

## **CULTURE-BOUND WEB-BASED INSTITUTIONAL ACADEMIC TEXTS. THE CASE OF SOME ROMANCE LANGUAGE UNIVERSITY WEBSITES IN ENGLISH**

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### **Abstract**

The internationalisation process of European higher education over the past years largely encouraged the translation into English of many university websites. However, the (deliberate or nondeliberate) presence of culture-bound terms on the English version of university websites represents an issue of debate, considering the worldwide provenance of visitors accessing the websites and the purpose of these texts. The main goal of this article is to analyse the appropriateness of translation strategies used for the culture-bound terms on university websites. The practical part of this research uses Aixelá's classification of translation strategies for the analysis of the culture-bound terms identified on some Romance language university webpages translated into English, allowing a series of suggestions and recommendations in each case. The study results have demonstrated that the strategy of conservation through repetition is used most often. Last but not least, this paper intends to raise awareness as to the translator's role and the impact of the quality of translations of university webpages into English as a *lingua franca*.

**Keywords:** *culture-bound terms, university websites, web-based academic texts, translation strategies*

### **PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS**

In the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when the internet is fundamental for the future of all university missions, the translation of university websites, which currently represent one of the most powerful instruments bound to promote their institutional image overseas, have come to the attention of quite a number of translation scholars. Before approaching them as communication performances aiming to reach an intended audience, we should bear in mind that these web-

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based institutional texts carry a heavy burden, that of being a reflection of universities themselves and of the quality of the education they provide.

The internationalisation process of the European Higher Education over the past years has expanded very much and the university strategies have included various undertakings which aim at making universities more visible and attractive to international students. These undertakings may refer to the provision of courses or academic programmes entirely taught in English, institutional involvement in academic exchange and mobility projects, the enlargement of cooperation with universities from all over the world, running international projects of research and innovation, etc. Nevertheless, none of these actions could be successful or sustainable without the web-based communication and the provision of institutional information in English as a *lingua franca* nowadays. The internationalisation process of higher education has thus triggered the translation of many European university webpages into English. Consequently, it is expected that the role of the translator as a professional enhance *volens nolens* due to the increased responsibility and the impact which the quality of the translations of websites has on universities in general.

In this context, the current study aims at examining and questioning the presence of the culture-bound terms on the English version of some Romance language university websites, analysing the strategies used for their translation and allowing a series of suggestions and recommendations in each case. Furthermore, the analytic dimension of the study is meant not only to reveal the current shortcomings in the translation of the cultural terms in the mentioned corpus, but also to set up a few basic guidelines and thus contribute to the general endeavours made by universities, which should streamline the clear and efficient communication of this type of texts.

## **THE THEORETICAL BACKGROUND ON CULTURE-BOUND TERMS**

Translation scholars have widely explored the encounter of different cultures at the level of communication through languages, either spoken or written, hence their concern for the possibility and impossibility of translating culture. According to Hatim and Mason, “the notion ‘culture-bound’ may be defined in terms of the degree of ‘universal currency’ which the text in question enjoys.” (Hatim & Mason 1990:188). Snell-Hornby labels these terms as “realia or culture-bound elements” (Snell-Hornby 1995:106), agreeing that “the problems do not depend on the source text itself, but on the significance of the translated text for its readers as members of a certain culture”. In the same line of thought, Hatim and Mason claim that “the degree of intervention by the translator will often depend on consumers and their needs” (Hatim & Mason 1990:190). The functionalist approach, which defines translation as “a purposeful activity with

the structure of the target text to be determined by the purpose it will have to fulfil in the target culture for the target audience” (Schäffner 2010:235), seems to be the most appropriate in our case since we are dealing with texts written for an audience and with a purpose.

For an accurate understanding of the intended meaning of the culture-bound term it is important for the translator to first recognize it, be able to decode it and then place it in its proper context within the source culture. It is only afterwards that the translator continues with the identification of the most suitable translation strategy to be used. The choice of a certain translation strategy is also motivated by the nature of the culture-bound term. Aixelá (1996) (qtd. in Dimitriu 2002:74) suggests that the translator should consider a series of “explanatory variables” for which the translator may translate a cultural term one way rather than other. According to him, the nature of these parameters can be supratextual (degrees of linguistic prescriptivism, nature and expectations of potential readers, nature and aims of the initiators, working conditions, training and social status of the translators), textual (material textual constraints, the existence of previous translations, canonisation), or intratextual within the source text, relevance of the cultural term, coherence of the target text). In our case the “consumers” or target audience accessing the English websites are visitors from all over the world, making up an international audience of potentially huge cultural differences. Consequently, the target readers’ educational background, their prior education, their linguistic competences, their previous contact with both the source and the target language, the intensity of their interactions with the source and target language people, their previous experiences with other cultures, the level of their intercultural competences, to name just a few, are all “supratextual variables” calling for the translator’s concern. As for textual factors, it is expected that the translator of academic texts does his/her research regarding the strategy to be used for the translation of a culture-bound term that appears in a similar position on the websites of other universities. From Aixelá’s taxonomy, the “textual variables” are possibly the most constraining in the case of the web-based academic texts and cannot be neglected. This may also be due to the digital genre which does not act only as text but also as medium, and the media is not only a distribution channel but also a carrier of meaning (Askehave & Nielsen 2005: 1, 8). Finally, the intratextual feature of conveying coherent internet-based information by universities is not only a linguistic requirement of the “academic conversation” genre (Trosborg 1997:7), but also a recommendation of the European Council (in agreement with the Council Recommendation 2011/C 199/01 “Youth on the move”).

