



An observatory for foreign language usage in the workplace

Nicole Lancereau-Forster

LAIRDIL Laboratory, Université de Toulouse 3, France

nicole.forster@iut-tlse3.fr

Abstract

This presentation deals with the origin of the concept of an *observatory* and the process of establishing one. Initially, as part of a doctoral thesis on foreign language learning and teaching at university, on the one hand, and foreign language usage in industry, on the other, a needs analysis was conducted by triangulating sources and methods based on tasks and situations. This analysis revealed an educational shortcoming in this regard and highlighted the fact that foreign language anxiety is regarded as a major issue in the workplace. In order to address this shortcoming, the university teaching environment has to be brought more in line with the workplace in the field of foreign languages. An *Observatory for Foreign Language Usage in the Workplace* is considered to be an innovative means for achieving this objective.

Key words

language in the workplace, foreign language teaching/learning, foreign language anxiety

Introduction

A side-effect of the globalization of the economy has been the increased contact between various nationalities and cultures in the workplace. The English language has become prevalent in multinational and transnational firms and this inevitably affects the teaching of English as a foreign language at university. This paper deals with the links between the university and industry in this field and the adequacy between English as taught at university and English used in the workplace.



Research carried out into the matter (Lancereau-Forster, 2013) provides the basis for the analysis and highlights some educational shortcomings to be addressed. A model is proposed which can be applied to enhance the knowledge of both environments. The Observatory for Foreign Language Usage in the Workplace then appears as an innovative instrument to help reduce this dichotomy between university and industry which still exists in the field of foreign languages today.

Literature review

The link between the teaching of English as a foreign language at university and the economic world emerged with the appearance of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Tom Hutchinson and Alan Waters (1987) distinguished three main reasons that gave rise to it, at the end of 1960 and during the 1970s. First, they mentioned two key periods in recent history. The first one occurred after the Second World War with the growing hegemony of the American economic power: The second key period took place in the early 1970s as a result of the oil crises and the export of some Western expertise to countries in the Middle East. English became increasingly linked to economic and political changes: It [English] became now subject to the wishes, needs and demands of people other than language teachers. (id.: 7)

English was then no longer restricted to the domain of education, but expanded to economic and scientific sectors. As a result, a characteristic of ESP teaching lies in the knowledge of the language needs of learners. Hutchinson and Waters stressed this fact: “[ESP is] an approach to language teaching which aims to meet the needs of particular learners” (1987, p. 21). Later on, they add: « What distinguishes ESP from General English is not the *existence* of a need as such but rather an *awareness* of the need » (1987, p. 53). Pauline Robinson also points out this link: “« a basic ESP philosophy is to cater to specific needs of learners as much as possible » (1991).

Meanwhile, and this is the second point mentioned by Hutchinson and Waters, a significant change in linguistics was happening. Instead of focusing on a traditional study of linguistic features and grammar, Henry



Widdowson (1978) became interested in the use of English in real communication situations. He explained, for example, that there was a significant variation between written and spoken language and that language could vary according to context. Hutchinson & Waters then explained that: If language varies from one location to another, it should be possible to determine the features of specific situations and then make these features the basis of the learners' course (ibid., p. 7).

The third reason cited by Hutchinson and Waters, which caused the emergence of ESP, was linked to the development of educational psychology. Indeed, studies such as those by Rogers (1969), in *Freedom to Learn* and his humanistic learner-centered approach emphasized the importance of taking into account the personalities, the interests and the needs of the learners. Therefore, the motivation would be enhanced and learning facilitated. Hutchinson and Waters conclude: "All three factors seemed to point towards the need for increased specialization in language learning" (ibid., p. 8).

With ESP, the context became determinant. Swales in his reference book, *Genre Analysis* (1990, p. 1) introduced three key concepts: *discourse community*, *genre* and *language-learning task*. He presented six characteristics to identify a group of people as part of a community of discourse (ibid., p. 24-26): common goals, mechanisms of intercommunication, participatory mechanisms to provide information and feedback, genres, some specific lexis and a balance between novices and experts. The term genre was defined by John Swales as such: A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre [...] In addition to purpose, exemplars of a genre exhibit various patterns of similarity in terms of structure, style, content and intended audience (ibid., p. 58).

Genres belong to discourse communities. Yet, discourse communities use a classification of genres and, as John Swales indicated, "a discourse community's nomenclature for genres is major source of insight" (ibid., p. 54). Basturkmen (2009) also corroborated the importance of the genres



of the discourse communities that the learners might integrate after their university studies:

Members of discourse communities regularly communicate with one another and with the outside world [...] It is understood that learners of English should try to emulate the ways of communicating of those who are already members of those communities, and thus ESP instruction focuses learners' attention on the genres used in target discourse communities, as these are seen to represent the typical forms of communication in them (ibid., p. 3).

In the 1990s, investigations into the language needs in industry increased (Currivand & Truchot, 2010). Thus, the report Prolang (Hutha, 1999) studied language skills and communication in industry and commerce in Finland. This was a comprehensive study carried out in a particular country. Another study, published by Hagen (1999), showed the results of the Elucidate project (1995-1997). This study compared how European companies managed language and cultural skills in their international trade. More recently the ELAN report (ELAN, 2006) studied the effects of the lacks of language skills among businesses in the European economy. This study provided a clear vision of the problems of language management of companies in Europe. Similarly, researchers involved in the DYLAN project, funded under the Sixth Framework Programme of the European Union, studied the "conditions in which the linguistic diversity of Europe is an asset for the development of knowledge and the economy" (DYLAN, 2011), and dealt with multilingualism, with research conducted on three levels, i.e. companies, European institutions and European educational systems. The CELAN project (2010-2012) was part of the development of *Language Strategies for Competitiveness and Employability* and aimed to improve the dialogue between the business community and language practitioners.

Along with these reports, articles on the use of languages in business focus on specific features, and give an insight into the world of business. For example, Hollquist's research (1984) concerned the use of English in three large Swedish companies. Similarly, studies of journal articles like *ESP* or *System* published by Elsevier dealt with the same issues, especially



articles analyzing the use of English and the needs of the workplace: the article by So-mui and Mead (2000) regarding the needs in the textile industry, by Louhiala-Salminen, Charles & Kankaanranta (2005) who examined the case of two Scandinavian companies, by Taillefer (2007) gave the example of economics students' needs, by Lehtonen & Karjalainen (2008) and their research on the needs perceived by employers as well as Kassim and Ali (2010), who also listed the communication situations and needs.

Methodology

A needs analysis was carried out in both environments using a triangulation of sources and methods based on tasks and situations, as recommended by Long (2005). In the university context, the study focused on the teaching/learning of the English language in the mechanical and production engineering department of the Institute of Technology (IUT) of Toulouse which has a bias towards aeronautical sciences. Questionnaires were sent to students and lecturers at local and national levels which enabled the current situation and the language needs of IUTs to be analysed. In the industrial context, problems and difficulties faced by technicians employed in the aerospace companies were identified thanks to questionnaires sent to former students in employment and semi-structured interviews in the workplace. The members of staff interviewed were HR people, former students and technical managers.

This needs analysis was based on work analysis. The expression *work analysis* is preferred to that of the traditional *job analysis*, as it provides a wider scope and perspective:

Work analysis can be defined as the systematic investigation of (a) work role requirements and (b) the broader context within which work roles are enacted (Morgeson & Dierdorff, 2011, p. 4).

For the researchers, "work role requirements" meant both work (tasks and activities) and worker (knowledge and skills) requirements. In order to structure the interviews in the workplace, a model was needed which

would encapsulate the various circumstances. Bertin, Gravé and Narcy pointed out that:

- a model in didactics ... should be understood as a tool to organize present knowledge as well as to prompt further action for increased knowledge. [...] a model can be understood in the following ways:
- it identifies basic components whose nature has to be defined or clarified;
- it identifies interfaces between these components, or “places for interaction”
- it eventually requires the researcher to investigate the reflexive impact of interactions on the original nature of each component » (2010, p. 3 - 4).

Drawing inspiration from the teaching/ learning triangle (Houssaye, 1988), we created a model: the Workplace Language Use Triangle (WUT):

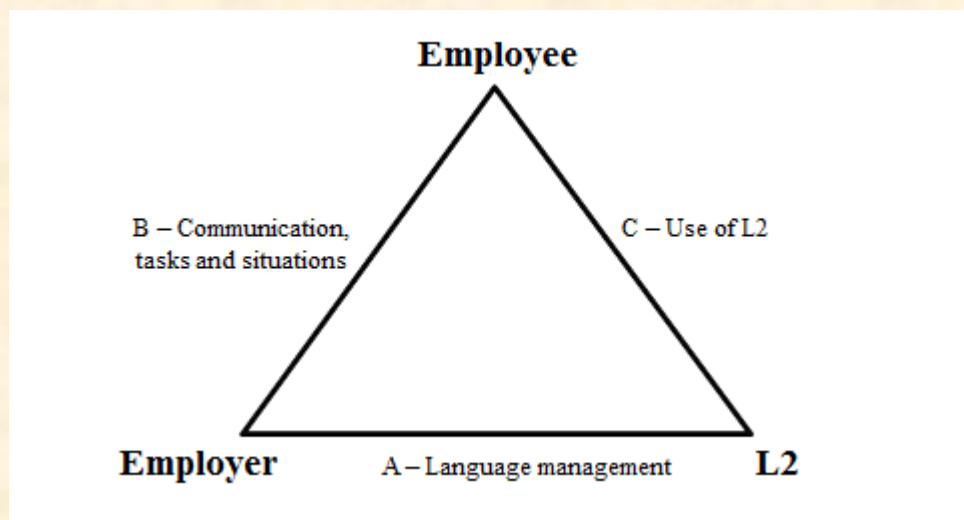


Figure 1: The *Workplace Language Use Triangle (WUT)*.



In this triangle, we distinguished three subsystems A, B and C along three sides:

Employer - L2 side	A Language management
Employer - Employee side	B Communication, tasks and situations
Employee - L2 side	C. Use of L2

Table 1 — *The Sides of the Workplace Language Use Triangle*

- “A” subsystem refers to language management in the company, for example, recruitment issues, employability, lifelong learning and promotion.
- “B” subsystem accounts for the work itself, oral and written activities as well as internal and external communication.
- “C” subsystem is related to the use of the foreign language by the employee, issues related to language needs and the attitude of the employee towards English.

