

---

---

.....

# *Cultus*

THE JOURNAL OF INTERCULTURAL  
MEDIATION AND COMMUNICATION

---

***TRANSLATING SYSTEMS OF KNOWLEDGE:  
BEYOND RESEMIOTIZATION***

2025, Volume 18

ICONESOFT EDIZIONI - GRUPPO RADIVO HOLDING  
BOLOGNA - ITALY

Registrazione al Tribunale di Terni  
n. 11 del 24.09.2007

Direttore Responsabile Agostino Quero  
Editore Iconesoft Edizioni – Radivo Holding  
Anno 2025  
ISSN 2035-3111  
2035-2948

Policy: double-blind peer review

© *Iconesoft Edizioni – Radivo Holding srl*  
*via Galliera 4 – 40121 Bologna*

---

# CULTUS

*the Journal of Intercultural Mediation and Communication*

***TRANSLATING SYSTEMS OF KNOWLEDGE:  
BEYOND RESEMIOTIZATION***

Volume 18, 2025

*GUEST EDITORS*

Giuseppina Di Gregorio  
*(University of Catania)*

Marco Neves  
*(NOVA University of Lisbon)*

ICONESOFT EDIZIONI – RADIVO HOLDING  
BOLOGNA

# CULTUS

*the Journal of Intercultural Mediation and Communication*

## Scientific Committee

Michael Agar

*Ethknoworks LLC and University of Maryland, College Park, USA*

Milton Bennet

*Intercultural Development Research Institute, Italy*

Patrick Boylan

*SIETAR-Italy and past Professor at Roma Tre University, Rome*

Ida Castiglioni

*University of Milan (Bicocca), Intercultural Development Research Institute*

Andrew Chesterman

*University of Helsinki, Finland*

Delia Chiaro

*University of Bologna (SSLMIT), Forlì, Italy*

Madeleine Strong Cincotta

*University of Wollongong, Australia*

Nigel Ewington

*WorldWork Ltd, Cambridge, England*

Peter Franklin

*HTWG Konstanz University of Applied Sciences, dialogin-The Delta Intercultural Academy*

Maria Grazia Guido  
*University of Salento, Italy*

Xiaoping Jiang  
*University of Guangzhou, China*

Tony Liddicoat  
*University of Warwick, England*

Elena Manca  
*University of Salento, Italy*

Raffaella Merlini  
*University of Macerata, Italy*

Robert O'Dowd  
*University of León, Spain.*

Anthony Pym  
*Intercultural Studies Group, Universidad Rovira I Virgili, Tarragona, Spain*

Federica Scarpa  
*SSLMIT University of Trieste, Italy*

Christopher Taylor  
*University of Trieste, Italy*

David Trickey  
*TCO s.r.l., International Diversity Management, Bologna, Italy*

---

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Translating Systems of Knowledge: beyond Resemiotization <i>Giuseppina Di Gregorio and Marco Neves</i>	7
I SECTION – <i>Specific Knowledge</i>	
Resemiotization, Transduction, and Inter-Epistemic Translation. With a Case Study from Philip Seargeant’s OpenLearn Video on the History of English <i>Maria Grazia Sindoni</i>	17
Translation as a Process of Mediation: Framing Accessibility, Inclusion, Participation and Belonging across Cultures <i>Elena Di Giovanni and Francesca Raffi</i>	39
Adapting Specialist Knowledge on Screen to Transmit Scientific Theories: Inter-Epistemic Translation in the <i>Jurassic Park</i> Movie Saga as Case Study <i>Daniela Cesiri</i>	59
II SECTION – <i>Identities</i>	
Translating Identities. Navigating Gender Neutrality and Resistance in the Italian Translation of <i>Pageboy</i> <i>Stefania Maci</i>	87
Inter-Epistemic Translation as Feminist Praxis: Reframing Masculinities in <i>Kumbalangi Nights</i> (2019) <i>Sriparna Das and Sabana Pradeep</i>	111
“It ended nothing”: Translating the Languages of the First World War in Video Games <i>Silvia Pettini</i>	144
Notes on Contributors	173

## **Translation as a Process of Mediation: Framing Accessibility, Inclusion, Participation and Belonging across Cultures**

Elena Di Giovanni  
*University of Macerata*

Francesca Raffi  
*University of Macerata*

### *Abstract*

*Over the past two decades, the concepts of disability, accessibility and inclusion have undergone a profound transformation: from a clinical and deficit-oriented model to a relational and universal approach. This change, supported by international references such as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) and the WHO's International Classification of Functioning (ICF), redefines disability as the result of interaction between individuals and their environments. In this context, translation plays a crucial role as a means of making knowledge, practices and experiences accessible across languages and disciplines. This article examines how these developments are reflected in the English translation of *Manuale di progettazione per l'accessibilità e la fruizione ampliata del patrimonio culturale. Dai funzionamenti della persona ai funzionamenti dei luoghi della cultura* (hereafter *Manuale*), coordinated by Gabriella Cetorelli and Luca Papi for the Italian National Research Council and supported by the Ministry of Culture. The handbook represents an interdisciplinary contribution to cultural accessibility, redefining access to heritage as a dynamic relationship between people's functioning and the functioning of cultural spaces. The study approaches translation as a process of mediation, where linguistic, conceptual and cultural choices contribute to shaping how accessibility, inclusion, participation, and belonging are understood and communicated in cultural contexts. By analyzing the translation process of the *Manuale*, the paper highlights how translation supports the circulation of ideas on accessibility and inclusion at an international level, fostering shared understanding and dialogue between disciplines and cultures. Ultimately, it argues that translating*

