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TERMINOLOGICAL EQUIVALENCE IN TRANSLATION OF PHILOSOPHICAL TEXTS

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Abstract

The paper zeroes in on the problem of equivalence with regard to translating philosophical texts which have so far been marginalized in translation theory in comparison to other sorts of (non-)literary translation. The paper primarily aims to describe the current translator practice in the field of philosophy and disclose why philosophical discourse is rendered in the unique way it is. The goal of the paper is also to recommend good practice in the ambit of philosophical translation. Drawing on Nida's equivalence theory, the authors of this paper prioritize formal equivalence over dynamic one, which is connected with the specific nature of philosophical discourse. To this end, pertinent extracts from David Hume's *A Treatise of Human Nature* with a special focus on philosophical terminology have been compared with their published Slovak, German and Czech translations. The present paper draws first and foremost on the methods of comparative textual analysis and utilizes elements of translation quality assessment models by House (1997; 2015). The terminological research is conducted from the position of induction as it involves the elaboration of theory from the analysed terms. The comparative analysis suggests that the form and function of philosophical discourse is interconnected to such a degree that the form even constitutes a part of the text's function. The results of our analytical probe may be used as a springboard for deeper, quantitatively-oriented terminological-translational research.

Keywords: *philosophy, terminology, philosophical translation, equivalence theory, formal equivalence, dynamic equivalence, translation quality assessment*

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past years, much has been written about both literary and non-literary translation. There is, however, one type of discourse which has been given scant attention by translation studies scholars. It is the discourse of philosophy and acquiring any information about philosophical translation is rather troublesome, as some admit (see *e.g.* Parks 2004, Knuuttila 2012). The present paper, of course, does not purport to address the entire variety of problems one can encounter when translating philosophical discourse¹. Quite selectively, the paper homes in on the most vital problem in philosophical translation, *i.e.* equivalence and the issue of how it relates to the fidelity of the target text (hereafter abbreviated as TT) to the source text (hereafter referred to as ST). Firstly, the paper aims to elucidate the semantic-pragmatic choices translators

¹ Although on a stylistic level there is a fine distinction between text and discourse as “a de-contextualized vs. contextualized speech event” (cf. Ferencík 2016: 15), in this paper the two terms are used interchangeably for the sake of simplicity.

make when translating philosophical texts and secondly, it shows why philosophy is translated in the specific manner it is. Thirdly, the goal of the paper is to give recommendations for good practice in the selected field of translation. The motivation for writing this paper comes from the authors' personal experience with philosophy experts who tend to criticize translators for either misinterpreting the originals or for making translations almost unintelligible. Whereas the former problem may often be the outcome of a too free translation, dynamically or functionally equivalent, the latter results from adhering to the ST too closely. The choice of the 18th century Scottish philosopher David Hume was not a coincidence; we decided to put his selected terminology under scrutiny, because it offers a rich empirical material for interlingual comparison in translation across several languages including Slovak, German or Czech.

One way or another, philosophy represents a field where translations are accompanied by a mixed critical reception. As it is known, philosophical texts are seldom easy to understand. The complexity of the philosophical argument's construction is the chief reason why the translator has to be careful when opting for crafting a translation that is rather dynamically equivalent with the ST (*i.e.* communicates the text's message emphasizing the function of the text over its form) or the one that is more formally equivalent (*i.e.* tries to keep the form of the ST, stressing its interconnectedness with the text's function). Another thing is that philosophical discourse requires a thorough knowledge of the concepts, ideas and purposes of the ST, which determines linguistic choices when translating subtle nuances of meaning which are of high importance to the whole when 'energizing' a text in translation².

2. PRE-TRANSLATIONAL 'DIAGNOSIS' OF PHILOSOPHICAL TEXTS

In compliance with functional theories of translation, the ST should be subjected to a thorough translation-oriented analysis prior to the actual process of translation. The analysis of extra-textual factors (as worked out by Nord 2005) involving in our case the author, audience and translator constitutes an important part of the so-called pre-translational 'diagnosis' of philosophical texts.

The aspects of the ST connected with its author are among the first factors the translator has to take into account. Although philosophers aim for a universal truth of their writings with minimum personal involvement (Munday 2016: 250), it seems crucial to identify the historical and cultural context of the period in which a certain text originated. This is also relevant for the identification of concepts because a new philosophical concept is rarely created without being grounded on some preceding concept. Besides, the author may have a specific problem-orientation which influences their work. For instance, empirical philosophers (where Hume belongs), who believe that all human knowledge comes from sensuous experience, present their concepts in a fashion that is a tad easier to understand than that of rationalist philosophers (*e.g.* Leibniz), for whom reason was the source of knowledge. Therefore, the more is known to the translator about the particular author and their intention(s), the closer they get to interpreting the ST.

