

How we neologise in Maltese

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Neology and Specialised Translation

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Preamble on “neologising”

- For us is also in relation to a term created in another language, mostly EN. So it falls within the realm of **secondary terminology**.
- **Not** the neologies from ordinary (every day) life forms, like a lot of jargon/words used on Facebook:

ADDJANI (mt)		"add me" (en)		
ADD	+	Ja	+	ni
en lexeme imported tense-neutral		mt verbal bound morpheme, used in the formation of verbs of non-semitic origin		mt inflectional morpheme representing 1 st person genitive pronoun (<i>me</i>)

- **But** on a terminology level: finding the right term for a concepts which has never been expressed in the target language (MT)

Preamble on “neologising” (2)

Technical vs. everyday language (Eggins, 1994)	
Technical language (LSP)	Everyday language (LGP)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ technical terms■ words only "insiders" understand■ acronyms■ abbreviated syntax■ technical action processes■ attributive (descriptive) process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ everyday terms [expressions]■ words we all understand■ full names■ standard syntax■ identifying processes■ (defining terms)



Contents of this presentation

- 1: Context
- 2: Our principles and scope
- 3: How neology comes about in our work

1: Context

Languages in the EU:

Council Regulation No 1/1958 Regulations and other documents of general application shall be drafted in all the official languages

Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (Articles 20 & 24): establishing language rights for citizens

Multilingual legal context

- All language versions of EU legislation are equally authentic, so that interpreting a provision of EU law involves comparing different language versions (ECJ, Case-283/81, CILFIT)
- Community law uses terminology that is peculiar to it in that it is not based on domestic law (ECJ, Case 29/69, Stauder v Ulm)
- Necessity of uniform interpretation across the EU (ECJ, Case-283/81, CILFIT)



Challenge for Maltese

- new terminology which frequently has to be coined rapidly and have an immediate reliability
- Maltese language confronted with the need to develop terminology to express a plethora of complex concepts (eg. in the scientific field) which had never been dealt with due to the prevalence of use of English in certain domains

The European Commission



Terminology creation is of paramount importance due to the fact that the Commission is the **prime originator** of legislation and implementing measures setting the technical details for primary legislation, and therefore the prime source of conceptualisation

Technical documents

These include:

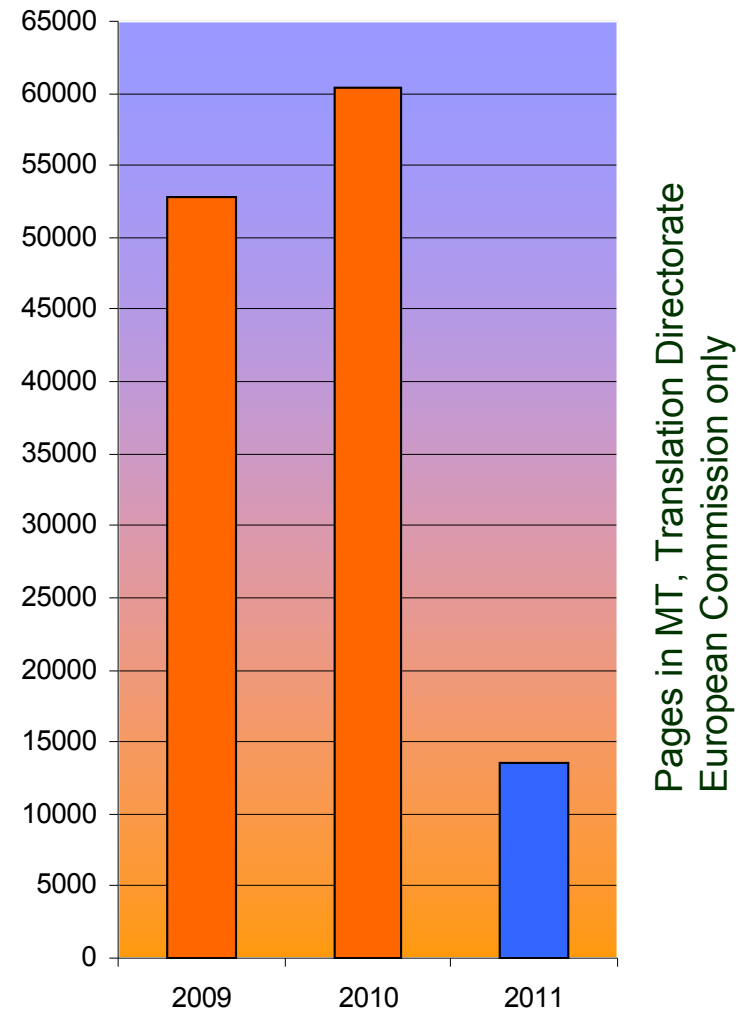
- Vehicle standards for braking, glazing, lighting, new technologies, etc.
- Telematics
- Food safety standards
- Hazardous goods
- Chemical substances in any imaginable good in the Single Market
- Financial market rules
- Financial reporting and auditing standards
- Aeronautics

