

THE TERMINOLOGY OF ALLERGOLOGY – AN ANALYSIS IN THE LIGHT OF LINGUISTICS

Mariana COANĂ
Romanian-American University, Bucharest
(Romania)

Abstract

This study deals with the *terminology of allergology in Romanian*, starting from the fact that there is an increasing concern of experts for the impact of this field on society at a global level. We will analyze, in the light of linguistics, the language specific to the field of allergology following the realization of a corpus of texts developed by specialists, in order to inform and educate the general public about types of allergies, allergic diseases, symptoms, and methods of diagnosis, treatment, and prevention. Terms are the linguistic representation of concepts, the result of the development of cognitive processes and of the communication between experts of a specialized language in the community (Sager 1997: 25). We have selected these texts because they represent a communication tool in respect of concepts, in which the terms of the field of allergology reflect the way in which knowledge is structured in the mind of the expert and how this knowledge is delivered to the general public.

The syntagmatic analysis has shown that the most common phrases in the allergology terminology are bimember or multimember phrases, semantically rigid, having a hermetic character for a non-specialist in the field. However, the common vocabulary – specialized vocabulary relationship in the field of allergology is important, because the symptoms of allergies are represented by terms that are part of the common vocabulary. We have also identified interdisciplinary terms, which are common to several specialized languages, because the disciplines of allergology and clinical immunology are interrelated with other disciplines, such as dermatology, pneumology, ENT, pediatrics, occupational medicine, nephrology, rheumatology, internal medicine, transplant immunology, and clinical pharmacology.

Key-words: *terminology, allergology, common vocabulary, specialized vocabulary, interdisciplinary vocabulary*

Résumé

Cette étude vise la terminologie de l'allergologie en roumain à partir du fait qu'il y a une préoccupation des experts de plus en plus accentuée pour l'étude de l'impact de ce domaine sur la société au niveau global. On analysera, par le filtre de

la linguistique, le langage du domaine de l'allergologie à la suite de la réalisation d'un corpus de textes élaborés par les spécialistes, afin d'informer et d'éduquer le grand public sur les types d'allergies, sur les maladies allergiques, les symptômes et les méthodes de diagnostique, de traitement et de prévention. Les termes sont la représentation linguistique de concepts, le résultat du développement des processus cognitifs et de la communication entre les experts d'un langage spécialisé dans la communauté (Sager 1997: 25). Nous avons choisi ces textes car ils sont un instrument de communication sur les concepts, où les termes du domaine de l'allergologie réfléchissent le mode dont la connaissance est structurée dans l'esprit de l'expert et comment est-elle livrée au grand public.

L'analyse syntagmatique a mis en évidence le fait que les plus fréquents syntagmes dans la terminologie du domaine de l'allergologie sont des syntagmes bimembres ou multimembres, rigides du point de vue sémantique, ayant un caractère hermétique pour le non-spécialiste. Cependant, la relation lexicale commun – lexicale spécialisée dans le domaine de l'allergologie est importante, car la symptomatologie des allergies est représentée par des termes qui font partie du lexique commun. Nous avons aussi identifié des termes interdisciplinaires, qui sont communs à plusieurs langages de spécialité, car la discipline de l'allergologie immunologique clinique est en relation réciproque avec d'autres disciplines, comme la dermatologie, la pneumologie, l'ORL, la pédiatrie, la médecine du travail, la néphrologie, la rhumatologie, la médecine interne, l'immunologie de la transplantation et la pharmacologie clinique.

Mots-clés : *terminologie, allergologie, lexique commun, lexique spécialisé, lexique interdisciplinaire*

1. Introduction

Linguists' interest in specialized terminology has significantly increased recently due to technical and technological developments in various sectors of activity which improve the quality of life, but also due to extremely complex global phenomena which affect the quality of life and thus health. Allergies are common in Europe, more than 150 million Europeans suffer from chronic diseases and, according to experts, by 2025, half of the European Union's population will be affected.

The object of study of this paper is the *language of allergology/terminology of allergology in Romanian*, based on a set of terms associated with the *field of allergology* and the discipline *Allergology and Clinical Immunology*. The aim of the paper is to make a linguistic analysis of terms in this field by recording, explaining, and describing representative allergology terms (terms describing types of allergic

diseases, symptoms, diagnosis, prevention, and treatment), in relation to the common language and other fields that coexist in the vast field of medicine.

