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**Literary Translation Quality Assessment: An Approach Based on Roland Barthes' Five Literary Codes**

**ABSTRACT**

For the purposes of this study, a novel literary translation quality assessment framework, which strives for universality and objectivity, was designed. The basis for its theoretical framework is J. House's definition of translation, which takes into account both micro and macrostructures. It also uses R. Barthes' five literary codes in interpretation, E. Dolet's five principles for the translator, A. Tytler's three principles for the translator and H. Belloc's six general rules for the translator of prose texts. B. Rodríguez Rodríguez's and J. House's findings on literary translation are used as a basis for further development. J. Polak's translation of I. Welsh's novel *Trainspotting* was used in this study as his case study because of the novel's complexity and its abundance in symbols, references, implications and wit. It was written in Edinburgh-Leith dialect, which is not only challenging but also culturally informative and it shapes the novel's atmosphere. The conclusion is that the translation does not express the complexity of the original. Apart from presenting a novel literary translation quality assessment framework, this paper will also suggest corrections for the translation of this demanding novel.

**KEY WORDS**

Translation, literary, quality, assessment, code.

1. **Introduction**

Translation is a complex phenomenon; hence, it has many interpretations and areas of focus. The difficulty in defining and delineating the concept of translation is mainly caused by its ubiquity and interdisciplinary character. Research progress on the concept shows that there are more and more areas interfacing with translation, which proves that our understanding of translation as a product and as a process is still incomplete. One of the key issues in the constantly developing discipline of Translation Studies is translation quality and possible ways of measuring it. There are numerous ideas about Translation Quality.
Assessment, but none of them seem to be definitive. This article presents relevant findings on Literary Translation Quality Assessment and produces on their basis a LTQA model, which aims at versatility and objectivity.

2. Defining translation

Any discussion about translation must begin with the definition of what actually constitutes translation, since there are many approaches to the subject. The following is Juliane House's (2015, p. 1) attempt at explaining the nature of translation:

Translation is both a cognitive procedure which occurs in a human being's, the translator's, head, and a social, cross-linguistic and cross-cultural practice. Any valid theory of translation must embrace these two aspects. To do this, a multidisciplinary approach to translation theory integrating these aspects in a plausible manner is needed. Further, a theory of translation is not possible without a reflection on the role of one of its core concepts: equivalence in translation. And looking at equivalence leads directly into a discussion of how one would go about assessing the quality of translation. Translation quality assessment can thus be said to be at the heart of any theory of translation. (House, 2015, p.1)

Starting with an overview of translation and mentioning an obvious link between translation theory and translation quality assessment, House (2015, p. 2-3) proceeds to define translation:

Translation can be defined as the result of a linguistic-textual operation in which a text in one language is re-contextualized in another language. As a linguistic-textual operation, translation is, however, subject to, and substantially influenced by, a variety of extra-linguistic factors and conditions. It is this interaction between 'inner' linguistic-textual and 'outer' extra-linguistic, contextual factors that makes translation such a complex phenomenon. Some of the interacting factors we need to consider when looking at translation are:

- the structural characteristics, the expressive potential and the constraints of the two languages involved in translation;

- the extra-linguistic world which is 'cut up' in different ways by source and target languages;
the source text with its linguistic-stylistic-aesthetic features that belong to the norms of usage held in the source lingua-cultural community;

- the linguistic-stylistic-aesthetic norms of the target lingua-cultural community;

- the target language norms internalized by the translator;

- intertextuality governing the totality of the text in the target culture;

- traditions, principles, histories and ideologies of translation held in the target lingua-cultural community;

- the translational 'brief' given to the translator by the person(s) or institution commissioning the translation;

- the translator's workplace conditions;

- the translator's knowledge, expertise, ethical stance and attitudinal profiles as well as her subjective theory of translation,

- the translation receptors' knowledge, expertise, ethical stance and attitudinal profiles of the translator as well as their subjective theories of translation.

