

Henrietta László

[DOI 10.51313/Freeside-2020-2-6](https://doi.org/10.51313/Freeside-2020-2-6)

**Translation of Politeness Strategies
in Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility***

Abstract

The present article is a comparative analysis of negative politeness strategies in Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* and the Hungarian translation in *Értelem és érzelem* translated by Gerda Barcza. The aim of the article is to examine whether the politeness strategies applied by the characters in the source text remain the same type of politeness strategies in the target text as a result of the translation process. The article also endeavours to establish whether the politeness strategies employed by the characters in the Hungarian translation mirror the same character traits as in the original text. The article presents the parallel analysis of the negative politeness strategies in the source text and the target text used by several characters in the novel. The comparative analysis explores whether there are any changes in the characters' linguistic behaviour as a result of the translation process. In order to show the differences between the source and the target text, we apply back translation, a translation that is as literal as possible to demonstrate the change of the politeness strategy. When no change is identified, no back translation is applied, only a detailed analysis and explanation is offered. The article presupposes that the politeness strategy in question will show only a slight change, therefore the characters will mirror the same traits as in the original text. The article ultimately aims to prove that the translation of the novel entitled *Sense and Sensibility* will not alter Jane Austen's specific way of characterization.

Keywords

Politeness strategies, negative politeness, translation of politeness strategies

Introduction

The present article is based on my BA paper entitled "Politeness Theories Applied in Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*" written in 2016. The thesis dealt with politeness strategies applied in Jane Austen's famous novel and it analysed the character's linguistic behaviour

from a pragmatic viewpoint. The approach was to apply Brown and Levinson's politeness model. The hypothesis was that all the characters use negative politeness since they are stereotypically English and the author of the novel is also English. The idea that English people tend to be negatively polite was underpinned by the works of Leo Hickey, Miranda Stewart and Kate Fox. While Hickey and Stewart claim that English people have "a preference for negative rather than positive politeness strategies, which is played out through a number of linguistic strategies" (Hickey and Stewart 2005: 118), Kate Fox expresses the same idea in the form of a humorous comment regarding English people's linguistic behaviour: the "English form of social dis-ease: a chronic and seemingly incurable inability to engage normally and directly with other human beings" (Fox 2004: 174). If we paraphrase the former statement, it means that English people keep their distance while they are talking and try to save their interlocutor's face, i.e. they use negative politeness strategies.

As the analyses showed, some of the characters used negative politeness strategies, while others used positive politeness and bald on-record strategies. The present paper will use the database of the BA thesis and its results to investigate their Hungarian translation.

Hypothesis

This article is a comparative study and it focuses on the Hungarian translation of the characters' linguistic behaviour. It tries to answer several research questions: Can English politeness strategies be translated into Hungarian? Will the Hungarian translation mirror the same linguistic behaviour? Will negative politeness be negative politeness in Hungarian? In order to find the answer to these questions, we are going to analyse the English linguistic choices and their equivalents in Hungarian.

Our hypothesis is that Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies can be translated into Hungarian since they are universal strategies, and their aim is to save the listener's face. Brown and Levinson admit that their strategies might be western oriented and they mainly focus on English linguistic behaviour, but they still claim that it is a universal principle to save other people's face, authority and freedom of action (Brown and Levinson 1978: 61). It always depends on the given culture as to which strategy is used in order to carry out these face-saving acts. Brown and Levinson's idea is also underpinned by a Hungarian author, Judit Bándli. In her PhD thesis, she refers to another politeness theory researcher, Mao, who claims that "[...] there is no irreconcilable contradiction between the western and eastern perceptions of face and politeness, although their starting point is different, their ultimate goal is to maintain the harmony between the interlocutors." (Bándli 2011: 55).

We also assume that the characters' linguistic choices will be reflected in the Hungarian translation. As all the strategies in Brown and Levinson's model are said to be universal, our hypothesis is that they can also be found in Hungarian. Although we are talking about two strikingly different languages, polite linguistic structures can be translated in a way that they can mirror positive politeness, negative politeness and bald on-record strategies.

When using the so called Positive Politeness strategy, the speaker is aware that s/he is committing a face threatening act and intentionally applies some redressive actions to mitigate the threat to the addressee's positive face. In order to have this effect in his/her utterances, the speaker shows solidarity, claims common ground, expresses friendliness and shows interest toward the feelings, beliefs of the addressee. The speaker also pays attention to the hearer's face needs, tries to save, and maintain the speaking partner's self-image, and tries to make the hearer feel good about himself/herself. In order to be positively polite, Brown and Levinson offer a list of ten strategies that serve the function of saving the addressee's face (Brown and Levinson 1987: 101–129). For example, seek agreement, use of "in-group markers", claim for common ground, etc.

