

ZONE, MORI ... ZONE! THE SERBIAN-TO-ENGLISH TRANSLATION MECHANISMS IN THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF ZONA ZAMFIROVA

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Abstract

Zona Zamfirova is a Serbian movie, released in 2002 and based on the eponymous novella written by Stevan Sremac. The movie is characterised by its speech, which represents one of the variants of the Prizren-Timok dialect, spoken in the city of Niš and the surrounding region. This paper attempts to discover which translation mechanisms were dominant in translating the peculiarities of the Prizren-Timok dialect found in the movie lines into English, and then to deduce the reasons behind the translators' choices. First, the author gives a theoretical background for the analysis: the main characteristics of the Prizren-Timok dialect are explained, followed by the main tenets of the contrastive relationship used for the analysis in the paper, namely that of correspondence. The following section explains the methodology behind the analysis; the paper collects all of the lines from the movie, as well as from its English translation, into a unified corpus. The lines are then classified according to the mechanisms used to translate particular cases of the Serbian dialect into English. The final section deals with the analysis of the results and how they may be understood in terms of translating dialects of a language into a different one.

Key words: *Zona Zamfirova*, Prizren-Timok dialect, Serbian-English, translation mechanisms, correspondence.

„ЗОНЕ, МОРИ ... ЗОНЕ!“ СРПСКО-ЕНГЛЕСКИ ПРЕВОДНИ МЕХАНИЗМИ У ЕНГЛЕСКОМ ПРЕВОДУ ФИЛМА „ЗОНА ЗАМФИРОВА“

Апстракт

„Зона Замфирова“ је српски филм објављен 2002. године и базиран на истоименом кратком роману Стевана Сремца. Филм карактерише говор, који представља варијанту призренско-тимочког дијалекта, коришћеног у граду Нишу и

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околној области. Циљ овог истраживања је да открије који су преводни механизми доминирали у превођењу јединствених карактеристика призренско-тимочког дијалекта који се јавља у репликама филма на енглески, а потом и да утврди разлоге због којих су преводиоци изабрали управо та решења. На почетку, аутор излаже теоријски оквир анализе: објашњене су главне одлике призренско-тимочког дијалекта, а потом следе основне карактеристике контрастивног односа употребљеног за анализу у раду, односа кореспонденције. Наредни одељак излаже методологију анализе; корпус коришћен у раду садржи све реплике из оригиналног филма, као и њихове енглеске верзије. Реплике су затим разврстане на основу механизма коришћених у преводу конкретних примера поменутог српског дијалекта на енглески. Последњи одељак укључује анализу резултата и како се они могу протумачити у погледу превода дијалеката једног језика на други.

Кључне речи: *Зона Замфирова*, призренско-тимочки дијалект, српско-енглески, преводни механизми, кореспонденција.

INTRODUCTION

Zona Zamfirova is a Serbian movie, released in 2002 and based on the eponymous novella written by Stevan Sremac. Starring Katarina Radivojević as Zona Zamfirova and Vojin Ćetković as Mane the goldsmith, it follows their love story as members of two different social classes. The events of the movie occur roughly at the end of the nineteenth century, following Serbia's liberation from the Turks, in Niš, the largest city of South-Eastern Serbia. Therefore, the movie is notable on account of its speech, which represents one of the variants of the Prizren-Timok dialect, spoken in the city of Niš and the surrounding region.

This paper attempts to discover which translation mechanisms were dominant in translating the peculiarities of the Prizen-Timok dialect found in the movie lines into English, and then to deduce the reasons behind the translators' choices. First, the author gives a theoretical background for the analysis; he explains the main characteristics of the Prizren-Timok dialect in the phonological, grammatical and lexical sense, and then he expounds on the contrastive relationship used for the analysis in the paper, namely that of correspondence. The following section explains the methodology behind the analysis; the paper collects all of the lines from the movie, as well as from its English translation, into a unified corpus. The lines are then classified according to the mechanisms used to translate particular cases of the Serbian dialect into English. The final section deals with the analysis of the results and how they may be understood in terms of translating dialects of a language into a different one.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The Prizren-Timok Dialect