Also referred to as “culture-specific items” (CSIs) (Aixelá 1996:59), “culturesmes” (Katan 2009: 79), “culture specific references” (Chiaro 2009:156), “cultural specifics” (Ramière 2006:152), “extralinguistic culture-bound references” (Pedersen 2005:2), “cultural references” (Olk 2001:30), “culturally

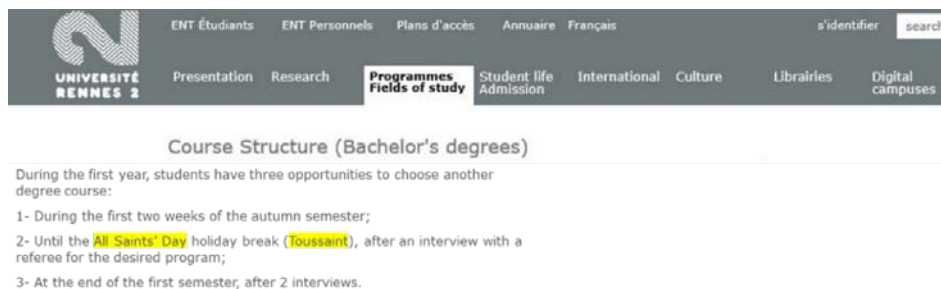
determined elements” (Hatim & Mason 1990:198), these translation units identified in the web-based institutional texts represent a “problem for cross-cultural transfer” (Ramière 2006:155). Even if Snell-Hornby’s opinion that “little or no relationship exists at the level of realia or culture-bound elements” (Snell-Hornby 1995:106) is very categorical in this respect, the translation practice shows that the success of such translations depends on the degree of transculturality of the terms designating the cultural reference. Pedersen makes a very useful distinction between different methodologically relevant levels of transculturality, explaining that “the degree of transculturality of an extralinguistic culture-bound reference deals with how familiar it is to the source text and target text audiences” (Pedersen 2005:10). According to him, the culture-bound references can be transcultural (i.e. not bound to the source culture, but retrievable from the encyclopaedic knowledge of both the source and target text audiences), monocultural (bound to the source culture and less identifiable by the majority of the target text audience) and microcultural (bound to the source culture, but too specialized or local to be within the encyclopaedic knowledge of both source and target text audiences).

Aixelá groups the translation strategies that can be applied to culture-specific items (CSIs) into two categories, in relation to their nature: conservative and substitutive (Aixelá 1996:52). According to him, the strategy of conservation may be achieved through repetition, slight orthographic adaptations, linguistic (non-cultural) translation, extratextual or intratextual gloss. On the other hand, the strategy of substitution may be rendered through (partial) synonymy, limited or absolute universalisation, naturalisation, deletion, or autonomous creation. Starting from the premise that a text is translatable according to “the distance that separates the cultural background of the source text and target audience in terms of time and place” (Snell-Hornby 1988/1995:41), we will use Aixelá’s classification of translation strategies for the analysis of the culture-bound terms identified on a series of Romance language university websites (Italian, French, Spanish and Portuguese) retrieved from electronic sources autumn 2017 – winter 2018. The identified culture-specific items will be analysed according to the category to which they belong, being divided into the following categories: holidays, food references, geographical names, local events, institutions / establishments, and education-specific terminology.

## **THE TRANSLATION STRATEGIES USED FOR CULTURE-BOUND TERMS ON ROMANCE LANGUAGE UNIVERSITY WEBSITES**

According to the distinction made by Pedersen (Pedersen 2005), *Figure 1* below presents a case of monocultural term, bound to the source culture and less identifiable by the majority of the target audience. The course structure for

bachelor's degrees provided by the University Rennes 2, introduces the religious **holiday** of *All Saints' Day*, a Christian festival celebrated in honour of all the saints, known and unknown. It is a public holiday in France which has always been celebrated on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November. Rendered both through linguistic translation by one of its official equivalents – this celebration is also known as *All Hallows' Day*, *Hallowmas*, or *Feast of All Saints* (*Britannica.com*) – , and repetition (the translator decides to also keep the original French term, *Toussaint*, within brackets), the culture-bound term actually fails to communicate the exact period of the second alternative offered to students for choosing another degree course. The target readers would need further clarification as to the proposed calendar. Considering the diversity of religions followed by international students, as well as the text genre and medium, the strategy of explicitation, either through an intratextual or an extratextual gloss (the addition of the calendar day *the 1<sup>st</sup> of November*), would have been preferable.



