

# A HYBRID TRANSLATION THEORY FOR EU TEXTS

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EU texts are produced by way of multilingual negotiation in a supranational multicultural discourse community, where there is no linguistically neutral ground and where the internationalisation of concepts and ideas is *sine qua non*. As a result, they are idiosyncratic texts, reflecting specific textual features. Their translation in the current 23 official EU languages is equally idiosyncratic and challenging, to say the least, especially since it is shaped under the EU's overwhelming cultural and linguistic diversity, the constraints of its policy of multilingualism, and the subsequent policy of linguistic equality which states that all languages are equal, or 'equally authentic' (Wagner, Bech, Martínez 2002, 7), and that translations are not really translations but language versions. In other words, in the framework of EU translation, the terms source text (ST) and target text (TT) cease to exist, while the *prima facie* illusory notion of 'equivalence' seems to resurface—though altered in nature—and dominate the translation practice. It thus goes without saying that in the case of EU texts and their translation a tailor-made theoretical framework is required where many classic concepts of Translation Studies (TS), such as ST, TT and equivalence need to be re-evaluated and redefined, and at the same time functionalist approaches and the postmodernist concepts of intertextuality, hybridity and in-betweenness need to come to the fore. The proposed translation theory for EU texts flaunts the feature inherent in their production, it is—just like them—hybrid.

## 1. THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSLATION STUDIES

In the past 60 years, translation has come a long way; in fact, in the past 30 years and after decades of neglect and repression, it has finally started to rise to the status that it deserves. Gone are the days when translators were ignored or frowned upon. Gone are the days when they were seen as mere polyglots who could speak several languages, and who could translate and interpret without a degree in translation or any formal training whatsoever. Gone are the days when translation was merely an element of language learning in modern language courses (Munday 2001, 7). During the past 60 years, interest

in the field has grown significantly, mainly because the role of translation in our rapidly evolving world has also grown significantly. Especially, in the new millennium, in which cultural exchanges have been widening, knowledge has been increasingly growing and international communication has been intensifying, translation has become *sine qua non*. Translation Studies (TS), therefore, in the sense of ‘the academic discipline concerned with the study of translation at large, including literary and nonliterary translation’ (Baker 1998, 277) has been flourishing. In fact, specialised translation courses at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels have been springing up like mushrooms, while numerous conferences, research projects, books and journals in many languages around the world have contributed to the visibility of translation and the translation profession.

### ***The Visibility of the Translation Profession and the Role of the EU***

A stepping stone in that direction was the setting up of the European Community in 1952, i.e. the predecessor to the current European Union (EU), and the adoption in 1958 of the policy of multilingualism. The EU, which in its own words is a democratic federation of 27 equal nations, aims at ‘the promotion of an ever closer Union among the people of Europe where decisions are taken as openly as possible and as closely as possible to the citizen’ (Article 1, Treaty of the European Union 1997). In light of this, it is easy to understand why the founding fathers of the EU, the authors of the Treaties of Rome, recognised right from the beginning the importance of multilingualism and adopted Council Regulation No 1 which guarantees that the official languages of all the member states are both official and working languages of the EU institutions and are considered to be equal (Šarčević 2001, 314). In practice, this policy means that instead of using just a few languages like other supranational organisations do, the EU uses at present 23 languages, i.e. the official languages of its current 27 member states and 498 million citizens.

In order to implement the policy of multilingualism, the EU relies on translation and interpretation, in other words on translators and interpreters. Since EU institutions are responsible for deciding on a wide range of policies and for lawmaking, they necessarily produce a significant volume of language work and they naturally employ a huge number of translators and interpreters. In Brussels, the European Commission, the European Council and the Economic and Social Committee have a permanent ongoing translation activity. In Luxembourg, the European Parliament, the Court of Auditors, the Court of Justice and the European Investment Bank each has its own translation service, as does the European Central Bank in Frankfurt. In other words, EU institutions constitute the biggest employer of translators worldwide. They don’t only employ in-house translators and lawyer-linguists, but they also call on external translation providers (translation companies or freelance translators) to cope with a level of demand that continues to increase (Sosoni 2011, 79).