As its name implies, the Prizren-Timok dialect is a Serbian dialect spoken roughly between Prizren in the southwest and the river Timok in the north, all the way to the Bulgarian border to the east and the Macedonian border in the south (Stanojčić & Popović, 2005, p. 8). It is also known as the *srednjoštokavski* dialect (Okuka, 2008, p. 230). This dialect is considered part of the Balkan Sprachbund or the Balkan Language Area; this means that, in some of its characteristics, it resembles the neighbouring Bulgarian and Macedonian languages, having also undergone certain linguistic processes typical of Albanian and Greek (Okuka, 2008, p. 230). The Prizren-Timok dialect is divided into three subdialects depending on the region; the subdialect spoken in the movie and relevant for this study is the Prizren-South Morava subdialect, which roughly covers the western and the southern parts of the Prizren-Timok dialectal area (Okuka, 2008, p. 232).

The Prizren-Timok dialect, and by extension the Prizren-South Morava subdialect, differs from the widely accepted Standard Serbian in several of its characteristic traits. For example, on the phonological level, in some of its subdialects, the dialect retains the old *yer*-(ь), a short vowel which developed into /a/ in all other variants of Serbian; this can be found in words such as *đbn* and *tbnk*, as opposed to the Standard Serbian forms *dan* and *tanak* (Stanojčić & Popović, 2005, p. 8). This phoneme was a result of two other vowels being equalised, and their vowelisation had a different course in this dialect compared to other Serbian dialects (Okuka, 2008, p. 230). Additionally, some instances of the dialect retain the word-final consonant /l/ in place of /o/ found in other Serbian dialects, as seen in *kazal* (vs. Standard Serbian *kazao*), or the syllable /-ja/ in the same position, as seen in *kazaja* (Stanojčić & Popović, 2005, p. 8). Finally, the consonant /x/ is usually missing; compare *straota* with the Standard Serbian form *strahota* (Stanojčić & Popović, 2005, p. 8).

Next, some of the dialectal differences are grammatical in nature; for example, this dialect is distinguished by the lower presence of cases compared to the Standard Serbian language. In other words, while Standard Serbian has seven cases, this dialect usually utilises only two, the nominative and the accusative, whereby the remaining cases - aside from, at times, the vocative - are formally syncretised with one of these two (Stanojčić & Popović, 2005, p. 8). In other words, the genitive, the dative, the locative and the instrumental case all assume the form of the accusative case, although all of them are usually combined with a preposition, such as *od*, *na*, *o* and/or *s*, into a periphrastic form known as the general oblique case. The following example showcases the difference between the Standard Serbian case system as presented in the left column and the one found in the Prizren-Timok dialect, presented in the right column (examples by the author):

Sg.	Pl.		Sg.	Pl.
Nom:	glava - glave		vs.	glava - glave
Gen:	glave - glava		vs.	(od) glavu - (od) glave
Dat:	glavi - glavama	vs.	(na)	glavu - (na) glave
Acc:	glavu - glave		vs.	glavu - glave
Voc:	glavo - glave		vs.	glavo - glave
Inst:	glavom - glavama		vs.	(s) glavu - (s) glave
Loc:	glavi - glavama	vs.	(o/od)	glavu - (od) glave

The case system is one of the main tenets of the Prizren-Timok dialect, which places it squarely in the Balkan Sprachbund, as opposed to the standard form of the Serbian language. Additionally, the infinitive verb forms are usually missing, and the future tense is created by combining the auxiliary forms *ću/ćeš/će* with the present tense, as in the dialectal form *će ode* vs. the standard form *on(a) će otići* (Stanojčić & Popović, 2005, p. 8). The dialect is characterised by unique types of pronouns, especially third person singular personal pronouns such as *vu*, *gu* and *njojzi*, and demonstrative pronouns such as *tija* and *ovija* (Okuka, 2008, p. 237).

On the lexical level, the Prizren-Timok dialect is characterised by its own specific vocabulary, which is a legacy of specific geopolitical and historical circumstances and, consequently, of the foreign language and inter-dialectal influences (Okuka, 2008, p. 239). The main lexical influence stems from the Turkish language, along with some import from Albanian and German (Okuka, 2008, p. 239). The Turkish influence was notably exhibited during the late 19th century period depicted by the movie; the influence was a consequence of the multi-centennial Turkish rule in the region, which in Niš ended in 1878.

