Book Reviews

STUDWELL, William E.: **Library of Congress Subject Headings: Philosophy, Practice, and Prospects.** New York, London: The Haworth Press 1990. 120p., ISBN 1-56024-003-2

Whatever we may think about *Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH)*, they are, probably, the most frequently used system of verbal indexing worldwide. Having been devised almost a century ago, they are going to be with us in the future, in spite of all widespread criticism. Indeed, they are being adapted to the online age, for use in online public access catalogues. Some years ago, they were considered as feasible for American libraries as the *PRECIS* system; or, to put it more carefully: given all the investment that had by then gone into LCSH development and cataloguing practice in American libraries, it was not thought to be worthwhile to change to another system. Besides, *LCSH* are no longer restricted to English or American usage, but have been translated into French and were thought to provide the basis for a multilingual thesaurus.

Books and articles on *LCSH* have become quite as numerous as the number of headings themselves. Publishing yet another book on the subject, therefore, would need some words of explanation. This would be all the more required if the author's interest was not on some ideological, linguistic or technical aspect, but on the very philosophy of the *LCSH* cataloguing system, or, as Studwell explains in the preface to his book: "This volume is an effort to contribute towards the improvement of the theoretical bases of subject cataloguing, specifically the subject heading system established by the Library of Congress" (p.5). Studwell unmistakeable states the purpose of his book as not to complement the numerous "everyday" guides to understanding and using *LCSH*. Studwell himself wrote several articles on various aspects of *LCSH* in recent years and must be considered, along with Chan, Cochrane and Daily, one of the most prolific writers on this subject.

Distinguishing three components of effective subject access, Studwell emphasizes two of them, the description of the system of subject cataloguing and its interpretation, while neglecting the third, the user's contact with subject access. This may be misleading, since all cataloguing, descriptive and particularly subject, needs, I think, some teleological framework to avoid what might be called "despair on the user's interface". Yet a dialectic turn would render the approach based on the theoretical foundations to be even more important than the user's point of view, for a sound understanding of the principles, - or rather the understanding of sound principles - is a precondition of successful use of the system. Apart from all methodological considerations, every attempt at *Improving LCSH for Use in Online Catalogs* (as Cochrane's seminal book on the subject is entitled) will draw the attention to the theoretical foundation of the system and the consistency of its application.

Studwell divides his book into three parts: "system", "application", and "future". The first two deal with the present state of *LCSH* principles and practice, while "future" is devoted mainly to matters such as improving the connection between *LCSH* and the computer. He painstakingly subdivides each part into sections, developing his thread of arguments in a way similar to a philosophical textbook. The approach is clearly deductive, a succession of principles followed by numerous explanations, examples as well as cross-references to related principles. As for the "system", Studwell groups the outline of its principles into subcategories such as structural matters, terminology and language, specificity and detail, as well as, finally, presentation of subject heading data. As for the "application", there are subcategories of secondary headings, number of headings assigned, order of headings assigned, as well as parallelism of subject headings.

Having said that Studwell describes *LCSH*, this is not entirely correct. For his approach is rather critical, that is to say, his "principles" read very much like a list of all the "do's" and "do not's" of subject cataloguing. At times, these principles appear to verge on the trivial, for instance: "Structural elements in LC subject headings must be consistent", or "'Rival headings' must be eliminated from LC subject headings", or "'Reverse patterns' should not be permitted in LC subject headings". Of course, this is not at all Studwell's fault, since every user of *LCSH* may easily find out that LC subject headings are inconsistent, that there are rival headings, etc. Now all that has probably been observed before, and the literature on *LCSH* may, to a large degree, be considered as the attempt at providing consistency of form and content of *LCSH*. What makes Studwell's book valuable, though not unique, is the stringency of his approach and the wealth of examples provided. A subject index facilitates access. Moreover, it is what I would call a "positive" approach: system and application of *LCSH* must be improved and, as Studwell clearly points out, LCSH can be improved if the principles he states are being observed. By assembling, in a nutshell as it were, all the faulty points in *LCSH*, and by providing a concise, comprehensive and coherent way of explanation, Studwell paves the way to really improving *LCSH*. If *LCSH* are improved, along the principles outlined and summarized by Studwell (and by the authors cited in the book), *LCSH* will become an instrument of subject cataloguing feasible in the online age and rendering the investment that goes into it rewarding.

Heiner Schnelling

Dr.H.Schnelling, Universitätsbibliothek Gießen, Otto-Behaghel-Str.8, D-6300 Gießen, Germany.

Fachsystematik und Einzelsprachensystematik des Instituts für Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft der Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität Münster (The classification system for general linguistics and for single lan-

guages of the Institute of General Linguistics, Universiy of Münster/Westfalia). Münster: Institut für Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft 1989. 3rd ed. 305p.

The technical language of linguistics is largely characterized by terminological wildness. The annoying lack of terminological precision, discipline and coordination is due to multifarious problems of terminological demarcation inherent in linguistics, to the fast growth of uncontrolled variants reflecting the manifoldness of linguistics coteries and their methodological approaches and hardly trying to disguise their theoretical provenance. There is a lot of off-hand pseudo-terminology and inflated jargon, often coined by the mere wish for private innovation and the striving for scientific prestige. The most embarrassing problems of linguistic terminology occur in the notoriously unstable and controversial field of semantics[1].

