Bondarenko, Kateryna and Bondarenko, Oleksandr. 2026. How language industry defines localization: a corpus-based study. In: L10N Journal. 1(5), pp. 24-38.

How language industry defines localization: a corpus-based study

Kateryna Bondarenko and Oleksandr Bondarenko

Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University, Translatel Ltd

katerinabond@gmail.com, abondarenko@translatel.com

Abstract

The relationship between *translation* and *localization* remains conceptually contested in both academic literature and professional discourse. While theoretical models often attempt to draw clear boundaries between the two, industry usage suggests a more fluid and practice-oriented relationship. This study adopts a corpus-based approach to examine how *localization* is explicitly defined and how its relationship with *translation* is constructed in professional industry discourse. The analysis is based on a 2.4-million-token corpus compiled from *MultiLingual* magazine (2014–2024). Methodologically, the study combines the extraction of definitions, collocation analysis, and the examination of coordinated constructions. Explicit definitional contexts reveal that *localization* is conceptualized as a process involving *translation* and adaptation. Collocations demonstrate substantial overlap between *translation* and *localization*, particularly in domains related to service provision, technology, and quality. The analysis of coordinated constructions further shows that *translation* and *localization* are most frequently paired in service- and organization-oriented contexts, reflecting the realities of language service companies as primary discourse producers. Taken together, the findings indicate that contemporary industry discourse increasingly converges with the long-standing position of Translation Studies by framing *localization* as a *translation*-centered practice rather than as an independent ontological category. The study highlights the value of a corpus-based approach for clarifying terminological relationships in rapidly evolving professional domains.

Keywords: localization, translation, terminology, industry discourse, corpus linguistics, collocation analysis, language services industry

1 Introduction

The relationship between *localization* and *translation* has been extensively discussed in both academic literature and professional discourse (Kabát and Koscelníková 2022; Jiménez-Crespo 2024); however, no uniform understanding of *localization* has yet emerged. Numerous studies point to persistent conceptual ambiguity between the two terms (Pym 2004; Zethsen 2007; Achkasov 2016; Floros and Jiménez-Crespo 2016;

Charalampidou 2019; Kassawat 2021). Despite sustained scholarly attention, a clear and universally accepted definition of *localization* in relation to *translation* remains elusive. Several translation scholars (Hatim 2009; Chesterman 2009; Jiménez-Crespo 2024) conceptualize *translation* as an umbrella term extending beyond linguistic transfer to encompass publishing practices, ethical, political, and ideological dimensions, with *localization* framed as a specialized instantiation of *translation*. In industry discourse, *localization* is typically defined as the process of adapting content, products, or services to the linguistic, cultural, and technical requirements of specific target markets. Within the language industry, it has traditionally been argued that, unlike *translation*, which primarily focuses on linguistic transfer, *localization* involves a wider range of adjustments aimed at ensuring functional and cultural appropriateness. These adjustments may include the adaptation of textual and visual elements, as well as modifications to formats, conventions, and system-level features, such as dates, currencies, contact information, and payment methods (Cockrell 2024). This view positions *translation* as subordinate to *localization*, even though, paradoxically, *translation* remains indispensable to the existence of the other components. *Localization* is frequently conceptualized through the *translation*-plus model, attributed to B. Esselink, which frames *localization* as the *translation* and adaptation of a software product (Esselink 1998). Jiménez-Crespo identifies several features that distinguish *localization* from other types of *translation* and adaptation, including a strong reliance on technology, the use of translation management systems, text processing and programming, testing, and quality management (Jiménez-Crespo 2024). This distinction has also been linked to the organization of *localization* workflows. *Translation* often constitutes only one component of a broader *localization* process that encompasses engineering, testing, content management, and other technical tasks. In practice, the linguistic component is frequently outsourced to freelance translators, while language service providers coordinate the overall *localization* workflow. Consequently, the distinction between *translation* and *localization* may reflect differences in project organization and service provision as much as differences in the linguistic activity itself (DePalma 2021; Jiménez-Crespo 2024).

Taken together, prior research indicates that the conceptual boundaries between *localization* and *translation* remain fluid and contested. This persistent lack of definitional stability points to the need for empirical, usage-based approaches capable of capturing how *localization* is actually defined and understood in professional discourse – an aim to which corpus-based analysis is particularly well suited.

This study adopts a corpus-based approach to examine how *localization* is defined and conceptualized in professional industry discourse. Specifically, it addresses the following research questions:

RQ1. How is *localization* explicitly defined in industry discourse as represented in *MultiLingual* magazine (2014–2024)?

RQ2. What do corpus-derived collocations reveal about the relationship between *localization* and *translation* in professional practice?

