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## **Terminology and the Internet in the Context of Slovak Translation: How to Avoid Traps**

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### **Abstract**

The article presents terminology search and verification methods in the modern translator's work and identifies the caveats of using the internet as a source of information with regard to the absence of any revision by experts and its impact on the target language culture. Internet sources of terminology are further categorised into groups and discussed from the point view of their reliability and technical skills requirements. The author presents basic commands for using search engines as a practical tool for the translators and explains their usage and subsequently shows how Daniel Gile's Sequential Model of translation can be applied to verify terminology.

**Keywords:** translation; terminology search; information sources; internet; technical skills; term verification; sequential model of translation.

### **Introduction**

Every translator has to be able to find and verify terminology, consider the reliability of the sources they use as well as consult any unclear terms [3]. The process of creation of traditional paper dictionaries falls behind the development in the individual areas of human activity which inevitably results in the need to name the new phenomena, concepts or objects. Therefore, the most used terminology source today is, quite understandably, the internet. On one hand, from the translator's point of view, the internet is basically a vast information database devoid of geographical obstacles, accessible from anywhere and anytime. On the other hand, anyone can contribute to this galaxy of information, creating traps in the form of unverified information or even bona fide made up content often presented as facts. The internet challenges the translator's critical thinking in a completely new way. Uncodified terminology sources are not reviewed by the experts and may contain wrong information. It is rather easy for the translator to find some information, but the responsibility for verification of its correctness is on his shoulders. The aim of this article is to present methods of searching and verification of terms in the context of scientific and technical translation using the internet.

### **1 Briefly on English loanwords in the Slovak language**

Globalisation and the fact that the English language has become the new lingua franca significantly affect the way new terms enter the individual languages. In the era of internet "memes", there is no means of preventing other nations from picking up English lexis. In fact, it is not actually such an issue, as it is a natural phenomenon which has always been present; we hardly ever notice the words of foreign origin that entered our languages decades or even centuries ago. Yet, there is a borderline between acceptable and unacceptable. The problem with English language is that people tend to pick up the words for which they actually do have native equivalents, thus giving birth to barbarisms. According to the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic, there are no legal objections against picking up internationalisms, in the light of the cultural and political changes which took place after 1989, however, it is important to balance out the impact of the Slovak-English language contacts [9]. The loanwords which name new concepts which have not

been previously present in the accepting culture can be considered functional, for example the term “meme” we mentioned above. Meme is usually a picture used in a certain context assigned to it by the internet community which is being used in the informal communication.



Figure 1: An example of a meme. Doge – a deliberately misspelled version of the English word “dog”. First time it was seen in the puppet show *Homerunner Show* in 2005. In 2010 the Shiba Inu dog picture in a funny pose appeared on the internet. Subsequently, the pictures of this dog with internal monologue text added began to trend on the Tumblr social network and the meme went by Doge<sup>\*†</sup>

This is an example of how “a non-standard word, expression or pronunciation as in a language, particularly one regarded as an error in morphology” known as barbarism enters a language. Another example is the so called “corporate English” used by the employees of supranational companies who often use English words for lexis related to their daily work such as “office”, “feedback” or “call” instead of using their native lexis. We believe it might be the result of language economisation, since the English is usually the working language in these companies and the employees are used to it, it comes to their mind quicker than the Slovak equivalent which they hardly ever use at work. Basically, it seems easier to just use English words than to mentally operate with bilingual terminology.

The social networks are a specific case, in Slovakia we all “like” and “share” despite the fact that the networks are actually localised into the Slovak language. The current young generation grew up with the internet encountering the English so often, they no longer perceive it as something strange or distracting. This phenomenon seems to be transposed into the language of advertisements. According to Janka Klincková who studied the language of advertisements, the selection of graphic verbal means is influenced not only by the topic and the communicative function, but also the target group [2]. The popularity of naming facilities, shops and clubs in English or using English in the advertisements is not a reaction to the immigration or a rising number of foreign tourists raiding Slovakia, the recipients of the messages are actually the Slovaks.

