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TERMINOLOGY AS AN ASSET FOR KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND TRANSFER IN A LEARNING ORGANISATION - A CASE STUDY

Abstract

This paper focuses on the approach to terminology practice adopted by the in-house language service department of a medium-sized company, its aim being to highlight that terminology represents a key factor for enhancing knowledge sharing and transfer in a learning organisation and thus can improve the quality of its multilingual deliverables.

The case study hereby presented equally puts emphasis on the commitment to build a terminology database that suits not only the language service provider's needs but those of other users within the organisation as well, endeavouring to optimise a concrete internal process: multilingual document production. The approach for terminology practice adopted by the translator-terminologists is targeted at developing a corporate language based on the consensus of all internal departments involved in the above-mentioned process as one of the key measures for consistent internal (and external) communication. In this "cooperative" scenario, the translator-terminologists are called to play a pro-active role for achieving effective corporate knowledge utilisation and leveraging at the organisation level. Thereby, the use of appropriate methods and modern tools also becomes fundamental.

1 INTRODUCTION

Our case study refers to the terminology practice of an in-house language services department working exclusively for a Zurich-based holding company, the SIS Group, and its subsidiaries, which provide clearing, settlement as well as securities safekeeping and management services for Swiss and foreign banks. The group is active at international level and releases its business-related documentation in German, English and French. The members of the language services department are multi-task professionals; in other words, they assume the role of "translator-terminologists".

An organisation producing a certain amount of multilingual deliverables (paper or electronic) has to streamline its procedures, which inevitably involves a certain degree of automation as far as the production and maintenance (update etc.) of multilingual documentation is concerned.

Taking into consideration the ever increasing complexity of the company's business jargon, the translator-terminologists team acknowledged the need for creating and maintaining its own language resources that would serve internal and external information and communication purposes and would be geared to improving corporate knowledge sharing and transfer, first within the team, later across the whole organisation.

As a consequence, the team of translator-terminologists introduced in 2000 computer-assisted translation (CAT) technology consisting specifically of a translation memory (TM) tool and a terminology management system (TMS). As of then, the team started creating a multilingual terminology database (TDB) from scratch.

2 TERMINOLOGY & CORPORATE KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND TRANSFER

2.1 General contribution of terminology to corporate knowledge management

In the context of this paper, "terminology" embraces the terms - and an extensive set of data complementing them - used within the company and pertaining to its various business fields.

According to Wieden & Weiss (2004), terminology plays a pivotal role in the internal knowledge development cycle, especially in terms of conceptualisation. In fact, terminology acts as an instrument that renders concepts more tangible, allowing to distinguish conceptual properties due to a concepts transformation into language. As for knowledge management, terminology paves the way for easy access to conceptualised expert knowledge, for the standardisation of technical terms and hence for the crossing of linguistic and cultural barriers.

In the present-day information and knowledge society, a concerted approach is vital when it comes to handling acquired and shared knowledge respectively, as the way knowledge is managed and particularly the means and pace of its transmission have undergone considerable changes.

Moreover,

- the degree of specialisation is on the increase in all fields of knowledge
- a high rate of innovation has driven the need for ever more differentiated specialist vocabulary (i.e. terminologies)
- dialogue is becoming increasingly difficult, not only between experts and laymen but also among experts of one and the same discipline
- technical language presupposes precision and unambiguousness
- vocabulary errors can lead to distortions in communication and thus engender competitive disadvantages and extra costs!

Since corporate knowledge is transported via language in written and oral form, i.e. the company's technical language, a multilingual harmonisation of the technical documentation published in the various languages must be granted in globally active companies. First and foremost, systematic, conceptual and coordinated terminology work makes for unequivocal communication.

The collection, management and continual updating of the technical terms that constitute the basis of terminology practice promote the communication between the parties involved in knowledge generation and sharing, and ensure the consistency of digital products (content1). Therefore, it is fair to say that terminology practice is part and parcel of a company's knowledge management.

2.2 Specific contribution of translator-terminologists to sharing and transferring corporate "explicit" knowledge

The translation-targeted terminology practice as pursued by translator-terminologists originates a vast repository of conceptualised corporate knowledge and results from a thorough selection and classification of information contained in texts to be translated or in other corporate publications. In the course of this procedure, service, process and product-specific knowledge is gathered and processed in three languages and can be made available by means of a simple query.

As systematic collectors of multilingual, contextualised data, the translator-terminologists assume the role of knowledge owners.

They thereby deal with so-called "corporate explicit knowledge" - in other words, knowledge relevant for the organisation, which has already been documented in different forms and can therefore be adequately transferred with electronic tools.

