IBM Germany using RMT

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IBM as one of the largest IT companies is confronted with huge translation volumes every year.

Optimizing translation costs is a clear objective for the 26 IBM 'Translation Services Centers' (TSCs) all over the world. Machine Translation as one option for reducing costs came under close investigation. This is quite ambitious as we are not talking about gist translations for internal use, but about production quality that goes out to customers who pay for it.

After a first year of tests, IBM´s own SMT sol tion is now in production for some languages. So far, the Statistical system does not work well enough for German and a number of other la guages. The German TSC therefore decided to try out Rule-based MT as well, offered by a translation vendor. Last year´s results lead to the conclusion that we wanted to extend the RMT test to more project families and higher volumes.

However, this implied the involvement of other translation vendor companies, both for capacityreasons and because of the specific expertise they hold for certain IBM products. Forcing severalvendors into a new RMT system was not a valid option. Instead, TSC Germany started at thebeginning of 2013 to implement RMT servers I house in order to provide our vendor base with translation memories, enriched with German MT proposals.

This presented a challenge for all parties involved. The IBM translation processes and the corresponding tools are very complex. Moreover, time and resources for a 'research phase' were lacking. From day one, the RMT implementation had to work in the real production environment of the German TSC.

The plain RMT engine alone would not be suff cient. Clearly, the engine had to fit into our translation environment with IBM´s Translation Manager TM2 right in the middle. Fortunately, a workflow tool was offered by one of our vendors which links the RMT engine together with the IBM tools and processes landscape.

An efficient workflow support is therefore abs lutely key, and the same is true for terminology handling. We consider the smart terminology capabilities of the RMT system a core advantage that may help us to reach the break even point. Our internal analysis shows that an overwhelming number of terms used for translation are more or less complex compounds. An MT system that does not know these terms is likely to fail, and vice versa: If we build up terminology the right way, RMT could potentially pay off.

In addition to the RMT engine and the workflow tool which we both bought from vendors, we implemented a so called 'Terminology Verification Package' (TVP) ourselves. This is a VBA based spreadsheet solution which compacts the list of unknown terms as listed by the RMT engine and provides an efficient link to the terminologist. Approved terms get converted and fed into the MT lexicon. This gives us highly jobspecific terminology exactly when we need it.

This presentation is about IBM's past experience with the RMT solution we have in use, describing the roles of key contributors like terminologists, post-editors and SMEs in due consideration of the results we have achieved so far.

Sima'an, K., Forcada, M.L., Grasmick, D., Depraetere, H., Way, A. (eds.)
Proceedings of the XIV Machine Translation Summit (Nice, September 2–6, 2013), p. 399.