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Vasilev, Todor

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# Specifics and origin of the Bulgarian vocative case and the difficulties of translating it in languages where it is not present:

## Case study of the Bulgarian historical novel “Under the Yoke” and its various translations

ヴァシレブ, トドル

Vasilev, Todor

### 概要

本論文では、ブルガリア語の呼格について検討する。この文法的特徴は、何世紀にもわたって他の名詞格が失われてきたにもかかわらず、ブルガリア語独特のものである。呼格の歴史的な変遷を探り、古教会スラブ語におけるその起源と、現代ブルガリア語における継続的な使用をたどる。また、他のスラブ諸語、ギリシャ語、アラビア語、そして日本語など、他の言語における類似の構文とブルガリア語の呼格を比較し、呼格を持たない言語への翻訳の難しさを明らかにする。ブルガリアの歴史小説『軛の下で』とその英語、フランス語、スペイン語、ロシア語、日本語への翻訳のケーススタディを通して、文法的特徴として呼格が存在しない言語で呼格を表現するための様々な翻訳方法を分析する。その結果、直訳を維持する言語がある一方で、訳者の判断によって語彙の省略や置き換えの程度に差はあれ、語彙を適応させる言語もあると結論づけた。本研究は、翻訳不可能な文法的特徴が、言語間翻訳においてどのように扱われるかについての理解に貢献するものである。

### Keywords

Vocative case, Bulgarian, Case inflection, Translation studies, Translation theory, Cross-linguistic analysis, Contrastive linguistics

### 1. Introduction

In every language the concept of addressing someone exists as a grammatical category. However, few languages modify sentence structure, alter word endings or employ specific words when addressing

someone, particularly words whose meaning cannot be conveyed in other languages (i.e. untranslatable words). This phenomenon is typically referred to in linguistics as the vocative case.

In this paper the vocative case will be explored in the context of Bulgarian where it is the only case presently used out of the original 7 noun cases that existed in Classical Bulgarian. This work will shed light on its specific features and usage, while also introducing other languages where the vocative case is used in a similar manner. It will also trace its roots to Classical Bulgarian and closely follow its adaptation into the modern language. A speculation will be made on why it is the only case that is actively used in the present day.

Furthermore, to clearly present the contrast between languages that make use of the vocative case and those that do not, examples of the vocative case from the historical novel *Under the Yoke* by Ivan Vazov will be provided and analyzed, as well as it will be explored how they are translated in English, French, Spanish, Russian and Japanese. The novel offers numerous examples of vocative usage, making it an ideal basis for examining how this grammatical feature is rendered in languages with different grammatical systems. By doing so, this paper aims to illustrate the importance of understanding those grammatical nuances and how they influence the translation process.

## 2. The issue of translating the vocative case

Translating the vocative case from languages that employ it to languages that do not remains an underexplored issue in translation studies, the reason for that being the difficulty of rendering an existing grammatical feature into a language where it virtually doesn't exist. As previously mentioned, the concept of addressing someone exists in every language; however, noun declensions or vocative case markers only exist in some languages, which turns the translation of the vocative case into a nearly impossible task.

As such, the most common translation strategy that is observed is replacing the vocative case with the nominative in the target language (from hereafter, the TL). This strategy aims to preserve original meaning of the source text (from hereafter, the ST) while maintaining the concept of direct address in the TL.

A researcher who has explored the topic of translating the vocative is Peter Newmark. In his book "A Textbook of Translation," he touches upon the pragmatic adjustments that translators often make when dealing with languages that lack specific grammatical cases, including the vocative. Newmark states:

When translating languages that have a vocative case into those that do not, the nominative often replaces the vocative. This substitution maintains the directness of address while fitting the grammatical norms of the target language (Newmark, 1988: 99).

While Newmark's theory on translating grammatical cases provides a foundational perspective, it is complemented by Eugen Nida's focus on equivalence, which highlights the balance between linguistic accuracy and cultural readability (Nida, 1969). Nida proposes dynamic and formal equivalence, where the former focuses on the form and content of the message, and aims to be as close as possible to the original text, while the latter is more reader-oriented and aims to convey the message of the ST as easy to understand as possible. In translating the vocative, it can be said that choosing to retain it falls under formal equivalence, whereas adapting it to the specifics of the TL counts as dynamic equivalence.

More recently, Ratnasari et al. explore the way the vocative case is translated in *The Hobbit* from English (where they argue it is marked by *O* preceding a proper noun) into Indonesian. They summarize their findings into a few distinct translation strategies. This paper will follow the same pattern and attempt to provide a list of predominantly used translation techniques when translating the vocative from Bulgarian to languages where it is not present. (Ratnasari et al. 2016)

With this in mind, while replacing the vocative with the nominative seems as the easiest and most practical decision, translators also have the option not to do so, provided that the TL allows them to. For example, the following adjustment is possible in Japanese.

- (1) a. 彼は少年です。

kare wa shounen desu  
*He is a boy.*

In this sentence, the noun 少年(shounen) serves as the nominative. However, adding the particle よ(yo) after the noun can function as a vocative case, often adding emphasis or drawing attention.

- (1) b. 少年よ、ここに来てください。

Shounen yo, koko ni kite kudasai  
*Boy, please come here.*

Here, 少年よ(shounen yo) is used to directly address the boy adding a sense of urgency or an emphasis. In contrast, 少年(shounen) alone would just state the a state of being without directly addressing the person in question. As such, it can be argued that よ(yo) succeeding a noun in Japanese has a function similar to the vocative case.

This research thus aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are the morphological, phonological, syntactic and semantic features of the vocative case in the Bulgarian language?
2. What other languages employ the vocative case and how does their use of it differ from that of the vocative in Bulgarian?
3. What other ways of translating the vocative besides replacing it with the nominative are seen in the English, French, Spanish, Russian and Japanese translations of the Bulgarian historical novel?

### 3. Historical Background

From a diachronic perspective, modern Bulgarian is thought to have derived from Old Church Slavonic, which is the predecessor of modern Slavic languages. Old Church Slavonic used to have seven noun case systems, with the vocative being one of them.

In their article titled “Countability, agreement and the loss of the dual in Russian” (2018), Stepanov and Stateva examine from a cross-linguistic point of view the loss of the dual form in the Russian and Bulgarian language. Old Church Slavonic used to have three noun forms (singular, dual, and plural) with seven noun cases – nominative, vocative, accusative, instrumental, dative, genitive, and locative. In their paper they explain that the gradual loss of the dual form first targeted the forms in oblique cases, since old Russian inherited the seven-case system from the Old Church Slavonic and subsequently lost the vocative, retaining the other six cases (Stepanov and Stateva 2018:788).

Bulgarian, on the other hand, not only lost the dual form, but also all of the noun cases with the exception of the vocative. In his study called “The loss of case inflection in Bulgarian and Macedonian” (2015), Max Wahlström identifies several factors contributing to the decline of the case systems inherited from the Old Church Slavonic were lost, the main ones being sound changes that led to sound homonymy (2015: 87), Balkan Slavic not developing alternative strategies to revive lost distinctions caused by sound changes (2015:96), contact with other languages such as Albanian and Greek (2015:98), the very high amount of L2 speakers, who reduced the morphological complexity of the language (2015:107) and also potentially the rise of the definite article (2015: 182).