So while translation is, as stated above, at its core a linguistic-textual operation, a multitude of other conditioning and constraining factors also routinely impinge on its processes, performance, and of course on translation quality. (House, 2015, p. 2-3)

House (2015) states that it is almost impossible to include all these factors in a practical model of translation quality assessment, so she suggests that the basic definition of translation as a common core should be retained. The basic definition, according to House (2015), is replacement of an original source text in one language with a target text in another language. The term replacement, however, may have some negative connotations i.e. creating the impression that the translated text is second-best to the original or a substitute for it:
More positively, however, translation can be seen as enabling - often for the first time - original access to a different world of knowledge, to different traditions and ideas that would otherwise have been locked away behind a language barrier. From this perspective, translation has often been described as a builder of bridges, an extender of horizons, providing recipients with an important service and enabling them to move beyond the borders of the world staked out by their own language. (House, 2015, p. 3)

3. Translation theories

Along with her definition of translation, House (2015) also mentions an orientation backwards to the existing message of the original text and an orientation forwards towards how texts of a corresponding genre are composed in the target language. The first step towards an examination of the processes of translation must be to accept that, although translation has a central core of linguistic activity, it belongs most properly to semiotics, the science that studies sign systems or structures, sign processes and sign functions (Hawkes, 1977). Beyond the notion stressed by the narrowly linguistic approach that translation involves the transfer of meaning contained in one set of language signs into another set of language signs through competent use of the dictionary and grammar, the process also involves a whole set of extra-linguistic criteria. Edward Sapir (1929) claims that language is a guide to social reality and that human beings are at the mercy of the language that has become the medium of expression for their society. Experience, he asserts, is largely determined by the language habits of the community, and each separate structure represents a separate reality: No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached (Bassnett, 1980).

One of the first writers to formulate a theory of translation was the French humanist Etienne Dolet (1509–46) who was tried and executed for heresy after mistranslating one of Plato’s dialogues in such a way as to imply disbelief in immortality. In 1540, Dolet published a short outline of translation principles, entitled Lamanière de bientraduired’une langue enaultre (How to Translate Well from One Language into Another) and established five principles for the translator:

1) The translator must fully understand the sense and meaning of the original author, although he is at liberty to clarify obscurities.
2) The translator should have a perfect knowledge of both source language and target language.

3) The translator should avoid word-for-word renderings.

4) The translator should use forms of speech in common use.

5) The translator should choose and order words appropriately to produce the correct tone (Bassnett, 1980, p. 60-61).

Dolet’s views were reiterated by George Chapman (1559–1634), the great translator of Homer. He repeats his theory more fully in the Epistle to the Reader of his translation of The Iliad. In the Epistle Chapman states that a translator must:

1) avoid word for word renderings;
2) attempt to reach the spirit of the original;
3) avoid overly loose translations, by basing the translation on a sound scholarly investigation of other versions and glosses (Bassnett, 1980, p. 61-62).

Alexander Fraser Tytler was one of the first English speaking scholars who published his findings on translation. His principles after all these years still prove to be valid and they provide ground for further, detailed development.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, in 1791, Alexander Fraser Tytler published a volume entitled The Principles of Translation, the first systematic study in English of the translation processes. Tytler set up three basic principles:

1) The translation should give a complete transcript of the idea of the original work.
2) The style and manner of writing should be of the same character with that of the original.
3) The translation should have all the ease of the original composition (Bassnett, 1980).

4. Translating prose

Literary genres present different level of difficulty in the process of translation. Also, various genres received different level of attention in research. Although there is a large body of work debating the issues that surround the translation of poetry, far less time has been spent studying the specific problems of translating literary prose. One explanation for this could be the higher status that poetry holds, but it is more probably due to the widespread erroneous notion that a novel is somehow a simpler structure than a poem, and is consequently easier to translate. Moreover, whilst we have a number of detailed statements
by poet-translators regarding their methodology, we have fewer statements from prose translators. Yet there is a lot to be learned from determining the criteria for undertaking a translation, as has been demonstrated above. For a number of years Susan Bassnett used an exercise designed to discover how the translation of a novel is approached. Students were asked to translate the opening paragraph(s) of a novel and the translations were then examined in group discussion. What emerged from that exercise, time and again, is that students would frequently start to translate a text that they have not previously read or that they have read only once some time earlier. In short, they simply open the source language text and begin at the beginning, without considering how that opening section relates to the structure of the work as a whole. Yet it would be quite unacceptable to approach the translation of a poem in this way. This is significant because it shows that a different concept of the imaginary distinction between form and content prevails when the text to be considered is a novel. It seems to be easier for the prose translator to consider content as separable from form (Bassnett, 1980).

