

Zuzana Jettmarová

While Western Translation Studies (TS) steered its course through the turns in the humanities to arrive at a social and dynamic picture of its object, the evolution of Czech and Slovak TS steered a different course from the very beginning. It was probably due to the specific domestic methodology of Czech and Slovak structuralisms. The Czech founder, Jiří Levý (1926-1967), developed his theory in the 1950s through 1960s. The Slovak founder, Anton Popovič (1933-1984) proceeded where Levý stopped because of his premature death, and embarked on an ambitious project of establishing a full-fledged discipline of what is now called TS. Popovič was a literary comparatist and met Levý at Brno University while completing his PhD. there. Popovič's first monograph on translation theory appeared in 1968, only a year after Levý's death. Although working behind the Iron Curtain, the two founders had access to both the Eastern and Western state-of-the-art. As a Czechoslovak representative to the FIT, Levý was editorial board member of "Babel". Popovič was member of the Invisible College, as Hermans calls the group of James Holmes.¹

Empirical foundations and methodology

In conclusion to his voluminous descriptive history of Czech translation in the European context (1957), previously published as a synoptical article, Levý argues that while translation played an important role in the making of European literatures, its role in the Czech culture was considerably stronger as it participated in the struggle for national survival under the Habsburg Monarchy during the 19th and early 20th centuries.²

Levý traces translation practices and their accompanying discourses on translation (called theories) from the Middle Ages to the end of World War

¹ T. Hermans, *Translation in Systems*, Manchester, St. Jerome, 1999.

² J. Levý, *Vývoj překladatelských teorií a metod*, in *Nové práce k otázkám teorie a praxe překladu*, Praha, Kruh překladatelů při Svazu čs. spisovatelů, 1954, pp. 1-53.

II. This descriptive and target-oriented work served as the solid empirical foundation of his translation theory, where the interdependences of cultural functions and needs on the one hand, and translation practices, be it flows or methods, on the other hand, crystallized. Unlike Toury,³ he saw that the co-existence of competing translation methods represented an ideological and sociological issue, rather than any intrasystemic, agentless moves between the centre and periphery. The same applies to the choices of source cultures and their texts. It is always a few people pursuing their interests and aims, not the culture as such, who decide to fill in its gap, and then affect it with their choice and translation method.

However, there were not only such noble aims. Levý found other socio-cultural and ideological functions of translation than the engendering of a literary system and language.⁴ He identified the economic factor when the proliferation of translations, competing with and hampering domestic production on the market, was motivated by the fact that translations were cheaper or more attractive than original production. Human agency (group, institutional, individual), ideological and material interests under specific socio-cultural conditions are the force driving translation flows and co-determining translation methods.

Levý also isolated other factors: (a) individual agency, (b) the evolutionary line of the system and (c) its embedding in a systemic hierarchy. The first means that any agent involved in the selection, production and distribution of translation under given socio-historical circumstances, has also his unique personal dispositions, beliefs and interests. The second means that a system may have its autonomous line of evolution, and it is again human agency (group and individual) as an extrinsic factor that affects its change. The third means that systems are involved in both vertical and hierarchical interactions, that is on intracultural, intercultural and supracultural levels. He also noticed that translation as a socio-historical phenomenon and methods of transfer not only changed over time under specific conditions but that tracing them over the course of time allows for isolating a specific evolutionary line, nevertheless afflicted by the dialectical intervention of extrinsic force – human agency. When there were more competing methods at a time, Levý identified the sociological and ideological motivations of the players on the scene through their discourses and belonging.

In other words, translation practices, methods and ensuing products are socio-historical phenomena, interrelated with socio-cultural contexts both

³ G. Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*, Amsterdam, J. Benjamins, 1995.

⁴ J. Levý, *České teorie překlada*, Praha, SNKLHU, 1957 [repr. 1996].

within one culture and a group of (European) cultures. Practices, methods, products and cultures exist and evolve through human (collective and individual) agency, which, on the other hand, builds on the *status quo* and tradition; this was later schematised by Popovič as follows:

