

FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND VIETNAMESE

**PROPOSAL OF SOME MANEUVERS
IN ENGLISH-VIETNAMESE TRANSLATION
OF COMMERCIAL ECONOMIC TERMS****TRAN QUOC VIET***

ABSTRACT: Terms are fixed words or phrases used to express concepts, things, phenomena, or objects in a scientific discipline or a certain field of expertise. In the process of translating commercial economic (EC) terms, particularly in English and Vietnamese within the EC fields, it becomes essential to study and comprehend the maneuvers for translating between the two languages. Based on the results of the research on the equivalence and non-equivalence of English and Vietnamese EC terminologies, this article proposes a number of maneuvers to maximize the strengths of each approach, thereby achieving the highest translation efficiency between these two terminologies. Depending on the specific situation, these maneuvers should be applied appropriately to ensure that the final results accurately convey the content and fulfill the form requirements of EC terms.

KEY WORDS: Terms; translation; term translation; translation of commercial economic terms; English-Vietnamese.

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1. Introduction

Terms are understood as a division or classification of words within a language's vocabulary. They encompass “the words and idioms used to identify various entities, phenomena, concepts, processes, fields, theories, and so on in different areas of social life, such as science, engineering, technology, and services” [Le Quang Thiem, 2018, p.9]. In line with the evolution of language, numerous individuals from different generations have engaged in the construction, study, and development of terms. These efforts have not been limited to various fields, including the field of EC, but have also encompassed EC educational and training institutions as well as EC learning resources. Delving into scientific research on the standardization and preservation of the purity of EC English and Vietnamese terms as well as related issues has been carried out in many research projects, treatises, and dissertations. Considerable accomplishments have been made in a number of works on surveying general and in-depth problems. However, very little research has been conducted specifically on the translation of EC terms from English to Vietnamese. Therefore, proposing teaching maneuvers for the translation of EC terminology is of great significance in terms of research, education, and practical contributions to the development of specialized EC materials that cater to the needs of advancing the national economy and society in the era of digital technology 4.0. As stated by Ha Quang Nang, “Building scientific terminologies is a matter of special importance in the development of sciences and technologies in every country, which greatly impacts its education.” [Ha Quang Nang, 2012, p.7].

2. Study results**2.1. Definitions of terms**

With the advancement of linguistics, terms have emerged and evolved to play a significant role in the field of linguistics today. However, there is a lack of clear and specific definitions given by many linguists, both domestic and international, when it comes to terms. Consequently, various perspectives have emerged in the study and reference of terms. Some viewpoints associate the

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definitions of terms with their functions, while others associate their definitions with their concepts. First of all, let us take a look at some of the perspectives put forth by terminologists who believe that the functions of terms inform their definitions. As G.O. Vinokur mentioned in his research document on terms [1939: p.5-6], “Terms are not special words, but words with a special function... it is their naming function” [cited in Nguyen Thi Bich Ha, 2000, p.10]. According to Reformatskij, A. A [1978, p.80], “Words, first and foremost, serve the function of designation, which means they are means of expression in the form of simple symbols, or they serve as means of logical definition in the form of scientific terms.”. In the views of the aforementioned authors, terms are regarded as “professional words”.

Meanwhile, other researchers have defined terms based on their relationships with concepts. As Nguyen Van Tu referred to terms in his work [1968, p.114], “terms are fixed words and phrases used to denote concepts within specific scientific, industrial, or cultural fields”.

Similarly, Luu Van Lang [1977, p.48] defined terms as “linguistic (lexical) components that express scientific concepts and attributes in intellectually organized areas of social reality such as sciences, techniques, and politics. Systematic terms are primarily distinguished based entirely on the contrast between symbols. In terms of form, this contrast is manifested through acoustic differences or the specific arrangement order of their elements”.

In his article on the Vietnamese textbook, Do Huu Chau [1981, p.221-222] emphasized that “technical and scientific terms consist of lexical units used to represent objects, phenomena, activities, characteristics, and more within the fields of industry, engineering, and the natural or social sciences. Unlike ordinary words, terms have practical usage and specifically refer to objects within their corresponding engineering and scientific disciplines. Their significative meanings correspond to conceptual representations of these objects and phenomena as they exist in thoughts. Regarding the content of terms, there is no separation from objective reality in a language-specific manner. Each term can be seen as a label attached to a particular object, along with its associated concept, forming its own content”.

