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# Modulation as Variation in Target–Language Translation Equivalence: The Case of English and Slovene

## Summary

Modulation in translation theory is usually observed as a procedure involving a change in point of view in the target–language text. The paper introduces a newly modified concept of perceiving the process as variation in two or more Slovene translation equivalents corresponding to a single English collocation of the source text. The reasons or conditions for such modulation can be sought in collocations representing a loosely fixed word combination and thus often allowing variation on the syntagmatic axis, collocations as a minimum context and extended minimum context, co–text as a whole, and TL situation.

**Key words:** modulation, collocation, co–text, English and Slovene languages

## Modulacija kot variacija med enakovrednimi prevodnimi ustreznici ciljnega jezika: primerjava angleščine in slovenščine

### Povzetek

Modulacija se je s prevajalskega vidika uveljavila kot postopek, pri katerem gre za spremembo stališča pri prevodu v ciljni jezik. Članek predstavlja nekoliko drugačen pogled na pojav, in sicer kot variacijo med dvema ali več slovenskimi prevodnimi ustreznici, ki izhajajo iz angleške kolokacije izhodiščnega besedila. Razloge ali pogoje za nastanek takšne modulacije je možno iskati v kolokacijah kot dokaj prostih ustaljenih besednih zvezah, ki dopuščajo variacijo na svoji sintagmatski osi, kolokacijah v vlogi minimalnih ali razširjenih kontekstov, sobesedilu ali kotekstu ter v okoliščinah ciljnega jezika.

**Ključne besede:** modulacija, kolokacija, sobesedilo, angleški in slovenski jezik

# Modulation as Variation in Target–Language Translation Equivalence: The Case of English and Slovene

## 1. Introduction: The Issue of Modulation

*Modulation* in linguistics is a phenomenon found either in a monolingual framework, where it refers to the addition or removal of meaning within the text for easier or accurate interpretation of a particular sense (Cruse 2000, 120–3), or in a bilingual one, in which it is described as one of the translation procedures with a change in viewpoint, encompassing some typical properties adding to its specific position in translation theory and practice.<sup>1</sup>

In this paper, however, modulation is assigned a narrower role than those just mentioned; it is not the method of translation I am focusing on, nor the features of each Slovene translation equivalent (e.g. as to their in/appropriate translation) of the source–language (hereafter SL) item, nor how and to what extent they differ from each other, but rather the plurality of target–language (hereafter TL) options – as it came to be and what caused it.

To be precise, modulation in this view represents a situation where a particular English collocation forming part of the SL text has been or can be translated by two or more Slovene translation equivalents; for example, the English collocation *had a profound effect* in the context of [..., *he was struck by how little most of us know about these years, which **had** such **a profound effect** on American political and social life...*] (McGrath 2010, 1) is translated by SL (...*leta, ki so imela (tako) **globok učinek***,<sup>2</sup> but one might also suggest e.g. *imela velik/močan učinek/vpliv*.

The idea that springs to mind in this situation is whether two or more Slovene translation equivalents semantically corresponding to the English collocation of the SL text occur at least in part due to the **nature of the English collocation**, its **co–text**, or are simply part of the **TL** and its **processing**.

However, even if diverging significantly from my own interpretation of the concept above, some considerations of modulation regarded as a contextual phenomenon in a monolingual context or as a translation process perceived bilingually should first be introduced too.

## 2. Modulation: Contextual Modulation in a Monolingual Framework and as a Translation Procedure in a Bilingual one

### 2.1 Contextual Modulation

In a monolingual setting, modulation tends to be context–related and is indicative of the effects of

<sup>1</sup> This view of modulation is based mostly on the theory of Vinay and Darbelnet in their *Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais* (1958).

<sup>2</sup> This Slovene translation equivalent constitutes a part of the draft Slovene translation (not proofread) based on an English publication in *The New York Times*.

context on the meaning of a word, in which case the focus remains on its semantic functions, and where it is also referred to as *sense modulation*. Several processes occur within the functions of sense modulation, particularly *selection*, *coercion* and *modulation* (Cruse 2000, 120). Selection is used to suppress all readings that might cause some sort of *semantic clash*<sup>3</sup> with the context. The one that is not suppressed is the selected one and the speaker or hearer does not even consider any other possibilities. However, in the case where none of the readings of the word is compatible with the context, the speaker might make use of different meaning extensions, such as metaphor or metonymy. If such a reading is then found, it is recognized as the intended reading and the context has thus *coerced* a new reading. Contextual modulation involves contextual effects that do not go beyond the bounds of a single sense, in which case we are dealing with *enrichment* (adding meaning or making it more specific), e.g. *Our teacher is on maternity leave*, where gender is determined (ibid., 121), and *impoverishment* (removing meaning), e.g. *The children formed a circle around the teacher*, where context demands a vague use of the lexical item *circle*, since we do not expect children to form a geometrically exact circle and “the description is vague in the sense (a) that it covers a range of possible dispositions of the children, and (b) that it is not clear what arrangements are excluded” (ibid., 122).

## 2.2 Modulation as a Translation Procedure

My research stems from Vinay and Darbelnet’s *Stylistique comparée du français et de l’anglais* (1958), where modulation is “a variation of the form of the message, obtained by a change in the point of view” (Vinay and Darbelnet 1995, 36) and is used when the direct translation into the target language would be considered unsuitable, unidiomatic or awkward (ibid.). The authors study modulation on three planes of expression: *lexicon* or *lexis*, *syntactic structure* and *message*.

