Preserving the ambiguity of gender in a language with grammatical gender

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Abstract

This work presents the results of experimental translation of a 'transgender text', i.e. a target text, translated from a language without categories of either natural or grammatical gender (Turkish) into a language with both of these categories (Russian). The case study is a short story, *The Tears of Love or Rapunzel and a Vagabond* by a contemporary Turkish writer, Murathan Mungan. The gender of one of the protagonists is not specified until the last chapter, producing an effect of surprising disclosure. The main purpose of this translation is to preserve the ambiguity of gender and to reproduce the same effect. The results of the experiment show that techniques such as transposition, modulation, equivalence, deletion, and addition make this task possible, at least to a certain extent, thereby enhancing the prospects of gender-inclusive language and once again demonstrating the power of translation in the propagation of ideas and images across borders.

Keywords: gender in translation, ambiguity of gender, Turkish literature, Murathan Mungan

1. Introduction

This paper originates from the borderline between Translation and Gender Studies; the field that, for the last twenty-five to thirty years, has been generating a wide array of the most interesting works. Some of these works seek to understand if men and women translate differently, while other works analyze the manner and results of recreating the image of a female writer or protagonist in a different language and culture; or contribute to the development of gender-inclusive language, a language that would represent and maintain more equal, non-androcentric world-building (Federici and Leonardi 2013; Flotow 1997, 2011; Larkosh 2011; Leonardi 2007; Santaemilia 2005; Simon 1996, and others). In addition, another group of works addresses the question of the ambiguity of gender or an LGBTQ theme in translation and struggles to establish a new, ungendered vernacular in languages with grammatical gender (see Casaganda 2013; Livia 2001; Marinzuli 2013). Louise von Flotow (2013: 164) points out that, "[q]uestions around homosexual writing, lesbian

texts, and queer aspects of textuality and translation arose – pushing aside earlier concerns about women in translation."

It seems important that texts of such discourse already have a special term, 'transgender texts', (Casagranda 2010, 2013) and a classification. Transgender texts are defined as translations into those target languages that have grammatical gender and specific morphological gender markers or different words for pronouns, tenses, adjectives, past participles, and so on. As for classification, the case study presented in this paper falls into the "third category" (Casagranda 2013: 115-116); these are texts introducing a genderless character and/or narrator, such as *Love Child* by Maureen Duffy (1971) and *Written on the Body* by Jeanette Winterson (1992). To a greater degree, *Tears of Love* is quite unique, since the ambiguity here is the gender, not of the narrator, but of the protagonist.[1] Anna Livia (2001: 58) explains this phenomenon: "Genderless narrators are more common than genderless characters […] [I]t is less disruptive to the text to conceal the gender of someone who refers to himself or herself in the first person, since *I* and *je* are epicene, while third person reference, *he/she* and *il/elle*, reveals gender."

Indeed, it is quite easy to disguise gender in the Turkish language, since even personal pronouns in it are gender-neutral. However, it seems almost impossible in grammatically gendered Russian, especially in the case of literary translation, which demands the utmost application of all linguistic resources. This work looks into ways to perform this laborious task.

2. The writer and the story

Murathan Mungan (b. 1955, Istanbul) is a Turkish author of Kurdish origin, playwright, novelist, and a poet. He grew up in Mardin, in the South-East of Turkey, but later moved to Ankara, where he earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in Dramaturgy. After a long career as a playwright and stage director, Mungan devoted all his time to writing. Openly gay, Mungan is an important figure for the Turkish gay community.

According to information on his official website, Mungan has published twenty-one books of poems, eleven books of short stories, three novels, along with essays,

[1] The categories of sex and gender differ, as the first is related to biology and anatomy while the second is related to self-identification. In this paper, I use 'gender' as a more inclusive term, as "the way humans live out their sexuality" (von Flotow 2013: 163).

plays, and film scripts. Some of his works, for example his novel *Chador*, have been translated into French, German, Italian and Greek.

