Terminological Methods in the History of Terminology Science

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It is a well-established fact that special lexis is in some ways different from the everyday word-stock, special vocabulary being quite probably the only part of language that may be consciously manipulated and controlled. Special features of terminology determined the emergence of a number of specific methods of analysing and ordering terms. In a certain sense we may regard the history of terminology science through the prism of the evolution of special methodology.

Since the beginning of scientific period in human evolution every science bases itself on the system of concepts and terms. In such a system every concept and term has a definite place, meaning of every term being strictly defined by the borders with other terms. Small wonder then that from the very beginning of terminological research and ordering of terminologies the **systemic approach** was used – much before it came into fashion in the second half of the 20th century and started to be applied in every possible activity.

Since terminology may be controlled and regulated and both terminological forms and meanings consciously shaped, in the process of detecting and analysing terminological drawbacks to be corrected, certain desired properties were determined already in the 1930s (Lotte 1937). Subsequent inventory of attributes of special lexemes aimed at making lists of desired properties of an “ideal” term took form of terminological requirements and lead to making fuller lists of various terminological features reaching 265 characteristics (Grinev 1998, 2001). This coincided with investigating differences between terms and ordinary words in the 1950s and the 1960s.
At the same time the first steps of **typological approach** started with first establishing the difference between terms and nomenclature units or **nomens** as they are now called, that later lead to discovery of a number of special units existing in language apart from terms. It started with G. O. Vinokur drawing a distinct line between terms and nomens as different special lexical units (Vinokur 1939). Later A. A. Reformatsky further specified criteria of distinguishing terminology and nomenclature (Reformatsky 1959).

However, at first nomenclature units were viewed as variety of terms. Only after introduction by A. D. Hajutin of the concept of **terminoids** – special lexical units naming the so-called “natural concepts”, concepts “in statu nascendi” which have no settled uniformly understood meanings, and therefore do not have generally accepted definitions (Hajutin 1970), it became clear that terminology science should not limit itself to investigation of terms proper, for there are other special lexical units. Later other kinds of special lexical units were introduced and described, such as **professionalisms** (Kuz’min 1970), units of professional slang – **professional argotisms** (Skvortsov 1972) or **professional jargonisms** (Gladkaja 77), **quasi-terms** (Leichik 1981), **pre-terms** (Leichik 1985) and finally **proto-terms** (Grinev 1990).

In the 1960s it was found that one of the most promising aspects of presenting and investigating terminological problems is based on **semiotic approach**, which is viewing terminological signs from the point of view of the general theory of signs. Later semiotic approach due to its being connected with the general theory of information and due to its universal character became almost as popular as the systemic approach. It has been extensively used in Russian terminology studies for the last thirty years, therefore it is expedient to sum up the experience.

The first attempts to introduce semiotic principles into terminology were made in Russia in the 1960s. In 1969 P. V. Veselov introduced the idea of appraising terminological characteristics from the semiotic point of view. It was based on dividing terminological features and requirements into three groups: **semantic**, which included characteristics reflecting relations between lexical meanings of words and word-combinations used as terms and contents of corresponding concepts; **syntactic**, connected with patterns of term formation and their productivity, and **pragmatic**, including those characteristics of term that influence its functioning.
According to P. V. Veselov such terminological requirements as invariance (absence of synonymy or polysemy), correspondence between lexical and conceptual meanings of term (concurrency of a concept and terminological meaning of the corresponding term) and classificational conciseness (reflection in terminological form of only the necessary characteristics of the concept) belong to semantics. Requirements towards patterns of term formation (creating or using homogeneous sings for the homogeneous concepts) and productivity of terminological forms (possibility of forming derivative terms) P. V. Veselov viewed as belonging to syntactics. Characteristics which reflected convenience of using term, such as brevity (number of term elements should not exceed the number of delimiting characteristics), uniqueness (absence of homonyms), euphony, translatability and the ability to be used as descriptor in computer systems were viewed as belonging to pragmatics (Veselov 1969).