Results

The results of the research showed that the adequacy of English as taught at university to English used in the workplace is imperfect. Indeed, some shortcomings appeared between the perception of cognitive, linguistic and emotional problems on the part of students, and the use of English in business. The gap between the learners’ perceptions and the use of English as a foreign language in industry was particularly noticeable on two levels:

- their under-estimation of the importance of the English language and of its use in firms. While IUT learners tend to underestimate the role of English, we found that the English language has become almost essential in the recruitment of technicians as well as in its almost daily use. Similarly, we noted that some former students, only recently employed,



tended to underestimate the importance of English for a promotion to a better job. They considered English as a bonus, but they did not regard it as essential. In fact, managers in industry seem to think very differently. English has a selective role in the choice of candidates even if, for example, the applicant has some good technical competence. Companies want to create mobility. They value visits and stays in English speaking countries as well as internships abroad (for example: mandatory ones for future engineers in France, but not for future technicians). These give access to different cultures and help feel the willingness to communicate. The openness and the desire to communicate are qualities which are highly sought after by HR people.

- the variation of the perceptions of shortcomings or needs, according to the sources (learners, lecturers, employees or middle managers). For example, this variation is at its highest when pronunciation is concerned. Pronunciation is a language component which is often underestimated by students and employees or perhaps a component they do not have a problem with. Yet, during missions abroad or during telephone conversations, problems may arise as a result of misunderstandings but also of lack of phonetic accuracy. In industry, managers insist on the economic losses due to the misunderstandings that may arise from comprehension errors. We must "understand and be understood", a former student said.

Foreign language anxiety (FLA) also proved to be a major issue in the workplace. It is first noticed during job interviews carried out partially or entirely in the foreign language. The job interview shows similarities between FLA in the classroom and FLA in the workplace. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986, p. 127) showed links between foreign language anxiety in the classroom and 'three related performance anxieties': anxiety related to examinations or tests, apprehension of communication and fear of negative evaluation. They wrote that the fear of negative evaluation might "occur in any social, evaluative situation such as interviewing for a job or speaking in a language class" (ibid., p. 128). During a job interview, foreign language anxiety, for example, can appear as test-anxiety. The communicative anxiety related to the use of the



mother tongue is then transformed into communicative anxiety related to the foreign language L2. In addition, a third category of anxiety may appear. Indeed, the fear of negative evaluation may permeate the whole interview and can be a reminder of a classroom situation, the evaluation being carried out by the interviewer(s) instead of the teacher.

The job interview, however, is not the only situation when FLA is experienced in the workplace. Our results showed that a high percentage of students, once employed and even after three years at university, retain a "school-like" attitude and are afraid of making mistakes, which can lead to a mental block. Yet, an opposite attitude is required in companies where employees must dare to speak the foreign language. The new recruits are expected to show a positive and proactive attitude. The managers we interviewed, repeatedly told us that, in fact, the issue was more "psychological or emotional than linguistic". Anxiety-provoking tasks in the workplace were then investigated, as it appeared that a better knowledge of these could help fight FLA, first at university then later in the workplace, hence improve the preparation of students for the working world.

Discussion - The Observatory

All these results indicated a lack of interaction and communication between university and firms. Whenever the link existed, it needed reinforcing and updating regularly. This was particularly noticeable with new technologies, e-mails, teleconferences, new forms of collaborative work which keep developing. Facing this evolution of work, the worker has to adapt and develop new skills. Tasks accumulate, oral and written tasks may intertwine. The employee, indeed, may be reading and writing emails whilst answering the phone and looking at another screen. All these changes need to be well known by lecturers or teachers of English for special purposes. In addition, they may need to become aware of the new needs due to the changing career patterns of employees during their working lives. A technician may want to become a chartered engineer at one point in his-her career and an early specialization may not be advisable in certain contexts.



After the research, a new issue was facing us: how to reduce the shortcomings and the gap between the learning and teaching of foreign languages and the use of these languages in the workplace? Indeed, it was obvious that our research at university and in industry had its limits in time and was showing a trend more than a fixed situation. One of the current features of business communication is precisely its dynamic aspect and new modes of communication appear regularly. Our research would therefore need to be continued and renewed regularly, especially with regards ICT. The notion of observatory came from that need. To help meet the changes and various research needs, the creation of an Observatory for the Use of Foreign Languages in the Workplace (*OULis*) was launched. According to Merriam Webster's on-line dictionary (Webster, 2014), an observatory is:

1. a building or place given over to or equipped for observation of natural phenomena (as in astronomy); *also*: an institution whose primary purpose is making such observations.
2. a situation or structure commanding a wide view.

The Observation of the use of languages in the workplace really appeared as the start of new and promising findings for the improvement of both language learning/teaching at university and language use in the workplace. As Henry David Thoreau, wrote: "where there is an observatory and a telescope, we expect that any eyes will see new worlds at once" (1849). In the case of *OULis* Observatory, the telescope could be a metaphor for any instrument helping to have better understanding and the different methods used in our research (quantitative, qualitative, for example).

The purpose of this Observatory is to serve as a direct and durable link between universities and businesses, as regards the use of languages in the workplace. A strong link between businesses and professional university training already exists for the industrial and technical fields and we want to extend the link to foreign languages, enhancing this link and updating it regularly. Therefore, language teaching will be backed by the industrial world in real time but not controlled by it. The Observatory

offers the advantage of preventing shortcomings between language teaching at university and the reality of their use in companies. For this purpose, it aims to promote exchanges and establish cooperation between university and various industrial and economic branches in the field of foreign language usage. Its main missions are both to contribute to research and the teaching of foreign languages at university and help address business problems related to foreign languages. It may participate in prospective studies.

In order to organize the observations offered by the Observatory, a second model needed to be elaborated. From our previous research, a new model was developed to study the components and interactions between the communities involved in both environments. Both worlds are interdependent, industrial managers referring to the university as a "reservoir" for recruitment. Hence, we connected the Teaching/ Learning Triangle by Houssaye (1988) with our previously exposed model of the "Workplace Language Use Triangle (WUT)". We obtain a geometrical figure which we call the "University/ Workplace Language Use Prism".

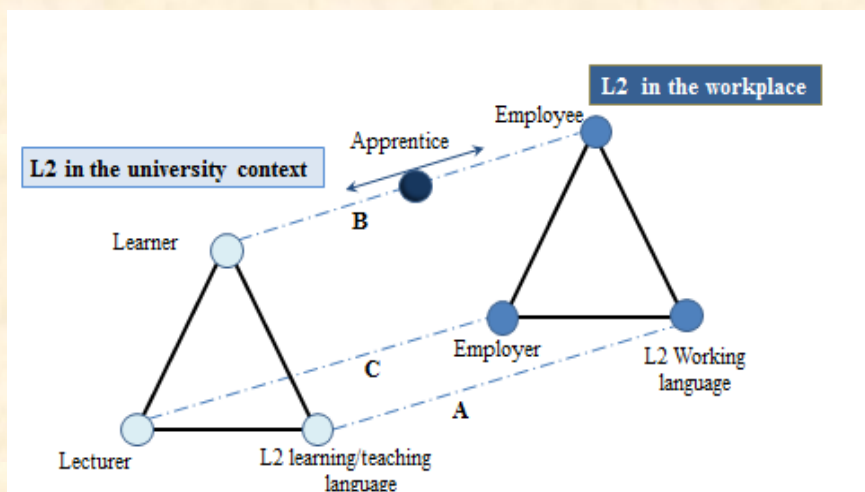


Figure 2 : University/ Workplace Language Use Prism



Each of the two triangles appears in context. The three vertices of the triangle on the left representing the initial university training are modified on the right in the triangle of use in the workplace. One of the three vertices has disappeared, that of the teacher. It is replaced by the vertex corresponding to the employer. The other two vertices have remained, but have been modified. The vertex corresponding to the learner has become that of the employee. At the intersection of these two worlds is the apprentice, both a learner and an employee at the same time, a university student being introduced to his-her future employment. The vertex corresponding to L2 has also evolved from the language learned at university to the language used in the context of work.

The transitions between both worlds can also be studied. They follow the three sides of the prism, drawn in dotted lines figure 2.

- Side A, from the general knowledge of L2 to L2 as a language of work concerns the necessary links between the knowledge acquired at university and the specific expertise required in the workplace.
- Side B, from the learner to the employee, concerns the evolution of the learner to his future employee's status. Problems related to the personality of the individual are at stake.
- Side C, from the teacher to the employer deals with the passage towards new protagonists, a new job, new tasks and situations.

The first steps of the Observatory

The first steps of the studies within the *OULis* Observatory deal with side A of the triangle (WUT), that is language management in firms. More specifically, language management is concerned with recruitment, job interviews, assessment tests, continuous professional development (CPD) as well as languages and promotion. First of all, a questionnaire was devised regarding these items and issued on line in English and in French to be filled in by companies (Human resource people, for instance). This quantitative study is to be completed by a qualitative study in order to specify and focus on some results. A one-day seminar hosting speakers from the business world and academia should then follow.



The scope of the study has been extended from the aeronautical industry to all economic and social sectors. It has also been spread out geographically from the Toulouse area to other parts of France and to other interested international partners. From September 2015, the second and third steps will deal respectively with side B and C of the triangle, that is to say on the one hand, communication and work situations in the workplace and on the other hand, the use of the foreign language, the difficulties and needs experienced as well as the attitudes towards this use.

Conclusion

Research showed that the needs for more proximity between university and businesses are real to improve the learning/teaching of foreign languages and their use in the workplace. The Observatory is an instrument to meet these needs; it is a valuable tool for teaching and for research. The creation of such an observatory facilitates research as the existence of an official entity acknowledged both by the university and the industry, providing access to key resources, people and data.

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Contact

Nicole Lancereau-Forster, Ph.D.

22 rue des tournesols

31170 Tournefeuille, France

nforster@lairdil.fr



The use of the English article system by Polish and Turkish students of English philology

Artur Świątek

Pedagogical University of Cracow, Poland

artursw@interia.pl

Abstract

The objective of this article is to analyse and compare the use of the English article system by two groups of non-native users of English, Polish and Turkish. The available theories devoted to this aspect of English grammar prove that this system cannot be acquired ideally by non-native users, no matter what language they use.

The English article system is either non-existent or realised differently in two analysed linguistic registers. Such features of these registers cause a tremendous difficulty for both groups of subjects to sufficiently cope with the use of the English article system on a daily basis.

