

Hi, good afternoon,

▶▶ In the next 20 minutes we'll explore how politeness and social relationships, as encoded in grammar, are manifested in a text translated from English into Welsh, the first Harry Potter book.

## Introduction

All across the globe many languages distinguish politeness in person markers, specifically second person ones. In Europe it is typical to have a binary distinction, between a familiar form and a polite form. ▶▶ Modern English is of course an exception, but Welsh does have this distinction.

▶▶ Now Welsh, for any of you who is not familiar with this language, is a Celtic language spoken by about half a million people in Wales. Today we'll discuss a very 'European' areal phenomenon, the T-V distinction, but in general Welsh is quite exceptional in the Standard Average European landscape, as are other Celtic languages.

▶▶ So, the first Harry Potter book was published in 1997 and was since translated into more than seventy languages. One of them is Welsh, into which it was translated by Emily Huws, a children's author from North Wales.

▶▶ There are many sociopragmatic factors contributing to the choice between the familiar 'T' form and the polite 'V' form. ▶▶ Brown and Gilman, who coined these terms in their seminal article, focussed on power and solidarity as overarching forces.

▶▶ The most common system, at least in Europe, is to have the distinction only in the singular, with the polite form being homonymic with the plural form. ▶▶ In Welsh the forms are *ti* and *chi*, ▶▶ which ultimately come from Proto-Indo-European corresponding pronouns, \**túh*<sub>2</sub> and \**wos*.

▶▶ Since English *you* lacks politeness and number distinctions, the translator was obliged to make those distinctions according to her understanding of the text, making the output as natural as possible in the target language. The number distinction is relatively trivial and we will focus here on the politeness distinction. Therefore, we'll discuss only 2SG, in which we do have this distinction, expressed through a *ti:chi* structural opposition.

All these nice colours ▶▶ make me think about role of the translator here as a prism, with *you* as a white light and *ti* and *chi* as spectral colours.

▶▶ The loci of the T-V distinction in Welsh are all across the system: in independent as well as dependent pronouns, including the verbs. One locus which does not correspond to English *you* is the imperatives, which are generally marked by a zero pronoun in English.

▶▶ So, how did I gather data? I've manually checked and tagged *all* 1393 occurrences of *you*, *your*, etc. in the book according to ▶▶ 'speaker', 'addressee' and 'address form' information (who speaks to whom how). From these tags ▶▶ I've automatically derived an long, intricate map representing the sociopragmatic relationships expressed through the *ti:chi* distinction. What I present here are some aspects of the system that emerges from this map, taking imperatives into account, by describing generalizations and common classes.

## ***ti:chi* in the corpus**

▶▶ Let's begin. We'll discuss three topics and demonstrate them with examples from the text:

- change in address form,
- addressing someone unknown (such as someone knocking on the door),
- and the relationship between children and grown-ups.

### **Change in address form**

The relationships between characters are not set in stone; there are some cases in which transitioning from one address form to the other one signals change in relationship.

▶▶ For example, when the child protagonist Harry first meets the character Hagrid he is a stranger, a grown-up man whom Harry doesn't know, so he speaks to him using the formal *chi*, ▶▶ but as Hagrid tells his story and the close connection between them is revealed, Harry transitions to using

the familiar *ti*, which he continues to do throughout the book. Hagrid is a very interesting character sociopragmatically, because he stands somewhere between the teachers and the students in the magical school Hogwarts. He also takes part in a special mixed-age clique with the students Harry, Hermione and Ron.

▶▶ Thus it is not surprising that as their friendship develops over time ▶▶ Hermione starts using *ti* towards Hagrid as well. [In this particular example the use of *ti* might also act as a rhetorical device of flattering, signalling closeness.]

▶▶ With Vernon, Harry's adoptive father, the transition from *chi* to *ti* when speaking to Hagrid bears a completely different meaning: from cold politeness (even when demanding Hagrid to leave) ▶▶ to direct, straightforward harsh speech the moment Hagrid is going to tell Harry the secret Vernon fears the most: that Harry is a wizard and his parents, who were wizards as well, were killed magically. *Taw, Taw, Paid*: straightforward commands.

