

Л. ЧЕНДУЛОВА  
(Университет им. Матей Бела,  
Банска Быстрица, Словакия)

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## ЯН ФЕРЕНЧИК И ПЕРЕВОДЧЕСКАЯ ШКОЛА В СЛОВАКИИ

**Аннотация:** Настоящая статья посвящена жизни и творчеству Яна Ференчика, его сильному влиянию на русскую переводную литературу в Словакии и на восприятие русской литературы в Словакии в целом. Благодаря одному из ведущих личностей словацкого перевода Яну Ференчику, который перевел много работ известных русских авторов, внося их в словацкое культурное пространство, словацкое читательское общество познакомилось с такими известными российскими авторами, как А.С. Пушкин, Л.Н. Толстой, М. Горький, Ф.М. Достоевский, И.С. Тургенев, А.П. Чехов, А.Н. Островский, В.В. Маяковский, М.А. Шолохов, К.М. Симонов. Кроме того он еще занимался теоретическими аспектами перевода. В этой работе также рассматривается значение перевода русской литературы после Второй мировой войны в бывшей Чехословакии (причем внимание сосредотачивается именно на словацком культурном пространстве) и статус переводчиков русского языка. Также представлена словацкая переводческая школа наряду с ее правилами. В статье приведен краткий анализ двух переводов Яна Ференчика (поскольку именно он повлиял на работу следующего поколения молодых переводчиков), который также поможет представить работу и стиль переводчика.

**Ключевые слова:** культурное пространство, русская литература, художественный перевод, переводная литература, Словацкая переводческая школа, переводчики, переводческая деятельность.

Jan Ferencík is still regarded as respected authority in the field of Slovak translation studies. Thanks to his excellent translating abilities, the fund of translated literature in Slovakia could welcome many well known authors such as A.S. Pushkin, L.N. Tolstoy, M. Gorky, F.M. Dostoyevsky, I.S. Turgenev, A. P. Chekhov, A.N. Ostrovsky, V.V. Mayakovsky, M. Sholokhov, K. M. Simonov. During his active translating years, he devoted himself not only to translation but also to the theoretical work about the translation process and took care of the development of the written Slovak language. His translations are still characterized by high quality, which was also one of the

reasons for the popularity of Russian literature in Slovakia. It was erudite translators who made it possible for the Slovak reader to get acquainted with the Russian authors and helped the Russian literature to spread across the Slovak book market.

Before the life and work of the translator Ján Ferenčík will be introduced, it is important to present the period in which he lived and how the cultural and social background of that period influenced his work and general perception of Russian literature in Slovakia. The translated literature has always had a significant place in the cultural space of the receiving literature, besides the undisputable artistic mission, the readers' ability to become acquainted with the foreign culture and the great foreign artists, it has many times also played ideological and political roles. Russian literature has always been a very important element in Slovak cultural space, either in disseminating the idea of Slavonic mutuality, or after the liberation in 1945, when it took a special place in the Slovak translation [Lesňáková 1983].

The ideological and political function was fulfilled mainly in the period after 1945, after the change in the cultural policy of the state and the change of the overall ideological, thematic and artistic orientation. According to Lesňáková [1983], many cultural and literary workers were aware of the importance of Russian literature in Slovakia, highlighting the need for translations of the literature of the countries that adopted the policy of the Soviet Union and rejecting the works that crossed these ideas. Therefore it is not surprising that the number of translations from Russian language had increased considerably compared to other languages, in 1950 there were recorded 144 translations from Russian literature, 23 from French literature, 21 from Polish literature, 16 from English and American literatures, 11 from Hungarian literature and 8 from the German literature [Pašteková 1998].

Along with the growing interest in the translation of Russian and Soviet literature, the status of Russian-language translators also grew and among translators of all languages was the number of Russian-language translators the greatest. Gradually, the Russian language translators began to institutionalize, within the Union of Czechoslovak writers the Circle of Translators from Russian language was created, which became very active. It was this Circle, which first organized a meeting in Budmerice, where issues in terminology, political and editorial plans of publishing houses were discussed and where manuals for translators and editorial staff were being prepared, and a translating community was formed around Russian language translators.

