

# **Translating Cultural Capital in Michal Hvorecký's novel *Dunaj v Amerike***

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## **Abstract**

The aim of this paper is to examine translators' strategies as employed in translating a multi-layered literary work that requires a variety of complex inferencing processes that take place during reading and allow readers to establish coherence as they proceed through the text. The material basis for this examination is provided by the Slovak novel *Dunaj v Amerike* (2010) and its (authorized, unpublished) English translation *Danube in America* (2016). The aim is to analyse the translation of Hvorecký's novel as a recreation of a text promoting the culture and history of Slovakia as part of the East European tradition while retaining the literary-aesthetic qualities of the source text. The main research objective is to examine how the aspects of the meaning of a text not made explicit but left open to the reader's interpretation, recognised as weakly implied meanings (Boase-Beier 2014), are inferred by the reader, in this case, the translator, and recreated in the target text. The pragmatic translation analysis revealed that the TT may benefit from employing the techniques of pragmatic translation as an efficient alternative to semantic translation. As a result, recreating germane implicatures in the TT, and incorporating these messages in the translated literary text, may solve many translator's problems, such as preserving literary aesthetic qualities of the ST by reducing the number of footnotes related to possible perception problems of the TT.

## **1. Introduction**

The openness to interpretation of specific features of literary style is appreciated as one of the main characteristics of literary writing. However, for a translator, these elements usually represent the most demanding of tasks. Within the last decade, the number of scholarly works on the interfaces between stylistics, pragmatics, and translation studies increased rapidly, approving the benefits of applying pragmatic (or more specifically) inferential approach to literary translation creation and analysis (cf. Boase-Beier 2006, Chapman and Clark 2019, House 2018, Parks 2014). However, this is not to say that earlier works on translation studies did not pay attention to pragmatic aspects. On the contrary, translation scholars have been interested in the study of pragmatics since the establishment of translation studies as an academic discipline and the research highlighting the crucial role of pragmatics in translation theory and practice has been particularly productive (Valdeón 2017, 367-374). The theme was discussed

in detail by Hatim and Mason (1990, 68-69), who incorporated the term ‘pragmatic action’ (referring to speech acts, implicatures, presuppositions, text act, etc.) along with communicative transaction and semiotic interaction/ intertextuality into their model of the “three dimensions of context”. Introducing the translator as a mediator, they discuss the major principles involved in the process of translating, namely the communicative, the pragmatic, and the semiotic (*ibid.*, 237-238). Their work bears relevance to this paper by means of putting forward the role of the translator as mediator.

Subsequently, translating a literary text can be seen as a unique type of writing where linguistic barriers are often easier to deal with than the cultural ones. Incorporating inferential processes in interpreting (weakly) implied meanings in the source text, and recreating relevant implicatures accessible to the target text reader in the target text, becomes of primary significance. As noted by Boase-Beier (2006, 51), a pragmatic view takes for granted that a translator is not just a reader, but also a communicator. In this sense, the process of (literary) translation is viewed as a process of communication at various text and discourse levels (cf. Gutt 2000, 27). Some questions were raised by the discussion of the function of the TT, especially related to literary texts and their translation, as the essence of skopos theory (Reiß and Vermeer 1984, 135). Also argued by skopos theoreticians, the “most important factor in all translations is the aim” (translated and cited by Boase-Beier 2006, 55) but then, as further noted by Boase-Beier, “most translations do not aim to capture the style of the original” (*ibid.*, 55). This statement bears significant relevance to literary translation. The translator’s purpose, also acknowledged as a performative function of literary translation (Morini 2012; Miššíková 2019), determines the overall characteristics of a literary translation in a target language and culture, intended for a particular target audience. Nord suggests viewing the translation governed by the aim to create “in the target language an *instrument* for a new communicative interaction between the source-culture sender and a target-culture audience”, as “instrumental” translation (Nord 1997, 47).

