Onomantics and Terminology

Part IV: Neologisms, Neoterisms, Meta-terms, Phrases, and Pleonisms Holly

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ABSTRACT: Parts I to III of this series have examined the terminology of Terminology by contrast with the vocabulary of Onomantics and identified some of the differences and difficulties revealed by a close study of ISO-1087, the most important glossary for terminologists. Part IV, finally, offers a speculative explanation of these problems. My central hypothesis is that an aversion to neologisms – especially newly coined words – impedes the introduction and acceptance of new concepts. The pressure for standardization of terminology compounds this difficulty. There are three kinds of neologisms: 1. newly coined words (neoterisms), 2. phases composed of familiar words (phrasal tags) and 3. familiar words for which new meanings have been stipulated (meta-terms). Neologisms in the form of phrases containing familiar words are often found in *ISO 1087*. Some perplexing ambiguities in *ISO 1087* occur when new meanings are stipulated for familiar words, creating terminological metaphors ("meta-terms") that are often obscure. Such meta-terms abound in the terminology of Terminology. Increased willingness to accept well-formed new words (neoterisms) would greatly simplify the development of a more adequate terminology for Terminology. The use of pleonasms is recommended as a technique to overcome ambiguity by linking familiar words having new meanings (meta-terms) to new words for the same concepts (neoterisms) and as a simple way to facilitate the introduction of such neoterisms.

1. Introduction: Ubiquitous "Neologisms"

NOTE: This article is the last in a four-part series. The first three parts have appeared, respectively, in the three preceding issues of this journal. Portions of this article may seem obscure to readers who have not yet read Parts I through III.

If one were to ask why so many words have been borrowed from Lexicography and why important terminological concepts are missing from *ISO 1087* (1990), I could not provide a definitive answer. However, I can speculate about two important parts of the story.

First, is the strong commitment to standardization of the International Organization for Standardization which provided the incubator for modern Terminology. The selection of a standard term for a concept easily leads to the practice of listing it first whenever there are several entry terms (syn-tags) for a concept – if so, it might seem reasonable to speak of this term as the "main entry." When entries are arranged alphabetically by entry words, being able to list a familiar word first seems reasonable in order to help users locate the entry. When neologisms are proposed for a concept, they cannot already be familiar and therefore they will not easily be found in an alphabetized list. However, since the headform actually used in most TC37 glossaries is, actually, a notation number rather than an entry term, all of this is really irrelevant.

The second and more important point is that terminologists share a widespread aversion to new words, even when they are needed to designate the new concepts that emerge whenever a new field of knowledge evolves. Instead, they would rather stipulate a new meaning for a familiar word, or coin a phrase composed of established words. However,

both new words and familiar words given new meanings are *neologisms* as indicated by the dictionary definition of this term as "a new word or phrase or an existing word used in a new sense" (*Webster's Third New International Dictionary,* 1964) [W3]. Consequently, all the familiar words used as "entry terms" [6.2.2.1] in *ISO 1087* – when new meanings are stipulated for them – are actually neologisms. A familiar word used for a new concept is as much a neologism as a newly coined word.[1] The treatment of "neologism" in *ISO 1087* offers an example of how a familiar word has been neologized as a meta-term. Its entry reads:

> [4.22] **neologism**: "a term that is newly coined or recently borrowed from another language or another subject field."

Although this stipulated new meaning for "neologism" is very similar to its ordinary lexicographic meaning, it is indeed difficult to remember the differences, especially when the same word is used for both concepts. To underline these differences, I shall write *neologism* in lower case to refer to the word's ordinary meaning, as defined in dictionaries like W3 , and *NEOLOGISM*, capitalized, to refer to the special meaning assigned to the word in *ISO 1087*. To illustrate this distinction, consider that some familiar words which are not neologisms could be classed as NEOLOGISMS by the criteria specified in [4.22]: they include *lexeme* and *thesaurus* as borrowings from another subject field, and *kindergarten* and *coup d'etat* as loan words from another language.

However, it may be difficult to operationalize the concept of a NEOLOGISM. Consider the following examples: *abbreviation, affix, index, prefix, root, stem, transliteration, word*. Because these words are borrowed from ordinary language, they appear not to be NEOLOGISMS. However, since they have special meanings developed in Linguistics, another subject field, they could also be classed as NEOLOGISMS. To illustrate, consider that *word* has several special meanings in Linguistics. If a technical sense of "word" borrowed from Linguistics had been reproduced in *ISO 1087*, it would be a NEOLOGISM. However, because 'word' comes from general language, it may not be a NEOLOGISM, but since it is assigned a new meaning in *ISO 1087*, it is definitely a neologism.

