

3.6. Translating Legal Texts using Machine Translation

The question remains: will MT translation be able to achieve the task of translating such cumbersome language? As we have seen in the previous chapter, MT systems which draw on matching up equivalents of words or morphemes would most probably struggle and the result would most probably be a fiasco. On the other hand, SMT which depends on matching larger units of language would probably do a better job. This tentative assumption draws on the parallel corpora which already exist or to be created in the future that would not vary to a great extent since variations between translated texts would be to the minimum.

Different attempts to automate the process of translating legal texts took place. Mattila (2007:20) argues that “technical tools as aids to legal translation have been considerably developed over recent years. European Union translators regularly use automated translation tools and computer-aided methods of human translation.” He, however, stresses the need of human to control automated translation and use of terminological databanks in the final analysis of the translated text.

Another important fact is that SMT depends heavily on parallel corpora. The challenge of finding such corpora is the corner stone for any SMT. In this respect, the availability of different contracts professionally translated from English into Arabic and vice versa, statutes, United Nations documents, and agreements between individuals, companies and even countries among others enable MT researchers to have their hands on a valuable treasure that can be exploited to build efficient systems which draw on solid parallel corpora.