In agreement with the above suggested approaches, the method of pragmatic translation was proven effective. Pragmatic translation, as contrasted to semantic translation in which “the translator attempts, within the bare syntactic and semantic constraints of the TL, to reproduce the precise contextual meaning of the author” (Newmark 1981/1988, 22), and where no effort is made to shift ST into a target cultural context, pays attention not only to denotative meaning but also to “the way utterances are used in communicative situations and the way we interpret them in context” (Baker 1992, 217). Viewing pragmatics as the study of meaning as generated by participants in a communicative situation is reflected in the method of pragmatic translation as an attempt to convey connotative meaning, allusion, and interpersonal aspects of communication such as implicature, tone, register and so on (Shuttleworth and Cowie 1997, 128-129).

As demonstrated further, the novel *Dunaj v Amerike* is the source text constructed as a historical and anthropological study of the region, and as such, it calls for applying the methods of pragmatic translation, comprising the elements of instrumental and documentary translation.

Thus, the research methodology of the presented study can be best characterized as blending the methods of stylistic, translation, and pragmatic analyses, placing the main emphasis on the processes of inferencing the weakly implied meanings in the source text, and their effectual recreation in the target text.

## 2. Introducing the source text

*Dunaj v Amerike* (The Danube in America, Hvorecký 2010) is an ambitious work by the recognised Slovak writer Michal Hvorecký, whose books are regularly published in Slovakia and translated into Czech, Polish, German, Hungarian, Slovenian and other languages. The story takes place on a river cruise ship called *America*, which transports retired American tourists in leisurely luxury. The cruise starts at the source of the river Danube and ends at its mouth on the Black Sea. For the passengers and the Eastern European crew, the Danube becomes a method of delivery into a series of towns on the Danube with disparate histories, populations and cultures. The plot develops on several levels, employing an array of light motifs and frequent changes of location and time frame. The main protagonists of the novel are Martin, a young Slovak intellectual and struggling translator who is also the Slovak tour guide on the cruise ship, and his troubled fellow-traveller and life-obsession Mona. The multinational East European members of the crew, the tour guides who interact with the American tourists in the cities they visit in Eastern Europe and the Balkans, and a range of diverse personalities among the American passengers complete the vibrant mosaic of characters.

The novel is often referred to as autobiographical due to its numerous personal recollections and as a crime novel, since several murders occur on the ship, and the motif of the femme fatale, in the shape of Mona, provides some bitter-sweet romance to the plot. The author himself agrees that the novel can be best characterised as "a blend of travelogue, mystery and love story" (Šlinská 2010). The multifaceted character of the novel is reflected in the variety of titles the novel received in translation. For instance, in Czech the title reads *Smrt v Americe* (Death in America), in German *Tod auf der Donau* (Death on the Danube). The Serbian, Bulgarian and Hindi translators opted for the original title *The Danube in America* (*Dunav u Americi* in Serbian, *Dunav v Amerika* in Bulgarian), and the American translators decided for the title *Danube in America*. The Polish and English translations are completed but have not been published yet.

### **3. The TT as a historical and anthropological study of the region: A pragmatic dimension in translation analysis**

The decision to work with this particular Slovak novel and its English translation was determined by several factors, among which were the ambivalent attitude towards the novel on the part of Slovak critics (cf. Gregor 2010, Mrva 2010, Prokopčák 2010, Štrompová 2010), the uncommon richness of themes elaborated in the novel, and Hvorecký's status as a recognised contemporary Slovak writer and public figure. Yet most scholarly interest has focused on the author's purposes in DVA, especially promoting the cultural capital of Slovakia within East European tradition, and their recreation by the translators in *Danube in America*.

In Hvorecký's novel *Danube in America* the three focal purposes can be pointed out: 1) recollecting the memories of his childhood in Bratislava and communist Czechoslovakia, along with pointing out the differences between the 'West' and 'East'; 2) providing a critique of tourism practices, symbolised in the novel by the American Danube Cruises company (ADC), and using this theme to familiarise readers with the cultural capital of Eastern Europe; 3) seeing the American tourists "as a projection of Western commercial incursions into the expanding market represented by the so-called New Europe" (Hudecova 2014), together with the mocking of the American tourists as being self-centred and ignorant towards the world outside the USA.

