Stylistic shifts in translation of fiction into Slovene: Is literary fiction translated differently from popular fiction?

Marija Zlatnar Moe, University of Ljubljana

Povzetek

Prevodi nežanrske književnosti v slovenščino se predvsem v slogovnih prevajalskih strategijah pogosto razlikujejo od prevodov žanrske književnosti. V prispevku analiziram slogovne spremembe v prevodih šestih romanov, ki so izšli po letu 2000, in sicer: *Svoboda* (Jonathan Franzen), *Na obali Chesil* (Ian McEwan), *Skrivnostni primer ali kdo je umoril psa* (Mark Haddon), *Brooklynske norosti* (Paul Auster), *Cesta* (Cormac McCarthy) in *O lepoti* (Zadie Smith), in predstavljam možne razloge zanje. Ugotovitve primerjam z ugotovitvami analize prevodov žanrske književnosti (Zlatnar Moe 2010) in ugotavljam, da nekatere spremembe sloga niso odvisne od žanra, druge pa so žanrsko specifične in do njih prihaja samo v prevodih nežanrske književnosti, ne pa tudi žanrskih besedil. V prevodih žanrske književnosti se večina sprememb zgodi na ravni registra, predvsem pri formalnosti, nekaj pa tudi pri funkcijskih jezikovnih zvrsteh (vojaški ali obredni jezik se na primer v nekaterih primerih prevajata v nezaznamovanem knjižnem jeziku). Pri prevajanju nežanrske književnosti je spreminjanja ravni formalnosti veliko manj, pač pa se pojavijo spremembe v ideološki podobi besedila in karakterizaciji, česar v žanrskih prevodih ni opaziti, prav tako je v njih več prevajalskih rešitev, ki kršijo norme slovenskega knjižnega jezika. V obeh skupinah besedil je veliko primerov nevtralizacije sloga, a so te spremembe različne glede na to, ali gre za žanrsko ali za nežanrsko književnost. Vsi ti prevajalski premiki lahko privedejo do prevoda, ki je slogovno nevtralnejši, na nekaterih mestih pa je lahko celo nejasen in okoren.

Ključne besede: književno prevajanje, slog, književnost, register, žanrska književnost.

0 INTRODUCTION

In 2007 I presented the results of a study of register shifts in translation of popular fiction from English into Slovene (Zlatnar Moe 2010) at the meeting of the Slovene Literary Translator Society. In the discussion, a question arose which seemed worth exploring further: Do the results of this study mean that translators translate literary texts differently from those belonging to the field of popular fiction? To find out, I analyzed six novels by critically acclaimed literary authors in addition to the seven popular novels presented in the 2010 study. The focus of the analysis lay on the shifts in style and register, and especially on their impact on the target text. The results show that there are differences in translators' approach to literary and popular texts on the stylistic level, specifically in the area of register, when dealing with levels of formality and different fields used by the authors of the source texts.

1 TRANSLATING PROSE

Although the translation of prose is probably the largest field of literary translation, such translations (especially of contemporary popular fiction) have been less studied than, for example, translations of poetry. As Bassnett (2002:109) says, "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." She offers a few possible explanations for this, such as the higher status of poetry, or greater eloquence of translators of poetry regarding their methods, but the most interesting one that seems to resonate in the Slovene prose translations (literary and popular alike) is "the widespread erroneous notion that a novel is somehow a simpler structure than a poem and is consequently easier to translate" (Bassnett 2002:109). One of the symptoms of this assumption is that translators often go straight on and start translating the text without reading it through first[1], an approach, as Bassnett (2002:110) rightly observes, that would be quite unimaginable in the translation of a poem. Because of this approach, the translator often does not even notice the overall structure of the novel, or the role that individual stylistic, syntactical, lexical, and other choices of the source author play in the structure of the novel as a whole. Instead, they begin with the first phrase, and they work their way through the whole text, following sentence after sentence, aiming to produce a text that adheres to the target culture norms, that will please the the target culture recipients.

[1] This kind of approach has been observed for example in translation classes of literary translation, as well as admitted in informal conversations with practising literary translators, and the reasons given for it were mostly ever shorter deadlines and increasing workloads.

To achieve this, the aim of the translator is what Venuti (1995:1) calls a fluent text[2]:

> A translated text [...] is judged acceptable by most publishers, reviewers, and readers when it reads fluently, when the absence of any linguistic or stylistic peculiarities makes it seem transparent, giving the appearance that it reflects the foreign writer's personality or intention or the essential meaning of the foreign text – the appearance, in other words, that the translation is not in fact a translation, but the original.

André Lefevere (1992) too, talks about the tendency to neutralize everything that is not familiar in the target culture, although his remarks deal with broader issues of ideology and discourse rather than style, syntax or register.

This approach, however, produces a text that is rather different stylistically (and sometimes also in other respects) from the source text: it is more neutral, less diverse and consequently often less interesting. For this reason, translation theorists have devised a number of recommendations to translators, such as regarding the whole novel as a unit, rather than a cluster of sentences; paying attention not only to the content of the novel, but equally to its style; and above all determining the function of the text, and the function of individual stylistic devices within the text[3] in order to choose the most appropriate strategy in each case.

As we can see, then, prose translation, whether it is of literature or popular fiction, tends to go in the direction of stylistic neutralization and domestication. But are there also differences between translators' approach towards texts from the two different fields of writing?

1.1 Translating literary fiction, translating popular fiction

Literature and popular fiction are both broad fields filled with different genres and (especially popular fiction) subgenres. They are also two very distinct fields. They operate in different ways, they are discussed differently, and the readers have different expectations towards them (cf. Gelder 2004:14-20). All this is mirrored by what professional and general readers say about them. Literary novels are praised for their originality, for their beauty of expression, for their intricate style, for the new, fresh ways in which writers approach the eternal questions of human experience. Popular novels are praised for telling a good story, for their

[2] Although Venuti talks about the British and US literary translation scene, his observations also describe the conditions in Slovenia (cf. Zlatnar Moe 2010b).