Apart from raising the demand for translators in the 23 official EU languages, the EU has also raised the standards of translation by setting stringent criteria for the employment of translators and the selection of contractors. In line with the above, the working conditions offered by the EU are also quite attractive, at least in terms of remuneration and especially in the case of staff translators. It is indicative that in the Commission an entry level gross salary for a translator is 4,267.72 euros per month, not including extra entitlements and allowances<sup>1</sup> (European Commission 2010a). For contractors, remuneration may not be as high as this, but it is still very competitive, especially in comparison to other translation genres (Sosoni 2011, 80).

The EU institutions and the European Commission have also been particularly active in helping to raise the profile, and thus enhance the visibility, of translation and translators. The Commission's Translation Service, the Directorate General of Translation (DGT), which is by far the largest and most complex translation service in the world, seeing as it employs around 1,750 full-time translators and some 600 support staff (European Commission 2010a), has taken several actions and initiatives towards such direction, especially in the past 10 years. Notably, the EU, through its officials, has had a very strong presence in international conferences organised by academic institutions as well as professional bodies and associations; it has been consistently funding translation research projects and has been keen to develop links with academia. Through the Visiting Translator Scheme (VTS) in particular, Commission staff translators can spend a few weeks at universities around the EU giving classes on translation, the work of the DGT and languages in the EU Institutions, while interacting with academics and students in a valuable cross-fertilisation process. Within that framework, another particularly laudable initiative undertaken by the Commission's DGT is the European Master's in Translation (EMT) network of universities which seeks to help raise the standard of translator training in the EU and foster cooperation and exchanges between academic institutions offering translation courses. The EMT's aim is to facilitate the training of highly qualified translators and equip students with the necessary skills in order to compete successfully for jobs on the translation market, including the EU institutions (European Commission 2010b). It is of significant value, primarily because it brings together academia and the largest translation service in the world in a common effort 'to enhance the status of the translation profession in the European Union' (European Commission 2010b)<sup>2</sup>.

Finally, one more action which is particularly noteworthy is the DGT's Study Strategy, which aims at gathering and disseminating knowledge and information about translation using a variety of methods such as internal studies, workshops and outsourced study

<sup>1</sup> As from 01.07.2009. Subject to salary adjustments according to the Staff Regulation.

<sup>2</sup> For more information on the activities of the DGT and the Translation Services of EU Institutions see Sosoni V. 2011. Training Translators to Work for the EU Institutions: Luxury or Necessity? *JoSTrans - The Journal of Specialised Translation* 16, 77-108. <[http://www.jostrans.org/issue16/art\\_sosoni.php](http://www.jostrans.org/issue16/art_sosoni.php)>.

projects (Kauko, Häggman 2011, 4). This strategy is particularly important because it raises awareness about translation as an activity and translators as key players in the dissemination of information and implementation of the policy of multilingualism; it also educates EU officials and the public about the translation profession, its demands and its crucial role in rendering accessible important information about the everyday lives of EU citizens.

It is thus safe to assume that the EU institutions and their policy of multilingualism have contributed significantly to the visibility of the translation profession and the breathtaking development that the discipline of TS has achieved over the past years.

## 2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSLATION THEORY

Naturally, together with TS as a discipline, translation theory has also experienced a similarly breathtaking and fascinating growth. Since the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, translation theory was visibly and radically transformed, in that it moved away from the sterile dichotomies of 'letter' and 'spirit' or 'word' and 'sense'. More importantly, in the 1980s the concept of equivalence which had been dominant in translation theory throughout the 1970s and which promoted linguistic or formal approaches to the analysis of translation was put aside, as pragmatic and communicative considerations were given to the text. A growing emphasis was then placed on translation as a communicative and intercultural action and the translator was no longer considered a passive mediator, but rather an intercultural operator.

In fact, from the eighties onwards, translation theory was characterised by a remarkable vivacity and diversity, as it drew on frameworks and methodologies borrowed from other disciplines such as psychology, communication theory, literary theory, anthropology, philosophy and cultural studies, notably poststructuralist, postmodern, and postcolonial theories (Naudé 2002, 46; Bassnett, Lefevere 1990, 12). The end of the twentieth century was also characterised by a growing need for the translation of non-literary texts, or LSP (Language for Special Purposes) texts such as scientific papers, medical articles, agreements, etc. Out of this need, rose functionalist approaches to translation which postulate that the critical factor for a translation is no longer the Source Text (ST) but its purpose or *skopos* (Vermeer 1989, 221), i.e. a complexly defined intention whose textual realisation may diverge widely from the ST so as to reach a set of addressees in the Target Culture (TC). The ST is therefore dethroned since the success of a translation, or Target Text (TT), depends on its coherence with the addressee's situation. Vermeer's approach resembles contemporary trends in literary history and criticism, namely reader-response theory and the aesthetics of reception (*Rezeptionsästhetik*), where the meanings of literary texts are affiliated with particular audiences (Venuti 2000, 217).

