

The Problem of Cultural Context in Translation and Translator Education

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1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to show, with the help of examples from the Hungarian translation of Nick Hornby's *Fever Pitch* (see Sources), how differences between the source reader's and the target reader's cultural background assumptions influence the interpretability of a text and what means a translator has to tackle difficulties of interpretation arising from such differences. The paper also aims to highlight characteristics of the translator that the author believes to be essential in dealing with such problems.

The novel is about how the mental and emotional life of a fanatic football fan is interwoven with his devotion to his team and how the vicissitudes of his private life are entangled with the failures and successes of the football team. Thus the novel is not primarily about football but about the mental journey of a football fan.

2. Assumptions, meaning, context and cultural context

In the theoretical framework that I employ, relevance theory, an assumption is defined as a structured set of concepts. The meaning of a concept is made up of a truth-functional **logical entry**, which may be empty, partially filled or fully definitional and an **encyclopaedic entry**, containing various kinds of representational information about the extension and possible connotations of the concept (e.g. cultural or personal beliefs), stored in memory. The content of an assumption is the function of the logical entries of the concepts that it contains and the context in which it is processed is, at least partly, drawn from the encyclopaedic entries of these concepts (Sperber and Wilson, 1986: 89).

Utterance interpretation is an inferential process whereby the audience infers, by combining the stimulus with a set of contextual assumptions (**context** in the narrow sense), the intended meaning of the communicator. For this to happen, the audience must use the context envisaged by the communicator, otherwise, in a **secondary communication situation** (Gutt 1991: 73) where the audience uses a different context, the stimulus may be misinterpreted and the communication may fail. Such problems are likely to occur when the communicator and the audience are representatives of different socio-cultural contexts, that is, when there is a marked difference between their background assumptions and circumstances, which constitute, roughly, the **cognitive**

environment of an individual (Sperber and Wilson, 1986:39). In our cognitive framework, these differences are best regarded, I think, as differences in the **mutual cognitive environments** of groups of individuals, which means a shared cognitive environment in which it is manifest which people share it (Sperber and Wilson, 1986:41). **Culture (cultural context)**, then, in the wide sense, may be defined as consisting in the set of assumptions that are mutually manifest for a group of individuals and cultural differences are differences between sets of mutually manifest assumptions. **Culture-specificity** thus means that an assumption which figures in the mutual cognitive environment of one community is not present in the mutual cognitive environment of another.

3. The data

I have picked 16 examples from the Hungarian translation. The expressions to be examined are written in bold, page numbers are given in brackets. The English back-translations, where appropriate, appear in square brackets.

... the games master was a Welshman who once memorably tried to ban us from kicking a **round ball** even when we got home (22) → ... a tornatanárunk, egy walesi fickó egyszer emlékezetes módon meg akarta tiltani nekünk, hogy akár csak iskola után is **gömbölyű labdával** játsszunk*

* **A walesiek közismerten rögbipártiak; a gömbölyű futball-labdával szemben a rögbilabda tojásdad alakú.** A szerk. megjegyzése. (21)

[The Welsh are known for their preference for rugby; as opposed to the round ball used in football, the rugby ball has an odd shape. The editor's footnote.]

Gazza (33) → „**Gazza**” [Gascoigne – *a ford.*] (35) [Note by the translator.]

the **Heysel** tragedy (55) → a **Heysel stadionbeli** tragédia (63) [The tragedy in Heysel stadium]

Saint Trevor of England (126) → **Angliai Szent Trevor (Trevor Brooking – a ford.)** (152) [Note by the translator.]

... I lived with my mother and my sister in a small detached house in the **Home Counties**. (15) → ... én az anyámmal és a húgommal éltem egy kis házban egy **London közeli városkában**. (12) [in a small town near London]

... and the next day, when **Southern** show the highlights of the game on TV (42) → Másnap pedig, amikor a **tévén** mutatják a meccs összefoglalóját... (47) [on TV]

Cockney (50) → **londoni akcentus** (57) [London accent]

... unless one stands on the North Bank, or **the Kop, or the Stretford End** (77) → ... hacsak nem az Északi Sáncon vagy **bármely másik nagycsapat „táborában”** szurkol (91) [among the die-hard supporters of any other great club]

... what the hell is buried in the subconscious of people who go to **Leyland DAF Trophy** games? (17) → ... akkor mi az ördög lehet eltemetve az olyan emberek tudattalanjában, akik képesek elutazni a **Leyland DAF Kupa** meccseire? (14)

