

Terminology Standardization and Translation Equivalence in Chinese - Vietnamese Translation of Economic and Commercial Terms

Tran Thi Anh Nguyet

Date of Submission: 02-12-2022

Date of Acceptance: 12-12-2022

ABSTRACT: In the context of strong economic globalization in the world, Vietnam-China relations are also increasingly strengthened and developed. Cooperation and exchange activities between the two countries are taking place more and more extensively, especially in the economic and commercial field. Along with that, the demand for interpreters in the economic and commercial field between Vietnam and China is also increasing. Correct understanding and translation of economic and commercial terms play an important role in the process of economic and commercial cooperation and negotiation, contributing to enriching the data warehouse of economic and commercial terms between Vietnam and China. Stemming from that actual need, we conducted a survey of some Chinese-Vietnamese dictionaries of economic and commercial terms in use today to see somewhat the situation of translation of these terms, thereby proposing some solutions to standardize translation of economic and commercial terms from the perspective of terminology standardization and translation equivalence theory.

Keywords: economic and commercial terms; translation equivalence; contrastive linguistics; terminology standardization

I. INTRODUCTION

With the birth of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, along with the world economic achievements in the current period, a huge number of terms in new fields such as electronics, computers, digital technology, artificial intelligence, internet of things, have appeared and spread strongly in the context of economic globalization taking place around the world. In that context, Vietnam-China relations are also increasingly strengthened and developed. Economic and cultural exchanges are taking place more and more extensively, especially in the economic field. The

demand for interpreters in the economic and commercial field between Vietnam and China is also increasing. Correct understanding and translation of economic and commercial terms is a matter of concern and discussion by many researchers, which poses requirements for research and training of translators and interpreters in general, as well as economic and commercial translators and interpreters in particular, which needs to be improved in both quality and quantity not only in practice but also in terms of translation and interpreting theory in order to meet the needs of development and economic exchange between the two countries. Stemming from that actual need, we conducted a survey of some Chinese-Vietnamese dictionaries of economic and commercial terms in use today to see somewhat the situation of translation of these terms, thereby proposing some solutions to standardize translation of economic and commercial terms in the current conditions from the perspective of terminology standardization and translation equivalence theory.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The study is based on the theory of terminology standardization and translation equivalence theory to conduct survey and analysis as well as make recommendations for standardization.

According to our survey, in Vietnam, there are 12 different definitions of terms, but the content of these definitions is quite similar. According to the relatively detailed definition of Do Huu Chau (1962), "Scientific and technical terms include lexical units used to express things, phenomena, activities, characteristics, etc., in industrial engineering, and natural or social sciences. Different from ordinary words, terms have denotative meaning that completely coincides with real things, phenomena, etc., in reality, objects

of the respective engineering and scientific branches. Their significant meaning is also concepts of things and phenomena just as they exist in the mind. Regarding the content, terms often have no separation of objective reality in a language-specific way. Each term like a label “sticks to this object” (along with its concept) to create its own content”. Although each definition comes from different research perspectives, through definitions, it can be seen that one of the most prominent features of terms is their systematicity and unity of meaning within the scope of a discipline or a specialized science.

Translation is a linguistic activity aimed at replacing a text in a source language with an equivalent text in a target language (Nguyen Hong Con, 2006). Translation equivalence is a concept that has been mentioned a lot in research on translation theory around the world since the 1960s-1970s, and is viewed in a relatively multidimensional way from many different perspectives. According to the summary of Le Thi Giao Chi (2015), the prominent views on translation equivalence of researchers around the world include Full Equivalence and Partial Equivalence by Meetham & Hudson; Formal Equivalence and Dynamic Equivalence by Nida; Semantic Equivalence and Communicative Equivalence by Newmark; Denotative Equivalence, Connotative Equivalence, Text-normative Equivalence, Formal Equivalence, and Pragmatic Equivalence by Koller; Systematic Equivalence, Unsystematic Equivalence by Salkie; Linguistic Equivalence, Paradigmatic Equivalence, Stylistic Equivalence, and Textual Equivalence by Bassnett. Among the aforementioned views, the translation equivalence views of Koller and Newmark are highly applicable in assessing the quality of translations from many levels such as words, phrases, sentences, texts, etc. Translation of terms is translation at the lexical level with strict requirements on form, meaning and communication; therefore, we choose Koller’s translation equivalence approach as a basis for proposing a method to translate economic terms from Chinese into Vietnamese.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

