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On terminological figurativeness

From theory to practice

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Terminologists' interest in studying the role of metaphor and metaphorical terms in specialized communication has proliferated since the first papers addressing this issue appeared in the 1990s. However, we believe that some facets of terminological meaning still remain overlooked or merit further analysis. This paper attempts to contribute to the study of one of these facets: the figurative meaning of some compound terms used in the domain of luxury marketing and business. In order to present a systematized view of this phenomenon we will adopt some theoretical tools from the Conventional Figurative Language Theory, in order to confirm the validity of some of its postulates for compound term analysis. Next, a contrastive approach between English, Spanish and Russian compound terms will put the theoretical ideas into practice with the aim of illustrating their applied and metalinguistic potential. Some basic conclusions will be offered at the end of the paper.

Keywords: terminology, figurativeness, Conventional Figurative Language Theory

1. Background

Despite its ancient origins, Terminology is a young academic discipline, with the issues involved only attracting serious attention by theorists and linguists relatively recently. As a field, terminology takes into account linguistic, communicative and cognitive considerations and its importance derives from being the discipline responsible for studying lexical items as part of a structured system of concepts, in which terms are the linguistic units that convey the knowledge of a particular scientific, technical or professional area.

Terminological theories can be classified into two major groups: prescriptive and descriptive. The General Theory of Terminology (GTT), developed by Wüster, set out the initial series of principles for the treatment of specialized

vocabularies and is representative of the first group. Within the second approach, we find social and communicative-based theories, such as the Socioterminology Theory (Gambier 1991; Boulanger 1995; Gaudin 1993a, 1993b, 1999) and the Communicative Theory of Terminology (Cabr e 1999), and cognitive-based theories, such as Sociocognitive Terminology (Temmerman 2000) and Frame-based Terminology (Faber 2011, among others). This paper adopts an eclectic perspective that draws on both social and cognitive theories and considers etymological, cultural, communicative and conceptual aspects of the terminological units examined.

The above-mentioned descriptive theoretical approaches do not represent a break with the past, but rather they are part of a theoretical and methodological continuum that reflects the evolution of the discipline. This evolution has been characterized most especially by the extension of the range of aspects and parameters involved in specialized communication that now need to be taken into account.

These new perspectives are based on the real observation of data and take into account the fact that terms are subject to phenomena such as variation, synonymy and polysemy. Thus, the same concept can be represented by a term that can vary not only morphologically and orthographically, but also due to regional or socio-professional factors. From the Socioterminology point of view, terminology reflects the relationship established with the sociolinguistic context from which it emerges. For the Communicative Theory of Terminology, a term is a multi-faceted conceptual and denominative unit, and concepts are not static or invariable, but are perceived according to a perspective that varies depending on the epistemic community in question, on how this community conceptualizes reality, and on the principal idea to be highlighted, to name just a few reasons. Cognitive-based theories of terminology stem from the translation context (Faber and L opez-Rodr iguez 2012: 17) and, apart from being lexically-centred and usage-based, meaning and conceptual representation is their primary point of interest (Faber 2009: 116).

The sociological, communicative and cognitive dimensions of terminology show, in our view, that the cultural footprint of every linguistic community is clearly present even in highly technical conceptualizations of special subject fields. Proof of this can be seen in the classifications made by Bagge (1999), which seem, in principle, universal, as the examples given concern bacteria, nuclear fission, and glands; however, this author also demonstrates the differences in fundamental conceptualization and classification from one language to another (English and French). One of the most representative examples of how different cultural views are reflected in the linguistic denomination of the same referent is the symbol @. As is well known, the English term is said to be a representation of *at* and is therefore interpreted in a rather literal sense (location), but in Spanish, French

and Portuguese, this symbol is referred to using the name of a unit of measurement (the *arroba*), which the symbol also represents. Other languages use even more descriptive expressions reflecting different perceptions: *kanelbulle* “cinnamon roll” in Swedish, *chiócciola* “conch” in Italian, *coada de maimuta* “monkey’s tail” in Romanian, *zavináč* “herring rollmops” in Czech and Slovenian, and *собака* ‘sobaka’ “dog” in Russian.¹

All these considerations converge in the notion of the “semantic frame”, one of the central concepts of cognitive-oriented approaches. A semantic frame is an experience schema, i.e., a knowledge structure representing the conceptual level which is retained in long-term memory (Fillmore 1977). This linguistic instrument representing extralinguistic events reflects the way in which people store the input information according to their culture or to their knowledge of the world, so the meaning is context-dependent. Frame Semantics bears considerable relevance to Terminology because it embraces some of the same concerns.

In any field of human experience, including science and technology, new knowledge needs to be communicated by means of linguistic structures which can express new conceptual categories (Cabr e et al. 2012: 2). It is not always possible to create new terms for every new scientific reality or experience, so the conceptual structures describing these realities are frequently built from elements that already exist in the language.

One way to create new linguistic structures from already existing forms is the use of figurative language, since, as Temmerman (2000: 44) suggests, metaphorical models play a major role in facilitating thought and expanding the understanding of the world through language. With this terminological resource, named “semantic neology” by Auger and Rousseau (1987: 46), we express new knowledge and experiences through metaphors, which transfer structures from one domain to another and help us to understand a new reality in terms of a previous one.

This metaphor-based cognitive mechanism is of an interlinguistic character, since we can frequently find that a concept is expressed by means of the same metaphor in different languages, and specialized language is no exception. Often, the interlinguistic metaphorical uses can be considered as being parallel, having evident similarities. However, they are not always identical in every language and sometimes important disparities in the metaphorical procedures can be found.

