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## **THE ROLE OF CONTEXT AND RELEVANCE IN TRANSLATING EUROPEAN UNION TEXTS**

### **Abstract**

The article presents the nature and legitimacy of translation studies; it examines the function of a translator, its role during the translation process and the generated linguistic product from the point of view of cognitive pragmatics. In the present study we are looking for the answer to what factors influence the translator in his/her activity, what aspects he/she keeps in mind, how relevance theory prevails in translation, what role the current context, target audience and readers' prior knowledge have in interpreting the translated text. In order to answer the questions, in the first part we summarize the opinions published in the literature, then we examine our hypothesis with the method of structural discourse analysis in relation to three languages (English, German, Hungarian) in EU texts, according to which, despite the European Union's language policy aspirations, similarities and differences can be noticed depending on what the translator considered relevant to highlight. In the examined texts we can find formal, semantic and pragmatic differences according to the levels of identity. In the course of the analysis, we have made an attempt to highlight the semantic and pragmatic similarities and the differences between the versions, the factors which may cause them, and also their connection with the cognitive context, relevance and the general context. As a first step, we identified the different parts of the texts, and then the reason for the differences was revealed during the analysis. The aim is therefore to support our hypothesis and to illustrate with linguistic examples that context and relevance are central to translation.

**Keywords:** translation studies, pragmatics, cognitive context, relevance theory, context.

### **Анотація**

У статті представлено діяльність перекладача з погляду когнітивної прагматики, досліджено його роль у процесі перекладу, з'ясовано відповідність створеного мовного продукту з погляду релевантності. Описано фактори, що впливають на діяльність перекладача; указано на аспекти, які перекладач вважає пріоритетними; продемонстровано, як реалізовується теорія релевантності в процесі перекладу, яку роль відіграє контекст, цільова аудиторія та попередні знання читачів при інтерпретації перекладеного тексту. У першій частині статті узагальнено результати попередніх досліджень; проаналізовано тексти про Європейський Союз методом структурного аналізу дискурсу, перекладені трьома мовами (англійською, німецькою та угорською); доведено, що в тексті перекладу спостерігаються деякі відмінності з погляду релевантності у зв'язку з наміром перекладача передати найважливіший зміст тексту-оригіналу. У досліджених текстах відповідно до рівнів ідентичності виявлено формальні, семантичні та прагматичні відмінності. У другій частині статті зосереджено увагу насамперед на аналізі семантичних і прагматичних спільних і відмінних рис текстів; встановлено, які фактори лежать в основі подібностей і відмінностей, як вони пов'язані з поняттями когнітивна сфера перекладача і цільової аудиторії, релевантність і контекст. Визначено відмінності при перекладі, а відтак указано на можливі причини їх виникнення. На конкретних прикладах підтверджено, що контекст і релевантність є основними чинниками у процесі перекладу.

**Ключові слова:** перекладознавство, прагматика, когнітивна сфера, теорія релевантності, контекст.

## **1. Introduction**

There is no such a country in today's Europe whose inhabitants would all belong to one single nation, and thus would have the same mother tongue. Members of national minorities who may not speak the language of the majority society are at a disadvantage in all spheres of life, be it official administration, further education, or everyday situations. In relation to Transcarpathia, this fact is proved by the results of empirical research (Csernicskó, 1998, 2010; Márku, 2013).

One of the most obvious ways to overcome language barriers is through translation. But does the reader of the original and the translated text receive the same information? Can we talk about equivalence between the two language products? According to lay people, translation is a matter of simple transposition, functional matching from one language to another. If, on the other hand, when translating a text/statement, all that happens is replacing the elements of the source language with the corresponding elements of the target language, then anyone can be a translator who knows two languages; not to mention those who live their daily lives in a bilingual or even multilingual environment, as they are also aware of the cultural customs of the nation that speaks the language(s). It is therefore important to clarify what competencies a translator needs to have in order to create the text for the target audience with as little loss of meaning as possible. Answering the questions raised is far from clear, otherwise there would be no translation theory or translation science or, in foreign words, translatorics (Banózerowski, 2000, p. 389) as a linguistic discipline.

The field of research in translatorics is quite wide, raising several questions from translation activities via translation competencies to translation evaluation. In the present paper, we are searching for the answer to what factors influence the translator in the course of his activity, what aspects he keeps in mind, and how relevance theory prevails in translation.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1 What is translation?**

Translation itself, as an activity, is interpreted and defined differently by linguistic disciplines based on the theories they profess.

