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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Comparative Legilinguistics	7
Preface	9

ARTICLES

1. Linguistic Rights and Legal Communication	
Montserrat CUNILLERA, Joëlle REY (Spain), Strategies argumentatives et attitude du locuteur dans les arrêts de la cour de cassation française et du <i>tribunal supremo</i> espagnol: une analyse contrastive	11
Sara PENNICINO (Italy), Legal Reasonableness and the Need for a Linguistic Approach in Comparative Constitutional Law	23
2. Sworn Translation and Court Interpreting	
Ewa KOŚCIALKOWSKA-OKOŃSKA (Poland), Interpreters in the Courtroom: the Importance of Competence and Quality	39
3. Legal Language and Terminology	
Swietlana GAŚ (Poland) Польская и русская дипломатическая терминология: эквивалентность в словаре и тексте (на примере двухсловных терминосочетаний)	49
Anna KIZIŃSKA (Poland), Polysemy in Contracts Establishing an Employment Relationship under the Law of England and Wales – A Case Study	57
Maria Teresa LIZISOWA (Poland), Sign character of the exponents of modality in a legal text	67
Aleksandra MATULEWSKA (Poland), Deontic Modality and Modals in the Language of Contracts.	75
Joanna NOWAK (Poland), Lunfardo lexical units related to legal matters	93
Antonios E. PLATSAS (UK), Making our Law Students Comprehend Foreign Legal Terminology: The Quest for Identifying Function, Context, the Semainon and the Semainomenon in the Teaching of Comparative Law	105
Anna SKOROFATOVA (Ukraine), Правовое и метазыковое сознание будущих правоохранителей	119
Tanja WISSIK (Austria), German legal terminology in the area of higher education – between national varieties and the use of English	127
Tzung-Mou WU (Taiwan), Lost in Translation: the Verbal Change	141

4. Legal Translation

Annarita FELICI (Italy), Translating EU law: a new perspective to the paradox of multilingualism	153
Frederic HOUBERT (France), <i>Caught in the web of the law</i> le traducteur juridique face à la métaphore	167
Nina ISOLAHTI (Finlandia), Метомарфозы языковой личности говорящего при переводе судебного допроса	183
Alenka KOCBEK (Slovenia) Kann Man Rechtstexte kulturell einbetten?	199

REVIEW

The long-felt need of a legal translation textbook: review of <i>Przekład prawny i sądowy</i> by Anna Jopek-Bosiacka (reviewed by Łucja Biel)	211
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Comparative Legilinguistics	7
Wprowadzenie	9

ARTYKUŁY

5. Komunikacja w prawie	
Montserrat CUNILLERA, Joëlle REY (Hiszpania), Strategie argumentatywne i postawa lokutora w wyrokach sądów najwyższych Francji i Hiszpanii	11
Sara PENNICINO (Włochy), Słuszność prawa i potrzeba analizy językoznawczej w komparatystyce prawa konstytucyjnego	23
6. Tłumaczenie poświadczone i sądowe	
Ewa KOŚCIAŁKOWSKA-OKOŃSKA (Polska), Wpływ umiejętności tłumacza sądowego na jakość przekładu	39
7. Język prawa i terminologia prawna	
Swietlana GAŚ (Polska), Polska i rosyjska terminologia dyplomatyczna: ekwiwalencja słownikowa a ekwiwalencja tekstowa (na przykładzie wyrażen dwuczłonowych)	49
Anna KIZIŃSKA (Polska), Polisemia w angielskich i walijskich umowach o pracę – studium przypadku	57
Maria Teresa LIZISOWA (Polska), Znakowy charakter wykładników modalności w tekście prawnym	67
Aleksandra MATULEWSKA (Polska), Modalność deontyczna i wykładniki modalności w języku umów	75
Joanna NOWAK (Polska), Jednostki leksykalne <i>lunfardo</i> dotyczące prawa	93
Antonios E. PLATSAS (Wielka Brytania), Η Αντίληψη Ξένης Νομικής Ορολογίας από τους Φοιτητές Νομικής: Η Αναζήτηση Λειτουργίας, Πλαισίου και Σημαινοντος και Σημαιομένου στη Διδασκαλία του Συγκριτικού Δικαίου	105
Anna SKOROFATOVA (Ukraina), Świadomość prawna i metajęzykowa przyszłych stróży prawa	119
Tanja WISSIK (Austria), Niemiecka terminologia prawnicza w dziedzinie szkolnictwa wyższego – warianty narodowe a język angielski	127
Tzung-Mou WU (Taiwan), Utracone w przekładzie: zmiana werbalna z <i>osobistości</i> w <i>osobę</i>	141
8. Przekład prawniczy	
Annarita FELICI (Włochy), Przekład prawa unijnego: nowe perspektywy paradoksu wielojęzyczności	153

