

## ERRORS AND DIFFICULTIES IN TRANSLATING MARITIME TERMINOLOGY

IOANA-RALUCA VIȘAN\*

<https://orcid.org/0009-0005-4500-865X>

CONSTANTA MARITIME UNIVERSITY

**Abstract:** This paper is part of an extensive research project on maritime language translation, which I consider to be a crucial but neglected area in translation studies, despite the maritime industry's significant relevance in today's world. It is essential to note that the maritime industry is vital to global trade and economic growth, providing employment opportunities worldwide and playing an increasingly important role in marine environmental protection. Although maritime activity generates a considerable amount of translation work, there is still a shortage of empirical research on the challenges of translating maritime genres, particularly with regards to terminology. This paper aims to address this gap by identifying the main difficulties encountered in translating maritime terminology and common errors that translators tend to make. It also draws useful comparisons between specialized texts written in English and their Romanian counterparts (and vice versa), highlighting the contrasts between the two languages and the impact of maritime terminology.

**Keywords:** maritime language, maritime terms, maritime texts, translationese

### 1. Introduction

Translating maritime language is a complex activity closely related to text typology, given the great diversity of maritime documents, the highly specialization level and a wide range of subjects from maritime trade to engineering aspects and activities.

Maritime terminology is the most visible and striking linguistic feature of maritime language as a specialized language and one of the primary sources of difficulty in translating maritime texts.

For instance, a translator lacking good knowledge of the maritime field, may not be aware of the fact that a kitchen on board is called a *galley*, that walls are referred to as *bulkheads*, a chimney is called a *funnel*, a window on board is a *porthole* and the noun *hands* in *All hands on deck* does not refer to the parts of the body but to the crewmembers on board.

---

\* ioanaralucavisan@yahoo.com



The author has no conflicts of interest to declare  
This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License.

It should be pointed out that the maritime field in translation still lacks empirical studies of the nature and translation-oriented difficulty of terminology in maritime genres, including both maritime and other specialized terms. Case studies should centre on selected maritime terminology in specific branches of maritime industry, maritime semantic fields or maritime genres. In maritime language texts there can be interaction with other fields of knowledge (i.e., engineering, legal, telecommunications, construction of waterborne vehicles, safety, etc., and even medical if a text from an international medical guide for ships is to be considered) which suggests that specialized language from other domains may be as prominent as maritime discourse features in maritime texts. The question arises to what extent this is the case and what level of difficulty it presents for maritime language translators. This question requires a detailed description of terminological features and their associated translation-oriented difficulty in a representative corpus of maritime texts. Maritime translation should be referred to as ‘pragmatic translation’ since the aim of several maritime texts in translation (i.e., institutional texts such as COLREG, MARPOL, IMO SMCP 2001, etc.) is to render the message as efficiently and as accurately as possible the focus being laid on the content of the message. Thus, maritime language translation is focused on the transfer of specialist maritime knowledge which is done by a translator who must ideally possess “the knowledge, the competence and the recognised status of an expert” (Snell-Hornby 1992: 10), in this way being assigned a certain level of competence which is “expertise itself, where intuition takes over, an intuition that is trusted because it is constantly tested and refined” (Schäffner 2004: 679).

## **2. Types of Maritime Texts**

It should be pointed out that maritime translation is rooted in its practical utilization, which is driven by social demand. Understanding maritime language must account not only for the nature of maritime texts, but also the discursive processes by which these texts are produced and interpreted. Therefore, a complete understanding requires recognizing the societal function that a particular maritime text serves, the social and institutional goals that led to its creation, and understanding the relationship between different maritime texts in terms of their linguistic similarities and differences as well as social functions. Viewed from a systemic functional perspective, maritime texts should be related to their context of situation and context of culture.

There are many texts linked to several maritime activities, which frequently need to be translated. These include: amendments, codes, conventions, regulations, technical manuals, user guides, scientific articles, shipping documents (i.e., sea transport documents), certificates, employment contracts, etc. It is as important as useful to mention that most maritime documents are generally written in English as the dominating language of maritime industry and translated into Romanian as the dominated language. In the position of dominating language, English holds the key, partly because of the number of texts considered universal which are written in this language.

On the other hand, Romanian as the dominated language has little to offer to the maritime industry from the translation point of view. In this context, the role of translation and translators is crucial since they are perhaps among the first persons to be aware of the consequences of the dramatic changes in technology and in the organization of the economies and societies at national and international level: “[...] translation, and by extension, translation studies, is ideally placed to understand both the translation movement that is globalization and the translational movement which is anti-globalization” (Cronin 2003: 2).

Additionally, Casanova (2010: 286) categorizes four different translation scenarios and argues that the significance of translation in each scenario depends on the relationship between the source and target languages, the author, and the translator. These scenarios include: a) translating a text from a dominant language into a dominated language, b) translating a text from a dominated language into a dominant language, c) translating a text from a dominant language into another dominant language, and d) translating a text from a dominated language into another dominated language (a rare occurrence). Casanova is particularly interested in the first two scenarios which she analyses under the headings of “Translation as accumulation of capital” and “Translation as consecration.”

Newmark (1988: 151) classifies specialized texts into two categories. The first is technical texts which are "universal" because they contain terms common to all languages and are not specific to one culture. The second category is institutional translation which covers areas such as politics, finance, government, law, etc. These terms are more cultural because they refer to specific cultural or historical phenomena unique to a certain society or culture. According to Davidson (2010: 156), institutional discourse refers to communication habits that are reinforced by an institution, which offer clear guidelines on how communication should take place, particularly for those familiar with the institution. In the context of maritime translation, these institutional interactions challenge the notion of neutrality because translators are tasked with providing a service while also serving as agents of authority and control. Institutional texts such as amendments, codes, conventions, regulations, and other documents produced by organizations like the International Maritime Organization and the European Commission are examples of such institutional discourse.

