

## Types of equivalence in terminological translation

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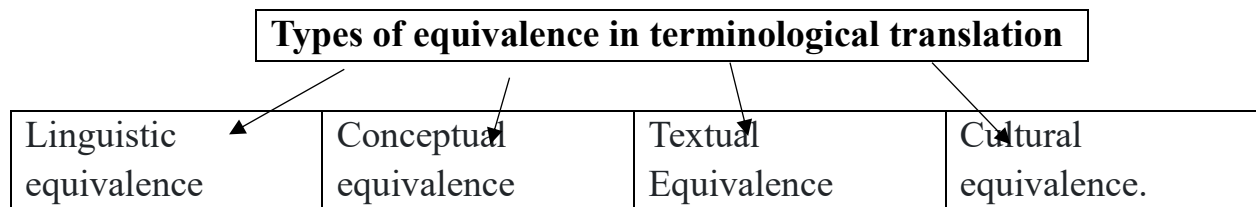
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**Abstract:** Terminology translation is a specialty within the broader field of translation that focuses on the accurate and precise transfer of terminology from one language to another. In this article, we discuss the different types of correspondence in terminological translation, what they mean, and the strategies used to achieve them.

**Key words:** Equivalent terms, bilingual terminology, multilingual terminology, translation accuracy assessment, terminology mapping.

Equivalence plays a key role in terminological translation, as it aims to ensure that the meaning, context and functionality of particular terms are preserved in different languages. However, achieving equivalence in terminological translation can be difficult due to linguistic, cultural and conceptual differences between languages.



### 1. Linguistic equivalence

a. Synonymous Equivalence: Synonymous equivalence refers to the use of different words or expressions in the target language to convey the same meaning as in the source language. This type of equivalence is usually used when no direct translation is available for a given term. For example, the English term "computer" can be translated into the French "ordinateur" or the Spanish "computadora"<sup>1</sup>.

b. Equivalence of Antonyms: Equivalence of Antonyms is the use of words or expressions with opposite meanings in the target language to convey the same concept as the expression in the source language. This type of equivalence is often used when a term cannot be directly translated due to cultural or language differences. For

<sup>1</sup>.Gouadec,D.& Sager,J.C.(1997) Terminology and language planning:An alternative framework of practice and discourse.John Benjamins Publishin

example, the English term "night" can be translated as "jour" (day) in Canadian French dialects to express the concept of "shift work".

c. Hyponymic Equivalence: Hyponymic equivalence is the use of a more general expression in the target language to convey the same meaning as a more specific expression in the source language. This type of equivalence is usually used when there is no exact equivalent for a specific expression in the target language. For example, the English term "neurologist" can be translated into French as "médecin spécialiste en maladies du système nerveux" (a doctor specializing in diseases of the nervous system).

d. Polysemous Equivalence: Polysemous equivalence refers to the use of a word or phrase with multiple meanings in the target language to convey the same concept in the source language as a polysemous expression. This type of correspondence requires careful consideration of the context to ensure that the intended meaning is accurately conveyed. For example, the English term "bank" can be translated into French as "banque" (financial institution) or "rive" (riverside), depending on the context.

e Homonymous Equivalence: Homonymous equivalence refers to the use of a word or phrase in the target language that is spelled or pronounced the same as the source language term but has a different meaning. This type of correspondence requires contextual cues to avoid confusion and ensure accurate understanding. For example, the English term "bat" can be translated into French as "chauve-souris" (mammal) or "bâton" (stick), depending on the context<sup>2</sup>.

## ***2. Conceptual equivalence***

a. Denotative Equivalence: Denotative equivalence means conveying the same denotative or literal meaning of a term by an equivalent term in the target language. This type of equivalence focuses on preserving the basic meaning of an expression in different languages. For example, the English term "car" can be translated into French as "butire" because both terms refer to motor vehicles.

b. Connotative Equivalence: Connotative equivalence refers to the loss of the same connotative or associative meaning of an expression in the source language by an equivalent expression in the target language. This type of correspondence takes cultural and contextual nuances into account to ensure accurate understanding and

