TO EAT OR NOT TO EAT...IN VIGO: THE TRANSLATOR SOLVES THE DILEMMA

Comer ou não comer... em Vigo: o tradutor resolve o dilema



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Abstract: What happens when a cruise tourist arrives in Vigo (Galicia-Spain) and feels culture-hungry enough to explore the local cuisine? There are two possible ways to go about it: walking around the port area and trying some of the exquisite dishes which are kindly offered by the surrounding caterers, or with modern day technology surfing the city's websites, for example, http://www.turismodevigo.org. Precisely here, some of the information offered deals with typical food any visitor can taste and includes recipes and information about food festivals. "[A]s all our behaviour is culture-specific" (Vermeer, 1994, p. 10), this paper aims to discuss how the translation of food on this mainstream website translated from either Spanish or Galician (or both) into English and Portuguese, yet not into French or Italian, can encourage or discourage visitors from savouring some of the most typical Galician dishes. One of the challenges of Translation Studies is dealing with cross-cultural references, which always increase the difficulty of transferring content from one language to another. The specific cultural barriers related to food might lead the translator to modify, adapt or even omit some of the content in order to make the translation (and explicitly the food) more delectable.

Key Words: Translation; Food; Culture; Tourism.

Resumo: O que acontece quando os turistas de um cruzeiro que chegam a Vigo (Galícia, Espanha) estão com fome de cultura e decidem explorar a gastronomia da cidade? Podem caminhar pela zona do porto e experimentar os requintados pratos que os restaurantes locais amavelmente oferecem ou podem utilizar as novas tecnologias para visitar sítios web da cidade, como http://www.turismodevigo.org, onde há informações sobre comidas típicas que qualquer turista pode experimentar, assim como receitas e informações sobre festivais culinários. "Dado que todo comportamento é próprio de cada cultura" (Vermeer, 1994, p. 10), o objetivo deste artigo é discutir como a tradução da linguagem sobre a comida neste sítio web, traduzido do espanhol ou galego (ou ambos) para o inglês e o português (mas curiosamente não para o francês nem o italiano) pode persuadir ou dissuadir os turistas a saborear alguns dos pratos mais típicos da cozinha galega. Um dos desafios dos Estudos de Tradução é como resolver as referências culturais que sempre tornam mais difícil a transferência de conteúdo de uma língua para outra. As barreiras culturais específicas relacionadas à comida podem levar o tradutor a modificar, adaptar ou mesmo omitir parte do conteúdo para que a tradução (e expressamente a comida) seja mais apetecível.

Palavras-chave: Tradução; Comida; Cultura; Turismo.

71

1. Introduction to Key Concepts

ourism is an activity which involves the direct contact between cultures and all that this concept includes, namely folklore, customs, gastronomy, dancing, rules, etc. The choice of language used in tourist texts is invaluable to bridge tourists and the place they are visiting, and above all, a joint element between the local and the foreign cultures involved (Durán, 2012, p.336). For this reason the translation of this specialized type of text into other languages is a challenge full of cultural obstacles which must be overcome. Yet before discussing the role of the translator in this quest to overcome these cultural obstacles, attention must be drawn to what is understood as culture. Soto has defined the cultural context in a text as: "El conjunto de costumbres y tradiciones, valores y reglas de comportamiento, la interpretación del entorno y el universo que cada comunidad de hablantes posee, así como el conocimiento de su de sus historia y literatura.³" (Soto, 2013, p. 237).

Larson is of the opinion (1984, p. 431) that culture is "a complex of beliefs, attitudes, values, and rules which a group of people share", thus, translators need to broaden their knowledge about their own culture in order to contrast it, while also acquire the necessary knowledge about those new beliefs, attitudes, values and rules which belong to the new group they are addressing.

In translation literature, terms such as, realia, culturally-bound, culture-specific expressions, culture-bound items, and culturemes have been used to define what entails the culture of the tourist destination and its attractions.

Vlakhov and Florin (1970) distinguished four different types of realia ("real things" or objects of the material culture): 1) Geographic and ethnographic, 2) Folkloric and mythological, 3) Everyday objects and 4) Social and historical (institutional and social classes). Among these, the translation of food would be probably included in the third category which includes everyday objects.

