

21 Italian-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce of Thessaloniki: an Italian-Greek-English Socioterminological Study

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to comparatively analyse the main socioterminological trends related to the Institution of the Italian Chamber of Commerce in three languages: Italian, Greek and English. In particular, the domain the project is focused on refers to the terminology contained in the Italian-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce of Thessaloniki website and in the bilingual publications of the above-mentioned body.

Chambre de Commerce Italo-Hellénique de Salonique : une étude socioterminologique dans les langues Italienne, Grecque et Anglaise

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RÉSUMÉ

Le but de cette étude réside dans la volonté d'effectuer une analyse comparée, en trois langues (grec, italien et anglais), des principales tendances au niveau socioterminologique dans le cadre de l'Institution de la Chambre de Commerce italienne.

En particulier, le domaine retenu pour ce projet porte sur la terminologie utilisée dans le site web de la Chambre de Commerce Italo-grecque de Salonique et dans les publications bilingues de ce même organisme.

1 Introduction

The present terminological study has been inspired by the apprenticeship I served at the Italian-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce of Thessaloniki. Being a bridge institution between two countries, the Chamber of Commerce was the ideal setting where to deal simultaneously with the specific terminology of the sector in two languages: Greek and Italian. The purpose of this study is to provide an overview of the neological trends, in particular concerning the use of the abbreviations and the loanwords in the analysed languages, and the social trends in terms of diastatic variation.

It is worth highlighting that the decision to include English language in the project and, primarily in the terminological corpora, fulfils two main fundamental needs: the first one is a direct consequence of the loanword analysis. Indeed most of the loanwords (both semantic

and morphological) analysed in the corpora proved to be imported from English. Therefore, it was necessary to provide the user with an English version of the final database in order to have a reference version of the studied phenomena.

The second reason to create the English version of the database serves the purpose to create a consultation tool that can tangibly meet the needs of the users who have terminological and linguistic doubts and, above all, to increase the availability and usefulness of this study.

2 Corpora and terminological extraction

The reference texts for the creation of the Italian and Greek corpora are the website pages of the Italian-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce, while the localization of the English parallel texts focused on the website of the same Italian institution in English-speaking countries, in order to collect the most relevant texts in terms of textual genres and communicative purpose of the above-mentioned corpora. The English equivalents of the terms that compose the database were extracted from the Italian Chamber of Commerce website in United Kingdom, United States of America and Australia.

It should be stressed that we made an important methodological choice with a view to the corpora creation: to collect heterogeneous source texts. Someone, reading the above-listed websites, could claim that we selected “dangerous” texts due to their composition, but we must acknowledge that, even if we were aware of the potential risks, such a choice was extremely useful for a socioterminological study. These texts are addressed to multiple and varied target readers. Really the different sections of the Italian-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce website are thought for a general audience that seek practical information, for those who approach this institution for the first time and ignore its specific competences, for sector specialists like entrepreneurs and agents interested in new trade opportunities and importers-exporters who need accounting and legal information.

Consequently, to this user multiplicity corresponds a multiplicity of texts and particularly of terminological sub-domains (related to the main one), which differ considerably in specialization degree, text genre and, obviously, in linguistic register. The above-explained corpora heterogeneity plays a fundamental role in researching the diastatic variants of the examined domain. Moreover, also Maria Teresa Cabré [2003:179] mentions this feature among the reasons, which, in her opinion, underpin a new theory of the Terminology instead