Despite the favourable status of Russian-language translators in the 1950s and 1960s, people working in a book environment lived in constant existential fear. Some workers had remained unverified or punished by the

ruling party's check-up, and were put to the "black list", they were not able to publish, and most of their previous works had been withdrawn from the public reach. Similar fate met Zora Jesenská. In 1969, publishing house Tatran published her translation of Doctor Zhivago, subsequently the party prevented her from further publication, while not only the aforementioned translation was withdrawn, but also all the books she had previously translated. During her active period, Jesenská translated number of valuable works of Russian great artists, the disappearance of these translations created vacant places in Slovak culture for many years, which had a very negative impact on the Slovak literary space [Maliti 1998].

The 1970s and 1980s continued to develop the translation standard of the previous era, but just as in the past, the political and cultural situation had a strong influence on the environment. The direction of the translated literature was largely influenced by the non-literary factors underlying the normalization efforts. In this period, the translation from Russian literature held a dominant position; it followed the direction of the translation since the end of the Second World War. The Soviet literature was there set the pattern of society, replacing a certain absent component of Slovak culture. "The translation should have been normalized but at the same time should normalize" [Maliti 1998: 101]. As the importance of the position of translation from the Russian literature had increased, the status of Russian-language translators significantly improved. In addition to the position, translators of Russian language had the largest representation among all the translated languages. The Literary Translation Commission as of 31.12.1975 recorded 389 translators, of which 125 were from the Russian language, 100 from the German language, 90 from French, 72 from the English language, 23 from the Italian language, 21 from the Spanish language and from the Nordic languages 18 translators. The interest in the translation in general and its significance was rising; greater emphasis was being placed on translation work rather than the original work, thus consolidating its importance in the Slovak cultural space.

One of the reasons why the status of the translation was improved were also the strong translating personalities who actively participated in the development of the translation during this period, which was of very high quality. The ideal environment for the development of the theory of translation was created and the translators began to create institutions, an Association of Slovak Translators was established at the Slovak Literary Fund, which later became the Centre of Slovak Translators. Ján Ferenčík, a leading personality of Slovak translation, organizationally and ideologically, tried to unify all areas of translation studies in Slovak cultural space. A great deal of attention was devoted to the upbringing of a new generation of

translators, theoreticians and literary critics, Ferenčík spoke about *Slovak School of Translation* for the first time [Maliti 1998].

Jan Ferenčík was involved in editorial, journalistic and publishing work, collaborating with various literary magazines<sup>1</sup>, film and theatre, television and radio, actively participated in the translation life in Czechoslovakia. Since 1949 he had worked in the committee of the Circle of Translators, and since the beginning of his translation career, he offered high quality translations of Russian literature to Czechoslovak public. In addition to the translation, he also dealt with theoretical aspects of translation, published his insights and research in various journals. Some of these essays and papers were published in 1982 as a comprehensive work called *Kontexty prekladu (Contexts of Translation)*. Ferenčík, according to Kusá [1997], was a respected person not only because of his high functions and the significant status of Russian literature in Czechoslovakia; he was also a natural authority. He translated a large number of works, not just the normative literature, but also the 20th century Russian literature. *"The translations of J. F. excel in their communicativeness, language and style cultivation, sensitivity in the choice of language and translation solutions, the sovereign knowledge of the cultural background of the original and the receiving environment. ... The importance of translational activity in Russian literature in Slovakia is based on the interaction of theoretical thinking about the translation with active translational activity, consisting of dozens of translations of Russian poetry, prose and drama that have become a permanent part of Slovak cultural awareness"* [Kovačičová, Kusá 2015: 210-211].

In 1982, Ferenčík wrote the *Contexts of Translation*, he was the head of the Center of Slovak Translators at the time. He summed up the methods, which were characteristic of the Slovak School of Translation. These were the practices used by the existing generation of translators, but they should have also determined the further development of Slovak translations and set a certain standard for the younger generation.