In terms of knowledge ownership, the focus is not on the information contained in the selected terminological data, since this information existed already in other internal or external sources. The accent is more on the way the data was retrieved directly and/or re-elaborated according to specific principles and finally put together to build a "corporate knowledge repository". It is by making it available to all members of staff that the translator-terminologists contribute to corporate knowledge sharing and transfer throughout the organisation.

As highlighted in **figure 1**, knowledge sharing and transfer represents one of several interrelated activities presented in Probst's model for knowledge management (Probst *et al.*, 2000).

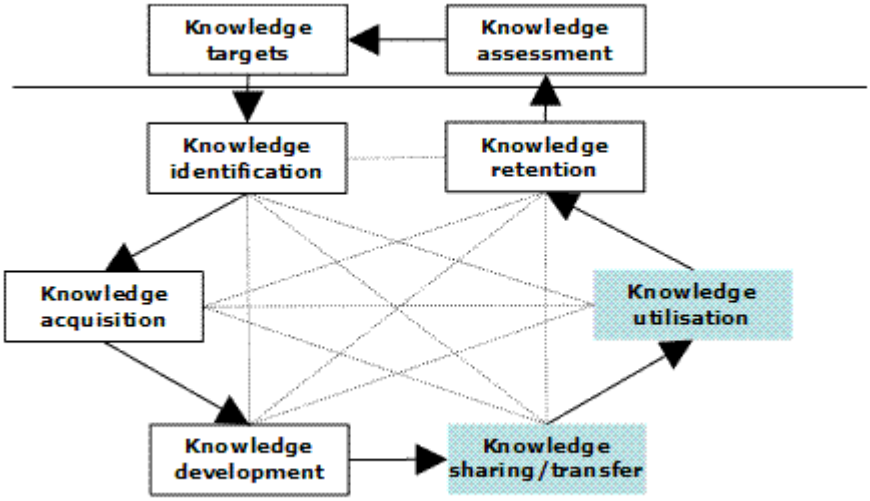

Fig. 1 - Knowledge management processes according to G. Probst et al., 2000

Since the creation and sharing/transferring of knowledge would be purposeless if the latter was not effectively used, it is of fundamental importance to make sure that the intended recipients/users of the corporate knowledge repository make systematic use of it. Knowledge utilisation, another element in the chain of knowledge management processes, also highlighted in figure 1, relates to the de-facto application of the accumulated corporate knowledge for task processing/completion and/or business processes.

It may be argued that ensuring the regular use of corporate explicit knowledge at organisation level surpasses the duties of translator-terminologists, especially in this case, where they assume the role of internal service providers but are not decision-makers as far as business processes are concerned.

Though, thorough terminology practice linked to a pro-active and cooperative approach of the translator-terminologists in their interaction with other specialists within the organisation can largely help establish best practices as far as corporate knowledge leveraging is concerned. This matter is discussed in detail in the following sections.

Considering the fact that all knowledge management processes are closely interrelated and that a change to any of them can have an effect on the others, translator-terminologists can be regarded as knowledge managers or, in other words - and as pinpointed by Peter Drucker -, as individuals "making knowledge productive" (Frappaolo 2002:24) for their specific contribution to knowledge sharing and transfer.

3 TERMINOLOGY PRACTICE IN A LEARNING ORGANISATION: A PHASED APPROACH

As previously stated, the translator-terminologists from the very outset considered terminology practice as an ongoing task that had to be systematically carried out within their "learning" team.

The targets were clear: the continuous enlargement of the multilingual TDB leading to terminology consistency and therefore higher translation quality. At a broader level, this new ongoing assignment in the translator-terminologists' task portfolio was geared to promote knowledge sharing and transfer not only at a team level, but organisation-wide as well.

Furthermore, the translator-terminologists ambitioned to apply this phased approach to their interaction with the business specialists from the various internal departments, especially those involved in the production of multilingual documentation. The translator-terminologists nurtured the vision of promoting a cooperative and interactive working environment, so that they considered themselves as part of a "learning organisation" in which all members would view its success in the future as being based on continuous learning and adaptive behaviour2.

For this reason, the translator-terminologists wished to promote awareness of the added value that terminology represented for the whole organisation as a means of achieving more efficiency in multilingual document production with the aim of increasing the multilingual deliverables' quality and, consequently, productivity.

As a matter of fact, once the multilingual TDB is made available to all members of staff, its regular use by the latter will also contribute to establishing a consensus-based corporate language. Subsequently, the organisation's external image will be strengthened as well.

