THE GLUE THAT HOLDS US TOGETHER: CHALLENGES OF TRANSLATING CONSERVATION-RESTORATION TERMINOLOGY FROM AND INTO SERBIAN

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Abstract: Cultural heritage as a concept in social legacy is meant to represent a culture and its significant achievements and artifacts to the rest of the world. Conservation-restoration helps keep and preserve that heritage for future generations and relies on international cooperation and sharing of research and experience for the betterment of the practice. However, an issue promptly arises if there is a lack of a unified terminological front when preparing to present the work done on the international stage. Translators who help promote that work may hit a wall while looking up terminology and encountering an abundance of different phrases relating to a single concept. This paper focuses on just a sample of vocational terminology issues the authors experienced while translating conservation-restoration related material. Starting from the basic concept of cultural property (kulturno dobro) as cited in the Republic of Serbia’s law and contrasted with cultural heritage (kulturno nasleđe), the binary system of terms zaštita vs konzervacija-restauracija, all the way to the instance of deciphering types of adhesives used in restoration and the confusion ensuing from the terms being loanwords from different languages. By using contrastive, analytical and descriptive methods, the authors wish to contribute to the ongoing debate bridging the fields of humanities and applied arts. The aim is to underline the importance of having a standardized glossary of terminology, and furthermore the need for participating in a national and transnational discourse between both art-field professionals and those aiding them en route to international presence.

Keywords: conservation-restoration, translating, terminology standardization

INTRODUCTION TO THE ISSUES AND METHODOLOGY

The title of an academic paper serves to summarize its author’s main idea in a succinct manner, its economical approach to wording introducing the intended audience to the topic, problem(s) considered and
the overall purpose of the work. With this in mind, while embarking on the writing process on this particular occasion, we were faced with a quandary of sorts – the necessity to reflect a binary background to research, as well as our own professional situation which led us to it.

First of all, the experiential background of the research meant that we drew from our translation practice, in the process of which we came across and noted certain irregularities and issues. Throughout this practice, it came to our attention that certain concepts and terms were difficult to understand, and subsequently translate, due to the nature of their origin or pertinent usage. This could not be simply explained by the phenomenon of layman’s comprehension as, upon consultations with professionals in the field, it became evident that there was a somewhat lax and freehand approach to area-specific applied-art terminology in Serbian. To be precise, this was observed in the field of conservation-restoration. The situation continued to develop unfavourably when it was transposed to the wider arena of what was considered to be generally accepted and adopted hypernym terminology – when it came to light that there was a clear divergence in the “basic” terminology, namely concepts of restoration, conservation, cultural heritage. To appropriate Leoni’s (2015) terms with a slightly different perspective in mind, we could call this existing general-specific bipolarity in lexis “microlanguage” vs. “macrolanguage.” Soon, that macro-problem would show to have surpassed the national borders. The theoretical discussion overlapped with practical issues in everyday reality of someone translating applied-art (conservation-restoration) terminology from and into Serbian – as defined by the second half of the title.

The first half of the title, however, is intended to signify the importance of cooperation among different fields, to stress the absolute necessity of having a shared set of root ideas and attitudes when approaching a particular problematic. If the outcome is meant to be universally accepted, there has to be an agreement on the starting points, on some standards followed by all. As an ICOM-CC Resolution (2008) clearly puts it,

“the public has increasingly become an essential partner in safeguarding our shared cultural heritage, […] there has been a sometimes haphazard multiplication of terminology, resulting in confusion and misunderstanding.”

This half also focuses on the true matter of the field in question – the fact that conservation-restoration practice is meant to protect and prolong the life of culturally significant property, something that is a shared value in a society. The playful wording also hides within itself a reference to one of the examples discussed further on.

As regards its academic ambitions, this paper approaches the discussion on primary issues present in Serbian terminology standardization. We wish to start an open conversation on the topic of terminology in applied arts practice, namely conservation-restoration one, whose worth cannot be denied and whose advancement often relies on transnational cooperation. From a linguistic point of view, terminology standardization holds a special place since successful resolutions to lexical issues pave the road for future lexicographic and translating enterprises. Parallel to that, no small benefit is felt in the legal framework as well, as the operational readiness of a system that governs and provides guidance for practical implementation depends on differentiation between terms and concepts, with no room for error.

