

Eventivity in the medical discourse: a cross-language and cross-genre approach

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Introduction

The Communicative Theory of Terminology (CTT)¹ allows for any lexical unit to activate a specialized meaning in its specific context of usage. In our research proposal, nouns and verbs are analyzed simultaneously as candidates to semantically eventive (dynamic and durative)² terminological units in the field of medicine.

Term in the CTT¹

- Linguistic / non-linguistic unit
- Pragmatic adequation
- Unity of form and content
- Node in the conceptual structure of the speaker
- Morphological analogy in a specialized field of study
- Selection of one grammatical category
- Lexicographical cumulative definition

Terminological noun in CTT³

- Denominative function
- Structure: Terminological head + Post-verbal (eventive) modifier

Terminological verb in CTT⁴

		Spec. related N	Spec. argument	Spec. field	Example (medical field)
↑ + spec.	Near-terminological V	✓	✓	✓	<i>intubate a patient</i>
	Phraseological V	✓	✓	✗	<i>thicken the airway</i>
	Logical relation V	✓	✗	✗	<i>cause dysfunction</i>
	Performative discourse V	✗	✗	✗	<i>document as grade 3</i>

Hypotheses

Language-independent findings

Specialization-related findings

- Distribution of grammatical categories
- Frequency of support verbs (components of phraseological verbs)
- Terminological variation in nouns
- Lexicographical inclusion – especially in verbs

Corpus

↑ + spec.	Text types (discourse genres)	Catalan		English	
		Texts	Words	Texts	Words
	Thesis abstracts	16	9,240	22	8,732
	Research articles	10	26,766	13	26,961
	Divulgative articles	14	8,356	12	8,176
	Divulgative guides	12	9,306	10	9,131
	Totals	52	53,668	57	53,000

Materials and methods

Linguistic processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linguistic pre-processing • Structural tagging • Linguistic processing • Validation of the process 	Processing software of CT IULA
Extraction of linguistic units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution across parts of speech • Selection of verbs and nouns 	Windows Grep
Linguistic analysis of nouns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extraction of candidates for eventive terminological nouns • Validation of the process 	YATE
Linguistic analysis of verbs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extraction of candidates for near-terminological (most specialized) verbs and phraseological verbs • Validation of the process • Selection of eventive verbs 	Bwananet MCR
Quantitative analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computation of frequency of terms • Computation of terminological variation • Classification of terminological variation 	SNOMED CT
Qualitative analysis	<p>Candidates for terminological nouns and verbs in medicine</p> <p>"In addition, airway tissue grafts from infection naïve CF fetal mice, when transplanted into mice with severe combined immunodeficiency, release increased levels of IL-8, which over the long term, increases epithelial breakdown and luminal inflammation. Direct sampling studies of young infants also suggest that abnormal airway inflammation may occur before the bacterial colonisation is established."⁵</p> <p>(Sample of a research article in English about cystic fibrosis [en122006-_000586])</p>	
Design of lexicographical work		

Conclusions

To our knowledge, eventivity has traditionally been overlooked in the lexicographical works specialized in medicine, as opposed to the actual practice. In our research proposal we aim to address this incoherence through a descriptive analysis of terminological units in context. Findings are expected to confirm some accurate tendencies corresponding to relevant features of medical discourse.

References

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