

## PROMOTING KOREAN LITERATURE IN ROMANIA THROUGH TRANSLATION

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**ABSTRACT.** *Promoting Korean Literature in Romania through Translation.*

Translation is the most basic act of communicating in a world where language barriers exist. Also, among the various cultural standards that look at and evaluate the world, literature can be regarded as a kind of universal cultural heritage that combines the intellectual, artistic, and overall social lifestyle of each society. Effective delivery of this cultural complex, what is called literature, to people of other languages begins with the correct translation. The translator must act as a missionary of literature, not just as a language communicator. The process of translation of literature cannot be accomplished with simple linguistic ability alone, but it can be said to be a high-level humanistic act that requires a variety of translators' talents. A good Korean literary translator in Romania must be a person with diverse talents and socialization-experience within the cultural framework of Korea and Romania. Just as each country has different requirements for its translation environment, the paradigm of literary translation that Romania seeks to accept must be very distinctive. After recognizing this distinction, translators should spread the value of Korean literature to Romania. The translator is the one who creates another original. With this in mind, Korean studies in Romania should be more concerned with the effective education of translation. This is because the development of specialized translators is the most important factor for revitalizing Korean literature in the world, inclusive Romania.

**Keywords:** *Korean literature translation, missionary of literature, Support for translation-publishing, education of translation.*

**REZUMAT.** *Promovarea literaturii coreene în România prin traducere.*

Traducerea este actul de bază al comunicării într-o lume în care există bariere lingvistice. De asemenea, printre diferitele standarde culturale care privesc și

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evaluatează lumea, literatura poate fi privită ca un fel de moștenire culturală universală care combină stilul de viață social intelectual, artistic și social al fiecărei societăți. Extinderea eficientă a acestui complex cultural, ceea ce se numește literatură, oamenilor care vorbesc alte limbi începe cu traducerea corectă. Traducătorul trebuie să acționeze ca misionar al literaturii, nu doar ca un comunicator de limbă. Procesul de traducere a literaturii nu poate fi realizat doar cu o abilitate lingvistică simplă, dar se poate spune că este un act umanist la nivel înalt care necesită o varietate de talente ale traducătorilor. Un bun traducător literar coreean în România trebuie să fie o persoană cu talente diverse și experiență de socializare în cadrul cultural al Coreei și României. La fel cum fiecare țară are cerințe diferite pentru mediul său de traducere, paradigma traducerii literare pe care România încearcă să o accepte trebuie să fie distinctivă. După ce recunoaște această distincție, traducătorii ar trebui să răspândească valoarea literaturii coreene în România. Traducătorul este cel care creează altă operă. În acest sens, studiile coreene în România ar trebui să fie mai preocupate de educarea eficientă a traducerii. Acest lucru se datorează faptului că dezvoltarea traducătorilor specializați este cel mai important factor pentru revitalizarea literaturii coreene din lume, inclusiv România.

***Cuvinte-cheie:** Traducere din literatura coreeană, misionar al literaturii, sprijin pentru publicarea traducerilor, educarea traducerii.*

## 1. Introduction

Currently, Korean language users are estimated at about 75 million people in five countries, including Koreans residing on the Korean Peninsula, which ranks 13<sup>th</sup> in the order of the number of language users in the world<sup>1</sup>. However, it is true that Korean language is not receiving the attention that deserves its value in the stage of world literature. The Korean people have paid attention every year to who wins the Nobel Prize for Literature, giving all literary values to this prize. Unfortunately, until now there are no any Korean on the list of Nobel Prize for Literature. Of course it is not easy to define or evaluate literary values by the unfamiliar standards of different languages because literature combines the spirit of each language community with the unique characteristics and values of each society. But when the common value pursued by literature, namely human experience<sup>2</sup>, appear in literary works,

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<sup>1</sup> This is higher than French, spoken by 75 million people in 51 countries, and one level below German, spoken by 78 million people in 18 countries (Lee Won Kwang).

<sup>2</sup> Everyone has a willingness to express their thoughts and feelings. The act of expressing these things beautifully can be regarded as art, of which literature is 'art that expresses thoughts and feelings in language' (Choi et al. 2010, 11). I think that human thoughts and feelings can only be formed through experience.

the evaluation of literature can be embodied. For example, even if there are obstacles of language and culture between Koreans and Europeans, the literary values can be shared on condition of compromise and coordination with each other. This compromise and coordination comes from the intervention of the translator.<sup>3</sup> In other words, it is no exaggeration to say that the ability of translators and the successful spread of literature abroad are closely linked. If the translators plays such an important role, it can be thought that the reason why Korean literature has not received such attention on the stage of world literature should be found in the quality and execution of the translation. Of course the blind praise of Korean literature comes from excessive national pride. However, considering the quality and quantity of Korean literature at present, it is clear that Korean literature has not been achieved great results in foreign literary world because of the lack of fidelity in the relationship between the original text and the translated text. This is because translation is an important determinant of overseas expansion of Korean literature.

