

FOREWORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE COLLOQUIUM "COMPARISON OF THE THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF TERMINOLOGY IN EASTERN EUROPE AND THE WESTERN COUNTRIES"

The aims of former workshops and colloquia arranged by the IITF have primarily been to clarify theoretical positions in terminology in the Western countries. Under this heading the proceedings of the following events have been published in this journal:

‘Sign Models in Terminology and LSP’ (Vol. 8 (1997) no. 1/2)

‘New trends in Terminology teaching and Training’ (Vol. 8 (1997) no. 1/2)

‘New Approaches to Research into the Concept within Terminology’ (Vol. 10 (1999) no. 2)

‘Terminology Science at the Crossroads?’ (Vol. 12 (2001), Vol. 13 (2002))

Taking a look at the lists of participants of those events, it is striking that East European researchers have been very poorly represented. In the past, this was to a great extent due to the restrictions and other problems, especially of a financial nature, which our Eastern colleagues have had to cope with.

Fortunately, things have changed, and therefore the IITF have considered it of paramount importance to re-establish, intensify, and strengthen the contacts and the interchange of results with a very important part of our research community.

Whether we as linguists like it or not, we have to admit that the language barrier between Eastern and Western European languages has considerably hampered our contacts, interchange and co-operation, especially at a more informal level, even though institutions such as Infoterm, the IITF, the IULA, and others have made a remarkable effort to publish translations of works written in languages inaccessible to most of our Western colleagues. However, the fact that knowledge about recent developments in terminology research in Eastern Europe is still insufficient or even non-existent in Western countries can be very clearly deduced from the references quoted in monographs and articles.

In order to change this lamentable state of affairs, in October 2002 the IITF, in co-operation with our Eastern colleagues especially in Moscow, took the initiative to a first colloquium within the framework of the "2nd International Conference on Terminology in Commemoration of E. Drezen's 110th Anniversary" in Riga. The subject of the colloquium was "Intensification of Co-operation in Terminology between East and Central European Countries". This conference may be considered a forerunner of the colloquium "*Comparison of the theoretical foundations of terminology in Eastern Europe and the Western countries*" held in Surrey in August 2003 in conjunction with the '14th European Symposium on Language for Special Purposes "Communication, Culture, Knowledge"'.

This colloquium, of which the proceedings are published in this and the following issue of the IITF Journal, is to be considered within the framework of the above-mentioned initiatives and events. It is therefore not surprising that the main aims of the colloquium were the following:

- To offer our Eastern European colleagues the opportunity to present the results of their basic research in terminology
- To contrast their research results with those from colleagues of the Western countries in order to elucidate differences as well as common basic foundations.

It is commonly agreed that any serious research work requires a solid theoretical foundation. In other words, if we want to create the basis for comprehensive and sound co-operation in terminology research, three preconditions have to be met: we must obtain knowledge about existing results, we must establish and ensure continuous knowledge transfer, and we must be prepared to share knowledge. Apart from these basic preconditions, personal contacts are indispensable. Consequently, we have to add to the above general aims the establishment of personal contacts as the real prime mover of any efficient collaboration.

Obviously the very tight timetable of the colloquium did not allow the commentators – who had only 15 minutes each – to go into detail in their oral presentations. Therefore, they have been allowed more space for their written comments in order to make them more comprehensible for those who could not attend the colloquium.

It is our hope that these proceedings will contribute to establishing a more intensive dialogue between our research communities in future.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank all colleagues for their efforts and dedication, without which such an event cannot be successfully realised.

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