▶▶ In this example Firenze the centaur speaks to what was for him at the moment a random Hogwarts student with *ti* which is the usual thing for adults to do, but when he realizes it is actually Harry he is speaking with, he transitions to *chi*, showing him respect. This is not a development in relationship, but a change caused by not recognizing the addressee correctly at first.

## Unknown / non-specific addressee

What happens when you don't know who your addressee might be or how many they are? The answer Emily Huws gives us for the Welsh language is to be on the safe side: use *chi*, not *ti* which is too loaded with pragmatic information, too specific to be used in such situations.

▶▶ *Who's there? Pwy sy 'na?*

- ▶▶ *chi* when someone knocks on the door (or rather 'knocks the door' in this case...);
- ▶▶ *chi* when something is moving in the Forbidden Forest (only to be revealed as Ronan afterwards, whom Hagrid greets with *ti*);

- ▶▶ *chi* when speaking to Harry, Hermione and Ron, who are hidden beneath the Invisibility Cloak.

▶▶ When you don't know who will read what you write you use *chi*: ▶▶ be it book titles ▶▶ or a written puzzle.

▶▶▶ When Rowling uses the literary technique of addressing the readers with a generic *you*, it is translated with *chi* as well, ▶▶ as is generic address within Free Indirect Speech, here representing Harry's thoughts. This specific example is interesting, because if we turn the pages back to when 'Gringotts is the safest place etc.' was actually said, ▶▶ it was Hagrid speaking familiarly with Harry. So the use of *chi* here does not mirror the original wording, as if in a quote, but the norm of this literary technique.

## Age and status

### Students and teachers

Next to our final and main section, 'age and status', ▶▶ beginning with the relationships between students and teachers. ▶▶ Let's see, students always address teachers with *chi* and each other with *ti*. Fair enough, that's reasonable. McGonagall and Dumbledore are more or less on the same level, being Deputy Headmistress and Headmaster respectively, ergo *ti*. So are Snape and Quirrell, who are both teachers. But Quirrell addresses Dumbledore, his superior, using *chi*. All this [point] make sense.

But what might seem, *a priori*, surprising is why teachers use *chi* toward students, who rank lower in the school hierarchy. The answer is that this is how things are in Welsh society, or at least how they used to be. ▶▶ Peter Wynn Thomas, who wrote a monumental Welsh grammar says that at least in the '60s students and teachers used to use *chi* reciprocally, and this was changed later (when? He doesn't say) so that an irreciprocal relationship is now more usual. With parent-child relationships, on the other hand, there was an opposite development: now the tendency is to use *ti* reciprocally within the family, marking it as a cohesive, 'familiar' unit. So why do Hogwarts teachers address students in the older way? I can think of two possible answers: ▶▶

one is that this is what the translator is used to from *her* days at school, and the other is that Hogwarts, being an old-fashioned school, is linguistically presented as such. Non-teacher staff, by the way, usually use *ti* towards students.

▶▶ A short digression: here is an extreme example from another corpus, which supports Thomas's statement, as expected. In the depicted situation, which takes place in the beginning of last century, a headmaster addressed a student using *chi* just before caning her... So being kind and using *chi* are two different things, on two different planes. ▶▶ This helps us understand why Quirrell the Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher, who had used *chi* towards Harry from the moment he met him, ▶▶ continues to do so even after being revealed as a villain: one can be evil and still use *chi* towards your students, just like the headmaster in the previous example. In the same situation ▶▶ Voldemort, the antagonist, addresses Harry with *ti*, but he isn't Harry's teacher, and of course doesn't wish to show him any respect.

▶▶ But wait a moment! If we have a second look on the table, we will see there *are* occasions in which the students Harry and Neville are addressed with *ti* by teachers.

▶▶ Let's begin with Neville, who is addressed with *ti* by both Madam Hooch the Flying teacher and Professor Snape the Potions teacher. If we take a closer look, we will see that in both cases this happens just after Neville acted... well, quite clumsily... which resulted in ▶▶ a broken wrist in one case, ▶▶ and a mayhem in class in the other. So we can understand these teachers not addressing him with *chi* in these particular situations.

