

How to research terminology

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1. Make sure you know what the word means in the source language, in the specific context.

I bought a **down** jacket.

I went **down** the stairs.

I hurt my **back**.

Come **back** here!

Step 1 continued

- If you are not sure of the meaning, first look the word up in a monolingual dictionary or some other source, or ask someone who knows. *Who really* knows, that is.
- You won't know if you have the right translation unless you're sure of the source-language definition.

2. Develop a hypothesis

You can now:

1. Use a bilingual dictionary
2. Use Google Translate
3. Ask somebody
4. Make an educated guess

3. Test your hypothesis

Make sure the word you found has the same meaning as the source-language word, in the specific context. You can do this by

1. Using a monolingual target-language dictionary.
2. Googling an image (if it's a physical object, like an animal or a tool)
3. Asking somebody, or relying on your own knowledge of the target language.

4. Confirm that the word is widely used

- The best way to do this is by Googling the word or phrase.
- Add the domain extension of your target language country (e.g. www.google.com.br for Brazil).
- Add extra words if needed to ensure that you get hits in the right context (medical or legal, for example).
- If you want to search for a phrase, put quotation marks around it (e.g. “give me a break”)
- If there are very few hits, it’s probably the wrong word.

You want to find a lot of hits, and they need to be in websites from a country that speaks the target language.

Bad confirmations

- blogs and social media are **not** good confirmations, unless you're looking for slang.
- bilingual dictionaries are **not** good confirmations (they're for step 2)
- Wikipedia is **not** a good confirmation
- a translated news story is **not** a good confirmation
- Foreign-language text from a website in the US is **not** a good confirmation

Good confirmations

- official government websites in TL (target-language) countries are good confirmations
- laws of TL countries are good confirmations
- commercial websites in TL countries are good confirmations
- local news stories written in TL country are good confirmations

The method in a nutshell

1. Make sure you know what the source-language term means in the context you find it in.
2. Develop a target-language hypothesis.
3. Test that hypothesis: does it have the same meaning as the source-language term?
4. Confirm that the target-language term you found is widely used in the correct context.

glossary format

ENGLISH	PORTUGUESE	SOURCE FOR TRANSLATION	CONFIRMATION THAT TRANSLATION YOU FOUND IS ACTUALLY USED
courthouse	fórum	class	http://www.maplink.com.br/como-chegar-forum-da-comarca-de-nova-iguacu-P23FD32T
fennel (foeniculum vulgare)	funcho (foeniculum vulgare)	linguee	http://portalarquivos2.saude.gov.br/images/pdf/2017/setembro/11/Monografia-Funcho.pdf
right-handed	destro	google translate	http://brasil.babycenter.com/x3400572/quando-saberei-se-meu-filho-é-destro-ou-canhoto

when compiling a glossary

- keep verbs in the infinitive e.g. “run”, not “running” or “ran”
- keep nouns in the singular e.g. “boat”, not “boats”
- make sure translation is same part of speech as source e.g.
- “runner”(noun) = “corredor” (noun)
“Correr”(verb) = “run”(verb)

a couple of useful websites you might not know

<http://www.linguee.com>

this site shows how other translators have translated things. It includes several language pairs.

<http://context.reverso.net/translation/>

similar to Linguee, shows you translations of phrases.

These are not always good translations, so anything you find here needs to be put through steps 3 and 4.