
Migration in Translation

The role of terminology and transediting on tackling the crisis in the EU



Research conducted in collaboration with

The European Parliament Press Unit

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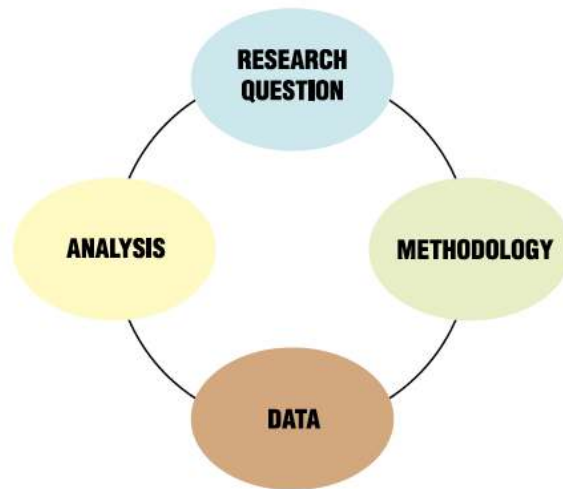


Introduction

The ongoing *migrant* and *refugee* crisis affecting European borders in recent years has questioned the precarious stability of the European Union, becoming a top priority issue tackled by institutional press services and news-media across the EU, due to its complexity and urgency. Since 2011, one of the most crucial moments for Europe ahead of the outbreak of war in Libya, news-media have played a significant role in representing diversity through the lens of migration phenomena, often leading to a linguistic categorization of the “actors” involved. This has resulted in an overflow of new terms designating brand-new concepts being translated in several languages across Europe. “Economic migrants”, “refugees”, “expats”, “hotspots”, “undocumented immigrants” and many other terms have challenged the translators, terminologists and communicators who used them in their texts, slowly entering European citizens' general lexicon. As reported by Kellner (2003), mediatized politics makes the struggle over meaning and terminology a public spectacle. Political debates imply struggles about how to label, justify and legitimize the various measures needed to protect Europe from refugees, involving privileged access to discourse via the media, legislation and the strategic use of language in the form of vagueness, neologisms and the reformulation of existing terminology (Rheindorf & Wodak 2016; Wodak 2011, 2015a, 2015b). The process of choosing the most “adequate” term to describe migration phenomena and find an equivalent in the 23 languages of the EU has heated the debate both in press rooms and news-media, questioning communicators' choices and reflecting a possible lack of terminological awareness in newsrooms. EU Institutions have a decisive responsibility in communicating policies, concerns and news regarding migration; the communication process in the European Union is even more peculiar. Besides all the complexities encountered to make migration policies comprehensible to the general public and the news-media, the EU has the responsibility to communicate the same content in 24 different languages and differentiate the communication process for 24 different cultures. Considering the new pressures facing translation as the need for a flow of accurate information across the EU, which must transfer successfully across geographic, linguistic and cultural boundaries in 24 languages, translation has become increasingly important. As claimed by semiologist Umberto Eco, “translation is the language of Europe”.

Communication with EU citizens has long been a primary concern of the European Institutions, so terminology and translation are crucial players to make migration phenomena more accessible and comprehensible to the general public. Translation in news involves negotiation, conscious selection and re-creation in the target language. Because of its foundational multilingualism, the European Parliament could be described as both a *translating* and *translated* institution (Koskinen 2008), where translation is an integral part in the process of drafting and adopting legal acts and resolutions that underpin the interlingual transfer of information material addressed to news media and citizens within the EU. How does the European Union structure its communication process through translation? What are the translation processes implemented and who are the actors involved? How is translation conceived? Is it evaluated and used in the same way at the European Parliament? In order to outline and understand the impact translation and terminology have on the way an Institution informs about a topic, in this case the migration crisis, one has to reconstruct the stages translation and terminology encounter before trans-edited information is transmitted by press officers to final receivers. Therefore, a diachronic corpus-based analysis of legal texts and translated press releases (1985-2016) regarding migration will be intertwined with ethnographic methods involving several EU professionals, who have officially agreed to participate in the project (see attachments).

Background and Structure



The project explores the highly complex set of translation processes and practices implemented in the European Parliament and raises important questions about the boundaries and definition of translation itself within the institution. The research study aims to measure the impact translation and terminology have on the information flow crossing the European Parliament, by exploring its language and translation policies, processes and strategies, and to outline to what extent they may influence the public perception of the EU through terminology and lexicon. In order to illustrate the effects of this set of translation processes on shaping the migration crisis, the research project uses two methodologies: corpus linguistics (Sketch Engine), to conduct an analysis of a selected corpus of legal texts regarding immigration and asylum law and translated press releases (EN-IT) about migration policies in the EU, and ethnography (observation practices, interviews, questionnaires and round tables with professionals working in European Institutions), to provide a qualitative framework to comment on quantitative data and merge results with EU professionals' opinions. In order to ensure an exhaustive ethnographic framework, an official agreement with the European Parliament Press Unit has been established, to enable press officers to provide required data for the analysis, together with the European Parliament Terminology Coordination Unit (Directorate General for Translation), to examine EU terminology management and collect useful data concerning the translation process.