The special meaning assigned to 'word' in *ISO 1087* reads, in part, like a definition of *lexeme* (a lexical unit that has meaning) but there is no entry for 'lexeme' in *ISO 1087*. Why not? It represents precisely a key element in the new meaning of 'word' offered in [5.5.1.3]. Why was *lexeme* not borrowed from Linguistics for the concept included in the definition stipulated for "word"? Was it, perhaps, because it was viewed as a NEOLOGISM that could not easily be found in an alphabetized list of entry words? Actually, the word is not a neologism, it occurs in many dictionaries and is well defined in the Hartmann and Stork glossary for Linguistics (1972). But various familiar words entered in *ISO 1087* have been assigned new meanings, making them neologisms though not NEOLOGISMS. The basic distinction offered in *ISO 1087* [4.22] seems to be between familiar and unfamiliar words without reference to their meanings, whether they be new or well established.[2]

Actually, we have little to learn by saying more about neologisms in general and much more to gain by considering the three main types of neologism: newly formed words (*neoterisms*); phrases that use familiar words to which special meanings have been assigned (*phrasal terms* or *p-tags*); and new meanings for established words (*meta-tags* or "meta-terms"). These terms have already been introduced and illustrated above. Here I shall provide some supplementary comments to explain our attitudes toward them, especially to indicate why I think terminologists are relatively willing to accept meta-tags and p-tags but reluctant to accept neoterisms. Since the pioneers in any new field of inquiry have to use neologisms to designate the new concepts they require, we have no choice about accepting new terms, but we can choose different forms for them.

Neoterisms. A major obstacle to the clear representation of new concepts arises with respect to one type of neologism, i.e. new words or *neoterisms* which W3 defines as "a newly invented word or phrase." I shall use "neoterism" narrowly to refer only to new words, introducing *p-tags* (or *phrasal terms*) as a more useful way to identify new terms taking the form of phrases. As for neoterisms, then, the only ones I found in *ISO 1087* (the 1990 standard)[3] are:

> [8.2.2] **terminography:** Terminology work that includes recording, processing and presentation of terminological data in dictionary form or in terminology data bases.
>
> [5.4.2] **mononymy:** Relation between designation and concept in which the concept has only one designation.

These terms cannot be found in general dictionaries nor even in the Hartmann and Stork dictionary of Linguistics. They are, therefore, new words, not borrowed or meta-terms. How can one explain the formal acceptance of these neoterisms by TC37?

A dozen or so terms found in *ISO 1087* use *terminology* as part of a phrase, like *terminology science, terminology work, terminological database, terminological entry*, etc. In this context, the concept of the lexi-

cographical processes involved in terminology work arose, and it must have seemed acceptable to borrow the ending of Lexicography to create the new word, *Terminography*. Notice, also, that the definition given at [8.2.2] refers to the "presentation of terminological data in dictionary form."

Insofar as the vocabulary of a special language has already gained acceptance within its subject field, its terms can be reported, *en bloc*, in an alphabetized glossary of terms. If terminologists did nothing more than terminography, as Sager (1990) recommends, their activities could be viewed as a specialized type of Lexicography and the concepts they need would already be available to them. In that case, there would be no need for new concepts with an onomantic thrust such as those offered in *ISO 1087*, and we would be justified to think of Terminography as a branch of Linguistics based completely on semantic analysis.[4]

As for *mononymy*, in the context of standardization, the notion that a concept ought to have only one designation seemed both reasonable and desirable, leading to the acceptance of a new term for which no synonym could be found in Lexicography or Linguistics.[5] The form, *mononymy*, although neoteric, was accepted, I think, because it transparently fits the paradigm offered by *synonymy* and *antonymy*. Most users of *ISO 1087*, actually, may not be aware that 'mononymy' is a neoterism – they may well assume that it is a borrowed technical term from linguistics, like 'polysemy' and 'monosemy'.

An obvious antonym to *mononymy* is *polynymy* yet no entry for this term appears in *ISO 1087*. The notion of a concept with several terms (tags) is, probably, more useful in terminology than the concept of mononymy. Moreover, since the compilers of *ISO 1087* accepted the need to view concepts as elements in a system, they did develop classifications schemes and used notations to head all their concept records. Consequently, they could have easily listed all equivalent terms for a concept after its description, thereby avoiding the apparent need for *mononymy* suggested by the concept of an "entry term".

However, to explain the listing of syn-tags for a concept, they would have needed to legitimize the notion that a concept can have more than one term. To do that, they would need a concept that is antonymic to *mononymy*: why not *polynymy*? However, this term does not appear in *ISO 1087*. Why not?[6] Perhaps it was felt that the introduction of one neoterism, mononymy, would not create much resistance, but offering two of them would create resistance that ought to be avoided.

Phrasal Tags. Instead, they decided to endorse phrasal tags, such as *alphabetical arrangement, borrowed form, concept correspondence, deprecated term, essential characteristic, permitted term, preferred term, term bank, subordinate concept, superordinate concept, systematic arrangement, word form,* etc. Because they resemble neoterisms in fundamental respects, it is appropriate to say more about them here. They are recognized in *Webster's Dictionary* (W3) as a type of "neologism" consisting of phrases, composed usually of familiar words, to which new meanings are assigned. I think of them as "phrases used as terms (tags)," i.e. as *phrasal terms, phrasal tags* or even *p-tags*, as illustrated by the examples from *ISO 1087* listed above.[7]

By giving the status of a tag to a phrase, terminologists are actually coining a neologism, even though the constituent words in the phrase are quite familiar; *term bank* is a good example. Such phrases do not meet the criteria specified in [4.22] for NEOLOGISMS, nor in [4.23] for *terminologizations*, but they are neologisms because a new meaning has been assigned to them that would not be apparent to anyone interpreting the phrase on the basis of what its component words mean.[8] Indeed, any phrase that is not a neologism ought not to be included in a conceptual glossary – it is a waste of time and effort to enter a phrase that anyone can understand just by looking up the meanings of its constituent words.

