
Paysage: Lexical Variation in the Lexis of Landscape in Romance Dictionaries

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Abstract

This paper centres on lexical variations across languages and across time using the theories of collocational networks and collocational resonance. The word ‘paysage’ serves as a starting point to observe the evolution of landscape words in four Romance languages – French, Spanish, Italian, Romanian – from both a diachronic and a synchronic perspective. Data from several dictionaries, beginning with 16th century French dictionaries, indicate that earliest usage of ‘paysage’ is related to painting. From French, the word spread to Spanish (*paisaje*), in which it has been recorded in dictionaries since the early 18th century and is again related fundamentally to painting. The corresponding word in Italian, *paesaggio*, on the other hand, is much more sparsely represented in Italian lexicography, and in Romanian, *peisaj* does not appear until the 19th century under a combined French and Italian influence. In our paper, we use the collocations for ‘paysage’ to show how collocational networks is a proper framework for analysing and comparing lexical development across languages and for identifying – and representing – nuances in meaning and usage over time.

Keywords: Landscape; Lexical variation; collocational networks; collocational resonance

1 Introduction

For most of us, the word ‘landscape’ conjures up pictures of unspoilt countryside with an emphasis on the natural environment. It is only when used in the printing context of ‘landscape’ as opposed to ‘portrait’ that users might wonder as to a more complex lexical picture. The same is true in other languages, which is why the word can be an interesting starting point to approach lexical variations across languages and across time.

The lexical variations work group of the COST project ENeL – European Network for e-Dictionaries – brings together scholars from across Europe concerned with representations of lexical variance in dictionaries. This paper concerns collaborative work between five Romance language scholars who have an interest in historical and current pictures of landscape words in four Romance languages – French, Spanish, Italian and Romanian – as seen in historical and current dictionaries, and now forms part of a larger group looking at the etymology of language related to plants and the landscape. The main theoretical tools that will be applied are collocational networks and collocational resonance.

2 Methodology

A methodological analysis of dictionaries past and present can be carried out simply using pen, paper and a highlighter, or using more sophisticated qualitative analytical tools as CAQDAS¹. Both are used here as the Furetière dictionary project is making extensive and experimental use of Atlas Ti² in mapping a very large historical dictionary. However, the best tools for actually visualizing and mapping variation are those of collocational networks (Williams 1998) and collocational resonance (Williams 2008) linked to multilingual lexicographical prototypes (Williams, Piazza & Giuliani 2012). The latter is a development from Patrick Hanks work on polysemy (Hanks 2000) and will not be explored here. Networks are traditionally formed using statistical collocates to show relations between collocational units, but as it is not possible to use such measures within dictionary entries, simple lexical word co-occurrence is used in these cases. Resonance arises by studying networks over time, or between languages (Alonso, Williams & DeCesaris 2016) to see what meaning elements remain and what are lost. This visible variance makes these networks a powerful tool in studying lexical variation and will be applied here to *paysage* (landscape) and related words in other Romance languages, as well as the elements of the landscape that are introduced via dictionary entries.

3 Landscape

Landscape, and its various forms in other languages, was essentially a term used by artists to describe the move from the upright portrait format, to a wider format that permitted description of the environmental features. This gradually evolved to cover aspects of natural beauty, and then to all aspects of environmental features and beyond all wide vistas, albeit natural or not, as is easily seen through contemporary, more figurative, collocations in Italian such as *paesaggio urbano*, *paesaggio sonoro* or *paesaggio culturale*, literally ‘urban’, ‘sound’ and ‘cultural landscape’. Such collocations are also found in other languages and will not be explored here as we concentrate on the representation of natural features.

‘Landscape’, a term built combining two words from Old English according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (Simpson 2000), has developed in a very similar way to its Romance equivalents, *paysage* in French, *paisaje* in Spanish, *paesaggio* in Italian and *peisaj* in Romanian. This means that we shall continue to use the English word as an umbrella term for discussions when the thrust of this paper is to the variations of the etymologically related word in four Romance languages.

If we look at French dictionaries, the earliest usage is related to paintings, so that Estienne (1549) defines the word *paysage* as being a “mot commun entre les painctres” (‘word commonly used by painters’). The *Trésor de la Langue Française informatisé* also mentions the word as occurring in a 1551 translation of Sperone Speroni’s *Dialogues*, but does not provide an example to show whether the source word was *paese* or *paesaggio*, presumably the latter if we accept Franceschi (Franceschi 1997) cited in (Gendrat-Claudiel 2007) who says that the word was a French neologism that spread to other Romance languages, including Italian on the basis that “un seul et même mot, *paese*, a longtemps désigné le pays et sa représentation, avant que ne soit introduit *paesaggio* qui désigne la représentation du pays, puis au fil du temps, finit par désigner la perception d’une portion de nature.” Leaping forward to 1680 and Richelet’s dictionary, we are told that it “c’est un tableau qui représente

¹ Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software.

