

Terminologiatöö Rootsii moodi (Terminology work – the Swedish way)

In other terms – raised awareness

Not long ago, a series of articles containing agricultural terminology (and even some definitions) was printed on the Swedish milk cartons. This is just one example of what can also be found in the media and in advertising these days. Examples of what could perhaps point to a raised awareness about terminological matters in Sweden. Even though they might not always be referred to as such, to a growing extent, discussions in the media circle around defining concepts, providing definitions or attempting to harmonize existing terms and definitions. More and more companies also provide glossaries on their websites and use terminology as a marketing means, to increase sales. As a national centre for terminology we can only welcome such a raised awareness.

Long term planning – the history of the TNC (Rootsi terminoloogiakeskus)

The Swedish national centre for terminology, *TNC*, is the hub of Swedish terminology work, and also one of the oldest terminology centres in the world. *The Swedish Centre for Technical Terminology (Tekniska nomenklaturcentralen, TNC)* was founded already in 1941 on the initiative of the *Academy of Engineering Sciences (IVA)* and other interested parties such as engineers and inventors. In 2001, at the age of 60, the TNC was reconstructed into *Terminologacentrum TNC (The Swedish Centre for Terminology)*. The new name was deliberately made more general in order to reflect this widening of the centre's activities. However, the acronym TNC was kept in order to emphasize the continuity of the activities. During the last 60 years, more and more subject fields have been covered by TNC's activities. TNC's competence and experience have increased, the use of new technology has made work more efficient and far-reaching, and the distribution of results, in the form of glossaries for example, has improved.

There are some factors which could be said to be essential prerequisites for a national terminology centre¹. Among the most important are a favorable scientific tradition in the country – Sweden has a strong tradition of systematizing and categorizing going back to Linnaeus and Berzelius – and strong financial support. TNC, which started out as a non-profit member organization, later to become a private company without profit distribution, has received varying financial support through the years. Today, the main shareholder is the *Swedish Standards Institute SIS* but among the owners can also be found *the Swedish Academy, the Finnish Centre for Technical Terminology (TSK)*, as well as representatives from areas such as construction, mechanical engineering, geographic information, chemistry and information technology. However, in order to preserve its basic function as the hub of Swedish terminology activities, Terminologacentrum TNC continues to receive a grant from the *Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications*, as was the case with the former TNC. Authorities, universities, colleges, companies, and trade associations, as well as private companies can subscribe to the services of Terminologacentrum through the *Association for the Promotion of Terminology Activities (Terminologifrämjandet)*. Another important prerequisite is manifold competence; today, the TNC employs a staff of 10 terminologists with expertise ranging from technical areas to linguistics.

Activities

The overall aim of Terminologacentrum TNC is to meet all kinds of terminological needs of users of languages for special purposes. TNC achieves this through

- terminological services and support to authorities, organizations, enterprises that pursue terminological work of their own within various subject fields, and also to individuals
- the development of terminological products such as terminological glossaries and databases, compilation of manuals for technical writing, etc.

- the formulation of rules and guidelines for the writing of technical texts
- collection, processing and dissemination of terminology of specialised subject fields
- terminological reviews of standards and other documents containing terminology
- lectures and courses on the principles and methods of terminology work and technical writing
- co-operation with other language institutions on a national level and with terminological institutions on an international level.

These and other terminology activities contribute to the development and maintenance of clear-cut Swedish terminology that can contribute to an efficient communication between subject specialists.

Terminological products

In order to help resolve ambiguity and misunderstandings within various subject fields, the TNC has compiled and distributed some 80 terminological glossaries covering approximately 40 different subject fields, e.g. geotechnics, paper manufacturing, corrosion, nuclear energy, textile manufacturing, and geology. The latest addition to this glossary collection is a revised *Glossary of Cleaning* (TNC 101). In all, the TNC glossaries contain some 130 000 term entries. The majority of these glossaries include – apart from definitions – term equivalents in English, French, and German, also occasionally in Danish, Norwegian, and Finnish. All the glossaries have been developed in close connection with experts in the field in question, a fact which is also true for all other work conducted by the TNC.

In 1988, as one of the first commercial cd-rom productions in Sweden, the TNC published a termbank, *Termdok on cd-rom*. The third edition, published in 1992, contained approximately 500 000 entries from TNC-glossaries, Swedish Standards, other Nordic termbanks, a selection from the Canadian termbank *Termium*, and the termbank of the European Commission, *Eurodicautom*.