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3 ICOM-CC* (2008), Terminology to characterize the conservation of tangible cultural heritage, p1. [*International Council of Museums – Committee for Conservation, not.*]
The research is presented in two sections, as per its binary approach. The first, more theoretical one, will observe and outline the existing issues on a larger scale – the principal concepts in conservation-restoration as used in Serbian and English – deriving material and support from multiple sources and offering possible solutions and corrections. Chosen methodology will be analytical; in linguistic terms this would be along the lines of cross-cultural semantics which looks at semantic universals4, especially significant in translatology. In our case, this “universal” would be subject to modern restructuration, and we compare and contrast its artificial adoption and incorporation in vocational genre. The second section, more heavily relying on specific instances encountered, will show the disparity found among individual concepts in conservation-restoration tradition in the said two languages. Here, the concept of language contact and borrowing, contrastive analysis5 and lexical semantic approaches will prove to be the most applicable.

Instead of making general concluding remarks, the final section of the study is devoted to our recommendations for steps to be taken with a view to standardizing applied arts (conservation-restoration) terminology in Serbian. We look at the parties responsible for creating and implementing terminology and offer a concise template for the process of decision-making that should be both lexically and pragmatically relevant.

For the overarching principle of what a term is and how it is created, the authors chose to follow the Communicative Theory of Terminology (CTT), which defines terms as “lexical units that are activated by their pragmatic conditions of adjustment to a given type of communication.”6 In other words, this is a *sine qua non* of language for specific purposes (LSP).

Though the sections are in a binary relationship, neither will brush over the fact of the matter, which is that the overlapping and intertwining of theory (forming principles) and practice (execution of principles) is what ultimately causes rifts in usage and further supports the proposition that interdisciplinary dialogue and standardization are key to solving the long-existing lexical puzzle.

THE WIDER ISSUE AT HAND

a) Heritage vs property

When considering the value of cultural heritage, we cannot underline enough its importance in socio-cultural, anthropological and international terms. The very concept of legacy that it is irrevocably tied to evokes the idea of continuity, connectivity and influence across the generations which partook in its creation and especially – in its selection, an integral part of the culture-building process. This is solidified by UNESCO's official citations, such as the one proffering that heritage “is the legacy that we receive from the past, that we experience in the present and that we will pass on to future generations”7, or the numerous iterations of “universal value”8 attributed to such elements as are recognized to be representative of heritage.

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5 Often called “differential”, *not*.
7 One of the many places where this particular definition is quoted is on UNESCO’s regional site for Latin America, http://www.unesco.org/new/en/santiago/culture/cultural-heritage/.
Naturally, UNESCO’s official files (conventions, operational papers and legal documents) all pertain to what is termed world heritage, but they never lose sight of the simple fact that it is the many individual cultural achievements and legacies that in reality make up the overall world history and culture – pan-generational, pan- and intercontinental. Not every item or phenomenon of national importance will make it onto the World Heritage List, but their status of building blocks of a single culture still spans borders by being counted in the wider picture of the world. UNESCO’s 2003 Convention, one of the many since the initial 1954 Hague Convention which have progressively expanded the scope and international protection awarded to heritage, rightfully recognized the concept of non-physical elements of a culture. Ever since, it has been understood that cultural heritage can be classified under three categories – tangible, intangible and natural; tangible being further divided into movable, immovable and underwater. Intangible cultural heritage is, among other manifestations, seen in oral traditions, social practices, rituals, etc.