Linguistic translation science defines translation as nothing more than the transmission of meaning while replacing the signs of the source language with the signs of the target language. When translating, the aim should be to reproduce the source text in the target text as much as possible at the lexical and semantic levels, i.e. to be identical from the viewpoint of lexical, formal, structural and functional semantics (read more about this in Subsection 2.3.1). Emphasis has been placed on legitimate correspondences, especially what concerns words, word structures, and possibly syntactic structures (Catford, 1965).

According to textual linguistics, translation is accomplished in such a way that the source text induces the creation of the target text (Neubert, 1985). It sees the text itself as an element of translation, it emphasizes that the text is born in a specific situation and culture, therefore situation factors, textual typological conventions, knowledge and expectations of the target audience, and text functions should be taken into account when translating. It is believed that communication identity is of great significance, which is manifested in the fact that the source and target text are judged equally in a given communication situation, in a given culture.

According to functionalist theories, translation is a purposeful, planned activity, a transcultural interaction that aims to create a target text that meets the set goals and is relevant for the target audience in targeted circumstances. The actual form of the target text therefore depends on the intended purpose and not solely on the structure of the source text. The goal is not to make the source and target text the same, but to make the latter fit the goals set before it (Nord, 1997). Translation is thus not a simple process of substitution, but the result of a complex text production activity (Schäffner, 2004, p. 1255).

The cognitive sciences emphasize that translation is actually a series of decisions to be made by the translator, which are aimed at how to interpret the stylistic elements of the original text and

what linguistic patterns and elements are selected from the sample system of the target language text. These decisions are made in a cognitive framework, which means that every person has a conceptual base in which folk knowledge, experience, and worldview are concentrated. With this cognitive framework, the translator approaches the text, so he has his own idea of human values; the objects around him, the world around people (Cs. Jónás, 2010, pp. 5-6). Cultural factors (Simcovich, 2008, p. 53), bodily experiences, and contextual effects play a central role in the interpretation process (cf. Kövecses & Benczes, 2010, pp. 232-236). The translator carries out the translation activity accordingly. The translated text is prepared for a target audience, so the translator adapts it to his needs, his knowledge of general human, cultural and life experience (cf. Illés, 2011, p. 146).

## 2.2 Who is the translator?

Not everyone speaking a foreign language can be a translator. To be a good translator, one needs to have a number of competencies. They must be thoroughly familiar with both the source language and the target language (morphological, syntactic, stylistic, pragmatic knowledge), the field to which the text to be translated belongs, and feel the social, emotional, and cultural connotations created by the text (Crystal, 2003, p. 428). According to Klauudy (2012), the translator functions as a cultural filter, that is, he filters out strangeness from the translated works (ibid., p. 137).

The translator is a central part of a translational system, the elements of which are summarized in Fig. 1.

**SENDER → TEXT A → TRANSLATOR → TEXT B → RECEIVER**

Fig. 1. *The translational system* (cf. Banózerowski, 2000, p. 389)

Szóllósy (2007) complements the above model.

**AUTHOR → TEXT I → READER → EDITOR → TRANSLATOR →  
READER OF TEXT II → TEXT II → AUDIENCE**

Fig. 2. *Paradigm of translation*<sup>1</sup> (cf. Szóllósy, 2007, p. 29)

According to the interpretation of Figure 2, the translator also performs editorial tasks simultaneously, and is even the first reader of the new text. He actually translates the original text as he interprets it, and only that version reaches the reader. When interpreting the system, the question arises as to whether Text A (I) (i.e. written in the original source language) and Text B (II) (i.e. translated into the target language) have the same semantic and pragmatic meaning. According to the academic literature, we cannot speak of complete identity (cf. Cook, 2010, p. 56), as the translator carries his own interpretation into the target text, which does not necessarily coincide with the intention of the author. It is also important to mention that the target audience of the source and that of the target texts have different background knowledge, cognitive base, which justifies certain changes during the translation (e.g., concretization, explication, implication, etc.) (Klady, 2007). In the next subsection, we are going to review the levels at which we can talk about identity.