Bearing in mind the above-stated purposes, the aim of the following section is to explore the translators' strategies aimed at making the TT reader familiar with the cultural capital of Eastern Europe. A comparative pragmatic analysis of selected text samples from the ST *Dunaj v Amerike* (DVA) and its translation *Danube in America* (DIA) is carried out. Even though translation analysis and pragmatic analysis are not the same, I hope to demonstrate how the latter could complement the former during the process of translation production. Although the analysed samples are rooted in a specific context, they are intended for the ST and TT reader to be processed properly. Adams (1985, 41) refers to this second aspect of meaning as "the pragmatic foundation to the interpretation of fiction", which carries further difficulties when rendering the text into another language, "perhaps because even though meaning is context-bound, context is boundless" (*ibid.*, 46-47). The most demanding task for a translator is to infer the intended effects as inscribed in the source text. Hence the process of translation requires the identification of connections between the utterances, the co-text, and the situational context. In this sense, the entire text of the analysed novel becomes of crucial importance. It modifies the reader's perception of the world. The translator acts as a knowledgeable reader, reading the ST with particular intentions in mind. Translating the ST, the translator aims "at 'doing what the source text does' in the target language – with all the obstacles posed by linguistic and cultural barriers – he/she must translate a 'text act' rather than a mere text" (Morini 2012, 15).

To begin with, it has to be noted that the novel *Dunaj v Amerike* may present some difficulties for a native reader, too. Most of these difficulties arise from the multi-layered structure of the narrative, frequent alterations of time periods, regions and specific (fictional and real) locations, a great amount of highly specific cultural, historical, and personally motivated messages encoded in the text. Another aspect that may create difficulties for some native readers is the frequent use of English all through the text. As a result, these aspects present the most demanding tasks for the translators and require a variety of decision-making and strategy seeking on the translators' part.

Moreover, to adequately infer and transmit a variety of communicative implicatures from the ST, that is to translate what is communicated yet not verbalized (and communicated between the lines) into another language, requires an experienced and well-informed translator who is aware of the pragmatic relevance of interpreting these aspects within the context of the translated literary text. Thus, the preferable recommended translation strategy to cope with these aspects of the ST is to balance semantic translation with the pragmatic one. The process of pragmatic translation involves inferring conversational implicatures, including the weak implicatures, and recreating them in the TT. The appropriate volume of necessary interpreting and explaining via pragmatic translation would be determined by the quality and extent of the existing relationships between the ST and TT culture. As stated above, a translator is not just a reader, but also a communicator. Indeed, both translators of DVA claim that they wish to act as mediators of cultural values, and want to introduce a small (Slovak) culture to a big (primarily American) culture (Hudecova Copeland, 2015). Thus, the choices they made were intended to potentially give rise to effects on target-text readers which reflect the potential effects the source text had on its readers. This makes the translator 'initially responsible' for enticing the reader's responses to the TT. The translator takes on the role of a writer who "triggers discovery in the reader" (MacKenzie 2002, 24). However, the more distant the ST culture the more difficult this task can be for the TT readers. As noted earlier, there are some specific features that make the translation of the source text *Dunaj v Amerike* challenging. Among them, the frequent use of English in the Slovak ST, forms of code-switching and multilingualism, together with a great number of culture-specific phenomena are most marked. The following discussion focuses on the strategies related to interpreting and reflecting specific elements of history and culture of Slovakia and the East European region.

