

# LATVIAN-ENGLISH-LATVIAN ELECTRONIC LEXICOGRAPHIC RESOURCES OF LEGAL TERMINOLOGY

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**Abstract.** The technological advances of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries have played a significant part in facilitating information exchange and processing the worldwide community outreach. A significant achievement has been the development of electronic dictionaries and terminological databases that allow access to information from various sources and in different languages. Much has been done to develop Latvian electronic dictionaries in line with the requirements of modern lexicography; however, the available electronic terminological databases are not so helpful in dealing with domain-specific terminology as is the case of Legal Latvian and its equivalents in other languages. The aim of the present research study has been to examine Latvian-English-Latvian electronic lexicographic resources, their adaptability to user needs and reliability, focusing in particular on their treatment of legal terminology where utmost precision is required. The research reveals the need for a free-access legal terminology electronic database where Latvian terms have equivalents from different foreign languages with appropriate support information. Undoubtedly, such a database can be developed only in close cooperation between language specialists and legal professionals that would consolidate the stability and reliability of Latvian legal terminology and the respective equivalents in other languages.

**Key words:** electronic dictionary, electronic terminological database, legal terminology, equivalents, reliability

## INTRODUCTION

Sophisticated software, applications, platforms, and cloud hosting have entered our life to stay, expanding their presence in education, medicine, and manufacturing – in actual fact, all areas of human activity. People read e-books, physicians write out e-prescriptions, pupils and students have e-studies that have proved invaluable in the current conditions of the pandemic, notwithstanding the psychological side-effects of isolation, restraint of personal freedom of movement and activity. The Internet has given everybody the opportunity and advantage of accessing

sources of knowledge and information that until recently remained an unattainable dream. One such source is electronic terminological databases and dictionaries, now more easily accessible for users and an excellent support for individuals of all ages in foreign language studies and for translators and interpreters in their profession.

The purpose of the present study has been to examine the evolution of electronic terminological databases and dictionaries, and their link to users' needs, particularly focusing on electronic databases and dictionaries of Latvian legal terminology and its English equivalents as well as English terms and their Latvian equivalents. In view of the fifty-year-long soviet period and the strenuous EU pre-accession efforts, much has been done in developing Latvian legal terminology and compiling respective dictionaries – first in printed form and subsequently summarizing the efforts in electronic databases and dictionaries. It must be recognised that work on electronic lexicographic sources in the Latvian language started much later than in other European languages, and it has certainly, in some ways, affected the quality of the outcome. Several Latvian-English-Latvian electronic lexicographic resources are examined in the study, paying particular attention to their reliability as precision is crucial in the use of legal terminology that could otherwise give rise to misinterpretations and misunderstandings. The study also reveals certain failings that should be eliminated to improve the quality of the said lexicographic sources.

## ELECTRONIC TERMINOLOGICAL DATABASES AND DICTIONARIES

Large terminological databases date back to the 1960s when the electronic medium was selected as suitable for the storage of large collections of terminology. There are several reasons behind the choice of this medium; for example, due to constant changes and development in various fields of knowledge the terminology used in these fields and its lexicographic description has to be constantly updated, and it can be done more efficiently in the electronic medium; the availability and constant development of the necessary technological support have also contributed to the selection of this medium (L'Homme, 2013: 1480). Having investigated the extraction of terminological data from various types of text corpora, Cabré and Vivaldi Palatresi (2013: 1487) contend that the 'relation between computer science and terminology is not limited to databases, but has evolved and today encompasses the terminological processes as a whole'.

Mayer (2013: 1461) observes that in the past decades, the structure of terminological entries has undergone considerable changes and become more complex. Having noted that 'a concept is conceived as a unit of thought, which represents the shared knowledge' (*ibid.*), the scholar points out two major approaches to concept presentation in dictionaries and databases – the onomasiological or concept-oriented approach (which is commonly applied in terminography) and semasiological or word/term-oriented approach (which is generally viewed as not

suitable for multi-lingual terminological entries). It is stressed that the concept is the main focus of the provided description. The term, its definition, synonymy and equivalence relations are viewed as the most relevant information types of this description (ibid.: 1461–1462). Since terminology is directly linked with concepts, the majority of terms presented in terminological databases are nouns (adjectives, adverbs and verbs are encountered less frequently). From a structural point of view, terms can be single or multi-word items (collocations, longer phrases); normally, proper names are also included in terminological databases (L'Homme, 2013: 1483).