The *LEXICON* covers the lexical properties of modulation (also called *lexical modulation*, 1995, 88–9) with a focus on how they affect our mental categories, e.g. (ibid., 41) FR↔EN: *Peu profond*↔*shallow*. Vinay and Darbelnet categorize modulation into several pairs of modulations which are summed up by Newmark (1988, 88–9):

- *negated contrary* or *positive for double negative* (and vice versa), which he claims can be applied to virtually any action (verb) or quality (adjective or adverb), e.g. FR *Il n’a pas hésité*=EN *He acted at once* and *Il n’est pas lâche*=*He is extremely brave*

<sup>3</sup> As to semantic clash, units of meaning impose semantic conditions of some kind on their syntagmatic partners and, if they are satisfied, the result turns out to be well formed; however if conditions are not fulfilled, some sort of clash may occur causing a semantic transformation and producing a reading that does not abide by these conditions. Cruse terms them *co-occurrence preferences* and distinguishes two types – *collocational* and *selectional preferences* (ibid., 221–2). Later he refers to *selectional* and *collocational restrictions* (ibid., 228–34), both summed up by Gabrovšek (2000, 207–8), who states that they are essentially semantic; however “the former, traditionally stated in the form of semantic categories to which lexical patterns had to belong, are an inescapable consequence of the meaning of a word (e.g. the direct object of *to kill* must be capable of referring to something that is animate and alive at the time the action is carried out; not taking this into account is violating the selectional restrictions of *to kill*), while the latter are extraneous to the core meaning of a word (e.g. the oddness of *the Vice-Chancellor’s wages*, where the restriction violated does not arise logically from the concept of ‘earnings’, which in any case is common to both *wages* and *salary*; rather, it is attached as a kind of peripheral extra). Violating selectional restrictions thus leads to contradiction or incongruity, while violating collocational restrictions leads to inappropriateness”.

- **part for the whole** which consists of familiar alternatives, e.g. (Vinay and Darbelnet 1995, 251) *La Palais Bourbon* for *the French Parliament*
- **abstract for concrete**, e.g. *sleep in the open*=*dormir à la belle étoile*
- **cause for effect**, e.g. *You're quite a stranger*=*On ne vous voit plus*
- **one part for another**, e.g. *from cover to cover*=*de la première à la dernière page*
- **reversal of terms**, e.g. *n'appellez pas du bas de l'escalier*=*don't call up the stairs*
- **active for passive and vice versa**, e.g. (Vinay and Darbelnet 1995, 139) *You are wanted on the phone* translated by an active verb in French, *On vous demande au téléphone*.
- **space for time**, e.g. *as this in itself (space) presented a difficulty*=*cela présentant déjà (time) une difficulté*
- **intervals and limits** (Vinay and Darbelnet note here that “this modulation is important in ethnological matters” [1995, 253]), e.g. *No parking between signs*=*Limite de stationnement*
- **change of symbols** (Vinay and Darbelnet point out that symbolism used in French and English is based on rather different images [1995, 253–4]), e.g. *Trade followed the flag*=*Les soldats firent place au commerce*

Newmark (1988, 88–9) also points out that modulation is clearly necessary in some cases, especially where there is a lexical gap in an opposition, e.g. *shallow*=*peu profond*; however, in other cases the procedure is potentially available, but one should use modulation only if the chosen translation sounded unnatural without it.

Furthermore, on the level of the lexicon Vinay and Darbelnet (1995, 87–8) describe modulation also in relation to **memory associations** that are evoked by a word or an expression. They refer to it as **lexical modulation**.

Associations can be those of synonyms or antonyms and **parallel terms** as well (ibid., 87). Parallel terms are especially important when interpreting the process of modulation since they “share the broad aspects of a general idea or object” (ibid.). This parallel series is led by a generic word and consists of words on the same level of *generic–specific* hierarchy; their position is not invariable and can alter with modification in the order of concepts from time to time adopted by society; e.g. in 1914 aeronautics belonged to the same level as infantry, artillery, engineers and cavalry; however, over time it has gradually been promoted to the rank of aviation and is now parallel to the army and navy. Its generic superordinate became *armed forces*, substituting for the previous *ground forces*. This proves useful in a monolingual context, “but translators also find it important because it creates a mental context which permits the identification of the sense they are dealing with” (ibid.), e.g. where (American) English uses *swim*, the French would use either *nager* when *swim* is a part of physical activities such as *walk, jump, run*, etc., or *se baigner* when it refers to leisure activities as *go for a walk, read, play tennis*, and as such often has the form of *to go swimming* (ibid.).

In terms of **SYNTAX**, (ibid., 249) during modulation requirements of syntactic structures, besides those of metalinguistic information, need to be fulfilled as well (e.g. one word class changing into another). This points to its double motivation, for example, (ibid., 41) FR↔EN: *Donnez un peu de votre sang*↔*Give a pint of your blood*.<sup>4</sup> If the focus is on grammatical changes, modulation might be viewed as transposition; in fact, Van Hoof perceives modulation as a type of transposition at a global level that involves categories of thought and not only grammatical categories.<sup>5</sup> Overall, he suggests comprehending modulation as an extralinguistic phenomenon (1989, 126).

