

PROBLEMS OF TRANSLATING ECONOMIC TEXTS: SYNONYMS AND CONNOTATIONS

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Abstract: This article examines the semantic, pragmatic, and cultural issues arising from synonym usage and connotative meanings in economic translation. Through a scientific approach grounded in translation theory, corpus linguistics, and cross-cultural discourse analysis, the study explores how linguistic nuances can lead to misinterpretation or distortion of economic concepts. It concludes with practical strategies for translators to enhance semantic fidelity, cultural alignment, and communicative effectiveness.

Keywords: Economic translation, synonyms, connotation, semantic equivalence, pragmatics, translation strategies, discourse analysis, cross-cultural communication

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada iqtisodiy tarjimada sinonimik qo'llanish va konnotativ ma'nolardan kelib chiqadigan semantik, pragmatik va madaniy masalalar ko'rib chiqiladi. Tarjima nazariyasi, korpus lingvistikasi va madaniyatlararo diskurs tahliliga asoslangan ilmiy yondashuv orqali tadqiqot lingvistik nuanslar qanday qilib iqtisodiy tushunchalarni noto'g'ri talqin qilish yoki buzishga olib kelishi mumkinligini o'rganadi. U tarjimonlar uchun semantik sodiqlikni, madaniy uyg'unlikni va kommunikativ samaradorlikni oshirish uchun amaliy strategiyalar bilan yakunlanadi.

Kalit so'zlar: Iqtisodiy tarjima, sinonimlar, konnotatsiya, semantik ekvivalentlik, pragmatika, tarjima strategiyalari, nutq tahlili, madaniyatlararo muloqot

Аннотация: В этой статье рассматриваются семантические, прагматические и культурные вопросы, возникающие из-за использования синонимов и коннотативных значений в экономическом переводе. С помощью научного подхода, основанного на теории перевода, корпусной лингвистике и кросс-культурном анализе дискурса, исследование изучает, как лингвистические нюансы могут привести к неправильному толкованию или искажению экономических концепций. В заключение приводятся практические стратегии для переводчиков по повышению семантической точности, культурного соответствия и коммуникативной эффективности.

Ключевые слова: экономический перевод, синонимы, коннотация, семантическая эквивалентность, прагматика, стратегии перевода, анализ дискурса, кросс-культурная коммуникация

Introduction

In an era marked by globalization and transnational economic cooperation, the accurate translation of economic texts has become increasingly critical for education, policymaking, trade, and international relations. Economic language is not only a vehicle for conveying information but also a means of framing ideologies and shaping perceptions. As such, translation in this domain extends beyond linguistic substitution to encompass semantic precision and cultural negotiation.

This article adopts a scientific perspective to explore how synonymy and connotation, two core linguistic features, can complicate the process of economic translation. It emphasizes the importance of context, genre-specific conventions, and cross-linguistic variation, arguing that these factors must be systematically analyzed to maintain the integrity of translated economic discourse.

Theoretical Framework

Central to the scientific study of translation is the concept of equivalence. Eugene Nida (1964) distinguished between formal and dynamic equivalence, a dichotomy that remains foundational in understanding the translator's task. In economic texts, where terminological precision is paramount, achieving a balance between form and function becomes particularly challenging.

Juliane House (1997) advanced this discussion with her model of translation quality assessment, emphasizing register analysis, genre conventions, and textual function. Her work is especially relevant for economic translation, where misalignment of communicative purpose and register can skew interpretation.

Moreover, Hans Vermeer's Skopos theory (1989) foregrounds the target text's function, urging translators to prioritize the communicative intent and audience expectations. This functionalist view is integral to managing connotative disparities and synonym choice.

Challenges of Synonymy in Economic Translation. While synonyms are generally perceived as interchangeable, their usage in economic texts is highly constrained by context, collocation, and disciplinary conventions. The danger lies in substituting words with near-identical denotations but divergent connotations or technical implications.

