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The Importance of the Editor in Translation

1. Introduction and research prospects

Not every translator works with editors. Many, for example those working with technical texts or legal documents, are often solely responsible for their final product. For literary translators, however, working with editors is a standard practice. In the case of bigger projects, for example larger books, there can be several editors, proofreaders and verifiers, all modifying the original translator's work. A considerable distance divides the translator from the reader who picks the book off the shelf. In such translation projects, there are multiple stages and the original, 'raw' version is substantially altered. Therefore, editors constitute an important part of the translation process, which is in itself longer than sole translation – it is the whole, multi-stage journey that the source text undergoes to be published in the target language.

In this article I will analyse how the translator's text gets reshaped in the editing and publishing process. In most of the cases, it is a field that remains unattainable for researchers, since, ordinarily, one can only have access to the final version of a given book, not the previous, draft versions, hence a comparison is impossible. Fortunately, I have managed

to gain access to such texts: in 2019, I was part of the team of translators responsible for the Polish rendering of Yuri Slezkine's book *The House of Government. A Saga of the Russian Revolution*. Thanks to that insider access, I will be able to present how the first, 'raw' translation was changed in the editing and publishing process.

2. Editors in translation studies

2.1. Who is to blame?

Translation analysis is a subfield of translation studies which focuses on analysing the work of translators, most often zeroing in on their mistakes. It is not being done out of spite; the idea is to learn from others' mistakes. Mistakes constitute a valid, and, sadly, inescapable part of translation, because they will always occur. Even the masters of this art can miss a comma, misunderstand a reference, or make a typo. To quote Hejwowski: "Translation may never attain perfectness, but as any human activity has to strive to attain it" [Hejwowski 2004: 199]. Let us examine certain types of mistakes and deduce who is to blame.

Sometimes, no one is to blame. Some translational flaws are a result of the fact that it is impossible to render a source text's idea into the target language without some of the meaning being lost in the process. Even if the meaning itself is retained, some other component of the message may be ousted. As Roman Jakobson [1959: 238] argues, "if we were to translate into English the traditional formula *Traduttore, traditore* as 'the translator is the betrayer,' we would deprive the Italian rhyming epigram of all its paronomastic value." That would not be anyone's fault; it is just a consequence of the fact that languages differ.

Scholars say that some notions can be deemed untranslatable, that there can be a 'lexical gap' [Crystal 2008: 205] in the target language (for example the lack of male/female distinction in the English word 'cousin' which is present in its Polish or Russian equivalents). This applies particularly to the concept of cultural translation. Translation, textuality, and culture are deeply intertwined. As André Lefevere stated, "[t]ranslations are not made in a vacuum. Translators function in a given culture at a given time" [Lefevere 1992: 14]. A single phrase can constitute a reference to a large body of cultural information that the source language users possess. If one is to translate such a phrase into a target language whose users do not share this

cultural background, that referential meaning would be lost. Eugene Nida and Charles Taber [1969] argued that in such cases one needs "a translation in which the content of the message is changed to conform to the receptor culture in some way, and/or in which information is introduced which is not linguistically implicit in the original" [Nida and Taber 1969: 199]. The translator has to alter the original wording and add some information so that the target language readers understand the intended notion and its context. Should the translator not provide that necessary explanation, the audience's understanding would be hampered – that would be a clear translator's mistake. However, the editor should be able to spot such a gap, since anything unclear to the target language readers should appear unclear to the editor as well. This is one of the cases when the translator-editor co-operation is crucial.

In the overwhelming majority of scholarly work about translational analysis, the blame is put on the translator. It is the translator who misunderstood a sentence, who chose the wrong equivalent, who made a spelling error. Hejwowski presents an entire chapter of various mistakes done by translators: choosing wrong dictionary equivalents, using false friends and calques, committing misinterpretation, exhibiting insufficient knowledge of the subject matter, choosing a wrong translation technique; the list goes on and on [Hejwowski 2004]. However, I would like to come to the translator's defence. In a lengthy, multi-link translation process there are more people involved than just the translator. The editors and proofreaders also bear responsibility for the translation – and for the mistakes. It is a part of their job to try to eliminate them. If a reader finds a mistake in a book, it is not only the fault of the translator who committed it. Editors and proof-readers who did not spot it are also partly to blame. This is an important thing to notice; justice should be given to translators and editors. It is thanks to the editors' work that the field of translation errors analysis has much fewer examples to study. Were it not for people who check translators' work, the overall quality of translated content would drop severely. Editors deserve recognition, because they are guardians of translation quality – even if an occasional mistake goes past them.

