

# Creating Multilingual Taxonomies

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# About Heather Hedden

- Taxonomy consultant with Project Performance Corporation  
*www.ppc.com*
- Continuing education instructor with Simmons College Graduate School of Library and Information Science  
*alanis.simmons.edu/ceweb*
- Author of *The Accidental Taxonomist* (Information Today, Inc., 2010)  
*www.accidental-taxonomist.com*

Broad experience creating taxonomies for:

- corporate web sites and intranets
- consumer web sites
- document management in SharePoint
- integration within an enterprise search software product
- periodical index databases



# About Project Performance Corporation

Project Performance Corporation, part of the AEA group, is a consulting firm specializing in information management, information technology, and environmental/energy consulting.

Our customers include top government and Fortune 500 decision makers.

PPC' Information & Knowledge Management practice offers services in:

- Business Taxonomy and Metadata Design
- Strategic Planning and Analysis
- Web Site/Portal Design
- Governance Strategy
- Content Management and Migration
- Knowledge Continuity Management
- Social Computing
- Web Usability



1. Introduction to Taxonomies
2. Multilingual Taxonomy Goals
3. Multilingual Taxonomy Design
4. Taxonomy Translating



1. Introduction to Taxonomies
2. Multilingual Taxonomy Goals
3. Multilingual Taxonomy Design
4. Taxonomy Translating



## A Taxonomy is...

- An authoritative, restricted list of terms (words or phrases)
- Where each term is for a single unambiguous concept
- Governed by policies for who, when, and how new terms can be added
- Arranged in some structure or groupings
- To support indexing/tagging/categorizing/metadata management of content to facilitate retrieval/findability

## May also include..

- Synonyms as cross-references to terms
- Additional relationships between terms (broader, narrower, related)
- Notes or additional data for each term



- [-] **USA TODAY Content Tree**
  - [+] **news** 218,440 stories
  - [+] **travel** 38,426 stories
  - [-] **money** 57,615 stories
    - **\_** 2 stories
  - [+] **advertising** 799 stories
  - [+] **autos** 3,325 stories
    - **biztravel** 734 stories
  - [+] **books** 463 stories
  - [+] **companies** 3,344 stories
  - [-] **economy** 16,598 stories
    - **confidence** 49 stories
    - **construction** 7 stories
    - **employment** 336 stories
    - [-] **fed** 357 stories
      - **beigebook** 19 stories
      - **rates** 85 stories
    - **gdp** 37 stories
    - [+] **housing** 1,739 stories
    - **income** 49 stories
    - **inflation** 92 stories
    - **production** 80 stories
    - **productivity** 22 stories
    - **services** 23 stories
    - **survey** 20 stories
    - **trade** 157 stories
    - **gallery** 3 stories
  - [+] **industries** 10,120 stories
  - [+] **jobcenter** 189 stories
  - [-] **markets** 2,944 stories

Back to 'Human Resources'

### Site Content and Structure

Refresh all

Breeze

- [+] Breeze Search Center
- [+] communications
- [+] Departments
  - [+] Accounting
  - [+] Commercial Asset Management
  - [+] Construction
  - [+] Corporate Communications
  - [+] Development
  - [+] Engineering
  - [+] Environmental
  - [+] Executive Management
  - [+] External Affairs
  - [+] Facilities
  - [+] Finance
  - [+] **Human Resources**
    - [+] Announcements
    - [+] Benefit Links
    - [+] Benefits
    - [+] Calendar
    - [+] Documents
    - [+] Employee Forms
    - [+] Employee Performance Appraisal
    - [+] Employee Self Assessment
    - [+] Handbook & Policies
    - [+] Images
    - [+] New Hire
      - [+] Visa Corporate Card
      - [+] Administrative Forms
      - [+] Benefits
      - [+] Payroll
      - [+] I-9
    - [+] Pages
    - [+] Payroll Forms
    - [+] Performance Management Process
    - [+] Photo Library
    - [+] Shared Documents
    - [+] Workflow Tasks
  - [+] Information Technology

Human Resources

Type	Title
<input type="checkbox"/>	Annou
<input type="checkbox"/>	Benef
<input type="checkbox"/>	Benef
<input type="checkbox"/>	Calen
<input type="checkbox"/>	Docum
<input type="checkbox"/>	Empl
<input type="checkbox"/>	Empl
<input type="checkbox"/>	Empl
<input type="checkbox"/>	Handb
<input type="checkbox"/>	Image
<input type="checkbox"/>	New H
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pages
<input type="checkbox"/>	Payrol
<input type="checkbox"/>	Perfor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Photo
<input type="checkbox"/>	Share
<input type="checkbox"/>	Workf
<input type="checkbox"/>	default

Hierarchical taxonomy examples

Broader terms & Narrower terms in "trees"



**Course**

- Main Dishes (15504)
- Desserts (7530)
- Side Dishes/Vegetables (6182)

[Show More](#)

**Convenience**

- Entertaining (23804)
- Make-Ahead (13917)
- Quick/Easy (13186)

[Show More](#)

**Cost Per Serving**

- \$1 and Under (388)
- \$1.01 to \$2 (394)
- \$2.01 to \$3 (250)
- \$3.01 to \$4 (94)
- \$4.01 and Up (28)

**Cuisine**

- American (28614)
- Italian (3129)
- New American (2370)

[Show More](#)

**Main Ingredient**

- Vegetables (11246)
- Fruits (6297)
- Poultry (5287)

[Show More](#)

**Dietary Consideration**

- Meatless (11299)
- Low Cholesterol (7534)
- Low Saturated Fat (7444)

[Show More](#)

**Cooking Method**

- Bake (12470)

**NARROW YOUR RESULTS**

**Carrier**

- Verizon Wireless (50)
- Sprint (50)
- AT&T (60)
- T-Mobile (32)

**Customer Reviews**

- Top-Rated (28)

**Price**

- Free (75)
- \$0.01 - \$49.99 (33)
- \$50 - \$99.99 (31)
- \$100 - \$149.99 (9)
- \$150 - \$199.99 (15)
- \$200 - \$249.99 (9)
- \$250 - \$499.99 (12)
- \$500 - \$749.99 (6)
- \$750 - \$999.99 (2)

**Device Brand**

- Samsung (44)
- Apple (33)
- HTC (29)
- LG (28)
- BlackBerry (22)
- Pantech (12)
- Motorola (11)
- Kyocera (4)

[See all...](#)

**Operating System**

- Android (57)
- BlackBerry (20)
- iPhone (33)

**Narrow Your Search**

[+ Search Within Results](#)

