The Cultural Aspects of Multilingual EU Legislation

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The European Union is the largest union of States with a common system of legislation which concerns numerous areas of life.

EU directives are transposed into national law and for their application all 24 of goal languages have equal status.

In some domains, most of the laws of the Member States are based on European legal acts.
The official languages of the institutions of the Union are Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish and Swedish.
THE EU AND MULTILINGUALISM

Source: DG Translation
Translation and Interpretation in the EU Institutions

How many Institutions? - how many translators?

552 Language combinations

Involvement of translation and interpretation in the legislative process: draft, negotiations, co-decisions, amendments….
HOW AN EU LAW IS BORN

When 28 countries sit together to create a law valid in each one of them

When 24 languages are all considered original

When drawing a common policy governing many domains of daily life
THE IMPRESSIVE FLOW OF A DOCUMENT IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: TRANSLATION AND LEGAL REVISION INTERVENES 8 TIMES
The linguistic dimension of legislation is the central pivot of European law: legal acts, being expressed in various languages of the Union, can be applied uniformly only if they are written in an understandable accurate way, and are devoid of ambiguity.

In this multilingual reality, translation and terminology assume fundamental roles of transmission.
How many languages in Europe?

What makes a language?
Regional
Local
Spoken
Written
Education
Literature......
OFFICIAL LANGUAGE
in a State
in the EU

An ‘official language’ is the language officially used by a State for legislation and administration and in courts and schools. The identification of an official language gives citizens the right to expect the State to communicate with them in that language. In many countries, national languages of minorities are also legally guaranteed as additional official languages.

Each national official language becomes an official language of the EU only if the Member State concerned seeks that status for it.
ONE STATE
MULTIPLE LANGUAGES

The diversity and challenge presented by multilingualism within a number of States is reflected in the European Union as a whole.

Minority languages are also gradually gaining a foothold in education.
The EU introduces terminology in the internal and external institutional network, which is then fixed by usage in the Member States and their customs, and fed back to the institutional level.

The fact that the official language of a Member State has at the same time become the official language of the Union has, in many countries, promoted the emergence of a conscious language policy.

MUTUAL INFLUENCE

The relationship between the European, national and local level leads to a mutual transfer of knowledge.

In the same way that legal systems, cultures and languages of the Member States have influenced the legal system of the Union, the latter redounds on the legal systems of the Member States and their linguistic and cultural environment.
The daily practice especially after the addition of 9 languages in 2004

To ensure efficiency in internal communication there has to exist a "lingua franca" for communication in multinational departments. But this does not affect the respect of the multilingual legislation

Pivot languages and relay translation

Editing Units for proofreading texts drafted by non-native speakers
THE ‘PIVOT’ LANGUAGES

- Since 2003 it has become impossible for practical reasons to use the 552 language combinations which ought to be used on a footing of equality for the unrestricted application of EU Regulation No 1.

Some texts are first translated into English, French and German, so that these translations can then be used as originals and translated by relay.

Translations are authentic texts and translators have equal responsibility to the authors of the texts.
The role of Terminology

In implementing the same legal acts in all States and in all the languages of the European Union, the most important point is that fundamental linguistic concepts should be understood in the same way everywhere.

Increased neology, or the emergence of new terms, demands finding equivalents in all other languages in a short period of time. Multilingual databases have therefore become essential (not only at institutional level, but also in politics).

This is only possible thanks to a shared and consistent terminology.

IATE is a concept-oriented database covering more than 100 fields.
The concept is not a pre-existing content in our minds. It is a constructed representation of an object (object is defined in terminology as any unit of reality which can be perceived or conceived).

The term is the description of the concept which assumes a value depending on the situation (or context) in which it is used.

Terminology, on the one hand, is the study of the concept described by the term (onomasiological approach), on the other hand, it is the study of contexts in which the term is recorded (semasiological approach).
COMPLEMENTARITY OF TRANSLATION AND TERMINOLOGY IN MULTILINGUAL PRACTICES

Translators need to have multilingual tools at their disposal, which they can keep feeding themselves.