▶▶ With Dumbledore and Harry, it is quite different. ▶▶ Dumbledore the Headmaster addresses Harry the same way he does with Hagrid and Professor McGonagall, *ti*. It is a systematic choice by the translator, with more than sixty occurrences. If we look at the situations in which Dumbledore talks to Harry, we will see that in all three situations they speak alone, or quietly enough so that only Harry can hear. These are not class or a class-like situations. My hypothesis is that the use of *ti* by Dumbledore signals special closeness, not considering Harry as 'just another Hogwarts students' to be addressed by the distancing *chi*. It's a pity the other books were not translated, so we cannot

check this hypothesis...

### **Children and their (adoptive) parents**

▶▶ I remind you that it is now normal to use *ti* reciprocally within the family.

▶▶ This is the way the Weasley family talk, using the familial *ti*.

▶▶ On the other hand, the relationship between the Petunia and Vernon Dursley and their adopted child Harry is not a loving one. That's reflected by the ▶▶ irreciprocal use of 2<sup>nd</sup> person between them, ▶▶ as opposed to the reciprocal one with their biological son Dudley.

▶▶ So the Weasleys are linguistically signalled as a family, while the Dursley-Potter hierarchical irreciprocal use of *ti* and *chi* is characteristic of their abusive relationship.

### **Grown-ups *chi*-ing Harry**

Understandably, in a story where the 'ugly duckling' Harry grows up to be a wizard, 'a beautiful swan', the respect people show Harry, who defeated the dreaded Voldemort, is expressed by linguistic means. (We've seen this with Firenze the centaur earlier). ▶▶ This is most pronounced in the Leaky Cauldron pub scene, where strangers are delighted to see Harry, shaking hands and all. This is actually the main literary purpose of this scene, showing Harry respect.

▶▶ Later on Harry and Hagrid's journey they go shopping. When a seller does not recognize Harry, she uses *ti*, which is the normal way adults speak to a children. ▶▶ But Ollivander the wand-maker do recognize him and addresses him using *chi*, ▶▶ while using *ti* towards Hagrid the grown-up whom he doesn't hold in high esteem, not forgetting to remind him he was expelled from Hogwarts...

## **Conclusion**

So, I want you to take two things from this talk.

▶▶ The first is the what I've presented here, a glimpse into the complex and interesting Welsh sociopragmatic system, as reflected by the obligatory translation choices arising from the different systematics of the original and target languages. [This system might not be identical to original fiction or spontaneous speech, but it can stand as a valid sub-kind of language with its own systematics.]

▶▶ The second thing I want you to take is the potential for typological comparison using translations of a single text. The research I've presented here is a part of a comparative cross-linguistic project exploring the sociopragmatics of second person using translations of the first Harry Potter book. This has some similarities to recent works done on film translations. The project is in an embryonic stage, with five languages currently, and I hope it will be fruitful. It makes use of this one book which has diverse interpersonal relations and was translated into dozens languages, many of which have a T-V distinction. What are the relevant differences between the translations in the distribution of the pronouns? How do they reflect the target languages and the social norms of their respective speech communities? What factors are in play? ▶▶ This is for us to discover; so if you work on a language with a T-V distinction *Harry Potter* was translated into (be it German, Tamil, Mongolian or whatever), please join us!

▶▶ *Diolch yn fawr iawn... i chi!*

## Appendix I

[▶▶ A quick remark about the impersonal use use of 2<sup>nd</sup> person. When translating impersonal, or 'generic', *you*s the translator usually used the Welsh 2<sup>nd</sup> person system, encoding and reflecting the sociopragmatic relation between the speaker and the addressee just like in actual, referential usage: if I would address you with the familiar *ti* I will do so in generic 2<sup>nd</sup> as well, and accordingly with the formal *chi*. The other, less commonly used strategy is to use non-personal constructions, as you can see in the ▶▶ first ▶▶ two examples. In addition, ▶▶ some *you*s in more-or-less bound phrases like *tellyou* or *thankyou* can be zeroed. This is all for making the text idiomatic in Welsh.]