

**MIHAI EMINESCU AS A UNIVERSAL POET.
TRANSLATION AS A TOOL IN TEACHING ROMANIAN
AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE AT THE COURSE
OF “ROMANIAN CULTURAL IDENTITY”**

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A student is given work, and a teacher – guidance (Comenius).

Abstract

The present article is aimed at suggesting an efficient way of teaching international students about one of the best-known Romanian poets – Mihai Eminescu, and namely, by means of a comparative analysis of his poems versus their translations in different languages. Considering our own experience of teaching foreign students about Mihai Eminescu’s poems, we have aimed at bringing to the limelight a methodological procedure which we would suggest to use in the framework of the “Romanian cultural identity” course at the preparatory year of the Romanian language. Such an analysis conducted in the classroom would allow us to move from the abstract acquisition of linguistic models to their contextual-situational integration. We do not wish to render them absolute; however, we believe that a careful analysis of Mihai Eminescu’s texts and their translations contributes to the development of oral fluency, written and oral communicative independence, intellectual receptivity, curiosity, flexibility and diversity of expression.

Keywords: *Romanian as a foreign language, Romanian cultural identity, circulation of the poems by Mihai Eminescu, translation, language teaching, language acquisition*

Rezumat

Articolul de față are ca scop sugerarea unei modalități eficiente de predare pentru studenții străini a informațiilor despre unul dintre cei mai cunoscuți poeți români – Mihai Eminescu, și anume, printr-o analiză comparativă a poeziilor sale și a traducerilor acestora în limbi diferite. Luând în considerare propria noastră experiență de predare a poeziilor lui Mihai Eminescu la studenții străini, am dorit să evidențiem procedeele metodologice pe care le-am sugera pentru a fi utilizate în cadrul cursului de Identitate culturală românească la anul pregătitor de limba română. O astfel de analiză realizată în clasă ne-ar permite să trecem de la o achiziție abstractă a modelelor lingvistice la integrarea lor contextual-situatională. Nu dorim să absolutizăm aceste direcții; totodată, credem că o analiză atentă a textelor lui Mihai Eminescu și a traducerilor acestora ar contribui la dezvoltarea fluenței orale și scrise, precum și la independența comunicativă, receptivitate intelectuală, curiozitate, flexibilitate și diversitate de expresie.

Cuvinte-cheie: *limba română ca limbă străină, identitatea culturală românească, circulația poeziilor lui Mihai Eminescu, traducere, predarea limbilor străine, dezvoltarea deprinderilor lingvistice*

The task of reviving the beauty of the Romanian romantic poet Eminescu in a foreign language is far from being easy, especially in the framework of the course called "Romanian cultural identity" in the preparatory year programme. The present paper is inspired by the vast subject of learning activities in teaching Romanian as a foreign language (RFL) with a view to highlighting some key problems referring to the teaching, learning and assessment process in the Romanian academic sphere, as well as inviting the reader to further ponder on the topic. It goes without saying that there is a clear demand for ensuring the creativity of the process of teaching RFL. The process of teaching, learning and assessment of a foreign language, such as RFL, presupposes that, in order to achieve certain learning aims, the teacher should not only get his/her students acquainted with the fundamental structure of the language and to develop the skills for its correct understanding and use in its written and oral form, but also present the fundamental data from the history of material and intellectual goods of the Romanian people, the history of its civilization and culture. Language is one of the liveliest forms of the spirituality of a human community, its most eloquent document. Thus, it can hardly be separated from the civilization and culture – expressions of the representative values of a community. In order to achieve the communicative aim (grammar, vocabulary and the mechanisms of sentence building are not aims, but rather means in mastering communicative skills), the study of RFL should be based on the systematic knowledge about the Romanian culture and civilization, considered in their dominant characteristics and their concrete realizations.