As I have mentioned in a previous study (Vişan 2021b: 16, 109), maritime texts should be generally considered from three different perspectives which are interrelated and must be all taken in consideration in translation. My research is based on Gerzymisch-Arbogast (2008) and Daniel Dejica (2008, 2010). Thus, the first perspective is the atomistic level of a maritime text where the smallest micro-structural features (i.e., terms and terminological units) are identified. The second perspective is the hol-atomistic level of a maritime text where the text features within and beyond the sentence must be identified. The third perspective includes the holistic level where the understanding of maritime texts involves integrating world or domain knowledge, so that texts gain coherence. The idea has to be pointed out that raising awareness of these text levels will enable translators to tackle translation problems from the perspective of terms (atomistic level), from the perspective of information sequencing (holistic level) and from the perspective of background knowledge. Thus, translators should integrate

all these perspectives in order to produce a coherent target text. A maritime text should be considered in terms of its register since register differences may be signalled by the differences in grammar or terminology.

### 3. Maritime Terminology, Context and Translation

When a language is translated, its reality takes on a new form, and although there may be some losses in the process, these are less significant in technical translations where the technical vocabulary is limited and specific, and there can be a direct equivalence between concepts. It is often assumed that the meaning of a word is fixed by its dictionary definition, but this is an illusion. In reality, definitions follow the usage and context of a word. Dictionaries only record the usage and do not determine or dictate it. However, dictionaries serve as anchors that help restrict changes in meaning (Bell 1991: 101). Thus, in ESP, words have a specific and concrete meaning, whereas in general English, they can be used both in their literal and figurative sense.

The translator is required to understand the context in which words in a text are used. Newmark (1991: 87) suggests that certain words are more dependent on context than others, and that the translation of words in a text necessitates an understanding of the context in which they are used. Newmark (1988: 193) identifies four types of context: linguistic (such as collocations), referential (the topic), cultural, and individual (the idiolect of the writer). This supports the notion that words cannot be fully understood without their context. A functionalist approach to translation would also consider the purpose of the translation commission as a contextual factor that affects the translator's decisions (Hönig 1997). However, when it comes to language for specific purposes (LSP) translation, the importance of context is sometimes viewed as less significant, with technical terms being seen as context-free (Coşeriu 1975: 28). The idea that terms are context-independent is also shared by the discipline of terminology science, where terms are seen as retaining their meaning within any context (Felber 1984: 108), at least once any polysemy has been identified and eliminated through standardisation. This approach is based on an onomasiological perspective that focuses on the study of specialist vocabulary and the compilation of specialized terminologies. In this view, certain terms within a particular subject field, such as maritime terms, have clear usage restrictions that are dependent on their context (e.g.: the noun *list* used in the context of maritime communication points to the inclination of the vessel to either port side or starboard side).

Thus, there is a fuzzy boundary between general language words and maritime terms. When used in common core language, some words have certain meanings; when used in maritime language, they become technical words, taking on an entirely different meaning from the ordinary one, such as for instance: *bow, hand, eye, neck, list, gypsy, painter, check, wild cat*, etc. (Vişan 2021a: 19).

In addition, maritime texts display terminological units expressed in the nominal group, followed by adjectives and verbs which should be of great interest for translation, especially within the framework of specific collocations. From my point of view, the issue of terminology must be carefully tackled by the maritime language

translator who should consider the two dimensions of terms when dealing with a text for translation. These two dimensions involve terms in their theoretical make-up and constitution, that is, the system level of terms and terms as they appear in texts, that is, the text level of terms (Gerzymisch-Arbogast 2008). The fact should be pointed out that it is on the text level of terms where translation problems can occur.

In translating Romanian maritime terminology into English and vice versa, I have noticed that the maritime language translator can come across different scenarios (Vişan 2021b: 26, 254):

a) “translating a term specific to the inventory of Romanian maritime vocabulary by means of a semi-technical term or a general language word specific to the English maritime vocabulary;

b) translating a term specific to the inventory of Maritime English vocabulary into a general vocabulary word in Maritime Romanian;

c) translating a technical maritime term from English and/ or Romanian into a technical maritime term specific to English and/or Romanian, etc.

d) several terms belonging to the inventory of Romanian maritime vocabulary have equivalents belonging to the general language word stock and/ or the semi-technical vocabulary in English” (Vişan 2021b: 26, 254).

Just like words, terms do not occur randomly, but they exist in conjunction with other terms. Maritime terms are interrelated by sense relations as hyponymy, meronymy, synonymy and opposition. Hyponymy consists in the relationship between a hyperonym and a hyponym. For example, the compound *merchant ships* is a superordinated term (known as hyperonym or superonym) because it comprises hyponyms or subordinated terms such as *bulk carrier*, *container ship*, *general cargo ship*, *Ro-Ro ship*, etc.

In both Maritime English and maritime Romanian, terms are interrelated by super- or subordination or part-whole relationships. These relationships come in the aid of translators when producing a target text (TT). A number of maritime terms signal cases of ambiguity and polysemy. For instance, in the example: *The rear part of a ship is called a stern* → *Partea din spate a navei se numeşte pupa*, the term *stern* makes reference to the back of the ship whose maritime Romanian counterpart is *pupa*. In the example: *The extreme aft end of a vessel is the stern* → *Etremitatea pupa / din spate a unei nave este etamboul*, the term *stern* refers to a different concept, that is, *etambou*. Thus, Maritime English makes use of the same term, *stern* to denote two different concepts related to the parts of a ship, while Maritime Romanian uses two distinct terms for two different concepts, namely, *pupa* as the rear part of the ship and *etambou* as the extreme aft end of a ship.

Similarly, the term *container* in maritime language is used to denote both *a vessel* and *a large metal box* in which goods are packed. It can be noticed that *container* translates into maritime Romanian both with *portcontainer* (i.e. or *navă portcontainer* to refer to a ship type) as a near-equivalent and with *container* as a perfect equivalent (i.e. to refer to a metal box).