Projects

The glossaries represent the most visible results of TNC's terminology projects. A great many more projects have been carried out though, always in close co-operation with subject field experts. Recently, terminology projects have been conducted in the subject fields of pension schemes and road maintenance (together with the *Swedish National Road Administration*), and currently a project on the terminology of mathematics is under way.

The library

The TNC reference library should house any terminological dictionary which contains Swedish terminology and the library currently has some 10 000 volumes of glossaries, handbooks, terminology literature, magazines, etc. The library also includes a collection of Swedish standards. Of special Estonian interest is the Edgar Kant collection for a polyglot glossary of geographic terms which was deposited at the TNC by Lund University (where Edgar Kant worked for many years). The collection includes a great number of library cards as well as binders of terminology record sheets in up to 14 languages.

Terminology training

Sweden is one of the few Nordic countries still lacking a formal terminology education and training at university level. There are a few initiatives, mainly within translator training programmes, but most of the courses in terminology are given by the TNC. A majority of these courses are given at universities, as part of other programmes, but courses are also custom-made for companies and authorities. The spring of 2002 saw the first separate terminology course, giving university credits. A new one is planned, and the TNC has also suggested that a professorship of terminology should be established at one of Sweden's technical universities. TNC also participates in the terminology training group of the *European Association for Terminology, EAFT*.

National contacts

The value of joint efforts in the field of special languages and terminology is difficult to overestimate. The TNC, in its role as a national terminological centre, maintains a wide contact net including language bodies, publishing houses, terminology groups, etc.

Language cultivation in Sweden

Sweden is traditionally well provided with language cultivation organizations. Besides the TNC, the list includes the following organizations:

- *The Swedish Language Council (Svenska språknämnden)* which is the primary institution for general language cultivation in Sweden with a mission to monitor the development of spoken and written Swedish.
- *The Swedish Academy* which publishes the *Swedish Academy Wordlist (Svenska Akademiens ordlista, SAOL)* – the (unofficial) norm for the spelling and inflection of Swedish words – and the *Swedish Academy Dictionary (Svenska Akademiens ordbok, SAOB)*.

To these organizations should be added language cultivators at the Swedish Government, at different authorities; journalists; technical writers; the group for media language; and *Språkvårdsgruppen* (a joint group comprising all those mentioned above).

Joint groups for terminology – the Swedish model

One of the quickest and most efficient ways of organizing terminology work for a specific subject field/sector has been found to be the joint group model. Already in 1996, the first group was formed: the *JOGSCOT, the Joint Group for Computer Terminology (Svenska datatermgruppen)*. The objective of the joint groups for terminology is to create an adequate Swedish terminology in fields where English terms dominate, as well as to harmonize the existing terminology by analyzing the concepts and providing plausible definitions and explanations. A core group of 5 to 6 people meet once a month to work out pre-recommendations containing a Swedish equivalent to an English computer term and an accompanying comment, definition or explanation. These recommendations are then sent out for reference to a larger group. The whole group meets once a year and corresponds by e-mail in the meantime. Besides language cultivation representatives, subject field experts and media representatives take part, all on a voluntary basis. With the help of a website, where the terms and recommendations are published for anyone to use, the group has managed to establish itself as *the* reference for proper Swedish computer terminology, and the recommendations gain ground and appear in the media and as part of newly published glossaries.

In 1999, the *Joint Group for Swedish Life Sciences Terminology (Svenska biotermgruppen)* followed. Since this subject field is still new, and since its terminology has not yet influenced everyday life and language in the same way as the computer terminology, this group is smaller and has so far attracted mainly researchers and teachers in this field. The specialized press in the field closely monitors the results, however.

The third joint group, the *Joint Group for Swedish Terminology of Built Environment (Svenska termgruppen för byggd miljö)*, was formed in 2002, and has terminology in the fields of planning, construction and facility management as its scope. This group is, from an organizational point of view, still somewhat different from the other joint groups. The main actor in the building information area (*Svensk Byggtjänst*) has teamed up with the TNC, organized a reference group of subject field experts, and launched a combined termbank/thesaurus system based on subscriptions and membership.

Very recently yet a new group was formed, as a result of an EU directive about in vitro-diagnostics. The directive claims that member states can decide whether documentation accompanying medical devices of different kinds should be translated or not. Sweden has adopted the directive and so, there is a need for Swedish terminology in this field.

