

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TERM AND LEXIS

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Abstract

The article says that ideas of “term” and “lexis” are fundamental in linguistic and terminological studies. Though their appearance is similar, these views serve key roles in understanding language as well as communication. This scientific article defines the differences in theory and practice in terms of terms and lexis, providing a comprehensive analysis based on linguistic theories, applied linguistics, and terminological principles. The main distinctions include their function, scope, and application in different domains. This study contributes to a basic understanding of these concepts and their consequences in language studies.

Key words: term, lexis, terminology, specialized vocabulary, concept, contex-dependent, general meaning, specific domain.

Introduction

It is not indisputable that language is a multifaceted system of communication and it consists of various elements serving specific purposes. Among these elements are “term” and “lexis”, which are considered crucial roles in linguistics and related fields. While these two linguistic elements are important for the study of language, they are different in their definitions, usage, and indications. This paper tries to find the differences between terms and lexis by examining their characteristics and functions within linguistic and terminological contexts. The study also investigates how these “concepts” affect different disciplines, including lexicography, translation studies, and language education.

Methodology

There are some views concerning the “term” and its function and usage, which have been analyzed by numerous linguists worldwide. One of them is Maria Teresa Cabre in her book *Terminology: Theory, Methods, and Applications*, says that terms are words or phrases used as precise linguistic labels for concepts in specific domains. She highlights the standardization of terms within technical and scientific fields to avoid confusion in professional communication [5].

Another scientist Sager eliminates terms as "linguistic representations of specialized knowledge." In his work called “A Practical Course in Terminology Processing,” he says that terms are dependent on context and are mostly systematically created or selected to reflect the

conceptual structure of a specific field[10]. So, Wuster, Eugen is known as the founder of modern terminology, Wüster argued that terms are essential for technical and scientific communication, where precision and consistency are important. He differentiated terms from general words by indicating their formalized creation and domain-specific nature[7].

As we have seen, there are some scientific ideas about terms. Linguists above highlight that Terms are specific words that can be used in technical and scientific communication. And they are often context-dependent. Now we will look through some concepts given by other researchers, related to lexis and its difference from terms.

Crystal defines **lexis** as the "total stock of words in a language. He defines that lexis is broader than vocabulary because it includes idiomatic expressions, collocations, and multi-word units, reflecting the dynamic and culturally embedded nature of language[6].

Next Sinclair views lexis as a fundamental component of language, shaped by patterns and frequency in actual usage. He argued that understanding lexis requires analyzing how words and phrases combine in context[4].

Michael Halliday in his systemic functional grammar framework, connects **lexis** with grammar, coining the term "lexicogrammar". He claimed that lexis and grammar are inseparable in understanding how meaning is constructed in language[5].

In his influential paper, Wilkins stated, "Without grammar, very little can be conveyed; without lexis, nothing can be conveyed". This view underlines the primary importance of lexis in enabling communication and conveying meaning[3].

Results and discussion

In discussing terms and lexis, we will analyze them with examples. In terminological studies, a term refers to a word or expression that represents a specific concept within a specialized domain. Terms are context-dependent and often associated with professional or technical fields. For example, "photosynthesis" is a term in biology.

Turning to lexis it is clear that lexis encompasses the entire vocabulary of a language, including words, phrases, idioms, and collocations. Unlike terms, lexis is not restricted to specialized contexts and includes both general and technical vocabulary. Lets analyzed some aspects of term and lexis

Aspect	Term	Lexis
Definition	Specific to a domain or field	Encompasses the entire vocabulary
Scope	Narrow, context-specific	Broad, general language use
Function	Represents specialized concepts	Facilitates general communication
Examples	"Quantum mechanics" (Physics)	"House", "run", "beautiful"
Formation	Often deliberate and systematic	Evolves naturally over time
Application	Used in technical and professional contexts	Found in everyday language and texts

There are some characteristics of Terms and lexis: For example, a) terms are designed to convey precise meanings within a domain. b) in specialized fields, terms are often standardized to ensure consistency. c) context dependence: The meaning of a term is heavily reliant on the domain in which it is used.

Characteristics of Lexis: a) Diversity- Lexis includes a wide range of linguistic elements, from simple words to complex idiomatic expressions. b) flexibility is another character of lexis. Lexical items can carry multiple meanings depending on context. c) in terms of Cultural Influence, lexis is influenced by cultural and social factors, reflecting the dynamic nature of language.

The distinctions between term and lexis highlight the complexity of language and its functions. While terms serve as tools for specialized communication, lexis provides the foundation for general linguistic interaction. These differences have significant implications for numerous fields:

Lexicography: Understanding the distinction aids in compiling dictionaries, where both general vocabulary and specialized terms must be addressed.

Translation Studies: Translators must navigate the nuances of terms and lexis to ensure accurate and culturally appropriate translations.

Language Education: Teaching vocabulary involves distinguishing between general lexis and domain-specific terms, particularly in English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

Terminology Management: Effective terminology management requires recognizing the contextual nature of terms.

In Practice in any field terminology is very important. Let's take medicine as an example. In medical terminology, “myocardial infarction” is a term that conveys a precise medical condition, whereas lexis related to the field might include “pain”, “heart”, and “treatment”. In information technology, “algorithm” is a term, whereas “code” and “software” are part of the broader lexis. The term “pedagogy” in education refers specifically to the science of teaching, whereas “learning” and “teaching” are general lexical items.

Conclusion

The difference between terms and lexis lies in their scope, purpose, and application. Terms are specialized and domain-specific, designed for precision and standardization, while lexis encompasses the broad, dynamic vocabulary of a language. Recognizing these distinctions enhances our understanding of language and supports effective communication across disciplines. Future research may explore the interplay between terms and lexis in emerging fields, such as artificial intelligence and cross-cultural communication.

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