

Ruxandra DRĂGAN<sup>1</sup>

## THE TRANSLATION OF DENOMINAL *-ED* ADJECTIVAL COMPOUNDS INTO ROMANIAN – A MATTER OF EXPLICITATION

**Abstract.** Typological differences across languages shape the translators' choice of particular strategies when rendering syntactic and lexical structures that are ubiquitous in the source language, but highly infrequent or non-existent in the target language (Slobin 2004, 2005; Alonso 2018; Capelle 2012; Drăgan 2021; Ibarretxe-Antuñano 2003, et al.). The present article explores the impact of such differences on the strategies adopted to translate English denominal *-ed* adjectival compounds into Romanian and the extent to which they contrive to compensate for the unavailability of said compounds in the target language. It is shown that their absence from Romanian compels translators to overwhelmingly adopt strategies that spell out the syntactic and semantic relations between the two stems of the original compounds (grammatical transposition, compensation by splitting, compensation in place, compensation in kind). Consequently, all these strategies are analyzed as instances of (obligatory) explicitation, and, thus, lend support to the view in the literature that *explicitation* is a universal strategy (Blum-Kulka 1986; Klaudy 2003, 2009; Klaudy & Károly 2005; Molés-Cases 2019, et al.).

**Keywords:** denominal *-ed* adjectival compounds, translation strategies, compensation techniques, grammatical transposition, explicitation

### 1. Introduction

Researchers in the field of translation studies have long argued that typological differences across languages directly influence both the strategies selected

---

<sup>1</sup> University of Bucharest, Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures; <ruxandra.dragan@lils.unibuc.ro>, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3207-5632>.

to render syntactic constructions prevalent in the source language, but almost non-existent or completely absent from the target language, and the syntactic structures they generate (Ibarretxe-Antuñano 2003; Slobin 2004, 2005; Alonso 2018; Capelle 2012; Molés-Cases 2019; Drăgan 2021, et al.). The effects of these typological differences are visible not only in syntax, but also in morphology, specifically in word formation. Germanic and Romance languages are typologically different as regards the word formation processes they regularly employ to augment their lexicons. The former make extensive use of compounding and conversion, whereas the latter favour affixation. English and Romanian, as representatives of the two families, are a case in point. While the English lexicon incorporates a considerable number of both root and synthetic compounds, stem-stem combinations like *salmon pink* and *stir-fry*, and affix-incorporating structures like *bone-jarring* and *battle-scarred* (Lieber 2009; Plag 2003), and constantly produces novel, spontaneous creations, Romanian has few compounds and uses compounding only infrequently. What is more, Romanian compounds follow different patterns, often incorporating both derivational and inflectional affixation; for instance, *rochița-rândunicii* ('field bindweed') consists of a first stem modified by a diminutive derivational suffix (-iță) and a second stem bearing the feminine Genitive marker -i (*rândunicii*). As a result, the translation of English compounds into Romanian is a problematic process, not only because many English lexicalized forms lack corresponding forms in Romanian, but also, and especially, because translators often have to provide solutions to ad hoc creations.

Following this line of thought, the present article is intended to round off the investigation into the rendering of a number of highly productive classes of English adjectival compounds into Romanian (see Drăgan 2023a for the translation of deverbal *-ing* adjectival compounds; Drăgan 2023b for that of deverbal *-ed* adjectival compounds). In this sense, the article explores the translation of denominal *-ed* adjectival compounds, on the one hand, in order to identify the strategies favoured by translators and the patterns generated by their application, and, on the other hand, in order to determine to what extent the resulting patterns substantiate the claim that explicitation is a translation universal (Blum-Kulka 1986; Klaudy & Károly 2005; Klaudy 2003, 2009; Molés-Cases 2019, et al.). The present investigation, conducted within the theoretical framework

proposed by Hervey & Higgins (1992), is built on a sizeable corpus of lexical items selected from three fantasy novels written by Joe Abercrombie (*The Heroes* 2011; *Best Served Cold* 2009; *Last Argument of Kings* 2008), and their Romanian versions, provided by three different translators: Monica Șerban (*Eroii*, Nemira, 2019), Ruxandra Toma (*Dulce răzbunare*, Nemira, 2017), and Mihnea Columbeanu (*Puterea armelor*, Nemira, 2017), respectively. The 386 tokens are distributed into four syntactically and semantically variable patterns: A-Ned items (285 tokens), N-Ned items (71 tokens), Q-Ned items (27 tokens), and V-Ned items (3 tokens).