A distinction can be made between two types of terminology presentation – ad hoc and systematic terminology. In the case of ad hoc terminology, separate concepts are described and presented in the terminological database, while in the case of systematic presentation of terminology ‘typically whole sub-areas of a given subject area, which mostly consist of several hundred concepts, are processed together, such that the relevant terminology of this area is described systematically and in one consistent (sub-)system’ (Mayer, 2013: 1464). Having reviewed terminological entry structures of various types and structural complexity, Mayer (ibid.: 1465–1474) contends that there is no set standard for a minimal entry structure for the description of terms, while such microstructural elements as the indication of subject field of the term, its equivalent(s) in multi-language databases and definitions with indicated sources (which are viewed as optional), are presented as the possible microstructural elements of a minimal terminological entry.

The translation-oriented terminography multi-lingual model entry structure proposed by Cotsoes (Conference of Translation Services of European States) reflects the needs and requirements of translation and interpreting services of various European countries (Cotsoes 2002, discussed in Mayer, 2013: 1466–1467). The following microstructural elements are pointed out as necessary for this type of terminological entry: ‘subject area, term, synonyms, abbreviated forms, spelling variants, transliteration, geographical restrictions, status of the term, sources, definition, remarks, degree of equivalence and synonymy, context, phraseology and illustrations’ (ibid.: 1466). L'Homme (2013: 1483–1484) proposes a generalized list of typical microstructural elements encountered in large terminological databases, noting that the entry structures of these databases tend to be fairly similar. The list comprises the following microstructural elements: field label, language identifier, headword, some other linguistic forms linked to the concept (e.g., acronyms, synonymous terms), grammar label, geographical label, definition, illustrative example, references, some additional information. *IATE* (Interactive Terminology for Europe) (Online 1) can be viewed as a typical example of a large multilingual terminological database. The microstructure of this terminological database includes the following major information categories that ensure a detailed description of the term: the internal ID of the term, a field label (identifying the subject field(s) of the term, occasionally also more specific subfields), labels identifying the selected languages, the term and its source, various other linguistic

items linked to the concept (synonyms, abbreviations), language-specific definition and its source, context or illustrative example presenting the headword in context and its source, additional information (creation and modification date and by whom it has been performed). It should be noted that the above-described lists of microstructural elements of terminological databases differ in detail but also bear notable similarities.

Moreover, L'Homme (2013: 1481) observes that in various multilingual databases, for instance, *IATE* and *UnTerm* (The United Nations Multilingual Terminology Database), the treatment of terms from various languages may vary. Namely, more information can be provided for terms from certain languages; for instance, English terms can receive a more detailed description than terms from other languages included in the database. A closer inspection of individual entries of the terms presented in the *IATE* database reveals that the complexity of entry structure of individual terms and their equivalents in the selected target languages may vary. Not all the terms included in the database are described using all the information categories available in the general microstructure of the database. For example, such microstructural elements as the *term reference*, the structural category *additional information*, are normally provided for all terms, while such elements as *definition*, *term in context*, *term note* and *language level note*, are not always given, thus revealing a certain lack of consistency.

Since terminology can also be presented in electronic dictionaries, some aspects of these lexicographic resources will be reviewed here. Electronic dictionaries, in comparison with terminological databases (dating back to the 1960s), is a more recent development; besides, many electronic dictionaries initially were (and some of them still are) based on their print predecessors. Though the first electronic dictionary, available on magnetic tape, was also published in the 1960s, and in the 1980s and 1990s, dictionaries started to appear on floppy discs and CDs; it was only after the year 2000 that the first dictionary (*Macmillan Dictionary for Advanced Learners*) was released in both print and electronic format (Béjoint, 2010: 373–376), thus marking a notable turning point in the development of electronic lexicography. Nesi (2015: 580) mentions the increased speed and reliability of the internet at the beginning of the 2000s as relevant preconditions that boosted the number of dictionaries appearing online, though it is also stressed that these still were 'digital versions of print dictionaries' (*ibid.*).

