Terminology Theory—Who on earth is it for?

Barbara Inge Karsch
BIK Terminology/NYU
TOTh -TKE Workshop
Vienna, 2017
Questions

- What is a terminologist?
- Who is involved in terminology work?
- What tasks are part of terminology work?
- Who should we author for?
To begin with

1. ISO 704: complex material for a broad audience
2. Global trends:
   • Professional tasks more and more complex with many different professionals involved
   • But increasing specialization
Terminologist in ISO 704

- Current definition: None
- But... “those involved in terminology management”
- Subsequently referred to as terminologist
**English:**

**language professional**
Noun

**Reference for term:** ISO/WD2 18841-1 Interpreting - General requirements and recommendations - Part 1: Overview, terms and definitions - 2.3.9

**General definition:** qualified person who makes a living working with language

**Reference for def.:** ISO/WD2 18841-1 Interpreting - General requirements and recommendations - Part 1: Overview, terms and definitions - 2.3.9

**Diagram:**

- language professionals; 1 professional (professionally qualified person) makes a living dealing w/ language
- HAS SUBTYPE: proofreader
- HAS SUBTYPE: post-editor
- HAS SUBTYPE: copywriter
- HAS SUBTYPE: translator
- HAS SUBTYPE: interpreter
- HAS SUBTYPE: terminologist
- HAS SUBTYPE: writer
- HAS SUBTYPE: lexicographer
- HAS SUBTYPE: lexicologist
- HAS SUBTYPE: taxonomist

**Subject:** 5 Translation and interpretation services

**English:**

**terminologist**

**Diagram:**

- language professionals;
- HAS SUPERTYPE: language professional
Job titles in US

Terminology Work in Life Sciences in the US

- Terminologist
- Clinical Terminology Specialist
- Medical Informatics Specialist
- Biomedical Terminology Engineer
- Informatics Terminology Specialist
- Medical Informatist
- Manager Dictionary Management
**Job description Colorado**

**Tasks**
- Support CDS solutions
- Work with controlled terminology
- Research and document terms

**Skills and experience**
- Experience in health care
- Knowledge in chemistry, pharmacology, human pathophysiology, biomedical informatics, etc.
- MS Access and Oracle
- Programming skills
- Terminology management skills
Job description Switzerland

• Tasks
  • Merge terminologies
  • Create common database
  • Establish change management process and workflow
  • Harmonize terms

• Skills
  • Terminology management skills
  • Communication skills
  • Diploma in linguistics or applied linguistics
  • Multilingual
RaDT — Council for German-Language Terminology

“Terminologists are specialists in compiling, describing, maintaining and propagation of monolingual and multilingual specialised vocabularies.”
# Matrix of Terminology Work

(inspired by BIK’s “Document dimensions” and the draft Austrian standard ÖNORM A 2704)

First outline by Georg Lückinger, 7 December 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of terminology work</th>
<th>Ad-hoc terminology work</th>
<th>Ad-hoc/systematic terminology work</th>
<th>Systematic terminology work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Designation level</strong></td>
<td>A single designation or several designations</td>
<td>Several designations</td>
<td>All designations of a domain or a sub-domain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Concept level</strong></td>
<td>A single concept</td>
<td>Several concepts</td>
<td>All concepts of a domain or sub-domain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Object level</strong></td>
<td>A single object or several objects</td>
<td>Several objects</td>
<td>All objects of a domain or a sub-domain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Concept relations</strong></td>
<td>No concept relations represented</td>
<td>Concept relations indicated in textual form</td>
<td>Concept relations depicted in concept diagrams or concept models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of languages</strong></td>
<td>One language only</td>
<td>Two languages</td>
<td>More than two languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Terminology work product</strong></td>
<td>Terminology list/glossary/a single terminological entry</td>
<td>Terminology list/glossary/several terminological entries</td>
<td>Fully-fledged terminological database/thesaurus/ontology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lower degree of complexity
Smaller amount of work

Higher degree of complexity
Bigger amount of work
Who does terminology work?

- Time spent
- Content publishers
- Translator
- Subject matter expert
- Terminologist
- Marketing expert
- Branding expert
- Trademarking expert
- Product developer
- Stronger concept focus
- Stronger designation focus
Consumers and contributors

- Partners
- End clients
- User interface designers
- Product managers
- Industry analysts
- Translators
- Localizers
- Geopolitical experts
- ...
Workflow

Terminologists

New term

New concept

Change request

Terminology Management System

External and internal community of users

Translators, editors, writers, subject matter experts, lawyers, PMs...
What a terminologist does

- Compiling monolingual or multilingual terminologies
  - Documentation searches
  - Evaluation of documentation to determine nomenclature
  - Systematic and selective terminology searches
  - Arranging terms in logical groups and setting up concept systems
  - Classifying terminology stocks by subject matter
  - Drawing up definitions
  - Preparing terminology and validating the information processed into entries for data bases
  - Quality management of the data
  - Updating the data
- Terminology planning activities
  - Drawing up and implementing a suitable terminology-related language policy for the sector of activity involved (institution, organisation, company, language community, etc)
  - Homogenisation of terminologies
  - Creation and generation of new terms, product — names or descriptions of functions
  - Standardisation of terminologies
  - Verifying the current and the correct uses of terminologies
- Making terminology collections available
  - Cooperation in the planning and designing of terminology data bases
  - Evaluation of software products specific to terminology (benchmarking) and cooperation in the further development of these working aids
  - Compiling entry structures and specifying working methods and routines
  - Looking after the technical and content aspects of terminology data bases
- Advisory and training activities
  - Advising direct beneficiaries or terminology data bases (including colleagues and staff from the translation, technical writing, research, development, production and sales)
  - Advisory services in conjunction with setting up terminology services
  - Training and mentoring trainees and learners
  - Introduction, training, and continuing education of terminology personnel within the organisation, institution, etc.
  - Drawing up courses of terminology studies and integrating them into a specific overall study course
  - Preparation of research results for teaching, training and advisory purposes and the development of teaching and study materials
  - Providing support for terminology theses and dissertations

ISO 704 meaning of terminologist
Conclusion

- Terminologist:
  - Define, based on RaDT definition
  - Additional distinction: time spent on terminology work

- Terminology worker
  - “role carried out by a language professional or other expert who performs terminology work as an ancillary function of other professional activities”
Conclusion

- Increased specialization
- Need to have lots of different specialists participate in terminology work
- So, anyone should really read and be familiar with ISO 704

➢ It ain’t gonna happen!
Conclusion

• Focus ISO 704 on the now fairly clearly emerged PROFESSION of terminologist

• Encourage people in a terminology role to read it