**- Locations Served**

- Arizona
- Arkansas
- California - North
- California - South
- Colorado
- [+] More

[+ Search Within # Miles](#)

**- Company Type**

- Manufacturers
- Custom Manufacturers
- Distributors
- Service Companies
- Manufacturers' Reps

[+ Certifications](#)

**- Ownership**

- Minority-Owned
- Woman-Owned
- Veteran-Owned

Faceted taxonomy examples

The user selects one value from each of multiple facets/attributes/filters and searches on them in combination



## Browse Books

### Amazon Kindle

- Kindle
- Kindle DX
- Kindle Books

### Categories

- Arts & Photography
- Audiobooks
- Biographies & Memoirs
- Business & Investing
- Calendars
- Children's Books
- Christian Books
- Comics & Graphic Novels
- Computers & Internet**
- Cooking, Food & Wine
- Crafts & Hobbies
- Entertainment
- Gay & Lesbian
- Health, Mind & Body
- History
- Home & Garden
- Literature & Fiction
- Mystery & Thrillers
- Nonfiction
- Outdoors & Nature
- Parenting & Families
- Politics
- Professional & Technical
- Puzzles & Games
- Reference
- Religion & Spirituality
- Romance
- Science

## Books

Browse [bestseller](#)

Save up to [Textbook](#)

### Browse

- Home Computing
- Apple
- Business & Culture
- Certification Central
- Computer Science
- Databases**
- Digital Music
- Digital Photography & Video
- Games & Strategy Guides
- General
- Graphic Design
- Hardware
- Microsoft
- Mobile & Wireless Computing
- Networking
- Operating Systems
- Programming
- Project Management
- Security & Encryption
- Software
- Web Development

[Alibi](#) Hardcover  
~~\$21.99~~ **\$14.95**

[See more new](#)

# Ecommerce taxonomies (hierarchical + faceted)

## Computers & Internet

### Blueprints for Web Design Success

LOOK INSIDE!

### New Releases

#### Any New Release

- Last 30 days (7)
- Last 90 days (38)

### Department

- < Books
- < Computers & Internet

#### Databases

- Beginning & Introductory (697)
- Data Mining (2,178)
- Data Warehousing (983)
- Database Design (2,119)**
- Database Management Systems (3,168)
- Oracle (1,360)
- Relational Databases (642)

### New Releases

#### Any New Release

- Last 90 days (6)

### Department

- < Books
- < Computers & Internet
- < Databases

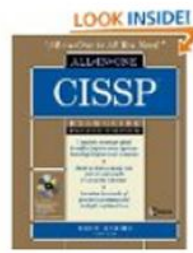
#### Database Design

### Format

### Books > Computers & Internet

Showing 1 - 12 of 23,172 Results

1. **CISSP**



9, 20

[Buy new](#)

Get it

Eligible

★★★★

Other

[See more](#)

2. **QuickBooks 2009**



Quick

[Buy new](#)

Get it

Eligible

### Books > Computers & Internet

Showing 1 - 12 of 2,204 Results

1. **PHP and MySQL Web Development**



4

Laura Thomson (Paperback - Oct 11, 2008)

[Buy new](#): ~~\$49.99~~ **\$31.49**

[78 Used & new](#) from

Get it by **Monday, Aug 10** if you order in the

Eligible for **FREE Super Saver Shipping**.

★★★★★ (201)

### Format

#### Any Format

- Audiobooks (7)
- HTML (902)
- Kindle Books (235)
- PDF (42)
- Printed Books (10,995)

### Binding

#### Any Binding

- Paperback (8,491)
- Hardcover (2,141)
- School & Library Binding (4)
- Large Print (2)

### Author

#### Any Author

- Gary B. Shelly (43)
- Lisa Friedrichsen (39)
- Thomas J. Cashman (36)
- Joseph J. Adamski (33)
- Shelley Gaskin (27)
- Ben Forta (26)
- Robert T. Grauer (22)
- [See more...](#)

### Series

#### Any Series

## Taxonomy Benefits

1. Structured as hierarchies or facets...  
Organizes information into a logical structure
  - Helps people browse or navigate for information“Guided search”
2. Managed a controlled vocabulary...  
Brings together different wordings (synonyms) for the same concept and disambiguates terms
  - Helps people search for information by different names
  - Helps people retrieve matching concepts, not just wordsPicks up/enhances where search alone fails



## Taxonomy Benefits (as a controlled vocabulary)

- Helps users search for information by different names
  - A controlled vocabulary gathers synonyms, acronyms, variant spellings, etc.
  - Without a controlled vocabulary keyword searches would miss some relevant documents, due to use of different words (e.g. **Automobiles**, instead of **Cars**)
- Helps users retrieve matching concepts, not just words
  - A single term may have multiple meanings.
  - Excludes document with mere text-string matches (e.g. **monitors** for computers, not the verb “observes”)



## Taxonomy Term Relationships

1. Equivalence  
A “preferred term” and its various “nonpreferred term” variants (“synonyms”), pointing to it as cross-references to use (USE) and is used from (UF)  
(e.g. **Cars USE Automobiles**)
2. Hierarchical  
A broader term (BT) and its more specific term, instance, or component part narrower term (NT)  
(e.g. **Motor Vehicles NT Automobiles**)
3. Associative  
Any other nonhierarchical, related term (RT) relationship  
(e.g. **Automobiles RT Automobile Repair Services**)

