

**THESES OF PHD DISSERTATION**

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**THE CHANGING COMPOSITION OF A PARABLE  
IN OLD HUNGARIAN BIBLE  
TRANSLATIONS**

**(BASED ON THE PARABLE “THE PRODIGAL SON”)**



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## **I. Aim of the dissertation, defining the theme**

The Bible has been translated into Hungarian several times since the Middle Ages. That is the reason why philology and especially the historical linguistics have always focussed attention on these translations of the Bible. They can be excellent source documents considering both the synchronic and diachronic aspects.

In my work I thoroughly examined the translations of one of the best known parables of the New Testament, 'The Prodigal Son', the linguistic phenomena of these materials were analysed. Here is the list of the source documents: the 'Müncheni Kódex' (M.), the 'Jordánszky-kódex' (J.), the New Testaments of Pesti Gábor (P.), Sylvester János (S.) and Félegyházi Tamás (F.), the Bible translations of Heltai Gáspár (H.), Károlyi Gáspár (Kr.), Káldi György (Kd.) and Komáromi Csipkés György (Cs.), the Lutheran translation of Torkos András (T.) and fragments of the text of Medgyesi Pál (Md.). I intended to show the linguistic processes found in the texts of the examined era in a wider time interval and partially I studied some Hungarian texts from later times. To demonstrate the end point of linguistic changes I involved the newest Catholic and Protestant translations in my research. From the period of transition I studied the Vizsoly Bible and the revision and revised publications of the Káldi text.

The main aim of the dissertation is to reveal the changing and consolidating processes in the language usage according to the chosen Hungarian translations of the parable with the help of a detailed analysis of the texts to explain these processes as far as possible. To achieve this aim I considered to carry out several necessary tasks: a) profound comparing the translations with the original Greek and Latin ones and with each other; b) to reveal the state of the language of the texts included in the study; c) to register the changing possibilities on different levels of the language shown by the parallel existing variants to demonstrate their contingent realization in order to trace them; d) to seek for the reasons of causal and teleological as regards external and internal movements and changes.

Before the analysis I enclosed the full version of the parable, respectively every examined translation and resource in individual verses are also included.

## **II. The methods applied, working process**

Choosing the methods and the procedure of my study was primarily affected by the aims and the limits of the analysis. I chose the context (cohesion) as a guiding principle because it

is suitable to provide wide-ranging possibilities for examining the various linguistic elements and phenomena on the surface of the parables.

Actually, I analysed the means of this examination in my dissertation revealing their relationship with the appropriate means of the source texts and on the other hand I showed and explained the movements, changes and consolidation passed off during the times. Besides the comparative contextual analysis of the given means I often carried out phonetic, morphological, lexicological analysis and their syntax was studied, too.

Examining the cohesive means I adopted two different approaches. For the synchronic type of my analysis I used the method worked out by Petőfi S. János published in the books of ‘Officina Textologica’, whereas for the historical analysis the method of Károly Sándor (1995: 759–834) was used.

The procedure of exploring the context was similar to the sample study of Petőfi S. János (1998: 8–19). First the text was taken down into sentences. In the second phase every sentence was completed with verbal phrases in italic font style put in brackets. These phrases include either the verbal environment of the sentences or our knowledge about the world. Then the referential parts of the sentences were completed with co-referential indices. Finally, I made the occurrences of the co-referential elements more perspicuous in a table format. Since the main direction of my research was the historical examination, the results of the above mentioned steps were included in the appendix but they were the basic elements for further research.

As for the diachronic examination one of the ways of the comparison was to associate the antecedents and the elements related to their age of the Greek and Latin source texts with the solutions of the given translations. Based on the results the next step was to highlight the characteristic tendencies being either identical or different. I also tried to show the changing trends. Working up the results was in a table format. I also characterized the diversity of the style at the referential parts and its economics was included in my essay, too.

### **III. Results of the research**

The most important achievement of my work is that it gives the most all-embracing linguistic analysis of the early Hungarian translations of this parable. In addition it has a lot of other achievements, some of them will be demonstrated as follows.

