

ECONOMIC TERMINOLOGY – NEW PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract:

The analysis starts from the premise of the differential partial behavior of terms in various types of economic discourse – scientific and environment related (in the economic press of wide circulation). Examples considered concern the preservation of the hard core of the specialized meaning and the conceptual-semantic effects triggered by contextual combinations in different types of texts. The terminological variation in the current economic texts is primarily conditioned by the evolution of companies, and the economic press of wide circulation is forced to reflect the dynamics of changes, which happen before our eyes, and are not yet reflected in the strictly scientific texts since they develop slower. The strict extra-linguistic determination entails a more rigorous use of the economic terms, with definitions and inter-conceptual relations manifested at the level of the terminological density, which are rather high in texts of wider circulation.

Key Words: Economic terms, terminology, variation, syntagmatic and paradigmatic analysis

Introduction

Terminology – Theory and Practice

The analysis of the *terminological variation* is based on the common idea that it has similar forms to the linguistic variation, in general. The causes of *variation* are diverse and can be studied from at least two perspectives: on one hand the type of terminology is investigated: more a terminology is recent or emerging, more the conceptual-semantic and denominative inconsistencies are frequent and, therefore, the *variation* is present at all levels: cognitive (conceptual), linguistic and situational, on the other hand, in terms of communication, in certain contexts, a lexical variant is preferred over the term that appears in the specialized dictionary.

The role of linguistics in terminology is presented in this paper, outlining at the same time, an interdependent and independent subject. Adopting several unitary analysis methods leads to a *linguistic and descriptive subject*, which according to its goals, falls into a *lexical terminology* and a *textual/discursive terminology*. It is also specified the achievement of the terminological research, in accordance with the connection between dictionaries and texts.

Main Text

Current terminology studies show the importance of using real terms in texts and contexts, differentiating the term – label from lists, dictionaries, etc. from terms in use. Objective criteria are proposed to distinguish texts depending on the density of specialist terms in context or their dissolution by using common words. A preliminary analysis of terms in texts and contexts concerns the relation between the lexicographic definition, that must be a natural definition (and therefore accessible) and the terminography definition, reproducing the scientific definition and which is conventional. Specifically, these distinctions are not rigid, because there are other types of classification of definitions which take account of conceptual-semantic aspects (the ability to describe the referent in substantial definitions or to appoint phenomena, concepts and abstract relations in relational definitions (see A. Bidu-Vrănceanu 2007: 52-54). There are other aspects to be taken into account as regards the type of definition grounded on similarity (designation of quasi-synonyms), association or opposition (antonymy), (id). These ways of defining influence in various ways and degrees the access to specialized purposes.

When the term passes a strict field, affecting various larger groups of speakers, the pre-scientific or usual definition is deemed convenient. Such definitions should be preferred for scientific and technical terms in general dictionaries or mass media communication, even though they provide

only partial knowledge. Partial decoding of specialized meaning by profane speakers in a particular area is broadly called de-terminologization (see A. Bidu-Vrănceanu 2007). The de-terminologization degree depends on many factors and different abilities of speakers, their gaps in knowledge that affect the definitions' "reading" (see A. Bidu-Vrănceanu 1993: 58-63, 2007: 71-103).

Placed interdependently between synchrony and diachrony, is the analysis of terms and terminology, due to the fact that "cognitive and linguistic patterns are essentially open" (Gaudin 2003:62, 72, 73, from 75, 96-97). Therefore, the *denominative cognitive variation* is a priority and has various reflections both in synchrony and in diachrony. Among the relevant aspects of this perspective, it is worth noting the relationship between a domain and its subdomains, the development of new branches by hyper-specialization. (Balliu 2006:476,478; Ouerhami 2006: 441-442; Bidu-Vrănceanu 2010: 159-179; 229-239) , the denotative mobility of certain terms, subject to scientific review of the interpretation (Bidu-Vrănceanu 2010: 39-42; 67-69), terminological dynamics (terminological or semantic neology).

The *synchronic perspective* in terminology is almost general, both at the level of specialized communication, as well as in the linguistic description of specific terminologies. There were identified and perfected, in this way, the *paradigmatic and syntagmatic* research methods, taken into consideration from the beginning of the linguistic-descriptive terminology (Cabre 1991:21,25, 27, 37; id. 1998) by describing actual *Romanian terminology* according to a common methodological grid which allowed the identification of features specific to each of them (see Bidu-Vrănceanu 2007; id.2010). There were obtained at the same time, relevant results regarding *the importance of the variation for the widely-used terms*, one of the goals of the *descriptive-linguistic terminology*. Analyses have shown the interdependence of paradigmatic and syntagmatic level, by checking the data in the *dictionaries* against updating terms in *texts with different degrees of specialization* (see Bidu-Vrănceanu 2007; id. 2010.) On the other hand, such analyses have revealed *differences between the languages*, forms of important variation in terminology both at a theoretical and practical level. (see, for example, economic marketing analysis, Bidu-Vrănceanu et al. 2009, 2010 and Museanu 2010, 2011, 2012 for the economic terms).