Although the temptation to plunge into a warm bath containing dissolved essence of **Kenneth Wolstenholme** is always with me... (29) → Bár mindig erős a kísértés, hogy beleüljek egy forró kádba, amely **Kenneth Wolstenholme** szétolvadt esszenciájával van tele... (29)

In a way nobody can blame any of us, the Mockneys or the cod Irish, the black wannabees or the **pseudo Sloanes**. (49) → Igazából senki sem vádolhat bennünket – feketemajmolókat és **ál-Sloane**-okat (55)

black-framed **Brains-style** National Health reading glasses (54) → fekete keretes **Brains-féle** esztéka olvasószemüveg (62)

Esso World Cup coin collections (38) → „Esso” **vb-gombfocikészletek** (40) [World Cup button soccer sets]

an **Old Firm** game (129) → egy **Old Firm**-meccsen (155)

an entire family, known to everyone as the **Munsters** due to a somewhat outlandish and unfortunate physical appearance (144) → egy teljes család, amelyet mindenki csak „**munsterieknek**” nevezett a némiképp külföldies és szerencsétlen külsejük miatt (175) [known to everyone as the people from Munster]

From **NW3 to N17** (174) → **Csak szurkoló** (212) [only a fan]

At first sight the only thing one notices is that some of the Hungarian renderings are clearly understandable while others are less so or not at all. To be able to evaluate the individual solutions, however, we need to compare them to their English originals.

4. Comparative analysis

After examining the semantic relationship of the English expressions with their Hungarian translations, the data can be divided into two groups, each of which in turn can be subdivided into two further groups.

4.1. Help from the translator

When we examine these expressions, we see that in some form the translator provides help to the target reader in making sense of the expressions which carry some culture-specific content.

4.1.1. Total transfer

In the first group we have those Hungarian expressions which, besides preserving the “dictionary” (logical) meaning of the original, also preserve, in some form, the culture-specific (encyclopaedic) background content.

... the games master was a **Welshman** who once memorably tried to ban us from kicking a **round ball** even when we got home (22) → ... a tornatanárunk, egy **walesi fickó** egyszer emlékezetes módon meg akarta tiltani nekünk, hogy akár csak iskola után is **gömbölyű labdával** játsszunk*

* **A walesiek közismerten rögbipártiak; a gömbölyű football-labdával szemben a rögbilabda tojásdad alakú. A szerk. megjegyzése.** (21) [The Welsh are known for their preference for rugby; as opposed to the round ball used in football, the rugby ball has an odd shape. The editor’s footnote.]

Gazza (33) → „**Gazza**” [Gascoigne – *a ford.*] (35)

the **Heysel** tragedy (55) → a **Heysel stadionbeli** tragédia (63)

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In these examples, the encyclopaedic contents in question, which the translator considers culture-specific, that is, unavailable to the target reader, are made explicit, or **explicated**, in the translation. Through explication, these contents are made directly accessible to the target reader. In other words, the translator (or the editor) here directly provides help to the target readers to enable them to make sense of the given expressions despite their lack of access to the relevant background information. However, it can also be observed that the method of providing such help is not consistent: there are examples of footnotes, of explanations integrated into the running text, and also of explanatory notes in brackets. And, as can be seen, in the case of the latter even the use of the type of brackets is inconsistent, round and square brackets occurring alike.

4.1.2. Encyclopaedic transfer

In this group we find expressions which are readily interpretable for the target reader but the logical content of which is not the same as that of the English originals.

... I lived with my mother and my sister in a small detached house in the **Home Counties**. (15) → ... én az anyámmal és a húgommal éltem egy kis házban egy **London közeli városkában**. (12)

... and the next day, when **Southern** show the highlights of the game on TV (42) → Másnap pedig, amikor a **tévében** mutatják a meccs összefoglalóját... (47)

Cockney (50) → **londoni akcentus** (57)

... unless one stands on the North Bank, or **the Kop, or the Stretford End** (77) → ... hacsak nem az Északi Sáncon vagy **bármely másik nagycsapat „táborában”** szurkol (91)

What can be observed in these examples is that the logical content of the English expression is substituted in the translation by its encyclopaedic content or by a content that logically follows from it.

