

Transferring meaning in a context of multilingual lexicology and terminology

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Abstract: This paper aims to show that there is no perfect fit between the dictionary definition of a term and the various uses it is put to in different contexts, especially in a multilingual perspective. When a term is used repeatedly in various contexts, the concept it designates becomes wider and wider because its conceptual traits keep increasing. As a result, the definitions of the concepts that we find in dictionaries are not comprehensive. The concepts change with time whereas the terms that designate them do not change. Translating a term into a foreign language also widens up its lexical field because several denominations are sometimes used in the target language to account for a single SL term. The method used in this research is qualitative. It starts from the terms to get to the concepts and adopts a semasiological and cognitive approach. In specialised translation, the information on a particular term is contained in the texts in which it is used and these (texts) are the sole repositories of its meaning. One of the main findings of this research is that the interpretation of terms in various contexts leads to new definitions that are sometimes wider than the dictionary definitions. This research has also found that concepts are likely to change because the realities they refer to, change.

Keywords: *Concept, Context, Meaning, Specialised texts, Term, Translation.*

1. Introduction

This research shows that it is becoming difficult to achieve consensus regarding the meanings of terms because their lexicographic and terminological definitions as well as the definitions derived from translations are not similar. Meaning has become a dynamic notion, just like the concept it designates. Concepts also evolve over time and space. Sometimes, it is very difficult to establish correspondences between concepts in two different languages since the segmentation of reality is not the same from one country to another or from one linguistic community to another.

Terms designate concepts that are themselves subject to definition in dictionaries, encyclopedias, or scientific and technical publications. In classical terminology, a term is described as a label affixed to a "unit of understanding" that it designates; this is called a concept, sometimes a notion (*le terme est décrit comme une étiquette apposée sur une « unité de pensée » qu'il désigne, et que l'on est convenu d'appeler concept, quelquefois notion*) (Sager 1990, p.23). The meanings of some terms vary sometimes when you compare their dictionary definitions with their various usages, their place in a syntactic structure, and their interpretation in a foreign language. Indeed, the translation of a term into a foreign language highlights, sometimes, conceptual traits unknown in the source language.

Thoiron and Béjoint (2010) explain in an article published in *Meta* that the definition occupies an important place in terminology, since "a term can only exist if it corresponds to a definition. Conversely, words do not need to be defined to be used, and some are, moreover, very difficult to define." «*Un terme ne peut exister que s'il correspond à une définition. À l'opposé, les mots n'ont pas besoin d'être définis pour être utilisés, et certains ne le sont d'ailleurs que très difficilement*» (pp.105-118). Sager indicates that "terminology requires precise definitions, which allow the identification of the specific concept within the framework

of the conceptual system to which it belongs." «*La terminologie suppose des définitions précises, qui permettent l'identification du concept concerné dans le cadre du système conceptuel auquel il appartient*» (1990, p.39). It is clear that the definition, whether it applies to a term or a word, whether it appears in a dictionary, an encyclopedia, a collection of terms, or in discourse, cannot be an exhaustive description of the concept or the referent of the sign. The drafting of the definition involves a choice of elements, a hierarchy of the chosen elements, and a formatting of these elements according to more or less precise algorithms within an overall framework.

Si l'on constate des points communs entre les différents types de définitions et les différents types de textes où on trouve ces définitions, il faut aussi en souligner les différences. On connaît les définitions lexicographiques et les définitions encyclopédiques. À côté d'elles, il existe aussi une définition de type terminologique, qui est caractérisée par le fait qu'elle est en quelque sorte constitutive du sens et gardienne de son intégrité – on dit parfois *fondatrice*. (Thoiron & Béjoint, op. cit.)

The point made in this quotation is that while there are similarities between some definitions, there are also differences. Alongside lexicographic and encyclopedic definitions, there are also terminological definitions that carry the conceptual meaning. Terminological definitions are integral and foundational. Other actors have recently emerged alongside the expert, whose role in terminological activities is not new. The use of corpora and the construction of ontologies have introduced an additional category to the essentially multidisciplinary world of terminology: that of cognitive scientists, who rightly claim their specificity and differences from linguists (Szulman, Biebow, et al. 2001, p.104). For them, the approach to problems is fundamentally semasiological: it is the texts that "justify the definition of terms. (*Ce sont les textes qui « justifient la définition des termes, et donc la structuration des connaissances retenues dans le réseau conceptuel ainsi que l'association terme/concept »*) (Ibid, p.101). This approach is accompanied, more or less openly, by the redefinition of some fundamental terms. Texts, most often in the form of corpora, have therefore become predominant in recent terminological work. The meaning of a term is studied in the different contexts in which it is used in discourse. The notion of context, then, becomes very important and deserves to be defined and elucidated.

