

## Insights into the lexicon of vision in domain-specific English

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Lexicological and lexicographic studies of domain-specific languages typically focus on lexical features of specialized lexis, i.e. on the monoreferentiality, lack of emotion, precision, transparency, conciseness etc. of technical terminology and on its relationships with the lexicon of general discourse (Gotti 2003, 2005, Bathia 1993, Cortese and Riley 2002). Our contribution, on the contrary, discusses the way in which specialized discourse influences the general lexicon in domain-specific texts by providing a specific frame which acts on the internal organization of the system.

Drawing on the theory of lexical complexity developed by Bertuccelli Papi (2003), Bertuccelli Papi and Lenci (2007) and the PRIN research group, which sees the lexicon as a complex dynamic system and the single lexical items as complex dynamic microsystems in which concepts are dynamically shaped according to general organizing principles (e.g. figure-ground, diagrammaticity, biuniqueness, etc.), we discuss the way in which the system is reorganized in specialized discourse so as to constrain the construal of specific meanings of certain verbs of vision. Our claim is that the effects of discourse specialization do not emerge only in technical terminology, but that, on the contrary, discourse acts as an overarching frame which influences the reorganization of the whole lexical system by favouring processes of foregrounding/backgrounding of conceptual semantic components.

First we focus on the theory of lexical complexity, its application to the study of the lexicon of vision and its suitability for the study of the lexis in specialized discourse. Our argument then is exemplified through a corpus-based study of some verbs of vision in economic and scientific discourse.

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