

From theory to practice and from history to terminology: “Translating” category distinctions within a humour studies framework

ISHS2017 – TRANSLATION AND TERMINOLOGY OF HUMOUR

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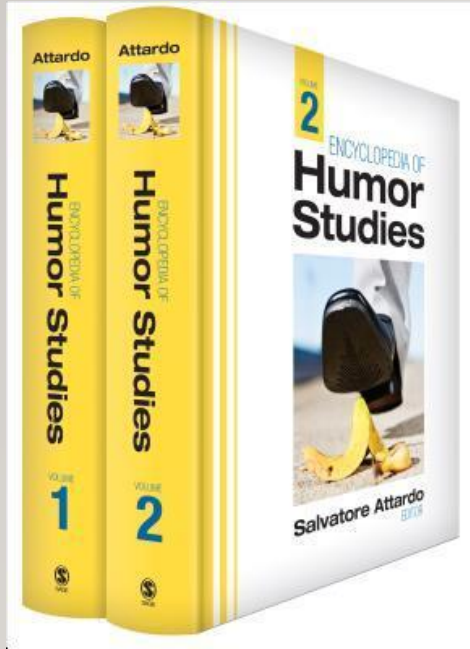
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AIMS

- How can we make it easier for humour researchers (and other researchers interested in humour) to share terms and concepts:
 - between languages (translation, adaptation)?
 - between academic disciplines (“translation”)?
- How can we best acknowledge/make use of the historical/cultural texture associated with many terms/concepts, while retaining sufficient flexibility in usage?

THE PROBLEM

- Humo[u]r studies as a maturing/mature field:
 - Established and growing body of academic literature, research communities
 - Recent publications as flagships for the field, e.g. *Primer of Humor Research* (2008), *Sage Encyclopedia of Humor Studies* (2014); book series (Mouton, Benjamins...), thematic collections on comedy/humour topics
- But (beyond “defining humour”) exchange among scholars can be problematic:
 - (Increasingly recognised?) lack of standardised terminology between fields
 - Difficulty negotiating between languages, and between scholarly traditions
 - General versus specific usage: does our broad use of “humo[u]r” erase potentially valuable cultural and historical specificities?



“In fact, there are so many terms, synonyms, partial synonyms, and overlapping definitions of humor and humor-related subjects [...] that a common understanding has been reached in the field of using the word *humor* as an umbrella term to cover all the synonyms. The word itself comes from the medieval theory of humors [...] but that is irrelevant in the technical sense just discussed.”

Attardo, introduction to
Sage Encyclopedia of Humor Studies (2014)

“What in my view the encyclopedia lacks is a glossary of major terms giving pithy definitions, but since neither Raskin nor Attardo have so far attempted this, maybe it has not been feasible.”

Chlopicki, review of *Sage Encyclopedia of Humor Studies* (2015)

A MULTILINGUAL FIELD: NATIONAL TRADITIONS VS. INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE

- Research groups working in languages other than English (e.g. *Observatoire de l'humour*), often with specific strengths/foci, or specific disciplines represented.
- “National” humour studies alive and well: RISU (Italy) and RIRH (France) founded 2017.
- Studies of lexical fields in different languages (Mullen and Goddard, Hempelmann et al.): scholarly vs. colloquial use of humor words?
- Category distinctions are traditionally narrower in these languages, cf. Mitchell (2014: 8): “The general tendency in French and Italian scholarship is to define each type of humour, to divide and subdivide. But the margins of each type are unclear, and one would think that, in some cases, several types of humour are so similar that they could fit into more than one category. British scholarship seems more pragmatic in its approach.”
- But not always: “*humour*” can have both a narrow, historicised (Escarpit 1960, Emelina 1996) and a broader (Vivero and Charaudeau 2013, Quéméner 2014) meaning in French; scholarly/technical vs. colloquial usage.

AN INTER- OR A MULTI-DISCIPLINARY FIELD?

- Problem of mismatching terms/concepts between disciplines.
E.g.: “humour styles” = patterns of humour use in everyday life,
vs. “styles of humour” = features or characteristics of humour in a text/performance
increasing recognition (cf . Beermann and Ruch 2009, Davis 2013, 2014, Beermann 2014)
- Typologies/glossaries can be helpful (e.g. Triezenberg 2008 on humour categories in literature; Juckel et al. 2017 on categories for sitcom analysis, following Berger 1993 on joke analysis; Mitchell 2014 on Greek vases) **typically focused on specific purpose.**
- “Risk” of fragmentation into sub-fields (e.g. psychologists vs non-psychologists; humour studies vs. comedy studies)?
- Reduced engagement from outside the field (e.g. Beard 2014; Mitchell 2014)?

IS A MULTILINGUAL TERMBASE THE SOLUTION?

Concept

> concept info

Index (language)

> index info

Term

> term info (definition/s)

> term info (usage/ex.)