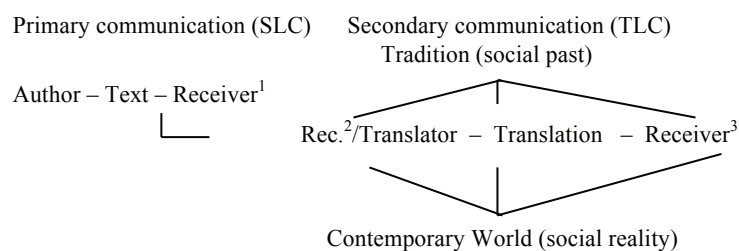


Fig. 1: The communication scheme⁵

Although this descriptive background might have been a solid foundation of Levý's theory of translation where he also discovered translation norms, during the 1950s and 1960s he produced numerous studies based on *ex post facto* and experimental research, probing into various specific aspects of translation and testing his hypotheses based on theoretical models or derived from observation, or producing new hypotheses and synthesizing empirical findings. This is how Levý arrived at the translator's tendencies (now called universals and shifts).⁶

The Czech principle of building a theory was also different from the Western positivist approach. While positivism insisted on induction, Czech structuralists adhered to the *zig-zag* method, also allowing for the prior construction of theory that was to be tested subsequently. This method, open theory and not rigidly defined concepts allowed for flexible theoretical adjustments and extensions based on new empirical findings. This particularly meant that theoretical models and concepts were flexible and open.

Levý was an ardent follower of the Czech structuralist method and a rigorous scholar, aware of the pitfalls of subjectivism as well as of objective

⁵ See A. Popovič, *Teória umeleckého prekladu*, Bratislava, Tatran, 1975.

⁶ See J. Levý, *Překladatelský proces – jeho objektivní podmínky a psychologie*, "Slovo a slovesnost", 1955, pp. 65-87; Id., *Translation as a Decision Process*, in *To Honor Roman Jakobson*, II, The Hague, Mouton, 1967, pp. 1171-1182; Id., *Bude literární věda exaktní vědou?*, Praha, Čs. spisovatel, 1971; Id., *The process of creation of a work of art and its reception*, in *Tradition versus Modernity. From the classic period of Prague structuralism to translation studies at the beginning of the 21st century*, ed. by J. Králová and Z. Jettmarová, Prague, FFUK/Togga, 2008, 47-88.

positivism. The Czech method was *constructivist*, historical-dialectical, sociological and interdisciplinary. It was based on the semiotic theory of function (linked to values and norms) and it combined well with (a) the theory and practice of functional equivalence in translation based on stylistic substitution, first formulated by Mathesius in 1913, and (b) the communicative model of the process, adopted from the theory of information / communication. This processual model of the communication act, adopted by Levý for translation, involved the participants and the situational context embedded in the cultural context. Because translation was a secondary act, Levý linked it to the primary act;⁷ hence he saw translation as both prospectively and retrospectively oriented practice, i.e. both target and source oriented activity producing a hybrid of two cultures and languages. Source and target orientedness is always there, but it is a dynamic sliding scale.

From his empirical analyses of translations in European history, Levý arrived at the socio-historical, semiotic and dynamic concept of *translativity*.⁸ This is an umbrella concept for what has been discussed in international TS as foreignisation vs. domestication since the early 1990s.⁹ The difference between Levý and these discussions is that translativity is a dialectical, dynamic phenomenon bound to socio-cultural values (it may acquire a positive, negative or zero value). For example, should the value be negative, translations would tend to be domesticated as in Classicism, when it is positive, as in Romanticism or when a new genre is introduced through translation, the opposite is true. Levý's binary oppositions are historical-dialectical and dynamic. Translativity is therefore bound to another opposition: the *general* vs. the *specific*. The translator either keeps the foreign specific, or substitutes it with the domestic specific, or transforms the foreign specific into the general.

Generalisation (a common neutral ground, *neutralisation*) is the so far missing middle *we* between *the self* and *the other* in Western TS discourse. Levý isolated generalisation as a technique or procedure (and also a negative tendency, on the other hand) from his empirical research. Today it may come close to globalisation practices. Levý considered translation a powerful means of mass communication and isolated its two evolutionary systemic functions leading to (a) differentiation and (b) universalization. On the level of singular cultural literary systems translation contributed to their differentiation in

⁷ J. Levý, *Umění překlada*, Praha, Čs. spisovatel, 1963 [repr. 1983, 1998].

⁸ Ibidem.

⁹ L. Venuti, *Genealogies of Translation Theory: Schleiermacher*, "TTR", 4 (1991) 2, pp. 125-150; Id., *The Translator's Invisibility*, London, Routledge, 1995.

terms of genres, on the supracultural level it contributed to the constitution of world literature.