The distinguished and prolific author Mungan is considered to be an intellectual postmodernist, writing for a selective, fastidious reader. Although in some of his works he explores a homoerotic theme, it is just one component of his literary portfolio.

The case study is a short story, *The Tears of Love or Rapunzel and a Vagabond*, from the book, *Forty Rooms*, first published in 1987, and then republished twelve times. Approximately twenty pages long, *Tears of Love* (1984) consists of six chapters and features two protagonists, Efkâr (a male name) and Ümit (a unisex name). Efkâr is a young man, a bus driver, living in a city slum. Ümit is a passenger, taking Efkâr's bus every day. They fall in love and live together for three years, when Efkâr, giving as an excuse the pressure of public opinion, asks Ümit to undergo sex reassignment surgery and 'become a woman'. A few months after the surgery Efkâr leaves Ümit, who becomes a sex worker at a brothel on the outskirts of the city.

The gender of Ümit is not specified until the last chapter, Chapter Six. Through the grammatical gender-neutrality of the Turkish language, the text provides the possibility of a two-fold reading; a love story between two men, or between a man and a woman, in which case Chapter Six produces effect in a surprising disclosure. The main purpose of the translation experiment is to preserve this effect.

3. Categories of gender in Turkish and Russian languages

The Turkish language marks neither natural nor grammatical gender in any aspect of language, and even pronouns like *he/she* (*o* [o] in Turkish), *his/her* (*onun* [onUn]), *him/her* (*onu* [onU]) are identical for both genders. A writer, in case she/he wishes to unveil the gender, is expected to supply a reader with additional specifications like 'woman' or 'man' or use specifically male/female names. On the other hand, if an author seeks to disguise this point, Turkish grammar makes it a relatively easy task.

For example, this is how Mungan describes Efkâr in the first chapter of the story:[2]

[2] Unless specified otherwise, all translations into English and Russian are mine. (ND)

EFKÂR

A swarthy sadness of Efkâr's virility shines out even from the headshot on his driving license. He is a dolmush[3]*-driver on the Aydinlik-Chankaya line; a tough youngster from the slum, he has been behind the wheel since he was fifteen; a reckless driver, he dotes on his dolmush and you can hear its loud signal from three blocks away. […] He must have been in and out of over a hundred street fights so far. Neighbors know him as a 'brave young fellow', decent and trustworthy; one who never wags his tongue, bearing lies and gossips, one who never lusts after someone else's goods. […] The virile youngster as he is, he has the face of a timid girl and the heart of a child. Change his outfit, and you will get an exemplary young gentleman from a rich district of the city. […]*

Here the author leaves no doubt that Efkâr is a man, using words like *virile/virility, youngster, fellow,* and *gentleman.* Besides these, before introducing Ümit, Mungan includes a sort of preparatory stage, a misleading, confusing context, pushing a reader towards a heteronormative perception.

Sometimes, while waiting for passengers he (Efkâr) reads a few pages of the old legends about Leyla and Mecnun, Ferhat and Shirin, Kerem and Asli, Arzu and Kember […] reads and buries them to his heart. He waits. For what? Or, for whom? Who knows…maybe for something that, as he knows, will never come true?

All the above-mentioned legends tell stories of love between a man and a woman, thus creating the expectation of a similar story to follow.

He is not even aware of many young girls' hearts, melting for him secretly, from a distance. […] Trust me, if you knew him, you would love him, too. Just like Ümit fell for him at first sight; fell for him, but betrayed no feeling, just kept taking Efkâr's bus every single day, with his/her head bent and bashful eyes, looking down.[4]

This is how a reader meets Ümit for the first time, as one of the 'young girls with melting heart', based on the context. A more detailed description of Ümit supports

[3] Dolmush – a small bus that carries passengers over a regular route on a flexible schedule.
[4] Hereinafter, in all translations from Turkish into English I use the combined forms like his/her, him/her, to preserve, at least to some extent, the ambiguity of the source language.

this illusion and, at the same time, leaves an attentive reader with a touch of suspicion:

Efkâr is stuck on the big blue eyes, on brown sun-kissed hair, on the shiny copper tan of this passenger, who takes the bus every morning and sits next to the driver on the front seat. In his/her melancholic timidity and submissive innocence, he sees his own adolescence, the purity of his own youth.
'Would you stop here, please?'. Ümit always averts his/her eyes away and coughs slightly to make his/her voice sound warm, soft and clear. Efkâr stops and glances at the shadows of bushy, black eyelashes on his/her cheeks, thinking that these shadows make Ümit look secretive, deep and guilty.