For achieving it, the translator-terminologists adopted a phased approach. Clear targets were defined, specific measures taken and resources allocated for the various phases, the last of which - still in progress - is aimed at maximising knowledge utilisation within the framework of specific tasks completion.

Figure 2 illustrates the given timeframe for completion of the various phases, which are explained in detail in the following sections.

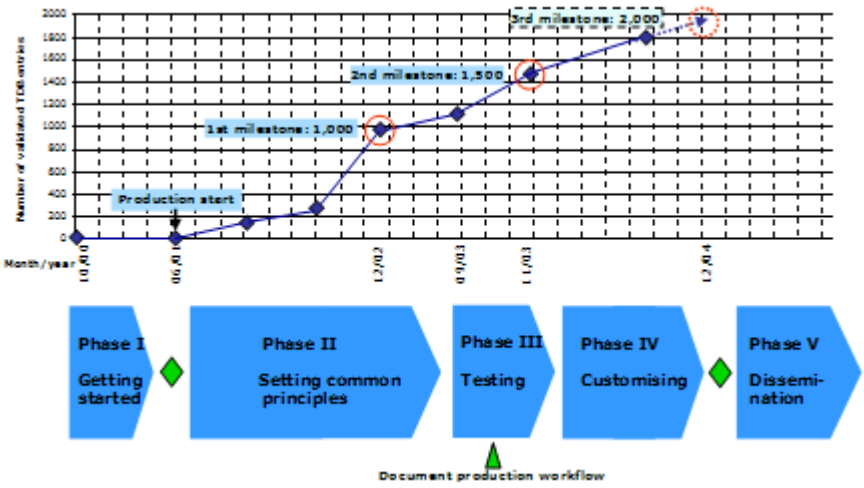

Fig. 2 - Phases in terminology practice: from beginning till present

The actual timeframe for each of the described phases is not of much relevance in the present case, since the translator-terminologists carry out terminology-related tasks on a best-effort basis; in other words, when they have the time and no pressure to deliver translations.

3.1 Phase I: Getting started before terminology capture

Before actually starting capturing terminology, the translator-terminologists defined terminology targets for knowledge sharing and transfer purposes at team level.

In this first phase, the main target was to define the most suitable TDB structure and to ensure that the first entries covered the most relevant terms of the organisation's business areas, especially the official denominations of products and/or services - though without specifying a threshold number of entries to be reached. Ensuring this was not difficult, since the translator-terminologists entered in the TDB mainly the terms contained in the texts to be translated and their equivalents in the other languages.

Furthermore, the translator-terminologists carried out a certain number of preliminary tasks for optimum assignment steering, such as:

- Build-up of a document corpus (representative texts, magazines, specialist publications etc.)
- Consultation of specialists within the organisation for defining the subjects to be covered
- Revision of the subjects
- Modelling of the terminology database including the definition of a model for data input
- Processing/revision of an existing glossary of some 550 records
- Import of the glossary into the TDB
- Assignment of responsibilities and organisation of terminology practice

During this phase, lasting a good six months, particular attention was given to setting general guidelines for future terminology practice; in other words, terminology capture, extraction, validation, update, etc. These guidelines for professional terminology management were aimed at guaranteeing or, at least, largely contributing to overall consistency of the terminological data.

3.2 Phase II: Setting common principles for terminology practice

The translator-terminologists gave themselves the following three guiding principles for terminology practice, geared to developing the TDB:

- **Quality comes before quantity, with special emphasis on systematic update, thorough validation and exclusive use of well-established sources of terminological data[3]**

The quality of the terminological data is more important than its quantity, whereby all the subjects represented in the TDB are to be covered by the relevant entries and the concepts and/or terms entered correspond to the currently used specialist jargon.

Furthermore, the so-called "6-eye principle" is applied: Each entry is proofread by two translator-terminologists other than the one who created it. Particular attention is also given to selecting only reliable sources and confirming content veracity by multiple source comparison, where necessary.

- **Terminological data has both descriptive and prescriptive character and is consensus-based**

The TDB is to become the official terminological reference for the organisation as far as corporate language is concerned. In order to establish a given corporate terminology, certain terms are defined as preferred whereas others are considered as synonyms or even disregarded, as a result, for example, of internal use considerations, language spelling conventions, etc.

Last but not least, and since the TDB is meant to be a tailor-made corporate knowledge repository, the translator-terminologists address internal field specialists when it comes to defining certain complex terms.

