

Stars, problem children, dogs and cash cows: evocative terminology in multilingual business communication

Rita Temmerman

Erasmushogeschool Brussel & Vrije Universiteit Brussel

Summary

Terminology, the vocabulary of specialized knowledge domains, exists and evolves in the ongoing negotiation process of societal dynamics. The dynamics of a domain can be traced in its textual archives by keeping track of the terminological variation over a period of time.

In recent years text-based terminology research has explored the linguistic representation of knowledge in texts with the aim of building high quality terminological resources. The systematic exploration of text corpora resulted in interesting data on term creation and terminological variation. Empirical evidence showed that terminological variation within a knowledge domain cannot be explained without insight in the origin and history of the terminology.

We try and point out some parameters influencing the dynamics of understanding and the role of terminology creation therein, starting from a number of examples of evocative language and metaphor in the domain of finance, accounting and banking. Specialists have resorted to evocative language and imagery in their English language communication and this has resulted in the coinage of metaphorically motivated terminology. The issue of societal dynamics is looked at in a multilingual setting. Several examples of terminology creation based on metaphorical understanding and their (in)translatability are discussed. Finally, we tentatively investigate what can happen to metaphorical and evocative language in a translated European text on the financial crisis.

Keywords

Linguistic creativity, evocative language, metaphor in translation, multilingual terminology, financial crisis terminology, culture-bound terminology, anisomorphism.

1 Newspeak, Nu-language and the creative power of language

In this paper we show examples of the creative power of language by zooming in on evocative and figurative language. Examples will be taken from specialized dictionaries on finance and recent publications on the terminology of finance and more specifically on the recent financial crisis (2009). We will also discuss some examples we encountered in the “equally authentic” English, French and Dutch versions of an Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on “The financial crisis and its impact on the real economy” (2009) (see appendix).

In order to explain how we understand evocative language as pertaining to the creative power of language we would like to start from the critical observations that were made by Nina Power in a position paper (2009). She relates the phenomenon of *Nu-language* to *Newspeak*, the fictional language in George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, closely based on English but the vocabulary and grammar are reduced and simplified. The aim of the totalitarian regime of the Party in Orwell's novel is to make any alternative thinking – “thoughtcrime”, or “crimethink” – impossible by removing words or possible constructs which describe for instance the ideas of freedom and rebellion. In the early 1940s, Orwell had briefly supported C. K. Ogden's Basic English campaign, an attempt to simplify the language

for teaching and everyday purposes. He soon changed his mind, and strongly satirized it in his invention of Newspeak, a depersonalized bureaucratic language. One of the most distinctive characteristics of Newspeak is that it shrinks every year. “Each reduction is a gain,” as the appendix to *Nineteen Eighty-Four* puts it, “since the smaller the area of choice, the smaller the temptation to take thought”. Nina Power believes that Newspeak lives today in the language of managerialism in government, business and academia. But, she believes that it thrives by pursuing a quite different strategy from the one Orwell describes in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. She coined the term “Nu-language” in 2008. Nu-language (a play on both Tony Blair’s New Labour and fast-turnover pop genres such as Nu-rave or Nu-metal) is the name of a language without referent and with a “junk syntax” (2009: 49), a non-grammatical set of abstractions that have the surface appearance of discussion and the exchange of ideas, but which in fact serve only in order to maintain the illusion of communication and creative dialogue. Characteristics of Nu-language are the proliferation of vague verbs (*to mediate, to framework* (sic), *to relate*) leading to abstractions that uses words like *consolidate, reconstellate, reconfigure, enhance, articulate*. According to Power, in Nu-language nouns appear to be out of fashion and Nu-language is characterized by a proliferation of coinages, buzzwords and neologisms like: *benchmarking, quality assessment, collaborations, partnerships, stakeholders, commitments, global*. As she points out we are surrounded by “a language designed to bamboozle, baffle and blindside” (2009: 49). This language use serves the same purpose as Newspeak, namely to make impossible all modes of thought other than that of the reigning ideology. But Nu-language does not attenuate language, it rather expands it. Power points out that in recent years we have seen an astonishing proliferation of neologisms. Rather than seeing a carefully controlled reduction in the number of officially sanctioned words, we are instead overwhelmed by wave upon wave of faddish expressions and tautologies – a kind of junk syntax in which there is no more reason for a word to be in one part of a phrase than another. Power talks of “a vagueness so oppressive that it makes it almost impossible to argue with”. For Nina Power, Nu-language attempts to saturate the mind with misleadingly one-sided pronouncements, with “an ominous word-cloud” that creates “the illusion of activity and the false comforts of a discourse of dynamism that is incapable of recognising its own sterility” (2009: 50).

The forgoing observations on Newspeak and Nu-Language can help us define the object of study in this paper i.e. the role of *evocative language* and *linguistic creativity* in the advancement of understanding through naming what is new or in other words by creating neologisms. Unlike Newspeak and Nu-language, evocative language stimulates thinking, makes ideas advance and helps resolve cognitive and communication problems. Evocative terminology creation is a “way of worldmaking” (Nelson Goodman). Yet, most often, neologisms are language- and culture-bound. Consequently neologisms are not always easy to translate. We will have a closer look at examples of evocative metaphorical terminology from the world of finance and investment (section two) in English and see how it gets translated into French and Dutch. In section three we refer to recent publications on (terminological) developments in the domain of finance, accounting and banking and point out some of the parameters influencing the dynamics of understanding, evocative language, neologisms, metaphor and terminological variation in that domain. The financial crisis was on the agenda of the European Union institutions where texts are often drafted in English and then translated into the other 22 official languages (situation in 2011). In section four examples will be given of how figurative, metaphorical language in an English text on the financial crisis was translated into Dutch and French. The deemed “equal authenticity” of European texts in different language versions needs cautious investigation. The examples we will present urge for reflection on culture-specificity of evocative language

In the conclusion (section 5) some research questions and ideas on a methodology for observational research on neologisms and the dynamics of specialized language and thinking are formulated.

