SHEDDING SOME LIGHT ON MODULATION ACROSS NON-LITERARY AND LITERARY TRANSLATION*

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Modulation is well-known in translation studies as an oblique translation technique that commonly entails a variation of the form of the message, obtained by a change in the point of view. Being looked upon as a touchstone of an apt translator, both by practitioners as well as 'Ivory Tower' scholars, the paper looks at this semantic-pragmatic procedure resting on a shift of cognitive categories between English and Slovak in translation. The nature of modulation will be put to the test on the samples of an EU institutional-legal text (non-literary text) and a novel excerpt from William P. Young's best-selling novel *The Shack* (literary counterpart). The author will both compare and classify the incidence of modulation in the selected text types and draw relevant conclusions. The analysis outcomes will contribute to solving partial translation problems encountered in a wide range of non-literary and literary texts.

Key words: modulation; translation; text; non-literary translation; literary translation; comparison.

INTRODUCTION

Drawing on Vinay and Darbelnet's widely proliferated and to this day, highly influential model of translation techniques[1] (1958/1995), modulation has since gone on to become a staple of oblique translation technique repertoire. As such, it entails a variation of the form of the message, obtained by a change in the point of view. This implies that this semantic-pragmatic translation technique rests on a shift of cognitive categories between two languages for it alters the category of thought, the focus, the point of view and the whole conceptualization of a described phenomenon. This shift deems to be justified in cases when a literal or even transposed translation results in a grammatically correct utterance but is still, however, considered somewhat unsuitable, unidiomatic or awkward in the TL [13. P. 36].

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[1] Generally, when analysing translations there are certain linguistic categories that allow one to examine how the target text (TT) functions in relation to the source text (ST). These categories are known as "translation techniques" or "translation procedures". It should be highlighted, though, that considerable terminological disagreement looms large among translation studies scholars regarding the proper label to be used in this connection. For this paper's sake, however, the author holds on to the former terminological designation. Moreover, as far as terminology is concerned, a sharp line of demarcation ought to be also drawn between "translation methods" and "translation strategies", which translation techniques/procedures are fairly often unjustly confused with (see Molina and Hurtado Albir [5. P. 498—499] and Gibová [4. P. 116—120].

Of all translation techniques, modulation appears to be the most thoroughgoing: whereas e.g. transposition puts the translator's, first and foremost, grammatical abilities to the test, modulation is said to be a real touchstone for a competent translator. The cause for this is to be sought in the very nature of modulation. While transposition affects grammatical function of TL units only, modulation, on the other hand, involves alteration of semantic categories or the processes by which thoughts are conveyed. For illustration consider the following examples from the assembled English-Slovak text corpus*:*

(1) *third-party insurance policy ~ poistenie zodpovednosti za škodu spôsobenú pri výkone činnosti, legal challenge ~ opravný prostriedok (non-literary text); the late arrival ~ najmladší prírastok v rodine, a unified sigh from the nearby city ~ jednotný výdych z neďalekého mesta* (literary text).

1. MODULATION AS INTERPRETED
BY TRANSLATION STUDIES SCHOLARS

Vinay and Darbelnet of the French School of Comparative Stylistics interpret modulation as a change in point of view that allows one to express the same phenomenon in two languages in a different way. In all probability, they were truly aware of the rather sweeping nature of their proposed definition for they dealt with it in several places of their groundbreaking monograph, attempting to illustrate the technique in question by vivid examples[1].

Moreover, they distinguished between obligatory (or fixed) and optional (or free) modulations. As to the former, they are caused by an objectively dissimilar structure and usage of two languages. As regards the latter, cases of free modulation stand for single instances not yet fixed and sanctioned by usage, so that the technique must be performed anew each time. As soon as a recipient when reading a translation where a free modulation has been used instantly feels the naturalness of expression, free modulation tends to a unique solution, which is necessary rather than optional. It is therefore evident that between fixed and free modulation there is but a difference of a degree and as soon as a free modulation is employed often enough, or is felt to offer the only solution, it may become fixed [13. P. 37]. In this connection it is noteworthy that the Czech scholar Bareš [2. P. 8] reached a similar conclusion in his article where he equally splits modulations into mandatory and free.

