

## **THE INVESTIGATION OF TERMINOLOGY AND ITS SPECIFIC FEATURES**

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**Annotation.** This article deals with the problems of terms and terminology which studies linguistic, stylistic and other characteristic features of terms in Modern English. It also investigates different viewpoints of terms by scholars in the world linguistics.

**Key words:** terms, terminology, semantic features, field, sociolinguistics.

Sharply defined extensive semantic fields are found in terminological systems. Terminology constitutes the greatest part of every language vocabulary. It is also its most intensely developing part, it means that the class giving the largest number of new formations.

Terminology of a language consists of many systems of terms. We shall call a term any word or word-group used to name a notion characteristic of some special field of knowledge, industry or culture. The scope and content of the notion that a term serves to express are specified by definitions in literature on the subject. The word utterance, for instance, may be regarded as a term since Z. Harris, Ch. Fries and other representatives of descriptive linguistics attach to it the following definition: "An utterance is any stretch of talk by one person before and after which there is a silence."<sup>1</sup>

Many of the influential works on linguistics that appear in the last five years devote much attention to the problems of sociolinguistics. Sociolinguistics may be roughly defined as the study of the influence produced upon language by various social factors. It is not difficult to understand that this influence is particularly strong in lexis. Now, terminology is precisely that part of lexis where this influence is not only of paramount importance, but where it is recognized so that terminological systems are purposefully controlled. Almost every system of special terminology is nowadays fixed and analyzed in glossaries approved by authorities, special commissions and eminent scholars.

A term is, in many respects a very peculiar type of word. An ideal term is monosemantic and when used within its own sphere, does not depend upon the micro-context, provided it is not expressed by a figurative variant of a polysemantic word. Its meaning remains constant until some new discovery or invention changes the referent of the notion. Polysemy, if it arises, is a drawback so that all the speakers and writers on special subjects are very careful to avoid it. Polysemy may be tolerated on one form only, namely if the same term has various meanings in different fields of science. The terms alphabet and word, for example have in mathematics a meaning very different from those accepted in linguistics.

Being mostly independent of the context a term can have no contextual meaning whatever. The only meaning possible is a denotational free meaning. A good term is intended to ensure a one-to-one correspondence between morphological arrangement and content. No emotional

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<sup>1</sup> Arnold I.V. The English Word. M. 1973.

coloring or evaluation is possible when the term is used within its proper sphere. As to connotation or stylistically coloring, they are superseded in terms by the connection with the other members of some particular terminological system and by the persistent associations with this system when the term is used out of its usual sphere.

A term can obtain a figurative or emotionally colored meaning only when taken out of its sphere and used in literary or colloquial speech. But in that case it ceases to be a term and its denotational meaning may also become very vague. It turns into an ordinary word. The adjective atomic used to describe the atomic structure of matter was until 1945 as emotionally neutral as words like quantum or parallelogram. But since that time it has assumed a new implication, so that the common phrase this atomic age, which taken literally has no meaning at all, is now used to denote an age of great scientific progress, but also holds connotations of ruthless menace and monstrous destruction.

Every branch and every school of science develop a special terminology adapted to their nature and methods. Its development represents an essential part of research work and is of paramount importance, because it can either help or hinder progress. The great physiologist, I.P.Pavlov, when studying the higher nervous activity, prohibited his colleagues and pupils to use such phrases as the dog thinks, the dog wants, the dog remembers; he believed that these words interfered with objective observation.

The appearance of structuralist schools of linguistics has completely changed linguistic terminology. A short list of some frequently used terms will serve to illustrate the point: allomorph, allophone; constituent, immediate constituent; distribution, complementary distribution, contrastive distribution; morph, morphophonemics, morphotactics.

Using the new terms in context one can say that phonologists seek to establish the system, pattern or structure of archiphonemes, phonemes and phonemic variants, based primarily on the principle of twofold choice or binary opposition. All the italicized words in the above sentence are terms. No wonder therefore that the intense development of linguistics made it imperative to systematize, standardize and check the definitions of linguistic terms now in current use. Such work on terminology standardization has been going on in almost all branches of science and engineering since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and linguists have taken an active part in it, while leaving their own terminology in a sad state of confusion. Now this work of systematization of linguistic terms is well under way. A considerable number of glossaries appeared in different countries, and a permanent UNESCO commission is planning to publish a series of glossaries for various linguistic schools. These efforts are of paramount importance, the present state of linguistic terminology being quite inadequate creating a good deal of ambiguity and misunderstanding.

The terminology of a branch of science is not simply a sum total of its terms but a definite system reflecting the system of its notions. Terminological systems may be regarded as intersecting sets because some terms belong simultaneously to several terminological systems. There is no harm in this if the meaning of the terms and their definitions remain constant, or if the respective branches of knowledge do not meet; where this is not so, much ambiguity can arise. The opposite phenomenon, that is meant, the synonymy of terms, is no less dangerous for very obvious reasons. Scholars are apt to suspect that their colleagues who use terms different from those favoured by themselves, are either talking nonsense or else are confused in their thinking. An interesting way out is offered by one of the most modern developments in world science, by cybernetics. It offers a single vocabulary and a single set of concepts suitable for representing the most diverse types of systems: in linguistics and biological aspects of communication no less than in various engineering professions. This is a paramount

importance, as it has been repeatedly found in science that the discovery of analogy or relation between two fields leads to each field helping the development of the other.

