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LEXICOGRAPHY VERSUS TERMINOGRAPHY: Some practical reasons for distinction

I. Introduction: Towards a convergence

Words as formal units of general language form	Terms as formal units of specialist language form
the vocabulary of that language , which is studied by	the terminology of a field , which is studied by
the science of lexicology , and is documented by ...	the science of terminology , and is documented by...
**** LEXICOGRAPHERS , whose goal is said to be to explain ...	**** TERMINOGRAPHERS , whose goal is said to be to explain
word meaning , and whose approach is	referents (objects/concepts) , and whose approach is ...
(1) semasiological , meaning that they start from a lexeme	(1) onomasiological , meaning that they start from an analysis of concepts
then look for all the senses of that lexeme, then enter these senses in the entry for that lexeme , and ...	then look for terms to assign/that are assigned to that concept, then enter these terms in the entry for that concept , and
(2) alphabetical , meaning that they represent entries according to the sequence of the alphabet.	(2) systematic , meaning that they represent entries according to theme/some previously developed classification.

Table 1: Overview of differences

Table 1 places our two keywords, Lexicography and Terminography, in the contexts where they have traditionally assumed their specific meanings.

- In the 21st century, the traditional concept of disciplines (as water-tight compartmentalizations) is hardly any longer the norm. Most disciplines and practices are today eclectic.
- This is true of both lexicography and terminography where traditional lines of distinction have become quite blurred. Today practically every feature previously associated with terminography can easily be taken up/has been taken up in lexicography: specialist terms, structuring of material (cf. general language ontologies), systematic (non-alphabetical) presentation, etc. By the same token, features considered exclusively lexicographical are being/need to be included in terminographical resources: term variants, word classes other than nouns, synonyms, grammatical/co-textual information, etc.
- Our approach: Not to say, this is what terminography does, this is what lexicography does. Rather: what practical reasons have encouraged and may continue to encourage lexicography to do certain things, and terminography others?

II. DIVISION OF LABOUR

- Lexicography provides, in the form of documentation, a description of the lexical inventory of a language. In this sense, any lexical unit encountered in a language – whether in gossip with a neighbour or in an Academy of Sciences lecture – is subject of lexicographical treatment. See Figure 1 below.

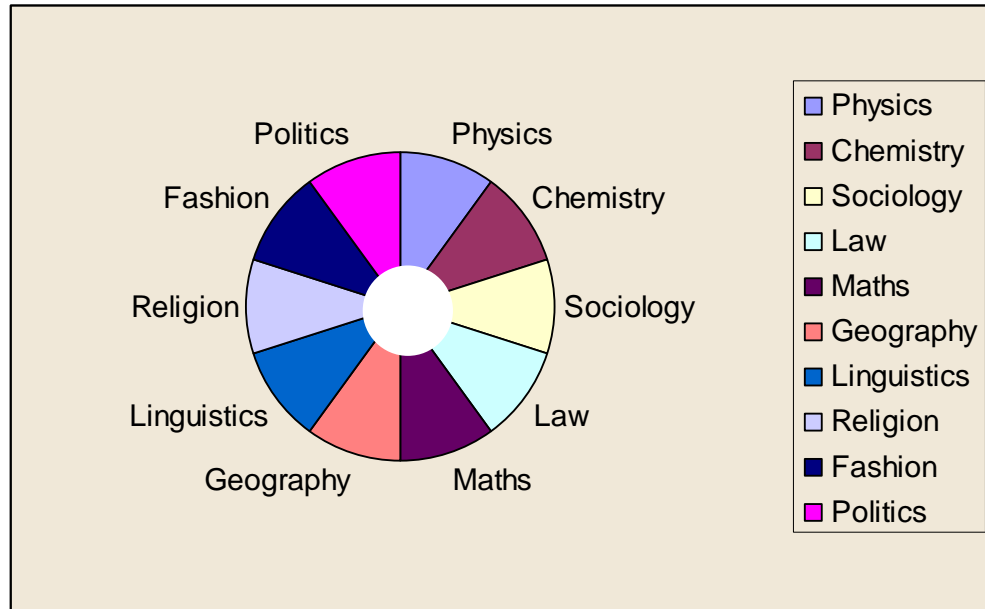


Figure 1: Samples of areas of specialized knowledge with a core general area

Notice that the lower fringes of each discipline seem to be contributing to the core area.

Given the scope of lexical material that would have to be covered if all parts of each of these disciplines were to be represented in a dictionary, it has made sense for lexicography to be interested in the core, central area, and to leave the slices to the terminography of each of the respective disciplines. Terminology after all was a science pioneered by subject experts. This core, which is what general language is about, consists of:

- lexical items that existed before the fields
- lexical items taken, with or without modification in sense, from the lower fringes of each field, or from parts of these fields which the mass media has brought to public attention.

Very simply, then, the distinction between lexicography can be explained by the need to divide the labour of lexical documentation in a language.

