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Eurolect in Translation on the Move: Diachronic Variation of Translation of the Passive in Institutional-Legal Texts

ABSTRACT

This study scrutinizes interlingual Eurolect from the perspective of the use of passive structures in the English language versions of EU institutional-legal texts while monitoring their variations in translation in the Slovak language versions. For the purpose of observing the diachronic variations in institutional translation, specific English-Slovak parallel corpora were compiled. The translational analysis draws on a text-based and corpus-driven approach while incorporating a mixed-method as a fusion of both qualitative and quantitative research in order to provide the most relevant outcome. To enable the quantitative analysis of the corpora to be accomplished precisely and time-efficiently, we employed the *Sketch Engine Corpus Query Tool*. The research findings reveal an increasing tendency in the use of passives in EU translation when comparing post-accession and contemporary subcorpora, suggesting a shift in English-Slovak translation practice despite institutional recommendations.

Keywords: Eurolect, corpus linguistic tools, CQL (corpus query language), diachronic approach, EU translation, institutional-legal texts, multilingual (parallel) corpora, passive structures

1. Introduction: Background to the research

Institutional-legal environment of the European Union (hereafter EU) epitomizes a place of interaction among politically, culturally, and linguistically diverse systems and legal ethnoscares. This poses an enormous challenge on translators as a consequence of a multilingual translational practice. The legal culture of the EU has developed in the course of interaction between both the supranational and national politics, laws, and cultures, which, to put it in Sosoni and Biel's words, have created "a hybrid conceptual and linguistic space" (2018, p. 3). Traditionally,

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legal languages are rooted and formed in a legal linguoculture of a particular country. The formation of EU legal language is, however, fundamentally distinctive as it emerges from the fusion of cultures, as proposed by Seracini (2020, p. 136): “the case of EU legal language is unique, since it originates from EU culture, which is not the culture of one single country, but rather the result of the encounter of the cultures of all the Member States”. With a view to such a unique phenomenon as EU legal discourse assuredly is, Mori and Szmrecsanyi (2021, p. 1) speak of a “*sui generis* language contact scenario [which] offers the ideal basis to explore the linguistic effects of the translation processes”. Such a multilingual and translational milieu naturally tends to induce lexical choices and morpho-syntactic structures and preferences (p. 1) which then add up to creating distinctive features of EU legal language worthy of a deeper scholarly reflection. The language that has been drafted and interlingually reproduced in the EU institutional environment in the course of time differs in its designations among many authors dealing with this subject matter. As there is not a complete consensus on how to entitle EU legal language, this study employs the term ‘Eurolect’, suggested by Mori as early as 2003 to refer “exclusively to an EU legal variety that differs from its corresponding national legal counterpart” (Mori & Szmrecsanyi, 2021, p. 2).

Over the past decade, EU legal language has gained considerable attention from many scholars (e.g. Bednárová-Gibová, 2016a, b; 2020; Biel, 2014a, b; Klbal, 2019; Mori, 2018; Seracini, 2020; Sosoni, 2012; Trklja, 2017; McAuliffe & Trklja 2019; Trklja & McAuliffe, 2018) who researched, among other aspects, its idiosyncratic linguistic-translational features. Seen through a lens of discourse analysis, institutional-legal discourse may be understood as ‘hybrid, reproduced, mirror-image-like and horizontal’ texts (Bednárová-Gibová, 2020) of which hybridity (Bednárová-Gibová, 2016b; Biel, 2014a; Doczekalska, 2009) and multilingualism (Biel, 2014b; Doczekalska, 2021) are perceived as the most distinctive specificities.

2. Previous research into morpho-syntactic Eurolect in translation: Where are we now?

Before delving into a diachronic translational analysis of morpho-syntactic Eurolect based on the examination of the passive, it is essential to outline its current state of scholarly investigation and identify potential research gaps. Although this overview certainly refrains from being exhaustive, it aspires to identify the main achievements relevant for the present undertaking.

