 ARHIPELAG XXI PRESS, TÎRGU MUREȘ, 2015, ISBN: 978-606-8624-21-1

TRANSPLANTING PRAGMATIC ORIENTATIONS WITHIN CONLANG TRANSLATIONS: A STUDY ON C. BRONTË' S "JANE EYRE", TRANSLATED INTO ESPERANTO BY H. J. BULTHUIS

Norica-Luminița Butnaru

PhD Student, "Al. Ioan Cuza" University of Iași

Abstract: Regardless of the fact that translating from and into constructed languages could be interpreted as a rather hazardous task for any translation practitioner, the primary reason behind undertaking such an enterprise begs us to return, somewhat paradoxically, to one of the most basic notions of translation, namely the idea that this activity is, first and foremost, an act of communication. Regardless of whether the creator of a constructed language seeks to obstruct or, on the contrary, to facilitate the conveyance of information, the bedrock for the creation of every constructed linguistic code consists of an ideology linked to the concept of communication, which can lead us to the pertinent assumption that the main concepts conveyed in the pragmatic orientations from the field of Translation Studies may be, to a certain extent, transplanted into the analyses of constructed language translated texts. This paper strives at showcasing a brief study on the conlang translation of a literary text, namely the Esperanto version of Charlotte Brontë's notorious novel, "Jane Eyre" (1847), thus militating for the fact that the communicative value of the source text can have a significant impact on the translation strategies used in the target text which, in this case, has been masterfully worded by the Dutch translator Hendrik Jan Bulthuis in 1930.

Keywords: Conlang translations, Communicative value, Esperanto, Pragmatic orientations, Translation strategies.

Introduction

Before attempting to demonstrate whether the translation from and into constructed languages can indeed be considered a communicative act, the decision of conducting such an investigation will most certainly raise a fair amount of questions which could be paraphrased along the lines of: "Why would anyone be interested in constructing such a linguistic code in the first place?" or "Are the hundreds of natural languages currently spoken throughout the

BDD-V2076 © 2015 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-14 00:05:33 UTC)

world not enough to render that which we desire to express?" From a personal standpoint, the primary reason for inventing a new language is the unrestrained capacity of the human mind, i.e., our creative imagination, our ability to interpret and desire to find new means of recording the phenomena which surrounds us, the possibility of finding new ways of describing our intricate social practices, as this is one of the primary characteristics which differentiates us from all the other animals, a sign of human evolution. When asked about the uniqueness of language, in general, François Jacob stated that ''the quality of language that makes it unique does not seem to be so much its role in communicating directives for action or other common features of animal communication, but rather its role in symbolizing, in evoking cognitive images, in molding our notion of reality and yielding our capacity for thought and planning, through its unique property of allowing infinite combinations of symbols and therefore mental creation of possible worlds''(Jakob,1982:59).

But why does pragmatics play such a key role in our endeavour to prove that conlang translations are far from devoid of communicative value? The primary reason resides in the fact that pragmatics provides us with the proper tools of clarifying the meaning of conceptions featured within conlang systems or, to put it differently, it guides us to finding their practical utility. Drawing on the principle of inquiry and the account of meaning first proposed by C. S. Peirce in the 1870s, William James proposes two criteria for the meaningfulness of propositions within his lectures on ''What Pragmatism Means" (1907). In accordance with the first criterion, a proposition bears meaning „if it refers to or predicts future experiences regardless of whether the proposition is believed or not", while the second criterion stipulates that „a proposition is meaningful if belief in that proposition results in some experiences on the part of the believer, despite the fact no preditions by way of future experiences can be deduced from the truth" (James cited in Rydenfelt, 2008: 2).

Before displaying the actual translation analysis, I strongly believe in the gargantuan importance of setting out a disclaimer by stating that, albeit Esperanto is a fairly comprehensible language, in no way do I consider myself an expert in this constructed code, being fully aware of the fact that I have yet to acquire the skills necessary to truly and skillfully translate from and into this language.

The only task I set out to accomplish was based on the following attempt: drawing on L.L. Zamenhof's constant effort of enriching and systematizing the language he created, I will make use of the linguistic materials I was able to retrieve, trying to perform what I consider to be a documentary, interlineal translation (according to Christiane Nord's translation

BDD-V2076 © 2015 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-14 00:05:33 UTC)

typology as depicted in "Translating as a Purposeful Activity" - 1997), in the sense that I will take the first fragment of Charlotte Brontë's novel, *Jane Eyre* and, using a glossary I have specially put together for the analysis of this literary piece, I will try to deconstruct the source text by giving each English lexical unit its Esperanto correspondent, thus attempting to reproduce the syntactical and lexical structures of the target language. I will also illustrate H. J. Bulthuis' perfected Esperanto translation, featuring all the required modifications in terms of word order, semantics and so on. After doing so, I will add a few personal remarks for each of these alterations, thus conducting a brief translation analysis, while paying close attention to the strategies made in order to preserve the communicative value of the source text.

