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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# On the Lexical Field related to Human Disabilities and its English<>Spanish Renderings: A Matter of Social Inclusion

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## ABSTRACT

These days, there is an increasing trend towards the use of inclusive terminology in all the fields (religion, politics, genre studies, psychology), and this state of affairs also occurs when dealing with social inclusion terminology. This matter becomes complicated when we receive a professional translation brief from a genderless source language (English) that must be rendered into a gendered language (Spanish). For this reason, we have carried out research where we have selected a list of terms related to disability in English language, and in Spanish language. After an accurate selection of the most reliable lexicographic resources, we looked for the abovementioned corpus' definitions within these resources. Additionally, we provided a taxonomy for the level of inclusion of each term from our bilingual corpus. The research findings unveil that we can provide an inclusive translation for the research corpus, in order to cope with our current society's requirements.

## KEYWORDS

Disability, social inclusion, translation, English, Spanish.

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## 1. Introduction

Nowadays, in order to enhance the respect towards each individual feelings, features, and traits, society is searching for tolerance, respect, and empathy with human beings in every single field, in an attempt to struggle against the anti-DEI (against Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion). And is social inclusion ("inclusión" in Spanish), and inclusion in translation renderings) the issue we will focus on in this research paper.

Let us now move to the different meanings and interpretations of the source term "inclusion" and the target term "inclusión". Accordingly, we will display the most significant definitions of both terms provided by the most reliable English-language and Spanish-language resources and institutions.

As far as English language is concerned, *Cambridge Dictionary* (2025) offers us the following formulation:

the act of including someone or something as part of a group, list, etc., or a person or thing that is included:

Inclusion in all patients gave informed consent before inclusion in the study.

She is being considered for inclusion in the Olympic team.

Inclusion of what makes the book so interesting is its inclusion of multiple viewpoints.

Two last-minute inclusions are Jim and Ahmed.

[ U ] education, social science, specialized

the idea that everyone should be able to use the same facilities, take part in the same activities, and enjoy the same experiences, including people who have a disability or other disadvantage:

The school has a strong culture of inclusion of students with special needs.

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Within this explanation (in the second entry), “disability” and “disadvantage” are both pointed out, nevertheless, we still need a wider spectrum. Consequently, we researched within the National Cancer Institute website (2025), which provides us with a global entry for “inclusion”:

Being part of something. Can also refer to creating an environment that encourages a person or group to feel like they belong and are supported, respected, and valued. Inclusion brings people with different racial, ethnic, cultural, and social backgrounds and experiences together in a safe, positive, and caring environment.

In parallel, if we look at the dictionary definition provided by the dictionary of the official Spanish language institution called Real Academia Española de la lengua (RAE), we come up with the following definition of “inclusión”:

Del lat. inclusio, -ōnis.

f. Acción y efecto de incluir.

Sin.:

introducción, inserción, incorporación, instalación, penetración, colocación, publicación.

Ant.:

exclusión.

f. p. us. Conexión o amistad de alguien con otra persona.

Although RAE does not offer a sharp definition according to our research purposes, there are additional institutions that offer more precise explanations for the term. Hence, we also researched the Spanish social group for disabled people ONCE in order to look for a more specific development of the term “inclusion”:

La inclusión es una forma de vida, es la actitud que permite integrar a todos los individuos como iguales dentro de una sociedad, en la que pueden participar y contribuir. Ser ‘parte de’ en igualdad de condiciones, sin importar las diferencias o características personales y disfrutar del mismo acceso a los recursos y servicios, eso es inclusión.

As we have seen, inclusion is a daily topic within today’s world. Consequently, we will summarise the legislation adopted in order to implement a list of measures so as to identify the need by disabled persons as well as to ensure and foster their rights, several acts and rules have been passed, both at domestic and international settings.