Though the characteristic features and types of electronic dictionaries have been discussed by numerous scholars (e.g., De Schryver, 2003: 143–160; Svensén, 2009: 438–439; Tarp, 2011; Granger, 2012: 1–5; Schmitz, 2013; Fuertes-Olivera, 2015; Singh and Tripathi, 2018: 590–591; Dziemianko, 2018: 667), the typology suggested by Tarp (2011) is not only insightful but also employs eye-catching and memorable metaphoric terms. It comprises four types of electronic dictionaries (Copycats, Faster Horses, Model T Fords and Rolls-Royces) that vary in their adjustment to the electronic medium and attempts to meet the needs of the users (Tarp, 2011; Tarp, 2012: 116–117). Copycats are print dictionaries (often in the form of PDF files) that are available in electronic format; Faster Horses are

lexicographic resources where only some advantages offered by the electronic medium have been employed but, essentially, they still resemble their print predecessors; Model T Fords are online dictionaries demonstrating more extensive use of technologies, though limited adaptability of microstructure to user's needs; the online dictionaries falling in the category of Rolls-Royces are characterized by advanced application of technologies, adaptability of contents to individual user's needs and ability to provide data from various online sources (Tarp, 2011; Tarp, 2012: 116–117). Evidently, compiling of such technologically advanced dictionaries that are designed to meet the needs of the users is also very demanding on their compilers. Having investigated the contemporary user-centred lexicographic scene, Tarp and Gouws (2020: 495) note that the compiling of contemporary electronic dictionaries 'places more responsibility on the shoulders of lexicographers in terms of needs detection as well as data preparation and presentation' (*ibid.*).

Nowadays, electronic dictionaries can often be clustered in dictionary portals. Engelberg and Müller-Spitzer (2013: 1023) describe dictionary portals as 'collections of electronic dictionaries, sometimes cross-referenced and provided with new access structures', adding that it is a data structure consisting of one or several interconnected webpages and giving access to several dictionaries, that can also function as independent reference works. A distinction can be made between dictionary and encyclopaedic portals, though it is not uncommon that both types of portals can be combined (*ibid.*: 1024). Engelberg and Müller-Spitzer (*ibid.*: 1025–1033) propose a typology comprising three basic types of dictionary portals: dictionary collections (websites that merely provide links to various online dictionaries), search engines (in these portals the dictionaries are normally owned by third parties, they can be indexed but the level of integration may vary) and dictionary nets (here the holder of the portal can own the included dictionaries, cross-references can be provided among the included dictionaries, though, the degree of integration of dictionary content may vary).

## ELECTRONIC LEXICOGRAPHIC RESOURCES OF LEGAL TERMINOLOGY AND THEIR CORRESPONDENCE TO USERS' NEEDS

An important aspect to be considered when describing a lexicographic resource and evaluating its quality is its correspondence to users' needs. Considering the focus of the study conducted in the present paper, this section will concentrate on some user-needs-related aspects of dictionaries and terminology databases comprising legal terms. Chroma (2014: 117) notes that 'Legal translation implies both a comparative study of different legal systems and an awareness of the problems created by the absence of equivalent concepts, legal institutions, terms and other linguistic units', and adds that the translators of legal texts constantly have to overcome various obstacles caused by significantly differing legal systems or

cultures (*ibid.*: 118). Commenting on the quality of dictionaries of legal terms, that largely depends on the experience of dictionary compilers, Chroma (*ibid.*: 137) also mentions the existence of a gap between what is expected by legal translators and what is offered by dictionaries of legal terms. Furthermore, Nielsen (2014: 153–154) observes that if legal lexicographers do not focus on the needs of dictionary users in particular types of situations, their dictionaries can provide large quantities of unnecessary information. Clear determination of dictionary functions and user needs, and matching of these two aspects, are described as mandatory steps to be taken to follow the principles of contemporary lexicography.

While focusing on users' needs, various scholars (e.g. L'Homme, 2013: 1482–1483; Cabré and Vivaldi Palatresi, 2013: 1486–1487; Drinóczi and Novák, 2015: 120) have underscored the importance of terminological databases for providers of translation and interpreting services, as well as the role of terminology databases in standardization of terminology on a national or international level, that can help the users in the process of selecting the most appropriate term. L'Homme (2013: 1483), for instance, notes that by highlighting 'a preferred term' in the entry, the compilers of the database may provide valuable information to the users, thus, helping them to select the most appropriate term. Moreover, a thorough analysis of various multilingual databases presenting legal terminology allows Drinóczi and Novák to conclude that the overall quality of large terminological databases

depends on how accurately, how reliably and in what way information provided to precisely defined target groups is conveyed, and how quickly the respective user can find and understand it. For exact wording and additional information provided by the database means consistent and safe utilization for the user, which significantly facilitates the proper application of the terminology. (Drinóczi and Novák, 2015: 129)

This observation is directly linked to the analysis carried out in the present study, that focuses on the evaluation of the quality of presentation of legal terms and their equivalents in several electronic lexicographic resources (bilingual dictionaries and multilingual terminological databases) for the English-Latvian language pair.

