

# CONFLUENCES

## MORPHOLOGICAL, SYNTACTIC, AND SEMANTIC FEATURES OF THE VERB IN THE ROMANIAN TRANSLATIONS FROM ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER'S *THE WISDOM OF LIFE*

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### **Abstract:**

The present paper emphasizes the difficulties in translating philosophical texts in general, with a special interest in Romanian translations of German philosophical writings. The focus was set on one of the late works of Arthur Schopenhauer, [*Aphorisms on*] *The Wisdom of Life*, and on its Romanian translation, with the purpose of contrastively and diachronically analysing the various existent versions of the translation and their influence on the development of the target-language (Romanian).

The types of analysis which have been used in our research are description and contrastive typology. Various versions of the Romanian translation of the *Aphorisms* have been compared with the original text and with one another, in order to diachronically analyse the translation methods and strategies that were used in the process of transposing the German original text into an adequate Romanian one. The analysis in the present study concentrated on the word class of verbs *and had the purpose of understanding the way various elements of this word class correspond with their Romanian equivalents and of drawing conclusions regarding a possible typology of translation strategies used for them.*

### **Key words:**

Translation studies; German philosophy; Romanian language; linguistic analysis; verbs.

## **1. Introduction**

The present paper displays an analysis of the characteristics of the verbs included in an excerpt from Arthur Schopenhauer's *[Aphorisms on] The Wisdom of Life*<sup>1</sup>. The purpose of this analysis is to understand the way these lexemes correspond with their Romanian equivalents and to draw conclusions regarding a possible typology of translation strategies used for them. An article such as the present one could not cover a detailed examination on the translation of a word class conducted on the *Aphorisms* in their entirety, therefore we resumed our analysis to a single excerpt, which we considered as representative for A. Schopenhauer's style - on one hand - and sufficiently expanded in order to display various translation case-studies - on the other hand. It is worth mentioning the fact that while conducting our analysis on this excerpt we have always considered the entire text of the *Aphorisms*. Thus, the conclusions drawn after the detailed research conducted on the excerpt we chose as an example shall preserve their validity for the entire text.

The present research has a dual character determined by the coalescence of two kinds of investigation: the contrastive analysis of two texts, original (source-text, ST) and translation (target-text, TT), on one hand, and the study of the different printed editions of the Romanian translation, delivered by the same translator - Titu Maiorescu - at different moments in time, on the other hand.

The source-text is an excerpt chosen from the original writing of Arthur Schopenhauer, which was placed by its author toward the end of the first chapter called "Division of the Subject" (*Grundeintheilung*). In this chapter, based on Aristotle's thesis on the existence of three types of blessings of the human life (those coming from the soul, others coming from the body and those coming from without), Arthur Schopenhauer described his vision on the fundamental triad that define us as humans - 'what someone is', 'what someone has', and 'what someone represents' - and stated that the blessing of life may and should be considered from all those three points of view. The excerpt we selected here is a synthesis of his

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<sup>1</sup> Hereinafter called *Aphorisms*.

introductory thoughts, which would later lead the German philosopher to the conclusion that personality ('what someone is') is the most important in order to achieve happiness in life, though the other two aspects of human existence should not be neglected either.

## **2. General aspects and definitions**

To get a better overview on the relation between the original text and the translated one, we introduced an *Appendix* built as a three column table (with an additional column added to the left for a quick orientation within the text, by using row numbers: r. 1, r. 2 etc.). The excerpt from the original text in German was introduced in our *Appendix* in the column called "Source-text" (ST) and has been extracted from a special edition<sup>2</sup> of Arthur Schopenhauer's *Aphorisms*, issued by the National Library of Germany. According to the editors' imprint, this edition reproduces the original text as it had been authorised by the author himself.

The target-text is represented by the various translated versions that exists in Romanian language, all made by Titu Maiorescu over a period of forty years (1872 - 1912)<sup>3</sup>. For all these versions a special notation has been used by including indices referring to the year of publication for the respective version of translation: A<sub>72/76</sub>, A<sub>80</sub> and A<sub>12</sub>. After having studied the Romanian versions of the excerpt in question, extremely few differences have been discovered between A<sub>72</sub> and A<sub>76</sub>, on one hand, and between A<sub>80</sub> and A<sub>12</sub>, on another hand. Moreover, this fact preserves its validity even at

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<sup>2</sup> Hans-Peter Haack, Carmen Haack (Hrsg.), 2013, *Schopenhauer: Aphorismen zur Lebensweisheit*, Leipzig: Antiquariat und Verlag Dr. Haack. This text has been corroborated with : Julius Frauenstädt (Hrsg.), 1891, *Arthur Schopenhauer's Sämtliche Werke*. 2. Aufl. Neue ausg. Fünfter Band. Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, pp. 331-530.

