Eclectic and paradoxical frameworks

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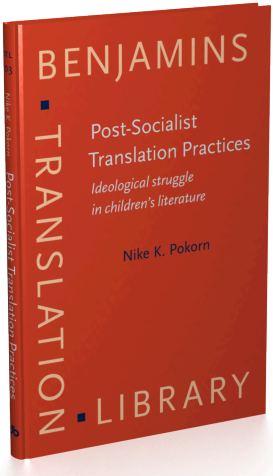

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Post-Socialist Translation Practices: Ideological struggle in children's literature
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Eclectic and paradoxical frameworks

The aim of the book is to identify the typical features of Socialist and Postsocialist translatorial behaviour by focussing on retranslations of children's literature and juvenile fiction published in the early days of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). Translations of children's literature were chosen because the research shows that in many cultures children's literature is one of the genres most susceptible to considerable change and manipulation through translation (see e.g. Puurtinen 1992; Du-Nour 1995; Fernandez Lopez 2000; Malmkjaer 2003, 2004; Desmidt 2006; Oittinen 2006). This acceptance of modifications most probably stems from the conviction that children's literature, including the works that are not openly didactic, should not be harmful to the development of children into ideal citizens or individuals – and, since the concept of an ideal adult is not a stable term, translations of children's literature are often very clear reflections of the ideology of a particular TL culture at a particular time.

In this study the term children's literature is understood in the broadest sense and shall cover both literary works originally written for children and for young adults, as well as those that were originally written for adults but then became part of the children's literary canon. Children's literature is a fuzzy term. Like the word "literature" itself (see e.g. Eagleton 1983), the term "children's literature" reveals a plurality of meanings. There are no characteristic textual features that could always be used to define the term; moreover, there is also a disagreement among scholars whether to treat children's literature in the same way as adult literature or not (cf. Hunt 1991: 42–64). And the same applies to books adopted by children, i.e. the works that were written for the adults but became in the course of time a part of children's literature. It shall be argued here that when involved in the translation process, texts intended for a juvenile audience seem to conform to a different and specific set of norms and not necessarily to those governing the adult literature of a particular period in a specific society and culture, and that translators of children's literature acquire a specific habitus that is tuned to the specific demands of translated juvenile fiction. An attempt will be made to show that it is translation strategies that can reveal whether we are dealing with a translation for children or, for example, with translation of mass fiction intended for larger audiences. Translation thus becomes the locus of the definition of genre showing us whether we are dealing with a text for adults or for children.

This research shall not attempt to isolate one cause and through it to explain all the facts connected with the translation, since it is believed here that translation and translating involve so many different factors, that consequently also the causality is by its nature plural, dispersed and multiple (see Pym 1998: 144; Brownlie 2003: 112). There are multiple causes for the explanation of the translation and translating: following the principles of the multiple causation method, it is argued here that the creation and the form of a translation is influenced by various factors and that there is no reason why one of those factors should a priori be given a dominant or prevalent role (Brownlie 2003: 112). This balanced approach that allows the combination of differential analysis of source and target texts with biographical research, interviews and historical and archival investigation was therefore used in our research, helping us to reveal "the various hands, minds and hearts that were responsible for the final product" (Simeoni 1998: 32).

The largest part of the research focuses on Slovene texts, i.e. one of the three official languages of the SFRY, although the other two languages (Serbo-Croat and Macedonian) are also taken into account. (The linguistic and historical situation shall be explained more in detail in the next chapter.) Methodologically, first, the most exhaustive Slovene electronic online bibliographic source (COBISS, www.cobiss.si), the printed Slovene bibliography from 1945 onwards and the *Bibliography of Children's Books* for the period from 1945 to 1958 (Šircelj 1961) were checked for all translations of children's literature from any foreign language into Slovene and from Slovene into any other foreign language in the period from 1800 to 2009. The bibliographical data were analysed and a catalogue was made of all works for children that were translated into Slovene, regardless of the language of origin, between 1800 and 1945.