2 Language industry publicistic discourse as empirical evidence

Industry discourse, in both oral and written forms, reflects established professional practice and contributes to its ongoing formation. The *MultiLingual* journal has, for several decades, functioned as a central communication platform for a broad range of stakeholders, including language service providers, localization teams, technology vendors and policy-oriented industry bodies. Its editorial scope consistently bridges operational practice, technological innovation and strategic reflection, making it particularly well suited for capturing mainstream professional discourse. The representativeness of *MultiLingual* is further reinforced by the diversity of its contributors, who include senior industry practitioners, localization managers, technologists, and, to a lesser extent, academic researchers and industry analysts. This plurality of voices ensures that the discourse reflects both hands-on operational concerns and higher-level conceptualization, while remaining anchored in professional practice. As a result, definitions and conceptual framings emerging in *MultiLingual* can be interpreted as indicative of widely circulated and socially validated understandings within the localization field, rather than isolated individual perspectives. The authorship profile remained broadly stable across the decade. Industry representatives consistently dominated the magazine, contributing 54% of articles in 2014 and 50% in 2024, while scholars accounted for 21% and 27%, industry researchers for 17% and 11%, and journalists for 8% and 12%, respectively. At the same time, the journal predominantly represents the perspective of language service providers and related industry stakeholders, whereas the voices of freelance translators and localizers, who perform much of the linguistic work itself, are comparatively less prominent. Consequently, the discourse captured in *MultiLingual* should be understood as reflecting an influential segment of the localization industry rather than the views of all professional participants.

As such, the journal provides a valuable empirical window into how *localization* is understood and discussed by practitioners, complementing previous empirical research based on interviews and focus groups with professionals (Dam and Zethsen 2024) by capturing naturally occurring professional media discourse in dynamics. Analyzing industry discourse allows researchers to capture definitions, conceptual boundaries, and evaluative stances as they are produced in situ, within the everyday

communicative practices of the localization industry. This is particularly relevant in a domain characterized by rapid technological change and evolving workflows, where professional usage often precedes and sometimes challenges conceptualization. Industry texts thus function not merely as secondary commentary, but as primary evidence of how key concepts are constructed and redefined over time.

3 Corpus design and analytical robustness

From the outset, the corpus design comprised ten distinct yearly corpora, each consisting of all *MultiLingual* journal issues published in a single calendar year. Texts were collected from publicly accessible archives and converted into a unified, machine-readable format to ensure consistency of analysis. Non-discursive material (such as advertisements and layout-related content) was removed without affecting the semantic integrity of the texts. An overview of authorship indicates that the corpus is dominated by industry practitioners, with contributions from academics and journalists providing complementary perspectives. This composition ensures that the corpus primarily reflects practitioner-oriented discourse while retaining a degree of conceptual diversity.

As shown in Table 1, the size of individual subcorpora varies considerably, reflecting fluctuations in publication volume, issue length, and editorial strategy over time. Notably, the period from 2019 to 2021 is characterized by smaller subcorpora, while earlier years (2014–2017) and 2022–2023 exhibit substantially higher token counts. This variation was taken into account at all stages of analysis since the study focuses on recurrent definitional frames and collocational tendencies that emerge across multiple subcorpora, rather than on isolated year-specific phenomena. Despite uneven yearly sizes, the overall corpus, comprising approximately 2.4 million tokens across a ten-year span, provides a sufficiently large and diverse empirical basis for identifying stable patterns as well as meaningful shifts in the conceptualization of localization. The combination of corpus-based and corpus-driven methods mitigates the effects of size imbalance and supports the robustness and interpretability of the findings.

Table 1. ***Composition of the MultiLingual subcorpora (2014–2024).***

Year	Tokens	Words	Sentences
MultiLingual 2014	291,634	244,725	10,422
MultiLingual 2015	404,678	333,688	13,718
MultiLingual 2016	313,998	266,777	11,289
MultiLingual 2017	278,474	236,765	10,264
MultiLingual 2018	237,023	200,457	9,129

MultiLingual 2019	80,916	70,643	3,385
MultiLingual 2020	132,755	115,710	5,692
MultiLingual 2021	152,121	132,038	6,137
MultiLingual 2022	232,681	201,208	9,451
MultiLingual 2023	216,684	187,647	8,634
MultiLingual 2024	165,856	143,954	6,888
Total	≈2.4M	≈2.07M	95,009

4 Methodology

To identify explicit definitional statements, the analysis focuses on definition frames, understood as recurrent syntactic patterns used to introduce definitions in discourse (Pearson 1998; Vintar and Grčić Simeunović 2017). In corpus linguistics, such frames are widely used for extracting terminology definitions from specialized texts.