... I lived with my mother and my sister in a small detached house in the **Home Counties**. (15) → ... én az anyámmal és a húgommal éltem egy kis házban egy **London közeli városkában**. (12)

This example can be explained as a sequence of deductive inferences in the following way. Encyclopaedic and other assumptions, following Wilson és Carston (2006), will be represented by small capitals. The source reader has available the following encyclopaedic assumption: EA1 THE HOME COUNTIES ARE THE COUNTIES BORDERING OR SURROUNDING LONDON. (The source of definitions is <http://en.wikipedia.org>.) The explicit content of the sentence in the context of EA1 implies the following contextual implication: C11 THE NARRATOR LIVES IN A COUNTY NEAR LONDON. This analytically implies the following (contextually independent) implication: A11 THE NARRATOR LIVES NEAR LONDON. By processing previous parts of the text, the reader has already stored in mind this contextual assumption: CA1 THE NARRATOR LIVES IN A SMALL TOWN. Thus the translation gives what A11 implies in the context of C11: C12 THE NARRATOR LIVES IN A SMALL TOWN NEAR LONDON.

... and the next day, when **Southern** show the highlights of the game on TV (42) → Másnap pedig, amikor a **tévében** mutatják a meccs összefoglalóját... (47)

In this second example, *Southern* is the name of a TV channel, which is also a background assumption that the assumed Hungarian target reader has no access to. Here this assumption has been substituted for the logical content.

Cockney (50) → **londoni akcentus** (57)

The word *Cockney* signifies a particular variety of the English language, which is used in East London by working-class people. Thus in this case, only a part of the encyclopaedic assumptions carried by the original has been substituted by the translator.

... unless one stands on the North Bank, or **the Kop, or the Stretford End** (77)
 → ... hacsak nem az Északi Sáncon vagy **bármely másik nagycsapat „táborában”** szurkol (91)

Here the target reader lacks the following background assumptions. THE KOP AND THE STRETFORD END ARE PARTS OF THE STADIUMS OF LIVERPOOL FC AND MANCHESTER UNITED, RESPECTIVELY, HOUSING THE DIE-HARD SUPPORTERS OF THE TWO TEAMS. (And the North Bank used to have the same status in Arsenal FC's stadium, but this expression has already occurred at an earlier point in the story.) These background assumptions are partly explicated by the translator and partly inductively generalised, starting from a further encyclopaedic assumption to the effect that Liverpool and Manchester United traditionally belong among the great clubs of English football.

Thus expressions in this group have in common that their logical content is substituted by their encyclopaedic content, or part of it, or by an assumption that is implied by the encyclopaedic content through deduction or induction.

4.2. No help from the translator

In this group of expressions the translator for some reason leaves the readers on their own, without help in making sense of the expressions carrying culture-specific assumptions.

4.2.1. Logical transfer

In this group we have the following expressions:

... what the hell is buried in the subconscious of people who go to **Leyland DAF Trophy** games? (17) → ... akkor mi az ördög lehet eltemetve az olyan emberek tudattalanjában, akik képesek elutazni a **Leyland DAF Kupa** meccseire? (14)

Although the temptation to plunge into a warm bath containing dissolved essence of **Kenneth Wolstenholme** is always with me... (29) → Bár mindig erős a kísértés, hogy beleüljek egy forró kádba, amely **Kenneth Wolstenholme** szétolvadt esszenciájával van tele... (29)

In a way nobody can blame any of us, the Mockneys or the cod Irish, the black wannabees or the **pseudo Sloanes**. (49) → Igazából senki sem vádolhat bennünket – feketemajmolókat és **ál-Sloane**-okat (55)

black-framed **Brains-style** National Health reading glasses (54) → fekete keretes **Brains-féle** esztéká olvasószemüveg (62)

What we find here is that the logical content of the expressions is unchanged in the translation but the target reader receives no help from the translator in activating the culturally bound background expressions needed to interpret the expression.

... what the hell is buried in the subconscious of people who go to **Leyland DAF Trophy** games? (17) → ... akkor mi az ördög lehet eltemetve az olyan emberek tudattalanjában, akik képesek elutazni a **Leyland DAF Kupa** meccseire? (14)

In order to be able to make sense of this sentence, the reader needs to have access to the (culture-specific) background assumption that THE LEYLAND DAF TROPHY WAS THE NAME OF THE ANNUAL COMPETITION ORGANISED FOR THE CLUBS IN THE TWO LOWER DIVISIONS OF THE FOOTBALL LEAGUE BETWEEN 1989 AND 1991. In the context of this assumption the sarcasm of the question becomes clear: a person who is willing to travel to see a cup game between two clubs in the lower divisions is obviously not completely sound-minded.

