What do translators need to know about terminology in the age of AI?

Webinar –Terminologifrämjandet
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Aim / Overview

Terminology pitfalls	Strategic terminological choices	Conceptual framework
AI	Human	

What do translators need to know about terminology in the age of AI?

What is the translator's task when dealing with terminology?

How has it changed with AI?
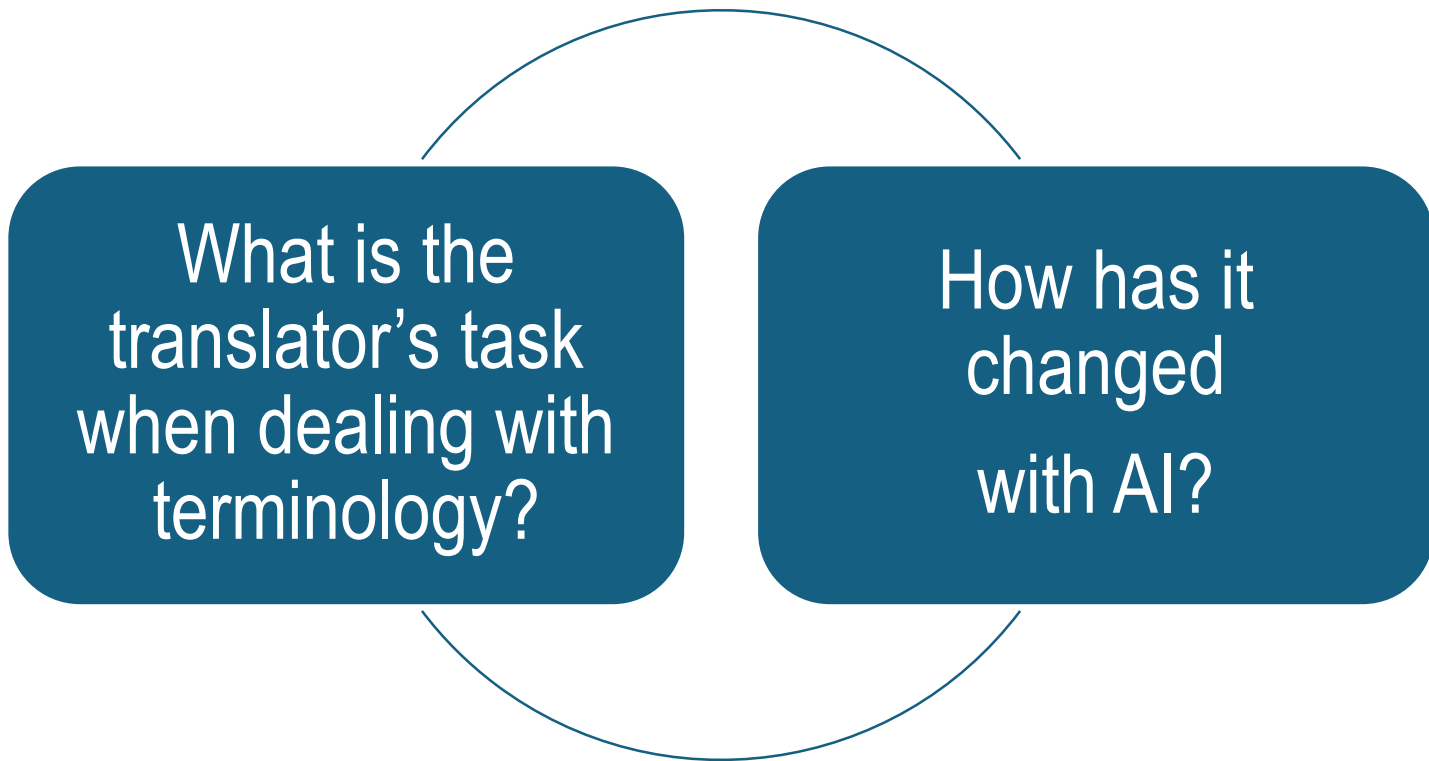
What is the translator's task?

Literature review

In models of translation competence:

- **Recognise** SL terms

- **Find** equivalent TL terms

- **Record** SL and TL terms

Assumption:

Terms are **available** established by experts

In theory and training:

- Focus: Terminology *management*
  - Even in translation-oriented terminology (Thelen 2022)

- Focus: Technology
  - Tendency to (over)stress technological competence Prieto Ramos (2024)

How has it changed with AI?