On one hand, descriptions like *big blue eyes, brown sun-kissed hair, melancholic timidity, submissive innocence, warm, soft voice, bushy and black eyelashes* bring to mind a female image. On the other hand, Efkâr is said to see in Ümit *his own adolescence, the purity of his own youth*, and this is, probably, the first warning signal for the possibility of an alternative reading, disguised behind the more obvious one. In the source text Ümit is referred to as 'Ümit', 'o' (*he* or *she* in Turkish), 'passenger' or 'stranger', and none of these words reveal gender identity in Turkish. Mungan does not use words like 'woman' or 'man' or 'young girl' or 'young boy', and this makes the text style somewhat peculiar (see Chapter 5). Without these additional explanations, a reader continues to read the story until the last chapter in the frame of his or her personal viewpoint.

In terms of gender, the Russian language is positioned on the opposite end; it marks both natural and grammatical genders and, in this case, the gender of a protagonist affects the forms of adjectives, pronouns, past tense verbs, case forms of nouns and so on. In the paragraph below the sign [g] specifies the grammatically gender-marked words.

Efkâr is stuck on the big blue eyes, on brown sun-kissed hair, on the shiny copper tan of this passenger, who takes the bus every morning and sits next to the driver on the front seat. In his [g] *melancholic timidity and submissive innocence he sees his own adolescence, the purity of his own youth.*
'Would you stop here, please?'. Ümit always averts his [g] *eyes away and coughs slightly to make his* [g] *voice sound warm, soft and clear. Efkâr stops and looks at*

the shadows of bushy, black eyelashes on his [g] *cheeks, thinking that these shadows make Ümit* [g] *look secretive* [g], *deep* [g] *and guilty* [g].

The last sentence requires a short excursion into Russian grammar. The Russian language has three grammatical genders, male, female and neutral, for both animated and unanimated nouns and six cases (Nominative, Genitive, Dative, Accusative, Instrumental, and Prepositional), with each of them having a set of flexions for female/male/singular/plural nouns, adjectives and participles. In Russian, female names traditionally end with [a], and male names with a consonant. Foreign unisex names like Ümit are inflected for cases if this name belongs to a man, and not inflected if it belongs to a woman. (See Table 1.)

Table 1.

Cases	**Ümit (a man)**	**Ümit (a woman)**
Nom.	Ümit	Ümit
Gen.	Ümit**a**	Ümit
Dat.	Ümit**u**	Ümit
Accus.	Ümit**a**	Ümit
Instr.	Ümit**om**	Ümit
Prep.	Ümit**e**	Ümit

In other words, by using any of the six cases, except Nominative, a translator will inevitably mark Ümit as a man. In addition, all adjectives will take the flexions of female or male gender for all cases, including Nominative. Lastly, a considerable part of the text applies the past tense, which is gender-marked in Russian. Past Tense verbs take a flexion [a] for a female subject.

To summarize, the translator cannot use the following: (1) the name Ümit in any case except Nominative; (2) any pronouns or adjectives, related to Ümit; and (3) forms of the Past Tense. Article (1) in fact means that the translator can use only simple sentence structure with a direct word order; $S_{Nominative} + V + O$.

