

Short Communication on a Project in French-Portuguese Forestry Terminology

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Abstract

A group of scientists working on rainforest ecosystem in French Guyana have gathered in a scientific complex named Silvolab. Within the framework of this regional co-operation programme, a project named OYAPOQUE has been launched with two purposes: to provide a searchable database of grey literature with abstracts in French or Portuguese on the World Wide Web; and to create a →glossary of forestry →terms with French and Portuguese access as an on-line resource for the users of the literature database.

The work is distributed among three Brazilian teams (INPA in Manaus, EMBRAPA and MUSEU GOELDI in Belem) and a French team (Silvolab, Kourou).

A database has been developed under Access[®], which includes windows and pop-up menus. An English-Portuguese →vocabulary of 2,000 →terms is used as a basic corpus. The translation of the →terms and their →definitions are looked up in the most common French and Portuguese text and reference books and are included in the database for further comparison and evaluation.

At this stage of the project it is important for us to make a first test of the database, assemble the information collected by the different teams and make them available at a single Web site.

Keywords: OYAPOQUE, international co-operation, Brazil, French Guyana, rainforest, French-Portuguese, grey literature, World Wide Web

1 Introduction

Silvolab is a joint research programme on rainforest ecosystem in French Guyana, involving scientists from CIRAD¹-Forêts, CNRS², ENGREF³, INRA⁴, ONF⁵, ORSTOM⁶ and Université Antilles-Guyane. Within this framework, a regional co-operation project named OYAPOQUE has been launched with the objective to provide a searchable database of grey literature (e.g. master and PhD theses) in French or Portuguese on the World Wide Web. As it appeared from IUFRO's →terminology bibliography that no French-Portuguese dictionary specialised on forestry is available, it was decided to create such a →glossary as an on-line resource for the users of the literature database.

¹ CIRAD: Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement

² CNRS: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique

³ ENGREF: Ecole Nationale du Génie Rural, des Eaux et des Forêts

⁴ INRA: Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique

⁵ ONF: Office National des Forêts

⁶ ORSTOM: Institut français de recherche scientifique pour le développement en coopération

2 Terminology Project Management

After a contact to FAO and SilvaVoc, IUFRO's →terminology clearinghouse, our terminological project was officially launched as a part of Silvolab co-operation in October 1996 at a meeting of the different partners.

The work was distributed among three Brazilian teams (INPA⁷ in Manaus, EMBRAPA⁸ and MUSEU GOELDI⁹ in Belem) and a French team. Each team includes a forest scientist, a computer engineer and a specialist in Scientific and Technical Information (STI). These multidisciplinary teams were specially created for this project.

Within each team the forest scientist and the STI specialist co-operate in order to:

- make dictionaries and →glossaries available within their own team and to other teams if necessary;
- define priorities and select →entry terms;
- limit the number of →entry terms for a better methodology;
- benefit from other studies in the field of science, information and computing. For example: extracting the most frequently quoted →terms from abstracts, etc.

3 Creating a Glossary

3.1 Data Management

A database has been developed under Access[®]. For technical reasons, this choice was preferred to the purchase and use of a software dedicated to →terminology such as Lexpro for example. Data input is facilitated by the user's interface, which includes windows and pop-up menus and allows users to add →entry terms.

3.2 Data Collection and Coverage

Terms related to tropical forest received priority, following the support undertaken by Silvolab and the scientific project "Natural Forest Development" with its Amazonian partners. An English-Portuguese →vocabulary of 2,000 →terms (FRANCIS 1994) was used as a basic corpus. The English →terms are the pivotal →terms. In the first stage, both French and Portuguese teams looked up each →term in the most common text and reference books. The data are captured within each team; the translation of the →term and its →definition in the various literature sources are included in the database. In a second stage, an evaluation of the →terms and a comparison of the →definitions are planned. In future more sophisticated tools may be applied, such as natural language analysis and oral sources provided by French or Portuguese-speaking experts, in order to identify the closest equivalent →term in the target language.

Each Brazilian team processes 400 Portuguese →terms of our corpus. They provide a translation of the English →term and a →definition in Portuguese. Thus 1,200 words will be defined. Meanwhile, the French organisation will translate the English →terms into French and provide →definitions in French.

⁷ INPA: Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas da Amazônia

⁸ EMBRAPA: Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisas Agropecuárias

⁹ Museu Goeldi: Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi

3.3 Validation

The first data batch will be captured on a workshop in December 1998, and the four teams will work together on the →terms and the information sources. During round-table discussions, the representatives of both language communities will validate the →entry terms and →neologisms (if applicable). It appears already that some →definitions and translations were difficult to find and that too many →terms were selected for the first step. The structure of the terminological records and the domain coverage may also be modified if it is necessary.

4 Conclusion

At this stage of the project it is important for us to assemble the information collected by the teams, and make the database on grey literature available on a single Web site. The relevance of the →terms of the French-Portuguese →glossary for the understanding of the selected literature and the compatibility of the →definitions will be checked.

This project benefits from work already done within the IUFRO network, by →terminology specialists, translators and forest specialist interested in the subject. The internationalisation of methodology, standardisation and forestry (IUFRO, FAO among others), the languages chosen as well as the fact that much →terminology work has already been done in Spanish lead us to the conclusion that we need to work together with the terminology association Union Latine. With this project, we expect to contribute to a better understanding and exchange of information on studies undertaken in the Amazonian region.

5 References

- FRANCIS, J.K., 1994: English-Portuguese Equivalents of Forestry and Conservation Terms. General Technical Report SO-109. New Orleans, LA: USDA Forest Service, Southern Forest Experiment Station, 45 pp.

6 Related Web Sites

- Silvolab-Guyane
<<http://kourou.cirad.fr/>>
- Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas da Amazônia (INPA)
<<http://www.inpa.gov.br/>>
- Union Latine
<<http://www.unilat.org/>>

