

Concept-Term Relationship and a Classified Schedule of Isolates for the term 'Concept'

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ABSTRACT: Draws attention to the efforts to define the terms 'concept' and 'term' and suggests a schedule of isolates for the term 'concept' under eight headings: 0. Concept; 1. Theoretical aspects; 2. Learning theory and Psychological aspects; 3. Origin, evolution, formation, construction; 4. Semantic aspects; 5. Terms and Terminology; 6. Usage and discipline-specific applications; and 7. Concepts and ISAR systems. The schedule also includes about 150 aspects/isolate terms related to 'concept' along with the name of the authors who have used them. The schedule is intended to help in identifying the various aspects of a concept with the help of the terms used for them. These aspects may guide to some extent, in dissecting and seeing the social science concepts from various point of views.

Keywords: Concept-Term Relationship; Concept- Depth Schedule; Isolates for Concept

1. Concepts and Terms

It is desirable that a concept is represented by a single term by all those who deal with it, but generally this does not happen. According to the perception of an individual, he or she forms an image of a unit of thought, or an object, which we name concept, and uses a term for it, many times quite different from what the concept in question should convey. In specific disciplines, concepts are given specific explanation, definition, and limiting boundaries, but in the social sciences, the situation is unclear and quite often different terms are used to represent the same concept. In addition, an individual object can also be seen from different angles and different concepts can be formed about it according to different cultural backgrounds.

In a specific discipline, items can be categorized and named as concepts of that discipline. The delimitation of knowledge into specific compartments is not easy, and as a result, in many fields of knowledge, specifically in the social sciences, where the same term is used in different discipline-specific contexts, the literature of that field provides the context in which a term is used and to which concept a term represents. To find out the concepts used in a specific discipline, its areas of interest are identified and some limits are drawn about its nature, perspectives, boundaries, range, field, scope, subject matter and coverage. The second aspect to be kept in mind in identifying the concepts related to a discipline is to see what type of consensus is emerging about individual concepts, with regard to their attributes, among the specialists of that discipline.

2. Definition of some related terms

1. Classification:

"A documentary language which groups concepts into classes, uses mostly hierarchical relations for arrangement of classes, and reflects the structure of arrangement by notation." (Wersig; Ulrich, 1976: p. 132)

2. Category:

"A category denotes either the name given to any class of things, actions, or relationships which recur with sufficient (relative) uniformity and frequency as to render the class a useful subject of predication or the class itself. When rigorously defined and placed in a system of classes, it becomes a scientific category. ... All technical terms and concepts in social sciences are categories in the sense that they denote name, a class of observable things, actions, or relations. Nothing can be observed as a datum for science that can not be named or categorized." (Bain)

"1. A 'class' of high generality; 2. A general facet applying to a lot of subject fields." (Wersig; Ulrich: p.124)

3. Concept:

"Any unit of thought; a mental image formed by generalization." (Wersig : p. 56)

"The basic unit of thinking. It can be said that we have a concept of A (or of A-ness) when we are able to distinguish A from whatever is not A." (Sartori p.9; 84)

"A concept is the meaning conveyed by some word which represents an idea, and which is capable of forming its own category of objects, phenomena, processes, etc., e.g. the concepts of class, interest, power in politics. Concepts are the elements from which complex statements are constructed about relationships, and which go to form their explanation, thus a theory or scientific law will consist of several interrelated concepts." (Roberts)

"Mainly denotes 'idea' or notion. It is envisaged as an abstract or psychological thing presupposing conscious minds which at least potentially 'have' the concept, i.e. understand it, or which one thinks; a unit smaller than a judgment, proposition, or theory, but which necessarily enters into these. In an assertion, some thing is predicated of a concept, and the predicate itself can generally be redescribed as a concept. At the same time, however, the concept is

by no means an ultimate or indivisible unit, for concepts can be augmented or diminished by addition or subtraction of some feature. Moreover, while concepts occur within assertions or theories and are thus distinct from them, a proposition or theory or thesis as a whole, can, in turn be referred to a further concept." (Gellner)

4. Isolate:

"An isolate is an object or class of objects, a process or class of processes, or an abstract term or class of such terms." (Farradane)

"A single concept of any degree of complexity which can be considered in isolation for purposes of definition, or for placing in a classification." (Wersig: p.127)