Translativity is linked with two dialectic categories for delimiting the concept and method of translation: *noetic compatibility*¹⁰ and *noetic subject / objectivism*.¹¹ They are both descriptive and explanatory categories whose introduction is intended to eliminate the static metaphors of faithful and free translation (a translation reading / not reading like an / the original, foreignizing or domesticating translation etc.), bringing in dynamic social and phenomenological, anti-essentialist aspects.

Noetic compatibility brings in the distinction between *illusionist and anti-illusionist translation* / method / translator as two extreme poles on a scale; readers of illusionist translations, relying on an 'agreement' that the translation has preserved the SLT qualities and perceiving no traces of the intermediary, believe they are reading e.g. *Madame Bovary*. Should the translator step out from behind the scene by an unintended stumble, by exoticization, notes etc., and recognized by the receiver, the illusion is dispelled. This category, linking the translator with the receiver, co-relates with *noetic subject / objectivism*. *Subjectivism* as an ideological basis makes cultures concentrate on the 'self', and their translations, paradoxically, tend to retain the SLT specific and individual alien features (producing the traditionally termed 'faithful' translation), while under ideological *objectivism* translations tend to generalize or suppress foreign features, highlighting those shared by the two or more cultures, or even substituting foreign elements with domestic ones ('free' translation). Concrete positions on the general subject-objectivism scale historically depend on translation functions related to specific TLC needs, as Levý observed.¹²

Semiotically, translation and translativity are thus linked to receiver experience, expectations and acceptability. Like any other message, translation is taken at face value as a representation of, in this case, the source message. Its credibility and verisimilitude may be infringed upon when the translator breaks down the *illusio* game when the receiver believes he is reading the original and wants it to read like an original. However, at the same time, what once may have been perceived as foreign/ized, may have lost its foreign slant later on due to linguistic and cultural developments (e.g. through appropriation, assimilation). What once looked domestic and natural in a particular genre may after some decades look obsolete in terms of content, form, sense

¹⁰ J. Levý, *Umění překladu*, cit.

¹¹ Id., *České teorie překladu*, cit.

¹² Id., *České teorie překladu* (1996), p. 235.

or understandability. It is the receiver who is the yardstick; during the process of translating it is the translator's intended or envisaged reader, and then he is the one who completes the act of communication by reception. This implies that messages, as teleological acts, unlike texts which are their physical materialisation, come into existence only through their social reception. Here Levý integrates the factor of ageing.

With the receiver (including the translator) and their language and culture changing, texts undergo ageing. Levý found out that the life-span of translations is usually shorter than that of originals.¹³ Through his empirical analyses Levý identified two major factors of ageing: interpretation and language. Language and style come to mind first. It is not only their changes, but namely the changes of recipients and their expectations as well as the translator's linguistic creativity that are at stake. Translators are usually less linguistically creative than authors and tend to use standardised language in its current usage, be it poetics or modern fleeting phrases.¹⁴ This aspect has been later theorized as the law of growing *standardization* by Toury,¹⁵ and as a translation universal called *normalization*. Messages, however, have another and perhaps, more important aspect, that is meaning.

Content, form, meaning and ideology

In Czech structuralism it is content and form together, i.e. a formed content, that make the meaning of the message. In non-literary discourses, form is standard, unmarked, and so 'transparent', and any deviation from the standard, whether intended or unintended by the author (or translator), draws readers' attention to the form. In literary discourse, the poetic function is adherent, expected and prominent. It is based not only on the period poetics (combining content and form), but also on intended deviations, innovations and specifics representing the author's individual style and creativity in both form and content. The result of the clash of two different poetics in translation depends not only on period translation norm and intended function, on the temporal and spatial distance of the two cultures and their literary traditions, readers' experience and expectations, but also on the intentions and dispositions of the translator. The category of the translator as producer and message sender may represent a sum of roles or players in the translation act – the publisher, editor, translator, policy maker, censor etc.

¹³ J. Levý, *Umění překladau*, cit.

¹⁴ Id., *Překladačský proces – jeho objektivní podmínky a psychologie*, cit.; Id., *Umění překladau*, cit.; Id., *The Art of Translation*, Amsterdam, J. Benjamins, 2011.

¹⁵ G. Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*, cit.