Similarly to its counterpart, negative politeness also uses redressive actions to soften the possible face threatening acts. Negative politeness is all about the hearer's negative face, his/her personal space, and privilege, freedom of action and freedom of imposition. By extremely polite constructions, the speaker constantly assures the hearer that his/her face is not imposed on. In every utterance, s/he expresses distance between him/her and the addressee to avoid any intrusion into his/her speaking partner's intimate sphere. In order to achieve all these effects listed above, negative politeness works with conventional polite structures, impersonal structures and utterances that contain markers of respect toward the hearer's negative face. Brown and Levinson similarly created ten different strategies to carry out negatively polite requests (Brown and Levinson 1987: 129–210).

In the case of bald on-record strategy, the speaker expresses his/her want very directly in speech without applying any redressive (term created by Brown and Levinson with the meaning "to fix", "to repair", "to improve") action. This means that there is no effort on the part of the speaker to improve the situation formed by the face threatening act. According to Brown and Levinson, when using the bald on-record strategy, in fact, neither of the speaking partners wants to cause damage to the face of the other. Mainly, participants apply this strategy in the case of emergency situations with the aim of a faster, easier and more efficient communication.

To underpin our assumption, we can enumerate several studies written by Hungarian linguists dealing with politeness theories and some strategies applied by Hungarian interlocutors. Katalin Szili and Attila László Nemesi translated Brown and Levinson's politeness model into Hungarian. Both of them work with this politeness theory and with Leech's maxims. They found that Leech's maxims and Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies overlap quite often. Szili states:

The universal nature of the two theories are similar. Their means of implementation (conversational principles, face-saving acts) is the definition of what is apparently completely different. Of course, with more accurate comparison there are several partial matches between them (Szili 2007: 14)

Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies have been applied to Hungarian conversations as well (see Szili's studies related to the strategies applied in Hungarian). This idea gives us our hypothesis and allows us to assume that it is correct.

For the scope of our investigation, we have chosen Jane Austen's novel entitled *Sense and Sensibility* and its Hungarian translation – *Értelem és érzelem* – by Gerda Barcza. Throughout the analysis we are going to examine selected dialogues from the original version and their Hungarian translations.

The novel itself presents the story of two sisters, the always moderate Elinor, and the impulsive and idealistic Marianne. The former represents *sense* and the latter embodies *sensibility*. Both of them experience love but in different ways. Marianne has a romance with John Willoughby and ends up with Colonel Brandon. Elinor struggles quietly to conceal her own heartbreak. Throughout their different experience of love the two sisters realize that the way to happiness is not easy in a society where material issues and money rule the world and love.

Methodology of the article

The methodology of the analysis consists of the following steps: firstly, a selection of representative examples from the database created for the BA thesis was used. For the sake of comparison, the source text dialogues were analysed, and afterwards their translations from the viewpoint of politeness strategies were also analysed. In order to present the possible differences, a back-translation was made where necessary.

The Translation of Negative Politeness Strategies

The first dialogue for investigation appears between Elinor and her mother, Mrs Dashwood, and they discuss whether Willoughby and Marianne are secretly engaged or not, after Willoughby left the village unexpectedly without giving any explanation. We will focus only on Elinor's utterances since we draw a parallel between them and their Hungarian translation.

Dialogue 1

(1) **E. D.:** “[...] But it would have been more like Willoughby to acknowledge them at once. Secrecy may be advisable; but still I cannot help wondering at its being practiced by him.”

[...]

(2) **E. D.:** “Not entirely. It may be proper to conceal their engagement (if they *are* engaged) from Mrs Smith – and if that is the case, it must be highly expedient for Willoughby to be a little in Devonshire at present. But this is no excuse for their concealing from us.” (Austen 2012: 79)

In the first part of the dialogue above (1), Elinor refers to her sister and Willoughby in the form of a very impersonal structure in spite of the fact that she is talking about her loved ones. She also uses Willoughby's family name instead of his first name, John, which marks the presence of respect towards him. We can also spot the modal verb “may”, which is typically an element of negative polite structures. In the second part of the dialogue (2), when she has to express her disagreement with her mother, she still uses impersonal structures in order not to offend her mother directly. Another element that she applies here is a conditional structure with the aim of expressing, without offense, that they might not be right. We can also see another modal verb (“must”) which has the role to express negative politeness. At the end of her dialogue, she says “*this is no excuse*” which is another impersonal structure referring to the secret engagement. In the following fragment, we are going to search for the equivalents of these highlighted negative politeness structures in the Hungarian translation.

