

# Terminological Synonymy: Corpus-Driven Translation

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**Abstract:** *The article deals with the problems of terminological synonymy in special legal texts. The purpose of the article is to study the specificity of translation of legal terms by synonyms using the corpus approach. The author analyses the legal terms 'implementation' and 'petitions' in English and their translation into Ukrainian. The material of the research is a parallel corpus of legal texts. The objectivity of the results obtained in the study is proved by quantitative calculations.*

**Keywords:** legal terminology, a synonym, a parallel corpus, translation, corpus-based analysis

## 1. Introduction

In the development of terminology, researchers have developed certain characteristics of a term as a language sign (semantic accuracy, uniqueness, context independence, stylistic neutrality, etc.). The question of the proper coexistence of synonyms within the terminological system was not considered, since it was argued that within a single science or industry the term should not have synonyms.

## 2. Literature Survey

In recent years, terminology as a cognitive and linguistic phenomenon has been the subject of much research. However, the phenomena of synonymy, duplicity and variability in terminology have not yet been fully explored. Among the works that laid the foundations for understanding these phenomena and began to study the cognitive and discursive mechanisms of the various thesaurus phenomena in terminology particular attention should be given to the works by M.T. Cabré [3], P. Faber [6], H. Gubby [7], K. Kageura [8], A. Rey [11], H.B. Sonneveld & K.L. Loening [12], R. Temmerman [13], and others.

## 3. Problem Definition

Recently, the globalization and integration processes have significantly influenced the vocabulary of the legal field. The modern translator must satisfy the social demands of a large number of translated documents quickly. Often this requires crucial shortening of the translation time, which leads to the loss of a certain percentage of the quality of translation in general and the glossary of the legal document, in particular, resulting in the formation of new terms for concepts and phenomena that already have the appropriate terminological names in the language of translation. Such processes provide the extension of the synonymic units of the law vocabulary, often through the borrowed terms with similar meaning. Such variants are often confusable and can be classified as doublets or synonyms, which can be proved by analyzing the number and content of the valences of each unit showing signs of synonymy or dimorphism.

The fact that the semantic structure, the same organization, and the meaning of synonymous terms in different languages

match only partially, presents real challenges and serious difficulties for the translator. Moreover, the situation is complicated by the heterogeneity of synonyms, the inconsistency of the semantic boundaries of the synonymous terms in the source and the target languages, etc. An important factor in this process is the influence of national-cultural specificity, which often causes the problem of inequitable translation or translation with different terms in the source and the target languages.

The **purpose** of the article is to analyze the specificity of translation of legal terms by synonyms using the corpus approach.

## 4. Methodology / Approach

Many of the mentioned issues can be resolved by using a corpus approach to analyze the terms, their lexical and grammatical distribution in the original text, and selection of the equivalents for translation, taking into account the complex characteristics of the translatable units and the whole text of their functioning.

The use of text corpora enables the simultaneous processing of a large amount of textual information selected by certain criteria. For example, the user can analyze language material according to the following criteria: chronological parameters (time of text creation, time of translation), frequency of use of each of the translation equivalents in different texts, etc. It is clear that the effectiveness of the using corpora when translating special texts depends directly on the representativeness of every corpus. Unfortunately, to date, translators of the Ukrainian language do not yet have any fundamental and representative parallel corpus of special texts. That is the reason for creation corpora for various research purposes.

The source for the extraction and further analysis of the legal terms within the scope of this study is the texts of European Court decisions in English, which are on open access on the "European Court of Human Rights" official website [5], and their translations into Ukrainian, provided on the "ECHR: Cases, Opinions, Matter. Ukrainian Aspect" website [4]. These texts are organized by the author of the article into the English-Ukrainian aligned parallel legal corpus for the purpose of conducting the research.

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Sentence No.	English	Ukrainian
236	Furthermore, the Court considers that the applicant's wish to seek an acknowledgement of his rights and relative compensation is in line with Articles 34 and 41 of the Convention, and the Government's remarks in that connection are manifestly without reasonable foundation.	Крім того, Суд вважає, що бажання заявника вимагати здійснення своїх прав і пов'язаної з цим справедливої сатисфакції відповідає статтям 34 і 41 Конвенції, і зауваження Уряду у зв'язку з цим є явно необґрунтованими.
237	In view of the above considerations, the Court finds no reason justifying a discontinuation of the examination of the case.	З урахуванням вищенаведених міркувань Суд не знаходить підстав, які б обґрунтовували припинення розгляду справи.
238	The Court therefore rejects the Government's request for the application to be struck out under Article 37 § 1 (c) of the Convention and continues the examination of the case.	Отже, Суд відхиляє заяву Уряду про вилучення заяви з реєстру справ відповідно статті 37 §1 (c) Конвенції та продовжує розгляд заяви.

Figure 1:

Fragment of the English-Ukrainian parallel legal corpus

The total number of words in this corpus is approximately 550,000 lexical units. The objectivity of the results obtained in the study is proved by quantitative calculations.

## 5. Results & Discussion

Due to the specificity of the texts that may be included in the specialized professional corpora, certain questions do not have an unambiguous answer and require targeted consideration. Among these issues there is the problem of terminological synonymy.

The study of the semantics of terminological units allows to expand our understanding of terminological synonymy, identify specific features of every unit, and show the ways to choose the optimal translation equivalent from the proposed synonymic chain.