² On the concept of the energy of language in philosophical translation see Pound in Munday 2016: 258 ff.

The second prerequisite for a successful philosophical translation is the awareness of the text's audience. Philosophy is written to be read and is thus written with a receiver in mind. There is, however, no agreement as to whether philosophy is aimed at a specific audience or whether it comes with no strings attached. It is true that nowadays philosophy remains almost exclusively a prerogative of universities, being only limitedly absorbed by the general public as it is by nature not suitable for what could be labelled as 'popular consumption'³. The pre-translational question, which is relevant to the translator to pose, is who (*i.e.* what audience) the author had in mind when composing a particular text? Here, the translator needs to decide if they translate a text for the addressee, for someone the author conceived the text for, or if they translate for a 'chance receiver' (see Nord 2005), *i.e.* the general public. In most cases, philosophical texts are not aimed at chance receivers; they focus on the addressees. Moreover, the chance receiver and the addressee also differ in their approach to text and textuality. While the chance receiver is usually a 'semantic reader', the addressee is expected to be a 'semiotic reader' (see Eco 1994). The semantic reader concentrates on the information within the text, the meaning. On the other hand, the semiotic reader sets out to understand not only what is said but also how it is said, discriminating between a semantic and pragmatic meaning. Having the audience of philosophical discourse in mind, the translator also has to count with the fact that the ST and TT audiences may be several centuries apart. This is why they must be able to predict how much of the information connected to the time of the text's origin is still likely to be understood by the TT audience and how much information needs up-dating.

The third extra-textual factor relates to the personality of the translator of philosophical texts. A very good knowledge of the history of philosophy is necessary for every scholar who conducts any philosophy-oriented research. The same rationale may be applied to the translator because only a thorough knowledge of a philosophical problem makes it possible arrive at a plausible translation. This accounts for why it is usually philosophers who translate philosophical texts because studying the ST(s) extensively should precede the actual act of translation. This is because the authors sometimes draw on their forerunners using intertextuality, take issues with their concepts or re-evaluate their theories. In these situations, the knowledge of the history of philosophy becomes indispensable. What is also interesting to note when analysing the philosophical translator's profile is the fact that many of them have never had any form of translator training and are not professional translators, either.

3. TRANSLATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR PHILOSOPHICAL TEXTS

As has been implied, before translating philosophical texts, their firm understanding comes first. What seems to make the situation for the translator intricate is first and foremost the style of the philosophical argument, marked by the overall complexity, which is many a time not easy to follow. The stylistic complexity is, quite paradoxically,

³ The present paper, however, takes no account of philosophical texts that are translated for general audiences.

the effect of the opposite author's endeavour to explain things as general as possible. The corollary of such an approach is that by the overgeneralization the philosophical argument becomes very complex. For illustration, Kant may say that "one's mortal existence achieved its termination [while] Hegel would say that a finite determination of infinity had been further determined by its own negation" (qtd. in Blanshard 1953: 35). Both statements capture the idea of the event of death, but whereas Kant's statement makes the implicit explicit, Hegel attempts to not only state a fact but also defines it in the process, which may cause that the semantic reader (not to speak of the translator) ends up being entangled in the argument.

In connection with the tendency of philosophy to overgeneralize, the syntactic aspect of translation deserves to be addressed. The consequence of the increasing level of generality is that the sentence structure becomes more elaborate. In this respect, the analysed German translation versions of Hume's philosophical writing are the most problematic because the German syntax usually places the finite verb at the end of the clause. In this way, an ultra-long sentence structure may become confusing and consequently requires several re-readings. For this reason, even German university students tend to read *e.g.* Kant's writings in their English translations, which speaks volume about the nature of German philosophical discourse. This poses a question if it were possible to decrease the threatening unclarity in philosophical translation. Doing so, however, would mean reversing the author's line of thought, which is to be avoided in philosophy.

