

NON-LITERARY AND LITERARY TEXT IN TRANSLATION JUXTAPOSED

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Abstract: This paper zeroes in on a comparative analysis of translation procedures in two typologically dissimilar text types. To this end, an EU institutional-legal text Council Directive 2004/114/EC and a novel excerpt *The Shack* by William P. Young are analysed against an English-Slovak contrastive background. The focal point of the paper revolves around the concept of ‘translation procedure’, *i.e.* a tool of textual analysis originating from comparing the source and target text affecting sentences and smaller units of language. To a large extent, the paper leans on translation procedure models by Vinay and Darbelnet (1958/1995), Newmark (1981, 1988) and Schreiber (1993, 1998) as crucial theoretical underpinnings. In addition, it stresses the need to enhance the author’s proposed construct by some further translation procedures (e.g. recasting sentences, naturalization, adaptation and paraphrase) so as to comply with the multifaceted nature of the literary text, so different from the non-literary text. By blending approaches of contrastive textual analysis, corpus analysis and analytical-deductive methods enhanced by a comparative dimension, the identification facet of research takes turns with the interpretation layer throughout the whole study layout.

Key words: non-literary text, literary text, text analysis, translation, translation procedure, comparison

Introduction

What, if anything, is distinctive about non-literary and literary text and their translation? Few would doubt their intuitive sense that there is a palpable difference between *e.g.* a legal text and a work of fiction, which could be referred to as very ‘unlike’ or ‘dissimilar’ ends of the range, respectively even by a lay person.

This study aims to compare translation procedures in two typologically dissimilar text types and subsequently find out their pertinent text genre characteristics. To this end, an EU institutional-legal text, *Council Directive 2004/114/EC* and an excerpt taken from the novel *The Shack* by William P. Young have been used. The reason why these two case texts have been chosen is because the contrast between them is clearly evident. In order to investigate translation procedures, we have deliberately chosen two quite different text types.

Crucial to this comparative study is the concept of ‘translation procedure’, *i.e.* a tool of textual analysis originating from comparing the source and target text which affects sentences and smaller units of language (Newmark, 1988: 81). According to Molina and Hurtado Albir

(2002: 509), translation procedures (or techniques) are used functionally and dynamically in terms of the genre of the text (a Council Directive and a novel in our case), type of translation (specialized and literary), purpose of the translation, characteristics of the translation audience, and the method chosen and have a bearing on a text's microstylistics.

However, it should be stressed that even if the topic of translation procedures seems of considerable relevance within translation studies nowadays, publications on translation procedures have never been high on the agenda of translation studies. Whereas the topic itself invites a good number of scholars to touch upon it tangentially in terms of one-off articles (*e.g.* Salkie 2001, Molina and Hurtado Albir 2002, Klaudy and Károly 2005, Pym 2005, Ordudari 2007, Zakhir 2008 and more recently Garnier 2009 and Gibová 2011), we believe that this translational problem area deserves a more focused treatment so as to make up for this shortfall. Therefore, the current state of affairs might be seen as a source of major motivation for the presented research.

As far as methodological considerations underlying this paper are concerned, by means of the study of the secondary sources relevant knowledge necessary for the approach to non-literary and literary texts have been inferred and consequently applied to the corpus text analysis zeroing in on comparing translation procedures. Granted, in order to perform a comparative analysis of translation procedures in a due manner, the delimitation of crucial terms such as transposition, modulation, expansion, reduction, permutation, calque and borrowing had to take place first. Moreover, the gamut of the above-said translation procedures had to be expanded for the literary text so as to comply with its considerably wider range of lexico-structural language resources and metaphorical character. Vinay and Darbelnet's (1958/1995), Newmark's (1981, 1988) and Schreiber's (1993, 1998) models of translation procedures served as crucial theoretical underpinnings. What is more, this study simultaneously aimed to put the applicability of our own synthesizing translation procedures construct (Gibová 2011) to the examined literary text to the test. Even if the models of translation procedures by Vinay and Darbelnet, Newmark and Schreiber have been taken as a point of departure, this does not mean that other translation studies scholars' interpretations of the investigated procedures were strictly incompatible. On the contrary, other clarifications of the examined phenomena have been used whenever it was deemed necessary, useful or perhaps just thought-provoking for running counter to conventional assumptions.

