



SYMBIOTIC EXISTENCE OF UK ECONOMICS TERMS AND THEIR TRANSLATION EQUIVALENTS IN CURRENT BULGARIAN ACADEMIC RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the processes of adaptation and change in the transfer of foundational UK economics terms to relevant Bulgarian research literature. The study is based on a corpus of lexemes derived from recent publications in Bulgarian economics journals and dissertations and analyzes the specifics of the symbiosis of various Bulgarian translation equivalents with the original lexemes in Anglo-Saxon usage and their relationships. The used methods are interdisciplinary, i.e. ranging from morphological derivations, semantic and grammatical aspects to intercultural interpretations of existent realia and translation phenomena. The corpus and the inferences elicited from our observations can serve as a reference and educational tool for students of economics and users of related terminology.

Key words: translation equivalents, symbiosis, economics research, terminology

INTRODUCTION TO THE PRACTICE OF TRANSLATION

This paper contains some thoughts about the nature of equivalency and translation of terms in economic research from English to Bulgarian. For illustrative purposes we have included an excerpt of the corpus, manually compiled from articles written in Bulgarian from the past ten years, analyzed for their relevance to the theoretical notions delivered in the first part of this essay.

The presence of a translated text in the academic article can be recognized by the level of foreignness it brings to the language which has adopted it. Or, also, through the tacit agreement between the writer and their readers who communicate better through such use, as if they

would be struggling to explain a structure, phenomenon, or a whole complex of meanings existing in the source culture if they did not use the neologism as it appears in the original. When the nature of the text is terminologically dense, the use of strangeness becomes accommodated into the terminological apparatus of the community of readers of a certain science, in this case, the realm of economics and related social studies. Here, everything that is contained in the pragmatic meaning of a term is lifted up to a level of understanding that includes code-reading and recognition of signs like a mathematical formula, which is universal in meaning. Though semiotic, it is narrowly linked to the lexical vocabulary span that a reader and a writer share by educating one another and speeding up the process of communication.

The creative process of translating a science into another language decides for or against the limits of equivalence. Within these limits lies the scope of the specific term, explained narrowly or descriptively to fit the definition that serves a functional purpose: the precision with which this

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term has been adopted in the language that determines the degree of freedom of its adaptation. When opting for a literal translation, there are several ways which show the progression of this usage: transliteration, transcription, calque, equivalent with a certain phonological, morphological or syntactic change. It is exactly in this fuzzy zone of decision making that the creative plan of the writer-translator becomes visible. The purpose of their social and academic views, the outlook on how the language changes, the trends that are set by other writers and the demands for more topical, concise and adequate specific terminology. The days of “драсни пали клечица” may seem outdated and amusing, like anecdotes of puristic efforts to localize a term for a monolingual audience. The readers of today’s research are competent, versatile and demand exactitude. The relevance of research to the scientific methods largely depends on the soundness of the translation approach that is illustrated through anything between creative or mechanical use of terms. The pitfalls of adopting new terminology rest on the readiness of the target language to stretch its limits. Readers and writers, therefore, create a common ground, which is agreement settled under the conditions of professional jargon and for the sake of progress and developing language items that serve to promote the uniformity of science.

Perhaps the use of English in the research article is transparent, visible, and therefore logical, but the fact that at least two languages may co-exist in an academic (non-fiction) text that is addressed to a readership who use both the normative, and the scientific dialect of those two languages fluently, is indicative of the spread of bilingualism in academia that allows the symbiotic existence of the Anglo-Saxon economics terms and culture and its transferred reception in academic research written in Bulgarian. Automatic translation, rule-setting for norms in the target language, sentences that dangle and are seen through English syntax are more commonly accepted and exist in a controversial mode. The clichés that were strange and suspicious several years ago have entered the conservative media and have become a sign for a whole semiotic complex laden with meanings that depend on the direct transfer of a meme into