---

*accessibility is an active contribution to building an inclusive cultural perspective grounded in diversity, participation and belonging.*

**Keywords:** Accessibility, translation, cultural heritage, inclusion, participation, belonging.

## 1. Introduction

Over the past two decades, the concepts and words used to name and discuss disability, accessibility and inclusion have undergone a profound transformation. Driven by international organizations such as the United Nations and the World Health Organization, disability has gradually moved away from a clinical and deficit-based model that for decades equated it with illness (Haynes & Hammond, 2007). It is now understood as a condition that can be permanent, temporary or situational — something that may affect anyone at different points in life. This shift in perspective, reinforced by the growing influence of Universal Design principles in rethinking spaces and services, has brought about a fundamental change in focus: from barriers and segregation to people, their individuality and diversity.

This idea was already clearly articulated in the *Libro Blanco de la Accesibilidad* (2003), published by the Spanish Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, which anticipated many of the principles later included in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, 2006). As the White Paper explains,

Design for All is the main goal in seeking solutions to accessibility problems. It means overcoming the stigma of difference and accepting that the constraints of disability stand on the same level as other common factors such as age, lifestyle or the temporary limitation of a function. It also means recognizing that the human dimension is not defined by abilities, measures or performances but must be understood more broadly: a way in which diversity is the norm and not the exception (2003: 2; our translation).

The concept of Universal Design is also one of the core principles of the CRPD and, as will be discussed later, it plays a key role in the translation choices made for the *Manuale di progettazione per l'accessibilità e la fruizione ampliata del patrimonio culturale. Dai funzionamenti della persona ai funzionamenti dei luoghi della cultura* (2023). Article 2 defines Universal Design as the creation of environments, services and products that can be used by

---

everyone without the need for adaptation or specialized design, while still allowing for specific solutions to support particular groups when necessary.

In a similar way, the World Health Organization has redefined its understanding of disability and access through the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF, 2001). This approach shifts the emphasis from individual limitations to the interaction between people and their environments, valuing what individuals can do rather than focusing on what they cannot. The WHO describes the ICF as an evolving framework, one that continues to be refined as our understanding of disability develops.

As these ideas and the words used to express them have evolved, their meanings have become increasingly interconnected. Language both reflects and shapes social change, and the first impact of this conceptual and paradigmatic shift has been felt within language itself. English, as a global medium of communication, has played a key role in articulating and spreading these new perspectives, while national languages and cultures have continued to adapt, supported by the work of institutions and associations— as has also happened in Italy.

This article explores these linguistic and conceptual developments, focusing on the changing meanings of accessibility, inclusion, participation, and belonging. It does so through the practical experience of translating the *Manuale di progettazione per l'accessibilità e la fruizione ampliata del patrimonio culturale. Dai funzionamenti della persona ai funzionamenti dei luoghi della cultura* (hereafter *Manuale*), published by the Italian National Research Council (CNR) in 2023 with the support of the Ministry of Culture.

Drawing on the work of the translation team, the paper examines how translation can serve as a form of mediation that helps convey and share evolving understandings of accessibility and inclusion across languages, disciplines and cultural contexts.

The following section examines the four key concepts at the heart of the study — accessibility, inclusion, participation and belonging — and traces how their meanings and applications have evolved over time. Section 3 explores translation as a social and cultural practice that contributes to communicating and connecting these ideas across languages and cultures. Then, Section 4 outlines the main stages of the English translation of the *Manuale*, while Section 5 presents concrete examples of the linguistic, conceptual, and cultural choices involved in the work. The paper then introduces the glossary developed through this process and concludes with some reflections and future directions.

---

## 2. Concepts and Words: Accessibility, Inclusion, Participation and Belonging

The paradigmatic revolution previously outlined has concerned not only the redefinition of the concept of disability, but also a range of notions and words related to it. In particular, it has pushed the reshaping of the concepts that describe and underpin the rights of persons with disabilities, while highlighting the corresponding duties of societies and communities at both the local and global levels toward them. In particular, the four concepts and words we will discuss here, namely accessibility, inclusion, participation and belonging are all, quite significantly, identifiers of actions: needs and requirements to be met (accessibility), processes of collaboration (inclusion), active involvement and empowerment (participation) and finally a sense of community and equality (belonging).