² www.atlasti.com

quelque campagne”. The spelling *paysage* is retained although he says that painters would pronounce it *pésage*. A separate entry informs as to a *paisagiste* being a specialised artist. However, a mere ten years later Antoine Furetière, in his *Dictionnaire Universel*, gives two senses for *paysage*, the first that it is “Aspect d’un pays, le territoire qui s’étend jusqu’où la veüe peut porter. Les bois, les collines et les rivières sont les beaux païsages.” The second sense gives the art definition where he precises that the word “se dit aussi des tableaux où sont représentées quelques veües de maisons, ou de campagnes.” The revised edition by Basnage de Beauval of the *Dictionnaire* (Furetière 1701) builds on this, adding new features and insisting on beauty. A contemporary dictionary of French, as *Le Petit Larousse illustré*, is far less prosaic giving three senses, the first being an ‘Étendue de terre qui s’offre à la vue’, followed by the notion of representation of a seen and finally the figurative senses.

In looking at the development of the word *paysage*, we are not only concerned with lexical variation of the word itself, across time and space, but also with the components of the physical landscape as described in dictionaries to see how these are represented and thereby how the descriptions of landscape features have varied over time. We are thus interested in the woods, hills and rivers mentioned by Furetière, and also the valleys, pastures and villages introduced by Basnage, as well as the collocates introduced in other languages.

In Spanish, it was not until 1708 that the Spanish word *paisaje* appeared. According to Corominas (1961), it was taken from the French *paysage*, derived from *pays*, in Spanish *país*. *País* entered in Spanish in 1597, with the original meaning of “rural territory”, then “district”, and, finally, the current meaning of *país* as “country”. Corominas includes *paisaje* inside the entry *pago* (‘payment’), coming from Latin *pagus* as meaning “pueblo, aldea” (‘village, hamlet’) “distrito” (‘district’). Despite the original reference to a rural territory stated in Corominas, the first definition of *paisaje* is given by Terreros y Pando in 1788 as a noun used in painting. Terreros’ dictionary entry for *paisaje* has two parts. The first refers the reader to the article for *país* (spelled at the time without an accent), in which both *país* and *paisaje* are defined as “la vista, ó aspecto de algún país, y en la pintura las arboledas, y casas de campo” (‘the view or aspect of a landscape, and in painting the woods and country houses’), giving the equivalents *paysage* from French and *paese, pittura* for Italian. The second part of the entry for *país* states “Palomino, que lo toma por un pedazo de país” (‘Palomino, who takes it as a piece of country’), which is noteworthy in our context because Antonio Palomino, himself a painter, is mainly known for his 3-volume work *El museo pictórico y escala óptica*, which became an influential work on how to describe art in Spanish. The *Diccionario de la lengua castellana* by the Real Academia Española (RAE) published in 1832 repeats Terreros’ reporting of Palomino’s view of *paisaje* as a “pedazo de un país en la pintura”. Gaspar y Roig (1855) completes the definition by including some frequent collocations used in painting with their respective definitions: *paisaje campestre* (‘countryside’), *paisaje histórico* (‘historical’), *paisaje ideal* (‘ideal’), *paisaje misto* (‘mixed’). The RAE’s 1869 edition considers two senses, both referring to artistic features: the part of a landscape in a painting or drawing, and a terrain or landscape which is observed artistically. This second sense is extended in the 1992 edition by giving a more general sense of the word as “extensión de terreno que se ve desde un sitio” (‘area of land which is seen from a [specific] place’). The Academy currently lists three senses for *paisaje*: first, “extensión de un terreno que se ve desde un sitio”; second, as the “extensión de terreno considerada en su aspecto artístico” (‘area of land considered artistically’); and finally, “pintura o dibujo que representa cierta extensión de terreno” (‘painting or drawing which represents an area of land’). Other dictionaries of Spanish generally follow suit, although importantly the *Diccionario de uso del español de América y España* (2002) lists as its first sense ‘Extensión de terreno vista desde un lugar determinado y considerada

como espectáculo' ('Area of land seen from a certain place and considered as a spectacle'), which clearly introduces the idea of being worthy of notice. This dictionary includes three examples, including 'el paisaje urbano' 'urban landscape', for this sense.

Lexicographical depictions of the entry **paesaggio** were sparse in both monolingual and bilingual Italian dictionaries from the first edition of the *Vocabolario della Crusca* in 1612 until its rather bland recording in the *Dizionario della lingua italiana* (1861) by Niccolò Tommaseo. In his entry, Tommaseo, fails to offer any collocational behaviour of the word itself but instead equates it to *paese* in a picturesque sense and offers some literary contextualisation of the entry³. Subsequent editions of the *Vocabolario della Crusca* until 1923 all went without recording the word **paesaggio**. Thus, the mantle passed to bilingual facet of Italian lexicography to shed some collocational light on this largely unrecorded term. In this regard, Fernando Altieri's *Dizionario Italiano-Inglese* (1749) was rather static referring to it as a 'termine pittoresco' and translating it as *landskip* [sic] or *country work in painting*. The next occurrence in a bilingual Italian-English dictionary came in the *Dizionario Italiano-Inglese* (1870), some nine years after Tommaseo's dictionary, with its compiler John Millhouse presenting two different conceptualisations of **paesaggio**: one as a physical environmental structure [landscape], the other as a piece of art [sketch]. Landscape, at least in the context of Italian lexicography, had a certain elusiveness – overlooked largely in the early and seminal editions of Italian monolingual dictionaries and being somewhat opaquely recorded in their bilingual Italian-English editions. Indeed, as Italy entered the twentieth century buoyed by a linguistic uniformity, there appeared to be little lexicographical treatment and clarity, at least in an Italian domain, about the meaning of landscape.

