

Manuela Cipri¹ • Giuseppe Gaetano Castorina (†)**A Eurolinguistic Approach to Terminology**

Abstract

Within a Eurolinguistic framework, the introduction of Europeanisms does not mean contamination. On the contrary, it is important to devise a simple and international register of the language that will replace local, idiomatic and gender-specific terminology. Modern translators have powerful technological means to optimize translation; and databases, specialized corpora and the web permit them to attain optimal onomasiological solutions. The phonological aspects that are relevant to the enhancement of the receptive skills of Eurocitizens enabling them to see a larger number of similarities and connections among European languages, must be simple and user-friendly. The observation of dialects within a lexical Eurofamily is an ideal context for highlighting interesting convergences and sound changes from a synchronic perspective. Eurosynonyms clearly show the variability of vowel sounds, and a number of some systematic sound changes. For example, the Estonian *puhvel* compared to the Swedish *buffel* exemplifies the equivalence of /p/, /b/, /v/ and /f/; Gaelic *bual* and the Albanian *bualli* the loss of the intervocalic labial, the Neapolitan *ufalo* the loss of the initial sound (*apheresis*).

Sommaire

Dans un cadre eurolinguistique, l'introduction des européismes ne comporte pas la contamination. Au contraire, il est très important de concevoir un registre de la langue, qui soit simple et international et qui puisse remplacer la terminologie locale, idiomatique et spécifique au genre. Les traducteurs modernes ont un moyen technologique puissant pour optimiser la traduction. En plus, les bases de données, les corpus spécialisés, et le web permettent d'obtenir des solutions onomasiologiques optimales. Les aspects phonologiques qui sont pertinents aux capacités réceptives des euro-citoyens et qui leur permettent de voir plusieurs similarités et liens entre les langues Européennes, doivent être simples et «user-friendly». L'observation des dialectes dans une euro-famille lexicale est un contexte idéal pour mettre en évidence des convergences intéressantes et des changements de son du point de vue synchronique. Les Euro-synonymes présentent clairement la variabilité des sons vocaliques, et des changements systématiques de son. Par exemple, l'estonien *puhvel* par rapport au suédois *buffel* montre l'équivalence de /p/, /b/, /v/ et /f/; le gaélique *bual* et l'albanais *bualli* mettent en évidence une perte de la labiale intervocalique et le napolitain *ufalo* montre la perte du son initial (*aphérèse*).

Zusammenfassung

Im Rahmen der Eurolinguistik bedeutet die Einführung von Europäismen nicht Kontamination. Im Gegenteil, es ist wichtig, ein einfaches und internationales Register der Sprache zu entwickeln und lokale, idiomatische, genderspezifische Terminologie zu ersetzen. Moderne Übersetzer verfügen über leistungsfähige technologische Mittel zur Optimierung von Übersetzungen; auch Datenbanken, spezialisierte Korpora und das Internet erlauben es, optimale onomasiologische Lösungen zu erreichen. Die phonologischen Aspekte, die für die Verbesserung der rezeptiven Fertigkeiten der Eurobürger relevant sind und es ihnen ermöglichen, eine größere Anzahl von Gemeinsamkeiten und Verbindungen zwischen den europäischen Sprachen zu erkennen, müssen einfach und benutzerfreundlich sein. Die Betrachtung der Dialekte innerhalb einer lexikalischen Eurofamilie ist ein idealer Rahmen, um interessante Konvergenzen und Lautänderungen aus einer synchronen Perspektive hervorzuheben. Eurosynonyme zeigen deutlich die Variabilität der Vokale und einige systematische Lautänderungen. Das estnische *puhvel* ist im Vergleich zum schwedischen *buffel* beispielhaft für die Gleichwertigkeit von /p/, /b/, /f/ und /v/; gälisch *bual* und das albanische *bualli* für den Verlust des intervokalischen Labials, das neapolitanische *ufalo*, für den Verlust des Anlauts (*Aphärese*).

