SUBTITLE ANALYSIS IN THE CONTEXT OF TRANSFER OPERATIONS AND TECHNICAL CONSTRAINTS: A CASE STUDY OF THE HOBBIT

Peter ZOLCZER[1]

ABSTRACT

The article deals with the English-Hungarian translation of the subtitles of two short scenes of *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* (2012) from the point of view of transfer operations reflected on the effects of technical constraints of subtitling. The research tries to answer whether it is possible to use the number of lexical and grammatical transfer operations to detect and identify any effects of technical constraints on subtitle translation. There is a quantitative (filtered sum of transfer operations) and a qualitative (translation analysis) aspect to the analysis as well. The paper also touches upon subtitle analysis of film adaptations in general and also on using creative language (/subtitle) analysis in the EFL classroom.

KEYWORDS

Subtitle, Hobbit, translation, transfer operations, technical constraints

1 INITIAL THOUGHTS

The idea of analyzing subtitles from the point of view of translation procedures derives from a bigger project which was concerned with the investigation of translation universals on a relatively large corpus composed of the different forms (i.e. book, film, comic book) and Hungarian translations of J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit, or There and Back Again*, a children's fantasy novel, originally published in 1937. (The project focused on analyzing creative language use from the point of view of translation universals and was carried out during the Translation Universals course in the Translation Studeis doctoral program of Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest).

This research focuses on the Hungarian subtitles of the film adaptation of this novel. From the point of view of its translation analysis, the fact that *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* (released in 2012) is a film adaptation is interesting for multiple reasons. After the novel was published, it was translated (and then re-translated multiple times) into Hungarian. When the film adaptation was released in English, the novel had already had a Hungarian translation.

Logic dictates that if the novel already has a translation in the target text, the audiovisual translation of the film will probably be affected by it. The most basic example for the novel translation influencing the audiovisual translation of the film adaptation made from it is names of places and characters. Many times, especially in fantasy novels, names carry some additional meaning, usually some form of description of the subject. Usually such names are not left untranslated, since then the additional meaning would be lost in the target text. If, however, the audience had been familiarized with the name of a place or character in the target language through the translation of the novel, usually the same name is used in the

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[1]PaedDr. Peter Zolcer, PhD. J. Selye Univerzity, zolczerp@ujs.sk.

same target language in the audiovisual translation of the film adaptation which was made from said novel. It is important to stress, that this applies to cases where the target language translation of the novel is published before the film adaptation is released in the same language.

A second reason for why the subject of the investigation is a film adaptation of a novel is that quite often certain parts, especially dialogues, are used in the film as well. This means that there is a very high probability that the same dialogue in the novel in the target language will either be used as well, or at least it will have a strong influence on the target language dialogue in the film adaptation. If, in such cases, the published translation of the novel wasn't checked by the audiovisual translator(s) of the film, they would miss a chance for improving their own productivity as well as possibly negatively affecting that part of the audience of the film who were familiar with the novel's translation.

Another example for the same phenomenon which is less locally bounded to the text (such as a dialogue) but still more context-related than a proper name would be a character speaking in a very peculiar dialogue. One can easily imagine the level of difficulty of translating a dialogue, especially if the target language doesn't have a wide range of alternative dialogues which most speakers of the language are familiar with. If such a dialogue is translated in the novel's target language translation, the translator would surely have to at least consider using the same dialogue in the audiovisual translation of the film which was adapted from said novel.

Despite the fact that the idea of finding clear indicators of connections between the translation of the novel and the film adaptation is very appealing, I do not focus on it in this research mainly for one reason, which is that it would require a cross-analysis of six different sources (the novel, its translation, the film audio transcript in both languages and the film subtitles in both languages), two of which (the transcripts) are not legally available at the time of writing. Instead, in this research I focus on finding connections between transfer operations and technical constraints of subtitling from the point of view of creative and humorous language use. The reason for focusing on creative and humorous language use is that the translation of these types of language use have a high chance of potentially being affected by the technical constraints of audiovisual translation. Also, creative and humorous language is rather easily detectable and usually requires high degree of creativity from the translator, therefore their translations provide intriguing sources for analyses.

2 INTRA- AND INTERLINGUAL SUBTITLING

When subtitling is discussed in the context of audiovisual translation, it is described as one type of this type of translation, among other types such as dubbing or voice-over. Naturally, since the umbrella term audiovisual translation has the word translation in its name, one can logically arrive at the assumption that subtitling means the translation of subtitles from one language to another. This assumption, however, only partially covers what subtitling actually is about. If we compare this assumption with the idea of subtitling that it is the rendering of the verbal messages of the audio track into the form of on-screen subtitles, we can safely deduce that there is no overlap between the two practices. This latter definition basically means that subtitling is the transformation of the audio transcription of the film into subtitles in the same language as the audio.

An example for a case when the language of the audio track and the subtitle is the same would be the subtitles created for the deaf and hard of hearing. However, if by translation we mean the translation of verbal messages between at least two different

languages, subtitling – according to the previous definition – does not include translation, therefore it being one type of audiovisual translation can be confusing.