Double impact

- Misconception – translation is easier than ever

  BUT ALSO

- Terminology – more important than ever

Terminology pitfalls – AI

(Haque et al. 2020; Vigier-Moreno and Pérez-Macías 2022, Stefaniak 2023, etc.)

- Genre
- Domain
- Language pair
- Corpus/texts

- Omission
- Use / creation of a wrong TL term
- Inconsistent use of terms

Terminology pitfalls

Research example

2023/24 study (Garcés–Hu, 2024)

- Spanish Civil Code into Chinese
- Translation by GPT3, DeepL, Google Baidu, Youdao Translate
- 7 legal terms – common errors

2024 follow-up study:

Has anything changed? (GPT4)

- 3 new terms
- No change in performance

Terminology pitfalls

Research example

Shortcomings (Garcés–Hu, 2024)

- Not considering the existing or well-adapted translation

- Lack of legal register (common words vs. legal term)

- Not using functional equivalents

- Scant analysis of the degree of equivalence

- Pre-dominance of literal translation

⬇

Equivalence issues

How to solve them?

Glossaries / TBs – Solution (?)

Two problems

AVAILABILITY

- Term *not* available / **more terms** available
  - dependent on domain
  - dependent on terminology policy

EQUIVALENCE

- ***Lack of equivalents***
- Terms available but *only partial* equivalents

So, what is the translator's task?

Literature review

In models of translation competence:

- **Recognise** SL terms

- **Find** equivalent TL terms

- **Record** SL and TL terms

Assumption:

Terms are **available**
established by experts

Reality:

Translators / AI
forced to **create terms / choose**

make terminological choices

Equivalence issues – terminological choices How to **solve** them?

TL and SL concept only similar

No equivalent in TL

Equivalence issues – terminological choices
How to **solve** them?

functional equivalent

new forms

literal/loan translation (calque)

direct borrowing

paraphrasing

descriptive definition

terminologisation

STRATEGIES?

Strategic terminological choices
Domesticating or foreignising?

Dilemma:

- Target reader or source text?
- Terms introduced by Venuti (1995)
- At lexico-semantic, syntactic, stylistic level, or even at paragraph, chapter, or full-text level

Misbelief: Translation is about domestication

- misunderstandings still associated with the term **equivalence**
- *'notably the idea that equivalence means domestication, or that it is opposed to creativity, or that it only comes in one flavor'* (Pym 2007, 290)

Strategic terminological choices
Domesticating or foreignising?

📚	1970s, cultural turn in translation studies	**domestication** predominant
⚖️	1990s, legal domain	strategy determined by the legal system **foreignisation** also justified (cf. Biel 2008; Šarčević 1997)
🏛️	Further research, other domains/texts	e.g. tourism, focus on the cultural and historical elements of the original (cf. Sanning 2010)
💬	Practice, laypersons **NMT**	Translators expected to **domesticate** **Random/ unpredictable /inconsistent**