2.2. "Other agents"

Are editors a part of translation studies? They are severely underrepresented in Holmes' [1972] categorisation of translation studies: in his entire article the words "editor" or "editing" do not appear even once. Yet there

is hope of finding them in the later approach of Chesterman [2009]. The perspective brought by Chesterman is definitely more human-oriented; however, the people he focuses on are primarily translators, not the other participants in the translation process. Nevertheless, editors are invoked when Chesterman presents the sociology of translating process, which includes "translation practices and working procedures, quality control procedures and the revision process, co-operation in team translations, multiple drafting, . . . and the like" [Chesterman 2009: 17]. Quality control and revision process – that is where editors and revisers come into play. However, they are not mentioned as such, which is odd in a work that stresses the personal approach to the area. If we are to work towards an agent model, focusing "not on translations at texts, nor even on the translation process, but on the translators themselves and the other agents involved" [Chesterman 2009: 20], then editors surely have to be taken into account. They should be visible and mentioned, not grouped anonymously under the term "other agents involved." The key to an agent model is an accurate recognition of the agents in the process and their influences on the final result. Within the agent model, researchers should focus on translators as well as editors, revisers and proof-readers – on all the agents, thanks to whom, for example, an English book gets published in Polish.

2.3. The Death of the Translator

In 1967, French literary theorist Roland Barthes published an essay titled "The Death of the Author." Barthes points out that literary theory focuses too heavily on the person of the author. He notes: "The image of literature to be found in ordinary culture is tyrannically centred on the author, his person, his life . . . , while criticism still consists for the most part in saying that Baudelaire's work is the failure of Baudelaire the man, Van Gogh's his madness, Tchaikovsky his vice" [Barthes 1977: 143]. He challenged this paradigm, arguing that the focus should be placed instead on the readers. For it is the readers that interpret a work, hence actively constructing its new meanings. Whereas one could perceive the lifespan of a book to end when the writer finishes it, Barthes argues that this is when it truly starts: a work lives while being read by the audience. It is the readers that give life to a work, not the author. Barthes underscores the importance of intertextuality in literature, noting that "a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations . . . but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader,

not, as was hitherto said, the author" [Barthes 1977: 148]. It all comes down to the readers, not the author.

A similar line of thinking could be applied to the perception of translation. A translator is an author as well – the author of the target language text. According to Barthes, the "life" of a book does not end when it is finished by the author' it is in that very moment that this life actually begins. The same could be said about translation. The life of the translation does not end when the translator finishes their job; this is when it starts. The translation begins its literary existence while being read, received by the audience. This begs a question: Who is the first reader of a translation? It is not the final reader, the customer picking up the book off a shelf. The first readers of the translation are its editors. Hence, it is the editors who begin the process of constructing meaning. As the first readers, it is the editors who play the role of a quasi-interlocutor. They notice potential ambiguousness, unclear passages, overtly buoyant wordings. Editors compensate for the lack of immediate feedback in writing and translation, which is present in a real-time spoken exchange.

Moreover, editors are not mere passive receivers. Having read the text, they become authors themselves as they alter and amend it. The translator and the editor can be perceived as co-authors of the final work. Tabakowska presents a similar observation, underscoring the importance of other agents in the translation process:

> Every text begins to live only after its first confrontation with the reader. The most valuable advice comes from the first readers of the translation. The Polish translation of *Europe* owes much to its editors, verifiers and researchers. Their multilayered, vivid notes, comments and proposals constitute the most valuable part of my archive [Tabakowska 2008: 32] (transl. D.S.).

This is true not only in the case of the Polish translation of Norman Davies' *Europe*. Indeed every translation owes much to the editors and verifiers who worked on it. Their notes, comments and improvements are of paramount importance to the quality of the final product. Hence, the importance of editors and their efforts should be recognized and underscored in translation studies.

