### Universitatea "Dunărea de Jos" din Galaţi Școala doctorală de Ştiinţe Socio-Umane



## **DOCTORAL THESIS SUMMARY**

# - English-

# TRANSLATING THE CIVIL ENGINEERING LANGUAGE

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#### ARGUMENT

It is a recognised fact that civil engineering has been a part of human existence since the very beginning. As a discipline that deals with the design, construction and maintenance of the built environment, civil engineering is a significant part of everyday life for all of us, whose main role is to bring about solutions for important issues that arise in society. Civil engineering is also one of the oldest engineering disciplines, second oldest only to military engineering, the two terms being initially defined as opposing. As such, it became a wide-ranging profession which includes a significant number of sub-disciplines for the development of which it merges knowledge related to structures, materials science, geography, geology, soils, hydrology, environment, mechanics, physics or mathematical principles.

When looking at all our surroundings, the long history of civil engineering, as well as its importance for our well-being become apparent. The earliest civil engineering practices can be traced back to several thousand years BC in the ancient Egypt, the Indus Valley or Mesopotamia, while the first attempts apply physical and mathematical principles in civil engineering were seen in the works of Archimedes. Moreover, every durable construction that surrounds us, from the ancient Egyptian pyramids, the Roman road and water transportation systems (particularly the Appian Way), the Great Wall of China, the impressive gothic-style cathedrals, the Eiffel tower (which is considered a wonder of modern engineering), the bridges and railway stations of Santiago Calatrava to our own across-the Danube bridge build by Anghel Saligny, all are products of civil engineering principles.

Modern times brought about a much-needed distinction between the professions of architect and civil engineer, two terms that used to be considered interchangeable up until the 18th century. As the population increased and the world itself developed, the responsibilities of civil engineers and the need for their profession have been constantly increasing in importance and, as a consequence, have become more complex, diverse and challenging. This is reflected in the wide variety of sub-disciplines that are encompassed in the broader domain of civil engineering: structural engineering, environmental engineering, geotechnical engineering, transportation engineering, land and construction surveying, urban engineering, or hydraulic engineering to name just a few. To this I must add the degree of liability civil engineers are faced with, as they are literally responsible for the safety and lives of the people who enter a build they designed or erected, a road they built, use the installations systems they helped develop, use the electricity produced by plants that work because of dams they built on rivers, cross bridges on different water courses, etc. Moreover, environmental engineers are responsible for the sustainable development of a number of sectors and for devising equipment that helps protect the environment and the atmosphere as well. Consequently, it is not wrong to state that civil engineering plays an important role in society both due to the aspect described above, and to the economic factors that derive from them.

The first contact I had with the civil engineering domain was as a teacher of English for students of different civil engineering programmes as well as within the programmes of specialised translations which the university I work for runs. Further, my interest in the domain of the language used in civil engineering and in the translations of texts related to this type of language was built by the contact I had with different types of civil engineering texts in different

situations. One such position is that of the teacher in need of relevant course and seminar material, while the other is that of the translator of various pieces of civil engineering discourse (research articles, habilitation theses, summaries of doctoral theses, activity reports, etc.) which I was have been doing along the years. All this varied interaction with different aspects of civil engineering language make me realise the need for further research in the domain and provided me with several useful study material. First of all, mention should be made that, although bits and pieces of civil engineering discourse were the object of study of some authors (Roldan-Riojas 2012, 2015 for metaphors in civil engineering is among the few such researchers), there is no extensive linguistic study that could provide a complete description of the language used in civil engineering as a whole, or one that looks at the civil engineering language from several perspectives. A second aspect is related to the matter of translations. When reading the translations available for different official document in the domain, I detected a significant amount of translation errors at several levels of the text, some of which serious enough to result in sensitive consequences. I also noticed that proof-reading translations is not a concept applied to the ones in the civil engineering domain, either to or from Romanian.

I consider that the aspects mentioned in the previous paragraphs undoubtedly indicate that research work that focuses on the language used in civil engineering both from the point of view of linguistic inquiry and translation theory is indeed a necessity in order to shed light on certain aspects inherent to the civil engineering language which have been previously neglected.

One of my main purposes when starting this doctoral research was to explore the complexity of this type of language, which is yet to be completely known to scholars outside the domain. I also intended to analyse the difficulties with which a translator is confronted, the solutions they opted for when coming across translation challenges and the errors which occurred together with the possible causes that led to them. In fact, I consider this last aspect one of the most relevant ones, as I am of the opinion that identifying the patterns of occurrence of translation errors is a useful instrument that enables translator trainers to help their trainees prevent producing errors further in their careers. The presence of such a high number of errors also demonstrates that translations are sometimes not the product of trained professionals that are familiar with the field they translate from and lack the necessary technical training which would enable them to understand the way it works. I also discovered that the opposite situation is often found in civil engineering translations, namely a professional in the field (usually an engineer) is responsible for the translations. This results in much more accurate texts from a terminological point of view, as Sections II 2.3.5, IV 4.3.2.1., IV 4.4.1.3. and IV 4.4.2.2. prove, but in terms of abiding by the correct morphological, syntactic, lexical rules, and even in terms of the natural flow of the target language in question, the target text is usually a far cry from what a quality translation is supposed to mean. Therefore, it is a reality of translating civil engineering texts that translators are in need of more rigorous training, as errors in translating civil engineering texts seem to be rather consistent.

My doctoral thesis brings forth as main novelty the complete overall study of the civil engineering language from different linguistic perspectives together with an evaluation of the translation problems found when translating this type of language. I based my linguistic research on quantitative assessments of the main categories, followed by the identification of the characteristic elements of civil engineering language at different linguistic levels which have not been previously pointed out. The aspects that resulted from this study are highly applicable in the

pre-translation phase pf the process of translating civil engineering language, in text evaluation and in developing more creative and interesting curricula for civil engineering language teaching.