#### **4. Comparative analysis of the ST and the TT**

The examples discussed below will also illustrate the artistic and aesthetic complexity of the original Slovak text, revealing specific features of Hvorecký's authorial style. Hvorecký assumes the reader who shares his opinions, beliefs, and experiences, and in this way, he is a reader-selective

author. It is by no surprise that the novel was received with mixed feelings and ambiguous reactions by the critique and general readership. For the overall decision-making process of translating DVA, the amount of cultural knowledge available to all participants involved, that is the ST readers, translators, the TT recipients appear crucial (Gutt 2000, 27). Consider the sample text (1a) and (1b):

(1a)

Ruky vypovedali poslušnosť. Vzdal sa, ponoril sa a klesal na dno. Posledný pohľad na svet predstavovala hnedá krútňava. Kam sa podeli jeho Priatelia? Bol najzúfalejší manžel aj najťažší prípad pre Dr. Housa. Bol Miss Južnej Karolíny Lauren C. Upton, ktorá si myslí, že Európa je štát a Hungary znamená hladný. Dostal sa six feet under a bude odpočívať v pokoji. Bol splnená misia Georga W. Busha, Britney Spears s vyholenou hlavou v sanitke, dobitá Rihanna, injekcia, ktorá zabila Michaela Jacksona, elektrické kreslo manželov Rosenbergovcov. Marilyn Monroe nadránom 4. augusta 1962, James Dean naposledy vo Fairmonte, Kurt Cobain s guľovnicou v ruke v dome v Seattli, nahý Heath Ledger ležiaci v byte na Dolnom Manhattane. Dunaj, ktorý tiekol v Amerike. (DVA: 286)

(1b)

His arms were giving out. He surrendered and started sinking to the bottom. His last look at the world consisted of a muddy vortex. Where did his friends go? He was the most desperate husband and the toughest case for Dr. House. He was Miss South Carolina Lauren C. Upton who thought that Europe was a country and that Hungary meant hungry. He was heading towards his six feet under<sup>78</sup> and he was planning to rest in peace. George W. Bush's mission was accomplished, Britney Spears' shaved head rushed somewhere in an ambulance, a bruised Rihanna, the injection that killed Michael Jackson, the Rosenbergs' electric chair.<sup>79</sup> There was Marilyn Monroe in the early morning of August 4<sup>th</sup>, 1962, James Dean in the Fairmont for one last time, Kurt Cobain with a gun in his hand at home in Seattle, a naked Heath Ledger on the ground in his apartment in Lower Manhattan. Then there was the Danube that flowed in America. (DIA: 322)

78 The author uses this phrase in English in the original.

79 Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were the first US civilians executed in 1953 for espionage. They were accused of passing on information about the atomic bomb to the USSR.

The analysed sample (1a) can be seen as describing a form of a stream of consciousness of the main protagonist conveying his feelings of

