DE GRUYTER OPEN

TRANSLATIONES Volume 10/2018, Pages 149-167
DOI: 10.2478/tran-2018-0004

Translationes 10 (2018)

Origins and Developments of Translation Theory in Lithuania from 1918 to 1990

Aurelija LEONAVIČIENĖ
Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

Résumé : Dans cet article, nous nous proposons de présenter un panorama de l'histoire de la théorie de la traduction en Lituanie durant la période du début du XX^{e} siècle à 1990. L'analyse des origines et du développement de la théorie de la traduction, permet de faire apparaître le rapport entre la traductologie et les contextes historiques, politiques et culturels de Lituanie pendant la période de son indépendance entre 1918 et 1940, ainsi qu'au cours de son occupation soviétique de 1940 à 1941 et de 1944 à 1990. En nous situant dans le domaine de la théorie de la traduction en Lituanie qui est une de trois pays post-soviétiques baltes, nous présentons aussi certains contextes historiques propres à la traductologie de la Lettonie et de l'Estonie.

Abstract: This article presents an analysis of the reasons and the specificities of the development of translation theory in one of the three post-Soviet Baltic countries, Lithuania, since the first half of the 20th century until 1990. The analysis considers the historical and political circumstances characterising the period of Lithuania's Independence (1918–1940) as well as the Soviet period (1940–1941 and 1944–1990). The discussion of the development of translation theory in Lithuania helps to reveal general features relevant to the context of translation studies in Latvia and Estonia as well, because the historical and political experiences of these Baltic countries have been similar to those of Lithuania.

Mots-clés : le développement de la théorie de la traduction en Lituanie, la théorie linguistique de la traduction, la théorie de la traduction ayant un fondement non linguistique.
Keywords: development of translation theory in Lithuania, linguistic translation theory, non-linguistic translation theory.

Introduction

Having emerged in the mid-20th century, the field of translation studies is quite young compared to other academic disciplines, but has undergone an intense development. Recent decades have seen diversification of translation objects, rapid changes in translation

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practices, and important extra-linguistic developments, such as the appearance of machine-aided translation programmes, advancements in digital information technology, and the like. As a result, the theoretical paradigm of translation studies has changed significantly over the eight decades of the development of the discipline. Alongside traditional linguistic translation theories (Nida, Jacobson, Mounin, and others), new ones have appeared in different parts of the world. These include the situational, interpretational, sociolinguistic, communicative, *Skopos*, pragmatic, cognitive, localization, and polysystem theories; theories based on the methods borrowed from corpus linguistics; and numerous others. Some theoreticians foreground the linguistic aspects of translation (Mounin, Fiodorov, and others), whereas others focus on the cultural elements involved (Cordonnier, Aixela, Leppihalme, and others); still others analyze the translation process itself (Tabakowska and others). It would be impossible to claim that there is a single cohesive translation theory, a comprehensive set of theoretical concepts, or a universal translation strategy applicable to all possible objects of translation. Translation scholar Leona Van Vaerenbergh from the University of Antwerp, Belgium, has addressed the theoretical diversity in translation studies and has suggested the following classification: 1) theories in which translation is seen as *a product*, taking into consideration its linguistic and cultural aspects; 2) theories interested in translation as *a process*, *cognitive* (with respect to the translator) and *communicative* (with respect to the reader); 3) theories foregrounding the *function* of translation within the culture of the language into which a text is being translated (culture of the reader) (2005, 22). This classification is, undoubtedly, far from exhaustive. A considerably more detailed classification could be developed, acknowledging the extent to which the paradigm of translation studies has expanded over the last decade and the variety of the new translation strategies which have emerged. Furthermore, the fact that translation theories and traditions are heavily influenced by the sociohistorical context in which they develop should also be taken into consideration; thus their classifications can differ in different countries, depending on which historical period is analyzed and what ideologies, philosophical attitudes, and cultural expectations it is marked by.

