The LETRINT project: Investigating translation at international organizations

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What is LETRINT?

- 5-year project on “Legal Translation in International Institutional Settings”
- First Consolidator Grant awarded to a Translation Studies project in Europe
- Responds to the need for empirical data on institutional translation: scope, patterns and quality assurance at international organizations

MAIN GOALS

1. Define the scope and conditions of institutional legal translation:
   - TEXTUAL MAPPING
   - CONTEXTUALIZATION FROM A LEGAL PERSPECTIVE
   - ANALYSIS OF WORKFLOWS (incl. QA and use of tools)
   ⟹ Shed light on volume and relevance of text categories + extratextual factors + legal implications
2. Describe DISCOURSE FEATURES (incl. hybridity of institutional discourses) AND TRANSLATION PROBLEMS: corpus annotation (terminology as key feature)
   ⟹ Implications for quality assurance and training: main domains, recurrent problems, profiles required, levels of revision, priorities and resource allocation...
3. Establish correlations between PERCEPTIONS OF QUALITY and competence profiles (thematic / linguistic / translation expertise) based on texts with various groups and annotated texts
   ⟹ empirical results to support added value of professional translation for institutional missions

LETRINT corpora

- Intergovernmental and supranational organizations: UN, WTO and EU
- Languages: English, French, Spanish
- Corpus compilation using institutional search engines
- Compiled and processed (LETRINT 0 – 3 monolingual comparable corpora): 513,640 texts, 1.71 billion words
- Aligned after stratified sampling (LETRINT 1 – parallel trilingual corpus): 7,918 texts, 25.76m words

LETRINT corpora

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corpora</th>
<th>Main method applied</th>
<th>Size per language setting of reference</th>
<th>Size per setting in all languages setting of reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIMST</td>
<td>All-inclusive compilation of publicly available texts in EN, FR or ES</td>
<td>461.32</td>
<td>163.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LETRINT 0</td>
<td>Selection of translated texts according to language and technical specifications + systematic text classification</td>
<td>382.85</td>
<td>147.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LETRINT 1</td>
<td>Stratified sampling for compilation of sampling frame (key genres as strata from each legal category) + tailored systematic sampling for selection of texts within strata</td>
<td>7.87</td>
<td>6.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Phase 1: Scope of institutional translation from a legal perspective**

Texts in major settings of multilingual text production:
- **Law-making**, including hard and soft law (e.g. treaty vs declaration); at the top of hierarchy, legal framework for other processes
- **Monitoring** of Member States’ compliance (e.g. universal periodic review at UN, trade policy review at WTO, infringement procedures at EU)
- **Judicial / adjudicative procedures**, including contentious and advisory proceedings (ICJ, CJEU, WTO’s dispute settlement bodies)

**Law-making**

Derived, e.g. activity reports, press releases

**Monitoring**

Large volume of texts (human resources, finance and procurement procedures, other coordination and internal matters)

**Judicial / adjudicative procedures**

High proportion of soft law within law-making (resolutions)

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**Text categorization also revealed...**

- Constellation of interrelated primary texts (key legal functions) and subsidiary texts:
  - input / preparatory, e.g. treaty negotiation documents
  - instrumental, e.g. meeting agendas, checklists
  - derived, e.g. activity reports, press releases

- Additional administrative functions (human resources, finance and procurement procedures, other coordination and internal matters)

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**Aligned trilingual parallel corpus: primary genres selected**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Law and policy-making</th>
<th>Mandatory compliance monitoring</th>
<th>Adjudication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EU</strong></td>
<td>Regulations</td>
<td>European Commission’s reports</td>
<td>CJEU judgments, opinions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Directives</td>
<td>國內 reports on several mandatory monitoring procedures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>Chinese reports on several mandatory monitoring procedures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guidelines</td>
<td>Chinese reports on several mandatory monitoring procedures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opinions</td>
<td>Chinese reports on several mandatory monitoring procedures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Phase 1: Illustrative results**

Correlation between text volumes per category and features of each legal order

- UN:
  - large volume of monitoring texts (dynamic role of human rights treaty bodies)
  - high proportion of soft law within law-making (resolutions)
  - lowest volume of adjudication texts (ICJ)
WTO:
- Second largest volume of monitoring texts (trade policy reviews)
- High proportion of adjudication texts (successful dispute settlement system)
- Lowest proportion of law-making texts

EU:
- By far, largest volume of hard law (systematic translation of directly applicable and enforceable legal acts, closer to national level)
- Highest proportion of adjudication (productive CJEU)
- Lowest proportion of monitoring texts (more "discreet" function)

Also conducted
- Interviews on QA with more than 40 heads of translation units
- Lexicometric analysis of consistency and adequacy of translations of selected legal terms
- Analysis of terminological databases and surveys on their use by institutional translators

... and ongoing
- Corpus annotation of discourse variables (including legal and other specialized terminology) and translation difficulties ("rich points")
- Larger-scale studies of adequacy and quality perceptions to come...

THANK YOU
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