

Teaching Translation Memory Systems: SDL Trados 2007

Hari Venkatesan

University of Macau, China

Abstract

This article discusses a model for teaching SDL Trados to graduate students. The model aims to engage students in its attempt to simulate real-life situations where TM systems may find utility. It involves evolving exercises that combine the most prominent features of SDL Trados 2007 to allow students to quickly build up a TM that can be used to handle various translation tasks. The article also discusses a model for evaluation of student performance. The focus in this article is on SDL Trados 2007, but the model can be adapted for use with Trados Studio 2009 and later versions as well.

1. Introduction

SDL Trados remains among the most popular translation memory (TM) applications available that promise better efficiency when translating routine/controlled texts. At the University of Macau (UM), SDL Trados is taught as part of the Translation Technology course, which is a required course for students of the MA in Translation Programme. The course, which targets beginners, aims to equip students with sufficient theory and practice to be able to take the certification tests offered by SDL online. UM is also taking steps to incorporate Trados into its

day-to-day working through administrative staff involved in translation on a regular basis.

One issue observed during orientation sessions that introduce the system to beginners is its failure to impress potential users or, worse, to be received as an “extra burden” with little tangible benefit. Technophobia and administrative lethargy aside, key reasons for this seem to be the disillusionment people face when they realize that Trados does not translate but “merely” remembers what they have previously translated. While this is admittedly a case of wrong expectations met with inevitable disappointment, it remains true that even as a TM system, Trados needs to be built up before it can actually bring about the desired effect of improving efficiency and avoiding repetitive translation work. The prospect of learning how to use various applications (such as Translator’s Workbench, MultiTerm, TagEditor, etc.) and using them each time when one translates could appear cumbersome, particularly when no immediate benefits are promised.

Students of the Translation Technology class are equally unimpressed by the inability of Trados to produce at least rough translations that could be postedited into something acceptable. They also fail to appreciate the utility of the system considering the investment of university resources and that of their own time.

One way to address these apprehensions is discussing applications such as TagEditor. Highlighting the fact that TagEditor allows the user to preserve formatting of supported file types while changing content from source language to target language does create some interest in the system. It comes also with an acknowledgment that there is an increasing trend of institutions and agencies commissioning translations with stringent requirements as to format and style. However, it still leaves much of the actual translation work to be done by the translators themselves.

It was for this reason that an alternate model of teaching Trados was sought and conceived. This model adopts a different approach from that of introducing each application and its working one by one in the order laid out in the Translator’s Workbench Training Manuals. It instead makes use of WinAlign to create a TM database that is then used to demonstrate in what manner Trados could help translators. This model also leads to a model for testing that involves putting together TM and Termbases, which are then used to translate a given text.

2. A Model for Teaching Trados to Beginners

As mentioned above, Trados fails to impress new users primarily because they can be shown only simple examples of how a translation unit (TU) is committed to its memory. The application simply returns the translation previously recorded when we click Open/Get on a source text (ST) that is similar to one recorded previously.¹ Fortunately, in bilingual societies like Macau and Hong Kong, there exists an enormous corpus of pretranslated data on the Internet. These data can find their way into a TM through WinAlign. This application can allow authorized users to make use of data available on the Internet to observe the benefits of Trados in a more tangible way.

In case of the model used at UM, the content on the official portal (www.umac.mo) is available in three languages: Chinese, English, and Portuguese.² Parts of this content were aligned using WinAlign, and the TUs extracted and imported into a TM created on Translator's Workbench.³ The TM was configured to allow multiple translations and also display results for a match as low as 30 percent.⁴ After students are familiarized with the working of the Workbench and its tools on Microsoft Word and/or TagEditor, they are given a text to translate using Trados.

This text is basically a slightly altered version of the content extracted from the website. As students use the TM to translate the text, they find matches of various percentages that then have to be revised and fed into the TM again. The process effectively simulates what goes on when Trados is being used in a real-time scenario. Additional content absent from the web page but utilizing key terms from it is also incorporated into the ST given to students. This is done to demonstrate the utility of the concordance tool used to display instances and contexts where the word occurs.⁵ This effectively demonstrates the utility of the tool as a source of reference where translations of the entire ST are unavailable.

