AL-FARABI KAZAKH NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Department of International Relations

Chair of Diplomatic Translation

**Translation business in the field of international and legal relations**

**“Translation of Scientific and Technical Documents”**

2024-2025 academic year, fall semester

**Lecture 13**

**Module 3: Scientific researches and abstracts**

**Lecture 13** Cultural specificity in scientific articles

1. *Cultural specificity: place names, institutions and other proper nouns*

Some research organizations, institutes, universities and multinational companies are well known internationally and are reproduced with- out change in other languages or are transcribed but not translated or explained. Examples in this category from Text 1 include *Harvard*, *NASA* and *Airbus*.

Proper nouns may be translated into the TL, for example, the *International Space Station* in the ST is referred to as *die Internationale Raumstation (ISS)* in German, *Estação Espacial Internacional* in Portuguese, *internationale ruimtestation (ISS)* in Dutch, *Uluslararası Uzay I ̇stasyonu* in Turkish and *Mie ̨dzynarodowej Stacji Kosmicznej* in Polish. Although this is the only reference to the International Space Station in the text, the ISS abbreviation, derived from English, is also given in German and Dutch, because readers may be familiar with it.

Organization names may be reproduced in the TT but accompa- nied by expansion, additional information or explanation. Taking examples from Text 1, *GE*, *Cornell University* and *the Victoria and Albert Museum* are expanded as follows in the German translation: *der Konzern General Electric (GE)*, *die Cornell-Universität in den USA*, *[das] Victoria and Albert Museum für Kunst und Design*. Likewise the Norwegian text specifies *Cornell University i USA*.

The abbreviated *GE* is not initially used but is expanded into *General Electric* in several language versions. Expansion may lead to an increase in specificity of information, for example when Amsterdam’s *Buiksloter Canal* is translated as *Buiksloter Canal in Amsterdam-Nord* in German and similarly *Buiksloterkanaal in Amsterdam-Noord* in Dutch. This increase in specificity may be justi- fied on the basis that the German and Dutch readerships may be more familiar with Amsterdam’s waterways than, for example, US, Portuguese or Turkish audiences.

Institutional information may be condensed or omitted in the trans- lation, for example, *Wake Forest Institute for Regenerative Medicine in Winston-Salem, North Carolina* in Text 2 is rendered in French as *Wake Forest Institute de médecine régénératrice (Caroline du Nord)*, thus relegating the state to appear inside brackets and omitting the name of the town in which the institute is located. Similarly, in German the name of the institute is translated and written in accord- ance with German compounding or hyphenation conventions and the town name is also omitted: *Wake-Forest-Institut für Regenerative Medizin in North Carolina*. In Text 1 a California firm, Solid Concepts, is rendered in German as *[e]in Unternehmen in Kalifornien*, while the Portuguese version includes the company name but omits its location. These details are given as examples of 3-D printing initia- tives, and the reduction in level of specificity may be justified on the basis that it is the example of what is printed that is more relevant than who printed it or where in the USA they were located.

Text 1 makes reference to the US television science-fiction series *Star Trek*, because the author draws a comparison between the fic- tional capabilities of the *Starship Enterprise*’s on-board replicator to synthesize objects and the now realistic potential offered by 3-D printers. This reference is kept in the German translation, where the series is referred to by its German title, *Raumschiff ‘Enterprise*’. Similarly, the Dutch translation also refers to the *Star Trek* series explicitly. However, perhaps this is less familiar to Portuguese read- ers, since a more general reference to the realm of science fiction is made in that translation, omitting explicit mention of *Star Trek*, the starship or the synthesizer device: *Aquilo que antes parecia saído do mundo da ficção científica*. The Turkish text also does not name the TV series