"O madness of discourse" – Contemporary Finnish Shakespeare Translation, Translator's Autonomy, and Ethics

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Empiirinen käännöstutkimus on perinteisesti perustunut näkemykselle, jonka mukaan yksilöllisesti toimiva kääntäjä tulkitsee käännettävänä olevan viestin ja siirtää sen toiselle kielelle (esim. Tymoczko 2006: 18). Tällainen oletus osoittautuu kuitenkin hyvin ongelmalliseksi, jos empiirisessä käännöstutkimuksessa perinteisesti käytettyä materiaalia eli julkaistuja lähde- ja kohdetekstejä täydennetään julkaisemattomilla käsikirjoituksilla, ja ennen kaikkea niiden sisältämillä toimituskommenteilla. Tässä artikkelissa käsittelen neljää WSOY:n julkaisemaa nykypäivän Shakespeare-suomennosta sekä niihin liittyviä käännös- ja julkaisuprosesseja. Erityisesti kiinnitän huomiota kysymykseen kääntäjän autonomisuudesta ja hahmottelen materiaalini perusteella joukon taktiikoita, jotka liittyvät julkaistussa käännöksessä esiintyvien käännösratkaisujen "neuvotteluun" kääntäjän ja toimittajien välillä. Käsikirjoitusten käyttäminen tutkimusmateriaalina johtaa myös eettisiin kysymyksiin, jotka koskevat esimerkiksi kääntämisestä yleisesti käytettyä metadiskurssia eli tapaa puhua kääntämisestä käännöstutkimuksen kentässä.

Keywords: Shakespeare, literary translation, editing, translator's autonomy, authorities, negotiation, ethics

> O madness of discourse,
> That cause sets up with and against itself!
> Bifold authority![1]
>   (Shakespeare 1981: 277)

1 Introduction

One of the traditional assumptions in the field of translational research has been that "an *individual translator* decodes a given message to be translated and recodes the same message in a second language" (Tymoczko 2006: 18; my emphasis). This implicit assumption on the nature of translation processes has, as Tymoczko (ibid.) further argues, largely prevented Translation Studies from venturing into new and "foreign" practices and concepts of translation. The classic representation of the process has been met with a fair share of criticism, but the basic model still continues to live on in many influential formulations of translation theory. In short, the classic model involving the

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[1] Troilus' paradoxical line in *Troilus and Cressida*, Act V, Scene II referring to the conflicting evidence of the reality given by the reason and the senses (Shakespeare 1981: 277).

individual translator working alone has become the norm in translational research (ibid.), a norm that even the recent sociological research paradigm (see e.g. Wolf 2007) has not yet been able to convincingly subvert. However, this kind of view becomes very problematic when the empirical material that has traditionally been used in the research of literary translation (i.e. *published* source and target texts) is complemented with *unpublished* manuscripts and, particularly, documents of *editorial interventions* in them.

The present article is based on my ongoing doctoral research on the interplay of translators and editors in the context of contemporary Finnish Shakespeare translation. I have previously dealt with the subject in the form of a pilot study included in the 2009 VAKKI publication (Siponkoski 2009). In it I outlined that the comparison of differently positioned translators could be a possible future direction for my research. I have since taken this direction, and this article represents an interim report on this development. In the course of this article I shall discuss a selection of contemporary Finnish Shakespeare translations and their translation/editing/publication processes[2] mainly from the point of view of *translator's autonomy*. My primary material consists of manuscripts of four tragedies that originate in a contemporary Finnish Shakespeare retranslation project; these manuscripts very clearly demonstrate that the translation/editing/publication processes involve multiple actors who work in structured interaction. More specifically, I shall outline a set of specific *tactics* by which the translation solutions that appear in the published translation are *negotiated* between the translator and the editors. Bearing in mind the theme of the XXXI VAKKI Symposium (Language and Ethics), I shall also briefly discuss my subject in terms of ethics.

