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A Thousand and One Names of Polish Translation Enterprises in the Lower Silesia Region: Exploring the Polish REGON Database

Abstract: This article examines the formal characteristics and names of translation enterprises operating in the Lower Silesia region in 2022. The data on the enterprises were drawn from the Polish official register of economic entities, i.e. REGON database. The conceptual framework is built on three fields: (1) developments in the field of translation & interpreting studies (T&IS); (2) linguistic studies in onomastics on chrematonyms/ergonyms; (3) economic and legal conditions of running businesses in Poland. The results obtained in this study offer comprehensive insights into the economic situation of Polish translation enterprises and suggest main criteria for the future sample selection: in terms of their legal and economic strength, and in terms of translational profile consistency expressed through the lexicon used in the identifying segments of their names in order to designate their core business.

Keywords: translation enterprises, Lower Silesia, REGON database, formal characteristics of translation enterprises, names of translation enterprises, legal and economic strength

1. Introduction

The title of this paper is inspired by the title of a widely known collection of Middle Eastern folk tales compiled in Arabic during the Islamic Golden Age (traditionally dated from the eighth to the thirteenth century) which includes a rich variety of texts: historical tales, love stories, tragedies, comedies, poems, burlesques, and even erotic forms¹. What we want to express by this intertextual allusion is mainly our amazement at the diversity of Polish translation and translation-related businesses.

At the same time, this paper opens a four-element series of complementary analyses performed on the same corpus and with the same general goal.

¹ See also Paloposki/Koskinen (2004).

The terminological dimension of translation enterprise names is commented on in Kuźnik (in press b), its internationalising dimension in Kuźnik (in press a), and its cognitive, semiotically oriented, metaphorical dimensions in Kuźnik (under review). In this way, we explore various dimensions of the data collected and different approaches towards its analysis.

The corpus used in these four studies – which can be considered a convenience sample – is made up of almost 1000 economic entities registered in the Lower Silesian voivodeship (*województwo dolnośląskie; Dolny Śląsk*) in September 2022 whose core business are translation and translation-related services, including interpreting, in its sworn and non-sworn form. This database is drawn from the official Polish national register, the so-called REGON register (*Krajowy rejestr urzędowy podmiotów gospodarki narodowej*), which contains the identification numbers of economic entities. This register is held by the Polish Central Statistical Office (*Główny Urząd Statystyczny/ GUS*) with economic and statistical purposes.

The above-mentioned four complementary analyses are aimed at selecting an optimal sample for our future research project on the definition and classification of translation from a theoretical and practical perspective (Kuźnik forthcoming).

Our three specific goals in the present study are as follows:

- (1) descriptive, aimed at describing (quantitatively) translation service providers active in Lower Silesia from an economic and translational viewpoint;
- (2) exploratory, aimed at identifying the largest and strongest translation service providers in the Lower Silesia region and, at the same time, the most centred on translation as their core business, in order to carry out a more extensive study on translation definition and classification in the near future, in cooperation with these carefully selected entities only (Kuźnik forthcoming);
- (3) methodological, aimed at testing the GUS database containing REGON numbers of economic entities, as an example of an external (as regards translational interests) database allowing even quantitative sampling in the future².

The economic results for 2022 are commented on in the context of previous data of the same kind collected in June 2017 (Kuźnik 2019a) in order to capture the evolution on the local market³.

² This methodological goal should be seen as our response to those scholars who argue for more rigorous sampling procedures in the field of translation and interpreting studies; see, e.g., Katan (2011), Künzli/Gile (2021), Kuźnik et al. (2010), Pöschhacker (2011).

³ The structural and lexical analysis carried out in 2017 encompassed a much smaller sample than in 2022: only entities from Wrocław set up with domestic, Polish capital, i.e. 473/1000 entities (Kuźnik 2019a). This is the reason why this part of analysis performed in 2017–2018 could not be compared to the present one.

This study is part of our larger research endeavour (Kuźnik 2018a; 2019b; 2019c; 2019d; 2021; 2022, under review) devoted to a (semiotically) extended conceptualization of translation, incorporating in its definition the objects of intralingual and intersemiotic translation, besides the predominant (until now) objects of interlingual translation (Doczekalska/Biel 2022; Gottlieb 2018; Jakobson 1959/2012; Ketola 2015; 2021; Marais 2019; Zethsen 2018; Zethsen/Hill-Madsen 2016). In these studies, opinions formulated by the stakeholders of translation industry are scarcely taken into consideration, which is surprising in the context of the recent economic growth of this sector.

The study is grounded in three sub-fields of knowledge: (1) developments in the field of translation & interpreting studies (T&IS); (2) linguistic studies in onomastics on chrematonyms/ergonyms; (3) economic and legal conditions of running businesses in Poland. The conceptual and pragmatic framework of the paper is thus structured according to these three areas. After a brief outline of the methods applied in this study, we present the results of quantitative (but still descriptive) and qualitative analyses of the enterprises' formal characteristics and the consistency of their proper names with their core translation and translation-related business activities. The last section of the paper sums up the topic in a few final remarks.

As for terminological clarifications, Polish legal regulations concerning economic activity use general terms with Slavic etymology, e.g. *podmiot działalności gospodarczej* (economic entity), *podmiot gospodarki narodowej* (entity of the national economy), because they apply to both the public and private sectors⁴. Terms *przedsiębiorstwo* and *przedsiębiorca* are translated into English as *enterprise* and *entrepreneur* in the GUS official website; these are also terms recommended by EUROSTAT and the OECD⁵. We follow these recommendations in this paper and avoid the generic term *firm*. On the other hand, it should be stressed that the terms *business* or *companies* are used in this paper in their broad meaning, as the REGON database also includes freelance workers, cooperatives, and foundations.

⁴ English/Polish equivalents as recommended by GUS for national public statistic purposes: <https://stat.gov.pl/metainformacje/slownik-pojec/pojecia-stosowane-w-statystyce-publicznej/lista.htm> [accessed: 31.12.2022].

⁵ EUROSTAT glossary: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/ramon/nomenclatures/index.cfm?TargetUrl=LST_NOM_DTL_GLOSSARY&StrNom=CODED2&StrLanguageCode=EN ; OECD glossary: <https://stats.oecd.org/> [accessed: 31.12.2022].