## METHODOLOGY

The analysis undertaken in the course of the study includes a comparative analysis of entries of Latvian legal terms and their English equivalents listed in four electronic lexicographic resources of Latvian-English-Latvian legal terminology, as well as the reverse search for Latvian equivalents listed for English legal terms. The results have been presented in tables and accompanied by comments.

The sample of terms for analysis has been collated on the basis of observations and discussions of terminology issues over a period of five years during practical workshops in the translation of economic and legal texts for students of the Modern

Languages and Business Studies Programme within the Bachelor studies programme as well as the Professional Master Studies Programme in Written Translation provided by the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Latvia. An in-depth analysis has been made of 12 Latvian and English legal terms.

These terms have been selected from a cluster of 60 key legal terms in Latvian legal terminology (frequently without respective equivalents in English) that emerged as problem cases during practical workshops with students of BA and MA study programmes.

In the present study, attention has been focused on four sources of Latvian-English-Latvian legal terminology: the electronic English-Latvian and Latvian-English dictionaries of the dictionary portal *Letonika.lv* (Online 2); the *EuroTermBank* (ETB) (Online 3), linked to *Letonika.lv*; the *Latvian National Terminology Portal* (LNTTP) (Online 4) and the *IATE* database (Online 1). The given sources have been chosen as they are freely accessible to the general public.

The English-Latvian electronic dictionary (available at *Letonika.lv*) analysed in the present study is based on a print dictionary published by the publishing house *Jāņa sēta* in 1995, which has been enriched by terms from terminological dictionaries, as well as nearly 150 000 monolingual entries from the lexical database *WordNet 2.1*. Recently it has also been updated with entries generated from the reversal of the Latvian-English electronic dictionary compiled by Andrejs Veisbergs (also available at *Letonika.lv*) (Karpinska, 2020: 88–89). Reduced versions of these dictionaries can be accessed free of charge, while the full content is available to subscribers and in public libraries. Employing the classification of electronic dictionaries suggested by Tarp (2011), the dictionaries available at *Letonika.lv*, being electronic dictionaries originally based on print dictionaries, fall in the category of Faster Horses, though they definitely have a potential of being upgraded to another category if more advanced technological solutions are applied (Karpinska, 2020: 96). *Letonika.lv* can also be viewed as a combination of dictionary and encyclopaedic portal, including both monolingual and bilingual dictionaries, encyclopaedias as well as providing links to the terminological database *EuroTermBank*. According to Engelberg and Müller-Spitzer's (2013: 1025–1033) classification of dictionary portals, it may be categorized as dictionary net, though, with a fairly limited integration of the lexicographic resources and cross-referencing system.

The *EuroTermBank* is a multilingual terminology database that includes terminology from various domains for the languages of the European Union and Icelandic, though, being linked to other terminology databases, it comprises more than 14 million terms presented in nearly 3.4 million entries from 44 languages (Online 3). It is worth noting that the multilingual terminology database *EuroTermBank* has been well-recorded in a list of publications (e.g., Vasiljevs and Rirdance, 2008; Vasiljevs et al., 2011; Gornostay et al., 2012), highlighting various aspects of the project as well as the challenges tackled in the course of this project development.

The *Latvian National Terminology Portal* provides access to 95 public term collections comprising 435 000 Latvian terms and 250 000 English terms alongside

with collections of terms in several other languages (Russian, French, German, Latin and Spanish). The collections include terms from 22 domains that have been arranged according to the guidelines established by the State Language Centre (Skadiņš et al., 2020: 186). The *Latvian National Terminology Portal* is based on the former national terminology portal *AkadTerm*. In 2018 it was considerably restructured and updated by the leading language technology company in Latvia, *Tilde*, in collaboration with the State Language Centre, the Latvian Language Agency and the Latvian Academy of Sciences, thus, developing it into a multifunctional terminology portal.