5. Term:

"Although a word may have several senses, only one of them is intended when it is used as a term. Hence, a word is a term only when it designates one of its possible meanings." (Riggs 1979: p. 152)

6. Terminology:

"The discipline concerned with the formation and naming of a concept, either in a special sub-field or in the aggregate of all subject fields.... An organized set of technical terms whose meaning has been explained or defined." (Wersig: p. 55)

"Important words' that are carriers of concepts, that can be said to constitute, in some meaningful sense, units of thinking." (Sartori: p. 84)

3. Concepts and Theories

Concepts in a discipline are useful for the formation of theories. Levy provides some guidelines for dealing with concepts for empirical scientific purposes and enumerates his observations like this:

"For empirical scientific purposes they (concepts) must first be precisely defined and precisely differentiated from other concepts. Second, they must be given empirical referents. Third, they are not more or less valid, but only more or less useful for a given purpose of analysis."

Sartori observes that

"Whether concepts are theory-formed or theory-forming, in either case they are the basic

units with which the social profession actually performs.” (p.9; 1984)

A term is a word or phrase used to denote a concept. Sartori defines a term as “The form used to signify the concept- that is, a word allocated to a concept.” (Sartori: p.84) Explaining the relation between concepts and terms, Soergel argues that

“In language, terms(single word terms or multi-word terms) are used to designate concepts. The relationships between concepts and terms are governed by the rules of terminology. However, as is well known, there is much confusion in this area. Firstly, there is no one-to-one relationship between concepts and terms. In the case of synonyms, several terms designate the same concept. For example, lawyer and attorney.... and place under government ownership and nationalization are synonyms. On the other hand, homonyms are terms, that correspond to different concepts (have different meanings)....: socialization (economics) and socialization (social psychology) are examples. Secondly, different people use the same term with different meanings. Things are complicated even more by the well-known fact that different persons (or even the same person at different times) associate different concepts with one and the same term. It is therefore, necessary to control the relationship between concepts and terms. In most fields, this problem is far from solved.”

Leslie *et al* write

“Whether we speak of men, tables, societies, cultures, or systems, the process is the same. We use abstract symbols to group things together, to distinguish one type of object from another and, ultimately, to see the world as orderly.

Concepts enable man to classify, sub-classify and cross-classify the objects in the environment. They provide him with the flexibility to see connection among things, in ways that otherwise would be impossible.”

Turner, emphasizing the importance of defining concepts unambiguously, in ‘Concepts: the basic building blocks of theory’, argues

“Theories are build from concepts.... concepts are constructed from definitions..... concepts that are useful in building theory have a special characteristic. They strive to communicate a uniform meaning to all those who use them.

However, since concepts are frequently expressed with the words of everyday language, it is difficult to avoid words that connote varied meanings – and hence point to different phenomena – for different groups of scientists. It is for this reason that many concepts in science are expressed in technical or more ‘natural’ language, such as symbols of mathematics. In sociology, expression of concepts in such special languages is sometimes not only impossible, but also undesirable. Hence, the verbal symbols used to develop a concept must be defined as precisely as is possible, in order that they point to the same phenomena for all investigators. While perfect consensus may never be attained with conventional language, a body of theory rests on the premise that, scientists will do their best to define concepts unambiguously. Not to do so, or to give up because the task is difficult, is to invite conceptual chaos and thereby to preclude the accumulation of theoretical knowledge.”

Stressing this point Riggs says

“The concepts used in a specialized field of knowledge are highly interdependent, as such, it is important that they are presented in systematic (i.e.) classified glossary, with inter-linked definitions, and comprehensive analytical index to all the terms, that can be used to designate each concept, given as an entry in the glossary.” (p.77; 1982)

Highlighting this problem, Coates writes

“This would be very simple to achieve if there were an uncomplicated, one-to-one relationship between concepts and words: that is to say, if there were a single word corresponding to each concept and a single concept corresponding to each separate word. In fact, we have on the one hand, concepts that can be rendered by any one of a number of words, and on the other hand, concepts for which no single word equivalent exists in the natural language.”

4. Some samples and types of Research on Concepts

Some of the following works represent the various types of research on concepts:

1. Research on concepts- general, philosophical, logical, learning theory, and psychological aspects e.g. E Heron The concept ‘Concept’: the

history of concept and its metaphysical interpretation. Munchen, Reinhardt, 1932: p.101.

