Time Reference in Translation

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Abstract

Although the concept of time is shared among cultures, there are specific attitudes towards it (i.e. Khairullin, 1993). The differences encountered between the translated Greek news reporting material examined and the English press source version, reveal two varying tendencies with respect to time specification in this genre: on the one hand, modifications introduced in the target version relate to an intensification intention of the translator, conveying a particular ideological force and, on the other, a relative tendency for future orientation is observed in Greek, as opposed to a clear preference for past time reference in English.

Introduction

Time is a universal concept in that time units exist independently of the grammar of any particular language (R. Quirk et al, 1972: 84). Reference to these extra-linguistic realities is made through the language-specific categories of tense and aspect, on the one hand, and certain time indicators (adverbials), on the other, which support event location in time (tense) or temporal event distribution (aspect).

The way temporal specification is conceptualized varies cross-culturally. A contrastive lexical semantic analysis may indicate that the manner the 24-hour period of the day is divided up into temporal points and temporal spans may be fuzzy and vague or differ cross-culturally.

Moreover, tense and aspect systems vary considerably across languages and therefore time adverbials are expected to conform to language specific constraints, thus, creating problems of equivalence in translation. In discourse, temporal adverbials may function as topic-shift markers or other discourse organizers (Brown & Yule, 1983: 96); given certain cross-cultural preferences in discourse organization, temporal adverbials may also need to conform to language specific constraints operating at discourse level.

Besides culture specific attitudes towards time may pose problems of equivalence in translation. Temporal clauses in narrative texts written in Modern Greek have been argued to function as essential guideposts that regulate the flow of information within a text (Kostouli, 1989: 350). Empirical examination of these narrative texts showed regularities in the use of temporal clauses which were accounted for by particular principles.
The difference in the use of temporal adverbial constituents observed between English (source) and Greek (target) news reporting material, in translation, reveal cultural preferences in the use of this grammatical category. Awareness of these differences facilitates the translator’s task to organize the temporal structure of the target discourse.

Contrasting source and target versions of press material, in translation, may not allow the researcher to draw as safe conclusions about cultural preferences, as in the case of contrasting independent production in both L1 and L2. It does however provide some basis for observation, in this direction, because genre membership, similarity of content and other factors influencing linguistic production are more likely to be controlled and thus irrelevant variation eliminated.

1. Intensification Devices in Time Specification

A 18,000-word sample of 1992-1995 Greek news reporting material, translated from the English press, is contrasted to its source version with respect to the way temporal adverbial constituents are rendered in the target text. The source version is, in fact, much longer because almost always only part of the source text is included in the Greek publication.

The modifications introduced in the target text are assumed to be due to the translator’s or the editor’s insights about what the appropriate temporal structure is, in this genre, in order for communicative equivalence to be achieved in the target language, which would make the text appealing to the Greek readership.

Out of the 1,038 time expressions encountered in the present set of data, about two thirds (i.e. 678) were transferred intact, in the target version, whereas a little more than the one third of the total number of time expressions (i.e. 360) appeared modified, in the target text, in various ways.

The following types of modifications contribute an intensification effect to the target version.

1.1 Evaluation

A very common type of intervention on the part of the journalist-translator is the introduction of evaluative comments which are either added to the target text (TT1) or replace (part of) the temporal expression (TTs 2-4). The pragmatic reading of these time expressions, that is, is made transparent in the TT. Additions in TT1 have been capitalized.

ST1 ..And he allowed the scandal.. to drag on for weeks before Boesak’s nomination ..was finally withdrawn.

Days later Mandela dismissed media reports about corruption in his government..

(‘Silence at the Top’, Newsweek, 6.3.95)

TT1 Καθώς άρχισε να παρατηρεί η ΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ ευθυμίας το σκάνδαλο... πως αποσύρει τον διαγωνισμό του [Αλικ Μπάι],...

ΔΙΣΕ ήρες αργότερα, ο Μαντέλα κατήγγελε... τις πληροφορίες περί διαφθοράς στην κυβέρνηση...

