La premodificación nominal en el ámbito de la informática. Estudio contrastivo inglés-español

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In the past few years, the number of papers on contrastive analysis has risen to hundreds, or even into thousands, if one counts all marginally relevant publications on business communication, foreign language teaching, training in composition, and translation in theory and practice. The great majority of these contrastive studies have focused on English and Oriental (Chinese, Japanese, Korean) languages, Arabic, German, Finnish and Czech. A few only have dealt with French and Spanish. The book under review is one of the most recent contrastive studies carried out between English and Spanish. More specifically, Fernández and Montero's research examines nominal premodification in a corpus of articles written in English and in Spanish in the field of computer science. The authors considered both broken (discontinuous sequences) and unbroken or coordinated (continuous sequences) nominal structures.

In a short (5 pages) Introduction the authors present the scope of the study, the state-of-the-art of the linguistic structure examined, the corpus analysed and the method they used to carry out their research. Their linguistic corpus is made up of several sources in both languages: dictionaries such as the *Dictionary of Computing* and the *Diccionario de Informática*; popularization articles published in specialized journals such as *Scientific American, Binary* and I*nvestigación y Ciencia* and *Byte*; academic textbooks and instruction manuals. All these sources are clearly

referenced in the Bibliography at the end of the book. I personnally would have appreciated a generic presentation of the sources consulted, i. e., different entries or listings according to the genres from which the texts were drawn (manuals, textbooks, scientific journals) instead of a global presentation of the papers examined. But this is a very minor detail that does not invalidate in any way the worth, interest and quality of the book.

The method used is the most appropriate for this kind of study. The authors recorded all the nominal compounds they encountered in their corpus (a total of 4.244). They then classified these compounds into several categories (adj + N, N + N, adverb + N, N + N + N etc.) and analyzed their Spanish equivalent (e.g., feedback processes = *procesos de retroalimentación*).

Chapter 2 is much longer (35 pages) and presents an exhaustive description of nominal compounds: the concepts of premodification and postmodification, the difference between compound and complex nominals, the concept of linguistic economy and that of innovation, the difficulty underlying the interpretation of complex nominal goups and the ambiguity inherent to this type of structure, the orthographical and phonetical representation of such groups, their structure and nucleus, etc. All these points are not only abundantly referenced but also nicely illustrated by examples in both English and Spanish.

Chapter 3 is by far the longest (almost 100 pages) and the most interesting. It could not be otherwise because it presents the results of Fernández and Montero's research. The authors first explain how they will present the equivalences between the English and Spanish nominal groups. They rightly remark that the main problem in finding an equivalent term in Spanish lies in the fact that, because the newly coined English words or expressions refer to very recent concepts or discoveries, these do not have always an equivalent word or expression in Spanish. The Spanish language thus very frequently recurs to anglicisms which the authors classified as follows: a) pure borrowing (*batch, hardware, bit, byte, chip*) and naturalized borrowing (reset = *resetear*, to format = *formatear*), b) semantic calque (hard disk = *disco duro,* application package = *paquete de aplicación)* and c) lexical and semantic neologism (addressing scheme = *esquemas de direccionamiento*, non-procedural language = *lenguaje no procedimental*). The authors then present the detailed quantitative and qualitative analysis of their findings: the morphological analysis of the 4.244 complex nominal groups analysed. All the examples provided are systematically accompanied by their Spanish translation and six tables/figures nicely sum up the results obtained. A table summing up the quantitative results on page 77 would have been appreciated, and the percentages indicated on page 79 could have been included in Figure 7. But these, again, are minor details. Then follows a very detailed syntactic analysis of the 4.244 nominal groups, also illustrated by a lot of English examples followed by their translation into Spanish. The chapter closes on the semantic analysis of the nominal groups analyzed, also illustrated by many English-Spanish examples. Altogether that Chapter presents 350 examples of English-Spanish nominal compounds.

The last Chapter presents the conclusions of Fernández and Montero's research. It is a 9-page-long concise and precise synthesis of the main results. I would like to point out that the results obtained by Fernández and Montero corroborate some of the findings obtained in two recent studies on compound nominals: that of Blanca Guzmán (2003) who studied compound nominals in a corpus of microbiology research papers and that of Lis León (2003) who analyzed nominal syntagms in a corpus of medical research papers. But the originality of Fernández and Montero's research lies in the "generic" aspect of the corpus they examined. Indeed, they not only analyzed academic articles per se but also popularization papers and manuals. A follow up of Fernández and Montero's research could precisely delve further into a cross-generic comparison of the structure of complex nominals in different scientific/technical genres. As Fernández Polo (1995: 263) states: "*Further constrative study is needed in particular genres in English and Spanish*".

Fernández and Montero's research findings have clear-cut pedagogical implications and applications not only in translation (English-Spanish and vice versa) courses, but also in scientific reading courses. It is indeed well-known that nominal premodification, so characteristic of English scientific-technical writing, represents an important obstacle for reading comprehension purposes, precisely because they are typical of English-written scientific prose.

Perhaps an Appendix with one or several recapitulatory tables that would summarize the main quantitative findings would have been useful, especially for researchers who would like to carry out further comparative research in the field.

I highly recommend this book, written in a clear and precise manner, for its comprehensive, detailed and very well documented morphological, syntactical and semantic analysis of complex nominals in English-written computer science texts. The rationale or raison d'être of that complex structure is moreover clearly explained (linguistic economy, innovation and necessity to designate new concepts and discoveries). This book will obviously be of interest to LSP professionals in general, especially those interested in contrastive studies of specialized languages, but also to professors and students of scientific/technical English-Spanish translation and to anyone interested in the field of languages for specific purposes.

Guzman, Blanca. 2003. Compuestos Nominales del Discurso Científico Escrito en Inglés (Microbiología Médica). Unpublished thesis. Universidad de Los Andes. Merida. Venezuela.

Lis León. 2003. La Estructura Funcional del Sintagma Nominal Inglés: Análisis de un Corpus Biomédico. Unpublished Ph.D dissertation. Universidad de La Laguna. Sta. Cruz de Tenerife. España.

Fernández Polo, Javier (2003) "*Some discoursal aspects in the translation of popular science texts from English into Spanish*" In Organization inDiscourse. B. Warvik, S.K. Tanskanen and R. Hiltunen (Eds). University of Turku. p. 256-264

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