



GeekSpeak

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More Is Better?

I took some time the other day to take an inventory of the out-of-the-box machine translation (MT) connectors or plug-ins that translation environment tools (TEnTs) come readily equipped with these days. Just a few months ago, most TEnTs came with only a connector to Google Translate, but Google's decision to start charging for its MT service (if it is integrated into a third-party tool) made most tool vendors look for other solutions alongside Google Translate.

What follows is an (admittedly incomplete) list of tools and their connectors, along with some thoughts about their usefulness. (Note that for the actual use of most of these MT tools you will need a license key.)

Trados Studio 2011

- Integrated plugins for LanguageWeaver (BeGlobal), SDL MT, Google Translate, and Microsoft Translator.
- Free installable plugins on SDL's app store OpenExchange for itranslate4.eu, Systran, MyMemory, Google Translate, and Microsoft Translator. The two last plugins extend the ability of the out-of-the-box connectors. For instance, this allows you—in the case of Microsoft Translator—to translate without a license in exchange for your translation data from the current project.
- How it works: You can select various engines at the same time and all matches are shown in the order of the preference you determine. Exceptions: When selecting itranslate4.eu or MyMemory, only those matches are shown.

memoQ 6

- Integrated plugins for Google

Translate, Microsoft Translator, itranslate4.eu, Systran, LetsMT!, Asia Online, and MyMemory.

- How it works: You can select various engines at the same time and all matches are shown with one selectable preferential engine.

Déjà Vu X2

- Integrated plugins for Google Translate, Microsoft Translator, itranslate4.eu, PROMT, and Systran.
- How it works: It is only possible to select one MT engine at a time. Déjà Vu X2 uses MT hits in combination with translation memory hits.

Wordfast Classic 6

- Integrated plugins for Google Translate, Microsoft Translator, itranslate4.eu, WorldLingo, and MyMemory.
- How it works: You can select up to three engines at a time and all matches are shown, including various matches from itranslate4.eu.

Wordfast Pro 3

- Integrated plugins for Google Translate, Microsoft Translator, and WorldLingo.
- How it works: You can select several engines at a time and all matches are shown.

Fluency 2011

- Integrated plugins for Google Translate, Microsoft Translator,

Systran, and MyMemory.

- How it works: You can select only one engine at a time and matches are not shown automatically. Features an interface for writing scripts to ease post-editing.

Lingotek

- Integrated plugins for Google Translate and Microsoft Translator.
- Possible connectors to SDL LanguageWeaver, SAIC Omni-fluent, and Asia Online.
- How it works: You can select several engines at a time and all matches are shown.

Multitrans

- Possible connectors to PROMT and MyMemory.

MemSource

- Integrated plugins for Google Translate, Microsoft Translator, Microsoft Translator Hub, and Systran.

OmegaT

- Integrated plugin for Google Translate, Belazar (for Russian↔Belarussian), Microsoft Translator, and Apertium.

Across

- Possible connectors to Google Translator, Lucy LT, Reverso, Language Weaver, Moses, and Asia Online. ➔

The GeekSpeak column has two goals: to inform the community about technological advances and at the same time encourage the use and appreciation of technology among translation professionals. Jost is the co-author of Found in Translation: How Language Shapes Our Lives and Transforms the World, a perfect source for replenishing your arsenal of information on how human translation and machine translation each play important parts in the broader world of translation.

Figure 1: Suggested translations in Wordfast

The control system operates with microprocessor-based technology.	
CT	Das Steuersystem arbeitet mit Mikroprozessor-basierte Technologie.
MS	Die Steuerung arbeitet mit Mikroprozessor-basierte Technologie.
IT (lin)	Das Kontrollsystem läuft mit mikroprozessorbasierter Technik.
IT (sys)	Das Kontrollsystem funktioniert mit mikroprozessorgesteuerter Technologie.
IT (trd)	Lenkender Gebäude handelt mit microprocessor-based Technologie.

If you need to know what these different MT engines are and what language combinations they support, I encourage you to check on their respective websites or Wikipedia pages.

So, what is all this good for? I will leave this up to your preferences (and language combination, and kinds of translation you do, and the many likes and dislikes that you might have about this kind of technology). But there is one thing that interests me in particular: Is it helpful to have several MT suggestions shown as you translate?

Consider the example in Figure 1 from Wordfast (with MTs from Google Translate, Microsoft Translator, Linguatrec, Systran, and Trident MT—the last three through itranslate4.eu).

We do not need to argue about how “good” these matches are, but most of them contain some material that in

some kind of combination might be useful in the actual and final translation. What role does this information play for the translator, though? Does it help or hinder? Is it different, for instance, than having a lot of matches from a general translation memory shown?

It was interesting to discuss this question at a workshop I gave recently. Not surprisingly, the translators in attendance expressed very divergent opinions. Some felt that this would stifle creativity, whereas others liked the idea of having four or five different MTs displayed. And chances are that the answer does indeed differ for each translator and that translator’s individual style of processing data.

There is, however, one way that this simultaneous display of different results will be helpful for anyone who is looking into using these out-of-the-

box MT engines (as opposed to not using MT at all or using a customized engine). It allows you to compare the results very easily. Chances are that you will quickly find one of the engines better than the others for your particular project, and this will allow you to disable the less helpful ones (and stop paying for their suggestions).

One of the (very unscientific) tests that we did during the above-mentioned workshop was to look at different MT providers with different kinds of texts in about 10 of the represented language combinations. The result? We noticed that often there was a clear “winner” on a per-project basis.

MT might not be your cup of tea as a productivity tool, but it is important to remember that the results of one MT system are always unlike those of another.

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