

Term as a Linguistic Unit

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to identify the distinctive properties of terms in fixed language structures, as well as within the framework of term field theory. The subject of the study is the term as a linguistic unit in its various aspects. At the end of the article, the thesis is made that a term is a special linguistic unit, which consists in a systemic relationship with other linguistic units of the corresponding special language of similar status, used to accurately name and express a special object, concept, phenomenon or type of activity. In addition, the terminological field is the linguistic environment of the existence of the term. In it, it realizes all its characteristics and carries out its main function of naming a special concept.

KEYWORDS: *properties of terms, terminological field, linguistic environment, existence of a term, terminology, stylistic neutrality.*

All aspects of the development and existence of human society are accompanied by scientific discoveries; nowadays science is reaching an international and interethnic level of development. An important factor in the development of science is the unification of world scientific knowledge, which allows us to achieve a greater level of objectivity and depth of research. The accuracy of language serves as a basis for science, determining the very existence of an interethnic scientific society. The basis of the scientific language is terminology; it is subject to a strict hierarchy and accompanies the formation of world scientific knowledge at all levels of its development.

The concepts of term and terminology are key in science; the term provides precision, clarity and understanding of scientific thought. However, despite the most important place of these concepts in the system of scientific knowledge and a large number of studies, there is still no consensus on a number of fundamental issues of terminology: for example, there is no generally accepted definition of the term, there are discussions about the requirements for the term, its grammatical expression, the question of the place of terminology in the language has been resolved, etc. In this work, we will consider existing opinions about the place of the term in the language, define its most important features and, based on this, try to define this concept. Terminology is part of special vocabulary, which includes words and phrases that name objects and concepts of various spheres of human professional activity and are not in common use. A comprehensive study of special vocabulary as the main component of language for special purposes begins in the 20th century. Terminology as the most important part of special vocabulary has been actively studied since the beginning of the 20th century. It becomes obvious that this is

a special area of vocabulary, a system organized according to its own laws and requiring its own methods and techniques of study.

The conceptual content of a term is determined by its place in the system. The term, being part of a certain terminological system, refers to one or another area of science, technology, and production. It has its own definition (precise scientific definition) among terms in the same field. The same word can be a term for different fields of knowledge. This is not polysemy, but homonymy (cf. the term "systematics" in botany, economics and mathematics), since terms within their terminological field are usually unambiguous, unlike "everyday" words. The terms are also associated with a certain scientific concept: they reflect the results of scientific research and their theoretical understanding. In this respect, they are opposed to general vocabulary. Sets of terms are an important part of the general language at the word-formation and grammatical levels [3].

They are formed on the basis of concepts and lexical-semantic relations. General theoretical as well as applied linguistics are the environment for the development and study of the term, since the term is inseparable from the units of the national language. A term is a unit of the lexical system of a language, which has special features that make it possible to distinguish between a term and a non-term. In order to analyze the internal properties of a term, it is studied within the framework of actually existing communities of units, terminological systems serving individual branches of knowledge. In modern linguistics, such properties of a term include: compliance with the term of a concept or concept in the mind of its bearer, belonging of the term to a special field of knowledge, definitiveness, accuracy of meaning, contextual independence (within the thematic text), systematicity, nominativity, lack of expression and stylistic neutrality, purposeful character and consistency in speech. In the works of different authors, the term, as one of the linguistic universals, has many definitions, even if it appears in modern research as a word or phrase denoting the concept of a special field of knowledge or activity [4].

A term is "a word or a verbal complex... that enters into systematic relationships with other words and verbal complexes and forms together with them in each individual case and at a certain time a closed system that is distinguished by high information content, unambiguity, accuracy and expressive neutrality" [5]. D. S. Lotte calls a term a word (phrase) that acts as the unity of a sound sign and an associated concept in the system of concepts of a given field of science and technology" [4]. S.V. Grinev defines the term as "a nominative special lexical unit (word or phrase) of a special language, used to accurately name special concepts" [3].