## 2.3 Translation as product

### 2.3.1 Similarity and difference of texts

Identity is one of the most controversial terms in the translation studies. Two texts can be the same or different at different levels. There may be differences in the phonological and/or graphological

<sup>1</sup> Figure presented in the authors' translation

system of the languages (e.g., Chinese-Hungarian). The next level of discrepancies is morphemes as the smallest meaningful units, lexicological units, which we form into sentences. Every text has its meaning that can be studied at different levels, from the viewpoint of lexical, formal, structural and functional semantics. The lexical approach starts from the naive assumption that each word is assigned a reference that exists in the real (non-linguistic) world. Formal semantics interprets semantic features as elementary predicates. Structural semantic theories consider that the main task of semantics is exploring the semantic connections between linguistic expressions. The main research area of functional semantics focuses on vocabulary and the language system.

Representatives of lexical, formal, structural, and functional semantics compare the translated text as a product with the source text at the formal level of the language, excluding the human factor from the analysis. They do not take into account that texts/statements are used in certain life situations to achieve a certain communication goal in a certain context. However, if we take these factors into consideration, the pragmatic meaning of language appears, which is influenced not only by language forms but also context, including direct situation, gesticulation, cultural background, thinking and emotions, and intentions of communication participants (Cook, 2010, p. 56). However, if we take into account that language is mostly used in a specific communication situation, the pragmatic meaning of language appears, which is influenced not only by language forms but also context, including direct situation, gesticulation, cultural background, thinking and emotions, and intentions of communication participants (Cook, 2010, p. 56). The criterion of translation is not identity, but the so-called optimal similarity (cf. Heltai, 2009, p. 32), which is determined by the principle of relevance. In the next subsection, we will summarize some issues discussed in the literature on this principle, with particular reference to the relationship between relevance and translation.

### 2.3.2 Relevance and translation

Relevance theory is connected to the names of Sperber and Wilson (1986), but it was Gutt who applied the theory to translation in his dissertation in 1989, which appeared in the form of a book in 2000. Gutt defines translation as *interlingual interpretive communication in a secondary communication situation in which the translator communicates with the secondary reader*. An important feature of translation is that it tries to be relevant by resembling another text (Heltai, 2009, p. 32).

The basic idea of relevance theory is that information is relevant when it relates in some way to one's assumptions about the world (Wilson & Sperber, 1990, cited in Zachar, 2012, p. 269). One of the central concepts of the theory is the cognitive environment, or as we have so far called it, the prior knowledge of the world of the translator or reader. According to Gutt (2000), a key issue for successful communication is how students select actual, speaking intentions from all possible suggestions that can be selected from the cognitive environment (cf. Gutt, 2000, p. 27).

An important basic thesis of the theory is also that a piece of information is only relevant if it is, so to speak, worth the energy invested in the process of interpretation for the reader, i.e. the processing effort is not too great (Heltai, 2005, p. 32). According to Heltai (2009), communication is thought to work in a cost / benefit way. The greater the contextual effect, and the smaller the processing effort, the more relevant the statement. In the following subsection, we look into what a context is.

### 2.3.3 Context and relevance

Pragmatics is often called the science of context, but this concept has been researched much more extensively in linguistic disciplines, and each of them formulates its essence and function in accordance with its own theoretical framework.

Pragmatic research starts from distinguishing the context from the situation and its central concept is the relevance already mentioned. Its basic hypothesis is that the context is not in the world outside of us, but in our minds. Context is an internal mental representation of external circumstances. The context is not predetermined; its creation requires the constructive activity of the individuals involved

in the situation (cf. Tátrai, 2004, p. 480). According to Widdowson (2007), context is not what we perceive in a situation, but what we consider relevant. There are also elements of the situation that, although perceived, are not considered relevant in our process of interpretation. Relevance is thus created by those involved in the situation (ibid., p. 19).

With regard to translation, as it is written communication, it happens that the translator reads a text for the interpretation of which he selects the marks he considers relevant, which does not necessarily coincide with the marks considered relevant by the author. While the text to be translated has a semantic meaning, it can have several pragmatic meanings. The latter depends on various factors, for instance, the reader's / interpreter's previous knowledge about the topic, their immediate physical context, the current state of mind, etc. (Widdowson, 2004). Accordingly, there are various possibilities of interpretation of the text, which are realized or made explicit by the reader (in this case the translator) with the help of hidden references, implications and interaction with the text (Widdowson, 1979). In the wording of Illés (2011), "the text he creates remains lifeless if the reader does not make sense of it by activating his knowledge of language and the world" (Illés, 2011, p. 147). In this way, the translator transfers the meaning he has created to the product he has constructed in the process of his interpretation.

