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# ASPECTS OF CREATING A ROMANIAN-ENGLISH TERM BASE

**Abstract.** As translators live in a globalized world, they have to follow the latest developments in the field of language industry, which is part of the technology's revolution. This means that they have to understand the importance of creating term bases and translation memories for various computer-assisted translation software, such as *SDL Trados* or *memoQ*. Our project focuses on enlisting all the available Romanian-English and English-Romanian printed dictionaries in order to select the core terminology for legal terms and creating a database compatible for the above mentioned software. We will also cover the problems found in these dictionaries and aspects of quality assurance.

**Keywords**: term base, Romanian, English, legal terms, dictionaries.

## Introduction

We live in a globalized world, which has overall effects upon the entire planet. The technical revolution, especially in the field of IT has had major impacts upon various fields, including translation as well. We would like to mention only two major consequences detailed below:

a. We can witness the ®evolution of technology with countless gadgets interconnected, which affects the field of translation as well;

b. Due to globalization, we tend to think „big"; this means that before this ®evolution, we only had translations, now we have *translation projects*, and we can even talk about a *translation industry* with an extremely large size worldwide [1; 2].

The language industry, following the latest trends in technology has had considerable developments; many improvements have been made since the infamous ALPAC report [3], getting to a point where machine translation (MT) is expected to take over human translators. Although this is not a realistic fear [4, p. 149; 5, p. 3; 6, p. 80], it is clear that MT is improving. The appearance of *terminology bases* (TB) and *translation memories* (TM), resulted in the development of *computer-assisted translation* (CAT) or *translation environments* (TE), which can handle full translation projects, including MT, TB and TM. At present, there are various CAT-tools, offering possibilities to enhance translation productivity: professional translators can offer larger quantity translations during a shorter period of time, and with high quality assurance. Although this may sound as a commercial for CAT-tools, let us take a look how this is possible.



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**Creating a term base (TB)**

The quality of a translator is partially given by the quality of tools he/she uses. Some tools may be purchased, such as CAT-tools, but other tools are the result of an extremely strenuous activity over a considerable period of time. A professional transla tor – from the first translation job – struggles to create a particular collection of specialized terms for the particular field he/she is involved, knowing that this collection of terms may be re-used later, during another translation activity (project). These collections are called *term bases*, and the simplest way to create them is to type the terms in a *Microsoft Excel* file, using at least two columns: the source language and the target language column, with proper headings (the international language code for the particular language, in our case *RO* for Romanian and *EN* for English).

The real gain of having a specialized term base is that it may contain as many terms as we consider important to include, together with synonyms, with one major notice: all the possible translations of one term should be listed in separate rows, not with commas:

| | |
|---|---|
| *judecător* | *arbiter* |
| *judecător* | *arbitrator* |
| *judecător* | *assessor* |
| *judecător* | *judge* |
| *judecător* | *magistrate* |
| *judecător* | *referee* |
| *judecător* | *trier* |
| *judecător asesor* | *associate judge* |
| *judecător itinerant* | *circuit judge* |
| *judecător recuzat* | *challenged judge* |
| *judecător de pace* | *justice of peace* |

**Table 1. Term „judecător" in Lozinschi 2008 and Hanga & Calciu 2009**

The gains of creating a term base are manifold; first, whenever we are involved in a new translation project containing the same term, all the previous translations of the same term will come up, offering the possibility to reuse, correct, delete them, or even extend them with further translations (*judecător natural – lawful judge*). Furthermore, the translator knows that the TB is good quality, reliable, having been created by himself/herself. But more than that, a TB may be shared with colleagues (import – export of TBs), which means that TBs may be downloaded and used, if we trust the source. In fact, terms in online dictionaries are one step away from a viable TB.

Our project (POSDRU/159/1.5/S/133652, http://www.postdoc.commscie.uaic.ro/) aims at creating a TB with legal terms in Romanian and English, due to the fact that there



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is no knowledge of an extensive, good quality database of this kind (www.proz.com), except for law dictionaries in Romanian-English, English-Romanian, with complaints regarding their quality.

