

BECKETT'S BILINGUALISM, SELF-TRANSLATION AND THE TRANSLATION OF HIS TEXTS INTO THE CROATIAN LANGUAGE

Mirna Sindičić Sabljo
University of Zadar, Croatia

Abstract

Samuel Beckett was a bilingual writer and a self-translator. He began writing in English, switched to French and then returned to English. The switch to French corresponds with a significant change in his style of writing. Given that Beckett revised his works while translating them into another language, there are numerous versions of his writings. His translations represent new and parallel texts. Beckett's critics generally consider his self-translations as texts which extend and amplify the original, as a kind of creative critical commentary of the original text.

Thirty texts written by Samuel Beckett were translated into the Croatian language from 1958 to 2010. Most of the translations were made soon after the success of *Waiting for Godot* Parisian premiere (1953), after the Nobel Prize attribution and after Beckett's death. Seven texts were translated from the second (self-translated) version instead of the one first written. These translations were not followed by translators' notes that justify the choice of a certain version, showing that the translator in question was aware of Beckett's bilingual poetics and that both versions were consulted during the translation process. Beckett's Old monolingual translations should be reconsidered and revised in the light of Beckett's bilingualism. Translators should clearly state which version of the text (English or French) is being translated and they should consult the other version in order to clarify unclear parts of the text, as well as solve the problems of interpretation. Both versions could be translated separately, if they differ significantly.

Key words: Samuel Beckett; Bilingualism; Self-translation; Translation.

References

Ackerely, C.J., & Gontarski, S.E. (2004). *The Grove Companion to Samuel Beckett*. New York: Grove Press.

Attar, S. (2005). Translating the exiled self: Reflections on translation and censorship. *Intercultural Communication Studies*, XIV(4), 131-148.

Bassnett, S. (2002). *Translation studies*. London & New York: Routledge.

Beer, A. (1994). Beckett's bilingualism. In J. Pilling (Ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Beckett* (pp. 210-221). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Butler, L. (1994). Two darks: A solution to the problem of Beckett's bilingualism. *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui: An Annual Bilingual Review/Revue Annuelle Bilingue*, 3, 115-135.
- Charles J. (1986). *Rencontre avec Samuel Beckett*. Paris: Edition Fata Morgana.
- Cockerham, H. (1975). Bilingual Playwright. In K. Worth (Ed.), *Beckett the Shape Changer* (pp. 139-159). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Cohn, R. (1961). Samuel Beckett: Self-Translator, *PMLA*, 76(5), 613-621.
- Connor, S. (1989). Traduttore, traditore: Samuel Beckett's translation of Mercier et Camier. *Journal of Beckett Studies*, 11-12, 27-46.
- Connor, S. (2007). Repetition and self-translation: Mercier et Camier, First Love, The Lost Ones. In S. Connor (Ed.), *Samuel Beckett: Repetition, Theory and Text* (pp. 99-127). Aurora: The Davies Group Publishers.
- Dobrović, M. (1969). Samuel Beckett. *15 dana*, 7-8, 58.
- Federman, R. (1987). The writer as self-translator. In A.W. Friedman, C. Rossman, & D. Sherzer (Eds.), *Beckett Translating/Translating Beckett* (pp. 7-16). University Park: Pennsylvania State UP.
- Fitch, B.T. (1987). The Relationship between Compagnie and Company: one work, two texts, two fictive universes. In A. W. Friedman, C. Rossman & D. Sherzer (Eds.), *Beckett Translating/Translating Beckett* (pp. 25-35). University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Fitch, B.T. (1988). *Beckett and Babel. An investigation into the status of the bilingual work*. Toronto, Buffalo & London: University of Toronto Press.
- Fitch, B.T. (1989). The status of the second version of the Beckettian text: the evidence of Bing/Ping Manuscript. *Journal of Beckett Studies*, 11-12, 19-26.
- Fotez M. (1954, July 6th). Pariška kazališta pred kraj sezone. *Vjesnik*.
- Friedman, A.W., Rossman, C. & Sherzer, D. (Eds.) (1987). *Beckett translating/Translating Beckett*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Gessner, N. (1957). *Die Unzulänglichkeit der Sprache: eine Untersuchung über Formzufall und Beziehungslosigkeit bei Samuel Beckett*. Zurich: Junius Verlag.
- Gontarski, S.E. (1995). Editing Beckett. *Twentieth Century Literature*, 41(2), 190-207.
- Graver, L. (2004). Godot in French and English. In L. Graver (Ed.), *Beckett: Waiting for Godot* (pp. 70-78). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Grün, H. (1954). Iz moderne dramaturgije (Godeau i Godot). *Republika*, 2-3, 259-260.