All of these new approaches to translation, as Arrojo (1998, 25) observes, despite their differences, share as 'common ground a radical distrust of the possibility of any intrinsically stable meaning that could be fully present in texts [...] and, thus, supposedly recoverable and repeated elsewhere without the interference of the subjects, as well as

the cultural, historical, ideological or political circumstances involved'. Consequently, in modern and postmodern theories, and notably in functional approaches, the traditional concept of the translator as an invisible transporter of meanings has been replaced by that of the visible interventionist. Translators are therefore no longer seen as servants of the ST and Source Culture (SC) but rather as agents actively engaged in shaping communicative processes. Similarly, the object of research of TS is no longer 'language(s), as traditionally seen, but human activity in different cultural contexts' (Schäffner 2004, 135).

### 3. TRANSLATION THEORY AND EU TEXTS

In light of the above, the question that this paper attempts to answer is whether this radical change in perspective that has occurred in translation theory is compatible with EU texts, which are clearly LSP texts, but with added idiosyncrasies. In other words, it seeks to investigate whether functionalist approaches and modern and postmodern translation theories apply to EU texts, or whether equivalence is the triumphant winner in this long-standing battle.

It is notable that in traditional translation theory LSP texts are generally considered to fall within the scope of the general theory. Yet, there are different voices who call for tailor-made theories or models; Garzone (2000, 397), for instance, observes that with regard to legal translation 'a general translation theory, albeit conceived for comprehensiveness and extensive application, seems to be somehow inadequate'. Similarly, Nida (2003, 142) posits that we cannot expect to have one dominant and comprehensive theory of language and translation, since 'there are too many different kinds of languages, too many different types of texts, and too many different audiences with diverse needs'. Within that framework, the paper also attempts to investigate whether a general translation theory is adequate in the case of EU texts or whether a tailor-made translation theory is required instead.

These questions will be answered on the basis of a description of EU texts and an inspection of their most prominent features as well as a study of the framework within which they are drafted and translated.

#### ***3.1. EU Texts and Postmodernism: An Unlikely Pair***

As pointed out already, the EU's policy of multilingualism is directly linked to its political nature. Although at first it was established as a common economic community, the current EU is a political as much as an economic union and constitutes an association of states which are equally and legally sovereign. Within that framework, the policy of multilingualism is simply an inevitable consequence.

According to Stoddard (1991, 3), texts cannot be considered as entities independent of the producer, processor, and environment in which they are generated and received, but are tied up with cultural, social and political realities (Dollerup 1996, 312) or, in the case of multilingual texts such as the ones produced by the EU Institutions, with 'socially

developed intercultural’ (Pym 2004, 1). As a result, when talking about EU texts one cannot and should not ignore the broader societal and political as well as intercultural and linguistic framework in which they are embedded. Unavoidably, EU texts come to life in a specific cultural space, which is in itself an intersection of different cultures. So they occupy a space in-between cultures, while at the same time they aim at expressing new and pan-European concepts. In the table below a sample of such concepts is provided, expressed through newly-coined terms, which are neither English nor Greek in nature, neither French nor Lithuanian, neither German nor Maltese; they are not rooted in one system but are products of compromise, negotiation and pan-Europeanness, valid in the particular hybrid cultural space of the EU.

**Table 1.** EU terms reflecting the linguistic and cultural ‘in-betweenness’ of EU texts

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Comitology</b>	The term comitology refers to a complex sequence of consultations that precedes the implementation decision. The committees that undertake this task consist of representatives from Member States and are chaired by the Commission; they act as forums for discussion that enable the Commission to establish a dialogue with national administrations.
<b>Additionality</b>	The additionality principle means that funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is additional to that provided by national and local authorities.
<b>Block Exemptions</b>	Agreements between the EC and other countries which include exemptions from the general prohibition by the EC of restrictive trade agreements.
<b>Creeping competence</b>	Creeping Competence refers to the spread of the role and powers of the supranational institutions at the expense of those of the Member States through interpretation of EC treaties.
<b>Derogation</b>	The term derogation refers to the exemption of one or more Member States from the provisions of EU legislation.
<b>Europe ‘à la carte’</b>	In the general discussion of how European integration should proceed, this term refers to the idea that Member States would be allowed to select which policies they wished to adhere to, as if from a menu.
<b>Hard core</b>	In the debate on the architecture of Europe, this refers to a small group of countries (typically the original six members plus a few more) able and willing to enter into closer cooperation with one another.