3. Methodology

3.1. The source texts

The primary source text for the translation was a 2017 book *The House of Government: A Saga of the Russian Revolution* by Yuri Slezkine, a Russian-born American historian. The book is a broad study of the Russian Revolution (it was first published on the centenary of the October Revolution). Slezkine's analysis pivots on the representation of Bolsheviks as members of a religious sect, rather than a political organization. Slezkine points out numerous similarities between Bolshevism and Christianity, between Jesus and Marx or Stalin. *The House of Government* is 1104 pages long; it consists of 33 chapters split into three volumes. For the sake of objectivity, the chapters translated by the author of this article are not subject to the present analysis.[1]

A book on the history of Russia, written by a Russian-born author will not be purely 'English' – it will be full of Russian proper names and characteristic cultural elements, nonetheless translated into English. Moreover, Slezkine's book is historical and documentalist in nature; the author's discourse is complemented by multiple authentic documents, letters, and diaries. These materials were originally written in Russian and only later translated into English to be incorporated into the book. Hence, a translator of the book into Polish would not, in fact, be translating original source texts, but performing a secondary translation of a translation. Such a scenario could potentially take its toll on the quality of the end-result. Any meanings lost in the translation from Russian to English would then be utterly inaccessible for the Polish translator.

In order to avoid this, the team was composed of both English and Russian translators. This gave the team access to the original, Russian texts and as a result original poems written, for example, by a Russian soldier were translated directly from Russian into Polish, not via English. This proved to be a very effective solution; given the relatedness of Russian and Polish as Slavic languages, it was possible to retain the original rhyming and syllable pattern, which otherwise would be impossible, should the

[1] I am indebted to the project manager Klaudyna Michałowicz, my fellow translators: Gabor Chodkowski-Gyurics, Grzegorz Kulesza, and Mateusz Różycki, as well as the editor working at the Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy: Jolanta Karbowska, who all consented to have their work – and mistakes – analysed and published, making this study possible.

translator rely on the English rendition. Hence, this particular translation process can be described as having two source texts, with the second being the Russian version of the book published in 2019.

3.2. Questioning the source-target supermeme

From a theoretical perspective, such a complex source-text scenario is somewhat a disruption of the classical source-target text paradigm, which is ubiquitous in translation studies. Andrew Chesterman calls this idea of "source-target" one of five *supermemes* of translation, "ideas of such pervasive influence that they come up again and again in the history of the subject" [Chesterman 2016: 4]. The idea is very rudimentary in its nature. It states that in a translation situation there is always the point of departure, the source text (ST) and the end-point, the result: the target text (TT). This supermeme is a based on a "dominant metaphor . . . of movement along a path." Chesterman points out that it is not precisely a movement, since "if an object moves from A to B, when it arrives at B it is no longer at A. But translation does not eliminate the presence of the source text at A" [Chesterman 2016: 4]. Therefore, Chesterman proposes a "genetic metaphor". He suggests that during translation, the ST evolves, develops and expands, in terms of readers and possible interpretations, into the translated TT. This supermeme of translation is a basic notion for the perception of all translation situations and gained "widespread acceptance . . . in modern translation studies" [Chesterman 2016: 3-4].

The scenario of the translation of *House of Government* into Polish is different. Yes, the primary source text is English, but significant parts of the text were translated from Russian. It can be said that such a situation somehow undermines the fundamental premise of that supermeme. What this translation involves is not *a* source text, but source *texts*, plural. In a path metaphor, there would be two points of departure leading to one destination. In the genetic metaphor, two objects would morph into one in the process. This shows that the basic, binary notion of the source-target opposition can be expanded and developed. In the contemporary, dynamically changing, multilingual world, one has to take into account that a book can, in fact, have more than one source language. Such coexistence of two source texts and languages and their influence on the target text can constitute an interesting prospect in translation studies. From the point of view of translator training, such a perspective could be an incentive to train future multilingual translators, working in more than one language pair.

4. Results

4.1. Fixing mistakes

Most editorial changes are straightforward and uncontroversial. Namely, editors fix obvious translators' mistakes. In many cases, there is no discussion to be held, no argument to voice in the defence of the translator's choice. In fact, the majority of the editor's corrections are such indisputable improvements. One would be the following example, in which the translator fell victim to a capitonym-related mistake:

> ST [source text]: "Sects" are usually defined in opposition to "churches".
> BE [before editing]: "Sekty" zazwyczaj definiuje się w kontraście do „kościołów".
> AE [after editing]: „Sekty" zazwyczaj definiuje się w kontraście do „Kościołów".