As for the vocative, there is a certain debate about whether it should be considered a case or not. Those in favor of excluding it claim that it does not mark grammatical relations and thus does not act as a dependent but is rather used as a form of address. Max Wahlström also notes a significant dependency

between the vocative and nominative, which is an asymmetrical one - the vocative is often replaced with the nominative, while the other way around is not common (p. 10).

Nevertheless, the reason why the vocative case remained in use while the official case system was corroded, remains mainly hypothesized and unanswered. Other linguists, in addition to Wahlström have also examined the development of the Bulgarian case system. In his book called “The Slavonic Languages” (1933), Bernard Comrie traces Bulgarian’s historical evolution from Proto-Slavonic to Modern Bulgarian. He discusses that Bulgarian shifted from a synthetic to an analytical language and lost its case system in the process. However, he doesn’t touch on the reason as to why the vocative remained in use, which also proves Wahlström’s hypothesis that the vocative may not be considered a case. For example, R.M.W. Dixon’s book “*Basic Linguistic Theory*” (2010) classifies it more as a pragmatic feature, which has survived the changes of the language because it serves a clear communicative function. Paul Kiparsky’s work on linguistic change backs this hypothesis up by stating that languages often simplify complex systems over time and the simpler forms tend to be retained. He illustrates this by exploring what linguistic categories have been left out from Old Church Slavonic in modern Polish and what haven’t (1968).

#### 4. The Vocative Case in Bulgarian

With reference to some previous studies on the topic, this study will try to sort out what functions the Bulgarian vocative case fulfills.

##### 4.1. Morphological features

- a) *Suffixation*. The vocative case in Bulgarian is marked by a special suffix attached to the base form of a noun, limited to masculine and feminine singular nouns. The masculine nouns take the suffix -e (e) or -ю (yu) and the feminine ones take -o (o) and -e (e).

It is also worth noting that it is used mainly for human names and titles and professions. The way the vocative is used to address people based on their profession will be further investigated in section 6. Furthermore, according to Leafgreen in his book titled *A concise Bulgarian Grammar*, it is never used on family names. (1918:37)

Additionally, according to Osenova and Simov (2002: 2), it is strictly restricted to second person and is treated within the opposition of the vocative vs nominative form paradigm.

- b) *Absence of vocative for neuter and plural form nouns*. As they do not have a distinct vocative form, it is replaced by the nominative case upon direct address. This is in agreement with the aforementioned statement by Osenova and Simov, claiming that the vocative is restricted to the second person only.

##### 4.2. Phonological features

- a) *Vowel harmony*. In the case of masculine nouns, depending on whether the ending consonant is soft or hard, the inflectional ending that they take also differs. This results in both vowel harmony and consonant softening.
- b) *Stress change*. In the case of multi-syllabic words (or rather, names), the stress of the vocative form may shift in order to maintain the natural stress pattern of the word (or name).

However, since this work focuses primarily on the way the vocative is translated in literary texts, this paper will not touch on the topic of phonology any further. Instead, this paper examines the syntactic features of the vocative which play a crucial role in sentence structuring and even more so when translating the said sentences.

##### 4.3. Syntactic features

- a) *Marking direct address*. The primary syntactic function of the Bulgarian vocative is to mark direct

address. Additionally, it is typically not integrated within the syntactic structure of the sentence; rather, it is normally positioned outside of the clause as a form of direct interaction between the speaker and the listener.

- (2) Тодорe, прочети това.  
Todore, procheti tova.  
TodorØ, read this.

The underscore denotes the use of the vocative in Bulgarian and its subsequent omission within the English translation of the sentence.

- b) *Position within the sentence.* While it does usually appear at the beginning of the sentence, the vocative may also be used in the middle or in the end of it, depending on the emphasis or emotional effect that the speaker aims to achieve.

- (3) Прочети това, Тодоре.  
Procheti tova, Todore.  
Read this, TodorØ.

If the vocative were to be placed in the middle of the sentence, then it would roughly look as follows:

- (4) Погледни този текст, Тодоре, и го прочети.  
Pogledni tozi tekst, Todore, i go procheti.  
Look at this text, TodorØ, and read it.

These two examples show that the placement of the vocative is not restricted to the beginning of the sentence, but the nuances that each sentence conveys differ based on its position. For instance, (2) and (3) both sound authoritarian and commanding, although (3) has a stronger emotional emphasis due to the vocative being placed at the end of the sentence. On the other hand, (4) may sound slightly condescending, especially if the speaker's intonation is calm.

#### 4.4. Semantic features

- a) *Predominant informal usage.* The Bulgarian vocative is mostly used in an informal context, for example when addressing friends or family members. In a formal setting, especially depending on the addressee, it may be considered rude or inappropriate. In such cases the nominative case is used to convey a more neutral and sometimes respectful tone.

- (5) Тодоре, помогни ми.  
Todore, pomogni mi.  
Todor, help me.
- (6) Тодор, бихте ли ми помогнал?  
Todor, bihte li mi pomognal?  
Todor, would you mind helping me?

As illustrated by those examples, the vocative falls out when using formal speech and expressing politeness towards the addressee. On the other hand, in an informal setting, not using the vocative sounds slightly unnatural and implies a feeling of distance from the listener. This is tightly related to the next point.

- b) *Emotional involvement*. The Bulgarian vocative is often used to regulate emotional intensity or to express urgency and/or emphasis. It is commonly used when drawing attention or expressing familiarity. This is well illustrated in (5) where a feeling of urgency is conveyed to the addressee.

## 5. Languages that Employ the Vocative Case

The most notable examples of the vocative are found in fellow Slavic languages (many of which are also believed to be derived from Old Church Slavonic), as well as Latin and Modern Greek. In addition to exploring the vocative case (and how its usage differs from that in Bulgarian), one more language's vocative will be introduced – the case of Arabic, which is not an Indo-European language and thus provides an interesting insight about how the vocative case is used in languages from a different linguistic branch.

### 5.1. Polish

Polish has a seven-case system which also includes the vocative case. The vocative in Polish is frequently used in everyday speech to express direct address, just as the Bulgarian vocative. According to OE Swan's Polish grammar book, oftentimes the nominative case functions as a de facto Vocative (which is another thing it shares in common with Bulgarian), however it becomes obligatory in conjunction with titles. (2003:543)

The vocative in Polish has distinct endings depending on the gender, as well as the number of nouns; whereas the masculine nouns take the -e or -u endings (Marek – Marku), feminine nouns take the -o or -i ending (Aleksandra – Aleksandro). Neuter nouns do not change, which is another feature it shares with Bulgarian.

However, a significant difference in the usage of the vocative in both languages is the width of the scope with which it is used – for example, Polish's vocative has a much wider range of usage and can be used to address even inanimate objects, whereas in Bulgarian this is rarely (if ever) done. Additionally, Polish has a plural vocative form which Bulgarian lacks, and uses the vocative even in formal situations, which is very rarely seen in Bulgarian. This might explain a higher percentage of vocative case marking in Polish than in Bulgarian.

