Effective Computer-assisted Terminology Management Through SDL MultiTerm

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Abstract: Long term changes have been brought about by information and computer technology to translation activity in the information age. Meanwhile, technical translation service demand is increasing, so new strategies and methods are needed to adapt to the change in translation activity. Computer-assisted terminology management tool plays an increasing important role in translation industry, attracting more and more research focus. The paper expounds the forms and significance of terminology management, with special emphasis on SDL MultiTerm. The paper argues that terminology work, also a form of collaborative team work interlinked with the whole translation process, will be further facilitated by computer and information technology to ensure quality translation service.

1. Introduction
The world is now in an era of globalization and specialization. The translation services offered by language service industry are most technical translation [1]. According to the “2019 China Language Service Industry Development Report”, information technology, education and training, and government international communication were the top 3 fields among the interviewed language service providers with percentage of 63%, 52%, and 45.3% respectively. Other main areas closely related to technical translation include equipment manufacturing, cross-border e-commerce and intellectual property rights.

According to a survey on terminology management conducted by SDL, 72% of respondents believed that inconsistent terminology in business and marketing communications has a negative impact on the brand, while 75% stated that it strongly compromises internal communication [2]. It can be inferred that the wide and consistent use of terms has become a prominent feature for technical translation, and terms must be accurately translated to achieve the same level of specialization as the source text to ensure a consistent transfer of information.

2. Terminology and Excel Glossaries
Terminologies are words or expressions used in a particular field, and they are organization-specific, customer-specific or product-specific terms, most of which cannot be found in standard dictionaries. For example, favourites is used by Microsoft in Internet Explorer while bookmarks is used by Google, indicating almost the same meaning.

It is impossible for translators to be an expert in all the above mentioned fields, and essay access to the existing terminology needs to be offered for translators and the newly emerged terminology shall be updated to ensure consistency. As a result, terminology management without computer technology is quite cost and time consuming. Inconsistent terminology will lead to consequences such as project delay, misunderstandings, customer & employee dissatisfaction and unsuccessful market launch, leading to
huge loses that might take years to recover. As Dimitra pointed out that the future localization paradigm is characterized by three aspects in a triangle diagram, with low price, high speed and high quality at the ends [3]. It is generally consider impossible to ensure all the three aspects, but with terminology management tools, we can achieve a balance between the three.

People always think of Excel first when compile a list of term. Excel, as a spreadsheet application, would be ok to start with, but in the long run, it is not perfect as a terminology management tool for the following disadvantages: passive query, which only shows the result user searched without related information; slow speed due to liner search type, esp. in case of large files; single display of items in rows and columns. Due to the above mentioned disadvantages, Excel glossaries cannot perfectly meet the latest requirement for terminology management.

3. Terminology Management

Terminology management comprises data collection, the creation of databases, and reviewing and storing terminology and associated metadata in databases, but it also involves categorization, validation, updating, conversion and other additional subtasks [4].

3.1. Term-oriented vs. Concept-oriented Approach

Before terminology management, terms need to be stored in a termbase, which involves the categorization, or the organization of terms. In a paper dictionary, all the terms are listed in alphabetic order, according to which the word car is listed under C and passenger car is listed under P, even though the two belong to the same concept. In an Excel glossary, this is also the case because it is term-oriented approach. In a concept-oriented termbase, all the terms under the same concept will be organized into one entry. When you search for a term passenger car in such termbases, other terms under the same concept such as hatchback and van can be found in the search result window.

3.2. Terminology Management System Criteria

Before choosing appropriate terminology management system (TMS), it is important to know the criteria for efficient TMS. Easy to use is the first principle, and the TMS should be accessible to project manager, translator and proofreader; second, the legacy glossaries can be easily included into the new TMS to ensure smooth migration; third, powerful searching and maintaining functions; fourth, additional information such as definition, illustration and context can be added to the term; last, easy import and export options shall be offered for upgrading and external modification.
3.3. SDL MultiTerm

In the following part, some functions of SDL MultiTerm will be illustrated as a case study, including searching termbases, creating termbases from Excel glossaries, exporting terminology and active terminology recognition.