- **TDB languages are handled on an equal footing**

To be regarded as completed and thus undergo the validation process, the TDB entries must contain all relevant mandatory concept-related and/or term-related data in the three handled languages (German, English and French). As each of the translator-terminologists in the team has sufficient general know-how to enter data in the three languages and is involved in the validation process according to his specific language competencies, only one model for data input has been defined.

For consistency's sake and as an instrument for knowledge sharing and transfer at team level, the translator-terminologists resolved to write what could be called a "white paper" for terminology practice. This regularly updated and/or enlarged compendium of all the knowledge continuously acquired through terminology practice. The handbook is richly illustrated with some 108 extracts of validated TDB entries and 9 complete TDB entries. Through its 125 pages, it comprehensively highlights and defines the following aspects of terminology practice related to the TDB:

- Use and scope of all data categories and data elements
- General procedures for entering terms
- Handling of the most frequent problems of multilingual terminology practice (e.g. overlapping or partial equivalence of term meaning in the different languages; terminology gaps; accepted non-synonymous designations for signifying a term due to usage reasons; mixture of different language registers to signify specific terms etc.)
- Applied methods (e.g. procedure for entry validation, TDB management and planning, including statistical monitoring of terminology production)
- Complementary useful information (e.g. language and bibliographical codes, accepted format of internal and external publication titles and details used as a source in the TDB entries)

This second phase came to an end when the first milestone in terminology practice was reached: The TDB contained its first validated 1,000 multilingual entries.

3.3 Phase III: TDB's user acceptance test

Knowledge has to be incorporated in an action by a human being to be considered as such: It would be pointless to maintain an instrument for knowledge sharing and transfer without the intended recipients using it! By letting key staff members test the TDB, the translator-terminologists also sought to raise awareness of the overriding role a consensus-based corporate knowledge repository plays for improved internal knowledge exchange, thus increasing the quality of multilingual deliverables.

3.3.1 Scope of TDB test

In view of the declared goal of building up a corporate knowledge repository, it was important for the translator-terminologists to know whether they were on the right track as far as the adopted approach to terminology practice from the perspective of other potential TDB users was concerned.

Therefore, as soon as the TDB contained 1,000 validated entries, the time was ripe to assess TDB acceptance as a future corporate knowledge repository by letting key staff members test it.

More precisely, the purpose of the test was to measure:

- the quality of the terminological data in the test users. view' especially to find out whether the displayed data was sufficient or too comprehensive, whether the collected data corresponded in most cases to the specialists' understanding of the relevant terms and, finally, whether the organisation's specialised terminology was actually represented (measured in percentage of successful search results);
- the degree of user-friendliness offered by the current graphical user interface (data display design, need for user training, etc.)
- the performance of the terminology management system (stability and search response time).

Moreover, the test users were requested to comment on any other requirement they wanted to be given consideration to for the future TDB development.

The test ran during a whole month, after which the translator-terminologists gathered and classified the test users' feedback on the above-mentioned criteria. As a matter of fact, their feedback confirmed that, by continuing terminology practice with the current approach, terminology would have undoubtedly contributed to improved knowledge sharing and transfer organisation-wide. The translator-terminologists

committed themselves to considering as much individual input as possible from test users for the read-only TDB version to be implemented on the organisation's Intranet in future.

3.3.2 Multilingual document production as the underlying business process for determining test user selection

The translator-terminologists decided to address especially the staff members involved in the multilingual document production process, since it was clear that the latter would be the prospect users of a corporate knowledge repository such as the TDB for their task completion.

The current workflow for the production of one of the most important multilingual documents released by the organisation, the Guide to Market Information (hereinafter "Guide"), was analysed in order to ascertain potential enhancements, one of which would clearly be regular TDB query by the various parties involved.

In end effect, the latter can be regarded as "knowledge carriers" from different areas since a large percentage of terminological data in the TDB is based on the information contained in the various texts delivered for translation by them.

Figure 3 shows the main sections and the length of the Guide as well as the various internal departments giving input for its production and update.