The primary retrieval pattern employed in this study is the canonical X is a/the Y construction, operationalized through the following Corpus Query Language (CQL) query: [lemma="localization"] [lemma="be"] [word="a|an|the"]. This pattern reliably captures explicit definitional intent, as opposed to evaluative, metaphorical, or purely descriptive mentions of the term. The query was implemented in Sketch Engine, which provides lemmatization, concordance retrieval, and contextual analysis tools suitable for large-scale corpus research (Kilgarriff 2014). All retrieved concordance lines were manually screened to exclude non-definitional uses, truncated constructions, and cases where *localization* did not function as the definiendum. This combination of automated retrieval and qualitative validation follows established best practices in corpus-based terminology research.

To address the relationship between *localization* and *translation* in professional practice, a methodology for detecting functional synonymy was applied. The analysis of functional synonymy in this study is grounded in the assumption that synonymy in professional discourse is usage-based rather than absolute. Following corpus-linguistic and terminological approaches (Temmerman 2000), terms are treated as functionally synonymous when they perform overlapping communicative and conceptual functions within comparable discursive contexts, even if they are not interchangeable in all situations. In specialized and industry discourse, functional synonymy often emerges through contextual convergence, where different terms are used to describe similar processes, practices, or roles depending on perspective, tradition, or stakeholder orientation (Fernández-Silva and Freixa 2012). This is particularly relevant for the

relationship between *localization* and *translation*, which may alternate in use while referring to overlapping professional activities.

Functional synonymy was investigated through a multi-step corpus-based procedure, combining quantitative distributional analysis with qualitative contextual validation. To assess functional similarity, the analysis examined whether the candidate terms occur in comparable environments. This step involved collocation analysis: identifying shared collocates (e.g. *process*, *workflow*, *quality*, *service*, *strategy*) within a defined span.

A key diagnostic for functional synonymy was the comparison of definitional frames associated with each term. Definitional contexts were extracted using structured CQL queries. The analysis examined whether *localization* and *translation* are defined using similar hypernyms (e.g. *process*, *service*, *practice*), *described* through overlapping semantic components (e.g. adaptation, user focus, quality assurance), and embedded in parallel explanatory structures. Convergence at the definitional level was interpreted as strong evidence of functional synonymy.

5 Conceptualizations of localization in industry discourse: process-, and service-oriented perspectives

To identify explicit definitional contexts of *localization* in industry discourse, this study employs a highly productive CQL pattern: [lemma="localization"] [lemma="be"] [word="a|an|the"]. This query retrieves instances in which *localization* occurs in a canonical definitional structure (e.g. “localization is a/the …”). The analysis is based on 11 explicit definitional statements of *localization* identified in the *MultiLingual* corpus (2014–2024). The analysis reveals three definitional frames: process-oriented, service-oriented, and hybrid process–service conceptualizations.

The dominant definitional frame conceptualizes *localization* as a process, accounting for 7 out of 11 definitions (approximately 64%). In these cases, *localization* is explicitly described as a structured sequence of actions involving translation, adaptation, and market-specific adjustment. Typical examples include definitions such as *“Product localization is the process of translating product branding and customer-facing content, such as user manuals and product packaging, into target languages to meet local customer requirements and taste”* (2015) and *“Localization is the process of customizing the app’s content in order to serve different users with different preferences and habits in different markets”* (2019). Other definitions emphasize adaptation to linguistic and national contexts, for instance *“Localization is the process of adapting a product or solution for use in a particular language and country”* (2019), or explicitly frame *localization* as a specialized translation activity, as in *“Localization is a term defining a specific translation process”* (2021). Additional examples highlight the complexity of localization, describing it as a *“long and continuous process”* that requires testing at multiple stages, particularly in

domain-specific contexts such as game localization, or as a *"more complex and multistaged process that incorporates cultural aspects of the target market"*. This conceptualization reflects the shift towards agile development workflows, where *localization* is integrated continuously into the product development cycle.

Across all process-oriented definitions, three core components recur: *translation* of textual material, product adaptation (technical, cultural, and functional), and alignment with market expectations.

A smaller but analytically significant group of definitions – 2 out of 11 cases (approximately 18%) – conceptualizes *localization* as a value-creating service and business function. These definitions shift the focus away from procedural execution toward strategic contribution and organizational impact: *"Yes, localization is a service, but it's not a cost center. It's a partnership, and overall company success is directly tied to localization success"* (2022). Here, *localization* is framed as a strategic partnership whose value is measured in terms of business outcomes rather than operational efficiency. Similarly, *MultiLingual* (2020) links *localization* to user experience and personalization, noting that understanding users and customizing their experiences is central when *"localization is a goal"*. In these cases, *localization* is positioned as an integrated service that supports user-centered design and market performance.