The analysis will demonstrate that, in order to avoid or mitigate translation loss, translators are compelled to adopt a variety of strategies with opposing effects. Grammatical transposition, compensation by splitting, compensation in place, and compensation in kind (Hervey & Higgins 1992), which all lengthen the source text items to complex phrases and even clausal structures, will be shown to rank high among the translators' choices. Most likely, this is because their selection is often rendered unavoidable by the translators' need to make explicit the complex syntactic and semantic relations holding between the two stems of the original items. On the other hand, the investigation will reveal that compensation by merging, which shortens the original derivatives to single adjectives in Romanian, is roughly three times less frequently employed, due to the fact that the number of spontaneous creations in the source text exceeds that of lexicalized compounds translatable by means of single-adjective equivalents listed in the dictionary. Last but not least, the study will conclude that the prevalence and diversity of compensation strategies with lengthening effect, made apparent by the results of the statistical analysis, lend support to the view of explicitation as a translation universal (Blum-Kulka 1986; Klaudy & Károly 2005; Klaudy 2003, 2009; Molés-Cases 2019, et al.).

The article is structured as follows: Section 2. defines denominal *-ed* adjectival compounds, provides a classification of their patterns, and proposes a number of predictions based on the complexity of the syntactic and semantic relations holding between their two stems. Section 3. uses the theoretical framework proposed by Hervey & Higgins (1992) to catalogue and comment on the various strategies selected by the translators and the syntactic structures they generate in the target language. Section 4.

discusses the statistical results of the analysis and their relevance to the concept of *explicitation*. Section 5. summarizes the conclusions of the study.

## 2. Background and predictions

Denominal *-ed* adjectival compounds are analyzed in the literature as *attributive compounds* consisting of a first stem (an adjective, a noun, or a quantifier) operating as modifier of a noun-based second stem, and are attributed the meaning “possessing/having X, being provided with or characterized by X”, where X (i.e., the first stem) stands for the modifying property assigned to the denominal second stem (Lieber 2009; Plag 2003; Baciu 2004, et al.). As suggested by the variation in the semantic description of this type of compound, the two stems stand in a rather loose semantic (and syntactic) relation, which would explain why denominal *-ed* adjectival compounds have a high degree of productivity. The exception is the V-Ned pattern, which is analyzed as a type of *subordinate compound* in so far as the first stem is a verb subcategorizing for the noun root of the second stem, interpreted as its argument.

The A+Ned combination appears to be the most productive of the four patterns identified, with 285 items of this kind out of 386 tokens. The reason for its high productivity must be the loose, easily-derivable semantic relation existing between the two stems. The first stem denotes a property that modifies the noun root of the second stem, hence, it is interpreted as Attribute, as illustrated by the paraphrases of the following examples: *a gaunt-faced (man)* < 'a man with a gaunt face', *a weak-nerved (youth)* < 'a youth with weak nerves', *a dewy-eyed (boy)* < 'a boy with dewy eyes', *a low-raftered (room)* < 'a room with low rafters', *a short-hafted (hammer)* < 'a hammer with a short haft'. Of the examples cited, *low-raftered* and *short-hafted* are novel, spontaneous creations with idiosyncratic denominal bases, as are the more unusual combinations *limp-wristed* (*a limp-wristed wave*), *wet-lunged* (*a wet-lunged chuckle*) and *clean-motived* (*a clean-motived set of murders*), among others. On the other hand, many of the examples identified as belonging to this category are lexicalized forms listed in the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (Turnbull ed. 2010): *ill-mannered*, *ill-tempered*, *surefooted*, *cold-blooded*, *thick-headed*,

*wide-eyed, old-fashioned*, etc. As will be discussed in the following sections, they form a subclass of their own in so far as these adjectival compounds are typically rendered as single adjectives in Romanian by means of compensation by merging. It is also worth noticing that many of the lexicalized forms are built on a semantically limited number of N-*ed* stems denoting inalienable body parts: *-faced* (*red-faced, white-faced, ruddy-faced, spotty-faced*), *-headed* (*thick-headed, curly-headed, hard-headed*), *-haired* (*grey-haired, curly-haired, brown-haired, dark-haired*), *-mouthed* (*bloody-mouthed, foul-mouthed, open-mouthed*), *-lipped* (*tight-lipped, grey-lipped*), *-eyed* (*moist-eyed, damp-eyed, sharp-eyed, bight-eyed*), *-hearted* (*cold-hearted, hard-hearted, soft-hearted*). The availability of these regular underlying micropatterns that describe facial/body features could be another reason why A-Ned compounds are highly productive.

The N+N-*ed* pattern is less well-represented, which suggests that it is most likely less productive, with only 71 tokens out of the total of 386 items. The reason must be the more complex semantic and syntactic relations holding between the two stems of the compounds. Specifically, the first nominal stem is attributed an adjunct-like interpretation, but, as the paraphrases point out, there is much variation in the semantics and syntax of these adjuncts: *a pock-faced man* < 'a man with a face covered with pockmarks' (Possessum), *gold-buckled boots* < 'boots with buckles made of gold' (Material), *a hook-nosed man* < 'a man with a nose like a hook' (Comparison), *a gap-toothed grin* < 'a grin showing a gap between the teeth' (Attributive), *tremble-lipped* < 'with lips trembling' (Manner).