The capitonym in question is the Polish word *kościół*. Spelled with small letters, it means a building, a Christian temple, whereas with its first letter capitalized, the word refers to a community of people of one confession or a religious institution. That is a clear divergence in meaning. In English, however, there is no such distinction; the word "church" covers both these semantic fields, there is no meaningful contrast between *church* and *Church* in isolation. Hence, the English word *church* has, in fact, two translations into Polish, since the Polish equivalent is a capitonym. This means that while translating the word *church* into Polish, one must decide whether its meaning refers to the semantic fields of *kościół* or *Kościół*. This is what lead to the error in the above example. The translator rendered *churches* as *kościoły*. which is, at first glance, the correct equivalent. However, Slezkine was not comparing sects to the physical buildings of temples, but to churches as religious institutions.

It is possible that the translator fell victim to a calque, to some extent. It was not a typical calque – lexical or syntactical. It was a capital-letter calque, so to say. The source-language word was written with no capitalization, which may have influenced the rendition of the target-language equivalent. This shows that translators can be influenced by the source language in numerous ways, often very subtle, yet transpiring in translation and potentially leading to mistakes.

Let us now turn to less clear-cut examples: to more interesting cases where translators and editors manifest different attitudes or apply varying translation strategies.

4.2. Feminatives

One of such more discussion-worthy, even controversial cases, bordering on ideological issues, is the question of feminine forms:

> ST: But most of the women had professional jobs (as editors, accountants, statisticians, economists, pharmacists, doctors, and engineers).
> BE: Większość kobiet miała jednak stanowiska zawodowe (jako redaktorki, księgowe, statystyczki, ekonomki, farmaceutki, lekarki i inżynierki).
> AE: Większość kobiet miała jednak stanowiska zawodowe (jako redaktorki, księgowe, ekonomistki, farmaceutki, lekarki, statystycy i inżynierowie).

The translator chose to use feminatives for all the enlisted names of professions. The editor, however, did not accept this approach. Three names, as well as the overall order of the list, were changed: *ekonomki, statystyczki,* and *inżynierki*. In the case of the first word, the feminine form was retained; what was changed was the derivational pattern. The translator transformed the masculine form *ekonomista* into feminine with a change in the word stem, resulting in a shorter form, *ekonomka,* That would be a hypothetical feminative of *ekonom* (hist.: steward of a landed estate), which is a wrong lexical item to render *economist* in Polish. The editor changed that and employed regular suffixation with no root change, writing *ekonomistka*. Either way, this is a feminine form of the noun. The most interesting thing happened to *statystyczka* and *inżynierka* which were bereft of their "feminization" done by the translator and returned to their masculine forms. The editor also moved these two forms to the end of the list, hence altering the original order and separating the masculine forms the feminine ones.

What could have been the editor's motivation? One could speculate that this is a gender issue – possibly a female translator's inclusive decision was overrun by a male editor's unwilling to accept the new forms. This is not the case here; it's exactly the opposite: the translator is male, whereas the editor is female. The word *inżynierka* already exists in Polish and means *a BSc thesis*. Hence, one could argue that this feminine form would be possibly confusing and should not be used. However, as the Council for the Polish language [Rada Języka Polskiego] [2019] argued,

homonymy is a natural phenomenon in language and should not be used as an argument against certain forms. How about *statystyczka*? The word is created accordingly to the Polish suffixation patterns, but can be potentially polysemous: *statystyczka* is in itself a diminutive form of *statystyka*, meaning *a little statistic.* It is possible that this is a question of individual perception of the word – it may just "sound weird." It is a rare form, occurring only twice in the entire 1800M segments of the National Corpus of Polish. However, it is appearing more and more often recently, especially on the Internet. For example, Janina Bąk, a female statistician, university lecturer, blogger, and book author, stresses that she wants to be referred to as *statystyczka* in the interviews she gives, hence raising the popularity of the word [Piorun 2021]. The editor may have never encountered this form before and hence deemed it incorrect. The translator and the editor, both native speakers of Polish, do not speak precisely the same variety of Polish. As any two speakers of a language, they exist within different sociolects and have their own idiolects. This may result in divergent linguistic judgements like in this case.

