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A review of the history of research on terminology with Chinese characteristics

Safarova Iroda

Doctoral Student, Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies, Uzbekistan

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Abstract: This article traces the emergence and development of terminology research in China, and argues that terminology research in China has gone through three historical periods: from the study of scientific and technological translation theory, the study of terminology ontology to the systematic, comprehensive and healthy development, and focuses on its representative characteristics. The paper describes the development process and status of terminology from two aspects: theoretical research and applied research. The research in terminology theory arose from the need to normalize scientific and technical terminology, and the theory of terminology guided and enriched the practical work. In the field of applied research, we combined the theory of terminology with China's national conditions and widely applied it in the practical work of normalizing nouns and terminology, and gradually penetrated into the fields of news publishing, foreign language translation and dictionary compilation, achieving great results.

Keywords: Chinese terminology; discipline construction; historical review; practical work; foreign language translation; dictionary compilation.

Introduction: Terminology emerged in the mid-20th century. It is a comprehensive discipline that covers many disciplines such as linguistics, ontology, logic and all fields of science and technology, and has obvious interdisciplinary characteristics. Due to the global nature of science and technology, terminology is also international, and countries around the world have common research and their own unique descriptions in this field. Chinese characters are different from Western phonetic symbols and have their own unique

characteristics. Terminology, as a universal subject in the world, has universal rules that are conducive to the progress of science and technology. Therefore, it is urgent to study the common features and characteristics between Chinese terminology theory and the terminology theories of other countries in the world. Although the Chinese academy started its research in terminology relatively late, it has achieved great progress and remarkable results in the past two or three decades [1].

In 1978, China entered the "Spring of Science" and in 1995, it began to implement the strategy of building a country through science and education, ushering in a new era of rapid development of science and technology. With the implementation of a series of science and technology policies, the deepening of institutional reforms, and the establishment of a system promoting science and technology development and personnel training, various scientific and technological works have developed rapidly, and urgent demands have been made for the standardization of scientific and technological terms. The standardization of scientific and technological terms has been conducive to the development of national science and technology, the improvement of China's discourse system, and the occupation of the commanding heights of world scientific and technological development.

Some domestic linguists and specialists involved in the International Organization for Standardization were among the first to pay attention to the issues of terminology. During the process of reform and opening up, China quickly introduced a large number of advanced scientific and technological achievements from abroad into its economy, among which the translation of nouns and terms became a hot topic at that time. For example, the focus was on the question of whether to use "transliteration" or "free translation" as a translation method.

Domestic linguists have observed that since the penetration of Western knowledge into the East in the late Ming Dynasty and early Qing Dynasty, the focus of translation gradually shifted to Western astronomy, geometry, medicine and other scientific and technological classics, forming the terminology

The Culmination of Language Translation. Comparing the translation theories during this period, two different points of view formed in the translation community. One was to take the path of "nationalization", focusing on free translation and integrating foreign nouns and terms into the national language; the other was to take the path of "internationalization", focusing on transliteration and accelerating the process of introducing foreign nouns and terms. There are also those who advocate a middle way. For example, Mr. Zhou Youguang proposed the topic of "dual terms of science and technology", which are compatible with "nationalization" and "internationalization" [2].

Despite the intertwining of various points of view, the language and translation communities have noticed that Chinese terminology has actually embarked on the path of "nationalization" (in the past, only 0.5% of Chinese terminology contained elements of transliteration). Noting that it is difficult to use free translation as the main method of "nationalization", Mr. Ye Fei Sheng proposed that free translation should meet two conditions: first, the validity period should be limited; second, the internal form should be transparent, that is, it can be understood "literally" [3]. At that time, some experts also proposed other methods and details for translating nouns.

In April and October 1985, the National Committee for the Review of Natural Science Terminology and the National Technical Committee for Terminology Standardization jointly issued the following documents: since then, experts and scholars from China representing various disciplines have been able to participate more actively in the work of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), especially its Technical Committee 37.

In this process, we have, on the one hand, actively participated in the development and revision of international terminology standards, and on the other hand, introduced international experience in terminology standardization in China. Introduce foreign theories and methods of terminology and apply them in combination with Chinese terminology. As the only Chinese representative, Mr. Wu Fengming attended the second plenary meeting of ISO/TC37 in 1984. After the meeting, he wrote an article introducing the history of terminology development, as well as the current situation of foreign terminology schools and terminology databases [4]. Since then, a window has opened, and the Chinese academic community has begun to pay attention to the development and dynamics of international terminology and consciously apply it in practical work.