In Romania, Korean literature is relatively undervalued compared to Chinese and Japanese literature. Why is the position of Korean literature still faraway for Romanian readers? In order to find a proper answer to the above question, it will be considered some arguments. In other words, there are two specific research objectives. (1) It will be examined the current status of translation of Korean literature in Romania and some of the problems that may arise in the process of translation. (2) What is required for the training of specialized translators and what are more strategic ways to revitalize Korea literature will be researched.

When describing the status of 'poor Korean literature' in Romania, it may not be effective and appropriate to limit it to the realm of translation. But it is very interesting and useful to check and consider the interaction between the processes of translation and Korean literature. It is also expected to contribute to the development of Korean studies in Romania.

## 2. The Status of Korean Literature in Romania

As Korea's status gradually rises, many overseas universities have opened curriculums related to Korean studies and have taught Korean, literature, Korean culture, history, and so on. It is no exaggeration to say that Korean studies in Romania, which began in the mid-90s, originated from a very elementary, superficial, simplistic impulse of scholastic passion until the early

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<sup>3</sup> Nord Christiane, a German scholar of translation studies who introduced Skopos theory, said "translating literary text is a process of providing readers with information about the genre, artistic value and linguistic beauty of the original text by reproducing the literary structure of the original text" (2006, 152-153).

2000s.<sup>4</sup> Because of the long history of Chinese and Japanese studies in Romania, it is evident that their academic positions are strong.<sup>5</sup> Compared to these Chinese and Japanese studies, it is only 20 years since the seeds of Korean studies were sown in Romania. In a short time, however, Korean studies made a quantum leap. The early direction of Korean studies focused simply on language education is now being extended to various levels such as literature, history and North Korean studies. Korean studies in Romania is now in the developmental stage to go beyond the leap and seek more concrete and effective education strategies.

The spread and recognition of Korean literature not only to learners of Korean studies but also to ordinary Romanians is one of the few gateways that must be taken for the development of Korean studies. In particular, rather than simply promoting Korean literature, we should consider how it is recognized by the Romanians and how to stimulate the readers' desire to purchase Korean literature. These are welcome to form a fixed readership of Korean literature in the long run.

Romanian literature became known in South Korea in the mid-1980s.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, Korean literature was actually translated and introduced in Romania in the early 2000s. In addition, Romania had a close relationship with North Korea as it was called 'North Korea of Balkan Peninsula'<sup>7</sup>, but literary interchange between the two countries left much to be desired. Korean language education, the starting point of the extension of Korean literature, began

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<sup>4</sup> Korean language education began in Romania in the mid-1990s, but initially it was a kind of liberal arts course without credit just for students who were interested in Korean language. In 1995, the first Korean language course in Romania was opened at 'University of Craiova (Universitatea din Craiova)' with the support of the 'Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA)'. Romania's the largest university, 'Babeş-Bolyai University (Universitatea Babeş-Bolyai)', also supported by KOICA, began Korean language courses in October 1997 and at present education on Korean studies is most effectively conducted among all Romanian universities. As of 2019, Babeş-Bolyai University is the only one that runs Korean language and literature as an undergraduate program besides 'University of Bucharest (Universitatea din Bucureşti)'. In addition, the Department of Korean language and literature at Babeş-Bolyai University was promoted to the first major in 2008 with the formal approval of the Romanian Ministry of Education. The Department of Korean language and literature at University of Bucharest, unfortunately, remains a minor.

<sup>5</sup> The Department of Chinese language and literature at University of Bucharest was established in 1956 and the Department of Japanese language and literature in 1975.

<sup>6</sup> After the establishment of the Department of Romanian at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in 1987, Kim Seong Ki, Lee Mun Su, Park Jeong Oh, Kim Jeong Hwan, Lee Ho Chang, Paik Seung Nam, Oum Tae Hyun, and Han Seong Sook began to introduce Romanian language and literature in earnest, and began to emerge as a new research subject. They are all working as professor or lecturers in the Department of Romanian at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies.

