Text Genre and Terminological Variation

A Corpus-driven Research in the Domain of Psychology

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Outline

- Terminological variation: motivation and functionality
- Text genre
- Research: Term variation across three text genres in Psychology
- Conclusions and future work
The purpose of specialised discourse according to specialists

- Quick and efficient transfer of specialised knowledge
- Facilitate communication among experts
Characteristics of specialised discourse

- Concision
- Precision
- Systematicity
- Impersonality

Term variation
Variation in specialised discourse

- Different perspectives on the same reality (Temmerman 2000)
- Different socioprofessional groups (Gaudin 2003, Diki-Kidiri 2010)
- Different communicative scenarios, participants, purposes (Cabré 1999)
Intra-textual term variation

- **Stylistic function**
  - Avoid repetition
  - Creative, expressive needs

- **Cognitive function**
  - Knowledge construction and transfer
Term variation has a cognitive function

- Emphasises different conceptual features (Mortureux 1997; Freixa 2002)
- Provides a enriched conceptual representation (Rogers 2004)
- Contributes to text coherence (Collet 1997, Adelstein 2002)
Term variation and level of specialisation

-- VAR  - VAR  + VAR  ++ VAR

++ ESP  + ESP  - ESP  -- ESP
"A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style.” (Swales 1990: 58)
Role of Intra-textual Term Variation in knowledge construction

Psychology
Chilean Spanish
2000-2012
1,481,699 words
198 texts

Research Article (RA)
(211,098 words, 22 texts)

Undergraduate Research Thesis (RT)
1,189,473 words, 35 texts

Science Popularisation Article (PA)
81,128 words, 141 texts

¿What kind of information is conveyed?

¿Does it vary across genres?
Methodology

- Conceptual information displayed by term variants

\[ \text{Term}^n = \text{concept 1} \xrightarrow{\text{relation}} \text{concept 2} \xleftarrow{\text{rel.}} \text{concept n} \]

\[ \text{spousal abuse} = \text{EVENT} \xleftarrow{\text{affected object}} \text{HUMAN} \]
Results

- Role in knowledge construction
  - Intracategorial information
    - Concept characteristics and dimensions
  - Intercategorial information
    - Relationship with other concepts within structure of subject field
INTRACATEGORIAL STRUCTURE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

(TP 2005_84) : Violence, violence against women, domestic violence, process of violence, concept of spouse abuse, situation of household violence, family violence against women
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

SPECIFIC EVENT
(VIOLENT INTERACTION)

- violence
- abuse

PLACE

domestic

PEOPLE

- INDIVIDUALS
  - women/spouse

GROUPS

- household/family

PARTS

- physical/psychological

Place

place/affected object

constituent parts
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

SPECIFIC EVENT
(VIOLENT INTERACTION)

violence

abuse

PLACE
domestic

people

INDIVIDUALS
women/spouse

GROUPS
household/family

PARTS
physical/psychological

place/affected object

Violence, violence against women
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**SPECIFIC EVENT**
(VIOLENT INTERACTION)

- **violence**
- **abuse**

**PLACE**
domestic

**PEOPLE**
- INDIVIDUALS: women/spouse
- GROUPS: household/family
- PARTS: physical/psychological

Violence, violence against women, domestic violence
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

ACTIVITY INDICATOR
process

SPECIFIC EVENT
(VIOLENT INTERACTION)

attributed concept

violence

abuse

Place

domestic

PLACE

people

INDIVIDUALS
women/spouse

GROUPS
household/family

PARTS
physical/psychological

Violence, violence against women, domestic violence, process of violence
Violence, violence against women, domestic violence, process of violence, concept of spouse abuse,
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

ACTIVITY INDICATOR
- process

ENTITY
- MENTAL concept

CLASSIFICATORY form

PROPERTY situation

SPECIFIC EVENT (VIOLENT INTERACTION)

abuse

PLACE domestic

PEOPLE
- GROUPS household/family
- PEOPLE
  - INDIVIDUALS women/spouse

GROUPS
- parts physical/psychological
VIOLENCE

is type of

FAMILY VIOLENCE

Is type of

SPouse

ABUSE

Is type of

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

PHYSICAL

PSYCHOLOGICAL
"For the first time in history **family violence against women** was recognised as a human right violation"
Results

- Role in knowledge construction
  - Intracategorial information
    - Concept characteristics and dimensions
  - Intercategorial information
    - Relationship with other concepts within structure of subject field
- Term variation and text genre
  - Relationship between communicative purpose and term variation
Scientific article

- Communicative purpose:
  - Persuade someone to a point of view, based on a theoretical or empirical study

- Role of Term Variation:
  - Stylistic motivation, avoid repetition

- Relationship with text parts
Communicative purpose:

- Present the results and conclusions of a research to emphasise its contribution to the field
- Master the conventions of the experts discourse community

Role of Term Variation:

- Knowledge is built, delimited and updated through the writing process
Communicative purpose:
- Facilitate knowledge to a non expert community
- Attract the audience’s attention

Role of Term Variation:
- Explain the concept’s content, generalize
- Point out ethical, sociopolitical or cultural consequences of topic
Conclusions and future work

**...SO FAR**

- First qualitative results on intratextual term variation
  - Intra e intercategorial structure
  - General differences across genres

**FUTURE WORK...**

- Quantitative analysis
  - Are differences statistically significant
  - Variation across text parts

- Effect on the reader
  - Reading comprehension tests
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