

TERMIA 84 CONFERENCE - TERMINOLOGY AND
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

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This conference was organised by the International Association of Terminology (TERMIA) with the participation of l'Agence Linguistique Européenne. It was attended by about 130 people from all over the world.

The conference proceedings fell into three broad categories, representing the different perspectives of the developing

countries (technology importers), the developed countries (technology exporters) and intermediaries such as the United Nations and TERMIA itself. Aspects of computerised terminology, especially term banks, were also discussed and demonstrations were given of three term banks (Eurodicautom, TERMIUM and TERMINOQ) and, briefly, the Systran machine translation system.

Perspective of the developing (importing) countries

Although not a developing country in terms of technological advancement, Canada holds a unique position in the domain of terminology due to the recent establishment of English and French as the country's two official languages. Terminology work in Canada is carried out by four main bodies : the Terminology Commission of the Office de la Langue Française in Quebec, the Translation Bureau of the Secretary of State of the Canadian Government in Ottawa and the Groupe Interdisciplinaire de Recherche Scientifique et Appliquée en Terminologie (GIRSTERM) at the Université Laval in Quebec, which is also the home of TERMIA.

Although much of the terminology work done in Canada relates to the adaptation of the existing French language, the Canadians also use the practical experience gained from these activities to form a theoretical basis for terminology research and teaching which can be applied to other world languages and cultures.

Canada has two fully operational term banks : TERMIUM, the bank of the Secretary of State of Canada and TERMINOQ, Quebec's term bank which is based at the Office de la Langue Française. Both these banks, reflecting the specific needs of Canada, contain only English and French entries, TERMIUM containing some 750,000 records and TERMINOQ 900,000.

Several Arab countries were represented and their interest in terminology has arisen, like Canada's, from necessity. The current need is for the arabisation of terms produced by the new technologies being imported into the Arab countries from the developed world. The transfer of terminology takes place largely from English and French into Arabic. As with francisation in Canada, Arabic speakers are

anxious to preserve the correct construction and style of their language when creating new terms and adapting from English or French.

Perspective of the developed (exporting) countries

Jacques Goetschalckx of the European Commission introduced the main issues with a call for more effort on the part of technology exporters to make the products more accessible to the purchasing countries. Thus he encouraged more extensive translation of technical material into the languages of the purchasing countries: he put the emphasis on specialist/linguist cooperation to ensure more reliable terminologies.

Siemens are very active in terminology with their terminology data bank, TEAM. They have also set up projects to help with the development of technical terminologies in minority/developing languages. This seemed to answer Brazil's plea for greater sensitivity to a country's needs when technology, and therefore, terminology transfer takes place. Companies such as Siemens make a contribution to terminological development over and above their commercial concerns; as developers of the new technologies to which terms must be assigned, their terminologists are closer to the source of new terminologies and with the right training can apply rules of neology to the terminology before technology transfer takes place.

Perspective of the intermediaries

The following were represented: the United Nations, Infoterm, Termia, European Commissions and Parliaments in Brussels and Luxembourg and GIRSTERM.

The United Nations are working on technical vocabularies with equivalents in all six languages used by the UN, namely English, Arabic, Chinese, Spanish, French and Russian. Having the advantage of objectivity, they are in a position to help developing countries to create technical terms in their national languages.

An informative paper was given by Wolfgang Nedobity of Infoterm, with the emphasis on terminology training. Infoterm is an information centre and the host of TermNet, the network for international cooperation

on terminology, and sees itself very much as a service-based organisation. Their training programmes rest on the strong theoretical basis developed by Professor Wüster and on the wealth of documentation stored in their terminology library in Vienna. Their aim, like that of the United Nations, is to provide a bridge between the countries now developing vocabularies along with the importation of technology and the developed countries looking for a more extensive distribution of their products.

Conclusion

The conference brought to light an inclination towards cooperation on all sides to avoid duplication of effort and to give those less experienced in the relatively new discipline of terminology an opportunity to benefit from the experience of others. This applies equally to individuals, organisations and countries.