6 Functional synonymy between translation and localization

To assess functional proximity between *translation* and *localization* in industry discourse, "noun–noun" collocation patterns were analyzed using immediate adjacency queries ([lemma="translation" & tag="N.*"] [tag="N.*"] and [lemma="localization" & tag="N.*"] [tag="N.*"]). The analysis is based on GDEX-sorted concordance data extracted from the *MultiLingual* corpus (2014–2024). Only unique noun lemmas occurring directly after the head nouns were counted; plural forms were lemmatized, and proper names (e.g., event titles) were excluded. The analysis identified the following numbers of unique noun collocates: "translation + noun": 52 unique noun lemmas; "*localization* + noun": 39 unique noun lemmas. This asymmetry reflects the broader discursive entrenchment of translation in industry texts. However, functional similarity is evaluated not through raw frequency, but through shared collocational structure.

Bondarenko, Kateryna and Bondarenko, Oleksandr. 2026. How language industry defines localization: a corpus-based study. In: L10N Journal. 1(5), pp. 24-38.

Figure 1. ***Collocates of*** **translation** ***and*** **localization** ***in*** **MultiLingual.**

16.12.25, 15:35 Concordance

SKETCH ENGINE

CQL [lemma="translation" & tag="N.*"] [tag="N.*"] • 7,828
3,227.37 per million tokens • 0.32%

Sort GDEX

	Details	sentence
1	doc#23	<s>Do you know your **translation volumes** and costs?</s>
2	doc#36	<s>The stakeholder who requests a **translation service** is a requester.</s>
3	doc#16	<s>In previous decades **translation technology** was concentrated on productivity gains in the area of user documentation.</s>
4	doc#31	<s>The main requirement is the **translation result** of high quality between the local language and interlingua.</s>
5	doc#36	<s>Some consider it to be at the core of **translation philosophy** and client satisfaction.</s>
6	doc#6	<s>Old functionality and translations had already been validated in earlier **translation projects** .</s>
7	doc#14	<s>A third major advantage of being highly specialized as a **translation company** is that many clients prefer working with specialists.</s>
8	doc#3	<s>Since then, many **translation tools** as well as other types of applications have implemented support for the format.</s>
9	doc#21	<s>I started my career working in different fields and capacities, before finally shifting back into the **translation realm** .</s>
10	doc#40	<s>Where do **translation service** providers add value to MT projects?</s>

16.12.25, 15:00 Concordance

SKETCH ENGINE

CQL [tag="JJ.*"][lemma="translation"] • 3,406
1,404.24 per million tokens • 0.14%

Sort GDEX

	Details	sentence
1	doc#13	<s>Expand your horizons and join our **5th translation** industry conference.</s>
2	doc#37	<s>Many people underestimate the extent to which **accurate translation** in financial services relies on expert industry knowledge.</s>
3	doc#3	<s>Many clients request **content translation** with quick turnaround without asking how it gets done.</s>
4	doc#16	<s>Another indicator of the market volume is the size of **top translation** companies headquartered there.</s>
5	doc#30	<s>WPML includes advanced features for translation management and an interface for professional **content translation** .</s>
6	doc#31	<s>For training documents – just like any other **pharmaceutical translation** – accuracy is essential.</s>
7	doc#32	<s>Who produced the **human translations** being compared?</s>
8	doc#36	<s> **Most translations** are done by average translators working with very tight deadlines and minimal context.</s>
9	doc#39	<s>A higher inverse edit distance signifies **better translation** quality.</s>
10	doc#42	<s>These related outcomes are in high demand in **medical translation** requests.</s>
11	doc#9	<s>Automation also turned this **quarterly translation** project into a more streamlined process.</s>

A comparison of the two noun sets reveals 21 shared noun lemmas that collocate with both *translation* and *localization*: *process, workflow, project, service, industry, system, management, team, quality, technology, platform, solution, tool, company, provider, cost, support, model, environment, strategy, operation*. These shared nouns constitute the conceptual core through which both activities are framed in professional discourse. The degree of overlap was calculated as follows: Overlap relative to *localization*: 21 / 39 = 53.8%; Overlap relative to *translation*: 21 / 52 = 40.4%. The results show that more than half of the noun collocational profile of *localization* overlaps with that of *translation*, while a substantial proportion of *translation* collocates are likewise shared.

The shared noun collocates cluster around several recurrent semantic domains: process and workflow (*process, workflow, project, operation*), framing both activities as structured, repeatable procedures; quality and evaluation (*quality, cost*), indicating comparable assessment criteria; technology and infrastructure (*system, platform, tool, technology, environment*), embedding both concepts in the same technological ecosystem; service and industry (*service, provider, company, industry, support*),

positioning both as commercial language services; management and strategy (*management, team, model, strategy*), reflecting organizational governance and coordination.