We believe that one of the responsibilities of professional translators is also to maintain the language culture of the nation, since the translators serve as a filter of language quality of the information coming from outside. Translated texts significantly influence what lexis and terminology enter the active vocabulary of the recipients. This is why the competence to work with terminology including the ability to verify its correctness is so important for the translator.

## **2 What is a term and where to find it**

Terminology as a discipline is important from the point of view of organisation of the knowledge and the normalisation of the terms, its practical aim being increasing the effectiveness

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\*The way memes are used in communication resembles to the way conceptual art works – either an object, concept or representation is taken out of the original contexts and transplanted into a different context. In the case of meme, it is usually used to express humour, absurdity or irony. Note: It is unknown how the word “Doge” should be pronounced.

† The word meme has never been codified in the Slovak language, yet its mutated version [me:m] became widely known and used by the young Slovak people.

of communication. The basic attributes of a term are motivation, systematism, stability, exactness and derivativeness [8]. From the translator's point of view, a term can be rather easily identified according to whether it is a part of a system of terminology in a given area and whether it is stable, clear and exact.

Official terminological data bases are a practical and reliable source of terms. Vlasta Křečková (2001) defines the terminological data base as a complex system of information on terms from a given topic area in one or more languages [6]. In comparison with dictionaries, data bases are easier to update, contain more information than dictionaries (e.g. on the sources and the authors of the terms) and are available on the internet [6]. In Slovakia, there are certain terminological data bases freely accessible for the translators; e.g. the Ludovít Stur Institute of Linguistics which offers several services greatly appreciated by the translator community, maintains also the Slovak Terminological Data Base or the data base of the Slovak Terminology Network.

The creation of terminological data bases is a task of research institutes, universities, professional organisations of translators and other workplaces

## 2 The strategies of searching terms

The ability to effectively work within the virtual space is closely related to the fast development of information and communication technologies. In the context of translation, it often results in certain revolutions. We no longer translate on a paper, nowadays we use text processors (e.g. Microsoft Word, OpenOffice). Computer assisted translation has become largely popular (CAT tools such as, e.g. Trados, MemoQ, Wordfast) machine translation is constantly improving (e.g. Google Translate), we use various quality assessment tools (e.g. Benchmark QA), cloud computing for data storage and cloud application for processing the documents. The labour market keeps increasing its demands on technical skills of the translator. Of course, an inseparable part of a translator's work is the internet. Internet is a technology and as such can be used on various levels of user skills which significantly correlates with the work speed and its effectiveness. The current task of the universities is to react to the need for new translator skills and to integrate them into the process of education.

### Internet search engines

According to The eBusiness Guide, Google is currently the most popular search engine [10]. It is a really effective tool, yet many translators cannot make the most of its potential as they are not acquainted with the commands for result filtering which causes them to waste their time on checking irrelevant search results. Here we would like to present the basic Google commands:

a) site:

Example: site: ff.umb.sk "the department of english and american studies"

The search engine will search only the faculty webpage and will not return the departments of English and American studies at other universities.

b) " "

Example: "the department of english and american studies"

The search engine will search the exact phrase instead of the individual words.

c) +

Example: +"the department of english and american studies" consult

The search engine will return only pages containing the exact phrase "the department of english and american studies" and optionally also the word "consult".

d) -

Example: university – private

The search engine will return only pages without the word "private".

e) ~

Example: ~university

The search engine will also search similar expressions\*(e.g. college, higher education).

f) ..

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\*This particular function seems to be most helpful when searching in the English language.

Example: “entrance exams” 2014. 2015

The search engine will return pages within the given period of time.

g) filetype:

Príklad: filetype: pdf “Lexicology”

The search engine will return documents in with the .pdf extension.

h) intitle:

Example: intitle: translation The search engine will return pages with the given expression in the title.

i) author:\*

Example: author: Ingrid Kurz

The search engine will return documents written by Ingrid Kurz.

j) define:

Example: define: linguistics

The search engine will return a brief definiton of the expression.

k) [unit x] to [unit y]

Example: 100 yards to km

The search engine will return a conversion of the given units [5].