2 Disposition and Research Questions

The emphasis of my research is on the translation/editing/publication processes of the contemporary Finnish Shakespeare translations and especially on *authority* within them. As a field strongly based on "invisible" and unevenly recognised collaboration, the

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[2] I have chosen to use the term "translation/editing/publication process" because these three activities in practice intertwine into one single activity. Translation is therefore not seen as a process that is separate from the editing and publication processes and conducted separately by an "isolated" translator, but as a process that is continuously influenced by the editors' input as well as by the whole publication process.

publishing industry is often depicted as a site of tension. The same applies, of course, to the relationship between the authors and the editors. For example, Bourdieu (1993) defines the literary field and the publishing industry that steers it as a "[...] *space of literary or artistic position-takings* [...]" (30; author's emphasis) or, simply, a "[...] *field of struggles* [...]" (ibid; author's emphasis). Furthermore, a written work is often seen as a part of the identity of its producer (writer or translator), and efforts to compromise the original integrity of the text (i.e. manuscript), such as editorial interventions, may be seen to constitute a personal threat to the writer as well. This is partly why manuscripts, especially with editorial comments, make such a sensitive type of research material.

The struggle for a space of literary or artistic position-takings or, simply, the *struggle for authorship* that is an integral part of any editing process can most fundamentally be defined in terms of *authority*. In other words, the editing process is in a fundamental sense a rivalry between two authorities, that of the writer (which is determined by e.g. the writer's status or influence within a given literature or literary system) and that of the editor (which is emphasised by a close link to the publisher and which might or might not be fortified by a selection of other, additional authorities with which the editor may argue for his/her interventions). What sets an editing process of a *translation* apart from that of an *original work*, however, is the presence of a *commission*. This means, in effect, that the translator is *hired* and works for the commissioner of the translation, for example a publisher. As Lefevere (1992) reminds, "[t]ranslation has to do with authority and legitimacy and, ultimately, with power [...]" (2); the abovementioned aspect of *authority* is therefore further emphasised in the context of translation, as the translator is usually given a set of definite authorities (e.g. a source text) by the commissioner which the translator, expected to produce a legitimate translation, then works under.

Drawing from the concept of *authority*, the research questions of my ongoing doctoral research are currently formulated as follows:

Main question: How has the interplay of the translators and the editors affected the contemporary Finnish Shakespeare translations?

Subquestion 1:   Which kinds of *authorities* is the agency of the editors of a Shakespeare translation "under construction" based on?[3]

Subquestion 2:   How has the translator's *authority* affected the way in which authorship is eventually fragmented in a published Shakespeare translation?

The scope of this article is restricted to subquestion 2 which concentrates on questioning the view according to which a completed translation is mainly a result of the translator's authority or, in other words, the translator translates autonomously; here the translator's authority or *status* becomes topical. This is especially topical in the contemporary Finnish Shakespeare translation project which features multiple translators whose professional profiles—and therefore statuses as well—are very different. Also their conceptions of translating Shakespeare into Finnish are different. Therefore the interest is in the translator's authority; how it relates to the way the editors comment his or her text and to the way the translator eventually deals with the editorial comments.

3 Material and Method

The contemporary Finnish Shakespeare translation project, which my research project and the present article are examining, was launched in 2003 by WSOY, currently the largest publisher in Finland. In the course of this translation project, all 37 plays included in the official Shakespeare canon are to be translated by contemporary translators and published as books. The project features several translators, and in addition to them the project currently involves three copyeditors and one consultant. By August 2011, the project is approximately three-quarters completed.

In the present article, my material consists of two types of texts: (1) manuscripts of the contemporary Finnish translations of Shakespeare's four tragedies: *Macbeth*, *Romeo ja Julia* (Romeo and Juliet), *Coriolanus* and *Troilos ja Cressida* (Troilus and Cressida), as

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[3] Subquestion 1 lies beyond the scope of the present article; it sets out to problematise the authority that is usually given to the source text in translational research. It is possible to demonstrate on the basis of my material that "source texts" in their traditional sense constitute merely one type of all the authorities that enter the translation/editing/publication process and on the basis of which editorial interventions are argued for.

well as (2) the published versions of these four tragedies. All four manuscripts represent the first complete draft that the translators have sent to the publisher, and each of these manuscripts also includes handwritten editorial comments from two types of editors, the main copyeditor and the consultant[4]. Two main copyeditors have edited the plays included in the material; Päivi Koivisto-Alanko (PhD and an expert on Early Modern English) and Alice Martin (professional translator and editor). In addition, there are some comments from Professor Emeritus Matti Rissanen, one of the leading Shakespeare experts in Finland, who acts as a consultant. The editorial comments have been sent back to the translators, and the published versions are based on the commented first drafts. Therefore the translators are free to decide how they deal with the editorial comments, and the final solutions have not been dictated by the publisher.