Starting from accessibility, as the word itself manifests, the possibility of having access for people with diverse needs implies meeting their specific requirements, in everyday life as well as in recreational moments and activities. Today, accessibility as a term is both overused and surpassed: it is overused in a number of contexts with increasingly generic references to audiences and users, and, on the other hand, when referred specifically to disabilities it occasionally appears surpassed as the focus, when talking of accessibility, is on barriers and obstacles (Stephanidis, 2009: 2-5), not on human beings and their diversity. Nonetheless, in the context of disabilities and the rights of people with diverse requirements, accessibility today has acquired a more specific meaning: if paired up with inclusion, for instance, accessibility does not refer to overall actions to be undertaken by all and for all, but rather to the implementation of specific strategies and tools. It seems, therefore, to have shifted from a segregationist meaning (Gossett *et al.*, 2009) to a more technical one. Thus, when the recently-enforced European Accessibility Act (2019) requires all member States to provide accessibility for people with disabilities, it does so in practical and technical terms, demanding (in a mandatory way, after decades of softer European directives) that accessibility is guaranteed for, amongst other,

- computers and operating systems
- ATMs, ticketing and check-in machines
- smartphones
- TV equipment related to digital television services
- telephony services and related equipment

- access to audio-visual media services such as television broadcast and related consumer equipment
- services related to air, bus, rail and waterborne passenger transport
- banking services
- e-books
- e-commerce.

Viewed in such an optic, accessibility regains a factual and proactive meaning, and the word finds a new balance within documents and debates on disability and inclusion.

The latter, i.e. inclusion, is our second key concept and term. Amongst the many documents that spell out its momentousness, the Solfagnano Charter, approved at the end of 2024 as the outcome of the first ever G7 summit on Disability and Inclusion, the word inclusion is used 25 times only in the first ten pages. The Charter, signed by all countries who participated in the summit, clearly states that “achieving effective inclusion requires a comprehensive and collaborative approach involving all stakeholders: particularly all levels of government, communities, industry and private sector, academia, society, as well as persons with disabilities” (2024: 5). Inclusion, therefore, indicates both a project and a process: the word and the meaning which it carries, imply action and true collaboration amongst all, as we shall further elaborate in the following sections more strictly pertaining to translation.

In academic discourse, inclusion in relation to disability has been widely discussed, across the disciplinary spectrum. In particular, scholars working in social studies, cultural studies, education, health, IT and architecture have dissected and reshaped the notion and the word, especially in the wake of the UN Convention. In the field of construction and building design, for instance, Zallio and Clarkson (2021: 2) discuss architectural design practice in relation to the terms inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility, providing an interesting disciplinary perspective on these concepts. In particular, the authors trace an interesting evolution identifiable as a development of Inclusive Design (ID) principles, stating that

ID, a design process in which a mainstream product, service or environment is designed to be usable by as many people as reasonably possible, is gradually evolving to find a natural extension of its scope to incorporate the principles of social equity and diversity. Furthermore, it appears that the recent notion of building inclusively is aiming to go beyond the concept of

purely addressing physical accessibility, by embracing further key sociological and behavioral aspects of human beings, such as physical, sensory and cognitive needs.

Equity, diversity and inclusion (often identified with the acronym EDI) have been the object of many studies, a lot of them involving field research and direct observation. Equity, often opposed to, or made subsequent to, the notion of equality, spells out essentially what inclusion should aim for, i.e. giving people with disabilities and with diverse requirements the possibility to carry out daily tasks, as well as to enjoy services and resources, just as they need them, i.e. tailored on their specific needs (Mullin *et al.*, 2021).

In order for inclusion to become a reality, another key concept has become more and more central in international debates, regulations and also research, i.e. that of participation. This is not a word and concept that has come later into the debate on disability and access, as it was clearly spelled out by the CRPD, back in 2006:

A person's environment has a huge effect on the experience and extent of disability. Inaccessible environments create barriers that often hinder the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in society on an equal basis with others. Progress on improving social participation can be made by addressing these barriers and facilitating persons with disabilities in their day to day lives.

For the CRPD, participation seems to equal the right to access. Today, as reflected in other international documents and, increasingly, in projects, actions and community practices (especially in the cultural sector), participation means collaboration, feeding onto each other's competences and knowledge, and truly building together. As stated elsewhere (Di Giovanni, 2022) participation leads to empowerment, and empowerment in turn leads to enhanced wellbeing. In fact, since the days of the momentous contribution provided by James Charlton in *Nothing About Us, Without Us* (2000), with the expression being taken from Masuta and Roland, i.e. two disabled people leading the movement named Disabled People of South Africa, the notion of participation has gone a long way. One of the great merits of Charlton's volume is to place the rights of disabled people at the very core of social and political debates, both nationally and internationally. Debates which, as he claims, deserve maximum attention towards the diverse needs of those with diverse abilities. Advocating with all his strength, using vivid images and strong words, Charlton talks about

oppression when describing the living conditions of people with disabilities at the turn of the century. And participation for Charlton needs to be extended to caregivers and families of people with disabilities, who often suffer from marginalization and endure difficulties themselves.