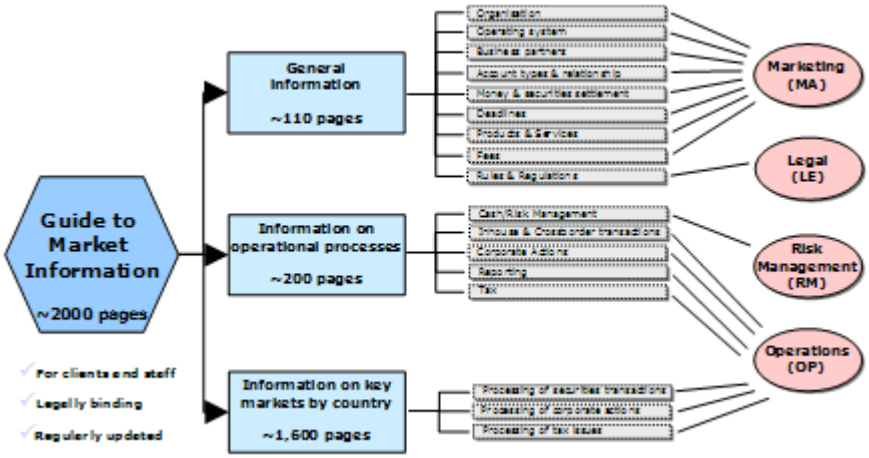

Fig. 3 - Guide to Market Information: volume, sections and internal departments involved in its production

The Guide is published on the organisation's Internet and regularly updated. The intended readers are not only the organisation's clients worldwide but also the employees in charge of processing and providing reliable information to partners and clients outside the organisation. The Guide contains a comprehensive description of the products and services provided by the organisation as well as information about the operational procedures related to the single business processes and to the individual market specifications. A considerable amount of information undergoes regular adjustments or is only valid for a short period of time and therefore needs to be replaced and updated on short notice. The Guide consists of three main sections of a total of over 2,000 printed pages and has legally binding character for both the company and the clients.

Given the variety and significance of its content, input on single sections of the Guide is provided by as many as 11 units within the marketing, legal, risk management and operational issues departments. Key representatives of these departments were thus invited to test the TDB.

3.3.2.1 Current document production workflow

The current workflow for the production of the Guide consists of a processing sequence involving other units as well, as represented in **figure 4**.

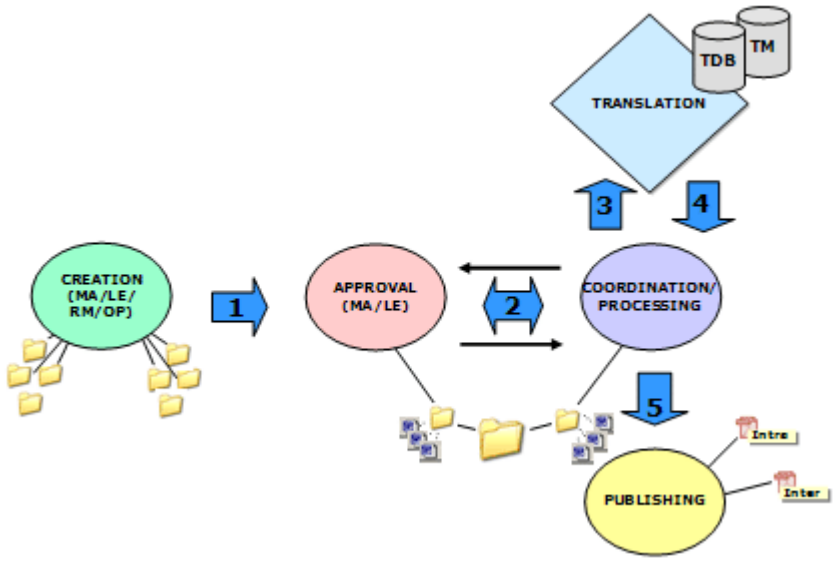

Fig. 4 - Workflow for the production of the Guide to Market Information

Once an author has drafted a text, it is passed on to the instance responsible for checking legal compliance and content truthfulness; the text is corrected where necessary. After this first approval, the process continues with the intervention of the coordination/processing instance that is also in charge of checking language correctness in the text's original version (mostly in German language). If any adjustment is made, the text goes back to the previous instance for renewed approval. Only then, the text is passed on to the translator-terminologists, who deliver the translation by using CAT technology and consulting the TDB for terminology checking. The translated versions of the original text are again submitted to the coordination/processing unit that often passes them on (but not systematically) to the approval unit for checking by specialists who are native speakers of the respective languages. If any adjustment proposal is submitted to the translator-terminologists, the latter approve or reject them and - whenever necessary - immediately proceed to data updating in the translation databases and/or the TDB.

Although the workflow has been designed to ensure proper quality control, the target of making key business information available to staff and clients timely is, unfortunately, not always achieved due essentially to terminology and/or content inconsistencies at source. Moreover, authors lack specific training on technical writing and no controlled language methods are applied. The mentioned shortcomings generate continuous document changes and adjustments in the process and in most cases a renewed approval by the single units becomes inevitable. As a matter of fact, most misunderstandings occur due to the lack of a common consensus-based terminology.

