ASp
la revue du GERAS

75 | 2019
Varia

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Aurélie Picton, *Multiple Perspectives on Terminological
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Édition électronique

URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/asp/5683>
DOI : 10.4000/asp.5683
ISSN : 2108-6354

Éditeur

Groupe d'étude et de recherche en anglais de spécialité

Édition imprimée

Date de publication : 2 mars 2019
Pagination : 116-121
ISSN : 1246-8185

Référence électronique

Rita Temmerman, « Patrick Drouin, Aline Francœur, John Humbley, Aurélie Picton, *Multiple Perspectives on Terminological Variation* », *ASp* [En ligne], 75 | 2019, mis en ligne le 02 mars 2019, consulté le 02 novembre 2020. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/asp/5683> ; DOI : <https://doi.org/10.4000/asp.5683>

Ce document a été généré automatiquement le 2 novembre 2020.

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Drouin, Patrick, Aline Francœur, John Humbley & Aurélie Picton. 2017. *Multiple Perspectives on Terminological Variation*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 260 pp. ISBN 978-9-0272-2342-5.

- 1 The aim of this volume is to bring together recent work by leading researchers on variation in terminology. As the editors explain in their introduction, in the early days of terminology studies (i.e. from the mid-twentieth century until the 1980s), variation was believed to be threatening for clear reasoning and unambiguous communication. Therefore, many terminologists were convinced that they needed to try and do away with variation in the – often multilingual – resources on technical subjects they were creating. They were convinced that univocity (i.e. one term for one clearly delineated concept) was to be aimed at. This was how terminology became a major tool in the methodology of industrial standardisation. Technical committees of specialists were supposed to agree on the preferred term for each concept. Variation was discussed, but with the view to restricting it as much as possible. Emphasis was placed on understanding relations between concepts and on how to give a name to these concepts. The terminologists of this period were subject specialist, not trained linguists, nor communication specialists, philosophers of science, or historians of knowledge. In recent decades, the emphasis shifted to descriptive studies of terminology in authentic communicative situations in which variation could actually be observed.
- 2 The volume is made up of nine chapters spread across three thematic sections: they are arranged according to complementary points of view to stimulate thought on the subject of variation as it is approached today, that is (1) the social dimension of variation, (2) tools and methods for studying variation and (3) semantics of variation.
- 3 The first theme includes three contributions dealing with variation across different categories of speakers. This reflects not only the expert/layperson dichotomy, but also other more original polarities such as the emotional dimension and the issue of diastatic variation, i.e. when terms are used outside the specialist field where they emerged.
- 4 **Anne Condamines** studies the recreational activity of fishing and she tries to identify how emotions are reflected in the discourse of those who practise the sport. She starts with the observation that anglers speaking French apparently infringe grammatical rules by turning the verb “to fish” into a transitive verb, and talking about “fishing a river”, rather than fishing in it. Using the web as a corpus, she tracks down this construction in French, English, Spanish and Italian, by identifying which texts were produced by specialists and which by non-specialists. It turns out that the specialists, with the exception of the Italians, demonstrate a strong preference for the transitive construction. A further study of other normally intransitive constructions using similar verbs but in other sports tends to confirm the trend.

