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TERMINOLOGICAL PROBLEMS IN LINGUISTICS,

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NEOLOGISMS

Introduction

The absence of standardization of terminology in the social sciences, as opposed to that of the natural sciences and technological disciplines, has resulted in an outcrop of new terms in a number of fields. In linguistics, in particular, the flowering of terminology has reached new dimensions, and its striking feature is a host of neologisms and polysemy of existent linguistic terms in different concepts and approaches. While the SLOVAR LINGUISTIČESKIKH TERMINOV (1966) dealt with 7,000 entries in one volume, the LINGUISTISCHES WÖRTERBUCH (1973) needed three volumes for treating only about 1,000 linguistic key terms, because the present state of the art requires not only definitions, but ample references to a specific meaning of a term in a specific concept and thus an extensive bibliography. The stock-taking and systematization of current linguistic terminology has become a vast task.

Those sub-disciplines which are most prolific in coining new terms seem to be text linguistics, speech act theory, spoken discourse analysis, and idiomatology (phraseology). The designations of these rapidly developing fields will be scrutinized under the following aspects:

(1) To what extent are they real terms in that they designate a defined concept, or only ad-hoc designations with a limited circulation?

(2) To what extent do they overlap with well-defined existing terms and give rise to polysemy and synonymy in linguistic terminology?

(3) To what extent do they promote the tendency towards international terms (either by direct borrowing or translations) and facilitate a consistent use of well-defined linguistic terminology? The interlingual comparability and intelligibility of linguistic terms is an urgent requirement, since various Russian-based linguistic dictionaries in the past have aimed at presenting equivalents of linguistic terms in English, German, French, Spanish and Czech (cf. LINGVISTIČESKIJ SLOVAR' and SLOVAR' AMERIKANSKOJ LINGVISTIČESKOJ TERMINOLOGII).

Text linguistics

Text linguistics has experienced a rapid growth of research activities in many European countries since the early 1970s. The very name of this newly established linguistic discipline is

indicative of different theoretical objectives and empirical approaches. The German term Textlinguistik seems to have been first used by H. Weinrich in 1967, but was probably anticipated by E. Coseriu in 1962. The term Textwissenschaft is used as a synonymous term by H.F. Plett, T.A. van Dijk, and Z. Wawrzyniak. Another synonym is Texttheorie (S.J. Schmidt; KLEINES WÖRTERBUCH), but has to be distinguished from Theorie der Texte, which is based on a semiotic concept (M. Bense).

The term text linguistics became current usage in Britain rather late, whereas it was used in Scandinavian studies as early as in 1974. The key term of the conference on text linguistics which was held at the Moscow State Institute for Foreign Languages 'Maurice Thorez' in 1973, was lingvistika teksta. The English term textology in the sense of linguistic studies on texts, also under contrastive aspect, was made popular by R.R.K. Hartmann (1980). It may count as another synonym of text linguistics and has no German equivalent so far. Textologie does not seem to be a necessary term in view of the various synonyms already available. The Russian term tekstologija, on the other hand, means textual criticism in editing historical written records.

Whereas the terms, mentioned so far, refer to the meta-linguistic description of texts, the following neologisms textuality and textonomy designate internal communicative and structural qualities of texts. The German approximation to textuality would be Texthaftigkeit or Textlichkeit (E. Werlich). The term textuality is used by R. de Beaugrande and W. Dressler without a strict definition, but rather as a description of the sum total or product of "seven constitutive principles of textual communication" or "seven standards of textuality", which are known as "cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, informativity, situationality, intertextuality".

Apparently a nonce-formation, the term textonomy occurs in a paper by A. Neubert entitled "Words and Texts" and is used as an operational term to cover the extensive field of ordered relations of the text described. This term has no general circulation in German either.

Considerable problems arise in the terminology linked with text typology. The term text type itself has meanwhile become highly polysemous because it is used (a) to designate a theoretical concept as the highest abstraction of a cognitive and communicative action (E. Werlich), and (b) to mean a pre-theoretical, empirical, inductively derived term designating a more or less institution-alized pattern of text, corresponding to the term Textsorte/Textform (Gülich/Raible). Werlich defines text type as "an idealized norm of distinctive text structuring which serves as a matrix of rules and elements for the encoder when responding linguistically to specific aspects of his experience" (1976:39). And he goes on by making a distinction into five types known as description, narration, exposition, argumentation, and instruction (with their German latinized equivalents). Werlich's text types are derived from the basic cognitive processes which originate from the speaker's action and his/her reactions on the environment.

