

NON-FINITE FORMS IN TRANSLATION

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Abstract: *English non-finite forms (gerunds, participles, infinitives) are reduced clauses mostly without straightforward equivalents in Romanian, which often makes their translation problematic. Following this idea, the article investigates the translation strategies used to render -ing participial constructions in order to identify the range of syntactic patterns generated in Romanian, and possible translation issues. The study argues that two strategies dominate the picture (literal translation and compensation by splitting) and their selection generally depends on the type of participial construction they translate. The findings also support the view of explicitation as a universal translation strategy (Blum-Kulka 1986, Klaudy and Karoly 2005, Klaudy 2003, 2009, etc.).*

Key words: *compensation by splitting, explicitation, -ing participial constructions, literal translation*

1. Introduction

English non-finite forms (gerunds, present and past participles, and infinitives) are compact clausal structures with special features. They may select expressed or unexpressed subjects, they have aspectual properties, some may be introduced by conjunctions and prepositions (see Huddleston and Pullum 2005, Cornilescu 2003, Vișan 2001, etc.). Quite importantly, since they lack regular equivalent forms in Romanian, translators have to pay special attention when rendering them into the latter language, especially in the case of the various types of gerundial and participial *-ing* constructions, for which the Romanian gerund is sometimes the wrong choice.

In light of these observations, the present article aims to explore the strategies employed by translators to render *-ing* participial constructions into Romanian, as well as the range of syntactic structures these strategies generate, and to relate the emerging patterns to the concept of explicitation as a translation universal, as proposed by a number of researchers in the field of translation studies (Blum-Kulka 1986, Klaudy and Karoly 2005, Klaudy 2003, 2009, Molés-Cases 2019, among others). Conducted within the theoretical framework put forth by Hervey and Higgins (1992), the analysis relies on a fairly substantial corpus of 285 tokens covering almost the whole range of available syntactic patterns built on participles (present participial constructions with PRO (i.e., unexpressed) subjects, Absolute Constructions, Accusative+Present Participle structures). The corpus is selected from a number of books of the fantasy genre written by Joe Abercrombie and their translated versions produced by three Romanian translators: *The Heroes* (2011), translated by Monica Șerban (*Eroii*, Editura Nemira, 2019) (TT1, henceforth), *Best Served Cold* (2009), translated by Ruxandra Toma (*Dulce răzbunare*, Editura Nemira, 2017) (TT2, henceforth), and *Last Argument of Kings* (2008), translated by Mihnea Columbeanu (*Puterea armelor*, Editura Nemira, 2017) (TT3, henceforth). Abercrombie's books provide ample material for this investigation since the author's dynamic writing style is reinforced by his using various syntactically condensed structures: resultative and Goal of Motion constructions, different types of synthetic compounds, and, most relevant for the present analysis, an extensive array of non-finite constructions.

The analysis will show that translators prefer two main strategies when rendering participial constructions into Romanian and their choice tends to depend on the type of present participle structure they translate.

One option is literal translation, which appears to be the strategy of choice when the participial structure has an unexpressed subject and operates as adverbial clause (of Time, Reason, Manner, etc.).

The other main option is compensation by splitting. Although used to render participial clauses with unexpressed subjects as well, compensation by splitting is, nevertheless, the strategy favoured by translators when rendering Absolute Constructions. The reason might be that this syntactic pattern, though present in Romanian as the Absolute Gerundial Construction, is rather marginal in this language precisely because it lexicalises its own subject and, as a result, is perceived as unconventional and features mainly in written contexts of the formal and literary kind. Consequently, the English construction is not readily available for literal translation, and compensation by splitting is used instead. On the other hand, compensation by splitting also becomes a choice to render participial constructions with unexpressed subjects when the translator means to disambiguate the adverbial relation existing between the participial subordinate and the matrix clause.

Statistically, of the two strategies, compensation by splitting is slightly more frequent, likely due to the translators' tendency to clarify the syntactic status and interpretation of the participial constructions, as well as to the high frequency of Absolute Constructions in the source text.

In addition to the two strategies mentioned, there are other compensation techniques with opposing effects; compensation in place usually accompanies compensation by splitting, generating syntactically lengthened structures, whereas compensation by merging, which is by far less frequent, reduces the original verbal structures to prepositional or adverbial phrases. However, the translators' preference for compensation by splitting leads to a higher number of lengthened structures. Therefore, since the expansion of the source text constructions appears to be a regular occurrence, the findings of the analysis may be interpreted as lending further support to the view whereby explicitation, as defined in the literature (Blum-Kulka 1986, Klaudy and Karoly 2005, Klaudy 2003, 2009, Molés-Cases 2019, etc.), is, indeed, a universal translation strategy.

The article is structured as follows: Section 2 provides a syntactic classification of the various types of participial constructions under analysis and makes a number of predictions regarding their translation based on their syntactic properties; Section 3 analyses the corpus from the perspective of the translation strategies adopted and the resulting syntactic patterns; Section 4 discusses the statistical results of the analysis, and Section 5 presents the conclusions of the study.