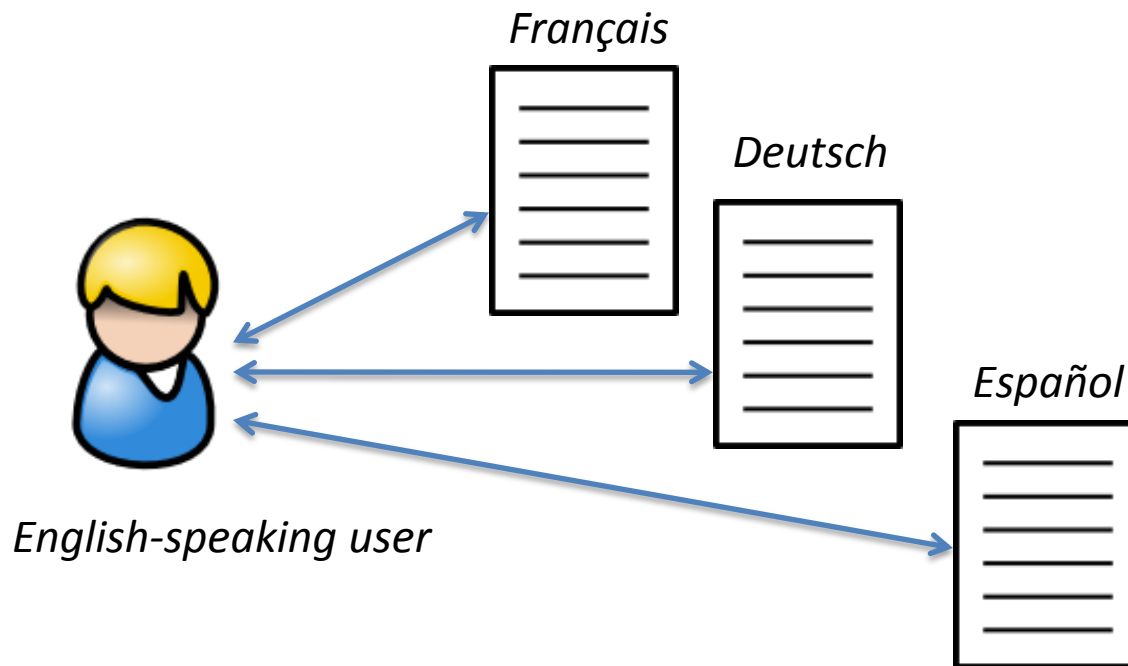


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Bilingual/Multilingual Taxonomies can enable:

1. A user to search and retrieve content that is in multiple languages through a single taxonomy in their own language



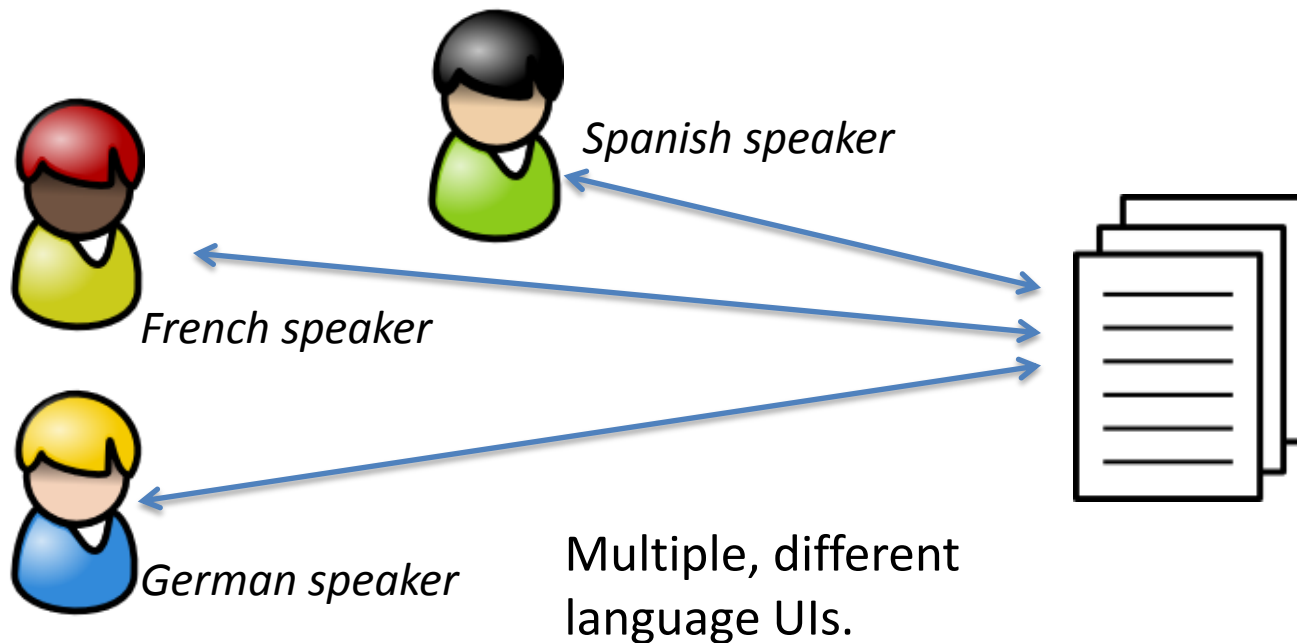
Taxonomy: Single-language UI.  
Multiple language translations, not displayed.



# Multilingual Taxonomy Goals

Bilingual/Multilingual Taxonomies can enable:

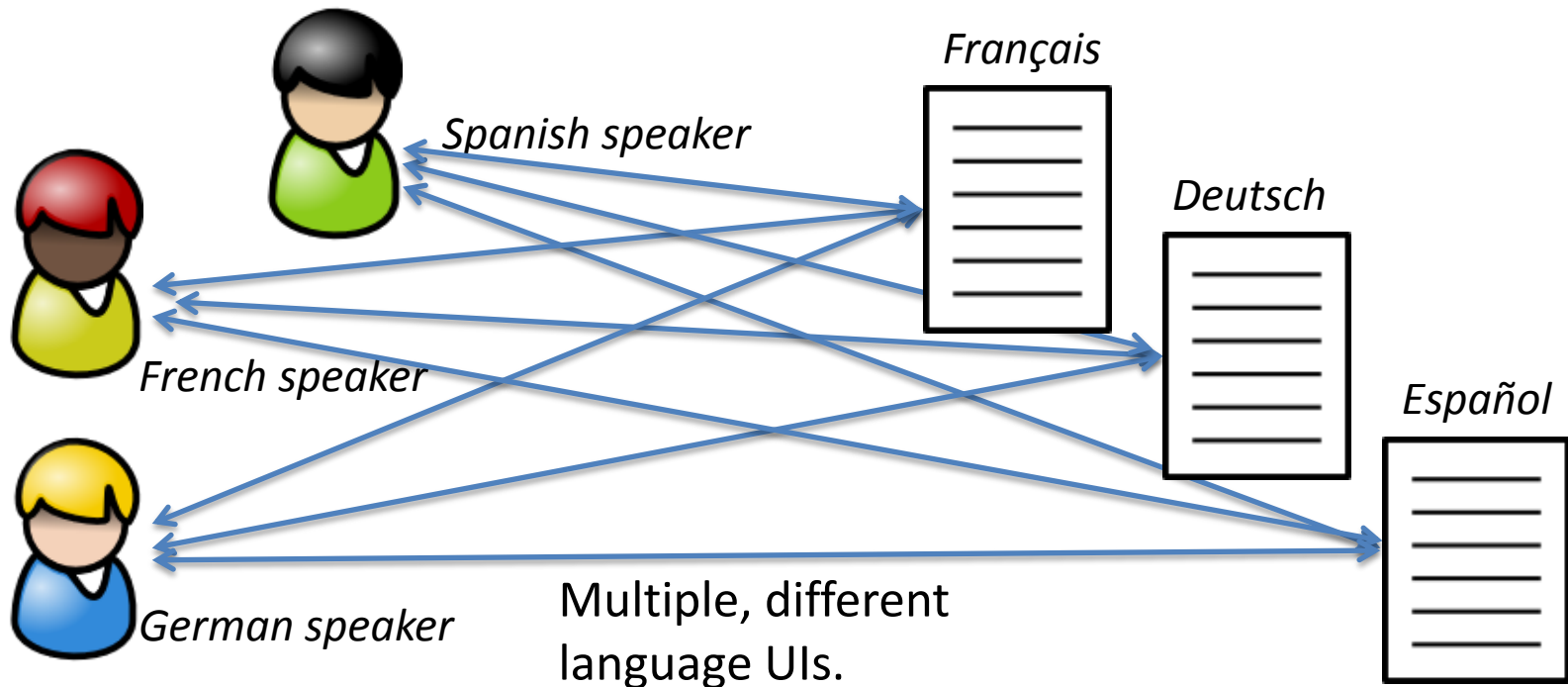
2. Different users who speak different languages to search the same body of content (in one other language), each using a taxonomy in the user interface in their native language