The *IATE* is a multilingual database of EU-related terminology. Established in 1999 with the aim to consolidate the EU terminology resources, it was also reconstructed and technologically updated in 2018. The *IATE* covers the official languages of the EU and comprises more than 8 million terms from a wide scope of domains encountered in the texts translated by EU translators (Online 1). In this, as well as the above discussed terminological databases, the concept-oriented or onomasiological approach has been applied when structuring the entries. This approach is considered to be more appropriate for terminological entries, but it may lead to a fairly fragmented macrostructure since every concept is presented in a separate entry.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of the entry structure of the selected electronic lexicographic resources reveals certain structural peculiarities as well as some common microstructural features shared by the terminological databases. The inspection of the entry structure of legal terms provided in the Latvian-English (E-L) and English-Latvian (L-E) dictionaries of *Letonika.lv* reveals sets of microstructural elements characteristic of bilingual dictionaries in this lexicographic tradition (with the addition of hyperlinks to navigate from the L-E to E-L dictionary as well as the indication of the sources of the entry). The L-E dictionary entry comprises the following microstructural elements: headword, field labels, sense indicators, equivalents, translated collocations, and sources of the entry. The E-L dictionary: headword, pronunciation, part of speech labels, field labels, sense indicators, equivalents, translated collocations, sources of the entry. Several multilingual entries from various terminological dictionaries are usually attached to the L-E and E-L entries of the terms presented in *Letonika.lv*. The microstructure of these terminological dictionaries usually comprises the following elements: headword, labels identifying the presented languages, one or several synonyms, field labels, equivalents in several languages, and the source of the entry.

The basic set of microstructural elements of the *EuroTermBank* and *Latvian National Terminology Portal* is similar: headword, labels identifying the selected languages, one or several synonyms, equivalents in several languages, source

of the entry; however, there are some elements that appear only in one of these terminological databases, often the access to this information may vary. For instance, a click on the button 'Show detailed' in the *EuroTermBank* reveals such additional microstructural elements as domain, entry ID, illustrative example and definition (however, the latter two are not provided consistently). The entry of the *Latvian National Terminology Portal*, on the other hand, comprises information on the date of confirmation of the term, occasionally also illustrative examples; it is also possible to expand the entry and acquire more information on the source of the entry, its group identification (collection) and domain.

The *IATE* database has the most complex microstructure comprising the following elements: the internal encoded ID of the selected term (headword), field (also sub-field) labels, labels identifying the selected languages, the term source (reference), definitions and their sources, language level notes and term notes, illustrative examples presenting the headword in context and their sources, additional information (creation and modification date and who has done it), then the same information is provided for the suggested equivalents, synonyms, and collocations. Though it has to be noted that not all the above microstructural elements were provided for the legal terms selected for analysis in this study, as well as their synonyms, collocations and equivalents, since such microstructural elements as definition, language level note and term note, and illustrative examples, were often missing, especially for the Latvian terms. The interface of this database also allows modification of the search options – the user can select the option 'Search by collection' or 'Open expanded search', as well as change the view from standard to interpreters'.

This review has also revealed that since the above databases comprise collections of terms from various sources, the application of the concept-oriented approach often leads to unnecessary repetition of information that can annoy the user and prolong the look-up process.

It is also one of the main grievances repeatedly voiced by students of BA and MA study programmes during practical translation workshops.

The feedback provided by students has allowed us to identify 60 key legal terms in Latvian legal terminology, of which 12 Latvian and English legal terms were chosen for an in-depth analysis as an illustration of difficulties encountered by users.

The cluster of terms presented in the article has been chosen in view of distinct peculiarities in interpreting and designating specific legal phenomena in different legal systems, for example, the age threshold when the person becomes criminally liable as in the Latvian term *nepilngadīgais* and *mazgadīgais*, the distinction between *rīcībspēja* and *tiesībspēja* in Latvian law that should be duly reflected in any translation of the respective legal acts involving the usage of appropriate equivalents, the term *atsavināšana* and its English equivalents and designations of two existing legal systems – the civil law system and the common law system.

Table 1 below presents a summary of English equivalents for the Latvian legal term *atsavināšana* provided in the selected lexicographic sources.