2. Conceptual and legal contextualisation of the study

This section contains a conceptual and legal contextualisation of the study performed.

2.1. Gap in the field of translation and interpreting studies

Generally speaking, with a broad awareness of conceptualisation of the core business of economic entities, T&IS may contribute to onomastic studies as regards their names. In this way, the studies of, for example, pharmacies and sanatoriums mentioned in the next section would be complemented – by the same or other researchers – by an analysis of what these industries consist of and what role they play in society. As far as we have been able to observe, in the field of T&IS, no research has been carried out on the names of translation service providers so far. The present study – within the limits of its exploratory purpose – is an attempt to fill in this gap.

Admittedly, T&IS have covered similar topics, thus perfectly preparing and defining the field for this kind of research. T&IS scholars have reflected on translation of proper names in general (e.g. Galewska 2019; Moya 2000; Skibińska 2004), including – among others – translation of film titles (e.g. Surdyk/Urban 2016), daily newspaper titles (e.g. Ehrensberger-Dow/Massey 2013), and scientific work titles (e.g. Dybiec-Gajer 2007; 2021).

In a more market- and business-oriented branch of T&IS, several seminal works laid down conceptual bases for defining translation service activity in a broad theoretical perspective of economic and social sciences, and knowledge management (Grbić 2011; Kujamäki 2020; Kuźnik 2014; Monzó 2006; Olohan 2019; Risku et al. 2010). Other studies focused on what Vecchi (2002; 2020) terms (translation) company-speak (see the previous section), i.e. a discourse and forms of internal and external communication, specific to each (translation) economic entity, approached mostly by ethnographical methodology (e.g. Ehrensberger-Dow 2014; Koskinen 2008; Olohan 2019; Milošević/Risku 2020; Pedersen 2019; Risku 2014). Another body of works were aimed at exploring the professional status of translators and interpreters, their professional identity and professional self-concept, including the self-concept of all kinds of translation service providers (e.g. Dam/Zethsen 2011; 2019; Ehrensberger-Dow/Massey 2013; Koskinen/Dam 2016; Kuźnik 2010; 2019b; 2019d; Sela-Sheffy 2011; Zwischenberger 2011). T&IS scholars also explored topics related to the types of economic entities which provide translation services, their interrelations and networks (e.g. Abdallah 2010; Gouadec 2007; Moorkens 2017;

Risku et al. 2016), as well as the internal structure of translation services and their potential of innovation (e.g. Kuźnik 2019c; 2019d), immersed in a general context of “economy of translation” (Biel/Sosoni 2017: 354).

Returning to research issues related directly to translation activity, T&IS scholars analysed problems linked to the translation of the names of economic entities (e.g. Dybiec-Gajer 2007: 147–149; Łomzik 2018), the translation of their legal form (e.g. Biel 2010; García 2017), and translation problems that arose during the process of translation of their products, including localisation of brand names (e.g. Cova 2021; Olvera-Lobo/Castillo-Rodríguez 2020).

As demonstrated by this brief review of the literature, T&IS researchers have long been conducting research from within and in collaboration with translation service providers and – from the methodological and ethical point of view of their empirical research – are aware of the difficulties of accessing economic entities (e.g. Ehrensberger-Dow 2014; Kuźnik 2010; 2016; 2019d; Risku 2014; see also Camiciottoli 2015). That is why, in their publications, the names of these entities are often replaced by anonymous codes or generalising identifiers. This is also one of the reasons why translation studies publications have so far avoided formally mentioning the analysed entities (though their names often appear in the Acknowledgements section of the publications; cf. Dorer et al. forthcoming). Our current study offers an opportunity to address these names in a systematic and objective way and to fill in this gap in translation studies.

2.2. Onomastic studies on proper names of economic entities

Proper names (proper nouns) are the object of study of onomastics, a sub-discipline of linguistics. Proper names of economic entities may be classified as chrematonyms, or ergonyms, the most heterogeneous class of onyms (Jadanowska 2014: 326). These two words are competing terms and are often used by different onomasticians in their different languages with slightly different meanings. The ICOS (2022) defines them in a general way, as follows:

- *chrematonym*: name of a politico-economic or commercial or cultural institution or thing; a catch-all category;
- *ergonym*: sometimes used for the name of an institution or commercial firm (ICOS 2022; bullets and italics in the original).

These short definitions make it clear that the chrematonym is a broader concept and the ergonym a narrower one, encompassing only the names of institutions and companies and less frequently used than the chrematonym.

The term *chrematonym* does not appear as a separate key term in the pivotal English version of the list of ICOS key onomastic terms (it appears only in a note to the term *ergonym*), but the term *ergonym* does (Gałkowski/Bijak 2018: 3; bold in the original): “**ergonym** – name of a product or a brand; NOTE: The term *chrematonym* in some languages is used in this sense, but can also have a broader meaning (i.a. proper names of social events, institutions, organisations...)”⁶, and the term **brand name** is defined as “proper name of a brand, e.g. Toyota” (the list of ICOS key onomastic terms does not define the term brand itself, but gives an example of a brand name: “Toyota”) ⁷.

Thus, these two terms (*chrematonym* and *ergonym*), depending on the language used and the scholar’s comprehension, may cover proper names of economic entities and, at the same time, proper names of products generated (produced) by these economic entities. Obviously, these two objects are linked, but are not identical. It should be stressed that given the scope of our research, only proper names of economic entities are of interest to us, the products of these economic entities being outside our research scope.

The semiotic nature of *chrematonyms* and/or *ergonyms* may be more complex than encompassing verbal instances only (Smith 2017). They often include images: logotypes (formed, or not, on the basis of letters and/or words) of economic entities and their products (Gałkowski 2022: 303). The interaction and/or the coexistence of different semiotic codes within brand names (i.e. names of economic entities and their products) are a frequent research topic in linguistic, semiotic, anthropological, and communicational approaches (e.g. Krško 2022). However, due to the characteristics of our data source, this study focuses on verbal content only.

