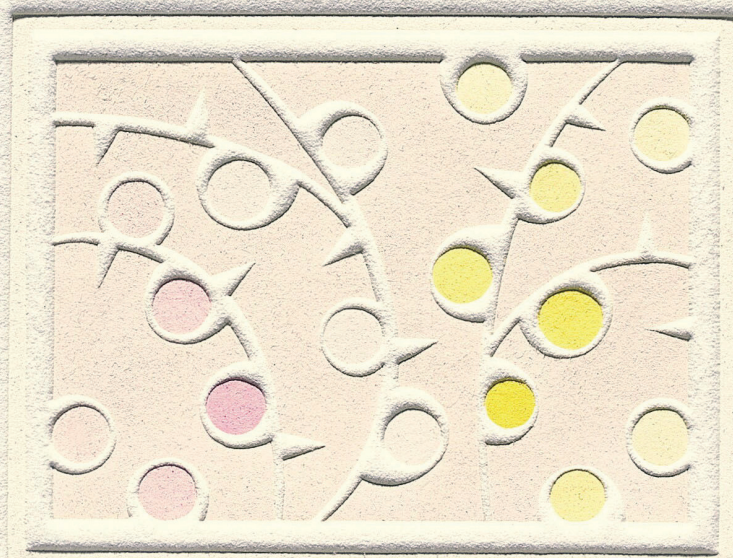


# FROM SLOVENE INTO ENGLISH: IDENTIFYING DEFINITENESS

FRANČIŠKA LIPOVŠEK

**E**nglish  
**L**anguage  
**O**verseas  
**P**erspectives and  
**E**nquiries



Editors: SMILJANA KOMAR and UROŠ MOZETIČ

**AS YOU WRITE IT: ISSUES IN LITERATURE,  
LANGUAGE, AND TRANSLATION IN THE  
CONTEXT OF EUROPE IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

Slovensko društvo za angleške študije  
*Slovene Association for the Study of English*

Oddelek za anglistiko in amerikanistiko, Filozofska fakulteta, Univerza v Ljubljani  
*Department of English, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana*

ISSN 1581-8918

**E**nglish  
**L**anguage  
**O**verseas  
**P**erspectives and  
**E**nquiries

**AS YOU WRITE IT: ISSUES IN LITERATURE,  
LANGUAGE, AND TRANSLATION IN THE  
CONTEXT OF EUROPE IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

Editors: SMILJANA KOMAR and UROŠ MOZETIČ

**Sdaš**

Slovensko društvo za angleške študije  
*Slovene Association for the Study of English*

Oddelek za anglistiko in amerikanistiko, Filozofska fakulteta, Univerza v Ljubljani  
*Department of English, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana*

**E**nglish  
**L**anguage  
**O**verseas  
**P**erspectives and  
**E**nquiries

AS YOU WRITE IT: ISSUES IN LITERATURE, LANGUAGE, AND TRANSLATION  
 IN THE CONTEXT OF EUROPE IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

Volume V/1-2

**Editors**

Smiljana Komar  
 Uroš Mozetič

**Editorial Board**

Dušan Gabrovšek (Ljubljana, Slovenia)  
 Meta Grosman (Ljubljana, Slovenia)  
 Adolphe Haberer (Lyon, France)  
 Darja Hribar (Maribor, Slovenia)  
 Victor Kennedy (Maribor, Slovenia)  
 J. Lachlan Mackenzie (Lisbon, Portugal)  
 Milena Milojević Sheppard (Ljubljana, Slovenia)  
 Janez Skela (Ljubljana, Slovenia)  
 Rastislav Šuštaršič (Ljubljana, Slovenia)

**Editorial Secretary**

Gašper Ilc

**Proofreading**

Jason Blake

**Editorial Policy**

*ELOPE. English Language Overseas Perspectives and Enquiries* is a journal devoted to the research and academic discussion of linguistic and literary issues from theoretical and applied perspectives regardless of school of thought or methodology. Its aim is to promote original enquiry into linguistics, literary and translation studies, language and literature teaching with the main focus on English. ELOPE will publish two issues per year.

Subscription for 2008 costs 12,50 EUROS.

Members of the Slovene association for the study of English  
 are entitled to a free copy.

## From Slovene into English: Identifying Definiteness

### Summary

The paper addresses some typical instances of the translator's failure to recognize definite reference in Slovene, which, in turn, results in an inappropriate determiner selection in English. It is argued that errors of this kind are ascribable not solely to the fact that the Slovene determiner system lacks an overt non-selective determiner parallel to the definite article, but to the relatively scarce use of overt determiners in general. Since definiteness is typically signalled by an anaphoric relation, some factors are explored that may help identify textual co-reference despite the absence of explicit anaphoric markers. Besides the translator's inability to recognize the given phrase as anaphoric, two other major causes of inappropriate determiner selection are discussed: the misconception that the absence of an anaphoric relation entails indefiniteness and the translator's misinterpreting an anaphoric expression as an ascriptive, non-referential entity. The second part of the paper focuses on the difference in use between the selective demonstrative pronoun and the non-selective definite article.