2. Theoretical Background

The English present participle is a purely verbal *-ing* form characterized by a number of properties typical of non-finite forms. Specifically, although it is not marked for Tense, it is marked for Aspect (it combines with the perfect – *have+en* – to express anteriority), Voice (it allows passivisation), and Negation with the negative marker *not*, it may select subjects in the Nominative and it may be introduced by conjunctions. Excepting the present participle used as a marker of the progressive aspect in combination with the auxiliary *be* and the *-ing* adjectival participle, this verbal form is the core of a number of clausal structures operating either as arguments or as adjuncts.

Thus, the present participle may restrictively appear in participial clauses functioning as arguments of main verbs. These are the Accusative+Participle construction and its passivised version, the Nominative+Participle structure, selected by verbs of perception (*see, hear, watch, notice, feel, smell*), causative verbs (*get, have, send*) and miscellaneous verbs like *find, keep, and leave*, as illustrated in (1) below:

- (1) a. I watched *him going into the shop*.
b. *The man* was last seen *boarding a train at Reading*.
c. The search party found *the climber clinging to a rock ledge*.
d. The doctor will soon have *you skiing again*.

Most of the examples above are instances of Accusative+Participle constructions c-selected by transitive main verbs (*watch* in (1a), *find* in (1b), and causative *have* in (1d)), all constructions functioning as Direct Object clauses. In contrast, the split participial construction in italics in (1b) is an instance of Nominative+Participle, a passivised version of, say, *We last saw the man boarding a train at Reading*. This structure operates as Subject Clause, hence it is another clausal argument.

Whereas the Accusative/Nominative+Participle patterns are restricted in use due to the fact that they are selected by specific categories of verbs, participial clauses used as adjuncts are free to occur in a variety of contexts, as illustrated in (2) below:

- (2) a. *Knowing* he was at fault, he ran away.
b. “Good stone, that”, he said, *peering at the ruby*.
c. As if she hadn't spent an hour *preening herself before the mirror*.
d. *While visiting his aunt*, he noticed that the painting was missing.
e. The man *leaving her house* was not her brother.

All the examples above include participial clauses with unexpressed logical subjects, i.e. PRO subjects that are coreferential with those of the predicates in the matrix clauses. Beyond that, each illustrates a different type of adjunct: Adverbial Clause of Reason in (2a), Adverbial Clause of Time in (2b), Adverbial Clause of Manner in (2c), Adverbial Clause of Time again in (2d), but notice that this participial construction is introduced by a time conjunction, and Attributive Clause (Restrictive Relative Clause) modifying the subject of the Main Clause (*the man*) in (2e).

Alternatively, present participles may feature in the so-called Absolute Constructions, when they select their own subjects in the Nominative case. These syntactic structures are also attributed adjunct status, operating as adverbial clauses of some type (see (3) below):

- (3) a. The bodyguard grunted, [*grip*]_{Subject} *slipping on the wire*.
b. [*The holidays*]_{Subject} *being over*, we must start working on our projects.
c. A minute later, [*nerves*]_{Subject} *still tangling*, Jem and I were on the sidewalk headed for home.
(Todorova 2013: 185)
d. [*Weather*]_{Subject} *permitting*, we could go on a three-day trip to the mountains.

The examples above share two properties: they have their own expressed subjects and are semantically indeterminate in the absence of standard subordinating elements (i.e. conjunctions) overtly specifying particular adverbial relations (Todorova 2013). Thus, the participial clause in (3a) functions as Adverbial Clause of Time (< “The bodyguard grunted as his grip was slipping on the wire/when his grip slipped on the wire”), that in (3b) is an Adverbial Clause of Reason (< “As/since the holidays were over...”), the structure in (3c) is an Adverbial Clause of Manner (< “with nerves still tangling”), and that in (3d), an Adverbial Clause of Condition (< “if the weather permits...”).

As briefly stated in the introduction, the present analysis builds on the idea that the syntactic type of participial clause will determine the translation strategy selected to render it into Romanian. In particular, two predictions will be made concerning the translation of English participial constructions into Romanian:

- (i) given the properties of present participles in participial clauses with unexpressed subjects, translators will overwhelmingly opt for literal translation, i.e.,

grammatical equivalence, and use Romanian gerundial forms with unexpressed subjects that are coreferential with those selected by the main clause predicates since they are non-finite verbal forms with comparable characteristics (they are marked for Negation and Voice, they are aspectually durative, denoting situations simultaneous with those in the main clause, and, syntactically, function mostly as adverbials);

- (ii) Absolute Constructions, though marginally present in Romanian as well (as Absolute Gerundial Constructions), are predicted to be more problematic to render using literal translation because of their unconventional internal structure (the presence of a Nominative subject in the context of a non-finite form is viewed as marginal in Romanian), and therefore, will be more readily translated by means of all manner of compensation strategies (compensation by splitting, compensation in place, grammatical transposition), the application of which will result in the lengthening of the source text structures.