Although this paper focuses on the terminology in conservation-restoration and therefore on the tangible (material) manifestations of heritage, it is worth noting this definition for the purposes of comparing Republic of Serbia’s legislation to current international standards. Namely, the Law on Cultural Property (first adopted in 1994, revised in 2011), opts in favour of the term kulturno dobro (cultural property), as opposed to the terms kulturno nasleđe / kulturna baština (cultural heritage). This in itself may in fact pose little issue, considering the frequent overlapping of the terms in official documents of various sources (Council of Europe’s, UNESCO conventions, etc.) and the fact that ‘property’ was the initial term chosen as far back as 1954. There is, however, some reservation at international level regarding the very concept of cultural property. According to legal experts like Prott and O’Keefe (1992), ‘heritage’ is justifiably superseding ‘property’ since “property does not incorporate concepts of duty to preserve and protect.” From a linguistic point of view, it is telling that the semantic features of heritage could be defined as possession [+], material [+/-], valuable [+], inherited [+], while for the property they are possession [+], material [+], valuable [–], inherited [–]. It is evident that property at its core focuses primarily on the tangibility, the material aspect, whereas heritage incorporates the concept of value to be retained and handed down to others. The underlying divergence has, therefore, been transposed into Serbian legislation, where the law is written only around kulturno dobro as an equivalent term. The discrepancy also lies in completely omitting the idea that kulturno nasleđe has been ‘updated’ to refer to both tangible and intangible forms. With no mention whatsoever of the evolution of the term, it in practice means that only material culture enjoys full legal protection and that, unfortunately, despite some of the intangible heritage (slava, kolo, singing to the accompaniment of gusle) being inscribed on UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural Heritage List in the 2014-2018 period, the new Law on Cultural Heritage, expected in 2015, never came to be. It is examples like these that show the importance of standardized terminology beyond the scope of pure semantics.

9 Of special interest is the UNESCO’s 1972 World Heritage Convention.
10 For a precise definition, consult a publication edited by Jokilehto, J., ICCROM Working Group ‘Heritage and Society’ (2005), Definition of Cultural Heritage, p.43.
13 Semantic features denote the basic conceptual components of meaning for any lexical item. See Palmer, F. (1981), Semantics, CUP, p.114.
b) Conservation vs restoration

Further confusion arises when instances of terms conservation and restoration are found to be present in a total of 2 places (Articles 99 and 111), bearing in mind the Law spans 143 articles and 22 pages. Even in those two instances, there is an inconsistency in the morphological and categorical makeup of the words. In Article 99, we talk of konzerviranje (conserving) and restauriranje (restoring), with them being verbal nouns (gerunds) denoting the process of doing something, whereas in Article 111 the abstract nouns konzervacija (conservation) and restauracija (restoration) are in use. It must be noted that in the context in which they were used, there was no syntactic or discursive rationale behind the use of two different nouns. Legal texts depend on the accuracy of expression and phrasing, which makes this oversight doubly problematic.

The term favoured throughout the legal text – mere tehničke zaštite (measures of technical protection) – appears to be a term used in such a predominant scope mainly in the Balkans, reminiscent perhaps of the former tradition of inserting more complicated phrasing into every part of the state apparatus. Nevertheless, it is not necessarily a negative occurrence. Mere tehničke zaštite does indeed cover a wider span of options available to the individuals and organisations working in the field of heritage protection. It also elegantly avoids entering into the conservation vs. restoration debate (elaborated upon below). However, it simultaneously avoids giving more weight to that terminology and paradoxically ignores the, now already established, title of konzervator-restaurator (conservator-restorer), leaving this term without a direct significant link to the legislative backing it deserves. The only mention is awarded to one half of that compound noun – konzervator – in Article 123, “conservators and other experts needed for the protection of exhibits” \(^{14}\). There simply needs to be a clear and visible presence of the concepts of konzervacija and restauracija, whose significance in both theory and practice (field implementation) is no longer disputable.

On the global stage, the Anglo-Saxon traditionalist view avoids the term restoration and shows no detachment from the term conservation, despite it not being in regular use long enough to warrant that preferred status. This attitude stems from the 19\textsuperscript{th} century anti-restoration movement \(^{15}\), which left a bitter aftertaste linked to the word – considered a remnant of times when invasive methods of “protection” irreversibly changed the appearance, originality or state of cultural property, oftentimes inflicting irreparable damage to it. Other dominant European cultures invested in the protection of heritage (French, Italian, German) did not attribute negative connotations to the word, thus continuing to officially use restoration. This lexical tug-of-war is still present to this day, though supposedly alleviated by the ICCOM-CC Resolution from 2008, which defined conservation as a term encompassing preventive conservation, remedial conservation and restoration. Conservation became a hypernym for multiple approaches to protecting tangible cultural heritage. Serbia sits somewhere inbetween the two currents, as evident in the choice to implement the term kurativna konzervacija \(^{16}\) (remedial conservation), following the French curative instead of the English remedial.