Encyclopaediae: Wikipedia

Despite the scepticism of the academia which usually does not consider Wikipedia a reliable source, almost everyone uses it. The information on Wikipedia is reviewed, the rules of article creation are rather strict and the articles which do not fulfil the criteria are visibly marked. It is also compulsory to present the bibliographical information. If one is in doubt, the verification of the relevance of the information contained in the article is quick and easy. From the translator’s point of view, Wikipedia is a perfect aid, as it is not a dictionary of isolated terms, but a complex encyclopaedia which is quick and easy to use, and what is the most important, Wikipedia is multilingual and the translator can switch the languages. However, the Slovak mutation of Wikipedia is not as large as other mutations and it is not always helpful. In such case, the translator can use different languages to eventually come across what s/he was searching<sup>†</sup>.

Official glossaries of individual organisations

These are usually internally compiled data bases which have been made public by the organisations. Usually, such glossaries do not meet the criteria of terminological work, but if there are no other sources, such a glossary can be of great help, especially if the translator works for the given organisation. If the translator uses terms commonly used by the organisation, the probability that the communication will be successful rises.

Professional fora

There are various specialised translator fora on the internet where the translator can consult with their peers. They can be individual websites (Proz.com [12]), professional organisation fora (The Slovak Association of Translators and Interpreters, SAPT[13]) or groups and pages on social networks. Many of them even offer glossaries available freely or under registration. One of the benefits of being a member of a professional organisation is the access to information and the opportunity to ask with senior colleagues.

### **Multilingual reviewed translation data bases**

E.g.Linguee, Glosbe or EurLex. These tools offer the opportunity to compare multilingual versions of the identical documents. In comparison with dictionaries, here the translator works with various contexts within which they can search rather than with isolated expressions. Despite the fact that these data bases are reviewed, often there are more versions of a single term. From the

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\* Google search engine has several functions and it can be switched to search particular types of documents, for example pictures or scientific articles. For using the author: command, Google has to be switched to the GoogleScholar function (<http://scholar.google.sk>).

<sup>†</sup>For example, the language combination of English and Russian is very practical when working with Wikipedia, as these two language mutations of Wikipedia are in general of high quality and extent.

point of view of terminology, it is an error in the system, but the translator is merely a user in this case and if all other sources fail, they simply have to choose one of the versions. The translator gets to decide whether to choose a term according to its occurrence in the corpus or a term he is acquainted with.