Although the temptation to plunge into a warm bath containing **dissolved essence of Kenneth Wolstenholme** is always with me... (29) → Bár mindig erős a kísértés, hogy beleüljek egy forró kádba, amely **Kenneth Wolstenholme szétolvadt esszenciájával** van tele... (29)

This sentence cannot be made sense of without the following encyclopaedic assumption: KENNETH WOLSTENHOLME WAS BBC TELEVISION'S FIRST FOOTBALL COMMENTATOR IN THE 1950S AND 1960S, IN THE GOLDEN AGE OF TELEVISED FOOTBALL BROADCASTING. From earlier parts of the text it has already become clear that THE NARRATOR GREW UP IN THE 1960S AND THAT WAS ALSO THE TIME (MORE PRECISELY IN 1968) WHEN HE BEGAN TO SHOW AN INTEREST IN FOOTBALL. In the context of these two assumptions, the sentence becomes easily interpretable as an expression of nostalgic longing into an age when in the narrator's thoughts his childhood, football and Kenneth Wolstenholme were inextricably interwoven.

In a way nobody can blame any of us, the Mockneys or the cod Irish, the black wannabees or the **pseudo Sloanes**. (49) → Igazából senki sem vádolhat bennünket – feketemajmolókat és **ál-Sloane**-okat... (55)

The missing background assumption is this: THE EXPRESSION SLOANES REFERS TO THE YOUNG UPPER- AND UPPER-MIDDLE-CLASS MEN AND WOMEN LIVING IN WEST LONDON'S FASHIONABLE AND WELL-TO-DO SLOANE SQUARE AREA. Thus here in this sentence the narrator is giving a list of the subtypes of wanting-to-

be-someone-else, one of them being the case when one wants to belong to a fashionable social group.

black-framed **Brains-style** National Health reading glasses (54) → fekete keretes **Brains-féle** esztéká olvasószemüveg (62)

Lacking the appropriate encyclopaedic assumption, the target reader may think that *Brains* was perhaps the name of an optometrist, but that is not the case. The missing assumption is the following: BRAINS WAS A CHARACTER IN AN ANIMATED TV SERIES CALLED “THUNDERBIRDS”, SHOWN ON BRITISH TV IN THE 1960S, WHO WORE CHARACTERISITIC BROAD BLACK-FRAMED GLASSES. In possession of this assumption, a possible translation providing more help to the target reader could have been formulated as follows: „vastag fekete keretes esztéká szemüveg” [broad black-framed “Social Security” glasses].

Naturally, this variant is not equivalent with the original in several respects. The mentioning of Brains’s name in the original text may ignite a chain of associations, activating a range of assumptions relating to the personality traits of the character, his style, or the story of the animated film. These associated assumptions, as part of the context, may further enhance, or add further tones to, the meaning of the expression. Obviously, these possible routes of interpretation are blocked by the “broad black-framed” version as it does not make accessible the above-mentioned associated assumptions.

On the other hand, it is interesting that in the same noun phrase the expression *National Health* is rendered by a peculiar way of encyclopaedic transfer. Here the endpoint of the deduction process is an assumption containing the colloquial name, “esztéká”, of an institution which is characteristically Hungarian, the SZTK (Workers’ Union Social Security Centre), from which, by activating the encyclopaedic contents related to this name, we can deduce the assumption that was probably also implied by the original: THE READING GLASSES IN QUESTION WERE OF A CHEAP AND NOT PARTICULARLY GOOD-LOOKING KIND. Beyond this, however, the expression “esztéká”, exactly because of its being bound to Hungarian culture, can give rise to further associations which the English original surely did not. Thus, with this solution the translator somewhat overstepped the mark by making this segment of the text culturally heterogeneous.

Within this single example, we can notice what is beginning to become clear from the discussion so far: at certain places the translator tries to help his target reader in interpreting the text but at other points he leaves the reader alone in this task. I will later return to the question of what might have been the reason for this duality.

4.2.2. Zero transfer

The last four examples belong here:

Esso World Cup coin collections (38) → „Esso” vb-gombfocikészletek (40)

an **Old Firm** game (129) → egy **Old Firm**-meccsen (155)

an entire family, known to everyone as the **Munsters** due to a somewhat outlandish and unfortunate physical appearance (144) → egy teljes család, amelyet mindenki csak „**munsterieknek**” nevezett a némiképp külföldies és szerencsétlen külsejük miatt (175)

From **NW3 to N17** (174) → **Csak szurkoló** (212)

These solutions are characterised by an inaccessibility of both the logical and the encyclopaedic content of the original to the target reader.