Strategic terminological choices
Conceptual framework

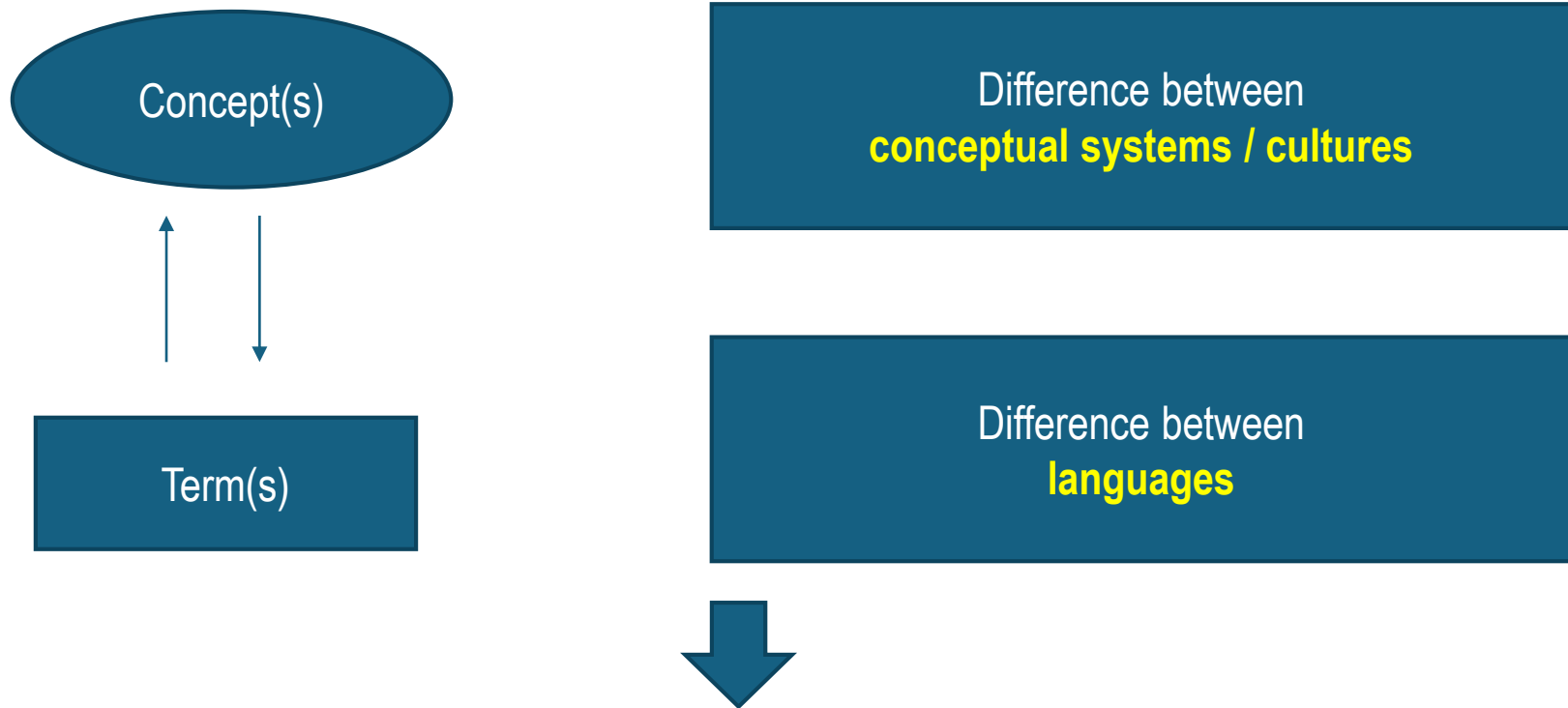foreignising – domesticating

concept level – term level

Cognitive dimension   **Linguistic dimension**
Communicative dimension

(Sager 1990)

Strategic terminological choices
at **concept and term level**

Concept(s)

Term(s)

Difference between
conceptual systems / cultures

Difference between
languages

Equivalence issues at **two** levels (Drössiger 2007)
Strategies at **two** levels

Relevance

Competence / motivation

Concept level

- domain competence
- experts

Term level

- linguistic competence
- linguists

Strategic terminological choices at concept level

- Asymmetries – **system- and culture-bound** terms
  - due to different cultures
  - different conceptual systems

- Examples:
  - legal systems / institutions (e.g. House of Lords/Commons)
  - company types (e.g. private company limited by shares – ltd)
  - historical / cultural concepts
  - EU terminology (e.g. value added tax)

