

There is a proverb in German: "Was lange währt, wird endlich gut", meaning, when something takes a long time to be done, it will also end with a good result. This Thesaurus Guide is indeed the fulfilment of a dream. Preliminary plans for it date back to 1971, the actual work was started only in 1982. But in considering its contents, the three years of work are justified: the result is a very worthwhile tool, not only for those seeking information on the different 462 individual "current" thesauri and the 192 additional references, but also for a lot of most interesting research which can be based on this collection.

The overall arrangement is by 10 subject groups which are subdivided altogether into 48 subject fields, as e.g. under Biomedical Sciences one finds Biology, Medicine, Veterinary Science. The single entries of thesauri, each on a separate page, cover the following 15 subentries, called categories and explained at length in the introductory part (they have not always been filled out, depending on the availability of information):

- 1) Heading (= Group and Subject Field)
- 2) Title and publication details (bibliographic data)
- 3) Responsible Organization
- 4) Originator (name and function of compiler)
- 5) Language (e.g. German, with descriptor equivalencies in..., also available in..., translation into ... planned)
- 6) Availability (printed, microfilm, microfiche, machine-readable, computer printout, typewritten, etc.)
- 7) Fields covered (scope, main areas, marginal fields)
- 8) Terms (number of, number of descriptors, non-descriptors modifiers; also criteria, like singular or plural form composite terms, abbreviations accepted, homonym control, scope notes, definitions, source references, indexing frequency data, chronological data, proper names)
- 9) Display (alphabetical, classified, narrow classification, microthesauri, broad classified display, facet classification, graphic display, hierarchical index, alpha-hierarchical index, indexes, supplementary lists)
- 10) Subdivision (main groups, sub-groups, hierarchical levels maximum)
- 11) Relational structure (synonyms, equivalence relation, alternative, hierarchical, generic, partitive, appurtenance, associative, antonymic relation; also ISO, DIN compatibility)
- 12) Notation
- 13) Construction and maintenance (instructions for use, character set, maximum descriptor length, software for thesaurus construction, edp-system for thesaurus development, updating)
- 14) Implementation
- 15) Miscellaneous (all other data of interest)

All of this has been most carefully checked and included in the volume in a very easy-to-read manner!

Besides the indexes for organizations and persons there are three trilingual subject indexes for German, French and English first entries (p.583-748). A lot of translation had to go into them. However, here one would have wished that more terms from the category "fields covered" had been included. A selection was apparently necessary because of too many entries. Thus, Classification and Indexing is not included in the index. Perhaps a reason to construct a thesaurus in this field soon?

One would wish that in the same manner an investigation could be undertaken to lead to a similar result for the special classification systems used in our world. This idea had been proposed by L.Rolling already in 1982 at the FID/CR Business Meeting in Augsburg. He is also the

"man behind the scenes" of the European Communities who inspired the Thesaurus Guide project and who is now working towards finding an adequate place for its further updating.

Besides the accessibility of the stored thesaurus data in printed form, a database has been established within ECHO (European Commission Host Organization) where one can search for its thesaurus data even free of charge. Please, look for information on this somewhere else in this issue.

I.Dahlberg

**GOPINATH, M.A.: Construction of Depth Version of Colon Classification: A Manual.** New Delhi: Wiley Eastern 1986. VIII,163p. ISBN 0-85226-326-0, Rs.70/-

H.E.Bliss, on coming across a copy of the first edition of the Colon Classification in a New York book shop, enquired S.R.Ranganathan in October 1933 about the theory behind his scheme. Ranganathan replied that there was no prior theory and he was just contemplating to construct the theory behind the CC - referring to *Prolegomena to Library Classification* which was in his mind in those days. Bliss replied: I did the theory first and design the next. You have done the design first and you propose to do the theory hereafter.(1, p.80). Ranganathan had the professed view that the work of designing a classification scheme requires a powerful flash of intuition. There is no doubt that the CC and the DDC were intuitively conceived. Ranganathan felt that designing a scheme on an a priori theory was just like writing poetry with a rhyming dictionary and a book of prosody (1, p.79). Such a view stems from his conviction that practice of any kind of art precedes its theory: poetry existed long before its theory just as social behaviour existed long, long before sociology was formulated.