The aim of this article is to analyse the reasons and the specificities of the development of translation theory in one of the three

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post-Soviet Baltic countries, Lithuania, since the first half of the 20th century until 1990. The analysis considers the historical and political circumstances characterising the period of Lithuania's Independence (1918–1940) as well as the Soviet period (1940–1941 and 1944–1990). The World War 2 years of 1941–1944 in Lithuania are not addressed in this article because no significant work in translation theory or criticism was undertaken during the time. The discussion of the development of translation theory in Lithuania helps reveal general features relevant to the context of translation studies in Latvia and Estonia as well, because the historical and political experiences of these Baltic countries have been similar to those of Lithuania, including the occupation by the Soviet Union, Russification, secession from the USSR, joining the European Union, and others.

The first translations into the Lithuanian language, along with the rudiments of translation criticism, are associated with the first book published in Lithuanian, i.e., *Katekizmas* [*Catechism*] by Martynas Mažvydas in 1547, which contains a brief presentation of the major principles of translation criticism. Later, up until the 20th century, numerous, albeit fragmentary, discussions took place, focusing on the issues related to the use of and translation into the Lithuanian language, including the famous 18th century debate between Gottfried Ostermeyer and Kristijonas Milkus [aka Christian Mielcke] regarding the translation of church hymns, which continued for over two decades (Balčiūnienė 2005). Despite the considerable attention paid to translation practices during the 19th century, it is the 20th century that can be labeled as the "Golden Age" of translation studies, both in Lithuania and in other countries. This period opened the door for translation theory and methodology, professional criticism, and translation studies in general.

The discussion of the origins of translation theory and its development undertaken in this article seeks to foreground the following issues: what influence dominant translation practices and criticism had on the nascent translation scholarship in Lithuania; what influence changing historical, political, ideological, and cultural contexts have had on the development of translation theory and translation practices.

Earlier reviews of the history of translation in Lithuania have attempted to provide brief answers to the issues raised in this article (Balčiūnienė 2005, Ambrasas-Sasnava 1980, Armalytė et al. 1990, Leonavičienė 2013, and others). Nonetheless, what is still missing is a

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more thorough discussion of the history of translation studies in Lithuania, more specifically, the sources of and influences on the discipline as well as the dominant practices in the field. Their systematic survey undertaken in this article includes an analysis of the collection of 20th century translations of fiction, donated to Vytautas Magnus University by professor Leonas Gudaitis. The article also offers a discussion of publications on translation theory; it also provides a survey of press archives from the two periods under analysis in this article, and other material available at the libraries of Vilnius University, Vytautas Magnus University, and Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania.

1. Translation practices and theoretical principles during the period of Lithuania's Independence in 1918–1940

The first period of independence for the Republic of Lithuania, which lasted from 1918 to 1940, was progressive, albeit difficult; new governmental institutions, modelled upon European structures, were established in order to assure congruous national development and to integrate Lithuania into the social space of Western Europe. Numerous individuals began to translate foreign fiction, seeking to educate Lithuanian readers and increase their familiarity with the little-known literature from Western Europe, the United States of America, and Russia. There were no professionally trained translators at the time, either in Lithuania or in other European countries, because no institutions offered programs in translation studies during the first half of the 20th century. Thus the work of translating foreign texts in Lithuania was undertaken by writers, priests, teachers, linguists, and other people employed in the sphere of arts and culture; they knew foreign languages and had graduated from universities in Lithuania or other countries with degrees in the humanities, social sciences, or theology. "Lithuanians who were engaged in cultural endeavors were full of drive and thirst for modernity," writes Ilona Januškevičiūtė, "and they were looking at Western European countries in order learn about modern artistic trends and absorb new ideas and creative impulses" (2014). Paris was one of the greatest cultural attractions at the time, and France was seen as the epitome of modern, Western European culture. Translators were eager to translate from various languages in an effort to introduce to their Lithuanian readers the cultures of Europe and other countries. For

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instance, the collection of original and translated 20th century fiction compiled by Professor Leonas Gudaitis, Vytautas Magnus University, includes some 1100 publications, dating from 1918 to 1940, which are texts translated from various foreign languages. The quantitative analysis shows that most of these translations are of English and American texts (272 published translations) as well as Russian (253 translations), French (191 translations), and German ones (140 translations). There are fewer translations from other languages: 85 texts translated from Polish, 23 from Italian, 17 from Spanish, 34 from Czechoslovakian, 24 from Norwegian, 10 from Finnish, 9 from Hungarian, 14 from Latvian, 2 from Arabian, 1 from Chinese, and 1 from the Japanese language. There are also quite a few translations from ancient Greek and Latin.[1]