Before EU accession: English was the rule of the day in such domains

Vocabulary functioned in a diglossial way (Fassold, 2009)

Production in MT

- For MT this is a considerable amount of published MT texts, requiring a certain level of consistency and accuracy in concept representation
- In such a context, terminology work becomes an indispensable tool to improve quality, clarity and consistency of message, and to eliminate inconsistencies (Seychell & Vella, 2011)





2: Our principles and scope

Die Grenzen meiner Sprache
bedeuten die Grenzen meiner Welt

- *The limits of my language
mean the limits of my world*

– L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus LP*

Overarching goal

- Legal certainty:
 - acceptability of meaning for the judiciary
 - predictability: less gaps for misinterpretation
 - harmonising legal meaning in a multi-lingual legal system
- ECJ cannot refer to linguistic arguments based on the ‘ordinary meaning of words’ or ‘everyday language’ in justifying its decision about the correct interpretation, because of the multilingual nature of the EU (Paunio, 2010)
- This necessitates terminology, as a normative practice, reconsidering the semantic scope of words if needed

eg. although in language for general purpose (LGP) we use **vettura** (most frequently used) and **veikolu** interchangeably for ‘land-based means of transport’, in a Case with reference to Directive 77/388/EC, the European Court of Justice made a distinction in such a way which necessitates a distinction between a term representing ‘land-based means of transport’ (**vettura**) only, and another term which includes the latter plus other means (**veikolu**, such as boats, aircrafts, etc.)

Scope

- Field & focus:
- **NOT** the language for general purpose (LGP)
 - not deal with individual words as they used in ordinary/normal communicational intentions (Strawson, 1967) with their multitude of meanings and significance (Ogden & Richards, 1960)
- **BUT** the language for specialised purpose (LSP)
 - needs more stability and consistency of use
 - is of a normative rather than descriptive nature (Rondeau, 1983)
 - does not look at words but at concept-representing terms within specific technical domains
 - is less context-dependent more subject dependent (Lerat, 1995)

When words become terms

- Words or group of words become terms when used in specialised fields and correspond to concepts of the same fields, defined in relation to those fields (Humbley, 1997)
 - eg. **consideration** (EN) = *kunsiderazzjoni/qies* (LGP-mt); *korrispettiv* (LSP-mt: settlement of payments domain)
 - **general government** = *amministrazzjoni pubblika* not its false friend *gvern ġenerali*
 - eg. **cost** (EN) = in LGP it is used interchangeably with *spiża/nefqa* (mt equivalent to *expense/expenditure*); in accounting and financial domains (LSP) the correct term would be *kost*, distinguishing itself conceptually from *expense*

ISO (704, 1987) requirements

- Terms should **consistently** reflect some key features of the **concepts** they are linked to in order to facilitate precise reference. At the same time, they should be as **economical** as possible **without giving rise to homonymy**
- Terms should be **lexically systematic** and should conform to the phonological and morphological **rules of the language**
- Terms must conform to the **general rules of word formation** of the language, that is they should **allow composition and derivation** where appropriate
- The meaning of a term should be **recognisable independently of any specific context**.

3: How neology comes about in our work

Pure terminography – no neology: we research, record and present terms as used in different domains

Terminography + terminology: when there are **inconsistencies**, we identify the signifier which best represents the concept

Terminology: when there are **terminological gaps**, we identify the signifier which best represents the concept

Systematic handling of chemical terminology

Systemic handling of terms: systems of concepts



In practice terminology as neology:

Actions could be categorised in 3 stages:

1. **Understanding** (abstract)
2. **Deconstruction/dismantling** (negative)
3. **Reconstruction** (positive)

Understanding

- Of concept / ‘units’:
 - linguistic phenomena of term in source language (grammatical qualities - *form*)
 - eg. “**fuel**” noun representing all types of fuels; not verb “(to) fuel”; not adjective like in “fuel cell”
 - the listing of categories / characteristics, of the ideas entailed (semantic scope - *matter*)
 - eg. “fuel” as something consumed to produce energy

