

**Henri Béjoint, François Maniez (eds.): *De la mesure dans les termes*. Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 2005. 445 sider, €29,00**

### **Measuring terms..? In what terms?**

The expressionistic title of the volume – *De la mesure dans les termes* – gives a fuzzy impression of what is to be expected, as the French word ‘mesure’ is a polysemous word par excellence: Is it ‘measuring terms’ or ‘moderation in terms’, or perhaps something else? All contributions reviewed here were presented at a symposium held at the Lyon-2 University, France, and have been edited by *Henri Béjoint* and *François Maniez* as a tribute to the career of *Philippe Thoiron* who has been the founder, the CEO and the maestro of the CRTT (research done at the ‘Centre de Recherche en Terminologie et en Traduction’ is introduced by *Dury* and *Lervad*, XIII-XVIII) for many years. The volume is divided into four sections: general lexicology, computational lexicography, terminology and LSP. One could regret the fact that the editors did not edit the volume with a view to bi- or multilingual dictionaries in so far as dictionaries that are designed to assist the translator are more or less salient through out the pages of the volume. We will aim at answering the following question: Does the volume come up to the terminological expectations of its readers working on LSP? Does it bring new theoretical or practical insights in the field of term measurement? As we naturally need a measuring instrument, the volume will be measured in terms of a user-perspective. All research work in linguistics, terminology, translatology and lexicography should always focus on the human needs of the users in order to develop user-oriented solutions for better assistance in reference works and language tools (grammars, term banks, dictionaries, software for language engineering, etc.). With this clear-cut review perspective, largely based on Tarp 2005, we will firstly measure different views on terminology, terminography and lexicography; secondly, methodological work of relevance for the conception of dictionaries; and finally, practical dictionary solutions. Consequently, we will assign the remaining contributions to the category of ‘measuring other aspects’ in terms of other benchmarking criteria.

### **Measuring in terms of terminology, terminography and lexicography**

According to *Cabré* (189-211), terms are multifaceted entities and can be studied from different angles: As lexical units, they belong to the semiotic language system; still, they represent nodes of conceptual knowledge referring to objects in

the world. Depending on the angle of study (or 'entry') and its material, the status of terminology as a discipline will change: Is it lexicology when the discipline describes the properties of the specialized lexical units or is it lexicography when it deals with their registration and presentation in terminographical tools? This epistemic and methodological controversy is not new and *Cabré's* diplomatic answer as to the true object of terminology is very much predictable: It depends on the view of the researcher. Controversy then must give way to multidisplinary. We will make no objections to *Cabré's* eclectics but simply point to the fact that terminography indeed is part of lexicography as an independent science having dictionaries as its object. Specialized dictionaries are quite uncontroversially conceived, made and measured according to the needs of their users to help them communicate in the fields of specialized human activity and/or acquire the needed level of knowledge related to those activities.

With reference to Wüster's wish to systematize language and terminologists' wish to establish the scientific coherence of language, *André Clas* (212-225) proposes a set of tools for measuring the true value of linguistic signs and the fuzzy borders between terms and 'ordinary' words: Concept denominations are shaped by regeneration, analogy and anomaly, inheritance, classification and normalisation. Yet, LGP dictionaries select a vast number of specialized words and domains with no particular wish to measure the coherence of language. Hence, the main question remains unanswered: For what purpose should dictionaries (LGP or LSP) deal with the fuzzy borders of human knowledge and communication when registering words and how?

As a representative of the socio-cognitive and textual terminology, *Slodzian* (227-240) opposes the Vienna School's rationalisation of language in the years 1930-1950 and to the reductionistic view expressed by Basic English. Focussing on central aspects of the discipline motivated by Wüster's pious wish of securing perfection of language for and between specialists, the study remains very critical to the general theory of terminology as a hermetically closed system. Yet, the Russian perspective illustrated by the theories of Voloshinov and Bakhtine contributes to enlarge the picture, with no dissociation of language and culture, and with a dialectic view on the mutual relation between language and reality. Although highly abstract in its discussion, this article implicitly confirms the necessity of exploiting corpus-based or corpus-aided practical solutions in the conception of user-needs oriented terminological dictionaries.

### **Measuring methodological work in terms of relevance to dictionaries**

In the 70s, Congo-Brazzaville decided to impose their national languages on state radio and television. Kituba and Lingala were chosen as Bantu 'linguae

francae'. *Lipou* (85-106) focuses on the terminological strategies at work. The Congolese journalists have given their terminographical creativity three directions: bantuisation, frenchification and hybrid neology. The difficulties of creating terminology from scratch are well described and are interesting from a language-planning, prescriptive perspective. The findings will be helpful to lexicographers developing multilingual dictionary solutions in communities in which official, national languages coexist with minority languages.