Among the authors having made an important contribution to our understanding of Eurolect are Mori and Szmrecsanyi (2021) who accentuate the context for an appropriate use of the ‘Eurolect’ concept. Conforming to their grasp of Eurolect, the term in the sense of a distinctive EU legislative variety is believed to affect

several language levels ranging from the lexical, morphological, morpho-syntactic, syntactic level to the level of textuality (Mori & Szmrecsanyi, 2021, p. 2). Having regard to the aforementioned, Mori and Szmrecsanyi (2021, p. 2) draw attention to the urgency of securing linguistic consistency in order to “minimise cross-linguistic differences on the semantic and formal levels, using deculturized broad labels and employing similar syntactic structures across all EU language versions”.

In order to illustrate the current state of investigating Eurolect, of crucial importance in this research avenue are corpus linguistic tools. In this vein, it is worth mentioning Ramos’ (2020) appreciation of the recent developments that have taken place in legal translation studies over the past several years, particularly with reference to ‘methodological sophistication’ and corpus analysis tools available to researchers in the thorough process of scrutinizing EU institutional-legal texts. With regard to the research methodology, the author acknowledges corpus-based methodologies as an important way of approaching research in this study area¹.

However, of central concern in shedding light on the current state of the research on Eurolect is the *Eurolect Observatory Project* led by Italian professor Laura Mori, the editor of the all-important volume entitled *Observing Eurolects*. The ambition of the unparalleled project, launched in 2013 and consisting of two phases (2013–2016 and 2017–2020), was to fill the existing gap in the linguistic research that would enable a systematic and extensive analysis of “EU languages with the same protocol, corpus, and methodology” (Mori, 2018, p. 11).

In order to allow for intralingual and interlingual analyses of the multilingual corpus in eleven EU official languages, the *Eurolect Observatory Multilingual Corpus*, comprising approximately 600 directives over a ten-year time span (1999–2008), was arranged (Mori, 2018). The advantage of the project lies in the use of the same research template focusing on the selected aspects of EU lexis, lexical morphology, verb morphology, morphosyntax, syntax and textual discourse. Despite some differences in the treatment by some researchers, as noted by Mattila (2019), the research outcomes of the first phase clearly corroborate in terms of “facts, not just perceptions” (Mori, 2018, p. x) the existence of Eurolects in nine official languages of the Member States (i.e. English, Dutch, German, French, Spanish, Italian, Finnish, Greek and Polish) and the differences between supranational and national varieties of legal language².

¹ In this connection, Ramos (2020, p. 7), appreciatively referring to Chesterman (2004), emphasizes “the relevance of parallel corpora for analysing inter-linguistic correspondences or equivalence relations, as well as the suitability of comparable corpora for examining naturalness and formulaicity in translations as opposed to non-translated texts” for translation studies.

² Of the examined languages, only Latvian and Maltese do not seem to vindicate the existence of Eurolect based on the analysed data (Mori, 2018).

It should be underscored that Slovak was not part of the extensive *Eurolect Observatory Project*, which makes the research on the Slovak Eurolect in translation desirable if not necessary. To the best of our knowledge, there is a shortage of both large-scale as well as small-scale studies on the Slovak Eurolect in institutional translation. In this regard, the research gap is expected to be partly filled by the first author's dissertation thesis in progress.

The passive as a morpho-syntactic manifestation of Eurolect as a “macro-variety of legal language” (Mori, 2018, p. 1), has been researched, within their much wider Eurolect undertaking, by e.g. Biel (2018), Proia (2018) and Sandrelli (2018). Within her Eurolect Observatory Project outcomes, Annalisa Sandrelli (2018) has explored English Eurolect and in her morpho-syntactic take on the issue she turns her attention selectively to the present simple passive forms of regular verbs, passive forms in other verb tenses, and the passives with modal verbs, having admitted to the impossibility of extracting all passive verbs. Although she stresses the more frequent occurrence of passive structures in UK legislation in comparison with EU directives, Sandrelli indicates the over-representation of some passive structures (*shall be + past participle* and *can be + past participle*) in EU directives when set side by side with UK legislation. The other conclusion provided by Sandrelli is the frequent use of *are + past participle*, which may be ascribed to the fact that “directives are aimed at Member States (not directly at citizens), resulting in frequent sentences with inanimate plural subjects (Member States, national authorities, companies, and so on) in passive structures” (Sandrelli, 2018, p. 82).