The proliferation of translated texts, though very uneven in quality, brought about active discussions in the press on the issues of selecting texts and quality standards. Brief commentaries about the linguistic quality of translations were frequent in the "Knygos [Books]" section of the periodical *Naujoji Romuva*. The major contributors to such discussions were Jurgis Talmantas (editor in chief), Sofija Čiurlionienė, Viktoras Kamantauskas, and Antanas Salys, publisher of the periodical *Gimtoji kalba* [*Native Language*], the major objective of which was to foreground "the accuracy and beauty of spoken and written Lithuanian" (*Gimtoji kalba* 1933, 117). Thus, for instance, in the second issue of *Gimtoji kalba*, published in 1933, Čiurlionienė criticizes translators for the low quality of their work and for catering to the tastes of unsophisticated readers:

> We have a great deal of literature in translation, only, alas, little of what should really be translated from foreign languages, what is truly a treasure trove of the wisdom and spirit of the humankind. Translations are often rushed, and the texts themselves are too frequently of little value and leave a bad taste. Even if you happen to pick up a more interesting book, you will be disappointed to see that the translator did not do the job *con amore* [with love] (1933, 17).

[1] Based on the data from E. Balionytė's research, 2016, 13–18.

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It is worth noting that, during the first half of the 20th century, the Lithuanian language itself was undergoing intense change and creative transformation. There were endless discussions in the press and scholarly articles regarding the use of vocabulary, syntax, and other aspects of the language. Many intellectuals actively upheld the ideological positions voiced by Jonas Jablonskis, Juozas Balčikonis, and other linguists, who undertook the task of standardizing the Lithuanian language. For example, Talmantas discussed the problems concerning spoken Lithuanian in the issues of *Gimtoji kalba* (No. 8, 1933, 113–115); Merkelis Račkauskas wrote about linguistic "weeds", for instance, overused parenthetical phrases and pointless drivel (No. 2, 1933, 20–23); Antanas Salys, among others, addressed the issue of spelling Lithuanian names (No. 4, 1933, 50–51). Attention to the linguistic quality of published translations was part of the same process of constructing and promoting the Lithuanian language. Čiurlionienė, herself a translator as well as one of the editors of *Gimtoji kalba*, was very outspoken about inaccurate, *word for word translations from foreign languages* into Lithuanian (No. 2, 1933, 18). Thus, for example, she blasted Dabušis's translation of *Women's Good Fortune* by Anton Chekhov, published in 1929, for its poor quality and chastised Juozas Narjauskas for his translation of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, published in 1938. Čiurlionienė was particularly dismayed by what she called a "mortal sin," namely, *adding Lithuanianisms without any good reason*, that is, unmotivated use of localization whereby, for instance, foreign place names or personal names would be replaced by Lithuanian ones (No. 2, 1933, 18; No. 4, 1933, 51–53).

A series of analyses of individual translations carried out by Čiurlionienė between the years 1918 and 1940 can be seen as the groundwork for translation criticism in Lithuania. The following are the most important principles she foregrounded:

1. "Translation is an art requiring a specific talent, true sense of language, and good taste." She contended that successful reproduction of the mood of a literary text is "the greatest proof of a translator's creative abilities." Therefore, "only a poet is capable of translating poetry" (*Gimtoji kalba*, No. 8, 1933, 115–116).

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2. Čiurlionienė insisted that translations be done from the original text: “A translator should translate the original text, not a translation of it” (*Gimtoji kalba*, No. 2, 1933, 17).

3. “A translator must know a foreign language well and understand its most sophisticated nuances, but it is perhaps even more important that they know and feel their native language and thoroughly train their taste” (*Gimtoji kalba*, No. 2, 1933, 17).

4. Čiurlionienė warned against translations done on a word-by-word basis: “They who consider translation to be a simple verbatim retelling of a text are obviously unable to sense or appreciate the beauty of language and have no ‘conscience’ – for such a person, translation is a merely mechanical process, page after page” (*Gimtoji kalba*, No. 8, 1933, 117).