The comparative frequency of vocative usage in Polish and Bulgarian sheds light on how cultural and linguistic factors influence the preservation and functionality of grammar cases. While Polish does employ the vocative in a wider range of contexts, such as addressing inanimate objects as well as in formal situation, Bulgarian restricts the usage of the vocative primarily to an informal setting. Future research is required to explore whether the different patterns in usage affect translation practices or the survivability of a grammatical feature.

### 5.2. Czech

Similarly to Bulgarian and Polish, the vocative in Czech doesn't give us any information about grammatical relationships of any kind, as it has an entirely pragmatic purpose – to inform us of a person addressing someone else.

It is marked by -e or -u endings in masculine nouns (Petr – Petre) and -o and -e for feminine nouns. (Marie – Mario). It does not have a plural form, similarly to Bulgarian. In their book called *The Case Book for Czech*, Clancy and Janda claim that the vocative in Czech is a defective case both grammatically and formally and can hardly even be considered a case at all (2006:148). Wahlström, as previously in section 3, also makes the same claim for the vocative in Bulgarian.

A minor yet meaningful difference between Czech's vocative and Bulgarian's vocative is the kinds of nouns that it can be used for. As previously mentioned, while that scope is rather narrow in Bulgarian, that is not the case in Czech, where the vocative can be used for far more nouns.

### 5.3. Serbian, Bosnian, Croatian

The Serbo-Croatian language, which is spoken in Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Montenegro, has also retained the vocative system and uses it with a higher consistency than Bulgarian. According to Lila

Hammond, masculine and neuter nouns remain the same as the nominative in the vocative case. (2005:140) In addition to that, she claims that it is often preceded by an exclamation, which is not necessarily the case in the languages I listed so far, Bulgarian included. However, the combination of an exclamation and the vocative from a cross-linguistic standpoint will be further explored in the case study analysis in section 6.

The main difference between the Bulgarian vocative and the Serbo-Croatian one arises in its usage in both formal and informal situations, which, as previously stated multiple times, is not the case in Bulgarian where it usually only occurs in informal situations. The Serbo-Croatian vocative entails many ways to formally address someone while expressing respect and politeness to them.

#### 5.4. Latin

While the vocative case is virtually absent from Romance languages today, it was actually present and widely used in the Latin language, which they derive from. According to Csonotos in his work titled *Compendium of Latin Grammar*, In Latin, the vocative case endings are the same as the nominative, except for the second declension nouns ending in -us, which change in -e (example: Et tu, Brute?). (1991:26)

The vocative in Latin was much more consistently used and could be applied to both animate and inanimate objects. Additionally, it was applied to all noun types. The transition from Latin, which actively employed a vocative case, to modern Romance languages where it is absent and replaced by the nominative for direct address, highlights a broader trend of case simplification in languages. This evolution is particularly relevant when translating from languages where the vocative is present, such as Bulgarian, into Romance languages. Understanding this historical shift provides insights into how translators navigate the loss of explicit grammatical markers, opting instead for pragmatic equivalents.

#### 5.5. Greek

Modern Greek retains the vocative case which has survived from Classical Greek to this day. As it is not a Slavic language like the ones I presented from 5.1. to 5.3., the formation and usage of its vocative is slightly different from that of Slavic languages. Masculine nouns take -a or -e endings, whereas feminine nouns either take -o ending or remain the same as the nominative. According to Holton, a word in the vocative may, in the context of a informal situation, be preceded by the exclamatory words  $\mu\omega\rho\acute{\epsilon}$  (moré),  $\rho\epsilon^1$  (re),  $\beta\rho\epsilon^2$  (vre) which are uninflected for case, number, and gender. (2016:77)

What distinguishes Greek's vocative is its poetic usage, as the vocative forms appear in more varied settings, including addressing abstract concepts, objects and in poetic language. In poetic language it is often used to address inanimate nouns.

#### 5.6. Arabic

Arabic employs a form of direct address, though it functions differently from the Indo-European vocative case. In his work titled *The Syntax of Arabic Vocatives*, Hussein explains that it is introduced by the particle يا (ya), placed before the noun. (2020: 2)

(7) يا محمد<sup>3</sup>

Ya, Muhammad

Oh, Muhammad

<sup>1</sup> This is a colloquial or informal vocative particle, commonly used in casual or familiar speech. It does not have a direct translation in English but is used to address someone informally, similar to “hey” or “man”.

<sup>2</sup> Similar to  $\rho\epsilon$ , this is also a vocative particle used informally to get someone's attention or as a casual address. It is often used in the same way as  $\rho\epsilon$ , especially in informal or familiar contexts.

<sup>3</sup> Please note that Arabic script is read from right to left, hence why the particle يا appears to be placed after the noun in the example provided.



The usage of exclamations to mark the vocative correlates with the example I provided at (1b) (少年よ). This point will be further examined in the next section, as this strategy seems to be frequently used by translators to mark the vocative in a language where it doesn't exist.

Arabic's vocative is used in both formal and informal contexts. Additionally, one unique trait of the Arabic's vocative is that it is often used in religious contexts, like prayers or invocations.

## 6. Case Study

In order to effectively examine the way that the vocative has been translated into languages where it is not marked by a specific noun case, analysis will be conducted of the Bulgarian historical novel *Under the Yoke* and its translations into English, Japanese, French, Russian and Spanish – all of these languages which were not brought up in the previous section due to their lack of an actively used vocative case.

This study adopts a comparative analysis of *Under the Yoke* and its translations into five languages. By examining passages containing the vocative case, the study identifies translation strategies and evaluates their effectiveness in preserving the communicative function of the original text.

*Under the Yoke* is Bulgaria's first novel after gaining independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1878. It was written by Ivan Vazov and published in 1888. The novel depicts the last years of Bulgaria being a part of the Ottoman Empire, the independence movement and the preparations for the April Uprising and its subsequent crush by the Ottoman forces.

The novel *Under the Yoke* was chosen due to its historical significance as the first Bulgarian novel, as well as its rich usage of the vocative case, which reflects the language usage of the specific time period. Its numerous translations into languages that employ or don't employ the vocative case provide a unique opportunity to analyze various translation strategies.

Table 1: Translation versions used in this paper

Translation	Title	Translator	Original Year	Publisher	Publish year
Original text	Под Игото	Ivan Vazov (writer)	1888	Български писател (Balgarski pisatel)	1978
English version	Under the Yoke	Edmund Gosse	1912	Legare Street Press	2016
Spanish version	Bajo el Yugo	Todor Neicov	1961	Editorial de libros en lenguas extranjeras	1961
Russian version	Под Игом	Melitina Klyagina-Kondratyeva, V. Volodin, Yakov Slonin	1970	Художественная литература	1970
Japanese version	軛の下で	Matsunaga Rokuya	1973	Kobunsha	1973
French version	Sous le Joug	Marie Vrinat-Nikolov	2007	Fayard	2007

Upon analyzing the ways that direct speech including the vocative case has been translated in various languages, a few prevalent translation strategies stood out. In addition to that, a few more properties of the vocative in the case of Bulgarian, which were not mentioned in section 4, became clear. They will all be explored in the next few sections by providing an example for every one of the patterns that were noticed.