**Key words:** definiteness, reference, anaphora, anaphoric markers/signals, determiner selection, definite article, demonstratives

## Iz slovenščine v angleščino: kako prepoznati določnost

### Povzetek

Članek obravnava nekaj tipičnih primerov, ko prevajalec v slovenskem besedilu ne prepozna določne reference, kar se odraža v neustrezni rabi člena v angleškem prevodu. Tovrstnih napak ni pripisati le dejstvu, da slovenščina nima neselektivnega označevalca določnosti, ki bi bil nekakšna vzporednica določnega člena, temveč razmeroma redki rabi označevalcev (ne)določnosti na splošno. Zanesljiv znak za določno referenco je anafora, vendar je potrebno ob pomanjkanju eksplicitnih anaforičnih signalov upoštevati še nekatere druge dejavnike, ki pomagajo prepoznati anaforično razmerje. Poleg prevajalčeve nezmožnosti prepoznati anaforično rabo in s tem določnost dane besedne zveze sta v članku predstavljena še dva poglobljena vzroka za napačno izbiro člena v prevodu: zmotno prepričanje, da je odsotnost anafore znak nedoločne reference, in napačna interpretacija besedne zveze v anaforični rabi kot nekakšnega deskriptivnega elementa brez reference, katerega vloga spominja na predikativno rabo. Zadnji del članka se osredinja na razliko v rabi med selektivnim kazalnim zaimkom in neselektivnim določnim členom.

**Ključne besede:** določnost, referenca, anafora, anaforični signali, izbira označevalca določnosti, določni člen, kazalni zaimki

# From Slovene into English: Identifying Definiteness

## 1. Introduction

Identifying the type of reference is of crucial importance for a translator faced with the task of determiner selection in the target language. Owing to the absence of articles in Slovene and in view of the fact that the structure of the Slovene noun phrase does not require an overt marker of (in)definiteness, a translator working from Slovene into English can be confronted with considerable indeterminacy in this regard. What is meant by ‘indeterminacy’ is not that a determinerless phrase has no definiteness value – a noun phrase, when used in a certain context, must be either definite or indefinite because the speaker (writer) chooses to use it as such – but rather that the translator is unable to identify it. This may result in an inappropriate choice of determiner in the target language.

The first part of the paper is practically orientated and examines some typical errors in this regard. The examples are taken from the translation work of Slovene students of English and are discussed primarily in the light of textual reference, i.e. the possibility of establishing an anaphoric relation between the given noun phrase and an item in the preceding text. As pointed out by Halliday and Hasan (1976), the basic difference between definite and indefinite expressions is that the former are context-bound, signalling that the means of their interpretation is available somewhere in the environment, while the latter convey no implication that any further specification is available from elsewhere. This means that anaphoric expressions are necessarily definite. In fact, definiteness is typically signalled by an anaphoric relation, with the definite article, demonstratives, personal and possessive pronouns functioning as explicit anaphoric markers. Since Slovene noun phrases are often used without any overt determiners, some factors are explored that may help identify textual co-reference despite the absence of anaphoric signals.

The second part of the paper focuses on the function of a demonstrative determiner as an anaphoric marker. Although the possibility of supplying a demonstrative determiner is one of the most advocated tests for definiteness, its function differs significantly from that of the definite article. It is shown in the paper that its use as a marker of definiteness is much more restricted. The difference between the two types of determiner is explicable in terms of the selective nature of demonstratives, which reflects their primary, deictic function.

## 2. Identifying Definiteness: Typical Problems

To illustrate the point made in the Introduction, let us consider the underlined phrase below from the point of view of determiner selection.

(T1) Več kot četrto stoletje je minilo, odkar je bila 1978 v Narodni galeriji v Ljubljani postavljena razstava risb in oljnih slik Franca Kavčiča. Vzrokov za raziskavo njegovega življenja in dela je bilo več. Med prvimi je bila želja povečati vednost o slikarju slovenskega rodu in ga predstaviti na večji razstavi.

Translation:

>> More than a quarter of a century has passed since an exhibition of drawings and oil paintings by the painter Franc Kavčič was mounted in 1978 in the National Gallery of Ljubljana. Several reasons had prompted research into his life and work; one of the foremost was the desire to extend the knowledge about the painter of Slovene origin and to present him at a major exhibition.

The definite article in *the painter of Slovene origin* is an explicit signal that the information about the referent is to be retrieved from elsewhere – a characteristic it shares with the demonstratives, personal and possessive pronouns (cf. Halliday/Hasan 1976). As a typical anaphoric marker, the definite article signals co-reference of the given phrase with an item in the preceding text. In our case *the painter of Slovene origin* is anaphorically linked to the possessive determiner *his* (in *his life and work*), which is in turn anaphoric to *the painter Franc Kavčič*. The reference of the latter is clear owing to the use of a name in apposition. The information about the referent thus ‘climbs’ up the anaphoric chain the painter Franc Kavčič<sub>i</sub> > his<sub>i</sub> > the painter of Slovene origin<sub>i</sub> > him<sub>i</sub>.

Whereas *the painter of Slovene origin* is explicitly (ana)phoric, its Slovenian counterpart contains no overt marker of definiteness:

(1) Med prvimi je bila želja povečati vednost o slikarju slovenskega rodu in ga predstaviti na večji razstavi.  
painter<sub>LOC</sub> Slovene<sub>adj-GEN</sub> origin<sub>GEN</sub>

The translator must have inferred its definite reference from the context. The definite interpretation is further supported by the acceptability of a demonstrative determiner. The Slovene *ta* (‘this’) appears in (2a) in its locative form *tem*:

- (2)
- a. Med prvimi je bila želja povečati vednost o **tem** slikarju slovenskega rodu in ga predstaviti na večji razstavi.
- b. One of the foremost was the desire to extend the knowledge about **the/this** painter of Slovene origin and to present him at a major exhibition.

