"A SPACE FOR THE TRANSLATOR(S)": SITUATING STUDENT TRANSLATORS IN REAL-LIFE SHOES[1]

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The paper presents an extra-curricular project of translating a collection of short stories *Prostor za mokrog psa* (2011) into English. The translation was done by 15 Niš English Department BA and MA students from February to July 2017, resulting in a publication (*The place for the wet dog* 2018). Starting from the theoretical concept of *Situated Translation* (Risku 2002), a Cognitive Sciences approach which 'portray[s] translation as a highly complex and ill-structured social, cognitive, and cultural process' (Kiraly 2005: 1103), the study presents the results from the comparison of various versions of the student translations and informal comments during group and individual conferences. In operationalizing the theory in translation education, we use the 'empowerment' approach (Kiraly 2005), which helps students become 'proactive agents of their own learning through authentic, collaborative work leading to autonomy and expertise' (ibid, 1104). We focus on the problems concerning the issues of audience (how to reach foreign readership), cultural and historical context of the stories (understanding of the ex-Yugoslav context) and translating different dialects, sociolects and idiolects. Although an extra-curricular activity, the project proves that the authentic, 'situated' translation tasks greatly contribute to students' learning and competences development, preparing students for real-life tasks.

Keywords: translation, situated translation, socio-cultural concepts, student projects, extracurricular student learning

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„ПРОСТОР ЗА ПРЕВЕДУВАЧОТ/ПРЕВЕДУВАЧИТЕ“: ПОСТАВУВАЊЕ НА СТУДЕНТИТЕ ПРЕВЕДУВАЧИ ВО „ВИСТИНСКА КОЖА“

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Во овој труд е претставен воннаставниот проект за преведување раскази *Prostor za mokrog psa* (2011) од српски на англиски јазик. Преведувачи беа 15 студенти, додипломци и постдипломци од Катедрата за англиски јазик на Универзитетот во Ниш. Преведувањето се одвиваше од февруари до јули 2017 г. и резултираше со издание насловено *The place for the wet dog* (2018). Тргнувајќи од концептот „ситуирано преведување“ (*Situated Translation* од Risku 2002), пристап од когнитивните науки што го претставува преведувањето како многу комплексен, когнитивен и културен процес без јасна структура (Kiraly 2005: 1103), во овој труд се презентирани резултатите од споредбата на различните верзии на преводите на студентите и неформалните коментари за време на групните и на индивидуалните консултации. Со операционализација на теоријата на преведување, го користиме приодот на „оспособување“ (Kiraly 2005), кој им помага на студентите да станат „проактивни учесници во нивното учење преку автентична, колаборативна работа, што води до автономија и експертиза“ (ibid., 1104). Фокусот е на проблемите поврзани со читателите (како да се привлечат странски читатели), со културниот и со историскиот контекст на расказите (разбирање на контекстот на поранешна Југославија) и преведувањето на различни дијалекти, социолекти и идиолекти. Иако се работи за воннаставна активност, проектот покажува дека автентични задачи за ситуирано преведување значително придонесуваат кон студентското учење и развој на компетенциите, односно за подготовка на студентите за задачи од реалниот живот.

Клучни зборови: превод, ситуирано преведување, социо-културни концепти, студентски проекти, екстракурикуларно студентско учење

1 Introduction

The need to provide students with more authentic translation work situated in real-life tasks with learning being constructed in the process is something that in the last decades has been seen as a preferred approach. With the changes in the dynamics of international commerce, politics and culture, the growing need for trained translators is obvious (Kelly 2014). As Kiraly puts it, translator competence is "a complex, highly individualized and social-context dependent interplay of cultural cognitive and intuitive processes" (2014: 49). Therefore, translation tasks that do not provide that context will not be enough for translator education – the stress has to be on raising students' awareness of different factors at play when translating, "developing students' own self-concept and assisting collaborative construction of individually tailored tools" (ibid., 49), where activities will match student needs.

Translation instruction should encompass a comprehensive list of skills and competencies that would range from differences in language use, over cultural references, critical thinking to decision justification (Showalter 2003). Students can benefit from situated, cooperative learning (Risku 2002), and having them work in a workshop setting (Washbourne 2013) provides students with an opportunity to contribute to the learning process – not just their own but of all students in the project.

The translation courses that English language students in Serbia have are mostly limited in their scope due to the constraints of the curriculum. Additionally, if the study programs are not geared towards translation as profession (for example, a translation master programs at the University of Novi Sad or Belgrade), undergraduate students mostly 'do translation' as part of their grammar and general language competence training, without proper specialization in ESP or literary translation. This translation project was, therefore, set up so that it provided guidance and assisted in awareness-raising of the factors that influence the authentic translation process: from concrete language concerns through social and historical circumstances to audience.