This research paper mainly uses the methods of desk research, sampling survey, and lexical and semantic comparison to conduct the survey, describe and classify Chinese economic and commercial terms and their equivalent terms in Vietnamese based on absorbing the views on terminology standardization and translation equivalence of previous researchers to propose

solutions to standardize translation of economic and commercial terms from Chinese into Vietnamese.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Standardization of economic and commercial terms in Chinese and Vietnamese

Economic and commercial terms as defined by us are words or phrases used to identify a specific thing, phenomenon or process of specialized branches in the economic and commercial field such as foreign trade, finance, economics, accounting, management, insurance, tax, etc.

Standardization of economic and commercial terms, like standardization of terms in other fields, is a work or activity to make those terms conform to the desired standards. According to Le Quang Thiem (2018), to do this work, first of all, it is necessary to set up evaluation standards; therefore, the author gives three principles of standardization of Vietnamese terms, including 1- Scientificity, including two standards: accuracy and systematicity; 2- Nationality, including Vietnamese materials, Vietnamese structure, easiness to read, remember and understand; 3- Internationality, including keeping the original form, being close to source language, and being internationally popular.

Regarding the standardization of terms in China, according to Feng Zhiwei (冯志伟, 1997), in 1987, the Working Conference of the National Committee for the Appraisal of Natural Science Terms of China made four basic requirements for identification of natural science terms, including 1- Words used in the terms must comply with relevant State regulations on language and writing; 2- Strictly adhere to the principle of “one term - one meaning”; 3- Strictly abide by the principle of unity in coordination, which emphasizes the clear division of the scope of belonging of interdisciplinary terms; for these terms, they are uniformly referred to a single major system of use; 4- Term identification must ensure that terms are scientific, reflect the essential properties and scientific concepts of that branch of science, and have a systematic correlation with terms in the same field. Terms must be short, easy to remember and understand, not use strange characters.

Zheng Shupu (郑述谱, 2014) in a statistics on term identification standards of 14 terminology research associations and organizations in a lot of countries around the world pointed out 11 requirements set forth for terms. The author arranges in high-to-low order of selection of 14 organizations and associations including 1- Monosemy; 2- Conciseness; 3- Rational nature; 4-

Systematic nature; 5- Ability to form words; 6- Usability; 7- Carefulness when using foreign words; 8- Correct language; 9- Concise and easy to understand; 10- Internationality; 11- Context independence. Among them, the standards 1-6 are selected by more than 50% of organizations, the first 2 standards (Monosemy; Conciseness) are given by 14/14 organizations, the third standard (Reasoning nature) is selected by 13/14 organizations.

It can be seen that the properties set for terminology, or in other words, the standards for terminology standardization from the point of view of terminology researchers in Vietnam and in the world are relatively similar. In order to identify a term in the terminology of a general field of expertise, the selected words must have all the common properties of a term such as monosemy, scientificity, internationality. In addition, in a particular country, the nationality of a term is essential. Acquiring the viewpoints on terminology standardization of previous studies, we propose some standards to standardize economic and commercial terms in general, and standardize economic and commercial terms translated from Chinese into Vietnamese in particular, including the following four standards: monosemy, scientificity, nationality, and internationality.