As will be demonstrated in the following sections, the corpus analysis and the ensuing statistical assessment will generally confirm these predictions.

3. Corpus Analysis

An overall glance at the corpus reveals that English participial constructions are rendered into Romanian by means of a variety of syntactic patterns, ranging from phrases (APs, PPs, NPs, etc.) to reduced gerundial clauses with adverbial functions to finite clauses, be they root or matrix clauses or subordinate clauses – mostly adverbial and attributive, but also, occasionally, other subordinate types, such as direct object clauses. In their turn, these patterns are generated by a miscellany of translation strategies, which oftentimes overlap. However, there are two main strategies that appear to dominate the picture and they seem to generally translate distinct participial constructions. They are compensation by splitting and literal translation, and they are used to render participial clauses with and without their own subjects, respectively. The two techniques appear to be on equal footing, in the sense that the number of instances in which they are applied is relatively the same, an aspect that will be revisited in the next section. What is more, compensation by splitting is always doubled up by grammatical transposition, in so far as the latter strategy entails the replacement of the original participial construction with a different syntactic pattern (cf. Hervey and Higgins 1992), and this occurs whenever compensation by splitting is at work.

As already stated, *literal translation*, which replaces the original participial structure with a reduced gerundial clause in Romanian, is one of the most frequently used strategies. This is to be expected since the Romanian gerund is easily perceived as equivalent to the English present participle in view of the fact that they share a number of properties. In particular, both are morphologically marked by specialised suffixes (-*ând/-ind* and -*ing*, respectively), syntactically, both c-select and s-select their own arguments (subjects, objects, predicatives, etc.), together with which they form reduced (non-finite) clauses with the same (mostly adverbial and attributive) syntactic functions, and aspectually, they express, as a rule, situations in progress that are simultaneous with those expressed by the predicates in the matrix clauses. These properties are made apparent in the examples in (4) to (6) below:

- (4) a. Craw took a few slow paces forwards (...), *doing his best* to look light-hearted...
b. Gât-Îngust înaintă câțiva pași (...), *dându-și întreaga silință* să pară voios. (TT1)
- (5) a. "And you, *being an obedient sort*... obeyed."
b. "Iar tu, *fiind o fire supusă*... te-ai supus." (TT2)
- (6) a. They wrestled with it, teeth bared, *gasping spit in each other's faces*...
b. Cu fălcile încheștate, *gâfâind și împrôșcându-se cu scuipat*, începură să se lupte ca să pună stăpânire pe pumnalul acela. (TT2)

In each of the examples above, the original non-finite present participle is replaced with a non-finite gerundial form in Romanian, which describes a situation simultaneous with that expressed by the predicate in the main clause. Both verbal forms c-select and s-select their arguments in (4) and (5) (the Direct Objects *his best/întreaga silință*, and the Predicatives *an obedient sort/o fire supusă*), have unexpressed PRO Subjects co-referential with those in the matrix clauses and the same syntactic function (the constructions in (4a,b) are Adverbial Clauses of Time, and those in (5a,b) are Adverbial Clauses of Reason). The Romanian version of (6a), while generally evincing the same characteristics as (4b) and (5b), is structurally different due to the quirkiness of the original participial construction, which is built on an intransitive unergative verb (*gasp*) used transitively in combination with a semantic cognate object (*spit* is the Direct Object NP and is attributed a resultative interpretation, i.e., it denotes the result of the subject's gasping) (cf. Avram 2003). To render the unusual combination, the translator employs several strategies simultaneously (literal translation, compensation in place and compensation by splitting), the result being that the verb and its object are translated into Romanian by two coordinated gerundial structures – *gâfâind și împrôșcându-se cu scuipat* (≈ "gasping and spitting at each other"). Thus, literal translation generates the gerundial forms, compensation by splitting lengthens the original construction to two coordinated reduced clauses, and compensation in place renders the object NP *spit* as a Manner-denoting PP (*împrôșcându-se [cu scuipat]_{PP}* is literally "splashing each other with spit").

Two more observations are in order at this point. Firstly, overlapping translation strategies are a common occurrence when rendering participial constructions into Romanian. As a rule, the overlapping strategies are some forms of compensation, as will be discussed below, resulting in the lengthening of the source text structures. Secondly, notice that in all the examples in (4) to (6) above, literal translation is used to render participial constructions with unexpressed subjects. While literal translation can also render Absolute Constructions (an aspect that will be discussed later in this section), using this technique to translate participial clauses with referential PRO subjects appears to be the norm.