Current approaches in terminological studies provide a broad theoretical framework that embraces a range of factors at play in specialized communication.

1. Apparently, the Russian term originated from a primitive computer game where the @ sign represented a dog that moved around the display. Nowadays, however, an average Russian speaker generally seeks an iconic explanation of this term in terms of the visual resemblance between the @ sign and its denomination, i.e. dog.

According to Dobrovolskij and Piirainen (2005a), different types of cultural phenomena are behind many figurative units. The issue of the cultural basis of terminology was first explored by Diki-Kidiri (2000) and metaphor in technical and scientific domains was first examined by authors such as Pavel (1993), Thoiron (1994), Knowles (1996), Meyer et al. (1997) and Fuertes-Olivera (1998). Terminologists' interest in studying the role of metaphor and metaphorical terms in specialized communication has proliferated since these first papers. However, some facets of terminological meaning still remain overlooked or the analysis of them has been insufficient. This paper attempts to contribute to the study of one of these facets: the figurative meaning of some compound terms used in the luxury marketing and business domain.

In Section 2 we will briefly outline the role of figurativeness in communication. Then, in order to present a systematized view of this phenomenon, we adopt some theoretical tools of the *Conventional Figurative Language Theory*, developed by Dobrovolskij and Piirainen (2005a) for the analysis of idioms. The key points of this theory will be explained in Section 3. The contrastive approach between English, Spanish and Russian employed in Section 4 will put the theoretical ideas into practice with the aim of illustrating their applied and metalinguistic potential. Some basic conclusions will be offered in Section 5.

2. Defining figurativeness

Even a strict definition of figurativeness could hardly fail to highlight how efficient this form of expression can be. In fact, when properly used, figurative elements enable the expression of a wide range of semantic and pragmatic information in a concise linguistic form (Wray 2008; Timofeeva, forthcoming). To a certain extent, figurativeness may be a response to what Levinson (1995: 95–98; 2000: 6) calls the *articulatory bottleneck*. In fact, the slowness of our phono-articulatory system contrasts with the speed of our reasoning, parsing and comprehension procedures. Levinson (2000: 27–30) assumes that this “imbalance” is remedied by means of inferential processes, and more precisely, by preferred interpretations. In other words, the only way to manage such a bottleneck in communication is to express more by using fewer words. The role of figurativeness in this needs to be carefully considered, and it seems particularly fitting that figurativeness in specialized communication should receive such attention, as terminology seeks an economic use of language based on the same parameters, i.e. the use of a compact linguistic form to express a wide range of semantic and pragmatic information.

Focusing on the speaker's point of view, it is remarkable that language users have such a high level of awareness of the considerable usefulness of figurative

units. Thus, metaphors, idioms, formulaic phrases and other types of figurative examples are pervasive in discourse and provide great communicative effectiveness. All this suggests that there should be a powerful heuristic supporting figurativeness; hence, its explanation should be based on the search of appropriately defined heuristic criteria (cf. Timofeeva 2008). In other words, to enable us to understand figurativeness, the characteristic features of a figurative linguistic unit need to be defined. The clear identification of these criteria will allow us to reflect more precisely on the meaning and the usage restrictions of each item, which would seem to be especially important for contrastive analysis. In our view, the same reasoning may be applied to the analysis of particular terminological strings, since an understanding of how their figurativeness is structured is fundamental to their interlinguistic comparison. We consider that the *Conventional Figurative Language Theory* – explained in the next section – provides the heuristic criteria with which to define figurativeness.

3. The Conventional Figurative Language Theory

Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen (2005a) developed the Conventional Figurative Language Theory (CFLT) to fill important gaps detected when applying previous cognitive approaches — especially the Cognitive Theory of Metaphor — to the analysis of figurative language samples.

As is well known, the Cognitive Theory of Metaphor postulated by Lakoff and Johnson (1980; Lakoff 1987; 1993) argues for the central role of metaphors in our conceptual system since they provide the basis for the understanding of different experiential domains in terms of other domains. According to this theory, there is a series of universal, or quasi-universal, metaphorical schemata that explain how we conceptualize the world: for example, a discussion can be seen as a war, ideas as buildings, and so on. In its later version, the neuronal basis of metaphors was considered as well. Hence, the reformulated Neuronal Theory of Metaphor (Lakoff 2008) attempts to account for the representation of the metaphorical mapping in the brain. In any case, as Ruiz de Mendoza (2014) points out, such a neurological approach is of an originally linguistic nature, since it was the observation of regularities in the use of language in the first place which led to the testing of the validity of these regularities by means of other branches of knowledge. All this indicates that metaphors are basic to our conceptualization of the world, but this framework seems to be too wide-ranging and, consequently, too vague for the analysis of other types of figurativeness.

As Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen (2005a: 5) have remarked, more suitable tools are needed in order for figurative variation to be studied adequately. It is for this

reason that we propose the CFLT as a theoretical framework, even though it was specially designed for the analysis of idioms. Although terminological figurativeness presents its own features, some of the CFLT postulates appear to be valid for compound term analysis.

According to the CFLT there are two basic requirements that a figurative linguistic unit should meet: *additional naming* and an *image component*, the latter being especially important since it is the core of the figurativeness. In what follows we will briefly present both criteria.