Newmark (1988) was inspired by Nida to create his classification which added a category for gestures and habits, i.e., paraverbal elements. This academic named these words and expressions as cultural words which can be classified into five categories: 1) Ecology: flora, fauna, hills, winds, and plains; 2) Material Culture: food, clothes, houses and towns, transport; 3) Social Culture Work and Leisure; 4) Organizations, Customs, Activities, Procedures, Concepts: political and administrative, religious, artistic, and 5) Gestures and Habits.

Nord considers cultural references as those items which are the consequence of the sociocultural content which helps build a text. She considers that a culture-specific phenomenon is:

thus one that is found to exist in a particular form or function in only one of the cultures being compared. This does not mean that the phenomenon exists only in that particular culture. The same phenomenon might be observable in cultures other than the two in question (Nord, 1997, p. 34).

The above mentioned phenomenon has been observed in the food website translation studied here. According to Nord culture-specificity can be classified into four groups: 1) Natural Environment, 2) Lifestyle, 3) History and 4) Cultural Heritage.

More recently, Antonini and Chiaro (2005, p. 39) have identified ten areas in which "lingua-cultural drops in translational voltage" might take place. Briefly, they mention the following; 1) Institutions, 2) Educational, 3) Place names, 4) Units of Measurement, 5) Monetary Systems, 6) National Sports and Pastimes, 7) Food and Drink, 8) Holidays and Festivities, 9) Books, Films and TV programmes, 10) Celebrities and Personalities. These different categories which help pinpoint culture specific references (CSR) in a ST (Source Text) raise the awareness of the translator of the need to put different strategies or translation techniques into practice quite often done unknowingly.

The translation of Food and Drink, the seventh area aforementioned, from Spanish into English of the Galician Web Site www.turismodevigo.org will be discussed below. Some data about the importance of tourism in Galicia and specifically Vigo will be presented beforehand in order to emphasize the serious consequences of a bad translation.

2. Background and Touristic Information about Vigo (Galicia-Spain)

Vigo is the largest city of the Spanish Autonomy of Galicia, outstanding for its fishing industry. Furthermore, Galicia's gastronomy not only thrives on its fresh, high-quality sea products, but on its inland livestock (especially veal) and agriculture as well. Vigo's privileged geographical location and mild climate also attract tourism although statistics reveal that most visitors have chosen Vigo due to its cuisine, cultural offer and the nearby Islas Cíes (The Cies Islands) Natural Park.

According to the INE (Spanish Statistical Office), one third of tourists who visit this charming town are from abroad, which explains why Vigo's Tourism Competitiveness Plan aims to internationalize tourist demand and increase its number of visitors. In fact, 20 per cent

of the total number of tourists who visited Galicia in 2013 was of international visitors accounting for a total number of 1.6 million people. In terms of the origin of these visitors, 59 different nationalities were registered. Moreover, mainly visitors from two of the most famous transatlantic cruisers, Independence of the Seas and Queen Mary II brought to these shores more than 250,000 passengers, mainly from the UK. Other foreign tourists, in order of importance according to figures, arrive from Portugal, France, Germany and Argentina, enjoying the city's nature, cuisine and lifestyle.

In 2012, 7,152 foreigners visited this city (most recent available data). Out of 59 countries which are included in the list of foreign visitors, some of the highest tourist counts are visitors from Canada (44), Ireland (77), the UK (1,803), the US (451) and Australia (37), so, obviously, English is likely to be the language used in hotels, restaurants, shops, city transport, etc.

3. Translating Tourist Texts

The need to promote Vigo as an attractive destination abroad explains why the town has invested time and money in the creation of a website which has been translated into, from a translator's point of view, only two languages: English and Portuguese (data from 2014)⁴. The lack of language variety is probably based on tourism statistics of the city, revealing the nationalities of those visitors who actually tend to come to Vigo, and also the use of English as *lingua franca*.

The studied website, www.turismodevigo.org, seeks to attract more foreign visitors through a site that includes travellers' impressions, the Read Speaker programme, the use of reader-friendly colours and word type and colourful photographs to guide the reader and whet potential visitors' appetites.

