



CLASSIQUES  
GARNIER

HUMBLÉ (Philippe), HUMBLEY (John), « Comptes rendus », *Cahiers de lexicologie*, n° 68, 1996 – 1, p. 193-204

DOI : [10.15122/isbn.978-2-8124-4320-6.p.0195](https://doi.org/10.15122/isbn.978-2-8124-4320-6.p.0195)

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## COMPTES RENDUS

***COLLINS Cobuild Student's Dictionary Bridge Bilingual Portuguese***, Harper Collins Publishers, London, 1995, 673 p. : a new bilingual dictionary concept.

*COBUILD est bien connu pour ses excellents dictionnaires monolingues anglais. Le COBUILD English-Portuguese Bridge Bilingual est un dictionnaire bilingue d'un type nouveau qui se distingue des dictionnaires déjà sur le marché en ce qu'il définit en portugais le mot anglais, tout en gardant ce mot en anglais dans la définition. Cette façon originale de définir un mot pour un public dont la langue maternelle n'est pas l'anglais est bienvenue dans un domaine parfois en mal d'initiatives. On pourrait néanmoins se demander si la manière un peu rigide dont cette innovation a été exécutée prend en compte la spécificité de chaque mot, notamment lorsqu'il s'agit d'une publication pour un public linguistiquement bien délimité. En outre, bien que le Bridge Bilingual soit, dans la tradition des dictionnaires COBUILD, facile à utiliser, certains secteurs plus traditionnels de la lexicographie semblent résister aux tentatives rénovatrices. C'est le cas de la grammaire, présente ici sous une forme qui ne prend peut-être pas suffisamment en compte le public du dictionnaire. Quoiqu'il en soit, le Bridge Bilingual, premier dans une série, est un dictionnaire très utile aux débutants et sa conception, même s'il est critiquable sur certains points, a le mérite de remettre en question nombre d'idées reçues.*

With the *Bridge Bilingual Portuguese Dictionary* Collins has just published a new dictionary in the COBUILD series. This time COBUILD innovates in the bilingual sector of lexicography and the result is certainly worth a closer look: its mixture of monolingual and bilingual dictionary techniques makes the *Brazilian Portuguese Bridge Bilingual* undoubtedly both innovative and stimulating. To my knowledge, this is the first kind of dictionary ever to have mixed both the source language and the target language in the body of the actual definition. The first impression is inevitably a little disorienting and the longer term question is if these innovative procedures entirely suit the needs.

*Cah. Lexicol.* 68, 1996-1, p. 193-207

The *Bridge Bilingual* is the translation of the monolingual *Collins Cobuild Student's Dictionary*. Roughly everything was translated into Portuguese, except the headword, of course, and the examples, drawn from the COBUILD data bank. Excluding the use of Portuguese, the content of the definition does not differ from that of the original monolingual *Student's Dictionary*. The headword, when used in the body of the definition, remains in English. For instance:

**nasty, nastier, nastiest.** 1 ADJ *Algo que é nasty é muito desagradável.*

Another example:

**lug, lugs, lugging, lugged,** VB com OBJ *Se você lug um objeto pesado, você o carrega com dificuldade; uso informal. She lugged the suitcase out into the hallway.*

The *Bridge Bilingual* counts 40 000 references and is preceded by an introduction in Portuguese which explains the use of the dictionary. Most of the entries comprise examples. A second section of five pages gives an explanation of the grammatical terms and abbreviations and there is one page on pronunciation.

## Beginners

This dictionary is clearly focused upon beginning English students. The use of the student's native language to explain the entry items is the most apparent illustration of this interest, but other features were also designed with the same purpose. Verb forms are listed separately — *given, gave; threw, thrown* — and some entries refer to drawings at the end of the volume — car, home, food, etc.

Attention has also been given to cultural information. *GCSE, Thanksgiving* and many other items are thus explained. Within the entries, meanings have been classified according to their frequency of use. The first meaning of *embark* is the metaphorical one, *Peru embarked on a massive programme of reform* and not the one related to sailing. Although this seems mere common sense, still dictionaries, especially bilingual ones, mention only the literal meaning: "to go on to a ship".

In many ways, the *Bridge Bilingual* is a practical dictionary and concerned with a real beginner's situation. Nevertheless, some of the procedures of the *Bridge Bilingual* can be questioned.