To narrow down the extent of the material, I have selected two first acts from each play. The plays and their details are presented in table 1 below; the plays are selected so that all different combinations of two variables, (1) *translator's status* and (2) *play's status*, have been accounted for.

Table 1. Material

	POPULAR PLAYS	**UNPOPULAR PLAYS**
ESTABLISHED TRANSLATORS	*Macbeth* Translated by Matti Rossi Edited by Alice Martin & Matti Rissanen	*Coriolanus* Translated by Lauri Sipari Edited by Päivi Koivisto-Alanko & Matti Rissanen
NON-ESTABLISHED TRANSLATORS	*Romeo ja Julia* Translated by Marja-Leena Mikkola Edited by Päivi Koivisto-Alanko & Matti Rissanen	*Troilos ja Cressida* Translated by Anna-Maija Viitanen Edited by Alice Martin & Matti Rissanen

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[4] I am currently missing the consultant's comments for the manuscript of *Romeo ja Julia*; it is unclear whether it is possible to obtain them anymore. However, the consultant's comments only make up a fraction of all editorial comments (e.g. 48 out of the total of 759 in the manuscript of *Troilos ja Cressida*).

The term *established translator* in this context refers to translators who are established as *Finnish Shakespeare translators*. They have a certain *status* and *authority* that springs from their numerous Shakespeare translations for the stage and the page, and that has also been acknowledged. For example, Matti Rossi was awarded a prize by the Finnish State for his contemporary Shakespeare translations in 2007 (Stenbäck 2007: C3). *Non-established translators* constitute the opposite of established ones; *Romeo ja Julia* and *Troilos ja Cressida* are their first published translations of Shakespeare's plays. *Popular plays* refer to plays that have been published as various different Finnish translations and that have been staged often in Finland according to Finnish Theatre Information Centre (2011). *Unpopular plays*, on the contrary, have been published only once before towards the end of the 19th century, and according to Finnish Theatre Information Centre (2011) they have been staged in Finland only a few times.

The method is built on comparing the initial draft and the published version of each of the four translations. The analysis starts from the handwritten editorial comments; what are actually compared with each other are (1) the editorial comment itself, (2) the textual passage in the initial draft to which the editorial comment refers, and (3) the respective textual passage in the published version. The analysis aims at constructing distinct categories pertaining to the way the translators have dealt with the comments.

4 From Autonomy to Negotiation

The basic question in traditional translator-oriented research has been how the *translator* creates equivalence between the source text and the target text. For example, the influential Descriptive Translation Studies methodology, as outlined by Toury (1995: 36–39, 102), focuses on examining the source and the target text "side by side", and emerging differences or "shifts" are seen as a result of the translator's work. Overall, the problem of how equivalence is created has been approached in terms of textual manipulation and problem-solving (see e.g. Chesterman 2005) which, in turn, have been dealt with the aid of terms such as *translation strategy* and many other similar, related terms (ibid: 17–19). However, most of them are problematic because they are very *individually-oriented* and intrinsically include the idea that translators are

autonomous, that is, they decide themselves how they proceed with translation problems. The present study challenges this kind of view by taking the element of *revision* (i.e. editorial interventions and commentary related to them) into account. The focus is therefore shifted to the *interplay* of the translators and the editors.