(‘Οι δισιακοί του Μαντέλα’, Το Βήμα, 5.3.95).
..Mohammed Farah Aidid and rival warlord Ali Mahdi Mohamed on Oct. 25 fought pitched battles across Mogadishu’s Green Line..
(‘The Renewal Hostilities’, Newsweek, 8.11.93)

..Πολιτοφυλάκες πιστών έναν πολέμαρχο στην Μογάδι. Αλά Μάυ, Αλι Μάχτι Μόχαμμε....
(‘Piós Eι κατά της Μογάδι’, To Bίμα, 15.11.93).

Her son, Anura, ..defected to the ruling United National Party, becoming minister of high education last month.
(‘Falling Out With the Family’, Newsweek, 24.1.94)

...Υπάρχει δίκαιο και η γυναίκα της, η Αναρία της, ο Αντιπόλεμος, η Αντίπολη και η Ευπάθητη από το αντιπόλεμο κάθεται και υπάρχει πρόσφατα υποψίαν....
(‘Οικογενειακές έρωτες για την εξουσία’, To Bίμα, 32.1.94).

..On September 10th the lira was in trouble again, dipping below its ERM floor..
(‘Nordic Currencies - In Shock’, The Economist, 12.9.92)

..Σύντομα η διάφορη σημείωση έκτακτο διώξης υποψίαν το εκτός της στο πλαίσιο του ΕΡΜ...
(‘Σύντομα η διάφορα’, Οικονομικός Τεχνικός, 17.9.93).

..saying: “it seems to me we have the basic facts now”. The date was Nov. 26, 1963..
(‘I wanted to be a hero’, Newsweek, 22.11.93)

..συμπλήρωσε... «Είναι δύσκολο για κανέναν από τους συνεργάτες μας να επικρίνεται την εξελίξεις στο εξωτερικό για τον τομέα της».
(‘Νέα χρονιά για την Ελλάδα’, To Bίμα, 21.11.93)

Making the pragmatic reading of time expressions opaque was rarely observed in the present set of data

..the declining significance of national borders.
(‘Mafia’, Newsweek, 13.12.93)

..η μεμονωμένη πλεύση σημασίας των εθνικών συνόρων.
(‘Η μεμονωμένη πλεύση σημασίας των εθνικών συνόρων’).
(‘Η μεμονωμένη πλεύση σημασίας των εθνικών συνόρων’, Το Βίμα, 12.12.93)

The phenomenon of the translator’s raising the level of evaluativeness, in Greek, has also been observed in EEC translating between English and Greek (Sidiroglou, 1993: 107). It is a realization of the explicitation tendency generally associated with the translation process.

1.2 Lack of Accuracy in Time Specification

Another type of modification, with respect to time expressions, is a tendency on the part of the journalist-translator to eliminate elements indicating time approximation and accuracy (omitted elements have been capitalized in the source text fragments, below).
Most important, does Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de Leon, LESS THAN three months into his six-year term, have a consistent strategy for dealing with political and financial crises? (‘Riding Off in All Directions’, *Time*, 27.2.95)

Kαι, το σπουδαίοτερο, ο Μεξικάνος πρόεδρος Ερνέστο Σεντέλια, τρεις μήνες μετά την εκλογή του, έχει αρχίσει κάποια συνεπή στρατηγική για να αντιμετωπίσει την πολιτική και οικονομική κρίση.

(‘Μεξικό: τι γίνεται με τους Ζαπατάτες και τον Σεντέλια’, Η Καθημερινή, 26.2.95).

..ABOUT 50 million years ago, that tectonic slab slammed into the underbelly of Asia...

(‘While they Slept’, *Time*, 11.10.93)

Πριν από 50 εκατομμύρια χρόνια, αυτή η τεκτονική πλάκα προσέκρουσε βιοκράτεια στο υπογόγιο της Ασίας...

(‘Ινδία: ο Θεός της παλής τόξης αποκουμπήθηκε’, Η Καθημερινή, 10.10.93).

..ALMOST overnight Nigeria was flooded with petrodollars...

(‘People Can Get Away With Anything’, *Newsweek*, 9.1.95)

...Μέσα σε μία νύχτα η Νιγηρία πλημμύρισε από πετρόσφαιρα...

(‘Ο νόμος της μίζας βασίστηκε στο Λάγος’, Το Βήμα, 8.1.95).

