

Vocal transcreation processes, remote and face-to-face teaching



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ABSTRACT

We approach hybrid forms of creation in process with students from PUC-SP, from the pandemic until now. The objective is to reflect on experiences of creating interpretation in voice and singing,

together with technological resources, after the pandemic. We dialogue with the transcreation in H. de Campos and resources from the Critique of Processes by C. Salles. This resulted in recordings in Audacity, emphasizing vocal dynamics. We conclude that the hybridity of remote and presential provided the emphasis on realization of vocal dynamics.

Keywords: Transcreation, Creative processes, Spoken voice, Singing.

1 INTRODUCTION

During the pandemic period and after it, we developed vocal creation processes with poetic texts and songs, with students from PUC-SP.

In the classes, the Audacity recording and editing program was used. The interactions of the oral voice with its resources resulted in transcreation processes marked by them. We will present and discuss them in the light of the neologism transcreation, conceptualized by Haroldo de Campos, reflecting on aspects of transformation of texts and songs, from the written to the oral text and the song taken as a reference, for interpretation by each student.

Resources of the Critique of Processes of Cecilia Salles were also studied with the students, and along with the theoretical aspects of transcreation, are brought here in the first item of the article, to measure about which the discussions were developed, showing the themes selected by us for reflections on processes of creation and transcreation in the work of the interpreter.

The class dynamics installed in the period of remote classes, with frequent searches on the internet, as well as the use of the *Audacity program*, spilled over into face-to-face classes, on its return in 2022. The study of the theoretical texts, which in the remote period were done along with the preparation of a common text of the students in Google Drive, aligning what they were discussing, was maintained in this way. Then, being together in person in the classroom, the students composed an article directly in Google Drive, using this technological service that favored and facilitated the writing together.

The behavior of the use of vocal dynamics (in which vocal sounds are performed from the lowest sound, which is called the piano, to the strongest sound, which would be the fortissíssimo), was



shown to be forceful, in view of the hybridity arising from technological and face-to-face aspects, both in the use of the spoken voice and in that of the sung voice, because its presence was striking in both cases.

Approaching and developing vocal dynamics in face-to-face vocal experiments has always been more difficult in classes in previous years, in the period before the pandemic. With this technology, the face-to-face work of vocal dynamics in the post-COVID 19 period has become more productive.

We will see below how the work with the students took place, reflecting on the hybridity in their transcreation processes.

2 TRANSCREATION OF WRITTEN TEXT IN REMOTE AND FACE-TO-FACE STATE

In the *Body Arts course* at PUC-SP, we taught the discipline *Sound Languages* from before the pandemic until this year. Before the pandemic classes were in-person, from 2020 to 2021 they were remote and from 2022, they returned to in-person.

Initially, in remote classes, for the purpose of identifying expressive meanings in the voice, the students chose sound poetry texts from the book *Poesia Sonora – Poéticas Experimentais da Voz no Século XX*, by Philadelpho Menezes.

But before the beginning of this work of interpretation, we proposed to the students a theoretical study about interpretation as transcreation.

Some excerpts from the texts and concepts discussed are brought here to understand the content of the reflections of perspectives about creation as transcreation, which underlies a relational mode between interpreter and source text (whether written or musical). And we, as a teacher, consider fundamental the discussion about this relationship, before practically carrying it out. We thought it was important to think about what was being done, about the relationship established in terms of creation.

At the time of remote classes, this study was done with extra-class readings and subsequent in-class discussion, online. From these reflections the students began to write in Google Drive, a text together about the text read, critically concatenating the points they considered important. This joint writing in a Google service, was one of the resources that spilled over to the period of face-to-face classes, and there it was also used, so that students could compose a reflective and critical text together, about the original text. Thus, even though they were in person together in class, the text was written together in Google Drive.

At the beginning of the theoretical study, the students pored over a text by Cecilia Salles about creation processes, which contained some of the resources of her *critique of processes: poetic project, cultural networks* and *communicative act*. Through them, the author indicates relational instances



from the cultural, social and communicative point of view, which have already introduced students to other perspectives in the relationship of creative translation:

The tendencies of the creation process can also be observed from the point of view of its social aspect. The work under construction carries the unique marks of the poetic project that directs it, which is part of complex cultural networks, to the extent that it is inserted in the emphasis of time and art, science and society in general. The communicative aspect of the creation process also involves a great diversity of inter and intrapersonal dialogues: of the artist with himself, with the work in process, with future receivers and with criticism. (SALLES, 2010, p. 89).