## Comprehension and production

According to the publishers, the audience of this dictionary is *alunos universitários e profissionais de várias atividades* (university students and members of different professions). What kind of use are they encouraged to make of this dictionary?

Nothing is specified, but the layout suggests that it should be useful both for *understanding* and for *production* of the target language.

How would it promote *understanding*? In the case of *nasty*, quoted above, the user will deduce that the word means *muito desagradável*. The minimum objectives of a bilingual dictionary are in this way fulfilled. The question is, however, if this result has been achieved in the most economic and effective way. Would it have made any difference if below the word *nasty* there was the Portuguese translation of the word — *muito desagradável* — instead of *Algo que é nasty é muito desagradável*? Not significantly, I suspect. The user will spontaneously reduce the entry to: *nasty, muito desagradável*. One could allege that the use of a full sentence demonstrates the use of the word. This was clearly one of the reasons why full sentences were used in the original monolingual edition. It might make sense in this case, because *algo* (something) suggests correctly that *nasty* means *muito desagradável* when it applies to things, whereas applied to persons it might be something else. A simple indication of the type (*coisas*) *muito desagradável* would have made this clear. Coincidentally, the translation of *nasty* would be the same in the case of persons, which would reduce the entry to *nasty (pessoas, coisas) muito desagradável*. In this case, the full sentence definition was not really useful.

There are, of course, a great many number of cases in which the *Bridge Bilingual* procedure works. This is so for a word like *begrudge*:

**begrudge**, se você **begrudge someone** algo, você sente que essa pessoa não merece isso e sente inveja dela por tê-lo.

Here the learner is able to form a "mental picture" of *begrudge*: it is used with a direct object which is a thing and an indirect object which is a person. The way in which the information is transmitted exempts the learner from knowing grammar. In this case the *Bridge Bilingual* system works well.

The practice of using full sentences to define an item was a major revolution in dictionary making for which the COBUILD project has to be credited. Nonetheless, the same advantages were not uniformly maintained when the *Student's* edition was translated into the *Bridge Bilingual*. In many items, no syntactical particularity is shown by this somewhat verbose way of displaying information. With space restrictions making many dictionaries difficult to use through recourse to incomprehensible abbreviations, symbols and eye-straining print, editors are always very careful as to what they include and exclude. In the present case, inclusion of more examples would surely have been more useful than the full Portuguese explanation of items such as:

**A kangaroo** é um animal australiano de grande porte que se locomove saltando com as pernas traseiras. As fêmeas carregam os filhotes numa bolsa localizada na barriga.

Which means: A **kangaroo** is a large Australian animal which moves forward by jumping on its back legs. Female kangaroos carry their babies in a special pouch on their stomachs.

In the case of *kangaroo*, no new information is being transmitted. The whole entry conforms to what an ordinary monolingual Portuguese dictionary would say on kangaroos and we could even ask why this word is in the dictionary at all. The Portuguese word *canguru* is very similar to *kangaroo* and people will at the most look the word up to know how it is pronounced. Inclusion of this item can be advocated on the grounds that it is listed among the most frequent words in English, but the space of 25 words or so could have been with only a translation and a phonetic transcription. In determining which English entries should be put into Portuguese clearly more questions could be asked about why any particular entry should be included and with what characteristics. When the explanation is in English, the user has the benefit of seeing how an animal like a *kangaroo* can be described in English. Without this advantage, inclusion requires some other justification.

The use of full Portuguese sentences has other consequences, as is illustrated by an item like *belly*: *Your belly é sua barriga*. In this case the Brazilian authors have had the common sense not to translate "the part of your body, especially your stomach, etc." as the original *Student's* states. However, why not simply say *barriga*? Here, the use of a whole sentence is not only superfluous, it gives the dictionary an almost childish tone ill-adapted to the audience.

When *oxygen* is explained as: *Oxygen é oxigênio, um gás*, the *Bridge Bilingual's* indebtedness to an essentially monolingual reference work becomes flagrant. In a bilingual dictionary no one expects to come across chemical information. Bilingual users may even have the impression that they are not, in fact, the intended audience. As, in a certain sense, they are not or not with sufficient thoroughness. On the one hand, the reader is given superfluous information, on the other; no examples or idioms show the use of the word in question. The inclusion of an idiom like *To run out of oxygen*, for example, would have been informative for Brazilians who would look up the word *oxygen*, not to know if its meaning was *oxigênio*, but to see how it was pronounced and if one should say, e.g., *deprived* or *dispossessed of oxygen*.

