

TERMINOLOGICAL HOMONYMY AS A LINGUISTIC PHENOMENON

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Scientific and technical literature has a number of peculiarities, which make it a unique language subfield. Language of scientific and technical literature differs from everyday language due to certain lexical, grammatical and stylistic features. The defining features of scientific and technical literature are its informative value, consistency, accuracy, objectivity, and clarity. But the main and the most important distinctive feature of this kind of literature is the variety of terminology.

Scientific and technical terms represent special notions of a certain scientific or technical field. Their primary purpose is to express a specific concept as accurately as possible. According to V.I. Karaban, depending on their structure terms are divided into: simple terms (*chamber, anode*); derivative terms: suffixal (*transmitter; feeder*); prefixal (*multi-cylinder*); prefixal-suffixal (*reprocessing*); compound terms (*flywheel*); and word combinations (*protective choke*) [1, p. 315].

There are terms that have the same form but represent entirely different concepts, and they are called homonyms. A very interesting fact is that homonymy is much more frequent in terminology than in general lexicon. This difference in frequency is based on the fact that in terminology each special subject field is considered to be a closed domain. Any term from a special field that is extracted by analogy and applied to another field will be a homonym. In scientific and technical literature homonymy is a widespread phenomenon because semantic word formation is widely used there, which means that existing words acquire new meanings. For example, the word “*body*” in biology/physiology means *the whole physical structure of a person or animal, including the head, arms, and legs* [2, p. 71]; in political science – *a group of people who work together for an organization or the government and have important responsibilities* [2, p. 71]; in engineering – *the main or central part of a building, not including areas at the side or parts that have been*

added later [2, p. 71]; in science – *a large amount or collection of something such as knowledge, information, or work* [2, p. 71] etc.

There are such types of terminological homonymy:

1. one meaning of a term is wider than the other (in psychology the word “*deviant*” has two meanings: the first one is wider, meaning *something that is not considered normal or morally correct by most people*, and the second one is narrower, meaning *mentally ill*);

2. one term has different meanings in different scientific fields (the term “*sentence*” in linguistics means *a group of words, usually including a subject and a verb, that express a statement, question, or instruction*, but in legal science it means *a punishment given by a judge, usually involving a period of time that a person must spend in prison*);

3. one term has different meanings in different subfields of similar scientific or technical fields (the term “*board*” in electronics engineering means *a circuit card*, and in telecommunications industry it means *a commutator*);

4. one term has different meanings in different subfields of one scientific field (in medical science the term “*debris*” has the meaning *foreign substance*, and in odontology it has the meaning *dental plaque*);

5. one term has different meanings in one subfield (in power engineering the term “*fuel*” means *a substance such as oil, gas, coal, or wood that produces heat or power when it is burned*, and in nuclear power engineering it means *a nuclear substance*).

Homonymy is also a widespread phenomenon within abbreviations (shortened forms of a words or phrases). They consist of a small number of letters, that is why there is often a possibility of coincidence of their forms in different scientific and technical fields. For example, the abbreviation *CPU* in software technology means *central processor unit*, in biological chemistry – *chromogenic phospholipase unit*, in, in military arts – *chemical protective underwear*.

Apart from inter-field abbreviation homonymy, described above, there is also intra-field homonymy, when the same set of letters renders completely different

meanings in one scientific field [1, p. 316]. For example in military arts the abbreviation *FA* can mean the following: *field allowance, field army, field ambulance, flight accident, friendly aircraft*.

To sum up, terminological homonymy is a widely occurring phenomenon not only in scientific and technical literature, but in all language subfields. In order not to mix the terms up, one should possess a considerable wealth of knowledge, taking into account all the information needed to understand the term, and thus the meaning of a phrase or a sentence, accurately and correctly and to avoid misunderstanding.

БИБЛИОГРАФИЯ

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