As far as Newmark's apprehension of modulation is concerned, he draws on the French School of Comparative Stylistics' terminology. In the same manner as Vinay and Darbelnet, Newmark [7. P. 88] understands by modulation "a variation through a change of viewpoint, of perspective and very often of category of thought". Surprisingly enough, even if he finds Vinay and Darbelnet's categorisation of modulation somewhat uncon-

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[1] Overall, Vinay and Darbelnet came up with eleven types of modulation [13. P. 89—90], grounded on the following substitutions: (a) abstract and concrete; (b) cause and effect; (c) means and result; (d) the part for the whole; (e) the whole for a part; (f) reversal of the point of view; (g) intervals and limits (or duration and date; distance and destination); (h) sense modulation; (i) form, aspect, usage; (j) geographical modulation; (k) change of comparison or symbol.

vincing, he does admit that their abundant examples are always thought-provoking. Therefore, Newmark treats individual modulation types in compliance with Vinay and Darbelnet and organizes them into the change of the abstract for concrete, cause for effect, pars pro toto, totum pro parte, reversal of terms or active for passive and so forth. However, Newmark sheds a critical light on some Vinay and Darbelnet's modulations. In his view, the 'negated contrary' should be superseded by 'positive for double negative' (or 'double negative for positive'). Similarly, 'part for the whole' seems equally misleading and he prefers to call it 'familiar alternatives' instead.

To make the issue of modulation in translation even more intricate and vexing, Schreiber's interpretation [12. P. 226] of modulation ranks it among semantic procedures as "a change of perspective by means of verbalization of other content features without altering sense". In addition, Schreiber argues that the sense is only expressed by other symbols in two languages. At the same time, when using modulation in some cases the denotative equivalence can only be achieved when assuming the same knowledge of the referential content with both SL and TL recipients.

In order to paint yet a richer picture of possible interpretations of modulation, it is vital to take into account some more recent theories. In this respect, a radically different view of modulation in comparison with the approaches mentioned above has been offered by relevance theory, as expounded by Sperber and Wilson in 1995 and applied to translation by Gutt. The relevance theory suggests that when one reads a text he/she constructs a mental representation in the aftermath of the interpretative process. Accordingly, "a translator's goal is to produce a text in the TL which, in the right context, will enable the reader to construct a mental representation that resembles the one constructed by the reader of the ST" [9. P. 439]. Given the assumptions above, modulation may be construed as a relation between two texts that yield the same mental representation but via a different process of interpretation [ibid.].

Besides, another novel perspective on modulation is courtesy of van Hoof who elucidates it as "a type of transposition at the global level, applying to categories of thought, not to grammatical categories" [qtd. in ibid., P. 434]. Granted, the mention of the application of modulation to 'categories of thought' is nothing ground-breaking, however, the inter-link with transposition makes it stimulating. Van Hoof's approach immediately foregrounds the crux of the matter in analysing modulation, i.e. an inter-lingual juxtaposition of various conceptual categories being applied to the same situation: "Whereas with transposition the translator's primary concern is the grammatical resources available in the TT, with modulation the principal consideration is the events or states of affairs that the words refer to. In the case of transposition, the guiding question is 'how would the target language naturally express it?'; with modulation the question is 'how would a speaker of the target language naturally conceive of it?'" [9. P. 437].

Thus, as implied above, a translator who deals with modulation is obliged to take into account an extra dimension which transposition does not entail: not the words only but what they refer to, as well.

2. TEXT CORPUS MAKE-UP

The text corpus underlying this paper is made up of an English EU institutional-legal document entitled *Council Directive 2004/114/EC of 13 December* [sic!] *2004 on the conditions of admission of third-country nationals for the purposes of studies, pupil exchange, unremunerated training or voluntary service* and a novel excerpt The Shack penned by William P. Young including their Slovak translations. The assembled text corpus comprises a total of 16179 words that were subjected to a contrastive analysis. Both texts were picked from diametrically opposite textual genres on purpose so as to gain a meaningful comparative dimension promising intriguing research results. All the same, an important research inclusion criterion 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 this date, twenty-four official languages. The selected non-literary text is approached as a paradigm text typifying legal language commonly used in EU institutions. What is of supreme importance, though, is that the non-literary text under discussion is a representative of 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' [4. P. 103] or 'homogenous discourse' [11. P. 172].