Starting from these general considerations, we are now going to present some of the didactic strategies through which learners (students and not only), along with acquiring Romanian as a means of expression and communication, also find out information on the Romanian culture and civilization. First of all, we have to mention the fact that there are no specific techniques to communicate useful information about various areas of the Romanian spirit. No matter the stages or the lesson type, making the foreign students speak Romanian is not only a technique but also a difficult art that requires deep knowledge of rules of the language and speaking, of psycholinguistic and psycho-pedagogical mechanisms that govern oral communication processes, taking into consideration the multitude of factors involved in the system of transfer and receptive communicative acts.

It has already been said, not without a reason, that modern education should not only be informative but an essentially formative one. This truth – which has now become a principle – is confirmed in all its major significations, in the activity of learning and teaching Romanian as a foreign language as long as it is known that a foreign language does not only represent a communicating and documenting value but it also has a strong educational value.

This demands the educational process to be always organised as a continuous activity of solving highly interesting oral-excogitative tasks designed for all students, reaching the place of borrowing ideas from read or listened sources (any piece of information is welcomed) and writing down what is used in the others' speech – informational background really productive for the future. Thus, the foreign student is psychologically prepared to express and think independently – a fact that does not come from within but it is a systematic, well-conceived, motivated activity.

We oriented towards the area of Romanian culture and civilization because even in the technology era, the student – be it foreign – must practice his spiritual choice, his scientific and artistic values, able to offer him an attitude model, and civilization is always, says H. Bess¹, the language of this civilization, and culture is, above all, in our opinion, the language of this culture. Knowing the language, civilization and culture of a people that created them, with such a clear identity as ours, makes us deeply feel we belong to a certain geographic and spiritual area. They also represent an essential way of reaching the linguistic and cultural world patrimony from one of the most facilitating means of intercultural communication and consolidation of inter-human and intercultural dialogue.

In the second semester, when our students have already acquired an advanced level of the Romanian language, after several months of an intensive study of the language system, we suggest teaching them about Mihai Eminescu – a traveller across limitless time, a universal poet; the aim of such an approach would be to integrate foreign students into the circuit of universal values, which would also ensure a greater variety of the communicative content. In order to achieve these aims, we suggest teaching Mihai Eminescu through a comparative analysis between the poet's own texts and their translations in students' mother tongues (or any other languages they are familiar with).

There are various reasons for resorting to the texts of translation in teaching Mihai Eminescu in an international classroom. It is a well-known fact that a good translation requires great effort in order to reconstruct the very moment of creation in the poet's soul or, at least, to strive to approach it as closely as possible. Beside the condition of accuracy, it also requires an intimate affinity of the temper, a moral climate "kindred" with that of the author. The reason for these is not difficult to see – the translation of a foreign text is not an arbitrary act of selection. First and foremost, the choice should be conditioned by the kindred organic structure – the interior content. It is the process of "selective affinity" that transforms the translated text in an

¹Apud Alina Stanciu, *Noțiuni de cultură și civilizație românească în predarea limbii române ca limbă străină*, in *Didactica modernă. Aspecte ale predării limbii române ca limbă străină*, University of Timișoara, Faculty of Letters, 1988, p. 103.

independent lyrical substance. This is the reason why translations are not completely faithful, the reason why they require deep devotion, passion and talent on the part of the translator in order to bring to the limelight the beauty of the original.

It follows from what has just been said that translation is a complex process which presupposes a deep analysis of the source text, the creative process in the writer's mind, as well as an excellent knowledge of both source and target languages which would ensure the accuracy of the rendered sounds and images. Thus, when we suggest such a comparative analysis to our students, it gives us the opportunity to work at different levels. Firstly, we can analyse separate lexical units with the help of explanatory dictionaries – a type of analysis which has already proved to be useful in teaching Romanian as a foreign language². Secondly, it would allow us to dwell upon the figure of one of the most important Romanian poets, his role in our culture, as well as the European values he advocated in his works. Thirdly, it would offer limitless opportunities for oral activities, given the variety of topics tackled by the poet. Last but by no means least, choosing an authentic material for the Romanian language lesson would surely boost students' motivation in language learning: it has been shown that the choice of meaningful activities on authentic texts would demonstrate to students that the vocabulary and the grammatical structures they have been studying are actually used in real-life situations³. Taking into consideration the above-mentioned benefits of using translation as a means of teaching about Mihai Eminescu in the framework of the "Romanian cultural identity" course at the preparatory year of the Romanian language, in what follows we will concentrate on the main directions of analysis that can be successfully followed in the class.

