

# Explicitation and Implication as Translation Universals and Their Occurrences in the Slovene Translations of Anglo-American Literary Texts

## Summary

The paper examines explicitation/implication as one of the most prevailing occurrences in Slovene literary translation practice. Drawing on the received typology of explicitation – obligatory, optional, pragmatic and translation-inherent – the paper seeks to identify the reasons for, and consequences of, certain (in)adequate translation processes, suggesting more adequate solutions where possible. An analysis of the examples selected from the corpus of Slovene translations is introduced by a detailed discussion of the explicitation and implication phenomena.

Key words: explicitation/implication, literary interpretation, translation universals

# EksPLICITACIJA in implicitacija kot prevodni univerzaliji ter njuna prisotnost v slovenskih prevodih angloameriških leposlovnih del

## Povzetek

Članek obravnava eksPLICITACIJO/implicitacijo kot enega najbolj prisotnih pojavov v slovenski prevajalski praksi. Na podlagi sprejete tipologije eksPLICITACIJE, ki loči med obvezno, neobvezno, pragmatično in prevajanju lastno eksPLICITACIJO, skuša razprava iz izbora primerov v slovenski prevodni literaturi poiskati razloge za vrsto (ne)ustreznih prevajalskih postopkov ter hkrati predlaga, kjer je to mogoče, boljše rešitve.

Ključne besede: eksPLICITACIJA, implicitacija, literarna interpretacija, prevodne univerzalije

# Explicitation and Implication as Translation Universals and Their Occurrences in the Slovene Translations of Anglo-American Literary Texts

## 1. Introduction

The practice of literary translation into Slovene (or into other languages, for that matter) has always evinced a tendency towards explicitation, that is, towards interpretation, commentary, explanation and other forms of directing the reader's production of meaning. This observation is confirmed by even a cursory comparison between certain seminal works written in English and their translations into Slovene. These shall be used here to elucidate and account for this widely popular translation strategy. But while it is possible to note and describe how explicitation affects the reception of Anglo-American literature in the Slovene cultural and literary systems, the reasons behind such translation measures are often more difficult to explain. These measures, as shall be shown, may be either conscious or unconscious. When translators have approached their texts in a scholarly manner, selecting at the very beginning a set of parameters to guide them through the translation process, readers and critics face an easier task because their reading is supported by coherent, consistent and – to a certain extent – expected translation solutions. A different situation emerges, by contrast, when the translator opts for a solution intuitively, on the spur of the moment, without being able to justify it. While the majority of well-trained and experienced translators do tend to choose their strategies and techniques consciously, there still occur unexpected oscillations, often regarding precisely the explicitation or implication of the original text. This paper shall seek to identify the reasons for, and consequences of, certain (in)adequate translation processes, suggesting more adequate solutions where possible. An analysis of the examples selected from the corpus of Slovene translations shall be introduced by a detailed discussion of the explicitation and implication phenomena.

## 2. Explicitation vs. implication

The issue of explicitation or implication has been alive ever since the first attempts at translation, but no definition had been attempted before 1958. It was then that Vinay and Darbelnet (1958) described explicitation as “the process of introducing information into the target language which is present only implicitly in the source language, but which can be derived from the context or the situation” (qtd. in Klauudy 1998, 80).

A more tangible and systematic theoretical framework came in 1986 with the publication of “Shifts of Cohesion and Coherence in Translation”, the celebrated study by Shoshana Blum-Kulka which defined explicitation as follows (Blum-Kulka 1986, 19):

The process of translation, particularly if successful, necessitates a complex text and discourse processing. The process of interpretation performed by the translator on the source text might lead to a TL text which is more redundant than the SL text. This redundancy can be expressed by a rise in the level of cohesive explicitness in the TL text.

