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Mixed Translations of the DDC: Design, Usability, and Implications for Knowledge Organization in Multilingual Environments

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Abstract

This paper reports on an ongoing investigation of mixed translation models for the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) system to support classification and access. A mixed translation uses DDC classes in the vernacular to form the basic framework of the mixed edition; English-language records are ingested directly to complete hierarchies where needed. Separate indexes of available terminology in the vernacular and English are provided. Specific Norwegian and Swedish mixed models are described, along with testing results of the Norwegian model. General implications of mixed translation models for knowledge organization in multilingual environments are considered.

Introduction

This paper reports on an ongoing investigation of mixed translation models for the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) system to support classification and access. A mixed translation uses DDC classes in the vernacular to form the basic framework of the mixed edition; English-language records are ingested directly to complete hierarchies where needed. Separate indexes of available terminology in the vernacular and English are provided.

A mixed translation could speed the translation process and make the translation easier to maintain. The majority of updates to the DDC occur in classes subordinate to those found in the English-language abridged edition; therefore, it might be easier to keep a mixed translation up-to-date by ingesting English-language records directly at deeper levels. Possible productivity gains in the development/maintenance of a mixed translation must be weighed against its usability as a classifier's tool and in end-user facing applications.

Investigation of a mixed translation was first suggested as an outcome of a 2006 study by the National Library of Sweden to explore a Swedish translation of the DDC (Svanberg 2006a, 2006b). The study looked at three approaches to translation: a Swedish translation of the abridged edition, a Swedish translation of the full edition, or a Swedish customized abridgment similar to the Norwegian edition of the DDC. The abridged edition was rejected as too brief and the full edition as too detailed. With respect to the third approach, a customized abridgment, concerns were raised related to interoperability and the cost of development and maintenance. A mixed Swedish-English translation arose as a possible solution. Svanberg's presentation (2006b) on the Swedish study during the Dewey Translators Meeting at the World Library and Information Congress in 2006 spurred interest on the part of the National Library of Norway to investigate a mixed translation as a possible approach to a new Norwegian edition of the DDC.

In late 2006, the authors initiated a joint study to explore models for mixed translations, and to test mixed versions based on those models for usability as a classifier's tool and in end-user facing applications. We began our investigation by proposing a basic design for mixed translations, and then developing specific models to address the Norwegian and Swedish contexts (Mitchell, Rype, and Svanberg 2008a). Using the Norwegian mixed model, several mixed Norwegian-English schedules were built and tested with users in Norway. Parallel to this work, Svanberg continued to refine the initial Swedish mixed model.

After a brief description of the basic mixed translation model, the paper reviews the Norwegian mixed model and testing results, followed by a discussion of the current version of the Swedish mixed model. We close with some general observations and questions about the role of mixed translations as knowledge organization tools in multilingual environments.

Basic Design

The current version of the basic model features available DDC data in the vernacular as the framework, updated to match the corresponding classes in the English-language full edition. English-language classes from the current full edition are added to the vernacular framework to complete the hierarchies. In hierarchies where interoperable expansions are available in the vernacular, the vernacular framework will be at a deeper level than its English-language equivalent.¹ The auxiliary tables (Tables 1-6) will be translated in full with the exception of the geographic table (Table 2). Table 2 will feature interoperable expansions for geographic areas of interest in the vernacular; the records for some areas not likely to be needed at the level of detail provided in the English-language edition will be ingested directly into the mixed edition without translation (e.g., U.S. counties will not be translated in Table 2 in the Swedish mixed edition). The standard terminology for instructions in a class record will be in the language of the record, e.g., "Inkluderer" for classes in Norwegian, "Including" for classes in English. Separate indexes featuring the terminology available in each language will be included. The Introduction and Glossary will be translated in full and made available in both languages; most of the Manual (with the exception of Manual notes that

¹ See Beall (2003) for a detailed discussion plus examples of interoperable expansions.

classify a set of twenty titles (ten in Norwegian, ten in English) using the 370-372 schedule and Relative Index from DDK 5, the mixed edition, and DDC 22. Participants were asked to complete an online questionnaire probing the usefulness of the mixed translation as a classifier's tool. Follow-up online interviews using open-ended questions were conducted with participants who completed the survey. A brief summary of the study and key findings follows; a fuller discussion can be found in Mitchell, Rype, and Svanberg (2008b) and Rype and Svanberg (2008).