Instances of temporal specifications being relativized, in Greek, are extremely rare in the data

No one much cared when the bearded Gysaeus disappeared from Alpine skies a century ago...

(‘The Recall of the Wild’, *Newsweek*, 2.8.93)

Κανένας δεν είχε στεναγμηθεί πριν από έναν ΠΕΡΙΠΟΙ οιώνα όταν εξημανίστηκε ο γενειοφόρος γιππατός από τον ουρανό των Αλπεων.

(‘Το πέταγμα του Άρεος’, Τογιουδόμους, 13.9.93).

This tendency for eliminating time approximation or additional temporal specifications, in favour of more general time indicators in Greek, may be justified on the basis of the stronger oppositional view of reality depicted in Greek news reporting material (Sidiropoulou, 1994: 82). Accuracy in time specification is a rather marginal issue, often irrelevant to the ideological message intended and, therefore, drawing the readers’ attention on this or using up the readers’ processing effort would not only be useless but also contrary to the overall intention for creating this ideological message about a world constructed in terms of strong binary oppositions.

Besides, this relative lack of interest in accuracy, in time specification, may be paralleled to the interpersonal involvement between speakers and audience, observed in a study of Greek and American narratives (Tannen, 1984: 27/28). While Greeks had an interpersonal attitude when engaged in telling what happened in a film, Americans seemed to be performing a memory task, thus echoing some more transactional attitude. Such a difference has also been observed elsewhere in contrastive studies: Greek researchers have been shown to adopt an interactional attitude in abstract writing, whereas researchers from English-speaking countries exhibited a more transactional behaviour in organizing and presenting information in abstracts (Sidiropoulou, 1995).
The fact that Greeks used details to support an interpretation of the film’s message and tended to judge the behaviour of characters in a film, as described by Tannen, may be paralleled with a tendency described earlier in this set of news data, namely, the tendency to make the pragmatic reading of time expressions transparent, thus increasing the degree of evaluativeness in the target text.

1.3 Shorter Time Units

Despite the fact that lack of accuracy in time specifica-tion is favoured, to some extent, in Greek, there is another feature which suggests concern for detail. In contrast to English, which favours relatively longer time units when referring to time periods, the data shows that Greeks very often use shorter time spans to refer to periods of time.

ST11 Ruby did make a flurry of calls to his underworld contacts in the months before the Kennedy assassination. ('I wanted to be a hero', Newsweek, 22.11.93)

TT11 Οι σχέσεις του Ρούμπι με την Κοσάκι, και τη μαφία ήταν υποτεντές και πράγματι έκανε πάρα πολλά τηλεφωνήματα τις εβδομάδες που προηγήθηκαν της δολοφονίας. ('Τζαφ Ρούμπι «Ημέρα να γίνει ήμισυ», To Βήμα, 21.11.93)

ST12 ...Indeed, Kozyrev spoke out in the United Nations last week for a lifting of sanctions against Baghdad. ('A Cold Peace', Newsweek, 19.12.94)

TT12 ...Πρόκειται, ο Κόζιρεφ μάλιστα πριν από μερικές μέρες στον ΟΗΕ για άμεση την κατάρρευση ενεπίγραμμας της Βαγδάτης...

('Η εποχή της ψυχής ειρήνης', To Βήμα, 18.12.94).

ST13 Disarray was already present among the Western nations. Over the past fortnight, it was spiraled into a crisis – the worst, experts say, since the early 1980s.

('A Cold Peace', Newsweek, 19.12.94)

TT13 Η αταξία ήταν ήδη περισσάκα ανάμεσα στα ευρυχρώντα της Βαγδάτης... 

('Η εποχή της ψυχής ειρήνης', To Βήμα, 18.12.94).

ST14 Agricultural researchers have used it to clone embryos from cattle, pigs and other animals for more than a decade.

('Cloning: Where Do We Draw the Line?', Time, 8.11.93)

TT14 ...οι ερευνητές την έχουν χρησιμοποιήσει εδώ και 10 χρόνια περίπου, για την κλωνοποίηση εμβρύων από αγελάδες, χοίρους και άλλα ζώα. ('Ενα πέμπτο που... κλώνω τον κόσμο', Η Καθημερινή, 14.11.93).