[3] Hilaire Belloc, *On Translation*, (1931:116), quoted in Bassnett (2002:119).

power to tear the reader out of the real world and settling him or her in the universe of the book, for a clear ending, for their adherence to the particular genre. This might indicate that the translators' tendencies to simplify and domesticate will bring about fewer and smaller stylistic changes in the translations of popular fiction than in the translations of literature, since stylistic originality is apparently less expected in the former.

It also seems that the readers approach the two fields in a different way: they turn to popular fiction for fun and escape, and to literature for personal growth and enrichment of the soul. One Slovene professional reader even thought that literature is for autumn, winter and rain, while popular fiction is meant to be read in the summer, on the beach (cf. Zlatnar Moe 2010:127). But what about the translators? Translators are also readers, as Bassnett (2002:78) points out: "The translator is after all, first a reader and then a writer, and in the process of reading he or she must take a position [towards the source text]". Does that mean, then, that the translators approach the translation of a popular novel differently than the translation of a literary novel?

In some ways, this is unavoidable. For example, much more popular fiction is translated than literary fiction. This means that translating popular fiction will enable the translator to get more work. Consequently, it will unavoidably feel more like a mundane activity, not a creative one. Sometimes translators of very famous books can suddenly find themselves explaining their work in the popular media, or in a fierce discussion over translation issues with the die-hard fans of the work in question. Some other working conditions also differ – the deadlines for popular fiction tend to be very short because the publisher wishes to join the trend. And, although translators of popular fiction occasionally get a taste of the fame that is usually reserved for the stars of popular culture, it seems quite impossible for them to achieve the kind of recognition that is expressed through awards – either official, state awards, or the professional ones awarded by translator or writer associations. The translators of literature, on the other hand, are often given more translator-friendly deadlines (except when a book of literary fiction becomes a best selling movie, for example, or when an author that has not yet been translated receives a major literary award), get practically no hassle from the fans of the source text, and are much more eligible for awards.

But external working conditions are not the only thing that changes. As Lefevere (Bassnett and Lefevere 1998) has pointed out more than once, and as the publicly expressed opinions of some Slovene translators also suggest,[4] translators do indeed have a different attitude to different fields, and also treat each group of

[4] "Publicly expressed opinions" here means statements by literary translators in interviews or during public discussions in the Translator Society, during literary festivals, etc.

texts in a different way: "Writers and their works are translated differently when they are considered 'classics,' when their work is considered as 'cultural capital', and when they are not" (Bassnett and Lefevere 1998: 109). When talking about translation of sacred texts, Levefere (1992:121) notes: "Such faithful, even literal translation[5] is reserved for books that are repositories of a culture's authority. Yet by analogy this kind of translation can be extended to works considered classics of world literature". The research done on the translation of popular fiction confirms this: Robyns (1990) finds that French translations of English crime fiction are heavily adapted to the norms of original French crime fiction, and also, that the translating strategies used are often old-fashioned and no longer used in other genres (Robyns, 1990: 24). Paizis (1998) came to a similar conclusion regarding Greek translations of French romances (Paizis 1998, quoted in Milton 2000: 171), whereas French translations of American science fiction are less heavily adapted to the target culture (ibid.)

All this leads to the hypothesis that there are indeed some differences between translating popular fiction and translating literary prose: that the translations of literary prose might be nearer the "faithful," source-oriented end of the scale, while popular fiction tends to be more neutralized, or even domesticated, nearer the target-oriented end of the scale. The study of popular translations from English into Slovene has shown a certain degree of stylistic neutralization in popular fiction (Zlatnar Moe 2010a). But does literary prose really escape it? How classic must a classic be in order to avoid neutralization and domestication?

2 RESEARCH MATERIAL

2.1 Corpus

In order to determine what stylistic shifts happen in popular fiction, seven novels of different genres published in Slovene translation in what was then the last decade (now the last 15 years) were analysed. To examine the shifts in the literary prose on the way from English into Slovene, I analyzed six novels:

1. Paul Auster: *The Brooklyn Follies* (translated by Miha Avanzo); first published in 2006, Slovene version: 2009.

[5] Although that varies between different target cultures: in the "central" target cultures (i.e. cultures that are more often the source of translated fiction than the target), such as the British or the American, translators/editors often make visible interventions (such as reorganizations of the text or omissions of its parts) even when it comes to translations of prestigious literary texts. We thank Reviewer 2 for pointing this out.

2. Mark Haddon: *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (translated by Vasja Cerar); first published: 2003, Slovene version: 2003.

3. Cormac McCarthy: *The Road* (translated by Lili Potpara); first published: 2006, Slovene version: 2009.

4. Ian McEwan: *On Chesil Beach* (translated by Suzana Tratnik); first published: 2007, Slovene version: 2008.

5. Zadie Smith: *On Beauty* (translated by Matej Juh); first published: 2005, Slovene version: 2008.

6. Jonathan Franzen: *Freedom* (translated by Jure Potokar); first published: 2010, Slovene version 2012.

The popular novels included in the analysis are: J.K. Rowling: *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (transl. by Jakob Kenda), J.R.R. Tolkien: *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the Ring* (transl. by Branko Gradišnik), T. Pratchett: *The Colour of Magic* (transl. by Maja Novak), H. Fielding: *Bridget Jones's Diary* (transl. by Maja Novak), N. Hornby: *About a Boy* (transl. by Mojca Krevel), D. Brown: *The Da Vinci Code* (transl. by Nataša Müller), and M. Binchy: *Tara Road* (transl. by Aleksandra Rekar).

2.2 The authors

The popular fiction books I studied and their authors all belong to the canon of their respective genres, in some cases they even started the genre in question or significantly shaped it. All the authors have had more or less successful films based on their books (though not necessarily the novels included in the study). They have generally acquired a faithful following of fans who are willing to buy whatever they write – in short, they are representative of the field of popular fiction.

