

**TRANSLATING CULTURE – TERMINOLOGY AND COMMUNICATION**

Mariana NICOLAE  
Roxana MARINESCU

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**Abstract**

*This article presents some considerations on the research resulted within the project **EPIR – Romanian Economic Personalities and Institutions – The Romanian Added Value to European Identity**, 2007-2010, whose main aim is to increase Romania's visibility by establishing and marketing the country brand as a member state of the European Union, especially in business and the economic field. This is done by creating a coherent and accessible knowledge data base of Romanian economic institutions and personalities, researching ways of communicating it to various audiences and exploring diverse marketing techniques in order to ensure effective dissemination of project results. The present article focuses on the research on the most effective ways of linguistic translation as a means of reaching an international audience through both the hard-copy and the virtual publication of the data base. Translation is not only a simple transfer of terms from one language into another, it needs to take into consideration cultural transfer as well; it includes intercultural communication. In this context, terminology was resorted to as a communicative tool, a means of facilitating communication among the different users of the research corpus.*

**Keywords:** terminology, translation studies, equivalence, intercultural communication, value added

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***Translation studies: word for word or sense for sense?***

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When translating a text a few questions persist: to what extent every single word of the source text is kept in the target one? Or to what extent is it altered by adding cultural inferences in order to communicate the idea to an audience unaccustomed and therefore unresponsive to the cultural stimuli of the source text?

It is our belief that translators are more conveyors of sense than insensitive finders of mechanical linguistic equivalence. Thus they need to first clarify the ambiguities of the source text, which can be lexical, grammatical or cultural, and afterwards try to render the meaning in the target text. Of course another question arises: how much is lost in the translation and how much of the original text is kept in the final version? Do we then deal with different texts? Possibly yes, as we need to also consider the target audience, their background knowledge and their expectations of

the given text. The target audience of the translated text is clearly different from that of the original audience of the source text, as they have different historic backgrounds, different social practices and speak different languages.

In *Philosophy, Anthropology, and Linguistics in Translation*, Carmen Guarddon Anelo takes into consideration the question of how the translators relate to their audience in relation to two philosophical perspectives: relativism and universal rationalism, in other words cultural differences among people vs. homogeneity of the human race. Thus, the work of translators differs depending on their preference for one or another of these perspectives.

*From the universal rationalism perspective, the translator must trace the reality exposed in one text over to another, limiting himself to merely one transfer. The reader of the translation (also known as the target text or TT) shares common biological and psychological characteristics with the reader of the original text (also known as the source text or ST). Therefore, from the universal rationalism perspective, the translator should not find it difficult to interpret the TT, even if the TT contains references to a culturally distinct setting. In effect, the differences in context will be limited by the biological and psychological makeup of the reader of the ST and the reader of the TT. In this case, the translation exercise would be reduced fundamentally to a linguistic one.*

*A translation exercise from the perspective of relativism differs from the same exercise from the perspective of universal rationalism on two points. First, although one accepts that the potential readers of these two products share common biological and psychological characteristics, the determinism that these characteristics exert at a cognitive level is to be questioned. Therefore, the emphasis is on what the readers have in common, rather than on the differences, the distinct interpretation strategies that arise as consequences of the different cultural context. In this sense, the translator makes a greater commitment with the reader of the TT; this would imply saying the same thing with different codes (Jakobson, 1959), maintaining the stylistic impact of the original. The translation would not simply be a question of linguistics. One should start translating not only words, but also concepts and even contexts.(Anelo, 2004: 2).*

Clearly the latter perspective, with its emphasis on communicating with the audience of the target text, considers translation more than just an equivalence of terms. It should rather refer to all aspects of the translation, it is at a lexical level, a grammatical one, but also at the level of the message and ideas. The role of the translator in this context would therefore be to communicate all the equivalent aspects above mentioned to the audience, while at the same time keeping a clear balance between the two languages.

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***Terminology – a necessity for language specialists***

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Terminology as a relatively new field of study is of paramount importance for the language specialists. Its latest development is in the area of computer science, alongside the development of this science. Now terminologists have at their disposal better and more user-friendly tools to use in their work. It also includes creating a powerful network of language specialists, in constant contact and permanent cooperation.

