Globalisation and the formulation of technical terms: is there still a need for terminology in national languages?

1. Disciplines, language and the global

We are part of a world that has been fundamentally changed over the last 160 years by industrialisation and the scientific-technical revolution, as well as, in more recent times, the emergence of the information society and globalisation. As Schildt (cited in Sommerfeldt, 1997:26) emphasises, there is no need for linguistics to look for explanations for language changes in the communicational needs of a particular period if the changes are of a formal character, that is if they are of a grammatical nature. However, when the reasons for changes are rooted in changing social needs that have affected the communicational environment, then we must take them into account as a factor in language development. In the case of Slovene, there was indisputably a connection of this kind with regard to the development of its terminology: the exceptional and dramatic development of Slovene technical functional varieties after 1848 was prompted by efforts to introduce Slovene as the language of instruction in secondary schools (the Slovene country being part of Austro-Hungarian...
monarchy until 1918 with the official language being German) and by the rapid technological development that accompanied new discoveries and new knowledge, both of which raised some important terminological issues (Kalin Golob, 2003b: 31–35).

Analysts of technical terms in Slovene (e.g. Pogorelec, 1974; Toporišič, 1974; Orožen, 1996; Korošec, 1996a) agree that in most technical texts from the second half of the 19th century the language performed its role in a very satisfactory manner, developing new functions in an appropriate way. Minor transgressions were connected primarily with pan-Slav enthusiasm, due to which many Croatian, Serbian and Russian words were adopted and this represents a general characteristic of texts in all functional varieties at this time. As the basic literature from which terms were formed was German (as well as German being the only official language in the country for centuries), the influence of this language is also apparent, often primarily of an orthographic-normative nature; elsewhere the reliance on German was even greater, but usually not excessive, as at that time linguistic-cultural endeavours against over-extensive borrowing from German were well-established (as moderate, constructive purism). In the late 19th century German played a stimulative role: as a competitor to Slovene it led to comparisons by Slovene intellectuals of the technical capabilities of the two languages (Kalin Golob 2003a).

Issues relating to the overall development of technical functional varieties in national languages became very topical once more at the end of the 20th century. Once again, the external circumstances were such that they raised similar questions to those raised a hundred years earlier: i.e., is it worth developing specialist terminology in a language with a relatively limited number of speakers (which might apply to almost all that are not English). Changes in communicational needs are influenced in particular by two phenomena: the modernisation and globalisation. The first is strongly connected with the growth of the information society, the second with the dissolution of economic, political and cultural borders (Daneš, 1997:12). The
almost daily flow of referential needs connected with new discoveries and findings faces national languages with the almost insurmountable problem of how to manage and satisfy these needs.

2. The global, terminology and language planning

From a linguistic-cultural and language policy point of view, the goal of preserving a national language includes both the preservation and widening of its referential properties (Korošec, 1996b:257; Kalin Golob, 2003a). This widening cannot stand in contradiction to the fact that, on the world stage, "English has become established as the de facto lingua franca of globalisation in politics, economics, defence, law and culture" (Wright, 1999:91). Preserving and widening the national language thus involves cooperating in the naming of yet unnamed: primarily, of course, in existing fields, but also in new ones arising at the global level, especially in relation to individual terminologies within areas of international communication where languages come into contact not only at the semiotic level – both as signifier and signified – but also as elements of partial systems of national culture.

It is possible to meet referential needs by taking into account historical experience, which confirms how important the development of the scientific-academic field is for the national language. A crucial role is also played by the linguistic self-confidence of the speakers of the language: as far as Slovene speakers are concerned, there can be said to be a great difference between the position now and that in the last few decades of the 19th century. Slovenia became an independent country in 1991 and Slovene language became the official language of the new state, but today there is also a need to become part of the wider world, of the global village, that constantly raises doubts in the minds of specialists with regard to whether it makes sense to develop Slovene technical terms: Why bother with Slovene, when I can use English? (Maček 2007).
The influence of globalisation is of a dual nature: on the one hand – if we focus for a moment only on the cultural and put the economic and political issues to one side – it relativizes traditional identities, but on the other, it at the same time leads to the reassertion of specific identities: "as a consequence of these tendencies there appear ethno-political movements based on nationalism, religious appurtenance or language as a resource for the forming of specific identities and their political mobilisation" (Štrukelj, 2000:46). If we try to relate this to the influence of globalisation on Slovene terminology, it is of course incontrovertible that the introduction of English as a global means of communication has also had an influence on the position of Slovene. Terminological endeavours are subject to two opposing tendencies: whether to first – if at all – develop terminology in Slovene, or whether to adapt to globalisation and make use of international or (most often) English terms.