Second, another catalogue was created of the works for children that were retranslated between 1945 and 1955. This ten year period was characterised by the most direct pressure from the ruling political and ideological position: it started immediately after the end of the Second World War, when all spheres of public life, including culture, were taken over by the Communist Party, and it softened after November 1952 when the VI. Congress of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia in Zagreb put an end to the agitprop committees that attempted to influence and mobilize public opinion by using different techniques of agitation and propaganda (cf. Gabrič 1995). The survey includes an additional three years after the congress since it was assumed that the translations that appeared in the next three years (i.e. up to 1955) might have been prepared before and that probable direct ideological interventions into the cultural life might not have ended abruptly at the end of 1952 and could have survived for some time after the official cancellations of the agitprop committees. And finally, the research focused on retranslations because in the period immediately following World War II the

Yugoslav population shared the fate of others in Europe and had to face extreme shortages not only of food, but also of paper and printing ink (see e.g. the 1952 report of the Print Committee at SAWPS, AS 531, a.u. 139). In 1945 all printing companies were nationalised and everything that was printed was controlled by the Communist Party (see Kidrič, the first prime minister of the Slovene Socialist government, at the meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of Communist Party on 17 December 1945 in Drnovšek 2000: 56; cf. Gabrič 2005: 903). The assumption was that pre-war translations would probably be so problematic to the new Socialist society that the government, despite the general shortage of resources and the fact that Slovene translations of these works were already available, nevertheless considered it necessary to commission and publish new translations. It was assumed that analysis of these early Socialist retranslations of children's literature would reveal some possible ideological interventions and the disturbing elements of the original for the new political paradigm.

As a third step, these translations were compared to their originals, focussing on potentially relevant passages based on extra-textual knowledge (see van Doorslaer 1995: 265), and to the pre-war translations. The next step was to compare the translations that were textually manipulated to subsequent retranslations into Slovene. The period was divided into two sections: first, from 1955 through to 1991, when the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia ceased to exist and Slovenia became an independent state, and second, the comparison was made also with the retranslations that were published between 1991 up to 2010.

As a fifth step, the translations and retranslations of those works into Croatian, Serbian and Macedonian (i.e. into the languages of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) were checked. All available translations of those works in all three languages from 1700 to 2010 were looked at. As the next step, biographies of translators and editors were studied, and, bearing in mind that translators are active and transformative agents, interviews were carried out with selected translators and editors with an aim to identifying and explaining any possible ideological interventions. In order to shed some additional light on the ideological framework, the historical material, including the archives of the Communist Party and of other relevant committees, was studied. And finally, since the study does not focus on "historical" texts but on translated texts that are still in circulation and are still being uncritically reprinted today, course books for Slovene language in primary schools were also studied to see whether they still include passages from the manipulated translations.

The methodological approach in the analysis of Socialist and post-Socialist translation practice will involve a certain degree of eclecticism and draw upon the theoretical and methodological concepts of two adjacent "turns" (cf. Wolf 2007: 4–6): it shall partially share the aims of scholars belonging to the so-called

cultural turn in Translation Studies and focus on the influence of factors such as social power, political and ideological goals, and national and economic interests in translation, but it shall also share the interests of those scholars belonging to the sociology of translation who focus on the agents involved in translation and by doing so also reveal the culture-specific value system and the ideology that influences the actions of those agents. Even though, according to some scholars (Inghilleri 2005: 139), there seem to be significant epistemological differences between the culturalist paradigm and the sociology of translation, and moreover, some theoretical approaches (e.g. polysystem theory (Even-Zohar 1990: 4)) demand the application of a whole theory as a network of interdependent hypotheses, and not just some disparate suggestions, an eclectic approach shall be adopted and terms from both TS currents shall be used.