2. Literature Review

2.1. What is a Context?

The *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* (1995, p.250) defines the word context as follows: "Words that come before and after a word, phrase, statement, etc., helping to show what its meaning is." In reality, this dictionary definition can be misleading. Gross (2010, p.187) proposes an approach to the term "context" that is different from the dictionary definition.

Mais le contexte ne peut pas être réduit à l'environnement immédiat de gauche et de droite de l'élément à analyser : seule la détermination des relations argumentales permet de définir un opérateur avec précision. Or, un texte n'est pas constitué d'une suite de phrases simples dans leur ordre canonique. Aussi est-il nécessaire d'éliminer les contextes immédiats qui ne participent à cette reconnaissance. Il peut s'agir d'incises, de structures figées, etc.

Gross emphasizes that the elements defining a word are not necessarily contiguous, as typically assumed for simple sentence elements. There are often insertions of various kinds between a predicate and its arguments that do not belong to the relevant structure and should be ignored if one wants to find the distribution that clarifies the term in question. These insertions can be:

- Parentheticals (e.g. "One must prune, as we know, the trees at the beginning of spring," "The state, as we all know, is a cold monster.").
- Negations.
- Adverbs (e.g. "Pierre greatly contributed to this victory.").
- Adjuncts (e.g. "Pierre forgot, before leaving, to turn off the gas.").

In these sentences, it is necessary to:

- Recognize that the right environment for "prune" is not "as we know" but the noun "trees."
- Know that the adverb "greatly" is not part of the argument schema of the predicate "contributed."
- Recognize the propositions and adjuncts inserted within an argument schema: "before leaving" should be placed in commas to link "forgot" with its complement "to turn off the gas."

If predicates are defined by the nature of their arguments, one must ignore the immediate environment and search for the sequence representing the actual complement. The distribution of a word is not constituted by its materially immediate context but requires analysis to find the terms that create cohesion. If the definition of the notion of context is useful for understanding the ideas developed in this article, the term "definition" is equally useful.

2.2. *What is a Definition?*

To better understand the term "definition," we refer again to Gross, who reminds us of a classic school exercise where a student is asked to define the meaning of a word. He highlights that this exercise may seem trivial, but it raises fundamental theoretical questions. Imagine the question concerns the meaning of the verb "casser" (i.e. *to break* in English). It is impossible to answer this question satisfactorily. Suppose a student responds with "to shatter." This student has arbitrarily selected one of the meanings of "casser" and proposed a synonym. It is well known, however, that most verbs are polysemous, as are most lexemes. Thus, it would not be surprising if another student proposed "fracturer" (to fracture) or another "annuler" (to annul). Each has selected from the various meanings of "casser" the one known to them or that comes most readily to mind at the moment of the question. The teacher should not be satisfied with these answers. They should ask each student the conditions in which the verb "casser" takes on such meanings and lead them to construct a sentence that highlights it. We would see that "casser" means "to shatter" with complements like glass, and dishes; "to fracture" with a complement designating a limb like a leg or arm; and "to annul" if the object belongs to the class of contracts or legal acts.

Since the verb "casser" is polysemous, it would have been necessary to ask: "What are the various meanings of the verb 'casser'? Give a synonym for each of these meanings." Out of context, it is impossible to recognize the meaning of a word. How, then, to define the meaning of a verb or any other lexical element? Gross responds that it is the context that determines the meaning of a term. Indeed, the elements that define a word are not necessarily contiguous, as assumed by definition for elements in a simple sentence. Gross notes that there is a link between syntax and semantics, as the combination of one word with another can influence the meaning of the first word.

Just like Thoiron, Béjoint, and Gross, other authors have inspired us in writing this article, and it is appropriate to mention their works. Indeed, this research draws on the theories developed by Thoiron and Béjoint, Gross, Durieux, and Rochard.