The Czech structuralist theory of meaning, namely in art, is a complex and elaborated issue with a tradition going back to the 1930s. It is based on meaning indeterminacy, phenomenology, reception and interpretation as cognitive and social action, as well as on the interdependence of language, thought and culture. Interpretation and reception are most relevant aspects in translation.

Ingarden's phenomenology of the cognition of a literary work and its structure has some affinities with *Gestalttheorie*, the basic axiom being that the reader, apart from disambiguating the ambiguous, fills-in the gaps or lacunas to complete the structures, thus actively participating in the construction of meaning and sense, and finally arriving at a *concretisation* of the whole, that is at its mental image. What the translator transfers is, in fact, his concretisation, as one of possible interpretations of the work of art, thus narrowing its interpretive radius and shortening its life-span. Since he had to disambiguate, fill-in the structures and knows the whole, the translator also inclines to *prompting* by filling in the gaps in his translation, which may decrease the artistic value of the work.¹⁶ Apart from that, having arrived at his concretisation, the translator, considering his prospective reader and receiving environment, forms the concept of his translation. This conception, the basis of the translation method and bound to norms, reflects socio-cultural differences between the original reader and the prospective reader of the translation and the receiving system.

Constructing the translation model on the lines of information theory, Levý specifies the communication chain as follows:¹⁷

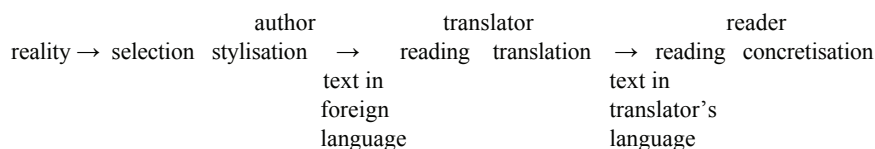


Fig. 2. The communication chain in translation.

Leví saw as pertinent that the receiver's reception is a combination of individual idiosyncrasies as well as of collective internalized norms and social context – interpretations may result in the shift of the dominant function, in the reshuffling of intended functions carried by the elements in the structure, but also in perceiving as intended certain elements that the author may have

¹⁶ J. Levý, *Bude literární věda exaktní vědou?*, cit.; Id., *The process of creation of a work of art and its reception*, cit.

¹⁷ See J. Levý, *Bude literární věda exaktní vědou?*, cit., pp. 36-37; Id., *The Art of Translation*, cit., p. 23.

never intended to function as such. Pospíšil,¹⁸ referring back to Mukařovský¹⁹ explains this intricacy by pointing out that for Czech structuralism the core theoretical assumption applies that the structure of functions of a work of art corresponds to the structure of needs of the individual or collective receiver, hence the derived value of the work.

It is the predominant need or the social relevance in a particular society that determines the function and value of the text, and this is also why receivers in their particular culture and time perceive the functions as intentional on the production pole. As Mukařovský points out,²⁰ intentionality may be grasped only if we look at it from the standpoint of the receiver whose anticipation of the author's intention makes the receiver seek the semantic integral of the work; this in turn is generally bound to its genre affiliation. In the translation process, this complex represents the *standpoint* of the translator, reader, editor and publisher, critic etc.

However, there is no straightforward relationship between what the translator, under constraints, imports from the original and what is actually transferred into the TLC. This is because meanings and shifts in meaning are generated through the interaction of the internal context and the external context – even social meanings carried by signs are only realized through their perception in a concrete society. This social meaning may be imparted in the signs by the author, or by the translator, or it may be attributed to the signs by the receiver only.

Mukařovský points out that whatever the intentions of the author may have been, receivers may perceive them differently, depending on their individual and collective dispositions, which may even reshuffle the intended dominance and subordination of structural units.²¹ This is the point where an author's intention interacts with reception, including the translator's and consequently that of the receiver. So intentionality can only be fully understood if we look at it from the point of view of the receiver trying to identify the integral semantic unity of the artistic work against the background of the preconceived authorial intention in the particular genre, as Mukařovský remarks.

In other words, the theoretical assumption, also valid for translation, is that the structure of a message corresponds to the receiver's (individual or

¹⁸ Z. Pospíšil, *Sociosémiotika umělecké komunikace*, Abert, Bozkovice-Olomouc- Prostějov, 2005, p. 211.

¹⁹ J. Mukařovský, *Studie z estetiky*, Praha, Odeon, 1943 [repr. 1966].

²⁰ Ibidem (1966), p. 64.