Although instances of longer or more general time units employed in Greek do exist

ST15 It took ten days for a coherent explanation of the massacre to emerge..

('Rain-Forest Genocide', Time, 6.9.93)
TT15 Χρειάστηκε να περάσει ένα δεκαήμερο, προτού οι ερευνητές μπορέσουν να δώσουν ικανοποιητική ευγνώμονα για το αποτέλεσμα γεγονός.
(Δολοφονούν τους Ινδώνους’, Η Καθημερινή, 5.9.93).

They always seem to contribute to the overall intention of the text. In TT15, a more general time unit is employed because the translator wishes to imply that ten days is too long a period for somebody to wait until ‘a coherent explanation’ emerges.

The concern for detailed accounts of time periods, in Greek, contributes to a dramatic effect intended by the translator, in accordance with the prevailing ideological message, described earlier, that we live in a world of strong oppositions. It also looks as if, whenever the opposite process is observed (e.g. in ST/TT 15) it is again because some dramatic effect is being intended, contributing to this intensification process.

1.4 Other Intensifying Modifications

Although there are quite a few temporal adverbials in the source text which have been rendered by an όταν (when) temporal clause in the target text, there is also a tendency for source temporal clauses to be rendered with some intensifying elements, in Greek, which replace the subord-native connective (when, while etc.)

ST16 When one of those single-celled embryos divided into two cells, ..., the scientists quickly separated the cells.
(‘Cloning: Where Do We Draw the Line?’, Time, 8.11.93)

TT16 Τη στιγμή κατά την οποία ένα απ’αυτά τα μονοκίτταρα έμβρυα διαιρέθηκε σε δύο κύτταρα, ..., οι επιστήμονες διαχωρίσαν αμέσως τα κύτταρα, δημιουργώντας δύο διαφορετικά έμβρυα με την ίδια γενετική πληροφορία.
(‘Ενα πέτρομη που ..., κλώνει τον κόσμο’, Η Καθημερινή, 14.11.93).

ST17 ...Nor can she understand why racketeers drive around Moscow’s streets in Jaguars while workers wait for months to receive their ever-shrinking pay..
(‘Betrayal of the Babushkas’, Newsweek, 21.3.94)

TT17 ...και δεν μπορεί να καταλάβει για ποιον λόγο οι καμπυλικάδοι κυκλοφορούν στους δρόμους της Μόσχας με Τζάκσον, τη στιγμή που οι εργαζόμενοι περιμένουν ολόκληρους μήνες για να πληρωθούν...
(‘Η μπαμπουκάκα νοσταλγεί τον Στάλιν’, Το Βήμα, 20.3.94).

ST18 You are driving in Accra, capital of Ghana, minding your own business, when a traffic cop decides you’ve made an “illegal” left turn.
(‘Money Talks’, Newsweek, 14.11.94)

TT18 Οδηγείτε το αυτοκίνητό σας στην Ακρα, την πρωτεύουσα της Γιάννη, και ξαφνικά ένας προσομοιωτής αποφασίζει ότι στρέφετε ανωτερός ενώ δεν επιτρέπονταν...
(‘Ο κόσμος μέσα σ’ένα φακέλλων’, Το Βήμα, 13.11.94).

Moreover, temporal adverbials are being intensified in the target text (although there is a target language equivalent) by being rendered by adverbials showing higher frequency and immediacy.
ST19 The government quickly appointed a commission to study ways to tighten German drug law...

...but the forces of reality will eventually force them to accept in principle what is already widely practiced

('The Drug Specter', Newsweek, 4.7.95)

TT19 Η κυβέρνηση διέλυσε συμβούλιο επίτροπο για να μελετήσει η σκληρύνση της

γερμανικής νομοθεσίας για τα ναρκωτικά...

...και η πραγματικότητα θα τους αναγκάσει σύντομα να δεχτούν και αρχίζει αιτία

που ήδη αρχικά έφερμε ένα μπλοκ...

('Η Ευρώπη πελάθει από υπερβολική δόση', To Βήμα, 10.7.95).

ST20 Elsewhere too, Zapatistas were neither fighting nor giving up but melting away into the jungle, sometimes with families in tow...