As regards the Polish onomastic context, Światała-Cheda (2013) presents a thorough chronological review of studies on names of economic entities, the most popular branches of economic activity in these studies, and the methodology applied. Research on *chrematonyms* and/or *ergonyms* in general is flourishing in the twenty-first century. Here are some examples of Polish studies on specific

⁶ Polish equivalents of these terms and definitions are formulated by Gałkowski/Bijak (2018: 3; bold in the original) as follows: “**ergonim** – nazwa własna produktu lub firmy/marki (UWAGA: w tym znaczeniu w wielu językach używa się również terminu **chrematonim** [por. *chrematonim marketingowy*], który może mieć również szersze znaczenie jako nazwa własna zjawiska/zrzeszenia/wydarzenia społecznego, instytucji, organizacji... [por. *chrematonim społecznościowy* oraz *chrematonim ideacyjny*])”.

⁷ Polish equivalents of this term and definition are formulated by Gałkowski/Bijak (2018: 3; bold in the original) as follows: “**nazwa firmowa** (ang. brand name, brand) – nazwa handlowa, nazwa firmy, marki, produktu, firmonim, np. Toyota”. For an etymology and definitions of the term brand, see Gałkowski (2022: 305–306).

groups of names of business entities and other chrematonyms after 2000: Szelewski (2004) – language schools; Górny (2006) – translation agencies in the Lesser Poland and Subcarpathian voivodeships; Górny (2003) and Sagan-Bielawa (2019) – pharmacies; Gaczyńska-Piwowska (2005) – guest houses and holiday homes; Jaros (2005) – pubs; Banderowicz (2011) – sanatoriums; Grochola-Szczepanek (2018) – accommodation facilities; Oronowicz-Kida (2012) – second-hand clothes shops; Jaros (2015) – vineyards; Gibka (2018) – rope courses; Dacewicz (2007) – higher education institutions; Młynarczyk (2019) – associations; Przybylska (2017) – awards; Gałkowski – an interesting case of “markings on individual vehicle registration plates in Poland as a linguistic phenomenon on the interface between propriality and appellativity” (Gałkowski 2021: 107). However, the REGON database has been scarcely used as a data source or corpus in these studies (Ułańska 2015 is the unique exception we are aware of).

2.3. Running and naming a business in Poland

Running and naming a business in Poland is bound to several basic legal requirements, which we present in this section⁸. Surprisingly, these formal requirements, imposed by the Polish law, are usually not taken into account by onomasticians when analysing brand names.

The rules for registering, running, and closing a business, or economic activity, in Poland are regulated by the Act of 6 March 2018 – Entrepreneurs Act (*Ustawa z dnia 6 marca 2018 r. – Prawo przedsiębiorców*). According to Article 3 of this Act, any activity that has all four of the following characteristics is an economic activity: (1) it is an organised activity; (2) it is for profit; (3) it is carried out continuously; (4) it is carried out for one’s own account. Entrepreneurs are either a natural person (including partners in a civil partnership), or a legal person, or a so-called incomplete legal person (i.e. an organisation which does not have the status of a legal person, to which a distinct law recognises legal capacity, and which carries out an economic activity). Any economic activity must be registered⁹. Depending on its legal form (Table 1), it can be registered in the Central Register of Economic Activities (*Centralna Ewidencja i Informacja o Działalności Gospodarczej/ CEIDG*) or in the National Court Register (*Krajowy Rejestr Sądowy/ KRS*).

⁸ Unless another date is indicated in the bibliographic references, this section presents the economic and legal situation in Poland as of the end of 2022.

⁹ However, in some cases, natural persons can also carry out an unregistered activity.

Table 1. Legal forms of business in Poland

Detailed legal form: type of legal form of the enterprise	Legal form: natural person/ incomplete legal person/legal person	Legal register: CEIDG/KRS	Legal basis
Sole-proprietor business (<i>jednoosobowa działalność gospodarcza</i>); possibility of employing staff	Natural person	CEIDG	Civil Code
Civil partnership (<i>spółka cywilna</i>)	Incomplete legal person	CEIDG (partners)	Civil Code
General partnership (<i>spółka jawna</i>); commercial law partnership	Incomplete legal person	KRS	Commercial Companies Code
Partnership (<i>spółka partnerska</i>); commercial law partnership	Incomplete legal person	KRS	Commercial Companies Code
Limited partnership (<i>spółka komandytowa</i>); commercial law partnership	Incomplete legal person	KRS	Commercial Companies Code
Limited joint-stock partnership (<i>spółka komandytowo-akcyjna</i>); commercial law partnership	Incomplete legal person	KRS	Commercial Companies Code
Limited liability company (<i>spółka z ograniczoną odpowiedzialnością</i>); commercial law capital share company	Legal person	KRS	Commercial Companies Code
Joint stock company (<i>spółka akcyjna</i>); commercial law capital share company	Legal person	KRS	Commercial companies code
Cooperative society (<i>spółdzielnia</i>)	Legal person	KRS	Act on Social Cooperatives
Foundation (<i>fundacja</i>); economic activity limited to the achievement of statutory objectives	Legal person	KRS	Law on Foundations

According to Article 43 of the Act of 23 April 1964 – Civil Code (*Ustawa z dnia 23 kwietnia 1964 r. – Kodeks cywilny*), natural persons who carry out a sole-proprietor business act “as a company” (*działają “pod firmą”*), which means that their business bears the name of their enterprise. Article 43 also states that the business of a natural person bears his or her first and last name, while the business of a legal person bears a company name¹⁰.

Let us now have a look at the regulations on company names in Poland (mandatory and optional elements to be included in the company name) and the recommendations in this regard on the official government portal Biznes.gov.pl (2022).

¹⁰ As a matter of fact, due to the obligation to indicate the first and last name in the name of certain legal forms of companies, these data have ceased to be considered as protected personal data in the REGON register and in business relations, since they are publicly accessible.

