ADJECTIVAL STRUCTURES EQUIVALENCES IN THE TRANSLATIONS FROM GERMAN INTO ROMANIAN OF THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

Dr. Mihaela Stan
mihaelastan75@yahoo.com

Abstract: The present study analyzes the regime of adjectives in the translation made for small industrial producers, farmers, artisans, etc.., Romanian speakers as „books of instruction", with practical-applicative character, from German (eg. flax or hemp cultivation and industrialization, silkworm rearing, beekeeping, etc.). The phenomenon can be placed within the efforts of Enlightenment scholars, especially in Transylvania, who tried to helped the people' evolution through culture and education. Strictly liguistically, these texts raise interesting questions of translation, because on the one hand, they entail a particular language, less approached by specialists, and on the other hand, they addressed to a large audience, but with low training. Therefore the final version had to take into account the capacity of reception of the target readers.

Keywords: translations, text with practical-applicative character, enlightenment.

The adjectives are much less numerous than the nouns in the basic corpus of our study. This is absolutely understandable, as in any scientific text and in any text with a technical applicative character, the adjectives that determine nouns are rather attributes of relation, the explicative attributes being based on usual adjectives, which rather quantify than qualify: *mare/mic, util/inutil, greu/uşor, bun/rău* and so on. In the respective texts, the attributive determinations appear rather for an objective appreciation, which defines a certain phenomenon, process, object, relation between objects, human action and less often a subjective quality of the type: *frumos / urât, interesant / neinteresant*, etc. Consequently, many attributes of relation are not even expressed by means of adjectives, but by means of nouns, with the possibilities of flexion given by each language in turn.

In the case of the Romanian language, the adjective as such has the noun for a concurrent, seeing the numerous possibilities of determination of

BDD-A4087 © 2009 Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 16:57:44 UTC)

the latter by means of its genitive forms (attribute expressed by a noun in genitive) and sometimes even by dative forms (attribute expressed by a noun in dative, always constructed with a preposition of the type: "conform", "grație", "datorită"), but mostly by a noun in accusative, with one of the numerous prepositions that help express the accusative case ("de", "cu", "pentru", "spre" etc.). This particularity of the Romanian language will fully manifest itself in comparison to German, too, as it is proved by the body of texts that we had in view in the analysis of the translations from this language. The fact is all the more obvious as German itself disposes of numerous possibilities to render the attribute expressed by a noun in genitive, both using the synthetic and the analytical forms of the noun.

In the text *Unterricht uber den Flachsbau für Böhmen, Möhren und Schlesien,* 1804, our attention is drawn by the small number of adjectives that we can record, even if we were to count them only in the German version. When we analyze in parallel the Romanian version as well, we notice that their number diminishes even more, almost up to the minimum resistance quantity of a discourse written in a natural modern language. In equivalences, we find the following typical situations:

a) the adjective from German is rendered using the corresponding adjective in Romanian:
   fremde (6,9) / *streini* (7,10)
   *(*das*) rohe (*Produkt*) (*6,11)/(produsul acesta) *crud* (7,11-12*)*
   *gute (*8,16) / *bun* (9,14*)*
   *teuer(*8,21*)/cea sumpă (*9,18*)*
   *leichten (*12,4)/*uşor (*13,3-4*)*.

b) actual adjectives from German rendered by adjectives of participial origin or even derived with suffixes from Romanian nouns. In this situation are found, actually, the nouns and especially the adjectives which, in German as well, are formations derived from adjectives using suffixes that express the matter out of which an object is made or which indicate its origin (*-en,-ern,-lich,-isch* etc):

   *glucklich (*Staat *)* 6,6 */norocită (* țară) 7,6.