<sup>7</sup> Some say that North Korea's Kim Il-sung and Romanian's Ceauşescu once had a brotherhood (Lee 2008, 26).

relatively late compared to other Eastern European countries.<sup>8</sup> The specific period in which Korean literature was first introduced in Romania was in the early 1960s. In the year of 1960, Korean classic poems were translated and published by Baconsky Anatol (1925-1977) who was a poet and translator.<sup>9</sup> Strictly speaking, however, it was a retranslation (secondhand translation, translating a translation), and it could not be said that it contributed greatly to the development of Korean translation literature in Romania. In general, the most important value that translation literature should pursue is an accurate understanding of the original. However, in the process of retranslation, mistranslation and clumsy translation are likely to occur. In other words, the contents of the original may be deleted or contents not present in the original may be arbitrarily added through two times of translation. For example, the fact that a picture is copied several times with a copier means that the original color or contrast gradually disappears from the original. Therefore, if the process of translation is regarded as a copy of the original, the process of retranslation can also give a lot of room to damage the sensitivity and value of the original. John Dryden suggested three theorized modes of translation<sup>10</sup>: 'metaphrase (word-for-word)', 'imitation (loose rewriting)' and 'paraphrase (a middle path)', and then argued that the paraphrase is the most correct and balanced way of translation, advising that metaphrase and imitation be avoided (Munday 2008, 26). In this way, translation can permit active and sometimes bold interpretation, such as retouches or changes to original works. This means that the cultural values and perceptions of the original author can be adapted or recreated to the translator's environment. Therefore, if the original works of literature were translated by translator from different cultural area and then transferred to the third cultural area through the involvement of other translator, the concept of paraphrase would be strengthened, which may lead to excessively inaccurate translation literature.

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<sup>8</sup> Korean language education in Poland was introduced in 1953. Kim Chun Taek of Kim Il-sung University came to be a professor at the University of Warsaw. In addition, Korean language education in Czech Republic began with the opening of the Department of Korean Studies at Charles University in 1950. In the early years, the education of Korean language and literature in Eastern European countries maintained a one-sided relationship with North Korea, and literary works mostly came from North Korea until the 1980s (Choi 2005, 353, 361-362).

<sup>9</sup> In a preface to 'Fluxul Memoriei', published in 1987 after his death, Romanian literary critic Mircea Braga said that Baconsky translated many Korean classic poems into Romanian and published them in 1960 under the title 'Poetii clasici coreeni' (Baconsky 1987, 33).

<sup>10</sup> John Dryden reduces all translation theories to three categories: (1) metaphrase: 'word by word and line by line' translation, which corresponds to literal translation (2) paraphrase: 'translation with latitude, where the author is kept in view by the translator, so as never to be lost, but his words are not so strictly followed as his sense'; this involves changing whole phrase and more or less corresponds to faithful or sense- for -sense translation (3) imitation: 'forsaking' both words and sense; this corresponds to very free translation and is more or less adaptation (Munday 2008, 26).

In the past, introduced Korean literature to Romania by retranslation was mainly poetry literature such as classical poetry. Poetry refers to human feelings, not information, that cannot be easily expressed, so the translator must also be another poet who can effectively convey the emotions and inspirations of the original poet. Poetic literary works translated through the process of retranslation cannot convey easily to the reader the characteristics, aesthetic effects and poet's emotions and intentions of the original poem. In this regard, Korean literatures, which were translated and introduced into Romania in the past, were limited and their fidelities of original works might be also very poor.

As soon as the 21<sup>st</sup> century was started, seven books related to Korean literature were translated and published by Brudaşcu Dan.<sup>11</sup> Although all were published through the retranslation process, it is true that he contributed a lot in informing Korean literature to Romanian readers.

Yuksel Diana, a professor at the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures, University of Bucharest, also influenced the development of translated Korean literature in Romania. It can be said that she has made great efforts, translating to be close to the original literatures with her fluent Korean and scholarly insights into the cultures of both countries, Romania and Korea. In 2015, with the support of 'LTI (Literature Translation Institute of Korea)', she translated and published '어디선가 나를 찾는 전화벨이 울리고 (Voi fi acolo)' by writer Shin Kyung-sook and in 2017 she also translated and published '리진 (Dansul privighetorii de primăvară)', a work by Shin Kyung-sook, with the support of LTI. It is worth nothing that they were published by 'Humanitas', a major Romanian publishing company that mainly has introduced works of high literary value.

