

TERMINOLOGY ORGANISATIONS AND ACTIVITIES IN GERMANY

Since German is not one of the great world languages, Germany (as well as Austria and Switzerland) is forced to conduct business with non-Germans in some other language than German. Nevertheless, the standard of technology and information in Germany and in the German language is one of the most advanced in the world.

In order to be able to claim their rightful place in the language world, the German-speaking countries are forced to find corresponding terminology in other languages in order to implement the transfer of technology and know-how to secure their own existence.

The German economy is highly dependent on export business which means that a great deal of terminology effort is required to ensure that the quality of the information is at the same level as the quality of the products being sold.

The work of the German Terminology Society (Deutscher Terminologie-Tag e.V. = DTT) and the German Institute for Terminology (Deutsches Institut für Terminologie e.V. = DIT) and other organisations is described.

All involved in terminology work in Germany would greatly welcome more cooperation with other terminology authorities in other countries to enable coordination of common activities and obtain more satisfactory management of terminology throughout Europe to the benefit of all its members and citizens.

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INTRODUCTION

Χαίρομαι που βρίσκομαι στην Αθήνα, αλλά και για την ευκαιρία που δίνετε να πω εδώ δυό λόγια για τη Γερμανία.

Despite its beauty and cultural heritage, Greek is not one of the most spoken languages in the world. Chinese is spoken by more people in the world than any other language.

English is generally regarded as the international language of trade and commerce whereas French is accepted as the international language of diplomacy and courtoisie.

Due to Spain's colonial history, Spanish is spoken in many countries throughout the world, as is Portuguese and, to a lesser extent, Dutch.

Latin is the main language chosen for precise and unambiguous identification in the natural sciences (zoological, botanical designations, etc.)

German, on the other hand, is not a world language. Nevertheless, a great many of the world's major writings in the fields of science, technology, and philosophy were originally written in German. In addition, Germany is located in the centre of Europe so that the German language has now gained strategical significance in dealings between eastern and western Europe.

In the terminology sector, apart from Eugen Wüster and his colleagues in Austria, Germany has also produced several major personalities: Rainer Arntz, Ingo Hohnhold, Heribert Picht, Eberhard Tanke, and many others.

Infoterm is known to all here. Besides Infoterm, there are several organisations and institutions active in the terminology sector in the German-speaking area.

DEUTSCHER TERMINOLOGIE-TAG e.V. (DTT)

The German Society for Terminology (Deutscher Terminologie-Tag e.V.) was founded in 1987, which means that it is celebrating its tenth anniversary this year.

The DTT originated as a permanent working group - originally sponsored by the BDÜ (German Association of Interpreters and Translators) - with 17 participants. It held its first event in Cologne on 27 and 28 November 1986 under the patronage of the FIT (Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs). Later, it was decided to create a new association for terminology alone.

The then President of the BDÜ, Hans-Thomas Schwarz, was present when the new association was launched in Cologne in 1987.

The new association ran into early problems concerning its aims and scope. There was a clash internally over the question of setting up large terminology banks, amongst others, and things began to stagnate.

As time went on, it became clear that terminology work should not be restricted to translation-oriented, i.e. multilingual terminology, but must be extended to include all sectors in which specialised communication takes place.

It was against this background that the 1989 annual general meeting, which was to mark the rebirth of DTT, took place. The scope of the organisation was specifically widened so as to approach terminology from a neutral point of view and to allow participation by specialists in the related fields of information and documentation science, technical writing and communications in special languages as well as by those engaged in standardisation

and lexicography in addition to translators. The value of this approach has been more than borne out by events; in recent years, DTT has grown into a thriving association with more than 150 members and a wide range of activities.

The underlying concept embedded in the association's articles is the pragmatic application of recognized terminological good practice:

- to support private persons and organisations in Germany and abroad in the preparation, clarification and storage of monolingual and multilingual terminologies and in the utilisation of existing terminologies
- to assist in the creation of an information centre to record in which institutes terminology is being systematically processed, defined and stored and for which specialised sectors,
and/or to support other organisations in the institution of such an information centre;
and
- to promote international cooperation in the field of terminology.

The first aim has been fulfilled by holding workshops and other events (chemical terminology, patents, differences between the German and Dutch legal systems, etc.).

The second aim has now taken on concrete form in that the Council for German-language Terminology has announced the foundation of an information centre at the Cologne High School (Fachhochschule Köln) with the cooperation of the German Institute for Terminology so that DTT has now become a supporting actor in this effort.

The third aim is a particular hobby-horse of mine. In 1995 we held a conference in Munich entitled "International Terminology Cooperation". In the meantime, DTT cooperates with terminology organisations in Greece (ELETO), Belgium, France, Russia, Switzerland, The Netherlands and in future with China. In addition, DTT is represented on the executive board of Infoterm by me. DTT was actively involved in setting up the Terminology Network in the British Institute of Translating and Interpreting and is cooperating in the formation of a British terminology association.

Thus, although it is primarily a German - or rather German-speaking - organisation, it boasts members from several other European and even some non-European countries. In addition, it has contacts with a wide range of related organisations; in Germany, these include the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Qualität (DGQ; German Society for Quality) and

tekom (German Society of Technical Writers) as well as the German Association for Terminology and Knowledge Transfer. Such contacts are an important and growing factor for DTT, which recognises that its objectives can only be achieved through the cooperation of all concerned. It therefore is more than happy to cooperate with other bodies.