3.1 Additional naming requirement

According to the first criterion, *additional naming*, a figurative unit offers an alternative way to refer to a concept; in other words, there is also another, simpler way to express its meaning. In this sense, figurative units represent the secondary denotative level since their meaning is constructed by adding semantic nuances to the primary denotative units (Dobrovolskij and Piirainen 2005a: 18). Thus, the word *die* acts as the primary denomination of the concept “to cease living”, whereas *pass away*, *be gathered to one’s fathers* or *kick the bucket* specify the same basic meaning by means of a range of additional data. In other words, and according to the cognitive categorization, the primary denotative units belong to the *basic level*, whereas the examples of figurative language occur at the *subordinate level* (cf. Cifuentes-Honrubia 1994; Ungerer and Hans-Jörg Schmid 1996; Croft and Cruse 2004).

Although this notion seems to be clear, its application to terminology is not trouble-free. As is well-known, semantic univocity or one-to-one reference between term and concept was the ideal model for the General Terminology Theory (Wüster 1979: 140) and, obviously, univocity is desirable for the elimination of ambiguity in specialized communication. In spite of this, a realistic approach to terms, and more particularly to compound terms, shows that phenomena such as metonymy, metaphor, synonymy or polysemy occur frequently in specialized communication, and predominantly in concepts with a prototypical structure resulting from their diachronic development.² All these linguistic phenomena invalidate the terminological univocity principle and support the additional naming requirement.

However, we should not confuse this requirement with popular designations that are used to name some concepts and are denominative variants of the scientific terms. In many domains, terms may have a vernacular equivalent: *parotitis*, the

2. For more details about the epistemological effects of the structure of concepts and their terminological description, see Temmerman (1997).

inflammation of the parotid gland, is frequently referred to in informal settings by means of the term *mumps*. This also occurs in other languages, with, for example, equivalent terms in Spanish — *paperas* — and Russian — *свинка*, ‘svinka’.

In this sense, another interesting reflection comes to mind. As in the case with figurative units, terms represent a more precise way of naming concepts, in contrast with the general lexicon. Therefore, cognitively, terms also belong to the subordinate level, whereas popular denominations are at the basic level. This perspective could be the focus of some interesting research, exploring the likely cognitive connection between terminology and figurativeness, but this exceeds the aims of this paper.

Coming back to the examples of popular denominations of *parotitis*, the Russian equivalent *свинка* ‘svinka’ leads us into the second figurative language requirement, the *image component*.

3.2 Image component requirement

The second condition that a figurative unit has to fulfil, according to the CFLT, is the presence of an *image component*. As Dobrovol’skij and Piirainen (2005a: 14) postulate, unlike simple lexemes, the meaning of figurative units comprises two levels: one which is strictly denotative and another additional and connotative level. The latter is conceptual in nature and it is here where associations between the literal form and the actual meaning³ of the unit are created: “Figurative units possess a second conceptual level at which they are associated with the sense denoted by their literal form” (Dobrovol’skij and Piirainen 2005a: 14).

We can illustrate this phenomenon with the example of the Russian equivalent for *mumps*, seen above. *Свинка* ‘svinka’ is the morphological diminutive form of the word for “pig” and this is the basis of its image component: the denotative level of *свинка* ‘svinka’ concerns the meaning of *parotitis*, while at the second level some associations between the literal and the actual (figurative) meaning of this lexeme are formed. Such associations are iconic in nature, because the motivational “bridge” that links the figurative meaning in this example is based on the similarity of the physical appearance caused by this disease.⁴

The image component is the main feature of figurativeness, since it is the key to distinguishing “figurative units from non-figurative ones” (Dobrovol’skij and Piirainen 2005a: 14). Hence, idioms — the most representative examples of

3. As Dobrovol’skij and Piirainen (2005a: 14) point out, the term *actual meaning* is ambivalent. In the CFLT, *framework* is used as an equivalent of *figurative meaning*.

4. For more on the different types of figurative motivation, see Dobrovol’skij and Piirainen (2005a: 79–105) or Timofeeva (2012: 173–197).

conventional figurative language — build their complete meaning by combining both levels of their figurative semantics, and the user is aware of the conditions and restrictions that the image component of an idiom may impose on the context in which it may be used.⁵

The notion of an image component also explains the holistic nature of phraseological meaning: the meaning of the whole phrase is not understood in terms of the meanings of its individual parts; rather, all of them contribute to its configuration. For this reason, it is possible to analyse the contribution of each constituent to the whole meaning, but we cannot predict nor calculate the semantic result from the individual meanings of the constituents. In other words, when we know the denotative meaning of a figurative unit we are able to establish and understand the cognitive links that support the image component; however, it is not always possible to “reconstruct” the whole figurative meaning only on the basis of the features of the image component.

In this sense, the terminological figurativeness examined in this paper points to an interesting connection between compound terms and phraseological units. Both construct their meaning according to holistic procedures which allow the motivational links supporting them to be understood. This could be a good starting point to investigate the relationship between terminology and phraseology, but due to the breadth of this topic, this will be broached in future studies.

For the CFLT, support for the image component comes from different kinds of knowledge, with most figurative units drawing on a mixture of them. A useful metalinguistic representation can be obtained by dividing the sources of knowledge into three groups: etymological, conceptual and cultural (Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen 2005a: 79–105; Timofeeva 2012: 211–222). These groups are described in the following paragraphs.