Beneath the surface, or between the lines of Charlton's book, lies the concept of belonging, our fourth and final in this section. Advocating for a comprehensive and strong fight against oppression and isolation that people with disabilities still experience today, Charlton pushes not only for inclusion, but for the chance of reaching a higher, more meaningful goal, that of belonging. As a matter of fact, as Raines *et al.* (2023: 2113) report, building a space for belonging for people with disabilities is something that has relatively ancient roots:

In 1943, American psychologist Abraham Maslow developed a tiered model of primal human needs, leading to the goal of self-actualization and fulfilment (Maslow, 1962). On the path to self-actualization (or achieving one's full potential), meeting the psychological need of belonging is second only to physiological and safety needs (e.g., food, water, and shelter).

As Raines *et al.* (2023) further state, the notion of belonging is extremely complex to define, as well as stratified, both in diachronic and socio-political terms. Carter *et al.* (2016) tried to clarify and enhance the definition of this word by defining a core set of principles for it, i.e. Present, Noticed, Welcomed, Cared for, Supported, Accepted, Known, Befriended, Needed and Loved. These and other principles have been widely used in experimental research involving people with disabilities. All in all, all these studies prove that belonging needs to be a two-way process, i.e. one that draws societies and their individuals to move towards disabilities and accept them as part of their everyday living environment, but also one that makes people with disabilities confident and strong enough to feel that they belong.

Since the road to true and general participation and belonging for these people with visible and invisible disabilities is still long and complex, every contribution scholars can provide, with their work, is essential and a true example of responsible, active research. In the following sections, reflecting on the role of languages and translation in supporting true accessibility, inclusion, participation and belonging, we hope to provide a contribution ourselves.

---

### 3. Translation as a Social and Cultural Act

In translation, most of the words and concepts discussed above find a solid and important space. Translation in its most common meaning is, de facto, a tool for accessibility, as it allows people of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds to access content originally written in one language unknown to them. Secondly, interlingual, intralingual and intersemiotic translations are tools for inclusion: messages or texts disseminated in multiple languages enhance knowledge, but also general and professional competence, thus making it possible for many individuals, at many levels, to be part of communities of practice. Being included via multiple languages and textual formats implies fostering participation: access supports inclusion, inclusion entails participation. And last but not least, being able to understand and access texts and messages, anywhere and everywhere, thanks to translation, may and should lead to developing a sense of belonging for people, in many contexts from daily and family life to professional and specialized settings.

As a matter of fact, in this study – and in the practical translation activity it is based on – translation is understood as a social and cultural practice that creates, adapts and communicates meaning across languages, disciplines and professional fields. This approach builds on the evolution of translation studies since the late 1970s, particularly the cultural and functional approaches introduced by Bassnett and Lefevere (1990), Toury (1980) and Vermeer (1978), and later expanded through research on the social dimensions of translation. Chesterman (2006) highlighted how translation contributes to the creation and transformation of knowledge: it is not simply a transfer of words but an interpretive process through which ideas are shaped, shared and validated across contexts.

In this sense, translation serves both as a communicative bridge and as a means of developing shared understanding between disciplines and cultures, helping to define how key concepts such as accessibility, inclusion, participation, and belonging are expressed in different contexts (see Section 2).

Be it interlingual, intralingual or intersemiotic, translation requires paying special attention to a set of principles that seem to have strongly survived across the centuries: register and style, coherence, intercultural awareness and identification of all communicative intentions are only a few amongst the major ones. When translating the *Manuale*, all these elements were indeed central, besides the not-too-common need to consider that transferring from Italian into English a volume whose contributions are

based on international documents, directives and guidelines, entails going through the complex process of intertextual and interlingual reconstruction. This is a backward-moving process that implies not only retrieving multifarious and often changing sources, considering how dynamic the overall context of access to cultural heritage is today.

Among the main reference documents that informed this process were the EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021–2030, which defines accessibility as a prerequisite for social participation and cultural citizenship. Building on this principle, the European Accessibility Act (Directive 2019/882) establishes shared requirements for accessible products and services. In the cultural domain, both the UNESCO's Recommendation concerning the Protection and Promotion of Museums and Collections, their Diversity and their Role in Society (2015) and the ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums (2017) position accessibility and inclusion as fundamental responsibilities of cultural institutions. Finally, the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Goals 4, 10 and 11, further situates accessibility within a global commitment to equality, education and sustainable cultural growth.

Together, these documents confirm the idea, which is central to this study, that translation functions as a bridge between national experiences of accessibility and inclusion and the broader international context made of policies and practices aimed at promoting equality, participation and cultural exchange.

The following section examines the translation of the *Manuale* in detail, showing how the team applied these principles in practice to bring together disciplinary diversity, maintain conceptual coherence, and make the text accessible to an international audience.