BDD-A4087 © 2009 Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 16:57:44 UTC)

In this example, we should comment on the archaic and regional form of the suffix used by the translator in order to create an adjectival derivative from the noun *noroc:* the suffix *–it*, specific especially for the participial adjectives, instead of the suffix *–os*, which prevailed in modern Romanian, for the formation of adjectives of relation (*noroc-os,* from *noroc*; *os-os,* from *os*; *lemn-os*, from *lemn*, etc.). Anyway, the translator took into account the morpholexical structure of the word from the basic text, rendering an adjectival derivative (Germ. *Gluck+lich*), by a similar derivative corresponding to it in Romanian. Such equivalences reflect, from the viewpoint of the technique of translation, a calculation of lexical structure:

flachen (8, 11) / *neted* (9, 10)
*erforderlichen (*10, 3-4) / *trebuincioasă (*11, 13)
nachstehenden (10, 5-6*)* / *următoare(a*)(11, 6*)*
vermischte n (12, 5) / *amestecat* (13, 4)
*vorhergehenden (*12, 8*)* / *trecută (*13, 7-8*)*.

c) Adjectives of different types from German (primary adjectives, postnoun or postverb derivatives, participles with adjectival value, etc) rendered by noun constructions in Romanian:

Germ. *wichtig* "important, însemnat" (4, 1)
vs
Rom. *trebuință* (5,1)
*
Germ. *menschlichen* ,,omenesc, uman, de om"(6,3)
vs
Rom. *omenirii* (7,3)
*
Germ. *leinenen* ,, de in , de pânză" (4,10)
vs
Rom. *de in* (7,1)
*
Germ. *notig* ,, necesar, trebuincios, de trebuință"(10.5)
vs
Rom. *de trebuință* (10,6)
*
Germ. *nothig* ,, necesar, trebuincios, de trebuință"(12,3)
vs

BDD-A4087 © 2009 Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 16:57:44 UTC)

Rom. *de lipsă* (13,3).

In many such examples, the equivalence of the adjective with a prepositional noun construction was to be expected, as the meaning of the respective adjective imposes these equivalences. A proof is the fact that not even the modern bilingual dictionaries can find another equivalent expressed by an actual adjective for the Germ. *leinen,* as the Romanian language has no such adjectival equivalent. We can deduce from here that the suffixes of origin and matter are more numerous and more productive in German than in Romanian, which makes some derivatives from this lexical-semantic class simply not have an equivalent in Romanian, which triggers the need to use a prepositional noun structure.

Moreover, the Romanian language has plenty of such possibilities, as we have just shown and as some of the examples we selected here confirm:

- *Omenirii* (noun, G., sg.) for an adjective ending in *-chen* from German (*menschlichen)*.
- *de in* (noun, Ac., sg. + prep.) for an adjective ending in *–ig* from German (*notig*).

Under these circumstances, even there where the equivalence with a corresponding adjective already present in Romanian or calqued after the German term would have been possible, the translator often preferred to use noun phrases, which he felt more adequate to express the respective notion and which corresponded perfectly, semantically, to the original German term, because this one, too, being an adjective, came from a noun or expressed, anyway, a noun-notion (matter, origin, an abstraction etc.).

d) The adjective from German is rendered using an adverbial structure in Romanian:

Germ. *derlei* „asemănător, de acest fel, astfel de" (4, 10)

vs.

Rom. *de asemenea* [scris *de asemenea*] (5, 10)

*

Germ. *zeitlich* "temporar, vremelnic" (12, 8); (12, 11)

vs

Rom. d*evreme* [scris *de vreme*] (13, 7); (13, 10)

BDD-A4087 © 2009 Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 16:57:44 UTC)

*

Germ. *(ist) schuld"vinovat"* (10, 4)

Rom. *(este) de vină* (11, 1-2).

Such equivalences are justified by the semantic similarities and even the identity between adjective and adverb in any natural language worldwide. Sometimes these similarities are reflected as well in point of form, a fact that is explained, actually, by the process of conversion that facilitates the passage of the adjectives into the class of adverbs and the other way round:

Are un scris frumos (adjective, because it determines a noun)
Scrie frumos (adverb, because it determines a verb)

*

Asemenea om (adjective, because it determines a noun)
Procedează asemenea (adverb, because it determines a verb).

