



Thesaurus Maintenance WG
BBT Curation Committee Annual Meeting
Wednesday, 13th November 2019,
Academy of Athens Main building, East hall,
28 Panepistimiou Street, Athens, Greece

Minutes

- Overview of the new hierarchies, modifications agreed on so far: Martin Doerr, FORTH

Martin presented an overview of the annual curation activity which included translations for the BBT facets and hierarchies in French, German and Greek, rendering the BBT accessible in four languages and systematic engagement in discussions about the structure of the BBT. The Thesaurus Maintenance WG organised a meeting at the DARIAH annual event 2019 in Warsaw, where they advocated for the use of the BBT, during sessions and the marketplace. FORTH advocated for the use of the BBT in the context of the meeting of the Linked Conservation Data Consortium, at the topic of Terminology (June 2019).

Martin went on to list the facets and hierarchies discussed in BBTalk: Living beings; Fictional entities; Geometric extents; Languages; Social collective entities; Organisations; Offices; Built environment; Physical features.

He then set strategic questions and spoke about initiatives to increase the visibility of the BBT. As next steps he defined the following:

- Mapping AAT to BBT
- Mapping TADiRAH to BBT
- Collecting thesauri samples to validate BBT classification and
- Developing relations with Link Conservation Data and Digital Numismatics WG
- Scope related issues:
 - desired level of granularity (expansion of the BBT) and potentially affected terms: Eleni Tsoulouha, FORTH

Eleni T presented the principles of the BBT and its structure and spoke about the need to validate facets and hierarchies with reference to concepts.

Potential areas of conflict; facets and hierarchies to be reviewed and/or restructured:

- concepts
- Conceptual Objects
- methods
- languages

She made particular reference to the term “concepts” explaining that it is problematic since the whole idea of the BBT is to classify concepts. Instead she suggested replacing it with the term “concept types” to avoid confusion, as a kind of generalisation of kinds/groups of concepts from an abstract point of view.

Regarding the Conceptual objects facet she argued that it is very broad, generic, comprising all things that are not material, so maybe it should be removed and replaced with two independent facets that are hierarchies within conceptual objects at the moment, namely propositional and symbolic, which are more concrete as specialisations of the Conceptual object.

Following a discussion, all participants agreed that the facet “Conceptual objects” (as opposed to material things) shall be retained and that the BBT can allow for the expansion of hierarchies to more levels, i.e. that the BBT may become deeper than the existing two levels wherever necessary. Christos Georgis gave the assurance that from a technical standpoint the BBTalk can support this expansion.

- languages: Eleni Tsoulouha, FORTH

Eleni T. proposed to reconsider the position of languages as language has both a form and a meaning (propositional and symbolic). Martin argued that language is about formulating propositions and it should go under propositional object.

She elaborated on three options to explore:

1. Only define the cover term “languages” and link other more expanded classifications to the BBT term with the indication Narrower in line with the AAT
2. Get rid of the term “languages” on the basis that the expressivity and communicative power of natural languages cannot be matched by that of formal languages, evoking the E56 Language in the CIDOC CRM and making explicit the distinction among natural and formal languages.
3. Add a third level of terms to the BBT at the level of languages –corresponding to the division between natural and formal languages.

Athanasios Karasimos interjected that the concept and the corresponding term for the hierarchy should be broader, i.e. Communication systems and that under this term the particular instances of communication systems (human languages, all technical/artificial languages, languages created for a community like Esperanto etc. and animal communication systems) should be subsumed. He argued that it is a conceptual object that may combine attributes from both symbolic and propositional objects and should be the top term. The proposal was adopted, and the classification system was adapted accordingly.

Summing up, Martin said that Methods remain a hierarchy under Conceptual objects, Languages become a third layer under Communication systems, under Conceptual objects and Concepts (under Conceptual objects) is renamed Concept types.

- materials: Camilla Colombi/Lena Marie Vitt, DAI

Camilla and Lena presented their proposal with respect to expanding the level of granularity in the case of Materials. They denoted possible sub hierarchies by composition (organic-inorganic), form (solid, liquid, gas), source (animal / mineral) and “treatment” (processed / non-processed). A discussion followed during which Martin suggested using the experience of FORTH in a project they undertook together with the Louvre. They used a model of “facets”, i.e. function, composition, form before use, form after use.

Decision: The third level is deemed necessary and further discussion on the specific terms will continue via BBTalk.