Furthermore, the absence of a common file storage repository results in inefficient document management and makes it difficult for the different units, of which each has its single folder setup, to swiftly get to the relevant document version. Since several units within the different departments are solely responsible for individual sections or sub-chapters of the Guide, the necessary updates are not simultaneously carried out throughout the entire document, which results in content contradictions or outdated information in single document sections and, in many cases, even in invalid - sometimes even inexistent - references to terms and/or titles.

As the last link in this long chain, the translator-terminologists are basically the only instance able to ensure overall consistency: by dint of their TDB.

3.3.2.2 How to optimise the document production workflow

This process analysis clearly highlights that document quality does not exclusively depend on the output from the translator-terminologists.

Appropriate input at source; in other words, no terminology inconsistencies, use of precise wording and broad consensus as to content are elements that accelerate the workflow and help improve the quality of multilingual deliverables.

The test users unanimously voiced their interest in availing of the TDB as a working tool that would ease preparing and checking information to be delivered for the production not only of the Guide but also of any other document. In this manner, current and validated information could be re-used for several purposes.

The test users also requested to be able to give feedback as to the TDB entries (entry of terms not included in the TDB, adjustments of term-related entered data, etc.) to the translator-terminologists in future. This cooperative approach corresponded to the translator-terminologists. vision of setting priorities for fostering corporate language together with the specialists of the relevant fields.

Acknowledging the need to avert duplication, the test users even agreed to charge the translator-terminologists with the review, adjustment and import of relevant data contained in existing glossaries individually build up and stored by the various departments, so that the TDB could become the only terminological reference for all staff members.

These conditions being met, the concept of the learning organisation could be materialised in this process. The growth of the corporate knowledge repository would no longer be the exclusive responsibility of the translator-terminologists but of all parties involved in the dissemination of corporate information; the translator-terminologists provide their expertise, whereas the experts ensure data truthfulness and its effective use. The "lessons learned" could be an asset for better understanding and steering future processes.

It goes without saying that other departments involved in the production of other multilingual documents face similar challenges when it comes to using a consensus-based corporate language to disseminate information outside the organisation.

Making the TDB available to all and implementing a suitable single-source document repository such as a document management system (DMS4) (see **figure 5**) would lead to:

- better content quality already at source
- validated unambiguous and unequivocal language
- consistent and consensus-based terminology constant reuse of approved information

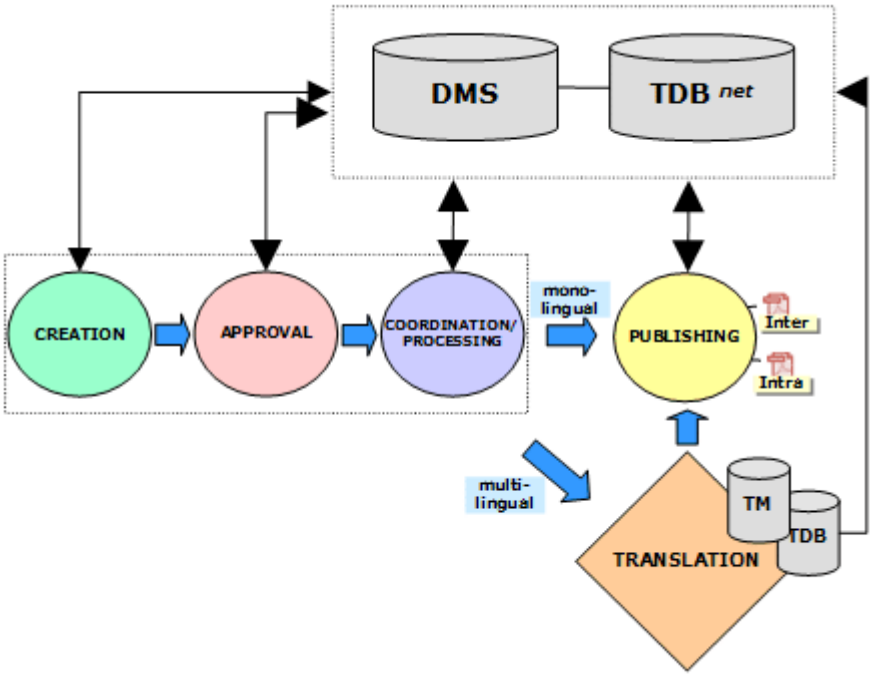

Fig. 5 - Optimised workflow for document production

More efficiency could be attained for both monolingual and multilingual document production workflows: The coordination/processing unit would come into play only for the production of documents in their original version; for the production of the foreign language versions, it would become superfluous since the units responsible for the content creation could get back directly to the translator-terminologists by means of the DMS version control functionality, should any adjustment be necessary. The coordination/processing unit could then devote more of its time to other, more valuable tasks commensurate with its specific language and computer skills.