This paper tries to unveil to what extent the student-translators managed not just to transcode the texts but to use their "socially mediated yet personal history of experience... as the interface for a succession of unique occurrences of intercultural communication" (Kiraly 2005: 1103). Therefore, the study focuses on the interpretation and translation of: language subtleties (dialects, regional dialects, slang, urban speech, idiolects) as well as culture-related concepts, customs, beliefs and values, since "in the social-constructivist perspective, language […] is a socially grounded tool of cultural mediation" (Kiraly 2005: 1105). An important aspect for the analysis was to see how capable the student-translators were to respond "to the needs of a target audience operating in a different language and culture" (Hatim 2001: 88 quoted in Șerban 2013: 60).

If translation is a result of an "interplay of cognition, identities and environment" (Kiraly 2005: 1105), we should wonder to what extent present-day young generations (our student-translators included) are capable of connecting their knowledge of the

recent history of former Yugoslavia, their personal history and identity as belonging to this cultural and linguistic space, and the physical, emotional and social remnants of Yugoslavia in present-day Serbia in order to interpret and translate successfully the stories in this collection. In short, this study sought to understand to what extent the student-translators were able to translate *not* just a language form, but the socio-semantic meaning "in order to indirectly characterize a character in another language, for another receiver, in another culture" (Rosa 2012: 84).

2 Theoretical framework and previous research in the field

2.1 Translation competencies

If students are to successfully translate, they need to show a number of competencies and the ability to further develop them. Firstly, they need to show general translation competence: the "combination of aptitudes, knowledge, behaviour and know-how necessary to carry out a given task under given conditions" (Gambier et al. 2009) which they should acquire during their translator education. Students should understand and complete the various, consecutive stages of a translation process: from recognizing subtle and complex differences in language use, to reading closely, paying attention to syntax, metaphor, and style. They need to offer a translation appropriate to the *skopos*, so that it appropriately transfers the purpose of the source text. Students should select correct strategies and apply them to all levels of the task and problems in question, detecting cultural assumptions and thinking creatively and strategically about problems. They should practice using not only morpho-syntactic strategies (calque or transposition, for example), but also pragmatic strategies, such as cultural filtering, speech act change or visibility change (Chesterman 1997). Also, students should practice proofreading and revising the product, and defending their choices against the informed opinions of others, as well as justifying the choices and decisions with appropriate metalanguage (Gambier et al. 2009; Washbourne 2013). Finally, students should possess the sociolinguistic dimension of intercultural competence – "the ability to interact correctly in various linguistic and cultural communities, analyse and understand source culture documents and reproduce them in the target culture and to choose and use a register appropriate to the verbal or written communication situation" (Gambier et al. 2009).

2.2 Translation instruction

With the new approach to translation that places the process of translation at the center of instruction and not the product (Nord 1991; Gile 1995), the main objections that cognitivists placed on traditional translation instruction were that students got mostly decontextualized training, with little regard for "the natural complexity of professional translational activity as a social, inter-cultural and interpretive process" (Kiraly 2005: 1101). The focus in the late 1990s shifted to the acquisition of interlingual, intercultural and intertextual associations and the usage of error analysis for teaching. With Vienne (1994) and Gouadec (2003 as cited in

Kelly 2014) and their situational translation, and Hurtado (1999 as cited in Gambier and van Doorslaer 2010) and González Davies (2004) with task-based approach, there was a continuation in the direction of practical work students should do: based on the commissioned, published, professional translation or as a series of practical, focused tasks. It became evident that the traditional manner in which translation was taught (translating sentence by sentence) disregarded "the supra-sentential cohesion and coherence" (Kiraly 2005: 1102) and excluded important elements from translation: the purpose and the audience as well as the possibility to collaboratively work on a text with all its cultural, linguistic, and pragmatic elements.

In Niš university translation courses, too, students mostly do not dwell much on intercultural elements in translation: they usually focus on a difference between American and British English, recognition of culture-specific names for food, plants, clothes, but without a deeper analysis of other intercultural elements, such as wider socio-historical contexts. Additionally, what has been already recognized as a disadvantaged situation in translation classrooms is also present locally: there is little coordination among instructors concerning text topics, evaluation procedures, course outcomes, syllabus design, and other possible pedagogical issues (Kiraly 1995).

2.2.1 Situated translation

Situatedness in translation studies has been developing since 1980s, with the general tenets being a growing interest in translation as a dynamic process, inclusion of intercultural communication as a means of language learning, and the emphasis on the role of the target situation, original situation, and translation situation (Risku 2002: 524). Taking context, history, and ideology into consideration, translation is seen as a communicative tool, where it constitutes production and not just reproduction or code-switching. Such a framework allows student-translators to become decision makers and intercultural mediators who, in an active and situation-specific act, can show their creativity and flexibility bearing in mind their target audience and the particular purpose of the translation. The way language is used in a specific kind of text and situation should be of the translators' interest, but the actual text should be always understood "as an integral part of the world, not as an isolated specimen of language" (Snell-Hornby 1988: 49 as cited in Risku 2002: 521).