In the case of sole-proprietor businesses (registered in the CEIDG), natural persons can only be registered once, as it is not possible to have more than one sole-proprietor business registered in one's name. However, it is possible to carry out different types of activities under the same company (by indicating several PKD codes – but in this case, only one of them should be selected as the predominant activity code). The mandatory elements are the first and last name of the entrepreneur (in this order, separated by a single space, in the nominative case, and according to the spelling in the identity document), e.g. “Jan Kowalski”. Possible optional elements of the company name are as follows: (1) the entrepreneur's middle name (e.g. “Jan Adam Kowalski”); (2) a nickname of the entrepreneur (e.g. “Red Jan Kowalski”); (3) the business profile (e.g. “Jan Kowalski's Key Cutting Service”); (4) the location of the company (e.g. “Jan Kowalski's by the Baltic Seashore”); (5) fancy expressions (e.g. “Jan Kowalski's Black Pearl”), which, in Article 43 of the Civil Code, are called “other free designations”. The optional elements may be combined and may come before or after the mandatory segment *first name + surname*, but must not be misleading, in particular with regard to the person of the entrepreneur, the object and place of the activity, and the company's sources of supply. Upper- and lower-case letters, abbreviations, acronyms, inverted commas and other symbols may be freely used in the optional elements. Article 43 of the Civil Code further specifies that the name of the company must be sufficiently distinct from those of other companies operating in the same market.

In the case of a civil partnership, the company name is not regulated by law. However, the Biznes.gov.pl portal emphasises the relevance of using a clear company name, i.e. including at least the first and last names of all partners, as well as an indication of the legal form of the company, “spółka cywilna” (“civil partnership”) or in short “s.c.” (e.g. “Kowalski and Nowak s.c.”).

In the case of a company registered in the KRS, different rules apply depending on the type of company, but as a common requirement, the legal form of the company must be indicated at the end of its name, either in full or in an abbreviated form. In the case of a general partnership (*spółka jawna*), the name of the entity must include the surname of at least one partner (e.g. “Kowalski sp.j.”). In the case of a partnership, the name of the entity must include the surname of at least one partner and, if the surnames of all partners are not included, the words “and partner(s)” (e.g. “Sworn Translators Kowalski and partners”). It should be noted that only members of the liberal professions, including (sworn) translators, are allowed to form a general partnership. In the case of a limited partnership (*spółka komandytowa*), the name of the entity must contain the surname or company

name of the general partner, i.e. the responsible entity whose assets cover the partnership's liabilities (e.g. "Kowalski spółka komandytowa" or "Czarna Perła sp. z o.o. spółka komandytowa"). In the case of a limited joint-stock partnership (*spółka komandytowo-akcyjna*), the name of the entity must also include the surname or company name of the general partner. For limited liability companies (*spółka z ograniczoną odpowiedzialnością*) and joint-stock companies (*spółka akcyjna*), the company name does not need to contain the surnames or given names of partners or shareholders; it can be chosen freely, but the legal form of the company must be indicated at the end of the company name (e.g. "Czarna Perła sp. z o.o." or "Czarna Perła S.A.").

3. Methodology

The study focuses on data from the Lower Silesian voivodeship, located in the southwestern part of Poland. Bordering Germany and Czechia, this voivodeship covers the western part of historical Silesia, i.e. most of the Lower Silesia region, the Kłodzko region and part of Saxony (eastern Upper Lusatia). It is the seventh largest voivodeship in Poland by area, with 1,994,670 ha, i.e. 6.4% of the country's area (GUS 2022). Its capital is the city of Wrocław.

Using the REGON database, we analysed the list of Lower Silesian entities registered with the PKD (*Polska Klasyfikacja Działalności Gospodarczej*) with the code 74.30.Z, i.e. "translation-related activities", as the predominant activity. This subclass also covers the activities of sworn translators and interpreters. The entities in our list did not indicate any other PKD code corresponding to an auxiliary or secondary activity. The list is up to date as of 30 September 2022. The database was bought in the form of an electronic file (Excel file) from the local GUS office in Wrocław, upon payment of PLN 75.00, i.e. approximately EUR 15.50 (in October 2022). The analysed REGON database contains a total of 980 entries (in 2017, the database contained 1000 entries, i.e. 20 more).

Due to space limitations, when presenting the results, we generally provide only one example – the most typical or representative of the phenomenon analysed. This should not be considered as an intention of advertising the company named. Despite the form's explicit instructions as regards the manner of entering the names, i.e. using only capital letters¹¹, many names contain a mixture of upper- and lower-

¹¹ These recommendations in the form are presumably intended to standardise the presentation of names and to facilitate their administrative and electronic processing.

-case letters (e.g. *PAWEŁ MARTIN nEo*). Presumably, these are cases where the entrepreneur neglected these instructions. On the other hand, it is quite obvious that visually, for potential customers but also from the perspective of linguists, a name containing upper- and lower-case letters seems preferable: it is easier to read, more natural, and more informative.

In order to check the consistency of the economic activity of entities, displayed in their names, we took into account the names' structure (made of three elements appearing independently or in combination, regardless of their arrangement in relation to each other) and their main (from a translational viewpoint) lexical element, i.e. the identifying segment, which is the main semantic element indicating the enterprise's predominant economic activity, linked to its main PKD code.

The three elements of the nouns are:

- [Name(s)+Surname(s)]: name(s) and surname(s) of the entrepreneur(s); a compulsory segment for certain legal forms of enterprise (see section 2.3.);
- [Identification]: general identification of the activity of the enterprise (generally, the Polish words *tłumaczenie*, i.e. translation, and *tłumacz*, i.e. *translator*; these words are considered to be self-evident and therefore neutral in the name of a translation company; they represent the name's main lexical element, i.e. the identifying element, which is the main semantic element of the noun phrase and governs the structure of the company name);
- [Differentiation]: information that distinguishes the company from the others in the same sector; this segment usually contains a phrase personalised by the entrepreneur (identification segments also fall into this category when expressed in languages other than Polish).

Example:

<i>Biuro Tłumaczeń</i>	<i>ARVERSO</i>	<i>Radosław Makówka</i>
[Identification]	[Differentiation]	[Name(s)+Surname(s)]

It should be noted that Polish onomasticians tend to term *informative* or *descriptive segment* of what we term here *identifying segment* ([Identification]), and *identifying* or *differentiating segment* of the proper name that we term here *differentiating segment* ([Differentiation]), and consider the latter the most important from a linguistic-onomastic viewpoint (Włoskowicz 2021)¹².

¹² Włoskowicz (2021) considers the *differentiating function* (*personalising function*) of a segment as more important than the *identifying function* of the same segment in proper names.