III. Epistemological reasons, or views of referent

- Lexicography is sometimes regarded as applied semantics. European Structural Semantics had a unique view of word senses, which has no doubt had an impact on lexicography influenced by this influential school of thought. Consider the following account by Kleiber (discussed in Antia 2000:88):
 ‘the European structuralist movement precisely sought to free semes of all association with the referent in order to emphasise their operational or functional side, which is linguistic and nothing else. Even if [...] a referential interpretation is always at the background, it is instructive to note that the goal of structural semantics is to detach from reality in order to describe reality-independent meaning, a goal that it accomplishes by contrasting words’.

- Having been pioneered by scientists and engineers, terminology was obviously interested in objects. Coseriu (discussed in Antia, *ibid*) says that although ‘science uses language [...] it is concerned with the designated things themselves, in that it analyses these things and makes a statement about them’.
- Definitions in lexicographical products and in terminographical products sometimes confirm these different views of how both lexicography and terminography come about their knowledge of the lexical items they record. Whereas a lexicographical product could define a word by merely listing synonymous and otherwise related words, this would not make sense in ideal circumstances with a terminological concept. With the so-called ‘terminological definition’, a concept to be defined would have to be related to its genus proximum (closest broader relative within the same knowledge structure), then have its characteristics stated. Characteristics of concepts in terminology are often seen as the correlates of the properties of the objects that gave rise to the concepts.
- The division of labour metaphor also applies here: lexicography documents words in their interrelationships, while terminography documents statements about previously analysed objects/concepts. This is of course a naïve simplification, as my other presentation on definitions will attempt to show. But for current purposes, this simplification is suitable.

IV. Different time lines

- Another practical consideration that supports the distinction lexicography – terminography is the relationship of precedence. In any language, a reservoir of resources (words) has to exist for expressing general ideas before it can exist to support the expression of specialised ideas. This is what is often meant by LSPs (languages for specific purposes, e.g. English of Physics, Cookery) getting/ tapping their resources from LGP (language for general purposes, e.g. the English language). So, generally, LGP before LSP.
- What is the relationship to the current discussion? Einar Haugen, the Norwegian who launched the term ‘Language Planning’ in 1966, did propose a model of language planning that clarifies the relation between the codification of lexis and the elaboration of terminology. Table 2 below presents a version of Haugen’s model of language development, with my comments.

	Norm	Function
Society	Selection (e.g. of a dialect as standard, or of a language as official)	Implementation (e.g. in schools, administration, etc. of the chosen dialect/ language and of codified conventions.
Language	Codification (producing an orthography, grammar, dictionaries)	Elaboration (of the language to make it meet new challenges). E.g. creation of terminologies, development of style guides, etc.

Table 2: Commented version of Haugen’s language development model

- Instructive from the standpoint of the relationship lexicography-terminography is the point that preoccupation with the creation of terminologies comes in the elaboration stage, after basic documentation and descriptive work has been done at the

codification stage. This would seem to be the sequence in language planning theory, going by the fourteen language planning models reviewed in Antia (2000).

- Lexicography would often provide the foundation for terminography. Notice for instance that in many specialist fields terms are typically formed by compounding: two previously existing words being brought together to acquire a new, technical meaning. This is reason to think that lexicographical products would typically document fewer compounds than terminographical products.
- In sum, lexicography documents the results of a natural, spontaneous, sometimes illogical process of primary word formation, while terminography on the other hand documents the results of deliberate secondary word formation.

V. Range of information documented

- My treatment of this header will not be to merely say terminographical products mainly record nouns (a point that can be justified in any case), whereas lexicographical products record all word classes. As said in the beginning, I believe other word classes should be recorded as well in terminographical resources. With this admission, the range of information provided by each type of resource can be discussed differently, from the standpoint of the previous section.
- As was seen, LSPs borrow their material from the LGP, then give them a new meaning. It is not however everything used in an LSP that acquires a new meaning. Given the current state of our knowledge, closed class words (determiners, conjunctions, prepositions, pronouns, interjections) are examples of this type of words that really have no business appearing as entries in a terminographical resource.
- This is not to say that these closed class words should not be given attention in a terminographical resource, as part of an entry that is a noun, verb or adjective. For instance, in a parliamentary terminographical resource, it is important to be told under the entry 'Hansards' that this term never takes an article.

VI Conclusion

- Table 1 at the beginning of this discussion lists a number of parameters commonly used in distinguishing terminography and lexicography. Given that information technology (IT) and some form of "osmosis" have blurred some of the lines of distinction, my preference in this presentation has been to focus on a small set of motivations explaining why lexicography has tended to document and may continue to document lexical information of a certain type. Ditto for terminography.
- Let me conclude by emphasizing the synergy between lexicographer and terminographer. Since terms are generally not formed arbitrarily (in other words, they tend to be motivated, or based on the characteristics of concepts to be designated), terminologists would generally require the expertise of lexicographers, or lexicographical products to name the characteristics that would be 'implemented' in a term to be created.