From a stylistic angle, philosophical texts have both a scientific and a moral dimension (see Parks 2004). The moral dimension is connected to the literary aspect of the philosophical writing, suggesting an author's personal engagement. The scientific and moral levels, however, are never clearly marked off and so it is the translator's task to strike a balance in literary and scientific means of expression. Nonetheless, in philosophical texts, it is not the moral dimension that the author primarily strives for because their aim is, first and foremost, to inform and to communicate ideas. Hence, the translation of philosophical texts exhibits a whole lot of traits of specialized translation. In the scientific ambit of translation, the translator does not have to be excessively creative and does not need to follow the original means of expressions as closely as possible.

Another problem related to style is philosophical terminology. Philosophers use words in a way that may not be natural for the reader. For illustration, when Hegel says that reason is substance, how is one to imagine the reason? Substance is material, reason is not (see Kiczko et al. 1997: 92—94). Such paradoxes may rightly confuse the (semantic) reader and translator. Moreover, philosophers often invent their own terms or assign new meanings to previously coined terms. All this means that the translator has to pay close attention to the author's words, to the rich, suggestive texture of writing, comparing and contrasting the different uses of one and the same word in different contexts (Parks 2004: 1). Arising from this, it is to be expected that reading and research may take up as much time as the actual translation, without being fully remunerated.

Another thorny issue in philosophical terminology is the uncertainty of terms, *e.g.* the Greek word *logos* may have the following meanings: word, speech, principle, reason, standard or even meaning. For this reason, authors try to use such ambiguous terms in their original form, especially when they become the object of explicit discussions (Rée 1999: 22). Similarly, it is the role of translators to put the TT reader before the same problem. If the translator decided to lower the obscurity of a certain text passage believing they know what is meant and trying to word it in a more straightforward manner, they could risk missing the author's point entirely.

4. EQUIVALENCE IN PHILOSOPHICAL TRANSLATION: THEORIES & INTERPRETATIONS

By and large, equivalence refers to the relationship between the ST and TT which makes it possible to call the final product translation. Despite heated more recent debates about its usefulness, equivalence remains a core concept of translation theory and a conceptual basis of translation quality assessment although it may be linked to subjectivity in evaluation. Terminologically-speaking, equivalence may be understood as “a relation of ‘equal value’ between a source language term and a target language term which can be established on any linguistic level from form to function” (Pym 2010: 7). This means that equivalence indicates that a source language term and target language term share some kind of ‘sameness’, implying an ‘illusion of symmetry between languages’ (Snell-Hornby qtd. in: House 2015: 6).

Although approaches to equivalence in translation studies have been put forward by many (among them to mention are *e.g.* Kade, Catford, Jakobson, Koller, Baker or Pym, to name just a few), this paper draws on the concept of equivalence worked out by Nida (1964) who differentiates between formal and dynamic equivalence. The two terms have often been understood fundamentally as word-for-word translation and sense-for-sense translation. In formal equivalence “one is concerned that the message in the receptor language should match as closely as possible the different elements in the source language” (Nida 1964: 159). Later called ‘formal correspondence’, it is keenly oriented towards the ST structure; the features of the form of the ST are mechanically reproduced in the target language (see Nida and Taber 2003/1969: 22—28). As formal equivalence reflects to some degree the linguistic features such as lexis, grammar and syntax of the source language, this has great impact on correctness and accuracy. Most typical of this sort of translation are gloss translations, with a close approximation to ST structure. Dynamic equivalence, later known as ‘functional’ equivalence, is based on what Nida dubs as ‘the principle of the equivalent effect’, where “the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message” (Nida 1964: 159). In other words, the message has to be tailored to the receptor's linguistic needs and their horizon of (cultural) expectations, “aiming at complete naturalness of expression” (*ibid.*). This receptor-oriented approach considers adjustments of lexicon, grammar and cultural references quintessential for achieving naturalness. Stress is put on transferring meaning, not grammatical form so the ‘foreignness’ of the ST is minimized. Dynamic equivalence

is designed to be used where the readability of the translation matters more than the original wording because it sacrifices some fidelity to the ST to achieve naturalness. As terms are designations of concepts and should be univocal in nature, in our view, formal equivalence should be a preferred translation strategy for terminology as dynamic equivalence could preclude the translator from encoding the implied pragmatic meaning of terms in translation. This would then lead to terminological mismatches between a source language term and a target language term, where the ideational component of a source term's function would not be captured properly.