5. Čiurlionienė was adamantly opposed to the tendency of “Lithuanianizing” cultural realia. She maintained that this strategy could only be applicable in translations of popular science books or educational books for children “where references to realia foreign to us are provided in order to broach psychological matters, rather than familiarize readers with a foreign country.” However, she argued, “There can be no discussion about making foreign literature for adults more Lithuanian. This would be evidence of a major lack of literary sophistication and of good taste” (*Gimtoji kalba*, No. 2, 1933, 18).

6. Čiurlionienė emphasized the importance of conveying the style of the original text in a translation, because “the writer wants his/her text to enter a foreign country not only at face value, but with traits of his/her own individual style retained as well as the entire backdrop of his/her society” (*Gimtoji kalba*, No. 2, 1933, 19).

7. A translator who undertakes to translate fiction of great artistic value is obligated to consult with translation critics and consider their opinions: “A translator who sets out to translate some literary *chef-d’œuvre* must complete a portion of it and show his/her work to knowledgeable others, seeking their assessment and advice. Then, upon having identified his/her weaknesses, the translator must eliminate them through serious effort” (*Gimtoji kalba*, No. 8, 1933, 116–117).

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The rules formulated by Čiurlionienė, voiced in numerous newspaper articles in which she asked for precision in translation and attention to the cultural realia of foreign texts, reflect the most important principles of translation: it is necessary to retain the artistic effects, style, and specific cultural features of the original text, while simultaneously taking into consideration the target audience by offering them a text in their native language that is correct, accurate, and understandable.

Errors recurrent in translations throughout 1918–1940 became the subject of many discussions among linguists, men of letters, and numerous other cultural activists of the time. One of the most resonant among the cultural elite of the time was the dialogue between writer and literary scholar Balys Sruoga and linguist Juozas Balčikonis. What sparked this discussion was the translation of Wilhelm Hauff's *Fairy Tales* by Balčikonis and his students, published in 1921 by the Ministry of Education. Balčikonis's major aim was to introduce the text to his Lithuanian contemporaries. He was not much concerned about the individuality of Hauff's style and did not invest much effort to convey the latter in his translation. He wanted to foreground the "Lithuanianism" and the vitality of the Lithuanian language in his work and, therefore, heavily relied on Lithuanian folk language and dialecticisms. This approach angered Sruoga, who published an article in 1927 titled "Apie kalbininkus ir rašytojus [On linguists and writers]" in the periodical *Lietuva* [Lithuania] to initiate a discussion about linguistics and literary translations. Sruoga stated: "It would seem it's high time Mr. Balčikonis (and other linguists) comprehend that the essence of a language does not lie in its etymology or syntax but in its style" (*Lietuva* 1927, 3).

Balčikonis replied as follows:

> Writers are thinking that they alone know what style is. Their effort to explain away grave language errors as stylistic specificities quite obviously shows that they know nothing about style. The first rule of good style is correctness in language. When a language is incorrect, it is dead, and when it is dead, it no longer flows. So, how can that possibly be considered good style? Style is inseparable from language. There can be various styles, but they cannot go beyond the limits determined by a language (*Lietuva* 1927, 3).

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The two passages reveal a conflict between a literary and linguistic approaches to translation, which became increasingly evident in the first half of the 20th century. Both participants of the discussion clearly formulated their views on language as the most important tool in the hands of the translator. However, as a linguist, Balčikonis maintained that language is to be seen as instrumental, whereas Sruoga adhered to the understanding of language as a creative activity. These are two entirely different and nearly incompatible philosophical platforms. Apparently, it was not without reason that Balčikonis wrote, "If Sruoga is of a different opinion, we will never be able to arrive at any understanding" (*Lietuva* 1927, 3).

