

TNA ACTIVITY REPORT

The principle of sustainability as the basis for the translator's stylistic creation

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The objective of the research project

The overarching objective of my project is to prove whether the Swedish translation of Witold Gombrowicz's unique novel "Trans-Atlantyk", conducted by the translator Anders Bodegård (first published 2009) is based on a certain general principle that has become the basis for the translator's stylistic creation and consequently a sense-making mechanism for multi-level readings of the novel on the ground of the foreign target culture – readings that may be seen as congruent to the ways, in which the text is read in the source culture. The hypothesis set forth in the project is that what underlies the translator's stylistic creation of the Swedish text is the principle of sustainability, cognitively economical and deeply inscribed in the functioning of natural language in communication. Viewed in this way, the principle pertains to finding a balance between the lost (old) and the new at the level of linguistic structures. In the Swedish translation, the principle has come to the fore through the translator's following the guidelines of Gombrowicz himself and on the other hand through the translator's creative approach to communication, his use of linguistic structures that today can be labeled as progressive (new) in Swedish. The frequency and combinations of such structures, conceived at different language levels constitute patterns of expression that underlie the linguistic construction of the translated text and its multifaceted style. In my research, I aim to find out such patterns.



My main object of the study is the chosen Swedish text, 44518 tokens, analyzed holistically. During my stay at the Charles University in Prague, the study was also extended to the text of the Polish original. Statistical analysis of linguistic data aims at (1) the frequency of occurrences of specific linguistic units in the text (2) the regularity of occurrences of specific linguistic patterns of expression in the text, (3) the reference point taken as a comparative norm.

While in Prague, I focused particularly on point 3, which is the most difficult part of the research. I assumed that it would allow me to learn new tools for searching digital data most effectively, which would ultimately increase the observability and replicability of my analyses. My general research question was: What characterizes the Polish novel is unconventional syntax. Does the Swedish translation preserve the syntactic unconventionality? Can we measure that?

The activities carried out during the fellowship

During my stay at the Charles University in Prague I have started learning new methods of data search and analysis, as well as how to apply modern software possibilities to my research. I learned it from scratch. Previously, I used manual analysis of linguistic structures via close reading of a text.

My mentor set a goal-oriented way of teaching me new skills (see e.g. the files: Conventuality of Literary text ...; How to search – Polish corpus). My first step was to juxtapose the original text with its translation into Swedish using Inter-Text software. The software made easier for me the initial sourcing of linguistic data performed through close reading of the text in both languages. This allowed me to observe to what extent the structures correspond and are similar to each other in the source and target language. As for the future, the compilation also will help me to determine the number of sentences in the translation and the original, as well as the number of words in a sentence under investigation (this was one of my initial research goals pertaining to the novels style).

The main research was focused on analyzing one of the key linguistic structures in the Swedish text, i.e. the construction of the initial part of the sentence, the so-called fundament. The study was therefore limited to the fundament in a graphical utterance (beginning with a capital letter and ending with a dot/question mark/exclamation mark) that was chosen as the basic unit of my analysis. The issue was also studied in a stylistic manual (Pitkänen-Koli, 1986. Analysmodell för stilistiska undersökningar. Manual for kvantitativ analys [‘Analysis model for stylistic studies. Manual for quantitative analysis’]).

After discussing the research project together with my mentor, we concluded that the specifics of the use of syntactic constructions in the place of the fundament in the Swedish translation of the novel would be compared with the use of this structure in Swedish as represented in Korp SpråkbankenTEXT, the largest available corpus of the Swedish language (<https://spraakbanken.gu.se>). We found this solution to be more up-to-date than the solution I planned initially. (Initially in the project, the reference point adopted in the study

was defined as standard usage of Swedish, in which the frequency for selected structures has been determined in earlier, extensive Swedish stylistic studies on various genres).

This solution was proposed by my mentor, as was extending the study to the original text and examining it according to the same method. This approach, therefore, made it possible to relate the Polish original text to the data available in a Polish language corpus.

The chosen course of action is also promising for the future as it will make it possible to determine other features of the style of the novel against the background of modern Swedish and Polish language represented by the huge language data.

Distinguishing the inventory of structures present in the initial part of a sentence in the Swedish text based on the formulated queries was a completely new experience for me. In order to conduct the study, I had to familiarize myself with and learn how to formulate queries in the query language used in Korp (CQL)

<https://spraakbanken.gu.se/verktyg/korp/anvandarhandledning>;
<https://www.gu.se/sites/default/files/2021-03/Att%20so%CC%88ka%20i%20Korp%20med%20CQP%20och%20Regexp.pdf> .

The text of the novel has been integrated into the Korp corpus thanks to the Mink research platform (see the file: A simple search). This made it possible for me to search for structures according to the same key in Korp and in Mink. Thanks to the software, certain values, e.g. nominal quote or readability index of the translated text, were set automatically (I was initially going to make their determination as relevant for the style description in the Swedish translation of the novel).

Formulating queries in CQL proved difficult and time-consuming. The first formulated queries were too restrictive and did not allow for the emergence of structures that could be observed in the INTER-TEXT file (see the file: First queries). The final queries established for the Swedish text, made it possible to distinguish more occurrences of the structures. However, it was still uncertain whether the acquired linguistic data corresponded to the actual state in the analyzed text. For this reason, a final analysis by using Excel software was included in the research procedure (see below).

Since Språkbanken's query language is slightly different from Universal Dependencies language, I had to get acquainted with Universal Dependencies (universaldependencies.org) and another query language for data analysis in Polish (see the file: Conventionality of Literary Text...). For doing this, I also used online materials that my mentor recommended on my request (see:

<https://campus.dariah.eu/resource/events/cls-infra-training-school-on-data-and-annotation>).

I became familiar with searching for structures in a Polish corpus. In this case, my mentor prepared an online video instruction for me on how to search and formulate queries in the Polish National Corpus (howToSearchPolishInterCorpUDWithKonText https://cunicz-my.sharepoint.com/:v/g/personal/50243070_cuni_cz/ER9Fk6oN1j1Hgs0RDruXdIABCqTOLfUZv9OCA_G4d5uckg?e=v7btNs).

The formulated queries for the Swedish and Polish texts were sent to the mentor (see the file: queries - final). The mentor is to establish the profile of the linguistic structure under study (the initial part of the sentence - fundament) in the Swedish and Polish language corpora. I have applied the queries to the Swedish text and will apply them to the Polish original.

To get a realistic picture of the category under study in both the Swedish and Polish texts, the translation text and the original text were analyzed using the Excel spreadsheet with one row corresponding to one graphical sentence. After the sentence, the text followed by four columns with syntactic labels. I analyzed the Swedish and the Polish text for each syntactic label whether it is present in the fundament (without taking into account what the queries can do or what the parser can do) (see the files in Excel). The Excel spreadsheets have been sent to the mentor to continue the research.

Additional competencies I acquired during my stay in Prague were how to acquire information through scientific contacts when, for example, the Mink platform or corpus search engine do not work properly.

Considerations over future work

The results of the analyses conducted will be subject to further verification. I plan to meet with the mentor to discuss the final results of the analysis. The analysis and its results will be a scientific article, which me and my mentor intend to publish.