Table 1 English equivalents for the Latvian term *atsavināšana*

LETONIKA	ETB	LNTF	IATE
expropriation <i>jur.</i> alienation, forfeit, forfeiture, divestiture, disposal	alienation appropriation confiscation disposal expropriation forfeiture transfer	alienation confiscation disposal divestiture expropriation forfeit forfeiture transfer	disposal divestment divestiture expropriation foreclosure

The term *atsavināšana* is a cover term for several types of enforced removal of assets. Subscribers of *Letonika.lv* can also use the listing of meanings for the term *atsavināšana* in Latvian:

- I. *lietv.* 1. *nelikumīga aizturēšana*; 2. *ekspropriācija*; 3. *atsavinājums*;  
4. *konfiskācija*; *zaudējums*;
- II. *konfiscēta lieta*; *konfiscēta manta*; *konfiskācija* (Online 2)

The listing given in *Letonika.lv* does not include the term *confiscation*, although this term is most frequently used to denote the enforced removal of assets, goods or property. However, it should be noted that the said term is listed as an equivalent in two domains – *museology* and *economics*. The comparison of the equivalents in Tables 2 and 3 provided below reveals that the Latvian term *atsavināšana* is listed as an equivalent to the English term *confiscation*.

Table 2 English equivalents for the Latvian term *konfiskācija*

LETONIKA	ETB	LNTF	IATE
confiscation seizing seizure forfeiture	confiscation forfeit	confiscation forfeiture withdrawal	confiscation seizure forfeiture

Table 3 Latvian equivalents for the English term *confiscation*

LETONIKA	ETB	LNTF	IATE
konfiskācija konfiscēšana atsavināšana atņemšana noņemšana	konfiskācija	konfiskācija konfiscēšana atsavināšana noņemšana	konfiskācija konfiscēšana

The *EuroTermBank* gives the following equivalents indicating the sector where they are used: *expropriation*, *transfer*, *disposal*, *forfeiture* (economics and finance);

*alienation, appropriation, forfeiture* (politics, law and public administration); *confiscation, expropriation* (entrepreneurship, competition, economics, documentation); *alienation* (tariff policy, taxes). However, the equivalents have been listed without more detailed explanations supported by examples that would delineate semantic differences as the given equivalents cannot be used interchangeably.

The *Latvian National Terminology Portal* lists equivalents as well as 28 collocations where the term appears and provides the source where the term has been used and, in some cases, examples – excerpts of texts.

The *IATE* database lists the following equivalents and references to the EU texts where the terms have been used: *divestment/divestiture* in finance and investment, business organisation; *disposal of shares* in taxation, *disposal of assets* in taxation and accounting; *foreclosure* in management accounting; *expropriation, compulsory purchase/acquisition* in ownership law; *disposal of fixed assets* in preparation for market.

It can be observed that there are differences in the listing of equivalents in the said sources. The choice of the correct equivalent largely rests with the user of these lexicographic sources. Moreover, it is quite clear that equivalents cannot be used interchangeably as all of them have a specific legal meaning. The absence of more detailed explanations revealing differences among equivalents presupposes that the lexicographic sources are used by users with substantial background knowledge of legal matters and that less sophisticated users may commit serious errors in choosing the inappropriate equivalent. Alignment of equivalents listed in various sources would be highly welcome and advisable to avoid ambiguity in the usage of legal terms.

The same can be said about equivalents for the Latvian term *nepilngadīgais*. The Latvian term includes two concepts distinguished in Latvian law. According to Section 11 in the Criminal Law of the Republic of Latvia: ‘A natural person who, on the day of the commission of a criminal offence, has attained fourteen years of age may be held criminally liable. An underaged person, that is, a person who has not attained fourteen years of age, may not be held criminally liable’ (Online 5). In the Latvian text of the law, *the underaged person* is called *mazgadīgais*. Thus, there is an age threshold that determines exemption from criminal liability. If the term *nepilngadīgais* denotes a person under the age of 18 (the age of majority in Latvia), the term *mazgadīgais* denotes a person under the age of 14. Such a distinction is not found in the respective English terminology, and it can be seen in Table 4, provided below, listing equivalents found in the selected lexicographic sources.

**Table 4 English equivalents for the Latvian term *nepilngadīgais***

<i>LETONIKA</i>	<i>ETB</i>	<i>LNTP</i>	<i>IATE</i>
minor juvenile	minor	minor	child minor

*Letonika.lv* lists the equivalents *minor* and *juvenile* providing also related terms: *nepilngadīgā noziegums* – *juvenile delinquency, juvenile offence*. The *EuroTermBank* lists only the term *minor* with 5 related terms. The same is listed in *Latvian National Terminology Portal* with an additional indication of 47 related terms. The *IATE* lists equivalents *child* and *minor* on the basis of EU texts. The search can also be reversed to find Latvian equivalents for the English legal terms *minor* and *juvenile* in the meaning of a person who has not yet attained majority.