It is expected prior to the administering of the gap-completion task that both analysed groups of subjects will find it problematic to complete the gapped passages with appropriate article. In case of Polish as L1 it realises and reacts to the deficits of article via the widespread use of demonstrative pronouns, word order, perfective and imperfective forms. In case of Turkish as L1 the deficit of articles is supplemented by highly frequent suffixation process.

The study was conducted in different groups of Polish and Turkish students to provide the relevant results. Polish groups were represented by first and third year students and Turkish groups comprised MA and first year PhD. students.

In the article the results of the gapped text completion will be analysed. They will reveal which of the available English articles is the most challenging for one or the other tested group of subjects or subsequently for both of them.

Key words: English article system, definite article, indefinite article.



The English article system and L2 learners – a theoretical background

The English article system, which comprises the indefinite article *a / an*, the definite article *the* and the zero article, is one of the most difficult structural elements for L2 learners to be acquired, causing even the most advanced non-native speakers of English to make errors. These errors occur even when other elements of the language seem to have been mastered. According to Master (2002), the difficulty results from three principal facts about the article system:

- (a) articles constitute the most frequently occurring function words in English (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999), making continuous rule application difficult over an extended stretch of discourse;
- (b) function words are normally unstressed and consequently are very difficult, if not impossible, for a non-native speaker of English to notice, thus affecting the availability of input in the spoken mode;
- (c) the article system stacks multiple functions onto a single morpheme, or constitutes a considerable burden for the learner, who generally looks for a one-form-one-function correspondence while learning the language until the advanced stages of acquisition.

The difficulties inherent in the foreign/second language learning processes constitute the complexity of the target system. From a language processing perspective it appears reasonable to state that function words, unlike content words, are generally overlooked by learners when processing language primarily for meaning. In the case of articles, the difficulty of meaning is determined by the novelty and abstractness of the concept (Pienemann, 1998). Learners' changing hypotheses about article usage at different stages in interlanguage development, as well as the influence of the first language (L1), complicate the task even more.

There has been an enormous amount of research carried out pertaining to the processes of L2 acquisition of English articles. Research on article acquisition in English language learning comprises two areas:



pedagogy and its effectiveness on the one hand, and the process of acquisition on the other hand.

Research on articles in the historical perspective

There has been an extensive research on L2 acquisition and subsequent use of articles, although often fragmentary, concentrating on separate features of the English article system (Chaudron & Parker, 1990; Goto Butler, 2002; Jarvis, 2002; Kharma, 1981; Liu & Gleason, 2002, Mizuno, 1999; Yamada & Matsuura, 1982; Yoon, 1993). Some studies that have brought important findings (Hakuta, 1976; Huebner, 1979, 1983; Tarone, 1985), were not specifically on article acquisition, but on the acquisition of grammatical morphemes in general. Only Master (1987), Parrish (1987), Tarone & Parrish (1988), and Thomas (1989) studied the acquisition of articles exclusively. In terms of the terminology specific to article acquisition research, the early studies focused mostly at the presence or absence of articles in obligatory contexts. It was Huebner (1983) who opened a new avenue of research on L2 article acquisition by employing Bickerton's (1981) noun classification system. Huebner did not only look at the presence or absence of articles in obligatory contexts, but he also analysed various types of noun phrases and the articles used with each semantic type, as well as the development of foreign language learners' grasp of the article system.

From these sources, some preliminary generalizations emerge concerning the development of article use by L2 learners. Master (1987) was the first to point out that articles seem to be acquired and subsequently used differently, depending on whether or not they occur in the learner's L1. The definite article *the* emerges early and *a* later in L2 acquisition (Huebner, 1983; Master, 1997; Parrish, 1987; Thomas, 1989). *The* may be overgeneralised. Both Huebner and Master call this phenomenon '*the-flooding*', although neither of them defines the notion, except generally as a dramatic rise in usage. The researchers find *the* dominating in [+ SR, + HK], [- SR, + HK] and [+ SR, -HK], (e.g. referential indefinites and definites as well as generics) contexts. Thomas (1989), on



the other hand, was of the opinion that the *zero* article overgeneralized across proficiency levels.

For the learners whose L1s lack articles [-ART], e.g. Polish, researchers (Master, 1997; Parrish, 1987) reported that *zero* dominates in all environments for articles in the early stages of L2 acquisition. Parrish (1987) proposed that the *zero* article was acquired first, followed by the definite article, and finally the indefinite article. Similarly, Master (1997) concluded that, *'the first article that seems to be acquired by [-ART] speakers is zero'* (p. 216). However, he admitted that since researchers cannot tell the difference between the *zero* article and non-use or omission of the article, *'acquisition is largely by default'* (p. 216). Master's data showed that *zero* accuracy is close to 100% for the low-ability level participants, which then drops, and rises to nearly 100% again for the high-ability level participants. Master also reports that overuse of *zero* decreases with an increase in proficiency level, although the overuse of *zero* persists more than overuse of the other articles.

Liu and Gleason (2002) reexamined Master's data and offered a new interpretation of the overuse of the *zero* article and underuse of *a* and *the*: *'this overuse of the zero article and the underuse of the at the advanced stage would suggest that the two articles are acquired rather late'* (p. 5).

This hypothesis is supported by Young's (1996) data on the use of articles by Czech and Slovak [-ART] learners of English. Definiteness was not encoded by *the* at the early stages of acquisition. That problem persisted even more at the more advanced stages. However, at all levels of proficiency, participants encoded indefiniteness by means of the indefinite article *a*, and the pattern became more consistent as acquisition progressed.

Summing up, it must be stated that the previous investigations into the acquisition of English articles by [-ART] speakers have brought somewhat conflicting results. The early research findings (Huebner, 1983; Master, 1997; Parrish, 1987; Thomas, 1989) suggest the integration of the definite article into the learner's interlanguage before the integration of the indefinite article. Liu and Gleason (2002) and Young (1996), however,



conclude the opposite: early and accurate control of the indefinite article. Another controversy generated by the research relates to the interpretation of *zero* article overproduction. Master's (1997) and Parrish's (1987) '*acquisition by default*' position with regard to *zero* article overuse fails to account for L1 transfer effects at the initial stages of adult L2 acquisition, which is especially severe for [- ART] speakers. Thomas (1989) described a very similar phenomenon occurring in her data as '*the zero article overgeneralization, or equivalently, failure to use any article*' (p. 349).

Classification of noun phrases according to Huebner

Article research traditionally begins by identifying contexts for the appearance of articles. Huebner's (1983) classification (which itself was based on Bickerton, 1981), has been one of the most widely used models for the analysis of English noun phrase (NP) environments.

In Huebner's model, the use of English articles is determined by the semantic function of the noun phrase in discourse. In accordance with this model, English noun phrases are classified by two discourse features of referentiality – namely, whether a noun is a specific referent [+/- SR], and whether it is assumed as known to the hearer [+/- HR]. These two aspects of referentiality thus give rise to four basic noun phrase contexts that determine article use. Nouns classified as Type 1, [-SR, +HK] are generics, and are marked with *a*, *the* and *zero*. Nouns classified as Type 2, [+SR, +HK] are referential definites and are marked with *the*. Type 3, [+SR, -HK], contains first mention nouns, whose referent is identifiable to the speaker but not to the listener, e.g. nouns that the speaker is entering into the discourse for the first time. These are marked with *a* or *zero*. Type 4 nouns, classified as [-SR, -HK] are nonreferentials. This type contains nouns that are nonspecific for both the speaker and the hearer; *a* and *zero* are the relevant articles. Except for these four types, idiomatic expressions and conventional uses were classified as Type 5, based on Goto Butler (2002) and Thomas (1989).



Research purpose

The purpose of this research was to test the use of the English article system by Polish and Turkish philology students, to indicate the differences in article use as well as to analyse the results of empirical research in the tabular form. The Turkish students were requested to complete the research task during the researcher's stay at the University of Adana within Erasmus teaching programme in March this year.

Research method and study participants

60 students took part in the research. There were 30 Polish and 30 Turkish philology students, who participated in the study. All subjects had long-term experience in English (being pre-advanced and advanced students). They were 15 first year and 15 third year Polish students. They were 15 Turkish students in their final year of MA programme and 15 Turkish students in their first year of PhD programme. The method was to analyse their performance in gap-completion task and subsequently draw relevant conclusions from the conducted studies.

Data analysis

In order to understand the results, the author of the article carried out the analysis of article use: *a/an*, *the* and *zero* article in obligatory contexts.

In order to understand how the subjects use English articles, the author of the carried out percentage calculations of the correct answers for each semantic article type and for each level the subjects represented.

In order to indicate the developmental sequences for each semantic article type, the percentage results of the correct answers were demonstrated in the table.

Test instrument

The test instrument consisted of fifty sentences (see appendix) adapted from Butler (2002), Liu & Gleason (2002) and Master (1994). There were a total of 87 deleted obligatory uses of *a/an*, *the* or *zero* in 5 semantic types described above. The subjects were given the written



instruction to correctly complete the test. They had to read the sentences carefully and complete them with an appropriate article.

Results

The article use by Polish learners at three different proficiency levels is shown in the tables below. It contains the results categorised in accordance with types of obligatorily used contexts.

Table 1: Tabular illustration of results –the percent of appropriately used article type

Philology students	Type 1: Generics [-SR, +HK] (a, the, Ø), e.g. Ø Fruit flourishes in the valley.	Type 2: Referential definite [+SR, +HK] (the), e.g. Pass me the pen.	Type 3: Referential indefinites [+SR, -HK] (a, Ø), e.g. Chris approached me carrying a dog.	Type 4: Nonreferentials [-SR, -HK] (a, Ø), e.g. Alice is a dancer.	Type 5: Idioms (a, the, Ø), e.g. All of a sudden, he belched.
Polish	72%	85%	92%	87%	68%
Turkish	67%	91%	90%	95%	60%

A number of interesting facts emerge from our research. The most difficult article type to be used by both groups of subjects was Type 5 (idiomatic expressions and conventional uses) – correspondingly 68% of appropriate uses demonstrated by Polish students and 60% by their Turkish peers. The difficulty related to the use of this article type is due to the fact that the subjects lacked sufficient exposure to this type of article



and many expressions and conventional uses are not sufficiently taught during their English courses.

Type 1 (generics) was the article type which caused difficulties for both groups of subjects as well. The similar percentage results (Polish students – 72%, Turkish students – 67%) related to appropriateness of the use of this type of article indicate similar problems with the comprehension of this type of article. The generic meaning of this type of article is really challenging and intricate, which needs further exposure of the students to it.