Term	Definition
<b>‘Multi-speed’ Europe</b>	In the debate over the EU’s architecture, the term ‘multi-speed’ Europe is used to describe the method of integration whereby common objectives are pursued by a group of Member States that are both able and willing to advance, while leaving other members to follow later.
<b>‘Variable-geometry’ Europe</b>	‘Variable-geometry’ Europe is the term used to describe the idea of a method of differentiated integration which acknowledges that there are irreconcilable differences within the integration structure. It therefore allows for a permanent separation between a group of Member States and a number of less developed integration units.
<b><i>Acquis communautaire</i></b>	Sometimes called the EU <i>acquis</i> , and often shortened to <i>acquis</i> , is the accumulated legislation, legal acts, and court decisions which constitute the body of European Union law. The term is French, where <i>acquis</i> means “that which has been agreed upon”, and <i>communautaire</i> means ‘of the community’.

The breadth and wealth of such concepts and terms unavoidably leads to end products that present lexicosyntactic forms foreign to the language which is used for their drafting. What is more, the various mother tongues and cultures of the drafters leave their mark on the end product and as a result ‘the final document is a mixture, a panache, a hybrid’ (Schäffner 1997, 194). More specifically, EU texts are drafted, in their majority, in English—the de facto vehicular and drafting language of the EU—by non-native speakers (NNS) of English or, even worse, collectively in committees, working groups and teams (Koskinen 2000, 59) which are made up of different speakers of different languages who also come from different cultural backgrounds and all work in English. Therefore, instead of being the products of individual creativity the texts are products of multilingual and multicultural negotiation and creation. Notably, in the case of legal documents, the co-decision procedure demands the involvement of numerous EU Institutions and the production of innumerable drafts and translations. As Robinson (2005) points out, the first draft of a legal instrument, such as a directive or a regulation, is initially written by a technical expert usually in English, or less often in French. Their choice is determined by the language used in their department. The draft is then revised by legal experts, before it goes through an approval process—which necessarily involves translation—at the Commission, the Parliament and the Council. There, translations are discussed and amended, while they may go back and forth several times, accompanied at all times by the translated drafts and amendments. The final product is therefore a hybrid, ‘the nature of whose source and original has become more and more blurred’ (Felici 2010, 102). As

Dollerup (2004, 197) pertinently observes ‘in this way, there is no one target text which has an unambiguous relation to one specific ‘original’. The source text is a fluid and changeable mass of text, composed of recycled translation, new linguistic material from both the core or tool languages<sup>3</sup> as well as national languages incorporated in the core languages.’

It thus emerges that in the case of the EU, cultural as well as linguistic boundaries are fuzzy as it becomes increasingly hard to determine who is ‘us’ and who the ‘other’. Consequently, it becomes almost impossible to draw clear-cut lines and separate a SC from a TC, and by extension a ST from a TT.

These notions of in-betweenness and hybridity that are at play in the case of EU texts are also key notions within the context of postmodernism and postcolonialism which *questioned the notion that fixity, territoriality, distinctive languages and ethnicities were separate identities and argued that borders were fractured and boundaries in flux*. Bhabha (1994) in particular, contends that a new hybrid identity emerges from the interweaving of elements of the coloniser and colonised challenging the validity and authenticity of any essentialist cultural identity. Hybridity is thus positioned as an antidote to essentialism, or ‘the belief in invariable and fixed properties which define the ‘whatness’ of a given entity’ (Fuss 1991, xi). In postcolonial discourse the notion that any culture or identity is pure or essential is disputable (Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin 1995). As it emerges, such is the case in the EU discourse as well.