If the definition of explicitation/implication is expanded beyond the functioning of cohesive elements, explicitation may be described as the verbalisation of something which might be inferred by the reader from the text even if left unverballed; implication, by contrast, is the non-

verbalisation of something which may be inferred by the reader. The prerequisite for examining explicitation/implication is that the element which is explicated in the language of the target text should be implicitly present in the language of the source text, and vice versa: any element subject to implication in the TT language must have an explicit basis in the ST language. I consistently use the pair 'explicitation/implication' in this particular order because the former is far more common in Slovene translations than the latter. In other words, it is highly unusual for a Slovene translation to suppress something which is conveyed in the original. While this claim may elicit surprised protests, arguing that translated texts, especially poems, are known to omit much that is present in the originals, I should stress that implication is not to be equated with omission. Rather, it is to be addressed in accordance with the definition given above: implication is not the omission of information but a vague expression of it. It should be remembered that we are dealing with artistic texts: texts which should not, and do not, consent to explicate their meanings, since explication would thwart their very purpose. I agree with the opinion voiced by Simona Šumrada, namely, "that the type of text is an important criterion: what is important in an expressive text (literature) is to preserve the aesthetic function. This is why it is more proper to avoid the explication of implicit elements which have been consciously left obscure by the author, as it helps the translator avoid narrowed-down meanings and idiosyncratic interpretations" (Šumrada 2009, 22). My paper shall thus concentrate on the phenomenon of explicitation in translated texts – a translation practice only too rampant in Slovenia, as I propose to demonstrate.

This daring feat of Blum-Kulka was still enhanced by her famous 'explicitation hypothesis'. The category of explicitation/implication thus gradually developed into a translation axiom, an irrefutable fundamental truth. The author of the hypothesis started from the assumption that every translation act was necessarily subject to explication: an assumption providing an answer to the question why translated texts tend to exceed the originals in length, regardless of the degree of explicitness dictated by the source and target language specifics. As was to be expected, the boldness of this assumption, which had been fermenting in translation studies for some time but had never been voiced so decisively, prompted both favourable and unfavourable theoretical and critical responses to the hypothesis. It found a staunch supporter in a leading translation scholar, Gideon Toury (1995), who dubbed the hypothesis as "the general law of translation"; in addition, it was adopted in the research of Mona Baker and Maeve Olan (2000), who largely concentrated on the conscious dimensions of the explicitation strategy, and in Linn Overas's (1998) research into the subconscious circumstances of its operation.

The hypothesis thus gradually assumed the status of a translation universal. This implies that explicitation subsumes linguistic elements which are typical of translated – but not of original – texts, as well as independent of the specific language pairs which occur in the translation process (Baker 1993, 243). Explicitation thus joins a string of other translation universals, such as simplification, disambiguation, conventionalisation/normalisation, standardisation, levelling out, avoidance of repetition, overtranslation and undertranslation. Based on my analyses and research into Slovene translations of English literary texts, I may safely foreground at least three of the most common translation universals or tendencies: disambiguation, avoidance of repetition, and explicitation.

## 2.1 Disambiguation

Shakespeare's sonnets are generally characterised by an ambiguity which enhances their metaphorical expressiveness. The much anthologised Sonnet 116 in particular may be said to employ the ambiguity principle as a means of expressing the speaker's doubt on the central issue. The doubt

concerns the existence of (true) love or, more precisely, the ability to remove any qualm or obstacle in the way of such love. According to Meta Grosman's treatise on Shakespearian sonnets and Slovene readers, "the zealous negation with which [the poet] seeks 'not to acknowledge' suggests the presence of powerful pressures and/or reasons for acknowledging obstacles to love, its flaws and dubiousness, but the poet is determined to believe in love's perfection: in not having to acknowledge the obstacles or yield to the pressure of his doubt" (Grosman 1997, 121). The original text conveys the speaker's ambiguous attitude through the use of modality in the opening words, "Let me not". The translation, by contrast, with its absence of a speaker, denies the existence of obstacles without leaving room for parallel readings. While the English speaker seeks to convince himself, his Slovene counterpart merely notes the state of affairs. This neutralisation of ambiguity (syntactic disambiguation) results from a change in the illocution of the speech act, that is, from replacing hortative modality with the indicative mood:<sup>1</sup>

Let me not to the marriage of true minds  
Admit impediments. Love is not love  
 Which alters when it alteration finds,  
 Or bends with the remover to remove:  
 O no; it is an ever-fixed mark,  
 That looks on tempests, and is never shaken;  
 It is the star to every wandering bark,  
 Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.  
 Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks  
 Within his bending sickle's compass come;  
 Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,  
 But bears it out even to the edge of doom.  
     If this be error and upon me proved,  
     I never writ, nor no man ever loved.  
 (Shakespeare 1994, 60)