> term info (discipline/s)

> (etc)

Index2 (language2)

> index2 info

Term

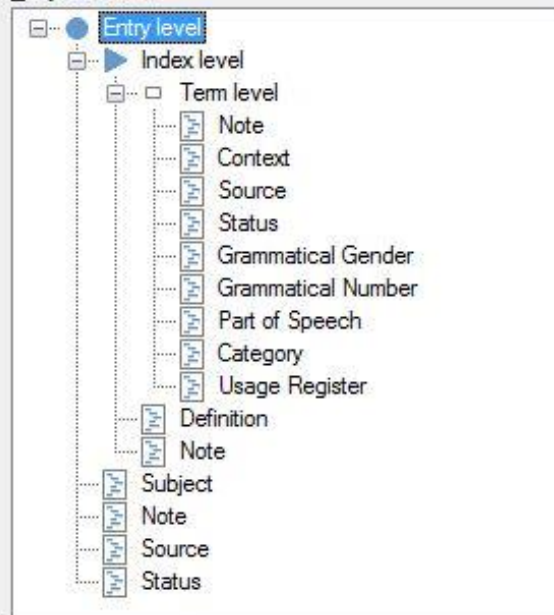
> term info

> (etc)

Entry Structure

Create an entry structure for your termbase entries by specifying the level at which descriptive fields are used. Specify field settings if required.

Entry structure:



Available descriptive fields:

Category
Context
Definition
Discipline
Etymology
Grammatical Gender
Grammatical Number
Note
Part of Speech
Source
Status
Subject
Usage Register

<< Add

Remove >>

Field settings

Mandatory

Multiple

Screenshot: SDL MultiTerm 2015

humour

en > fr (domain: Any domain, type of search: All)

Medical science [COM]

EN aqueous humour

FR humeur aqueuse

Medical science [COM]

EN aqueous humor

FR humeur aqueuse

Medical science [COM]

EN aqueous fluid

aqueous humor

FR humeur aqueuse

Medical science [COM]

EN vitreous humour

FR corps vitré

Medical science [COM]

EN vitreous humor

FR humeur vitrée

Medical science [COM]

EN cardinal humours

FR humeurs cardinales

Other languages: [DA](#) [DE](#) [EL](#) [ES](#) [ET](#) [GA](#) [IT](#) [LT](#) [LV](#) [MT](#) [NL](#) [PL](#) [PT](#) [RO](#) [SL](#) [All](#)

[Feedback](#)

Domain

Medical science

en

Definition

the clear, watery fluid which fills the anterior and posterior chambers of the eye

Definition Ref.

Max Schapero, David Cline, Henry W. Hofstetter. Dictionary of Visual Science. Chilton Book Company, 1968

Term

aqueous humour

Reliability

3 (Reliable)

Term Ref.

Max Schapero, David Cline, Henry W. Hofstetter. Dictionary of Visual Science. Chilton Book Company, 1968

Date

24/09/2003

fr

Definition

liquide transparent contenu dans les chambres de l'oeil, de part et d'autre de l'iris

Definition Ref.

Reallex Med

Term

humeur aqueuse

Reliability

3 (Reliable)

Term Ref.

Reallex Med;DF: Bien-être et Santé, octobre 1997

Date

24/09/2003



FICHE TERMINOLOGIQUE




TAILLE DU TEXTE

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[« Retour à la page d'accueil](#)

humour

CHERCHER



Préférences de recherche 



humour



[Anglais \[EN\]](#)



Domaine

publicité

Auteur

Dubuc, Robert, 1991

Définition

Biais comique introduit dans une annonce.

Terme

humour n. m.



G12n=I18n<>L10n: CAN WE “LOCALISE” HUMOUR TERMS AND CONCEPTS?

- Can something like the global product development cycle (cf. LISA 2003) be applied to humour studies, and particularly its terminology?
- Are some terms more “international” (humour [en]), others more “local” (*humour* [fr_FR]; *humour* [fr_CA])?
- How might the process work for different disciplines, languages, or historical periods?
- Role of English (and English terms) in international (and interdisciplinary) exchange?

PROPOSAL: BUILD A MULTILINGUAL TERMINOLOGY RESOURCE

Need to determine:

- Aims and approach (compile terminology from HS publications, then analyse for relationships, particularities, inconsistencies)?
- Scope (disciplines, languages...)?
- Methodology (corpus building > terminology extraction > termbase building)?
- Interface and modes of interaction for authors/contributors and end users
- Interested researchers
- (...)

PROPOSAL: BUILD A MULTILINGUAL TERMINOLOGY RESOURCE

One suggestion: apply for EU COST Action (www.cost.eu) funding for research networking

- 4 year networking funding, as prelude to research funding proper
- Minimum participation of 7 COST network states, other international partners possible
- **A good opportunity to develop a multilingual, interdisciplinary framework for a future resource?**
- **Next call deadline: 7 September 2017**
- **Interested researchers please contact will.noonan@u-bourgogne.fr**

MERCI ! THANKS!

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