# Multilingual Taxonomy Goals

Bilingual/Multilingual Taxonomies can enable:

3. Different users who speak different languages to search the same body of content that is in multiple languages.



*Goals #1 or #2: Users of one language can access content in a different language.*

- Taxonomy in one language with equivalent translated terms
- The taxonomy needs to function in only one direction.

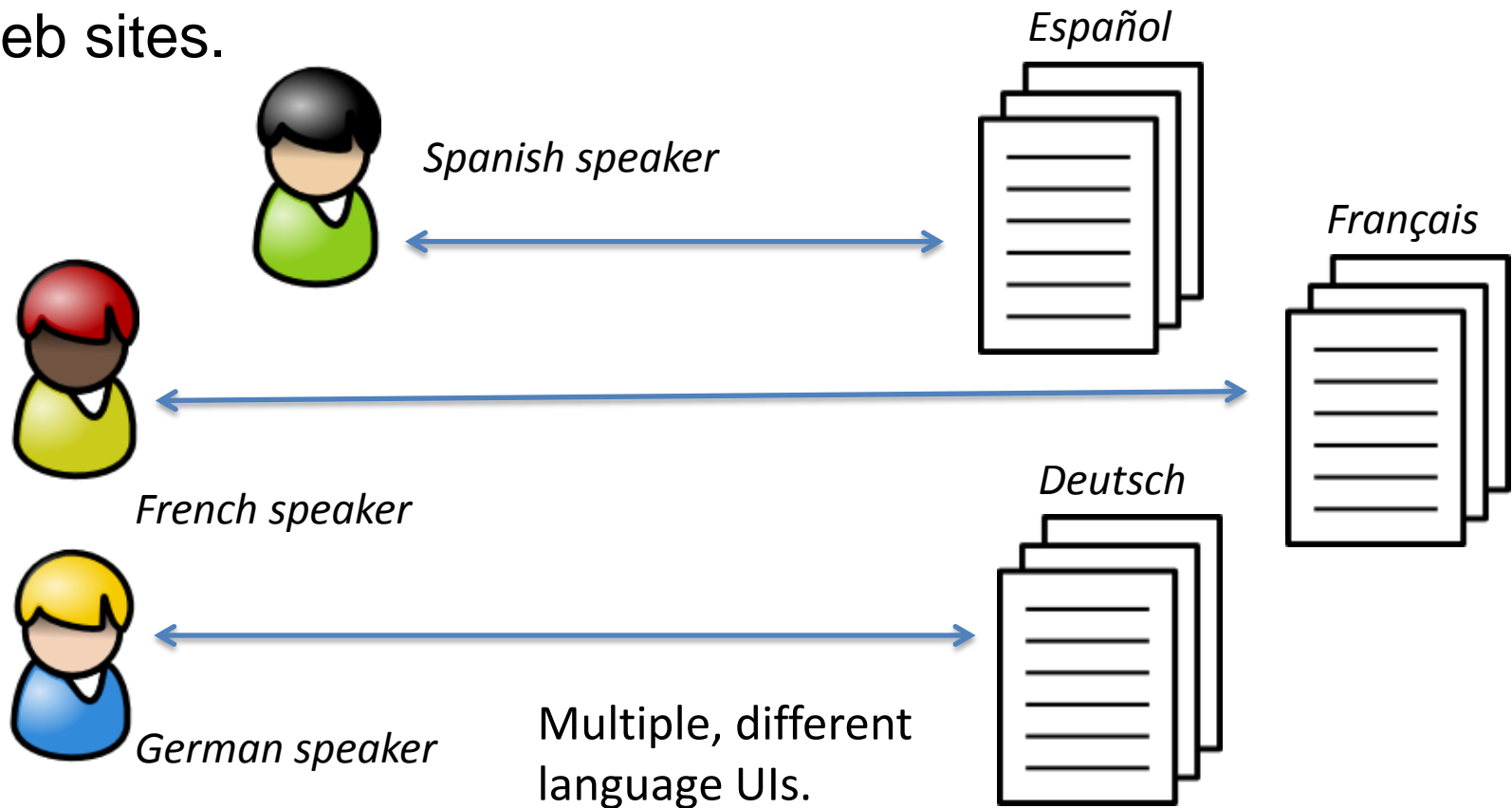
*Goal #3: Multilingual users can access multilingual content.*

- *Fully* multilingual taxonomy or distinct taxonomies for each language linked at equivalent-meaning terms
- The taxonomy needs to function in both/all language directions.



# Multilingual Taxonomy Goals

Different scenario: Multiple language taxonomies, each connected to its own language content, such as for separate web sites.



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Design the multilingual taxonomy to meet the taxonomy goals.

In a one-direction translated taxonomy:

- The language of the searcher has structure to display.
- The language of the content may not need structure.
- Translations may be in one direction (user/display term *may be used for* content/index term, not vice versa).

For a fully bidirectional multilingual taxonomy:

- Both language taxonomies need structure.
- Translations must be exact matches in both directions.