²¹ Ibidem, pp. 93-94.

collective) structure of needs, and that this needs-related functioning constitutes its value. This is why a dominant need in a society at a particular time determines the function and value of a text, be it an original or a translation, and this is also why these two features are perceived as intentional. This may explain the ways texts are translated, perceived, and the criteria of their selection, but of course it is not an explanation of the origins of the receiver's needs, nor of the needs of the receiver's culture or their dynamism, which is rather the domain of social psychology.

The semiotic approach keeps focus on its object – the sign as text and message, while the social context penetrates the sign through the author and receiver, whether we consider formal aspects, the content or the pragmatic aspect.

The text as a material object or artefact is only the carrier of the message or work of art. However, the genesis and linguistic coding of the message and production of ideas are influenced to a lesser or higher degree by the material: this bond is most prominent in poetry – here the formal aspects of versification (i.e. properties of the language, prosody and metrics) play a crucial role. Levý analysed what Poe had said about writing *The Raven*.²² Unlike Poe's voiced beliefs that he had been free in his decisions as to what he had written and how, Levý identified that some of the decision moves were predetermined by linguistic and poetic (genre-stylistic) norms. Hence the claims of *untranslatability* of poems and also diverse methods of their transfer. The translator's dilemma between *what* and *how* is inherent in any translation, as what is being transferred is the message and what is being exchanged or substituted is the material; because of the bond between the material and the message there is a tension. Apart from looking into period translation norms in European cultures, Levý outlined which aspects of the message require *invariance* should the basic function of the genre remain similar: e.g. in technical texts it is the preservation of denotative meaning, in poetry it is often more important to preserve the connotative meaning, while in an opera libretto it is formal properties, such as rhythm, etc.²³

The dilemma of faithful vs. free translation was generalized by Levý as two opposing translation norms, or the *dual norm in translation*: the *reproduction norm* (fidelity) and the *aesthetic norm* (beauty).²⁴ They represent the extreme points on a sliding scale, whereby the period norm gives more or less preference to one or the other. Therefore translations are more or less free or

²² J. Levý, *The Art of Translation*, cit., p. 67.

²³ Ibidem, p. 8.

²⁴ Ibidem, p. 60 n.

faithful. Levý isolated this dual norm from the history of European translation of works of art; because it is dialectical, it has a general validity for any genre. In non-literary genres, beauty normally lies in the domestic, transparent style, unless translativity has a positive value. Otherwise, the breach of target norms is perceived as *translationese* carrying a negative value and breaking the *illusio*. While translationese is generally related to the linguistic make-up, translativity encompasses both the linguistic and thematic levels.

The whole and its parts

Although translations function as representations of their originals, in structural terms they are inevitably more or less different from them for a number of reasons outlined above. In search for functional equivalents at the final stage of the process, i.e. re-stylisation, the translator applies different procedures: (a) conceptual translation *sensu stricto*, (b) substitution or (c) transcription. These decisions derive from the overall conception and ensuing method of translation (bound to the period translation norm whether respected or not), but it is prevalence which is at stake, not absolute homogeneity. This final stage of the process is modelled as a linear decision-making process.

Levý hypothesised that the translator cannot remember the whole text, so he proceeds chunk-by-chunk, with the chunks functionally defined on different structural levels (word, syntagm, sentence, idiom, word play, register or the textual level of the genre). This model, including the subjective factor of individual translator dispositions, defined by Levý as the translator's linguistic memory and preferences (i.e. his idiolect), has been descriptively and experimentally endorsed later, including the distinction between the processes applied by professionals and non-professionals.²⁵ In general, the distinction between mechanical or surface translation on the one hand, and creative translation on the other, has been an omnipresent issue.

In Mukařovský's terms, a verbal message, produced, transmitted and perceived in the process of communication, and embedded in its socio-cultural context, always carries a dominating function; other functions may be present as accessory or ancillary. The dynamic aspect of *function*, pointing to the historicity, or socio-historical embeddedness of verbal messages, implies that one and the same text may acquire different (especially dominant) functions at different times and in different cultures. This important aspect,

²⁵ See e.g. B. Englund-Dimitrova, *Expertise and Explication in the Translation Process*, Amsterdam, J. Benjamins, 2006.

thoroughly treated by Mukařovský in his *Aesthetic Norm, Function and Value as Social Facts* (1970, Czech version 1936), is one of the cornerstone concepts underlying Prague functional dynamism, and sharply distancing it from other, static and a-historic functionalisms. Mukařovský, concerned with the aesthetic function, explained how one and the same aesthetic object may lose its dominant, i.e. aesthetic, function over time and acquire another dominant function. Applied to translation by Levý and Popovič, this pivotal dynamic concept has become one of the strongest descriptive and explanatory variables underlying the interrelationships between translation method, the product's structure and function/s, as well as its socio-cultural embeddedness.