On the one hand, André Lefevere's terms "patronate", "poetics" and "ideology" shall be used to explain how all forms of rewriting (e.g. translations, adaptations, anthologies etc.) occur within the limitations imposed by either the patrons (individuals, groups or institutions) who promote or censor the works (e.g. as in the case of the literary expression of explicit sexuality in the Latin poetry of Catullus (Lefevere 1992: 99–110)), or by a specific poetics that defines the "real" literature in a particular society at a particular time (as in the case of the Western translations of Arab poetry (Lefevere 1992: 73–86)), or by an ideology which pretends to define the very nature and the limits of acceptability of a particular society (e.g. as in the case of Brecht's translations (Lefevere 1998: 109–122)). Lefevere's insistence that all forms of rewriting could be subject to manipulations, cultural bias, assimilations and deliberate distortions by the TL culture proved particularly valuable for our study.

In addition to Lefevere's conceptualisations, we shall make use of Bourdieusian terminology (introduced into TS by Daniel Simeoni (1998) and further developed by Gouanvic (2005, 2007), Inghilleri (2005) and Wolf (2007)), as these seem to be most widespread among TS scholars focusing on historical studies (e.g. the use of Lefevere's theoretical framework in Thomson-Wohlgemuth 2009, and the use of Bourdieusian terminology in Tahir Gürçağlar 2008). Theresearch research shall employ mainly the following two terms taken from the translatological transformation of Bourdieusian terminology: "habitus" and "translatorial field". The term "translator's habitus" shall indicate a set of dispositions which incline the translator to act and respond in a particular way (see Bourdieu 1990: 91; Simeoni 1998; Gouanvic 2005). These dispositions will help us understand why the agents in the translatorial field, e.g. translators, always act in a similar way without regarding those same dispositions as limitations or imposed rules, and to describe why they internalise a typical behaviour so much so that it becomes their second nature. In our attempt to explain the coordinated behaviour of Socialist translators, it

shall be argued that the translator's habitus is the elaborate result of a personalized social and cultural history (cf. Simeoni 1998: 16–32; Hanna 2005: 168), that it is, according to Bourdieu (1990: 91), the product of the collective history inscribed in institutional practices, social, economic and political structures and of the personal, individual history which disposes the agents to specific physical and intellectual behaviour. The translatorial habitus will help us understand how the incorporated dispositions of the translator (Gouanvic 2005: 148) inevitably reflect the social conditions within which the translator acquired those dispositions. And finally, the use of this term shall help us emphasise that translators as social agents are viewed not only as determined but also as acting at the same time. Because habitus incorporates the double dimension of the "structuring and structured" function (see Gouanvic 2005: 147; Inghilleri 2005: 134), translators and other agents in the field shall be defined not only by the existing norms that govern translation practice, but they shall also be viewed as agents who are able to transform the practice in which they engage (see Inghilleri 2005: 143).

A term that is closely connected to the concept of habitus is "translatorial field". Adopting the conceptualisations of the Bourdieusian sociologists of translation (see e.g. Simeoni (1998: 14)), it is maintained here that every translator's habitus is tuned to the specific demands of the translatorial field which is being constructed by various agents: besides the translator, there are also the author(s) of the original, agents, editors, readers, illustrators, critics, the film industry that adapts the work, and numerous others on this open list. This translatorial field, in which the translator is involved in a continuous interaction with other agents, is not only complexly structured but also structuring: the field moulds and shapes the agent's habitus, but at the same time the agent also continuously generates and transforms the translatorial field. The position of translators in this field is subordinate – Simeoni (1998: 23) even talks about "*servitude volontaire*" – and tuned to the established order, not only because translators want to avoid the negative consequences or sanctions, but also because they do not know any better – this practice is the only one they know and master. Translators thus accommodate to the wishes and expectations of their clients, the target readership, authors, editors, the original, the language, the dominant ideology and a variety of other aspects of the culture or subculture in which they must create a work which shall make sense to this environment. However, their position is never passive, translators also actively form this translatorial field: for example, they can sustain and support or reject and transgress the conventions and norms that govern the target society at a particular time. Translators thus develop an adaptive habitus that is tuned to the practical demands of the translatorial field in which they act, and at the same time they contribute through their acts to its further formation and transformation. Since, according to Bourdieu (1990: 87), fields are historically constituted

areas of activity with their specific institutions and own laws of functioning, the loci of relations of force and therefore of endless change (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 103), some TS scholars deny the existence of proper translatorial fields and prefer to talk about translation within literary fields (e.g. Gouanvic 2005). Due to the importance of translation, reflected in the high percentage of published books, and specific institutions governing translation practice in the Socialist Yugoslavia, in this study the use of the term translatorial field, describing a fairly structured area of activity, seem nevertheless justified.