Granted, the translator's *initial draft* submitted to the publisher can be approached—in a very traditional sense—as being built from the translator's individual translation solutions reflecting the underlying translation strategies. But when these solutions are confronted by the editors' suggestions for their revision during the process of writing a second, revised draft, the translator finds him/herself in a new kind of situation. Editorial comments can here be understood as *sanction-like* statements that are dealt to the translator whenever the manuscript goes against the editor's normative expectations[5], and that are usually based on some kind of an authority which is used to provide grounds for the statement. Authorities may be, for example, *textual models* (Hermans 1991: 167) or *norm-models* (Chesterman 1997: 65), or the editors may also present themselves or other individuals as authorities. This new situation very much resembles the previous phase of the translation process in which the translators mainly worked under the authority of the source text(s) and in which they had to find ways of carrying the message over from Shakespeare's (edited) Early Modern English to Modern Finnish. However, in this new situation the translator also works with suggestions for revision that are given by representatives of the publisher, the editors. In this situation the translators again have to find ways of dealing with specific communication problems that have to do with decisions such as whether to override the publisher's request for changing a part in the translation or to conform to the request.

Working with the commented manuscript has a strong *negotiational* aspect to it: the translators might at some places unconditionally conform to the publisher's wishes, whereas at some places they might be headstrong to do as they themselves feel is necessary – or they might truly negotiate with the publisher's representative and come up with a solution that contains elements from both agents. This is why I have chosen to

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[5] On the definition of norms as expectations in the context of translation, see Hermans (2002) and Chesterman (1997: 64–70).

approach this specific kind of textual manipulation or communication-related problem-solving during the revision phase in terms of *negotiation*. Furthermore, exactly like traditional translation research has approached the textual manipulation performed by the translator by distinguishing between the local level (e.g. text-linguistic shifts or procedures) and the global level (e.g. cognitive strategies) (Chesterman 2005: 19–22), also negotiation in the context of the editing process has these two sides to it.

To distinguish between local and global levels, I am employing the concepts *negotiation tactic* and *negotiation strategy* which are, of course, based on the concepts *translation tactic* and *translation strategy*. Strategy is seen as the overall goal, and tactics are seen as decisions that lead to the overall goal (see Gambier 2008: 64). These concepts closely relate to the fact that neither the translators' nor the editors' solutions make it to the published version automatically; instead, they are negotiated. It is also important to note that negotiation strategies and tactics do not so much have to do with the question of "who is the real author of the published translation", but more with power relations in Bourdeusian terms (Bourdieu 1993: 30). As a working hypothesis, I am presuming that the translator's status greatly affects the end-result of these negotiations.

Concluding on the basis of the material analysis, the solutions appearing in the final, published version that have gone through an editorial intervention fall in four distinct categories of negotiation tactics. The categories are as follows:

1. **The final solution comes from the editors**
   ➔ The translator either uses the solution *exactly* as suggested by the editors or the editorial comment has such a massive influence on the final solution that it must be considered to come from the editors

2. **The final solution is the translator's, but it is influenced by the editorial comments**
   ➔ The translator alters his/her initial solution so that it shows elements of the editorial comment

3. **The final solution is the translator's, but it is not influenced by the editorial comments**
   ➔ The translator changes his/her initial solution to something completely different

4. **The final solution is the translator's**
   ➔ The translator retains his/her initial solution *exactly* as it was in the manuscript

In the above list the textual finding that unifies the category is given in bold and the negotiation tactic following from the textual finding is preceded with an arrow. These

four tactics form a continuum in which tactics 1 and 2 represent the editors' authority and tactics 3 and 4 represent the translator's authority.

5 Findings and Discussion

The findings of the analysis are given in table 2 below. Numbers 1–4 below the columns represent the four negotiation tactics. The first of the two numbers next to the names of the plays refer to the number of comments that fell into the four negotiation tactics, and the second number represents the total number of editorial comments in the first two acts of each play. These two numbers do not add up because in all plays there were a number of comments that did not fall in any of the four categories due to their illegibility, for example. The great differences in the number of editorial comments between the plays are caused by the different lengths of the manuscripts, of which *Macbeth* is the shortest (105 pages) and *Troilos ja Cressida* the longest (243 pages).