the culture that is using them without editorial intervention (1). When the language of the street randomly and massively adopts that buzzword trend, it battles with local conservatism. The liberal reader may sometimes appreciate the subtleties of a fine translation into the target language, but he will mostly depend on the benchmark terms if he is aware of them and to the best of his ability in order to serve the communication purposes of the text delivered in a linguistic mix. This mix is evolutionary, the symbiotic effect being the creation of an artificial environment, that tolerates linguistic strangeness and direct transfer of lexemes and constructions. The final stage is a language that is functional, but has a lower readability for non-natives in the professional sphere where terms are expressed in or translated from English. Perhaps the choice of language of commerce depends on the daily transactions in business and society that inevitably interpret their own existence through the imposition and implosion of argotic vernacular. The newspeak of researchers resembles an organism or a species that has developed the extra evolutionary feature which will allow it to walk down the new forest of meanings equipped with a tool to adopt, adapt and procreate a language for specific purposes. Why language? Couldn’t it be an application of a mental operation, or a function that resides in its untapped potential? Language is resourceful, it moves and procreates, and as an organism, it interacts with other bodies in a commensal or symbiotic relationship (3). It uses bits and pieces of other cultures and social conventions to develop itself. The language of commerce, economics and finance used in research connects the untranslatable terms with translatable realities experienced by humans in various societies involved in economic transactions (4). The anthropological approaches used to justify the ethnolinguistic aspect of communication and interaction are linked to the evolving process of culture coding, which is reflected in the language of social studies research. When proposing a new term, a writer readily assumes that it is a concentrated essence of a thought or a meme that has insightfully been used in light of serving a specific purpose for tackling a research task. This analogy of thought that recurs in time and the current state of professional language in a certain sphere describes their parallel existence: when

the writer faces a phenomenon that seems radically different and unknown, the first thing that he does is to invent a term for it – a sudden illumination for neologism coinage that is brought to an extreme in some academic spheres. Perhaps the alert following and noticing of events that reverberate in society originate in the vigilance of explorers who then act as translators to accommodate that event in the schemes and terms of a language. The dominant lingua franca is used because of many reasons – for convenience, convention, tradition, practicality, ease of learning, accessibility of resources, for a certain influence that the metalanguage and cultures (general and professional/ academic) have on non-native professionals (5). The writer of an article then acts as the translator of a source text, culture, a phenomenon or a whole reality. He also channels ideas and memes that stand out with their local specifics and are therefore in need of definition. With time and spreading use, these definitions gradually are left out as redundant, which indicates a trend in development of communication that achieves a more economical, concise, vivid, fluent and at least bilingual mastery of a terminological expression (6).

Scientific translation, as any interpretation effort, originates in the onset of communication and uses codes to achieve translatability and realize expression. In this sense, it exists as an evolutionary medium and describes the symbiotic presence of alternatives in a dynamic aspect. Translation is additive by nature, not equitable (7). Perhaps arboreal, perhaps commensal. Existence of complementarity, of co-existence of differences. It is the identity of the smaller and larger foreign unit that seeks to be transferred, not the weighty dogmatic rules of lexeme choice no matter how conservative the context may be. For those long-lasting terms that have withstood the test of time the target language has become a host of scientific ideas that grow from the relative unfamiliarity and the lack of interpretative models. When the concept is explained from various angles and that discussion has become a validation of its sense and pertinence, its use being topical and debatable, it may naturally grow as a new addition, a graft on a cherry tree that will slowly converge.

The choice of equivalents depends on the translation strategies used for adapting or

adopting a lexeme. Because equivalence is based on meaning, the code and its type is only secondary in importance. It carries a more explicit idea to the readers who expect to perceive it and will understand it better when it is used in full, as in the original. The ethical question of what is possible approaches the permissibility of the readership who tend to take a more liberal view on the foreignness of the text. The norms and coding of a target text reflects language changes and cultural, i.e. scientific and academic culture in a specific context allow the use of direct calques as better than the clumsy and descriptive attempts to give an equivalent to a non-existing concept in target language.