The main direction of translation after 1945 determined translations from Russian literature. It was the translation of the novel of Mikhail Aleksandrovich Sholokhov *And Quiet Flows the Don (Tichý Don* in Slovak translation), which caused a heated debate in the translation community. Thanks to this and similar cases, the driving forces started to work towards the formation of the Slovak School of Translation [Ferenčík 1982]. The translation of Zora Jesenská met with a positive reaction from the public and even won the national prize, however, the same could not be said about

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<sup>1</sup> They were, for example, the magazines *Kultúrny život*, *Nové slovo*, *Romboid*, *Slovenské pohľady*, *Revue svetovej literatúry*, *Slavica Slovaca*, *Pravda*, *Smena*, *Kultúry slova*, etc.

the reception by the translators. The biggest problem of this work was the fact that the translator replaced the dialect of the Don Cossacks by the local Slovak dialect.

The School was governed by unspoken rules that were normative, but these rules were relevant not only to translations of Russian literature, but also to all the translated languages. Ferenčík [1982: 53] claims that: *"This is not a classical art school, which deliberately and collectively develops its collective program and more or less successfully fulfils it. It is an indication of a set of processes which lead into the creative method that becomes the dominant, the most productive and the most characteristic for a certain period of development. In case of the Slovak School of Translation, this method has achieved the character of a standard voluntarily adopted especially in the field of published prose and drama, but to a great extent also in the field of poetry – at least in such a way that its noncompliance or rejection feels like a deviation from the mainstream "*. In written form, the rules appeared in the aforementioned book *Contexts of Translation*, in which they were summarized<sup>2</sup>. This work brought up a new topic for a debate not only for an older, erudite generation of translators, but also introduced a written set of rules to help the younger generation of Czechoslovak translators. Ferenčík's work as one of the first responded to the real demands of the translators of the period, because the previous theoretical works came from the fields of linguistic semiotics and stylistics, and that is why they became frequently criticized by the translation community [Ferenčík 1982]. One of the greatest contributions of this work is Ferenčík's formulation of the principles of the School of Translation, in which he wrote the generally applicable rules of literary translation in the Czechoslovak literary and translational environment.

The principles that Ferenčík formulated on the basis of established rules are:

- *Text integrity principle*
- *Identity of meaning principle*
- *Identity of form principle*
- *Good Slovak principle*
- *Principle of giving preference to the meaning in a case of a conflict between the identity of the meaning and the form*

During the research, two works, translated from Russian into Slovak by Ján Ferenčík, were analyzed. For each work, the elements that could cause problems for the translator were brought into focus. The attention was

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<sup>2</sup> In addition to the principles, there are also reflections on the history of translation work in Slovakia, translation criticism, the translation of drama in Slovakia, the status of editor and editorial activity in Slovakia [Ferenčík 1982].

concentrated on cultural elements, dialects, and specific lexicon. In the case of the analysis of translation of *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, the elements of cultural and social criticism and taboo elements before the period of Khrushchev Thaw were of importance.

The work of A. S. Pushkin is considered to be a historical novel, or a novella, set in the period of rebellion led by Yemelyan Pugachev. The work is very complex, it can be said that multilayered or hybrid, as it is a historical novel that depicts the real historical events related to Pugachev's uprising, but it is also written in the style of fairy tale or legend, capturing folklore motifs emerging across Russian culture and history. It is full of proverbs and historical references.

The analysis has shown that the translator successfully coped with the demanding cultural context and historical references. Pushkin's work is also full of phrasemes, proverbs, and sayings. The translation of proverbs and sayings belongs to one of the most demanding translational problems, since each nation has its own proverbs and only in exceptional examples can an adequate equivalent be found. The translator was able to appropriately translate problematic passages and managed to find a harmony between exotisation and naturalization.