4.2 Translation equivalence in translation of Chinese-Vietnamese economic and commercial terms

4.2.1 Translation equivalence

Regarding the definition of translation equivalence in Vietnam, Nguyen Hoai An (2005) gave the definition of translation equivalence on the basis of absorbing the views of linguists around the world, especially W. Koller as follows: "Translation equivalence is the corresponding relationship between the translational units of two texts, the source text and the target text, on the basis of paying attention to extra-linguistic factors, pragmatic conditions, text and style of recipient". This definition generalizes W. Koller's standards of translation equivalence when it mentions extra-linguistic factors, pragmatic conditions, text, and style of the target language (recipient). M. Koller¹ thinks that there is no need to be framed in any two translation equivalence standards, each of which can be applied to many different types of text; therefore, he proposed five types of translation equivalence so that translators can choose in accordance with the content of words or texts to be translated, specifically including:

(1) Denotative equivalence is equivalence towards the externality of concept, that is the extra-

linguistic factors. Denotative equivalence is especially suitable for application to translation of specialized terms due to the rational nature, also known as the scientificity of terms.

(2) Connotative equivalence is equivalence towards the nuance of meaning or the polysemy of words. Depending on the context, a word can be translated in many styles of expression to show different emotional nuances. In case of translation of economic and commercial terms, because of the monosemy and scientificity of terms, connotative equivalence is not suitable to be applied to term translation.

(3) Text-normative equivalence is equivalence towards the norm of language use, and style of the text type in the target language (translation) which is equivalent to the text style in the source language (the original). This equivalence standard is suitable for application in translation of economic and commercial terms to ensure the appropriate terminology text style.

(4) Pragmatic equivalence is equivalence towards the subject receiving the text (the reader of the translation), towards the feeling of the recipient of the target text (the translation) which must be equivalent to the feeling when reading the source text (the original). To achieve pragmatic equivalence, it is required that translators must understand the contextual intention or out-of-text intention to have a strategy to choose words suitable for communication situation in order to create equivalent emotions for the recipient of the text. Therefore, pragmatic equivalence is often applied in translation of literature or texts rich in connotative meaning, it is not suitable for term translation.

(5) Formal equivalence is the complete equivalence in terms of the form and aesthetics of the target text compared with the source text, focusing on the goal that the aesthetic form of the target text is as close to the expressive form of the source text as possible in terms of phonetics, vocabulary, and syntax. This form of equivalence works on the premise that reader of the target text already has an understanding of culture and language of the source text. Formal and aesthetic equivalence is often applied in comparing text translation with specific styles such as translating poetry, idioms, proverbs or texts with a particular style of expression.

4.2.2 Equivalence factors in translation of Chinese-Vietnamese economic and commercial terms

Due to the special properties and requirements in the standardization of economic and commercial terms as mentioned in the previous section, determining the translation equivalence

factors is especially important in determining the evaluation standards for translation of terms in general and translation of economic and commercial terms in particular. Based on 5 factors of translation equivalence proposed by M. Koller, after examining each aspect of equivalence in accordance with the standardization of economic and commercial terms, we find that there are two equivalence factors that are suitable to apply in assessing translation equivalence in translating economic and commercial terms from Chinese to Vietnamese, including denotative equivalence and text-normative equivalence. Specifically, as follows:

(1) Denotative equivalence in translation of terms

Denotative equivalence is an equivalence towards extra-linguistic factors. Each Chinese term is a single-meaning and unique concept in the internationally economic and commercial

	Chinese terms
[1]	公司
[2]	不动产
[3]	自由市场
[4]	所有权
[5]	自然利率
[6]	都市经济

From the aforementioned examples, it can be seen that Vietnamese terms which have denotative meaning and form of expression completely equivalent to Chinese terms are usually the terms that are composed of Sino-Vietnamese elements. This is the advantage of translators when it is easy for them to find equivalent terms in