In line with the first scenario, it would be easy to say, in the global society the development of terminology in national languages is pointless, as knowledge is global and so the tool for transferring that knowledge should also be universal or global. What would this mean for national languages? Their gradual demise, for a developed language can only be a fully functional language that operates in every field, especially the scientific and academic. Daneš (1997: 81) talks of the "amputation" of one's own tongue. Thus the repudiation of terminology means the repudiation of the academic language and with it the language of university education. If we once again turn to historical experience: one of the reasons for the establishment of the University of Ljubljana in 1919 was to demonstrate the equality and excellence of Slovene, as well as its ability to operate in a fully functional way in the most demanding area of human activity and thought – in science. Only then could we speak of the equal role of the language. In the pursuit of a more marked international reach, let alone because of market logic or convenience, no individual discipline, or university, or country can
afford to write off the scientific-academic role of its language – be it Slovene, Dutch, Spanish, or any other.

The second scenario, which globalisation brings about through the erasure of borders, is an excessively closed terminology and the forced domestication of already established loan words involving their time-wasting "translation" into "real, pure" Slovene (or some other language), which is also a consequence of a lack of cooperation between linguists and experts or practitioners from other fields. When it comes to the appearance of terminology a linguistic viewpoint alone does not suffice: however "authentic" the expressions, they remain an experiment that the experts simply fail to accept if they do not see in it a genuine solution that captures the essential elements of the conceptual framework, in regard to which only an expert can help. The formation of technical terms is not translation along the lines of table – Tisch, fish – Fisch, but a theoretically supported process taking into account the basic principles of semantics, the rules of the language in which the term is formed and the conceptual framework of the discipline (Korošec 1996b). For precisely this reason, creative cooperation between experts and linguists is required.

For a discipline to exist there needs to be a specific body of knowledge. Knowledge is a system of inter-related concepts or mental constructs, and concepts have their names – terms. All the terms used in a discipline constitute its terminology, which is, as already noted, an important part of the lexical standard of the national language. The knowledge of a particular discipline is expressed in written or spoken form in various technical texts: academic discussions, conference proceedings, textbooks, research reports, doctoral theses, dictionaries, lectures, interviews, individual consultations, and so on. Whenever linguists emphasise the need for the development of technical terms in the domestic language, the response of some experts is that the international, or in other words English terminology contributes to standardisation of reference (Čmerjková, 1999: 32). But does the creation of
domestic terms really close the door to internationality? No, terminological agreement means that the Slovene, Dutch, Spanish, etc. term relies on the same conceptual framework as the foreign word. Thus when, instead of a word or phrase quoted from English, a Slovene term is used, the definitions of the concepts in both languages is identical, only the labels differ – one to be used in Slovene texts, the other in texts written in English. The value of this is at least twofold: the Slovene reader can approach the concepts of the discipline through the domestic language, which certainly contributes to greater understanding, while the discipline, through the development of terminology, contributes not only to the development of the discipline itself, but also to the enrichment of the standard language (cf. Kalin Golob, 2001).

