

Translation of Hungarian Economic Lexicons With Specific Regard to Neologisms

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Abstract

The subject of this paper is the expansion of the Hungarian economic lexicons with specific regard to the neologisms that can be observed in the scenes of economic language. The paper intends to contribute to the researches in the field of applied linguistics, the linguistics of professional languages by the elaboration of some issues of professional foreign word-formation at the lexical-semantic levels. The paper aims to point out the reasons for the appearance and the translation of new economic lexical units and their roles in Hungarian language.

Keywords: translation, special language, neologism, word-formation, professional language

1. Introduction

Neologisms are perhaps the non-literary and the professional translator's biggest problem. New objects and processes are continually created in technology. New ideas and variations on feelings come from the media. Terms from the social sciences, slang, dialect coming into the mainstream of language, transferred words, make up the rest. It has been stated that each language acquire 3000 new words, annually, but in fact, neologisms can not be accurately quantified, since so many hover between acceptance and oblivion and many are short-lived, individual creations. In other words, **neologisms** are new words, word-combinations or fixed phrases that appear in the language due to the development of social life, culture, science and engineering. New meanings of existing words are also accepted as neologisms. The problem of translation of new words ranks high on the list of challenges facing translators because such words are not readily found in ordinary dictionaries and even in the latest specialized dictionaries mostly concerning the economic language.

Applying Hoffmann's well-known model (HOFFMANN 1984 : 66) and Braun's classification (BRAUN 1993 : 194), the paper distinguishes three vertical levels of economic language use:

- theoretical economics can be placed at the level of theoretical sciences. This type of communication has the highest degree of abstraction. Its typical genres are: the scientific treatise, the scientific works, and the special books, in which a theoretical economist communicates with a theoretical economist or with a prospective economist. Besides the natural language artificial mathematical codes are also used to express symbols and relations, such as *Volumenertrag* (scale of return = the expression of the extent of relation between the increase of all the resources and the increase of output by economic-mathematical calculation: $\alpha \cdot Q = f(\beta \cdot K; \beta \cdot L)$.)
- the various economic sub-disciplines, e.g. international forwarding, economy and management, economy and marketing, can be placed at the level of applied sciences. Its typical genres are *der Geschäftsbericht* (business report), *die Allgemeine Lieferbedingungen* (the general terms of delivery), and *der Kaufvertrag* (the contract of sale). The degree of abstraction of the typical genres is still high and they are terminologically loaded, the typical terms can be e.g.: *die Incoterms* (Incoterms), *die AIDA-Formel* (the AIDA-model), *das Termingeschäft* (the forward contract)) *das Yield Management* (yield management), *(außenwirtschaftliches Gleichgewicht* (balance of trade).
- the everyday economic language use can be put at the level of Hoffmann's 'consumption' level, which is the way the non-professional, but interested person or the man in the street talks or writes e-mails about the tax system, the inflation, the price rise, the new choice of products, etc. This level has the lowest degree of abstraction. It can be considered the everyday / standard language; the sentence construction is free, and some special terms are used, e.g. *Preiserhöhung* (price rise) *Inflation* (inflation), *Arbeitslosigkeit* (unemployment).

2. Goals

The goals of this study are to find typical translation strategies, the knowledge of which might be useful for those translating neologisms. These strategies will be illustrated by examples.

3. Methods

I employed various methods.

- I built the corpora of text types of such English and Hungarian professional journals, in which experts communicate with experts, whose profile and frequency of publication are more or less the same.
- In order to prove my hypotheses I chose the method of computer-assisted corpus-analysis.
- Before starting my examinations I selected the neologisms to be examined by various selection procedures.
- I conducted quantitative and qualitative examinations on the corpora.
- When performing the examinations I applied the contrastive method, which is a comparative-descriptive examination procedure in the course of which the researcher concentrates on the differences between the two language systems under examination (REIN 1983 : 1). In order to preserve accuracy and authenticity I only compared two languages at a time. The method applied is always of an asymmetric character (GAK – ROJZENBLIT 1965 : 3) , i.e. out of the languages to be examined one of them is the source language, the second is the target languages.

4. Hypotheses:

- A. The Hungarian economic specialist language is susceptible to English borrowings.
- B. When analysing the Hungarian equivalents of the English economic terms, it can be observed that in Hungarian in most cases compound word is expressed by a collocation / word-group.
- C. The formation of inner neologisms as an alternative to external neologisms is active; their use is frequent in the economic professional languages.

5. Neologisms

Nikska (1998) draws on the concept of "translational creativity" to claim that:

„Neologisms are tokens of a creative process, "a novel relational product, growing out of the uniqueness of the individual on the one hand, and the materials, events, people, or circumstances of his life on the other."

We in respect of the definition of neologism accept Herberg's approach:

„Ein Neologismus ist eine lexikalische Einheit (bzw. ein Formativ oder eine Bedeutung), die in einem bestimmten Abschnitt der Sprachentwicklung auf Grund kommunikativer Bedürfnisse in einer Sprachgemeinschaft aufkommt, sich ausbreitet, als sprachliche Norm kollektiv akzeptiert und in diesem Entwicklungsabschnitt von der Mehrheit der Sprachbenutzer über eine gewisse Zeit als neu empfunden wird.“ A neologism is such a lexical unit (or such a formative or meaning) that is formed at a certain stage of language development, on the basis of communicative needs in a certain communicative community, spreads, becomes accepted as a language norm, and at this stage of language development most language users perceive it as new' (HERBERG 1988:110).