2. Examined Translation Procedures in a Nutshell

Throughout the analysis the following translation procedures have been examined based on the contrastive comparing of the English and Slovak (non-)literary texts:

- **Transposition** – an intentional and often unavoidable grammatical change that occurs in translation from SL into TL. **Word-class (WC) transposition** (or formal transposition) is grounded on the change of word-classes between SL and TL. **Sentence-member (SM) transposition** (or functional transposition) rests on the change of the syntactic function of the TL element as against that of the SL element.
- **Modulation** – a shift of cognitive categories between two languages altering “the category of thought, the focus, the point of view and the whole conceptualization“ of a described phenomenon (Hardin and Picot qtd. in Zakhir, 2008: 3). Occurs at the level of lexicon (so-called “**lexical modulation**” or “**modulation of expression**”) or syntax (so-called “**pure modulation**”) involving the change of the point of view based on the substitution of the passive voice for the active (or vice versa) in translation.
- **Expansion** – “a technique of resolving ambiguity, improving and increasing cohesiveness of the [source text] and also of adding linguistic and extralinguistic information” (Pápai qtd. in Becher, 2010: 6), resulting in the increase of word count in TL.
- **Reduction** – a translation technique whereby “translators draw together the meaning of several words, and thus SL units consisting of two or more words are replaced by a TL unit consisting of one word; meaningful lexical elements of the SL text are dropped” (Kludy and Károly, qtd. in Pym, 2005: 3), resulting in the reduction in the number of elements from the SL text.
- **Permutation** – a change of the sentence constituent order, an alteration of the organization of lexical/syntactic units, or words/sentence stretches
- **Calque** – literal translation of a transparent designation from SL which has its respective literal equivalent in TL. A word/phrase that morphematically and semantically mimics a foreign word/phrase in TL.
- **Borrowing** – taking over a foreign word into TL in order to introduce the flavour of the SL culture into translation and thus induce a stylistic effect
- **Recasting sentences** – alteration of sentence structure during translation process in such a manner so that SL complex sentences are recast as TL coordinate (or compound)

sentences or SL complex sentences are rendered as two or more TL sentences (Newmark, 1981: 30).

- **Adaptation** – a situational equivalence between ST and TT created by translator in cases where “the type of situation referred to by the SL message is unknown in the TL culture” (Vinay and Darbelnet, 1958/1995: 39), usually when bridging a cultural gap between two languages.
- **Naturalization** – adaptation of the SL word to the grammatical rules of the TL in terms of pronunciation and morphology
- **Paraphrase** – amplification and free rendering of the meaning of the sentence; translation with latitude. Rests on a creative re-composition of the SL message which re-codes its communicative value in an artistic and unrestrained fashion, where the limits of interpretation are to be handled sensitively (based on Gibová, 2012: 36-75).

3. Text Corpus Make-up

The corpus is made up of an English EU institutional-legal document entitled *Council Directive 2004/114/EC* and a novel excerpt *The Shack* penned by William P. Young including their Slovak translations. The whole text corpus comprises a total of 16 179 words that were subject to a contrastive textual analysis. Both texts were selected from diametrically opposite textual genres on purpose so as to gain a meaningful comparative dimension promising intriguing research results. An important research inclusion criterion, however, was a roughly comparable time period of a text’s production so that no significant shifts in language development left their mark on the examined textual genres. Further, the novel excerpt’s word count was tantamount to that of the legal text in order to warrant relevant research outcomes.

The EU institutional-legal document (hereafter referred to as the ‘non-literary text’) falls under secondary legislation of the EU. More specifically, it is sourced from the thematic repertoire of education and training. The analysed text was retrieved from EUR-Lex database’s website (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/index/html>) containing all EU legal documents published in the *Official Journal of the European Union* simultaneously in all, up to now, twenty-three official languages. What is of supreme importance, though, is that the non-literary text under discussion is a so-called ‘euro-text’. That is to say that such a text is marked by an officially

prescribed style, which is manifested in a very high degree of language similarity from text to text so that it is possible to speak about its 'matrix form' (Gibová, 2010: 103) or 'homogenous discourse' (Schäffner, 2001: 172). In line with Schäffner and Adab (1997: 325), the analysed non-literary text is a hybrid text exhibiting features that are "strange or unusual to the receiving culture" as well as an informative-operative text type, drawing on Reiss' framework (1981/2000), fulfilling an essentially pragmatic function. Further, the non-literary text has been identified with Newmark's semantic or Nord's documentary translation since these translation types are fully in compliance with the function and place of *Acquis communautaire* documents within specialized communication by meticulous observation of the original.