A useful model when assessing equivalence in translation is that by House (1997; 2015), designed to compare a ST-TT pair, drawing on Hallidayan Register analysis, in terms of situational variables, function, genre, translation method, language and translation errors. Although there are certain parallels between Nida's formal/dynamic equivalence and House's overt/covert translation⁴, we shall refrain from a systematic comparison of the textual 'profile' of the ST and TT, focusing on the lexical, syntactic and textual means used to construct the Register (see *e.g.* House 2015: 71—84). This is because our equivalence focus is on terminology, which allows only for selected elements of the model to be employed to serve our goal (see section 5).

In contemporary translation studies, striving for formal as well as dynamic equivalence too much is not recommended. As much as the translator aims to achieve a high level of fidelity with the ST, they ought not to be too faithful and attempt to reproduce all features of the ST. Similarly, a too free communicative translation is equally castigated for its takes too many liberties with the TT. Based on this it may be claimed that there is no agreement as to what sort of equivalence is to be aimed at in translation. All the same, a plausible translation is the one which preserves the author's intention, upholds the text's purpose, allows the recipient to access the same information and provides them with the same experience.

5. TERMINOLOGICAL EQUIVALENCE IN CLOSE-UP

As far as methodology is concerned, selected philosophical terms from Hume's writing are compared across their Slovak, German and Czech translations, using the methods of comparative textual analysis. The analysis utilizes elements of translation quality assessment models by House; both her revised 1997 as well as new integrative 2015 model. Nonetheless, the paper abstains from reviewing the translations under investigation at a more complex level (assessing style, translation shifts, changes of expression at the macro- and microstylistic level etc.), which would fall outside its remit. Similarly, the core dimensions in House's model (1997; 2015) drawing on Hallidayan Register analysis of Field, Tenor and Mode, are not scrutinized because in their further

⁴ According to House, in an overt translation the TT does not pretend to be an original and is clearly not directed at the TT audience. On the other hand, a covert translation "is a translation which enjoys the status of an original source text in the target culture" (House 2015: 56). As the overt/covert distinction is a cline rather than a pair of binary opposites, it works mostly when assessing translations in their entirety. Due to our limited focus on terminology, this translation distinction is less suitable for assessing the equivalence of terms.

subdivisions they take us to various lexical, syntactic and textual means. Although these would be apt for a complex translation quality assessment at all key language levels, they are less appropriate for our terminological analysis narrowed down to equivalence-oriented investigations. For this reason, we shall employ only selected elements of the translation quality assessment model (*i.e.* the concepts of ‘covertly erroneous error’, ‘overtly erroneous error’, ‘mismatch’ and ‘profile’) so as to reinforce our recommendations for philosophical translation practice. With regard to terminology, translation quality evaluation is based in the first place on its ideational functional component, *i.e.* adequate representation of a philosophical concept. In this paper, we understand terms as units of specialized philosophical knowledge whose correct translation requires an expert degree of conceptual fluency that is present only in semiotic readers. Although the performed probe into philosophical translation is rather limited by the choice of the author, it does have the potential of signposting vital strands of problems in philosophical translation.

When translating philosophical terms, equivalence should be established at the level of pragmatic meaning which overrides semantic meaning. That said, the meaning of a term is manifest ‘outside’ a term *per se*, being endowed with special illocutionary force, transcending its denotational sense that the translator has to decode. When comparing the ST and TT terminological ‘profile’ so as to assess its translation quality, ‘overtly erroneous errors’ (see House 1997; 2015) are to be avoided. These result either from denotative mismatches between the source language term and target language term, giving incorrect meanings, or target system errors which do not conform to the formal grammatical or lexical requirements of the target language. In House’s model there are also ‘covertly erroneous errors’ that result from a breach of the situational dimensions of Hallidayan-influenced Register analysis of Field, Tenor and Mode. As House (2015: 33) herself admits, covertly erroneous errors “demand a much more qualitative-descriptive in-depth analysis [and] have often been neglected”. This is relevant for our comparative translational analysis of the selected terms.