Shifting attention to the German Eurolect investigated by Fabio Proia (2018) within the same-name project, the author highlights the pervasive employment of the passive voice in both the German national variety of the legal language and well as in the EU variety³. The important findings in investigating German Eurolect verb morphology are the preference of the passive formed with the preterite tense of the auxiliary as well as its prevalence in secondary clauses (pp. 161–162).

Concerning the Polish variety of Eurolect, Łucja Biel (2018) contends that the Polish legal language employs the passive less frequently than English and preferably adopts impersonal structures. Based on the author's intensive research devoted to the Polish Eurolect, she argues the following: “Overall, passives are strongly overrepresented in the Eurolect, where they are nearly twice as frequent as in domestic law. This trend is especially noticeable for the present-tense auxiliaries *być* [to be] and *zostać* [to become]” (Biel, 2018, p. 321). In addition, the scholar is also critical of the unnatural character of translations of present and

³ “The recommendations given at EU level to prefer the active voice and to name the agent [...] did not prevent, at least in the time frame analysed by the project, an extensive use of verbs in the passive form” (Proia, 2018, p. 161).

future passives which should be replaced either with the active or middle voice (p. 321).

Thus, based on the precious insights as provided by Sandrelli (2018), Proia (2018), and Biel (2018), respectively, we have sufficient evidence for confirming the manifestation of interlingual Eurolect at the morpho-syntactic level in the examined EU languages.

With regard to the English-Slovak interlingual perspective in EU-ese, the research on the translation of the passive in institutional-legal documents by Gibová (2010) and Bednářová-Gibová (2020) corroborates the prevalence of passive structures over their active counterparts despite the recommendations at the supranational level. With a view to morpho-syntactic Eurolect, however, the limitation of the early research by Gibová (2010) is that it does not focus specifically on the comparison of the EU legal variety and its attendant national law, and thus morpho-syntactic EU-induced features cannot be confirmed rigorously. For this reason, this, to the best of our knowledge, first study on the Slovak Eurolect in translation applying corpus linguistic tools⁴, with a special focus on the passive, attempts to contribute to the jigsaw of the ongoing Eurolect research with yet another small piece.

3. Methodology, data, corpus and research design: On the whats and hows

The main ambition of this study is to compare the incidence of passive structures in post-accession and contemporary EU institutional-legal texts while monitoring their interlingual variations in translation.

For the purpose of the present analysis the following research questions were formulated:

- Based on the qualitative analysis of the selected parallel texts, is it possible to confirm that the passive structures in the English language version of the examined EU regulations are expressed in the Slovak language version particularly through the medium of the passive?
- Has there been any evident shift in translation practice in connection with the use of passive structures when comparing 2006 EU regulations to contemporary ones?

In order to provide a more complex view of the role of passive structures in the type of the investigated EU documents, the following additional research questions were posed:

- Which types of passive structures with regard to their functions occur in the analysed documents the most frequently?

⁴ Compare with the pilot study by Hrežo (2020), whose focus is rather linguistic and lacks the application of corpus linguistics methods.

- Which passive structures were not found at all in the selected EU regulations?

In compliance with the research questions, the assembled corpus comprises nine multilingual (parallel) English-Slovak texts, more precisely, EU regulations pertaining to a financial thematic area. The corpus was divided into two subcorpora based on a diachronic variation. The first subcorpus encompasses five parallel texts – 2006 EU regulations in English (EUR-Lex English 2006) and their corresponding Slovak language versions (EUR-Lex Slovak 2006), whereas the second subcorpus consists of four contemporary EU regulations in English (EUR-Lex English 2021) and Slovak (EUR-Lex Slovak 2021). The choice of the 2006 EU regulations belongs to the early post-accession period in the Slovak EU legal culture whereas the 2021 regulations stand for contemporary EU linguoculture and provide an interesting point of contrast for the research, thus enabling a diachronic comparison.