One of the main ways in which DTT fulfils this brief is by holding in-depth symposia on specific topics of interest to terminologists. The first of these, "Terminology for 1992" was held in December 1989 at the University of Duisburg and clearly demonstrated the organisation's rebirth. Other conferences followed in April 1991 "Terminology as a Quality Factor" and September 1992 "Intellectual Property Rights in Terminologies". The fourth symposium was held in Cologne in April 1994. Entitled "Macro- and Microeconomic Aspects of Terminology as a Productivity Factor" this event was aimed specifically at general management as well as terminologists, it took a broad look at the concrete financial benefits to be gained from terminology work in industry, administration and the economy in general. These symposia, which are unique of their kind, have largely helped to anchor DTT's reputation as the address in Germany for serious practical terminology work. In addition, DTT provides speakers for other organisations on request and arranges workshops and visits. The next symposium will be held on 24 and 25 April 1998 in Cologne under the title "German Terminology in International Business". The proceedings of these conferences are available in German only.

The society has also published a number of brochures in German, English and French on the importance of terminology. In keeping with the association's pragmatic brief, these were designed to help terminologists and related specialists argue their case with superiors, customers and other doubting Thomases who have not yet recognised the value of serious terminology work. The brochure gives practical examples of "false friends" and other howlers and their effects, as well as pointing out more the general advantages of terminology. The examples given were specially selected for each language with the advice of international experts such as Professor Sue Ellen Wright of Kent State University (U.S.A.) and Professor Jean Klein and Louis Chaballe of Mons (Belgium).¹⁾

In 1994, the European Union called for tenders for a project entitled Proposals for an Operational Infrastructure for Terminology in Europe (POINTER). DTT set up a group of experts to deal with this project. Once the consequences of participating in such a project

became clear, it was decided that this expert group should become a legal entity in its own right. In this way, the German Institute for Terminology was founded.

**GERMAN INSTITUTE FOR TERMINOLOGY
(DEUTSCHES INSTITUT FÜR TERMINOLOGIE E.V. = DIT)**

DIT was set up in order to participate in the Pointer project. In fact, DIT was the leading entity in this project.

DIT is a virtual centre of competence for terminology and is intended to awaken and improve general awareness of the significance of terminology and to promote the quality and quantity of terminology work (in particular computer-aided terminology work).

In its short history, DIT has gained a solid reputation for the quality of work produced.

It has provided terminological assistance in projects and holds workshops on specialised subjects.

I have the honour to be President of this Institute at this moment.

**GERMAN ASSOCIATION FOR TERMINOLOGY AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER
(GESELLSCHAFT FÜR TERMINOLOGIE UND WISSENSTRANSFER)**

This association was founded to promote all efforts involving knowledge transfer and technology transfer. It has been actively involved in work on the translator's workbench, prenormative research and development and has held many workshops in its 15 years of existence.

The primary thrust of this association's efforts has been the annual conference on Terminology and Knowledge Engineering held in cooperation with TermNet and Infoterm of Vienna, Austria.

Its president is Professor K.-D. Schmitz, who is also present here at this conference.

DIN TERMINOLOGY COMMITTEE

The German Institute for Standards (Deutsches Institut für Normung e.V. = DIN) has a permanent committee for terminology activities and is actively involved in quality management for terminology and specialised translators in addition to the principles of terminology and lexicography, reproduction of specialised dictionaries and computer applications.

COUNCIL FOR GERMAN-LANGUAGE TERMINOLOGY (RaDT)

In November 1991, the UNESCO passed resolution 11.34 in Paris entitled "Co-operation on terminological matters" inviting Member States and the national UNESCO Commissions to support terminological activities within their area of responsibilities. On the occasion of the Third International Congress on Terminology and Knowledge Engineering - TKE'93 in Cologne in 1993, a first meeting of experts was convened to establish a German-language initiative. A constitutional meeting was called in November 1994 on the premises of the German UNESCO Commission and the Council for German-language Terminology (RaDT) was founded.

RaDT should be regarded as constituting a forum of experts representing organizations, associations, governmental bodies, and the economic sector as well as institutions of higher learning in the German-speaking area involved in terminological issues, applications and curricula. RaDT consists of some 25 members who are striving to maintain equal representation of all groups engaged in terminology work as well as adequate representation of all German regions. The three national UNESCO Commissions of Germany, Austria and Switzerland delegate representatives as permanent guests.

The goals of RaDT are

- to raise an awareness for terminology in the German-speaking area,
- to foster collaboration in the field of terminology,
- to coordinate and support terminological activities,
- to prepare the guidelines for terminology policies and strategies etc.

At the meeting of RaDT in Beme, Switzerland, in November 1996, it was decided to examine the findings of the Pointer working groups and determine the significance of this information for the German-speaking area, since not all the information was published.

OTHERS

The International Standards Organisation maintains a group entitled TC37 which concentrates its efforts on international standards involving the principles and methodology of terminology and terminography work and standardisation of methods.

And, of course, we all know Infoterm, which we regard as being the headquarters for terminology internationally and I personally am proud to be involved with Infoterm and its work.

The last twenty years have seen terminology emerge to become a high-profile activity at present.

We in Germany look forward to intensifying our contacts with colleagues elsewhere in Europe and, indeed, in the whole world..

Σας ευχαριστώ για το ενδιαφέρον σας.