¹ This article was conceived together with my colleague Giuseppe Gaetano Castorina, linguist and President of the Association Eurolinguistica-Sud, who passed away in July 2013. This research was presented by us during the convention held in Pappenheim in April 2013.

For some time now the cultured languages of Europe have many common voices, most evident in politics and in philosophy, and by philosophy I also mean the kind of philosophy found in everyday conversation, even conversation of a less cultured, prepared or artificial kind. I'm not referring here to the voices pertinent to the sciences, which are common to almost all of Europe... But a vast number of those words that express things that are more subtle, and let me say it, more spiritual than what could be expressed by the classic languages or by our own languages in past centuries; or rather, they express the same things expressed in those languages, but more subtly and more finely in light of the progress and the refinement of perception and metaphysics and human sciences in recent times; a vast amount, I tell you, of these voices are the same in all of the cultured languages of Europe, apart from small particular modifications, mostly to their endings. They thus form a kind of smaller language, or a vocabulary which is absolutely universal". [1214]²

In this short passage, Leopardi underlines the importance of “Europeanisms” that “all derive from the same European civilisation and science”, a very similar outlook to that of Eurolinguistics, whose primary objective is to promote the common linguistic and cultural patrimony in order to reinforce the sense of “*European togetherness*”³.

The treaty of Lisbon, which came into force in December 2009 as an embodiment of directives, recommendations and documents from the Commission and the European Parliament, sets communication in one’s mother tongue and in other European languages in first and second place respectively in the list of eight key competences necessary for personal fulfilment. The institutional pluralism of the European Union calls for a solution that respects the linguistic rights of all European citizens.

Communication in the mother tongue is the ability to express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written form (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and to interact linguistically in an appropriate and creative way in a full range of societal and cultural contexts; in education and training, work, home and pleasure. There are essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to this competence: Communicative competence results from the acquisition of the mother tongue, which is intrinsically linked to the development of an individual’s cognitive ability to interpret the world and relate to others. Communication in the mother tongue requires an individual to have knowledge of vocabulary, functional grammar and the functions of language. It includes an awareness of the main types of verbal interaction, a range of literary and non-literary texts, the main features of different styles and registers of language, and the variability of language and communication in different contexts.

Individuals should possess the skills to communicate both orally and in writing in a variety of communicative situations, and to monitor and adapt their own communication to the requirements of any given situation. This competence also includes the abilities to distinguish and use different types of texts, to search for, collect and process information, to use aids, and to formulate and express one’s oral and written arguments in a convincing way that is appropriate to the context. A positive attitude towards communication in the mother tongue involves a disposition to critical and

² Leopardi, Giacomo, *Zibaldone* (1817-1832). The number in square brackets refers to the pages of Leopardi’s manuscript.

³ Europeanisms, European togetherness and identity, Thesis 7: Such insight into the common linguistic and cultural basis of European languages will foster a sense of European togetherness, Puskin Essay www.eurolinguistica-sud.org (1999), an essential requirement for international communication in light of the geolinguistic and socioeconomic changes in recent years.

constructive dialogue, an appropriation of aesthetic qualities and a willingness to strive for them, and an interest in interaction with others. This implies an awareness of the impact of language on others and a need to understand and use language in a positive and socially responsible manner.

Competence in the mothertongue language and in other languages is defined in such detail that it brings to light the profound interactions that must be activated in examining further the nature, structure and evolution of both the mother tongue and of the other languages that are studied. The creation of a linguistic register with a simplified, Europeanised grammar and a widely shared vocabulary can contribute to multilingualism on a large scale while protecting and enriching each individual mother tongue as a primary source of Eurolinguistic competence.

The more than 2,000 combining formes listed in *Webster*, the numerous suffixes and prefixes, the thousands of words that possess analogous semantic value, with variations that do not impede inter-understanding, should form part of the basic knowledge common to all European citizens. Such an added conveyance level augments the communicative span of the mother tongue without interfering with the other creative, cultural, expressive and symbolic values of its other registers.