While using the CC thus created, Ranganathan came to know many maladjustments. "These could - no doubt - have been avoided", writes Ranganathan, "if I had been working on the basis of a well-tested theory of classification. But the process was reversed in my case. My theory had to be developed later to discover the causes of such hidden faults and to set them right" (2, p.28). Ranganathan was also fully aware that a classification theory was not only necessary to remove the kinks and to polish up the "cosmic product", but also to make it objective. So, he developed the theory behind his CC in his *Prolegomena to Library Classification* (1937, 1957, 1967). He had wished to be very explicit on this topic. During his office (1951-1960) as chairman of FID/CR, he unsuccessfully mooted a proposal to organize an international summer school on the designing of documentary classification schedules. (It became, though, the famous Dorking Conference of 1957!) With his establishment of the Documentation Research and Training Centre 1962 at Bangalore, and with him as its founder director, the designing of depth classification schedules to the Colon Classification became formally institutionalised. Ranganathan realized that such a training was imperative for a documentalist. DRTC students are now imparted an intensive training in depth schedule making and they are also taught its theory. By this, also the research in the methodology of schedule making got a good impetus. The result is an impressive number of

depth schedules prepared by DRTC students (3, p.22-26) and (4, p.243-245). It is a matter of symbolic significance that the first issue of the research journal started from DRTC had an extensive paper by Ranganathan himself on designing depth schedules (5). In it he recommended the blending of the speculative method with the pragmatic one as a possibility that the one serves as a corrective of the other. Now, the theory and methodology of the design of depth schedules form an integral part of classification curricula of Indian library schools. Consequently, we have seen some other literature published on the topic outside the DRTC (6). The western interest culminated in Vickery's celebrated succinct book on the subject (7).

M.A.Gopinath's book under review - viewed in this chain - is a renewed indicator of the abiding interest of the Indian school of thought in what is now considered as their traditional forte. Gopinath is to be heard seriously on the topic as much for his being research assistant to the late Ranganathan as also for his own deep knowledge, practice and teaching of the field. Therefore, this book may be considered a blue book on designing depth schedules despite the fact that it nowhere bears any endorsement or sponsorship sign of DRTC or the Sarada Ranganathan Endowment in Library Science whose Secretary is Dr.Gopinath.

The book, divided into 8 parts marked A to H, has 30 chapters in all by subdividing the six sections A to F further by Roman Capitals in Ranganathan's style. The chapters are small and consist sometimes only of a single paragraph. Part G (p.119-152) contains a depth schedule for Solar Energy Production D6 B. This part contains also a list of reviewed and extended Space Isolates as well as Time Isolates of the CC. However, no list of Common Isolates is given. Part H contains a list of bibliographical references and the alphabetical index to the book. The index, as expected, refers to the section numbers instead of to the page numbers of the text. But unfortunately these section numbers were not given on the top of the pages. This impairs the efficiency of the index. A lot of flipping of the pages has to be done to thumb the desired reference.

The book is skilfully annotated on the blurb. Part A overviews the development of classification catalogues and its various uses in the intellectual life of the society and the individual. Chapter AC traces various stages of the job from conception to schedule production. Part B dwells upon the preliminary work: understanding the subject, readers approach and various resources for the job. Part C lays down the methodology for collection of terms, their processing and standardisation (verbal plane). Part D explains the grouping of terms into various facets, further patterned into arrays and chains. The role of a subject specialist has been mentioned here and there, but the overall work has been presented as if it is an ivory tower job, whereas this is now more than a team work. The administration of the work required for revision and rewriting of schedules is best manifested, though, in the revision procedure of the Dewey Decimal Classification (8-9), to which Gopinath's book can provide the necessary technical hardcore know-how. Anyhow, returning to Gopinath's book: Part E is devoted to the problem of proportionate allocation of notation. Here it is suggested that "in order

to optimise the allocation of notation to achieve overall economy in the class number, a bibliometric survey to identify the frequency of ideas incident has to be done" (p.68). By way of illustration, a bibliometric study of Solar Energy Production literature from 1870-1979 has been made. Lastly there are some guidelines on how to compile an alphabetical subject index to the schedule. The book does not end here. In Part F, some terms concerning ideas and kinds of subjects are defined. This part also contains a very valuable chapter on freshly illustrated principles of helpful sequence (Chapter FB).

In the context of the 7th edition of the CC, the new concept of "speciator ideas" - a qualifier to any isolate idea - has been introduced. Speciators are of two kinds and they are attachable to any facet with the indicators ":" and "=" respectively. Minute enumeration and speciators have enormously enlarged the versatility of the schedule. This is achieved, however, at the great price of getting unwieldy class numbers. I.Dahlberg deploringly asked: Where is the beauty of the system gone: Is it necessary that in classification today ugliness must prevail as it does in many examples of modern art? (10). Anyhow, this book gives us a foretaste of things to follow in CC-7.

The book is full of details and has been prepared with sufficient care. However, I do not understand why Gopinath writes that the Colon ":" is used to connect (E) to (M) and the Semicolon ";" is used to connect (M) to (P) (p.33). Are we reverting back to the rigidity whose abandonment in the 4th edition (1952) of the CC was considered the great breakthrough in CC?

In presentation and style of this book Ranganathan still remains the ideal although his charming simplicity of language is missing. The language remains more prosaic than it seems necessary. But there is no doubt that the book with its many merits will come handy to classification schedule designers as well as to the general students of classification.

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