The term Texttyp has a different definition and linguistic status in the concept of the communicative and functional description of language as represented by the Potsdam Circle of Linguists and chiefly the late Professor Wilhelm Schmidt, so that there is an overlap with Werlich's interpretation of the term. W. Schmidt's text type is integrated in a model of a descending hierarchy which comprises the categories Textklasse (according to the sender's communicative intention), Texttyp (according to the prevailing set of communication acts = Kommunikations-verfahren), Textart, and Textsorte. Schmidt's concept of Textsorte roughly corresponds to Werlich's Textform and its modification Textformvariante and is also comparable to what Sager/Dungworth/McDonald understand under special form with reference to texts of English Special Languages. There seems to be unanimous agree-ment among linguists that the individual text under analysis may be termed Textexemplar (Werlich), Textformular (S.J. Schmidt), specimen text or sample text.

Examples of metaphorical terms and idiosyncratic ad-hoc-formations which are not substantiated by definitions are Text-partitur (H. Weinrich), Textwelt/textual world (originally used by U. Oomen in 1974 and resumed by Beaugrande/Dressler) and textual field (A. Neubert 1979). In the light of the criteria which a term must satisfy, metaphorical coinages are not self-explanatory.

Essential new terms in text linguistics are cohesion and coherence, and their conceptual difference seems to be generally accepted. Coherence/Kohärenz is understood as the semantic/notional connection of sentences in a text as the basis of the expansion of a topic and of the sender's intention; cohesion/Kohäsion de-scribes only the surface structure of a text beyond sentence boundaries. It is interesting to note that the term cohesion has been taken over into Russian and has been assimilated into kogezija, meaning coherence. The necessity of segmenting a text for tracing its coherence has given rise to the terms Abschnitt and Absatz in German, because the structural/conceptual unit and the typographical unit do not always coincide. The English term chunk and core seem to designate text segments for empirical analysis, whereas the terms conceptual paragraph and physical paragraph with regard to texts in science and technology have a theoretical status in the concept of New Rhetoric as presented by the Washington School (L. Trimble and associates). The list of terms in text linguistics is in fact open-ended, and a number of them neither meet the requirements of a term nor make a general contribution to theory formation. Clarification of this ter-minology with a view to its consistent use would be desirable.

Spoken discourse analysis

As a recent extension of text linguistics and speech act theory, the analysis of spoken discourse has produced a number of new linguistic terms which are chiefly circulating in English and occur in German either in their foreign form or as loan trans-lations. The subject of this analysis is spontaneous, unrestrained discourse between two or more people and the prosodic and para-linguistic features which accompany it.

The American term conversational analysis is reflected in

German publications as Diskursanalyse (Wunderlich 1976), Linguistik des Dialogs (Steger 1976), Konversationsanalyse (Kallmeyer/Schütze 1976) and Gesprächsanalyse (Henne/Rehbock 1982). The Survey of Spoken English as a sub-project of the Survey of English Usage (London), conducted by Prof. Randolph Quirk and Prof. Jan Svartvik (also known as the London-Lund Corpus) has produced valuable data of impromptu speech in English. The term impromptu speech, another neologism, designates a long-term project devoted to unrestrained oral communication in English and in various Scandinavian languages conducted by N.E. Enkvist (Turku/Åbo). At a conference held in Åbo in 1981, for a number of theoretical reasons, the term impromptu speech was preferred to other competing terms, coined by individual contributors to this conference, e.g. unplanned speech , spontaneous speech , unrehearsed speech , improvised speech , and extemporated speech .

An essential new term in spoken discourse analysis is turn-taking. It designates the sequence of contributions which the individual speakers make in the course of a conversation; the stretch of discourse of one speaker is called a turn. These terms have equally been translated into German as Sprecherwechsel and Gesprächsbeitrag/Gesprächsschritt. Another relevant neologism is gambit. Originally a metaphor borrowed from the game of chess, it designates conversational elements which open and maintain a discourse. The typology of gambits is still open to discussion, and so are its linguistic units, which may range from inter-jections, hesitational phenomena to set expressions as conversational formulas. Among the names of individual gambits, which are all neologisms (e.g. appealer, cajoler, hesitater, represent etc.) synonymous terms may be found, e.g. starter/opener. The concept of gambits has practical implications for speech training (oracy) as well. The German translation Gesprächsfloskel for gambit is not quite satisfactory, because it does not cover hesitational phenomena which are not phrases like other gambits.