When faced with semantic gaps in the target language, the maritime language translator can resort to the feature of semantic fields. There is hypernymic and hyponymic (non)-equivalence in Maritime English and maritime Romanian, that is,

Maritime English and maritime Romanian have specific words (hyponyms) but no general words (hyperonyms) and vice versa to head the semantic field. For instance, in Maritime English the verbs *to lighten* and *to lighter* both involve the handling of cargo and translate into Romanian with the specific verb *a alimba*. The verb *to lighten* refers to the process of reducing the weight or cargo load carried by a ship. This is typically done to increase the ship's buoyancy or comply with weight restrictions in areas such as shallow waters or ports with draft limitations. It may involve offloading cargo, fuel, or other materials from the ship. On the other hand, the verb *to lighter* refers to the action of transferring cargo from a larger vessel, such as a ship, to a smaller vessel called a lighter. This is done when a ship cannot directly dock at a port, and lighter vessels are used to shuttle cargo between the ship and the shore. The hyponymic verb *a alimba* captures the meaning of both *lighten* which is more general and *lighter*, which is specific. Interestingly, according to the Dicționar Maritim Român-Englez (1985: 18), the direct equivalent in English of *a alimba* is the hyponymous verb *to lighten* and not *to lighter*. However, this aspect is understandable since this dictionary has not been updated since 1985. Under the circumstances, it is the translator's duty to search and research and collaborate with domain specialists in order to clarify or disambiguate the meaning of certain terms.

#### 4. Translating Maritime Collocations and Compounds

With regard to the lexical level of maritime language, mention should be made that there is a very high frequency of multiword terms expressed in the form of collocations (i.e. *to have a list* → *a fi canarisit(ă)* / *a avea o canarisire*; *to check a cable* → *a vira lanțul*, where *check* does not mean to verify but to pay or ease out a cable; *to make headway* – *a avea inerție înainte, a înainta*; *to make sternway* → *a avea inerție înapoi, a se deplasa înapoi*, etc.), compound nominal phrases and prepositional and phrasal verbs (i.e.: *heave in, heave on, bear away, slack away, let go, etc.*). The fact should be also pointed out that maritime texts display a constant usage of abbreviations which we consider very important in translation.

Since both collocations and compounds are considered to be delicate elements in translation, the translator requires adequate competence in mastering both the source and the target maritime language and the specialized topic at stake. In addition, in order to produce a good translation, the maritime language translator is required to pinpoint the appropriate lexical and terminological fields and to comprehend the overall tone and intended message in order to get the correct interpretation of terms, collocations and idiomatic expressions as well as of the text as a whole.

As regards the formal and semantic aspects characterizing collocational patterns, there are cases in which the semantic content is delivered in formally identical or similar structures and cases in which the semantic content of the maritime English pattern is preserved by means of an explanation (i.e. *port anchor* → *ancoră babord*; *mushroom anchor* → *ancoră ciupercă*; *breast anchor* → *ancoră cu brațul la travers*; *monkey island* → *punte etalon*; *to steer a ship* → *a guvernă o navă*; *to alter course* – *a schimba de drum, etc.*). In addition, formal dissimilarities between maritime English

and maritime Romanian may as well be illustrated by collocational patterns whose transfer from English into Romanian requires that maritime language translators should closely observe the collocability rules specific to the two languages in question. Moreover, the translation of maritime collocations from one language into another involves difficulties which may be determined by semantic, grammatical and sometimes cultural differences. Most of the problems are caused by lexical gaps in the target language, and sometimes by the lack of a target language equivalent of some semantic characteristics present in one of the constituents of the English collocation.

Nominal compounds, also called complex nominals, compound nominal phrases, noun strings or complex lexical items have a considerably higher occurrence in maritime English. They are used for compressing semantic and syntactic information into a highly compact form. Nominal compounds are frequently used in the realization of maritime registers for reasons of impersonality, to avoid finite verbs and participles and to set the writing as being specialized and technical. According to Trimble (1985: 130), “[N]oun compounds, also called noun strings can be defined as two or more nouns plus necessary adjectives (and less often verbs and adverbs) that together make up a single concept; that is, expresses a single noun idea.” A model of the complex noun phrase in technical English is offered by Croitoru (1996: 83). In her schemata nominal and adjectival premodifiers indicate permanent characteristics while *-ing* and *-ed* premodifiers signal temporary characteristics (i.e., *man-made fibre cordage stopper* → *boț de parâmă*; *two-legged swinging mooring* → *ancorare giratorie cu două ancore*). In the examples below, several compounds consisting of two short nouns are merged into a single term. At first the two nouns are hyphenated and then they become one word. Thus, in Maritime English the pattern N + N can cover such features as:

Functions on board: *helmsman* → *timonier*; *donkeyman* → *mecanic auxiliar*; *storekeeper* → *magazioner*; *pumpman* → *pompagiu*; *boatswain* → *nostrom*; *seaman* → *marinar*;

Different types of vessels: *bulk carrier* → *vrachier*; *container ship* → *navă portcontainer*; *icebreaker* → *spărgător de gheață*; *warship* → *navă de război*; *fisherman* → *pescador*; *lightship* → *navă far*; *tugboat* → *remorcher*; *firefloat* → *navă de stins incendiul*; *salvage vessel* → *navă de salvare*; *buoyage vessel* → *navă de balizare*; *supply boat* → *navă de aprovizionare*; *survey vessel* → *navă de cercetare marina*; *pilot tender* → *pilotină*;

Onboard devices, installations and machinery: *windlass* → *vinci de ancoră*; *anchor chain* → *lanț de ancoră*; *anchor cable* → *lanț de ancoră*; *cable chain* → *lanț*; *breast line* → *traversă*; *bow line* → *parâmă prova*; *stern line* → *parâmă pupa*; *head rope* → *parâmă prova*; *bow spring* → *spring prova*; *stern spring* → *spring pupa*.

Onboard spaces and separations: *bulkhead* → *perete etanș*; *starboard* → *tribord*; *weather deck* → *punte principală*; *tanktop* → *puntea dublului fund*; *chain locker* → *puț al lanțului de ancoră*; *wing tank* → *tanc lateral*; *engine room* → *camera motoarelor*; *cofferdam* → *coferdam*; *messroom* → *sală de mese*; *wheelhouse* → *timonerie*; *chartroom* → *camera harților*; *quarterdeck* → *punte pupa*; *gangway* → *scară de acces*.