The next step is to bring together the Translator's Workbench and MultiTerm,⁶ another basic and important feature of Trados. Taking the example of the UM portal again, a comprehensive glossary of terms was compiled and made available on the portal to ensure uniform usage across all departments and administrative units.⁷ This glossary is imported into a Termbase,⁸ created on MultiTerm.⁹ After students are familiarized with the working of MultiTerm, the aforementioned TM is

used in conjunction with the Termbase to translate a given piece of text. This demonstrates the utility of Trados in standardizing usage of terminology, which arguably is of critical importance to any large organization.

In the case of orientations for administrative staff, the TM created using WinAlign contains all available content on the UM portal. It also includes parts of routinely translated texts such as interoffice memos, letters, notices, and so on. This TM along with a Termbase including the entire glossary of terms compiled by the administration of the UM effectively demonstrates the benefits of deploying Trados across administrative units. Different TMs are compiled for departments/units grouped together for minimum variation in content and usage. There is one master TM available on the central server for all departments and units to use. This TM is managed by an administrator as power user while individuals are given read-only access.

Following the simulation using the model described above, students are introduced to other applications of Trados and the basic applications in greater detail as time permits and proficiency is achieved with the key and basic features identified above. Exercises are conducted with texts in different formats to be translated using TagEditor to simulate scenarios that Translators might need to work with.

This model was seen to arouse much curiosity and enthusiasm among new users of the system and also led to innovative uses of the system before a sizable database of translations could be built up. The model described above naturally led to a model for testing that was successfully used at UM.¹⁰

3. Model for Testing Aptitude of Trados Users

Testing here refers to both designing a method to test the aptitude of SDL Trados users and also evaluating results of the test. During the training of both categories of users (students and staff), emphasis is placed on quickly gaining operational skills and being able to apply them to a simulated work environment. The test of their aptitude consequently emphasizes the ability of users to use all basic components of SDL Trados (Workbench, WinAlign, TagEditor, MultiTerm, MultiTerm Convert) to create from scratch a usable database that can then be used to translate a given piece of text. The actual test given to the users is as follows:

Users are given a set of numbered tasks to perform on the computer within a given time period (in this case two hours). Upon completion of each task, they are required to notify the instructor, who confirms successful completion and asks them to proceed to the next task. The tasks are as follows:

1. To create a TM between a given pair of languages that allows multiple translations and displays fuzzy matches as low as 30 percent (Translator's Workbench)
2. To use two .html files containing the same text in two languages to import TUs into the TM created in task 1 (WinAlign, Workbench)¹¹
3. To use a glossary given in .doc/x format to create a Termbase on MultiTerm and attach it to the Translator's Workbench (MultiTerm, Microsoft Excel, MultiTerm Convert/Extract, Translator's Workbench)¹²
4. To use the TM and Termbase to translate a given piece of text,¹³ which needs to incorporate all terms exactly as in the glossary provided and preserve all formatting and figures (numerical) as in the original text (Translator's Workbench, TagEditor)

The applications mentioned in parentheses above indicate the corresponding skills being tested. For task 1 examinees need to understand how the Translator's Workbench functions. They need to create a TM from scratch and with the right options. When working with Chinese, they need to choose the right region (PRC, HK, etc.) so as to ensure compatibility in encoding of characters. They need to ensure that the TM accepts multiple translations for the same ST and displays fuzzy matches as low as 30 percent. Failure to choose the right encoding could result in display of ASCII characters instead of actual content upon import of TUs, while failure to reconfigure the minimum match value might lead to the system offering no translations in case of an ST that is significantly altered from the original recorded in the TM.