The noun–noun collocation analysis provides strong corpus-based evidence for functional synonymy between *translation* and *localization* in industry discourse. While *localization* shows a stronger tendency toward managerial and strategic framing, it remains anchored in the same operational, technological, and service-oriented conceptual space as *translation*. The high degree of overlap – particularly the 53.8% shared collocational profile of *localization* – suggests that, in contemporary industry discourse, *localization* is conceptualized as a *translation*-centered activity framed in organizational and market-oriented terms. This tendency may also reflect broader changes in industry discourse, whereby language service providers increasingly emphasize localization management, workflow coordination, quality assurance, and productivity, while the linguistic aspects of *localization* are probably more frequently discussed by freelance professionals.

To examine the degree of functional proximity between *translation* and *localization*, adjectival modification patterns were also compared. Adjectives occurring in attributive position were retrieved via Sketch Engine CQL queries and analyzed under the assumption that shared adjectival environments signal comparable functional roles, in line with the distributional hypothesis.

Figure 2. ***Adjectival evidence of functional proximity between*** **translation** ***and*** **localization.**

16.12.25, 14:59 Concordance

SKETCH ENGINE

CQL [tag="JJ.*"][lemma="localization"] • 1,464
603.59 per million tokens • 0.06%

Sort GDEX

	Details	sentence
1	doc#34	<s>The analysis results in a document containing **relevant localization** reviews as well as their translation and rating.</s>
2	doc#39	<s>Many **established localization** companies face talent shortages and struggle with high workloads and tight or unachievable deadlines.</s>
3	doc#42	<s>The company has reached those numbers after conducting **professional localization** .</s>
4	doc#16	<s>The simple fact is that most **continuous localization** apps are offered by companies at a price.</s>
5	doc#18	<s>Videolocalize.com is a cloud based online platform designed for **video localization** .</s>
6	doc#19	<s>External hires or outsourcing in those new marketplaces will become key for **crucial localization** purposes.</s>
7	doc#21	<s>Cultural differences and varieties in games lead translators and localizers on a **new localization** journey.</s>
8	doc#36	<s>We would also love to know a bit more about your **internal localization** mechanics.</s>
9	doc#40	<s>The core competency from **traditional localization** is less likely to be useful with these new challenges.</s>
10	doc#9	<s>Metrics can also reveal opportunities for a more efficient or **effective localization** process.</s>

16.12.25, 15:00 Concordance

SKETCH ENGINE

CQL [tag="JJ.*"][lemma="translation"] • 3,406
1,404.24 per million tokens • 0.14%

Sort GDEX

	Details	sentence
1	doc#13	<s>Expand your horizons and join our **5th translation** industry conference.</s>
2	doc#37	<s>Many people underestimate the extent to which **accurate translation** in financial services relies on expert industry knowledge.</s>
3	doc#3	<s>Many clients request **content translation** with quick turnaround without asking how it gets done.</s>
4	doc#16	<s>Another indicator of the market volume is the size of **top translation** companies headquartered there.</s>
5	doc#30	<s>WPML includes advanced features for translation management and an interface for professional **content translation** .</s>
6	doc#31	<s>For training documents – just like any other **pharmaceutical translation** – accuracy is essential.</s>
7	doc#32	<s>Who produced the **human translations** being compared?</s>
8	doc#36	<s> **Most translations** are done by average translators working with very tight deadlines and minimal context.</s>
9	doc#39	<s>A higher inverse edit distance signifies **better translation** quality.</s>
10	doc#42	<s>These related outcomes are in high demand in **medical translation** requests.</s>
11	doc#9	<s>Automation also turned this **quarterly translation** project into a more streamlined process.</s>

The analysis is based on two datasets of adjective–noun combinations extracted from the *MultiLingual* subcorpora. 68 unique adjective lemmas were identified as regularly modifying *translation*. These include, among others, *accurate, automated, audiovisual, computer-assisted, customized, domain-specific, effective, general, good, human, legal, literal, machine, manual, neural, professional, reliable, scientific, statistical, technical, universal.* 41 unique adjective lemmas were identified for *localization*, including *agile, automatic, component-based, continuous, corporate, deep, full, global, incremental, mature, medical, multilingual, professional, proper, pseudo-, scientific, strategic, systematic, technical, true.* Compared to *translation*, the adjectival profile of *localization* is narrower and shows a stronger orientation toward organizational, strategic, and process-management concerns, possibly also reflecting the editorial focus of the corpus and the perspective of language service providers.

Comparison of the two adjectival inventories reveals 18 shared adjective lemmas, which modify both *translation* and *localization*: *accurate, automated / automatic, audiovisual, continuous, effective, full, global, human, medical, professional, strategic, systematic, technical, true, multilingual, proper.* Nearly half of the adjectival profile of *localization* is shared with *translation*, while the shared adjectives constitute approximately one quarter of the broader adjectival space of *translation*.

