Abstract
Knowledge organization (KO) can be seen as an emerging area since the scientific society which named it (ISKO) was founded in 1989. This paper presents the partial results of a terminological study of a qualitative nature which focuses on the set of expressions considered as belonging to KO and commonly applied in the literature within this area. It aims to organize the terminology used in the discourse of the KO community by combining two different and complementary viewpoints, namely Hjørland's rationalistic approach and Singh's historicist perspective. In this study, we propose a method based on literary warrant to identify, date, classify and place KO terminology in such a way that the product works as an area map. The methodology which will be followed begins with the selection of a corpus of reference works compiling the terminology of KO. One of the products is a list of all the terms recorded; dating of terms, year of coining and coiner; and a table of matching terms found in the sources. The main results arising from analysis of a random sample of ten terms will be submitted in advance in this paper. In conclusion, the fact that KO reference works currently belong to the domain (glossaries, dictionaries, classification systems, standards) provides ample indication that KO is gaining strength as an emergent new discipline which is in the process of stabilizing, defining and organizing its key notions.

1. Introduction

Knowledge organization (KO) can be considered as an emerging area since the scientific society which named it (the International Society for Knowledge Organization-ISKO) was founded in 1989. However, this field of study has been developing since the middle of the 19th century, incorporating more or less autonomous or overlapping areas such as classification, subject analysis, information retrieval and indexing, all of which belong to LIS. It is clear that these and other fields, such as informatics, linguistics, technology, semantics and terminology, converge in terms of theory, methodology and applications.

Although it is understood that KO is an intersection field between these and other disciplines, LIS seems to be “the central discipline of KO” (Hjørland 2008, 86), where it originated and from where it projected itself in various different directions. For Smiraglia, KO “is critical for the proper functioning of the Science of Information. Without that which is learned in KO, information retrieval cannot work” (Smiraglia 2014, 3). If we become aware of the multidisciplinary composition of this research field, as well as the various epistemological approaches which try to apply KO within other disciplines, we will have a better understanding of the emergent and developing processes of its terminology. Several authors have often wondered what KO is (Dahlberg 1993; 2006; Hjørland 2008; 2013; Smiraglia 2014).

Narrowly speaking, “KO as a field of study is concerned with the nature and quality
of such knowledge organizing processes (KOP) as well as the knowledge organizing systems (KOS) used to organize documents, document representations, works and concepts” (Hjørland 2008, 86). This dichotomous division of the domain which could be seen as a rationalistic approach to KO, implicitly proposing a border between the terms which can be associated with processes such as classification and indexing, their premises and those linking KOS (system typologies, terms found in standards, guidelines for system construction, domain analysis, etc.).

A historicist approach is also admissible, such as that proposed by Singh (2001) to describe and explain the terminology belonging to Ranganathan's colon classification, in which the background is ordered in a linear sequence starting with the contributions made by Richardson (1860-1939) and Sayers (1881-1960). This perspective, based on the timeline of canonical works and authors, can provide a convincing explanation of the terminological evolution within the field.

This paper presents the partial results of a terminological study of a qualitative nature which focuses on the set of expressions considered as belonging to KO or commonly applied in the literature within this area. It aims to organize the terminology used in the discourse of the KO community by combining two different and complementary viewpoints, namely Hjørland's rationalistic approach and Singh's historicist perspective.

The research objective is to carry out a historical and semantic reconstruction of the KO terminology area, to be used as the basis for research on single topics as well as the development of diachronic, synchronic and comparative studies.

Terminological research offers some comparative advantages with regard to other approaches, because not only does it analyze specialized language commonly found in the construction of science and technology discourse, but also studies interaction with the semantic web as well as the multiple aspects related to educational processes. Specific research focuses on a single term or on a limited number of terms from a particular thematic area (Talaván Zanón 2016).

2. Research context

If we look at the historical development of KO terminology, we can see that initially, as concepts began to take shape in the literature, they were first recorded in prefaces and tutorials of classification systems, in certain canonical texts (i.e. Cutter 1876; Richardson 1901; Hulme 1911; Bliss 1929) and, non-specifically, in the groundbreaking dictionaries and vocabularies of LIS (Harrod 1938; Thompson 1943).

The steady flow of terminology increased greatly around the middle of the 20th century due to the development of thesauri, and the contributions made by Taube (1955), Sayers (1959), Lancaster (1972), and especially Ranganathan (1967). In order to develop his faceted theory and method, Ranganathan created his own terminological system, made up of some 200 terms.
This trend continued with publication of the first standards (*i.e.* ANSI 1974), an increasing number of journals and the regular production of specialized dictionaries in LIS (Landau 1958; Buonocore 1976; Clason and Salem 1992). With the advent of the Internet and ICTs, and after the establishment of KO as a disciplinary field, a classification scheme (Dahlberg 1999), a digital encyclopaedia (http://www.isko.org/cyclo/) and three dictionaries of KO (Wellisch 2000; Gnoli, Marino and Rosati 2006; Barité *et al.* 2015) were published.

It is important to highlight that for decades standards have been an important tool to organize field terminology since they usually include a glossary for ordering and defining terms that require an explanation in order to apply standards effectively.

