

3.2.5. Language and Dialect

SNOMED CT is a multinational, multilingual terminology which enables the link between concepts and different linguistic representations. Hence, SNOMED CT has a built-in framework to manage different languages and dialects. Each concept, representing a clinical meaning, can be linked to descriptions, which express that particular meaning using different terms, languages or dialects. This means that descriptions can be added to SNOMED CT concepts and expressed in other languages than what is included in the [International Edition](#). Often these additional descriptions are used in a national [Extension](#) of SNOMED CT.

Consequently, one aspect of implementing and customizing SNOMED CT to meet specific user needs is to determine and specify preferences for the descriptions to be used, e.g. for display in an electronic health record or more generally, as preferences within a specific clinical domain or facility.

In the International Edition of SNOMED CT [language reference sets](#) are included which specifies the preferred and acceptable synonyms for each concept in both US english and GB english. However, language reference sets can also be developed and applied locally to specify what descriptions are preferred and acceptable in a given context. This means, that even within a single country, or a single hospital, different descriptions can be applied to meet the user preferences, even without relaxing the need for consistency and unambiguous concept definitions.

For more detailed use case examples, please refer to the following sections:

- [3.2.5.1. Indications of Acceptability of Descriptions](#)
- [3.2.5.2. Interface Terminology](#)