This approach is especially beneficial for translation instruction as it highlights the concept of socially constructed meaning, with the student-translator as an active agent in the translation process. Together with decision-making and critical thinking, authentic translation demands agency from students, as they need to be aware of all parts of the process and see themselves almost as 're-creators' of the text.

2.3 Previous research

Massey and Ehrensberger-Dow (2011) conducted a longitudinal study by monitoring eight MA students and professional translators at various points in their careers: from the beginning of the program, over the finishing period to becoming professionals. By using a multi-method approach: screen recordings, eye-tracking data, cue-based retrospective verbalisations and semi-structured interviews with students, the study showed that "applying process research techniques to translator training stimulates reflection on decisions made and actions taken and heightens awareness of key procedural aspects of translation practice and expertise" (Massey and Ehrensberger-Dow 2011: 36). Students were asked to comment on their own process of translation, and then, a few weeks later on that of the other participants. Students tended to comment on the (un)successfulness of the strategies applied and on the ideas they got from the peers. The study showed that students benefited from the analysis of the process of translation, and showed that process-oriented components of "translator training can be profitably incorporated into course development and curriculum design" (ibid., 38).

González Davies and Scott-Tennent (2005) worked on a number of issues in translator training: from the lack of lexical L1-L2 correspondence, over lexical phrases, proverbs and idioms, to the lack of cohesion and/ or coherence. In a later study the authors focused on cultural references (Scott-Tennent and González Davies 2008), with a specific aim to provide the training, so that students as a group become able to: detect cultural references within a text, provide and evaluate options for translating them and give logical reasoning when making a final choice. The data were gathered though a pre-test when 21 BA Spanish-English translation students had to identify any cultural references they could in the excerpts from *Angela Ashes*, and through a post-test, done on the same text. During the 4-month long training, special attention was given to culture reference identification, and "awareness-raising through analysis and discussion, of the existence and nature of cultural references, and fostering a critical, questioning attitude in the reading and comprehension of source texts" (Scott-Tennent and González Davies 2008: 785). In order to improve students' competence in detecting cultural references, the procedures were "analysis, evaluation and application of problem-solving strategies (such as accessing creativity skills, resourcing, comparing, generating and evaluating multiple potential solutions" as well as "fostering the adoption of a more […] reader-oriented approach" (ibid.,785). After the training participants "were undoubtedly detecting a significantly greater amount of cultural references and proposing a significantly greater amount of feasible variants for the translation of cultural references" (ibid., 791). On the other hand, they did not provide more reasons for (or against) each translation variant.

Lazarević, Savić and Marković (2008) reported on a student translation of Salinger's newspaper stories, another project in translation done through a series of workshops in which undergraduate students organized in groups tried to translate, give peer-review and edit their translation. Although the project included translation into their mother tongue, students still had to predict potential challenges of modern Serbian audience who had to understand a specific period in a particular culture. The students needed to decide on how to translate the urban and regional dialects, everyday items from a specific time period or specialized vocabulary of the military

within a particular cultural and timeframe. The fact that the translation was to be published considerably influenced students' motivation, engagement and reflection. All participants claimed that the project presented a completely new context, different from the course-based one, and that it made them aware of a number of elements that were rarely raised in their course work.

3 Methods

3.1 Background to the project

English language BA students have translation courses from the 2nd to the 4th year as part of a complex English language course. The main focus is on the grammatical correctness, learning particular vocabulary sets and on some of the most frequently used translation techniques (compensation, addition, etc.). While this approach is beneficial for students' language build-up, in terms of translation expertise there are several areas that are not tackled – the situatedness of the text and the author, the audience, the importance of the social and political context, to name but a few.

3.2 Participants

Fifteen BA and MA students of the English language and literature participated. As specified in the outcomes of the study program, the expected level of the English language proficiency for those students is a C1 to C2 level. At the time of the project, they all had taken at least four translation mini-courses within the obligatory Contemporary English Language courses (from the 3rd to the 8th semesters) and they could attend two elective courses: Theory and Techniques of Translation (5th semester) and Consecutive Translation (7th semester).

3.3 Project objectives

The project was organised as an extra-curricular activity with the main aim for students to experience an authentic assignment, to connect their classroom knowledge with real-life experiences and gain autonomy and responsibility in front of a wider audience, and not just their instructors. They had time to go through a reflective analysis and to negotiate their work in pairs or teams. The project was to provide them with a complete experience of a translation process and it was important that the students followed all the necessary steps in the process – from the understanding of the stories, over the understanding of the target audience to linguistic means at their disposal with which to achieve the best result.

3.4 The process

The translation project was offered to students on a first-come-first-served basis. As the instructors had taught students in a number of different classes and knew their competencies well, entrance testing was not performed. The introductory part of the project consisted of a series of learner-centered and example-oriented

workshops based on team-work and different forms of interaction (student-task, student-student, student-teacher). Though the workshops were moderated by the instructors, they were not led but guided by them: they prepared material with various exercises (e.g. punctuation, difference between British and American English, idiom practice) as well as examples of the published English translations of authors from the region[2]. Then the students worked on the activities and reflected on how these could be relevant for their translation work.

