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FROM LSP TRAINERS TO TRAINEES AND BACK: WHAT CAN BE LEARNT FROM DEVELOPING TERMINOLOGY RESOURCES FOR FUTURE LEGAL EXPERTS

Abstract

The Department of Legal, Language, Interpreting and Translation Studies of the University of Trieste is working on TERMitLEX, a new terminological knowledge base (TKB) containing legal terminology. This knowledge base is specifically meant to meet the needs and expectations of legal experts besides those of terminologists and translators. Expert input through consultation with legal practitioners was sought to design the template for the terminological records to be included in TERMitLEX. As part of this consultation process, a questionnaire was submitted to final-year students of the Department's own 5-year degree programme in Law. This paper first presents the questionnaire and then analyses participant responses. The results of the questionnaire not only provide information for the design of TERMitLEX (e.g. what aspects of a legal TKB students are most interested in, such as contexts, phraseology, and equivalence), but also shed light on other important factors in the learning process: the students' attitudes to using English as a foreign language, a general lack of awareness of linguistic resources (both electronic and printed), and scarce online information retrieval skills. This information could be useful in the design or redesign of LSP course syllabuses.

Keywords: legal terminological knowledge base, needs assessment questionnaire, lexical and terminological resources for future legal experts, LSP training, Legal English

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1. Terminological resources and future legal experts

The social, economic, political, and legal dimensions of today's world are permeated by increasing multilingualism. It should then not be surprising that nowadays one is expected to know, understand, and communicate in more than one language. Legal experts, who are here understood as legal practitioners and legal scholars, are no exception. However, the fact that the knowledge and the ability to use foreign languages are (almost) taken for granted in professional settings does not mean that those who find themselves in a multilingual working environment are also aware of the linguistic resources available to them nor that they understand which resources best suit their needs and goals. Indeed, they may not even recognise the need to consult a linguistic resource.

The assumption at the basis of this study was precisely that future legal experts, who in this study correspond to 5th-year Law students (see also Section 3.1.1 below), have almost no clue to the variety of linguistic (both lexicographical and terminological) resources that may prove useful to the legal community. Therefore, to gain insight into the needs of future legal experts, it was first necessary to expose them to a set of linguistic resources and to a multilingual terminological knowledge base (TKB) specifically developed for the legal domain. The rationale behind this study lies in a wider project[1] aiming at the creation of TERMitLEX, a new TKB developed by the Department of Legal, Language, Interpreting and Translation Studies (IUSLIT) of the University of Trieste as a repository of legal terminology. TKBs are not new to the IUSLIT Department, since its terminological database TERMit (see Magris (2001, 2002) and Magris, Musacchio, Rega, and Scarpa (2002)) has existed for over two decades now. However, while TERMit's ideal end users have always been interpreters and translators, it was felt that TERMitLEX's focus on legal terminology would make it a useful resource for Law students and legal experts as well.

2. Developing a legal TKB: from TERMit to TERMitLEX

Ever since the creation of TERMit, the terminological collections it contains have always been produced by students of the University of Trieste, in particular, by BA students in Applied Interlinguistic Communication, MA students in Specialised Translation and Interpreting and, prior to the Bologna process, students in Translation and Interpreting. Although the degree programmes just mentioned have a vocational orientation, the terminological entries compiled by the students (who can select a domain and a language combination of their choice) cannot be considered the outcome of a professional terminologist's work. Moreover, the translation and terminological skills and expertise of BA students are generally lower than those of MA students. Given these two factors, a variable level of quality of BA and MA students' work can be expected. Moreover, as the compilers study translation and interpreting and TERMit's developers are professors of translation and interpreting with a professional background in these fields, TERMit's logical intended end users are translators and interpreters and students

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1   Title of the project: *Sviluppo di una base di conoscenza terminologica multilingue in ambito giuridico* (*Development of a multilingual legal terminological knowledge base*), financed by the University of Trieste, coordinator: Prof. Marella Magris.

of translation and interpreting. However, since the establishment of the IUSLIT Department from the aggregation of four units (Faculty of Law, Advanced School of Modern Languages for Interpreters and Translators, Department of Legal Studies and Department of Language, Interpreting and Translation Studies), the shared research initiatives carried out in the legal field have revealed a potential interest in terminological resources by legal scholars and other professional profiles within the legal community. Therefore, the new TKB, which is entirely dedicated to legal terminology, is not to be considered as a complete novelty but rather as an evolution of TERMit.