<sup>3</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer, 1872, „Aforisme pentru înțelepciunea în viață“. Translated by T. Maiorescu, în: *Convorbiri Literare*, anul VI, nr. 8, Iași: Tipografia Societății Junimea; Arthur Schopenhauer, 1876-1877, „Aforisme pentru înțelepciunea în viață“. Translated by T. Maiorescu, in: *Convorbiri Literare*, anul X, nr. 1-12, Iași: Tipografia Societății Junimea; Arthur Schopenhauer, 1890, *Aforisme asupra înțelepciunii în viață*. Translated by Titu Maiorescu. București: Editura Librăriei Socecu & Comp.; Arthur Schopenhauer, 1969, *Aforisme asupra înțelepciunii în viață*. Translated by Titu Maiorescu. Text by Domnica Filimon-Stoicescu. Introductory Study by Prof. univ. Liviu Rusu. București: Editura pentru Literatură Universală. This last edition reproduces the translation that, according to its editors, Titu Maiorescu made last and published in 1912.

the level of the whole writing of Arthur Schopenhauer, the *Aphorisms*. Therefore, only two versions have been considered for our parallel and diachronic study: the first one (A<sub>72/76</sub>) was introduced in the second column called „Target-text 1- A<sub>72/76</sub> (TT1)”, and the second one, displayed in the third column, “Target-text 2 – A<sub>80</sub>, A<sub>12</sub> (TT2)”, which is almost identical with the definitive version of translation (A<sub>12</sub>), published by Titu Maiorescu in 1912. The very few differences between the various versions within the target-texts as defined by us (TT1 and TT2, respectively) shall be punctually acknowledged and discussed at the moment of their occurrence.

In the present article, the analysis of the Romanian translation from Arthur Schopenhauer’s *Aphorisms* concentrated on the word class of verbs, namely on predicative verbs and on verbal complexes that include at least one verbal operator of predication.

The term ‘verbal complex’, which is specific to the grammar of German language<sup>4</sup>, is used here to designate all verbal forms that are built analytically, *i.e.* those which among a main verb (the so-called ‘semantic carrier’<sup>5</sup>) also contain auxiliaries or free morfemes that are used to render temporal or aspectual values and that together with the main verb build a so-called ‘sentence bracket’ (*Satzklammer*<sup>6</sup>). This term is specific to German grammar, as well. Therefore, within our analysis, the term ‘verbal complex’ includes the concept of ‘complex predicate’ which is used in Romanian linguistic literature. There are certain similarities between the classification of complex predicates in the Romanian grammar<sup>7</sup> and that of verbal complexes in the German grammar<sup>8</sup>. Thus, certain relations of

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Cap. „Der Verbalkomplex”, în: Ulrich Engel *et al.*, 1993, *Kontrastive Grammatik deutsch-rumänisch*, Heidelberg: Julius Groos Verlag, pp. 362-455.

<sup>5</sup> GBLR, p. 398.

<sup>6</sup> Ulrich Engel, *op. cit.*, p. 186. *Der Satzklammer* or ‘the verbal bracket’ may be found under other different names: ‘*die verbale Klammer*’ or ‘*der prädikative Rahmen*’ and consists of inserting the syntactical complements of the verb (excepting the one that precede it) between the two components of the verbal complex: the finite verbal form (the operator) and the non-finite one (the semantic carrier) or, in the case of separable verbs, between the finite form of the verb and the separable particle. The model included in this description is a declarative sentence (n. a.).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. GBLR, p. 400.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Ulrich Engel, *op. cit.*, p. 362.

correspondence could be established between the two classes of terms, on the basis of which we distinguished for the purpose of our research between verbal complexes with various operators: copulative, passive, aspectual, or modal.

Based on the notion of ‘verbal complex’, we could also make a clear distinction between verbal forms built analytically and simple ones, the synthetic forms, which include temporal or aspectual values by using auxiliaries or by means of suffixes and/or endings directly attached to the verb. Our study labels them as ‘simple predicative verbs’. Verbal phrases in both languages involved in translation are also included in this category, along with German verbs with separable particles (here: *hervorgehen*, *herbeiführen*), even if their paradigm sometimes implies building of a ‘sentence bracket’.

