Infoterm News

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Arabic telecommunications vocabulary

On the basis of a resolution passed at the International Telecommunications Union Conference in Nairobi in 1982, the Arab Telecommunications Union started a telecommunications terms and definitions project. The project is sponsored by and is being carried out in collaboration with the United Nations Development Program, the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), the League of Arab States as well as several other Arab institutions such as the Arab telecommunications ministries. The aim of this project is the establishment of Arabic equivalents for the ITU telecommunications vocabulary, which contains some 15,000 terms. Arabic would then be the fourth official language of the ITU, the others being English, French and Spanish.

A committee has been set up to supervise and co-ordinate the work, which is being done by five translators, four telecommunications experts and several other professionals — for example, information experts in the fields of linguistics and terminology.

Two basic methodologies have been established:
- a general methodology for establishment of Arabic equivalents (questions of documentation, linguistics and terminology, standardization of terminology, transcription and transliteration, suffixes and prefixes, terminological records and files); and
- a methodology for computerization aspects (input, output, data carrier, unified Arabic script) with a view to establishing a data base.

It is hoped that the methodologies validated by this project will be applicable to other fields, and thus contribute to the development of Arabic terminologies in many fields of science and technology.

Together with a wide range of activities initiated in response to several Arabization conferences held in recent years, this project will certainly provide a further impetus to terminology work in the Arab world.

Medical terminology projects

Computer-oriented medical terminology/ classification project

Back in 1928 the New York Academy of Medicine organized a special meeting to focus on standardization of American medical terminology. The result was the *Standard Nomenclature of Diseases and Operations* (SNDO), which was periodically revised and was published a last time in 1956. Not until 1982, when the American Association for Medical Systems and Informatics (AAMSI) established a group of experts to explore the problems of medical computing, was a project launched to build a new medical terminology/classification system which would be computer-oriented.

Briefly, the principal objectives of this project are:
- to examine the feasibility of compiling a uniform, controlled medical nomenclature to serve a wide range of users (patients, medical experts, researchers, etc.);
- to develop a unifying strategy to make existing and currently available medical glossaries compatible with the new nomenclature; and
- to contact other groups to work toward a global uniform nomenclature essential for worldwide use of medical data banks.

Several meetings have already been held in recent months to establish ground rules for man-machine compatibility. The key issues in this important project have been set down in a number of papers by Dr. *E.R. Gabrieli*, Chairman of AAMSI. These issues include definition of patient data collection standards and of patient identification for multigeneration medical records, automated conversion of natural language input into machine-oriented symbols, hierarchy and semantic organization of medical terms.

The medical community has accepted the challenge of such an important project, and the outlook for the project is therefore very good.

Terminological Information System of the World Health Organization (WHO) in Geneva

For many years, the lack of easily accessible and reliable terminological information has resulted in an increasing number of problems within the WHO secretariat. With an ever-larger need for information and the constant creation of neologisms in almost all fields of concern to WHO, members of the WHO secretariat were unable to cope with terminological difficulties.

Now a solution has been found in the form of a retrieval system that displays answers to queries on the screens of word-processing terminals. Although much remains to be done, particularly to render the data base adequate for most needs, the initial implementation of the WHOTERM data base has been quite successful.

In addition to the general terminology file, the data base consists of an abbreviations file and specialized files (on bacteria, viruses, fungi and chemicals, for example). Several other files are in either the implementation or planning stage. A large proportion of the data base will consist of vocabularies standardized by other organizations; this entails certain copyright problems.

Therefore, nothing in the data base, with the exception of terminology developed by WHO itself, may be made available to any organization or individual not a member of the WHO secretariat.

The experiences gained with WHOTERM so far are of great value; however, new techniques that could be used to improve the system will become available in the near future.