To discuss interpretation as transcreation, the students first addressed the most famous question in the common sense, of translation against the well-known Italian proverb in the area of literary translation: *traduttore traditore*, that is, *traitor translator*. It was also brought the speech of Laplantine & Nouss indicating another view of the issue, that is, the otherness in dynamic diversity inscribed in the translation:

Translation could and should, instead, mark the distance between languages, show that there are different languages. The notion and the term translation only appear in the sixteenth century, when the linguistic and national delimitations are created. Its role, therefore, is to remind the readers of a particular language that it is possible to say the world in another way, with another pronunciation, with other colors; to make the language of others heard in their own language and to let into it a strangeness that will enrich the possibilities of expression and the identity of the subject. The same only exists when it recognizes the other, both outside oneself and in one's bosom (LAPLANTINE & NOUSS, 2002, p. 41, 42).

Thus, the "other" would be, in the case of our class, the text that would be interpreted by the students, chosen by them.

It began here, the first contact of the students with a perspective of otherness, which could be incorporated as a vision of creative reciprocity with the source text, to be interpreted by them.

The comprehension of the processes of creation of interpretation in its dimension of transcreation, initially raises a space of the 'indefinable' to the question and it was presented to the students. In a movement contrary to the discussion of *interpreter as executor*, some notions of Albercht Fabri contextualized the discussion made later with them:

... "every translation is critical, for it is born of the deficiency of the sentence," of its insufficiency to be effective in its own right. "One does not translate what is language into a text, but what is non-language." (FABRI apud CAMPOS, 2006, p. 32).

But if you don't translate the language of a text, be it an essay or a poem, or even a musical text, what does it translate? We then brought the speech of the poet Haroldo de Campos, pointing out the fact that the term translation does not necessarily concern the translation of meaning, but what gives it **its aesthetic force as a work**, which, in its new language can also be observed, that is, in the new creation:



I will only emphasize that I do not seek in my Bible translations a supposed textual 'authenticity' or 'truth'. My commitment is to achieve in Portuguese, according to lines and criteria advised by my long and varied practice as a translator of poetry and suggested also by the very nature of the original, a reconfiguration - in terms of 'trans-creation' - of the phonosemantic and syntactic-prosodic articulations of the source text. I aim to obtain, through the translator operation, a comparative and coextensively strong text, as poetry in Portuguese. (CAMPOS, 1993, p. 17).

Boris Schnaiderman had a text of his studied, in which he indicates a type of precision in the work of translation, the 'precision of tone', which "requires a concern with artistic effect and a certain lightness, which implies, not infrequently, relative freedom as to semantics pure and simple." (SCHNAIDERMAN, 2011, p. 31).

Therefore, the predominance of semantic fidelity in a translation process such as transcreation was called into question.

Paulo Ronái brought an important dimension to the discussion: "the theoretical impossibility of literary translation implies the assertiveness that translation is art." (CAMPOS, 2006, p. 34).

Delimiting a little more the question of semantics, Haroldo indicates that "the semantic parameter will be only and only **the demarcation beacon** of the place of the recreative company. It is therefore in reverse of the so-called literal translation." (CAMPOS, 2006, p. 35, emphasis added).

Thus, it was discussed with the students the issue that, considering the untranslatability of the text on the one hand, and the "semantic beacons" on the other, the field of transcreation in vocal interpretation opens up to broader aspects that any type of reproduction practice could indicate. Therefore, it would not be possible to speak of reproduction of the author's ideas, but rather, of a transcreation from them.

The centrality of the reflections was treated quite clearly by the poet Haroldo de Campos, considering the translation of creative texts as a creation of an artistic character, reciprocal, implied in autonomy, in some way. The neologism transcreation created by him, introduces clearly in the word translation, the dimension of creation. What could be considered an intrinsic fault, as commented on a translation process, the impossibility of pouring its original originally, becomes a propulsion to creation, to **translation-creation**.

From this perspective, the students went to the written texts they would like to interpret, which were chosen by them. About the songs, we will deal with in the following topic.

After selecting the poetic texts of sound poetry, the students carried out a study to recognize the "semantic beacons" present there and to observe the aesthetic forcefulness of the works.

After this study, each student began their transcreation of the chosen poem.

The *Audacity* program was used by everyone, and its recording and editing features acted directly on the transcriptions. The feature of folding the same sound was used in order to provide the sound increase of words chosen by an interpreter. Another student worked predominantly with echo



resources, which were suggested to him by the chosen poem. The recording in five overlapping tracks was used with identical and different words, resulting in a poem with tracks of similarity and differences, emphasizing the aspects that the interpreter desired.

But the realization of a vocal dynamic, where the students created with more intense sounds (strong, half strong) and less intense (piano, half piano), with sonorities that grew and decreased, was present in all the works. This unanimity of this vocal resource combined with the presence of the microphone and consequent fine capture of the vocal emission, proved to be a novelty in this practice, and surprised us. In the other years we had already proposed transcriptions of texts to the students, but without the use of a recording and editing technology, everything was done in an acoustic way, and as the vocal emission of the dynamics is difficult to perform, it was not performed by them. The use of the technological apparatus facilitated and propitiated its appearance in the horizon of vocal expression, in the transcriptions with *Audacity*, enriching its expressive dimensions.