Another significant step in elaboration of semiotic aspects of terminology is connected with publications of V. M. Leichik (Leichik 1971; Leichik, Smirnov, Suslova 1977). In these publications four main types of semiotic relations in terminology were laid out: 1) between terms; 2) between term as a sign and the corresponding concept; 3) between term as a sign and the corresponding object; 4) between term as a sign and the user of this sign. It was stated that the first aspect – syntactics – presupposes not only combinability of term in linear speech sequence, but also term relation within a certain terminology. The next two types of relations, connected with semantics, deal with terminological property of expressing concepts and denoting classes of objects. In contrast with everyday vocabulary the form of term often reflects the essential characteristics of the concept and its place in the concept system while the objects denoted by terms are connected with special activities (such as scientific research, production, etc.). The fourth type of terminological relations is connected with pragmatics and includes sociolinguistic problems, such as the problem of professional jargonisms, relations between terminological systems and natural language, etc. and is important from the point of view of normalising usage of terms.

The semiotic approach to classification of characteristics of terms later was elaborated in publications of Veselov and other terminologists (Veselov, Chirukhina 1974; Grinev, Leichik, Nalepin 1985; Grinev, Sergejev 1987; Grinev 1993). The next step in application of semiotic approach
was its usage in estimating and describing characteristics of the whole terminologies (Leichik, Smirnov, Suslova 1977; Grinev 1990, 1993, 1998). Such approach formed the basis of typological studies and parametrical estimation of terminologies.

At the end of the 1970s a new, **parametrical approach** appeared (first in lexicography) which was based on the concept of lexicographic parameter – the way of lexicographic representation of a structural element or a functional phenomenon of language and their extra-linguistic correlations – introduced by Y. N. Karaulov (Karaulov 1981). The concept of parameter was borrowed into terminology, where it was defined as measurable terminological characteristic denoting degree of manifesting of a particular property (Grinev 1985). Parametrical approach in describing and analysing terminologies is based on the inventory of terminological processes and phenomena as well as on paying consideration to term features, for the majority of parameters of a terminology or its autonomous fragment depend on the respective features of its terms. The need for introducing parametric approach in describing terminologies and thus making foundation of typological studies was caused by the state of terminological theory in the 1980s and beginning of 1990s.

In his work entitled *History of sciences* S. Toulmin contrasts descriptive and prescriptive phases of a science that evidently mark stages of its development. Even a superficial survey of the situation in terminological studies at that time in the USSR showed that the majority of research projects had a clearly noticeable descriptive approach. A great number of terminological publications in this country (averaging more than 500 a year) were containing descriptions of some phenomena in a chosen segment of special lexis. Another feature of terminological studies that was worth mentioning was the accidental nature of the choice of the object of study, the subject field, target language and the terminological process or phenomenon to be investigated. A further noticeable feature was the evident incompleteness and incompatibility of the descriptions of terminologies, which ruled out a dependable comparison of the results of separate studies and drawing of general conclusions as to the degree of presence of the observed phenomena in special lexis in general.

There was every reason to believe that this situation resulted from the absence of criteria and a well-founded basis for the comparison of the results of the separate studies. However, while the lack of co-ordination
and guidance of terminological research in the USSR and Russia of that period may have been accounted for by the absence of an appropriate competent terminological body, other features seemed to have a universal character and reflect the state of the terminological science in general. Therefore there was evident a need for transition from the state of merely collecting information on isolated terminological phenomena, resulting in separate incomplete and inexact descriptions of particular terminologies, to a systematic parametrical estimation of terminologies as a prerequisite of further development of terminology science. To facilitate this development it was found necessary to establish a set of parameters that might be used to measure particular terminological properties and which together would form a system ensuring completeness and compatibility of independent studies of different terminologies.

The list of terminological features that were supposed to serve as terminological parameters was at that time already quite extensive. In classifying them semiotic approach was used allowing to divide them into certain groups. At the beginning the group of syntactic features comprised such characteristics of terminological forms as length (measured in words and letters), formal structure (morphological or syntactic), patterns of term formation, motivation, productivity, invariability of form, linguistic correctness, and grammatical peculiarities (such as the absence of singular or plural).

Features of terminological meaning, such as nominative character of term, its comparative independence from the speech context, peculiarities of semantic structure, categorial relations and exactness (including monosemy and absence of discrepancy between lexical and terminological meaning, semantic integrity), etc. were viewed as belonging to semantics.