Thoiron and Béjoint emphasize the importance of the corpus in terminological research, which includes the investigation of the meanings and usages of terms and the study of the conceptual traits of concepts. Indeed, the text has become the place where the meanings of terms are revealed. This is a descriptive approach to terminology that departs from Wüster's theory of terminology, as the notions of monoreferentiality, biunivocity, and normalisation no longer prevail. Concepts evolve, and their uses in discourse determine their meanings. We are far from the fixed meaning that Wüster attributed to every term.

Regarding meaning, terms, or more generally words, no longer have a fixed meaning because when they combine with other words in a syntactic structure, their interpretation changes. There is a link between syntax and semantics. This is what Gross explains by indicating that the various uses of a verb and, more generally, of any predicate can be highlighted using *classes d'objets*. A *classe d'objets* is a set of nouns, semantically homogeneous, that determine a shift in the interpretation of a given predicate by delineating a specific use. According to this definition, *classes d'objets* are not abstract semantic concepts but entities constructed on syntactic bases and determined by the meaning of the predicates. Below, we

provide the distributional schemas of different uses, characterized by *classes d'objets* for subjects (N0) and for complements (N1), for two verbs and two adjectives.

- Verbs

Allonger / N0 : <couturier> / N1 : <vêtements>	N0 (Tailor) To <u>lengthen</u> a garment (N1)
Allonger / N0 : <cuisinier> : (N1) <potages> <sauces> / avec (N2) <huile> <bouillon> <eau>	N0 (cook) To <u>add</u> oil, broth, or water (N2) to stew or soup (N1)
Allonger / N0 : <hum> / N1 : <argent> <pourboire> / N2 : à <hum>	X (N0) To <u>inflate</u> a tip or money (N1) for Y (N2)
Allonger / N0 : <hum> / N1 : <hum> / N2 : sur <sol> <lit> <civière>	X (N0) To <u>stretch</u> a bed or stretcher (N1) on the ground (N2)
Atteindre / N0 : <hum> / N1 : <loc>	To <u>reach</u>
Atteindre / N0 : <hum> / N1 : <âge>	X (N0) to <u>reach</u> an age (N1)
Atteindre / N0 : <hum> / N1 : <but>	X (N0) to <u>achieve</u> a goal (N1)
Atteindre / N0 : <eau> / N1 : <niveau>	(water) (N0) to <u>reach</u> a level (N1)
Atteindre / N0 : <hum> / N1 : <hum> / N2 : à <téléphone>	X (N0) To <u>get in touch</u> with someone (N1) on the phone (N2)
Atteindre / N0 : <projectile> / N1 : <hum> <cible>	A projectile (N0) to <u>reach</u> a target (N1)
Atteindre / N0 : <maladie> / N1 : <hum>	X (N1) to <u>catch</u> a disease (N0)
Atteindre / N0 : <hum> / N1 : <public>	X (N0) to <u>reach out to</u> people (N1)
Atteindre / N0 : <malheur> / N1 : <hum>	A misfortune (N0) to <u>strike</u> X (N1) (This column is a translation)

Having given the examples of these two verbs whose meaning changes depending on the context, it is important to reiterate that terms, or more generally words, no longer have a fixed meaning because when they combine with other words in a syntactic structure, their interpretation changes. There is a link between syntax and semantics. The examples below involve adjectives.

- Adjectives

Juste / N0 : <hum> / Sy : <i>droit, intègre, honnête</i> Juste / N0 : <hum> / N1 : avec <hum> / Sy : <i>équitable, impartial</i>	Synonyms: Right, honest, of integrity, fair, impartial
Juste / N0 : <action> / Sy : <i>équitable</i>	In the case of an action – synonym: fair
Juste / N0 : <récompense, punition> / Sy : <i>légitime, justifié, fondé</i>	In the case of a reward, or punishment – synonyms: fair, justified, right, legitimate
Juste / N0 : <calcul, déduction> / Sy : <i>correct, exact</i>	In the case of calculation, or deduction – synonyms: correct, accurate
Juste / N0 : <vêtement> / Sy : <i>étroit, étriqué</i>	In the case of clothing: Synonyms: tight, straight
Juste / N0 : <instr de mesure> / Sy : <i>exact, précis</i>	In the case of measurement instruments: synonym: Accurate
Juste / N0 : <instr de musique> / Sy : <i>accordé</i>	In the case of musical instruments: Synonym: tuned
Âpre / N0 : <objet concret> / Sy : <i>rugueux</i>	Synonym: Rough
Âpre / N0 : <lieu géologique> / Sy : <i>escarpé,</i>	In the case of a location:

