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ENGLISH FOR TOURISM AS A CULTURAL LIAISON

Laura Rebeca Stiegelbauer

Lecturer, PhD and Narcisa Schwarz, Assoc. Prof., PhD, "Vasile Goldiș" West University of Arad

This paper is intended to tackle a very fashionable subject nowadays, namely, English for Tourism as a cultural liaison, but more important than that, English for Tourism used for and by BA students who attend the Specialisation of Applied Modern Languages. Moreover, in this paper, we intended to analyse the difficulties the BA students could encounter when they have to translate texts coming from this domain during their ESP Courses (English for Specific Purposes). English is a versatile language and Tourism English is no exception; but is there a real challenge for the BA students who need to practice translation from a source language into a target language, namely into Romanian? Are CAT Tools reliable in this aspect?

Keywords: ESP, Tourism English, Transdisciplinarity, terminology, compact structures

Introduction

In the Merriam-Webster online dictionary[1], *culture* is defined as the "beliefs, customs, arts of a particular society, group, place or time; a particular society that has its own beliefs, ways of life, art; a way of thinking, behaving, or working that exists in a place or organisation". In the same dictionary, *translation* has the following definition "words that have been changed from one language into a different language; the act of changing something from one form to another". Moreover, what is *Tourism?* Merriam-Webster Dictionary tells us that tourism "is the activity of traveling to a place for pleasure and the business of providing hotels, restaurants, entertainment for people who are traveling". If we put these three definitions together can we come up with a proper definition for the concept of Translating in the Tourism Domain from English into Romanian (or the other way around) as

[1] http://www.merriam-webster.com - accessed on 5 October 2016

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a Cultural Liaison? We believe that one proper definition could be: words/phrases coming from the field of tourism (hotels, restaurant, entertainment for the people who are traveling, etc.) that have been changed from English into Romanian or vice-versa in order to make sense and to be properly understood in the target language focusing on the beliefs, customs, way of life that exist in a particular place or organization.

How everything started

Working in the field of teaching for the Applied Modern Languages (AML) Specialisation for almost 15 years, made us reach the conclusion that teaching translation really usable strategies to BA students is not always easy, as translation process is a very complex one. Hence, we wanted to do something different for a change, we wanted to get the students involved and make them see the pros and/or cons in translation in the tourism area.

It is almost never just word-to-word translation. There has always been the question of how to deal with the cultural aspects that can be found behind a word or phrase and which way is the best way to convey the message behind the words in order to fully make the target reader/speaker understand the source writer/speaker. "Since no two languages are identical, either in the meanings given to corresponding symbols or in the ways such as symbols are arranged in phrases and sentences, it stands to reason that there can be no absolute correspondence between languages. Hence there can be no fully exact translations"[2] Having this in mind it is our job as teachers to find the best teaching and assessment method for our students in the Applied Modern Languages Specialisation.

Down to business

Along with our students from AML we had a quick look online on various Romanian websites related to the tourism industry. Our method of research was a simple one: we typed on Google search: *pagini turistice Romania* (translation: Romania – Tourism Pages). We did not use any symbols to narrow our research, we just wanted to go as easy as possible, as for a

[2] Nida, Eugene 1964. "Principles of Correspondence." In Venuti, L. *The Translation Studies Reader*. London: Routledge.

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person who is not very much into using the Internet. We obtained 1.150.000 pages. On the first page we had 16 results. Everybody is well aware that the first page is the most important one, as people tend to read what comes first, and leave out the information found on the other pages, even if we talk about over a million webpages: "ninety-one percent did not go further than the first page with search results …"[3] Out of these, 9 websites were relevant as they had general Touristic Information (we did not consider Wikipedia). We opened every link and we found out that only 4 (http://www.romanianmonasteries.org/, http://turism.gov.ro/#, http://romania-montana.ro/ , http://romaniatourism.com/) had a language option, namely English. Hence, we said that English was used to control the media information found on websites in order to be understood by the common reader who read and/or spoke English. Unfortunately 5 from the first Google Search Results Page (http://www.monumenteoltenia.ro/ , http://www.ghiduri-turistice.info/,http://obiective-turistice.romania-tourist.info/obiective-turistice-romania,http://www.romaniaturistica.ro/,http://www.calatorii-in-romania.ro/ro/acasa) had no translation at all (we did not take into consideration Google auto-translate).