In spite of all the above-mentioned difficulties of the process of transferring the stylistic temper of the poet into other languages, over 600 titles and editions of Mihai Eminescu's poems have so far been created; being far from just some reading experiments, they reveal high professionalism, similar moral character and translator's talent.

This was made possible due to both translator's honesty and artistic talent and some specific characteristics of the Romanian language. The latter is a rich and expressive lyrical instrument which contributes to the transfer of the poet's thoughts and feelings into a foreign text. Quite a few translators

²See Arina Chirilă, *Aplicarea analizei comparative lexicologice în cazul predării limbilor străine*, in Laura Leon (ed.), *Learning Solutions in Medical Higher Education – an Interdisciplinary Approach*, Publishing house „Gr. T. Popa”, U.M.F. Iași, 2019, pp. 336-338.

³See Arina Chirilă, *Motivarea studenților străini în anul pregătitor de limba română: strategii și tehnici*, in *Intertext*, nr. 1, vol. 2. Universitatea Liberă Internațională din Moldova, 2021, pp. 201-207.

succeeded in creating valuable pieces of art by means of a great match of senses and atmosphere, the echo of the original in the text of the translation, thus refuting Arghezi's statement "the lock of languages cannot be opened with foreign keys". Examples adduced in the present article are to demonstrate the accuracy of these affirmations.

The process of translating Mihai Eminescu's poems in various languages included all possible procedures: simple renderings in prose, interlinear translation, translations in rhymed prose which result in faithfulness on the technical level, as well as translations faithful to the original sense and atmosphere, where the metrics, rhythm and, to a certain extent, the charm of the original musicality were preserved. This is of great importance since a translation should be considered in terms of euphony and artistic adaptation as well as in terms of faithfulness. To "betray" the concept of Eminescu's poems and their main purpose as little as possible and to preserve as many poetic elements, images and rhythmic harmonies as possible are the ideal conditions for a good translation. In what follows the translations of Mihai Eminescu's poems are going to be considered from this point of view.

It goes without saying that the versions in *romance languages* are the closest ones in terms of accuracy and the spirit of the original, being also the most artistic ones as far as literary quality is concerned.

To begin with, we shall confront the first two stanzas of the poem *Luceafărul* in the original and in *Latin* – the "mother" of romance languages [1].

„A fost odată ca-n povești,
A fost ca niciodată,
Din rude mari împărătești,
O prea frumoasă fată.

Și era una la părinți
Și mândră-n toate cele,
Cum e Fecioara între sfinți
Și luna între stele”.

„Antiquis un in fabulis,
Fuisse quondam fertur.
Regali nata genere,
Pulcherrima puella,
Eratque unigenita,
Et inclita in primis.

Ut Virgo inter sanctos est
Et luna inter stellas”.

The present example demonstrates a quasi interlinear translation where the content is preserved most faithfully; the rhyme does not coincide with that of the original; however, the metre and the rhythm succeed in producing an epic atmosphere of the poem and draw the reader closer to the musicality of Eminescu's verse.

A successful rendering of the atmosphere can also be illustrated by *Somnoroase păsărele...* :

„Somnoroase păsărele
Pe la cuiburi se adună,
Se ascund în rămurile –
Noapte bună!

„Somnolentae avicelae
Iam ad nidos congregantur,
Se in ramulis occultant –
Noctem bonam!