The other prevalent translation strategy is *compensation by splitting*, which is selected to render both Absolute Constructions and participial clauses with unexpressed PRO subjects. According to Hervey and Higgins (1992), compensation by splitting entails the use of several words in the target text to reproduce the meaning of a specific word in the source text. Consequently, it overlaps with grammatical transposition, since it generates a structurally different, longer syntactic pattern, and oftentimes with compensation in place as well, as the constitutive parts of the original construction usually get reshuffled. As far as the translation of present participles is concerned, compensation by splitting produces a shift from non-finite to finite clausal structures of various kinds – root clauses, matrix clauses, and subordinate clauses with both argument and adjunct status. This variation is illustrated in the examples in (7) to (13) below:

- (7) a. If I had a man like you *working for me* I'd make better use of him than Black Dow does...
b. Dacă aş avea un bărbat ca tine, *care să lucreze pentru mine*, l-aş folosi mult mai bine decât Dow cel Negru... (TT2)
- (8) a. She felt *the familiar frown gripping her face*.
b. ... simţind *cum nemulţumirea-i caracteristică îi strâmbă trăsăturile*. (TT2)
- (9) a. As if she hadn't spent an hour *preening herself before the mirror*.
b. De parcă nu ar fi stat un ceas în faţa oglinzii *ca să se gătească*. (TT2)
- (10) a. Whirrun had shrugged the Father of Swords off his shoulders and stood it on end, the pommel coming up to his neck, *watching* how the light moved on the crosspiece as he turned it round and round.
b. Whirrun scăpase de greutatea Mamei Săbiilor, lăsând-o să cadă cu vârful în jos, mânerul ei venindu-i până la umăr. *Privi* cum lumina se plimba pe mânerul ei în cruce, învârtind-o întruna. (TT1)

- (11) a. He wheezed, and stumbled, eyes wide, mug still hanging from his hand, *groggy drool spilling out his open mouth*.
b. Bătrânul scoase un găfâit și se împletici, cu ochii mari și cana încă în mână, *pe când din gura căscată îi curgeau balele*. (TT3)
- (12) a. And so on, past they went, through the gate and into the dark streets, *making no more noise than the wind off the sea and the waves on the dock...*
b. Și tot așa, treceau pe rând, intrând pe poartă spre străzile cufundate în beznă, *fără să facă mai mult zgomot decât vântul pe mare și valurile la chei*. (TT3)
- (13) a. But that's what war is. *A lot of folk getting killed* that don't deserve it.
b. ... dar așa e la război... *Mulți oameni sunt uciși* pe nedrept. (TT3)

As stated above, compensation by splitting generates finite clausal structures of various types, both root and matrix clauses, as well as subordinate clauses. Thus, (13b), which translates the italicised Absolute Construction in (13a), is an independent/root clause built on a finite present indicative predicate (*Mulți oameni sunt uciși...* < lit. "Many people are killed..."). On the other hand, *watching* in (10a) becomes a matrix clause in (10b) with its own embedded Direct Object Clause (*Privi cum...* < lit. "(he) watched how..."). The rest of the examples illustrate various types of embedded clauses: an Attributive Clause introduced by the relative pronoun *care* ("who") in (7b), a Direct Object Clause introduced by the complementizer *cum* ("how"), which translates an Accusative+ Participle construction selected by the verb of perception *feel*, in (8b), an Adverbial Clause of Purpose introduced by the complex complementizer *ca să* ($\approx$ "so that") in (9b), an Adverbial Clause of Time introduced by the specialised complex conjunction *pe când* ("while") in (11b), and an Adverbial Clause of Manner introduced by the complementizer *fără* ("without"), built on a finite *conjunctiv* (i.e., subjunctive) predicate (*să facă*), in (12b).

Overall, there are several predictable syntactic patterns resulting from the application of compensation by splitting, and they correlate with distinct classes of participial constructions.

Firstly, Accusative+Participle constructions are regularly translated as embedded Direct Object Clauses introduced by the complementizers *că* ("that") and *cum* ("how"), as in (8b) above. This is to be expected, since in both languages these subordinate sentences are selected by transitive verbs and classify as their arguments. Alternatively, the construction is translated as a reduced gerundial clause. For example, this is the case of "She heard *the wind creaking in the branches, crackling in the leaves*.", which TT2 translates as "Monza auzea acum *vântul trosnind printre ramuri, foșnind printre frunze*." However, as the corpus indicates, a gerund is less frequently selected to reproduce an Accusative+Participle construction, and its selection appears to be restricted to instances where the focus of perception falls on the direct object entity performing something, like the wind, in this case, instead of falling on the ongoing event in its entirety, as is the case when the construction is translated by means of an embedded direct object clause.

Secondly, when the participial clause with a referential PRO subject functions as Attributive Clause in the source text, compensation by splitting turns it into a finite relative clause (restrictive or non-restrictive); this clause is introduced by a relative pronoun or relative adverb and has the same attributive function in Romanian.