In the part of the dissertation with this title ‘**Realization of context in the texts**’ I gave a detailed comparison of cohesive elements of the source and target languages thus making it

possible to have a look at the technology of the translation procedure, translation techniques, transformations applied by the translators when translating the parables. The tables and the analyses after them highlight the following things: on one hand the mutual correspondence that existed between the particular elements and other kinds of means - perhaps they still exist now - in the relations of Greek – Hungarian and Latin – Hungarian languages, on the other hand those points (in bold font type) where there are differences between the original version and the Hungarian translation, namely where the translators made transformations, thirdly the movements run their course in time, the alternations, the changes, the fixations can be easily surveyed. Illustrating the above mentioned facts there is a sample: pronominal possessive attributes in an anaphoric role.

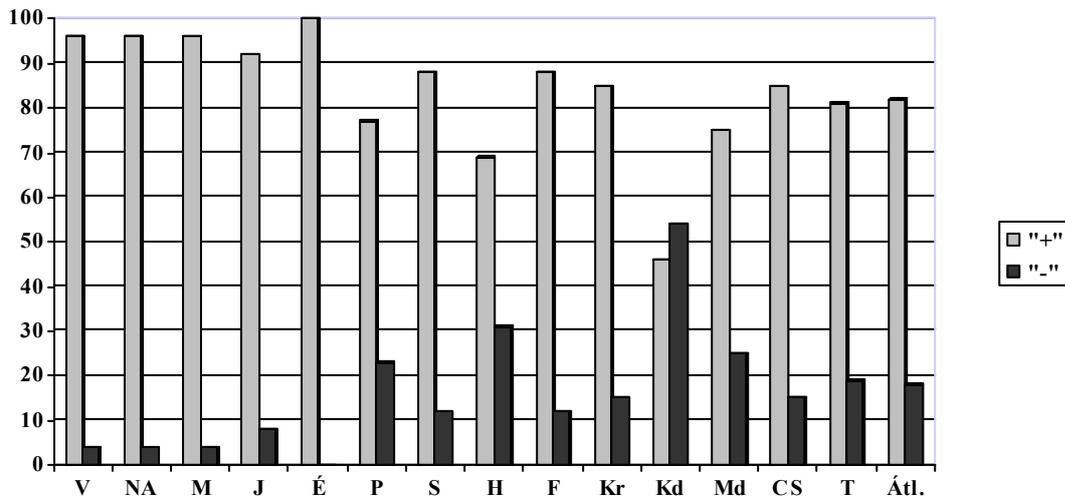
In the Latin and Greek translation of the parable we can often experience the analytical expressions of possession (structures including possessive pronouns or personal pronouns with the same role) because of the nature and type of these languages. From the table below these two ways can be clearly differentiated, the way these foreign elements were translated into Hungarian using explicit or implicit pronouns instead of the original Greek or Latin ones.