This confusion, however, goes away as soon as one considers the linguistic definition of subtitling, according to which there are two main types of subtitling: intra- and interlingual [1]. Intralingual subtitling is the process of rendering the verbal messages of the audio track onto the screen, resulting in intralingual subtitles whose language is the same as the language of the audio track, while in case of interlingual subtitles, the languages differ.

The function of interlingual subtitles is to allow the viewer to understand the verbal messages conveyed in the source language in the audio track through their translation in the target language in the subtitles. This is, generally, what is meant under the term subtitling. Even the definition Gottlieb provides for subtitling, "the rendering in a different language of verbal messages in filmic media, in the shape of one or more lines of written text presented on the screen in sync with the original written message" [2:87], covers only what interlingual subtitling is.

3 TECHNICAL CONSTRAINTS OF SUBTITLING

Overcoming the technical constraints of subtitling requires the translators to follow certain strategies. These strategies involve the application of translation procedures which, in some form, alter the original message. For example, the fact that subtitles have to be visible for a specific amount of time which is based on the assumed reading speed of the audience usually results in some degree of reduction of the original utterance.

It is generally accepted that the reading speed of a viewer is about 12 characters per second, and also that the maximum number of characters in one line of a subtitle can be 35–40, with the maximum of two lines per subtitle. There is a minimum and maximum number for the visibility time of a subtitle as well (1–6 seconds). If one imagines a film scene with a fast dialogue between two characters, one can acknowledge that in such cases some form of reduction or compression of the verbal messages of the audio track are absolutely necessary to stay within these constraints. Therefore, reducing the text of the original utterance is a very common strategy translators when creating subtitles.

The only criterion for reduction is that the main message of the original utterance has to be conveyed without any loss of important details. This criterion is not very specific, but can be easily understood on an example. If the phrase "nice car" is in the immediate context of an utterance, reducing the content of a subtitle from "Please look at that nice car" to "Please look at it" meets the criterion mentioned above, since no important detail was lost.

Another important technical constraint of subtitling is that a subtitle cannot be visible during the change of a shot or during a cut. This constraint has clear consequences on the translated text of the subtitle, especially as far as the semantic and syntactic structuring is concerned, but it affects punctuation as well as strategies such as compression, simplification or omission.

The strategies used by translators for dealing with the technical constraints of subtitling are classified in different ways by different authors. Antonini [3], Gottlieb [4] and Lomheim [5] besides reduction, define further strategies such as expansion, omission, simplification, rendering or neutralization. It is important to point out that the strategies mentioned above, although similar in nature, are not the same as the translation procedures of most taxonomies. Strategies, as their name suggests, might be considered as being one level higher than translation procedures, working on the word level only.

4 RESEARCH AIM AND QUESTION

As pointed out in the previous section, the most limiting technical constraints of subtitling are the maximum number of characters per subtitle and the maximum reading speed (number of characters visible per second). Naturally, both of these constraints make the translator gravitate towards leaving out everything that is not essential and also selecting solutions which are shorter but convey the vital elements of the original subtitle.

Logic dictates that such omissions and changes should be identifiable with the help of optional grammatical and lexical transfer operations like omission, addition and change. To illustrate this on an example: if the source subtitle is visible for only about a second and contains the expression 'done that' to refer to the fact that the person speaking has already tried something, the Hungarian translation of this subtitle has to be something that does not exceed 12 characters (with the maximum of 12 characters per second reading speed).

Since the English expression uses present perfect to point out that it had already been done in the past, and because in Hungarian there is no perfect tense, the translator would have to point this out explicitly with some word(s). Depending on the context, one acceptable solution would be 'már megcsináltam' ['I've already done that'], or 'már próbáltam' ['I've already tried that'], but none of these would fit for the 12 character constraint. The translator then would have to consider alternatives which would still be possible to fit into the context and also not exceed the limit. The expression 'megvolt' ['have already happened'] comes to mind as a suitable candidate for the final solution. This solution uses both grammatical and lexical omission and change transfer operations which reflect on the technical constraint.

The aim of this research is to find out whether it is possible to point out the effects of the technical constraints of subtitling through the analysis of optional grammatical and lexical transfer operations applied in the Hungarian translation of the subtitles.

The research question of this research is: Is it possible to use quantitative data of the transfer operations used in translated subtitles for identifying subtitles affected by technical constraints?

5 RESEARCH CORPUS

The size of the corpus of this research is relatively small, it contains only two scenes selected from the film *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*, i.e. 220 words of the English and the Hungarian subtitles. The reason for having a small-sized corpus in this research is that in order to reach my goal and see whether this approach could be used to identify cases where the technical constraints affected the translation, it was not necessary to have a larger corpus. By increasing the size of the corpus I still would not have been able to provide more solid results. Also, this research is not aimed at being representative since in order to reach its goal it does not have to be.