Idiomatology

Another linguistic sub-discipline which has substantially contributed to the development of new terms is idiomatology. This is the British name of the linguistic discipline dealing with phraseological units the majority of which have undergone a transfer of meaning (either as a metaphor or a metonymy). Its equivalent in Continental linguistics, and in Soviet research in particular, is phraseology. In British and American linguistics, idiom proves an umbrella term for entirely different word groups and is used as such in British, American and Western European studies devoted to them. Competing terms for word-groups are phrase, collocation, macrolexeme, hyperlexeme, string, word-group lexeme, ready-made utterance, set expression etc. In linguistic studies published in the Soviet Union, in Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic, the generic term, on the other hand, is not idiom, but phraseological unit or phraseologism. There is nearly universal agreement among Soviet authors who have investigated phraseological features of the English language (O. Akhmanova, I. Arnol'd, A.V. Kunin) that idioms form a sub-group among phraseological units although they prevail in quantity in the phraseological system. The term which the two branches of research share is idiomaticity/ Russian idiomatičnost'/ German

Idiomatizität; it designates the complex meaning of a set ex-
pression which cannot be derived from the meanings of its con-
stituents, but is often obscured or fossilized.

The generic term of the phraseological unit has attracted
a host of synonyms both in German and Russian, since many authors
strive to make their personal contribution to the terminology
which is still in a constant state of flux due to parallel pub-
lications. Quite a number of ad-hoc coinages have not found a
firm footing in the formation of the theory of set expressions.
To quote a few typical ones in German: (feste) Wortverbingung
(H. Brinkmann), festes Syntagma (A. Rothkegel), Wortgruppenlexem
(H. Wissemann), lexikalisches Syntagma, Wortgruppe, phraseolo-
gische Fügung, idiomatische Redewendung (W. Friederich), stehende
Redewendung (Dudengrammatik), feststehender Ausdruck, sprachliches
Fertigstück, Wortverband (E. Leisi, B. Carstensen), Phraseolexem
(K.D. Pilz, W. Fleischer), Frasmus (J. Häusermann - a neologism
which stands more or less apart), verbaler Stereotyp (F. Coulmas),
Phrase (mostly with negative connections).

This range of synonymous terms is by no means an extreme
case, but quite a natural phenomenon where absence of termino-
logical coordination allows for new individual coinages which
are often presented as novel research.

In Soviet linguistics, the generic term seems to be frazeo-
logičeskaja edinica and occasionally frazeologizm. But there
are still a number of competing terms such as (frazeologičeskoe)
sočetanie, frazeologičeskoe edinstvo, frazeologičeskoe sraščenie,
frazeologičeskij štamp. The term phraseological collocation which
is sometimes used in English written publications in Soviet
linguistics is a misnomer because it leads to a confusion with
the British term collocation which since Neo-Firthian linguistics
has come to designate the habitual co-occurrence of lexical units
due to their semantic compatibility.

Conclusion

Although in this paper only a selection of terms of three
linguistic sub-fields could be discussed, some general conclusions
may be drawn.

   (1) Since the possibility of new discoveries in linguistics
       is limited, the range of linguistic key terms forming
       the 'common core' of most linguistic terminological
       dictionaries may be regarded as sufficient in designating
       defined linguistic phenomena. Language economy should be
       equalled by economy of linguistic terms and their con-
       sistent use.

   (2) With a view to international coordination of linguistic
       terms and their translation, a further blurring of
       apparently identical designations (formatives) must be
       avoided, cf. English textology and Russian tekstologija
       are false friends; phraseological collocation is a mis-
       nomer. Metaphorical ad-hoc coinages among linguistic
       terms offer difficulties in translation because of their
       possible connotations and violate the principle of being

self-explanatory.

(3) Linguistic neologisms which are not substantiated by a definition of an <u>essential</u> linguistic phenomenon should be discarded entirely by the compilers of dictionaries of linguistic terms.

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