

**PRISMATIC POETRY TRANSLATION WORKSHOP AS A MEANS OF
PROMOTING CREATIVE MULTILINGUALISM. ROMANIAN LANGUAGE
POETRY PRISMATIC WORKSHOP – A CASE STUDY**

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***Abstract:** The following article focuses on the role of creative multilingualism through poetry prismatic translation workshops in raising interest and awareness regarding different languages, at the same time impacting on the destiny of languages as well as on the personal development of the individual. Prismatic translation in the context of creative multilingualism is seen as a set of parallel prisms which all reflect a certain aspect of the original text. Thus the present article is divided in two parts: the first one dedicated to the concepts of creative multilingualism and prismatic translations as defined and put into practice by Mathew Reynolds and his team of researchers; the second part focuses on the way Mathew Reynolds's project has been applied in different universities in different countries through poetry prismatic translation workshops in which the source language is Romanian language.*

***Keywords:** prismatic translation, creative multilingualism, Romanian language, poetry*

Creative Multilingualism and Prismatic Translation: Theoretical Premises

Por speak Europanto tu basta mix parolas from differente linguas. Keine study, keine grammatica, just improviste, und voilà que tu esse perfecte Europanto speakante.

Erodant habe keine grammatica. Better dixit, grammatica habe, aber tu can liberamente und instinctivamente invente.

Aquí tambien, der gutte rezepe esse de mix maxime common grammaticale elementos from differente linguas.¹

This excerpt from the manifesto of translator, interpreter and writer Diego Marani dedicated to Europanto – a new but old language with the status of *lingua franca*, which Diego Marani proposes as a language of circulation in the European area – the idea being that in the European area, by speaking a little of each language one can manage absolutely fine, European languages forming one big language, which is relevant to the policy of multilingualism applied in the European Union. Obviously, Marani is not advocating a macaronism that would not respect the rules of grammar, or a lack of thorough study in order to communicate correctly and effectively in a foreign language, but rather a metaphorical plea for multilingualism.

¹ Diego Marani, *Langues et créativité: un parcours à moitié biblique et à moitié fantastique*, Conférence du samedi 17 janvier, Expolangues 2009, <https://lab314.brsu.by/kmp-lite/kmp2/Translation/History-Theory/Diego%20Marani.pdf> 25.09.2024.

Diego Marani pleads for *Europanto* in the same way in which Pierre Bayard pleads for intelligent reading in his book *How we talk about the books we haven't read*². In the chapter entitled *Imposing your ideas*, there is an idea discussed by Pierre Bayard that 'a book is not a fixed object, and that even tying it up with string will not be sufficient to stop its motion'³ For a longtime, both languages and books were approached from an educational point of view as monoliths, as unmovable rocks, with very strict rules, in which the emphasis was on errors and mistakes rather than on speaking and reading. Hence the parallel between a book and a language also from this point of view would not be either useless or meaningless. Languages function in the same way as books do – they are not fixed; they function as living beings and have a will of their own.

The same Diego Marani wrote the following about the human need to speak and understand all the languages in the world:

Les langues ont toujours été pour l'homme un mystère et une fascination. Parler toutes les langues reste pour nous un mythe. Nous continuons à nourrir l'illusion que la compréhension de l'énigme linguistique nous donnerait aussi la clé pour comprendre le sens de l'existence humaine. Cette quête sans fin est aussi à l'origine d'une très grande créativité qui a souvent débordé le cadre linguistique.⁴

The languages we do not speak nor understand have a way to transmit something beyond words, especially when carried through music and/or poetry. It is also said that the more languages we speak, the more lives we have.

The idea of creative multilingualism relies in a way on these above principles, through languages in contact. Moreover, languages, their contact and the effect of learning a new language can be very easily associated with what is called *creative multilingualism*. According to Katrin Kohl and Wen-chin Ouyang, 'Creative Multilingualism is a provocation to think of languages not as typically homogeneous, monolithic and unified, but as intrinsically diverse — languages.'⁵ Hence Marani's *Europanto* fits this view upon languages perfectly, as languages are in continuous development, simultaneously for all their speakers and in all contexts. They also impact the life of the speakers in the same way the speakers impact on the development and future of the languages themselves.

