

On the Translation of English and Polish Terms Selected from the Field of Urban Monument Revitalisation

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to examine the semantic fields of some terms chosen from the field of revitalisation in order to find a translation model for the chosen terms and their most suitable equivalents.

The problems with translation of the terminology from the field of art and architecture are related to the fact that it is impossible to create a unified definition for some terms which would include all aspects relating to these concepts. Often some terms found within a specific culture may display more meanings and definitions in comparison to other societies. Moreover, as it is shown in this article, the lack of unified, specific definition of some terms is present even within the same culture. This phenomenon stems from the intra and intercultural diversity of conceptualisation. These problems appear not only in the context of broad terms like culture, language or art but in other, narrower aspects of human activity. What is more, the specialist literature from this field of research is limited, even though the issue presented above is important in the process of classification, digitalisation and creation of multilingual thesauri concerning art and architecture.

The method used in this research consists of gathering, analysing and comparing the semantic fields of the chosen terms in both languages while using dictionaries and specialist literature from the field of art and architecture. The analysis enabled the creation of specific typology in the context of translation of Polish and English terms concerning the process of revitalisation.

Keywords: *translation, culture, revitalisation, art, architecture*

I. The differences between semantic fields of the term *rewitalizacja*

According to one of its definitions, *rewitalizacja* refers to actions undertaken in a broad area (parts of a city, a district), understood in the different contexts of urban space (architectural, societal, economic, cultural). This definition suggests that it is wrong to use the term *rewitalizacja* as referring to single, individual buildings or the repair of the part of a city like a square or a street. The correct terms referring to such occurrences are *modernizacja*, *remont*, *rewaloryzacja*, *adaptacja*, *konserwacja*, *restauracja*, *rekultywacja* – they may be parts of the process of *rewitalizacja*, but they are not synonyms of the term. Kurzątkowski (1989) described *rewitalizacja* as:

1. the development of non-usable monuments;
2. giving the monument a new, society-related function, while at the same time emphasising monument values of the building or the complex of buildings. According to this meaning, the term *rewitalizacja* is similar to the term *rewaloryzacja*.

In other words, according to Kurzątkowski (1989) not only an area of a city can undergo the process of *rewitalizacja* but individual buildings as well.

The English terms for *rewitalizacja* are revitalisation and urban renewal. To revitalise is an equivalent of the Polish term *rewitalizować* and so it is defined as:

1. to make (someone or something) active, healthy, or energetic again (Merriam-Webster Dictionary¹);
2. to give new life, energy, activity, or success to something (Cambridge Dictionaries²).

To sum up, in English, the semantic field of one of the equivalents for the Polish term *rewitalizacja* is much broader, less limited and allows for a more arbitrary interpretation. It does not refer only to monuments or areas.

¹ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/revitalize>, accessed on 20 September 2016.

² <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/business-english/revitalization>, accessed on 20 September 2016.

Another equivalent term for *rewitalizacja* is the phrase *urban renewal* which is described as a process by which old buildings or buildings that are in bad condition in part of a city are replaced or repaired (Merriam-Webster Dictionary³). The definition presented above is more detailed, however, it refers to both parts of a city and individual buildings – it is then more comprehensive than the definition of the Polish term *rewitalizacja*.

Business Dictionary⁴ defines this term as the process where an urban neighbourhood or area is improved and rehabilitated. The renewal process can include demolishing old or run-down buildings, constructing new, up-to-date housing, or adding in features like a theatre or stadium. Urban renewal is usually undertaken for the purposes of persuading wealthier individuals to come and live in that area. Urban renewal is often part of the gentrification process. Hence, this definition is narrower and includes references to society.