Public relations can be taken in as a textbook example of a new discipline that in forming its terminology experiences a tension between the international or global and the national or local. The leading Slovene PR expert Dejan Verčič (1998:12–13) believes that without a Slovene technical language we are still without a Slovene discipline of public relations. This viewpoint represented a happy circumstance that had a key influence on efforts which a good hundred years ago seemed essential but today, among young Slovene experts and practitioners in different fields, is more the exception than the rule. A survey of PR texts (Lumbar, 2006) shows that the development of this discipline in Slovenia and its terminology has been influenced by contact with English and socio-political changes in Slovenia, while particular importance can be attached to large, successful Slovene companies and government institutions who either wanted to or had to familiarise the public with their work, especially after independence in 1991 when they acquired more strength and prestige at the national level.
3. Disciplines, language and the local: an example of Slovene PR terminology and corpus

The beginnings of Slovene public relations are located by the discipline itself in 1990 (e.g. Gruban, 1998:26; Verčič, 2003:283). As mentioned above – for a discipline to exist there needs to be a specific body of knowledge. The endeavour among European theorists and practitioners of public relations to produce a European and thus global corpus of knowledge in the field (Ruler, Verčič, Bütschi, Flodin, 2000) began to be realised locally in Slovenia in 2006: at the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ljubljana, with the financial support of the company Pristop, a project was set in motion to produce a corpus of Slovene texts from the field of public relations. The corpus KoRP can be accessed free of charge and is publicly available on http://www.korp.fdv.uni-lj.si (Figure 1, 2). As is made clear below, this corpus has specific limitations, but it is nevertheless intended primarily for the extraction of terms for a terminological dictionary and is, through the analogy term-concept-conceptual system, also a body of knowledge of the discipline.

![Figure 1: The opening page of the corpus KoRP.](image-url)
The decision to base the dictionary on a corpus that is also a database for those who are not interested in the corpus only from a linguistic point of view was a logical one. For corpus linguistics corpora are a research subject and a source of data for linguistic descriptions and arguments. Corpus research is centred above all on performance (and very little or not at all on competence) and on observing language in use, leading to theoretical conclusions (and not the other way round) (Kennedy, 1999:7; Leech, 1992:107). Corpus linguistics is used to support other linguistic theories – or in other words, corpora as a source of data on language phenomena are used by different researchers employing different approaches: "A starting point for corpus linguistics is the language behaviour of a discourse community as displayed in texts and it thus supplements the procedural linguistic analysis of traditional linguistics that is interested in rules" (Teubert, 2005/1999:103).

In the case of corpus-based research, the evidence is derived directly from texts. In this sense corpus linguistics differs from approaches to language which depend on introspection for evidence. [...] Corpus linguists are concerned typically not only with what is probable – what is likely to occur in language use. [...] Any scientific enterprise must be empirical in the sense that it has to be supported or falsified by evidence and, in the final analysis, statements made about language have to stand up to the evidence of language use. The evidence can be based on the introspective judgement of speakers of the language or on a corpus of text. The difference lies in the richness of the evidence and the confidence we can have in the generalizability of that evidence, in its validity and reliability. (Kennedy, 1998:7–8.)
Corpus linguistics is particularly developed at the level of lexical analysis and has become the basis of all modern lexicography. Corpus analysis can lead to – and this often happens – the uncovering of facts about language that the researcher would perhaps not even have thought about looking for. The language data offered by corpora "enable us to distinguish between what is typical in language and what is particular or individual – in other words, between central and marginal language phenomena" (Gorjanc, Krek, Gantar, 2005:4). Drstvenšek (2003:66), in connection with the claim that dictionaries based on corpus analysis tend to emphasise what is typical, even talks of the "objectivity" that is facilitated by modern lexicographical corpora in the initial phase of research, i.e. when gathering language material for analysis. In connection with corpora, Stabej (1998:98) clarifies the expression "objectivity" as follows:

In fact, it is not so much a matter of objectivisation as offering corpus users, with regard to the data available in the corpus, the opportunity […] to select and evaluate language data. In other words, although the corpus is marked by the theoretical convictions and relevant decisions of its creators, the user can always discern and transcend that markedness.

For Teubert (2005/1999:108), corpus linguistics combines three aspects:

a) identification of language data in the corpus,

b) correlation of language data with the help of statistical methods and

c) interpretation of the results.