The aim of this paper is to propose a method based on literary warrant (the data provided by the topics present in documents) for the identification, dating and classifying of KO terminology so that the product works as an area map. It is thus potentially helpful to use the literature produced over the last 150 years as the basis for a historical and conceptual reconstruction of the domain, and for the setting of KO terms. In this way, we seek to establish the traceability of each term from when it was first coined until its current usage.

### 3. Methodology

The methodology outlined below will be adopted in order to fulfil the following objectives:

1. **Selection of a corpus of works in several languages**, compiling – in whole or in part – the terminology of KO. The core of this corpus will be constituted by at least two dictionaries (Gnoli, Marino and Rosati 2006; Barité *et al.* 2015) and four glossaries specialized in KO (Dewey Decimal Classification 2011; BSI 2005; NISO 2010; ISO 2011). The corpus also includes: all available glossaries and dictionaries specialized in LIS, canonical works, articles and submissions focused on a particular topic and the collection of the *College & Research Libraries* journal, published since 1939, and significant because of its subject coverage over a long period of time.

2. **The creation of a database supported by TemaTres software**. A terminological record file was established with the following items: term in English, Spanish, Portuguese and Italian, synonym, generic term, specific term, associated term, corpus definitions, original definition, theory or trend, core or fringe term of KO, bibliographic references of documents with in-depth analysis of the term, links to documents available on the Internet, coining date and author, notes and dating.

3. **Extraction of data from the corpus and record in terminological files**. The procedures used to collect information are those routinely carried out in the methodology for specific term research (Célestin, Godbout and Vachon-L'Heureux 1984) given that they include a retrospective analysis of each term,
from its coining to the present day, establishing the scope of the concept and any changes or extensions of meaning which may have arisen.

Literary warrant is taken into account since it was established that the only source from which to select and extract terms should be documents of the area. The only terms selected are those which have been mentioned by at least three researchers in the field and which have been in use in the literature for at least ten years. Terms in use (i.e. “folksonomy”) as well as obsolete terms (i.e. “uniterm”) have been included in the database, provided there is sufficient literary warrant.

As we are aware that this project can only be developed in the long term, this paper provides an advance submission of only ten terms from a random sample.

4. Results

The following comments result from the literature review process:

1. Part of the literature - especially scientific articles or presentations submitted to congresses - is devoted to the analysis of single terms. Thus, several authors have presented in-depth work on the notions of “relevance” (Mizzaro 1997), “folksonomy” (Noruzi 2006), or “facet analysis” (La Barre 2010).

2. Another portion of the documents studied focus on a KO sub area (i.e. Lancaster 1972), or on terminology established by an author or a trend (Spiteri 1998; Singh 2000).

3. Many authors suggest “neoterms” to name what they consider new phenomena, objects, operations or concepts, but a high percentage do not achieve peer recognition, since they are not convinced of the originality or innovation of the proposal. As a consequence, a great number of terms are usually not used beyond the sphere of action of the coiner and his closest students. Such terms do not fulfil the methodological framework established in the project and are, therefore, not included in the main database.

As a summary presentation of the results, Table 1 shows a list in English of the ten selected terms with their equivalents in Spanish and Italian, the year the term was recorded in the sources and, as examples, some coining dates. A column of comments and notes is also included.

Due to the lack of space, the chronological list of sources will not be included here. Only the year of the term’s recording in a source will be mentioned in the “Years of record (sources)” column.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>Italian</th>
<th>Years of record (sources)</th>
<th>Coiner, coining date in KO</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aboutness</td>
<td>Tematicidad</td>
<td>Tematicidad</td>
<td>1999; 2015</td>
<td>Fairthorne 1969</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Classaurus</td>
<td>Clasauro</td>
<td>Classauro</td>
<td>2006; 2015</td>
<td>Bhattacharyya 1982</td>
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<td>warrant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Granularity</td>
<td>Granularidad</td>
<td>Granularitá</td>
<td>1988; 2015; 2017</td>
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5. Conclusions
The kind of systematization proposed is based upon the idea that sciences require a certain uniformity of criteria and that the reliability of their classifications is reduced to a minimum so as to facilitate a greater consensus among specialists. This research can also contribute to the chronological reconstruction of KO terminology, visualizing
the periods of inclusion of terms and their origin.

It is possible that the first terms of the area appeared in order to name concrete practices of subject representation in libraries, their tools and products (i.e. “classification system”, “subject heading”) with the subsequent incorporation of others, of an abstract nature, derived from reflection on this practice (i.e. “aboutness”).

As a thematic area with strong interdisciplinary links, KO has reached a certain degree of maturity, attracting researchers from other areas, with a sustained scientific production throughout the world, accounting for the ongoing problems of subject representation of knowledge in all information contexts. This process is seen when the area terminology receives in-depth analysis from historicist and semantic perspectives. The combination of both perspectives naturally allows for a significant number of terms to be associated with the main researchers and scientists of the area, responsible for their creation, introduction or extrapolation from other knowledge areas (Dewey, Ranganathan, Hjørland, Beghtol, Sayers, Chaumier, among others).

The fact that KO reference works currently belong to the domain (glossaries, dictionaries, classification systems, standards) provides ample indication that KO is gaining strength as an emergent new discipline which is in the process of stabilizing, defining and organizing its key notions.

References