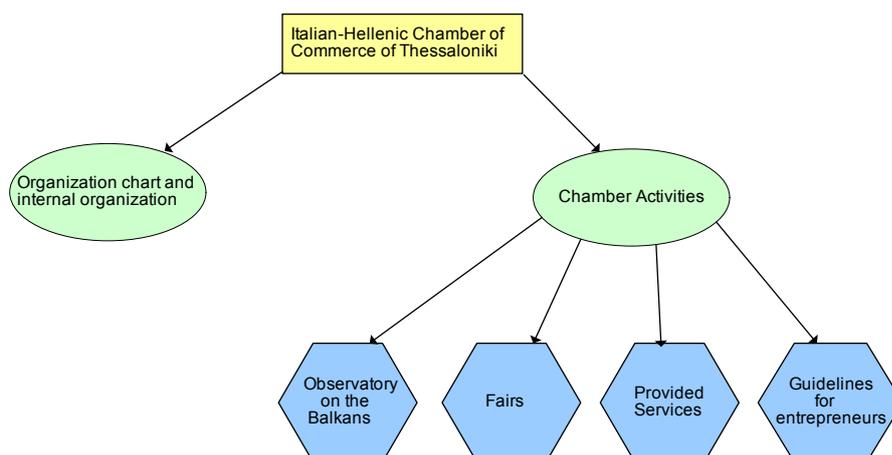
of the General Theory of Terminology by Wuster, because it is not structured enough to achieve a comprehensive description of the terms:

En quinto lugar porque su corpus de observación es totalmente homogéneo, con lo que no puede dar cuenta de la variedad que se produce tanto desde la observación de ámbitos temáticos distintos, como desde la inclusión en el corpus de datos procedentes de corpus de naturaleza real, no normalizados.

Maria Teresa Cabré [2003:179] suggests which kind of texts a corpora aiming at an “in vivo” (i.e. in their actual discourse operating) term analysis should contain, as follows:

Para ello debemos incluir producciones que sean [...] en situaciones de distinto nivel de formalidad y de grado de abstracción o nivel de especialidad diferente (discurso altamente especializado, medianamente especializado, discurso de divulgación científica) y de distintas funciones, o mejor dicho con valores distintos de las funciones que un discurso especializado puede tener (función informativa, función didáctica, directiva, evaluativo, etc.).

We here below include a diagram of the sub-domains that make up the domain:



In the first 1st degree sub-domain (“Organization chart and internal organization”) the terms refer to the institutional positions and the competence subdivision inside the Chamber of Commerce. Then, the second 1st degree sub-domain (“Chamber activities”) is more

complex and it contains most of the information regarding the provided services and the dossiers for the users. Now let us consider the 2nd sub-domains, the one called "Provided Services" is both general and specialized and it addresses specialist and no-specialist readers. Hence, it contains highly specialized terms and specialized terms that make already part of the general language. This phenomenon should be anything but unexpected; indeed it is a very common trend, as Maria Teresa Cabré [2003:183] points out:

Ello nos ha llevado a formular el postulado del "valor especializado": las llamadas unidades terminológicas, usadas en los ámbitos de especialidad, y las palabras usadas en contextos generales pueden explicarse a partir de una misma unidad de base, la unidad léxica. Una unidad especializada se convierte en una unidad de conocimiento especializado, es decir, adquiere *valor especializado*, cuando en un discurso de determinadas características se activa un contenido preciso.

On the other hand, in the sub-domains "Fairs", "Guidelines for entrepreneurs" and "Observatory on the Balkans" there is only extremely specialized terminology, in particular belonging to the economic, tax and legal fields.

With reference to the 2nd degree sub-domain "Observatory on the Balkans", the presence of this section in the Chamber of Commerce website depends on a peculiar geopolitical situation in the examined region. Indeed Thessaloniki in particular, and Macedonia in general border on the Balkans and this Greek region is considered as the anteroom to these countries. So this factor makes potential Hellenic-Italian partnerships acquire an added value in terms of trade possibilities, because they may result in projects conceived for the Balkans as it has already occurred and still happens.

Therefore, leaving out this aspect during the analysis of the domain and its terminology would turn out to be the cause of a limited and inaccurate work. Moreover, since the project intends to be an operational tool for the studied institution, in order to be useful and reliable the database must necessarily include all the components and the sectors of action of the Chamber of Commerce itself.