### 3. Aim and objectives

The research aims to answer the following questions:

- what factors influence the translator in the course of his activity,
- what aspects he keeps in mind,
- how relevance theory prevails in translation.

It was essential to review the academic literature in order to answer the questions. In the first part of the study (see Section 2), we clarified the concepts (e.g., relevance, context, parts of the translational system, their function, etc.) primarily from the perspective of cognitive pragmatics on which the analysis was based. In the course of the empirical research, we examined texts in three languages (English, German, Hungarian) published on the official website of the European Union. When designing the research, our initial hypothesis was that despite the European Union's language policy aspirations, *differences could be discovered in the original and translated EU texts depending on what the translator considered relevant to underline.*

Therefore, our aim is to support our hypothesis and to illustrate with linguistic examples that context and relevance are central to translation.

From the fact of being a native Hungarian-speaking German philologist and a native Hungarian-speaking English philologist, it has occurred that we examine the above-mentioned problems in relation to the languages known to us. In support of our initial hypothesis, we investigated the English, German and Hungarian versions of the same texts from the official website of the European Union<sup>2</sup>. We selected three descriptive texts. The only selection criterion was that they should not be specific texts but, in general, should be relevant for all Member States. In the exact interpreting of the German texts, we have applied Duden Publishers' monolingual dictionary (Auberle & Kunkel-Razum, 2003) and dictionary of sayings and idioms (Scholze-Stubenrecht, Worsch & Schoch, 2008).

### 4. Research methodology

In the theoretical part of the study (see Section 2), we have prepared a synthesis on the basic works published in the topic and on the current academic literature. In the meantime, we have compared and contrasted different opinions, highlighting the importance of the problem and possible approaches to it. We have defined the basic concepts that are essential to understanding the analysis of translations.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://scic.ec.europa.eu/>

The theoretical issues and problems mentioned above can be well illustrated by the European Union texts available in different languages. According to the EU, "language policy deserves special attention, as in addition to the Member States' consciousness, we must also preserve cultural and linguistic diversity in Europe. In addition, the various pieces of EU legislation that apply to citizens must be made available to everyone so that they can understand and form an opinion in their own language," is read on the union's website<sup>3</sup>. This means that texts of public interest must be made available in the official language of each Member State, i.e. translated into all languages. Due to its cost, it has been suggested that a common so-called working language should be introduced to be used in the conduct of EU affairs. The English language would be the most appropriate to hold this so-called "office" (cf. van Els, 2005, p. 227). Ammon (2006) responds to this suggestion with indignation, dissecting the *raison d'être* of German, French and Spanish languages, supporting his argument with figures concerning the percentage of the population of the Union who speak those languages.

Three working languages are used in the institutions of the European Union, mainly English and French, and sometimes German (cf. Ammon, 2006, p. 321). Most EU texts are originally written in English and are then translated into the various languages by Directorate-General for Translation (DGT) staff. The German text is intended for the German-speaking target audience, while the Hungarian text is written primarily for the inhabitants of Hungary. The question arises as to who the target audience for English texts is, as English as a *lingua franca* is understood and spoken by part of the population in each member state, i.e. they can read and understand the text in English. Do multilingual residents construct the same meaning while reading it in English or their native language? Certainly not, as the two texts are differently relevant, depending on the target audience, their cognitive environment, the energy invested by the translator and reader, and many other factors (Boldog, 2009).

The selected texts are therefore examined from the perspective of cognitive pragmatics. As a first step, we identified the different parts of the texts, and then the reason for the differences was revealed during the analysis.

The analysis of European Union texts, which present various social and cultural phenomena, leads researchers to the recognition of different historical, social and cultural correlations. We have examined these hidden meanings following hermeneutical, that is, methodological principles that seek to decipher the hidden meaning. The hermeneutic approach considers reality as something that has to be interpreted, and views its meaning as something that is not obvious, but that has to be clarified. We have reconstructed the hidden contents of the statements using content analysis methods. Using the content analysis method, we have performed a structural discourse analysis, which means that we have not assumed any ideological background behind the texts. We have identified the alternative forms of knowledge that appear in the examined discourses, the system of statements that make them up, primarily in terms of how the outlined cognitive pragmatic interpretation of context and relevance is manifested in translations. We have primarily sought to present qualitative results.