The dominant function (and other functions) of a verbal message as a whole, encoded in text structure, is gradually constituted from elements and their interrelationships in the receiver's mind during the process of perception. On completion of the reception process, understood as a combination of linear perception and interpretation based on the interaction of the sender's and receiver's sociolects and idiolects, shared world view, value systems, etc., functions (intended by the sender for the intended receiver), if perceived, turn into *values* for the receiver. The reception process itself is seen as an incremental operation normally completed when the reader perceives the last element of the text.

From the communicative aspect, the important feature of reception is that the reader is conceived as a 'learning system' – every new incremental textual unit perceived is interpreted against the background of the text perceived so far, and, at the same time, the perception and interpretation of the new unit modify the previously perceived part of the message in the reader's cognition.²⁶

To further bridge the part-and-whole 'gap', Mukařovský introduced the concept of *apperception frame*: in the light of their (socio-cultural) experience with particular genres, readers, when exposed to a text identified or presented as belonging to a specific sub/genre, anticipate a certain frame of reference to the world, a specific textual/message structure, its typical 'language' or style and function, which are activated in memory at the point of encounter. Naturally, when receivers encounter textual structures as wholes or their parts that do not match their apperception frame, as e.g. in a translation – the perception process and its outcome (functions perceived as value) are not habitual, but may later become so through further repeated encounters.

This bottom-up and top-down mechanism is also the underpinning of the above mentioned *translativity*, further developed by Popovič who upgraded

²⁶ J. Levý, *Umění překlada*, cit.; Id., *Bude literární věda exaktní vědou?*, cit., p. 49.

this category to the status of translation norm, integrated Lotman's semiotic and also introduced the concept of *experiential complex* understood as the translator's and the receiver's set of internalized, individually acquired life-experience that is used as a background during production and reception processes.²⁷ Levý points out that it is the translator's / receiver's passive idiolect that exerts influence on SLT interpretation, while, on the other hand, it is the translator's active idiolect that leaves the imprint on the translated text.²⁸ Therefore, translation can be viewed as a result of SLT values that were perceived by the translator's passive idiolect, in combination with his active idiolect through which the translator articulated the values perceived from the SLT.

At this point, Levý introduces *assumed general tendencies* (now translation universals) – those of *stylistic levelling* and *generalization, overtranslation* in terms of highlighting the SLT stylistic features assumed to be typical, *disambiguation, explication, explicitation* in terms of additional surface syntactic structures, linking the tendencies with the psychological process of interpretation (SLT reception) and subsequent communication (TLT production).²⁹ Levý also discovered the phenomenon of what is now called the *unique-items-hypothesis* introduced by Tirkkonen-Condit as a tendency to overlooking the means of the TL repertoire that are absent in the SLT.³⁰ These tendencies were later incorporated into the conceptual category of *shifts* by Popovič and subcategorized (a) into *constitutive*, objectively or intersubjectively motivated shifts on the one hand, and *individual*, subjectively motivated shifts on the other; and (b) into resulting *macrolevel* and *microlevel changes in expression*, comprising both form and content.

Equivalence and adequacy

The Czech understanding of translation *equivalence* was quite different from what was considered to have been the concept of the 60s-70s in the West or in linguistic translation theories in the USSR and the GDR. *Functional equivalence* is the reproduction in translation of the (communicatively relevant) functions of dominant SLT message elements (on different hierarchical struc-

²⁷ A. Popovič, *Teória umeleckého prekladu*, cit.

²⁸ J. Levý, *Bude literární věda exaktní vědou?*, cit., p. 48.

²⁹ Id., *O některých zákonitostech překladatelské věrnosti*, "Slovo a slovesnost", 53 (1953) 2, pp. 63-80; Id., *Bude literární věda exaktní vědou?*, cit., p. 149 n.