The translation of Korean literature by Koreans, not Romanians, can expect more inspirations and responses from readers. In this case, it is usually possible to collaborate with local Romanian to review and evaluate each other's translated texts to reach a satisfactory compromise of translation. It is possible to transfigure the extremely Korean emotions and values in literature into universal values in collaboration with Korean translator and Romanian, and to cope with somewhat diverse cultural backgrounds in a way appropriate to Romanian readers. For example, Korean translators can provide a more accurate understanding and background of Korean culture, while Romanian

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<sup>11</sup> He is currently a professor at 'Avram Iancu University (Universitatea Avram Iancu)' in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. Resume on his personal homepage shows that he translated literary works from various countries, including Korean literature, into Romanian. In addition, he has translated and published some contemporary Romanian poems into Korean. It can be said that he played an important role in promoting literary exchange between Romania and Korea.

translators (or helpers), who are involved in translating work, can offer Romanian readers accesses to unfamiliar Korean cultures through their appropriate cultural intermediation and intervention. In 2004, Kim Jeong Hwan, a professor of the Department of Romanian at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, published ‘천상병 시선집 (Întoarcerea în cer)’ which was translated with the support of LTI. In addition, Kim Jeong Hwan translated and published a collection of works by Yi Sang, including ‘날개 (Aripi)’, in 2009, in collaboration with Roxana Anghelescu. Besides Kim Jeong Hwan, professor Oum Tae Hyun of the Department of Romanian at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies has translated actively Korean literatures into Romanian. In 2005, he began publication with the translation of ‘Seo Jung-ju’s collection of poetry’ and in 2007 he published ‘Hwang Soon-won’s short novels’. In the year of 2014 he translated with Roxana Anghelescu to introduce Shin Kyung-sook’s ‘엄마를 부탁해 (Ai grijă de mama)’ to Romanian readers and in 2016 Park Wan-suh’s ‘그 많던 싱아는 누가 다 먹었을까? (Cine a mâncat toată shinga?)’ in collaboration with Roxana Anghelescu, in 2017 ‘사과는 잘해요 (Măcar ne pricepem la scuze)’ from Lee Ki-Ho were translated and published by a prominent Romanian publisher. All translations of these works were supported by LTI.

So far, it was briefly reviewed which Korean literatures were translated and introduced in the Romanian literary world. The fact is that the number of translated Korean literatures in Romania is gradually increasing, and that the literary works of authors, such as Hwang Soon-won and Park Wan-suh who have very Korean originality, were also introduced, which means that the ability and skill of translators have improved.

### **3. Some Suggestions for Developing Korean Literature Translators**

#### ***3.1. Interdisciplinary efforts***

Korean literature now has a theoretical basis that must be understood and accepted within the framework of world literature, but in practical experience the theoretical basis is not applied to the field of world literature. Korean language, which served as a pillar and girder of building called ‘Korean literature’, paradoxically became an obstacle to the spread of Korean literature overseas. This is due to the fact that Korean language is not compatible with other languages in the world, especially with major languages of the world (Jeong 2013, 17). The literary works with more Korean characteristics require

more efforts and patience in the process of translation. In addition, differences in linguistic expressions between Korean and Romanian affect much of the translator's work. Reducing the inconsistencies caused by these two linguistic differences, of course, depend on the ability and effort of the translator. The linguistic friction in the translation process will be extremely dichotomous, depending on the translator's skill. In other words, 'translation as another creation' or 'simple translation faithful to the original text' can be introduced to readers. Above all, the most important thing in the translation work is to reproduce the original intention of the author of the original work. It may be too abstract, but there is a certain invisible commonality between the original and the translated language, and the role of the translator is to capture this commonality. This role will allow the translator to naturally communicate to the reader what the original works are saying.

Therefore, the most important thing in translating Korean literature into Romanian is how much translator has knowledge of Korean and Romanian. When translating Korean literature into Romanian, Koreans can fully understand the feeling of the original work, but there are severe limitations in their ability to speak Romanian. Therefore, it is very difficult to convey faithfully or satisfactorily the vocabulary or tone of the original work. Considering that Korean literature become a part of the Romanian literary world through the translation process, Romanian fluent in Korean must participate in the translation process. In Romania, however, there are very few professional translators who are fluent in Korean. The fact is that there is an absolute shortage of Romanians who are quite fluent in Korean, understand Korean literature and culture, and are able to independently translate. This is very unfortunate when considering only translation work, but it also means that there are no professionals who can evaluate and advise on the results after the translation work. In order to train Korean literary translators in Romania, it is necessary to establish a direct and efficient network between higher education institutions such as local universities in Romania and institutions in Korea like LTI or KF (Korea Foundation). For example, through the network above, workshops can be held regularly related to Korean language education to open up opportunities to discuss various problems in the translation process. In this way, those who dream of becoming professional translators will be able to effectively improve their translation skills and even build their own networks. In addition, it would be very positive if the literary institutions in Korea run a short-term training program related to translation learning for Romanian students who major in Korean or Korean literature. Korean studies majors in Romanian universities are already familiar with Korean language. If they are trained continuously and effectively, it is very likely that a large number can be developed into professional translators.