Before rounding off this section, we should mention also the other sources we used for the terminological extraction: the four-month bilingual journal "Notizie italoelleniche" published by the Italian-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce of Thessaloniki, the Italian journal "Business Italia 2004" by the Italian Ministry of Economy and Finance (Tax Policy Department) and the monthly "Eureka" published in Athens.

3 Conceptual tree diagrams

After creating the above-described corpora, we extracted the candidate terms and then we identified the conceptual relations among the terms. The following step consisted in studying the linguistic relations that connect the vedette terms with their variants and finally we drew the diagrams. The diagrams we designed are divided into two types [Meyer 1994:7].

The first one provides an overview of the sub-domain to be analysed and the conceptual relations are marked with different colours according to the legend in each table. On the other hand, the second one contains detailed parts of the general diagrams. On the arrows linking the term there are some “satellites”, where the relation between two terms is indicated explicitly. This binomial enables us to explain the sub-domain clearly and it allows the user to look the semantic relations up quickly and effectively, so that these relations become transparent also for a not-specialist audience. Before giving an example of an ad-hoc tree diagram designed for this domain, it is advisable to make a few remarks aiming at reaffirming the importance of this key phase in terminological research, as Lucia Fabbri [2005:7] appropriately claimed:

Si words are the living things with then power to move¹ la finalidad del modelo de análisis y de representación de los sistemas conceptuales debe ser la comprensión y no la clasificación. El modelo debe ayudar a comprender, que es ayudar a identificar, analizar, organizar, alertar, alterar, comparar, decidir y en todo momento ser dueños del proceso. El modelo debe permitir realizar y distinguir estas operaciones.

The above-mentioned opinion is worth being considered, if we assume that in terminology the terms are “unidades de conocimiento (M.T.Cabré), unidades de comunicación especializada (M.T.Cabré) o units of understanding (R. Temmerman)”², because, conversely, the terminological study would be a mere recording and cataloguing of terms that belong to a same domain. It is undeniable that, carrying out an analysis of the terms at a comprehensive semantic and linguistic level, the socioterminological perspective is a condition sine qua non. Indeed if the ultimate objective of the terminologist is to provide an overall overview of the terminology of a specific domain, it is impossible to leave the concept of variant out of consideration, otherwise the value of the study would be jeopardized.

¹ Rita Temmerman, *Towards New Ways of Terminology*, John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2000, 258.

² Lucia Fabbri, “Mutatis Mutandis”, *Riterm*, 2005, 1-03, 22.

This approach implies the need for the terminologist to ask oneself many questions at each step on all the slightest nuances of the terms, intended as vehicle of meaning and illocutory acts, that are able to influence the speaker and characterize specific social groups (according to age, geographical origin, social background, etc):

High-quality concept-analysis is a sine qua non for high-quality terminology work: without understanding of the conceptual structures underlying the domain, the terminologist cannot properly carry out many of the practical tasks related to the production of a vocabulary.