Hungarian Dialogue 1

(1) **E. D.:** [...] Lehet, hogy ajánlatosabb a titoktartás, én mégis egyre azon csodálkozom, hogy épp ő gyakorolja.

[...]

(2) **E. D.:** – Nem teljesen. Talán ajánlatos eltitkolni a jegyességüket – ha csakugyan jegyesek – Mrs. Smith elől, s ha így áll a helyzet, Willoughbynek most célszerű keveset mutatkoznia Devonshire-ben. Ám ez nem lehet ürügy arra, hogy előlünk is eltitkolja. (Austen 2016: 69–70)

Back translation applied by the author of the text:

E. D.: “[...] Maybe it is more advisable to have secrecy, but I’m still wondering that he is practicing it.”

[...]

E. D.: “Not completely. Perhaps it is advisable to conceal their engagement – if they are really engaged – from Mrs Smith, and if it’s the case, Willoughby should not show himself in Devonshire. But this cannot be an excuse for him to keep it a secret from us.”

As we can see from dialogue (1) and (2), they mirror the tone of the original English text. Similar to the original text, the Hungarian translation also starts with an impersonal structure (*lehet, hogy ajánlatosabb a titoktartás*) and also keeps using Willoughby’s family name (2) instead of his first name. The Hungarian word for the modal verb *may* is *lehet*, the translator did not omit to use this negative politeness strategy. The only difference between the English and the Hungarian text in the case of the first utterance (1) is that the translator uses an active structure while the original consists of a passive one when referring to Willoughby. This may be due to the fact that Hungarian does not like passive voice in everyday speech, but still, the Hungarian translation remains just as impersonal as the English text due to the use of the adjective *ajánlatos* (advisable).

In the case of Elinor’s second utterance (2), the politeness strategy in use does not change or lose from the tone. All the impersonal structures are mirrored in the Hungarian translation, from the very beginning until the end of the proposition. Elinor expresses her disagreement with a hundred percent equivalent in Hungarian (*not entirely = nem teljesen*). The translator also uses a conditional structure to express Elinor’s doubt whether they are right or wrong. Conditionals are also used to express hesitation to create a distance between the interlocutors. The word *talán* means *maybe* or *perhaps*, therefore the presence of modal verbs can be detected in the translation. Elinor also finishes her contribution with an impersonal structure to express her opinion on the whole topic. The translator managed to render the tone of negative politeness in the dialogue above using negative polite structures that are familiar to Hungarian speakers.

The next selected piece of dialogue appears between Elinor and her sister, Marianne, when they talk about Edward Ferrars, Elinor's loved one. She talks about her feelings covertly, then she apologizes for being shy, for not speaking in a direct way.

Dialogue 2

(3) **E. D.:** "I do not attempt to deny," said she "that I think very highly of him – that I greatly esteem, that I like him."

M. D.: "Esteem him! Like him! Cold-hearted Elinor! Oh! worse than cold-hearted! Ashamed of being otherwise. Use those words again and I will leave the room this moment."

(4) **E. D.:** "Excuse me," said she, "and be assured that I meant no offence to you, by speaking, in so quiet a way, of my own feelings." (Austen 2012: 21)

In example (3), one of the main characteristics of negative politeness can be detected. This strategy avoids using any directness. It is slightly different from our first dialogue since this one is more personal, but it carries other features of negative politeness, such as apologizing or using hedges. As we can assume, the sisters are talking about Elinor's love towards Edward Ferrars, but she does not express it directly. The first part of the utterance *I do not attempt to deny* is a hedge and it delays the message of her contribution, but still marks her intention to talk about the topic since she reveals her intimate feelings.

Marianne's reply can function as a contrast to Elinor's well-constructed utterance as she repeats her sister's words ironically and threatens her to leave the room instantly if she continues to talk like that about somebody whom she loves. In response to Marianne's harsh reply, Elinor reacts by apologizing. The formula *Excuse me* (4) is a typical negative politeness strategy, as well as the rest of the proposition, which is a more elaborated apologizing structure. The interlocutor assures the listener that she is aware of her speaking partner's face and did not mean to offend it. Apologizing and giving explanations are both negative politeness strategies.

Below we can see the Hungarian translation of this dialogue. Our aim again is to highlight those elements of the propositions that mark the presence of negative politeness in the translation.

Hungarian Dialogue 2

(3) **E. D.:** – Nem próbálom tagadni, hogy rendkívül jó véleménnyel vagyok Edwardról... – vallotta be –, hogy nagyra becsülöm..., hogy kedvelem.

