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To Gloss or Not to Gloss? Learning to Navigate Specialised Knowledge: Glossaries, Terminological Competence and the Education of Translators and Interpreters in the Age of AI

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Abstract: Translator education increasingly takes place alongside machine translation and generative AI, yet students often arrive at university without secure habits of consulting dictionaries, glossaries or terminology databases. This paper argues that the glossary, a lexicographic genre distinct from the dictionary, the encyclopaedia and the termbase, deserves a central place in the training of translators and interpreters. Drawing on the function theory of lexicography, on terminology theory and on functionalist translation studies, it shows how glossary work operationalises the documentary, terminological and intercultural sub-competences required by current competence models, and how it supports the acquisition of specialised vocabulary in the German-Romanian-English language combination. The paper reports on teaching experience in the Translation and Interpreting programme of the Faculty of Communication Sciences, Politehnica University of Timișoara, with particular attention to its German-language study track, to first-year workshops on reference resources and to the third-year course on scientific writing that prepares the bachelor thesis. It proposes a staged glossary-building task, an AI-supported verification workflow and a set of assessment criteria, and it argues that prompting, evaluating and correcting machine output are facets of one and the same terminological literacy. Finally, the paper relates the discussion to the multilingual glossary of the Erasmus+ project EAIEN and to the European sustainability competence framework GreenComp, showing how project glossaries connect research, teaching and green skills.

Keywords: glossary, terminology, lexicography, translator and interpreter education, artificial intelligence, green skills

1. Introduction

This paper is written for a volume that marks two anniversaries: fifteen years since the founding of the Faculty of Communication Sciences (www.sc.upt.ro) and thirty-three

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years since the establishment of the translation and interpreting study programmes at the Politehnica University of Timișoara (www.upt.ro). Anniversaries invite a look backwards, but they also invite a question about what future specialists will need. This contribution addresses that question from the standpoint of a teacher in the Translation and Interpreting programme, and in particular in its German-language study track, in which students work between German, Romanian and English. It concentrates on a small, unglamorous resource that is easily overlooked: the glossary.

To gloss or not to gloss, that is the question. In the era of AI, words are everywhere, meanings are negotiable, and fluent answers can make uncertainty look like knowledge. We prompt, generate, we paraphrase and sometimes we mistake the gloss for the truth. But gloss has a double life. It can mean a comment, an explanation, a note. It can also mean shine: a polished surface that makes something look better than it is. And this is the AI dilemma: Do we gloss to clarify or do we gloss over what we don´t understand?

The starting point is a classroom observation. Over several years I have organised translation workshops and introductory workshops on dictionaries and documentation resources for students in the first year of the Translation and Interpreting (Traducere și interpretare) study programme within the Bachelor's field of study Applied Modern Languages (Philology). I have also taught third-year students in the course on writing scientific papers, where they prepare for their bachelor thesis. In both settings, the same pattern appeared: many students do not come from school with a habit of consulting dictionaries, and even fewer know that there are specialised dictionaries, glossaries and terminology databases, or how these differ from one another. The consequence is practical. A student who has never been asked to decide between a general bilingual dictionary, a specialised dictionary, a glossary compiled for one project and an entry in a termbase will tend to reach for whatever is nearest, and today what is nearest is an automatic translation tool.

This matters more than before because the bachelor thesis (https://sc.upt.ro/attachments/article/971/Met_cadru_elabor_lucrar_licenta%20TI%202025-2026.pdf) in our programme can take two forms: a commented translation or a terminological study. A terminological study cannot be written by a student who cannot read a glossary critically, query a terminology database, or design a small glossary of his or her own. These skills are therefore not merely supplementary. They are essential to the successful completion of a bachelor's thesis.

From a didactic point of view, terminological gaps are a paradigm case of how translation problems turn into translation errors. As Mihaela Cozma and Romanița Jumanca (2023, 126) put it, "Any problem that occurs in the process of rendering a source text into a target language can be solved if the translator uses appropriate strategies. If such strategies are not used, then the problem is very likely to become a translation error." Where specialised vocabulary is concerned, the most elementary of these strategies is documentation, and the glossary is its most tangible and most teachable product. Silvia Montero Martínez and Pamela Faber Benítez (2009, 88) formulate the corresponding training goal with precision: "Translation students should

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thus learn how to carry out descriptive terminological work oriented towards producing a suitable target text." Terminology work is thus explicitly tied to the production of an adequate target text. For translation didactics this means that students should not simply adopt ready-made dictionary information, but learn to prepare, document and justify terminological decisions themselves.

The present paper therefore asks why glossaries should retain a firm place in the education of translators and interpreters even in the age of artificial intelligence. Particular attention is paid to the acquisition of specialised vocabulary, to the critical use of AI-based tools and to the potential of project glossaries for the transfer of knowledge between research and teaching. The argument develops in seven steps. Section 2 clarifies what a glossary is and why it should be treated as a lexicographic genre in its own right. Section 3 situates glossary work within translator competence models, within the German and international terminology tradition and within the problem of equivalence across German, Romanian and English. Section 4 describes the local academic context and teaching experience in Timișoara and proposes a staged glossary-building task. Section 5 turns to artificial intelligence and argues that asking well, evaluating output and supplying a trustworthy glossary are three aspects of one terminological competence. Section 6 illustrates glossary work in selected specialised domains, Section 7 relates the discussion to the international EAIEN project and to green skills, and Section 8 concludes.