#### **4. Describing the Translation Process: From Documentation to Revision**

As discussed in the previous sections, accessibility, inclusion, participation and belonging are evolving practices that take shape through language, interaction and shared understanding. In this sense, the English translation of the *Manuale* represents a practical expression of the principles it promotes: it seeks to make knowledge on accessibility and cultural

participation comprehensible and applicable beyond the Italian context, while remaining faithful to the original text.

The translation process, as anticipated, began with a documentary phase aimed at collecting and analyzing key international and European documents on disability, accessibility and cultural participation. Building on the references described in Section 3, this stage involved an in-depth examination of institutional and professional sources — including museum accessibility reports, and inclusive design manuals — with the aim of consolidating a coherent linguistic and conceptual foundation for the English version of the *Manuale*. This work ensured that the translation reflected the same understanding of accessibility as a multidimensional process involving participation, equality, and cultural citizenship (Stephanidis, 2009), while also recognizing translation itself as an act of reconstruction and mediation of shared knowledge across languages and contexts (see Section 3). The comparative study of these materials supported the development of consistent and internationally aligned terminology, forming the basis for the subsequent analytical and drafting stages of the work.

Following this preparatory stage, the translators examined the *Manuale* in depth. The volume includes contributions from several disciplines, each characterized by its own terminology and ways of interpreting key concepts related to accessibility, inclusion, participation and belonging. This analytical phase revealed that the main challenge was to maintain internal coherence while preserving the distinctive voice of each field. To achieve this, the translators compared definitions, structures and recurring terms across the chapters, identifying connections and terminological differences. This work showed how language does not merely describe but actively shapes the way accessibility, inclusion, participation and belonging are understood and enacted. For example, the choice of one term over another can determine whether diversity is framed as a limitation or as a shared value, and whether participation is regarded as a formal obligation or as a collaborative practice grounded in mutual recognition and belonging (see Section 2).

After these analytical phases, the translation work moved to the actual drafting stage, which was guided by three main objectives: ensuring terminological coherence, maintaining stylistic clarity and balance, and preserving conceptual consistency. Coherence ensured that key terms retained their meaning across the text, while clarity made the English version accessible to an international audience. Consistency, in turn,

---

guaranteed that tone and register reflected the multi-layered and interdisciplinary nature of the original. This stage also enabled the translators to address terminological differences and align disciplinary perspectives within a coherent and unified structure.

Finally, in the revision phase, translators and reviewers — all experts in the relevant fields — reviewed the text as a whole. This stage went beyond checking linguistic accuracy: it focused on ensuring that the translation was coherent and consistent with the key ideas and principles of the *Manuale*. The team paid particular attention to the clarity of each passage and to the use of terminology in line with international practice and professional standards. In this way, the revision phase completed the documentary and analytical process described above, ensuring that the English version could serve both as a practical tool for professionals and institutions in the field of cultural heritage, and as a contribution to the wider international discussion on accessibility, inclusion, participation and belonging (see Section 2).

The following section builds on the translation process outlined above by presenting specific examples of how these steps informed concrete translation choices. These examples also show how translation operates as a social and cultural act: a means of making knowledge accessible, fostering participation, and creating shared understanding across languages and disciplines (see Section 3).

## **5. Translation in Practice: Terminological, Conceptual, and Cultural Choices**

The translation process described in the previous section turned the principles discussed earlier into concrete decisions that conveyed the *Manuale*'s key ideas on accessibility, inclusion, participation, and belonging in English. This section is divided into three parts. The first examines terminology, focusing on how key terms were translated and adapted. The second addresses broader conceptual choices and their implications across different disciplinary contexts. The third considers how translation expresses the emotional and relational dimensions of accessibility in different cultural settings.

### 5.1 Terminological choices

The following discussion focuses on three terms that best illustrate the intersection between language, knowledge and practice in the translation of the *Manuale*. The term *funzionamenti* offers a clear example of the conceptual and linguistic complexity that runs throughout the *Manuale*, beginning with its very title. It appears in chapters addressing accessibility, cultural participation, and the relationship between people and cultural spaces, where it describes the diverse ways individuals act, perceive, and engage with their environments. The concept is inspired by the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (see Section 1), yet the *Manuale* extends it beyond the biomedical framework to encompass social, cultural, and experiential dimensions of participation. English has no single equivalent capable of conveying the relational and situational richness of *funzionamenti*. To address this, the translators adopted two complementary solutions: individual functioning in contexts focused on human abilities and personal interaction with environments, and operational modes when referring to the ways people experience and interact with cultural spaces. The first maintains conceptual alignment with the International Classification and its emphasis on functional diversity, while the second highlights the performative and contextual aspects central to the *Manuale*'s approach to accessibility.

A different challenge arose with the expression *accomodamento ragionevole*, used in the *Manuale* in connection with inclusive design and the management of accessibility in cultural spaces. The phrase might suggest a literal translation such as reasonable compromise, but this would have weakened its institutional meaning. In Italian, *accomodamento* does not imply concession or negotiation but refers to a structured process of adaptation that ensures participation and equity (see Section 2). In international legal and policy contexts, reasonable accommodation designates specific measures intended to guarantee equal access and eliminate discriminatory barriers to participation. The translators therefore adopted the established form reasonable accommodation, consistent with the terminology of the CRPD (2006) and with European and national accessibility policies (see Section 3).