The literary fiction authors are generally considered to be among the most highly regarded authors of contemporary prose fiction, some have been called "the best of their generation" or "one of the greatest", one has been knighted; they have all been nominated and had won literary awards, and several of their books, too, have seen film adaptations. They have generally written fewer books than the authors in the popular fiction corpus. Only one of them, Paul Auster, also writes popular fiction, namely crime. Another slight exception is Mark Haddon, since most of his books belong to the genre of literature for children. But the studied book, *The Curious Incident,* was targeted at the adult public in

the source culture.[6] All of the authors have more than one book translated into Slovene, but by different translators.

2.3 The translators

The Slovene translators of popular fiction are a rather diverse group in terms of age and experience. Some are beginners, others have published over 100 translations as well as original work, some are freelance translators, others higher education teachers, authors, etc. The Slovene translators of literary fiction are a more homogenous group. All graduated in some combination of languages and literatures,[7] except one who graduated in sociology and anthropology. The Slovene On-line Bibliography (COBISS) shows that none of them has published less than 50 items (original work and translations combined). They are also a slightly older group on average, and unlike the popular fiction group, they all work with literature in some way. Five out of six are published authors in Slovenia (some of them also internationally), the remaining one is a journalist. All have had experience with translating literature for adults, two of them have also translated literature for children, and one also translates crime fiction. One of the translators has published quite a few theoretical texts on literary translation.

This seems to show that translators of literary fiction are very often different people than translators of popular fiction. There is some overlapping in the field of children's literature, but the findings (as well anecdotal evidence) seems to suggest that the translators mostly either translate one or the other, and also, that popular fiction is the field where beginners get their first chance while literary fiction is mostly translated by more experienced translators.[8]

3 METHOD

I concentrated on the most diverse parts of the books in terms of style and register. I thus analyzed those parts of the text where the characters are in direct or indirect interaction; where characters differ in social position, status, age, and role; or where the style is extreme (e.g. arguments). For each work, I analyzed either an actual chapter if the chapter met all these criteria, or suitable excerpts

[6] But not, as we shall see, in the Slovene target culture, which had a very strong impact on its translation.

[7] But only half of them actually studied English, which is interesting, considering the source language of the books in this study.

[8] It is probably necessary to say that this is only valid in the case of most commonly spoken foreign languages in Slovenia. When it comes to less spoken and translated languages, the situation is somewhat different, and the translator from such a language has very often the opportunity to work with the greatest classics as well as best selling popular fiction from the very beginning.

from different chapters, totalling about a chapter's length. If the chapters were very short (as in *The Curious Incident*), I analysed several chapters.

I focused on the shifts that caused:

- increased formality
- decreased formality
- a change of field
- stylistic changes that affected the contents of the text
- words and phrases that deviated markedly from the target-language norms.

In the second study I started with the same categories as in the first, but later I added new ones (such as ideological shifts).

Those strategies influence the stylistic level of the text directly. A text, for example, which deviates from the norms in the relevant language is considered badly written. The same goes for a text that becomes less coherent because of intentional or accidental shifts of meaning. While a badly written popular novel only confirms the wide-spread opinion among Slovene professional readers and the general public that popular fiction is simply badly written literature, it also influences the reception of literary fiction in the target culture, leaving readers wondering why a certain book won a literary award and why its author seems to be so highly regarded abroad.

The occurrences of the stylistic shifts were determined by comparing individual words, phrases or longer expressions in the source and target languages. In cases of archaisms, neologisms and the like, it was determined with the aid of dictionary definitions in both languages and/or the frequency and typical occurrences of an item in the Slovene corpora. When such aids were not available, as in cases of authors' or translators' personal neologisms, the register of an expression was determined on the basis of an analysis of morphemes, word-formation, etc.

4 FINDINGS

The general overview of the shifts shows some interesting differences between the two groups of translations. Firstly, there are far fewer shifts in the literary translations than in the popular fiction, although a similar amount of text (a chapter, or, in novels with shorter chapters, totalling about a chapter's length) was analysed: in the popular novels 1,287 shifts were found, and in the literary fiction 572. But this is not the only difference. After excluding shifts of meaning, which was the most common shift in the translations of literary fiction, and the second most common in the translations of popular fiction, the distribution of shifts was as follows:

Popular fiction	Literary fiction
1. shifts of formality level	1. other stylistic shifts
2. other stylistic shifts	2. non-normative solutions in the target language
3. non-normative solutions in the target language	3. shifts of field
4. shifts of field	4. shifts in ideology

Shifts in formality, which formed the largest category in the first study, are hardly an issue in the literary fiction corpus. A completely new type of shift comes up in the literary fiction corpus that was absent in popular fiction: shifts of ideology – either within the book universe, or in relation to the target standards of political correctness and polite target society. This list indicates that the stylistic priorities indeed differ in translation of the different genres.

4.1 Stylistic shifts

Stylistic shifts in both studies include shifts of register (field and formality), and shifts due to adherence to Slovene norms of good writing and good manners.

4.1.1 Shifts of field

Shifts of field tend towards the neutralization of style. In the first study, biblical, legal, teenage, children's, military, journalistic or ritual English were all translated into the same neutral formal variety of Slovene.

Field also changes in literary fiction but there are some differences. While in popular fiction extreme varieties are neutralized, this is not the case in literary fiction. Here, gangsta slang in *On Beauty*, for example, is retained and the lower colloquial varieties sometimes even intensified, for example the milder swearing in *The Brooklyn Follies* becomes much harsher in the Slovene version. It is the middle varieties that change to the more neutral ones: university students' language, in *On Beauty* for example, or the sometimes slightly elevated (though not very formal) way their academic parents and their colleagues speak together; the unusual, technical way in which the autistic boy talks to his neighbours in *The Curious Incident*.

In a few cases teenage language mutates into children's language, or adult language into the teenage variety. An example of the former is found in *On Beauty*

where Zora, a sophomore, in the Slovene version calls her father by a word for "father" (*očka*), which is used by small children (and mostly in books). An example of the latter appears in *Freedom,* where two middle-aged men in the Slovene translation suddenly utter two sentences in teenage slang, and then go back to the standard language.

