

# ANNALES

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## TASSA DI SOGGIORNO OR TASSA TURISTICA? TERMINOLOGICAL CHALLENGES IN ITALIAN TRANSLATIONS IN THE BILINGUAL MUNICIPALITIES OF SLOVENIAN ISTRIA

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### ABSTRACT

*This article addresses bilingualism in Slovenian Istria, where both Slovenian and Italian are official languages, and it examines translations of administrative texts from the websites of four bilingual municipalities: Ankaran, Koper, Izola, and Piran. The study briefly reviews prior analyses whose findings served as the foundation for this research, and it outlines characteristic and widely used full-form lexical units as well as acronyms and abbreviations in normative and informative bilingual texts. It then discusses problems in terminological uniformity, proposing appropriate translation strategies to provide coherent use of terminology as well as clearer texts.*

**Keywords:** Italian, translation strategies, terminological uniformity, acronym, abbreviation, corpora

## TASSA DI SOGGIORNO O TASSA TURISTICA? SFIDE TERMINOLOGICHE NELLA TRADUZIONE IN ITALIANO NEI COMUNI BILINGUI DELL'ISTRIA SLOVENA

### SINTESI

*L'articolo affronta il tema del bilinguismo nell'Istria slovena, dove sia lo sloveno che l'italiano sono lingue ufficiali, ed esamina le traduzioni di testi amministrativi presenti sui siti web dei quattro comuni bilingui: Ancarano, Capodistria, Isola e Pirano. Lo studio fornisce una breve rassegna delle analisi precedenti, i cui risultati sono serviti da base per la presente ricerca, e offre una concisa panoramica di alcune unità lessicali caratteristiche ed ampiamente usate, scritte in versione integrale, nonché di acronimi e abbreviazioni nei testi bilingui normativi e informativi. In seguito, vengono discussi i problemi di uniformità terminologica e proposte strategie di traduzione adeguate per garantire un uso coerente della terminologia e una maggiore chiarezza dei testi.*

**Parole chiave:** italiano, strategie traduttive, uniformità terminologica, acronimo, abbreviazione, corpus

## INTRODUCTION

Linguistically and culturally, Slovenian Istria is a diverse area that is often referred to by different names (Janko Spreizer, 2019, 99; Hrobat Virloget, 2021, 27–31). It comprises the northern part of the Istrian peninsula and is also part of the wider geographical and historical region (cf. Kalc, 2019, 146) of the Slovenian Littoral, representing a crossroads between the Slovenian and Italian cultures and languages. The area is especially interesting because it is a strategic point where a Slavic language and culture come into contact with a Romance language and culture (Zerzer, 2009, 157–172; Kompara Lukančič, 2014, 89) on a daily basis. The historical dynamics of contact between the Slavic and Romance populations in Istria have created a complex sociolinguistic landscape (Poropat Jeletić et al., 2021, 330), in which interculturality and bilingualism have played an important role (Zudič Antonič, 2017; Zorman & Zudič Antonič, 2019) in the linguistic development of the region.

The bilingual area of the Slovenian coast is composed of the municipalities of Koper, Izola, Piran, and Ankaran (established in 2011), in addition to some surrounding villages in the countryside, comprising an ethnically mixed territory where Slovenian and Italian are the official languages. This is an area where individuals from different ethnic groups coexist (Novak Lukanovič, 1998, 91–96), constructing “multiple pure and hybrid identities” (Janko Spreizer, 2019, 97).

The presence of bilingualism is visible immediately upon entering the bilingual region, as indicated by bilingual street signs and public notices, which unambiguously shape the linguistic landscape in the area (cf. Mikolič Južnič & Pisanski Peterlin, 2023). Slovenian and Italian are used in all administrative areas of the bilingual zone, such as banks, post offices, administrative units, and so on. Most employees in public administration and other public institutions are required to know Italian, as stipulated by Article 17 of the Public Employees Act (*Zakon o javnih uslužbencih*, 2006). Novak Lukanovič and Mulec (2014, 96–97) point out that, in ethnically mixed areas, the conditions have been established for institutional bilingualism, based on the functional bilingualism of the majority and minority, which allows for the mutual linguistic interaction of speakers from both linguistic communities. The authors (Novak Lukanovič & Mulec, 2014) also specify that functional bilingualism implies that members of the minority use the language of the minority in both in-group and out-group communication in formal and informal speaking

positions, and that the members of the majority have at least a passive knowledge of the language of the minority at an informal level.

The fact that bilingualism is formally guaranteed at the institutional level means that state bodies, municipal authorities, judicial authorities, and public services operating in the ethnically mixed area operate bilingually. In this way, linguistic diversity is respected and financial resources are provided for bilingualism (Novak Lukanovič & Mulec, 2014, 96–97). Knowledge of the minority language has an added value for individuals, making possible employment in public institutions in the ethnically mixed areas and resulting in a financial incentive. Moreover, it also facilitates mobility, empowering individuals to enter the employment market of neighboring Italy (Limon & Novak Lukanovič, 2017, 668; Poropat Jeletić, 2017, 634). At this point, it should be emphasized that the administratively and institutionally guaranteed bilingualism also has an impact on the economy, which is an essential sphere of life (Novak Lukanovič, 2011, 334).

Institutional and functional bilingualism are certainly closely linked to the school system and promotion of the use of the minority language by young speakers, which is ensured by Italian preschools, primary schools, and secondary schools with Italian as the language of instruction in the bilingual area, as guaranteed by the Slovenian constitution and various sector-specific laws (Sorgo et al., 2022, 75). Children are entitled to attend either a Slovenian or Italian school, where both languages are taught throughout the entire compulsory education system, which however does not necessarily mean that all residents are able to actively use both languages, given various social and individual factors that influence the development of communicative competence in the language of the national minority. Zorman (2021, 206) observes that the prevailing sentiment among the residents of the Slovene Littoral is that the area is no longer truly bilingual as a result of a decrease in proficiency in Italian as a second language among the young (cf. Kompara Lukančič, 2014).