As far as UK and US are concerned, we would like to highlight the most outstanding laws and rules. In the UK, the Equality Act 2010 is the most significant piece of legislation protecting disabled people from (indirect and direct) discrimination, victimization and harassment, at the same time promoting disability inclusion. Since it simplifies over 115 previous acts, the main areas covered are education, employment, facilities and services, premises, and public functions, to quote some. Among other, this Act was preceded by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

In the U.S., the primary law addressing disability inclusion is ADA (the Americans with Disabilities Act, signed into law in 1990, and amended in 2008). This piece of legislation fosters the access for disabled human beings to every single area. Accordingly, it prohibits disability-based discrimination in diverse areas like public accommodations, transportation, employment, and state and local government services. As in the case of the (UK) Equality Act 2010, this Act has been preceded by several acts and laws, being the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 the most relevant one, since it fosters non-discrimination, especially within working settings.

As far as Spain is concerned, there are several acts and laws also worth mentioning, especially the Ley General de derechos de las personas con discapacidad y de su inclusión social (passed in 2013, it settles the rights of disabled human beings, promoting their inclusion into society), as well as the Ley 8/2021, aimed at helping disabled persons in order to support and foster their legal capacity. Additionally, the Código del Derecho de la Discapacidad is worth mentioning, since it entails several rules governing disabled persons’ rights.

Disabled persons’ inclusion has also been ruled international. Actually, the EU is a party to CRPD (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006). In line with the abovementioned CRPD, the EU is committed to providing inclusive humanitarian aid, by making humanitarian aid inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities.

Subsequently, the Bridge CRPD-SDG Training initiative was initiated as an ambitious project to implement international development and human rights into the lives of disabled human beings. It was established in 2015 by International Disability Alliance (IDA) and the International Disability and Development Consortium, so far trainings have reached since then over 500 people from 103 countries, generating agency and knowledge, and an extraordinary multiplying effect in countless communities around the world. (IDA, 2025)

At a later stage, EU members have launched the World Humanitarian Summit's Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action (2016), fostering meaningful implementation of the 4 must-do actions identified by then IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action (2019), namely:

- promote meaningful participation of persons with disabilities and their organisations
- remove barriers
- empower persons with disabilities
- disaggregate data for monitoring inclusion.

In the same vein, the EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations Department released in 2019 operational guidelines on disability inclusion. Their aim is to ensure that the rights and needs of disabled human beings are included in all projects involving EU humanitarian aid, by creating and fostering barriers' removal, preventing meaningful access as well as full and effective participation of disabled people in humanitarian assistance. The main goal is to lead to stronger, more accessible and secure services as well as protection for disabled people (as right-holders) in humanitarian operations.

Later on, in 2021, the EU released a European Disability Strategy, committed to ensuring that the needs of disabled people are correctly satisfied in EU external action by cooperating with civil society, and supporting capacity building. Simultaneously, the Humanitarian Aid Communication introduced provisions for the inclusion of people with disabilities in humanitarian assistance and protection.

In order to foster these kinds of inclusive actions, the Global Disability Summit (GDS) is held every 3 years, aimed at disability-inclusive development cooperation and humanitarian action. The third edition of GDS has taken place in April 2025, co-hosted by the international disability Alliance (IDA), Jordan, and Germany. As a result of the Summit, the Amman-Berlin Declaration, introduces relevant commitments for inclusive development cooperation and humanitarian action.

As the European Commission poses on their own website, EU took an active part in the summit and made a set of commitments on disability-inclusive humanitarian aid and civil protection, as quoted below,

To continue taking into account the specific needs of persons with disabilities and to mainstream disability inclusion in humanitarian operations, from design to reporting;  
to pursue the work on intersectionality for stronger equality and inclusion in humanitarian aid;  
to advocate for disability inclusion in humanitarian aid, raise this topic with strategic partners, and promote equitable partnerships with Organisations of Persons with Disabilities;  
to continue strengthening accessibility and inclusivity in EU Civil Protection activities;  
to raise awareness and promote a disability-inclusive approach through the Union Civil Protection Mechanism;  
through the Union Preparedness Strategy, to take a whole-of-society approach, including vulnerable groups.  
The EU is a member of the Global Action on Disability Network (GLAD), a coordination body of donors and agencies, public and private foundations, key coalitions of the disability movement with a common interest in achieving inclusive international development and humanitarian action. In 2023, the EU organised the annual GLAD network meeting in Brussels.  
[[https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/humanitarian-aid/disability-inclusion\\_en](https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/humanitarian-aid/disability-inclusion_en)]

### **1.1 Literature Review**

So far, we have summarized the most pertinent (domestic and international) acts, rules, and initiatives concerning disabled persons' rights and inclusion. Hence, we will now continue by analysing the most prevalent academic contributions in the field of inclusion and its translation in the last decade.

