

In this work, I analyze the system of lexicology proposed by P. R. F. Butet in 1801. My main goals are to explain the inspiration Butet found in the progress of natural sciences at his time and to point out the originality and modernity of his method. I present Butet's study in its philosophic, scientific and linguistic context; I describe its theoretic background and summarize and comment its main conclusions. In this perspective, I highlight the analogy with Lavoisier's system of chemistry and discuss the reasons for such an unusual inspiration, as well as its consequences. I compare Butet's lexicological system to the modern linguistic theory, showing the similarities which can be found between the two approaches and explaining the differences. My conclusion prove that the analytic tools which Butet invented for the purpose of his study are in principle the same as those used in modern linguistic, although they are introduced under a different name.