Specialized translators are always in need of optimal dictionary help in order to solve equivalence problems; translators are also in need of acquiring background knowledge to check on conceptual equivalence. The textual resources of the web, which can be easily accessed with the Google search engine, can help the translator with the needed information when dictionaries fail to do so. This is the issue *Pierre Lerat* (124-133) addresses. The appropriate web searching strategy is illustrated by the French beverage term 'mise en perce' (= tapping a cask) and its equivalents in a number of foreign languages. It appears that the concept itself, as most concepts do, varies according to cultural contexts as well as according to professional and communicational settings. Therefore, the search strategy must be refined to sort out search results and validate the results found on the web. The refinement includes the use of linguistic criteria and text typology criteria as well as the involvement of experts when necessary. This article is interesting because it demonstrates once again that knowledge of domains and subject fields is not pre-established, but is shaped by varying points of view; it means that terminological work should always be guided by the view of the users. It also means that specialized language should not be seen as a subset of the language system, but simply as language at use in professional settings. Therefore, the task of the lexicographer should combine the double user-perspective: the natural users of terminology themselves and the end-users of dictionaries.

*Maniez* (134-152) explores a range of syntactic and semantic features that can be used for the identification and automatic extraction of terminologically relevant relational adjectives (relationals rarely occur as attributes of copular verbs and they are incompatible with certain adverbs; they always occur closer to the noun than non-relational adjectives; there seems to be a certain relationship between semantic features and qualitative or relational uses of adjectives). After testing the proposed methods on a corpus of English medical research articles, the author concludes that the selection of second adjectives in [ADJ1-ADJ2-N] patterns represents the most reliable method (relational adjectives occur closer to the noun than non-relational adjectives) both with regard to precision and recall, and points out that further precision can be achieved by considering relational and qualitative uses of the selected adjectives. The results will be most useful for the extraction of candidates in English medical texts

(in which frequent [ADJ-N] patterns generate noise) but also in other subject fields. Unfortunately, the author does not discuss the selection and presentation of those candidates in dictionaries.

*Lelubre* (249-268) examines the status of French and Arabic adjectives in LSP texts with a view to their treatment in specialized dictionaries. It is shown that adjectives in both languages may have a terminological status as elements of terminological units or as autonomous terms. Yet, the vast majority of entries in specialized dictionaries are still represented by nouns, and adjectives are rarely lemmatized although corpus studies demonstrate their importance; the solution is a supra-lemmatized representation of concepts that allow for different denominations and grammatical categories according to concept type. The bilingual, practical terminographical solution, however, remains unclear, and nothing is said about the direction of translation.

Measuring the level of specialization of LSP-texts is the goal of *Depierre* (268-279); this is done by an etymology-based lexical method (when speaking of kidneys, 'renal' is less specialized than 'nephr(o)') and statistical tools. It turns out that the method does not really help and that other parameters must be used. The question, however, is: What is the point of measuring the degree of terms in the first place? Is it necessary for compiling and exploiting corpora? Our answer is clearly no, as the use of simple text genre parameters (sender and receiver profiles, media and communicative purpose) can provide faster and easier identification of the level of specialization.

*Conceição* (296-305) addresses the possible method of extracting terminological data by studying reformulation phenomena in LSP-texts, reformulation being a verbalization strategy to ease access to concepts and knowledge in technical and scientific discourse. This article is clearly based on discourse analysis and we find it difficult to acknowledge its practical value for terminologists and lexicographers. In any case, the possible data and the method itself are not clear to us.

The sociolinguistic contribution by *Costa* (313-323) seems guided by the natural wish to build optimal, specialized text corpora as a sound basis for the work to be done. The recommended methodology is to take typological criteria from text-linguistics into account. Despite the lack of general agreement in the field, specialized texts are tokens of text genres that combine different text types and obey to discourse categories. There are some problems there. First, nothing is said on how these features should be used in the compiling process. Second, nothing is said on the genuine purpose of the corpus: Is it for terminological research work or for compiling the empirical basis of a specialized dictionary? This makes quite a difference, at least from a user perspective.

The study of neological transfers is particularly suited to reveal the true nature of neology which in any case should remain at the centre of any terminological work in a translational perspective. *Humbley* (384-423) makes this point by investigating the French reception of the English vocabulary of the new economy to pinpoint the mechanisms of neology, using the nomenclature of an English encyclopaedia on the subject as reference. Depending on encountered problems – new word formation or syntagms, use of proper names and eponymy, new meanings of existing words or meaning adaptation from existing words in related domains – the French language reaction is to translate the linguistic forms, to adapt or create new competing forms and ultimately to resist in the few cases of opaque metaphoric patterns or word formation in English. The study reveals the dynamics of factors that complicate or facilitate neological transfers. It also implicitly reveals crucial aspects of the mechanisms of specialized translation in a multilingual lexicographical perspective: The upcoming of new or transformed ideas and objects develop into new or transformed words and meanings that can live on or become obsolete. Obviously, the findings of this article will be most valuable for future designers of English-French dictionaries of economics.