Words in everyday use are a key to obtaining important linguistic and cultural insights, and can be both useful in the construction of an international register and bode well for a common European register (Castorina 2009: 112f.). The Italian word *ippodromo*, for example, is formed from the confixes *ippo-*, which means ‘horse’ and *-dromo-* ‘race’. The *ippodromo* is the place where horse races are run. The term is present with minor variations in numerous European languages: *hippodrome* (en), *hipódromo* (es), *hippodrome* (fr), *Hippodrom* (de), *hipodrom* (al), *hipódromo* (pt), *hippodrom* (da), *hippodroom* (nl), *hipodromo* (es), *hippodrom* (no), *hipodrom* (pl), *hippodrom* (sv), *hipodrom* (tk). The presence of the morphemes *ippo-* and *dromo-* bestows on the noun a higher European Diffusion Index, which can also be found in other common language nouns: in Italian *velodromo*, *aerodromo*, *cinodromo*, *autodromo*, *motodromo*, *dromedario*, in specialist vocabulary such as *sindrome* (composed of *syn-* ‘together’ and *drómos* ‘race’), and in a group of symptoms that describe an individual’s critical condition, *lossodromia* (English *loxodromic curve*) - ‘that runs askew’ (a curved line that connects two points on the surface of the earth’s sphere which always makes an equal angle with every meridian), *lossodromico*, *prodromo* (that runs ahead, a messenger), *ortodromia* (running the shortest distance between two points on the earth’s sphere), *palidromo*, *polidromo*, *prodromo*, *prodromico*, *psammodoro*, *anadromo* (fish that runs backwards – a fish that travels up rivers from the sea to lay its eggs) and its antonym *catadromo* (fish that travels down rivers to lay its eggs in the sea), *cosmodromo* (launch base for spaceships), *emerodromo* (a runner that undertook very long paths), *lampadodromia* (running with torches). The number of words that we normally use (often without realising their semantic values or the importance of their components with regard to a reorganisation of the lexicon to acquire Eurolinguistic competence) is extremely large (Salvi/Cipri/Castorina 2011: 4). The Italian word *acido*, for example, contains the confix *ac-* which is of Indo-European origin, but which in Greek is *akē* - ‘point’. The same affix appears (denoting a sense of something pungent or acute) in *acciaio*, *acerbo*, *aceto*, *aculeo*, *acre*, *acuminato*, *acuire*, *acrimonia*, *esacerbare* and in the affixes *acanto-*, *acetil-*, *acro-*, *acuti-*, *acuto-*, *-ace*, as a component of words such as *acrobata* (literally one who walks on the tips of his or her toes); *Acropoli*, *acrostico*, *acronimo*, *acacia* (lit. thorny tree, containing quills); *acanto*, from *akantha* ‘thorn’, although it is probable that *akantha* derives from *akanthos* (*akē* + *anthos*), which literally means thorny flower. The phonetic variant *ag-* also adds to this lexical family *ago*, *agro*, *agrume*, *agrifoglio*, *agopuntura* (with /g/ in Italian and Albanian, /k/ in the other languages, e.g. *acupuncture* in English) and English words like *aglet* (shoe tip), *ague* (acute fever), *eager*, *garlic*, *vinegar*, *auger*, *garfish*, *to gore*. Another example is *Acne*, which like *acme* derives from the Greek *akmē* ‘culminating point’.

There is the precious stock of Greek, Latin and Neo-Latin words that, from a denotation perspective, are equivalent to words in other European languages. Toponyms, odonyms, eponyms, hypernyms, meronyms, names that contain international elements, for example *Garibaldi*, which contains an “element” of the English words *garlic* and *vinegar*, *Antonio*, which leads to Europeanisms such as *antologia*, or mentor an eponym which by virtue of a universal knowledge of Homer is widely known in many cultures.

Those words that English or French have mutated from Latin or from other European languages and then given back to Europe and to the world as Anglicisms, Frenchisms, internationalisms. Significant examples of words “given back” and adaptations in Italian include: *costituzione*, *mozione*, *opposizione*, *ultimatum*, *conservatore*, *liberale*, *comitato*, *conformista*, *assolutista*, *isolazionismo*, *obiettore*, *patriota*, *rivoluzionario*, *federalista*, *terrorismo*, *cosmopolita*, *nazionalizzare*.