Therefore, our study focuses on identifying the characteristics of terminology corresponding to this field starting from a set of terms relevant to this terminology, which we achieved after consulting articles of specialists on the website of the Romanian Association for Allergy Education and lexicographic sources. We have considered the premise that a website devoted to a specialized field contains current information that presents the latest research in that field, thus reflecting the ongoing concern for updating information. The articles are both informative and educational because they provide the knowledge of the mechanisms of *allergology* and are addressed to the general public, and specialized because they are addressed to a specific audience that can understand a specialized code. The vocabulary used in these articles inform the public about allergic diseases, for example, *allergies to dust and pollen, food allergies, allergies to drugs (medicines)*, etc. but also about the scientific advances made in the field of *clinical immunology*.

The investigated texts reveal the relationship between the strict scientific and the pre-scientific interpretation and the preoccupation to disambiguate and specify the specialized meaning through different contextual means. We have also noticed the tendency of the authors to increase the social interest in key terms in the field of allergology, for example, *anaphylactic shock, allergen, adrenaline*, etc. However, the frequency of medical terms in these texts cannot guarantee their rigorous knowledge because the proper decoding of these terms becomes an obstacle for ordinary speakers due to the frequent interconceptual relationships that cannot lead to the pursued result. Even when they are extended in ordinary communication, medical terms have the features of a professional terminology, which cannot be rigorously decoded by non-specialists.

2. Delimitation and definition of the domain

The *allergology terminology* is varied considering that its dynamics and complexity are influenced by the evolution of clinical immunology and medicine. According to experts, the World Allergy Organization has recommended the adoption of a global nomenclature for allergic diseases. The proposed terminology was published by the European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology in 2001. In 2004 it was revised by the World Allergy Organization and renamed the "Revised Nomenclature". To delimit and define the domain, we will present and analyze the definition from the Merriam-Webster dictionary of the basic terms in the investigated domain:

- *Allergology* is "a branch of medicine concerned with allergy."
- *Allergy* is a. "altered bodily reactivity (such as hypersensitivity) to an antigen in response to a first exposure; b. "exaggerated or pathological

immunological reaction (as by sneezing, difficult breathing, itching, or skin rashes) to substances, situations, or physical states that are without comparable effect on the average individual.”

- *Immunology* is “a science that deals with the immune system and the cell-mediated and humoral aspects of immunity and immune responses.”

In *Dicționarul Explicativ al Limbii Române online*/ ‘Explanatory dictionary of the Romanian language online’ (DEX) the same representative terms have the following entries:

- *Allergology* is that “part of medicine that deals with processes and diseases of an allergic nature.”

- *Allergy* is a “special response of the body under the action of microbes or foreign substances introduced in various ways (digestive, respiratory, injections, etc.)”

- *Immunology* is “the science that studies the body’s reactions to infectious agents and their toxic products.”

We agree with the specialists who argue that general dictionaries should be placed as intermediaries between specialized languages and standard literary language, trying to make terminologies semi-open codes for non-specialist speakers (Bidu-Vrănceanu 2007: 25). We will further analyze the components of the lexicographic definition, compare them with the definition of specialists, then establish whether the lexicographic definition ensures the access of the non-specialist to the specialized meaning. We have noticed that, in both dictionaries, the relationship between *allergology* and *immunology* is not specified in the definition of *allergology*. The literature mentions that *allergology* is a specialty derived from *clinical immunology*. Therefore, the above definition must be supplemented with this information because *allergology* is a growing specialty due to the fact that new roles of cells involved in allergic and immunological reactions and new dimensions of the immune response have been identified.

3. Methodology

Many studies show that specialized terminology can be successfully investigated thanks to the theories of terminology, which use linguistic methods and means of analysis and characterization of specialized languages (Gaudin 2003; Cabré 2005; Slodzian 2000; Bidu-Vrănceanu 2007, 2010; Ciolăneanu 2011). Based on these theories and the object of study of terminology in the field of allergology, we will analyze the terminological units used in this field. Thus, on the one hand, we will adopt functional and semantic methods of analysis to describe both the surface mechanism of terminological units related to the language system of which they are part, and the specific mechanism of terminological units, in relation to terminology in the field of allergology in which they are used.

