EDITORIAL

Classification and Standardization

The two concepts, classification and standardization, have at least one characteristic in common: both are concerned with methods whose aim is the establishment of order. While classification, however, is employed where the establishment of order in a *material, substantial* sense is pursued, standardization, on the other hand, can establish order only through the observance of *formal* principles. Yet, it seems also true that the introduction of formal principles, e.g. in the adherence to specific formal structures (basic categories) in the construction of a classification system, accounts for greater objectivity of the resulting structures. One should, however, not consider the ordering of concepts according to the alphabet of their names as such a wishful formal organization since here the conceptual level is mixed up with the designational one, which is of course dependent on the terms of a given natural language. Perhaps one may put it this way: the more formally determinable elements find access to a system, the more readily can it acquire features that permit a standardized application. But then the question arises: how does one arrive at such formally determinable elements? The question seems to be similar to that enquiring after the presence of laws: how does one find generally valid laws?

If we wish to arrive at generally recognized, hence standardizable classification systems and standardized applications of these systems–and why shouldn't this be a lawful aim, considering that objectivity, accuracy, reproducibility and any other approximations to truth can only be achieved in this way–then we should consciously strive to find generally valid structures and laws for conceptual units and arrangements.

In this issue we are opening a discussion on a *Unesco* Guideline (Indexing Principles. Draft) which aims at organizing the description of document contents along uniform lines. That such an endeavor is fraught with problems may be evident from the comments accompanying the proposed draft. That the path toward the standardization of such a procedure will be quite a long one can easily be surmised. The more regularity can be recognized, however–and this is a field where linguistics, particularly syntax, will just *have* to do its share–the easier will it be to formulate generally-valid recommendations on the basis of such regularity.

One case of application of a postulated system of relations for representing syntactic relationships between concepts is presented by the contribution of *Farradane/ Gulutzan*, in which the faithfulness of reproduction of the given meaning of an 'analet' is tested. And a case of application for the purpose of introducing formalization criteria into ordering systems is offered by *Stokolova* ('Paradigmatic Relations') thus continuing her work on the formalization of predication structures in issue 1976 2 of *International Classification*. A very pragmatically oriented application of standardization principles in the classification field is found in the efforts aimed at the recognition and dissemination of a uniform terminology. Here the formal element consists in the conventionalization of designations, i.e. of elements of human language, or of their expressive possibilities, i.e. in the fixation of an agreed-upon definition/meaning of a concept by a single designation. At a recent meeting in Düsseldorf on the topic "Linguistics and Terminological Work", however, *R. Fugmann* called attention to the dangers to the progress of science inherent in a one-sided fixation of concept contents–and thus by the same token to the risks of blocking recognition possibilities through the standardization of terminology. This cannot mean, of course, that for proper understanding one should not have recourse, as far as possible, to those communication means/terms which in a given context can represent a subject in the most effective way or that one should not look for ways and means to find the shortest possible designations for specific concepts. Today, however, the prime objective–especially in scientifically as yet non-consolidated fields–should consist in doing descriptive terminology work, starting out with presenting terms within their application-oriented connotation range. There can be no doubt that today a terminological prescription such as aspired for in the two books co-authored by *Wersig* (see the book reviews by *Wellisch* in the previous and by *Farradane* in the present issue) cannot fail to meet with the determined resistance of the specialists as long as the field of knowledge concerned has not yet been sufficiently explored and recognized along theoretical lines as to its objects, methods and aims. This does not eliminate the need, however, to devote intensive efforts to the task of bringing to light the concepts on the terms used.

Exactly this latter is what the late member of our Editorial Advisory Board, *Eugen Wüster*, the great teacher of modern terminology, regarded as one of his tasks all his life, the task inspiring him to lay down the theoretical foundations for the naming of concepts already in 1931. Our grief at the sudden end of this unique man's great life is mitigated, however, by our gratitude for the invaluable insights we owe to him, for the wondrous goodness he radiated and for the exemplary perseverance he demonstrated in his pursuit of goals recognized as correct once and for all. He seemed to have lived by the principles: through conceptual knowledge to an orderly and possibly standardized use of terms, through standardized terminology to intellectual economy and thus easier and better mutual understanding in science and technology. May his good example inspire us too!

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