Temporal varieties of the language also seem to cause some problem. In *Freedom,* Richard, a student and a fledgling rock star in the 1970s, insists on using the word "chick" for any female from fellow students to Margaret Thatcher, even though his friends explicitly remind him (and the translator) that he sounds as if he were stuck in the sixties. The Slovene translator ignored that, used the slightly pejorative non-slang word "miškica" ("a little mouse") once, and then apparently gave up on slang completely and opted for the standard informal word for girl ("punca"). This is problematic, since there is quite a discussion on the word "chick" at one point in the novel (p. 100-101), which becomes redundant in the Slovene version.

But generally, children's and teenage language seem to cause problems for the translators of popular fiction as well as of literary fiction. Not only do they regularly neutralize the style of speech in the source text, they also frequently correct the style of the underage characters. This urge to correct children affects popular fiction and literary fiction alike. One such example is *The Road*, where most of the text is written as a rather informal dialogue between the father and the son; and the second one is *The Curious Incident*, which is written from the point of view of a fifteen-year-old autistic boy. It is in those two texts that the large majority of stylistic corrections in the study occur (36 out of 51). While the shifts in *The Road* simply confirm the findings from the study of popular fiction, namely, that translators apparently fall into a teacher-like mode when translating children and teenagers, *The Curious Incident* has an additional complication. Monotony, repetition and generally poor vocabulary apparently are symptoms of autism. Correcting this, then, not only changes the style of the book, but also affects characterisation, and removes important clues to the plot. The boy in the target text is less obviously autistic than in the source text, which may influence the way the reader reads the story.[9] A similar case is Nick Hornby's *About a Boy* in the popular corpus, in which most shifts towards neutralization (and "improvements" of style) happen in the chapters narrated by a teenager.

To sum up, we could say that field-specific varieties of language sometimes change in both categories, but that the translators of literary fiction tend to be more com-

[9] *The Curious Incident* shows some confusion of the target professional public as to whether it is a book for children or for adults. It has been translated by a prominent translator of books for children, and obviously according to the Slovene norms for translations of children's books (see Tabbert 2002, 326). But then it was used as the book for the final high school exam that uses books for adults.

fortable with the extreme varieties of language – except when it comes to children and teenagers, where the norms of good writing for and by children prevail.

4.1.2 Adherence to the Slovene norms of good writing and good manners

In translations of popular fiction I found several changes which 'improved' the style of the text, adapting it to the Slovene norms of good writing, such as compression, where the translator uses fewer words to say something than the author; omission of repetition, and changes that prettify nastier parts of the text. Vulgarisms tend to be either embellished or left out, sometimes probably to avoid repetition.

These types of changes also appear in the translations of literary prose, but to a lesser degree, and mostly in only two novels, *The Road* and *The Curious Accident,* involving child narrators. The norm of non-repetition is very strong in the Slovene target culture, not only as a "universal of translation" (see Baker 2011: 288), but also in original writing where it is generally frowned upon and permitted only occasionally (see Zlatnar Moe 2010a). Both those books go against what any Slovene writer would intuitively do. *The Road* has the additional complication that the style is not only repetitive and monotonous, but also informal, and involves a very prominent child character. Repetition is retained much of the time, but the style is corrected and the formality level is increased. Repetition is sometimes avoided in the other books in the study, too, although not as often as in popular fiction. This can change the style of the book considerably. In *The Brooklyn Follies* one woman says, "My father is a **dark** man and he lives in a **dark** wood. He pretends he is a bright man now, but that's only a trick. He's still **dark**. He'll always be **dark** – right up to the day he dies"[10]. In the Slovene version only two forms of the word are exactly the same ("mračnjak" – and the word means "a grim person", not "dark"), once the translator opted for "dark" and once for the adjective "grim". Consequently, the darkness of this sentence was considerably lightened.

A very frequent improvement strategy is to complete the sentence structure with missing auxiliaries or sentence elements: "Downshore the weathered timber of an ancient ship" receives a verb in past tense: "Further down **there were** the weathered timbers of an ancient ship" (*The Road*). Another strategy involves replacing a general word with a more specific one: "a **thing** that could not **be** back" becomes "a **world** that cannot **be given** back" (*The Road*) and similar.

Unlike the translators of popular fiction who often use compression to improve the style, literary translators use more words to say something than the author,

[10] And his family name is "Dunkel," as we shall see.

because they decide the target reader needs some explication of what is said. In *The Brooklyn Follies* a woman explains that her family name is "Dunkel" and goes on: "It means Dark, in case you didn't know." The Slovene reader has the benefit of getting a fuller dictionary definition: "Dunkel means **dark or dim** in case you didn't know." Explanations are given in the text for the culture-specific elements, such as "a rehab in Berkeley', (*The Brooklyn Follies*), or "soul food" (*On Beauty*) which is somewhat confusingly explained as "our traditional food".[11] Sometimes less specific items also are explained even though they are not unfamiliar to the readers in Slovenia, such as "to check into a motel" or "a fortune-teller." When the text *is* compressed, it seems more a result of a lack of ideas what to do in Slovene, than because the translator wants to avoid wordiness. Such examples are "Poor-Tom-All-Alone" which is reduced to "poor Tom" (*The Brooklyn Follies*) or "a wee undergraduate" which becomes "a student" (*Freedom*).

In literary fiction, stylistic shifts sometimes take an unexpected direction. They do neutralize the style, but not towards standard language. Vulgarisms are sometimes intensified. For example, in *The Brooklyn Follies* one character says, "I want to get the hell out of New York", but the expletive in the Slovene version is much harsher. The same happens to "Mr Goddam God" who becomes "fucking mister God" in the Slovene version, and the irony of the phrase is lost in translation. Another interesting difference in the use of expletives is that while in popular fiction they tend to disappear, this is not the case in literary fiction. Instead, differences in intensity disappear. Whether the person in question is mildly irritated or absolutely furious, in the Slovene version, the intensity is always the highest. We could say, then, that while the shift in expletives is common to both fields, literary and popular, the change happens in opposite directions.