On the other hand, based on the principles of *external terminology*, we will investigate allergology terminology through a descriptive approach and a primarily semantic approach that aim at the degree of accuracy or determinologization of the specialized meaning and the means of correct identification. Considering the corpus, composed of educational and informative articles of specialists in the field, we will analyze whether there is a migratory vocabulary, ie terms that are found both in the field of origin – medicine, and in the field of allergology, which becomes a receiving field.

We will make a twofold analysis, according to the recommendations of specialists:

- on the paradigmatic axis we will try to find out if conceptual conditions are observed, verified by interlingual correspondences, correlated with the stipulative character manifested at the level of meaning by units imposed by competent bodies (Depecker 2002:66-67).

- on the syntagmatic axis we will follow the recurrence of the group, in correlation with the pertinence of the concept, the specificity and the cohesion of the meaning, conditions that lead to the stability of the complex unit, with consequences on terminologization (ibidem).

4. Results

Among the types of variation that can affect terms, one refers to time-related change. One might think that this change is very slow, which does not jeopardize the stability of terminological dictionaries. This is undoubtedly correct for disciplines in which knowledge evolves slowly (Condamines, 2018). However, in the field of allergology, knowledge is evolving rapidly due to the impact of allergic diseases on society and due to the interest of allergists who cooperate in multidisciplinary teams with researchers in internal medicine, ENT, dermatology, nephrology, etc. The context is essential in characterizing *allergology terms* because it refers to the elements around the term which have an impact on its form, operation, and meaning (Ciolăneanu 2011: 31).

One may notice that the language of allergology has increased its corpus of terms by borrowing from other fields (interdisciplinary terms) such as biochemistry (*biomarker*, *immunoglobulin E*), anatomy, physics, etc., but also terms from other foreign languages - Latin (*fusarium*, *aspergillus*, *dermatophagoides farinae*), English - partially adapted neologisms (*patch testing*, *rebound phenomenon*) and unadapted neologisms (*accuhaler*, *pancake syndrome*). By deepening the syntagmatic relations in the investigated lexical field, we have identified several categories of defining contexts for the *language of allergology*. The language of allergology is characterized by precision at the lexical level and at the level of adjuncts, whereas the structure of terminological units is complex (see table below).

Lesion	Medication	Rhinitis	Testing
<i>Acute lesion</i>	<i>Control</i>	<i>Allergic</i>	<i>Non-</i>
<i>Chronic</i>	<i>medication</i>	<i>rhinitis</i>	<i>standardized</i>
<i>lesion</i>	<i>Additional</i>	<i>Intermittent</i>	<i>allergy testing</i>
<i>Flexural</i>	<i>control</i>	<i>allergic rhinitis</i>	<i>Patch testing</i>
<i>lesion</i>	<i>medication</i>	<i>Moderate-</i>	<i>Conventional</i>
<i>Herpetiform</i>	<i>Rescue</i>	<i>severe allergic</i>	<i>patch skin testing</i>
<i>lesion</i>	<i>medication</i>	<i>rhinitis</i>	<i>Atopic patch</i>
<i>Itchy lesion</i>	<i>Inhalation</i>	<i>Persistent</i>	<i>testing</i>
<i>Symmetrical</i>	<i>medication</i>	<i>allergic rhinitis</i>	<i>Sesquiterpen</i>
<i>lesion</i>		<i>Mild</i>	<i>e lactone mix patch</i>
<i>Leaking</i>		<i>allergic rhinitis</i>	<i>testing</i>
<i>lesion</i>			

In syntagmatic structures, inarticulate nouns that single out the referent are common. From a logical-semantic point of view, we distinguish medical terms that are part of set phrases, and in defining these phrases, the presence of specialized elements is absolutely necessary. Some phrases are translations of equivalent phrases from English, and others are created based on terms already existing in the language of allergology, taken from other fields of medicine since the discipline of allergology correlates with other disciplines, such as dermatology, pneumology, ENT, pediatrics, occupational medicine, nephrology, rheumatology, internal medicine, transplant immunology, and clinical pharmacology, a fact which reflects that the terminology of allergology has the quality of a receiving terminology. This mutual relationship between the field of allergology and the mentioned medical fields is absolutely necessary and gives the terminology of allergology the status of professional terminology, based on the principle of reciprocity.