Our study will not discuss non-finite verbal forms functioning as predicates<sup>9</sup>, since the conditions for their occurrence are very limited and, in addition, such occurrences do not appear in the excerpt (TS) analysed here. Furthermore, the limited space offered by the present research could not cover an analysis on the grammatical features of the verbs (mode, tense, aspect, person and number).

The lexical items used for negation (*nicht* and „nu”, respectively) – and which can be classified as grammaticized adverbs – were considered as part of the verbal complexes and analysed as such.

### **3. Lexical, morphological, and semantic features of the verb**

The source-text includes 27 verbs and verbal complexes functioning as predicates within the sentences they occur in. Out of these, 12 are simple predicative verbs, and 15 are verbal complexes with various operators: copulative (9), modal (4), passive (1) and aspectual (1).

Two of the simple predicative verbs in the TS are formed by juxtaposition, following the model adverb + verb (*hervorgehen* and *herbeiführen*), where the adverbs (*hervor*, *herbei*) become separable

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<sup>9</sup> The term ‘predicate’ is used with the meaning of ‘predicate of the declarative sentence’ (Rom: ‘predicat al enunțării’, cf. GBLR, p. 396).

particles. Other three verbs within this group are verbal derivatives built with prefixes: *ver-* (*vermögen*), *bei-* (*beitragen*) and *über-* (*überlassen*). Only one of those prefixes (*bei-*) became a separable particle. The rest of the verbs (7) are simple verbs, whose internal structure is not analysable.

As far as the morphology of German verbs and its influence on the Romanian translation are concerned, the excerpt we analysed displayed very few examples of this kind (verbs derived by juxtaposition or by prefixes) in order for us to draw any conclusion regarding them. Nevertheless, considering both Arthur Schopenhauer's work in its entirety and various studies in contrastive analysis of German and Romanian, we are able to say that there are extremely few cases of equivalence between verbal prefixes in the two languages involved in translation. Therefore, we regarded this aspect as unproductive for our study and, consequently, we shall not refer to it.

Out of the total of 15 verbal complexes included in our excerpt, 9 are built with a copulative operator (the verb *sein*, Rom.: "a fi", occurs eight times as a copulative operator, while the ninth is the verb *sich fühlen*, Rom.: "a se simți"), 4 verbs have a modal operator (the modal verbs *dürfen*, *sollen*, and *können* with a double occurrence), and the rest (2) have a passive operator (the verb *werden*) and an aspectual one (*suchen*), respectively.

The Romanian version of our excerpt displayed a certain number of additional verbs (seven in TT1, and eight in TT2), whose occurrence is explained by the fact that there were some phrases in the ST with no verbs or with non-finite verbal forms whose equivalents in Romanian included structures with finite verbal forms. These are, as follows:

- (r. 27) *vorhandenen Reichthum* – "bogăția ce o posedă" (1)
- (r. 28) *über den engen Gesichtskreis* – "tot ce trece peste  
horizontul strimț" (2)
- (r. 32) *wenig Zeit, aber viel Geld kostenden* – "care cer timp  
puțin și bani mulți" (3)
- (r. 36) *wirklich* – "ce e drept" (4)
- (r. 37-38) *zu vermehren oder durchzubringen überläßt* – "lasă  
ca să mai mărească sau să risipească" (5)
- (r. 38-40) *ein solcher mit ernsthafter Miene durchgeführter  
Lebenslauf* -

(TT1) “o astfel de viață deși *este condusă* cu o fisionomie cât se poate de serioasă”;

(TT2) “o astfel de viață deși cel ce o *duce* își *dă* un aer cât se poate de serios”. (6)

References to their location within the *Appendix* are being made in the form of stating the row number in brackets at the beginning of each example, while the additional verbs in the TT are underlined.

The first example (1) exhibits the case of a participial adjective (*vorhandenen*), whose Romanian equivalent is a relative clause introduced by the relative pronoun “ce”. Therefore, the simple predicative verb “posed”, which is the basis of the relative clause used to modify the noun “bogăția”, does not have an equivalent in the ST. Since bilingual dictionaries provide Romanian equivalents for the respective German adjective, we consider that the translator could have avoided the modalized translation by using instead - in this case - the Romanian adjective “existentă”<sup>10</sup> as a direct equivalent for the participial adjective in the ST.

Another reason for the occurrence of additional verbs in the TT is the syntactic reorganizing of a sequence in the ST, as shown in the example (2). Here, a prepositional phrase introduced by the preposition *über* (or *ueber*, as it occurs in the original text) is turned in the TT into a relative clause modifying the pronoun “tot” (which, at its turn, does not have an equivalent in the ST). To get a better overview, we extracted here the respective structures as they occur in the ST and the TT:

ST: *Ueber den engen Gesichtskreis [...] kennt er nichts.*

TT: “Tot ce trece peste orizontul strimt [...] le rămâne necunoscut.”