2. The glossary as a distinct lexicographic genre

2.1. Glossary, dictionary and terminology database

In everyday academic speech the words *dictionary*, *glossary* and *terminology database* are often used as if they were interchangeable. For teaching purposes it is more useful to separate them. Tackabery (2005), in one of the few articles devoted specifically to the topic, traces the history of glossaries, shows that formal definition is the preferred method for writing their entries, and compares the guidelines found in technical writing textbooks with professional guidelines for glossaries and terminology lists. She also stresses that well-written glossary definitions matter for controlling word usage, localisation and the translation of documentation. The glossary, in this view, is not just a small dictionary, it is an essential part of effective communication. It is a purpose-built list of terms with definitions, compiled for a defined text, project or community, and its value lies in the decisions its compilers have taken once, so that its users do not have to take them again: „For technical communicators, writing a glossary should not be an afterthought to assist in making a document usable or user-friendly but a part of the entire communication process between a company and its customers.” (Tackabery, 2005, 431) Tackabery argues that glossaries help establish a shared understanding of specialized terminology between companies and their customers, making information more accessible.

One working definition for the classroom can be formulated as follows: a glossary is a thematically delimited collection of specialised expressions together with the information needed to understand and use them. Depending on its purpose, it may

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be monolingual, bilingual or multilingual, and its entries may contain, besides the term itself, definitions, translation equivalents, contexts of use, grammatical information, references to sources and pointers to related concepts. What distinguishes the glossary from a general dictionary is above all its thematic delimitation and its orientation towards a particular text, field, project or communicative need. A terminology database, by contrast, can manage larger structured data sets and the manifold relations between concepts and designations. In practical translator training these resources complement rather than replace one another.

The function theory of lexicography offers a way of making these distinctions explicit. Henning Bergenholtz and Sven Tarp (1995; 2003) and Tarp (2008) argue that a reference work should be designed around the needs of a specific type of user in a specific type of situation, rather than around the structure of the language or the field. A general dictionary serves a wide range of situations; an encyclopaedia explains subject knowledge; a glossary typically serves a narrow, well-defined set of situations, such as reading a particular handbook or producing a consistent translation of one document. Seen in this light, the glossary is a monofunctional tool, and its smallness is a design choice and not a deficiency. This is precisely what students need to grasp: before using a resource, one must ask what it was made for. Table 1 summarises the distinctions in the form in which they are presented to first-year students.

Resource	Scope and organising principle	Typical users and situations	Typical content	Didactic use
General (bilingual) dictionary	Broad coverage of the general language; organised by headword	Wide range of reception and production situations	Meanings, grammar, general equivalents, examples	Checking general meaning, grammar and collocation
Specialised dictionary	One subject field; organised by headword or by concept	Experts, translators and learners working in the field	Terms, definitions, equivalents, subject information	Identifying established terms and equivalents in a domain
Glossary	One text, project, course or community; purpose-built and deliberately limited	A narrow, well-defined set of situations (e.g. one translation, one handbook)	Selected terms with definitions, equivalents, contexts, sources	Documenting and justifying terminological decisions; consistency
Terminology database (termbase)	Concept-oriented; structured entries and relations	Institutions, language services, CAT environments	Concept entries, designations, variants, definitions, sources, metadata	Verifying terms against an authoritative, maintained resource

Table 1. Glossary, dictionary and terminology database: a functional comparison

2.2. Concepts, definitions and designations

The terminological literature adds a conceptual layer. Terminology as a discipline, from Wüster (1979) onward, starts from concepts rather than words and aims at clarity and

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standardisation of specialised communication; Cabré (1999) later broadened the perspective to include the communicative and social nature of terms. The international standard ISO 704:2022, *Terminology work – Principles and methods*, codifies this concept-oriented approach. Its abstract describes the standard as establishing "the links between objects, concepts, definitions and designations" (International Organization for Standardization 2022) and setting out principles and methods for preparing terminologies in different subject fields. The consequence for glossary work is fundamental: specialised terms must not be treated as isolated words, but in relation to the concept they designate and to neighbouring concepts in the same system.

For the choice of a target-language equivalent this implies that formal similarity or the first suggestion of a bilingual dictionary is not a sufficient criterion. What matters is whether the selected designation adequately renders the intended concept in the given subject-specific and communicative context. The first volume of the *Handbook of Terminology* (Kockaert and Steurs 2015) gathers the methodological approaches of the field, and the third volume (Biel and Kockaert 2023), which is open access, shows what terminology work looks like when it is applied to a high-stakes domain. Its chapters on multilingual legal terminology databases and on the training of legal translators in terminology are particularly relevant for teachers, because they treat workflows, roles and training together.