horror while heading toward the tragic end. For a ST reader, the listing of particular phenomena of the American show business industry and allusions to mass media and political figures (TV serials, actors and actresses, Miss world/state contests, the world of music, memorable events, etc.) represent, in a form of a quick slide show, the movie of his life in present-day Slovakia before he joined the cruise ship America, and experienced a lot of personal and professional disillusion and misfortune. In general, the ST readers will infer the messages implied by the TV serials Dr House and Friends, which have been broadly broadcasted and popular in Slovakia. Similarly, they will recognize most of the other names and recall the shocking stories presented in the Slovak tabloids and scandalous online media. However, there are also implicit messages communicated between the lines, so-called "weakly implied meanings" (Boase-Beier 2006, 36) that require an attentive and well-informed reader. What is weakly implied will vary from reader to reader and the translator's role it to provide clues in the TT that can potentially give rise to accurate inferences. In the Slovak ST, expressions such as "*vzdal sa, posledný pohľad, najťažší prípad, odpočívať v pokoji, elektrické kreslo*" represent semantic triggers which help cognitive processing of literary text: the state of desperate defeat is semantically entailed in the listed expressions (*posledný/last, najťažší/the hardest*). Common sense, general cultural and social experience will make the reader understand the fixed expression *odpočívať v pokoji* (rest in peace) as dying, and *elektrické kreslo* (electric chair) as the death penalty. Based on semantic triggers, pragmatic triggering develops and thus *elektrické kreslo* is not just a death penalty but may be inferred as final punishment in general - the ST reader infers the implicature that the main protagonist of the novel accepts the catastrophe as some sort of punishment for his daring desires. Similarly, the pragmatic triggering may reveal such implicatures as 'the girls taking part in Miss contests are not very bright' (*Miss Južnej Karolíny Lauren C. Upton, ktorá si myslí, že Európa je štát a Hungary znamená hladný*), or that famous American superstars often end up in scandals or die young. A subtle particularized implicature can be inferred here – these events are typical for the US or 'elsewhere' not in Slovakia, the 'punishment' for joining 'America' (the cruise ship called America that symbolically represents the American dream) is implied here. To correctly interpret the weakly implied meaning in the final sentence of the quoted paragraph, *Dunaj, ktorý tiekol v Amerike*, requires close familiarity and understanding of the entire text of the novel, as well as a high level of inferential capacity and pragmatic processing. Weakly implied meanings or "second-order" meanings (Dowling 1999: xii; Katz 1990), arise out of collocations that the readers, in our case the translators of DIA, attempt to infer. The translators also consider various elements of style that function as the points of highest interaction with the text, allowing for personal interpretations. As the opposite to second-order meaning, the primary meaning (determined by the lexis and sentence structure) of the sentence "*the Danube that flowed in America*" suggests direct associations between the cruise ship and the country (both

called 'America'). Thus, the primary meaning 'the river flowed in the ship' (the ship was wrecked and sinking) can be readily inferred. Expounding on semantic processing, various weak implicatures can be inferred by pragmatic processing, such as hallucinating about the final end of a journey, an implicature of a definite stop suggesting the end of the American dream.

Weakly implied or second-order meanings allowing for personal interpretations engage the translator as a reader to a great extent. Presumably, semantic triggers will help to recognize fixed meanings that are assigned to words, such as *surrendered*, *last*, *desperate* or *gun*. Although the choice of English words by the translator may depend upon a complex "fidelity to the text as a choreography of effects" (Boase-Beier 2006, 36), the complex of stylistic factors recognized in the ST and translated by the parallel expressions (such as *muddy vortex*, *most desperate*, *the injection that killed*, *electric chair*, etc.), usually do not change the basic meaning of words. Translators' background cultural and linguistic knowledge of the source language enables them to translate determinate meanings embedded in the linguistics of the text. For instance, in (1a) and (1b) the expression *hnedá krútnava* is translated as *a muddy vortex* which adds on interpretation and nicely balances the amount of expressiveness in both. All sentences in (1a) start with the predicate *Bol* (he was), either explicitly expressed or implicitly implied, which places the emphasis on the protagonist and relates all actions directly to his situation and state of mind. In (1b) the translators decided to change the sentence perspective and opted for changing the subject, such as in "George W. Bush's *mission was accomplished...*", or used more impersonal sentence patterns as in "*There was Marilyn Monroe...*". Inferencing the weakly implied meaning may reveal tacit differences in the ST reader's and translators' interpretation. For instance, the final sentence in (1a) *Dunaj, ktorý tiekol v Amerike* is translated in (1b) *Then there was the Danube that flowed in America*. In the ST, the weakly implied meaning of the predicate *Bol* (he was) can be inferred which suggests that it was the main protagonist who felt as the river Danube himself that flowed through and over the wreck of the cruise ship America. The TT excludes this implicature by explicitly saying "*Then there was the Danube...*". The translator's choice is determined by the aim of a particular element of translation.