In 2004, the National Terminology Committee, together with Heilongjiang University, the National Language Committee, the Institute of Linguistics of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and other institutions and organizations, held the first "Workshop on the Construction of Chinese Terminology" to change the backward situation of Chinese terminology research and jointly promote the construction of the discipline of

Chinese terminology. Since then, the study of Chinese terminology has become an organized, conscious, systematic and academic activity with the broad participation of experts and scholars [5].

Since 2004, with the clear organization and promotion of the National Terminology Committee and the broad participation and promotion of experts from various fields based on their professional knowledge and work needs, terminology research has gradually entered the path of sustainable development.

Since its inception, terminology has become a subject that has attracted much attention. This is not only because it is a comprehensive subject that covers many fields, but also because it is very practical and plays a very important role in human social life. According to the general opinion in the academic community, terminology should include two parts: theoretical terminology and applied terminology. Terminology is born from the needs of human social practice, and its theory is gradually developed. Maturity has guided and promoted the development of social practice, and this is the case in all countries of the world. A review of the development of terminology in China fully confirms this view.

Terminology research primarily starts from the need to normalize scientific and technological terms and standardize terminology, and the working documents are formulated under the guidance of terminology theory. In April 1985, the National Terminology Committee was established. In 1987, it applied the basic principles of terminology and combined them with the actual situation of the review work in China to formulate the “Principles and Methods of Terminology and Terms Review” to standardize the review procedures and guide the work of its subcommittees. The document clearly sets out the basic requirements of naming, the basic principles of choosing and defining words [6]. In this way, the initial theoretical discussion conducted around the production practice and met the needs of the review work. In October 1985, the National Technical Standards Committee was established, and in 1988, it adopted the international standard ISO/TC37 to formulate the national standard “General Principles and Methods of Terminology Establishment” (GB10112-1988) [7]. Since then, based on changes in international standards, the “Principles and Methods of Terminology Work” formulated to regulate and guide national work on terminology standardization.

Terminology research cannot separated from the extensive academic exchange activities at home and abroad. For example, as early as November 1984, ISO/TC37 Secretary and Professor H. Felber of the University of Vienna (Austria) came to China to give lectures at the invitation of the China Standardization Association. The National Terminology Committee invited him to deliver a special report on "Terminology Science and Terminology Coordination", which focused on the unified principles and methods of natural science terminology. He also spoke about the history of the development and the current state of terminology, which met with approval and praise from the participants. In October 1986, the National Terminology Committee held an academic seminar in Beijing as part of the visit of the Canadian terminology delegation to China. Terminologist R. Dubach and others presented Canadian terminology research and the work on the creation of a terminology database, and presented Dubach’s book “Practical Handbook of Terminology”.

As the influence of theoretical research on terminology expands, many domestic experts and scholars have paid attention to Chinese terminology and joined in its development. Zheng Shu Pu’s research team from Heilongjiang University was the first to enter this field, starting its research work from translating and implementing theories of foreign terminology.

The research team led by Zheng Shu Pu completed two major research projects of the Key Research Base for Humanities and Social Sciences of the Ministry of Education, named, “Research on the Theory and Practice of Russian Terminology” and “Research on the Theory of Foreign Terminology” [9] , which opened the period of introducing the results of the theory of foreign terminology into the domestic academic community. After that, Wu Likun, Qiu Bihua and others translated the terminological works of the Russian terminologist S. B. Grinev, the famous Austrian terminologists E. Wüster, H. Felber and others, which contributed to the development of terminological science in China.

Terminology is a specialized natural language with a regular grammatical structure, limited semantics and areas of use. It is easier to process than ordinary natural language, and it can analyzed and understood using the theories, methods and tools of computational linguistics. It is also widely used in computer work. For example, terminology theory applied to the construction of terminology databases in China. The work on constructing China’s terminology database began in the early 1980s and developed rapidly in the 1990s. Since 1989, many ministries and commissions or their affiliated research units have successively established various types of terminology databases, such as the Applied Linguistics Terminology Database (1991), the Chinese-English and English-Chinese Scientific and Technological Terminology Databases, and the Chinese-English Terminology Databases. (1992), Scientific and Technical Terms Database (1995),

Mechanical Engineering Terminology Database (1996), Chinese Encyclopedia Terminology Database (1997), etc.

Terminology theory is also widely applied in terminology recognition and extraction. The earliest terminology extraction system in the world was TERMINO [10], created in France in 1990. Since then, a large number of automatic extraction systems developed to assist in terminology management.

