

EU Translation, Terminology and Quality Assurance

Barcelona 20 November 2008

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Disposition

- What is EU translation?
- What is drafting quality?
- What is quality assurance?
- Does formal competence in terminological methodology has any role to play?

An historical perspective...

- ECSC → EEC → EC → EU
- From coal and steel legislation to recipes
- From 4 languages to 23, 6 countries to 27
- Different actors: Commission, Council, Parliament, Court of Auditors, Court of Justice, Committees, Agencies, etc.

EU translation services



The role of the European Commission

- The legislative process normally starts in the Commission. Exclusive right of initiative.
- Green Papers, White Papers, Communications, reports which may eventually give rise to concrete proposals for legislation
- Implementation and monitoring (the Guardian of the Treaty)
- Information about EU policies
Lots of publications: reports, leaflets, brochures, the Web

Texts of the European Commission

- Always LSP texts
- Often legal texts (ca 60% legal acts)
- Almost always law + another LSP domain
- Often image aspects at stake

Transparency and openness

- Transparency on the agenda ever since 1992
- Different aspects:
 - Quality of the legislation (drafting quality, simplification, better lawmaking, codification/consolidation/recast)
 - Accessibility of the legislation (intellectually, i.e. the drafting quality; physically via EUR-Lex, EU OJ; indirectly via Regulation 1049/2001, ...)
 - Information policy in general

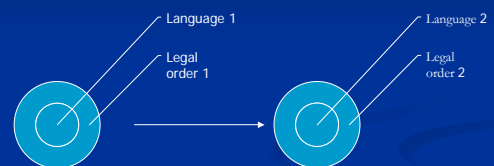
EC Communication Strategy

- It is based on three strategic principles :
- Listening to citizens: taking their views and concerns into account
 - Communicating how our policies affect their everyday lives
 - Connecting with citizens by 'going local': addressing people in their national or local settings, using their favourite form of media.

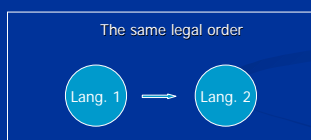
And the translations...

- For 22 languages of 23 translations constitute the interface between EU and the citizens. The entire EU project is communicated through translations.
- All 23 official languages have the same status → all language versions are original → the texts have to « work » as originals → text type conventions
- Objective : to depart as little as possible from the corresponding text types produced as originals in the official language concerned

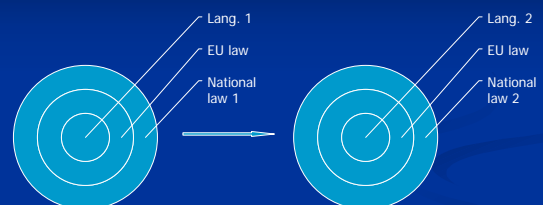
Legal translation (1)



Legal translation (2) Legislative translation in Finland



Legal translation (3) EU



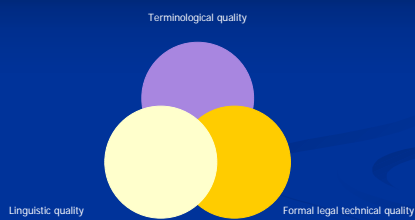
EU legislation

- All official languages have the same status
- EU law is an integrated part of the national law
- EU law is applicable law in the member states
- EU law has to work as national legislation so that the addressees understand their rights and obligations
- → Same requirements as for national legislation as regards the drafting quality

Drafting quality : different aspects

- Formal legal quality: 1) Legal order of its own, own text type conventions 2) Legal equivalence = same legal effect in all languages
- Terminological quality – use existing national terminology when possible and create new EU terminology when needed
- Linguistic quality – compliance with target language drafting conventions as far as possible despite the imposed translation format

What is drafting quality?



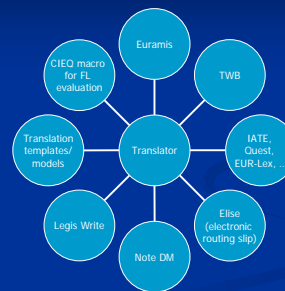
What is quality assurance?

- The product: both the original and the translation
- The process: the whole text production cycle
 - Before translation
 - During translation
 - After translation

The actors involved



Tools

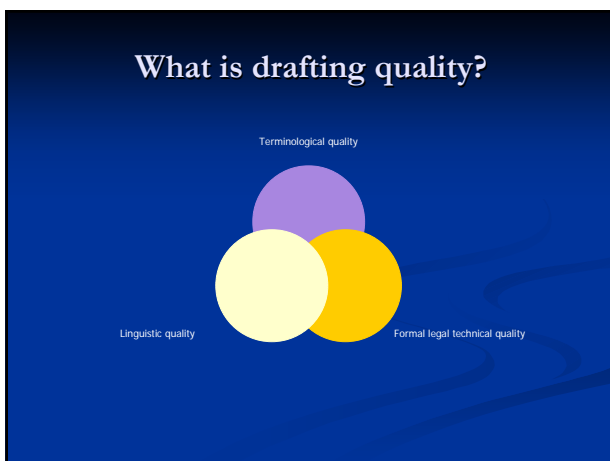




- ## Quality problems
- Lack of time / Time constraints
 - Quality problems in originals
 - Quality problems in translations
 - Imperfect communication