Strategies at concept level
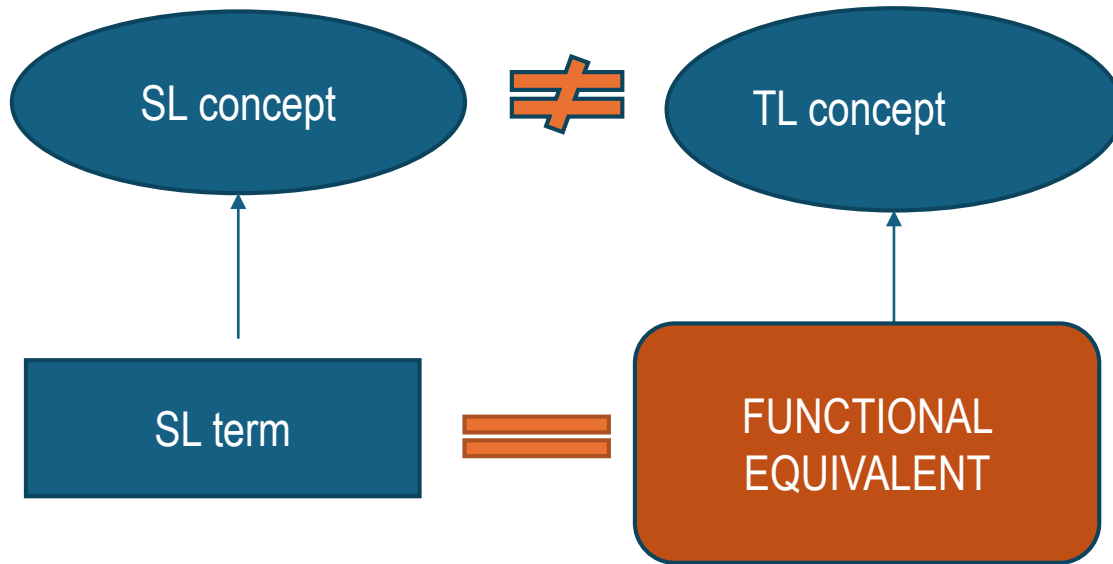
domesticating
ltd = GmbH
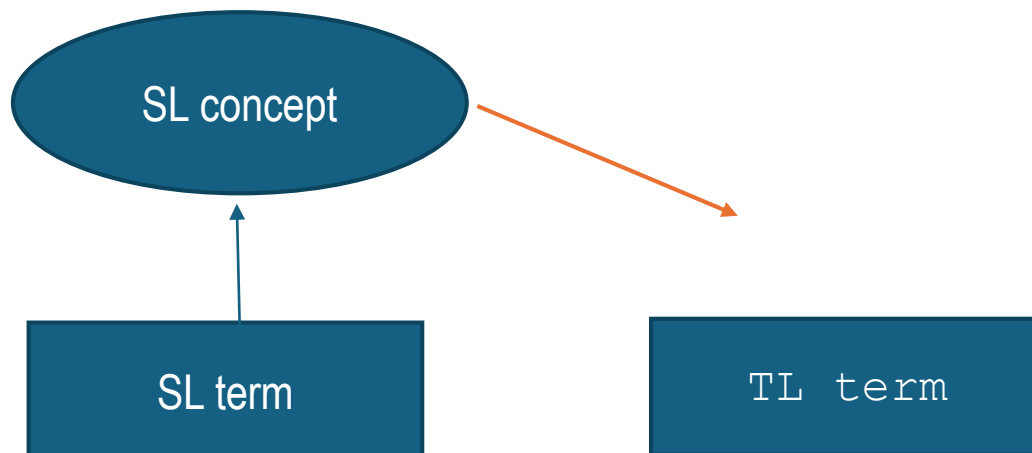
foreignising
ltd = ltd

(Fischer 2019)

18

Example 1

HUNGARIAN COURTS HU	HUNGARIAN COURTS EN	STRATEGY	USA / UK COURTS EN
Kúria	Curia	foreignisation	~~Supreme Court (USA)~~
ítélőtáblák	regional courts of appeal	foreignisation	~~court of appeals (USA)~~
törvényszékek	regional courts	foreignisation	~~Court of Justice (UK)~~
járásbíróságok	district courts	domestication	district courts (USA)

(based on Tamás 2019:30–31)

Example 2

HU term (Code of Studies)	EN term
javítás (repeat the exam to *correct* a bad grade)	retake
ismétlés (repeated attempt)	repeat completion
pótlás (take the exam at a later date)	late completion

(Fischer 2023)

Relevance

Strategies at concept level

- Foreignising – perceived as a lack of competence
  - PACTE – terminological competence (Toro, Fernandez-Silva 2021)
  - Translation by an accepted target equivalent most adequate, the use of calque, borrowing and paraphrasing less acceptable

- Dictionaries
  - Terms presented as equivalents may be only partial equivalents (cf. Blazek 2017; Muráth 2002; Šarčević 1988, 1997, Terminology databases
  - do not necessarily contain information on the level of equivalence (Tamás–Sermann 2019)

- AI: random use / creation

Awareness / critical attitude is needed

Strategic terminological choices at term level

- Asymmetries
  - due to different languages

- Examples: EU context (24 languages – diff. language families)
  - **flexicurity:**

  EU initiative, acting as a foundation for a debate on the future of the European Union, which seeks to foster communication and debate on the activities of the EU by addressing the need to listen to citizens' expectations (IATE)

  - **Plan D: Plan for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate**

  A policy strategy to enhance, at the same time and in a deliberate way, the flexibility of labour markets, work organisations and labour relations on the one hand, and security – employment security and income security – on the other (IATE)