Seen from the point of view of text linguistics, the non-literary text under scrutiny belongs according to Schäffner and Adab [10. P. 325] to a very distinctive text type, so-called 'hybrid text'. These texts, being the upshot of cultures and languages in contact, are a feature of contemporary intercultural communication marked by an increasing level of internationalization. They result from a translation process and exhibit features that somehow seem 'out of place', 'strange' or 'unusual' for the receiving, i.e. target culture. Hybrid texts "allow the introduction into a target culture of hitherto unknown and/or socially unacceptable/unaccepted concepts through a medium which, by its non-conformity to social/stylistic conventions and norms, proclaims the otherness of its origin" [ibid., P. 328]. Hence, hybrid texts are endowed with features that are somehow contradictory to the norms of the target language and culture. From a translatological point of view, the non-literary text corresponds to Newmark's semantic translation[1] [6. P. 39], which holds onto the original slavishly tending to be 'more complex, more awkward and more detailed'. The translator perpetrating semantic translation is heedful of the syntactic structures and stylistic peculiarities of the ST, transferring not only meaning but also the form of the original.

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[1] The semantic translation, as elucidated by Newmark, could also be likened to Nord's 'documentary translation' [8. P. 80], which "serves as a document of a source culture communication between the author and the ST receiver", allowing the TT receiver access to the ideas of the ST but making them aware that they read a translation.

On the other hand, the fiction sample *The Shack* (hereafter abbreviated as the 'literary text') is a novel with palpable religious undercurrents written by a Canadian author William P. Young and first published in 2007. Since its release, *The Shack* has become a publishing phenomenon in the United States and it was the top-selling fiction on the New York Times best sellers list from June, 2008 to early 2010. Despite the success and wide appreciation by readership, the blockbuster novel has stirred criticism for its apparently edgy theological slant.

From a translatological angle, the literary text concurs with Newmark's 'communicative translation'[1] whose essence rests on producing on its readers "an effect as close as possible to that obtained on the readers of the original", being smoother, simpler, clearer, more direct and tending to undertranslate [6. P. 39].

3. DISTRIBUTION OF MODULATION IN THE TEXT CORPUS: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Moving onwards, after bringing out some crucial insights into the term *modulation*, looking at the range of the selected scholars' interpretations and doing the text corpus make-up justice, it seems proper now to pay heed to the actual text corpus analysis. The in-depth corpus analysis has uncovered that modulation may be encountered both in lexis as well as in syntactic structures in both analysed texts. Modulation of the former sort has been labelled as the so-called 'modulation of expression' while modulation of the latter type has been given the designation 'pure modulation', in tune with Newmark [7. P. 89].

Turning attention to the modulation of expression first, it is essential to underscore that in the non-literary text 37.5% of modulations of this sort are terminology-oriented, which can be exemplified by the following, e.g.:

(2) *academic record ~ priebeh štúdia na vysokej škole*
possible redress procedures ~ možnosti preskúmania rozhodnutia.

Besides, another group of the revealed modulations of expressions with 34.38% pertains to language clichés (also known as language schemata or templates), i.e. standard turns of phrases given by legal conventions entering into a legal text as pre-fabricated language units. These serve to demonstrate that modulation as a translation technique is not confined to specialized terms only, but operates at higher discourse levels such as parts of sentences, too, as evinced by, e.g.:

(3) *This Directive shall be will **without prejudice to** more favourable provisions ~ Táto smernica **sa nedotýka** výhodnejších ustanovení*
***Subject to Article 3**, a third-country national [...], shall.... ~*
***Pokiaľ článok 3 neustanoví inak**, príslušník tretej krajiny [...] musí...*

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[1] Again, this can be put on a par with Nord's 'instrumental translation' [8. P. 81] which serves as an independent message-transmitting instrument in a new communicative action in the target culture, and is intended to fulfil its communicative purpose without the receiver being aware of reading or hearing a text which, in a different form, was used before in a different communicative action.