Despite unfavorable trends in the linguistic competence of younger speakers in the bilingual area that have been observed in recent years, it should be emphasized that Slovenians have frequent and direct experience with bilingualism and multilingualism because Slovenia has adopted laws that ensure equal rights for minorities to achieve cultural and language diversity (Godunc, 2008, 95–97). Members of Slovenia's Italian and Hungarian ethnic minorities have rights in line with the Slovenian Constitution as guaranteed by Articles 5, 11, 64, and 80 (*Ustava*, 1991) and international agreements. Their constitutional rights include

the right to a full education in their languages, as already indicated, the use of their native language, and proof of membership in their native ethnic community (Urad Vlade Republike Slovenije za narodnosti, 2020). The Slovenian Constitution and various international agreements recognize the Italian ethnic community and its rights as equal to those of any other ethnic community. The position of language in the area of Slovenian Istria where the Italian minority lives is well organized as a result of the special legislation in the Slovenian Constitution, although there is still room for improvement to reduce the gap between the normative framework and the practical implementation of bilingualism (Urad Vlade Republike Slovenije za narodnosti, 2022).

Zudič Antoniĉ (2023, 186) points out that language is the fundamental means of expressing the status of belonging to a particular ethnic group; it is a connecting component of a particular community and an element of separation from another group. Ethnic consciousness triggers a sense of pride, but also of unease in the face of a reality in which the majority language prevails, especially in administration and business, where terminology is constantly changing and consequently the use of Italian must also adapt to new vocabulary. This adaptation to new vocabulary is carried out through various translation processes, which in the case of administrative texts have only recently become a subject of linguistic research (Paolucci, 2020; Paolucci & Lenassi, 2021; Lenassi, 2022; Kompara Lukanĉiĉ et al., 2023).

To ensure that the rights of the Italian minority are also properly applied through terminology, this article adds some additional observations in this domain, based on a pilot study conducted through analyses of administrative texts in the bilingual area and based on applied translation practice. In particular, it examines when it is preferable to adopt source-oriented translation strategies and when to resort to target-oriented ones. In light of these examinations regarding the appropriate translation strategies, the following sections focus on previous research carried out on administrative texts produced in the bilingual region of Slovenian Istria, a brief examination of the parameters that determined the research, the present research, and some observations on how to offer terminology that is relevant and unambiguous.

#### STUDIES ON TRANSLATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE TEXTS IN THE BILINGUAL REGION OF SLOVENIAN ISTRIA

To examine whether equal rights for the Italian linguistic minority are actually respected in everyday linguistic practice, a previous study (Kompara

Lukanĉiĉ et al., 2023, 92) focused on various web pages of the four municipalities and examined them to determine the adequacy of the translated website content. The analysis identified inconsistencies that range from missing information and translations, outdated information, no information provided under specific submenus, and missing forms to mixed-up sequences of information and so on.

These incongruities at the hyperlink level are not the only issues that need to be taken into account to ensure equal linguistic rights for all the residents of the bilingual coastal area. Another aspect to be considered in ensuring an appropriate bilingual policy is the coherence and unity of the terminology that is a distinctive characteristic of normative texts; that is, documents relating to binding measures such as municipal statutes, regulations, decrees, and so on. Uniform terminology makes possible uniform interpretation and conceptual analysis of all that is involved in the translation of such texts, providing greater transparency and legal certainty to everybody required to observe the rules they contain.

Previous studies also showed a lack of terminological uniformity for particular characteristic terms (cf. Paolucci & Lenassi, 2021, 35) and identified a need for cooperation between various experts to standardize the Italian terminology in the ethnically mixed area of Slovenian Istria. The first significant steps toward uniformity were already taken by setting up the Office for Bilingualism of the Coastal Self-Governing Community of the Italian Nationality (Comunità Autogestita della Nazionalità Italiana, 2022), which among other tasks also focuses on cooperation between experts in the search for terminological solutions. Previous linguistic analyses have not only highlighted challenges in translating selected full-length lexical units, such as the verb *approvare* 'adopt' and on the noun phrases *lokalne volitve* 'local elections', *upravna enota* 'administrative unit', *zdravstveni dom* 'health center', and *vrtec* 'preschool', arising from the fact that there are no specific directions on which term is the most appropriate in specific text types of a binding and non-binding nature (Paolucci, 2020, 113–133), but also a variety of problems regarding the use and translation of acronyms and abbreviations in bilingual administrative texts. The analyses show that the short lexical units mentioned above should be regarded as linguistic choices that pose various challenges to translators, and they therefore need to be seen as an object worthy of study to ensure that the most appropriate term is used in certain communicative contexts, considering several plausible terminological options in the target language (Kompara Lukanĉiĉ et al., 2023; Lenassi, 2022).

Translation equivalents, often expressed through several alternatives, of which two or more are sometimes appropriate, present a dilemma for the translator's ultimate selection regarding the optimal linguistic choice in a specific context (Paolucci, 2013, 73–89). In particular, the same term can be translated in different ways depending on whether a source-oriented (foreignizing) or target-oriented (domesticating) translation strategy is used (Paolucci, 2017b, 243–263; 2020, 130). For example, *nadzorni svet* 'supervisory board' can be translated as either *consiglio di controllo* or *consiglio di sorveglianza* (using the foreignizing strategy) or *collegio sindacale* (using the domesticating strategy). In each case, a translator must decide to choose either a predominantly foreignizing translation strategy, the objective of which is to maintain the linguistic features, legal system, and culture of origin as much as possible, or to opt for a principally domesticating strategy, with the intent of rearticulating the subject matter of the original text in such a way that it preserves the legislation, language, and cultural features of the target language as much as possible (Paolucci, 2020, 129–130). In our specific case, by domesticating strategies we mean translation into Italian primarily referring to the Italian legal system and, in any case, taking Italian circumstances into account. As is specified later on, these domesticating strategies would always be recommended only for texts of an informative nature aimed at a broader audience.