Task 2 requires the examinee to understand all basic functions of WinAlign. She or he must also be aware of file formats and how to help WinAlign identify the format being used. Once the .html files are imported, the examinee needs to spend time aligning the content contained in the two .html files carefully.¹⁴ Examinees are asked to restrict the length of TUs to a maximum of two sentences. Aligning thus requires the examinees to split and join segments to create the right

associations.¹⁵ Once aligned, the alignment needs to be committed and exported in the form of TUs. These TUs must then be imported into the Translator's Workbench successfully.¹⁶

Task 3 requires proficiency in office applications in addition to Trados. Examinees need to copy the glossary provided to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet which can then be converted into the MultiTerm XML format acceptable by MultiTerm using MultiTerm Convert. The examinee needs to create appropriate field titles in the spreadsheet and configure MultiTerm Convert correctly in order to effect the conversion. Once converted, the glossary then has to be imported into the Termbase created on MultiTerm. Finally, the Termbase has to be attached to the TM created in task 2 on the Translator's Workbench.

Assuming that tasks 1 through 3 have been completed successfully, all that remains to be done is to translate the text provided using Trados in task 4. Examinees need to be able to use TagEditor to preserve all formatting present in the ST.¹⁷ They must also be proficient with Workbench tools in order to import terms and numbers correctly.¹⁸ In places where the ST differs significantly from the translation suggested by the system, the examinee needs to make required revisions and commit the new translation to the TM as an additional TT for the same ST. Once completed, the final translation needs to be mailed to the instructor in .doc/x format.

4. Evaluation

Tasks 1, 2, and 3 are allocated 20 percent each, while task 4 is allocated 40 percent. An examinee is generally unable to move to the next task unless she or he completes the previous one. As such, there are no penalty points for tasks 1 through 3. Examinees are given full marks for successful completion. Task 4 is however evaluated such that marks are deducted for ignoring terms (-2/40) per instance), failure to import figures correctly (-1), erroneous translations (-2), and failure to make changes to translations if necessitated by differences in the ST (-2). The ST is designed to resemble the content in the two .html files provided for task 2. It is however altered significantly at various points to test the user's alertness and proficiency in Trados. Such alterations include omissions, changed content, changed numbers, and so on.

The test is designed to be practical and closely related to content discussed and practiced in class. While the exam does not delve

exhaustively into the workings of individual applications in Trados, it attempts to simulate an actual translation assignment in task 4. Tasks 1 through 3 that lead to task 4 test the user on her or his ability to put together a TM and Termbase that can help her or him translate content of a particular kind. They also provide the user with an innovative way of dealing with routine translations where no TM is readily available. Based on an informal survey conducted among students, this test was found both interesting and challenging. Students particularly appreciated the focus on practice and actual use that they could relate to. As a follow-up, all students who successfully cleared the examination are recommended to take the Certification Tests provided by SDL online. With the course as a base study of the training manuals provided by SDL, students are expected to clear the examination with relative ease.

5. Summary

This article began by trying to address the problem that Trados fails to impress beginners when faced with the fact that the system needs to be built up over time before it can yield tangible benefits. For purposes of orientation/demonstration, it was therefore suggested that a mock TM be created using pretranslated data available on multilingual websites. In order to sustain interest in the system, a nonlinear approach to teaching Trados was adopted. Students/users were systematically introduced to key applications and their working, albeit in lesser detail. This model was conceived in order to ensure better utilization of time (given the constraint that the course spans only a semester) and also to give students a sound overview of how Trados can aid a translator. Preliminary results as reflected by the high success rates in examinations are exciting. However, end-semester surveys over a longer period of time and across batches of students and users will be required to confirm the efficacy of this model. The model itself was set up with SDL Trados 2007 in mind, but it can be adapted to teaching Trados Studio 2009 and later versions. The possibility of using online machine translation services as TM in Trados Studio 2009 allows instructors to incorporate MT+postediting exercises where translations are unavailable in the TM. At the same time, starting with the 2009 version, the functions of TagEditor and Translator's Workbench are integrated into a single interface. The file format of the TMs has also been changed. These changes will require users of the model described in this article to be

acquainted with the new interface and to go through additional steps for converting TUs from WinAlign into the TM.