Uchendu Eugene Chigbu (2012) observed that urban renewal refers to relocation, destruction of buildings and uses expropriation as a legal instrument for repossessing private property for urban projects. This process is carried out in rural areas as well and, in such cases, it is called rural renewal, even though these processes, in fact, might be different. According to Cambridge Dictionaries⁵, urban renewal is the process of making a poor area of a city attractive again for people to live and work in by building new houses, offices, schools, etc. and improving the existing ones. Raphael J. Heffron and Paul Haynes (2011) define this phrase as a type of urban development, which includes considerable modifications related to the concentration of residential units and their infrastructure. Such undertakings are complex in the context of the number of processes which have to be planned in detail and the number of regulations with which they have to be consistent in the field of property, development and law. Moreover, *Dictionary of Architecture and Building Construction* (Davies & Jokiniemi 2008: 400)

³ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/urban%20renewal>, accessed on 20 September 2016.

⁴ <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/urban-renewal.html>, accessed on 20 September 2016.

⁵ <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/business-english/urban-renewal>, accessed on 20 September 2016.

describes urban renewal as urban development or reconstruction and renovation of dilapidated urban areas or communities.

The definitions presented above show that urban renewal usually refers to buildings or areas and it is not necessarily related to giving new functions to existing monuments while maintaining their artistic values. The suggested English equivalent concerns all buildings and the main goal of urban renewal is making the neighbourhood attractive, even at the cost of demolishing existing buildings. In other words, "revitalisation" is a better equivalent for the Polish term *rewitalizacja* than "urban renewal".

II. The differences between the semantic fields of the Polish term *restauracja*.

Similar problems occur when it comes to the term *restauracja*. Kurzątkowski (1989) described the term as:

[w]orks which aim to return the monument to the state which shows its artistic and historic values, carried out in accordance with requirements of 1) respect for the valuable layers of monument substance, 2) exclusion of resolutions imitating historic forms (reconstruction, reproduction, pastiche), while giving all the necessary complements a contemporary form (unification); 3) avoidance of the resolutions that would interfere with the reception of artistic values of a monument (for example too much contrast between the original and the complements, excessive exposure of layers of monument substance).

The website "Współczesne metody konserwacji budownictwa zabytkowego"⁶ defines the term *restauracja* as a process which shows its artistic and historic values in accordance with the following requirements:

- respect for all layers;
- no imitation of the historic forms;

⁶ <http://zasoby.open.agh.edu.pl/~11sadebus/podstawy.html/>, accessed on 15 October 2016.

- if possible, avoiding interferences with the reception of aesthetic values.

Małachowicz (2007: 110–112) mentions that the term *restauracja* includes repairs and reinforcing buildings, replacement of some building parts, restoring its durability and its former appearance. At the same time, *restauracja* does not relate to modernisation and adaptive works which shows that this definition is different from the one presented by Kurzątkowski (1989). What is more, Małachowicz (2007: 110–112) limits the term only to the buildings the function of which has not changed – for example churches, palaces and castles. Works related to foundations, wall drying, ceilings, vaults, roofs and external architecture of a building.

One of the suggested English terms is the word “restoration”. According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary,⁷ this term refers to the act or process of returning something to its original condition by repairing it, cleaning it, etc., the act of bringing back something that existed before, the act of returning something that was stolen or taken. A similar definition can be found in *Dictionary of Architecture and Building Construction* (Davies & Jokiniemi 2008: 313), which also distinguishes the ways of restoring a building, and so does *Dictionary of Landscape Architecture and Construction* (Christensen 2005: 306), but the latter refers to ecosystems.

Oxford Dictionaries⁸ describe the term as restoring something to its previous owner or place or restoring it to its previous state. A *Dictionary of Construction, Surveying & Civil Engineering* (Gorse et al., 2012: 348) clarifies that the processes which allow for restoring an object to its previous state are repairing, cleaning or improving the structure. This term is also translated as a process of restoring the building, piece of art, etc. to its original state. The Getty’s Research Institute Art and Architecture Thesaurus⁹ also defines the term in the

⁷ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/restoration>, accessed on 15 October 2016.

⁸ <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/restoration/>, accessed on 15 October 2016.

⁹ http://www.getty.edu/vow/AATFullDisplay?find=restoration&logic=AND¬e=&english=N&prev_page=1&subjectid=300053742/, accessed on 15 October 2016.

same way, while adding that a building can be restored to a state from any other time period.