M. D.: – Nagyra becsülöd! Kedveled! Mily rideg szívű vagy, Elinor! Ó, nem is rideg szívű, rosszabb annál! Szégyellsz másmilyen lenni. Még egy ilyen szó, és tüstént elhagyom a szobát!

(4) **E. D.:** – Bocsáss meg – felelte –, biztosíthatlak, hogy nem akartalak megbántani azzal, hogy ily visszafogottan nyilatkoztam érzelmeimről. (Austen 2016: 20)

Back translation applied by the author of the text:

E. D.: “I don’t want to deny that I have an extremely high opinion about Edward...” she admitted, “that I greatly appreciate him... I like him.”

M. D.: “You appreciate him! Like him! How cold-hearted you are, Elinor! Oh, not cold-hearted, worse than that. You are ashamed to be different! One more word like that, and I will leave the room instantly!”

E. D.: “Sorry,” she said “and be sure, that I didn’t want to hurt you with the way I expressed my feelings in such low-key.”

In the Hungarian example (3) the speaker, Elinor starts her contribution with a delay concerning the topic, similar to the original version of the text. After this, a difference appears which changes the tone of the strategy in use. In the English text, instead of the name of the male character, the author uses the pronoun “him”, while in the Hungarian translation this character’s first name is employed. Using *Edward* instead of *Mr Ferrars* or *Ferrars* transform the negatively polite structure into a positive one. The compensation for this change in the translation appears in the following part of the proposition. The translation of the verb *like* is very successful from the perspective of politeness because it is an understatement mitigating the degree of love embedded in Elinor’s utterance. The verb *like* can be translated as *szeretni* (love), *tetszeni* (like) or *kedvelni* (prefer). We have the third option in the translation which is the best way to express love in a negatively polite way. This solution brings back the tone and indirectness of Elinor’s speech act.

The translation of Marianne harsh reply mirrors her bald on-record linguistic choices and functions as a striking contrast in the Hungarian version as well. In the Hungarian example (4), Elinor also starts with a Hungarian formula of apologizing and continues with an explanation-like apologetic structure. This translation unfortunately loses from the indirectness and distance created by the English text due to the *tu/vous* feature of Hungarian. The translator uses the *tu* informal verb form which suggests common ground and closeness in Hungarian, and it is a regular linguistic behaviour among sisters or family members. In the

case of this contribution, only the form and the fact of Elinor's reassuring her sister that she did not mean to offend her, carry the characteristics of negative politeness.

The next conversation to be investigated is another dialogue between Elinor and Marianne, while they are staying in London. Marianne and Willoughby's relationship comes to a sad turn and the little sister does not want to accept this fact. Passionately and desperately she gives orders to her elder sister, who wants to calm her and gives her advice by using negative politeness.

Dialogue 3

(5) **M. D.:** "Go to him, Elinor," she cried, as soon as she could speak, "and force him to come to me. Tell him I must see him again – must speak to him instantly. – I cannot rest – I shall not have a moment's peace till this is explained – some dreadful misapprehension or other. – Oh go to him this moment."

(6) **E. D.:** "How can that be done? No, my dearest Marianne, you must wait. This is not a place for explanations. Wait only till to-morrow." (Austen 2012: 175)

In the case of example (6), Elinor mixes three strategies, but the utterance, as a whole, remains negatively polite. She starts with an impersonal question referring to Marianne's impossible requests ("that" refers to these requests). She follows the negative polite linguistic manifestation with a positive polite proposition which begins with an exaggerated address form ("my dearest Marianne"). This kind of address form is normal and acceptable between sisters who love and care about each other. The modal verb "must" refers to the impossibility of Marianne's requests, it softens the harshness of Marianne's order. In order to balance the whole utterance, the interlocutor delivers another typically negative polite impersonal proposition. This means that they cannot discuss the topic right then and Marianne cannot do whatever she feels like doing. If we take the global message of Elinor's contribution, we can claim that it remains negatively polite, since she does not scold her sister, or offend her in any sense. With the bald on-record utterance, Elinor wants to delay Marianne's actions because those are dangerous for her. The positive polite manifestation has the aim to comfort her sister and save her positive face from Willoughby. The two impersonal utterances prove the presence of negative politeness in Elinor's utterances, and the fact that she does not want to impose on Marianne's negative face directly.