2 Stars, cash cows, question marks and dogs

So what is “evocative” terminology and what is the function of evocative language in the advancement of understanding? In an attempt to define the phenomenon we will start from an example that illustrates how evocative language is potentially rich in connotations. *Stars*, *problem children*, *cash cows*, and *dogs* are terms to indicate the products and businesses that make up the business portfolio matrix of the Boston Consulting Group (BCG). According to BCG the best business portfolio is one that fits the company’s strengths and helps exploit the most attractive opportunities. They developed a portfolio planning method in the 1970s. The first step is to identify the various Strategic Business Units (SBUs) in a company portfolio. A SBU is a unit of the company that has a separate mission and objectives and that can be planned independently from the other businesses. A SBU can be a company division, a product line or even individual brands. Using the BCG Box (Figure 1) a company classifies all its SBUs according to two dimensions: On the horizontal axis: *relative market share* – this serves as a measure of SBU strength in the market. *On the vertical axis: market growth rate* – this provides a measure of market attractiveness.

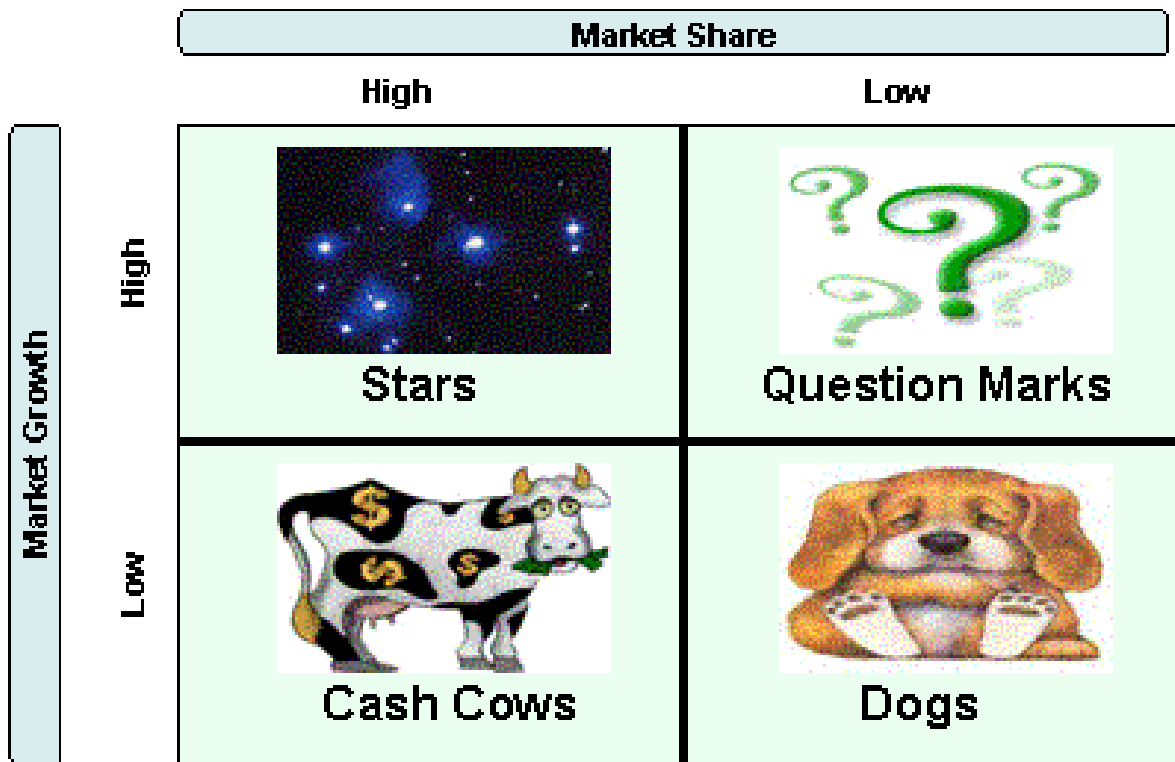


Figure 1 The Boston Consultancy Group Box

(source: http://tutor2u.net/business/strategy/bcg_box.htm

consulted 8 March 2011)

The matrix shows four types of SBUs. *Stars* are high growth businesses or products competing in markets where they are relatively strong compared with the competition. Often they need heavy investment to sustain their growth. Eventually their growth will slow and,

assuming they maintain their relative market share, will become *cash cows*. Cash cows are low-growth businesses or products with a relatively high market share. These are mature, successful businesses with relatively little need for investment. They need to be managed for continued profit – so that they continue to generate the strong cash flows that the company needs for its stars. *Question marks* (also: *problem children* or *wild cats*) are businesses or products with low market share but which operate in higher growth markets. This suggests that they have potential, but may require substantial investment in order to grow market share at the expense of more powerful competitors. Management have to think hard about “question marks” – which ones should they invest in? Which ones should they allow to fail or shrink? The term *dogs* refers to businesses or products that have low relative share in unattractive, low-growth markets. Dogs may generate enough cash to break-even, but they are rarely, if ever, worth investing in. The purpose of the Boston Portfolio Matrix analysis is to identify which SBUs to invest in, which to sell off, and which to shut down.