6 RESEARCH METHOD

As pointed out in the introductory section, *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* is a film adaptation of the novel *The Hobbit, or There and Back Again*. Since the Hungarian translation of the novel had been published long before the film adaptation was released, it is clear that the translation of the novel had to have an influence on the audiovisual translation of the film.

Also, it is important to point out that when a film, with English as a source language, already has English (intralingual) subtitles, these subtitles are usually used as basis for the their translation into the target language, since these subtitles are already timed to be in sync with the verbal utterances of the audiovisual channel. Creating subtitles in a target language is faster and cheaper than dubbing the film, which means that subtitles are rarely based on the dubbing of the same target language. One can consider the process of using the source language subtitles for the target language subtitles as subtitle translation, because that is what actually happens: the intralingual (English) subtitles are translated into interlingual (Hungarian) subtitles.

In this research, only the English and the Hungarian subtitles were analyzed and compared; there was no cross-analysis or cross-comparison conducted with any other source or target language text (i.e. novel) inherently connected to the film. This decision was based on the assumption that the Hungarian subtitles were primarily based on, that is, translated from the English subtitles, and also because the potential elements of the Hungarian subtitles which were affected by the Hungarian translation of the novel (e.g. names of places or people) are not relevant from the point of view of this research. Nevertheless, my curiosity resulted in looking into the Hungarian translation of the book (for details, see section 8).

In this research, I am using Klaudy's typology [6] of transfer operations (translation procedures), often used in research which is based on or connected to translation universals. The reason for selecting this specific typology is that – as discussed above – this research is part of a bigger project which is based on translation universals. According to Klaudy, transfer operations can be obligatory, those which are applied due to the systemic differences of the source and target langauage, and optional ones, which, as their name suggests, reflect the subjective preferences of the translator. Both categories can further be divided into lexical and grammatical transfer operations such as narrowing, contraction, omission, exchange, division or replacement of meaning. Klaudy's typology of grammatical and lexical transfer operations contains 17 types altogether.

The method of the analysis was partly quantitative and partly qualitative. In the first step, two scenes (containing creative and humorous language use) were selected from the film *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*.

The first scene was selected from the beginning of the film (00:13:11 – 00:14:26), where two of the main characters (Gandalf and Bilbo Baggins) meet and greet each other. This scene was selected because one of the characters is continually reacting in a humorous way to the other characters utterances, therefore creating an interesting linguistic source for translation analysis.

The second scene was selected from close to the end of the film (02:03:27 – 02:07:01), where two characters (Bilbo Baggins and Gollum) ask riddles from each other. This scene was selected because the riddles the characters ask from each other rhyme and due to the nature of riddles, they are intentionally constructed in a linguistically creative way so as to to make it difficult to find their solutions. For samples of the subtitles from both scenes see Table 1.

English	Hungarian
Scene 1 (humorous language use)	Scene 1 (humorous language use)
158 00:13:11,999 --> 00:13:14,334 – Good morning. GANDALF: What do you mean?	123 00:13:11,700 --> 00:13:12,700 Jóreggel!

159 00:13:14,794 --> 00:13:16,461 Do you wish me a good morning... 160 00:13:16,629 --> 00:13:19,881 ...or do you mean that it is a good morning whether I want it or not? 161 00:13:20,549 --> 00:13:25,136 Or perhaps you mean to say that you feel good on this particular morning? 162 00:13:25,805 --> 00:13:29,766 Or are you simply stating that this is a morning to be good on? Hm?	124 00:13:12,900 --> 00:13:13,900 Ezt hogy érted? 125 00:13:14,700 --> 00:13:16,952 Jó reggelt kívánsz, vagy úgy gondolod, 126 00:13:16,978 --> 00:13:19,025 hogy ez a reggel jó, akár tetszik, akár nem? 127 00:13:20,500 --> 00:13:24,500 Vagy hogy te érzed magad jól ezen a reggelen? 128 00:13:25,700 --> 00:13:29,200 Vagy hogy olyan ez a reggel, amelyen jó élni?
Scene 2 (creative language use)	Scene 2 (creative language use)
1638 02:05:51,460 --> 02:05:55,505 All things it devours 1639 02:05:55,673 --> 02:06:00,802 Birds, beasts, trees, flowers 1640 02:06:00,970 --> 02:06:05,181 Gnaws iron, bites steel 1641 02:06:05,349 --> 02:06:09,143 Grinds hard stones to meal 1642 02:06:10,604 --> 02:06:12,272 Answer us.	1202 02:05:51,900 --> 02:06:00,300 Ez a valami mindent elemészt, madár, vad, fû, fa általa vész, 1203 02:06:01,400 --> 02:06:08,400 vaszat, acélt megrág, sz a kõbõl, a sziklából isz lisztet õröl. 1204 02:06:10,400 --> 02:06:12,500 Nosz?

Table 1. Text samples from the analyzed subtitles of both scenes

In the next step, the text from the selected scenes was manually processed, that is, cut up into segments and organized into a table for easier comparison. Then each sentence segment of the source text was compared to the target text and the transfer operation used in the translation

was identified. It is important to point out that only optional grammatical and lexical transfer operations were identified, since, in contrast to the obligatory grammatical and lexical transfer operations, these can be directly used to analyze the effects of the subjectivity (or freedom) of the translator.