Hungarian Dialogue 3

(5) **M. D.:** – Menj oda hozzá, Elinor – kérlete Marianne, amikor ismét meg tudott szólalni –, és kényszerítsd, hogy jöjjön ide hozzám. Mondd meg neki, hogy újra látnom kell..., hogy azonnal beszélnem kell vele. Nem lehet nyugtom..., nem lesz egy percnyi békességem, amíg ezt nem tisztázzuk. Valami szörnyű félreértésről lehet szó csupán. Ó, most azonnal menj oda hozzá!

(6) **E. D.:** – Ugyan hogy tehetném? Nem, drága Marianne, várnod kell. Most nincs helye magyarázkodásnak. Várj holnapig. (Austen 2016: 150)

Back translation applied by the author of the text:

M. D.: “Go to him, Elinor,” asked Marianne when she could talk again, “and force him to come to me. Tell him that I have to see him again... that I have to talk to him now. I can’t rest... I won’t have any peace for a minute until we clarify this! It must be a terrible misunderstanding. Oh, go to him right now!”

E. D.: “How could I do that? No, dear Marianne, you have to wait. There is no place for explanations now. Wait until tomorrow!”

As the Hungarian dialogue above shows, a marked change can be detected right in the first sentence of Elinor’s contribution. While in the source text Elinor starts with a totally impersonal question (*How can that be done?*), in the Hungarian version the pronoun “I” is marked in the verb’s ending (*tehetném = I could do*), therefore the utterance loses its negative politeness tone. In the second proposition, in the English text we have an exaggerated address form, while in the translation we have a simple *drága* (‘dear’) instead of the superlative “dearest”, but the utterance remains a positive polite sentence. In the rest of Elinor’s contribution there are no differences between the source text and the target text. The third sentence is an impersonal affirmative sentence that remains the same in Hungarian as well as the last bald on-record sentence. Only one utterance changes throughout the process of translation, but the Hungarian version still contains all the mixed strategies just like in the original.

Two women at war can provide the best negatively polite contributions. In this conversation it turns out that Edward is Lucy’s fiancé. They beat around the bush for a while and then Lucy clarifies the misunderstanding that it is not Robert but Edward who is her “loved” one. The length of the contribution also suggests that the following utterances are well-elaborated negatively polite sentences.

Dialogue 4

(7) **L. S.:** “You will think my question an odd one, I dare say, but, pray, are you personally acquainted with your sister-in-law’s mother, Mrs Ferrars?” [...] “Indeed! I wonder at that, for I thought you must have seen her at Norland sometimes. Then perhaps you cannot tell me what sort of a woman she is?”

E. D.: “No, I know nothing of her.”

(8) **L. S.:** “I am sure you think me very strange, for inquiring about her in such a way, but perhaps there may be reasons – I wish I might venture; but however I hope you will do me the justice of believing that I do not mean to be impertinent.” [...] “I cannot bear to have you think me impertinently curious. I am sure I would rather do anything in the world than be thought so by a person whose good opinion is so well worth having as yours. And I am sure I should not have the smallest fear of trusting *you*; indeed I should be very glad of your advice how to manage in such an uncomfortable situation as I am; but however there is no occasion to trouble *you*. I am sorry you do not happen to know Mrs Ferrars.”

E. D.: “I am sorry I *do* not, if it could be of any use to you to know my opinion of her. But really, I never understood that you were at all connected with that family, therefore I am a little surprised, I confess, at so serious an inquiry into her character.” (Austen 2012: 126)

Right in Lucy’s very first contribution we can detect many manifestations of negative politeness that are different from the other features mentioned in the previous analysed dialogues. As we can see, Lucy’s first contribution is an entire hedge containing many softeners, a multitude of hedges and structures that have the function of keeping distance between the two speakers. A great deal of linguistic pessimism also permeates the initial utterance. Instead of declaring that she is Edward Ferrars’ future wife, Lucy applies questions, excuses and explanations. In Brown and Levinson’s view, questions, hedges, pessimism delaying the real topic are all means of expressing negative politeness (Brown and Levinson 1978: 129–210). In (7), Lucy introduces and delays her “odd” question referring to Edward’s mother which has the purpose of revealing her engagement to Edward. The structure “I dare say” also softens the immediateness of the inquiry. In order to make the whole contribution totally negatively polite and mannered, Lucy is being very pessimistic regarding the matter (*Then perhaps you cannot tell me what sort of a woman she is?*). From Elinor’s reply, Lucy can be sure that Elinor does not know anything about her engagement to Edward and Mrs