Thirdly, as regards the various types of adverbial clauses, it has already been pointed out that translators typically opt for one of two alternative strategies – either literal translation or compensation by splitting – to generate reduced gerundial clauses and embedded finite clauses, respectively. As already illustrated in the examples above, these finite subordinate clauses are often introduced by specialised complementizers which signal the appropriate semantic interpretation of the adverbial structure. Practically, while literal translation is statistically the go-to strategy, as will be discussed in the next section, compensation by splitting is also fairly frequently selected because it is the mechanism that can disambiguate the adverbial relation existing between the participial construction and the matrix clause.

Last but not least, compensation by splitting is the main strategy used to render Absolute Constructions because, as stated, the similar pattern present in Romanian is rather marginal and basically restricted to formal and literary written discourse, so literal translation is more rarely an option. Its marginality is due to the unconventional combination of a Nominative subject with a non-finite gerundial form into the Absolute Gerundial Construction, when, in fact, everyday spoken discourse displays the opposite tendency – subjects that are not coreferential with those in the matrix clauses are typically omitted, resulting in ambiguous structures (see *Gramatica limbii române* (Guțu Romalo 2005)). Therefore, translators will select compensation by splitting and other compensation strategies to render these constructions in a manner that would not only sound more natural and more familiar to the Romanian reader, but also avoid ambiguity:

- (14) a. They passed through a high archway, the hall beyond dim and echoing as an emperor's tomb, *light filtering down in dusty columns and pooling on the marble floor*.
 b. Trecură pe sub o arcadă înaltă, dincolo de care urma un culoar întunecos și plin de ecouri, ca mormântul unui împărat. *Sulițe de lumină prăfoasă se strecurau înăuntru și se întâlneau pe pardoseala de marmură*. (TT2)
- (15) a. Foscar's mouth fell open, *wine glass dropping from his hand, shattering on the floor*.
 b. Foscar rămase cu gura căscată și *scăpă din mână paharul cu vin, care se făcu țandări*. (TT2)
- (16) a. Count Foscar (...) rushed around the pool like an eager puppy, *shoes crunching on fresh-raked gravel*...
 b. Conte Foscar (...) venea în goana mare pe lângă heleșteu, aidoma unui cățeluș exaltat. *Pietrișul proaspăt greblat îi scârțâia sub tălpi*. (TT2)
- (17) a. The blood had drained from the sky and left it a vivid blue, *white clouds crawling high above*.
 b. Sângele se scursese de pe cer, lăsând în urmă-i un albastru intens, *peste care se târau nori albi și pufoși*. (TT2)

All the examples above indicate that compensation by splitting produces lengthened syntactic structures by turning the compact Absolute Constructions into different types of finite clauses, either independent or subordinate clauses of the attributive kind, or a combination thereof, if there is more than one Absolute Construction in the source text. Thus, (14b) consists of two independent clauses coordinated by means of the complementizer *și* ("and") ([*Sulițe de lumină prăfoasă se strecurau înăuntru*]_{MCL} și [*se întâlneau pe pardoseala de marmură*]_{MCL} < ≈ "[Spears of dusty light crept inside] and [met on the marble floor]."), which translate the two Absolute Constructions in (14a) ([*light filtering down in dusty columns*] and [*pooling on the marble floor*]). In similar fashion, the Absolute Construction in (16a) (*shoes crunching on fresh-raked gravel*) becomes a root clause in (16b) (*Pietrișul proaspăt greblat îi scârțâia sub tălpi*. < ≈ "The fresh-raked gravel squeaked under his soles."). The example in (15a), which incorporates two juxtaposed Absolute Constructions ([*wine glass dropping from his hand*], [*shattering on the floor*]), illustrates the mixed syntactic pattern resulting from the association of a matrix clause (*scăpă din mână paharul cu vin* < ≈ "(he) dropped the glass of wine") with an embedded Attributive Clause (*care se făcu țandări* < ≈ "which turned into shards"). Finally, (17b) includes a non-defining relative clause with attributive function (*peste care se târau nori albi și pufoși* < ≈ "over which [i.e., the sky] crawled fluffy white clouds"), which renders the Absolute Construction in (17a) (*white clouds crawling high above*).

Notice that in none of the examples above does compensation by splitting operate alone; in fact, co-occurrence with other compensatory mechanisms appears to be the norm rather than the exception. It overlaps with compensation in place in (15b) and (16b), as there is not only a shift from a non-finite structure to a finite clause, but also a reshuffling of the constitutive elements of said construction. In (15b), the subject of the original construction (*wine glass*) has become a direct object used as antecedent for the relative clause translating the second Absolute Construction ("(he) dropped the glass of wine, which turned into shards"); in (16b), the Locative PP *on fresh-raked gravel* turns into the subject of the root clause (*pietrișul proaspăt greblat*),

while the subject of the present participle (*shoes*) is translated as a Locative PP (*sub tălpi* ("under his soles")). On the other hand, compensation by splitting overlaps with free translation in (14b) and (17b). In (14b), the *light filtering down in dusty columns* is reinterpreted as "spears of dusty light" (*sulițe de lumină prăfoasă*), while in (17b), the translator improves upon the original *white clouds* by creating a more poetic image with the addition of a second adjective (*nori albi și pufoși* < "fluffy white clouds").

