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The ENEOLI Matrix of Neologism Selection Criteria

A Comparative Framework for Lexicographic Practice

Keywords neology; lexicographic practice; dictionarization; selection criteria; comparative lexicography

Within the COST Action *European Network on Lexical Innovation* (ENEOLI[1]), Working Group 2, Task 2.5 on *Neology from a Lexicographic Perspective* has undertaken a collaborative effort to document, compare and systematize the criteria used by lexicographic projects when deciding on the inclusion of neologisms. Lexicographers and researchers presented their institutional policies and practices and integrated their inclusion and exclusion criteria in a shared analytical framework, resulting in a structured comparative matrix. This matrix is conceived as a point of reference: it enables professionals and researchers to compare methodologies and techniques across languages, institutional contexts and dictionary types, and it provides developers and data analysts with clearer insight into how tools and corpus analyses can support neology within the lexicographic workflow.

Our point of departure was the typology developed for Catalan (Freixa 2022, Freixa Aymerich 2022) that formalizes *dictionarizability* by structuring and weighing criteria such as frequency, dispersion, and linguistic integration. Building on this foundation, we extended the framework by integrating perspectives from other lexicographic traditions and languages, including Danish, Finnish, French, German, Korean, Portuguese, and Spanish. This cross-linguistic integration resulted in a comparative typology of selection criteria. The work of Task 2.5 was included in the design of the ENEOLI survey on methods and practices in lexicography and terminology (Kallas et al., 2025). The survey results provided additional insights from 27 distinct dictionary projects into how neologism selection criteria are implemented.

Taken together, our analysis identifies four interacting layers in neologism selection that form the basis of the comparative matrix:

First, evidence-based criteria can be distinguished by source: (1) usage data from corpora provide indicators such as minimal frequency, micro-diachronic developments in usage, and dispersion; (2) expert analysis evaluates word formation, semantic and pragmatic integration; (3) signals from the wider language community include user suggestions and dictionary logfiles; and (4) external lexical or terminological resources offer converging evidence. Although frequency is a dominant factor, it is rarely decisive in isolation but interpreted in interaction with these additional forms of evidence, that are especially relevant for languages and varieties with limited corpus coverage.

Second, workflow properties shape the operationalization of criteria, ranging from systematic candidate-list evaluation to case-by-case editorial judgments, and from inclusion- to exclusion-driven approaches.

Third, editorial governance structures influence authority and consistency, from top-down institutional guidelines to distributed decision making.

[1] https://eneoli.eu/

Fourth, a dictionary's overall functional orientation modulates the applicability of criteria. This includes macrostructural orientation (general monolingual vs. dedicated neologism dictionary), interest in documenting ephemeral formations, thematic focus, regional coverage, and positioning along a descriptive–proscriptive–prescriptive continuum.

By organizing these heterogeneous criteria along shared dimensions, and considering both inclusion and exclusion principles, the ENEOLI comparative matrix aims to enhance transparency in the documentation of lexical innovations and provide a reusable framework for comparing lexicographic practice, research and tool development. The matrix will be made publicly available via the ENEOLI repository.

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