Poroka zvestih duš, glej, ne pozna  
zadržkov! Ne, ljubezen ni ljubezen  
 če varanje jo v varanje peha  
 in izogibanje v umik oprezen!  
 O, ne, ljubezen je svetilnik žarki,  
 ki neomajno na viharje zre,  
 je zvezda v temi tavajoči barki,  
 ki kaže smer, čeprav globine ne.  
 Ljubezen Času ni pavliha bedni,  
 čeprav ji srp cvet ust in lic dohaja;  
 o, ne spreminja z dnevi se in tedni  
 temveč do konca dni, do groba traja.  
     Če to ni res, če bom jo kdaj pogúbil,  
     jaz nisem pesnil in nihče ni ljubil!  
 (Shakespeare 1990, 120)

## 2.2 Avoidance of repetition

As a common figure in literary texts, the repetition of words, phrases or grammatical structures should cause few problems in translation. Nevertheless, it is ignored by many Slovene translators in their attempts to avoid repetition. The omission of recurrences is usually subjective, due to the translator's imperfect awareness of their role in the text. Their significance is highlighted by Tomaž Onič in his study on translating the recurrences in Pinter's plays: "Its importance is even greater in texts where recurrences are common or, as in Pinter's plays, they represent one of the important elements of the author's style" (Onič 2005, 293). Needless to say, frequent recurrences have a clear function defined by the context. In the excerpts cited below, the figure of repetition has an idiolectal function: it is used to portray a character, the maid Maria in the short story "Clay" from Joyce's *Dubliners*. Maria's favourite word is *nice*, used at least twelve times in the text:

- (2) The fire was nice and bright and on one of the side-tables were four very big barmbracks. (110)  
 SLO: Ogenj je bil živ in svetel in na eni pomožnih miz so ležale štiri štruce. (88)
- (3) What a nice evening they would have, all the children singing! (111)  
 SLO: Kako lepo bodo prebili večer, ko bodo vsi otroci peli! (89)

<sup>1</sup> As in all subsequent quotes, underlining by U.M.

- (4) ... (though Joe's wife was ever so nice with her) ... (111)  
SLO: ... (četudi je bila Joejeva žena zmerom tako prijazna z njo)... (89)
- (5) She used to have such a bad opinion of Protestants but now she thought they were very nice people, a little quiet and serious, but still very nice people to live with. (111)  
SLO: Prej je imela tako slabo mnenje o protestantih, a zdaj je sodila, da so prav prijazni ljudje, nekoliko tihi in resnobni, pa vendar prijazni ljudje, s katerimi je kar moči živeti. (89)
- (6) ... but the matron was such a nice person to deal with, so genteel. (111)  
SLO: ... toda upraviteljica je bila tako ljubezniva ženska, tako plemenita, tako lahko se je bilo sporazumeti z njo. (89)
- (7) ... in spite of its years she found it a nice tidy little body. (113)  
SLO: Letom navkljub se ji je zazdelo, da je telesce kar čedno. (90)
- (8) She hoped they would have a nice weekend. (113)  
SLO: Upala je, da bodo preživeli prijeten večer. (90)
- (9) ... she wanted to buy something really nice. (113)  
SLO: ... rada bi kupila kaj res lepega. (91)
- (10) He was very nice with her ... (114)  
SLO: Bil je zelo prijazen z njo ... (91)
- (11) He was very nice with her. (115)  
SLO: Zelo prijazen je bil z njo. (92)
- (12) Maria had never seen Joe so nice to her as he was that night... (117)  
SLO: Maria ni pomnila, da bi bil Joe kdaj tako prijazen z njo kot nocej ... (94)

The adjective *nice* is evidently translated in six different ways. By itself this would not be 'fatal' if it was not for an additional dimension: the figure of repetition crucially marks the narrative mode – free indirect discourse, to be precise – thus determining the narrative perspective or focalisation. According to Katie Wales, the rhetorical figure of repetition is a key component of free indirect discourse, suggesting as it does “the unsophisticated nature of ordinary thought-processes such as would be reproduced in informal speech or writing” (Wales 1992, 41).<sup>2</sup> While the English text leaves no doubt about the focaliser's identity – it is always Maria – the reader of the translation may well wonder in places about the identity of the observer/speaker in the narrative discourse.

