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Comptes rendus

CABRÉ, M. Teresa (1998): *Terminology: Theory, methods and applications*, Philadelphia PA, John Benjamins, 248 p. [transl. of *La Terminologia. La teoria, els mètodes, les aplicacions*, Barcelona, Emúries, 1992].

This book, dealing with the subject of terminology, is divided into seven chapters, each approaching terminology from a historical, theoretical, methodological or practical perspective. The volume also contains a bibliography, a subject index and an author's index. The organization of the chapters is the following:

The first chapter—An Overview of Terminology—presents a short review of the history, the theory and the different areas where terminology is used.

Terminology, an Interdisciplinary Field—documents the cross-disciplinary nature of terminology. It examines the interaction of terminology and the domains of theoretical and applied linguistics, cognitive sciences, communication sciences, documentation, computer sciences and knowledge engineering. In this chapter, Cabré defines both the concept of terminology and that of lexicography, while insisting on what aspects of theory and methodology distinguish these two areas of specialization.

The Foundations of Terminology—the third chapter, presents the notions of “special language” and “terminological unit,” the main domains of application of terminology according to Cabré. She outlines criteria used to define and circumscribe these two concepts.

A fourth chapter—Terminology in Practice: Terminography—describes the methodology used to create a terminology. More specifically, this section presents a description of different information sources (documentation types, specialists, etc.), of equipment and materials used in terminology (terminological documents, etc.) and the methodology used by terminologists.

The following chapter—Computerized Terminology—includes a discussion of the question of the relationship between the domains of terminology and computer sciences. The author emphasizes the interdependence of these two areas and describes the strong and growing contributions of the computer sciences to terminology including the generalized use of computerized databases by terminologists. She describes the creation and implementation of data banks. Cabré ends this chapter with a discussion of different types of data banks and the limits to the use of these (use of formal languages, incompatibility of different data banks, lack of specialisation of these banks...).

In the sixth chapter—Terminology and Standardization—the author discussed the question of standardization as the main goal of terminology. Cabré describes the international bodies responsible for standardization norms as well as for detailing of directives governing terminological practice. This chapter also includes a theoretical and applied discussion of the creation of neologisms by terminologists.

Finally, in the last chapter—Professional Terminology: The Role of Terminologists in a Language Service—we find a discussion of the role of the terminologist within a linguistic, political and social context. A section of this chapter also discusses scholarly training of terminologists.

Cabré is a member of the classic school of terminological thought, first outlined as a theory by Waster in 1931, that proposes the development of a terminology using an onomasiological (concept – term) rather than semasiological (term – concept) approach. This philosophy also has as one of its main goals the standardization (i.e., the normalization) of concepts throughout specialized languages. However, two factors have recently put this approach to terminology in perspective. The more and more frequent use of computerized data banks and the development of terminologies for non-Indo-European languages, with morphological structures very different from those traditionally used by terminologists, have both contributed to a re-analysis of the theoretical and methodological bases of the onomasiological approach (see, for example, Bourigault, 1996).¹ The onomasiological approach presupposes the primacy of a concept over its linguistic expression: the linguistic expression would therefore only be the symbolic representation of an abstract concept. Bourigault criticizes this approach because, according to him, it ignores the complexity of linguistic phenomena and denies us the right to analyse the text from a semantic perspective. Furthermore, the new and developing work methods of the lexicographer (that is, a descriptive rather than normative approach to lexicography) and the wider variety of types of terminologies produced in new domains of expertise lead us to believe that, in the future, lexicographers will not use an exclusively onomasiological approach. Bourigault proposes boldly to abandon the traditional approach entirely and to replace it with one that is more functional and constructivist because, according to him, the notion of “concept” in speciality linguistics is nothing but a theoretical artifact that should not be confused with the notion of “concept” as defined by the cognitive sciences, this last one being a fundamental constituent of thought.

Cabré mentions the coming together of the domains of terminology and lexicography during a discussion of new research methods in lexicography, and notes that:

the principles on which terminology compilation is currently based have changed markedly [...] Computer aided text analysis and the possibility of processing large amounts of information have changed the bases of terminology compilation, as well as how the appropriateness of terms is conceived, and the degree of human intervention in the whole work process. The result is that the two disciplines that were seen by many as being different from each other—terminology and lexicography—have come closer together.

Unfortunately, despite her consciousness of the fact that terminology and lexicography are coming closer together, she does not integrate this fact into her definition of the role of lexicography, neither does she discuss its implications for methodological practice and theoretical thought.

The organization of this text allows for it to be used as a course book for an introductory course in terminology or as a complimentary text for a course in translation or applied linguistics where the question of terminology is addressed. This book presupposes a good base in linguistics as the notions discussed in certain sections are summary and often not well defined or fleshed out (in particular, semantic relations and morphological processes) and would have to be accompanied by extra

readings in linguistics if these concepts have not yet been learned by the readers. The text seems to have been written specifically in order to prepare Catalan speaking students for work in the Catalan Linguistic Service. However, the discussions it contains, although summary, can be extended to any general terminology course. The book contains examples of unilingual and multilingual documents used by the Catalan Linguistic Service. These can serve as models for the development of new data banks by terminology students and professionals.

In addition, Cabré discusses the use of terminology as a tool for resolving the problem of minority languages (Catalan, Basque) or for the preservation of language that is being colonized by another (the case of Quebec French in the sixties), making this book interesting reading for a course where the question of linguistic survival is addressed. Unfortunately, in the section on linguistic processes used for the creation of neologisms, the author only discusses morphological processes commonly used in Indo-European languages and does not mention other ones that could be used fruitfully by terminologists working within non-Indo-European structures (reduplication, infixation, root and pattern, etc.). Finally, this book contains editing errors such as incomplete phrases and missing endnotes which make it difficult for a neophyte to use. Despite these drawbacks, it could be used as a course book but would probably need to be complemented by the use of other works on terminology, translation or linguistics.

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NOTE

1. BOURIGAULT, D. (1996): «Conception et exploitation d'un logiciel d'extraction de termes: problèmes théoriques et méthodologiques», *Lexicomatique et Dictionnaires: IV^{es} Journées scientifiques du réseau thématique «Lexicologie, Terminologie, Traduction»*, Lyon, France, 28-30 septembre 1995 (A. Clas, P. Thoiron et H. Béjoint dir.), Montréal, AUPELF-UREF, pp.137-145.