Comparative Legilinguistics vol. 2/2010

Frederic HOUBERT (Francja), <i>W siódlach prawa</i> : tłumacz prawniczy w obliczu metafor	167
Nina ISOLAHTI (Finlandia), Metamorfozy leksykalnych właściwości mowy w tłumaczeniu przesłuchania sądowego	183
Alenka KOCBEK (Słowenia) Can legal texts be culturally embedded?	199

RECENZJA

Długo wyczekiwany podręcznik przekładu prawniczego: recenzja książki <i>Przekład prawny i sądowy</i> Anny Jopek-Bosiackiej (Łucja Biel)	211
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**THE LONG-FELT NEED OF A LEGAL TRANSLATION
TEXTBOOK: REVIEW OF *PRZEKŁAD PRAWNY I
SĄDOWY* BY ANNA JOPEK-BOSIACKA**

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Przekład prawny i sądowy.

Jopek-Bosiacka, A., Warszawa: PWN, 2006, 254 pp., ISBN-13: 978-83-01-14854-6, ISBN-10: 83-01-14854-3.

Neglected for years by researchers, legal translation has recently observed a revival within Translation Studies all over the world. It is closely connected with the intensive development of research on specialised (LSP) translation and the growth of translator-training institutions, fuelled by the increased demand on the translation market related to globalisation and the European Union. In the last decade three notable books, i.e. Šarčević (1997), Alcaraz and Hughes (2002) and Cao (2007), were published; however, none of them is well-suited for training Polish legal translators. Šarčević is theoretically oriented and focuses mainly on translation of legislation in multilingual countries (e.g. Canada) while practically-oriented Alcaraz & Hughes and Cao do not use Slavonic languages as their point of reference. Likewise, the Polish publication by Kierzkowska (2002) is not intended to be a textbook.

Przekład. Mity i Rzeczywistość [Translation/Interpreting. Myths and Reality], a new series by the PWN publishing house, fills the market niche with its accessible books on audiovisual translation, community interpreting, conference interpreting, and, last but not least, legal translation. In particular, Jopek-Bosiacka's *Przekład prawny i sądowy* [Legal and Court Translation], published in Polish and dedicated specifically to Polish and English translation, meets the long-felt need. It is the first book, both comprehensive and succinct in its treatment of the subject, which surveys various branches of legal translation and is a convenient compilation and synthesis of knowledge scattered in various Polish and English sources. It is worth noting that the author is both a linguist and a lawyer and manages to integrate both perspectives in her writing.

The book may be divided into two parts. The first discusses properties of English and Polish legal language within the discourse analysis methodology, while the second follows the genre-based approach to translation (cf. Alcaraz & Hughes 2002: 101) and surveys major legal genres. These include: contracts, company law documents, national

legislation, European Union legislation and court translation. Given English>Polish translation practice, the selection of the genres seems to be well founded.

The internal organisational structure of chapters is not always clear, which is especially noticeable in the first two chapters. Chapter 1 selectively depicts sometimes isolated theoretical concepts. It starts with a brief history of research into Polish legal discourse but also contains, more importantly, a short history of foreign influences on Polish legal language and borrowings. The author also discusses classifications of legal language, comprehensibility, syntactic schemata of legal norms, modality, and basic properties of legal terms. What is lacking is a more systematic discussion of the syntactic and semantic features of Polish legal discourse as in Chapter 2, which surveys the properties of the English legal genre in full detail.

Chapter 3, which focuses on translation of commercial contracts, has high practical relevance to students. It contains a thorough contrastive analysis of major types of contractual clauses, such as recitals, definitions, representations, obligations, boiler-plate clauses, arbitration, force majeure, applicable law, etc. The discussion is amply illustrated with examples and translation tips.

Chapter 4 on translation of documents related to company law focuses on articles of association and shareholder resolutions. Its major merit is an insightful contrastive analysis of basic company law terms, such as *spółka*, *firm*, *partnership*, *company*, *corporation*, *Board of Directors* and *articles of association*, which reveals the complexity and incongruity of legal terms between systems. The chapter is however asymmetrical in its treatment of Polish and English terms. It provides English equivalents of Polish terms, derived mainly from three translations of the Polish Code of Commercial Partnerships and Companies (*Kodeks spółek handlowych*). Yet it fails to do so *vice versa*: there are no Polish equivalents of incongruous and problematic English terms, such as *memorandum of association* or *Board of Directors*. The author also presents a detailed structure of Polish partnerships and companies (p. 116) with their English equivalents but similar charts of US and UK entities are missing, not to mention their Polish equivalents. It is a pity because, as a future textbook, the book could have contributed to establishing equivalents of some problematic terms, including company types. However, these minor flaws do not diminish the overall value of the otherwise excellent chapter.

