

Problems with Terminology in the Period of Globalisation

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Resumen

En el presente trabajo analizaremos los problemas de los traductores en Eslovaquia desde el punto de vista de la nueva situación (ingreso a la Unión Europea), la relación entre esta situación y la nueva terminología, la adaptación del nuevo léxico y modos de su adaptación al sistema gramatical de nuestro idioma. Hay muchas interferencias, generalmente del inglés. Éste es también el problema de muchos idiomas. ¿Cómo arreglárselas? ¿Qué hacer? Ofreceré algunas opiniones y propuestas de algunos traductores y lingüistas. Mi atención se concentrará en el receptor de nuestras traducciones y la traducción de la literatura para fines específicos. En resumen quisiera concentrarme en las siguientes ideas básicas: 1) la influencia de la globalización en el idioma; el inglés como *lingua franca* y términos ingleses en la lengua materna; las interferencias; Slovglish; las interferencias checas (como la lengua más similar a la nuestra); los falsos amigos 2) las traducciones textuales y cómo evitarlas; varios modos de traducir la misma terminología; perspectivas académicas y profesionales 3) las exigencias de los clientes; traducciones de los materiales de la UE.

Impact of Globalisation And Ways of Adapting

My homeland, the Slovak Republic, is among the ten countries to become new European Union members on 1st May, 2004. As such, it will be opened to other countries, and the openness leading to more communication asks for expressing oneself in a variety of new ways, using new expressions, words, etc. That all leads to the formation of new terms, and to their codification. It is vocabulary that is the fastest developing part of our language system.

Since we look for information in foreign materials, I would like to mention translations from other languages. Being the *lingua franca* today, most new terminology comes to our language from English. We cannot and do not want to avoid this phenomenon. The question is how to cope with it, and how to process the information from the point of view of the relation between the source and the target languages.

We are experiencing a new phenomenon. At present, the language level and culture do not depend on native speakers spreading their mother tongues but they do depend on accepting and adapting foreign elements by native speakers.

There are three ways how it can be done:

borrowing or transfer – using the original version from the source language

adjustment – due to different grammar systems

translation – case when we have equivalents in our language

The first is ***borrowing***. Our language is very favourable to the English terminology and English that dominates in business, marketing, and other branches of economics. As I teach at the University of Economics, most examples are from that branch, e.g., *boom, cash, call and carry, cash pooling, copyright, dumping, embargo, forfeiting, goodwill, hacker, hedge, hi-tech or high technology, holding, know-how, laptop, marketing, notebook, outsourcing, public relations, tender, trading*.

Words from politics and social life can also be found: *sitcom, no comment, impeachment* etc.

Very popular are original, English names of films, or of fast-food dishes like *big mac, hot dog, milk shake, drive-in* restaurant, the interjection *wow*, or expressions of feeling *sorry, cool*, etc.

When looking up in various resource materials we can sometimes find out there is not a unity even in the original sources:

e-commerce – e-business – e-biznis – e-biz

just-in-time – just in time – Just In Time – Just in Time – various English sources use various writings (hyphenated or not hyphenated, lack of unification in writing capital letters)

Roma – Romany – before we used to say Gypsy

A similar lack of unification is found in geographical names. One example may serve for For one republic of the former USSR I have seen on TV, read in papers, or in dictionaries following names:

Belorussia – Byelorussia – Belorus- Belarus – Byelarus – White Russia

The next way is ***adjustment***. It is a step when the original expression

a) graphically changes according to the rules of our orthography:

SK	EN
<i>biznis</i>	<i>business</i>
<i>dizajn</i>	<i>design</i>
<i>hardvér</i>	<i>hardware</i>
<i>imidž</i>	<i>image</i>
<i>softvér</i>	<i>software</i>
<i>samit</i>	<i>summit</i>
<i>tím</i>	<i>team</i>

b) using endings

Unlike English, Slovak has a very complicated grammar: six cases for nouns, pronouns and adjectives, three grammatical genders, too many endings, suffixes and prefixes, etc. Therefore, when we accept a foreign term, after some time it becomes established in our language system with the root/stem from the source language + the Slovak ending (e.g. marketing as an adjective is *marketingový m sg* – *marketingová f sg* – *marketingové ne sg, pl, f pl* – *marketingoví m pl*)