## 2.3 Explicitation

Despite extensive support (e.g. Baker 1993; Klaudy 1996, qtd. in Mauranen and Kujamäki 2004; Chesterman 1997, qtd. in Hermans 2014; Toury 2001, qtd. in Dimitrova 2005), the universals mentioned above have been subjected to recent critical objections, but their original proponents seem to remain adamant. One of the loudest protests can be found in Juliane House's treatise “Beyond Intervention: Universals in Translation?” (2008), which questions the existence of any translation universals whatsoever. Her objections are supported by five arguments: (a) what the

<sup>2</sup> “With repetition that occurs in close juxtaposition rather than over successive pages we are likely in *Dubliners*, as in Joyce's later prose, to be also in the presence of a marked subjectivity (of character), rather than an objectivity (of narrator). So the repetitions suggest then unsophisticated nature of ordinary thought-processes such as would be reproduced in informal speech or writing” (Wales 1992, 41).

advocates of translation universals actually discuss is the universals of language, which simply happen to apply to translation as well; (b) these advocates examine the specific features of the language pairs in a given translation situation, when they should begin by analysing individual phenomena linguistically and only then seek to determine possible universals; (c) in the case of certain suggested universals, research outside the canon of translation universals has discovered irreversibility, that is, a translation feature may function only in translating from language A into language B, but not vice versa; (d) it is important to consider the special requirements of the genre – a tendency, such as the use of explicitation in German translations of general interest texts, may be toned down in translating texts on economics; (e) an important factor in identifying universals is the diachronic study of text development, since the use of language elements may change considerably over time, especially in transitions from one genre to another.

Criticism has not been levelled only at translation universals but at the explicitation hypothesis itself. The most uncompromising seems to be the study by a German translation scholar, Viktor Becher, entitled “Abandoning the Notion of ‘Translation-inherent’ Explicitation: Against a Dogma of Translation Studies” (2010). Becher cites three major reasons for discarding the explicitation hypothesis: (1) the methodological unsuitability and misleading interpretation of the results yielded by corpus research into explicitation – that is, by research based on text segments which display a tendency towards simplification; (2) the explicitation hypothesis runs counter to the principle of Ockham’s Razor (i.e. the problem-solving principle that among competing hypotheses, the one with the fewest assumptions should be selected); (3) the hypothesis presupposes explicitation as a universal category that is inextricably intertwined with the process of language mediation, without explaining whether this strategy is a conscious one or not (Becher 2010, 7-8).

But as the purpose of this study is not to evaluate the hypotheses of explicitation or of its status as a translation universal – such a venture would call for a solid factual foundation, a corpus analysis of Slovene translations of English literary works – I shall focus on several more or less evident occurrences of explicitation/implication in Slovene translations, classify them according to the extant typology, and (where possible) provide the reasons or motives for their appearance.

In identifying the explicitation type, I draw on the typology of the Hungarian translation scholar, Kinga Klaudy (2008, 80-5). Klaudy distinguishes four types: (1) **obligatory** explicitation; (2) **optional** explicitation; (3) **pragmatic** explicitation; (4) **translation-inherent** explicitation.

### 2.3.1 Obligatory explicitation

The notion of **obligatory explicitation** applies to cases of obvious divergence between the source and target text languages: of divergence based on structural or systemic differences between the two languages. Such differences are either grammatical or semantic. Grammatical explicitation may be illustrated by means of a number of sentences taken from Joyce’s short story “Eveline” from the *Dubliners* collection:

- (13) She *would not cry* many tears at leaving the Stores. (38)  
SLO: Zato ker zapušča trgovino, *ne bo prelila* mnogo solz. (D, “Evelina”, 31)
- (14) People *would treat* her with respect then. (38)  
SLO: Tedaj *se bodo vedli* z njo spoštljivo. (31)
- (15) She *would not be treated* as her mother had been. (38)  
SLO: *Ne bodo ravnali* kakor z njeno materjo. (31)