For separate taxonomies in different languages:

- Taxonomies are not translated but each created and managed separately



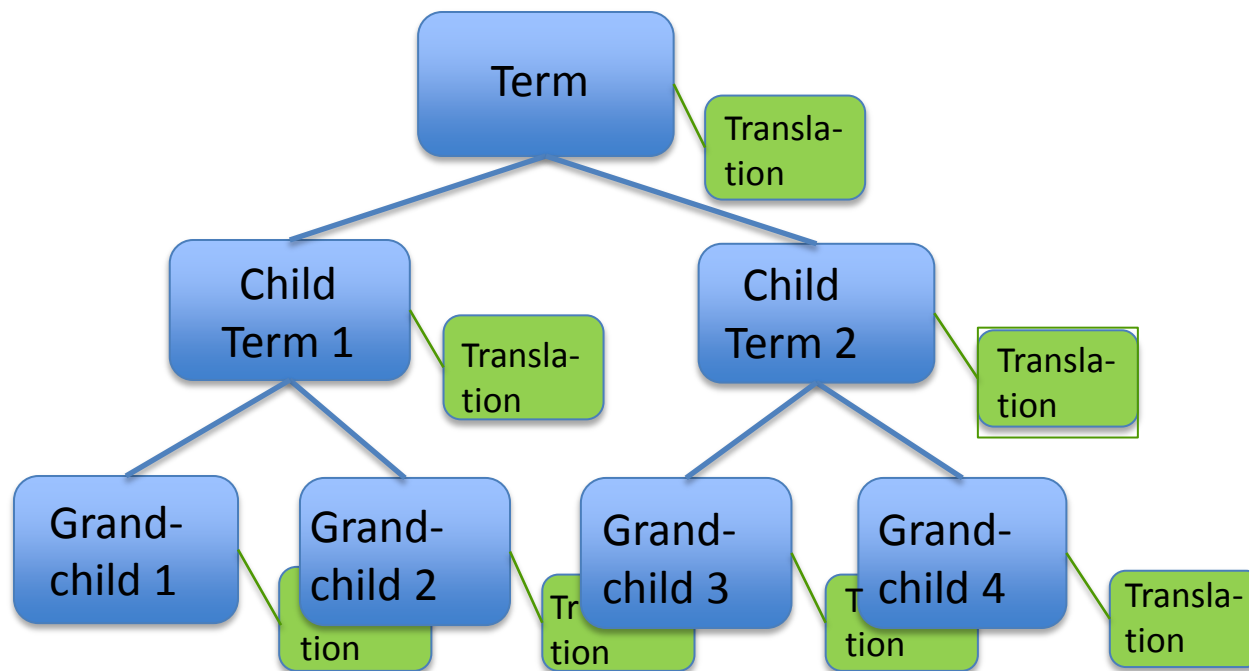
Dedicated taxonomy/thesaurus management software tools provide varying multilingual capabilities:

1. Customized text field used for term translations
  - No vocabulary control of second language(s)
2. Translations as a controlled vocabulary flat list, linked at each term
  - Vocabulary control of second language(s)
  - Taxonomy structure of primary language inferred
3. Second language taxonomy mirroring first, linked at each translated term
  - Vocabulary control of second language(s)
  - Copying taxonomy structure of primary language
4. Multiple taxonomies in different languages linked at equivalent term translations
  - Each language may have its own structure (requires additional work to build)