Table 2 shows a sample from the analysis table. The first column contains gradually increasing numbers according to the beginnings of the sentences. S1 and S2 indicate the text samples from scene 1 and scene 2. The second and third column contain the text segments in the source and target language respectively. The boundaries of the segments were determined by the number of transfer operations used in a given segment. Each row of the table contains text segments translated with one identifiable transfer operation. Words highlighted in bold indicate the specific part of the segment the transfer operation was applied on. The fourth column contains the identified transfer operation.

The last column of Table 2 contains a shift in the creativity level of the given sentence. The '+' sign means that the Hungarian translation added to the creativity level of the original, while the '-' symbol means that it reduced it.

An example for such a shift in the creativity of the language used would be the how the the greeting *Good morning* was translated. The Hungarian translation became *Jóreggel*. The conventional form of this greeting in Hungarian is *Jó reggelt* [Good morning]. By merging the two words and removing the 't' suffix used for inflection in Hungarian, the translator created a word which fits very well into the humorous context, as opposed to the conventional form of the phrase, which, considering the remaining part of the scene, would probably not have carried the same level of humorous load, if any at all. The reason for this is that the complete formal greeting in Hungarian is *Jó reggelt kívánok* [I wish a good morning], in which the word *reggelt* is inflected, therefore the everyday use of the phrase, *Jó reggelt*, since it is also inflected, would not have been possible to use for making a distinction between wishing a good morning or simply saying that it is a good morning. For a sample analysis of the transfer operations of the selected scenes, see Table 2.

S1	English	Hungarian	Transfer operation	C. shift
1.	Good morning.	Jóreggel!	lex. contraction	+
2	What **do you** mean?	Ezt hogy érted?	gr. omission	
3.	**Do** you wish **me a** good morning…	Jó reggelt kívánsz,	gr. omission	
	…or **do**	vagy úgy gondolod	gr. omission	
	you mean	gondolod	lex. exchange	
	0	úgy	gr. addition	
	that it is **a**	hogy ez **a**	gr. exchange	
	good morning	reggel jó,	gr. transposition	
	whether I **want** it or not?	akár **tetszik**, akár nem?	lex. exchange	+
4.	Or **perhaps you mean to say**	Vagy	lex. omission	-
	that you **feel good**	hogy te érzed magad jól	gr. division	
	on this **particular** morning?	ezen a reggelen?	lex. omission	-

5.	Or **are you simply stating**	Vagy	lex. omission	
	that this is	hogy **olyan** ez	gr. addition	
	a	a	gr. exchange	
	morning **to be good on**?	reggel, **amelyen jó élni**?	lex. exchange	
S2	English	Hungarian	Transfer operation	C. shift
1.	All things	mindent	lex. contraction	
	0	a	gr. addition	
	devours	elemészt	lex. exchange	
2.	Bird**s**, beast**s**, tree**s**, flower**s**	madár, vad, fű, fa	gr. exchange	
	0	általa vész	lex. addition	+
	gnaws	**meg**rág	gr. addition	
	iron	vasz**at**	gr. addition	
		va**sz**at	phonetic specification	+
	bites	0	lex. omission	
	steel	acél**t**	gr. addition	
	hard	0	lex. omission	
	stones	kő**ből**	gr. addition	
	0	a	lex. addition	
	0	sziklából	lex. addition	
	to meal	lisztet őröl	lex. specification	
		sz	phonetic specification	+
		isz	phonetic specification	+

Table 2. Sample of the analysis of the optional
grammatical and lexical transfer operations

After the analysis of all text segments of both selected scenes was done, the results were quantified on the bases of the types of optional grammatical and lexical transfer operations (see Table 5.3 in the next section). As the last step of the research, the quantitative results of the analysis were subjected to further investigation from the point of view of the technical constraints of subtitling. In this last section I tried to provide some potential explanations for the quantitative results as well as tried to find out, by qualitatively analyzing specific examples, whether any effects of the technical constraints of subtitling can be identified and/or used as explanations for the quantitative results of the analysis.

7 RESULTS

The following table contains the quantitative results of the analysis and identification of optional grammatical and lexical transfer operations used for the Hungarian translation of the English subtitles. Table 5.3 has three parts. The first part contains the summary of all optional transfer operations, and the second and the third part contains the numbers for all types of optional grammatical and lexical transfer operations respectively.

Optional transfer operations	All: Grammatical Lexical Phonetic	108 31 71 6
Optional grammatical transfer operations	Contraction: Omission: Generalization: Division: Addition: Specification: Replacement: Exchange: Transposition:	1 9 0 1 9 0 3 8 0
Optional lexical transfer operations	Contraction: Omission: Generalization: Division: Addition: Specification: Replacement: Exchange:	7 18 0 4 12 5 0 25
Optional phonetic transfer operations	Specification:	6

Table 3. Optional grammatical, lexical and phonetic transfer operations
in the Hungarian subtitles

Table 3 shows that there is a rather big difference between the number of optional grammatical and lexical transfer operations, identified in the Hungarian subtitles translated from English. While there are 31 optional grammatical transfer operations in the analyzed subtitles, the number of lexical operations found is 71, more than double the amount of the grammatical ones.