When analyzing the work and its various translations, the vocative in the ST will be highlighted in bold and the noun marked by the vocative case will be underlined. The nouns in the respective translations will

be underscored as well. Elements which are not present in the ST but have been added due to the translator's discretion will be marked by a double underscore.

In addition to that, an English translation will be provided for the original text French and Russian translations.

#### 6.1. Word order shift

In these next two passages, two Turkish men stumble upon a miller's hut in the middle of a severe storm. They ask to be let inside but the miller is reluctant to let them in, which leads to them addressing him in a rather rude manner.

In section 4.3. I touched upon the importance of the vocative's position within the sentence, as the nuances it conveys might differ depending on where it is located. As previously explained, placing the vocative at the end of the sentence denotes a feeling of urgency and emotional emphasis. Regardless of this, in the next passage the vocative is placed in the beginning of the sentence in the original text. However, that is not the case for some of the translations.

(8) BG : -Воденичарю, отвори! - извикаха по турски. (p. 17) (*Miller, open! – they screamed in Turkish*)

EN : Open the door, miller!” cried someone in Turkish. (p. 10)

JP : 「粉屋、あけろ！」とトルコ語で叫ぶ声がした。(p.22)

FR : Ouvre, meunier! - cria-t-on en turc. (*Open, miller! – they screamed in Turkish.*) (p. 20)

RU : —Эй, мельник, отопри! — крикнул кто-то по-турецки. (p. 15) (*Hey, miller, open! – someone yelled in Turkish*)

ES : -Abre, molinero! - gritaron en turco. (p. 11) (*Open, miller! – they yelled in Turkish.*)

As seen in this example, while the Japanese and Russian versions have stayed true to the original text, the English, French and Russian translators have put the noun at the end of the sentence. While the reasons behind each translator's choice to invert the sentence structure remain unclear, it can be inferred that emotional emphasis and urgency are conveyed differently across languages.

Another interesting element in this example is the addition of an exclamation word by the Russian translator. Using exclamation can be considered one way to effectively translate the vocative into a language where it doesn't exist and it will be explored further in the next sections.

In the next passage I would like to introduce a noun ending which I did not bring up in section 4. (as it is far less common and rarely used). In addition to the inversion translation strategy, the nuance it holds will also be further explored.

(9) BG : -Защо не отваряш, воденичарино? - попита той. (p. 18) (*Why don't you open, miller? [vodenichar-ino] – he asked*)

EN : Why didn't you open, miller?” he asked. (p. 11)

JP : 「粉屋、どうして開けなかったのだ？」とエメクシズがたずねた。(p.23)

FR : Pourquoi n'ouvres-tu pas, menuier? demanda-t-il. (p. 21) (*Why don't you open, miller? He asked.*)

RU : —Отвечай, мельник, почему не открывал? — спросил он. (p. 15) (*Answer, miller, why didn't you open? – he asked.*)

ES : ¿Por que no abías, molinero? - preguntó. (p. 12) (*Why didn't you open, miller?*)

The noun ending **-ino**, present only in the ST, was not previously discussed in section 4. It is a rather rare form which usually shows contempt and can be quite disrespectful towards the addressee; it is normally affixed to insults or name-calling. This is yet another delicate detail of the vocative in Bulgarian, and, as can be seen, has been lost in all of the translations (it is however worthy to point out that this detail is not necessarily relevant as far as the story progression goes).

A feminine noun alternative for the **-ino** ending also exists in modern Bulgarian (and can also be considered equally rude and disrespectful). It will be explored in section 6.7.

## 6.2. Absence in loanwords

In section 4 I outlined the noun endings for feminine and masculine nouns for the Bulgarian vocative case. I also pointed out that there is no distinct noun ending for the neuter and plural nouns and their function is carried out by the nominative.

What I didn't touch upon, however, is how the vocative is applied when the noun is not a part of the Bulgarian lexicon, i.e. a loanword. As seen in the next example, foreign-origin words, whether if they are a masculine, feminine or a neuter noun, remain in their nominative form when used to mark the addressee in the sentence.

(10) BG: -Мухтар, ела тук! (*Mouhtar, come here!*) (p. 177)

EN: "Mayor, just come here" (p. 139)

JP: 「<sup>ムフタル</sup>村長、ここへこい！」 (p. 207)

FR: «Moukhtar(1), viens ici!» (p.204) (*Moukhtar, come here!*)

1. Maire d'un village dans l'Empire musulman. (*Village mayor in the Muslim Empire*)

RU: — Староста, иди сюда! (*Chief, come here!*) (p. 114)

ES: - Mujtar, ven aquí. (*Mujtar, come here!*) (p. 173)

As explained by a footnote in the French version, *mouhtar* means mayor in Ottoman Turkish, and because of its noun ending, it would be considered a masculine noun in Bulgarian. However, as visible in this passage, it has not acquired the vocative suffix and has remained in the nominative form. This rule also holds true for other loanwords from different languages and can be considered one more specific trait of the Bulgarian vocative case.

## 6.3. Retention of the original form

In certain cases, the translator has chosen to keep the vocative case ending in the target text. While by doing so they might potentially confuse their readers when the vocative ending appears instead of the nominative without any prior explanation, it can be said that it is one translation strategy which remains as close to the original as possible. Such is the case in the following two passages.

In this next example, a few young people are at a gathering and are throwing jests at each other in the form of poems. As such, the receiving end of the jest (in this case, a character named Ivan), has to be addressed directly.

(11) BG: "Иване, мечка пуствяла,  
Иване, дълги саръко!"  
(*Ivane, you desolate bear,*  
*Ivane, lanky clothes-prop!*) (p. 170)  
EN: "Ivan, you shaggy, old she-bear,  
*Ivan, you lanky clothes-prop!*" (p.132)  
JP: "イワンさん、おまえは<sup>メチカ</sup>痩せこけた熊"

イワンさん、おまえは物干し竿。”（p.199）

- FR : “Ivan, ours efflanqué,  
Ivan, bâton allongé”  
*(Ivan, gaunt bear;  
Ivan, elongated stick)* (p.196)
- RU : “Иване, медведь худущий,  
Иване, как шест длиннуций...”  
*(Ivane, skinny bear;  
Ivane, like a long pole...)* (p. 109)
- ES: Iván, el viejo oso,  
Iván, el largo tronco.  
*(Ivan, the old bear;  
Ivan, the long trunk.)* (p.166)

In this passage, the retention of the vocative has taken place in the Russian translation, where the noun ending -e has not been removed by the translator and has been left as in the ST, despite the Russian language not having a similar case inflection. Another curious translation method is adding the honorific -san (さん) in the Japanese translation, which is usually used to express respect, despite the jest towards Ivan being rather rude. This addition provides a fascinating example of how honorifics can be used pragmatically in order to convey layered meanings. In this case, the honorific may simultaneously express a degree of respect and sarcasm, highlighting the speaker's complex attitude towards the addressee. This duality seen in Japanese honorifics is particularly effective in preserving the emotional intensity of the Bulgarian vocative, even if the grammatical function differs. Such a choice reflects the translator's ability to adapt culturally specific elements into the TL.