The discussions about translation practices in Lithuania during the period of 1918–1940 raise the question about which trend of translation theory in Lithuania appeared first. Having reviewed the panorama of Lithuanian translation criticism and the overall cultural context, it might be assumed that, most likely, linguistic translation theory was the first to appear. This is also evident in the particularly frequent discussions of the problems of oral translation, attention to the target language (Čiurlionienė 1933, Balčikonis 1927, etc), and the ongoing processes of the standardization of the Lithuanian language, carried out by the followers of linguist Jonas Jablonskis and others. Linguistic translation theory, rapidly developing at the time, might have also encouraged the appearance of the stylistic approach in Lithuania in the opening decades of the 20th century. Thus, the year 1923 saw the publication of a textbook by Motiejus Gustaitis, *Stilistika. Literatūros teorijos vadovėlis* [*Stylistics: A Textbook of Literary Theory*]. Another textbook, *Literatūros teorija. Poetika* [*Literary Theory: Poetics*] by Juozas Ambrazevičius, published in 1930, paid considerable attention to stylistic devices and their analysis. Stylistics addresses a number of issues when it comes to analyzing literary texts, and it is probably unsurprising that more than one linguistic translation theory has developed specifically from this discipline. For example, Canadian linguists Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet in their *Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais. Méthode de traduction* [*Comparative Stylistics of French and English: A Methodology for Translation*], published in 1958, laid down the fundamentals of the situational model of translation. In the early stages of the development of translation theory, more than one scholar argued that stylistics was the field of studies most closely related to translation,

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and that linguistics was the methodological basis for translation theory, seeing the study of translation as inconceivable without linguistic insights (Nida 1969, 483–498; Mounin 1963, 16–17; Fiodorov 1958, 16–22 and others). The field of translation studies in Lithuania was also steadily maturing, retaining clear focus on linguistic translation theory, as is evident in the publications of Lithuania's translation critics, who consistently grounded their arguments in the propositions of European translators and critics, particularly the French. Language studies in Lithuania were gaining momentum, too. However, World War II and the Soviet occupation in 1940 halted most of translation-related activities and theoretical thinking about translation. The Soviet occupational regime rapidly set out to annihilate what Lithuania had created during its independence period, including cultural achievements. The names of many translators, linguists, and translation critics were erased from public memory; their publications were removed from libraries, destroyed or restricted to special storage areas, inaccessible to the general public. Many cultural activists were exiled to prison camps in Siberia; others fled to Western Europe or to the United States. This marked the demise of Lithuanian translation studies, which had just begun maturing but had not yet become systematic enough. The seedlings of theoretical thinking about translation died as well.

2. Translation practices, criticism, and the scope of translation theory during the Soviet periods, 1940–1941 and 1944–1990

The Soviet Union first occupied Lithuania in 1940, the Soviet rule lasting until mid-1941, and then in 1944,[2] this time fully imposing the Stalinist totalitarian regime. The second occupation lasted for nearly fifty years. The free market, which had existed in Lithuania from 1918 to 1940, was replaced with planned economy and mass culture dictated by the central government in Moscow. These changes also affected the publishing industry, including translations. The cultural life in Soviet Lithuania depended on the Soviet cultural agenda and the political scenario imposed upon the country. Furthermore, the USSR sought to develop and promote folk arts in the Soviet republics, while criticizing

[2] The first Soviet occupation lasted from June 15, 1940, to June 22, 1941. The occupation of Lithuania by Nazi Germany lasted from June 22, 1941, to 1944, followed by the second Soviet occupation, from 1944 to 1990.

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and outright rejecting everything created during "the years of the bourgeois rule", as the dictum went.

The policy of Russification was particularly intense during the first decade of the occupation. The decade saw a series of ideologically appropriate translations of Russian fiction, whose function was ideological indoctrination, for example, *The Mother* by Maxim Gorky, *How the Steel was Tempered* by Nikolai Ostrovsky, *And Quiet Flows the Don* and *Soil Upturned* by Mikhail Sholokhov, *The Grave of the Unknown Soldier* by V. Lidin, *The People Immortal* by Vasily Grossman, etc.[3] For a long time, texts that dominated in the translation market were fiction of Russian writers or those from other Soviet republics (e.g., Latvia, Estonia, Belarus, Ukraine, etc), countries of the Soviet bloc (e.g., Czechoslovakia, Poland, etc), and a few others. Using the data from the Book Chamber of the Lithuanian SSR, Kazimieras Ambrasas-Sasnava estimated that, in Lithuania, during the period between 1945 and 1972, 1,736 books of Soviet fiction were published, totaling in 21,413,700 copies. Between 1940 and 1974, some 1,400 people translated Lithuanian literature into the languages of the other Soviet republics, and 350 translated into other languages (1980, 68). Translations of literature from outside the USSR were mostly of French prose and English poetry, and were subject to meticulous revisions and censorship. Therefore, Western European literature selected for publication during the first decade of the Soviet rule consisted mainly of texts dwelling on social issues, class struggle, and other themes that fit within the Marxist or Leninist ideology. Soviet officials whose task was to control and censure translations encouraged translating foreign texts from their translations into Russian, which had already been "politically approved." This practice soon became standard throughout the Soviet Union and, consequently, Lithuania. Critical of it, Ambrasas-Sasnava remembered Čiurlionienė urging him to translate solely from original texts. He wrote in 1980: "The Russian language, which nearly 50 years ago many advised to 'abolish,' has not lost its functionality" (1980, 66).