Correspondence

Seeing as this research is contrastive in nature, and because it focuses on the translation mechanisms between Serbian and English, we must first explain the theoretical angle utilised in the analysis. The chief problem when contrasting two languages is what aspect of the two languages should be compared, and for this problem two potential solutions are suggested: equivalence or correspondence (Đorđević, 2004, p. 53). Since the aim of the author is to discover the mechanisms by which certain formal units in Serbian were translated into English, with the importance of meaning being secondary, it is correspondence that is the chosen method for our analysis, even though equivalence is used more often when discussing movie script translations.

Compared to equivalence, which is based on contrasting units comparable on a communicative and/or semantic level, correspondence tries to establish an inter-lingual connection on both the formal and the semantic level (Đorđević, 2004, p. 58). On this basis, there are two types of relation-

ship found between the language units, *congruence* and *incongruence*: congruent structures are those which are both formally and semantically similar, they are of the same word class and the same syntactical function, while incongruent structures are semantically similar but not formally, as they differ in word order, the number of elements included, and so on (Đorđević, 2004, pp. 58-59). These relations run parallel to two particular types of correspondence; incongruence is connected to *partial correspondence*, when one element from language A is matched with multiple elements from language B (this is also known as textual correspondence and is considered parallel to translation equivalence), while congruence is related to *complete correspondence*, when elements from language A are always matched one-to-one by elements from language B on the structural level (Đorđević, 2004, pp. 59-60). A formal correspondent is any category found in the target language occupying, as closely as possible, “the ‘same’ place in the ‘economy’” of the target language as the identical category occupies in the source language; additionally, since every language is defined by using relations found in the language itself, Catford deduces that “formal correspondence is nearly always approximate” (Catford, 1967, p. 27, p. 32).

Since the main goal of correspondence in translation, or ‘formal equivalence,’ as Nida somewhat confusingly referred to it, is that “the message in the receptor language should match as closely as possible the different elements in the source language,” the messages in the two languages must constantly be compared “to determine standards of accuracy and correctness” (Nida, 1964, p. 159). The negative side of such a translation is that the resulting text may become high unintelligible to the reader and may require additional notes to explain the unrepresented formal features or, conversely, some of the correspondents that were used (Nida, 1964, p. 166).

Formal correspondence is not without its criticisms. Krzeszowski notes that formal resemblance must be supported with semantic equivalence in order to serve as the basis for comparison; at best such comparison based only on formal criteria can be incomplete, and at worst it is misleading or impossible to perform at all (Krzeszowski, 1990, p. 16). Additionally, the term *formal* is seen differently by different authors; Hjelmslev uses it to cover “the entire plane of expression,” while American linguists tend to restrict the use of this term to “word order, function words, inflections, affixation, and suprasegmentals” (Krzeszowski, 1990, pp. 17-18). Nonetheless, for the purpose of this paper, the author has chosen correspondence to analyse the lines in the corpus in order to shed some light on the congruent structures, in addition to the dominant incongruent structures, which can in most cases be understood as translation equivalents as well.

METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of this paper the author collected all of the original Serbian lines from the movie, as well as their English translations. This amounted to 1308 lines in total; however, 141 Serbian lines were excluded from the corpus as the subtitle did not include English translations for them, while 13 English lines were excluded from the translation as these lines were not featured in the movie. The excluded lines, both in Serbian and English, amounted mostly to repetitions of previous statements, questions or exclamations, especially of the characters' names, as well as certain lines spoken during group dialogues which could not be discerned clearly. The process of exclusion left 1154 lines which were used for the analysis.

As per the aforementioned theoretical discussion, congruence or incongruence may occur between two languages, and instances of both were found in the corpus, though heavily in favour of incongruence. Incongruence implies semantic similarities but formal differences between the lines in both languages; the examples of this type are further classified into six subgroups according to the dominant translation mechanism. On the other hand, congruence is much less present in the corpus, as very few lines represent both formal and semantic similarities; therefore, this type is not classified into subgroups.