As mentioned in section 2, Eugene Nida (1969) proposes the concept of formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence, where the former emphasizes a word-for-word translation approach, aiming to retain the structure and content of the source text as closely as possible. Its opposite, dynamic equivalence, focuses on conveying the meaning and effect of the source text in a way that feels natural and clear to the target audience, often prioritizing readability over literal accuracy. In this particular case, the retention of the vocative case noun can be considered a clear example of formal equivalence.

#### 6.4. Replacing or omitting the noun

In some cases, the translators have chosen to either replace the vocative case inflected noun or to omit it entirely, in order to convey the message of the sentence in a more natural manner to their target audience.<sup>4</sup> These two techniques will be examined in the next two examples. The first example actually consists of two vocative cases; however, the first one has been entirely replaced by the nominative in all translations. The second vocative, however, is subject to various translation methods. In the case where the noun has been replaced, it will be highlighted with a wavy line.

- (12) BG : - Радо, тая църната има мустачета. Оти ги не фърга?  
 Рада се усмихна неволно:  
 -Мълчи, сестро. (p. 368)  
*(-Rado, this black one has moustaches. Why doesn't she shave them?  
 Rada smiled involuntarily.*

<sup>4</sup> This is consistent with Nida's concept of dynamic equivalence, which was introduced in the previous subsection

-*Quiet, sister.*)

EN : "Rada, the old cat's got whiskers. Why doesn't she shave them?"

Rada smiled involuntarily. "Hush, dear." (274)

JP : 「ラーダ、あの尼さんにゃひげがあるよ。どうして判らないんだろうね？」

ラーダは思わず微笑した。

「しっ！黙って」 (p. 435)

FR : Rada, c'te vieille en noir, elle a des moustaches. Pourquoi qu'elle les rase pas?

Rada ne put s'empêcher de sourire.

-Tais toi, ma chère sœur. (p. 446)

(*Rada, that old lady in black, she's got whiskers. Why doesn't she shave them off?*

*Rada couldn't help smiling.*

-*Shut up, dear sister.*)

RU : —Рада, глянь-ка, а у этой чернухи-то усы растут! Чего она их не бреет?

Рада невольно усмехнулась.

—Молчи, сестра. (p. 236)

(-*Rada, look, that black woman has a mustache! Why doesn't she shave it?*

*Rada involuntarily grinned.*

-*Shut up, sister*)

ES : Rada, está, la negra, la monja, tiene bigote. ¿Por qué no se afeita?

Rada sonrió sin querer.

-Calla, hermana. (p. 374)

(*Rada, the black woman, the nun, has a mustache. Why doesn't she shave?*

*Rada smiled unintentionally.*

-*Shut up, sister.*)

In this passage, the second noun with a vocative ending is the word “sister”. However, as it is not possible to translate it word to word, the English translation has replaced the word with “dear”, while the Japanese translation has omitted it completely. Something similar can be seen in the next passage as well:

(13) BG: - Хъ, що думаш, булка Цанковице? Ами аз, като ще тръгвам за К....!- каза угрижено Райчин.

(*Hey, what are you saying, bride of Tsanko [Boulka Tsankovitse]? I'm to be off to K....!" said Raichin worriedly (...)*) (p. 174)

EN: “What are you talking of, Boulka\* Tsankovitsa - why, I'm off to K - tomorrow,” said Raichin, regretfully. (...)” (p. 136)

\* “Boulka” is the title given to a young or middle-aged wife, who on growing old exchanges it for “Baba,” grandmother. Both names are followed by the feminine derivative from the husband's name, thus Tsanko, Tsankovitsa; Avram, Avramitsa.

JP: 「そりゃほんとうですか、ツァンコヴィツァおばさん？でもおれは K へでかけるもんで・・・」とライチンが心配顔でいった。(p. 203)

FR: -Hm, qu'est-ce que tu racontes là? Et moi qui dois me rendre à K.! répondit Raïtchine, contrarié... (...) (p. 201)

(*Hm, what are you talking about? And I have to go to K.!" replied Raïtchine, annoyed...*)

RU: -Да что ты говоришь, Цанковица? А я завтра еду в К.! — огорченно проговорил Райчин.” (*What are you saying, Tsankovica? And I'm going to K. tomorrow! - Raichin said sadly.*) (p. 112)

ES: -¿Qué dices? Yo que tengo que ir mañana a K. - dijo, preocupado, Raichin.  
(*What do you say? I have to go to K tomorrow. - said, worried, Raichin.*)

Translating verbatim “boulka Tsankovitse” (lit. bride of Tsanko), where the vocative is used on the second noun, might be quite challenging across languages given their own case systems (or lack thereof) and grammatical categories. For that reason, this part has been omitted in the Spanish and French translations, and replaced by aunt, auntie (おばさん) in the Japanese version.

#### 6.5. Translation of nicknames and diminutive form

Diminutive forms are extremely common in Bulgarian and they are often suffixed to people’s names to express familiarity or affection. They function in a similar way to the suffixes ちゃん(-chan) or くん(-kun) in Japanese. They are combined with the vocative case, as they are very frequently used when addressing someone. This can make them very challenging to translate and translators often opt for the nominative form of the name without any diminutive form. There are some exceptions, however, introduced in the next two passages.

- (14) BG: — Иванчо! — викна той в сламеника.“ (*Ivancho! - he yelled in the shed.*) (p. 14)  
 EN: Ivancho!” He called in the shed.” (p. 14)  
 JP: 「イヴァンチョ」 マルコは干草置場にむかって叫んだ。(p. 18)  
 FR: «Ivantcho!(2)» cria-t-il dans la grange.” (“*Ivantcho!*” he shouted in the barn.) (p. 16)  
 2. Diminutif de «Ivan». En bulgare, les diminutifs sont extrêmement fréquents. (*Diminutive of “Ivan”. In Bulgarian, diminutives are extremely common.*)  
 RU: — Иванчо! — позвал он, заглянув на сеновал.“ (*-Ivancho!*” he called, peering into the hayloft.) (p. 13)  
 ES: ¡ Iván, Iván! - gritó en el pajar.” (*Ivan, Ivan! - he shouted in the haystack*) (p. 8)

Arguably the best way to stay as close as possible to the ST in this particular case is to use footnotes, like in the French translation. There, the translator has provided the necessary linguistic context so that the target audience can understand why the diminutive form is important and how it symbolizes the type of relationship the two speakers have with each other.

The English, Russian and Japanese translations have kept the original without explaining as to why did the character’s name suddenly changed and where the additional **-cho** came from. It is necessary to point out, however, that Russian has a similar diminutive form (although it doesn’t use this specific noun ending.)

The Spanish version has opted for the easiest way to convey the sentence, which is by simply replacing the diminutive form and the vocative with the nominative for of the person’s name.