The joint group model was exported to Norway, Finland and Greece during the Efcot-project, a project supported by the EU MLIS-program and concluded in 1999 with the formation of similar groups in the participating countries.

The success of these groups is partly due to their broad composition, and especially the fact that the media take part in the discussion and then use the terminology decided upon is crucial for the spreading of the terminology to a larger audience. The web technology has obviously also contributed to the work itself, and to the spreading of the results.

Other national contacts

Furthermore, the TNC participates in the terminology work of other organizations, e.g. the *Swedish Society of Medicine (Svenska Läkaresällskapet)*, the *Swedish Chemical Society (Svenska Kemistsamfundet)*, and the *Swedish Optical Society (Svenska optiksällskapet)*.

Terminology work is naturally not only conducted at the national centre. Much work is being done in organizations of different kinds. A particularly good example is the work carried out by the *National Board of Health and Welfare (Socialstyrelsen)* where two terminologists work full-time with terminological issues within the national healthcare. However, it is important to notice their close collaboration with the TNC – through terminology courses, reviews drafts of their terminologies, etc.

International contacts

The co-operation with other Nordic countries is carried out through *Nordterm*. Outside of Sweden, TNC has also participated in a number of EU projects and has also played an active role in the terminology committees of European and global standardization organizations. TNC is also a member of the board of the *European Association for Terminology (EAFIT)*.

Nordterm

When it comes to international co-operation, the *Nordterm* co-operation holds an exceptional position. There is a long tradition of terminology work in the Nordic countries. Indeed, the first work on technical terminology work was carried out as early as the late 19th century. The starting point for *Nordterm* was in 1976 when representatives from terminology groups in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden met in Stockholm for the first time. This led to a number of joint courses and informal discussions about various projects. The organizations were all small with very limited resources, but through a fruitful exchange of ideas and experiences *Nordterm* became an important actor on the international terminology scene. Among the results achieved by this network can be mentioned a number of publications (e.g. the handbook *Guide to Terminology* which has been translated into Chinese, Croatian and Esperanto), courses and a joint Nordic terminological record format, *NTRF*.

The principal objective of *Nordterm* is to be a Nordic forum and network for terminology work. The nucleus of *Nordterm* is composed of terminology centres in the Nordic countries: *Icelandic Language Council (Íslensk málnefnd)*, *Finnish Centre for Technical Terminology (Tekniikan Sanastokeskus)*, *TNC*, *Danish Terminology Group (Terminologigruppen)*, *Nordic Sami Institute (Sámi instituhtta)*. In addition to these, a large number of other organisations and individuals take part in *Nordterm* activities, for example: *the Nordic Language Secretariat (Nordiska språkrådet)*, the language councils of all the Nordic countries, the Nordic bodies for standardisation, universities, and translators. Every two years, a *Nordterm* symposium is held in one of the Nordic countries. A broad presentation of the state of the art in terminology theory and practice is given at these occasions. In 2003, TNC hosted the *Nordterm* symposium in Visby, Gotland.

ISO/TC 37

For many years, the TNC (and *Nordterm*) has played an active role in the work of ISO's only committee devoted solely to terminology work – *ISO/TC 37 Terminology and other language resources*. At the request of SIS, TNC represents Sweden in TC 37 and is responsible for a secretariat for one of TC 37's subcommittees, SC1 Principles and methods. In 2002, a Swedish national

committee for terminology and language resources, which is a mirror committee to TC 37, was recently founded with TNC in the role of project coordinator. Currently, the committee has nine members.

EU

TNC has had contacts concerning terminology with the EU long before 1995 when Sweden officially joined. When a large number of documents concerning the co-operation between EU and EFTA (of which Sweden was a member) was to be translated into Swedish, a large-scale translation project was started in Sweden and a special translation committee established. The TNC was given the task of providing terminological advice and assistance to the translators. The TNC also built a termbank on the basis of the English and Swedish versions of EU documents. To meet the needs of all those interested in, or professionally associated with the EC and its terminology, TNC also compiled an English–Swedish vocabulary from the material in the termbank. The vocabulary *EC words and expressions* appeared in 1993, as a result of a work process addressing a wide range of practical, theoretical and methodological problems.³

When Sweden then joined in 1995, it also meant new translation-oriented tasks for the TNC. During four years, the TNC was entrusted by the *European Commission* to introduce Swedish terminology into their termbank *Eurodicautom*. The TNC supplemented approximately 140 000 term records with Swedish terms and source references, and in many cases also definitions and explanatory notes were added.

