

## Corpus-based Comparative Analysis of English and Latvian Terms of Land Administration

Inese Ozola<sup>1</sup> Dr.philol.; Zigrīda Vincēla<sup>2</sup> Dr.philol.; Velta Parsova<sup>3</sup> Dr.oec.  
Latvia University of Agriculture, Latvia<sup>1</sup>, University of Latvia, Latvia<sup>2</sup>,  
Latvia University of Agriculture, Latvia<sup>3</sup>  
[inese.ozola@llu.lv](mailto:inese.ozola@llu.lv)<sup>1</sup>; [zigvin@lu.lv](mailto:zigvin@lu.lv)<sup>2</sup>; [velta@parsova.lv](mailto:velta@parsova.lv)<sup>3</sup>

**Abstract:** The article presents the analysis of the terms of land administration contained in the texts published in Latvia and the United Kingdom. The aim is to compare the terms used in Latvian texts, their translations in the English language with the terms used in authentic English texts, to identify the most controversial cases and to provide the explanation of the problem arising in working with the English terminology of land administration. The comparative analysis of the terms was based on corpus linguistics methodology, i.e., the parallel English term lists were created, the frequency of the term use was found and the concordances of the extracted English terms from both types of texts were analysed. The findings of the small-scale study reveal a discrepancy in the use of terms of land administration in the translated texts from Latvian into English and the ones found in the original English texts since they contain different terms denoting the same concept.

**Keywords:** English for specific purposes (ESP), terms of land administration, corpus linguistics.

### Introduction

English for specific purposes (ESP) researchers (Dudley-Evans, St. John, 1998; Hutchinson, Waters, 1987) define ESP teaching/learning as a study course that is designed to meet specific needs of adult learners and is related in content, methodology and activities to a specific subject field or occupation focusing on those language aspects of syntax, vocabulary, text structure, semantics, and so on, that are appropriate to such content.

The teaching of a language for specific purposes for non-philologist students at the tertiary level should be aimed at developing competences necessary for the world of work. The Latvian researcher (Luka, 2009) considers that the competence of foreign language for specific purposes consists of communicative, intercultural and professional activity competences, the components of which interact in a definite socio-cultural context. Study courses of English for specific purposes or ESP (if a foreign language is English) should be designed according to the needs analysis and mostly they are content-based. Students at the university improve their language skills, acquired during the secondary school, and gain new skills and the knowledge necessary for their future career and the academic environment. The focus is on the development of knowledge and skills necessary for the reception of scientific and professional texts, and the production skills, speaking and writing, are also concerned with scientific and professional activities hence the ability of the relevant use of field-specific terms (Ozola, Grasmane, 2012).

Concerning ESP teaching in higher educational institutions in Latvia, ESP courses have to be designed not only on the basis of the students' needs analysis, but also on the basis of the EU labour market demands, and the requirements for specific professions and occupations determined in the regulations of the National Occupational Standards adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia (Profesiju standarti, 2010). They state that most of the professions and occupations require general knowledge of one or two foreign languages and also the terminology of the subject field in one or two foreign languages.

The curriculum of the Latvia University of Agriculture includes content-based ESP courses in the first and second years of undergraduate studies which are integrated in the whole study process, stressing the interdisciplinary approach when preparing specialists for agriculture, forestry, veterinary medicine, environmental studies, land administration, landscape architecture, agricultural engineering and other fields. The ESP study courses include acquisition of terms in the subject field, their use in the authentic texts. Linguists (Bušs, Joma, 2007, Rogers, 1999) define *term* as a word or a collocation

denoting or designating a specific concept of a particular subject field, which in turn belongs to a system of concepts which maps out the structure of the subject field. There is a view that the meaning of terms is context-independent, however, many researchers (see Rogers, 1999) discuss context-dependency, especially, in relation to translation issues.

The ESP course in the study programme “Land Administration” contains 6 CP, and the knowledge of terminology in the specialty is included in the learning outcomes. However, there is no unanimous opinion among industry professionals regarding certain terms and their equivalents in the English language in this subject field. Several terms in English are used in different texts to denote the same meaning, for example, the term “*zemes ierīcība*” appears as “*land management, land use planning, organization of the use of land or land survey*” in various English texts. In addition, there is no Latvian - English dictionary of the terms of land administration available in Latvia. The aim of the paper is to carry out a small-scale study to compare the terms of land administration used in Latvian texts and their translations in the English language with the terms used in authentic English texts. The research question is the following: does the use of terms of land administration in the translation of Latvian texts into English correspond to the terms used in the authentic English texts?