Maritime compounds also display the following common semantic relationships as pointed out by Blakey (1987:146) and Reguzzoni (2006: 6-7):

Table 1. Semantic relationships of maritime compounds

Type of relationship	Example
B of A	e.g. <i>cylinder cover, hatchway</i>
B with/has A	e.g., <i>salt water, ship owner</i>
B contains A	e.g. <i>wheelhouse, engine room</i>
B is made of/from A	e.g. <i>manila rope, copper wire, air-cushion</i>
B in/on/at A	e.g. <i>port operations, after peak tank</i>
B operated by A	e.g. <i>hand pump, steam engine</i>
B uses A	e.g. <i>water plant</i>
B shaped like A	e.g. <i>needle valve, I-beam</i>
B invented by A	e.g. <i>Hall anchor, Beaufort wind scale</i>

In addition, maritime language involves the use of various linguistic structures to create compound words, such as adjectives (e.g., *deep tank, double bottom*), nominalized adjectives (e.g., *deck longitudinals*), ordinal numbers (e.g., *first mate, second mate*), prepositions (e.g., *tween deck, overhauling*), proper nouns turned into common nouns (e.g., *diesel engine, jackstaff*), eponyms (e.g., *Hall anchor, Plimsoll mark*), toponyms (e.g., *York-Antwerp Convention, North Atlantic freeboard mark*), the names of seasons (e.g., *summer load line*), and metaphors (e.g., *cat's walk, dog watch*). Additionally, reverse structures (e.g., *breadth moulded, length overall*), adjectival compounds (e.g., *watertight, oil tight*), and multi-word terms created by connecting words with prepositions (e.g., *round of deck, turn of the bilge*) or using the genitive case (e.g., *bosun's locker, Ship's Cook*) are also used. All these multi-word units do not only condense information and create new meanings different from the one of the parts making up a combination, but they are a way of creating 'unique' meanings. As a matter of fact, in most cases, they are the only acceptable referential forms available to point to areas of experience shared by the target maritime community (Reguzzoni 2006: 5; Pritchard 2006: 270-271).

Another important aspect to be considered is that in maritime Romanian the equivalents for some of these compounds may be one word only, or they can be expressed by means of the following sequences: noun + noun as in *parâmă prova*; noun + preposition + noun as in *navă de cercetare*; noun + adjectival noun + noun as in *puntea dublului fund*; noun + adjective as in *tanc lateral*. The purpose of nominal adjectivation is to make exposition denser and attach semantic weight to the compound. Maritime English texts also reveal instances of compounds comprising three items and taking on the following patterns:

- N + Present Part. + N: *cargo handling gears* → *dispozitive de manipulare a mărfii*; *cargo handling equipment* → *echipament de manipulare a mărfii*; *fire-retarding doors* → *uși cu calitate ignifugă*; *sound-signalling appliances* → *dispozitive de semnalizare sonoră*.
- Adj. + N + N: *controllable pitch propeller* → *elice cu pas reglabil*; *wet bulk cargo* → *marfă lichidă în vrac*; *dry bulk cargo* → *marfă uscată în vrac*.
- N + N + N: *deck-beam brackets*; *fire-detection equipment*; *mine clearance operations* → *operațiuni de dragare a minelor*; *cargo stowage factor* → *indice de stivuire*; *rudder head shaft* → *ax al cârmei*



- Past Part. + N + N: *balanced spade rudder* → *cârmă compensată*;
- Present Part. + N + N: *swinging derrick system* → *instalație de încărcare cu braț turnat*;
- Adj. + Present Part. + N: *steady turning radius* → *rază statică de întoarcere*
- N + Past Part. + N: *power driven vessel* → *navă cu propulsie mecanică*

As I have already pointed out, in order to gain a better understanding of dense compounds, a common strategy is to paraphrase them using a relative clause. However, translating complex, more complex, and highly complex compounds poses challenges due to the order of the premodifiers and the lack of explicit specification of semantic relations among the elements. While some scholars argue that nominal compounds do not pose translation difficulties (Coșeriu (1973: 11), I refute this notion and assert that terminological phrases, including apparently simple nominal phrases, present significant translation challenges. The maritime language translator may require the collaboration with a specialist to accurately translate many nominal compounds. These compounds cannot be translated by considering the meanings of the constituent lexical items separately, as the translation difficulty increases with the amount of information and the grammatical behaviour of nouns.

Thus, as suggested by Boris Pritchard (2006: 273) “the lexical combination *damage control* is semantically deceiving and its literal translation can produce false pairs in the target language.” The word *damage* in the compound *damage control* does not refer to its dominant sense of “harm impairing the function or condition of a thing” (id. *ibid.*) and therefore, the translation into Romanian must render the maritime sense of the compound.

## 5. Translationese in Maritime Translation

In this section I will rely on several text fragments that contain many lexical, terminological or syntactic errors. The source texts have either Romanian or English as a source language. Cases of mistranslation or translationese in maritime language are often caused by interference. This occurs when a literal translation either falsifies or ambiguates the meaning or violates natural usage for no apparent reason (Vișeanu 2008: 99). In such cases, translationese in maritime language can be considered either an error due to a lack of knowledge or a mistake caused by faulty performance. Interference in maritime language translation arises when two distinct meanings are brought together. For example, the term *port facility* is frequently mistranslated as *facilitate portuară*, which is a paronymous calque resulting from an incorrect correspondence between two words with similar forms or etymologies but with different meanings in their respective languages. Most translators are not aware of the fact that, in this context, *facility* in English and *facilitate* in Romanian are not one and the same thing. The word *facility* in English is polysemous while *facilitate* in Romanian is monosemous and refers to the ease of action or performance, freedom from difficulty. The lexeme *facility* in the structure *port facility* refers to something that is built, installed, or established to serve a particular purpose. Instead of using this

mistranslated structure, the maritime language translator should choose the correct term, which is *instalație portuară* (see Table 2 below).

Mistranslations analysed for the purpose of this section highlight the lack of research on maritime terminology and the unawareness of the differences between general language words and field-specific terms. In addition, mistranslation in maritime language can also be the result of lexical interference, which is more dangerous than syntactical interference since it can falsify meaning. One example is the false friends or deceptive cognates of Greco-Latin origin, such as *operational, facility, interest, function*, etc. Interference in maritime language occurs when any feature of the source language, whether syntactic or lexical, is translated literally into the target language text.

Maritime texts can be difficult to understand, and it's important for translators to clarify the specialized language as much as possible. Mistranslations of maritime terms and collocations are included in Table 2 below. The examples in Table 2 below may have been taken out of context, but the translator should consider that words are used in a linguistic and cultural context. While the primary meaning of words should be taken into account, it's also important to understand their meaning in the context of the real or imaginary world. Isolated translations can serve as a reference for the meaning of words in context.