Doar izvoarele suspină,
Pe când codrul negru tace;
Dorm și florile-n grădină –
Dormi în pace”!

*Non suspirant nisi fontes,
Atro nemore tacente;
Flores dormiunt in horto –
Dormi in pace”!*

Such a rendering model of Eminescu’s verse is brought about by means of vocalism common to both languages, as well as the lexis which nearly coincides. For example:

“*luna inter stellas*” – „luna între stele”
“*somnolentae*” – „somnoaroase”
“*in ramulis*” – „în rămurele”
“*noctem bonam*” – „noapte bună”
“*flores dormiunt*” – „florile dorm”
“*dormi in pace*” – „dormi în pace”
“*somnus dulcis*” – „somnul dulce”
“*tacente*” – „tace”

The existent imperfections of Latin translations are generally caused either by stress in some words, or by the synthetic character of this language; that leads to the lack of rhythmical harmony and the unique musicality of Eminescu’s verse. For example, “*Regali nata genere*” – “Din rude mari împărătești” or “*Eratque unigenita*” – “Și era una la părinți” are far from being successful.

The same also refers to the translations in the *Spanish language*. Two famous and highly appreciated translators – *Maria Teresa Leon* și *Rafael Alberti* – were preoccupied with finding lexical equivalents so that they could render the thoughts and feelings of the Romanian poet. Like in Latin translations, the rhyme is not preserved, the rhythm is sacrificed as well, and the euphonic aspect of the poem *Dorința*, for example, in spite of the creative talent of its translators, is far from being a success. Let us adduce a stanza from the poem:

„Fruntea albă-n părul galben
Pe-al meu braț încet s-o culci,
Lăsând pradă gurii mele
Ale tale buze dulci...”

*“Frente blanca, pelo rubio
Reposada en mi brazo,
Prisioneros de mi boca
Seran tus labios dulces...”*

The atmosphere and melody created by Eminescu in the sonnet *Afară-i toamnă* are rendered more faithfully:

„Afară-i toamnă, frunza-mprăștiată,
Iar vântul zvârle-n geamuri grele picuri;
Și tu citești scrisori din roase plicuri
Și într-un ceas gândești la viața toată”.

*“Afuera esta el otono, las hojas caido
I el viento al cristal tira grandes gotas de agua
I tu lees las cartas de mustios sobres viejos
I en una sola hora passa entera tu vida”.*

In this case the verse is beautiful and clear as well as faithful.

Translations in the Italian language performed by Ramiro Ortiz, Umberto Cianciolo, Mariana Câmpean, Rina d’Ergiu, Caterinici, Petre Ciureanu, Rosa

del Conte as well as the literally-poetic translations by Mario Ruffini proved to be more accurate, without additions or lacks of the text, rhythm and melody. These honestly elaborated translations dominated by scrupulousness and devotion succeed in rendering the beauty of the original.

Ramiro Ortiz, remaining faithful to the original Romanian text, applies the faithfulness criterion, thus demonstrating a profound understanding of the original text, whereas Mario Ruffini, by means of intuition and knowledge of interpretative and poetic capabilities of the Romanian language, manages to render not only the message of the poems, but also their tone, atmosphere, and lyrical climate:

*“Fuori è autunno, le foglie sparpagliate
E il vento lancia alle finestre grevi gocce;
Ma tu leggi lettere da spiegazzate buste
E in un momento pensi a tutta la vita”.*

or

*“Che è l'amore ? E una lunga
Occasione di dolore,
Che migliaia di lacrime non gli bastano
E sempre ne chiede di più”.*

Nobody could possibly fail to recognize the tone and atmosphere of the original texts. This match of senses and the echo with the original are performed due to the phonetic structure of the Italian language which is quite close to that of Romanian. For example, confronting the verses: “pierzându-ți timpul tău cu dulci nimicuri” - “perdento il tuo tempo in dolci nonnulla” - we cannot but observe, first and foremost, that the number of graphic characters is almost the same (34 and 33); the difference between the number of letters in a line is also rather insignificant (16 and 13). It should be mentioned in this connection that of the 13 letters building the Italian verse there are 11 letters coinciding with those of the original text; the vocal *o* corresponds to *u* which is quite close to it; it is only the last vocal *a* that produces a kind of discrepancy.