**Figure 1** Screenshot from the website of Université Rennes 2 (*Univ-rennes2.fr*)

*Figure 2* and *Figure 3* below are placed side by side so we can compare the strategies used by two different universities for the same **food** reference, i.e. the transcultural term *baguette*. If the University of Lille simply transfers the reference, the University of Versailles uses two strategies at once, both repetition and an intratextual gloss. The expansion *French bread stick* is meant to disambiguate the culture-bound term, but it can be regarded as a patronizing act since the word has been included in the English dictionaries since the 1920s (*Merriam-Webster.com*)



**Meals**

**University dining Food**

Allow between €150 and €250 for your monthly food budget. The price of a meal ticket is €3 in university canteens.

- Price of a *baguette* (French bread stick), €0.90
- A croissant: €1
- A liter of milk: €0.90
- A bottle of soda: €1.50
- A packet of coffee: €3
- 1kg of rice: €1.30
- 500g of pasta: €1
- 1-2 eggs: €1.50
- 250g of butter: €1.70
- 4 yoghurts: €1.70
- A soft drink: €3.80
- A packet of biscuits: €1.50
- 1kg of oranges: €2.50
- 1kg of apples: €2.60
- A sandwich: €2
- A fast-food menu: €6.50
- A meal in a restaurant: between €15 and €25
- A coffee: around €1.20

**Figure 2** Screenshot from the website of Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines (*Uvseq.fr*)



**Le coût de la vie - Cost of living**

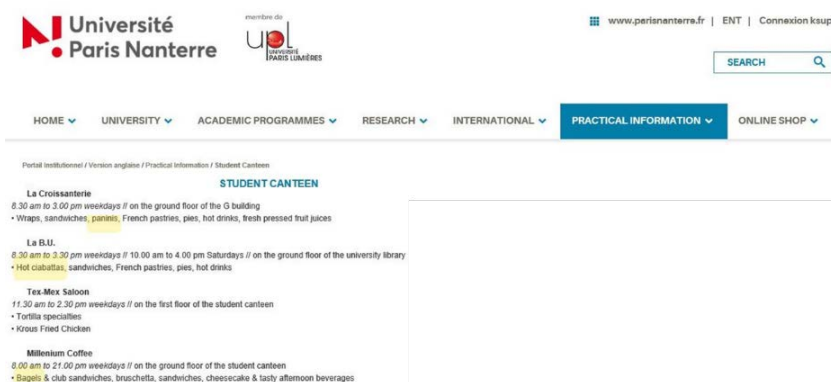
Pour te donner une idée du coût de la vie dans la métropole lilloise, voici quelques exemples de produits de la vie courante.

To give you an idea of the cost of life in the metropolis, here are a few examples of everyday products.

Produit / Product	Prix Lille	Produit / Product	Prix Lille
Alimentation / Food		Produits d'origine / Origin products	
Beurre / Butter (250g)	2€	Éthanol / Ethanol (75 ml)	1.50€
Lait / Milk (1 L)	0.80€	Gascon / Gascon (200 ml)	2.50€
Yaourt nature / Yogurt (1kg)	0.70€	Clafoutis / Clafoutis (200 ml)	2.50€
Café moulu / Ground coffee (250g)	2.2€	Champignon / Mushroom (500 ml)	2€
Œuf / Egg (25 sachets)	1.50€	Épave jetable / Disposable razor (10)	4€
Huile d'olive / Olive oil	2€	Papier toilette / Toilet paper (10)	2.40€
Pâtes / Pasta (1 kg)	0.90€	Prêt-à-manger / Sandwich (12 unités)	9.50€
Riz / Rice (1 kg)	2€	Bonbon à mâcher / Toothbrush	1.50€
Fromage de terre / Cheese (1 kg)	1.30€	Deodorant / Deodorant	4€
Beurre / Butter (1 kg)	1.80€	Shampoo / Shampoo	
Chocolat / Chocolate (10)	1.20€	Chaise / Chair	4.9€
Bière / Beer (33cl)	0.80€	Remède / Remedy	4.9€
Soda (sachet) / Soda (1.5 L)	1.40€	Laine / Wool	4.9€
Eau minérale / Water (1.5 L)	0.18€	Plume / Quill pen	3.9€
Jus d'orange / Orange juice (1 L)	1.45€	Thé / Tea	10€
Vin / Wine (75cl)	> 2€	Carton / Carton	14.20€
Supermarché / Supermarket	0.80€	Déplacement / Moving	
Épicerie / Grocery	0.80€	Levier de voiture / Car jack	1.40€