The research study is structured in two distinct phases. The first phase consists of investigating the European Parliament terminology framework regarding Immigration and Asylum law, starting from how terminology is institutionally selected and coined at the EP Terminology Coordination Unit and negotiated with other European Institutions. After this, the second phase will observe how press officers communicate EU activities regarding migration policies through institutional press releases and mediate between the institutional terminology used in official translations, MEPs reports and parliamentary debates. The act of translating texts represents a strategy itself in a multilingual news service like the European Parliament Press Unit; as claimed by Kang (2007), news translation is a collective effort made by media professionals, and trans-editors communicate through translation without being necessarily professional translators. When we consider news translation, the translator's visibility is a completely different matter, and Venuti's foreignisation theory ceases to hold any value. News Translation relies on domestication, as material is shaped in order to be consumed by the target audience, (in this case, journalists and citizens,) so it has to be tailored to suit their needs and expectations. When translating news, communication professionals filter, select, add, omit and adapt information they receive and select from their source. The complex practices in news translation and the interaction between translators and editors are considered "invisible" actions and have been identified by scholars Kang, van Doorslaer, and Chen as follows: omissions, additions, neutralisation, explicitation, referential and transitivity choices, strategies of focalisation, recontextualization. So far, scholars have illustrated how such strategies might mitigate or reinforce political or ideological tensions and are influenced by ideologies and values upheld by the respective mass media institutions. This study aims to table results and also have them commented on by professionals. Translation takes place across linguistic and socio-cultural patterns that can alter the semantics of words. Edward's Sapir theory about linguistic difference is as valid today as it was when he wrote the following statement in 1956: "No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached". Tymoczko and Gentzler (2002) suggest that there are times when translation may also involve more sinister forms of textual manipulation that they term "falsification" and "refusal of information". To provide an exhaustive example, the strategy of omission, which is extremely common, effectively prevents target readers from having full access to the source.

However, communicators rarely label their articles as translations and the risk of a biased “recontextualization” of news tends to be quite high. According to Bielsa and Bassnett (2008), when journalists refer to translation, they tend to think of what others might term “literal translation”. Apparently, some of the views expressed by people who prefer to call themselves “international journalists” rather than translators reveal that the way in which they conceive of translation is very different from the way in which linguists might. Furthermore, although the study is entirely on the European Parliament, the European Commission is partly involved in the analysis. The European Parliament terminology framework is not isolated from the European Commission’s one, but it is interdependent with it. Institutional term-bases for translators are mainly created by terminologists at the European Commission and then coordinated by the European Parliament and other EU institutions through the inter-institutional multilingual term base called IATE, together with the brand-new version of the internal one called EurTerm. Linguistic and translation negotiation procedures carried out within DG Translation represent the first stage the European Parliament goes through to define its institutional identity. Once a terminological framework and language policy has been constructed, all institutional documents will linguistically reflect its institutional identity through translated EU documents, which constitute a point of reference for communication professionals, who address their translated texts to European news-media and citizens.

Research question and sub-questions

What impact have terminology and translation had on communicating the Migration Crisis in the EU since Schengen was implemented?

How have translation policies and practices evolved in the European Parliament in thirty years?

What are the “unknown agents” operating in the translated information process at the European Parliament?

Do political communicators and translators “play” on a common ground and share the same vision of translation? Does this enrich or weaken the Institution’s communication strategy?

What terminology and translation problems have been encountered in press releases over time?

Methodology

In order to reconstruct the stages translated information goes through within the European Parliament, the project employs two distinct methodologies: **corpus linguistics applied to translation** and **ethnography**. The study is therefore conducted on both EU texts and professionals, it identifies the changes in terminology use in EU legal texts and the translation processes and strategies used in press releases on a diachronic basis, from 1985 to 2016.

Corpus Linguistics applied to translation

As stated by Fantinuoli and Zanetti (2015), corpus linguistics has become a major research methodology in translation theory and practice, with practical applications ranging from professional human translation to terminology and machine translation. The turning point to descriptive corpus-based studies in translation came in the 1990s, when researchers recognized in large corpora of monolingual texts an opportunity to implement a target oriented approach to the study of translation, based on the systemic comparison and contrast between translated and non-translated texts in the target language (Baker 1993).

