INFOTERM NEWS

by Helmut Felber, Vienna

Terminology and Terminological Lexicography

Discussions and Recommendations of a Working Group at the First European Symposium on Language for Special Purposes (LSP) in Vienna, 26–28 August 1977

1. Dissemination of knowledge on the General Theory of Terminology (GTT)

Two measures were proposed, namely:
– training and
– publication of a popular introduction to this field.

1.1 Training.– It was felt that there is an urgent need for training in the "General Theory of Terminology" not only for students at universities but also for professionals involved in terminology work. First of all teachers will have to be trained in special courses for this field. In addition training should be offered to people involved in terminology work in organizations, institutions, firms, etc. in order to acquaint them with the terminological principles (see particularly item 2.1).

Therefore appropriate measures should be taken to organize summer schools and workshops for teachers for the General Theory of Terminology.

For the funding of such courses applications should be made to organizations such as Unesco and the Council of Europe.

Austria would be an appropriate place for such courses since it has a long experience concerning research in terminological principles. In addition the Austrian Standards Institute hosts the International Information Centre for Terminology (Infoterm) and holds the Secretariat of TC 37 "Terminology (principles and co-ordination)" of the International Organization for Standardization.

1.2 Publication of an introduction. – The second measure would be the publication of a popular introduction to the General Theory of Terminology. It should provide a general view for students and serve as a reference book for those involved in practical work. The preparation should be entrusted to a group of experts in this field who have enough experience not only in teaching but also in the application of the principles of terminology work.

2. Terminology and lexicography

2.1 When discussing lexicographical problems it became evident that nearly all requirements for technical vocabularies proposed by the participants can be found in ISO Recommendations and ISO Standards of the pertaining national standards (see Infoterm Newsletter 4 published in "Lebende Sprachen" 22 (1977), no.2, pp.93–95). These standards should be applied whenever possible. ISO Recommendations and Standards in question are listed below:

(1) Organization
ISO/R 1087 "Vocabulary of terminology"
ISO/R 919 "Guide for the preparation of classified vocabularies (Example of method)

(2) Terminology work
ISO/R 704 "Naming principles"
ISO/R 860 "International unification of concepts and terms"

(3) Layout
ISO/R 639 "Symbols for languages, countries and authorities"
ISO/R 1149 "Layout of multilingual classified vocabularies"
ISO 1951 "Lexicographical symbols particularly for use in defining vocabularies"

(4) Thesauri
ISO 2788 "Documentation – Guide for the establishment and development of multilingual thesauri"

2.2 Terminology banks. – Lexicographical work cannot be executed satisfactorily without the aid of modern techniques. A considerable part of lexicographical work can be done by using terminology banks.

Therefore it is highly desirable that terminology banks be established and maintained.

2.3 Particular vocabularies and encyclopedias. – It was mentioned that there is a particular need for collocation vocabularies and middle sized encyclopedias (appr. 3 volumes).

3. Co-operation

It was proposed that co-operation with all national and international organizations involved in applied linguistics be established, in particular with Infoterm which is developing a network of terminology preparing bodies and terminology documentation centres.

Recommendations

4. Dissemination of knowledge on the General Theory of Terminology (GTT)

We recommend that the General Theory of Terminology be taught as widely as possible especially at the university level and that seminars be set up to disseminate knowledge on the application of GTT in professional bodies and organizations. This should be done on the international and national level.

4.1 We recommend that as soon as possible a workshop or summer course on GTT be set up on a permanent basis to train future teachers of GTT and that application for the funding of such courses be presented to organizations such as Unesco and Council of Europe. We suggest Vienna as a suitable place for holding such courses.

4.2 We recommend as an immediate measure that a popular introduction to the theory and practice of terminology be prepared in as many languages as possible, by a panel of experts.

5. Terminology and lexicography

5.1 We recommend co-operation in the field of terminology and lexicography and the implementation of the

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ISO Recommendations and Standards whereever possible. This applies particularly to the setting up and use of terminology banks.

5.2 We recommend that all forms of terminological lexicography (monolingual, multilingual, systematic and alphabetic vocabularies as well as frequency dictionaries) be furthered.

6. International co-operation

6.1 We recommend that AILA maintain close contact with all organizations etc. connected with terminology especially with Infoterm which is developing a network of terminology preparing bodies and terminology documentation centres within the framework of UNISIST (Unesco).

Computational aids in terminology and lexicography.

Meeting of ISO/TC 37/WG4, Offenbach/Main (FRG), 8–9 Dec. 1977

Automatic processing of terminological data (such as terms, synonyms, definitions, equivalents, etc.) assists terminologists and lexicographers enormously in their work. During the last decade quite a number of terminology banks came into being. In order to increase the efficiency of these banks free exchange of terminological data is necessary. Such an exchange requires a unified exchange format.

In Offenbach the members of WG 4 discussed the ISO Draft Proposal 6156 "Format for terminological/lexicographical data interchange on magnetic tape (MATER)" submitted by German experts and the counter proposal submitted by French experts taking into account the comments presented by other members.

The future International Standard is intended to specify the requirements for a generalized format, the definition and layout of data on magnetic tape, as well as the meaning and the layout of tags associated with each element. It describes an interchange principle between processing systems but does not aim at defining how or in which form a user manages his own system. Therefore, generally three formats will exist: the acquisition, internal and exchange format.

The result of the discussions is a revised version of DP 6156 which will be submitted to all TC 37 members for vote and comment.

Study on the development of a network for terminology information and documentation (TermNet)

Report on the meeting of experts, Vienna, 19–21 Oct. 1977

In accordance with a decision taken by the Bureau of the former UNISIST Steering Committee an evaluation panel (composed of 7 experts from different countries) was constituted to report on a study on the development of a terminology network (TermNet). (See also Infoterm Newsletter 4, item 1.1). This study had been prepared by Infoterm as a direct result of the Infoterm Symposium (April 1975) and of the evaluation of Infoterm activities (June 1976). The meeting convened by Unesco and prepared by Infoterm took place in Vienna, 19–21 October, 1977.

The function of this meeting was to discuss the study in hand and to advise on its feasibility and practical merits. There was unanimous agreement on the aims and objectives of the proposed network of organizations concerned with terminology. It was strongly recommended that Infoterm proceed forthwith to establish such a network in several phases commensurate with its resources, and that Infoterm take on the full responsibility for organizing TermNet. It was stressed that this network should be open-ended and flexible in order to fulfill its rôle in the quickly changing and expanding field of terminology. It was further recommended that urgent consideration be given to the provision of additional staff so that Infoterm could develop the network to its full potential for the benefit of improved information and documentation and multilingual communication as a whole.

As a first step a communication is to be sent to a selected number of likely members inviting them to join TermNet. This communication will include a questionnaire, the amended study on the development of such a network, and a detailed description of the proposed structure, the services and benefits provided by TermNet, etc.

(Interested parties are welcome to contact Infoterm for further information.)

Terminology Centre Wieselburg

The vast collection of terminological documents and other literature pertaining to linguistics and related subjects, an endowment of the late Prof. Eugen Wüster, will be available for research purposes starting January 1978. It is hoped that the Wüster Library in Wieselburg, Lower Austria, now mainly supported by the Austrian Standards Institute, will eventually, by concerted action, reach the status of an international foundation.

This INFOTERM NEWS has been compiled from Infoterm Newsletters 7 and 8. For the references given as well as further references please turn to the Section "Classification Literature", items under the heading 7 "Classification and Language", esp. 76–79.

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