3.2.1 *Etymological knowledge in the image component*

In some cases, the image component contains very concrete references to a historical fact or a well-known person without which it may be impossible to understand the actual meaning. Historical references of this kind may remain in the collective memory of a society and determine their worldview. Naturally, many figurative units have lost their etymological motivation for contemporary speakers or this motivation may have been “replaced” with an apocryphal one, since people tend to search for an iconic explanation when the real etymology is unknown (Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen 2005a: 79–84; Timofeeva 2012: 183–189). Thus, the importance of this source of knowledge depends on the continuing relevance of

5. Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen (2005a: 15) analyze how the image component feature of the idiom *to be between a rock and a hard place* determines the context of its use.

its historical basis and on whether it remains in the collective memory. This phenomenon is not alien to compound terms, as we will now see.

In the textile and fashion industry (a subdomain in our luxury marketing and business conceptual tree), the term *Prince of Wales* refers to a kind of woollen cloth patterned with a combination of small and large checks. This specific motif of the fabric is frequently associated with the so-called “British style”, because it is quite representative of this traditional fashion. It seems that the name *Prince of Wales* was originally a reference to Edward VIII, later the Duke of Windsor, who made this cloth popular when he was the Prince of Wales. Whether this is true or not, what seems clear, however, is that the image component of this compound term contains a clear historical reference that remains, at least partially, in the collective memory. We suggest that for an average speaker, expert or not, the reference to the Prince of Wales does not necessarily bring Edward VIII to mind, but the link to a particular style of dress related to high social status is clear.

Similar reasoning can be applied to many other examples, such as *Chanel style*, referring to the distinctive design or way of wearing dresses and accessories that are typical of the French designer. Obviously, the actual meaning of this string cannot be understood without linking it to the proper noun Coco Chanel, although the specific referent denoted may have nothing to do with the Chanel brand.

Another example of etymological motivation can be found in the compound term *Fortuny pleats*, which is a kind of pleated finish in silk fabrics invented by the Spanish fashion designer Mariano Fortuny in the early 20th century. As we can see, the name of the inventor of this pleating technique gives rise to a specific image associated with the actual meaning of the term. However, it is important to emphasize that, unlike the two previous examples (*Prince of Wales* and *Chanel style*), *Fortuny pleats* has a more restricted use, as it is clearly limited to a specialized addressee. Thus, the image component based on the etymological knowledge in this example is revealed completely only to experts in the textile domain, whereas ordinary people unaware of its origin can only access general information about a type of pleating.

The examples analysed here show that the role of etymological knowledge in the construction of the image component may vary considerably depending, above all, on the usage circumstances of a given term. The close acquaintance with a particular textile technique operates as a precondition to the accessibility to the image component of *Fortuny pleats*, whereas *Prince of Wales* or *Chanel style* are based on a more general knowledge shared by non-expert speakers. At the same time, and to a certain extent as a consequence of this, the wider coverage of the two latter terms implies that other sources of knowledge contribute to their image component construction. In fact, both compound terms are frequently associated with the British style and the French style, respectively. This reflects the fact that

cultural knowledge also plays an important role in these examples. We will return to this matter below.

3.2.2 *Conceptual basis of the image component*

Another source of knowledge that participates in the construction of the image component is conceptual, and concerns patterns which are essentially of a metaphorical and metonymic kind.

First of all, it is worth highlighting the fact that in many cases the creation of a new term, and more especially of a compound term, is an essentially metaphorical process. By this, we mean that a compound term frequently consists of a sign that uses the formal container of another sign and fills it in with new content. As a consequence, additional associations resulting from the interaction between the two signifieds of the same signifier emerge and determine the image component configuration.

As some recent studies reveal (Temmerman 2000; Faber and Márquez 2004; Fuertes-Olivera et al. 2002; Tercedor et al. 2012a, 2012b; among others), many terms base their meaning on metaphorical and metonymic associations. This general idea needs further specification, as different levels of cognitive representation appear to be activated in this process.

On the one hand, according to the Cognitive Theory of Metaphor (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), some quasi-universal metaphorical patterns — initially based, above all, on embodied image schemata (Johnson 1987, 2007; Lakoff and Johnson 1999) — work as conceptual matrices that match two experiential domains (source and target) at a rather abstract level. In other words, the universality of metaphorical patterns is assumed because these patterns are generally of an embodied origin; since we have similar bodies whose different parts are used for the same functions, it seems reasonable to expect that our basic experiences will be similar too. This thought reveals the possibility that there may be a limited number of inter-domain patterns that are repeated from language to language, such as MORE IS UP, LESS IS DOWN, THE HUMAN BODY IS A CONTAINER, IDEAS ARE BUILDINGS, ARGUMENT IS WAR, LOVE IS A JOURNEY, etc. (Lakoff and Johnson 1980).

On the other hand, despite the assumed universality of many metaphorical schemata, a detailed analysis of figurative units reveals that a number of them build their image component according to more concrete features of the source domain. To put it another way, some metaphorical mappings are carried out at a less abstract level where more “refined” situational and cultural knowledge is required. We are dealing, therefore, with conceptual *frames* whose particular *slots* are adapted to the target domain (Fillmore 1977; 1982). This involves taking into consideration the very concrete nuances which are clearly conditioned by com-

municative and cultural contexts (cfr. Dobrovolskij and Piirainen 2005a: 161–185; Timofeeva 2012: 183–189).

This point can be illustrated by means of the following examples. The first one is the term string *to build customer loyalty*: this refers to a commercial strategy for keeping the core group of customers satisfied in order to make them purchase the same product again. As we can see, the metaphorical mapping supporting the image component of this string is clearly linked to the IDEAS ARE BUILDINGS schema.