Grutman, R. (1998). Auto-translation. In M. Baker (Ed.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (pp. 17-21). New York: Routledge.

Košutić, N. (1960). Uz prijevod Beckettova romana "Molloy". *Zadarska revija*, 6, 466-470.

Lyndon, M. (1997). Stretching the imagination: Samuel Beckett and the frontier of writing. *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association*, 30(1/2), 1-15.

Mađarević, V. (1958). Beckettov "Svršetak igre". *Teatar*, 6, 62.

McGuire, J. (1990). Beckett, the translator, and the metapoem. *World Literature Today*, 64(2), 258-263.

Montini, C. (2006). Traduire le bilinguisme: l'exemple de Beckett. *Littérature* 1(141), 101-114.

Montini, C. (2007). Le sujet traducteur face à l'oeuvre bilingue de Samuel Beckett: Quelle stratégie? *Dolentiana*, 1. Retrieved May 17, 2010, from <http://www.fti.uab.cat/doletiana/English/Doletiana1-e/Doletiana1e.html>.

Montini, C. (2009). Bilingualisme et autotraduction: le decentrement dans l'oeuvre de Samuel Beckett. In *Traduções: Revista do Programa de Pós-Graduações em Estudos de Tradução da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina*, 1. Retrieved May 17, 2010, from http://www.pget.ufsc.br/in-traducoes/_edicao-1.php.

Perloff, M. (1987). Une voix pas la mienne: French/English Beckett and French/English Reader. In A.W. Friedman, C. Rossman & D. Sherzer (Eds.), *Beckett Translating/Translating Beckett* (pp. 36-48). University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Sabljak, T. (1960). O romanu Samuela Becketta. *Republika*, 2-3, 55.

Shread, C. (2009). Redefining translation through self-translation: the case of Nancy Huston. In J. Day (Ed.), *Translation in French and Francophone Literature and Film*, French Literature Series, Vol. XXXVI, pp. 51-69. Amsterdam & New York: Editions Rodopi.

Simić, N. (1959). Svijet Samuela Becketta. *Literatura*, 12-13, 1065-1072.

Vuletić, B. (1969). Čekajući Godota. *Književna smotra*, 1, 34-37.

Annex

A list of Croatian Translations of Samuel Beckett

- Beckett, S. (1958). Sve koji padaju (All that fall). (Mignon Mihaljević, Trans.). *Republika*, 7-8, 15-21.
- Beckett, S. (1958). U očekivanju Godota (Waiting for Godot, fragment). *15 dana*, 10, 11.
- Beckett, S. (1959). Malone umire (Malone dies). (M. Mihaljević, Trans.). *Literatura*, 12-13, 1073-1079.
- Beckett, S. (1959). Svršetak igre (Endgame, fragment). (M. Bertoša, Trans.). *Istarski borac*, 1-2, 25-28.
- Beckett, S. (1959). *Svršetak igre* (Endgame). (A. Škiljan, Trans.) Zagreb: Dramska biblioteka Zagrebačkog dramskog kazališta.¹
- Beckett, S. (1960). Ugarci (Embers). (J. Torbarina, Trans.). *Književnik*, 17, 572-583.
- Beckett, S. (1963, March 2nd). Izgnanik (L'Expulsé). *Večernji list*, 9.
- Beckett, S. (1964). Posljednja vrpca (Krapp's Last Tape). (V. Gotovac, Trans.). *Razlog*, 9-10, 881-888.
- Beckett, S. (1965, October 22nd). Onaj koji se ne može imenovati (Unnamable, fragment). (D. Kolibaš, Trans.). *Telegram*, 10.
- Beckett, S. (1966). *U očekivanju Godota* (Waiting for Godot). (A. Škiljan, Trans.). Zagreb: Biblioteka Scena HNK.²
- Beckett, S. (1969, March 28th). Izgnanik (The Expelled). (M. Dobrović, Trans.). *Telegram*, 14-15.
- Beckett, S. (1969). Cascado (Cascado). (M. Novak, Trans.). *Mogućnosti*, 8-9, 1006-1011.
- Beckett, S. (1969). Za umiranje (The Calmative). (M. Dobrović, Trans.). *15 dana*, 7-8, 58-61.
- Beckett, S. (1969). *Malone umire* (Malone dies). (S. & I. Slamnig, Trans.). Zagreb: Zora.
- Beckett, S. (1976). *Novele i tekstovi nizašto* (Texts for Nothings). (M. Dobrović, Trans.). Zagreb: Društvo hrvatskih prevodilaca.³

¹ The same translation was published subsequently in: *Mogućnosti*, 7-8, 1975; *Nova drama* (1976). (T. Sabljak, Ed.). Split: Čalavski sabor; *Drame* (1981). Zagreb: Nakladni zavod MH.