We notice thus that the structures are different in the two languages as far as their syntax is concerned, and that those differences originate in the valence of the respective verb. The transitive verb *kennt* in the ST requires a subject, here the personal pronoun *er*, and a direct object, here the negative

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<sup>10</sup> DGR, s. v. *vorhanden*.

pronoun *nichts*. The prepositional phrase introduced by the preposition *über* (*ueber*) is functioning as an attribute of this negative pronoun.

The subject pronoun *er* acts as an Agent in the ST, but as a Beneficiary in the TT, in the form of a personal pronoun in dative “*le*”. The intransitive verbal complex with a copulative operator “*remăne necunoscut*” requires a subject as its only complement. To cover this position, the translator inserted the indefinite pronoun “*tot*”, which has no equivalent in the ST. In order to recuperate the semantics of the prepositional phrase in the ST (introduced by the preposition *über*), it was necessary for a relative clause to be inserted here as a modifier for the pronoun „*tot*”. This relative clause had to include an equivalent of the German prepositional phrase and also needed a simple predicative verb (“*trece*”) - with no equivalent in the ST – in order to be built.

The first two examples above are different from the next three in the way that no translation strategy could have been used in order to avoid transferring special non-sentence structures - specific to German language - into sentences with finite verbs.

Thus, examples (3) and (6) display participial structures included in nominal phrases, whose heads are modified by them. Since a direct equivalent is impossible or unacceptable in Romanian, they had to be transferred into additional sentences, as follows:

- *kostenden* (example (3)) is a present participle (the equivalent of the Romanian gerund) inserted in a nominal phrase and functioning as a modifier for the (implied) noun *Genüsse* (“*plăceri*”), and being its adjective. A literal translation, “\**plăceri costânde*”, is evidently unacceptable in Romanian, particularly as from a syntactic and a semantic point of view the verb *kosten* (“*a costa*”) requires a direct object. For this reason, the present participle *kostenden* was transferred into Romanian in accordance with the rules<sup>11</sup>, by using a relative clause containing a finite verb („*cer*”): “*care cer timp puțin și bani mulți*”.

- *durchgeführter* (example (6)) is a past participle (equivalent of the Romanian participle), inserted in a nominal phrase and also functioning as a

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<sup>11</sup> Ulrich Engel, *op. cit.*, p. 353.

modifier for the noun *Lebenslauf* (“viață”) and being its adjective. In TT1 an additional adverb clause (of contrast), whose finite verb in the passive voice (“este condusă”) recuperate the past participle in the ST *durchgeführter*:

“o astfel de viață deși *este condusă* cu o fisionomie cât se poate de serioasă”.

In TT2, the finite verb of the adverb clause is in the active voice (“(își) dă”), while its subject is, at its turn, a relative clause containing the finite verb “duce”:

“o astfel de viață deși cel ce o *duce* își *dă* un aer cât se poate de serios”.

Here, thus, a nominal phrase in the TS was transferred in TT2 into two additional clauses with verbs in the active voice.

In example (4), the adverb of epistemic modality *wirklich* is functioning as a pragmatic connector of confirmation, whose equivalent in the TT is a parenthetical structure, which has the same function as the adverb in the ST, but is built as a sentence and therefore analysable by describing its verb. Thus, we can say that this structure includes the adverb “drept” as a predicative for the copulative verb “e” (the short form for “este”), or - in other words - that a verbal complex with copulative operator was here used.

Example (5) brings to attention the case when a German structure with a non-finite verb (*zu* + infinitive) has been transferred into Romanian as a finite form (a Romanian conjunctive – Eng.: subjunctive). The sentence we discuss here is structured around the predicative verb *überläßt* (translated, quasi-literally, as “lasă”, in accordance with references in the bilingual dictionaries). The verb is accompanied by an adverbial of purpose in the form of two infinitives coordinated by the conjunction *oder* (*zu vermehren oder durchzubringen*), which were transferred into Romanian also in accordance with the rules<sup>12</sup> as two subjunctive verbs (“să mai mărească sau să risipească”).

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 349.

As far as the verbal complexes in the ST are concerned, these were transferred into Romanian by preserving their internal structures. There are very few exceptions from this pattern and these are given below. References to their location within the *Appendix* are being made in the form of stating the row number in brackets at the beginning of each example, and the two versions of translation are given (TT1, TT2), but only when they differ from one another. When that is not the case, the translation into Romanian is given only once. The first five examples in the list below are verbal complexes with various operators (three of modality, one passive, and one aspectual) which were transferred into Romanian as simple predicative verbs. The last example is in fact a reversed case of translating a simple predicative verb in the ST into a verbal complex with a copulative operator.