In the second part of the project the students themselves chose the stories they wanted to translate and were free to choose whether they wanted to work alone, in pairs or in groups of three. The intensive translation process lasted from February to July 2017. During that period, students were asked to share their translation for peer-feedback, and to come to face-to-face sessions with the instructors. The sessions were obligatory after the first draft, and then optional after the second and third, depending on the students' efficiency and quality of their work.

The later drafts of the translations were also read and commented on by reviewers other than instructors: a Serbian translator and the three American reviewers (a professor and two MA students), who took the position of the potential audience and provided feedback on the early drafts of the translation. In addition, mid-way through the project, students shared their translations with the USA students of the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, who visited the Faculty of Philosophy within a Fellowship Exchange Program. Finally, after they had received feedback, all the students, except in one case, did their own editing of the stories.

3.4.1 Material

The collection consisted of 19 stories by 17 authors from Serbia (12), Bosnia and Herzegovina (3) and Croatia (2). The stories were shortlisted and published in 2012 as the best submissions in the contest for the best short story in Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian and Montenegrin languages written for young adults organized by the Grad Culture Center (KC Grad, Belgrade). The stories are set in the recent period (1980s-2000s), mostly in urban contexts. There are some stories with references to the civil war in the region in the 1990s, while some others portray minority groups (Roma, LGBT).

3.4.2 Research questions and instruments

The instructors wanted to examine the translation process and to follow up on the potential problematic areas the students pointed out. The important research

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[2] Branko Ćopić *Ježeva kućica* and Branko Ćopić (2015) *Hedgehog's House*, transl. by S. D. Curtis; Danilo Kiš, *Rani jadi* and Danilo Kiš (1998) *Early Sorrows*, transl. by Michael Henry Heim; Gordana Kujić *Miris kiše na Balkanu* and Gordana Kujić (2003) *The Scent of Rain in the Balkans*, transl. by Richard Williams, rewritten by the author; Svetislav Basara (1987) *Fama o biciklistima* and Svetislav Basara (2012) *The Cyclist Conspiracy*, transl. by Randall Major; Dejan Stojiljković (2009) *Konstantinovo raskršće* and Dejan Stojiljković, *Constantine's Crossing*, transl. by Randall Major; Mijat Lakićević (2016) *Njujork, Njujork* and Mijat Lakićević (2016) *New York, New York*, transl. by Marijana Simić; Vojin Dimitrijević (2016) *Strahovlada: Optimizam, crne slutnje i surova stvarnost dvadesetog veka* and Vojin Dimitrijević (2016) *The Reign of Terror: A study on Human Rights and State Terror*, transl. by Ana Knežević Bojović.

questions were: how students navigated cultural references, sociolects and idiolects; what tools they used to solve these problematic points; and how invested they were in the translation process. Given that each translation is, to some extent, a recreation, the instructors wanted to discuss the student-translators' responses to the stories.

To answer the research questions, the instructors did deep reading and textual analysis of consecutive drafts of the stories. After the translation process, the instructors highlighted certain areas which seemed to have been challenging for students – due to the use of dialects and idiolects, historical or cultural distance, and a wider audience to be addressed. Trying to decide on the students' "invested-ness" and understanding of the translation process, the instructors took notes from individual and group discussions on the students' concerns and responses to the problematic issues in stories.

4 Data analysis

4.1 Regional dialects

The first area of research is the translation of regional dialects. In the former Yugoslav space the majority of population used a common language – Serbo-Croatian or Croato-Serbian. Linguistically, three dialects were distinguished within this common language, which were further distinguished through regional dialects. The authors of the stories in *The Wet Dog*,[3] coming from different parts of ex-Yugoslavia, carefully use the regional dialects of Serbo-Croatian in order to "define the sociocultural profile of the character[s] as well as [their] position in the sociocultural fictional context" (Ramos Pinto 2009: 291 quoted in Szymanska 2017: 63). For example, Fahrudin Kujundžić (*Mokar pas* 2012) describes a rainy day in the life of young men from Travnik (Bosnia) after the war of the 1990s and his characters use the local variety, *Sjedeli smo ispod mosta… Upravo smo pobjegli sa stare ceste, noseći vina i pive u kesama.... Odmah 'nako ... u po' frke. ...Ako je ko šta i vidio, pravio se je da ne vidi* (*Mokar pas* 2012: 39, our emphasis).[4] With them is also a young man from Split (Croatia), who is mocked by the group for the way he speaks (he uses the Dalmatian coast variety of Croatian): *He didn't mind us laughing at his speech. We were quizzing him on how they said tomato, eggplant and onion over there, and were laughing our asses off afterwards* (*The Wet Dog* 2018: 34). Even though the Dalmatian guy's direct words of the 'funny' speech are not given, readers can assume that the difference is considerable.