The development of TERMitLEX entails two fundamental steps. Legal terminology, with its peculiarities (e.g. embeddedness in different legal systems expressed in the same language), requires specific fields in TKBs, so the first step consists in reconsidering the existing fields in TERMit's terminological record to make them suit such peculiarities. The second entails considering future legal experts as a new group of intended end users. In this regard, again two remarks can be made. First, the inclusion of a new group of end users may require amendments to the template, an operation that has been extensively explored for instance in e-lexicography (for a discussion of customisation of e-dictionaries, see, among others, Bergenholtz and Bothma (2011), Bothma (2011), Müller-Spitzer and Koplenig (2014), Tarp (2009, 2011), Trap-Jensen (2010) and Verlinde and Peeters (2012)). Second, there is a general lack of empirical data as to the real terminological needs and preferences of different groups of end users. In fact, the translators' and interpreters' needs and expectations were well known to the scholars who developed TERMit, due to their academic and professional expertise, and have already been investigated by different authors (for a survey on translators' needs regarding specialised lexicographical resources and an overview of other previous studies on users' needs, see Durán Muñoz (2010, 2012, pp. 129-134), while for a discussion of translators' need in the age of the so-called "e-lexicography", see Bowker (2012)). The same holds true for foreign language students who, along with translators, are the most obvious users of lexicographic resources (see, among others, Abecassis (2007), Bogaards (2005), Salehe Mdee (1997), Szczepaniak (2003), Tarp (2004) and Tono (2001)). However, the same cannot be said about other potential groups of users, such as legal experts.

The tool of the trade of legal translators, legal interpreters and legal experts, i.e. legal language, is the same, but the purposes for dealing with legal texts, be they written or oral, and the methods used to do it, differ (see Mortara Garavelli, 2001, p. 4). In principle, then, also the way legal terminological data are processed and displayed in a TKB should be different. Therefore, the development of TERMitLEX included a research phase in which the needs and preferences of future legal experts were collected by means of a questionnaire and subsequently considered for the fine-tuning of the template. However, while the design of the template for the new TKB was the ultimate aim of the questionnaire, the responses provided by Law students turned out to be a source of interesting information for LSP trainers. In the following Section, the structure of the questionnaire used for the needs assessment is described, while in Section 4 the most relevant observations from an LSP training perspective are summarised.

3. Assessment of future legal experts' terminological needs

Broadly speaking, needs assessment can be undertaken for many purposes and applied to many different situations, but, as a rule of thumb, such a systematic analytical process is carried out with a view to improving the current state and achieving a desired situation or correct deficiencies on an individual or collective scale, within educational, training, business or public organisations. In educational and training environments, needs assessment is generally considered as a part of course and syllabus design and evaluation. In this sense, needs assessment has a long tradition in the teaching of second and foreign languages. A closer look at English language teaching, for instance, reveals that needs assessment has attracted much interest in relation to both general English (see, for instance, Brindley, 1989, and Seedhouse, 1995) and English for specific purposes (see, for instance, Huhta, Johnson, and Tulkki (2013), and Hutchinson and Waters (1987)). Within these broad categories, needs assessment has also been performed with a specific focus in terms of types of needs and/ or communicative/professional contexts, such as in Munby (1978), who concentrated on communicative needs, and in Crosling and Ward (2002) and Bosher and Smalkoski (2002), who discussed oral communication in business and health-care settings respectively, just to mention a few. In this study, however, no needs assessment for language teaching and learning purposes was conducted, for a survey of which the reader is referred to Serafini, Lake, and Long (2015), who covered a time span of thirty years (1984-2014). On the contrary, the purpose here was to shed light on the needs and preferences of future legal experts as regards terminological resources. For this reason, a needs assessment questionnaire was administered in May 2016 and April 2017 to 5th-year Law students at the IUSLIT Department. These students were selected for two main reasons. First, they were considered to be possible future legal practitioners or legal scholars although it is very likely that some of them will pursue a different career path after graduating. Secondly, they were deemed sufficiently versed in law, legal language, and legal terminology (at least in their mother tongue) so as to be able to assess their own needs and express their *desiderata* with regard to linguistic resources.