Vinay and Darbelnet believe that modulation is motivated by metalinguistic information and demands a skilful translator be able to recognize the need to change a point of view in the TL text. They assign these requirements to the level of the **MESSAGE** since it has to correspond to the source–text situation, e.g. FR *remplir* is not the appropriate translation of EN *to fill* when in relation to gastronomic satisfaction, as in *Coca-Cola refreshes without filling*, which cannot be translated literally, but has been skilfully translated into *La boisson légère, qui rafraîchit!* The authors emphasize that “these cultural taboos force translators into changes of the point of view which cannot be justified semantically or syntactically and which therefore are not felt by target language speakers with the same impact” (1995, 246–7).

Apart from modulations perceived through the three planes of expression, the authors also differentiate between *free* or *optional* and *obligatory* or *fixed* modulations. With fixed modulation the translator, being well–versed in both languages, shows his/her awareness of the expression’s frequency of use, its overall acceptance and the fact that it can be verified in a dictionary or grammar, e.g. *The time when...* is translated into French as *Le moment où...* as the only option available to coincide with the English original.

In optional modulation there are translation equivalents not fixed and limited by usage, e.g. apart from the EN *It is not difficult to show* translated by FR *Il est facile de démontrer* (the type of modulation which turns a negative SL expression into a positive TL expression) (ibid., 37), the word–for–word translation of FR *Il n’est pas difficile* is equally possible.

However, the fact that the translator is aiming at a single solution in the TL rendering and that this then becomes the only solution that translator can use makes the line between fixed and optional modulation somewhat blurry. In addition, when this solution is used often enough

<sup>4</sup> Apart from modulation, Vinay and Darbelnet mention other translation procedures, such as borrowing, calque, literal translation, equivalence, adaptation and **transposition** (1995, 36). The last of these “involves replacing one word class with another without changing the meaning of the message” and can be used in a monolingual setting, e.g. FR *Il a annoncé qu’il reviendrait* can be re–structured by transposing a subordinate verb with a noun, as in *Il a annoncé son retour*, or in a bilingual one, where transposition (as is modulation) is either obligatory or optional. An example of the former is FR *D s son lever* translated literally (but also transposed) into EN *As soon as he gets / got up*, while the latter can be observed in FR *Apr s qu’il sera revenu* either with no change in grammatical categories, as in EN *After he comes back*, or it can be transposed into *After his return*. The translation procedures can overlap in some cases, e.g. translation of *paper weight* by *presse papiers* is a case of fixed transposition as well as of fixed modulation (ibid., 40–2).

<sup>5</sup> Salkie argues that many authors agree with the concept of different grammatical forms expressing the same meaning, while there are some who believe that a change in form may result in a change in meaning. With transposition, there is also a problem of identifying the same grammatical categories across different languages. While the English noun and French noun can fall into the same category, it might not be so in terms of e.g. auxiliary verb or subordinating conjunctions, let alone if compared to a non–European language (2001, 434–5).



to be recognized, for example, by comparing bilingual texts, or from discussions at linguistic conferences, it may become fixed (ibid.).<sup>6</sup>

There is also ‘a new look at modulation,’ as Salkie (2001, 433–41) entitled his article stemming from Vinay and Darbelnet’s theory, which is a step forward in terms of attributing some new qualities to this procedure. He perceives modulation as a situation in which a source text is translated in many different ways in the target text, and has adopted the position of perceiving modulation as types of relationship between two texts; he attempts to do so by focusing on features of texts instead of the activities that produced them. He draws on the principles of contrastive analysis based on corpus analysis of a large number of texts (of the chosen languages) where he examines modulation.

In order to aptly present modulation, he relies on the principles of *Relevance Theory*,<sup>7</sup> modulation being perceived “as a relation between two texts such that they yield the same mental representation but via a different process of interpretation” (ibid., 439).

Salkie ponders over the issue of “change in viewpoint” and “the same situation” throughout his paper. He indicates that in some cases it is tempting to equate the same situation with the same meaning, as in: FR *Complet*. translated by EN *No vacancies*. He suggests that (*Cet hôtel est) complet* in a particular context entails (*This hotel has no vacancies*) and vice versa. However, it is not obvious that we have a two-way entailment in every case, as in e.g. EN *You can have it*. translated by FR *Ja vous la laisse*<sup>8</sup> (ibid., 435–6).

Similar to Newmark, he lists the types of modulations mentioned by Vinay and Darbelnet, but adds two more presented by Chesterman (1997, 103–4)<sup>9</sup> that are “good examples of a translator arriving at the same message using different means, which is one way of conceiving of modulation” (ibid., 436–7). These examples include:

- Converses, which represent the same state of affairs from opposing viewpoints, such as *buy* and *sell*.
- Paraphrase, in which certain elements of meaning are disregarded in order to capture the overall sense of a larger unit, as in GER *Wenn Sie sich entschließen, die Vorteile zu nutzen ...* translated into EN *If you decide to become a member of the scheme ...* (ibid., 436).

Another way in which Salkie (ibid., 437) interprets modulation is by placing it side by side with transposition. Transposition involves grammatical resources available in the target text and focuses on how the TL would naturally express a particular span of text, whereas “with modulation the principal consideration is the events or states of affairs that the words refer to” and the translator is interested in how a speaker of the TL would naturally conceive of it.

<sup>6</sup> This is only possible when the expression can be codified in dictionaries or grammars and is regularly taught (Vinay and Darbelnet 1995, 37).

<sup>7</sup> Salkie points out that the theory was elaborated by Sperber and Wilson (1995) and discussed within translation theory by Gutt (1991).