Perhaps the most central philosophical terms in Hume’s *Treatise* are those of *justice* and *injustice*. A ‘covertly erroneous error’ would occur when translating Hume’s focal term *justice* in a straightforward denotative manner as *spravodlivost’*. This could be most probably done by a translator who would be only a semantic reader failing to recognize an ideational component of a source term’s function and its perlocutionary effect on the target reader. Although at first sight this might seem like a perfectly legitimate equivalent in the TL, the disadvantage of this translation strategy would be that it could cause that the term would acquire a broader meaning than it has in the English ST. Namely, in Slovak *spravodlivost’* is used to refer to a larger scale of concepts than its English equivalent, *e.g.* in a sentence such as “Život nie je spravodlivý”, the term *spravodlivý* does not refer to the fact that life disobeys the rules of justice, but that it is not fair. Hence, “Life is not fair” would make the sentence above correct in translation, where “fairness” is a far cry from “justice”. In its legal meaning, *justice* refers to “a moral ideal that the law seeks to uphold in the protection of rights and punishment of wrongs” (Law 2015: 351). Although it may be true that *spravodlivost’* also fits the given definition, it is also used to refer to objective universal fairness, which Hume is arguing against,

by claiming justice to be “artificial”. Even though the semantic reader did not know what kind of justice Hume had in mind, they would know, by the end of the discourse, that no universal justice as fairness was meant.

Upon interlingual comparison of the philosophical term at hand, one finds out that the same problem crops up in the 1973 German translation. Similarly to the Slovak translation, the German translator did not use *Gerechtigkeit* and *Ungerechtigkeit*, respectively, but went on to use *Rechtsinn* or *Rechtsordnung* for *justice*⁵ and *Rechtswidrigkeit* for *injustice*⁶. In the attendant Slovak translation, *justice* is translated as *zmysel pre právo* or *právny poriadok* and *injustice* appears as *protiprávnosť*. The Slovak translation shares similarity with the German translation in being less direct and implicit. Such terminological choices in both languages approximate the translations to the authorial intention and consequently help the reader understand his philosophical message. In addition, the German and Slovak translation both contain the problem that sometimes the reader may lose track of the philosophical argument because they are presented with a double variation of terms for the same concept, which might be confusing (*Rechtsinn* or *Rechtsordnung* and *zmysel pre právo* or *právny poriadok*). However, the presence of the two translation equivalents does not lead to a clash between the ST author and the translator when capturing the ideational component of the ST’s function.

Another term that is worthy of scholarly attention is that of *artifice*. Not only does it imply artificiality, as opposed to naturalness, but according to *Cambridge Dictionary* it may also be used to refer to “a clever trick or something intended to deceive”⁷. Consider the following translations under examination:

English source text: We now proceed to examine two questions concerning the manner in which the rules of justice are established by the *artifice* of men [...] (Hume 1896/1739: 252)

German translation: Wir kommen jetzt zu der Untersuchung von zwei Fragen; die erste betrifft die Art wie die Normen der Rechtsordnung durch *Menschenkunst* festgelegt worden sind [...] (Hume 1973/1739: 289)

Czech translation: Přicházíme nyní ke zkoumání dvou otázek, z nichž prvá se týká způsobu jak byly *uměním člověka* zjištěny normy právního pořádku [...] (Hume 2015/1739: 243)

Slovak translation: Teraz prichádzame k preskúmaniu dvoch otázok, a to ohľadom spôsobu, ktorým sa *zručnosťou človeka* stanovujú pravidlá právneho poriadku [...] (Hume 2007/1739: 238)

As can be seen, the German translation employs the term *Menschenkunst*, with *Mensch* meaning *man* and *Kunst* having the semantics of *art and artificiality*, however, lacking the semantic components of trickery and deceit. The ideational component in the German translation equivalent is thus less strongly marked. Besides, art implies a certain veneer of nobility, while Hume’s intention in the Treatise is to emphasize an egoistic nature of the *artifice* by means of which the rules of justice are established.

⁵ The German terms *Rechtssinn* and *Rechtsordnung* best correspond to ‘sense of law’ and ‘rule of law’, respectively.

⁶ *Rechtswidrigkeit* best corresponds to ‘unlawfulness’ in English.

⁷ See <https://dictionary.cambridge.org> for the exact definition.

In a similar vein, the Czech equivalent *umění* does not capture this semantic feature of meaning, either although it approximates to the English original a tad more faithfully because the Czech word *umět* means to “have a skill”. The Slovak translation seems slightly more appropriate by being semantically closer the other original, but it is not the most satisfactory translation solution because it lacks the semantic component of deceit as well. Nonetheless, the advantage of the Slovak term is that it does not have the negative connotation of nobility that both *Kunst* and *umění* have. Although the proposed terms in the German and Czech language versions have their downsides, they do not represent any ‘overtly erroneous errors’; there is neither a mismatch of denotative meanings nor any trace of ungrammaticality or dubious acceptability in the target language. All term translations are marked by a high degree of formal equivalence among the individual language versions. A dynamic approach to equivalence in the terms under scrutiny would show disregard for the form of the source text and could distort the original authorial intention.