The correspondence is even more obvious in the first two lines of the poem *Ce e amorul ?*, cited above:

*„Ce e amorul ? E un lung
Prilej pentru durere”.*

*“Che è l'amore ? E una lunga
Occasione di dolore”.*

The number of characters accounts for 34 and 35, whereas that of the constituent letters is 15 and 13 respectively, 11 of which correspond to those of the original. The consonants *c* and *z* correspond to *p*, *g* or *j* which are quite

close to them. The frequency of the vocals *e* (7 and 6), *u* and *o* (15 and 5), and the consonants *n* and *l* (3 and 3) is also characteristic of the original. To a certain extent, this successful match compensates musicality of the verse – the charming power of Eminescu’s poetry which could be partially provided by the use of rhyme.

Italian translations demonstrate both the possibilities of lyric expressivity of this cognate language and the affinity of the temper of translators who manage to render profound senses of Eminescu’s poetry in detail, being close enough to the spirit of the Romanian language and the verse of the poet. They admitted no deviation from the text in order to arrive at an approximate equivalent, thus succeeding in rendering the general tone of the poems, at the same time permitting the Italian reader to feel the melodious harmony and the sonority, and cadences typical of the Romanian verse. This is the reason why in some cases Italian verses are accompanied by the original text, so that a competent reader could reconstruct the state of the poet’s soul in the moment of creation. Eminescu’s musicality remains untranslatable.

Our next step is to look more closely at the *French translations* of the Romanian poetry.

The first translations, such as L. Bazin, M. Miler, Al. Gr. Soutzo, Pièrre Niculesco (the last ones being Eminescu’s compatriots), appear to be some reading experiments, blank verse translations, where the inherent difficulties are solved by means of omissions, additions and simplifications. The later translations by Louis Barral, S. Pavès, Hubert Juin, Michel Steriade, Alain Bosquet, Paul Miclău, Jean-Louis Courriol prove to be more faithful to the letter and the spirit of the original; avoiding interlinear translation, they respect poetic sense and metric structure. In some cases (for example, in the sonnet *Veneția*) the effort of legitimizing the translation is based upon the rhythm and the general melodic line of the verse, as in the case of the translation performed by Jean-Louis Courriol:

„S-a stins viața falnicei Veneții,
N-auzi cântări, nu vezi lumini
de baluri;
Pe scări de marmură, prin
vechi portaluri,
Pătrunde luna, înălbind păreții”.

“La vie s’est retirée de la fière Venise,
On n’entend plus de chants, les lampions sont
éteints;
Sur les marches de marbre, sous les portails
d’airain,
La lune seul vient, pâlisant sur les frises” (Mihai
Eminescu. *Poésies*. Présentation, traduction de
Jean-Louis Courriol, București, 1987).

Obviously, the epithet *fière* is rather far from the sense and euphony of the trope *falnicei* used by Eminescu; however, the idea and a number of expressive elements are preserved.

French professor J.-L. Courriol claimed that the translation of Eminescu came to him "from inside, as a natural consequence of esthetic pleasure".

That is the reason why his verse, more successful than that of other translators, proves to be not only a technical exercise. It becomes an “act of esthetic interpretation”, thus making it possible for foreigners to read and understand the Romanian poet.

A lower quality of some French translations can be accounted for by the nature of the Molière’s language, its possibilities for translators being more limited. The prevailing front labial vowels with a smaller degree of openness and with a sharper acoustic effect moves the translation away from the overwhelming, calm and elevating atmosphere of Eminescu’s poetry. The distance between the original and its translation can be observed by confronting the two epithets: “fálniceii Venetii” and “fière Venise” or in another version – “vechi portaluri” and “portiques vieillots”.