SK	EN
<i>deflácia</i>	<i>deflation</i>
<i>negociováť</i>	<i>to negotiate</i>
<i>skenovať</i>	<i>to scan</i>
<i>surfovanie</i>	<i>surfing</i>
<i>surfovať</i>	<i>to surf</i>

Something in between could be the use of either the Slovak transcription or of the origin spelling:

EN/SK	SK
<i>clearing</i>	<i>klíring</i>
<i>dealer</i>	<i>díler</i>
<i>factoring</i>	<i>faktoring</i>
<i>leasing</i>	<i>lízing</i>
<i>management</i>	<i>manažment/menežment</i>
<i>trust</i>	<i>trast</i>
	<i>e-mail/e-majl</i> or without the "e":

e-mail

mail/majl/mejl

The latter is a peculiar case because the term which means electronic mail has the same meaning in Slovak even without the letter "e" for electronic unlike English where mail is synonym of the American origin for any post. If Slovaks mean other types of mail, not electronic, we use the Slovak word *pošta*.

Another peculiar example is the abbreviated form *www* for the World Wide Web. W in Sl is dvojité v (vé - doble uve en español), for v (vi:) it is (vé) therefore the English *www* should be pronounced dvojité vé, dvojité vé, dvojité vé. However, we only say *vvv* (vé, v vé) instead.

Sometimes there is a funny mixture in word combinations, e.g., the noun *mix* is taken from the English but the adjective *marketing* has a Slovak suffix – *ový*, so *marketing mix* in Slovak is *marketingový mix* or *feasibility study* is *štúdia feasibility*, etc.

Another type of endings is the suffix –*ová* used for female surnames. My husband's surname, e.g., is *Paule*, adding –*ová* we get *Pauleová* and that is my surname. Mr. Brown's wife's name would be *Brownová*. It may seem funny but in this way we can avoid making mistakes, moreover, when the first name is strange. On the other hand, in some countries the first name precedes the surname. If we do not know this system and do not know which is the first name and which the surname, it can happen, and it has already happened, that the meaning had been changed because the translators did not know that the surname preceded the first name in some languages. In the case of a Chinese swimmer whose surname was Zhou and the first name Li the ending –*ová* was added to the first name: *Liiová*.

There is a debate in our university, in particular at the Faculty of Foreign Commerce, Marketing Department, with which I co-operate in coining a new terminology. At present we are concentrating on the terminology of trade, marketing, knowledge of merchandise, logistics, and tourism, in particular. On the grounds of possibilities and flexibility of our language, the dispute should lead to establishing a terminology of our own in the above mentioned economic branches by a group of people – we are a kind of committee or commission establishing Slovak terms or judging whether to borrow the source language terms.

Another group could be called *various* or *mixture*, due to disagreement among specialist my case economists, when we use several terms for the same source language term. I c

not mean only expressions like *tax avoidance* or *tax evasion*, both of which are translated one way only as if they meant the same. However, economists should know they are similar but not the same. Let me provide some more examples of the mentioned mixtures:

SK	EN	SK
<i>afilácia</i> (English origin, Slovak ending)	<i>affiliation</i>	<i>pobočka</i> (translated to Slovak)
<i>forfaiting</i>	<i>forfeiting</i>	<i>odkúpenie pohľadávok</i> (in Slovak)
<i>futurity</i> (EN origin, SK ending)	<i>futures</i>	<i>termínované obchody</i>
<i>kompúter</i>	<i>computer</i>	<i>kompjúter</i>
<i>marketingový mix</i>	<i>marketing mix</i>	
<i>on-line obchodovanie</i>	<i>on-line business/commerce</i>	
<i>revolvingový účet</i>	<i>revolving account</i>	
<i>segmentácia trhu</i>	<i>market segmentation</i>	
<i>forwardové obchody</i>	<i>forward contracts</i>	
	(the former word being English+ the Slovak ending, the latter translated to Slovak as "commerce, trade")	
<i>franchising</i> (French origin but taken from English)		<i>frančíza/franšíza/frenšíza</i>