When it comes to items which are much more common in Brazil than in Great Britain or in the United States, this lack of attention to the specific characteristics of the audience risks becoming confusing and even funny. The definition of *ox* could lead the public into thinking that an *ox* cannot possibly be a simple boi: *An ox é um touro castrado* (an ox is a castrated bull).

The reluctance to translate the headword leads in most cases to an excess of words to the detriment of other information. In the case of simple words it may even lead to unnecessary ambiguity. After reading the entry for *bakery*: *é o local onde se assam pães e bolos* (is a place where bread and cakes are baked), a student of mine suggested it could

be a *padaria* (bakery) as well as a *forno* (oven). Everything indicates that the translators stayed too close to the original:

**bald**, Alguém que é **bald** tem pouco ou nenhum cabelo no alto da cabeça.  
(Originally: on the top of their head.)

At times the entry word exists in Portuguese with exactly the same meaning as in English yet the lexicographers — or the translators — did not take advantage of this and even seem to have avoided such words. A word like *ennoble* could easily be translated as *ennobrecer*, without losing anything of its meaning. Instead of this, the *Bridge Bilingual* prefers:

**ennoble**, To **ennoble** uma coisa ou pessoa significa torná-las mais nobres e dignas (To *ennoble something or someone* means to make something or someone more noble and dignified.)

Why not say: *ennobrecer, pessoas e coisas*? It is a natural mnemonic aid.

Omitting a straightforward translation may not only lead to superfluous explanations, it can obscure the meaning. This is the case of

**enjoyable**, Algo que é **enjoyable** dá prazer, *We had an enjoyable day.*  
(Something that is *enjoyable* gives you pleasure.)

According to this definition, *enjoyable* could be the equivalent of *agradável*, *ameno*, *alegre*, *prazenteiro*, *delicioso*, *prazeroso*, *maravilhoso*, etc. In this instance, where there is a wealth of possible translations, one of the Portuguese words would not only render the meaning of the word adequately, but could also narrow down the range of its register and its possible collocations. Brazilian students would know better in what context to use it and how formal or informal the word is.

### Every entry is an entity

All this does not mean that the explanation of the lexical items in Portuguese is useless. The issue is the determination of those cases where it helps the learner and in what cases it does not. It is assuredly very useful every time there is no exact equivalent in the target language. This is so for words like *slot*, *prig*, *entrant*, *ultimately*, etc. Here, the meaning can only be circumscribed, and to do this in *English* would be complicated for learners at a beginner's stage. The explanation in Portuguese builds up an idea of what the word refers to and allows the learner to understand the word in its context.

This is the case of *keep out*.

**Keep Out**, está avisando às pessoas que não devem entrar num determinado lugar.

In Brazil *keep out* could be translated in various ways, either by *perigo*, *propriedade privada* or *proibida a entrada*, depending on the context. The explanation, instead of the translation, allows the user to understand the concept and adapt it linguistically in accordance with the situation.

**Slot**, é uma abertura estreita numa máquina ou recipiente, por exemplo, uma abertura em que você põe moedas para fazer com que uma máquina funcione (*Slot* is a narrow opening in a machine or container, for example, the hole in which you put money to make a machine work.)

The user creates an almost visual idea of what a *slot* is and then adapts the translation (*ranhura*, *fenda* or even *slot* in the case of computers). In such cases, the *Bridge Bilingual* deserves to be imitated.

Another important category for which the *Bridge Bilingual* system works well, is *phrasal verbs*. The explanation in Portuguese shows the learner if the particle remains together with the verb or not and it gives an idea of its position.

**Name** uma coisa ou uma pessoa **after** outra coisa ou pessoa, dá à primeira o mesmo nome da segunda. (If you *name* something or someone after another thing or person, you give the first one the same name as the second one.)

Another example:

Se você **put up** o dinheiro for uma coisa, fornece o dinheiro necessário para pagar por ela. (If you *put up* money for something, you provide the money that is needed to pay for it.)

