

## **TERMINOLOGY COURSE AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF MASTER IN TRANSLATION PROGRAMME**

*Competences related to terminology work and terminology management play an important role in translators' teaching. In this article, we share our experience of organising the course "Theory and Practice of Terminology" within the Master programme "Multilingual Communication and Translation Studies" at Tampere University, Finland. We describe the objectives and the place of the course in the curriculum, the topics and structure of student glossaries compiled in the course, as well as special software used for term extraction, compilation of concept charts and glossary-making. We provide arguments in favour of systematic terminology work and the "learning by doing" approach and discuss other pedagogical considerations related to the organisation of a Terminology course for translators at the Master level.*

### **1. The role of terminology in translators' work and translator training**

The importance of terminology for the quality and time efficiency of translation of specialised texts can hardly be overestimated. Translators spend a large share (estimates depend on many factors and range from 20% to 70%) of their working time searching for term equivalents [Ubin 1992: 16; Grinev 1993: 259; Bowker 2015: 311]. Inadequate and/or inconsistent terminology is the main reason for rework in translation industry [SDL 2016; Bowker 2015: 306].

Consequently, competences related to terminology work and terminology management play an important role in translator training [e.g. Kiraly 2000: 136; Alcina 2011: 1]. According to the European Master's in Translation Competence Framework [EMT 2017: 8], students of translation should acquire, develop and use thematic and domain-specific knowledge relevant to translation needs, master systems of concepts, methods of reasoning, presentation standards, terminology and phraseology, specialised sources, etc. In particular, translators should be able to perform the following routines [Montero and Faber 2011: 93]:

- identification and acquisition of specialised concepts from the text;
- evaluation, consultation, and elaboration of information resources;
- recognition of interlinguistic correspondences;
- management of the acquired information and its re-use in future translations.

According to the constructivist approach to teaching [e.g. Kiraly 2000; Alcina 2011: 4], which currently prevails in university pedagogics in Western Europe and the U.S., learning by doing is one of the most effective ways of mastering a subject and acquiring competences. Combining theory (lectures) with practice (exercises and participation in glossary-making) is probably the best way to teach Terminology basics to translators. In this article, we would like to share our experience of organising the course “Theory and Practice of Terminology” within the Master programme “Multilingual Communication and Translation Studies” at Tampere University, Finland, in 2016–2020.

## **2. The objectives and the place of the Terminology course in the curriculum**

The expected learning outcomes of the course “Theory and Practice of Terminology” are as follows: the students understand the importance of concept analysis and terminology work for translation and interpreting; they learn to effectively use and critically evaluate terminological reference sources, such as term banks; they have an understanding of the principles and methods of systematic terminology work and are able to apply these methods in practice; the students learn to work in a team; they compile a concise bi- or multilingual glossary in their own field of specialisation; they master the software required for conducting term extraction, concept analysis and glossary-making.

Those who want to deepen their knowledge about terminology management, to learn about different approaches to Terminology and get acquainted with ontology work, may also take an advanced course, “Terminology Management”. This course is based on several terminology management handbooks [e.g. Wright & Budin 1997, 2001; Kudashev 2013; Kockaert & Steurs 2015].

## **3. Ad hoc vs. systematic terminology work**

It is well known that translators usually practice *ad hoc terminology management* [Wright & Wright 1997: 147; Cabre 2010: 359; Bowker 2015: 311], which is based on a much lighter yet considerably less time-consuming analysis than in *systematic terminology work*. *Ad hoc* and *fully systematic* terminology work may be seen as the opposite ends of a continuum with a large array of intermediate options between them [Kudashev 2020, forthcoming; cf. Warburton 2015; Pasanen 2018]. The rationale behind our course is that if students of

translation learn the principles of *systematic terminology work*, they will cope with any other variations of terminology work required in the field.

The principles of systematic terminology work are covered in the ISO 704:2009 standard and classical handbooks on Terminology. In the Finnish context, they are represented by the publications of the Finnish Terminology Center (Sanastokeskus TSK): *Sanastotyön käsikirja* [1989], *Toimikunnista termitalkoisiin* [1999], and *Guide to Terminology* [Suonuuti 2001].

The distinctive characteristic of systematic terminology work is that it is based on concept analysis: the place of each concept in the concept system is unambiguously indicated and each concept is assigned a clear-cut terminological definition. This is why in our course special attention is paid to the compilation of concept charts, which are visual representations of concept systems, and to synchronisation of definitions with concept charts. Concept charts are both a tool for concept analysis and a means of representing its results.

Learning the basics of concept analysis is important to translators for multiple reasons. Concept analysis is the only reliable way to establish the degree of equivalence between terms in different languages. It allows separating essential characteristics from secondary ones, which is crucial for selecting natural term equivalents and constructing artificial ones. At the same time, concept analysis demonstrates that the viewpoint and the target group's needs have to be taken into account when deciding which characteristics are considered essential. Concept analysis also helps to develop a critical attitude to the sources of terminological information.