The role of local universities is important to manage them efficiently and systematically. Translation should be recognized as an essential part of the curriculum, forming an academic basis for it. The ability to speak Korean and an accurate understanding of Korean culture are the most necessary elements in the translation process. In this connection, it is necessary to consider translation as a more scientifically independent discipline and to expand it to interdisciplinary research or teaching. The most important thing in the process of academically recognizing translation is that Korean language learners in Romania should understand that 'translation is a form of communication through written language' and then understand the basic Korean writing norms.<sup>12</sup> The primary goal of education in the translation class is not to read and write, but to acquire knowledge and practice for producing the target text that meets Korean writing norms. Many learners and educators who do not have an academic access to translation overlook the fact that the process of producing a translation is basically similar to writing (Joo 2016, 287). Therefore, translator (translator refers to a local who works in Romania)'s ability to write Korean is very important in the process of translating Korean into Romanian. In addition, most Korean language education at universities is centered on the younger generation. If they act as translators after graduation, they are likely to choose and translate literary works that are rich in the sensibilities and linguistic expressions of the new generation of Koreans. The works of a young writers with universal value will be more familiar to Romanian readers than the old literature, which is less aware of reality. Therefore, those who are engaged in Korean language education at the universities of Romania need to manage their students more strategically for the efficient expansion of Korean literatures. For example, for educators it would be very effective to select students with excellent Korean writing ability to encourage translation training, to understand the characteristics of Korean discourse structure. In addition, students can be divided into two groups through the analysis of student's ability and will. As Delisle mentioned, it is good to separate students into two groups: 'learning for translation education (reading-oriented education for improving foreign language ability)' and 'professional translation education (training to improve translation ability)'. It could be an effective training method (Kim 2018, 371). Under the three-year Romanian university course, it is a good idea for students to learn the Korean language through reading and writing practice until the second year, and then as they enter the third year it is better to have more practical translation education.

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<sup>12</sup> The effects that can be expected in the 'writing norms' education I think include (1) overcoming the habit of translating Korean sentences into the same form as Romanian (2) accurate recognition of the difference between spoken and written words in Korean (3) improved high level of translation skills using 'Korean spacing words' (4) correct understanding of the omission of particles (Korean postpositions) that occurs frequently in Korean.

### ***3.2. Institutional attention and support***

It is no exaggeration to say that the important factor that determines the success or failure of Korean literary translation works in Romania is the support and interest of various institutions in Korea such as LTI. These institutions should not only focus on extending Korean literature but also pay more attention to training directly many young generations abroad who can become professional translators. This is a task that must be discussed not only in the quality of translation but also in the sense of the diversity of Korean translation literature. Currently, LTI operates a specialized program for translating Korean literature and workshops for translators, but for those who want to become translators, it is necessary to open new programs, extend the benefit period of the existing programs, and expand the beneficiaries. If institutions like LTI select outstanding graduates who majored in Korean at Romanian universities as scholarships and give them the opportunity to study at the graduate schools of interpretation and translation in Korea, it would be a support method that can produce good results. In addition, the establishment of an educational program for educators who are in charge of Korean translation courses at the universities of Romania can also be of great help in the operation of specialized courses. In the 1980s, a new study called 'translation studies' appeared, and since then, much research has been conducted on the theory and practice of translation. Since the 1990s, translation studies has established itself as an independent discipline and has firmly established itself by imparting several scientific technologies and methods to other disciplines (Kim 2004, 68). However, because there is no professional educator who can deeply understand and effectively teach translation studies to students in Romania, it is necessary to open a kind of educational training program to specialize some existing educators.

Apart from the role of LTI mentioned above, it is also meaningful to consider the functional and administrative issues of LTI, which is the forerunner of Korean literature abroad. In this regard, I would like to share some direct and indirect experiences that I have seen and heard from my point of view in Romanian Korean studies. Like other general administrative agencies in Korea, I must believe that LTI is results-oriented - guided not by process but guided by performance. For example, the translation process of a Korean literary work may be referred to a system that divides the translation process into many stages and pays the translation fee accordingly, considering the case of giving up. This support system may be beneficial for the individual translator for a time, but on the other hand, there is a high possibility that the management of the translation fee may be seen as the main concern of LTI. It is supposed to be a pure window dressing. In addition, because the main function of LTI is translation of Korean literary works, more philosophical

self-examination and deliberation are needed. Why Korean Literature? Why should Korean literature be extended? LTI should make efforts to find appropriate answers to these questions. Furthermore, LTI's administrative problems are easily revealed in communication with publishers in the case of unique foreign language translations such as Romanian. Because unlike the case of France and United States there are no publishers dedicated to Korean literature, the Romanian book market has many difficulties in communicating between translators and publishers for publishing Korean literatures.