In both these examples the Portuguese explanation, with the English word embedded, gives valuable additional information. On the negative side, a single example of *put up* hardly gives an idea of the meaning if there is no straightforward translation in the target language. One example is not enough to see for oneself *if* indeed there is no such translation. On the other hand, it could be argued that anyone who wants to use a word like *put up*, probably has a sufficiently good command of the language to use a monolingual English dictionary and look up the examples there.

Experiments alone could really test to what extent this method of mixing two languages is successful. One of the things it probably depends on is what languages are involved. English and Portuguese, for example, have reasonably comparable syntactical systems. I doubt if a similar Finnish version would be very successful. Tests would reveal if students who use this kind of explanation of phrasal verbs are indeed better at using them than others who look them up in more traditional dictionaries.

In conclusion, every entry is an entity. Explaining an English word in Portuguese can be very useful in some cases and merely amusing in others. Each entry should be

considered in itself, without an exaggerated concern for symmetry. The fact that some items are translated does not imply all should be. A number of English words probably have a near exact equivalent in Portuguese. This is certainly true for material things and these words would be more readily assimilable through a straight translation. *Butter* is *manteiga*, *car* is *carro*. Even many abstract words can be translated, certainly at a beginners' level. *Love* is *amor*, *take* is *pegar*, *about* is *sobre*, *quase*, *para cá e para lá*, with a few other possibilities which some well chosen examples would help to elucidate. More nuanced understanding will be acquired by the learner through varied forms of contact with the target language.

### Comprehension and vocabulary

As is usual for learner's dictionaries, the vocabulary used by the *Bridge Bilingual* has been controlled to enable a non-native speaker to understand the text of the entries. But as this dictionary is the translation of the monolingual COBUILD, examples are taken from real texts, which makes it more difficult to check vocabulary. Consequently very simple explanations are sometimes followed by examples with some quite hard words. The example for *belly* is: *lions creeping on their bellies*, though the verb *creep* is probably unknown to someone seeking the meaning of *belly*. There are other examples. The entry for *behind* contains words like *limping*, *schedule* and *paces*. If you do not know what *behind* means, you will almost certainly not know the meaning of these words.

### Production and grammar

The dictionary itself contains semi-grammatical items. *Able* is such an item.

**-able SUFFIX** Acrescenta-se **-able** a alguns verbos para formar adjetivos que descrevem algo ou alguém como passíveis de sofrerem uma determinada ação. Por exemplo, uma coisa que é **identifiable** pode ser identificada. *They are both immediately recognisable.* (-able is added to verbs to form adjectives describing someone or something that can have the thing done to them which is described by the verb.)

Whilst this is certainly useful information, since it allows readers to extend their vocabulary by a productive item, the question is whether it is in its place in the alphabetical listing of a dictionary. It seems very unlikely that the learner would look up the item spontaneously, at least nobody who is not familiar with the meaning of a hyphen (-). Either the entry should give very specialised information, or else draw the reader's attention to itself in some other manner. But, apart from these considerations, let us suppose a Brazilian student comes across the **-able** entry. No doubt he will have some difficulty in understanding — as I had — *adjetivos que descrevem algo ou alguém como*



*passíveis de sofrerem uma determinada ação*. Especially the word *passível* and the expression *sofrer uma ação* are not self-evident.

As so often happens in lexicography, the entry is included primarily for lexicographers to fulfill their task: the entry is there and the information is correct. Nevertheless, from the user's point of view this kind of information does help not very much. It is superficial for those able to find it. It is too complicated and abstract for those who could profit from its information.

The entry could have been something like:

Words ending with the suffix **-able** can be translated in Portuguese by "*que pode ser....*"; **recognisable** is *que pode ser reconhecido*; **translatable**, *que pode ser traduzido*; **estable**, *que pode ser comido*. Generally, this suffix is translated into Portuguese by the suffix **-ível**: *reconhecível, traduzível, comestível*.

This definition is some ten words longer than the original, but it has, I think, the advantage of being readily usable.

The grammatical section which precedes the actual dictionary seems rather detailed. The explanations are somewhat abstract and some of the items could have used examples. The grammatical part of a dictionary is intended only as a support to the dictionary, and not as a separate part which can be read independently of it. I assume that the purpose of grammar in a dictionary is to help whoever has trouble with the use of a word and wants to find in a grammatical rule the answer to a precise problem.