Terminology plays a fundamental role in ensuring clarity and precision in specialized communication. As Dana Grosseck (2008, 47-48) observes: „Wie jedes Kommunikationsmittel strebt auch die Fachsprache Eindeutigkeit an [...] Neue Gebiete führen zu neuen Terminologien, die ihrerseits die jeweilige Fachsprache beeinflussen oder sogar verändern.“ [“Like any means of communication, specialized language also strives for unambiguity. [...] New fields of knowledge give rise to new terminologies, which, in turn, influence or even transform the specialized languages associated with them.”] This principle highlights the importance of using terms consistently and accurately within a specific field of knowledge.

For students, a termbase entry is the visible outcome of a structured process involving concept analysis, source evaluation, and informed terminological decision-making. Learning this process enables them to move beyond collecting terms and develop a systematic, evidence-based approach to terminology management. Through practice, guided analysis, and reliable resources, termbase creation fosters terminological competence, critical thinking, research skills, and autonomy in specialized translation.

2.3. The microstructure of a didactic glossary entry

If the glossary is to serve as a learning instrument and not merely as a list of word pairs, its microstructure must make terminological decisions traceable. A didactically well-designed glossary entry should, as far as possible, contain the following information: the specialised term in the source language; a reliable, subject-specific definition, written according to the principles of formal definition; the target-language equivalent or equivalents; an authentic context of use; where relevant, synonyms, abbreviations

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and variants; references to related concepts and to possible differences in meaning; the source of the definition or of the attestation and the date of verification and, if necessary, a note on open terminological questions.

Such a structure supports the transparency of terminological decisions and makes later updating of the glossary easier. It also trains a habit that published reference works do not always model. Even established bilingual dictionaries are not exempt from shortcomings. In a series of metalexicographic studies, Doris Sava has examined the deficits of Romanian bilingual phraseography with German (Sava 2010) and the lexicographic treatment of usage-restricted phraseological units in Romanian bilingual dictionaries (Sava 2017). Analysing gender-restricted phraseological units in Romanian bilingual dictionaries with German, she observes: "Inkonsequenzen können bei der Nennformdarbietung oder bei lexikografischen Gebrauchsmarkierungen ausgemacht werden" [Inconsistencies can be identified in the presentation of citation forms or in lexicographic usage labels] (Sava 2017, 192) (The English renderings of German quotations given in square brackets are my own.). In a more recent study she turns to online dictionaries and collaborative platforms and examines their usefulness and potential for the description of phraseological units, with a view to new directions for digital phraseography (Sava 2022). For the classroom, these findings carry a double lesson: students must learn to read even authoritative reference works critically, and when they compile their own glossary they must document their decisions consistently, precisely because the reliability of a reference work rests on the consistency of its microstructure.

3. Terminological competence and specialised vocabulary in translator education

3.1. Competence models and the functionalist rationale

Documentation and terminology have long been part of translation competence models. The PACTE group (2003) conceives translation competence as a set of interrelated sub-competences that includes instrumental competence, that is, knowledge of documentation sources and of information and communication technologies. The European Master's in Translation framework (European Commission 2022) likewise describes the profile of the graduate translator in terms that include information retrieval, terminology and technology-related abilities.

Functionalist approaches to translation supply the theoretical rationale. Reiß and Vermeer (1984) develop a general theory of translation in which the purpose of the translational action plays a central role, and Nord (1997) explains functionalist approaches and their application to translation practice and translator training. Neither work proposes a specific definition of the glossary, but both provide a framework for understanding why terminological decisions should not be taken independently of text function, communicative situation and target audience. If translation is a purposeful activity directed at a target audience, then the choice of a term is a decision tied to purpose, and the resource that supports the decision must be chosen with the same awareness. A specialised expression may have to be explained differently in a scientific report and in an information brochure for the general public. A glossary for students

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should therefore not only record a translation equivalent, but also show, wherever possible, in which context that equivalent is appropriate.

The German-language tradition is especially rich for practitioners and teachers. Arntz, Picht and Schmitz (2014) is the standard introduction to terminology work in German and has accompanied several generations of translators and terminologists through concept analysis, definition and the structure of terminological entries. The *Deutscher Terminologie-Tag* has published a practitioner-oriented guide to the organisation of terminology work in companies and institutions (Deutscher Terminologie-Tag 2014 https://downloads.dttev.org/publikationen/tagungsakten/Symp-2014-Akten-Inhalt.pdf). For a teaching programme with a German-language study track, as ours has, these sources are useful because they connect classroom exercises with professional standards and show students that terminology management is a profession in its own right.

3.2. Glossary work and the acquisition of specialised vocabulary

The acquisition of specialised vocabulary is a central component of translator education. Competence in a language for special purposes presupposes that learners understand the meaning of a term, recognise its use in authentic texts and are able to employ it independently in appropriate communicative situations. Memorising word pairs is not sufficient. Students must also learn to recognise differences in meaning, to delimit specialised concepts from one another and to identify potential problems of equivalence between languages. Montero Martínez and Faber Benítez (2009) emphasise that terminology training should be geared to the requirements of the translation process; the aim is not to turn every translation student into a professional terminologist, but to provide strategies and research skills for later professional practice.