3.3.1. Searching termbases

There are varied searching types available in MultiTerm, for example Normal Search, just input the term into the search field; Wildcard Search, you may use asterisk (*), which can be used as a number of characters, for example to find out terms containing pseudo*; Fuzzy Search, which enables user to search for terms even if the spelling is not correct. This is very helpful because some technical terms are rarely used in daily life with unusual spellings; Full Text Search can be used to search for terms contained in notes, definitions and examples in addition to the source and target term text; Defining and using filters enable users to perform customized search by selecting different conditions, such as “begins with”, “contains”, and “modified by”, making highly efficient term searching possible.

![Defining filter](image.png)

3.3.2. Creating termbases from legacy files-MS Excel glossaries

SDL MultiTerm supports the import of XML file (which contains terms) into a termbase. For all other legacy files and terminology data (MTW, XLS, TBX, OLIF, TXT, CSV), SDL MultiTerm Convert, a tool included in the MultiTerm application, can be used to convert into XML format. MS Excel glossaries will be used as an example for it is widely used. Before converting, the Excel glossary shall meet the requirements, for example, make sure that the terms in different languages and descriptive fields are in separate columns, and the first row which contains column headers contain label information, rather than the first term. Then follow the steps below to complete the process.
3.3.3. Exporting termbases
Exporting termbases can be useful when users want to make a copy of the termbase, import the existing entries into another termbase, or share the termbase with others who has no SDL Multiterm application installed on their computers. There are a variety of selections available, such as default export definition, with which users can export XML format; word dictionary export definition in RTF format with entries in alphabetical order, resembling the format of a paper dictionary and Tab-delimited export definition.

3.3.4. Active terminology recognition
A well-organized termbase would be better facilitate the translation process if being seamlessly integrated in the translation process. With active terminology recognition, the terms in the source segment will be highlighted with red bracketed lines, indicating that the corresponding term translation has been found in the termbase. Meanwhile, the term translation will be listed in the term recognition window, and it is convenient to just insert the translation by right clicking the mouse button or striking the keyboard shortcut combination.

4. Terminology work
Although effective terminology management tool will considerably improve translation speed while maintaining terminology consistency, this is not the ultimate solution for the whole scenario because
terminology work is a collaborative team work, involving multiple processes such as translation, technical documentation, standardization, localization, and market communications, and multiple parties such as author, translator, developer, reviewer and terminologist. How should companies, clients, and translation companies (translators) collaborate with each other to optimize terminology management? When developing new products and formulating concepts, developers should study the brand-worthy content and treat them as terminology if necessary to ensure the localization process afterwards. Terminology accuracy is vital for companies to go global, and terminology inaccuracy would lead to disastrous consequences such as market delay and company image damage. Before translation project kick-off, terminology extraction and translation should be handled by a corporate terminology specialist who is capable of applying a complete solution to determine the most suitable translation. Discussions with source language terminology specialists, engineers, and domain experts are necessary in case of obscure terms. If necessary, notes, definitions, examples and illustrations for specific terms shall be provided with a view to offering context for translators. In the process of terminology use, customers may have questions about terminology, because under most circumstances, the termbase used by the customer may be different from that of technical experts. As a result, joint efforts between relevant parties shall be made to ensure smooth terminology usage.

5. Conclusion
Many practitioners mentioned that one of the most considerable challenges for companies at present is to successfully maintain terminology consistency across all departments, and the same situation goes for language service providers. With information and computer technology, terminology management tools, together with a systematic terminology approach, will offer a cost effective and high efficient solution to manage terminology for smooth translation process and better consistency, thus assisting companies in maintaining competitive-edge in globalization.

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