Let us suppose I have difficulties with the word *every*. I could be unsure whether *every* has to be used with a plural or a singular. A Brazilian user could become confused because two translations are possible: *todo* and *cada*. *Every person* can be translated by *todas as pessoas* (all of them) and by *cada pessoa* (each of them). The dictionary says *every* is a *determiner*, I might hope to find some supplementary information in the grammatical introduction of the dictionary:

**DET** significa **determiner**. **Determiners** são palavras como **a, the, my e every**, que são usadas no início de um sintagma nominal para indicar a que coisa ou pessoa alguém está se referindo.

(*Determiners* are words like *a, the, my* and *every* that are used at the beginning of a noun to indicate what thing or person you are referring to).

The practical value of this kind of information is limited. It basically explains what a *determiner* is, but this was only a problem the dictionary itself created, and it says nothing about the use of determiners in general. Furthermore, we have to understand what *sintagma nominal* refers to, which is not obvious. And even given this understanding, the grammatical explanation does not help us to resolve the real problem which is «how do I use a determiner such as *every*». As determiners are not very numerous, it would have

been more helpful and simple if the dictionary had indicated the use of each one by means of an example.

In short, insufficient inquiry seems to have been made to determine how this grammatical section would be used in practice. Instead of conceiving the dictionary's grammar from the user's point of view, the concern was perhaps too much with linguistic correctness and orthodoxy. However, the majority of people do not know what a *sintagma nominal* is and do not need to in order to speak a foreign language.

A further example of the use of the grammatical section is the reference to *suffix*.

**SUFFIX** Chama-se *suffix* a um grupo de letras, como **-able**, **-er**, e **-ly** que, acrescentadas ao final de uma palavra, alteram a sua classe gramatical ou o seu sentido. Por exemplo, acrescentam-se **-ly** ou **-ness** a adjetivos para formar advérbios ou substantivos cujos significados estão relacionados a esses adjetivos. Pode-se acrescentar **-ish** a adjetivos para formar outros adjetivos que significam que alguma coisa tem aquela qualidade só até certo ponto. (A *suffix* is a letter or group of letters like **-able**, **-er**, and **-ly** which are added to the end of a word in order to alter its word class or its sense. For example, **-ly** or **-ness** can be added to adjectives to form adverbs or nouns whose meaning is related to these adjectives. **-ish** can be added to adjectives to form other adjectives that mean that something has that quality up to a certain point.)

In this paragraph, the examples of *suffixes* are all in English, but the explanation of the concept *suffix* is not specifically focused on English nor, on the other hand, specifically concerned with the problems a Brazilian public could have. The explanation in a Portuguese grammar would indeed not be very different. No reference is made to Portuguese equivalents, which would make the explanation easier to understand. The problem originates in the fact that the *Student's* version was aimed at learners speaking any native language, from Malay to Dutch. The explanations had to remain as general as possible, with all the consequent disadvantages. But this was not the case with the *Bridge Bilingual*, aimed at an exclusively Brazilian audience. It would have been much clearer and economical to say that a *suffix* is a *sufixo* in Portuguese and give some examples in English. Once again one has the impression of reading a monolingual, instead of a bilingual dictionary. Furthermore for the middle of the road student *alteram sua classe gramatical* can mean very little without an example.

There might be an ideology behind this procedure: students have to learn the theory first, and then apply it to prevent them from learning isolated facts instead of a more economic, abstract principle. This theory, applied to native language teaching, is questionable. It probably works for some people, but not for others. In second language learning, most things are learned by specific examples. The majority of foreign language learners are not linguists but want to use the dictionary as a tool. Traditional grammar books will provide the general rules. The grammatical part of a dictionary such as the *Bridge Bilingual*, which addresses itself to a specific public, should offer contrastive

information to make it a tool that is more adapted to the user. As it now stands, the grammatical part of the dictionary solves problems only the entries themselves created.