Deconstruction/dismantling

- contrasting with the system of concepts
- comparing the concept to its idées voisines
- how: concept mapping techniques, categorical analysis within the whole system of concepts (genera-species analysis), etc.
 - eg. **fuel** = all types of fuels; not “**(to) fuel**”; not adjective like in “**fuel cell**”; not “**fuel**” as commonly used to refer to diesel or petrol for cars. It includes both carbon and non-carbon types; so important to caution against the romance form of “**karburant**”, which essentially would include only the carbon type. “**Non-carbon fuels**” would end up as “**karburanti nonkarburanti**”, or “**karburanti bla karbonju**”

Deconstruction (2)

finding the difference

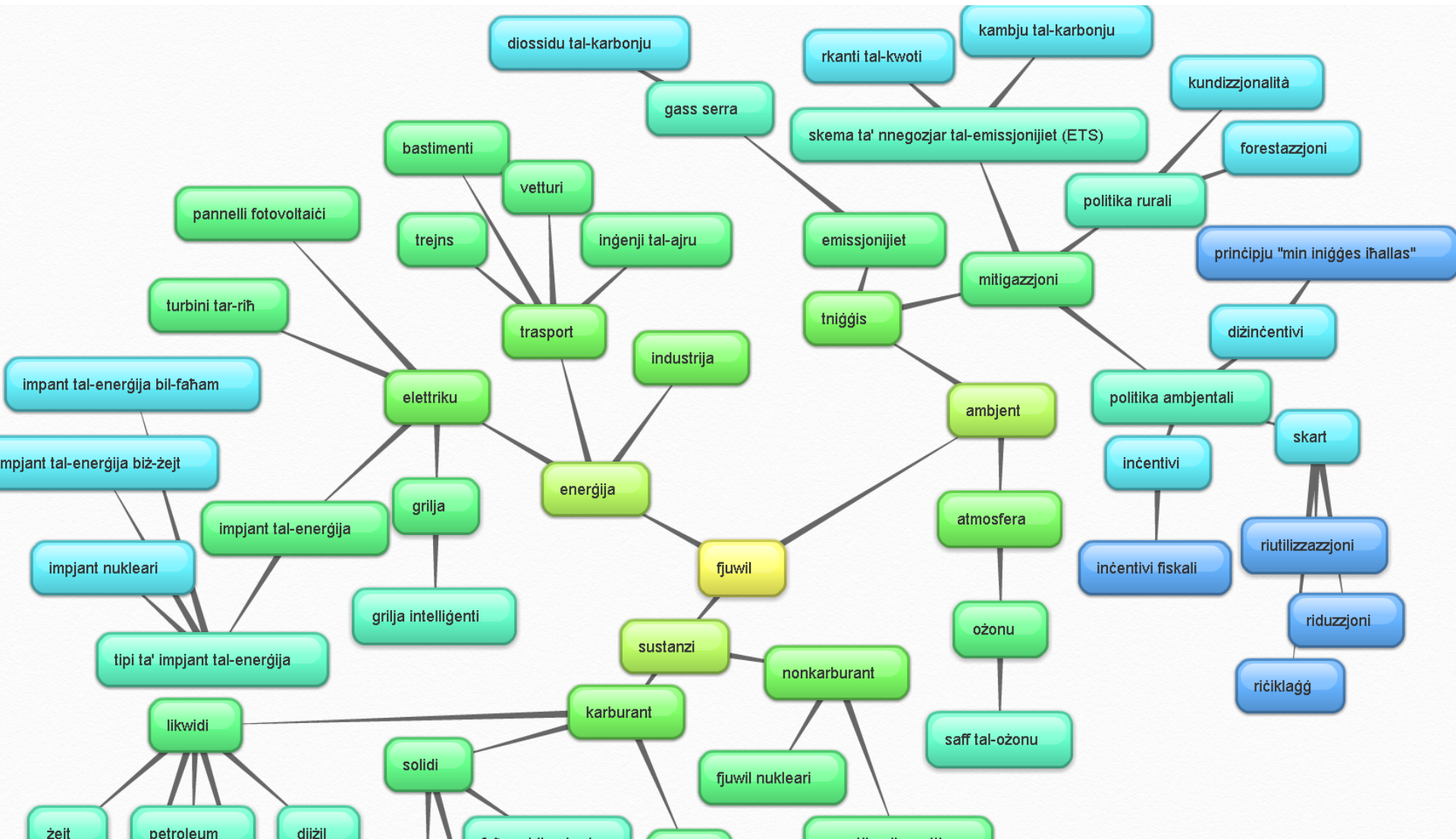
- King Lear: “I’ll teach you differences”
- De Saussure: in the language itself, there are only difference
 - Language as a system of differences
 - Identity/equivalence = minimal; leftover of the operation of marking the differences
- A word has meaning by **contrast** with other words that could occur in the same context, **not positively or empirically** (by direct correlation with the world) but by opposition to other words within a closed system of contrasts (Garver 1994)

