TERMCAT: PROVIDING TERMINOLOGY SERVICES FOR THE CATALAN AUTONOMOUS REGION

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Abstract

The public centre for the Catalan terminology (www.termcat.cat) has the mission of ensuring the development and integration of Catalan terminology into both specialist sectors and society in general through the constant creation of innovative, quality tools and resources in permanent dialogue with experts and users.

TERMCAT's activities take place within the framework of the process of standardising the Catalan language and in a global context determined by the knowledge society, diversity and multilingualism.

Our approach to Catalan language planning adopted is based on a cooperative model that revolves around social participation and involvement and is aimed at ensuring the sustainable co-existence of Catalan with the other languages used in Catalonia. In pursuing these goals over the last 25 years, TERMCAT has forged its own style, one that includes both idiosyncratic characteristics and elements that could be exported to other linguistic communities.

Keywords*: Catalan terminology, terminology services, terminology dictionaries, terminology standardisation*

Terminology for the Catalan language

Catalan is a language that more than 11 million people understand and more than 9 million speak today. A language that is used in seven territories belonging to different States: in four autonomous communities in Spain (Catalonia, the Valencian Community, the Balearic Islands and Aragon); in Andorra; in the south of the France; and in Alghero (Italy).

This is a language that, compared to the 23 official languages in the European Union, occupies eighth position in number of speakers, and which is among the 30 most used languages on the Internet. A language that today faces the challenges posed by the modern society, such as globalisation, migratory movements and the impact of the Internet and information technologies on everyday life.

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TERMCAT's activities take place within the framework of the process of standardising the Catalan language and in a global context determined by the knowledge society, diversity and multilingualism.

TERMCAT (www.termcat.cat) was created 25 years ago as a consortium with its own independent legal status, constituted by 3 bodies: the Generalitat, or Government of Catalonia (which is its principal source of funding), the Institute of Catalan Studies (which plays the role of reference in terminology standardisation) and the Consortium for Linguistic Standardisation (which ensures dissemination throughout Catalonia).

Our mission is to ensure the development and integration of Catalan terminology into both specialist sectors and society in general through the constant creation of innovative, quality tools and resources in permanent dialogue with experts and users.

Our approach to Catalan language planning adopted is based on a cooperative model that revolves around social participation and involvement and is aimed at ensuring the sustainable co-existence of Catalan with the other languages used in Catalonia. In pursuing these goals over the last 25 years, TERMCAT has forged its own style, one that includes both idiosyncratic characteristics and elements that could be exported to other linguistic communities.

As a public institution that provides services to society, TERMCAT has a responsibility to work to the highest standards of efficiency and efficacy and to ensure that its procedures are transparent as regards both its administrative management and the performance of its technical work. For this reason, within the frame of its Strategic Plan, TERMCAT has adopted ISO Quality Management Standard 9001:2008, aimed at ensuring constant improvement to both the organisation's operations and its accountability.

In this context, the services that TERMCAT provides to society are divided into four large blocks:

1. Development of terminological products

On of the most important commitments undertaken by TERMCAT is that of providing Catalan society with terminological resources in the fields of science, technology and the humanities. To achieve this goal, TERMCAT produces terminology dictionaries and other compilations that bring together terminology from different specialist fields.

More than 500 products, embracing all fields of knowledge

Since 1985, TERMCAT has helped to develop 515 products that cover a broad range of knowledge fields: from the medical sector, technology and industry to the human and social sciences and sport.

All these products are the fruit of coordinated work between terminologists and experts in the different sectors. They are distributed by different channels, according to their nature and to the interests of their target audiences: dictionaries on paper, online dictionaries, pamphlets, promotional posters...

Catalan is the main language used in all TERMCAT publications, and denominations and definitions are given in Catalan. Nonetheless, within the framework of a multi-lingual project, equivalent denominations are generally given in Spanish, French and English (and, occasionally, in other languages).

TERMCAT lasts publications include *Diccionari general de l'esport* (2010) [4], *Diccionari dels mercats financers* (2009) [1], *Lèxic multilingüe de la indústria* (2009) [8], *Noms de plantes* (2009) [12], *Lèxic de les comunitats europees* (2009) [7] and *Diccionari d'infermeria* (2008) [3].

Tools for managing terminology

In order to ensure optimal management at all stages in its terminology work, TERMCAT is equipped with its own, powerful management tool, adapted to the methodology employed. Moreover, two terminology management tools, GesTerm and GdTweb, have been developed and made available to the general public.

GdTweb is a tool designed for people who collaborate with TERMCAT from different physical locations (terminologists and experts), enabling them to work online by using a terminology management programme connected to the Centre's terminology databases. GdTweb enables users to work with several TERMCAT terminology data files at the

same time, modifying them, making searches according to a wide range of criteria and generating lists and statistical reports.

GesTerm is a terminology management tool created using free, downloadable software and which can be improved collaboratively by modifying the source code. GesTerm assists users in carrying out the main tasks involved in terminology work: creation of files and dictionaries containing terminology; maintenance of information linked to such files and dictionaries; advanced searches; and generation of printable lists.