Example 1

en	flexicurity
	flex-security
cs	flexikurita
es	flexiguridad
	flexibilidad y seguridad
	flexiseguridad
fr	flexicurité
	flexisécurité
it	flessicurezza
	flexecurity
mt	flessigurtà
nl	flexizekerheid

en	flexicurity
	flex-security
bg	гъвкавост и сигурност
	съчетаване на гъвкавост и сигурност
el	ευελιξία και ασφάλεια στην απασχόληση
	ευελιξία με ασφάλεια
	ευελιξία-ασφάλεια
	συνδυασμός ευελιξίας και ασφάλειας
et	kaitstud paindlikkus
	paindlikkus ja turvalisus
	turvaline paindlikkus PREFERRED
fi	joustoturva
ga	solúbthacht agus socracht
lv	elastdrošība
sl	prožna varnost

en	flexicurity	★★★★
	flex-security	★★
da	flexicurity	★★★★
	flexsecurity	★★
	fleksibilitet og sikkerhed	★★★★
de	Flexicurity	★★★
	Flexibilität und Sicherheit	★★★
hu	rugalmas biztonság	★★★★
	flexicurity ADMITTED	★★★
sv	flexicurity	★★★
	flexibilitet och trygghet på arbetsmarknaden	★★★

IATE - Search - Standard view (europa.eu)

23

Example 2

⚓ en	Plan for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate	★★★
	Plan D	★★★
da	Plan D	★★
de	Plan für Demokratie, Dialog und Debatte	★
	"Plan D"	★
es	Plan D	★★★
	Plan D de Democracia, Diálogo y Debate	★★★
fi	kansanvalta, kuunteleminen ja keskustelu	★★
	K-suunnitelma	★★
fr	Plan pour la Démocratie, le dialogue et le débat	★★★
	Plan D	★★★
hu	D-terv	★★★★
	D-terv: demokrácia, párbeszéd és vita	★★★★
it	Piano D	★★★
	Piano per la democrazia, il dialogo e il dibattito	★★★
nl	Plan D voor Democratie, Dialoog en Debat	★★★

Distance b/w
source and target **language**

Methods **at term level**

SL concept

SL term

TL term
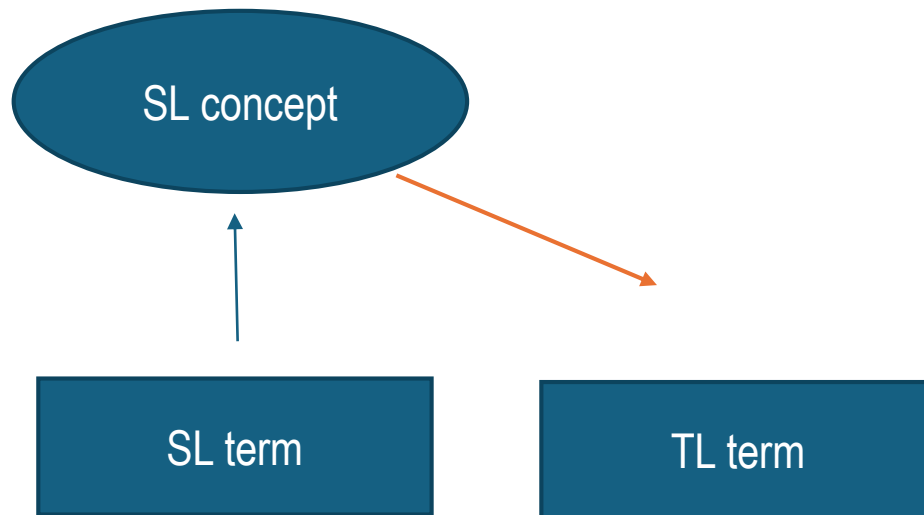
Secondary term creation
(Sager 1990)