We went a step forward. We narrowed the search to Arad area and we focused on the same steps: we typed in the words *pagini turistice Arad,* we had 492.000 results, 16 results on the first page but this time we had three results from *pagini aurii (https://www.paginiaurii.ro/firmy/ARAD/q_Cabane+turistice/1/)* - one had information related to accommodation, one to touristic insurance and one had three touristic transportation possibilities. Probably the most relevant related to the information we were looking for, were pages http://arad-turistic.ro/en/ and http://www.cniptarad.ro/en/home. Unfortunately the first one was last updated on 15 December 2015 (we accessed the page 15 May 2016) and the second one on 7 April 2016. These two also had English page option. The last link found here was one, which took us to visit Arad in Israel, so, completely out of our research area. The other pages had nothing to do with Arad or with tourism in this area.

While analyzing our research and talking to our students about what we found, we realized that we did not open any travel agency webpage. Consequently we went straight to the point, namely we searched on Google: *agentii turism arad 2016. (*translation – Tourism

[3] Van Deursen, A.J.A.M., van Dijk, J.A.G.M. Using the Internet: Skill related problems in users' online behavior. Interact. Comput. (2009), doi:10.1016/j.intcom.2009.06.005

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Agencies Arad 2016) . We came up with 553.000 results, 16 on the first page. We were surprised to find out that not even one page contained any information in English or in any other language besides Romanian. Thus, these pages were strictly addressed to Romanian citizens willing to travel abroad or in Romania. The foreigner, who studies or lives here for a short or long period of time and who does not speak Romanian, needs some hands-on translation tools in order to get an idea of what is offered there. For a reader like this, unfortunately a quick and poor related to quality solution is Google translate as not everybody has CAT Tools. This conclusion was relevant to our next steps.

Tourism Terminology and its Difficulties in Translation

The language used on the different websites we found was either (highly) specialised or very general. The very specialised language was found in legal documents (documents related to the setting up of a travel agency) or in professional discourse and public institutions links (http://romaniatourism.com/government.html).

Furthermore, on all the other webpages we encountered general thematic writing used on the websites of the travel agencies, hotels, blogs, the two Arad official webpages (http://www.cniptarad.ro/en/home and http://arad-turistic.ro/en/) and in advertisements. We wanted to give to our students the possibility to discover by themselves how English Language developed when we "speak Tourism" and more important than that how English influenced Romanian when we talk about translating some phrases and even some newly created words. The research they did was based on the abovementioned websites.

1. They first encountered the blended words from English, for which in Romanian there was not always just one word, sometimes they encountered a phrase:

- Campsite – loc de campare (a place where you can put your tent)
- Motel – Motel
- Ecotourism – Ecoturism
- Ecotours – Turism și Ecologie (Tourism and Ecology)
- Edutainment – Educație prin Distracție (Education through Fun/Entertainment)
- Keepsake – suveniruri (which sometimes might have a wider meaning in Romanian than in English)
- Knapsack – limitare bagaj de mână (Hand luggage limit)

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- Outdoors – în aer liber (in fresh air)
- Indoors – în incinta locației (inside the location)
- Getaway – escapadă (the same equivalence)
- Seashore – la/pe malul mării (by the sea)
- Sightseeing – priveliște (scenery, landscape)
- Waterpark – parc de distracții acvatic (Aquatic Fun Park)
- Weekend – weekend (in all the webpages they found that there was no translation for this word even if in Romanian we have *sfârșit de săptămână* which means end of the week)