### **Measuring specific dictionary solutions in terms of user-needs**

According to *Muller* (3-11), the interactive online language resources of French *Orthonet* make use of an obsolete grammatical terminology. The grammar questions of the users encountering problems normally do not include proper linguistic terms, nor does *Orthonet* when its experts bring answers to those problems. One could, as the author, deplore this unscientific state of affairs. One should remember, however, that all language and reference tools should always develop solutions based on the profile and needs of the users. Proper terminology or not, this is the only scientific way to conceive any language information tool, including *Orthonet*.

*Brunet* (12-36) brings a quantitative study of items dealing with the origins of loan words in French LGP dictionaries. Although interesting for the philologist, the study fails to meet the qualitative curiosity of the lexicographer as it is silent on the functional status of etymological data types.

*Gaudin* addresses the scheming concept of *militant* lexicography (77-84). Data from subversive and normative dictionaries show that entries and definitions tend to become reflections of their time, distorting the truth. Dictionaries being human products made to cater human needs, this is no surprise and the author should have addressed the concepts of description and prescription as well as true or false definitions.

Based on the apparently unlimited potentials of computational lexicography and on the innovative solutions implemented in their dictionaries (DAFA,

DAFLES, DICOFE), the contribution of *Verlinde, Selva and Binon* (109-123) falls into three parts: First, the presentation of new tools for corpus analysis (here a fine-grained analysis of the lexical networks of the verb 'jouer' – to play – and its arguments) for the inclusion of better lexicographical data types on word derivation for instance; second, multiple ways of presenting and accessing paradigmatic, syntagmatic and encyclopædic information (including external access to related dictionaries), and finally, the generation of dictionary-based and dictionary-aided exercises for semi-autonomous vocabulary learning. It appears to us that all solutions are implemented in a user-perspective; furthermore, it also appears that the user is omnipresent in the lexicographic work, as all dictionary solutions are seen *in actu*. The only reservation would be that the plethora of practical dictionary solutions designed to bring optimal assistance to the users in foreign language learning environments is not theoretically, at least explicitly, related to the planned dictionary functions in terms of specific user problems and specific user situations. In other words, the solutions designed by the *Verlinde* team paradoxically demonstrate that there is still much to be done in the development of theoretical lexicography as an independent science of its own, in particular the relationship between dictionary functions and the lexicographic structures and data types.

*Dichy* (153-185) examines Arabic and French lexical data and introduces a subset of S-specifiers to entries, the categories generated by the conceptual tree of the fundamental features: Concrete, animated and human applied to verb argument structures. The study might interest ontologists but is irrelevant to the methodology of language tools.

In the view of *Depecker* (306-312), terminological definitions should always define concepts, not words, and allow the systematic development of logical relations between concepts. Hence, definitions are triadic entities combining language definers, conceptual features and referential object properties. Yet, because of the built-in economy of the language system, there is a constant danger of making up definitions that are definitions of words, not of things. In short, definitions should ideally be supralinguistic knowledge modelling systems rather than knowledge labelling systems. This is of course important for the universal development of language independent artificial intelligence systems. This is, however, far less important for the scientific development of user-oriented terminographical tools that should always be conceived as human products made to fulfil human needs. Terminographers and specialized lexicographers distinguish between knowledge- and communication-oriented functions in their reference works, and the distinction between knowledge of the words and knowledge of the world is irrelevant. Accordingly, functional definitions are definitions that can help the users in specific user situations when reading (and not understanding the meaning), writing (and not being familiar with the

grammar of collocates), translating (and looking for equivalence in culture-bound subject fields), or when acquiring knowledge. Hence, scientific definitions are specific solutions to specific human problems and nothing else.

