International Standard

ISO 20539

Translation, interpreting and related technology — Vocabulary

Traduction, interprétation et technologies apparentées — Vocabulaire

Second edition
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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 document 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).

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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.

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

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO 20539:2019), which has been technically revised.

The main changes are as follows:

— new terminological entries arising from the publication of new and revised International Standards in the fields of translation, interpreting and related technology have been added;

— some terminological entries have been updated.

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.

Introduction

This document is intended to provide a description of concepts used in International Standards on translation, interpreting and related technologies. 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 International Standards will have a standardizing effect in practice.

Information within terminological entries in this document has been structured in accordance with ISO 10241-1, and concepts have been grouped, as far as was possible, according to thematic order, as defined in ISO 1087:2019, 3.7.11. Related concepts are grouped together under subheadings. The subheadings are:

— key concepts;

— concepts common to translation and interpreting;

— concepts relating to translation;

— concepts relating to interpreting;

— concepts relating to technology.

The last subheading is divided into two parts: technology relating to translation and that relating to interpreting.

An effort has been made to avoid using terms without having defined the relevant concept first. This is to ensure that the reader does not come across a term for the first time within the definition of another concept, with no clear understanding of it. For example, "floor" is defined before the term is used in the definition of "language distribution".

For the convenience of readers, an index is provided at the end of this document, in which all terms are listed alphabetically, with their relevant terminological entry numbers.

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Translation, interpreting and related technology — Vocabulary

1   Scope

This document defines terms for International Standards on translation, interpreting and related technology.

2   Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3   Terms and definitions

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

— ISO Online browsing platform: available at https://www.iso.org/obp

— IEC Electropedia: available at https://www.electropedia.org/

3.1   Key concepts

3.1.1
language
systematic use of voice, characters, symbols or signs by which to communicate

3.1.2
content
information in any form

EXAMPLE   *Text* (3.3.1), audio, video.

3.1.3
source language
language (3.1.1) from which *content* (3.1.2) is *translated* (3.1.8) or *interpreted* (3.1.10)

3.1.4
target language
language (3.1.1) into which *content* (3.1.2) is *translated* (3.1.8) or *interpreted* (3.1.10)

3.1.5
source language content
content (3.1.2) to be *translated* (3.1.8) or *interpreted* (3.1.10)

3.1.6
target language content
content (3.1.2) *translated* (3.1.8) or *interpreted* (3.1.10) from a *source language* (3.1.3)

3.1.7
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

3.1.8
translate
render *source language content* (3.1.5) into *target language content* (3.1.6) in written form or *signed language* (3.1.7)

3.1.9
translation
rendering *source language content* (3.1.5) into *target language content* (3.1.6) in written form or *signed language* (3.1.7)

3.1.10
interpret
render spoken or signed information from a *source language* (3.1.3) into a *target language* (3.1.4) in spoken or signed form, conveying both the meaning and *language register* (3.2.2) of the *source language content* (3.1.5)

3.1.11
interpreting
interpretation
rendering spoken or signed information from a *source language* (3.1.3) into a *target language* (3.1.4) in spoken or signed form, conveying both the meaning and *language register* (3.2.2) of the *source language content* (3.1.5)

3.1.12
translator
person who *translates* (3.1.8)

3.1.13
interpreter
person who *interprets* (3.1.10)

3.2 Concepts common to translation and interpreting

3.2.1
domain
sphere of knowledge or activity

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

3.2.2
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

Note 1 to entry: A person usually has 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* (3.2.1).

[SOURCE: ISO/TR 20694:2018, 3.3, modified — The wording "An individual usually has" has been changed to "A person usually has", "verbal repertoire" has been changed to "linguistic repertoire" and the word "language" has been added before "register" in Note 1 to entry.]

3.2.3
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.

3.2.4
competence
ability to apply knowledge, experience and skills to achieve intended results

3.2.5
qualification
demonstrated education, training and work experience, where applicable

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC 17024:2012, 3.7]

3.2.6
continuing professional development
CPD
continuing education
maintaining, improving or increasing knowledge and skills related to a professional activity

3.2.7
authorization
third-party attestation of a person's right to provide a specialized service

3.2.8
end user
person or group of persons that ultimately uses a service

3.2.9
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* (3.2.8), but this does not have to be the case.

3.3   Concepts relating to translation

3.3.1
text
content (3.1.2) in written form

3.3.2
document
information and the medium on which it is contained

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

3.3.3
translation output
result of *translation* (3.1.9)

3.3.4
translation service
production and delivery of *target language content* (3.1.6) according to specifications issued by a *client* (3.2.9)

3.3.5
translation service provider
TSP
person or organization that performs a *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* ([3.2.1](#)) 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 ([3.1.12](#)) examination of *target language content* ([3.1.6](#)) upon completion of *translation* ([3.1.9](#))

3.3.12
proofread
examine the final *target language content* ([3.1.6](#)) and apply *corrections* ([3.3.18](#)) before submission to the *client* ([3.2.9](#))

3.3.13
proofreader
person who *proofreads* ([3.3.12](#))

3.3.14
process
set of interrelated and interacting activities performed in order to achieve an objective

3.3.15
project
unique *process* ([3.3.14](#)), 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 removed.]

3.3.16
project management
planning, organizing, monitoring, controlling and reporting of all aspects of a *project* ([3.3.15](#)) 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 removed.]

3.3.17
project manager
PM
person responsible for *project management* ([3.3.16](#))