Because this translation choice is referred to several times in this article and it is the basis for some of our deductions or possible solutions, it should be noted that, also with reference to legal translation, the discussion on the adoption of either a foreignizing (source-oriented) or domesticating (target-oriented) strategy has always been lively, especially since the early 1980s, including scholars such as Venuti (1995), Šarčević (1997), de Groot (2000), Eco (2003; 2004), Cao (2007), Cheng and Sin (2008), Biel (2009), Prieto Ramos (2011), Peruzzo (2012), and Bajčić (2017) (cf. Paolucci, 2017b, 249). Nevertheless, it is crucial to distinguish between two fundamentally different cases: (a) translation within a multilingual legal system, such as the Slovenian legal system encompassing Slovenian as the language of the majority as well as Italian and Hungarian as the languages of linguistic minorities, which involves three distinct legal languages within a single legal system; and (b) translation between two distinct legal languages and systems, such as Slovenian and Italian, each with its own legal language and system (Šarčević, 2000, 15; Kocbek, 2006, 239; Cao, 2007, 23; Prieto Ramos, 2014, 313; Paolucci, 2017a, 86).

## PARAMETERS THAT DETERMINED THIS RESEARCH

This section highlights key points in support of this article's proposals (i.e., the parameters that determined this research), which are categorized into discipline-specific parameters and linguistic parameters. The discipline-specific parameters refer to factors that are particular to the field of study (i.e., law and legislation), and the linguistic parameters apply to language-related factors. The discipline-specific parameters are the differences between legal systems, the specificity of legal language, and the relevance of the source legal system, whereas linguistic parameters encompass equivalence, text typology, and textual function (cf. Paolucci, 2017a, 85).

The first discipline-specific parameter refers to differences between legal systems; each legal system is original and consequently dissimilar to other legal systems. Even when two legal systems are a part of the same legal family (e.g., Italian and Slovenian law) or when one was particularly influenced by another (e.g., Italian and French law), there are still numerous differences between the two systems. It is precisely these differences that constitute important proof of the sovereignty of individual countries, requiring translators to work as comparatists (cf. Husa, 2017).

As for the second discipline-specific parameter, the specificity of legal language, it is generally accepted that legal language is technical, unwieldy, formalized, complex, and influenced by its legal system (cf. Wiredu, 2016, 30). Although it is a technical language, it is commonly accepted that it is only partially "technicalized." To be specific, it contains terms belonging to common language, and only a few terms are technical and characteristically legal (Ajani, 2006, 23).

The last, but equally important, parameter of the first set of parameters is the source legal system. In the translation of legal texts, especially those with a normative function, the legal system that the source text belongs to has a particular relevance. Much attention is currently being paid to translation strategies designed to favor the target text and to meet the needs of the target community (Paolucci, 2020, 121–122).

Let us now take a brief look at the linguistic parameters that are relevant for this research and play a crucial role in analyzing and understanding language and its various components during translation. The first parameter—the concept of equivalence—has been a topic of the greatest importance in legal translation studies for quite some time now. It is obvious that the solution to any translation problem represents much more than mere transfer of a source text into a target language: during the

translating process for legal texts, legal comparatists and translators need to work closely together to find the most optimal equivalent term or concept in the target language.

The next parameter refers to the text type, which assumes particular importance in this case. A classification of text types has been put forward by many scholars, among whom Sabatini (1990; 1998; 2006) singled out three major categories: a) *very binding texts*, consisting of normative documents (laws, regulations, and other legal sources); b) *averagely binding texts*, comprised of expository texts (text-books, encyclopedias, essays, political speeches, conferences, lectures, and others) and informative texts (informational and promotional texts, and journalistic texts); and c) *non-binding texts* (i.e., literary texts, which do not relate to this context).

Another important parameter is the text function, which is of crucial importance for choosing the appropriate translation strategy (cf. Vermeer, 1982; 1996; Reiss, 1989; Nord, 1997) in both the source and target language and culture. Sometimes, in given circumstances, a text can be translated for a function that differs from that of the source text. A characteristic example of this is the translation of a law with a normative function in the source language and an informative function in the target language.

Obviously, all these parameters are intertwined and influence each other, which makes the translation process particularly complex, requiring special attention on the part of the translators, who often find themselves facing different translation possibilities, often all acceptable, but with different degrees of relevance and appropriateness in particular texts, especially ones of a legislative and administrative nature.

## RESEARCH

Research was carried out within the bilateral research project between Slovenia and Croatia titled “Translation in Bilingual Institutions in Croatian and Slovenian Istria: Status and Perspectives” (2023–2025), which is a continuation of cooperation on the project “Bilingualism in Slovene and Croatian Istria on the Example of Translations of Administrative Texts” (2018–2019). The first project raised many hitherto unanswered questions and laid the foundations for a systematic approach to solving the problems of translation into a minority language. One relevant finding of the previous project is that “of the automatically retrieved official newsletters from the selected websites, only 37% of the documents are available in Italian” (Brkić Bakarić & Lalli Pačelat, 2019, 826) and that “content analysis of the official websites of bilingual towns and municipalities has shown that most of the content is not translated, not

translated in time or only partially translated” (Lalli Pačelat et al., 2020, 822). Research also showed that Istrian translators need the support of language technologies, tools, and resources to facilitate and speed up translation and reduce translation costs (Lalli Pačelat et al., 2020), and that there was lack of uniformity in terminology (Paolucci & Lenassi, 2021). Therefore, this research aims to shed further light on terminology in the translation process by presenting some selected findings that emerged during the analysis.