The Q+Ned pattern ranks a distant third in terms of frequency of occurrence with only 27 out of 386 tokens, despite its straightforward internal structure. The quantifier representing the first stem is always interpreted as Attribute of the noun root on which the second stem is based. There is a small number of recurrent structures consisting of one of four quantifiers (*one, two, half, and many*) combined with denominal bases denoting mostly, though not necessarily, inalienable body parts (*one-eyed, one-armed, one legged, two-handed*, but also *many-coloured, one-sided*, or the metaphorical *half-hearted*). It bears mentioning that, once again, many of these compounds are lexicalized forms listed in the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (Turnbull ed. 2010) and translatable as single adjectives into Romanian (*one-eyed* – 'chior', *one-handed* – 'ciung', *many-coloured* – 'multicolor').

In addition to the attributive compounds introduced so far, the corpus also includes three lexical items built on a verb-argument combination: *gape-mouthed* (< 'mouth gaping', i.e., 'agape'), *spread-eagled* ( $\approx$  'with arms and legs extended'; derived from the nominal 'spread-eagle', a heraldic term) and *pop-eyed* (< 'eyes popping out', i.e., 'with eyes wide open'). They are exceptional instantiations of denominal *-ed* adjectival compounds that follow an unusual pattern since the verbal head precedes the selected argument instead of following it, as is the rule in compounds built on verbs, be they *-ed* or *-ing* compounds (*number-obsessed (cook)* < 'a cook obsessed with numbers', *smoke-filled (corridors)* < 'corridors filled with smoke', *blood-freezing (wail)* < 'a wail that freezes (one's) blood'). Their syntactic and semantic quirks must explain why they are all listed as lexicalized forms in the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (Turnbull ed. 2010).

The typological difference between English and Romanian as regards their preference for compounding vs. affixation and the semantic and syntactic variation within the class of denominal *-ed* adjectival compounds introduced in this section appear to open an avenue for a number of predictions regarding their translation into Romanian. First of all, given the infrequency of compounding in Romanian and the distinct syntactic patterns of compounds in the two languages, the expectation is that their translation will not follow a straightforward path. Translators will presumably provide solutions that reflect two opposing tendencies – reducing the source language tokens to single items or lengthening them to more complex structures. Specifically, the translation of lexicalized compounds is predicted not to be problematic, since they are listed in bilingual dictionaries with Romanian equivalent forms, usually single adjectives, hence the shortening tendency. In contrast, the translation of novel compounds is predicted to reflect the opposing tendency, that of lengthening the source text tokens. This is because the unexpected combinations can only be rendered by making explicit the syntactic and semantic relations holding between the two stems and that can only be achieved by adding lexical material. Last but not least, the tendency to lengthen the source language items is predicted to dominate the picture due to the large number of new, spontaneous creations and, going beyond

the samples included in the corpus, to the fact that English novel compounds are the rule rather than the exception.

As will be demonstrated in the next two sections, the findings of the analysis will generally confirm these predictions.

### 3. Translation strategies

One of the advantages of the theoretical framework proposed by Hervey & Higgins (1992) is that it allows for more translation strategies to be applied concurrently, which is quite frequently the case when rendering denominal *-ed* adjectival compounds into Romanian. Thus, the prevalent strategy is *grammatical transposition*, which entails the replacement of the original compounds with a number of different syntactic structures ranging from phrases (complex APs, PPs, NPs) to clauses, be they independent or subordinate clauses of various types. That this is the norm is to be expected since using literal translation is prevented by the typological differences between English and Romanian compounding. Nevertheless, as previously suggested, grammatical transposition co-occurs with some other strategies meant to compensate for the very real possibility of translation loss.

One such strategy that is almost always at work is *compensation in place*, a technique which allows for the reduplication of a certain effect in the source text in a different place in the target text. Since word order rules require that premodification in English be replaced with postmodification in Romanian, it follows that the selection of compensation in place is necessary to ensure that the rule is observed. On the other hand, compensation in place can at times effect more than the repositioning of the modifying compound to the right of the nominal head it modifies. The corpus also includes cases where compensation in place leads to a reshuffling of the constitutive elements, i.e. modifying compound and modified nominal, as illustrated in (1) to (3) below:

- (1) a. ... staring at her with *teary-eyed emotion*.  
 b. ... cu *privirea înlăcrimată de emoție*.  
 '... with [look-the teary with emotion].'

- (2) a. He gazed about in *damp-eyed wonder*.  
 b. Privi în jur cu *ochi umezi și mirați*.  
 'He looked around with [eyes damp and wondering].'
- (3) a. Cosca split a *crack-lipped grin*.  
 b. Pe *buzele crăpate* ale lui Cosca se lăbărță un *rânjet obscen*.  
 'On [lips-the cracked] of Cosca stretched [a grin dirty].'