## Conclusion

On the whole, the Portuguese *Bridge Bilingual* is a potentially very beneficial initiative. The bilingual dictionary evidently has its drawbacks for learning a language in a way that approximates as closely as possible to the way the native speaks it. The knowledge one draws from a monolingual dictionary is of a different kind to the one drawn from a bilingual one and it is clear that a monolingual knowledge approximates itself more to a native knowledge than one that passes through translation. However, equally evidently the use of monolingual dictionaries is not suited to the beginner and bilingualised initiatives such as the *Bridge Bilingual*, that undertake to form an intermediate kind of class, precisely, a bridge, have to be welcomed. Nevertheless, this particular dictionary is less revolutionary than it might seem at first sight and less than its potential. Many of the flaws of this dictionary are unfortunately the same as those of other dictionaries.

It lacks an accurate description of what the target audience is. It has not been clearly determined what the use of this dictionary is for its specific public. Is it to *produce* a second language or merely to *understand* it? If it were comprehension, a translation of the lexical items would be sufficient and space could have been cleared for more entries. As it is, the *Bridge Bilingual* has too few entries to cope with most novels. If, on the contrary, the intention was to make a production dictionary, more examples needed to be included for most item, and a number of entries could easily have been eliminated.

In this dictionary too, homogeneity has created its own disadvantages. Especially when the audience is so clearly defined, every entry should be considered in relation to it. Some words are evident for a Brazilian learner, others are hard. Some entries demand more explanation, others less. A bilingual dictionary should be based on contrastive studies and careful targeting. The people who compile this kind of dictionary can be assumed to have, as in the case of the *Bridge Bilingual* they evidently have, the requisite knowledge of both languages. This bilingual knowledge however was not sufficiently used. The original *Student's COBUILD* was undoubtedly made by lexicographers, the *Bridge Bilingual* was made by translators. Very good translators obviously, but with some fear of being called *tradittori*.

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**Pierre LERAT, *Les langues spécialisées*, Collection Linguistique nouvelle, Presses universitaires de France, Paris, 1995, 201 p.**

Le français dispose depuis près de quinze ans d'une description approfondie d'un grand secteur de sa langue de spécialité sous la forme du livre de Rostislav KOCOUREK, *La langue française de la technique et de la science*, qui a connu une nouvelle édition fortement augmentée en 1991. On pourrait se demander alors ce que la récente étude de Pierre LERAT peut apporter de plus. En réalité, la visée de ces deux études est bien différente. D'une part, la portée de cet ouvrage est plus large que celle du livre de KOCOUREK dans la mesure où les langues spécialisées comprennent non seulement celles des sciences et des techniques, mais aussi celles du droit et d'autres sciences humaines, et que, d'autre part, le degré de spécialisation est défini plus largement ; il ne s'agit pas, dans le livre de P. LERAT, uniquement de discours entre spécialistes, bien au contraire. Mais la justification principale de cet ouvrage est certainement une différence de genre : celui de KOCOUREK est un manuel, une somme qui présente le plus grand nombre possible d'exemples, de citations, de points de vue différents, tandis que celui de P. LERAT relève davantage du genre français de l'essai. L'essai à la française comporte une thèse qui est développée par argumentation faisant appel à une économie d'exemples et d'illustrations. La thèse qui est développée dans ces pages est que l'étude des langues de spécialité peut et doit être subordonnée à une analyse linguistique de tous leurs constituants.

Ce recentrage linguistique scientifique est en effet une nécessité, car, lorsqu'on évoque les langues de spécialité, c'est le plus souvent dans un contexte pratique, notamment celui de l'apprentissage d'une langue étrangère, où il convient de limiter le vocabulaire et les principales structures syntaxiques à présenter aux apprenants. On procède donc depuis des années sur des présupposés dont il s'agit aujourd'hui de vérifier le bien-fondé scientifique. Même si cette étude tombe à point nommé, le défi n'en est pas moins de taille, d'autant plus que P. LERAT se situe parmi ceux qui minimisent les spécificités des langues de spécialité, qu'il refuse de considérer comme autant de sous-systèmes. À ses yeux, il s'agit de l'«usage d'une langue naturelle pour rendre compte techniquement de connaissances spécialisées» (p. 21). C'est pour cette raison d'ailleurs qu'il récuse la dénomination classique (quoique de date récente) de *langue de spécialité*, préférant *langues spécialisées* «pour dire en français l'unicité de l'idiome et la particularité des univers de connaissances» ; ce terme reconstruit aurait l'avantage de «renvoyer au système linguistique pour l'expression et aux professions pour les savoirs».