<sup>8</sup> The example is taken from Vinay and Darbelnet (1958, 238).

<sup>9</sup> Cited in Salkie (2001, 436).

This idea certainly unveils a new approach to modulation and, when compared to Vinay and Darbelnet, is closer to the concept of modulation described in the next section.

Moreover, Salkie carried out an empirical research using translation corpora in order to further examine modulation and find parameters or patterns by which it could be recognized.

For him corpus is a means to observing or counting *inventive* translations where the expression of the SL is not rendered in the way that we would expect in the TL. In his view, inventive translations are divided into *translationally unsystematic* ones that are devised anew each time, and *translationally systematic* ones that may occur regularly with translation A being selected in particular contexts and translation B in others. Salkie is only interested in translationally systematic types, since by establishing which contexts regularly favour translation A as opposed to translation B, we can find out something about the linguistic systems of the compared languages.

To support his ideas, Salkie lists several examples from the INTERSECT corpus showing different ways of translating by:

- the expected equivalent, which is **NOT** the case of modulation as in, e.g. FR *Et puis d'abord quand il a **bien** bu et bien mangé le convive, il est facilement convaincu.* translated by *And anyway, when he has eaten and drunk **well**, the other fellow is easily convinced.*,<sup>10</sup> where focusing on FR *bien*, we come across its EN expected translation equivalent of *well* (ibid., 438).
- modulation as **two-way entailment**, or equating the same situation with the same meaning, e.g. FR *Cette visite s'est déroulée par petits groupes, afin que tous puissent observer les diverses tâches qui sont accomplies dans ce laboratoire; le personnel de ce laboratoire a **bien** montré et expliqué les divers traitements de conservation et de restauration qu'il donne aux documents.* rendered as EN *The tours were conducted in small groups so that all could observe the various activities taking place, and the staff of the Laboratory **did an excellent job of** demonstrating and explaining the different conservation and restoration treatments they were performing.*,<sup>11</sup> where FR *bien* corresponds to EN *did an excellent job of* (ibid., 439).
- modulation as the same situation described from a **different point of view** (where it is difficult to establish the complete identity of meaning), e.g. FR *On me permettra de souligner que le Canada a **bien** rempli son rôle dans le vaste effort international...* rendered as EN *Let me stress that Canada has been playing a **full** role in the broad international effort...*,<sup>12</sup> in which case FR *bien* + verb correspond to EN adjective *full* modifying the object of the verb in English. The two versions do not appear to mutually entail each other, but still refer to the same state of affairs (ibid.).

This categorization leads to considering the impact of *relevance theory* where the translator's aim is to produce a text in the TL which, in the appropriate context, would make it possible for the reader to construct a mental representation that resembles the one created by the reader of the

<sup>10</sup> [FICTION\CELINE]

<sup>11</sup> [MISC\CANLIB]

<sup>12</sup> [CANHANS\HANS1]

source text. Consequently, “two texts can have different semantic representations but yield the same mental representation”. This notion proves simple when applied to corpus examples where we are certain whether two texts are identical or different in meaning. However, when we have trouble in deciding on the meaning, *relevance theory* enables us to find support in the idea that the source text and target text are the same at the level of mental representations (ibid., 439–40). This gives way to a new concept of modulation.

Salkie has certainly come up with compelling ideas about modulation, and extended its use in order to define it in more detail or at a more abstract level. Modulation as such can no longer be taken merely as one of the translation procedures, but as a gradual process that owing to the translator’s knowledge and inventiveness leads to its place in a linguistic system.

### 3. Modulation: Plurality of TL Options

Even though Salkie furthered the existing theory on modulation, the difference between two interpretations and this one is quite obvious. The former is interested in finding one optimum translation equivalent and does not even suggest alternatives, whereas the latter depends on the existence and availability of at least two options for a single word combination (collocation in this case) of the SL. This modulation strives for an atypical manner of expression in language or contradicts to what is natural in language and uses a pragmatic approach rather than translational one.

Modulation of this type thus stands for a process where a particular English collocation forming part of the SL text is translated by two or more Slovene translation equivalents; for example, and as mentioned, the English extended collocation *had a profound effect* in the context of [..., *he was struck by how little most of us know about these years, which had such a profound effect on American political and social life...*] (McGrath 2010, 1) has been/can be translated not only by SL *imela globok učinek*, but also *imela velik/močan učinek*, *velik/močan/globok vpliv*, and *so močno/globoko zaznamovala*, *pustila velik/močan/globok pečat*, *močno/globoko vplivala*.<sup>13</sup> Appendix 1 consisting of the preceding Slovene translation equivalents shows search results for individual core or key words and their collocates in terms of how often they appear together. The Slovene noun *učinek* and its collocate *globok* are actually used together only in seven cases and when considered together as a unit (*globok učinek*) immediately preceded by *imela* in FidaPLUS (or the infinitive form of *imeti*<sup>14</sup> in Slovene), it occurs only once. *Velik učinek* and *močan učinek* have a significantly higher frequency than *globok učinek*. Moreover, *velik vpliv* and *močan vpliv* are even more frequent. Overall, the adjective *globok* premodifying the nouns *vpliv* and *učinek* is the least frequent of the adjectives in the tables; however it proves quite frequent in combination with *pečat* (74 occurrences) and as an adverb of *zaznamovati* (61). These results could be explored even further and possibly lead to another linguistic research in relation to, for example, in/appropriateness or optimality measured among the Slovene equivalents. However, not in this case – the results obtained in FidaPLUS are here only to confirm the existence of the listed

<sup>13</sup> All of which occur in FidaPLUS corpus of the Slovene language (see Appendix 1).