Cooperation among the different "knowledge carriers" resulting in an optimised resource allocation would obviate the need to change and/or adjust the relevant document versions at different stages and result in much shorter production processes in a short- to medium-term time span. Circulating and leveraging corporate knowledge at organisation level would consequently contribute to higher productivity.

3.4 Phase IV: Customising the TDB's graphical user interface and on-demand bulk terminological data integration

3.4.1 Customising the TDB's graphical user interface

Most of the test users. feedback concerned the TDB.s graphical user interface (GUI). Therefore, customising a truly user-friendly GUI was very important to ensure that future users could feel at ease querying the TDB on the organisation's Intranet and, consequently, use it regularly.

Customising the TDB's GUI to the users' needs meant essentially to provide:

- an easy search function consisting of two fields with dropdown menus for defining the source and target language and a field for term entry. Any other search criteria such as subject etc. to restrict the search were not regarded as necessary; a fuzzy search feature was, on the contrary, considered as a must.
- a "compact" terminological data display in order to avoid unnecessary scrolling, whenever possible: For instance, by displaying only relevant data elements without displaying the corresponding data categories, whenever the latter were self-explanatory.

- two different data display layouts: A default one appearing immediately after any successful search and displaying only the basic entry data such as concept-related data categories with the relevant data elements, all designations in the three languages and the concept definition in the source language chosen by the user; an optional one displaying all entry data. The latter would appear only in case of the user wanting to extend the search.
- an automatic e-mail generation feature to send a request to the translator-terminologists for requiring/suggesting adjustments to terminological data on a specific entry.

For the translator-terminologists, another customising goal was to ensure no user training for TDB querying would be necessary. Apart from a simplified search function as described above, the TDB's read-only version had to comply with the organisation's corporate identity guidelines and design. Furthermore, some navigation links to useful TDB-related information were added to its Intranet page, such as:

- the number of available terminology entries (this figure has to be updated as frequently as possible);
- a disclaimer;
- all navigation links to the pages containing useful information for the readers such as: A description of the scope, content and languages of the terminological data collection (including applied internal guidelines for each of the handled languages etc.), a description of the entry structure and entry fields, a list of the available subjects, the TDB's facts and figures (development, statistics, etc.) and, last but not least, a detailed description of the search feature (data displays, fuzzy search, etc.), definitions of terminology, terminology practice and the relationship between terminology and knowledge management.

Furthermore, a link to the translator-terminologists mailbox is provided for any terminology-related request.

3.4.2 On-demand terminological data integration

Following their cooperative approach and their commitment of avoiding the proliferation of disparate glossaries on the organisation's Intranet, the translator-terminologists immediately included the integration of data from existing glossaries in the TDB among their priorities for terminology production and started reviewing and adjusting it.

In this process, they found out that approximately 60% of all data had already been entered in the TDB by them. This confirmed the adequacy of the choices they had made when it came to defining the terms to be entered first, before effectively starting with terminology capture. As for the remaining eligible data, the translator-terminologists committed themselves to fully import it in the TDB as soon as they could before making the TDB available on the Intranet.

3.5 Phase IV: Organisation-wide dissemination of the terminology collection

3.5.1 Timing for the dissemination

This challenging phase started in January 2005. At that moment, the translator-terminologists. third milestone in terms of terminology capture, 2,000 validated entries, was reached. Although the TDB is only in its fledgling stages and, in quantitative terms, does not stand comparison with other similar products managed by large organisations, the number of entries that it contains - though modest - is a sound basis to make it an efficient search and working tool for all staff members.

The TDB is likely to prove useful since terminological data closely related to the organisation's business activities was given preferential treatment for entry and is in line with linguistic practices of internal and external specialists. Two other major reasons underpin the need to release the collected data and to put the TDB at a larger user group's disposal:

- Timeliness of the terminological data
- Validity of spelling rules, especially in the German language

In an ever changing business environment such as the financial one, terms and/or data related to them can become outdated after a relatively short time (e.g. a company name changes as a result of a merger or a reorganisation; or a product name is replaced by another one since a company no longer supports the former version and/or applications; e.g. a company is no longer active in a certain business field or a programme or application replaces functionalities naming; or SWIFT compliant messages change designation, etc.).