('Riding Off in All Directions', Time, 27.2.95)

TT20 Και αλλού, οι Ζαπάτιτας οδή έδωσαν μικρές, συχνά παραδίδοντας, κατά παραπλήρω

μέσα στην ζωή, σκηνώθηκαν συχνά δέκαδες ομογένειες...

('Μεξικό: τι γίνεται με τους Ζαπάτιτας και τον Σεντίλιο', Η Καθημερινή, 26.2.95).

The devices of intensification described, i.e.

- raising the level of evaluativeness in the target text by making the pragmatic reading of time expressions transparent,
- making use of shorter time units in time specification, and
- replacing temporal conjunctions or time adverbials by others indicating higher frequency or immediacy

create a dramatic effect, in translated news reporting material in the Greek press, which contributes to the different social reality constructed for the target reader, namely, the stronger oppositional view of the world.

The lack of interest in accuracy, in time specification, was attributed to an interpersonal involvement between the translator and readership, as opposed to a more transactional involvement observed both in the Greek press and elsewhere.

The type of material translated from the English press is usually what is called 'feature articles', i.e. 'soft' news. With respect to the distinction between

- 'hard' (reports of accidents, conflicts, crimes, announcements, discoveries) and
- 'soft' news (stories with background and personal opinion, bylined by the author's name),

Bell (1991: 14) argues that for both newswriters and researchers the boundaries are unclear, and that journalists "spend much of their energy to find an angle which will present what is essentially soft news in hard news terms". The differences between source and target texts described above suggest that the Greek translator-journalist is strongly concerned about 'hardening' soft news.
2. Open-endedness in Time Specification

It has been argued (Khairullin, 1993: 247) that English tends to describe the future moment by referring to the past or present moment. This is observed not only in the description of time proper, but also in the referential classification of personal subjects. In the present data, part of the modified expressions show that the text producer, i.e. the translator, views time from a different perspective than that adopted in the source text.

2.1 Past vs. Future Orientation

Occasionally, it is observed that there is a future orientation in the description of time, in Greek, which is contrasted to some reluctance of the English to refer to the future.

ST21 His wife Barbara was shocked to see her husband burst into tears. She had never seen him cry before..

("The JFK Assassination: A nation of doubters", Newsweek, 22.11.93)

TT21 Η σύζυγος του Μπαϊμπάιρα έπαιθε σε δυο όταν είδε για πρώτη φορά στη ζωή της τον άντρα της να βάζει τα κλάματα...

("Τραγική χρονιά μετά: Ο άνδρας φόρεσε της δολοφονίας του Τζον Κένεντι", Το Βήμα, 21.11.93).

ST22 By 1981 the Mujahideen were using 12.7 m.m. DShKM heavy machine guns..

("Dragons of the Sky", Combat, 10.90)

TT22 Το 1981, οι Αφγανοί αντάρτες αρχίσαν να παραλαμβάνουν τα πυράτα βαριά πυροβόλα DShKM των 12.7 m.m..

("Με όπλο το θάρρος", Αμυντικά Θέματα, 15.12.90).

ST23 ...Woo is gambling that China’s immense internal market is ready to open to the outside world as never before..

("Woo Sees the Future in Wuhan", Newsweek, 8.3.93)

TT23 ...Ο Γου μψηφιοκάλυβε τις επενδύσεις του με βάση την πεποίθησή του ότι η τεράστια εσωτερική αγορά της Κίνας είναι τώρα για πρώτη φορά έτοιμη να κάνει ανοίγματα προς τον έξω κόσμο...

("Ο Κινέζοι διμοιρούνται υποδομή μιας τεράστιας εσωτερικής Αγοράς", Το Βήμα, 7.3.93).

Although these instances of future orientation in time specification are not numerous, the opposite phenomenon has not been observed, except in cases like

ST24 ...when she was 11, six years after her mother died..

("Betrayal of the Babushkas", Newsweek, 21.3.94)

TT24 Ηταν 11 ετών και πριν από 6 χρόνια είχε πεθάνει η μητέρα της...