The editor's change in this example is very significant. It is far from being a mere correction of a typo or a calque. This shows that editors can exert their influence on the text to a great extent. This feminatives change can be said to be almost an ideological issue. One could imagine that a translation scholar analysing the Polish target text could berate the translator for not using feminine forms for all the nouns in that enumeration. The translator would be unrightfully accused, for he did use feminatives there and it was the editor who is responsible for the final phrasing. This shows how crucial it is to underscore the editors' role in the translation process and strive for their visibility.

4.3. Additional foreignization

The following example represents a case of a translation strategy being applied not by the translator, but by the editor:

ST: Stalin and other top Party leaders rarely interfered […]
BE: Stalin i reszta kierownictwa partyjnego rzadko oponowali […]
AE: Stalin i pozostali członkowie wierchuszki rzadko oponowali […]

The translator's choice here was relatively straightforward: *reszta kierownictwa partyjnego* is a valid Polish equivalent rendering the phrase *top Party leaders*. In the context of the book's topic and given the fact that

this example comes from the 6th chapter of the book, the reader is well aware which "Party" is meant in the text. However, the editor decided to add something more here. The phrase *reszta kierownictwa partyjnego* was replaced by the word *pozostali członkowie wierchuszki*. The last word is a borrowing from Russian *верхушка*, which has been adopted into Polish. Polish Dictionary of Foreign Words defines it as "a group of people governing a country, an organisation or an institution; leadership (transl. D.S.)" [2009: 983]. Definition-wise, it is a correct equivalent for *top Party leaders*. Moreover, its Russian sounding is in line with *the Party* being the Russian Communist Party. However, *reszta kierownictwa partyjnego* is unmarked, similarly to the source phrase, whereas *wierchuszka* clearly is marked. Hence, this change done by the editor constitutes implementing foreignization to an element which did not clearly call for such a decision. The editor might have wanted to enliven the text and use a word which brings up certain connotations. It may have been a sign of the editor's slightly disparaging attitude towards the realities of Soviet Russia, for *wierchuszka* can be viewed as a derogatory word. What is interesting, the Russian version of this passage does not contain the word *верхушка*; the wording is *другие высшие руководители* meaning "other high-ranking leaders." Interestingly, this is an example of foreignization relating to a third-language culture. Usually, foreignization relates to the source-language culture. However, here that's not the case: this example does not relate to the English culture, but to the Russian one, which is, in fact, a third culture in the translation process from English to Polish.

This example can be viewed as a potentially controversial one. Unlike most editorial decisions, it is not a straightforward improvement of a mistake – this particular change could be perceived as an interesting addition to the text's value, or as an erroneous interfering in the source text's meaning.

4.4. Colour

Colours may seem relatively easy to translate; however, they can prove quite problematic. The main issue related to translating colours is the fact that languages' divisions and lexical representations of the colour spectrum often differ. A well-known example is the case of the colour blue. English *blue* cannot be directly translated into Russian, for there is no word in Russian to encompass the same part of the colour spectrum. In Russian there are two words for colours corresponding to the English *blue*:

голубой (light blue) and *синий* (dark blue). This conceptual and linguistic difference makes it impossible to simply translate English *blue* into Russian; one has to decide which hue of blue is meant in order to provide the correct equivalent.

Let us now analyse how the issue of translating a certain colour was tackled by Yuri Slezkine's Polish translator and editors.

> ST: At the center would be a large table surrounded by chairs and with a burnt-orange silk-fringed lampshade hanging over it.
> BE: Pośrodku mieścił się stół, otoczony krzesłami i oświetlany przez lampę z kloszem w kolorze palonej pomarańczy z jedwabną obwódką.
> A1E: Pośrodku stał stół, otoczony krzesłami i oświetlany lampą z brązowo-pomarańczowym kloszem z jedwabną obwódką.
> A2E: Pośrodku stał stół, otoczony krzesłami i oświetlony lampą z rudobrązowym kloszem z jedwabną obwódką.