<i>raboteux</i>	Synonyms: Rugged, steep
Âpre / N0 : <fruit> / Sy : <i>acide, âcre</i>	In the case of a fruit: Synonym: Bitter
Âpre / N0 : <dispute> / Sy : <i>violent, rude</i>	In the case of a dispute: Synonym: Harsh, violent, rude
Âpre / N0 : <propos> / Sy : <i>véhément</i>	In the case of an utterance: Synonym: Harsh
Âpre / N0 : <combat> / Sy : <i>violent, sanglant, acharné, sauvage</i>	In the case of a fight: Synonym: Violent, bloody, fierce
Âpre / N0 : <climat> / Sy : <i>rude, rigoureux</i> (Gross, 2010 : 187-197)	In the case of the weather: Synonym: Harsh, inclement, frigid, blustery, unforgiving (This column is a translation)

The conclusion to be drawn is that the environment on the right side, that is, the complements, provides much more information than the subject in the interpretation of a predicate. The meaning of a word depends on the environment in which it is used. In this case, the notion of *use* assumes a major importance. Can we conclude that words do not have meanings, but uses? This important remark applies to specialised languages as well.

The translation of the verb "allonger" into English yields different terms depending on the context. Indeed, in the first case, the verb "*allonger*" means to lengthen (in the case of a garment), to add (in the case of stew), to inflate (in the case of tip or money), and to stretch (in the case of a bed). The list is not exhaustive.

Using *classes d'objets* to determine a predicative use of a word has the advantage of allowing it to be described in both intension and extension, which is a considerable advantage for automatic processing. On the other hand, corpus linguistics cannot do without the notion of relevant environment if it wants to find useful information for describing the words of the lexicon in texts, nor can it do without the notion of a simple sentence.

In general, translation theorists use examples of the aforementioned *classes d'objets* to develop algorithms relative to the meanings that a lexeme or term takes on in a particular syntax.

Durieux relies on a definition that Robert Galisson gives to terminology in his *Dictionnaire de didactique des langues*: "A set of terms that refer to the concepts and objects related to a particular field of knowledge or human activity."

Similarly, the term "translation" can refer to the action of translating and the product of this action. Durieux (1992: 96) notes that:

De fait, deux théories principales s'opposent. La théorie contrastive de la traduction et la théorie interprétative de la traduction. La première postule que la traduction est la mise en regard de codes linguistiques. Elle reconnaît l'irréductibilité des langues à des schémas superposables et admet la spécificité des visions du monde mais, appliquée à la traduction de textes techniques, elle avance que les termes propres à une langue de spécialité sont essentiellement monoréférentiels et, en conséquence, fait de l'adoption des correspondances pré-établies le fondement-même de la méthode de travail. La terminologie, au sens où nous l'avons définie, joue donc ici un rôle clé dans la production de traductions.

According to this first theory, the translator's task is facilitated by the existence of terminological databases where they can look up the equivalents of terms they do not know in the target language. In this case, the translator no longer has to make an effort since all the terms are already translated. They only need to do "copy-pasting." However, there is a second theory that does not accept pre-established correspondences between terms. The second theory presents the translation process as a two-step approach: comprehension and re-expression, separated by a phase of deverbilization. At no point do the two languages—source and target—come into contact. Indeed, the comprehension phase, which relies

on the original text and involves mobilising related thematic knowledge to reconstruct the meaning of the text to be translated, leads to an alingual stage. This stage of deverbalization corresponds to the formation of a mental image. In a way, this image has no caption. It is this image that the translator must express in the target language, independently of the formulation of the original text that prompted its formation. At this point in the translation process, the translator relies exclusively on the image they have in their mind to produce the target text, without considering the original linguistic substrate of the image. It is clear that the systematic adoption of pre-established correspondences does not fit into this approach, since the deverbalization phase—the formation of the mental image—intervenes between the two linguistic codes, preventing direct transcoding. (Ibid)

La seconde présente l'opération traduisante comme une démarche articulée en deux temps majeurs - la compréhension et la réexpression - séparés par une phase de déverbalisation. A aucun moment les deux langues - de départ et d'arrivée - n'entrent en contact. En effet, la phase de compréhension qui prend appui sur le texte original et sollicite la mobilisation de connaissances thématiques connexes pour permettre la reconstruction du sens du texte à traduire débouche sur un stade alingue. Cette étape de déverbalisation correspond à la formation d'une image mentale. En quelque sorte, cette image n'a pas de légende. (Ibid)

Durieux concludes that one must be cautious when seeking equivalents for unfamiliar terms in the target language, as the ready-made solutions offered by terminological databases can be misleading and may lead the translator astray. In the descriptive section, we will provide concrete examples given by Durieux to support his point.

