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SPECIAL ISSUE

## Neology in specialized communication

Guest editors:

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## Neology in specialized communication

Maria Teresa Cabré Castellví, Rosa Estopà Bagot and Chelo Vargas Sierra

The need to update languages is a real and necessary fact. A language that is not continuously updated is left, over time, with a marginal presence in formal and prestigious communication, and consequently, plays little or no part in international communication. Although languages always change, these changes may be undetectable, since they occur gradually, or be clearly visible: lexical changes have the greater visibility in languages when the emergence of a new unit to describe a concept or a new reality becomes apparent.

The most important reason behind the renewal of the lexicon is the need to change language to adapt to the changing environment. The world evolves, knowledge increases and is redefined, and languages should be able to express this renewal. The most representative linguistic units of this change are lexical units, as advances of all kinds, especially scientific and technological innovations are expressed through terms. Thus, neologisms represent the constant changes of a society and are a clear indication of the vitality of a language. In 1969, the word *homophobia* was first used in politics and *Islamophobia* was not used until 1991; *Internet* was used for the first time in 1976 and *blog* did not appear until the late 90's.

This continuous movement, with the corresponding need for lexical renewal, is particularly important in specialized fields and, consequently, in terminology: *Android phone*, *blamstorming*, *blocking minority*, *citizen journalism*, *cloud computing*, *tweet* or *wiki* are new formal or semantic terms that name new realities in the specialized areas involved.

### Primary neology and secondary neology

The rapid dissemination of scientific and technological developments, the introduction of new social and economic concepts in the real world, and the permanent intercommunication in the knowledge society require specialized terms.

Therefore, languages have to update their terminology at the same rate of social changes. It is neither possible to build specialized knowledge without terms, nor possible to communicate or disseminate new developments in science or technology without new terms.

Therefore, this continuous updating of the lexicon of languages occurs as a result of the creation of new knowledge in a language, or because the new knowledge of a speakers community are imported. In addition, it is incorporated into the receiving language through borrowings, coinage *ex nihilo* or through lexical units constructed from morphosyntactic and semantic resources of their own language.

Every day, it is possible to observe situations that require new terms: a) in a context of knowledge production, a new entity to be named is discovered or invented; b) in a translation context, it may be necessary to select or propose an equivalent for a term in the original text which so far had only been named in the language that created the term; or c) in the context of language planning, institutions have to establish the most appropriate terms by adopting or adapting a loanword or by proposing a new formation.

In these activities, there are two different delineating actions regarding neology: on the one hand, the activity of creating an original neologism, and on the other, the activity of terminology selection or the replacement of an original term. Sager (1993) named the first activity *primary neology*, and the second *secondary* or *translation neology*. The distinction between primary and secondary neology, named by Rondeau (1981) *néonymie d'origine* and *néonymie d'appoint*, is fundamental in classifying specialized neologisms into two large groups: those appearing in languages together with knowledge production, and those appearing in processes of knowledge transfer between different speakers' communities.

It is necessary to emphasize that secondary neology is an activity much more related to the language planning taking place in contexts of language promotion.

### Denominative neology and expressive neology

Three important contributions to classify neologisms in general are: firstly, the distinction between *general neology* and *specialized neology*, called *neonymy* by Rondeau (1981) or *terminological neology* by other authors (Cabré 1992; Humbley 2006); secondly, *denominative neology* — also called *referential neology* — and *stylistic neology* (Guilbert 1975), or called *expressive neology* by Cabré (1992); the first being specially related to terminology, and the second with communication. And thirdly, the distinction between *spontaneous neology* and *planned neology*, proposed by Boulanger (1989).

However, even if denominative neology is the most common and far-reaching social case of word creation in a language, it is not the only function neologisms have. Sablayrolles (1993) establishes a typology of functions on the basis of the enunciative element on which the speaker focuses his creation: the receptor, to cause a particular reaction on him; the message itself, to increase its expressiveness or aesthetics; the code, to provide a language with its own resources or to replace the introduced borrowings, and finally, the sender, in order to emphasize the contribution and focus the attention on the communication.

Although neologisms may be justified and be necessary, they are not always used decisively by social groups. That is the reason why Rey (1974, 1976, 1977), the author who made the most relevant contribution on neologisms during the second half of the 20th century, thinks that only the neologisms that have been in social use can be properly considered as units of lexis.

In the course of time neologisms can disappear for different reasons, among which we find: 1) the concept has become obsolete; 2) it has been modified; and 3) it may have acquired negative connotations over time, as Gutiérrez (1998:93) shows when saying that the term *neurasthenia* was first used in 1969 to avoid the word *hysteria*, which has a negative connotation, but this new word quickly acquired a social burden and it was replaced by a new denomination: *neurovegetative dystonia*.

Finally, the widely spread of specialized knowledge through writing and audio-visual means has stimulated the creation of a great number of terms for scientific dissemination, their main function being to make new concepts easier to understand. These neologisms are used along with others having a higher level of specialization. For example, from 1996 onwards, three terms of similar synonymous equivalence but with an extremely different terminological value and reflecting different degrees of specialization, started to circulate in the media: *Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease*, *bovine spongiform encephalopathy* and *mad-cow disease* (Cassuto 1999).

### Neology and globalization

It is well-known that there are two forces that affect languages in today's world of economic and cultural globalization: on the one hand, the tendency to adopt one language as the *lingua franca* in certain situations of communication; on the other hand, the tendency to maintain linguistic diversity. It is a fact that more and more languages want to be "visible" internationally and be present in the new communicative scenarios and technologies (social networks are an example). This effort of languages to be active and visible inevitably asks for new terminology. A language

of a whole culture (i.e., in its humanistic, scientific and technological sense) needs to have its own terms to be able to express the new concepts of all specialized areas, particularly the most recent ones, without excluding borrowings as a neological resource.