The colour in question is *burnt-orange*. Merriam-Webster dictionary defines it as "moderate reddish orange that is yellower and duller than crab apple, yellower and darker than flamingo, yellower than burnt ocher, and deeper than average persimmon" [Merriam-Webster, 2021]. The translator decided to treat *burnt-orange* quite literally and render the word in a descriptive way: *w kolorze palonej pomarańczy* (*in the colour of a burnt orange*). This phrasing may appear odd and unnecessarily attracting the reader's attention, but it is a faithful rendition. The first editor decided to replace it with *brązowopomarańczowy* (*brown-orange*). It sounds natural and is formed like other Polish names of hybrid colours. However, this equivalent is a simplification: the aspect of opalization, retained in the translator's version, is lost here. Moreover, in the context of the provided *burnt-orange* definition, using *brązowopomarańczowy* as an equivalent can be considered a mistranslation, for *burnt-orange* is a "moderate reddish orange," not a brownish orange. The second editor, who only had access to the first editor's version, offered yet another version: *rudobrązowy*. This word is defined as "brown with a ginger hue" [*Słownik języka polskiego PWN*, 2021] (transl. D.S.). During the editing process the colour has changed from a *colour of a burnt orange* through *brown-orange* up to *brown with a ginger hue*. It is fascinating that the final colour is primarily brown, whereas there was no brown in the colour in the source text or in the initial translation. Incidentally, Russian version of the text was of no

help here; the Russian source text's word is *оранжевый*, which is just orange.

This example clearly shows how thoroughly a translation can get changed in the editing process. The text was altered at every subsequent stage to such an extent that a part of the initial source meaning, retained in the first translation, was lost in the editing, and, in turn, is absent in the final target text.

4.5. An editor's note

Translator's notes are an issue that may seem minor and barely relevant at first but proves to be of significant importance. These notes constitute an intrusion of the translator upon the source text, adding something what was absent in the original. Their main function is to provide the reader with important additional information in order to bridge a cultural gap, clarify a foreign concept, or explain an obscure reference or a joke. However, translators use this space to express themselves as well. They tend to "entertain, share one's feelings or influence the reader" [Sztorc 2020: 17]. Some do not approve of such encroachments on the source text. One could argue that translator's notes, especially if not particularly informative, but rather casual, constitute a certain violation. Jacqueline Henry, for example, argues that the translator should remain invisible in translation, so as not to distort the author's voice [2000: 239].

Regardless, one thing is clear: these notes are undoubtedly a sign of translator's visibility. A reader may forget that what he or she is reading is indeed a translation – which could, in fact, be considered a compliment for the translator. However, a translator's note serves as a clear reminder that there is one more link in this process of literary communication between the author and the audience: the translator. A translator's note is the peak of their visibility, it clearly belongs to them – or does it? Let us look at a certain note in the analysed text.

BE: [3] N. S. Chruszczow, *Wriemia, liudi, własť (wospominanija)*, Moskowskije nowosti, Moskwa 1999, t. 1, s. 38–91;
AE: [3] N. S. Chruszczow, *Wriemia, liudi, własť (wospominanija)*, Moskowskije nowosti, Moskwa 1999, t. 1, s. 38–91 (polskie, drugoobiegowe wydanie wspomnień Chruszczowa jest fragmentaryczne i zaczyna się od 1939 roku – przyp. tłum.);

A translator's note (marked in Polish with *przyp. tłum.*) is clearly visible in the second version of the text. What it states is that the Polish edition of the referenced book is fragmentary and starts later than the Russian issue – in 1939. This can be valuable information for the reader: – if one decided to read further and refer to that book, one would not find the passages regarding the years 1929 and 1935, which are mentioned in Slezkine's work. This information was, of course, absent in the source text. However, it is not much of an intrusion; it is not a personal expression of the translator, but valuable information for a potential thorough reader. Hence its appropriateness is not controversial. It can be deemed a good, informative addition. However, this addition was not there in the BE version; it appeared only after editing. This means that it was not actually written by the translator, but by the editor.

This begs a question: Is it, in fact, a translator's note? Or rather an editor's? On the surface, it is rather straightforward: it is clearly not a translator's note: it was written by the editor, so attributing it to the translator could be perceived as misinformation. However, it is more complicated than that. Let us pause for a while to consider what the word *translator* means in the phrase *translator's note*. When a book has only one translator, then it's clear: we can safely assume that the author of the notes is the person whose name is visible on the title page. However, what if there are two or more translators? It is not specified clearly who is the author of a given note. In a book translated by, let's say, five translators, a given *translator's note* could have been authored by each of them, or be a result of a collaborative effort. Hence, the *translator* in the *translator's note* often does not refer to a specific, single person. One could say its reference is, to a certain extent, abstract. The *translator* here means all the translators of a given book. It refers to the concept of a mediator between the author and the reader, regardless of how many actual people fulfilled that role in a given book.

