

European Network On Lexical Innovation – ENEOLI

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In recent years neology has gained new international insights thanks to the Globalex Workshop on Lexicography and Neology (GWLN) series of events and publications, but the study of lexical innovation as the most dynamic aspect of language change is yet to find a more prominent position in general linguistic studies.

Approaching neology from a multilingual or global point of view, however, is the goal of the recently launched COST Action (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) “European Network On Lexical Innovation – ENEOLI” (CA22126 – <https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA22126/>, October 2023 – October 2027). As of March 2024, 218 members from 44 different countries are participating in the Action. The primary objective of ENEOLI is to establish a network of researchers across Europe and beyond, fostering the exchange of best practices and methodologies in research on lexical innovation, also known as neology, a central though all too frequently neglected dimension of natural language study. From a linguistic point of view, the study of neology “contributes to a better understanding of the lexical system of a given language and its evolution” (Sablayrolles 2019: 7), while from an extralinguistic point of view, “the inventory of neologisms also gives much information about language communities in their material lives and social representations” (ibid.).

The key challenges addressed by the Action can be summarised as follows: (1) Defining and explaining key concepts in the field of lexical innovation by creating an open-access multilingual glossary where none existed hitherto; (2) Reviewing and sharing methodological implementations, digital resources and tools for identifying and tracking neologisms over time, using both natural language processing approaches and sociolinguistic/psycholinguistic methods; (3) Conducting comparative studies of neologisms in European languages, exploring factors such as the impact of technology on lexical innovation and contact-induced language change in the digital era; and (4) Providing specific neology training for professionals (e.g. translators, teachers, technical communicators, terminologists).

The Action aims to advance the state of the art in neology through a four-fold approach: (1) Compiling a born-digital open-access multilingual glossary defining and illustrating the terminology of lexical innovation; (2) Investigating and developing methods, digital resources, and tools for the study of lexical innovation; (3) Conducting diachronic and synchronic comparative studies of neology; and (4) Developing innovative forms of neology training.

ENEOLI is dedicated to advancing research on neology, with a specific emphasis on enhancing the lexicographic dimension. The core deliverable, a multilingual glossary collecting the terminology of lexical innovation, is an innovative digital lexical resource whose architecture is designed to accommodate a large number of languages and to fulfil various user needs. The glossary will serve both didactic and pedagogical functions, as well as facilitate intercultural comprehension and cooperation across different languages worldwide.

To achieve these aims, the Action is organised into four work packages: WG1: Multilingual glossary of neology; WG2: methods, digital resources and tools for neology; WG3: Diachronic and synchronic comparative studies of neology, and WG4: Training in Neology.

This paper provides an overview of the project, outlining the goals of each work package and describing ongoing work, and highlighting its lexicographic aspects.

References

Sablayrolles, Jean-François. 2019. *Comprendre la néologie. Conceptions, analyses, emplois*. Limoges: Lambert Lucas.