On the other hand, the literary illustrative text sample *The Shack* (hereafter the 'literary text') is a novel with strong religious undercurrents written by the Canadian author, William P. Young, and published in 2007. *The Shack* has become a publishing phenomenon in the United States and was the top-selling work of fiction on the New York Times best-sellers list from June 2008 to early 2010. Despite its success and wide appreciation by its readership, however, the blockbuster novel has stirred criticism for its apparently edgy theological slant. On the other hand, as magnified as it might seem, the novel's reviewer Eugene Peterson uplifted the legacy of this work of fiction and how it looks at deep moral issues and questions one's approach to faith and forgiveness by making the following statement: "This book has the potential to do for our generation what John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* did for his" (Young, 2007: book blurb). The literary text comes under the heading of an expressive text type according to Reiss (1981/2000: 63) as the author foregrounds the aesthetic dimension of language. Employing Barthes' notional apparatus, the selected literary text is a 'readerly' text since it is marked by a fairly smooth narrative structure, with narratives and characters presented to the reader by the text allowing them to be a 'consumer' of the meanings (see Thornborrow and Wareing, 1998: 148-149 for more detail). Furthermore, the rendering of the literary text concurs with Newmark's communicative translation or Nord's instrumental translation serving, first and foremost, an aesthetically-oriented mediated communication.

4. Research Questions

Instead of a classic hypothesis, the following array of research questions, has been taken into consideration and answered in the process of analysis: Will oblique translation procedures in the literary text surpass direct procedures? Will the non-literary text exhibit a foreignizing veneer? Will modulation be extremely frequent in the literary text translation? Which translation procedures will be distinctively characteristic for the literary text? These questions, however, blending both theoretical and empirical qualities, are very closely entwined and thus they were researched synchronically. The key research questions, however, are the following: **Do different textual genres lead to the employment of different translation procedures? What striking differences between examined translation procedures across the selected non-literary and literary text can be observed?**

5. Research Outcomes & Discussion

From the empirical analysis it follows that different textual genres, as exemplified by the selected non-literary and literary text respectively, do not call for the use of completely different translation procedures. Notably, the employment of transposition, modulation, expansion, reduction, permutation, calque and borrowing is likewise traceable in the literary text. This fact supports the argument that our synthesizing translation procedure construct, drawing upon and building on Vinay and Darbelnet's (1958/1995), Newmark's (1981, 1988) and Schreiber's (1993, 1998) theoretical underpinnings, has a sound applicability in the case of the examined literary text, too, even if further translation procedures have been identified and explored therein, too. This finding testifies to a somewhat universal nature of the applied construct. By selection of semantically and formally different text types a new vista for the application of the drawn up model has been opened. What is notable to underscore after the conducted analysis, though, is that translation procedures can be considered a universal feature of any text under interlingual comparison given the linguistic and cultural dissimilarities between the source text and target text.

Although the research has amply demonstrated the use of more or less the same translation procedures, some striking differences attributable to the pertinent text genre characteristics have been at the same time revealed by the quantitative corpus analysis. Both transposition (word-class and sentence-member) and modulation (especially modulation of

expression) exhibit a considerably wider typological scale in the literary text compared to the analysed non-literary text (see Gibová, 2012: 38-49 for more detail). This can be interpreted in light of the more heterogeneous nature of the literary text in terms of its lexico-stylistic diversity of expression, which requires a more stimulating transfer of SL features into the TT when overcoming structural-conceptual asymmetries or 'lacunas'. The roughly similar values of expansion in both texts can be largely ascribed to an intrinsic nature of translation process *per se* and the tendency of explicitation as a translation universal regardless of the text type in which it occurs. In the case of the literary text, however, it is confined to cohesive explicitness and lexical unit addition only (see *ibid.*: 54).