Rarely do we see such a thing as an *editor's note* – and introducing it would be possibly confusing to the reader. Hence, there is no clear way the editor's note in the above example could have been appropriately attributed. However, the abovementioned notion of the *translator* in the *translator's note* could possibly be expanded further. It could encompass more than just the translators of a given text, but all the participants of the translation process. This would include editors as well. From this point of view, the presented example is not controversial at all, for an editor

is part of the translation collective and has the right to label his or her comments as *translator's notes*. it follows, then, that the discussion about precise authorship of a given note (whether it's actually the translator's or the editor's) is unimportant because they work together for the sake of the final product.

4.6. An editor's mistake

Last but not least, let us remember that editors, whose job is to spot and fix mistakes, can, in some cases, make mistakes themselves:

ST: […] where she lived whenever she was in Moscow […]
BE: […] gdzie zatrzymywała się, gdy tylko była w Moskwie […]
AE: […] gdzie zatrzymywała się, gdy przybywała do Moskwie […]

The translator's version is perfectly understandable to the reader. It is, to some extent, a calque of the English *she was in Moscow*, for the translator also used the word *to be* (*była*). The editor wanted to use a more literary construction in this context: *gdy tylko przybywała do Moskwy* (*whenever she would come to Moscow).* It is a good change in itself, a stylistic improvement. However, the change was only partially introduced. The editor did change the verb *była* for *przybywała*. However, the case of the word *Moskwa* was not changed. The construction *była w* requires *Moskwa* to be in the locative case (*była w Moskwie*), whereas the construction *przybywała do* requires *Moskwa* to be in the genitive case (*przybywała do Moskwy*). The editor changed the verb, but did not change the case of the following noun. This resulted in a jarring grammatical mistake, which would be spotted right away by the reader (incidentally unlike the slight stylistic lapse of the translator).

Luckily, the mistake did not make it to the final version of the text; it was spotted by the second, intralingual editor. This shows the importance of having both interlingual and intralingual editors. Should this mistake slip past the second editor and verifiers into the final target text, who would be blamed? The innocent translator, of course.

5. Conclusions

The aim of this paper was to present and underscore the importance of editors in the translation process. It was shown that the changes introduced by them are not limited to mere corrections of typos, for editors can introduce

significant alterations to the text. They can overrun the translator's choices, implement another translation strategy or make a decision that could be deemed almost ideological, like in the case of feminatives. They can even add their own translator's notes.

Editors are, in a way, guardians. On one hand, they protect the audience from being exposed to mistakes; they prevent a poor-quality end-product from appearing. On the other hand, they protect the translators – through fixing their mistakes. Were it not for the editors, the translators would be berated for many more errors.

Even though editing consists primarily of fixing obvious mistakes and introducing irrefutable improvements to the text, the presented examples also show that the process of editing is not always clear-cut and black-and-white with regard to what is correct. Editors have to weigh their decisions with respect to language change and differences between various idiolects and sociolects. This served to highlight the point that the translation and editing process does not involve a binary incorrect-correct opposition but is rather a spectrum; it constitutes a constant journey towards (possibly unattainable) perfection. Speaking of imperfection, the last example shows that the the guardians are human, too: they do err, as well".

The aim of this work was also to highlight the visibility of editors in translation studies. It was argued that editors should attract a research interest of translation scholars, just like the translators do. This is very much in line with Chesterman's agent-, human-oriented perspective.

This work constitutes a potential contribution to the field of translator training. Translation is often not a solitary, but a collective effort. Prospective translators should be taught how to cooperate with other translators and, importantly, with editors.

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Abstract

This article is concerned with the significance of the editor in the translation process. The author presents the current status of editors in translation studies and calls for more attention to be paid to them. In the analytical part, the author analyses and presents selected examples of editorial changes of the first version of Yuri Slezkine's *House of Government* translation into Polish. The analysis deals with passages where the editors corrected the translators' mistakes. Particular attention is paid to fragments where the editors implemented difficult, potentially controversial corrections. This serves to show the role editors play in the translation process as well as the multitude and importance of the changes they introduce. The article stresses that the choices in the final translation that the audience, including translation scholars, reads are very often the editors', not the translator's, which should be taken into account while giving praise or assigning blame.

Keywords: editing, editors, literary translation, translation studies