DIFFERENT FACETS OF MARITIME TERMINOLOGY – FROM NORM TO USAGE

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Abstract: Until the first part of the twentieth century, the theory of terminology was highly descriptive and normative, having the Wüsterian desideratum of monosemy of terms at its core. Despite its shortcomings, the classical theory of terminology has had its benefits. The term-concept correspondence reduces ambiguity, improves specialized communication, facilitates the creation of conceptual hierarchies, and draws the cognitive structure of a specialized field, thus enabling the creation of taxonomies and the compilation of standardized terminologies. From this point on, the way the term was perceived changed significantly, reaching the modern theories of terminology from the '90s, which situated terms in context. Specialized languages were no longer totally dissociated from common language, while polysemy was detected transdisciplinarily, through the conceptual transfer from one discipline to another. With this in mind, the present paper aims at illustrating how these theories of terminology may reflect the many facets of Maritime Terminology.

Keywords: maritime terminology, internal terminology, external terminology, interdisciplinarity, maritime term.

The traditional theory of terminology and Maritime Terminology (MT)

The approach to terminology has long been onomasiological, with polysemy and synonymy being excluded or, in the worst case, considered accidental. In this model that considered monosemy and univocity as "virtues", terms had no contextual, co-textual or pragmatic value. (Desmet, 2007: 3) Therefore, from the perspective of Wüsterian terminology, terminological polysemy is considered a terminological anomaly, an "imperfection" which needs to be solved, as much as possible, by homonymy. (Béjoint, 1989: 406)

The traditional or internal approach to terminology is descriptive and normative-prescriptive. It proposes an ideal model of universal monosemy that does not allow any resemblance to common language because specialized communication must be precise, unambiguous, so as not to leave room for interpretations, and to achieve rigorous professional communication. According to this point of view, terminology is the study of notional systems that structure a specialized field; terminological research, in this case, aims at representing the conceptual field and establishing precise concepts. Among those who support this principle, we find Robert Dubuc, who considers that the purpose of terminology is to provide specific terms to an activity, by structuring them to facilitate use. (R. Dubuc, 1985: 6) Thus, terminology should be used in strictly specialized

communication, by those who work in a specific field and is represented by the lexicon used in specialized texts, for the circulation of scientific information.

Maritime Terminology (MT) corresponds to the lexical system that is connected to maritime navigation, and includes terms that designate: **a.** types of ships and craft - commercial, military and leisure (e.g. oil tanker, barge, dredger, frigate, etc.); **b.** parts of the ship (e.g. framework, bow, stern, keel, portside, etc.); elements related to rigging and sails (e.g. main mast, rope, halyard, etc.); **c.** functions on board ships (e.g. master, sailor, officer, cadet, etc.); manoeuvres and actions associated with the field of navigation (e.g. to anchor, to moor, to heave up, to let go); **d.** devices used for navigation (e.g. anemograph, binnacle, gyrocompass etc.); **e.** instruments and mechanisms (deck fittings, capstan, bollard, etc.); **f.** concepts related to sailing (e.g. knot, bowline, hook rope, etc.), **g.** navy armament and equipment (e.g. combat vessel, flotilla, torpedo, etc.); **h.** marine meteorology (e.g. breeze, cyclone, current, tide, etc.); **i.** marine geomorphology (e.g. iceberg, canal, ocean, etc.); j. port facilities (e.g. quay, wharf, warehouse, harbour, etc.). However, MT is not limited to the subcategories listed above. It also includes terms belonging to related fields, such as: shipbuilding, astronomy, mathematics, physics, fishing, trade, transport, telecommunications, port operation, etc.

Since it plays such an important role in supporting the maritime industry, Maritime Terminology has also manifested some prescriptive features, being the result of normalization, through international standardization bodies dealing with the regulation of maritime terms and phrases. According to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and its member countries, there has always been a compelling need to promote high level language skills for ship crews. Accordingly, the 1995 International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW 95) requires that seafarers be proficient users of Maritime English. In this regard, multiple projects and programmes have been implemented to promote language and terminological acquisition and to enhance the efficiency and quality of maritime services worldwide. (Ziarati, 2009; Schröder, 2002) To achieve this purpose, certain standards needed to be set in order to avoid language misuse and misunderstandings onboard, such as The International Safety Management (ISM) Code and IMO Standard Marine Communication Phrases (SMCP). These standards also for MT have been developed in the form of glossaries of terms and standard specific phrases for the use of maritime personnel.

The classical theory of terminology, as reflected in MT, has certainly had its benefits. It facilitates the creation of conceptual hierarchies and draws the cognitive structure of this specialized field. Moreover, a thorough term-concept correspondence improves specialized communication on board, and thus ensures safety by reducing ambiguity and communication failures.

External terminology

The way terminology was perceived changed significantly between 1930 and 1990. It started from the traditional viewpoint of internal terminology from the '30s until it reached the modern perspective of external terminology from the '90s.