This study makes use of a selected corpus built from the largest multilingual parallel corpora publicly available, Europarl and Acquis Communautaire, together with the European Parliament Digital Corpus, created by the activity of European Institutions, which contain original texts in a legal sense. The corpus tool used to conduct the analysis is Sketch Engine, with its functions like the bilingual word sketch and term extraction. Comparable corpora may have varying degrees of similarity and contain not only original texts but also translations. Examples include news translation which are generated through “transediting” (Stetting 1989) practices and are thus partly “original writing” and partly translation, possibly from multiple sources.

Ethnography

An ethnographic study of translation practices in political institutions can help researchers to find out if there are correlations between the textual profiles and the institutional policies and practices; if there are, one can analyze them in more depth and also explain them with reference to assumptions about translation, values and ideology. Such research could contribute to investigate the impact of translation on the reception of political discourse, of politicians, and of politics. Analyzing translation as an institutional practice induces the researcher to reconsider which methods and what kinds of data might best illuminate the "institutionality" of institutional translation. Two aspects seem to be essential: first, translation is a textual activity, and to understand it one needs to examine the source and target texts produced within the institution in question. Second, "institution" is a sociological concept, and taking the institutional context into account directs the research towards questions related to the socio-economic context where translation takes place. An institutional approach therefore needs to combine the study of texts and the study of people and human interaction. The ethnographic part of the project has been organized in short-term periods spent with the units of the European Parliament, who have agreed to be part of the project, ranging from a daily access to the Institution to a period of a continuative month as a study visitor, going through a proper selection procedure to access the EU Program. For example, spending a one-month research period as a study visitor at the Terminology Coordination Unit of the European Parliament has given me the opportunity to analyze translation as an institutional practice, investigating how terms are institutionally selected and coined to designate new concepts within the EU, how terminology research and management are conducted in the translation units, with reference to the use and compiling of IATE (the EU Multilingual Term Base), and EurTerm portal, which is accessible to internal members only. Furthermore, I could observe how professionals look for new terminology and provide related glossaries and definitions for important legislative procedures and how they cooperate with relevant services and management groups both within the Parliament and on an interinstitutional level.

Data

First Phase

DATA FOR CORPUS ANALYSIS

Typology of Texts	Corpus tool	Selection criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Legal texts concerning EU Immigration and Asylum Law from 1985, corresponding to the establishment of Schengen, until the end of 2016.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Sketch Engine. Function used: Term extraction to select candidate terms to investigate throughout the different typologies of texts in both phases of the thesis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Relevance and typology of the legal text. An overview of all typologies is also provided to clarify selection procedure.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- EU Glossaries related to Migration and Asylum in the EU: the more recent ones (since 2009) are available online and are very well structured; the older ones were used only internally by EU Institutions themselves and have been requested to the European Commission. The European Parliament translation processes, terminological selection and coordination are closely intertwined with the European Commission ones, which is the only EU institution in charge of coining and selecting the terms and eventually negotiating them with other EU bodies, although this happens very seldom.		

ETHNOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Terminology Coordination Unit

I paid a one-month study visit at *Termcoord* (Terminology Coordination Unit of DG Translation at the European Parliament) in Luxembourg which enabled me to have a wider and clearer overview of the work implemented by the linguistic units within the Parliament. I collected

ethnographic material such as interviews, took notes during meetings (observation practices) and actively participated in the daily workload of the unit. An internal ECAS account has been also provided to investigate terminological discussions on the new portal EURTERM, to better measure the impact of terminology within the European Parliament and eventually observe terminological issues on an institutional level. For further details of the activities being implemented at the Terminology Coordination Unit please consult with the official evaluation the unit has provided.

Second Phase

DATA FOR CORPUS ANALYSIS

Texts analysed	Selection criteria	Corpus Tool
Press releases (EN-IT) concerning Immigration policies and migration crisis written and translated by the European Parliament Press Unit before and during Plenary Sessions.	press releases are selected according to the Parliamentary Committee involved, the Civil Liberties Committee in this case, and their publication on the European Parliament website.	Functions used: Bilingual Word Sketch (EN-IT), Frequency of candidate terms (monolingual analysis)

ETHNOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

The European Parliament Press Unit

Press officers are in charge of reporting Committees activities and debates in Parliament's office in Brussels and votes during Plenary sessions in Strasbourg, through press releases and press conferences (mainly before and during plenary sessions). Depending on their background, press officers are instructed to follow debates of one or maximum two parliamentary committees, update the press kit online and maintain contacts with journalists, organizing meetings and seminars. There is one press officer per language, who is normally fluent in two foreign languages, English plus another European language, not necessarily French, although it is highly recommended, plus his mother-tongue. Press releases are normally written in English and French, published online or simply sent to journalists, depending on their priority. They are first drafted in advance, sent to all press officers and later proofread by English native editors.