There is nothings outside the text – Derrida

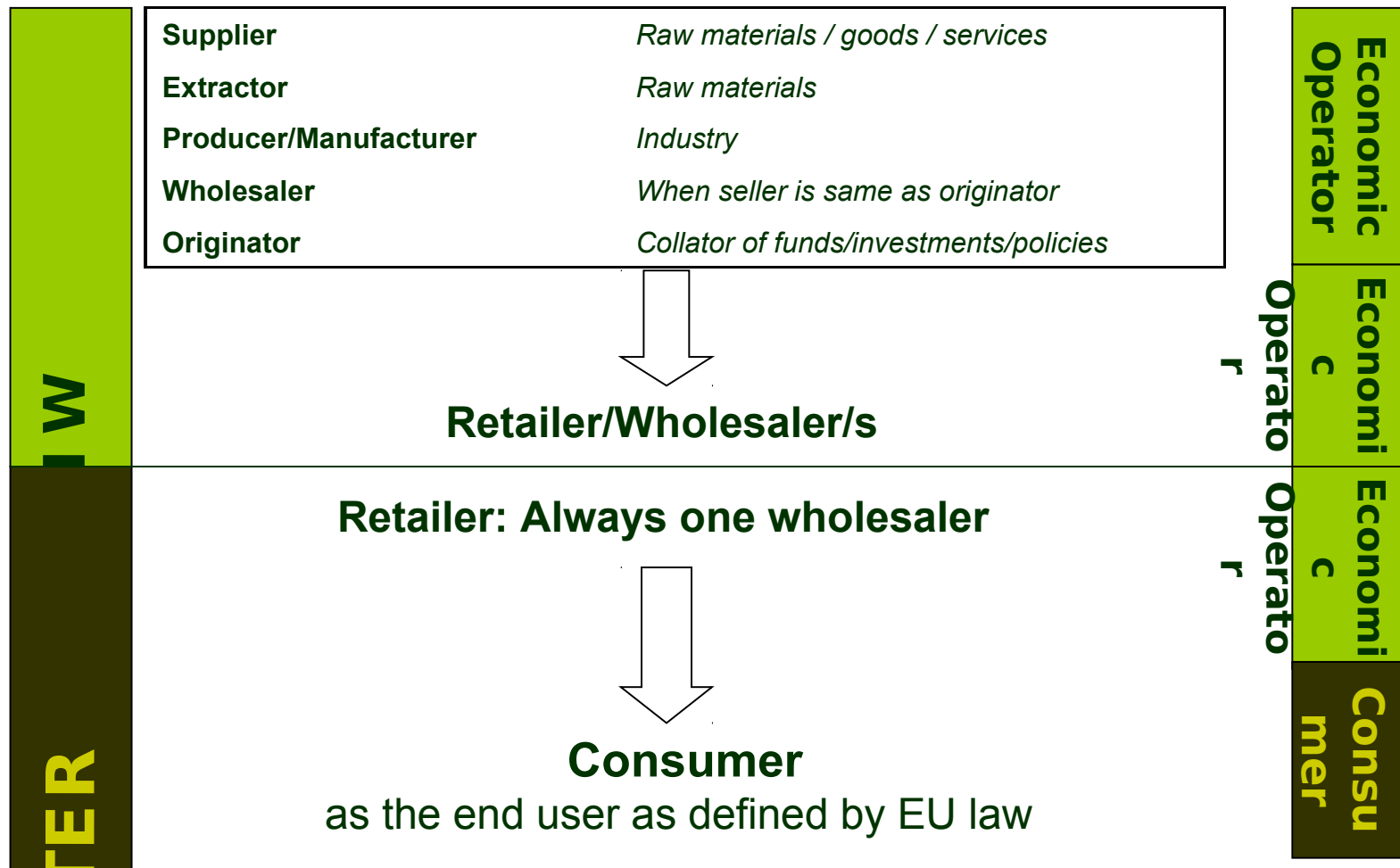
World of facts not of objects.