Table 2. Mistranslations of maritime terms and collocations (Vișan 2021b: 233)

<b>Maritime terms /collocations</b>	<b>Serious mistakes/ Wrong translation/ Mistranslation/ Misinterpretation</b>	<b>Correct Romanian Equivalent</b>
<i>approaches from seaward</i>	*zonele de apropiere dinspre mare	<i>căile de acces dinspre mare</i>
<i>boiler room</i>	*sala boilărelor	<i>compartimentul caldarine</i>
<i>bunker</i>	*buncher	<i>combustibil</i>
<i>[...] forming a part of a navigational watch.</i>	* <i>făcând parte dintr-o echipă de cart pe pasarelă.</i>	<i>făcând parte dintr-o echipă de cart pe puntea de comandă.</i>
<i>linesmen</i>	*legători de nave	<i>barcagii</i>
<i>a list of companies and ships granted exemption under this Article.</i>	*o listă de companii și de nave exceptate în conformitate cu prezentul articol.	<i>o listă a companiilor și navelor care beneficiază de scutire în temeiul prezentului articol.</i>
<i>manning conditions</i>	*condițiile de echipare a echipajului	<i>condiții privind încadrarea personalului navigant.</i>
<i>passenger transport</i>	*transport de călători	<i>transport de pasageri</i>
<i>port facility</i>	*facilitate portuară	<i>instalație portuară</i>
<i>port facility security officers</i>	*funcționarii de securitate ai facilităților portuare	<i>ofițerii desemnați cu securitatea instalațiilor portuare</i>
<i>Port State Control (PSC)</i>	*controlul statului de port; controlul	<i>Biroul/ inspectoratul</i>

	statului portului	<i>de control al statului de care aparține portul (our emphasis)</i>
<i>relay of international cargo</i>	*releu pentru mărfurile internaționale	<i>schimb de mărfuri internaționale</i>
<i>refrigerated ship</i>	*navă refrigerată	<i>navă frigorifică</i>
<i>the state of visibility</i>	*Starea de vizibilitate / starea vizibilității	<i>condiția vizibilității/vizibilitatea</i>
<i>The manageability of the vessel with special reference to stopping distance and turning ability in the prevailing conditions.</i>	*capacitatea de manevră cu referire specială la distanța de oprire și la abilitatea navei de a se întoarce în condițiile date.	<i>capacitatea de manevră și mai ales distanța de oprire și calitățile de girație în condițiile existente.</i>
<i>The term 'height above the hull' means height above the uppermost continuous deck.</i>	*termenul 'înălțimea deasupra corpului navei' înseamnă înălțimea deasupra punții continue celei mai de sus.	<i>termenul 'înălțimea deasupra punții' înseamnă înălțime deasupra punții superioare continue.</i>
<i>wooden ships of primitive build</i>	*nave din lemn construite primitiv	<i>nave din lemn cu construcție simplă</i>
<i>vertical position and spacing of lights</i>	*amplasarea verticală și distanța dintre lumini	<i>amplasarea și distanța dintre lumini în plan vertical</i>
<i>in the capacity of a rating</i>	* în calitate de matelot	<i>în calitate de marinar nebrevetat.</i>

The noun *rating* in the structure *in the capacity of a rating* cannot be translated with *matelot* but with the collocation *marinar nebrevetat*. The noun *matelot* which is archaic, is typically part of the Military Navy's inventory being no longer in use nowadays, except for aesthetic purposes. Thus, the word *matelot* is archaic and informal in Romanian and does not capture the meaning of *rating*. This aspect can be put down to the differences in the evoked meaning which arise from dialect and register variation.

A translation error that we have also come across is rendering the maritime term *grounding* by the syntagma *coliziune cu fundul apei* [Back translation: *collision with the bottom of the sea*].

ST1: Any **grounding** or similar damage which pierces the outer bottom plating will flood one or more of these tanks [...].

TT1: Orice coliziune cu fundul apei sau cu un obstacol asemănător care ar duce la perforarea bordajului exterior al carenei ar produce inundarea a unuia sau mai multora dintre aceste tancuri.

In Maritime English, the term *grounding* means running a vessel ashore and its direct equivalent in maritime Romanian is *eșuare* or *punere a navei pe uscat*. Thus, *grounding* cannot be translated with *coliziune cu fundul apei* (i.e., the literal translation in English being *collision with the water bottom*) since the noun *coliziune* (Eng. collision) in maritime language involves the coming together of two things (from

opposite directions) with such force that both are damaged. As a result, the syntagma *coliziune cu fundul apei* does not sound natural in maritime language and cannot be accepted in terms of collocability.

Various false friends have created confusion in translation because of the transfer of meaning (i.e. metaphor); in their evolution, such words have become subject to extension or narrowing of meaning, or to elevation or degradation of meaning. Table 3 below includes deceptive cognates in maritime language translation, stressing the contextual mistranslation/ misinterpretation of several maritime terms and providing the correct translation in Maritime Romanian.

Table 3. Deceptive cognates in maritime language translation (Vișan 2021b: 235)

<b>Deceptive cognate / False friend in Maritime Language Translation</b>	<b>Wrong contextualization of dictionary meaning/ Contextual mistranslation / Mistaken for the Romanian word</b>	<b>Correct Translation in Maritime Romanian</b>
<i>accommodation</i>	acomodare	<i>cazare, spațiu de locuit</i>
<i>approach</i>	apropiere, zonă de apropiere, acces, aproximație, împrejurimi	<i>cale de acces</i>
<i>actual</i>	actual	<i>real, concret</i>
<i>captain</i>	căpitan, șef, conducător	<i>comandant</i>
<i>chief officer</i>	ofițer principal, prim ofițer	<i>căpitan, secundul navei</i>
<i>collateral (noun)</i>	colateral (adj.)	<i>garanție, gaj</i>
<i>combustible (adj.)</i>	combustibil (noun)	<i>inflamabil</i>
<i>commodity</i>	comoditate	<i>marfă</i>
<i>domestic</i>	domestic	<i>național, intern</i>
<i>defect</i>	defect	<i>a dezerta</i>
<i>expertise</i>	expertiză	<i>experiență profesională</i>
<i>fabric</i>	fabrică	<i>material textil</i>
<i>fabricate</i>	a fabrica	<i>a născoci; a falsifica dovezi</i>
<i>facilities</i>	facilități	<i>Instalții, dotări</i>
<i>hold</i>	sobă, cuptor, etuvă, seră (caldă), mașină de gătit	<i>magazia navei</i>
<i>interest</i>	interes	<i>dobândă</i>
<i>list</i>	listă, agenda, enumerare	<i>canarisire</i>
<i>store-room</i>	magazie, cămară	<i>magazie de materiale</i>
<i>passenger transport</i>	transport de călători	<i>transport de pasageri</i>
<i>ordnance</i>	ordonanță	<i>artilierie</i>
<i>operational</i>	operațional	<i>funcțional</i>
<i>petrol</i>	petrol	<i>benzină</i>
<i>probe</i>	probă	<i>sondă</i>