Compiling a glossary independently supports this process. Students first identify unfamiliar or subject-relevant expressions. They then research their meaning, compare different sources, examine authentic contexts of use and select suitable target-language equivalents. Finally, they document their decisions. This sequence links language learning, subject research and translational problem solving, and it can foster at least four learning processes.

First, it fosters a conscious perception of new terms: students learn not to pass over unfamiliar expressions but to investigate their meaning systematically. Second, it supports semantic deepening, since working with definitions, contexts and related concepts helps to understand a term more precisely and to distinguish it from similar expressions. Third, it promotes the productive use of specialised vocabulary: when students formulate an entry themselves, use the term in a translation and then explain it orally, they must actively retrieve and apply it. Fourth, glossary work supports long-term revision, because a glossary that is maintained throughout the course of study can be extended and reused before later translation or interpreting assignments. These potentials should not, however, be understood as an automatic effect of every glossary.

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What is important is that students do not only collect terms, but apply them regularly in new contexts.

3.3. Equivalence, culture and image across German, Romanian and English

In the German-Romanian-English translation context, the question of equivalence is particularly pressing. Specialised terms may have similar forms in different languages without having the same meaning in all professional or institutional contexts. This affects, among others, legal, economic, administrative and technical language, and even within the field of sustainability, concepts may be defined or used differently. Cozma and Jumanca (2023) analyse, from a didactic perspective, the problems of lexical and grammatical equivalence that advanced students encounter when translating from English into Romanian, and their analysis confirms that such problems are predictable and therefore teachable. A glossary can document them: besides the target-language equivalent, it can record institutional particularities, subject-specific contexts and possible restrictions on a translation. Glossary work thus becomes an instrument that links linguistic and subject-specific competence.

Equivalence, however, is not only a matter of concepts and designations. Many of the expressions our students must render, from institutional names to culture-bound terms, carry images of the cultures in which they originate. The researcher, writer and translator Bogdan Mihai Dascălu (Romanian Academy), whose translation work comprises, more than 20 volumes from German and English, from Titu Maiorescu, Rainer Maria Rilke and Joseph Roth to philosophical and memoiristic and scientific texts, has approached this problem from the perspective of imagology. In his imagological studies he has developed analytical tools with the help of which "the imagological approach becomes more rigorous and diversified" (Bogdan Mihai Dascălu 2020, abstract), using categories such as self-image, heteroimage and retroimage to analyse the image of the German in Romanian memoir literature. Summarising his research, he states: "For me, translation is a form of applied research," and adds: "I consider the act of translation to involve a double transfer – cultural and imagological" (Bogdan Mihai Dascălu 2025). He accordingly proposes "imagology in translation, as a tool for analyzing how the image of the Other is (re)shaped through interlinguistic transfer" (Bogdan Mihai Dascălu 2025).

For glossary didactics, this imagological perspective is more than an ornament. A remark on connotation, register or cultural embedding in a glossary entry is the place where the "double transfer" becomes visible and discussable in the classroom. In an earlier study I have argued in the same direction that "der Übersetzer muss nicht nur seine eigene Kultur, sondern auch die fremden Kulturräume kennen" [the translator must know not only his or her own culture but also the foreign cultural spaces] (Ana-Maria Dascălu-Romițan 2019, 248). A trilingual glossary compiled in a German-language study programme in the Banat is, in this sense, also a small archive of intercultural knowledge.

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3.4. Technology and the need for a benchmark

Technology has reinforced rather than weakened the need for terminological competence. Bowker (2002) explained early on how terminology management is embedded in computer-aided translation environments, where termbases and translation memories depend on the quality of what is entered into them. Pym (2013) argued that machine translation shifts the translator's skills towards revision, decision-making and the evaluation of alternatives. Evaluation, however, presupposes something to evaluate against. A translator who cannot consult a reliable glossary or a termbase has no benchmark for judging whether an automatic rendering is acceptable.

4. Thirty-three years of translator training in Timișoara: context and classroom

4.1. A local tradition of lexicography and terminology

Lexicography and terminology are not new topics at our Faculty. Colleagues have compiled bilingual and multilingual reference works that are directly relevant to our students: a multilingual dictionary of education covering English, German, French and Romanian (Șimon et al. 2018), English–Romanian and Romanian–English dictionaries for the language of the arts and literature (Șimon and Stoian 2018) and for cultural themes (Stoian and Șimon 2018), and a trilingual English-German-Romanian dictionary of translation and interpreting (Șimon et al. 2023). The last of these is described in a review in the *Scientific Bulletin* as an example of research and teaching going together; the reviewer notes, among other features, that it includes lists of official documents requiring certified translation, of professional associations and of standards in the field (Lupșan 2025). Terminological perspectives on specialised translation have also been published in the journals of the Department, for example on legal translation (Cosmulescu 2021). Dejica (2020) and Dejica et al. (2016) address technical and scientific translation and the challenges of language work in the digital era.