## Methodology

To carry out the research, 114 bilingual texts intended for the four Slovenian bilingual municipalities were analyzed. The study examined these documents in Slovenian and their translations into Italian, all accessible on the webpages of the four bilingual municipalities. The documents are 1) informative texts, such as invitations to meetings of various municipal bodies and amendments to the agenda of meetings, forms or applications intended for various municipal bodies to provide diverse certifications, lists of approved candidates for municipal elections and municipal election reports, and lists of officially authorized persons in municipal administration, and 2) normative texts, such as municipal statutes, decrees, additions to decrees, regulations, resolutions, administrative measures, and mayoral decisions. The texts were analyzed using the Sketch Engine software tool with the algorithm for automatic recognition of abbreviations and abbreviations’ expansions in electronic texts (Kompapa Lukančič & Holozan, 2011, 144) as well as manually.

The research was carried out in three stages: in the first stage, some terms were selected and observed for which it is clear that there are no uniform criteria on their translation equivalents in normative and informative texts and that they have not been studied in previous research. In our pilot study, we selected specific terms as illustrative examples from a larger sample for qualitative analysis. Our approach involved examining various translations of these terms across different documents, allowing us to delve into their nuances and variations, providing valuable insights for our study’s objectives. For a better overview of the lack of systematic standards, both full-form and short-form lexical units were observed (i.e., acronyms and abbreviations). The second stage involved the study of two typical texts in both languages in which the use of acronyms could be observed. The two characteristic texts were selected for a closer analysis exclusively as illustrative examples, to study the range of translation possibilities and to observe translators’ choices

within individual texts, in which one could anticipate a rather uniform approach to acronyms. These shortened linguistic forms were specifically chosen for the analysis because they appear in almost all texts (cf. the section Acronyms for frequency data later in this article), and they generally represent an interesting diversity in the use of short forms and/or expansions in the target language as well as diverse translation strategies (Kompara Lukančič et al., 2023, 121–122). For a better overview of the translation options that linguistic practice offers within individual documents when there are no clear guidelines on what translation strategy to follow, it was decided to observe acronyms in an informative text and in a normative text. The last stage of the research addressed abbreviations, which, like acronyms, appear in most documents (cf. the section Acronyms for frequency data later in this article). In this part of the study, particular attention was paid to abbreviations denoting academic degrees and their renderings into the target language. This focus stemmed from two reasons: first, a previous study (Lenassi, 2022, 49) identified academic degrees as the predominant semantic field employing abbreviations in administrative texts, and, second, various translation practices (cf. Lenassi, 2022, 67) address abbreviated academic degrees in different ways.

## Results and discussion

### Selected terms and their translation equivalents

The first stage of the study involved creation of a list of terms extrapolated from the original Slovenian texts with related translations into Italian,<sup>1</sup> as shown in Table 1. For practical reasons, the list of Slovenian terms is not exhaustive, and the origins of the translations sourced from various municipalities have been anonymized for discretion.

The research shows that some terms have been translated in different ways depending on the municipality. Such practice creates uncertainty and is misleading for the target audience. Therefore, greater terminological consistency is hoped for, aimed at promoting transparency and recognition by those expected to observe the instructions and rules that apply in individual municipalities. However, cases have emerged in which certain terms were translated uniformly in the four municipalities, with a single translation that is a mere calque that is not used in Italy; in fact, the concept is expressed with another term. For example, *nosilec projekta* ‘project manager’, a term used by the administrations of the four municipalities of Slovenian Istria, is translated

into Italian as *portatore del progetto*, with three more variants presented in Table 1, whereas in Italy this function is denominated predominantly as *titolare del progetto*. In informative texts that borrow from English, the same term is often translated as *project (stake)holder* or *project manager*.

One of the principal reasons for the lack of terminological uniformity is that the translator is, as already mentioned, called upon to make a fundamental choice between a source-oriented translation (e.g., *scuola media*) or a target-oriented translation (e.g., *scuola media superiore*), or in some cases even a translation that one might call neutral because it is more understandable to an international audience (e.g., *scuola secondaria*). However, in the case of the term *scuola media*, an important clarification must be made. In fact, in the Italian school system *scuola media* is divided into *scuola media inferiore* (three years) for pupils eleven to fourteen years old, and *scuola media superiore* (usually five years) for pupils fourteen to nineteen years old. Nonetheless, in the language spoken in Italy, when one speaks of *scuola media* in general, one thinks exclusively of *scuola media inferiore*. For this reason, to an Italian, the source-oriented translation *srednja šola*, which has always been adopted in Slovenia, may appear inappropriate (cf. Mardešić & Lütze-Miculinić, 2023, 121–123).

Now let us look at some other terms in Table 1. In the case of *turistična taksa* ‘tourist fee’, this term is translated into Italian in various ways as well (i.e., *tassa di soggiorno*, *tassa turistica*, *tassa di soggiorno turistico*, and even *imposta di soggiorno*). These are all acceptable solutions to a certain extent, some being the subject of source-oriented traditions such as *tassa turistica* and even *tassa di soggiorno turistico*, and others of target-oriented tradition, such as *imposta di soggiorno* ‘tourist tax’ (actually, more than a tax, it is a fee) and especially *tassa di soggiorno*. The latter, in fact, is the true equivalent term used in the Italian legal system.

The same situation (i.e., multiple translation equivalents), can also be found in the field of acronyms, here represented through the term for ‘municipal spatial plan’ and abbreviations such as those for ‘bachelor of political science’ and ‘master of law’. The acronym and its expansion offer three different verbalizations in the target language; however, only two strategies: that is, the source-oriented *piano territoriale comunale* (PTC), and its two corresponding equivalents for the Italian legal system; that is, the target-oriented *piano regolatore comunale* (PRC) as well as *piano regolatore generale comunale* (PRGC). The abbreviated form

<sup>1</sup> The Italian translations in the table are all in lower case, although from the documents analyzed they often appear otherwise; for example, *Scuola Media*, *Scuola media*, or *scuola media*.