Cultural developments in Lithuania during the Soviet rule were very uneven. According to literary scholar Donatas Sauka, 1965 was the "threshold year," when "the [Khrushchev] thaw generation" made itself

[3] The basis is the data on translations collected by Vytautas Visockas. See Visockas V. 1980: "Vertimo medžio šaknys ir metūgės [Roots and sprouts of a translation tree]". In: *Meninio vertimo problemos*. Vilnius: Vaga, 9, 11-12.

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known; these people longed for innovations and tried to use the opportunities which had been opening since Stalin's death. They were not burdened by the past, weighing heavily on the older generation, who had survived the years of terror (1998, 388–389). One of the accomplishments of the thaw generation is "Poetry Spring," an annual international poetry festival, launched in 1965 and organized to this day. The relaxed political climate of the Khrushchev thaw, along with intensified cultural activities, prompted a surge of translations and translation criticism, usually published in the magazines *Pergalė* [*Victory*] (1942–1990) or *Literatūra ir menas* [*Literature and the Arts*] (1946–). Three articles discussing the importance of translating and foregrounding the need to pay greater attention to translation issues, published in brief succession in 1969, can be noted: Valys Drazdauskas's "Vertėjo pastabos [A Translator's Comments]" (*Literatūra ir menas*, II 1, 1969); Eugenijus Matuzevičius's "Už mus niekas kitas nepadarys [Nobody Will Do It for Us]" (*Literatūra ir menas*, II 15, 1969); and Galina Čepinskienė's "Ko ligi šiol pasigendame [What Do We Still Lack?]" (*Literatūra ir menas*, III 15, 1969). The year 1969, as critic and translator Irena Balčiūnienė (2005) notes, marked the beginning of probably the richest time period when it comes to translation and translation theory, which consistently matured over the decades leading to the restoration of Lithuania's independence in 1990. Along with writers and literary critics (e.g. Martinaitis, Masionis, Matuzevičius, Kubilius), translators also published their commentaries (e.g. Žirgulys, Urbas, Ramunienė, Merkytė, Petrauskas, Vanagienė, Balčiūnienė). They discussed literary and linguistic translation strategies, holding very different opinions regarding original and translated texts, argued about the means of conveying the author's style and other issues. The surge of translation criticism in Lithuania along with increased interest in translation theory was influenced by the considerable attention the Soviet Union was paying to translation studies. There were several reasons for this in the USSR: 1) the necessity for the multinational USSR to communicate via translations and to deliberate the means to achieve their effectiveness; 2) the strategy of the USSR's central government to familiarize the readers of the Soviet republics with the literature and scientific achievements of Russia and other republics, rather than with those of Western Europe or the United States; 3) the "Sputnik mania", which had overtaken the USSR, though the competition between the USSR and the USA entailed

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more than who would launch the first satellite to orbit the Earth; it meant competing in different fields of science and scholarship, including translation; 4) growing interest in machine translation during the 1950s and the 1960s and the need to analyze this type of translation theoretically. As a result, a number of Russian scholars undertook activities in the field of translation studies (Chukovsky, Reformacki, Retsker, Fedorov, Barkhudarov, Komissarov, Gak, and others). Understandably, translation studies in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia or any other Soviet republic could not develop independently due to the Soviet Russification policies, but had to be adapted from the propositions of Russian scholars; in this way, Russia demonstrated its assumed role as a carrier of culture to the nations under its rule.

