

Svoboda, Tomáš, Biel, Łucja and Łoboda, Krzysztof (eds) (2017). *Quality aspects in institutional translation*. Berlin: Language Science Press, pp. 179, £ 30 / 30 €. ISBN 978 3961100217.

Edited by three scholars who have either worked for or researched the EU's translation services, and published as part of Language Science Press's "Translation and Multilingual Natural Language Processing", this book's ambition is to explore "quality in institutional translation by confronting academics' and practitioners' perspectives" (1). Inspired by two conferences on translation quality funded by the European Commission as part of the "Translating Europe Workshop" series (Krakow 2015 and Prague 2016), this book focuses nearly exclusively on aspects of quality assessment and quality assurance in the context of the EU's supranational institutions.

It is organised into three main parts. In the first part, Vandepitte and Biel help set the conceptual and theoretical framework for this study of quality aspects in institutional translation. Vandepitte thus uses the example of the translation of a public procurement that went badly wrong to stress the importance of translation quality assessment defined as "the provision in a company's activities to take care of quality or its implementation, application and management of quality control" (17). In the only chapter not related to EU translation, she uses a survey by Belgium's Central Translation Service for German to illustrate the role of the following parameters in Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) for institutional translation: the object of TQA (translation as a process or as a product?), its purpose, translation quality levels and TQA criteria. She also reflects on the actors and factors involved in TQA. This is followed by Biel's chapter that looks at the parameters, policies and practices of quality in institutional EU translation, thereby setting the EU background for the following chapters. She shows that EU translation "challenges our understanding of translation quality" (31) and calls it "diplomatic translation" as "a complex array of political, ideological and procedural factors" come into play (32). She also discusses how the European Commission's understanding of translation quality has started moving away from what Koskinen once called "existential equivalence" to embrace instead a more dynamic view of quality. Compared to 2008, the 2017 Tender Specification for external contractors does not feature the word "faithful", for instance. This contributes to what she sees as a rewriting of the narrative of quality in the EU institutions (52).

Slightly more empirical, the second part focuses on the study of selected aspects of quality assurance. Prieto Ramos starts with a survey of the evolving role of institutional translation service managers and shows how translation management has moved from "one-fits-all quality control to a more modulated approach to quality variables" (72). This is followed by Svoboda's rather exhaustive study of the Directorate-General for

Translation's (DGT) style guides that explores the extent to which the process of translation at the DGT is governed by rules (77). Stefaniak then gives an account of the work of terminologists at the DGT (where she works as a Quality Officer). Her account clearly illustrates Biel's earlier point that EU translation is diplomatic translation: "EU translators are expected to create texts which are comprehensible, linguistically correct and terminologically accurate, and at the same time consistent with EU legislation and with other language versions, and on top of that able to fit in the national legislation" (119). Finally, Strandvik concludes this part by addressing how outsourced translations are evaluated and showing how crucial it has become in recent years to make sure "the institution speaks with one voice" (129) in the face of increased budgetary constraints and limited staffing levels. Again, this chapter reinforces Biel's earlier point on the narrative of quality in EU translation as it illustrates how recent changes to the assessment tools and to the evaluation grid for outsourced translations have contributed to a move from fidelity to fitness for purpose (129). The last part of the book contains two case studies by practitioners of quality control at the Council and the DGT (Hanzl and Beaven) and at the Court of Justice (Koźbiał) and serve as a "reality check" for what was said before.

With its focus on institutional translation in general, and on EU translation in particular, this book seems to present a dramatic update to Arturo Tosi's *Crossing Barriers and Bridging Cultures: The Challenges of Multilingual Translation for the European Union* published in 2002. The greater emphasis on translation quality should come as no surprise with the emergence of industry standards (e.g. EN 15038:2006 and ISO 17100:2015) since Tosi's publication. Even though these standards do not apply to EU translation, they have had an impact on quality control in the EU's translation services at a time of increased workload and budgetary pressure. This is something this book documents very well by showing a rewriting of the narrative of quality discourse among most EU institutions. Despite being primarily descriptive, this book is therefore extremely valuable to all scholars with an interest in the latest developments in EU translation.

References

- **Tosi, Arturo** (ed.) (2002). *Crossing Barriers and Bridging Cultures: The Challenges of Multilingual Translation for the European Union*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

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