COCTA NEWS

1. The CONTA Conference

Bielefeld, West-Germany, proved to be an outstanding success as judged by the quality of participation, the goodwill expressed in all its interactions, and the intrinsic importance of its results. As announced in the previous issue of *COCTA News* (in International Classification 8 (1981) No. 1), COCTA (the Committee on Conceptual and Terminological Analysis in the Social Sciences), in cooperation with the German Unesco Commission; the International Federation for Documentation, Committee on Classification Research (FID/CR) and on Social Science Information and Documentation (FID/SD); the Informationszentrum Sozialwissenschaften, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Dokumentation, Komitee Politik, Recht, Wirtschaft, Verwaltung (DGD/PRWV) and the Gesellschaft für Klassifikation convened its first independent conference at the Zentrum für Interdisziplinäre Forschung of the Bielefeld University from May 24–27, 1981. Altogether 74 persons of 17 countries participated. A total of 32 papers were presented in 7 plenary sessions and six workshops. E. K. SCHEUCH delivered the keynote address entitled "From Libraries for the Scholars to Global Information". During the preconference seminar on May 24 some 14 reports were given in addition, outlining the work of international and national committees relevant to the topics of the conference.

On the evening of May 26 the workshop chairmen and rapporteurs met for a lively discussion of the results of the debates and reached agreement on a set of draft recommendations that were finalized by a subcommittee consisting of D. SOERGEL, K. JANDA, J. POOL and H. TEUNE for presentation in the next morning's plenary session. After discussion and addition of a few points, the following recommendations were adopted.

2. Recommendations

Preface

Conceptual and terminological analysis is needed in the social sciences for the following purposes:

- To facilitate the conduct of research.
- To improve scientific and technical writing. Clarity and precision can be improved through more careful use of concepts, and corresponding terms, which are most appropriate to the objects of study and which are not biased toward cultures other than the one being studied. This is of particular importance for social science research on non-Western cultures and the communication of such research in the context of the traditional disciplines that are oriented toward Western culture.
- To improve the understanding of social science results through better understanding of the terms used. This includes understanding within scientific communities, across scientific communities, from science to applications, and from science to the public, and in all of these areas understanding across language and cultural barriers.
- To improve information storage and retrieval for scientists and scholars, practitioners, and the public. The boundaries mentioned for understanding of scientific results apply here as well.

The effective use of terms and concepts in social science research troubles all scholars. The participants of the CONTA Conference, who specialize in conceptual and terminological analysis, are especially aware of difficulties in developing scientific languages and relating these special languages to the ordinary language of different countries. Despite these difficulties, the conference papers described several concrete examples of progress achieved in producing dictionaries, glossaries, and thesauri for certain fields and subfields in the social sciences. These advances are reported in various papers presented at the conference and published in the conference proceedings.

Our recommendations below grew out of our experience with these existing projects on diverse topics in several countries. We offer our recommendations to the scholarly community in the hope of making even greater progress in the effective use of language in social science research in the future.

1. General Recommendations

1.1 Because many terms in the social sciences are used for political purposes and often deliberately made ambiguous, and because the meanings of some terms change radically, giving the terms a history of their own, retrieval systems should provide access to documents both through concepts assigned by an indexer and through the actual terms used in the documents. This applies both to scientific writings and to historical documents.

1.2 Designers of glossaries and/or terminological data banks should take into account different degrees of difficulty in defining concepts. Some can be defined succinctly; others require contexts, including quotations from materials using them; still others are so complex that substantial analysis and/or extensive reference to relevant literature is required.

1.3 Dictionaries (whether mono- or multilingual), classification schemes/ thesauri, and glossaries all contain the same basic information; each type of tool contains additional information specific to its purpose. One unified computerised data base can be used to produce all of these tools. When term banks are established for a specific purpose, their format should be flexible so as to allow for inclusion of in-depth conceptual and terminological information and for the arrangement of their content in the format of a dictionary, a classification scheme/thesaurus, or a glossary. Other purposes can then be served by simply including additional information.

1.4 We recommend that each international disciplinary association in the social sciences establish a permanent body to deal with conceptual and terminological problems of their disciplines.

1.5 We recommend that national disciplinary associations initiate and/or maintain projects for the analysis of concepts and terms which have significance in their respective countries and cultures, and to relate these efforts to the preparation of an international encyclopedia of social science concepts.

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1.6 We recommend that regional meetings on conceptual and terminological analysis be held among social scientists from third world countries to discuss problems specific to their experience under Western influence.