Incongruent Structures

The majority of Serbian lines found in the corpus establish the relationship of incongruence with their English counterparts. As previously explained, incongruence occurs when there is a semantic similarity but a formal difference of some sort, be it of word class, word order, or some other type of divergence. The corpus features 1045 lines which succumb to this type of relationship, and these are further divided into six subgroups based on the dominant translation mechanisms found in the corpus, namely: loss of phonemes in Serbian lines translated using loss of phonemes in English lines, dialectal pronouns translated utilising loss of phonemes, dialectal case usage translated with loss of phonemes, additional descriptions found in the English lines, and different changes in the Serbian lines translated by using the personal pronoun *me* in place of the possessive adjective *my*. On the other hand, some of the structures which characterise the Prizren-Timok dialect were not indicated in the English translation of the script, most notably the dialectal verb constructions such as the perfect aspect, the past tense and the future construction; these are discussed as a separate category.

Loss of Phonemes > Loss of Phonemes. The most dominant type of translation mechanism found in the corpus is loss of phonemes found in the original Serbian lines transferred into English utilising loss of phonemes. In certain cases, such as a) and c), the missing Serbian phoneme is pronounced as the semi-vowel /ɫ/; however, the alternation is still consid-

ered loss of phonemes, as /ɤ/ is not part of the Standard Serbian phonological system. Seventy instances of this process were located in the corpus, including the following examples:

- a) *S'g su skupe pare.* > Money's worth a lot *t'day!*
- b) *Ti treba da si gledaš priliku sproću seb'.* > You must look for a right match for *you'self.*
- c) *L'sno mu.* > *'Ts easy* for him.
- d) *'Ajde, 'ajde, zna'em da se udavaš.* > *C'me on,* take it, I know you're gettin' married.

Dialectal Pronouns > Loss of Phonemes. The next most frequent group is the one featuring dialectal forms of Serbian pronouns such as *gu* or *njuma* being transferred into English with loss of phonemes. There are 43 cases of such a mechanism, of which four examples are featured:

- a) *Da gu ponesem ja, bata Mane?* > Shall I help *'er,* young-master-Mane?
- b) *A što si gu tene pituvaž za njuma?* > What are you to her to ask 'bout *'er?*
- c) *Ćorčo, b'e, zar ga ne poznavaž?* > Eh, you, blind silly, don't you know *'er?*
- d) *Vaske, otidi si do onuj... de, kako se vika?* > Vaska, go over to... what's *'er* name?

Dialectal Case Usage > Loss of Phonemes. The third dominant translation mechanism once again utilises loss of phonemes to translate instances of case usage typical of the Prizren-Timok dialect found in the corpus, of which there are 39 instances, including the following:

- a) *A ti, Zone, u školu kako je?* > And you, Zone, *how's your s'hoool doing?*
- b) *Pa da praća pisma na oficiri i indžiliri?* > An' t' write love letters *t' army officers and eng'neers!?*
- c) *Cel dan je pred ogledalo.* > *'N front of the mirror* all day long, she is!
- d) *Ti da batališ to pisivanje zašto u noć mož' se sapleteš o neki ćuteci.* > You sh'd give up your scribbling. 'Cause you might stumble *o'er some cytek* in the dark.

Turkish Lexemes > Turkish Lexemes with Additional Descriptions.

Due to a vast number of lexical imports from the Turkish language, the translator used additional descriptions within certain lines, which are not found in the original Serbian dialogue; the Serbian viewers were probably expected to be familiar with the meanings of these particular lexemes, unlike the audience outside of the region or country. This is seen as a type of additional information translators sometimes add within the target

language text itself, as evidenced by Newmark (Newmark, 1998, p. 92). Thirteen such occurrences were discovered in the corpus, and among those were the following:

- a) Ja gu pratim po mušljiku, a ona mi donese *tefter*. > I send 'er to fetch my cigarette holder - she comes back with my *tefter*, my *account-book*!
- b) E pa, dajte gu za Manulaća, za onoga zevzeka čorbadži-Jordanovog, a posle nemo' da vi bude krivo kad počne da praća *šeftelije* na drugi momčinja! > Very well! Give 'er to Manulach, that chorbaci-Jordan's fool! But you'll be sorry when she starts sending *love-messages*, *shefteli-scarves*, to other lads!
- c) Aa, to ti *dever*. > Your *dever*, the bride's best man.
- d) Manulać, će mi budeš *kum*? > Will you be my *kum*, my groom's best man?