I am aware of the fact that the shift of the research focus on to the translator or interpreter can also be found in other sociologically oriented theoretical discourses: for example, in Theo Hermans's approach influenced by the sociologist Niklas Luhmann (cf. Hermans 2007). Moreover, in 1997 Erich Prunč introduced the term "translation culture" [*Translationskultur*] which, like habitus, denotes a changing set of norms, conventions and expectations that frame the behaviour of all agents in the translatorial field. Similarly, Anthony's Pym "translation regime" denoting "implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules and decision making around which the expectations of the agents converge" is close to the notion of the translator's habitus (Pym 1998; Pym 2006: 24), and his emphasis on multiple causation as well as his insistence on the connectedness of a specific history to social reality are close to Bourdieu's approach to these topics (see Hanna 2005: 169). These theoretical positions also shift the focus onto the individual translators who belong to a particular social system, and in a theoretically valuable manner reveal a complex web of relationships between the author of the original, the agent of transfer, the text, the readership and their social embeddedness. Furthermore, they all stress that every translation is closely connected with social institutions that have a considerable influence on the choice of the texts to be translated, on the production and distribution of translations, and also indirectly or directly on translation strategies. That means that Bourdieusian translatological concepts are not the only valuable methodological tool for historical and sociological investigation of translation. In addition, I also share the scepticism of some scholars towards one of Bourdieu's premises (see Inghilleri 2005: 138; Dreyfus and Rabinow 1999: 92), in particular towards his claim that researchers can – when engaged in objective social sciences – step outside their habitus and illusio (see Bourdieu 1982). The total objectivity of the researcher is a myth. I admit – I am also writing from within. My descriptions are "shot through with interferences" (Hermans 1996), stemming from my Christian faith, my personal history, and my social persona. Born and educated in a Socialist country with one grandfather a Communist who served as a minister in a post-war government, and the other a teacher of Latin who never joined the Communist Party and whose youngest brother was executed in 1944 by the Partisans on charge of being a British spy,

I know that my embeddedness in the complex environment I call my home has partly influenced my understanding and interpretations of the findings. Despite the need to strive to minimise the interference of the personal and the subjective, no scholarly interpretation of reality can claim to be objective. We all engage in research under particular sociocultural conditions, which affect the way we see, perceive and understand (cf. Claramonte 2005: 263; Blommaert 2005: 225). But in addition to the acceptance of the need to recognize and acknowledge the fact that, like translators and other agents involved in the creation and afterlife of a translation, TS scholars are embedded in a variety of narratives (cf. Baker 2005) and subjective in their interpretations, I am also convinced that "the native's point of view" (cf. Koskinen 2008: 8–10) can be an added value: it can help us see past the embellishments or vilifications of post hoc clarifications and interpretations of past events and deeds. Our embeddedness also does not stop us, through the application of the post-modern hermeneutics of suspicion, from submitting to our doubt everything that imposes itself as generally known, accepted and universal. Despite or maybe even because of my experience of a Socialist upbringing, I believe that researchers from societies where a particular ideology attempted to present itself as stable and eternal (be it Franco's or Salazar's regimes, Nazi Germany or Socialist states) have developed a stance of discernment, critically reflecting on what they read or hear, and are particularly equipped to expose a text's ideology and biases.

Although this book is an attempt to present a possible framework for subsequent systematic research into translations in all former Socialist states and for critical assessment of Socialist translation practice, I am aware that much more research needs to be done before laws of translational (and transnational) behaviour can be formulated (Gentzler 1996: 136). I hope that this study will nevertheless represent a first step towards a transnational and transcultural critical assessment of typical Socialist translation strategies within the framework of Post-Socialist Translation Studies, the formation of which can ultimately only be a communal effort.