- ## Quality problems in the originals
- Linguistic, legal technical and terminological levels
 - The authors do not draft in their mother tongue
 - They are often subject field experts but not lawyers
 - Not much training in legislative drafting
 - Hardly ever training in terminological methods
 - Insufficient awareness of text type conventions

- ## Quality problems in the translations
- At linguistic, terminological and legal-technical level
 - Non-compliance with instructions and style guides
 - Insufficient translation skills (interferences)
 - Insufficient awareness of text type conventions
 - Insufficient familiarity with terminological methodology



- ## Lack of awareness of terminological working methods (1)
- "Underterminologisation"
 - E.g. unwanted synonyms
 - "Overterminologisation"
 - Terminologisation of the standard language, suppressing acceptable synonyms

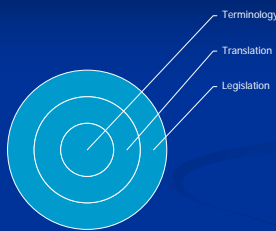
Lack of awareness of terminological working methods (2)

- How to you do analyse a concept? Important to avoid "unnecessary" EU terminology
 - Often "normal" LSP communication in an EU legal wrapping
- Terminological status vs. terminological quality
 - The "once wrong, always right" syndrome

The importance of the terminology

- Good legislative quality and LSP communication presuppose good terminological quality
- Good terminological quality means use of existing national terminology when possible and creation of new EU terminology when needed
- Terminology is an integrated part of all EU translation, of the daily work of each EU translator
- The terminological work has to be documented to avoid inconsistencies and reinventing the wheel

Quality of EU legislation



Conclusions

Translation of EU legislation

- EU law text type of its own, but...
- Style guides exist, but...
- Legislative quality requires terminological quality
- Often "normal" LSP communication in an EU legal wrapping
- Formal training improves awareness
- The complexity requires knowledge-sharing

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Terminology work in the European Commission

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Four main databases

- **DGTVista:**
 - translated documents, comprehensive (not available outside the EU institutions)
- **Euramis:**
 - translated documents in segment form, not comprehensive (information available as a pre-processed document)
- **EUR-Lex:**
 - published legislation
- **IATE:**
 - Interactive Terminology for Europe (available to freelancers with a password, open to the public by December 2006)

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Before IATE

- Most translation departments had their own terminology databases. The “big three” (Eurodicautom, TIS and Euterpe) were available online.

Disadvantages

No “one-stop” access to the most recent data of all institutions
Limited cooperation between institutions and agencies
Not interactive

↓

Duplication of effort.
Generation and development of terminology collections was slow.

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The IATE project

IATE = “Interactive Terminology for Europe”

Objective: Creation of an interactive terminology database for the consultation, storage and joint management of terminological data

Partners: European Commission
European Council
European Parliament

with: Court of Justice, Court of Auditors, European Economic and Social Committee, Committee of the Regions, European Investment Bank, European Central Bank, Translation Centre

Development work started in **January 2000**.

IATE became operational in **August 2004** and opened up to EU translators.

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The IATE project

- Consolidating the terminology collections of all EU institutions
- Consultation through a range of interfaces tailored to the needs of specific user groups (administrators, translators, terminologists, general public)

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Introduction of a Term

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Reliability

1	Not verified	Automatically given by the system to terms entered by non-native speakers.
2	Minimum	Automatically given by the system to terms entered by native speakers.
3	Reliable	Never automatic. Assigned by a terminologist on the basis of a relevant source, agreement among terminologists or common designation in its field.
4	High	Never automatic. Assigned by a terminologist because the term is well-established and widely accepted by experts or from an authoritative source.

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Terminology work in the DG for Translation

- ➔ **Work on terminology content within language departments**
Translators and departmental terminologists
 - Research, contacts with national experts
 - Entry, validation and consolidation of IATE entries
 - Language-related interinstitutional cooperation
- ➔ **“Terminology Tribunal”**
Forum of the 20 departmental terminologists
 - Identification of the requirements of the translation departments
 - Discussion of problem cases
- ➔ **Overall coordination**
“Terminology coordination” team
 - Involvement in the technical development of IATE
 - Responsibility for cross-language aspects of the database
 - Contacts with terminology departments and organisations
 - Secretariat of the “Terminology Tribunal”

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Situation today

- **Already achieved ...**
 - All existing data collections were imported into the shared database without any significant data loss
 - 1.4 million concepts
 - 7.1 million terms
 - 0.5 million abbreviations
- **Consolidation**
 - Relatively large number of duplicate entries (identical subject area, identical terms)
 - Insufficient quality of entries (definitions missing)
 - Inconsistent use of certain fields

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Terms in IATE (by language)

Language	Number of Terms
BG	21422
CS	815689
DA	1083435
DE	1482450
EL	22798
EN	6331100
ES	328669
ET	71109
FI	33332
FR	716591
HU	34461
IT	20339
LA	21104
LT	710736
LV	23415
NL	541000
PL	2211
PT	17502
RO	48484
SK	311545
SL	47295
SV	47295
CY	0

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Going public

- **Access for external users**
 - Current situation: it is now publicly available
 - Free of charge
 - No password
 - No “correction mechanism” but feedback is welcome
 - Use the button “feedback” or “comments” in the term post

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If you have any further questions

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