A quality TB should fulfil certain requirements; one of them is to contain only terms belonging to a certain field (if there are too many non-specific terms alongside with the relevant ones, the search and selection process takes extended time); only good quality translations should be included from reliable sources [not ad hoc *paraphrases, literal borrowings* or *discursive creations*, cf. 7, p. 505]. At present, we have been gathering terms from more than a dozen of available law dictionaries printed in Romania in the last fifteen years (as of 2014); a list of these dictionaries is available in the Appendix.

While collecting the terms, we have come upon many errors in the dictionaries, some of them minor ones (usually connected to typographical mistakes), but major ones as well: wrong alphabetical order (after all, we are talking about dictionaries!), entries not belonging to the field of legal terms, misplaced sub-entries, non-standard use of symbols and abbreviations, or partially translated entries, when the translation preserved a word from the source text [8]. Consequently, the need for a revised and unified legal term base is beyond any doubt, having in mind that in the European Union there is a growing interest in the legal system of the member states when drawing up or applying laws, orders, rules, regulations, conventions or treaties.

After the term base is finalized (and rearranged into a strict alphabetical order), it can be used as a *Microsoft Excel* file (*.xlsx* format), but it may be converted into *LibreOffice Calc* file (*.ods* format), or into a searchable portable document file (*pdf* format). However, to make it more compatible with various CAT-tools, it may be converted into a *.csv* or *Multiterm XML* format file, which can be easily exported to *SDL Trados, memoQ, Wordfast Pro, MetaTexis, MemSource,* or *Global Sight*[1].

At this point, it is important to offer a short description of CAT-tools or translation environments.

**CAT-tools (*memoQ*)**

The appearance of machine translation tools caused a certain anxiety among translators, who – for a long period of time – were the authoritative „bridges" among cultures and languages, focusing mainly on literary translations. However, since the advent of technical revolution, affecting the translation industry as well, a new type of translator has emerged, having certain skills, among which we can mention language, thematic and translation skills, as „the days of paper and pencil are over" [1, p. 109]. The stereotypically philological profile of a translator has faded to a certain extent, focusing more on his/her technical skills, being competitive in handling computers, multi-

[1] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer-assisted_translation#Some_notable_CAT_tools, 29. 10. 2014.



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media and software. This includes a proper use of translation environments, as in our globalized McWorld and McLanguage [9, p. 132-133] the market for them in on the increase [10; 11].

Basically, all professional translation environments should contain certain features:

1. the possibility to create a translation project, which can be modified later;
2. the possibility to translate more documents within the same project (e.g. chapters of a book);
3. the possibility to create, enable/disable, import and export term bases;
4. the possibility to create, enable/disable, import and export translation memories;
5. the possibility to add, enable, disable machine translation tools during the project;
6. the possibility to save and export partial/full translation project compatible with other tools;

Due to a university agreement between Kilgray Translation Technologies (http://kilgray.com/), we were able to use their feature product, *memoQ*, which is a constantly growing integrated translation environment. This software has all the features listed above, contributing directly to quality assurance. The term base management of *memoQ* is excellent, as it is compatible with *.xlsx, .csv* or *Multiterm XML* format files, thus we can test our term base in various ways.

We have created a term base in *.xlsx* format, including all the translations of *închisoare* (prison) found in the dictionaries (see Appendix). The list contains thirteen possible translations in alphabetical order: *city jail, confinement, county jail, detention, gaol, imprisonment, jug, limbo, penitenciary, penitentiary, prison* and *quod*. Then we created a project in *memoQ*, and a sentence from the Romanian Penal Code was inserted containing the term *închisoare*. Figure 1 shows that there were no translations found for the term (last column) using the activated machine translation tools (seven MT tools were activated, including *Google Translate*):