Usually, when the gender of a character is unclear, a translator is forced to find a solution, based on his/her knowledge of the source culture and its traditional stereotypes, on ideological, historical, social considerations and so on. In *Tears of Love* the ambiguity of gender is not a purely grammatical element of a source language, but a cornerstone of the literary text. Therefore, preserving the ambiguity

of Ümit's gender becomes the primary task and the major difficulty of the translation process. The problem is that this difficulty seems insurmountable.

The following part of this paper presents a number of examples of techniques developed during the experimental translation of this story. My English translation is far from any literary ambition and serves as a plain bridge to access the shifts in source and target sentences.

4. Translation: Process, results and techniques

It appears useful to establish a certain terminological grid to navigate in the multifaceted, polysemous field of the target text. Vinay & Darbelnet (1995), along with Delabastita (1993) and Wallmach (2006) provide practical terminology and insight. Vinay & Darbelnet's well-known seven 'methods' are borrowing, calque, literal translation, transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation. Wallmach modifies the third method as literal translation with obligatory or optional word order changes (2006: 15), while Delabastita suggests the category of substitution. Substitution is, "the only [transformation category] to occur in strict recoding processes. […] In the case of *substitution*, the relevant S.T. [source text] item is replaced by a T.code [target code] item which is characterized by a more or less equivalent relational value." (Delabastita 1993: 33-34). Apart from 'strict recoding' Delabastita (1993: 34) defines the recoding "in the wide sense of the word only (translation)", which covers such techniques as repetition, permutation, deletion, and addition. Wallmach (ibid.) 'refines' the broad categories of Delabastita with categories of Vinay & Darbelnet, using substitution as an 'umbrella term' that includes literal translation, transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation; i.e. the latter five techniques fall into the category of 'strict recoding'.

The following terms and definitions will be used in this work:

Literal translation with obligatory word order change

Russian and Turkish languages have different general syntactic structures; SVO for Russian and SOV for Turkish. Therefore, a change of word order is inevitable. On the other hand, of all possible target sentences, I chose the one that complies with the overall purpose of this translation.

Transposition

This method involves replacing one word class and one grammatical category

with another without altering the meaning of the message (Vinay & Darbelnet 1995: 36).

Modulation

This is a variation of the form of the message, obtained by a semantic change in the point of view, in perspective (ibid.).

Equivalence

It is a case of reformulation when the same reality is rendered with completely different stylistic and structural methods. Vinay & Darbelnet recommend this method for rendering proverbs, idioms, and clichés (1995: 38), but in this case, I had to search for completely different structures with equivalent meaning more often than not.

Deletion

Here, the particular source text item is not rendered in the target text at all. Delabastita (1993: 35-36, also for the category of addition) points out that, "[a]ny pruning or trimming of the S.T. [source text] blurs the line between 'translation' and 'adaptation' and is, therefore, to be rejected. Yet, whatever the critics say, deletions are for a large variety of reasons very frequent in the actual reality of translation."

Addition

There are target text content components that have no apparent antecedent in the source text. The reasons for additions can be manifold, but Wallmach (2006: 16) underlines that, "[a]dditions may also be due to conscious intentional interventions of the translator, and therefore could be considered to be the most important strategy in creating 'difference'."

Although this terminology to a certain degree facilitates the target text analysis, the very nature of a literary text, subjective and elusive, often resists any strict approach and the lines in this 'grid' are not solid, but dashed, blurred and transitive.

Example 1 (Transposition, modulation, equivalence)

Source:

Her sabah son duraktan binip, yanına oturana, onun iri mavi gözlerine, sarısı bol kumral saçlarına, kirpiklerine değen kaküllerine, bakır parlaklığındaki tenine

vurgun. (Efkâr is already in love with this passenger, who takes his dolmush at the last stop every morning and sits next to him; he is in love with his/her big blue eyes, his/her brown sun-kissed hair, his/her shiny copper tan.)

Target:

Умит каждое утро садится в долмуш на последней остановке и всегда – на переднее кресло, рядом с Эфкяром, который уже давно влюблён. Влюблён в большие синие глаза, каштановые волосы с щедрой россыпью более светлых прядей, в задевающую ресницы чёлку, в гладкую кожу с медовым отливом. (Every morning Ümit takes the dolmush at the last stop and always sits on the front seat, next to the driver, who is already in love. In love with these big blue eyes, with brown sun-kissed hair, with shiny copper tan.)