In addition to that, the introduction of the German language reform represents another stumbling block for translator-terminologists when it comes to defining adequate spelling in order to ensure term consistency; this holds true especially for the Swiss German business environment where the tendency to reuse English terms, sometimes hyphenated, sometimes uppercased (whereby spelled exactly as in the original language), prevails. Since authors do not have common spelling guidelines, translator-terminologists have to cope with repeated inconsistencies and assist authors with a sensible and consistent spelling alternative that they then reflect in the corresponding TDB entries.

The choice of an appropriate communication strategy to entice potential users to acknowledge the existence of the new tool is also crucial: The translator-terminologists have already written the relevant announcement - a concise message in the form of a pop-up-window - to appear on the Intranet homepage for a period of about two weeks. By telling the users that their involvement in the process of defining corporate language is welcome and valued, they expect to appeal to the staff members' curiosity and have them click on the corresponding link to the TDB and subsequently become active users of this corporate knowledge repository. The chain reaction will hopefully result in a productivity increase over time, leaving the staff members with time for more value-added tasks.

3.5.2 Next steps

It goes without saying that the translator-terminologists. phased approach to terminology practice does not end with this phase. The next step they commit themselves to make is to assess to which extent the product "TDB" will effectively contribute to knowledge sharing and transfer for knowledge seekers that wish to extract knowledge from this corporate knowledge repository for personal purposes (internalisation) or for disseminating it in the form of deliverables to a larger recipients group (externalisation).

The first aspect will definitely be more difficult to assess since it has to do with the understanding and acknowledgement of the organisation's language in the minds of all staff members - including those with whom the translator-terminologists do not maintain any (regular) working relationship. The second aspect could be appraised by analysing how much more efficient the processes for which the terminology collection represents a supporting tool became within a given timeframe.

In order to monitor the number and kind of queries of the TDB, the translator-terminologists intend first of all to implement a statistic feature in the TDB Intranet site. In addition to that, they will gather and classify all users' requests and keep the latter informed about their status (also via the TDB site) as well as prepare a user survey on the TDB.

The timing for initiating this assessment phase will depend on the reaction from users. In all likelihood, however, a whole year will elapse from the point of terminological data dissemination until assessment becomes viable.

4 HOW TRANSLATOR-TERMINOLOGISTS CAN CONTRIBUTE TO CORPORATE KNOWLEDGE UTILISATION IN A LEARNING ORGANISATION

By using translation-related and terminological knowledge (on the human side) and the appropriate infrastructure (on the technical side), it becomes possible to share a sort of ready-to-use knowledge with the company staff. This fact allows the continuous repurposing of certain or all contents for purposes they were not originally intended for.

In the presented corporate setting, terminology becomes an asset for knowledge sharing and transfer. As a matter of fact, the described multilingual document production process, as well as other ongoing processes such as the localisation of a proprietary software, effectively demand the use of a corporate knowledge repository such as the TDB. Particularly in this respect, the translator-terminologists seek to become real knowledge facilitators by making specific knowledge available on demand.

As far as human intervention is concerned, the translator-terminologists envision contributing to set the grounds for a more cooperative environment, similarly to a learning organisation in which practices, culture and systems promote the continuous sharing of experiences and lessons learned (Frappaolo 2002).

According to Garvin (1993) a learning organisation has the skills to create, acquire and transfer knowledge and to change its behaviour based on the new knowledge and insights gained. By continuing to adopt a pro-active approach in their relationships with other agents across the organisation, the translator-terminologists will seek due recognition as central language regulators for communication processes and, more specifically, as qualified partners of the business specialists for language and terminology matters. The ultimate goal is to contribute - even if minimally - to the cultivation of an open attitude towards changes and new approaches in the minds of the other agents in the organisation as well.

In order to give input on how existing or future gaps could be filled and on how the use of controlled languages or machine translation tools for future complex processes demanding a higher degree of automation could be integrated, the translator-terminologists will need to keep up-to-date with the latest trends in language processing solutions and techniques. They will thus promote active TDB utilisation.

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[1]"Content" as a technical term refers to material (data) saved in one or several media to support knowledge acquisition and transfer (e.g. content on Websites or other digital media as manuals, reports, internal and external corporate publications, etc).

[2]http://www.nelh.nhs.uk/knowledge_management/glossary/glossary.asp#I

[3]According to C. Frappaolo (2002:10-11), the main challenge when facing explicit knowledge is "to manage its volume, ensure its relevance and quality, and make it easily accessible - in a phrase, handling infoglut".

[4] A DMS is a software system based on an underlying database, in which unstructured objects (i.e documents) are indexed and tracked. A DMS monitors security, logs access to files and maintains a history of file content (Frappaolo 2002).

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