Terminology Policies

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What is terminology and language planning?

Language planning

Cooper (1989), broad definition:
“Language planning refers to deliberate efforts to influence the behaviour of others with respect to the acquisition, structure, or functional allocation of their language codes”.

Examples: Irish, South Africa
To counter domain loss:

In most cases limitation in the use of a language to folklore or to the family sphere means that such a language can hardly support professional communication.

Similarly, a language that lags behind in its terminology for a given domain risks losing the ability to communicate in that subject in its language over time.

Around 1990, linguists in Denmark started to get concerned about the perceived pressure from the English language on Danish; very early it was stated in several publications that this pressure did not so much involve the influx of English loans as the increased use of English in contexts within Denmark. The domain concept came in very handy to describe this process: English was taking over domains in Denmark that had previously been reserved for Danish; Danish was losing domains to English.
Who uses terminology policies?

Terminology plays crucial role whenever domain-specific knowledge is

• **Generated** (research, development)
• **Used** (specialized texts)
• **Recorded** (databases, dictionaries)
• **Passed on** (training, teaching)
• **Implemented** (technology & knowledge transfer)
• **Translated and interpreted**
There's no knowledge without Terminology
“Order into the chaos”

To give those who need it (translators, terminologists or organization of whatever kind)

... a tool to start and carry through this enormous task

... and eventually to improve communication and knowledge transfer
Language (and terminology) development

**TERMINOLOGY DEVELOPMENT**

is a natural, unavoidable phenomenon, but it can also be a goal-driven initiative as part of (language) development.

Different views on terminology planning/policy

Short term view: all-embracing policy might slow down development.

Medium-long term view: for a certain level of semantic interoperability, reusability and sustainability of efforts, synchronized development is fundamental.
The “national” / language planning perspective

Development of a language to function as scientific and economic medium:

1. Standardization – clear communication
2. Policies for use of language in certain domains
3. Status and self-esteem of the speakers of the language/language communities
4. Terminology management methods
Fact:

Terminology management activities should be guided or governed by a policy.

You as terminology manager do not only manage terms and tools but people!
What is a terminology policy?

**Policy:**

A plan or course of action, as of a government, political party, or business, intended to influence and determine decisions, actions, and other matters: *American foreign policy; the company's personnel policy.*

(American Heritage Dictionary)

The noun policy has 3 meanings:

1: **line of argument rationalizing the course of action of a government**
2: **plan of action adopted by an individual or social group**
3: **written contract or certificate of insurance,**
   **Synonyms:** insurance policy, insurance.
What is a terminology policy?

Strategy

concerning the development or regulation

of emerging and existing terminologies

for an array of purposes.
As we have seen this morning

- Often it is part of your job to work towards a terminology policy
- Where to start and then what?
What?

Each organization or sector has **different needs** and needs a different form of a policy.

Different forms of policies include:

- **Official government policy** (legislation, guidelines that govern how laws should be put into operation)
- Broad ideas and goals in **political manifestos and pamphlets**
- A company or organization’s policy on something e.g. the equal opportunity policy of a company shows that the company aims to treat all its staff equally.

→ a *(formulated/expressed)* **strategy towards a goal,**
→ a **governing tool**
What?

Policy-making is a highly complex process

Factors having an impact on terminology policies:

- demographic factors
- cultural, ethno-linguistic and geo-linguistic factors
- socio-psychological factors
- economic factors
- legal factors
Essential skills for a terminology manager:

- Argumentation
- Coordination
- Communication
- Conflict management

→ Familiarize with the content of the International Standard ISO 29383 and the UNESCO Guidelines for Terminology Policies

→ Exercise! 😊
Exercise: Elevator pitch terminology

• Turn to your neighbour at your left side
• Form teams of two (or three)

• Some minutes for you to think of and note arguments pro terminology management (reference to your personal context). **Prepare for a difficult very brief meeting!**

• Now take turns: bring your arguments. **Get to the point quickly!**
• The other partner: **be critical and challenging.** Imagine you are the boss who needs to be convinced before agreeing to give that other one money!

• 5 minutes each!
• Some examples for the benefit of all
Exercise is important - needs to be trained again and again.

Practise your elevator pitch:  Tough!  30 seconds- 2 mins

Get your point across quickly.  Don’t be unnerved too easily!