2. Research on social science concepts as a general field e.g. Giovanni, Sartori; Fred W Riggs; Henry Teune Tower of Babel: on the definition and analysis of concepts in the social sciences. Pittsburgh, Univ. of Pittsburgh, 1975.
3. Research on the nature of concepts /terms in specific disciplines e.g. S E Finer "Vocabulary of political science" Political studies 23(2-3), 1975;
4. Research on individual concepts and the state of the art reports e.g. Fred W Riggs ed. Concepts and terms used in ethnicity research. Frankfurt, Indeks Verlag, 1988: 205 p.
5. Studies suggesting new social science concepts/ term and their application in specific situation e.g. W W Rostow "The concept "Take off" in Stages of economic growth.1960; 'Ethnocentrism by W G Sumner in Folkways. (1906); 'Vocabulary of motive' by Hans Garth and C Wright Mills in Am. Sociol. Rev.,1954.
6. Studies suggesting methods of concept analysis e.g. Giovanni Sartori "Guidelines for concept analysis." Social science concepts: a systematic analysis. Beverly Hills, Sage, 1984: p. 72-85.
7. Publications and glossaries providing definition, explanation of subject-specific concepts e.g. G Wersig; Novelig Ulrich Terminology of documentation, 1976.; Singer, J D A general systems taxonomy for political science. 1971; and glossary of terms provided in the textbooks e. g. Alvin M. Bertrand Basic sociology, 1967: p. 495-507 and; Bernard Phillips Sociology. 1979: p.501-510.
8. Research on concepts and their representation in information retrieval tools e.g. Dagobert Soergel "Concepts and terms" in Indexing languages and thesauri: construction and maintenance. Los Angeles, Cal., Melville, 1974: p.20.

5. A Schedule of Isolate Terms representing various aspects of a 'Concept'

A detailed bibliographical and literature survey of the field indicates that no study can truly be called a complete guide for concept analysis, or can claim to touch all the major aspects of social science concepts. However, the contributions by Wersig et al (1976), Dahlberg (1978), Riggs (1979), and Sartori (1984) have laid the foundation for systematic work in the field. A format for analysing social science concepts is being

proposed, which tries to organize the various aspects of a concept/term that appear to be significant and any future analysis on these lines is likely to lead to a better conceptual clarity and completeness of individual concepts. The proposed schedule of isolates is divided into the following major sections: 1. Theoretical aspects; 2. Learning theory and psychological aspects; 3. Origin, evolution, formation, construction; 4. Semantic aspects; 5. Terms and Terminology; 6. Usage and discipline-specific applications and; 7. Concepts and ISAR systems. In most of the cases, an isolate/aspect of a concept used by an author in some of his publications has been indicated by the first one or two letters of his surname, details of which are provided in the note at the end of the schedule. Individual isolates within a heading are however, not arranged in hierarchical order, which requires further consideration by specialists in the field, and the author will be glad to receive suggestions. Information retrieval systems use terms which represent some concepts. Knowledge organization in libraries requires clearly defined, classified, and hierarchically arranged concepts. Because concepts are called building blocks of theory, and a discipline stands on its theories, the development of a discipline rests primarily on the clearly defined and differentiated concepts.

Schedule of Isolates and their Synonyms for the Term 'Concept' Sources referred to in the Schedule of Isolates:

- Abell, Peter (1973): Concept. in Model building in sociology. London, Weidenfeld. p. 27-31 (A)
- Abercrombie, Nicholas et al (1984, 1988): Dictionary of sociology. London, Penguin. 320 p. (Ab)
- Dahlberg, I. (1978): A referent oriented analytical concept theory for INTERCONCEPT. Int. Class. 5(3). 142-51 (D)
- Dahlberg, W. (1979): Towards a geometry of basic concepts. Intl. class. 6(2), 73-84 (Da)
- Heath, P. L. (1967): Concept. in Encycl. of Philosophy. NY, Macmillan. p. 177-81. (H)
- Heron, E. (1932): Concept 'Concept': the history of concept and its metaphysical interpretation. Munchen, Reinhardt. p.101 (He)
- International Encycl. of Social Sciences. (1979): NY, Free Press, Vol.17 (index) (I)
- Levy Jr., Marion J. (1952): Structure of society. Princeton, NJ, Princeton Univ. Press. (L)
- Mullins, Nicholas C. (1971): Art of theory construction and use. New York, Harper. 184 p. (M)