<sup>14</sup> The extended units of *vpliv/učinek* with *imeti* and *pečat* with *pustiti* are also listed in the Appendix 1; in addition, some parameters had to be set for a reliable data representation, for example, excluding all comparative or superlative forms of adjectives (e.g., *globlji*, *večji*).



Slovene translation equivalents and to emphasize their number as generated from a single English collocation. This plurality of TL options is termed modulation and in order to find its source and outline how it functions, some parameters need to be set.

There are three ways in which such modulation can be interpreted, as it can be viewed as a result of either:

1. **collocation** as a (semantically) “scattered” unit allowing translation variation (more than one translation equivalent)<sup>15</sup> in the TL that is also considered as *minimum context* (e.g. *to make a move*) and *extended minimum context* (e.g. *to make a sudden move*)
2. *co-text* and the collocation
3. *TL situation* based on the inventory of lexical choices as shown in existing resources (texts, dictionaries, grammars, corpora) or as a consequence of associations, accumulated skills, etc.

### 3.1 Collocation

This heading is intended to highlight the key concepts involved and processes that contribute to modulation in the TL.

Collocation is considered a multi-word unit that is “loosely” fixed, is mostly binary, occurs frequently and carries a literal (compositional) meaning (Gabrovšek 2000, 198). There are several interpretations of collocation, the most general being “any more or less common and grammatical co-occurrence of words and phrases” (ibid., 199). From the semantic point of view, collocation can be observed in terms of *lexical sets*<sup>16</sup> to which the collocates constituting it belong. Lexical sets are “non-arbitrary strings of items characterized by a shared common range of meaning, a shared common factor of denotation, and by belonging to the same word class or having a similar grammatical function”, as in, for example, *She is riding a horse*, where horse belongs to a set that includes *bicycle*, *motorbike*, *scooter*, and also *hobby-horse*, *dolphin*, *camel*, *elephant* (Lord 1994, 79–80).<sup>17</sup>

Moreover, collocations have to abide by particular *selection restrictions* and *collocational (combinability) preferences* (cf. *semantic clash*). For example, we use *glacial lake* and not e.g. \**glacial age*, where we cannot argue for semantic restrictions, as can be observed in the cases of *rancid* being combined with a limited set of nouns – *butter/lard/oil*, but perceive it as usage-based, possibly having to do with frequency also (Gabrovšek 2005, 211). This issue can also be discussed in terms of **lexical** and **semantic collocations**, the former being usage-based and the latter semantically motivated (ibid., 210).

<sup>15</sup> One must be aware that not all English collocations cause variation in TL, e.g. (Krek et al. eds. 2005, 867) *heavy traffic=gost promet*.

<sup>16</sup> Lipka (2002, 173) describes “*lexical set*” as a cover term for all paradigmatically related groups of words which cannot be described by purely linguistic methods. On the syntagmatic level, this is paralleled by the term collocation. Lexical sets are based either on association and intuition, or on objectively verifiable extralinguistic relationships captured by encyclopedic knowledge. They are often highly culture-specific and closely connected with the modern notions of prototype and categorization” (cited in Gabrovšek 2005, 157).

<sup>17</sup> Cited in Gabrovšek 2000, 199.

In pursuit of finding the connection between collocation and modulation, it is possible to compare *single-word units* to their synonymous *multi-word units* and related *extended multi-word units*,<sup>18</sup> as in, for example, *to discover* vs. *to make a discovery* vs. *to make a chilling/startling discovery*=*Odkriti* vs. *priti do odkritja/priti do šokantnega/nenadnega/srhljivega odkritja/zgrozo odkriti...* The number of possible translation choices is increasing in proportion to the number of collocates being added to the base word on the syntagmatic axis. The same is observed in the case of *profound effect* above which needs a verbal category of *have (had)* in this context and thus acquires the status of an extended multi-word unit and allows variation on the syntagmatic axis, e.g. *have + a profound/significant/strong/dramatic/powerful/etc.*<sup>19</sup> + *effect*.

Another distinction of modulation are considered to be *non-metaphorical multi-word units* (or collocations in this case) as opposed to *metaphorical* ones; the latter enable less variation in the TL due to their semantic restrictions (cf. idioms<sup>20</sup>), e.g. (1) *keep up appearances*=*ohranjati (dober) videz/ugled*<sup>21</sup> in comparison to, for example, (2) *physical appearance*=*zunanji videz/izgled, zunanost, videz, izgled* (Durjava 2008, 35).

Binary and extended collocations might also be regarded as presenting the *minimum context*<sup>22</sup> (e.g. *profound effect*) and *extended minimum context* (e.g. *had a profound effect*) of the base that 'allows' modulation to happen. This concept stems from the assumption that the collocate/s of the base word create a situation from which TL variation might arise, there still being restrictions in terms of the pattern the collocates need to follow on the syntagmatic axis as well as the limited set which they can belong to.

However, the context of collocation might not suffice to explain modulation in full, and the answers could thus be sought in the co-text of collocation – textual exploration going beyond the minimum context or extended minimum context.

## 3.2 Co-Text

According to Halliday (1985, 76), a linguistic unit examined in a text is found in two environments – *the extra-linguistic* one or *the context*, which is important for the whole text, as well as in *the linguistic environment* or *the co-text*, defined as “the language accompanying the linguistic unit under focus”.