- Mobile objects: Camilla Colombi/Lena Marie Vitt, DAI

A long discussion ensued, following an introduction by Camilla and Lena as to the necessary level of granularity and the terms to be introduced for the classification of the next level. They suggested adding a term Biological objects to the third level. Martin proposed to consider a

classification based on human activities i.e. a function-based classification of Biological objects".

Decision: The third level is deemed necessary and the BBT should adopt a function-based classification. Further discussion on the specific terms will continue via BBTalk perhaps creating a sub-group (communities of practice coming from Archaeology, the Natural Sciences etc).

- Terminology loose ends [terms in suspension]
 - social collective entities facet: George Tzedopoulos/Eirini Mergoupi-Savaidou, AA

Eirini and George presented the current status of the facet Social Collective Entities and proposed certain modifications to the scope note for Organisations in order to respond to a historical perspective, the introduction of a hierarchy under Social Collective Entities titled Groups and Collectivities without organisational characteristics and a consequent modification of the scope note for the facet Social collective entities, in order to become more generic and to allow better the inclusion of both "Organisations" and "Groups and Collectivities".

Martin disagreed with the use of the term Groups and Collectivities in the way proposed here for two reasons:

- (a) He objects to classifying terms such as slaves, Christians, etc. in the sense proposed by Eirini and George because one cannot use properties (i.e. characteristics ascribed by the observer) in order to classify collectives.
- (b) The proposed scope note for Groups and Collectivities involves a negative definition regarding to organisations.

A long discussion ensued during which George and Eirini pointed out the difficulty to distinguish properly between collectivities per se and groups being regarded as such. Historiography, Sociology and Social History use terms like "social classes" and it is hard to draw a line between these specialisations. Finally, it was mentioned that it would be interesting to define an hierarchy of those collectives that are not defined by their own will, when the society deals with some part of the society collectively and it is not their decision.

The following decisions were adopted:

1. There is a need for a new facet to be called "Social status" and a scope note must be provided to describe groups sharing properties applying to individuals which may or may not be associated with collectivities in reality.
2. The phrase "or being regarded as such" is to be removed from the scope note of the facet "Social collective entities".
3. The hierarchy Groups and collectivities is on hold until a proper scope note is formulated.
4. Discussion on points 1 and 3 will continue via BBTalk.

- natural processes: Lida Charami/Martin Doerr, FORTH

Martin provided a new scope note of the Natural processes facet treating them not as phenomena that occurred without any human intervention, but as phenomena for which we cannot establish causation on behalf of humans (i.e. volitional agents). It was specified that mental/psychological processes are excluded.

Lida then presented an idea for altering the structure of the hierarchies introducing Biological processes comprising processes that happen within living beings and Physical - chemical processes. The question raised was whether they are needed and if they should be divided.

The discussion continued on physical chemical processes (such as in art conservation etc.) and the question at which scale to separate that and at which complexity was posed.

Finally, Martin proposed a scope note for Natural disasters. Following the discussion, it was agreed to change the term of Natural disasters to something less hermeneutical that doesn't comprise the notion of "disaster" that has a strong aspect.

This new facet shall include two hierarchies:

- (a) One for large scale natural processes such as earthquakes and other natural disasters, that are massive and abrupt occurrences and
- (b) A hierarchy for both biological and chemical processes combined, that involves processes on a microscopic scale.

The relevant discussion will continue via BBtalk.

- o social / cultural / political processes: Helen Goulis/George Tzedopoulos, AA

Helen and George elaborated on

- (a) how to distinguish social processes from other terms corresponding to temporal entities (or concepts of changing in time), and
- (b) how to accommodate -if possible- social processes in the facet Activities, given that the scope note of the latter emphasises the factor of intentionality.

Following the examples of terms like "globalisation" or "radicalisation", they argued that sociocultural processes display an intelligible unity and coherence. However, their most crucial feature is the dynamics of change they bare that results in the making and / or unmaking of sociocultural structures. They focused on the problematic notion of intentionality which is not objective in many cases and can't be easily attributed to an agent since it often entails complex phenomena composed of different actions and / or processes deploying on several levels.

They proposed subsuming the term under the hierarchy "Human interactions" of the Activities facet, provided that the intentionality feature is relativised. This proposal led to a review of the current status of the Activities facet.

