



ADP - SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA ARCHIVES

Analyze data! Deposit study! Promote science!

Translating ELSST into Slovenian: Challenges in Supporting Open Science and FAIR Principles



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Slovenian Social Science Data Archives

(ADP-Arhiv družboslovnih podatkov)



- Founded in 1997
- Slovenian **national data repository** for social sciences
- **Member of CESSDA** ERIC since 2017
- Status of a **trusted repository** (CoreTrustSeal since 2018)
- involved in EU and national projects



ELSST - European Language Social Science Thesaurus

... is a broad-based, multilingual thesaurus for the social sciences.

It's maintained by CESSDA (Consortium of European Social Science Data Archives) & used to support the indexing and retrieval of data in a standardized, multilingual way.

In short, **ELSST is not just about translation – it's about conceptual alignment across languages and cultures.**

<https://thesauri.cessda.eu/en/>



CESSDA Training Team (2017 - 2022). CESSDA Data Management Expert Guide. Bergen, Norway: CESSDA ERIC. Retrieved from <https://dmeg.cessda.eu/>

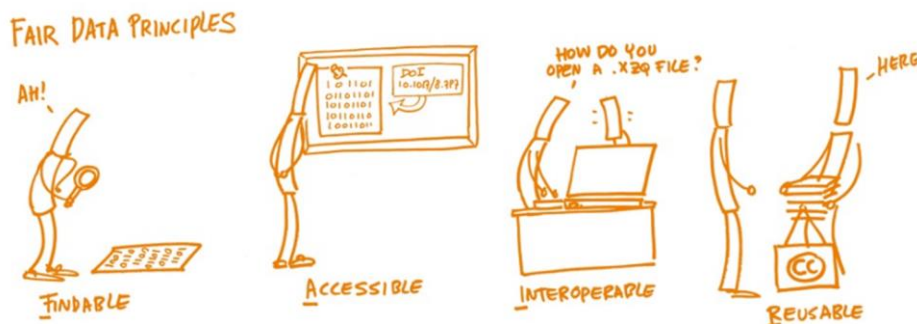
Translating ELSST into Slovenian is not an option

Enabling access to data in one's native language is key to participation in global research.

Translating ELSST into Slovenian contributes to:

- More effective searching in national and international data catalogues;
- Better indexing of Slovenian data collections;
- And stronger interoperability with other European archives.

This is essential for meeting the **FAIR principles**, particularly **Findability**, **Accessibility**, and **Interoperability**.



Supporting Open Science

By making ELSST available in Slovenian, we:

- Support **inclusive access** to social science data.
- Enable **students and early-career researchers** to work in their native language.
- Promote **equity** in research participation across linguistic borders.
- And actively contribute to the European research infrastructure.

FAIR connection – Accessible & Reusable:

Multilingual vocabularies support **inclusive access** to data, especially for early-career researchers and students.

Local-language indexing improves the chance that datasets will be discovered, understood, and reused by diverse user groups.

For metadata to remain reusable over time, it must reflect current language and knowledge. Static translations risk becoming obsolete or misleading, which undermines data reusability in evolving research contexts.

Linguistic challenges of Slovenian

Slovenian is morphologically rich.

It has:

- Six grammatical cases,
- Three grammatical numbers (singular, plural, and dual),
- And frequent compound noun structures.

This makes translation tricky.

For instance:

- Should a term be translated in singular or plural?
- Is a direct translation possible, or does it require semantic adaptation?
- How do we ensure consistency across related concepts?

FAIR principles in practice – easy part

To give you a quick example:

A Slovenian researcher might search for “brezposelnost” (unemployment) in a national data catalogue.

In ELSST, this term is mapped to its **English equivalent** and other language variants, enabling cross-lingual discovery in CESSDA’s wider infrastructure.

ELSST is a bridge that connects researchers across languages and systems.

Translation Difficulties

E.g. **Social exclusion**

- **The meaning is not universal:** In different national or disciplinary contexts, "social exclusion" can refer to: poverty and economic exclusion, but also marginalisation due to ethnicity, disability, gender, or other factors.
- **The Slovenian equivalent is not commonly used:** While the direct translation ("socialna izključenost") is accurate and used in EU policy language, it is not widely established in everyday Slovenian academic or policy discourse. Alternative translations exist: "Družbena izključenost" (closer to the literal translation, but less common), "Marginalizacija" (more familiar in some contexts, but conceptually narrower or different).
- Translation dilemma: The translator must choose between **terminological consistency with EU and international frameworks**, and **semantic clarity for local users and researchers**.

It is not just about language – it's about meaning, cultural nuance, and conceptual clarity.

FAIR connection – Interoperable:

The lack of direct equivalence between Slovenian and English terms can hinder the alignment of metadata across systems. To ensure **semantic interoperability**, we must adapt—not just translate—terms to retain their conceptual intent.

FAIR connection – Reusable:

If a term is incorrectly or inconsistently translated, future researchers might misunderstand the metadata, reducing the reusability of datasets indexed with these terms.

Our process at ADP

To tackle these challenges, we:

- Work in close collaboration with linguists and subject experts;
- Use review loops: translations are discussed, tested in context, and revised;
- Document translation choices and maintain a versioned log.

Translation is never “done” – it’s a living process that adapts as language and society evolve.

FAIR connection – Reusable & Interoperable:

Our documentation of translation decisions improves **transparency**, allowing future translators, archivists, and systems to reuse our work confidently.

Consistent and well-documented terminology enables **machine-actionable metadata** and better system integration.

Final thoughts

Without conceptually sound and culturally aware translations, even the best data infrastructure can fall short of FAIR goals.

Translating ELSST into Slovenian is therefore not only a linguistic task, but a foundational contribution to making social science data truly FAIR: findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable.

IF YOU HAVE ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS...



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