Table 2. Findings

	POPULAR PLAYS			UNPOPULAR PLAYS		
ESTABLISHED TRANSLATORS	*Macbeth* (341/372)			*Coriolanus* (574/579)		
NON-ESTABLISHED TRANSLATORS	*Romeo ja Julia* (460/482)			*Troilos ja Cressida* (730/759)		

In the case of *Macbeth* (trsl. by Matti Rossi), clearly the majority of the solutions in the initial draft that have been subjected to an editorial intervention remain as they are in the initial draft. In *Coriolanus* (trsl. by Lauri Sipari), most of the commented initial solutions are in the published version replaced with ones suggested by the editors, but the translator's initial solutions are also well represented. With *Romeo ja Julia* (trsl. by Marja-Leena Mikkola) the situation is the opposite with regard to *Macbeth*. Clearly the majority of the commented initial solutions have in the published version been replaced with the editors' suggestions. The results of *Troilos ja Cressida* (trsl. by Anna-Maija Viitanen) are very similar compared to those of *Romeo ja Julia*. Furthermore, when the diagrams showing the results of all four translations are compared by arranging them in the way displayed in table 2, it can be seen that in the translations on the top row (established translators) all four tactics are more evenly balanced than in the translations on the bottom row (non-established translators) which are dominated by tactic 1.

There are two clear deductions that may be arrived at on the basis of the findings. The first one focuses on tactic 3 which is clearly the less employed one in all plays; this means that *the translators, in spite of their status, quite rarely change their initial solution to something that does not take the editorial comments or the initial solution into account in any way*. The second deduction concerns the tentative generalisations that can be made on the basis of these findings; these would be that (1) with established translators there seem to be more variance between the four tactics and the overall negotiation strategy seems to be "dominant" (tactic 4 dominates) or "deliberating" (tactic 2 is well represented), and that (2) non-established translators usually seem to choose the editors' solution, rendering the overall negotiation strategy "subservient" (cf. Simeoni 1998: 7–14).

It would therefore seem that the differences that emerge in the material cannot entirely be dealt with in terms of statements such as "[a]n experienced and well-established poetry translator may feel more confident than the young aspiring novice in ignoring the wishes and suggestions of a particular editor or publisher" (Hermans 1996: 35). On the basis of the findings, it is perhaps more reasonable to say that established translators tend to *negotiate* the final solutions *in a more varied fashion* than non-established

translators. Of course, generalisation is impossible because of a very narrow selection of material. The findings portray, however, how the authorship or *translatorship* in translations subjected to editorial interventions *can be* fragmented between multiple agents. They also demonstrate that a link can be established between the translator's status and the way the final solutions are negotiated. Most importantly, however, the findings indicate that it cannot be presumed, especially in the context of literary translation, that the translator is alone responsible for all solutions.

The final point presented above touches upon *ethics* in the context of translational research. Working with unpublished manuscripts naturally gives rise to questions about the ethics of a single researcher, but more importantly, about the "general ethics" in the field of Translation Studies as well. While the researcher's ethics are mainly challenged by a sensitive kind of material that is not public, ethical questions concerning the discipline as a whole are closely tied to the *metadiscourse* on translation, that is, the way in which translations and translational activity are generally talked about. It seems that especially in the research of literary translation this "[...] madness of discourse [...]" (Shakespeare 1981: 277) relates to the way the translator has traditionally been approached as a kind of a "Romantic author" who is seen to work very solitarily, creating equivalence between the source and the target text. Differences between the source and the target texts have been attributed to the translator, perhaps with the exception of the network-based sociological approaches as well as corpus-based research and its quantitative methods. The metadiscourse on translation has thus been very translator-based: after all, statements such as "translator X did Y" are very common in Translation Studies research reports. All in all, the *fragmented* nature of authorship and translatorship has been ignored, and ethical questions pertaining to the way in which published translations tend to be discussed in terms of individual translators and their autonomous decisions should be increasingly considered.

6 Conclusions

The findings I have presented in this article show that authorship and translatorship are not so straightforward concepts; they are always more or less fragmented in the case of

literary works and translations that have undergone an editing process. As the opening quote from Shakespeare already intimated, the authority behind the contemporary Finnish Shakespeare translations is indeed at least "bifold". Nevertheless, the contemporary Finnish Shakespeare translations set a good example by acknowledging the "non-unilateral" nature of translatorship behind them and announcing the names of the editors on the first pages, thus highlighting their importance. Now it is time for other translations and especially translational research to follow this example.

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