In previous research I have examined the role of multilingualism in communication and translation programmes, the relationship between translation, transcription and intercultural understanding, the connections between multilingualism, intercomprehension and translation, as well as the use of media in foreign-language teaching. The curriculum of Translation and Interpreting programmes integrates theoretical and methodological approaches to translation and interpreting with language courses for specific purposes, specialised translation, terminology and discourse analysis. This interdisciplinary structure reflects the complex competence profile required of translators and interpreters, encompassing advanced linguistic proficiency, cultural and intercultural awareness, and specialised subject knowledge.

The curriculum of the Translation and Interpreting programme combines an introduction to translation studies, the methodology of translation and interpreting and consecutive interpreting with courses on languages for special purposes, specialised translation, terminology and discourse analysis (Dascălu-Romițan 2020, 142). It also summarises the competence profile towards which this curriculum is oriented: "Neben sehr guten Sprachkenntnissen werden von den Übersetzerinnen und Übersetzern sowie von Dolmetscherinnen und Dolmetschern auch weitere Kompetenzen, wie kulturelles

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Hintergrundwissen, Fachwissen, kulturelle und interkulturelle Fähigkeiten, erwartet" [Besides very good language skills, translators and interpreters are also expected to have further competences, such as cultural background knowledge, subject knowledge, and cultural and intercultural skills] (Dascălu-Romițan 2020, 145). Within this framework, glossary development represents a practical activity that brings these competences together, supporting terminological accuracy, conceptual understanding and consistency in specialised translation. It also provides an opportunity to connect linguistic knowledge with domain-specific information and intercultural considerations, highlighting the relevance of terminology work in translator and interpreter training.

4.2. Glossary work in the German-language Translation and Interpreting programme

Glossary work can be connected directly to these curricular components. It links theoretical knowledge with practical research and translation tasks, and it allows students to document terminological decisions in a transparent manner. In the German-language study track, work with German, Romanian and English specialised texts is particularly relevant. Students can compile multilingual glossaries for different subject fields and learn, in doing so, to verify linguistic equivalents against subject-specific definitions and authentic contexts.

The tradition described above gives the classroom something to build on, but it does not remove the entry-level problem. The workshops I have run for first-year students are intended as a first step. Students are shown that different questions call for different tools, and they practise formulating a question before choosing a resource. In the third-year course on writing scientific papers, the emphasis changes: the same students now need resources for a research project, and they are asked to see the glossary as part of the apparatus of a scientific text, much like the bibliography.

Two observations from this practice deserve to be recorded. First, the difficulty is rarely a lack of motivation. It is a lack of prior training in what counts as a reference work and how to read its microstructure: headword, grammatical information, definition, equivalent, example, source. Second, when students do compile a glossary for a text they must translate or write about, they begin to notice what a dictionary entry leaves out, for example that an equivalent may be correct in one domain and wrong in another. This noticing is the most valuable learning outcome, and it cannot be delivered by a lecture.

4.3. Individual and collaborative glossary work

Glossaries can be compiled individually or in groups. Individual work makes visible how students research, select terms and justify terminological decisions. Group projects, on the other hand, offer the opportunity to compare different research results and to negotiate shared decisions. Especially in subject-specific and complex topics, students can learn from one another: they can discuss definitions, examine

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contradictory sources and decide together which terminological information should be included in the glossary.

The teacher takes on an accompanying role. He or she supports the selection of suitable sources, gives feedback on the quality of definitions and encourages critical reflection on translation decisions. The teacher thus models, in the classroom, the role of the reviser and terminologist in professional practice.

4.4. The bachelor thesis as a terminological study

For the bachelor thesis in the form of a terminological study, the glossary is not merely a source but an object of study. The student must delimit a domain, compile a corpus or a set of source texts, extract candidate terms, decide on definitions, document equivalents and justify choices. These operations coincide with those of professional terminology work as described in the handbooks cited above. A graduate who has done this once, on a small scale, has acquired a transferable skill.

4.5. A staged glossary-building task

On the basis of this experience I propose a staged task that can be integrated into a translation or scientific writing course. It has five steps and requires no special software.

1. *Delimit the use situation.* The student states who will use the glossary, for which text or project, and in which language pair or language combination. This implements the function-theoretical question of Section 2.1.
2. *Select and evaluate sources.* The student compares a general dictionary, a specialised dictionary, an institutional termbase and at least one parallel text, and records which sources are authoritative for the domain.
3. *Extract and structure.* Candidate terms are taken from the text, grouped by concept, and entered in a table with fields for term, definition, equivalent, source and a remark on context, register or cultural embedding (Section 2.3).
4. *Define.* Each definition is written according to the principles for formal definition discussed by Tackabery (2005), and sources are acknowledged. In groups, students compare and discuss divergent definitions
5. *Test and revise.* The glossary is applied to a translation, to an interpreting assignment or to a passage of the thesis. Inconsistencies discovered in use are corrected, and the revision history is documented.