The second example is slightly different. The term *grey market* refers to a kind of unofficial trading where a product is sold outside of the manufacturer's authorized commercial channels. In our opinion, several types of mapping can be highlighted here. Firstly, the LIGHT IS GOOD, DARK IS BAD schema appears, since the colour *grey* tends to the *dark* extreme, so it shows a negative tendency. Secondly, metaphorical mapping based on the bodily experience of vision — or more precisely, on the visual difficulties experienced in darkness — also seems to be present. Particularly, we are faced here with concrete knowledge which is clearly traceable to an informational slot of the cognitive frame of “darkness”. The use of the “darkness” frame carries with it the implication of “concealment” in this context. Finally, the third type of mapping underlying the image component of *grey market* concerns the frame related to our experiences of colours. Indeed, grey is situated between white and black in the colours spectrum and these two extremes are part, at the same time, of the “legality (white) / illegality (black)” frame. In other words, the intermediate position of grey makes *grey market* seem to refer to a kind of semi-legal area of business.

The problem centres on the considerable divergence in the categorization of colours and their expression across different languages and cultures. As is well known, Berlin and Kay's (1969) seminal study pointed to the existence of fixed sequential patterns according to which languages encode the basic colour categories. In these patterns, “grey” is one of the last to be encoded, i.e. only if a language has eight or more names for basic colours will one of these be grey. Although the debate about the soundness of these findings continues, the clearest consequence is that there are significant differences in how colours are encoded among the world's languages. For example, Hindi has traditionally had no standard word for “grey”; likewise, Navajo has only one word for both “grey” and “brown” (Kennedy and Horowitz 2011). Does this mean that the native speakers of those languages discern the colour hues in a different way? How should a term like *grey market* be translated to them? What would the image component supporting this term be? Perhaps these people would never participate in such semi-legality? Some authors consider that the explanation for all these differences lies in the cultural conceptualization rather than in the physiological perception of colours (Wierzbicka 1990);

thus, these differences are the result of cultural evolution. If so, the cultural factor again plays a key role in the configuration of figurative meaning.

The above examples demonstrate the broad range of conceptual knowledge supporting the construction of the image component. Sometimes, this can be explained by means of the quasi-universal schemata described by the Cognitive Theory of Metaphor, but in other circumstances we should “descend” to a more basic level of categorization. As we can see, at this basic level the awareness of the informational slots of a concrete conceptual frame is frequently interwoven with cultural knowledge, which will be considered in the following section.

3.2.3 *The cultural backdrop to the image component*

Although it may seem that terminology is a discipline which is strongly resistant to cultural influence, empirical data show that this is not completely true. As pointed out above, many recent studies have recognized the importance of cultural factors as well as their relevance to applied terminology, especially in areas such as terminography, translation and the teaching of languages. Furthermore, the examples analysed above show that cultural knowledge is one of the most important factors in the construction of the image component. The CFLT postulates that culturally based concepts “in many cases govern the inference from literal to figurative” (Dobrovol’skij and Piirainen 2005b: 31), as we have seen, for example, in the case of *grey market* analysed above. According to the CFLT there are a variety of types of cultural concerns which can provide support to the image component of a figurative unit. These include areas such as social habits and behaviours, items and artefacts of so-called “material culture”, popular and literary traditions, religions, superstitions and ancient beliefs or easily identifiable cultural symbols.⁶

So, terminology is not impervious to cultural influence. Many terms rely on different types of knowledge directly related to cultural and social habits and traditions, and we can follow the trail of these through the image component. For example, the earlier case of *Prince of Wales* is representative of this. Etymological and cultural knowledge are intermingled as we have a clear allusion to as important a British symbol as the monarch’s first-born son. This reference provides us with an explanation for how the association with the sense of the “British style” is established. So, the element *Prince of Wales* contains “the relevant cultural knowledge” which needs to be considered within “the framework of cultural semiotics” (Dobrovol’skij and Piirainen 2005b: 22).

6. For a more detailed treatment of the cultural phenomena involved in the configuration of the image component, see Dobrovol’skij and Piirainen (2005a: 205–251; 2005b: 21–26) or Timofeeva (2012: 217–221).

The compound term *Chanel style* — also analysed above in relation to etymological knowledge — works in a very similar way. Furthermore, in some contexts *Chanel style* can be considered a quasi-synonym of *French style* if we take into account the symbolic value of the figure of Coco Chanel.

Another interesting example of cultural items providing support to the image component can be given. *Window shopping* can be defined as a consumer habit involving browsing goods without buying anything, and the term reflects a common social behaviour in many western countries in which shopping has become a kind of leisure activity. Additionally, the increase in purchase options — especially with the advent of online shopping — has made traditional shops realise the impact that window shopping might have on their sales, thereby favouring the inclusion of this term into a specialized vocabulary.

The range of cultural references that we can find in specialized language is very broad. As we have seen with the symbol @, even different gastronomic traditions may contribute to the configuration of the image component. The Swedish *kanelbolle*, Czech *zavináč* or *ensaimada*,⁷ the term used by some Catalan speakers, certainly reflect a view in which the cultural influence is related to local traditional food.

All these examples constitute reliable evidence of the great variety of cultural elements which are reflected in terminology. It is clear that this fact cannot be ignored and a rigorous translational or contrastive approach is needed to account for the semantic nuances implied.