**Table 1: Selected Slovenian terms and corresponding translations into Italian.**

Slovenian, English gloss	Italian
<i>nosilec projekta</i> ‘project manager’	<i>portatore del progetto</i> <i>promotore del progetto</i> <i>responsabile del progetto</i> <i>capofila del progetto</i>
<i>turistična taksa</i> ‘tourist tax’	<i>tassa di soggiorno</i> <i>tassa turistica</i> <i>tassa di soggiorno turistico</i> <i>imposta di soggiorno</i>
<i>srednja šola</i> ‘secondary school’	<i>scuola media</i> <i>scuola media superiore</i> <i>scuola secondaria</i> <i>scuola secondaria di secondo grado</i>
<i>občinski prostorski načrt (OPN)</i> ‘municipal spatial plan’	<i>piano territoriale comunale (PTC)</i> <i>piano regolatore comunale (PRC)</i> <i>piano regolatore generale comunale (PRGC)</i>
<i>univ. dipl. polit.</i> (for <i>univerzitetni diplomirani politolog</i> ) ‘bachelor of political science’	<i>dott.</i> (for <i>dottore</i> ) <i>in scienze politiche</i> <i>laurea in scienze politiche</i> <i>laurea universitaria in scienze politiche</i> <i>univ. dipl. polit.</i> [untranslated]
<i>mag. prava</i> (for <i>magister prava</i> ) ‘master of law’	<i>dott. mag.</i> (for <i>dottore magistrale</i> ) <i>in giurisprudenza</i> <i>master in giurisprudenza</i> <i>laurea magistrale in giurisprudenza</i>

for the academic title ‘bachelor of political science’ on the other hand offers four equivalents and four strategies: *dottore in scienze politiche* for the target-oriented translation, *laurea universitaria in scienze politiche* for the source-oriented strategy, *laurea in scienze politiche* as a neutral or general translation, and the untranslated term *univ. dipl. polit.*, in accordance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention, particularly the Revised Recommendation on Criteria and Procedures for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications (UNESCO & Council of Europe, 2010). According to Article 24 of this recommendation, foreign qualification titles are generally to be presented in their original language without translation. It is worth noting that the use of untranslated terms, such as this one, reflects a form of code-switching within the text.

As stated earlier, the translator usually chooses either the source- or target-oriented strategy. In the specific case of the abbreviation *dott. mag. in giurisprudenza* ‘master of law’, both strategies are

used.<sup>2</sup> *Dott.* is a domesticating translation, whereas *mag.* is foreignizing, resulting in a hybrid or mixed multiword term. Such a selection of strategies in one term could probably be ascribed to the translator’s wish to choose a form showing respect. This seems particularly apt in formal or private correspondence.

Acronyms and abbreviations present interesting traits in the use of both short and expanded forms in individual texts. If a shortened form is expanded within one text, it is referred to as a *local* acronym or abbreviation. If, on the other hand, the short form is not expanded in the same text, it is referred to as a *non-local* acronym or abbreviation (cf. local and non-local acronyms in Hogan et al., 2021, 127). In the texts studied, it is possible to find various combinations of the presence and absence of expanded forms both in original texts and in translations, and therefore this study also covers some aspects of this field, presented the following two sections.

<sup>2</sup> As a rule, academic degrees in both languages always have the option of an abbreviation. In the case of *dottore magistrale* ‘master’s degree’, the normative sources do not provide for an abbreviation (cf. Quadro dei Titoli Italiani, 2011), probably because it is a relatively recent title. However, some use the abbreviation *dott. mag.*

### Acronyms

In almost every administrative text studied (i.e., in 97% of texts), it is possible to find a relevant number of acronyms, which are often treated with different approaches in the translated documents. Altogether, we found 157 distinct acronyms in Slovenian texts, occasionally accompanied by their expansions. The rendering of these linguistic elements into Italian varied: either solely acronyms, solely expansions, or both, depending on the translators' discretion regarding the appropriateness of each form or combination. For an overview of possible combinations of forms in various documents (cf. Kompara Lukančič et al., 2023, 121–122), whereas this section examines translation possibilities for acronyms in two characteristic documents.

The renderings of acronyms in the target language may range from source- and target-oriented translations to code switching and hypernyms. Whereas literal translation (i.e., source-oriented) and code switching (cf. Table 1 for *univ. dipl. polit.* and Table 3 for *univ. dipl. inž. arh.*) are rather common (Kompara Lukančič et al., 2023, 122),<sup>3</sup> the use of generalized hypernymic terms in the target language is an exception to the rule in the corpus studied here.

The translation strategy in which the target language hypernym is equivalent to a domain-specific term in the source language results in partial equivalence and might be seen as a device of plain language translation (Williams, 2005, 31; Hansen-Schirra et al., 2020, 103). In our corpus, this kind of strategy is present in a deliberation about the municipal detailed spatial plan; that is, a normative text in which the source-language acronym OPPN (for *občinski podrobni prostorski načrt* 'municipal detailed spatial plan') was often translated with the equivalent Italian acronym PRPC (for *piano regolatore particolareggiato comunale*), but most often a broader semantic category was used, such as *strumento urbanistico* 'urban planning tool':

(1) **OPPN** se izdelava tudi v digitalni obliki / **Lo strumento urbanistico** è compilato anche in forma digitale 'The municipal detailed spatial plan is also produced in digital form.'

The document also provides some other equivalents, presented in Chart 1: the hypernymic *suddetto strumento* 'the tool mentioned above' and *atto urbano* 'urban act', as well as the retention of only the root lexeme or partial ellipsis (*Piano* 'plan',

capitalized) and also the ellipsis of the observed feature, whereby the syntactic structure of the sentence allows for such an elliptical construction.

The deliberation about the municipal detailed spatial plan is a text of a binding nature in which the use of hypernyms results in semantically non-identical translations, allowing for a wider conceptual interpretation, and therefore their use in normative texts is not recommended, whereas they are entirely acceptable in informative texts.