If, on the other hand, sentence (1) is considered in isolation, the noun phrase in question is likely to be understood as indefinite and non-specific, which yields the following translation:

(3) One of the foremost was the desire to extend the knowledge about **a** painter of Slovene origin and to present him at a major exhibition.

The referent of *a painter of Slovene origin* can be anyone who fits the description ‘a Slovene painter’. The possibility of (3) results from the ambiguity of reference of determinerless noun phrases in Slovene. The crucial factor in resolving such ambiguities is the context. If (1) is regarded as an integral part of T1, the indefinite interpretation is much less plausible. The hearer (reader, translator) adopts the following strategy. He/She assumes that the phrase in question is definite

because he/she can find the means of its interpretation in the preceding text: *Franc Kavčič*, which is a name and as such self-identifying (cf. Anderson 2004). This, nevertheless, does not suffice for establishing co-reference between *slikar slovenskega rodu* and *Franc Kavčič*, for it is theoretically still possible to understand the former as ‘a painter of Slovene origin’. But the indefinite, non-specific interpretation would imply contrast, for example that too much attention was being paid to foreign painters and that people wanted to learn more about painters of home origin, and such implications do not really fit into the context of T1. The conclusion is that *slikar slovenskega rodu* is a definite, anaphoric expression, co-referential with *Franc Kavčič*.

It should be pointed out that sentence (3) is ambiguous too. From the speaker’s point of view, *a painter of Slovene origin* can be presented either in the non-specific sense (i.e. ‘anyone who fits the description’) or in the sense that the speaker has a specific referent in mind but would not, or cannot, identify it for the hearer. This means that the ambiguity of (1), repeated below as (4), is in fact threefold (5a–c).

(4) Med prvimi je bila želja povečati vednost o slikarju slovenskega rodu in ga predstaviti na večji razstavi. (=1)

- (5)
- a. One of the foremost was the desire to extend the knowledge about **the/this** painter of Slovene origin and to present him at a major exhibition.
  - b. One of the foremost was the desire to extend the knowledge about **a/some** (‘no matter who’) painter of Slovene origin, and to present him at a major exhibition.
  - c. One of the foremost was the desire to extend the knowledge about **a/some** (‘one specific’) painter of Slovene origin and to present him at a major exhibition.

Compare the Slovene equivalents with overt determiners:

- (6)
- a. Med prvimi je bila želja povečati vednost o **tem** slikarju slovenskega rodu in ga predstaviti na večji razstavi. <> (5a)
  - b. Med prvimi je bila želja povečati vednost o **kakem** slikarju slovenskega rodu in ga predstaviti na večji razstavi. <> (5b)
  - c. Med prvimi je bila želja povečati vednost o **nekem** slikarju slovenskega rodu in ga predstaviti na večji razstavi. <> (5c)

Supplying an overt determiner can be a reliable test for reference, as the acceptability of one form or another depends largely on the context. If, for example, sentence (4) is taken in isolation, it will probably be understood in the sense of (6b), whereas in the context of T1 its most plausible interpretation seems to be that of (6a).

It seems that the ambiguity of a determinerless noun phrase is more difficult to resolve if the phrase has in fact definite reference; in other words, it is usually the case that a definite phrase



is misinterpreted as indefinite, rather than the other way round. What follows is an outline of three typical cases of the translator's failure to recognize definite reference in Slovene and the consequent inappropriate determiner selection in English.

## 2.1 Failing to identify the antecedent

Example:

(T2) Zabodel ga je morski bič med snemanjem dokumentarnega filma o strupenih prebivalcih morja okrog avstralskih koralnih grebenov. Napad zanj bržčas ne bi bil usoden, usodno je bilo to, da ga je riba z repom zabodla naravnost v srce.

>> He was stung by a stingray during the filming of a documentary on venomous inhabitants of the sea around the Australian coral reefs. The attack itself wasn't fatal; what was fatal was that the/\*a fish stabbed him with its tail directly in the heart.

Situation:

The NP in question (*riba/the fish*) is anaphorically linked to an item in the preceding text. The following anaphoric chain can be identified: a stingray<sub>i</sub> > its<sub>i</sub> (the non-overt subject of *attack*) > the fish<sub>i</sub> > its<sub>i</sub>.

Error:

The translator perceives the phrase as a new entity introduced into discourse rather than an anaphoric expression. He/she cannot identify its antecedent because he/she fails to recognize the semantic (in our case hyperonymic) relation between the two: some of the students who had used the indefinite article argued that 'a stingray wasn't a type of fish and that there had in fact been two attacks: one by a stingray and one by *some fish*.'

It should be noted though that failing to identify the antecedent was not the only reason for the indefinite article in this case. Some students used *a fish* in another, ascriptive sense: 'The man was stabbed by the aforementioned stingray, which is a fish, so he was stabbed by *a fish*.' A similar problem will be discussed in 2.3.

In either case the students completely overlooked some very obvious clues, especially the word order and the topic-comment structure. *Riba* is used in topic position, which implies identifiability and definite reference unless a new topic is being introduced into discourse. If *riba* appeared in the text as a new topic, its indefinite reference would be signalled overtly: *neka riba* ('some fish'). Without the determiner, it would be shifted into a non-topic position. Similarly, the ascriptive interpretation suggested by some students would be possible only if the phrase had a non-topic function.