### Methodology and text corpora

The following corpus linguistics methodology (Baker et al. 2006, 42-43, 76; McEnery, Hardie, 2012, 49-50) was applied in the present study: (1) the creation of small specialised raw text corpora; (2) the research of the selected term frequency in the corpora; (2) the extraction of the concordance lines containing term use examples from both corpora texts. All selected texts were available online and dealt with rules and regulations of land administration of the Republic of Latvia translated from Latvian into English and similar texts of rules and regulations of land administration of the United Kingdom originally written in English. The analysed texts were arranged in two corpora. The first corpus contained three documents (Table 1) that were translated from Latvian into the English language and they comprised 26,444 words and the corpus was labelled CTTLE (corpus of texts translated from Latvian in English).

Table 1

Text Corpora

Corpus of texts translated from Latvian in English (CTTLE)		Corpus of the authentic English texts (CAET)	
Texts	Words	Texts	Words
Land Use Planning Law (Land Use ..., 2006)	2,690	Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Chapter 8 (Town and Country..., 1990)	4,731
National Real Estate Cadastre Law (National Real..., 2005)	11,942	Law of Property Act 1925 (Law of Property..., 1925)	16,185
Land Register Law (Land Register..., 1937)	11,812	Land Registration Act 2002 Chapter 9 (Land Registration..., 2002)	31,443
Total	26,444	Total	52,359

The second corpus contained the UK documents all originally written in English (in total 52,359 words) that were thematically related to the translated English texts (see Table 1). This corpus was labelled CAET (corpus of the authentic English texts). The English text collection was created to serve for the comparison of terminology use in the translated English texts with their use in the texts of the same domain originally written in English.

In total 10 terms (consisting of one or two words) were selected in the Latvian language for the research of their English equivalents as used in the texts of both corpora (see Tables 2 and 3 for the

selected terms). The chosen terms were taken from the list of specialized vocabulary included in the programme of ESP study course for Land Administration students to be studied during one term.

## Results and discussion

In order to find out how far the use of the selected terms in the English translations of the Latvian documents correspond with their use in the English authentic documents, the terms were searched in both corpora. The search of the selected terms was done with the help of *AndConc* concordancer (Anthony, 2013). The terms were entered in the quarry box and the concordance lines alongside with the frequency of the quarried term were displayed, as shown in Figure 1. Each concordance line was carefully inspected to check if the displayed word really performed the function as listed in Tables 1, 2 and 3. For example, the concordance lines revealed that the term *enter* 'ierakstīt' was used also in the meaning 'to enter into such agreement' or *decision shall enter into effect* (Cambridge Dictionaries Online were used for defining meanings). The concordance lines displaying the use of the selected words in a meaning beyond the scope of the present study were deleted from the list.



Figure 1. *AntConc* concordance lines of the term *estate* (Anthony, 2013).

In total 5 terms were found in the texts of both corpora used in the function defined in Table 2. In order to provide an overall insight in the frequency of these terms in the selected texts that vary in their length, the raw frequency counts were normalised to a text length of 1,000 words and their frequency is shown in Table 2. Irrespective of their frequency, which varies depending on the purpose of these documents, it is obvious that these five terms are found in all the translated and the authentic English texts included in the corpora.

Table 2

### Terms that occur in both corpora (per 1,000 words)

Terms in Latvian	Terms in English	Term frequency in CTTLE	Term frequency in CAET
būve	building	0.15	0.26
hipotēka/s	mortgage/s	0.30	0.72
ierakstīt, ieraksts	enter, entry	0.07	1.85
iznomāt/noma	lease	0.03	1.26
robeža/s	boundary/ies	0.22	0.22

Thus Example 1 shows that the term *lease* 'iznomāt / noma' is used in the meaning of money required for the use of a building. Example 2 reveals that the term *boundary* in both corpora texts denotes the

line that marks the limit or edge of something ‘*robeža*’. The term *building* ‘*būve*’, as seen in Example 3, denotes a structure with walls and a roof in both text corpora.

- (1) This paragraph does not apply to a **lease** (English text corpus)  
... the prices of the real estate market and **lease** payments (Translated text corpus)
- (2) A general **boundary** does not determine the exact line ... (English text corpus)  
... the land **boundary** plans (translated text corpus)
- (3) ... any **building** occupies together with land (English text corpus)  
... a newly erected **building** (Translated text corpus)

The research of the rest of the selected terms, however, shows that they occur either in the texts that are translated from Latvian into the English language or in the texts that are originally written in English, but not in both corpora. Thus the term *estate* in the meaning of ‘*nekustamais īpašums*’ is the most frequent (see Table 3) of the researched terms in the corpus of authentic English texts, as it is seen in Example 4. None of the concordance lines containing *estate* collocates with the word *real*. Moreover, the word *immovable* is not found in the corpus of authentic English texts, whereas the term *property* is used in the title *Law of Property* or in the meaning defined as ‘an object or objects that belong to someone’, as in Example 4, without specifying that it means areas or land in someone’s possession.