	Chinese terms	Reference translationⁱⁱ	Recommended translation
[7]	创业	Sáng nghiệp/tạo nghiệp	Khởi nghiệp/ Startup
[8]	初级商品价格	Giá sản phẩm sơ cấp	Giá nguyên liệu thô/ Raw material prices
[9]	单一贸易	Giao dịch đơn nhất	Thương mại thuần túy/ Pure commerce
[10]	定期保险	Bảo hiểm định kỳ	Bảo hiểm có kỳ hạn/ Term insurance
[11]	产权说明书	Giấy thuyết minh quyền sở hữu tài sản	Bản sao kê quyền sở hữu tài sản/ Statement of property ownership
[12]	独家专利权	Quyền chuyên lợi độc quyền	Giấy phép độc quyền/ Exclusive license

In the examples [7] - [12] to properly translate into equivalent terms in Vietnamese, it is necessary to compare and contrast the denotative meanings of terms in two languages to find equivalent Vietnamese terms, the abuse of Sino-Vietnamese words has created phrases with vague and even

terminology system, so there can only be a single equivalent term in Vietnamese. Therefore, denotative equivalence in translating economic and commercial terms from Chinese to Vietnamese is a complete equivalence. However, in the Chinese terms, some components constituting the term have multi-meaning phenomenon, so when translating it into Vietnamese, we will have to choose words for terminology standardization accordance with familiar expression in Vietnamese. Denotative equivalence in translation of Chinese-Vietnamese terms can be divided into sub-categories as follows:

+ Absolute equivalence is the case where the Vietnamese term and the Chinese term are completely equivalent in both the denotative meaning and form of expression. For example:

Vietnamese terms
Công ty/ Company
Bất động sản/ Real estate
Thị trường tự do/ Free market
Quyền sở hữu/ Ownership
Lãi suất tự nhiên/ Natural rate of interest
Kinh tế đô thị/ Urban economics

Chinese and Vietnamese. However, there are not many completely equivalent terms like this in economic and commercial terms. In the process of translating economic and commercial terms from Chinese into Vietnamese, the abuse of Sino-Vietnamese words may lead to incorrect translation of terms. For example:

confusing meanings such as “sáng nghiệp, tạo nghiệp, giao dịch đơn nhất, quyền chuyên lợi độc quyền”, etc.

+ Extended equivalence is the phenomenon that a Chinese term is equivalent to 2 or more Vietnamese terms. When these terms

become terminological components, translators who do not pay attention easily lead to mistranslation or translation into ordinary words that are not terms. For example, in the term “标准股票”, the word “标准” can be translated as “standard” in Sino-Vietnamese meaning; however, the phrase “cổ phiếu tiêu chuẩn/ standard stock” does not guarantee the accuracy of economic terms in Vietnamese, because there is no concept of “cổ

phiếu tiêu chuẩn/ standard stock” in Vietnamese stock terminology. Based on the concept of “标准股票” in Chinese, the equivalent term in Vietnamese must be “cổ phiếu phổ thông/ common stock”. According to our survey, the Vietnamese equivalent terms translated in these cases often do not guarantee terminology standardization. See some examples as follows:

	Chinese terms	Reference translationⁱⁱⁱ	Recommended translation
[13]	标准股票	Cổ phiếutiêu chuẩn	Cổ phiếu phổ thông/ Common stock
[14]	标准成本	Giá thành (tiêu) chuẩn	Chi phí định mức/ Standard cost
[15]	成本收益比率	Phân tích chi phí - lợi ích	Tỷ suất chi phí trên doanh thu/ Cost-to-revenue ratio
[16]	成本因素	Yếu tố giá thành	Nhân tố ảnh hưởng đến giá thành/chi phí/ Factors affecting cost/price
[17]	偿还时净收益率	Suất lợi tức tịnh lúc hoàn trả	Tỷ lệ lợi nhuận ròng khi trả khoản vay/ Net rate of return on a loan
[18]	公共财产	Của công	Tài sản công/ Public property
[19]	公共企业	Xí nghiệp quốc doanh	Doanh nghiệp công ích/ Public utility enterprise
[20]	公共投资	đầu tư công cộng	Đầu tư công/ Public investment

