

# Power Relations or Language Interference: Extraposed Linking Constructions in the Polish Translation of *The Economist*

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## *Abstract*

*The paper examines how global English influences translations from English into Polish with respect to the so called 'extraposed linking constructions'. The analysis concentrates on different forms of 'extraposed linking constructions', their functions, distribution and their translation equivalents used in the journalistic discourse of The Economist. The use of linking constructions seems to differ in some way in English and in Polish journalistic discourse as Polish word order is freer than the English one. These differences may block English influence on Polish discourse norms via translation. The question that needs to be answered is whether this is the case in this particular discourse type.*

**Keywords:** *globalization, language interference, linking constructions, extraposed absolute linking constructions, extraposed prepositional phrases, syntactic integration.*

## **Globalization and language interference**

Globalization processes have had an impact on the world economy and have influenced the role of translation in the modern world. In the process of globalization, worldwide social relations link distant places and, as a result, what happens locally is influenced by distant events. Globalization is responsible for the rise of translations in many different languages and cultures.

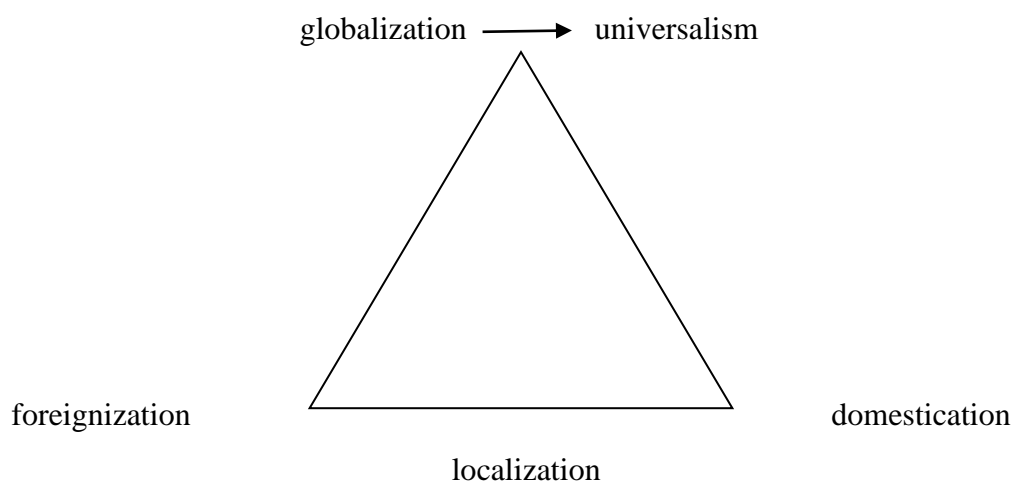
Until recently translators and text producers have shown a tendency to apply a cultural filter. It is the aim of the present paper to investigate the impact of English extraposed linking constructions in the selected articles of *The Economist* on the use of comparable or equivalent Polish linking constructions in the translation process of the articles in question. In other words, do English textual norms in terms of linking constructions 'shine through' the Polish translation of mass media or journalistic discourse? Hence, is there a tendency of cultural and linguistic levelling? Do the usage norms of 'weaker' languages converge with those of the dominant English ones, which may result in universalism in translation? (Under universalism Assmann (2010: 121) understands "the rise of theories, ideas or beliefs with a claim to universal validity".) Or, to the contrary, can one talk about localization in the form of domestication, which means that cultural filter is applied in the translation process?

According to Esselink (2003: 67), localization is about customizing things for a 'local' audience, a process that involves "taking a product and making it linguistically, technically and culturally appropriate to the target locale where it will be used and sold". It can be defined linguistically as adjusting a product to suit the target users with respect to their language expectations. In result, what is culturally and ideologically unacceptable might have to be eliminated in the localization process.

In cultural adaptation studies one can distinguish between domestication versus foreignization (Venuti 1995), depending on whether the target or the source culture elements are more dominant in the translated text. While foreignization ensures adequacy of

translation, domestication determines its accessibility and/or comprehensibility to the local audience. It is noteworthy that according to Boltuc (2019), globalization and localization may be viewed as super-categories, where localization embodies or incorporates the socio-cultural phenomena of foreignization and domestication. Accordingly, four concepts (foreignization versus domestication and globalization versus localization) can be distinguished (Bołtuc 2019).