<sup>18</sup> Gabrovšek (2005, 89) observes that in English there appears to be a sort of progression in certain cases from e.g. the “simple” collocation *to make a discovery* to the “composite” collocation *to make a chilling discovery*, the latter appearing also as part of a larger *pattern* *somebody + to make + a chilling discovery + that-clause*.

<sup>19</sup> *Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English* (Crowther, J., Dignen, S., Lea, D. et al. eds. 2002, 249).

<sup>20</sup> Gabrovšek (2000, 188) refers to idioms as “relatively frozen or fixed and semantically non-transparent – or, more technically, semantically *opaque, non-compositional, non-motivated* or *holistic* – word combinations of varying length”, e.g. *to move heaven and earth* – ‘to try hard to achieve something’, but also *to take place, at all, in fact*. Some can be taken in their literal sense, e.g. *to skate on thin ice, be my guest!*, in which case they are no longer to be considered as idioms but as collocations or even free combinations.

<sup>21</sup> Krek et al. eds. 2005, 71.

<sup>22</sup> A similar view has already been put forward by Gabrovšek (2005, 172), who states that “collocations should perhaps be regarded as instances of typical, recurrent minimum contexts, the smallest complex syntagmatic sequences showing vital combinability patterns in a language”.

For Dash (2008, 21–2), context is the “immediate linguistic environment” in which a particular word is found. He explores the role of context in meaning variation of a word when used in a piece of text. In order to examine this interdependence, he classifies context into four types and in the following order: *local*,<sup>23</sup> *sentential*, *topical* and *global context*. Local context (ibid., 23–5) involves “the immediate environment of the KW in a sentence where it has occurred, encompassing its immediately preceding and succeeding words”. KW stands for key word, i.e. a base word, preceded by LW1 (left word) and immediately succeeded by RW1 (right word), all together constituting a lexical block. Dash believes that local context reveals information of whether the key word has any idiomatic relation to its neighbouring members and that it proves “useful for understanding lexical collocation of words used in a lexical block.”<sup>24</sup> In this view, parallels between local context and collocation as minimum and extended minimum context could be drawn.

Furthermore, Dash argues that local context offers the most important information concerning the contextual meaning of a word; however, in most cases it does not provide enough information to capture the actual meaning of the key word. In such instances we resort to sentential context (ibid., 26–7) that refers to the sentence where the key word is found and assigns it syntactic importance in terms of the key word having implicit or explicit syntactic relations with the other words of the same sentence. This type of context enables us to explore whether there is any variation of meaning of the key word because of its relation to the other words located at distant places within the sentence.

The next step includes topical context (ibid., 27–8) that concerns “the topic of discussion and focuses on the content of a piece of text”. Dash believes that we ought to extract necessary information from the topic to keep track of the change in meaning of the key word.

Finally, we might have to refer to global context described as extralinguistic environment of the key word, (Allan 2001, 20)<sup>25</sup> the meaning of which can be obtained only by considering information from the external world, such as details about the place, time, interpretation, pragmatics, discourse, culture, society, etc. Seeing that global context is interpreted as building up the cognitive interface between language and reality, we consider it when dealing with questions of who says, what is said, when it is said, etc. (Dash 2008, 28–9).

This classification makes it easier to pinpoint which segment of context is affecting modulation and to what extent. However, as the title of this section suggests, only co-text is accounted

<sup>23</sup> According to Dash (2008, 22), the terms *local context* and *topical context* were coined by Miller and Leacock (2000).

<sup>24</sup> Dash (2008, 25) elaborates further on collocation, as he points out that local context enables us to “know if co-occurrence of any two words is caused by choice (to evoke an intended sense) or by chance (having no special significance)”. Through research in corpora he has found out that association of two different words next to the key word can express a specific meaning (idiomatic and/or metaphoric), which cannot be retrieved from the sum of separate literal meanings of these words (ibid.). This notion has already been discussed in different literature, e.g. in reference to collocational meaning, Baker (2011, 57) indicates that “what a word means often depends on its association with certain collocates”, supported by examples of *dry* in isolation meaning ‘free from water’ compared to *dry* in *dry sound*, *dry voice*, *dry humour*, etc. This idea is also captured in the concept of *semantic tailoring*, in which case the meaning of a collocator is contextually so highly restricted that it is considered different from what it denotes in collocation-free sequences, e.g. the neutral *it is heavy* compared to the rather specific *heavy drinker/smoker* (Gabrovšek 2007, 284).

<sup>25</sup> Cited in Dash (2008, 28).

for in reference to modulation, as can be examined and supported by evidence. The effects of everything beyond co-text, that is, extralinguistic knowledge or global context, as Dash refers to it, might contribute to modulation, but due to the large area it covers and the data it provides (usually) outside the realms of the written text, it remains disregarded throughout this study.

For practical purposes, let us return yet again to *had a profound effect* in the sentence of Daniel Okrent, a former public editor for *The New York Times*, who has just published a history of the period, “*Last Call: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition*,” said that when he began his research, he was struck by how little most of us know about these years, which **had such a profound effect** on American political and social life (McGrath 2010, 1). The plurality of TL options (*imela globok učinek, velik/močan učinek, velik/močan/globok vpliv*, and *so močno/globoko zaznamovala, pustila velik/močan/globok pečat, močno/globoko vplivala*) results from the local context or extended minimum context in this case, since, as can be observed, none of the equivalents in their semantic and syntactic character have been sought outside the context of collocation and its interpretation.