The group of pragmatic features contained such characteristics as brevity, euphony, inculcatedness (including frequency of usage and conventionality), chronological status, normative status, singleness (absence of synonyms), uniqueness (absence of homonyms), translatability, easiness of forming combinations, place in respective terminology, sphere of usage, geographical area, cognitive function, etc.

In the process of applying semiotic approach to classifying terminological parameters it became clear that the three main aspects introduced by Charles Morris and based on types of triads suggested by Charles Sanders Peirce were insufficient for complete description and analysis of lexical signs.
Firstly, existence of an important group of features, connected with appearance and subsequent historical evolution of terms showed necessity to consider evolutionary characteristics. Such features as origin, age (time of appearance), purpose of their appearance, etc. belong to this group. Secondly, the existing triad did not present possibilities of investigating features connected with the structure of any type of signs.

Therefore it was felt expedient to introduce more aspects enabling studies of formation and development of signs and systems of signs, which would make it possible to specify their character and tendencies of their development. It was proposed to name this aspect which deals with evolution of signs evolutics. Investigating signs from the point of view of their evolution makes it possible to view typology of signs as hierarchy or stages of evolution. Also such aspects as morphetics, dealing with structural characteristics of terms and denotatics, dealing with relations between term as a sign and its denotate (leaving in semantics relation between the sign and the significate) were introduced as the result of applying semiotic approach in terminology (Grinev 1996; Гринев 2000).

As the result of inventory of features of terms finally the number of revealed characteristics reached more than two hundred – 265 (Grinev 1998). It was found that these features may be divided into three groups: (a) properties – immanent features used in exactly defining the concept of term; they are always present and cannot change; (b) shortcomings – unwanted features which serve as a basis for terminological requirements and which must be eliminated, and (c) the remaining features, some of which are rather beneficial, some neutral and some having both positive and negative aspects in various conditions.

The immanent properties of terms, as opposed to words in everyday language, are determined by their main function – to name concepts and also include specificity of usage (term belonging to a special field of knowledge), nominative function (naming general concepts), definability (presence of scientific definition), exactness of meaning (terminological meaning has precise borders determined by its definition), contextual stability (independence from the context resulting from the exactness of meaning), stylistic neutrality (absence of connotations), conventionality (appearance of terms is often the result of convention on the part of community), nominative character (mostly nouns and nominative phrases are used as terms), also stability and recurrence of form in speech (which
allows no variation of form and also helps to differentiate terminological
word-combinations and combinations of terms).

The number of desired properties of an “ideal” term or **terminological
requirements** considered by various terminologists varies from 4 to 13 and
includes desired formal, semantic and pragmatic (or functional) properties.

The most important **semantic requirements** are semantic consistency
and monosemy.

**Semantic consistency** means no contradiction between the lexical and
the special meaning of a term. In some terminologies we come across
such contradiction – for example, *seam* as a common word means *joint*
tight connection) but sometimes in building terminology in cases, such
as *sedimentation seam, earthquake seam* is used as *fissure; Russian suhaja
shtukaturba* (dry plaster) in building is used in the meaning ‘dry plastered
partition’.

By **monosemy** the existence of only one meaning in a given termin-
ology is meant. If a lexical form is used in different terminologies, this
causes no inconvenience – the word *morphology* is used in linguistics,
geology and biology having in every science a specific meaning. But
many terms are polysemic, such as *flooring, roofing, cladding, isolation,
moulding, coating, rehabilitation* meaning both a process and its result; in
linguistics – *borrowing, assimilation*, etc. There are also cases when the
same term has a broader and a narrower meaning, such as in balneology
*water treatment* is divided into *mineral water treatment* and *water treatment*
(proper); the same applies in building to *inner walls* that are divided
into *partitions* and *inner walls* (proper). In lexicology there are cases such as
*affix word* meaning: 1) a word, which is an affix, and 2) a word with
an affix; *doublets* – 1) different words etymologically coming from the
same word, and 2) species of absolute synonyms.

To the group of **form requirements** belong such beneficial qualities as
shortness, exactness, absence of variants, motivation.