Documentary, interlineal translation from English into Esperanto

Before displaying Charlotte Brontë's original source text, together with my interlineal translation of the fragment, whose sole purpose is that of gaining insight into the internal mechanisms and operating principles of the Esperanto language, I would like to mention that the fragments from my translation which appear in bold font make reference to certain areas of Bulthuis's translated text where several deviations from the original text have been made. In doing so, I consider that the translation hurdles and the strategies that have ensued from this predicament will be easier to follow in my version of translation into Esperanto. My interlineal translation can be found immediately below the source text.

ST:

"There was no possibility of taking a walk that day. We had been wandering, indeed, in the leafless shrubbery an hour in the morning; but since dinner (Mrs. Reed, when there was no company, dined early) the cold winter wind had brought with it clouds so sombre, and a rain so penetrating, that further out-door exercise was now out of question.

I was glad of it: I never liked long walks, especially on chilly afternoons: dreadful to me was the coming home in the raw twilight, with nipped fingers and toes, and a heart saddened by the chidings of Bessie, the nurse, and humbled by the consciousness of my physical interiority to Eliza, John and Georgiana Reed." (Brontë, 1997: 1)

IT:

Tie estis ne ebleco de venpreni promenado tio tago. Ni estis vagantoj, fakte, en la senfolia arbustaro unu horo en la mateno ; **tamen ĉar tagmanĝo** (sinjorina Reed, kiam

BDD-V2076 © 2015 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-14 00:05:33 UTC)

ekzistis neniuj gastoj, tagmanĝis frutempe) **la malvarma vintro vento alportis kun ĝi nuboj tiel sombroj, kaj** unu pluvo tiel akuta, ke plua subĉiela ekzerkoj estis jam ekstere de diskuti. Mi ĝojis prin ĝi : mi neniam ŝatis longaj promenoj, precipe sur malvarmoj posttagmezoj : forloga por mi estis venanta hejmen en la maldeca krepusko, kun pinĉitaj fingroj kaj piedfingroj, kaj unu koro afliktita de la riprocxoj de **Bessie, la flegistino**, kaj humiglita de la konscienco **de mia fizika malsupereco al** Eliza, John, kaj Georgiana Reed.

Glossary of lexical and morphological items

Before I move on to providing H.J. Bulthuis's perfected Esperanto version of *Jane Eyre* and continue with the translation analysis per se, let us have a closer look at the glossary I have put together, as it would have been impossible to suggest any form of translation from English into Esperanto without it. I would also like to note that some of the words, both from English and Esperanto, have been separated into morphemes, so as to facilitate the comprehension of the manner in which the grammatical and syntactic structures function within the Esperanto language. As a final remark, I shall only specify the entirety of the sources I used as guidelines in the section dedicated to the bibliographical references.

there (adv.) - tie
was (aux. v.) - estis
no (adj., pre-modifies a noun, conveying its opposite meaning) - ne
possibility (n.) – eblo, ebleco
of (prep.) - de
taking (past part.) - venpreni
a (indefinite article) – no Esperanto equivalent
walk (n.) – marŝi, promenado
that (def. art.) - tio
day (n.) - tago
we (pron.) - ni
had been wandering (v., ind. mood) – estis vagantoj
indeed (adv.) – fakte, ja, vere
in (prep.) - en
the (def. art) - la
leafless (adj.) - senfolia