Only a thin line separates phrasal tags from neoterisms. Consider that in some languages, like German, it is normal to write phrases as single words. This also happens in English, not only with loan words from German, like *kindergarten* (nursery school) but also with such phrases as *data base* which is often written as *database*. Some of the phrasal tags listed in *ISO 1087* could easily be converted into neoterisms by word elisions, for example by writing *termbank* instead of *term bank*, or *wordform* instead of *word form*. Actually, by this means the potential for ambiguity can be reduced since, I believe, it is easier to understand that a "termbank" is not a kind of financial institution than to see that a "term bank" is not a bank for long-term deposits. In such cases, reducing a phrase to a word would be helpful.

If all the phrasal tags listed above were written as a single word rather than as a phrase, we could easily see that they are a kind of neoterism in disguise. The reverse situation may clarify the issue. Consider the meaning of a familiar word like *understand* when it is uncoupled as in *under stand*. As a phrase, it might represent a kind of "stand" that is not an "upper stand." By linking the words in a phrase, its new meanings are more easily understood – even if 'understand' and 'under stand' were synonyms, it would be much easier to recognize the expression as a new term if it were written as a neoterism – e.g. 'termbank' rather than as a p-tag in 'term bank.'

However, I can understand the reluctance of English speakers to accept a Germanic convention that would delete the spaces separating words in a phrase. Nevertheless, it is important to understand that phrasal tags have a special meaning not apparent from the meanings of their component words. To illustrate this point, again, think about the meaning of *alphabetical arrangement*. Readers will easily understand that any checklist of words can be arranged alphabetically, but in *ISO 1087*, this term designates more than a checklist. As defined in [6.2.3.3], the phrase refers to the "arrangement of entries [6.2.2.2] according to the filing value of the entry terms [6.2.2.1]."

The entailed terms (marked by their notations) in this definition link this concept to two others defined elsewhere in the same glossary, thereby relating it to "entries" and "entry terms." The phrase, therefore, conveys a more specific concept (the alphabetical ordering of records in a glossary) rather than the more generic concept (that also includes how names are arranged in your address book, or how entries are arranged in a dictionary) that one might infer from the meanings of the words conjoined in this phrase.

It would be more precise to explain that the concept of an "alphabetic arrangement" (applicable to words in any context) can also be used by terminologists to refer to the arrangement of entries in a glossary – the *ASTM Compilation* (1990) provides an example. However, terminologists normally emphasize systematic relations between concepts and, in fact, do arrange entries by notation numbers. Thus, one might expect more emphasis to be placed on the concept of a *systematic arrangement*, which is actually illustrated by the design of *ISO 1087*. The notations that head each entry in this glossary are used to order its concepts systematically, but there are no entries for the concepts of *notation* and *head form*; these concepts are employed in this glossary, but they are not defined in any of its entries.

Interestingly, however, there is an entry for the concept of a "systematic arrangement" in *ISO 1087* [6.2.3.2] which indicates that entries can be arranged systematically, but it offers no indication about how to do it. This contrasts with the definition of *alphabetical arrangement* [6.2.3.3] which specifies the use of the "filing value of the entry terms" as a methodology. This methodology is appropriate for all dictionaries and glossaries whose entries are, indeed, headed by words, but not for terminological records headed by notations, as we see them in *ISO 1087*. A parallel definition of *systematic arrangement* could have specified the appropriate methodology: i.e., concept records can be arranged systematically when the "filing value of their head forms, written as notation numbers" is used to order the entries. Such a methodological note could not be included in this glossary because, although terminologists clearly need and use both head forms and notation numbers, lexicographers do not and, therefore, they have no terms for them.

Another p-tag identifies (or misidentifies) a concept that also deserves our attention here; it is:

> [8.3.3] **concept harmonization.** Activity or process which reduces or eliminates the differences between two or more concepts.

A note on this record explains that "Complete concept harmonization may lead to merging two or more concepts." This definition is puzzling because, I suppose, if two concepts are different, one cannot eliminate their differences. However, I think the original intent was probably not to reduce two different concepts to one, but rather to reconcile variant definitions of the same concept. When similar descriptions (definitions) are found, we may want to decide whether they make significant distinctions or whether two texts identify a single concept that can be well represented by one term (tag). The notion that different concepts can be "harmonized" seems to complement the idea of "mononymy" as a proper function of standardization. Ideally, I suppose, each concept should have only one term, and each term should have only one definition. In practice, however, not only can a concept have several tags, but each concept can also have several defining texts (descriptions).

Frequently, we write different definitions that mean the same thing – when this happens, both texts represent the same concept and a single term (tag) can correctly designate it. I don't know if "concept harmonization" calls for efforts to "standardize" the definitions for every concept. Such a project would be monumentally difficult and flouts the efforts by TC37 groups to revise the definitions of terms entered in *ISO 1087*. Actually new definitions for the same entry term, as found in successive versions of this glossary, multiply the number of concepts represented by a single word.

From an onomantic point of view, if two definitions (descriptions) identify different concepts and both are useful, then they should be distinguished from each other by having different tags. However, if only one of them is useful, we can economize by dispensing with the other, but when two texts describe the same concept, it is helpful just to keep the one that is clearer and more succinct.