Let us confront the following lines:

„La steaua care-a răsărit
E-o cale-atât de lungă,
Că mii de ani i-au trebuit
Luminii să ne-ajungă”.

“Jusqu’a l’étoile qui s’avive
Les espaces sont si distants
Qu’il a fallu des milliers d’ans
Pour que sa clarté nous arrive”.

Light vocals *a* and *ă* prevail in the original, whereas the final *u* strengthens the impression of distance, whereas the frequency of closed vocals *i*, *u* and *e* reduces the borders of the grand and vast space of Romanian verse.

As far as the latest translations are concerned, the ones performed by *Georges Bartouil* seem to be closer to Eminescu’s style. The translator explained that he eliminated rhyme and, in some cases, did not respect the caesura; adopting himself to the “*principle of verses*”, he preserved the poetic rhythm:

“La vie a déserté la superbe Venise
Tous ses chants se sont tus, ses bals et ses lumières
Sur les marches de marbre et par les vieux portiques
Décolorant les murs, la lune se répand”.

or:

“Dans ce monde il y a des femmes
Aux yeux qui sourdent d’étincelles...
Mais aussi haut qu’elle seront,
Ce n’est pas toi, ce n’est pas toi”.
“Mais quand mon cœur ensorcelé
Revient vers toi, pourquoi te taire ?
Rejoueras-tu de ce doux cor
Rien que pour moi, rien qu’une fois” (M. Eminescu. *Présentation. Choix de poésies*. Avignon, 1976).

By means of the process of selective affinity, the translator managed to transform the translated poems into independent lyrical pieces, contributing to the penetration of Eminescu into the spiritual area of French culture.

Readers' distrust in translations is overcome as far as the *Russian translations* of Mihai Eminescu are concerned; they are generally considered to be the most successful. It goes without saying that this success is accounted for, first and foremost, by the vocalism of the Russian language, its large possibilities of versification and, obviously, the literary talent of the translators who, in quite a few cases, managed to reconstruct the state of the poet's soul in the moment of creation. The progress is visible in the course of time. There is a long way from the modest honesty of *E. F. Corsh*, apparent in the sonnet *Ori câte stele...* to the translations signed by A. Akhmatova, I. Perov, A. Brodski, Y. Kozhevnicov, I. Murimski etc.; it demonstrates the philological effort of revision, every time even more faithful, of rendering the ideas of Mihai Eminescu's poetry.

This effort is concentrated upon rendering the ideas and feelings present in the original text as well as prosodic parameters: rhythm, musical tonality and timbre of Eminescu's verse. In the majority of cases translation is free; translators use ingenious equivalents typical of the Russian language; however, the author's purport remains undistorted.

Let us confront the first stanza from *Luceafărul* in the version by D. Samoilov with the original text. The distance between the spirit of Eminescu's text and its translation is not too long; on the contrary, one cannot but observe their convergence, which means that the translation tries to penetrate into Eminescu's universe.

„A fost odată ca-n povești,
A fost ca niciodată,
Din rude mari împărătești,
O prea frumoasă fată”.

“В стране за тридевять морей,
Как в сказках говориться,
Жила, наследница царей,
Красавица девица”.

The content is not diluted, while the echo capacity of rhymed versification is preserved in the posthumous edition *Dintre sute de catarge*, translation performed by Yurii Kozhevnikov, 1968:

„Dintre sute de catarge
Care lasă malurile,
Câte oare le vor sparge
Vânturile, valurile?”

“Снова мачты покидают
Берега беспечные,
Сколько их переломают
Ветры, волны вечные!”

The repeated line is varied, like in the original; the repetitions of the consonant *v* followed by the stressed vowel contribute to the sound expressivity which is quite close to the original one.