("Η Μπαμπαμπάς νοσηλεύεται στον Στόλιν", Το Βήμα, 20.3.94).

where the ‘mother’s death’ is the starting point for the future orientation of the source author’s point of view, whereas, in the target text, the translator is looking back in time at the ‘mother’s death’.
2.2 Time Points vs. Beginning of Time Spans

The difference in the text producer's orientation in time specification may be supported by instances of time points replaced, in the target text, by time expressions referring to beginning of periods. This could be seen as a variant future orientation attitude, since the end of the time span is left unspecified and open to the future.

ST25 In the euphoria of 1989 and 1990, many people in Central and Eastern Europe hoped that a new group of rulers, untainted by communism, would emerge. ('Former communists - A phoenix phenomenon', The Economist, 25.2.95)

TT25 Κατά την ευφορία του επαράτημα μετά το 1989, πολλοί κάτοικοι της κεντρικής και της ανατολικής Ευρώπης ήλπιζαν ότι θα επαρατάταν μια νέα πολιτική ομάδα η οποία θα είναι επιχειρηματική μετά τον κομμουνισμό...
("Επιστρέφουν οι πράγματα κομμουνιστικές", Η Καθημερινή, 26.2.95).

ST26 Hasty had been given a file on Lee Harvey Oswald back in March.
(‘The JFK Assassination: A nation of doubters’, Newsweek, 22.11.93)

TT26 Από τον Μάρτιο η υπηρεσία του εξήλθε αναθέτει να παρακολουθεί τον Ούσβιλαντ ως πιθανό επικίνδυνο στοιχείο ή ακόμη και κατάσκοπο...
("Τούτο ισχύει χάριτα μετά: Ο ανάγκης φύλαξης της διοικητικής του Τζον Κέννεντκ", Το Βήμα, 21.11.93)

ST27 In 1986 he bought the AC Milan soccer club...
(’Merchant Prince’, Newsweek, 21.3.94)

TT27 Διακότητας από το 1986 της πολυσύμβανής ομάδας Μίλαν...
("Ο περίπατος - έμπορος", Το Βήμα, 3.4.94).

2.3 Static Events vs. Processes

Preference for beginning of periods over time points reveals a dynamic vs. static approach to time, which may be further supported by a preference, observed in the target text, for referring to processes rather than static events. It is as if Greeks are more aware of the fact that time flows and that events could be seen in relation to periods extending towards the future (TT28), or future in the past (TTs29-31).

ST28 With Europe’s nerves stretched to breaking point before France’s Maastricht referendum on September 20th, Scandinavia’s were the first to snap.
(’Nordic currencies -In shock’, The Economist, 12.9.92)

TT28 Τα νεύρα των Ευρωπαίων καθώς είχε στάσει καθοδός τιμωρίας ο γαλλικός δημοσιογράφος της 20ης Σεπτεμβρίου για το Μαστριχτ. Επισκόπησε ήδη στις Σκανδιναυικές Χώρες...
("Σε έναν ναμάματα", Οικονομικός Τομηδρόμος, 17.9.92).

ST29 Simons might be too old and out of condition to be toting a rifle behind enemy lines. He was fifty two and had suffered a slight stroke two years earlier...
(‘Foray to the Red River Valley’, Time)

TT29 ..Ο Σίμονς ήταν πολύ μεγάλος για μια τέτοια επιχείρηση, εφόσον είχε φθάσει τα 52 και δύο χρόνια πριν είχε υποστεί μια ελαφρά καρδιακή προσβολή...
("Επιθετική στην κόκκαλη Κοιλάδα", Σύγχρονος Στρατός).
ST30 Just a few years ago exit visas for those living in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and China were a prized rarity.
(Mafia', Newsweek, 13.12.93)

TT30 ΚΑΙ ΜΕΧΡΙ προς από λίγα μόλις χρόνια στανίσα χορηγήθηκαν άδειες εξόδου από την Σοβιετική Ένωση, την Αντιστασιακή Ευρώπη και την Κίνα...
(‘Ποιοι είναι οι νέοι άρχοντες της Μαφίας’, To Βήμα, 12.12.93).