In order to achieve the relatively comparable number of tokens and words in both subcorpora, the reduction in the number of the 2021 selected documents (from five to four) was deemed reasonable. Apart from providing the number of frequencies of occurrence of each investigated structure, we also express their frequency per 1 million tokens to enable comparability between both subcorpora, regardless of their size. Hence, the final number of tokens and words of the subcorpus built from the 2006 EU regulations is as follows: 35,623 tokens and 26,546 words. As for the second subcorpus, which was compiled on the basis of contemporary EU regulations (2021), the number of tokens is 32,938 whereas the number of words counts for 26,749.

The inclusion criteria for the corpus arrangement were related to the activation of the following search criteria: *regulations*, language: *English*, domain: *EU law* and *case-law*, subdomain: *legal acts*, author: *European Parliament and Council*, form: *regulation*, date of document: *2006* and *2021*, results containing: *finance* in the title and text. Based on the entered criteria, the suitable EU documents were selected.

To be able to extract the data for the research, it was necessary to figure out which corpus linguistic tool would be the most suitable. Ultimately, the *Sketch Engine Corpus Query Tool* (Kilgarriff et al., 2014) was chosen because of its user-friendly interface enabling not only advanced users to search for specific grammatical, morphological, syntactic and lexical patterns. However, an in-depth study of tutorials was required in order to be able to process a variety of data queries. To be able to compare both EU language versions more efficiently, it was necessary to use a parallel concordance tool while incorporating such a corpus which has texts aligned in both language versions. The alignment of texts in this case means that the corpus linguistic tool is capable of recognizing which

segment in one language corresponds to which segment in the other language when comparing parallel (multilingual) texts (Matuška, 2019). Such recognition of corresponding segments is possible due to the information contained in the corpus, whose operationalization may be explained as follows:

Segments refer to the parts into which a parallel (multilingual) corpus is divided for the purpose of alignment. Alignment means that the corpus contains information about which segment in one language is a translation of which segment in another language. Segments typically correspond to sentences but some corpora can be aligned at a paragraph or document level. The shorter the segments, the easier is to locate the translated word or phrase in the segment (Matuška, 2019).

Concerning the structure of the search results of specific morpho-syntactic structures in the corpus, the segmentation and alignment of specific morpho-syntactic structures we were searching for took place on a paragraph level. This allowed for detecting a paragraph with a particular structure in English and its matching Slovak paragraph.

In order to locate specific and complex morpho-syntactic structures in the selected documents, it was necessary to activate Corpus Query Language (CQL) (Jakubíček, Kilgarriff, McCarthy, & Rychlý, 2010) in the advanced user interface (see Figure 1).

Parallel concordance E... x

CQL [tag="VBZ"] [tag="VBG"] [tag="VVN"] • 1
28.07 per million tokens • 1.2e-7%

Regulation • 32006R1638

<s> 5. </s><s> Countries, other than the participating countries, which face a common sea basin where a joint operational programme **is being established** may be associated with that joint operational programme and benefit from Community assistance under the conditions determined in the implementing rules referred to in Article 11. </s>

Figure 1: Example of a CQL search result using a parallel concordance tool in Sketch Engine

The CQL is a special code which is used as a means of communication language between the corpus linguistic tool and its user in order to enter the search inputs to detect complex patterns. The inevitable element of CQL is a POS tagset, which stands for part-of-speech tags, enabling searching for very specific forms of tokens occurring in the assembled corpus. Each POS tag stands for a specific morphological form of a specific part of speech.