I also considered necessary to increase the visibility of civil engineering translations as a domain and research into the complexity of the civil engineering language represents a good starting point for such an endeavour. I decided to approach the translation process from three angles: methods and procedures used, translation difficulties at different levels and the optimum solutions found for them and translation error patterns found in civil engineering texts. In my opinion, it is this last aspect in particular that is of great interest both to experienced translators as well as to future translators who intent to concentrate on specialised translations and who need a thorough evaluation of the domain.

#### **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The doctoral thesis **Translating Civil Engineering Language** represents the result of my research on the civil engineering language, which is presented in detailed from a double perspective: linguistic and translational. Research into the linguistic aspects connected to the civil engineering language show that it has been give some thought (see Conrad 2017 and Biber and Conrad 2019). On the other hand, there is little to no exploration of the translation of civil engineering texts from or into Romanian. I can, therefore, assert that this thesis fills an existing gap in the research in the domain. The purpose of my thesis is not primarily linguistic in its nature, but it rather intends to cover particular areas that I deemed relevant both in terms of language characteristics and particularly in terms of translatability of civil engineering language in the different types of texts that constitute my corpus. Therefore, the main objectives of my investigation can be conveyed as follows:

- to prove that the language used in civil engineering is not a mere variation of general English, but that it is a distinct branch of English for Specific Purposes (ESP)
- to integrate English for Civil Engineering (ECE) into the ESP tree and its sub-branches
- to identify and analyse the main characteristics of ECE that solidly differentiate it from other ESP branches
- to identify the methods and procedures that are predominantly used when translating civil engineering language as well as the possible differences in the usage of methods and procedures according to whether the source text is in English or Romanian
- to identify the main types of difficulties found when translating civil engineering language, to group and to analyse them and to provide alternative solutions for those difficulties when needed
- to identify the most common errors in civil engineering translations, to classify and to analyse those, as well as to provide solutions and improved translation variants
- to identify a pattern for errors in translating civil engineering language from and into Romanian and to identify the underlying causes for these errors

The present research is not intended as an exhaustive study of all aspects concerning the civil engineering language from different perspectives, but it rather aims at investigating the current status the civil engineering language has and the way it is reflected in relevant documents

in the domain. In addition, I consider it important provide an overview of translating civil engineering language professionally and to mention the different elements which a translator in the civil engineering domain must be familiar with, the type of considerations that might affect their activity given the degree of specialisation of civil engineering texts, as well as the variety of text types that need to be translated.

#### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research material consists of documents used in several areas connected to civil engineering, ranging from official documents (Eurocode Standards), to research articles, and instructions intended for either professionals or laymen, as I consider that the reality and complexity of the domain can only be reflected by the study of the wide variety of texts that make use of the civil engineering language. Since my intention was to obtain accurate, reliable and complete results of my research, I used several methods and techniques. When covering the theoretical aspects of this study, I made use of the historical research method, particularly when describing the emergence and development of English for Specific Purposes in Part I -Section I. I employed the same historical method in Part II-Section III 3.1., when presenting the evolution of English as the most prominent language in several domains, until reaching the status of lingua franca in a number of areas, including civil engineering. Sections III 3.2 and III 3.3. in Part II also drew on the same method to show the emergence and growth of translations and particularly of Translation Studies as an independent research domain and to provide solutions for current issues and some insight into possible future trends. A significant part of this thesis relies on the synthetic and analytical approaches, especially when dealing with the impressive amount of data available through linguistic and translation research in order to highlight the most relevant of these theories for my subject, corpus and type of analysis.

In matters pertaining to the application of the theoretical aspects related to this domain, I used a *quantitative research method*. For this purpose, I analysed a corpus consisting of five main types of texts (Eurocode Standards, which contain the current regulatory design norms for building in Europe and in Romania, technical specification sheets for different products used in the construction domain, a report referring to sustainability belonging to one of the companies producing cement and aggregates for concrete, a technical expertise of a metal pillar for the support of the telecommunications equipment, a series of 15 research articles from different civil engineering sub-domains and three web sites that include the profile and portfolio of three important companies in the domain), more specifically 38 text samples with both English and Romanian as source text, totalling over 180.000 words, or 76 texts samples if the corresponding translations of the original source texts are included, totalling more than 300.000 words. More details regarding the types of texts included in my corpus are given in the Corpus Description sub-section below. I also use the *quantitative method* to generate important numerical data which I further submit to rigorous quantitative analysis (Kothari 2004). The results of this analysis are provided into the multiple tables, charts and diagrams (containing quantitative information both in terms of figures and in terms of percentage) which I created and included in this thesis for several aspects dealing with civil engineering language and civil engineering translations.

The data provided by the quantitative research method was then refined and analysed through the qualitative research method, which enabled us to explore the linguistic features of the

texts in my corpus and to identify the functions which these particular features perform. For this, the *descriptive* and *functional linguistic approaches* were the methods which I considered to yield the most accurate results. Therefore, these were the methods I use when I described and analysed the civil engineering language.

When analysing the source texts and target texts, I applied *the comparative and contrastive methods* in order to identify similarities and difference particularly in terms of methods and procedures used in each type of translation (either to or from English). The same method was employed when analysing difficulties and translation errors. *The deductive method* was also a useful tool that enabled us to identify the main differences between types of texts and general and specific language. It was also the method I used to analyse the way in which the results provided by the comparative and contrastive study were applied.

Finally, I used *the observation method* to gather data regarding linguistic aspects that characterise the civil engineering domain, as well as regarding the way in which civil engineering language is used originally or in translations. Translation errors were also identified and solutions, more specifically my own translation variants, were provided. The information collected through observation represented the basis of the comparative, contrastive, descriptive and functional approached that I use.