The four SBUs are given metaphorical names that evoke quite a few culture bound features in the US situational context (the ideas were developed in Boston). We looked for some of the connotations of the words “cash cow”/“milk cow” and “dog” in English consulting dictionaries and lexicographical resources on the web. According to Wordnet 3.0 (<http://wordnet.princeton.edu/>) a cash cow is “a project that generates a continuous flow of money (synonyms: money-spinner, moneymaker project)”. “A source of easy profit”, we read in *The Oxford American Dictionary of Current English* (1999). Alternatively, *milk cow* is used as shown in the following sentence from *Random House Unabridged Dictionary* (1997): “The new subsidiary turns out to be a real milk cow”. According to *A Dictionary of Finance and Banking*, Oxford University Press (2008), *cash cow* means “mature businesses or products with a high market share but low growth rate. Typically, most fixed investment has already been made and a substantial cash flow is generated, the surplus being used to develop and support other businesses or products requiring higher levels of investment and marketing support”. We get the picture: in: a cow produces and “gives” milk. This milk is valuable and mankind has a long tradition of feeding on the milk that cows produce. There is quite some parallelism between the features of a milk cow on a farm and those of the SBU named *cash cow* in English. Yet, the metaphorical name for the SBU is culture-bound. Cows are not raised for their milk in all parts of the world.

In English *a dog* can be a mean, contemptible person, such as “You dog, you stole my money!” It can also mean an unattractive or unpopular person, such as “She's a real dog.”¹ Dog is slang for: a) a person regarded as unattractive or uninteresting; b) Something of inferior or low quality: “The President had read the speech to some of his friends and they told him it was a dog” (John P. Roche) and c) an investment that produces a low return or a loss. Moreover *go to the dogs* means as much as to go to ruin; degenerate². These examples show that in English the word “dog” has quite a few negative connotations. It explains why the word is metaphorically assigned to the least attractive SBU in the Boston Consultancy Matrix. Again not everywhere in the world the equivalent for “dog” has the same negative connotations, nor has “dog” been used metaphorically so regularly in negative situations. Therefore in French or in Dutch, for instance, a literal translation of the English term “dogs” is not possible in this context of SBUs of a portfolio matrix.

¹ http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_does_the_slang_term_'dog'_mean#ixzz1TPj7KwEM

² <http://www.answers.com/topic/dog#ixzz1TPkQgHVh>

This type of evocative language and metaphorical naming may be problematic in translation as the following example shows. We looked for translations into French of *cash cow* and *dog* in the ontologically enriched task-oriented terminological dictionary for human translators by Jeanne Dancette's and Christophe Réthoré's (2000) *Dictionnaire Analytique de la Distribution. Analytical Dictionary of Retailing*. The authors of this bilingual (English-French) dictionary believe that a translator with French as his native language will benefit from being immersed in a wealth of ontological information, i.e. information on how the term which has to be translated is related to other terms in the same lexical field or semantic network of related terms. All this information is given in the target language (French) to stimulate the autonomy of the translator in phrasing the target language text (Temmerman 2003). In this dictionary we find the definitions of the four SBUs that constitute the Boston Matrix in French: *vedettes*, *vaches à lait*, *dilemmes* and *poids morts*. To illustrate our point we will have a closer look at the evocative power and the ground for metaphorisation of *cash cow/vache à lait* and *dog/poids lourd*. The point is that the figurative use of existing words and expressions can be equivalent between English and French like for *cash cow/vache à lait* or it can be divergent like for *dog/poids lourd*.

Vaches à lait is based on the same image but has an even stronger evocative value than *cash cows* has because the word *lait* is explicitly present (like in English *milk cow* but not in *cash cow*). The core definition in French reads:

Produit dont la forte rentabilité s'explique par la **part de marché relative** (*relative market share*) élevée que ce produit occupe sur un marché à faible croissance.

More semantic information is added :

Le **produits vache à lait** génèrent habituellement d'importantes **liquidités** (*earnings*), car ils n'ont plus à financer un **accroissement de capacité** (*increase in capacity*). Ils profitent d'**economies d'echelle** (*scale economies*) et d'une forte **marge bénéficiaire** (*profit margin*). La stratégie à suivre avec cette catégorie de produits consiste à maintenir le **positionnement** (*positioning*) sur le marché.

Relatedness to other categories in French is made explicit:

Dans l'évaluation de la rentabilité des divers éléments du **portefeuille d'activités** (*business portfolio*) d'une entreprise, la **vache à lait** représente un des quatre éléments de la **matrice BCG** (BCG matrix). Elle se situe dans le quadrant inférieur gauche de celle-ci, indiquant la rentabilité maximale.

Dog is not translated into *chien* in French as the connotations of the word are not quite the same. The French equivalent term for the SBU *dog* is *poids mort* (literally "dead weight"). The metaphorical naming of this SBU in French has strong evocative power but the image used is very different as compared to English *dog*. The core definition according to Dancette and Réthoré is:

Produit (**PRODUCT**) dont la faible rentabilité (profitability) s'explique par la petite part de marché relative (relative market share) qu'il occupe sur un marché à faible croissance.

More semantic information is added :

Les poids morts représentent les produits en déclin sur un marché vieillissant. Ils peuvent rapporter assez de **liquidités** (*earnings*) pour se maintenir, mais pas assez pour engendrer des profits. Ils peuvent même entraîner des pertes. Ils nécessitent généralement peu d'investissements, et l'entreprise peut les maintenir sans effort tant qu'ils sont rentables. À long terme, elle devra toutefois les retirer du marché.

Relatedness to other categories in French is made explicit:

Dans l'évaluation de la rentabilité du portefeuille d'activités (business portfolio) d'une entreprise, le poids mort représente un des quatre éléments de la matrice BCG (BCG MATRIX). Il se situe dans le quadrant inférieur droit, indiquant la rentabilité minimale. Il s'oppose en cela à la vache à lait (CASH COW).