On his part, Rochard (1992, pp.109-111), a translator/reviser at the *Banque de France* (Bank of France), demonstrates that concepts evolve and that the translator needs to know the contents of the concepts more than the designations in the target language. Without going into detail, it suffices to take the example of the American concept of "financial institution." In 95% of cases, it will indeed be used in the sense that all serious terminological products will rightly give, namely "institution financière." However, the translator who relies on this translation is likely to make a serious error when applying it to a text discussing insurance companies in the United States. While insurance companies are indeed "financial institutions," they are not "institutions financières" for a knowledgeable French reader, as the French concept is more restrictive than the American concept.

As far as the concept of terminology is concerned, there are recent books that provide in-depth discussions on various aspects of the concept, reflecting current trends and research in the field. These books include: (1) "*The Routledge Handbook of Terminology*" (2023) - edited by Pedro A. Fuertes-Olivera and Henning Bergenholtz. This book discusses the intrinsic link between terminology and translation by highlighting that accurate translation relies heavily on precise and consistent use of terms. Terminology ensures that specialised concepts are correctly understood and conveyed across languages, making it a vital component of translation processes. The book explains that terminologists and translators often collaborate to maintain the integrity of terms in different languages, ensuring that the translated text remains faithful to the original meaning while being culturally and contextually appropriate. (2) "*Terminology in Everyday Life*" (2nd edition, 2023) - edited by Marcel Thelen, Frieda Steurs, and Heribert Picht, this book explores the application of terminology in various fields and everyday contexts; (3) "*Terminology and Language Planning: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*" (2023) - edited by François Grin and Gabrielle Hogan-Brun, this book focuses on the relationship between terminology and language policy. (4) "*Theoretical Perspectives on Terminology: Traditions and New Trends*" (2024) presents theoretical reflections on terminology from various perspectives, including cognitive, sociolinguistic, and computational approaches. The author is María Teresa Cabré. This book discusses various theories of terminology, focusing on both traditional approaches and emerging trends. It explores the classical theory of terminology, which emphasizes the systematic collection and standardization of terms, and contrasts it with newer perspectives that incorporate cognitive linguistics, socioterminology, and corpus-based approaches. The book aims to bridge the gap between established

methodologies and innovative trends in the field, offering a comprehensive overview of contemporary terminological theory.

3. Methodology

3.1. Problem Statement

The translation of specialised texts involves terminological constraints that go beyond merely searching for the linguistic designations of scientific and technical terms in the target language. Terminological research also involves investigating the content of concepts. Terms do not have fixed meanings, as claimed by the Wüsterian theory. Recent research in corpus linguistics proves that dictionary definitions are not immutable truths, as concepts evolve and terms are subject to new usages. New usages lead to new interpretations and new meanings. Syntax influences the meaning of terms. The translation of terms into foreign languages also uses designations that enrich the lexical, semantic, and conceptual fields of these terms. It is important to understand that meaning is now a dynamic notion that is expected to evolve. The methodology is qualitative in that the functioning of certain terms in discourse is described, and their meanings are analysed and interpreted.

3.2. Method and Purpose

This research uses a qualitative method that consists, in this particular exercise, in interpreting the meanings of terms and lexical items in various contexts. The main idea of the paper is that words do not have fixed meanings; they have uses. A word's meaning depends on the context in which it is used. In this perspective, several words and terms are shown in different contexts and their different meanings are interpreted and revealed. The paper attaches great importance to terminological meanings extracted from corpora. Dictionary definitions are challenged sometimes.

3.3. Data

The data include lexical items such as '*allonger, atteindre, âpre, juste*', on the one hand, and terms such as tax credit, *crédit d'impôt*, prime rate, *taux de base*, labour, etc.

In discussing the study of terms in translation, Rochard asserts that what every translator needs, above all, is to forget the linguistic aspect of terminology and to engage with the non-linguistic logic of the author. To do this, the translator must approach terminological questions from a conceptual angle. A concept is primarily characterised by two elements: its linguistic label(s), which allow(s) for the identification of the concept, and the definition of its content.