#### CORPUS DESCRIPTION

Taking into account that the main purpose of my doctoral thesis is to analyse the civil engineering language, with particular focus on translations, I considered that it was necessary to select a corpus consisting of bilingual texts with both English and Romanian as source texts (ST) as well as their respective translations (TT). Therefore, I considered it best to select the corpus from written text types only for a number of reasons. One first reason has to do with the availability of this type of resource. There is little video or audio recorded material related to civil engineering, as usually lectures are not recorded, talks between specialists are only private and interpreting services in this domain are not followed by a transcript. Therefore, oral discourse is rarely put into recordable form and even more rarely translated, for which reason I decided to use only f written text samples. The second reason why only written texts were selected is the difference in the two types of discourse, spoken and written. The characteristics and functions of the spoken and written discourse in general being inherently different, and the purpose of the thesis having little to do with comparing different types of discourse, I considered that choosing only one of the two types for this analysis would be more helpful and render more accurate research results.

Written texts making use of civil engineering language are extremely varied and cover several sub-domains, from engineering design documents and regulatory standards, design reports, studies regarding cost estimates, data reports, including research and developments ones, feasibility studies, bid documents, general conditions, construction drawings, technical specification, technical requirements, technical memoranda, site visits reports, such as technical expertise, proposals, correspondence related to on-going projects, products resulting from academic and research activities, such as lab reports, course books and research articles, instructions of use for products and materials, catalogues containing description of products services provided, etc.

As it can be seen, documents related to civil engineering are varied and complex both in terms of form and content. Nevertheless, selecting relevant items to create the corpus was no easy task, mainly due to two reasons: monolingual documents only and the lack of access to some types or texts. The first aspect that impacted on the choice of corpus material is related to the low number of texts available in both English and Romanian irrespective of their original source language. Thus, books and articles initially printed in English are not translated into Romanian, studies and reports are mostly written in Romanian and discussions with civil engineers revealed that most part of the correspondence between a foreign and a Romanian part, usually e-mails, is monolingual, in English at the beginning of the interaction and in Romanian in the following period. Technical expertise is a type of document that is rarely translated, due to its local character, while elements such as construction drawings, or sketches offer little linguistic insight, as they usually contain visual elements. Contracts and other type of legally binding documents are sometimes translated, but standard ones are extremely short, repetitive and, since they are concerned with the legal aspect, more in the sub-domain of language for legal purposes, not the one used in civil engineering. Contracts for larger infrastructure works are indeed longer, more interesting in terms of linguistic and rhetoric characteristic, are sometimes translated into two or more languages but are strictly confidential and unfortunately not available even for research purposes. The situation is similar for most of the design normatives(standards). On the one hand, the national ones are not translated for lack of necessity, as they are only applicable within Romanian borders. On the other hand, European ones, which are all translated and harmonised with Romanian specificities, are usually available for general public only under strict licencing from the regulatory organisms that have translated and adapted them for local use.

Taking all these elements into account, as well as the need for a variety of texts from different sub-domains and areas, I chose several documents that deal with structural design, bridges, road and railway infrastructure, land surveying, hydrotechnics and environmental protection, building materials and connected serviced, as well as a variety of text types: technical expertise, research articles, design standards, technical specification sheets, reports and declarations of performance. The texts selected for analysis are all bilingual documents. Mention should also be made that all translations represent official translations, published at some time in specialised journals, or represent documentation employed by the interested parties.

Thus, for the English to Romanian, I chose as first type of text Eurocode Standards, which contain the current regulatory design norms for building in Europe, and in their Romanian variant. I selected three such standards, which contain 71474 words and their Romanian counterparts: BS EN 1538:2000 Execution of special geotechnical works - Diaphragm walls; EN 1993-1-1:2005 Eurocode 3: Design of steel structures - Part 1-1: General rules and rules for buildings and EN 1991-1-4:2005 Eurocode 1: Actions on structures - Part 1-4: General actions Wind actions. The second type of text consists of technical specification sheets for different products: Holcim Catalogue of products and services: cement, concrete, aggregates; Ceresit Catalogue of Products for External Thermal Insulation Composite Systems; Nine technical sheets for flooring products and systems belonging to Thomsit – Henkel; Three declarations of performance for several anchor systems produced by HILTI were also added to the corpus. I also decided to include a report referring to sustainability issued by one of the companies producing cement and aggregates for concrete. This type of texts includes, thus, 16 samples, containing 64160 words.