Objects = substance of the world but not part of it – Wittgenstein

Concept map: fuel (fjuwil)



Conceptual design (retail/wholesale)



Reconstruction (term formation)

- Normative: to represent the meaning and signification required (functional/pragmatic as opposed to foundationalist or realist/non-cognitive discourse). Not a master-vocabulary which permits absolute commensuration of all discourses (see Rorty 1980)
- Avoiding non-terms by opting for descriptive solutions.
- Finding interlanguage ‘synonymity’: same valid norms of usage in each language (Lorenzen, 1987); in EU law it would be like finding “European multi-lingual commensurability”
- Using a tool-box applied on existing lexemes or other drawn from language families within the MT milieu (Semitic-Romance-EN)
- Reconstruction: not an end in itself, not a destination but rather one step in a hermeneutic circle, feeding the stage of **Understanding** (‘bicommsuration’) and **Deconstruction**



Tool box for establishing basic elements of terms

(can be applied individually or concertedly)

1. Use of morphology
2. Use of models
3. Use of alliterations (with caution)
4. Loan translation
5. Use of metaphor
6. Reconsider the semantic field

1. Use of morphology

Morphological solutions applied on existing lexicon, exploiting dormant linguistic potentiality

- eg. **enclosure** (EN) = **magħlaq** (MT) based on the Semitic root GḤ-L-Q, developing the typical MT “nom mimmat”
- eg. the **systematic handling** of chemical terminology whereby a 'pro-creating' mechanism has been devised so that any chemical compound could be translated without the need of a dictionary, but simply by combining pre-established morphemes

1. Use of morphology (2)

Chemical terminology:

- Agreement on elements
- Agreement on affixes
- Agreement on basic compounds eg.
Carbon dioxide, ammonium hydroxide, etc.
- Complex compounds mechanism:
adding the affixes to elements

EN	MT
2-(2H-Benzotriazol-2-yl)-4,6-bis(1-methyl-1-phenylethyl)phenol	2-(2H-Benzotriazol-2-il)-4,6-bis(1-metil-1-feniletil)fenol
6,7-Dihydro-5H-cyclopenta[b]pyridine	6,7-Diidro-5H-čiklopenta[b]piridina
Methyl 3-aminothiophene-2-carboxylate	3-amminotijofen-2-karbossilat tal-metil

EN	MT
-AMINO-	-AMMINO-
-ANE	-AN
-ASE	-AŽI
-ATE	-AT
EN	MT
LACT-	LATT-
METH-	MET-
OCTA-	OTTA-
-OIC	-OJKU
-OL	-OL

1. Use of morphology (3)

Other examples:

1. **employer** = **impjegatur** = **impjega** (employ) + **tur** (morpheme to represent the actor, in this case in EN “-er” of “employer”); traditionally this was translated as “min iħaddem” (those who make other work), which does not match up to ISO terminology requirements.
2. **sampling** = **kampjunar**:
from “**kampjun**” (existing noun in mt) + **jar** (verbal morpheme for verbal nouns) = traditionally as “**teħid ta’ kampjuni**” (taking of samples)
3. Other examples are with the use of terms such as “**prudenzjali**”, “**sistemiku**”, “**operatorju/operazzjonali/operattiv**”, “**organizzazzjonali/organizzattiv**”

1. Use of morphology (4)

Subject field	English	MT	Method	Comments
administrative	operative	operattiv	<p>morphological solutions applied on existing lexemes, exploiting dormant linguistic potentiality, in order to narrow the semantic scope (a combination of semasiological and onomasiological perspective)</p>	eg. operative measure/measures in operation (accusative)
administrative	operational	operazzjonali		eg. operational reliability/ the reliability of operations (genitive)
administrative	operating	operatorju		eg. operating theatre/theatre for operations (dative)
administrative	organisational	organizzazzjonali		eg. organisational structure/ structure of the organisation
administrative	organising	organizzattiv		eg. organising committee

2. Use of models

...of derivations from MT milieu languages/elements originating from them:

- eg. **to fit** = **fittja**
fitt <phonetic expression> **+ja** <verbal morpheme>
to check = **čekkja** (**čekk+ja**)
- **fitter** = **fiter** (phonetic representation)
checker = **čer** (phonetic representation)
- **fitting** (n) = **fittjatura**
check (n) = **čekkjatura**
- **distort** (EN) = **distort**; distortion = **distor[s]joni**

3. Use of alliterations with caution

- eg. “**hedge**” has been existing in MT ‘public speak’ since the 1970s when Malta started negotiating its oil supplies with Libya with hedged rates.
 - Tested metaphors to find a better term like “**kopertura**” in line with other Romance languages, BUT it didn’t work properly because it conflicts with other terms, it is too general and creates ambiguity and it is not transparent. Hence, it fails most of what the ISO asks.
 - Alliteration as the most natural option: “**heġġ**” as an alternative to leaving the word in EN.
- There are numerous examples of such alliterations eg. **network**, **brejk**, **stepni!**, **kerikott**, etc.
- Background: 1980s revision of the MT language rules permit alliterations
- IT terminology: **dawnlowdjar/applowdjar?** (**downloading/uploading**)

