

INTRODUCTION

Once again we have to say that the use of technology is absolutely essential to make progress in dialectology. Dialectology needs technological tools to develop and to advance in the research of language variation as has already been demonstrated in different occasions, in different countries, and in different ways to analyse linguistic variation.

The preoccupation for the use of technology in Dialectology is not new. There are lots of citations about this subject in the scientific literature. We can quote i.e. Kretzschmar (1999), amongst others.

When the aim is to speak about the future of Dialectology the use of technology is a common place.

We think that we already are in the future, because in nowadays Dialectology it is essential to take into account that the use of automated tools is a task which cannot be postponed. Most of them use it in their usual researches, but there are many others who think that in Dialectology the use of technology could be important in the future, but no now; that is to say, they do not use it.

We are absolutely convinced that we cannot postpone the use of technology; each project we postpone the use of it is one occasion we have lost. Time runs against us.

Teachers of Dialectology must speak in the class-rooms to university students (in undergraduate studies but also in postgraduate), that as in other kinds of researches in Dialectology also is crucial the use of tools that allow us to research more efficiently and quickly using automated computer programs.

This book gets together several European researchers, some of them well-known in the international field and other younger that manage diverse research projects or are taken part in research teams. The papers were shown in “Tools for Linguistic Variation” symposium, held at the Faculty of Letters of the UPV/EHU (The University of the Basque Country), in October 1 and 2, 2009.

All of them are joined by the conviction that the use of technology is crucial at this moment. And all of them use in their researches automated computer programs.

Hans Goebel (U. Salzburg) shows the maximum advances that he has done in the well-known VDM program, in the dialectometrical team of the University of Salzburg in his “Introducción a los problemas y métodos según los principios de la Escuela Dialectométrica de Salzburgo (con ejemplos sacados del ‘Atlante Italo-Svizzero’, AIS)” entitled paper. The contribution shows some aspects of the dialectometry: inter-punctual dialectometry, dendrograme’s dialectometry, and correlative dialectometry. The VDM program is one of the most widely used tools in Dialectology when it is necessary to use the statistics.

John Nerbonne, Jelena Prokić, Martijn Wieling and Charlotte Gooskens (U. Groningen) present “Some further dialectometrical steps”: Levenshtein distance (one of the most successful methods to determine sequence distance), using the RuG/L04 package to visualize geographical patterns (world wide known program), Inducing segment distances empirically, Co-clustering to detect linguistic basis of dialect differentiation, Understanding Séguy’s curve, etc.

The technology used in different geolinguistical researches has been shown by Roland Bauer, the team Guylaine Brun-Trigaud and Pierre-Aurélien Georges, and the team Gotzon Aurrekoetxea and Aitor Iglesias. Roland Bauer (U. Salzburg) deals with oral dialectology in his “Le projet VIVALDI: présentation d’un atlas linguistique parlant virtuel”, which studies Italian dialects in an on-line environment. Guylaine Brun-Trigaud (CNRS) and Pierre-Aurélien Georges (Université Nice Sophia Antipolis) present the THESAURUS OCCITAN in two papers: “Le THESAURUS OCCITAN: une base de données multimedia consacrée aux dialectes occitans” and “the THESAURUS OCCITAN: a multimedia database dedicated to Occitan dialects. Presentation of its morphosyntax module”, respectively; that is to say, the characteristics of data processing (the addition of new data, lemmatisation, syntactical tree tagging) and work features. Gotzon Aurrekoetxea (UPV/EHU) and Aitor Iglesias (UPV/EHU) shows the technological tools that EUDIA research team (UPV/EHU) take in their researches from gathering information for the EDAK corpus, in the entitled “Technology for prosodic variation” paper. Pilar García Mouton (CSIC, Madrid) deals with the project to launch on-line the ALPI atlas in her “El procesamiento informático de los materiales del *Atlas Lingüístico de la Península Ibérica* de Tomás Navarro Tomás”: The paper takes into account the composition of the new team, the description of the project and its methodological aspects.

Esteve Clua (UPF, Barcelona) shows the need of the linguistic analyse of the data before their dialectometrical analyse in his “Relevancia del análisis lingüístico en el tratamiento cuantitativo de la variación dialectal”.

With regard to syntactical aspects the book enrichs with two contributions: Ernestina Carrilho (U. Lisboa) shows the tools that the Centro de Linguística of the University of Lisboa use to analyse syntactic variation in the contribution entitled “Tools for dialect syntax: the case of CORDIAL-SIN (an annotated corpus of Portuguese dialects)”. And Inés Fernández-Ordóñez (U. Complutense, Madrid) contributes showing the value of COSER corpus in her “New methods for the study of grammatical variation and the *Audible Corpus of Spoken Rural Spanish*”.

Maria-Pilar Perea (U. Barcelona), using *La flexió verbal* of the Catalan gathered in the first middle of the 20th century, shows in “The application of speech synthesis and speech recognition techniques in dialectal studies” one aspect no studied in dialectology until nowadays.

Ekaitz Santazilia (UPV/EHU) discuss the use of the article in the Basque according to the Bourciez Corpus (1895) and using VDM program to show the geographical distribution in “Un retrato del artículo vasco en el año 1895 mediante el programa *VDM*”.