Although the present study originally took the cue from needs assessment in language teaching, the premises on which it was based were slightly different. In fact, the aim of the assessment was not to identify the training needs of Law students to design a new academic module, but rather to identify the possible needs of future legal experts as regards terminological resources. The type of needs assessment carried out was designed to meet the specific requirements of the project for the development of TERMitLEX. In other words, it was assumed that legal experts may benefit from resorting to legal terminological resources. Given this assumption, the idea was to expose Law students to different existing terminological repositories by asking them to try to use them and express their opinions in terms of usefulness and satisfaction with the resources, their preferences, and their *desiderata*. Their responses would thus allow the further development of functions in the existing database TERMit or the addition of new ones in TERMitLEX. Previous teaching experience of Legal English revealed a lack of familiarity with lexicographical or terminological resources by Law students. The respondents to the questionnaire were thus expected to be unfamiliar with these resources and unable to answer to questions at an abstract level. Consequently, the questionnaire used

for the needs analysis contained a structured activity consisting in a series of practical tasks to be completed in a pre-established order.

3.1. Structure of the questionnaire

Given the lack of experience with lexicographic and terminological resources displayed by Law students, the structure of the questionnaire has a gradual approach. Part 1 was meant to provide profile data of the respondents and verify whether they met the criteria for taking part in the study. The first prerequisite was being enrolled in the fifth year of the Single-Cycle Master's Degree Programme in Law at the IUSLIT Department. The second prerequisite was attending one of two specific elective modules, namely Legal English or Criminal Enforcement Law. Indeed, the questionnaire included a task-based activity revolving around an English text focusing on *probation*. To carry out this activity, minimum knowledge on probation was required. As this legal notion is touched upon in both elective modules, students fulfilling both prerequisites were supposed to have the minimum knowledge required. The questionnaires were compiled by a total of 66 students, 20 of whom were male and 46 female and half of whom read Legal English and the other half Criminal Enforcement Law. The questionnaire was administered in the second semester of academic years 2015/2016 and 2016/2017.

After Part 1 students were asked to answer questions on their self-perception of their knowledge of English. The questionnaire focussed on English for two reasons. Firstly, it is a language that should be mastered by or at least known to all 5th-year Law students. Secondly, in multilingual contexts, one of the most common pragmatic solutions to the problems posed by the co-existence of several languages is the use of English, which has assumed the role of a *lingua franca*. The point here is certainly not to argue for or against this use of English. It is rather to explain that this role makes English a suitable language for undertaking a structured reflection on a foreign legal language and on the benefits of using bi- or multilingual lexicographical or terminological resources. In the same part of the questionnaire, students were required to state whether they held any international English language certificate, had ever worked or completed a traineeship in an environment requiring the use of English and/ or had already attended a Legal English course. Part 3 was devoted to the knowledge and use of—both printed and electronic—lexicographic or terminological resources by future legal experts.

Part 4 of the questionnaire contained a task-based activity designed to lead students to reflect on their terminological needs and *desiderata* and provide constructive responses to TERMitLEX's developers. The activity was subdivided into a sequence of tasks: reading the text, selecting three problematic elements, specifying the reasons for their choices, trying to solve the problems using the resources available on the Internet and examining the information available in the *probation* entry in IATE. Part 5 required students to observe the terminological entry for the same term *probation* in TERMit and express their opinions or suggestions. Finally, Part 6 was an open-ended section in which students could make comments and suggestions on the type of linguistic resources and features they would like to find online.

4. Results and discussion

In this Section, the responses provided by the students in the questionnaire for the terminological needs assessment are illustrated and discussed.

4.1. Knowledge and use of English

To lead the respondents into the task-based activity based on an authentic English legal text on probation (see Section 4.3), students were first asked to self-evaluate their level of English in accordance with a simplified version of the Common European Frame of Reference (Council of Europe, 2001). Students were also asked to indicate whether they held any international English language certificate, whether they had ever worked or completed a traineeship in an environment where the use of English was required and whether they had already attended a Legal English course.

What emerged from their responses is that 12 out of 66 participants reported having had a job or completed a traineeship that required the use of English and, of these, only two students had actually performed an activity (at a regional institution in Brussels and in a multinational company) that could be linked to an MA degree programme in Law, the others having been receptionists in hotels, bartenders, shop assistants, and the like. Moreover, three of the students reading Legal English at the IUSLIT Department reported having already taken the same module in a different university, while four students reading Criminal Enforcement Law declared having taken Legal English elsewhere. Being outside the scope of the needs assessment for the TERMitLEX project, these two aspects have not been investigated further. However, from an LSP trainer's point of view, the second fact should be given a critical appraisal: English is widely used in multilingual legal professional settings, but Law students at the IUSLIT Department do not seem very interested in learning or improving their Legal English skills. It would be thus worth investigating whether the same trend applies to Law students in other non-Anglophone universities.