In the context of the symbiosism or mutualism (2), the semantic use of lexemes as equivalents and neologisms is apparent. The symbiosis is a theory of biological origin and relates to the evolution of language. This theory regards the language as a mutual benefit of already familiar and schematically existent knowledge of constructions and their meanings and the newly coined and expressions which enter the terminological sphere as loans and calques (8). For the reader, who is also professional, the co-existence of terms from Anglo-Saxon origin in the text of the recipient culture would mean that the concepts and the images associated with the signs are mutually agreed between the professional source and the target language users, thus they agree to adopt the term in the academic language. The spheres that are partaking in this communication are academic, professional, general or specific social, commonly adopted (agreed on) formulae for using the neologism as a part of speech, grammatical or lexical category and the type of change that has occurred in the process of adaptation.

TRANSLATION STRATEGIES

When the English lexeme is used, it saves time and is more concentrated more marked in the mind of the reader who is also aware of the information contained in that term. Resembling a code that achieves its purpose for communication reasons instead of trying to expand the description into a definition that will weigh and burden unnecessarily the body of the text. Perhaps a foreignness that sounds unusual for two reasons: alien because of its specialized meaning in a foreign language; and the choice is justified

because it will sound even less comprehensible if it were written as a descriptive phrase. In the language of science there could be a tendency to speak “right”, i.e. to use the vocabulary that the smaller circle of people are familiar with and to use it correctly, or to have another agenda such as the newspeak of a certain organization which implies political bias.

Chesterman (7) suggests the use of language strategies that abide to specific norms of the translation process. His ideas rest upon the work of other scholars of translation studies, such as Vinay and Darbelnet (9), however, he manages to create a typology that is characterized with greater practicality and arises from a sense of continuous addition and variability. He divides the strategies into syntactic, semantic and pragmatic. The first three syntactic strategies, which are most relevant here, have been illustrated with examples from our corpus:

(S1) Literal translation: he thinks of this strategy as the default form of choice, which can be changed, if necessary, to create a more accurate equivalence in the target language: “дигитална икономика, големи данни (в кавички), изкуствен интелект, автономни превозни средства” (BG)

(S2) Loan, calque: this is the most common choice for introducing neologisms. It consists of the borrowing of a lexeme or a syntagma, including its transcription or insertion as it is: “роботика, интернет на нещата, блокчейн технологии, 3D принтери, (Брекзит) Brexit, Bremain, Breentry, Breversal, Grexit, PPP, GDP” (BG)

(S3) Transposition: any change of word class or syntactic order (noun to verb, adverb to adjective, etc.) “революция на данните, облачни технологии” (BG)

The pragmatic reasons for using any of these strategies are:

- a) The wish to use coding for clearer and more direct/ short understanding (addresses a more specialized public, speeds up understanding and conciseness)
- b) The need to adhere to internationally known abbreviations of organizations or terms which have entered the language and the professional sphere and have gained popularity
- c) The desire to instruct, or use a term for didactic purposes – the term, its translation

and its definition are included in order to explain and educate the reader

- d) The decision to incorporate the term and use a translation transformation for the subjectively best expression

The difficulties and challenges to language fluency during the translation of economic vocabulary into Bulgarian are omnipresent, and some of these are a subject to foreign language teaching (10). Some of them are tackled by inserting inverted commas around the unskillful translation, by adding the term per se (in English, as in the original), by using calques and loan words to express the similarity in meaning and emphasizing the element of strangeness and ostracization. We identify those occurrences of foreignness and attempts for adaptation which turn the source text into a target text with its rough, unpolished and literal meaning borrowed from the most widely established forms of communication in economics and social sciences, including abbreviations (11). They are signaled through inverted commas and become adopted with a certain precaution. Thus, the promotion of foreignness in the original is related to choosing more resistant, transgressive strategies to convey the meaning of the foreign text and culture.

There is a certain tradition in the choice of translation equivalents and it goes in two directions – 1) towards a fluent and free translation that deviates from the original, but is easily readable and relatable in the target language; 2) towards an attempt to acculturate and localize the standards of the target language in view of the readers’ awareness of the problems discussed.