Variation in terminology is related to a particular orientation of research, increasingly well represented lately, where specialized terms are not considered in isolation, at the level of nomenclatures. The analysis is conducted on their usage in *texts and contexts*, with theoretical and applicative benefits (see, for example, M.P. Jacque 2006: 299, F. Bertaccini and A. Matteucci 2006: 317) as regards *terms* beyond their construal as labels of concepts. The study of "non-linguistic and linguistic contexts" has triggered a progress of terminology (P. Lerat 2006: 89) and has showed that the existence of *textual, discursive variation* is the source of variations of all levels of language (I. Desmet 2006: 236, 238). Such analyses show the existence of differences between a lexicalized form (term) and its usage (F. Neveu 2006: 383), such differences representing illustrative aspects for *terminology variation*.

The *discursive variation*, base of *textual terminology*, has imposed several distinctions of general nature (I. Desmet 2006: 236), some of which seem important for our analysis. The following distinguish: the *specialized scientific level* (texts and academic courses), the level considered as an intermediate one, represented by texts in *specialist magazines* produced by experts for an initiated audience (I. Desmet 2006: 237) (some considering it semi-vulgarized discourse) and the discourse of *scientific vulgarization* represented by specialized fields from the general press (id).

Instances of Economic Terms and the Role of Variation

Our analysis of *economic terms* has grounded its selection based on the terms' *frequency* in the texts from the specialized press and based on their *representativeness* in the conceptual hierarchy of *economics*, as indicated by *strictly specialized texts*.

This analysis will consider *variation* in the corpus compiled for the terms DEFAULT, CRACH, CESSATION of PAYMENTS).

The *selection of texts* is just the premise of research, which should be continued and detailed under a *paradigmatic analysis*, either regarding the expression or how *neology* is involved in the phenomenon of *variation*, or regarding the *content* or variations of the terminological meaning, with consequences over certain semantic relations such as *hyponymy* and *synonymy*.

The *syntagmatic analysis*, based on the study of *contexts*, subject to their integration in certain *types of texts* can reflect the relation between the linguistic system and the conceptual system (M.

Contente 2006: 457). Current studies on terminology (see volume *Mots, termes et contextes*) reveal newer, more refined typologies of *contexts*, summarized by some definitions. In this respect, we can underline the definition directly applicable in our study: “all cognitive, *circumstantial or inter-textual elements* able to intervene in the *process of the meaning’s construction*” (S. Mosbah 2006: 652). This definition highlights both the importance of the *linguistic/extra-linguistic relation*, illustrated in *economic terminology*, and the need for compiling the paradigmatic study with the syntagmatic one in the linguistic analysis of terms.

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The terms DEFAULT, BANKRUPTCY, CRASH or the quasi-synonymic syntagm FAILURE TO PAY could be found in the Romanian economic press as equivalents for *crisis*. There are several examples for each of the above: “*Officials intend to speed up the change of bonds to partially reduce the period of DEFAULT for Greece*” Ziarul Financiar 2011/ 26 July; “*The speech was seen as warning that Germany would not defend the euro forever and comes at a moment when the investors are worried, not knowing if the USA evade the DEFAULT*”, Ziarul Financiar 2011/ 29 July; „... *the voice of an official of its Central Bank stated that the USA “could not go BANKRUPT*”, Capital 2011/ 25 July; „*the crisis of failure to pay moves to the USA*”, id; “*on Friday, the financial assessment agency Fitch announced that would relegate Greece to ‘restricted DEFAULT’, after the leaders of the countries from the euro zone agreed, on Thursday, on a new plan of 109 billion euro aimed at saving Greece from BANKRUPTCY*”, Capital 2011/ 27 July; „*Adrian Vasilescu, advisor of the NBR Governor, has declared today that the global economy is not facing a CRASH, but a severe crisis of debts in the USA, which has expanded worldwide on the financial markets.*”, Capital 2011/ 9 August; „*The symptom restricting the investor from making money on the stock exchange is overrated emotions which make the investor exaggerate, more than usually, the risk of investments on the stock exchange, taking as reference a stock exchange CRASH, whose amplitude was last encountered by investors in the 1930s during the Great Depression from the USA*”, Ziarul Financiar 2011/ 6 July.