The hierarchies "Disciplines" and "Functions" are not problematic. "Intentional destructions" are debatable. The "Human interactions" hierarchy, on the other hand, needs to be revised and, in this context, "social / cultural / political processes" will also be examined, whether as a new hierarchy or as an extra layer under "Human interactions".

The AAT mapping would help in this aspect. It was decided to omit most part of the note in the scope note of the Activities facet and rephrase the rigidness of the free will notion which is debatable in many kinds of human activity.

- o fictional / mythological / supernatural entities: Evelyne Sinigaglia, CNRS/FRANTIQ

Evelyn presented a proposal regarding a new hierarchy under the facet Conceptual objects and the hierarchy "Propositional objects" covering superhuman entities. These would comprise supernatural beings (kinds of beings from religion, mythology or folklore), mythical characters (persons or animals from mythology), hypothetical entities, (entities whose existence is possible, but not proven, fictional entities (entities that only exist in works of fiction), abstract beings (entities that have no physical realisation), deities (gods or goddesses, divine beings).

Patrissia Kalafata pointed out that in the AA thesaurus for Literature the term "literary characters" is subsumed under the Propositional Objects (under the narrower term Information Objects), while types of literary characters like the 'antagonist', the 'false hero',

the 'helper'" are taximoned under the hierarchy "Roles of Interpersonal Relations" of the Facet "Roles".

Helen Goulis on the other hand contributed that in the AA Theatre/Drama thesaurus, terms denoting a typology of fictional dramatis personae ("villain", "fool", "messengers" of Greek tragedy etc.), are narrower terms of the term "roles (theatre)" under the Information object. The discussion covered inconclusively such topics as hypothetical or abstract entities and religious concepts. It was finally agreed that someone will further elaborate a new separate hierarchy for the spiritual or imaginary beings.

It was decided that Evelyn, Patrissia and Eleni T should work together on the issue and make a proposal via BBTalk for further elaboration.

- rituals: Evelyne Sinigaglia, CNRS/FRANTIQ

Evelyn proposed subsuming rituals under the Functions hierarchy, a proposal that was immediately adopted.

- terms showing ability / competence: Evelyne Sinigaglia, CNRS/FRANTIQ

Evelyn then presented a list of terms indicating ability / competence ("literacy", "memory", "bipedalism", "laterality") and referred to the AAT term "Attributes and properties of living beings". Martin suggested that the proposed terms were not sufficiently documented by means of examples and their classification for a decision to be taken. He also asked all partners to provide for all the BBT concepts examples of terms (how they use them and what they classify with them).

- ideas for other hierarchies

Eleni Tsoulouha spoke specifically about the term Geometric extent remarking that out of the four terms subsumed under it, two have been approved and for two approval appears to be pending. The discussion revealed that some of the members of the curation committee had abstained from voting because the terms were not sufficiently clear to them. Martin suggested that all members should vote and that if further clarification is required, members should ask for additional examples.

With regard to the specific terms under discussion the committee members who had not yet voted would go to the BBTalk and approve them.

- Connecting thesauri to the BBT: Christos Georgis, FORTH

Christos presented the technical procedures and requirements for connecting local thesauri to the Federated Thesaurus via BBTalk. He also presented the SKOSMOS viewer developed and maintained by Matej Durco at ACDH-OEAW, where the DARIAH vocabs are hosted (https://vocabs.dariah.eu/backbone_thesaurus/en/).

Local thesauri (copies) should be uploaded to DARIAH-EU Federated Thesaurus in order to enable faster retrieval, facilitate better visualisation of multiple concept schemes and relationships among their concepts and provide uniform view of federated thesaurus concepts.

Local thesauri maintainers are encouraged to create back references to the BBT in their local thesaurus, using their own thesaurus editing tool. In the case where they do not have a web thesaurus-viewer to disseminate their thesaurus online, they can either use the ACDH Vocabs Service as a web thesaurus-viewer for their thesaurus or setup an open-software like SKOSMOS (basis of ACDH Vocabs platform) that is easily configurable. Christos offered to assist any institution for setting up their own viewer. Finally, he provided technical details on SKOS data quality.

It was mentioned that DARIAH encourages open access and DARIAH vocabs are licensed under <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

A discussion ensued during which concerns were expressed that there if the URL of the browser base to the DARIAH concept is copied, it might lose the actual URI of the proper local thesaurus. Martin expressed the opinion that any local thesaurus that is made available for the purpose of browsing should not appear under a DARIAH URI and SKOS files, when listed in a DARIAH page, should be under the control of the provider. He proposed to have a CC ShareAlike license which doesn't allow byproducts, the proposal receiving unanimous consent.