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<sup>2</sup> Rey-Debove, J. & Rey, A. (1998) Le grand dictionnaire terminologique: une banque de données terminologiques et linguistiques pour l'information scientifique et technique. Actes du colloque international sur les dictionnaires électroniques. pp135-145

interpretation. For example, the English term "liberty" can be translated into French as "liberté", which includes both its denotative meaning and the meaning of personal autonomy and political rights.

c. Cultural equivalence: Cultural equivalence means translating terms specific to a particular culture or context using culturally appropriate expressions or concepts in the target language. This type of correspondence is crucial for accurate communication and cross-cultural understanding. For example, the English expression "Thanksgiving" can be translated into Canadian French as "Action de grâce", reflecting the cultural meaning and customs associated with that holiday.

d. Functional Equivalence: Functional equivalence focuses on conveying the same functional role or purpose of an expression in the source language through an equivalent expression or expression in the target language. This type of equivalence is often used when there are significant linguistic or cultural differences between languages. For example, the English term "firefighter" can be translated into French as "pompier", since both terms refer to individuals who put out fires and provide rescue services<sup>3</sup>.

### ***3. Textual Equivalence.***

a. Terminological consistency: Terminological consistency involves the consistent use of specific terms in a text or document. This type of correspondence ensures clarity and consistency of terminology, facilitating accurate understanding and interpretation by readers. Terminological consistency can be achieved through glossaries, style guides and quality control measures.

b. Stylistic Equivalence: Stylistic equivalence focuses on conveying the same stylistic features and characteristics of a text or document in the target language. This type of correspondence considers language conventions, register, tone and other stylistic elements to ensure effective communication and readability. Stylistic matching requires language skills and cultural sensitivity to adapt the style of the source text to suit the target audience.

c. Pragmatic Equivalence: Pragmatic equivalence refers to conveying the same pragmatic or communicative function of a text or document in the target language. In this type of equivalence, factors such as discourse structure, rhetorical strategies, and target audience response are considered for effective communication and persuasion.

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<sup>3</sup> Budin,G.& Zock,M.(Eds.)Handbook of terminology management:Basic aspects of terminology management(Vol1)John Benjamins Publishing

Pragmatic equivalence requires an understanding of the communicative norms and practices of both the source and target cultures.

#### ***4. Cultural equivalence.***

a. **Ethnographic Equivalence:** Ethnographic equivalence refers to the translation of expressions related to certain cultural practices, beliefs or traditions using equivalent concepts or expressions in the target language that accurately reflect the cultural context. This type of equivalence is crucial to preserve cultural nuances and ensure accurate representation of cultural knowledge across languages.

b. **Sociolinguistic Equivalence:** Sociolinguistic equivalence focuses on translating terms that reflect social or sociolinguistic variations using appropriate expressions or concepts in the target language that accurately capture those variations. This type of correspondence takes into account factors such as dialects, registers, social norms and language variations to ensure accurate communication between different social contexts.

c. **Ideological Equivalence:** Ideological equivalence means translating terms that convey ideological concepts or values using equivalent expressions or concepts in the target language that accurately reflect those ideologies. This type of correspondence is important to preserve ideological nuances and ensure accurate representation of ideas and beliefs in different languages<sup>4</sup>.

Equivalence is a basic concept of terminological translation, which aims to ensure the accurate and precise transfer of special terminology from one language to another. Linguistic equivalence focuses on finding equivalent words or expressions that convey similar meanings, while conceptual equivalence aims to preserve basic concepts and relationships between languages. Textual equivalence emphasizes the consistency, style and pragmatic functions of translated texts, while cultural equivalence emphasizes cultural, sociolinguistic and ideological factors.

Achieving these different types of equivalents requires language skills, cultural sensitivity, domain knowledge and translation strategies adapted to specific contexts and regions. Translators must deal with linguistic, cultural and conceptual differences between languages and strive for accuracy, precision, clarity and readability in translation. By correctly understanding and applying these different types of equivalents, terminological translators can ensure effective communication, facilitate

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<sup>4</sup> Felber, H. & Stuppacher, I. (2008) Terminology management in the European Union: Current practice and future challenges. John Benjamins Publishing

cross-cultural understanding, support international cooperation and promote the dissemination of knowledge in specialized fields within language communities<sup>5</sup>.

### **LIST OF USED LITERATURE**

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