In terms of the stock exchange crisis (highly topical in August 2011), we can notice that the term CRAH (crash) is activated (with or without the determinant *stock exchange*). Its use is strictly correlated to other economic terms, even to CRISIS, which appears as hyperonym (and CRAH (crash) as hyponym), being accompanied by a specialized definition: “*Under the current market conditions, a decrease of over 30% on the mature markets can be considered as CRASH (crah)... (it is unlikely) that the decreases of the last weeks (16%) to transform into a CRASH (crah), even if they remind of the crash of 2008*” (Ziarul Financiar 2011/3220); „*Since 1990 there have been six STOCK EXCHANGE CRASHES worldwide*” (id.); “*The STOCK EXCHANGE CRASHES have represented in the last decades the main danger for investors*”, (ibid.). The following contexts are illustrative for the relation between CRAH (crash) and CRISIS; “... *in the following years, we will witness a STOCK EXCHANGE CRASH, even two, maybe... there is a price for the economic growth and the price is these CRISES, which come and will keep coming in the future*” (ibid.); “*We must learn from CRISES and, mostly, to decide, from the start, on a maximum threshold of losses... (for) THE STOCK EXCHANGES CRASHES affecting concomitantly shares on all stock exchanges*” (ibid).

The examples above show the complexity and variety of economic data that determine not only inter-conceptuality, but a large terminological density leading to a greater degree of specialization even in the media of wider circulation.

The relationship between *dictionaries* and *texts*, as well as the importance of *describing the uses of the terms* in the *descriptive linguistic terminology* is based on the interdependence of *paradigmatic and syntagmatic analysis*, with different emphases depending on the issues researched. An example is the *semantic neology* of the terms, involving the interpretation according to theoretical and methodological criteria, with significant variations depending on the examples analyzed. Thus, the preliminary criterion of the *semantic neology* is the new usage of terms in very recent texts (e.g. *absorption* in certain texts of recent years - after 2007 - meaning of "to request, receive, use European funds"), meaning which is not present as such in the dictionaries. When the meaning is present in dictionaries, the variation is considered *semantic shift*. Thus, it results the inter-dependence between the syntagmatic and paradigmatic level, showing that paradigmatic variations occur on the syntagmatic axis, the textual and contextual conditioning resulting in terminological variations (Mejri 2006:545-549; Lino 2006: 512; Eliman 2006:118).

Conclusion

The analyses of the *relationships between specialized vocabulary (SV) and common vocabulary (CV)* refer almost exclusively the *domain of Linguistics*, representing a form of *lexical and semantic dynamics* of great importance (see Bidu-Vrănceanu 1993:63-80; id. 2007: 112-121, 154-155; ibid. 2010:31-113; Stoichițoiu-Ichim 2006:11-17). An increased interest in this respect is motivated extra-linguistically by the *secularization* or *democratization of knowledge* in modern societies today, which determines the assimilation in communication of usual terms, a phenomenon found in various languages (see Bidu-Vrănceanu 2007:29-30;id. 157-162; Meyer and K.Mackintosh 2000: 157-162). Even if the transition of terms in other types of communication than the strictly specialized ones is accompanied by varying degrees *de-terminologisation* (id.), keeping a hard semantic core provides them a specialized meaning when *variation is kept within the limits of a denotative meaning*. Expanding the use of terms in ordinary communication, contextual conditioned, can reach more or less generalized *connotative meanings* (Bidu-Vrănceanu 2007: 157-161).

The *terminological variation* in the current economic texts is primarily conditioned by the evolution of companies, and the economic press of wide circulation is forced to reflect the dynamics of changes, which happen before our eyes, and are not yet reflected in the strictly scientific texts since they develop slower. The strict extra-linguistic determination entails a more rigorous use of the economic terms, with definitions and inter-conceptual relations manifested at the level of the terminological density, which are rather high in texts of wider circulation. These specialized features of the analyzed texts enhance their importance for the specialized economic language, precisely because they reflect the economic dynamics in appropriate terms.

The economic terminology is especially dynamic. Dynamics is seen both in the inventory and the meanings and reflects a close relation between linguistic and extra-linguistic. High frequency of some economic terms does not necessarily ensure their thorough, deep knowledge. The interference of specialized meanings with usual ones represents a difficulty in the exact decoding of terms and makes more important the use of dictionaries.

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