To make this problem more concrete, consider that different definitions for the same word are often found in dictionaries where the same concept is clearly intended by each of them – such variations typically result from efforts to avoid copyright viola-

tions rather than from attempts to make fine distinctions between similar concepts. Thus the G & C Meriam Co. in *Webster's Third International*, published in 1964, defines a *definition* as "a statement of the meaning of a word ... " whereas the American Heritage Publishing Co. in its *Heritage* ... dictionary published three years later says that a definition is "the act of stating a precise meaning ... as of a word ..." I cannot find any significant conceptual distinction here and the later version is no clearer than the earlier one, but I can see that "conceptual harmonization" might lead to a suit for copyright violation if the editors of these different dictionaries felt they had to use the same language to harmonize their definitions of "definition."

From an onomantic point of view, the important question to ask is whether two different descriptions identify significantly different concepts from the point of view of those who need to use them. If so, even similar concepts may require separate records and tags (designators). However, if different definitions of a word do not identify different concepts but, for any reason, merely display different ways to describe a single concept (such as those chosen by rival dictionaries to avoid copyright infringements) than efforts to "harmonize" these concepts by standardizing their definitions are superfluous.

In any event, the precision of a phrasal tag does not depend on the separate meanings of the words composing a phrase but, rather, on the clarity of the concept associated with the phrase, taken as a whole unit, as a designator. The examples given above illustrate several possibilities. *Term bank* is needed to tag a concept that would not be self-evident from the meanings of "term" and "bank." By contrast, *alphabetical arrangement* and *systematic arrangement* are transparent phrases whose meanings are evident from the meanings of their component words. However, I believe the definitions offered for them in *ISO 1087* unjustifiably narrow their meanings by limiting them to one context of use. Each is a general concept applicable in many fields, but a note could explain that, in Terminology, entries may be arranged alphabetically or systematically, and the relevant concepts needed to do both ought to be provided; they are offered only for the former, not the latter.

As for *concept harmonization* the phrase is misleading and the stipulated definition in [8.3.3] compounds the confusion. The intended concept clearly involves revising the text of variant definitions for what may be only one concept or, perhaps, two concepts when only one is needed. A phrase that points to the comparison of definitions to determine if they identify one or several concepts might be more useful. Certainly it does not involve efforts to "harmonize" different concepts.

To summarize, some phrasal terms (term bank, for example) would be less ambiguous if converted to neoterisms (e.g., termbank). Others are unambiguous as they stand, but should not be so defined as to restrict their meanings. A note can accomplish the same purpose with more integrity; thus, let "alphabetical arrangement" be defined by the meanings of its two words, but add a comment that glossary entries can be arranged alphabetically by their entry terms – or systematically, by their notations. In other cases, p-term are poorly formed when the meanings of their words clash with the intended concept, as illustrated by "concept harmonization"; the comparison of defining texts is not well represented by this phrase. Nevertheless, the difficulties experienced in the choice of p-tags pale by comparion with the problems generated by the use of meta-terms.

Meta-Terms (or Meta-tags). The most serious problems involved in the selection of neologisms for new concepts in any field arise from the use of *meta-terms*, i.e. words used metaphorically for new concepts.[9] When the compilers of *ISO 1087* wrote entry [5.4.3] for *synonymy* (as discussed in Part III) they produced a meta-term, clearly a neologism even though the word-form is familiar. The defined concept – designations that represent a single concept – is not what users of 'synonym' have in mind: they are thinking about lexemes with similar meanings.

Actually, *ISO 1087* (1990) contains many meta-tags: in addition to 'synonymy' other examples that have been discussed above include 'word', 'concept', 'definition', 'designation', 'name', 'object', 'symbol', 'term', 'polysemy', and 'homonymy.' In each case, new meanings for these words have been stipulated by definition. They are borrowed words with new meanings – neologisms in the form of *meta-terms* (meta-tags). The problems involved here are so great that I shall discuss them in a separate section.

2. Evaluating Neologisms

The greatest obstacles to clear communication caused by the need to introduce neologisms arises, I think, not from the coining of neoterisms nor from the use of p-tags but, rather, from the incautious use of meta-terms. I say "incautious" because, when used cautiously, meta-terms can be unambiguous and easy to remember. However, one needs to be able to distinguish the metaphoric meaning of a word from its prior meanings – the chief relevant variable is the *semantic distance* between the original meanings of a word and its metaphoric usage: when the distance is remote, the meta-term enjoys enough *semantic space* but when the differences are too close, we have *semantic traps.*

To illustrate, consider the use of *mouse* for a computer device: the term is unambiguous because the semantic space separating the gadget from a living rodent is substantial – the two concepts are semantically far apart. By contrast, when the semantic distance is small, ambiguities easily arise because such metaphors lack *semantic space* – they are *semantic traps.* To give "space" to others is to respect their privacy, to grant them room for maneuver. By contrast, a semantic trap occurs when the distance between the new meaning of a meta-term and its prior meanings are too close together.

For example, *word* [5.5.1.3] adds to the normal meaning of an orthographic word (separated by spaces from neighboring words) the linguistic concept of a "lexeme." Since many words are not lexemes, and since many lexemes are not words, this hybrid concept is difficult to remember. Moreover, because there is no real need for it, it is infrequently used and easy to forget. Both 'word' (as defined in *ISO 1087*) and 'mouse' are meta-tags but semantic space makes the latter easy to understand and recollect whereas a semantic trap hampers acceptance and use of the former: the two 'mouse' concepts are remote cousins but the two notions of 'word' are "Siamese" twins.[10]

The text of *ISO 1087* contains many *borrowed terms* [5.5.8]. Most of them are *siamese-terms* whose stipulated new meanings are suffocated by semantic traps – I shall write 'siamese' to suggest that this concept has nothing to do with Siam. Examples include such "hard words" as 'homonymy', 'synonymy', 'monosemy', and 'polysemy', as explained above, plus such familiar words as 'word', 'term', 'definition', 'symbol' and 'entry'.

