

TRANSLATING 'CRIME' AND 'CRIMINAL' IN COLLOCATIONS

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Introduction

The words **crime** and **criminal** conjure up images of murders to most people working outside the legal system. This is far from being true because these two terms are used in reference to many violations of the law, not just crimes injuring persons, but also to stealing things, and numerous other serious offenses.

When the former aspect is taken into account, i.e. crimes injuring persons, mention can be made of such crimes as assault, mugging, murder and rape, whereas, in the case of stealing things, robbery, burglary, theft, shoplifting, fraud, carjacking are among the most frequent crimes referred to by the specialists in the field.

1. On crimes and criminals

The non-restrictiveness of the terms **crime** and **criminal** to murder is also made clear by the fact that **crimes** are defined as "a violation of societal rules of behaviour as interpreted and expressed by a **criminal** legal code created by people holding social and political powers" (Siegel 2007: 15). In other words, "**crimes** are behaviours believed to be repugnant to all the elements of a society." (Siegel 2007: 15), and since repugnant behaviours are rather numerous in any society, the conclusion may be drawn that crimes may be as various as repugnant behaviours are.

As regards the person committing a **crime**, Siegel (2007: 15) defines the **criminal** as that individual who violates societal rules, being thus subject to sanctions by state authority, social stigma, and loss of status. Nevertheless, the fact should be born in mind that an individual's behaviour is not a **crime** unless it is prohibited by the criminal law. Furthermore, the simple reality of one having violated a law is insufficient, if the person having done so has not been at least identified and charged with the violation. Becoming a criminal also requires that a legal process of identification with the crime has occurred, usually a trial and conviction.

Similarly to the noun **crime**, **criminal** is a hyponym which includes various co-hyponyms such as: thief, crook, burglar, mugger, robber, pickpocket, rapist, offender or lawbreaker. Each of these co-hyponyms denotes different types of criminals, according to the type of crime they are responsible for.

If **criminals** are violators of societal rules, this logically means that the rules governing any society and punishing people for their criminal behaviour are officially recorded in a specific code which is consulted before convicting somebody of a crime. The official sources consulted by the specialists dealing with crimes and criminals are, in domain specific terms, the **criminal law** and the **substantive criminal law**.

Criminal law is conventionally defined “as a body of specific rules regarding human conduct which have been promulgated by political authority, which apply uniformly to all the members of the classes to which the rules refer, and which are enforced by punishment administered by the state.” (Sutherland and Cressey in Siegel 2007: 16)

On the other hand, the term **substantive criminal law** is used to refer to “the written code which defines **crimes** and their punishments, and reflects the values, beliefs and opinions of a society’s mainstream”. (Siegel 2007: 16)

Procedural criminal law defines the “**due process**,” the legal procedures by which one becomes labeled a criminal.

2. Crime and criminal: linguistic dimensions and specific lexical patterns

When considering the linguistic dimension of the terms **crime** and **criminal**, dictionaries make an inventory of their literal and figurative meanings, as well as of the most frequent collocations in which these two terms occur. Thus, the noun **crime** is used in the legal domain to refer to ‘illegal activities in general’ and to ‘illegal actions, which can be punished by law’, whereas **criminal** denotes, in its nominal use, ‘the person charged for a crime’ and ‘something relating to crime or to the part of the legal system that is concerned with crime’, when used attributively.

Furthermore, if attention is shifted to the collocational patterns in which **crime** and **criminal** are used, the fact may be noticed that the best represented are the nominal ones. This is also the case with the examples included in our corpus. To be more specific, in the case of the noun **crime**, whether used as the ‘node’ or as the ‘collocate’, the most numerous examples have been identified for the patterns **crime** + N, V+ **crime**, N/ Adj. + PP (P + NP **crime**), and N + and + **crime** (see **Appendix 1**)

As regards the collocations including the term **criminal**, the more numerous examples have been found for the case in which **criminal** is used attributively, rather than for that in which the same term is used as a noun (see **Appendix 2**).