ST31 The case which was supposed to have been heard by the Council of State in April has been postponed until October.
(‘Trends towards integrated developments’, Industrial Review, 6.93)

TT31 Η απόφαση η οποία έπρεπε να έχει εξαντληθεί μέχρι τον Απρίλιο από το Συμβούλιο της Επικρατείας, αναβλήθηκε μέχρι τον Οκτώβριο.
(‘Τέλος προς ενωτική ανάπτυξη αναμνήσεων’, Βιομηχανική Επιθεώρηση, 6.93).

Cases where the durative aspect of the source verb has been treated in terms of a more static conception of time, in the target text, do exist but they are limited, eg.

ST32 Traditional hardware and software markets are fast becoming saturated.
(‘Boulevard of Hype’, Newsweek, 11.93)

TT32 Οι αγορές των παραδοσιακών ηλεκτρονικών υπολογιστών και προγραμμάτων έχουν σχεδόν κυριαρχήσει και οι τιμές πέρασαν...
(‘Η λειτουργία των πληροφοριών’, To Βήμα, 19.11.93).

2.4 Vagueness in Specifying Ends of Periods

The text producer's future orientation in time specification observed in Greek may be paralleled with some vagueness in the specification of ends of periods, also observed in Greek. English seem to be concerned with not exceeding time limits, whereas Greeks can be either relatively less precise about specifying ends of periods (TTs 33/34) or specify them by treating them as been exceeded (TT35), which again suggests concern about the future.

ST33 ...it is pressing ahead with preparations for a presidential election before the end of this year..
(Many losses, no victories in Algerian war’, The Guardian, 17.2.95)

TT33 Αντί αυτού οι στρατιωτικοί προγραμματίζουν προεδρικές εκλογές για τα τέλη του έτους...
(‘Αλγερία: παράταση του ανεξέλεγκτου’, Η Καθημερινή, 18.2.95).

ST34 ...its [NATO's] member states will cut their troop strength and armament by an across-the-board 40 percent before the end of the century...
(‘NATO’s Identity Crisis’, Newsweek, 1.11.93)

TT34 ...τα κράτη-μέλη θα πρέπει ως το τέλος του αιώνα να περικοπήσουν τις ένοπλες δυνά-μεις τους σε ποσοστό 40% κατά μέσον όρο...
(‘Η χαμένη ταυτότητα του NATO’, To Βήμα, 31.10.93).

ST35 It created a $1.7 bn fund for a job bank, which allowed UAW workers laid off for at least 36 weeks to be called back to work..
(‘GM work fund runs out of cash’, Financial Times, 20.2.93)
TT35 ...επέτρεψε στο συνδικάτο «United Auto Workers» (UAW) να ιδρύσει μια «Εργασιακή Ειρήνη», με κεφάλαιο 4.7 δισ. δολ., που ήδη η δινατότητα στους εργαζόμενους οι οποίοι επέτρεψε σε διαδικασία πλέον των 36 εργοδότων, να επιτρέψουν στις εργασίες τους...

('Σε διαδικασία πλέον εργάτες της Τσιμ', Η Καθημερινή, 27.2.93).

The phenomenon of rendering 'at least x' by a 'more than x' formula, in Greek, may not be restricted to time specification

It was, at the very least, grim happenstance...

('The JFK Assassination: A nation of doubters', Newsweek, 22.11.93)

Η σύμπτωση ήταν κάτι περισσότερο από καταστροφική...

('Τριάντα χρόνια μετά: Ο κρίσιμος φάσματος της δολοφονίας του Τζον Κένεντι', Το Βήμα, 21.11.93).

2.5 Reference to the Past vs. Present Moment

The preference for past time reference observed in English versus the concern about the future and the more dynamic conception of time observed in Greek, should be widened to include the present moment, on the Greek side. There are instances of time modification in the data, where the focus on past time reference in English is switched to present time reference in Greek.

ST36 Thirty years later, it is still hard to persuade conspiracists of the simpler explanation.

('I wanted to be a hero', Newsweek, 22.11.93)

TT36 Τι από ακόμη και σήμερα η απόδειξη της εξήγησης μοιάζει ελάχιστα πειστική για όσους θέλουν να πιστεύουν τη θεωρία της συνωμοσίας...

('Τζάκ Ρώσλον, «Ηθελά να γίνω ήρωας», Το Βήμα, 21.11.93).