In connection with the corpus arrangement, it should also be noted that the 2021 EU regulations had to be processed in a more demanding way as those texts were not part of the EUR Lex 2/2006 corpus (Baisa, Michelfeit, Medved', & Jakubíček, 2016) directly accessible from the *Sketch Engine Corpus Query Tool*. In order to

be able to analyse the 2021 EU texts with the help of the selected corpus tool, it was necessary to convert the texts through the use of the LF Aligner tool, which, based on the CELEX number of the particular piece of the EU legislation, was able to download the required document, process the alignment of the text and subsequently transform it into the required format suitable for the *Sketch Engine Corpus Query Tool*.

4. Research results and discussion: The crux of the argument

In order to make the research feasible and more efficient, we explored those passive structures which could be identified by the selected corpus linguistic tool without constraints. We adopted a conceptually similar methodology as provided by Sandrelli (2018), however, with several variations to enable us to search for more passive structures while employing a different corpus linguistic tool. The only structure that had to be excluded from the analysis in order to achieve the most valid results is *to be + past participle*, thus leaving space for a more complex scrutiny of the particular structure in future research. The reason behind the exclusion of the passive structure *to be + past participle* was the fact that in one of our subcorpora the structure was relatively frequently translated into Slovak in such a way that it was not possible to figure out the passive or active voice as those translations were made through indefinite verb forms. Thus, the selected EU regulations have been found to contain the following passive structures (see Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1. Passive structures in subcorpus A*

<i>Passive structures</i>	Subcorpus A (EU regulations from 2006)			
	Number of hits	Number of hits per million tokens	Translated into Slovak as passive voice	Translated into Slovak as active voice
<i>is + past participle</i>	55	1,544	25	26
<i>are + past participle</i>	32	898	14	11
<i>was/were + past participle</i>	2	56	2	0
<i>is being + past participle</i>	1	28	1	0
<i>are being + past participle</i>	1	28	0	1

<i>shall be + past participle</i>	99	2,779	64	33
<i>should be + past participle</i>	26	730	22	4
<i>can be + past participle</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>might be + past participle</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>will be + past participle</i>	4	112	3	0
<i>must be + past participle</i>	1	28	0	1
<i>may be + past participle</i>	27	758	22	4
<i>has been + past participle</i>	10	281	8	1
<i>having been + past participle</i>	1	28	1	0

* excluding the passive structure *to be + past participle*

Table 2. Passive structures in subcorpus B*

Passive structures	Subcorpus B (EU regulations from 2021)			
	Number of hits	Number of hits per million tokens	Translated into Slovak as passive voice	Translated into Slovak as active voice
<i>is + past participle</i>	40	1,214	29	10
<i>are + past participle</i>	36	1,093	20	11
<i>was/were + past participle</i>	18	546	10	2
<i>is being + past participle</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>are being + past participle</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>shall be + past participle</i>	51	1,548	39	11
<i>should be + past participle</i>	53	1,609	49	4
<i>can be + past participle</i>	1	30	1	0

<i>might be + past participle</i>	1	30	1	0
<i>will be + past participle</i>	2	61	2	0
<i>must be + past participle</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>may be + past participle</i>	16	486	13	3
<i>has been + past participle</i>	6	180	0	6
<i>having been + past participle</i>	-	-	-	-

* excluding the passive structure *to be + past participle*

Based on the qualitative analysis of the data in the selected parallel EU texts supported by the *Sketch Engine Corpus Query Tool*, it is possible to provide the conclusive answer to the first research question. We can confirm that passive structures in the English language version of the examined EU regulations are expressed in the Slovak language version through the medium of the passive, as evidenced by Tables 1 and 2. However, we also ascertained the presence of the active voice in the Slovak translation, which is known as (a syntactic) modulation, e.g. *EN: a cost-benefit analysis of communication channels and technologies that **are used** by, or are available to, providers of currency conversion services.../ SK: analýza nákladov a prínosov komunikačných kanálov a technológií, ktoré poskytovatelia služieb menovej konverzie **používajú** alebo majú k dispozícii...*