An interesting aspect which is worth mentioning is that many standard collocations, i.e. made up of two members, which include the terms **crime** and **criminal**, respectively, may be traceable in a series of extended collocations. In the case of the noun **crime**, reference can be made of standard collocations such as: *hate crime*, *crime rate* and *crime prevention* which are used in a significant number of extended patterns (see the table below):

TRADITIONAL COLLOCATIONS	EXTENDED COLLOCATIONS
<i>hate crime</i>	Adj./ N + hate crimes : <i>mission hate crimes, reactive/defensive hate crimes, retaliatory hate crimes, thrill-seeking hate crimes</i> ; N+ PP (P + NP hate crimes): <i>the extent of hate crimes, the nature of hate crimes</i> ; V + hate crimes : <i>to control hate crimes</i> .
<i>crime rate</i>	V + crime rate : <i>to bring the crime rate down, to lower crime rate, reduce crime rates, to shape crime rates</i> ; crime rate + V: <i>crime rates diminish, crime rates spiral upward, crime rates vary</i> ; NP + PP (P + NP crime rate/s): <i>a decline in crime rates, patterns in the crime rates</i> .
<i>crime prevention</i>	Adj. + crime prevention : <i>situational crime prevention</i> ; Adj. + crime prevention + N: <i>situational crime prevention efforts</i> .

The way in which standard collocations including the term **criminal** may be extended in various types of collocational patterns is illustrated by collocations such as *criminal justice*, *criminal behaviour*, *criminal acts* and *criminal activity*:

TRADITIONAL COLLOCATIONS

EXTENDED COLLOCATIONS

<i>criminal justice</i>	criminal justice + N: <i>criminal justice agencies, criminal justice experts, criminal justice programs, criminal justice statistics, criminal justice system;</i>
<i>criminal behaviour</i>	criminal behaviour + N: <i>criminal behaviour systems;</i> N + PP (P+ NP criminal behaviour): <i>extent of criminal behaviour, measurements of criminal behaviour, nature of criminal behaviour, patterns of criminal behaviour;</i> V + criminal behaviour: <i>to maintain criminal behaviour, to reinforce criminal behaviour.</i>
<i>criminal acts</i>	V + criminal acts: <i>to commit a criminal act, to decriminalize criminal acts, to legalize criminal acts, to report criminal acts.</i>
<i>criminal activity</i>	V + criminal activity: <i>to cause criminal activity, to desist from criminal activities.</i>

Although traceable in a limited number of cases, examples of extended collocations such as the ones included in the previous tables may be easily referred to in relation to other collocations including the terms **crime** and **criminal**. For example, lexical patterns such as *the extent of* and *the nature of* combined in our corpus with the standard collocations *hate crimes* and *criminal behaviour* may as well combine with collocations such as: *crime control*, *crime prevention*, *crime problems* or *criminal activity*, *criminal acts*, *criminal damage*, *criminal incidents*, *criminal violations*.

4. Translating *crime* and *criminal* in collocations

If reference is made to translating **crime** and **criminal** in collocations, the starting point in this process should be the identification of the different meanings that these two terms have in the target language (TL), in our case Romanian, so as to appropriately select the meaning envisaged in the source language (SL) collocational patterns.

In the case of the noun **crime**, the list of Romanian equivalents is correlated to three possible interpretations of this term, out of which only one is strictly related to the legal domain: **1.** crimă, nelegiuire; **2.** (fig.) vină, păcat; **3.** (mil.) încălcare a disciplinei, infracțiune, greșeală. On the other hand, the meanings of the term **criminal** follow two distinct lines according to whether its nominal or attributive use is envisaged: **n.** criminal, făptaș, nelegiuit, vinovat, inculpat, **adj.** **1.** criminal, nelegiuit, culpabil, vinovat; **2.** (jur.) criminal, penal.

The reason for considering the meanings of the terms **crime** and **criminal** as a starting point in translating English collocations including them is that many of the problems that translators may encounter in translating these two terms are likely to originate in the appropriate choice of the meaning envisaged. For example, the appropriate translation of the term **criminal** used attributively in collocations such as: *criminal action*, *criminal case*, *criminal law*, *criminal prosecution* implies the selection of the Romanian adjective which naturally collocates with *acțiune*, *proces*, *cod* and *urmărire*, i.e. 'penal': e.g. *criminal action* → *acțiune penală*, *criminal case* → *proces penal*, *criminal law* → *cod penal*, *criminal prosecution* → *urmărire penală*.