The co-text being a relatively difficult factor with reference to modulation, modulation could also result from the TL situation itself, being due to the translator’s inventiveness on the one hand and his/her knowledge based on grammars, dictionaries and his/her professional training or experiences gathered throughout the years.

### 3.3 TL Situation of Two or More Slovene Translation Equivalents

The idea of modulation being entirely due to TL situation might work only from the viewpoint of the level of knowledge or expertise in mastering the Slovene language one possesses and intuition. The Slovene equivalent *pustila velik pečat*, for example, is more figurative than not and diverges significantly from the literal translation of *imela globok učinek*. Still, the equivalents remain restricted to the SL situation in terms of causing modulation; the TL situation might be perceived only as a process following modulation, where the translator is left with choices and is compelled to opt for the optimum one. This is no longer the issue of modulation.

## 4. Conclusions

According to Vinay and Darbelnet, modulation involves perceiving SL situation from a different point of view, usually necessary only if the translation appeared unusual or strange (1995, 36). While, though admitting to the change in point of view, Salkie points to the difficulty in trying to define it. Hence he provides examples supporting the various functions or roles of modulation, either as the two-way entailment, that is, the same meaning equated with the same situation, or with the same situation presented in a different way. His dilemmas of whether we are faced with the same situation or not are resolved with the help of *relevance theory* (2001, 439), which views modulation as a relation between two texts such that they result in the same mental representation, but by a different process of interpretation.

Salkie’s view not only provides a profound insight into understanding modulation, but also highlights its potential to be applied to different concepts in linguistic research. In this study, modulation is interpreted as the occurrence of two or more Slovene translation equivalents



available for a single English collocation, as has been examined thrice in the example of *had a profound effect* translated by *imela globok učinek* and also *imela velik/močan učinek*, *velik/močan/globok vpliv*, and *so močno/globoko zaznamovala*, *pustila velik/močan/globok pečat*, *močno/globoko vplivala*.

In an attempt to pinpoint what exactly causes this, or brings it about, three potential inducers have been suggested: collocation as a semantic unit by itself, collocation in the function of minimum as well as extended minimum context, and finally the co-text and TL situation.

Translator's skills and knowledge of their mother language are the two elements of TL situation that might be related to modulation. The co-text and context, for example, are constant companions of any linguistic unit and to what extent they are taken to be a verifiable influence depends on the type of research we are conducting. If, however, collocation is considered a co-text,<sup>26</sup> its nature can be accounted for together with its loosely fixed structure allowing variation on the syntagmatic axis (e.g. *have every/little/nol/some confidence*, or *bolster/boost/build (up)/enhance/improve/increase/lift/raise confidence*<sup>27</sup>) which can be observed in the progression from **single-word units** to **multi-word units** and **extended multi-word units**, as in e.g. *check* vs. *havel/makel/run a check* vs. *havel/makel/run a carefull/close check*<sup>28</sup>=*pregledl/kontrolal/preverjanje* and *natančno/pazljivo*<sup>29</sup> *preveriti/l pregledati*.<sup>30</sup>

Another relevant modulation-related assumption is that non-metaphorical collocations can result in more variation in TL than the metaphorical ones, as in non-metaphorical e.g. *carefull/close check*=*natančenl temeljit pregledl kontrolal preverjanje* vs. *to hold oneself in check*<sup>31</sup>=*obvladati se*.

Furthermore, if collocation is taken to be a minimum context or extended minimum context of a particular linguistic item under investigation and as such enough (i.e. the overall meaning can be discerned from collocation alone) to provide modulation, the effects of co-text as sentential, topical context and global context could be disregarded (as in *had a profound effect* above); this, however, does not imply that this should always be the case.

Collocation has been examined extensively in the literature, and there remain a number of issues either pertaining to its status in phraseology, its varying length, or how it affects translation. Modulation could thus also be perceived as one of the means that might contribute to clarifying the complex apparatus of collocation.

<sup>26</sup> Or local context (see above).

<sup>27</sup> *Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English* (Crowther, J., Dignen, S., Lea, D. et al. eds. 2002, 149).

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 112–3.

<sup>29</sup> Krek et al. eds. 2005, 261.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 291.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*



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## APPENDIX 1

### Učinek

<i>NR.</i>	<i>COLLOCATE</i>	<i>FREQUENCY</i>	<i>ABS. FREQ.</i>	<i>MI VALUE</i>	<i>MI3 VALUE</i>	<i>LL VALUE</i>
472	globok	7	35514	2.055513	7.670223	9.313910
875	močen <sup>*</sup>	<b>129</b>	204357	3.734754	17.757208	429.203388
2204	velik	<b>297</b>	1362407	2.200851	18.629489	441.316063

### Globok učinek

<i>NR.</i>	<i>COLLOCATE</i>	<i>FREQUENCY</i>	<i>ABS. FREQ.</i>	<i>MI VALUE</i>	<i>MI3 VALUE</i>	<i>LL VALUE</i>
1	imeti	<b>1</b>	2118296	7.231760	7.231760	8.038654

### Močan učinek

<i>NR.</i>	<i>COLLOCATE</i>	<i>FREQUENCY</i>	<i>ABS. FREQ.</i>	<i>MI VALUE</i>	<i>MI3 VALUE</i>	<i>LL VALUE</i>
4	imeti	<b>19</b>	2118296	7.894725	16.390580	170.103345