Despite this finding, it can be generally claimed that the passive voice prevails over the active one in the Slovak language version of the analysed EU translations. Nevertheless, we also detected such cases where neither the passive nor the active voice was used in Slovak to express those structures that were passive in English, *EN: Member States should lay down penalties applicable to infringements of this Regulation and ensure that those penalties **are applied**.* / *SK: Členské štáty by mali stanoviť sankcie za porušenia tohto nariadenia a zabezpečiť ich **uplatňovanie**.* Those Slovak translation equivalents (counterparts to English passive structures) which were of unidentifiable voice (indefinite verb form/'verbálne substantívum') were not given in the separate columns in Tables 1 and 2.

In the quantitative analysis, the frequency of occurrence of all passives was also observed, which, consequently, provided us with the answer to the first complementary research questions. As can be inferred from Tables 1 and 2, the most frequent passive structure is *shall be + past participle*, with a total of 99 hits in subcorpus A and 51 hits in subcorpus B. This finding is in complete agreement with that by Sandrelli (2018) who also reports on the passive form *shall be + past*

participle as the most frequent one “accounting for over 92% obligation modals” in her corpus (Sandrelli, 2018, p. 80). In order to provide an explanation for *shall* being so over-represented in EU directives, the author refers to Robertson (as cit. in Sandrelli, 2018, p. 80): “*shall* has value in a multilingual context as its function is well understood as normative and it is a clear and unambiguous sign, whereas the present indicative already has a factual signification and there could be ambiguity”. This insightful explanation further serves to emphasize the ‘biblical status’ (Seymour, 2002, p. 9) assigned to the *shall* modal.

What follows is a list of passive structures not found in either subcorpora. This gives us an answer to the second complementary research question. The non-occurrence of the passive structures listed in Table 3 may be the result of the following two factors: first, the occurrence of some structures may be connected to the text genre, and hence it may be a genre-related phenomenon. Second, the other possible cause may be ascribed to the small-scale corpus size.

Table 3. Passive structures not found in either subcorpora

<i>was/were being + past participle</i>
<i>would have been + past participle</i>
<i>might have been + past participle</i>
<i>should have been + past participle</i>
<i>could have been + past participle</i>
<i>may have been + past participle</i>
<i>must have been + past participle</i>
<i>shall have been + past participle</i>
<i>can be + past participle</i>
<i>might be + past participle</i>
<i>could be + past participle</i>
<i>would be + past participle</i>
<i>to have been + past participle</i>

For the sake of a diachronic translational analysis of the 2006 and 2021 subcorpora, only those passive structures are taken into consideration that occur in the analysed subcorpora with the highest frequency. The comparison was made based on the following passive structures: *is + past participle*, *are + past participle*, *shall be + past participle*, *should be + past participle*, and *may be + past participle* (see Tables 4 and 5). When comparing the 2006 subcorpus with that of 2021, based on the gained data, we may observe that in the majority of cases there has been an increase in employing the passive voice in the translation of passive structures from the English into the Slovak language version of EU texts. Simultaneously, a decreasing tendency in the translation of passive structures

into active ones in Slovak has been detected. Overall, the most significant diachronic change in the translation of passives is related to the verb structure *is + past participle* with an almost 60% increase in preferring the passive voice in contemporary EU institutional-legal texts that were the subject of the analysis. The only apparent exception to the trend observed applies to the structure *may be + past participle* which accounts for almost no change concerning the passive; however, a minor variation in connection with translation by dint of the active voice has been detected. Based on the data in Tables 4 and 5, it is possible to

Table 4. Diachronic variation in translating passive structures into Slovak as passive voice

Passive structure	Translated into Slovak as passive voice		
	Subcorpus A (2006)	Subcorpus B (2021)	Percentage change* between the year 2006 and 2021
<i>is + past participle</i>	45.45%	72.5%	+59.51
<i>are + past participle</i>	43.75%	55.55%	+26.97
<i>shall be + past participle</i>	64.64%	76.47%	+18.30
<i>should be + past participle</i>	84.61%	92.45%	+9.26
<i>may be + past participle</i>	81.48%	81.25%	-0.28