- (16) Frank *would save her*. He *would give her* life, perhaps love, too ... Frank *would take her* in his arms, *fold her* in his arms. He *would save her*. (41-2)  
 SLO: Frank *jo bo rešil*. *Dal ji bo življenje*, morda tudi ljubezen ... Frank *jo bo vzel v naročje*, *jo stisnil k sebi*. *Rešil jo bo*. (33-4)

The complex temporal dimension of the text at the discourse and plot levels, coupled with the **modal force of the text** (Toporišič 1992, 120), affects the element which is vital to the reader's coherent production of relationships within the narrative world, as well as to the correct identification of the characters' motives. This element is the use of the word *would* in its double function: as an **auxiliary verb** for the formation of the future-in-the-past tense, and as a **modal verb** expressing hypothetical modality. The loss of this duality cannot be attributed to the translator's lack of language proficiency: the systemic differences between English and Slovene virtually preclude retaining this source potential by suitable morphological or syntactic means. Still, the translator's strategy in choosing the future tense to render the original *would*-structures is dubious: after all, **modality** is one of those elements in the original which are crucial to the production of the meaning. The dénouement may thus strike the Slovene reader as unconvincing and unmotivated, at variance with the textual hints dropped throughout the narrative. It is certainly difficult to accept the final backing out of a character who has (in translation) categorically been repeating what she is going to do, who is going to save her, what life in a new environment will be like, etc. If a loss of meaning is inevitable, one might well opt instead for the modality at the expense of the future tense. But it is in fact possible to compensate for the loss of one function of *would*: by coupling the future tense with such modal adverbs as *nemara* ('possibly'), *nekako* ('somehow'), *menda* ('supposedly'), etc. While such insertions might admittedly heighten the explicitness of the text, they would also substantially lower the declarative force of future-tense statements.

### 2.3.2 Optional explicitation

**Optional explicitation** largely stems from the textual norms and/or stylistic preferences in individual languages. These may manifest themselves as textual additions (often enhancing the cohesion of the text); as morpho-syntactic expansions prompted by the complexity of the original (see Sheppard 1997); and through the translator's personal style, preferences and strategies. This shall be illustrated with examples motivated by three different contexts.

#### 2.3.2.1. Explicitation intended to facilitate comprehension

Slovene literary translation practice fosters a silent concern for the 'correct' reception of the text – a concern which often stems from the translator's underestimation of the reader's text processing ability. Indeed, it may even be due to the translator's unreflective reading and inability to analyse the source text stylistically. The result is a misperception or imperception of seeming gaps in the text, which should – in the translator's view – be filled in if the text is to be brought closer to the reader. While such textual economisation may be fully justified in translating technical or informative (denotative) texts, it is bound to reduce the original connotative potential in literary translation, which is dominated by the principle of stylistic innovation and rhetorical expressiveness. This process may take place at various language levels, but it often appears as replacement or explicitation of cataphoric deictic words. An example is the opening lines from Coleridge's poem *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798) / SLO: *Pesem starega mornarja* (1961). Semantically, these two lines represent no novelty, let alone a translation problem:

- (17) It is an ancient Mariner,                    In enega od svatov treh  
 And he stoppeth one of three.            ustavi star mornar. –

/Part One, ll. 1–2/

The lines are of both syntactic and semantic interest: by postposing the subject, Coleridge creates the illusion of a gap, of incohesion caused by the absence of a preceding sentence, for instance the question *Who is it?*, which would find a meaningful reply in the opening line. This juxtaposition opens many possibilities of interpretation, hinting at a cycle of epic dimensions, perhaps even a narrative *perpetuum mobile*. While this effect is partly re-created in translation by the introductory conjunction *in* ('and'), the original discontinuity between the two clauses is nevertheless smoothed over through their congestion into a single clause and an increase in cohesion.

The rhetorical level yields an interesting use of cataphoric reference: the description of the Wedding-Guest as "one of three". The two texts differ in that the source text does not identify the addressee until the fourth stanza, whereas the target text does so at the very beginning. This filling of the gap precludes the element of suspense, which is a vital building block of any literary text.