In line with the findings of corpus linguistics, which has for more than four decades researched various types of corpora, from general to specialised, including corpora of technical texts (Stubbs, 1996; Biber, Conrad, Reppen, 1998; Kennedy, 1999; Čermák, Klímová, Petkevič, 2000; Gorjanc, 2005), we tried to build the corpus of PR texts so that it would be as representative as possible (Summers, 1991; Atkins, Clear, Ostler, 1992; Pearson, 1998:58–62). In so doing, we had to bear in mind a number of parameters:
a) *Type of text*

The overall concept *technical text* encompasses a number of sub-types, which can, with regard to level of difficulty or addressee, be placed in three groups: *scientific or academic texts* (aimed at researchers in the field), *technical texts* (aimed at experts or practitioners) and *popular-scientific texts* (aimed at laymen). This division is reflected in the greater or lesser density of (new) terms, definitions, examples, and so on that the author incorporates into the text. In collecting texts for the corpus, the relative balance between the three identified groups of texts was guided by three loose presumptions: (a) collect all the scientific or academic texts that contain new knowledge acquired through research; (b) collect all the technical texts and popular-scientific monographs with a wide readership and with a wide coverage of the field; and (c) the proportion of popular-scientific texts can be smaller than that of technical texts because they contain few if any new findings.

b) *Size*

In the 1990s the standard size for a general language corpus was 100 million words, while in the current decade that number is at least five times as high. The scope of specialised corpora is much smaller, with the quality of the texts playing a more important role than their extent. When we were preparing the corpus of PR texts we tried to construct a "substantial" corpus and our evaluation is that with its almost 2-million word scope we have succeeded.

c) *Authorship*

Gorjanc (2002:78) points out that in order to ensure that the corpus of technical texts is representative it is necessary to include texts from authors established in the field, while the suitability of the textual material can be guaranteed by an editor or editorial committee from a recognised publication in the field. At the same time, one should ensure as wide a sample as
possible of different authors and texts with single or multiple authorship, as well as those whose authorship is linked to a particular institution.

Technical competence and the extent of the author's influence are partly measurable: for example, by the number of citations and publications, academic titles, mentorship, awards, cooperation with the users of research results, opportunities for disseminating knowledge, and so on. Public relations, at least as an optional subject, is currently taught at four university faculties in Slovenia, while the discipline is touched upon in some other subjects. The subject coordinators in question have doctorates, publish academic articles, and supervise degree papers and postgraduate dissertations, while as university lecturers they directly pass on their knowledge to numerous university students. However, most of those who publish articles on public relations are employed at institutions outside the university sector and started in the discipline as practitioners. With regard to these, we also took into account their involvement in the organising of conferences, relevant media appearances and editorship of specialist journals, as well as co-authorship of work with foreign experts, delivery of guest lectures, awards, international IABC accreditation, and so on.

In contrast to authors who satisfy at least one of the above criteria are students, who are not yet established in the discipline but are of interest as the authors of degree papers for two reasons: (a) a degree paper and the terminological preferences it contains is a joint creation with an academic supervisor who is a competent expert in the field; (b) a degree paper researches a minor topic arising from the already known and, like a technical text, confirms established terminology as well as introducing new terms (in the face of possible objections to the inclusion of degree papers in a representative corpus, let us note that public relations is still a young discipline in Slovenia and institutional research into it has scarcely got off the ground). The number of degree papers in the corpus was limited and careful attention was paid to the distribution of supervisors.
d) Readership

The basis for the selection of texts for general corpora includes data from national research into reading and library loans. No such data was available for public relations, with two exceptions: data was obtained on the borrowing of monographs from the library of the Faculty of Social Sciences and on the number of students attending classes from which we acquired MS Power Point presentations. Text reception could thus be taken into account in only a limited way – otherwise the text selection was production led.

e) Channel

Mainly because of the time and difficulties that would be involved in the creation of a spoken sub-corpus, it was decided in advance to limit the corpus to written texts – either paper-based or published on web sites. Although e-mail and technical forums would also be relevant, they are not included in our corpus.

f) Publication

As well as texts published in the public domain it would also make sense to include a small proportion of internal texts and personal communications, although these are harder to obtain. From a terminological point of view such texts can be expected to display more use of jargon and dual reference. That being said, our corpus does not include any personal communications and there are only a few internal texts.