However, one can also find many borrowed terms that carry *borrowed concepts* [3.1.1] with them. Examples in *ISO 1087* include 'abbreviation', 'acronym', and 'affix'. I refer to any borrowed term that designates a borrowed concept as a *borrowed term/concept.* It is not a neologism (nor a meta-term). It is truly a *loan*, perhaps a *semantic loan* or a *sema-loan*. I prefer this neoterism to the cumbersome p-term, but both can be used to mean the same thing.

It would improve terminological glossaries if a sharp distinction were made in them between borrowed terms/concepts (sema-loans) and meta-terms. They cannot be distinguished from each other in an ordinary list, but they could easily be marked, as by asterisks: e.g., "abbreviation, acronym, *homonym, *monoseme, name, root, *synonym, *word." The starred words, as defined in *ISO 1087*, are meta-tags, but the unstarred words identify sema-loans. The meta-terms would not cause much difficulty if they enjoyed a lot of semantic space but, unfortunately, most of them are, indeed, siamese-terms suffocated by semantic traps.

A different, perhaps better, solution would involve listing all the borrowed terms/concepts (sema-loans) in an appendix. Users could easily find their definitions elsewhere, but it would help to cite the dictionaries offering the best definitions. As presently written, *ISO 1087* gives its users no easy way to tell whether a given term is a meta-term or a sema-loan. One can only tell the difference by hunting for the definitions of these words in another glossary or a dictionary.

It would also be helpful to mark the meta-tags that are siamese-terms. Meta-terms like *mouse* are easily recognized as meta-tags and do not need to be marked, but the siamese-terms among the meta-tags are often ambiguous and they should be marked – perhaps by double stars, e.g., ***word*, ***synonym*, ***homonym*. If sema-loans were excluded from a glossary like *ISO 1087* (or just listed in an appendix) one might assume that all of the words defined in its entries are meta-tags, but those that risk semantic entrapment, i.e., the *siamese-terms*, should be specially marked.

Onometric Evaluations. Whenever we need terms to designate new concepts, we must accept neologisms, whether they take the form of neoterisms, meta-terms or p-tags. When selecting such terms, we should consider the various onometric criteria that have been identified by Charles Gilreath (1995). He did not discuss the problem of semantic distance, as I have discussed it above, but we can benefit by looking at some of his sixteen measures: they include *transparency, unequivocalness, precedent, conciseness, derivability, acceptability, euphony*, etc. I cannot improve on his battery of variables nor his numerical weighting system. However, it is important to note that his criteria pertain primarily to neoterisms and, perhaps secondarily to phrasal-terms. They pretty much ignore meta-terms although most of the problematic terms defined in *ISO 1087* are, in fact, siamese (meta) tags. However, I'd like to comment on a few of his criteria as they relate to the Onomantic perspective.

The first criterion is *transparency*. It is clearly useful when considering the design of neoterisms – i.e. whether or not their roots convey the intended meanings. Of course, phrasal terms (p-tags) are automatically transparent, provided one understands how the special meaning assigned to a phrase rest on the meanings of the familiar words found in them.

Gilreath's fourth criterion is *conciseness*, an advantage for most neoterisms by comparison with most p-tags – but not always, as the "termbank/term bank" example shows. As I shall argue, the onometrics of neoterisms and p-tags are almost the same. The most serious difficulties, which Gilreath does not discuss, actually involve the choice of meta-terms.

His 8th criterion is *acceptability*, and, no doubt, newly coined words are often rejected as unacceptable, even when they might be preferable for other reasons. Personally, I find "terminologization" [4.23, *ISO 1087*] hard to accept but I cannot pinpoint any particular reason for this feeling. *Pronounceability* is ranked no.11 by Gilreath and assigned no weight in his calculus. Since I find '*terminologization*' harder to pronounce than a p-tag like *term formation*, I would more willingly accept the phrase. However, these two terms are not syn-tags. We can use "term formation" to cover any new term (tag) formed, as a neologism, to represent a new concept. However, the definition of *terminologization* [4.23] limits its meaning to neologisms formed by borrowing "general language words or expressions," by contrast with NEOLOGISMS [4.22] borrowed from foreign languages or other technical fields. For example, *term bank* is a product of term formation, but not of terminologization nor is it a NEOLOGISM. Consequently, my main reason for resisting 'terminologization' arises from the triviality of the distinction it stipulates with 'NEOLOGISM'. Both are neologisms used to tag new concepts. Hence they both result from *term formation*, a more important superordinate concept omitted from *ISO 1087*.

