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## Translation, interpreting and related technology — Vocabulary

*Traduction, interprétation et technologies apparentées —  
Vocabulaire*

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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see [www.iso.org/directives](http://www.iso.org/directives)).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see [www.iso.org/patents](http://www.iso.org/patents)).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), see [www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html](http://www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html).

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 37, *Language and terminology*, Subcommittee SC 5, *Translation, interpreting and related technology*.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at [www.iso.org/members.html](http://www.iso.org/members.html).

## Introduction

This document is a compendium of vocabulary used in International Standards on translation, interpreting and related technology. It was compiled with a view to coordinating usage of terms and definitions in these standards in future. Some of the concepts in these domains are referred to in different ways by practitioners. It is not expected that these differences will disappear in the short term; however, it is likely that, in the long term, consistency in terms and definitions across the related ISO documents will have a standardizing effect in practice. For example, “revision” is the preferred term in International Standards on translation for the following concept: “examination of the entire target language content against the source language content to ensure linguistic accuracy and faithfulness to the source language content.” In practice, this concept is referred to interchangeably as “revision”, “editing”, “proofreading” and “review”, yet these designate other concepts in the ISO documents for this domain.

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# Translation, interpreting and related technology — Vocabulary

## 1 Scope

This document provides the vocabulary for translation, interpreting and related technology standards.

## 2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

## 3 Terms and definitions

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>

### 3.1 Key concepts

#### 3.1.1

##### language

systematic use of sounds, characters, symbols or signs by which to communicate

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#### 3.1.2

##### content

information in any form

EXAMPLE Text, audio, video, etc.

#### 3.1.3

##### source language

language (3.1.1) from which content (3.1.2) is translated (3.1.7) or interpreted (3.1.9)

#### 3.1.4

##### target language

language (3.1.1) into which content (3.1.2) is translated (3.1.7) or interpreted (3.1.9)

#### 3.1.5

##### source language content

content (3.1.2) to be translated (3.1.7) or interpreted (3.1.9)

#### 3.1.6

##### target language content

content (3.1.2) that has been translated (3.1.7) or interpreted (3.1.9) from a source language (3.1.3)

#### 3.1.7

##### translate

render source language content (3.1.5) into target language content (3.1.6) in written form or signed language (3.2.3)

### 3.1.8

#### **translation**

rendering *source language content* (3.1.5) into *target language content* (3.1.6) in written form or *signed language* (3.2.3)

### 3.1.9

#### **interpret**

render spoken or signed information from a *source language* (3.1.3) to a *target language* (3.1.4) in oral or signed form, conveying both the *language register* (3.2.1) and meaning of the *source language content* (3.1.5)

### 3.1.10

#### **interpreting**

interpretation

rendering spoken or signed information from a *source language* (3.1.3) to a *target language* (3.1.4) in oral or signed form, conveying both the *language register* (3.2.1) and meaning of the *source language content* (3.1.5)

### 3.1.11

#### **translator**

person who *translates* (3.1.7)

### 3.1.12

#### **interpreter**

person who *interprets* (3.1.9)

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## 3.2 Concepts common to translation and interpreting

### 3.2.1

#### **language register**

*language* (3.1.1) variety used for a particular purpose or in an event of language use, depending on the type of situation, especially its degree of formality

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Note 1 to entry: Individuals usually have more than one language register in their linguistic repertoire and can vary their use of language register according to their perception of what is appropriate for different purposes or *domains* (3.2.4).

[SOURCE: ISO/TR 20694:2018, 3.3, modified — the wording ‘An individual usually has’ has been changed to ‘Individuals usually have’, and ‘verbal repertoire’ has been changed to ‘linguistic repertoire’.]

### 3.2.2

#### **language proficiency**

ability of a person to understand or communicate in a given *language* (3.1.1)

Note 1 to entry: Language proficiency generally refers to speaking, listening, reading and writing skills.

### 3.2.3

#### **signed language**

*language* (3.1.1) which uses a combination of hand shapes, orientation and movement of the hands, arms or body, and facial expressions

### 3.2.4

#### **domain**

sphere of knowledge or activity

Note 1 to entry: A domain can have its own culture, social context and linguistic characteristics.



**3.2.5****client**

customer

person, or organization, who enters into a formal agreement for the provision of a service

Note 1 to entry: The formal agreement can, for example, take the form of a contract or an interdepartmental service agreement between units of an organization.

Note 2 to entry: The client can be the *end user* (3.2.6), but this does not have to be the case.

**3.2.6****end user**

person or group of persons that ultimately uses the service delivered

**3.2.7****authorization**

third-party attestation of a person's right to provide a specialized service

Note 1 to entry: Authorization for *legal interpreters* (3.4.20) and *legal translators* (3.3.22) is conferred by a recognized authoritative body.