As mentioned before, literal translation by means of a gerund is not excluded as an alternative to translating Absolute Constructions, but it is much less frequent and is often applied simultaneously with different types of compensation mechanisms (compensation in place, compensation by merging, grammatical transposition) in order to avoid the lexicalisation of the Nominative subject of the gerund (see (18) to (22) below):

- (18) a. Hardbread's lads all twitched to the side, *mouths gaping*.
b. Flăcăii lui Păine-Tare își întoarseră, ca la un semnal, gâturile într-o parte, *căscând gura de uimire*. (TT1)
- (19) a. He stood by the window, one hand upon the stone, *fingertips drumming*.
b. Stătea lângă fereastră, cu mâna pe piatră, *bătând darabana cu degetele*. (TT1)
- (20) a. ... he froze, *the blood suddenly pounding in his head*...
b. ... și el îngheță, *cu sângele [zvâcnindu-i în tâmplă]*... (TT1)
- (21) a. A man stood in the archway, *shaggy head almost touching the keystone*.
b. Un bărbat stătea în prag, *capul lui cu păr zburlit aproape atingând bolta*. (TT1)
- (22) a. The blade went back, *steel glinting in a shaft of light*.
b. Cuțitul se înalță, *licărind în razele prăfuite de soare*. (TT2)

The examples in (18) to (22) above illustrate all possible gerund-based syntactic patterns present in the corpus which were generated by literal translation with or without the aid of some other accompanying strategy.

(18b) and (19b) are both the result of literal translation co-occurring with compensation in place to the effect that the original structures become gerundial clauses with unexpressed subjects, and the Nominative subjects of the present participles (*mouths* in (18a) and *fingertips* in (19a)) are rendered as internal arguments following the verb (a Direct Object in (18b) (*căscând [gura]* *Direct Object de uimire* < $\approx$ "opening their mouths in wonder"), and an Instrument-denoting PP with adverbial function in (19b) (*bătând darabana [cu degetele]* *Manner Adverbial* < lit. "tapping the drum with the fingers")).

Alternatively, the gerundial construction with unexpressed subject generated by literal translation in combination with grammatical transposition may be assigned an attributive function, as it now modifies the original subject of the Absolute Construction, which itself becomes the complement of a PP headed by the default possessive preposition *cu* ("with"). This pattern is illustrated in (20b), which renders *the blood suddenly pounding in his head* as *cu sângele [zvâcnindu-i în tâmplă]* *Attribute* (< $\approx$ "with the blood pounding in his temples").

In contrast, (20b) is the only pattern produced solely by literal translation, which means that it preserves the original structure with a Nominative subject followed by a non-finite form in what is called the Absolute Gerundial Construction. *Shaggy head almost touching the keystone* is rendered as *[capul lui]* *Subject cu păr zburlit aproape atingând bolta* (< $\approx$ "his head with shaggy hair almost touching the arch"). As mentioned before, the Absolute Gerundial Construction is a rare occurrence in Romanian because of its unusual syntax, and the corpus lends support to this idea as it contains only 6 instances of this construction out of the 20 gerund-based tokens that literal translation produced as the Romanian versions of the original Absolute Constructions.

Last but not least, in some cases, literal translation operates concomitantly with compensation by merging, again with the purpose of avoiding the translation of the Nominative subject. It is what occurs in (22b), where the subject of the Absolute Construction (*steel*) is semantically a part of the whole denoted by the subject of the matrix clause (*the blade*). Using

synechdoche, the translator merges the subject of the gerundial clause with that of the matrix clause, which actually becomes more specific (*cuțitul* < “the knife”) and reduces the Absolute Construction to a gerundial structure with unexpressed subject (*licărind în razele prăfuite de soare* < “glinting in the dusty sunbeams”).

Compensation by merging, which Hervey and Higgins (1992) define as a strategy that converts a complex phrase in the source text into a single word or a shorter phrase in the target text, is also involved in rendering present participles with unexpressed subjects and Absolute Constructions. However, in the cases analysed below, this strategy takes the shortening of the source text construction one step further by eliminating the non-finite verbal form altogether (see (23) to (26) below):

- (23) a. Agrick strode into the firelight, bow loose in his hand and *an arrow dangling between two fingers*.
b. Agrick se apropie cu pași mari de foc, cu arcul într-o mână și *o săgeată între degetele celeilalte*. (TT1)
- (24) a. ... while Monza stared, *face burning from lack of air*.
b. ... în vreme ce Monza se holba la el, *roșie la față din cauza lipsei de aer*. (TT2)
- (25) a. No sound but *the empty bell creaking on its pole, the cold waves slapping on stone and wood*.
b. Niciun sunet nu se-auzea, numai *scârțâitul clopotului gol pe prăjină și plescăitul valurilor reci pe lemn și pietre*. (TT3)
- (26) a. He looked out at the sea, *flapping and sparkling under the moon like a thing alive*.
b. Privi peste mare, *care se unduia scânteietor sub lună, ca o fință vie*. (TT3)