Thus, the two stems of the compound in (1a) are redispersed so that the second stem (*eyed*) becomes the head of the DP in Romanian (*privirea* 'the look') and is modified by the first stem expressed as an AP modifier functioning as Attribute (*înlăcrimată* 'teary'). In its turn, the AP now selects a prepositional phrase functioning as Adverbial of Reason (*de emoție* 'with emotion'), which translates the original nominal head (*emotion*). In similar fashion, the second stem of the compound in (2a) (*eyed*) is reinterpreted as the head of the DP in Romanian (*ochi* 'eyes') and is modified by two coordinated APs, one translating the first stem (*umezi* 'damp'), and the other, the original nominal head (*mirați* 'wondering', instead of *wonder*). A more complex example of reshuffling is illustrated in (3), as the constitutive parts of *cracked-lipped grin* in (3a) are split and rearranged so that the original nominal (*grin*) remains the head of the structure, but is now modified by an AP the translator 'volunteers' into the translation (*obscen* 'dirty'), while the compound itself is rendered as the locative PP *pe buzele crăpate* ('on the cracked lips') and moved to the front of the sentence.

*Compensation in kind* is another strategy applied concomitantly with grammatical transposition and other compensatory techniques, as illustrated in (4) to (6) below. This strategy is intended to balance out one type of textual effect in the source text by means of another type in the target text; specifically, it entails replacing denotative meanings in the source text with connotative meanings in the target text and vice versa.

- (4) a. *Calmer-headed horsemen* broke to the sides...  
 b. *Călăreți cu mai multă minte în cap* porniră pe flancuri...  
 '[Horsemen with more sense in head] set out on flanks...'



- (5) a. ... he was staring straight up into *a* twisted, *bulge-eyed* face.  
 b. ... văzu că se uită direct la *o față strâmbă, cu ochii ieșiți din orbite*.  
 '... he saw that he was staring straight at [a face] twisted,  
 [with eyes-the popped out of orbits].'
- (6) a. A few *misty-eyed* mentions around the fire.  
 b. Cu numele pomenit de câteva ori de camarazii lui *cu ochii umeziți de tristețe*.  
 'With the name mentioned a few times by his comrades  
 [with eyes-the damp with sadness].'

While the examples in (4) and (5) both illustrate a shift from denotative to connotative meanings, the structure in (6) instantiates the opposite. Specifically, prosaic *calmer-headed* in (4a) is translated as the idiomatic P-headed adverbial collocation *cu mai multă minte în cap* ( $\approx$  'with more common sense'/'wiser') in (4b), while denotative *bulge-eyed* in (5a) is rendered as the metaphorical expression *cu ochii ieșiți din orbite* ( $\approx$  'with eyes popping out of their orbits') in (5b). In both cases, compensation in kind is applied concurrently with grammatical transposition and compensation by splitting, as the two-stem compounds are translated as syntactically-lengthened idiomatic collocations. In contrast, the connotative meaning of *misty-eyed* in (6a) is translated as the matter-of-fact, descriptive PP *cu ochii umeziți de tristețe* ('with eyes damp with sadness') in (6b). Notice that, in addition to the shift from a connotative to a literal meaning, as a result of compensation by splitting and free translation, the structure also undergoes a syntactic transformation into an internally complex prepositional phrase that incorporates explanatory extra information (i.e. the comrades' eyes were damp because they were sad).

By far the most frequently employed compensatory strategy operating alongside grammatical transposition is *compensation by splitting*. As already illustrated, it involves the use of several words in the target text to translate the meaning of a specific item in the source text. Its prevalence straightforwardly relates to the typological difference discussed in the previous sections, namely, that compounding is a minor derivational process in Romanian and generates items whose internal make-up differs considerably from that of English compounds, especially those that are novel items.

More importantly, compensation by splitting is responsible for the high degree of variation in the syntactic patterns that translate denominal *-ed* adjectival compounds into Romanian, as exemplified in (7) to (13) below:

- (7) a. I like a *tight-lipped* man.  
 b. *Îmi plac oamenii scumpi la vorbă.*  
 'I like people [expensive at word] > heedful of their words.'
- (8) a. a *foul-mouthed* bowman  
 b. *un arcaș spurcat la gură*  
 'a bowman [dirtied at mouth] > having a dirty/filthy mouth'
- (9) a. ... and crossed the sea to find a more *broad-minded* master.  
 b. ... apoi traversase marea ca să-și găsească un stăpân *cu vederi mai largi.*  
 '... then had crossed the sea to find himself a master [with views] more [broad].'
- (10) a. To my eye they seem very much as *violent-tempered* and *mean-spirited* as ever.  
 b. *Mie mi se pare că au aceeași fire violentă și meschină dintotdeauna.*  
 'To me it seems that they have the same [nature violent and mean] as always.'