The BCG example illustrates how evocative language can help “to picture” a newly developed concept. The specialists use general language words in a metaphorical way. The connotations of words and expressions are useful in evoking and in communicating a new idea. Yet, as words in principle belong to one language and as languages are related to cultural frames, it is not always possible to literally translate evocative words from one language to the next. More examples of this are presented in the next section.

3 Attempted harmonization and cross-cultural comparison in the domain of finance

In Temmerman and van Campenhout (2011) two articles appeared illustrating the dynamics of financial terminology and the role of evocative language therein: one by Marita Kristiansen and one by Pedro Feurtés-Olivera and Sandro Nielsen.

Kristiansen (2011) discusses how scholarly areas are subject to different kinds of external pressure resulting in both concept and term changes. However, she finds that the factors causing the knowledge development are quite different from one domain to the next. She investigated three domains: 1) Organisational Behaviour, 2) Financial Accounting and 3) Crisis, Restructuring and Growth. Her examples from these domains are discussed in relation to degrees of cognitive change; gradual change, revolutionary change and change resulting from a complex problem solving process, respectively. We refer to one of her example on cross-cultural comparison in the domain of Financial Accounting. Kristiansen used the recent international standards of financial reporting (IFRS) and accounting (IAS) as corpus material. Furthermore, the Norwegian accounting acts of 1999 and 2005 provided material for cross-cultural comparisons. She demonstrates that in recent years, Financial Accounting has experienced an external pressure that has led to revolutionary changes and a paradigm shift. The social environments in which Financial Accounting operates have altered. International standard-setting documents, national legislation and accounting practices have seen the light and should be investigated to produce the current representation of its concepts and terms. The changes in Financial Accounting may to a great extent be attributed to supranational political measures. The more global international trade and industry has become, the greater the need for transparent and comparable financial reports. This has been one of the motives for the European initiative to harmonize the presentation of financial statements of public limited companies, through the international accounting standards (IAS) and the international financial reporting standards (IFRS) adopted by the EU in 2002.

The international accounting standards, which have been implemented globally, have been prepared using the English language. Thereafter, the standards were translated into various national languages, like Norwegian. Kristiansen convincingly shows that the greatest challenge in this adaptation process was not to choose the best terminology to denote the various accounting concepts, but to delineate the concepts in such a way that the adaptation to a national accounting legislation could be successful. International harmonization presupposes that the concepts of the standards are culture-free, i.e. the content of a set of concepts described in the international standards are understood the same way when it comes to inherent characteristics across nations and accounting practices. The whole conceptual apparatus, including all concepts and their relations should be the same. This is a necessary condition for the standards to be convergent and transparent. The obvious proof of such transparency would be that the terminologies used in the national-adopted standards are equivalent across countries and across languages. That is what harmonisation aims at. But life

as it really is proves not to be that simple as one finds out when comparing the texts of the global English version of the IFRS and IAS to, for instance, its Spanish translation (Fuertes-Olivera and Nielsen 2011) and then to look for how the harmonized terminology is used (or not used) by the linguistic community (see further in this section: third and final example).

Kristiansen (2011) also discusses variation in terminology on the financial crisis, based on Norwegian newspaper analyses on the financial crisis period of 2007-2010. One of the points she makes is that several related concepts exist in addition to *financial crisis*, with several term variants (frequencies are added in brackets): *finanskrise* [financial crisis; 2064], *økonomisk krise* [economic crisis; 739], *nasjonal krise* [national crisis; 40], *norsk krise* [Norwegian crisis; 6], *finansiell krise* [financial crisis; 57].

In her discussion of the terms *subprime* and *hedge fund* she approaches the fact that terminology is culture-bound from a different perspective. The situation with rising defaults on subprime mortgages in the US is said to have triggered the global financial crisis. In particular, hedge funds and banks all over the world were suddenly exposed and the financial crisis became a fact. Kristiansen demonstrates that although appearing frequently in Norwegian newspapers in the period of the financial crisis, the content of the concepts *subprime* and *hedge fund* appears not to have really been delineated yet in a Norwegian setting, and a number of terms or expressions are used to represent the concept. A consequence is that as *subprime* and *hedge fund* are subject to both national monetary policies and national and/or international financial markets regulations, the interpretation of *hedge fund* is still being discussed in Norwegian courts in the wake of national security scandals caused by speculative investments by Norwegian municipalities. Here, being culture-bound, has a different implication as compared to the examples in section two. It is not so much the connotation of words that causes (legal) problems in these examples but the culture-bound way the financial crisis is dealt with in the Norwegian societal and legal setting.

Pedro A. Fuertes-Olivera and Sandro Nielsen (2011) have given examples of what the construction of accounting dictionaries reveals about metaphorical terms in culture-bound subject fields. The authors discuss a network of internet dictionaries in English, Danish, and Spanish. They discuss strategies for translating English metaphorical terms into Spanish assuming that bilingual accounting dictionaries should use similar terms in both source and target languages. They discuss interesting examples of evocative language in English and the possible translations. A first example proves how sheer coincidence can give an ambiguous connotation in English which is absent in Spanish. It concerns the English acronym PIGS. It stands for Portugal, Italy, Greece, and Spain and is frequently used in a derogative way by Spanish conservative newspapers to criticize the economic policy pursued by Spain's socialist government. The acronym PIGS is a lemma in the *Spanish Accounting Dictionary*, http://www.accountingdictionary.dk/regn/gbbsp/regngbbsp_index.php compiled by Fuertes and Nielson, and has been defined without mentioning its connection with English *pig*. However, they have included a usage note that describes the metaphorical mappings of this acronym in contemporary Spanish based on the potential of metaphors to frame social discourse.

PIGS

definición

PIGS es un acrónimo formado en inglés por las iniciales de Portugal, Italy, Greece, y Spain que utilizan los mercados financieros para referirse a estos cuatro países que comparten algunas magnitudes y características económicas, como formar parte del euro y estar muy endeudados.