BDD-V2076 © 2015 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-14 00:05:33 UTC)

shrubbery (n.) - arbustaro

an (indefinite article) – no Esperanto equivalent

hour (n.) - horo

morning (n.) - mateno

but (conj.) – sed, tamen

since (adv.) - ĉar

dinner (n.) - tagmanĝo

Mrs. Reed (p. n.) – sinjorina Reed

when (adv.) - kiam

company (n.) - gasto

dined (v., ind. mood) - tagmanĝis

early (adv.) – frue, frutempe

cold (adj.) - malvarma

winter (n.) - vintro

wind (n.) - vento

had brought (v., ind. mood) – alportis, kunportis

with (prep.) - kun

it (pron.) - ĝi

clouds (n.) - nuboj

so (adv.) - tiel

sombre (adj.) – sombra, malgaja

and (conj.) - kaj

rain (n.) - pluvo

so… that (adv., used in comparisons to refer to the extent or degree of something) – tiel… ke

penetrating (adj.) - akuta

further (adv.) - plua

out-door (adj.) - subĉiela

exercise (n.) - ekzercoj

now (adv.) – nun, jam

out of question (prep. phrase) – ekstere de diskuti

I (pron.) - mi

was glad (v., ind. mood) - ĝojis

of (prep.) - pri

BDD-V2076 © 2015 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-14 00:05:33 UTC)

it (pron.) - ĝi
never (adv.) - neniam
liked (v., ind. mood) - ŝatis
long (adj.) - longaj
walks (n) - promenoj
especially (adv.) – precipe, aparte
on (prep.) – sur
chilly (adj.) - malvarmoj
afternoons (n.) - posttagmezoj
dreadful (adj.) – forloga, malbelega
to (prep.) - por
me (pron.) - mi
the coming (n.) - venanta
home (adv.) - hejmen
raw (adj.) - maldeca
twilight (n.) - krepusko
nipped (adj.) - pinĉitaj
fingers (n.) - fingroj
toes (n.) - piedfingroj
heart (n.) - koro
saddened (adj.) - afliktita
by (prep.) - de
chidings (n.) - riprocxoj
nurse (n.) - flegistino
humbled (adj.) - humiligita
consciousness (n.) - konscienco
my (pron.) - mia
physical (adj.) - fizika
inferiority (n.) – malsupereco

Translation analysis on H. J. Bulthuis' rewording of "Jane Eyre" into Esperanto

Before examining the differences ensued between the two versions of the translation, let us first examine Bulthuis' reinterpretation of the interlineal translation, which I have only

BDD-V2076 © 2015 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-14 00:05:33 UTC)

provided in order to show how the Esperanto language works in terms of internal structure. Immediately thereafter, I will also provide the back translation of the target text, so as to make the comprehensive process altogether transparent.

TT:

"Estis neeble promeni tiun tagon. Kvankam en la mateno ni jam promenis ĉirkaŭ unu horo inter la senfoliaj arbetaĵoj (sinjorino Reed kutime frue tagmanĝis, kiam ŝi ne havis gastojn) la malvarma vintrovento estis pelinta al ni tian penetrantan malvarmigan pluvadon kaj tiajn pezajn nubojn, ke plua promenado sur la kampo estiĝis tute neebla.
Mi ĝojis pro tio, ĉar mi ne amis longajn promenadojn, principe en malvarma posttagmezo. Estis al mi terure, veni hejmen kun glaci-malvarmaj manoj kaj peidoj, afliktita de la riproĉoj de Bessie, la vartistino, kaj humiligita de la scio, ke korpe mi malsuperis al Eliza, John kaj Georgiana Reed."(Brontë, 2001: 1)

BT:

It was impossible to go for a walk that day. Even though, in the morning, we took a walk for approximately one hour through the leafless bushes (Mrs. Reed usually dined early, when there were no visitors) the cold winter wind had forced upon us such a penetratingly cold rain and such heavy clouds that walking on the field any further became completely impossible.

I was delighted by this because I am not fond of long walks, especially in a cold afternoon. It was dreadful to me, to have to come home with ice-cold hands and feet, saddened by the accusations of Bessie, the nurse, and humbled by the knowledge that I was physically inferior to Eliza, John and Georgiana Reed.

***

Once we have taken note of all these aspects which, for the performance of this brief case study, were absolutely mandatory, we begin our proper translation analysis with several general remarks regarding the differences in style and formal structure of Bulthuis' translation, as compared to my 'raw', interlineal translation. Firstly, in the perfect translated version, there are far less punctuation marks than in the source text, the translator being most likely motivated by the desire to increase the level of overall textual coherence in the translated text. Secondly, as we will soon see more concretely, the word order from the target

BDD-V2076 © 2015 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-14 00:05:33 UTC)

text is much more standardized (according to the model: Subject + Verb + Object) than it is in the interlineally translated version. This is probably due to the fact that recreating the less common word order from the source text could have confused the target readers, which would have significantly decreased the communicative value of the Esperanto translation. And finally, after scrutinizing the entire fragment, we could say that the structure of the text, as a whole, has been simplified, the author opting to omit any kind of information that was superfluous in the least bit.