Multiple Alterations > Me Replacing My. Multiple alterations found in the original Serbian script, such as loss of phonemes, dialectal pronouns, lexical import, or a combination of some of these phenomena resulted in the translator using the personal pronoun *me* in place of the possessive adjective *my*. In certain cases there was no discernible occurrence in the Serbian script, yet this change was still utilised in the English translation. There are ten cases of this change found in the corpus, including:

- a) Za tebe Zone *sefte*! > *Me first customer*!
- b) Ja te milujem kako da si *moje*. > I fancy you like *me own child*.
- c) Kakav je ovoj kalabal'k *pred kapiju*, a? > Why this mob 'n front of *me gate*?!
- d) S'm' *kod majke* kizmet ću činim. > I won't be a servant but at *me mama's home*.

Untranslated Constructions. It should be noted that, in opposition to the aforementioned categories, certain grammatical structures typical of the Prizren-Timok dialect (as seen in section 2.1), namely the dialectal perfect, the dialectal past tense and the dialectal future constructions, were not in any instance or manner indicated in the English translation. The following three examples illustrate this:

- a) Ali *si došaja* kodi men' da ti navodadžišem neku trgovačku ćerku? > *Have you come* to ask me to arrange a marriage for you, with a merchant's daughter?
- b) Au, pa *nesam znaja* za toj. > Oh, I *didn't know* that.
- c) Nas tri *će* brzo *da poudavaju* ... po Leskovci, po Piroti, po Vranja, a ti *će* si *ostaneš* jedino mezimče na tatka. > We'll soon *be given away*, t' marry in Leskovac, in Pirot, in Vranje. You alone *will remain* at home, t' be Papa's lit'le precious.

Congruent Structures

A minor part of the corpus features fully congruent structures between the two languages. Congruence occurs when there is a full semantic *and* formal correspondence between the two lines, and this is evidenced by 109 lines in the corpus, including the following:

- a) Dobro jutro, kolege. > Good morning, colleagues!
- b) Dva groša? > Two farthings!
- c) Oskudacija! > Recess'on.
- d) Mnozina vidoše. > Plenty saw.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Observing the specific tenets of the Prizren-Timok dialect found in the original Serbian script and their translated English equivalents, we can deduce that none of the translation mechanisms used are particularly dominant compared to the size of the corpus. The three most dominant alterations in Serbian, namely the loss of phonemes, the dialectal pronouns and the dialectal case usage, which jointly comprise roughly the tenth of the corpus, were translated using loss of phonemes in English. This could point to the fact that the English case system and the class of pronouns are not as nearly as diversified as the Serbian ones, so the translators decided to use loss of phonemes, already dominant on its own in both versions of the corpus, to translate the dialectal forms of cases and pronouns as well.

Additionally, some of the Turkish lexemes found in the Serbian script necessitated additional descriptions; these words were likely found by the translators to be unfamiliar to the public predominantly versed in English and not well acquainted with the vocabulary or customs of the late nineteenth century South-Eastern Serbia. These additional descriptions function as additional notes in a literary work, even though the original script does not include any additional information on the words in question.

One particular change found in the English translation is the one where the personal pronoun *me* replaced the possessive adjective *my*; since this alteration is dialectal in nature, it represents a set of rare cases in the corpus where the Serbian dialectal forms were translated using an English dialectal form, representative of the Cockney dialect spoken in London and its surroundings. Still, the Serbian forms translated using this alteration are not uniform; sometimes there is no change in the original line, or the English alteration is facilitated by a Turkish imported lexeme. This might point out to the translators not being quite set in the ways of translating every unique characteristic of the Prizren-Timok dialect, yet being willing to make an attempt to use a dialectal form of English to bring the original text to life for the English speakers. Furthermore, seeing that, geographically speaking, Cockney is a south-eastern dialect (Catford, 1967, p. 87), it seems

interestingly coincidental that such a dialect would be chosen to transfer what are elements of another south-eastern dialect, albeit in terms of Serbian geography.