Esso World Cup coin collections (38) → „**Esso**” **vb-gombfocikészletek** (40)

As regards the logical content: obviously, the proper Hungarian correspondent of the expression *coin collection* is not “gombfocikészlet” (button soccer set) but “érmegyűjtemény”. The missing encyclopaedic assumption is this: THE ESSO WORLD CUP COIN COLLECTION WAS A COLLECTION OF 30 COINS ISSUED BY THE ESSO OIL COMPANY TO COMMEMORATE THE 1970 FOOTBALL WORLD CUP, FEATURING PORTRAITS OF THE MEMBERS OF THE ENGLISH NATIONAL TEAM. What happened here, probably, is that the translator himself did not have this piece of background information and, for lack of it, tried to work out an interpretation of the expression that would seem appropriate in the macrocontext of the book (football). In other words: he guessed – and made a mistake.

an **Old Firm** game (129) → egy **Old Firm**-meccsen (155)

When the translator transfers a source language expression into the target text in its original form, by definition the logical content of the expression gets lost. The only exceptions are those expressions which for some reason have already been adopted into the target language, taking with them their logical content as well as certain encyclopaedic assumptions. The expression *Old Firm* is obviously not such a phrase in Hungarian, known only to some football fanatics, perhaps. We mustn't forget, however, that this book is not written exclusively, not even primarily, for football fanatics. The missing encyclopaedic assumption is the following: THE TERM OLD FIRM REFERS TO THE RIVALRY BETWEEN THE SCOTTISH FOOTBALL TEAMS CELTIC F.C. AND RANGERS F.C., BOTH BASED IN GLASGOW. And the source of the expression, as Wikipedia explains: “The expression derives from Celtic's first game in 1888, which was played against Rangers. A newspaper report stated that both sets of players ‘got on so well that you would believe that they were old firm friends.’”

an entire family, known to everyone as the **Munsters** due to a somewhat outlandish and unfortunate physical appearance (144) → egy teljes család, amelyet mindenki csak „**munsterieknek**” nevezett a némiképp külföldies és szerencsétlen külsejük miatt (175)

To interpret this expression, the following encyclopaedic assumption would be needed: THE MUNSTERS WAS A HORROR COMEDY SERIES SHOWN ON AMERICAN TV IN THE 1960S, DEPICTING THE LIFE OF A FAMILY OF MONSTERS. Beyond this, the expression is also a pun, based on a formal similarity between the words *Munster* and *monster*. Although such puns can almost never be rendered into another language without a residue, and for this reason they often fall victims in the process of translation, here it would have seemed necessary for the translator to find some solution as in this form the Hungarian version is utterly senseless. It seems to make reference to people from the southernmost province of Ireland, Munster, but I think it fails on the following three grounds. First, it is unlikely that an average Hungarian reader is aware that Munster is an Irish province. Second, provided that such readers do exist, it is even more unlikely that those Hungarian readers would have any encyclopaedic assumption available to them concerning the people of Munster that would make this sentence meaningful in some way. And finally, supposing that some readers are actually able to interpret the target sentence as an allusion to the physical appearance of the people of Munster, this would clearly be an utterly misguided interpretation.

From NW3 to N17 (174) → *Csak szurkoló* (212)

This is the title of one of the key chapters of the novel, in which the narrator relates how Arsenal's win over Tottenham in a cup semi-final helped him overcome his depression. The chapter begins with these words:

If this book has a centre, then it is here, on the Wednesday night in March 1987 that I travelled from a psychiatrist's office in Hampstead to White Hart Lane in Tottenham to see a Littlewoods Cup semi-final replay.

The game was won, amidst circumstances that would cause a release of monstrous surges of adrenalin, by Arsenal, the narrator's team, and the resulting delirium of the triumph somehow moved him over his long-time depression and also enabled him to separate his personal fate from Arsenal's. The chapter ends in this way:

That night, I stopped being an Arsenal lunatic and relearnt how to be a fan, still cranky, and still dangerously obsessive, but only a fan nevertheless.