Nota de uso

Es frecuente encontrarnos con referencias a este término en las que se traduce el acrónimo PIGS por cerdos, el término español para pigs. Normalmente estas referencias indican una intencionalidad política asociando la palabra cerdos a una serie de decisiones de política económica que favorecen el incremento del déficit de una economía.

A second example in Fuertes and Nielsen (2011) is the English metaphorical expression “at arm’s length”. If transactions are made *at arm’s length*, the transactions are conducted on terms and at prices that would have applied if the transactions had been made between knowledgeable, willing, independent parties. In Spanish this idea can better be rendered by “en condiciones de igualdad”. A third example is “thin capitalization”. In a usage note in their dictionary Fuertes and Nielsen explain that Spanish accountants prefer the Spanish term „subcapitalización” to the harmonized IAS/IFRS term “capitalización delgada”. This literal translation is felt to be nonsensical in Spanish. It is a novel metaphor introduced into Spanish by the translators of the international accounting standards. The solution Fuertes and Nielsen have adopted for the problem of how to treat this new synonymy consists in retaining the traditional Spanish accounting term as equivalent, presenting the IAS/IFRS term as synonym, and including a usage note that explains the difference between the two Spanish terms. This example shows how harmonized terminology may be rejected by a group of users on the basis of the existence of an earlier equivalent that has cultural binding. A final example of how a metaphorical term with evocative potential can be translated is *hedge fund* which is translated into *fondo de cobertura* in Spanish. Alternatively, *hedge fund* is left as a loan term in Spanish. The use of *hedge* in the English expression indicates that the fund is used to protect investors against potential and unknown dangers – “to keep trespassers out” in the literal sense of the word. Its Spanish equivalent – *fondo de cobertura* – has a similar metaphorical association between its literal translation *seto* (a physical object) and its mapping onto the abstract *cobertura* (something you put over something in order to hide it, protect it, or close it). Although *fondo de cobertura* is easily understood by Spanish speakers, Fuertes and Nielsen have included the English term as synonym in their dictionary because it is frequently used in Spanish accounting texts.

Fuertes and Nielsen (2011) propose solutions to some of the problems lexicographers and terminologists have when translating English metaphorical terms into Spanish based on two assumptions of the dynamics of terms. The first one consists in offering neutral Spanish terms, i.e., terms that do not smack of ideological motivations. This is especially relevant when translating metaphorical terms as the conceptual theory of metaphor has shown that metaphors are used to frame political and economic discourse. The second assumption leads them to propose lexicographical practices that will retain the same conceptual scenario in the source and target metaphorical terms.

4 Societal dynamics in the European multilingual reality: Eurospeak in translation

The examples from research and experience described in sections two and three, show that evocative metaphorical language is culture- and language-bound. Attempts at harmonization by international organizations are meant to even-out culture-bound connotations of terminology. The principles are clear and as long as one remains in the *in-vitro* situation there are no problems. Yet, *in-vivo*, harmonization is a many-faceted phenomenon. In this section we will turn to the European multilingual reality and look at the Dutch and French translations of a text on the financial crisis.

In a growing number of sectors the European Union proposes common concepts and a shared framework, and it warrants an ultimately unifying perspective in spite of all apparent

divergence. In particular, this framework is believed to provide a semantic basis for communication. For skeptics ‘common concepts’ can be just as much sources of misunderstanding, confusion and, therefore, divergence (Prechal and Van Roermund 2008:8). European law is multilingual, and all language versions are deemed equally authentic (see Nita and Swiatłowski 2010). However, it is commonly agreed that no two texts in different languages will ever have exactly the same meaning. Hence, divergence between different language versions of texts may be expected.

If in the European Union, Euro-English has become the lingua franca and if Europeans continue to have the right to information in all official European languages the issue of approximate meaning will have to be tackled all the time. The reasons why translations are hardly ever a word for word transfer from a source language to a target language have been dealt with extensively in the literature on translation theory (see e.g. Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 2004). Basically, translation shifts, e.g. modulation and transposition, are often the result of the inherent lexical and structural limitations of each language. Moreover each language carries historical and cultural elements that allow its users to express messages in particular ways (e.g. figurative language based on metaphorical understanding, allusions to culture-specific elements). Moreover, translated texts, like the Euro-English originals show variability and have characteristics of the dynamics and plasticity of all living languages. Readers of the texts in translation find the same information, but not quite, as there is asymmetry (anisomorphism) between languages.

European Union official texts are more and more frequently drafted in English and in a second phase translated into 22 official European languages. In 2011, 23 official languages have equal status to express the European policy. Equality of the languages of member states implies that all EU legislation is promulgated with equal force in all official languages. Research on what Sager (1990) refers to as ‘secondary term formation’ is relevant for the European linguistic diversity policy. Sager states that “secondary term formation occurs when a new term is created for a known concept [...] as a result of knowledge transfer to another linguistic community” (Sager 1990: 80). In a EU setting secondary term formation depends to a large extent on the creativity of translators. It is debatable whether official European texts actually mean the same in different cultures and different languages, because of different world views in each country with its own legal system and cultural traditions. Even though the rule of law forms part of our shared European cultural experience, how the term is interpreted may depend on several contextual and local factors.

The dynamics of terminological variation in European multilingual communication and the societal dynamics in the European multilingual reality, are exciting research subjects. As a lot of European discourse in several languages is available on the internet, researchers engaging in contrastive linguistics, translation studies and terminology studies have access to materials for studying e.g. variation, evocative language and primary and secondary term formation (see Cox et al. 2011). In what follows we will use one of the texts retrieved from the multilingual database of European Union law (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu>) to find examples of what happens to metaphorical and evocative language in parallel texts on the financial crisis. A Euro-English original text is compared to its Dutch and French translations (tests in appendix).