If a translated text has ‘domestic’ or ‘foreign’ elements, they will be viewed as localization processes. If it has more elements of the global culture, these phenomena will be described as globalization processes. Both pairs of these opposing concepts (foreignization versus domestication and globalization versus localization) are not simply the opposites, but they form a continuum (Boltuc 2019). Theoretically, any text could be placed somewhere inside the triangle below, not necessarily on its perimeter. The more the target text is altered (in comparison to the original or the start text), the more domesticated or localized it is. *Fig. 1* shows a tentative scheme for analyzing domestication versus foreignization, and localization versus globalization.



*Figure 1 A tentative scheme for analyzing foreignization/domestication and globalization/localization.*

It is possible for mass media or global texts to be classified somewhere in the area between or inside the three extremes: 1. foreignized and localized, 2. domesticated and localized, and 3. globalized or rather universal. It should also be mentioned that universalism seems to be an intellectual and spiritual phenomenon. Globalization, in turn, is a political, economic and civilizational process that is connected with material culture (Assmann 2010).

While it is evident that the translation of mass media texts is the effect of globalization, the relation between globalization and language interference needs to be clarified. Language interference (also known as linguistic interference or cross meaning) refers to the situation in which speakers or writers apply knowledge from their native language to a second language. Dulay et al (1982) define interference as the automatic transfer, due to habit, of the surface structure of the first language onto the surface structure of the target language. This kind of interference can also be treated as errors in the learner’s use of the foreign language that are generated under the influence of the mother tongue. Ellis

(1997: 51) in turn defines interference as transfer, which he says is “the influence that the learner’s L1 exerts over the acquisition of the L2.”

It is noteworthy that we can talk about language inference not only in connection with the process of acquiring a foreign language, but also in connection with the process of translating from the source language into the target language and it does not seem to matter whether the translator is translating from or into his or her mother tongue. The interference of the English language, however, would more likely be referred to as a borrowing process. In most cases, either the foreign or the domestic elements in terms of word choices or even some grammatical constructions are more predominant in the translated texts.

### **Register and linking constructions**

Register can be defined as a variety of language made use of for a particular purpose or in a particular situation, for example, degree of formality. Change of register is largely perceived as culture-dependent. It can also be claimed that there is always some ideology behind style (defined as a specific manner of writing, characteristic of a given writer, historical period or genre, less or more literary, for example). Thus, the notion of style, contrary to register, seems to be more ideology-dependent.

Van Dijk (1988: 73), however, defines style as “the total set of characteristic, variable structural features of discourse that are an indication of the personal and social context of the speaker, given a semantic, pragmatic, or situational invariant”. In this definition style encompasses register. Van Dijk (1988: 27) is right claiming that style is an indicator of context in a text as it may unveil some personal or social factors of the communicative context. As a result, it seems obvious that style and register are somehow interrelated.

One can also find the trace of style and/or register used by an author in the linking words or constructions used. Linking words and constructions are single, or multiple-word, lexico-grammatical patterns used to indicate a relationship between some part of a prior and/or following discourse. We can distinguish ‘unembedded/extraposed linking constructions’, unattached to the syntax of the clause they introduce (Haegeman 2009). They appear on the left periphery of a sentence (*After all, In addition*, for example). Linking constructions negotiate information between a writer and a reader, identify, reinforce or foreground theme, exemplify, introduce, re-introduce, add and contrast information or a referent and indicate temporal sequencing. According to Prince (1985), they facilitate the processing of discourse-new entities.

Bühlig and House (2007) identified two types of ‘extraposed linking constructions’:  
1. extraposed absolute linking constructions (*Given this result, Simply put, Viewed differently*) and 2. extraposed prepositional phrases (*After all, In particular, On the other hand, In fact, In short, In contrast, In addition*). These linking constructions can behave differently in translation; they can be preserved, substituted, omitted or they can undergo syntactic integration with some other part of a sentence. According to House (2017: 52), extraposed absolute linking constructions are infrequent in the popular-science corpus.