A similar problem can arise when the antecedent is not a phrase but a larger portion of text. Sometimes the anaphoric relation is not immediately clear because of the distance between the anaphor and the antecedent. The following example (an excerpt from an original English text) is a combination of both:

(T3) (2nd paragraph) ... But, after easing over the river Inn, across a bridge curved like a taut bow, the train climbs at an angle so steep you'd think you were ascending vertically. (...)

(5th paragraph) ... The train, divided into five neat little compartments, heads through a tunnel to emerge at Loewenhaus station, a carapace of glass built on an irresistible curve. It's a delightful taste of what's to come, the river Inn rippling up ahead, the big ascent still to come.

## 2.2 Indefinite interpretation due to the absence of an antecedent

Example:

(T4) Hladno je velo po dolini, ko sva v zgodnjem majskem jutru pred skoraj dvajsetimi leti s prijateljem stala pri izlivu Gačnika v Trebušico. Cesta se je na tistem mestu končala in naprej je čez leseno brv vodila le steza.

>> The cold drifted along the valley when a friend and I stood at the outfall of the Gačnik into the Trebušica on an early May morning almost twenty years ago. The/\*A road ended there, and only a path led over a wooden footbridge.

Situation:

The noun phrase in question (*cesta/the road*) appears in the text as a first mention.

Error:

The translator perceives the phrase as indefinite because there is no prior mention of the entity; in other words, nothing in the preceding text can be identified as its antecedent.

It is true that an anaphoric relation entails definiteness, but it is not the necessary condition for it. In other words, if a phrase is recognized as an anaphoric expression, its reference is necessarily definite; if no anaphoric relation can be identified, its reference may be definite or indefinite. The necessary condition for definiteness is identifiability. In our case, the existence of some kind of road or path is presupposed by the fact that the two friends had arrived somewhere. Its first mention in the text does not behave like a new entity introduced into discourse but rather as a perfectly identifiable entity, interpretable by virtue of implicit information associated with the travel frame. The term *frame* is used to refer to 'the set of propositions characterizing our conventional knowledge of some more or less autonomous situation' (van Dijk 1980, 99).

Another clue to the definite reference of *cesta* in T4 is its syntactic function of a subject together with its role of sentence topic in the information structure of the sentence. If it represented a completely new entity introduced into discourse, it would occupy a non-topic position after the predicator and would be preceded by an indefinite determiner. Compare:

(7) Na tistem mestu se je končala neka cesta ...  
on that spot ended some road

Sentence (7) is understood in the sense that 'there was some road ending on that spot', and the road is by no means interpreted as the road which had brought the two friends into the valley. In

fact, nothing in the changed text states explicitly that they had travelled by road – perhaps they followed a forest path or a cycle trail, or were brought into the valley by a helicopter. The travel frame implies only that they must have got there somehow, without specifying the means.

An interesting observation can be made at this point. Implicit information associated with a certain frame becomes relevant when some phrase depends on it for interpretation. It is not necessary for all the implications to be true in the given context, but the phrase makes it explicit which of them is true. In the case of T4, the travel frame gives rise to different associations as to how the two friends came into the valley. But what actually happened is unknown to the reader until an entity appears in the text that can be interpreted only by association with one of these implications: *the road*.

## 2.3 Ascriptive interpretation due to postmodification

Example:

(T5) *Carju v veselje* je vznemirljiv kolaž plesnih oblik, ki jih je Forsythe ustvaril med svojo genialno umetniško kariero, in eden največjih dosežkov postmodernega plesa. Balet v treh dejanjih, ki vsebuje vse od klasičnega dvornega plesa, prek baleta do break-dancea, se vrtili okoli zgodovine zahodne civilizacije.

Forsythe, ki je v obdobju 1984–2004 vodil Frankfurtski balet, z vsakim delom razburka mednarodno baletno javnost. S premikanjem baletnih mej in nepredvidljivimi tematskimi variacijami je na novo napisal jezik klasičnega baleta. Njegove prepoznavne predstave so postale sinonim za kontroverznost in drznost. Koreograf, ki je obrnil hrbet “lažnemu blišču klasičnega baleta”, kot pravi sam, je v začetku lanskega leta ustanovil svojo plesno skupino.

>> *Impressing the Czar* is an exciting collage of dance forms created by Forsythe throughout his brilliant artistic career and one of the finest achievements of postmodern dance. This ballet in three acts, which / \*A ballet in three acts which has it all, from classical court dance and ballet to breakdancing, revolves around the history of western civilization.

Forsythe, who directed the Frankfurt Ballet from 1984 to 2004, evokes a strong response in the international ballet public every time he puts on a new piece. ... The choreographer, who has turned / \*A choreographer who has turned his back on, as he puts it, the ‘superficial glitter of classical ballet’, set up his own dance company at the beginning of 2005.

Situation:

The noun phrase in subject position contains a descriptive postmodifier and is co-referential with a clearly identifiable noun phrase in the preceding text.

Error:

The translator perceives the anaphoric, referential noun phrase as a description of the antecedent and treats it like a non-referential, ascriptive predicative complement. This type of error typically involves misinterpreting a non-restrictive postmodifier as restrictive. The difference between the referential and ascriptive uses is illustrated below.

(8)

- a. [This ballet in three acts, which has it all, from classical court dance and ballet to breakdancing,]<sub>R</sub> revolves around the history of western civilization.
- b. [The choreographer, who has turned his back on, as he puts it, the 'superficial glitter of classical ballet',]<sub>R</sub> set up his own dance company at the beginning of 2005.