3. Pleonasms

A simple expedient can be used to overcome the ambiguities likely to arise because of the need for neologisms (not necessarily NEOLOGISMS) in all newly developing fields of knowledge. It involves the use of *pleonasms*, i.e. linking two or more terms for the same concept. The dictionary definition of a "pleonasm" asserts that it involves "the use of more words than are required to express an idea." An example might be: "Use synonyms (syn-tags) with care." As defined by *ISO 1087* at [5.4.3], as noted above, terminologists should use *synonym* not to mean two words (lexemes) with similar meanings, its lexical sense, but rather to speak of "different designations for one concept." I have proposed *syn-tag* as an unambiguous neoterism for this concept, recognizing that the form will generate resistance because it is unfamiliar. To overcome the vagueness of 'synonym' and the strangeness of 'syn-tag', why not use both words, pleonastically? Anyone who wishes to express the onomantic perspective in Terminology would not be limited to the use of 'synonym' for this concept because the addition of 'syn-tag' would show which of its possible meanings is intended. By contrast, anyone fearful of being misunderstood because 'syn-tag' is a neoterism could insert 'synonym' to remind readers that this expression refers to a special sense of "synonym."

Acceptance of pleonasms requires a change of mind-set about how many terms can be used to designate a concept. If *mononymy* is associated with standardization, as it often is, then we can understand why advocates of terminological standardization demand that each concept should have only one term.[11] However, if clear communication is seen as involving the unambiguous representation of concepts, then it would be easier to accept *polynymy*. Whenever, as in the example of "synonym (syn-tag)", a familiar meta-term is likely to be misunderstood (because it is a siamese-tag), an unfamiliar neoterism can be added (in parentheses).

There is also a practical consideration involving the preference for alphabetization in the design of conceptual glossaries. This preference leads to insistence on the use of terms as headforms – even, paradoxically, when concept records are not alphabetized but are arranged by notation numbers! No doubt synonyms (syn-tags) can be placed after a head term and in front of a definition, but this usage is awkward and often resisted. It would be easier not only to accept lists of syn-tags but to identify their properties if the onomantic format adopted for the INTERCOCTA project (Riggs et al., 1996) (Riggs, 1985; 1989) could be used, as in the following example:

[4.33] designations representing the same concept:
*SYNONYMS, SYN-TAGS, SYN-TERMS

Readers might know, from the asterisk, that 'synonym' is not only a meta-term but also a siamese-tag, and they would also recognize 'syn-tag' as a neoterism that can unambiguously designate the same concept. They are not asked to choose between them but, whenever, in context, the concept described in [4.33] is not clearly understood, they can use both terms pleonastically. This example demonstrates, I believe, the advantages of describing concepts onomantically and accepting most of them as polynyms that can be designated by several syn-tags. By this means, more options become available to anyone wishing to use a concept unambiguously.

I believe that the ability to compare syn-tags will lead users of a concept to choose those that best enable them to communicate with their intended audiences, and there is no need for a standardizer to recommend any one of them as a "preferred term." Initially, they may well prefer to use pleonasms that involve the concurrent use of several syn-tags. As a result, the most useful forms will, I believe, gain acceptability, and eventually mononymy may evolve spontaneously. After usage has created consensus on a mononym, it becomes possible to treat the accepted (preferred) forms in *a terminographic* glossary, i.e. one that uses lexicographic principles to identify the es-

tablished terms used in a special language and to enter them alphabetically, as in ordinary dictionary entries. By then the *term disputes* that Gilreath discusses might be largely avoided.

4. Concluding Remarks

The strong preference for meta-terms and p-tags by contrast with neoterisms enables us to understand, I think, why so many siamese-terms are offered in *ISO 1087*. Resistance to polynymy also explains why meta-terms are not associated (pleonastically) with syn-tags, a procedure that could be easily used to overcome ambiguity. Moreover, resistance to neoterisms also accounts for the unwillingness of terminolgists (especially those working through ISO/TC37) to recognize useful concepts that are important for Terminology (and the organization of knowledge).

Since the onomantic perspective needed in Terminology is not important for Lexicography, we find no terms in the lexicological vocabulary (or even in Linguistics, which also starts from language in use) that would be specifically relevant to Terminology. As a new field of study, it requires some distinctive concepts of its own that cannot be found in other fields of knowledge. Its heavy dependence on *term lists* [6.1.2.6] drawn primarily from Lexicography and Linguistics, therefore, explains the presence of most of the items found in *ISO 1087* and why so many useful concepts are omitted from this glossary.

It would surely help terminologists if they were willing to add onomantic concepts and tags to their vocabulary even though there are no terms for them in the vocabulary of Lexicography. No doubt, the lack of established terms for these concepts means that the addition of new entries to *ISO 1087* will often involve the acceptance of neoterisms or p-terms. When meta-terms are adopted they should enjoy enough semantic space (like 'mouse') to permit easy distinctions between their original meanings and newly added senses.

If terminologists continue to rely almost exclusively on the familiar loan words found in *ISO 1087*, they will deny themselves many conceptual tools that are needed to organize knowledge in any newly developing subject field. Unfortunately, because of its continuing emphasis on standardization (especially by prescribing preferred terms) and its preference for mononymy (to support the alphabetical listing of designators), Terminology limits its own utility as a viable framework for understanding and handling the problems of Knowledge Organization in new fields of study. This does not contradict the important functions served by Terminology in the field of special Lexicography, i.e., Terminography for fields with a well-established repertoire of concepts and terms. Onomantics cannot contribute to this field of work insofar as well-established concepts and terms are already available.