The texts having Romanian as source language consist of three types of documents, 19 sample texts, which total 49125 words, more specifically: the Technical Expertise of a metal pillar for the support of the telecommunications equipment; a series of 15 research articles regarding research from different civil engineering sub-domains published bilingually between 2005 and 2007 in different numbers of the Scientific Bulletin of The Technical University of Civil Engineering Bucharest, totalling 39311 words. The titles of the articles, both in Romanian and English, are the following: Modificarea comportării în exploatare a structurilor rutiere Alteration of Pavement Behaviour; Algoritmi de calcul pentru dinamica nelineară a structurilor - Algorithms for nonlinear structural dynamics; Incercări la oboseală prin forfecare pe mixturi asfaltice - Fatique Tests by Shearing on Asphalt Mixtures; Analiza stării tehnice a pilonilor metalici pentru iluminat nocturn de la stadionul "LIA MANOLIU" - The Analysis of the Technical State of Steel Lattice Masts for the Lighting Equipment at "LIA MANOLIU" Stadium Predicția stării îmbrăcămintei rutiere utilizând metode numerice - Prediction of the Pavement Condition Using Numerical Methods; Importanta alcăturii rețetei de mixtură bituminoasă asupra performanțelor din exploatare ale stratului asfaltic - The Importance of Asphalt Mixture Blending on Layer Exploitation Performances; Aplicatii ale laser scannerului 3D terestru în lucrările topografice - Terrestrial 3D Laser Scanning Applications in Topographical Projects; Urmărirea prin teledetecție a modificărilor geomorfologice în Delta Dunării și zona costieră a Mării Negre Remote Sensing Monitoring of Geomorphological Changes in the Danube Delta and the Coastal Area of the Black Sea; Raionarea geotehnică a unui perimetru din zona Slatina - Geotechnical Mapping of a Perimeter within Slatina Area; Impactul reducerii biodiversității asupra mediului înconjurător - Impact of biological diversity reduction upon the environment; Impactul defrişării și degradării pădurilor asupra mediului înconjurător - Impact of the deforestation and degradation of forests; Potabilizarea apei. Stabilirea dozelor de reactivi de coagulare prin modelare matematica - Potabilization. Dose Settlement of Coagulation Reagents through Mathematical Simulation: Destratificarea termică a lacurilor – o soluție tehnică pentru exploatare în vederea eliminării efectelor eutrofizării - Thermal Destratification of Lakes -Technical Solution for Maintenance to Eliminate Eutrofication Effects Factori determinanti pentru proiectarea stațiilor de epurare rurale - Determinant Factors for Rural Wastewater Treatment Plant Design; Infiltrații la baraje pentru deșeuri miniere construite etapizat prin metoda amonte -Seepage Related to Sequentially Raised Tailings Dams Using "Upstream" Method. Finally, I also chose three web sites that include the profile and portfolio of three important companies in the domain: a company whose main concern is the design of civil and industrial buildings (p-c.ro), one which deals with the execution area of the business (bogart.ro) and one in the area of modernising railways and automation systems connected to railways (ISAF.ro).

The corpus for this research consists of 38 text samples with either English or Romanian as source text, with a total of 184761 words, or 76 texts samples if we also include the corresponding translations of the original source texts, with a total number of word of 372410 words.

#### THE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This doctoral thesis is organised into two parts, one focusing on the linguistic aspect of the civil engineering language, the other one of matters relating to translating this type of language. Each of the two parts is further divided into two sections directed at the research objectives introduced above. The thesis also includes general conclusions and bibliography.

Part I THE LANGUAGE OF CIVIL ENGINEERING is a detailed analysis of the linguistic component of this type of language and specifies the features of the civil engineering discourse. It consists of two main section, the first one focusing on integrating English for Civil Engineering into English for Specific Purposes, the second one exploring the specificities of the civil engineering language per se. Section I addresses the issue of English for General Purposes (EGP) versus English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and the matter of integrating ECE (English for Civil Engineering) into the ESP tree as a result of a set of characteristics the ECE shares with it. ESP is viewed as an increasingly important component of language study, particularly if the fact that subject matters are ever more specialised is taken into account. Therefore, this section first aims at describing the characteristics of ESP starting from different definitions available in the literature. ESP is also addressed from a historical perspective in order to trace the development stages that have brought it to the status it has today and which led to the set of characteristics that distinguish it from general English.

The opinion is shared that what differentiates ESP from general English are not only lexical and terminological characteristics, which are the first to come to mind, but also morphological, syntactic and, particularly, rhetorical ones. In order to provide a more complex perspective on ESP, I applied traditional grammar theories, as described by Quirk et al (1985, 1992) or (Leech and Svartvik 2002), functionalist perspectives, such as the one put forward by Halliday (2004), as well as elements of discourse analysis for which I relied on the works of Trimble (1985) and Superceanu (1998). Thus, having established the main features that apply to ESP, as well as the several branches which it consist of, with particular focus on English for Science and Technology (EST), the main objective of the section is that of establishing the status of English for Civil Engineering (ECE) as a branch of ESP. Working within the framework provided by Hutchinson and Waters (1987), I propose to integrate ECE into ESP as a sub-branch of both English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP), as figures 2 and 4 in the thesis show. I consider this to be correct status for ECE, as it is used by highly specialised academic staff for lectures, academic courses or scientific articles, as well as by individuals with different degrees of professional training in situations involving written correspondence, technical specification sheets, instructions, etc. One more crucial aspect for this type of language is the function which the different text selected as corpus perform. These functions are the result of the category of people that interact with or through that text and of the type of topic (either general or specialised), as the table 7 in the thesis shows.

In order to be integrated into ESP, a detailed analysis of the features that are common for both types of language is necessary. In terms of characteristics that make ECE part of ESP, I analysed two morphological components, namely nominalisation and the behaviour of modal verbs, passive and stative structures for the syntactic component and lexical density and terminological content for elements regarding the lexis. Mention should be made that in order to

clearly establish the status of ECE, comparisons were drawn between civil engineering text samples and samples of texts from other ESP sub-branches, such as the medical, technical or IT. An important part of this section is dedicated to the analysis of the rhetorical aspect of the civil engineering texts and to the techniques which help build these functions (time and space order, causality and result, comparison, contrast, exemplification and illustration), which also integrate ECE within the ESP tree.

**Section II** LINGUISTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LANGUAGE USED IN CIVIL ENGINEERING is the result of linguistic research applied on the civil engineering language at morphological, syntactic, lexical, semantic and terminological levels. The section focuses on a set of specialized lexical and grammatical features which are not in the repertoire of the non-users of that specific domain: complex noun phrases, special use of articles and of modal verbs, prominence of the passive voice, long, complex sentences, collocations, specialized terminology. If Section I of this thesis addressed the similarities between characteristics of civil engineering written discourse and different ESP branches, in order to show that ECE is indeed part of the ESP tree, this section builds on the specificity of civil engineering written discourse and intends to bring forward aspects that individualize this type of discourse and that set it apart within ESP. The main focus of this section is to provide a detailed account of the specific linguistic features of civil engineering texts.