The tradition of seeing languages as rather monoliths or social appendices belongs rather to postcolonialism, when there existed the language of the colonists

² Pierre Bayard, *How we talk about the books we haven't read*, translated from the French by Jeffrey Mehlman, Bloomsbury USA, New York, 2004. The original title is *Comment parler des livres que l'on n'a pas lus?* (1954).

³ Pierre Bayard, *How we talk about the books we haven't read*, p. 131.

⁴ Diego Marani, *Langues et créativité: un parcours à moitié biblique et à moitié fantastique*, Conférence du samedi 17 janvier, Expolangues 2009, <https://lab314.brsu.by/kmp-lite/kmp2/Translation/History-Theory/Diego%20Marani.pdf> 25.09.2024.

⁵ Katrin Kohl and Wen-chin Ouyang, *Creating Multilingualism. A Manifesto*, Edited by Katrin Kohl, Rajinder Dudrah, Andrew Gosler, Suzanne Graham, Martin Maiden, Wen-chin Ouyang and Matthew Reynolds, Open Book Publishers, 2020, p. 6.

and those of the colonized, and when some of the languages of the colonists became in time regional *lingua francas* such as English, for example, in Ireland or Wales, or Australia and the USA, or Russian in the USSR territory, or English, French or Dutch in South Africa, etc. In these regions, local languages and their speakers were repressed, as it happened in Ireland, Brittany, Africa, etc. In most of the former postcolonial regions the postcolonial identity languages still function as *lingua francas*. The already iconic book of Postcolonial studies, *The Empire Writes Back*⁶ by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin discusses the way the literatures and languages of the British Empire decolonize themselves while, at the same time, influence the empire in their own turn both at a literary and a language level. Language becomes a tool of negotiation in a more emphasized way, in a way giving way to creative multilingualism. The process of decolonization also meant a moment for colonial languages to stop being monoliths but rather creative means to communicate interculturally, to give shape to cultural and linguistic identities and thus of negotiating them.

The process of decolonization and consequently the postcolonial period together with the rise of globalization, and internet favoured languages to come into contact more, and to influence one another, simultaneously with the more intense efforts to save and preserve languages, and also for languages to become more and more fluid. Thus, between 2016 and 2020, ‘Creative Multilingualism began as a research project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council’s Open World Research [...] The project brought together academics from diverse disciplines and institutions to explore the interconnection between languages and creativity.’⁷ As part of the project, the term Mathew Reynolds coined the term prismatic translation which focuses on

[...] translation, not as fundamentally a single act involving one source-text in one language, and one translation-text in one another language, [...] but rather as paradigmatically generating multiple texts, so that ‘translation’ becomes the process of turning from one language into others, *da una lingua in altre*, producing chains of signifiers in target languages, creating multiple equivalent, authentic texts [...] Translation’s dominant metaphor would change: it would no longer be a ‘channel’ between one language and another but rather a ‘prism’. It would be seen as opening up the plural signifying potential of the source text and spreading it into multiple versions, each continuous with the source though different from it, and related to the other versions though different from all of them too.⁸

⁶ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back*, (2nd ed.). Routledge, 2002.

⁷ Mathew Reynolds, *Creative Multilingualism*, <https://torch.ox.ac.uk/creative-multilingualism>, retrieved on 29.05.2024.

⁸ Mathew Reynolds, *Introduction to Prismatic Jane Eyre*, <https://prismaticjaneeyre.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Prismatic-Translation-Reynolds-Introduction.pdf>, pp. 4-5, retrieved on 29.05.2024.

In this project Mathew Reynolds and his team of researchers focused on the myriad of translations of the novel *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte, aiming at comparing the various but all also very relevant titles of the novel as well as on different translations of the text in all those translations.⁹ The reasons why the members of the project chose the novel *Jane Eyre* are as follows: ‘it has been very frequently translated, is out of copyright, and is both popular and canonical; and it is a conflicted text with a probing relationship to language, place, identity, metaphor and genre—all elements which play out differently in translation.’¹⁰ Also, as part of the project a series of key words in the text were chosen and analysed in translation. What is very interesting is that the project focused not only on the languages of Europe, but also on languages from Asia or Africa, comparing how the mentality and code of a language worked for and in the process of translation.