Another concept from postmodern theory which is also valid in the case of EU texts is that of intertextuality. Intertextuality is a term coined and expounded by Julia Kristeva in her interpretation of Mikhail Bakhtin’s dialogism. In broad terms, the theory of intertextuality postulates that a text cannot exist alone as a self-contained, hermetic whole, since it is shaped by the repetition and transformation of other textual structures. The writer is a reader of texts before he is a creator of texts. Therefore, the text gets inevitably loaded with references, quotations (direct or indirect) and influences of every kind. Although, obviously, intertextuality as a concept originates in literary theory (Barthes 1977, Kristeva 1980), EU texts are in fact intertextually more tightly knit than most literary texts (Gibová 2009, 148). As was hinted earlier, their intertextuality is mainly manifested in the interconnection of the newly drafted documents with the previous ones through the use of innumerable references, direct or indirect quotations, language clichés and consistency of terminology. An interesting example of such intertextuality is the European Commission’s *2009 Report on Competition Policy* which is 13,283 words long and there are 225 footnotes referring to various official EU documents and EU case law, not taking into account the language clichés and recurrence of specialised terminology.

Although EU texts are Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) texts, pragmatic texts and their translation are viewed as bureaucratic, uncreative and restricted (Koskinen

<sup>3</sup> Dollerup (2004) uses the terms ‘core’ or ‘tool’ languages to refer to English and French, otherwise known as the vehicular or procedural languages of the EU, since they constitute the main drafting and negotiating languages in its Institutions, with English gaining ground every day.



2001, 299), incompatible at first sight with postmodern theories, a closer look reveals that the postmodern notions of hybridity, cultural ambivalence and intertextuality are central to them as well (ditto). And yet, translation practice in the EU comes to question that affinity. In fact, it will be shown that the notions of hybrid text, hybrid cultures, space-in-between, intercultural space, etc. seem to go hand-in-hand with the traditional binary opposites of content vs. form and literal vs. free translation, although at the same time they work as a catalyst to reposition the concepts of Source Language/Text/Culture and Target Language/Text/Culture in the translation realm.

### ***3.2. Equivalence and Functionalism in EU Texts: The ST is Dead, Long Live the ST!***

Translation as well as text production in the EU are inherently related to the principle of linguistic equality which states that all languages are equal, or 'equally authentic' (Wagner, Bech, Martínez 2002, 7), and that translations are not really translations but language versions. In practical terms, this means that all language versions are 'mirror images' of each other as they should correspond paragraph for paragraph, even sentence for sentence, as far as possible. This is so that directives and regulations can be modified and updated easily, just by locating the appropriate text within the numbered section. It is also because some documents are translated as they are drafted, such that modifications may have to be introduced into various language versions. Although this principle of equality applies first and foremost to legal EU texts (Šarčević 2001, 319), it seems to have extended to almost all genres in the EU institutions, such as the European Parliament's proceedings, press releases, public statements, etc. (Dollerup 2001, 289).

In essence, this means that EU texts are not merely translated but drafted in all languages simultaneously, and that none of the versions is derivative from any other. In other words, once the translations are completed, the ST ceases to exist as such, since none of the 23 'equivalent' documents is supposed to carry any sign which distinguishes its status from the others. In fact, translation as a term is not even mentioned in any of the EU legislation (Felici 2010, 96). Yet, as Nystedt (1999, 200) points out, in reality these texts are nothing other than translations, while Correia underscores this paradox saying that 'In practice Community law is inconceivable without translation, while in strictly legal terms Community law is inconceivable with it' (2003, 40). Along the same lines, we can posit that in practice multilingualism in the EU is inconceivable without translators, while in strictly legal terms it is inconceivable with them. Thus, the EU, which as pointed out was instrumental in enhancing the status and visibility of translators, is at the same time undermining it, since it questions or 'obnubilates' their very existence, first by failing to acknowledge them in the legislation and second by repudiating their very role as translators, i.e. as decision-makers and creators of texts. More specifically, translation in the EU does not seem to be translation in the core sense of the term, a sense which

entails a dimension of choice and decision-making. *Traduire c'est choisir*—translating means choosing—wrote Pierre-François Caillé in 1967 and ideally choosing well as Correia (2001, 41) observes. Contrary to that position, translation practice in the EU does not leave much choice to translators.

As already explained, the need for sameness and the production of ‘mirror images’ naturally imposes restrictions on translators, who have to follow closely not only the given ST in order to achieve the desired equivalence, but also the specific guidelines or preferences of the EU Institution or body commissioning the translation job.

