

number of people. Mid-Atlantic meets these requirements. The most commonly understood word is selected as opposed to more esoteric lexical items which are obscure or incomprehensible to some people. Switching can be used, that is, the use of more than one word to describe the same thing, as a method to explore the listener's frame of reference. The widening of the active vocabulary establishes a foundation which, in cross-cultural terms, facilitates the best possible conditions for rewarding and effective communication.

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## CURRENT RESEARCH

A new doctoral dissertation in English literature from Uppsala University:

Hedda Friberg, *An Old Order and a New: the Split World of Liam O'Flaherty's Novels*.

In the Irish author Liam O'Flaherty's novels, two societal forms, or sub-cultures, meet and clash. One, called the Old Order, is rural, "primitive", indigenous, sometimes colonized, and linked to the cycles of nature. The other—the new Order—is urban, modernity-marked, "civilized", and sometimes colonizing. It is "imported" and marked by technological progress and a cash-nexus economy. In addition to the cultural division, psychological and social splits are also apparent in O'Flaherty's novels. Some protagonists have dual or multiple personalities and some undertake, or attempt to undertake, a "class journey"—a journey across class boundaries. A class journey is also discernible in Liam O'Flaherty's own life. In the study, which is based on O'Flaherty's fifteen novels and three autobiographies as well as on biographical material, O'Flaherty's shifting positions between an Old Order and a New during the course of his authorship are explored. Finally, the reasons for O'Flaherty's waning productivity have been reassessed.

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## TNC — The Swedish Centre for Technical Terminology

I denna artikel ges en presentation av Tekniska nomenklaturcentralens arbete. Förf. är språkligt utbildade terminologer som båda har medverkat i utarbetandet av TNCs ordlista *EGs ord och uttryck*. De svarar idag för en del av TNCs kontakter med EG-kommissionen.

#### Some definitions:

##### term

designation consisting of one or more words which denotes a given concept in a special language

##### concept

unit of knowledge constituted through combining characteristics

##### terminology

set of terms belonging to one special language

##### nomenclature

set of designations structured according to pre-established rules

##### terminology work

work concerned with the systematic collection, description, processing and presentation of concepts and their designations

(Definitions from the ongoing work on ISO 1087-1 "Terminology work - Vocabulary - Part 1: Theory and application")

#### Organisation

The Swedish Centre for Technical Terminology (TNC) was founded in 1941 to meet the growing need for adequate technical terminology in Swedish. Terminological activity in Sweden had, however, been in progress since 1936 when the Academy of Engineering Sciences set up a standing committee to deal with technical terminology, or nomenclature, as it was called at that time. Sweden already had a longstanding tradition of work with nomenclature; the well-known scientists Linnaeus and Berzelius were important pioneers within the fields of botany and chemistry in the 18th century.

TNC today is an independent non-profit association with about 70 governmental agencies, organisations and industrial enterprises as members. Among them are the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden Post,

the Royal Institute of Technology, Ericsson, Asea Brown Boveri (ABB). TNC is financially supported by the Royal Academy of Sciences, the Academy of Engineering Sciences, the Royal Academy of Agriculture and Forestry and the Swedish Academy. The basic activity of TNC is subsidised by the Swedish Ministry of Industry and Commerce. This constitutes a financial basis together with the membership fees.

Terminology work is carried out by TNC's secretariat in close cooperation with subject specialists. TNC has a staff of 15 people. Of these, 10 are terminologists with varying professional backgrounds, e.g. engineers, linguists, information and documentation specialists, technical editors.

### Objectives

TNC has as its main objective to improve specialist communication by promoting the use of technical terminologies appropriate to Swedish conditions. This includes the co-ordination of terminologies in various subject areas as well as considering international communication needs. TNC's efforts are also aimed at preserving and developing Swedish special languages, something which is of paramount importance to such a comparatively small language community as the Swedish one.

To achieve these objectives TNC carries out a wide range of activities both on a national and international basis, such as:

1. Collection, recording and processing terminological information from external sources
2. Participation in terminological projects where TNC's role varies from consultation to full responsibility for the project
3. Compilation and dissemination of terminological data in the form of vocabularies and term banks
4. Providing guidelines for writers of technical texts, as well as the checking of such texts, mainly from a terminological point of view
5. Providing information and advice on terminological matters
6. Offering courses on the theoretical and practical aspects of terminology work
7. Co-operation with other institutions in Sweden within the sphere of language cultivation, and with terminology institutions abroad
8. Participation in international standardisation concerning

the elaboration of standards on the principles and methods of terminology work

The wide range of activities indicated in TNC's statutes makes it necessary for TNC to have a staff with the broad-based competence described above.

### Publications

Since its foundation TNC has published more than 90 terminological and special language vocabularies, handbooks, guidelines on technical writing etc.

The initiative to start a terminological project is in most cases taken by the subject specialists themselves. This often stems from the fact that terms are understood differently, even within a given subject field. This is particularly serious in instructions, agreements or safety regulations; a precise terminology is of utmost importance in order to guarantee a greater efficacy and accuracy in professional communication.

The vocabularies are compiled by working groups consisting of at least one terminologist and preferably 4-6 subject specialists. The terminologist, specialised in the principles and methods of terminology work, is in constant dialogue with the subject specialists who provide him - or her - with essential source information and feedback in the terminological analysis.