**Figure 3.** Screenshot from the website of Université de Lille (*Esnille.fr*)

The following examples are also transcultural terms, retrievable from the encyclopaedic knowledge of both the source text and the target text audiences. The website of the Paris Nanterre University (see *Figure 4* below) informs that the campus cafeteria sells *paninis*, *ciabattas* and *bagels*. The confusion arises when the term *paninis* is used in the enumeration following the term *sandwiches*, implying the two designate different things, whereas *panini* is a *sandwich*. The strategy of repetition is also used for *ciabattas* and *bagels*, monocultural terms which have turned into transcultural ones with the age of internationalization.



**Université Paris Nanterre**

www.parisnanterre.fr | ENT | Connexion ksup

HOME | UNIVERSITY | ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES | RESEARCH | INTERNATIONAL | PRACTICAL INFORMATION | ONLINE SHOP

Portail Institutionnel / Version anglaise / Practical Information / Student Canteen

**STUDENT CANTEEN**

**La Croissanterie**  
8.30 am to 2.00 pm weekdays // on the ground floor of the G building  
• Waps, sandwiches, paninis, French pastries, pies, hot drinks, fresh pressed fruit juices

**La Boul**  
8.30 am to 2.30 pm weekdays // 10.00 am to 4.00 pm Saturdays // on the ground floor of the university library  
• Hot ciabattas, sandwiches, French pastries, pies, hot drinks

**Tex-Mex Saloon**  
11.30 am to 2.30 pm weekdays // on the first floor of the student canteen  
• Tortilla specialties  
• Kross Fried Chicken

**Millemium Coffee**  
8.00 am to 2.00 pm weekdays // on the ground floor of the student canteen  
• Bagels & club sandwiches, bruschetta, sandwiches, cheesecake & tasty afternoon beverages

**Figure 4** Screenshot from the website of Université Paris Nanterre (*University.parisnanterre.fr*)

On the other hand, the strategy of repetition used for the monocultural term *quiches* (see *Figure 5* below) leaves the reference less overt, and provides international students with no concrete information about the ingredients. *Figure 6* below is a perfect illustration of microcultural terms, bound to the source culture only and too local to be within the encyclopaedic knowledge of both the source text and target text audiences. In their intention to promote the university region, the University of Lille preserves the French original cultural terms designating the traditional food in the North of France, such as *le maroilles*, *les merveilles*, *le potjevleesch*, *le welsh*, or *les moules-frites*. The strategy of repetition is preferred in their case not solely for the sake of foreignization, introducing the target readers into the local cultural atmosphere, but also because they represent what Leppihalme calls “culture bumps” (Leppihalme 1997). The non-verbal elements (the carefully selected photographs which give a hint of the subject matter) are equally multicultural, thus enhancing the text’s effect.



**Figure 5.** Screenshot from the CROUS website of Université Grenoble Alpes (*Crous-grenoble.fr*)



**Figure 6** Screenshot from the website of Université de Lille (*Esnlille.fr*)

In the same category of food, the Portuguese culture-bound terms *Bife à Café* and *Pastel de Nata* are treated differently in translation. While the cultural term *Bife à Café* is rendered only through repetition, borrowed as such on the English version of the University of Lisbon website, the translation of the term *Pastel de Nata* is achieved both through repetition and absolute universalisation. The neutral reference *custard tart*, placed between brackets, is thought to delete any foreign connotation of the term, it being part of the culinary world knowledge of the target text readers. The different translation approaches and strategies applied to apparently similar translation units can be explained by their different levels of transculturality (Pederson 2005). If *Pastel de Nata* is a monocultural term (originally from Portugal, but which can also be found in countries with significant Portuguese immigrant populations), the term *Bife à*

*Café* is microcultural, too local to transcend the borders of the Portuguese cuisine and therefore left without any equivalent in the target text

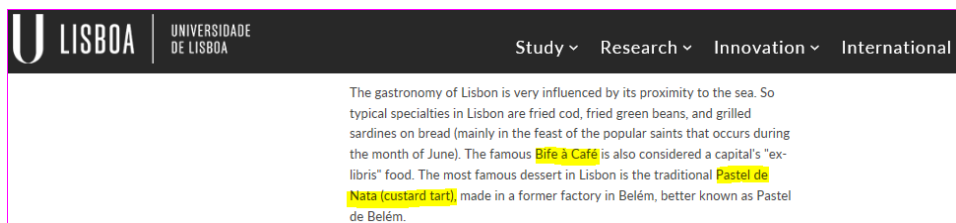


Figure 7 Screenshot from the website of Universidade de Lisboa (Ulisboa.pt)

Another case of monocultural term is the **geographical name Asturias** (see Figure 7 below) used in the column title *Asturias' University*. If the culture-bound term were left unexplicitated, the target audience would have to turn to other sources to establish whether the proper name *Asturias* refers to a place or a person. Therefore, the explicitation *the Principality of Asturias* used in the first paragraph clarifies the cultural reference.