As part of the project dedicated to creative multilingualism through prismatic translation, poetry workshops were organised in Oxford Spire Academy or in Westminster Academy or other schools from Britain¹¹, where there were students speaking around 30 languages and where the whole purpose of the activities was to enhance *the creative force of linguistic diversity*. Poets coming from different countries were invited to organise such workshops in languages such as Polish, Arabic, Portuguese and others, thus stimulating the students to become aware of one another’s languages as well as of the way in which poetry stimulates creative thinking, and poetry translation stimulates creative multilingualism.

According to Matthew Reynolds, the key ideas of creative multilingualism are:

- Languages are important;
- They are important because they are creative;
- Translation is part of that creativity. Moving back and forth between one language and another (even one you do not know well or are just starting to learn) can help you come up with new forms of expression and new ideas.¹²

Prismatic translation is a way of employing and at the same time encouraging creative multilingualism. Prismatic translation also changes our perspective on what translation is generally accepted to be. Translation ceases to be a fixed rendering of a text from a certain language in a certain language, but sees a text rendered from a certain language in a multitude of languages at the same time. Here are some of Mathew Reynolds’s observations on prismatic translation:

- Translation generates multiple new texts: it is inherently creative.

⁹ For a closer reading of the project analyses, visit [Prismatic Title – Prismatic Jane Eyre](#).

¹⁰ Mathew Reynolds et al., *Prismatic Translation and Prismatic Jane Eyre*, <https://occt.web.ox.ac.uk/prismatic-translation-2015>.

¹¹ See [Multilingual poetry in schools | Creative Multilingualism \(ox.ac.uk\)](#), retrieved on 29.05.2024.

¹² Mathew Reynolds, Sowon S. Park and Kate Clanchy, Chapter 6, *Prismatic Translation* in Kohl et al., *Creative Multilingualism. A Manifesto*, Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0206>.
<https://books.openbookpublishers.com/10.11647/obp.0206/contents.xhtml>.

- Translation works differently with different kinds of languages: for instance, in the ‘Chinese scriptworld’, speech and writing do not interact in the same way as with European languages, so translation has other processes and results.
- Translation can merge with other modes of writing and re-writing: poetry and fiction are nourished by the fresh perspectives that come from thinking and feeling across languages.¹³

One important element in the prismatic translation workshops which generally translate poetry is that the source language is not mandatorily known by the participants to the workshop, an English language gloss translation and explanations in the English language being used as a way to make the poem understandable for the translators. The whole idea reflects the language policy in the European Union.

Poetry Prismatic Translation Workshops with Romanian Language

Within the theoretical frame of Mathew Reynolds, I intend to present the modality in which I have organised different prismatic poetry translation workshops which in which the source language has been Romanian language, while the poems have been translated in more than 25 languages. I would like to also present the way in which such workshops can impact on the multilingual creative of the participants as well as on their personal lives and careers. Such workshops have also impact on the lives the languages used in translation as in the end there is no separation from one language and its speakers. The communication language has been English, used here as *lingua franca*. There are at least two reasons while *English as lingua franca* (ELF) can be successfully used in situations as such: one would be that ELF accepts all varieties of English, native or non-native, in their own right independently of a standard English (SE) benchmark and includes all users of English, native or non-native, regardless of where they are from; the second would be ‘growing dominance for the translation and interpreting (T&I) industry.’¹⁴

Given the model proposed by Matthew Reynolds and his team, starting with 2020, I have been invited to organise an annual poetry translation seminar for the students studying Romanian language at l’Université libre de Bruxelles, Belgium, by Professor Alice Toma, posted lecturer of Romanian language and literature of the Romanian Language Institute in Bucharest¹⁵, Romania, at the Belgian university. After 2020 I have also organised similar poetry prismatic translation workshops in different universities as well, for example, at the University of Languages in Baku,

¹³ Matthew Reynolds, Sowon S. Park and Kate Clanchy, Chapter 6, *Prismatic Translation* in Kohl et al., *Creative Multilingualism. A Manifesto*, Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0206>.
<https://books.openbookpublishers.com/10.11647/obp.0206/contents.xhtml>.