By **shortness** of a term we mean either the absence of unnecessary
elements (underlined in the following examples) - *living flat, traumatic
injury, metan-tanks for sludge treatment, chronic form of influenza, contact
telephones, commercial shops, free gift, plans for the future* or preference of
the short forms (compare Russian нейромезодерматодистрофия and ней-
рофиброматоз).

**Exactness** means correspondence of the form of a term to its meaning
which is sometimes lacking: Indian standard IS 1382:1961 (glass produc-
Absence of variation is a necessary quality for some new terms that may have several variants: term graffiti has many variants – graffiti, sgrafitti, sgraffiti, sgrafito, etc. which sometimes are even used in the same text.

The quality of motivation, that is having form that points to its meaning, helps to easier understand and learn the respective concept. Out of the existing three main types of motivation the most extensively used in forming new terms are structural motivation that occurs in words consisting of the already known meaningful parts, such as penknife, railroad, loader, their structure pointing to their meaning, and semantic motivation that occurs in words with secondary meaning which can be guessed on the basis of the primary meaning. In the combinations aeroplane wing, aeroplane tail, column neck, head of a line, leg of a table the words wing, tail, head and leg have secondary meaning. Using the primary, generally-known meaning we can guess where the wings and tail are in an airplane, or where a column neck is situated even if we see these objects for the first time.

The most important pragmatic requirements are:

establishedness – the quality of being approved by specialists and universally used, which could be judged by the frequency of occurrence in communication;

international form which helps in international communication;

euphoniousness - the quality of having no unpleasant connotations (compare rhinitis and running nose); very important in trade-names: the Soviet car Zhiguli for a long time would not sell in France where its name was associated with gigolo – a hired lover; the Czech car Shkoda (which in Polish means ‘harm’) was changed in Poland to Skoda, which has no connotations; in the USA such names of professions as garbage collector and rat catcher were changed to sanitary engineer and vermin control officer.

With the task of choosing the most effective forms for new terms, one of the most popular directions of terminological research in the USSR in the 1960s and the 1970s was the analysis of the existing forms of terms in various terminologies of many languages with the aim of establishing the most productive means and patterns of term formation and elaborating recommendations for forming new terms. As the result of this research
also various forms of motivation were studied and some tendencies of usage of various means of term formation on certain stages of development of terminologies were revealed.

However, it was found that synchronous research does not present reliable information concerning productivity of various ways and patterns of term formation and so diachronic approach was suggested in the 1970s.

Firstly, different means of term forming may result in the same structural type of terms – among the simple, or root terms there may be words from the everyday vocabulary – water, hand, abbreviated – motel, laser, scuba, dinky and borrowed – pizza, castle. At the same time usage of the same means – for example borrowing – may result in terms of various structural types.

Secondly, relatively low frequency of a means of term-formation may signify either means coming out of usage or new, perspective means that have not yet attained sufficient level of usage.

Thirdly, there was found a certain relation between the predominant forms of terms and time of their appearance and also between degree of development of a certain field of knowledge and prevalent means of forming its terms (Grinev 1979).

It was also found that for assessing a chosen type of term-formation it is very useful to establish mean time of appearance of terms produced with its help. This may be accomplished by using the existing historical dictionaries containing dates of first appearance in texts and changes of meaning of words and word-combinations. In English such information is provided by the exhaustive 20-volume Oxford English Dictionary.

To establish this characteristic a new method, tested on a number of English, French and Russian terminologies was elaborated. The date of first appearance of a lexical form in text is considered to be the date of appearance in language. But taking account of the fact that usually written fixation is preceded by a certain period of usage in oral speech five years is subtracted from the date of appearance in written speech and the result is approximated to decade. In this way the conditional time of appearance of a lexeme is supposed to be within the limits of ± 5 years. For example a word first recorded in the year 1572 is considered to appear in oral speech at least in 1567, which is in round figures (roughly) in 1560s and in statistic calculations only the first three digits are taken into consideration.
It was found that the existing means of term formation may be classified into the following groups and subgroups:

Semantic term-formation:
- generalisation of the ordinary word;
- metaphoric term-formation;
- metonymic term-formation;
- specialising of the everyday speech word;
- inter-terminological borrowing;
- borrowing (viewed as semantic means of forming terms because in the majority of cases borrowing is accompanied by semantic changes).

