

BOOK REVIEW – A NON-NATIVE USER PERSPECTIVE OF CORPUS-BASED DICTIONARIES OF ENGLISH AND FRENCH.

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Corpus-based dictionaries are intended to any native or non-native speaker of a particular language. Nonetheless, terminology researchers insist that professional translators need to be aware of the array of resources made available to them by modern dictionaries.

Referring to dictionaries is an essential and time-consuming activity of a translator's daily work. Even though bilingual dictionaries are useful, they cannot take the place of monolingual dictionaries, particularly after the end of the nineties, when the most important English learners' dictionaries started to be reformulated owing to the availability of large quantities of text of varied sources in machine-readable form.

Combinations of words in a language happen more frequently than they would happen unintentionally, and even if they cannot be clearly distinguished. The so-called collocation is the primary concept offered by corpus-based dictionaries and, nowadays, it could yet be considered a tool.

As pointed out on its back cover, the Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary [OALD] (2002 edition, with Genie CD-Rom) is based on the Oxford Corpus Collection and the British National Corpus. It is filled up with numerous examples based on real context of use, emphasis given to collocations.

Sixteen highlighted study pages offer important information to the user on how to consult the dictionary. Number B3, which refers to Collocation, is particularly useful; it makes clear that the examples shown in the dictionary are based on natural occurrences.

The noun *Wine* is worthy of note. To start with, a question is raised: *Can you say "pink wine"*? Afterward, the text of the entry of that noun is reproduced. Non-native speakers will therefore be able to realize that they can say *dry / sweet / red / rosé or white wine*. The same sort of explanation is given with reference to which verbs can be used with a specific noun and which adverbs are normally employed with particular adjectives. Important collocations are also printed in bold type, as in the example: *She writes **under a pseudonym***.

The grammar points are particularly useful for a non-native speaker as well. Subtle differences in the use of, for example, *can / be able to / could / manage to*, are found in note boxes placed close to one of the entries, and they are also referred to in the mentioned entries.

The Genie CD-Rom can be used either by inserting the CD into the CD-tray or by installing the software on the hard disk. By clicking twice on the corresponding icon shown on the Desktop of a PC, an image similar to a palmtop is shown. One should only have to type a word on the dialog box and then type < enter> in order to know its meaning. When using a word processor or the Internet, it is only necessary to point the word with the cursor of the mouse and the dictionary entry will appear on the Genie screen.

Grammar points are also featured on the Genie screen, a useful feature for text production purposes.

Conversely, if the word in question is mistyped, the Genie will not display any possible option. One must first know the correct spelling of a word to look it up on the Genie CD-Rom.

As mentioned above, the OALD's printed version contains useful study pages and visual aids. In contrast, they are not illustrated on the CD-Rom. Therefore, the users will have to refer to the printed version of the dictionary if they need to comprehend, for example, the difference between pie / pudding / pancake, supposing that if the entries on the screen are not enough for someone to deduce it. As a result, when traveling or working outside the office, a translator using his laptop will also have to carry the printed version of the dictionary.

The New Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary [CALD] CD-ROM is much superior to Oxford's Genie CD-ROM.

To begin with, it is readily understandable: one should just have to start typing a word to display automatically a list of similar entries on the left side of the window screen. A variety of information comes together with the description of the meaning: spelling, smart thesaurus, and word building, a unique feature that reveals a list of words that are formed from a common root.

Word Building is displayed through a pop-up window that reveals related words formed with the same root, that is, nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs.

The Smart Thesaurus illustrates the words related to a particular entry. All information can be copied or printed. The option "copy all entries" makes possible to paste the content of all related words to a new Word document, including their meaning and examples.

In the Pictures section, there is an onomasiologic term-bank, varying from animals, to car and trucks, kitchen equipment and cooking. Labels can be seen by pointing the cursor over the picture and, to see a definition, it is only necessary to click on the label: a small "look up" window opens showing the definition. Finally, it is possible to see the complete entry in the main dictionary window by clicking on the "show in main dictionary" button.

This represents an enormous economy of luggage if working outside the office is needed. A portable computer and the CALD's CD-Rom would be as much as necessary.

The 2004 edition of the *Nouveau Petit Robert* [PR] is illustrated by examples and citations derived from a corpus formed by literature, scientific texts, extracts from films and music.

It is the first time it benefits from information technology techniques of corpus compilation and research. A commentary found in one of the fourteen pages of introduction justifies that, as press goes faster than literature, many citations are taken from newspapers, and not only from literature, especially in what concerns neologisms.

The editors present a new way of explaining how a lexicographer can use his intuition or corpus information to form examples to illustrate each entry: the circumstances in which a lexicographer produces examples are as natural (or as artificial) as those of a writer while writing fiction texts.

Five pages describe, in alphabetical order, the names of the authors quoted in the citations. Furthermore, forty-seven periodicals are listed as contributing to the compilation of the corpus, from the legendary *Le Monde* to *Cosmopolitan* and *Le Québec tel quel*. Moreover, 28 films, from *Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne* to *Et Dieu Créa la Femme* are quoted, and the scriptwriters' names are indicated as well.

Most entries begin with their first year of appearance [i.e., *cité* (1080), *baladeur* (1985), *logiciel* (1970), *souris* (1983), *cédérom / cd-rom* (1989), *courriel* (1990)]¹.

Finally, some entries are illustrated either by citations or by invented examples. When the entry refers to a citation, the author or periodical is shown just after the sentence: "*L'oursin, dont la bouche s'appelle, on ne sait pourquoi, lanterne d'Aristote, creuse le granit.*" (Hugo). "*Les raves, ces nuits secrètes [...] dans des vieux hangars désaffectés.*" (Le Nouvel Observateur, 1995).

To a certain extent, the PR is quite an investment for a Brazilian translator. Additionally, if a CD-Rom with the same contents is required, one should have to disburse twice as much. Hence, if working outside the office is needed, the 2949-page book should be also taken. Conversely, the OALD or the CALD is worth half that sum, with a CD-Rom included.

¹ Respectively, city / walkman / software / mouse / CD-Rom / e-mail.

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