Reply to Göran Hammarström's comment on Emma Tămăianu-Morita's paper

I would like to clarify two issues raised by Göran Hammarström.

1. First, a terminological clarification regarding the notion of “sense” (Sp. *sentido*, Germ. *Sinn*, Fr. *sens*) as it is defined in Eugenio Coseriu's text linguistics. It is true, as Göran Hammarström mentions, that the English term “sense” is often used with reference to the type of meaning specific of the *idiomatic* level in Coseriu's triadic model (i.e. the level of particular languages, Level II), and it is only in this latter acceptance that “words and syntactic constructions” can be said to have “sense”. However, the term used for this level in Coseriu's framework is not “sense”, but “significatum” or “signification” (Sp. *significado*, Germ. *Bedeutung*, Fr. *signifié*). The idiomatic content that can be assigned to transphrastic devices, as far as they can be identified in each language, also pertains to Level II. Therefore, strictly speaking, the „size” or structural rank of the idiomatic units in question (within the sentence or beyond the border of a sentence) does not change the nature of the linguistic content they are correlated with, *at the level of the particular language as such*.

On the other hand, “sense” is used to indicate the type of content peculiar to the level of discourse (Level III) – a type of content that cannot be reduced to the sum of (idiomatic) *significata*, and is, indeed, of a different nature than *significata* and *designata*. In the construction of textual “sense” (let me emphasize: in Coseriu's acceptance of the term), factors such as “genre, topic, aim and circumstances” are all recognized as playing an important role. To give only one example: the role of “circumstances” is captured as one part of what Coseriu calls “evocative relations of the sign (actualised) in a text”, which are constitutive for textual “sense”. Thus, it seems to me that there is in fact no contradiction between Göran Hammarström's view of textual meaning, as indicated in his comment, and Coseriu's “linguistics of sense”: it is only a matter of terminological choice – for a choice *has to be made* – as to how this type of content should be labeled. Personally, writing in English, where the undifferentiated term “meaning” cannot be accurately used for the semantic distinctions we operate with in «integral linguistics», I consistently use the terminological triad “designation” – “signification” – “sense”, which I find to be closest to the corresponding terms in the other languages in which Coseriu wrote, and is also the form that can actually be found in the very few studies that do have an English version prepared (or at least checked) by Coseriu himself.

2. The second point I would like to discuss is the matter of “creation” and “creative”. How “lasting and important” the *products* of a certain activity are cannot be taken as a relevant factor in defining the nature of that activity: one that is truly creative or one that is simply productive (or reproductive).

Let me refer to one of Göran Hammarström's examples: “Only the innovator who gets a new word accepted in the language has created something.” In fact, in its proper acceptance, the term “creation” can only be applied to the very first step in this process, namely the creation of the “new word” (the bringing into existence, so to speak, of a unit that is “new”, i.e. a unit that did not exist before). A phase of *adoption* of the “new word” can follow – or not. Whether the created unit is “lasting” or not depends entirely on this phase of adoption. However, the issue of the process of adoption takes us into the domain of *particular*

languages (again, Level II in Coseriu's triadic model), which is different from the level of discourse (Level III), where it is obvious that adoption is by no means necessary or even pertinent. For instance, Walt Whitman's *created* lexical unit "the not-day", which I discuss in my paper, does not lose its status of lexical creation on account of the fact it was not adopted into general English usage.

I do agree, however, with the underlying assumption of Göran Hammarström's comment, namely with the fact that it is preferable, especially in text analysis, to distinguish between truly creative texts (/textual units, devices, strategies etc.) and – shall we say – „ordinary“ texts (/units, devices, strategies etc.), where the sense is produced and can be interpreted fairly well through the application of pre-existing rules and techniques. As I see it, this difference can be understood as a very basic (primary) text-typological distinction, which was captured, for instance, in Wilhelm von Humboldt's dichotomy of the "poetic" and "prosaic" (non-poetic) modes of discourse. In fact, I use the term "creation of sense" in relation to the former (poetic discourse proper), and the term "construction of sense" in relation to the latter (non-poetic discourse) or as a neutral term, if it is needed (i.e. for the process of sense articulation in texts in general).

As for the broader issue of understanding language / speech as a "creative activity", my formulations draw upon E. Coseriu's definition of "creativity" as one of the primary essential universals of language (see "Los universales del lenguaje (y los otros)", *Gramática, semántica, universales. Estudios de lingüística funcional*, Madrid: Gredos, 1978, pp. 148–205).