2. Terminology consulting services

Cercaterm, a free online multilingual enquiry service

To enable them to resolve doubts about terminology, TERMCAT provides all users with access to Cercaterm, an online consultation service available free of charge from its website. By entering Cercaterm (www.termcat.cat), users can freely consult Catalan terminology in any specialist field and from any available language.

Cercaterm contains 220,000 files (more than 900,000 denominations) than can be found thanks to a multilingual search engine. Each file may contain denominations in different languages, a definition in Catalan, thematic classification and notes of linguistic and terminological interest on the term considered.

If the information obtained is not sufficient to resolve their doubts, users can also send their queries to a terminology specialist at the Consultation Service, first registering as a Cercaterm user and then completing and sending a personal attention form.
There are currently more than 25,000 registered users of Cercaterm.

Customised advice

TERMCAT provides institutions, universities and research centres, businesses and other bodies, as well as individuals, with methodological, terminological and documentary advisory services for drafting or translating specialist works, technical documentation and other specialist texts.

According to the specific characteristics of each project, advisory services may include: terminology review; research, resolution and, if appropriate, standardisation of neologisms; methodological support;

coordinating teams of translators; qualitative assessment; and terminology and data-processing management.

TERMCAT has published methodological texts about terminological definition [5], loan translation [10], bibliography [2] and term order [9].

On request, TERMCAT provides bodies (associations, public institutions, businesses, etc.) with advisory services for locating data-processing products in Catalan.

According to the specific characteristics of each project, these advisory services may include: information about reference documentary resources in the field of technology; coordination of localisation teams; methodological and terminological support throughout the development process or translation of the software; standardisation of neologisms as appropriate; assessment of the linguistic and terminological quality of the final product; and terminology and data-processing management throughout the project.

Terminology downloads and cessions

From its website, TERMCAT makes available to the general public terminology repertoires generated from its databases, freely downloadable in standard xml format. This is a very popular service, and we hope to increase the services provided in this way in the future.

On request, TERMCAT also grants to institutions, universities and research centres, businesses and publishers, professional associations and other bodies cessions of terminological data that enable them to respond to their organisations' needs for knowledge and dissemination of terminology, whether through their corporate websites or as support for the construction of technological management platforms (search engines, websites, integration into editing tools, etc.). TERMCAT also makes such cessions, on request, to language professionals, doctorate students and experts requiring representative terminological corpus in their research work.

3. Terminology standardisation for the Catalan language

TERMCAT's mission also includes a singular task: standardising neologisms from the speciality lexicon. TERMCAT approves the Catalan forms of new terms that emerge in the fields of science, technology and the

humanities, whether because no proposed form already exists or because forms are being circulated that are inappropriate from the linguistic or terminological point of view.

The body responsible for this work is the TERMCAT Supervisory Council, a standing committee whose work focuses on aspects related to the linguistic form of neologisms and their adaptation to the general rules of Catalan.

Before being approved by the Supervisory Council, terms are studied in dossiers [11] and discussed by experts. Finally, all terms standardised by the Supervisory Council are included in the Neoloteca, and can also be consulted by using Cercaterm.

Since 1985, more than 6,500 terms have been standardised in Catalan. The standardisation process [6] is applied to terminology that falls into one or other of the following cases:

* They have no fixed denomination because they respond to new conceptual realities
(*servei de missatges curts*, *empresa puntcom*, *bloc*) [short message service, dotcom company, blog]

* There exist doubts or variations (spelling, morphology, etc.) with regard to the denomination
(*burca*, *delfinari*, plural de *vanitas*) [burkha, dolphinarium, plural of *vanitas*]

* There exist more than one denomination for the same concept
(*hipòtesi de l'origen africà recent*: *out of Africa, model de reemplaçament ràpid, teoria de l'Eva mitocondrial, teoria des d'Àfrica* or *teoria a partir d'Àfrica*) [(Recent) "Out of Africa" Theory]

* They are designated by a borrowed or copied form (*airbag: coixí de seguretat; bullying: assetjament escolar; estat de l'art: estat de la qüestió*) [airbag, bullying, state of the art, state of the question]

* They present conceptual confusions
(*reciclar, recuperar, valoritzar, reutilitzar*) [recycle, recover, valorise, reuse]

In order to objectively evaluate the possibilities of introducing a Catalan alternative or whether to opt for an adaptation of the spelling or accept the borrowed term directly, TERMCAT makes an in-depth study of

each term [10], taking into account linguistic and terminological criteria, as well as usage.

4. Translation of standards into Catalan language

In accordance with the cooperation agreement signed in 2005 with AENOR, the Spanish Association for Standardisation and Certification, TERMCAT is the authorised centre for translating the UNE and ISO-UNE standards into Catalan. The procedure employed in translating these standards follows the guidelines laid down in the ISO: UNE 15.038 standard for translation services.

Since 2005, 20 standards have been translated into Catalan.

Towards the future

One of our mains goals is increase social confluence. We need the involvement of all people affected by terminology: technicians, linguists, terminologists, translators, journalists, communicators, etc. Otherwise the results will not have the necessary social support or legitimacy for successful use.

After 25 years' experience and participation in countless projects and initiatives aimed at enhancing Catalan's prestige as a language for work and for specialist communication, we continue to constantly review TERMCAT's mission, bringing it up to date and seeking the best ways of reaching all sectors of society.

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