Lithuanian translation scholars analyzed translation practices, theory, and history by following the example set by Russian translation theorists, i.e., that of structural linguistics based on formalist translation theories. Seminars on specific translation issues contributed to more comprehensive and purposeful discussions in the field. Two substantial collections of articles were published, the first of the kind in Lithuania: *Meninio vertimo problemos* [*The Problems of Literary Translation*] in 1980 and *Meninio vertimo akiračiai* [*The Horizons of Literary Translation*] in 1986. These aforementioned collections of articles encouraged theoretical thinking about translation and helped form a more systematic approach to major translations problems. Nonetheless, it was impossible to avoid Soviet propaganda and Marxist-Leninist ideology. Lithuanian scholars were unable to benefit from the latest findings in translation studies when writing their academic papers. The only theoretical texts accessible to them were translation theories used in the USSR, academic translation studies conducted in the countries of the Soviet bloc (e.g., by Czech scholar Levý, member of the Prague school of linguistics Jakobson, etc), and an occasional text on translation by Eugene Nida or some other author. Nevertheless, in the late 1970s and the early 1980s Lithuanian translation theory was steadily developing, even under such restrictive circumstances. Rooted in linguistics, it served as the theoretical and methodological basis for Ambrasas-Sasnava's monographs *Vertimo mokslas* [*The Science of Translation*], published in 1978, and *Vertimo tyrinėjimai* [*Analysis of Translation Practices*], published in 1984. These texts offered the first comprehensive review of translation theory in the Lithuanian language. They included definitions

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of the most important concepts in translation studies, a discussion of different aspects of translation studies (general translation theory, special translation theory, translation criticism, translation history, etc), and a description of the translation process; they also provided of a glossary of major terms and concepts related to translation. A brief glance at Ambrasas-Sasnava's *The Science of Translation* reveals an obvious influence of linguistic translation theory: he quotes and paraphrases linguists (Mounin 1963; Levý 1963; Catford 1965; Komissarov 1973; Barkhudarov 1975 and others) who formed his understanding of the main concepts in translation studies. Translation itself is described as follows:

> The translation process is a creative act during which the translator becomes acquainted with the original, analyzes it, grasps it, and then expresses it in the signs of a different language, but retains the semantics, which is invariant (Ambrasas-Sasnava 1978, 11–12).

This description of the translation process is reminiscent of discussions about the opposition between original and translated texts, which led to the idea, familiar from linguistic translation theories, particularly Russian formalism, of text language as a system of signs. According to this view, translation is seen as a search for corresponding signs in another linguistic system to develop "an unchanged semantic invariant", disregarding the specificities of the historical period, cultural knowledge, or expectations of an individual in a specific geographic location. Obviously, there are certain dangers for a translator who is searching for semantic invariance by attempting to come up with the most *accurate translation* of meaningful units. This strategy most often involves the inductive translation method, which increases the risk of slipping into word-for-word translation and failing to convey the style and "spirit" of the literary text. These issues have been repeatedly addressed by theoreticians who are more inclined to non-linguistic approaches or who have criticized linguistic translation theory, claiming that translation cannot be simplified to become a linguistic exercise or a linguistic operation (French: *opération linguistique*) but should be treated as a creative activity (Cary 1957, 186).

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Ambrasas-Sasnava's other assertions further reveal his predisposition towards the linguistic route of translation theory: "Despite the differences in formal or semantic structures, all languages have a great deal in common. Linguists refer to such common features as universal. Semantic universalities are especially important in translation theory" (1978, 21–22).

These statements echo the principles of Mounin's linguistic translation theory, which foregrounds the search for lexical and syntactic universalities in another language (1963, 195–196, 222–252).

The linguistic school of translation formed in Lithuania during the Soviet period was based on the principles of Russian translation theory (Ambrasas-Sasnava 1978, 1984; Armalytė 1986; Pažūsis 1984, etc), which over the years had become fundamental to Soviet translation studies as well as translation practices. Translation programs taught its major tenets in the departments of foreign languages at Vilnius University and Vilnius Institute of Pedagogy. During the final years of the Soviet rule, Vilnius University introduced a possibility for philologists who studied Lithuanian and some other foreign language to specialize in written translation (for example, the Lithuanian–French Studies Program, which was taught at the university from 1982 to 1989, offered the specialization in translation). The Anthology of Translations *Atodangos*, published from 1988, also contributed to instilling and disseminating theoretical principles about translation: it published translations of modern writers' work, such as Virginia Woolf, Peter Handke, or Jorge Luis Borges, but also excerpts from theoretical texts, e.g., *Science of Translation* by Nida.