As far as **translation** is concerned, this is perfect for known terms, collocations, groups of words, word combinations, idiomatic phrases, etc. As for our language, the problem comes in a shortage of bilingual dictionaries. Although their compilation is time consuming, that is not the reason. The reason is different. We are a young country, a little over ten years old only, which was born after the split of the former Czechoslovakia. There were two official languages – Czech and Slovak – both being official and equal in both parts of the former common country. Two thirds of the population spoke Czech, one third Slovak. We, the Slovaks, had no problems with the Czech language, therefore we used bilingual dictionaries with the Czech either as the source or as the target language. In the past ten years we have been making up our own dictionaries. Those who have ever written one know it is a matter of several years to work out such a "product", moreover if the terminology is from newly introduced branches. Sometimes translation to our language is literal – loan translations (calques), e.g., *icon*, *mouse*, *to launder money*; *ask for scalps*; *break the ice*, etc. but sometimes they are completely different.

Lost in Translation – False Friends – Slovglish

I have already said that English penetrates into our language. Corrupt, garbled terms or confusing words lead to misunderstanding, and result in the so called Slovglish. Nothing under the sun, you can say. This is a problem of Spanish, and leads to Spanglish, German Deuglish or Engdeutsch, etc. As far as I know, French and Hungarian protect their language better and oppose the mentioned penetrations. Let me give you some examples:

SK	Wrong EN	EN
<i>agenda</i>	<i>agenda</i>	<i>clerical work</i>
<i>aktuálny</i>	<i>actual</i> (Ger. aktuell)	<i>topical, up to date</i>
<i>bilión</i> (12 zeros)	<i>billion</i> (9 zeros)	<i>million of millions, trillion</i>
<i>eventuálne</i>	<i>eventually</i>	<i>possibly, perhaps</i>
<i>gymnázium</i>	<i>gymnasium</i>	<i>grammar school</i>
<i>klerikál</i>	<i>clerical</i>	<i>clericalist</i>
<i>komisia</i>	<i>commission</i>	<i>board, committee</i>
<i>maturita</i>	<i>maturity</i>	<i>school leaving examination</i>
<i>prémia</i>	<i>premium</i>	<i>bonus</i>
<i>propagácia</i>	<i>propagation</i>	<i>promotion</i>
<i>promócia</i>	<i>promotion</i>	<i>graduation ceremony</i>
<i>provízia</i>	<i>provision</i>	<i>commission</i>
<i>respektívne</i>	<i>respectively</i>	<i>as the case may be</i>
<i>rezort</i>	<i>resort</i>	1. <i>department</i> 2. <i>competence</i>
<i>sekrét</i>	<i>secret</i>	<i>secretion</i>

I would like to give you more examples of these false friends because they have always been a source of misunderstandings, this time in more language combinations than Slovglish only:

EN	Wrong ES	ES	EN
<i>carpet</i>	<i>carpeta</i>	<i>alfombra</i>	<i>briefcase</i>
<i>exit</i>	<i>éxito</i>	<i>salida</i>	<i>success</i>
<i>preservative</i>	<i>preservativo</i>	<i>sustancia conservativa</i>	<i>condom</i>
<i>rest</i>	<i>resto</i>	<i>descanso, pausa</i>	<i>residue, remainder</i>
<i>success</i>	<i>suceso</i>	<i>éxito</i>	<i>event</i>
<i>café</i>	<i>café</i>	<i>cafetería</i>	<i>coffee</i>

Some examples of Slovak and Spanish false friends:

SK	Wrong ES	ES
<i>káva</i> (coffee)	<i>cava</i> (sprinkling wine)	<i>vino espumado</i>
<i>no...</i> (well...)	<i>no</i> (no)	<i>bueno, pues</i>
<i>vec</i> (thing)	<i>vez</i> (time-s)	<i>cosa</i>
<i>koza</i> (goat)	<i>cosa</i> (thing)	<i>cabra</i>
<i>debil</i> (moron)	<i>débil</i> (weak)	<i>tonto</i>
<i>pero</i> (pen)	<i>pero</i> (but)	<i>pluma</i>
<i>bola</i> (she was)	<i>bola</i> (ball)	<i>fue, era</i> (ella)
<i>cena</i> (price)	<i>cena</i> (dinner)	<i>precio</i>
<i>cesta</i> (road, way)	<i>cesta</i> (basket)	<i>camino</i>
<i>kurva</i> (whore)	<i>curva</i> (curve)	<i>puta</i>
<i>áno</i> (yes)	<i>ano</i> (anus)	<i>sí</i>