Other definitions are as follows: restoring a previous practice, law or situation; a model or a drawing which shows the original form of a dilapidated building, etc. Cambridge Dictionaries¹⁰ describes restoration as an act or a process of restoring something to its previous, better state or position. According to American National Park Service¹¹, restoration is defined as an act or a process of a detailed presentation of the form, quality and characteristics of property which were present in a given time period by removing the qualities from another time periods or a reconstruction of the missing characteristics from the restoration period.

It can be thus said that the Polish term *restauracja* and the suggested English equivalent, that is "restoration", mostly overlap when it comes to their semantic fields. However, as far as the Polish term is concerned, one should not imitate historic forms, while the English equivalent seems to allow such solutions. In other words, an object subjected to the restoration process in Great Britain may not be deemed as *odrestaurowany* in accordance with Polish terminology.

Another suggested equivalent for *restauracja* is "renovation" which, according to Merriam-Webster Dictionary¹², means making changes and repairs to an old house, building, room, etc. so that it is back in good condition. Collins Dictionary¹³ definition is more comprehensive, as it does not limit the process of renovation to buildings, in contrast with the Oxford Dictionary¹⁴, which mentions only buildings and does not take the end result into consideration. However, renovation is the equivalent for the Polish term *renowacja*.

¹⁰ <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/restoration/>, accessed on 15 October 2016.

¹¹ <http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/four-treatments/treatment-restoration.htm> /, accessed on 15 October 2016.

¹² <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/renovate>, accessed on 15 October 2016.

¹³ <http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/renovate/>, accessed on 15 October 2016.

¹⁴ <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/renovation/>, accessed on 15 October 2016.

The term “renovation” is not the appropriate equivalent for the Polish *restauracja*. The English definition refers to improving the condition of a building, but it does not include the need for preserving and restoring its historic form. Consequently, if there is a need for prioritising and compromising as described by Hejwowski (2004), restoration is a better equivalent for *restauracja*.

III. The differences between the semantic fields of the Polish term *konserwacja*.

Kurzątkowski (1989: 35) describes *konserwacja* as:

1. In the strict sense, consistent with the Venice Charter, it is an action the aim of which is maintaining the proper condition of a monument, that is a condition which is not hazardous for the monument substance and which allows for perceiving and receiving the monument values. It consists of prevention and preservation. Actions which go beyond this scope (such as restoration or reconstruction) are not considered a *konserwacja* when this definition is concerned. 2. All monument-related works.

*Słownik języka polskiego PWN*¹⁵ defines *konserwacja* as a number of measures, the aim of which is to preserve a good condition of something or processing food to increase its durability.

The suggested English equivalent is “conservation”. In accordance with MacMillan Dictionary¹⁶, it is an English word which means protection of building or objects of historic importance. In this case, the term overlaps with the Polish one only partially, as “protection” and “maintenance” have different meanings. Other definitions given in this dictionary are not related to revitalisation. Oxford Dictionaries¹⁷ translates this term as maintaining and repairing of archaeological, historic and cultural objects. *A Dictionary*

¹⁵ <http://sjp.pwn.pl/sjp/konserwacja;2564372/>, accessed on 18 October 2016.

¹⁶ <http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/conservation/>, accessed on 19 October 2016.

¹⁷ <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/conservation/>, accessed on 19 October 2016.

of *Construction, Surveying & Civil Engineering* (Gorse, Johnston & Pritchard 2012: 86) describes conservation as an efficient and careful usage of existing natural and human resources such as energy, environment and buildings so that they are preserved for future generations.

In accordance with the Merriam-Webster¹⁸, “conservation” consists of works the aim of which is preserving pieces of art and elements of historic value in a good condition. *Dictionary of Architecture and Building Construction* (Davies & Jokiniemi 2008: 93) indicates that it entails preservation, restoration and protection of monumental buildings and structures in their original state using traditional materials and methods. *Dictionary of Landscape Architecture and Construction* (Christensen 2005: 86) defines conservation as avoiding or protection against damage. While Kurzątkowski’s (1989: 35) definition is more detailed, the semantic fields of the two above definitions are the same.