In Romanian, *peisaj* appears in the XIXth century, under a combined French and Italian influence, in the context of an important change in manners and civilisation, when both painting and sightseeing are developing amongst a new formed middle class; it is to be noted that the root *peis* or *pais* was never acclimated in Romanian, where country and land are both designated by the word *tzara* (from Latin *terra*). *Dictionarul explicativ al limbii române* (Academia Română 2009) gives four senses for *peisaj*, the first one insisting on the artistic feature of the portion of nature which can be designated as "peisaj", the second defining it as a type of painting or photograph, the third specifying it may designate a literary genre, i.e. description of the nature in literary works, and the fourth indicating it can name a piece of music which uses onomatopoeia to suggest landscape.

4 Networking meanings and Conclusion

Collocational networks can demonstrate the different ways in which a word is characterised in different environments or languages. Thus, the late 17th century vision of landscape as seen in Furetière gives a series of features as *bois* (woods), *bourgade* (small town), *campagne* (countryside), *collines* (hills), *hameaux* (hamlets), *maisons de plaisance* (country residences), *prairies* (pasture), *sources* (springs), *rivières* (rivers), *ruisseaux* (streams), *vallées* (valleys), *vignes* (vines), *villes* (towns), *et enfin la mer même* (and finally even the sea). Even is interesting as it signals a feature that would apparently not have sprung necessarily to Basnage's mind.

³ Per lo vano d'una finestra, o per qualunque altra apertura di lor capriccio, mostrare una lontananza di paesaggio in isfuggita.

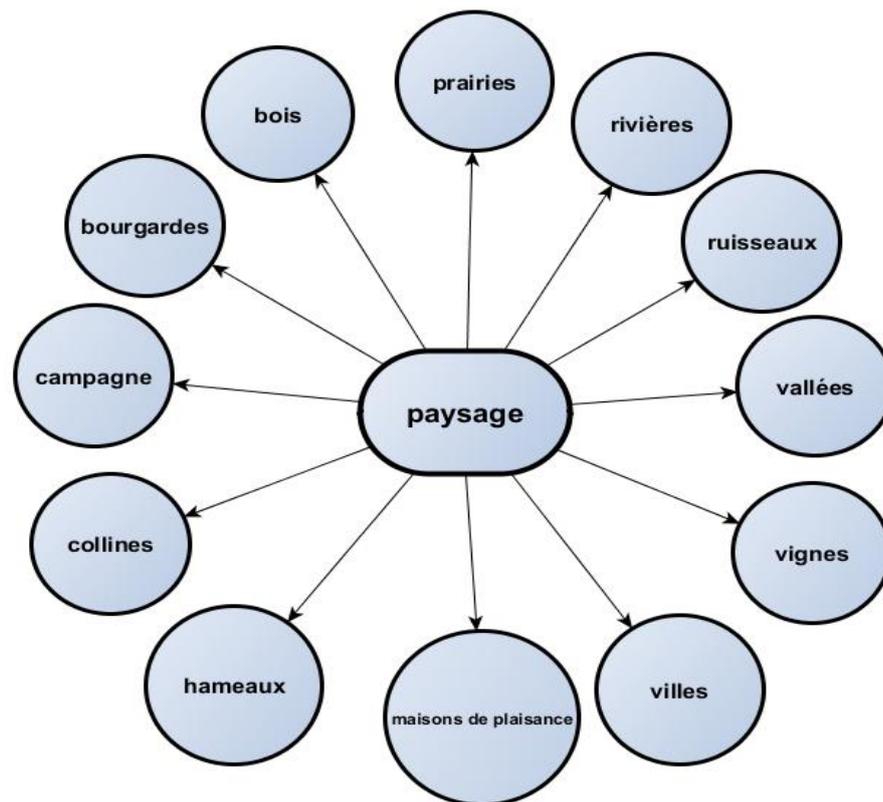


Figure 1: Collocational network of “paysage” (first level).

Spanish dictionaries shows a slightly different picture as they include país (*country*), *aldea* (hamlet), *campestre* (related to countryside), *terreno* (terrain), *natural* (natural), but also *ideal* (ideal), *mixto* (mixed) or *histórico* (historical) to name types of paintings. The set in Romanian is somewhat different as it includes *teritoriu* (territory), *natura* (nature), *relief* (relief), *sol* (soil), *ape* (waters), *vegetatie* (vegetation), *fauna* (fauna), *munti* (mountains), *sat* (village).

The next stage is to look at all these words and their evolution to see what images they carry and how they relate to the different and evolving pictures of the landscape in Romance dictionaries. This is ongoing work which as it evolves will allow us to get a better picture of lexical variation across European languages by starting from a group of Romance languages and then seeing how this term appears in other languages in historical and contemporary dictionaries.

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