As a first step, translator translates the preface of the original work and submits it to LTI. LTI reviews it and inquires Romanian publishers by email if they are willing to publish. After that, endless waiting for the publishers' response is the only administrative support that LTI can provide. Therefore, in order to save time in translation work and to increase economic efficiency, many translators usually find publishers who are willing to publish and negotiate directly with them. If the publisher is determined to publish, a contract must be made for the copyright of the original work. In most cases, however, Romanian publishers do not deal with contract pertinently for copyright owner of original work. Many problems also arise in communication with Korean copyright holders, and in many cases, difficulties arise in negotiating with royalties. In this situation, LTI is not acting as an intermediary coordinator, and the fact is that it does not provide any help other than simply providing translation expenses. The problems mentioned above indicate the lack of LTI's own philosophical self-examination and can be also regarded as a combination of cultural differences and communication difficulties. Against this backdrop, translators in Romania have many questions, especially why they have to deal with the issue of direct copyright. Translators' extreme dissatisfaction is likely to be expressed in response to LTI's ineffective attitude. It is LTI's main duty and responsibility to introduce various and excellent Korean literature to Romania and around the world and to make it the best book loved by readers. More than anything else, LTI must promote customized support projects for each country's book market, and it is advisable to engage in some degree of discord and cooperation between publishers and translators.

#### **4. Some Problems in the Process of Translation**

After the human language was divided into diverse languages by the Tower of Babel in Genesis of the Old Testament, the translation coincides with the history of our human language. However, translation process that connects language (native language) with other languages (foreign language) is not so easy. As there is always a gap between reality and ideals, there is always a high tension or gap between the original text and the translated work

due to discrepancies and errors. Linguistic aesthetics and expressions which are only available in Korean and unique forms of Korean literature, these can be difficult and easily isolated to foreign languages and unfamiliar cultures.

The root cause is that Korean is difficult. Just as a literary work is born from the concrete and practical labor of the writer, the translation must be practiced with the specific labor of the translator (Lee 2018, 166). Needless to say, the labor force of the translator is based on fluent language skills. Of course, the translation process is not a simple language exchange but a complex work of special interest, understanding, and literary communication. But the basic of translation depends on the translator's ability to speak the language. The fact that there is no translator who speaks both languages perfectly in Romania and Korea is the biggest obstacle to the spread of Korean literature in Romania. No matter how good a translator with excellent literary feelings and expressions is, if he lacks a high level of language proficiency, the level of translation will certainly fall. Of course, it is meaningless to prove which of these is more ideal or worthwhile, either academic access to Korean and Romanian (the translator's language ability) or the ability to access translation from a literary point of view. Just as translators are not necessarily poets or writers, translators do not need to be able to speak both languages exactly as native speakers. However, it is not a successful translation if it is translated without a proper understanding of the vocabulary, tone, expression, etc. that appeared in the original. As mentioned earlier, the feature of Korean translation literature introduced in Romania in the past is retranslation. This has clear limitations in terms of accurate reproduction of the original. From the efficiency of time and acceptance, retranslation can provide an easy way to select the literary work to be translated, and the translator can be somewhat free from the difficulty of finding a publisher.<sup>13</sup> In the past, when Korean literary translations were not common, even if they were retranslated, they had to be satisfied that Korean literature itself was published in Romania. Recently, however, various Korean literary translations have been introduced, and the interest about Korean literature has increased due to the efforts of several translators. That's why more specialized translators are urgently needed at present. To date, most translations have been realized by people

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<sup>13</sup> Retranslating Korean literary works that were already translated into European languages, into Romanian is relatively easier than directly translating Koreans with completely different linguistic systems. And some of the publishers I met in Romania say that the first thing to consider when publishing translated literature is whether it was translated into English or French. They say that the most important thing was whether it was translated and published in French, which belongs to the Romance family originated from Latin like Romanian, and how the French readers responded. Therefore, in order to spread Korean literature more strategically to Romania, the quality of the translation is important, but it is very important to look at the interests and reactions of readers in a particular country and then select the literary works to be translated.

who have some knowledge of Korean and Romanian, that is, people from other fields of occupation who do not normally act as translators. Of course, the recent activity of translators with active attitudes beyond the framework of passive work such as retranslation has great prospects.