Type 2 (referential definites) was appropriately used by the two groups of students as well. The slight difference in their performance with respect to this article type reflect good control over the use of referential definite (correspondingly 85% by Polish students and 91% of Turkish students).

Type 4 (nonreferentials) was used appropriately by most of the subjects participating in our research. Once more the results proved to be highly satisfactory, which points to a stable control of the use of this type of article (87% of appropriate uses demonstrated by Polish subjects and 95% of such uses were observed among Turkish students).

Type 3 (referential indefinites) turned out to be the easiest for both analysed groups of subjects. The percentage results prove best the accurate and stable use of this type of article (correspondingly 92% by Polish students and 90% by Turkish students).

Conclusions and implications for further research

Having analysed and discussed the outcomes of the above research, we may state that both groups of students, Polish and Turkish, demonstrated a highly impressive performance in relation to the use of the aforementioned types of articles. Both language registers are not equipped with the use of the article system on an daily basis, hence the initial assumptions and expectations of the researcher were profoundly different from the final obtained outcomes. Polish needs to compensate for lack of articles replacing their deficit by the use of Polish



demonstrative pronouns, word order, perfective and imperfective forms. Turkish realise this deficit by the morphological process of suffixation. What is apparent is that both groups find it very challenging to overcome the difficulties with initial comprehension when, why and where to use articles properly, as many grammar sources and many methods of teaching point to incomplete use of articles, e.g. forgetting very frequently about explaining the sense of Type 1 of the English article system, namely the their generic use.

As far as implications for further research are concerned, it would be preferable to increase a number of studied subjects, prepare test instrument comprising both spoken and written form. These forms would apparently expand the article use by the investigated study participants. Incorporating corpora studies to cover the use of the English article system would be advisable to expand the study instruments and obtain more reliable and logical research results.

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Contact

Artur Świątek, PhD., Assistant Professor

41-300 Dąbrowa Górnicza

ul. Stara 11c/3

Woj. ŚLĄSKIE

POLAND

artursw@interia.pl



Appendix

Typology of article use (Version with inserted articles)

Type 1 [-SR, +HK] Generic nouns (*a, the, 0*)

0 Language is **a** great invention of 0
humankind.

[Type 1] [Type 4] [Type 1]

A/the Favourite food of the jaguar is **the/0**
wild pig.

[excluded] [Type 1] [Type 1]

I like to read **0** books about 0 philosophy.

[Type 3] [Type 1]

A/The cat likes **0** mice.

[Type 1] [Type 4]

0 Love and 0 hate are **0** two extremes.

[Type 1] [Type 1] [Type 4]

Your claim flies in **the** face of [Type 5]

all **the/0 evidence**. [Type 1]

A/The Tiger is **a** fierce animal.

[Type 1] [Type 4]

A/the Paper clip comes in handy.

[Type 1]

The telephone is **a** very useful invention.

[Type 1] [Type 4]



We don't know who invented **the** wheel.
[Type 1]

He used to be **a** lawyer. [Type 1]

Type 2 [+SR, +HK]
Referential definites (*the*)
Previous mention
Specified by entailment
Specified by definition

John bought **a** car on Tuesday. On
Wednesday, he crashed the car.
[Type 3] [Type 2]

What is the sex of your baby? It's **a** boy!
[Type 2] [Type 4]

There are **0** nine planets travelling around
the sun.
[Type 4] [Type 2]

In **the** 1960s, there were lots of protests
against the Vietnam War. [Type 5]
[Type 2]

We rented **a** boat last summer at **a/the**
lake. Unfortunately, the boat hit another
boat and sank.



[Type 3] [excluded] [Type 2]

I saw **a** strange man standing at the gate.

[Type 3] [Type 2]

The French are against **the** war in Iraq.

[Type 2] [Type 2]

Last month we went to **a** wedding.

The Bride was beautiful.

[Type 3] [Type 2]

The horse I bet on is still in **0** front.

[Type 2] [Type 5]

Jane bought **a** ring and **a** necklace for her mother's birthday. Her mother loved the

ring, but

[Type 3] [Type 3] [Type 2]

hated the necklace. [Type 2]

Sally Ride was the first American woman in

0 space. [Type 2] [Type 5]

The shade on this lamp is really ugly. [Type 2]

I saw **a** man in a/the car across the street.

[Type 3] [excluded] [Type 2]

I am young; I may be beautiful, handsome, pretty and attractive to the opposite sex.

[Type 2]



Viewing the facts from your teens or twenties, the following suggestions may be made.

[Type 2]

[Type 2]

This will give them interest and a sense of pride whilst financially they will contribute more

[Type 5]

funds to the government to help the non-working population.

[Type 2]

[Type 2]

**Type 3 [+SR, -HK]
Referential indefinites (a, 0)
First-mention nouns**

John bought a car on Tuesday. On Wednesday, he crashed **the** car.

[Type 3]

[Type 2]

We rented a boat last summer at **a/the** lake. Unfortunately, **the** boat hit another boat and sank.

[Type 3]

[excluded]

[Type 2]

I saw a strange man standing at **the** gate.

[Type 3]

[Type 2]

I keep sending **0** messages to him. [Type

3]



I like to read 0 books about **0** philosophy.

[Type 3]

[Type 1]

My computer has **a** new sound card.

[Type 3]

Last month we went to a wedding.

The Bride was beautiful.

[Type 3]

[Type 2]

I look after a little girl and a little boy on Saturdays.

[Type 3]

[Type 3]

Jane bought a ring and a necklace for her mother's birthday. Her mother loved **the** ring, but

[Type 3]

[Type 3]

[Type 2] hated **the** necklace. [Type 2]

There is **an** orange in that bowl. [Type 3]

I ordered **a** bottle of wine for us. [Type 3]

I'm in **the** mood to eat a hamburger.

[Type 5]

[Type 3]

I saw a man in **a/the** car across **the** street.

[Type 3]

[excluded]

[Type 2]



Type 4 [-SR, -HK] - a, 0
Nonreferential nouns
Attributive indefinites
Nonspecific indefinites

What is **the** sex of your baby? It's a boy!
[Type 2] [Type 4]

0 Language is a great invention of **0**
humankind.
[Type 1] [Type 4] [Type 1]

There are **0** nine planets travelling around
the sun.
[Type 4] [Type 2]

A/The cat likes **0** mice. [Type 1] [Type 4]

I'm going to buy a new bicycle. [Type
4]

0 Love and **0** hate are **0** two extremes.
[Type 1] [Type 1] [Type 4]

A/the Tiger is a fierce animal.
[Type 1] [Type 4]

I don't have **a** car.
[Type 4]

Richard's wedding is in **0** two weeks and he
is getting **0** cold feet. [Type 4] [Type
5]



This room has **a** length of 12 metres.

[Type 4]

Writing **0** letters is **a** pain in **the** neck for me.

[Type 4] [Type 5] [Type 5]

I would like **a** cup of coffee, please.

[Type 4]

The telephone is **a** very useful invention.

[Type 1] [Type 4]

He is as poor as **a** mouse. [Type 4]

Do you have **a** pen? [Type 4]

There may be **a** job for you. [Type 4]

You will find **a** partner to love and marry.

[Type 4]

Even **a** child with little knowledge of mathematics would understand our country's problem. [Type 4]

To become **a** nurse is **a** wonderfully rewarding career.

[Type 4] [Type 4]



Type 5 - a, the, 0
Idioms
Other conventional uses.

In **the** 1960s, there were lots of protests
against **the** Vietnam War.

[Type 5]

[Type 2]

He has been thrown out of **0** work, and his
family is now living **0** hand to **0** mouth.

[Type 5]

[Type 5]

[Type 5]

All of **a** sudden, he woke up from his coma.

[Type 5]

Your claim flies in **the** face of all **the/0**
evidence.

[Type 5]

[Type 1]

The horse I bet on is still in **0** front.

[Type 2]

[Type 5]

Washington says that Saddam Hussein is
playing another game of **0** cat and **0** mouse.

[Type 5]

[Type 5]

Richard`s wedding is in **0** two weeks and he
is getting **0** cold feet.

[Type 4]

[Type 5]

Sally Ride was **the** first American woman in
0 space.

[Type 2]

[Type 5]



Writing **0** letters is a pain in **the** neck for me. [Type 4] [Type 5] [Type 5]

I'm in **the** mood to eat **a** hamburger.
[Type 5] [Type 3]

To sum up, we are faced in Poland, as in **the** rest of Europe with more older and less younger people. [Type 5]

This will give them interest and a sense of pride whilst financially they will contribute more [Type 5] funds to **the** government to help **the** non-working population.
[Type 2] [Type 2]



Ethnic linguistic worldviews: “the devil is in the detail”

Elena Napolnova

Ozyegin University, Turkey

elenapolnova@yahoo.com

Abstract

Modern Turkish has a threefold system of demonstrative pronouns – *bu* – *şu* – *o*, but their distribution is rather specific: the zone closer to the speaker is represented by one pronoun, while the further zone is represented by two. We have determined the conditions for use of each pronoun based on experiments with the speakers of the language, the choice is governed by categories unusual for foreigners. Linguistic data contained in the present report point at the necessity for special contrastive research, which would help the instructors of native language as foreign who don't have good command of their students' native language. Such research can help determine points of nonconcurrence between languages, and from the beginning of instruction concentrate on preventing related mistakes and communicative failures.

Keywords

deixis, demonstratives, demonstrative pronouns, Turkish language

The topic of this report and of the research that preceded it came from a small and at first unexplained observation on the behavior of native speakers of Turkish. There is a threefold deictic opposition in Turkish, i.e. there are three demonstrative pronouns – *bu* 'this', *o* 'that', and *şu*, about the meaning of which there are different opinions in the literature: “that”, “this”, “this here”, “there/yonder”, “situated nearby”, “hereinafter contained” and others. The observation consisted in the following: to point at the article of clothing or accessory that he wears, the speaker can

a) use the pronoun *bu* and touch the item or

b) use the pronoun *şu* and simultaneously slightly pull the article away or in the direction of the addressee.