The MacMillan Dictionary¹⁹ defines “maintenance” as the work which has been done to repair or preserve a good condition of a building or part of its equipment. The dictionary defines the word further as a process of continuing something or maintaining its existence. Oxford Dictionaries²⁰ define this term as a process of preserving a condition or situation or the state of being preserved. The other definition is preserving a good condition of something. In accordance to *A Dictionary of Construction, Surveying & Civil Engineering* (Gorse, Johnston & Pritchard 2012: 261), maintenance means works necessary for preserving a proper operation of objects and their good condition. This dictionary also adds that this term means providing functionality for elements of equipment or a plant, as well as maintaining a non-interrupted operation of machines by checking them and replacing parts that are worn or have a diminished lifespan before they stop working. This source also

¹⁸ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/conservation/>, accessed on 19 October 2016.

¹⁹ <http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/maintenance/>, accessed on 19 October 2016.

²⁰ <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/maintenance/>, accessed on 19 October 2016.

mentions checking decorative elements and undertaking actions the aim of which is preserving their visual appeal.

A Dictionary of Construction, Surveying & Civil Engineering (Gorse, Johnston & Pritchard 2012: 261) focuses more on the industrial meaning of maintenance, however it also briefly mentions the definition related to decorative elements.

In Merriam-Webster Dictionary²¹, this term is defined as an action or state of preservation. The Cambridge²² definition overlaps the second definition of Oxford Dictionaries²³ mentioned above. *Dictionary of Architecture and Building Construction* (Davies & Jokiniemi 2008: 228) defines the word maintenance as synonymous to servicing. In accordance with the dictionary, it means caring for a building, structure, system or a technical installation in order to preserve its functionality. According to the *Dictionary of Landscape Architecture and Construction* (Christensen 2005: 218), this term means preserving a good condition of an area, structure, flora, mechanisms, equipment, systems, etc. It consists of, among others, mowing weeding, ploughing, sweeping and replacing faulty parts in a way which does not change the basic design. These definitions are not limited to buildings of historic or artistic value, but are related to non-monument buildings or areas around them.

The term “keeping”, in accordance to MacMillan Dictionary²⁴, means maintaining something in the same state which is the same as the definition given by Cambridge Dictionaries²⁵. Oxford Dictionaries²⁶ define this word as an action of owning, maintaining

²¹ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/maintenance/>, accessed on 19 October 2016.

²² <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english-polish/maintenance/>, accessed on 19 October 2016.

²³ <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/conservation/>, accessed on 19 October 2016.

²⁴ <http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/keeping/>, accessed on 19 October 2016.

²⁵ <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english-polish/keeping/>, accessed on 19 October 2016.

²⁶ <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/keeping/>, accessed on 19 October 2016.

or protecting something, while Merriam-Webster²⁷ describes this term as a state of being kept or maintained in a given condition.

According to MacMillan Dictionary²⁸, "upkeep" represents a process or cost of maintaining a good condition of a building or an area. The definition of this term is similar in the Oxford Dictionaries²⁹. However, the latter does not clarify what can be maintained. This definition is the same as the ones in Merriam-Webster³⁰ or Cambridge Dictionaries³¹.

None of the above definitions overlap with the definition Kurzątkowski (1989: 35) gives. However, the definition of *Słownik Języka Polskiego PWN*³² is underspecified, which makes it equivalent to more than one of the English terms. Therefore, considering that "conservation" is art-related according to most of dictionaries, it represents the best equivalent of the Polish term *konserwacja*.

IV. No English equivalents for Polish terms on the basis of *rewaloryzacja*

Kurzątkowski (1989: 69–70) defines *rewaloryzacja* as:

[a]ctivities the goal of which is for the building to achieve a state which allows for fully receiving its monumental values. Single architectural monuments, monument complexes, historic urban layouts, historic gardens, archaeological sites can be subject to *rewaloryzacja*. When it comes to single monuments (architectural, archaeological), *rewaloryzacja* also refers to shaping the environment in a proper way. It is preceded by the process of studying the monument. The

²⁷ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/keeping/>, accessed on 19 October 2016.