Such being the case, it is not surprising that the translator preferred the adverbial variant, which was more at hand, closer to the vivid language of the readers for which the book was meant, and which had the possibility to express just as clearly the adjectival qualification, even though the adverb is, by its nature, a determiner of circumstance or a determiner of relation (direct, indirect, of relation etc.).

The last example we have given above can be contested concerning its selection as a German adjective equivalent to an adverb in Romanian. It represents a special situation even in German, where it expresses a predicative adjective accompanying the verb *sein "a fi"*, in the formation of predicate complements. It is exactly such an enunciation that we find in our text, the difference being that, in the German version, the predicative complement is an adjective, while in the Romanian version we have to do with a noun preceded by preposition, whose integral value can be equivalent to an adjective : *de vină = vinovat.* So, we are dealing rather with the equivalence with a noun rather than with an adverb, and if we take into

BDD-A4087 © 2009 Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 16:57:44 UTC)

account the value of noun phrase of the respective construction, then this example should rather be considered as representative for point a) or for c).

e) Adjectives from German rendered by corresponding verbs in Romanian.

There are situations when the adjectives of verbal origin from German, which are not just few, in these texts, are not rendered by the same type of postverbal adjectives in Romanian, but directly through the verbal construction in whose lexical family the respective adjective should have been found.

Germ. *gewiß* "sigur, cert, pozitiv" (6, 24)
vs
Rom. *trebuieşte* (7, 24).

In this example, in fact, there is no direct correspondence between the adjective from German and any corresponding verb from the same language (which should be "*müssen*"). The equivalence the translator made comes from the fact that he did not find in Romanian, at the beginning of the 19th century, a corresponding adjective.

Indeed, the Romanian equivalences given by the usual dictionaries for the Germ. *gewiß* are all recent, constituting neologisms in the historical evolution of the vocabulary of the Romanian language: *sigur, cert, pozitiv*.

And yet, there is another context in which the translator found an equivalent that was closer to the original, on the scale of the morphological classes. It is about the adverbial phrase *întru- adevăr* (today: *într-adevăr*), which appears at (7, 17), for the same *gewiß*, from the German version (6, 17).

f) Adjectives from German rendered by a pronoun in Romanian

Such equivalences appear especially in the fragments translated more freely. The modular versions, deviating more or less markedly from the grammatical and semantic structure of the enunciations from text A, facilitate the replacement of a certain type of adjectives from these versions with pronouns or pronoun phrases, in version B.

Germ. *(für) eigenen* "propriu" (6, 7)
vs

BDD-A4087 © 2009 Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 16:57:44 UTC)

Rom. *pentru însuşi a* [sa] (7, 7-8).

The German adjective rendering the idea of property of the terms, of identity, is rendered in Romanian by the pronoun of identity, accompanied by the possessive pronoun. Sure, the solution found by the translator seems to us heavy and unnatural today, especially as it creates a pleonasm through the association of the pronoun of identity with the possessive pronoun. But, if we judge at a historical scale, we understand that it was quite difficult for the translator of those times to use a word like "propriu", accepted recently in the Romanian literary language.

Similar difficulties wee encountered by the translator in an equivalence of the type:

Germ. *mannigföltigen* "felurit, variat, diferit, divers" (4, 10)
vs
Rom. *mai multora* (5, 10).

We notice that the solutions found by the modern dictionaries all consist in neologisms. None of the words we have given above taken from such dictionaries (*diferit, variat etc.)* was used currently at the beginning of the 19th century. *Felurit, -ă* certainly existed in the old Romanian, but it was not common in Transylvania and, in fact, in no other Romanian province was it part of the usual word treasury. In exchange, *mult,-ă* was very commonly used, so that the translator preferred to select it, with the sense of "diferit, divers", usual in the popular idiom, especially as the whole context suffered visible modifications.

g) The adjective from German totally omitted in the Romanian version.