When translating this regional dialect as well as others in the stories, our students did not (or could not) mark the distinctions between them. Regardless of the origin of the author, the narrator of the story or the main character(s), almost all the stories are translated by using standard English (with slight American v. British English

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[3] The Serbian title of the collection will be shortened to *Mokar pas*, and the translated collection to *The Wet Dog* in the rest of the paper for the sake of economy.

[4] "We were sitting under the bridge … We had just run away from the old road, carrying beer and wine in some plastic bags. Out of nowhere it began raining, with no warning … Even if anyone had noticed anything, they pretended they didn't see it" (*The Wet Dog* 2018: 33).

variations in spelling and vocabulary as a matter of preference rather than stylistic means). To illustrate this, here are two excerpts: one narrated by a Serbian and the other by a Bosnian:

Stajao sam sa torbom u ruci na autobuskoj stanici, bilo je oko devet sati ujutru, autobus je polazio u pola jedanaest. Imao sam još sat i po vremena. Šetao sam besposlen po stokholmskoj autobuskoj stanici, tražio mesto gde bih mogao da sednem i da sačekam polazak (*Mokar pas* 2012: 31)

Cesta je vijugava, klizava i poškropljena snijegom. Sprijeda sjedi majka, otac u krivini ubacuje u manju brzinu. Ja i sestra smo pozadi. Šutimo (*Mokar pas* 2012: 49).

Both excerpts are translated by using standard English:

I was standing at the bus station with a bag in my hand; it was nine o'clock in the morning, and the bus was leaving at half past ten. I had an hour and a half to spare. I was walking round the Stockholm bus station, having nothing to do and looking for a place to sit and wait for the time to leave (*The Wet Dog* 2018: 25).

The road is twisted, slippery and covered with snow. Mother is sitting in the front seat. Father changes to a lower gear to slow down on the bed. My sister and I are sitting in the back. We're silent (*The Wet Dog* 2018: 43).

Based on our own translation experience, drawing such fine linguistic distinctions for a foreign audience can be quite difficult, since along with the linguistic knowledge of English dialects, it would include the translators' awareness of "'linguistic allusions' aimed at evoking culture-specific associations in the reader" (Wojtasiewics 1992: 89-91 quoted in Szymanska 2017: 64) that each English and Serbian dialect respectively make.

4.2 Idiolects

The social and cultural position of the representatives of minority groups (LGBT, Roma people) is adequately represented linguistically in the stories and translations. The story *Silvana, šesnaest godina* was particularly interesting for the translation in this respect. It is the story about a teenage Roma girl, representative of a large (underprivileged) ethnic minority in Serbia who faces daily hardships. Due to her background, she does not speak 'proper Serbian'. She does not use grammatically correct cases (*kad odem kod tetku; živi u veliku higijenu; stavi mi lak za nokti*), the verb inflection and bases are incorrect (*da ga komšije ne prijavu; škole ne radu; puštimo muziku*), the initial consonant *h* omitted (*oću, ajde, ladno* instead of *hoću, hajde, hladno*), she uses a wrong consonant (*ćetke* instead of *četke*), a wrong form of a word (*taka* instead of *takva*) or an ungrammatical sentence structure (*sve će nas pobije*) (*Mokar pas* 2012: 51–54). The students tried to recreate the 'ungrammaticality' of the character's speech, consciously opting for the most common characteristics of substandard English: incorrect verb form (*it don't matter, erryone are looking at me, when he ain't around*), omitting sounds (*'cause; c'me on; o'er; nothin'; jus'; h'r hair; little flowers on 'em; comin'*), wrong verb patterns

and other grammatical structures (*my aunt got me rid of them; I don't even have them no more; I wish their limbs dry and falloff*) (*The Wet Dog* 2018: 45-48). Using these characteristics of substandard English, the students managed "[to elicit] in the reader of the translated work the closest possible impression to the one the original had on its own audience" (Brescia 2011: 2).

It must be stressed that the students were much more successful in translating this sub-standard language. We can postulate that they have had experience with such varieties and therefore could easily find corresponding equivalents in the English language.

4.3 Jargon and slang

One of the characteristics of urban slang is the use of a great number of words and phrases borrowed from English. In these stories, some borrowings were used in their (almost) original form, some were given Serbian suffixes to make them sound 'Serbian' and yet some were used as completely domesticated. Our English majors could easily spot these examples but could also use different strategies to translate them. In a story a character addresses another using the English title *Mister* (*Mokar pas* 2012: 94). In order to indicate the borrowing from English and yet make is sound natural in English, the translators used a similar title *Sir* (*The Wet Dog* 2018: 94), keeping the communicative implication but not the exact word. In a number of stories where characters use English words and phrases in their original form but with Serbian transliteration, such as *jea right; fajnali* (*Mokar pas* 2012: 66–67), the students just used the English originals: 'yeah, right'; 'finally' (*The Wet Dog* 2018: 60–61).