In the table that follows, some examples are provided of the influence that this need for sameness exerts on translation. These are drawn from the translation from English into Greek of the European Commission’s *Proposal for a Council Decision authorising France to apply differentiated levels of taxation to motor fuels under Article 19 of Directive 2003/96/EC*. The first column provides the ST phrase, the second column the translation proposed by the Greek translator commissioned to do the job, and the third column provides the translation opted for by the EU reviser. Back-translations are provided in brackets for ease of understanding, while a fourth column attempts to describe the reviser’s change.

**Table 2.** Examples of the influence that the need for sameness exerts on translation

ST phrase	TT version	Revised version	Description of change
<u>Devoid of substance</u>	<u>Δίχως ουσία</u> [without meaning]	<u>Κενή περιεχομένου</u> [devoid of meaning]	Choice of a word-for-word equivalent which is more accurate semantically but not as frequent as the one used by the translator.
<u>Therefore</u>	<u>Ως εκ τούτου</u> [As a result]	<u>Συνεπώς</u> [Consequently]	Preference for a synonym which is equivalent not only in terms of propositional meaning, but also in terms of expressive, presupposed and evoked meaning <sup>4</sup> . The choice simply reflects a difference in idiolect.

<sup>4</sup> Terms are used as defined by Baker (1992). In particular, the propositional meaning of a word or utterance arises from the relation between the word and its referent, i.e. what it refers to in the real or imaginary world, as conceived by the speakers of the particular language to which the word or utterance belongs. Expressive meaning relates to the speaker’s feelings or attitude, rather than to what a word or utterance refers to. Unlike propositional meaning, it cannot be judged as true or false. Presupposed meaning arises from co-occurrence restrictions, i.e. restrictions on what other words or expressions we expect to see after a particular lexical unit. These restrictions can be of two types: selectional or collocational. Finally, evoked meaning arises from dialect and register variation.

ST phrase	TT version	Revised version	Description of change
<b><u>According to</u></b>	<u>Σύμφωνα με</u> το άρθρο 19 της οδηγίας 2003/96/EK [According to]	<u>Δυνάμει του</u> άρθρου 19 της οδηγίας 2003/96/EK [In accordance with]	Preference for a synonym which is equivalent in terms of propositional meaning, expressive and presupposed meaning, but slightly different in terms of evoked meaning, since it is higher in register.
<b><u>Due to the possible future developments</u></b>	<u>Εξαιτίας</u> των ενδεχόμενων μελλοντικών εξελίξεων [Because of]	<u>Λόγω</u> των ενδεχόμενων μελλοντικών εξελίξεων [Due to]	Preference for a synonym which is equivalent not only in terms of propositional meaning, but also in terms of expressive, presupposed and evoked meaning. The choice simply reflects a difference in idiolect.
<b><u>Member states cannot substitute themselves for the Council.</u></b>	Τα κράτη μέλη <u>δεν μπορούν να υποκαταστήσουν το</u> Συμβούλιο.	Τα κράτη μέλη <u>δεν δύνανται να υποκαταστήσουν το</u> Συμβούλιο.	Preference for a synonym which is equivalent in terms of propositional meaning, expressive and presupposed meaning, but slightly different in terms of evoked meaning, since it is higher in register. It is notable that the English ST is closer in register to the original translation rather than the revised one.
<b><u>However</u></b>	<u>Ωστόσο</u> [However]	<u>Εντούτοις</u> Nevertheless	Preference for a synonym which is equivalent not only in terms of propositional meaning, but also in terms of expressive, presupposed and evoked meaning. The choice simply reflects a difference in idiolect.

The examples above affirm that translators a) have to follow closely the text that they use as a ST—whether it exists in theory or not—often deviating from the Target Language (TL) and TC rules, conventions or norms (Sosoni 2003, 206) and b) are bound—or even hand-tied—in their choices by particular instructions or preferences. Their aim is not, as one would expect, the production of a TT which is pragmatically accurate and which fulfills the expectations of the TT addressees, but rather the production of a TT which conforms to the conventions and norms of the genre of EU texts and fulfills the expectations not necessarily of the TT audience, which admittedly is often varied and even impossible to define, but of the translation commissioner, i.e. the EU Institution commissioning the job.

