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Translation-oriented terminography

Terminographie axée sur la traduction

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Foreword

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International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 3.

The main task of technical committees is to prepare International Standards. Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this International Standard may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

ISO 12616 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 37, *Terminology and other language resources*, Subcommittee SC 2, *Terminology and lexicography*.

Annex A of this International Standard is for information only.

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Introduction

Translators have always had a need to record terminological information for later use. Translators dealing with specialized texts face an increasing need to record and retrieve terminological information, as it saves time and allows them to work more efficiently. Experience has shown that terminography facilitates translation by enabling translators

⎯ to record and systematize terminology,

⎯ to use terminology consistently over time, and

⎯ to deal more efficiently with multiple languages.

By recording terminological information systematically, translators can enhance their performance, improve text quality and increase productivity. An organized collection of terminological information makes it possible for translators to keep track of, and reuse, their expertise, and facilitates cooperation between individuals or teams of translators.

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Translation-oriented terminography

1 Scope

This International Standard provides guidelines to enable translators and translation support staff to record, maintain and quickly and easily retrieve terminological information in connection with translation work.

The quality of a translation can be measured partly in terms of linguistic elements, such as style and grammar, and partly in terms of the accurate use of the terminology involved. The guidelines in this International Standard provide the necessary elements for quality control of terminological information in translations. The guidelines can also be adapted to provide a basis for the administration of source-language texts, parallel texts, translations, and other information (e.g. bibliographies, references) in the target language.

This International Standard is applicable to the work of an individual translator as well as the work of a team or a department. It also lays down guidelines that are essential for the interchange of terminological data.

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2 Normative references

The following normative documents contain provisions which, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of this International Standard. For dated references, subsequent amendments to, or revisions of, any of these publications do not apply. However, parties to agreements based on this International Standard are encouraged to investigate the possibility of applying the most recent editions of the normative documents indicated below. For undated references, the latest edition of the normative document referred to applies. Members of ISO and IEC maintain registers of currently valid International Standards.

ISO 639:1988, *Code for the representation of names of languages*

ISO 6156:1987, *Magnetic tape exchange format for terminological/lexicographical records (MATER)*

ISO 12200:1999, *Computer applications in terminology — Machine-readable terminology interchange format (MARTIF) — Negotiated interchange*

ISO 12620:1999, *Computer applications in terminology — Data categories*

3 Terms and definitions

For definitions specific to the field of terminology work, readers should refer to ISO 1087-1 and ISO 1087-2.

For the purposes of this International Standard, the following terms and definitions apply.

3.1
terminography
part of terminology work concerned with the recording and presentation of terminological data

[ISO 1087-1:2000]

3.2
data category
result of the specification of a given data field

[ISO 1087-2:2000]

3.3
data element
unit of data that, in a certain context, is considered indivisible

[ISO 1087-2:2000]

4   Features of translation-oriented terminography

Translators need to store and retrieve a much broader set of data than is traditionally stored in a terminology database, and therefore translation-oriented terminography deals with not only all forms of terminology (i.e. terms, names and certain symbols), but also phraseology, contexts and standard text segments.

The application of translation-oriented terminography involves storing text-related terminological information in an agreed upon, predefined format (normally computerized) and in addition, identifying specific data categories which are to be included in each entry.

The terminological information contained in a text shall be identified according to pre-established criteria. This information shall then be investigated and documented using reliable, authoritative sources wherever possible. In cases where such sources are not available, the translator should cooperate with subject specialists to find ways of translating terminological information adequately.

5   Management of terminological information

5.1   General

Managing terminology and related information involves recording such information in terminological entries that are part of a database or collection designed to meet specific user requirements. Computer-assisted management of terminological information becomes essential when the collection has reached a certain size.

5.2   Terminological entry

The terminological entry is the basic unit of a collection of terminological information. It is made up of terminological data categories that are related to each other. These data categories are grouped together according to different criteria (see 5.3.4).

A collection of terminological entries can be consolidated into a database. The internal structure of such a database should be as flexible as possible to enable users to adapt it to their specific needs. Terminological entries can also be linked to other types of information such as bibliographic information, addresses of institutions, or names and addresses of translation clients.

The format of terminological entries is also suitable for, and can be adapted to, the multilingual management of information such as names (e.g. product names, names of institutions, job titles), phraseological units and standard text segments.

The structure of the terminological entry shall ensure that

— all terminological information, including changes in meaning, context-dependent use, etc., can be recorded adequately, and

— all information can be easily processed and retrieved.

5.3   Data categories for terminological information

5.3.1   General

The information recorded in a terminological entry is subdivided into data categories that consist of data elements. Each type of information should be represented in an individual data category. In a translation environment, term-related data categories will be recorded for at least two languages.

5.3.2   Essential and optional data categories

Essential data categories constitute the information required for a terminological entry to be complete.

The following data categories constitute the minimum basic information required to create a terminological entry. This basic terminological entry may be extended by adding optional data categories, if necessary.

— Main entry term;

— input date;

— source.

Optional data categories are categories that may be added to the terminological entry according to specific user needs. A translator may choose to designate one or more optional data categories such as "subject field", "entry identifier" or "synonym" as essential, depending on the purpose of the terminological database or collection.

5.3.3   Repeatable data categories

Certain data categories must be repeatable within the terminological entry because several data elements may belong to the same data category.

EXAMPLES:

— A terminological entry will usually contain main entry terms in more than one language (repeatability by language but not within a language).

— An entry may contain more than one synonym for each language (repeatability within a language and by language).