In this work, there are various elements of criticism that show the senseless functioning of the establishment and the regime. All the passages mentioned and many other were also found in the target text, the translator remained faithful to the original, with respect to the identity of meaning principle. This fact is also a proof of the influence of the Khrushchev Thaw in our country, as in the previous period a similar translations would be unthinkable. Furthermore, the source text contains a number of dialect elements and own jargon words that are used throughout the camp. Ferenčík, however, employs the normative language in the translation, he does not replace the social dialect – as it is written in one of the rules – with the corresponding dialect of the Slovak language, neutralizing and replacing the words with standard words, but in some places the signs of folksiness can be seen. In the target text, Slovak narrative words are often found to approach the prison environment.

Many translations of well-known Russian authors have been published thanks to Ján Ferenčík, but the translator himself admits that the relationship with A. S. Pushkin was lifelong and strongest since his first contact with the Russian author in grammar school. As the author admits, "*... the first encounter with Pushkin has influenced my entire personal and professional development and has directed my literary interests for life. Pushkin read in the original and in the existing translations became, from the very beginning, an indisputable authority...*" [Ferenčík 1977: 127]. His relationship with Pushkin was not just in the reader's perception. During his active peri-

od, Ján Ferenčík translated several author's works and it is likely that the translational encounter with this author was the most striking form of Ferenčík's poetics and a view of the translation process. In one of his remarks, the translator recalls that *"To master Pushkin's poetics in any genre – is an extremely difficult and complex task. The complexity of the task rises with impression of greater clarity and smoothness, after reading his work. ... In the text, where nothing can be delivered or taken out without the danger of flattening the optimally expressed idea to the vulgarized banality, you cannot help with "rhetorical padding" ... Pushkin's complexity and translational difficulty lies in the least use of the means which could help to achieve the maximum effect"* [Ferenčík 1977: 128]. The translator had been coming back to Pushkin his whole life, and was always able to find new, previously unrecognized, aspects of author's works.

In several interviews and articles, Jan Ferenčík emphasized the important role of translation for national culture, even though this role is often underestimated. According to his words, translation in smaller countries has a more important purpose than it has in the national literature of large countries, it fills the gaps, helps to shape the direction of national culture, and influences the development of the national language. According to Ferenčík, *"...translation in Slovakia has contributed to the enrichment and development of all areas of the national language, from vocabulary to stylistics. ... in some cases, it is possible to talk about the creation of some terminological domains, which due to geographic and historical facts rarely occurred in the original works."* [Ferenčík 1972: 31] Translators, during their work, frequently encounter problems of linguistic character with which they are confronted and for which they must find immediate solutions. This is one of the reasons why Ferenčík mentions the impact of translators in the development of the Slovak language and their efforts to actively engage in discussions with linguists, whether in the form of dialogues or reflections, studies and seminars.

The translation of literary texts is a complex process and, according to Ján Ferenčík, no school will prepare the future translator for all the problems that could emerge during the translation process. In addition to artistic prerequisites, a thorough knowledge of the source text, the source and target culture and language is necessary, the translator must be stylistically capable and able to become impersonalized from his own artistic expression in order to interpret the original author as faithfully as possible. Ferenčík also claims that *"The translator learns, among other things, from the translation process itself. ...What helps the translator in his work? Above all, the love of literature, the willingness to serve it, endless tenacity and the ability to learn until the very end. And, of course, a favourable social climate, a set of conditions that the society provides to the translator..."* [Ferenčík 1974: 15].

One of the translation problems to be highlighted is, according to the translator, the transcription of foreign names and titles. Translators may choose to use the original name, transliteration or transcription, depending on the translated language. Apart from the translated language, the translator must also take into account the type of translated text. These and similar thoughts, along with his translations and rules of Slovak school of translation have influenced the generations of future translators.

As the study has shown, Ján Ferenčík is up to this date considered to be one of the finest translators of Russian literature in Slovakia. Although the environment of that time was very favourable towards the Russian literature translators, it was not mere this fact which gained Ján Ferenčík his reputation. It was his active work as a theoretician, and his translation mastery that approached wide readership among which the translations were very popular, thus helping to spread works of well known Russian authors among Slovak readers.

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Науч. руководитель: Марта Ковачова – д.ф.н., доц.