Wolfgang Iser, developing Roman Ingarden’s discussion of the intentional sentence correlatives that make up the world presented in the literary text, points out that the intentional correlatives disclose subtle connections which individually are less concrete than the statements, claims and observations, even though these only take on their real meaningfulness through the interaction of their correlatives. Iser goes on to state that the sentence does not consist solely of a statement but ‘aims at something beyond what it actually says’, since sentences within a literary text ‘are always an indication of something that is to come, the structure of which is foreshadowed by their specific content’. If the translator, then, handles sentences for their specific content alone, the outcome will involve a loss of dimension (Bassnett, 1980).

Translation is a broad phenomenon thus it does not seem appropriate to apply the same rules to all acts of translation. Texts vary considerably from one another so translation techniques may change in order to reveal all the complexity of the original in a translation. The following is a set of rules designed to help literary translators in their work:

Hilaire Belloc laid down six general rules for the translator of prose texts:
1) The translator should not ‘plod on’, word by word or sentence by sentence, but should ‘always “block out” his work’. By ‘block out’, Belloc means that the translator should consider the work as an integral unit and translate in sections, asking himself ‘before each what the whole sense is he has to render’.

2) The translator should render *idiom by idiom* ‘and idioms of their nature demand translation into another form from that of the original. Belloc cites the case of the Greek exclamation ‘By the Dog!’, which, if rendered literally, becomes merely comic in English, and suggests that the phrase ‘By God!’ is a much closer translation. Likewise, he points out that the French historic present must be translated into the English narrative tense, which is past, and the French system of defining a proposition by putting it into the form of a rhetorical question cannot be transposed into English where the same system does not apply.

3) The translator must render ‘intention by intention’, bearing in mind that ‘the intention of a phrase in one language may be less emphatic than the form of the phrase, or it may be more emphatic’. By ‘intention’, Belloc seems to be talking about the weight a given expression may have in a particular context in the source language that would be disproportionate if translated literally into the target language. He quotes several examples where the weighting of the phrase in the SL is clearly much stronger or much weaker than the literal TL translation, and points out that in the translation of ‘intention’, it is often necessary to *add* words not in the original ‘to conform to the idiom of one’s own tongue’.

4) Belloc warns against *les faux amis*, those words or structures that may appear to correspond in both source language and target language but actually do not, e.g. *demander*—to ask translated wrongly as to *demand*.

5) The translator is advised to ‘transmute boldly’ and Belloc suggests that the essence of translating is ‘the resurrection of an alien thing in a native body’.

6) The translator should never embellish (Bassnett, 1980).

Belloc’s six rules cover both points of technique and points of principle. His order of priorities is a little curious, but nevertheless he does stress the need for the translator to consider the prose text as a structured whole whilst bearing in mind the stylistic and syntactical exigencies of the target language. He accepts that there is a moral responsibility
to the original, but feels that the translator has the right to significantly alter the text in the translation process in order to provide the target language reader with a text that conforms to target language stylistic and idiomatic norms (Bassnett, 1980).

5. Introduction to Translation Quality Assessment

Translation Quality Assessment offers a chance to test the rules constructed for translator and allows readers and researchers to look at translated text with awareness of its structure and its functions. One method of establishing a reliable Translation Quality Assessment model seems to be synthesis of selected elements from existing models and further development of these techniques. This section is an investigation into the history of the thought and research on Translation Quality Assessment, a branch which stems naturally from Translation Studies. This branch, however, may claim centrality in the translation process since translated text, as any other product, may be considered incomplete or even useless if its quality standards are not met.