The concepts in question belonged to a broad spectrum of subject fields, ranging from law to agriculture and air pollution. In many respects the task of providing Swedish equivalents to Eurodicautom differed from traditional terminology work previously carried out by the TNC, namely in scope, size, time limits and main target users.⁴ During one of the projects, a special terminology help desk function was established for the Swedish translators, and the TNC then committed to answer any questions regarding terminology within 48 hours.

Within the MLIS-programme (*Multilingual Information Society*) of the European Commission, TNC conducted two projects: *Nordterm-Net* (MLIS-122) resulting in a joint Nordic termbank on the Internet⁵ and *Efcot* (MLIS-2007), resulting in a forum for computer terminology (see above) and the export of the joint group model to Norway, Finland and Greece. In recent years, Recently, the TNC has participated actively in the different working groups for the development of *IATE* (*Inter-Agency Terminology Exchange*), the new interinstitutional termbank.

TISS – Terminology Infrastructure in Sweden

The Swedish public administration is facing a great challenge – namely that of using new technology and finding new electronic ways of filing and communicating with citizens – or in other words, transforming into the modern so-called e-government, where one issue will be handled by one authority only, and where access and service to government information for industry and citizens is available around the clock. This new 24-hour service will entail the need for precise terminology in order to give citizens what they want, when they need it. Different authorities must start making inventories of existing terminology, harmonizing and coordinating their terminology work. This has been further emphasized by several public investigations, as has also the need for appointing specific people who are to be responsible for the terminology work of the authorities. The TNC has already taken the first step towards a terminology infrastructure in Sweden.

Since October 2002, the TNC is conducting the project *TISS* (*Terminology Infrastructure for Sweden*) aiming at providing Sweden with a terminology infrastructure. This visionary project contains different phases, the most important of which are the establishing of networks of people responsible for terminology work in different organizations, and the investigation of national terminological resources – all in order to arrive at a web-based terminology portal with a national termbank,

Rikstermbanken. TNC has received special funding from the Ministry of Industry and Commerce for the project.

The idea about a terminology infrastructure is not new. The *Pointer* project (*Proposals for an Operational Infrastructure for Terminology in Europe*), finalized in 1996, was a co-operation project with some 40 participants, conducted within the MLAP-programme of the EU. An important component was considered to be network building – to integrate, facilitate and improve existing structures on all levels in Europe. The Nordic situation with national terminology centres and regional co-operation was considered an example of best practice. The Pointer project presented a number of joint definitions for several concepts, including that of 'terminology infrastructure': *framework of -institutions, companies (LEs and SMEs), associations, self-employed professionals, etc.; - their terminological activities; and - co-operation and communication networks (on both the physical and logical levels) they are operating (in) for a given application area.*² The TISS project follows up the Pointer results but brings a modern perspective to it.

In the course of the project, the guidelines for implementing a terminological infrastructure in Sweden will be drafted, the basic prerequisites and needs specified, taking into consideration existing and planned terminological resources in Sweden. The project will consist of the following stages:

- a survey on terminological resources
- the creation of a terminology portal and a national termbank where existing termbanks and terminology collections can be made publicly available
- a pilot study for the creation of a joint group for terminology (applied to the terminology of in vitro-diagnostics during the project)
- laying the grounds for creating a terminology coordination network which will include people responsible for terminology coordination at all Swedish authorities, agencies and companies
- the continuation and expansion of the activities of the existing joint groups for terminology, especially the *Joint Group for Swedish Computer Terminology*
- the drafting of terminology training programs and the preparation of new teaching material, including a translation of the *Guide to Terminology* (Nordterm 8) into Swedish.

Sweden in terms of terminology work

As shown above, terminology work in Sweden is conducted in various ways, in different subject fields, and by different organizations, but always with the same goal: to create a common conceptual ground. In this, the TNC has been given the task by the government to inspire and coordinate terminology work and to see to the continuity, which is what we continue to do.

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Web links:

<www.tnc.se>
<www.nada.kth.se/dataterm>
<www.tnc.se/bioterm>
<www.svenskaspraknamnden.se>
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