Interpretation can be right or wrong, measured by how closely it matches the writer's intentions, which is the translator's job, partly by stylistic analysis, to establish and recreate. However, even close attention to stylistic nuances of the ST will not allow meaning to be read "straight off from form" (Montgomery et al 2000, 292); what guides interpretation are "weakly implied meanings" which may or may not be intended by the author. These are open-ended, tend to be implied by stylistic nuances of the text, and embody the facility of texts to involve the reader. For example, in the sample texts (2a) and (2b), the primary meaning of the words in the sentence "*Zmyslom nadchádzajúcich dvadsiatich dní nie je stres a únava, ale radosť a uvoľnenie / The purpose of the next 20 days*

*isn't stress and exhaustion but happiness and relaxation*" is lexicalized but the connotations of the phrase as a whole – what is weakly implied – will vary from reader to reader. The phrase can suggest that Martin is a good company, jovial, and feels for the elderly passengers. Yet an attentive reader will infer other weakly implied meanings, too. Namely that Martin wants to earn the best evaluations from the passengers and thus his actions are pre-calculated, and his polite attitude towards the passengers is part of his professional training and thus pretended and superficial. We can argue that both these meanings are weakly implied but the meaning the reader assigns will depend on his or her background knowledge of the situational context, for instance, the situation on a cruise ship, and so on. Similarly, the sentence "*sľubujem, že si ho nezapíšem na čiernu listinu / I promise I will not blacklist you.*" implies that Martin has a good sense of humour, likes his job, and enjoys working for elderly passengers, yet another weakly implied meaning suggests that his behaviour is mainly diplomatic – he says what he is expected to say, according to the company's brochure of suggested phrases to be used in communication with passengers.

(2a)

„Zmyslom nadchádzajúcich dvadsiatich dní nie je stres a únava, ale radosť a uvoľnenie. Ľudia prejavujú rozličný stupeň záujmu o históriu a ked' niekoho niečo nebude zaujímať, sľubujem, že si ho nezapíšem na čiernu listinu.” (DVA: 28)

(2b)

“The purpose of the next 20 days isn't stress and exhaustion but happiness and relaxation. People show varying levels of interest in history, and if you aren't interested in something, I promise I will not blacklist you.” (DIA: 26)

The translator will perceive the style of the ST author as a reflection of his/her choices and mental state which thus provides certain constraints upon the translators' stylistic choices and their attempts to recreate this mental state. Another set of constraints upon the translator's stylistic choices arise from the function which a translation is seen to fulfil. The importance of the target text function is the essence of skopos theory (Reiß and Vermeer 1984, 135), Boase-Beier refers to its aim (2006, 55). Nord suggests viewing the translation governed by the aim to create “in the target language an *instrument* for a new communicative interaction between the source-culture sender and a target-culture audience”, as “instrumental” translations (1997, 47). In this sense, the translation of Hvorecký's novel (DIA) may be viewed as instrumental since it provides certain ‘instructions’ for TT readers. Considering the specific nature and volume of footnotes included in the target text, it may also be considered as “documentary” or “exoticizing” (Nord 1997, 52). The translation of DIA aims at documenting how the original text worked, providing explanations of culture-specific phenomena and interpretations of weakly implied

meanings. The (stylistic and translational) analysis of DIA shows that the translators' primary aim is to introduce the Slovak and East-European culture to the American audience, not necessarily trying to echo and recreate the style of the original text in the TT. The volume of footnotes, explanations in additional notes, used in DIA seem to demonstrate that literary translations, or better to say some of their parts, are often documentary. Also, the purpose of the target text seems to be respected as more important than the source text style. In this sense, the translators of DIA considered also the educational purpose of the TT and provided detailed descriptions and explanations of a variety of historical, political, cultural and other specific phenomena of the Slovak culture, and a broader East European background.

Introducing the ST to an audience different from the original, features of domestication in the TT can be observed too. In the following example, the explanation added in the footnote uses comparison to the American domestic culture of the intended TT readership.