Terminologists must take into account the texting-discursive dimension.

These two disciplines go hand in hand, practice and research in context cannot be separated. Translation and terminology are essential steps in the creation of texts that, once adopted, are only at the beginning of their long life.
**DIFFERENT USES OF TERMINOLOGY**

- **Sentimental analysis**: the terms used in a text regarding capital markets can have an influence on the behavior of investors. Example: the translation of "hedge funds" in several languages using or choosing not to use the word “risk” as part of the term.

- **Terminology in journalism and communication**: the language used to communicate news and to pass messages is different than administrative language.

- **Adaptability of terminology according to the audience**: for some target groups a different level of language – example: medical terminology database of the "medecins sans frontières"
Terminology and technological progress

- Ontology and semantic web
- Quality assurance in CAT tools and MT
- Normative terminology for proactive use
- Terminology resources for post-editing
- Terminology and artificial intelligence – bioethics
- Technical aspects – Term extraction etc.
- Interlinking of terminology – Cloud technology and Metasearch
IATE content

- concepts/entries: 1.5 million
- terms: 8.7 million
- languages: 24
- new terms per year: 100,000
- terms updates per year: 170,000
Main aim: to support the multilingual drafting of EU texts, legal texts in particular

Specific function of the terminology database: to provide relevant, reliable, verified, easily accessible data which represents a distinct added value by comparison with other lexical information (e.g. translation memories, mass of information on internet)
Terminology Cooperation in the EU

Interactive, online communication and collaborative platforms and tools
Language specific wikis
Access the EU terminology through termcoord.eu

- EU terminology training material and presentations
- The toolbox for translators
- Terminology by and for interpreters
- The database IATE and its content in TBX is free for everyone
- The ability to search in all EU glossaries
- The terminology of the EU Agencies
- DocHound: all EU public documents in all languages
IATE terminology projects with universities

- Professors from the terminology or translation departments of various universities prepare lists of terms in specific fields in close cooperation with TermCoord.
- Their students complete and enter the data in a template.
- Our terminologists check and validate the data.
- The data is imported into IATE.
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki for IATE: Migration

Short presentation of the project

The aim of this project was to both initiate MA students to terminology work and to contribute to the IATE term-base with well-documented and reliable terms. For this purpose, a number of textual resources and access to internal IATE were offered to us by TermCoord. For each term, members of the team had to provide a solid definition and context in both English and Greek language. Our final results were also discussed with experts in the field of migration laws and social anthropology.

Participants

The Aristotle University's IATE project on migration was carried out by MA students of a Postgraduate Program in Translation. This program is offered jointly by the Schools of Philology and Languages of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. This MA Program is actually the only one of its kind in Greece.

IATE project on Migration (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki)

Download a more detailed table in Ms Excel format.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LANGUAGE</th>
<th>TERM</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>en</td>
<td>1.5 generation</td>
<td>young people who arrived in the country of destination during their secondary school career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>el</td>
<td>γενιά 1,5</td>
<td>[...]Παιδιά που μετανάστευσαν σε πολύ μικρή ηλικία, πήγαιναν σχολεία και κοινωνικοποιήθηκαν [σε χώρα διαφορετική από την πατρίδα τους] [...]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>en</td>
<td>acculturation</td>
<td>the processes of change in artifacts, customs, and beliefs that result from the contact of two or more cultures</td>
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THANKS

Σας ευχαριστώ
Terminology’s mental process in the legal system

- We find the same process of composition in legal terminology.
- The mental representation of a legal object is expressed in a loaded term, whose particular signification can lead to legal consequences.
- Example: the term « desprendimiento » in Spanish law refers to the particular moment when the umbilical cord of a newborn child is cut. El « desprendimiento » represents the instant at which the child is considered to be a human being in the light of law. The terms used in specialised discourse can be indicative of the attitude to birth in a given country.