As mentioned earlier in this paper, the terminology of maritime discourse makes use of a large number of words which belong to the common vocabulary, but which play a very important part in the attainment of the communicative purpose of a specific maritime genre. A good example in this respect is the English noun *operation* and the adjective *operational*, which in the context of the texts under analysis, are

characterized by a restrictive and specific meaning, being an example of false friends when translated in maritime Romanian. In addition, as shown in Table 3, the noun *captain* is often mistranslated with the false friend *căpitan*, whose English dynamic equivalent is *chief officer* or just *chief*. In merchant ships, the words *Captain* and *Master* are synonymous and translate into Romanian with *comandant*. Not being familiar with the naval ranks on board, the translators of the *Titanic* movie, have formally rendered the word *captain* with *căpitan*.

Furthermore, the noun *marinar* cannot be rendered as *mariner*, since the STCW Convention (i.e., Standards for Training, Certification and Watchkeeping) does not include the noun *mariner* in the list of positions and ranks specific to the Deck Department. Thus, the Romanian *marinar* must be translated with the syntagma *Ordinary Seaman*. This aspect is evidence of the fact that maritime language translators must not only handle terminology, but they also need to be familiar with the legally binding instruments of the maritime profession.

In order to give more examples of *translationese* in maritime language, I will also focus on a sample text taken from the official website of the Constanța's Naval Shipyard. The aim of website texts is to inform and reflect a good image of their organization and activities, constantly relaying official news about them. Mention needs to be made that website localization involves much more than the simple translation of a text, it is a process of adapting a website into a different linguistic and cultural context. Peter Sandrini (2008: 167) notes that localization is a modern field of activity focused on digital media and computer products. To understand this field, it is crucial to comprehend the interconnectivity of the terms globalization, internationalization, localization, and locale. The specialized service of website localization has been around since 1999, which combines translation services with technical services to guarantee proper functioning of translated sites (Van der Meer 2002: 10). Romanian maritime websites serve as marketing channels that contain various digital assets, such as common content, multimedia assets, application-bound assets, and community assets. Common content comprises the main structure of the website, including maritime texts, images, and links. Multimedia assets consist of audio and video streaming and flash animations, while application-bound assets are files and documents that require software applications to access. Finally, community assets comprise the dynamic content of discussion forums and chat rooms created by maritime visitors.

A number of errors can be spotted in the translated text below. This is due to the fact that, in trying to be faithful to the source texts, the maritime language translators produce literal translations which lead to meaning and syntactic distortions.

**ST1:** *Înregistrarea Ministerului pentru Lucrări Publice din 1892 ce face referire la Atelierul de Reparații din Portul Constanța este considerată „certificatul de naștere” al Șantierului Naval Constanța. Dezvoltarea ulterioară a Șantierului Naval Constanța a cunoscut multe stadii, fiind în stransă legătură cu dezvoltarea portului Constanța. Până în anul 1950 principalele activități ale Șantierului Naval Constanța s-au axat pe reparații de nave. Totuși, un moment semnificativ în istoria șantierului îl reprezintă lansarea primei nave construcție nouă în mai 1936, iahtul „Crai Nou,” cu o lungime de 12m. Din anul 1950, pe lângă activitățile de reparații nave, Șantierul Naval Constanța a*

început și un program de construcții. S-a marit semnificativ suprafața șantierului, s-a construit un nou atelier de prelucrare și s-au achiziționat echipamente / instalații noi, pentru a le suplimenta pe cele existente (inclusiv un doc plutitor cu o capacitate de ridicare de 15.000 tone).

**TT1:** *The records of the Ministry for Public Works since 1892 referring to the Craft Repair Shop within Constanta Harbour area is considered to be the “birth certificate” of Șantierul Naval Constanta. The subsequent growth of Șantierul Naval Constanta has passed through many stages and it was closely connected with the development of Constanta Harbour. Until 1950, the main activities of Șantierul Naval Constanta were focused on ship repairs. However, a very important milestone of yard’s long history is May 1936, when it was launched the very first new ship building, a 12-m long yacht named “Crai Nou.” From 1950, along with the ship repair activities, Șantierul Naval Constanta has started a ship building program. The surface has significantly increased, a new steel shop was built and other equipment / facilities (including a floating dock with a lifting capacity of 15,000 tons) were added to those already existing on site.*

As I have already pointed out, the source text under analysis is taken from the official website of Constanța Naval Shipyard. In the structure *Înregistrarea Ministerului pentru Lucrări Publice din 1892* → *The records of the Ministry for Public Works since 1892*, the polysemous noun *înregistrarea* is translated into English with the plural noun *records* with the sense of “information or data on a particular subject collected methodically over a long period of time” (CED 2003: 1355), while the syntagm *Ministerul pentru Lucrări Publice* is rendered with the *Ministry for Public Works* without considering that names of institutions cannot be equated directly or that the noun *ministry* is always followed by the preposition *of*. Perhaps, what the translator had in mind was to avoid the use of a double genitive construction, namely, *the records of the ministry of public works*. The adverbial attribute *din 1892* translated with the prepositional phrase *since 1892* acts as a postmodifier of the noun *records*. However, in translating the nominal group above, the cardinal numeral should take initial position. Thus, in my opinion *Înregistrarea Ministerului pentru Lucrări Publice din 1892* had better be rendered by *The 1892 Ministry of Public Works’ records*, which is more specific to the technical English.