²⁸ <http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/upkeep/>, accessed on 19 October 2016.

²⁹ <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/upkeep/>, 19 October 2016.

³⁰ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/upkeep/>, accessed on 19 October 2016.

³¹ <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english-polish/upkeep/>, accessed on 19 October 2016.

³² <http://sjp.pwn.pl/sjp/konserwacja;2564372/>, accessed on 19 October 2016.

process of *rewaloryzacja* consists of such actions as adaptation, conservation, modernisation, exposition, reconstruction, restoration. The undertaking should go hand in hand with selecting a function of the monument which guarantees its further preservation in the form achieved as a result of *rewaloryzacja*. In Poland, this term was first used in relation to holistic actions undertaken in historic cities. *Rewaloryzacja* as a process which aims to protect the monuments as well as maintaining and adapting older residential and service premises to future requirements is equally a social-economic countrywide and conservation problem.

In mass media and colloquial language there is a tendency to use *rewaloryzacja* in relation to such terms as conservation, reconstruction, renovation, overhaul, restoration.

*Słownik Języka Polskiego PWN*³³ defines this word as a form of restoring a previous value when it comes to appearance, to object or pieces of art requiring such actions. Other definitions are related to pensions, remuneration and re-evaluation.

In English, there are no accurate equivalents for this word. Despite the fact that there are words such as "revalorisation" or to "revalorise", they are false friends, at least in the architectural context. Revalorisation overlaps semantically with *rewaloryzacja* only when it comes to re-evaluation.

V. Problems with equivalents for the term *integracja*

Kurzątkowski (1989: 28) writes that *integracja* is:

[a]rchitecture integrated with historic architectural environment relates to new buildings constructed in the neighbourhood of a monument and in monument complexes. It consists in erecting buildings the external appearance of which is not an imitation of historic forms and has modern characteristics but is in harmony with neighbouring monuments due to its shape and selection of materials and

³³ /<http://sjp.pwn.pl/sjp/rewaloryzacja;2574171.html/>, accessed on 19 October 2016.

texture. Designing buildings which are integrated to their monumental environment is a domain of modern architectural work.

*Słownik Języka Polskiego PWN*³⁴ defines the term as a process of creating a whole out of parts. In English, there is only one equivalent suggested, integration. This word is defined by MacMillan Dictionary³⁵ as a process of connecting objects into one unit or system. This word is defined similarly by Oxford Dictionaries³⁶ in accordance to which it is connecting (two) items into one whole. A similar definition also exists in Merriam-Webster. In other words, dictionary definitions are by far less detailed in comparison with Kurzątkowski's (1989: 28) definition which focuses on integration being a part of revitalisation.

Conclusions

After analysing all presented terms, it may be concluded that the best equivalent for the term *rewitalizacja* is the term "revitalisation", whereas "restoration" is suitable for the term *restauracja* and "conservation" for *konserwacja*. As it can be seen in this article, even though the semantic fields of these terms are similar, they do not overlap with each other completely, not to mention the differences in definitions within their languages. Some of these differences may seem marginal; however, their wrong translation may lead to inaccuracy in research or other processes requiring the translation of terms from the field of revitalisation – for example preparing multilingual thesauri, legal documents or creating digitalised databases.

There are several ways of attempting to solve this problem: expanding or narrowing the semantic fields in the Polish

³⁴ /<http://sjp.pwn.pl/sjp/integracja;2561723.html/>, accessed on 19 October 2016.

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/<http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/integration/>, accessed on 19 October 2016.

³⁶ /http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/integrate#integrate__2/, accessed on 19 October 2016.

language, adding new phrases or borrowings to the Polish language, adding the place of origin of a particular monument or process.

All the methods presented above have their advantages and flaws, the main flaw being that they require artificially interfering with the language itself. However, in this case – the presented terms from the field of revitalisation – it would be advised to ignore the discrepancies of the semantic fields. The differences between the terms are not really significant and the lack of unity when it comes to definitions within a given language allow for making a compromise, that is resigning from certain aspects of their semantic fields.

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