The results also show that the most frequently used lexical operations were exchange (25) and omission (18). Based on these results, one could logically assume that translation

procedures such as compression, simplification and omission, used as strategies with which the translator deals with the technical constraints of subtitling, show themselves in a high amount of lexical exchange and omission, since both of these operations may produce more compressed and simpler text. This logical assumption, however, cannot be applied in this case, because in order to explain the high numbers of lexical exchange and omission, one would have to compare the target language subtitles with the source language transcript of the audio track, not with the source language subtitles, as it was in our case. As discussed above, it is very likely that the source language subtitles were used as basis for the target language subtitles, since this way the translator(s) of the subtitle could start with an already timed subtitle template.

What can be the explanation for the relatively high number of lexical exchange and omission used in the translation of the subtitles? By taking a closer look at the analyzed sentences, we can see that the lexical omissions very often occur in case of onomatopoetic words. Words such as *hmm*, *oh*, *huh*, were omitted from the target language subtitles. Since the subtitles are the written form of (mostly) the speech one can hear in the film, the inclusion of onomatopoeia is only necessary if one is creating subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing. This can provide an explanation for the high number lexical omission. The translator decided not to include onomatopoeia in the subtitles which resulted in an elevated number of omissions.

Some cases of the lexical exchange transfer operations also reflect the intention of the translator to create a text which has the features of (live) speech. The following subtitles are a good example for this:

Example (1)	
00:13:14,794 --> 00:13:16,461 Do you wish me a good morning …	00:13:14,700 --> 00:13:16,952 Jó reggelt kívánsz, vagy úgy gondolod,
00:13:16,629 --> 00:13:19,881 ... or do you mean that it is a good morning **whether I want it or not?**	00:13:16,978 --> 00:13:19,025 hogy ez a reggel jó, **akár tetszik, akár nem?**

Table 4. Example (1) for lexical exchange in the Hungarian subtitles.

The Hungarian translation contains an expression, *akár tetszik, akár nem* [whether I like it or not]), which in everyday use (in live speech) is mostly used in the form *ha tetszik, ha nem* [if I like it or not]). The lexical exchange, however, can be identified on the word *tetszik* [like], since it is not the equivalent of *want* [akar], even though *akar* would have been a possible alternative solution (ha akarom, ha nem [whether I want it or not]). At this point, it is important to point out that the character, Gandalf, who speaks in this example, has a rather peculiar speech style. Being an old and wise wizard, this character uses a colorful, rich and often formal language. One can argue that the translator might have decided to use the *akár tetszik, akár nem* form of the expression in order to reinforce Gandalf's speech style in the Hungarian subtitle. Since the source text subtitle does not reflect any particular (peculiar) speech style, the translator might have opted for the lexical exchange, which resulted in a peculiar speech style in Hungarian, as a means of adding a compensation for a potential future case where the loss of speech style features was inevitable. A similar phenomenon can be observed on example (2) below:

Example (2)	
00:13:31,143 --> 00:13:33,186 All of them at once, I **suppose**.	00:13:30,700 --> 00:13:32,700 Mind egyszerre, úgy **sejtem**.

Table 5. Example (2) for lexical exchange in the Hungarian subtitles.

