

Review of *Non-Literary and Literary Text in Translation*
(based on an analysis of an EU institutional-legal text
and novel excerpt “*The Shack*” by William P. Young)
by Klaudia Bednárová-Gibová

(Prešov: Acta Facultatis Philosophicae Universitatis Prešovensis, 2012,
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This book was published by the University of Prešov in 2012 and presents the author's survey of various methods of translating both literary and non-literary texts. The author claims at the very beginning of the publication that “the textbook will be instrumental in helping translation trainees at the Institute of British and American Studies develop and hone personal yet objective methods of theorising about (non-)literary translation, which may in turn provide them with a set of necessary techniques to produce high-quality translation on their own.”¹

The textbook does provide a good insight into books dealing with translation methods, the linguists listed in the secondary sources are numerous and their attitude to the process of translating is commented on in detail. Special attention is devoted to books on translation procedures written by Vinay and Darbelnet, Newmark, Schreiber, and many other recently published books (Nord, 2005; Sanchez, 2009) and articles (Ordurari, 2007; Zakhir, 2008 and Mizani, 2010) which bring information about the topic have also been referenced.

Surprisingly, some well-known authors who have dealt with texts, discourse and translation are not included in the sources of this textbook, namely Hatim, Halliday, House and others. Also, the author complains of the lack of publications covering translation procedures in practice,² as well as the lack of complex studies on the contrastive analysis of literary and non-literary texts. Both of these claims are rather misleading.

The tradition of the contrastive approach to texts introduced by the Prague School of Linguistics still prevails among Czech linguists, many of whom have greatly contributed to specifying typological differences of the English and Czech languages revealed in translation. The long list of linguists involved with this tradition began with, among others, Mathesius, Nosek, Poldauf, and continues with contemporary linguists. Books and articles on this topic have been written, for example, by Tárníková, Jettmarová and Knittlová, to name just a few, and representatives of other schools of translation studies (e.g. Russian) have also produced numerous books and articles. Also, many doctoral theses have conducted research connected with the contrastive analysis of English texts translated into Czech.

I would especially like to remind readers of the recently published book by D. Knittlová a kolektiv: *Překlad a překládání*, Olomouc, FF UP, 2010. Not only are translation procedures fully described and explained in this book, but also many practical aspects of translating are commented on and evaluated. All the styles and their specific translation

1 Klaudia Bednárová-Gibová, *Translation Procedures in the Non-literary and Literary Text Compared* (Prešov: Prešovská univerzita v Prešove, 2012), 11.

2 See Bednárová-Gibová, *Translation Procedures*, 16.

problems are depicted, and the results are based on very extensive sources taken from both literary and non-literary texts.

Returning to the book being reviewed here, I should present the structure of the theoretical chapters and the aims of the research and its results.

The chapters giving information about different types of texts and general remarks on their structure and translation³ are well-structured and could be useful for translation beginners. Other chapters specify shifts and changes in semantic and grammatical levels, such as transposition, modulation, expansion and reduction, permutation, calque and borrowing.⁴ The individual terms are explained (with frequent reference to secondary sources) and demonstrated through examples from the investigated texts. More translation procedures connected mainly with literary texts are summarized in later chapters, e.g. naturalization, adaptation, recasting sentences and paraphrase.⁵

Included in the above-mentioned chapters about translation procedures are results of the author's comparative work with the collected non-literary and literary texts. Before assessing the research results, I must go back to the declared research aims and primary sources.

Research questions are abundant⁶ and the following two are regarded as the most important: "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 spotted?"⁷

The answers to these (and other) questions are established through a corpus of compiled non-literary and literary texts. The former are represented by EU institutional-legal documents, the latter by excerpts from the novel *The Shack* (10 pages) by W.P. Young. "The whole text corpus comprises a total of 16, 179 words that will be subjected to a contrastive analysis."⁸ The translator(s) of the analysed texts are not referred to.

As mentioned before, the results of the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the English texts and their Slovak translations are depicted in individual chapters dealing with various translation procedures (e.g. transposition, modulation, etc.) and summarized in Tables, below which the results are clarified and discussed. Considering the readership of translation trainees or young research workers, I believe that these chapter sections could be contributory for them, as they can learn here how to present their own results of contrastive analysis.

Unfortunately, the concrete statistical results found in the Tables cannot be taken as valid and the same is true about the findings concerning the application and usage of various translation procedures in stylistically different texts.⁹ There are several reasons for this allegation.

First, the analysed corpus of texts is so tiny that it is impossible to guarantee that more extensive sources would justify the yielded quantitative results. Secondly, the structure of translation, including semantic aspects, grammar and the usage of various translation procedures are dependent on the choice of an individual translator. Therefore, it is of vital importance to compile excerpts from both literary and non-literary texts executed by several translators if the results should be appropriate to stylistic varieties of

3 See Bednárová-Gibová, *Translation Procedures*, 23-32.

4 See Bednárová-Gibová, *Translation Procedures*, 44-76.

5 See Bednárová-Gibová, *Translation Procedures*, 80-85.

6 See Bednárová-Gibová, *Translation Procedures*, 20.

7 Bednárová-Gibová, *Translation Procedures*, 20.

8 Bednárová-Gibová, *Translation Procedures*, 21.

9 See Bednárová-Gibová, *Translation Procedures*, 87.

texts in general. Thirdly, some interpretations of the changes in sentence structures and their constituents in the source and target languages found in several Tables are rather doubtful, e.g. p. 47, 51, 58.

Thus, I cannot fully agree with at least this part of the conclusions drawn at the end of the book: "Although our 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."¹⁰

In spite of these critical remarks, however, this textbook could be a valuable study material for translation trainees to better understand the many-sided process of translating as well as for its survey of translation procedures.

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¹⁰ Bednářová-Gibová, *Translation Procedures*, 91.