As for English words and phrases that have been in use for several decades and are now completely 'domesticated' (at least in substandard Serbian), the students kept the original if it had the same meaning in both languages. However, if the English borrowing had a different meaning in Serbian, they opted for the semantic equivalent rather than the formally related word. Thus, the noun *spika* (*Mokar pas* 2012: 67) (from English *to speak*) in Serbian slang can have two meanings: 1) one's skills to create a good story/ excuse; 2) conversation. The translators did not use the formal equivalent (*speech*) at all, but rather chose semantic equivalents: 1) to have a way with words; and 2) conversation, respectively (*The Wet Dog* 2018: 61). Sometimes the students tried to give an additional meaning to the source-text. For example, the main characters of a story want to buy some chips. One asks the other if he has some money for chips: *Imaš li nešto para za čips? … Dodaću ja nešto pa da kupimo u „Metrou"* (*Mokar pas* 2012: 8). Probably for the sake of a pun, the students merged the two sentences together: *Got some money to chip in for potato chips?* (*The Wet Dog* 2018: 2). Although appreciating the pun, the instructors still suggested staying faithful to the original, so the final version was: *Got some money to get some potato chips? … I'll chip in too…* (ibid.).

The students had to decide on how to translate the IT- and social media-related words, mainly originating from the English language. Two characters talk about getting online by using the Serbian verb *surfovati* (*Mokar pas* 2012: 31), coming from English *to surf*. In the first draft the students changed the lexis and used two

options instead: *search the Web* and *surf* respectively (*The Wet Dog* 2018: 25). Only when the instructors drew their attention to the fact that it was one and the same word in the source-text did they realize that there was no need for different equivalents.

In another story the social network of the 1990s *mIRC* was mentioned. In the original story the network is written as a common noun (*mirc*) (*Mokar pas* 2012: 70) as well as the derived verb *mircati - to mIRC* and noun *mirceri* – mIRCers (ibid, 70). The translators used a footnote to explain *mIRC* (*The Wet Dog* 2018: 66), but also decided to graphically change the form in the English text and use the original form: *are ya on mIRC?, the people ... on mIRC* (*The Wet Dog* 2018: 66). In addition, they felt obliged to further explain who those people were, so they added a participial phrase as an explanation although the social network was already explained in a footnote (*the people chatting on mIRC*) (*The Wet Dog* 2018: 66).

This analysis seems to suggest that our students were successful in understanding, interpreting and translating the language varieties with which they were familiar (urban speech, slang, sociolects). However, as they seem not to have first-hand experience with regional dialects in former Yugoslavia, along with a lack of confidence with English regional dialects, many of the 'linguistic allusions' (Wojtasiewics 1992: 89-91 in Szymanska 2017: 64) seem to have been 'lost in translation'.

4.4 Socio-cultural context

The translation work indicated that students might not be familiar with the social and cultural context of Yugoslavia in the 1980-1990s, where most stories were set. It turned out that our students did understand the stories (or elements of them) linguistically, but not culturally. The 1980s/ early 1990s Yugoslav context was significantly different from today's Serbian context. Ideologically, Yugoslavia was a multi-ethnic, communist country with only one party in power which disapproved of religious practices. This fact significantly coloured the social life of Yugoslavia: all political, social, financial, cultural, educational power was in the hands of the communist party leadership, the majority of ordinary citizens were set on communist ideas and tried to live up to the communist values. On the other hand, Serbian society today is rather ethnically and religiously homogenous, (still) in transition, with a somewhat strong nationalistic emphasis. Unfamiliar with the concepts related to the communist ideology and non-Orthodox (specifically Muslim) cultural setting, the students seem to have faced challenges when translating these.

When translating the ideological symbols of communist Yugoslavia, it was observed that the students could successfully translate the reference to the former-Yugoslavia flag or membership in the Municipal Committee of the Communist Party. However, it is questionable if they knew what the flag symbolized, or that communists were not allowed to go to church, so the transformation of a character from a high representative of the Communist Party to a zealous church-goer would represent something unfathomable to the people of the time. Yet, the magnitude of this transformation seemed to be unnoticed by our students, since they neither asked nor advance researched on the issues.

However, with the vocabulary from the area of Muslim culture (*muezin, hodža, daidža, ahiret*) *(Mokar pas* 2018: 47-48)*,* the students felt that they could not use the translation tools they had used up to then, so they had to expand their research from general Serbian-English and English-English dictionaries to some more specialized sources (such as glossaries of Turkish words in Serbian, chat rooms, etc.) or explicitly ask the instructors for help in order to understand and then translate these words. Knowing how little our students travel to foreign countries (Lazarević 2015), we can postulate that due to a lack of personal experience the students were not able to understand and translate these concepts. When it comes to the Orthodox Christian cultural setting, in which the student-translators actually live, they did not have problems translating it. What turned out to be a problem, however, was that the students did not find it necessary to explain these concepts and customs to a foreign readership as they did for the Muslim religion. They took for granted that the audience would be familiar with the tradition of lighting candles for the living (*The Wet Dog* 2018: 23), not turning on the TV set for 40 days after a family member dies (ibid., 44), or a difference between *a čitulja* – notice of somebody's death and *an obituary* (ibid., 43). They did not even try to explain these in a footnote, so we might assume that our students exhibit some characteristics of ethno-centrism, believing that the lifestyle of their culture is widely known and therefore widely understood.