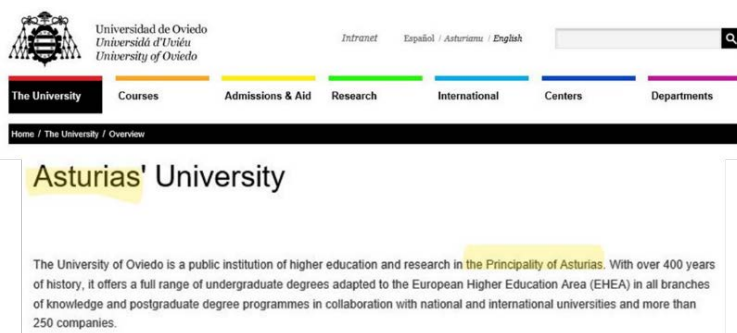


Figure 8 Screenshot from the website of Universidad de Oviedo (Uniovi.es)

We can further exemplify the strategy of conservation through repetition with the names of some French **events** (see Figure 8 below), i.e. the transcultural *Journées d'Immersion dans la Vie Étudiante* and the microcultural *braderie de Lille*, which are borrowed from the French source text into the English target text without any gloss or explicitation. A widely used term for the events intended to guide international students through the campus and introduce them to the academic and social opportunities of a university is *welcome days*, which could have gotten the message through the target audience. The *braderie de Lille*, on the other hand, was translated by the Independent (*Independent.co.uk*) as *Lille flea market*, which means that the translator did not



search for the existence of previous translations of the same term, as a textual variable (Aixelá 1996). Not to mention the microcultural term *la Brocante de Maroilles*, which was poorly translated using the strategy of limited universalisation, as the *goodwill shop of Maroilles* and which, in fact, is an *antique fair* or a *vintage market*.



Figure 9 Screenshots from the website of Université de Lille (Esnlille.fr)

The names of local **institutions** or **establishments** are most of the times rendered in translation through repetition. The same monocultural term appears in both *Figure 9* and *Figure 10* below, namely the place name *Café Langues*. The University of Paris Nanterre resorts to two strategies for the translation of this cultural term: since its repetition is not seen as explicit enough, the strategy of absolute universalization is additionally used within brackets (*Language Resource Center*), acting as an extreme strategy and destroying the cultural function of the term. Its simple repetition in the text translated by the University of Lille simply increases the exotic character of the cultural item in question, keeping the social features of the place, beside its educational purposes. However, British universities currently use the term *Languages Café* (see, for example, *Plymouth.ac.uk*) which signifies that neither of the above-mentioned universities checked the existence of this cultural reference on native English university websites.



**Figure 10** Screenshot from the website of Université Paris Nanterre (*University.parisnanterre.fr*)



**Figure 11** Screenshot from the website of Université de Lille (*Esnlille.fr*)

Other universities prefer to deliver unequivocal information so as to prevent any possible misunderstanding in their communication with international students. The term *Serviços de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras* (see *Figure 12* below) is rendered in translation both through the strategy of absolute universalization, being translated as *the Foreign Office*, as well as repetition (the original culture-bound term follows, being placed within brackets and quotation marks).



**Figure 12** Screenshot from the website of Universidade de Coimbra (*Uc.pt*)

Although traditionally omission is identified with the translator's failure to render the necessary translation unit, Dimitriu distinguishes a series of deliberate purposes for using this strategy, including presenting information in a more concise manner, to present only essential information, to avoid unnecessary culture, time and space bumps, etc. (Dimitriu 2004). In the case of the culture-bound term *CAF* (*Caisse d'Allocations Familiales*) the University of Lille chooses the strategy of deletion (or omission) (see *Figure 13* below) in order to avoid an unnecessary overload of information for the international students before their arrival at the guest university (this information is included in a student guide). Nevertheless, if accurate and complete information were to be offered to potential inquirers, the linguistic translation *Family Allocations Office* would be a good option (even more so as this translation is already present on *Wikipedia.com*).



Figure 13 Screenshot from the website of Université de Lille (Esnlille.fr)

For the translation of the transcultural terms *écoles primaires*, *colleges* et *lycées* belonging to the same category of institutions (see Figure 14 below), the University of Lille used the strategy of partial synonymy most probably in order to generalize the given situation so that the focus of the text message may be on other elements. The term *écoles primaires* becomes *schools*, the *elementary* element as a differentiated type of school being ignored, while the terms *colleges* et *lycées* are merged into a single general term, *highschools*, which again lacks the specificity of each of the two types of French education institutions.