In analysing the structure of company names and the lexicon used, we did not take into account the segments indicating the legal form of the entity, required by Polish law (see section 2.3.).

4. Results

In this section, we present the results of our data analysis.

4.1. Legal and economic characteristics of the economic entities

In this section the main legal and economic characteristics of the economic entities studied are presented.

4.1.1. Legal and economic status

In 2022, 768 entities (78%) were in operation and 212 entities (22%) had suspended their activities (Figure 1). Among the suspended entities, we included one company that had not yet started operations and two companies in liquidation.

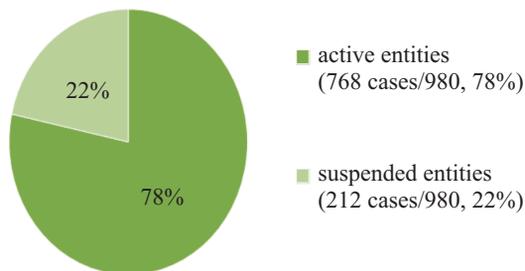


Figure 1. Legal and economic status

The 2017 database not only contains 20 more entities, but the number of companies in operation that year was higher: 897 (90%), compared to 103 suspended (10%, including three that had not yet started operations and two in liquidation).

The large number of suspended entities in 2022 (22%) is most likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus (2020–2022) and the economic crisis caused by inflation and rising energy prices following the Russian aggression against Ukraine on 24 February 2022.

4.1.2. Legal form

As regards the legal form of the enterprises (see Table 1 in section 2.3.), the 2022 REGON database contains 65 (7%) legal persons and so-called incomplete legal persons: 38 legal persons (one cooperative and 37 limited liability companies) and 27 so-called incomplete legal persons (one general partnership, two limited partnerships, and 24 civil partnerships). All other companies – 915 (93%) – are natural persons (Figure 2). A small part (22 persons)¹³ of these 915 natural persons are partners in 24 civil partnerships, while the remaining 893 persons run sole-proprietor businesses. The database does not contain any joint-stock companies, foundations (which would be classified as legal persons), and partnerships (as incomplete legal persons).

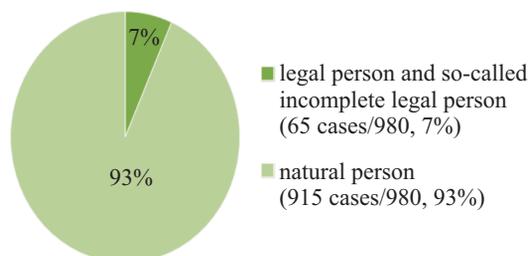


Figure 2. Legal form

In the 2017 database, there were 45 legal persons and so-called incomplete legal persons (4%): 19 legal persons (one joint-stock company and 18 limited liability companies) and 26 so-called incomplete legal persons (one general partnership, three limited partnerships, and 22 civil partnerships). There were 955 natural persons (96%) running a business, some as partners in civil partnerships. The database did not contain any foundations, cooperatives (which would be classified as legal persons), and partnerships (as incomplete legal persons).

In both years, more than 90% of registered businesses in the Lower Silesian voivodeship were businesses carried out by natural persons (some as partners in a civil partnership). This situation reflects a phenomenon that is well known in Poland (Duś 2022; EDORADCA 2020). However, despite the generally understandable reluctance of freelance translators and interpreters towards translation

¹³ In only five cases of civil partnerships, both partners are registered in the REGON database in the same voivodeship as their civil partnership, and with the same PKD code of predominant activity (translation); this situation is not observed in the other 17 cases (out of 22 identified). These partners are probably registered with a different PKD code of predominant activity and/or in a different voivodeship.

companies (see, e.g., Moorkens 2017), an increase in the number of legal persons, especially limited liability companies (from 18 to 37), can be observed in the translation sector, and in our opinion, this should be seen as positive, as legal persons are generally more resilient to market fluctuations than natural persons. It also reflects an increasing concentration of capital in the global market, which is difficult to resist. But this increase may also be an effect of the special economic regulations introduced in Poland in January 2022 under the auspices of the “Polish Deal” (“*Polski Ład*”) programme, which have incited natural persons to set up limited liability companies, as the “Polish Deal” imposed increased social and tax burdens on individual entrepreneurs.

4.1.3. Number of employees

In 2022 (Figure 3), three entities (0.3%) employed 10 to 49 employees (according to the data provided by the entrepreneurs): one limited liability company from Polkowice and two sole proprietors from Strzelin and Legnica¹⁴. The remaining entities (957, i.e. 97.7%) employed 0 to 9 employees¹⁵.

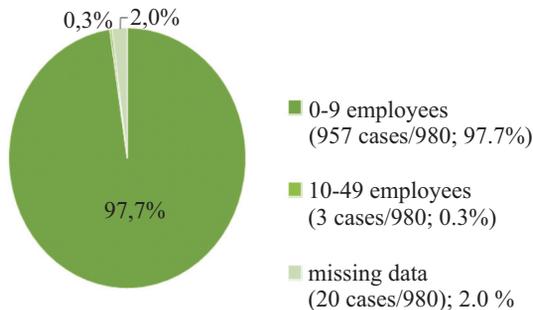


Figure 3. Number of employees (in this chart, percentage results are given with one decimal, as the result without decimal would be an irrelevant 0% for the 10–49 employee category, 98% for the 0–9 employee category, and 2% for the no data category)

In 2017, also three entities (i.e. 0.3%, three sole proprietors in Wrocław, Strzelin, and Legnica, including the mentioned *Europejskie Centrum Obsługi Głuchych Monika Narowska* in Legnica) employed 10 to 49 employees. The remaining entities (990, i.e. 99.0%) employed 0 to 9 employees.

¹⁴ In Legnica, the *Europejskie Centrum Obsługi Głuchych Monika Narowska* (European Centre of Services for the Deaf Monika Narowska), a company specialised in services for deaf people.

¹⁵ No information provided in 20 cases in 2022 and 7 cases in 2017.

For both years, we can thus observe a huge fragmentation of the translation market among translation-service providers and an extremely low percentage of translation companies employing more than nine persons. Given the fact that Polish natural persons can employ an unlimited number of employees, the conclusion is obvious: in Poland, the cost of hiring employees is too high. All translation companies are therefore to be classified as small and medium-sized enterprises. The 2017 and 2022 databases do not include large companies, i.e. companies with more than 49 employees.