As already mentioned above, there are several levels of analysis when assessing civil engineering texts, starting from the word level, to sentence and above sentence levels, each aspect being developed into one or more parts of this section. The first component to be addressed is the morphological component, which is extremely important for these types of text. Therefore, it is also the linguistic branch to which most space was dedicated. At the level of morphological units, the vast majority of ESP texts express information in terms of nominal groups, followed by adjectives and only then by verbs. I, along with scholars such as Halliday (2004), Gerzymisch-Arbogast (2008), or Hyland and Tse (2009), consider the nominal component as one of the defining traits of this type of language, therefore the section dedicated to nouns and the types of relationships they develop takes up significant space in this research. Adjectives and verbs, though not as prominent quantitatively, are of great significance to translators, as they form specific collocations (Gerzymisch-Arbogast 2008: 7) and are, therefore, also analysed in this section. A typology of adjectives, both from a structural and a semantic point of view, is described, together with the syntactic roles these elements fulfil in civil engineering written discourse. The verbal component is analysed in terms of the passive/active alternation, tense and aspect distribution and use and frequency of modal verbs. Special attention is paid to types of verbs that are frequently used in the civil engineering language, both as morphological and semantic categories.

From a syntactic point of view, the quantitative assessment which I ran for the texts in the corpus revealed that the aspects that individualise the language used in civil engineering are related to the length and the complexity of the sentences, the favouring of the passive over active structures, the extensive use of participial and infinitive verb forms and large-scale use of extraposed structures, particularly subject extraposition. The lexical, semantic and terminological section address aspects related to density of specialised vocabulary, collocability patterns, polysemantic words, for which I also show the way they migrated across fields and the way complex terms appeared in civil engineering. A very important remark is that, since grammar is a

complex system, none of the levels mentioned above can be explained only individually, independently from the whole. Starting from this assumption, several types of relationships building among components of different levels are described in this section. For instance, a verb, therefore a morphological category, requires a particular syntactic structure, say *that* complement, to follow it, while at a closer examination, it can be noticed that only verbs from the same semantic domain enter that syntactic structure. The same applies to adjectives and their categorial and semantic selection.

The approach used for this part of the thesis is a hybrid one, mixing elements from descriptive and functional theories, but mostly relying on elements from corpus-based studies. I performed a quantitative analysis (in terms of number and percentages for each grammatical category both for the whole corpus and for each text type separately) of the linguistic elements I found in the corpus, by means of a set of word and text processing tools and devices. This type of analysis provided the data which I further refined during the following steps of my research, namely the qualitative analysis of the results. These two types of analysis resulted in a series of diagrams and pie charts disseminating the results, accompanied by my personal views and comments regarding their role and reason of use in English for Civil Engineering. The section also contains a significant number of examples extracted from all text types that make up the corpus, which are analysed and commented in detail both in terms of structure and of function in the discourse. The analysis provided in this section is by no means exhaustive, as there are several linguistic areas either left out or insufficiently developed due, on the one hand, to the complexity of linguistics as a domain and, on the other hand, to the restrictions imposed by the subject matter, which aims at researching civil engineering language from several perspectives, not from the linguistic one exclusively.

Part II CIVIL ENGINEERING DISCOURSE IN TRANSLATION addresses aspects related both to the process and the result of translating civil engineering texts and is further divided into two sections, the first of which is more theoretical in contents, with the second one being more practice oriented. Section III THEORETICAL APPROACHES AND THEIR APPLICATION WHEN TRANSLATING CIVIL ENGINEERING TEXTS, as the title suggests, aims at provided a theoretical background for the applied sub-section. I set as starting point for the discussion the status of English as *lingua franca* for several domains and make a statement for it as lingua franca if civil engineering as well. It is already a clear fact that English has reached this status in a variety of domains and that, together with globalization networking, economic integration, and the Internet has become one of the symbols of our times (Mauranen 2009), which led to it acquiring the same status in this domain of interest. The justification for such an analysis is found the impact which the position of English has on translation in terms of increasing demand in several domains, with civil engineering as no exception.

As regards the theoretical aspect of translation, the sub-section dedicated to it covers areas such as definitions of the concept selected from a variety of media, accompanied by a discussion regarding their contributions and limitations, followed by a short history of the development of translation studies as a discipline in its own right. This sub-section also reviews the most important approaches, classifications and taxonomies for the translation process available in the literature. The totality of the discussions in the first part of Section III represents the starting point, the basis of my applied analysis on methods and procedures used in translating civil engineering language. This last part, therefore, explores aspect regarding the difference

between methods, procedures, techniques, or strategies and it provides classifications of such tools put forward by several scholars. The most important classifications and the ones I mostly relied on for my application belong to Vinay and Darbelnet (1958, 1995) and Newmark (1988). Thus, I examine the way in which both direct and oblique/indirect procedures are used in the corpus, to what extent each of them is applied and with what results. In this I aim to identify whether there are typical methods and procedures used in translating the civil engineering language as well as which of them yield more accurate results for this type of language. I also consider it necessary to draw a comparison between the types of procedures used in translations into English and into Romanian and to analyse whether there are significant differences as regards this aspect according to the source language involved. In order for this type of application to be fully relevant, more than 60 text samples were extracted and are discussed in detail in the body on the sub-section for each type and sub type of method and procedure which I found. Furthermore, I undertake a qualitative assessment for the result of applying these procedures, more specifically I analyse them in terms of accuracy and appropriateness and propose alternative solutions where they are considered useful.