Index

Chapter 1

EU Immigration and Asylum Law

An overview of institutional terminology from Schengen to Frontex

- 1.1 Understanding the legal framework
 - 1.1.1 Free movement of people
 - 1.1.2 Immigration
 - 1.1.3 Asylum
- 1.2 Migration Policies through terminology
 - 1.2.1 The role of institutional terminology
 - 1.2.1 Typology of legal texts in the EU
 - 1.2.3 EU Glossaries: representing institutional identity
- 1.3 Migration: a diachronic corpus-based analysis of EU Terminology
 - 1.3.1 The corpus: a selection of legal texts and glossaries
 - 1.3.2 Analysis: tools, methodology, time range
 - 1.3.3 Results: changing terminology in the EU

Chapter 2

Communicating Migration through Translation

An ethnographic study of the European Parliament information flow

- 2.1 Researching EU Translation through ethnography
 - 2.1.1 The role of the researcher
 - 2.1.2 Units involved at the European Parliament
 - 2.1.3 Phases of work
 - 2.1.4 Ethnographic methods
 - 2.1.4.1 Observation practices
 - 2.1.4.2 Interviews
 - 2.1.4.3 Questionnaires
 - 2.1.4.4 Focus Groups
 - 2.1.4.5 Limits of the approach
- 2.2 The Information flow
 - 2.2.1 Phase 1: DG Translation, where it all starts
 - 2.2.1.1 The Terminology Coordination Unit

- 2.2.1.2 Coining and negotiating terminology at DG TRAD: unknown agents
- 2.2.1.3 Translation practices, policies, problems, risks
- 2.2.1.5 From IATE to Eurterm: sharing terminology among EU Institutions
- 2.2.2 Phase 2: DG Communication and the Press Unit
 - 2.2.2.1 Press officers as news translators
 - 2.2.2.2 Translation practices and policies
 - 2.2.2.3 Translation as a strategy to be retold

Chapter 3

News Translation in the EU

A diachronic corpus-based study of EU press releases related to Migration

- 3.1. Press releases as political texts
 - 3.1.1 Is the press release a genre?
 - 3.1.2 Journalism and the EU
 - 3.1.3 The challenge of communicating Migration to the press
- 3.2 The corpus: from 1985 to 2016
 - 3.2.1 Sketch Engine: bilingual word sketch
 - 3.2.2 EP press releases: structural and stylistic changes over time
- 3.3 The analysis
 - 3.3.1 Terms investigated
 - 3.3.2 Collocations and frequencies
 - 3.3.3 Political statements in translation
- 3.4 The role of terminology in press releases
 - 3.4.1 Mixing LSP and LGP
 - 3.4.2 The strategy of not translating “hotspot”
 - 3.4.3 Illegal acts or people? The battle over “illegal immigrants” in migration texts

Chapter 4

30 Years of Migration in the EU

The role of terminology and translation on tackling the crisis

- 4.1 Combining ethnography with corpus linguistics: beyond qualitative research
- 4.2 Results of the analysis
 - 4.2.1 Map of the translated information flow
 - 4.2.2 Map of the Lexical framework derived from the analysis
- 4.3 Ethnographic material
 - 4.3.1 Interviews
 - 4.3.2 Round tables

4.3.3 Questionnaires

4.3.4 Focus groups

4.4 The last roundtable at the European Parliament: discussing results

4.5 Comments on the analysis by experts

4.6 Conclusive remarks



Directorate-General for Translation
Terminology Coordination Unit

Luxembourg, 10 May 2016

To the Doctoral Committee of the PhD School in Humanities, PhD Program in Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures, University of Verona

Dear Sir/Madam,

This is to certify that Jessica Mariani, PhD Candidate in English Language and Translation, supervised by Professor Roberta Facchinetti, Head of Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at the University of Verona, has agreed with the European Parliament Head of Terminology Coordination Unit, Rodolfo Maslias, to conduct an ethnographic study on terminology management processes and practices within the institution, with reference to her PhD Project "Building a European Perspective in News Translation: how translated information flows across the EU".

Yours sincerely,



Rodolfo Maslias
Head of Terminology Coordination Unit

Directorate-General for Communication
Directorate for the Media
Head of the Press Unit

Brussels, 6 May 2015

To the Doctoral Committee of the PhD School in Humanities, PhD Program in Modern Foreign Languages, Literatures and Cultures, University of Verona

Dear Sir/Madam,

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Yours sincerely



Marjory Van den Broeke