If terminologists refuse to accept concepts derived from Onomantics, however, those interested primarily in the representation of new concepts will, I fear, increasingly distance themselves from Terminology, but if terminologists are willing to accept more of the relevant onomantic concepts, then the linkages between Onomantics and Terminology as fields of study can surely be strengthened. The onomantic perspective provides, I believe, a sound foundation for the development and utilization of systems of concepts in any growing field of knowledge where new concepts are needed. Unfortunately, the vocabulary now available to Terminology seriously limits its capacity to serve these purposes.

Notes

1. The dictionary definition of "neologism" includes a second sense of the word which sometimes refers to a new theological doctrine. We can ignore this concept as irrelevant here.

2. The entries in *ISO 1087* for *neologisms* (unfamiliar words from special and foreign languages) and *terminologizations* (terms formed from familiar words found in ordinary language) – see note no.9 – relate to degrees of familiarity and linguistic sources rather than to the meanings attributed to words. Both these concepts pertain to *meta-terms* (i.e., borrowed forms given new meanings by stipulation).

We need to be clear about the meaning of terminological *stipulations*. The classic example can be found in *Alice in the Looking Glass* where Humpty Dumpty asserts that a word will mean whatever he says it will mean. Stipulations work, however, only when we can remember what the stipulator asserts. Unfortunately, many of the stipulations found in *ISO 1087* cannot be remembered and the original meanings of its meta-terms are likely to be confused with its newly assigned meanings. Far more important than the distinction between familiar and unfamiliar words, therefore, is the distinction between meta-terms and borrowed terms/concepts.

3. A third neoterism appears in a proposed revision of *ISO 1087* that was distributed in 1994. It reads: "[4.23] **terminologization**: introduction of a general language word or expression into use as a term". When we compare [4.23] with the definition for "neologism" [4.22], we find that both include borrowed lexemes for which new meanings are stipulated – i.e. they are both meta-terms. However, they differ insofar as NEOLOGISMS (taken from foreign and special languages) are presumably unfamiliar words, whereas *terminologization* refer only to familiar lexemes (borrowed from the vocabulary of a general language). Given the obvious inclination of the authors of *ISO 1087* to reject neoterisms, why did they nevertheless accept *terminologization*? It seems ironic that this neoterism is used to help legitimize the rejection of neoterisms!

4. A third model for designing glossaries and dictionaries can be identified that falls outside the boundaries of both

Terminography and Onomantics, both of which are essentially descriptive in orientation. Terminographers, like Lexicographers, are expected to report established technical terms and their meanings without prescribing usage – in principle, *preferred terms* are those recognized by specialists in a field, not by the terminographers compiling them. Similarly, Onomantics seeks to identify the new concepts needed in an emerging field of study and to report the terms already used to designate them. When the available terms clearly seem inadequate, new terms may be suggested but not recommended – only specialists in the field concerned have the authority to recommend the terms they feel comfortable with when introducing or using new concepts.

Nevertheless, a prescriptive mode of terminological work exists and flourishes. It is normally practiced by specialists in a given field who recognize the need for a glossary and lack expertise in either Terminography or Onomantics. A good example can be found in the *Dictionary of Archival Terminology* that was compiled by a distinguished group of archivists. They met regularly for several years, with UNESCO support, to list the terms used in their work and to agree on definitions that would tell fellow-archivists what they thought these words ought to mean. The result was a kind of prescriptive glossary that deviates in important respects from the norms accepted by both Terminography and Onomantics. There are no specialists who focus their attention on the problems involved in preparing such prescriptive glossaries because, in each case, they are prepared by subject-matter specialists who see no need for help from professional lexicographers or terminologists – see my review of the *Archival Dictionary* (Riggs, 1988).

We could talk more easily about this phenomenon if we could accept a term to represent it. The best word I have found is *gradus*, a term used in the *Gradus ad Parnassum*, a prosodic dictionary published late in the 17th Century. It was used by students as a guide to good usage in Latin, and similar works known as "graduses" became popular in England during the 18th century. Many early dictionaries, in fact, were graduses (handbooks of correct usage), reflecting the author's opinions about what words should mean and how they should be used.

Professional lexicographers have long since abandoned this approach as counter-productive, but the non-lexicographers who compile pseudo-dictionaries in their own fields of specialization perpetuate the *gradus* tradition and misuse the words *dictionary* or *glossary* to label them. Such works are quite numerous and vary greatly in quality and design, but there is no special vocabulary or set of concepts applicable to their design and preparation. Even today, in popular discourse, we often hear "dictionary" definitions cited as though they offered authoritative definitions of what words should mean rather than reports on the usages found in texts – in popular usage no distinction is made between the *descriptive* entries found in genuine dictionaries and the *prescriptive* opinions found in graduses. I think Terminology could also benefit by making this useful distinction.

5. The felt need for standardization was perhaps reinforced by a practical consideration. If mononymy were actually possible, glossators could by-pass the complex problems involved in identifying systemic relations between concepts. The frequent revisions of the notation scheme for each revision of *ISO 1087* reveals the difficulties its compilers experienced. If all concepts could be entered alphabetically after a single main entry without any need to mention syn-tags, the problems faced by terminologists would be much easier to solve. Thus the concept of mononymy is very appealing to terminologists.

The Committee on Terminology of the American Society for Testing and Materials actually follows this principle in its *Compilation* of terms, which is fully alphabetical. However, in practice, mononymy was not possible, as revealed by the addition of cross-references to syn-terms in this ASTM glossary. Nevertheless, the compilers of this reference work have not prepared a classification scheme to link their concepts with each other, nor do they mark entailed terms to help users find closely related concepts.