Moreover, numerous problems are also likely to occur in translating collocations in which the meaning of the words combining with **crime** and **criminal** becomes specialized. This is the case with *crime sheet* and *criminal record* whose appropriate translation into Romanian (*crime sheet* → *fișă de pedepse*, *criminal record* → *cazier judiciar*) can only be made if the translator is familiar with the domain-specific meanings of the two terms making up these collocations. Collocations such as **foaie de crime/delict* and **registru de crime/delict*, respectively, would not only be inappropriate, but would also sound awkward to the speakers working in the legal domain.

In much the same way, collocations such as *the scene of the crime* and *habitual criminal* cannot be translated correctly into Romanian if the translator does not select the appropriate equivalent of the words *scene* and *habitual* as resulting from their combination with the terms **crime** and **criminal**: *the scene of the crime* → *locul crimei/ delictului* (not **scena crimei*); *habitual criminal* → *criminal recidivist, infractor înrăit* (not **criminal obisnuit*).

When reference is made to collocations such as *street crimes* or *hate/bias crime* their correct use in English and appropriate translation into Romanian is possible only if the translator is aware of the fact that the former include burglary, robbery and larceny, and that the latter, i.e. *hate/bias crimes*, “are violent acts directed towards a particular person or members of a group merely because the targets share a discernible racial, ethnic, religious or gender characteristic” (Garofalo 1990, in Siegel 2007: 344). At the same time, their translation is conditioned by the translator’s ability to select the appropriate ‘equivalent’ collocations in the target language, i.e. in Romanian. In other words, the appropriate transfer of collocations such as *street crime* or *hate/bias crime* across linguistic borders can be made only by those translators who are both legally and collocationally competent in the languages brought into contact, in our case English and Romanian.

In quite numerous situations, the appropriate translation of certain collocations including the terms **crime** and **criminal** depends on the translator’s access to synonyms or antonyms which combine with these two terms in collocations denoting the same reality or opposed realities. Illustrative for the synonymy relationship are such collocations as *to combat/ to fight crime*, *juvenile/youth crime*, *crime figures/statistics*, in which *to combat*, *juvenile* and *figures* may be easily replaced by *to fight*, *youth* and *statistics* without a change of meaning. As regards antonymy, *petty crime* and *serious crime* are good examples of the collocations whose correct use and appropriate translation is conditioned by the translator’s collocational competence in the two language cultures brought into contact.

Last, but not least, even though the translation of the various binominals including the term **crime** which have been identified in our work (see **Appendix 1**) is hardly problematic, the fact may be noticed that there is a wider range of binominals in which the factors leading to crime take front position in the *noun + and + crime* pattern, as compared to those in which the term **crime** takes front position combining with nouns which denote the possible effects of criminal actions. Since such binominal structures are not recorded in dictionaries, the fact may be deduced that their use is not governed by collocational and domain-specific restrictions, but by a writer’s creativity or customary patterns of usage within the disciplines of criminal justice.

Conclusions

Far from having covered all the aspects which could have been discussed in relation to the *crime* and *criminal* collocational patterns identified in the corpus selected for analysis, the aspects presented above make it clear that resource material such as Larry J. Siegel’s summary of criminology theories, patterns and typologies, is extremely valuable, providing especially the non-specialists with a consistent number of crime-related terms and collocations.

As regards the translation of the collocations including the terms **crime** and **criminal**, most patterns in English are very accessible, allowing a rapid and non-problematic translation into Romanian. The more difficult situations are, as expected, determined by collocational and domain – specific restrictions which can only be overcome by the translator’s good collocational and legal competence in both the SL and TL.

APPENDIX 1 - CRIME COLLOCATIONS

CRIME (n.) = 1. illegal activities in general. 2. [C] an illegal action, which can be punished by law.