#### 1.2 The Younger Boy (i03)

Ref. egység:	Vulgata	Káldi	Nestle–Aland	KomáromiBibl..
Ref. egység:	<i>duos filios</i> <sup>11</sup>	<i>két fia</i> <sup>11</sup>	<i>δύο υιούς</i> <sup>11</sup>	<i>két fia</i> <sup>11</sup>
<b>SZÓMÁSOK:</b> - névmás birtokos jelzőként:	<i>substantiam suam</i> <sup>13, 30</sup> <i>ventrem suum</i> <sup>16</sup> <i>patris mei</i> <sup>17</sup> <i>ad patrem meum</i> <sup>18</sup> <i>ad patrem suum</i> <sup>20</sup> <i>pater ipsius</i> <sup>20</sup> <i>supra collum eius</i> <sup>20</sup> <i>in manum eius</i> <sup>22</sup> <i>in pedes (eius)</i> <sup>22</sup>	<i>az x κίχκ/égét</i> <sup>13,30</sup> – – <i>az én atyámhoz</i> <sup>18</sup> – <i>az x atya</i> <sup>20</sup> – – –	<i>Οὐσίαν αὐτοῦ</i> <sup>13</sup> ( <i>την κοιλίαν αὐτοῦ</i> <sup>16</sup> ) <i>πατρός μου</i> <sup>17</sup> <i>πατέρα μου</i> <sup>18</sup> <i>πατέρα αὐτοῦ</i> <sup>20</sup> <i>πατήρ αὐτοῦ</i> <sup>20</sup> <i>ἐπὶ τὸν τράχηλον αὐτοῦ</i> <sup>20</sup> <i>χεῖρα αὐτοῦ</i> <sup>22</sup>	<i>az ő jószágát</i> <sup>13</sup> <b><i>az ő hafát</i></b> <sup>16</sup> <i>az én atyámnak</i> <sup>17</sup> <i>az én atyámhoz</i> <sup>18</sup> <i>az ő atyához</i> <sup>20</sup> <i>az ő atya</i> <sup>20</sup> <i>az ő nyakára</i> <sup>20</sup>  <i>az ő kezébe</i> <sup>22</sup>
- ø névmás birtokos jelzői funkcióban:	<i>patri</i> <sup>12</sup> <i>ventrem suum</i> <sup>16</sup> <i>pater</i> <sup>12,18,21</sup> , <i>patris mei</i> <sup>17</sup> <i>ad patrem suum</i> <sup>20</sup> <i>collum eius</i> <sup>20</sup> <i>pater ipsius</i> <sup>20</sup> , <i>pater</i> <sup>28</sup> <i>in manum eius</i> <sup>22</sup> <i>in pedes</i> <sup>22</sup>	<b><i>az ø atyanak</i></b> <sup>12</sup> <b><i>a' ø hasát</i></b> <sup>16</sup> <b><i>az ø atyám</i></b> <sup>12,17,18, 21</sup> <b><i>az ø atyahoz</i></b> <sup>20</sup> <b><i>a' ø nyakára</i></b> <sup>20</sup> <b><i>az ø atya</i></b> <sup>22, 28</sup> <b><i>a' ø kezébe</i></b> <sup>22</sup> <b><i>a' ø lábaiba</i></b> <sup>22</sup>	<i>τῷ πατρί</i> <sup>12</sup>  <i>Πάτερ</i> <sup>12, 18,21</sup>    <i>Τοὺς πόδας</i> <sup>22</sup>	<b><i>az ø atyanak</i></b> <sup>12</sup>  <b><i>ø atyám</i></b> <sup>12, 18, 21</sup>    <b><i>ø lábaiba</i></b> <sup>22</sup>

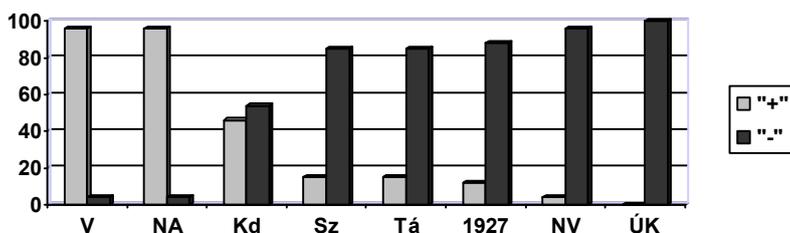
In the course of the analysis it turned out that the former one is typical of the early texts (codices), whereas in the latter case it is typical of the later texts (the works of Heltai and Káldi). On the other hand it can be seen that the preponderance of the explicit form is characteristic of the whole era while the implicit form is gradually spreading. The illustration below makes it perceptible in an excellent way.

**Graph about the ratio of the existence of pronouns (+) and lack of pronouns (-)**



In the background of these tendencies there could be a multitude of factors: the prestige of Latin language, the sacral nature of the text, the practice in the study of literature, text traditions etc. From the middle part of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the two ways showed major fluctuation as a sign of a changing process. According to the texts written after this period the process was aimed at nearly absolute use of the implicit form and it is proven unambiguously by the illustration below.