Many other resources were used by them creatively, composing their transcriptions of the poems in which, artistically, the aesthetic force of the starting work was taken into account for the creation of the arrival work.

The use of *Audacity* has remained for in-person classes, a fact that as we noted above, did not occur in in-person classes in the period before the pandemic.

Some chose the same poem and it was possible to make a comparative study of the two transcriptions, highlighting similarities and differences. About these, the class can ask each of the two interpreters, the whys of the choices made by them and in this way, it was possible to know directly from them, which personal singularities were present in their transcriptions. If they had studied only the recordings, they would not have had access to the creative whys who participated in the transcreation processes, they could only indicate them, but they would not know how the singular filters of each interpreter had acted in their transcreative decisions of the poem.

3 HYBRIDITY IN THE WORK WITH THE SINGING VOICE

Before starting with the students the processes of transcreation in the sung voice, in songs, we used the exercise of reflections about the same song interpreted by two different singers. In the remote period, the fact that all students were already on the internet, via computer or cell phone, optimized the practice of this study of different interpretations, which revealed different expressions.

First, the texts that the students built together in Google Drive about transcreation were resumed, now in discussions with the focus of the following question: What is the creative dimension that we singers imprint with what comes from the composer?

And from then on, each of them chose a song, starting to reflect critically on the interpretive differences of the various singers. First, the structures of each one were identified, as to the musical



elements and the lyrics of the songs. Musical elements are understood as rhythms, heights, movements, harmonies, dynamics, arrangements. Next, expressive meanings from the identified structures were verified. To this end, the fact that they are, in general, on Youtube contributed, because the video can be paused easily and restarted several times, so that the musical ideas were observed and also, along with the gesture that was performed in the assisted performance. The corporeality of each singer can also be included in the observations about each interpretation. Then, the lyrics of the songs and how the singers behaved in relation to her and the music in each interpretation were analyzed.

From all the observations and reflections, the students also began to write together, a text in Google Drive, as they had done with the oral text, highlighting and critically discussing how the elements of the songs created by the composer (including the lyrics of the song chosen or composed by him), can be transcreated in similar and diverse ways, by the interpreters.

What we wanted to emphasize with the students, was the "how", but from the whys. And to get into the universe of whys, we proposed that they make transcriptions of the same song, the same for everyone. They chose the song *Cajuína* by Caetano Veloso and used *Audacity* in this transcreative process. From the semantic beacons identified, each student dedicated himself to using resources in recording and editing, transcreating in a unique way the music of Caetano. These classes were taught both remotely and in person, again overflowing the use of the already more popularized editing technology.

And again it was intense, the use of dynamics by the students. The dynamics created also emerged here, due to the *Audacity program*, as well as in the transcriptions with written texts. And in the singing voice, the realization of dynamics is even more demanded in terms of vocal emission than in the spoken voice, the nuances in the vocal flow are numerous and must be precise.

The results were surprising and the resulting *Cajuínas* were compared, in reflections made by the students, focusing on the whys of the transcreative decisions.

4 CONCLUSION

From 2020 to 2022, when we taught *Sound Languages*, it was possible to work with the students on the concept of transcreation, having as an ally the technological support of the *Audacity* program, elevated to creative vocal instances. In the years prior to 2020, vocal creations were performed only live, and thus, the many features that *Audacity* offers for broadening the creative horizon with the voice, were not used. Admittedly, there was a degree of experimentation in the acoustic performances, but the addition of the technological program's resources offered more of a perspective to the vocal transcriptions, broadening their horizons. It's not about replacing one with the other, but rather about adding features in vocal transcreation.

The intense appearance of the realization of dynamics by the students, both in oral texts and in



the songs, was a grateful revelation of the techno hybridity in the classroom. The importance of the presence of the dynamics in the transcriptions occurred by broadening their expressive horizons and this vocal practice has difficulty in its emission, the *Audacity program* made it possible in a forceful way.

Still, the use of Google Drive for the joint writing of students on the issue of transcreation, proved to be another resource that brought hybrid practice in the classroom. With the students present in the class and working together in Drive, writing a text about the theoretical and practical reflections on transcreation, hybridity proved to be creative. From our teaching practice, we are moving towards the future use of more technological resources that can be creative, we will be investigating in the coming years, experimentations of the audiovisual allied to *Audacity*. Responding to the Seminar's interrogative appeal this year, "What is built in these other ways of living together?", we would say that in class, in the discipline we have taught in these pandemic and post-pandemic years, techno-vocal hybridity has produced transcriptions of the students, who have transformed their views on creation, text, music and voice.



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