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INFOTERM NEWSLETTER 27

Terminology work in Japan. — Report on a lecture tour by the Director of Infoterm. Interest in terminology in Japan focuses on three areas : automatic (AT) or machine assisted (MAT) translation, preparation of terminologies and standardization of terminologies.

The present state of machine (assisted) translation in Japan is at an advanced experimental stage, translating Japanese into English or English into Japanese. The system developed at the University of Kyoto (Department of Electrical Engineering) presently translates keywords, titles of papers and abstracts. Close collaboration exists already between the Gesellschaft für Information und Dokumentation (GID), FRG, and Kyoto University. The specific problems encountered stem from basic linguistic differences (such as sentence structure, word order, gender, tense, aspect, etc.) and of course, also from cultural differences. Recent information indicates the existence of about 20 projects dealing with the computerization of the natural language and 17 projects dealing with machine translation or aspects of it. There is an overall co-ordination of these projects.

Due to rapid technological progress Japanese terminologies have to be prepared simultaneously in many fields. Approximately 200 ~ 300 terminology commissions of specialists for a particular field are working on vocabularies at all times. This results in an average output of probably more than 50 specialized vocabularies in printed form every year. The development of a well functioning information network, too, necessitates the preparation of adequate information languages (thesauri). Thus the need for proper training in terminology particularly for subject specialists, information specialists and language mediators has become apparent. Therefore, close collaboration in this matter will be established between Infoterm and various Japanese institutions of higher education.

41st FID-Congress in Hong Kong, 12-16 September 1982

Within the framework of the main topic of this meeting "The challenge of information technology" the Director of Infoterm presented a paper on "UDC and terminology. A comparison of their classifications", drawing upon Wüster's two types of classifications, namely the concept vs. subject classification. The former is designed for the ordering of concepts, the latter for the ordering of topics. The difference between the two types of classifications is caused by the different relationships of the members forming the system. Briefly, concept relationships are either logical (indicating the existence of common characteristics) or ontological (relationships of individual objects). The UDC must be considered as a basic subject classification with inserted parts of concept classifications. A second paper on "The General Theory of Terminology — a theoretical basis for information" stressed the importance of terminology in the information field. The demand for information on concepts of various subject fields has increased enormously during the last decade, since terminology is the basis for the formulation and retrieval of information in all existing languages.

Meeting of ISO/TC 37/SC 1 "Principles of terminology" in Moscow, 23-26 November 1982

At this meeting the discussion focused on: Draft Proposal 704 "Principles and methods of terminology", Draft Proposal 860 "International unification of concepts and terms", a working draft "Systems of concepts and their representation" as well as the key to international terminology.

DP 704

The elaboration of DP 704 meets with great difficulties owing to substantially different views of terminological schools or different views on what should be the content of this future basic standard for terminology work. The opposing views on the content reach from rather comprehensive guidelines for the use of subject specialists working in terminology commissions to guidelines as simple as possible to enable standardizers, not trained in terminology, to prepare vocabulary standards. Since a comprehensive draft met with several negative votes a reduced version was adopted now in Moscow, which is divided into three chapters : concepts, definitions, and terms. This draft is expected to receive now the substantial support of the member bodies to become a Draft International Standard.

DP 860

In the past fifty years efforts were made to bridge the gap between national languages in form of international terms. The draft, based on the ISO Recommendation showed the advantages, possibilities and limits of the international unification of concepts and terms. It was intended to help those who have to select and coin terms, particularly for the purposes of vocabulary standards. A second draft was submitted at the Moscow meeting which was not adopted. It was decided to elaborate a new working draft which is no longer based on the ISO Recommendation which had taken into consideration the experience of international terminology work gained during the past decades.

Working draft "system of concepts and their representation"

It was decided to prepare a working draft to assist those specialists preparing classified vocabularies. The working draft will be based on a German standard (DIN 2331) and the comment given by SC 1 members.

Key to international terminology

From the beginning ISO/TC 37 (formerly ISA 37) had directed its efforts to the preparation of a key to international terminology which was intended to consist of a compilation of word elements (= roots and affixes) and the necessary rules for the correct forming of international terms. It was decided to withdraw this item from the working programme.