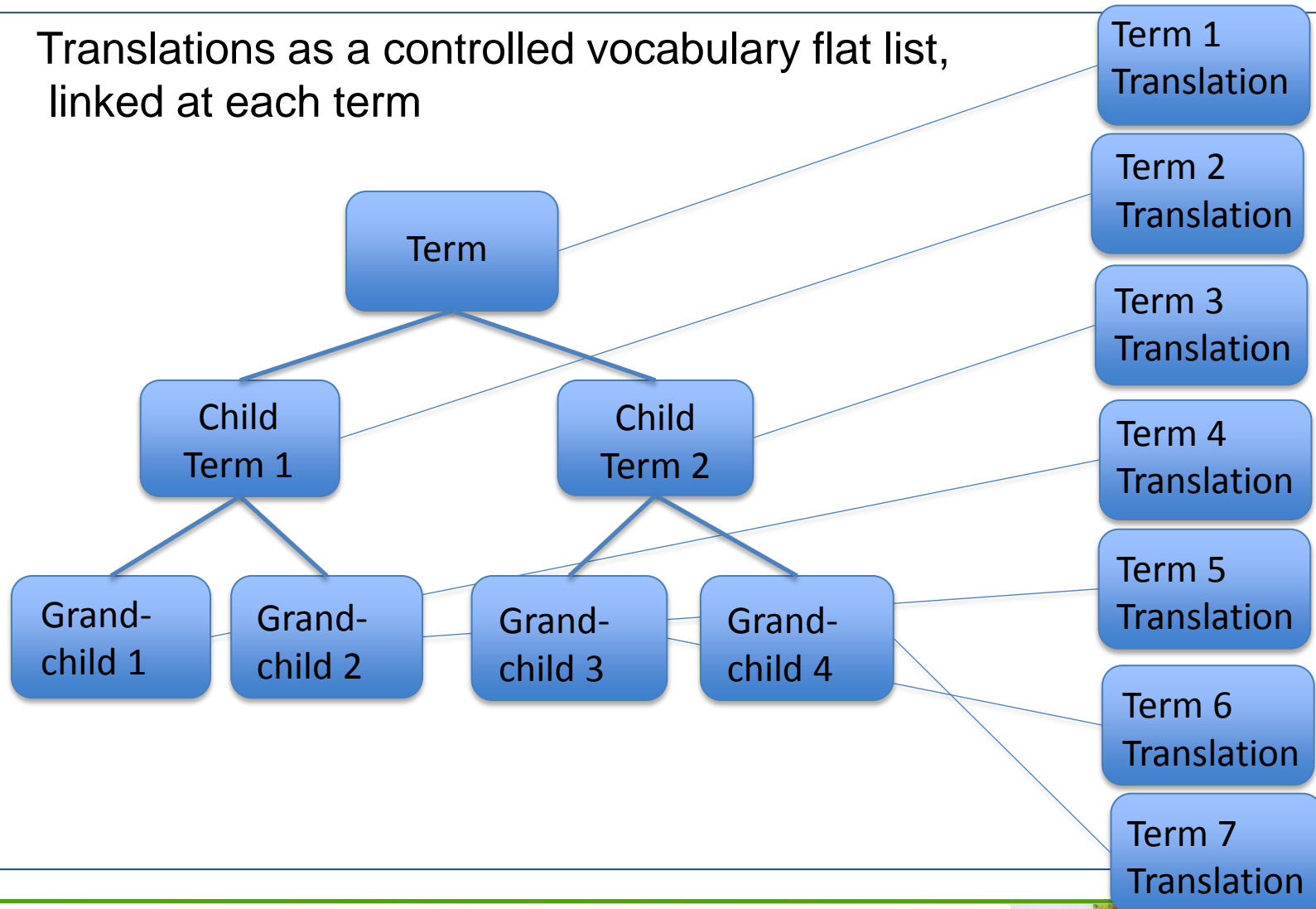
# Multilingual Taxonomy Design

## 1. Customized field used for term translations

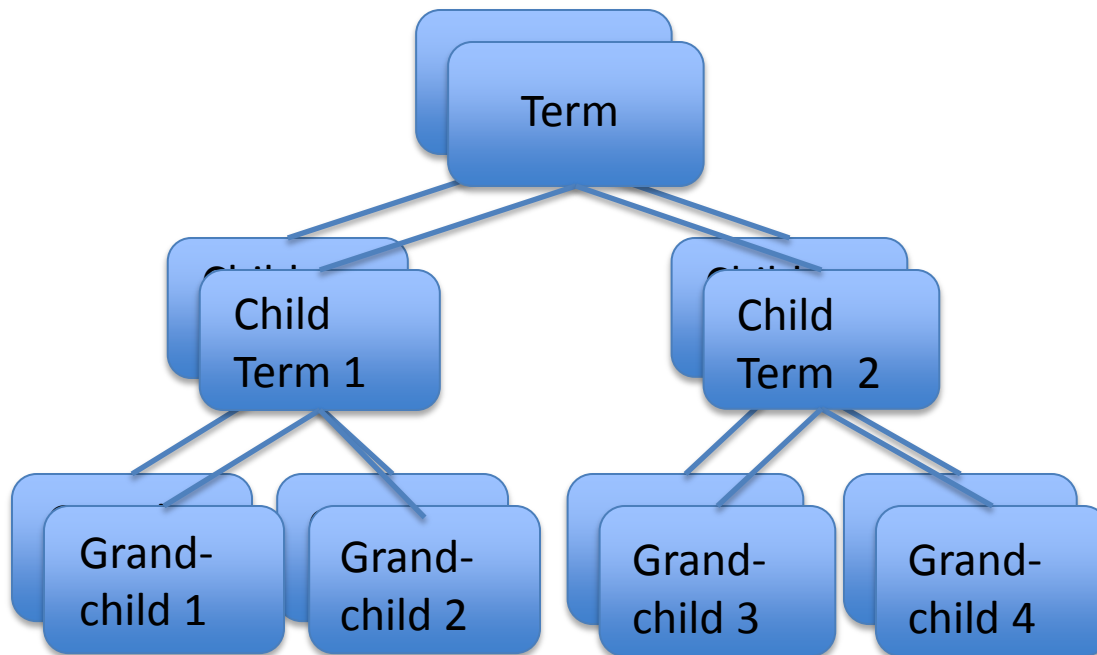


# Multilingual Taxonomy Design

2. Translations as a controlled vocabulary flat list, linked at each term

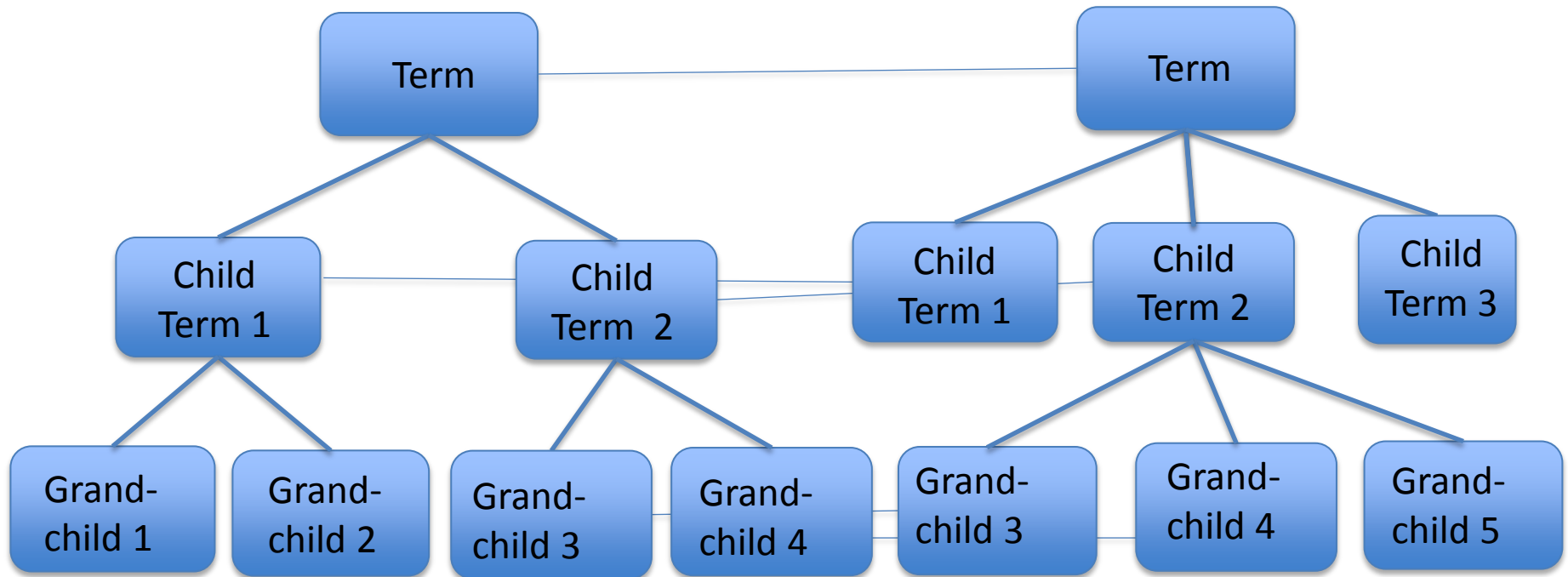


3. Second language taxonomy mirroring first, linked at each translated term. Inter-term relationships replicate.



# Multilingual Taxonomy Design

4. Multiple taxonomies in different languages linked at equivalent term translations. Inter-term relationships may differ.



Dedicated taxonomy/thesaurus management software tool screenshot examples from:

- Data Harmony Thesaurus Master (Access Innovations, Inc.)
- Synaptica (Synaptica, LLC)
- MultiTes (Multisystems)

Other tools also provide similar capabilities.



# Multilingual Taxonomy Design

The screenshot shows a software interface for managing a taxonomy. On the left is a tree view of categories under 'newsindexer\_EN-SP', with 'Society' selected. The main area displays the 'Term: Society' and various relationship controls: 'Broader Term', 'Narrower Term', 'Related Term', and 'Non-Preferred Term', each with '+', '-', and 'V' buttons. The 'Status' is set to 'Accepted'. A 'Spanish' label and a 'Save' button are circled in red. Below these is the Spanish translation 'Sociedad'. At the bottom, there are buttons for 'Scope Note', 'Editorial Note', 'Facet', and 'History'.