The theoretical fundamentals of translation studies during the Soviet period in Lithuania were part of a larger dynamics at work in all three Baltic countries: the only available theory was that of linguistic translation as it provided a coherent set of principles which conformed to the Soviet ideological standards.

The "Act of the Re-Establishment of the State of Lithuania," signed by the members of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania on March 11, 1990, announced the restoration of Lithuania's status as an independent country. Lithuania seceded from the Soviet Union after 50 years of the Soviet occupation. The system of planning in the field of publishing translated books collapsed, and the ideological

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control of different academic fields ended. New opportunities opened for free academic thought.

The early years of Lithuania's Independence were marked by renewed interest in Western Europe and other countries, which prompted numerous translations of classical and modern fiction by foreign writers. As usual, translation critics were quick to react to the surge of translations. Numerous academic articles were published on the issues of translating foreign literary texts into Lithuanian and articles on translations of Lithuanian writers' texts into various foreign languages.

Thus conditions for theoretical discussions about translation were excellent. Nonetheless, some researchers persistently adhered to the linguistic translation theory, even after the ideological climate had changed. This is evident in the first publication on the translation theory, compiled during the last years of the Soviet rule and published in 1990 by Vilnius University and the Ministry of Education of the Lithuanian SSR. It was compiled by Vilnius University scholars Olimpija Armalytė and Lionginas Pažūsis and titled *Basics of Translation Theory: A Teaching Tool*. As in their previous publications, Armalytė and Pažūsis based their publication on the Soviet translation theory (Recker, Barchudarov, Komisarov, etc) and linguistic translation theories developed in other countries (Nida, Catford, etc); they also espoused the view on equivalence and translation transformations which is characteristic of linguistic theories (Armalytė, Pažūsis 1990, 52–75, 181–239).

Linguistic translation theory which had become a standard during the Soviet rule continued to dominate translation studies in Lithuania for two decades after the restoration of independence in 1990. A more pluralistic theoretical paradigm of translation studies became more pronounced only during the second decade of the 21st century. Some translators and scholars continued to adhere to the "old-school" linguistic translation theory but many others turned towards the communicative, interpretational, or some other trend of translation theory. Further research on the development of translation theories in Lithuania from 1990 until the present could reveal the specificities of the contemporary paradigm of translation theories in the country.

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Conclusions

After investigating the early beginnings and the development of theorizing about translation in Lithuania from 1918 to 1990, the following conclusions are possible:

Lithuania's independence in 1918 and opening to the world during the interwar period were significant factors in the formation of translation industry in the country. A surge of translations of various quality encouraged some intellectuals to engage in their critical analysis, which eventually formed a basis for more theoretical discussions, fueled also by the developments in linguistics and, particularly, stylistics. However, the Second World War and the Soviet occupation interrupted the early theoretical developments.

The Soviet Union occupied the three Baltic countries twice, in 1940 (the Soviet rule lasting until 1941) and in 1944, isolating them from the Western world for almost five decades, until 1990. Since Lithuania found itself on the Eastern side of "the iron curtain," translation practices and criticism in the country became subject to and then served as tools of the indoctrination into Marxist-Leninist philosophy and ideology. Discussions about translation as a creative practice did not begin until 1965, the so-called "threshold year," which marked more favorable conditions for invigorating translation studies in Lithuania. Nonetheless, during the entire Soviet period, Lithuanian translation studies were dominated by Russian formalism, an essentially linguistic theory, and, quite predictably, no tradition or methodology that would have responded to specifically Lithuanian cultural environment could be developed.

The research on the development of theorizing about translation in Lithuania from 1918 to 1990, presented in this article shows that the ideological climate of a specific historical period and the societal norms influence and regulate translation practices, criticism, theoretical and methodological rules. The other two Baltic countries, Latvia and Estonia, have had similar historical experiences. Thus the analysis of the theoretical developments in translation studies in Lithuania is informative about Latvia and Estonia as well, but a more thorough investigation of the processes and a comparative analysis, taking into consideration all three countries, is still to be conducted.

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