Book Reviews

RIGGS, Fred W.: **The CONTA Conference**. Proceedings of the Conference on Conceptual and Terminological Analysis in the Social Sciences, held at the Zentrum für Interdisziplinäre Forschung (ZIF), Bielefeld, FRG, May 24–27, 1981. Frankfurt: INDEKS Verlag 1982. XII, 368 p. ISBN 3-88672-200-7

The contributions made by information scientists, classification and terminology specialists to concept and terminology problems in the Social Sciences and published here, are based on the now completed UNESCO project INTERCONCEPT (1981). Special praise is due to the precise, subtly differentiated, and well thought-out structure of the congress report at hand, in which not only "conference resolutions and recommendations" are presented, but also research results subdivided according to the three levels of problem presentation (Pt. 1), theorization (Pt. 2), and method application (Pt. 3), and — as a source of more comprehensive information — the institutional background (Appendix). The individual introductions to Pts. 1–3 serve as a further consolidation of the thematic relations, whereas, on the other hand, discussions and controversies arising from the single contributions have been allotted rather too little space. All these guidelines make for considerably easier reading due to F. W. Riggs' careful editing. The wide spectrum and the well arranged differentiation of the research results presented here call for a review in the form of a report. I shall, therefore, keep to the presentation levels Pt. 1–3 as used in the CONTA Conference and, in conclusion, deal with the results.

Pt. 1: Problem Presentation

The advocates of the lexical approach (LECLERCQ, p. 6–13; MARRADI, p. 26–36) illustrate the well-known problems of synonymy, quasisynonymy, homonymy, and polysemy in numerous examples (e.g. "measurement"). The definition-oriented approach (FLANZ, p. 20–25; BJÖRKMAN, p. 14–19) endeavours to establish the difference in sense of synonymous concepts according to their context in the politico-ideological field, whereby differences in meaning may arise extending to opposing moral concepts and policies. Using the term "equity" as an example, they prove that concepts of "equality and of "efficiency" may by applicable. The relations-oriented and the evaluating approach (MISRA, p. 37–41; BOYD, p.42–45; JANDA, p. 46–55) refer primarily to the extent to which the language subjects are bound by cultural, professional, national, and ideological ties. Under this point of reference, the contributions of authors other than those from western countries could perhaps have been subsumed, authors who, under the collective heading "Pitfalls and Difficulties", would seem to take a back seat. (MALICSI, p. 56–62); RUSU-DRAGOMIRESCU, p. 63–71. AYOADÈ, p. 72–80). The language problems considered in the last two approaches make, because of their affiliation to various contexts, the practical relevance of concept and semantic research particularly clear. The

following problems are treated in the form of summarized theses: the contents of their origin can therefore not be identified with similar concepts from other culture areas and scientific fields (e.g. Indian "nonalignment" in relation to European "neutrality", or the term "consciousness" as used in the original Marxian sense in contrast to the present-day meaning of the term "global consciousness" with its respectively political, economic, social, scientific, and religious character; technical language and colloquial language have each their own terminology, which, however, loses its expressiveness when similar word-forms are used simultaneously in both fields or serve political rhetoric (e.g. the terms "democracy", "people", "liberal"); there is no possibility of political and scientific discourse when there is no communication between the ruling and the ruled (e.g. Africa's lack of scientific analysis of its own reality); manifold problems arise in translating a highly civilized world language into the languages of developing countries and vice versa (e.g. English — Philippine); problematic is also the translatability and comparability of terminology when the structure of the system differs ideologically and economically (e.g. English — Romanian).

Pt. 2: Theoretization

On the level of concept and terminology analysis, the CONTA Conference in Bielefeld dealt with the following approaches: a technology-oriented theory, aimed at achieving an interlingual communication and conference network on a computer basis which may diverge from the traditional ways of solving concept and terminology problems, is feasible (POOL, p. 85–100). A language-oriented concept system, which cannot only summarize the meaning of words in technical language precisely, but also elucidate the relation contexts of technical language and colloquial language, is structurable (PETÖFI, p. 100–118). A concept theory, based on distribution frequency in the main branches of the individual Social Sciences, makes the empirically provable idea of a hierarchy according to the prevailing use of concepts and technical terms plausible (OHLY, p. 119–129). A theory based on semantic argumentation gives a critical assessment of the logical and hermeneutical circularity of the method of concept definition and considers, in comparison to this, the understanding of concepts as bound, in principle, to the understanding of socio-scientific theories themselves. (ARTUS, p. 130–139). In the COCTA research group's programme of concept and terminology analysis, a completely new method to minimize concept vagueness has been applied, by which, with the aid of a logically deductive metalanguage, the problem of concept markings with the interactive process of concept definition and concept operationalization is to be related to the non-language object (TEUNE, p. 140–148).