Morphologic term-formation:
- suffixation;
- prefixation;
- conversion;
- phonetic transformations (salt – silt, trill – tweed, baluster – banister);
- truncation.

Syntactic term-formation (producing word combinations)

Morpho-syntactic term-formation:
- composition;
- ellipsis;
- abbreviation.

In the 1990s terminology science felt the influence of cognitive linguistics where the leading type of research was comparing lexical presentation of a certain basic notion in different languages. With this aim in view and also to investigate possible deviations in translating terms within the framework of comparative terminology science the method of reversibility was worked out, which already has been successfully applied in a number of MA and even PhD (Гринев 1997, Миронова 2002, Фадеева 2004, Жадейко 2008).

This investigation is carried out as follows. Two large translating dictionaries (if possible of the same author/s) of the opposite directions, i.e. English-Russian and Russian-English are used in following forth and back translations of a chosen word. Usually there are several variants of translation of the chosen word, which are then translated back into the origi-
nal language (this is called a full reverse). In the process of reverse translation again some new words appear, mostly synonymic to the original word. Translating them would start the second step and bring out some new words and translating them back would finish the second step. Usually this process lasts for three or four steps, but sometimes it may take more steps. In the process of subsequent reverse translations we witness radiation – an increase of new words, immediately or intermediately connected with the initial word.

The aims of such investigation are manifold. Firstly, we may reveal incorrect translations which are signalled by receiving in back translation words quite different from the original one (floor – De. Decke – ceiling). It was found that in many cases two steps are sufficient to find superficial incorrect translations of the initial word.

Secondly, we may find out whether the authors of the dictionaries published in Russia adhere to conventions accepted at the conference of lexicographers at 1969 in Moscow concerning presentation of variants of translation. It was agreed then that in translating dictionaries homonyms would be presented as separate entries, while translations of different meanings of polysemic word are presented in the same entry under Arabic numbers. Synonymic translations are divided by commas, while quasi-equivalents are divided by semicolons. Therefore in a dictionary of this kind such relations as homonymic, polysemic, synonymic and quasi-synonymic should be presented quite clearly. However in some dictionaries these principles are not strictly observed.

Thirdly, new possibilities of studying polysemy appear with the advent of this method. One of the possibilities concerns discriminating between evident and hidden polysemy. It was found that if one of the translations of the seemingly monosemic word on the first step does not return to the original word and on the second step has semantically quite different translation, then it is an evidence of hidden polysemy. With the evident polysemy we may further investigate the borders of possible dispersion of meaning.

Fourthly, we may investigate synonymy, for back translation of the foreign equivalents of the original word will bring forth its synonyms. At the same time we may analyse differences between back translating of full and partial equivalents which are supposed to be between themselves full and partial synonyms.
Further on, we may analyse the choice of equivalents in translating terminological dictionaries. It is known that up to 75% of the translation time takes trying to provide accurate translation of terms. The importance of terminological problems of translation results from the lack of coincidence between even closely related languages which causes distortions in conveying information of the original text.

If there are several equivalents to the term that is being translated, then it is necessary to choose the most adequate term, which is not always easy for two reasons – disparity of national terminologies and bad quality of the majority of modern dictionaries.

These variants could be either different terms, the subtotal of their meanings corresponding to the various meanings or usages of the source term, as in: Abwasser – sewage; effluent (Junge... 1991) or synonyms: Porzellan – porcelain, china (Harrap’s... 1983); spelling variants: capital – Kapital, Kapitell (Junge... 1991), word-formation variants: park – Park, Parkanlage (Junge... 1991); abbreviation – Abkurzung, Kurzung, Kurzzeichen (Worterbuch... 1979), or local variants: Mais – maize (Br) / corn (USA) (Harrap’s... 1983). When the target language is native for the translator then it is much easier to find out what is the case, but when the target language is not native then it is very difficult to choose the right equivalent. Situation becomes even more complicated with the growth of number of probable variants of translation.