The noun *port* in the structure *Portul Constanța* is not rendered with its English formal equivalent *port*, but with its near-synonym *harbour*. Though often used interchangeably, the nouns *port* and *harbour* are different in meaning. The meaning differences are related to the differences in the purposes they serve. For instance, a *port* refers to a commercial place along the coastline that is used for the loading and unloading of ships. It has many facilities like buildings and warehouses for storing goods after unloading the ships and a well-built transport system like a railway or roads to carry goods. On the other hand, a *harbour* is smaller than a port and can be either natural or man-made and provides shelter to ships from bad weather.

Mention needs to be made that the noun *port* is a hypernym in Romanian which comprises the meanings of both port and harbour. This means that Romanian lacks a hyponym for the English *port*. Therefore, given the semantic and pragmatic dimension of the context, the translator should have opted either for the toponymous structure *Constanta Port* or for the analytic genitive construction *Port of Constanta*. Mention

needs to be made that when translating toponyms, most translators transfer and adapt them to the morphological and phonological specifications of the target language. This is not the case with the toponym *Constanța* which is transferred in English as such. The structure *Șantierul Naval Constanța* is not translated, though, the compound *șantier naval* has *naval shipyard* as a direct equivalent in English (i.e., *Șantierul Naval Constanța* → *Constanța Naval Shipyard*). In the sentence *Dezvoltarea ulterioară a Șantierului Naval Constanța a cunoscut multe stadii* → *The subsequent growth of Șantierul Naval Constanța has passed through many stages*, the Romanian verb *a cunoaște* is not used in its primary meaning, viz. *a ști, a pricepe, a înțelege*. The meaning of this verb is derived from the meaning of the verbs *a experimenta, a parcurge, a trece prin, a fi supus la*, the use of the phrasal verb *pass through* being a good choice and forming a felicitous collocation with the noun *stages*. The subordinate clause *fiind în stransă legătură cu dezvoltarea portului Constanța* is changed into a coordinate clause in translation without preserving the tense sequence (i.e. past tense is used instead of present perfect). In addition, the passive reflexive structure *s-au axat pe* is translated with the passive *were focused on*, though I consider that a translation with an inflected genitive construction followed by the verb centre *on/ upon/ around* in the past perfect passive is a much better solution (i.e., *Până în anul 1950 principalele activități ale Șantierului Naval Constanța s-au axat pe reparații de nave* → *Until 1950, Constanța Naval Shipyard's main activities had been centred on ship repairs*).

The verb *centre on/ upon/ around* is considered to be the most appropriate both in terms of meaning and of the co-text. Moreover, the translation of the next sentence proves a poor linguistic knowledge on the part of the maritime language translator (i.e., misuse of grammatical and lexical items). Even if the ST is not very well written, the maritime language translator “can be as bold and free in recasting grammar (cutting up sentences, transposing clauses, converting verbs to nouns, etc.) as in any other type of informative or vocative text [...]” (Newmark 1988: 176). In this respect, translating two isolated sentences by one complex sentence made up of a main clause and a concessive clause is considered to be a good choice (i.e. *Until 1950, Constanța Naval Shipyard's main activities had been centred on ship repairs, though a significant moment in the shipyard's history is related to the launching in May 1936, of the first new construction ship, “Crai Nou,” a 12-m long yacht*), the prepositional phrase *until 1950* being preserved at the beginning of the sentence because emphasis is laid on the period of time. Moreover, the name of the ship, *Crai Nou* being a cultureme, is preserved as such in translation.

## 6. Conclusion

The conclusion can be drawn that the accurate translation of maritime texts is of utmost importance.. Unlike other areas of translation where there is room for individuality in terms of lexicology and style, maritime language translation is primarily a decision-making process that requires the selection of the correct target language rendition from a range of context-dependent alternatives. While a literary translator may focus on producing a target text that is as elegant and readable as the original, the main goals of a maritime language translator are precision and comprehensibility. This is because

even minor lexical errors in maritime translation can have serious consequences, potentially resulting in hazards to human life offshore and/or on shore. Furthermore, the task of the maritime language translator is often more complex than that of general translators because they may not fully understand the source text. Therefore, maritime language translators must ensure that their texts are identical to those produced by maritime writers working in the target language. Failure to follow target language text conventions can undermine the credibility of the text, the author, and the information contained within. When encountering a problem at the terminological level, the maritime language translator needs the collaboration with a specialist. For instance, a large number of compounds cannot be translated by considering the meanings of the constituent lexical items separately. The translation difficulty of a nominal compound even if consisting of two nouns, is increased by the polysemy on the one hand and the grammatical behaviour of nouns on the other. The greater the amount of information, the more complex the nominal groups which can cause problems to translators. Another pitfall in translating maritime terms is the fact that many general language words (i.e., the so-called semi-technical vocabulary) have developed a technical meaning which the novice translators may not be familiar with. Thus, general language words with a specialized meaning, for instance, *list*, *cat*, *gypsy*, *painter*, *scope*, etc. may be extremely difficult for translators who are not familiar with the maritime domain.

Mistranslations in maritime language point to the lack of research on maritime terminology and the unawareness of the differences between general language words and field-specific terms. Furthermore, mistranslation in maritime language can also be the result of lexical interference.

Maritime discourse is closely linked to the globalisation process, which has important implications for the language used by both native and non-native speakers working in intercultural and cross-cultural maritime environments. Currently, many Romanian maritime texts used at the local level are translations or adaptations of international documents, reflecting the fact that maritime discourse has become more international and less domestic as a result of cooperation and collaboration in international shipping. Accurate and authoritative translation of maritime texts and documents is increasingly necessary at the international level to effectively convey the pragmatic and functional intentions and implications of the original text in both Romanian and English. A common European and international maritime framework is a prime example of this trend. Despite addressing the same issues, such as safety of navigation, protection of the marine environment, and standards of seafarer training, maritime documents in different languages and cultural contexts may differ in their construction and legal systems, resulting in overlapping content.

## References

- Blakey, T. N., 1987. *English for Maritime Studies*. Prentice Hall International (UK) Ltd.
- Casanova, P., 2010. "Consecration and Accumulation of Literary Capital: Translation as Unequal Exchange." In Mona Baker (ed.), *Critical Readings in Translation Studies*, pp. 283-303. London & New York: Routledge.