Over 70 terminological vocabularies have been published covering terminology from more than 40 subject fields such as geology, nuclear energy, textiles, water supply and sewerage, plastics and rubber technology, etc. The first, *Glossary of Foundry*, published in 1944, lists about 600 Swedish terms including, in some cases, short definitions or explanations, which can be compared to *Vocabulary of Forestry*, published in 1994 comprising more than 4,000 entries including Swedish definitions and term equivalents in English, German and Finnish.

In 1993 TNC published an English-Swedish vocabulary, *EC Words and Expressions*, which mainly has translators, not subject field specialists, as the target group. Compiling a translation-oriented vocabulary of a special language involves the use of both terminological and lexicographical methods. Unlike terminological vocabularies which have a clearly prescriptive character and cover established terminology from one or several closely related subject areas, *EC Words and Expressions* is, for the most part, descriptive and contains not only terms, but also phrases and names of organisations, documents etc., from a variety of subject areas. The vocabulary shows how a term or a phrase has been translated in a given context but the translation presented is not necessarily the only possible one. The aim of the vocabulary is simply to offer guidelines for translators and other users, to help avoid multiple translations of terms appearing for the same concepts.

Other TNC publications are *Writing Rules for the Construction Indus-*

try, *Handbook of Lexicography* and several editions of *TNC's Writing Rules*, intended for technical writers and covering e.g. term formation, spelling, punctuation, etc.

The most recent publication (October 1995) in TNC's series of publications is a glossary of basic technical words, a selection of the central words of the technical language vocabulary. Examples of words dealt with are *function, machine, planning, system, and tool*. By clearly stating their meanings in the technical language, a prerequisite for high-qualitative terminology work is created. The glossary contains about 1,500 Swedish words and definitions.

TNC also publishes a newsletter, *TNC-Aktuellt* (3-4 issues a year), containing information on TNC's activities, recent publications, forthcoming courses, conferences, etc. as well as articles on the theory and practice of terminology work, and a selection of term queries.

### Computer-based products

TNC's most comprehensive product is its term bank TERMDOK on CD-ROM. TERMDOK contains selections from EURODICAUTOM of the European Commission, TERMIUM of the Federal Canadian Government and a number of Nordic term banks, as well as TNC's terminological vocabularies, Swedish standards, etc. TERMDOK comprises more than 500,000 entries, including terms with their definitions and equivalents in up to 12 languages, and covers a wide range of subject areas such as environment, law, economics, administration, the labour market, industry, transport, agriculture, education, engineering, etc.

### Term inquiry service

TNC's term inquiry service is intended to provide assistance and advice to its members and other interested parties. The average number of queries is 400-500 a year. The majority of queries concern the translation of terms from, and particularly into, Swedish. Other common subjects are the choice of the right term, definitions, term formation, abbreviations, etc. Examples of some typical term queries are:

- What is the Swedish equivalent for "cyberspace"?
- What is "dibasic sodium phosphate" and how to write it in Swedish?
- What does the unit "mcq" stand for?
- "Fast yellow" is the name of a food additive with the numer E 105. What is it called in Swedish?
- Is "plotter" a recommended term also in Swedish? If so, what is the plural form?

TNC's reference library offers extensive information retrieval possibilities for the terminologists involved in this service.

Since 1989 all queries and answers are registered in a computerised sys-

tem which permits various search facilities. It is important for TNC, with its coordinating function, to give the same answer to the same kind of question every time it appears.

### Terminology training courses

No formal terminology training is offered in the curriculum of Swedish educational institutions, but terminology is occasionally integrated in some branches of education at university level. So, for the last 15 years, TNC has given lectures on the theory and methods of terminology work within the framework of courses arranged for different levels and groups of participants, for example to students in translation and engineering, language consultants and technical writers.

Courses of a more practical nature are organised by TNC for people working in standardisation, technical experts or others taking part in terminology projects. On request, TNC also offers terminology training tailor-made for its members or other interested parties having specific terminological needs.

### Current TNC activities

Shortly after Sweden's membership in the European Union, TNC was assigned the task of supplementing parts of the European Commission's term-bank EURODICAUTOM with Swedish terminology. EURODICAUTOM is an important tool for translators and interpreters working in the Commission and has been in existence since the 1970s. Today TNC's task comprises the completion of 30,000 term records covering various subject fields, not only purely technical fields but also fields such as medicine, law and work environment. A number of subject specialists are involved in the project.

TNC also provides, via telephone or fax, a term inquiry service for the Swedish translators and interpreters working within the Commission.

The prospects for Swedish terminology work seem to be very positive and manifold, partly because there is a growing awareness in areas outside the traditional ones. The Swedish approach to terminology has so far mostly been oriented towards conceptual and denominational standardisation. During the last few years, however, especially in connection with Sweden's contacts with the EU, the need for translation-oriented terminology work has become more evident and will certainly increase. TNC, acting as a national body in special language in general and terminology in particular will play an important role also in this process.

Glöm inte att ange namn och adress vid girering av prenumerationsavgiften. Anmäl adressförändringar, även sådana beträffande postnumret till tidskriften.