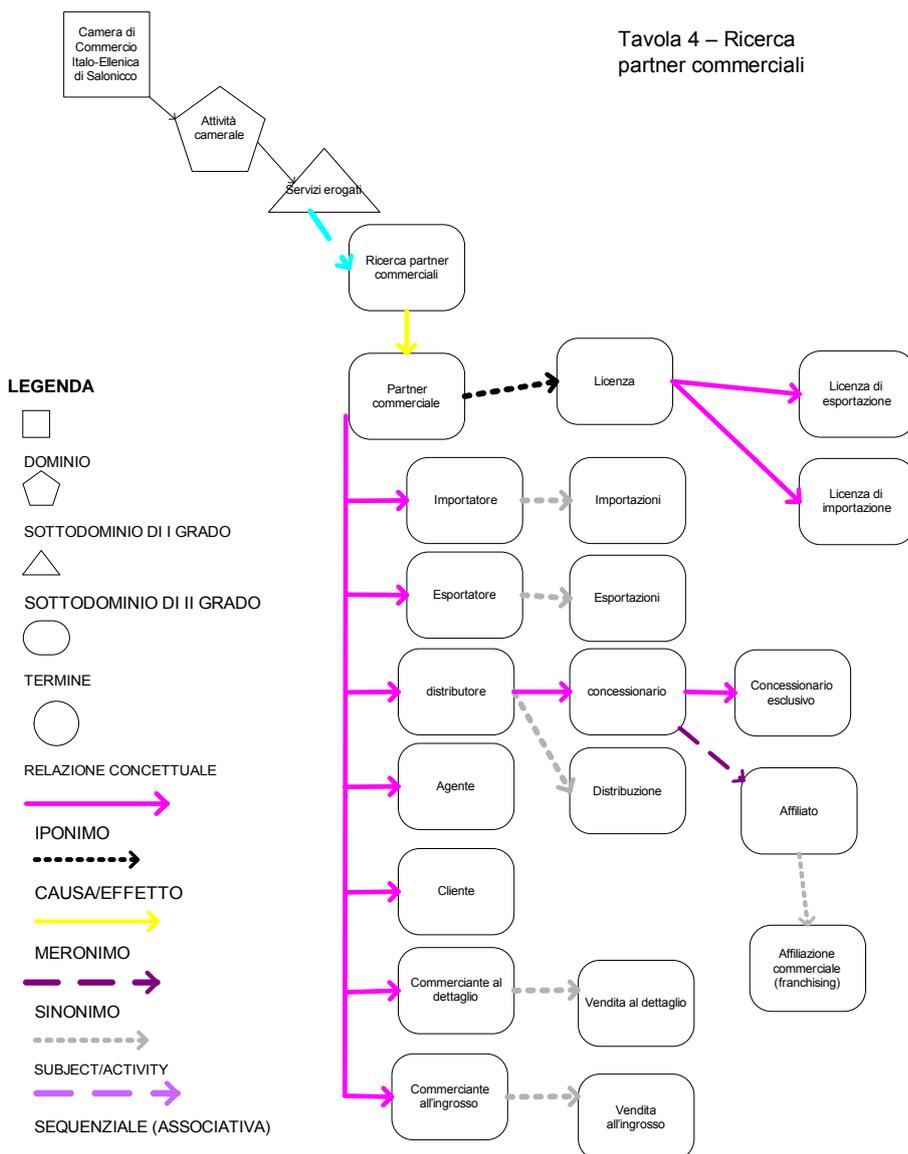
This opinion diverges remarkably from the Felber's and Wuster's theories according to which the term comes before the concept and, as a consequence, diamesic and diastratic variants do not exist. If we look closer at the conceptual diagrams, we notice that the use of the tree diagrams allows hierarchizing the terms and thus to identify unequivocally the domain and the sub-domains for the reasons outlined by Dubuc [1992:39]:

I sistemi concettuali arborescenti rappresentano quasi sempre strutture concettuali gerarchiche (dove dominano le relazioni gerarchiche e meronimiche). In questi sistemi la parte superiore del grafico serve soprattutto per indicare i domini e sotto-domini della ricerca. La parte medio-bassa contiene la maggior parte dei termini più importanti del dominio. In altre parole al parte alta dell'albero serve a collocare il lavoro nel quadro del campo specialistico considerato. La parte bassa serve per strutturare la ricerca dei termini e permette di classificare i concetti secondo le loro caratteristiche.

Our terminological trees are both poli-hierarchical and mixed, in other words, respectively, they are systems that “ofrecen la posibilidad de combinar un tipo de característica con otro empleando simultáneamente características de ordenación” [H. Felber & H. Picht; 1984:192] and “aquellos en los que se han combinado varias relaciones. De esta manera se amplia considerablemente la expresividad de un sistema, ya que caben en el mismo sistema concepto de distinta índole que no se pueden juntar al emplear una sola relación” [H. Felber & H. Picht; 1984:204]. This is particularly clear in the following example where different relations are used simultaneously, as indicated in the legend:

DATABASE TERMINOLOGICO.
CAMERA DI COMMERCIO ITALO-ELLENICA DI SALONICCO

Tavola 4 – Ricerca partner commerciali



Among the hierarchical conceptual relations we pointed out, there is a marked preponderance of the meronomic and hyponimic ones, while, for the not-hierarchical relations, we decided to create the new following definitions and employ them in our trees:

- Object-operation: it refers to the activities undertaken by the Chamber of Commerce of Thessaloniki, considered as a service provider.
- Sequential (associative): it points out a connection between two terms that share an associative relation such as exhibitor-stand.
- Subject-activity: it is the equivalent of the object-operation relation but referred to animate subjects.
- Phenomenon- measurement: it indicates the basic reference parameter to perform a specific calculation or measurement (i.e. the tax burden is calculated on the basis of the taxable base)
- Process-object: it refers to an object that is necessary to carry out an operation (i.e. the tax allowance is a crucial factor to quantify the tax base)

4 Terminological Sheets

The terminological sheets, in addition to the commonly included fields (definition, context, grammatical notes, etc) include new linguistic and semantic fields: synonyms, pseudo-synonyms, acronyms, abbreviations and initials; hyponyms, super ordinates, holonyms, isonyms, not-assimilated loanwords and assimilated loanwords.

5 Loanwords, abbreviations and variants

The socioterminological approach is closely bound to social phenomena and their repercussions on linguistic and terminological level. Therefore, in the study of the terminological variants we cannot undermine the effects of the knowledge spread and circulation, which in the last few years have reached extraordinary proportions. The language, which is the tangible expression of the knowledge and its transmission vehicle, has been considerably affected by these changes. When this trend crossed the national borders and this exchange took place among speakers of different languages, inevitably new linguistic trends emerged. In particular we will focus on the not-assimilated loanwords.

The uneven distribution of technical and scientific development and the imbalances in terms of economic power in the world led to the appearance of some dominant languages, both in general and specialized communication. The languages spoken in the countries at the cutting edge in the technical-scientific research coined new concepts and words, which have been exported and used by other language speakers by starting up a contamination phenomenon that poses new challenges to linguists and terminologist.

Analysing the loanwords of our corpora, we notice that both Italian and Greek use English loanwords. In a research by Adamo e Della Valle, the English influence proved to be significant in particular in compound nouns; moreover, only a few English forming particles

combine with a large number of Italian words by creating determinant+determined hybrid compounds typical of English³ language. The amount of not-assimilated loanwords is far higher than the amount of other loanwords, due to the fact that the integral loanwords meet multiple needs. Some are justified because they belong to specialized domains and they are characterized by the “monoreferentiality of their use”, whereas others depend on a growing trend according to which the English term has an increased stylistic value and higher prestige than the national equivalent.

Concerning this aspect, it is worth mentioning the so-called *Analogue Rule* coined by K.Valeontis [2006:10], according to which “when forming a term in a target language in order to name a new concept that has been primarily named in the source language, the namer’s first choice should be to apply a term-formation mechanism analogous to the term-formation mechanism used for the source language term”.

In our reference corpora there are some examples of the phenomena we outlined so far. In some cases both Italian and Greek use English loanwords such as *mailing e joint ventures*. Regarding the latter, we would like to make a few interesting remarks, the most accredited Greek equivalents of *joint ventures* are *κοινοπραξία* and *κοινή επιχείρηση*, whose reliability is 3 according to EU inter-institutional terminology database (IATE). Also the ΛΕΞΙΚΟ ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΚΩΝ ΟΡΩΝ⁴ mentions both the terms as equivalent of the English loanword. The presence of the not-assimilated loanwords, neither at orthographical level, in our corpora serves on a specific communicative purpose.