If one acronym can be translated in various ways not only in different documents (Table 1) but also within a single document (Chart 1), it is equally unsurprising to encounter different translation strategies for different acronyms within that same document. To illustrate this tendency, we show how different acronyms are used and translated in yet another characteristic administrative document—specifically, a bilingual invitation to a municipal council meeting.

The source text contains six different acronyms with no expansions, for the translations of which three different strategies are used (cf. Table 2): a) retention of the source-text acronym (code switching): OŠV (for *osnovna šola in vrtec*) and CUDV (for *Center za usposabljanje, delo in varstvo*), b) expansion of the corresponding source-language short form in the target language using either the literal translation, *Comune di Ancarano* (for *Občina Ankaran – OA*), *Comune città di Capodistria* (for *Mestna občina Koper – MOK*), or the corresponding functional equivalent resulting in the target-oriented strategy *Piano regolatore generale comunale* (for *Občinski prostorski načrt – OPN*), and c) use of the corresponding target language short form: CC (for *Consiglio comunale* for the Slovenian designation *Občinski svet – OS*).

The three different approaches to translating acronyms show the uncertainties on how to address non-local acronyms that have no expanded forms in the source document. With no expansions available in the Slovenian text, the translator's extralinguistic competence plays an important role in deciding which short multicomponent terms should be expanded to make the translated text more accessible to the target audience. In this particular case, it is not clear why the translators opted for particular translation strategies in individual cases. Given the fact that the text is intended for a local community and is of informative value, the variation in approaches offers an interesting overview of translation possibilities. However, in texts of a more binding nature, it is advisable to follow the same

3 Kompara Lukančič et al. (2023, 111) specify that the "practice of code-switching is commonly used for acronyms denoting various projects, laws, and institutions cited in normative texts to promulgate rules, amendments, and supplements to documents, or issue resolutions and decrees."

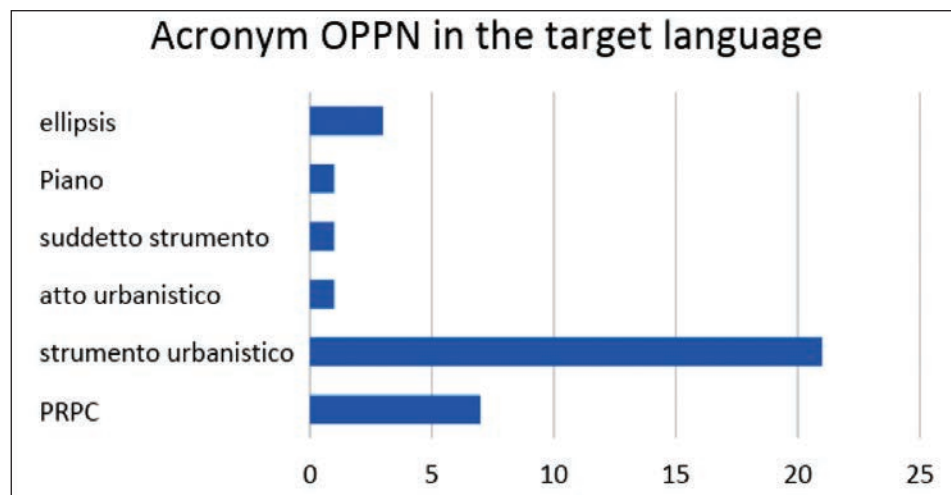


Chart 1: The Slovenian acronym OPPN in the target language.

translation approach throughout the text, taking into account the various parameters that affect the translation process.

### Abbreviations

Abbreviations are also features often used in administrative texts. In our case, they are present in almost all (97%) of the 114 texts that we analyzed (cf. Lenassi, 2022, 49). The abbreviations found in the texts analyzed cover forty Slovenian general terms that refer to legal documents (e.g., čl. for člen and art. for articolo 'article'), commercial law (i.e., d.o.o. for družba z omejeno odgovornostjo and s.r.l. for società a responsabilità limitata 'limited liability company'), a variety of aspects of life in a municipality (e.g., tel. št. for telefonska številka and tel. for telefono 'telephone number'), metadiscourse markers (e.g., itd. for in tako dalje and ecc. for ec-cetera 'et cetera'), and so on. These are translated into Italian with thirty-one abbreviations, whereas the remaining nine Slovenian abbreviations are translated with the expanded form. However, the most frequently used abbreviations are the ones that

denote academic degrees. There are eighty-seven Slovenian abbreviations for academic degrees, corresponding to forty-nine abbreviations in Italian texts, with the remaining thirty-eight being verbalized through expanded forms.

From the translation point of view, the general abbreviations present no special issues, whereas the ones that refer to academic degrees offer some interesting aspects; these are presented as a sample in Table 3:

Table 3 shows that there are five options found in the texts for the translation of one degree. *Laurea universitaria in architettura* is a source-oriented translation, whereas *laurea in architettura* can be considered neutral or general. *Dott. in architettura* reflects the Italian school system and thus the target-oriented strategy. In this specific case, the target-oriented translation into Italian always leads us to use the title *dottore in* + discipline. Because the title *doktor* in Slovenian, similar to almost all other European languages, corresponds to PhD, when we have to translate a university title into Italian it is preferable to translate it literally (i.e., the source-oriented *Laureato universitario in architettura*) instead

Table 2: Examples of different translation strategies within one text.

Slovenian text	Italian text
OŠV 'Primary School and Preschool'	OŠV
CUDV 'Education, Work, and Care Center'	CUDV
OA 'Municipality of Ancaran'	Comune di Ancarano
MOK 'City Municipality of Koper'	Comune città di Capodistria
OPN 'Municipal Spatial Plan'	Piano regolatore generale comunale
OS 'Council Committee'	CC

Table 3: Translations of bachelor of science in architecture.