**Illustration of comparing the percentage of revisions done by Káldi**



In the background of this process there could be numerous factors: changes between the prestige of the Latin and Hungarian language, the modification in the relation with the text, the growing influence of live language usage etc.

The dissertation often drew attention to the fact that the nature of source texts of Bible translations is not an insignificant factor even though its identification is not easy in all cases. The novelty of the dissertation is that I tried my best to reveal and track the original versions of these texts in the most *circumspect* way, thus I used various *critical* editions published in Greek and Latin and other texts: the Latin and Greek texts of Erasmus, the *textus receptus*, the *Vulgata Clementina* etc. That is to say, choosing the means of reference was divided

depending on the source texts. For example in the 12<sup>th</sup> stanza in the Latin text there is a  $\emptyset$  pronoun used as subject related to the father whereas in the Greek it is a copulents pronoun:  $\emptyset$  divisit ~  $\acute{o}$  → MünchK.: „ $\emptyset$  |g oÇta”; JordK.: „ $\emptyset$  el oztha”; ÉrsK.: „ $\emptyset$  meg ozta”; PestiNTest.: „ $\emptyset$  meg oÁta”, Káldi: „ $\emptyset$  el-ofztá”, HeltUT.: „Az kedig meg of3ta”; KárBibl.: „az, meg of3ta”; MedgyesiPréd.: „a’ megofztá”

We can experience the same with the means of time organization. In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> stanzas the Greek language expresses the antecedence with a participle in the case of the Hungarian word ‘felkel’ whereas the Latin uses pertaining co-ordinate compound sentence first and later a participle and a verb pairing them. Hence texts derived from Greek we can find participles whereas texts derived from Latin contain verbs and participles: FélegyháziUT.: *Felkeluen*<sup>18</sup>, *felkeluen*<sup>20</sup>; KárBibl.: *Fel keluén*<sup>18</sup>, *Fel keluén*<sup>20</sup>; Torkos: ÚT.: *Felkelvén*<sup>18</sup>, *felkelvén*<sup>20</sup>; illetve MünchK.: *felkèlec*<sup>18</sup>, *fèl kèluē*<sup>20</sup>; PestiNTest.: *fel kelek*<sup>18</sup>, *fel kelwen*<sup>20</sup>; Káldi: *fel-kelek*<sup>18</sup>, *fel-kelevén*<sup>20</sup>

The dissertation deals with effects originated in the practice in the study of literature in several aspects. Translating these Latin texts for many centuries the grammatical correspondences and patterns became ingrained in the scribes’ consciousness so considerably that they used them automatically in their translations. The influence of this practice especially can be seen in the Hungarian translation of the parable in the cases of tenses, principally the past tense, the mood corresponding to ‘consecutio temporum’, when converting participles and in the translations of synonym pairs. Examining the tenses it is obvious that the Hungarian verb forms corresponding to the Latin ones appeared in those texts primarily originated in Greek sources: the narrative past, the past with ‘-t’, or the ‘ $\emptyset$ +vala’ form. The consecutio temporum rule found in some compound sentence types of the Latin language generated a characteristic verb mood in the Hungarian equivalents. It can be found not only in the Greek sources but sometimes in some texts where the Latin source did not justify it. It means that the frequent use rendered the pattern independent.

The 13<sup>th</sup> stanza is an eloquent example, where putting the participles to the sentence level was done by an adverb of time clauses. The verb of the sentences transformed this way got the form according to the rule of consecutio temporum in almost every case as if they were the Hungarian translations of the verbs in coniunctivus perfectum. The translation of the 30<sup>th</sup> stanza is similar in the works of Károlyi. The verb of the clause is in praesens perfectum (*venit*<sup>30</sup>), in the Greek it is in pedigaoristos ind. ( $\eta\lambda\theta\varepsilon\nu$ <sup>30</sup>). Károlyi translated this text as if it was in con. praeteritum perfectum, too: *meg i%tt vólna*<sup>30</sup>. This solution is reminiscent of using