### 2.3.2.2. Explication for the sake of expressiveness

A brief allusion may be made to a cognate phenomenon, a variant of explicitation which might be described as the expansion of a translation unit for the purpose of achieving more colour and expressiveness in the target text. The result of this procedure is not disturbing for the reader as such – that is, it does not curtail the aesthetics of reading, mainly because it functions at a microstructural level and is thus more limited in scope. Indeed, there are cases when such expansion is welcome despite a touch of pleonasm, such as in the following passage from Heller's popular novel *Catch 22*:

- (18) "Metcalf," said the colonel, "you're a goddam fool. Do you know that?"

Major Metcalf swallowed with difficulty. "Yes, sir."

"Then keep your goddam mouth shut. You don't make sense."

(74)

SLO: "Metcalf," je rekel polkovnik, "vi ste repec na kvadrat, strela. Veste to?"

Major Metcalf je težko pogoltnil slino. "Da, gospod."

"Potem pa držite svoj trapasti gobec. Govorite brez repa in glave."

(98)

BT [backtranslation]: "Metcalf," said the colonel, "you're *a bloody fool, damn it*. Do you know that?"

Major Metcalf swallowed with difficulty. "Yes, sir."

"Then keep your *goddam gob* shut. You don't make sense."

While this form of explicitation is fairly harmless, the next example illustrates a very different procedure: explicitation at a macrostructural level, which takes the form of the translator's own additions. It is hardly necessary to stress what havoc such text manipulation can play with the portrayal of the characters. This is the language of Pap Finn in Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*:

- (19) "You think you are better'n your father, now, don't you, because he can't [read]? I'll take it out of you." (21)

And in the translator's version of *Huckleberry Finn*:

SLO: "Zdaj si gotovo domišljuješ, da si kaj boljšega kot tvoj oče, kajne? Paglavec nesramni!"

Le čakaj, da mi prideš v roke!” (34)

BT: “Now you think you’re better than your father, don’t you? *You cheeky punk!* Just you wait!”

- (20) “The widow, hey?—and who told the widow she could put in her shovel about a thing that ain’t none of her business?” ... Well, I’ll learn her how to meddle. And looky here—you drop that school, you hear? I’ll learn people to bring up a boy to put on airs over his own father and let on to be better’n what he is.” (21)

SLO: “Vdova, a? In kdo je dovolil vdovi vtikati svoj nos v stvari, ki je prav nič ne brigajo, kdo, a? Ji že pokažem, babnici stari! In ti, cepec, mi ne smeš nikoli več v šolo, razumeš, smrkavec grdi! Pokažem pa tudi vsem drugim ljudem, kaj se pravi takemu *paglavcu*, kot si ti, vtepati v glavo trapasto misel, da je boljši kot njegov oče.” (34)

BT: “The widow, hey? And who let the widow pry into things that are none of her business? I’ll show the *old hag!* And you, *stupid*, forget about the school, do you hear me, *you dirty brat!* I’ll show everyone what it means to fill the head of a *punk* like you with *half-baked* ideas that he’s better than his father.”

### 2.3.2.3. Explicitation in translating book titles

A separate problem of explicitation occurs in Slovene translations of literary titles, a topic little examined so far in Slovene translation theory and criticism. Indeed, even such fundamental translation textbooks written in English as *A Textbook of Translation* (2005) by Peter Newmark or *In Other Words* (2011) by Mona Baker spend little time on this topic. Newmark, for example, dismisses it by establishing two categories of title translation: descriptive and allusive (Newmark 2005, 56-7). This division, while perfectly possible, is by no means an exhaustive one, and this aspect of translation in fact requires much more attention. The Slovene practice, marked by strong oscillation in the translators’ strategies, reveals five major procedures in the translation of titles:

- The translators opt for a literal translation of the source metaphor, particularly when the metaphor is the author’s own coinage, e.g. Richard Brautigan: *In Watermelon Sugar* (SLO: *V lubeničnem sladkorju*).
- In their excessive concern for the reader, many are driven to clichés or idioms in translating the author’s metaphor, even an innovative one. This is evident in the translation of an Agatha Christie title, *Postern of Fate* (SLO: *Nič ni tako skrito*; BT: *Nothing is too hidden* – the beginning of a Slovene proverb).
- There is a noticeable tendency towards the explicitation of the title through expansion, as in the translation of John Galsworthy’s *Beyond* (SLO: *Onkraj sreče in ljubezni*; BT: *Beyond Happiness and Love*) or P.S. Buck’s *Portrait of a Marriage* (SLO: *Zakon iz ljubezni*; BT: *Love Match*).
- The greatest liberties are taken by those translators who render a more or less original metaphorical title interpretively, that is, who draw on the narrative to formulate a new title, which will, as they believe, encapsulate the essence of the work more effectively, e.g. Alexander Cordell: *The Rape of the Fair Country* (SLO: *Mortymerjevi*; BT: *The Mortymers*).
- The reverse process may be observed in the translation of another Agatha Christie title, *The Mirror Crack’d from Side to Side* (SLO: *Ledeni pogled*; BT: *The Cold Look*), or James Baldwin’s *If Beale Street Could Talk* (SLO: *Šepet nežne ulice*; BT: *Whisper of a Tender Street*, which is in fact an instance of implicitation).

The translations of literary titles thus reveal a range of translators' views and solutions – a burning issue which calls for systematic analysis and appropriate categorisation in the near future.

### 2.3.3 Pragmatic explicitation

Since any translation act represents a contact, in a sense even a clash, between at least two cultures, it is the intercultural dimensions of the translation process that are being increasingly foregrounded these days (see e.g. Grosman 1997, 1999, 2007). There have been seemingly interminable controversies between two schools of thought: those who consider the target culture to be central and therefore promote the domestication principle, and those who believe that the target text should include admixtures of the source elements and accordingly promote the foreignisation principle. Many translators thus opt for **pragmatic explicitation** as dictated by the culture-specific information implied in the source text: while the author takes it for granted that such information will be comprehended by the reader, the translator assumes the opposite and seeks to facilitate comprehension by certain explicitation procedures. In addressing and re-creating the role of elements which include culture-specific admixtures, I, as an opponent of the domestication method and proponent of foreignisation, argue above all for maintaining a consistent demarcation line between literary and non-literary texts, and (with regard to the former) an equally consistent demarcation line between 'high' and 'low' literatures. A comic text, for example, written for the sole purpose of making the reader laugh by wittily alluding to well-known circumstances or personages in a given cultural milieu, will not produce the desired effect in the target culture unless the translator employs certain naturalisation procedures, that is, adapts the references for the target audience. On the other hand, to read a literary text of some weight is primarily to become acquainted with a more or less unfamiliar foreign culture; from this perspective, the use of the same measures as above would deprive the source text and its cultural tradition, brought into the intercultural context, of its aesthetic and humanist significance. In addition to the explicitation of cultural peculiarities, which inevitably neutralises all hints of exoticism, translators have at their disposal such strategies as commenting and glossing.

A typical text interwoven with culture-specific patterns is Waugh's novel *Brideshead Revisited* (1945), translated as *Vnovič v Bridesheadu* (BT: *In Brideshead Again*; 1988). Set in the 1920s, the language is heavily coloured by the expressions which were in vogue at the time and by the slang phraseology of the upper middle class. The translator is thus faced with the demanding and time-consuming task of decoding the complex network of social, cultural and political connotations. The specific nature of the language underlying the text is manifested in the following passage:

(21) Rex, indeed, was neither starched nor wrinkled; his seniors thought him a pushful young cad, but Julia recognized the unmistakable chic – the flavour of 'Max' and 'F.E.' and the Prince of Wales, of the big table in the Sporting Club, the second magnum and the fourth cigar, of the chauffeur kept waiting hour after hour without compunction – which her friends would envy. (177)

SLO: Rex v resnici ni bil ne naškrobljen ne naguban; starejši od njega so ga imeli za kopolčarskega mladega neotesanca, Julija pa je spoznala njegov nezamenljivi čar – vonj po 'Maxu' in 'F.E.' in po valizanskem princu, vonj velike mize v Sporting Clubu, druge velike steklenice in četrte cigare, šoferja, ki ga je ure in ure puščal brez kesanja čakati – ki bi ji ga njene prijateljice zavidale. (184)