Lastly, there is a group of shifts characterized by explicit non-adherence to the norms of good writing. They mostly occur in works of the more experienced translators, as a result of their inclination to creatively play with language in their translations, thus introducing non-normative versions of existing words, or neologisms. Sometimes this strategy is effective, but sometimes the neologisms or the non-normative solutions stand out in the text, or, not seldom, decrease formality of the text by being too unusual, or unintentionally funny. But this tends to happen more in popular fiction than in literary fiction. Franzen's novel *Freedom* poses numerous stylistic challenges to the translator's creativity, and in most cases the result is neutralization. One example is a word used frequently in one part of the book, namely "to crutch", as in: "Patty […] crutched herself speedily to the front door..." The Slovene translator initially opted for a literal translation of "to crutch", but afterwards preferred various descriptive versions such as "by help of crutches", or "on crutches", while the author of the source text let Patty crutch around until her knee was healed.

[11] Confusingly because it is not clear who the "our" refers to.

There is one more stylistic feature that seems to cause more problems in literary fiction than in popular fiction, and that is intertextuality. In the popular fiction corpus there was one novel (*Bridget Jones's Diary*) which included many references to other texts, more or less retained in the Slovene translation, even though they were sometimes too culture-specific for the Slovene reader to understand (references to what was said by some very British celebrity, on TV shows, etc.). But it has to be said that those intertextual references were quite obvious and easy to spot for the translator. Intertextual references in *Freedom*, on the other hand, are sometimes less obvious and the translator did either not see them, or decided to ignore them. At one point the dialogue between the characters becomes quite incoherent for that reason:

> "What's up?"
> "What's up with *you?* […] It seems like you've been everywhere."
> "Yeah, really *singing the body electric.* Heady times here."
> "*Tripping the light fantastic.*"
> "Exactly. In a Dade County jail cell."

This dialogue is translated word-for-word, without any cultural references to either poetry or popular music, and this makes it incomprehensible in the Slovene translation.

Stylistic shifts, then, differ between the two sets of novels. While in the popular fiction there is the tendency of neutralizing the extreme and unusual stylistic features of the original, this is less often the case in literary fiction. There the extremes are preserved, but less extreme varieties are neutralized. Strategies on neologisms and other creative use of language in the source text, too, seem to differ. While the more experienced translators creatively translate those expressions in popular fiction, and often add some of their own, the translators of literary fiction are more reserved when it comes to creative use of language. They either neutralize it or translate it word-for-word. Intertextuality seems to pose more problems to translators of literary fiction as well, but a different corpus of novels with strong intertextual links and references would be required to establish a clear tendency.

4.1.3 Shifts of formality level

In both studies, I looked for three types of formality shifts: increased formality, decreased formality and sudden falls in an otherwise formal environment. In the first study, this was by far the largest group of shifts (627 out of 1287), and for the most part the formality of the text was increased (412 shifts). Formality was increased especially in dialogues, in informal conversations, in the speech of low-status characters, children and teenagers, in conversations across social-class

boundaries and in informal writing. Formality was decreased in cases where the text was very solemn, when characters discussed serious issues such as emotions, and in the case of proper names and universe-specific elements (in fantasy books).

The situation in translations of literary fiction proved to be quite different. Less than a fifth of all shifts (105 out of 572) belong to this category. The vast majority of all changes happens in dialogues; the only exceptions are the cases from *The Road* and, surprisingly, the entire *On Chesil Beach,* in which the translator consistently opted for a more formal and poetic style than the original. In literary fiction, the majority of shifts cause increased formality. This is done through the choice of more formal, unusual or archaic synonyms, a more complex syntax, unusual or archaic endings of suffixes. Translators sometimes (again, most frequently in *The Road*) decided to complete incomplete sentences, or opted for a more formal word order. That the most upward shifts in formality happened in *The Road* comes as no surprise, for the reasons explained above, and indeed they are fewer than I expected before the study was done. The translator only occasionally decided to break the monotony, and did not avoid repetition at all costs, or very often. The reasons for the overall increased formality in *On Chesil Beach* are less clear, and seem to be simply the result of the translator's reading of the source text.[12] In *Freedom* and *On Beauty* increased formality occurs in dialogues between students, former students, and their teachers. It seems then, that students fall into the same category as teenagers and children, the group which poses great challenges for Slovene literary translators.

There are not many (13) cases of decreased formality in the analyzed texts. All of them occur in dialogues. The most interesting cause of decreased formality is instances of public address. In Slovene, people who do not know each other, or are not equal in status, normally address each other in the 2nd person plural, and all others in 2nd person singular or dual. In English there is no such distinction. One indicator is the use of first names, but names are not always used, and the translator has to decide, based on conventions, circumstances, context, etc., how the characters will address each other[13]. In most cases, translators followed the relevant Slovene conventions, but in *The Brooklyn Follies,* the translator chose informal address in all circumstances – regardless of age, status, intimacy between characters and so on. This solution stands out of the context, for example when complete strangers meet for the first time, and decreases the formality of the text in others. Another stylistic change that also helped decrease formality in some instances was the above-mentioned intensifying of expletives, though whether this actually decreases the formality of the text, depends on the context.

[12] Incidentally, *On Chesil Beach* is also the novel in which most semantic shifts occur, which indicates that the translator did read and interpret it in a very special way.

[13] For further discussion on the problems of translating English forms of address into Slovene, see Onič 2013.

The third type of formality shift, namely a sudden fall in the formality of a word or phrase relative to its immediate context, appears in both fields, although less often in literary fiction than in popular fiction, but there are some instances. In popular fiction, it was the less formal word or phrase that was nearer to the source material than the more formal vicinity. But in literary fiction the shifts go the other way too, and there were a few cases of sudden jumps in formality, which stood out just as much as sudden falls. The reason for this new type of shift is probably that the formality is generally less increased in translations of literary fiction than in translations of popular fiction, which is what makes those jumps in formality possible. In *On Chesil Beach,* for example, a couple is discussing how they met, and the woman says "And then you saw me. [...]And you decided to *stare me out*." The Slovene version renders "stare" as "*bolščati*", an old-fashioned word which is never used in spoken language. Even though the style of the whole text is formal in the source version and even more so in the target version, this one word still stands out as much more formal than the rest of the text.

