

Sense Relationships in Terminology

Introduction

Ideally, all terms designating a concept should be

- **unambiguous** (having a unique relationship between form and concept) and
- **monosemantic** (a one concept - one term relationship) with that concept in a given specialized language.



Introduction

4th principle:

a concept is referred to by one term and one term only designates one concept.



Introduction

In reality, however, this is not always the case.

The principle

one designation - one concept,
does not always occur in practice.



In spite of this principle, in a special subject field there can be identical terms with different meanings. Their independent conceptual system may be justified by the fact that they belong to different branches of the same field.

Polysemy

Polysemy is one of the most productive ways of extending a language's lexicon. The origin of most polysemantic terms is analogy of one concept to another, which allows the designation of one concept to be used for designating another. A new term is thus created from partial semantic overlap.



Definition of Polysemy

*A word having several meanings is called **polysemantic**, and the ability of words to have more than one meaning is described by the term **polysemy**.*



Identification of polysemic expressions in terminology is difficult, if not impossible, without a sufficient knowledge of the subject field and without a reasonable context available which helps delineate the topic, a branch of SpF, text-type, etc.

Polysemy vs. Homonymy

Traditional understanding of homonymy as opposed to polysemy, is that homonyms have no common etymological roots or basis whereas polysemes have developed from one common form and acquired different or modified meanings through their devolution.

Homonyms

Are terms that have the same form but represent entirely different concepts. It is far more frequent in terminology than in the general lexicon. This is explained by the fact that in terminology each subject field is considered a closed domain.

Synonymy in Terminology

Broadly speaking two units designating the same concepts are synonyms.

Even though theoretically a concept is expressed by a single designation, in reality there are alternative designations for a single concept and the designations of two different concepts can coincide even within the same subject field.



Thus, terminology only considers synonyms to be semantically equivalent units that belong to the **same historical language** and to the **same formal register**.

Synonyms for a single concept, however, do not always correspond to absolute equivalents, but rather manifest a range of possible cases.

True synonyms

are terms that designate the same concept and that can be used interchangeably in all contexts.

derived word = derivative

word-building = word-formation

substantive = noun

Quasi-synonyms / near-synonyms

are terms that designate the same concept but that are not interchangeable because of differences in usage depending on communication situations.

fridge / refrigerator

measles / rubeolla

football / soccer

Pseudo-synonyms / false synonyms

designate different, although often
closely related, concepts.

chair / stool

law / statute / ordinance / act

Antonyms

are pairs of words whose meanings are
the opposites of one another, exactly as
antonym is opposite to synonym

explosion / implosion

seropositive / seronegative

constitutional / unconstitutional

Hyperonymy-hyponymy

Hyperonymy and hyponymy are semantic relations of lexical units deriving from a hierarchical classification of the referents they represent.

A hyperonym

is a word whose meaning contains the meanings of other words (hyponyms) or, from the ontological dimension point of view, a hyperonym represents a referent, of which there are several kinds (the name of each kind is a hyponym).



A hyponym

is a word whose meaning is contained in the meaning of another word (hyperonym), this means, a hyponym represents a referent that is a certain type of a hierarchically superior referent in a sorting of referents.

A co-hyponym

is a word whose meaning is at the same level as another word in relation to a hyperonym. Two co-hyponyms represent two types of referents of the same referent.