The search for quality in translation is still an unsettled issue today. Since the second half of the 20th century onwards, controversy surrounding the concept of quality has become central. Nonetheless, it seems that there is no common ground when it comes to defining quality either from a practical or from a theoretical viewpoint. According to Roberto Mateo (2014), there are many scholars who still believe that quality in translation is a relative and subjective concept (Horguelin & Brunette, 1998; Larose, 1998; Parra, 2005). Not surprisingly, it has been the excess of conflicting opinions and the experts’ lack of consensus on the definition of quality that have hampered any potential progress in the field (Colina, 2009).

However, there seems to be a general agreement on some points, such as what the optimal measures are to be taken when building a successful model. In order to assess quality in translation three steps should be taken: firstly, quality must be defined. Many would agree that a quality translation is one which fits its purpose (Nord, 1997; O’Brien, 2012). Secondly, the methodology must be set. For that, special attention has to be paid to those quality assessment methods that enable measurement. And thirdly, the assessment should be carried out in accordance with the definition of quality as applied to the text and to the assessment methodology chosen (Mateo, 2014).

6. Definition of Quality
Numerous authors offer various definitions of translation and quality and of translation quality, which are basic concepts of any translation theory. These notions are so ample that different translation theories may put forward their own view (Gómez, 2002). Subsequently, different views of translation give shape to different concepts of translation quality and so call for different ways of assessing it (House, 1997).

Quality of translation is difficult to define because it depends on many factors and different points of view. Quality in industrial translation may be assessed differently than quality in literary translation. There are many values, factors and requirements concerning a translated text so each and every text deserves scrutiny and separate treatment:

Quality is far too complex a matter and too dependent on context (Nord, 1997) to be condensed to an all-embracing definition. It has to do with a wealth of factors: fulfilling user’s needs or expectations, enhancing work efficiency, profitability, deadline compliance, resources and tools availability, etc. These characteristics (and many others) that could be attributable to quality do not all have the same weight on each translation assignment and are not therefore equally measurable or assessable.

A review of quality evaluation literature from industrial sectors has revealed that most quality standards define the concept as the ability to fulfil a client-defined set of parameters (Jiménez-Crespo, 2009). Nonetheless, in translation, the concept of quality has traditionally been linked to values such as accuracy, correctness and fidelity (to the original). Currently, the concept has evolved to take on a higher polyhedricity due to the fact that quality can be observed from diverse angles and, thus, checked at different stages and with regard to objects. Therefore, delimiting this intricate concept calls for the assumption of a multifaceted view (Mateo, 2014).

It seems reasonable to think that given the subjectivity and relativity of the notion, and indeed of the evaluator (House, 1997), quality assessment requires something that could offer the process greater objectivity. Without explicit criteria on which to base evaluation, the evaluators can only rely on their own views (Colina, 2009).

7. Literary Translation Quality Assessment
Rodríguez (2006) attempts to bridge the gap between scholarly approaches to translation quality assessment and practical quality assessment. In her opinion, the helical procedure that Gideon Toury applies to translation analysis is to be implemented to all steps of the assessment analysis including criteria; the assessment scheme must be delimited as research advances. In every phase, from the very start, explanatory hypothesis will be reformulated, which will then reflect backwards and affect subsequent discovery procedures. The normal progression of a study is thus helical rather than lineal: there will always remain something to go back and discover, with the concomitant need for more (or more elaborated) explanations. Similarly, Lauscher (2000) proposes the notion of flexibility applying it specifically to translation evaluation. Translation quality assessment requires to be based on a yardstick which is flexible enough to integrate translation strategies designed in actual translation processes (Rodríguez Rodríguez, 2006).

Rodríguez Rodríguez claims that the scheme proposed (covering contrastive analysis of macrotextual features of both texts, units of analysis, shifts and their categories, translation devices, and assessment criteria) can be considered in the assessment of translated literary texts provided that slight divergences are accepted accounting for each text. Consequently, she proposes an assessment analysis of literary translated texts which must be flexible and broad enough to be always delimited and redefined in each study as research advances; each step is to be verified before proceeding to the study of the next one. As this suggests, the evident need for objectivity in translation assessment is to be combined with the characteristics which identify each specific translation process (Rodríguez Rodríguez, 2006).