The importance of this, seemingly small, detail is not limited to its role in the body language, which is, nevertheless, essential in mastering and



using a foreign language. This example is very illustrative in showing the necessity for comparative research of ethnic linguistic worldviews in order to discover the nonconcurrences between them that can cause communicative failures, even serious ones. The research of particularities in reflecting the outer world by different languages was founded by the works of W. Humboldt, E. Sapir, and B. Whorf and their followers. At present, the connection between language and reasoning is one of the important topics of linguistic semantics and is also studied within research of ethnic linguistic worldviews. Differences in structuring and categorization of the outer world by speakers of different languages cannot be ignored in the process of foreign language instruction, especially, when preparing professional translators and other specialists who aim to establish mutual understanding between peoples of different cultures. The fine point of this problem is that, firstly, such differences in linguistic worldviews become more prominent when the corresponding cultures are substantially different, and, secondly, these differences are hard to detect even for people with good command of the language. Along with more or less known interlingual differences, such as connotations of animal names (Kornilov, 2003, p. 237-241), color notations (Wierzbicka, 1990), and designation of body parts (Kornilov, 2003, p. 215), there are many more disparities between the languages, for example, in segmenting the day (*Доброе утро* 'Good morning' in Russian can be used only during a short time after waking up, but *Good morning* in English can be used until noon) (Kornilov, 2003, p. 80), in the degree to which humans associate themselves with animals (Lado, 1957, p. 115-117), in the system of description of object location and movement (verbs of movement, position and causation) (Majsak, 2000, p. 43-47) and others. Only systematic description of foreign linguistic worldview can help students form at least an approximate system of semantic connections between separate lexemes, resembling the system that every speaker of the language bears in his consciousness, system that forms through practical and linguistic experience.



Deictic indications are always egocentric, i.e. the main reference point when describing spatial location of an object or time of an event is the speaker (Apresjan, 1995, p. 631). Not only presence of the speaker is important, but also his notion about location and size of the space in which he imagines himself – the “field of the speaker” (Apresjan, 1995, p. 637). According to this, the meaning of deictic pronouns can be formulated as the following: “THIS = ‘situated within the space where the speaker is or imagines himself’, THAT = ‘situated outside of the space where the speaker is or imagines himself’” (Apresjan, 1995, p. 636).

In accordance with H. Frei’s classification, there are binomial and tripartite deictic systems (Frei, 1944, p. 113). Binomial systems are based on the principle “close to me” (A) and “far from me” (B), and in tripartite systems, there are the following members: “1” = “close to me”, “2” = “close to you”, and “3” = “far”:

A
B

1
2
3

Frei points also that some of the seemingly tripartite systems may in truth be binomial, where one of the two zones is represented by two pronouns (Frei, 1944, p. 114).

A
B ₁
B ₂

A ₁
A ₂
B



There is no doubt that in Turkish the opposition of deictic lexemes is truly tripartite, since in relation to unequally distant objects the function of *bu* – *şu* – *o* can be in describing the remoteness from the speaker: *bu bina* ‘this (i.e. situated in close proximity of the speakers) building’ – *şu bina* ‘this/that (i.e. moderately remote) building’ – *o bina* ‘that (i.e. most remote) building’. We should take into account that in such situations there is almost no difference between the positions of the speaker and his addressee, and the objects are situated in the same plane with them, their relative location is obvious, and the furthest object is within human reach. In the case of “macro-situation”, when we speak about far away objects for which relative position is not so obvious, for example, flying planes, or “micro-situation”, when we point at small objects, all situated close to the interlocutors who, in turn, are situated next to each other, for example, if interlocutors look at a showcase with small objects, the use of deictic pronouns is more or less arbitrary and serves mainly to verify the statements.

As we will show below, the essence of the opposition of deictic pronouns is not limited to opposition in distance. The need for deictic situation in order to elucidate the functions of deictic pronouns makes it impossible to base the research on anything but observation and modeling of real-life situations. In order to explore the conditions of use for each pronoun we have conducted a poll of the native speakers – mostly students, along with some university employees. Multiplicity of factors involved determines the variation in the answers. Besides, relatively low level of normalization of contemporary Turkish language, especially spoken language, and careless attitude of the speakers towards the use of linguistic means complicate the assessment of the results received from respondents. In the process of polling the respondents were given two scenarios. The number of possible answers was not limited.

It is important to note that a necessary condition to use *şu* in describing the location of surrounding objects is **dialogue** (direct deixis). In monologic bookish description location of objects can only be



characterized within the borders of distal and proximal deixis (*bu* – *o*). Besides that, *şu* **instigates a response** from the interlocutor and, therefore, cannot be used when answering a question: – *Şu ne?* – *Bu kalem* ‘– What is **this**? – **This** is a pen’.

Scenario 1. You are in a store and you want to tell the addressee that you like one of the dresses. Which pronoun would you choose if *a)* the dress is on you; *b)* you are holding the dress in your hands; *c)* the dress is mounted on a stand in front of you; *d)* the dress is in the showcase; *e)* the dress is in your addressee's hands?

Group 1

Location of object	<i>bu</i> ‘this’	<i>şu</i> ‘?’	<i>o</i> ‘that’
<i>a)</i> on the speaker	16	1	
<i>b)</i> in the speaker's hands	13	6	
<i>c)</i> on a stand in front of the speaker	2	13	3
<i>d)</i> in the showcase	5	13	5
<i>e)</i> in the addressee's hands	6	3	12

Group 2

Location of object	<i>bu</i> ‘this’	<i>şu</i> ‘?’	<i>o</i> ‘that’
<i>a)</i> on the speaker	19	1	
<i>b)</i> in the speaker's hands	17	3	
<i>c)</i> on a stand in front of the speaker	2	16	3
<i>d)</i> in the showcase	2	15	4
<i>e)</i> in the addressee's hands	4	4	13

The answers of the respondents show that in situation *a)* the pronoun *bu* is practically the only choice, and in situation *b)* it is preferred, in situations *c)* and *d)* *şu* is preferable, while in situation *e)* most respondents chose *o*. The choice, of course, was affected by the way in



which the respondents imagined the configuration of the members in the situation, and also by the possibility to complement the utterance with pointing gesture. Thus, in situation *b*) a considerable number of answers with *şu* can be explained by the possibility (in contrast to *a*)) to extend the object towards the addressee; distribution of answers in situations *c*) and *d*) obviously depends on the supposed distance between the showcase or stand and the speaker. As was directly noted by some respondents, pronoun *şu* may be used in all cases when the speaker is not holding the dress; in the situation when the speaker is pointing at the dress in the showcase definitives *o* or *oradaki* 'situated there' would be the most appropriate.

On the whole we can say that *bu* attributes the object to the "field of the speaker", which can be perceived narrowly (i.e. "my field consists of the things that are situated right around me/on me") or more broadly (if the addressee, stand, or showcase situated near the speaker – approximately within the reach of the speaker – are included). Rather big number of answers with *şu* in situation *b*) is dictated by the need of a pointing gesture, which is even more evident in situations *c*) and *d*). In such a case *şu* takes the object pointed at away from the "field of the speaker", regardless of spatial closeness.

Scenario 2. The speaker is seated at the table. He has a pen (*a*), but it doesn't work. He conveys this fact to his interlocutor seated at a table nearby and asks him to pass another pen which *b*) is located on the table where the addressee is seating, *c*) is in the addressee's hands, and *d*) is located on a third table, at a small distance from the addressee and at a bigger distance from the speaker. Unlike Scenario 1, in this case the item in possession is not masterless, but belongs to one of the interlocutors (*a*, *b*, *c*), it is not put on the speaker, and the arrangement of objects is more clearly defined.



Group 1

Location of object	<i>bu</i> 'this'	<i>şu</i> '?'	<i>o</i> 'that'
<i>a</i>) in speaker's hands	17		
<i>b</i>) on the addressee's table	1	11	4
<i>c</i>) in addressee's hands		5	13
<i>d</i>) at a third table		12	8

Group 2

Location of object	<i>bu</i> 'this'	<i>şu</i> '?'	<i>o</i> 'that'
<i>a</i>) in speaker's hands	22		
<i>b</i>) on the addressee's table	2	18	5
<i>c</i>) in addressee's hands	3	9	12
<i>d</i>) at a third table		11	15

The answers of the respondents show that in such a scenario the speaker can use only *bu* when referring to his own pen. Mention of object that does not belong to the addressee is accompanied by *şu* in the majority of answers (situations *b*) and *d*)), and the item clearly within the "field of the addressee" (situation *c*)) – similar to Scenario 1 – is accompanied by the pronoun *o*. Matter of fact distance between the object and the speaker do not play a decisive role, since the pen situated on a third table, the most distant from the speaker, receives an even number of answers with *şu* and *o* from the respondents.

The answer to the question posed at the beginning of our research is the following: the use of *şu* in relation to an object in the hands of the speaker or on him is possible when the speaker wants to express self-distancing from the object, such answer is accompanied by a characteristic gesture when the speaker slightly pulls the item on him away or, holding the item in his hand, extends it towards the addressee, i.e. practically takes it away from his personal field (cf. above, Scenario 1, situation *b*): *Al şunu!* 'Take this!', *Şu kokmuş tişörtü elimden alır mısın!* 'Take (lit. "will you take?") from me (lit. "from my hand") this stinking t-



shirt!', *Şu hırka çok eski* 'This jacket is very old!' (about a jacket that the speaker wears).

As to the relationship between the choice of demonstrative pronoun and spatial orientation of the speaker's body, questioning of the native speakers showed that *bu* can only be used in relation to objects within the visibility distance of the speaker, while the objects behind the speaker can only be referred to with *şu* and *o*, complemented by pointing the finger behind: *Bana şu/o tornavidayı uzatır mısın* 'Give me that screwdriver' (about a screwdriver situated behind the speaker, if he cannot pause his work and take the screwdriver himself).

Thus, we can make the following conclusions about the use of demonstrative pronouns in relation to inanimate objects in direct conversation when the positions of the speaker and his addressee differ:

- 1) pronoun *bu* indicates that the object is situated within the "field of the speaker" and within his visibility range;
- 2) pronoun *şu* shows that the object is outside of the "field of the speaker" and, usually, relative closeness of the object to the speaker;
- 3) pronoun *o* is used to point at an object outside of the "field of the speaker" and relatively far from him or within the "field of his addressee".