### **Data and methodology**

I will investigate the behavior of English extraposed linking words or constructions, occupying sentence initial position, in the translation into Polish in global or mass media discourse. The data analyzed consists of 11 articles published in *The Economist* (special

edition – *The World in 2011*) and their Polish translations. The limited scope of the material is justified by the fact that *The Economist* is normally not translated into Polish, only its special editions can sometimes be translated. All full-length articles published in the special edition of *The Economist – The World in 2011* have been chosen for the analysis (about 12 000 words altogether).

There are a few hypotheses underlying the analysis of occurrence, variation, omission and change of linking constructions discussed in the previous section:

- (1) Global English as dominant lingua franca influences communicative preferences and discourse norms in Polish through language contact in translation.
- (2) The cultural filter applied in cultural adaptation – domestication – is no longer applied because of English influence on Polish translated texts – foreignization.
- (3) Anglophone influence is particularly visible in mass media, journalistic, economic and scientific discourse.

Following House (2017), who draws the same conclusions about German popular-science discourse, I assume that Anglophone and Polish mass media discourse preferences can vary along the following dimensions: directness versus indirectness, orientation towards content versus orientation towards persons and explicitness versus implicitness. As a result, there can be a more detached communicative style in Polish and German, and a more interactional and involved style in English mass media, journalistic or popular science discourse.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, in the continental tradition (including Poland) popular-science journals were lighter scientific journals addressed to educated audience such as engineers or high school teachers, whereas in the mid or late 19<sup>th</sup> century in the Anglo-American tradition popular-science magazines addressing a broader audience emerged. For example, *Scientific American*, *National Geographic* and *The Economist* were all originally published in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Consequently, it seems that a journalistic or popular science genre as such has a longer tradition in the English-speaking countries than in Poland. The popular science genre is less established in Polish culture (translations of these magazines or their Polish versions appeared towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century).

As a result, Polish and German popular science texts tend to be less ‘popular’ and closer to scientific texts (Bołtuć 2016, House 2017). Similar conclusions can be drawn in relation to other most widely used European languages (French and Spanish, for example) (Kranich and González Diaz 2010, Küppers 2008, Probst 2001). For instance, House (2017: 51) writes that “the German popular science genre is generally less interpersonally oriented, less addressee- and more content-oriented as well as more written than spoken”. According to Bołtuć (2016), the same can be said about Polish journalistic and especially popular-science discourse.

The analysis undertaken in the project consisted of the following steps:

- (1) Extraction of all occurrences of English ‘extraposed linking constructions’ and their translational occurrence or variation in translated texts.
- (2) Frequency counts in the comparative corpora.
- (3) Are equivalent items used for the same communicative purpose in different corpora?
- (4) Interpretation of findings.

The methodology employed in this project is a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. It consisted in categorizing corresponding linking devices and frequency count in the two languages to see if they were susceptible to variation and/or

change under the influence of the English norms. Manual annotation was used to find different co-occurrences of various kinds.

### Analysis of extraposed linking constructions

What struck me most in the material analyzed is the frequency of the use of contrasting conjunction *but* in this kind of journalistic discourse. Originally it appeared 29 times in sentence initial position in English. When it appeared in the mid position of a sentence it was usually translated in a literal way as *ale* or *jednak*. In sentence initial position it was usually translated as *Ale* – there were 9 such instances. At this point it needs to be stressed that it is uncommon or even ungrammatical in Polish to begin sentences with ‘*ale*’ and it can certainly be considered a colloquial style. This is where the influence of English is very visible as translators exhibited the tendency to translate this conjunction in a literal way and substituted it with the closest equivalent ‘*ale*’, even in sentence initial position. This conjunction, however, is equally frequently substituted in Polish by other contrasting conjunctions such as *Jednak*, *Niemniej* or *Natomiast* (literally, ‘yet’, ‘but’, ‘however’,) – 11 such instances have been found. It is more common in Polish to begin sentences with *Jednak*, *Niemniej* (which is a short form of *niemniej jednak* ‘nevertheless’) than with *Ale* which sounds more colloquial. There are also 4 instances where the conjunction *but* was omitted in translation when it was in sentence initial position in the original. And there are 5 instances where English initial *But* was substituted by Polish *jednak*, *niemniej jednak*, *natomiast* (synonymous conjunctions to English *but*) and was embedded in mid-sentence position. Consider the examples below:

- (1) *But* the savagery could also be the start of something much more beneficial.  
*Ale* zdecydowane cięcia mogłyby też doprowadzić do czegoś o wiele bardziej pozytywnego.  
‘*But* decisive cuts could also lead to something much more positive’.  
(there were 9 instances with Polish initial *ale*)
- (2) *But* that something should not be austerity at any price.  
*Jednak* tym czymś nie może być oszczędzanie za wszelką cenę.  
‘*However*, that something cannot be saving at any cost’.  
(there were 11 instances with Polish initial *jednak*, *niemniej*)
- (3) *But* no numerological thrill-seeker need feel short-changed in 2011.  
W 2011r. żaden numerologiczny poszukiwacz nie powinien się czuć zawiedziony.  
‘In 2011 no numerological seeker should feel disappointed’.  
(there were 4 instances of omission of initial *but*)
- (4) *But* a more balanced German economy will not be enough to rescue some euro-zone countries from a difficult year.  
Bardziej stabilna gospodarka Niemiec nie wystarczy *jednak*, by uchronić niektóre kraje strefy euro przed trudnościami w nadchodzącym roku.  
‘A more stable German economy is not enough, *however*, to save some euro zone countries from the difficulties in the coming year’.  
(there were 5 instances where English initial *But* was incorporated/embedded in mid-sentence position in Polish translation).

It is a different story with English initial conjunction *And* (*I* in Polish). It appeared in sentence initial position only 5 times in English. It was substituted by Polish *A* (literally,

‘but’, which usually introduces some contrasting information in Polish) twice and once by *Ponadto* (literally, ‘moreover’). There were also two instances where English initial *And* was omitted in Polish translation.

Consider the following sentences:

- (5) *And* the blame for most of this lies with California’s voters.  
A największą winę za ten stan rzeczy ponoszą kalifornijscy wyborcy.  
‘*And* the Californian voters bear the greatest guilt for this state of affairs’.  
(there were 2 instances with Polish initial *A* and one with *Ponadto*)
- (6) *And* that’s a new year’s resolution that can start painlessly – on 1:1:11.  
Takie nowoczesne postanowienie byłoby pierwszego dnia bezbolesne: 01-01-11.  
‘This new year’s resolution would be painless on the first day – 01-01-11’.  
(there were 2 instances where English initial *And* was omitted in Polish translation)

English *So* in turn appeared only 3 times; it was translated as *Dlatego też* (literally, ‘also, for this reason’) once. It was translated as *więc* (literally ‘so’, and was embedded in the Polish sentence structure in mid-position) once and was also omitted one time in Polish translation. Consider the following instances:

- (7) *So* the private sector will need to take the strain, *and* the signs here are not good.  
*Dlatego też* powstanie potrzeba, by ciężar ten został przejęty przez sektor prywatny, a tu znaki nie wróżą dobrze.’ (one instance)  
‘*Also, for this reason*, a need will arise for the private sector to take over the strain, and here the signs are not good’.
- (8) *So* the fashion may not last.  
Moda może *więc* nie potrwać długo.’ (one instance)  
‘*So* the fashion may not last long’.
- (9) *So* Mr Weber’s characteristic bluntness may count against him.  
Obcesowość Webera może działać na jego niekorzyść. (one instance of omission)  
‘Mr Weber’s bluntness may work to his disadvantage’.