4. Loan translation

- translating the lexemes into MT
- widely used in the EU context, not only with MT
- terms constructed on existing interlingual ‘synonymous’ lexemes but occurring in unusual contexts -> share the interlingual metaphor to create a sort of EU multilingual contiguity

4. Loan translation (2)

- long position (EN) = pożizzjoni twila (MT) = position longue (FR)
 - In order to preserve the interlingual reversibility of the term with a clear understanding of what is being said in the international language of finance, i.e. English, we followed the widely-used form by the other EU languages, and adopted "twil/a" for "long", which delivers the same metaphoric sense in MT
- “covered short selling” (EN) = “bejgħ bin-nieqes kopert” (MT) = “vente à découvert «couverte»” (FR):
 - “covered” in contrast with “naked/uncovered”/”kopert”/”couverte” position where the seller has or has not the asset back-up required (originally metaphoric, but by today’s usage the metaphor is neutralised & hence mere loan translation);
 - “bin-nieqes” has the same meaning as “short” (short of something, short of money) in MT. Hence, representing the totality of the term in a cognitive manner. We avoided the Romance element “qasir” (corto, IT&ES; court/à découvert, FR; curta, PT;) for “short” since there would be incongruence of the metaphor’s meaning: totally metaphoric but borrowed metaphor
 - “bejgħ” = MT for “selling” (loan translation)
- futures = futuri
 - (in MT only the singular existed “futur” meaning the temporal future. We kept to the EN metaphor and added the plural)

5. Use of metaphor

- **Metapherein**: Greek verb - to transfer
- Reduce semantics to pragmatics
(Rousseau, Nietzsche, Derrida)
- Reduce metaphor to semantics
- Pragmatics to complement semantics (Ricoeur)
 - Determine which meanings are proper in a given context - careful appreciation of the context makes possible the reduction and elimination of any surplus meaning

Metaphor consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else; the transference being either from genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, or on grounds of analogy (Aristotle, Poetics, 1457b 6-9)

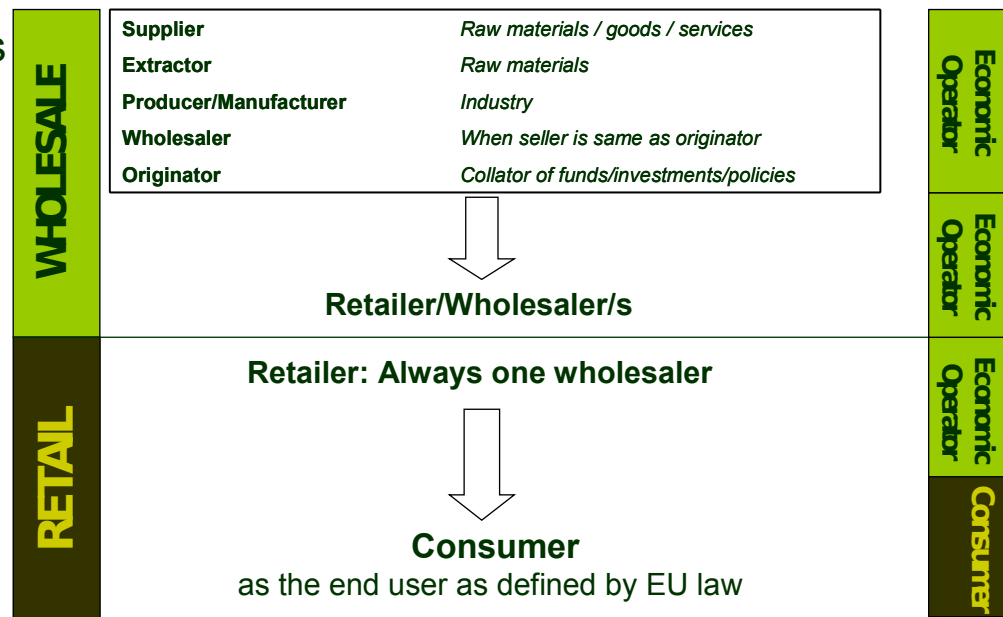
5. Metaphor (2) *(Fontanier)*

1. highlighting certain features, suppressing others
2. substituting a whole network of elements « aspects » (Lakoff, 1980: “aspects of concepts”)
3. 1+2 = new meaning: “New metaphors have the power to create a new reality” (Lakoff, 1980) – meaning generation.
4. Metaphor sanctioning: literal
5. Fontanier: conditions for good metaphor

5. Metaphor (retail/wholesale)

Is the metaphor always suitable?