4.1.4. Type and form of ownership: domestic and foreign capital

As regards the type and form of ownership, the 2022 REGON database (Figure 4) includes 45 enterprises with foreign capital (i.e. 5%, owned by foreign natural and complete or incomplete legal persons; we also included in this category three entities with mixed, foreign-national capital) and 935 enterprises with domestic capital (i.e. 95%, domestic natural and complete or incomplete legal persons; Polish legislation includes in the category of domestic natural persons Polish citizens who have carried out economic activity abroad previously or in parallel and who use this capital to start a business in Poland)¹⁶. The 42 cases of strictly foreign capital (4.3%) include 32 foreign citizens and ten legal persons (nine limited liability companies established in Wrocław and one in Wałbrzych).

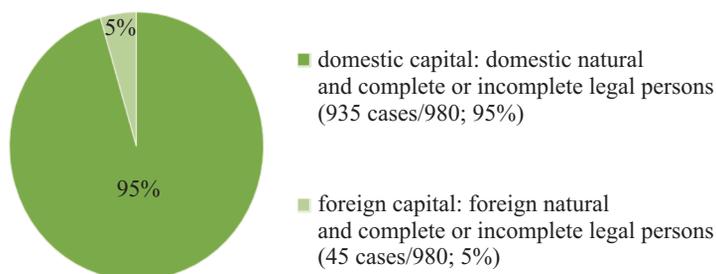


Figure 4. Form of ownership: domestic versus foreign

¹⁶ In the REGON database, the term *form of ownership* (*forma własności*) covers both the form of ownership itself (pure versus mixed; *czysta/mieszana*) and the nature of the ownership (domestic versus foreign; *krajowa/zagraniczna*).

In 2017, only 22 companies (2%) operated with foreign capital (including two cases of mixed capital), and 978 entities (98%) operated with domestic capital. The 20 cases of pure foreign capital were 17 foreign citizens and three legal persons (one joint-stock company and two limited liability companies, all in Wrocław).

For both years, a complete absence of public sector ownership can be observed, even in the form of public-private partnership. Formal branches (*oddziały*) and representative offices (*przedstawicielstwa*) of foreign companies (see section 2.2.2.) are also completely absent. Even though in 2022 there were entities whose names contained the word “Polska” (six entities: four with domestic capital, two with foreign capital) or “Poland” (three entities: one with domestic capital, two with foreign capital), and in 2017, the word “Polska” (six entities: three with domestic capital, three with foreign capital) – “Poland” did not appear in that year. The presence of these words means that all these entities were established on the Polish market as independent and legally registered domestic companies, and not as branches or representative offices of foreign companies.

Considering the number of entities in the analysed REGON database (and not the value of their capital), the predominant form of ownership is domestic ownership (mainly of natural persons); however, it should be noted that the share of foreign natural persons is significant (32 foreigners in 2022). The share of foreigners in this sector has increased since 2017 (17 persons in 2017), probably due to the influx of refugees, mainly from Ukraine after 24 February 2022, but also due to the gradual internationalisation of the Lower Silesian economic area and the intensification of personal mobility that generally favours global migration (Biel/Sosoni 2017: 354).

4.1.5. Location in the Lower Silesian voivodeship

The territorial distribution of the 980 economic entities in the corpus (according to their postal codes) is as follows (Figure 5): 482 entities (49%) are located in Wrocław, and the remaining 498 (51%) outside this city. In 34 localities, only one entity is registered.

In 2017, 523 entities (52%) were based in Wrocław and the remaining 477 (48%) outside this city. Similarly to the present situation, 39 localities had only one registered entity.

For both years, half of the registered translation companies can thus be considered to be located in the region’s capital. Translation companies are also well established in other cities of some importance, such as Legnica, Jelenia Góra, Wałbrzych, Świdnica, Lubin, and Głogów.

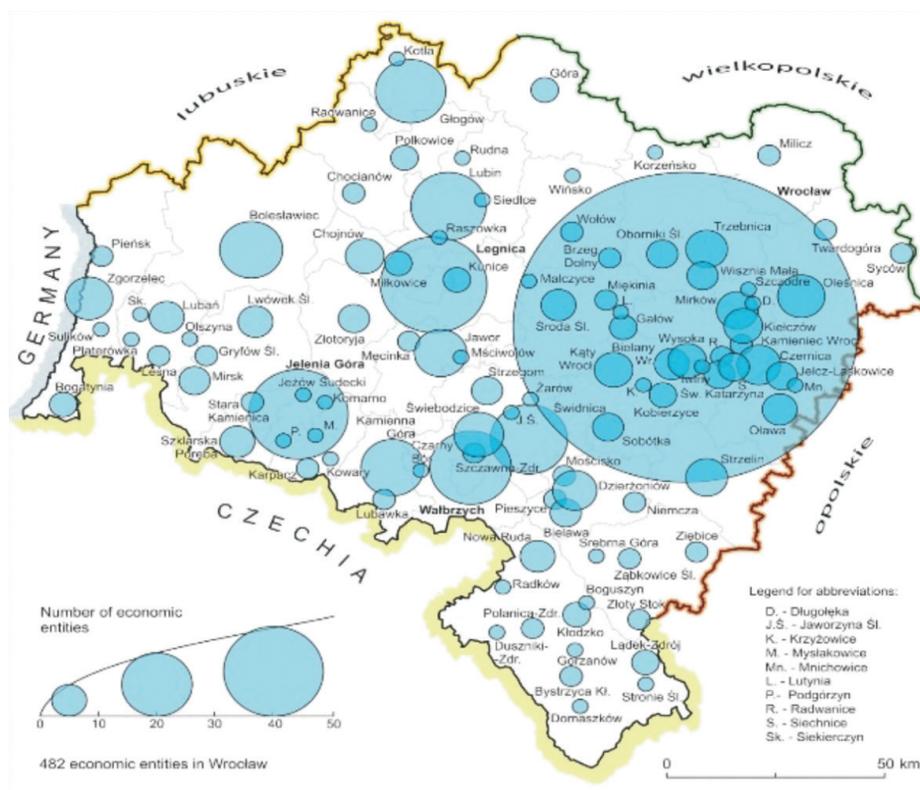


Figure 5. Territorial distribution of economic entities

4.2. Structural patterns of entity names and lexicon used to describe activities

This section presents the results of our analysis of structural patterns of entities names and the lexicon used in their identifying segments to describe economic activities¹⁷.