<> referential (R), specific, definite

(9)

- a. Impressing the Czar<sub>i</sub> is [a ballet in three acts which has it all, from classical court dance and ballet to breakdancing]. It<sub>i</sub> revolves around the history of western civilization.
- b. Forsythe<sub>j</sub> is [a choreographer who has turned his back on, as he puts it, the superficial glitter of classical ballet]. He<sub>j</sub> set up his own dance company at the beginning of 2005.

<> non-referential, ascriptive

The error does not occur because the translator would have failed to recognize the specific, definite reference of the given phrase. If that were the case, the same type of error would be observed in cases without postmodification. The inappropriate determiner selection is to be ascribed almost exclusively to the presence of a descriptive postmodifier, which lends the whole phrase a descriptive air and gives it the false look of a predicative. Compare:

(10)

- a. [The ballet]<sub>R</sub> revolves around the history of western civilization.
- b. [The choreographer]<sub>R</sub> set up his own dance company at the beginning of 2005.

(11)

- a. \*[A ballet in three acts which has it all, from classical court dance and ballet to breakdancing,]<sub>R</sub> revolves around the history of western civilization.
- b. \*[A choreographer who has turned his back on, as he puts it, the 'superficial glitter of classical ballet',]<sub>R</sub> set up his own dance company at the beginning of 2005.

It has to be admitted, though, that the 'clash' between referentiality and ascriptive meaning could be resolved by the following interpretation:

(12)

- a. [a ballet in three acts which has it all, from classical court dance and ballet to breakdancing,]<sub>R</sub>  
= [this piece/ballet, which is a ballet in three acts ...]<sub>R</sub>
- b. [a choreographer who has turned his back on, as he puts it, the 'superficial glitter of classical ballet',]<sub>R</sub> = [this artist/choreographer, who is a choreographer who ...]<sub>R</sub>

According to (12), the indefinite determiner does not reflect reference but is triggered by the

highlighting function of the modifier, which makes the whole phrase look like new information. The interpretation, however, cannot be applied in (11) because an anaphoric sentence topic is incompatible with ‘newness’. This special use of the indefinite article with anaphoric expressions seems to be restricted to non-topic positions. For example (Lipovšek 2007, 110):

(13) The north-eastern region of Karamoja<sub>i</sub> is the only arid region in a country rich in lakes and rivers, and suffers from a cyclical problem of drought and famine.

### 3. Demonstratives as Anaphoric Markers

Traditional grammar (cf. Quirk et al. 1985) views the definite article and the demonstrative as occupants of the same structural position, i.e. the central determiner position in a nominal phrase. If the determiner position in front of *balet* or *koreograf* in T5 is filled by the demonstrative pronoun *ta* (‘this’), the phrase is immediately recognized as an anaphoric expression. As pointed out by Vidovič Muha (1996, 118), the anaphoric *ta* is an unambiguous signal of textual co-reference. In either case the English translator has a relatively free choice between the definite article and a demonstrative: (*ta*) *balet* > *the/this ballet*; (*ta*) *koreograf* > *the/this choreographer*. Indeed, a demonstrative determiner and the definite article (or its non-overt counterpart in Slovene) are often interchangeable, and the possibility of applying a demonstrative is a very popular test for definiteness. A note of caution, however, should be added at this point. Definite reference does not automatically entail the acceptability of a demonstrative. In T4, for example, it is not possible to use a demonstrative with *cesta* (the same for its English counterpart) although the phrase has definite reference:

(14)

- a. \*Ta/\*Tista cesta se je na tistem mestu končala in naprej je čez leseno brv vodila le steza.
- b. \*This/\*That road ended there, and only a path led over a wooden footbridge.

We will return to this phenomenon in 3.3.

The definite article and the demonstratives signal that the phrase in question has specific, definite reference and that the means of its interpretation is available somewhere in the environment. If, for example, *riba* in T2 were preceded by a demonstrative, none of the students would have failed to recognize the phrase as anaphoric. The overt anaphoric marker would have encouraged them to search the text for the antecedent and to eventually recognize co-reference between *ta riba* (‘this fish’) and *morski bič* (‘a stingray’), no matter how much their concept of stingray might differ from the concept of fish.

But while both types of determiner signal identifiability (cf. Halliday and Hasan 1976; Lyons 1999), only the demonstratives are semantically selective, i.e. ‘they contain within themselves some referential element in terms of which the item in question is to be identified’ (Halliday and Hasan: 1976, 71). Their anaphoric uses reflect their primary, deictic use, where the item in question is identified in terms of proximity. In this respect they differ significantly from the

definite article, for they ‘mark the anaphoric relationship more clearly and explicitly’ (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 373). This functional difference is also reflected in the generative view (cf. Alexiadou et al. 2007; Bruge and Giusti 1996; Campbell 1993) that the definite article and the demonstrative occupy different structural positions: the former is found in the head of the determiner phrase, the latter in its specifier. Some typical manifestations of the selective nature of the demonstratives are presented in 3.1.–3.3. below.

### 3.1 A demonstrative as a means of disambiguation

The following text provides an example of two phrases which are headed by the same noun (*plovilo*) but are not co-referential. In terms of cohesion (cf. Halliday and Hasan 1976), the tie between *plovilo* (‘the spacecraft’) and *to plovilo* (‘this spacecraft’) is lexical only, not anaphoric. The translation makes use of the head nouns *probe* and *rocket* respectively, which are more specific in meaning than *spacecraft* and make reference immediately clear.