-De Marco (2006) has researched the issue of gender-inclusive translations within the field of audiovisual translation.

-Von Flotow and Josephy-Hernández (2018) have enquired into the role of gender inclusion in the research of translated audiovisual products.

-Botha (2021) has researched the possible intersections between literary translation and social transformation in South Africa (concerning symbolic exclusion among socioeconomic inequalities).

-Expósito and Rodríguez (2023) have coordinated a volume enhancing good practice of inclusive language for writing and translating purposes.

-Bolaños and Oaknin (2024), by means of translation teaching exercises, have revisited how translation and languages are instructed with a significant emphasis on EDI (equality, diversity and inclusion).

-Amy (2024) has investigated translation as queer practice, arguing that translation can be interpreted as a queer (and inclusive) method for both reading poetry and de-gendering feminist poetic language.

-Díaz (2024), within literary French-Spanish translation settings, has analysed how a focus on gender equality can also be performed by synergising French literature (*Les Liaisons Dangereuses*) and its dubbed cinematographic adaptation, in the context of EDI teaching methodology.

-Zayyanu and Ahmed (2024) have examined the multifaceted impacts of IA-driven translation systems on the transfer of inclusion and equity.

-Leone, Li destri and Picone (2025) have revealed both the power relations and the level of inclusion, equality and diversity under the EDI translation process through a single-case study.

-Todorova (2025) analyses how Romani translation and interpreting services provide us with a tool for enhancing social justice and inclusion.

So far, only a few contributions have unveiled the intricacies of translation and disability inclusion, such as the ones carried out by Hayvon and Roberts (2025) or Takyi et al. (2025).

-Hayvon and Roberts (2025), with a view to identify potential guiding principles and disability-inclusive knowledge translation, search for the meeting of inclusive criteria in translation trainees' renderings.

-Takyi et al. (2025) evaluate video-to-text African sign language (Afrisign) by using machine translation of Bible verses in order to assess hearing disability inclusion in the translation renderings.

As we have seen, only a few contributions have been devoted to the investigation of the intersections of inclusion disability and translation. Nevertheless, we could not find any piece of research devoted to the study of social inclusion translation within disability settings. Once we have reviewed the theoretical issues, we will now address the research corpus (Materials) and its methodology (Methods).

## 2. Materials and Methods

Since our main goal is related to the social inclusion of disability terms' English-Spanish translation, we searched for a list of terms referring to people with disabilities in English language. Equally, we looked for a list of Spanish language terms alluding to the same matter. Later on, we looked them up in several dictionaries' definitions for those terms, and, finally, we suggested our own English-Spanish renderings in order to provide the target readership with socially inclusive translations.

Thus, the English language corpus consists of the following terms:

- disabled
- dysfunctional
- handicapped
- impaired
- incapacitated
- impeded
- invalid.

Similarly, the Spanish language corpus is comprised of the following terms:

- discapacitado
- impedido
- imposibilitado
- lisiado
- minusválido
- tarado
- tullido.

Later on, we searched for the monolingual definitions provided by reliable lexicographic resources, as listed below,

-English language dictionary: *Merriam-Webster* (as quoted by its url, America's most trusted dictionary, by Encyclopaedia Britannica Company)

-Spanish language dictionary: *RAE* (as mentioned on its website, Diccionario de la Real Academia Española, the official and academic Spanish language dictionary).

Let us now move to our research findings (Results section).

### **3. Results**

Once we have presented the materials and methods applied to our research corpus, let us now unveil the definitions provided by the above dictionaries. We will first start by quoting the Spanish corpus definitions provided by *RAE* dictionary.