All the examples in (7) to (10) are instances of compensation by splitting that generates some type of phrasal structure. *Tight-lipped* in (7a) is rendered as *scumpi la vorbă* ( $\approx$  'heedful of their words') in (7b), and *foul-mouthed* in (8a) is translated as *spurcat la gură* ( $\approx$  'having a filthy mouth') in (8b), both of them idiomatic APs which subcategorize for a PP complement. In their turn, (*more*) *broad-minded* in (9a) is rendered by means of a PP – *cu vederi (mai) largi* ('with views (more) broad') in (9b), while *violent-tempered and mean-spirited* is translated by way of a complex NP with two AP modifiers – *fire violentă și meschină* ( $\approx$  'violent and mean nature') in (10b). Alternatively, compensation by splitting may also produce non-finite verbal structures and even clausal structures like those in (11) to (13) below:

- (11) a. The lanky one helped Hedges up, whimpering, *bow-legged* and bloody-haired...
- b. Sfrijitul îl ajută pe Hedges să se ridice, scâncind, *împleticindu-se*, cu țeasta plină de sânge.  
'The lanky one helped Hedges up, [tottering], with the skull [full of blood] > covered in blood.'
- (12) a. Cosca's thin hand clutched the table with a *white-knuckled intensity*...
- b. Cosca se apucă *atât de strâns* de marginea mesei, *că i se albiră degetele subțiri*.  
'Cosca grabbed the edge of the table [so tight that his thin fingers whitened].'
- (13) a. Yolk stood up, *wide-eyed*.
- b. Gălbenuș se ridică și *făcu ochii mari*.  
'Yolk stood up and [made eyes-the big] > opened his eyes wide.'

While the second denominal adjectival compound in (11a) (*bloody-haired*) is another instance of a prepositional phrase incorporating a complex AP (*cu țeasta plină de sânge* (lit. 'with skull-the full of blood' > 'his head covered in blood')), the first N-Ned compound (*bow-legged*) is rendered as a non-finite verbal form, i.e., a gerund (*împleticindu-se* 'tottering'). Interestingly, compensation in kind is also involved in the translation of this compound as the Romanian variant is the result of metonymic shift; thus, the meaning of the property-denoting *bow-legged* (i.e., 'having bow-shaped legs') is translated by means of an event-denoting gerundial form that is semantically related to the original item (in so far as having bowlegs may cause one to totter). Compensation by splitting, compensation in place and grammatical transposition are all involved in the translation of *white-knuckled intensity* in (12a). The resulting syntactic structure is an instance of both reshuffling and lengthening, as the nominal the compound modifies (*intensity*) is rendered as the AdvP *strâns* ('tight') modified by the DegP *atât de* ('so'), which, in combination with the complementizer *că* ('that'), mark the presence of an Adverbial Clause of Result. It is this subordinate clause that actually renders the meaning of *white-knuckled* (*atât de strâns* [...], *că i se albiră degetele subțiri* ('so tight [...]

that his thin fingers whitened'). Finally, compensation by splitting is also responsible for the translation of *wide-eyed* in (13a), a depictive phrase functioning as Predicative Adjunct, into another clausal structure, a main clause built on the idiomatic light-verb collocation *a face ohii mari* ('open one's eyes wide').

Unlike the strategies discussed so far, which all result in the syntactic expansion of the source text derivatives, compensation by merging has the opposite effect. This technique is intended to reduce a complex phrase in the source text to a single word or a shorter phrase in the target text. In this case, the items translated by means of compensation by merging are English lexicalized compounds rendered as single adjectives into Romanian (see (14) to (16) below):

- (14) a. But you, my friend, are constant, *clear-sighted*, *single-minded*.  
 b. Însă tu, prietene, ești statornic, *perspicace*, *hotărât*.  
 'But you, friend, are constant, [insightful], [determined].'
- (15) a. How wonderfully *old-fashioned* of you.  
 b. Ce minunat de *demodată* ești...  
 'How wonderfully [old-fashioned] you are...'
- (16) a. Exceptionally *cock-eyed* notions, as it happens.  
 b. Niște idei exceptional de *neghioabe*, după cum s-a văzut.  
 'Some ideas exceptionally [foolish], as it turned out.'

All four compounds in the examples above are listed in the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (Turnbull ed. 2010) and are translated by means of lexicalized single adjectives: *perspicace* 'clear-sighted', *hotărât* 'single-minded', *demodată* 'old-fashioned', and *neghioabe* 'cock-eyed'. In the case of *cock-eyed*, notice that compensation by merging operates concurrently with compensation in kind, given the shift from connotative to denotative meaning; metaphorical *cock-eyed*, meaning 'preposterous', 'ludicrous', is rendered as the plain evaluative adjective *neghiob* ('foolish', 'stupid'). Generally speaking, compensation by merging will naturally apply to lexicalized compounds listed in bilingual dictionaries as having single adjective corresponding forms, as evidenced by the great majority of the examples

in the corpus translated by means of this strategy. Infrequently, compensation by merging may also be used to translate a novel creation, for instance, *rough-heaped* in *a rough-heaped mass of yellow grass*, rendered as *neregulată în o întindere neregulată de iarbă îngălbenită* ('an [uneven] stretch of yellowed grass').