In his article on the formation and development of Vietnamese terminology, Hoang Van Hanh [1983, p.26] wrote: “Terms are words used to denote a defined concept belonging to the system of concepts within a certain scientific discipline. The entire system of terminologies across all scientific disciplines constitutes the terminological foundation of a language”.

T. Thorsten [1999, p.8] stated that “each term is a linguistic symbol representing a specific concept. This linguistic symbol can be a single word, a group of words, or a fixed phrase used to describe a professional concept. Some terminologists consider terms as single-word idioms, which leads to several difficulties since certain languages form terms not only through word compounding but also through word combination. The advantage of using single-word terms is that it facilitates the recognition of boundaries between them. Most terminologists recognize short phrases of two or three words as terms”.

Thus, despite differences in directions or perspectives within terminological studies, there are commonalities among most definitions or concepts put forth by these authors, namely the relationship between terms and their concepts, or terms and the functions they represent. Based on the views of both domestic and foreign researchers on terminology, it can be deduced that a term, above all, is a type of unit belonging to the lexical-semantic system of a language and “always signifies the concept defined in a scientific discipline, depending on the conceptual framework of that discipline” [Mai Ngoc Chu, Vu Duc Nghieu, and Hoang Trong Phien, 2009, p.220]. In terms of content, terms accurately represent the professional concepts or objects within a specific scientific discipline or area of expertise. In terms of form, terms are composed of words or compound words.

After conducting thorough research and consideration, we have come to the conclusion that terms refer to fixed words or phrases employed to convey concepts, things, phenomena, or objects within a scientific discipline or a specific field of expertise.

2.2. Constituent elements of terms:

In order to analyze the form and structure of EC terminology, this article considers the units that form terms as constituent elements. Constituent elements of terms are regarded as the parts or units that directly contribute to the formation of terms. In terms of content, each constituent element of a term represents a concept, a complete object, or a specific part or feature of the corresponding term within a particular field of expertise. Regarding structure, each constituent element of a term can be a morpheme when the corresponding term is composed of words, or a word when the corresponding term is composed of a phrase or idiom [Manuel, 2010, p. 4].

The concept of constituent elements has been widely adopted by researchers in the West and Russia in various previous terminological studies. It is evident that the perspective on constituent elements of terms differs between Western and Russian researchers and Vietnamese scholars. The first perspective posits that Vietnamese terms are composed of *syllables* (or letters). However, reality has shown that terms consist of both words and phrases, with *syllables* serving as the units directly constituting words rather than phrases. The notion that syllables constitute Vietnamese terms holds true only for terms that are single words. When it comes to analyzing phrasal terms or idioms, *syllables* can only be used as basic units to count the number of syllables present in the term's structure, but they do not reflect its structural characteristics. Therefore, the fundamental units that form phrasal terms (or idioms) are words, not *syllables*.

The second perspective suggests that the constituent elements of terms are the smallest components of terms that clearly express their meanings, with each element corresponding to a certain concept or its criterion in a specific field of expertise. This viewpoint is advocated by Russian-Soviet terminologists and has also been adopted by some Vietnamese scholars in studying the structures of various terminology systems. According to this perspective, the elements that constitute terms are considered “morphemes if terms are single words or complete words (or even compound words) if terms are phrases. Terms can consist of one or more terminological elements, with each element corresponding to a certain concept or its characteristic in a specific field of expertise” [B.M. Лейчик, 2009, p.179]. Therefore, when analyzing the structural characteristics of terms, we can determine their constituent elements as morphemes or words based on specific terms. Constituent elements of terms are the units directly involved in forming terms, making it the final step in analyzing the structural characteristics of EC terminology.

From the above analysis and explanation, it becomes evident that the analysis of constituent elements of terms according to the perspectives of Western and Russian scholars is more reasonable. These authors not only describe the form of terms but also pay significant attention to their content, making their perspectives on the analysis of term structure more appropriate. Moreover, unlike other lexical units such as professional words and ordinary words, terms are used to denote and designate concepts without explicitly explaining the meaning of the words, which can only be accomplished by units at the word level.