¹⁷ The differentiating segments of the same proper names are analysed in Kuźnik (under review): they are far more prone to contain metaphors compared to identifying segments, which tend to be expressed in a more literal language.

4.2.1. The three segments of the names and their combinations

In the analysed REGON database, the following combinations of entity name segments have been observed (Figure 6)¹⁸:

- [Name(s)+Surname(s)] alone, 118 cases;
- [Name(s)+Surname(s)] + [Identification1], 346 cases;
- [Name(s)+Surname(s)] + [Differentiation], 338 cases;
- [Name(s)+Surname(s)] + [Identification1] + [Differentiation], 137 cases;
- [Identification1] + [Differentiation], 4 cases;
- [Differentiation] alone, 37 cases.

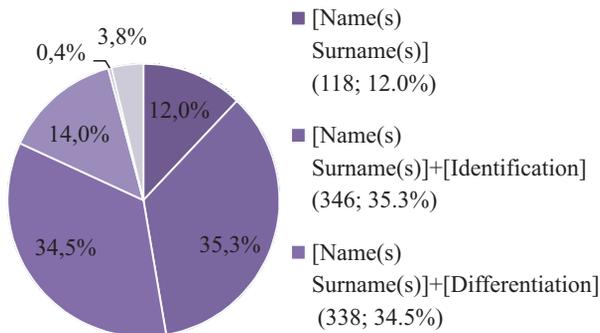


Figure 6. Entity name structure

The order of the segments in the names is quite free, but the order of the segments [Identification] + [Differentiation] seems to be rather constant (e.g. *ZESPÓŁ TLUMACZEŃ TECHNICZNYCH "EMA"*).

In 72 names (0.7%), the first segment identifying the entity's activity [Identification1] is supplemented by a second [Identification2], and even, in 9 cases (0.09%), by a third segment [Identification3]. The combinatorial system presented above must therefore be completed by taking these cases into account (the database does not contain any other combinations):

- [Name(s)+Surname(s)] + [Identification1] + [Identification2];
- [Name(s)+Surname(s)] + [Identification1] + [Identification2] + [Identification3];
- [Name(s)+Surname(s)] + [Identification1] + [Differentiation];
- [Name(s)+Surname(s)] + [Identification1] + [Identification2] + [Differentiation];
- [Name(s)+Surname(s)] + [Identification1] + [Identification2] + [Identification3] + [Differentiation].

¹⁸ The segment [Identification] is never used alone: we found no name which, for example, would be limited to the phrase **BIURO TLUMACZEŃ*.

4.2.2. Lexicon used to designate activities

Table 2 shows the lexicon used to designate activities carried on by enterprises as stated in their names. Two main groups may be observed:

- (1) lexicon used for [Identification] or [Identification1] covers translational activities (upper row in Table 2), which is the most desirable situation in line with the PKD code 74.30.Z (predominant activity: “Translation-related activities”);
- (2) lexicon used for [Identification] or [Identification1] covers other activities than translational activities (lower row in Table 2), e.g. foreign language training, IT, technical or tourist services, advertising, publishing, legal and tax consulting.

In the second group, two subgroups have been identified:

- (2a) The only activity mentioned in [Identification] is different from translational activities (activities without * in the lower row of Table 2). These enterprises should not be taken into account in our future study (Kuźnik forthcoming) as their translational profile is not clear.
- (2b) The activity mentioned in the identification segment [Identification1] is followed by a designation of translational activity in [Identification2] (activities with * in the lower row of Table 2, column [Identification] or [Identification1]). The inclusion of these enterprises in our future study (Kuźnik forthcoming) is debatable, as translation is not necessarily seen by these entrepreneurs as their core business.

It should be stressed, however, that the decision of designating translation activity in the second place of the name (and not in the first place) may be an effect of prosody requirements, i.e. an entrepreneur’s prosodic strategy in order to obtain a name which “sounds good” (see, e.g., Smith 2017: 112–113; cf. Ułańska 2009). Probably for the same reason, names designating three different activities tend to be concise, e.g. *Danuta Alchimowicz Tłumaczenia – Edukacja – Publikacja*.

Translational activities mentioned in [Identification], [Identification1], and [Identification2] may be ordered in a sort of lexical continuum from the most general words (hypernyms including synonyms of *enterprise* or *linguistic services*, i.e. hypernyms of translation-related economic activity as indicated by the PKD code “74.30.Z”) to the most particular (hyponyms including types of translation or translator, even sight translation). Translational activities are never designated in [Identification3] (third column of Table 2). Logically, when hypernyms are mentioned in the [Identification] segment, the entrepreneurs do not seem to need to complement this segment with additional activities [Identification2] because hypernyms implicitly refer to translation and all translation-related activities.

