

eSSHra 12th-13th June 2007 Bern
Towards a Knowledge Society:
Is Knowledge a public good?
Dynamics of Knowledge production and distribution

Knowledge, Language and Diversity: Understanding
Specialized Language Using *CompSpecT* Multilingual
Dialogic Terminology Database

Comprehension of Specialized Terms

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The Knowledge Society

- Possession of knowledge
 - Manipulation of knowledge allows mere facts to be woven into a coherent discourse
 - Communication through wider networks
- ⇒ Efforts by the applied sciences to support the development of a knowledge-based society
- ⇒ Focus on the comprehension of specialized terms

CompSpecT Objectives

- 1st Granting access to specialized terms to those unfamiliar with them
- 2nd Insight into the transmission of specialized terms into common usage
- 3rd Comparison of specific terms accross different languages
- 4th Understand the transformation processes of different languages

The Knowledge Economy

- Participation and membership of the wider social group depends on
 - Possession of knowledge (inside traders, consultants, et al.): Added value comes from having more/different knowledge than others
 - Manipulation of knowledge (good politicians, “knowledge workers”): Added value comes from transforming one type of information into another
 - Production (academia, R&D): Added value comes from gaining new insights
 - Application (educated workforce): Added value comes from using existing knowledge to solve

Pure Knowledge Activities

- Knowledge society is manifested in a knowledge economy
- Share of value added of knowledge activities is rising:
 - E.g. CH: From 18.3% of the economic value added in 1990 to 24.5% today
 - CH: Decline in agriculture, industry, and tourism

Source: *OECD Factbook 2007: Economic, Environmental and Social Statistics*, pg. 49-51.

Importance of Terms

How can we support the appropriate use of of specialized terminology?

- Terms are the key to concepts and to new knowledge
- Awareness of the different spheres: Science and everyday life
- Awareness of the different worlds behind the different terms in different languages, for instance *s/Standard, education, Leistung, Bildung ...*
- Importance of information technology in managing knowledge
- Language independence (multilingual issues in EU research)

Principles of CompSpecT Database

- Reverse the decontextualization of terms in everyday communication (public and private)
- Recontextualizing the terms to comprehend their original meaning
- Lending transparency to transformation processes from scientific dialog to the public sphere
- Insight into multilingual structures and transparency of the different “worlds” behind the different “words”
- Interactivity
 - +Cooperation with local institutions and municipalities
 - +Usability analysis

Two Phases

Initial research phase:

- Define the database with several topic domains
- Using different languages for the same topic
- Development of a prototype database

Second phase:

- Contextualizing the topics in multilingual settings
- Expanding in the European network to include other topics and languages

CompSpecT Subject Domains

“Official” topics (cf. http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/knowledge_society)

- Society
- Economy and Work
- Education and Training
- Quality of Life
- Regions and World

“Local” topics

- Educational Standards
- Peace education
- Gender Equality

Research Topics and Cooperation

- Scientific analysis of the problem comprehending specialized language
- Solving multilingual terminology database issues
- Usability analysis in cooperation with the local political and academic institutions
- Propagate the use of the database and consequently to improve public access to knowledge in form of terms

Summary and Added Value

- Increase participation and improve attitudes towards lifelong learning
- Demonstrate the origins of the terminology
- Contextualization of the concepts
- Mettre en evidence le processus de transmission d'un context spécialisé à un usage général

- Scientific benefit and European impact: Data about transformation processes and deeper insight in possibilities for “bridging the gap” between science and society
- Towards the European Research Area