



ISSUES OF TERMINOLOGY

Kuliyeva Dilshoda Alijon qizi
*Teacher of the Faculty of World Languages (English),
Namangan State University,
kulievadilshoda98@gmail.com*

Ganiyeva Muxtasarxon Muxtorjon qizi
*Namangan State University,
Faculty of World Languages (English),
4th grade student*

E-mail address: ganiyevamuxtasar6@gmail.com

Abstract. When studying terminological vocabulary, the heterogeneity of its composition in terms of the characteristics of the conceptual content of various units becomes obvious, which is reflected in the creation of various classifications of terminological vocabulary, some of which will be discussed in this section.

Keywords: terminology, vocabulary, singular concepts, professionalisms, colloquial terms, linguistic terms

INTRODUCTION

In terminology, there is a tradition of comparing classes of special vocabulary with types of concepts in their logical interpretation, within the framework of which, in particular, the relationship between a term and a nomenclatural sign (nomen) is studied. The issue of distinguishing between terminological and nomenclature vocabulary is considered in the works of such linguists as G.O. Vinokur, B.N. Golovin, S.V. Grinev, G.A. Dianova, L.A. Kapanadze, A.Ya. Klimovitsky, R.Yu. Kobrin, V.M. Leichik, G.P. Melnikov, A.N. Minyar-Belorucheva, A.A. Reformatsky, A.V. Superanskaya, V.A. Tatarinov, S.D. Shelov and many others. Some scientists, on the contrary, deny the very fact of



stratification of special vocabulary into terms and nomen, such as A.I. Moiseev.¹ He believes that the opposition between terminology and nomenclature is meaningless, since, in his opinion, we can only talk about the presence of subject and conceptual terms in terminology, i.e. designations, “which more clearly reflect either purely objective or actual conceptual organization”.²

MAIN PART

The division of terminological vocabulary in a broad sense into terminology and nomenclature was introduced in Russian terminology by G.O. Vinokur in the article “On some phenomena of word formation in Russian technical terminology”,³ in which he proposes to consider nomenclature “a system of completely abstract and conventional symbols, the only purpose of which is to provide the most convenient from a practical point of view means for designating objects, without direct relation to the needs of theoretical thought operating with these things. Why a given object is named this way and not another is more or less indifferent for nomenclature designations, whereas for a term that strives to have a meaningful internal form, this is a very important question”.⁴

This definition has been repeatedly discussed in the linguistic literature, the main subject of discussion being the fact that it does not explain what should be understood by “abstract and conventional symbols”. So, L.A. Kapanadze poses the following questions: “What is meant by “abstract and conventional symbols”? Words or not words? Where is the border between a term and a nomenclature sign?”.⁵ Refraining from making final conclusions, the scientist nevertheless writes

¹ A.I. Moiseev [1970].

² A.I. Moiseev [1970: 133].

³ G.O. Vinokur [1939]. “On some phenomena of word formation in Russian technical terminology”

⁴ G.O. Vinokur [1939: 8]. “On some phenomena of word formation in Russian technical terminology”

⁵ L.A. Kapanadze [1965a: 82].



that “to the nomenclature, strictly speaking, one can include only proper names in geography and cartography... and such technical labels as MAZ-200...”.⁶

A.A. Reformatsky distinguishes between terminology and nomenclature, believing that “terminology is primarily associated with the system of concepts of a given science, while nomenclature only labels its objects,” it “is not directly correlated with the concepts of science. Therefore, it does not represent science in the system of its concepts”. The nomenclature is “innumerable, although associated with concepts, it is more nominative”. The terms “are connected by the concepts of science; for each science (in some of its unified directions) they are countable and are forcibly connected with the concepts of a given science, since they verbally reflect the system of concepts of a given science”.

“Dictionary of linguistic terms” edited by O.S. Akhmanova offers the following definition of nomenclature: “a set of special terms-names used in a given scientific field, names of typical objects of a given science (as opposed to terminology that includes designations of abstract concepts and categories)”.⁷

S.V. Grinev agrees with this definition according to whom, the most reliable approach in assessing these linguistic formations is functional – “the difference between the functions of reflecting a concept and labeling a separate subject”.⁸ He also notes that by naming a specific object, a nomen simultaneously represents its condensed definition and, therefore, does not need a definition.