4. Results

1. The meaning of a word depends on the context in which it is used. The same applies to the meaning of a term.
2. A word can have different meanings in different contexts.
3. In specialised translation, the micro-definition of a term should be explored in the corpus in which it is used.
4. There are differences between dictionary definitions and terminological definitions. Terminological definitions are the repositories of the meaning. They are foundational.
5. Meaning is a dynamic rather than a fixed notion.
6. Concepts evolve over time, while the terms that designate them do not evolve.
7. The translation of a term into a target language expands its lexical and conceptual fields.
8. Translators should not only be concerned with the linguistic equivalents of terms; they should also make sure that they understand the scope and content of the terms they translate.

5. Discussion

If a translator is aware that words and terms can be polysemous and that it is the context that triggers a particular word's meaning, s/he can adequately handle specialised translation. Translators should stop looking systematically for word's meaning in dictionaries and encyclopedia before exploring the particular word or term in a corpus. Note that the meaning of a particular term that you explore in a corpus will be more accurate and specific than its dictionary definition that is vague sometimes.

The linguistic label of a term and its content cannot exist without each other, as shown by the following example, which involves two fiscal concepts, one American and one French, extracted from a remarkable terminological thesis on American tax reform.

TAX CREDIT

Dollar-for-dollar reduction in the amount of tax that a taxpayer owes. Unlike deductions or exemptions, which reduce the amount of income subject to tax, a credit reduces the actual amount of tax owed. The availability of tax credits was curtailed by the Tax Reform Act of 1986.

(J.P.Friedman: *Dictionary of Business Terms*. Barron's. New York, 1987)

CREDIT D'IMPÔT

Créance sur le Trésor à raison d'une opération effectuée dans le cadre d'une disposition fiscale particulière. (...) Les personnes percevant des revenus de capitaux mobiliers ayant supporté la retenue à la source, les personnes ayant ouvert un plan d'épargne retraite et effectuant des retraits sur ce compte peuvent bénéficier d'un crédit d'impôt.

(*Dictionnaire fiduciaire fiscal 1991*, La Villeguérin Editions. Paris, mars 1991)

Here, we see that the labels are equivalent in language, but the definitions reveal very different concepts, since the "tax credit" is certainly not a "*crédit d'impôt*," but rather a reduction in income tax, while the "*crédit d'impôt*" is closer to an advance tax payment.

The third indispensable element is the source of the definition and its date. Rochard says that the source guarantees the reliability of the translation. If you use a terminological entry on the rate of repurchase agreements from 5 to 10 days in France, with the definition provided by the Banque de France, you are likely to have a reliable definition. The date of the source is also crucial, as concepts can evolve. An example of this is the concepts of "prime rate" in the United States and "taux de base bancaire" in France.

Rochard (1992, p.110) declares: "When I joined the Banque de France, the 'prime rate' corresponded to the following definition:"

PRIME RATE: The quoted rate that banks charge their «best» low-risk business loan borrowers. (US Congress, *A Reference Guide to Banking and Finance*, Washington, Congressional Research Service, 1982)

"At the same time, the French base rate was a reference rate that had nothing to do with a market rate freely set by each bank. It was much more of a rate set jointly by banks under the Treasury's watchful eye. Today, not only is the base rate freely determined by each bank, but it is also intended to set the cost of credit for the best borrowers. Thus, the French concept has moved closer to the American concept. Ten years ago, it was necessary to mark the difference between the two concepts, for example, by translating the notion of 'prime rate' as 'taux débiteur privilégié.' Today, one could theoretically translate 'prime rate' as 'taux de base.' However, the base rate remains much more theoretical than the prime rate."

These are crucial elements for translation. Indeed, the difference in concept can justify a difference in translation in certain cases. One could thus maintain the translation 'taux débiteur privilégié' when marking the difference between the two concepts in context and use 'taux de base' when highlighting their common characteristic as a reference banking rate, as opposed to, for example, the central bank's key rates.

Interestingly, while the base rate has evolved towards the prime rate, the prime rate itself has started to evolve in the opposite direction, as it is increasingly less used by American banks. The two concepts might one day intersect. (1992, pp.104-111)

In this example of banking terms and concepts, Rochard illustrates a part of the world of banking terms and their evolution over time. The segmentation of reality is not the same from one country or linguistic community to another, and concepts and their labels are not the same across different geographic and linguistic areas.