To narrow down the scope of our analysis, we commence with the very first sentence. The ST reads as follows: "there was no possibility of taking a walk that day", for which my interlineal correspondent is "tie estis ne ebleco de venpreni promenado tio tago." H. J. Bulthuis, however, opts for the following Esperanto structure "estis neeble promeni tiun tagon", which translates back into English as "it was impossible to go for a walk that day." Therefore, according to the classification of translation strategies elaborated by Andrew Chesterman in "Memes of Translation" (1997), we can notice that, by changing the original grammatical category from the segment "it was impossible" (adjective) to "there was no possibility" (noun), the translator uses a translation strategy known under the denomination of "transposition".

We now reach to the second sentence, namely "we had been wandering, indeed, in the leafless shrubbery an hour in the morning; but since dinner (Mrs. Reed, when there was no company, dined early) the cold winter wind had brought with it clouds so sombre, and a rain so penetrating, that further out-door exercise was now out of question." The interlineal translation for this fragment is "ni estis vagantoj, fakte, en la senfolia arbustaro unu horo en la mateno ; tamen ĉar tagmanĝo (sinjorina Reed, kiam ekzistis neniuj gastoj, tagmanĝis frutempe) la malvarma vintro vento alportis kun ĝi nuboj tiel sombroj, kaj unu pluvo tiel akuta, ke plua subĉiela ekzerkoj estis jam ekstere de diskuti." The Esperanto translator offers the following suggestion for translating this section: "kvankam en la mateno ni jam promenis ĉirkaŭ unu horo inter la senfoliaj arbetaĵoj (sinjorino Reed kutime frue tagmanĝis, kiam ŝi ne havis gastojn) la malvarma vintrovento estis pelinta al ni tian penetrantan malvarmigan pluvadon kaj tiajn pezajn nubojn, ke plua promenado sur la kampo estiĝis tute neebla", which can be back translated into English as "even though, in the morning, we took a walk for approximately one hour through the leafless bushes (Mrs. Reed usually dined early, when there were no visitors) the cold winter wind had forced upon us such a penetratingly cold rain and such heavy clouds that walking on the field any further became completely impossible."

BDD-V2076 © 2015 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-14 00:05:33 UTC)

The segment we are most interested with is "but since dinner" from the source text, which actually justifies Brontë's choice of making an explicitation in the brackets (thus taking the risk of disturbing the reader through a diminishment in the cohesiveness of the fragment). If we take a look at Bulthuis' translation, we can notice that he chose to omit this section altogether, thus rendering the communicative message from the brackets completely pointless. He actually succeeds in confusing the target readers, who will not be able to understand why the author felt the urge to needlessly point out Mrs. Reed's dining habits. From a personal standpoint, this omission should certainly not have been made, as the coherence of the fragment had a lot to suffer on its behalf. Having said that, in the same sentence we can also find translation alterations that do indeed benefit the target text, such as the change in the illocutionary force of Bulthuis' translation where, for the original "…the cold winter wind had brought with it clouds so sombre, and a rain so penetrating, that…" (interlineal translation: "…la malvarma vintro vento alportis kun ĝi nuboj tiel sombroj, kaj…"), he creates a much more impactful structure "…la malvarma vintrovento estis pelinta al ni tian penetrantan malvarmigan pluvadon…", which translates to "…the cold winter wind had forced upon us such a penetratingly cold rain and such heavy clouds that…"

In the second paragraph, we encounter a very well-calculated decision made by the Esperanto translator. Here, I am referring to the translation offered for the apparently straight-forward apposition "Bessie, the nurse" (interlineal translation: "Bessie, la flegistino"), reworded into Esperanto as "Bessie, la vartistino". The subtlety in nuance which has been graciously picked up by Bulthuis is that the English noun "nurse" is a homograph which can be employed to designate both a "medical assistant" and a "care giver/ babysitter". For each of these two dictionary entrances, Esperanto speakers have two distinct denominations and the translator was very wise to chose the one that would best suit the given context, namely that of "vartistino" (care giver / babysitter).