Pt. 3: Method Application

The contributions in this section relate to the fields of text interpretation using technical lexicographic means, text retrieval with information languages, and text production on the basis of technical glossaries. The contributions on text interpretation demonstrate the enormous difficulties connected with planned and existing technical dictionaries from the multilingual

viewpoint and under the aspect of worldwide validity (FÖLDI, p. 154–167): Economics Dictionary Project; MEYNEN, p. 168–171: The Multilingual Dictionary of Technical Terms in Cartography – ICA; International Geographical Glossary – IGU; NEUMAN: p. 172–173: Glossary of Administration/Kamus Administrasi). In these papers, processes are explained and possible solutions offered. What is basically new, is an approach in the lexical field, which, in addition, establishes classification relations and gives weight to the procedural character of transitive verbs (BURGER, p. 174–181). In the area of application of text retrieval, contributions are centred, in the main, on two problem complexes: a) the search for criteria in the choice of descriptors with key functions in thesauri and their availibility in hierarchic classification schemes and/or alphabetically ordered vocabularies (MEYRIAT, p. 182–184; JUDGE, p. 185–201) and b) how can organizational conditions and methodical processes, compatibility between retrieval languages be attained (LITOUKHIN, p. 202–206; DAHLBERG, p. 207 proposes four compatibility matrices; AITCHISON, p. 208: Feedback procedures for existing descriptors and relevant modifications of classification schemes and the selected concepts; SOERGEL, p. 209–223; DIENES, p. 224–233).

In contrast to the more reproductive fields of text interpretation and text retrieval, text production must find a solution for one major field: the identification and marking of new concepts, a problem which is impeded by the fact that there are no standardized dictionaries in the Social Sciences. The following solutions to the problem of identification have been put forward: a special reference methodology with thesaurus-type features, which stresses the onomasiological as against the semasiological approach (RIGGS, p. 234–276: COCTA Glossaries); model-type application and extension according to the method of the COCTA glossaries in the form of the pilot project INTERMIN (MOLNAR/ROSZA), p. 277–282), of the standards in ISO/TC 37 (NEDOBITY, p. 287–290), together with the proposal of a "Terminology Thesaurus TERMIA" (CHAN, p. 282–286); semantics-oriented technical dictionaries for special fields of research (MOGEY, p. 291–300: a conceptual frame will be produced for the term "family"; WOLFSON, p. 301–312: following inventaries based on organizational theory, a few basic axioms are to be used as a point of departure and as a test of the behaviouristic concept).

The results of the papers discussed at the CONTA Conference were put into concrete terms as resolutions and recommendations for future concept and terminology research (p. X–XII). In general, the main emphasis lies on retrievability of concepts and terms (1.1), the establishment of computerized data bases (1.3), the firm institutionalization within the disciplinary associations of the social sciences to deal with conceptual and terminological problems (1.4), and projects (1.5), and the holding of regional meetings in Third World countries to discuss problems specific to their experience under Western influence (1.6). In particular, the CONTA Conference recommends the establishment of an "International Encyclopedia of Social Science Concepts" (2.1), the development of classified analytic glossaries in specialized areas (2.2), and the planning of an integrated

thesaurus for the Social Sciences (2.3) including the appropriate methodical aids (2.4; 2.5).

With the publication of Vol. 1 of the "International Conceptual Encyclopedia for the Social Sciences" (1985) the CONTA Conference has, in the meanwhile, put into effect one of its recommendations and through this has been able to fulfil its forwards-oriented purpose, which is no mean indication of the productivity of analytic concept and terminology research!

Gisela Hartwieg

Dipl. Soz. G. Hartwieg
Ahornstr. 25, D-1000 Berlin 41, FRG.

There are reports here of subject cataloguing *innovations;* the largest value they can represent to the reader often rests in the lists appended to some of the papers, which demonstrate how a solution to a particular problem has been devised: (in special library catalogues:) D. Choquette on new religious movements, S.A. Smith on referral systems in human services; (in general library catalogues:) S. Berman on women's headings, Berman on teenage headings. P.R. Murdock gives thorough directions for establishing a multilingual authority file for a multilingual collection; and Berman's concluding contribution is simply an annotated bibliography of sources for those who perceive the need to do-it-better-themselves but need some help or guidance.

But the rest – the majority of the volume – is *critique,* which is all too appropriate, given how poorly American libraries often serve their information-seeking clientele. (I almost ended that sentence ". . . often without being at all aware of that very deficiency"; but more emphasis is needed than the subordinate clause implies.) This volume, if it reaches its ideal readership and makes its intended point, first and foremost says: *"Become aware of these your own deficiencies, do not go on with business as usual; look at yourselves and at what you are doing! – and then do something about it!"*

As much as this aim is salutary, as much as the deficiencies mentioned are so deeply built into the systems and policies we operate with that we seldom look beyond them – and they *must* be looked beyond – as much as this is true, still the content as well as the style of many of these critiques often show their own grave deficiencies. A most serious overlooking is that none of these authors advert to (are they unaware of it?) the basic distinction between the *nature* of a subject-*system* and the *policies* (explicit or implicit) that govern its *application.* J.R. Likins criticizes the LCSH **Apple growers – U.S. – Bibliography – Juvenile literature** in its application to a children's book on Johnny Appleseed, but does so in the context of a paper listing LCSHs that are in themselves ridiculous or inaccurate or offensive. A. Taylor, in a useful "popular" description of the advantages of PRECIS, compares an LCSH for a particular book (one that quite misses the theme by focussing only on the subject – the same dichotomous