Literary translation demands literary devices in order to interpret a given piece and translate it into another language. First and foremost task of a translator is to comprehend a text in its totality and then do his best in expressing the contents of the original in a translated text. Literary texts tend to be complex and rich in meaning hence translators need universal and thorough tools in order to cope with their task.

8. Five Literary Codes

Roland Barthes (1970) explains the theory of five literary codes in his essay S/Z and analyzes Honore de Balzac's novella entitled Sarrasine to illustrate his point. Barthes' (1970) framework is versatile and it can be easily applied to different texts. Jolanta Kozak, among
others, successfully applied the five codes in her analysis of translated texts, such as E. A. Poe’s *The Raven*, W. Blake’s *The Tyger* or A. A. Milne’s *Winnie-the-Pooh*.

This article focuses on I. Welsh’s novel *Trainspotting* because it is very rich in symbols, metaphors and references. Polish version of the book, translated by Jędrzej Polak and entitled *Ślepe tory* differs considerably from the English text; those differences were scrutinized and will be presented further in the article. The codes, however, need to be briefly introduced:

- The hermeneutic code introduces enigmas and riddles to be solved by the reader,
- The proairetic code is constructed by actions which constitute the plot of the story,
- The semantic code consists of connotations as they appear throughout text,
- The symbolic code focuses on sets of meaning and organizes them usually by way of antithesis,
- The cultural code refers to bodies of knowledge such as science, religion or a particular profession (Barthes, 1970)

9. **Comparative analysis of 'Trainspotting' and its translation into Polish**

The very name of the novel is already rich in codes and meanings. However, the translation fails to convey most of them.

1) Trainspotting.

Literal meaning of this word, according to dictionaries, refers to a free time activity of spotting trains and making a note of their number and time when they were spotted.

*The hermeneutic code*: There is no literal mention of trainspotting until late in the novel. Even then, it is meant only as a joke. Also, trains, train stations and railway tracks are notably absent until the last part of the novel, which encourages the reader to seek different meanings of the title as provided by hermeneutic code:

- Injecting drugs intravenously leaves so called *tracks* on a user’s skin. Habitual users have so many *tracks* it is difficult for them to *spot* a good vein. Metaphorical expression of *track* suggests that syringe, or its content, is a *train*.

- The novel also suggests that trainspotting might be life itself and abusers are ones who, instead of living their lives, only watch others who live. In such a situation, drug
abusers are the trainspotters and the trains they watch are lives of people devoid of addiction.

Multiplicity of hermeneutic clues in the title forms a riddle for the reader to solve. Unfortunately the Polish title of the novel fails to communicate all these clues:

2) Ślepe tory.

The Polish title does not constitute a riddle but an answer. First problem caused by this situation is the reversal of roles; good translator translates hermeneutic clues suggested by the writer and the reader is the one to solve the riddle or the mystery. Jędrzej Polak decided to answer the riddle himself but, he gave a false answer, which is another problem.

*The proairetic code:* Trainspotting is an activity which implies numerous subsequent actions such as to observe, travel, choose or change. In 2) proairetic code is absent because Ślepe tory is not an activity but a place. Additionally, the Polish title suggests immobility and lack of choice.

*The semantic and cultural codes:* Trainspotting by connotation is a hobby which is considered trivial. Ślepe tory fails to communicate that connotation.

*The hermeneutic code:* The novel has an optimistic ending because the main character finally abandons his city and country in search for better life, free of drug abuse. He enters a train both literally and metaphorically. The happy ending is in contrast with the pessimistic Polish title.

3) - Aw, ah sais. Ah wanted the radge tae jist fuck off ootay ma visage.

4) - O - mowie. Chciałem, żeby palant zszedł mi z widoku.

*The semantic code:* 'Aw' in 3) may express protest, dislike, disgust, sympathy or commiseration, whereas 'O' used in 4) is an exclamation (wołacz - o!) so it fails to convey the original meaning and confuses the reader. Since *aw* in English and *o* in Polish have similar pronunciation, this situation seems to be a calque. Additionally, *o* may suggest that the addressee of the exclamation was absent and appeared shortly before 4), and hence the surprise.