- 5 **Valérie Delavigne** draws abundantly on the specifically French sociolinguistic frame of analysis to account for how terms vary diastatically, in particular when it comes to conveying specialised information to non-specialist audiences. The author analyses a varied corpus, consisting of one set of texts on nuclear safety, designed for the general population, another on explaining cancer to sufferers of the disease and their families, and a third, also on cancer, but taken from discussion forums where those directly affected take an active part. The corpus also contains various stages of drafting papers intended for a non-specialist audience, which turns out to be very useful in identifying those terms which fail to be transferred to a wider audience. Though the corpus lends itself to a multitude of treatments, it is exploited here from a purely lexical viewpoint. Using a variety of linguistic analyses, the author demonstrates that the terminological variation observed in the corpora is by no means arbitrary and indeed corresponds to clearly defined communication strategies, which in turn appear to be materialised linguistically along very different lines.
- 6 **Aurélie Picton** and **Pascaline Dury** point out that diastatic variation seems to be less often studied than other manifestations of the phenomenon, so they set about to rectify the situation by examining two subcorpora from the fields of nuclear medicine and higher education didactics. The “theoretical” subcorpus was relatively easy to find in both cases: research articles are easy to access and are a well-known quantity in terminology studies. The “practical” subcorpus proved more difficult to identify. Regarding nuclear medicine, the authors chose two French-language forums of electro-radiological manipulators. Concerning higher educational didactics, university websites for pedagogical advisors were considered. The analysis showed several marked tendencies. For example, on the French language forums of electro-radiological manipulators, many clippings were observed (*cardio* for *cardiologue*; *scinti* for *scintigraphie*; *labo chaud* for *laboratoire chaud*). This indicated that the practitioners showed they belonged to the group by using the right clipping for the right term. Unsurprisingly, phraseology proved to be a clear marker of diastatic variation, as was the case in the ways the practitioners administer the radiation. The terminology used was felt to belong to the same field, but certain layers were more frequently represented in one subcorpus than in others, and a few terms were very much marked as belonging to one subcorpus. In the case of higher education didactics, one of the most interesting findings was that the theoretical corpus presented the highest frequency of lexical variation, explained by the fact that the researchers would regularly discuss terminological problems and argue their case using these terms.
- 7 The second theme of this volume highlights different tools and methods for identifying, describing and managing term variation.
- 8 **Patrick Drouin** believes that using corpora can be an efficient way to track down variation in specialised fields. To prove his point, he builds a corpus out of sixteen car manufacturers’ French-language websites for France and for Canada – four million words for Canada, five million for France. Using a tool based on R language, he obtains subcorpora which can be used to measure specificity. He then uses Diatopix (functional in English, French and Spanish) to visualise the distribution of words, terms and expressions. Further pruning (e.g. toponyms and model names were eliminated) and further use of both frequency and specificity tests reveal that some terms are indeed specific to one language area, whereas others form combinations that appear to be typical of one country rather than another. Variation was also easily detected in

general vocabulary. It was felt significant that half of the varying terms were also found in compounds, as was the optional adherence to the recommendation of language-planning authorities. Therefore, by using relatively simple tools, with an appropriate methodology, the terminologist can explore resources which reflect the actual use much more reliably than by using introspection. Drouin's contribution sheds new light on how lexicographers and terminographers can be computer-assisted when describing diatopic variation, which is defined as variation across geographical areas. He points out that much work remains to be done to be able to mine corpora for more subtle cases of variation that are still undocumented in dictionaries. He performs experiments on a corpus built automatically from the websites of car manufacturers that have both a French and a Canadian site, and realises that further explorations are needed to work directly from the Internet instead of first building corpora from websites, then verifying the usage on the Internet.