After analyzing recent studies describing specialized terminology, we directly related the *specialized vocabulary* to the *common* one to determine and justify the adoption of analysis methods in both types of vocabulary and thus, the comparison of results became useful. We would like to point out that this approach belongs to Angela Bidu-Vrănceanu, who emphasizes that the extension of terms beyond specialized communication attracts, in different forms and to various degrees, a conceptual-semantic approximation or a determinologization that plays an important role in the common vocabulary-specialized vocabulary relationship. (Bidu-Vrănceanu 2010: 11).

The symptoms of an allergy can sometimes be taken for the symptoms of a cold. The terms specific to allergy symptoms are part of the *common language* and

are also found in the description of cold symptoms. In the table below, we present these symptoms with identical names in both conditions. We note that *cough* and *runny nose* can cause the condition if the people in question analyze any reaction of their bodies or their relatives' and if they are informed by safe, medical sources.

Symptom	Allergy	Cold
<i>Runny nose</i>	Yes	Yes
<i>Clogged nose</i>	Yes	Yes
<i>Sneeze</i>	Yes	Yes
<i>Cough</i>	Yes, sometimes	Yes, most of the times
<i>Nasal secretions</i>	Yes, watery	Yes, yellowish

We have also identified in the analyzed corpus phrases or simple terms frequently used in the common language, listed in the table below, which show the symptoms of types of allergies, which indicates that the use of common language terms is an important process in scientific popularization, taking into account the dynamics of the field of allergology and clinical immunology.

Dust and pollen allergy	Food allergy	Allergy to insect bites	Allergy to drugs
<i>Clogged nose</i>	<i>Vomiting</i>	<i>Breathing difficulties</i>	<i>Breathing difficulties</i>
<i>Itchy eyes and nose</i>	<i>Swollen tongue</i>	<i>Dizziness</i>	<i>Itch</i>
<i>Swollen eyes</i>	<i>Tingling on the tongue</i>	<i>Swelling in the sting area</i>	<i>Swollen lips and face</i>
<i>Cough</i>	<i>Swollen lips, face and throat</i>	<i>Cough</i>	<i>Skin rash</i>
<i>Skin reactions</i>	<i>Stomach cramps</i>	<i>Lowering blood pressure</i>	
<i>Exfoliation</i>		<i>Irritated skin</i>	
<i>Skin rash</i>		<i>Chest pressure</i>	

5. Conclusions

From a thematic point of view, the *terminology of allergology in Romanian* is distinguished by a classification aimed at: types of allergies, allergic diseases, symptoms, and methods of diagnosis, treatment, and prevention. The paper presents the terms depending on the ways in which they were formed. The field of allergology has a terminology combined with a medical terminology, formed via Latin or Greek, specific to the fields with which it has a reciprocal relationship, but also a terminology that is enriched lexically through external procedures (lexical borrowing and loan translation). In recent decades, English has been the main language generating new terms in allergology (*cross-sensitization; sensitization; nebulizer*).

Another very important aspect is the lexicalization of concepts through complex structures, namely the frequency of *bimember* or *multimember phrases*, due to the dynamics of the field, extralinguistic factors, and English into Romanian translations of scientific articles, published in prestigious international journals.

Along the same line, the definition in allergology is very important in the *texts of allergology and clinical immunology* because we have noted the lack of specialized dictionaries, as well as diastatic marks in general purpose dictionaries, to mention belonging to the field of allergology. However, one can notice the diastatic mark *med.* of medical terms present in the field of allergology. Comparing some textual definitions with the definitions in general purpose dictionaries, one can distinguish the specialized semantic values that identify the *terms of allergology*. Our goal is the terminological imposition, in Romanian, of the field of allergology. Therefore, the analysis we have made contributes to the creation of a *glossary for the field of allergology* because we have identified a corpus of specialized terms and meanings in this field.

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