Quite similar to the findings of Lazarević et al. (2008), this study shows that students have difficulties recognizing what can be culturally 'foreign' to the foreign reader as well as translating culturally 'distant' concepts. In such cases they needed guidance as to where to find additional help and what translation strategies to use.

4.5 Audience

A question that arose quite early in the project was what additional information to include in footnotes for the foreign reader. In the first discussion of the topic this issue seemed not to be particularly clear to our translators because it was difficult for them to imagine the potential foreign reader. However, after a workshop with the visiting students of the University of Alabama (USA), in which the American guests read the stories and provided their comments, our translators seemed to have become more aware of what information the foreign reader needed in order to understand the stories.

Following group discussions, the students almost unanimously agreed to provide this information in footnotes: terms of endearment: Gaga, Gagica (The Wet Dog 2018: 1), Milanče (ibid., 77); toponyms: Mladenovac (ibid., 1), Zvezdara (ibid., 45), Travnik (ibid., 34); hypermarkets: Tempo (ibid., 86); newspapers: Blic (ibid., 51); authors: Vuk Karadžić (ibid., 67), Meša Selimović (ibid., 67); local currencies: kuna (ibid.,70), dinar (ibid., 89).

Some of the students included the translation of foreign idioms, proverbs and fixed phrases in Latin, French or Italian: *deus ex machine* (*The Wet Dog* 2018: 37), *une grande tristesse* (ibid, 78)*, finite* (ibid., 81) in footnotes, but not the world-famous pop-culture items, such as: Johnny Cash (ibid., 97), *The Doors* (ibid., 2), Dock Holiday (ibid., 90), *Gunfight at the O.K. Corral* (ibid., 95). They were even

uncertain whether it was necessary to explain the local pop-culture references: the rapper Voodoo Popeye (ibid., 3) or the movie *Three palm trees for two punks and a babe* (ibid., 49) but did so after the instructors' suggestion. This might be another piece of evidence of possible ethno-centrism of the translators: they might have believed that these were as widely known as *Gunfight at the O.K. Corral* and Johnny Cash.

4.6 Student translators' self-representation

The stories in *Prostor za mokrog psa* (2012) are mostly written in an informal, rather simple, colloquial style used by teenagers of the period. The authors' writing style is characterized by short, run-on sentences, with no conjunction or only a couple of the most frequent ones (Serbian equivalents of *and, so, but*). However, the first translation versions were much more formal than the originals, so the instructors had to devote a lot of time during individual conferences to analysing the original and comparing it to the translation. The whole process can be best illustrated with the translation of the phrase referring to one's personal identification documents: *Dajte dokumente* (*Mokar pas* 2012: 68). They started with the most formal in the first draft (*your documents*), through a little bit less formal, mainly Americanism (*your papers*), until coming up with the most informal word (*your ID*) (*The Wet Dog* 2018: 62). Further, they would use formal synonyms, including conjunctions: *validate* for *punch a ticket* (ibid., 65), *own* for *have* (*I don't ~~own~~ have one*) (ibid., 84); *as if* for *like* (*~~as if~~ like I was uncomfortable*) (ibid., 9).

Occasionally, there would be so many students' interventions that they would completely change the source text:

> I woke up the next morning, walked out of the room and went downstairs. Neither Rolf nor Anneli was in the house. It was sunny and warm outside, ~~so~~ I made coffee, took my pen and notebook, went ~~outside in~~ to the garden and sat at the table. The table was wet with dew which would ~~form and~~ stay longer in the north than in the south of Europe. That was the first thing I noticed. ~~It was~~ the first distinction ~~to be noted~~ (*The Wet Dog* 2018: 28-29).

The double-strikes (comments by the instructors) are the students' interventions: a conjunction is inserted where there is none in the original; adverbs and verbs are added to clarify the meaning; phrases are extended into sentences or clauses; instead of a simple infinitive particle – a complex conjunction is used.

It seems that the reason for the 'improvements' was two-fold. First, up to that moment almost all students had practiced translation only as exercises in language proficiency done for the teacher as the sole audience, who would assess the translation for the scope and accuracy of vocabulary and grammar. As this project was the students' first real-life translation task, they used the same strategies and habits as when doing a test. Second, being still in their students' shoes, they wanted to show 'their better self' to the public exhibiting their knowledge of the English language. A similar tendency was exhibited by the student-participants in a previous project on translating J. D. Salinger's stories (Lazarević et al. 2008).