## 5. Results and discussion

In the examined texts we can find various differences according to the levels of identity (see Subsection 4.1). These are the following:

- a) differences due to language system, i.e. formal differences;
- b) differences resulting from the translation of lexical elements (words, word combinations, fixed word combinations, idioms, realities), i.e. semantic differences;
- c) contextual, i.e. pragmatic differences.

In the course of the analysis, we have not covered the formal differences arising from the morphological and syntactic alterations between the examined languages (Hungarian, English

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.euvonal.hu/index.php?op=kozossegi\\_politikak&id=44](http://www.euvonal.hu/index.php?op=kozossegi_politikak&id=44)

and German). The study focuses on semantic and pragmatic differences. This is because the concepts of context and relevance discussed in the theoretical part (see Subsections 4.2 and 4.3) may appear while selecting of lexical elements. According to the position of cognitive pragmatics, on the one hand, the translator decides in favour of a word, word combination, or idiom on the basis of his cognitive environment, and on the other hand, he does it in order to reduce the reader's energy of processing, i.e. to make the information relevant for them. However, according to the pragmatic conception of context outlined in the theoretical framework, prior knowledge of the target audience is central. The sender (in this case the translator) forms the text according to the knowledge that he assumes is also owned by the receiver (the reader). To do this, the translator provides additional information or omits some data from the original.

In the case of written texts, the title is of great importance. This is especially true of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, constantly moving, time-constrained society flooded with a wealth of information on the World Wide Web. In many cases, readers are only informed from the title or decide whether to read the text. For this reason, it is important to highlight what differences can be detected in the titles of the texts. While the author of the English-German version addresses his words to Europeans, '*Europeans united in diversity*', '*Die Europäer [Europeans]: in Vielfalt vereint*', this is translated into Hungarian as '*Sokszínűségben egyesült Európa [Europe united in diversity]*'. The Hungarian text refers to unity, while in the other two cases the title may refer to European citizens or European countries. The idea of unity and division plays a central role in the history of both Germany and Hungary, which is reflected in the cognitive base and historical consciousness of the speakers. The title of the following text is the same in English and German ('*Europe Day – EU Open Doors*', '*Europatag – Die EU öffnet ihre Tor*'), but the Hungarian title '*Európa-nap – Unió nyílt napok*') differs. Assuming that the English text was first written and then translated into German and Hungarian, we need to find an explanation for why the Hungarian translator did not leave the original English title, but concretized the title using the term 'open day'. We assume that the original English title, according to which Europe opens its doors, evokes different associations in the inhabitants of Hungary from those it does in English and German readers. The reason for this is to be found in the different social, economic, social, etc. systems of the countries. Germany and England<sup>4</sup> have played a leading role in EU politics and the economy, having been members of the union for much longer than Hungary. For instance, it is not typical for the residents of the two countries to work in other European states in order to earn a higher income, while in Hungary the mentioned tendency can be observed. For the Hungarian target audience, the term '*open day*' refers more specifically to the content of the text, according to which they have the opportunity to go to the EU institutions for information purposes, thus gaining an insight into their operation. The above reasoning therefore exemplifies the theory that the translator adapts the translation to the cognitive environment of the target audience. He selects lexical elements so that their hidden content evokes the expected associations from readers.

It often happens that a word, phrase, or part of a text does not cover the same meaning in different languages. This may be due to the lack of an appropriate term in the given language, or the translator simply did not consider it crucial to highlight – either by circumscription or other linguistic means – a certain extra meaning that can be found in the other language (see Appendix 1, Lines 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 11, 13, 16, 17). This often results in loss of meaning or adjustment of meaning.

Both of these phenomena are exemplified by the text below. The English text reads as follows: '*[...] committed to working together for peace and prosperity*'. In the Hungarian translation, we can read: '*[...] békéért és fejlődésért dolgoznak*', while the German translation is the following: '*[...], die sich der Wahrung des Friedens und dem Streben nach Wohlstand verschrieben haben.*' '[...], who are committed to the maintenance of peace and the pursuit of prosperity]. The translator chose the word 'sich verschrieben haben' as the German equivalent of 'committed to' in the original

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<sup>4</sup> The texts under analysis were written before the Brexit [British exit] (authors' comment).