Among the terms analyzed, *barriere* stands out for its wide semantic and conceptual range, encompassing physical, cognitive, and cultural aspects of accessibility. In chapters dealing with architectural design and planning (e.g., Chapter 2), *barriere* was translated as barriers, as in *superamento delle barriere fisiche*. This choice aligns with international architectural and

---

policy terminology (see Section 3), where barriers is now a consolidated term within the lexicon of universal design. However, in sections focused on sensory and cognitive accessibility (e.g., Chapter 4), a literal translation would have flattened the conceptual nuance of the term. In these cases, *barriere* cognitive became cognitive constraints and *barriere comunicative* was rendered as communication obstacles. The translators aimed to reflect the *Manuale*'s broader understanding of accessibility, which goes beyond removing obstacles and focuses on creating environments and practices that foster participation and inclusion.

## 5.2 Conceptual Choices

Moving from terminology to broader conceptual aspects, translation also required addressing how key ideas were expressed and understood across different contexts. One of the most significant examples is *progettazione universale*. The term reflects a complex idea that is already well established in international debates but shaped by specific national and disciplinary traditions (see Section 3).

In English, *progettazione universale* can be translated either as Universal Design or Design for All. Although the two expressions are often used interchangeably, they carry different historical and cultural nuances. Universal Design is the expression most widely recognized internationally, promoted since the 1990s by the Center for Universal Design at North Carolina State University and adopted in key UN and WHO documents. It describes the design of environments, products and services that can be used by everyone, as much as possible, without the need for special adaptation.

By contrast, Design for All is more common in the European context, particularly through the work of the European Institute for Design and Disability (EIDD). This perspective places stronger emphasis on the social and participatory dimensions of design, focusing on collaboration and diversity rather than technical standardization.

When translating *progettazione universale*, the translators had to find a balance between these two interpretations. After reviewing relevant international sources (see Section 4), the team decided to adopt Universal Design as the preferred translation. This choice aligns with the explicit reference in Article 2 of the CRPD and with the term's established use in global policy and academic research.

For example, the Italian sentence “I principali intenti riguardano la progettazione universale” (Chapter 5, p. 198) was rendered as “The main aims focus on the principles of Universal Design.” The translation ensured consistency with international practice while preserving the meaning and tone of the Italian text.

At the same time, the translators aimed to preserve the participatory approach that characterizes the Italian understanding of *progettazione universale*. Their choice of Universal Design thus goes beyond technical accuracy: it conveys the idea of design as a shared and inclusive process that values the diversity of users and contexts. In this way, the translation connects the *Manuale*'s local perspective with a wider international effort to promote accessibility as both a practical goal and a social responsibility.

### 5.3 Cultural Choices

Translating accessibility also means engaging with the cultural dimension of language. Since meanings are shaped by shared values, social practices and collective ways of seeing the world, translation becomes an opportunity to frame how accessibility, inclusion, participation, and belonging are expressed and shared across cultures.

One significant example is the translation of *inclusività*. Although inclusivity may seem an obvious equivalent, the translators chose inclusion, a term more established in the language of rights, design, and international policy (see Section 3). In this context, inclusion refers to an ongoing and collective process, while inclusivity tends to describe a static quality or characteristic (Titchkosky, 2011). Choosing inclusion ensured coherence with the terminology used by the United Nations, UNESCO, and the European Union, where it denotes participation, equality, and active citizenship. The decision also reflects the *Manuale*'s central idea that accessibility is not a fixed state, but a shared practice built on diversity and participation.

A similar reasoning informed the translation of *appartenenza*, a term frequently used in the *Manuale* to describe the emotional and cultural dimensions of access. The translators rendered it as belonging, a word that emphasizes emotional connection and shared identity. In sections addressing community engagement and cultural participation, belonging captures the idea that accessibility goes beyond removing physical or cognitive barriers: it involves recognizing individuals as active members of

a shared cultural space. In this way, the translation mirrors the *Manuale*'s understanding of accessibility as both a cultural right and a foundation for meaningful participation.

The translation process, together with the reflections and choices it stimulated, led to the creation of a glossary designed to consolidate the terminology developed throughout this work. The glossary serves as a tool for ensuring consistency across future translations, supporting professional training, and promoting the wider dissemination of an inclusive vocabulary. The next section describes its structure and purpose in more detail.

## 6. A Glossary for Accessibility across Languages and Cultures

Creating a glossary occurred as a natural evolution of the translation process described in Section 4, for both practical and strategic reasons. First of all, our aim was to ensure that the key concepts related to accessibility, inclusion, participation, and belonging used across the *Manuale* were conveyed in a precise and coherent way throughout. The glossary was therefore developed and shared, in order to make these choices explicit but also to provide a clear and flexible reference for future projects addressing the same themes.

