

**REVIEW OF *Terminology throughout History. A discipline in the making*, edited by Kara Warburton and John Humbley, John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam / Philadelphia, 2025 (678 pp.)**

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*Terminology throughout History. A discipline in the making*, edited by Kara Warburton and John Humbley, is the 24<sup>th</sup> volume in the acclaimed John Benjamins series *Terminology and Lexicography Research and Practice*. The focus this time is on the history of terminological thought, practice and research.

The editors of this book, with its emphasis on disciplinary establishment, aimed to trace the history of terminology up to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, leaving for another publishing opportunity the significant contributions of megacorpora, artificial intelligence, and other modern technological achievements. They do mention the potential of terminology in aid of artificial intelligence systems in view of terminology's preparedness for semantically structured knowledge representation (p.21), thus envisaging a bright future for this field.

The introduction, apart from providing a summary of the individual contributions, revisits the question of the status of terminology as a scientific discipline. The authors/editors, perhaps too cautiously, begin by quoting criticisms of terminology as a discipline, but also state more optimistically that "if it is not yet a fully-fledged discipline, as the 31 chapters of this volume attest, it certainly has the ambition to become one" (p. 2).

The 31 articles, or chapters, that follow were written by a total of 63 scholars. They are divided into three sections. The first is titled *Early history* and accordingly explores practical and pretheoretical endeavours in terminology from antiquity to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As the editors aptly note, terms were not called terms then and the concept and lexical unit 'terminology' did not exist. However, glossaries of what would today be recognised as terms were published and there were scholars reflecting on the relationship between language and knowledge. To shed more light on those beginnings, individual chapters in the first section delve into terminology in the Roman empire, developments in scientific naming in the Middle Ages in France (with an emphasis on vernacular equivalents to Graeco-Latin terms) and work towards nomenclatures in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, also predominantly in France. The 19<sup>th</sup> century sets the time frame for several chapters, discussing the evolution of names of clouds, expounding on Charles Peirce's views of language in philosophy

and presenting a detailed analysis of the surprisingly modern terminographic approach of Heinrich Paasch.

Part 2 *Developments in theory and methodology*, traces major approaches to terminology science and terminology work that have emerged over the last century or so. It begins with an article about international languages and knowledge communication, followed by a chapter about E. Wüster. Then there are articles exploring terminology scholarship in particular countries or regions, namely the former Czechoslovakia (Prague School), Soviet Union, Canada, France, Spain, Mexico, the Nordic countries, Lithuania and African countries, with separate chapters in between them addressing socioterminology and terminology standardization. The focus in Part 2 is on theoretical developments potentially of significance for the entire community of terminology researchers, while national developments in terminology practice and terminology science are generally dealt with in Part 3. Still, many of the contributions concerned with particular countries or regions combine summaries of developments in terminological thought with reports on terminological activities over the decades.

Part 3 *Terminology the world over* brings reports from countries as diverse as Indonesia and North Macedonia, South Africa and Wales, Arab countries (collectively) and France, and European Union-level activities at the IATE. Each report has a different focus reflecting the many facets of the creation and dissemination of terminology in specific historical and cultural contexts: shaping national terminology in a colony and then a newly-independent country where a neighbouring state uses essentially the same language (Indonesia), path towards autonomy from a politically intertwined and somewhat more potent neighbour (Slovakia), a unique multilingual context (South Africa), or efforts to (re)create terminology in a Celtic language in the United Kingdom (Wales). These chapters may readily serve as tutorials and/or forewarnings for terminologists working in similar settings.

An equally interesting list, regrettably, would be of those countries which were not gratified with a separate article. In the *Introduction*, the editors apologetically note that certain articles “could not be included”, acknowledging the work of terminologists from the United Kingdom and the United States, Ireland, Austria (but, in the latter case, there is the chapter on E. Wüster, and the work of Infoterm is presented at length in the chapter on standardisation), and Belgium and the Netherlands. The omission of Belgium unfortunately means that R. Temmerman’s sociocognitive terminology is not showcased, which is disappointing given that T. Cabre’s and P. Faber’s approaches are given ample space in the article about Spanish terminological research and that R. Temmerman’s view are referenced across multiple chapters. Missing from the volume are also contributions by Japanese and Chinese authors.

In this context, it is a little disappointing, too, to also note the absence of an article about terminological thought in Poland. Like other central European countries, Poland can boast a terminological narrative spun by a host of major terminologists. A possible starting point could be the wide acceptance and use of borrowed terms until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, followed by work towards creating national terminologies throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the vernacular of a partitioned country, the need to eliminate the many terms borrowed from the languages of the partitioners (i.e. Russia, Prussia and Austria) when Poland regained independence in 1918, limited access to Western scientific achievements in the Socialist era until 1989 and coping with a massive influx of Anglicisms since then.

There is an index towards the end of the book, and one can see there how certain terms are distributed quite evenly throughout the volume, to mention *onomasiology*, *terminology/language planning*, *concept orientation* and some others. An electronic copy naturally makes it possible to locate instances of a particular word or phrase, and this activity can turn out to be very educational for readers of *Terminology throughout History...* A quick contextual analysis of a few key words, such as *systematic*, *onomasiological* or *standardisation*, will reveal some recurring themes in the national/regional terminology accounts: how, historically, terminology issues first became relevant to domain specialists rather than linguists; how those specialists set great store by ensuring monosemy and, more generally, stability of term meanings and forms; and how in many of the localities described there have been controversies over whether it should be domain specialists or linguists that take the lead in terminology work. While many of the authors in this volume can be linked to ISO's Technical Committee 37, the inclination towards prescriptive activities in terminology is probably more than a nod towards this focus of Wüsterian thought, mirroring, as the narratives show, the needs of domain specialists. Efforts to describe the non-ideal discourse realities of terminology use that do not go beyond description are apparently not regarded as highly as action to eliminate what is wrong.

In the words of the late Professor Jerzy Lukszyn of the University of Warsaw, the ultimate goal of terminology research and terminology work is to improve specialized communication. Under this philosophy, terminology-related activities are a prescriptive enterprise, but the outcomes of corpus-based descriptive studies of terminology in discourse may well serve the same overarching goal.