It is a well known fact that lemma lists in LGP dictionaries have always tended to include a broad variety of specialized entries in all sort of domains (often depending on the preferences of the lexicographer), a tendency that has become even more salient today because of the strongly increasing terminologization of terms in general language. The questions asked by *Roberts* and *Josselin-Leray* (324-348) are why and how this is done, and with what purpose. The answers are viewed in a user-perspective, which is of course encouraging. What is less encouraging is that the authors apply a demoscopic perspective in which the users are asked to what extent they look for information on domain-specific words and expressions in LGP dictionaries and whether or not they are satisfied with the selection and treatment of the information they can find. It must be asserted that such user data (behaviours) are irrelevant to scientific lexicography in so far as answers to questions regarding the selection and treatment of data types solely depend on the intended dictionary functions. Hence, although very methodical and detailed in its survey on the (poor) treatment of oenological terms in a selection of French and English mono- and bilingual LGP dictionaries, the contribution fails to bring a serious answer as to the functional status of domain specific entries and their related data types in LGP dictionaries. What should matter here is to keep a firm view on the genuine purpose of the dictionaries – Are they tools for reception, for translation or for production, or perhaps for knowledge acquisition? Is the problem the mother tongue or the foreign language? Are they intended for experts or for laymen? – including the specialized dictionaries that have been used as points of reference: Simple questions but crucial answers that must be dealt with prior to any scientific lexicographical work.

*Contente and Magalhães* (424-442) have implemented a multilingual medical dictionary (Portuguese-French/English) in which the user will find contrastive information about the forms of the selected medical terms, their equivalents and their synonyms ('linguistic markers' in the terminology of the authors), as well as information about the contrastive meaning of those forms (not by ways of traditional definitions but by ways of 'semantic and conceptual features' bringing contrastive information on related meaning). According to the authors, the genuine purpose of the dictionary is to assist (Portuguese?) medical students in the difficult process of medical language acquisition in the three languages. Because medical terms shape the representation of knowledge differently, the main difficulty for the user is supposed to be the identification of equivalence relations between competing terms. Nothing can be said really against the meticulous methodology of this terminological contribution in the field of interlinguistic

conceptology. One can simply regret the fact that the lexicographic solutions presented at the end of the article are the matching image of the conceptual modelling system. It may well be that the chosen solutions turn out to be useful for the intended users; it would have been preferable, however, to focus on the needs of the users and on the situations in which the dictionary is supposed to help (reception, translation, production or knowledge acquisition problems). One should remember that learner's dictionaries combine communication- and knowledge-oriented functions, including medical learners' dictionaries with one or more (foreign) languages.

### **Measuring in other terms**

According to *Roman* (37-58), languages are abstract constructs and the sounds that realize them may even seem immaterial. Between so called 'trompe-l'oeil', the linguist will recognize hidden doors leading to the latent binary organization of language. Yet, the value of this contribution remains unmeasurable to us as it clearly addresses phonologists.

*Boisson* (58-76) deals with the problem of assessing the work of the translator with reference to a specific passage of a bible translation: Is the translator a translator or is he a writer? Again, we will have to leave the measurement assessment of the contribution to philological experts, and particularly to translationologists of arts and to practitioners.

*Beltran-Vidal* (241-248) addresses the difficulties of measuring emerging concepts and examines ways of describing the evolution of LSP on the basis of Michel Foucault's work "Les Mots et les choses". It is concluded that terminologists should adapt to the needs of specialized fields that cannot develop in isolation and include multidisciplinary reflections. However, the conclusion is far from new to terminologists and the possible value of this contribution should in any case be measured by language philosophers.

The cultural thesis defended by *Soubrier* (280-295) is that English terminology measured as a scientific *lingua franca* does not match the ideals of a transparent system of denominations; this is due to unavoidable interferences from human cognition, shaped by the language system and embedded in culture, and mutual comprehension is then endangered. It should be simply added that communication and knowledge problems are at the measuring core of functional, bi- or multilingual dictionaries.

*Carras* (349-367) studies reception and production problems of learners of French as a foreign LSP. Although aimed at the language teacher, the conclusions (use of specific reformulation strategies) might be inspiring to the lexicographer.

*Dürr* (372-380) focuses on problems when doctors express their view on



a given treatment to laymen. Although the statistical notions and words used for quantification are quite precise, the use of the terms should give laymen a sufficient understanding of a reality which by nature is imprecise (statistical notions being related to nonexistent average persons) and medical practitioners should do better when measuring their words. However, the measurement of reception remains unclear.

Working on a medical corpus in order to measure the dynamics of denomination, *Silva* (381-393) accounts for morphological and morphosemantic features of the terms as well as word formation patterns (particularly concatenation); we must leave the measurement assessment to linguists.

### **Measuring.., but in some measure only**

We will sum up symmetrically, the answer to our initial question being yes and no. Yes, because one half of the volume brings contributions that are measurable in terms of a user-perspective, including contributions that are up to expectations and bring valuable, functional points of reference, and no, because the other half is not really suited for measuring in terms of a true user-perspective. In conclusion, we will have to moderate our statement: *De la mesure dans les termes* comes up to its readers' expectations – but in some measure only. In our view, term measurement should always include user-needs measurement; this should prevent putting the cart before the horse.

### **Reference**

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