- Outhwaite, William (1983): Concept formation in social science. London, Routledge. 245 p. (O)
- Pratt, Vernon (1978): Philosophy of the social sciences. London, Methuen. 189 p. (P)
- Sartori, Giovanni (1984): Guidelines for concept analysis. in Social science concepts: a systematic analysis. Beverly Hills, Sage. 72-85. (S)
- Schutz, Alfred (1972): Phenomenology of the social world. Tr. by George Walsh and L Frederick. London, Heinemann. 255 p. (Sc)
- Soergel, Dagobert (1974): Concepts and terms. in Indexing languages and thesauri: construction and maintenance. Los Angeles, Cal. Melville. p.20 (So)
- Vickery B. C. (1971) Subject analysis and information retrieval. ICSI proceedings, 2, p. 85 (V)
- Wersig, Gernot; Noveling, Ulrich eds. (1976): Terminology of documentation. Paris, UNESCO, 1976: 274 p. (W)
- Whaley, Fred (1971): Concept coordination. Encycl. of Lib. and Inf. Sci. Vol. 5. NY, Marcel Dekker. 584-86 (Wh)
- Winch, Peter (1958) Idea of a social science. London, Routledge, 1958 (WI)
- Nedobity, Wolfgang (1983): Terminology and its application to classification, indexing and abstracting. UNESCO J. of Inf. Sci. 5(4), 249-55 (Wo)

Summary

1. Theoretical aspects
2. Learning Theory and Psychological aspects
3. Origin, Evolution, Formation, Construction
4. Terms and Terminology
5. Semantic aspects
6. Usage and Discipline-specific Applications
7. Concepts and ISAR Systems
 1. Theoretical aspects
 - 1.1 Abstract and philosophical aspects - Hypothesis and concepts; Theoretical concepts; Scientific and theoretical concepts (O); Deeper lying theoretical concepts (A); Metaphysical interpretation (He); Philosophy of science (I); Reasoning and logic (I)
 - 1.2 Social science vs. natural science concepts.
 - 1.3 Concept structure – Concept systems (D); System of concepts (W); Set of concepts (W); Complete set of concepts; General set of concepts (M); Concepts as set of ideas;

Concepts as branch of thought; Geometry of basic concepts (Da)

- 1.4 Concepts and theory – Approach (Sa); Concepts and theoretical development (L); Concept dependence (O); Conceptual dimension of social study (P)
- 1.5 Concept term relationship – Plane of concepts vs. plane of terms
2. Learning Theory and Psychological aspects
 - 2.1 Learning theory -Semantic projection (Sa); Concept attainment (Wh); Concept formation (Sa); Concept formation vs. Concept attainment; Conceptualization (Wh); Conceptualization of meaning; Concept identification (Wo); Concept coordination (Wh); Implementation of concept coordination (Wh); Origination of concept coordination (Wh); Learning theory (I); Learning in children (I); School learning (H); Transfer learning (I); Conception (Sa); Cognitive learning styles (H); Discovering learning (H)
 - 2.2 Language development (I)
 - 2.3 Intellectual development (I); Abstract intelligence (H); Human intelligence (H); Concept formation (So)
 - 2.4 Psychological aspects – Piaget's theory of concept formation (Wh); Psychological concept formation, system analysis (I); Developmental psychology (I); Concept formation – Psychological aspects (Wh); Symbolic interaction (I); Simulation: individual behavior (I); Stimulus generalization (H)
3. Origin, Evolution, Formation, Construction Original concept; Basic concept; Emerged concept; Evolving concept; Base of a concept; Sources of a concept (M); Coining of concepts (Ab); Concept construction (Sa); Ideal concept; Choice of concepts (O)
 - 3.1 Role of intuition, thinking, and analysis, – Thinking (I)
 - 3.2 Exchange of ideas, discussion groups
 - 3.3 Historical development – Etymology (Sa)
 - 3.31 Main contributors and their contribution – Concept developed by -; Introduced by -; Pioneered by --; elaborated by/ used by