ANALYTICAL NOTES ON EXCERPTS OF THE CORPUS

Literal translation of the English term placed in inverted commas that hints its intrusive, strange or foreign character. That signals an attempt to adapt it to the target language for the purposes of clearer use of an internationally recognized term.

Дигитална икономика, големи данни, революция на данните, изкуствен интелект, облачни технологии, автономни превозни средства, интернет на нещата, роботика (BG) (11).

Loan words or calques by transliterating or transcribing the original term which is new and does not or will not have an equivalent in the target language (neologism):

блокчейн технологии, 3D принтери, „лайкване“, „фрикономика“ (Freakonomics) (BG) (13, 14)

Descriptive definition of a commonly known idea or a meme which is marked deliberately as foreign (in inverted commas) in the target text

Адам Смит е принуден да работи с помощта на непосредствените си емпирични наблюдения на ставащото в икономиката и абстракции като „невидимата ръка на пазара“ и „икономическия човек“

По-късно Дейвид Рикардо изгражда важни елементи от теорията си на основата на противопоставянето на т. нар. „житни закони“, поставящи високи мита върху вноса на зърнени култури, чрез които се поддържат високи цени и се намалява конкурентноспособността на английската икономика, а количествената му теория за парите е силно повлияна от решението на Английската банка от 1797 г. да не разменя книжните банкноти срещу злато, което води до инфлация. (BG) (11)

Exceeding and sometimes unnecessary use of anglicisms or latinized versions of international lexis which can be easily avoided by the choice of local variants:

Тенденции към подценяване на емпирията за сметка на абстракцията намираме и в началото на ХХ век, когато това става характеристика и на неокласическия икономикс, който тръгва от аксиомите за хомо икономикус и за рационалния човек, максимизиращ своите изгоди. (BG) (11)

An interesting phenomenon of reintroduction of a term which has been part of the Bulgarian scientific and social life during the socialist era in order to make it sound obsolete and historical, thus using the inverted commas as a mark of oddity.

Съответните икономики започват да се наричат „планови икономики“ и в тях планирането, с помощта на огромни масиви от данни и информация, се противопоставя на спонтанната

саморегулация на капиталистическия пазар. (BG) (11)

Common use of titles and abbreviations from the Anglo-Saxon area in original.

Проучване на съдържанието на статиите в трите най-влиятелни американски икономически списания – American Economic Review, Journal of Political Economy и Quarterly Review of Economics – показва, че пикът на доминиране на теорията в тях е през 1980 г (BG) (11)

Attempt to translate or adapt the term from the English original with the Bulgarian calque.

Появява се дори въпросът дали не се движим към едно „пост-статистическо общество“ (Davies, 2017). Първото е свързано с т. нар. „тъмни данни“ (Dark data). (BG) (11)

Use of the complete strategy – literal translation, inverted commas (signaling a new and unknown term, perhaps strange) and an extended definition in the following sentence. This is a didactic use of introducing terminology.

Второто направление е свързано с т.нар. „извличане на данни“ (Data mining) – процес на откриване на корелации, зависимости, модели, смисли в огромни бази данни, които не са разбираеми и ясни. (BG) (11)

Word and phrase formation by using unit shift and transposition:

науката за големите данни (Big data science); науката за данните (Data science), анализ на данните (Big data analytics), обработка на потоци от данни (Streaming data processing), обработка на готови данни (Batch data processing); „прогнозна аналитика“ (predictive analytics) (BG) (11)

Synonymous use of the term expressed through two variants in the target language.

Затова тя характеризира трансформацията на икономическите изследвания през последните години по-скоро като „приложен завой“, отколкото като „емпиричен обрат“ (BG) (11)

An illustration of a whole phenomenon in economic thought through the use of a somewhat

cryptic translation signaling the implications of its meaning.