Apart from the terminology-oriented modulations and modulations of language clichés, the last ascertained group with the frequency distribution of 28.13% within modulations of expressions are modulations which all congruently convey a dissimilar temporal point of view, or "a change in the point of view of interval/limit", to put it in Vinay and Darbelnet's terms. For illustration, the interlingual juxtaposition such as

(4) *a third-country national* [...] *shall not be **below the minimum age** nor above the maxim age set by the Member State concerned ~*
štátny príslušník tretej krajiny [...] ***musí dosiahnuť minimálny** vek a nesmie prekročiť maximálny vek, ako je stanovený dotknutým členským štátom*, —

evinces that both languages, English and Slovak face the same situation, however, with a certain divergence in the usage of formal means as far as the expression of a temporal perspective is concerned.

For the sake of comparison, within the literary text, there are no modulations of language clichés present due to their common incidence in the EU institutional-legal text only. However, lexical modulations occur in the examined literary text, too, even if to a much lesser extent, e.g.:

(5) Overtaken by the **conviction of the moment**, Mack confessed in tears that he hadn't done anything. ~ V tej **pôsobivej chvíli** sa Mack so slzami v očiach priznal, že neurobil nič.
*You sense he has **strong convictions** ~ Cítite jeho **vyhranené názory**.*

Unlike the non-literary text, the remaining modulations of expressions are dispersed among multiform typological groups, ranging from 'interval and limit', 'reversal of the point of view' via 'negation of the opposite' up to 'abstract for concrete' and 'change of comparison'. Pertinent examples for the above-said categories in the examined literary text are given below.

(6)
(a) "*Sorry, I was busy **for a second** there.*" ~ *„Prepáčte, bol som **na chvíľu** zaneprázdnený."* (interval and limit);
(b) *"Idiot", he grunted, thinking about Tony the mailman; an overly friendly Italian with a big heart but **little tact**. ~ „Idiot", zašomral, mysliac na poštára Tonyho, prehnane priateľského Taliana s veľkým srdcom, no **nedostatkom taktu**.* (reversal of the point of view);
(c) *Mack would like you to know that if you happen to read upon this story and **hate it**, he says, "Sorry." Mack by chcel, aby ste vedeli, že ak si prečítate tento príbeh a **nebude sa vám páčiť**, odkazuje: „Prepáčte."* (negation of the opposite);
(d) *Then there is **the late arrival**, Melissa — or Missy, as we were fond of calling her. Potom je tu **najmladší prírastok,** Melissa — alebo Missy, ako sme ju radi volali.* (change of comparison);
(e) *He hit hard, back of the head first, and skidded to a heap **at the base** of the shimmering tree. Tvrdo dopadol, najprv zadnou časťou hlavy, a skĺzol sa na hromádku **pri koreňoch** ligotavého stromu.* (abstract for concrete).

As it can be seen, examples (6a)—(6e) amply demonstrate that literary modulation partially overlaps with some literary figures of speech such as metaphor or litotes. What

these have in common with some examples above is the change of abstract for concrete and negation of the opposite. The crucial difference, however, between the figures of speech and literary modulations is that with the former the change in the point of view may take place within one language, too, while with the latter the change in the point of view, as a rule, happens between two languages.

As mentioned earlier, apart from the analysed modulations of expressions, the other distinctive modulations in the corpus are made up by the so-called pure modulations. In stark contrast to modulations of expressions, pure modulations are syntax-oriented and they subsume the cases which lead to the formation of the SL sentence equivalent in the TL by means of the change of perspective based on the substitution of the passive voice for the active. While some translation scholars unanimously view this translation technique as a specific kind of modulation [13. P. 252; 7. P. 89], every now and again there appear voices which approach the technique under investigation as a mere transposition [1. P. 182].