We have already had the opportunity to show that the omissions are not at all few in the translations we analyzed. The phenomenon is as natural as possible, as it is related to adaptation, transposition, equivalence, interpretation, rephrasing or any of the possibilities of translation that even the most expert and talented translators have to have recourse to from time to time. There are enunciations and contexts where the literal translation is not possible, because of the differences between the grammatical and lexical-semantic structure of the two languages. In the case of some older translations, where the translator had to deal both with the traps of the basic language and with the limited resources of the target language, such

BDD-A4087 © 2009 Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 16:57:44 UTC)

omissions occur frequently. We were able to comment such cases in the analysis dedicated to the nouns. We will hurry to add now that, in the case of adjectival equivalences, such situations are much rarer than we expected. The adjectives usually represent more abstract concepts than the nouns, even when it comes to adjectives coming from verbs or nouns designating concrete notions, as they express, by their very nature, a certain subjectivity where a quantity of personal evaluation subsists. Among the examples we have encountered we should quote:

> Germ. (*für) mühsame (Bearbeitung)* "pentru cultivarea anevoioasă a pământului " (6, 19).

The adjective *mühsame* "greu, anevoios, obositor" could have found equivalence easily, as all the three Romanian versions given by today's dictionaries were present in the inventory of the Romanian language at the beginning of the 19th century as well. However, the translator modifies the entire context, so we find an equivalence that uses an adverbial phrase, made up of preposition + noun, in the enunciation *cu ostineală păşeşte* (7, 19). If we ignore the change of context, then we could say that this equivalence finds its well-established place in one or even two of the above-mentioned groups, namely noun + preposition (group c) or adverbs (group d).

A partial **conclusion** that we can formulate concerning the equivalences of the adjectives is that the Romanian translator manages to find, one way or the other, adequate correspondences for the different types of adjectives from the German version, even if for this, many times, he has to change the grammatical class in the Romanian version. In other words, even if he uses an adverbial phrase, a noun phrase, a verbal phrase, or even a pronoun phrase, which would mean a visible drawing away from the original, the message is transmitted in a reader-friendly way.

In reality, he endeavors, and even manages, in the great majority of the cases, not to leave the problematic adjective without an equivalent, however abstract and ambiguous its semantic value and formal value may be. Consequently, he makes use of all the means available in the Romanian language of that era, choosing from the resources of the popular, regional, archaic language and, less often, borrowing from modern languages, when

BDD-A4087 © 2009 Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 16:57:44 UTC)

the literary Romanian language – inasmuch as its norms were settled at the time – was not able to provide adequate solutions.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Sources

Anonim, 1811, *Doftorie împotriva gălbezii oilor*, Buda.
Anonim, 1828, *Învățătura despre cultura sau lucrul cânepei*, Buda.
Anonim, 1804, *Învățătură despre sămănatul inului...*, Liov.
Anonim, 1823, *Învățătură pentru lucrătorii de tăbacă...,* Buda.
Gh. Şincai, 1807, *Povățuire către economia de câmp*, Buda.
Ioan Molnar, 1785, *Economia stupilor...*, Buda.
Ioan Thomici, 1823, *Cultura albinelor...*, Buda.
Ioan Thomici, 1823, *Cultura bombițelor...*, Buda.
Johann Neuhold, 1812, *Învățătură de a face sirup din zahăr*, Buda.

2. Theoretical studies, grammars, treaties

*** *Gramatica limbii române,* 1963, vol. I-II, Ediția a II-a revăzută şi adăugită, Bucureşti, Editura Academiei.

ALT Peter André, 2007, *Aufklärung. Lehrbuch Germanistik*, Stuttgart, 3. aktualisierte Auflage.

ARVINTE, Vasile, 1971; *Die deutschen Entlehungen in den rumänischen Mundarten (nach den Angaben des Rumänischen Sprachatlasses),* Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 2002, *Raporturi lingvistice româno-germane. Contribuții etimologice,* Bacău, Editura Egal.

AVĂDANEI Şt., 1988, *Traduceri şi traducători, contacte şi interferențe culturale,* Simpozion de anglo-americanistică, Universitatea „Alexandru Ioan Cuza", Iaşi.

AVIELÁ Javier Franco, 1996, *Culture Specific Items in Translation*, in Román Alvarez and Carmen-Africa M. Vidal (Editura) Translation, Power, Subversion, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, p.52-78.

