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THE ABSTRACT

of Pollmann Teréz's doctoral dissertation entitled 'Problems of translation of deictic lexical elements'

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1. Choice of subject, the aim and the method of the research

1.1. Choice of subject

The attention to the importance and essential quality of the research on translation was called by Roman Jakobson in the middle of the twentieth century. According to him 'Linguistics cannot interpret any single lexical items without translating their linguistic signs into another sign of the same system or into the signs of another system'. Since then several theories and researches have produced findings about the process of translation, the question of translatability and the equivalence, and we still cannot speak about an accepted translation theory. To define translation there are dozens of definitions. Describing translation activity is complicated also because the process of translation contains extralingual components as well. As the subject of my PhD dissertation I chose a linguistic phenomenon that is influenced, like the translation itself, by extralingual factors, those phrases of which transfer to another language does not belong to the obligatory transfer operations, so the translator has possibility of interpreting and freedom of decision.

The deictic expression can arouse our interest because it represents the problematic nature of the immediate usability of a dictionary: deictic elements obtain their meanings (senses) from the context or the co-text.

To find examples of the research of deictic items from the point of view of translation in the recent international specialized literature: significant differences and main tendencies were studied in narrative texts translated from French into Swedish, in English translations of Romanian literary works. In 2005 Federica Da Milano published her book on the system of the place deixis expressed through determiners in various European language, the sampling was occurred by virtue of native speakers. The question of deixis has not been studied in Hungarian-foreign language relation yet.

1.2. The aim

In the thesis I study how often preserves the deictic element in the Italian source text (ST) its deictic quality in the Hungarian target text (TT).

As the starting hypothesis I suppose

1. that the deictic element in the TT created as a result of translation do not always remain a deictic element
2. that the deictic element typically becomes explicit if the equivalent of the deictic element of the ST in the TT is not a deictic one.

John Catford established as early as 1965 that the formal equivalence is rare 'since almost never happens that any lexical items and grammatical structures serve the same function in

the system of two languages owing to the difference of linguistic systems'. We can prove also during the comparison of deictic elements that formal equivalence is rare.

So we cannot speak about formal equivalence but we have to find the realization of equivalence on the level of the text. As during the process of translation lexical items are exposed to transformation (Catford: *shift*, Newmark: *transposition*) to a high degree, our expectation that deictic elements in TT created as a result of translation do not always remain deictic elements, will probably be confirmed. Explicitation is a universal of translation that is a characteristic of texts created as a result of translation, and does not depend on the direction of translation or on language pairs. The notion of explicitation was first defined by *Vinay* and *Darbelnet* in 1958: 'In the course of the process of explicitation we introduce information into the target language which is present only implicitly in the source language, but which can be derived from the context or the situation'.

Deictic elements are typically those linguistic elements of which meanings can be derived from the context and the situation. As the explicitation is a universal of translation, a universally and typically applied procedure of translation, it is expectable that the translator will not represent the interpreted sense as an implicit meaning in the TT.

1.3. The method and theme of the research

In my thesis I apply the linguistic method, the comparative research model that is the traditional way of the research of translation. That means the comparison of the source text to the target text from some kind of point of view in close connection with comparative linguistics. This research model studies the identity or the approximate identity between texts, and if shifts are systemic or not. The approaching method of the research is not causal or explanatory but first of all descriptive.

The source text is Luigi Pirandello's novel entitled *Il fu Mattia Pascal*, and the target text is its translation by Déry Tibor entitled *Mattia Pascal két élete*.

The basic linguistic elements will be considered as the subject of the research through the three main types of deixis such as person deixis, place deixis and time deixis. I look for all the presence of the ten deictic items in the original Italian text, then their equivalences in the Hungarian translation.

We will see how often and in which typical cases occurs a deictic element as a deictic one in the target text, and we will look for systemic connection between shifts.

2. The theoretical background

2.1. Lexical meaning – current meaning

The meaning is a relative notion that can be defined in several ways depending on the base of comparison. Chierchia also approaches the question from different point of views: distinguishes a closer and a wider sense of the meaning. While the former is determined by the linguistic system, the latter is determined by the linguistic usage. We would rightly arise the question whether a word has an own, lexical meaning or not. There are such opinions that a word exists only in context, not by itself. On the other hand Antal László says: 'The meaning basically and in general is independent of the context'. According to the most of the linguists the meaning of a word has an essential meaning which is independent of the specific usage, determined by the language community, and these are the terms of communication. In W. Schmidt's opinion a word can weaken certain meanings or create new ones in different contexts, so words can develop 'new, current meanings'.