5) Ah'd be too fucked by the time we goat back.
6) Będę napierdolony zanim wrócimy.

The cultural code: *Fucked* may be interpreted as tired or drugged, but not as *napierdolony* because of contextual information which refers to cultural and medical codes: heroin addict cares only about heroin.

The hermeneutic code: *Napierdolony* is a false clue because there is both drinking alcohol and taking drugs in the novel so these activities must be distinguished.

7) - Ah'll gie ye the money tae git it back oot. Is that aw yir sae fuckin moosey-faced aboot?

8) - Dam ci forse, zebyś se go pożyczył. To cię, kurwa, boli?

The proairetic code: *Git it back oot* implies that it (a film from a video library) was already borrowed once and can be borrowed again. 8) does not convey that meaning.

9) If ah ever live long enough tae huv a bairn.

10) Jeśli przeżyję i będę miał bachora.

The proairetic code: 10) falsely suggests that the speaker will experience some risky situation shortly and if he survives, he will have a baby. 9) mentions distant future and only a probability of having a child; there is no certainty.

11) The Fit ay the Walk.

12) Deptak.

The cultural, geographical and administrative codes: The Foot of the Walk is a particular street in Edinburgh. It is also the name of a pub in Leith, district of Edinburgh where main characters of the novel lived. Those facts might be of interest and importance for some readers given the novel's popularity. If readers desire to follow the path of Mark Renton, just like James Joyce fans walk around Dublin visiting the same places as Ulysses' protagonist Leopold Bloom did, they do not have this opportunity. Another problem is that the Foot of the Walk is only partly a mall (deptak), most of it is a regular street designed for vehicle use, hence another situation:
13) He charged straight oot intae the middle ay the Walk screaming: - TAXI!

14) Rzucił się prosto na środek Deptaka i wrzasnął: - TAXI!

The cultural and urban codes: malls are designed for pedestrians, not for cars, so the appearance of a taxi on 12) might be confusing for the reader. Moreover, 12) is false. Again, it seems to be a calque. If one assumed that the translator wanted to make the text more familiar to Polish readers by using 12) instead of original proper name of the street, such assumption would be contradicted by the following:

15) Hundred fuckin yards.

16) Sto pierdolonych jardów.

The cultural code: Units of measure: in Poland a generally accepted unit of measure of the distance is a meter, not a yard. 16) might be a problem for people whose spatial imagination is not acquainted with the notion of a yard.

17) There were a group ay young guys in shell-suits n bomber jaykits.

18) Na postoju stało przed nami kilku młodych gości w skórach i lotniczych kurtkach.

The cultural code, namely the code of clothes and their cultural meaning: shell-suits translated as skóry is an obvious lexical mistake, not to mention their different cultural associations. Bomber jackets, however, can be translated as kurtki lotnicze according to dictionaries but that term does not fit the context. 17) describes a group of potentially very dangerous people, whereas 18) describes a group of innocent men who might be aviation fans. As the story unfolds the potential danger becomes real and protagonists must flee quickly. The following is a suggestion of correction which is truthful according to the literal meaning of the original as well as codes which are included:

19) Na postoju stało przed nami kilku młodych gości w dresach i flekach.

Flek is a type of jacket commonly used by a violent subculture of skinheads. Apart from clothes, the potential danger is signified also by way of hairstyles:

20) One guy in a black, purple and aqua shell-suit wi a flat-top asks.
21) Pyta się jeden gość w czarno-fioletowo-niebieskiej flyerce, ojebany na łysko.

The cultural code and the code of hairstyles: flat-top does not mean that a person is bald as the translation falsely suggests. Flat-top is similar to crew cut hair but the former is more eccentric and original. Flat-top is common among military hence another implication of danger.

The proairetic code, which in this case is a sequence of events, continues to unfold logically and consistently. The translation, however, does not convey the events and utterances faithfully which results in reduction of number of implications a reader may discover.