- "bl-imnut" for retail, from the romance vocabulary, meaning minute, a little
- "bl-ingrossa" for wholesale, meaning in big quantities ('grossa' is a measure equivalent to a dozen of dozens: $12 \times 12 = 144$).
- reference was purely metaphoric; but metaphor could never be sanctioned as literal nor made sense as a metaphor to the new circumstances. Our solution was to construct a "conceptual design" in cognitive terms. We set out the distinguishable factors between retail and wholesale and identified the main difference. We divided to two concepts and draw the relationships between actors:
- 1) In the wholesale one finds relationships between economic operators
- 2) In the retail one finds an exclusive relationship between the retailer and the consumer
- Therefore: retail not sufficiently unique as identifier; operator is unique in the wholesale group
- Hence we chose to replace retail with konsumatur (consumer) and wholesale with operator (operator), and applied the right MT preposition to fit the adjective in the appropriate syntax.



5. Metaphor (retail/wholesale) (2)

+ Market	Suq tal-konsumaturi	Suq tal-operaturi
+ Investor	Investitur konsumatur	Investitur operaturi
+ Investment	Investiment tal-konsumaturi	Investiment tal-operaturi
+ Prices	Prezzijiet għall-konsumaturi	Prezzijiet għall-operaturi
+ Pricing	Ipprezzar għall-konsumaturi	Ipprezzar għall-operaturi
+ Investment fund	Fond ta' investiment għall-konsumaturi	Fond ta' investiment għall-operaturi
+ Fund	Fond għall-konsumaturi	Fond għall-operaturi
+ Price index	Indiċi tal-prezzijiet għall-konsumaturi	Indiċi tal-prezzijiet għall-operaturi
+ Exposure	Skopertura għall-konsumaturi	Skopertura għall-operaturi
+ Banking	Ibbankjar tal-konsumaturi	Ibbankjar tal-operaturi
+ Store	Fanuta għall-konsumaturi	Fanuta għall-operaturi
+ Customer	Klijent konsumatur	Klijent operaturi
+ Retailer	bejjiegħ għall-konsumaturi	
+ Wholesaler		

6. Existing lexis & semantic field

- Reconsider the semantic fields' limits of words in LGP & compare to LSP: to ensure a necessary congruence between a concept and its representation (semasiological perspective)
 - eg. **sikurezza** and **sigurtà** used interchangeably for safety and security. However, in order to distinguish between the 2 concepts (incident v accident elements) we stick to: **safety** = **sikurezza**, **security** = **sigurtà**
 - eg. a related example: in LGP, **nefqa**, **infiq**, **spejjež** are used interchangeably for **expenditure**, **expenses**, **spending**, while in the financial domain each's semantic scope is delimited to create the necessary difference. In LSP **nefqa** = **expenditure**, **infiq** = **spending**; **spejjež** = **expenses**.

Tools for composite terms

- incremental (+): coining through the use of elements resulting from the other tools
- reductive (-): eliminating the unnecessary and frills
 - eg. **green house gass**: **gass serra**: from "gass b'effett ta' serra" to "gass tas-serra" to "gass serra"
 - **medium enterprises** = **impriži medji** (instead of 'impriži ta' daqs medju')
 - **framework programme** = **programm qafas** (instead of 'programm ta' qafas')

Tools for composite terms: INCREMENTAL

Possible constructions:

• literal + literal

eg. **brake actuator** (EN) in cars = **attwatur tal-brejk** (MT): combining an interlanguage synonym as noun and alliteration of EN to MT as adjective.

eg. **non-return valve** (EN) = **valv unidirezzjonali** (MT): the first conceptual unit already exists as such (valv) derived from Romance and exported to this particular technical field. We used an unequivocal synonym of "non-return" ("one-way/single direction") to represent better the concept in a cognitive manner

eg. **threshold** (EN) - **livell limitu** (MT) seuil (FR): from "livell(i) ta' limitu" to "livell limitu". Also tested "għatba" literal meaning of threshold but used metaphorically as in EN in the same way it has been used by the other Romance languages, but did not succeed the usage test because of clarity and other factors

• literal + metaphor

eg. **shade band** (EN) in cars = **faxxa tad-dell** (MT): combining a **Romance** with a **Semitic** lexeme