Discussing the Polish *spółka partnerska*, Jopek-Bosiacka assesses its established equivalent, *professional partnership*, as ‘very well chosen’. She notes further that this concept may require additional explanation for the UK audience in contrast to US audiences, which are familiar with *professional corporations* and *limited-liability partnerships* (2006: 116). This is an inaccuracy: a very similar entity, a limited liability partnership, has been introduced in the UK under the Limited Liability Partnership Act 2000. This type of business structure is elected mainly by professionals (Lowry and Dignam 2006: 5). For this reason, the best functional equivalent of *spółka partnerska* would be *limited liability partnership* as it is comprehensible both in the UK and in the US (cf. Krześniak 2003).

Throughout the book the author generally advocates the functional approach to translation (e.g. pp. 112, 134, 136), emphasising the need to strike a delicate balance between fidelity to the source text and compliance with target-language conventions of the genre. This approach is in line with both Šarčević’s and Alcaraz and Hughes’

recommendations. As Jopek-Bosiacka rightly argues, ‘in respect of terminology, despite frequent substantial incongruity between the Anglo-Saxon system and the Polish system, translators should use corresponding target legal concepts wherever possible (...), otherwise they may be accused of unprofessionalism’ (2006: 134, translation—L.B.). She further adds that the target text should appear natural to a lawyer (2006: 136).

Some inconsistencies in her approach may be noted though. Referring rather cryptically to § 10 of the Legislative Technique Rules [i.e. two distinct concepts should not be named with the same term in Polish legislation], Jopek-Bosiacka praises distinct equivalents for *zgromadzenie wspólników* and *walne zgromadzenie* in the three translations of the Code (2006: 117). No comment is made about the *general meeting* being an equivalent of *zgromadzenie wspólników* in Beck’s translation and, simultaneously, of *walne zgromadzenie* in Zakamycze’s and Tepis’s translation. Yet, in contrast to *Rada Nadzorcza* (Supervisory Board) and *Zarząd* (Management Board), *zgromadzenie wspólników* and *walne zgromadzenie* are synonymous concepts operating within different frames (sp. z o.o. and S.A.). The natural equivalent for a UK lawyer would be *general meeting* in both cases since, unlike Polish, English does not have a separate terminology for private and public companies. Similarly, Polish makes a distinction between *udziały* and *akcje*, both of which are translated into UK English as *shares*. The same applies to *wspólnik* and *akcjonariusz*, both of which become *shareholders* (or *members*) in UK English. This semantic problem could have been explored in more detail.

Chapter 5 on translation of legislation discusses the internal structure of legislative acts in different legal systems by comparing the macrostructure of Canadian and Swiss acts (after Šarčević), and of EU and Polish acts. Yet from a Polish perspective references to the UK or US legal system would be more useful. In the next part the author is selective in her choice of issues, focusing on translation of titles of legislative acts, systematisation, definitions and English names of Polish administrative units (English administrative units are not examined though).

Chapter 6 on translation of EU legislation is a convenient compilation of materials for translators prepared by UKIE and OPOCE and available on the DGT website.

Given the dearth of practical training materials on court translation, except for the technically-oriented *Kodeks tłumacza przysięgłego* [Sworn Translator Code] edited by Kierzkowska, Chapter 7 on court translation seems to be rather disappointing in its one-sidedness. It contains an informative typology of the Polish civil procedure and briefly mentions the criminal procedure. Unfortunately, the UK and US procedures are discussed perfunctorily and little attention is paid to terminological differences between the two common law systems, a good illustration being no mention of the US equivalent of *claim—complaint*. Next the author presents the Polish court structure with useful English equivalents. However, there is no comparison to the UK or US structures with their Polish equivalents, which could be very interesting, but only references to rather dated and inaccessible publications.

On balance, the major advantage of the book is that, as already noted, it integrates a number of sources in one publication. It also contains an extensive bibliography embracing 367 entries, which is an excellent record of resources on legal translation available in English and Polish. The book may be a good introductory textbook to

practical courses on legal, certified or EU translation, as well as to more theoretically oriented courses on legal translation at the BA or MA level. It may also be used by experienced translators as a refresher or a 'gap-filler'.

Przekład prawny i sądowy is not a typical textbook; however, it could easily be turned into one in further editions. First of all, exercises at the end of each chapter, preferably with a key, would definitely add to its value. These could be terminological quizzes, and stylistic or translation exercises for self-study. Secondly, self-assessment questions and a glossary with major definitions would be an asset. Thirdly, the book will have even more practical relevance if it is extended by additional parallel texts as in the company law chapter; this need is especially felt in the contract chapter. Nevertheless, it should be emphasised that the book is lavishly illustrated with a plethora of examples and frequent references to problems encountered by translators in practice, as well as in-depth contrastive analyses of terms.

As already emphasised, the book is both wide ranging and succinct, but there is a price to pay. Some issues are discussed perfunctorily only (e.g. court translation/interpreting) or are omitted altogether (other types of sworn translation). This is however unavoidable to a certain extent.

To sum up, the book offers a neat synthetic survey of various legal genres with reference to Polish and English and consolidates knowledge on legal translation scattered in numerous resources. Undoubtedly, it will prove useful to many students.

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