It might be assumed that the reversed search would provide almost an identical response; however, it is not always the case in practice, as evidenced by Tables 5 and 6 below.

**Table 5 Latvian equivalents for the English legal term *minor* in the meaning of a person who has not yet attained majority**

LETONIKA	ETB	LNTF	IATE
nepilngadīgais	nepilngadīgais	nepilngadīgais	bērns nepilngadīgais

**Table 6 Latvian equivalents for the English legal term *juvenile* in the meaning of a person who has not yet attained majority**

LETONIKA	ETB	LNTF	IATE
jauneklis pusaudzis	mazgadīgais	mazgadīgais	nepilngadīgais

According to the *Online Etymology Dictionary* (Online 6), the word *juvenile* appeared in the English language in the 1620s as an adjective meaning *young, youthful*, from Latin *iuvenilis* with the meaning “of or belonging to youth, youthful” from *iuvenis* “young man, one in the flower of his age” (in Roman use, the period just beyond adolescence, from age 21 or 25 to 40)’ (ibid.).

*Letonika.lv* contains older entries for *juvenile* dating back to 2009, and they have not yet been aligned. The equivalents listed there are *jauneklis, pusaudzis*, while the equivalent for a *juvenile delinquent* is *mazgadīgs noziedznieks*. The *EuroTermBank* also lists *mazgadīgais* as an equivalent for *juvenile*. The *Latvian National Terminology Portal* lists *mazgadīgais*, and the *IATE* gives *nepilngadīgais*.

The definition found on the US Department of Justice website is quite explicit: ‘A *juvenile* is a person who has not attained his eighteenth birthday, and *juvenile delinquency* is the violation of a law of the United States committed by a person prior to his eighteenth birthday which would have been a crime if committed by an adult’ (Online 7). A similar definition of *juvenile* is provided by the *Black’s Law Dictionary*: ‘A child, a young person who is below the age of adulthood or the majority’ (Online 8).

Another problem that emerges in legal terminology is the need to develop equivalents for specific concepts that do not have distinct counterparts in the respective legal systems – the civil law system and the common law system.

A closer look at the English equivalents for two key basic legal terms in Latvian *tiesībspēja* and *riņībbspēja* shows that one and the same English equivalent is used in both cases even though each of the Latvian terms has a very distinct meaning: *tiesībspēja* starts at the moment a person is born and expires upon the person's death while *riņībbspēja* denotes the person's ability to perform legally relevant actions and to assume responsibility for their consequences (Balodis, 2007: 75–77). English equivalents for the Latvian terms *tiesībspēja* and *riņībbspēja* are presented in Tables 7 and 8.

Table 7 English equivalents for the Latvian term *tiesībspēja*

LETONIKA	ETB	LNTP	IATE
legal capacity	legal capacity	legal capacity	legal capacity legal status

Table 8 English equivalents for the Latvian term *riņībbspēja*

LETONIKA	ETB	LNTP	IATE
legal capacity	legal capacity	capacity to exercise rights legal capacity legal capability capacity to act	legal capacity

The analysis has revealed that there have been efforts to find appropriate equivalents in the respective languages; however, any decision on the alignment of terminology should be taken in close cooperation with legal professionals and with their approval, although it seems that no involved party is ready to assume ultimate responsibility that is clearly demonstrated in the case of the English legal term denoting the legal principle of *double jeopardy* meaning that no person can be tried more than once for the same offence, no Latvian equivalent is given, resorting to the Latin equivalent *ne bis in idem* (Lat. *not twice about the same*). Table 9 provides information on Latvian equivalents for the said term found in the selected sources.