Correlation of meanings of the three Turkish demonstrative pronouns can be more accurately expressed if we slightly modify the above mentioned scheme proposed by Frei:

bu	← zone of «self»
şu / o	← zone of «not self»

All the above said about the functions of *bu* – *şu* – *o* isn't directly related to the translation of these pronouns, i.e. *şu* can be translated as "this" or "that" in different contexts, since, as we have observed, the boundaries of the field of the speaker in relation to demonstrative



pronouns are different in the different languages. The limits of the personal space of the speaker are an important part of the surrounding space's structure within the ethnic linguistic worldview and, as our research shows, are also expressed in the semantics of some lexical groups (Napolnova, 2010).

Let's return to the question of foreign language instruction and how the above said is related to it. It is known that people make certain mistakes when speaking a non-native language: such as incorrect pronunciation, mistakes in the choice and structure of grammatical or syntactic constructions. These mistakes can be easily isolated and explained, it is usually sufficient to show the mistake to the student and try to correct it. Serious cultural or communicative failures arise from a different type of mistakes – the mistakes with origins non-evident to the speakers and difficult to explain to students of the language. As R. Lado has pointed, «There is every reason to believe that the same kind of distortion that we can observe in the sounds of the speech of a nonnative speaker also occurs in the meanings he is trying to convey» (Lado, 1957, p. 85). Acquisition of native language by a child happens simultaneously and parallel to the exploration of the outside world. The child perceives the world not chaotically, but in accordance with the categories offered by his native language. «As a matter of fact the meanings into which we classify our experience are culturally determined or modified, and they are very considerably from culture to culture» (Lado, 1957, p. 78). Kornilov proposes to represent the whole of such categories in the form of a “matrix” (Kornilov, 2003, p. 80), and we want to suggest a comparison with a CD that needs to be formatted before recording. This approach calls for special contrastive research which can help the teachers of native language as foreign when they don't know or only poorly know the native language of their students to determine the points of incongruity and from the very beginning concentrate on preventing certain mistakes and communicative failures.



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Contact

Elena Napolnova
34794 Alemdag Cekmekoy
İstanbul Turkey
elenapolnova@yahoo.com



History of teaching English as an academic subject in Slovakia

Pavol Kvasniak

Catholic University in Ružomberok, Slovakia

pavol.kvasniak@gmail.com

Abstract

The article presents results of the bachelor thesis which offers a general overview of foreign language education history in Slovak Republic, more thoroughly, teaching English as a foreign language. Initially, the article introduces a reader into brief description of the history of teaching foreign language in Slovakia and situation before and after 1989. Afterwards, it presents eleven parts which fully cover the results of research being made in the selected educational institution and maps its entire history of teaching English as a foreign language since 1994 till 2013. Those eleven parts provide answers to several research questions and deal with the key reasons of beginning teaching English at the selected school and various documents, decrees and laws which have to be kept. Furthermore the article presents all the teachers of English who worked/have worked at school, which qualification they had/have, which school books, handbooks, dictionaries, magazines or other educational equipment were/are used in teaching and learning process as well as the number of pupils who were taught English, etc. The conclusion sums up and presents the results of the research.

Key words: school, foreign language, English, teacher, pupils, school book, teaching, learning, classroom, education

Introduction

Nowadays, the importance of being well educated, especially in language area, is simply indisputable. Ability to communicate with the whole universe has been demanded for centuries and has become an essential feature of human capital in the globalizing world. The mankind has been learning foreign languages for 5000 years whether for a



scientific or pragmatic reasons reflecting the personal interest but also the needs of the market, economy, policy, culture, etc. (Bálintová, 2003).

Firstly, the article will briefly discuss the most relevant parts of very long and rich history of teaching foreign languages in Slovakia and afterwards, it will narrow its focus to teaching English as a foreign language and its overall status before and after 1989.

Secondly, the article will present the results of the research which maps entire history of teaching English language as an academic subject at selected Primary school with preschool Oravská Polhora 130. It will present the aim of the research, five research questions, research sample, research methods and overall results of the research which will deal with the beginning of teaching English at school, which grades were/are taught English, teachers who taught/teaches English subject and their qualification, the school books, dictionaries, magazines, facilities which were/are used in English educational process, which documents, decrees or laws have to be kept by the school, which English extracurricular activities the school offers or how the English education process looks like since, respectively, how the process has changed.

Finally, researched history of teaching English language as academic subject at selected school will be compared to overall history of teaching English language at Slovak republic in order to find out whether the school fit or differ from majority.

Materials and methods

The research which maps the history of education of English language as a foreign language at selected educational institution has been done by the intervention of the school ethnography. It prefers the direct contact with the informants, using the form of interview, important for obtaining reliable and factually accurate materials / data (Švec, 1998) and historiography (It gives the form and the content to the history of mankind and selects all what is considered worthy for the recording in terms of the present (ibid.), according to the pedagogical-methodological handbook and through the researching and studying of the school archive



materials, the teaching handbooks, the schoolbooks and the interviews with a school director and the teachers of English subject.

Results

The bachelor thesis maps history of foreign language teaching in Slovakia since 17th century, when the school attendance was not compulsory, proper education was a matter of wealth and Latin was dominant. The era of formalism and dogmatism was later on changed by teaching methods and educational theories embraced in J. A. Comenius's works (Bálintová, 2003). The enlightenment widened education of classical foreign language by new, modern ones, such as German, French and Hungarian. However, German and Hungarian languages were taught naturally in order to denationalize Slovak children, which also raised counter demands to pay more attention towards national languages and education of foreign languages base on mother tongue (ibid.). Significant change in foreign language education was made in 20th century when traditional grammar-translation teaching methods were shifted into the direct communicative method (ibid.). The Slovak school system underwent many changes in case of foreign language education till the present. Recently, the new conception of foreign language teaching at primary and secondary schools was made, based on effort to create multicultural European society, by achieving communication skills in at least two foreign languages as well as communication level B1/B2 for first and level A2/B1 for second foreign language.

Afterwards, the thesis pays much more attention towards teaching of English as a foreign language in Slovakia. At the beginning, it generally states that there were several historical changes which affected not only the particular society and people's foreign language interest, but also school system which caused that foreign languages such as German, Hungarian and Russian, which were currently in the center of attention was substituted by another ones, especially English. This global and international language was firstly taught as optional foreign language in 7th – 9th grade at primary school, with very poor 90 minutes time dotation per week. However, in the 1970s education of modern European



languages was completely abolished in all teacher training colleges and the only" place for studying them was in the faculties of arts, with limited number of students was limited which caused serious shortage of teachers qualified for teaching foreign languages. In 1989, Slovakia experienced political, economic and social changes which significantly influenced the way of thinking of people and resulted in a serious reform of foreign language education. Education of foreign languages has become the part of the school curriculum; Russian language has lost its dominant position as a compulsory subject and English language has risen to the very top. Education of foreign languages has been given more teaching lessons per week and wider range of well accessible teaching material, which markedly reflected people' new desires for travelling, professional growth and communication and collaboration with other nations. In the bachelor thesis there are furthermore several chapters describing English language education at all levels of schools after 1989 and then the attention is pointed to translators and interpreters, teacher training, fast track, examination, curricula, teaching materials and in service training, which are efficiently characterized. The final paragraph states that however the foreign language teaching in Slovakia has improved a lot; there are still some challenges, which have to be solved, such as a creation of national foreign language school books, and supporting teaching materials incorporating *a modern technology*, etc. (Gadušová & Hartánská, 2002).

In the part of the bachelor thesis where the results of the research are presented, the reader is initially introduced to the aim, which is to map history of teaching English language as an academic subject at selected educational institution, and subsequently with five partial aims reflected in five research questions, focusing on the beginnings of teaching English at the school, teachers of English, all kinds of educational equipment and methods used to teach English, extracurricular activities at school and the future perspective of teaching English at the school.

Afterwards, the research sample itself is presented from the organizational, environmental, social, personal, educational, philosophical, athletic, scientific, cultural and extracurricular perspective.



The last paragraph of this complex characterization is devoted to foreign language teaching and it states that German is taught unprofessionally, while English, Russian and French professionally. The school seeks international cooperation, predominately with Poland school in order to provide an opportunity of exchange trips (Primary school..., 2012/13).

When research methods, which have been already discussed in this article, are presented, the research results take their turn. The chapter called "*The starting point*" explains the beginnings of foreign language education at the school after 1989, when Decree allowed teaching German and Russian. However, people got a hankering to travel to work much further and their foreign language knowledge were for the Francophone and the Anglophone countries insufficient, what subsequently raised new demanding. English was introduced at the school in 1994 and was taught by unqualified teacher with an exception from education. English as an academic subject has started being taught in two classes of 5th grade which were classified upon eight grades school system, however, a few pupils continued and finished 9th grade.. From that point, English has been taught at upper degree of primary schools till presence. In school year 1999/2000 the school started teaching English experimentally at lower 3rd grade. This experiment was stopped and restored several times per decade. The significant change came in 2011 when English language became established as 1st compulsory foreign language being obligatory taught from 3rd grade from legislative. Till that year, English was also taught as the second foreign language, firstly in 6th grade experimentally, secondly in 7th, 8th and 9th grade after the curricula had been modified in school year 2010/2011.

Next very interesting chapter maps the amount of the pupils who were/has been taught English at school since the very beginning. Those numbers will not be presented in this article, because there is too many of them and we have to keep in minds that the pupils who attend the school make it a living organism which acquires constantly year after year a new face which means that the numbers of the pupils at school or in each class change every school year and this happens for a plenty of reasons, such as the grade repetition, the change of the school, the family relocation, etc.



The chapter notices the number of English learners predominantly at lower 3rd and upper 5th grade, rarely in lower 1st grade and each five years, the statistic reports show the total numbers of the pupils in these very school years. But to give you just a taste of it, in the school year 1994/1995 the pupils of 5th grade divided into two classes got an opportunity to choose English, German or Russian, as a foreign language, which they wanted to learn and English was chosen by 14 pupils from the total number of 57. In the school year 2012/2013, the school established one pure English class of lower 3rd grade with 19 pupils. The number of 5th graders divided into three classes was 53 which equal the number of English learners. The school taught English 339 pupils. The main aim of this chapter is simply to show, how the interest of English has grown throughout two decades.