#### **4. Student glossaries: topics and structure**

Bilingual (sometimes trilingual) glossaries compiled by students in groups are the main outcome and evaluation subject of the course. Glossaries are compiled using the best practices of bilingual terminology work. The Finnish-Russian Forestry Dictionary [Suomalais-venäläinen metsäsanakirja 2008], which was awarded the *International Award for Applied Terminology Research and Development* by the European Association for Terminology (EAFT), serves as one of the models [see Kudashev & Kudasheva 2008 and Kudashev 2007 for an overview of its features].

The recommended number of concepts per student is 15–20. Teams are usually formed by language pairs, with 3 to 6 students in each. Students are free to choose the topic of their glossary as long as they take into account the following recommendations: the subject field has to be narrow enough, so that the glossary contains all the major terms from it; texts should be

easily available in the electronic form; no topics covered in published dictionaries and glossaries are allowed unless these resources are out-of-date or clearly deficient; it is advisable to have at least some knowledge on the special field in question.

Here are a few examples of the topics selected by teams for their glossaries in recent years: fishing, hunting, biking, Finnish baseball, rugby, mushroom gathering and processing, board games, web page interface, comics, movie cameras, film production crew, beer brewing, amusement park equipment, video game cheating, gym training, asylum-seeking procedures, cyber safety, inheritance regulations, environmental protection regulations, organisation of healthcare, regional conflicts. As we can see, students often choose topics related to their hobbies or topics in which they would like to specialise after the graduation.

Each glossary contains an introduction, instructions on how to use the glossary, the reference list, an appendix with concept charts, and the reverse index. Each term should be assigned a terminological definition which is clearly separated from additional notes, one or several foreign language equivalents and a reference to the concept chart(s). Other elements of the microstructure are optional and partly language-specific. Students may choose from a wide range of grammatical and pragmatic labels offered by the terminology management system. The only requirement is that these labels should be used systematically throughout the glossary.

## **5. Special software used at the course**

During the course, students learn to use three applications. The source texts are collected from the Internet with the help of Sketch Engine. Concept charts are drawn in Flowchart maker, and the glossary articles are compiled and managed with the help of MyTerMS. We describe these programmes below.

### **5.1 Sketch Engine**

The students terms from from special domain texts available on the web. The collecting and processing of the corpora is performed with the help of SketchEngine<sup>1</sup>. This is one of the most popular online corpus managers that allows both to use ready corpora for multiple languages and to host users' text collections.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sketchengine.eu>

Users can create their own corpora and share them with other users, which makes teamwork possible. They can manually upload texts or let the service get texts from the web with the built-in utility WebBootCat. Usually a combination of these two methods is used.

The students compile small corpora both in the source and the target languages. The source language is always Finnish; the target language(s) are English, French, German, Russian or Swedish. Students collect comparable corpora, as collecting parallel corpora is too complicated a task for a one-semester course. The texts are used as raw data for searching and checking up term candidates.

SketchEngine has many utilities for investigating the texts. Texts are lemmatised and grammatically annotated, which facilitates advanced searches. The service also finds recurring word combinations, so called lexical Ngrams, many of which are terms. When the corpora are compiled, the following functionalities can be used for obtaining lists of term candidates:

- Ngrams (combinations of two, three, four or more words)
- Keywords (words that occur in the corpus significantly more frequently than in a large ready-made corpus used as a reference corpus)
- Word Sketch (collocations of a search word)
- Frequency list
- Concordance (usage examples of a search word)

The final product is the list of terms to work with. Later the corpus may be consulted to clarify the meaning of terms and their usage as well as for looking up translation equivalents in the target language.

## **5.2 Draw.io Flowchart Maker**

Flowchart maker<sup>2</sup> is a free software for drawing charts and diagrams. It has been chosen as a drawing tool for the Terminology course for several reasons. First, it provides all the necessary features for drawing classical concept charts. It is possible to assemble and save a personal collection of lines and forms, which allows sharing with students a dedicated collection for drawing concept charts. Second, it is quite intuitive and easy-to-use, so it can be learned in an hour during a guided training in the classroom. Third, it is a free online tool which does not require installation and can be used from anywhere. Fourth, it suits well for teamwork. The diagrams can be saved in various cloud services and shared with other team members. Last but

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<sup>2</sup> <https://app.diagrams.net>

not least, the programme is based on well-established standards like XML, which guarantees sustainability. Diagrams can be exported into a large number of formats, including jpeg, tiff, pdf, etc. This allows their easy incorporation into the glossaries.

### 5.3 MyTerMS

A tailored version of the in-house dictionary writing system MyTerMS [Kudashev & Kudasheva 2006] has been used in the course for managing term entries. MyTerMS has been used in several dictionary projects and serves as a terminology management system for both large-scale and small-scale terminological projects at Tampere University and the University of Helsinki.