In short, the aim as regards text production in the EU is not the production of functional TTs which respect the TL and TC conventions and norms, but the production of ‘versions’, which respect the ‘sameness format’, i.e. the literal rendering and the closest possible syntax and lexis, as well as the very specific instructions issued by the EU institutions. It thus seems that the principle of fidelity to the ST is combined with the principle of adherence to a whole spectrum of tenets following from the fundamentals of EU law and translation practice within the institutional setting of the EU. In a neofunctionalist way, we could postulate that the critical factor for a translation in the EU is no longer *just* the ST but also its purpose or *skopos* which is a complexly defined intention whose textual realisation is, unlike in Vermeer’s terms (1989), very similar to that of the ST and aims at fulfilling the expectations not of a given set of addressees in the TC but of a multicultural, supranational, hard to delineate and define commissioner.

## CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of the characteristics of EU texts and the socio-political reality within which they are drafted and translated, we can conclude that although nowadays in general translation theory the focus of attention has shifted from emphasis on the starting point, namely, the ST, to the manner in which a text is understood by those who receive and interpret it, in the EU context there is a need for a tailor-made theory, since the ST appears to take back the throne, but share it this time with the TT’s *skopos* and the Commissioner’s sociopolitically constructed expectations and preferences. Interestingly, the notion of ‘equivalence’ which as Schäffner (2004, 135) claims is almost a ‘dirty’ word in modern translation theory, seems to be reinstated as a legitimate goal, since translating is seen as a process of communicating the ‘original’ text—whichever that is—by establishing a relationship of identity or analogy with it as well as with the general translation practice in the EU. Along the same lines, the translator’s role, which is hailed and enhanced by the EU, is also paradoxically reduced to that of an invisible transporter of meanings with very limited decision-making powers. Moreover, the postmodern notions of hybridity, intertextuality and cultural ambivalence are equally relevant since they are instrumental in positioning the ST and providing the necessary context of situation for the translation action.

In other words, in the case of EU texts which are LSP texts characterised by a uniqueness and idiosyncrasy in nature due to their unorthodox production and the reality that they reflect, a special theory or at least a special theoretical framework or model is needed which, like them, appears to be a hybrid, a panache, or to use a less loaded word, a synergy of *prima facie* contradicting theories.

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## ES TEKSTAMS – HIBRIDINĖ VERTIMO TEORIJA

VILELMINI SOSONI

Santrauka

ES tekstai kuriami daugiakalbių derybų būdu viršnacionalinio daugiakultūrio diskurso bendruomenėje, neturinčioje kalbiniu požiūriu neutralaus pagrindo, kurioje sąvokų ir idėjų internacionalizavimas yra *sine qua non*. Taip sukuriama idiosinkretiniai tekstai, atspindintys specifines teksto ypatybes. Jų vertimas į dabartinės 23 oficialiąsias ES kalbas lygiai taip pat idiosinkretinis, keliantis sudėtingus uždavinius vertėjui, ypač dėl to, kad šie tekstai kuriami didžiulės ES kultūrinės ir kalbinės įvairovės kontekste. Jiems galioja daugiakalbystės politikos suvaržymai ir su juo susijusi kalbų lygybės politika, pagal kurią visos kalbos lygios arba „vienodai autentiškos“ (Wagner, Bech, Martínez 2002, 7), o patys vertimai iš tikrųjų nėra vertimai, o tik originalo tekstų variantai kitomis kalbomis. Kitaip tariant, ES vertimo sistemoje tokie terminai kaip originalo (šaltinio) kalba ir vertimo (tiklo) kalba nustoja egzistuoti, o iš pirmo žvilgsnio iliuzinė ir jau gerokai kritikuota „ekvivalentiškumo“ sąvoka, nors savo pobūdžiu ir pasikeitusi, atrodo, vėl iškyla į pirmą vietą ir vertimo praktikoje tampa svarbiausia. Akivaizdu, kad ES tekstų ir jų vertimo atveju reikia ir specifinės jiems taikytinos vertimo teorijos, nes daugelį klasikinių vertimo studijų sąvokų, pvz., originalo (šaltinio) kalba, vertimo (tiklo) kalba, ekvivalentiškumas, reikia įvertinti ir apibrėžti iš naujo, į pirmą vietą iškeliant tokias postmodernistines sąvokas, kaip intertekstualumas, hibridiškumas, tarpdalykiškumas ir pan. ES tekstams taikytina vertimo teorija, kaip ir patys tekstai, yra hibridinė.