³⁰ S. Tirkkonen-Condit, *Translationese – a Myth or an Empirical Fact?*, "Target", 14 (2002) 2, pp. 207-220.

tural levels, but understood semantically as meaning constituted by both form and content contributing to the realization of the intended dominant function of the TLT message as a whole. This can be achieved by substituting dominant SLT elements with TLT elements of a *similar value* (i.e. corresponding in function, and not necessarily in form and/or content) for the target receiver.

Should the *potential of the intended function of the whole message* remain the same or rather similar, such a translation as a whole was considered to be an *adequate translation*. In other words, this meant that the *semantic invariant core* of the original,³¹ now representing the *intertextual invariant*, was to a degree transferred through the functional substitution of the linguistic material on the textual level under specific socio-cultural conditions, while the remaining part of the translation's semantics (constituted by content and form) represented the *variant component* conceived of as the result of constitutive and individual translation shifts. While Levý outlined a structural taxonomy positing (a) elements that (should) remain invariable and (b) elements that are variable, Popovič (1975) seeks an analytical-descriptive tool in Miko's stylistic taxonomy of expression changes in combination with shifts.

Consequently, Levý and Popovič point out a series of other more or less dominant *functions* that translations may have and in fact had throughout history in the TLC, unlike the SLT in its culture, including a complete change of the dominant function, and they point out that the position of translation within the receiving culture is different from the position of the original text / message in its culture. They point out that concepts such as *translation*, *equivalence* and *adequacy* are socio-historical ones, dependent on world view, ideology and philosophy of a particular culture in a particular period,³² which is reflected in a particular translation method and its underlying translation norm (cf. medieval, classicist, romanticist, modernist, formalist, naturalist translations), and also derive from other interdependencies such as TLC aesthetics, literature, function of translation, the translator's individuality and other factors.

They posit the empirically derived fact that competing and different norms and methods may coexist in the same period even for one and the same genre.

³¹ A. Popovič, *Teória umeleckého prekladu*, cit., p. 79 n.

³² Popovič points out that there is no universal definition of translation because it is a historical relational concept that can either be empirically derived from the structure of translations (as a projected communication in the text), or determined through its positioning among other TLTs (namely metatexts). Translations may also be used as prototexts with domestic texts (second-hand translations) derived from them.

In other words, there are different socio-historical criteria for (a) what is considered to be translation or another type of transfer – if this distinction is practised at all; for (b) what is considered to be acceptable translation in terms of adequacy (functional representation of the original), and for (c) what, to what degree and how it has been transferred (structural reproduction and modifications). All these socio-historical aspects of translation are fluid and interwoven with both collective and individual agencies. This is also why functional equivalence as outlined above is a denomination of a specific translation method, for example as opposed to other methods, like formalist, naturalist or modernist methods where equivalence was sought in other aspects of message transfer. On the semiotic level, any of these methods produced translation that functioned as a representation of the original at face value, but the structural relationships were different, and when complying with the period translation norm – they were legitimate.

Between theory and practice

The concepts of social and individual agencies in translation came in with the latest turn of Western TS to sociology. With it, the social/collective and the individual as two integral antagonistic components of both the dynamics of human entities, their activities and their cultural codes have come to the fore. For example, the recently debated neo-Marxist conceptual framework based on human agency as suggested by Bourdieu in his field model alongside with the idea of theory for practice – *practical theory* or *praxeology* in Bourdieu's terms.³³ For Bourdieu, practical action is incumbent on a social change, and not a mere reproduction of existing social structures, which is nothing new. What may be new, leaving methodological aspects aside, is that (a) players in the professional field of the competitive *illusio* game have different chances depending on their habitus and capitals, and (b) that scholars should use their research results for the improvement of practice.³⁴

The currently debated utilitarian aspect of theory, that is the idea of *a theory in service of practice* (with research and researchers committed to improving the translator's status or conditions, translation quality and policy, etc.) has its precursors in western prescriptive or normative translation theo-

³³ H. Buzelin, *Unexpected Allies. How Latour's Network Theory Could Complement Bourdieusian Analyses in Translation Studies*, "The Translator", 11 (2005) 2, pp. 193-218; A. Chesterman, *Questions in the sociology of translation*, in *Translation studies at the interface of disciplines*, ed. J. F. Duarte et al., Amsterdam, J. Benjamins, 2006, pp. 9-28.