5. Glossaries, prompting and evaluation in the age of AI

5.1. Evidence from our students

It would be possible to argue that glossary skills are made obsolete by tools that translate and explain terms instantly. The evidence from our own students points the other way. In a study published in 2025 I compared DeepL, Google Translate and ChatGPT on specialised and general examples and surveyed students of the Translation and Interpreting programme in years one to three (Dascălu-Romițan 2025). The survey showed that Google Translate was the tool used most often, with DeepL and ChatGPT

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following, and that students used the tools to translate academic texts, to support essay writing and, in a substantial minority of cases, to extend their vocabulary and check the correct use of terms. The comparison of outputs showed weaknesses in all three systems with specialised terminology, for instance in a medical example, where none of the systems produced the established German term for the surgical procedure. The study concluded that, depending on context, text type and genre, dictionaries, specialised dictionaries, lexica, glossaries and parallel texts remain indispensable, and it recommended training in the critical use of translation tools and the validation of their output.

5.2. Possibilities and limits of AI-supported terminology work

Generative AI applications and machine translation systems undoubtedly open new possibilities for researching and processing specialised vocabulary. They can suggest translations and definitions, generate alternative formulations and support the compilation of multilingual terminology lists. These possibilities do not, however, remove the need for expert verification. AI-generated answers may contain inaccurate definitions, inappropriate equivalents or unattested sources, and especially in specialised texts it must be checked whether a proposed expression actually corresponds to the intended meaning.

Liu and Wang (2026) examine how generative AI is changing terminology translation. They address, among other things, multilingual term generation, cross-linguistic semantic mapping and the handling of terminological variation, while also discussing risks such as hallucinations, bias and subject-specific inaccuracies. The authors argue for a dynamic perspective in which human expertise and machine capabilities interact. For the education of future translators this is an important signal: AI can support terminological work, but it should not replace the independent assessment of subject-specific decisions.

5.3. Terminological literacy as a precondition for prompting

These findings can be extended into a principle: the quality of an interaction with an AI system depends on the user's terminological literacy. There are at least three reasons.

First, knowing *what to ask for*. A student who has compiled a glossary knows that the problem is often not the sentence but the term, and can formulate a request in terms of domain, text type, target readership and register. Second, knowing *how to ask*. Generative systems can be instructed to follow a supplied glossary, to flag terms that are missing from it, to propose alternatives with reasons, or to state their degree of uncertainty. A user who cannot produce a clean glossary has nothing to supply, and a user who does not understand definitions cannot judge whether the explanations returned are adequate. Third, knowing *how to verify*. The output of a language model is fluent by design, and fluency can conceal error. The reflex of checking a term against an institutional termbase, a specialised dictionary or a parallel text is exactly the habit that glossary training builds. In the terms of Cozma and Jumanca (2023), verification

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is the strategy that prevents a terminological problem from becoming a translation error.

5.4. The glossary as a verifiable knowledge resource

In an AI-supported translation process, a carefully compiled glossary can serve as a verifiable knowledge base. It documents which terms are used, how they are defined and on which sources the entries are based. Such a glossary promotes terminological consistency in longer texts, and it facilitates the checking of AI-generated translations, since students can compare the proposed terms with entries they have already researched and documented. This yields a didactic workflow in five steps, which extends the task proposed in Section 4.5:

1. *Research.* Students identify specialised terms in authentic texts and research their meaning on the basis of reliable sources.
2. *Documentation.* They compile glossary entries with definitions, target-language equivalents and contexts of use.
3. *AI-supported comparison.* They have an AI system generate alternative definitions or translation suggestions and compare these with the results of their own research.
4. *Verification.* They check the suggestions against the original sources and document errors, deviations and justified corrections, including which suggestions were accepted or rejected and why.
5. *Application.* They use the verified entries in a translation, in the preparation of an interpreting assignment or in an oral specialised presentation.

In this procedure, professional responsibility remains with the students. AI is used as an auxiliary tool, while the terminological decision rests on research, context analysis and reasoned evaluation. Glossary work thus becomes an exercise in critical information assessment, digital competence and scholarly source criticism.

This does not amount to a rejection of technology. Quite the contrary, an AI-supported workflow can speed up term extraction, propose candidate definitions and produce bilingual lists that students can then correct. What changes is the student's role: from compiler of every entry to editor and validator of a draft. The role is more demanding, not less, because it presupposes the competences described in Sections 2 to 4. In practical terms it means that a student should learn to build a glossary by hand before learning to have one generated, and should learn to check a generated glossary against an authoritative source before adopting it.

Current research at our Faculty explores the same terrain from complementary angles. Cernicova-Buca and Palea (2026) examine how Romanian universities respond to generative AI, and Kovacs and Dejica (2025) address hybrid workflows with automatic post-editing and quality assessment for English–Romanian medical texts. Both lines of work suggest that institutions and professionals need people who can govern the tools rather than merely operate them. Teaching glossary construction is one concrete way of educating such people.

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5.5. Assessing glossary work

The assessment of glossary work should not be based on the number of entries alone. What is decisive is the quality of terminological research and documentation. Suitable criteria include: the subject-specific accuracy of the definitions; the appropriateness of the target-language equivalents; the quality and traceability of the sources; the consideration of context and text function; the consistent use of terms; the ability to justify terminological decisions; the critical examination of AI-generated suggestions and the practical application of the entries in translation or interpreting tasks.

