

Book Review

Ana A. Jovanović, Osnovi teorije prevođenja [‘Basics of Translation Theory’], Factum izdavaštvo/Plejada. Beograd/ Zagreb, 2015.

Nenad Tomović

Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade, Serbia
Email: nenad.tomovic@fil.bg.ac.rs

Although translation theory is important in education, especially in the education of future linguists, language teachers and high-school students who aspire to become translators, books on this subject have been scarce in the past two or three decades, with a few notable exceptions. *Osnovi teorije prevođenja* by Ana Jovanović is certainly going to bridge this gap. Furthermore, the book has two publishers, one from Belgrade, and the other from Zagreb, since it is intended for readers from both Serbia and Croatia and from other countries of the former Yugoslavia. The author decided to treat both Serbian and Croatian translations as parts of the same corpus due to the fact that they were written in two varieties of one and the same language, while both varieties are still mutually intelligible regardless of certain changes in both standards which have been introduced in the past two decades. Additionally, translations into both varieties were once part of the same market and many of them are still present as sole translations of certain works.

The book contains five chapters, appendices to the fifth chapter, a list of references, index of names, subject index, as well as the author’s preface, an afterword by Andy Jelčić, and a brief English summary of the book. Chapter one presents main issues in translation studies, the status of this discipline, translation unit, equivalence, and analyzes other issues in the domains of context and style and the two major strategies – free translation and literal translation. To further elaborate these issues and problems in translation theory the author cites various authors and summarizes their opinions on each subject in question. Finally, this chapter explains the terminology used in modern translation studies and thus helps the reader who is not well-acquainted with this field to better understand many important concepts. Chapter two is devoted to various literary theories of translation, which are primarily focused on esthetic and artistic aspects of this process. Chapter three is focused on translation criticism and evaluation. In this chapter, the author provides an overview of different approaches to these problems and states both strengths and weaknesses of each approach in question. Chapter four deals with re-translation, which is primarily focused on literary texts, and occurs due to various reasons, e.g. if the existing translation is now obsolete, if it lacks in quality etc. Chapter five has the narrowest focus, since it deals with grammatical and stylistic aspects of translations of Marcel Proust’s novels into Serbo-Croatian.

Since the author has a degree in French and is known as an excellent translator of major works written in this language, it is no wonder that most examples provided are from French. However, the author has managed to sufficiently explain every single example so as to allow the readers who are not proficient in French to clearly understand both the examples and their implications, which adds to the quality of this book. Works cited in the references section and in the book itself are dominantly written in French, although the author sufficiently utilizes theories developed in English-speaking and other countries, which provides an unbiased approach to major issues in translation studies. Furthermore, it is important to mention that major problems and concerns in translation are often exposed by providing comprehensive analyses of translations and/or contrasting two translations of the same text, which are efficient explanatory tools, most likely to be welcomed by every reader of this book, and particularly by students of foreign languages. The style in which the book was written can be described as very clear and concise, but at the same time, it is not oversimplified. Although the author focuses on literary translation, it can be said that many aspects that are important in literature can be applied in other kinds of translation despite the fact that non-literary translations usually have no artistic merits. The author's comments and opinions are well-balanced and unbiased, which allows the reader to form an opinion about each theory or issue described by the author.

Although most of the major strengths of this book have been stated above, it is our opinion that it will certainly be welcomed by many readers in the former Yugoslavia, and particularly among fellow-translators, interpreters and students of foreign languages and literatures.

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