2. Recommendations on Specific Projects

2.1 We believe that there is an urgent need for an International Encyclopedia of Social Science Concepts. Its analysis of concepts should proceed from the most important and interdisciplinary concepts to the more specific ones and should present a historical account of their evolution. An international team of scholars representing the widest possible spectrum of cultures, political systems, and research traditions should compile the Encyclopedia.
Such an Encyclopedia is needed not only by scholars and the interested public but also by the designers of classification schemes/indexing languages/thesauri who cannot themselves undertake the thorough conceptual analysis on which their tools should be based.
2.2 We recommend that COCTA initiate pilot projects for the development of classified analytic glossaries in specialized areas. Such projects should be linked to preparations for an International Encyclopedia of Social Science Concepts.
2.3 We strongly urge UNESCO to go forward with its plans for an Integrated Thesaurus of the Social Sciences. Such a thesaurus would allow retrieval from a variety of viewpoints taking account of cultural and contextual differences. Retrieval is supported either through direct use in indexing and searching or through facilitating the construction of specialised classification schemes/thesauri. With respect to the development of this thesaurus we recommend the following:
a) There is a strong link between the Integrated Thesaurus and the International Encyclopedia of Social Science Concepts. The Thesaurus, and the data base used in its development, should be structured in such a way that it can support the compilation of the Encyclopedia. On the other hand, as the Encyclopedia is compiled, it should be used to improve the thesaurus.
(b) A computerised descriptor bank should be established and the Thesaurus itself should be maintained in machine-readable form.
(c) The sources to be used should be selected with respect to their contribution to the final content and structure of the Thesaurus; therefore, classification systems should be included. Care should be taken to include also sources for concepts arising from social science research in third world countries. Sources not available in machine-readable form should be converted.
(d) Scope notes should be emphasized, so that the concepts covered will be widely understood.
(e) To save effort, an available detailed classification should be used as a starting point to develop the conceptual structure.
2.4 We recommend that guidelines for integrated thesauri be developed.
2.5 We recommend that COCTA develop guidelines for efforts in conceptual and terminological analysis undertaken by disciplinary associations.

3. Papers presented at CONTA Conference

Topic 0.2: Theory and Practice of Conceptual and Terminological Analysis

0.21 Henry TEUNE: Concept development in the social sciences: The logic and strategy of the Committee on Conceptual and Terminological Analysis.
0.22 Jonathan POOL: Applying conceptual analysis in the 21st century: design of a computerized system for global translingual communication.

Session 1A and Workshop 1B: Theoretical Premises

1A1 J. S. PETÖFI: Theory of concept analysis. 1B1 H. M. ARTUS: Concept and context: problems and limitations. 1B2 S. K. GHOSH: Problems and concepts of social science research in India, especially Bengal and Bengali. 1B3 K. JANDA: What's in a name? Party labels around the world. 1B4 H. LECLERCQ: Some pluriconceptual terms in everyday language.

Session 2A and Workshop 2B: Descriptor languages in the social sciences.

2A1 Jean MEYRIAT: Evaluation of descriptor languages in the social sciences 2B1 J. A. AYOADE: Criteria and constraints of conceptual and terminological analysis: an African perspective. 2B2 K. P. MISRA: Conceptual and terminological analysis: An Indian perspective. 2B3 J. E. BOYD: 'Global Consciousness' – a system-building political concept? 2B4 J. W. BJÖRKMAN: The concept of 'equity'. Multiple meanings in ordinary language. 2B5 G. FLANZ: The significance of separating powers in the development of constitutionalism and in contemporary constitutions.

Session 3A and Workshop 3B: Glossaries and Termbanks

3A1 F. W. RIGGS: Establishment of glossaries. 3B1 H. P. OHLY: Concepts: of what? for whom? 3B2 J. MALICSI: The universality of descriptor languages in relation to the particulars of data. 3B3 A. J. N. JUDGE: Anti-developmental biases in thesaurus-construction.

Session 4A and Workshop 4B: Metaconcepts and Concept Compatibility

4A1 D. SOERGEL: Comparison and compatibilities of index languages and other concept schemes. 4B1 A. MARRADI: Metaconcepts for measurement terms. 4B2 W. NEDOBITY: Metaconcepts of terminology. 4B3 D. RUSU, I. DRAGOMIRESCU: Terms and concepts in technology assessment studies. 4B4 H. G. BURGER: The Transitive Taxonomy: Classification by the grading of processes.

Session 5A and Workshop 5B: Integration of Thesauri

5A1 Jean AITCHISON: Integration of thesauri in the social sciences. 5B1 J. LITOUKHIN: UNESCO's Project for the establishment of an Integrated Thesaurus of the Social Sciences. 5B2 I. DAHLBERG: Guidelines for the establishment of compatibility between information languages. 5B3 M. DIENES: Testing the compatibility matrix in the field of culture.

Session 6A and Workshop 6B: Dictionaries and Term Banks.

6A1 Imre MOLNAR, Geörgy ROZSA: Establishing the INTERMIN system model within the UNESCO–INTER-

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CONCEPT Project. 6B1 R. J. WOLFSON: A formal lexicon for the social sciences. 6B2 T. FÖLDI: A multilingual dictionary of economics. 6B3 E. MEYNEN: Two international glossaries in cartography and geography. 6B4 J. MOGEY: A conceptual dictionary for family studies.