The interpretation and the definition of lexical and contextual meaning, just like the definition of the connection between them, as we can see, are not homogeneous. According to many

experts the duality expressed by the lexical meaning-current meaning notion pair can compared with the correlation between the *langue* of Saussure (linguistic system) and *parole* (speech act). The key issue of this dialectical relation is how and what is transferred to the level of the use of language and to the language stock from the vocabulary and the dictionary. In the course of the process of translation is essential the comprehension of the current content of communication of the source language item to which help the closer and wider context and the circumstances of the communication. The correspondence of the lexical meanings of foreign-language words is only of approaching type and imperfect. A word can be untranslatable but the utterance is always translatable.

That group of words which depend the most on the context, and of which interpretation the *ego-hic-nunc* parameters are essentials, are the deictic expressions.

2.2. Deixis

Deixis is a linguistic phenomenon in which certain expressions can be interpreted only in the knowledge of the particular coordinates of the context. Deixis refers to something that is outside of the sentence but is inside the speech situation (except for the discourse deixis). According to Levinson deixis obviously reflects the correlation between language and context in the structure of a language. The deictic elements, or using another universal word, the indexical elements have become one of the key issues of the formal semantics and the pragmatic linguistics since the 1970s. Now we know that deixis is not limited to pronouns and adverbials but it is a much more common phenomenon. Deictic elements in general organize themselves in an egocentric way: the central person is the one who is speaking, the central time is that one when the speaker shows his utterance, the central place is that one where the speaker is in the course of the utterance. Deixis covers three main categories: person, place and time deixis. Levinson completes the three traditional conceptual classes of the deixis with the categories of the discourse deixis and the social deixis.

I study the three main categories of deixis in detail: person, place and the time deixis.

3. The result of the research

3.1. Person deixis

The theme of the research are the speaker's and the addressee's, two forms of the person deixis, forms in the third person singular in nominative case. I studied whether the deictic elements of *io* (I) and *tu* (you) preserve their deictic quality in the translated text, and if so, in what percentage they do it.

The novel is written in the first person singular that can be the explanation of the considerable, numerically 362 presence of *io*. The translator expresses the speech function with the personal pronoun *én* in the 50% of the Italian presence.

Io is present as *én* in the Hungarian text when its stressed quality and rheme function is expressed in post-verbal position, there is an emphasis of meaning on *io* – among this we can also find those sentences which express private opinion. The translator did not ignore the deictic elements neither in the cases of list more characters and expression of contrast. The writer expressed the addressee's part with a lot fewer deictic elements, 64, times that is a sixth part of the expression of the speaker's part. This part using the personal pronoun *te* in the Hungarian text is realized in 60%. The classification of the occurrence shows the same result as in the case of the speaker's part. It is not obligatory to use personal pronouns neither in Italian nor in Hungarian, since verbal morphemes act as deictic elements that refer to the participants of the speech act. Nevertheless, verbal morphemes appeared more often in the

studied Hungarian text than in the Italian one. We can also claim that we cannot speak about explicitation in the case of the translation of the personal deixis.

3.2. Place deixis

I studied the Hungarian occurrence and the equivalences of *qui* and *qua* (here) and *lì* and *là* (there) within the category of the place deixis. It is an inherent characteristic and a lexically given quality of *qui*, *qua*, *lì* and *là* that they are indexical phrases. In the Italian text the pronouns *qui* and *qua* that refer close to the speaker (positive pole) occurred 112 times while those that refer far from the speaker, *lì* and *là* (negative pole), 140 times altogether. It is frequent also in the case of *qui* and *qua* (the half or a third of the cases) that their Hungarian lexical equivalent do not appear in the translation while in the case of *lì* and *là* it is conspicuously frequent (60%). The omission in the case of all the four words we could observe in those sentence contexts which included typically double adverb of place. The very frequent use of *lì* and *là* in the Italian text, their considerable omission in the Hungarian one and the frequent syntactic context of double adverb of place in these cases raise the possibility of the conclusion that the deictic adverbs of place do not often have any semantic content, they are only filler words. When the translator do not applies omission but any Hungarian equivalences of these four elements, expresses explicitly the referent, in almost 40% of the cases, in spite of using any indexical phrases.

