

## **An Inspiration for terminologists - By: LISA WOLFF FOSTER**

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Report from Scania CV AB's participation in Nordterm 2007

### **Hoping for a good catch**

There were some great expectations ahead of Nordterm 2007 with the theme of *Knowledge and specialist communication*, situated within the fishing town of Bergen, Norway, at the Norwegian Handelshøyskole (NHH). My colleagues and I from Scania CV AB were looking forward to meeting other terminologists, in the hope of gaining further insights into how terminology work is carried out in our neighbouring Nordic countries and what is happening within terminology research. And last but not least, I was personally looking forward to seeing the magnificent Västlandet again, where I had lived and worked for a year.

### **An inspiring smorgasbord**

The extensive conference programme offered everything from the latest research conducted within terminology at various Scandinavian universities, to practical advice and benefits from terminology work. The conference was composed of a long, introductory lecture, followed by parallel lectures of 30 minutes each, so one had to choose with care. Although the tightly squeezed content of the programme aroused some concern before the conference, the concern proved to be only unjustified due to the organisers' punctuality and organisational competence. Unfortunately there was no time for subsequent discussions after the shorter lectures, which would have been useful since many interesting issues were raised.

Thursday, which was the first day of the conference, commenced with Koen Kerremans' lecture *Terminology, situatedness and variation*, which apart from being very interesting provoked a debate between advocates of traditional terminology and descriptive

terminology.[1] For us, this was a new experience, but nevertheless an interesting discussion. This was followed by three sessions of lectures that despite the fact that they had a limited time of about 30 minutes per presentation, gave a great deal of information.

That day's most useful presentation for us was Hanne Erdman Thomsen's presentation on an economic model for computing terminological investments.

After Thursday's conference, we took a walk through the town allowing me to absorb the beauty of Bergen. After struggling through winding alleys, all the conference participants were invited to the historical Håkonshallen for some sparkling wine, something to eat (yes, a smorgasbord, but nothing for a vegetarian though) and beautiful singing.

Friday was started off by Gjert Kristoffersen discussing *Terminology in the new Norwegian language politics*. In the subsequent debate, participants in general agreed that terminology issues should fall within the Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications or similar, instead of how it is today, when terminology questions are often treated as cultural issues and referred to the corresponding ministry. A very inspiring day unfolded with, amongst others, Nina Pilke and Anita Nuopponen speaking about the stumbling blocks of terms and names, and Annelise Grinsted describing a new master's degree in terminology.

Disappointed by our own planning, we left Nordterm 2007 as early as Saturday morning, and missed the interesting presentations and the boat trip with dinner on the Saturday evening that wrapped up the conference. A mistake that we won't repeat next time! Fortunately we had time to visit the pleasantly odorous fish market at Bryggen that offered everything from gigantic long-legged crabs to whale steaks.

### **In the doggy bag**

From Scania's point of view, we can confirm that we, along with Saab Aerotech, stood out as representatives from industry. Bearing in mind the fact that the Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications is the body that should be responsible for terminology questions, it can seem somewhat odd that no other companies were represented. We also noted that Sweden is behind its Nordic neighbours when it comes to research within the area of terminology, and that there was only one present representative from any Swedish university.

The conference is an excellent arena for industry and academia where specialists from each area can meet and share experiences. For future conferences, I hope that more representatives from the industry sector could be present and report how terminology is used and set down within different companies. Could this be a theme for a future Nordterm conference?!

Every new, or deepened insight into others' terminological work, theoretical or practical, creates a broader understanding of the area. New contacts have been created and old ones reinforced and made stronger. During the three days of the conference we enjoyed Bergen's history and beauty, and apart from the terminological refreshment, we have also taken part in the Norwegian lunch tradition that is distinct from that of its neighbouring Nordic countries. The powers working behind the weather decided to take a favourable attitude as we miraculously experienced something as rare as sun and heat in Bergen! From Scania's point of view, it confirmed once again that we were on the right track with our terminological work and how important it is for the company. We brought back new inspiration and energy, and now we look forward to the next Nordterm conference.

### **A word about the arena**

The conference was arranged by Nordterm, an association and network of Nordic organisations, universities and companies engaged in terminology. Nordterm was founded in 1976 to appease the need for Nordic cooperation within the field of terminology. The most important activity of Nordterm is the Nordterm Assembly, which is open to everyone with an interest in terminology. The Nordterm Assembly normally takes place every two years and in connection with it, there is a terminology conference and a course.

For more information about Nordterm, and for those who wish to read about the lectures, see <http://www.nordterm.net/>.

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[1] The traditional terminology, General Theory of Terminology (GTT), established by Eugen Wüster on the one hand and the descriptive terminology, Sociological Terminology (ST), with Rita Temmerman as a leading figure on the other hand.

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