If we explore this duality through a linguistic prism, we should cite the translatability thesis, which proffers that “any meaning that can be expressed in any given language can also be expressed in any other language.” \(^{17}\) Although the theory of semantic universals focuses on common lexical meaning naturally occurring cross-culturally, we propose that in the modern era we can also speak of artificially imposed

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\(^{14}\) „konzervatore i druge potrebne stručnjake za zaštitu eksponata“, Zakon o kulturnim dobrima, p.18.


universals – those concepts and terms which are imposed by joint decisions at international level and transposed into individual languages. The common referential meaning for both conservation and restoration is “repair” and “preservation”, concepts we believe to be present in all languages, but denoted with different lexical items. As seen in the previous paragraph, the term conservation is meant to be consciously adopted by multiple languages to signify particular concepts, as well as to rid itself of previously existing connotations. It surpasses the status of a mere loanword, because within itself it brings a plethora of sub-context and, when used in context, a proposition\(^{18}\) that remains unchanged regardless of the language using it. What is more, in the English language – contrary to the pre-existing use in that language. This process of creating new universals lies at the core of ISO terminology standards, more on which shall be said in chapter 4 of this study.

As a summary of this section, we can argue it is no wonder that de Guichen, Special Advisor to the Director General of ICCROM, said in his Forbes Prize lecture in 2006, in no uncertain terms, that he “ha[d] the impression that we [the ICCROM community] [were] living in the Tower of Babel.”\(^{19}\) With so many sides entering the discussion with their varied backgrounds, it will take an inordinate amount of conscious effort to finally implement the terminology as agreed upon.

THE PROBLEMATICS OF INDIVIDUAL CASES

To make matters more complex, when translating conservation-restoration texts, it is not enough that the basic concepts are still somewhat unclear, but delving deeper into the field reveals even more daunting problems with terminology.

Before mentioning any specific examples, we must emphasize that the field of art history in Europe, and consequently in Serbia, has been fundamentally influenced by Romance languages. These, especially Italian, would be considered adstrate languages in art – those languages whose prestigious status makes them the source of lexical borrowing, the prestige here stemming from their long tradition in the arts and art research. Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that a considerable number of terms have been borrowed from them and translators in conservation-restoration field can expect to be looking for Italian loanwords in English as well.

All is not that simple, however, as we will show with the analysis of a few examples. Readers should note that these have come from a rather limited corpus, albeit representative enough of the vocational genre in question. Through conversations with field experts, it becomes apparent that one might expect many more such cases upon closer investigation.

The first example is a source of confusion when the term is mentioned in passing and without much elaboration in the context. It is an English word which, at first glance, has a clear formal correspondent\(^{20}\) in Serbian, depending on its usage. We are talking, of course, about the notorious plaster. In practice, the

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\(^{18}\) In linguistics, a proposition is the meaning of a clause/sentence which is constant and independent of its syntactic or lexical realization.


\(^{20}\) Formal correspondence in translation is when a word/phrase in one language fully matches a word/phrase in another, e.g. jabuka vs apple. Functional-communicative (translational) equivalence is when a certain sense of the word is missing in the target language, so other expressions are formed or used to create that meaning and fill the lexical void between the two languages. See more in Prčić 2005 and Ivir 1981.
Serbian *gips* corresponds to the concepts of plaster, “plaster of Paris” and lime plaster. The English *gypsum*, on the other hand, is a different matter not applicable to art cases, despite seeming to correspond to the Serbian word in the same practice. It is, in fact, the name of the mineral used to make plaster of Paris. What is more, *malter* also corresponds to plaster (in rendering), but also to mortar (in joining) and lime plaster (in fresco painting). It is quite problematic to have such an intertwining situation, especially when the texts to be translated do not offer a more precise description and the material mentioned differs in its formula, not usually given since the author knows what they had in mind. There seems to be a clear delineation in English of the many different versions of the material, whereas Serbian condenses them all into two terms without creating functional-communicative equivalents. Such a lack of terminological diversity is to be solved by introducing new words and phrases, though the necessity of this is best judged by those operating with the existing terminology on a daily basis.