Terminology was defined as

*the process of compiling, describing, processing and presenting the terms of special subject fields in one or more languages, terminology is not an end in itself, but addresses social needs and attempts to optimize communication among specialists and professionals by providing assistance either directly or to translators or to committees concerned with the standardization of a language. (Cabr , 1999: 10).*

Terminology is mainly used by two groups of people: the direct users, or specialists in each subject field, and the intermediaries, those who facilitate communication for other users, i.e. translators, interpreters, language specialists. Therefore, due to this twofold usage, terminology is directly interested in standardization of the definitions of concepts and fixing their corresponding names or terms. Glossaries and specialized dictionaries are created to facilitate communication of these terms and to assist translation from one language into another.

Within EPIR the need for creating a specialized glossary in the field of business and economics was identified as of utmost importance. It was supposed to help language specialists communicate their research results in these areas. Unfortunately, due to severe cost cuttings in the project budget, the creation of such a glossary is no longer possible.

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***Translation studies, research in marketing and communication:  
EPIR - Romanian Economic Personalities and Institutions –  
The Romanian Added Value to European Identity***

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The project *EPIR – Romanian Economic Personalities and Institutions – The Romanian Added Value to European Identity* unfolds over the period 2007 – 2010 and is run by a consortium of well-known Romanian entities: three universities, The Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies, The West University in Timișoara and Alexandru Ioan Cuza University in Iași, and a research institute, The Institute of World Economy in Bucharest. Its main aim is to increase Romania’s visibility in the context of its EU integration and to help define and establish the country brand by critically revisiting its economic and business traditions and marketing them to the wider audience of the region. The role of the Romanian personalities and

institutions from the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century up to the present time is emphasized against the general European background, as it has been so far largely unknown to the international public.

The rationale of the project takes into account the need to offer rapid access to information in Romanian and English to international researchers interested in the Romanian economic phenomena. Thus, through its results, EPIR will contribute to the increase of Romanian visibility in the European cultural environment by creating a hard-copy and an on-line knowledge base with brief but essential presentations of Romanian economic institutions and personalities and by offering free access to this information. The long term benefit will be a local contribution to better understanding of the values and traditions of the Romanian business and economic fields, leading to mutual respect and understanding within the European Union.

Within EPIR, a team of language specialists have had the task of conducting research on the one hand in marketing techniques in order to ensure better dissemination of the project results, and on the other hand, in communication in order to update the best practices in economic and business translation to various audiences. This implies identifying the target audience for the end results of the project and finding the best channels for attracting their attention. Also it means identifying the social, historic, economic and cultural backgrounds of these audiences to ensure better understanding of the project's results. EPIR goals include reaching this target audience through a number of channels: classical publication of the research results in a volume (at present affected in terms of length and number of languages by budget cuts), and also a bilingual Romanian and English website, as well as creating an integrated database as a useful research instrument, visible in the European Research Area. Therefore, in order to reach these ambitious targets, the language specialists involved in the project expected a number of problematic issues, among which being part of a large team (economic specialists writing in Romanian, then translators for three languages: English, French and German), difficulties in coordination, being part of a team of professionals with different interests, professional goals, knowledge, and also diverse levels of interest in the subjects to be translated. These have been overcome through intense communication among team members and strong coordination of team leaders.

Standardisation of the material in Romanian had to take into account the target audience and their cultural knowledge and expectations. Language specialists had to adapt the texts to these expectations, usually by offering simplified versions which were translated afterwards. Here are some examples of types of issues when research results had to be communicated in a standardised way:

Initial text	Revised text
Studii universitare (1854 – 1857), Facultatea de Filosofie din Viena. Aici l-a cunoscut pe economistul austriac Lorenz von Stein. În 1857 obține diploma de licențiat în drept și științe politice.	Studii universitare, (1854 – 1857), Facultatea de Filosofie din Viena. În 1857 obține diploma de licențiat în drept și științe politice.
Militând pentru propășirea economică a țării și apărarea independenței ei economice, condiție și a independenței politice, prin aria mare de cuprindere a problemelor economice cercetate, prin bogatul fond de idei cu multe elemente de permanență, opera sa trebuie să se bucure de înaltă prețuire din partea noastră, reprezentând o parte importantă a patrimoniului culturii românești. (55 words)	Opera sa trebuie să continue să rămână în atenția noastră deoarece reprezintă o parte semnificativă a culturii românești prin multiplele și variatele aspecte economice cercetate, prin contribuția avută la dezvoltarea și apărarea independenței economice a țării. (36 words)
Problematika abordată de către Academicianul XXX YYYY în vasta sa operă se înscrie pe patru direcții fundamentale. Urmare a recunoașterii seriozității în activitate, mediul academic îi încredințează înalte îndatoriri.	Problematika abordată în opera sa de către academicianul XXX YYYY se înscrie pe patru direcții fundamentale. De asemenea, mediul academic îi încredințează înalte îndatoriri.
Din inițiativa sa, Congresul Asociației din anul 1997, pentru prima dată în România, a fost adoptat „Codul deontologic al economiștilor” și s-a hotărât ca în ziua de 23 noiembrie a fiecărui an să fie sărbătorită „Ziua economiștilor”.	La inițiativa sa, pentru prima dată în România, Congresul Asociației din anul 1997 a adoptat „Codul deontologic al economiștilor” și a hotărât ca în ziua de 23 noiembrie a fiecărui an să fie sărbătorită „Ziua economiștilor”.