For illustration, consider the following corpus examples:

(7)
(a) *The methods of making such reference shall be laid down by the Member States ~ Podrobnosti o odkaze upravia členské štáty* (non-literary text);
(b) *Routine choices become adventures and are often experienced with a sense of heightened clarity ~ Rutinné rozhodnutia sa menia na dobrodružstvá a často ich prežívame s pocitom zvýšenej jasnosti* (literary text).

It is a well-established fact that English has a propensity for using the passive voice much more than many other European languages including Slovak. As long as the translator desires to achieve naturalness of expression in the TL, transposition from one mode into another comes as a handy, if not necessary, ploy. Moreover, a consequential finding resulting from the corpus analysis performed is that pure modulation, as Newmark dubs it, is closely intertwined with sentence-member transposition because the change of the point of view is accompanied by the shift in the sentence-member categories.

Furthermore, in quantitative terms, modulations of expressions in the non-literary text (32 occurrences in total) turned out to be more abundant than in the literary text (21 occurrences). This finding runs counter to Alcaraz and Hughes' hypothesis that modulation, though extremely frequent in literary translation, will be much less so in the non-literary text [1. P.185]. Of course, in a holistic perspective, this finding should be taken with some reservation due to the non-literary text's limited scope. Surprisingly, however coincidental it may seem, the frequency distribution of pure modulations is identical in both texts (13 occurrences per each text). This suggests that when translating from whatever English text, it seems advisable to eschew passive constructions, so endemic to the SL, which would sound cumbersome in the Slovak language.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, the overall importance of modulation in translation cannot be underestimated. In both texts it has been regarded as a semantic-pragmatic translation technique resting on a change in the point of view that enables one to convey the same

phenomenon in two languages in a different way. To conclude, Bettelheim seems to have aptly summed up the translator's responsibility to employ modulation: "Translators need to be very sensitive not only to what is written but also to what is implied. Their task very definitely includes an obligation to try to transmit not just the words forming a sentence but also the meanings to which these words allude" [qtd. in 3. P. 44]. Modulation has been encountered in the analysed texts both at the lexical (modulation of expression) as well as syntactic level (pure modulation). As to the former, in the case of the literary text it has shown a greater typological scale ranging from 'interval and limit', 'reversal of the point of view' via 'negation of the opposite' up to 'abstract for concrete' and 'change of comparison'. All in all, the use of modulation in the corpus has been influenced by the differences resulting from varying views of the extra-linguistic realities, cultures and (incommensurable) language structures of English and Slovak.

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PRIMARY TEXTS ANALYSED

1. Council Directive 2004/114/EC.
2. Smernica Rady 2004/114/EC.
3. *Young W.P.* The Shack. London, Hodder & Stoughton, 2007. P. 7—19.
4. *Young W.P.* Chatrč. Bratislava, Tatran, 2009. P. 7—17.

ПРОЛИВАЯ СВЕТ НА МОДУЛЯЦИИ В ПЕРЕВОДЕ НЕХУДОЖЕСТВЕННЫХ И ХУДОЖЕСТВЕННЫХ ТЕКСТОВ

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В исследованиях по переводу модуляция хорошо известна как скрытая техника, которая обычно включает вариацию форм послания вследствие изменения точки зрения. И практики, и ученые-теоретики обычно определяют модуляцию как важный критерий, характеризующий опытного и талантливого переводчика. В данной статье модуляция рассматривается как семантико-прагматическая процедура, базирующаяся на подвижности когнитивных категорий английского и словацкого языка в процессе перевода. Природа модуляции будет проверена на образцах институциональных законодательных текстах Европейского Союза (нехудожественный текст) и фрагменте из романа-бестселлера Вильяма П. Янга *The Shack* (художественный текст). Автор статьи одновременно проведет сравнительный анализ и предложит классификацию приема модуляции в отобранных текстах обоих типов и сделает необходимые выводы. Результаты анализа внесут вклад в решение частных проблем, возникающих в процессе перевода широкого спектра нехудожественных и художественных текстов.

Ключевые слова: модуляция, перевод, текст, перевод нехудожественных текстов, перевод художественных текстов, сравнение.