Following chapter deals with all teachers who taught or have taught English at the school. Particular paragraphs present each teacher as employee and give information about his / her studies and qualification. Afterwards, the thesis names the educational equipment for teaching and learning English. In 1994, when English began to be taught problems with finances and a lack of the school books were present, but fortunately, the school somehow managed it and soon, all pupils had their first school books named "*Angličtina 1 pre základné školy*". These school books were in the school year 1997/1998 replaced by "*Project English 1st edition*", in 2003/2004 by 2nd edition and in 2010/2011 by newest 3rd edition. All project books were supported by workbook, CD, teacher's book and in case of project 3rd edition also by DVD worksheets and tests plus brand new Culture DVDs and new Project iTools. All projects are also supported by web pages. At lower grades was used "*Chatterbox pupil's book*" also supported by Activity book, Teacher's book and Cassette. Since the school year 2010/2011 Chatterbox has been replaced by "*Family and friends*" also accompanied by Class Book with MultiROM, Workbook, iTools, Teacher's Book, Audio CDs and Readers. The school works with two kinds of dictionaries, bilingual Lingea pocket dictionary and monolingual Oxford Basic English dictionary. The school started ordered a magazine Hello to enrich pupils' vocabulary, gain new knowledge about culture of



English-speaking countries and other topics reflecting life. The school established two special foreign language classrooms with all needed equipment and interactive whiteboards to all classrooms in order to meet needs of pupils and improve educational process. Beside these innovations, pupils use computers, English CD-ROMs, DVDs and visit several internet websites for learning and practicing foreign language. Next few chapters deals with extracurricular and extra-ordinary activities closely connected to English, all important documents, decrees, laws regulating teaching English, sufficient characterization of ways of teaching English at the school since beginning and additional perspective of further English language education.

Discussion

The total time needed to finish the research was approximately 1 and 1/2 year and a lot of required information had to be collected, evaluated and processed. The research was based on investigation of the school ethnography and historiography, according to the pedagogical-methodological handbook and through researching and studying of school archive materials, teaching handbooks, schoolbooks and interviews with school director and teachers of English language. The reader can find the overall result containing the wide range of relevant information gained by investigation which unambiguously contributes most to achievement the main stated aim of research. One can find the thesis very interesting thus beside of giving wide and detailed look into the history of teaching English language in Slovakia it incorporates its concrete application in research at real school. The facts in the bachelor thesis are not only built from dry theoretical and historical facts, but also contain a practical research, which definitely changes a reader point of view. This kind of research itself can be highly useful especially for future potential teachers of not only English language. The entire process of working and exploring the unknown, in order to finish the research, significantly enriches an individual by essential knowledge from school practice, answers many yet unanswered questions and raise awareness of thorny the school system really is.



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Contact

Mgr. Pavol Kvasniak
KAJL FF KU v Ružomberku
Slovakia
pavol.kvasniak@gmail.com



**'GMINA', 'WOJEWÓDZTWO', 'POWIAT', etc.:
How to relevantly translate such intricate Polish words
into English and remain competent?
(The challenges for university students,
translation-trainees and translators)**

Artur Świątek, PhD.

Pedagogical University of Cracow, Poland

artursw@interia.pl

Abstract

The objective of this article is to demonstrate how significant relevance is in the process of translation from the source language into the target language. Two languages will be considered here - Polish and English. Polish will serve here as the source language and English as the target one. Both languages, deriving from distant language families, provide anyone who takes up any translating tasks with lots of discrepancies in the fields of administration, law, medicine and other disciplines which require translation. The items that will be exemplified in this presentation (e.g. 'gmina', 'województwo', 'powiat', 'okólnik', etc.) cause a tremendous difficulty for anyone who is obliged to translate them into English.

The following ambiguous questions will be posed in the article:

- what is more professional and relevant to rely on – paper dictionaries or their electronic equivalents?
- what about many available Internet websites or Internet translators?
- where is this golden means to master the translator's work?
- how to access relevant information in the form of precise equivalents necessary to convey the intended message?

Such intricacies and nuances keep tormenting many translators' minds for years. Where is the source of perfection? What to do when we come across a really challenging item to translate? How to approach it – is it better to use the avoidance strategy by omitting a difficult part or do our best to find the equivalent in the target language even if it truly does not exist or if it may not precisely correspond to the one we manage to coin in the target language?



The author of this article is convinced that all these posed questions will be fully answered and explained, which, hopefully, will open a nice source for a debate on translation nowadays.

Key words: relevance, translation, translation sources, translator`s approach.

Introduction

The idea to describe this intricate process of challenging words and phrases related to administrative field occurred to the author after his advancing experience as a translator, which presently amounts to over ten years. Being obliged to face such intricacies on a daily basis, while fulfilling the post of a translator, the author was forced to check up the meaning of such terminology in many available sources. They abounded in both paper and electronic forms, however, to his surprise, many of them were not profoundly relevant and convincing as for which notion(s) should be used predominantly in the required context.

Therefore it was decided to describe the translator`s doubts and queries in this respect. They concerned the so-called ‘forced choice’ as many times all available sources displayed many equivalents instead of one, which could be apparent and relevant at the same time. Very frequently there were too many to be selected. Hence there occurred the first question needed to be posed in our study: which equivalent among so many available ones, should be used as the very relevant one in the preparatory stage of the translation process? The approach suggested by many translation scholars in this respect is to select the first as the most common, popular and relevant one. This is not always the case, as in the paper forms such an approach is still favoured, however in case of electronic sources, namely in case of online dictionaries, the displayed equivalents at our disposal amount even to a dozen or more, hence there remains the subsequent query that causes our doubts: which one or two of these equivalents should be appropriately selected and subsequently implemented into a piece of writing – the translated text? These queries will be responded to in the following sections of this article.



Relevance

In accordance with the definition provided by Cambridge Dictionaries Online (online source) relevance is *the degree to which something is related or useful to what is happening or being talked about*. In other words, it is the condition in which a given word, phrase, expression is in comparison and contrast with its intended translated counterpart in the target language. Some equivalents may be related due to their proximity in both analysed languages, hence the ease of translation as both forms, the source one and the target one, will be promptly comprehended by recipients of the target text or language. The complexity arises when the act of relevance may not be fulfilled due to frequent intricacies in the process of translation, e.g. in case of the afore-mentioned discrepancies in the field of law, medicine, administration, etc.

Therefore, the practical part of this article will prove how close or distant the notion of relevance is in case of translation of administrative terms from Polish into English.

The study and discussion

The current study aims at indicating the most common instances of administrative terms, while transposing them from the source language (Polish) into its target counterpart, (English).

Let us now proceed to the very exemplification of the selected group of terms. Unfortunately, the demonstration of all this intricate translation process will not be possible here, as we need to face many spatial constraints. Therefore, we will outline this process by defining, clarifying the terms as well as suggesting the most relevant selection of theirs, and conclude with the subsequent implementation of these terms into the very translated texts.

The first analysed term that has been selected for our needs is the word '*gmina*'. In Polish it means the basic unit of local government¹. As it

¹ All Polish definitions provided here are translations by the author of the article. The definitions are based on Polish Wikipedia sources, selected as the most adequate and relevant for the content of the article.



can be clearly noticed, the Polish definition is not clear-cut, as it may seem too general or just vague. Let us now try to find its counterparts in English. Following our first selected source, the website proz.com, we face lots of problems, as here this website is not the website itself, but also a forum to discuss many intricacies in the field of translation. As *gmina* may be used in different contexts and hence be polysemous, the users of this website and forum in one, keep discussing and exchanging arguments to find the best equivalent, but it is rather too challenging. Let us provide the very first counterpart, which turns up when we click this word. It is the word *commune*. As this equivalent is not clear, the most frequent suggestion made by both translators, linguists and English philologists is to preserve this term with its bracketed Polish counterpart. The problem remains that we need to bear in mind who the recipients of the potential translated text will be, whether it will be only an English-speaking group or English speakers originating from Poland, hence understanding Polish reality and being able to fully comprehend what was translated and refer quite relevantly to the translated content of the conveyed message.

Apart from the general meaning of the Polish word *gmina*, we, as Polish inhabitants, have to be able to distinguish from other sub-terms used on a daily basis in relation to a rather intricate Polish administrative division. This division is unnecessarily too complex, but that is only a personal view of the author of this article. By complexity and intricacy we mean the further divisions into types of the Polish administrative unit *gmina*. We also distinguish such a word as *gmina miejska*, which in Polish means an administrative unit, which comprises a town or a city in its administrative boundaries. Let us now try to search for its English counterpart. It is *municipality*. The English equivalent may be similar, because it touches upon the issue in question, but obviously is not thoroughly relevant, as following Merriam-Webster dictionary online the definition is as follows: a city or town that has its own government to deal with local problems. This English-English source provides us rather with a more general definition of the word *gmina miejska* in English than in case of its source counterpart in Polish, as it rather refers to



administrative duties of the people governing it than to its administrative boundaries.

Another kind of the Polish word *gmina* is *gmina wiejska*. Referring once more to the Polish sources, we may define this word as an administrative unit, not comprising a town or a city in its boundaries. Let us find its English counterpart. Following the website proz.com, we will not be able to find its equivalent, as this source equips us with the expression *rural commune*, which is definitely very imprecise, as it was elaborated on above. As we did not obtain the relevant information from proz.com, we will now proceed to obtain some assistance from other Polish-English online dictionaries. The equivalent we were able to find was unfortunately absent, which means that the only counterparts that were possible to be considered appropriate were two words that were separately treated by online sources, namely *gmina* and *wiejska*. In this case we may clearly state that the available sources (both paper and online ones) failed completely with provision of adequate news, so vital for our needs. There remains a question: what should this poor little thing – a translator – do in this respect? We think that the only solution to this very challenging translation nuance and a problem with translation is to provide any reader, recipient or naturally a client with the descriptive equivalent.

The last kind of the Polish word *gmina* is *gmina miejsko-wiejska*. It is a total mixture as for terminology of the Polish administrative system, for it combines both kinds described separately above, that is *gmina miejska* and *gmina wiejska*. In accordance with the Polish sources providing us with its definition, it is an administrative unit, which comprises one town or one city and neighbouring villages. This term becomes a very complex one, as it unnecessarily complicates already not a very simple Polish administrative system. As far as its English counterpart is concerned, we encounter the one as follows: *urban and rural commune*. Again this counterpart is imprecise, as it, on the one hand, refers quite accurately to the second element of this expression, namely *urban* or *rural* (from the perspective of the Polish source word), but, on the other hand, it completely obstructs the very meaning of the word *gmina* in Polish and is



totally incomprehensible for the English-speaking recipients. What follows is another obstacle a translator needs to overcome, namely how to deal with another nuance in translation? Whether to blindly and inconsistently follow the imprecise sources that provide such imperfect instances or to be above it all, use them and improve their meaning by providing an adequate description as well? It is clearly advisable that a translator should follow the last piece of advice to preserve his or her competence and be professional in fulfilling his or her translation commitment.