g) Time

The newest text in the corpus is from 2007, the oldest from 1994 (Kodeks ravnanja poklicnih svetovalcev za odnose z javnostmi, "Code of behaviour for professional PR
advisers", 2. 4. 1994). Efforts to obtain the first Slovene book on public relations, published in 1990 (Gruban, Maksimovič, Verčič, Zavrl, 1990), and the first journal dealing with the subject (Pristop: revija za odnose z javnostmi in komunikacijski menedžment, "Pristop: Journal of public relations and communications management" (1993–1995)) were unsuccessful. These and other texts prior to 1994 were unavailable because copies in electronic format are no longer kept in the archives. The production of PR texts in Slovenia between 1990 and 1994 was not extensive, but we are aware that their exclusion from the corpus fails to facilitate any insight into the early development of Slovene PR terminology.

h) Translation status

The corpus is monolingual, as all the texts it includes are in Slovene. Due to an awareness that, when it comes to languages with a small number of speakers, "the conceptual framework of a discipline is not constructed entirely through text production, but often through the translation of scientific texts" (Gorjanc, 2002:78), it was decided to include in the corpus not only original Slovene texts but also translations. The selection of technical texts worth translating is usually carefully considered and justified by the important findings that the work in question brings. Through translation, these findings acquire Slovene terms, so the inclusion of such texts in a corpus of technical texts is a necessity.

i) Field

When including texts in the corpus the principle was adhered to that technical texts on public relations are those texts that are so recognised by authors, editors and reviewers who are themselves experts in this or a related field. Attention was also paid to how well a particular theme was covered with regard to stakeholders, sectors, tools, and so on.
The corpus of PR texts KoRP is a monolingual and synchronic corpus of written texts. It contains 1,824,699 words. Due to the limited time and resources available, no texts were retyped or scanned, so that it only contains texts that were available free of charge and in electronic format, but in spite of that it includes most of the units from our initial wish list of texts. There are 153 authors represented in the corpus, of which 20 are foreign authors in Slovene translation; in terms of type of text, there are 10 monographs, 6 proceedings or collections, 4 special editions of two specialist journals, 5 MA dissertations, 20 degree papers, 38 lectures in MS Power Point format, etc. Copyright permission was obtained from the publishers of the texts through copyright agreements. The texts are marked in such a way that the authorship is clear at all times, as well the time and location of publication and other details. The corpus is computer processed and linguistically labelled (Garside, Leech, McEnery, 1997; Erjavec, 2003) so that a simple search procedure enables the user to look for a particular word or string of words, which are then displayed by the programme contextually, i.e. in the form of concordances. The programme also statistically processes data, making the extraction of terms more straightforward. The maximum scope of the display for the searched term is one paragraph, but that is enough for a linguist interested in a term as a linguistic phenomenon or for a PR specialist who is, for instance, writing an academic paper and (a) does not remember or know the Slovene term for a particular concept; or (b) does not know the meaning of some term, but can, at least indirectly, deduce it from the co-text (or will perhaps even find a definition in the corpus); or (c) wants to check whether there already is a Slovene term for a particular concept or whether one needs to be created; or (d) knows more than one term for a concept and wants to ascertain which is the most frequent, which author uses which term, or which term is older, which more recent, and so on. These are, of course, just some of the questions that the corpus can be used to answer, at least indirectly (cf.
Bowker, 1996; Pearson, 1998; Meyer, Mackintosh, 1996). The corpus will also be of value to translators and within the teaching process.

The next phase of the project is to produce an explanatory terminological dictionary on the basis of the corpus and in cooperation with PR specialists and linguists.

As we have seen, research has shown that the work of dictionary authors whose material is a representative, linguistically tagged corpus that has been described and publicly presented (for more on the construction of the Corpus KoRP, see the corpus website and Logar 2007) is based on more objective criteria and needs to rely to a much more limited extent on mere introspection. Initial analyses of the corpus KoRP have shown that, with corpus data, it is possible to produce better-founded definitions of terms and in a language environment that is more characteristic of them. As an example, we shall take the entry for *oglas* (*advertisement*):

a) as it appears in the *Terminological Dictionary of Marketing* (*Terminološki slovar trženja*, Potočnik, Umek, 2004), which is not corpus-based, and

b) as it could roughly appear in a future dictionary of public relations terms incorporating collocations, examples of use, synonyms and related terms – all derived from a corpus.