At the same time, this shows that cultural knowledge should be understood in a rather broad sense given its inclusive nature, since both etymological and conceptual knowledge are closely “interwined” with it, thus forming a complex semantic network. Untangling this via metalinguistic reflection is therefore crucial to translational, terminographical or language teaching approaches, among others. Therefore, in what follows we attempt to exemplify our ideas through a comparative analysis of some compound terms in English, Spanish and Russian.

4. Cross-linguistic analysis (English-Spanish-Russian) of terminological figurativeness

In the previous section we have seen that terminological figurativeness is highly heterogeneous and, indeed, there are no pure types that can be assigned to only one source of knowledge. Usually, several kinds of cognitive “ties” have to be es-

7. A spiral-shaped pastry typical of Majorca.

tablished in order to achieve an adequate understanding of the image underlying a term, and even more so when dealing with a polylexical one.

By making an interlinguistic comparison, the differences mentioned above can be seen even more clearly. In this section, we will examine features of the image component in several terminological units in three languages: English, Spanish and Russian. In our view, this kind of metalinguistic reflection is a crucial prior step to a translational task and, of course, it is also a useful tool for the teaching of a Language for Specific Purposes (LSP).

The specific domain we have chosen concerns the area of luxury marketing and business. This wide sphere includes fashion and jewellery manufacture, as well as different types of financial services and customer or market behaviour. The methodology followed consisted of four steps. Firstly, all compound terms in Spanish and English were extracted from the *Diccionario LID Lujo y Responsabilidad* (the “LID Dictionary of Luxury and Responsibility”) (Girón 2012). Secondly, they were contrasted with some trusted resources available on the Internet (corpora, IATE, TERMIUM, and others) and we searched for their Russian equivalents in different Russian-English-Russian and Spanish-Russian-Spanish specialized dictionaries (*Academic Dictionaries and Encyclopedias*, 2000–2014) as well as other online glossaries for Russian terms. Thirdly, once we had the compounds in the three languages, they were classified as figurative terms or non-figurative terms. Fourthly, a trilingual contrastive method was applied with the figurative compound terms only.

We will now present five examples that illustrate terminological figurativeness: *green wash*, *wardrobe essentials*, *thigh boot*, *crystal chandelier* and *houndstooth*.

1. *Green wash*

The first term to be analysed is *green wash*,⁸ which is defined as “the act of misleading consumers regarding the environmental practices of a company or the environmental benefits of a product or service” (Estes 2009: 123). In other words, it is a type of deception committed by a company, which poses as an environmentally responsible organization because this brings certain economic and social benefits for the company, and yet its productive activity may in fact inflict serious damage on the ecological balance.

The meaning of this compound term is obviously holistic, that is, the whole meaning is not equivalent to the mere sum of its components, and its sense might be considered to consist of an integrated whole. With this approach, i.e. taking its meaning as a whole, it is possible to explain and understand its components, but

8. Also used in the *-ing* form as *greenwashing*.

not vice versa. As mentioned before, this is a feature that figurative compound terms and idioms have in common.

According to the theoretical basis developed above, the holistic meaning is supported by an image component that provides the cognitive “bridge” between the lexical compound and the actual meaning of this combination. In the case of *green wash*, the image is essentially based on conceptual knowledge, since two main procedures can be observed. Firstly, the component *green* is an example of metonymic mapping in which one feature of the wide frame “Nature and environment” is used to refer to the whole frame. In this way, *green* acquires a connotative meaning that favours its use as a synonym of *natural*, *ecological*, *environmentally friendly*, *sustainable*, etc. The metonymic basis also draws strength from the consideration of *green* as the prototypical colour of a vigorous and healthy plant, even though we know that the foliage of many plants may contain different shades of blue, red or yellow as well. Secondly, the term *green wash* alludes to the act of cleaning something, that is, to make something become clean and pure. In other words, this cognitive frame allows us to explain *green wash* as “the practice of adopting allegedly environmentally friendly (i.e. green) procedures in order to clean the appearance or the image of something”. The key words here are *appearance* and *image*, because we know that the “washing” is only superficial and what we see may not coincide with the truth.

Seemingly, *green wash* is created by analogy with *whitewash*, a political term that refers to the manipulation of data in order to conceal the real crimes, injustices or errors committed by political regimes. This etymology reveals that lying and falseness are part of the implied sense of the term *green wash*. Having said that, we think that many speakers, even specialised ones, are often not aware of the real etymology, so the sense knowledge based on the cognitive script of “washing, cleansing” emerges.

A Spanish equivalent of *green wash* is *engaño verde* (literally “green deception”), so the image in Spanish is slightly different from that in English. The first detail that stands out is its more explicit nature, because the Spanish term clearly indicates that it may be a fallacy. There is no reference to the “washing” frame, so the Spanish equivalent loses the allusion to the idea that something is dirty and needs to be cleaned.

On the other hand, the element *verde* (green) apparently carries out the same function as its English correlate, that is, as a synonym of *natural*, *ecological*, etc. However, there is an interesting detail that is worth noting: the lexeme *verde* in Spanish has a cultural meaning too, as it may be used to make reference to obscenity or sexuality (cf. *blue* in English). This connotation is completely unknown to an English addressee, but we should keep it in mind in a Spanish context.