4. COCTA Meeting

On the afternoon of May 28 altogether 20 participants in the CONTA Conference convened for a COCTA meeting that continued for two hours. Among the decisions taken at that time are the following:

a. Encyclopedia: The recommendation by the Conference to recommend the preparation of an Encyclopedia of Social Science Concepts was strongly supported. Riggs agreed to bring this proposal to the attention of the International Social Science Council and other potentially interested bodies.

b. Glossary: In accordance with the Conference Recommendation to COCTA to develop classified analytic glossaries in one or more specialized areas, it was decided to press for the preparation of glossaries in several languages dealing with the phenomena and concepts used by specialists writing about ethnicity, nationalities and minorities. COCTA will solicit volunteers among its members who wish to participate in this project.

c. Bibliograpic information: Jan-Erik Lane and Kenneth Janda will take responsibility for the preparation of annotated bibliographic information about publications – past and present – that relate to the analysis of selected concepts. This information will be included in future issues of COCTA News. A list of COCTA members giving their special interests in relation to Conceptual and Terminological Analysis (CTA) will also be prepared.

d. Methodology: Henry Teune agreed to proceed with the collection of a supplementary bibliography on methodological problems and metaconcepts important for CTA, and will seek the assistance of interested participants in the CONTA Conference.

5. ISA Congress

Alfredo Marradi announced plans that have been made for the Congress of the International Sociological Association to be held in Mexico City, Aug. 1982. They are as follows:

a. Key Concepts in Political Sociology: Authority, (De-) Centralization, Development

Chairman: *Henry Teune* (Dept. of Political Science, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa. 19104, USA). *Jan-Erik Lane* (Umea): The concept of Authority. – *D. L. Sheth* (New Delhi, invited): Concepts of Development. – *Günther Endruweit* (Stuttgart): Methodological consequences of different concepts in development research. – *Zdravko Mlinar* (Ljubljana, invited): Concepts of Decentralization and Development. – *J. Rogers Hollingsworth* (Wisconsin): Concepts of Centralization Discussants: *David Baldwin* (Dartmouth College, invited).

b. The Development of Social Science Glossaries: the Idea of Ethnicity in Different Languages

Chairman: *Fred W. Riggs* (Dept. of Political Science, University of Hawaii, 2424 Maile Way, Honolulu, Hawaii, 96822, USA)

Julian Bromley (USSR Acad. of Sciences, invited): Concepts of ethnicity in the USSR. – *John Ayoadé (Ibadan)*: Concepts of ethnicity, nationality and minorities in Africa. – *Robert Jackson* (British Columbia, invited): Concepts of ethnicity in the Anglo-Saxon languages. – *Rhoda Kesselman* (Saarbrücken): Concepts of ethnicity in German. – N. N. Concepts of ethnicity in Spanish. Discussant: Eric Casino (East-West-Center, Honolulu, Hawaii, inv.).

c. Problems and Issues of Conceptual Development in Sociology

Chairmen: *Alberto Marradi* (Universities of Florence and Catania, Viale Duse 32, Florence) and *Nico Stehr* (Dept. of Sociology, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada T6G 2H4).

Helmut M. Artus (Bonn): The role of theories in conceptual development: how far are concepts theory dependent? – *Jeffrey Alexander* (UCLA, inv.): The genesis and transformation of concepts in sociology. *Robert J. Wolfson* (Syracuse) and *Alberto Madella* (Catania): Neopositivist vs. phenomenological theories of concept formation and development. – N. N. (Mexico City): Concept development and the growth of knowledge in sociology. Discussants: *Niklas Luhman* (Bielefeld, inv.), *Stefan Nowak* (Warzsawa, inv.).

d. Metaconcepts in Sociology and Other Social Sciences

Chairman: to be decided

David Singer (Michigan): The concepts of Variable and of Indicator.

Alberto Marradi (Florence and Catania): Metaconcepts in measurement.

Janos Petöfi (Bielefeld): A common core of metaconcepts for the social sciences.

6. IPSA Congress

Suggestions for inclusion in the program of the IPSA Congress were formulated to be passed on to George Graham, Jr., IPSA coordinator, who could not attend the CONTA conference. These suggestions include a panel on the operationalization of definitions, to be planned by Jan-Erik Lane and Kenneth Janda; and a panel on "nationalism" and other concepts having special reference to their applications in Africa and other Third World Countries to be planned by J. A. A. Ayoadé.

7. Guidelines

To carry out the recommendations No. 1.4 and 2.5, COCTA will develop guidelines for conceptual and terminological analysis for general use, and especially for use by specialist bodies in the member associations of the International Social Science Council.

8. Follow-up

As its concluding action, the CONTA Conference adopted a resolution of thanks to all those who had made the Bielefeld meeting possible and called upon COCTA to establish a continuation machinery looking toward a second similar conference at some future time. Such a possibility will be considered most favorably when the time is ripe.

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