The first three examples show that (part of) the connotative evocative power can be lost in translation. The final one shows that the opposite can happen too: translators can turn neutral

terminology into metaphorically inspired wording and therefore introduce a higher connotative potential in the translated version of a text.

In the first example there is a loss in the textual cohesion because the metaphorical “financial bubble” is translated into *financiële “mega-inflatie”* (Dutch) and *énorme “inflation” financière* (French). However, later in the English text reference is made to the bubble once more. At that point the translators in Dutch and in French use the equivalent word for *bubble* in Dutch *bubbel* and in French *bulle*. Since they used a more neutral expression the first time, this makes the translated texts less comprehensible, as the cohesion is lost. One could consider this to be an error in translation.

a financial bubble	een financiële “mega-inflatie”	une énorme “inflation“ financière
within the bubble	tijdens de “bubbel“	qu'à l'intérieur de la bulle financière

The next example concerns loss of metaphor in translation or in other words neutralization of the evocative expression in the French translation. The *packaging and repackaging* of loans *into complex derivatives* has been neutralized in *ces prêts ont été regroupés*. In Dutch the image was kept: *leningen werden verpakt en herverpakt*.

In investment banking, these loans and others such as LBO financing were packaged and repackaged into complex derivatives and traded without due diligence or adequate reserves.	In investment banking werden deze en andere leningen verpakt en herverpakt in complexe derivaten en zonder enige zorgvuldigheid of adequate reserves verhandeld.	Dans les services bancaires d'investissement, ces prêts et d'autres tels que le financement de LBO (acquisitions par emprunt) ont été regroupés dans des lots de produits dérivés complexes, puis vendus sans qu'il soit fait preuve de l'attention requise ou des réserves adéquates.
---	---	---

When *crash* is translated into *degeneratie* (Dutch) and *déliquescence* (French), we see a shift in metaphor and consequently in the evocative power of the words used which have quite different connotations. According to *A Dictionary of Finance and Banking* (2008), *crash* signifies “a rapid and serious fall in the level of prices in the market”, whereas in *The Handbook of International Financial Terms* (1997) it reads “generic description for any sudden and dramatic large fall in the prices of securities, currencies, or commodities. (...) The US stock market had a Great Crash in 1929 and world-wide securities markets experienced similar difficulties”. According to *The Concise Oxford Hachette French Dictionary* (2004) “être en pleine déliquescence” means “to be degenerating” which is also the meaning of Dutch “degeneratie”. For one thing “degeneration” has the connotation of a slow process in time whereas with *crash*, “rapid” and “dramatic” are associated and one thinks of an accident or a fall.

<p>Causes: the crash was possible because no policy existed, because of errors and omissions on the part of governments and others, not just with regard to finance, but also in terms of macroeconomic and monetary policies.</p>	<p>Oorzaken: een degeneratie die mogelijk is gemaakt door de afwezige politiek, nalatigheid en fouten van regeringen, niet alleen wat betreft de financiering, maar ook vanwege het macro-economische en monetaire beleid.</p>	<p>Causes: si cette déliquescence a été possible, c'est à cause de la passivité des acteurs politiques, des négligences et des erreurs commises également par les gouvernements, non seulement dans le domaine de la finance mais aussi dans celui des politiques macro-économiques et monétaires.</p>
---	---	---

We also find examples of neutral wording in English being turned into more colorful expressions like “Political forces have often used globalisation as an excuse” which becomes “Vaak heeft de politiek zich achter de globalisering verscholen” [the political world often hid behind globalization] in Dutch and “Bien souvent, le pouvoir politique s’est retranché derrière la mondialisation” [Political power often took refuge behind globalization] in French. Whereas in English globalization is used as “an excuse”, in Dutch it is *the root of all evil* and in French it is *the eternal scape goat*.

<p>The EU lacked adequate instruments with which to take action, and saw its socio-economic model assailed from several sides as the cause of all the problems. International bodies were too weak to intervene. The situation has lasted too long. Political forces have often used globalisation as an excuse, blaming it for everything and thus bearing substantial responsibility for the causes of the crisis [1]</p>	<p>Met een EU zonder toereikende instrumenten om in te grijpen, met een sociaal-economisch model dat van diverse zijden onder vuur ligt, als de oorzaak van alle kwaad. Met internationale organisaties die te zwak zijn om in te grijpen. Een crisis die al te zeer aansleept. Vaak heeft de politiek zich achter de globalisering verscholen en deze als de wortel van alle kwaad gezien. Daardoor is de politiek grotendeels verantwoordelijk voor de oorzaken die tot de crisis hebben geleid [1].</p>	<p>et ce dans un con-texte caractérisé par une Union européenne privée d'instruments d'action appropriés, avec un modèle économique et social de toutes parts accusé d'être la cause de tous les maux. Cette période ne s'est que trop prolongée. Bien souvent, le pouvoir politique s'est retranché derrière la mondialisation, sempiternel bouc émissaire, et assume dès lors une lourde part de responsabilité dans l'apparition de la crise</p>
---	---	---

What these examples show is that in each of the three language versions words are used with different connotation and that different metaphorical language is used. We observe interlingual variation which might be compromising in a Europe where equal authenticity of several language versions is a principle.

5 Observational research on neologisms and the dynamics of specialized language

In this article we have tried to understand the evocative power of language by looking at neology creation that is based on creatively using the connotations of culture-bound figurative language. We showed how the translation of such culturally embedded neologisms can be problematic. We also showed that attempts at harmonization of financial rules and regulations, in international contexts, through the creation of standards in several equally authentic languages versions, do not necessarily solve all terminology problems. The standardized neologisms in some of the language versions are not necessarily accepted by the linguistic communities for whom they were created. We finally compared EU equally authentic texts in English, Dutch and French and we had to conclude that not exactly the same is expressed in each language version.