- Community building strategies (new collaborations). Advocating for the use of the BBT in order to expand its user base: Helen Goulis, AA

Helen proposed three further steps for advocating the use of the BBT:

- (a) Producing and disseminating promotional material (like a demo), which will focus and explicitly explain to thesauri holders (stakeholders / organisations), with concrete examples, the benefits of connecting to the BBT. In that vein she suggested to profit from the experience of DAI and FRANTIQ as use cases of existing thesauri holders that have gone through the process of restructuring their thesauri and connecting to the BBT.
- (b) Submit a proposal for a workshop for expanding the BBT federation during the upcoming DARIAH annual event 2020 in Zagreb.
- (c) To launch a BBT ambassador's network.

Eleni Tsoulouha informed about the involvement of FORTH in the SSHOC project (Social Sciences and Humanities on the cloud) where they will develop an ontology for the Social Sciences and Humanities data life cycle.

Following Helen's presentation, Martin sketched out the next steps on how to proceed with advocating for the BBT:

- (a) Using the case of DAI as a success story (integrated several thesauri). Camilla and Lena will share a document advocating integration with the BBT and making recommendations.
- (b) Further pursuing talks with Linked Conservation Data and
- (c) Preparing a demonstrator.

- Wrapping up, assignment of tasks: Helen Katsiadakis, AA

Helen summarised the meeting's discussions and identified the issues that have been adopted and the homework that needs to be done, as described in the present minutes.

PARTICIPANTS LIST

NAME	INSTITUTION
Martin Doerr	FORTH-ICS
Helen Katsiadakis	AA
Helen Goulis	AA
Eleni Tsoulouha	FORTH-ICS
Lida Charami	FORTH-ICS
Gerasimos Chrysovitsanos	AA
Camilla Colombi	DAI
Anastasia Falierou	AA
Christos Georgis	FORTH-ICS
Athena Iakovidou	AA
Patritsia Kalafata	AA
Athanasios Karasimos	AA
Eirini Mergoupi-Savaidou	AA
Evelyne Sinigaglia	CNRS/FRANTIQ
George Tzedopoulos	AA
Lena Marie Vitt	DAI

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Agenda

Welcome: 10:30

Session I: 10:30-11:45

- Overview of the new hierarchies, modifications agreed on so far (15 min): Martin Doerr, FORTH
- Scope related issues (60 min):
 - desired level of granularity (expansion of the BBT) and potentially affected terms:
Eleni Tsoulouha, FORTH
 - languages: Eleni Tsoulouha/Lida Charami, FORTH
 - materials: Camilla Colombi/Lena Marie Vitt, DAI
 - mobile objects: Camilla Colombi/Lena Marie Vitt, DAI

Coffee break: 11:45-12:00

Session II: 12:00- 14:20

- Terminology loose ends [terms in suspension] Part I (each subsection is: 5 min presentation, 25 min discussion, 5 min wrapping up)
 - social collective entities facet: George Tzedopoulos/Eirini Mergoupi-Savaidou, AA
 - natural processes: Martin Doerr/Lida Charami/Eleni Tsoulouha, FORTH
 - sociopolitical processes: Helen Goulis/George Tzedopoulos, AA
 - fictional/mythological/supernatural entities: Evelyne Sinigaglia, CNRS/FRANTIQ

Lunch break: 14:20-15:20

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Session III: 15:20-16:45

- Terminology loose ends [terms in suspension] Part II (each subsection is: 5 min presentation, 25 min discussion, 5 min wrapping up)
 - rituals: Evelyne Sinigaglia, CNRS/FRANTIQ
 - terms showing ability/competence: Evelyne Sinigaglia, CNRS/FRANTIQ
- Introduction of ideas for other hierarchies (15min)

Coffee break: 16:45-17:00

Session IV: 17:00-17:55

- Aligning thesauri to the BBT (20 min): Christos Georgis, FORTH
- Community building strategies –new collaborations and synergies with other projects (e.g. SSHOC). Advocating for the use of the BBT in order to expand its user base (20 min)
- Wrapping up, assignment of tasks (15 min): Helen Katsiadakis, AA

PHOTOS FROM THE WORKSHOP