The absence of the ascendant diphthong *oa* in the Russian language and other effects produced in the original poems by means of constant usage of vocals which results in the euphony of verses are, as a rule, compensated in translations by repeating open vowels in stressed position – a successful in-

initiative in rendering the Romanian poet's ideas, his elevated thoughts and his lyric climate.

It is only natural that a detailed analysis reveals some (in a number of cases substantial) deviations from the original text which uncover the ignorance of the conditions that should be taken into account while studying the works of Eminescu.

Let us recur to the cited stanza from *Luceafărul* in which the translator, by using the expression "за тридевять морей" intended to create the atmosphere of a fairy tale which can be sensed at the beginning of the poem. However, he did not succeed because of the improper use of the aspect of *place* instead of that of *time*, present in the original.

Deviations from the ideas of Eminescu's poetry can also be noticed in the last line of the stanza: it is rather narrowed by highlighting only the beauty of the emperor's daughter, who, however, was also "mândră în toate cele".

A number of inadvertences can also be found in the translations performed by Y. Kozhevnikov. In the last stanza of the above-mentioned poem, *Dintre sute de catarge*, the idea of the original is distorted – translator assumed an absolute freedom as far as Eminescu's text is concerned:

„Ne-nțeles rămâne gândul
Ce-ți străbate cânturile,
Zboară veșnic, îngânându-l
Valurile, vânturile”.

„Будут только непонятны
Мысли своевольные,
Вечно шепчутся невнятно
Волны, ветры вольные”.

In these cases the translators allowed themselves too many liberties; this is the reason why the translations are now and again revised in every new edition, respecting the Romanian text and offering the readers a better solution – as in the case of the last editions of A. Brodski and Y. Kozhevnikov.

Translations in other *non-romance languages* include some successful ones in the *Hungarian language* performed by Franyo Zoltan, Istvan Fenyi, Dsida Jenö, Geza Nady etc. which reveal a fresh and assiduous reading of Eminescu's poetry; thus, meter, rhythm, rhyme and the tonality of the original are strictly respected.

A continuous and deliberate exercise required in the search for a perfect equivalent is found in the works by German translators of Eminescu (Oskar Pastier, Konrad Richter, Alfred Margul-Sperber, Edgar von Herz etc.) – good technicians attentively considering every word in order to render both form and meaning combined in the texts of the Romanian poet. Translators admit that the suggestibility of these lines, "their music through both content and form", as G. Ibrăileanu stated, cannot be reproduced because of the consonantism of the German language; the same situation can be observed in the translations in the Polish (Emil Zegadłowicz, Włodzimierz Lewik, Stanisław R. Dobrowoński), Bulgarian (Boris Kolev, Ljuben Ljubenov), Greek (Antonis Mistakidis, Rita Bumi Papa), Albanian (Dhimitri P. Pasco, Vehbi Bala), Czech

(B. F. Maria Ha de Vërnyj, Ivan Krasko), Slovakian (Jože Smit), Serbian (Leposave Pavlovič, Tode Čolak), Ukrainian (Constantin Basenco, Micola Tereșenco), Estonian (Helvi Jürisson, Muia Veetamm), Latvian (J. Plitnieks, A. Skalbe) languages, in the Northern languages – Swedish (Ralf Parland), Dutch (Gerard de Ridder), Finnish (Aale Tynni, Liisa Ryömä) as well as in Georgian (Grigol Abașidze), Armenian (H. Siruni), Arabic (Abdul-Razak Ahmed), Chinese (Ge Baoquan, Xu Wende, Li Ninglai), Japanese (Harumi Tanaka), Hindi (Usha Choudhuri), Sanskrit (Basik Vihari Ioshi), Bengali (Amita Ray) or Yiddish (Nelson Vainer). Some defects can also be noticed in English translations which, in general, do not distort Eminescu’s poetry and manage to make some deliberate selections from the works of the poet – this is the case in translations performed by Sylvia Pankhurst, Roy MacGregor-Hastil, Ștefan Avădanei, and especially in those by Corneliu M. Popescu, an expert on the expressive capabilities of the two languages; this can be observed in the translation of the poem *Glossă*:

„Vreme trece, vreme vine,
Toate-s vechi și nouă toate;
Ce e rău și ce e bine
Tu te-ntreabă și socoate;
Nu spera și nu ai teamă,
Ce e val ca valul trece;
De te-ndeamnă, de te cheamă
Tu rămâi la toate rece”.