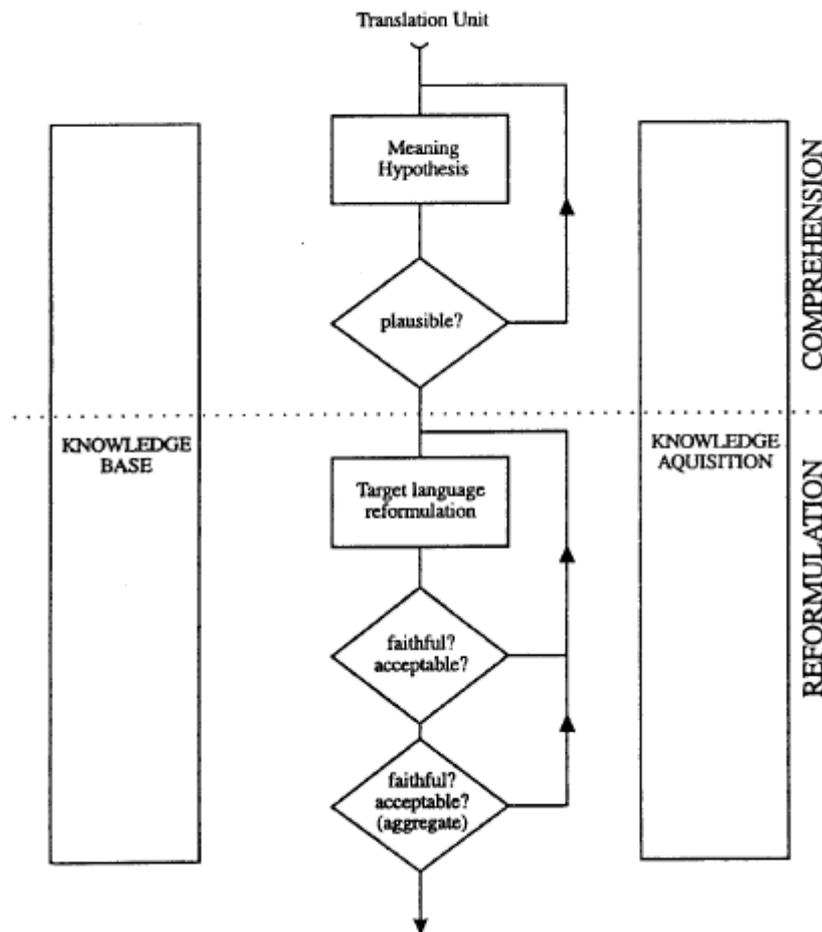
**Consulting experts**

Another way to find a term is to consult an expert in the given field. However, the experts are not linguists and they often do not distinguish between professionalisms, jargon and actual terms and there is a chance the translator will not be given right information. The professionals can explain the concept or tell the translator how they are used to call the particular phenomenon, but for the sake of terminological exactness, the translator should compare it against different sources. They are of greatest help when it comes to explaining concepts and the relations within the field with which they are acquainted better than the translator.

There are several ways of making contact with the professionals. As we live in the internet era, it is easy to simply visit a professional forum and ask a question or search for a particular expert and contact them. Often, the clients themselves are willing to consult. It is beneficial if the translator has a lot of acquaintances who work in different professional areas, they are often willing to help. Whether the consultation will be free or the expert will be offered a reward from the translator is a matter of individual agreement.

**3 Term verification**

A practical application of the Sequential Model of translation by Daniel Gile can be very helpful even in verification of terms.



(Giles, Basic Concepts and Models for Interpreter and Translator Training, 2009, p. 102).

The first step for the translator is to formulate a meaning hypothesis about the translation unit, in this case the translator relies on their own knowledge of the source language as well as their

general knowledge about the world which are both a part of their knowledge base. In case of terms, the knowledge base of the translator often does not suffice. The next step is therefore the knowledge acquisition which can be carried out as mentioned above (see 2 The strategies of searching terms). If the translator finds a suitable term, they analyse the meaning hypothesis for plausibility, compares the information against the context and checks whether it is contradictory. If the hypothesis is not plausible, the translator repeats step two, the knowledge acquisition. In other words, they repeat the analysis until the meaning hypothesis is plausible and the term correct. Only then they proceed to step three, the target language reformulation after which they again analyse the result. If the translation is not faithful and/or acceptable, the translator reformulates it again. The step is repeated until the translation is faithful and acceptable. The last step is the analysis of the faithfulness and the acceptability of the whole aggregate in the context. The final translation has to be logical, cohesive, devoid of contradictions and the terms have to be used consistently [1].

### Conclusion

A recent study carried out by Djovčoš has shown that 62 % of Slovak translators specialise in other than literary translation [4]. The ability to work with terminology on a professional level has always been a competence a real translator had to have, but the era of dynamic changes we are living in, the development in technologies and rising requirements for skills and technical competence of translators bring brand new challenges. Critical thinking is necessary not only in the process of translation, but also in searching the in the vast amounts of information on the internet. The increasing amount of information and the speed of its processing together with the rising demands of the clients pose continually increasing cognitive load on the translator. The apparent availability of terminology can be a deceitful. For the sake of quality of our work, we should consider how much we can increase the information processing speed without negatively affecting the quality of the translation.

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