**SECTION IV** DIFFICULTIES AND ERRORS IN TRANSLATING CIVIL ENGINEERING TEXTS is the last one in my thesis and is dedicated to presenting the results of the research carried out on translations in the civil engineering domain in terms of major difficulties and errors, as well as possible solutions to both issues and is further sub-divided into four sub-sections. The first two sub-sections deal with two aspects that I consider important for the translation process, namely the concept of specialised translations together with their emergence, evolution and particularities according to the perspectives of several researchers and an analysis of text types. As the type of translation is closely related to the type of texts that needs to undergo this process, it is first necessary to provide short insight into textual typology in order to investigate the potential role they have in deciding upon translation strategies and solving potential translation challenges.

The following sub-section provides a detailed analysis of the major difficulties found in the translations pertaining to the civil engineering domain included in my corpus. Several classifications of translation difficulties according to various scholars are put forth in order to supply the framework for the applied research and the dissemination of the results. For a more complete and uniform general picture of the difficulties in the texts, I also opted to present the results of my research into four main categories, mainly on the basis of the linguistic criterion: terminological, lexical, syntactic and morphologic, each with their specific sub-categories. All categories above are analysed in terms of complexity, linguistic structure of both source text and target text and procedures used to render the original term, phrase or sentence into the target texts. The difficulties identified are listed with detailed explanations, analysis of translation solutions and, where necessary, ways of improving the existing translation based on a set of 48 examples extracted from all text types included in the corpus.

Morphological difficulties are generally connected to the structure and length of noun phrases as well as to the frequency of nominalised constituents. Another significant aspect related to morphological difficulties is related to the complexity of the relationships that develop within the English NP in particular, which leads to the impossibility to apply word-for-word translation in most cases. Syntactic difficulties are generally related to the length of the sentences, which seems to be sometimes excessive, especially in texts with Romanian as source language. Two types of difficulties which in civil engineering translations tend to go hand in hand are related to rendering

the correct word order and the passive/reflexive paradigm. *Terminological difficulties* tend to be present in both types of translations and solutions for finding the most appropriate SL equivalent are sometimes extremely creative and prove the need for thorough pre-translation research on the part of the translator. *Semantic and lexical difficulties* are for the most part related to the translation of terms that are polysemous across domains and to the accurate rendering of collocations. These types of difficulties are generally correctly rendered into the TT, with some exceptions which are discussed in the error analysis section.

The last sub-section covers aspects related to errors found in civil engineering translations. The sub-section contains an extensive analysis of the different types of errors met in the corpus. Before proceeding to the actual identification and analysis of the errors in civil engineering translations, several more theoretical remarks were put forward. The first aspect tackled here was the distinction between mistake and error. I also outlined the importance of distinguishing between translations from and into one's mother tongue, as well as the impact this aspect has on the translation quality and quantity and types or errors produced. Taking this into account, this sub-section is divided into two parts: 4.4.1. Translating into Non-native Tongue and 4.4.2. Translating into one's mother tongue. The errors were identified, grouped into categories, mainly on linguistic basis, but style and formatting were also dealt with, and offered a solution for, namely an alternative translation. Besides the qualitative analysis, the section includes a quantitative assessment of the recurrent errors detected in translations having English as TT and interpretation of the data gather after undergoing research of both types of translation (with English as wither ST or TT), as well as a comparison between the types of errors found in each group, with the particular aim of highlighting the differences between the error patterns in the two types of translations, this time, not the similarities. The discussion is centred around more than 50 samples extracted from the corpus, which are listed as source text (TT), initial translation (T1) and improved translation (T2 – my translation).

#### CONTRIBUTION TO THE FIELD AND CONCLUSIONS

When starting the research that materialised in this thesis, I intended to emphasise the complexity of the civil engineering language as well as the extended applicability of a study which focuses on it. My doctoral thesis, entitled *Translating the Civil Engineering Language*, is the expression of applied research in the domain of specialized translations which extends to an area that benefited from less coverage previously. My thesis consists of the analysis of several different components of civil engineering language as language for specific purposes and of translating civil engineering language. It represents an attempt to investigate the most important aspects regarding what I consider a complex topic and to emphasise the significance and necessity of continuous research in the domain of specialised translations.

Part II-Section III 3.1. in the thesis discussed the status of English at global level and details the status it has acquired in the civil engineering community as well. English has gradually started to be used as international language for the scientific and technical domain for both written and spoken forms of communication, which subsequently led to it being called *global language* (Crystal 2003), or *international English* (McArthur 1992), and even a component of *cultural* 

imperialism (Phillipson 1992), until reaching the status of *lingua franca* (Kirkpatrick 2007, Mauranen 2009) in several domains, including that of civil engineering, with all the consequences that derive from that in terms of language standardization, loss of diversity, changes in the structures of both English and the mother tongues of people who use English predominantly. This omnipresence of English notwithstanding, or sometimes because of it since it does lead to an increase in international visibility, the requirement for translations is still high, both to and from English. As my research proved, correct, accurate translation of the language used in civil engineering is no easy task and it is by no means a matter of simply rendering one item through another into the TT. I showed throughout my thesis that civil engineering language is a complex structure and translating civil engineering language in order to produce a coherent and accurate TT, that transmits all the information in the ST in the form required by the client is influenced by a plurality of factors: the translators' levels of skills and training, the availability of terminological resources, the legal requirements in force, professional and cultural communication, professional exchange and particularly collaboration between professionals in the domain and trained translators.