This tendency to 'correct' the original was still more noticeable when it comes to the translation of sex-related language. Since the stories deal with teenage years, there are a lot of references to the characters' newly-discovered sexuality and sexual experiences, but also many sexually-loaded words used to describe the characters' perception, feelings and attitudes. When this vocabulary occurred in the stories, the students seemed less forward with providing alternatives and options than with the text in standard English. They opted for the technique of hypercorrection, i.e. using less 'offensive' synonyms. For example, the text which describes an attractive girl (*Cupi bez premca. Prava ribetina. Guzova koji bi podigli i mrtvu kitu, dojki spremnih da udare sunce*) (*Mokar pas* 2012: 89) was first translated with carefully chosen, more 'neutral' terms (*An outstanding chick. A real Betty. Butts that would wake a dead boner, boobs ready to hit the sun*). Just like with the question of style, the instructors had to encourage the students not to hypercorrect but rather stay true to their initial impulse and use the colloquial equivalents. The final translation was more direct and colloquial: *a steaming hot chick. A real babe! With an ass that would give a dead man a hardon, and breasts ready to slap the sun* (*The Wet Dog* 2018: 89).

This kind of self-censorship "based on moral, religious or purely personal reasons" (Santaemillia 2008: 245) can be observed in the translations done by experienced professional translators as well. Santaemillia notices that translators want "to produce rewritings which are 'acceptable' from both social and personal perspectives" (2008: 222), so they opt for the words or phrases which are in their opinion acceptable and respectable. This is in line with our understanding of the students' need to hypercorrect these words but also the authors' style.

When translating sex-related words in an idiomatic sense, students were not as prude. One of the examples is the translation of the story *Samo muda* by Želimir Periš (*Mokar pas* 2012). The title comes from the Serbian idiom 'prodati muda za bubrege', meaning 'to sell something for nothing'. In this story, the idiom is used to describe the marketing business but also a life without values. The idiom appears in the punch-line of the story as well, so the students were aware that they had to choose the equivalent idiom carefully to fit both appearances: the title and the punch-line. The students could choose between two English idioms: *selling a pup* and *a pig in the poke*. They chose the latter since it was not as 'polished' as the former, thus staying faithful to the 'vulgarity' of the Serbian idiom. The idiom was reduced to the image of 'a pig': the title says *Just a pig*, while the punch-line goes *you no longer know whether <u>you're selling the pig</u>, or <u>you are the pig</u> yourself* (*The Wet Dog* 2018: 75) (our emphasis).

The fact that this was the students' first real-life translation project played a considerable role in their choice of translation strategies to use. The novelty of this experience was reflected in their decisions with what additional information to provide their potential readership in footnotes as well as their concern about the public image of themselves, which could be observed in their 'improvements' of the authors' style and hypercorrection in the translation of sex-related words.

5 Implications and limitations

Judging from this student translation project, we can notice that translator education at the Niš English Department seems to exhibit inadequacies similar to what research has shown - that university translator education and training are too theoretical, there is a narrow exposure to culture, and graduates have difficulty in working independently. Referring to these studies, Kiraly (2005) wonders why university education fails to produce translators capable of flexibility, teamwork, problem-solving, creativity and independent thinking and proposes a methodology based on "real translation projects carried out in a pedagogical setting" (Kiraly 2005: 1099). This extra-curricular project was an attempt in that direction.

At the same time, we are aware of the limitations of this study. One of them is how the results have been presented. While the students did the translations individually or in groups of two or three, the results of the study are presented summatively, as representative of the whole group. The truth is that the successes and challenges that the actual translators had in rendering a story were not the same for all students, so this presentation does not do justice to some of the students. Another is related to data-collection. The data from individual sessions could have been more revealing of the students' deliberations while translating if they had been structured via a verbal protocol aiming at eliciting the reasons why the students opted for one translation over another, particularly when translating style and sex-related vocabulary. Also, if some pre-task and post-task had been used, students' progress in terms of their competencies would have been monitored more carefully.

Finally, since culture-related issues turned out to present a considerable problem for the students (although the instructors did not expect that), obviously this area should have been dealt with in greater detail in translation instruction with the employment of different awareness-raising techniques.

6 Conclusion

This paper looked into the first real-life translation experience of the Niš English Department students. The project of translating *Prostor za mokrog psa* (2012), a collection of short stories for young adults, indicates that situating real-life assignments in translators' education gives both students and instructors insight into the good and bad sides of that education but also what kind of education and training should be provided in the future. As previous research has shown (Massey and Ehrensberger-Dow 2011), translation training organised like this helps students become more aware of what translation procedure entails. It also builds confidence (Scott-Tennent and González Davies 2008) so that students become more attuned to cultural references and entertain a greater number of feasible variants for their translation.

This study succeeded in providing a group of students with 'a situated translation opportunity'. It also offers insight into this way of organizing translator education as well as guidelines for further research with better controlled instruments and both qualitative and quantitative data-collection techniques. In our opinion, this project suggests that creating 'the place for [this] wet dog' in translator education is worth the effort.

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