Methods:

new form
terminologisation

direct borrowing
literal translation (calque)

paraphrasing
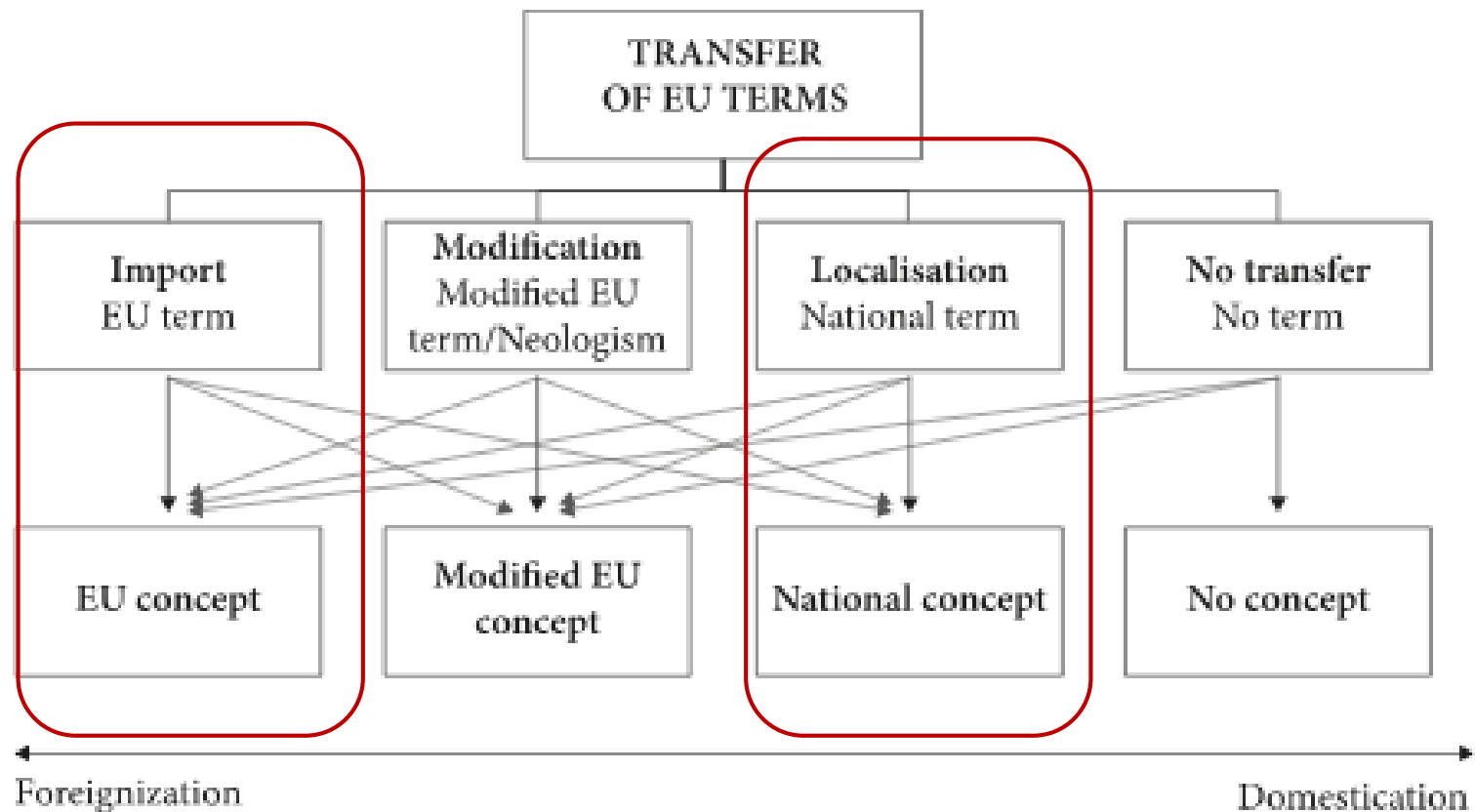descriptive definition

Several categories
ISO 704: 2009

(Fischer 2019)