2.3. Concept of term translation

The study of adopting or translating foreign language terms into Vietnamese is not a new issue but has long been under discussion and consideration. However, there is a lack of consensus and regulatory documents regarding the concept of term translation. Therefore, different dictionaries and research documents on translating terms from foreign languages into Vietnamese, particularly from

English to Vietnamese, often do not have separate treatments, and inconsistencies can even exist within a single regulatory document.

According to Vuong Thi Thu Minh [2005, p.121], translating terms from foreign languages into Vietnamese is defined as “creating the corresponding terms in Vietnamese through techniques such as original form recording, transcription, transliteration, and translation.”. When studying the theoretical and practical history of translation across different languages worldwide, Ha Hoc Trac [2010, p.27–28] observed that “in the era of ever-growing globalization, cultural, scientific, and technological exchanges between nations, the rapid development of science and technology has led to the emergence of numerous new achievements and inventions. Therefore, new concepts, words, and terms, many of which are in English, have emerged and been introduced into the Vietnamese language. Generally, there are three approaches to creating equivalent terms in Vietnamese: (1) adopting foreign language terms in their original forms, (2) transliterating these terms into Vietnamese, and (3) creating equivalent Vietnamese terms”.

Hoang Van Hanh [2010, p.96] stated that, in general, Vietnamese terms, like those in other developed languages, are formed through three primary methods: (1) converting ordinary words into terms; (2) creating terms that simulate foreign terms; and (3) borrowing original foreign terms.

According to Le Quang Thiem [2018, p.247–248], “the system of Vietnamese terminology classes is actually composed and developed through various approaches.” The term “approaches” can be specifically understood as the necessary paths chosen to develop and build the Vietnamese terminology system, which includes: (1) the path of self-reliance utilizing the already existing inherent knowledge, wisdom, and vocabulary of the Vietnamese language and people; (2) the path of adopting original terms derived from linguistics, contact language, and receptive language; and (3) the path of constructing and creating terms based on their content, concepts, and categories, or through imitation and translation from the terms in the source languages (contact languages) into those in our national language.

From the aforementioned perspectives, it becomes evident that the translation process is fundamentally a process of creative and linguistic activities aimed at achieving unity and equivalence in terms of the content between the target terms and the source terms. In order to achieve this unity, translators need to possess not only a thorough understanding of the structure and functioning of both languages involved but also the ability to identify the asymmetry that exists between them at various levels. Establishing equivalence across different levels of translation, such as vocabulary, grammar, content, and style, is crucial, particularly when dealing with languages that are from different language families and significantly distant in their origins.

Until now, the translation of EC terms from English to Vietnamese, and vice versa, has not been extensively studied in both theory and practice. The majority of EC terms are only covered in comparative or explanatory dictionaries, which leaves translators facing significant challenges when selecting the appropriate equivalent expressions for the target text. Additionally, the difference in linguistic characteristics between English and Vietnamese further complicates the translation process for translators. Therefore, in-depth studies on the theory of term translation, encompassing studies on vocabulary, grammatical structures, and communicational objects, are crucial to facilitate the application of translation maneuvers, which are essentially maneuvers for effectively conveying ideas and converting content (i.e., semantics) from the source language to the target language. With regard to term translation, linguists, translators, and language teachers face the challenge of bridging language theory and translation practices to attain the highest possible correspondence between terms.

2.4. Quantitative survey of EC terms based on the number of equivalent units

a) 1:1 equivalent ratio

“1:1 equivalent ratio” indicates that for a particular EC term, there is only one corresponding translated Vietnamese EC term. For instance, the English term “abandonee” has only one equivalent translated term in Vietnamese with the meaning “người được hưởng.” During the survey, out of the total 9,560 English EC terms observed, we have identified 4,090 EC terms (accounting for 43% of the total) that have only one equivalent Vietnamese EC term.

b) 1>1 equivalent ratio

The term “1>1 equivalent ratio” indicates that there are multiple equivalent translated Vietnamese EC terms for a given English EC term. For instance, the English term “welfare payments” has two corresponding Vietnamese terms: “tiền trợ cấp phúc lợi” and “khoản trợ cấp xã hội.” During the survey, out of the total 9,560 English EC terms observed, we have found 5,470 EC terms (making up 57% of the total) that have more than one equivalent Vietnamese EC term.