AVRAM, Mioara, 1986, *Gramatica pentru toți,* Bucureşti, Editura Academiei.

BAHNER Werner, 1985, *Aufklärung als europäisches Phänomen. Überblick und Einzeldarstellungen*, Verlag Philipp Reclam jun., Leipzig.

BDD-A4087 © 2009 Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 16:57:44 UTC)

BAHNER Werner, 1976, *Renaissance, Barock, Aufklärung. Epochen- und Periodisierungsfragen*, Scriptor Verlag, Berlin.

BANTAŞ Andrei, 1978, *Analiza textului şi traducerile* (*Text Analysis and Translation*), în Studii şi cercetări lingvistice, 29, No.3, p. 341-346.

BANTAŞ Andrei, CROITORU Elena, 1998, *Didactica Traducerii*, Bucureşti, Editura Teora.

BANTAŞ Andrei, 1988, *Translation-Oriented Text Analysis* (TOTA), *Revue Romaine de Linguistique Cahiers de linguistique therique et appliquce,* 25, No.2/1988, July-December, p.103-116.

BÂRLEA Octavian, 1948, *Ex historia romena: Ioannes Bob Episcopus Fogarasiensis* (1783-1830), Frankfurt am Main.

BELL, Roger, 1991, *Translation and Translating: Theory and Practice*, Longman, London and New York.

BENJAMIN W., 1969, *Illuminations*, trans. H.Zohn, Shocken Books, New York.

BERARIU P., 1937, *Ioan Piuariu-Molnar,* Tipografia Victoria, Cluj.

BERNATH Mathias, 1994, *Habsburgii şi începuturile formării naţiunii române*, Editura Dacia, Cluj-Napoca.

BIANU I., HODOŞ N., 1785, *Bibliografia românească*, vol. II, p. 308-309; sau textul original în *Economia stupilor*, Viena, (*Cătră cititori)*.

BIGELOW J., 1978, *Semantics of Thinking, Speaking and Translation*, in Guenthner, F and Guenthner-Reutler, M. (eds.), *Meaning and Translation. Philosophical and Linguistic Approaches,* New York University Press, New York,

BLAGA Lucian, 1966, *Gândirea românească în Transilvania în secolul al XVIII-lea*. Ediţie îngrijită de George Ivaşcu, Bucureşti, Ed. Ştiinţifică.

DUŢU Alexandru, 1970, *Traducere şi remodelare în cultura română din perioada luminilor*, în *Probleme de literatură comparată şi sociologie literară*, Editura Academiei, Bucureşti.

FLONTA Mircea, 1997, *Traducere şi comunicare interculturală. Cărări înguste şi dileme ale traducerii filosofice,* în Conferinţele Academiei Române, Ciclul *Limba română şi relaţiile ei cu istoria şi cultura românilor*, Editura Academiei Române, Bucureşti.

BDD-A4087 © 2009 Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 16:57:44 UTC)

FRIEDRICH H., 1965, *Zu Frage der Uebersetzungkunst*, Heidelberg.
FROMAIGEAT E., 1955, *Die Technik der praktischen Uebersetzung*, Zürich.
GEORGESCU, Vlad, 1972, *Ideile politice si iluminismul în Principatele Române. 1750-1831*, Bucuresti, Editura Academiei.
GHEȚIE Ion, 1966, *Opera lingvistică a lui Ion Budai-Deleanu*, Editura Academiei, Bucureşti.
GHIŞE Dumitru, TEODOR Pompiliu, 1972, *Fragmentarium iluminist,* Editura Dacia, Cluj.
TOMUŞ Mircea, 1994, *Gheorghe Şincai. Viața şi opera,* Editura Minerva, Bucureşti.
URSU N.A., 1962, *Formarea terminologiei ştiințifice româneşti*, Editura Ştiințifică şi Pedagogică.
URSU, N. A; URSU, Despina, 2004-2006, *Împrumutul lexical în procesul modernizării limbii române literare (1760-1860),* Iaşi, Editura Cronica, I-II.

BDD-A4087 © 2009 Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 16:57:44 UTC)