External terminology, or terminology as a science, can be found in several new theories, where the linguistic aspect is no longer ignored. They bring forward an innovative approach to the term, which is henceforth situated in discourse, in the real linguistic and communicative context. This approach is semasiological and descriptive, giving up the strictly synchronic approach, with denominative variation and polysemy being finally accepted as natural phenomena. This theory of terminology has as fundamental principle the questioning of the Wüsterian postulate, according to which the term is monosemantic and monoreferential, and aims at the appropriate use of specialized meaning as used not only by the specialist but also by the ordinary speaker. (Bidu-Vrănceanu, 2007: 23) Here lies the fundamental distinction between the two main directions of terminological development: traditional or internal terminology, which addresses the specialists, and is governed by the ideal of semantic univocity and monoreferentiality of the term, and modern or external terminology, which addresses the non-specialists, who may use common language in relation to the specialized one.

The information explosion of the last decades has contributed to this phenomenon, which, through the development of mass media, has allowed scientific terminologies to share their terms with the general public and with each other. This phenomenon was described by F. Gaudin as "a democratization of knowledge", or "a socialization of knowledge". (Gaudin, 2003: 151) The same author goes beyond the strictly terminological sphere, proposing a sociological approach to terminology, without neglecting the historical side of a linguistic study of terminology. This approach favours the transition to interdisciplinary research.

On account of this, terminology is context dependent and is based on the analysis of widely circulated texts or of those found in textbooks. It is a terminology made by linguists for the non-specialist, with a pronounced descriptive character. The normative-prescriptive function, so important for the traditional theory of terminology, appears here only implicitly. Acknowledging the fact that terms may appear in various linguistic contexts, and that they may have variants that are often determined by context undermines the idealistic view that there is or that there should be only one name for a concept and vice versa.

In order to justify the different meanings of the same term, as they appear in various texts, it is generally accepted that a term can belong to several domains, where it will be defined differently. This division into separate vocabularies according to specific domains has become a necessary precondition for a terminological theory which, not long ago, excluded the natural existence of homonyms.

In her groundbreaking work of 1999, MT Cabré reconciles these two theoretical approaches: internal, which is “systematic and cognitive”, (Lerat, 1995: 61) and external, which is descriptive and less rigorous, claiming that they represent two perspectives on terminology: a normative one, relevant to the specialists in the field, who use terms to communicate scientific information, and a more flexible one, suitable to the non-specialists, who use the terms in real life communication. Therefore, the two facets of terminology do not exclude one another but are actually complementary.

Interdisciplinarity in Maritime Terminology

The modern period brings along great changes in the way the concept is perceived and in the creation of new concepts. This process is seen in its evolution. Concepts are no longer static since many sciences borrow concepts and terms from other sciences in what seems to be a universal linguistic network. This phenomenon can be attributed to interdisciplinarity, increased specialization and the acceleration of the process of science popularization. (Dury, 1999: 17-18)

Proponents of the external approach formulate the idea of the itinerant characteristic of linguistic signs, which are transferred from one community to another or between different communities formed within the same linguistic system. (Coşeriu, 1995: 57) Terminology should therefore be studied both from a synchronic and a diachronic perspective because concepts and terms evolve over time, just as they change their meaning depending on the context. The domains are also permeable to extra-linguistic influences - they can interfere with other domains, thus ensuring the migration of terms.[1]

The more advanced and modern a scientific field, the more popular its professional terminology is. The interest manifested by non-specialists in specialized terminologies is on the increase. In this way, terms which may or may not have undergone semantic changes can migrate either towards common language through a process called *determinologization*. The migration of terms from specialized terminologies into common language occurs on a regular basis, as a consequence of the *popularization of knowledge*, that is to say the growing interest of non-specialists in specialized information. This allows for a progressive "secularization of knowledge" which allows for alternative definitions of terms, along with the ensuing conceptual distinctions. (Bidu-Vrănceanu, 2000)

Within the linguistic system of MT, there is a constant back-and-forth movement between common language and MT, and between other specialized terminologies and MT. In this way, MT borrows and loans lexical items from/to common language and the scientific or technical terminologies of the spheres of activity with which it intersects.

For instance, the nouns *line* and *rope*, together with the phrasal verbs *let go* and *tie up*, which are deeply related to seamanship and the mooring and anchoring of ships, belong to common language and might seem ambiguous if the lexical domain is not mentioned. However, when found in phrases, compounds and collocations their specificity is clear (i.e. *fibre rope, wire rope towing line, log line, stern line*, *headline, breastline, let go an anchor, let go a line, tie up a ship, tie up a rope,* etc.).

In fact, recent studies show that polysemy, so controversial and sanctioned by lexicographic practice, has also left its mark on specialized languages, as a result of this lexical migration of terms.[2] This phenomenon triggers several semantic changes - it can

[1] In this regard, scientific fields were divided into "strong" sciences, that usually lend terms (i.e. mathematics, physics, chemistry, etc.) and "weak" sciences, which usually borrow terms.