The analysis of the Russian equivalent of *green wash* reveals the existence of other cognitive links supporting its image. In spite of the relatively recent presence of this phenomenon in the Russian market, the term *зеленое замыливание* ‘*zeljonoje zamylivanije*’, of which a rough translation would be “green soaping”, is quite frequent. The two lexemes that form this terminological string shape its meaning and add some interesting nuances not present in English or Spanish. Thus, the component *зеленое* ‘*zeljonoje*’ “green” coincides with the English and Spanish equivalents and works in more or less the same way semantically.⁹ Nevertheless, the second component — *замыливание* ‘*zamylivanije*’ “soaping” — gives rise to different cognitive links based on the following considerations. First of all, the lexeme *замыливание* has a certain colloquial value found in expressions such as *замыливание глаз* ‘*zamylivanije glaz*’ “eye soaping” or *замыливание мозгов* ‘*zamylivanije mozgov*’ “brain soaping”, which both refer to “tricking, cheating, or defrauding someone”. Secondly, even if we consider that *замыливание* belongs to the same cognitive frame as *washing* in the English equivalent, a more detailed analysis suggests a different cognitive image. The deception here is related to the action performed by soap when applied to the eyes, more than to the concept of cleaning. Therefore, *зеленое замыливание* evokes the frame of “hinder the visibility (as soap does) by using pseudo-environmentally friendly procedures”. In sum, although the English and the Russian terms seem to be “inserted” into a similar cognitive frame, very different specific slots of this are activated in each case. Of course, this determines the underlying image component which may therefore have significant contextual restrictions.

This trilingual comparison reveals important differences with regard to the cognitive image which provides support to the meaning of the term *green wash* in other languages. Of course, translators have to be aware of this in order to carry out an appropriate metalinguistic reflection prior to the translational process. At the same time, this analysis confirms that figurativeness is also present in terminology, especially in the case of compound terms. The following paragraphs analyse more such examples.

2. *Wardrobe essentials*

Luxury and fashion marketing materials frequently employ the compound *wardrobe essentials*, which means “an assortment of timeless clothes and accessories

9. Nevertheless, it is important to note that whereas English and Spanish dictionaries refer to the sense of “ecological, environmentally friendly” in their definitions of *green* (cf. *Macmillan Dictionary Online*, *Diccionario Manual de la Lengua Española Vox*), this is not the case in Russian, where we have only found this sense in reference to the terminological string *Движение “зеленых”* ‘*dvizhenije zeljonykh*’ “Movement of Greens” (Ozhegov and Shvedova 2004). However, this is not consistent with usage data, in which the sense is quite frequent.

easily matchable with any style that, in opinion of experts, everyone should have to appear elegant and fashionable”. A black dress, a suitable pair of jeans, a good suit or a white shirt are some examples of garments of this kind.

The English term seems rather transparent due to the fact that it is arranged on the basis of the “Container-for-Content” type of metonymic mapping: *wardrobe*, whose core meaning is “a piece of furniture where we store our clothes”, here refers to the garments themselves, so the whole meaning may be paraphrased as “essential clothes”.

Identical reasoning can be applied to the Russian equivalent *базовый гардероб* ‘basovy garderob’ which appears to be a calque of the English expression and can be literally translated as “basic wardrobe”. Here, we can also see how the “Container-for-Content” metonymy supports the term’s meaning.

The case of the Spanish counterpart, however, is slightly different. The phrase *fondo de armario* — literally “bottom or back of the wardrobe” — may suggest an image of garments accumulated in an obscure corner of the item of furniture, possibly because they are little-used or old-fashioned. As a matter of fact, it is not strange to find in Spanish magazines or even in specialized journals papers with titles like *cómo aprovechar el fondo de armario* (“how to make the most of the basic wardrobe”) (Albarrán 2009). Notice that the Spanish equivalent refers to the *wardrobe* strictly as an item of furniture, without any metonymic conversion. This detail is relevant to the configuration of the image component, since it is clear that other slots of the frame “wardrobe” are activated in the Spanish *fondo de armario*. More precisely, in this case the wardrobe is conceptualized in relation to how its contents are organized, with easier access to more wearable clothes and putting the less usable ones at the bottom or back of this item of furniture. Evidently, the image component of the Spanish term differs significantly from the English and the Russian ones, which may give rise to some contextual restrictions and, thus, important translational complications.

3. *Thigh boot*

The next example to consider is the term *thigh boot*, which refers to a specific type of footwear: more specifically, a very long boot that reaches the upper part of the leg. The English term is completely descriptive and transparent and its meaning is easily inferred. This is not the case with its Spanish and Russian equivalents, as we will now see.

To name *thigh boot* the Spanish footwear industry uses a curious term: *bota mosquetera*, which can be literally translated as “musketeer boot”. The close relationship between etymological and cultural knowledge is obvious, with this being the main means of support to the image component of *bota mosquetera*. The refer-

ence, both to the historical figures and to their clothing, is essential, since it gives a better understanding of the origin of the term as well as its cultural background.

The Russian equivalent for *thigh boots* is not a noun phrase as such, but it is also a compound lexeme. The term *ботфорты* ‘botfort’ is a loanword from the French word *botte forte* “strong boot”. Thus, the footwear’s strength, toughness and resistance are emphasised. These features were originally relevant because of the importance placed on military footwear being hard-wearing. Nowadays, the fashion industry does not focus on these features, but a rigorous metalinguistic reflection on the term should be based on an awareness of the different sources of knowledge which provide support to its current meaning.

4. *Crystal chandelier*

The term *crystal chandelier* is another interesting example. It is used to name a type of hanging light fixture containing several light bulbs which are often flame-shaped. This creates the illusion of candles in a candelabrum. Originally made with wood and iron, these light fixtures began to be manufactured with crystal from the 18th century, and they became symbols of luxury and elegance.