These criteria make glossary work visible as a component of professional translational competence, and they give students a transparent account of what is expected of them.

6. Glossary work across specialised domains

The following examples, drawn from domains that recur in our German-language translation and interpreting classes, show how the general principles translate into concrete tasks.

Sustainability and environmental communication. When translating texts on sustainability, students encounter terms such as *Kreislaufwirtschaft*, *Ressourceneffizienz*, *Treibhausgasemissionen*, *Biodiversität* and *nachhaltige Entwicklung*. A glossary can supplement these with definitions, Romanian and English equivalents, authentic attestations and references to related concepts. The entry *Kreislaufwirtschaft*, for example, can be linked to the Romanian designation *economie circulară* and the English *circular economy*, while further entries can explain concepts such as *Wiederverwendung* (reuse) and *Recycling* and represent their conceptual relations. Students thus learn not merely isolated equivalents but a thematic concept network, which facilitates the processing of longer specialised texts and supports the oral communication of sustainability topics.

Law and administration. Legal texts call for particular caution, because institutional concepts are frequently bound to specific legal systems. A glossary can document whether a seemingly suitable target-language equivalent actually fulfils the same function or whether an explanation is necessary. Students can, for instance, compile entries with information on the respective institution, the definition and the legal basis, learning to distinguish between linguistic similarity and functional equivalence, a distinction that the volume on legal terminology edited by Biel and Kockaert (2023) places at the centre of legal terminology work.

Economic and technical communication. In economic and technical texts, a glossary supports the consistent use of terms across several documents, which is relevant for technical manuals, project reports and corporate information. Students can also learn to prepare glossaries for computer-aided translation tools, and in doing so they see how terminological preparation supports the quality and uniformity of later translations (Bowker 2002).

Interpreting and oral language production. Glossary work is equally important for interpreting. Before a specialised meeting or a conference, students can compile key

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terms, abbreviations, definitions and multilingual equivalents. They can then use the entries for short oral exercises: explaining a term without notes, formulating an example sentence or rendering a definition into the other working language. Such tasks support the active retrieval of specialised vocabulary and help to transfer terminological knowledge into oral language production.

7. The EAIEN project: glossaries between knowledge transfer, artificial intelligence and green skills

7.1. The glossary in teacher and learner materials

The importance of glossaries has also become apparent in the Erasmus+ project EAIEN (www.eaien.eu) (EcoAI EduNetwork Initiative), in which the Politehnica University of Timișoara is a partner. EAIEN is an Erasmus+ KA2 cooperation project, with the number 2024-1-TR01-KA220-SCH-000255119, whose consortium includes Anadolu University and the Cagdas High School from Türkiye, the Politehnica University of Timișoara and the „Stefan Hell" Technological High School from Santana, Romania, and Future Learning, a partner from Greece. The project promotes AI literacy, green skills and the creation of open educational resources for teachers and learners (EAIEN Consortium 2025). One of its principal results is the *Teacher's Handbook* (https://www.eaien.eu/teachers-handbook/), which the consortium decided to make available in English, Turkish, Romanian and Greek. A second publication, the *Experience Sharing Book* (2026) which documents the experience of the project and is forthcoming, concludes with a glossary (*Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations*), which serves as a key resource for documenting and clarifying the project's core terminology.

This glossary covers, first of all, the central concepts and institutional terms used in the project, ranging from *AI literacy* and *Open Educational Resources* (OER) to *Work package* (WP). It gives readers access to specialised terms and makes the conceptual foundations of the joint work transparent. Beyond that, it supports the transfer of knowledge: terms that appear self-evident within a research project may be new to external readers, to students or to people from other fields, and precise definitions and appropriate contexts of use make the knowledge developed in the project systematically accessible. A multilingual educational glossary of this kind is a small illustration of the argument made in this paper. Terms from artificial intelligence, sustainability and education must be defined for a non-specialist audience, and their equivalents in several languages have to be chosen and kept consistent across the versions. The task combines the genre knowledge discussed in Section 2 with the translation and revision skills discussed in Section 3. It also demonstrates the practical relevance of these competences highlighting the role of terminology work in supporting communication, accessibility and knowledge exchange within European educational cooperation, having a real use beyond the classroom.

7.2. The project glossary in AI-supported teaching

The entries of the EAIEN glossary can also be used in AI-supported teaching and learning activities. Students could, for example, compare a definition from the glossary

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with an AI-generated definition, check the specialised sources used, or assess alternative translations into German, Romanian and English. Another possibility is to develop multilingual learning materials, short specialised texts and terminological exercises from the glossary entries. In all such activities it should be made clear which information comes from verified sources and which formulations were generated in the course of a learning activity. The glossary thus becomes a link between research documentation and practical translator training, and at the same time an opportunity to practise the responsible use of AI and to make the importance of human verification in the translation process tangible.