The quality of the International Register, if Italian is taken as a point of reference, is proportional to the degree of effort employed in building on our knowledge of the language and in the reconstruction of its semantic families by virtue of the natural gift of inference that one has for one’s mother tongue, and then in the reconstruction of the Eurosemantic families, through reordering and enlarging the paradigms with words from other languages that share the same origin and among which key words can be found that assist in tracing and understanding others; for example the Italian words *sedere*, *assidersi*, *sessione*, *assiduo* (who sits beside continuously), *assessore*, *assise*, *dissidente* (who sits apart), *presidente* (who sits in front, who governs); the English *sit*, *session*, *assessor*, *assiduous*, *consider*, *dissident*, *president*; the Spanish *sentarse*, *sesión*, *asesor*, *asiduo*, *asisia*, *presidente*; the French *assidu*, *session*, *président*; the German *Sitzung*, *Präsident*; the Portuguese *assíduo*; the Polish *sesja*; the Polish and Slovakian *asesor*; the Swedish *sesion*, *president*; the Albanian *president*; the Czech *prezident*; the Dutch *forzitter*; the Norwegian *president*; the Lithuanian *prezidents*; and so on, including terms that at first sight seem unconnected but that within the paradigm reveal their affinity and the reasons for their belonging together, such as *assess*, *assessment*, to the extent that an assessment implies one or more “sittings” of a Commission or a Council, and that there exists a correlation with terms such as *sessione*, *assise* and *assessore*, who, from an etymological perspective, is ‘he who sits beside, or who participates in the sittings’. It is also noticeable how, within a Eurosemantic family, an awareness or knowledge of the phonetic changes that can be observed is favourable to and consolidates increased inference ability.

The grouping of terms in different languages reveals the connections between them and sheds light on the paths and evolutions of meanings and signifiers. Words reciprocally become clearer and lexical competence is developed, together with interest for semantics and applied Eurosemantics.

The ability to interpret and understand oral and written passages both in one’s own language and in others increases in measure with reflection on and analysis of the transparency of words and structures, with strategies for rendering transparent, memorising and acquiring those that are unclear through memory and acquisition helpers. It also interacts positively on the ability to speak and write and on one’s accumulation of cognitive, linguistic, communicative and intercultural competences aimed at propitiating integrated learning of language and content.

It is important to highlight the characteristics and specificities of different language registers in relation to the contacts, functions, objectives and recipients of communication and in relation to the register for international communication. Demonstrating the advantages of a multilingual approach, with its modalities and the opportunities they provide for perceiving and seeing interesting aspects of reality (together with the connections and similarities, differences and diverse perspectives which

are always instructive and revealing) underlines that such an approach not only represents a problem-solving resource at a linguistic level, but is also necessary for the true fulfillment of European citizenship, for citizens' rights to fair and equal living, social and working conditions within a multilingual community.

The costs of an absence of multilingual training and the ability to fully interact at a European and global level, or to be able to avail of conditions and instruments that facilitate international communication, are damaging not only from an economic viewpoint but also at a psychological, sociological and cultural level; whereas the advantages of a multilingualism that is sustainable, articulated, flexible, functional and that contains codes for communication behaviour, supported by precise linguistic and metalinguistic competences, serves to facilitate the accelerated learning of new languages which are necessary for the furthering of professional goals, and this is so rewarding that it is certainly worthwhile to take the trouble to do so and not underestimate any proposal or initiative.

In conclusion, in this era of globalisation and of the crossing of geopolitical barriers spurred on by the evolution of information technology, the need to overcome linguistic barriers represents an absolute priority. Information and its quality is inherently related to the quality of language and linguistic competence, and its development is increasingly linked to the quantity and level of interaction between languages. Multilingual ability is no longer simply a valuable bonus but has now truly become an integral part of development itself.

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