Last but not least, as has been pointed out, literal translation is seldom available to Romanian translators since English adjectival compounds rarely have corresponding forms in this language (Drăgan 2023a, 2023b). Moreover, those that do are typically deverbal *-ed* compounds built on [adverb + past participle] combinations (Drăgan 2023a), and never of the denominal kind. The presence of only two instances of literal translation in the corpus does lend support to the claim. What is more, in both cases, literal translation operates only on the surface (formally), in so far as an English compound is translated using a Romanian compound. Beyond their resemblance in form, the internal make-up of the Romanian items points to the concomitant application of grammatical transposition in both cases, as well as of compensation in place in (17b), and free translation in (18b):

- (17) a. a clumsy, low-born, *ill-mannered* oaf  
 b. un mârlan stângaci, *prost-crescut*, de origine joasă  
 'an oaf clumsy, [badly-educated], of low origin'
- (18) a. One more report of Nicomo Cosca's death, and one more only. Few people indeed would consider that anything other than an entirely righteous and *public-spirited* –  
 b. Prea puțini vor fi aceia care să considere moartea lui Nicomo Cosca drept altceva decât o *binemeritată* și dreaptă...  
 'Few will be those who will consider Nicomo Cosca's death something other than a [well-deserved] and righteous...'

As the examples above indicate, while the original compounds, *ill-mannered* and *public-spirited*, are instances of the A-Ned and N-Ned patterns, respectively, grammatical transposition renders them as Adv-Ved items in Romanian, and, in (17a), compensation in place repositions the adjectival compound to the right of the nominal head ([*un mârlan*]<sub>Noun head</sub> [...] [*prost-crescut*]<sub>AP compound</sub>). The Romanian version of *public-spirited* ('socially concerned', 'community-minded')

in (18a) veers away from the meaning of the original item; *binemeritată* (lit. 'well-deserved') is an evaluative adjective, the result of free translation, which reflects the translator's personal judgment rather than the writer's view of the character's situation.

To conclude, this section has identified and discussed the strategies used to translate denominal *-ed* adjectival compounds into Romanian, and has provided an inventory of the syntactic patterns their application generates. In addition, it has demonstrated that translators typically select strategies that expand the original structures, due to the general absence of corresponding compound forms in Romanian coupled with their need to make explicit the semantic and syntactic relations holding between the stems. Strategies with shortening effects have been shown to be possible, but they are generally limited to the translation of lexicalized forms. The next section will focus on a statistical analysis of these findings and their connection to the concept of *explicitation* (Blum-Kulka 1986; Klaudy & Károly 2005; Klaudy 2003, 2009; Molés-Cases 2019, et al.).

#### 4. Statistical analysis

The current section provides an analysis of the statistical data derived from the inventory of patterns shown to translate denominal *-ed* adjectival compounds into Romanian. The aim of the analysis is twofold: (1) to determine to what extent it validates the predictions introduced in Section 2.; (2) to assess to what degree the findings further support the status of *explicitation* as a translation universal (Blum-Kulka 1986; Klaudy & Károly 2005; Klaudy 2003, 2009; Molés-Cases 2019, et al.).

Several predictions were made in Section 2., which are reiterated below:

- (1) generally speaking, the translation of denominal *-ed* adjectival compounds will be problematic due to the infrequency of compounding in Romanian and the distinct syntactic patterns underlying compounding in the two languages;
- (2) the strategies adopted by the translators will reflect two opposing tendencies: the shortening of lexicalized compounds to single

adjectives due to their listing in bilingual dictionaries, and the lengthening of novel creations to phrasal and clausal patterns, as the semantic and syntactic relations holding between the stems need to be made explicit;

- (3) the tendency to lengthen the original items will predominate due to the large number of spontaneous creations and, going beyond the samples included in the corpus, to the fact that English novel compounds are the rule rather than the exception.

The data included in the two tables below generally confirm the above-mentioned predictions. Table 1. provides an inventory of the range of patterns generated by applying the various strategies discussed in the previous section. Table 2. provides statistical information regarding the distribution of phrases, clauses and single items per compound pattern.

Table 1

**Translation Patterns**

Compound to phrase/clause	Compound to single item	Compound to compound	Omission	Shift in meaning (error)	Free translation	Total
261 (67.61%)	80 (20.72%)	2 (0.51%)	19 (4.92%)	16 (4.14%)	8 (2.07%)	386

Table 2

**Single Item and Phrase/Clause Distribution**

Pattern	Complex AP	PP	Complex NP	Clauses	Single item
A-Ned	19	140	23	13	61
N-Ned	4	37	3	3	11
Q-Ned	4	11	0	1	8
V-Ned	0	2	1	0	0
Total	27/261 (10.34%)	190/261 (72.79%)	27/261 (10.34%)	17/261 (6.51%)	80

The data in Table 1. indicate that the tendency to lengthen the source text structures does dominate the picture, with 261 out of 386 instances (67.61%). This tendency must be triggered by the large number and the semantic and syntactic variability of the novel denominal *-ed* adjectival compound formations coupled with the translators' need to make explicit the semantic and syntactic relations holding between the two stems. As demonstrated in the previous section, this lengthening tendency correlates with the translators displaying a marked preference for strategies like grammatical transposition and all manner of other compensatory techniques (compensation by splitting, compensation in place, compensation in kind).