² The same translation was also published subsequently in: *100 najvećih djela svjetske književnosti* (1968). (A. Šoljan, Ed.), pp. 683-686. Zagreb: Stvarnost; Beckett, S. (1981). *Drame*. Zagreb: Nakladni zavod MH.; Beckett, S. (1997). *U očekivanju Godota*. Zagreb: SysPrint. Beckett, S. (2001). *U očekivanju Godota*. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga; *Teatrološka čitanka*. (2005). (N. Batušić, Ed.), pp. 567-584. Zagreb: Slovom; Beckett, S. (2005). *U očekivanju Godota*. Varaždin: Katatrina Zrinska.

³ The same translation was previously published in the literary magazines: *Republika*, 1975, 7-8, 866-878 and *15 dana*, 1976, 4-5, 28-29.

- Beckett, S. (1980). Doći-Proći (Come and go). (M. Hribar-Ožegović, Trans.). *Dubrovnik*, 4-5, 81-82.
- Beckett, S. (1982). Proust (Proust, fragment). *Treći program hrvatskog radija*, 55.
- Beckett, S. (1990, February 22nd). Neporecivi negativ (Poems). (Z. Mrkonjić, Trans.). *Oko*, 9.
- Beckett, S. (1990). Blagodat kiše. (Poems). (D. Dumančić, Trans.). *Forum*, 1-2, 60-67.
- Beckett, S. (1990). Film (Film). (M. Živković, Trans.). *Quorum*, 2-3, 708-776.
- Beckett, S. (1990). Neuspjeli pokušaji (Fizzles). (M. Kožul, Trans.). *Quorum*, 4, 34-44.
- Beckett, S. (1990). Prva ljubav (First love). (B. Vidović, Trans.). *Quorum*, 4, 45-57.
- Beckett, S. (1990). Eh, Joe (Eh Joe). (M. Živković, Trans.). *Quorum*, 4, 58-62.
- Beckett, S. (1990). Ne ja (Not I). (J. Milošević, Trans.). *Quorum*, 4, 63-68.
- Beckett, S. (1990). Iz napuštenog djela (From an abandoned work). (G. Suntešić, Trans.). *Quorum*, 5-6, 407-412.
- Beckett, S. (1990). Ohajska improvizacija (Ohio Impromptu). (M. Živković, Trans.). *Quorum*, 5-6, 413-416.
- Beckett, S. (1990). Nacht und träuma (Nacht und Traüme). (P. Kosty, Trans.). *Quorum*, 5-6, 417-418.
- Beckett, S. (1991). Dante i jastog (Dante and the Lobster). (S. Veselica, Trans.). *Quorum*, 1, 234-241.
- Beckett, S. (1998). Kraj igre (Endgame, fragment). (D. Štambak, Trans.). In D. Štambak (Ed.), *Odabrana francuska proza*, 277-283. Zagreb: MH.
- Beckett, S. (2000). Beznina. (Lessness). (A. Stamać, Trans.). *Forum*, 4-6, 409-415.
- Beckett, S. (2001). *Stihoklepstvo* (Mirlitonrades). (D. Dumančić, Trans.). Zagreb: Ceres.⁴
- Beckett, S. (2001). *Pjesme* (Poems). Zagreb: Ceres.⁵
- Beckett, S. (2001). *Molloy* (Molloy). (G. Popović, Trans.). Zagreb: Školska knjiga.

⁴ The same translation was previously published in the literary magazine: *Nova Istra*, 1999, 1, 170-177.

⁵ The same translation was previously published in the literary magazine: *Tvrđa*, 2000, 1-2, 139-146.

Beckett, S. (2006). Kazališni fragmenti I, II (Rough for Theatre I, II). *Kazalište*, 27-28, 38-50.

Beckett, S. (2006). *Alba* (Alba). (T. Brlek, Trans.). *15 dana*, 3, 4.

Beckett, S. (2006). *Katastrofa* (Catastrophe). (L. Čale-Feldman, Trans.). *15 dana*, 3, 8.

Beckett, S. (2010). *Murphy* (Murphy). (I. Buljan, Trans.). Zagreb: SysPrint.