

Abstract

The German Special Language of Railways. A Morphosemantic Analysis with the Polish-German Contrastive Perspective

This dissertation is devoted to a morphosemantic analysis of German specialist terminology of railways. The linguistic material that has been extracted from the industry's most comprehensive terminological database, RailLexic, is analysed from the point of view of morphological structures and semantics in order to notice the most productive word-formation mechanisms in the analysed field. The juxtaposition of German terms with their Polish equivalents reveals the differences in the nomination processes of the two language systems.

There are many factors that prove the relevance of a study oriented in such a manner. First of all, these include the fact that railways are deeply ingrained in the national identity of the Germans, which is shown in the brief historical overview in the first chapter. The significance of the research subject being analysed is emphasised by the sketched picture of rail transport, which appears both as a barometer and as a motor for the most important groundbreaking historical events from the time of the nascent German statehood, through the dark page in history written by the two World Wars and the yoke of post-war realities, up to the present day.

A thorough screening of the professional lexis of railways and the identification of its characteristics is also justified in the context of the sustainable development strategy currently implemented by the EU. In fact, an integral part of this environment-friendly strategy is interoperability, described in the first chapter, which consists in harmonising infrastructure and all the processes involved in order to increase the international use of railways, which are seen as a particularly eco-friendly form of transport. The choice of the RailLexic term bank, which is recognised by international institutions of the railway industry, is in the spirit of these interoperability efforts and gives the analysis carried out a representative character.

A thorough review of the professional terminology of railways and the resulting presentation of the most productive nomination strategies aim to fill the gap in the current state of research. The few scientific works on the subject published to date, as described extensively in the second chapter, are either of a purely diachronic nature and focus on the period of the emergence of this discipline (works by Rahnenführer and Krüger) or highlight only isolated aspects of the subject without, however, documenting them with wider linguistic material (joint publication edited by Gerstenkorn/Hums/Schmidt). The review carried out as part of this doctoral thesis therefore represents the first attempt to capture the most comprehensive and up-to-date picture of the terminological substance of the German professional language of railways. Furthermore, some of the findings obtained can be perceived as a kind of dialogue with already available research. This is because, on the one hand, the conducted analysis makes it possible to prove some of the

hypotheses contained in older works, such as Ilse Rahnenführer's prediction of an increase in the importance of native word-formation processes of composition and derivation. On the other hand, the results obtained make it possible to verify some of the views contained in available studies on the specialist language of railways. This includes, among other things, a revision of the position on the declining importance of synonymy in the area described, which was expressed by Rahnenführer on the basis of a study conducted on an archival linguistic corpus. Compared with the studies published to date on the professional language of railways, this dissertation also offers a deeper insight into phenomena such as metaphorisation and synonymy and illustrates them with the help of numerous examples derived from the terminology of this field.

The third chapter presents the research paradigms of the LSP linguistics, focusing on the most widespread definitions of languages for specific purposes, taking into consideration the possibility of transferring them to lexical research. While doing this, a lack of definitional and methodological consensus was identified, which in research practice results mainly in the fact that a term of a language for specific purposes that fits into the accepted line of analysis is usually chosen as the basis for research. On these grounds, it can be concluded that only a synthetic approach can provide an adequate basis for the study.

Due to the concentration on the terminological plane, this dissertation can be assigned to the model of systemic linguistics, according to which the main focus is on the lexical and syntactic system of a given professional discipline. As emphasised by reference to numerous theoretical concepts, in this regard the function of lexis should be interpreted in many respects. On the one hand, lexis acts as an inherent signal of recognition, which helps to highlight the contrast between the general language (*Gemeinsprache*) and the language for specific purposes (*Fachsprache*). On the other hand, it is an important element that holds a given professional community together, which is due to the fact that it is the professional lexis that is the carrier of specialist content that constitutes the realities of the existence of a given group. The multitude of functions ascribed to the professional vocabulary thus outlined confirms the unflagging topicality of the chosen research direction.

The fourth chapter describes the analysed terminological database and focuses primarily on highlighting its prescriptive function, which can guarantee the consistent use of terminology and thus cement the entire specialist group that uses it. This section of the thesis justifies the selection of the 24 RailLexic domains from which the material for the analysis was taken.

The entire corpus comprising a total of 3,567 terms was subjected to a morphosemantic analysis, the results of which are shown in chapters five and six. Chapter five presents a summary review in which the individual term types are characterised in order of frequency of occurrence (starting with the most popular). 73% of all the terms, and thus the most numerous group, are two- and

three-part noun compounds among which the so-called genitive constructions predominate (70% of all the compounds), i.e. such compounds which in their paraphrase contain a word group and an attribute in the genitive case. This category includes mainly rection compounds characterised by agentive and instrumental meaning. The study carried out shows the active role of derivatives as elements of nominal constructions. The most productive verbal derivatives in this respect are those with -er as *nomina agentis* and *nomina instrumenti*, and the verbal derivatives with -ung as *nomina actionis*.

It is symptomatic for the topic discussed that Polish terminological equivalents of German compositional terms almost always consist of genitive groups and nominal phrases combined with an adjectival attribute. This result confirms the profile of the juxtaposed linguistic systems, ascribing to German a tendency towards synthetic, while Polish towards analytical means of expression.

The second most important word-formation process turned out to be derivation, by means of which 15% of all analysed terms are formed. Also this time, verbal suffixations deserve special attention, being the largest group of derivatives. The elaborated review confirms the crucial importance of composition and derivation in the formation of German railway terms. The potential and significance of these German native nomination mechanisms become even more distinct when attention is drawn to the fact that linguistic elements from other languages now play a minor role in the linguistic register under analysis and are limited to the few technical terms that were borrowed from English at the time of building the German railway.

The relevance of considering the aspects that are presented as qualitative conclusions in chapter six have emerged during the quantitative analysis. Because the quantitative analysis of the RailLexic terminological database has revealed numerous examples of metaphorisation and synonymy. After the chapter's opening description of metaphor as a regular attribute of reality perception, the author presents the types of metaphorical terms. Also in this aspect, the compounds predominate; they make use of the transfer of somatic and biological concepts, and those concepts that are the product of human labour to technical objects, making the latter more illustrative and, consequently, also easier to understand. A recurring form of metaphorical projection is also animisation, presented later in the chapter, which consists in bringing the named objects to life.

The selection of the presented examples of synonymy made it possible to show that this phenomenon is deep-rooted in the specificity of the studied discipline. This extremely close relationship stems from the fact that synonymy reflects the most important intra- and extra-linguistic factors that have influenced or continue to shape railway industry and the form of its language.

Keywords: language for specific purposes, LSP linguistics, railways, professional terminology, word formation