Often such lists of equivalents include synonyms, variants and quite different terms side-by-side, thus utterly embarrassing the user of the dictionary. We already mentioned that with the increase of the number of equivalents we evidence the increase of the probability of including erroneous equivalents among the right ones (Grinev 1999). If we take terms with a very large number of equivalents suggested, we can see that most of these equivalents are in reality narrower or slightly different in meaning terms. Very often among the variants of translating a source term we can see broader or narrower terms, or terms with quite different meanings, or sometimes having their own exact equivalents, like in: Vestibul – vestibule, anteroom, lobby, when in the English-German part of the same dictionary there are precise equivalents of superfluous translations: anteroom – Vorraum; lobby – Lobby (Junge 1991).

Finally we may be able to find national (as well as international) associations. For example the range of possible further equivalents of the
word *magician* includes, on the one hand words like *virtuoso*, *maestro* and *genius* having positive connotations, while on the other hand words like *trickster* having decidedly negative connotation.

Lately it was found that, since the process of cognition has a historic character, starting with the beginnings of human self-consciousness, *cognitive studies* should not be limited to synchronous plane. Therefore there was a search for more effective methods that would allow getting a close look at the earlier stages of cognition in connection with evolution of special vocabulary. It was based on the assumption that practically all historical changes in human mentality and knowledge growth are reflected in changes in the lexical system and resulted in creating a new scientific discipline – *anthropolinguisitcs*. Therefore an opportunity arises to implement the analysis of transformations in terminological apparatus of a definite field of knowledge in obtaining a relatively accurate notion of the specific features and tendencies of evolution in theoretical thought. It also creates the opportunity to reconstruct the historical states and tendencies of development of cognition.

A new approach to the *method of semantic fields* was lately suggested within the framework of anthropolinguisitcs that took into consideration the original aim of semantic field theory – Jost Trier applied it for analysing historical changes in human mentality and investigating its evolution on the basis of changes in vocabulary. This is important for investigating the history of cognition. As the well-known French Medievalist George Duby states, “The history of mentalities cannot develop without the help of lexicologists. They may supply it with fundamental data, for example lists of words that were used at a particular epoch. The task of the history of mentalities is to reveal verbal constellations reflecting the most important points of the collective mentality of the time. It is necessary to analyse changes in vocabulary, losses, growth and transformations in word meanings and to establish connections between semantic changes and shifts in mentalities” (Duby 1961: 20). Recently it was found that similar ideas were expressed already in the Middle Ages.

Investigations of this type currently being carried out in Poland and Russia strive to make the transfer from simple descriptions of the evolution of various semantic fields (representing the evolution of respective ideas in mentality) to understanding and explaining changes in their history. This is being done by extracting information from historical dic-
tionaries on the historical changes in the meanings of words belonging to the chosen semantic field and analysing every semantic change, searching for the answers to a number of questions, including such as what brought about the need for new words; and what has changed with the addition of new lexemes in the previously existing system of words.

We may not find the answers to these questions, but in many cases we may suggest the possible reasons and causes for historical changes, thus discovering the peculiarities in the development of modern general ideas and reasons for historical changes in perceiving the world. In these studies the analysis of relations between meanings in historical polysemy turns out to be promising – the simple fact that in Sumerian the same word denoted *stars* and *gods* throws some light on Sumerian religious beliefs.

By comparing synchronic sections of terminologies viewed as a means of formalising respective systems of concepts attributed to various chronological epochs, we gain the possibility of estimating the tempo in the development of a chosen conceptual fragment of a picture of the world, its quantitative and qualitative historical variations, and stages of specialisation and affiliation (branching) of particular scientific sub-disciplines. In general it might be used as a relatively reliable basis for research aimed at discovering the causes and conditions of accelerating knowledge growth.

To **conclude**, the history of terminology science may be viewed as history of development of methods of investigating special vocabulary. Every major stage of growth of theoretical knowledge is accompanied by particular problems and new ways of solving them.

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TERMINOLOGIJOS METODAI TERMINOLOGIJOS MOKSLO ISTORIJOJE

Straipsnyje specialiosios leksikos tyrimo ir tvarkybos metodų raidos požiūriu aptaria terminologijos mokslo istorija. Pažymima, kad plėtojantis terminologijos mokslo įvairiais jo raidos etapais buvo taikomi ir tobulinami tam tikri metodai – sisteminis, tipologinis, semiotinis, reversinis, diachroninis ir antropologinis. Tai leidžia terminologijos tyrinėjimų istoriją apžvelgti kaip terminologijos metodologijos raidą.

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