The general process in all the examples above consists in the replacement of the reduced clause built on the non-finite verbal form with a phrasal constituent headed by a lexical category other than a verb. Specifically, the Absolute Construction in (23a) (*an arrow dangling between two fingers*) is translated as a prepositional phrase headed by the Locative *între* (“between”), whose Figure and Ground positions are occupied by the Subject DP of the participle in the source text (*o săgeată* (“an arrow”)) and the DP functioning as reference point (*degetele celeilalte* (“the fingers of the other (hand)”). The Absolute Construction in (24a) is reduced and reshuffled to a complex AP headed by the adjective *roșie* (“red”) subcategorising for a PP (*la față* (“in the face”). Compensation by merging co-occurs with compensation in place in (25), with the two juxtaposed Absolute Constructions ([*the empty bell creaking on its pole*], [*the cold waves slapping on stone and wood*]) being replaced with two supine nominals derived from the verbs *creak* and *slap*, while the Nominative subjects of the participial forms become Genitive phrases (*scârțâitul clopotului gol pe prăjină* (“the creaking of the empty bell on the pole”) and *plescăitul valurilor reci pe lemn și pietre* (“the slapping of the cold waves on wood and stone”). Finally, the two participial constructions with unexpressed subjects in (26a) (*flapping* and *sparkling under the moon like a thing alive*) are translated using a combination of compensation by merging, compensation by splitting and grammatical transposition in so far as the first participle is lengthened to a relative clause (*care se unduia* (“which was flapping/rippling”)) and the second participle is reduced to an AdvP (*scânteietor* (“sparklingly”)), resulting in a different syntactic structure.

To conclude this section, the analysis has shown that the various participial constructions of English are translated by means of a diverse array of translation mechanisms, which, more often than not, tend to overlap. However, the analysis has also revealed that two strategies are actually favoured by translators and they correlate with particular participial constructions. Thus, literal translation renders mostly participial constructions with unexpressed subjects, functioning mainly as adverbial clauses, while compensation by splitting is the translators' first choice when rendering Absolute Constructions, and is also used when rendering participial constructions with PRO subjects in order to disambiguate the adverbial relation existing between the participial construction and the matrix clause. In what follows, the analysis will turn to a statistical overview of the data extracted from the corpus to verify the observations made so far.

4. A Statistical Bird's-Eye View

The present section provides a statistical evaluation of the data collected from the corpus, the aim being to determine whether the predictions made in Section 2 actually check out. There were two such predictions concerning the translation of English participial constructions, which stemmed from the idea that the syntactic type of participial clause would influence the translators' choice of a particular strategy. Specifically, one prediction was that translators would overwhelmingly opt for literal translation and use an equivalent gerundial clause to translate participial clauses with unexpressed subjects, since English participles and Romanian gerunds share a number of properties that would make the latter pattern an ideal choice. The other was that the Absolute Construction would be more problematic to render by means of its Romanian equivalent (the Absolute Gerundial Construction) using literal translation, since the latter pattern has marginal status due to its unconventional internal structure, and, therefore, would be more readily translated using disambiguating compensatory techniques (compensation by splitting, compensation in place, grammatical transposition), which would produce lengthened syntactic patterns (finite clauses). Table 1 below indicates that the predictions are partially borne out.

Table 1. Translation strategies and resulting syntactic patterns

Literal translation – reduced gerundial clauses	Compensation by splitting (+/- compensation in place) – finite clausal structures	Compensation by merging – phrases (PP, AP, DP, NP, AdvP)	Free translation	Omission	Total
113 (39.78%)	122 (42.80%)	31 (10.91%)	11 (3.8%)	8 (2.81%)	285

Table 1 shows that, while literal translation has a high rate of selection (39.78%), it does not appear to dominate the hierarchy, but rather shares this property with compensation by splitting, a strategy that has a lengthening effect on the source text structures, rendering them as finite clauses of various kinds (root clauses, matrix/main clauses, and various classes of subordinate clauses with both adjunct and argument status). As a matter of fact, compensation by splitting, which, more often than not, co-occurs with compensation in place and grammatical transposition, has a slightly higher rate of occurrence (42.80%).

There are a number of possible reasons why compensation by splitting and literal translation share top position in the hierarchy of preferred translation strategies, with the former having a slightly higher frequency rate.

Firstly, as suggested before, while literal translation is the go-to strategy because the Romanian gerund is the grammatical equivalent of the present participle in non-finite/reduced clauses, especially when they have adverbial functions, resorting to compensation by splitting to generate finite clauses, be they root/matrix or subordinate clauses introduced by specialised complementizers, allows translators to clarify the often ambiguous adverbial relation existing between the participial construction and the main clause in the source text.