English text. Both mean [take a position / commit to something]. In the Hungarian text, the translator uses the verb *'to work'*, the meaning of which lacks the meaning of commitment. According to the English and German texts, the member states have committed themselves to working for peace and development, while the Hungarian translation highlights the fact of action, but does not mention its reason or motive. This resulted in a loss of meaning. A further difference is that in the English and Hungarian texts we can read about peace and development, while in German we can read about the preservation of peace and prosperity. The German text again reflects the historical past, the historical consciousness of the Germans. For a people who started a world war, preserving the peace achieved is so important that it is also manifested in their language. It is also worth mentioning that the meaning of the words 'development' and 'prosperity' is also different. The German translation creates an association that for the Germans, development can be achieved through an increase in prosperity.

The interpretation of the following two passages proves that the author presents the European Union as an institution to the German target audience somewhat differently than he does in English and Hungarian. We can discover a difference not only at the level of linguistic formation, but also at the conceptual level (Kövecses 2005). The author of the English and Hungarian texts conceptualizes the union as a family: 'family of democratic countries', while in the German text no such bond is perceived between the countries: 'Zusammenschluss [unification, union] demokratischer europäischer Länder'. In the previous two languages we are confronted with the linguistic manifestation of the conceptual metaphor of the SOCIAL ORGANIZATION IS FAMILY, while the conceptual metaphor of the SOCIAL ORGANIZATION IS A MAN is meant by the German metaphorical linguistic term, for people are able to come together for a purpose by thinking rationally. Family bonding and working together for one goal is completely different. The former is based on instinctive, emotional (positive or even negative) relationships, while in the latter there is no emotion, just the rationality of being able to do more together than individually. Furthermore, the authors / translators define the union in the English text as *'the European institution'*, in Hungarian as *'egy olyan európai intézmény [European institution]'*, and in German as *'... einer überstaatlichen [transnational] europäischen Institution'*. Traces of the aspirations of the Germans for superiority, known from history, can be found in the text. The Germans are fighting the stereotype that they are called a nation seeking power. The term 'überstaatlich', with which the German translator described the Union as an adjunct, can be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, it may indicate that the EU is an international institution that brings together the member states, but it can also be interpreted as a supranational governing body. Aware of the fact that Germany is one of the founding members of the European Union and has been a leader among the member states since its inception, the country also makes a significant financial contribution to the EU budget, this is relevant information for the German-speaking reader.

The following example is an excellent illustration of how a translator's interpretation can appear in a product. The phrase *'among the peoples'* is *'der Völker Europas'* in German, whereas in Hungarian the translator uses the expression *'az európai állampolgárok'*.

If we consider the English version as the source text, it is crucial to clarify the meaning of the word *'peoples'*. In the present case its relevant meanings presented in the Cambridge Online Dictionary<sup>5</sup> are the following: men, women, and children],

- all the men, women, and children who live in a particular country, or who have the same culture or language,
- a society,
- a culture or nation.

In the German text we can speak of European peoples, in the Hungarian ones we can speak of European citizens. So the German translator interprets the word in one meaning, while the Hungarian

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<sup>5</sup> <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/people?q=peoples>



one interprets the word in another meaning. The term ‘people, nation’ refers to unity, while the word ‘citizens’ focuses more on individual members. The idea of the already mentioned unity / division has thus reappeared in the translations, referring once again to the decisive role of historical consciousness as a component of the cognitive environment. The second text also confirms the previous idea, as the Hungarian translator mentions ‘*a kontinens országai közötti* [cooperation between **the countries** of the continent]’, which the author of the German and English texts describes as cooperation between European nations, ‘*between Europe’s nations*’, ‘*zwischen den europäischen Nationen*’.

In many cases, the German translator formulates and clarifies the information more precisely, thus reducing the energy to be spent on comprehension among readers. All this can be traced back to the cost / benefit perception outlined in the theoretical part. According to the theory of relevance by understanding the text with less energy, the revelation becomes more relevant to them. The following linguistic examples illustrate the statement: ‘*by all EU leaders*’, ‘*az EU vezetői*’, ‘*von allen Staats- und Regierungschefs der EU-Mitgliedstaaten* [by the Heads of State and Government of the EU Member States]’. It concretizes the leaders of the EU, describing that they are none other than the heads of state and government of the member states. There is also a precedent in the German text for explaining in a whole sentence (‘*Das Motiv der Flagge ist bis heute gleich geblieben.*’). As the translator had previously described that the flag motif has survived to this day, he does not repeat himself in the last sentence and omits the word ‘*today*’ from the translation (see Appendix 1, lines 17-18). The same remark is evidenced by the title of the third text, according to which the English and Hungarian texts classify the flag as European (‘*the European flag*’), while the German specifically refers to it as the ‘*flag of the European Union*’. In the present case, the more precise wording already mentioned in the title of the German text dominates, and the already mentioned conception of the EU as a family or unity may also be in the background. The German text shows that Europe is not necessarily the same as the European Union. The Hungarian translation of ‘*the beginning of what is now the European Union*’ is exactly the same as the Hungarian translation of ‘*A mai Európai Unió kialakulásának kezdete*’. However, the German translator concretizes the beginning by using the word combination foundation stone (‘*gilt als Grundstein der heutigen Europäischen Union* [is considered to be the foundation stone of today’s European Union]’). In the term the conceptual metaphor ORGANIZATIONS ARE BUILDINGS is manifested. The construction of a building begins with the laying of the foundation stone. In this way, the German translator conveys the development of the EU not as a simple start, but as the beginning of a construction. Thus, most of the differences in the analysis were due to the translator adapting texts to his target audience in the course of his work.