Not all linguists believe that nomen name singular concepts, and terms refer to general concepts. So, V.M. Leichik believes that both of them denote abstract concepts, but, unlike a term, a nomenclature unit does not denote any, but a specific concept. He sees the specificity of this concept in the fact that “it is certainly a member of a number of homogeneous concepts that differ in secondary

⁶ L.A. Kapanadze[1965a: 82].

⁷ O.S. Akhmanova[1969: 270].

⁸ S.V. Grinev[1993a: 47].



characteristics”.⁹ Based on the fact that the plan of content of nomen, as well as terms, are general concepts, and the plan of expression, like proper names, are private, consciously chosen external features, the scientist makes the following conclusion: nomenclature is an intermediate, connecting link in the series of nominative units between term and proper name.

Analysis of these and other statements on the distinction between terms and nomen allows us to conclude that most linguists share the following views on the nature of the term and nomen: these linguistic units differ in the degree of abstraction of their conceptual basis. The term expresses general concepts that cover many homogeneous things, phenomena, and relationships that have some common characteristics. Nomen are based on single concepts that relate to any one thing, phenomenon, relationship and do not reveal the essential relationships of objects.

Nomenclature signs name specific objects; their connection with the concept is weakened and mediated through the object. As noted by V.A. Tatarinov, it is the abstractness of the term and the concreteness of the nomen that is the reason for the difference in the construction of their definitions: “If the definition of a term usually establishes the boundaries of the concept denoted by the term, then the definition of a nomenclatural sign is usually of a referential nature or has the form of instructions, descriptions...”¹⁰

The nomen is born as one of the initial stages of scientific knowledge of a subject or its fixation in practice. The formation and growth of terminologies often occurs at the expense of nomen. It is the primacy of the latter in relation to terms that determines their less stability in the language. Objects created by people undergo significant changes in a short time, and the body of nomenclature names is constantly updated. The secondary nature of terminology leads to the fact that the

⁹ V.M. Leichik [1974: 24].

¹⁰ V.A. Tatarinov [1996: 254].



term functions in the language constantly until the concept it denotes is considered unscientific or does not come into conflict with another term. Note that in this case, when concepts change, the term most often does not disappear from use, but is filled with new content.

Mutual transitions of terms and nomen reflect hyper-hyponymic relationships between concepts. V.A. Tatarinov argues, for example, that in a synchronous section of the development of a terminological system, “the lowest member of the genus-specific taxonomy is a nomen. The remaining members are terms. The term in this structure is characterized by denotative uncertainty, i.e. allows for ambiguous interpretation, while the nomen has a strictly unambiguous correlation and does not allow for different interpretations”.¹¹

Professionalisms, or colloquial terms, have a special status in terminology. Usually they are understood as “not the entire set of professional vocabulary, but only variant units of generally accepted terms”,¹² which are characterized by irregular use, functional and stylistic limitations of the use of oral speech of professionals in an informal setting, the presence of emotionally expressive connotations and the absence of a closed systems.¹³ As S.V Shelov. writes, “the decisive factor in the relationship between ‘terms and professionalisms’ seems to be the factor of ‘officiality’, ‘legitimacy’ of the former and ‘informality’ (‘semi-officiality’), ‘illegitimateness’ of the latter”

“Terminologists have different attitudes towards professional vernacular: some call for a fight against it”,¹⁴ “others believe that observing the functioning of professionalisms in a language provides extensive material on the development of the language system and that their removal would lead to the impoverishment of

¹¹ V.A. Tatarinov [1996: 255-256].

¹² V.A. Tatarinov [1996: 259].

¹³ [Grinev 1993: 13; Kapanadze 1965a: 82; Shelov 1984: 82]

¹⁴ [Natanson 1966].



the language”¹⁵ So, V.P. Petushkov [1995] sharply objects to the explanation of the emergence of professional vernacular by the fact that it is allegedly present in the speech of uneducated people who deliberately oppose themselves to specialists. He writes: “Each modern scientific and technical sublanguage has its own vernacular, regardless of the “intellectual” level and, apparently, the reasons for the existence of this layer of speech must be sought in the very complex features of human thinking, which is not entirely subject to strict logic.”¹⁶

It is curious that in some terminological dictionaries professional vernacular is passed off as a term, which is largely due to the lack of sufficiently reliable criteria for separating professionalisms from terms. According to S.V. Grinev, “the only criterion remains limited use, but this criterion is valid only if a parallel term exists”.¹⁷ It is somewhat easier to identify professional jargon, a type of professionalism that, unlike most of the latter, is not of a normative nature and is clearly perceived as non-terms.