“Days go past and days come still
All is old and all is new,
What is well and what is ill,
You imagine and construe
Do not hope and do not fear,
Waves that leap like waves must fall;
Should they praise or should they jeer,
Look but coldly on it all” (Mihai Eminescu.
Poems. English version by Corneliu M. Popescu, Editura Cartea Românească, 1989).

Thus, the hypnotic character of Eminescu’s poetry remains to be hardly achieved in translations from all over the world, from the European ones to the North and South American versions, from those from the Middle East to those from the Far East. Translations in foreign languages remain a true challenge for any translator.

However, great effort and meritorious results of the translators of Mihai Eminescu deserve our attention and appreciation. Being unequal as far as faithfulness and poetic value are concerned, foreign translations are not infrequently incomparable with the uniqueness and beauty of the original, in spite of the elaborated prosody and the inspiration of the translator. This is an expressive evidence of the meeting of one of the greatest modern poets and his translators who perceived Eminescu’s poems from their personal point of view as well as from that of their nation, either with becoming modesty, or with genuine admiration (which was admitted by the translators themselves). Benefits from knowing and understanding the art of the Romanian poet obtained by reading translated versions cannot be ignored. They should be appreciated, despite their deficiencies (the ideal requirements for a translation can hardly be met!), as successive and accumulating contribu-

tions to placing Mihai Eminescu among the leading figures of the world literature.

In conclusion, considering our own experience of teaching foreign students Mihai Eminescu's poems, we have aimed at bringing to the limelight a methodological procedure which we would suggest to use in the framework of the "Romanian cultural identity" course at the preparatory year of the Romanian language. Such an analysis conducted in the classroom would allow us to move from the abstract acquisition of linguistic models to their contextual-situational integration. We do not wish to render them absolute; however, we believe that a careful analysis of Mihai Eminescu's texts and their translations contributes to the development of oral fluency, written and oral communicative independence, intellectual receptivity, curiosity, flexibility and diversity of expression.

The paradigm of the modern school does not recommend lecturing. Teaching and learning are correlating and co-evolutionary processes. The success or failure of the didactic act is due to both teaching and learning. The teacher should know how to involve students into discussions, how to formulate a suitable question which would stimulate them to express their opinions or to present counter-arguments to the answers of other students, how to include the most timid students to participate in the exchange of opinions. The teacher's skills are also responsible for finding some original ways of the development of intercultural competence in the framework of the course called "Romanian cultural identity" at the preparatory year programme. Thus, for J.-M. Ducrot⁴, learning a foreign language should be an original and dynamic process, a tool for discovery which participates in the moulding of the student's personality and his/her intellectual enrichment.

Last but by no means least, from the point of view of a foreigner, the culture and civilization of a people are not only an issue of knowledge, but also that of awareness. We strongly believe that, by discovering Romanian values in their own forms and peculiarities, our students explore the greatest symbols of human destiny, which helps them to competently participate in the most important debates of our time.

Endnotes

1. according to the edition *Mihai Eminescu. Carmina*. Ediție bilingvă româno-latină de Traian Lăzărescu. Prefață de Aurel Martin, Editura Minerva, București, 1980.

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Tipografia Universității de Stat „Alecu Russo” din Bălți. Mun. Bălți, str. Pușkin, 38.

⁴Ducrot, J.-M., 'L'utilisation de la vidéo en classe de FLE'. <http://www.edufle.net/Lutilisation-de-la-video-en>.