The next administrative term that has been selected for our study is the Polish word '*województwo*'. As Poland has undergone many administrative reforms since 1970s, the semantics of this word has changed many times, very frequently due to the changing territory *województwo* comprised through the years. But let us focus initially on its Polish definition. In Polish it denotes a unit of administrative division of higher degree in Poland. Once more the definition does not reflect anything similar or recognisable when confronted with English speaking background. Let us now use the most favoured website that is used to reveal any doubts, also in this respect, namely *proz.com*. According to it, the counterpart is *province*. It is unclear, as such a word has many connotations in English. What is even more surprising and what appears on this website as well is a set of three equivalents: *commune*, *district*, *province*. As we remember, the equivalent suggested to match the Polish word *gmina* was to be *commune*. Three equivalents to match one administrative unit in the Polish conditions is just too wide a selection, hence it causes ambiguity and doubts in a translator's mind. What should be the translator's approach in this matter? Definitely, to select one provided counterpart out of three suggested, but which one is the most relevant? In this case the translator's decision should require lots of flexibility and knowledge-based experience as many years ago, the core equivalent for the Polish word *województwo* was *voivodship* (following the core paper Polish-English, English-Polish dictionary by Jan Stanisławski). However, due to the change of a political system in Poland in 1989, many changes in the market of dictionaries as well as



administrative reform in 1990 occurred; the equivalent *voivodship* lost its significance, mainly due to the range of territory Polish *województwo* comprised. The number of Polish administrative units of this kind decreased from 49 to 16, hence the problems started occurring and persist till today. As for our analysis, the most relevant counterpart that we, as translators, use on a daily basis is the word *province*.

Another word that has been selected from a wide list of intricate notions for translators to convey into the target language, was the Polish word '*powiat*'. The Polish definition of this word is a unit of 2nd degree administrative and territorial division. Similarly to the formerly analysed instance, this definition is very unclear and it does not clarify its meaning to any potential addressee. Let us now proceed to the very analysis of its counterparts in English. Using the same source we tend to rely on, namely the website proz.com, we may find the following equivalent in English: *district*. We may be easily confused seeing such an equivalent, as it is very misleading when confronting it with the English administrative system, where there are obviously districts, provinces, boroughs and counties, but their territorial and administrative division is different and distant from their Polish equivalents. Therefore we need to pose another question that needs to be replied here. What is the translator's approach in such matters? Whether it would be more advisable and relevant to just select one more or less corresponding word at random and leave it as it is or would it be simply more logical and better to focus on one equivalent accompanied by a Polish source word as well and followed by some description? The solution to this intricate problem is to use the English word *district*, followed by its Polish source word and provided with a very relevant description what precisely the word *district* refers to in Polish conditions.

There exist many kinds of *powiat* in Polish as well. The reason is also very similar to the issue of *gmina*, mentioned above. The initial assumptions for introducing many kinds of this administrative unit derive from the interwar period in Poland, as due to many social and political changes, such divisions were introduced. Surprisingly, as the aftermath and immediate consequence of introducing the last administrative reform



in Poland in 1990, the kinds of *powiat* were re-introduced to demonstrate respect to interwar period achievements and to outline this new division as a fully democratic move. Hence, at present we have many kinds of this administrative unit. To distinguish only several of them, we may enumerate the following ones: *powiat miejski (grodzki)* – these two terms are used interchangeably and *powiat ziemski*. In case of the former one, it is still used officially and on a daily basis, in case of the latter one it occurs mostly in informal contexts just to pay respect and demonstrate sentiment for the interwar period. As for the Polish definition of the former one, it is the following: an administrative unit in Poland, comprising a town or a city, and similar in the field of responsibilities to *gmina*. Let us now proceed to a brief analysis of their English equivalents. In case of *powiat miejski (grodzki)* we may illustrate such a counterpart: *township*. The term used in English has a very approximate connotation and meaning compared to its Polish source word and surprisingly fulfils its function.

As for the next kind of *powiat*, namely *powiat ziemski*, we will analyse now the definition in Polish and its counterpart in English. Commencing with the Polish definition, it states that *powiat ziemski* is an administrative unit in Poland, mostly in the interwar period, related to a town or a city, and similar in the field of duties to *gmina*. As we may clearly observe, the definition in Polish profoundly resembles the one quoted above and referring to *powiat miejski (grodzki)* with the only exception that in case of *powiat ziemski* we encounter this historical reference to the interwar Poland. What about its English equivalent? It is *rural county*. Evaluating this equivalent, it is worth noting that it is a very relevant term, as it precisely refers to the administrative term used in Britain, hence its comprehension will be highly probable by English recipients. In this case, a translator may quite easily deal with his or her translation task.

The subsequent word that will undergo our investigation is the Polish word '*sołtys*'. This is the first word here which does not precisely refer to a set of administrative terminology adaptable in Polish conditions, but rather in the first place to a person responsible for holding a post related



to a given administrative division. The Polish definition of this word is a representative of a local community, preferably in the country. Having provided this definition, let us try to search for its English counterparts. Commencing with our main source – the website proz.com, we may find the following equivalents, which are *village leader* or *village administrator*. The equivalents are rather clumsy and awkward, as in Polish reality and administrator, *sołtys* is a person responsible for administering the village community and providing it with all up-to-date news and status quo revolving around the everyday life inside and outside of the village community. But the first equivalent in the form of *village leader* simply does not fulfil its role in any sense, as the term is too irrelevant and apparently too vague to be used in such conditions. Obviously, this criticism is related to the reception of Polish recipients knowing English and reading about Poland, while being abroad and having access to English sources depicting Polish administrative system. That is the perspective of a Pole, being an English translator. However, for the needs of English native speakers, we cannot be as critical as before, because such correspondence conveyed for the target English recipients would definitely suffice.

In case of another term, which should be analysed in our article, the problem appears to be of a similar nature, as the word derives from the Polish word *sołtys*, because it refers to the administrative division any Polish *sołtys* is obliged to hold his or her position in. This word in Polish is *sołectwo*. Its Polish definition is an auxiliary unit for commune in contemporary Poland, characteristic for rural areas. Let us now quote its English equivalent. It is as follows: *village*. Referring to the illustrated equivalent, we may easily state that again it is not precise, as it refers generally to the area any village may cover, but administratively it is not relevant at all, as we know about the existence of the English words, such as *country*, *village*, the meaning of which is very vague in Polish conditions.

Another word which we may study is the Polish word *marszałek*. Its Polish definition is the chairman of a province, the executive organ of provincial government. Before we proceed further with our clarification,



let us now briefly refer to the word 'provincial' in the Polish definition. The word 'provincial' derives from the word 'province' discussed above as one of the many Polish administrative terms. The English equivalent for *marszałek* is, as proz.com indicates, *marshal of the voivodship*. As we may clearly see, the translation is rather out-of-date, as even the most relevant and contemporary source, which proz.com is considered nowadays by all translators and linguists, cannot provide more adequate counterpart. Apparently, the Polish word *marshal* possesses different meanings than its meaning used in the field of administration, however even in this specific case, the counterpart should be more precise, as the word *voivodship*, rather criticised above, should be replaced with something more modern, e.g. province. Hence we see that all the problems with transposing many administrative terms from Polish and English persist.

The subsequent word which we would like to discuss in our study is the Polish word *wojewoda*. We have already mentioned the inadequately transposed Polish word *województwo* above. Now we shall concentrate on the analogy between the Polish words *sołtys* and *sołectwo* (discussed above as well) and *wojewoda* and *województwo*. The analogy originates from the fact that these are administrative divisions given to state officers fulfilling their functions in and the very names for people fulfilling such functions. But let us return to the very word *wojewoda*, announced several lines above. In Polish the definition states that *wojewoda* is an organ of state administration. What is highly surprising here is that even the Polish definition does not specify that *wojewoda* is a person, but an organ which makes it sound very artificial. It is a very responsible post in the hierarchy of Polish administration, but it does not simultaneously mean that the definition should be so vague even for Polish native speakers, let alone its translation. Let us proceed to look for the equivalents of this word in English. The available sources, out of which still the website proz.com is the predominant one and the most relevant, indicate the following instances: *voivode*, *governor*. We observe lack of relevance and adequacy here, as the first equivalent must be apparently treated as very archaic, and deriving from not very modern contexts. In



case of the second instance, we may accept it more easily as it concerns the range of duties any *wojewoda* has to take to fulfil his position in administration.

The next instance, which we intend to outline in our article, will be of a slightly different nature, as it does not precisely refer to the very administrative division in Poland, but rather to administrative and office work. This word is '*okólnik*'. The Polish definition is very general, naming *okólnik* as a kind of official document. For Polish translators, as well as for Polish citizens, this word is rather not modern, let alone the obligation to familiarise the English recipients with its existence and meaning. In English the equivalent is, according to proz.com, non-existent. In other words it was not possible to find it on this website. Other online dictionaries provide us with *circular*, which surprisingly is one of the very few instances which may be regarded as fully corresponding and being relevant to its source counterpart. *Circulars* in this meaning are used not only in office correspondence. They also occur in the academic contexts, as sources informing potential conference participants about the upcoming conferences and trainings.

Conclusion

Concluding the above considerations, we may state that translation of administrative terms from Polish into English is a highly challenging task, not only for university students commencing their practice and academic work based on translation, but for translation trainees and professional translations as well. Why is that? The reason for encountering challenges in this case is this field of translation, namely administration. Because two administrative systems differ profoundly, it is required from any translator to be highly competent and relevant while performing a translation task in this respect. Competence and relevance will be clearly visible in the work of any translator. But how to be fully competent and relevant in transposing terminology that is unfamiliar for users of this or that language? Firstly, any translator must be eloquent and possess sufficient specialised knowledge in the translated field, here administration. Secondly, their knowledge may be enhanced by their



exposure to relevant sources, that is dictionaries, glossaries, Internet messaging boards and the like referring precisely to the terms, which are necessary to be familiar with, to be subsequently conveyed into the target language.

It is believed that the selected instances presented above allowed to comprehend how intricate each translation task is when faced with any challenging terminology.

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Contact

Artur Świątek, PhD., Assistant Professor
41-300 Dąbrowa Górnicza
ul. Stara 11c/3
Woj. Śląskie
Poland
artursw@interia.pl