Slovenian texts	Italian Texts
<i>univ. dipl. inž. arh.</i> (for <i>univerzitetni diplomirani inženir arhitekture</i> )	<i>laur. univ. in architettura</i> (for <i>laurea universitaria in architettura</i> ) <i>laurea in architettura</i> <i>dott. in architettura</i> (for <i>dottore in architettura</i> ) <i>architetto</i> <i>univ. dipl. inž. arh.</i>

of *Dottore in architettura* (i.e., with the title that is obtained in Italy according to the Italian education system).

The term *architetto* 'architect' is an example of overgeneralization, which does not denote an academic degree, but is a general term to refer to persons with a degree in architecture. The last option (i.e., an untranslated term) is the strategy recommended in Article 24 of the Revised Recommendation on Criteria and Procedures for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications (UNESCO & Council of Europe, 2010), as mentioned in a preceding section (cf. Selected terms and their translation equivalents). In our corpus there are untranslated academic titles in some lists of names, such as the list of persons responsible for specific areas of municipal administration, which further reinforces the presence of code-switching, a phenomenon already observed in other documents (cf. Table 1 and Table 2).

Five distinct translation strategies, as identified in the translation of the abbreviated title for *bachelor of science in architecture* (shown in Table 3), are consistently observed throughout the entire corpus

for other academic degrees in various disciplines. To examine this phenomenon across all collected texts, we specifically considered titles containing the term *univ. dipl.* (for *univerzitetni diplomirani*) + the noun deriving from the corresponding discipline (*arhitekt* 'architect', *ekonomist* 'economist', *sociolog* 'sociologist', etc.). *Univ. dipl.* is the most frequently used first two items of multi-component nouns denoting degrees in the list and thus the most appropriate lexical units to show translation trends. These two abbreviations refer to pre-Bologna academic titles, as is evident from the List of Professional Titles for Bachelor's Programs Accredited before June 11th, 2004 in Slovenia (*Seznam strokovnih naslovov po dodiplomskih študijskih programih, akreditiranih pred 11. 6. 2004*, 2015) and which could be acquired until September 30th, 2016 (cf. *Univerza v Mariboru, Filozofska fakulteta*, 2023). In the Bologna process, these terms were changed to *dipl. + noun (UN)*, as is evident from the List of Research Titles and Their Abbreviations (cf. *Seznam znanstvenih naslovov in njihovih okrajšav*, 2015). However, the term *UN* is only rarely used in

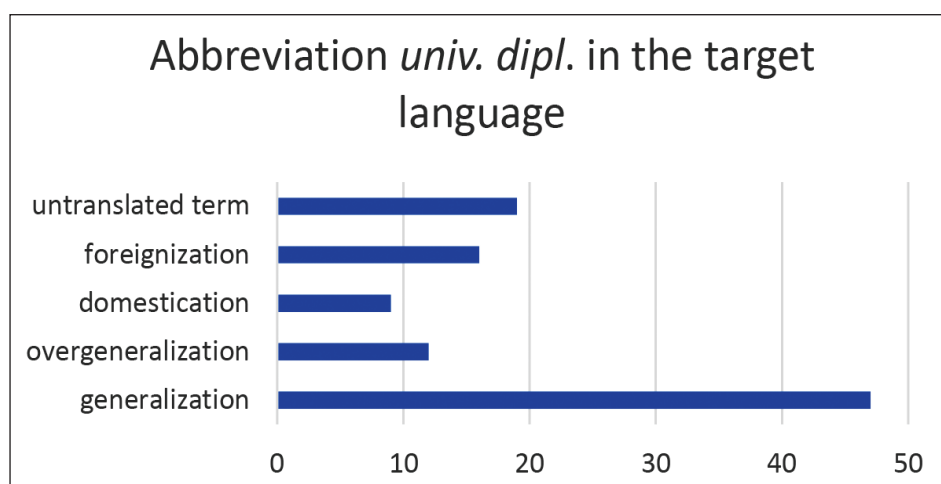


Chart 2: Translation of abbreviated academic degrees with *univ. dipl.* from Slovenian into Italian.

the corpus to denote a research-oriented bachelor's degree, as opposed to *VS*, which refers to a title obtained for an applied bachelor's degree (cf. Lenassi, 2022, 64–65), and therefore we could not consider *UN* and *VS* in our research. Instead, we focused on the term *univ. dipl.*, which clearly reflects five possible types of renderings into Italian, as presented in Chart 2.

Chart 2 shows that, in the absence of clear guidelines on how to translate academic degrees, translators prefer to resort to neutral or general translations such as *laurea in* 'bachelor's degree in' + discipline. The strategy of using untranslated terms is used in only two documents, which, however, are so extensive that the abbreviations used in them total 19%. Given the limited number of documents in which academic titles remain untranslated, it might be said that this strategy is not widely used and that the neutral translation is considered the most appropriate one by translators. However, as pointed out in the following section, to preserve the legislator's (i.e. municipal authorities') will and concepts in texts of a normative value, it would be necessary to adopt the source-oriented strategy—that is, foreignization.

### The importance of clear and precise terminological solutions

To avoid translators' conundrums and potential misunderstandings on the part of the recipients, consistent and uniform terminology is required in legislative and administrative texts; that is, in texts containing binding provisions for the recipients (municipal statutes, regulations, decrees, and other administrative measures). Therefore, in such cases it would be preferable to apply source-oriented strategies (formal equivalence: literal translation and calques). On the other hand, when legal texts are translated for informative purposes—that is, in order to make known or disseminate certain content or acts that are not binding for the recipients—target-oriented strategies, aimed at being better perceived by a wider audience, would be more suitable. In these cases, it is advisable to use equivalent terms present in the target language or to use paraphrasing to make the translated text more understandable. As mentioned above, particularly with regard to informative texts, the translation strategy is influenced by whether the text recipients are intended solely as the Italian minority in Slovenia or extended to other Italian speakers, who often would not understand source-oriented terminology.