Secondly, selecting compensation by splitting or literal translation might be a matter of the translator's personal preference, as evidenced by the present corpus. In particular, TT2's translation style pays attention to nuances, therefore, it favours compensation by splitting as a disambiguating mechanism, whereas TT1 and TT3 are more focused on staying close to the source text and, as a result, are more inclined towards literal translation.

However, bear in mind that the similar frequency rates of literal translation and compensation by splitting actually stem from different sources. As already discussed, literal translation has a high rate of occurrence due to the fact that the Romanian gerundial clause with

unexpressed subject and the English participial construction with the same coreferential PRO are semantically, syntactically and aspectually compatible (they are marked for Negation and Voice, they are aspectually durative, denoting situations simultaneous with those in the main clause, and, syntactically, function mostly as adverbials). As a result, literal translation is easy to opt for under the circumstances. In contrast, the high number of tokens that result from the application of compensation by splitting is due to two sources. Of the 122 instances of compensation by splitting, 46 instances (37.70%) translate Absolute Constructions and only 76 (62.29%) translate participial clauses with unexpressed subjects. On the other hand, of the 113 instances of literal translation, only 20 (17.69%) render Absolute Constructions, while the rest (i.e., 93 tokens (82.30%)) render participial clauses with unexpressed subjects, mostly with adverbial functions. Thus, a more in-depth look at the statistics reveals that the first prediction concerning the translator's overwhelming preference for the translation of participial constructions with unexpressed subjects as reduced gerundial structures was correct.

This brings us to the second prediction, namely, that compensation by splitting and not literal translation is the go-to strategy when rendering Absolute Constructions. Table 2 below confirms this prediction:

Table 2. Absolute Constructions – translation strategies and resulting syntactic patterns

Literal translation		Compensation by splitting
Gerundial clauses with unexpressed subjects	Absolute Gerundial Constructions	Finite independent/subordinate clauses
14/66 21.21%	6/66 9.09%	46/66 69.69%

In particular, of the 66 instances of Absolute Construction present in the corpus, 46 tokens (69.69%) are rendered by compensation by splitting, while only 20 tokens (17.69%) are instances of literal translation. What is more, notice that literal translation generates two types of gerundial structures – gerundial clauses with unexpressed subjects (in which case literal translation co-occurs with some compensation mechanisms (compensation in place, compensation by merging, grammatical transposition)), and Absolute Gerundial Clauses (generated solely by literal translation), and most of the structures are of the former kind (14 tokens), while only 6 tokens illustrate the latter. As already discussed, the reason why compensation by splitting is preferred when rendering Absolute Constructions into Romanian might be that Absolute Gerundial Constructions are perceived as rather marginal and are basically restricted to formal and literary written discourse because of the unconventional combination of a Nominative subject with a non-finite gerundial form. As pointed out in *Gramatica limbii române* (Guțu Romalo 2005), everyday spoken discourse displays the opposite tendency – subjects that are not coreferential with those in the matrix clauses are typically omitted, an observation reinforced by the fact that even when Absolute Constructions are rendered as gerundial clauses, they are translated as gerunds with unexpressed subjects. Therefore, compensation by splitting and other compensation strategies are a better choice to render Absolute Constructions in a manner that sounds more natural and more familiar to the Romanian reader, while also avoiding ambiguity.

Last but not least, the findings of the investigation lend support to the view that explicitation is a universal strategy (Blum-Kulka 1986, Klaudy and Karoly 2005, Klaudy 2003, 2009, Molés-Cases 2019, among others), since many of the translation mechanisms uncovered by the analysis are operations that involve explicitation, i.e., the lengthening of the original constructions (compensation by splitting, compensation in place, grammatical transposition, free translation), despite the availability of literal translation.

5. Conclusions

The present study has revealed that the selection of a particular translation strategy to render participial constructions into Romanian depends on the syntactic construction it translates. Two main strategies have been identified as dominating the picture: literal translation and compensation by splitting.

Literal translation is used when rendering participial constructions with referential PRO subjects and generates reduced gerundial constructions that also have unexpressed subjects and function mainly as adverbial clauses of some kind (Reason, Condition, Time, Manner, etc.).

Compensation by splitting is the translators' strategy of choice when rendering Absolute Constructions into Romanian, which it expands to finite clauses of various types (root or main clauses, as well as subordinate clauses, mostly attributive). It is also a viable option to render participial constructions with unexpressed subjects when the translator means to clarify the adverbial relation existing between the non-finite construction and the matrix clause.

While these two strategies have high rates of occurrence, they do not exclude other compensation mechanisms with which they often overlap (compensation in place, grammatical transposition, compensation by merging, free translation). Since most of these strategies result in the expansion of the source text participial constructions, they are interpreted as further proof that explication is a universal translation strategy.

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