- (15) BG: — Ти да си жив, Петърчо — каза му единият селянин.”  
 (‘*May you live, Petercho, one of the villagers said to him.*’) (p. 184)  
 EN: ‘Petr, my poor boy, God keep you from harm,’ \* said one of the peasants.” (p. 146)  
 \*The usual Oriental form of condolence when some fatal mishap has befallen a member of the family.  
 JP: 「気をしっかり持ってくれよ、ペータルチョ」と村人の一人がいった。” (p. 214)  
 FR: «Longue vie à toi, mon pauvre Peter», lui dit l’un d’eux.” (*Long life to you, my poor Peter, said one of them.*) (p.211)  
 RU: — Отдал богу душу, Петр, — сказал один крестьянин.” (- *You’ve given your soul to God, Pyotr, said one peasant.*) (p. 118)

ES: “- Vivé tú, Peter - le dijo uno de los campesinos.” (*You live, Peter, said one of the peasants.*)  
(p. 179)

The context behind this passage is that Petr’s father was brutally beaten to death by three Ottoman Turks who barged into their house. The villagers are thus expressing their condolences and sympathies to Petre, hence why they are using the diminutive form when talking to him. While the Japanese version has retained the original vocative ending, the French and English translators have taken the liberty of switching the diminutive and the vocative with “my poor boy” or “my poor Petr”. In her paper called 『固有名詞の翻訳方法について』 (*About translation strategies of proper nouns*), Fujinami (2002) proposes several methods of translating proper nouns, one of them being a phonetic transcription. (2002: 29) It is safe to assume that the translation of the diminutive form of Petr’s name in the Japanese version falls under this category.

In any case, the relationship between the vocative and the diminutive form in Bulgarian is undeniable and the most accurate way to translate it seems to be the usage of footnotes. In the next subsection we will explore another very common translation method.

#### 6.6. Replacing or combining the vocative with exclamation

Arguably one of the most common ways to translate the vocative that I found during the case study is the usage of language-specific exclamation words, either to replace it or to combine with the noun in order to carry out the same communicative function as the vocative. It will be illustrated with the following three examples.

In this first passage, a priest is referencing the Bible in Old Church Slavonic. There is a direct address towards women where the vocative is used.

(16) BG: — Ти знаеш ли там, дето казва: Жены, своимъ мужемъ повинуйтесь? И по-нататък: Сега ради вставить человекъ отца своего и матеръ и прилепится къ жени своей?  
(-Do you know where it says, Wives, obey your own husbands? And further, For whose sake shall a man put in his father and mother, and cleave unto his wife?) (p. 130)

EN: **Omitted**<sup>5</sup>

JP: 「あの中でこう書かれてある箇所を憶えておいでかな—『妻よ、夫に従うべし』それからまた—『かかる故に人は父母を離れ、その妻に会いて、二人のもの一体となるべし』と」”(p.151)

FR: -Est-ce que tu connais le passage où il est dit: Femmes, soyez soumises à vos maris. Et plus loin: C’est pourquoi l’homme abandonnera son père et sa mère et il s’attachera à sa femme.<sup>1</sup>  
(Do you know the passage where it says: Wives, be submissive to your husbands. And further: "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife.") (p. 150)

1. En slavon dans l’original. (*In Slavonic in the original.*)

RU: — Помнишь, как там сказано: «Жены, своим мужем повинуйтесь?» И дальше: «Сего ради оставит человек отца своего и матеръ свою и прилепится к жене своей?»  
(- Do you remember how it says, "Wives, obey your husbands?" And further: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife?") (p. 85)

ES: - ¿ Has leído allí donde se dice que las mujeres deben obedecer a su marido y más adelante

<sup>5</sup> By the translator and/or publisher’s discretion, certain parts of the novel have been omitted in the English version.

que al casarse el hombre abandone a su padre y a su madre y se una a su mujer?  
*(Have you read there where it is said that women should obey their husbands and further on that when a man marries, he should leave his father and mother and join his wife?)* (p. 127)

The Japanese translator has chosen to put the particle よ after the word for wives, putting emotional emphasis on the noun and using it to address wives in the same way they are allegedly addressed in the Bible. This corresponds to the example I provided in section 2.

Another very interesting choice is the Spanish translator's decision to avoid the vocative by changing the speech form from direct to indirect and thus avoiding the direct addressing of the noun. This is another plausible translation method of the vocative, although its scope of usage maybe somewhat narrow. In the next passage, more exclamation words and expressions are used to accompany the vocative.

(17) BG: — Пак жертва християнска! Пак кръв невинно пролитая! Доколе, Боже, поноситъ врагъ?... вскую отвращаеши десницу твою?... Востани, Боже!.. Суди... воздвигни руце твои на гордини ихъ въ конецъ!..”

*(-A Christian sacrifice again! Again blood innocently shed! How long, O God, dost thou bear the enemy?... all thou hast abhorred thy right hand?... Arise, O God! Judge... lift up thy hands upon their hills to the end...)* (p. 156)

EN: Yet another Christian victim - more innocent blood shed! How long, O Lord, shall the adversary reproach? ... Why withdrawest Thou Thy right hand? Arise, Lord, judge ! Lift up Thy hands against the haughty at last.” (p.122)

JP: 「またしてもキリスト教徒が一人犠牲になった！またしても無辜の血がここに流された！『神よ、敵はいくその時をふるまでそしるや？・・・いかなれば汝その右の手をひきたもうや？・・・神よ、おきて裁きたまえ！・・・今やおごれるものに汝の両の手をあげたまえ！・・・」」 (p. 182)

FR : «Encore une victime chrétienne! Encore un sang innocent qui a été versé! Jusqu'à quand, mon Dieu, faudra-t-il supporter l'ennemi?... Pourquoi détournes-tu de nous ta droite? Lève-toi, mon Dieu!... Juge!...Lève tes mains et mets fin à leur orgueil2.»

*(Another Christian victim! Another innocent blood shed! How long, my God, must we put up with the enemy?... Why do you turn your right hand away from us? Rise up, my God! Judge!...Raise your hands and put an end to their pride.)* (p.180)

1. Les phrases en italique sont en slavon dans le texte. (*Sentences in italics are in Slavonic in the text.*)

RU : — Еще одна христианская жертва! Опять невинно пролитая кровь!.. «Доколе, боже, поносит враг?.. Вскую отвращаеши десницу твою... Восстани, боже! Суди! Воздвигни руце твои на гордыню их в конец!»

*(Another Christian sacrifice! Another innocent spilled blood! "How long, O God, shall the enemy be reviled? "How long will you avert your right hand? Rise up, O God! Judge! Set thy hand upon their pride in the end.")* (p. 101)

ES: - ¡Otra víctima cristiana ! ¡Otra vez sangre inocente vertida! ¿Hasta cuándo, Dios, toleraremos al enemigo? ¿Por qué apartas de nosotros tu mano derecha? Levántate, Señor, y juzga - y le saludó e interrogó con interés, pero Ognianov, que quiso incorporarse, gimió de dolor.”

*(- Another Christian victim! Another innocent blood shed! How long, God, will we tolerate the enemy? Why do You take Your right hand away from us? Arise, Lord, and judge - and he greeted and questioned him with interest, but Ognianov, who wanted to sit up, groaned in*



*pain.*) (p. 152)

This passage contains a priest's reaction to finding out that yet another Bulgarian peasant has been killed by the Ottoman Turks. For that reason, he addresses the Christian God in Slavonic in the ST. Every time he addresses God, the vocative is used and is translated in various ways across the different translations.

What I find peculiar about this passage is that even if the vocative doesn't exist in some languages, the concept of addressing God directly and asking for help seems to be universal across languages and cultures. When doing so, lexical elements similar to the vocative are used (ex. “O Lord” in English and “my God”) in French. Furthermore, the Japanese particle よ (yo) is yet again used in the form of a vocative in this passage. It can be seen again in the next example.