-Discapacitado, da: Del part. de discapacitar, por calco del ingl. disabled.

1. adj. Que posee una discapacidad. U. t. c. s.

-Impedido, da: Del part. de impedir.

1. adj. Que no puede usar alguno o algunos de sus miembros. U. t. c. s.

Sin.: imposibilitado, inválido, lisiado, tullido.

-Imposibilitado, da: Del part. de imposibilitar.

1. adj. Que ha perdido el movimiento del cuerpo o de alguno de sus miembros. U. t. c. s.

Sin.: impedido, inválido, lisiado, tullido.

-Lisiado, da: Del part. de lisiar.

1. adj. Dicho de una persona: Que tiene alguna lesión permanente, especialmente en las extremidades. U. t. c. s.

Sin.: impedido, inválido, imposibilitado, tullido.

2. adj. desus. Excesivamente aficionado a algo o deseoso de conseguirlo.

-Minusválido, da: Del lat. minus 'menos' y válido.

1. adj. discapacitado. U. t. c. s.

-Tarado, da: Del part. de tarar.

1. adj. Que padece tara física o psíquica.

2. adj. Tonto, bobo, alocado. U. t. c. s.

Sin.: tonto, bobo, estúpido, torpe, alocado.

-Tullido, da: Del part. de tullir.

1. adj. Que ha perdido el movimiento del cuerpo o de alguno de sus miembros. U. t. c. s.

Sin.: lisiado, impedido, imposibilitado, inválido, huilo.

Concerning the English-language definitions, *Merriam-Webster* offered the following explanations for our research corpus.

-Disabled:

adjective

dis-'ā-bəld

as in impaired

deprived of the power to perform one or more natural bodily activities

the disabled man was unable to climb the stairs without help

-Dysfunctional:

adjective

dys-function-al (,)dis-'fəŋ(k)-sh(ə-)nəl

: characterized by or exhibiting dysfunction: such as

a

: not functioning properly : marked by impaired or abnormal functioning

With 180,000 employees and a \$43 billion budget, the department is a collage of 22 distinct government agencies drawn from different corners of the federal organization chart and glued together into a single, largely dysfunctional unit.—Paul C. Light

This form of anemia develops because the bone marrow is not producing new cells rapidly enough to replace old cells that have become destroyed or otherwise dysfunctional.—Tom Ewing

This led to a dysfunctional credit market that in important respects soon turned non-functional.—Warren E. Buffett

b

: characterized by abnormal or unhealthy interpersonal behavior or interaction

dysfunctional relationships

As with any dysfunctional family, it may take an outsider to get a clear picture of the situation.—Chris Mooney

-Handicapped:

verb

past tense of handicap

as in hampered

to create difficulty for the work or activity of

the baseball player's small size did not handicap him in the least

adjective

as in hindered

-Impaired:

adjective

im-'perd

Definition of impaired

as in drunk

being under the influence of alcohol driving while impaired is against the law

as in disabled

deprived of the power to perform one or more natural bodily activities special devices for sight-impaired visitors

-Impeded:

verb

past tense of impede

as in hampered

to create difficulty for the work or activity of

the construction work impeded the smooth running of the office for several months

adjective

as in hindered

-Incapacitated:

verb

past tense of incapacitate

as in paralyzed

to render powerless, ineffective, or unable to move

the malfunctioning of a single component can incapacitate the engine

-Incapacitated:

verb

past tense of incapacitate

as in paralyzed

to render powerless, ineffective, or unable to move

the malfunctioning of a single component can incapacitate the engine

-Invalid:

adjective

in-val-id (,)in-'va-ləd

Synonyms of invalid

: not valid:

a

: being without foundation or force in fact, truth, or law

an invalid assumption  
declared the will invalid  
b  
: logically inconsequent  
invalidly  
(,)in- 'və-ləd-lē  
adverb  
noun  
in-və-lid 'in-və-ləd  
British usually - ,lēd  
: one who is sickly or disabled  
verb  
in-və-lid 'in-və-ləd  
- ,lid,  
British usually - ,lēd,  
or 'in-və- 'lēd  
invalided; invaliding; invalids  
transitive verb

: to remove from active duty by reason of sickness or disability

: to make sickly or disabled

adjective (2)

in-və-lid 'in-və-ləd  
British usually - ,lēd

: affected by disease or disability : SICKLY

: of, relating to, or suited to one that is sick  
an invalid chair.