So, *crystal chandelier* is quite a transparent term since its image component is mainly set up according to procedures that are iconically determined. Certainly, the term suggests an image of a candelabrum made of glass; moreover, the French origin of the denomination *chandelier* adds clearly a nuance of distinction, marking the luxurious kind of item that is being represented.

In the Russian equivalent, *хрустальная люстра* ‘khrustalnaja lustra’ — literally translated as “crystal hanging lamp” — its image component focuses especially on the material the fixture is made of. For an average Russian speaker, a prototypical *хрустальная люстра* is a combination of the finest glass pieces shaped in a rather sophisticated way, but the term does not include any reference to the candelabrum form.

The Spanish equivalent for *crystal chandelier* is even more original because its image component calls on cognitive knowledge, unlike English or Russian. In Spanish, the compound *araña de cristal* “crystal spider” is used to denominate this sort of light fixture. Obviously, another kind of knowledge is required to establish the cognitive links between the literal form and the actual meaning of the term. Rather than an allusion to the resemblance with a candelabrum, it is the likeness to an arachnid which provides support to the image component of the Spanish term. Such a circumstance might well cause important contextual restrictions that need be taken into account during the translational task. Furthermore, the reference to spiders may impose some cultural constraints depending on the traditions, superstitions or even on the religious considerations about this animal in certain social groups. Thus, the association between a “crystal hanging lamp” and

an arachnid seems strange in Russian and the literal translation *хрустальный паук* 'khrustal'ny pauk' "crystal spider" only evokes an image of a spider-shaped item made of glass. This reveals once more the important interlinguistic differences deriving from the different image components which provide support to the meaning of compound terms.

5. *Houndstooth*

The last example we will analyse in this paper is the term *houndstooth*, which refers to the textile pattern made up of a combination of broken checks, traditionally in black and white. The English denomination of this fabric design suggests that the image component is based on iconic knowledge, i.e. it is similar to a dog's teeth. Essentially, we are facing a type of metaphorical mapping where some slots of the frame "dog" are transferred to the frame "textile design". In fact, we believe that the term *houndstooth* is, in fact, an example of metonymic mapping since what is supporting the image component is not exactly the similarity with a dog's teeth, but with a dog's bite mark. In other words, the total domain of dog's teeth is used to refer to the result of the action of the teeth. This kind of mapping allows us to explain how the relationship between the broken checks of the houndstooth fabric and a dog's teeth is established.

If we look at other languages, we see how the situation changes considerably. Spanish and Russian choose words referring to poultry to construct the equivalent to *houndstooth*. So, Spanish *pata de gallo* "cockerel foot" acquires its meaning through the image component based on another kind of iconicity, very different from the English term. Russian, on the other hand, uses the term phrase *гусиная лапка* 'gusinaja lapka' "goose leg" as the equivalent for *houndstooth*. Obviously, the image component in this case is slightly different from the Spanish one and very different from the English term.

Furthermore, the differences arising from comparing this term in three languages also show the importance of cultural knowledge. Cultural idiosyncrasy can be seen, to an extent, in the fact that the English term has as the basis for its meaning the image of a dog, which could be said to be an animal which is representative of the British hunting tradition. Spanish and Russian terms are inspired by the visual resemblance to a bird leg; and here there are some interesting cultural differences that are worth highlighting. If for a Russian speaker the goose reference is common, as this fowl belongs to his/her folklore and traditional food, such a reference would be quite strange for a Spanish speaker because of its lesser cultural prominence. Certainly, although Spanish has a specific lexeme for this (*ganso* "goose"), it is not culturally prominent — like, for example, *pollo* "chicken" or *pato* "duck" —, and this determines the frequency of the use of this word.

We believe that these considerations demonstrate the desirability of more descriptive studies concerning terminological figurativeness, especially from a contrastive perspective. An awareness of the differences that the image components of possible term equivalents may possess are key to producing adequate translations, undertaking terminographical descriptions or optimizing the LSP acquisition process.

5. Conclusions

This paper seeks to stimulate a new way of carrying out research on terminological figurativeness. Although this question is not recent and is a subject of current debate, we suggest the adoption of an innovative perspective based on the CFLT — developed by Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen (2005a) — in order to examine how the figurativeness of diverse compound terms is configured. In our opinion, an appropriate adaptation of the central postulates of the CFLT enables the systematization of the metalinguistic reflections that are essential in different areas of applied terminology.

The two CFLT figurativeness requirements — *additional naming* and the *image component* — suggest that the research should be oriented to the analysis and description of their configurations and the contextual implications. In this sense, studies of the image component of different compound terms could be especially interesting since they reveal the main patterns that a rigorous metalinguistic reflection should take into account.

As we have demonstrated, the image component of some terms is a cognitive structure that provides support to their actual meaning and may impose some contextual restrictions. This does not necessarily concern a visual image associated with the term, but rather a cognitive “bridge” based on different sources of knowledge — etymological, conceptual or cultural — that the speaker evokes in order to make the term truly meaningful. From this point of view, image component analysis is essential in order to understand how terminological figurativeness works.

This short trilingual comparison of some terms from the area of luxury marketing and business has been an attempt to illustrate how these ideas can be exploited in different areas of applied terminology. The examples analysed in English, Spanish and Russian reveal that the image component may present considerable divergence across different languages and this is a crucial aspect to take into account in order to undertake an appropriate translational, terminographical or language teaching approach to the terminology.

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