The translation of a legal text involves not only a transformation from one language into another, but, in some cases, also a transformation from the language, legal concepts, and terminology of a

starting or source system to the same features of another legal system of reference; in this case, the Italian one. However, in the case in question, terms and denominations proper to the Slovenian legal system are translated, freely created, or desired by the Slovenian legislator. We believe that the translator has no power or mandate to take action on the merits of a choice that belongs only to the legislator—that is to say, the sovereignty of the people of that particular country. Therefore, we believe that, in translating legislative and administrative texts for regulatory purposes, one must opt for or resort to source-oriented translation strategies. A translation oriented to the source text and (the original) legal system in such cases is necessary and constitutes the translation strategy that best respects the will expressed by the legislator (Paolucci, 2020, 114; 2021).

The legislative and administrative acts are issued and, where necessary, translated, to be known and to be (compulsorily) observed by all the members of that particular community. It is above all for this reason that the terms contained therein must be technical, be used consistently, and have a unique meaning. The use of synonyms, in fact, at the level of normative legal texts, is not only misleading, but also incorrect. In contrast to normative texts, informative texts allow for more translator creativity: in translating certain terms for information purposes, such as newspaper articles, magazines, interviews, and brochures on legal matters, the use of synonyms and hypernyms is often useful to avoid repetition and make the text more fluent and usable. In this way, translated texts with informative content become accessible not only to members of the minority but also to anyone proficient in Italian. For instance, articles discussing topics from Slovenia, which might interest a wider Italian readership, especially those in the neighboring Friuli Venezia Giulia region, are often featured in Italian newspapers.

Therefore, when translating (administrative) texts written to inform potential readers—that is, to disclose certain content or acts that are not binding for the recipients—target-oriented strategies aimed at better comprehension by a wider audience would be preferable.

### CONCLUSION

If an administrative text is translated to have a normative function and is binding for the recipients, a source-oriented strategy should be used; that is, a translation close to the original text and legal order; for example, *srednja šola* translated as *scuola media* 'secondary school'. In the case of texts with an informative function and therefore not having a binding character

for the recipients, one could act with greater flexibility, also allowing target-oriented strategies that are closer to the language and terminology that is appropriate for the target language and takes into account the target (legal) system; for example, *srednja šola* translated as *scuola secondaria* or *scuola secondaria di secondo grado* or *scuola media superiore*. In the first case, choosing a single term in a coordinated and coherent way is required, and therefore a univocal solution (i.e., *scuola media*) is proposed here. In the second case, the use of synonyms is allowed because they are often useful, and so terms such as *scuola secondaria* or *scuola secondaria di secondo grado* or *scuola media superiore* are suggested.

As far as the translation of the acronyms is concerned, the study shows that, although it would be advisable to resort to the source-oriented strategy (i.e., a literal translation) to maintain the characteristics of the source-language administrative system and legislation in normative texts, translators sometimes also opt for code switching (cf. Kompara Lukančič et al., 2023) and hypernymy. Hypernymic terms result in partial equivalence and are thus not recommended in normative texts, whereas in informative texts a translator may provide a wider range of possibilities.

Finally, the study of abbreviations for academic degrees shows that, in the absence of clear guidelines for translators, the preferred strategy is that of generalization—which, however, does not reflect the source-language legislation and culture, as expected in texts of a more binding nature.

At this point, it should be emphasized that our study is a pilot initiative, and larger-scale analyses are currently underway. Recognizing the constraints inherent in analyzing a restricted number of texts and the resulting findings, one of our next tasks to be carried out to ensure terminological appropriateness and thus the implementation of the rights of the Italian-speaking community in Slovenia, is to systematically review the key terminology in normative texts in administration, education, commercial law, the health system, and so on and to standardize them by means of interdisciplinary cooperation among various experts. With the planned initiatives, the aim is also to raise awareness among speakers of Italian as a second language in the bilingual region regarding the significance of a minority language and translation solutions that accurately capture the diverse aspects of the majority population's lived experiences.

## TASSA DI SOGGIORNO ALI TASSA TURISTICA? TERMINOLOŠKI IZZIVI PRI PREVAJANJU V ITALIJANŠČINO V DVOJEZIČNIH OBČINAH SLOVENSKE ISTRE

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### POVZETEK

*Članek obravnava dvojezičnost v slovenski Istri, natančneje v občinah Ankaran, Koper, Izola in Piran, kjer sta slovenščina in italijanščina uradna jezika. V ospredje postavlja italijanske prevodne različice upravnih besedil, ki so zagotovljene pripadnikom italijanske manjšine, pri čemer so preučene značilnosti dokumentov, prevedenih iz slovenščine v italijanščino, dostopnih na spletnih straneh naštetih občin. Študija se najprej osredotoča na vprašanje o terminološki koherenci pri prevodih upravnih besedil, še zlasti tistih z normativno vrednostjo, ki jih morajo naslovniki spoštovati. Po pregledu teoretskega ozadja in prikazu prevodnih ustreznih nekaterih v celoti izpisanih leksikalnih prvin in tudi nekaterih krajših leksikalnih enot, kot so okrajšave in kratice, uporabljenih v normativnih in informativnih besedilih, prispevek osvetljuje problem terminološke enotnosti. Temu sledi predlog ustreznih prevajalskih strategij, namenjenih zagotavljanju dosledne rabe upravne terminologije in jasnih besedil. Natančneje, za doslednejše upoštevanje volje in konceptov, ki jih je izrazil zakonodajalec na državni ravni ali tudi pristojni občinski organi, bi bilo v normativnih besedilih primerno uporabiti potujitvene prevajalske strategije, tj. usmerjene v izvirni jezik in kulturo. Pri informativnih besedilih pa je dopustna večja prožnost, kot je raba strategij, osredotočenih na ciljni jezik in kulturo, tj. podomačenje, pa tudi raba sopomenk in nadpomenk, da bi se izognili ponavljanju in tvorili bolj tekoče besedilo.*

**Ključne besede:** italijanščina, prevajalske strategije, terminološka enotnost, kratica, okrajšava, korpus

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