2. The students found new terminology, created to describe the up-to-the-minute concepts we encounter today:

- incentive tour – turism de stimulare or turism de tip "incentive" (in Romanian this translation sounds a little too direct as *stimulare* in http://www.dex.ro/stimulare is explained as an urge, an impulse to do something)
- package holiday – pachet de călătorie (the same meaning)
- tour operator – tur operator and tour operator (a new terminology was created in Romanian – one which translated the word tour (tur) and one which used the same word from English
- adventure holiday – adventure holiday (the same terminology was encountered on all pages – no translation)
- city-breaks – city breaks (no translation)
- nature getaway – escapadă în natură (the same meaning)

3. Transdisciplinarity was encountered on all the webpages: words/phrases taken from various fields of activity. Hence, their level of vocabulary needed to be quite vast and diverse in order to be able to fully understand the meaning.

- Cuisine – hamburgers – which remained the same in Romanian
  – cheeseburgers - the same in Romanian
  – the Romanian *mici* ((plural noun which also is the plural of the adjective little in Romanian) minced mixed meat rolled and

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fried/grilled) remained the same with the exception of a TV commercial where they wanted to be funny and they used "Littles" in English

– the Romanian *sarmale* can be found written the same on the English translated webpages or on some pages is almost given the recipe explained – minced meat in cabbage leaves

- Economy – financial and trade terminology
  - ATM – bacomat
  - Overdraft – remained the same in Romanian
  - Username – remained the same but pronounced with a strong z and sometimes using the definite article *username-ul*
  - Password – was translated as *parola*
  - Withdrawal – retragere numerar (proper translation of the meaning)
- History of Art – city and building architecture
  - Fortress – cetate (sometimes in Romanian the word *cetate* expressed only the citadel and not the fortified walls around it or its surroundings as the word fortress expresses[4]
  - The terms used in the architecture of the buildings were properly translated

4. The easier and more simple variants of some long and too explanatory expressions in Romanian
   - Self-catering accommodation – cazare in regim propriu (the same meaning)
   - Sleeper – vagon de dormit (a sleeping wagon)
   - Step-on-guide – ghid care se dă in autobus/autocar (guide which is offered to you when you are on the bus/coach)

5. Newly created compounds

[4] http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/fortress

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- Airline – once air line; in Romanian we have just linie de traffic aerian
- Email – once e-mail; in Romanian it was encountered with both spellings and sometimes even just mail (it was not an address, it was the electronic email)
- Timetable – once time-table; in Romanian orar, the same word being used for schedule

6. Very often met in the research were the over evaluative terms, meant to draw the reader's attention or meant to become earworms
    - Richly-decorated façade – fațadă/frontispiciu puternic decorat
    - Picturesque sights – priveliște pitorească
    - Breathtaking views – priveliște care îți taie respirația
    - Idyllic Black Sea – Marea Neagră din poveste (Black Sea from the tales)
    - Fantastic prices – prețuri incomparabile (the exact translation would be: incomparable prices)
    - Best food in Romania – cea mai bună mâncare din România

Conclusions

These were the major translation issues the students encountered in their short research. This analysis made them aware of the permanent development of the English language but more important than that it made them realize that translation is versatile, translation is sometimes fun and sometimes it gives headaches. We managed to make our students do research enthusiastically as they were encouraged by the quick findings on almost every webpage which was analysed. Some students found out interesting cultural aspects related to Romania but also related to their city Arad. It was a real success to see how they worked in teams and how they debated on the online translation they found on the abovementioned webpages. Many noticed that the cultural aspect behind certain Romanian words was not properly/totally conveyed and thus the desired emotional power of the word/phrase was not there. They did not feel the need to use any CAT Tools or Machine

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Translation Tools during their research, on the contrary, this made them use our dictionaries from the University Library as they considered them more reliable sometimes.

This short experiment was fruitful for both my colleague and I too as we developed our insight in this field, we experienced on our own what it means to work on a permanent changing area but more than that, we saw the need to constantly adapt our teaching materials to modern teaching methods and strategies and to the need of this new digitized generation.

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