The tendency to reduce the source text derivatives to single adjectives ranks second in the hierarchy, with only 80 out of 386 tokens (20.72%), which is only one third of the percentage of lengthened structures. Shortening is the result of compensation by merging and concerns the translation of English lexicalized compounds. They are listed in bilingual dictionaries like the *English-Romanian Dictionary* published by the Romanian Academy (Levițchi coord. 1974), and their corresponding forms are often single adjectives, although phrases are also possible (for instance, *ill-mannered* 'nemanierat, necioplit', *ill-tempered* 'irascibil, iritabil', *thick-headed* 'greu de cap, bătut în cap, tâmpit', *tight-lipped* 'taciturn, tăcut', *white-faced* 'alb la față', etc.). Of the four identified patterns, the A-Ned combination is the most frequently rendered by a single adjective (61 out of 80 tokens are instantiations of this pattern). One possible reason might be that the A-Ned category includes many lexicalized forms whose nominal stem denotes an inalienable body part that becomes incorporated, i.e., conflated, in translation, while the focus remains on capturing the meaning of the modifying first stem by means of the single adjective (*red haired* 'roșcat', *dark-skinned* 'tuciu, oacheș', *curly-headed* 'creț', *grim-faced* 'încruntat', *cold-headed* 'calm', etc.).

The translation of compounds as phrases and clauses in Romanian is dominated by the shift to PPs (190/261 tokens, i.e., 72.79%), followed by complex APs and NPs (27/261 tokens each, i.e., 10.34%) and clausal structures (17/261 tokens, i.e., 6.51%). The sharp contrast between the percentage of PPs and those of APs, NPs, and clausal structures might be accounted for by the fact that PPs are the easiest and most straightforward



choice to translate the many novel creations in the corpus. Prepositions are relational by nature, they establish connections between Figures and Grounds, hence, they are a natural choice for associating properties with entities they come to modify. Quite significantly, most of the PPs are based on the default preposition *cu* ('with') and express the pattern 'entity endowed with property', with the property itself expressed as a [noun-modifying adjective] structure (*a chubby-faced boy* ('un băiat cu fața bucălată' – [a boy with face-the chubby]), *a wild haired girl* ('o fată cu părul zburlit' – [a girl with hair-the wild]), *a dark-skinned man* ('un individ cu pielea măslinie' – [a man with skin-the dark])). In contrast, complex APs, NPs, and clausal structures are, as the name suggests, more complex, involving not only modification but also complementation, so that might explain why they are less frequently produced.

Last but not least, from a more general perspective, it bears mentioning that the results of the present investigation fall in line with those of similar studies into the translation of both denominal and deverbal *-ed* and *-ing* adjectival compounds into Romance (see Labrador de la Cruz & Ramón García 2010 for Spanish; Pierini 2015 for Italian; Drăgan 2023a, 2023b for the translation of deverbal *-ed/-ing* adjectival compounds into Romanian). They all point to the typological differences between English and the various Romance languages under analysis to account for the translators' unavoidable need to adopt strategies that lean towards making explicit, and, consequently, lengthening the original derivatives. Their similar conclusions reinforce the proposal in the literature that, rather than classifying as one type of transfer operation, explicitation is a universal strategy, i.e., an umbrella term for a number of translation techniques like compensation by splitting, compensation in place, compensation in kind, grammatical transposition, free translation, whose effect is the syntactic/semantic expansion of the source text items (Blum-Kulka 1986; Klaudy & Károly 2005; Klaudy 2003, 2009; Molés-Cases 2019, et al.).

## 5. Conclusions

The present investigation has explored the translation strategies selected to render denominal *-ed* adjectival compounds into Romanian and the

syntactic patterns resulting in the target text. It has demonstrated that the typological differences between English and Romanian with respect to which word formation processes they favour (compounding for the former, and affixation for the latter), as well as the structural differences regarding compounding in the two languages explain why translators resort to compensatory strategies that unavoidably lengthen or shorten the original derivatives. Shortening has been shown to associate with the translation of lexicalized forms as single adjectives, while lengthening is related to the rendering of spontaneous creations, which require syntactic and semantic decoding, as phrasal and clausal structures. The lengthening of compounds in translation is the dominating tendency as it is produced by the application of a diverse range of compensatory strategies – compensation by splitting, compensation in kind, compensation in place, grammatical transposition, free translation. Their variety lends support to the view whereby *explicitation* does not describe a single translation technique, but rather stands for an entire array of transfer operation with the same lengthening effect, in other words, it is a translation universal.