Thus, most of the differences in the analysis were due to the translator adapting texts to his target audience in the course of his work. It is noteworthy that the titles differed in each case. From the above analysis it becomes clear that in two cases the English and German text titles were the same. The English and Hungarian titles of the third text are the same, and the German title is concretized, emphasizing that the article is about the flag of the European Union.

The main feature of the German translation is addition, concretization (see Appendix 1, lines 4, 8, 9, 10, 12, 15, 16, 17), which, following the principle of relevance theory, reduces the reader’s effort in terms of comprehension. It can also be observed that the German translator often uses a different lexical element, thus creating a different association in the reader (see Appendix 1, lines 1, 2, 3, 4, 14). In comparison, the Hungarian texts resemble the original ones more, and we can single out less differences between the English and Hungarian texts than between the English and German texts. With our statement above, we do not want to rate or criticize the work of the translator. Since the context according to the cognitive-pragmatic interpretation (see Subsection 4.3), which is not the same as that in the traditional sense, is impossible to reconstruct because we do not know the factors affecting the translator, we can mention the different cognitive environment of the German and Hungarian translators and target audiences as the reason for the differences.

## 6. Conclusions and further research

In conclusion, since the target audiences of the original and the translated texts are mostly not the same, they not only vary in that they are written in various languages, but more nuanced differences can be discovered between them, and this fact was also supported by the research results. It is inevitable that there be no loss of semantic and/or pragmatic meaning (cf. Sabban, 2010, p. 192) or meaning clarification during translation. It is not enough to speak the target language, one must know the culture, language use and everyday habits of the target audience, and properly assess its background knowledge, because all this contributes to the interpretability of the product created by the translator. In pursuit of this, the translator *maintains a constant dialogue with the reader* in his work: *he decides what arguments he will come up with, in what order, with what examples, while anticipating the questions and possible counter-arguments that the reader may raise while reading the text* (Illés, 2011, p. 146). Taking all this into account, it can be stated that the universal implementation feature of the language is that it is context-sensitive (cf. House, 2006, p. 340), hence the source text and the target text created as a translation product can never carry the same semantic and/or pragmatic meaning. Therefore, in order to carry out a more detailed analysis of EU texts, it is necessary to know the place, function and perception of certain countries in the given country, for the above-mentioned concretizations, generalizations, i.e. differences can be traced back to these reasons.

Our intention in continuing our research is to examine further texts in which we will focus on linguistic and cultural asymmetry. This way, we may get deeper insights into the relations between language, culture and translation that could help better comprehend and explain the reasons behind pragmatic differences.

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#### SOURCES OF EU TEXTS

- Europeans united in diversity / Die Europäer: in Vielfalt vereint / Sokszínűségben egyesült Európa (<http://scic.ec.europa.eu/>)
- Europe Day – EU Open Doors ([http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/symbols/europe-day/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/symbols/europe-day/index_en.htm)) / Europatag — Die EU öffnet ihre Tore ([http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/symbols/europe-day/index\\_de.htm](http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/symbols/europe-day/index_de.htm)) / Európa-nap – Unió nyílt napok ([http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/symbols/europe-day/index\\_hu.htm](http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/symbols/europe-day/index_hu.htm))
- The European flag ([http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/symbols/flag/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/symbols/flag/index_en.htm)) / Die Flagge der Europäischen Union ([http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/symbols/flag/index\\_de.htm](http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/symbols/flag/index_de.htm)) / Az európai zászló ([http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/symbols/flag/index\\_hu.htm](http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/symbols/flag/index_hu.htm))