(T6) Kitajska namerava v okviru svojega prvega lunarnega raziskovalnega programa popisati vsak centimeter Luninega površja. Pri tem ji bo pomagal orbiter Chang’e One<sub>i</sub>, ki ga bodo v vesolje poslali v drugi polovici letošnjega leta. Plovilo<sub>i</sub> bo posnelo tridimenzionalne fotografije Luninega površja, do leta 2010 pa bodo kitajski znanstveniki izstrelili vesoljsko raketo brez človeške posadke<sub>j</sub>, ki bo na Luni pristala. To plovilo<sub>j</sub> bo imelo nalogo s površja Meseca prinesiti vzorce kamnin.

>> China is about to examine every inch of the moon’s surface. The project is part of the country’s first lunar exploration programme and will be carried out with the help of the orbiter Chang’e One<sub>i</sub>, which is scheduled to be launched in the second half of the year. The probe<sub>i</sub> will take 3-D photographs of the moon’s surface, and there are also plans afoot to send an unmanned space rocket<sub>j</sub> to the moon by 2010. The rocket’s<sub>j</sub> mission will be to bring back samples of rock from the moon’s surface.

Here it is worth repeating the last two sentences of T6 to consider the reference of *to plovilo* (translated as *this spacecraft* in (15b) in order to maintain the parallel with Slovene) and the possibility of omitting the demonstrative determiner. The reference is clear with or without the demonstrative: if the spacecraft is expected to bring back samples of rock from the moon, it can refer only to the rocket because orbiters do not land on celestial bodies.

(15)

a. Plovilo<sub>i</sub> bo posnelo tridimenzionalne fotografije Luninega površja, do leta 2010 pa bodo kitajski znanstveniki izstrelili vesoljsko raketo brez človeške posadke<sub>j</sub>, ki bo na Luni pristala. To plovilo<sub>j</sub> / Plovilo<sub>j</sub> bo imelo nalogo s površja Meseca prinesiti vzorce kamnin.

b. The probe<sub>i</sub> will take 3-D photographs of the moon’s surface, and there are also plans afoot to send an unmanned space rocket<sub>j</sub> to the moon by 2010. The mission of this/the spacecraft<sub>j</sub> will be to bring back samples of rock from the moon’s surface.

Compare:

(16) The probe<sub>i</sub> will take 3-D photographs of the moon's surface, and there are also plans afoot to send an unmanned space rocket<sub>j</sub> to the moon by 2010. The spacecraft<sub>???</sub> will be launched from the space centre in Xichang.

In (16), by contrast, the context offers no clue as to whether *the spacecraft* refers to the probe (i.e. the orbiter) or to the rocket. The definite article has no semantic content and merely states that the item in question is specific and identifiable. A demonstrative, on the other hand, 'selects' the closest potential target as the intended antecedent and is as such a reliable means of disambiguation:

(17) **This** spacecraft<sub>j</sub> will be launched from the space centre in Xichang.

Ambiguity is, of course, best avoided by choosing a noun whose lexical meaning does not include the meanings of both potential antecedents:

(18) The rocket<sub>j</sub> / The probe<sub>i</sub> will be launched from the space centre in Xichang.

As to (17), it must be pointed out that the selection of the target that is nearer the anaphor has nothing to do with the fact that proximal *this* is used rather than distal *that*. The distinction between 'near' and 'not near' is often observed when proximity is interpreted in terms of time or association with the speaker, but '*this* and *that* cannot be used contrastively in the anaphoric use as they can in the deictic use' (Huddleston/Pullum 2002, 1506). Example (ibid.):

(19) \*I went Christmas shopping and bought a t-shirt<sub>i</sub> and a CD<sub>j</sub>; that<sub>i</sub> is for Kim and this<sub>j</sub> is for Pat.

The Slovene system, too, provides both forms: proximal *ta* ('this') and distal *tisti* ('that'), but in the purely anaphoric, non-deictic use only the proximal form is used. The difference in use between proximal and distal forms as anaphoric markers is beyond the scope of this paper.

### 3.2 The semantic relation between the anaphor and the antecedent

The selective nature of the demonstratives manifests itself also in the dependence of their acceptability on the semantic relation between the anaphor and the antecedent. Lexical superordination is a case in point. Let us consider the following example:

(20)

a. Pri tem ji bo pomagal orbiter Chang'e One<sub>i</sub>, ki ga bodo v vesolje poslali v drugi polovici letošnjega leta. ?<sub>i</sub> bo posnel tridimenzionalne fotografije Luninega površja.

b. ... with the help the orbiter Chang'e One<sub>i</sub>, which is scheduled to be launched in the second half of the year. ?<sub>i</sub> will take 3-D photographs of the moon's surface.

There are several ways of supplying the anaphor:

(21)

- a. Ta bo posnel / Posnel bo tridimenzionalne fotografije Luninega površja.
- b. Orbiter / ~~Ta~~ orbiter bo posnel tridimenzionalne fotografije Luninega površja.
- c. Sonda / ?Ta sonda bo posnela tridimenzionalne fotografije Luninega površja.
- d. Plovilo / To plovilo bo posnelo tridimenzionalne fotografije Luninega površja.

(22)

- a. It will take 3-D photographs of the moon's surface.
- b. The orbiter / ~~This~~ orbiter will take 3-D photographs of the moon's surface.
- c. The probe / ?This probe will take 3-D photographs of the moon's surface.
- d. The spacecraft / This spacecraft will take 3-D photographs of the moon's surface.