Twelve of those recruited completed the study; two national library participants answered jointly and were counted as a single respondent for a total of eleven responses. All respondents were current users of DDK 5. Three also used DDC 22 (for one of the university libraries, DDC 22 was the primary tool and DDK 5 the secondary tool). One used WebDewey, two used older English-language editions (DDC 21 and DDC 20, respectively). The study had several limitations: DDK 5 itself was not fully updated to reflect DDC 22; some interim updates to DDK 5 classes were not included in the mixed edition; and only two respondents were from public and county libraries, a key user group of DDK 5.

Survey participants showed openness to using a mixed edition, using DDK 5 as the guide for the level of notation in such an edition, and including Norwegian index terms for English-language classes. There was less interest in having English-language index terms associated with classes in Norwegian. In follow-up interviews with nine participants (again, two national library participants answered jointly for a total of eight respondents), we were able to probe likes and dislikes more deeply. Respondents liked the Norwegian framework for the mixed version, the addition of more terms to the Norwegian index, and the depth/context provided by having the English-language classes close at hand. Some found the mix of languages confusing, and thought more attention should be paid to the basic design in terms of color, font, etc. While numbers in notes included a slash mark to show abridgment to the DDK 5 level, class numbers in the number column and index did not include abridgment marks. Some found the association of Norwegian index terms with English-language classes confusing. One respondent raised a concern about the mastery of English among Norwegian librarians. Several commented on the need for a more comprehensive Norwegian index—one with more terms and with additional aspects of subjects.

One key concern among respondents was the loss of information in the Norwegian classes in the mixed edition. For example, figure 2 shows class 370.153 as it appears in DDK 5; figure 1 shows the same class in the mixed edition. The DDK 5 version was developed by abridging the contents of the corresponding subdivisions of 370.153 in DDC 21; that abridgment is reflected in the contents of some of the notes under 370.153 in DDK 5. In the mixed version of 370.153 (fig. 1), there is no longer an abridged summary of the class in Norwegian and the subdivisions are explicitly listed in English. Even though most of the terminology from the DDK 5 version of 370.153 still appears in the Norwegian index associated with the mixed edition, many of the terms now point to English-language classes.

370.153 Emosjoner og personlighet

Forholdet mellom atferdsmønstre, emosjoner, følelser og læreprosessen og klasseromssituasjonen

Inkluderer: Atferdsendring, utadvendthet og innadvendthet, personlighet, underbevisste prosesser

Læringsmotivasjon, se 370.154

Figure 2. Class 370.153 from DDK 5

Because of the limited participation of public librarians in the original study, a second study was launched in November 2008 with all large public libraries in Norway plus a 10% sample of small and medium public libraries (fifty-six participants in total). An updated version of the 370-372 schedule was prepared that addressed some typographical errors and omissions in the version used in the initial study. Unfortunately, only three libraries responded to the second study, and none completed it.

In early 2009, we prepared mixed Norwegian-English versions of two additional schedules, 006 Special computer methods and part of 616 Diseases (616-616.1). The computer science schedule was chosen because it represented a fast-changing area, and the medicine schedule was chosen because it featured a complicated add table for which a special instruction had to be devised to handle different application instructions for abridged users versus full mixed edition users (see fig. 3). The note under notation 0023 and 00284 prefaced by “DDK 5” instructs users of notation at the DDK 5 level to class the topic represented by the notation in the number for the disease (“sykdommen”) without adding the notation.

- > 616.1–616.9 Bestemte sykdommer
 - Alle noter under 616.02–616.08 gjelder også her
 - Dersom ikke annet angis, tilføyes følgende etter alle klassenumre merket med*:
 - 001 Filosofi og teori
 - 002 Diverse
 - [0023] Spesialfeltet som yrke, arbeid, hobby
 - Brukes ikke; klassifiser i 023
 - DDK 5: klassifiser i nummeret for sykdommen uten å tilføye
 - 0028 Hjelpeteknikker, arbeidsmetoder; apparater, utstyr, materialer
 - 00284 Apparatus, equipment, materials
 - Do not use for self-help devices for persons with disabilities; class in 03
 - DDK 5: klassifiser i nummeret for sykdommen uten å tilføye

Figure 3. Add table under 616.1-616.9 in mixed Norwegian-English edition (excerpt)

The original plan was to present the materials to participants in a special workshop on the future of the Norwegian translation scheduled for 4 February 2009 in Oslo. Instead, a general conversation was held with participants in that meeting on the future of the Norwegian edition. The discussion at the workshop centered around two questions: What level is needed for a new translation of Dewey? Is it possible to create a Norwegian edition of Dewey that could be used by all libraries?