The title of the chapter in the English original is metaphorical: the codes of the two London districts signal the journey leading from the psychiatrist's office, depression, to Tottenham's stadium, redemption from depression. The Hungarian translation makes possible the recovery neither of the background assumptions that serve as the basis of the metaphor nor the metaphor itself. What remains in the translation is the endpoint of the metaphorical journey – and even a narrowed down and impoverished sense at that.

5. Lessons for translator education

The first thing that strikes the eye during the analysis of this translation is the inconsistency of the translator. In some cases he tries to help the target readers where they do not have access to the necessary encyclopaedic assumptions, while in other cases he fails to provide help. We can even find examples when he does both within one and the same sentence (“Brains-style National Health reading glasses”). It seems that the translator did not have a conscious strategy for dealing with such problems.

On the other hand, the translator also seems inconsistent in the way he provides help to the reader. Here we can think of the explanatory expressions in footnotes and in brackets, or of the use of different types of bracketing.

What can be the reason for this inconsistency? At several places, the analyst has the impression that the translator perhaps does not even notice that the interpretation of a text segment rests on some culture-specific encyclopaedic assumption (“ESSO coin collection”). In other words, he does not realise that he is facing a secondary communication situation. At other places, where he notices this and is able to make sense of the expression himself, he attempts to help his reader (“Heysel tragedy”). However, where he was not able to interpret the source expression, he seems to have failed even to check out the missing contextual assumptions and he left his readers on their own (“pseudo-Sloane”, “the Munsters”) or skirted around the problem in some other way (“From NW3 to N17”).

In sum we can have two principal objections concerning the translation: one is its inconsistency, the other, its occasional superficiality. It appears that the translator’s primary aim was not producing as good a translation as he could but to get over it with as little effort as possible. This, of course, can also be a legitimate aim for a translator, as Heltai (1999) points out in introducing the concept of **minimal translation**, but probably not in the area of literary translation.

Perhaps the most important thing a translator needs to learn is that translation is a kind of interpretation, in at least two senses. On the one hand, translators interpret the source text for themselves. This is an indispensable prerequisite for producing a translation that the target reader will be able to make sense of: that is, for interpreting the source text for the target reader. It is important to distinguish these two kinds of interpretation because the translator and the target reader occupy two different positions with regard to the source text: the translator is a direct interpreter, while the target reader is a subsumed interpreter, dependant on the translator’s assistance.

Therefore translators cannot be satisfied with a superficial interpretation of the source text. If they themselves are not able to make sense of a text segment, it is very likely that this will also make the translation impossible to interpret. Translators need to learn that there are no compromises in interpretation. (Naturally, I am only talking about the lower levels of interpretation).

In a secondary communication situation one prerequisite of correct interpretation is that translators recognise that they are working in a secondary communication situation. They must be aware that their task also involves a bridging of the differences between cultural contexts. The translator is not merely an expert of linguistic mediation but also of cultural mediation, and this is also true of non-literary translation. Of course, not even the translator can know everything but today it does not take much time and energy to find things. We do not even have to leave our desks to carry out research, since all the information we need is there in front of us, a few clicks away on the Internet. If the translator does not know what the expression *Old Firm game* means, the only task is to copy it into the search window of a search engine and click on the ok button. With the help of the Internet and some ingenuity, we can find a quick solution to almost any such problem today.

The translator also interprets the original for the target reader by producing a target text that the reader will be able to interpret. Apart from the fact that the way this is done is a function of several factors (the intended target reader, the type of text, translation norms, the needs of the client etc.), two basic approaches are commonly distinguished: the **foreignising** and the **domesticating translation strategies**. The essential difference between them is that in the case of the former the translator assumes that the target readers think it important that they learn new things about the source culture and for this end they are willing to exert some cognitive effort. In such a case, there can be no objection against a rendering of *an Old Firm game* as “Old Firm-meccs”. The other strategy is built on the assumption that the source text needs to be approximated towards the target reader’s cognitive environment so that the reader will be able to interpret the text with as little cognitive effort as possible. In this case, the word *Cockney* may be appropriately rendered into Hungarian as “londoni akcentus”. However, when solutions based on the two approaches appear at different places of one and the same text, this alludes to the fact that the translator had no clear idea regarding his task.

If I had to briefly summarise what, on the basis of my experience in translation and the teaching of translation, I consider most important to pass over to students, it is not the technical skills, because those can be learnt while practising translation, but the need of careful reading and interpreting, the importance of correctly assessing the cognitive environment of the intended target reader as opposed to that of the source reader, and consistency in implementing a conscious strategy to the task.

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