Besides the translators' language skills mentioned above, the fundamental condition that determines the quality of translation works is how much translators understand and perceive Korean and Romanian culture.<sup>14</sup> The translation process from Korean to Romanian involves many difficulties. This is because the system of the two languages is distinctly different and for most Romanian readers the background of Korea and Koreans is very limited. In other words, the environment in which Korea-related general knowledge is not widely formed puts a heavy burden on the role of the translator. Itamar Even-Zohar and Gideon Toury mentioned and developed the concept of a multi-system approach to literature for correct translation, and specifically explored the study of systematic thinking on translation in different cultures. Their theory bridged the gap between literary research and linguistics, and provided the opportunity for translation activities to carry out new interdisciplinary research. At the core of this theory is the emphasis of research on the culture in which the language to be translated exists (Kim 2004, 63). Culture-related texts are a big challenge for translators. Translator's active intermediation is very important to instill the same level of information as the original text to readers of different cultural backgrounds (Cheong 2009, 183). Venuti also emphasized that translation is the process of rewriting text written in a foreign language in accordance with its cultural values (Venuti 1995, 312). As such, the biggest invisible difficulty in the translation process is the lack of understanding of Korean culture and background knowledge. It is fortunate that some Koreans who can speak Romanian have been translating and publishing Korean literature in Romania. In particular, since most of the translation work is carried out by co-translation with Romanian people or with their help, the reckless translation that arises from cultural differences is gradually decreasing. For example, the co-translation enables an efficient and concrete response to the translation of extremely Korean cultural expressions, Korean vocabulary, and exceptionally phrases with such as onomatopoeia and mimesis in Korean.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> In general, readers also consider many things when choosing a literary work abroad. Readers' interest in foreign literature is driven by a variety of factors. After becoming familiar with a certain culture in a wide variety of ways, including thought, religion, music, film, art, history, tourism, economics and others, readers choose their literary works in that country (Pucek 2007, 63). As such, literature and culture are closely related. In addition to linguistic skills, understanding of culture is of great importance to translators.

<sup>15</sup> In Romanian, onomatopoeia, which mimics the sounds of things, has been developed quite a lot, but unlike Korean, there are significant difficulties in translation of mimesis.

The next problem is that there is still no effective cooperation with local Romanian publishers. In translation work, it is difficult for a translator to directly select a publisher and make a publishing contract. To put it plainly, selecting and publishing a well-recognized publisher in Romania requires a lot of effort and patience because of Korean literature's low reputation. In particular, it is unavoidable to continuously check and cooperate with publishers during the translation process, but it is true that Korean translators are not free from time and space constraints because they mainly work in Korea. Fortunately, most of the Korean translators work in academic institutions like universities, so some cooperation is possible with people who can help in Romania, mainly those who work at local universities. However, direct and close cooperation between the translator and the local publisher should be more firmly established. This is because translators and publishers must maintain a 'cooperative partnership' until the translation process is complete.

The fourth problem is also related to some of the issues raised during publication. These issues should be solved with a more specific and visible roadmap through cooperation with literary institutions in Korea such as LTI. The ultimate goal of translation is to reproduce the original text for readers of other cultures. In other words, the real goal of translation can be regarded as the transformation of the original text into other cultures. In general, publishers are not satisfied with accurate and simple translation. They expect the challenge of translators to place the commercial value of the translation higher than the literary value of the original text. For publishers, translation is a process of literary manipulation, as Kim Ji-won said (2004, 67). Romanian publishers are, of course, also impressed by the translations that are of interest to readers. For publishers, the most important consideration is not the introduction of a good literary work, but the introduction of a work that meets the interests and intellectual needs of the reader. However, for the translators, it is a pity that there is a lack of information related to Romanian publishing. Most of the translators argue that there are some difficulties in the process of contact with publishers in Romania.<sup>16</sup> The way to raise the image of Korea and its cultural background can play an important role in the spread of translated Korean literatures in Romania. But this is an extremely long

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<sup>16</sup> To quote from Oum Tae Hyun, who has been actively translating recently, "*Romanian publishing companies do not have much interest in Korean literature yet, and prefer only marketable literary works due to small Romanian publishing market. In other words, they are so commercial that there are many difficulties in the spread of Korean literatures. In addition, due to the structure of the publishing industry in Romania, it is impossible to introduce translated Korean literature through a consistent publishing company because of the frequent change of staff due to hard work of editing and low wages. Furthermore, most Romanian publishers prefer western literary works, and are particularly interested in Japanese and Chinese works among Asian literatures*" Oum Tae Hyun (22 November 2019) Kwak Dong Hun Personal interview.