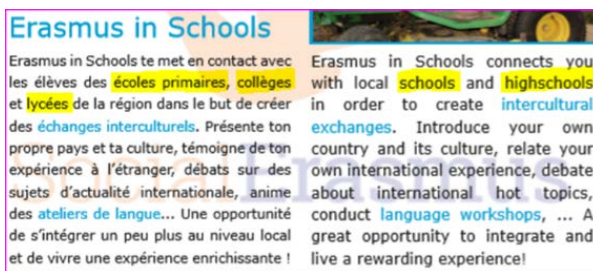


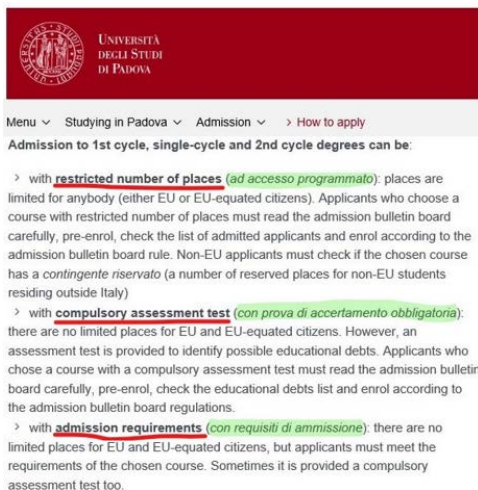
Figure 14 Screenshot from the website of Université de Lille (Esnlille.fr)

As for the culture-bound terms denoting **education-specific terminology**, the most commonly used strategy is conservation, which is achieved either through repetition, or linguistic (non-cultural) translation, the translator's choices being conditioned and motivated by the profile of the target text audience and the purpose of the translation, which is consistent with the functionalist approach. It often happens that both the repetition and the linguistic translation of the culturally determined element are used at the same time, probably in an effort to convey the information in the target text in the clearest way possible. Items like *specialista* (see Figure 15 below), *ad accesso programmato*, *con prova di accertamento obbligatoria*, and *con requisiti di ammissione* (see Figure 16 below), *frequentanti* and *non-frequentanti* (see Figure 17 and Figure 18 below), *licence* and *unités d'enseignement* (see Figure 19 below) are both borrowed from the source text to the target text, as well as linguistically translated – usually within brackets (see *specialist*, *restricted number of places*, *compulsory assessment test*, *admission requirements*,

attending, not attending, bachelor's degree, and credits respectively), which makes it maintain the original reference and increase its understandability.



**Figure 15** Screenshot from the website of *Università degli Studi di Padova* (*Unipd.it*)



**Figure 16** Screenshot from the website of *Università degli Studi di Padova* (*Unipd.it*)

Deciding on the strategy of repetition for the translation of other culture-bound terms specific to the field of education raises doubts, as in the case of the pairs *Laurea magistrale* and *Laurea magistrale a ciclo unico* (see *Figure 15* above), or *Travaux Dirigés* and *Travaux Pratiques* (see *Figure 19* below, left), as well as the tripartite *Diplôme universitaire de technologies*, *Diplômes universitaires*, and *Diplômes inter-universitaires* (see *Figure 19* below, right). The distinction between the respective items is crucial to the text and would have to be made explicit through a gloss, either extratextual (a glossary on the university webpage, for example) or intratextual so as to require minimum effort from the target audience. In an expository text on the Italian/French education system, the borrowing of the source text elements into the target text might be appropriate, but not here, all the more so since the distinction between the cultural items cannot be inferred “whether from co-text or because it is situationally relevant” (Hatim & Mason 1990: 93). Relating to the issue of inference from the point of view of translation studies, Hatim and Mason claim that “what is inferable or situationally evoked for a source text reader may not be so for a target text reader. Operating in different cognitive environments, source text and target text readers are not equally equipped for the task of inferencing.” (Ibidem).

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PADOVA	
Prerequisites:	Good knowledge of English and interest in environmental issues
Target skills and knowledge:	There are four learning outcomes for this course. It is expected that the students will acquire knowledge of the topics discussed in class and in the assigned readings; that they will understand the meaning of the research conducted about these topics (e.g., identify the critical points); they will be able to apply this knowledge and understanding to novel situations. All this needs to be done by communicating effectively.
Examination methods:	The written exam will combine multiple choice questions with a few open-ended questions.
Assessment criteria:	For "non-frequentanti" the final grade will be based on the written exam. For "frequentanti" the final grade will be based on the final exam (50%), on class participation (10%) and on in-class activities (40%) that will be specified at the beginning of the course.