Ferrars, Lucy continues the subject in a pessimistic, apologetic tone (8) while explaining that she does have a purpose in talking about the issue. The modal verb *may* and the conditional structures – typical strategies to express negative politeness – make her utterances a little ambiguous and they express hesitation which further delays the topic. In order to prove that Lucy is not “impertinently” curious, but she has a reason to talk about the subject, Miss Steel starts complimenting, nominalizing Elinor’s opinion and face at the same time (see Brown and Levinson 1987: 207–209) (*whose good opinion is so well worth having as yours*). Lucy also expresses indirectly that she trusts Elinor in the form of a compliment-like hedge (*And I am sure I should not have the smallest fear of trusting you*). At the end of the contribution, Lucy switches the tone and uses pessimism again. The whole part of the dialogue is about introducing the topic with a lower degree of imposition on Elinor’s negative face since Lucy uses many redressive actions to mitigate the threat.

Elinor expresses a little surprise and inquiry, though very indirectly, therefore Lucy keeps using hedges before revealing the truth about her and Edward. As we can see, Elinor does not ask any questions, she only gives a quite detailed explanation why she is surprised. Instead of asking: “Why is Mrs Ferrars so important to you?”, she expresses her surprise by applying mitigating devices and softeners, therefore the imposition on Lucy’s face is highly minimized. We are not going to analyse the piece of dialogue when the truth turns out, but we present its Hungarian translation.

Hungarian Dialogue 4

(7) **L. S.:** – Kétségkívül különösnek tartja majd a kérdésem (...) de kérem, mondja meg, hogy ismeri-e személyesen sógornője édesanyját, Mrs. Ferrarst? (...) – Valóban? Csodálkozom rajta, hisz azt hittem, bizonyára találkoztak időnként Norlandben. Azt talán meg tudná nekem mondani, hogy miféle asszony Mrs. Ferrars?

E. D.: – Nem tudok róla semmit.

(8) **L. S.:** – Bizonyára furcsállja, hogy ily módon érdeklődöm felőle (...), de talán megvan rá az okom – bárcsak elmondhatnám, azonban remélem, hogy méltányos lesz velem szemben, és elhiszi, hogy nem arcátlanságból kérdezem. (...) – Nem viselném el, ha arcátlanul kíváncsinak tartana, a világon bármit elviselnék inkább, mint hogy ezt gondolja rólam valaki, akinek jó véleménye annyira értékes számomra, mint az öné. És biztosan nem vonakodnék megbízni önben, az igazat megvallva, nagyon boldog volnék, ha tanácsot adna, hogy oldjam meg azt a szerencsétlen helyzetet, melyben vagyok, azonban nincs okom rá, hogy épp önt zaklassam ezzel. Sajnálom azonban, hogy nem ismeri Mrs. Ferrarst.

E. D.: – Én is sajnálom, ha önnek bármi haszna is származnék abból, hogy megtudja az én véleményemet róla. De igazán, nem feltételezem, hogy ön ismeri a családot, ilyenformán, bevallom, meglepett kissé, hogy komolyan érdeklődik Mrs. Ferrars jelleme felől. (Austen 2016: 111–112)

Back translation applied by the author of the text:

L. S.: “You will find my question special [...] but, please, tell me, do you personally know your sister-in-law’s mother, Mrs Ferrars?” [...] “Really? I am surprised, because I thought that you must have met sometimes in Norland. But could you tell me what sort of woman is Mrs Ferrars?”

E. D.: “I don’t know anything about her.”

L. S.: “Probably you find it strange that I am so interested in her [...] but, I might have a reason to do so – I wish I could say, but I hope that you will be fair to me and believe that I do not ask you because I’m impertinent.” [...] “I couldn’t bear you think me impertinent, I would bear anything in the world, than the fact that somebody thinks of me as impertinent, somebody, whose opinion is so valuable to me as yours. And I’m sure that I won’t hesitate to trust you; to be fair, I would be very happy, if you gave me some advice on how to solve this unfortunate situation I am in, but I don’t have any reason to bother you with this. But I’m really sorry that you don’t know Mrs Ferrars.”

E. D.: “I am sorry, too, if you had any benefit from finding out my opinion about her. But really, I don’t assume that you know the family, so, I confess, I was a little surprised that you were so seriously interested in Mrs Ferrars’ personality.”