(18) BG: -Чичо, оти гониш девойчето? - попита сърдито Стайка, като го не пуцаше. (p. 393)

(*Uncle, why are you chasing the lassie? – asked Staika angrily, not letting him go.*)

EN: “Guv’ner, what are you chasing the girl for?” asked Staika angrily, holding him.(p. 279)

JP: 「おじさんよ、あんたなんだってあの娘っ子をおっかけるんだね？」とスタイカはステフチョフの上着の裾をしっかりとつかんだまま怒った顔でたずねた。

FR: “Dis donc, pourquoi qu’tu poursuis c’tte fillette? Demanda Staika, qui, furieuse, ne le lâchait pas. (p. 453)

(*Tell me, why are you chasing after that little girl? asked Staika, who was furious and wouldn't let him go.*)

RU: —Дядя, ты чего гоняешься за девчонкой? — сердито спросила Стайка, не выпуская полы его сюртука. (p. 239)

(*Uncle, why are you chasing the girl? - Stayka asked angrily, not letting go of the hem of his coat.*)

ES: -Por qué persigues a la muchacha? - preguntó, enfadada Staika, sin soltarle. (p.379)

(*Why are you chasing the girl? - asked Staika angrily, without letting go of him.*)

In a similar fashion, in this passage the Japanese translation uses the よ particle to evoke emotional response and create a sense of urgency (or in this case, to blame the addressee), which is a nuance that is present in the ST.

The French translation, on the other hand, has removed the vocative case noun and has replaced it with the expression “dis donc” (*tell me*), which is used to engage the addressee in a conversation. The Spanish translation has omitted it altogether.

#### 6.7. Emergence of untranslatable words

What I personally believe to be the most difficult part to translate are the Bulgarian-specific set of words that accompany the vocative, бе, ма and мари (bé, ma and mari). They do not have a direct equivalent in any other language and are quite frankly untranslatable. They serve a similar function to the Japanese よ, engaging with the addressee, but they are extremely casual (and sometimes even considered rude) and are never used in a formal situation.

Those three words appear numerous times in the ST, especially when the vocative is used, but are more often than not omitted during the translation process. Still, I have extracted two passages where the translators have tried to, at least to some extent, retain this language-specific element.

(19) BG: -Що се смееш, Стайке? - попита я каква Гинка.

-За две кукурузени зрънчета как се мъчи Хаджи Врана.

-Хаджи Ровоама **мари** - поправи я ниско Рада. (p. 368)

- (Why are you laughing, Staika?  
 - How Haji Crow tortures herself about two corn kernels  
 - 'Haji Rovoama mari, ' Rada corrected her quietly.<sup>6</sup>)
- EN: "What are you laughing at, Staika?" asked Ghinka.  
 "Why, at the fuss the old crow's making over a couple of grains of maize."  
 "You mustn't say that, Sister Haji Rovoama, dear," whispered Raja, correcting her." (p. 274)
- JP: 「何を笑っているのだね、スタイカ？」とギンカがたずねた。  
 「二粒三粒の玉蜀黍粒をさがすのにハジ・ヴラーナ（ヴラーナはブルガリア語で『からす』のこと）が苦勞しているざまったらないよ」。  
 「ハジ・ロヴォアマよ、スタイカ」 (p. 435)
- FR: -Pourquoi ris-tu, Staika? Demanda Guinka.  
 -Que d'mal elle s'donne pour deux grains de maïs, *hadji* Panorama."  
 -Haji Rovoama, voyons, la corrigea Rada à voix basse.(p.446-447)  
 (Why are you laughing, Staika? asked Guinka.  
 -What a pain she is for two kernels of corn, *Haji* Panorama. "  
 -Haji Rovoama, come on," corrected Rada in a low voice.)
- RU: —Чего ты смеешься, Стайка? —спросила ее Гинка.  
 —Глянь, как она мучается из-за пары кукурузных зерен, эта Хаджи Ворона!  
 —Хаджи Ровоама, милая, — шепотом поправила ее Рада. (p. 236)  
 (-Why are you laughing, Stayka? - Ginka asked her.  
 -Look how she's agonizing over a couple of corn kernels, that *Haji* Crow!  
 -Haji Rovoama, my dear," Rada whispered to her.)
- ES: "Por qué te ríes, Staika? - preguntó Guinka.  
 -¡ Qué trabajo se dá Hayí Vrana l por dos granos de maíz ! " (*What a job* Hayi Vrana gives herself for two grains of corn.) (p. 374)  
 -Hayí Rovoama - le corrigió en voz baja Rada. (p. 374)  
 1. Vrana es «uracca.» (*Vrana is "uracca."*)

While it is clearly impossible to translate the untranslatable word *mari*, the translators in all versions except for the Spanish one have tried to substitute it with some word or expression that will in one way or another symbolize the closeness between Rada and Staika and will convey the nuance that Rada's rebuttal carries.

As I mentioned previously, depending on the context, *mari* can be an extremely rude word to use when addressing someone and could show contempt and despise, heavily depending on the speaker's intonation. Here is the example for that.

- (20) BG: -Пусни ме **мари**, свиньо! - изкрещя презрително Стефчов и се откъсна от нея. - Ах!  
 Селачанко, тебе те праща оная. Знам, знам. (...) (p. 393)  
 (-'Let me go *mari*, pig!' shouted Stefchov contemptuously and broke away from her. - Ah!  
 Hillbilly woman[*selachanko*], you are sent by her. I know, I know. (...))
- EN: "Let me go, you pig," shrieked Stefchoff in a flurry, struggling to get free. "Ah! I see it all; she's sent you, you infernal village hussy. (...) (p. 279)
- JP: 「はなしやがれ、メス豚め！」とステフチョフはさげすみの色を顔に浮かべて叫

<sup>6</sup> The context here is that Staika makes fun of Haji Rovoama by calling her Haji Vrana (crow in Bulgarian), which rhymes with her name. Rada finds her joke inappropriate as they find themselves in Haji Rovoama's house and are under her patronage.

び、スタイカの手をふりはらった。「この百姓女め！おまえをよこしたのはあそこに  
いる女だな？わかっているとも・・・（...）」

FR: -Hé, mais lâche moi, espèce de truie! Hurla Stefchov avec mépris en se dégageant. Hé, toi, la paysanne, c'est l'autre qui t'envoie. Je sais, je sais... (p. 453)  
(Hey, let go of me, you pig! Stefchov shouted contemptuously as he pulled away. Hey, you, peasant girl, the other one sent you. I know, I know...)

RU: —Пусти меня, свинья! — презрительно крикнул Стефчов и вырвался из ее рук. — Ах ты, мужичка! Это та тебя послала? Понятно, все понятно... (p. 453)  
(Let me go, you pig! - Stefchov shouted contemptuously and wrenched himself out of her hands. - You little village woman! Did she send you? I see, everything is clear...)

ES : - Déjame, puerca ! - gritó Stefchov, y se desprendió de ella. - Comprendo ahora ; te ha enviado ella. Lo sé.