(3)

Vienna became the mirror of Bratislava and many thought that capitalism looked like Mariahilferstrasse<sup>30</sup>. (DIA: 164)

<sup>30</sup> The Mariahilferstrasse is the most famous upscale shopping and commercial street in Vienna. It is akin to Michigan Avenue on the Gold Coast of Chicago. As Hvorecký suggests, when people from Eastern Europe came to Mariahilferstrasse, they saw the product- and store-saturation on this street as a symbol of the promised land which they had been kept away from for 40 years. This consumerist heaven, however, only showed them the possibility of having all their dreams come true; it did not suggest how to get the means to attain them. Of course, in the first moment of wonder, this discrepancy was overlooked.

No literary translation is purely documentary or purely instrumental. In the following example, the translators provide an explanation of a culture-specific phenomenon, and in this sense, they provide certain 'instructions' about the ST, nevertheless the original (weak) implicature is not recreated in the TT. The memory of the protagonist's childhood in communist Czechoslovakia, when the books of Karl May embodied a dream of freedom and a life where fairness and honesty always win over immoral robbers and invaders, is the weakly implied message that got lost in the TT.

(4)

He bought a group ticket, and when he looked at the Danube, he was reminded of Karl May, who spent some time in Linz in 1902.<sup>20</sup> (DIA: 132)

<sup>20</sup> Karl May was a popular German writer known throughout Europe mainly for adventure novels exploring the Romantic theme of the noble savage. The improbable Apache Winnetou, the hero of many of May's stories and later a cinematic fixture in the Red Westerns of the Eastern bloc in mid-20th Century, more than once occurs in Martin's conversations and dreams.

As demonstrated by the following example, where components of the cultural capital of Europe are introduced, such as classical music, opera, and arts in general, the translation of DIA balances between instrumental and documentary translation. I want to argue here that the 'instrument' for the TT reader, if any, could be provided in a more refined way that will not interrupt the flow of the literary text. Translators' interpretation of some implicatures and allusions could be incorporated in the TT by means of pragmatic translation, which respects the ST's quality and helps to reduce the volume of footnotes significantly. For instance, the description of *Wachau* provided in footnote 21 could be condensed and embedded in the main text: *Wachau, this picturesque stretch of land (in the Lower Austrian region), belonged to his favorite parts of the trip.* Similarly, footnotes 22 and 23 can be edited. Moreover, not all given details are inevitable for the TT reader's accurate understanding of the ST. As a matter of fact, a native reader of the ST may share similar circumstances, not knowing all historical and geographical details or being unable to reveal allusions to German poetry and opera. Thus, if needed, he or she will search for clues in external sources, just as American readers of the TT could do. Furthermore, the openness and 'adventure of discovering' are the most vital and significant characteristics of a literary text, and readers may appreciate an air of mystery created around the unknown region and its history and culture. However, a variety of communicative implicatures related to Martin's personal experiences and preferences will be inferred by an observant reader based on his or her ability to process the entire text and context of the source and target texts.

(5)

Wachau belonged to his favorite parts of the trip.<sup>21</sup> Even though he had detailed knowledge of many of the places in the 25-mile-long Valley of the Niebelungs, he kept discovering things that he hadn't noticed before.<sup>22</sup> He talked about the towns of Schwallenbach and Spitz, about the wine cellars, the medieval houses with frescoes, and about the hill called the Hill of a Thousand Buckets.<sup>23</sup> (DIA: 148)

<sup>21</sup> As the author suggests, the Wachau valley is a 25 mile-long rugged, picturesque stretch of land in the Lower Austrian region. It spans the Danube and consists of numerous small towns, castles and abbeys, some of which trace their origins

back to the 9th century CE. In 1972, this area became a single entity, and in the year 2000, UNESCO chose the "Wachau Cultural Landscape" as one of its World Heritage sights. In addition to unique varieties of grapes, this area houses more than 5,000 historic monuments.

<sup>22</sup> The author calls this area "the valley of the Niebelungs," because the epic 13th century German poem "Niebelungenlied" (or the song of the Niebelungs) was set in the Wachau valley. Also, fragments of it were discovered at the monastery in Melk. The towns Melk and Krems are located at the two ends of the Wachau valley.