Table 3

**Terms that occur in one of the corpora (per 1,000 words)**

Terms in Latvian	Terms in English	Term frequency in CTTLE	Terms frequency in CAET
servitūts	easement	0	0.22
	servitude	0.11	0
nekustamais īpašums	estate/s	0	7.50
	real estate	9.64	0
	immovable property	4.91	0
apgrūtinājums	burden	0	0.13
	encumbrance/s	0.56	0
zemes ierīcības projekts	development plan	0	0.07
	land use planning project	2.00	0
kadastrs	cadastre	11.36	0

- (4) An easement, right, or privilege in or over land for an interest equivalent to an **estate** ... (English text corpus)
- (5) A person may take an immediate or other interest in land or other **property**, ... (English text corpus)

As to the corpus of translated texts, in all cases the term *estate* is used in the collocation *real estate* (see Example 6); this is the most frequent of the researched terms. In addition, comparatively frequent is also the use of *immovable property* in the same meaning that is seen in Example 7.

- (6) name of the **real estate** – a title allocated to a real estate in rural terrain by decision of the self-government, other than the address. (Translated texts corpus)
- (7) the area of an **immovable property** and of the land attached thereto (Translated texts corpus);

The term *easement* ‘*servitūts jeb apgrūtinājums*’ is found only in the corpus of the authentic English texts (see Example 8), whereas this term is not detected in the corpus of the translated texts. This corpus displays a few instances of the term *servitude*, as seen in Example 9.

- (8) the person entitled to the **easement** or profit...(English text corpus)
- (9) the person who has submitted a document regarding establishment or termination of **servitude** – in relation to the registration of an encumbrance of the real estate in the Cadastre Information System (Translated texts corpus);

Another term displaying the use variation across corpora is ‘*apgrūtinājums*’. Some instances of the term *encumbrance/s* are found in the corpus of the translated texts, see Example 11, but this term is not found in the corpus of the authentic English texts, whereas a few instances of the term *burden* are found (see Example 10).

- (10) A notice is an entry in the register in respect of the **burden** of an interest affecting a registered estate or charge. (English text corpus)
- (11) A division shall consist of four parts in which information regarding the following shall be entered 1) an immovable property, 2) the owner of an immovable property, 3) the **encumbrances** of an immovable property and 4) the debts of an immovable property. (Translated text corpus)

Regarding ‘*zemes ierīcības projekts*’, the translated text corpus displays the use of *land use planning project* in such contexts as shown in Example 13. However *land use planning project* has not been found in the corpus of the authentic English texts. Instead, contextually the same idea is found in the sentences that employ the term *development* (see Example 14).

- (12) A **land use planning project** shall be developed by complying with the spatial plan of the local government. (Translated text corpus)
- (13) take into account the **development plan** and any declared or ascertainable pattern for the grant or refusal of planning permissions in the relevant areas, as well as the period at which and context in which the restriction was created or imposed and any other material circumstances. (English text corpus)

The final, the tenth term, *kadastrs* has been detected in the corpus of translated texts in such collocations as, for example, *cadastre documents*, *cadastre object*, *cadastre statement*, *Cadastre Information System*, *cadastre data*. This term, however, has not been detected in the corpus of the authentic English texts. This is explained by the fact that the word *cadastre* is not commonly used in the UK due to the fact that because of historical reasons the development of land administration institutions has taken place in a different way from the rest of Europe. “A *cadastre*” is up-to-date information system consisting of register of land assigned for use, cartographic materials of land cadastre, data of land recording and land valuation. According to the legislation of Latvia, buildings and structures that are not owned by the same owner as the respective land and apartment properties are also required to be included in the cadastre (Parsova, Boruks, 2009). The UK does not have a cadastre which is different from other European countries. The UK has a compulsory land registration, but there is no central record of the precise location of boundaries. The rural land register and the real estate tax register could be considered as a type of the cadastre in the UK. The land law in the UK does not have a concept of ownership but rather of rights over land (Grover, 2008). These historical and culture differences should be explained to students when teaching terms of land administration within the respective ESP course.

## Conclusions

The findings of the small-scale study show that there is a certain discrepancy in the use of terms of land administration in the translated texts from Latvian into the English language and the ones found in the original English texts. Thus a half of the selected terms occur either in the texts that are translated from Latvian into the English language or in the texts that are originally written in English, but not in both corpora. The conclusion can be made that original English texts contain different terms (e.g., *easement*, *estate/s*, *burden*, *development plan*) from the ones used in the texts translated from the Latvian language into English (e.g., *servitude*, *real estate/immovable property*, *encumbrance*, *land use planning project*) denoting the same concept.

As regards the subject field of land administration, historical and culture reasons could be one of the explanation of such inconsistency of terminology. Another reason is the lack of the English – Latvian dictionary of land administration. A further research would be advisable to investigate in detail the terms that are used in different texts.

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