Table 1. Examples of revision of Romanian text within EPIR research project (Nicolae, 2010: 465 - 466)

As the translation of the agreed Romanian version is under way and there are issues of standardisation research to be addressed, we cannot at this point present the end result. However, here are two examples in which direct translation of Romanian terms has had to be avoided: *siderurgie*, translated by *ironworks* (and not *siderurgy*), and *zootehnie* by *animal husbandry* (and not *zootechny*). Although wikipedia is not an entirely reliable source, we will insert below the full entries of these two terms, as they are widely consulted both by language specialists and the public at large.

*The processes carried at ironworks are usually described as ferrous metallurgy, but the term **siderurgy** is also occasionally used. This is derived from the Greek words sideros - iron and ergon or ergos - work. This is an unusual term in English, and it is best regarded as an anglicisation of a term used in French, Spanish, and other Romance languages (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ironworks>).*

*Animal husbandry, also called animal science, stockbreeding or simple husbandry, is the agricultural practice of breeding and raising livestock. It has been practiced for thousands of years, since the first domestication of animals (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zootechny>).*

In parallel, here are the entries in the Oxford dictionary online ([www.oxforddictionaries.com](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com)): *ironworks* = “a place where iron is smelted or iron goods are made”; *animal husbandry* = “the science of breeding and caring for farm animals”.

Computer-assisted translation is used as electronic dictionaries, glossaries and terminology databases are nowadays widely available. Although new technologies have been rejected in the past, mostly due to the fear that they may replace human translation, we need to acknowledge the great potential they have especially for economic and business texts translations. As the internet provides us all with wide access to information and with the possibility of permanently cross-checking information and continuously updating it, we could say that the role of the translator has indeed changed with it. Translating without doing this kind of cross-referential research is nowadays impossible.

Unfortunately, as stated above, compiling the glossary of terms that would have been an important and useful instrument for language specialists in the area of economics and business is no longer possible due to massive budget cuts in the project financing.

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### ***Conclusion***

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As seen so far, translation studies are not as simple and mechanic as one may believe at first sight. As the translators take on themselves to translate culture, not only language as such, they take into consideration more than one aspect of the text in front of them. As the project EPIR fully demonstrated, they need to do larger and deeper research into the cultural values of the target audience(s) and to respond to the challenges of addressing their expectations. At the same time, translators need to manage more than just language, they do detailed research in marketing the product of their work, the translation per se. Moreover they need to be communication specialists in order to ensure smooth transmission of this product.

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*The authors*

**Dr. Mariana Nicolae** is a Professor of English and business communication with the Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies (ASE-Bucharest) and the director of the Master in International Business Communication programme delivered in English. Besides teaching, research and academic management, her current duties involve institutional building, coaching and mentoring, networking with people and organizations, publishing, travelling both in-country and abroad to attend conferences and seminars and organizing (inter)national conferences in Romania. She was a Fulbright senior scholar in 2005 and participated as an expert evaluator in the Framework Programme FP7 of the European Union. She is member of ESU-Romania, RAAS, BETA, ADAF.

**Dr. Roxana Marinescu** is a Lecturer in English for business communication at the Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies. As a teacher trainer in British Cultural Studies, Gender Studies, Human Rights and Education for Democratic Citizenship, she has been a course director and facilitator at national and international courses, conferences and summer schools. Also she is a materials designer for academic courses and textbooks on cultural studies, business communication in English, human rights and education for democratic citizenship.