One last translation strategy we have been able to detect in H.J. Bulthuis' translation of the inaugural fragment from *Jane Eyre* is another example of a transposition, encountered in the segment "…humbled by the consciousness of my physical interiority to Eliza, John and Georgiana Reed", interlineally translated as "humiglita de la konscienco de mia fizika malsupereco al Eliza, John, kaj Georgiana Reed". The Esperanto translator's version reads as follows: "humiligita de la scio, ke korpe mi malsuperis al Eliza, John kaj Georgiana Reed", which, in turn, translated back into English as "and humbled by the knowledge that I was

BDD-V2076 © 2015 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-14 00:05:33 UTC)

physically inferior to Eliza, John and Georgiana Reed." Thus, the original "my physical inferiority to" (noun phrase) turns into "I was physically inferior to" (verb phrase).

As a final remark, if we were to compare the raw version that I obtained when I interlineally translated the first fragment from "Jane Eyre"(which must also have been the crude form H. J. Bulthuis came up with before rewording it) with the perfected translation, which, as I was able to demonstrate, suffered a fair number of modifications, we could consider that this entire alteration represents a strategy in itself, namely an interpersonal change, in the sense that, by adapting the Esperanto version, Bulthuis managed to change the relationship between the author and the readers by slightly changing the overall style of the translated text, thus simplifying the information content.

Conclusions

By the setting up of this scrutiny, I hope I have been able to prove that, since constructed languages do, indeed, fulfill all the requirements necessary for them to be perceived as fully functional languages, it could be possible for us to draw up new theoretical paradigms with regard to the communicative values of artificially created languages and the possibility of translating from and into conlangs.

And since I have already previously managed to prove that certain general acceptations that apply in the field of Translation Studies on texts written in naturally developed languages also apply in the case of conlangs, it was only fitting to attempt to transplant the core of pragmatic orientations within conlang translations. As a result, after making a few general remarks on what pragmatic orientations have to offer to this new and intriguing subfield of constructed language translations, I had to put my theoretical speculations to the test. Thus, I conducted a brief translation analysis on Charlotte Brontë's "Jane Eyre" (1847), translated into Esperanto by H.J. Bulthuis in 1930, all the while focusing on how the translator managed to enhance or, on the contrary, to diminish the communicative value(s) of the target text.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: This work was supported by the strategic grant POSDRU/159/1.5/S/133652, co-financed by the European Social Fund within the Sectorial Operational Program Human Resources Development 2007 – 2013.

BDD-V2076 © 2015 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-14 00:05:33 UTC)

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

1. Brontë, Charlotte (1997) *Jane Eyre,* Hertfordshire: Wordsworth
2. Brontë, Charlotte (2001) *Jane Eyre, Unua Parto,* Translated by H.J. Bulthius, Stockholm: Elibro
3. Chesterman, Andrew (1997) *Memes of Translation*, Amsterdam/ Philadephia: John Benjamins
4. Chierchia, Gennaro and Sally McConnell-Ginet (2000) *Meaning and Grammar: An Introduction to Semantics*, Cambridge and Massachusetts: MIT Press
5. Hatim, Basil and Mason, Ian (1997) *The Translator as Communicator,* London/ New York: Routledge
6. Jacob, François (1982) *The Possible and the Actual*, Seattle and London: Washington University Press
7. Kalocsay, Kálmán and Waringhien, Gaston (1980) *Plena Analiza Gramatiko de Esperanto (Complete Analysis of Esperanto Grammar),* Rotterdam: Universala Esperanto-Asocio
8. Libert, Alan (2000) *A priori artificial languages (Languages of the world),* München: Lincom Europa
9. Nord, Christiane (1997) *Translating as a Purposeful Activity,* Manchester: St. Jerome
10. Reiss, Katharina (2000) *Translation Criticism – The Potentials and Limitations – Categories and Criteria for Translation Quality Assessment*, Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing
11. Rydenfelt, Henrik (2008) *Meaning and Pragmatism. James on the Pragmatic Consequences of Belief,* Helsinki: Gaudeamus
12. Wennergren, Bertilo (2005) *Plena Manlibro de Esperanta Gramatiko (Complete Manual of Esperanto Grammar),* El Cerrito: ELNA

ONLINE SOURCES:

http://blogs.transparent.com/esperanto/start-reading-esperanto-literature/
http://onpoint.wbur.org/2009/06/01/invented-languages
http://www.esperantic.org/dosieroj/file/LLZ-Bio-En(1).pdf
http://www.esperanto-panorama.net/vortaro/eoen.htm

BDD-V2076 © 2015 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-14 00:05:33 UTC)

http://www.gutenberg.org/files/16967/16967-h/16967-h.htm

http://www.lexicool.com/esperanto-dictionary-translation.asp

BDD-V2076 © 2015 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-14 00:05:33 UTC)