For example, consider the English terms "debt" and "liability." Though often used interchangeably in casual speech, they have distinct legal and accounting meanings. Using "debt" in place of "liability" in a balance sheet translation can lead to inaccuracies in financial reporting.

Similarly, terms like "income" and "revenue" may overlap in general contexts but diverge significantly in taxation and accounting discourse. Revenue refers to total earnings before expenses, while income typically denotes net profit.

Scientific approaches to resolving synonymy include corpus-based analysis, which examines authentic usage patterns across economic texts. Baker (1992) argues that collocational behavior and semantic prosody—the tendency of a word to co-occur with positive or negative terms—are crucial indicators for synonym selection.

Connotative Nuances and Cultural Contexts. Connotation refers to the secondary, often subjective meanings that accompany a word. In economic translation, overlooking connotative dimensions can result in semantic distortion or unintended ideological signaling.

For instance, the term "austerity" has strong connotative baggage in Western political discourse, evoking notions of social hardship and neoliberal critique. A literal translation into another language might neutralize these associations, diluting the rhetorical force or misrepresenting the source text's intent.

Another example is “liberalization,” which in Anglo-American contexts typically connotes market freedom and deregulation. However, in post-Soviet or Latin American contexts, it may be interpreted with suspicion due to historical experiences with economic reform.

Koller (1995) posited that connotative equivalence is just as critical as denotative equivalence, especially in fields like economics where ideology and policy are tightly interwoven. Thus, a translator must be attuned not only to dictionary definitions but also to socio-political and historical factors.

Case Studies and Empirical Insights. An illustrative case is the Spanish translation of an International Monetary Fund (IMF) document where “fiscal discipline” was rendered as “disciplina fiscal.” The direct translation sparked backlash due to connotations of authoritarian control and punitive austerity. A more culturally sensitive alternative, such as “prudencia fiscal” (fiscal prudence), might have preserved the intended meaning while mitigating negative connotations.

In Chinese translations of Western economic textbooks, the term “entrepreneurship” was initially translated as “qǐyèjiā jīngshén” (entrepreneurial spirit), which lacked cultural resonance. Subsequent translations adopted more contextually meaningful formulations that emphasized innovation and initiative, aligning better with domestic economic narratives.

These cases highlight the necessity of localized linguistic and cultural adaptation, as emphasized by Venuti’s (1995) concept of the “visible translator,” who actively mediates between texts and cultures rather than passively transmitting content.

Translation Strategies: A Scientific and Practical Approach. Based on empirical studies and theoretical models, several strategies are recommended for navigating synonymy and connotation in economic translation:

- **Terminological databases and glossaries:** Compile and use domain-specific bilingual glossaries to maintain consistency.
- **Contextual sensitivity:** Analyze surrounding text and genre conventions to guide word choice.
- **Corpus linguistics tools:** Employ software tools to investigate word frequency, collocation, and semantic prosody.
- **Back-translation and peer review:** Implement iterative checks through back-translation and expert review to ensure semantic accuracy.
- **Localization frameworks:** Tailor translations to cultural and ideological contexts without distorting meaning.
- **Discourse analysis:** Evaluate how language constructs economic ideologies and adapt translations accordingly.

These strategies are supported by scientific approaches to translation as both a cognitive and social activity, integrating insights from linguistics, communication theory, and intercultural studies.

Conclusion

The translation of economic texts requires a rigorous, scientifically informed approach to linguistic equivalence and cultural mediation. Synonyms and connotations are not mere stylistic issues but fundamental aspects of meaning-making that can affect policy, perception, and pedagogy.

By drawing upon translation theory, corpus linguistics, and discourse analysis, translators can better navigate the complexities of economic language. As global interdependence deepens, the



role of the translator evolves from language technician to cross-cultural communicator and semantic strategist.

Future research should focus on developing multilingual economic corpora, training programs that combine linguistic and economic literacy, and dynamic translation tools that account for both terminological precision and contextual appropriateness.

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