6. In practice, most new concepts in any field acquire several suggested tags before any one of them can gain acceptance as a preferred term. Even when a concept's inventor suggests a suitable tag, others who need to use the same concept often propose syn-tags. Consequently, although a concept may have only one designation when first introduced, equivalent terms for the same concept are often added by others who may conceive the same idea without being aware that someone else has already proposed a term for it. Or they simply may not like the first suggested tag. This means that mononymy may often be a transient phenomenon and "polynymy" is more common, at least during the early stages of the development of any new subject field.

7. *Phrasal term* may be compared with "phrasal verb," a term entered in W3 where it is defined as an expression composed of two or more words used as a verb. A more generic tag, *phrasal compound*, is entered in Hartmann and Stork's dictionary for Linguistics (1972). Because "term" for linguists typically means a lexeme, I prefer "phrasal tag" or "p-tag" as a less ambiguous designator for this concept.

8. In semantic contexts, such phrases are often lexemes, eligible for entry in a dictionary. By contrast, in Onomantics, phrases need not be lexemes in order to designate a concept. Lexicographers classify phrases as lexemes if their meanings cannot be deduced from those of the words used in the phrase: *term bank*, for example, could be interpreted by an uninformed person as a term for long-term vs. short-term banking. Consequently, its special meaning as a repository of terminological information justifies classing it as a closed phrase (lexeme).

Phrases may be open or closed, but since their status as lexemes is not relevant for Terminology, we do not need to ask whether they would be entered in a dictionary. This point underlines the contrast between semantic and onomantic analysis. Lexicographers have to distinguish closed from open phrases in order to enter the former in dictionaries while omitting the latter: thus 'blue bird' meaning a particular species of bird would be lexiconized, whereas 'blue bird,' meaning any bird with blue feathers, would not be. By contrast, in onomantics it is irrelevant to determine the lexical status of a phrase: the only relevant question is whether a phrase tags a concept. Fortunately, none of the many lexicographic terms used to mean a "set phrase" were borrowed for reproduction in *ISO 1087*. Terminological purposes are well served by phrases (p-tags) that, whether

open or closed, can unambiguously represent needed concepts.

9. When familiar words are used for a new meaning they are often called *metaphors*. However, this word has such a broad and general meaning (like "ship" for "government," or "rolling stone" for an itinerant person) that it cannot really serve our purposes. However, we might well speak of "metaphoric terms" or just *meta-terms*. Acceptance of this neoterism would make it easier to recognize an important type of neologism consisting of new (metaphoric) usages for established words. There are many of them in *ISO 1087*.

10. The original "Siamese twins" were Chinese babies born in Bangkok. I wish we could use another word for twins anatomically linked at birth, but the concept appears to be mononymic. Without insulting the Thai people who have absolutely nothing to do with this phenomenon, we might nevertheless borrow the word to coin a term, *siamese-terms*, used for any meta-tag whose metaphoric meaning is trapped by its original meaning. Put differently, a siamese-term is a meta-tag caught in a semantic trap – its new meaning is suffocated anatomically (semantically) by its familiar senses.

Whenever no semantic distance results from two definitions of a word, they designate the same concept even though the defining texts are different: *semantic unity* can prevail even when defining texts are different. Many examples can be found in rival dictionaries where, to avoid copyright violations and costly suits, editors must find different ways to define the same concept. Fear of copyright violations, however, need not hamper the authors of a conceptual glossary. The definitions of borrowed terms found in *ISO 1087* identify concepts that are different from, though similar to, those used in dictionaries to define their original meanings. They express neither the semantic unity found in borrowed concepts, nor the semantic space enjoyed by meta-terms like 'mouse'. Instead, they suffer from the semantic trap experienced by all siamese-terms.

11. Gilreath (1995) asserts that *mononymy* "... is a primary goal (albeit elusive) for any onometric analysis" (p.28). Although he recognizes *multinymy* (polynymy) as an antonym for "mononymy," Gilreath dismisses it as an unimportant concept. However, he does compare it with *synonymy*, which he uses in its ordinary language sense. The point is, I think, that polynyms, by definition, have two or more designators, each of which is a syn-tag (synonym) in relation to other syn-tags for the same concept, but not necessarily a synonym (lexeme with similar meaning). Pleonasms can legitimize syn-tags (synonyms) by encouraging the use of several designators for a multinym in order to reduce ambiguity.

Gilreath also discusses *term disputes* as conflicts about what to call a concept. When more than one tag is available, he argues, speakers "... will miscommunicate unless both speakers recognize the synonymy." I would say, instead, that good communication results when speakers recognize that different syn-tags (synonyms) can be used to represent a single concept, but miscommunication is almost unavoidable when synonyms (lexemes with similar but not identical meanings) are treated as though they were syn-tags. Actually, virtually all "synonyms" are "near-synonyms" in the sense that they do not have identical meanings, the criterion offered for a "true synonym".

The way to avoid term disputes is not to impose mononymy but, rather, to insist that the syn-tags for a given polynym (multinym) be clearly identified. When we know the different expressions that, in context, can be used to designate the same concept, many disputes about what to call a concept can be avoided. Why not use all of them pleonastically?

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