The results of surveys on two types of equivalent ratios are presented in the table below:

Table. Summary of equivalent ratios represented by the number of English and Vietnamese EC terms

Equivalent ratio	Number of cases	Percentage (%)
1:1 Equivalent ratio	4,090	43%
1>1 Equivalent ratio	5,470	57%
Total	9,560	100%

From the data presented in the above statistical table, it is evident that, in terms of structural form, the number of units with a 1 > 1 equivalent ratio is higher than those with a 1:1 equivalent ratio (5,470 units accounting for 57% of the total and 4,090 units accounting for 43% of the total, respectively). These results indicate that achieving a strict 1:1 equivalence relationship between the source language and the target language is sometimes not feasible. The translation of EC terms from English to Vietnamese requires not only close coordination between experts and linguists but also the adoption of appropriate translation maneuvers and techniques to handle the complexity of these terms.

2.5. Maneuvers for translating EC terms from English to Vietnamese

As mentioned earlier, there are two possibilities encountered when translating EC terms: equivalence (1:1) and non-equivalence (1>1). Achieving accurate translations of EC terms relies on the existence of their equivalent Vietnamese counterparts. However, in cases where there is no equivalent Vietnamese EC term available, indicating a lack of corresponding term in Vietnamese, specialists must employ certain techniques to create equivalent Vietnamese terms based on the content of the foreign terms. Based on an analysis of term translation concepts, we propose the following maneuvers to address EC terms that lack equivalent terms in Vietnamese.

2.5.1. Adopting English terms in their original forms

The adoption of original forms of foreign terms in the EC terminology system is a common practice due to the vast scope of EC, which encompasses various aspects of human society. Numerous English terms have been borrowed and integrated into the Vietnamese EC terminological system, becoming indispensable components. There are several reasons for adopting the original forms of foreign terms during the borrowing process: First, it's due to the lack of corresponding units: In some cases, there are no existing units in the Vietnamese terminological system that directly correspond to the foreign terms being borrowed. Second, it's due to the lack of consensus: In other

instances, there might be one or more corresponding units, but there is a lack of consensus regarding the appropriate expression and understanding of those terms. Third, it's due to some terms' limited popularity: Certain terms may not have gained widespread popularity yet, and thus have not been fully embraced and popularized within the Vietnamese context. Fourth, it's due to incomplete conceptual conveyance: It is possible that the Vietnamese terminology system has not effectively conveyed the entire conceptual content of the original term. For example, the term "market" has several current translations in Vietnamese, such as chợ (market), giá thị trường (market price), sự buôn bán (trade), and others. However, none of these translations fully capture the true essence and meaning of the English term "market." In such cases, adopting the term in its original form is the most appropriate choice. Similarly, the term "share" also has multiple translations in Vietnamese, such as hùn vốn (capital contribution) and chia sẻ (the act of sharing). However, these translations do not encompass the entirety of its meaning. Therefore, maintaining the original form of the term is preferable. These examples represent just a few instances where certain terms are commonly and widely used in Vietnam without undergoing translation.

2.5.2. Creation of equivalent terms

In the field of EC, it is crucial to translate terms accurately according to their specific contexts. In many cases, a word-for-word translation of constituent elements of terms is not feasible as it may result in meaningless or misleading units. To address this, terminologists shall utilize a method known as the complete designation in the target language to generate new terms. By employing this method, the created terms are highly precise, clear, and reliable. This method enables the highlighting of fundamental functional features or descriptive characteristics of economic objects or phenomena in Vietnamese. For example, the term "bonded area", if translated word-by-word, means "khu bảo thuế" (tax-suspension area). However, in order to create a new term that conveys the full meaning of its function in EC activities, "bonded area" should be translated as "khu vực kho hải quan" (customs warehouse area).

Similarly, the term "declared" can be translated as "bản tuyên bố" (declaration) rather than "bản khai hải quan những mặt hàng phải đóng thuế" (customs declaration of taxable goods).

When creating a completely new term in Vietnamese, it is important to ensure that the invented term carries a single meaning to avoid any obscurity or ambiguity during usage. For example, the term "covered interest parity" consists of three constituent elements: covered (che phủ), interest (lãi suất) và parity (ngang nhau). If this source term is translated using conventional techniques, the resulting target term would be meaningless. However, in the EC field, this term is translated as "bình giá lãi suất đảm bảo" (parity of secured financing rates).