The term labour is the next example that is going to be discussed. According to ILO Thesaurus (i.e. the International Labour Organisation's thesaurus):

The term **labour** is synonymous with work, which is defined as “Human activities, paid or unpaid, that produce the goods or services in an economy, or supply the needs of a community, or provide a person's accustomed means of livelihood.” The labour force is the sum of persons in employment plus persons in unemployment. Together these two groups of the population represent the current supply of labour for the production of goods and services taking place in a country through market transactions in exchange for remuneration.

The definition is clear enough but is it applicable in all the contexts in which the term labour is found? Let us examine the term in several contexts. Akpaca (2008) researched the term and presented the following contexts in which it was used:

1. Between 1964 and 1966, Ghana witnessed a weakening in union authority over the labour force, and the elimination of union brokers between labour, capital and the state.	Entre 1964 et 1966, l'autorité syndicale sur la main-d'œuvre s'affaiblit et les intermédiaires entre les travailleurs, les capitaux et l'Etat furent éliminés.
2. labour-management relations	Les relations entre les ouvriers et le patronat
3. Labour organisations	Organisations ouvrières
4. Labour	Travail
5. Labour leader	Dirigeant ouvrier
6. Labour college	Institut de formation ouvrière

In contexts 1-2 above, the word labour is a synonym for workers. In contexts 3-5-6, it is used as an adjective related to workers. In context 4, it is used as a synonym for work. The partial conclusion is that the term labour is not used in labour discourse with the sole meaning of work, contrary to the ILO definition above.

In the next example, the meaning of the term labour is going to be examined in an economic context.

Engels declares in his essay titled *The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man* (1950) that:

Labor is the source of all wealth, the political economists assert. It is this, next to nature, which supplies it with the material that it converts into wealth. But it is even infinitely more than this. It is the prime basic condition for all human existence, and this to such an extent that, in a sense, we have to say that labor created man himself. (1950, p.7)

In this second definition, labour is a synonym for work.

In *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) by Adam Smith, the term labour has several meanings. In a paper entitled “A Lexico-semantic Exploration of the Term Labour as Developed in Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*”, Akpaca (2018, p.353) states that “labour is presented in the book as a commodity, a means of purchase and exchange, the real price of commodities, a measure of the value of commodities, a factor of production, a source of wealth, an inherited wealth, an entity employed by the stock.” Indeed, on pages 21, 35, and 13, Adam Smith makes the following statements about labour.

Extracts from the wealth of nations	Remarks
Labour is a factor of production: If the society were annually to employ all the labour it can annually purchase, the quantity of employed labour would increase greatly every year, and so the product of each year would be of vastly	In this statement, labour is a commodity and a factor of production.

greater value than that of the preceding year.	
The liberal reward of labour, therefore, is not just the effect of increasing wealth but also the cause of increasing population.	Labour increases wealth and the population.
Labour was the first price, the original purchase money that was paid for all things.	Labour is money.

So far, three views of labour have been expressed by ILO, Engels, and Adam Smith respectively, even though these are not contradictory. The point is that there is no fixed definition of the term. It means workers, work, commodity, factor of production, wealth and population growth trigger, and money. It is important to stress that the various meanings of the term labour extracted from the Wealth of Nations have been the subject of a terminological exploration.

6. Conclusion

The idea of tracing the meaning arises from the fact that knowing the equivalent of a term in a target language is not enough to fully understand its meaning. Understanding the meaning of a term often involves knowing the concept it refers to. Lexicographic definitions are increasingly being replaced by terminological definitions that emerge in scientific and technical discourse. The problem is that terminological definitions are often a redefinition of lexicographic definitions. The contexts in which terms are used also offer a window for terminological exploration. It is in the various contexts where terms appear that their meanings can be explored and interpreted. Translating terms or words into foreign languages also offers an interesting perspective for terminological exploration, especially when translators are not bound to completely worn-out established terms. The creativity of translators, who have a good understanding of the concepts they are translating, advances terminology, as they are capable of innovating and proposing better translations. Indeed, in databases and on the websites of certain international organisations, such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO), there are often windows next to certain translated terms inviting users to propose better translations. The translator must remain an active participant in terminological monitoring.

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