It is noteworthy that it is quite uncommon or not very grammatical in Polish to begin sentences with *Dlatego też*, so the sentence number 1 above, being the evidence of the English influence, is not very grammatical. In a similar vein another Polish sentence that start with *Ponieważ* (literally, ‘because or since’) is also rather ungrammatical:

- (10) *Since* human beings have ten fingers...  
*Ponieważ* istoty ludzkie mają dziesięć palców...  
‘*Since* human beings have ten fingers’

There are also two instances with *Yet*, at the beginning of English sentences. This English conjunction is translated by means of *Niemniej* once, which is more or less a literal translation and it is omitted once in translation. Other extraposed absolute linking constructions or linking words used in sentence initial position by English journalists and their Polish translations are as follows:

- (11) *Indeed* – *W rzeczy samej* (literal translation by means of an extraposed prepositional linking construction in Polish)
- (12) *First* – *Po pierwsze* (literal translation by means of an extraposed prepositional linking construction in Polish)
- (13) *Second* – *Po drugie* (literal translation by means of an extraposed prepositional linking construction in Polish)
- (14) *Strangely* – *Dziwne to, ale* (literal translation with a deictic *to*, ‘this’, in Polish translation and conjunction *ale*, ‘but’, which makes the initial conjunction incorporated in the sentence that follows)
- (15) *Even so* – *Mimo to* (literal translation with a deictic *to*, ‘this’, in Polish translation)
- (16) *Unfortunately* – *Niestety* (literal translation in Polish)
- (17) *No doubt* – *Nie ma wątpliwości* (literal translation in Polish)
- (18) *Even* – *Jednak* (literal translation in Polish)
- (19) *Hence* – *Stąd* (literal translation in Polish)
- (20) *Most fundamentally* – *Co najważniejsze* (literal translation in Polish)
- (21) *Despite all this* – *Mimo to* (literal translation, but here English *all* is omitted in translation)
- (22) *One way or another* – *Tak więc* (synonymous expression and *Tak czy inaczej* would be a more literal translation here)

The examples above illustrate the tendency to translate English extraposed absolute linking words or constructions in a literal way into Polish, preserving their sentence initial position.

There are also some extraposed prepositional linking constructions in the English texts analyzed. They are usually translated in a literal or synonymous way; there are however some rare instances when they are omitted or embedded in the body of the sentence in Polish translation. Consider the following examples:

- (23) *In general*, making government smaller is a good idea...  
Zmniejszenie rządu to dobry pomysł... (linking construction *In general* was omitted in Polish translation)  
‘Making the government smaller is a good idea...’
- (24) *After all* – *Koniec końców* (synonymous translation in Polish, ‘in the end’)
- (25) *Far from* – *Co gorsza* (synonymous translation, ‘what is worse’)
- (26) *In this respect* – *Pod tym względem* (literal translation)
- (27) *In short* – *Krótko mówiąc* (literal translation)
- (28) *For a start* – *Na początek* (literal translation)
- (29) *In its aftermath*, the differences between the developed and the emerging economies look stark, and in 2011 they will be strikingly clear.  
Kryzys wyraźnie ujawnił różnice między gospodarkami rozwiniętymi i wschodzącymi; w 2011 różnice te będą się rzucały w oczy. (linking construction *In its aftermath* was omitted here in translation)  
‘The crisis clearly revealed the differences between the developed and the developing economies; in 2011 these differences will be conspicuous’.
- (30) *In essence*, the multinational company of the past was a series of national businesses co-ordinated by a single global headquarters.

W przeszłości firma wielonarodowa była *w gruncie rzeczy* zbiorem firm narodowych koordynowanych przez globalną centralę. (here the linking construction was translated literally and embedded or incorporated into the translated sentence, taking a mid-sentence position)

‘In the past the multinational company was, *in essence*, a collection of national firms coordinated by a global headquarters’.

(31) *By contrast*, the very wealthy in fast-growing emerging markets such as China and India will feel less heat.

Na szybko rosnących rynkach wschodzących, jak Chiny czy Indie, *będzie inaczej* – bardzo bogaci odczują mniejszy ogień krytyki. (here the linking construction is incorporated in the sentence in question, meaning literally ‘will be different’)

‘It will be different in fast-growing emerging markets such as China and India, the very wealthy will feel less heat’.

