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Power relationships between major and minor languages and the translation of LSP texts

Minor or less translated languages are languages of reception rather than generation (Cronin 2003) and are mostly dependent on translation from major languages. The flow from minor-to-major language translations is less frequent and major languages dominate many aspects of the minor languages translation product. For example, minority languages are considered to be able to cope less with the terminology of LSP texts than major languages, which create their own language and translation imperatives (e.g. anglicisms, corporate language, controlled language) and impose them on the minor languages.

The wish to communicate in a common language and the dynamic role of the economic, political and cultural activities taking place mostly in English today leads to a power relationship which seems rather stable and static. So the minor languages having less power in all the three mentioned fields will feel on the 'defensive' to those in power (Cronin 2003). However, this relationship is not static, but rather dynamic, as the history of the word's languages has shown us (e.g. Greek, Latin). Being a minor language, translation does not have to be a 'minor' activity but should be looked upon as a 'major' activity. Only then the minority languages will have a linguistic and cultural future of their own.

The geographical-historical and the socio-cultural reasons for the spread of English as a global language and a lingua franca of the sciences leads to a language with phonological, grammatical, lexical and other variations (Crystal 1997/2003). We will discuss the fragile power relationship between major and minor languages and focus on the changes that a minor language (in our case Greek) is forced to make in order to be part of today's globalized economic and cultural activities when dealing with the translation of LSP texts.