Table 9 Latvian equivalents for the English term *double jeopardy*

LETONIKA	ETB	LNTP	IATE
<i>an explanation is provided</i>	divkārša sodīšana dubultā sodīšana	divkārša sodīšana dubultā sodīšana	ne bis in idem

Certain inconsistencies could be understandable in respect of relatively new Latvian equivalents as terminology is developed, upgraded and refined in an ongoing dynamic process. However, there should be absolute clarity and precision in respect of fundamental concepts. One of such concepts is *common law*, usually mentioned in

the context of civil law in many ways as its opposite. The research study undertaken by Dace Liepiņa in 2019 on equivalents for the term *common law* revealed that more than seven equivalents were in active use in Latvia (2019: 58–59). In 2019 no Latvian equivalents were provided for the term *common law* in such authoritative sources as *Letonika.lv* and *EuroTermBank*; the equivalent *paražu tiesības* was given in *A Dictionary of Legal Synonyms: Latvian-English-Latvian* edited by Condrell and Condrell and published in 1993.

In 2021 the situation has slightly changed. Tables 10, 11 and 12 show that although there are explanations provided for the term *common law* – *anglosakšu tiesības*, *paražu tiesības* in *Letonika.lv*, other sources included in the current study give *anglosakšu tiesības* for *common law* (see Table 10), *common law* for *anglusakšu tiesības* (see Table 11) and *customary law* for *paražu tiesības* (see Table 11). An interesting twist of development can be found in *IATE* that does not give any equivalent for *anglosakšu tiesības*, although EU law is viewed as common law based.

Table 10 Latvian equivalents for the English term *common law*

LETONIKA	ETB	LNTP	IATE
<i>an explanation is provided</i>	anglosakšu tiesības	anglosakšu tiesības	anglosakšu tiesības

Table 11 English equivalents for the term *anglosakšu tiesības*

LETONIKA	ETB	LNTP	IATE
<i>an explanation is provided</i>	common law English law	common law English law	–

Table 12 English equivalents for the term *paražu tiesības*

LETONIKA	ETB	LNTP	IATE
<i>an explanation is provided</i>	Customary law	Customary law	Customary law

The above brief review confirms once again that Latvian legal terminology is in an ongoing process of development and refinement. However, it may also give the impression of the volatility and instability of Latvian legal terminology and its equivalents, as well as the Latvian equivalents for English legal terms. There has always been a hidden fight against loanwords in Latvian terminology in favour of Latvian equivalents; there is a profound distrust of metaphorical terms in Latvian legal terminology, suffice to mention the English term *money laundering* and its Latvian equivalent *nelikumīgi iegūto līdzekļu legalizācija*. These are the prevailing trends in the development of Latvian terminology; however, whatever trends there might be, alignment and harmonisation of equivalents for legal terms – be it from Latvian into English or from English into Latvian – would be very advisable.

## CONCLUSIONS

The evolution of legal terminology is a gradual process ensuing from the development of society and the respective legal practice. Sometimes it is to develop under serious pressure of time constraints and urgency of decision-making like it has been in the case of Latvian legal terminology and Latvian equivalents for legal terms in foreign languages. It requires considerable investments of time and effort, constant and ongoing coordination and alignment.

Undoubtedly, the future belongs to electronic databases and dictionaries, not printed dictionaries, as they offer information that flows through the electronic media and reach the addressee in a split second. There is also no need to economize on space as there are almost no format constraints and the electronic media offer limitless opportunities for lexicographers to present and provide information. Some of the electronic lexicographic sources are more generous in providing explanatory information, examples, and comparisons, while others restrict themselves to listing equivalents for a word.

The analysis has allowed the delineation of certain trends in the development of lexicographic resources as well highlighted some failings that should be eliminated to improve the quality of these resources. The ultimate question is the reliability of lexicographic resources as precision is required in the usage of legal terminology to avoid misinterpretations and ambiguities; however, the electronic terminological databases often list several equivalents that cannot be used interchangeably and in all contexts. Without sufficient support information, the way is wide open for errors and misunderstandings. The electronic lexicographic sources for Latvian legal terminology and respective equivalents in foreign languages require considerable background knowledge of legal phenomena as well as linguistic acumen – a certain alertness of the mind and memory – to be able to choose the required equivalent from those offered for choice. Another issue that most often is not even mentioned or perhaps is not considered to be sufficiently relevant is the time factor – how much time is needed to surf through all the databases and online dictionaries, to find the required term, to compare equivalents listed, to check its usage in a context and then make an informed decision.

Fully aware of the amount of work that is required as well as the time that will be dedicated to the venture if it is ever undertaken, Latvian legal terminology deserves the full attention of linguists, terminology developers and the legal community who in future could establish a free-access portal of Latvian legal terminology with equivalents in foreign languages.

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