Another problem when the translator cannot apply the denotative meaning in their translation concerns the term *benevolence* that is formally equivalent with *Wohlwollen* in the German translation. Both the English and the German versions are composed of a word-formation base meaning ‘good’ (*bene-* and *Wohl-*) and the other one standing for ‘to wish’ (*-volence* from the Latin ‘volantem’ and *-wollen*). For the noun phrases *public benevolence* and *private benevolence* the closest Slovak equivalents *verejná benevolencia* and *osobná benevolencia* would impart a calqued impression, in much the same way as translating *justice* and *injustice* denotatively, where the philosophical interpretation by the semiotic reader is necessary. The disadvantage of the tentative Slovak term *benevolencia* is that it is usually associated with the meaning of ‘lenience’ that is not present in the English original. Hence, the philosophically correct translation equivalents for the terms above are *úsilie o verejné blaho* and *úsilie o osobné blaho*, respectively. In these exceptional cases, however, a too high degree of formal equivalence is not desirable. It would lead to an ‘overtly erroneous error’ on the part of the translator due to a denotative meaning’s mismatch.

Furthermore, there is one important term in the Treatise whose ‘profile’ deserves to be dissected via a comparative translational analysis. The English term *affection* signifies according to *Oxford English Dictionary* an emotion, a fondness or liking (in a positive sense) and an inclination towards something (in a neutral sense)⁸. In Slovak, the former meaning corresponds to *náklonnosť* whereas the latter to *sklon*. In German, there are two terms, *Zuneigung* and *Neigung*, differing only in the presence of a prefix. Therefore, in the German translation it is obvious that the two TL terms refer to the same SL concept. In Slovak, however, this is not evident because *affection* is rendered in the Slovak translation as *náklonnosť*. Compare the English ST and its pertinent Slovak translation below.

English source text: So far from thinking, that men have no *affection* for anything beyond themselves, I am of the opinion, that tho’ it be rare to meet with one, who loves any single person better than himself [...] (Hume 1896/1739: 253)

⁸ See www.oed.com.

Slovak translation: *Dištancujú sa od tvrdenia, že ľudia nepocitujú náklonnosť k ničomu mimo nich samých sa domnievam, že aj keď sa dá len zriedkavo natrafiť na človeka, ktorý miluje každú osobu viac než seba samého [...]* (Hume 2007/1739: 240)

In lieu of the given TL equivalent, ‘city’ could be used with a semantic difference. The Slovak translation would then read as follows: “*Dištancujú sa od tvrdenia, že ľudia nemajú city k ničomu mimo nich samých sa domnievam [...]*”. The translation solution of using *city* as an equivalent for *affection* is not entirely devoid of problems, though. Despite being endowed with both a positive and neutral sense, the potential equivalent of the term lacks the semantic aspect of inclination towards something. However, this a far more fitting semantic choice than the version with *náklonnosť*. Here, it is also important to rule out *faux amis*⁹, because one could easily suggest that another possible Slovak equivalent could be that of *afekt*. The formal similarity to the English term would, however, lead to an unfitting TL term and, to put it in House’s words, an ‘overtly erroneous error’. This is because *afekt* in Slovak refers to a state of mind when one is under the control of strong passions and loses his mental balance¹⁰, which is not implied in the philosophical discourse at all. If the Slovak translator were misled by a *faux ami*, the lexical requirements of the TL would be clearly violated, so it would be fallacious to add this semantic dimension to the discourse. What is noteworthy though, is that the Czech translation even uses four different terms for *affection*: *náklonnosť, afekt, hnutí, zájem*. Although this may help the translator to achieve a smooth and naturally flowing translation in certain places of the discourse, a dynamic approach to equivalence obscures the text’s message and makes it even more demanding for the reader to follow the terminology¹¹.

In sum, based on the performed selective probe into philosophical terminology, it can be seen that a dynamic approach to equivalence may not be an ideal solution as the translator may move away from the implied meaning in such a way that it is almost contrary to the original author’s intention, as in the case of *justice* and *artifice*. Apart from this, dynamic equivalence can trigger off terminological inconsistencies, which make it strenuous for the reader to keep track of the terminology and philosophical argument, as in the case of *affection* in the Czech translation. One also needs to be heedful of potential *faux amis*, which may lead to erroneous translations, *e.g.* *affection* does not correspond to *afekt* in Slovak, as we have witnessed. Last but far from least, it is vital to reiterate that many philosophical terms are contextualized in their meaning only in a particular place of the discourse.