Still finding it difficult?
1) get help from colleagues and friends!
2) LinkedIn Terminology group

Don’t give up – argumentation can be trained and will improve with practise
How?

Linear model, common-sense model

PHASE 1  Preparation  ➔
PHASE 2  Formulation  ➔
PHASE 3  Implementation  ➔
PHASE 4  Sustained operation, adaptation mechanism, evaluation

↓
simplification
idealization
useful for visualization
How?

Real life:

A complex network of interdependencies
**How?**

*Linear model, common-sense model*

- **PHASE 1**: Preparation
- **PHASE 2**: Formulation
- **PHASE 3**: Implementation
- **PHASE 4**: Sustained operation, adaptation, mechanism, evaluation

↓

simplification
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How?

Preparation should include

- **Thorough STAKEHOLDER analysis**
  - Who is to what degree concerned/affected/involved in policy issues (positively or negatively)
  - What underlying interests might affect the policy process and
  - How “deal with them”

- **Begin with AWARENESS RAISING and STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE**
  - To obtain official recognition & commitment
A stakeholder is any entity with a declared or conceivable interest or stake in a policy concern. The range of stakeholders relevant to consider for analysis varies according to the complexity of the reform area targeted and the type of reform proposed and, where the stakeholders are not organized, the incentive to include them. Stakeholders can be of any form, size and capacity. They can be individuals, organizations, or unorganized groups. In most cases, stakeholders fall into one or more of the following categories: international actors (e.g. donors), national or political actors (e.g. legislators, governors), public sector agencies (e.g. MDAs), interest groups (e.g. unions, medical associations), commercial/private for-profit, nonprofit organizations (NGOs, foundations), civil society members, and users/consumers.

Source: www.worldbank.org
How?

Preparation

- **SURVEY for evidence-based policy-making**

- ✓ **General environment**
  - diversity, development facts

- ✓ **Language and terminology environment**
  - Identify existing applications, infrastructure & gaps

- ✓ **Existing related policies**
  - Find inconsistencies, overlapping for harmonization
  - Find appropriate style for policy (law, guidelines, etc.)
  - Support argumentation
  - Benchmarking
How?

**PREPARATION**

- **preliminary DOCUMENTS**
  - “Knowledge-brokering” (“translation” of survey)
  - Background: analysis of studies/survey
  - Broad policy statement: general, goals, need, issues to be incorporated (draft policy)
  - Other: (institutional profiles, incl. cost-benefit-aspects; work-plan/procedural aspects, participants)

  → Cooperate with authoritative partners

- organization of a **CONSULTATION PROCESS**
FORMULATION

→ Benefiting directly from preparation efforts

- draft final terminology policy proposal on the results of the consultation
- include plan for the co-ordination and integration with other strategic/planning activities
- include implementation plan
How?

**FORMULATION**

- submission of the final policy
  - The better the previous stages, the greater commitment, the more likely success

- official approval of the final policy

Congratulations!
How?

IMPLEMENTATION

→ Reverse action to formulation process

Coordinating committee:

• Action plan → priorities, programmes, projects, interventions
• Roles and budget
• Operational, organizational, procedural planning as outlined in implementation plan
• Awareness, campaigns
• Small steps, big success!
• Based on change management principles
How?

**SUSTAINED OPERATION & ADAPTATION MECHANISM**

Policy should be a living, ongoing process without closing point

Requires Monitoring and Evaluation
- by independent agent
- based on implementation plan and policy statement

Create/support infrastructures, empowerment through capacity-building, science & research to ensure sustained operation through regular policy review

- to reach flexibility / adaptability to changes & innovations
Guidelines for terminology policies: formulating and implementing terminology policy in language communities

These Guidelines address decision makers in different positions at various levels, who - for a variety of purposes - want to design, plan and implement a terminology policy, which is geared towards a conscious, systematic and controlled approach to the creation, maintenance and use of terminology in defined user communities.

Download
- English
- French
- www.infoterm.info > activities > terminology policies

- Lots of resources, language versions of UNESCO Guidelines
This is an example for a terminology policy used in a globally active and known IT company

Example of a terminology policy in a company

Note:

Terminology policies in companies often take the form of guidelines or reference documents that describe processes of terminology work and tools that are used for it.