Formality levels, then, tends to change less in translations of literary fiction than in translation of popular fiction, and the changes are almost always limited to dialogues. The possible reasons for this are many, from biographical to ethical. Beginners prefer formal register and are more likely to translate popular fiction; also, translators might feel that they should stick close to the original when translating literature, but less so when translating popular fiction.

4.2 Shifts specific to literary fiction

Some shifts occur only in the translations of literary fiction, or are at least much more prominent there. For example, translators tend to make more additions, most often to complete the sentence on the syntactical level. This does not happen in translations of popular fiction, at least not noticeably, but that could be the result of the source text style. As mentioned before, literary texts are often praised for their original style and creative expression; in popular fiction other usually qualities are prized more highly. It may be, therefore, that the literary authors in my study took a more creative approach to syntax, but the Slovene translators (and possibly even more so the copy editors) did not follow their lead. There is also an increase in deviations from the target-language norms on all levels, beginning with the morphological, which was expected. But it came as a surprise that the majority of those were not neologisms or other creative solutions, but awkward literal translations (59 out of 115 altogether). Very interesting are new categories of shifts in ideology, and, even more surprising, changes that make characters look better than they do in the source text.

4.2.1 Shifts in characterization and ideology

This category of shifts was not present in the popular novels, but it appeared in literary translations. The shifts fall into two groups. In the first, the shifts occur when the character does or says something that does not put him or her (or possibly the author) in the best light. Such an example is from *On Beauty*, where one character wrongly states that *Kyrie Eleison* is Latin. In the Slovene translation this information is corrected, and the character is left marvelling at the beauty of *Kyrie Eleison* in Greek. Similar are changes of "Negro" into "a black man" (in a dialogue)[14], "he kissed her **wetly**" into "he kissed her **passionately**", or "they would have [...] **dumped** my body into an unmarked grave" into "they would have [...] **buried** my dead body in an unmarked grave". This is a translation norm that used to operate in Slovene literary translation in the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century (see Zlatnar Moe 2004: 218), but later it seemed to disappear. It is very interesting that it reappears at the beginning of the twenty-first century. [15]

The other group of changes includes shifts in ideology, following Hatim and Mason's (1997: 218) definition of ideology as "a body of assumptions which reflects the beliefs and interests of an individual, a group of individuals, a social institution, etc., and which ultimately finds expression in language".

The shifts in ideology sometimes change the characterization, or even the plot; at other times, they only adapt incidental detail to expectations and stereotypes of the target culture.

Shifts of the first type may be subtle changes in meaning on the word level: while a character "decides" on something in the source text, he "realizes" this same thing in the target text. Thus the power to decide is replaced with realization, which is much less deliberate, but which involves facticity, unlike "decide" which indicates mere personal opinion or preference. A similar change is from "mind" to "soul", a shift from the rational to the spiritual, very common in Slovene translations of this word. An example of another change, which happens within the book universe, can be seen in *The Brooklyn Follies* where one character in the source text speaks about her unpleasant experiences with an extreme Christian cult. In the target version, her comments are directed towards "the Church" in general, or a generic "god" (never written with the initial cap[16]). All her references to this specific cult are generalized: when she says "we're quitting the church" (meaning

[14] For further research on translating racist language see Trupej, 2014.

[15] It is possible, however, that this particular translation norm is gaining strength, as it can also be observed in, for example, Srečko Fišer's translation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* from 2013 (Zlatnar Moe, submitted).

[16] This, again, could possibly be the contribution of the copy editor, a radical implementation of the rule that ‚the word God is only capitalized in theological or confessional texts (and contexts)' (personal communication from an editor).

the extreme Christian cult she is escaping from), in the Slovene translation they "stop going to church" ("nehali sva hoditi v cerkev"), which would be understood by readers as abandoning religion in general. The same shift occurs later, when the woman quite specifically says "[...] I'll never have to go near ***that*** church again". Some terms belonging to Christianity, such as "God" and "excommunication" are generalized; in the case of "God" this happens by omission of initial cap, which changes the Christian God into a generic deity of any denomination or mythology. Also, "excommunicated" becomes "excluded" which is rather less severe and final. The last example is the translation of a specific term "born-again holy-rollers". In the target text the phrase "born-again holy-roller"[17] is rendered as "one of those converted saints". Both words, "converted" and "saint" can be used derisively in Slovene, but they mean something else, and thus vital information about the church in question is lost.

Shifts of the second type do not cause any profound changes in plot and characterization. Instead, details in characterization, references to extra-textual reality, etc., are adapted to suit stereotypes or public opinion in the target culture. Such examples are upgrading Mozart from "one of the greatest unappreciated composers" to "one of the greatest composers", or changing "friends" into "female friends", or "Negro" to "a black man" (all from *Freedom*).

4.3 Non-normative solutions in the target language

That this group of shifts is larger in the literary than in the popular novels was partly expected, based on the expressed opinions of the translators. Several of them have said in interviews or public discussions something along the lines that translating popular fiction is just work, whereas real creativity lies in translating literature. The expected result of this attitude would be more creative solutions on all levels, but, surprisingly, this is not what happens. In fact, the larger part of non-normative elements occur because the translators opt for literal translations of source-language elements, followed by linguistic shifts which signal lacking appreciation of the target language rules (such as the use of the dual number, declination of nouns, use of possessive pronouns, etc.).