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In conclusion, based on the performed probe, we propose the preference of formal equivalence over dynamic one in respect to the translation of philosophical terminology. This is because the form and function of philosophical texts are so intertwined that

⁹ Words in two languages that look or sound similar, but have a significantly different meaning which foreign language learners may easily misrecognise.

¹⁰ See www.slovníky.juls.savba.sk for the exact definition.

¹¹ Intriguingly enough, a similar problem appears in the translation of Kant when *e.g.* his central term ‘nature’ (*Natur* in the German original) may be translated into Slovak, depending on the context, as either ‘*priroda*’ or ‘*povaha*’.

the form even constitutes a part of the text's function. Another argument disregarding dynamic equivalence is that philosophy nullifies concepts that lay people usually assign to certain terms and fills them with new, philosophically-rooted semantics. This causes that certain terms are only intelligible to philosophy connoisseurs, who are semiotic readers, in sharp contrast to semantic chance receivers. If philosophical discourse were to be rendered in a more straightforward manner, it would pave the way for more room for dynamic equivalence. This would, however, run against the nature of philosophy.

Based on the comparative analysis of the excerpted philosophical terms, the following recommendations can be given: the translator has to contextualize and decode the precise meaning of the term depending on its philosophical interpretation; denotative term meanings are to be used with caution; it is essential for the same philosophical term to be used consistently so as not to confuse the reader and distort the message; and the translator should not add any semantic dimensions to terms so as to approximate to the (ideal) reader.

Overall, the paper has provided an account of how and why the form is bound up with the meaning in the specialized ambit of philosophy. Although the treatment of equivalence in the translation of philosophical terminology in this paper is by no means exhaustive, we believe that it has signposted some issues whose verification is in need of further, quantitatively-oriented research, possibly with more philosophical texts from various periods. It could be interesting to move from a text and discourse-oriented approach to translation quality assessment on to a more recent response-based approach and, using the questionnaire method, elicit reader reactions to different translation strategies of philosophical terminology. This could involve translators who are no philosophy experts and those having a philosophical background but no professional translation training. It would also be enticing to look at how semantic and semiotic readers react to translation strategies by the two translator groups. Aside from terminology, it would be tempting to test equivalence in rendering philosophical style and investigate for example what kind of text passages (*e.g.* descriptive or exemplifying) require which basic equivalence orientation and if there is any clear dominance.

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ТЕРМИНОЛОГИЧЕСКАЯ ЭКВИВАЛЕНТНОСТЬ В ПЕРЕВОДЕ ФИЛОСОФСКИХ ТЕКСТОВ

КЛАУДИЯ БЕДНАРОВА-ГИБОВА, САНДРА ЗАКУТНА

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Исследование посвящено терминологическим соответствиям в переводе философских текстов, которым до сих пор уделялось мало внимания в теории перевода по сравнению с переводом текстов в других научных отраслях. Целью исследования является описать современные практики перевода в области философии и выявить причины уникальности этих практик в философском дискурсе, а также рекомендовать оптимальные практики перевода в этой отрасли знания. Опираясь на теорию переводческой эквивалентности Найды, мы отдаем приоритет формальной эквивалентности над динамической, что связано со спецификой философского дискурса. Отобранные с учетом фило-софской терминологии фрагменты «Трактата о человеческой природе» Д. Юма сравниваются с их переводами на словацкий, немецкий и чешский языки. Акцент делается в первую очередь на методах сравнительного текстуального анализа, а в оценке качества перевода используются элементы модели Хауза (1997; 2015). Терминологическое исследование проводится на основе индукции, поскольку она предполагает уточнение теории исходя из анализа терминов. Сравнительный анализ предполагает, что форма и функционирование в философском дискурсе взаимосвязаны до такой степени, что форма даже определяет часть функции текста. Результаты нашего аналитического опыта могут быть использованы в качестве отправной точки для более глубокого, качественно-ориентированного терминологически-переводного исследования.

Ключевые слова: философия, терминология, перевод философских текстов, теория эквивалентности, формальная эквивалентность, динамическая эквивалентность, качественно-ориентированное терминологически-переводное исследование

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