Table 5 shows another example where the lexical exchange might have been applied for reinforcing a peculiar speech style of a character. Interestingly, the utterance in the second example does not come from Gandalf, but another character named Bilbo Baggins. However, similarly to Gandalf, especially when speaking to Gandalf, Bilbo also uses a rather elevated speech style. There are multiple synonyms for the Hungarian equivalent of *suppose* (e.g. *feltételez* [assume], *gondol* [think], *hisz* [believe]), but none of them is *sejtem* [suspect, presume], the word which was actually used in the Hungarian subtitles. This word, however, reflects humility, a typical feature of a more formal speech style, which a closer equivalent of *suppose*, (*azt hiszem* [I believe]) would not hove conveyed.
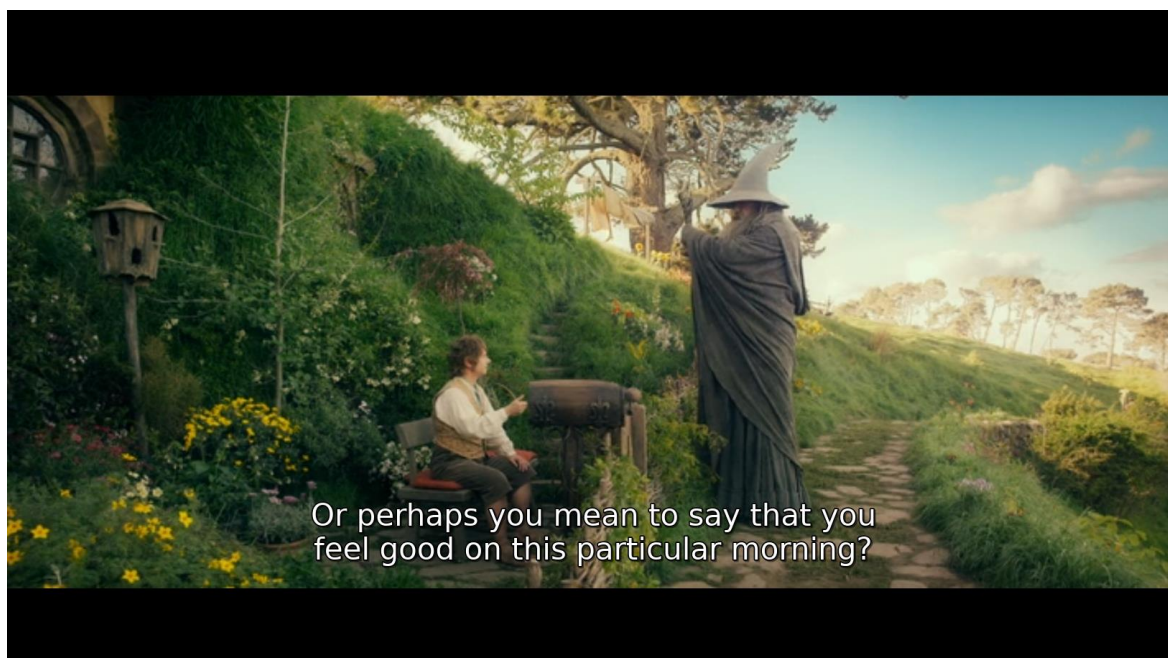

Image 1. Example of the English subtitles of the first analyzed scene from The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey

Some lexical contractions in the analyzed subtitles can be explained with the freedom of the translator to use creative language in the translation. Example (3) contains a lexical contraction which resulted in a more creative language in the target text as opposed to what the source text contains.

Example (3)	
00:14:21,694 --> 00:14:26,698 ...by Belladonna Took's son as if I were **selling buttons** at the door.	00:14:21,357 --> 00:14:23,525 fia úgy veti nekem oda a jóreggelt,

-	00:14:23,600 --> 00:14:25,500 akár valami vándor **gombárusnak** a küszöbön!

Table 6. Example (3) for lexical contraction in the Hungarian subtitles.

The reason why creative load in the Hungarian subtitle in the example above is higher than it is in the source subtitle is only partially explained by the lexical contraction of the words *selling buttons* to create *gombárus* [button-seller]. This transfer operation caused a change in word class (*gombárus* is a noun) which subsequently allowed the addition of the adjective *vándor* [traveler, wayfarer] to complement the noun as well as it induced another transfer operation which resulted in the word *küszöb* [door-step] used as a translation for *at the door* (whose equivalent would have been *az ajtónál*). As a results, the Hungarian translation of the clause, from the point of view of language creativity, definitely contains a richer and more colorful, therefore more creative language.

There were certain transfer operations applied in the translation which I was not able to put into any of the available lexical or grammatical categories. Considering the functions of the changes these transfer operations resulted in, a new category of transfer operations was created. The following example clearly shows why there was a need to create the category of phonetic transfer operations:

Example (4)	
02:01:47,842 --> 02:01:52,429 What has roots as nobody sees? 02:01:52,596 --> 02:01:55,348 Is taller than trees? 02:01:55,516 --> 02:01:57,600 Up, up, up it goes 02:01:57,768 --> 02:02:00,687 And yet, never grows	02:01:48,000 --> 02:01:52,500 Mi az: gyökere a föld alatt van, 02:01:52,800 --> 02:02:00,800 **c**ú**c**a fáknál maga**sz**abban, égbe szökkenő, még**sz**e nő!?

Table 7. Example (4) for phonetic contraction in the Hungarian subtitles.

The example in Table 7 contains three words (*{c}úca* {ts}], *maga{sz}abban* {s}, *még{sz}e* {s}) in the Hungarian subtitles which are the phonetically transcribed versions of their originals (*{cs}úcsa* {tʃ} [its edge], *maga{s}abban* {ʃ} [higher], *még{s}e* {ʃ} [rather not]), modified to reflect a specific speech impairment of the character named Gollum who uses them in his speech. Gollum, besides having issues with properly pronouncing certain consonants, also has a very peculiar idiosyncratic speech style. He often refers to himself in the third person or by using the plural 'we', and he often adds an extra '-es' suffix to words already in plural (e.g. rocks becomes rockses). Some of the features of his idiosyncratic speech, mainly due to the differences of inflection in English and Hungarian, is rather difficult to translate into Hungarian, especially those connected to extra plurals. This is important, because in order to give back as much detail of the source text as possible in the translation, the only strategy left for the translator to use in such a case is to compensate with something extra, possibly in the near context of the given text. It seems likely that the emphasis on the speech impairment of Gollum is exactly such a compensation. It also results, however, in a high level of creative load in the translation.