- 9 The next contribution to the second theme starts from the observation that translators are major terminology users and that knowing how to deal with variation is a constant preoccupation for every translator. A translator analyses the unit of understanding based on how it is expressed in the source texts (i.e. the semantic perspective), how its meaning is developed through the use of cohesive ties (i.e. the textual perspective), and how it can be rendered in the target language (i.e. the contrastive perspective).
- 10 As term variants are a natural phenomenon in special languages, it is important for translators to know the different options that are available in source and target languages for expressing units of understanding and to know how these can be used (i.e. how they function) in specific communicative settings. **Koen Kerremans** argues that a translator needs to understand the reasons for the variation in the source text to be able to have a free hand at expressing the message in the target language, using whatever variation is necessary. He therefore designs a resource which will guide the translator to make the appropriate choices. Kerremans' database may be built from EU material in English (the source language), in French and in Dutch (the target languages), but it is semantically and contextually structured. In that respect, the database largely differs from term banks such as the *Interactive Terminology for Europe* (IATE) by offering a broader and more realistic account of lexical variation. The translation resource proposed is one of the outcomes of two comparative studies focusing on intra- and interlingual terminological variation in a trilingual parallel corpus and in the IATE terminology base. The questions addressed in this chapter concern (1) the method according to which this type of resource is developed, (2) the way the translation data in this resource are structured, and (3) the way these data could be exploited and visualised in a translation tool. Contrary to terminological approaches in which terms are linked to an independent level of meaning, intra- and interlingual variants are represented as a network of "meaning potentials" (page 101).
- 11 **Janine Pimentel**'s contribution specifically examines the description of variation in the context of producing lexicographical or terminographical resources. She gives a methodology which can be used on other corpora. Pimentel's study of specialised verbs is set within Fillmore's theory of Frame Semantics, and also based on the work by Marie-Claude L'Homme and Mercè Lorente, whose contributions are discussed in detail. The verbs she studies were taken from judgements made by the Supreme Courts or their equivalents of Canada, Portugal and Brazil. They are divided into specialised verbs and specialised uses of general language verbs. The study shows that some verbs evoke

frames that are specific to legal procedures, whereas other verbs are not. In the first case, frames group together specialised verbs and, in the second, they group together specialised uses of verbs. In both cases, some verbs raise decoding and encoding difficulties for translators. The hypothesis was that a methodology for the description of terms based on a theory that links linguistic semantics to encyclopaedic knowledge. The author suggests that Frame Semantics theory and methodology offer a reasonably language-independent apparatus (i.e. semantic frames) and could be suitable for identifying the equivalents of terms. Working with judgements from very different countries should make it possible to make generalisations on the behaviour of verbs in this textual genre. The study also aims at investigating if terms behave differently in European Portuguese and in Brazilian Portuguese, and if the equivalence degree between them and their English counterparts varies.

- 12 This study supports the conviction that term bases should provide users with the description of both types of verbs. In addition, the study aimed at assessing whether geographic variation played a role in the assignment of equivalents. If a given Portuguese term, as it is used in Europe, is a partial equivalent of an English term, the same term, as it is used in Brazil, is not necessarily a partial equivalent of the English term and may be a full functional equivalent of it. Given that the isomorphy between the legal terminology used in Europe and in Brazil is not constant, the results of this study argue against the full automatism of the process of assigning equivalents when geographic variants are involved.
- 13 The third theme of this volume questions the semantics of term variation through the topics of concept saturation, metaphor and multidimensionality.
- 14 **Judit Freixa** and **Sabela Fernández-Silva** have chosen to examine variation within the framework of saturation, which they define as a state of completeness, a state which they deny for concepts, which in their eyes are open-ended. Starting from an experientialist's viewpoint, they provide a literature review on the topic of term (or denominative) variation, where the form of the term changes on the one hand, and conceptual variation on the other, with, of course, relationships between the two. The authors examine the latter, considering the various parameters which determine conceptual variation. These in turn often turn out to be multifaceted: diachronic variation takes on different forms and functions according to the situation in which it occurs and to the timescale. Neological instability is thus seen not as a troublesome phase but a process in which various aspects of the new concept are effectively explored by the users. They also show how new terms can take on different forms in order to advance the argument that the researcher is making, bringing out the various aspects inherent in the concept. In the conclusion they consider further developments including experimental methods which could be used to gauge both denominative and concept variation.
- 15 This chapter explores the reasons why the substance of a concept is unlimited. Textual analysis shows that the number of terminological variants used to refer to a concept seems endless. The authors also observe how the same concept, without leaving any traces in different denominations, acquires a great range of nuances in the different contexts where it appears.
- 16 Variation in terminology is usually understood as the diverging use of terms within one language, but there are terms, especially those coined through a constitutive metaphor, whose conceptualisation differs from one language to another. To account for this type