Minute observation of how languages and societies differ in trying to express agreed-upon information is needed to come to a profound understanding of the dynamics of specialized

language and communication in a multilingual setting. Terminology studies and translation studies should join forces with linguistics and intercultural studies in trying to better understand the assets and liabilities of multilingual intercultural communication. The evocative power of language can be an asset and a liability at the same time, as we hope to have illustrated.

References

- Cox, Antoon /Temmerman, Rita (forthcoming) Can EU harmonisation efforts of administrative forms co-exist with cultural and linguistic diversity? *Proceedings 4th International Adriatic-Ionian Conference. Ca'Foscari University of Venice.*
- Dancette, Jeanne /Réthoré, Christophe (2000, 2006) *Dictionnaire analytique de la distribution. Analytical Dictionary of Retailing.* Montréal : Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal. Version électronique sur le site de l'OLST (2006), <http://olst.ling.umontreal.ca/olster/olster.php>.
- Fuertes-Olivera, Pedro and Nielsen, Sandro (2011) The dynamics of terms in accounting: What the construction of the accounting dictionaries reveals about metaphorical terms in culture-bound subject fields. *Terminology* 17 (1). 157-180.
- Kristiansen, Marita (2011) Domain dynamics in scholarly areas: How external pressure may cause concept and term changes. *Terminology* 17 (1). 30-48.
- Lewandowska- Tomaszczyk, Barbara (2004) Semantics and Translation. In: [Harald Kittel](#) et al. (eds) *Übersetzung – Translation – Traduction. An International Encyclopedia of Translation-Studies.* Vol. 1. Berlin: de Gruyter. 301-310.
- Nita, Barbara /Swiatłowski, Andrzej (2010) Pluralism and Interpretation of European Law in the Third Pillar, Discussed with Reference to the Example of Article 54 of the Convention Implementing the Schengen Agreement. In: Jemiłniak, Joanna/ Mikłaszewicz, Przemysław *Interpretation of Law in the Global World: From Particularism to a Universal Approach.* Heidelberg: Springer. 231-250
- Power, Nina (2008) The Artworld is not the World. In: Garnett, Robert /Hunt, Andrew (eds) *Gest/Laboratory of Synthesis* #1. London: Book Works. 106-107.
- Power, Nina (2009) Bamboozle, baffle and blindside. *New Statesman*, 28 May 2009.
- Prechal, Sacha /Roermund, Bert van (eds) (2008) *The Coherence of EU Law The Search for Unity in Divergent Concepts.* Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press
- Sager, Juan Carlos (1990) *A Practical Course in Terminology Processing.* Amsterdam/New York: John Benjamins.
- Temmerman, Rita (2003) Innovative methods in specialised lexicography. *Terminology* 9 (1). 117–135.
- Temmerman, Rita (2011). Ways of managing the dynamics of terminology in multilingual communication. *SCOLIA* (25). 105-122.
- Temmerman, Rita /Campenhoudt, Marc van (eds) (2011) The dynamics of terms in specialized communication: An interdisciplinary perspective. (special issue) *Terminology* 17 (1).

Appendix

Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on "The **financial crisis** and its impact on the real economy" (own-initiative opinion)

(2010/C 255/02)

On 26 February 2009, the European Economic and Social Committee decided, under Rule 29(2) of its Rules of Procedure, to draw up an own-initiative opinion on The **financial crisis** and its impact on the real economy. The Section for Economic and Monetary Union and Economic and Social Cohesion, which was responsible for preparing the Committee's work on the subject, adopted its opinion on 13 November 2009. The rapporteur was Mr Cedrone. At its 458th plenary session, held on 16 and 17 December 2009 (meeting of 16 December), the European Economic and Social Committee adopted the following opinion by 122 votes to 75 with 33 abstentions. Source : <http://eur-lex.europa.eu>

<p>3. Current situation: the international financial crisis</p>	<p>3. Waar staan we? De internationale financiële crisis</p>	<p>3. Où en sommes-nous? La crise financière internationale</p>
<p>3.1 Origins: The origins of the crisis are so well documented by now that there is no need to revisit them. The EESC nevertheless considers it useful to highlight at least two factors that created the conditions for the crisis, namely the direction taken by international finance, supported by an ultra-liberal economic culture, which ended up feeding itself more than the real economy, thus producing a huge financial bubble. This was largely unregulated, and such rules as existed were inadequate and widely flouted, which was the second cause of the crisis. The rules that existed did not work or were not applied by supervisory bodies and ratings agencies, whose behaviour made markets less transparent [2].</p>	<p>3.1 Oorzaken: Deze zijn ondertussen zo bekend dat ze niet opnieuw aan de orde hoeven te komen. Volgens het EESC is het wel zinvol om ten minste twee oorzaken aan te halen: de ontwikkeling van de internationale financiële sector, die, gesteund door het ultraliberale economische klimaat, uiteindelijk meer zichzelf voedde dan de reële economie en een financiële "mega-inflatie" veroorzaakte. Dit alles met weinig, ontoereikende en slecht nageleefde regels, de tweede oorzaak van de crisis. De regels die er waren, werkten niet of werden niet toegepast door toezichthoudende organen en ratingbureaus, wier optreden de markten minder overzichtelijk maakte [2].</p>	<p>3.1 Origines: Les origines de la crise sont à présent trop bien connues pour qu'il faille les examiner encore une fois. Le Comité estime toutefois utile de rappeler au moins deux causes qui en constituent les prémisses: l'évolution de la finance internationale qui, soutenue par une culture économique ultralibérale, a fini par alimenter ses propres circuits plutôt que l'économie réelle, ce qui a provoqué une énorme "inflation" financière, et ce alors que les règles étaient rares, insuffisantes et peu respectées – il s'agit là de la seconde cause de la crise. Les règles existantes n'ont pas fonctionné ou n'ont pas été appliquées par les organes de surveillance et les agences de notation, dont le comportement a altéré la transparence des marchés [2].</p>
<p>3.1.1 It is now apparent that within the bubble, bankers were wittingly or unwittingly engaged in high-risk activities for which the provisions and precautions were wholly inadequate. In retail banking, in the pursuit of volume, imprudent loans were made via mortgages and credit cards. In investment banking, these loans and others such as LBO financing were packaged and repackaged into complex derivatives and traded without due diligence or adequate reserves. It is clear that</p>	<p>3.1.1 Het is inmiddels duidelijk dat bankiers zich tijdens de "bubbel" al dan niet bewust in zeer riskante activiteiten stortten waarvoor de bepalingen en voorzorgsmaatregelen volledig tekortschoten. In het streven naar meer volume was er in retail-banking sprake van onverstandige leningen in de vorm van hypotheekleningen en credit cards. In investment banking werden deze en andere leningen verpakt en herverpakt in complexe derivaten en zonder enige zorgvuldigheid of</p>	<p>3.1.1 Il apparaît à présent clairement qu'à l'intérieur de la bulle financière, les banquiers étaient, sciemment ou non, engagés dans des activités à haut risque par rapport auxquelles les dispositions et les précautions étaient tout à fait inadéquates. Dans les services bancaires de détail, des prêts risqués, ayant pour seule garantie des hypothèques ou des cartes de crédit, ont été octroyés, dans le but de gonfler au maximum le chiffre d'affaires. Dans les</p>