In China, term extraction technology has also been widely applied in various industries and fields. For example, in 2012, the National Terminology Committee used Chinese terminology extraction methods to extract new scientific and technological terms that appeared in the National Knowledge Infrastructure of China. It applied the automatic term extraction technology in mathematics, physics, chemistry, astronomy, geography, biology and other disciplines, extracted 31,000 new scientific and technological terms, and selected 7928 of them for review and publication by experts in various disciplines. Another example is that machine learning is also widely used in terminology work. The training corpus is built manually or semi-automatically, and a model is formed based on a certain machine learn algorithm for the corpus. Then the model used to conduct term extraction experiments on the test corpus to test the effectiveness of the algorithm. Another example is the construction of domain ontology to obtain the relationship between different concepts in the domain. These results show that terminology theory has a wide range of application scenarios in computer work.

Based on the positive achievements of terminology research in China, it is of great significance for colleges and universities to carry out terminology education and terminology teaching. Liang Ailin proposed that the teaching of terminology in the field of terminology education should focus on applicability, workability and integrity; the teaching of terminology in the field of terminology teaching can focus on applicability, workability and appropriateness. Teaching and teaching terminology is of great help in popularizing the theory of terminology, improving the knowledge level of terminology and the professional level of professionals working in terminology-related fields. In April 2007, at the National University Presidents' Forum, representatives of the National Terminology Committee introduced the development of terminology in China and called for the experimental implementation of terminology courses in universities. After that, studies made on opening an undergraduate major in Terminology and establishing national terminology courses in universities such as Peking University and Heilongjiang University. In October 2015, the National Terminology Committee organized the compilation of China's first general terminology textbook, Introduction to Chinese Terminology, which filled the gap in the absence of a unified terminology textbook in China.

In recent years, domestic college teachers have been calling for the establishment of terminology courses. Some experts have discussed the principles of course construction from the perspective of foreign school management experience and job responsibilities in terminology-related industries, and discussed the teaching objectives, teaching content, teaching methods, teaching resources, assessment methods, and teacher training. Some universities have already carried out activities to teach and train terminologists.

For example, China University of Technology regards “terminology knowledge”, “terminology use ability” and “terminology management” as the components of translation ability, and opened a course of “terminology translation” in the translation teaching process, paying special attention to developing students’ terminology application skills; Peking University opened a course of “Terminology and Database Management System” in the Department of Computer Translation. The teaching content divided into 7 blocks: terminology basics, terminology exploration, relational database, XML technology, terminology management and terminology management software, IT practical course and terminology management software practical course. The teaching objectives are to introduce the theories and methods of terminology, discuss

Discuss its application in translation work, explain the introductory theory of database and the basic technology of database application, teach the application methods of computer terminology management system, etc. [11]; The Department of Foreign Languages of Zhejiang University adopted the form of "experts in the classroom" and invited terminology experts to teach the theory of terminology. The course content integrates the teaching of scientific and technical translation, teaching the important role of terminology translation in the translation of scientific and technical texts, and the use of noun terminology in scientific and technical translation.

In terms of discipline construction and development, terminology research began in China in the mid-1980s, more than 30 years ago. The situation of terminology construction in China greatly improved, and it expected that terminology research develop faster in the future.

(1) The terminology research team will continue to grow. At present, the number of people has grown from tens to hundreds. With the active participation of the

National Terminology Committee and the broad support of various academic groups, more experts and scholars will be involved in research work in the future.

(2) There will be new expansions in research areas. With the development of science and technology at home and abroad, terminology work has penetrated into all of life in society, and will receive more attention in politics, economics, science and technology, education, etc., and more work done.

(3) The number of research results is significant. Up to now, about 60 terminology works published, which meets the expected development level of a new discipline in the initial stage of development. Following this trajectory, terminology will have more related works.

(4) Form a relatively complete discipline terminology system. At present, the terminology has fully demonstrated its interdisciplinary, open and comprehensive characteristics. The traditional terminology exhibits theoretical characteristics in linguistics, ontology, logic, etc., and is currently closely related to information science, cognitive science, philosophy, history and culture, etc. In the future, new theories and disciplinary knowledge added.

(5) Inherit the characteristics of Chinese culture and build a Chinese discourse system. Only by building a discourse system with Chinese characteristics, can we attract more attention from the international academic community and play a more important role. Terminology will coordinate the efforts of all parties and move forward in a coordinated manner to form an academic terminology system in Chinese style, inheriting Chinese traditions and reaching the global level. The construction of terminology with Chinese characteristics is a long historical process, and the study of terminology requires several generations of researchers. At present, the country has proposed to build a disciplinary system, a conceptual system and a discourse system for philosophy and social sciences, which has put forward new requirements for the future development trend of Chinese terminology, as well as the disciplinary system and theoretical basis of terminology.

In the forerunners based on the accumulated academic achievements, the development of terminology with Chinese characteristics will continue to develop, and will also receive more attention from lifestyles at home and abroad, and achieve more research results.

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