4.2. Knowledge and use of lexicographic resources

Research on the use of linguistic – mainly lexicographic – resources, in particular dictionaries, with a view to improve them is not new and dates back to the 1980s (for a brief overview, see, for instance, de Schryver and Joffe (2004)). However, a closer look at the studies carried out so far in this field reveals that both printed and electronic dictionaries and their use have been studied in connection to two main activities, i.e. foreign language learning and translation, as clearly demonstrated also in a relatively old but nonetheless current volume edited by Atkins (1998). More recently, this has been further confirmed by, for instance, Lew (2012), Müller-Spitzer (2013), and Tarp (2008), who distinguish between text reception or comprehension, text production, and translation. The close relation between these activities and lexicographic resources should not be surprising, considering that printed and/or electronic dictionaries are constant companions in foreign language students' and translators' daily lives. When legal experts are taken into account, on the contrary, other resources come to mind, such as legislative acts and statutes, textbooks, legal encyclopaedias, law reports, and scholarly

Table 1.
Answers to Questions Concerning the Use of Different Types of Lexical and Legal Resources.

Have you ever used	Yes	No
paper dictionaries	55	11
monolingual	36	
bilingual	32	
electronic dictionaries	57	4
monolingual	19	
bilingual	15	
paper legal resources	14	48
electronic legal resources	27	35

Table 2.
Answers to Questions on the Knowledge of Dictionaries of (Legal) English.

Do you know any	Yes	No
online English dictionary	44	22
paper Legal English dictionary	22	41
online Legal English dictionary	24	39

collections. In this respect, it must not be overlooked that the range of these resources depends on the underlying legal traditions.

While studies on how and why translators and language learners use lexicographic or terminological resources are available, as are available studies on the requisites that these resources should have to meet their expectations, no evidence of similar studies in relation to legal experts have been reported in the literature. A part of the questionnaire has thus been devised to shed light on these aspects. The answers to the questions on the use of lexicographic and legal resources, both in paper and electronic format, have been summarised in the following Table[2].

Table 1 indicates that a comparable number of participants admitted having used paper and electronic dictionaries, regardless of the language (83% and 86% of the students, respectively). As for legal resources, including encyclopaedias and databases, the trend is completely reversed: only 21% report having used paper legal resources and 40% electronic legal resources.

A similar situation can be noticed when exploring the knowledge of English dictionaries. As a matter of fact, while two-thirds of the participants declared to know online English dictionaries, only slightly more than one-third reported knowing that paper or online Legal English dictionaries exist.

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2   Please note that the sum of the answers in this and the following tables does not always correspond to the total number of participants in the needs analysis because answering all the questions in the questionnaire was not mandatory.

Given the data presented in Subsection 4.1, it is not difficult to imagine that students are not involved in any activity requiring the use of these types of tools. Consequently, the answers reported in Table 2 should not come as a great surprise. What is surprising, on the contrary, is that three students specified *bab.la*, three *linguee.it* and five *Google Translator* as examples of electronic dictionaries. The interesting fact here is that some students seem to prefer web portals that contain a large number of bilingual dictionaries rather than a dictionary specific to the English language, while some students do not seem to see a difference between a machine-translation tool and a dictionary.

Since one of the first hits generated by any search engine comes from *Wikipedia*, the next questions were devoted to this tool. In this regard, 64 students reported commonly using *Wikipedia*, but only 30 of them considered it a reliable tool and only 29 admitted employing it when they do not know the meaning of a legal term. In the latter case, all of the respondents declared that they verify the truthfulness of the information provided by *Wikipedia* by checking it through other tools.

The last question in this section concerned the evaluation of the reliability of online tools. Four options were possible: the quality of the website, the indication of an authoritative author, the date of latest update, and citations or links to external sources. Since no further specifications were given, a subsequent degree of subjectivity in the responses is implied, especially as regards the first two options, but, nonetheless, all the options provided resulted relevant for the participants, since 83% claimed to be in favour of the first and third option, 70% of the second and 65% of the fourth.