Table 2. Lexicon used to designate activities

[Identification1]	[Identification2]	[Identification3]
<p>TRANSLATIONAL ACTIVITIES</p> <p>Hyponyms</p> <p><i>firma, firma usługowa, biuro handlowe, wielobranżowa spółdzielnia, przedsiębiorstwo wielobranżowe, przedsiębiorstwo handlowo-usługowe, firma usługowo-handlowa, usługi, usługi biurowe, usługi językowe, usługi lingwistyczne, usługi językoznawcze, centrum językowe, centrum rosyjskie</i></p> <p>Translation itself</p> <p><i>tłumaczenie, tłumaczenia, tłumacz, tłumacze</i></p> <p>Hyponyms</p> <p><i>tłumaczenia usne i pisemne, tłumaczenia specjalistyczne, tłumaczenia techniczne, tłumaczenia ekonomiczne, tłumaczenia biznesowe, tłumaczenia medyczne, tłumacz przysięgły, tłumacz sądowy, tłumacz języka migowego</i></p>	<p>TRANSLATIONAL ACTIVITIES</p> <p>Hyponyms</p> <p><i>przedsiębiorstwo wielobranżowe, usługi, usługi biurowe, usługi językowe, usługi lingwistyczne</i></p> <p>Translation itself</p> <p><i>tłumaczenie, tłumaczenia, tłumacz, tłumacze</i></p> <p>Hyponyms</p> <p><i>tłumacz przysięgły, tłumaczenia techniczne, lokalizacja</i></p>	<p>[...]</p>
<p>NOT TRANSLATIONAL ACTIVITIES</p> <p><i>– nauczanie (lektorat, lektor*, szkoła, centrum szkoleniowe, ośrodek nauczania, ośrodek szkoleniowy, centrum nauki, nauka*, korepetycje*, kursy*, centrum treningowo-*) języków obcych (języka niemieckiego etc.);</i></p> <p><i>– biuro techniczne;</i></p> <p><i>– usługi informacyjne;</i></p> <p><i>– wydawnictwo;</i></p> <p><i>– usługi biurowe*, obsługa sekretarska*;</i></p> <p><i>– usługi reklamowe*;</i></p> <p><i>– biuro prawno-podatkowe, biuro prawne*, kancelarie prawne*;</i></p> <p><i>– doradztwo*;</i></p> <p><i>– biuro turystyczne.</i></p>	<p>NOT TRANSLATIONAL ACTIVITIES</p> <p><i>– nauka (lekcje, lektor) języka*, korepetycje, szkoła języków obcych, edukacja*, szkolenia (kursy) językowe, szkoła języka, biuro kształcenia;</i></p> <p><i>– biuro oprogramowania;</i></p> <p><i>– doradztwo (techniczne), konsultacje językowe;</i></p> <p><i>– wydawnictwo, edycja, korekty*;</i></p> <p><i>– usługi turystyczne, przewodnik górski-sudecki, przewodnik wycieczek;</i></p> <p><i>– archeologia*;</i></p> <p><i>– management kultury;</i></p> <p><i>– nieruchomości;</i></p> <p><i>– obsługa biznesowa; marketing*, świadczenie usług biznesowych;</i></p> <p><i>– logopeda specjalista neurologopeda.</i></p>	<p>NOT TRANSLATIONAL ACTIVITIES</p> <p><i>– korepetycje, usługi edukacyjne;</i></p> <p><i>– publikacja;</i></p> <p><i>– handel;</i></p> <p><i>– doradztwo;</i></p> <p><i>– usługi turystyczne, usługi przewodnickie;</i></p> <p><i>– konserwacja zabytków.</i></p>

* cases with subsequent activity: [Identification2], or even [Identification3]

Our last observation in the analytical part concerns the use of *przekład*, i.e. the competing word (term) with relation to *tłumaczenie* in the Polish language (Kuźnik 2018b; 2021: 93–94). In the REGON database, the word *przekład* is used only three times and only in differentiation segments of names chosen by natural person entrepreneurs (*PRZEKŁADNIA MARTA MIATKOWSKA*, *BOŻENA MACIEJEWSKA BIURO TŁUMACZEŃ PRZEKŁAD*, *Dobry Przekład Bogusław Solecki*). Most probably, this lexeme is not considered as appropriate to designate the service activity of translation in the Polish context.

4.3. Identification of the *strong players* in translation business in Lower Silesia

As an exploratory result of this descriptive economic analysis, we have been able to identify the largest and strongest translation enterprises in the Lower Silesia region, which will be used to carry out a more extensive study on translation definition and classification in the near future (Kuźnik forthcoming). Our preference, thus, would be focused on contacting and analysing:

- 35 limited liability companies: 10 companies with foreign or mixed ownership, 25 strictly Polish companies;
- one cooperative, as an atypical case of legal form (*DZIERŻONIOWSKA WIELOBRANŻOWA SPÓŁDZIELNIA SOCJALNA “AWANS”*);
- three companies employing between 10 and 49 employees (in Polkowice, Legnica, and Strzelin);
- entities located within the city of Wrocław (482 entities; 49%), which will be selected on the basis of additional criteria;
- entities that mention translation activities in the first (or unique) identification segment of their names (in [Identification] or [Identification1]).

5. Concluding remarks: research goals achieved, limitations of the study, research perspectives for the future

In this study, we have described translation service providers acting in the Lower Silesia region from an economic and translational viewpoint; we have identified the largest and strongest translation service providers in this region, and the most centred on translation, as their core business; and we have demonstrated the usefulness

of the GUS database, which registers the REGON numbers of economic entities, for studies on translation definition and classification.

As for the third goal – the methodological one – we were able to work with “clean”, systematised data, similar to bibliographical databases, and we had no problems – encountered by other researchers (Gałkowski 2011: 189; Jaros 2015: 303) – in establishing the exact form of the proper names analysed (i.e. their extent: where they start and where they end). However, this database did not allow us to establish whether some companies use two names, and what form their abbreviated name may then take – a phenomenon Jaros (2015: 317) observed in the naming of vineyards.

Another conceptual and methodological limitation of this study is that we did not know the motivations behind the choice of company names. These motivations could have been ascertained in possible interviews with the entrepreneurs. But the reasons for these linguistic choices, just like those of the language users, may be conscious or unconscious (Rygg 2021). In this respect, Ułańska (2009: 101) points out that “only the creator of the name or the owner of the company (who is not always the same person) knows what the acronym stands for [in the company name]. The recipient can just speculate”¹⁹. We believe that names of translation service providers are the result of a deliberate decision, and not casual (Świtała-Cheda 2013: 172–173, footnote 7), and that these names are an important issue that should be discussed with translation students during their entrepreneurship training.

What is missing in this study is also an analysis of the visual component of the enterprises’ names, i.e. enterprises’ logotypes, as postulated by semiotically-oriented researchers (Smith 2017: 112–113), and an analysis of possible links between the proper name of a translation enterprise and proper names of their translation products, i.e. the research perspective suggested by Vecchi (2002; 2020). These are examples of research orientations, derived from this study, to be conducted in the future.

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¹⁹ In the original: “Tylko twórca nazwy lub właściciel firmy (nie zawsze to jest ta sama osoba) wie, co dany skrótowiec [w nazwie firmy] oznacza. Odbiorcy pozostają jedynie domysły” (Ułańska 2009: 101; trans. A.K.).

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