History has shown us that the dominant language of communication has changed over the centuries based on the concentration of economic power. The role English currently has as a *lingua franca* is not unchangeable, and it seems that there are small clues indicating that languages from countries with emerging economies and considerable populations are willing to assert themselves as languages of international communication. In a possible new international scenario, in which there is not only one language of communication, neology would be a key piece.

### Neology and professionalization

There are many professions that need neologisms and several ways to address this need. Translation and interpreting are well-known examples. Translators are faced with situations in which the lack of a term to name a new concept, or simply the exclusive presence and systematic use of a loanword in a specialized field make them choose it, adapt it, or create a new term using the formal or semantic resources provided by their own linguistic system. These decisions are fundamental to the way specialized languages look like; hence, the great responsibility translators have with the target language and the solid linguistic background they need to acquire.

### Neology and research

Research topics on neology have changed over the last two decades. Initially, the main focus was on the description of processes and resources that speakers and experts of a domain used to represent and communicate the concepts of each domain. The aim was to guide proposals for standardization of terms or to provide computer systems with recognition patterns to facilitate the automatic extraction of information. Today, neology is at the heart of new research fields. Automatic processing of natural languages and knowledge management have to make use of neology as keywords in data mining; documentation needs to use new terms in order to properly classify new information; forensic linguistics uses neologisms to detect terms related to cybercrime. In this panorama, the creation of neology observatories and research groups has spread in recent years. They provide the

research community and the productive sectors with the required units to carry out tasks such as dictionary updating, terminology binding, detection of new topics, information and knowledge management, dissemination of scientific knowledge and/or sociological analysis.

Due to the real importance specialized neology has nowadays and to the interest it arouses as a research topic, it was necessary to devote a monographic issue of *Terminology* to this topic.

### The papers in this issue

This volume includes six articles that have been grouped into three sections, according to the aspect of neology dealt with.

In one group, there are two articles focusing on the specialized functions of specialized neology. The first one, by Mercedes Roldan and Jesus Fernandez, entitled “Emergent neologisms and lexical gaps in specialised languages”, deals with neology aimed to fill denominative gaps in a specialized language; the second, by Mojca Pecman, “Tentatives in a term formation: study of neology as a rhetorical device in scientific papers”, focuses on neology as a rhetorical strategy of specialized discourse.

The second group includes three articles on neology in the context of interlinguistic mediation processes. The article “Neology and terminological dependency” by Humbley and Garcia-Palacios emphasizes the fact that secondary neology depends on English and proposes some linguistic and pragmatic parameters to measure this dependency. In the article “Secondary term formation in Greek: theoretical and methodological considerations” by Floros and Grammenidis, from a translation context, the authors propose to use a wide theoretical framework provided by the semiotic approach that allows to relate new terms with the notion they represent and the definitions they are given. This section ends with the article by Lara Sanz “Approaching secondary term formation through the analysis of multiword units: an English-Spanish contrastive study”, which describes and compares multiword units in an English-Spanish comparable corpus containing research papers in the field of remote sensing with the aim of demonstrating, as in the article by Humbley and Garcia-Palacios, the current dependency on English.

Finally, the third section, devoted to the sociocultural aspects of neology, includes an article by Natividad Gallardo “De pateras o de cómo la embarcación utilizada por la inmigración irregular se convierte en fuente de creación neológica. Aspectos sociolingüísticos de la neología especializada de las migraciones en la prensa” (Eng. Of “pateras” or how a boat used by illegal immigrants becomes a source of lexical creation. Sociological aspects of specialized neology related to

migrations in the press”), which examines how the sociocultural phenomenon of migration has linguistic, legal, social and administrative implications at an international level. In the article, some neologisms generated from the term *patera* (a boat used by illegal immigrants to reach Spain) are analyzed. Gallardo notes that one of the most used resources is terminologization of words from general language and resemantization of terms used in other areas of specialization and raises the issue of the difficulty in transferring these neologisms to other languages.

We hope that this introduction and the papers in this special issue will provide readers with insights and hints not only into the theoretical front line of existing problems on specialized neology but also point to possible new and innovative areas of research and application.

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## Emergent neologisms and lexical gaps in specialised languages

Mercedes Roldán-Vendrell and Jesús Fernández-Domínguez

One of the characteristics traditionally attributed to neologisms is that they label new realities, which is particularly relevant in terminological studies because these are concerned with areas of intense denominative activity. This article proposes that, besides this well-known feature, the neologisms of specialised fields may also take a different role, more related to filling lexical gaps than to naming innovative concepts. This investigation examines the specialised vocabulary of modern olive oil agriculture and analyses a selection of neologisms before bringing forward a theoretical proposal concerning their linguistic use. Subsequently, this argument is illustrated by applying our model to the definitions of the terminological neologisms under study.

**Keywords:** terminology, emergent neologism, lexical gap, complementary neologism

### 1. Introduction

In specialised subject fields the continuous evolution of knowledge leads to a growth of terminology and, as a result, the emergence of new words stands as a fundamental feature of specialised languages. Whenever a new notion arises in a given subject area, it has to be named both in order to speak about it and to make it known to the world.

In the past years, the progress of Terminology and Neology has fostered the development of pieces of research about how specialised languages solve these denominative needs (Cabré et al. 2008, 2010; Paredes Duarte and Palacios Macías 2008; Cabré and Estopà 2009). Two of the questions under discussion are whether the optimal solution lies in procedures of a morphological, syntactic or semantic kind, or how to avoid designative ambiguity between neologisms. Many examples illustrate the above situation. As a token, in the area of Food and Agriculture, the