4.3. Task-based activity and IATE

The assumption underlying this study is that legal practitioners and scholars cannot work but with language(s), but the goals they pursue are different from those of translators and interpreters. Therefore, they may not have taken into serious consideration, for instance, looking for the meaning of a foreign language legal term in a resource different from those traditionally considered or specifically developed for legal purposes. This could explain why they may not have ever consulted a dictionary or any other lexicographic or terminological resource. On the basis of this assumption, it was believed that asking "abstract" questions on the information that future legal experts would like to find in a dictionary or glossary[3] would be counterproductive and distance students rather than encourage them to collaborate. A task-based activity was thence considered as the most likely solution to involve the students in the needs assessment and yield useful results.

The task-based activity concerned an authentic text in British English regarding the legal institution of probation (the text is shown in Appendix). The text was retrieved from *gov. uk*, the website of all UK government departments and other agencies and public bodies where governmental policies, announcements, publications, statistics, and consultations are reported. The website primarily addresses British citizens and aims at providing information simply, clearly, and rapidly, but it is also a resourceful portal for any foreigner who wants

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3   It should be borne in mind here that metalanguage terms such as *terminological repository* or *terminological knowledge base* are unknown to the students who compiled the questionnaire.

Table 3.
Problematic Elements Selected by at Least 10% of Respondents and Relevant Reasons.

	Total	I don't know the word	I know the word, but I would like to check its meaning	I don't know what the Italian equivalent is	Other
offender manager	41	11	10	17	3
serve/serving	24	1	19	4	3
community sentence	20	5	6	11	/
probation	20	2	12	2	5
(on) parole	19	3	7	9	1
released	10	4	4	2	1
unpaid (work)	7	3	1	2	1

to live in the UK or understand how the UK government, agencies, and public bodies work. Given its aim, it is quite natural that the topics covered concern a wide array of legal issues, ranging from benefits to childcare and parenting, from UK citizenship to the administration of justice, from driving licenses to visas and immigration, and the like. It is also quite natural that, owing to the heterogeneity of its readership, despite the predominantly legal nature of the topics covered, the language used, and its structure are simple and clear. The text on probation, which belongs to the thematic area called "Crime, justice and the law", has been chosen for two main reasons. The first was that the topic falls within the broad field of criminal procedure and, more precisely, criminal enforcement law. Given the prerequisites specified in Subsection 3.1, the topic should have been known to at least half the respondents. The other reason was that probation is not an unknown legal concept in Italy[4]. However, probation as described on *gov.uk* is a foreign legal institution for an Italian Law student. As such, it may be different compared to the Italian institution. For this reason, an Italian (future) legal expert may be motivated to look for further information.

The activity was divided into a series of linked tasks. The first task was to read the text and select a maximum of three problematic elements for which consulting the Internet could be useful. For each selected element students had to specify the reason why they found it problematic by selecting one of the three options provided or by giving a different reason. The problematic elements selected by at least 10% of the respondents and the reasons for such choice are reported in Table 3 below.

What emerges from Table 3 is that the problematic elements can be divided into two categories: the first group is made up of nouns or noun groups, which thus fall within legal terminology, while the second group comprises verbs forming collocations, which thus fall within legal phraseology. This appears particularly relevant for both the development of TKBs and LSP teaching. Relating the first aspect to TERMitLEX, it must be said that TERMit's record template already contains a "Phraseology" field. Therefore, the responses only confirm

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4   See, for instance, Cesari (2016) and Conti (2016).

Table 4.
Websites Consulted to Solve Doubts on the Problematic Elements from the Text on Probation.

Type of resource	Website	Number of respondents
Dictionaries/ linguistic resources		
	wordreference	32
	dictionary.com	11
	macmillandictionary.com	10
	context.reverso.net	9
	dictionary.cambridge.org	8
	oxforddictionaries.com	7
	linguee.it	5
	bab.la	4
	Google Translate	4
	dizionari.corriere.it	3
	thefreedictionary.com	2
	thesaurus.com	2
	dicios	1
	dizionari.repubblica.it	1
Legal dictionaries/ resources		
	IATE	4
	legal-dictionary. thefreedictionary.com	3
	legaldictionary.com	1
	thelawdictionary.org	1
Search engines		
	Google	8
	pluris-cedam.utetgiuridica.it/ main.html (Italian)	1
Encyclopaedias		
	Wikipedia	17
	duhaime.org	2
Other websites		
	gov.uk	26
	offendersfamilieshelpline.org	19
	sentencingcouncil.org.uk	4
	hub.unlock.org.uk	2
	justice.gov.uk	2
	workwithoffenders.co.uk	2
	criminal.findlaw.com	1
	ec.europa.eu	1
	law.com	1
	Ministero della Giustizia	1
	psychologytoday.com	1

the usefulness of this field in the template, even when the TKB addresses Law students. Moreover, phraseology is further emphasised as an important aspect also in Part 5 of the questionnaire (see Subsection 4.4), which supports the idea that "Phraseology" must be kept in TERMitLEX's template and indicates that further investigation in legal phraseology as a fundamental component of legal TKBs is needed.