It is therefore no easy task to produce an efficient classificatin scheme[2] for the subject of general linguistics and in consequence the attempt by the Institut für Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft at the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster here under review deserves the classifier's and the linguist's welcome - despite some reservations about its classification philosophy. The classification system in question underlies the catalogue of a special library; it is not intended to meet the strict demands on systematization characteristic of science: "consistent realizations of well-defined theoretical concepts" (p.V) are not its purpose.

The Münster classification system (p.5-63) attaches great importance to semiotics, nowadays frequently hailed as an omnipotent universal science by linguists and related scientists. Provided with the notation 3., semiotics even precedes logic (notation 4.) and the philosophy of language (5.), but is thereby situated far away from another subject with a similar universal claim: pragmalinguistics and communication theory (11.). The field of semiotics is deeply differentiated; the following *criteria of a typology of signs* (3.1.3.1) are given notations of their own: 3.1.3.1.1 *arbitrariness*, 3.1.3.1.2 *conventionality*, 3.1.3.1.3 *motivation*, 3.1.3.1.4 *naturalness*, 3.1.3.1.5 *artificiality*, 3.1.3.1.6 *contiguity and partiality*, 3.1.3.1.7 *similarity, isomorphism*.

The arrangement from minor linguistic units to major ones (following the well-known pattern 'from phoneme to text') - an arrangement characteristic of linguistic classification - is not applied to all parts of the Münster classification system. The above mentioned *Theory of linguistic communication and pragma-linguistcs* (11.), e.g., is positioned between *semantics* (10.) and *text linguistics* (12.). It makes sense, by the way, to combine *syntax and grammar* (9.).

Besides a semiotic bias there is a clear preference for the interests of comparative linguistics, a tendency which explains the existence of various deeply divided classes such as *case* (8.6.1.3) and *aspect* (8.6.3.7): true quarries for comparative research.

All in all the Münster classification system is characterized by the following classificatory features:
- a tendency to sum up related terms in fairly open, rather

generous, even capacious classes whose class terms do not strive for further terminological differentiation. So we find class terms defined by extension rather than intension (!), prone to enumeration and explanation (e.g., 13. *linguistic universals, linguistic typology, contrastive linguistics*, 9.1.6 *predication, attribution, apposition*; 10.1 *Essentials of semantics: 'meaning', 'sense', 'reference'* ...). In many cases class terms are marred by rather vague phrases such as *and other things* (1.4.2), *and the like* (12.4.3), *including...* (10.2) *or especially* (9.1.11), *and... respectively* (16.), *for instance* (11.2.5.3.2.5). Conciseness and precision are often sacrificed for tentativeness and approximation: a decision not necessarily detrimental to a mere initial pragmatic handling of the matter. But will it pay in the end?
- a tendency to open up 'asylum classes' with rather vague labels such as *Other matters* (1.5.x), *Individual problems* (10.3.1).
- the renunciation of terminological control, quite obvious in class terms listing synonyms and quasi-synonyms without according one of them the rank of a preferred term (e.g., 9.4.2 *Dependenzgrammatik/Abhängigkeitsgrammatik* [two German synonyms for 'dependency grammar'], *Valenzgrammatik* [valency grammar].
- a propensity for arranging sections according to arbitrary, either alphabetical or chronological, criteria (e.g., 2.7 *Non-European linguistics*: 2.7.1 *Texts (chronological)*, 2.7.2 *Persons (A-Z)*).

The classification of some sections is rather arbitrary: the reference sciences of linguistics, for instance (1.6.1 - 1.6.21), appear in rather a loose order: there is an obvious mixing of humanities and social sciences. From time to time general topics succeed more particular ones (e.g., 5.3.7.3 *The relationship between language and thought*, 5.3.7.2 *The theory of linguistic relativity, linguistic determinism, the Whorfian hypothesis*). Sometimes the class term is directly succeeded by the sum of individual problems (e.g., 8.2 *Generative morphology*, 8.2.1 *Individual problems*). Only prefixation and suffixation are classified as affixation, but not infixation (8.4.2.2.1.1).

An index, distinctly separated from the rest of the book by its green colour (p.65-221), covers in alphabetical order all categories of the classification system as well as "a great number of further technical terms, which, via decimal classification, are classified as belonging to the relevant categories" (p.4). The criteria for selecting a term as an index term are not always plausible. for example, alveolars, labiodentals and uvulars are missing, whereas fricatives and nasals are listed. Nomen collectivum, nomen diminutivum, nomen loci, nomen qualitatis are excluded, whereas nomen acti, nomen actionis, nomen agentis and nomen instrumenti are included. The index does not qualify preferred terms as such; so we find *Verschlußlaut* (a German synonym for 'explosive') and *Explosivlaut* (explosive), both referring to 7.1.1.2: a notation representing within the systematic part of the book the class types of sound. the index entries *verb* and *Zeitwort* (a German synonym for 'verb') refer both to the class 8.5.2.2 *Verb*. By thus refraining from all syndetic

intentions the terminological control of the vocabulary of the special language is made complicated.