7.3. Green skills and green competences

The connection of the EAIEN project with green skills and green competences opens a further didactic perspective. In the European context, *GreenComp: The European Sustainability Competence Framework*, published by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre, provides a relevant reference; it describes competences intended to help learners think, plan and act with sustainability in mind (Bianchi, Pisiotis, and Cabrera Giraldez 2022). GreenComp comprises four interrelated competence areas: embodying sustainability values, embracing complexity in sustainability, envisioning sustainable futures and acting for sustainability.

A glossary can help create the linguistic and conceptual prerequisites for engaging with these topics. Terms such as *sustainability competence*, *resource efficiency*, *circular economy* or *sustainable development* can be approached through reliable definitions and discussed in their subject-specific relations. A distinction must, however, be drawn between the acquisition of conceptual knowledge and the development of comprehensive competences for action. A glossary alone does not convey green skills in full. It can, however, lay the conceptual foundation on which further learning activities build. When glossary entries are combined with case studies, project tasks, discussions and practical translation exercises, students can not only use sustainability terms correctly but also engage with their professional and social significance.

7.4. A model entry for the EAIEN glossary

A possible entry for the term *green skills* could be structured as shown in Table 2. The table deliberately presents the structure of the entry and the type of information each field should contain; the definition itself is to be taken from a verified institutional source and documented accordingly.

The entry can then be used in three learning activities. First, students compare the German, Romanian and English designations. Second, they check AI-generated definitions against the documented source. Third, they use the term in a translation or in an oral presentation on sustainability topics. In this way, the glossary links terminological precision, the acquisition of specialised vocabulary and engagement with sustainability.

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Field	Content
German term	Green Skills
Romanian equivalent	competențe verzi
English definition	Definition taken from a reliable institutional source (to be documented)
German explanation	Subject-specific explanation based on the selected source
Context of use	Sustainability education, vocational education and training, green transition
Related concepts	Green Competencies, Nachhaltigkeitskompetenz (sustainability competence), Ressourceneffizienz (resource efficiency)
Source	Full bibliographic reference
Didactic application	Compare definitions, translate a specialised text, explain the term orally

Table 2. Structure of a model entry for the EAIEN glossary

8. Conclusions

The argument of this paper can be summarised in five points. First, glossaries are a lexicographic genre with their own function, and students should learn to distinguish them from dictionaries, encyclopaedias and termbases, and to read even established reference works critically. Second, glossary work is a concrete, teachable form of the documentation and terminological competence that translation competence models require, and it is one of the most effective strategies for preventing translation problems from turning into translation errors. Third, students do not automatically arrive at university with this competence, so it must be taught explicitly from the first year; it can be consolidated in the third year through scientific writing and the bachelor thesis, especially where the thesis takes the form of a terminological study. Fourth, in a trilingual German–Romanian–English programme, the glossary is also the place where cultural and imagological dimensions of equivalence become visible, in line with the notion of translation as a "double transfer". Fifth, in the era of AI, glossary skills are not displaced but upgraded: they determine what students ask, how they ask and whether they can recognise a good answer.

For the German-language Translation and Interpreting programme at the Politehnica University of Timișoara, glossary work offers a way of combining terminological competence with the acquisition of specialised vocabulary, digital competence and practical translator training, in support of both written translation and the preparation of interpreting assignments. In the EAIEN project, this approach gains an additional dimension: the glossary of the *Experience Sharing Book* documents central project concepts, facilitates the transfer of knowledge and can serve as a basis for AI-supported learning activities, while its sustainability terminology strengthens the linguistic prerequisites for engaging with green skills and green competences. Glossaries should therefore not be regarded merely as supplementary lists at the end of a book. As didactic, terminological and knowledge-organising instruments, they can make a lasting contribution to the education of future translators and interpreters, precisely because they bring together subject learning, linguistic precision, critical research and the responsible use of digital tools.

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A glossary can be our antidote to artificial fluency. It slows language down. It asks what a word means, where it comes from, and what it hides. It turns the black box of jargon into a shared vocabulary.

Because in the age of AI, the real intelligence may not lie in generating more words, but in knowing which words need explaining.

Less gloss, more glossary. Less shine, more sense.

Gloss or not to gloss? Perhaps the answer is: *gloss with care* and *never gloss over the meaning*.

Several lines of further work suggest themselves. A longitudinal study could examine whether early training in glossary construction measurably improves the quality of terminological theses and of translation assignments. A comparative study could test how supplying a student-made glossary to a generative system affects term accuracy and consistency. The development of a shared, open-access collection of student glossaries, quality-checked by teachers, would support the Faculty's educational mission while creating a valuable resource for the wider academic and professional community.

On the occasion of the anniversary of the Faculty of Communication Sciences of the Politehnica University of Timișoara, these directions for further research acquire a particular significance. An anniversary is an opportunity to celebrate the Faculty's achievements and reflect on its contribution to education, research, and professional development, and also a moment to reaffirm its commitment to the challenges and that lie ahead. In an era shaped by rapid technological change and the growing influence of artificial intelligence, preparing future translators and interpreters requires more than the ability to use new digital tools; it demands critical thinking, terminological precision and take responsibility for the choices they make. By connecting linguistic and translation practices with innovation, the Faculty of Communication Sciences can continue to equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to meet the evolving demands of their profession.

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