of variation is the task that **Micaela Rossi** has set herself. To do so, she gives a critical analysis of the role that metaphor has played in language for special purposes, where it was long neglected, as it was held to be a source of ambiguity and variation. The metaphor she chooses for her study is in itself a varied one, namely “junk,” as a component of “junk bond,” “junk DNA” and “junk food” and how these terms are rendered in French and Italian. It is argued that different semantic features of junk are highlighted in each of these coinages, which explains why the images chosen in the two borrowing languages differ, or why a refusal to transpose the image occurs, thus leading to a direct loan from English and subsequently a loan word from English is preferred.

- 17 **Pilar León-Araúz** is in line with Freixa and Fernández-Silva’s stance that terminological variation is simply the reflection of the inherently dynamic nature of knowledge, expert knowledge in particular. It is incumbent upon the terminologist, therefore, to conceive ways of representing this dynamism and related term variation in a way that is the most beneficial for the user. The author investigates the challenges and solutions worked out in the context of two very different knowledge bases – one devoted to medicine, the other to coastal environment protection. In both cases the concept of multidimensionality proves to be a key to understanding the forces at work. Medical terms reflect the discoverer, the patient, the body part affected, the cause and many other features expressed directly or through metaphor or metonymy; they can take different forms according to the communicative situation (e.g. expert to layperson). A study of three pragmatically determined subcorpora (expert, didactic-encyclopaedic and semi-specialised) shows how certain features are given prominence in given situations but not in others. The knowledge bank hosting the coastal environment terminology, with its systematic specification of generic and partitive relations, reveals a huge difference in the hypernyms of many concepts. According to the context, the typical hypernym changes, which is a striking demonstration of how multidimensionality works.
- 18 This volume, edited by **Patrick Drouin, Aline Francœur, John Humbley and Aurélie Picton**, provides researchers interested in terminological variation with a collection of studies that take on a wide range of research objects. The volume is also methodologically coherent thanks to the recurrent use of corpus linguistics and discourse analysis.
- 19 The collection of studies in this volume convincingly shows that variation proves to be a touchstone for the understanding of the major issues of terminology research today: it is the manifestation of discourse which is transformed by the terminologist into a coherent tool that can be used in various situations. Terminology theory is enriched by direct input from general linguistics – uniformly based on corpus evidence, semantics (in particular frame semantics), sociolinguistics, cognitive linguistics, diachronic linguistics, the linguistics of pragmatics and popularisation. Moreover, the chapters draw on research in terminology carried out in different language communities – Spanish, French, Portuguese, Italian and Dutch in particular – thereby opening up a window on much of the research carried out in these cultural areas.
- 20 Despite these positive aspects, certain criticisms could also be made. The book mostly focuses on French and other Romance languages. Whilst this is not necessarily a problem and may indeed be useful for those working in places that are heavily represented in the contributions, perspectives obtained from other linguistic areas

might have added depth to the volume. An example is the alleged infringement of grammatical rules when French anglers turn the verb “to fish” into a transitive verb. A comparison with Germanic languages might tell that in German for example, a distinction exists between to fish (*fischen*) and to fish the river (*befischen*) and that this is a general characteristic of Germanic languages (*fragen* versus *befragen*, *antworten* versus *beantworten*). The prefix “be-” emphasises the intensity of the action, the thoroughness and systematicity of it. Knowing this, the hypothesis of emotional involvement leading to grammar changes in Condamines’s paper might be reconsidered.

- 21 However, these minor points of criticism should not take us away from the fact that *Multiple Perspectives on Terminological Variation* is a rich, thought-provoking and expansive contribution to the study of terminological variation. The inclusion of such a volume in the *Terminology and Lexicography Research and Practice* (TLRP) series published by John Benjamins Publishing Company, points to the widening range of approaches within terminology and lexicography studies. This book will no doubt be of interest to scholars studying lexical variation within these disciplines and beyond.

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