<sup>23</sup> The Hill of a Thousand Buckets is an area in the Wachau region city of Spitz. It is thus named due to the large variety and amount of grapes that grow there.

The sample indicates that the translators did not consider the style of the source text to be the major determinant of their translation methods, and prefer to provide a detailed and accurate explanation of specific aspects of the ST cultural background as possible. They produced an instrumental translation in the sense that they considered the style of the TT as the most determining factor. The problem is that an instrumental translation mostly neglects literary aesthetic qualities of the ST and the translation obtains the character of an educational (both documentary and instrumental) text. However, translators' choice is always guided by translators' aims and the purpose they assigned to the target text they create. In this respect, the English translation of Hvorecký's novel can be seen as an accomplishment of translators' aim - to introduce a new culture to an American readership.

## **5. The corpus of footnotes in the TT**

One of the most demanding task for the translators was to decide how to bring closer the source text culture to the intended American readership. Applying the approach of pragmatic translation was the main option, however, the translators considered each culture-specific detail and specific historical, political, geographical, etc. information crucial for the accurate and proper understanding of the ST context, and thus decided to provide an extensive number of footnotes.

The total number of footnotes used in the TT is 87. As for their characteristics, the majority (39%) represent cultural references. The second largest group (25%) provide information on the places and points of interest. A smaller number of footnotes is devoted to explanations of historical facts (16%) and facts related to the political context comprise 13% of the total number. Another two small groups can be identified – one explaining wordplay which is untranslatable and thus lost in the TT (8%) and a few footnotes related to possible perception problems of the TT

readers (2%). To sum up, approximately 93% of all footnotes are devoted to background information and specific contexts. The footnotes devoted to linguistic problems (such as wordplay and slang words) represent just a small portion (7%). Besides its effectiveness in explaining unknown phenomena and contexts, the size of the corpus sometimes interferes with literary-aesthetic qualities of the TT, causing unnecessary distractions to the TT readers. As argued before, the element of not knowing could also add to the story, in the sense that it is broadening the audience's perspective and intellect.

## 6. Conclusion

In this study, I argued that pragmatic approaches to literary translation are beneficial for the process of the creation of a literary translation. The pragmatic analysis of selected samples of the ST and the TT has shown that messages communicated in the ST "between the lines" typically occur in the form of weakly implied meanings or so-called 'weak implicatures'. They convey subtle nuances of the messages communicated by the ST writer and as such are of great significance for a literary text translator. In an attempt at translating weakly implied meanings, the translator engages in meaning-making processes, which require certain sensitivity to weakly implied meanings on the translator's part. It is also the translator's responsibility to decide which implicatures will be reflected in the TT, and which may be neglected as unimportant or irrelevant. The 'readiness' of a translator to infer conversational implicatures in general and recreate them in the TT is crucial since the ST typically offers a range of implications but relevant implicatures can only be derived by a well-informed competent reader, in this case, the translator of a contemporary Slovak novel.

The novel *Dunaj v Amerike* (*Danube in America*) is a journey through history and time, a journey that delivers some degrees of learning about the past and present of the region. In spite of the wealth gap separating the West and Eastern Europe, there are other kinds of capital, cultural and intellectual capital. Translators' purpose was to recreate these values in the TT and introduce an 'unknown' region and its culture to the American reader. They saw their role mainly as mediators of cultural values. For that reason, they wanted to ensure that the TT recipients were provided with all details they considered necessary for the reader's accurate perception of the TT. However, as demonstrated by the presented analysis, the corpus of explanatory footnotes does not guarantee appropriate inferential processes on the reader's part. In spite of the instrumental and encyclopaedic character of explanatory footnotes, the complexities of the original text are not always conveyed by the translators. Thus, I argued that the technique of pragmatic translation could be considered as the most beneficial in translating DVA, and as such applied on a larger scale.

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