The shared adjectival space clusters around quality-oriented adjectives: *professional, accurate, reliable, effective* which indicate that both concepts are evaluated against the same quality standards. Shared items such as *automated, continuous, systematic* frame both *translation* and *localization* as organized, repeatable workflows, reinforcing the view that *localization* is frequently conceptualized as a *translation*-centered process. Adjectives such as *human, technical, audiovisual, medical* show that *localization* inherits the same technological and domain distinctions traditionally associated with *translation*.

Despite substantial overlap, each term exhibits preferred adjectival domains: *translation* more frequently attracts linguistic-precision adjectives (e.g. *literal, faithful, idiomatic*), reflecting its traditional anchoring in linguistic theory and textual fidelity; *localization* more often co-occurs with organizational and technical adjectives (e.g. *corporate, mature, cross-functional, data-driven*), highlighting its framing as a broader operational and managerial construct. These differences point to functional specialization rather than conceptual opposition. The adjectival evidence provides strong corpus-based support for partial and asymmetric functional synonymy between *translation* and *localization*. While *translation* displays a broader and more heterogeneous adjectival profile, *localization* systematically draws on the same core evaluative, operational, and technical vocabulary. The high overlap relative to *localization* (43.9%) demonstrates that *localization* is largely framed through adjectival categories traditionally associated with *translation*, with differentiation emerging primarily at the level of scope, organizational framing, and strategic orientation, rather than core function.

In specialized and industry discourse, functional synonymy rarely arises from strict semantic identity. Instead, it emerges through contextual convergence, whereby different terms are mobilized to describe largely overlapping processes, practices, or professional roles, depending on disciplinary tradition, technological framing, or stakeholder perspective. This perspective is particularly productive when examining the relationship between *translation* and *localization*. Industry discourse frequently deploys the two terms interchangeably or in tightly coordinated constructions. Corpus evidence from professional publications demonstrates a strong tendency to conjoin the terms in coordinated structures such as *translation and localization*, especially in references to services, workflows, technologies, and professional identities. In such

contexts, the pairing does not signal conceptual opposition but rather reinforces a shared functional domain.

As a first diagnostic for functional synonymy, coordinated constructions were extracted. Coordination indicates that two terms are treated as conceptually compatible and operationally adjacent rather than mutually exclusive. CQL query: [lemma="translation"] [word="and|&"] [lemma="localisation|localization"] retrieved instances where the two terms are explicitly paired, typically in references to services, companies, workflows, tools, or industry events. The high frequency and stability of this pattern across the corpus confirm that *translation* and *localization* are routinely framed as part of a shared professional domain rather than as competing concepts.

The CQL query [lemma="translation"] [word="and|&"] [lemma="localization"] [tag="NN.*"] retrieving coordinated constructions of the form *translation and localization + noun* yielded 327 hits in the *MultiLingual* corpus (2,425,503 tokens), corresponding to 134.82 occurrences per million tokens and accounting for 0.01348% of the entire corpus. Although quantitatively marginal at the corpus level, the pattern is sufficiently recurrent to constitute a stable and analyzable discourse feature, enabling reliable observation of how *translation* and *localization* are jointly conceptualized in professional industry texts.