**Terminološki slovar trženja, 2004:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>advertisement</strong> / <em>oglas</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plačano oglasno sporočilo v kateremkoli sredstvu javnega obveščanja, ki je oblikovano tako, da bi množično občinstvo spodbudilo za nakup določenega izdelka, storitve ali ideje ali ustvarilo pozitivni odnos do organizacije, ki je objavila oglas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(EN: Paid for advertising message in any public communications media that is formed in such a way as to encourage large numbers of people to buy a specific product, service or idea, or to create a positive attitude towards the organisation that produced the advertisement.)

**KoRP:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>oglas</strong> / <em>razlagal</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>frekvenca: 717</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(EN: advertising, public relations ad, message, paid for message)
vseh problemov ni mogoče rešiti z dobrimi oglasi / Marlborove cigarete so postale slavne zaradi oglasa s kavboji. / Oglas v tanjši reviji bo v splošnem videlo in prebralo več ljudi kot oglas v dehelejši izdaji iste publikacije. / Kaj vam je oglas hotel povedati? / Oglas za pralne praške so ponavadi dolgočasni / Neodplačno objavljeni oglasi morajo biti posebej označeni kot taki.

S: NEUSTREZNO (INAPPROPRIATE) reklama

GL: televizijski oglas, tiskani oglas, celostranski oglas, plačani oglas, radijski oglas, TV-oglas, časopisni oglas, spletni oglas, mali oglas, revijski oglas, WC-oglas

(EN: advertisement frequency: 717 /definition/ 
[good, recognised, award-winning] advertisement; [publication, scope, content] of an advertisement; [publish, see, broadcast, pay for, remember] an advertisement; [car, employment] advertisement; [media, newspaper, magazine] advertisement
every problem can't be solved by good advertising / Marlboro cigarettes became famous because of the cowboy ad / An advertisement in a thin magazine will be seen and read by more people than one in a thicker edition of the same publication. / What is the ad trying to say to you? / Ads for soap powder are usually boring / Unpaid advertisements must be marked as such.
S: (INAPPROPRIATE) reklama

GL: television ad, printed advertisement, full-page advertisement, paid advertisement, radio advertisement, TV ad, newspaper advertisement, online advertisement, small ad, magazine advertisement, toilet ad)

4. Linguistically local, but in terms of knowledge global

The dictionary of public relations terms would contain systematically organised terms and concepts, and thus knowledge of the discipline. Without Slovene terminology, as has already been noted, Slovene public relations would simply not exist. The only thing that makes the corpus of Slovene PR texts and the dictionary that will be produced from it local and differentiates it from the global is the language barrier: in every other respect it could be an example of how linguists and specialists from different fields can together respond to one of the challenges posed, in particular to languages with relatively few speakers, by global English – through the well-judged production of modern language tools: textual and lexical databases.

The corpus KoRP could be used by public relations experts as a reference source and by linguists who are not directly involved in the production of a PR dictionary as a resource in lexicological and, to some extent, textual and stylistic research. The group producing the
dictionary look forward to, among other things, analysis of word lists, an improved procedure for the automatic reception of terminological candidates (for Slovene, see Vintar 2003) and editorial judgement regarding synonyms for terms that will result in normative terminological agreement. Furthermore, we wish to supplement the corpus with a program that can recognise the grammatical and collocational behaviour of words – i.e. like the ‘word sketches’ generated by the program module Sketch Engine. The results derived from using this module in the referential corpus of the Slovene language FidaPLUS (http://fidaplus.net) have already shown its great utility in lexicographical work (Krek, Kilgarriff 2006).

References


Globalisation and the establishment of English as a *de facto lingua franca* has raised a number of questions relating to terminology in national languages. Newer disciplines in particular (for example public relations) are torn between the international or global and the national or local. An awareness that without a Slovene technical language we are still without a Slovene discipline of public relations has led to the production of a corpus of texts of that discipline. The corpus is intended for PR specialists, linguists, translators, and others; it will also be a basis of an explanatory terminological dictionary.

*Key words: terminology, globalisation, public relations, corpus linguistics, LSP corpus*