

TNA ACTIVITY REPORT

What characterizes the Polish novel *Trans-Atlantyk* by W. Gombrowicz is unconventional syntax. Does the Swedish translation of the novel preserve the syntactic unconventionality? How can we measure that?

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Preparation for analysis and an initial research question

My second stay at Charles University in Prague was focused on preparing a scientific article connected with my research project dedicated to the Swedish translation of W.

Gombrowicz's novel *Trans-Atlantyk*.

After discussing the research project with my mentor, Silvie Cinková, we decided to conduct research on sentence initials (the so-called "fundament") in the Swedish translation. The initial research question was based on my previous studies of the translation and was formulated as follows:

What characterizes the Polish novel *Trans-Atlantyk* by W. Gombrowicz is unconventional syntax. Does the Swedish translation of the novel preserve the syntactic unconventionality?

An additional research issue was to observe whether the original word order, with the finite verb occurring at the end of the sentence, might have caused an information overload in the sentence-initial position in the translation.



We decided that the specifics of syntactic constructions used in the sentence-initial position in the Swedish translation of the novel would be compared with the use of such structures in Swedish across various text types, as represented in InterCorp version 13ud, which has been automatically labeled with Universal Dependencies. **We considered this solution more up-to-date than the one originally planned.** Initially, the reference point in the study was defined as standard Swedish usage, with frequencies for selected structures determined by earlier, extensive Swedish stylistic studies across various genres.

We also decided not to extend the study to the original text or to data available in a Polish language corpus, as this would have made the article too long and complex.

Since we decided that we would publish an article to the Digital Scholarship in the Humanities (DSH) we familiarized ourselves with the articles that have been published there in recent years to match the requirements of the journal (https://academic.oup.com/dsh/issue/36/Supplement_1).

On the first day we agreed on what parts of the article to write. I worked on the introduction presenting Gombrowicz's *Trans-Atlantyk* and its translation into Swedish in a wider literary and translational research context. The second section I prepared concerned the concept of *marked/unmarked* in linguistics as a basis for our research. The concept of markedness can be defined in different ways. We applied it to stylistic research and syntax. The length and the position of a sentence initial can be marked i.e. outstanding or more regular as compared to different types of literature. The third part I prepared concerned Swedish word order and the nature of sentence initials in the language. This issue was illustrated with a few examples from our language data to show the sentence initials as they occur in the data. Writing the abstract helped me better understand the structure of the article.

The research resulted in a new title of the article: *A case of syntactic markedness as a successful cultural transmitter: the Swedish translation of Trans-Atlantyk by Witold Gombrowicz*.

During my first 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 tools to my research. I learned these skills from scratch. Therefore, during my second stay, I repeated the methods, which was fruitful, as I could ask questions directly to my mentor. To conduct the empirical part of our study, I formulated queries in the query language used in InterCorp. These queries enabled us to harvest different linguistic structures in the sentence initial position (nsubj, obj, obl, xcomp, advmod, advcl). My mentor prepared the analytical part of the article based on statistical calculations, displaying each structure separately.

Writing the paper

Work on the article proceeded in such a way that each of us, after writing her section, subjected the partner's section to close reading and revisions. Working via OneDrive, Silvie revised my part from the perspective of an external reader, ensuring that my Polish-influenced writing would be understandable to an international audience. I did the same with her part.

Nonetheless, since the analytical section included advanced computational statistical analysis of linguistic data, Silvie explained her reasoning and data presentation to me in detail.

Degree of progress of the article

At this stage, the article contains a completed theoretical part and an analytical part, which needs to be supplemented with comments based on statistical data analysis that have been prepared.

The theoretical part includes following sections:

1. Introduction
 - 1.1. Stylization and intertextuality in *Trans-Atlantyk*
 - 1.2. *Trans-Atlantyk* as a translation challenge
 - 1.3. Transmission of cultural concepts in the Swedish translation
 - 1.4. Syntactic markedness in the Swedish translation

Final specific research questions are:

1. Is the sentence initial in the Swedish translation of *Trans-Atlantyk* longer than usual in written Swedish texts?
2. Is the length of the sentence initial in the Swedish translation of *Trans-Atlantyk* particularly outstanding with specific clause elements populating the sentence initial, or does the type of clause element play no role?

The empirical part has been elaborated (see attachments). Each of the distinguished sentence initials (i.e. nsubj, obj, obl, xcomp, advmod, advcl) is described separately, with reference to the research questions.