Cette dernière formulation lapidaire a l'avantage de présenter on ne peut plus clairement le programme du livre. C'est donc tout d'abord vers les fondements linguistiques que P. LERAT se tourne, en examinant tour à tour les aspects sémiotiques, graphiques, morphologiques, syntaxiques et sémantiques des langues spécialisées (et la liste n'est pas exhaustive), avant d'aborder dans une seconde partie plus pratique ses nombreuses applications : traduction, documentation, normalisation, aménagement linguistique, rédaction technique, ingénierie de la connaissance, lexicographie, terminographie et enseignement.

Cette approche permet à l'auteur de couvrir un vaste champ de réflexion linguistique, sans pour autant viser l'exhaustivité. C'est ainsi que l'apport de l'analyse du discours aux langues spécialisées n'est guère abordée, et les aspects linguistiques de la

vulgarisation scientifique et technique ne sont qu'évoqués dans le chapitre sur la rédaction technique. Ce qui importe ici, c'est la «capitalisation théorique en linguistique» (p. 15), l'apport de tout l'acquis linguistique appliqué aux langues spécialisées, qu'il considère comme des "plurisystèmes", à l'instar du modèle proposé pour l'orthographe par Nina CATACH.

Au centre des langues spécialisées, il y a la terminologie («La terminologie est par excellence le matériau distinctif du texte spécialisé», p. 62), et P. LERAT incorpore dans cet essai une présentation de sa conception : il a peut-être plus que quiconque, du moins dans le monde francophone, contribué à donner à cette discipline un statut de branche de la linguistique, en reformulant les postulats des pères de la discipline selon une démarche inspirée de SAUSSURE et de ses successeurs. Pour P. LERAT, la terminologie, comme les langues de spécialité, n'est qu'en partie l'affaire des linguistes, mais elle est digne de tout leur intérêt. La terminologie est une considération transversale dans ce livre, et chaque aspect de l'analyse linguistique a son pendant terminologique.

La division en deux parties que nous avons cru déceler n'a rien de strict. On retrouve dans plusieurs chapitres consacrés aux applications des considérations de théorie linguistique. C'est ainsi que l'aménagement linguistique est à évaluer, en amont et en aval des actions, à la lumière de la sociolinguistique. De même, le chapitre sur la traduction met en lumière les zones d'ombre d'une approche purement saussurienne, plongée, voire figée dans l'immanence des langues. Car ce livre, qui jette les bases théoriques d'une étude des langues spécialisées, ne se contente pas de rester dans la théorie : chaque hypothèse est confrontée aux complexités de la réalité pratique. Et l'auteur ne manque pas de pratique ; il puise ses exemples dans le travail de son *Dictionnaire juridique* (réalisé avec J.-L. SOURIOUX), dans son exploitation des banques de terminologie, dans son expérience de réviseur du *Trésor de la langue française* et d'expert auprès du Rint. C'est ainsi qu'il n'est pas convaincu par les logiciels d'extraction de terminologie, car la forme des termes est trop variable, ni par l'intérêt d'immenses corpus numérisés, car on ne se soustrait pas à l'analyse illocutoire. Les grands développements de l'ouvrage, celui sur la féminisation des noms de fonctions par exemple, visent essentiellement à démontrer que l'insuccès (du moins partiel) de l'action vient de l'insuffisance de l'analyse linguistique préalable — morphologique en particulier — et de la confusion regrettable entre phonétique et phonographématique.

Ce livre n'est pas sans esprit polémique, mais ceci clarifie les positions.

Quel est donc le message de ce livre tonique ? D'une part, que les langues de spécialité concernent un nombre important d'applications, non seulement la rédaction technique, d'ailleurs trop longtemps négligée par les linguistes, mais aussi l'aménagement linguistique, l'ingénierie de la connaissance, sans parler des secteurs plus classiques comme la documentation et la lexicographie. Puisque ces domaines relèvent des langues spécialisées, et que les langues spécialisées ne se distinguent pas de la langue, ils relèvent aussi, pour leur partie langagière, de la linguistique, et on nous montre comment une analyse linguistique peut éclaircir les problèmes typiques. Il n'apporte pas toutes les réponses, mais il indique des orientations de recherche. Un livre stimulant.

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