Of interest here is the determiner selection in examples (21b–d, 22b–d). It seems that the acceptability of a demonstrative increases with generalization in meaning. If the anaphor is synonymous with the antecedent, the demonstrative is redundant because there is no need for any additional means of identifying the anaphoric relation. If, on the other hand, the anaphor is lexically superordinate to the antecedent, the link between the two may be less evident (cf. *the fish* and *a stingray* in T4); in fact, the more general the meaning, the less evident the relation. By using a demonstrative, the writer 'points' to the closest potential target, assuring the reader that the 'selected' phrase is the item targeted by the anaphor.

This also explains why in cases where the anaphor is a description with a more general meaning rather than an item in the hyperonymic relationship with the antecedent, a demonstrative is normally used:

(23)

- a. **To** čudo tehnologije bo posnelo tridimenzionalne fotografije Luninega površja.
- b. **This** technological miracle will take 3-D photographs of the moon's surface.

Compare:

(24)

- a. Pa pojdite na Jezersko. Kraj / Ta kraj je res vredno obiskati.
- b. Why not visit Jezersko? The place / This place is really worth seeing.

(25)

- a. Pa pojdite na Jezersko. \*Biser narave / **Ta** biser narave je res vredno obiskati.
- b. Why not visit Jezersko? \*The jewel / **This** jewel of nature is really worth seeing.

### 3.3. The absence of an antecedent

(T7=T4) Hladno je velo po dolini, ko sva v zgodnjem majskem jutru pred skoraj dvajsetimi leti s prijateljem stala pri izlivu Gačnika v Trebušico. Cesta se je na tistem mestu končala in naprej je čez leseno brv vodila le steza.



>> The cold drifted along the valley when a friend and I stood at the outfall of the Gačnik into the Trebušica on an early May morning almost twenty years ago. The road ended there, and only a path led over a wooden footbridge.

The above example was discussed in 2.2 as an instance of failing to recognize definite reference because the phrase in question appears in the text as a first mention. What is sometimes mistakenly put forward as an additional argument in favour of indefiniteness is the unacceptability of a demonstrative determiner:

(26)

- a. \*Ta/\*Tista cesta se je na tistem mestu končala in naprej je čez leseno brv vodila le steza.
- b. \*This/\*That ended there, and only a path led over a wooden footbridge.

The argument should be dismissed because, as shown in 3.1–3.2, a demonstrative and the definite article (or its non-overt counterpart in Slovene) are not necessarily interchangeable. The use of a demonstrative determiner in (26) is precluded by the fact that the noun phrase in question has no antecedent in the preceding text (in which case only the proximal form could be used), nor does it point to an item directly accessible for the hearer in the extratextual context of situation (in which case either form could be used). The need for an antecedent supports the view that demonstratives in anaphoric use can be seen as markers of topic (Alexiadou et al. 2007, 105). The phenomenon is perfectly explicable in terms of the primary, deictic function of demonstratives: a demonstrative signals that the referent is not only identifiable, but also directly accessible to the hearer. In (26), by contrast, the reader cannot identify the referent without activating his/her non-linguistic knowledge associated with the travel frame (cf. 2.2.).

The following text provides two additional examples of the kind:

**(T8)** Ko smo ob pomolu čakali na ladjico, sem se šele začel zavedati, da gremo v neznano, čeprav mi Južna Avstralija že nekaj časa ni bila več tuja. Pust dan se je počasi bližal večeru, naša pot pa je bila negotova, saj so valovi neusmiljeno butali v obrežje.

>> Not before waiting for a boat at the pier did I begin to realize that we were going into the unknown, although South Australia had not been foreign to me for quite some time. A dreary day was slowly turning into dusk, and our voyage was uncertain with the waves beating mercilessly against the shore.

Although the pier has not been mentioned before, the reference of *pomol* (*the pier*) is specific and definite because waiting for a boat presupposes a kind of structure used for getting on and off boats (cf. 2.2). But the fact that the phrase appears as a first mention precludes the use of a demonstrative determiner:

(27)

- a. Ko smo ob \*tem/\*tistem pomolu čakali na ladjico, ...
- b. Not before waiting for a boat at the/\*this/\*that pier ...

The demonstratives in (27) would, of course, be perfectly acceptable if the phrase in question referred exophorically to a specific pier present in the context of situation. They would also be possible in very informal conversation, where so-called ‘false definites’ are used as a means of introducing a new entity into discourse which is present neither in the text nor in the context of situation but only in the speaker’s mind (cf. Halliday and Hasan 1976, Huddleston and Pullum 2002).

Similarly, *pust dan (a dreary day)* refers to a specific, definite day. It should be pointed out that the indefinite form of the adjective in (28a) and the indefinite determiner in (28b) do not reflect reference. Their use is triggered by the highlighting function of the adjective, which presents the whole phrase as new information: *It was a dreary day*. This explains why (28a,b) are strongly preferred to (28c,d).

(28)

- a. Pust<sub>INDEF</sub> dan se je počasi bližal večeru.
- b. A dreary day was slowly turning into dusk.
- c. ?Pusti<sub>DEF</sub> dan se je počasi bližal večeru.
- d. ?The dreary day was slowly turning into dusk.

The definite reference becomes obvious if the adjective is omitted:

(29)

- a. Dan se je počasi bližal večeru.
- b. The day was slowly turning into dusk.
- c. \*A day was slowly turning into dusk.

The use of a demonstrative is precluded in either case (i.e. with or without the adjective):

(30)

- a. \*Ta/\*Tisti pusti dan se je počasi bližal večeru.
- b. \*This/\*That dreary day was slowly turning into dusk.
- c. \*Ta/\*Tisti dan se je počasi bližal večeru.
- d. \*This/\*That day was slowly turning into dusk.