This bilingual glossary takes inspiration from, and maintains a conceptual continuity with, the one included in the *Manuale* itself at the end of Chapter 5, which was originally attached to the *P.E.B.A. – Piano per l'Eliminazione delle Barriere Architettoniche nei musei, complessi monumentali, aree e parchi archeologici*<sup>1</sup> developed by the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities (MiBACT, 2018). That glossary was designed by the author of Chapter 5 to clarify the meanings of the most frequently used terms related to accessibility and access to cultural heritage, promoting uniformity across professional and institutional contexts. The glossary prepared for the English translation follows the same principle but extends it to the interlingual level, ensuring that the central ideas of accessibility, inclusion, participation, and belonging can be communicated with precision and clarity in English and, more broadly, in international contexts, where English often serves as the main language (see Section 1).

---

<sup>1</sup> Guidelines for the Drafting of the Plan for the Elimination of Architectural Barriers (P.E.B.A.) in Museums, Monumental Complexes, Archaeological Areas, and Parks.

The glossary was compiled, expanded and revised as the translation process advanced, following a sequence of stages that involved documentation, analysis, drafting, and revision. During the documentation phase, the translators consulted the glossary of the *Manuale* together with the national and international sources collected and used for the translation process (see Section 4). The analysis phase involved a side-by-side comparison of the Italian and English versions of the *Manuale* to identify recurring terms, overlaps, and differences in meaning across chapters and across disciplinary competences of the various authors gathered in the *Manuale*. This stage was crucial for refining the meaning of key terms and for clarifying their usage within both institutional and professional contexts (see Section 5).

On the basis of this analysis, the drafting phase which ensued focused on formulating each glossary entry clearly and consistently. Each term was paired with its English equivalent and, where relevant, a brief explanatory note or contextual indication. Choices such as *funzionamenti* rendered as individual functioning or operational modes (see Section 5.1), and *fruizione ampliata* translated as enhanced access or enhanced use, arose from the need to convey in English concepts that are deeply embedded in Italian disciplinary and institutional language while preserving their specific meaning and scope. Needless to say, the glossary also includes terms that are rather straightforward to convey, such as *accessibilità* rendered as accessibility, and others that required more careful consideration, such as *visitabilità condizionata* as conditional visitability; the literal rendering was intentionally retained to reflect its precise institutional sense of partial or assisted accessibility in heritage contexts.

Other entries illustrate how apparently simple words acquire specialized meanings in the context of accessibility and cultural participation. For instance, *barriere percettive* was translated as perceptual barriers to maintain the connection with architectural barriers (*barriere architettoniche*), while highlighting the sensory and cognitive dimensions of access. Similarly, *facilitatori* became facilitators, aligning with the terminology of the ICF but also emphasizing their active role in enabling participation. These examples show how the glossary reflects the broader understanding of accessibility articulated in the *Manuale*: not only as physical or technical access, but as a relational process that connects people, environments, and cultural experiences.

During the revision phase, the translation team worked together to review the glossary as a whole. This stage focused on verifying the accuracy

and clarity of each entry, aligning terminology with the choices adopted in the translation (see Section 5), and ensuring consistency in the use of preferred terms and variants. An integral aspect of the glossary is the use of inclusive and respectful language. Following the principles outlined in Sections 2 and 3, it avoids outdated or stigmatizing expressions such as handicap and adopts person-first formulations like person with a disability or persons with disabilities. When community preference supports identity-first usage, as in Deaf person, the glossary reflects that choice.

The glossary is designed to remain open and adaptable. Like the concepts of accessibility, inclusion, participation, and belonging themselves, the language that describes them evolves over time. For this reason, the glossary is presented as a living tool that can be updated, expanded, and shared. To ensure continuous access and updating, the glossary is included as an appendix to the English version of the *Manuale* and is also available through a link to an open digital format, allowing readers to consult the most recent version as the terminology and practices of accessibility and inclusion continue to evolve.

## 7. Conclusions

As Susan Bassnett stated at the end of the past century (1998), translation never happens in a vacuum, but in a historical, cultural and socially-determined continuum. As a matter of fact, any act of linguistic transfer is embedded in the context that generates it: power relations, revolutions or involutions very often happen precisely through, or with the support of, translation.

In an extremely dynamic and multifaceted environment such as the world of disability and access, translation occurs at many levels and in multiple directions. Translation processes are very much part and parcel of the conceptual and terminological transformations that we have presented in the first sections of this article, followed by a discussion of examples from the so-called translation proper, i.e. the interlingual transfer from Italian into English of a complex volume dedicated to accessibility to cultural heritage for people with disabilities. As has been observed above, the pitfalls of translating from a more 'local' language such as Italian into an internationally acknowledged lingua franca like English poses a number of challenges, including the occasional need to return to English as the matrix of calques or altered loanwords that at the origins of Italian words or

expressions. Also, in the context of disability and accessibility studies, increasing attention has been devoted over the past two decades to the appropriate words to be used, themselves the object of relentless changes with strong socio-political implications.