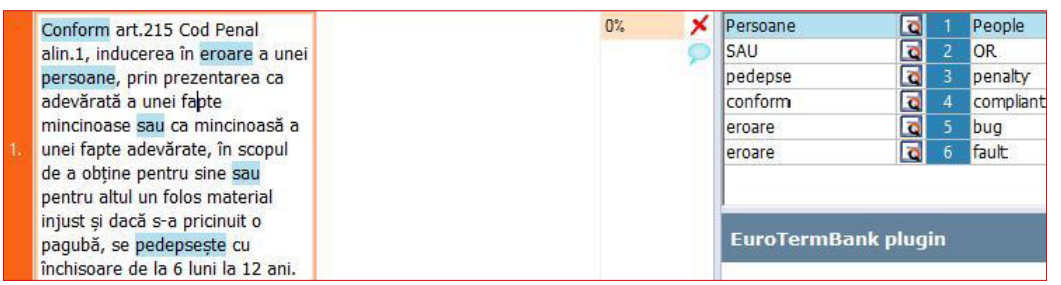



**Figure 1. No hits for închisoare without a TB**



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However, when the term base was added to the project, all thirteen possibilities were shown, leaving the translator to decide upon the best, based on the context:

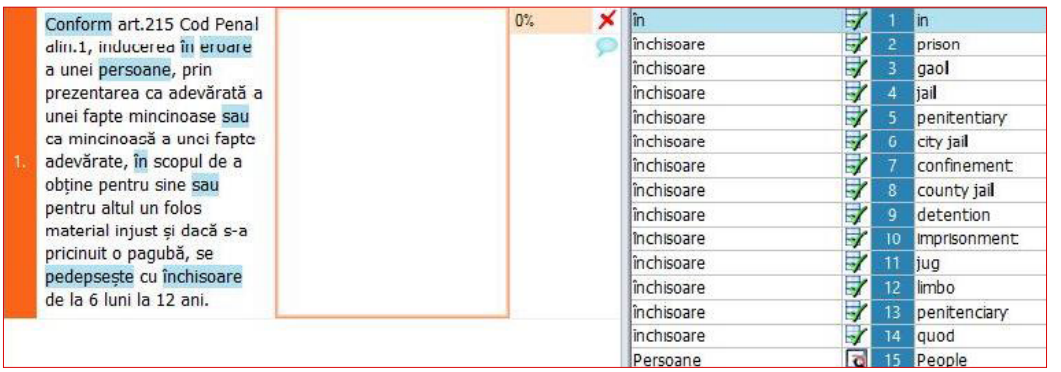



**Figure 2. Term base activated**

At this point, we can say that we have an effective TB for one particular term. We hope that towards the end of our project we will have a large database containing the most important (and frequent) legal terms, thus enhancing productivity. As our aim is to argue for the benefic aspects of TBs, we only mention that translation memories are also very effective under certain conditions, as they memorize all the sentence pairs (called segments) during translation. In the case of legal texts, the gain may be between 10-70%, depending on the repetitiveness of the text compared to a previous one. What we should also consider, is the quality assurance (QA), as whenever we have a term that was previously translated, the software signals it, and we can always use the same translation. For example, the Romanian *judecător* will always be translated as *judge*, and not *magistrate* or *referee* in a similar context.

**Conclusions**

The market for literary translations is ever smaller, which means that professional translators, who would like to remain competitive, should „consider the target reader" [10, p 30], although Dimitriu [12, p. 24] is more balanced: „Nowadays many contemporary trends in Translation Studies seem to swing the balance in the Target direction without however losing sight of the Source". Although McKay [11, p. 22] analyses the US segment alone, the statistics are discouraging: „Americans don't tend to read literature in translation, so there is a small market for the work of literary translators; in 2004, only 891 of the 195,000 new books printed in English were adult literature in translation". This is less than 0.004% of all published books in the USA. Consequently, translators have to adapt to needs of specialized translations, including various fields, such as politics, environmental issues, economics, IT, law, medicine, as well as the expanding



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media and audio-visual (entertainment) industry: subtitles, dubbing, news, videogames, surtitles, voice-overs, scanlation, or localisation. This means that translators need to handle specialized term bases, translation memories, and translation environments in a very effective way, combining the skills of a language expert and a computer-literate (IT) specialist.

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