¹⁴ Nazan İşi, Korkut İşısağ, *Implications of English as a Lingua Franca for Translation and Interpreting: Current and Future Directions*. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/362143451_Implications_of_English_as_a_Lingua_Franca_for_Translation_and_Interpreting_Current_and_Future_Directions [accessed Apr 25 2024].

¹⁵ Institutul Limbii Române | Limba română în lume (ilr.ro)

Azerbaijan, for a group of academic lecturers specialised in translation studies, and for the University in Helsinki, Finland, for students in translation studies and for students who study Romanian language. The workshops organized for l'Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium also had foreign students either from the Bucharest University of Economic Studies in Romania (where at time I was teaching them Romanian language as foreign language) or from different other lectureships of Romanian language throughout the world.

Following Mathew Reynolds's project frame, the multilingual background was thus ensured, usually the languages involved being around 25, and ranging from French, German, Spanish, Italian, Polish, Serbian, Turkish to Dutch, Armenian, Chinese, Azerbaijani, Slovenian, Finnish Luganda language, etc. The workshops for ULB were organized online, while those for the Azerbaijani translators and the Finnish students were organized face to face. The prismatic poetry translations employed in the UK within the frame of the creative multilingualism through poetry prismatic translations workshop guested a poet who would hold the workshop of the participants translating one of his or her poems. As a consequence, the workshops I usually organise focus one of my own published poems in Romanian language and are structured according to the following script. The first activity in the workshop usually consists in the presentation of all participants, who introduce themselves and say into which languages they can translate the poem, and what their relation is with those languages and poetry. The next stage of the workshop is represented by my reading the poem in Romanian language because, irrespective of the fact that the participants might not speak the language of the poem to be translated during the prismatic translation workshops or might just speak it very little, the rhythm and language in itself can transmit a certain message to the listeners. Afterwards the students are asked whether they have recognized any word and about the message the reading of poem conveys to them through tone and expression. Usually because the students are generally bilingual or plurilingual, there is always at least one participant who would recognize at least one word that can be a Romance word or even Slavic. That is the moment when the discussion of the poems starts. It is presented with an English gloss, and then I choose key words from the poem for which participants offer different translations. Sometimes there are two participants who offer different solutions for the same word, and the explanations they give never fail to impress, as this proves how differently each reader senses and feels the poem. The poem will then be translated fragment by fragment, while the meaning the words have in Romanian are explained to the participants. Here is the one of the poems I have used in workshops both for the workshops in ULB, Baku and Helsinki.

Înserată

Părul îi acoperă ochii,
dar, totuși, vede lumea.
Marea îi acoperă picioarele,
dar, totuși, înoată.
Frunzele îi acoperă florile,

dar, totuși, dă rod.
Tăcerea îi înghite cuvintele,
dar, totuși, se aude.
Este.
Precum lumina.¹⁶

This is a poem I chose for three workshops because, first of all, it is short and it allows the participants to have a final version by the end of the activity in other words the satisfaction to have completed the task. Also because the title is difficult to translate: the participle *înserată* comes from the Romanian reflexive verb *a se însera*, which would mean *the fall of evening, twilight*, but the participle would refer rather to the process not the completed action of *evening falling*. Yet the participle, even though the grammatical form can be constructed, does not actually exist in Romanian or is it used. Hence it can be considered a poetic license in the text. The whole poem is a depiction of a feminine entity that becomes shaped only when the evening falls. The poem consists of eight lines grouped in two somehow opposite perspectives plus two final ones. The first eight create a stylistic effect, at the same time being a challenge for the translator(s). Then come the final two lines, out of which one is a third person form of the verb *to be (a fi)* in the present (*este*), while the last line includes a comparison with light.