Figure 17 Screenshot from the website of Università degli Studi di Padova (Unipd.it)

The screenshot shows the website of Sapienza Università di Roma. The page is titled "Political and Social History of Modern and Contemporary Japan and Korea A, 2016-2017" and is taught by Marco Del Bene. A highlighted text block states: "Il corso prevede due percorsi, per frequentanti e per i non frequentanti. The course is for both students attending or not attending the lessons."

Figure 18 Screenshot from the website of Università di Roma Sapienza (Uniroma1.it)

The left screenshot, titled "LMD", explains the Licence, master, and doctorate levels in the French Higher Education system. It notes that a Licence (bachelor's degree) lasts for three years and consists of basic multidisciplinary training. The right screenshot, titled "A wide choice of training options", states that the university prepares national diplomas such as the DUT (Diplôme universitaire de technologies) and also offers specific diplomas like DU (Diplômes universitaires) and DIU (Diplômes inter-universitaires).

Figure 19 Screenshots from the website of Université de Rennes 1 (Univ-rennes1.fr)

It often happens that two translators choose different strategies for the translation of the same cultural term. However, it should be pointed out that the inconsistency in applying different strategies for the translation of the same culture-bound term (by the same translator) is not always deliberate and may betray the translator's lack of experience. In *Figure 19* below the term *validation*

*d'études* acts as a constitutive part of the phrase *to make a "validation d'études"*. On closer investigation, only two paragraphs farther on the same page, the term is rendered through linguistic translation as *validation of studies*, which means that the sentence *you have to make a "validation d'études"* could have been translated as *you have to validate your studies*.

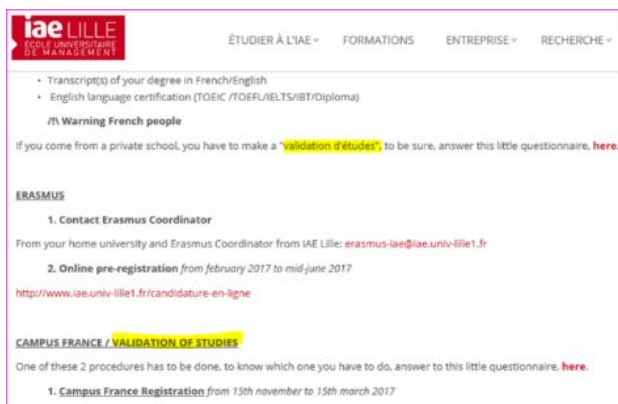


Figure 20 Screenshot from the website of Université de Lille 1 (Univ-lille1.fr)

An example of naturalization (the cultural term is radically replaced by the target culture correspondent) appears in Figure 21 below where the French *mention assez bien en L3 (12/20 à l'année de L3, minimum)* is translated by the specialized term *upper second class honor minimum, or first class honor*, which belong to the British undergraduate degree classification system. When dealing with such specialized terminology, the introduction of an extratextual gloss (a glossary on the university website) would be highly recommended. The consequences of not conveying clear information about this cultural term, whose meaning still remains obscure for the international students whose origins are not British or who have not studied in the British education system before, could be quite serious if the prerequisites for enrolling in the respective master programme were not met.



Figure 21 Screenshot from the website of Université de Lille 1 (Univ-lille1.fr)

*Table 1* below summarizes the translation strategies used for the culture-bound terms identified in the analysed corpus of university websites. The first column indicates the category to which the terms belong, the second and third columns include the source text and target text culture-bound terms. Column four specifies the strategy(ies) used for the translation of the original cultural term into English, while column five shows whether or not there are alternative solutions that the translator could have provided instead of the ones used in column three.

**Table 1** *Translation strategies used for culture-bound terms*

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Category of culture-bound term</b>	<b>Source text culture-bound term</b>	<b>Target text culture-bound term</b>	<b>Translation strategy(ies) used</b>	<b>Alternative translation (if any)</b>
Holidays	Toussaint	All Saints' Day (Toussaint)	linguistic translation + repetition	All Saints' Day (the 1st of November)
Food	baguette	1. baguette 2. baguette (French bread stick)	repetition repetition + intratextual gloss	
	paninis	paninis	repetition	sandwiches
	ciabattas	ciabattas	repetition	
	bagels	bagels	repetition	
	quiches	quiches	repetition	tarts
	le maroilles	le maroilles	repetition	
	les merveilleux	les merveilleux	repetition	
	le potjevleesch	le potjevleesch	repetition	
	le welsh	le welsh	repetition	
	les moules-frites	les moules-frites	repetition	
	Bife à Café	Bife à Café	repetition	
Pastel de Nata	Pastel de Nata (custard tart)	repetition + absolute universalization		
Geographical names	Asturias	Asturias/ Principality of Asturias	repetition + intratextual gloss	
Local events	Journées d'Immersion dans la Vie Étudiante	Journées d'Immersion dans la Vie Étudiante	repetition	welcome days

