

# Terminology for the Catalan language: 25 years of TERMCAT

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## THE CATALAN LANGUAGE AND TERMINOLOGY

In 1985 in a social and linguistic context very different from the situation today (just a few years after democracy had been restored in Spain and the ban on the use of Catalan imposed by the Franco dictatorship had been removed), Catalan society, through its autonomous government, decided to establish, in Barcelona, a body devoted to equipping the Catalan language with terminology resources and working to normalise Catalan in terms of specialist languages.

Now, twenty-five years later, Catalan society is still very active in the sphere of language, and TERMCAT, the terminology centre for the Catalan language, has become consolidated in its role of coordinating terminology activities.

Today Catalan is a language that more than 11 million people understand and more than 9 million speak. 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 part of 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.

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](http://www.termcat.cat)) was created in 1985 as a consortium with its own independent legal status, constituted by three 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 language standardisation) and the Consortium for Linguistic Standardisation (which ensures dissemination throughout Catalonia).

#### TERMCAT'S ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

TERMCAT's 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 co-operative 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.

TERMCAT maintains stable cooperation relations both nationally and internationally with bodies and organisations devoted to terminology and related activities. Moreover, TERMCAT also promotes multilingual terminology work to ensure the international dissemination of Catalan. TERMCAT cooperates closely with universities throughout the Catalan linguistic territory by supplying specialists to take part in terminology projects and to provide advisory services. Parallel to these activities, TERMCAT has also established cooperation agreements with other bodies and organisations that play important roles in disseminating and promoting terminology.

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.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF TERMINOLOGICAL PRODUCTS

One 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.

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, etc.

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) [sports], *Diccionari dels mercats financers* (2009) [financial markets], *Lèxic multilingüe de la indústria* (2009) [industry], *Noms de plantes* (2009) [plants], *Lèxic de les comunitats europees* (2009) [European Communities] and *Diccionari d'infermeria* (2008) [nursery].

In order to ensure optimal management at all stages in its terminology work, TERMCAT is equipped with its own, powerful management tool, GdT, 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.

## TERMINOLOGY CONSULTING SERVICES

A number of language reference resources are available to the Catalan linguistic community, helping users to draft texts and resolve the most frequent doubts.

Regarding specialist languages, one of the most frequently consulted resources is Cercaterm, an online consultation service available free of charge from TERMCAT website. By entering Cercaterm ([www.termcat.cat](http://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.

Moreover, 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, as well as for locating data-processing products in Catalan.

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.

In recent years, with a view to adapting our services to meet users' needs, we at TERMCAT have put great efforts into complementing the aforementioned terminology reference resources by providing data download services. In order to develop language technology tools, it is essential to make quality basic language data available, and for this to be appropriately labelled and formatted. Such data can then be reused and adapted for different uses; in search tools, spelling checkers, automatic translation, etc.

With these uses in mind, TERMCAT makes available from its website, to the general public terminology repertoires generated from its data-

bases, 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.

#### TERMINOLOGY STANDARDISATION FOR THE CATALAN LANGUAGE

TERMCAT's mission includes the task of standardising neologisms from the speciality lexicon. The Centre approaches this work in two ways:

- by approving 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 terminology point of view;
- by establishing linguistic and terminological criteria to facilitate terminology work and the development of specialist languages in Catalan.

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 [6] 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 [3] 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 of *vanitas*) [burkha, dolphinarium];
- there exists 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 [6], taking into account linguistic and terminological criteria, as well as usage.

In order to describe and explain the methodological criteria that have guided the work of TERMCAT over the years, the centre has published works on: terminological definition [2], loan translation [5], bibliography [1] and term order [4], amongst others.

#### 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.

#### THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

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.

The TERMCAT's commitment to the Catalan language community is its reason for existing. We need the involvement of all stakeholders in terminology: technicians, linguists, terminologists, translators, journalists, communicators, etc. In order to achieve this, we shall work for greater social participation in projects, greater proximity to terminology users and increased efficiency in achieving the mission TERMCAT was set up to achieve and delivering its results to society.

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#### KATALONŲ KALBOS TERMINOLOGIJA: 25 TERMCAT METAI

Katalonų terminologijos centro ([www.termcat.cat](http://www.termcat.cat)) Barselonoje uždavinys – užtikrinti kataloniškos terminijos plėtrą ir diegimą specialiose srityse bei plačiojoje visuomenėje nuolat kuriant pažangias ir kokybiškas priemones bei išteklius ir bendradarbiaujant su ekspertais ir vartotojais.

Centro veikla ir paslaugos apima katalonų kalbos tvarkybą, joms įtakos turi žinių visuomenė, įvairovės ir daugiakalbiškumo idėjos.

TERMCAT veikla, susijusi su katalonų kalbos planavimu, remiasi bendradarbiavimo modeliu, kuris numato visuomenės dalyvavimą ir darnaus katalonų bei kitų Katalonijoje vartojamų kalbų gyvavimo užtikrinimą. Siekdamas šių tikslų per pastaruosius dvidešimt penkerius metus TERMCAT sukūrė savitą veiklos stilių, turintį išskirtinių bruožų, kuriuos galėtų panaudoti kitos kalbinės bendruomenės.

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