the consecutio temporum rule, too, where the perfecta actio highlights the antecedence of the predicate of the dependent clause, however, it was formed independently of the source, this way: „*Minec vtánna pedig ez te fiad meg i%tt vólna*, ki minden te marhádat az paráznackal k%lt%tte el, *meg %letted % néki amaz hizlalt tulkot*”. As for the synonym pairs, becoming a formula could be a general phenomenon in this early period. Its consequences can be traced easily in the examined texts with the example of *epulari [laetari] autem et gaudere*, where the two Hungarian words – *örül (örvend) és vigad* –, as a pair appeared very early and it was dominant in almost every Hungarian translation irrespective of their source.

While analysing certain elements I could consider several evidence of the fact that the text tradition can strongly influence the translation made at later times. It becomes visible both in a general sense – as the text of the parable became a tradition by either a verbal way or by literacy – and concretely, as a tradition of some certain texts. The most characteristic example for the former one could be the translation of the notion of squandering (‘tékozlás’). In the source texts we can meet this notion three times and it is represented by three different words (Lk 15,13.14.30): *διεσκόρπισεν*<sup>13</sup>, *δαπανήσαντος*<sup>14</sup>, *καταφαγών*<sup>30</sup> ~ *dissipavit*<sup>13</sup>, *consummasset*<sup>14</sup>, *devoravit*<sup>30</sup>. In its first appearance in the 13<sup>th</sup> stanza it was translated using the word ‘squander’. As it is clearly seen from my examination the translators could have other choice either then or nowadays. According to the equivalence conditions of that period in the case of the word ‘*dissipo*’ either having a look at the practice of translating Latin words into Hungarian (*dissipo* = *elhányom, elszéllesztem, pusztítom, olykor tékozlom*; vö. MA., PPB.), or the Latin equivalents of the word squander (Gl. *tékozlás, tékozlom* = *prodigalitas, dissipare, abligurio, devastatio*, PestiNom. *tékozló* = *prodigus, decoctor, discintus, largus*, MA. *eltékozlom* = *prodigo, disperdo*, PPB. *eltékozlom* = *dilapido, disperdo, abligurio*), there are no close constraints between the two words (*dissipo* and ‘*tékozlom*’), thus theoretically the translators could choose from different kinds of synonym possibilities. The Greek basic word can also offer different possibilities to translate (‘*szétszór, elszéleszt, széthány, eltékozol*’). The fact that the ‘*tékozol*’ (squander) word was used with no exceptions can be explained by the centuries-old traditions experienced in the text of the parable and by its naming process.

Different in nature but a similar tradition was formed at later times connected to some translations having high reputation and respect, such as the Vizsoly Bible or the translation of Káldi György. The influence of these texts can be proven several times by facts. For example, in the usage field in the background of the considerable spread of this word swill (‘*moslék*’)

can be explained by the effects of the Vizsoly Bible. We can explore connections between the distribution of the explicit and implicit forms of pronominal possessive attributes, or the distribution of the synonym words meaning property ( 'vagyom' ) and the tradition of the bibles having high reputation and respect.

Naturally, these bibles influenced their revised editions the strongest way. Besides the modernization the translators took very good care to preserve the antiquity and impart the flavour of their bible translations as far as possible. There are several data in the dissertation to prove this phenomenon .Besides these, there are thorough analyses of the usage to demonstrate how many factors influenced the certain translators when choosing the appropriate phrases which is theoretically free. There is also a thorough analysis of the usage and the related processes of the pronouns, articles, conjunctions and elements for expressing time and space. Tables and graphs help the clarity and the logistics of this work.

In the summary I listed all the factors that could influence the translators during their work: the principles of the translators, differences between the languages, the text tradition, the practice of translation, the knowledge of previous translations, the religious affiliation, the target audience, the sacral feature of the text to be translated, the competence of the translators etc.