Interestingly enough, the treatment of reduction forms a salient point of contrast between the two texts; while in the literary text it ranks as the fourth most frequently used translation procedure, in the non-literary text it comes across as a minor procedure only. This can be justified by the overall function of EU institutional-legal texts and the nature of EU language work precluding translators from any omission of ST inventory items. Therefore, a complete absence of recasting sentences in the non-literary text does not come as a surprise, either.

Apart from this, another point of difference between the two texts concerns the use of modulation. Even though modulation at the syntactic level (so-called pure modulation) occurs in both texts to the same degree, modulation in the lexicon is more plentiful in the non-literary text, which runs counter to expectations about the nature of literary modulation in general and Alcaraz and Hughes' hypothesis (2002: 185), in particular.

Furthermore, permutation in the literary text is almost double that in the non-literary text and evinces only minimum and median type. These divergences of lexico-syntactic TL elements from their original SL positions very often occur in order to maintain a smooth and natural text flow in the TL. Compared to the non-literary text, their occurrence was much more expected, even though it should be stressed that permutations were not absent from the non-literary text, either. Notably, their non-applicability would relegate the text under investigation to a purely robot-like machine translation lacking any intellectual challenge. Calques and borrowings in the non-literary text by far and away outnumber those in the literary text, indicating that the literary translation is not based on the use of direct translation procedures.