The use of the not-assimilated loanword, in fact, may depend on the need of transparency and monoreferentiality, which are guaranteed by the employment of the English term, although there is a reliable Greek equivalent. Another example of not-assimilated loanword is *franchising*, it is used both in Greek and in Italian, in the latter the ‘geolectal’ variant *affiliazione commerciale* is less frequent and there is no accredited Italian equivalent for the derived term *franchisee*, excepting the term *affiliato* that is used in “Fare Affari in Grecia-Guida all’imprenditore” [2006:48]. In the guidelines the term *franchising* appears 27 times and, only the first time it is mentioned, it is followed by the geolectal variant in to bracket (*affiliazione commerciale*). A similar phenomenon exists also in Greek, where *franchising* is commonly used, even by the Greek National Association of Franchising

³ Susanna Soglia, La terminologia come supporto alla traduzione: metodologie, applicazioni e prospettive future, S.S.L.M.I.T.- Università di Bologna, 2000, 548.

⁴ ΛΕΞΙΚΟ ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΚΩΝ ΟΡΩΝ⁴, ΜΑΛΛΙΑΡΗΣ-ΠΑΙΔΕΙΑ Α.Ε., 2000.

(www.franchising.gr). The term has been normalized by Greek language till it acquired the same reliability as the Greek equivalent, confirming that IATE assigned to it a 3 reliability as to its equivalents *παραχώρηση προνομίου ε δικαιοχρηση*.

To conclude this brief overview on the loanwords in our corpora, we illustrate a representative example of the normalizing approach of Greek language. This analysis is considerably interesting also for the fact that it focuses on a language, which has not a Latin alphabet; therefore, it is possible to examine the transliteration of the loanwords in the Greek alphabet that is the first assimilation step of a borrowing. For instance, if we consider the term *leasing*, in Italian it has been imported without being assimilated, while in Greek both the transliterated variant *λήζινγκ* and the Greek *χρηματοδοτική μίσθωση* are awarded with the same reliability (i.e. 3) by IATE.

Our research deals also with abbreviations (initialisms and acronyms). In our reference corpora we identified a large amount of these forms, and we provide some examples: Gross domestic product: (English *GDP*, Italian *PIL* ; Greek *ΑΕΠ*); Ordinary partnership (English *OP*, Italian *S.N.C.*, Greek *Ο.Ε*); Limited partnership: English *LP*, Italian *S.A.S*, Greek *Ε.Ε*. In our opinion, these forms- all the types of abbreviations- can be considered as synonym of the extended form both at interlinguistic and intralinguistic level and, Owing to the evaluation of the trend and use frequency at socioterminological level, we fully agree with Cabré [1993:217] when she claims that there is a synonymic relation between the abbreviation and the correspondent extended form that designate the same concept. There is a diametrically opposed theory to this one, stating that the abbreviations just accomplish the task to remind the extended form.⁵

For instance, if we consider the compound *società in nome collettivo*, we observe that it is more frequent in “Fare Affari in Grecia- Guida all’imprenditore”, which is a specialized publication, while *S.N.C.* is more frequent in the articles of the Chamber of Commerce Journal (general language publication) and in the spoken language. Thus, we should admit that the two forms unquestionably differ from usage context, social status and pragmatic purpose; however we cannot say they are variants of the same terms, otherwise, we jeopardize the concept itself of variant.

⁵ Ana María Cardero, “Abreviaturas, Acrónimos, Siglas y Símbolos en los vocabularios especializados. Una propuesta”, *Riterm*, 2006, 2-07, 10

6 Conclusions

In conclusion our study analysed the creation process of a terminological database about a specific domain in order to provide practical suggestions on the key phase of this work, particularly the systematization of the conceptual relations with a view to the intralinguistic variant and the interlinguistic equivalent identification in a socioterminological perspective. Moreover it demonstrates that a terminological research aiming at the harmonization of the terms of a specific domain must take into account those aspects that are closely connected with the term usage in particular the speakers, who are markedly different in social background, specialization degree, geographical position and age. Therefore, to create reliable and valuable tools, terminology should draw from the sociological knowledge to achieve a synergy, whose outcome is a thorough term analysis. Furthermore, terminology should accept the challenge to take a huge step forward till it reaches the imperceptible border of knowledge branches that permeate each others and whose ultimate objective is to study a complex and rich microcosm: the term.

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