Beyond doubt, the Hungarian translation is just as long as the original text, which suggests that the translator maintained the well-elaborated linguistic structures. Similar to the English text, Lucy’s introduction of the topic (7) begins with a delaying structure referring to the topic and then she continues with the actual question. However, a change can be detected in the first utterance. In the original text, we have the verb *pray* used impersonally as opposed to the Hungarian which is not impersonal at all, but it is a bald on-record formal imperative *mondja meg* (‘tell me’). This structure subverts the indirectness of negative politeness. The *tu/vous* feature of Hungarian saves the tone of the whole contribution. In the case of English, one cannot express respect or even social distance with the use of personal pronouns, but in Hungarian it is possible to do that by using the more formal *vous* conjugation of the verb. When translating the English pronoun “you”, the Hungarian language has two options: *te* and *ön*. We use the former one when the participants are in a friendly, close relationship, they

have common ground, while the use of the latter suggests social distance and it is used to be the mark of respect and formality in Hungarian. In our case, the translator used *ön*, which presupposes a great deal of respect between the speaker and the listener.

As mentioned earlier, some sort of pessimism governs Lucy's utterances, which totally disappears from the Hungarian translation. In the English text, Lucy asks a negative question regarding Mrs Ferrars' personality. In Hungarian, we have an affirmative question which is pervaded by some insecurity, but it is not a negative but a positive polite question. All in all, Lucy's Hungarian contribution remains a hedge-like utterance, but it is more direct and not pessimistic at all. The only feature that marks the presence of distance is the translation of the pronoun "you" as *ön* i.e. *vous*.

After Elinor's reply, besides the similarities (repetition of the delaying structure at the beginning) more differences can be detected in the Hungarian translation. The source text contains impersonal elements (*but perhaps there may be reasons*) that are personal ones in the translation (*de talán megvan rá az okom* 'but perhaps I have reason to do so'). Due to this feature of the translation, the distance between the speaker and the listener disappears, they become "closer" to each other. In the next utterance, we have a conditional (*bárcsak elmondhatnám* 'I wish I could tell you') similar to the original text, and it also functions as a means of delaying the real message of the contribution. The translator keeps the conditional form and the use of hedges. The last part of the dialogue does not change significantly in the translation. Just like in the source text, the translator uses compliments, nominalizing the flatter to Elinor, which is a typical feature of negative politeness. Some sort of pessimism can be felt in this part of the Hungarian dialogue as well, both referring to Lucy's own situation and Elinor's previous and future reaction. What makes this part of the contribution similar to negative politeness is the use of *tu/vous* distinction. Without using the respectful form of address "ön", the whole contribution would become a positively polite one since it would sound like two close friends talking about mothers-in-law or future husbands. The use of the informal *tu* form ("tegezés") would not sound strange to Hungarian ears but it would spoil the respectful tone of the whole conversation.

The significant changes regarding the means of negative polite structures are the absence of impersonal structures and the single imperative at the beginning. The first one suggests some closeness between participants, which we obviously do not have in this case as these ladies hate each other for different reasons. The latter one changes the degree of indirectness embedded in the source text and transforms Lucy's contribution into a more direct one which also lets us assume their closeness.

The following conversation occurs between Lucy Steel and Lady Middleton while preparing some baskets for Lady Middleton's daughter.

Dialogue 5

(9) **L. M.:** "I am glad," said Lady Middleton to Lucy, "you are not going to finish poor little Annamaria's basket this evening; for I am sure it must hurt your eyes to work fillagree by candlelight. And we will make the dear little love some amends for her disappointment tomorrow, and then I hope she will not much mind it." (Austen 2012: 139–140)

When somebody says exactly the opposite of what s/he thinks, is the most indirect, and being indirect always means negative politeness. Lady Middleton's words (9) say that Lucy does not have to do the basket but obviously she means its opposite: she wants Lucy to make the basket. In order to increase the tone of the negatively polite structure, she delivers her utterance in a totally pessimistic way. If we look at this example from the perspective of negative politeness, we can claim that Lady Middleton uses this type of strategy to completely minimize the imposition on Lucy's face showing that she does not want to influence her freedom of action. The more indirect you are, the better chance you have to achieve your purpose or get what you want. Exactly the same happened to Lucy Steel: she realised the meaning of the hint since she recollected herself instantly and replied *Indeed you are very much mistaken, Lady Middleton* (Austen 2012: 140) and she finished the basket for the lady's daughter.

In the following we will analyse the Hungarian translation, whether this reverse psychology is embedded in the target language as well.

Hungarian Dialogue 5

(9) **L. M.:** – Örülök (...), hogy nem szándékozik ma este befejezni szegény kis Annamaria kosarát, bizonytal nem tenne jót a szemének a gyertyafénynél végzett aprólékos munka. Holnap majd kárpótoljuk valamivel szegény kis drágámat a csalódásért, s remélem, nem fog nagyon bánkódni. (Austen 2016: 122)

Back translation:

L. M.: "I am happy [...] that you have no intention to finish poor little Annamaria's basket tonight, certainly the meticulous work done by candlelight would not do any good to your eyes. We are going to make some amends for my poor little darling for her disappointment, and I hope that she won't be very sad."