According to A.S. Gerd, the term contains the implementation of "a specific unit of the corresponding conceptual system in terms of content" [2]. Thus, various authors in the definition of the term highlight one or two most important or main, in their opinion, characteristics. In new areas of knowledge, a short definition may be used instead until a suitable one-word term is found. Using the definition of a term, you can get a general idea of the named object (it can be concrete and material, an abstract mental construct), while at the same time eliminating the possible ambiguity that is characteristic of the word of the same name in a common language. The definition should not be negative where a positive definition is possible, it should be commensurate with what it defines. In the modern field of terminology, when defining terms, not only words or phrases, but also sentences can be used [4].

Sentence terms are used in special languages of military, naval, and sports affairs, are represented by small groups of command, and order semantic orientation. In a common context, only a word and a phrase are used as a term. The sentence as a grammatical category is contrasted in syntax with words and phrases. A sentence serves to report something, performs a communicative task and does not have a nomination function. Therefore, we can consider that the sentence is not a term. The term must correspond to the characteristics of nominativity, stability and reproducibility in speech, which the sentence as a unit of message does not correspond to. Consequently, the definition of a term should reflect its key properties and characteristics; it should be succinct and concise. O.S. Akhmanova defines the term as "a word or phrase of a special (scientific, technical, etc.) language, created (accepted, borrowed, etc.) to accurately express special concepts and designate special objects" [1].

In the terminological system, each term occupies a certain place. It is determined by the place of the corresponding concept in the entire system of concepts. Outside this system, the term loses its characteristic features, and within the language system (not terminological) it can manifest its national and cultural affiliation, "as evidenced by the designation of individual manifestations of lexical meaning by such linguistic categories as polysemy, metaphor, figurativeness, expressiveness, emotionality, connotation, modality" [4]. One of the most important properties of a term and terminology is consistency, and the study of terminological units should take place within the framework of the system to which they belong. There are three approaches to the study of terminological systems [5]:

The first approach is logical, which allows us to identify terms that denote basic, derivative and complex concepts of a given system of concepts. This division is determined by the objects of a certain area and the theory (concept) underlying the system of concepts.

The second approach is linguistic. He represents what lexical units, in terms of their semantics and form, express the units of a given terminology system. Terms can have a varied structure, and only their semantic proximity ensures their unification into a system.

The third method is terminology, which combines the first two approaches; it demonstrates the relationship between a term and a terminological system, shows the place of a particular unit in the corresponding terminological system. If we consider the system from the point of view of its parts (elements), then it acts as a set of interconnected and interdependent homogeneous elements that form a complex

unity. A system always has its constituent parts, namely structure. The structure represents the composition and internal organization of a single whole, considered from the perspective of its integrity and fixation of the relationships between its elements [1]. Terms are units of a special language; they serve any professional field of activity. At the same time, they represent units of natural language, which, in turn, indicates the heterogeneous and complex composition of the latter. The systematic nature of the general vocabulary is expressed in thematic associations of linguistic units, interconnected on the basis of semantic community (lexical-semantic systems). An important role is played by terminological systems in the lexical system of natural language and its functional varieties. Among them are languages for special purposes. A terminological system is a linguistic model of a certain specialized field. This model can exist along with a logical model represented by a system of concepts and a system of definitions. It embodies the logical model into a system of verbal signs [5].

The term system adequately depicts the real system of scientific and technical concepts of a given subject area [1], and it is isomorphic to it. This is "a complex dynamic stable system... its function is to serve as a symbolic (linguistic) model of this area of knowledge or activity" [4]. "...a terminological system reflects in the semasiological structure of the words included in it certain connections and relationships that objectively exist in the circle of named concepts and phenomena" [1]. A terminological system also acts as an ordered set of terms expressing a system of concepts of a special sphere of human activity. There is a mandatory and inalienable connection between them, and the set of connections within such a set determines its structure [2]. Thus, we can talk about the logical and linguistic systematicity of terms. However, not every set of terms can be a term system. Only a high level of development of terminology leads to the creation of a terminological system. It should also be taken into account that all terms containing genus-species relations, according to D. S. Lotte, have signs of logic. This may define logical consistency as a mandatory requirement for terms. If we talk about linguistic consistency, it is an optional condition for creating a terminology system. This condition is met subject to certain requirements. Firstly, the term system has components or elements. Also, the presence of connections between components and the heterogeneity of the terminology system. The next requirements are the materiality of symbolic (transmitted graphically) elements of the terminological system, determinism, openness, structure, controllability (the latter requirements are determined due to the fact that terminology is created and subject to streamlining in the process of a particular field of activity).