Without appropriate help from the translator, Slovene readers may reasonably be expected to lose their way in this maze of names and metonymies. The majority of references should be

supplied by the translator's footnotes: 'Max', for instance, is Max Beerbohm, English humorist and caricaturist, while 'F.E.' is F.E. Smith, a well-known English lawyer and orator. Others would require explicitation through expansion: (in the game room of) the Sporting Club, the second large bottle (of champagne), etc. Naturally, such encyclopaedic annotation demands an extraordinary amount of time and research. Sooner or later the Slovene milieu will have to accept a fact which is already recognised in countries with rich literary and translatorial traditions: literary translation is not only art but academic work as well, since it presupposes a scholarly approach and a store of philological, culturological, lexicological and encyclopaedic knowledge. In the absence of such knowledge and skills, the translation will possess an – often truncated – informative value at best.

The above example demonstrates that pragmatic explicitation, enthusiastically promoted by the majority of international translation scholars, is dependent on time. In the early 1980s, when Waugh's novel was translated, access to works of criticism – let alone the Internet – was severely limited. Today's technology, by contrast, enables a reader of the translation who is unfamiliar with the cultural allusions and references to 'Google up' any concept and obtain the desired information in a fraction of a second. But even so the dilemma persists: to what degree should the translation consider the principle of pragmatic explicitation, and to what extent is the translator permitted to make assumptions about the reader's cultural horizon? Uncertainty about such decisions is evident from the following passages in the same novel:

- (22) "He was in Mercury again last night." (43)  
 SLO: "Sinoči je bil spet namočen v vodo." (Waugh 45)  
 BT: "He was dipped into the water again last night."  
 /Tom Quad, the largest college quadrangle in Oxford, houses the Mercury Fountain./
- (23) "[I]n his speeches he said the sort of thing which 'made a story' in Fleet Street..." (283)  
 SLO: "[V] svojih govorih je izrekal reči tiste vrste, ki so bile zanimive za časnike..." (294)  
 BT: "[I]n his speeches he said the sort of things which were interesting for the papers."  
 /In the period depicted in the novel, Fleet Street was the hub of British journalism./

Of further interest is the fact that both explicated units result from generalisation rather than specification, although translation theory normally highlights the pairs 'explicitation– specification' and 'implication–generalisation', which is, of course, logical and in most cases correct (cf. e.g. Kamenicka 2007).

### 2.3.4 Translation-inherent explicitation

The only observation to be made about the fourth type of explicitation, that is, **translation-inherent explicitation**, is that it is grounded in the very nature of transferring a text from one language code to another, and that it takes place during the translator's interpretation of the source text. Its manifestation is supported by no example in translation theory, and the arguments for its existence are thin and subject to sporadic criticism. Officially its existence is still ensured, but I believe that, sooner or later, the hypothesis will have to be either reformulated or discarded.

## 3. Conclusion

Why, then, does explicitation occur in Slovene translations of English literary texts, and indeed in many cultural practices? The language-, literature- or culture-related factors listed above should be complemented by another factor, purely human and subjective: since translators are, above

all, mediators between two – often quite different – communication systems, they want to make themselves understood. Therefore they have recourse to aids which are perceived at a distance as unnecessary. As argued by certain studies (e.g. Heltai 2005), explicitation is the shield with which translators “cover their backs”, especially in translating technical texts, where the transfer of reliable information from one language code to another is of paramount importance.

Research has shown, too, that younger and inexperienced translators have recourse to explicitation more often than their experienced, professional colleagues (cf. Becher 2010, 20). To this I can personally attest as a translator of English and American literary texts into Slovene: in my salad days, when I tackled my first translation of Walt Whitman’s poetry for the central Slovene publishing house, Mladinska Knjiga, I was in an agony of uncertainty. Since my poet was relatively unpredictable and of uneven aesthetic quality, I oscillated between staying true to the original and striving for the best possible response on the reader’s part. It is these uncertainties that account for the possible cases of explicitation in my Slovene translation of Walt Whitman.

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