- 3.32 Change in denotation
- 3.33 Transformation, transmutation – Combination of concepts (S); Conjunction (W)
- 3.34 Reconstruction, reconsideration – Evaluation of a concept; Reconstruction of concept (Sa; D); Refining of a concept
- 3.4 Comparison, correlation -Correlation of concepts (D); Local and universal concepts
- 3.5 Categorization – Conceptual category (V); Categorization of concepts (D); Graph of concepts
- 3.6 Quantification – Operationalization of a concept (A)
- 3.7 Critical works and reviews – Analysis of concept (D); Conceptual elaboration (A); Concept decomposition (So); Critique of concept (O)
- 3.71 Guidelines for concept analysis (Sa)
4. Terms and Terminology
- 4.1 Term – General term; word and term; Root word; defining characteristic of a term; theoretical term (Sa); abstraction related term; Extrinsic characteristic of a term (W); Coined term; Named term; Primitive term (Sa); compound term; Complex term; deprecated term; technical term; Explication of a term; Entailed term; syntax (W) and syntactics (Sa);
- 4.2 Terminology; Naming of a concept; Selection, coining of terms, Descriptive term; Context of a word (Sa); Appropriate term (Sa); Object word; Logical words; Pairs of terms;
- 4.3 Semantics aspects of terms – Etymology – Meaning; Metaphor; Synonymy (Sa); Concept designation (So); Designator of a concept; Surrogate term (Sa); Parsimony (Sa); Application / usage of a term (So); Terminologist; Terminological analysis (Sa); Plurivalent (W); Polyseme (Sa); Homonymy (Sa); Widely or commonly used term; Substitution test of a term (Sa); Preferred term (We); Exact term; Control of adequacy of a term (D); Tolerated term (W); Transferred term (W) Neologism; Semantic field; Semantic projection; Connotation (Sa); Denotata of a term; Term diffuse in meaning; Generic term; Ambiguity (Sa); Confusion (Sa); Fussiness (Sa); Vagueness (W, Sa);
- Looseness and indeterminacy of a term (W); Disjunction (W); Extension of a term; Term used to explain something; Vocabulary (W); Stipulation; Evaluative connotation; Loaded word (Sa); Referent(Sa); Predicate (Sa); Univocal; Related terms;
- 4.4 Antonymy (Sa); Opposite words (Sa); Contradictory term (Sa)
- 4.5 Hierarchy – Generic term; Broader term; Narrower term;
- 4.6 Terminological control- Class term; Exact term; Key term (Sa); Entry term; Descriptor; Index term; Permitted term; Controlled term test; Associated terms; Neighbouring terms (Sa); Equality relation between terms; Terms in the same concept class (So)
- 4.7 Thesaurus construction and use
5. Semantic aspects of a Concept
- 5.1 Definition, explanation – Concept types (So); Plane of concepts vs. Plane of terms; Bound term; unboundedness of a term (Sa); Boundlessness of a concept (Sa); Concept definition (Sa); Scope of concept (M); Defined concept (M); Example of a concept (M); Denotata of a concept (Sa); Verbal determination of a concept (W); Operational definition (Sa); Minimal definition (Sa); Metaphor (Transferred meaning) (Sa); Meaning (Sa); Lexical definition (Sa); Declarative definition (Sa); Precising definition (Sa); Semantic Field (Sa); Explained concept (Ab); Definition by genus and species (W)
- 5.11 Parsimony (in defining) – Explication (Sa)
- 5.12 Referent (Sa)
- 5.2 Classification
- 5.21 Attributes, characteristics, property – Properties included in the definition of a concept (Sa); Properties that constitute a concept (W); Characteristic belonging to a concept (W); Defining properties/ characteristic of a concept (Sa) Attributes which constitute a concept (W); Generic characteristic (W); Incidental characteristic of a concept (W); Specific characteristic of a concept (W); General concept (So); Loaded word (with strong evaluative connotation) (S); Entailed term (Sa); Primitive (unde-