22) Next time one ay us ur walkin hame oan oor Jack Jones, wi git hassle fi these wee radges.

23) Dopierdolą się do nas, jak będziemy wracali do domu.

The cultural code: Cockney Rhyming Slang: Jack Jones means alone which is strengthened by one of us in the same sentence. It is an important difference between translation and original because Jack Jones and one of us emphasizes and increases the danger of the situation. One individual is more vulnerable than two people. Another problem in 23) is that it falsely implies that protagonists are going to return home together possibly the same day, whereas the original only mentions a future possibility of their separate return. Such modifications in translation alternate proairetic code which is temporal and unfolds over time. In this respect 23) is similar to 10): instead of describing a possibility both 23) and 10) suggest a plan.

24) - Ah want tae see Mother Superior n ah dinnae gie a fuck aboot any cunt or anything else. Goat that? He pokes his lips wi his forefinger, his eyes bulging oot at us. - Simone wants tae see Mother Superior. Watch ma fuckin lips.

25) - Chcę się widzieć z Matkom Przełożonem i gówno mnie obchodzi taka czy inna pizda na Deptaku. Kapujesz? - Grzebie paluchem w ustach i wybałusza gały. Simon ma życzenie widzieć się z Matką Przełożoną! Mam czytać z jego ust!

The cultural code and nonverbal language: touching or pointing at one's lips means that one wishes others to pay attention to his or her lips or their product which in this case is
language. Similar techniques include touching one's nose suggesting bad smell or touching one's ear with simultaneous turning one's head to position the ear closer to the speaker which may signify listening closely to what is being said. Such clues, obviously, are insufficient to draw determining conclusions so the reader needs context in order to confirm or disconfirm the message suggested by nonverbal language. Protagonist's nonverbal hint is affirmed by his subsequent utterance: watch ma fuckin lips.

Unfortunately, 25) misleads the reader by offering a false interpretation, namely grzebie paluchem w ustach which signifies oral cavity problems. Thus, hermeneutic code is broken which in original consists of nonverbal announcement and verbal explication.

26) Muirhouse-Leith mob.

27) Ludzie z Muirhouse-Leith.

The cultural code: a mob is, according to Merriam-Webster dictionary, a large group or crowd of people who are angry or violent or difficult to control. Another meaning of a mob the dictionary gives is a secret organized group of criminals. All these meanings fit perfectly into the context because the said mob lives in a very dangerous area of the city and deals drugs often mixed with harmful chemicals. The translator, however, decided to reduce the meaning to people ignoring all the richness of connotations of the original term. Thus, the semantic code, as obvious as it may seem in the original, does not exist in translation.

28) Ah wis only aware ay him slouching tae a halt oan the banister in front ay us, because he wis blocking ma route tae Johnny's and the skag. He wis struggling fir breath, haudin grimly oantay the railing, looking as if he wis gaunnae spew intae the stairwell. - Awright Si? ah sais irritably, pissed off at the cunt fir haudin us up. He waved us away, shaking his heid and screwing his eyes up. Ah sais nae mair.

The hermeneutic, proairetic and symbolic codes: The First problem which makes this fragment difficult to understand in translation is slouch to a halt which means to stop but the Polish version says wlec się which means to walk. Such introduction makes the subsequent activity in 29) inconsistent. The protagonist was blocking the way because he stopped. If he was walking, he would not be blocking the passage. Another difference invokes different implications. In the original protagonist looked as if he was going to spew into the stairwell suggesting physical torment whereas the translation suggests mental torment and suicidal mood. Protagonist’s reaction when asked if he was fine also gives different answers. In the original he is looking up towards dealer's apartment; looking up is also a nonverbal sign of hope and life. In the translation the character's behavior is a nonverbal suggestion of depression and powerlessness thus positioning the protagonist on the other extreme of the antithesis; instead of moving towards life he is moving towards death or actually resignedly awaiting it.

30) Johnny wis bombed ootay his box whin we finally made it up the stairs. A shootin gallery wis set up.

31) Kiedy wreszcie dowlekliśmy się na górę, Johnny otworzył nam napierdolony jak autobus. W środku leżał rozłożony sprzęt.