Let us consider the following example for comparison:

**(T9)** Barry the dinosaur was being put through his paces last week. Over and over, he would rear up on his massive hind legs, bare rows of needle-sharp teeth, and then pounce at the robot fish slithering across his plywood plinth. Then the huge creature – baryonyx, or Barry, to staff at the Natural History Museum – would return to his starting position and begin his hunt again.

(31)

- a. Then the/this huge creature would begin his hunt again.
- b. Potem se je (ta) ogromni<sub>DEF</sub> stvor ponovno lotil lova.
- c. \*Then a huge creature would begin his hunt again. (\* in T9)
- d. \*Potem se je ogromen<sub>INDEF</sub> stvor ponovno lotil lova. (\* in T9)

As illustrated by (31a), the definite article in *the huge creature* is completely interchangeable with a demonstrative determiner. The necessary condition for the use of a demonstrative is fulfilled: the phrase is anaphoric to an item in the preceding text, the anaphoric chain beginning with *Barry the dinosaur*. The same acceptability of a demonstrative can be observed in the Slovene translation (31b).

It should be noted that the indefinite article in (31c) is an indisputable signal of indefinite reference. In contrast to (28b) above, it cannot be triggered by the adjective because an anaphoric expression in topic function is incompatible with a reading that would present it as new information. This explains why (31c) and (31d) are unacceptable in the context of T9.

In colloquial Slovene, the meaning combining topichood and newness ('this creature, which is a huge creature') can be conveyed by using a demonstrative together with the indefinite form of the adjective:

(32) \$ Potem se je ta ogromen<sub>INDEF</sub> stvor ponovno lotil dela.

The use is rather restricted though, for the indefinite form of a Slovene adjective is distinguishable from its definite counterpart only in Nom-Masc-Sg (with all nouns) and Acc-Masc-Sg (with inanimate nouns).

## 4. Conclusion

A Slovene noun phrase without an overt marker of (in)definiteness can pose a problem for translation into English from the point of view of determiner selection in the target language. Errors in this regard typically involve the translator's failure to recognize definite reference, which is ascribable to three main reasons: (i) the translator's inability to identify an anaphoric relation, i.e. recognize coreference between the noun phrase in question and an item in the preceding text; (ii) the misconception that the absence of an antecedent entails indefiniteness; (iii) misinterpreting an anaphoric expression as an ascriptive, non-referential entity.

A popular test for definiteness is the acceptability of a demonstrative determiner. Due to its selective nature, nevertheless, the use of a demonstrative is often precluded by other factors. With no overt determiners to rely on, the translator has to search the text for other clues that will help him/her identify reference: anaphoric chains, lexical cohesion, the word order and the topic-comment structure, the topic of discourse and the implications of the previous discourse. It should be kept in mind that although an anaphoric relation entails definiteness, it is not the necessary condition for it. The main criterion for definiteness is identifiability, which can derive also from non-linguistic, conventional knowledge shared by the speaker and the hearer.

## Bibliography

- Alexiadou, A., L. Haegeman, and M. Stavrou. 2007. *Noun Phrase in the Generative Perspective*. Studies in Generative grammar 71. Berlin & New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Anderson, J. M. 2004. On the Grammatical Status of Names. *Language* 3: 435–74.
- Bruge, L., and G. Giusti. 1996. On Demonstratives. *GLOW* 36: 24–5.
- Campbell, R. 1993. The Occupants of SpecDP. *GLOW* 30: 62–3.
- van Dijk, T.A. 1980. *Text and Context. Explorations in the Semantics and Pragmatics of Discourse*. London / New York: Longman.
- Halliday, M.A.K., and R. Hasan. 1976. *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman.
- Huddleston, R., and G.K. Pullum. 2002. *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Lipovšek, F. 2007. Misconceptions about Article Use in English. *Elope* 1/2: 99–113.
- Lyons, C. 1999. *Definiteness*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Quirk, R., S. Greenbaum, G. Leech, and J. Svartvik. 1985. *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. London, New York: Longman.
- Vidovič Muha, A. 1996. Določnost kot besedilna prvina v slovnem opisu slovenskega jezika (ob Kopitarjevi slovnici). *Obdobja* 15. *Kopitarjev zbornik*. Ljubljana: FF. 115–31.

## Sources

- T1: Ksenija Rozman: *Franc Kavčič/Caucig in Češka*. Narodna galerija, 22. marec – 29. maj 2005. Narodna galerija, Ljubljana.
- T2: *Smrtonosni napad morskega biča*. Delo, September 6 2006.
- T3: Jonathan Glancey: *Beyond the clouds*. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2007/dec/18/architecture.austria>
- T4 (= T7): *Grape in slapovi*. Mohorjev koledar 2008. Celje: Mohorjeva družba.
- T5: *Carju v veselje / Impressing the Czar*. *Kraljevi flamski balet*. Theatre bill. Cankarjev dom, Ljubljana, spring 2006.
- T6: *Kitajska bo raziskala sleherni centimeter Lunine površine*. <http://www.dnevnik.si/novice/znanost/262160>
- T8: *Kengurujev otok*. Mohorjev koledar 2004. Celje: Mohorjeva družba.
- T9: Robin McKie: *Robotic 'big claw' rises to make a killing for museum*. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2006/may/28/artsnews.theobserversuknewspages>