Reflecting on concepts beyond words, and on word choices for interlingual translation, we hope that this article can lay the foundations for further critical approaches to intralingual, interlingual and intersemiotic communication in a socio-culturally complex domain like that of accessibility to culture for people with disabilities. The glossary here briefly presented aims to be an open tool for further experimentation, possibly leading to new approaches and visions, for the good of people with disabilities and their right to enjoy the beauty of culture throughout the world.

## References

- Bassnett, S., & Lefevere, A. (Eds.). (1990). *Translation, history and culture*. London: Pinter.
- Bassnett, S. 1998. "Still Trapped in the Labyrinth: Further Reflections on Translation and Theatre." In Bassnett, S. & Lefevere, A. eds. *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters. 90-108.
- Cabré, M. T. (1999). *Terminology: Theory, methods, and applications*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Carter, E. W., Biggs, E. E., & Boehm, T. L. (2016). *A place of belonging: Research at the intersection of faith and disability*. Vanderbilt Kennedy Center.
- Cetorelli, G., & Papi, L. (Eds.). (2023). *Manuale di progettazione per l'accessibilità e la fruizione ampliata del patrimonio culturale: Dai funzionamenti della persona ai funzionamenti dei luoghi della cultura*. Rome: Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche – Dipartimento di Scienze Umane e Sociali, Patrimonio Culturale, with the support of the Italian Ministry of Culture.
- Charlton, J. I. (2000). *Nothing about us without us: Disability oppression and empowerment*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Chesterman, A. (2006). Questions in the sociology of translation. In J. F. Duarte, A. Rosa, & T. Seruya (Eds.), *Translation studies at the interface of disciplines* (pp. 9–27). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Di Giovanni, E. (2022). Inclusive theatre-making: From practice to theory and back. *inTR.Alinea: Online Translation Journal*.

- European Commission. (2021). *Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021–2030*. Brussels: European Commission.
- European Union. (2019). Directive (EU) 2019/882 on the Accessibility Requirements for Products and Services (European Accessibility Act). *Official Journal of the European Union*, L151, 70–115.
- Gossett, A., Mirza, M., Barnds, A. K., & Feidt, D. (2009). Beyond access: A case study on the intersection between accessibility, sustainability, and universal design. *Disability and Rehabilitation: Assistive Technology*, 4(4), 439–450.
- Haynes, J., & Hammond, M. (2007). *The social construction of disability*. London: Routledge.
- Heinisch, B. (2020). Accessibility as a component in inclusive and fit-for-market specialised translator training. in *TRALinea: Online Translation Journal*.
- Libro Blanco de la Accesibilidad. (2003). *Libro blanco de la accesibilidad*. Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales, Gobierno de España.
- Maslow, A. H. (1962). *Toward a psychology of being*. Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand.
- Ministero dei beni e delle attività culturali e del turismo (MiBACT). (2018). *Linee guida per la redazione del Piano di eliminazione delle barriere architettoniche (P.E.B.A.) nei musei, complessi monumentali, aree e parchi archeologici*. Circolare n. 26/2018 della Direzione Generale Musei, Allegato 3 – Glossario. Rome: MiBACT. Retrieved from
- Mullin, A. E., Coe, I. R., Gooden, E. A., Tunde-Byass, M., & Wiley, R. E. (2021). Inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility: From organizational responsibility to leadership competency. *Healthcare Management Forum*, 34(6), 311–315.
- Raines, A. R., Francis, G. L., Fujita, M., & Macedonia, A. (2023). Belonging from the perspectives of individuals with disabilities: A scoping review. *Psychology in the Schools*, 60, 2112–2127.
- Risku, H., & Rogl, R. (2021). Translation and situated, embodied, distributed, embedded and extended cognition. *Translation, Cognition & Behavior*, 4(2), 217–238.
- Sager, J. C. (1990). *A practical course in terminology processing*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Schäffner, C. (Ed.). (2003). *Translation and intercultural communication: Similarities and differences*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

- Solfagnano Charter. (2024). G7 Inclusion and Disability: Solfagnano Charter. Italian Presidency of the G7.
- Stephanidis, C. (Ed.). (2009). *The universal access handbook*. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.
- Temmerman, R. (2000). *Towards new ways of terminology description: The sociocognitive approach*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Titchkosky, T. (2011). *The question of access: Disability, space, meaning*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Toury, G. (1980). *In search of a theory of translation*. Tel Aviv: Porter Institute for Poetics and Semiotics.
- United Nations. (2006). *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)*. New York: United Nations.
- UNESCO. (2015). *Recommendation concerning the protection and promotion of museums and collections, their diversity and their role in society*. Paris: UNESCO.
- World Health Organization. (2001). *International classification of functioning, disability and health (ICF)*. Geneva: WHO.
- Wolf, M., & Fukari, A. (Eds.). (2007). *Constructing a sociology of translation*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Zallio, M., & Clarkson, P. J. (2021). Inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility in the built environment: A study of architectural design practice. *Building and Environment*, 206, 108352.