Method #1:  
Create user-defined  
text field and enter  
translation

*Data Harmony  
Thesaurus Master*



# Multilingual Taxonomy Design

The screenshot displays a taxonomy management interface with a left sidebar, a central item summary and sub-elements panel, and a right panel for relationships and administrative attributes.

**Left Sidebar (Taxonomy Hierarchy):**

- Test-English
  - Botany
    - Applied botany
    - Agriculture
      - Forestry
      - Afforestation
      - Reforestation
    - Research Botany
    - Exobiology
  - Medicine
    - Dentistry
    - Family practice
    - Veterinary medicine
  - Zoology
    - Applied zoology
- Test-French
  - Botanique

**Item Summary (Forestry):**

- Descriptor: Forestry
- Object: hedden\_thes
- Categories:
- Status: Active; Approved; Preferred; Unlocked
- UID: 1001
- Created: dclarke 3/31/2008 12:09:12 PM
- Modified: hhedden 11/23/2011 3:08:19 PM

**Buttons:** Save, Add New, Subsume, Refresh, Categories, History, Deactivate, Delete, Restore, Copy

**Sub-Elements:**

Descriptor:	Forestry
Scope:	
French:	Foresterie
German:	Forstwirtschaft

**Administrative Attributes:**

- Approval: Approved
- Workflow: Normal
- Language: English (dropdown menu open showing English, French, German, Spanish, Italian)
- Locked:
- BLAT:

**Relationships Panel:**

- Buttons: Add/Edit Relationships, Tree View
- Options:  Limit to Taskview,  Show All
- Forestry
  - Top Level Parents: TT Botany (hedden\_thes)
  - Parents: BT Applied botany (hedden\_thes)
  - Children: NT Afforestation (hedden\_thes), NT Reforestation (hedden\_thes)
  - Associations:
  - Variants:

**Method #1 Synaptica**

# Multilingual Taxonomy Design

Thesaurus Master MAI Rule Builder Test MAI

File Edit View Help

eurovocthes

- BG
  - ЕВРОПЕЙСКА ОБЩНОСТ
  - ИКОНОМИКА
  - МЕЖДУНАРОДНИ ОТНОШЕНИЯ
  - ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ И КОМУНИКАЦИЯ
  - ПОЛИТИКА
  - ПРАВО
  - ПРОИЗВОДСТВО, ТЕХНОЛОГИЯ И ИЗСЛЕДВАНЕ
  - СОЦИАЛНИ ВЪПРОСИ
  - ТЪРГОВИЯ
  - ФИНАНСИ
- DE
- EL
- EN
  - ECONOMICS
  - EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES
  - INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
  - LAW
  - POLITICS
  - TRADE
- FR
  - COMMUNAUTÉS EUROPÉENNES
  - DROIT
    - Drroit Civil
    - Drroit International
    - Drroit Pénal
    - Droits Et Libertés
    - Justice
    - Organisation De La Justice
    - Sources Et Branches Du Droit
  - FINANCES
  - RELATIONS INTERNATIONALES
  - VIE POLITIQUE
  - VIE ÉCONOMIQUE
  - ÉCHANGES ÉCONOMIQUES ET COMMERCIAUX
- HU

Term: DROIT

Broader Term + - V

FR

Narrower Term + - V

Drroit Civil  
Drroit International  
Drroit Pénal  
Droits Et Libertés  
Justice  
Organisation De La Justice  
Sources Et Branches Du Droit

Status  Candidate  Accepted

Related Term + - V

traité d'adhésion UE

**Alternate languages** + - V

JOG  
LAW  
RECHT  
ΔΙΚΑΙΟ  
ПРАВО

Non-Preferred Term + - V

acte d'adhésion

Scope Note	Descriptor ID
Term ID+	Editorial Notes
History+	

Method #2 or 4:  
Link equivalent terms in different language by user-defined “alternative language” reciprocal relationship

*Data Harmony*  
*Thesaurus Master*



# Multilingual Taxonomy Design

## Item Summary

**Descriptor** Forestry  
**Object** Test-English  
**Categories**  
**Status** Active; Approved; Preferred; Unlocked  
**UID** 1001  
**Created** dclarke 3/31/2008 12:09:12 PM  
**Modified** hhedden 11/23/2011 3:45:17 PM

<input type="button" value="Save"/>	<input type="button" value="Add New"/>	<input type="button" value="Subsume"/>
<input type="button" value="Refresh"/>	<input type="button" value="Categories"/>	<input type="button" value="History"/>
<input type="button" value="Deactivate"/>	<input type="button" value="Delete"/>	<input type="button" value="Restore"/>
	<input type="button" value="Copy"/>	

## Sub-Elements

**Descriptor:**

**Scope:**

## Administrative Attributes:

**Approval:**

**Workflow:**

**Language:**

**Locked:**

**BLAT:**  Yes  No

**BTN:**  Yes  No

## Relationships

Limit to Taskview  Show All

## Forestry

### Top Level Parents

TT [Botany](#) (Test-English)

### Parents

BT [Applied botany](#) (Test-English)

### Children

NT [Afforestation](#) (Test-English)  
NT [Reforestation](#) (Test-English)

### Associations

EN>FR [Foresterie](#) (Test-French)

### Variants

Method #2 or 4:  
Link equivalent  
terms in different  
language by user-  
defined associative  
relationship.

*Synaptica*



# Multilingual Taxonomy Design

Method #2 or 4 alternate: Create separate taxonomies, and link equivalent terms in different language by same Concept ID.