MyTerMS is a web interface to the underlying lexicographic database. It performs all basic operations that can be expected from dictionary management software, such as adding, editing, searching, browsing, printing, and deleting entries. It also automates many operations and helps ensure the integrity of the data, for example by preventing duplicate entries and automatically managing cross-references. In addition, it ensures the correctness of the input by performing a compliance check before saving the data.

Entries are added and edited with the help of an HTML form. The programme allows adding inline formatting (e.g. bolded font, italics, upper and lower indexes). Most labels related to grammar and usage are predefined, but users can also provide additional free-form notes related to these categories. The entries are segmented into data fields, and the articles are formed “on the fly” with the help of scripts and cascading style sheets. Search results and the whole glossary can be saved as an HTML file and then transformed into a docx or pdf file. According to the feedback, students find MyTerMS easy to use and intuitive.

## 6. Pedagogical considerations and practical experience

When planning our course, we have used the principles of *constructive alignment* which means that the objectives, contents, methodology and assessment of the course should logically support each other [Alcina 2011: 5].

At the beginning of the course, it is important to motivate the students by explaining the benefits of terminology work for translators [cf. Alcina 2011: 5; Pasanen 2018: 11–12]. We use articles written by translators and for translators [e.g. Kuhmonen 1999; Vik-Tuovinen 2003; Vehmas-Lehto 2010; Pasanen 2015] for this purpose. Most of the articles are in Finnish,

because it is easier for the students to learn the basics in their native language. Students have not only to read the articles at home but also make short presentations on them in the class.

As the course is intensive and the size of the group can reach 30 students, detailed step-by-step written instructions are vital. The use of software applications should be taught in the computer class first as a “guided tour”, and then as “free-for-all” exercises when students can try various functions and ask for help at any time. At the same time, most of the practical work takes place outside of the class.

The two prerequisites for successful teamwork are an energetic and effective team leader and a reasonable size of the team. Our experience shows that an optimal size of a glossary project team is 3–5 persons. Teams distribute the responsibilities and select a communication channel themselves.

As students have no previous experience of concept analysis and glossary-making, it usually takes them some time to understand the main principles. This is why we provide a detailed written feedback on the preliminary versions of the concept charts and the glossary and organise a question-and-answers session after that.

Translators are among top users of term banks and other terminological reference resources [Allard 2012]. In our course, students get acquainted with term banks containing Finnish terminology, such as TEPA<sup>3</sup>, Term Bank for the Arts and Sciences<sup>4</sup>, VALTER<sup>5</sup>, Finto<sup>6</sup>, EuroTermBank<sup>7</sup>, IATE<sup>8</sup>; collections of links to special domain glossaries, such as Vaasa University collection<sup>9</sup> and Glossary Links<sup>10</sup>; and “hybrid” resources which combine glossaries and corpora, like Glosbe<sup>11</sup> and Linguee<sup>12</sup>.

Working with a large number of terminological resources and the experience of glossary-making allows students of translation to better understand the structure, potential and limitations of dictionaries, term banks, and other terminological resources. In particular, terminology work has a positive impact on the following translators’ competences [Kudashev 2016: 403; cf. Thelen 2015: 360]: the ability to identify terms in context; the ability to process dictionary entries and quickly locate the required information; the ability to disambiguate

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<sup>3</sup> <https://termipankki.fi/tepa>

<sup>4</sup> <https://tieteentermipankki.fi>

<sup>5</sup> <https://mot.kielikone.fi/mot/valter>

<sup>6</sup> <http://finto.fi>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.eurotermbank.com>

<sup>8</sup> <https://iate.europa.eu>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.univaasa.fi/en/sites/terminology/glossaries>

<sup>10</sup> <https://termcoord.eu/glossarylinks>

<sup>11</sup> <https://glosbe.com>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.linguee.com>

between different meanings; understanding of polysemy, homonymy, and synonymy; understanding of the difference between dictionary equivalents and context equivalents; understanding of terminographic traditions and conventions; understanding of various models of dictionary organisation and access structure; critical approach to information sources, including dictionaries and term banks; precision, accuracy, and punctuality; the ability to carry responsibility for one's decisions and to provide arguments in their defence.

Self-reflection and self-assessment at the end of the course have proved very valuable. Students make a team report about their project in which they analyze various stages, organisation of team work, particularly successful and unsuccessful experience, etc. This is also a good opportunity for the teachers to get feedback and find out which topics require more close attention next time.

## 7. Conclusion

In this article, we have briefly described our experience of organising the course “Theory and Practice of Terminology” within the Master programme “Multilingual Communication and Translation Studies” at Tampere University. Although translators usually practice *ad hoc terminology management* in their work, we believe that if students of translation learn the principles of *systematic terminology work*, they will cope with any other variations of terminology work required in the field. Following the constructivist approach to teaching, we favour the learning by doing method. In our opinion, combining lectures with practical exercises and participation in glossary-making is an effective way to teach Terminology basics to translators.

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