From an LSP teaching perspective, on the other hand, it is very interesting to notice that students perceived both terminology and phraseology as problematic. Among the options available (see Table 3), they preferred claiming that they would have liked to know more about the meaning or the Italian equivalent, rather than admitting that they did not know the word or expression at all. Evidence that attention must be paid to terminological and phraseological aspects alike may be very useful in the design or redesign of an LSP course syllabus. However, also the fact that for LSP students with a non-linguistic background the use of their mother tongue is a gateway to understanding the message conveyed through a foreign language should not be underestimated.

The next task consisted in the search of the problematic elements in a search engine. For each element the webpages consulted were reported. For clarity, the results obtained have been divided into five categories in Table 4.

As Table 4 shows, despite the legal nature of the text to be analysed, most resources consulted by the students are not tools developed specifically to deal with legal issues or legal language. On the contrary, resources for legal language (i.e. IATE and legal dictionaries) were used in a limited number of cases. A link could thus be established between Tables 2 and 4: most participants in the study do not know that linguistic resources focusing on legal language exist or, if they do, they do not use them. However, this is perfectly in line with the observation that "[f]or the user the type of information source is not important. Important is that he/she retrieves the exact required information as quickly as possible" (Bergenholtz & Gouws, 2010, p. 105). Moreover, while students were not asked to specify the keywords used, what can be concluded by looking at the websites they indicated is that their method for searching for linguistic/legal information online is rather rudimental. Indeed, it seems clear that they opened the first hits provided by a search engine without examining the source in more detail or performing an advanced search.

This observation has strengthened the hypothesis that Law students of the IUSLIT Department, but the same is supposed to hold true for Law students of other universities in Italy at least, are insufficiently familiar with the linguistic resources that are freely available online and that may prove useful in their future career. It is precisely on the grounds of this hypothesis that the decision has been taken to include, in the same part of the questionnaire, some questions about IATE[5]. Participants were first asked whether they knew what IATE was, and only 38% provided a positive answer. However, not all of those who knew IATE also claimed to use it, since only 27% reported having already tried it. After these introductory questions, students were asked to look for the term *probation* in IATE, observe the relevant terminological entry and describe the possible differences between the information contained

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5   IATE (Inter-Active Terminology for Europe) is the European Union's inter-institutional terminology database used in the EU institutions and agencies since 2004 for the collection, dissemination, and shared management of EU-specific terminology. It is available at http://iate.europa.eu/SearchByQuery.do.

in it and the information retrieved during previous searches at the beginning of Part 4 of the questionnaire. In this regard, 62 out of 66 participants found the information in IATE useful and 56 were satisfied with it. In an attempt to summarise the comments freely expressed by the students, however, it could be said that the features offered by IATE that they appreciated most are the degree of reliability (expressed in stars), the context(s) that accompany the searched term, the possibility to choose the domain, the large number of hits obtained by performing a single search, the degree of specialisation and the accuracy of the information, the presence of one or more definitions, the schematic layout, the reliable and official links to external sources, the date of latest update, and the sources of the information.

4.4. Task-based activity and TERMit

In Part 5 of the questionnaire, students were required to observe another terminological entry, i.e. the terminological entry for the term *probation* in English and Italian compiled according to TERMit's record template[6]. Again, students had to express their opinions on the usefulness of the information contained in the entry and identify the fields and the data that they considered most relevant for a future legal expert. Students were also encouraged to provide any suggestion or comment to the entry, so that both positive and negative aspects could emerge.

As for the former, like for the entry in IATE referred to in Subsection 4.3, students appreciated the presence of contexts, definitions, and sources. In addition, they also highlighted the importance of the fields containing related words, synonyms, phraseology, equivalence (in this specific case between Italian and English), and the geographical area where the term is used. The entry they had to analyse was formally complete (it was made of all the fields comprised in TERMit's record template) but simplified in terms of its content[7]. Therefore, it is not surprising that students preferred the Italian part of the entry, which was more detailed. Along the same lines, preference was also reported for the contexts in Italian, which were more similar to a definition than to a context of use, as well as for the so-called field "Note", in which further information on the classification of the legal institution of probation was provided.