Appendix 1

Screenshots of Translated Content Available on the UM Portal

The screenshot shows the University of Macau website in Chinese. The header includes the university's name in Chinese (澳門大學) and English (UNIVERSIDADE DE MACAU, UNIVERSITY OF MACAU), along with a logo and a language selector (中文 | Português). The left sidebar contains a navigation menu with categories like 'About the University', 'Academic Units', 'Research', 'University Library', 'Administrative Units', 'Prospective Students', 'Current Students', 'Staff', 'Alumni', 'Media', 'Visitors', 'News & Events', 'Useful Links', 'MONIC', 'Tender Notice', 'Job Vacancy', and 'Contact Us'. The main content area is titled 'The University of Macau' and contains two paragraphs of text. The first paragraph describes the university's origin in 1981 as the University of East Asia (UEA) and its transition to the University of Macau in 1991. The second paragraph mentions the university's restructuring and the establishment of various faculties.

The screenshot shows the University of Macau website in English. The header includes the university's name in Chinese (澳門大學) and English (UNIVERSIDADE DE MACAU, UNIVERSITY OF MACAU), along with a logo and a language selector (中文 | English). The left sidebar contains a navigation menu with categories like 'Sobre a Universidade', 'Gabinete do Reitor', 'Unidades Académicas', 'Investigação', 'Biblioteca Universitária', 'Unidades Administrativas', 'Inscrição', 'Alunos Actuais', 'Professores e Funcionários', 'Antigos Alunos', 'Comunicação Social', 'Visitantes', 'Notícias e Eventos', 'Links Úteis', 'MONIC', 'Concursos Públicos', 'Lugares a Concurso', and 'Contactos'. The main content area is titled 'A Universidade de Macau' and contains two paragraphs of text. The first paragraph describes the university's origin in 1981 as the University of East Asia (UEA) and its transition to the University of Macau in 1991. The second paragraph mentions the university's restructuring and the establishment of various faculties.



澳門大學
 UNIVERSIDADE DE MACAU
 UNIVERSITY OF MACAU

Português | English

澳大簡介
 校長辦公室
 學術單位
 研究
 大學圖書館
 行政單位

報藏資料
 學生園地
 教職員工
 校友園地
 傳媒
 訪客資訊

新聞及活動
 常用連結

澳門互聯網資訊中心
 招標通告
 職位空缺
 聯絡我們

澳大簡介 > 簡介

簡介

澳門大學的誕生可追溯到1981年3月。當年Ricci Island West有限公司獲政府批租土地，創辦澳門首間大學——私立東亞大學，也是澳門高等教育的開始。

1991年，東亞大學成立初年，大部份學生均來自香港。其後，為配合澳門回歸，東亞大學進行重組，設立文學院、工商學院、理學院、法學院、社會科學學院和教育學院。教學語言仍以英語為主。

1991年新大學章程頒佈，東亞大學正式轉名為公立的澳門大學，並以培養澳門人才為目標。大學重組後，學生人數急劇上升，由創校時的數百人升至目前的六千多人，而澳門本地學生的比重也由39%增至目前的80%。

經過26年的成長，澳門大學現已具備一套完善的教學體系，設有文學院、法學院、社會科學學院、理學院、工商學院、醫學院、藥學院、牙醫學院、護理學院、教育學院、藝術學院、音樂學院、設計學院、工程學院、科技學院等。大學中設有英語中心、持續進修中心、預科中心等。

澳門大學擁有一支350多人的教師隊伍，均具有豐富的教學與專業經驗，他們來自英國、美國、加拿大、澳洲、紐西蘭、葡萄牙、日本、中國內地、台灣、香港、澳門等國家和地區，其中多名教師更在國際著名的大學取得博士學位。

澳門大學一直以發展成為一所教學與科研並重的國際性大學為

Appendix 2

A Simple Glossary Used for Testing

表一	
澳門	Macao
澳門特別行政區	MSAR
澳門特別行政區	Macao Special Administrative Region
中華人民共和國	People's Republic of China
中華人民共和國	PRC
香港特別行政區	Hong Kong
香港特別行政區	Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
廣東省	Canton Province
特區	Hong Kong
特區	Macao
颱風	Hurricane
格林威治標準時間	GMT
官方語言	Working Languages
普通話	Modern Standard Chinese