The vocative here is used on the words pig and village woman, with the word *mari* used before pig, to enhance the insult and further add a sense of contempt and fury. While the translators have no way to translate *mari*, they have used various language-specific exclamations and words in order to get the point across. The Japanese translation employs the suffix め(me) which is derogatory and the French adds exclamation expressions to put emotional emphasis.

In 6.1. I introduced the derogatory form of the Bulgarian vocative for male nouns, ending in -ino. What we see in this passage is the ending for the feminine nouns where Stefchov refers to Staika as a hillbilly woman (selachanko). Thus, the more colloquial, ruder form of the Bulgarian vocative employs -ino endings for masculine nouns and -nko endings for feminine nouns. It can be concluded that they serve the same function as the suffix め in Japanese.

In the next section, an overview of the translation strategies this paper introduced so far will be provided and their way of use will be summarized.

## 7. Summary

In section 6, I examined 12 different passages and the various translation methods that have been used in their English translation, Japanese translation, French translation, Spanish translation and Russian translation respectively. The following table summarizes the mainstream translation strategies of the Bulgarian vocative.

Table 2: A summary of the translation methods used and their respective examples

Translation method	Explanation	Example	
		ST	TT
Word order shift	Repetition of the ST, without removing the vocative ending	(11)Иване, мечка пустяла, Иване, дълги саръко!	RU : “ <u>Иване</u> , медведь худущий, <u>Иване</u> , как шест длиннуший...”
Replacement	Replacing the vocative with another noun or expression	(18) <u>Чичо</u> , оти гониш девойчето? - попита сърдито Стайка, като го не пушаше.	FR:” <u>Dis donc</u> , pourquoi qu’tu poursuis c’tte fillette? Demanda Staïka, qui, furieuse, ne le lâchait pas.
Omission	Omitting the noun with a vocative ending	(13) Хъ, що думаш, <u>булка Цанковице</u> ? Ами аз, като ще тръгвам за К....!- каза угрижено Райчин.	ES: -¿Qué dices? Yo que tengo que ir mañana a K. - dijo, preocupado, Raichin.

Creation	Adding words that are not present in the ST	(15)— Ти да си жив, <u>Петърчо</u> — каза му единият селянин.”	EN: ‘Petr, <u>my poor boy</u> , God keep you from harm,’ * said one of the peasants.”
Gloss	Using footnotes to provide linguistic background necessary to understand the vocative	(14)— Иванчо! — викна той в сламеника.	FR: « <u>Ivantcho!(2)</u> » cria-t-il dans la grange.” 2. Diminutif de «Ivan». En bulgare, les diminutifs sont extrêmement fréquents.
Adding exclamation	Using language-specific exclamation words or expressions in combination with the vocative	(20) -Пусни ме <b>мари</b> , <b>свиньо</b> ! - изкрещя презрително Стефчов и се откъсна от нея. - Ах! Селачанко, тебе те праща оная. Знам, знам. (...)	JP: 「はなしやがれ、 <u>メス豚め</u> ！」 とステフチョフはさげすみの色を顔に浮かべて叫び、スタイカの手をふりはらった。「 <u>この百姓女め</u> ！おまえをよこしたのはあそこにいる女だな？わかっていると も・・・(…)」
Indirect speech	Changing from direct to indirect speech in order to avoid translating the vocative	(16)Ти знаеш ли там, дето казва: Жены, своимъ мужемъ повинуется? И по-нататък: Сеги ради вставиъ человекъ отца своего и матеръ и прилепится къ жени своєї?”	ES: Has leído allí donde <u>se dice que las mujeres deben obedecer a su marido</u> y más adelante que al casarse el hombre abandone a su padre y a su madre y se una a su mujer?

In addition to the various translation techniques that I examined, I also managed to outline three more features of the Bulgarian vocative that were not examined in section 4.

- ① **Absence in loanwords.** As seen in 6.2., regardless of the noun’s gender or number, Bulgarian vocative does not apply to it and it can not take the vocative noun ending.
- ② **-ino & -nko noun endings.** In informal situations or when addressing someone in a rude manner, the masculine nouns take the -ino noun ending and the feminine ones take the -nko noun ending. They are both considered rude nowadays and are rarely used.
- ③ **Inextricable connection with the diminutive form.** As seen in (14), the Bulgarian vocative and diminutive form find themselves in an inseparable connection and very rarely occur one without the other, as the diminutive form is often used when addressing people (thus dragging the vocative along with it).
- ④ **Equivalence to Japanese sentence ending particle よ.** In his book titled *Introduction to Politeness*, Takiura (2008) points out that *yo* is a marker used when the speaker is ready to manage information assertively, with a focus on understanding the listener’s knowledge state. (2008:132) In section 6, however, I provided plenty of examples where *yo* is used to draw the listener’s attention and address them directly, carrying out a function that is very similar to Bulgarian’s vocative case.

## 8. Final notes

In this paper I introduced the issue of translating Bulgarian’s vocative case into languages where it is not present as a grammatical category. The paper began by outlining the morphological, phonological, syntactic and semantic features of the vocative case in Bulgarian, then explored how it is formed in 3 other Slavic languages, as well as in Greek, Latin and even Arabic, which is not an Indo-European language. It

then examined the similarities and differences between each language's vocative case with that of the Bulgarian language.

Afterwards, a case study was conducted of a Bulgarian historical novel, *Under the Yoke*, from which I extracted 12 passages to analyze the way the vocative has been translated in them. By summarizing 7 different translation methods of the vocative from languages which have it to languages that do not, this paper also outlined four more distinct features of the Bulgarian vocative which were not commented on in section 4, because they became apparent during the course of the case study analysis. The study found that translators often adopt strategies such as replacing the vocative with the nominative, using exclamations or adding footnotes to convey the communicative function of the vocative. These strategies reveal both the limitations and the flexibility of target languages in rendering grammatical nuances across languages. This research emphasizes on the importance of understanding language-specific grammatical features in translation. By illustrating how the vocative case is handled in different languages, the study contributes to the ongoing debate about preserving linguistic and cultural authenticity in literary translation.

The significant time gaps between the original text and its translations suggest that the translators' choices were shaped by differing cultural, linguistic and literary trends of their respective periods. An example that illustrates this is how earlier translations reflect a more literal approach, while more recent translations, such as the Japanese one, exhibit modern tendencies toward dynamic equivalence as well as cultural adaptation.

The decreasing use of the vocative case among younger speakers in Bulgaria highlights a shift in linguistic norms, potentially reducing the frequency of vocative expressions in modern Bulgarian texts. This trend raises new challenges for translators as they must navigate between preserving traditional usage and adapting to contemporary language practices. Further studies could investigate the socio-linguistic factors influencing the vocative's decline and examine how these changes are reflected in modern translations.

Several aspects of vocative usage in Bulgarian remain unclear, as well as the issue of translating it. For example, as mentioned above, there is a tendency for it to be avoided in recent years due to young people considering it rude to address someone by using the vocative. A questionnaire or a survey targeted at young Bulgarians, aiming to examine their language usage, specifically their vocative usage, would shed light on the current situation in which the Bulgarian vocative finds itself. Additionally, more hypotheses are needed on how to translate the untranslatable words accompanying the vocative (see 6.7.). My next ask will be to focus on those issues.

(神戸大学国際文化学研究科博士前期課程)

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