The workshop participants recommended the development of a full translation in Norwegian, in which abridgment instructions based on the DDK 5 level of notation would be provided for smaller libraries. The reasons behind the recommendation included the importance of Norwegian terminology, and consistency in application to support exchange of classification data. Norwegian terminology is important in order for classifiers to apply the DDC correctly, and as the basis for subject access for librarians and users (there is no national subject heading system in Norway). Participants felt that if all Norwegian libraries were using the same edition of the DDC, it would be easier to maintain consistency in classification.

Following the February workshop, we prepared three new versions of 006 Special computer methods: a mixed version that included abridgment marks for class numbers in the number column and index plus those already in the notes (addressing an earlier criticism by respondents in the original pilot study), and two Norwegian-only abridged versions derived from the mixed edition.

Figure 4 shows class 006.33 in DDK 5, and figure 5 shows class 006.33 plus its subdivisions in the mixed version of 006.

006.33 *Kunnskapsbaserte systemer

Inkluderer: Kunnskapsinnhenting; kunnskapsrepresentasjon; deduksjon, problemløsning, reonnement; programmering og programmer for kunnskapsbaserte systemer

Her: Deduktive databaser, ekspertsystemer

Figure 4. Class 006.33 from DDK 5

006.33	*Kunnskapsbaserte systemer
	Her: Ekspertsystemer
	Deduktive databaser klassifiseres nå i 005.74015113
006.33/1	*Knowledge acquisition
006.33/2	*Knowledge representation
	Class here knowledge engineering
006.33/3	*Deduction, problem solving, reasoning
006.33/6	*Programming for knowledge-based systems
	<i>For programming for knowledge-based systems for specific types of computers, for specific user interfaces, for specific operating systems, see 006.33/7</i>
006.33/63	*Programming languages for knowledge-based systems
006.33/7	*Programming for knowledge-based systems for specific types of computers, for specific operating systems, for specific user interfaces
006.33/8	*Programs for knowledge-based systems
	Collections of programs, systems of interrelated programs, individual programs used to create a knowledge-based system
	Including expert system shells

Figure 5. Class 006.33 from Norwegian-English mixed edition

We also explored two approaches to deriving a Norwegian-only abridged edition from the mixed edition. Figure 6 shows an abridged version of class 006.33 that was derived using Norwegian index terms mapped to English-language classes in the mixed edition. The abridged version of class 006.33 in figure 7 was derived using data from classes one level down from the established DDK 5 notational framework according to rules for automatic abridgment under study by Green and Mitchell (2009). The abridgment in figure 7 is a fuller representation of 006.33 than found in DDK 5, but it also required additional translation of topics not selected for inclusion in DDK 5. If a machine-assisted abridgment of a mixed edition requires additional translation in order to produce an

abridged edition in the vernacular, that could be a hidden cost in a mixed model for which a vernacular abridgment is an additional requirement.

006.33 *Kunnskapsbaserte systemer

Inkluderer: Deduksjon, kunnskapsinnhenting, kunnskapsrepresentasjon, problemløsning, resonnement

Her: Ekspertsystemer

Deduktive databaser klassifiseres nå i 005.74015113

Figure 6. Abridged class 006.33 derived from Norwegian index terms associated with subordinate classes in Norwegian-English mixed edition

006.33 *Kunnskapsbaserte systemer

Inkluderer: Deduksjon, kunnskapsinnhenting, kunnskapsrepresentasjon, kunnskapsteknikk, problemløsning; programmering for kunnskapsbaserte systemer, for kunnskapsbaserte systemer for bestemte typer datamaskiner, for bestemte operativsystemer, for brukergrensesnitt; programmer for kunnskapsbaserte systemer; resonnement

Her: Ekspertsystemer

Deduktive databaser klassifiseres nå i 005.74015113

Figure 7. Abridged class 006.33 derived from subordinate classes in Norwegian-English mixed edition

Status of the Mixed Model in Norway

In April 2009, the Norwegian Committee on Classification and Indexing (NKKI) recommended to the National Library of Norway that the library proceed with a full translation of the DDC into Norwegian, and accompany the translation with abridgment instructions. The National Library of Norway agreed in principle with NKKI's recommendation, but has postponed a final decision until a full review of the costs associated with a full translation can be completed.

Does this mean that the mixed model does not have a future in Norway? The answer is, probably not as an end, but perhaps as a means to an end. In the last section of this paper, we discuss the use of the mixed model as a way of exposing a translation early in the process to users in areas where English enjoys wide usage.