Newmark proposed 12 types of neologisms:

A) Existing lexical items with new senses:

1. Words
2. Collocations

B) New forms:

1. New coinages
2. Derived words
3. Abbreviations
4. Collocations
5. Eponyms
6. Phrasal words
7. Transferred words (new and old referents)
8. Acronyms (new and old referents)
9. Pseudo-neologisms

10. Internationalism

6. How to Translate Neologisms

Dictionaries lag behind changes in languages. New words, figurative words and phrases, slang and *nonce words*¹ are coined in the language so swiftly that no dictionary can and should register them immediately. Indeed, the number of neologisms appearing in mass media during a year amounts to tens of thousands in developed languages.

Existing collocations with new senses are a translator's trap: usually these are 'normal' descriptive terms which suddenly become technical terms, their meaning sometimes hidden innocently behind a more general or figurative meaning.

Therefore, translators have to find out the meaning of very new neologisms mainly based on the context (a sentence, paragraph, chapter or even the whole document) in which the neologism is used. Neologisms are usually formed on the basis of words and morphemes that already exist in the language. The analysis of these words and morphemes is an additional helpful tool in finding out the meaning of the neologism. For this purpose, the translator should remember word-formation rules, in particular the following:

6.1 New senses

Existing words with new senses, these don't normally refer to new objects or processes and therefore are rarely technological.

For example: *black/illégal*

To sum up old words with new senses tend to be non-cultural and non-technical. They are usually translated either by a word that already exists in the TL, or by a brief functional or descriptive term.

6.2 Derived words

The great majority of neologisms are words derived by analogy from ancient Greek (increasingly) and Latin morphemes usually with suffixes such as -ismo, -ismus, -ja, etc., naturalized in the appropriate language.

For example:

-izál: *aktiv - izál/activate*,

-íroz: *finansz - íroz/finance*

6.3 Acronymes

Abbreviations have always been a common type of pseudo-neologism.

For examples:

ECB – European Central Bank – electronic codebook

PC – Parliamentary Commissioner (=ombudsman) – personal computer

GM – General Motors Corporation – genetically modified

LP- Labour Party – linear programming

ITT – International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation – insuline tolerance test

USA – United States of America – United States Army

UNO – ENSZ: United Nations Organisation – Egyesült Nemzetek Szervezete

VAT - áfa: value added tax – általános forgalmi adó (nem ugyanaz a terminus az eltérő jogrend miatt: VAT – Hozzáadott érték adó)

OSCE – EBESZ: Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe – Európai Biztonsági és Együttműködési Szervezet

6.4 Phrasal words

New 'phrasal words' are restricted to English's facility in converting verbs to nouns (e.g. 'work-out,' 'trade-off,' 'check-out,' 'thermal cut-out,' 'knock-on (domino) effect,' 'laid-back,' 'sit-in').

Note that phrasal words: (a) are often more economical than their translation; (b) usually occupy the peculiarly English register between 'informal' and 'colloquial,' whilst their translations are more formal.

6.5 Transferred words

Newly transferred words keep only one sense of their foreign nationality; they are the words whose meanings are least dependent on their contexts: *marketing*, *VIP*, *pool*, *speditőr*, *outdoor-training*.

6.6 Pseudo-Neologisms

Lastly, the translator has to beware of pseudo-neologisms where, for instance, a generic word stands in for a specific word. And the only generalization Newmark can make is that the translator should be neither favorable nor unfavorable in his view of new words.

6.7 Collocations

New collocations (noun compounds) or (**adjective plus noun**) are particularly common in the economic sciences and in computer language.

For example:

kisvállalkozás/small company

nagyvállalat/big company

útikalauz/guide book

fizetővendég/paying guest

agrárpolitika/agricultural policy

Thus 'lead time,' a term for the time between design and production or between ordering and delivery of a product, has to be translated in context; 'cold-calling' (soliciting on the doorstep) may not last as a term, though the practice will; 'acid rain,' unfortunately a universal phenomenon, is likely to be literally translated everywhere, since it is 'transparent'; 'sunrise industries' refers to electronics and other 'high-tech' industries, and is likely to be ephemeral; therefore the metaphor can be ignored or reduced to sense; 'walkman' is a trade name (eponym) and therefore should not be transferred.

Languages that cannot convert verbs to nouns or, in the case of the Romance languages at least, suppress prepositions, cannot imitate this procedure. For this reason English collocations are difficult to translate succinctly, and an acceptable term emerges only when the referent becomes as important (usually as a universal, but occasionally as a feature of the SL culture) that a more or less lengthy functional-descriptive term will no longer do.

Ways of translating neologisms:

- Selection of an appropriate analogue in a target language
- Transcription and transliteration
- Loan translation and calque
- Explanatory translation and descriptive translation

7. Conclusion

In non-literary texts, you should not normally create neologisms. You create one only: (a) If you have authority; (b) If you compose it out of readily understood Graeco-Latin morphemes.

In a literary text, it is translator's duty to re-create any neologism he meets, on the basis of the SL neologism. When translating a popular advertisement, he can create a neologism, usually with a strong phonaesthetic effect, if it appears to follow the sense of its SL 'counterpart' and is pragmatically effective. The translator can transfer an SL cultural word, if for one reason or another he thinks it important. If he recreates an SL neologism using the same Graeco-Latin morphemes, he has to assure himself: (a) that no other translation already exists; (b) that both the referent and the neologism are not trivial, and that they are likely to interest the SL readership. The more general questions of neologism translation are dependent on language planning, policy and politics. Given the world domination of English, most countries are faced with two forms of English neologisms: (a) Graeco-Latin forms (b) monosyllable collocation. The first are naturalized in most countries, but have their morpheme components translated in Arabic, Japanese and other Asian languages.

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¹ *nonce words* are neologisms made up by writers and publicist for a special literary effect. They are rarely adopted into common language.