For comparison, for example, one of the students who translated the title chose the following in Turkish: *Akşam Şiiri*, which literally translates as *evening poem*. One of the Azerbaijani translators chose the word *darkness - Qaranlıq* for the title. One of the German translators entitled the poem *Dämmerung*, which means dusk. Another German translator from the same group of participants focused rather on the idea of light that is dying: *Abendlicht*, preferring the word that would mean *evening light*. The Dutch translator chose the word *Schemering*, which translates as *twilight*. One Polish translator played with the meaning and grammatical forms creating an adjectival feminine gerund form, *Zachodząca*, which would translate as *'the (feminine) one that is setting'*. The Czech translation would be *Podvečerní*, which would translate as *early evening*, while another Czech translator would choose the following *Ztracená v šeru*, which translates as *lost in the gloom*. The Portuguese version would be *Entardecida*, which translates as *sunset*. The more interesting situation arose when translating the poem into Hebrew, where the participant offered two versions of the poem in translation, one in a female gender tone, another in a male gender tone. The situation arose because the entity in the Romanian poem does not strike from the beginning as feminine, because the verbal forms are not gendered. The Italian translator chose the word *Oscurata*, which translates as *darkened*. Obviously the major two choices for the translators were either the focus on the light which is fainting or on the darkness that takes over. Here there are two elements that can influence the decision of the translator: first it is the potential of the language to convey the rather ambiguous and difficult title in Romanian, and on the other the very subjective reading of the translator, his or her preference for a certain type of

¹⁶ Emilia Ivancu, *Înserată*, în volumul *Șamanii și poezii*, Editura Eikon, Bucharest, 2014, p. 43.

images, the very personal interpretation of the poem in an individual key. Even though considered to be more difficult to translate, poetry can offer a myriad of possibilities just because the reading key is crucial in the process of translation, and one of the features of poetry is exactly ambiguity.

Mathew Reynolds, when analysing the various translations of the title Jane Eyre, wrote the following:

The translated titles are all different from the source; but obviously they are not mistakes. Their divergences show that language is always embedded in contexts and communities: to translate is to remake, not only in a new language with its different nuances and ways of putting words together, but in a new culture where readers are likely to be attracted by different themes.¹⁷

The lines apply perfectly on the different translations of the poem *Înserată*. The explanations the translators offered for their choices were always illuminating and the parallels that could be made between and amongst languages showed nuances that maybe not even the original text could capture at the very first reading. Thus as *modus operandi*, the close reading (CR)¹⁸ mode of approaching a text is recommended for such prismatic translation workshops. In another poem used for two prismatic poetry translation workshops, *Călătorie mută*¹⁹, the most interesting

¹⁷ Mathew Reynolds, *Prismatic Jane Eyre. Prismatic Title*, <https://prismaticjaneeyre.org/prismatic-title/> retrieved on 29.05.2024.

¹⁸ Close reading „can mean anything from a work’s particular vocabulary, sentence construction, and imagery, to the themes that are being dealt with, the way in which the story is being told, and the view of the world that it offers. It involves almost everything from the smallest linguistic items to the largest issues of literary understanding and judgement.” Close reading can be seen as four separate levels of attention which we can bring to the text. They are: linguistic, semantic, structural and cultural. Roy Johnson, *What is close reading? a brief guide to advanced reading skills*, <https://mantex.co.uk/what-is-close-reading>, retrieved on 29.05.2024.

¹⁹ Here is the entire poem in Romanian:

Călătorie mută

*Douăzeci de primăveri au trecut de când am plecat de acasă,
am plecat cu inima ascunsă
și ochii privind spre cerul înroșit.
Am plecat după ce limba mi-am tăiat-o cu pumnalul tatălui meu –
am jurat că din mine vorbe de nisip încins și arșiță nu vor mai ieși,
am jurat că lacrimi nu vor mai curge,
pentru că, dacă limbă nu am,
nu voi mai suferi.
Și douăzeci de veri, de toamne și ierni am călătorit prin lume mută,
cu limba tăiată și ascunsă la piept lângă inimă,
ca un hoț care se ascunde de razele soarelui
și nu poate privi pe nimeni în ochi,
nici măcar copacii.*

*După douăzeci de primăveri,
am visat din nou tărâmul roșiat al Africii,*

discussion was stirred by the very first line in Romanian: *Douăzeci de primăveri au trecut de când am plecat de acasă*, which would literally translate as *Twenty springs have gone by since I left my home*. The season *primăvară*, *spring*, reads here as *year*, but in different languages years passing by can refer to other months depending on the culture, as it happens with the Polish *lato*, which means *summer*, while *lata*, *years*, comes from the counting of summers.