- fined term) (Sa); Unifying concept; Raw concept (M); Organizing concept; Object concept (Sa); Meta-concept (Sa); Accompanying property (Sa); Necessary characteristic (Sa); Requisite characteristic (Sa); Setting (Sa); Predicate (S); Object concept (Sa); Ensemble of characteristics of a concept (Sa)
- 5.22 Primary and secondary concepts – Elemental concept (So); Primary concept; Secondary concept (Sc)
- 5.23 Object and property concepts – Object concept (Sa); Predicate (Sa)
- 5.24 Context (of a word) (Sa); Context, environment/ or language in which concepts are used (called setting) (Sa)
- 5.3 Associated concepts – Equality – a relation between two terms (Sa); Neighbourliness (Sa); Compound concept (So); Concept combination (So; W);. Concept relationships (So); Concepts similar in meaning (So); Conceptual association (Wh); Connectedness of a concept (M); Empirically connected concepts (So); Nearly related concepts (So); Concept connected with --; Terms in the same concept class (So)
- 5.31 Concepts in a continuum – Polar concept (Sa)
- 5.4 Clarity of concepts – Contentious concept; Difference of opinion on a concept; Conceptual completeness (So); Refined concept (M); Clarity of concept (M); Specific concept (So; W); Conceptual representation (So)
- 5.41 Hidden and surfaced concept – Surfaced concept; Deeper lying concept (Ab); Empirical concept (Sa)
- 5.42 Ambiguity, homonym, synonym – Conceptual problem; Elusive concept; Fictitious concept; Imaginary concept; Slippery concept; Undenotativeness (Sa); Vagueness (Sa); Polyseme (Word with many meanings) (Sa); Confusion (Sa); Fuzziness (Sa); Indefiniteness (Sa); Widely overlapping (So)
- 5.43 Antonym, contradictory terms – Opposites (Sa); Antonymy (Sa); Contradictory (Sa)
- 5.5 Intension, extension – Intension (Sa); Limiting concept (N); Adequacy (extensional) (Sa); Central concept; Dimension of a concept (Ab); Extensional adequacy of a concept (Sa); Extensional definition of a concept (W)
- 5.6 Hierarchy – Hierarchical classification (Sa); Division of a concept
- 5.61 Broader and narrower concepts (W); Broader concept (So); Higher order concept (M); Narrower concept (So); Sub-concepts (M); Sub-ordinate concept (W); Super-ordinate concept (W)
- 5.62 Terms used in textbook's sections/ chapter headings
- 5.7 Discipline specific connotation – Specialized language (Sa); Stipulation (Sa); Conceptual framework (Sa; P); Setting (Sa); Borrowed concept; Concepts and cultural anthropology (I); Commonalty of concepts (M); Conceptual compatibility (So)
- 5.71 Evaluative connotation (Sa)
- 5.8 Conceptual, inter-cultural, and inter-lingual compatibility
6. Usage and Discipline-specific Applications
- 6.1 Usage in the general/ relevant literature – Use of a concept (M); Theoretical concept (Wi); Concept of general application (So); Every day concept; Current term (Mu); Useful concept (M); Widely used concept (So); Very frequently used concept (So); Very seldom used concept
- 6.2 Usage in dictionaries, encyclopedias
- 6.21 Usage in subject dictionaries, encyclopedias
- 6.3 Usage in textbooks and glossaries
- 6.4 Discipline-specific considerations – Specialized language (Sa); Conceptual framework (Sa)
- 6.41 Linguistic aspects
- 6.42 Philosophical aspects
- 6.43 Logical aspects
- 6.44 Psychological aspects
- 6.45 Theological aspects
- 6.46 Political science aspects
- 6.47 Concepts in economics
- 6.48 Anthropological aspects

- 6.49 Sociological aspects
- 7. Concepts and ISAR Systems
 - 7.1 Word/ term
 - 7.2 Concepts in ISAR systems – Concept formation in Information Science (Wh); ISAR Concept (So)
 - 7.21 Concepts representing Key terms – Key term (Sa)
 - 7.22 Vocabulary control
 - 7.23 Descriptor/ Subject headings – Conceptual representation (So)
 - 7.3 Subject headings representing concept
 - 7.4 Subject indexing – Concept co-ordination for computerized indexing (Wh); Concept co-ordination as an indexing criteria (Wh); Conceptual hierarchy in information retrieval (Wh)
 - 7.5 Bibliographic classification schemes
 - 7.51 Class headings
 - 7.52 Isolate (Single concept)

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