Note 2 to entry: In some countries, official authorization is referred to as accreditation, certification, credentialing.

**3.3 Concepts relating to translation****3.3.1****text***content* (3.1.2) in written form

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**3.3.2****document**

information and the medium on which it is contained

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[SOURCE: ISO 9000:2015, 3.8.5, modified — the Example and the Notes to entry have been removed.]

**3.3.3****translation output**result of *translation* (3.1.8)**3.3.4****translation service**production and delivery of *target language content* (3.1.6) according to *client* (3.2.5) specification**3.3.5****translation service provider**

TSP

person or organization that performs *translation service* (3.3.4)**3.3.6****translation workflow**sequence of activities required to produce *target language content* (3.1.6)**3.3.7****review**

monolingual editing

examination of the entire *target language content* (3.1.6) to ensure its *domain* (3.2.4) accuracy**3.3.8****reviewer**person who performs *review* (3.3.7)

**3.3.9**

**revision**

bilingual editing

examination of the entire *target language content* (3.1.6) against the *source language content* (3.1.5) to ensure linguistic accuracy and faithfulness to the source language content

**3.3.10**

**reviser**

person who performs *revision* (3.3.9)

**3.3.11**

**check**

*translator's* (3.1.11) examination of *target language content* (3.1.6) upon completion of *translation* (3.1.8)

**3.3.12**

**proofread**

examine the final *target language content* (3.1.6) and apply *corrections* (3.3.15) before publication

**3.3.13**

**proofreader**

person who *proofreads* (3.3.12)

**3.3.14**

**verification**

action taken to determine whether specifications have been fulfilled

**3.3.15**

**correction**

action to eliminate an error

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Note 1 to entry: In translation, corrections are made when errors are detected during a *check* (3.3.11), or when errors are reported by a *reviser* (3.3.10), *reviewer* (3.3.8), *proofreader* (3.3.13) or *client* (3.2.5).

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**3.3.16**

**corrective action**

action to eliminate the cause of a failure to comply with a requirement in the *translation* (3.1.8) *process* (3.3.20), with a view to preventing recurrence

**3.3.17**

**project management**

planning, organizing, monitoring, controlling and reporting of all aspects of a *project* (3.3.19) to achieve the project objectives

[SOURCE: ISO 9000:2015, 3.3.12, modified — the wording ‘and the motivation of all those involved in it’ has been deleted.]

**3.3.18**

**project manager**

PM

person responsible for *project management* (3.3.17)

**3.3.19**

**project**

unique *process* (3.3.20), consisting of a set of coordinated and controlled activities with start and finish dates, undertaken to achieve an objective conforming to specific requirements, including the constraints of time, cost and resources

[SOURCE: ISO 9000:2015, 3.4.2, modified — the Notes to entry have been deleted.]

**3.3.20****process**

set of interrelated and interacting activities performed in order to achieve an objective

**3.3.21****product**

result of a *process* (3.3.20)

**3.3.22****legal translator**

*translator* (3.1.11) who is qualified to provide *translation services* (3.3.4) related to the law

Note 1 to entry: Legal translators can be required to be authorized by law.

**3.3.23****specialist field**

area of expertise of a person

**3.3.24****competence**

ability to apply knowledge, experience and skills to achieve intended results

**3.3.25****locale**

geographic region in which people use specific linguistic, cultural and technical conventions

**3.3.26****locale convention**

accepted usage or standard practice in a *locale* (3.3.25), which is generally expected to apply

Note 1 to entry: This can include date or time formatting rules.

**3.3.27****localization**

adapting *products* (3.3.21) and services for distinct *locales* (3.3.25)

**3.3.28****style guide**

set of editing and formatting instructions

**3.4 Concepts relating to interpreting****3.4.1****'A' language**

primary *language* (3.1.1) or its strict equivalent of which the *interpreter* (3.1.12) has complete command and into which the interpreter *interprets* (3.1.9) from all their other 'A' languages, 'B' languages (3.4.2) or 'C' languages (3.4.3)

**3.4.2****'B' language**

*language* (3.1.1) in which the *interpreter* (3.1.12) is proficient, but which is not their primary language or its strict equivalent

Note 1 to entry: An interpreter works into this language from one or more other languages.

**3.4.3****'C' language**

*language* (3.1.1) from which the *interpreter* (3.1.12) *interprets* (3.1.9) into their 'A' languages (3.4.1) or 'B' languages (3.4.2)

Note 1 to entry: An interpreter can have more than one 'A', 'B' or 'C' language.