- (r. 8) *vernachlässigen sollte* - “să se negrijească” (simple predicative verb, which includes a passive-reflexive “se”);
- (r. 14) *befähigen könnte* - “să pună în stare” (verbal phrase);
- (r. 16) *(noch) leisten kann* - TT1: “adaogă” (simple predicative verb),  
- TT2: “(mai) poate da” (verbal complex with modal operator);
- (r. 18) *wird gestört* - TT1: “smintește” (simple predicative verb),  
- TT2: “împiedică” (simple predicative verb);
- (r. 20-22) *sind bemüht* - “caută” (simple predicative verb);
- (r. 42) *(Schellenkappe zum Symbol) hatte* – “(a cărei) simbol ar fi fost” (verbal complex with copulative operator).

It is here to be noticed that among the examples above there is a case when the revised translation (TT2) returned to the initial internal structure of the verbal complex:

TS: (*noch*) *leisten kann* (verbal complex with modal operator) →  
TT1: "adaogă" (simple predicative verb) → TT2: "(mai) poate da"  
(verbal complex with modal operator).

It is also worth mentioning the fact that one syntactic sequence in the ST, *wenn das Glück gut war* (r. 35 in *Appendix*), has no equivalent in the TT (in both versions discussed here), for reasons which remained unexplainable for us, as yet. We could easily exclude a difficulty of translation, since the sentence in question does not display any semantic ambiguity and an equivalent in the Romanian language of the time could have easily been found in the form of the verbal phrase "a-i surâde norocul"<sup>13</sup>.

#### **4. Conclusions regarding the word class of the verbs in the Romanian versions of translation from the *Aphorisms***

After having contrastively analysed the morphological, syntactical, and semantic features of the verbs in the ST and in the versions of translation (TT) discussed here, we are able to draw a series of conclusions, as follows:

a) The word class of verbs, along that of nouns – which we already discussed in other studies – was one of the word classes that was most difficult to translate; this is proved by the large number of revisions the translator made in the various Romanian versions of the same translation;

b) In addition to a), it can be stated that transferring verbs derived by prefixes raised many difficulties for the translator, who solved them by paraphrasing or by inserting verbal phrases. Two conclusive examples are given here:

- *nicht mißdeutet werden darf* – "nu trebuie să se interpreteze în sensul fals" (TT1), "nu trebuie să se întoarcă în înțelesul greșit" (TT2);

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<sup>13</sup> Lazăr Șăineanu, 1908, *Dicționar universal al limbei române*, a opta edițiune, revăzut și adăogit la Ediia a VI-a, Editura „Scrisul românesc”, www.dacoromanica.ro, s. v. *surâde*.

- *befähigen könnte* – “să pună în stare”.

c) Some simple verbs also raised translating difficulties for the translator, who solved them by using equivalents which modified the transitivity of the verbs in the ST, thus causing a syntactic reorganising of the sentence in which they occur in the TT:

- *vermag (wenig zu)* – “are (puțin) efect (pentru)” (TT1)/”face (puțin pentru)” (TT2);
- *(noch) leisten kann* – “adaogă” (TT1)/”(mai) poate da” (TT2);
- *herbeiführt* – “provin” (TT1)/”(le) aduce (cu sine)” (TT2).

The following examples also display a syntactic reorganising caused by the modification brought to the semantic and syntactic valence of the verb in the ST:

- *wird gestört* – “(îl) smintește” (TT1)/”(îl) împiedică” (TT2) (passiv→active);
- *(er) kennt (nichts)* - (le) “remăne necunoscut” (Agent → Beneficiary).

d) Having in mind the large number of additional verbs inserted in the Romanian version (in comparison with the ST), we reached the conclusion that T. Maiorescu (the translator) had to make use of all his creative resources in order to offer a TT as faithful to the ST as possible, but also accessible to his readers.

At the time he started his admirable endeavour of translating a German philosophical writing, Titu Maiorescu was disadvantaged by the fact that Romanian philosophical language was not very well developed in comparison with the German one. For that reason, it may be clearly stated that, while having limited linguistic means at his disposal, T. Maiorescu permanently tried and most of the times also succeeded in keeping the balance between the two responsibilities implied by being a translator: staying faithful to the ST, on one hand, and creating a text which is accessible to his readers, on the other hand.

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