Стои въпросът в каква степен те могат да станат основа на изграждане на нови теоретични модели, ако досегашните икономически теории са изградени на основата на допускането при „други равни условия“. (BG) (11)

A whole nest of word forms related to a main morpheme in the same text (digital+ collocates)

„дигитален данък“, „дигитален тоталитаризъм“, „дигитален суверенитет“, „дигитален капитализъм“, „дигитален социализъм“, „дигитален марксизъм“, „дигитален реализъм“ (BG) (11)

Another symbiotic use of synonyms of the same term which tries to explain and instruct the readers who may be confused or not be aware of the novelty of the terms and their general meanings in the target language.

Това е нов тип „смагт“ или „умна“ икономическа система... нови понятия като „умна собственост“, „смагт договори“, „динамични дигитални индивиди“, „умни бизнес модели“ и „разпределени автономни организации“ (BG) (11)

A range of vocabulary related to a global phenomenon which are impossible to translate, and are transcribed or transliterated (such as the nest of Brexit). The case of Brexit vocabulary, especially in the media has been extensively researched and analyses on the identity, controversies and polemics has been addressed in numerous studies (15, 4, 16, 17): Brexit, Bremain, Breentry, Breversal, Grexit (15)

Names of specific bills, laws, strategies, or institutions, which are also commonly known in their original rendition. It is notable that the authors tend to give the historical or current context of the origin or at least the background of the term in the original country.

Great Repeal Bill, City Code on Takeovers and Mergers. Say on Pay und Related Party Transactions, Corporate Governance Codes, Cadbury Committees (17)

Relatively free translation which uses a unit shift:

По-скоро съвсем механично се декларира, че правилата ще се спазват (т.нар. ticking

the box exercise) (17); екзогенните променливи са предимно фиктивни (dummy variables) (BG) (18)

Using abbreviations or full names in brackets to add the English original to the Bulgarian equivalent.

Прилагане на мониторинг върху стабилността на лева. Това е т.нар. „Exchange Rate Mechanism II (ERM II)“. Среден темп на инфлацията, по-нисък от 1.5 % спрямо трите държави с най-висок темп на ръст на ИПЦ (CPI). Единна нормативна рамка (Single Rulebook). Единен надзорен механизъм (Single Supervisory Mechanism). Единен механизъм за реструктуриране (Single Resolution Mechanism). Единна схема за гарантиране на депозитите (Deposit Guarantee Schemes). Европейския механизъм за стабилност (ESM) (BG) (18)

Among the shown examples there are instances of different degrees of acculturation, some of which have been adopted as unwritten, but practical rules of introducing neologisms. Even when the term is not new, such as abbreviations of organizations, institutions, policies, strategies and phenomena of recent origin, the common trend is to add the original abbreviation in brackets, or use it freely in the target language.

CONCLUSION

The characteristics of a specialized text, that reflects a culture or different subcultures relate to the social meaning of the universal language of academia. It is a professional language that uses metalanguage for science written in English, especially about commerce and economy as fields of most active exchange and research, most common interactions. It also contains an economy of words and expressions, avoidance of ambiguity and adding descriptive notes that explain the definition of the term and its environment. The areas where neologisms tend to thrive are new disciplines, digital sphere, or current and futuristic fields where the readers will be expected to follow the jargon of technology and science and to recognize it when they see it. Furthermore, they will find it burdensome to read long extensive explanations of the term, and would prefer to use the shorter and clearer version. For many others, these neologisms will

remain cryptic and will defer them from being interested and motivated to learn. That is why the academic literature always has an element of instruction and seeking the middle ground when tackling the newest terminology. In this sense academics are largely interpreting science for colleagues and the general public, acting as translators of intercultural/ interlinguistic space. Their readers could be multilingual, educated, coming from specific groups of professions, elitist or highly critical. They may also be general, populist, unaware of the specifics and tools of scientific language. That is why the writer carries the burden of striking the balance between the historical, conventional and modern, innovative in order to reach larger audiences and inspire a more convincing debate.

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