Image 2. Example of the Hungarian subtitles of the second analyzed scene from The Hobbit:
An Unexpected Journey

In example (4), besides the additional creativity of the language, a creative loss can also be observed in the first Hungarian subtitle. The *roots as nobody sees* part of the first sentence was translated into Hungarian as *gyökere a föld alatt van* [its root is under the ground]. Using the word 'as' instead of 'that' in the source subtitle creates the impression, again, of a rather peculiar speech style. The Hungarian translation of this part of the sentence has no peculiarity to it, meaning that the translation has no extra creativity. (This is, of course, not to say that no creativity was needed from the translator to make the riddle rhyme in Hungarian as well.)

The fifth example below contains a clear loss of the creative aspect in the target subtitle. The translation of the sentence in Table 5.8 does not contain the words *perhaps* and *particular*, whose Hungarian equivalents in this context would have been *talán* and *bizonyos*. I cannot provide any explanation as to why these word were omitted, but since this omission removes an important detail of Gandalf's speech, it results in creative loss.

Example (5)	
00:13:20,549 --> 00:13:25,136 Or **perhaps** you mean to say that you feel good on this **particular** morning?	00:13:20,500 --> 00:13:24,500 Vagy **(Ø)** hogy te érzed magad jól ezen **(Ø)** a reggelen?

Table 8. Example (5) for creative loss in the Hungarian subtitles.

The English subtitle in the fourth example clearly reflects Gandalf's peculiar (elevated) speech style. Using the word 'perhaps' instead of 'maybe' (or not using any word here at all) and including the word 'particular' in the sentence where it would not be necessary creates a richer and more colorful language. For some reason, both words were omitted from the translation, rendering it to the level of everyday speech, therefore making it not resemble Gandalf's idiosyncratic speech.

One possible reason for this kind of omission would be if the translator had run into a technical constraint of subtitling. The most logical constrain to check first is the maximum number of characters per subtitle, which usually is 75–80 characters for a two line subtitle, with a maximum of 16 characters per second reading speed in Hungarian. In case of this specific subtitle, the number of characters is only 37, and since the subtitle is visible for 4 seconds, the characters per second value is only 9. If we add the target language equivalents of the two omitted words into the Hungarian subtitle (Vagy *talán* hogy te érzed magad/jól ezen a *bizonyos* reggelen?), the subtitle would still stay within the limits with 50 characters in total and 12 characters per second visibility, allowing a comfortable reading. This means that the omission of the words *perhaps* and *particular* cannot be explained by the technical constraints of subtitling.

The research question of this research was:

Is it possible to use quantitative data about the transfer operations used in subtitle translation for identifying cases of the translation which were negatively affected by the technical constraints of subtitling?

I was not able to find any subtitle of the analyzed two scenes in which the reason to use any transfer operation could be traced back to a technical constraint of subtitling. This means that the technical constraints of subtitling did not restrict the translator in any way which is identifiable by the analysis of the subtitles from the point of view of optional grammatical and lexical transfer operations. Despite the fact that the corpus of this research only contains two scenes of the film, since both scenes have rather fast paced dialogues (which are typically the type that causes problems for the conventional reading speeds of subtitles), we can assume that the technical constraints of subtitling are not restricting the translator as far as keeping the humorous or creative load of the source subtitle is concerned.

8 CONSIDERATIONS FOR ANALYZING SUBTITLES OF A FILM ADAPTATION

There are certain issues I encountered with during the analysis of the English and Hungarian subtitles of *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*. As I described it in the introductory section of this research, the film whose subtitles I selected for the analysis is a film adaptation of the novel *The Hobbit, or There and Back Again*. Due to certain inconsistencies of the translations of proper names in the franchise this novel belongs to, there is more than one Hungarian translation of this novel.

All Hungarian translations of the novel were published years before the novel was adapted. When this is the case, the translators of the film have to consider at least the proper names, but often many other elements of the already published translation of the novel the film is based on.

In this research I was focusing only on the English and Hungarian subtitles of the film, however, this can be misleading, especially if one is tries to explain certain decision made by the translator, since it can happen that a decision is considered to be the decision of the translator of the subtitles, even though it had been the decision of the translator of the novel, and the translator of the subtitles simply used an already existing solution. Although at the time of doing this research I did not check any of the previously published Hungarian translations of the novel, a few months after I finished this research and was working on another analysis of the comic book version of the same novel, I checked the Hungarian translations of the riddles which I also used for the corpus of this subtitle research.

In fact, scene 2 of this corpus is the scene in which Gollum and Bilbo exchange their riddles to each other. I immediately noticed that the translation of the novel contained the very same translation of the riddles which were used in the subtitles. Upon closer examination, though, I noticed that in case of one riddle, there were differences between the novel and the subtitles. The difference, interestingly enough, was that in that riddle, there were extra consonants phonetically transcribed to reflect the speech impairment of Gollum.