Both ST (Source Text) and TT (Target Text) share a similar purpose in the sense that this website is a tourist text: "designed to introduce the scenic spots to the viewers, and to convey the related information to them in order to enable the viewers to understand and enjoy the spots. They mainly offer the expressive, the informative and the vocative functions." (Sanning, 2010, p. 125)

Both texts are intended to offer information and to advertise a destination, encouraging potential tourists to discover Vigo and its cuisine. Despite this general statement, parts of the TT in English reveal that some of the decisions made by the translator while dealing with cultural specific references, namely food, were inappropriate and confusing for target readers.

The examples showed below are aimed to demonstrate how important cultural difference considerations are in the production of a tourist TT in order to avoid causing a negative effect on the target reader. The writers of these target texts are not always professional translators since these texts are frequently underrated to the point that "administrations, travel agencies, and companies (...) continue ordering their translations to unskilled translators or people that have no experience in translation but have some knowledge of languages" (Durán, 2012, p. 336). This might justify why the examples showed below do not fulfil the *skopos* or purpose of the tourist texts selected which is to attract visitors. In fact, these translations discourage tourists by producing, in fact, the contrary effect.

4. The Links where the Specific Food References can be found

Four links which belong to the mentioned website have been analysed. Each of these links has been titled in their English versions as follows: 10 Essential Gastronomic Experiences, the Octopus á feira recipe from the Vigo's Recipes link, and the Mini Gastronomic Dictionary.

5. The Objective of this Study

The objective of this work is to find those culture specific food references which have been translated disregarding cultural aspects causing the target reader to feel uneasy about trying any of these dishes, the inadequate descriptions or information to help promote these, among which the inclusion of much food, drink vocabulary in Spanish/Galician without an English explanation must be mentioned. All of these will be described below in detail according to the link they were found in. The original and translated text will be written as it appears in the website and, finally, comments will be made to exemplify how the translation has not achieved the desired effect.

6. Specific Examples

6.1. Example 1 – The Mini Gastronomic Dictionary

Five gastronomic concepts typical of Vigo's everyday leisure moments have been defined in this dictionary. They are: Going for Tapas, Preparing Octopus, Furanchos (family-run rural home where home-produced wine and some dishes are served), Oyster Sampling and Wine Tasting. One of the terms, which is crucial in this gastronomic glossary, is the word *tapear*. The ST (Source Text) for this term is defined as follows:

Ir de tapas forma parte de la cultura gastronómica española. Desde mediodía hasta la hora de la comida, o desde las ocho de la tarde hasta la cena, consiste en ir recorriendo locales degustando diferentes manjares, normalmente de pie y de manera informal. Una actividad típica que puedes practicar en cualquier barrio de Vigo: en el barrio histórico, en Bouzas o en As Travesas. Todo regado con una cerveza o un buen vino local.

TT (Target Text):

Going out for tapas is part of Spanish gastronomic culture. From noon until lunch time, or from eight in the evening until dinner time, the idea is to walk from bar to bar tasting the varied delicacies, usually standing and in an informal manner. A typical activity available in any of Vigo's neighbourhoods: in the Old Town, Bouzas or As Travesas. All washed down with a glass of cold beer or some good local wine.

6.1.1. Comment:

The producer of the TT has included a strange description of what "ir de tapas" means. First, it is not clear at what time lunch is usually eaten in this area. A tourist can assume that tapas can be served in restaurants from noon to "luchtime". But what time is lunch available in restaurants in Spain? Another example of how this translation has overlooked the English target culture is the idea of walking from bar to bar to try different delicacies. Delicacies are understood as unusual or rare food items in English which contrast with the widely served pieces of Spanish omelet and fried fish. The dangling participle brings to mind a quaint picture of the delicacies standing up in an informal manner, not the tourists. Lastly, the verb wash down is used, which gives the reader a negative impression about what he/she has just eaten. In fact, "wash down" might imply that the food does not taste right and must be swallowed down with some drink that can eliminate the flavor of the dish. Instead of using this verb, "accompany" could be used to imply that there is a perfect mix between the wine and the "tapa".

6.2. Example 2 – Vigo's Recipes

Eight recipes describe how each of the following traditional dishes are prepared in Vigo: Churrasco (Galician Barbecue or grilled meat), Cuttlefish with Ink Sauce, Empanada de Zamburiñas (Variegated Scallop Pie), Galician Style Monkfish, Grilled Sardines, Octupus* "Á Feira", Queimada and Seafood: Cooking Time.