## References

- Alonso, R.A., 2018, "Translating Motion Events into Typologically Distinct Languages", in *Perspectives*, 26 (3), p. 357-376.
- Baciu, I., 2004, *English Morphology: Word Formation – A Generative Perspective*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, București, Editura Universității din București.
- Blum-Kulka, S., 1986, "Shifts of cohesion and coherence in translation", in House, J., S. Blum-Kulka (eds.), *Interlingual and Intercultural Communication*, Tübingen, Narr, p. 17-35.
- Capelle, B., 2012, "English is less rich in manner-of-motion verbs when translated from French", in *Across Languages and Cultures*, 13 (2), p. 173-195.
- Drăgan, R., 2021, "Trailing Harry Potter into Romanian", in *Linguaculture*, 12 (1), p. 163-178.
- Drăgan, R., 2023a, "Explicitation and the Translation of English Adjectival Compounds into Romanian", in *Bucharest Working Papers in Linguistics*, 25 (2), p. 105-118.
- Drăgan, R., 2023b, "Translating -ING Adjectival Compounds into Romanian – A Case of Explicitation", in *Romanian Journal of the English Studies*, 20 (1), p. 11-22.
- Hervey, S., I. Higgins, 1992, *Thinking Translation. A Course in Translation Method: French to English*, London/New York, Routledge.
- Ibarretxe-Antuñano, I., 2003, "What translation tells us about motion: A contrastive study of typologically different languages", in *International Journal of English Studies*, 3 (2), p. 153-178.

- Klaudy, K., 2003, *Languages in Translation. Lectures on the Theory, Teaching and Practice of Translation. With Illustrations in English, French, German, Russian and Hungarian*, Budapest, Scholastica.
- Klaudy, K., 2009, "The Asymmetry Hypothesis in Translation Research", in Dimitriu, R., M. Shlesinger (eds.), *Translators and Their Readers. In Homage to Eugene A. Nida*, Brussels, Lés Éditions du Hazard, p. 283-303.
- Klaudy, K., K. Károly, 2005, "Implication in Translation: Empirical Evidence for Operational Asymmetry in Translation", in *Across Languages and Cultures*, 6 (1), p. 13–28.
- Labrador de la Cruz, M.B., N. Ramón García, 2010, "'Bollywood-Loving Countries' and 'Bollywood-Inspired Films': English Compound Adjectives and Spanish Translations", in Rabadán, R., T. Guzmán, M. Fernández León (eds.), *Lengua, traducción, recepción: En honor de Julio César Santoyo*, León, Universidad de León, Área de Publicaciones, p. 247-270.
- Levițchi, L. (coord.), 1974, *Dicționar englez-român*, București, Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România.
- Lieber, R., 2009, *Introducing Morphology*, New York, Cambridge University Press.
- Molés-Cases, T., 2019, "Why Typology Matters: A Corpus-based Study of Explicitation and Implication of Manner-of-motion in Narrative Texts", in *Perspectives*, 27 (6), p. 890-907.
- Pierini, P., 2015, "Translating English Compound Adjectives into Italian: Problems and Strategies", in *Translation and Interpreting*, 7 (2), p. 17-29.
- Plag, I., 2003, *Word-Formation in English*, New York, Cambridge University Press.
- Slobin, D.I., 2004, "The Many Ways to Search for a Frog: Linguistic Typology and the Expression of Motion Events", in Strömqvist, S., L. Verhove (eds.), *Relating Events in Narrative Volume 2: Typological and Contextual Perspectives*, London, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, p. 219-258.
- Slobin, D.I., 2005, "Relating Narrative Events in Translation", in Diskin R.D., H. Bat-Zeev Shyldkrot (eds.), *Perspectives on language and language development: Essays in honour of Ruth A. Berman*, Dordrecht, Kluwer, p. 115-129.
- Turnbull, J. (ed.), 2010, *The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, 8<sup>th</sup> edition, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

## Sources

- Abercrombie, J., 2008, *Last Argument of Kings*, London, Gollancz.
- Abercrombie, J., 2009, *Best Served Cold*, London, Gollancz.
- Abercrombie, J., 2011, *The Heroes*, London, Gollancz.
- Abercrombie, J., 2017a, *Dulce răzbunare*, Ruxandra Toma (trad.), București, Nemira.
- Abercrombie, J., 2017b, *Puterea armelor*, Mihnea Columbeanu (trad.), București, Nemira.
- Abercrombie, J., 2019, *Eroii*, Monica Șerban (trad.), București, Nemira.

All links were verified by the editors and found to be functioning before the publication of this text in 2024.

**DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS**

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

**FUNDING**

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this review/paper.

**Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License**

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>