Nonetheless, some critical aspects also emerged with regard to the information contained in the Italian part of the entry. Some participants recognised the fact that some information was outdated. This is indeed true, given that the entry was compiled before major amendments in Italy were made to the legal institution of *sospensione del processo con messa alla prova*, which is the most similar notion to the UK *probation*. Moreover, some students highlighted a lack of references to legislative, normative or official sources and to scholarly works, which can be linked to the need for reliable sources. They also pointed out the disorganised display

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6   The terminological entry provided in the questionnaire was extracted from the MA thesis in Specialised Translation and Conference Interpreting by Marta Vitulano (title of the thesis: *Giustizia riparativa e mediazione penale: un'indagine terminografica in italiano, inglese e tedesco*, academic year 2013/2014, thesis supervisor: Prof. Marella Magris, thesis co-supervisor: Dr. Katia Peruzzo).

7   Due to space and time constraints, the information contained in some fields related to the English language had been shortened.

of the content. However, in this respect a justification can be found in the fact that TERMit's entries are meant to be interactive and visualised online, while for the purposes of the needs analysis they were presented on paper. Another interesting observation should engender reflection in the developers of legal TKBs and LSP trainers alike: one student signalled the lack of clarity in the "Equivalence" field, where the metalanguage term "prestito" (i.e. loan word) was used to refer to *probation* when used as a borrowing in Italian texts. While in this specific case the meaning of the term may be inferred from the context, the fact that TERMitLEX and other TKBs may be consulted by a variety of users who may be versed in a different knowledge domain (law in this case) but may lack linguistic metalanguage necessarily entails the reconsideration of some aspects that concern the language to be used in expressing linguistic concepts.

4.5. Comments and suggestions

The previous parts of the questionnaire, especially those intended for the observation of two examples of terminological entries (IATE and TERMit), were considered sufficient for participants to reflect on their needs and preferences. For this reason, in the last part of the questionnaire students were given the opportunity to leave further comments on the type of linguistic resources and features they would like to find online. No restriction was placed in this part, so some comments do not consider the feasibility of the solutions suggested, such as in the case where a student called for the creation of a terminological-legal catalogue that, at the same time, focuses on comparative legal aspects, contains different meanings in every single jurisdiction, highlights the relevant differences and whose comparisons are not limited to the UK-USA/Italian legal systems. The "freedom of expression" granted to the participants led to the most varied comments. For the purposes of the present paper, only the comments relevant from an LSP teaching perspective have been selected and presented in the next Section.

5. Developing a legal TKB: what LSP trainers can gain from this experience

The questionnaire developed for needs assessment was originally conceived as a suitable means for guiding the design of a terminological record template for TERMitLEX that would meet the expectations of future legal experts. However, a careful analysis of the Law students' responses revealed information that may prove useful also for LSP trainers.

Although expressed by one respondent only, a comment on collocations seems relevant in this sense: one student pointed out his difficulties in finding a definition or an explanation of a collocation and the need to consult several entries in a dictionary to be able to understand a phraseological unit, entailing a considerable "waste of time". This aspect is certainly significant for the developers of a TKB, since it seems to indicate that the simple enumeration of, for instance, verbs that most frequently collocate with a certain term is not sufficient to meet the needs of the end-users. This is especially true when the verb has different meanings depending on the noun that it collocates with in context. Suffice it to mention here one of the verbs recognised as problematic (see Subsection 4.3 above), i.e. *to serve*, whose meaning is

completely different if combined with the nouns *sentence* or *warrant*. From the point of view of an LSP trainer, this observation can also be of particular importance since it suggests that in LSP courses the study of terminology and phraseology cannot be separated but should rather go hand in hand and be supported by targeted training on how to efficiently use dictionaries and other lexicographic and terminological resources.

From the same standpoint, it is interesting to note that two students highlighted the need for linguistic resources with an integrated tool for listening to the correct pronunciation of the searched terms. Although there are no plans to include such a tool in TERMitLEX, these comments give food for thought as to the advisability and urgency to incorporate the illustration of websites offering these types of features in LSP courses. As a matter of fact, these websites may be useful in the self-learning of foreign languages but can also be used as support to academic LSP courses. However, some comments even call for an introduction to both linguistic and legal resources that are freely available online in the early years of university study, for all Law students rather than just for those taking Legal English as an elective module. In this regard, it must also be added that, based on the list of websites consulted during the task-based activity (see Subsection 4.3), a simple illustration of available resources would most likely be insufficient to address the lacunae in information retrieval skills shown by the students. Therefore, a more comprehensive effort should be made to start considering profession- or market-oriented digital skills as an integral part of academic study programmes.