— Grammatical information (e.g. gender), may have to be repeated for each term (repeatability within a language).

— An entry may contain more than one context, possibly one for each synonym. Each context, definition, etc. may require its own source information (repeatability within a language).

5.3.4   Description of data categories

The data categories described in this clause are typically of particular use to translators. However, it is up to the individual translator or team of translators to determine which categories shall be included in their respective terminology collections. A complete list and full description of these categories can be found in ISO 12620.

The information recorded in each data category shall be entered consistently, taking into account existing standards or conventions (e.g. selecting a specific format for entering dates according to International Standards).

In the following, the data categories are subdivided into data categories for terms and term-related information (5.3.4.1), data categories related to concept description (5.3.4.2) and administrative data categories (5.3.4.3). See informative annex A for examples and explanations of each of the data categories listed in 5.3.4.1 to 5.3.4.3.

In this International Standard, ESS indicates essential data categories, REP-IN-LANG indicates that a category is repeatable within a language, REP-BY-LANG indicates that a category is repeatable in a terminological entry by language, but not within a language. and NO-REP indicates that a category is not repeatable within a terminological entry.

5.3.4.1 Data categories for terms and term-related information

5.3.4.1.1 Data categories for types of terms

		Repeatability		
		REP-IN-LANG	REP-BY-LANG	NO-REP
main entry term (including names, e.g. names of institutions)	ESS		x	
synonym		x	x	
full form		x	x	
abbreviated form of term (including abbreviations, short forms, initialisms, acronyms and clipped terms)		x	x	
variant (e.g. spelling variants, deprecated variants)		x	x	
symbol		x	x	
formula		x	x	
phraseological unit (including collocations and set phrases)		x	x	
standard text		x	x	

A terminological entry will normally contain one main entry term for each language. In translation-oriented terminography, phraseological units and standard text segments should be recorded as main entry terms. Furthermore, it is recommended that all abbreviated forms and variants be recorded as synonyms.

5.3.4.1.2 Data categories for term-related information

	Repeatability		
	REP-IN-LANG	REP-BY-LANG	NO-REP
grammar (e.g. part of speech, gender, number, class)	x	x	
usage (including geographical usage, temporal qualifier and proprietary restriction)	x	x	
term status (including deprecated/admitted/ preferred/ recommended/proposed term)	x	x	
equivalence (including degree of equivalence, directionality and reliability code)	x	x	

Data categories for term-related information are utilized to record the actual use of terminological information in a given context.

5.3.4.2 Data categories related to concept description

5.3.4.2.1 Domain and subdomain

Repeatability
REPEATABLE, BUT NOT LANGUAGE DEPENDENT

domain and subdomain

Terminological information may be classified in many ways, for example according to subject field (e.g. medicine, economics) or type of information (e.g. names of institutions, job titles, customer or project name).

5.3.4.2.2 Concept-related description

	Repeatability		
	REP-IN-LANG	REP-BY-LANG	NO-REP
definition	x	x	
explanation	x	x	
context	x	x	
figure	x	x	
note	x	x	

If possible, at least one concept-related category, preferably a definition, an explanation or a context should be recorded, as this enhances reliability. Other kinds of concept representation can supplement or replace the concept description.

5.3.4.3 Administrative data categories

		Repeatability		
		REP-IN-LANG	REP-BY-LANG	NO-REP
input date	ESS	x	x	
modification date		x	x	
approval date			x	
responsibility (e.g. inputter, updater, approver)		x	x	
subset identifier (e.g. customer subset, project subset)		x	x	
language symbol			x	
entry identifier				x
cross-reference		x	x	
source	ESS	x	x	

These categories contain information regarding the establishment and maintenance of terminological data. In addition to traditional bibliographic references, the source category will often contain data documenting oral sources (for example data on subject field experts). For language symbols, see ISO 639.

6 Referencing and source identification

In translation-oriented terminography, the recording of sources is indispensable. Methods of documenting sources can be found in ISO 690. It is important to ensure proper management of

— information on sources (e.g. reference works, relevant literature, experts consulted), and

— source language texts, translations and relevant citations.

Uniform rules for dealing with sources of terminological information

— increase efficiency and facilitate the organization of translation work over time,

— increase the reliability of the terminological information recorded, and

— facilitate the interchange of terminological information.

Such rules ensure uniform recording and unambiguous identification of sources of terminological information, and facilitate analysis of these sources from the translator's viewpoint.

Such factors are especially important for retrieving the sources when the entries are recorded, used, updated and maintained. The identifiers used shall correspond to unambiguous bibliographic descriptions.

7 General principles for data entry and retrieval

7.1 Form layout for data entry

It is recommended that data entry be organized by setting up input models to facilitate entry of repetitive data (e.g. date, inputter).

The input model should allow

— practical and mnemonic arrangement of the data categories,

— combinations of and links between data elements,

— possibility of adding notes, and

— optimum efficiency in entering terminological information.

7.1.1 Recording sheet

If a recording sheet is used for preparing terminological information for entry into a computerized terminology collection, the recording sheet and the template must be compatible.

7.1.2 Template

Templates are recommended either in databases or as macros in word-processing systems for entering terminological information in a terminological database. While the design of the screen template will always depend on the software used, it should represent the logical structure of the information in a manner that is clear and easy to understand.

7.2 Data retrieval

There are essentially two output options:

— single entries: on screen or paper;

— larger sets of entries: on paper or some other data medium.

The layout, arrangement and set of data categories output on paper or in other data media can differ from those of the output screen, depending on the needs of the user and the purpose of the output.