Company terminology policies typically address different users or audiences who need different types of information.

a) Terminology users: developers and product developers, translators, lawyers, marketers, others

b) Terminology managers: terminologists and others who are responsible for the development and maintenance of databases and other (central) resources

Often, they are part of other strategies (globalization, customer relations, marketing, etc.)

1) Terminology and its role in business processes

Why terminology is important for consistency, quality and risk reduction?

Which terminology work processes are necessary to ensure these goals?

Who is involved and concerned with terminology?

Past strategy/history of terminology work in the company.

2) For terminology users

Finding information about terms and definitions

Searching for terms

How to access and use terminology correctly

a) in product development (consulting relevant standards, creating a term list for a product, choosing terms for new products, dealing with homonymy and synonymy, etc.)

b) in glossary/manual development (selecting terms, creating definitions, cross-references using terms from other companies/departments, copyright)

c) in the translation of a product (using terms and database, getting feedback and posting questions about the product, etc.)

d) in contracts and legal documents (copyright, using definitions for legal documents, cooperation with external partners, product safety and liability, etc.)

e) in marketing and customer relations (branding and customer language, consulting vernacular, creating marketing content, etc.)
PRINCIPLES FOR EVOLUTION OF TERMINOLOGY
APPROVED
BY THE STANDING COMMISSION FOR SCIENTIFIC AND
TECHNICAL TERMINOLOGY

1. International terms should be adopted in their current English forms, as far as possible, and transliterated in Hindi and other Indian languages according to their genius. The following should be taken as examples of international terms:

a) Names of elements and compounds, e.g., Hydrogen, Carbon dioxide, etc.;
b) Units of weights, measures, and physical quantities, e.g., dyne, calorie, amperes, etc.;
c) Terms based on proper names, e.g., Marxism (Karl Marx), Braille (Braille), Boycott (Capt. Boycott), Guiltine (Dr. Guiltine), Juggler (Mr. Juggler), etc.;
d) Binomial nomenclature in such sciences as Botany, Zoology, Geology, etc.;
e) Constants, e.g., G, N, etc.;
f) Words like Radio, Radar, Electron, Proton, Neuron, etc., which have gained practically worldwide usage;
g) Numerals, symbols, signs, and formulas used in mathematics and other sciences, e.g., sin, cos, tan, log, etc. (Letters used in mathematical operation should be in Roman or Greek alphabets).

2. The symbols will remain in international form written in Roman script, but abbreviations may be written in Nageri and standardised form, specially for common weights and measures, e.g., the symbol cm for centimetres will be used as such in Hindi, but the abbreviation in Nageri may be "ً". This will apply to books for children and the popular works only, but in standard works of science and technology, the international symbols only, i.e., cm, should be used.

3. Letters of Indian scripts may be used in geometrical figures, e.g., ट्रिकोण or त्रिकोण, but only letters of Roman and Greek alphabets should be used in trigonometrical relations, e.g., sin A, cos B, etc.

4. Conceptual terms should generally be translated.

5. In the selection of Hindi equivalents, simplicity, precision of meaning and ease of intelligibility should be borne in mind. Obscurantism and purism may be avoided.

6. The aim should be to achieve maximum possible identity in all Indian languages by selecting terms:
   a) Common to as many of the regional languages as possible; and
   b) Based on Sanskrit roots.

7. Indigenous terms, which have come into vogue in our languages for certain technical words of common use, as in telegraph/telegram, hindi for continent, etc., should be retained.

8. Such loan words from English, Portuguese, French, etc., as have gained wide currency in Indian languages should be retained, e.g., ticket, signal, pension, police, bureau, restaurant, etc.

Translation of international terms into Devanagari script and the transliteration of international terms into English script. The transliteration of international terms should be made so simple as to necessitate the introduction of standardised pronunciation. The Devanagari rendering of international terms should be made as complete as possible to resemble the form of the standard English pronunciation.
8 Principles

1) Invest in thorough preparation!
2) Learn from experiences of other (countries)!
3) Involve stakeholders – create dialogue and commitment!
4) Collaborate as extensively and intensively as possible, employ participatory work methods wherever feasible!
5) Empower! Start capacity building for sustainability early!
6) Create awareness in the community (language community, department, company…)
7) Be realistic!
8) Think universal (network/systemic)!
UNESCO Guidelines for Terminology Policies

Thank you for your attention!

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