<p>inappropriate incentives were in place for those executives and staff whose activities affected the risk profile of the bank and that, as a result of these incentives, personal rewards took precedence over the interests of most of the stakeholders in the banking system and the ordinary people who, knowing no better, had purchased these securities. However, this does not justify the improper practices and unscrupulous abuses that we have witnessed. This behaviour damaged the entire financial system and put it in a bad light.</p>	<p>adequate reserves verhandeld. Ook is het duidelijk dat er onbehoorlijke stimulansen waren voor leidinggevend en personeelsleden wier activiteiten hun weerslag hadden op het risicoprofiel van de bank en dat door deze stimulansen persoonlijke beloningen belangrijker werden dan de belangen van het merendeel van de betrokken partijen in het bankstelsel en van de onwetende burgers die aandelen hadden gekocht. Een omstandigheid die echter geen excuus is voor het oneigenlijk gebruik en gewetenloze misbruik waarvan we getuige zijn geweest. Gedrag dat het financiële systeem heeft benadeeld en in een kwaad daglicht heeft gesteld.</p>	<p>services bancaires d'investissement, ces prêts et d'autres tels que le financement de LBO (acquisitions par emprunt) ont été regroupés dans des lots de produits dérivés complexes, puis vendus sans qu'il soit fait preuve de l'attention requise ou des réserves adéquates. Il est clair que des incitations inappropriées étaient en vigueur pour les dirigeants et les membres du personnel dont les activités affectaient le profil de risque de la banque et qu'en résultat de ces incitations, les rétributions individuelles ont pris le pas sur les intérêts de la plupart des parties prenantes du système bancaire et des citoyens ignorants qui avaient acheté des titres. Pareille situation ne justifie cependant pas les détournements et les abus pratiqués sans scrupules, auxquels nous avons assisté. Un tel comportement a porté atteinte au système financier dans son ensemble et terni son image.</p>
<p>3.2 Causes: the crash was possible because no policy existed, because of errors and omissions on the part of governments and others, not just with regard to finance, but also in terms of macroeconomic and monetary policies. At global level, for example, there was the USA's extremely loose budget policy. The EU lacked adequate instruments with which to take action, and saw its socio-economic model assailed from several sides as the cause of all the problems. International bodies were too weak to intervene. The situation has lasted too long. Political forces have often used globalisation as an excuse, blaming it for everything and thus bearing substantial responsibility for the causes of the crisis [1].</p>	<p>3.2 Oorzaken: een degeneratie die mogelijk is gemaakt door de afwezige politiek, nalatigheid en fouten van regeringen, niet alleen wat betreft de financiering, maar ook vanwege het macro-economische en monetaire beleid. Zo was er in de VS sprake van een laks begrotingsbeleid. Met een EU zonder toereikende instrumenten om in te grijpen, met een sociaal-economisch model dat van diverse zijden onder vuur ligt, als de oorzaak van alle kwaad. Met internationale organisaties die te zwak zijn om in te grijpen. Een crisis die al te zeer aansleept. Vaak heeft de politiek zich achter de globalisering verscholen en deze als de wortel van alle kwaad gezien. Daardoor is de politiek grotendeels verantwoordelijk voor de oorzaken die tot de crisis hebben geleid [1].</p>	<p>3.2 Causes: si cette déliquescence a été possible, c'est à cause de la passivité des acteurs politiques, des négligences et des erreurs commises également par les gouvernements, non seulement dans le domaine de la finance mais aussi dans celui des politiques macroéconomiques et monétaires. Au niveau mondial, on peut pointer à titre d'exemple le laxisme de la politique budgétaire américaine, et ce dans un contexte caractérisé par une Union européenne privée d'instruments d'action appropriés, avec un modèle économique et social de toutes parts accusé d'être la cause de tous les maux. Cette période ne s'est que trop prolongée. Bien souvent, le pouvoir politique s'est retranché derrière la mondialisation, sempiternel bouc émissaire, et assume dès lors une lourde part de responsabilité dans l'apparition de la crise [1].</p>