process, and much effort and investment must be supported. Therefore, it is necessary to take a strategic approach to how to help translators technically with short-term efforts, that is, to help effectively find publishers. For example, the professional management of literary foundations or institutions, including LTI in Korea, and the establishment of effective programs can form the basis for efficient support. In particular, LTI should be interested in developing programs that can attract the attention of major publishers in Romania, and play a more specific role in promoting Korean literature.<sup>17</sup> The publication is not just about the introduction of a good book, but also seeks positive responses and favorable reviews from readers. In particular, the success of translation literature publication depends on how much literary inspiration and novelty are provided to overseas readers. Romanian publishers keep this in mind as well, so no matter how good Korean literary work is, it is difficult to publish a work that cannot convey inspiration to readers in Romania. Korean literary institutions generally expect the works of Korean celebrities to be translated and spread abroad. One misconception, however, is that the value and reputation of literary works in Korea can create a common consensus abroad. The criteria for evaluating literary values emphasized by various institutions in Korea need to be transformed into more global standards. A German master writer, Goethe left the words, "*What's the most nationalistic is the most international*" and his words can be understood as literary works with many of the most unique characteristics of Korea can also work in the world literature world. However, it is difficult to persuade publishers who expect to sell their publications to have a consensus on this. If literary institutions in Korea have direct interests and policies in the Romanian publishing market in order to encourage the acquisition of Korean literature, translators will be able to have a wider choice of translation strategies. In the relationship between translators and publishers described as 'collaborative conflict', institutions like LTI are hoped to intervene and energize translators' activities. Among many literary institutions, LTI has played a very important role in promoting excellent Korean literature to Romania and the world. But clearly there is a need for changes for the better.

## 5. Conclusion

Translation is the most basic act of communicating in a world where language barriers exist. Linguistic obstacles in communication due to differences

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<sup>17</sup> LTI's main businesses, 'translation support' and 'publishing support', are determined based on a publishing contract between the translator and the publisher. In other words, the support of LTI is determined after the translator's publishing contract is concluded, and it is a pain for translators who have little information about the publishing market.

in languages are coordinated and compromised by the active intervention and role of the translator. Literature is a kind of universal cultural heritage combined with the intellectual, artistic and social lifestyle of each society. Introducing this cultural complex, that is, literature and impregnating people from other languages with the value of our Korean literature, begin with the correct translation. Therefore, by the translators who are the literary missionary, Korean literature can be widely spread abroad and also Korean literature can make its own place in the overseas publishing market with its own voice.

The expansion of popularity and recognition of Korean literature in Romania is still far from distant. The reality of Korean literature, which has been absolutely undervalued compared to Chinese and Japanese literature, is related to the lack of specialized translators. Since Korean classical poetry was introduced to Romania through retranslation by the Romanian poet Baconsky in 1960, Korean literature was delivered for a while with limited relativity to original works by relying on retranslation. It was an important watershed in the history of Korean literature in Romania that translation work started by Koreans, not Romanians. They have been able to transfigure the very Korean emotions and values inherent in Korean literature into universal values through joint translations with Romanian collaborators, creating synergies in the development of Korean translation literature. The translation of Korean literature in Romania has made great progress in terms of quantity and quality, and the fact that the some authors with very Korean characteristics, such as Hwang Soon-won and Park Wan-suh, were also introduced, suggests that the translator's capabilities and know-how are at a considerable level.

Besides the linguistic ability of translators, what has a significant impact on the success of translation is how much they understand and perceive Korean culture and culture of the respective country. This is because translation is the process of rewriting text in other languages according to cultural values. The number of professional translators who are fluent in Korean in the Romanian translation space, who can understand well Korean literature and culture and work on translations independently is insufficient. This means that there is also a lack of specialists who can evaluate the results after the translation. In order to train Korean literary translators efficiently, more active support and consistent attention from various institutions in the field of Korean literature such as the LTI are required. Instead of focusing only on the spread of Korean literature, much time and effort should be invested in training those with the potential of professional translators in Romania. Support strategies are needed to present these institutions' available means and resources in place.

The growth of Korean translation literature depends on the endogenous growth of professional translators in Romania. For this purpose,



the role of local universities is given priority. The field of translation should be regarded as an independent discipline, and strengthened as an interdisciplinary study. Educators working in Korean studies should build and present more systematic and scientific translation learning directions.

It is hoped that the dawn of the Korean Wave of literature between Korea and Romania, where language and cultural barriers exist, will improve the status of Korean literature and enhance the national image in Romania. To this day, Kipling's 'Jungle Book' still influences the image of India. Kunczik Michael said that literary works have a profound effect on the formation of images of peoples and nations in other countries.<sup>18</sup> His words suggest much to translators who should act as literary missionaries.

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<sup>18</sup> Kunczik said in his book, 'Images of Nations and International Public Relations', many British literary writers dealing with the history of imperialism have emphasized frequently the merits of imperialism, and in their literary works imperialist heroes were depicted as gentlemen and courageous characters as adventurers (Kunczik 2008, 14-15).

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