6.2.1. Comment:

As can be seen, the translation techniques to name these dishes combine the usage of Galician and English. The spelling mistake "octupus*", made in the TT might have been a typographical error, but "A Feira" could have been explained (as prepared at market festivals).

In addition, the recipe to cook octopus provides what must be strange instructions to the English reader:

The recipe includes a list of ingredients (octopus, water, oil, paprika and sea salt) and tells the interested foreign cook about how the octopus should be prepared and served. Culturally speaking, the British in general do not consider octopus as a delectable dish due to its color, texture and appearance; just the word itself might cause some shivers. However, if an English-speaking foreigner wished to prepare this exquisite sea bite he/she would have to follow these steps according to the www.turismodevigo.org site.

In order to prepare the octopus the ST explains:

Si el pulpo es fresco debe mazarse sobre una superficie dura antes de cocinarse. La tradición indica que deben ser 33 golpes. Pero si el producto es congelado ya no es necesario. El proceso de congelación ablanda el pulpo de forma natural sin que pierda ni su sabor ni sus propiedades.

This is the TT:

If the octopus is fresh beat it 33 times (according to tradition) on a hard surface, such as the rocks on the beach or a resistant countertop. Another option is to freeze it and then let it thaw. Boil plenty of unsalted water, preferably in a copper pot. If you froze the octopus, let it thaw completely before cooking. If you beat it instead, it's ready to be cooked.

6.2.2. Comment:

According to the Spanish explanation, the octopus must be beaten on a hard surface before cooking it, at least 33 times but there is no need to hit it if it has been frozen. This is due to the fact that the freezing process softens the meat without losing any of its properties. Recommending the cook to beat the octopus on beach rocks as instructed in the TT is quite

impractical and inconvenient. This "information" was added by the target text producer, and although it might have been done in the past, it does not appear in the ST. In any case, it is a strange piece of advice since this dish is not prepared by the beach, but at home where it will be boiled in a copper pot.

The recipe then continues with the cooking process:

The ST:

El pulpo se limpia quitando del interior de su cabeza las tripas, la boca con forma de pico y los ojos y frotando bien sus tentáculos. Luego se pone agua a hervir sin sal y cuando alcance la temperatura de cocción se coge el pulpo por la cabeza y se introduce y se saca de ella tres veces seguidas. En este proceso los tentáculos se rizan y encogen parcialmente. Luego lo sumergimos completamente en el agua y cuando vuelve a hervir lo dejamos hacerse durante unos 30 minutos. Su cocción dependerá del tamaño del pulpo, por lo que es recomendable pincharlo cada cierto tiempo para saber si está en su punto (si se hierve demasiado tiempo, volverá a endurecerse).

The TT:

Clean the octopus in the meantime, removing the head's innards, mouth and eyes, and rubbing the pads thoroughly. When the water comes to a boil, "scare" the octopus: grab it by the head and dip it into the boiling water three consecutive times. When you see the tentacles curl, leave it in the water and boil for 30 minutes, prodding it from time to time to check if it's ready.

6.2.3. Comment:

Culturally speaking, the British and the Americans do not find the idea of eating octopus appetizing, as mentioned by a blogger it is an "unappetising creature"⁵, much less cleaning "the head's innards, mouth and eyes" although the translator omitted the description of the mouth possibly to make it less graphic. The ST gives more information to the Spanish reader and there is no explanation of why it is advisable to check if the octopus is ready every now and then. At the same time, the need to "scare" it before cooking might be totally incomprehensible. This literal translation of the gournet Spanish term "asustar", which does not appear in the ST, should be explained in the TT, namely, the octopus should be dunked or submerged and removed from the boiling water three consecutive times. But what is the

purpose of this? The tradition has not been explained nor the real reason to follow these steps: to avoid the octopus from peeling. The literal translation of the text is insufficient; it lacks the needed explanations and the cook will be discouraged, so this recipe and cultural heritage of Galician cuisine will not be considered as desirable.