³⁴ P. Bourdieu, *Raisons pratiques: sur la théorie de l'action*, Paris, Seuil, 1994.

ries criticized from positivist positions. J. Holmes saw the solution in the *applied branch*, concerned with translator training, aids and policy.³⁵ On the other hand, Chesterman suggested a normative theory built on the principle of *from-is-to-ought* to accommodate the axiological dimension precluded by positivism, and now thriving as e.g. translation quality assessment.³⁶

Levý and Popovič aimed at building a theory that could also be useful to translators, serving as a tool for improving translation quality; not through prescription, but through understanding the mechanisms at work and informed reflection of the processes. Their books were written with this dual purpose and targeted at two audiences – researchers and literary translators. However, they are explicit about the difference between (a) a general theory and special theories built on empirical research, a verifiable theoretical model and hypotheses, (b) descriptive research based on an analytical model and methods and (c) translation criticism based on a critical model (anchored in the concrete socio-cultural, historically established ‘ought’).

Popovič designed the *science of translation* as built from (a) *general theory* (subcategorized into human and machine translation), (b) *special theories* (subcategorized into technical, journalistic, administrative, religious and literary translation), and (c) *praxeology* and *didactics*.³⁷ In his opinion, the subdiscipline of praxeology should complement the theoretical model of the translation process as the communicative functioning of translation because ‘real’ translations (i.e. processes and products) deviate from the ideal model due to concrete external social conditions.

Praxeology, then, would explain the difference between the deductive theoretical model and reality, and come up with respective suggestions to improve translation practice, so that reality would get closer to the normative theoretical ideal, which, in consequence would improve practice with regard to the functioning and value of translation. Popovič’s praxeology, programmatically based on its own interdisciplinary research methodology and conceived as a subdiscipline concerned with translation practice with the aim of

³⁵ J. Holmes, *Translator Theory, Translation Theories, Translation Studies, and the Translator* [1977], in Id., *Translated! Papers on literary translation and translation studies*, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 1988, pp. 93-98.

³⁶ A. Chesterman, *From is to ought: Laws, Norms and Strategies in Translation Studies*, “Target”, 5 (1993) 1, pp. 1-12; Id., *The empirical status of prescriptivism*, “Folia Translatologica” 6 (1999), pp. 6-19.

³⁷ The programmes of TS suggested by Holmes and Popovič are compared in Z. Jettmarová, *East meets West: On Paradigms in Translation Studies*, in *New Trends in Translation Studies*, ed. by K. Károly et al., Budapest, Akademia Kaido, 2005, pp. 95-106.

improving it through researchers' proposals, represents almost a prototype of the above mentioned endeavours and concerns in TS today – that is theory, research and researchers acting in service of practice in order to help it or improve it. This has been the primary concern of didactics and criticism (quality evaluation).

Sociology of translation represented one of the three branches in Popovič's praxeology, the other two being *editorial practice* of translation and *methodology of translation criticism*. Sociology was to be concerned with the selection of texts for translation (publishing policy, translator policy) and the concrete social conditioning of the process and its product, also related to the status of translationship and its professionalization, etc. To illustrate how a researcher may contribute to the improvement of practice. Popovič made a probe into *substandard translation* in Slovakia: having empirically identified the causes, he suggested some remedies and rectifications.

Irrespective of any turns and paradigmatic changes in the humanities, the distinction between theoretical/conceptual vs. utilitarian disciplines, as well as between basic and applied research has always been there, but it has taken some time for these positions to become intergal in Western TS.

Conclusion

Czech and Slovak foundation theories of translation, based on their domestic structuralist theoretical-methodological backgrounds appear to have anticipated Western turns and paradigmatic changes in TS from the outset. They may even be said to be more complex, integral and elaborated when compared to current Western general models, mostly thanks to their underlying methodologies. What have been by-passed are formalism, deconstruction and post-modernism, extreme cultural relativism and agnosticism, as well as the ideology of post-colonialism.³⁸ What have been anticipated are e.g. constructivism, holism, phenomenology (today close to cognitivism) and interpretation, socio-historical dialectic and dynamism, culture functions, human agency, the communication process and sociology of the translator and translation practices.

³⁸ Cf. L. Doležel, *Poststructuralism: A View from Charles Bridge*, "Poetics Today", 21 (2000) 4, pp. 633-652; Z. Jettmarová, *Czech and Slovak translation theories: the lesser known tradition*, in *Tradition versus Modernity. From the classic period of Prague structuralism to translation studies at the beginning of the 21st century*, ed. by J. Králová and Z. Jettmarová, Prague, FFUK/Togga, 2008, pp. 15-46.