Swedish Mixed Model

The idea of the mixed translation originally arose in Sweden. In Sweden, the mixed model still seems like a good way to produce a DDC translation within a fixed time limit and with limited resources. Also, the Swedish situation differs from the Norwegian situation—there is no previous edition of Dewey in Swedish, nor is there a requirement to produce a Swedish abridged view of the mixed edition.

The Swedish edition will follow the mixed model described in the beginning of this paper. The initial guide for building the vernacular framework will be the level of specificity found in the classification scheme used by most Swedish libraries, *Klassifikationssystem för svenska bibliotek* (2006), generally known as SAB. SAB will guide the initial translation of class records into Swedish. SAB represents literary warrant in Swedish libraries, and provides a level of specificity that has proven to be usable in Sweden. There is a conversion table between DDC and SAB that will form the basis for the decisions on which classes to translate (Gustavsson 2000). The printed conversion table maps classes from DDC 21 to classes in SAB 7. There is also a web version that has been updated to reflect the classes in DDC 22 and SAB 8, the latest SAB edition published in 2006.² Revising and expanding the conversion table is also part of the Swedish DDC project; further details on the Swedish DDC project are reported by Svanberg (2009).

All classes superordinate to a translated class will be translated, even if certain DDC classes in the upward hierarchy do not have a corresponding class in SAB. The mix of languages in a mixed edition can be confusing, and the language shift in a hierarchy should occur only once.

Figure 8 shows an example from DDC class 616.04. In the conversion table, five numbers in 616.04 are mapped to SAB:

DDC	SAB
616.042	Vaa
616.043	Vbbc
616.047	Vea
616.0472	Vef
616.0473	Ve

Figure 8. DDC numbers in 616.04 in the Conversion table DDC-SAB

This means that those classes will be translated into Swedish, while the rest remain in English. Class 616.04 will be translated into Swedish since it is a superordinate class to 616.042, 616.043, and 616.047.

² *Konverteringstabell mellan Dewey och SAB*, the web version of the table, is available at <http://export.libris.kb.se/DS/>. See Svanberg (2008) for more information about mapping DDC and SAB.

DDC number	Caption
616	Sjukdomar
616.04	Särskilda medicinska förhållanden
616.042	Genetiska sjukdomar (Ärftliga sjukdomar)
616.043	Medfödda sjukdomar
<i>616.044</i>	<i>Chronic diseases</i>
616.047	Symtom och allmänna patologiska processer som problem i sig
616.0472	Smärta
616.0473	Inflammation
<i>616.0475</i>	<i>Shock and multiple organ failure</i>

Figure 9. Class 616.04 in the Swedish-English mixed edition

An additional source of entry vocabulary will be the Swedish subject headings, Svenska ämnesord. Svenska ämnesord includes links to equivalent LC subject headings, and LC subject headings have been mapped to many DDC classes. In addition to providing access to vernacular content, the Swedish headings can be a source of additional access to classes that have not been translated into Swedish. The mapping of the Swedish headings to the DDC is described in more detail in Svanberg (2009).

SAB and DDC share many similarities, but there also significant differences between the two systems. Some DDC classes at a broad level in the hierarchy do not have equivalents in SAB. To avoid a situation where some DDC sections do not even have the top level in the hierarchy translated into Swedish, it was decided to use the level in the English-language abridged edition as second source to decide what to translate.

For example, DDC class 363.4 Controversies related to public morals has no counterpart in SAB, but will still be translated into Swedish, since it appears in the abridged edition.

In order not to spend too much time on choosing what to translate instead of translating, the Swedish team developed a set of simple rules:

1. All DDC classes with equivalents in SAB are translated. The conversion table SAB-DDC is used to decide which classes are equivalents.
2. All superordinate classes of translated classes are translated.
3. All classes from the abridged DDC edition are translated.
4. When there is an obvious need for Swedish terminology, other classes can be translated as well. This should be done restrictively.

Since the translation process has not started yet, the rules have not been tested in practice; modifications or additional rules may be added once the translation is under way.

The mixed model has only been tested in pilot studies this far, and the Swedish version of the mixed model has not been tested at all. The Swedish team came to the conclusion that the mixed model is a model that makes it possible for Sweden to reach a DDC translation within limited time and with limited resources. There are, however, important questions to consider: Are there important classes in DDC that will be missed? Are there weaknesses of SAB that might be brought into the Swedish translation of DDC?

Here are just a few examples from 616 with more than 50 hits in LIBRIS, the Swedish Union Catalogue, that will not be translated:

616.8521 Traumatic neuroses
616.89142 Behavior therapy (Behavior modification therapy)
616.89156 Family psychotherapy

Even if these classes will not be translated initially, the Swedish team plans to continue the translation work after the Swedish DDC is made available. Using data on frequency in LIBRIS will be one way to decide what to translate once the initial translation is done.