However, in all logical definitions of the term, its connection with the concept comes first [4]. Compare: "Terms are special words, limited by their special purpose; words that strive to be unambiguous as the exact expression of concepts and the naming of things" [3, p. 110]; "a term is a word (or phrase), the linguistic sign of which is correlated (connected) with the corresponding concept in the system of concepts of a given field of science and technology" [3, p. 35]; "a term is a word or phrase of a special (scientific, technical, etc.) language, created (accepted, borrowed, etc.) to accurately express special concepts and designate special objects" [1, p. 474]; "a term is a word (or phrase) that is the unity of a sound sign and the corresponding concept correlated

(associated) with it in the system of concepts of a given field of science and technology" [1, p. 19–20]. Thus, based on the above, the ability of a term to designate a specific scientific concept, we consider it the most important feature: "for a term, the named concept is simultaneously the named object, i.e. the "name-concept" connection dominates. Behind the term there is always an object of thought, but not thought in general, but a special thought limited to a certain field" [2, p. 34].

Currently, the descriptive approach is the most recognized theory in special research. However, the inherent shortcomings of this theory (for example, the lack of a generally accepted definition of the term), controversial and undeveloped aspects (the normative nature of terminology, its specificity in relation to the general language) have given rise to other theories. This is, for example, the concept of "linguistic substrate" proposed by V.M. Leichik, according to which the term is "a complex three-layer formation, including a) natural language substrate - a material (sound or graphic) component of the structure of the term, as well as an ideal (semantic) component of this structure, determined by the term's belonging to the lexical system of a particular natural language; b) logical superstrate, that is, meaningful features that allow a term to denote a general - abstract or concrete concept in a system of concepts; c) terminological essence, that is, meaningful and functional features that allow a term to perform the functions of an element of a theory describing a certain special area of human knowledge or activity" [1, p. 7].

Also among the alternative theories, one can name the point of view of A.V. Superanskaya and her followers: taking a position in understanding the essence of the term, in some ways similar to the point of view of supporters of the descriptive approach (for example, recognizing the existence of polysemy, synonyms and antonyms, multicomponent terms, expressiveness terms by different parts of speech, etc.), she believes that "terminology forms an autonomous section of the vocabulary of the national language, which has little in common with the literary language, ... an independent zone with its own patterns, sometimes not consistent with the norms of the literary language," and the meaning of an individual term is revealed only in the system of concepts [4, p. 17-18].

In addition to the correlation of the term with the concept, modern terminology identifies a number of other important requirements that the term must meet: unambiguity, accuracy, compliance with the norms of literary language, brevity, lack of emotionality and expressiveness, motivation, consistency, etc. These conditions represent the requirements for the term in ideally, but in practice terms are found that do not correspond to them, but successfully serve conceptual purposes. Thus, the question of whether certain requirements are mandatory remains highly controversial at present. For example, the requirement of unambiguity is refuted when studying specific term systems, where polysemy is a very common phenomenon [2; 12].

Today, the dominant opinion is that the unambiguity of a term is not a prerequisite, but only a tendency, a state to which any terminology system strives; in practice, the unambiguity of the term is achieved "thanks to the restrictions that are imposed on it by the conditions of each terminological field" [5, p. 130]. However, it should be noted that in many cases, even within the same terminological

field, a term can have not one, but several lexical meanings, since the meaning of the term is determined, on the one hand, by the objective content of the corresponding concept, on the other hand, by a certain subjective principle that is introduced by the researcher in order to clarify the boundaries of the content of a special concept denoted by the term [5, p. 58].

The requirement for accuracy is also controversial. In our opinion, the most legitimate point of view is that of scientists who believe that the accuracy of a term is achieved primarily by the accuracy of the term in use. Obviously, inaccuracy and vagueness of meaning are characteristic of terms in the period of formation or rethinking.

We consider terminology to be an integral part of the vocabulary of the literary language, independent, but not isolated, which implies the subordination of terminology to the general trends in the development of the literary language on the one hand, but also some independence on the other. We see the function of a scientist more in the study and description of the state of terminological systems than in their strict artificial regulation; regulatory restrictions imposed on terms, in our opinion, rather slow down and limit the development of term systems than help them.

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