	braderie de Lille Brocante de Maroilles	braderie de Lille secondhand shop of Maroilles	repetition limited universalization	Lille flea market Maroilles antique fair / Maroilles vintage market
Institutions / establishments	Café Langues	1. Café Langues	repetition	Languages Café
		2. Café Langues (Language Resource Center)	repetition + absolute universalization	Languages Café
	Serviços de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras	Foreign Office (SEF-Serviços de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras)	repetition + absolute universalization	
	CAF (Caisse d'Allocations Familiales)		omission	Family Allocations Office
	écoles primaires	schools	partial synonymy (generalization)	elementary schools
	collèges and lycées	highschools	partial synonymy (generalization)	colleges and high schools
Education-specific terminology	specialista	speciatista ( <i>specialist</i> )	repetition + linguistic translation	
	ad accesso programmato	restricted number of places ( <i>ad accesso programmato</i> )	linguistic translation + repetition	
	con prova di accertamento obbligatoria	compulsory assessment test ( <i>con prova di accertamento obbligatoria</i> )	linguistic translation + repetition	



con requisiti di ammissione	admission requirements ( <i>con requisiti di ammissione</i> )	linguistic translation + repetition	
frequentanti/ non-frequentanti	1. frequentanti/ non-frequentanti	repetition	students attending/ students not attending
	2. students attending/ students not attending	linguistic translation	
licence	1. licence 2. licence (bachelor's degree)	repetition repetition + linguistic translation	bachelor
unités d'enseignement	unités d'enseignement	repetition	credits
validation d'études	1. validation d'études 2. validation of studies	repetition linguistic translation	validation of studies
mention assez bien en L3 (12/20 à l'année de L3, minimum)	upper second class honor minimum, or first class honor	naturalisation	upper second-class honours minimum

The corpus of university websites includes thirty-one culture-bound terms, five of which were recognised on two different websites, therefore two alternatives for their translation are provided for them in the third column of *Table 1* above. The most often used translation strategy for the analysed culture-bound terms is repetition, identified in thirty instances. Linguistic translation was used in nine instances, absolute universalization in four, partial synonymy in three, while strategies like naturalisation, limited universalization and omission were used only in one instance each.

The overwhelming use of repetition (or cultural borrowing), followed by the linguistic (non-cultural) translation of the cultural terms, leads us to the conclusion that the preferred translation strategy is conservation, which suggests not only linguistic nationalism on the part of the Romance language universities whose websites have been analysed, but also the concern to preserve their unique national culture within the European diversity of cultures. Nevertheless, in spite of the linguistic and cultural conservation aimed at promoting the

national language, values and traditions, the English version of the university websites calls most importantly for clarity of information, which is primordial in our case. For that reason, as it has been suggested through the alternatives provided for the translation of some culture-bound terms, other translation strategies should be used to a larger extent to make the content culturally acceptable to international students. Aside from the idea of conservation and promotion of one's own language and culture, there is also a natural tendency to assimilate the culture-bound term, as an easier option. Yet, translators need to negotiate the appropriate balance, so that translations remain accessible to a wide readership. Otherwise, translated texts would fail to be a force for cross-cultural understanding. The diversification of strategies would aim to supplement the readers' cultural knowledge (see the use of glossaries) and universalize the terms when their cultural meaning is too obscure, in line with the correct and consistent norms regarding the elaboration of web-based institutional academic texts.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The following minimum recommendations regarding the translation of cultural terms on university websites, based on the empirical research of this study, will be advanced:

- To use correct and consistent terminology (e.g. *validation d'études* and *validation of studies*);
- To avoid using two translation strategies for the same culture-bound term (e.g. *specialista* (*specialist*));
- To create a glossary for the education-specific terminology (e.g. *mention assez bien / upper second class honor minimum, or first class honor*);
- To render cultural presuppositions through explicitation, when needed (e.g. *Asturias / the Principality of Asturias*);
- To opt for the culture-neutral terms over the local/national-specific references (e.g. *tart* instead of *quiche*, *sandwich* instead of *panini*, *bachelor's degree* instead of *licence*);
- To refer to previous translations, esp. if retrievable from native English sources (e.g. *flea market* instead of *braderie*, *Languages Café* instead of *Café Langues*, *students attending* instead of *frequentanti*);
- To maintain culture-bound terms if they carry important messages for the target audience (e.g. *Family Allocations Office* over deletion of *CAF (Caisse d'Allocations Familiales)*).

This case study has shown that the translation of culture may be a daunting task. The translator's effort to use the most appropriate strategies so as to convey the accurate message to the intended audience contributes to the

success not only of the translation of university websites, but of the universities themselves, among international students.

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