APPENDIX 1. Text parts in three languages

<i>Text 1</i>	<i>Europeans united in diversity</i>	<i>Die Europäer: in Vielfalt vereint</i>	<i>Sokszínűségben egyesült Európa</i>
1.	<b>Europeans</b>	<b>Europäer</b>	egyesült <b>Európa</b>
2.	<b>family</b> of democratic countries	<b>Zusammenschluss</b> [egyesülés, összefogás] demokratischer europäischer Länder	demokratikus országok <b>családja</b>
3.	<b>committed to</b> working together for peace and <b>prosperity</b> (állást foglal vmi mellett)	die <b>sich</b> der Wahrung des Friedens und dem Streben nach Wohlstand <b>verschrieben haben</b>	békéért és <b>fejlődésért</b> dolgoznak [hiányzik az elkötelezettség]
4.	it is <b>more than just another</b> international organisation. The EU is, <b>in fact,</b>	<b>mehr als alle sonstigen</b> internationalen Organisationen. Die EU ist <b>im Wortsinne</b> einzigartig.	<b>több, mint bármely más</b> nemzetközi szervezet. Egyedülálló, ✓ mert
5.	with shared values.	auch mit gemeinsamen Werten	<b>sok</b> a közös érték
6.	among the <b>peoples</b>	der <b>Völker</b> Europas	az európai <b>állampolgárok</b>
7.	<b>fosters</b>	<b>fördert</b>	<b>segíti</b>
8.	<b>interdependent</b> world	<b>kölcsönösen egymástól függő</b> világ	<b>durch globale Verflechtungen</b> gekennzeichneten Welt
9.	delegate some of their sovereignty	egyesítik szuverenitásuk egy részét	Teile ihrer <b>einzelstaatlichen</b> Souverinität [...] übertragen
<i>Text 2</i>	<b>Europe Day – EU Open Doors</b>	<b>Europatag – Die EU öffnet ihre Tor</b>	<b>Európa-nap – Uniós nyílt napok</b>
10.	EU open doors	öffnet die Tore	nyílt nap
11.	between Europe's nations	zwischen den europäischen Nationen	a kontinens országai közötti
12.	a ✓ European institution	Schaffung einer <b>überstaatlichen</b> [államok fölötti] europäischen Institution	egy olyan ✓ európai intézmény létrehozására
13.	pool and manage coal and steel production	Verwaltung und Zusammenlegung der Kohle- und Stahlproduktion	a <b>közös</b> szén- és acéltermelést
14.	the <b>beginning</b> of what is now the European Union	gilt als <b>Grundstein</b> der heutigen Europäischen Union	A mai Európai Unió kialakulásának <b>kezdetét</b>
15.	<b>Local</b> EU offices in Europe and all over the world organise a variety of activities and events <b>for all ages.</b>	Die Vertretungen in ✓ Europa und der restlichen Welt organisieren verschiedenste Aktivitäten und Veranstaltungen für <b>Jung und Alt.</b>	Az Európában és a világ többi részén működő <b>helyi</b> uniós irodák is különféle, <b>felnőtteknek és gyerekeknek</b> szóló programokkal várják a látogatókat.
16.	To celebrate Europe Day, the EU institutions open their doors to the <b>public</b> in early May in Brussels and Strasbourg.	Zur Feier des Europatags öffnen die EU-Institutionen Anfang Mai in Brüssel und Straßburg ihre Tore ✓.	Az Európa-nap alkalmából az uniós intézmények Brüsszelben és Strasbourgban megnyitják kapuikat az <b>érdeklődők</b> előtt.

<b>Text 3</b>	<b><i>The European flag</i></b>	<b><i>Die Flagge der Europäischen Union</i></b>	<b><i>Az európai zászló</i></b>
1.	European flag	Die Flagge der Europäischen Union	európai zászló
2.	by all EU leaders	von allen <b>Staats- und Regierungschefs</b> der EU-Mitgliedstaaten	az EU vezetői
3.		<b>Das Motiv der Flagge ist bis heute gleich geblieben.</b>	
4.	All European institutions <b>now</b> use an emblem of their own	Alle Organe und Einrichtungen der EU verwenden eigene Embleme.	<b>Ma már</b> mindegyik európai uniós intézmény saját emblémával rendelkezik.

### List of abbreviations

DGT – Directorate-General for Translation

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