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Bertha Toft & Eva Roth: MIKROØKONOMISK GLOSSAR

- Samt teoretiske og praktiske betragtninger over terminologi og vidensrepræsentation. Herning: Systime 1990.

The proclamation in the Publisher's note of a buyers' audience that spans from the economist to the linguistic scholar who is interested in terminological work testifies to the kind of ambition that has made it possible for this dynamic Danish publishing company, Systime, to become a channel relevant to those who wish to see their results hit the market. This book certainly does deserve an audience - but who: economists, linguists, or others, students perhaps?

The authors, in a gently downtoned foreword, profess that the book serves different, though related, aims each of which is given a chapter. First, the book is a reference work, containing a description of the field of microeconomics and a glossary of key concepts in microeconomics. Each "entry" in the glossary carries a numerical label identifying the term vertically and horizontally within the terminological matrix of the field. The headword, complete with definitions, explanations, synonyms and comments is given in English followed by the Danish equivalent and matching definitions, explanations, synonyms and comments. Apart from this principal aim, the book purports to widen the knowledge of the terminologist's craft in general and to unveil the working methods of the practising terminologist in the field of microeconomics in particular. Other secondary aims include a comment on the relevance of knowledge engineering and new technology and on the ongoing debate over the hegemony of the Anglo-Saxon vocabulary in LSP texts in Danish.

The glossary contains some 250 basic microeconomic terms. It begins with an overview of the field of microeconomics which is divided into seven macrostructures each of which is further subdivided. A short text describes the relationship between key concepts within each conceptual macrostructure and subsequent illustrations and tables classify the concepts in terms of their logical, partitive or thematic relationships. This graphical presentation works excellently in most cases, providing nice pedagogical overviews amply suited for any course where basic understanding of principal microeconomic concepts is taught. Accordingly, the overviews have found a welcome use in the teaching of 2nd and 3rd semester undergraduate language students at the Aarhus School of Business. There are, of course, some conceptual relationships that do not lend themselves readily to the rigour of a box and the strictly logical representation occasionally falls short of stringency, e.g. the box describing the market structure and the box describing the principles of resource allocation. The authors, knowing this, try in various ways to counter this problem and mostly succeed, e.g. by inviting and illustrating other relationships (temporal, causal, etc) where appropriate.

Careful commentary is given to those graphical presentations whose apparent simplicity could be seen to veil an underlying complexity of the terminological relationships (e.g. the section on Market structures, Characteristics and Consequences). Furthermore, where conceptual structures vary greatly between the SL and the TL, overviews are given of both systems.

In general, the box-like representation of semantic relationships must be said to work better within the technical sciences and some social sciences than within the humanities and the approach should therefore, in my view, be restricted to the classification of LSP vocabularies. However, in this field there can be no doubt that a work of this kind, its obvious limits and minor flaws notwithstanding, is relevant, if not indispensable, for anyone entrusted with the task of imparting factual knowledge about microeconomics. Nor can we neglect the relevance of this approach for linguists concerned with conceptual and semantic mapping of terms within any given field.

I am somewhat less enthusiastic about this book's worth as a possible tool for translation of texts on economics. Thus, checking the terminological profile of the glossary against that of translations and text editing assignments performed by 2nd, 3rd and 4th semester language students showed the glossary to be of little real use as a reference work for solving equivalence problems. This must, of course, be so because real life business translations are concerned less with the theory of microeconomics than with microeconomics in practice. A glossary that contains a limited number of basic theoretical microeconomic concepts would therefore seem to be of limited use to those whose interest goes beyond the elementary and whose main concern is translation. They would invariably have to consult other reference books, broader in scope and more extensive in terminological coverage. Furthermore, the layout of the glossary is less than thrilling and not particularly friendly to the user looking for easy reference. A single example should suffice:

BEGREBSNR 1'1'2.1
 ENG.TERM demand for goods and services
 SYNONYMER demand for commodities
 ENG.DEF. the quantity of goods and services demanded by households.
 FORKLARING quantity demanded (of goods and services) refers to a continuous flow. It expresses the quantity demanded per period of time
 DA.TERM efterspørgsel efter varer og tjenesteydelser
 SYNONYMER efterspørgsel efter forbrugsgoder
 efterspørgsel efter færdigvarer
 DA.DEF. den mængde varer og tjenesteydelser, som husholdningerne efterspørger.
 FORKLARING den efterspurgte mængde (af varer og tjenesteydelser) repræsenterer en "strøm" (flow) af varer og tjenesteydelser over en afgrænset periode.

As far as the other purposes of the book are concerned, the authors discuss the problems encountered by the practising terminologist in trying to "box" and regularize social science terms which are often both multidimensional and dynamic. This gives rise to an interesting discussion about the art of defining in which the authors maintain that a purely 'descriptive' identification of a word by genus and differentia is not sufficient. It is necessary to invite both the rigour of the logicians and the usage

knowledge of pragmatics to capture the full spectrum of meanings of social science terms. In this connection, the authors raise the relevant question of how to cope with the associative aspects of meaning particularly pertinent to the social sciences.

The book ends with a short and interesting discussion about the applicability of theories and practices of knowledge engineering, knowledge representation, semantic networks and new technology which brings into focus both its main achievement and its principal relevance: the work of the terminologist serves the primary purposes of knowledge systematization and secondary, though certainly not unimportant, aims as a tool for those engaged in imparting knowledge about concepts and relationships within fields of science. This book clearly deserves a wide audience of both economists and language teachers.