A separate classification scheme of individual languages (p.227-45), provided with an index (p.247-305), arranges by way of a decimal classification individual languages partly according to genealogical, partly according to geographical criteria. For lack of space it cannot be reviewed in detail here.

To sum up: The Münster classifiers give us an open classification system" (p.VI) of a highly tentative and approximative orientation. The system succeeds two former editions (1986, 1987), all of them based on the initial *Systematischer Katalog der Allgemeinen Sprachwissenschaft* (Münster, 1983). It tries to be as neutral as possible as far as theoretical backgrounds are concerned and unmistakably opts for hospitality and flexibility. It allows for the fact that many linguists tend to define their science as a 'contact science' (p.VII). The Münster classification devotes great care to both the objects and the concepts of linguistics (such as 'opposition', 'markedness', 'substitution'). Devoid of any classsificatory elegance, it has its roots in the pragmatic cataloguing of the holdings of a special library, rather than in a wish for the sophisticated organization of linguistic knowledge.

Werner Bies

1 Cf.Fluck, H.-R.: Fachsprache. Einführung und Bibliographie. 3rd ed., Tübingen: Francke 1985 (UTB 483), p.82 and Kürschner, W.: Grammatisches Kompendium. Systematisches Verzeichnis grammatischer Grundbegriffe. Tübingen: Francke 1989 (UTB 1526), p.20.
2 Some aspects of the classification of linguistics are discussed in: Dutz, K.D.(Ed.): Studien zur Klassifikation, Systematik und Terminologie. Theorie und Praxis. Akten der 6. Arbeitstagung des Münsteraner Arbeitskreises für Semiotik, Münster, 25. u. 26. Sept. 1984. Münster: Inst. f. Allgemeine Sprachwiss. 1985. (MAKS Publ.). Studium Sprachwiss. Beiheft 5; Arbeiten z. Klassifikation, 5).

Dr.Werner Bies, Universitätsbibliothek der FU Berlin, Garystr. 39, D-1000 Berlin 33

BEAUBIEN, Denise B., PRIMACK, Alice L., SEALE, Colleen (Eds.): **Software for Patron Use in Libraries**. Library Trends 40(1991)No.1. Champaign, IL: Univ. of Illinois. 197 p.

The aim of this timely issue of *Library Trends* is defined by the issue editors on page two: "... To provide one comprehensive guide that covered all aspects of patron-use software in all types of libraries".

The issue comprises nine articles, plus a brief introduction by the issue editors, and provides a comprehensive treatment of this very topical subject. The subject areas covered include experience in several different library environments, consideration of legal and copyright issues, and discussions of physical access, service provision and software selection. This explicitly multi-dimensional organization of the material is valuable to establish perspective, and ensure comprehensiveness. The editors are to be congratulated on this approach and its successful execution.

The development of information technology - of which end-user software tools, as discussed in this issue, are only one relatively small component - is one of the, if not the dominant, transforming forces impacting human society during the last thirty years. These changes have of course not been ignored by librarians, but the necessary radical re-evaluation of well-established organizational methods and procedures has not yet got up to full speed. (A valuable discussion on the impact of information technology on information providers, appropriate in this context, has recently been given by Richard N.Katz (1)).

I believe that the speed of development of the technology and the impact this has on service providers is - if anything - underestimated by several of the contributors. INTNER recognizes and points out the high volatility of the subject area in her contribution, and appropriately points to two other areas of great importance: the very recent emergence of multi-media technology, and the significance and impact of network technology. When considering the provision of software to library users it is necessary always to bear in mind the symbiotic relationship which exists between computer hardware and software, and to recognize that software without its corresponding hardware platform is useless. Personal computer software will often be superseded after one year, usually after three years, and will be of only curiosity value after five. Similar comments might be made in relation to hardware. This rapid obsolescence is a factor which has to be recognized and taken into consideration.

The future relationship of campus library and computing center - an inevitable topic of discussion in the context of this subject - is touched upon by BRADY & ROCKMAN & WALCH (p.75). Their conclusions appear to be tempered by caution; this is an organizational issue which would bear further investigation and discussion.

Finally a word of warning: In any discussion of publicly available and -distributed personal computer software the topic of computer viruses is of considerable importance, the potential for damage enormous. These issues also are addressed by BRADY & ROCKMAN & WALCH, but I feel that they simplify the issue unduly, which could engender a feeling of complacency and false security. The threat which viruses prove is a very real one, and prevention far from an easy issue. This cannot be successfully achieved by simple procedures alone; even the use of appropriate anti-viral software and a check list are probably going to prove inadequate in the library environment. Prevention and cure call for a significant level of technical expertise. Viral software technology is developing and evolving at an extreme rate, and will presumably continue to do so until personal computer operating systems are designed and developed to hinder virus propagation.

This periodical issue will be of value to library planners and policy makers reponsible for new initiatives and user service offerings. No less, however, does it have a message for directors of college and university computing facilities by highlighting and discussing an area of common interest. These individuals are perhaps less likely to