3.3. Time deixis

I set the study of four deictic elements that refer to time as an aim: *ieri* (yesterday), *oggi* (today), *domani* (tomorrow) and *adesso* (now). *Ieri* did not occur so I could study three Italian deictic elements and their Hungarian equivalents. I could see that the time deixis does not occur so often as person and place deixis do, the three studied elements occur only 64 times altogether. Their Hungarian equivalences do not appear in the Hungarian text only in 20% in their entirety, and typically remain deictic elements in the translation as well. The translator often took the opportunity to choose a more explicit deictic element. It can be claimed that also the tense influences the choice of the deictic element which refers to time.

4. Conclusion

The person deixis shows the less variety. 50-60% of the lexical meanings preserved their sense in the translated text. In the other cases, in the translation very typically ‘only’ the verbal personal suffix referred to the participants of the speech act. In insignificant per cent of the cases the personal pronoun was replaced with a pronoun or an adverb provided with a personal suffix (e.g. *előttem*, *belőlem*), which replacement could be arise naturally from another way of formulation of a thought. The relation of the personal deixis – especially of *én* -, the deictic centre was more unambiguous, so the translator had less latitude and freedom of choice.

In the case of the place deixis, in the Hungarian translation they preserved their lexical meaning in 25-30%. The translator’s most frequent solution was that he did not use any deictic elements in the Hungarian text. The background of this choice is that there was another, specific adverb of place to indicate the referent, so the deixis seemed to be a pleonastic use. The expectation that the translator expresses himself in a more explicit way, showed the most in this one of the three cases. I could find numerous nouns provided with suffixes of adverb of place in the place of indexical expressions.

The time deixis did not occur so often and showed less variety as for its translation. In a bit more of the half of the cases it preserved its lexical meaning. When the translator

translated it in another way, it was still a deictic expression but its relation was more specific and exact.

In its entirety, the omission of deictic elements is a noticeable phenomenon. Behind this fact there is often the pleonastic use that is, the deictic expression actually does not serve its deictic function. The quite free passage between and inside the place and time deixis is quite an unusual phenomenon, for example there > here, today > tomorrow, here > now. The freedom of choice of words proves that the interpretation of the text is determinant. The statement which says that the lexical meaning of deictic expressions is a frame, a structure of meaning not fully completed that will become a complete value as a result of the translator's sophisticated interpreter work, proves true in the case of deictic expressions.

5. The profit of the research, further possibilities

The here presented analysis is utilizable in contrastive semantic research, in the methodology of Italian language teaching and in translator training. In the following it would worth considering the research of deictic elements *not* in literary text to see if the result is characteristic of deixis itself. A research in texts translated from other foreign languages to Hungarian could result a useful outcome concerning the universal behaviour of deictic elements.

6. The author's publications in issue at research of translation so far

Essays:

- 2001. A megőrzés dilemmája a műfordításban. In: *A X. Magyar Alkalmazott Nyelvészeti Kongresszus előadásainak válogatott gyűjteménye*. Székesfehérvár: Kodolányi János Főiskola. 379-385.
- 2001. Bruno Osimo: Corso di traduzione (review) In: *Fordítástudomány* 6. Budapest: Scholastica. 125-127.
- 2002. A szinonimaválasztás dilemmája a fordításban. In: *A XI. Magyar Alkalmazott Nyelvészeti Kongresszus előadásainak gyűjteménye*. Pécs: Lingua Franca Csoport. 498-504.
- 2002. Introduzione alla traduttologia. In: *Nuova Corvina* 12. Budapest: Istituto Italiano di Cultura. 121-126.
- 2003. Átváltási műveletek. In: *Il Nuovo Baretti* 2. Cosenza: Il Baretti. 295-317.
- 2003. Osservazioni su due traduzioni di Pinocchio. In: *Ambra*. Szombathely: BDF. 204-218.
- 2004. A fordítói kompetencia elemei. In: *Fordítástudomány* 11. Budapest: Scholastica. 82-95.

Books:

- 2001. *Olasz-magyar fordítástechnikai példatár és feladatgyűjtemény*. Budapest: Eötvös József Kiadó.
- 2004. *Olasz-magyar fordítóiskola*. Budapest: Eötvös József Kiadó.