Another consideration is if the Swedish team might need to adjust the model to avoid spending time translating unimportant classes that are mapped to the DDC for completeness. Most of the mappings in the conversion table are made on the level of the least specific system, often SAB. However, there are also mappings on a more specific level that are made to handle differences between the systems.

Examples of this can be found in DDC class 616.2 Diseases of respiratory organs. This DDC class is mapped to SAB class Vei Respiratory organs. Some of the subdivisions of 616.2 are mapped to other SAB classes. The DDC classes 616.201 Croup, 616.203 Influenza and 616.204 Whooping cough are mapped to SAB class Veba Immunologic diseases. The main equivalent in DDC for Veba is 616.97 Diseases of immune system. The mappings of DDC classes 616.201, 616.203, and 616.204 have been introduced to show that works on croup, influenza, and whooping cough are put in a different class in SAB than general works on diseases of respiratory organs (DDC class 616.2). They do not show an existing level in SAB. It is not yet known how frequently this kind of mapping occurs in the conversion table, or how easy such mappings are to identify for the translator.

Implications for Multilingual Representations

The literature contains discussions of theoretical issues in bilingual and multilingual representations of knowledge organization systems, but mixed translation models of classification systems do not appear to have been explored previously. A mixed translation is not a bilingual edition in the sense of parallel classes in both languages. The mixed model features a vernacular framework in which English-language classes supplement classes in the vernacular, plus separate language-specific indexes that may contain varying levels of terminology.

Nonetheless, some literature focused on multilingual thesauri can inform the mixed translation work. In a discussion of multilingual thesauri, Hudon (1997) argues for acceptance of nonidentical and nonsymmetrical structures, and recommends that the number of descriptors in each linguistic version should be permitted to vary. In the mixed translation model, the terminological content of the vernacular index may be shallower in some areas than its English-language equivalent, and deeper in other areas, matching some of the elasticity in the vernacular framework. In *Guidelines for multilingual thesauri* (IFLA 2009), the building of nonsymmetrical thesauri is noted as an important development in multilingual thesauri construction.

What have we learned to date from building and testing models for mixed translations, and what are the implications of this work for knowledge organization in multilingual environments?

We have previously discussed the loss of descriptive content in the Norwegian-English mixed edition when topics from subdivisions of a class in the full edition are moved from notes in the abridged edition to the index. If the Norwegians decide to proceed with a full edition, this will no longer be a consideration.

Developing a DDC edition using a mixed model can serve as a vehicle to expose embedded assumptions in vernacular and English-language versions of the DDC. Work on the mixed Norwegian-English translation made it possible for one of the authors (Mitchell) to view the general DDC framework from within a Norwegian perspective—a different view from that of a mere reviewer of a translation or a developer of the general English-language DDC framework. Editorial work was already under way on improvements to the 370 Education schedule, but the process of creating the mixed version of 370 exposed some deep-seated differences in the levels of education and the primary school curriculum from a Norwegian perspective. For example, in Norway, primary education covers grades one through ten, is equivalent to compulsory education, and has a terminal degree associated with it. In the general DDC framework, primary education covers grades one through six, and compulsory education is handled as a policy issue rather than a cohesive level of education with a terminal degree. We are studying how to improve the general DDC framework to accommodate both views while retaining interoperability. While building the mixed version of another part of the education schedule, we came to the realization that every language edition of Dewey implicitly defines the class 372.6 Language arts (Communication skills) as “language arts and communication skills in the language of this translation.” Work is currently under way to make the implicit explicit here, and to support interoperability by viewing the class in the context of the source edition.

Perhaps our most important finding is a reconsideration of the mixed translation model as simply the framework for a certain type of language edition. Might the mixed translation be a vehicle for exposing a translation to users at an early point in the translation process? If yes, at what point does one start exposing the framework? We expect to test the point of exposure in the process of developing the Swedish-English mixed edition. Once the working translation is exposed, what role could users play in the translation process?

Certainly feedback on terminology is one possible role, but might users also play a more active role in the process? Could a mixed translation serve as a social-networking environment to develop the translation further (and perhaps as a vehicle for crowd-sourcing recommendations for basic improvements to the DDC)? Are there differences in the levels of a mixed translation that can be exposed as a classifier's tool versus in end-user facing applications? We plan to continue our investigation of mixed translation models in this broader context.

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