Figure 3. *Co-occurrence of* translation *and* localization *in* MultiLingual



18.12.25, 14:53 Concordance

SKETCH ENGINE

CQL [lemma="translation"] [word="and|&"] [lemma="localis… • 327

134.82 per million tokens • 0.013%

	Details	sentence
1	doc#0	<s>VSI Group www.vsi.tv TTC Language Services rebrands TTC Language Services Ltd., a **translation and localization company** , has changed its name and is now doing business as TTC wetranslate.</s>
2	doc#0	<s>River Linguistics, Inc. http://riverlinguistics.com TTC wetranslate www.ttcwetranslate.com suma redesigns website SpeakLatam moves office suma, a provider of **translation and localization services** in English, Latin American Spanish and Brazilian Portuguese, has redesigned its website as part of its first year anniversary celebration. suma www.sumalatam.com ExperTrans opens office in Myanmar ExperTrans, a provider of translation, interpreting, transcription, voiceover, subtitling and dubbing services, has opened an office in Yangon, Myanmar.</s>
3	doc#0	<s>Linguacle www.linguacle.com People Recent industry hires ■■ Netwire, a provider of language services, has hired José Messias de Oliveira and Bruno Nascimento to the technical depart- ment, Camila Souza to the quality assurance department and Daniela Guimarães de Paula to the marketing department. ■■ Localization Care, a **translation and localization agency** specializing in the languages of the CEE and FIGS regions, has hired Marta Fabin, a human resources management and marketing specialist. ■■ Diskusija UAB, a language service provider, has hired Ieva Barauskaite' as its sales manager and Indre' Panaviene' and Rasa Stalnionyte' as part of its project management team.</s>
4	doc#0	<s>The company is also celebrating its 20th anniversary. ■■ SpeakLatam, a **translation and localization service** provider with expertise in Latin American Spanish, has hired Luciana Frontoni to its project management team. ■■ Version internationale, a language service company focused on technical and medical translation, has hired Hélène Bajon as business development manager. ■■ Cloudwords, Inc., an online translation management platform, has hired Joseph Denzel as customer success manager. ■■ Across Systems GmbH, a manufacturer of corporate translation management systems, has hired Vanessa Hirthe as a supervisor for its business unit for language service providers and associated international network activities. ■■ Saudisoft Co. Ltd
5	doc#0	<s>Plunet GmbH www.plunet.com XTM International www.xtm-intl.com GFT Communicate GmbH www.gft-communicate.de Acrolinx GmbH www.acrolinx.com Alchemy Software Development Ltd. www.alchemysoftware.ie TextMaster partners with Transifex ACP Traductera, a.s., a **translation and localization company** , has added to its offering of computer-assisted translation tools.</s>
6	doc#0	<s>Globalization and Localization Association www.gala-global.org/conference The **Translation and Localization Conference** March 28-29, 2014, Warsaw, Poland.</s>
7	doc#0	<s>Nevertheless, the correlation between the automated MT quality metrics and Anna Rubina is responsible for ABBYY Language Services activities in Europe, promoting language technology solutions in the **translation and localization industry** .</s>
8	doc#0	<s>An open XML standard for the exchange of translation memory data created by computer-aided **translation and localization tools** . translation management system (TMS).</s>
9	doc#0	<s>A leading **translation and localization provider** , the company specializes in software localization and technical translation (IT, telecommunications, medical, automotive, engineering, marketing, financial, EU).</s>

https://app.sketchengine.eu/#concordance?corpname=user%2Fkaterinabond%2Fmultilingual_2014_2024&tab=advanced&queryselector=cql&attrs=word&viewmode=sen&attr_allpos=kw&linenumbers=1&refs_up=0&shorten_refs=1&g…

The analysis of nouns occurring immediately after the coordinated construction *translation* and *localization* yielded a total of 118 noun tokens. The most frequent nouns are *service(s)* (41 tokens; 34.7%), followed by organization-related nouns such as *company, firm, and agency* (29 tokens; 24.6%), and industry (18 tokens; 15.3%). The noun provider occurs 12 times (10.2%), further contributing to the organizational profile of the construction.

Process-related nouns, including *projects*, *process*, and *workflow*, account for 13 tokens (11.0%). Nouns referring to human or internal organizational units (*team*, *department*) are comparatively infrequent, with 5 occurrences (4.2%). All remaining nouns show very low individual frequencies (two tokens or fewer).

7 Conclusion

This study set out to examine how *localization* is defined and how its relationship with *translation* is conceptualized in professional industry discourse, using a corpus-based analysis of *MultiLingual* magazine (2014–2024). The findings demonstrate that, despite long-standing theoretical debates and prescriptive distinctions in academic literature, industry discourse exhibits a high degree of conceptual overlap and functional proximity between the two terms.

The analysis of explicit definitional frames shows that *localization* is most frequently conceptualized as a process, typically involving *translation*, adaptation, and alignment with market-specific requirements. At the same time, a smaller but consistent set of definitions frames *localization* as a service-oriented and strategic business function, indicating a shift from purely operational descriptions toward value-oriented perspectives. These definitional patterns confirm that *localization* is not conceptualized independently of *translation*, but rather consistently incorporates it as a core component.

Corpus-based evidence from noun–noun collocation patterns further supports this observation. More than half of the noun collocational profile of *localization* overlaps with that of *translation*, with shared collocates clustering around processes, services, industry, technology, management, and quality. This overlap indicates that both activities are embedded in the same operational, technological, and organizational environment. Differences in collocational preferences point to variation in scope and framing rather than to categorical separation.

Adjectival modification patterns reveal a similar tendency. While *translation* displays a broader and more heterogeneous adjectival profile, *localization* systematically draws on the same core evaluative and operational adjectives, particularly those related to quality, workflow organization, and technical domains. The observed asymmetry suggests functional specialization rather than conceptual opposition.

Coordinated constructions of the form *translation and localization + noun* provide an additional diagnostic for examining how professional actors conceptualize the relationship between the two activities. Although quantitatively marginal within the corpus as a whole, this pattern is recurrent enough to reveal systematic tendencies in noun selection. The nouns following the coordination predominantly refer to services, organizations, and market actors, while process-related and human-role nouns occur less frequently. This distribution suggests that, in professional discourse, the pairing *translation and localization* is most often used to characterize service offerings, organizational profiles, and industry structures rather than to signal functional differentiation.