Interest in proper names in terminology arose quite a long time ago. So, D.S. Lotte,¹⁸ considering them within the framework of the requirements for the term he developed, believed that their assimilation is extremely difficult and that their creation is permissible only if certain conditions are met, namely: 1) the connection of the concept with a process or subject of technology that is of great importance for science, or connections with the person who directly made or caused this discovery; 2) maximum use in term elements.

Modern researchers note the active replenishment of terminologies due to proper names, during which proper names are used either separately or in combination with common nouns. Such linguistic formations are unambiguous, which brings them closer to ideal terms. At the same time, proper names perform

¹⁵ Danilenko [1977]; Petushkov [1995]; Superanskaya [1989]; Tatarinov [1996].

¹⁶ V.P. Petushkov [1995]

¹⁷ S.V. Grinev [1993a: 50].

¹⁸ D.S. Lotte [1961].



either a “temporal-local-personification function”, using the names of scientists and geographical names, or a “term-forming function”,¹⁹ participating in the creation of terms and nomen.

In compound terms, one of the components of which is the proper name, the meaning of this component is weakened, since the proper name designated a specific individual person or place only at the time of the creation of the term, but over time it was subject to rethinking, and in some cases fell out of use altogether, and in the present tense is perceived not as the name of a person or place, but as a certain qualitative sign.

Along with the units already discussed, in any terminology there are also term-like words, terminoids, which are special lexemes used to name “so-called natural concepts, i.e. insufficiently established (emerging) and ambiguously understood concepts that do not have clear boundaries - and therefore definitions”.²⁰

Some scientists are expanding the list of term-like lexical units. So, S.V. Grinev includes prototerms, preterms, quasiterms, pseudoterms, but a clear distinction between their conceptual content is still difficult.

From comparing special vocabulary with the types of concepts it expresses, we will move on to analyzing its composition from the point of view of the interaction of terminological systems with each other. Within the framework of this approach, it is customary to distinguish between general scientific (general technical), interdisciplinary and industrial terminology. General scientific terms include words that retain a constant meaning regardless of the terminology system in which they function, for example: element, system, method. They are distinguished by their information content and not entirely clear conceptual features. The “general scientific” component included in the name of this layer of

¹⁹ Tatarinov [1996: 257].

²⁰ Grinev [1993a: 12].



terminology does not mean that it is necessarily present in the terminologies of all sciences; this means that “this is the vocabulary with which the categorization of the world through the prism of a given science begins.”²¹

Interdisciplinary terminology combines terms that are used in two or more term systems. These are, as a rule, basic concepts common to several scientific disciplines. The reasons for the transition of a term from one term system to another are varied:

1) the borrowed term belongs to the terminology of a more developed or important field of knowledge at the given moment in the development of society;

2) the presence in the term of a pronounced semantic component that can be attributed to some new concept in another terminology (while the latter is not necessarily more developed or important);

3) the transition of the term following the transition of reality from one industry to another.

With a significant amount of general scientific and interdisciplinary terminology, the core of any terminology is still formed by industry terms, since in the absence of industry vocabulary it is impossible to talk about the terminology system of a particular science or technology. This is the most extensive layer of terminology, in which there is a large number of derivative, complex and composite terminological units.

Note that the question of dividing vocabulary into general scientific, interdisciplinary and sectoral does not have an unambiguous interpretation in the terminological literature. Thus, the authors of the book “General Terminology” consider the classification of terms on this basis to be illegitimate, arguing that “in each particular field, “general scientific” terms are specified in their own way, turning into a homonym of a term that sounds the same as it, included in another

²¹ Tatarinov [1996: 261].²¹



discipline”.²² As for terms borrowed from other disciplines, they are given the status not of interdisciplinary homonyms serving several areas, but of homonyms of original terms created initially in other fields of knowledge and undergoing specialization, during which they changed their place in the system, connections with other concepts and definitions.

In conclusion, I would like to say that terminology pays considerable attention to the study and classification of terminological vocabulary. This section examined the classes of terminology in accordance with the types of concepts it reflects and from the point of view of the interaction of terminological systems with each other. The representation and correlation of these classes are different in different terminologies, and it is they that determine the originality and uniqueness of each of them.

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5. Superanskaya, Podolskaya, Vasilyeva [1989: 108].

²² Superanskaya, Podolskaya, Vasilyeva [1989: 108].