

Alenka Kocbek

### **A meme-based model for translating technical texts**

The paper proposes a model for translating technical texts which has been designed by triangulating various translation approaches. It follows in large traits Snell Hornby's integrated approach, as it foresees a sequence of stages each addressing one specific aspect of a text with an interdisciplinary focus. It furthermore adopts the functionalist view stressing the importance of the prospective function, i.e. skopos according to Reiß and Vermeer (1984) as the decisive factor determining the type of translation to be produced. Originally developed to be used in the translation of contracts (Kocbek 2009), the paper suggests to apply the procedure across technical texts, from more complex ones, such as contracts, to relatively simpler ones, e.g. recipes. Given their cultural embeddedness texts are viewed as culturemes, i.e. culturally conditioned patterns of communicative behaviour according to Oksaar (1988) and/or formalized, socially and juridically embedded phenomena, existing in a particular form and function in a given culture (Vermeer 1983: 8; Nord 1997: 34). The model proposes to observe the text as cultureme by splitting it into several levels and identify its specific features shaped by established cultural practices, which according to Chesterman (1997: 7) have the status of memes – units of cultural transfer, which can only be transmitted verbally across cultures through translation. By analysing the source text and parallel target culture texts it aims at identifying the memes on the extra-linguistic (the impact of the relevant culture, e.g. in the case of contracts of the governing law, or, in the case of recipes, the culinary traditions reflecting cultural aspects such as religious norms or historical influences) and linguistic levels, that is on the macro-structural (e.g. contents and consequently extent of the text as required by or customary in a given culture) and micro-structural (i.e. lexical, syntactic, pragmatic, stylistic) levels. The memetic structures thus established are then compared and their universal memes, as well as their divergences mapped. Finally, in drafting the target text in accordance with the skopos, the relevant memes of both the source and the target cultures are combined, i.e. source text memes are preserved, mutated, eliminated and/or substituted by target culture memes. In conclusion, the model foresees that given the skopos, memes pertaining to both the source and the target culture can co-exist on various levels of the target text, resulting in a more or less pronounced cultural-hybrid.