For example, the legal terms *implementation* and *petition*. The explanatory dictionary of modern Ukrainian contains the following definitions:

*імплементация* – «1. Здійснення, виконання державою міжнародних правових норм. 2. Введення результатів референдумів у конституцію держави» [1, 493];

*петиція* – «письмове, перев. колективне прохання, клопотання, звернене до державних керівних установ або до голови уряду» [1, 941].

The given definitions themselves already have synonyms (*імплементация* – *здійснення, виконання*; *петиція* – *прохання, клопотання*), which are also the equivalents offered in terminological bilingual dictionaries for translation:

*implementation* – «виконання, здійснення, введення в дію» [2, 262]; «введення в дію, виконання (у т.ч. судового вироку), реалізація, здійснення, імплементация, проведення (реформ тощо), проведення (через парламент)» [9, 509];

*petition* – «прохання, клопотання, петиція» [2, 386]; «клопотання, петиція, прохання; звернення, позовна заява» [9, 747].

In our research text corpus, we identified 37 cases of using the noun *implementation* in 7 documents in English. Table 1 contains examples of collocations with the noun *implementation* (original + translation) from the English-Ukrainian parallel legal corpus.

Table 1: Translation of the noun *implementation*

English	Ukrainian
full <b>implementation</b> of the Convention	повне <b>виконання</b> Конвенції
<b>implementation</b> of the International Covenant	<b>імплементация</b> Міжнародного пакту
<b>implementation</b> of any effective measures	<b>вжиттям</b> будь-яких ефективних заходів
<b>implementation</b> of gender-sensitive policies	<b>здійснення</b> гендерно чутливої політики
<b>Implementation</b> of Article 2	<b>Реалізація</b> статті 2 державами

The following translation equivalents are used in the Ukrainian translation:

*здійснення* – 11 times (29,7%);

*реалізація* – 11 times (29,7%);

*виконання* – 7 times (19%);

0 (no translation equivalent) – 2 times (5,4%);

*застосування* – 2 times (5,4%);

*імплементация* – 2 times (5,4%);

*вжиття* – 1 time (2,7%);

*впровадження* – 1 time (2,7%).

Among the translation equivalents used, there are only two units from the synonymic chain registered in the dictionary of synonyms: *застосування, вжиття* [10, 131].

The noun *petition* is used 9 times in 5 English texts being analyzed. Table 2 contains examples of collocations with the noun *petition* (original + translation) from the English-Ukrainian parallel legal corpus.

Table 2: Translation of the noun *petition*

English	Ukrainian
petition of Recommendation	<b>виконання</b> Рекомендації
petition to reopen proceedings	<b>клопотання</b> про повторне відкриття провадження
petition to the court	<b>петиції</b> до суду
petition of appeal	апеляційній <b>скарзі</b>
on the grounds of abuse of petition	на підставі неналежного <b>подання заяви</b>

The following translation equivalents are used in the Ukrainian translation:

*подання заяви* – 3 times (33,4%);

*клопотання* – 2 times (22,2%);

*скарга* – 2 times (22,2%);

*виконання* – 1 time (11,1%);

*петиція* – 1 time (11,1%).

Of the five translation units listed, four are synonymous: *заява, скарга, клопотання, петиція* [10, 134].

The corpus-based analysis and mathematical calculation of the frequency of use of each equivalent in the context allow to make assumptions (due to a small array of texts processed) about the change in the order of the representation of the translation equivalents offered by the bilingual dictionary in the form of a synonymous chain:

**Table 3:** Ukrainian equivalents for the noun *implementation*

Dictionary 1 [2, 262]	Dictionary 2 [9, 509]	Corpus
виконання	уведення в дію	здійснення
здійснення	виконання	реалізація
введення в дію	реалізація	виконання
	здійснення	застосування
	імплементация	імплементация
	проведення	вжиття
		впровадження

**Table 4:** Ukrainian equivalents for the noun *petition*

Dictionary 1 [2, 386]	Dictionary 2 [9, 747]	Corpus
прохання	клопотання	поданнязаяви
клопотання	петиція	клопотання
петиція	прохання	скарга
	звернення	виконання
	позовна заява	петиція

Such an analysis can completely change the results of vocabulary work presented in traditional bi- and multilingual dictionaries.

So, the parallel corpora are used for automatic extraction of terms and terminological collocations, their mathematic analysis and taking decision as for the most appropriate translation equivalent for each discourse scenario.

## 6. Conclusion

It is obvious that the presence of so many variants, doublets and synonyms in the translation of these units is resulted, first of all, from certain conceptual-semantic shifts and semantic differentiations in the meaning of the terms, caused by discursive and usual factors. On the one hand, synonyms provide some degree of functional flexibility of the whole terminological system, but on the other hand, they bring a lot of challenges to translators.

The main task of the translator is to render the functional and semantic components of the source text with maximum accuracy in the target text. Studying the possibilities of using special parallel corpora for translation of professional literature in general and determining the correct usual correspondences “an original term –its translation” in particular increase the quality of translation of scientific and technical texts and provide a theoretical basis for creation and further improvement of the structure of such corpora.

So, the obtained results show the necessity of using parallel corpora in translation as a tool for exploring the verbal subtleties in the contexts and in real communicative situations. This definitely provides the higher quality of translation.

## 7. Future Scope

The study of the fixed collocations of the legal terminological system as well as the contextual distribution of units that influence the choice of translation equivalents, is a prospect for further study.

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