As a result of the factors discussed above, and given its interdisciplinary, it was necessary to analyse the civil engineering language through multiple approaches and points of view in order to chart the complex domain and its practicalities. One first step to this purpose was to firmly establish the status of English for Civil Engineering (ECE) as part of ESP. For this purpose, I analysed text samples in terms of morphological, syntactic, lexical and terminological characteristics, as well as from the point of view of how ECE rhetorical discourse is built. Morphologically speaking, the message in ECE texts is concentrated in noun phrases, expanding in numerous combinations around a noun which acts as head, which is often itself the result of the process of *nominalization*. This type of building meaning is typical for several languages: a diverging and separation of the heterogeneous Rays (scientific texts), installation begins automatically (IT), reducing demineralization and enhancing remineralization (medicine) and, of course, ECE (increase of wall insulation and elimination of thermal bridges). It was also shown that the verbal component, while present and important as carrier of tense and aspect related information, underwent a process of desemantization (Gerzymisch-Arbogast 2008), while modal verbs exhibited a shift in meaning in civil engineering texts similar to the one described by Trimble (1985) for scientific and technical English and similar to the use found in other domains (see Part I-Section I 1.4.2.4.). In the active-passive paradigm, the passive was the preferred variant preponderantly. The high lexical density of ECE sentences was also mentioned as common characteristic, also not always with the desirable results, as high density of content words tends to impose a heavy load on reading, understanding and translating texts. Evidence was also analysed that showed that civil engineering texts fulfil a set of rhetorical functions that are common with the ones in EST: definition, description, classification, instructions, and visual-verbal relationships. Moreover, my research revealed that the techniques that are found in EST are also typical for civil engineering discourse: time and space order, causality and result, comparison, contrast, exemplification and illustration. Therefore, I considered that the text analysis I carried out proved that ECE displays all the elements of specialised language and I can firmly state that it is indeed a branch of the English for Special Purposes tree.

It is a required assumption that, there are numerous characteristics that individualise ECE within the ESP extended "family". This is why further research entailed adopting a purely linguistic

perspective on ECE. Terminology is one of key factor that differentiates civil engineering discourse from other branches of ESP, as terms are domain specific. I showed that terms are not static, monosemantic elements, but entities which gain several meanings when employed in a distinct domain. There are instances when terms migrated from general English, such as is the case of gate, which is used to denominate a specific component in the structure of a dam (the equivalent term in Romanian is stavilă), or diaphragm, which is a truly polysemous word and refers to a type of foundation in civil engineering. In addition, it was also illustrated that terms are more often than not expressed morphologically as nouns, confirming the statement above regarding the importance of the nominal component in civil engineering language. Moreover, it became clear that other morphological categories (particularly verbs, pronouns and adjectives) enter different structural and lexical relations as well and are used to fulfil specific function in civil engineering texts. My analysis also revealed that the civil engineering language uses specific syntactic structures to convey message: long sentences (sometimes up to 60 words per sentence), strings of embedded clauses, preference for passive so as to concentrate on the action, not on the agent, non-finite clauses, substitution and ellipsis to keep the message compact and concise.

As regards the civil engineering language in translation, there are particular aspects that were highlighted through the present study. An important part of my research focused on identifying the difficulties which a translator could be confronted with and the way in which they could be overcome. The main morpho-syntactic difficulty of translating civil engineering language was the correct decoding and rendering of the noun phrases. English complex noun phrases used in the civil engineering language were usually made up of juxtaposed nouns without any preposition that would identify their semantic connections, which sometimes led to problems related to understanding the real underlying meaning on the part of non-native speakers and of translators. The more noun phrases there were in the text, the more translation patterns had to be used. It cannot be denied that such noun phrases caused both morpho-syntactic and semantic problems, such as ambiguity resulting in the possibility that some sentences be given two interpretations as a result of the arrangement of words. It was not only the number of words that caused the problem, but also the multiplicity or confusion of grammatical roles and relationships. The ability of the translator to identify the relationships within the elements of the structure became in situations such as these extremely important. One means which well trained and skilled translators have in their repertoire to solve these difficulties is the application of the most appropriate translation procedures. In case of translating noun phrases, these procedures proved to be generally calque (especially when referring to translations from English into Romanian), transposition (used substantially in both types of translations) and to some extent only, literal translation. If complex noun phrases represented a challenge for translations both from and to Romanian, nominalization was an issue mainly in translations with Romanian as ST. Seen as a mean of condensing information, as well as of eliminating agentivity, nominalised words or phrases were usually translated literally into Romanian. Those originating in Romanian texts, on the other hand, were translated into English through a wider variety of structures, the majority by transposition.

The syntactic assessment of translating the civil engineering language revealed several features that required special attention. One such major difficulty was represented by the word order and differences in syntactic patterns between the ST and the TT. The English rule of not

dropping the subject and its SVO structure, combined with the Romanian more lenient word order was often a source for difficulties as well. Hence, transposition was usually the preferred procedure in situations such as these, which in most cases produced an elegant and accurate translation. The translation of passive structures was another issue to be taken into consideration. The difficulty lay mainly in the contrast between the preference which English shows in specialised texts for passive structures and the predilection of Romanian to avoid the passive voice and to make use of either active or reflexive structures. Couplets, mainly combinations of amplification, condensation and modulation or transposition were successfully applied in these situations.

There were situations when lexical elements, particularly in connection with the natural rendering of collocations in the TT, created certain translation difficulties. Another source of difficulty for translators were polysemous words acquiring a separate meaning for civil engineering which could generate confusion. Special mention should be made here regarding the terminological aspect of translating the civil engineering language. Terminology is, beyond any doubt, an important channel of communication among specialist in particular domains and as such is, or should be, an important part of translators' training programmes. Nevertheless, civil engineering presents a particular advantage when it comes to the terms that populate its language, namely they have already benefited from a more rigorous process of standardization, when we refer to English terminology, and standardization and harmonization, when we refer to Romanian terms. A particular consequence of these phenomena is that it is common for civil engineering terms to have one equivalent only in current use, while older ones have already been discarded. That does not mean that I exclude the existence of such pairs, but I state that they are rather rare exceptions. One of them is represented by the term sleeper, which is translated in two different ways in Romanian, according to whether we refer to tramway or railway infrastructure (dală in the case of tramways and traversă for railways). Borrowings, calque and equivalence were the means through which semantic and terminological difficulties were solved.