Another sort of uncertainty arises when Serbian draws terminology from different languages, while not always aware of the overlapping backgrounds existing among them. In conservation-restoration of easel paintings, oftentimes paintings have to be relined with another canvas at their back to reinforce the support of the painted layer (picture). An adhesive solution that does not damage the paint is applied in this process. An example from our translating practice names two types of adhesive in the process: *podleplijivanje* “Klajsterom” and *podleplijivanje* “kola pastom”. Translated, it means ‘relining with paste’ and ‘re-lining with (flour) paste’, the difference supposedly lying in the type of paste (adhesive). It is obvious even at first glance that *Klajster* comes from German (signaled by both morphology and spelling), so when a translator looks it up, they get the following definition: Ger. Kleister – starch glue paste, wallpaper paste.

Naturally, one assumes then that the other term would provide a key difference in the type of material used. Surprisingly though, *kola pasta*, once identified as Italian *colla di pasta*, is in fact also starch/flour/glue paste. This definition is clearly laid out in the multilingual comparison of glue lining paste recipes in European restoration tradition, performed by the ATSR (Art Technological Source Research), a working group of ICOM-CC and supported by the famous Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, as well as Danish, Spanish, Italian and many other researchers. Consequently, both terms relate to the same concept, so the question arises whether Serbian has loaned them with clear differences in meaning, or are we simply faced with attribution of new meanings to loanwords, not historically present in their original use abroad.

The third instance we shall comment on is a somewhat similar problem to the one discussed above, though the root cause of it lies more in the morphological makeup of the words. *Lazurno slikanje* is a technique in oil painting where the paint is applied in many transparent layers to create various effects. Despite, as previously mentioned, Italian being the main language source for art field vocabulary, here we again refer to German and its *Die Lasur*, as opposed to *la velatura*. Going from there, we discover that the method in question is called ‘glaze/glazing technique’ in English. The misconstrual now lies in the English adoption of the German word, used only to denote a wall painting technique – ‘lazure painting’. The German root word is adopted by two languages for two separate techniques (both relying on layering of transparent coats of paint), which could potentially cause confusion since at first glance the words *lazur* and ‘lazure’ seem to be formal correspondents. On the other hand, the term ‘glaze/glazing’ is used in ceramic arts as well, which is exactly where we find it in Serbian as well as *glazura*. It has to be concluded that various traditions in art and its corresponding terminology tend to jump hedges between languages

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21 Ibid.

and can end up in meaning and usage divergence. Lexical voids which exist between loanwords in different target languages (but from the same source language) should be carefully noted and discussed to assess the appropriate functional equivalence established between them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Solving terminological issues in a language is never one person’s responsibility or work. Individual translators may undertake to suggest solutions and future practice based on their experience and what they deemed fitting in a particular case. However, for any specific concepts that appear in regular use and constitute the bulk or significant parts of a profession/field, it is of crucial importance to have a standard to follow, a term agreed upon by experts and used widely and without an inherent confusion.

When it comes to standardising conservation-restoration terminology in Serbia, there is a vast network of institutions which have to be consulted, all of which have to actively participate in the process and pursue solutions to the best of their capacity. We could divide the parties of this endeavour into two categories: those whose primary concern is language and those whose focus rests on heritage protection.

Language standardisation is in the hands of the Institute for the Serbian Language of SASA\textsuperscript{23} and the Committee for the Standardisation of Serbian. Any decisions or recommendations made by them and regarding specific vocational terminology should be forwarded to the Institute for the Standardisation of Serbia, which compiles glossaries to be referred to in practice in the field. These language-focused bodies cannot act on their own, i.e. they have to act in close cooperation with field experts whose invaluable knowledge of the matter at hand serves to resolve any issues in usage and comprehension. In the field of conservation-restoration, there is no single hub for this, but rather a group of organisations which all collaboratively work on heritage protection, promotion and advancement. The Republic Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Serbia, The Provincial Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments, The Society of Conservators of Serbia as well as museum staff with practical experience all have to join forces to establish terminology they can agree upon and implement in their practice. In this endeavour, academic institutions should also be consulted, such as The University of Arts in Belgrade, seeing as many field experts work in academia and are responsible for the transfer of knowledge to future generations of conservator-restorers. Not to be omitted is the importance of legislature (Ministry of Culture and Information), which should operate with the agreed-upon terminology when proposing and supporting the adoption of legislative acts.