Slovak belongs to the group of Slavic languages, together with Polish and Czech (being West Slavic), Bulgarian, Slovenian, Croatian, Serbian (South Slavic), and Ukrainian, Belorussian and Russian (East Slavic) languages. There are many examples of misunderstandings caused by similar sounding words too. These are some examples:

SK	E	CZ	CR	RU	PL
<i>chudý</i> (slim)		<i>chudý</i> (poor)			
<i>horký</i> (bitter)		<i>horký</i> (hot)			
<i>kapusta</i> (cabbage)		<i>kapusta</i> (Brussels sprouts)			
<i>kúriť</i> (to heat)		<i>kouřit</i> (to smoke)			
<i>topiť</i> (to drown)		<i>topit</i> (to heat)			
<i>láska</i> (love)					<i>laska</i> (stick)
<i>záchod</i> (toilet)					<i>zachód</i> (We)
<i>čerstvý</i> (fresh)				<i>čerstvyj</i> (old, not fresh)	
<i>krásny</i> (beautiful)				<i>krásnyj</i> (red)	
<i>nedeľa</i> (Sunday)				<i>nedel'a</i> (week)	
<i>vzkriesenie</i> (resurrection)				<i>voskresenie</i> (Sunday)	

<i>páchne</i> (stinks)		<i>páchnet</i> (smells lovely)
<i>vonía</i> (smells lovely)		<i>vonjaet</i> (stinks)
<i>zabiť</i> (kill)		<i>zabyť</i> (forget)
<i>zabudnúť</i> (forget)	<i>zapomenout</i> (forget)	<i>zapomniť</i> (remember)
<i>mier</i> (peace)	<i>mír</i> (peace)	<i>mir</i> (world)
<i>svet</i> (world)		<i>svet</i> (light)
<i>život</i> (life)		<i>život</i> (belly)
<i>slovensky</i> (Slovak adj.)		<i>slovensky</i> (Slovenian)
<i>zrak</i> (sight)		<i>zrak</i> (air)
<i>časť</i> (part, portion)		<i>časť</i> (honour)
<i>stan</i> (tent)		<i>stan</i> (flat)
<i>rad</i> (row)		<i>rad</i> (work)
<i>odbor</i> (branch, field)		<i>odbor</i> (committee)
<i>slovo</i> (word)		<i>slovo</i> (letter of the alphabet)
<i>reč</i> (speech)		<i>riječ</i> (word)
<i>pomyje</i> (pigswill)		<i>pomyje</i> (drink)
<i>hladna</i> (hungry)		<i>hladna</i> (cold)
<i>brak</i> (trash)		<i>brak</i> (matrimony)
<i>nudiť</i> (be boring)		<i>nuditi</i> (offer)
<i>kraj</i> (edge)		<i>kraj</i> (end)
<i>sklad</i> (warehouse)		<i>sklad</i> (harmony, consensus)
<i>kruh</i> (circle)		<i>kruh</i> (bread)
<i>závod</i> (factory, plant)	<i>závod</i> (race)	<i>zavod</i> (University department)

I would like to close the examples with some funny expression. When you say *out of sight*, *out of mind* in English, it means "if you do not see a person, after some time you forget or her", in Russian the English *out of sight* means "invisible", *out of mind* means "a fool, idiot", and so *out of sight out of mind* can be translated as an *invisible fool*; a piece of ca

something very easy in English - translated to Slovak means a "portion of a dessert/pastry/pie/cake". The Slovak phrase for *"be/keep up-to-date, or be well informed"* is *"byť v obraze"*. Translated back to English it results in the phrase *"to be in the picture"*,

Conclusion

How to avoid bad translations? A good translator must never stop learning, must be up-to-date and update information using any possible accessible resources or media. We should realise that language purity without any foreign elements is unthinkable today so our task is to cope and to find the best way of doing so which seems to be a never-ending story.