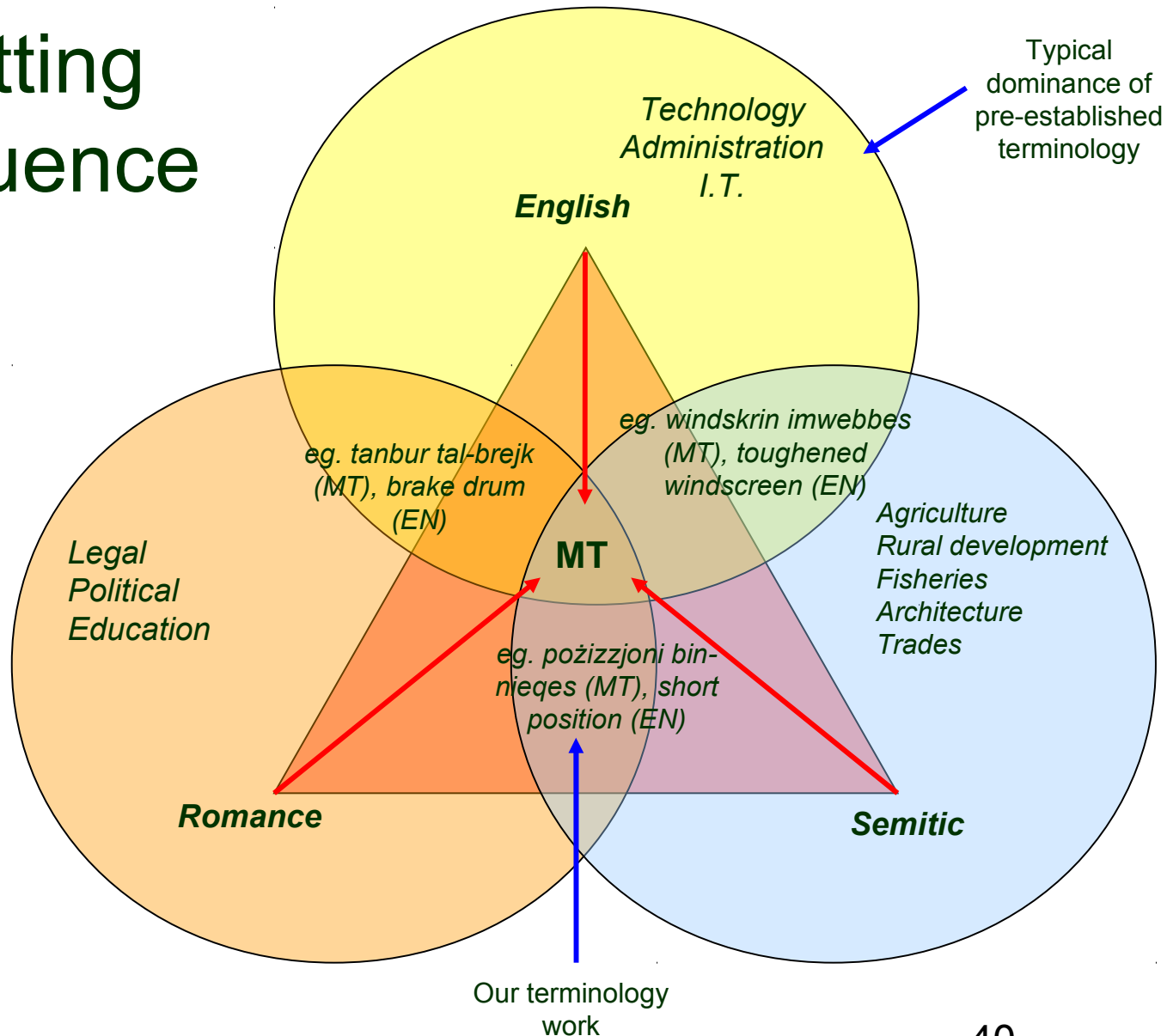
• metaphor + literal

eg. **seat back** (EN) in cars = **dahar is-sit** (MT): combining existing **EN** and **Semitic** lexemes

• metaphor + metaphor

eg. coupling head (EN) in cars = **ras l-agganċ** (MT) 'ras' = original meaning is 'head' as in EN; 'agganċ' is based on a cognitive understanding of the actions involved in a 'coupling' keeping the significance of such actions representing them by one metaphor.


Plotting influence



Summing up

From concepts to new terms. Check for:

- Existing lexis (literal/sactioned metaphor) + compare semantic fields in LGP & LSP
- Check for loan lexemes in the MT linguistic millieu (Semitic/Romance/EN)
- Check for models for word formation
- Possible alliterations with caution
- Possible morphological elements
- Metaphoric possibilities
- Possible multi-lingual contiguity through loan translation
- Possible combination of methods
- In non-elementary terms check for:
 - consistency in incrementalism
 - categorical correctness
 - avoid non-terms (lenghty descriptive versions)
 - correct syntax
 - eliminate frils
- Conformity to ISO on terminology
- Retranslatability test of term ('neutral' back-translation to source language)



Thank you
for your attention

Reuben Seychell, 2011

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