表二	
澳門	Macau
澳門特別行政區	RAEM
澳門特別行政區	Região Administrativa Especial de Macau
中華人民共和國	República Popular da China
中華人民共和國	RPC
香港特別行政區	Hong Kong
香港特別行政區	Região Administrativa Especial de Hong Kong
廣東省	Província de Cantão
特區	Hong Kong
特區	Macau
颱風	Tufão
格林威治標準時間	TMG
官方語言	Línguas de trabalho
普通話	Mandarin padrão

Appendix 3
ST for Translation with Trados

澳門簡介

中華人民共和國澳門特別行政區是中國領土的一部份，位於中國南方廣東省沿海的珠江三角洲，毗鄰廣東省，與香港特別行政區相距60公里，距廣州市145公里。

特區由澳門半島、氹仔及路環兩個離島組成。總面積約29.2平方公里，其中澳門半島佔9.3平方公里、氹仔6.7平方公里、路環7.6平方公里、路氹填海區5.6平方公里。澳門半島與氹仔之間共有三條澳氹大橋，包括：嘉樂庇總督大橋（2.5公里），友誼大橋（4.5公里），以及西灣大橋（2.2公里），當中最長的友誼大橋可直接通往位於氹仔的澳門國際機場。特區首條斜拉橋——西灣大橋，於二零零五年一月九日正式投入使用。雙層大橋上層有六條行車線，而下層則有四條行車線。下層將於颱風期間開放供使用。氹仔和路環之間也有一條約2.2公里的路氹連貫公路相連。

旅客除可經澳門半島最北面的關閘到達珠海市和中山市外，亦可經位於路氹城的蓮花大橋到達珠海的橫琴島。

澳門的時間比格林威治標準時間早八小時。

澳門永久及非永久居民約有557,400人，其中絕大部份居民居住在澳門半島，兩個離島人口相對較少。澳門居民以華人為主，約佔總人口的94%，葡國及其他國家公民只佔6%左右。

華文和葡文為官方語言。特區居民日常溝通普遍使用廣州話，但許多居民也能聽懂普通話。英語在澳門也很通行，可在很多場合應用。

Notes

1. See *SDL Trados 2007 Translator's Workbench: Getting Started*, 3.6.
2. See Appendix 1 for sample screenshots.
3. For the actual process leading to extraction of data, see “Chapter 11: WinAlign” in *SDL Trados 2007 Translator's Workbench: Intermediate Training*.
4. See *SDL Trados 2007 Translator's Workbench: Intermediate Training*, 2.22.
5. See *SDL Trados 2007 Translator's Workbench: Getting Started*, 3.10–3.12.
6. See *SDL Trados 2007 Translator's Workbench: Getting Started*, 2.10.
7. See <http://www.umac.mo/reg/Glossary/glossary-main.html>.
8. For the steps to create a Termbase, see *SDL Trados 2007 Translator's Workbench: Advanced Training*, 10.2–10.11.
9. For the steps to import data into a Termbase, see *SDL Trados 2007 Translator's Workbench: Advanced Training*, 10.11–10.39.
10. Successful as reflected in the class average score of 85 percent and above in the final examination conducted in semester 1, 2008–9. Nearly all students received perfect scores in tasks 1 through 3 described below.
11. Created from <http://cn.macautourism.gov.mo/cn/info/info.php> and <http://cn.macautourism.gov.mo/en/info/info.php>.
12. See Appendix 2 for the glossary used.
13. See Appendix 3 for the text used.
14. See *SDL Trados 2007 Translator's Workbench: Advanced Training*, 11.20–11.27.
15. See *SDL Trados 2007 Translator's Workbench: Advanced Training*, 11.31–11.33.
16. See *SDL Trados 2007 Translator's Workbench: Advanced Training*, 11.35.
17. See “Chapter 3: TagEditor and Microsoft Word” in *SDL Trados 2007 Translator's Workbench: Getting Started*, 3.1–3.28.
18. See *SDL Trados 2007 Translator's Workbench: Getting Started*, 3.6–3.16.