As Đorđević states, complete correspondence is very rare (Đorđević, 2004, p. 60); as a result, most of the notable mechanisms in the corpus are incongruent rather than congruent. Most of the structures – 1045 of them – in the corpus have been translated bearing the semantic component in mind first and foremost, so meaning-wise the two versions are close, if not identical; formally speaking, however, these structures are uniformly incongruent, and differ in terms of word order, the number of elements included – especially in terms of the subject missing in the Serbian lines as the verb inflection usually specifies the subject – as well as in terms of a large number of dialectal structures not being indicated in any way in the English translation. This should point to the fact that seeking formally identical structures to translate dialectal forms is even more of an arduous task compared to translating standardised structures; therefore, the translators did not attempt to stick rigidly to the one-to-one formal correspondence and opted to translate the lines using any form that would transfer the correct meaning properly into English. On the other hand, one of the reasons the dialectal forms were not as minutely translated with English alterations or dialectal forms could have been, as Newmark noted, a tendency of the translators to under-translate, “to normalise by generalizing, to understate,” which is a common issue in literary translation (Newmark, 1991, p. 104). While this statement pertains predominantly to literature, it can be fairly noticeable in movie translations, such as the one covered in this paper.

To sum up, the Serbian portion of the corpus showcased a variety of structures typical of the Prizren-Timok dialect, which were subsequently translated into English, predominantly using loss of phonemes, additional descriptions, or the *me-my* dialectal variation. A number of dialectal verbal structures, such as the perfect aspect, the future construction, and the past tense, were translated using Standard English, and as such were not indicated as different in the translation. Most of the translated forms were found to be incongruent – their meaning was transferred into English, but their formal structure on a word-to-word basis was not – yet a minor portion of the lines exhibited fully congruent structures in the translation relation.

In terms of future research, analysing other movies or series characterised by their dialectal usage and contrasting the original scripts with their translations could prove to be valuable for linguists in observing the ways translators utilise to transfer such specific structures, formally, semantically or communicatively, into other languages, as well as in discovering how adequate these techniques are in such cases. Additionally, incongruent structures such as those found in this paper could be further analysed as translation equivalents, and in terms of finding the *tertia comparationis* which connect the versions in Serbian and English. This could help us draw additional par-

allels between unique dialects found in all corners of the world, and construe new and different ways in which languages may be interconnected.

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„ЗОНЕ, МОРИ ... ЗОНЕ!“ СРПСКО-ЕНГЛЕСКИ ПРЕВОДНИ МЕХАНИЗМИ У ЕНГЛЕСКОМ ПРЕВОДУ ФИЛМА „ЗОНА ЗАМФИРОВА“

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Резиме

Зона Замфирова је српски филм објављен 2002. године и базиран на истоименом кратком роману Стевана Сремца. Филм карактерише говор, који представља варијанту призренско-тимочког дијалекта, коришћеног у граду Нишу и околини. Циљ овог истраживања је да открије који су преводни механизми доминантни у превођењу јединствених карактеристика призренско-тимочког дијалекта који се јавља у репликама филма на енглески, а потом и да утврди разлоге због којих су преводиоци изабрали управо та решења. На почетку, аутор излаже теоријски оквир анализе: објашњене су главне одлике призренско-тимочког дијалекта, као и његовог призренско-јужноморавског поддијалекта, на фонолошком, граматичком и лексичком нивоу. Потом следе основне карактеристике контрастивног односа употребљеног за анализу у раду, односа кореспонденције; представљене су разлике кореспондентног приступа у односу на приступ еквиваленције, два типа преводног односа у оквиру теорије кореспонденције – конгруенција и неконгруенција, те две врсте кореспонденције које се јављају на преводном нивоу – делимична и потпуна кореспонденција. Наредни оде-

љак излаже методологију анализе; корпус коришћен у раду садржи све реплике из оригиналног филма, као и њихове енглеске верзије. Реплике су затим разврстане на основу механизма коришћеног у преводу конкретних примера поменутог српског дијалекта на енглески; најчешће се јављају неконгруентне структуре, које су подељене у шест подгрупа: губитак фонема преведен губитком фонема, дијалекатске замене преведене губитком фонема, дијалекатска употреба падежа преведена губитком фонема, турцизми преведени помоћу истих лексема са додатним објашњењима, вишеструке алтерације преведене заменом *me/ty*, те подгрупа са конструкцијама које нису преведене. У засебном поделењу наведене су и конгруентне структуре пронађене у корпусу. Последњи одељак укључује анализу резултата и њихово тумачење у погледу превода дијалеката једног језика на други; рад затварају предлози аутора на тему даљих истраживања сличног типа.