Technique:

Transposition and modulation: The word 'passenger' in Russian (or other possible options like 'stranger' or 'person') has masculine grammatical gender, while a structure with 'Ümit' in Nominative Case can offer a solution. To this end, one sentence is divided into two; the first sentence has the direct word order (S_{Nom}+V+O). Equivalence: Demonstrative pronouns are used instead of possessive ones (these-his).

Example 2 (Equivalence)

Source:

Onun mahzun çekimserliğinde, boynu bükük masumiyetinde kendi ergenliğini buluyor; ilkgençliğinin el değmemiş günlerini. (In his/her melancholic timidity and submissive innocence, Efkâr sees his own adolescence, the purity of his own youth.)

Target:

В этой грустной застенчивости, в невинности склонённой головы Эфкяр видит дни своей юности, своей нетронутости, чистоты. (In this melancholic timidity and submissive innocence, Efkâr sees his own adolescence, the purity of his own youth.)

Technique:

Equivalence: Demonstrative pronouns are used instead of possessive ones (this-his).

Example 3 (Transposition, addition)

Source:

> Müsait bir yerde duruyor. Koyu, gür kirpikleri yanakları gölgeliyor; bir derinlik, bir saklılık, bir suçluluk katıyor yüzüne bu. (He (Efkâr) stops. His/her (Ümit's) black, bushy eyelashes leave shadows on his/her cheeks; it makes him/her look secretive, deep and guilty.)

Target:

> Эфкяр останавливается и смотрит, как тень от густых тёмных ресниц падает на щёки и придаёт лицу глубину, таинственность и даже какую-то виноватость. (Efkâr stops and looks at the shadows of bushy, black eyelashes on the cheeks, giving the face a touch of secretiveness, depth, and guilt.)

Technique:

Transposition, addition: The second verb '…and looks at' is added. The adjectives are replaced with relevant nouns (secretive-secretiveness).

Example 4 (Change of Tense, deletion, addition, equivalence)

Source:

> Adının Ümit olduğunu çok sonra öğrenmişti. Ona, onun on altı yaşına vurgun olduğunu kendine bile itiraf etmekten uzun zaman kaçınmıştı. (Much later, Efkâr got to know his/her name – Ümit. And, for a very long time, he could not confess even to himself that he had fallen in love with him/her, with his/her sixteen-years.)

Target:

> И пройдёт ещё много времени, пока Эфкяр не узнает это имя – Умит. И ещё больше времени пройдёт до момента, когда он сможет признаться себе, что влюблён в эту шестнадцатилетнюю красоту. (And a long time will pass, until Efkâr gets to know this name – Ümit. And an even longer time will pass until he can confess, even to himself, to falling in love with this sixteen-year-old beauty.)

Technique:

Transposition: As it was mentioned earlier, Past Tense is gender-marked in Russian; for this reason, the Future or Present Tenses are used instead (see also example 5).[5] Equivalence: Possessive pronouns are replaced with demonstrative

[5] See the similar technique in Marinzuli (2013: 106).

ones (his-this). Deletion: The second sentence is reduced (with him). Addition: The second sentence is also paraphrased (with this sixteen-year-old beauty).

Example 5 (Transposition, equivalence)

Source:

Nedense birkaç kez geçip arka sıraya oturmuş, buna öfkelenen Efkâr da dikiz aynasından yoklayıp durmuştu onu. Her defasında da bakışlarını kaçırmış, Efkâr da inadına inadına gözlerinin ta içine bakmıştı. (A few times Ümit, for some reason, sat on the back seat and Efkâr, getting angry at him/her for that, kept throwing resentful glances through the rearview mirror. Each time Ümit turned his/her eyes away, but Efkâr persistently looked him/her in the eyes.)