Accordingly, let us now display a table summarizing the most relevant definitions provided for each term.

<b>Discapacitado</b>	Que posee una discapacidad
<b>Impedido</b>	Que no puede usar alguno o algunos de sus miembros
<b>Imposibilitado</b>	Que ha perdido el movimiento del cuerpo o de alguno de sus miembros
<b>Lisiado</b>	Que tiene alguna lesión permanente, especialmente en las extremidades
<b>Minusválido</b>	Discapacitado
<b>Tarado</b>	Que padece tara física o psíquica
<b>Tullido</b>	Que ha perdido el movimiento del cuerpo o de alguno de sus miembros

<b>Disabled</b>	Deprived of the power to perform one or more natural bodily activities
<b>Dysfunctional</b>	Not functioning properly : marked by impaired or abnormal functioning
<b>Handicapped</b>	As in hampered
<b>Impaired</b>	As in disabled
<b>Impeded</b>	As in hampered
<b>Incapacitated</b>	As in paralyzed
<b>Invalid</b>	One who is sickly or disabled

#### 4. Conclusion

Once we have summarized our research results, let us now pose our comments and suggest inclusive translation alternatives. First, the table below will display our translation suggestions starting from the most inclusive terms and ending by quoting the least inclusive ones.

<b>The most inclusive terms (for people with disabilities)</b>	<p><b>Discapacitado:</b> would be the official term in Spanish language. According to the Spanish social group for disabled people (ONCE), the use "discapacitado/a".</p> <p>Similarly, <b>Disabled</b> would be the official term employed by English language institutions, such as DisAbility in the UK or the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD).</p>
<b>Intermediately inclusive terms (for people with disabilities)</b>	<p><b>Minusválido</b> is being increasingly replaced by <b>Discapacitado</b>. A similar issue happens with <b>Impedido</b> and <b>Imposibilitado</b>.</p> <p>In the English language we would include the terms <b>Handicapped</b>, <b>Impaired</b>, <b>Impeded</b>, and <b>Incapacitated</b>, since they are not that inclusive.</p>
<b>The least inclusive terms (for people with disabilities)</b>	<p><b>Lisiado</b>, <b>Tarado</b> and <b>Tullido</b> are no longer recommended in Spanish language, since they are pejorative terms.</p> <p>In parallel, <b>Invalid</b> and <b>Dysfunctional</b> would not be recommended at all in inclusive settings.</p>

Accordingly, we now may offer diverse (English<>Spanish) translation renderings of the most inclusive terms, as listed below, -"**Discapacitado/-a**" translated into English language:

- Disabled
- Person with X disability
- Human being with X impairment
- Individual with (kind of) aid (as in "hearing aids")
- (Person's Nationality name) person/human being/individual with disability.

-"**Disabled**" translated into Spanish language:

- Discapacitado/-a
- Persona con discapacidad X
- Ser humano con X limitación (quoting the required assistance)
- Individuo con (type of) ayuda/asistencia (as in "asistencia motora")
- Persona/Ser Humano/Individuo (Person's Nationality name) con discapacidad.

As we have unveiled, there are several inclusive, intermediately inclusive, and least inclusive terms in the linguistic pair under study (English and Spanish). In this regard, we have been able to gather a relevant list in both languages, then we classified them according to their inclusion level, and we then suggested English-Spanish translations for each of them, in order to satisfy the real needs of our society, where inclusion is a must, and diversity is a real issue.

Additionally, we have been able to show how a gendered language (the Spanish one) can become genderless if we make full use of paraphrasing strategies in those instances when the translation brief requires the translation rendering from a genderless language (the English one). To sum up, we feel we have provided the target readership with inclusive (English<>Spanish) translations not only from a social perspective, but also from a gender studies one.



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