* increase + / decrease -

Table 5. Diachronic variation in translating passive structures into Slovak as active voice

Passive structure	Translated into Slovak as active voice		
	Subcorpus A (2006)	Subcorpus B (2021)	Percentage change* between the year 2006 and 2021
<i>is + past participle</i>	47.27%	25%	-47.11
<i>are + past participle</i>	34.37%	30.55%	-11.11
<i>shall be + past participle</i>	33.33%	21.56%	-35.31
<i>should be + past participle</i>	15.38%	7.54%	-50.97
<i>may be + past participle</i>	14.81%	18.75%	+26.60

* increase + / decrease -

reflect upon the possibility that a shift in translation practice regarding the passive structure use in the Slovak language version of EU legal texts has taken place in the time frame under examination, thus providing a positive answer to the second research question. The shift towards a higher prevalence of passives in contemporary EU Slovak texts seems at variance with the latest research by Biel (2022) in which she reports approximately a 40% decrease of passives in the post-accession Polish Eurolect. However, a much larger English-Slovak corpus is necessary to be able to confirm our finding unequivocally.

5. Limitations: Deficiencies despite doing our best

Despite being responsive to recent trends in legal translation studies in terms of applying a mixed methods approach (with some preference of a quantitative analysis) and corpus linguistics methods (see Klabal, 2019), this study is not devoid of limitations.

The restraint of the present research consists in researching only one document category of EU institutional-legal texts, i.e. *legislation (CELEX sector)* and one type of EU legislation documents, that is *regulations*. Therefore, the task posed for further research is the inclusion of several other EU legislation document types such as e.g. directives, judgements, orders, resolutions and so forth for the sake of eliminating potential genre-driven specificities.

The next limitation is connected with the exclusive focus of the performed analysis only on positive passive verb forms. This leaves space for further research with a focus on both positive and negative forms of passive structures. Besides, the conducted research does not include the cases in which an adverb is placed between the auxiliary and the verb (e.g. *should always be considered*).

Last but not least, worth noting is the limitation pertaining to the character of the analysis which requires the mixed-method approach. The results provided by a quantitative analysis had to be complemented by a qualitative analysis in order to provide the relevant outcomes. However, such a manual scrutiny of each and every translation equivalent posed a time-consuming task as this was a mental operation to be performed by a human translator.

6. Conclusion: So what?

To sum up, owing to the quantitative and qualitative scrutiny of the corpus the analysis provides us with the preliminary results that allow for a clear answer to the proposed research questions. Based on the data resulting from the mixed-method approach towards the selected EU-ese, it was revealed that the English passive structures in the investigated texts do not always have their translation counterparts in Slovak expressed through the medium of passive verb forms, but many times they are expressed through the active ones, or, though less often, indefinite verb forms. However, the preference of passive verb forms over

the active ones in the Slovak interlingual reproduction of the analysed EU regulations is evident. This fact, however, contravenes the recommendations for EU translators provided by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Translation (see Claire's Clear Writing Tips – CCWT, 2016, p. 11) which foster shunning the use of the passive voice. As the focal point of the analysis was the investigation of diachronic variation of EU legal language, a relatively considerable time span was selected for the corpus arrangement in order to achieve the most contrasting and relevant results, and concurrently to comply with the requirement of contemporariness. The empirical position of this study makes a contribution to our understanding of the Slovak Eurolect in institutional translation through a lens of morpho-syntactic forms. It provides us with rather straightforward confirmation of the changes that have taken place in translation tendencies within the selected time frame.

For the sake of refining the present findings, it would be worth performing a similar analysis, however, with a much larger corpus to provide even more accurate outcomes in order to arrive at robust generalizations. Last but far from least, the incorporation of a wider range of genres of EU institutional-legal documents into future analyses would contribute to enhancing the quality of such investigations, too.

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