Hungarian subtitles	Hungarian translation of the novel[2]
02:04:04,000 --> 02:04:09,800 Hangja **nincs**, de rivall, szárnya **nincs**, de röpül, 02:04:10,200 --> 02:04:16,801 foga **nincsen**, de mar, szája **nincs**, de fütyül.	Hangja **ninc**, de rivall, szárnya **ninc**, de röpül, foga **nincen**, de mar, szája **ninc**, de fütyül

Table 9. Comparison of the Hungarian subtitles and the Hungarian translation of the novel.

As can be observed in Table 9, compared to the translation of the novel, the subtitles do not contain the highlighted words in a phonetically transcribed way (without the 's' letters) to match Gollum's speech impairment. This is highly surprising, since (1) this way the subtitles are inconsistent with Gollum's way of pronunciation, and (2) there is no explanation for why such a modification should be applied if one is using an already published translation in the subtitles.

This follow-up partial cross-analysis clearly shows that when doing a subtitle analysis of a film adaptation, it is highly advised to check the target language translation of the novel the film is based on. Without doing this, one can easily render the part of the analysis which deals with potential explanations of certain decisions made by the translator unusable.

Another issue I noticed while doing this research was that analyzing the optional grammatical and lexical transfer operations involves a high level of subjectivity when it comes to the decisions of the analyzer, since there are many cases (even on a relatively small corpus as the one for this research is) when deciding which category a specific transfer operation falls into is very unclear. Double-coding is necessary in this type of research to minimize the subjective bias.

9 CONSIDERATIONS FOR USING CREATIVE AND HUMOROUS LANGUAGE-BASED SUBTITLE ANALYSES IN AN EFL CONTEXT

It is clear to all teachers that from the multiple factors affecting language acquisition, motivation is probably the one which we need to pay the most attention to. Motivating students in a language learning environment can be approached from multiple angles (Marosi 2020; Zolczer 2016, 2019). It seems clear that using relatively up-to-date content (preferably connected to popular culture) which is rich in stimuli has a chance of grabbing and keeping the attention of students. If they are paying close attention, the probability of successful language acquisition increases greatly and if the content is engaging for them, the time they remain attentive also lengthens (to the great benefit of the teacher, too).

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[2]*A hobbit*, J. R. R. Tolkien, translated by Tibor Szobotka and István Tótfalusi, Ciceró Könyvstúdió, 2006.

Creativity in general is a very effective tool for engaging students in the classroom (Puskás 2020). Creative and humorous language of the kind analyzed in this paper might provide many opportunities for teachers of EFL for not only increasing their level of motivation (i.e. grabbing their attention), but also for giving ideas for various kinds of activities which could be designed for improving language skills. Since the analysis of lexical and grammar transfer operations requires the analyzer to be fluent with the vocabulary and grammar of the analyzed sentences, one can easily create activities for improving vocabulary and grammar skills by simply asking students in groups to analyze selected scenes from a favorite film, TV show or series. In the same way as it was realized in this paper, the teacher then could follow this activity by another one in which s/he asks the students to compare the English subtitles of the selected scenes with the Hungarian subtitles from a semantic point of view and try to assess the creative load in them. The level of difficulty of both of these activities can be adjusted from a pre-intermediate to an advanced level by (1) changing the source from which the subtitles are selected and by (2) changing the goal of the sub-tasks of the activities by adjusting the level of detail of the semantic, lexical and grammatical analyses.

10 SUMMARY

The aim of this research was to find out whether it is possible to point out any effects of the technical constraints of subtitling through the analysis of optional grammatical and lexical transfer operations applied in the Hungarian translation of the subtitles of a film adaptation *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*. Two scenes, containing humorous and creative language use respectively, were selected from the subtitles. Then a comparative analysis was conducted on the English source and the Hungarian target subtitles during which the optional grammatical and lexical transfer operations were identified. The transfer operations were summed up and quantified.

The results show that lexical exchange and lexical omission were used at least twice as frequently as any other grammatical or lexical transfer operation. The qualitative analysis of the subtitles in which lexical exchange and omission were used shows that in most cases, the potential reason for using them was to enrich the language of the characters and to emphasize their idiosyncratic speech style. There are, however, cases when there is a partial or complete loss of such indicator of a character's peculiar speech style in the Hungarian subtitles for which no reasonable explanation was found.

The qualitative analysis of the subtitles did not reveal any identifiable effect of any technical constraints of subtitling. Despite the fact that the corpus for this research is rather small, the fact that fast paced dialogues were selected for analysis allows us to assume that the effects of the technical constraints of subtitling are not possible to detect through the identification and analysis of optional grammatical and lexical transfer operations.

The paper also touched upon the potential benefits one might experience and expect when using creative and humorous language-based subtitle analyses in an EFL context. Since the type of transfer operations and translation analyses done in this research are "scalable" to various levels of proficiency, teachers have the ability to create activities focusing on creative language use for a wide range of English classroom students from pre-intermediate to advanced language skills.

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