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Evidence-based LSP

Translation, Text and Terminology

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Foreword

In post-modernist circles *evidence* is perhaps regarded as a commitment to a positivist approach to scholarship and research. Discussions surrounding the subject of terminology, one of the earliest aspects of Language for Special Purposes (LSP) to be studied systematically, certainly reveal different philosophical stances. In practice, however, the interpretation of evidence can be contrasted with intuitive speculation, which can be regarded as a comparatively weak basis for many activities in which LSP studies are applied, including language planning, LSP pedagogy, technical authoring, specialist translation and terminography / lexicography. In this respect, parallels can be drawn with areas of specialist activity such as medicine and foreign-language teaching where recent developments focus on an evidence base of therapies and classroom behaviour respectively rather than on systems of belief. In this vein, the current volume addresses a number of aspects of what can be broadly called evidence-based LSP studies. The contributions are drawn from papers presented at the 14th European Symposium on Language for Special Purposes held in Guildford at the University of Surrey, in co-operation with the AILA Scientific Commission on Language for Special Purposes.

This volume is divided into five Parts, each Part being further sub-divided into chapters. The first two Parts deal with two principal sources of evidence: LSP text corpora and citation patterns in specialist communication. The third Part deals with dichotomies in LSP research and highlights the role of evidence, touching on some ideological questions. The final two Parts deal with the potential applications of an evidence-based approach: first, in the area of terminology and knowledge management, and secondly, in the challenges of LSP translation, on which an evidence-based approach may shed particular light.

Overall, the volume aims to give a sense of the different kinds of evidence which LSP studies embrace, while at the same time indicating the importance of how that evidence is interpreted in different applications, languages and cultural environments.

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