This tendency can be related to the role of language service companies as the primary producers of the discourse represented in *MultiLingual*. Such companies are typically responsible for linguistic stages of *localization* – most notably translation, adaptation, quality assurance, and project coordination – while being less directly involved in downstream technical implementation or product engineering. As a result, *localization* is frequently framed in relation to *translation* as part of a shared service offering, rather than as a fully autonomous end-to-end process.

Taken together, the results support the conclusion that, in industry discourse, *translation* and *localization* function as partially and asymmetrically synonymous terms. *Localization* is typically framed as a translation-centered practice with an expanded organizational and strategic scope, rather than as an independent ontological category. The study demonstrates the value of corpus-based, usage-oriented approaches for clarifying contested terminological relationships and underscores the importance of grounding theoretical distinctions in empirical evidence from professional practice.

Bondarenko, Kateryna and Bondarenko, Oleksandr. 2026. How language industry defines localization: a corpus-based study. In: L10N Journal. 1(5), pp. 24-38.

Bibliography

Achkasov, Andrei V. 2016. If the Mountain Won't Come... Translation Studies Meets Localization. In: Journal of Siberian Federal University. Humanities & Social Sciences. 9(3): pp. 568-578. https://doi.org/10.17516/1997-1370-2016-9-3-568-578.

Chesterman, Andrew. 2009. The Name and Nature of Translator Studies. In: Hermes – Journal of Language and Communication in Business. 22(42): pp. 13-22.

Cockrell, Jordan. 2024. What Is Localization and Why Is It Important for Your Business? https://www.rws.com/blog/what-is-localization-why-it-is-important/. Accessed on: 22 July 2026.

Dam, Helle V. and Zethsen, Karen Korning. 2024. Professionals' Views on the Concepts of Translation: The Challenge of Categorisation. In: The Translator. 30(3): pp. 388-406.

DePalma, Donald. 2021. Augmenting Human Translator Performance. https://insights.csa-research.com/aim/en/reports/305013266. Accessed on: 22 July 2026.

Esselink, Bert. 1998. A Practical Guide to Software Localization. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Fernández-Silva, Sabela, Freixa, Judit and Cabré, M. Teresa. 2012. A Cognitive Approach to Synonymy in Translation. In: Brdar, Mario, Raffaelli, Ida and Žic Fuchs, Milena (eds.). 2012. Cognitive Linguistics between Universality and Variation. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. pp. 189-212.

Floros, Georgios and Charalampidou, Parthena. 2019. Website Localization: Asymmetries and Terminological Challenges. In: The Journal of Internationalization and Localization. 6(2): pp. 108-130.

Hatim, Basil. 2009. Translating text in context. In: The Routledge companion to translation studies. New York/London: Routledge. p. 36-53.

Jiménez-Crespo, Miguel A. 2016. What Is (Not) Web Localization in Translation Studies: A Prototype Approach. In: The Journal of Internationalization and Localization. 3(1): pp. 38-60.

Jiménez-Crespo, Miguel A. 2024. Localization in Translation. Abingdon and New York: Routledge.

Kabát, Marián and Koscelníková, Mária. 2022. Localization and Its Place in Translation Studies. In: L10N Journal. 1(1): pp. 4-26.

Kassawat, Madiha. 2021. Translation and Localization: Frequent Arguments through Asymmetric Binoculars. In: transLogos Translation Studies Journal. 4(2): pp. 27-44.

Kilgarriff, Adam et al. 2014. The Sketch Engine: Ten Years On. In: Lexicography. 1(1): pp. 7-36.

Pearson, Jennifer. 1998. Retrieval of Formal and Semi-Formal Defining Expositives. In: Terms in Context. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. pp. 135-167.

Pym, Anthony. 2004. Localization from the Perspective of Translation Studies: Overlaps in the Digital Divide.https://www.researchgate.net/publication/250363090_Localization_from_the_Perspective_of_Translation_Studies_Overlaps_in_the_Digital_Divide. Accessed on: 22 July 2022.

Temmerman, Rita. 2000. Towards New Ways of Terminology Description: The Sociocognitive Approach. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Vintar, Špela and Grčić Simeunović, Larisa. 2017. Definition Frames as Language-Dependent Models of Knowledge Transfer. In: Fachsprache – Journal of Professional and Scientific Communication. 39(1-2): pp. 43-58.

Zethsen, Karen Korning. 2007. Beyond Translation Proper – Extending the Field of Translation Studies. In: TTR. 20(1): pp. 281-308.