The creative multilingual aspect of such prismatic translation workshops can also lie in the fact that one comment and or explanation on behalf of one participants regarding a choice of words in his or her language can trigger very interesting findings in other languages, the participants and inherently their languages being inspirational for one another. Stimulating discussions have occurred also amongst participants speaking languages from the same family such as the Slavic or Romance languages, where words having the same etymology function very often differently and have acquired different meanings in time, while, in the case of Finnish, the mentality behind the language triggered solutions which can be very different from the other languages mentioned already. Enthralling were also the Chinese or Japanese versions, where the approach is totally different, and where we deal with a totally shifting point of view.

At the end of workshops, I usually present an officially printed translation of the poem if the poem has been already published into an English version, just because that as well can be inspirational for the participants if they still have dilemmas about certain aspects of their translation when the workshop closes to the end. Below there is the English version translated by poet and translator Diarmuid Johnson and published in the collection *Washing My Hair with Nettles*. What is interesting about the English version is that, because the difficulty in the title, the translator has chosen to transfer the idea in the title in the last line of the poem: *A rustle in the twilight*, which can be a useful artifice in translation, which sometimes can require artifices as such, while the title proper is more than a suggestion that the entity in the text is a feminine one. The reason why the English version is presented only towards the end of the workshop is because the participants' own translations could be otherwise influenced by the English version maybe more than the Romanian original.

The translation of the poem *Înserată* in the context of the analysis of the English translation of the text led to discussing the term '*untranslatability*'.

*mama murise departe de marea pe care n-a cunoscut-o vreodată,
vestea mi-a venit fără ca eu să pot plânge sau jeli,
nu aveam limbă,
eram mută și sufletul meu ciopârțit.
Am luat atunci din buzunar resturile limbii mele retezate,
mai rămăsese doar o alună din ea,
și am început să plâng, să plâng,
visând la turbanul mamei de culoarea cerului înroșit
până când plânsul a devenit cântec,
iar eu am putut, pentru prima dată după douăzeci de primăveri,
să vorbesc cu mama, dincolo de mormânt.*

Untranslatability was illustrated thus by the Romanian word in the title, which could not and cannot be rendered faithfully with ease in most languages.

She Is

Falling hair veils her eyes
But she can see the sky.
The waves conceal her thighs
But she is there, swimming, swimming.
Behind the leaves, there are hidden flowers
With time, they will bear their fruit.
And though silence may rob her of her speech
Listen, listen, maybe you shall hear her.
Yes, she is there:
A rustle in the twilight.²⁰

Conclusions

At this point many relevant conclusions can be drawn after the poetry prismatic workshops organised in different contexts, in different universities and different countries where, for examples, even the local *lingua francas* can differed. One major conclusion is that creative multilingualism through poetry prismatic translation can raise interest in other existent languages in which we do not become aware unless in a context of language contact. Moreover, such workshops can also raise awareness about languages that are not common, can raise interest in learning those languages, and also represent a form of reinforcement for their speakers. One example I always use now in my poetry prismatic workshops refers to the very workshop I organised for ULB Belgium, when some of my students learning Romanian language as a foreign language at the Bucharest University of Economic Studies also joined the activity in 2020. For that very first workshop, I used two poems, one of which was supposed to be prepared by the students beforehand the workshop and sent it to me to prepare the slides so that we could all analyse the translated versions together. What happened represents a vivid example of how creative multilingualism works with and on people: a former student of mine from Uganda, who had not spoken her language, Luganda, for 15 years until the moment she was supposed to prepare the translation of one for the poem for workshop, decided to translate the poem in her language, Luganda. Luganda language is a Niger-Congo language and belongs to the Bantu group of languages, spoken by c. 3.5 million people named Buganda (in south-east Uganda), between Lake Victoria

²⁰ Emilia Ivancu, *Shamans and Poets*, Parthian Books, 2015, translated into English by Diarmuid Johnson, p. 23.

and Lake Kyogo. Luganda is a tonal language.²¹ During the workshop, the participant told us openly the story of the translation: she had contacted her mother over the phone and translated the poem from Romanian into Luganda language together with her mother and grandmother. The participant started speaking her mother tongue again. Creative multilingualism consequently not only brings together people and languages, takes them from isolation and puts them into contact, but also prevent languages from becoming extinct. Here is the Luganda version of the poem as well as the Romanian original, the translated version being published with the agreement of the participant:

Obunyogovu Bwe Ensi²²

Enaku ezimu mpulila empewo ejja okuva mumubili gwange,
 Eletawo ebbanga wakati wanze ne wagulu ewatali bunyonyi,
 Okufuna obunyogovu wakati we mbirizi zange.
 Kubanga tewali akwata ku mikono gange,
 Nempulila engeli empewo jefuwa ennyo ennyo,
 Kindetera okutya,
 Nentunula ne ssanyu
 Ne embili ejitalimu bisikiliza nga binetolodde.
 Njagala kugneda naye sirina gengenda.
 Niza okutula kumuti mpulile nga we biyimba,
 Ela nsobole okuyimba nabyo,
 Ela nsobole okugenda no omutii nga bwegwe buba

²¹ ‘Ganda developed over centuries as a spoken language. It was not until after the second half of the 19th century that the language was first written down and appeared in print. The standard orthography of Ganda was introduced in 1947. The language is written in the Roman alphabet, consisting of 24 characters.’ [University of Cambridge Language Centre Resources - Ganda / Luganda](#), retrieved 29.05.2024.

²² The Romanian version is below and was published in the collection Emilia Ivancu, *Noaptea în care focurile vor arde până la capăt*, Editura Eikon, București, 2016, p. 26:

Frigul universurilor

*Sunt zile în care simt cum bate un vânt dinspre astre,
 se creează goluri de aer între mine și cerul fără păsări,
 se face frig între coaste
 pentru că nu mă țin nimeni de mână.
 Simt atunci cum vântul bate atât de tare
 că mă goleşte de teamă,
 privesc doar a mirare
 la toate trupurile fără umbră din jurul meu.
 Aș vrea să plec, dar nu știu unde.
 M-aș așeza sub un copac să-l aud cum cântă,
 să-nvăț și eu cântecul lui,
 să merg apoi cu copacul de mână,
 să nu mai simt vântul cum bate
 dinspre golul dintre astre
 printre coastele mele ce se frâng
 prea curând, mult prea curând.*

Ela nga siwulila nga empewo weyita
Kumubilil gweange
Mu mbirizi gyange nga zimenyeka
Amangu ddala, amangu ddala nnyo.²³

Such multilingual prismatic translation workshops represent, on the one hand, an extraordinary space for people passionate by poetry, languages and translation to practice their translators' skills as well as to interact in a professional milieu in a creative and instructive way. They are not necessarily specialists in philological or translation studies or languages, but they can have different specialisations such economic studies, cultural studies or any other field. The humanist and thus language education is a modality for them to discover different aspects of their own language, different aspects of their own relation with their mother-tongue(s) as some can be monolingual, but some can be bilingual or plurilingual. Such a workshop can also be a stage for the development of the translator profession as it was also the case of an Italian student in Romanian language, and who is already a professional translator from other languages than Romanian. After the prismatic workshop of 2023 organised online for ULB, Belgium, and which gathered participants translating into 25 languages, an Italian student, EC, attending the Romanian language classes at the lectureship of Romanian language held by Professor Nicoleta Neşu, submitted the translation of the Romanian poem translated into the Italian language during the workshop as well as two other poems for the translation journal *IL Pietrisco Journal. Learned Online Journal of Modern and Contemporary Studies – POETRY PROSE CINEMA* for a special translation issue which would publish original, as yet unpublished translations of 21st century poetry published by women who write in one (or more) of the following Romance languages: French, Italian, Portuguese, Rumanian, Spanish.²⁴ The Italian translations of the three poems have been accepted for competition, and will be published on 30th September, 2024 (International Translation Day).

Future developments

The workshop of prismatic poetry translation has become a mutual project both for me and for my colleague Professor Alice Toma, lecturer of Romanian with ULB, Brussels. As a consequence, we have been editing the various translations of the poems translated in the workshops with the purpose of publishing a collection of those translations which would be both a didactic instrument for academics who teach languages and translation studies as well as a multilingual collection for everyone who loves languages and poetry. It will be the proof that creative multilingualism through prismatic poetry translation brings into fruitful contact both people, languages, and cultures.

²³ PN, author of the poem translation into Luganda language.

²⁴ <https://www.pietrisco.net/Translations/Forthcoming-Projects/index.php/>, retrieved on 29.05.2024.

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