Social sciences terminology in Latin America

The Latin American Council for Social Sciences (CLACSO) is now trying to fill an increasingly obvious

gap in the development of the social sciences in Latin America. The objectives of the new project are:
- on the national, regional and international levels, to familiarize organizations, institutions, researchers and students with conceptual definitions peculiar to the study of the social sciences in this area;
- to participate in the terminological studies of other regional and international bodies, such as COCTA and Infoterm (see also the last Infoterm and COCTA News);
- to encourage experts preparing vocabularies, thesauri, etc. to deal with concepts specific to this area in their publications.

For further information contact: Mr. M.R. dos Santos, Director of the Social Sciences Library, CLACSO. Calloa 875, 1023 Buenos Aires, ARGENTINA.

Meetings

April 2−6, 1984: Université Catholique de Louvain, Louvain-La-Neuve, Belgium. "Computers in Literary and Linguistic Research".
This will be the 11th international conference of the Association for Literary and Linguistic Computing. It is sponsored by the Association for Computers and the Humanities.
Contact: Dr. Jacqueline Hamesse, Institut Supérieur de Philosophie, Chemind'Aristote 1, B-1348 Louvain-La-Neuve, BELGIUM

August, 27−29, 1984: Luxembourg. Terminologie et coopération internationale: la terminologie, outil indispensable au transfert des technologies.
This conference, organized by the International Association of Terminology (TERMIA), supported by the Agence linguistique européenne and held with the co-operation of a number of organizations, will focus on:
- terminology and socioeconomic and sociolinguistic aspects of technology transfer;
- terminography and technology transfer;
- sociolinguistic aspects of international terminology standardization;
- technology transfer and internationalization of concepts and terms;
- international co-operation and computerized terminology.
Contact: Dr. Guy Rondeau, Département de langues et linguistique. Faculté des lettres. Université Laval, Québec GlK 7P4, CANADA

News on Infoterm holdings

New Periodicals

Language Monthly

According to the editorial, the new journal *Language Monthly* seeks to bring together in one publication news regarding all the professions concerned with foreign languages, education, translation, interpretation, terminology, and research. As a news and information magazine, it will attempt to cover the whole language spectrum and provide topical and comprehensive coverage.

For further information please contact: Language Monthly. Praetorius Limited, 30 Clarendon Street, Nottingham NG1 5HQ, United Kingdom.

Newsletter Terminology: Latin American experience and projects

Mindful of the growing interest which the *Informativo Terminologico* has aroused in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, the Latin American Centre for Economic and Social Documentation (CLADES) of the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) has announced the publication of an English version of this journal.
The journal is published three times a year. One section, "International Experiences and Projects", is designed to meet the many requests for information from users. For further information contact: ECLA/CLADES, Casilla 179-D, Santiago, CHILE.

Language Problems & Language Planning

The first part of the spring issue of this journal consists of three articles − namely, "French in the New World: Linguistic Response to Cultural Patterns" by *L. Loretto Rapp* (Indiana University), "Kriterien der ethnischen Identität" (criteria of ethnic identity) by *H. Haarmann* (Hitotsubashi University) and "Sinhala and English" by *J.W. Gair* (Cornell University). The article by Rapp is devoted to the historical role of the French and the French language in the Americas and an assessment of the contemporary sociolinguistic situation. Haarmann's article is concerned with criteria of ethnic identity and specific problems related to ethnicity. Finally, Gair discusses Sinhala, the official language of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and changes as they relate to Sinhala and English.
The second part of this volume presents fifteen book reviews and eighteen pages of interesting notes on various subjects related to language. A highly interesting issue of LPLP!
The one hundred or so pages of the summer issue of this journal deal with a symposium on the economics of language planning and contain book reviews. The first article, by *Toussaint Hocevar* (University of New Orleans), focuses on economic aspects of the functional dynamics of languages. The paper by *Timothy Reagan* (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) seeks to examine the potential of the economics of language both for language planning and language policy, and is supported by a comprehensive list of references. A paper by *François Vaillancourt* concludes this part of the issue with a non-technical introduction to economic literature of interest to sociolinguists and language planners. There are two review essays and twelve book reviews proper in the second part. Finally, notes on general matters of interest to experts in language problems − biographical notes on contributions for example − are given.