The cultural code: The problem with napierdolony is similar to 6); it falsely suggests drunkenness when the context clearly indicates drug abuse. Shooting gallery is an opportunity of creating the same metaphor in Polish. To shoot as strzelać and a shot as strzał already function in the Polish language in reference to drugs so creating a metaphor 32) strzelnica would be commonsensically understandable to native speakers of Polish.

33) Johnny often snorted some coke wi his fix or mixed up a speedball concoction ay smack and cocaine.

34) Johnny biorąc działkę, często wąchał kokę albo strzelał sobie spida z mieszanki hery i kokainy.

Medicine and chemistry in the proairetic and cultural codes: To snort coke is to ingest it through the nose whereas wąchać kokę is to smell it which is a pointless activity. The
translator might have mistaken to snort (wciągać) with to sniff (wąchać) as in to sniff glue (wąchać klej) for example. Needless to say, glue is notably absent in the context.

A speedball concoction is a mixture of drugs, whereas spid in Polish signifies amphetamine only. The abovementioned mistakes confuse the reader to a large extent because they include both nouns and verbs. The translation is ineffective because retrieving original message consumes a lot of unnecessary processing effort.

35) Raymie could detect a labdick in a crowded street the wey that sharks can sense a few drops of blood in an ocean.  

36) Raymie potrafi wypatrzyć tajniaka na zatłoczonej ulicy, tak jak rekin wyczuwa ofiarę po zapachu krwi.

The cultural and symbolic codes: Simile: in the original Raymie's skill is accentuated by the comparison with sharks' abilities as well as their hunting area. The immensity of an ocean is presented through antithesis with tiny drops of blood in it. In Raymie's case the ocean is a crowded street and drops of blood are labdicks. The translation does not include simile nor antithesis.

The following sentence, interestingly enough, does not exist in the original:

37) Johnny zaczął podśpiewywać: - kto rano wstaje, ten w żyłę daje... .

The cultural and semantic codes: There is a mention of a serenade which is a metaphor. Injecting drugs into another person's vein is expressed by way of a metaphor to sing a serenade. That is why it was now Sick Boy’s turn tae serenade Johnny. - Swanney, how ah love ya, how ah love yah, my dear old Swanney is just another explication of an umbrella concept a serenade. Singing a serenade in the novel is, by connotation, giving someone a great pleasure just like literal serenade is motivated by love to give another person pleasure by composing beautiful music. If the translator failed to understand this metaphor which constitutes deep structure of meaning, he might have added 37) striving for unity of the surface structure of a serenade. This is not the only situation where the translator decided to add a fragment which does not exist in the original.

38) - a double-ended jack plug tae the south ay Waterloo, Raymie sais.
39) - trójnik na południe od Waterloo - mówi Raymie.

*The cultural and symbolic codes: Trójnik* is an element used in plumbing and it does not have cultural connotations of a *double-ended jack plug* which is slang for a police officer or an informer. In Polish version the term *wtyczka* might be used as it carries both surface and deep structure of the original *jack plug*:

40) - wtyczka na południe od Waterloo.

The examples presented above are only a fraction of all of them. The selection of these fragments is designed to serve as information for both recreational readers and professionals studying culture and literature. Since literature in the Polish language mostly consists of translations from different languages, it is of utmost importance for literary translators to research the texts they attempt to translate.

10. Conclusions

The analysis of *Trainspotting* and *Ślepe tory* suggests the need for improvement in present state of literary translations into Polish. Roland Barthes' theory of five literary codes, along with the rules for translators mentioned in this article, may serve as a workshop or a basis for literary translators. Translation Quality Assessment serves as a mirror for translated texts which needs to be present on every stage of the translation process. It seems impossible to translate *belles lettres* without proper framework and grounding. This article provides a selection of translation theories which is supposed to help both professionals and laypersons in understanding of translation. Deeper understanding of translation enhances product value as well as enjoyment this product gives. This article does not claim to be final on the subject of literary translation, however. It was designed both to be informative as well as to be an invitation to a discussion on Literary Translation Quality Assessment.

References

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