2.5.3. Imitation

Imitation, also referred to as simulation, is a method of constructing terms in which structural elements and models of Vietnamese are used to translate the meanings of corresponding terms. These terms can be seen as new terms in Vietnamese in terms of their linguistic form. However, in terms of the scientific concepts represented by the terms, they are considered international terms. Therefore, the terms created through imitation effectively demonstrate the harmonious integration of their national and international characteristics [Hoang Van Hanh, 1983, p.29].

Imitation is regarded as a primary approach in processing or building Vietnamese terminology, especially within the rapidly developing field of EC where a significant proportion of terms are created using this method. When translating scientific concepts from foreign languages, each language employs its inherent structural elements and methods. In the case of the Vietnamese language, based on the survey data, we have observed that all the factors involved in term construction through the imitation method possess meaningful elements that are typically pure

Vietnamese or Sino-Vietnamese. Another approach to forming terms through the imitation of foreign terms is the method of compounding.

In various research works, several authors have discussed the distinction between imitating the structure of words and imitating their meanings. According to Nguyen Thien Giap [2008, p.233-234], the utilization of inherent elements and methods of word formation in Vietnamese to create a lexical unit based on the structural model of its equivalent unit in a foreign language is referred to as word structure imitation. This method involves translating each terminological element or word in the term composition from the foreign language into Vietnamese. However, in situations where there is no existing word in the native language to convey the same meaning, the method employed is known as meaning imitation. For example: banking system (hệ thống ngân hàng); capital flow (dòng vốn); bill accepted (hối phiếu đã được nhận thanh toán); contractual terms (điều khoản hợp đồng); agreement price (giá thỏa thuận); net profits (lãi ròng). It is evident that most terms structured using the word structure imitation method are concise in form, quite accurately descriptive in content, and possess the necessary qualities of scientific terms. This thereby facilitates the processes of learning, teaching, and translation.

3. Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be firmly asserted that in all cases, the translation of EC terms from English to Vietnamese by proposing some translation maneuvers, such as adopting terms in their original forms, creating an equivalent term in the target language, and imitating terms, is the appropriate direction in the current context of “Vietnamese terminology having developed along with the development and modernity of Vietnamese science, technology, and technology over the periods. Terms serve as tools for scientific thinking, intellectual products of the nation, and drivers for the development of national science, technology, and culture. The comprehensive development of terminology is not only indicative of independent and sustainable progress but also a measure of national adaptability and integration into the global community. Vietnamese terminology has experienced significant changes in its development and integration. Today, in the face of the urgent demands of industrialization and international integration, it is crucial to further develop, adopt, and integrate Vietnamese terminology to adequately meet the general requirements of the country” [Le Quang Thiem, 2018, p.204]. Each translation maneuver has its own strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, in the process of translating EC terms from English to Vietnamese, it is essential to find an optimal combination of these solutions in order to achieve the highest efficiency in transitioning EC terms to meet the needs of future practice.

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Đề xuất một số thao tác trong phiên chuyển thuật ngữ kinh tế thương mại tiếng Anh - tiếng Việt

Tóm tắt: Thuật ngữ là những từ hay cụm từ cố định dùng để biểu đạt các khái niệm, sự vật, hiện tượng hay đối tượng trong một ngành khoa học hay trong một lĩnh vực chuyên môn nhất định. Trong quá trình phiên chuyển thuật ngữ kinh tế thương mại nói chung, đặc biệt lĩnh vực kinh tế thương mại tiếng Anh và tiếng Việt nói riêng rất cần sự tìm hiểu nghiên cứu các thao tác phiên chuyển giữa chúng. Dựa trên kết quả nghiên cứu sự tương đương và không tương đương của hệ thuật ngữ kinh tế thương mại tiếng Anh và tiếng Việt, bài viết đề xuất một số thao tác nhằm khai thác tối đa tính ưu việt của từng giải pháp nhằm đem lại hiệu quả cao nhất cho việc chuyển dịch giữa các thuật ngữ ở hai hệ thuật ngữ này. Tùy từng trường hợp mà sử dụng phù hợp các thao tác để có thể đạt được kết quả cuối cùng là chuyển tải trung thực nội dung và đáp ứng được yêu cầu về mặt hình thức của thuật ngữ kinh tế thương mại.

Từ khóa: thuật ngữ; phiên chuyển; phiên chuyển thuật ngữ; phiên chuyển thuật ngữ kinh tế thương mại; Anh-Việt.