ST37 Four years later NATO's future is more of an issue than ever.

('NATO's Identity Crisis', Newsweek, 1.11.93)

TT37 Καλό σήμερα το μέλλον της Συμμαχίας είναι αβεβαιότερο παρά ποτέ...

('Η χαμένη ταυτότητα του ΝΑΤΟ', Το Βήμα, 31.10.93).

ST38 Never before have the creations of laboratories come so close to crossing the threshold that separates living from nonliving.

('How did life begin', Time International, 11.10.93)

TT38 Ποτέ μέχρι στιγμής οι δημιουργίες των εργαστηρίων δεν έχουν πλημμύσει τόσο πολύ στο κατάφυτο που χωρίζει την υπαρξή από την ανυπαρξία ζωής...

('Οι νέες θεωρίες για την εμφάνιση της ζωής στη γη', Η Καθημερινή, 17.10.93).

The following table summarizes the types of modifications encountered between source and target text and indicates percentages in the portion of the time expressions which appeared modified in the TT (c. 1/3 of the total number of the source time expressions appeared modified in the TT).
Table 1. Percentages with reference to the types of modifications found in the portion of the source time expressions which appeared modified in the TT.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engl.</th>
<th>Greek</th>
<th>Types of modifications in time specification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% a</td>
<td>% b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Lack of accuracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>Shorter / more specific time units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>Other intensifying modifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>Focus on present moment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>Future orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>Focus on beginning of periods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Processes (preferred over static events)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Information loss – no evaluation involved</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Column ‘a’ indicates percentages of counterexamples to what has been argued for, in this presentation, namely, that one third of the source time expressions appear modified in the TT by percentages indicated in column ‘b’. Dashes, in column ‘a’, do not signify that English has no interest in intensification or the present; they only mean that, in the portion of time expressions which were modified in the TT, there were no instances of neutralization encountered in the TT, as far as the indicated property is concerned.

3. Conclusion

One motivation of this presentation was the observation that the concept of time, although shared among cultures, is associated with culture specific attitudes. The differences observed between the source and target versions of news reporting material from the English and Greek press, were accounted for in terms of

- a general tendency on the part of the translator to intensify the oppositional view of the world usually present in news reporting (as suggested by U. Eco (1981), J. Hartley and M. Montgomery (1985)), and in terms of
- an interactional attitude adopted between translator and readership with respect to time specification accuracy, as opposed to a more transactional involvement observed between source author and source readership.

Raising the level of evaluativeness in the TT, employing shorter time units, replacing temporal conjunctions or adverbials with others which have a more dramatic impact on the target readership, as well as, exhibiting a relative disregard for accuracy in time specification, are steps taken towards an intensification goal in the target text.

The second type of modification observed in the target text, was a future orientation preference with respect to time specification, which was further shown to be supported by a preference for specifying the beginning of periods over time points or time expressions with orientation towards the past. This future orientation in Greek was also supported by instances where the translator preferred to take a more dynamic approach to time by
underlining the durative aspect of events. Besides, some vagueness in specifying ends of periods in Greek contributed to this future orientation idea, since some relative open-endedness with respect to time limits is to be associated with a more positive attitude towards futurity. Finally, the future orientation preference of the translator was shown to include the present moment, as well. Expressions with past time reference, in English, were turned into adverbials with present time reference, in Greek.

Although the percentages are not high – it was only the one third of the total number of time expressions which appeared modified in the target text – the types of modifications observed do reveal an intensification intention with respect to time specification, on the one hand, and a more positive attitude towards the future and a dynamic approach to time, on the other.

This latter type of difference could be paralleled with the one shown by Khairullin (1993) between English and Russian. Khairullin discussed time reference in Russian and in English-speaking cultures by contrasting Russian translation variants of time expressions to the source English expressions. It was observed that English-speaking cultures tend to refer to the past in time reference, whereas Russian tends to refer to the future.

Although the categories of differentiation are not identical between English-Russian and English-Greek, it is obvious that there is a number of languages which view time from a different perspective than that of English. Awareness of these differences will allow the translator to interfere with time perspective modifications, in order to achieve a higher degree of communicative equivalence between source and target text.

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