The last category of comments considered relevant from an LSP teaching perspective relate to the contact between languages. While it is self-evident that translators and interpreters consulting a TKB are interested in the degree of equivalence between two terms in different languages, it is interesting to see how translation acquires a prominent place in the comments expressed by Law students. Indeed, students would like to find websites containing the translations of foreign legislative acts and similar documents. By taking a closer look, a link can be thus established between these comments and the results reported in Table 3: Law students seem to process the information related to a different legal system through their mother tongue in order to come to grips with it or to be reassured that they have properly understood a text in a foreign language. Moreover, this is also in line with the positive opinions about the degree of reliability in IATE entries (see Subsection 4.3) and suggests not only that translation should have a role in LSP courses but also that LSP trainers should help the students develop a critical awareness of the contexts where translation may be useful or detrimental. This is of utmost importance when teaching LSPs in domains whose underlying conceptual systems differ, such as languages for legal purposes, given that an inaccurate translation could distort the message and assign misleading connotations to foreign concepts. In the specific case of Legal English, for instance, trying to understand who an "offender manager" is through translation, i.e. by looking for an Italian equivalent (see Table 3), may convey the idea that probation in the UK and Italy are the same legal institution, while in reality they share a common essence but have developed differently.

6. Conclusion and future perspectives

The identification of the needs and *desiderata* of the Law students who took part in the needs analysis described in this paper was one of the tasks in the project for the development of the legal TKB TERMitLEX. The main aims of the project are the revision and the integration of the terminological collections covering different legal topics already compiled by BA and MA Translation and Interpreting students at the IUSLIT Department according to the TERMit record template. However, the needs assessment of 66 5th-year Law students has also yielded relevant information for LSP trainers in general and trainers of language for legal purposes in particular.

The overall picture that emerges from the responses to the questionnaire is that the Law students who compiled the questionnaire are not (very) familiar with the different types of available linguistic resources. This finding is consonant with Bothma's observation that "users don't care what the source of the information is, whether it comes from a dictionary, encyclopaedia, thesaurus, Web document, research article, book/textbook and so on, as long as their information needs are satisfied and the criteria for good quality information are met" (2011, p. 76). What also comes to the fore is that Law students, like language learners and translators (see, among others, Abecassis (2007, p. 252), Laufer and Hadar (1997, p. 195), Tarp (2004, p. 318), and Varantola (1998, pp. 180–181, 2002, p. 32)), require some form of reassurance that the information available is reliable or that they correctly understood a term or a text in a foreign language. Since the study did not aim at exploring the reasons for the perceived need for a passage through one's mother tongue and for external confirmation, no further investigation was carried out to establish whether this need was due to a lack of self-confidence, an insufficient command of the foreign language or any other possible reason. It should also be pointed out that these findings relate to a relatively small group of students of a single university who study Law in accordance with the Italian legal tradition. To obtain a broader understanding of the real situation, it would be interesting to repeat the needs assessment with students from other universities with both civil law and common law backgrounds.

Moreover, the task-based activity described in Subsections 4.3 and 4.4 was conducted in what can be called a situational vacuum: neither were the real professional circumstances under which legal experts may need to deal with a legal text in a foreign language taken into consideration nor the text types that legal experts most frequently face. Therefore, research is urgently called for to identify the real-life situations in which legal scholars, legal practitioners, judges, and any other legal professionals are required to use a foreign language[8] and may need to consult a lexicographic or a terminological resource. In addition, this may help to detect the legal subdomains of major interest for legal experts and thus direct the efforts of both terminologists and language-for-legal-purposes trainers towards what is needed in the professional arena.

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8   For instance, for the English language this type of study was conducted within Spanish police forces by Torregrosa Bonavent & Sánchez-Reyes (2015).

Appendix

Text extracted from https://www.gov.uk/guide-to-probation used for the practical task described in Subsection 4.3:

Probation

Probation means you're serving your sentence but you're not in prison.

You could be put on probation because:

- you're serving a community sentence
- you have been released from prison on licence or on parole

While on probation, you may have to:

- do unpaid work
- complete an education or training course
- get treatment for addictions, like drugs or alcohol
- have regular meetings with an 'offender manager'

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