

Why terminology planning is important in language revitalization

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What is terminology planning?

Language
planning

Corpus planning

Terminology
planning

Branch of corpus planning, which deals with elaboration, standardization and implementation of terminology in selected fields

Terminology is currently seen as an art or practice rather than as a science. Even though it has a well-defined aim to satisfy the expressive needs of its users, its working methods are mainly empirical. Theoretical research and the refinement of the processes of recognition, analysis and creation of terms must improve before terminology can be placed among the sciences deriving from linguistics. (Dubuc 1985)

Terminology planning
vs.
Terminology studies

Methodology
vs.
Discipline

Practices however well-established, do not constitute a discipline, but there is no denying a long history of methodologies which themselves require theoretical underpinnings to justify their distinctive nature. (Sager 1990)

Relevance of terminology planning for marginalized languages

- + Representation of a language in a new or earlier abandoned domain perfectly addresses the problem of marginalization (both in the eyes of sociolinguists and native speakers)
- + Image of a language suffers from claims that it doesn't have enough means to express "complex" or "abstract" concepts and thus cannot be used in education and other important domains
- + Terminology planning creates a framework for efficient collaboration between linguists/sociolinguists and native speakers

"[Language planning] is primarily the means, whereby less fortunate language communities organize their self-defense, as well as their inter-translatability, at least to some extent and in some functions, vis a vis one or another 'international language'". (Fishman 1987)

"Today, one world-wide challenge of language planning research and terminology scholarship lies in working out the details of how to create specialized discourses for functional (as opposed to mere symbolic or demonstration) purposes. In other words, the concern is one of ensuring that many more languages are able to serve as means for communicating specialized information and knowledge, so crucial to the pursuit of goals on the global agenda, for example, the environment, international public health, empowerment, democratization and good governance, etc.". (Antia 2000)

Adaptation of terminology planning to the conditions of language endangerment

No governmental body – disadvantage or advantage?

“If government agencies take charge of terminological activities, they can give new terms a legitimacy that they could never obtain from a non-governmental body, no matter how highly organized or well researched”. (Cabr  1999)

“Empirical studies suggest that broadcasters, journalists and writers create and disseminate vocabulary with far greater success than government agencies”. (Jernudd & Das Gupta 1971)



➔ The case of Radio San Gabriel in El Alto, Bolivia (Swinehart 2009)

1. Conflict situations

In most of the cases, there is no language institution with commonly recognized authority

(possible exception – The Academy of Kaqchikel language in Guatemala)

A conflict between speakers (as groups or individuals) may rise about:

- dialectal differences
- how much material for the new lexicon should be borrowed
- how far a lexical elaboration should go
- each term taken separately

lesser languages

bigger languages

**Indirect conflict: concurring activities
in the same field**



Terminological disarray

Conflict situations: harmful disarray



“Quechua names” for tuberculosis

SOURCE	QUECHUA TERM
Academia Mayor de la Lengua Quechua (2005): Diccionario Quechua – Español – Quechua. Cusco: Gobierno Regional.	soq'a onqoy qhaqya onqoy
Cadillo Agüero, Silvestre F. (2012): Quechua médico: curso selectivo. Lima: Universidad de San Martín de Porres.	tuberculosis tuwirculuusis tiisiku
Pan-American Health Organization, World Health Organization (2013): Diálogo Médico- Paciente en Quechua. La Paz, Bolivia	ch'ujuwan unquy
United Nations Population Fund (2011): Palabras Clave para atención en salud – Quechua de Cusco.	surq'an unquy

2. Problem of implementation

Tackles mostly bigger, geographically dispersed languages

- + Lack of media sources to disseminate new terminology
- + Inadequate media sources (e.g. dictionaries)
- + Lack of resources to verify the acceptance of the new lexicon
- + Lack of preoccupation in this respect
- + Producing terminological sets for unplanned fields

3. Finding balance between purist neology and borrowing

- + Awareness of different strategies and absence of taboos
- + Preferences of borrowing: languages (internationalisms, L1, neighboring languages, related languages)
- + Preferences of borrowing: semantic domains

(Tadmor 2009)

Table 6: Borrowing by semantic field

Semantic field	Loanwords as % of total
Religion and belief	41.2%
Clothing and grooming	38.6%
The house	37.2%
Law	34.3%
Social and political relations	31.0%
Agriculture and vegetation	30.0%
Food and drink	29.3%
Warfare and hunting	27.9%
Possession	27.1%
Animals	25.5%
Cognition	24.2%
Basic actions and technology	23.8%
Time	23.2%
Speech and language	22.3%
Quantity	20.5%
Emotions and values	19.9%
The physical world	19.8%
Motion	17.3%
Kinship	15.0%
The body	14.2%
Spatial relations	14.0%
Sense perception	11.0%
All words	24.2%

4. Revision of the principles of a ‘good term/neologism’

Four criteria of a “good neologism” (Cabré 1999)

- 1) It has to designate an explicitly delimited, stable concept
- 2) It has to be as transparent as possible
- 3) It has to be brief and concise as possible
- 4) It has to conform to the phonology and grammar of the language

Nahuatl: *tepozpatlanki*, ‘plane’; *tepozcalmimilolli*, ‘train’

Navajo: *béésh bee ak’e’alchíhí t’áábí nitsékeesígíí*, ‘computer’ → *béésh nitsékeesígíí*

Is inter-translatability a universal value?

Conclusions: roles for a linguist (sociolinguist, applied linguist)

- Conflict situations: negotiating between sides, suggestion of compromising options, conducting survey among the rest of speakers
- Problem of implementation: raising awareness. discussing and developing possible media of implementation, evaluation of acceptance among speakers
- Purism vs. Borrowing: informing about different strategies, basics of language contact typology
- “Good term”: not being implicit follower of methodology (linguistic and cultural specificity above)

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