In the example [14], the term “成本” in Chinese can be translated into two equivalent terms in Vietnamese, which are “giá thành/ price” and “chi phí/ cost”. This case can be called open equivalence, that is, a Chinese term has two equivalent terms in Vietnamese. Therefore, when translating into Vietnamese, it is necessary to base on the overall meaning of the term in Chinese to identify the equivalent term in Vietnamese. In the examples [14] and [15], based on the conceptual meaning of the terms “标准成本” and “成本收益比率”, the equivalent terms in Vietnamese are “chi phí định mức/ standard cost” and “tỷ suất chi phí trên doanh thu/ cost-to-revenue ratio”. In the example [16], “成本” can be translated into “giá

thành/ price” or “chi phí/ cost”, at this time, the denotative meanings of these two terms are equivalent. The examples [18], [19], [20] are three different equivalences when translating the term “公共” into Vietnamese. This is a difficult point for translation of terms when it requires translators to have both language knowledge and understanding of names and concepts of specialized terms.

+ Narrow equivalence is the phenomenon that many terms in Chinese when translated into Vietnamese have only one equivalent term. When these terms become terminological components, translators also need to pay attention to choosing right words to ensure correct use of terms. For example:

	Chinese terms	Reference translation^{iv}	Recommended translation
[21]	独家代理	Quản lý độc quyền	Đại lý độc quyền/ Exclusive agent
[22]	垄断集团	Tập đoàn lũng đoạn	Tập đoàn độc quyền/ Exclusive group
[23]	法定专利	Độc quyền pháp định	Độc quyền theo luật định/ Statutory monopoly
[24]	独占许可证	Giấy phép độc quyền	Giấy phép độc quyền/ Exclusive license

Through the examples [21], [22], [23], [24], it can be seen that the terms “独家,垄断,专利,独占” acting as a terminological component have only one equivalent term in Vietnamese, that is “độc quyền/ exclusive”.

+ Non-equivalence is the phenomenon that an economic and commercial term in Chinese has no equivalent term or concept available in Vietnamese. There are not many terms of this kind, mainly some terms denoting specific and unique things and phenomena of the Chinese economy

such as “脱贫攻坚战, 乡村振兴”, or an economic and commercial thing or phenomenon identified in a metaphorical way, an image imbued with traditional Chinese thought such as “钉子户, 百年企业, 龙头企业”. The translation of these terms must ensure not only the equivalent level of meaning of terms but also the standards of terminology standardization. To ensure the scientificity of terms, the translation must still be concise and include additional annotations for new metaphorical concepts. For example:

	Chinese terms	Vietnamese translation
[24]	钉子户	“Ngôi nhà đing” “the phrase “Ngôi nhà đing” is used to refer to houses and buildings that refuse to be cleared in China” ^v
[25]	龙头企业	Doanh nghiệp dẫn đầu/ Leading enterprise referring to large enterprises that have influence and leading role in an industry sector of the economy.
[26]	脱贫攻坚战	Cuộc chiến công kiên thoát nghèo/ Fight to get out of poverty ^{vi}
[27]	百年企业	Doanh nghiệp trăm năm tuổi/ Centennial enterprise
[28]	持证上岗制度	Những công việc cần chứng chỉ hành nghề/ Jobs that require a practicing certificate
[29]	社会主义新农村	Nông thôn mới xã hội chủ nghĩa/ New socialist countryside
[30]	乡村振兴	Chấn hưng nông thôn/ Rural revitalization

(2) Text-normative equivalence in translation of terms

Text-normative equivalence refers to the fact that the language-using standards and text style in the target language (the translation) are equivalent to the text style in the source language (the original). The economic and commercial terms

are also a document used in a particular professional field; therefore, when translating them, it is necessary to choose words that are suitable for the style of terminology in the economic and commercial field, without use of common words. For example:

	Chinese terms	Use of common words ^{vii}	Correct use of terms
[31]	非关税手段	Thủ đoạn phi thuế quan/ Phương sách phi thuế quan	Biện pháp phi thuế quan/ Non-tariff measures
[32]	非上市股	Cổ phiếu ngoài thị trường	Cổ phiếu chưa niêm yết/ Unlisted stocks
[33]	自给经济	Kinh tế tự túc	Kinh tế tự cung tự cấp/ Self-sufficient economy
[34]	资本还原成本	Giá thành hoà nguyên vốn	Chi phí hoàn vốn/ Payback cost
[35]	折旧费	Tiền hao mòn	Phí khấu hao/ Depreciation
[36]	债权债务	Trái vụ của trái khoán	Nợ trái phiếu/ Bonded debt
[37]	运费折扣	Bớt cước	Chiết khấu vận phí/ Shipping discount
[38]	房产税	Thuế tài sản nhà cửa	Thuế nhà đất/ Housing tax

V. CONCLUSION

Economic and commercial terms, like other specialized terms, are a special linguistic unit. Different from common vocabulary, economic and commercial terms are lexical units that have all the attributes such as monosemy, scientificity, nationality, and internationality. Therefore, when translating economic and commercial terms from Chinese into Vietnamese, translators need to choose and comply with translation equivalence standards in accordance with the principles of terminology standardization to standardize the translation, contributing to creating new terms or standardizing the existing terms, enriching economic and commercial terminology in Vietnamese in general and standardizing terms translated from Chinese into Vietnamese in particular.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Le Hoai An (2005), "Translation equivalence and Terminology equivalence", VNU Journal of Science, Foreign Language 21, Issue No. 2, 2005
- [2]. Do Huu Chau (1981). Vietnamese vocabulary - semantics, Education Publishing House, Hanoi, 1981
- [3]. Le Thi Giao Chi (2015), "Some translation equivalence approaches", Journal of Science and Technology of University of Danang, Issue No. 4(89), 2015
- [4]. Le Quang Thiem (2018). The development of cultural-oriented Vietnamese terminology (1907-2005), VNU Publishing House, 2018, page 257
- [5]. 冯志伟,现代术语学引论, 语文出版社, 北京, 1997:96
- [6]. 郑述谱,术语学论集, 商务印书馆, 北京, 2014:98

ⁱ Quoting Anthony Pym, "Natural and directional equivalence in theories of translation"

(<https://sites.ualberta.ca/~ivashkiiv/translation/PYM%20on%20equivalence.pdf>)

ⁱⁱ Referring to the Vietnamese-Sino and Sino-Vietnamese economic and commercial dictionary, Am Tuong Publishing House, Beijing Normal University, 2005

ⁱⁱⁱ Referring to the Vietnamese-Sino and Sino-Vietnamese economic and commercial

dictionary, Am Tuong Publishing House, Beijing Normal University, 2005

^{iv} Referring to the Vietnamese-Sino and Sino-Vietnamese economic and commercial dictionary, Am Tuong Publishing House, Beijing Normal University, 2005

^v Referring to the website:

<https://cafeland.vn/tin-tuc/doi-pho-voi-van-nan-nha-dinh-tham-quyen-tq-tiet-lo-cach-xu-ly-cao-tay-hang-trieu-nguoi-lo-lang-89559.html>

^{vi} Referring to the website:

<https://bdntw.org.vn/mo-t-tram-nam-tuoi-sang-bung-suc-song-chung-tay-thu-c-da-y-sung-hie-p-xa-ho-i-chu-nghi-a-the-gio-i-090533.html>

^{vii} Referring to the Vietnamese-Sino and Sino-Vietnamese economic and commercial dictionary, Am Tuong Publishing House, Beijing Normal University, 2005