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Computational Studies in Terminology

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Terminology, as a field of applied linguistics, is gaining increasing importance, since in recent years striking new developments of technology and the sciences have taken place. Terminologists have their own international congresses; linguists and standard associations try to build up and control the specific vocabularies of all different fields, in order to have them compiled and printed in up-to-date dictionaries. Industry also shows remarkable interest in this work, because those great international companies heavily depend on the means of a fixed and standardized vocabulary in order to achieve the necessary communication (to go along with its products), either by publication or by translation.

For various reasons, the task of documenting and controlling the growth and structure of terminological vocabularies cannot satisfactorily be accomplished without the application of computers. Insight into the structure of terminologies has been gained by functional, computer prepared statistics of vocabularies and validations of texts. Linguists, for their part, have programmed computers in order to isolate relevant lexical items from terminological texts, as well as to determine the various meanings and shades of meaning of specific terms, by means of special procedures.

Several linguistic methods and procedures, as originally developed for automatic sentence analysis and mechanical translation, can successfully be employed in the field of computer assisted research and control of terminologies. This holds especially true with regard to automated compilation procedures, as to be used within the process of preparing bilingual and multilingual technical dictionaries.