This interference is sometimes found even on the orthographical level, especially in the use of capital letters (which are used less often in Slovene than in English). But the largest group by far are calques, not only where idiomatic expressions are

[17] *American Heritage Dictionary* defines it as "Used as a disparaging term for a member of any of various religious denominations in which spiritual fervor is expressed by shouts and violent body movements"; *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* as "a member of one of the Protestant sects whose worship meetings are characterized by spontaneous expressions of emotional excitement"; and *Wikipedia* as "a term in American English used to describe Pentecostal Christian churchgoers. The term is commonly used derisively, as if to describe people literally rolling on the floor or speaking in tongues in an uncontrolled manner."

concerned but in the case of typical collocations, or as a result of a strong interference with the source language elsewhere. One such example is the translation in *Freedom,* where "our poster bird" becomes simply "our bird on the poster", or examples where the English language uses more words than Slovene (the subject in Slovene is normally expressed through the form of the verb, not separately, and the sex of the person is expressed through the ending of the noun, thus there is no need to say "male musician" in as many words in Slovene, as it is done in *Freedom*). Another type of interference happens on the syntactical level, an example being the excessive use of present participles in Slovene (where they increase the formality and make the text look mildly old-fashioned). Also split sentences (such as "It was her brother who came to see her.") have a different role in Slovene, the emphasis is much stronger if you split a sentence than it is in English, and the result is often that trivial events are emphasized out of proportion. Those shifts are not motivated by the source text; they are the translators' additions.

The last large group are literal translations of idiomatic and culture-specific elements or references, such as "law school" in *Freedom* or the biblical expression "the heavenly host"[18] in *The Brooklyn Follies*. Also informal conversational phrases, such as "I rest my case" or "How are you doing there", receive a different meaning in Slovene as a result of literal translations, while idioms lose meaning altogether for the same reason. In *Freedom* one character says to another "you have to fish or cut it here" which is translated as "you have to fish or cut the cord", leaving the Slovene reader rather puzzled as there is no corresponding saying in Slovene, and the characters are talking about love matters, not fishing. Only the smallest group in this category are non-normative solutions that occur because of the creative approach of the translator towards the target language (for example neologisms, surprising word-formation and similar), whether following in the footsteps of the source text author, or independently.

While there are non-normative solutions to be found in translations of both popular fiction and literature, it is surprising that in translations of literary fiction most of those solutions are not a result of creative use of language by the translator, as one would expect. On the contrary, the translators neutralized creative use of language in the source text with normative solutions. The non-normative solutions are mostly the result of linguistic interference or lack of familiarity with the source culture. After analyzing both sets of novels, I can conclude that translators seem to be much more daring and playful when translating popular fiction, especially fantasy, than when they are translating literary fiction. In the latter case the results seem to indicate a certain degree of discomfort on the part of translators when faced with unusual linguistic and syntactic features.

[18] In the latter example "host" is rendered by "gostitelj", a person who receives guests, instead of a word referring to "a great number, multitude", usually "truma" in the phrase "heavenly host".

4.4 Semantic shifts

Although my research focused on style, the semantic shifts must be at least mentioned, since they were rather numerous. It is interesting that they were the largest group by far in the literary fiction corpus (171 out of 572 shifts) and second largest in the popular fiction corpus. There was one novel that stood out, containing 63 of the 171 total changes. It was translated by the only translator who did not study language and/or literature. It must be said that those shifts are neither so numerous nor so visible that they would change the reader's experience of the book, but they are sometimes puzzling, and they do subtly change the characterization and relations between the characters, if not the plot. Most of them seem to be the result of misreading ("two hours" becomes "two houses", "Haven's hundred" becomes "heaven's hundred", etc.); unfamiliarity with a certain field (such as ornithology in *Freedom* or individual universes in fantasy fiction); interference, or, sometimes, attempts to avoid interference, and false friends; but very often there is no apparent reason why the translator opted for a word or phrase that means something different in the target language. Why, for example, did the Slovene translator of *On Chesil Beach* translate "long hair, almost over **your ears**" with "and long hair, almost over **your eyes**"? Another type of semantic change is the result of misreading of grammatical features. Especially prone to disappearing are the target-specific linguistic features, in the case of Slovene, the use of dual, imperfect verbs, or the polite form of address. Because of these shifts, the person, gender or tense change, and with them the relations and characterizations. Such an example is found in *Freedom* where one character is said to be a tee-totaller, but in the source version it is the man, and in the target version the woman, even though this is inconsistent with other passages.

5 CONCLUSION

After analyzing 13 novels from both fields I can conclude that there are indeed differences between translations of popular fiction and translations of literary fiction. They begin with the choice of the translator, it seems, as literary novels in the study were all translated by more experienced translators who translate mainly literary texts, while popular fiction was translated by a mixed group of beginners and experienced translators of literary and non-literary texts. But there are also differences in translating strategies, which result in different translation shifts. Thus register is more vulnerable to change in popular fiction than in literary fiction. In particular, formality levels change more in popular fiction, while in literary fiction changes of field are more usual. The one field-specific language variety that seems to pose problems for everybody is the language of children, teenagers, and students (in literary fiction).

Other stylistic changes, too, differ between the two fields. In popular fiction most shifts are towards improvement of style, prettifying of uglier elements, neutralization of extremes, and stylistic improvements of the speech of child characters. By contrast, in literary fiction, the children's passages are still corrected but the extremes remain, or are even intensified, and the more moderate elements are further neutralized. Some shifts are much more prominent in the literary fiction, or even exactly opposite to the shifts in popular fiction. While in the latter, the translators often chose compression as a strategy to improve the style, the translators of literary fiction chose more verbose solutions in order to explain certain elements to the readers. Syntactical improvements (completing sentences that are lacking auxiliaries or sentence elements) are much more present in translations of literary novels.

An interesting group of shifts are those concerning expletives. While in popular fiction they tend to be embellished or deleted, in literary fiction they tend to remain in the text, but are unified and sometimes intensified.

Non-normative solutions are present in both fields, but are surprisingly more creative in the field of popular fiction, especially in the fantasy genre, than in literary fiction. There the translators tend to neutralize the creative solutions of the source text, and adapt them to the linguistic and stylistic norms of the target language. The non-normative solutions that remain are mostly the result of literal translations of the source material.

There are a few shifts that are specific only to the translation of literary fiction. These occurred in the area of characterization and ideology. In the former some translators decided to protect the characters' reputation by choosing prettier words or phrases for what they do/are in the source text. Shifts in ideology sometimes affect characterization and the plot, but sometimes they subtly adapt details to the stereotypes and expectations of the target culture[19].