Such notions and terms as quantity of information, redundancy, entropy, feedback and many more are used in various disciplines. Today linguists, no less than other scholars, must know what is going on in other fields of learning and keep abreast of general progress.

Up till now we have been dealing with problems of linguistic terminology. These are only a part of the whole complex of the linguistic problems concerning terminology. It goes without saying that there are terms for all the different specialties. Their variety is very great. For example: amplitude (physics), antibiotic (medicine), arabesque (ballet), feedback (cybernetics), fission (chemistry), frame (cinema). Many of the terms that in the first period of their existence are known to a few specialists, later become used by wide circles of laymen. Some of these are comparatively recent origin. Here are a few of them, with the year of their first appearance given in brackets: stratosphere (1908), gene (1909), quantum (1910), vitamin (1912), isotope (1913), behaviorism (1914), penicillin (1929), cyclotron (1932), ionosphere (1932), radar (1942), transistor (1952), bionics (1960).

Special terms are the linguistic expressions in various disciplines, and they generally correspond to a single concept in the given discipline. Thus, they play an important role in the construction and development of disciplines. Since the 1980s, scholars have translated and compiled some introductory books on terminology, there is even a call for the establishment of a course on terminology in tertiary institutions. All this has shown the importance of terminology. After discussions on the nomenclature of scientific and technological concepts, the committee published their agreed linguistic expressions, terminology in special fields.

On the other hand, terminologists and institutions have established relations with the International Standardization Organization (ISO) and other institutes on terminological research to coordinate certain terms and promote scientific and technological exchange.

Compared with general translation, the translation of terms has its own features. As is known, terms and their translations that have been approved by the CNCTST can be directly used by the translator, but on those occasions when no authority has stipulated the standard translations for terms, translating these terms into foreign languages is not an easy task. In other words, "... translators have to work as terminologists when they are faced with decisions concerning the right choice among alternative expression forms or the creation of a neologism or a paraphrase". Thus, qualified translators/terminologists must acquire some basic knowledge about terminology. Furthermore, since a term's meaning is fixed in a specified field, translators must consider the referent of the term in the context on the one hand, while on the other hand, they should let target text (TT) readers pay attention to and accept the singular meaning of the term. For those translators, that is, those who translate the term without any authoritative reference, their trial must include the consideration of various aspects of the translation of terms. Only in this way can their translation of certain term provide an accurate concept for the TT readers.

This chapter focuses on the special terminology. Taking the English translation of terms, as an example, we will first discuss the basic terminological knowledge necessary for translators when translating a term and show the mismatch between existing translations. Then a corpus-based investigation is carried out to find the usage of the term and a similar concept (organic food) in English as well as the expressions green food and organic food in other languages, which would provide insight into the decision-making process of translators. On the basis of the above analyses, some tentative translations are given in the hope that this integrated approach in translating terms can be adopted by more translators.

First, the formation of terms is different from that of ordinary words. For ordinary words, the meaning is to be defined from an existing form, while terms require the form (nomenclature) to be found for the known referent. This is made obvious by the research methodology adopted by terminologists and lexicologists.

Second, terms demand the singularity of meaning and the unique reference of the referent. Ordinary words are often polysemous, and many words often have the same meaning, which shows the richness of linguistic expressions. In contrast, for a term, nomenclature and concept are uniquely matched. Although "there are cases when one term has many meanings or many terms actually refer to one concept, terminologists always try their best to avoid or even erase such phenomena instead of letting them grow uncontrollable as in the case of ordinary words". Such knowledge provides some methodological hints for translators. First, they can search sources from the same discipline in the target language (TL) for the equivalent term, which is the preferred translation strategy in translating the source language (SL) term with the same concept of the target language term. In many cases, however, translators cannot find the equivalent term in the TL due to the differences between source language and target language disciplinary traditions and development.

At this time, they should consider various aspects concerning the translation of the term. Only based on their thorough understanding of the concept of the source language term can they choose the appropriate expression in the target language, or even coin a new target language term corresponding to the concept of the source language term instead of being content with achieving a word-for-word correspondence. Furthermore, the translated term should look like a term itself, that is, conforming to the reading and cognitive habits of the target language readers so that they will accept it as a term with a unique referent.

For a translator, the first task in translating English terms into other languages is the attainment of an accurate understanding of the term in its context and identification of its referent. Only then can the translator begin to search for an accepted term. This requires that the translator know the referent of the similar equivalent terms, including their intention and extension, and then decide which one can be used as an equivalent term for the source language term. If there is a discrepancy, the translator should carry out research and choose the most suitable from several possible translations.

So, terms are words denoting notions of some special field of knowledge: medical terminology: antibiotic.

Generally terms are used in the language of science but with certain stylistic purpose they may be used in the language of emotive prose. For example, Arch. Cronin employed a lot of medical terms in some of his books. All this is done to make the narration bright, vivid and close to life. It is a well-known fact that terms are monosemantic and have not any contextual meaning. In most cases they have only a denotation free meaning.

In this article we tried to analyze about special terminology and tried to give some examples. Terms are words denoting various scientific and technical objects, phenomena, processes etc. Terms abound in special texts in the scientific style, in this case their function is merely that of communication. But when terms appear in the belles-lettres style, their function changes. Their main stylistic function is to create the true-to-life atmosphere. Terms are used to create a historical background of local colouring, elevation, humorous atmosphere of the narration.

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