CRIME → ‘node’

N + crime: car **crime** (Br.E), corporate **crime**, cyber **crime**, hate/bias **crime**, index **crime**, legal **crime**, overall **crime**, property **crime**, sex **crime**, street **crime**, theft **crime**, vile **crime**, youth **crime**.

NP + crime: common law **crime**, drug-related **crime**, offense-specific **crime**, offender-specific **crime**, personal theft **crime**, profit-oriented **crime**, public order **crime**, strict liability **crime**, white-collar **crime**.

Adj. + crime: cleared **crime**, expressive **crime**, instrumental **crime**, juvenile **crime**, organizational **crime**, organized, **crime**, petty **crime**, serious **crime**, specific **crime**, victimless **crime**, violent **crime**.

crime + Adj.: crime- related

crime + PP: **crime** against the person, **crime** against property, **crime** of sedition, **crime** of business enterprise.

crime + V: **crime** occurs, **crime** persists.

CRIME → ‘collocate’

crime + N: **crime** causation, **crime** consequences, **crime** control, **crime** data, (an effective) **crime** deterrent, **crime** discouragers, **crime** displacement, **crime** figures, **crime** mapping, **crime** prevalence, **crime** prevention, **crime** problems, **crime** prone, (high) **crime** rates, **crime** rehabilitation, **crime** report, **crime** scene, **crime** statistics, **crime** trends, **crime** types, **crime** typology, **crime** victims.

V+ crime: to cause a **crime**, to combat **crime**, to commit **crime**, to control **crime**, to displace **crime**, to eradicate **crime**, to explain **crime**, to fight **crime**, to fit the **crime**, to influence **crime**, to measure **crime**, to precipitate **crime**, to prevent **crime**, to report **crime**, to solve **crime**, to structure **crime**, to study **crime**, turn to **crime**, to undertake **crime**.

N/ Adj. + PP (P + NP crime): attraction of **crime**, the causes of **crime**, choice of **crime**, concepts of **crime**, continuity of **crime**, costs of **crime** (to victims), definition of **crime**, a determinant of **crime**, the ecology of **crime**, the extent of **crime**, the nature of **crime**, number of **crimes**, pathways to **crime**, place of **crime**, research on **crime**, the roots of **crime**, the study of **crime**, target of **crime**, theories of **crime**, time of **crime**, tough on **crime**, type of **crime**, victims of **crime**, vulnerable to **crime**.

BINOMINALS (N + and + crime): age and **crime**, biochemical conditions and **crime**, child abuse and **crime**, diet and **crime**, drugs and **crime**, gender and **crime**, genetics and **crime**, intelligence and **crime**, IQ and **crime**, mood disorders and **crime**, neurological impairments and **crime**, impulsivity and **crime**, patriarchy and **crime**, personality and **crime**, race and **crime**, self-

concept and **crime**, self-control and **crime**, socioeconomic structure and **crime**, sugar and **crime**.

BINOMINALS (crime + N): **crime** and human nature, **crime** and labeling theory, **crime** and mental illness.

APPENDIX 2 - CRIMINAL COLLOCATIONS

➤ **CRIMINAL (n.)** = someone who is involved in illegal activities or has been proved guilty of a crime

Adj. + criminal: known **criminal**, occasional **criminal**, potential **criminal**, professional **criminal**, psychotic **criminal**, rational **criminal**, reasoning **criminal**.

➤ **CRIMINAL (adj.)** = 1. relating to crime. 2. relating to the part of the legal system that is concerned with crime.

criminal + N: **criminal** activity, **criminal** acts, **criminal** anthropology, **criminal** attitudes, **criminal** behaviour, **criminal** career, **criminal** cases, **criminal** charges, **criminal** choice, **criminal** damage, **criminal** defenses, **criminal** incidents, **criminal** identification, **criminal** intent, **criminal** justice, **criminal** law, **criminal** lawyer, **criminal** matters, **criminal** negligence, **criminal** offence, **criminal** offenders, **criminal** opportunity, **criminal** patterns, **criminal** process, **criminal** record, **criminal** (lawful) solutions, **criminal** statistics, **criminal** techniques, **criminal** trials, **criminal** types, **criminal** violations.

References

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Corpus

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