An online search was made to shed some light on the reactions of English foreigners and their suggestions and advice for tourists coming to Vigo and how to tackle food issues. One of the entries admits and recommends:

I've never cooked a real whole octopus in my life, and I'm not suggesting that you do. If you're in Spain or Greece, or somewhere civilized like that, then you can just amble down to the market and buy a couple of tentacles, boiled by your fishmonger. (2015: n. p.)⁶

With this advice in mind, it is evident that very few foreigners would be willing to torture, beat and scare a poor octopus for lunch. This example has shown how translation can be a crucial procedure in the acceptance of a foreign country's cuisine. The following ones confirm the importance of the production of high quality tourist text translations.

6.3. Example 3 - 10 Essential Gastronomic Experiences

10 Essential Gastronomic Experiences is the title chosen to whet tourists' appetites. Any of the passengers from a visiting cruiser will discover this link and feel tempted by the attractive photographs provided, but some of its ten texts might discourage hungry visitors from going to a 'furancho' (a rustic residence whose owners serve home-produced wine and some specific home-made dishes).

The ST:

Si vienes a Vigo en temporada de furanchos, esa visita es imprescindible. No dejes de ir a un furancho en Vigo a probar el vino joven del año. Los propietarios suelen acompañarlo de fabulosas tapas caseras, las más tradicionales de productos de matanza y también empanadas. En los barrios de Vigo hay varios furanchos, donde te sentirás como en una auténtica taberna rural gallega, de ambiente familiar y distendido, por la que no ha pasado el tiempo.

The TT:

If you come to Vigo during *furanchos* season, a visit to one of them is a real must. Be sure to go to a *furancho* in Vigo to sample the year's young wine. The owners usually

accompany the wine with delicious homemade tapas, made with traditional pig slaughter products, as well as pies. Vigo's neighbourhoods have several *furanchos*, where you will feel like in a real Galician rural tavern, with a relaxed, timeless family atmosphere.

6.3.1. Comment:

The translation of the fifth essential gastronomic experience is not as explicit as it could be. The target audience must complete the reading of the whole text to grasp the idea of what a *Furancho* might be. The end of the extract reveals that the tourist should visit one of these rural taverns and it is likely that wine and tapas will be happily accepted except for the 'productos de la matanza' (slaughter products) which can also be served.

The ST presents the slaughter products ('productos de la matanza') taking for granted that even the Spanish reader will understand the type of products offered in these taverns. Traditionally, Galicia subsisted agriculturally where lifestock represented one of its main economic sectors; these were sold and consumed by farmers and breeders alike, constituting a vital way of making a living for generations. When the producer of this text chose "pig slaughter products" as a possible equivalent of the previous concept, the negative connotations deriving from the word slaughter mislead the receptor of this text. In the past the only occasion of being able to eat meat and prepare by-products, such as sausages, was from home-raised pigs, so it was a family celebration within the Galician culture and folklore. And this joyful tradition should not be confused with the displeasing image that the slaughtering of a pig would bring to the English/American readers' minds. As can be read in the following comment made in a blog: "we still find truly astounding Spaniards' capacity to discuss cheery topics such as 'you can't just kill the pig first, because you have to let all the blood flow from its neck into a bowl while it is still alive in order to make sure you get all the blood for making sausage' ... (and then pause for about one second and reflect) .. 'oh but blood sausage is so delicious, yum I wish I was eating some right now" (2014: n.p.)

6.4. Example 4 –A "churrasco"

The ninth gastronomic experience mentioned in this text deals with one of Vigo's culinary attractions. This is the opportunity to try grilled meat. The text in Spanish reads as follows:

The ST:

Hacer un "churrasco". ¿Vienes a Vigo con amigos o con niños? Una opción divertida para pasar el día al aire libre es cocinar en la parrilla un auténtico churrasco gallego. Hay instalaciones públicas disponibles en todos los parques forestales de Vigo, donde además de disfrutar de la naturaleza degustarás la carne gallega con inigualable sabor de la leña, una costumbre de lo más viguesa. Y si no te atreves con la parrilla, siempre puedes visitar uno de los fabulosos asadores que encontrarás para comer en Vigo.

The TT:

A "churrasco". Are you visiting Vigo with friends or with children? A fun option is to spend the day outdoors, grilling an authentic Galician Churrasco. Every forest park in Vigo has public facilities where, besides nature, you can enjoy Galician meat with the unique flavor wood, a typical custom of the area. And if you're not up for grilling, you can always visit one of the great grillrooms available to dine in Vigo.

