

TERMINOLOGY POLICIES & PLANNING

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Arguments Part 1: Terminology planning v. “natural” terminology creation/change



Contra: Language is a natural and dynamic resource and develops after its own rules. Man will never succeed in and should never attempt to manipulate it.

Pro: In today’s global information society and increased interaction language has to be formed, planned and standardized otherwise it will never become an effective medium of communication for a larger society. Without deliberate efforts it will become extinct soon because it will be dominated by another.

Terminology planning v. “natural” terminology creation/change



complementary processes

Language community which lacks terms for a new/foreign concept but has a direct and urgent need for it will always find ways for substitutes, in most cases it is forced to use another medium (English)

Also, an economically active language community will create terminologies “naturally”, bottom-up

Terminology planning v. “natural” terminology creation/change

**In view of development of a language to function effectively
as scientific and economic language**

planning efforts may be necessary:

- 1. Standardization: clear/unambiguous communication**
- 2. Development: Terminology creation, coining**
- 3. Status planning: Policies for use of language in certain domains**
- 4. Awareness: Self-esteem of the speakers of the language**

The interaction between language, knowledge (terminology) and economy is self-evident:



Mutual impact:

- **The economical development reflects in the terminological development of a language, i.e. economically (either internationally or locally) strong language communities have well developed languages**

Economy ⇌ Language

- **Science and technology are the base of economic and societal development. Knowledge transfer needs terminology. Knowledge transfer is best when done in L1.**

Arguments Part 2: Globalization, Language Planning and Terminology

Why is there such an interest in terminology, planning and less widely used languages when events point (or seem to point) towards non-interventionism, the dismantling of frontiers, growing use of English world-wide ?

Isn't terminology planning running against the grain of globalization ?

Why should anyone bother with bridging digital divides and enabling developing countries to gain access to the information highway and computers while there are more pressing issues to care for?

What is Globalization?

In its broader sense it is an all-embracing (social, political, economic) phenomenon, characterized by:

- Increased mobility of labour, capital, goods
- Faster and cheaper means of transportation & increasing mobility
- Formation of transnational economic and trade blocs
- Interlinkage of money markets
- Increased information sharing across national borders
- Advances in information technology
- World-wide action plans
- Increased substitution of residency for nationality
- Hegemonialisation of the English language



Globalization creates an illusion of a *global village* in which everybody has equal access to its center square.

The reality causes grief among those who feel that they are (again?) left out.



What can be done to enable them to participate and benefit from the many good aspects of globalization?

Empower them. Allow them a fair chance to participate by enabling them to gain access to information and knowledge.

All economy? The terminological contribution

Terminology basis for communication and information. Key to provide developing communities access to information, by providing “fuel” technical means, i.e. content and thus access to knowledge.

Knowledge is liberating, it creates the possibility for change of own power, free from manipulation by others.



Thus terminology is not “just” about language and culture but is directly linked to political, economic and development aspects.

The terminological contribution for the development of a society

Information and knowledge transfer impact:

- human rights, gender and social rights
- health, hygiene, AIDS
- (adult) literacy
- agriculture, water, environment
- business opportunities, market and price information
- participation in democratic processes, freedom of expression
- ...



Glocalization!

**On the local level,
knowledge needs to be transferred in a language
that is understood by the people!**



There is no knowledge without terminology.

...because

Terminology plays crucial role whenever
domain-specific knowledge is

Generated (research, development)

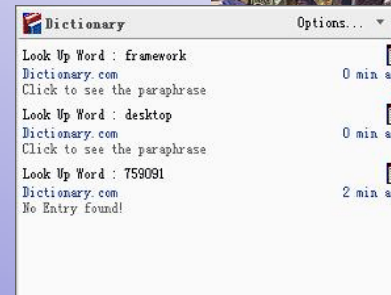
Used (specialized texts)

Recorded (databases, dictionaries)

Passed on (training, teaching)

Implemented (technology and knowledge transfer)

Translated and interpreted



Who plans terminology – approaches

Different approaches (partly determined by different needs)

Historical shift: Earlier focus in LP (and TP) was almost entirely on the



Policy approach or **top-down approach**, as practiced mainly, though not only in developing countries, in which activities are initiated and carried out by a super-ordinate body

(SA, France, most language communities with developing minority languages)

More recent publications acknowledge the formerly neglected impact of the



Cultivation or **bottom-up approach**: i.e. by individual planners or private initiatives (industry, ICT communities, “wikis”)

This approach seems to be predominant in certain language communities (German, English...).

Who plans terminology?

Domain experts
Language professionals
Educators

In LP/ TP activities there should be joint forces for best results
Terminology planning is a group activity
Provide subject specialists with some terminological know-how.

Who plans terminology – stakeholders:

National terminology institutions



Clearing house, sometimes decentralized

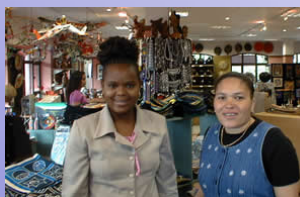
- Advice and support governments in terminology issues (policies, needs, projects, campaigns...)
- Coordinate efforts, projects, stakeholders
- Inform public and train specialists (awareness raising, Human Capacity Building)
- Standardize or promote standardization work (national term bank, via standardizing body)
- Disseminate products (national term bank, glossaries, web-services, directories, bibliographies...)



Who are the stakeholders in

Public & Private initiatives ?

- Terminology creators (scientists/researchers, technicians/engineers, journalists/reporters, ...)
- Terminol. data producers (standardizers, database creators, specialized lexicographers...)
- Terminol. data distributors (publishers, web service administrators, technical documentation)
- Any citizen, professional



→ There is often a **better acceptance** by (because “closer to”) the actual users, **wider distribution** and **better feedback** at grass root level and **limited** (because shared) **costs**

Terminology Planning Processes

Development and documentation-oriented projects

Most projects are **development-oriented**:

Characterized by: generally needs-driven (identification of domains which lack terminology),

The source data are usually foreign (European, Arabic, etc.) texts and dictionaries, terms in target language are created mainly by loan or translation.

Potentially able to transfer substantial knowledge to speakers of target language, esp. in new domains

→ quick, relatively cheap way

Terminology Planning Processes

Documentation-oriented projects:

**Mali example, collection of existing terms in dialects, sociolects...
Are based on apparent wealth of experience and knowledge in the language community to be developed.**

Purpose: to make knowledge known to non-practitioners (laypeople) and foreigners, perhaps to harmonize and standardize indigenous terms

**→ More sustainable because concepts, definition of concepts are indigenous to the culture, but more time-consuming/expensive,
→ feasible rather in traditional domains**

Terminology Marketing, Implementation

Different approaches, depending on situation, has to be evaluated by language planning/ terminology planning institution as part of the policy

- Industry creates terms and specialists use them

Terminologists have an advisory/regulating function, e.g. to avoid too many foreign terms

- Media: TV, radio, Internet/cell phones/handhelds (ICT).

In rural context of developing countries theater groups, awareness raising campaigns

- Education (secondary, tertiary level)→ regulations by government, assign status, monitoring institutions

Students that have been taught in their language will enter the professional field and find it easier to go on spreading the new terms

Thank you for your attention.

Your questions and discussion are welcome!

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