[2] In order to solve the problems related to the ambiguity that could result from such a phenomenon, the term-lexeme vs. term-concept distinction is proposed. The term-lexeme is prone to conceptual-semantic and contextual

manifest itself in the simple "dilution" of the specialized meaning or in the addition of connotations. The highest degree of determinologisation is reached when semantic changes such as metaphor or metonymy occur, culminating in the assimilation of terms in common language. One cannot speak, however, of total determinologisation because, as A. Bidu-Vrănceanu observed, the semantic core of the terms is always preserved. [3] (Bidu-Vrănceanu, 2007: 39)

Take the term *bearing,* for example, which as a maritime term refers to "an angle formed by the direction of an object and a fixed reference point", by extension to common language, it designates "the way a person of stands, moves or behaves". The expression *to find/get one's bearings* indicates awareness of one's position relative to one's surroundings. Similarly, *adrift* as a maritime term refers to "a boat, a ship or any floating object that is not moored or secured", used metaphorically in common language, it denotes a person that has no clear purpose in life.

Furthermore, specialized terminologies also contain terms that primarily belong to other fields of knowledge, to such an extent that the vocabulary spheres of each socio-professional category of speakers intersect, partially overlapping in a process that ensures the success of communication. Thus, scientific and technical terminologies rarely correspond to the terminological ideal of monoreferentiality and semantic univocity of terms. In the case of migration of terms between different domains, the transfer or loan is based on 1) a conceptual analogy or 2) a methodological loan due to cross-disciplinary interaction. In the first case, we are dealing with a type of lexical creation related to polysemy. In the second case, the lexical loan or transfer takes place when various disciplines intervene in the research of the same object of study or when scientists, with double or multiple specializations, have a particular mobility between fields of study. (Toma, 2006, 393) In this case, a term can sometimes be reintroduced in the field of origin, so the original meaning is extended (intra-domain polysemy) or another term originating in another field is used (inter-domain polysemy).

This sort of semantic enrichment process was possible in MT due to its interrelationship with disciplines such as astronomy, mathematics, physics, electronics, telecommunications, followed by the development of technical and engineering sciences and the evolution of navigation respectively.[4] Since MT is a vast lexical domain, convergent to many other sciences, occupations and activities (i.e. fishing, trade, transport, telecommunications, etc.) it provides a rich store of terms compiled from various terminologies, however without losing its specificity. The technological evolution of the twentieth century led to further borrowings from other scientific and technical fields, such as: electromechanics, electronics, informatics, etc. New

variations and is therefore marked by polysemy, while the term-concept is well anchored in a specific field, and cannot be touched by polysemy.

[3] Bidu-Vrănceanu acknowledges the interference of scientific languages and their extension to common language. In this sense, the author provides the example of medical terms that appear in political and economic language. (Bidu-Vrănceanu, 1995: 43-44)

[4] Speaking of this phenomenon, Bidu-Vrănceanu observes that, at times, scientific languages may mix or overlap, while extending to common language. In this sense, the author provides the example of medical terms that appear in political and economic language. (Bidu-Vrănceanu, 1995: 43-44)

mechanisms and high precision instruments have constantly appeared on board ships, while considerably modifying the aspect of MT. Other specialized lexical systems clearly marked in the structure of MT are: economics (*bill of lading, concession, quota, freight, fixed costs, charter party, insurance*), physics (*acceleration, cavitation, displacement, force, deflector, isoba*r, etc.); astronomy (*aphelion, perihelion, astrograph, co-latitude, ephemeris, nadir, zenith,* etc.), geology and geography (*guyot, basin, doldrums, gulf, reef,* etc.), meteorology (*isobar, hurricane,* etc.), mathematics or geometry (*angle, arc, circle, diameter*, etc.), biology (*valve, flare* etc.), etc.

The semantic distinctions for some of these lexical items can be so profound that polysemy (with the preservation of semantic links between the various meanings and etymologically related meanings) becomes homonymy (with totally semantically and etymologically unrelated meanings). (Pană-Dindelegan, 1997, 11) The term *displacement* clearly illustrates this principle. Starting from the denotation "the act of forcing somebody/something away from their home or position" or "the enforced departure of people from their homes, typically because of war, persecution, or natural disaster", *displacement* is also used in physics with different meanings to indicate "the volume or weight of fluid displaced by a submerged body", but also "the component of an electric field due to free separated charges, regardless of any polarizing effects". The same term in MT is used with reference to a ship's size, while in psychoanalysis it denotes the unconscious transfer of an intense emotion from one object to another.[5]

Conclusion

MT is undoubtedly marked by monoreferentiality and univocity, aspects without which it would lose its specificity. However, the Wüsterian desideratum of monosemy of maritime terms should be presented less categorically because polysemy sometimes occurs transdisciplinarily, through the conceptual transfer from one discipline to another, which may give rise to semantic changes stimulating ambiguity. Together with the highly specialized terms referring to ships and maritime navigation, MT also comprises lexical items which exceed these domain boundaries or simply belong to common language. There are clear areas of interference between other specialized terminologies and MT, the latter functioning as a complex and semi-autonomous semiotic system, based on elements derived from the scientific style of literary language. Therefore, both the traditional and the modern facets of terminology can be found in MT in the form of two complementary perspectives of terminological analysis: a normative one - directing terms to fix and communicate scientific information, and a more flexible one – using terms in real-life communication.

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[5] See https://www.lexico.com/definition/displacement

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