6.4.1. Comment:

This is an example of a version of the ST which is literal. The name given to grilled meat 'churrasco' was kept in Spanish in the TT, a good choice of term so that tourists are able to order it. However, a cultural obstacle has been overlooked by the translator. The content of the TT does not accomplish the informative purpose inherent to tourist texts since it has not included the fact that during the summer (July 1st- Sept 30th) it is prohibited to grill meat at the facilities mentioned in the ST due to the risk of forest fires, something that is widely known among Vigo's inhabitants. Not having included this fact might have consequences, namely, a fine from the Consellería do Medio Rural (Autonomous Environmental Agency) as announced in the newspapers, *La Voz de Galicia* and *Faro de Vigo*⁸. This poses a dilemma for the translator, who needs to decide whether to follow the text literally (as it was done) or to describe the law to the foreign reader and adapt the text to the new cultural context in which the reader could be informed about the source culture's laws and regulations.

7. Conclusions

As shown in this paper, translating food is not an easy task. Literal versions of source texts can mislead and easily discourage foreigners with different gastronomic cultures, especially English, American, and Canadian tourists and cruise holidaymakers. This means

82

that other translation strategies must be followed in order to fulfil the 'skopos' (Nord, 1997) or main function of any tourist text. As Chiaro has suggested to handle CSR in written translations, professional translators opt for:

a) 'Chunking up' and making CSR in the target language more general than those in the source language through the adoption of hyperonymy; b) 'chunking down' by replacing them with more specific references in the target language; or c) 'chunking sideways' and replacing CSR with same level equivalents (Katan, 1999/2004, p. 147).

Cuisine and Food tradition have been wrongly presented to the foreign English visitors due to how the linguistic context has occupied all the attention of the producer of the target text disregarding Soto's (2013, p. 237) main advice:

Queda claro que en la traducción de textos turísticos se debe tener en cuenta no sólo el contexto lingüístico, sino también el cultural, entendiéndose éste como el conjunto de costumbres y tradiciones, valores y reglas de comportamiento, la interpretación del entorno y el universo que cada comunidad de hablantes posee, así como el conocimiento de su historia y su literatura⁹.

The consequences of this forced structured target text are the inappropriate translation of certain aspects regarding the gastronomical offer which will probably discourage the English customer. The negative publicity, multiple linguistic errors and lack of necessary explanations could be solved if the TT had:

Le 'caratteristiche estrinseche' del testo, nella traduzione scritta solitamente trovano spazio e vengono rese esplicite, quando necessario, attraverso l'aggiunta di informazioni supplementari o chiarificatorie all'interno del testo o attraverso note a piè di pagina ¹⁰. (Katan, 2010, p. 15)

Another fact worth mentioning regarding the translation of this website has to do with the usage of three languages in the TT: Spanish, Galician and English. This has not been consistently done as a translation technique all throughout the different links. Product names, dishes or street names have been occasionally translated. Although some cases of explicitation have been spotted, omissions of certain seafood names or no translation whatsoever are examples which have left the reader in the dark about a traditional dish. Leaving the names of these dishes in Galician or Spanish so that they can be ordered by the visitor together with an explanation of what is being served is recommended.

In a nutshell, the translated links in English do not make the potential tourist wonder whether to eat or in fact, not to eat in Vigo. And the only question left to pose would be: After reading these examples, would you like to eat any of these traditional dishes in Vigo? We wonder...what you will think.

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- ¹ The combination of customs, traditions, values and rules of good behaviour, the interpretation of one's surroundings and the universe which every speaking community has, as well as the knowledge of its history and literature.
- ⁴ Recently, this web site has also been translated into French. This fact might be a consequence of the letter sent to Vigo's Town Hall which explained the need to improve the linguistic and cultural content offered in English and insisted on the importance of including the translation of these links into other languages besides English and Portuguese.
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¹⁰ Extrinsic characteristics of a translated text in the written text form find space to become explicit in the text. Information is added and clarified in the text or through footnotes.

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84

⁹ It is clear how in the translation of tourist texts one should consider not only the linguistic context, but also the cultural one, by this meaning the combination of customs and traditions, values and codes of conduct, the interpretation of the environment and the universe which each community of speakers has as well as the knowledge of their history and literature.