- Coşeriu, Eugenio. 1975. *Die Geschichte der Sprachphilosophie von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*. Bd.1. Tübingen: Günter Naar. 2te Ausgabe.
- Croitoru, E. 1996. *Interpretation and Translation*. Galaţi: Porto Franco.
- Cronin, Michael. 2003. *Translation and Globalization*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Cronin, Michael. 2010. "The Cracked Looking Glass of Servants: Translations and Minority Languages in a Global Age." In Mona Baker (ed.), *Critical Readings in Translation Studies*, pp. 247-262. London & New York: Routledge.
- Dejica, Daniel. 2008. "Information Universe and Text Perspectives in Translation: The Hol-Atomistic Phase." In Croitoru, E. (ed.) *Translation Studies, Retrospective and Prospective Views*, 3/2008, pp. 77-91. Galaţi: Galaţi University Press Foundation.
- Dejica, Danilel. 2010. *Thematic Management and Information Distribution in Translation*. Timisoara: Editura Politehnica.
- Davidson, Brad. 2010. "The Interpreter as Institutional Gatekeeper: The Social-Linguistic Role of Interpreters in Spanish-English Medical Discourse." In Mona Bake (ed.), *Critical Readings in Translation Studies*, London & New York: Routledge, pp 152-173.
- Felber, Helmut. 1984. *Terminology Manual*. Paris: General Information Programme & UNISIST, UNESCO, Infoterm.
- Gerzymisch-Arbogast, Heidrum. 2008. "Fundamentals of LSP Translation." In Heidrum Gerzymisch –Arbogast, Gerhard Budin, Gertrud Hofer (eds.), *LSP Translation Scenarios. Selected Contributions to the EU Marie Curie Conference, Vienna 2007*, MuTra Journal (02), pp, 7-64. Germany: ATRC Group.
- Gotti, Maurizio. 2006. *Studies in Specialized Discourse*, Bern/ Berlin/ Bruxelles/ Frankfurt am Main/ New York/ Oxford/ Wien: Peter Lang.
- Gotti, Maurizio. 2008. *Investigating Specialized Discourse*. Bern: Peter Lang AG, European Academic Publishers.
- Hönig, Hans. G. 1997. "Positions, Power and Practice: Functionalist Approaches and Translation Quality Assessment." In *Current Issues in Language and Society*, Vol. 4, pp. 6-34.
- Newmark, Peter. 1988. *Approaches to Translation*. Hertfordshire: Prentice Hall.
- Newmark, Peter. 1991. "Word and Text: Words and their Degree of Context in Translation." In P.P. Newmark (ed.). *About Translation*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, pp. 87-100.
- Pritchard, Boris, 2006. "Some Lexical Aspects of Translating Specialized Texts." In Maurizio Gotti, & Susan Šarčević, (eds.), *Insights into Specialized Translation*, pp 155-172. Bern: Peter Lang.
- Reguzzoni, Manuela. 2006. "A Lexical Investigation into a Pedagogic Corpus of English for Maritime Studies' Newsletter." *Journal of Professional and Academic English* 28, 9-23.
- Sandrini, Peter. 2008. "Localization and Translation." In Gerzymisch-Arbogast, H., Budin, G., Hofer, G. (eds.), *LSP Translation Scenarios. Selected Contributions to the EU Marie Curie Conference Vienna 2007*, Journal 02. Vienna: ATRC Group.

- Snell-Hornby, Mary. 1992. "The Professional Translator of Tomorrow: Language Specialist or All-round Expert?" In Cay Dollerup, Anne Loddegaard (eds.). *Tecahing Translation and Interpreting*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, pp. 9-22.
- Van der Meer, Elke. 2002. "Temporal Order Relations in Language Comprehension." In *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory and Cognition*, pp. 167-192.
- Vișan, Ioana-Raluca (a). 2021. *Translating Maritime Language (Volume 1): Maritime Language: A Branch of Language for Specific Purposes (LSP)*. Timișoara: Editura Politehnica.
- Vișan, Ioana-Raluca (b). 2021. *Translating Maritime Language (Volume 2): Aspects of Maritime Language in Translation*. Timișoara: Editura Politehnica.
- Vîlceanu, Titela. 2008. *Translation: The Land of the Bilingual*. Craiova: Editura Universității Craiova.
- Schäffner, C. 2004. "Developing Competence in LSP Translation." In Fleischmann, E., Schmitt, P. Wotjak, G. (eds.) *Translationkompetenz*, pp. 679-89. Tübingen: Stauffenburg.

### **Corpus.**

#### **Maritime Manuals, Regulations, Textbooks, Specialised Magazines and Dictionaries**

- \*\*\* Dicționar de marină. 1979. Bejan, A., Bujeniță M., București: Editura Militară.
- \*\*\* Dicționar poliglot de transporturi terestre, aeriene și navale: engleză, română, germană, franceză, rusă. 1974. Contescu Titus, Szabados carol, Bujeniță Mihai; Aramă, C-tin (Coord.), București: Editura Tehnică.
- \*\*\* Dicționar Maritim Român-Englez. 1985. Beziris, A., Popa, C., Scurtu, G., Bantaș, A., București: Editura Tehnică.
- \*\*\* Dicționar tehnic englez – roman, Editia a II-a revăzută și adăugită. 2004. București: Editura Tehnica. ISBN 973-31-1587-8
- \*\*\* Dicționarul Explicativ al Limbii Române: DEX. 2012. București: Institutul de Lingvistică Iorgu Iordan.
- \*\*\* Dictionary of international trade: 4071 international trade, economic, banking, legal & shipping terms. 1994. Hinkelman, Edward, with contributions by Stacey Padrick, Karla Shippey, Alexandra Woznick ... [et al.], San Rafael, World Trade Press.
- \*\*\* Elsevier's Nautical Dictionary in six languages: English/ American/ French/ Spanish/ Italian/ Dutch and German. 2nd completely revised edition. 1978. Vandenberghe, J.-P., Chaballe, L. Y., Amsterdam: Elsevier Scientific Publishing Company.
- \*\*\* English Dictionary – Complete and Unabridged, sixth edition. 2003. Glasgow: HarperCollins Publishers.
- \*\*\* GENCON 94 with Explanatory Notes: Standard General Voyage Charter Party, 1994, BIMCO.