Target:

А если время от времени Умит почему-то садится на заднее сиденье, то Эфкяр сердится и бросает в зеркало обиженные взгляды. Умит прилежно прячет глаза, а Эфкяр упрямо смотрит, пытаясь поймать встречный взгляд. (A few times Ümit, for some reason, sits on the back seat; Efkâr gets angry and keeps throwing resentful glances through the rearview mirror. Each time Ümit glances away, but Efkâr continues staring.)

Technique:

Transposition and equivalence: These two sentences are paraphrased to avoid pronouns ‘him’ or ‘his’, and the forms of the Past Tense, which are replaced with the Present.

Example 6.1 (Literal translation)

Source:

“Neredeydin bunca zaman?” “Hastaydım.” (“Where have you been for all this time?” “I was sick.”)

Target:

“Где ты был всё это время?” “Болел.” (“Where have you been for all this time?” “I was sick.”)

Literal translation with obligatory word order change. At this point, in Chapter Four, I could not find any elegant solution for ‘I was sick’, so I had to use the Past

Tense, putting an end to the intrigue. There was an alternative, although rejected later as somewhat unnatural:

> "Почему тебя так долго не было?" "Грипп…эпидемия, вы не слышали?"
> ("Where have you been for all this time?" "Flu…There is an outbreak, haven't you heard?")

This scene is a turning point of the narrative, Efkâr opens his heart to Ümit for the first time, so the relative awkwardness of this answer could probably reflect Ümit's excitement at that moment.

Example 6.2, the alternative to 6.1. (Rewriting, equivalence, transposition, modulation)

Source:

> "Neredeydin bunca zaman?" "Hastaydım."
> Sesinde hesap soran bir ton vardı – nedenini anlayamıyor Ümit – Soruları, sorularının nedenlerini anlayamıyor, yalnızca yanıtlıyor […]
> "İnsan bir haber vermez mi?"
> Şaşkınlığını atamamış üzernden, ürkek gözlerle bakıyor Ümit. Kime? Neyi? Niçin? Neden haber verecek?
> Demek…
> O zaman anlıyor sevildiğini…
> Bu mucizeye inanamıyor…
>
> ("Where have you been for all this time?" "I was sick."
> In his/her voice there is a touch of surprise and confusion, he/she does not understand the reason behind these questions, he/she is just answering. […]
> "Couldn't you have let me know?"
> Ümit is still confused, he/she is looking at Efkâr timorously: Know what? What for? Why?
> It means…
> This is when Ümit realizes that he/she is also loved…
> And cannot believe this miracle…)

Target:

> "Почему тебя так долго не было?" "Грипп…эпидемия, вы не слышали?"

В голосе сквозит удивление, Умит не может понять причину этих расспросов, просто отвечает.
“Тебе было трудно как-нибудь сообщить мне об этом?”
Умит всё ещё не может справиться с удивлением и смотрит на Эфкяра с легким испугом: сообщить что? Для чего? Почему?
Значит…
И тогда Умит понимает, что Эфкяр тоже влюблён…
И не может поверить в это чудо…

(“Where have you been for all this time?” “Flu…There is an outbreak, haven’t you heard?”
There is a touch of surprise and confusion in the voice, Ümit does not understand the reason behind all these questions, just answering. […]
“Was it too difficult to let me know?”
Ümit is still confused, looking at Efkâr timorously: Know what? What for? Why?
It means…
This is when Ümit realizes that Efkâr is also in love…
And cannot believe this miracle…)

Technique:

Equivalence, transposition, and modulation: Possessive pronouns are replaced with demonstrative ones or an article (his-this or the). Personal pronouns are replaced with Ümit in Nominative form, using SVO structure.

The structure with Past Tense is replaced with the Impersonal sentence: Couldn’t you have let me know? – Was it too difficult to let me know?