The process of standardisation itself should be threefold if it is to bear any valuable results. The first step is to describe, classify and systematise the terminological fund in the field of conservation-restoration. The second is to gain support from the state and create conditions for organised teamwork – cooperative efforts of linguists and conservator-restorers. The final, and equally crucial, step is to produce a lexicographic publication – an official volume of references that paints a clear picture of appropriate terminology and its adequate usage. An example of one such publication already exists in Europe – EwaGlos\textsuperscript{24}, a multilingual illustrated glossary of conservation terms for wall painting and architectural surfaces. There is no professional reason why such a project could not be initiated in Serbia, as long as there is a cooperative spirit among the interested parties and sufficient support provided by the state.

\textsuperscript{23} SASA – Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (Serb. SANU).

\textsuperscript{24} EwaGlos, http://www.ewaglos.eu/.
As regards the process of forming new terms where needed, all sides should follow ISO recommendations. Its Technical Committee 37 (TC37) states the following criteria should be respected: term adequacy – semantic and stylistic conformity with the concept being denoted; the economy of terms – language is economical and terms should be concise; morphological potential of the term – other words and potential new terms should be easily derived from the starting one. Whereas lexicology as a branch is descriptive, terminology is often prescriptive and in the case of LSP it invariably should be. In the standardization efforts in Serbia, all parties to the process should pay special attention to the principle of univocity when it comes to scientific terminology. That principle prescribes that “one designation corresponds to one concept (a term shall have only one meaning) and that, equally, one concept corresponds to one designation (a concept shall be named by only one term).”

If we refer back to our earlier examination of Serbia’s Law on Cultural Property, it is evident this rule is currently not being followed.

Furthermore, based on our previous research in the field, we propose that the following criteria be followed and be treated as of equal significance and merit as regards the formation and selection of terms in this specific area and its LSP:

- semantic and pragmatic criteria: precision, monosemy, prime status given to native language (Serbian) where possible, but not disregarding the longstanding tradition of employing foreign terms in arts (Romance, Germanic, now also Anglicisms);
- formal and functional criteria: derivation potential, economy of form, ease of pronunciation
- miscellaneous criteria: productivity, systematic use and frequency of use which govern the selection of terms in cases where there are more lexical units denoting the same concept.

As the authors of this study, we hope it will serve as a valuable point in a national discussion on terminology standardization in conservation-restoration, the necessity of which we have endeavoured to show through the lens of linguistics and translation practice with its relevant issues.

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ВЕЗИВО КОЈЕ НАС ДРЖИ ЗАЈЕДНО: ИЗАЗОВИ ПРЕВОЂЕЊА ТЕРМИНОЛОГИЈЕ ИЗ ОБЛАСТИ КОНЗЕРВАЦИЈЕ И РЕСТАУРАЦИЈЕ СА СРПСКОГ И НА СРПСКИ ЈЕЗИК

Резиме: Аутори се у раду осврћу на актуелну терминолошку проблематику енглеског и српског језика у области конзервације и рестаурације, односно на изазове двосмерног превођења у овој области. Употребом дескриптивне, компаративне и секвенцијалне аналитичке методе аутори указују на апстрактност српске конзерваторско-рестаураторске терминологије, али и дају конкретна решења како би се наведени проблеми и недоследности отклонили. Примери који су у раду анализирани, као и бинарни начин њихове обраде (у ужем и ширем смислу: од општег – културно добро, наслеђе, заштита, конзервација, рестаурација; ка посебном – гипс, малтер, подлепљивање клајстером, лазурно сликање) засновани су на релевантним савременим лингвистичким и струковним изворима. У закључку се представља modus operandi мултидисциплинарног институционалног предзнака, заснован на сарадњи између конзерватора-рестаураатора и лингвиста, као и нормирању и стандардизацији језика струке, којим би се отклониле описане тешкоће.

Кључне речи: конзервација и рестаурација, превођење, стандардизација терминологије