At this point, separate reference needs to be made about the use of methods and procedures in translating civil engineering language. In general sense, when comparing translations from and to Romanian, it can be said that direct translation procedure are used to a limited degree, while indirect or oblique ones are much more common. There are, however, differences in how they are used. More specifically, if borrowings and calques were used in translations to Romanian preponderantly, literal translation was more present in translations to English. As regards indirect procedures, the main difference resides in that amplification was more frequently used in texts to Romanian, while those to English favoured condensation. As a rule, indirect or oblique procedures were found to be most frequent, particularly transposition, which was common in translations both from and to Romanian. Direct procedures were used less frequently and were noticed to be reserved word and phrase level. A very interesting characteristic that I found in the corpus is the rather frequent use not of a particular procedure, but of several of them applied within the same phrase or sentence, in what Newmark (1988, 1991) called couplets. They were used regularly both in translations from and to Romanian and usually contained at least a transposition or some sort of amplification. I can, thus, state that couplets are characteristic of translations of civil engineering texts.

At this stage mention should be made that my analysis revealed that not all translation procedures were applied correctly and not always with felicitous results. This is particularly true for calques from English to Romanian, which happened to produce awkward, clumsy wording in

Romanian. Errors were, unfortunately, consistently present in the civil engineering translations that I analysed and, what is more, were frequent in both types of translations, either from or into Romanian, but with considerable differences regarding the level (morphological, syntactic, semantic, lexical, etc.). In text with Romanian as ST, the highest percentage of errors is represented by the wrong word order in the target text, most likely as a result of tendencies to reproduce the Romanian phrasing when translating out of one's mother tongue. Extremely frequent are the cases when the errors are instances of lexical confusions. As opposed to the majority of the other errors, this particular type has less to do with the influence of the mother tongue but is rather linked to the nuanced contained by the discourse, which can sometimes be more difficult to grasp for the non-native speaker but are not necessarily influenced by the translator's mother tongue. An important number of errors encountered include the lack of correspondence between structures containing prepositions in Romanian vs. English and the lack of correspondence between the use of articles in the two languages. Both the above-mentioned aspects result in inaccurate translations. The use of tenses and especially the use of aspect, either perfect or continuous, also seemed to create a series of difficulties. But, as opposed to the errors described in the last two paragraphs, in the case of aspect errors seem to occur because of the absence of the concept in the Romanian language. Terminological errors are one of the least frequent ones, mainly due to the consistent work of organisms and professionals that deal with standardization, as well as to the fact that many of the translations under analysis were products of engineers, who may be more or less proficient in the language, but know the terminology thoroughly. It is also important to notice that there are very few errors that alter the meaning of the source text. The majority of the errors are structural, without affecting the quality of the message.

Errors in translations to Romanian, on the other hand, follow a slightly different pattern. One first aspect which this research revealed is that the errors encountered in in translations towards the mother tongue of the translator are considerably fewer that in the case of translations towards non-mother tongues. Most of the errors found in translation to Romanian are lexical in nature and generally consist of wrong collocations, confusion between semantically closely related verbs, or wrong calques. In fact, infelicitous calques are the most numerous lexical errors found in the corpus. At syntax level, I also found significantly fewer errors which usually generate from overlooking the syntactic pattern of the target text or from using literal translation. It is not a surprise that syntax is cleaner when translating to Romanian, since the degree of proficiency of a translator in one's mother tongue is considered superior to the one in another language. Terminological errors are few and far between and, although there are a few terms nor correctly rendered into Romanian, their number is quite inferior to that of the other categories which I analysed. Nevertheless, it cannot be overlooked the fact that some of these translations, specifically those of Eurocode Standards, represent official translations that regulate the norms regarding the design of buildings and other similar structures, in which case error impact is significant and, sometimes serious. The situation is similar in case of instructions for use or application of products and substances, when translation errors could result the misuse of those products or substances and lead to severe injury or property damage.

The assessment of translation errors which I performed also clearly revealed one more interesting aspect, namely that terminology is far from being the only issue translators should be concerned with, taking into account that terminological errors are among the fewest errors found

in translations either from or to Romanian. Therefore, is was proved once more that to know words is not equivalent to knowing a language and that simply knowing the language does not automatically entail the ability to produce good translations. I am of the opinion that translations are to be done by professionally trained translators, while professional in different domains (civil engineers, in our case) should act as consultants and not try to substitute the translator.

I consider that this thesis may prove useful to translators of specialized texts, translation trainees intending to specialise in translating civil engineering texts, researchers in the domain of specialised translations, teaching staff that need to develop courses on the civil engineering language and students alike. My thesis intends to offer a global image of the civil engineering language in translation and is by no means a complete study of each of the aspects it addressed, but it can be considered as a starting point for future research projects regarding several smaller units treated here, or even extended to include elements which I omitted intentionally, given the purpose and specificity of the topic, or unintentionally.

Therefore, taking into consideration all the aspects discussed so far, I consider that a more detailed analysis of several topics approached in each section may lead to new perspectives and may produce useful linguistic findings. Thus, one first matter to be considered is extending the corpus to include *oral discourse* material of different types (courses, presentations, discussions between professional, building sites talks, interviews with civil engineers, etc.), which would certainly reveal interesting information in terms of discourse analysis in the first place and of professional jargon in the second. One element that drew my attention during the research for this thesis, but which would have been somewhat more difficult to integrate is the *etymology* of both English and Romanian terminology, which would provide an interesting perspective of terms and their "walk" through history. Analysing the situation of borrowings as a translation procedure through a *diachronic perspective* would also prove valuable in order to see if and what changes occurred in the way Romanian civil engineers use terms that might have more than one origin.

**Key words**: specialised language, English for Civil Engineering, civil engineering terminology, specialised translation, civil engineering translations, translation difficulties, translation errors

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