1. Gl. = Berrár Jolán–Károly Sándor (szerk.) 1984. *Régi magyar glosszárium*. Budapest.
2. Károly Sándor 1995. Szöveggrammatika. In: *A magyar nyelv történet nyelvtana. II./2. A kései ómagyar kor*. Benkő Lóránd (főszerk). Budapest. 789–834.
3. MA. = Szenci Molnár Albert. *Dictionarium Latinoungaricum*. Nürnberg, 1604. Közzéteszi: Imre Mihály–Kőszeghy Péter. Budapest, 1990.
4. *Officina Textologica* 1.(1997), 2. (1998). Petőfi S. János (főszerk). Debrecen.
5. Petőfi S. János 1998. Koreferenciális elemek és koreferenciarelációk. In: Petőfi S. János (főszerk): Koreferáló elemek – koreferenciarelációk. *Officina textologica* 2. Debrecen. 8–19.
6. PestiNom = Pesti Gábor. *Nomenclatura sex linguarum...* Bécs, 1538. Hasonmás kiadás: Budapest, 1922.
7. PPB. = Pápai Páriz Ferenc. *Dictionarium Latino-Hungaricum [...] locupelatum intentione ac labore Petri Bod. I–II*. Cibinii, 1767. Hasonmás kiadás: Budapest, 1995.

#### IV. Publications on the theme by the writer of this dissertation

1. Félegyházi Tamás és Komáromi Csipkés György bibliafordításának kapcsolatáról. *Magyar Nyelv*, 2003. 69-70.
2. A latin és görög igenevek fordításáról régi bibliai szövegeinkben. *Magyar Nyelvjárások XLI*. A Debreceni Egyetem Magyar Nyelvtudományi Intézetének évkönyve. Szerk.: Hoffmann István – Kis Tamás. Debrecen, 2003. 83–92.
3. A latin és görög igenevek fordításáról régi bibliai szövegeinkben. (másodközlés) *Tanulmányok a magyar egyházi nyelv története köréből*. Szerk.: A. Molnár Ferenc – M. Nagy Ilona. Debreceni Egyetem Magyar Nyelvtudományi Tanszék. Debrecen, 2003. 89-101.
4. Egy bibliai reália átváltásának a magyar fordításokban mutatkozó gyakorlatáról. *Acta Academiae Paedagogicae Agriensis*. Nova Series Tom. XXXII. Sectio linguistica hungarica. Szerk.: Zimányi Árpád. Eger, 2005. 159–168.
5. Az időviszonyítás szövegkohéziós eszközei a Tékozló fiú példázatában. *Irodalmi és nyelvi kölcsönhatások az integráció folyamatában. – Literárne a jazykové interakcie v procese integrácie*. Főszerk.: Alabán Ferenc. Banská Bystrica, 2005. 253–9.
6. Preklad isteĵ biblickej reálie v maďarských bibliách. *Analytické sondy do textu 2*. UMB. Filologická fakulta. Katedra slovakistiky. Banská Bystrica, 2006. 86–91.
7. A szentjánoskenyér megfeleltetései régi bibliafordításainkban. *Irodalmi Szemle*. 2006. 9: 67–75.
8. Az igekötők időviszonyító szerepe a Tékozló fiú példázatának korai fordításaiban. *Kontext – Filológia – Kultúra*. Katedra hungaristiky FiF. UMB – Eszterházy Károly Főiskola, Magyar Nyelvészeti Tanszék. Banská Bystrica – Eger, 2006. 289–297.
9. A névmási birtokos jelzős szerkezetek megjelenése a Tékozló fiú példázatának régi magyar fordításaiban. *LingDok 6. Nyelvész-doktoranduszok dolgozatai*. Szerk.: Sinkovics Balázs. SZTE, Nyelvtudományi Doktori Iskola. JATEPress, Szeged, 2007. 11–28.
10. A térjelölés eszközei a Tékozló fiú példázatának szövegében. *Szemiotika és tipológia (A komplex jelek kutatása) Semiotica Agriensis 4*. Szerk.: Balázs Géza H. Varga Gyula. Magyar Szemiotikai Társaság. Líceum Kiadó, Eger, 2007. 109–115