Relevance

AT term level

- For ' distant' languages: often no equivalence at term level

- Several methods, not only literal/loan translation

- AI: term creation – random

further research needed

# Foreignisation and domestication at concept **and** term level
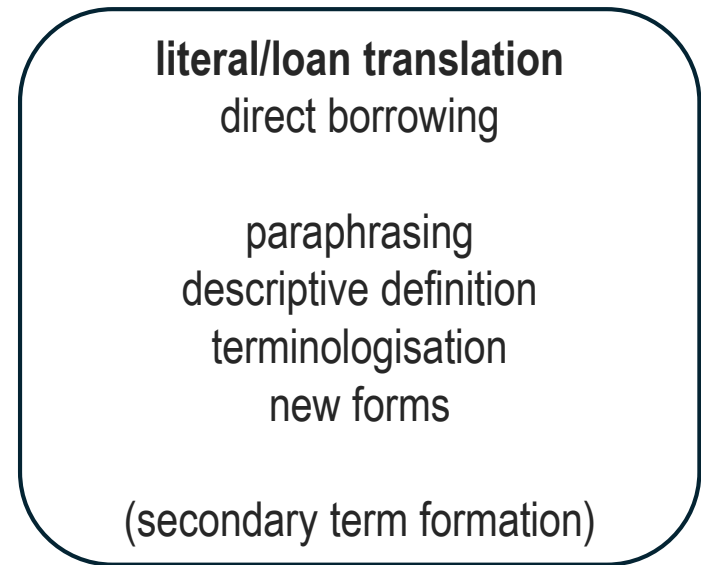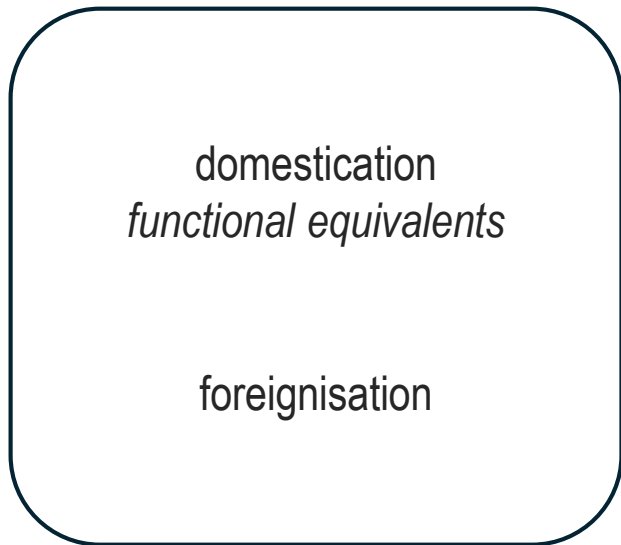
- Biel and Doczekalska (2020)

Relevance

Term variation

Concept level

SL concept ≠ TL concept

SL term → SL concept

TL term → TL concept

domestication
functional equivalents

foreignisation

Term level

SL concept

SL term

TL term

literal/loan translation
direct borrowing

paraphrasing
descriptive definition
terminologisation
new forms

(secondary term formation)
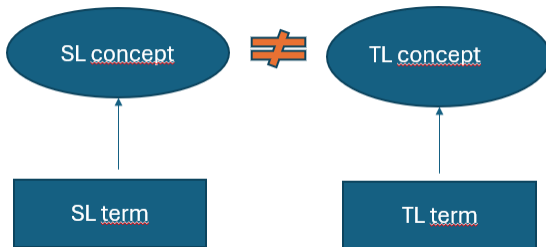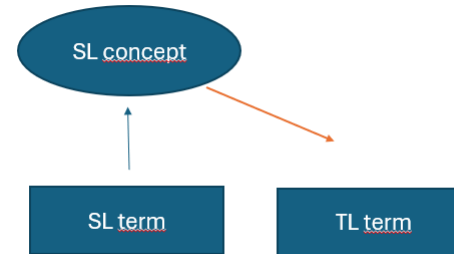
Danger: here also: random use by AI

How to enhance quality?

Instructions

Purpose of translation

Good prompts

Do we have **unambiguous terms** for the desciption of terminological choices?

Strategic terminological choices
- in literature (and practice)

Domestication

Foreignisation

localisation

familiarisation

(Baaij 2015)

externalisation

(Baaij 2015)

naturalisation

acculturation

(Bassnett 2005)

assimilation

functional equivalent

methods of secondary term formation

The terminology of terminology

STRATEGY at concept level	domestication	foreignisation
RESULT	functional equivalent	translational equivalent
METHOD	„matching"	translation (secondary term creation) by
		literal/loan translation (calque)
		direct borrowing
		new forms / terminologisation
		paraphrasing / descriptive def.

Fischer 2025, forthcoming

Conclusion 1

Terminological competence

- Awareness of equivalence issues at:
    - **concept** and
    - **term** level
- Awareness of the notion and implications of
    - **domestication** (functional equivalents) and
    - **foreignisation** (translational equivalents)
    - methods of secondary term creation
- Ability to recognise and deal with **term variation**
- **Critical** attitude to resources and AI tools, etc.

Conclusion 2

Advances in NMT / AI

- BUT pitfalls in terminology
- BUT human involvement is needed
  - Terminological competence of humans
- BUT Terminology of terminology
  - Instructions (prompts)

  - Terminological competence of AI

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