One sentence was rephrased to avoid the gender-marked form of a participle: This is when Ümit realizes that he is also loved… This is when Ümit realizes that Efkâr is also in love…

This alternative solution could have made it possible to complete the translation following the author's original idea. However, even without it, approximately half of the text is translated preserving the ambiguity of Ümit’s gender, which can be deemed as a success, considering all of the grammatical restrictions.

5. Comment and conclusion

To summarize, the grammatical form of the source text was noticeably altered, in both obligatory and optional ways. Apart from transpositions and modulations I

often had to use completely different words to transfer the message and sometimes apply methods of addition and deletion to achieve the primary goal.

To follow the cross-age discussion between Dryden, Schleiermacher and Venuti can be one way of contemplating the process and the result of translation in question. To build up initial speculation, I suggest seeing my overall strategy as an example of Dryden's paraphrase, where "[the] words are not so strictly followed as [the] sense". In his comment on Dryden's classification Venuti writes:

> […] Dryden underestimated the extent to which paraphrase falls short of maintaining a semantic correspondence and is transformative. He suggests that when structural differences between languages complicate the translator's task, the goal should be 'to vary but the dress, not to alter or destroy the substance' – as if a change in the means of expression did not change the substance expressed, especially with literary genres, such as poetry… (Venuti 2004: 18)

This is an exact description of the case – structural differences between languages complicate the translator's task, and since the purpose of this experiment is to reproduce the same effect in a different language, 'varying the dress' was often the only option. However, one of the probable outcomes could be a 'Frankenstein's monster', an unreadable text made of many pieces, failing to correspond with each other in terms of style and register. As Friedrich Schleiermacher puts it:

> Paraphrase […] caught between a burdensome too-much and a tormenting too-little, it laboriously works its way through a great mass of individual details. Through this approach it can perhaps reproduce the contents of a work with some accuracy, but the impression made by the work must be dispensed with altogether; for living speech hereby perishes irrevocably, it being clear that all these words could not have sprung originally thus from a human mind. (in Venuti 2004: 48)

A literary text is a unity of form and content, and any interference to the form is also transformative on the level of content. Nevertheless, in conclusion, this experiment was partly saved by the general peculiarity of the original style. It appears that in *Tears of Love* Mungan seeks to catch a certain rhythm, sometimes close to poetry or a fairytale, and to that end often uses inverted sentences. The text is also stylistically uneven: in some places, it is extremely abundant, sentences are

expanded with numerous homogeneous elements, synonyms, adjectives or nouns, whereas in other places its style gets elliptical, cryptic and obscure. Another possible explanation for the peculiarity of the original style may be the restrictions of the traditional discourse. To rephrase von Flotow (1997: 12), Mungan as an LGBTQ society member has to translate his private language, his specifically homoerotic forms of discourse, developed as a result of social exclusion, into some form of the dominant heterosexual code. As it was already mentioned in Chapter 3, the author avoids using words like 'woman' or 'young girl', as well as 'man' or 'young man', referring to Ümit. This technique creates a sort of 'heteronormative trap' for some readers to fall into (including myself). For one reason or another, the original texture is somewhat bizarre as it is and probable extra bizarreness added to it by translation dissolves, vanishes in it, becoming its organic part.

We already know enough questionable metaphors on translation, born throughout its long and turbulent history. From 'les belles infidèles' to 'shaving off the hair and paring off the nails of captive women that were handsome and beautiful' (Amos 2007: 327).[6] To add another disturbing analogy, visualizing the protagonist's gender in *Tears of Love* would be to perform a forcible gender reassignment surgery/therapy on the text. While true fidelity for such an experimental text would be to preserve the ambiguity and the effect of the "disruptive discourse of what we can label as a transgender text" (Casagranda 2013: 120).

This work does not aim to be a model for further translations of this sort; this case study is exceptional, specific in terms of the language pair, and in terms of the subject itself. On the other hand, it may show how structural linguistic differences, insurmountable at first sight, can be negotiated, opening new capabilities of language.

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[6] For a brief history of "sexualization of translation" also see Lori Chamberlain 1988: 455-460.

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