The shifts of meaning emerge as a concern to the researcher. They are numerous in both groups of texts, and while in some cases it is obvious that they are the result of misreading, interference or unawareness of a specific linguistic or cultural feature, far too many appear unmotivated. Further research should pay attention to those semantic shifts and the reasons why they happen.

In conclusion, not only do readers approach literary and popular fiction in different ways, but apparently, so do commissioners and translators,[20] although there

[19] And sometimes less subtly, as research by Orel Kos (2014) and Kocijančič Pokorn (2014) shows.

[20] Possibly not, however, copy-editors. But this too needs further investigation, since what we have now, is mostly anecdotal evidence.

are many similar translation strategies in both groups as well. As a result, popular fiction and literary fiction in Slovene translations seem to be more distinct from each other than they are in the source cultures.

References

American Heritage Dictionary, http://www.answers.com/topic/holy-roller#ixzz28nI6ahJZ. Last accessed 30 September 2015.

Auster, Paul, 2006: *The Brooklyn Follies.* London: Faber and Faber.

Auster, Paul, 2009: *Brooklynske norosti.* Trans. by Miha Avanzo. Ljubljana: Vale-Novak.

Baker, Mona (ed.), 2001(1998): *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies.* London and New York: Routledge.

Bassnett, Susan and André Lefevere, 1998: *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation. Topics in translation 11.* Clevendon: Multilingual Matters.

Bassnett, Susan, 2002 (1988): *Translation Studies. Revised Edition.* London and New York: Routledge.

Franzen, Jonathan, 2010: *Freedom.* London: Fourth Estate.

Franzen, Jonathan, 2012: *Svoboda.* Trans. by Jure Potokar. Ljubljana: Študentska založba.

Gelder, Ken, 2004: *Popular Fiction: The Logic and Practices of a Literary Field.* London and New York: Routledge.

Haddon, Mark, 2003: *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time.* London: Random House.

Haddon, Mark, 2004: *Skrivnostni primer ali kdo je umoril psa.* Trans. by Vasja Cerar. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga.

Jankovič, Jaroslav, 2002: Trije prstani za vilinske kralje in pravica do zmotljivosti [Three rings for the elven kings and the right to be wrong]. *Delo, Sobotna Priloga*. 20-22.

Kocijančič Pokorn, Nike, 2012: Skrita ideologija v prevodih otroške literature. *Seminar slovenskega jezika, literature in kulture 48.* Aleksander Bjelčevič (ed.). Ljubljana: Znanstvena založba Filozofske fakultete. 55-61.

Landers, Clifford E., 2001: *Literary Translation: A Practical Guide. Topics in Translation 22.* Clevendon: Multilingual Matters.

Hatim, Basil and Ian Mason, 1997: *The Translator as Communicator.* London: Routledge.

Lefevere, André, 1992: *Translating Literature: Practice and Theory in a Comparative Literature Context.* New York: The Modern Language Association of America.

Lefevere, André, 1998: Acculturating Berthold Brecht. Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere (eds.): *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation.* Topics in translation 11. Clevendon: Multilingual Matters. 109-12.

Merriam-Webster On-line Dictionary, http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/holy-roller, last accessed 30 September 2015.

McCarthy, Cormac, 2006: *The Road.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, E-edition.

McCarthy, Cormac, 2009: *Cesta.* Trans. by Lili Potpara. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga.

McEwan, Ian, 2007: *On Chesil Beach.* London: Random House.

McEwan, Ian, 2008: *Na obali Chesil.* Trans. by Suzana Tratnik. Ljubljana: Založba Sanje.

Milton, John, 2000: The translation of mass fiction. Allison Beeby, Doris Ensinger, Marisa Presas (eds.) *Investigating Translation.* Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company *(Benjamins Translation Library* 32). 171-180.

Onič, Tomaž, 2013: Vikanje in tikanje v slovenskih prevodih Albeejeve drame *Kdo se boji Virginije Wolf? Primerjalna književnost* 36/1. 233-252.

Orel Kos, Silvana, 2012: Ideologija: izgubljeno ali pridobljeno s prevodom. Aleksander Bjelčevič (ed.) *Seminar slovenskega jezika, literature in kulture 48.*. Ljubljana: Znanstvena založba Filozofske fakultete, 100-106.

Robyns, Clem, 1990: The normative model of twentieth century belles infidèles: detective novels in French translation. *Target* 2, 23-42.

Smith, Zadie, 2005: *On Beauty.* London: Penguin Books.

Smith, Zadie, 2008: *O lepoti.* Trans. by Matej Juh. Tržič: Učila International.

Tabbert, Reinbert, 2002: Approaches to Translation of Children's Literature: A review of critical studies since 1960. *Target* 14:2. 303–351.

Trupej, Janko, 2014: Prevajanje rasističnega diskurza o temnopoltih v slovenščino. *Primerjalna književnost* 37/3. 89-102.

Venuti, Lawrence, 2002 (1995): *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation.* London and New York: Routledge.

Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_Roller, last accessed 30 September 2015.

Zlatnar Moe, Marija, 2004: Odstrani, prosim, prste mi z vratu. Prevajalske norme v dramskih prevodih 20. stoletja [Take thy fingers from my throat: translation norms in the 20th century drama translations]. *Vestnik* 38, 1-2. 207-227.

Zlatnar Moe, Marija, 2010a: Register shifts in translation of popular fiction from English into Slovene. Daniel Gile, Gyde Hansen and Nike Kocijančič Pokorn (eds). *Why Translation Studies Matter*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing. 125-136.

Zlatnar Moe, Marija, 2010b: Repetition in English vs. non-repetition in Slovene: how different norms of good writing change the style of translated texts. *Slovene Studies* 32 (1). 3- 17.

Zlatnar Moe, Marija (submitted): The Fifth Slovene Hamlet: Return to the Tradition? *Multicultural Shakespeare,* (Re)Translations: Diachronic and Synchronic Perspectives on Giving New Voice to Shakespeare›.