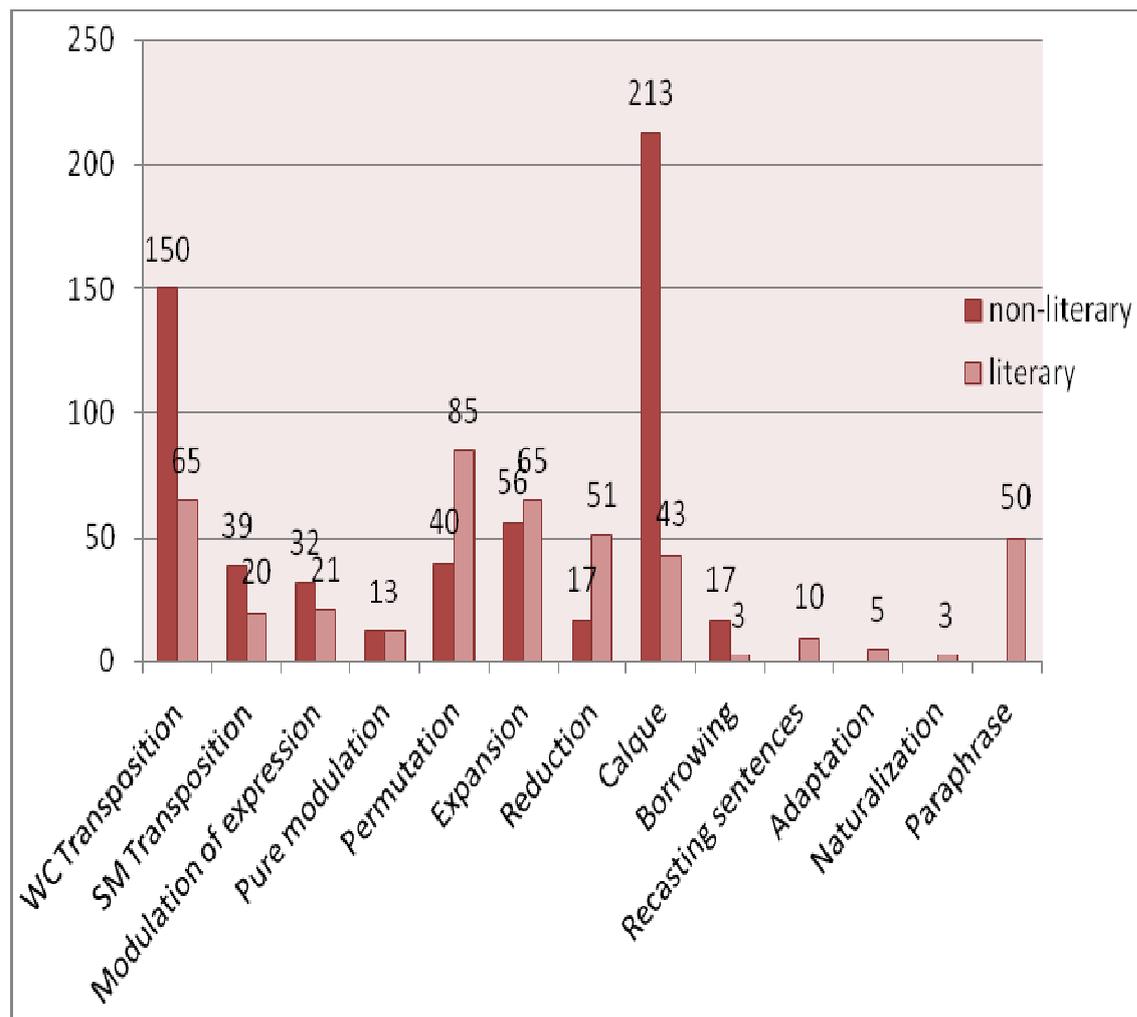


Chart 1 Frequency distribution of examined translation procedures across the non-literary & literary text

Despite these discernible differences between the examined texts, it should be noted that transposition, expansion and permutation play a significant role in both texts in terms of their frequency distribution, as Chart 1 shows. However, a crucial difference lies in the frequent use of calques in the case of the non-literary illustrative text and by reduction and paraphrase as far as the literary text sample is concerned.

Having answered the key research questions, the study also dealt with a set of minor questions that have been resolved in the analysis. From the quantitative text corpus analysis it follows that oblique translation procedures in the literary text outweigh direct procedures by almost 2.7 times. This corroborates that literary translation is not a straightforward text transfer from SL into TL but demands far more complex stylistic translation procedures due to structural, metalinguistic or cultural differences. Further, the non-literary text under

investigation does not indicate, quite surprisingly, a purely foreignizing veneer since the ratio of oblique translation procedures (234 counts) and direction translation procedures (230 counts) is somewhat surprisingly almost tantamount to each other, thus challenging our expectations. The foreignizing feel of the non-literary text is manifested unequivocally only in its high calque incidence in the text at hand, but not in a holistic text's perspective. The high incidence of calques in the non-literary text can be explained by the EU language policy and its institutional guidelines which urge EU translators to adhere to the ST slavishly and consequently induce them to imitate its language structures. Furthermore, the literary illustrative text sample does not show a plethora of (lexical) modulation, which runs counter to what was hypothesised by Alcaraz and Hughes (2002: 185). Besides, the results of the analysis have indicated that the translation procedures of recasting sentences, adaptation, naturalization and paraphrase turned out to be distinctly endemic to the literary text. Of these, the frequent use of paraphrase testifies to the incommensurably freer translational character of the literary text in comparison with its non-literary counterpart, which speaks volumes about the essence of literary translation as such. By contrast, the low incidence of adaptation, naturalization (especially in terms of English units of measurement) and borrowing implies that the literary text under focus does not brim with a great many culture-specific terms as a result of which the translator did not need to make up foreignness of the source text for the target recipient's sake. It should be borne in mind, however, that these findings may be quite different in the case of a more culture-specific literary text, and should thus be taken as such.

Conclusion

To sum up, it ought to be reiterated that understanding the mechanics which govern the use of translation procedures with non-literary and literary text may help translators come up with more successful solutions to translation problems. Granted, apart from the knowledge of translation procedures, a translator also has to have a good intellect, cognitive flexibility, some talent and also experience. It should be highlighted that in this study, translation procedures have been by no means canonized as a manual for a methodology for translation. Instead, they have been presented as a tool for the systematization of translation theory, to which we still owe a lot, or so it seems.

As the research conducted is by no means exhaustive, it might be valuable to undertake further quantitatively-oriented research in the near future that draws on a much larger sample of empirical text material, which was not possible in the presented case study due to its limited scope. It would certainly be enticing to map out translation procedures in miscellaneous prose texts and perhaps challenge the applicability of our proposed enhanced construct of translation procedures in this way. Nonetheless, we hope that at least some of our research results are instrumental in fulfilling the need for a translational analysis of typologically different texts focusing on translation procedures.

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