In the Hungarian dialogue presented above, we can see that there are no changes in the types of politeness strategies rendered throughout the process of translation. The utterance starts with the speaker meaning the opposite of what is said. It continues with the concern shown towards Lucy's face, another trait of negative politeness. The pessimistic tone also pervades the whole contribution regarding the future action of the listener. The imposition on Lucy's negative face is highly mitigated in the Hungarian target text, as well. Her freedom of action is influenced only indirectly, not pressingly. We should also mention that the translation enhances the politeness embedded into Lady Middleton's use of the formal *vous* verbal form which transformed her utterances into more respectful and polite contributions.

Conclusion

After analysing all the selected dialogues, we can claim that the Hungarian translation dominantly carries the specific features of negative politeness. In the case of two dialogues, some of the negatively polite utterances are transformed into positively polite sentences. Once, when Elinor talks to her sister, Marianne, her negatively polite sentences lose their impersonal tone and become positive polite ones. On the one hand, this is how two sisters talk to each other in Hungarian. It sounds more natural to be positively polite among siblings. On the other hand, regarding verbs and pronouns conjugated in the *tu/vous* system, by obviously choosing *tu* creates common ground and a friendly medium for speakers, resulting in their becoming closer to each other.

Another change must also be mentioned: the use of family and first names. When a speaker uses a person's or the listener's family name, both in English and in Hungarian, it is the sign of respect. On the other hand, the use of first names suggests closeness, friendliness between those who apply them. When translating Elinor's utterances, the translator uses this technique to suggest closeness and emotional connection between Edward and Elinor. In the rest of Elinor Dashwood's linguistic manifestations there is no significant change between the source and the target text from the perspective of pragmatic politeness. These remarks allow us to draw the conclusion that a slight change can be detected in Elinor's personality. When she talks to her family and loved ones, in the source text she equally uses negative politeness, while in Hungarian this is transformed into positive politeness. Concerning those whom she does not love, she uses her cold sense, well-structured polite formulas and distance-based approach to face both in the source text and in the translation, as well.

In the case of Lucy Steel, the indirectness loses from its degree throughout the process of translation. Instead of negative questions, the translator uses positive ones, and some imperatives are also embedded into Lucy's Hungarian utterances. This decreases the degree of distance between the two ladies found in the English version, since they do not particularly like each other. A compensating device is detected when the translator uses the formal *vous* variant when translating the pronoun *you*, which also enhances the respect and concern shown toward the listeners' faces.

Regarding Lady Middleton, we can talk about successful translations, since her negatively polite utterances mirror the original text in Hungarian. Therefore our final conclusion is that negative politeness changes in Hungarian when we talk about the intimate relationship between the characters of the novel.

As the summarised results present above, only those negatively polite conversations change in the translation that appear between participants who are emotionally close, who care about and love each other. The strategies employed between speakers who have no emotional connection do not change throughout the process of translation. This change is not significant, therefore it does not bring meaningful adjustment to the characters' traits.

Works Cited

Primary references

Austen, Jane. 2012. *Sense and Sensibility*. London: Penguin English Library

Austen, Jane. 2016. *Értelem és érzelem*. [Transl.: Gerda Barcza]. Szeged: Lazi Könyvkiadó.

Secondary references

Bándli Judit 2013. Az egyet nem értés pragmatikája [The Pragmatics of Disagreement].
Magyar Nyelvőr 1: 97–109

Brown, Penelope and Stephen C. Levinson. 1978. Universals in Language Usage: Politeness Phenomena. In: Goody, Esther N. (ed.), *Questions and Politeness: Strategies in Social Interaction*, 56–310. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brown, Penelope and Stephen C. Levinson. 1987. *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fox, Kate. 2004. *Watching the English*. London: Hodder.

Hickey, Leo and Miranda Stewart. 2005. *Politeness in Europe*. Clevedon: Cromwell Press.

- Szili, Katalin. 2000. Az udvariasság elméletéről, megjelenésmódjairól a magyar nyelvben [On the Theory and Modes of Politeness in Hungarian], 261–280. *Hungarológia* 2. Nemzetközi Hungarológia Központ. Budapest.
- 2007. Az udvariasság pragmatikája. [The Pragmatics of Politeness] *Magyar Nyelvőr* 131 (1): 1–16. www.c3.hu/nyelvor/period/1311/1311/pdf.