<i>NR.</i>	<i>COLLOCATE</i>	<i>FREQUENCY</i>	<i>ABS. FREQ.</i>	<i>MI VALUE</i>	<i>MI3 VALUE</i>	<i>LL VALUE</i>
7	imeti	<b>40</b>	2118296	6.924331	17.568188	304.624374

### Vpliv

<i>NR.</i>	<i>COLLOCATE</i>	<i>FREQUENCY</i>	<i>ABS. FREQ.</i>	<i>MI VALUE</i>	<i>MI3 VALUE</i>	<i>LL VALUE</i>
67	globok	<b>14</b>	35514	3.673558	11.288268	45.486526
393	močen <sup>**</sup>	<b>1252</b>	204357	7.631590	28.211628	10746.746276
1043	velik	<b>2189</b>	1362407	5.700633	27.892746	13001.931954

### Globok vpliv

<i>NR.</i>	<i>COLLOCATE</i>	<i>FREQUENCY</i>	<i>ABS. FREQ.</i>	<i>MI VALUE</i>	<i>MI3 VALUE</i>	<i>LL VALUE</i>
1	imeti	<b>4</b>	2118296	8.231760	12.231760	37.673174

### Močan vpliv

<i>NR.</i>	<i>COLLOCATE</i>	<i>FREQUENCY</i>	<i>ABS. FREQ.</i>	<i>MI VALUE</i>	<i>MI3 VALUE</i>	<i>LL VALUE</i>
5	imeti	<b>137</b>	2118296	7.608693	21.804757	1172.455675

### Velik vpliv

<i>NR.</i>	<i>COLLOCATE</i>	<i>FREQUENCY</i>	<i>ABS. FREQ.</i>	<i>MI VALUE</i>	<i>MI3 VALUE</i>	<i>LL VALUE</i>
7	imeti	<b>761</b>	2118296	8.045289	27.188795	6971.029229

### Zaznamovati

<i>NR.</i>	<i>COLLOCATE</i>	<i>FREQUENCY</i>	<i>ABS. FREQ.</i>	<i>MI VALUE</i>	<i>MI3 VALUE</i>	<i>LL VALUE</i>
53	globoko	<b>61</b>	38170	8.291927	20.153401	579.490579
103	močno	<b>238</b>	71737	9.345729	25.135364	2607.456934

## Vplivati

<i>NR.</i>	<i>COLLOCATE</i>	<i>FREQUENCY</i>	<i>ABS. FREQ.</i>	<i>MI VALUE</i>	<i>MI3 VALUE</i>	<i>LL VALUE</i>
53	globoko	<b>27</b>	38170	5.164535	14.674310	140.795832
1	močno	<b>1040</b>	71737	9.521737	29.566472	11635.792796

## Pečat

<i>NR.</i>	<i>COLLOCATE</i>	<i>FREQUENCY</i>	<i>ABS. FREQ.</i>	<i>MI VALUE</i>	<i>MI3 VALUE</i>	<i>LL VALUE</i>
52	globok	<b>74</b>	35514	9.156571	21.575478	791.439769
103	močen***	<b>146</b>	204357	7.612310	21.991959	1250.112827
293	velik	<b>98</b>	1362407	4.300201	17.529621	398.154128

## Globok pečat

<i>NR.</i>	<i>COLLOCATE</i>	<i>FREQUENCY</i>	<i>ABS. FREQ.</i>	<i>MI VALUE</i>	<i>MI3 VALUE</i>	<i>LL VALUE</i>
3	pustiti	<b>34</b>	102432	11.782498	21.957424	487.364381

## Močan pečat

<i>NR.</i>	<i>COLLOCATE</i>	<i>FREQUENCY</i>	<i>ABS. FREQ.</i>	<i>MI VALUE</i>	<i>MI3 VALUE</i>	<i>LL VALUE</i>
7	pustiti	<b>38</b>	102432	11.546072	22.041927	532.249025

## Velik pečat

<i>NR.</i>	<i>COLLOCATE</i>	<i>FREQUENCY</i>	<i>ABS. FREQ.</i>	<i>MI VALUE</i>	<i>MI3 VALUE</i>	<i>LL VALUE</i>
5	pustiti	<b>53</b>	102432	12.307478	23.763319	798.268259

<i>*NR.</i>	<i>COLLOCATE</i>	<i>FREQUENCY</i>	<i>ABS. FREQ.</i>	<i>MI VALUE</i>	<i>MI3 VALUE</i>	<i>LL VALUE</i>
108	močan	<b>68</b>	22431	6.144754	18.319679	444.975736

<i>**NR.</i>	<i>COLLOCATE</i>	<i>FREQUENCY</i>	<i>ABS. FREQ.</i>	<i>MI VALUE</i>	<i>MI3 VALUE</i>	<i>LL VALUE</i>
906	močan	<b>604</b>	22431	9.754094	28.230903	6944.631837

<i>***NR.</i>	<i>COLLOCATE</i>	<i>FREQUENCY</i>	<i>ABS. FREQ.</i>	<i>MI VALUE</i>	<i>MI3 VALUE</i>	<i>LL VALUE</i>
4	močan	<b>137</b>	22431	10.694635	24.890699	1756.481317

As the result of a corpus research, the adjective *močen* is shown in the base form, which does not imply that this is the only form we can find it in. Therefore, the results for *močan* are included separately.