(32) *Among other things* – *Między innymi* (literal translation)

(33) *Compared with* – *W porównaniu* (literal translation)

(34) *By contrast* – *W przeciwieństwie* (literal translation)

It can be said that extraposed prepositional linking constructions are in most cases translated in a literal or synonymous way. They can also sometimes be omitted in translation, but if translated, their initial position is usually preserved in translation into Polish.

### **Interpretation of findings and conclusions**

It can be said that English extraposed absolute linking constructions or words as well as English extraposed prepositional phrases are more often than not translated in Polish articles of *The Economist*. In most cases, they seem to be translated literally which may result in their unnecessary and often unjustified influence on the Polish texts in question, resulting in deliberate or nondeliberate interference of the English language. As a result, Polish sentences begin with words such as *Ale* (‘but’), *Dlatego też* (‘also for this reason’) or *Ponieważ* (‘because’), which is quite uncommon or not very grammatical in Polish and sounds colloquial.

On the other hand, there can be instances where extraposed linking constructions were omitted in translation or incorporated in the middle of the sentences in Polish. In a few examples, deictic expressions were used together with linking constructions in Polish – this need may be generated by the structure of the Polish language, whose word order is less strict than it is in English. In this respect the number of Polish extraposed linking constructions in translation is surprisingly high and can possibly be treated as a trace of the English language influence on Polish mass media discourse norms. Generally, extraposed linking constructions are more efficient and reader-oriented as they seem to be beneficial for readers’ processing efforts, requiring less processing time than embedded linking constructions, which are frequently used in the Polish language. In other words, one of the main reasons why Anglo-American expressions (including terminology, but also linking constructions which are often translated in a literal way) are, in some sense, absorbed into other national languages, including Polish, is that they can be more efficient and easier to understand for a broader audience.

The function of extraposed linking constructions is to set the theme/scene of the clause that follows “as it were the peg on which the message is hung” (Halliday 1970:161)



and the theme setting acts like a frame (Goffman 1972, Gumperz 1982). This kind of framing in discourse has a strong cohesive effect, but it can also enhance readers' comprehension and clarity of the message.

It seems that while Polish texts sound a bit less interactional or are less involved, more content oriented than the English ones, there seems to be some influence of the English language on the Polish texts in translation. Translations from English seem to be more colloquial in register or style in comparison to Polish mass media parallel texts. This tendency is the result of foreignization or even globalization processes or universalism, the hegemonic position of English language and not quite equal power relations between languages, which is especially visible in mass media language. As has been mentioned, cultural filtering can often be suppressed in translation, which results in linguistic interference or English textual norms to 'shine through' (Bołtuć 2016:187, House 2009:82). Consequently, all three hypotheses mentioned in the paper above in section 3. seem to have been confirmed by this preliminary analysis.

Finally, it might be said that the distribution/position and meaning or function of the extraposed linking devices, both the absolute ones and the prepositional ones, is quite similar in the original and translated Polish texts of *The Economist*. It might also be interesting to investigate the impact of English textual norms on Polish mass media or journalistic parallel texts/parallel mass media discourse.

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### Source material:

#### ***The Economist: The World in 2011:***

*Tremble Leviathan; A year of palindromes; Much less stimulating; Avoidable errors, Multinationimble; Cooling the Earth; Another year, another billion; The filthy rich; Curl up with a good screen; Powerhouse Deutschland; The emerald no longer shines.*

#### ***The Economist: Świat w 2011:***

*Drżj Lewiatanie; Rok palindromów; Dużo mniej stymulacji; Błędy do uniknięcia; Rącze i żwawe korporacje globalne; Schładzanie ziemi; Kolejny rok, kolejny miliard; Obrzydliwie bogaci; Ekran do poduszki; Potęga Niemiec; Szmaragd już nie błyszczy.*

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*In SKASE Journal of Translation and Interpretation [online]. 2022, vol. 15, no. 2 [cit. 2022 12-12]. Available online at [http://www.skase.sk/Volumes/JTI23/pdf\\_doc/02.pdf](http://www.skase.sk/Volumes/JTI23/pdf_doc/02.pdf). ISSN 1336-7811.*