

From *chasse patate* to a Terminology Service Center...



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Basic principles

Terminology is a natural and central part of the general language policy of the Taalunie. I will give a brief survey of the basic considerations of our concern with terminology.

- ***Instrumental***
- Taalunie meta-actor
- Synergy

The language policy of the Taalunie is an **instrumental** one. It aims at creating the right conditions to make it easier for Dutch speakers to continue to use their language in as many different situations as possible. The need to be able to communicate on all possible aspects and domains of human activity is recognised as being essential, if a language is to maintain its position in society.

If this is our general aim, one immediately understands how crucial terminology is for the realisation of this objective. We have to ensure that Dutch does not become a language which can only be used in informal occasions and hence does not become what we call a language for exclusive usage at home, in the garden and in the kitchen. Dutch must continue to be also a language for science and technology, for commerce and business, for jurisprudence and so on. Therefore, specific attention should be paid to the characteristics of the language of specific domains, including their lexical characteristics.

It is also appropriate to stress the importance of terminology in relation to the increasing possibilities offered by language and speech technology. More and more communication takes place within technical, automated environments. Think of dictating devices and navigation systems which we use in our cars and with which we interact through voice commands.

It is quite realistic to expect that Dutch will easily lose ground if it cannot play a significant role in technological applications such as the ones I just mentioned. For this reason, our policy should address terminology and should aim at developing the necessary tools and instruments for the integration of Dutch in HLT, materials such as language and speech corpora, lemmatisers, parsers etc...

One example. Suppose that we want to develop excellent speech-to-text systems, as an alternative for text input by means of a keyboard. Such systems will never be able to perform in a satisfactory way if we confine ourselves to the general, non domain specific lexicon. It is especially professionals that will want to use such systems in order to be more effective: lawyers that want to speed up the production of their legal and juridical documents, surgeons who might want to describe their actions while performing them and so forth. In a medium-sized language area such as ours, it is the public level that has to take care of the domain specific lexicons, in order to make sure that the new HLT applications can be used by specific professions.

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Principles into practice

- co-operation with others
- real products and services

Co-operation with others

- CoTerm
Policy commission
- NL-Term
Field organisation

Products and services

- Web site Nedterm
- Steunpunt voor Nederlandstalige Terminologie
Terminology Service Centre