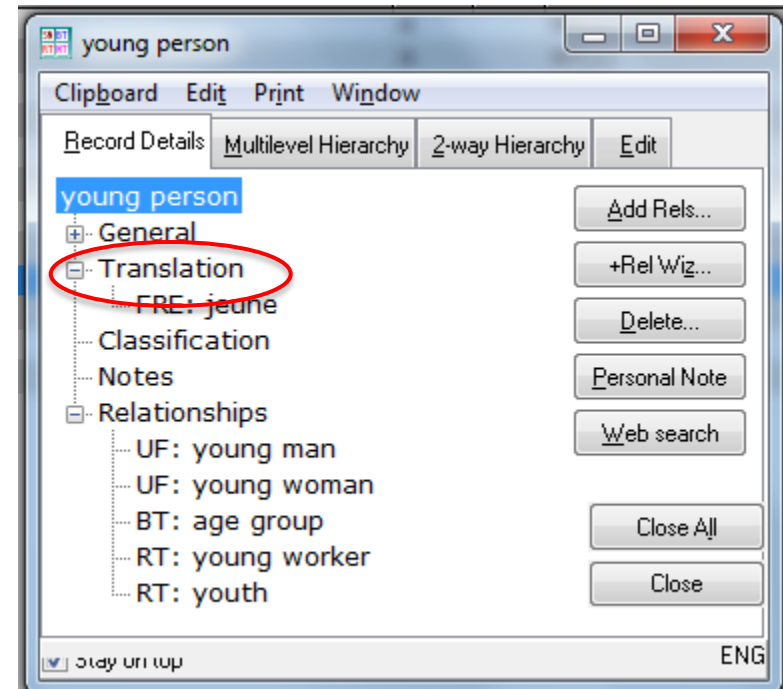
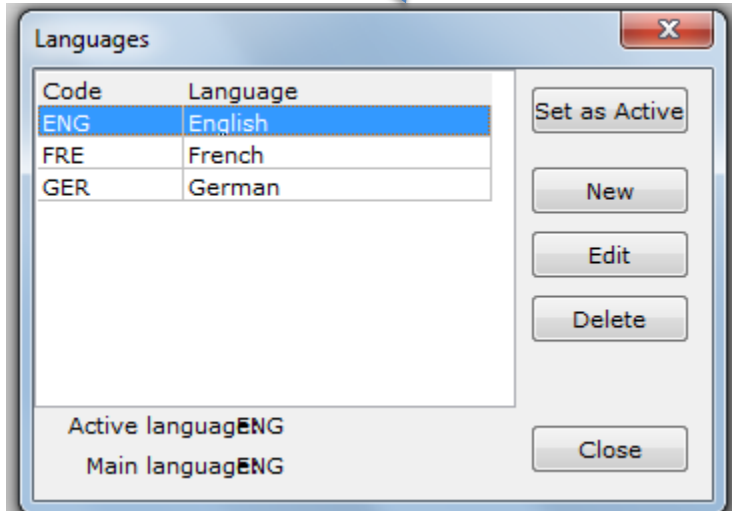
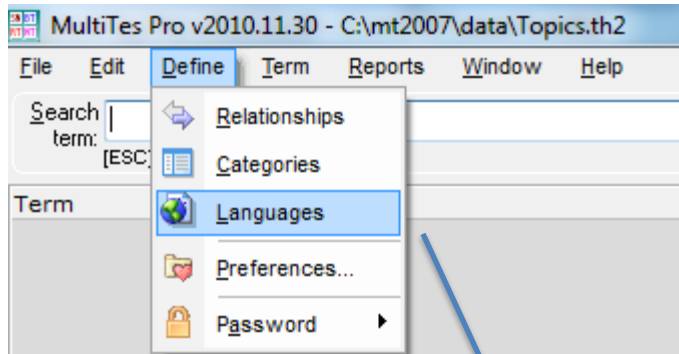
*Data Harmony*

The screenshot shows the MAistro software interface for populationthes-Branches. The main window is titled 'Thesaurus Master' and contains a tree view of terms organized by language: English, Español, and Française. The English section includes 'Data Collection Topics' with sub-terms like 'Census data', 'Censuses', 'Data collection', 'Field activity (data collection techniques)', 'Intercensal periods', 'Interviews', 'Life cycle', 'Name', 'Sampling', and 'Surveys'. The Spanish section includes 'Colección Temas de datos' with sub-terms like 'Actividades de campo (metodos)', 'Apellido', 'Censos', 'Datos censales', 'Encuestas', 'Entrevistas', 'Muestreo', 'Periodo intercensal', and 'Recopilacion de datos'. The French section includes 'Sujets de collecte de données' with sub-terms like 'Activite sur le terrain (Technique de collecte)', 'Collecte des donnees', 'Cycle de vie', 'Donnee de recensement', 'Enquete', 'Entretien', and 'Nom'. A 'Search Thesaurus' dialog box is open, showing a search for '159' with options for 'Preferred Terms', 'All Equivalent Terms', 'Accepted Terms', 'Candidate Terms', 'Related Term', 'Non-Preferred Term', 'Scope Note', 'Editorial Note', 'History', and 'Concept ID'. A 'Thesaurus Terms' dialog box is also open, displaying 3 terms found: 'Colección Temas de datos -- Actividades de campo (metodos)', 'Sujets de collecte de données -- Activite sur le terrain (Technique de collecte)', and 'Data Collection Topics -- Field activity (data collection techniques)'. The 'Concept ID+' field in the bottom right is circled in red.

# Multilingual Taxonomy Design

Method #3: Create second language taxonomy mirroring first, linked at each translated term. Inter-term relationships replicate.

*MultiTes*



- Translations of a term display as another kind of relationship.
- Similar to equivalence, but both languages are preferred and none is nonpreferred

young person	jeune
<b>FD:</b> 13. Population	<b>MT:</b> 13. Population
<b>UF:</b> young man young woman	<b>EP:</b> jeune femme jeune homme
<b>BT:</b> age group	<b>TG:</b> groupe d'âge
<b>RT:</b> young worker youth	<b>VA:</b> jeune travailleur jeunesse
<b>FR:</b> jeune	<b>EN:</b> young person

From the bilingual European Training Thesaurus <http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/ett>



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- Taxonomy translations are typically created from scratch, translating each term.
- It is also possible to map and existing/separately created foreign language taxonomies to another, if their coverage is nearly identical.
- For Goals #1 or #2 (*Users of one language accessing content in a different language*) translations may suffice
- For Goal #3 (*Multilingual users accessing multilingual content*) mapping separately created taxonomies in each language may be better.



- Matches are for concepts, not terms.
  - Translations are for the concept and not necessarily for the preferred term.
- Nonpreferred terms may vary.
  - Some can be translated
  - Some cannot be translated
  - Additional nonpreferred terms may be created in the second language(s)



Translating taxonomies/thesauri is different from translating documents.

- Pay by hour/project, not by word.
- Translators should have experience with translating in both directions.
- Translators should be familiar with using taxonomies, if not also taxonomists.
- If not using a translator who is also a taxonomist, have a taxonomist/information-specialist native speaker of target languages review the translated taxonomy.



## Taxonomy Translation/Localization Issues

- Lack of an equivalent translation
- A term in one language having two meanings with two terms in another language (**seguridad = safety & security**)
- Term length
- Use of definite articles
- Use of abbreviations
- Use of plural
- Use of capitalization
- Alphabetizing sorting rules



Translation projects end, but taxonomy management does not.

Taxonomy management issues:

- Taxonomy growth
  - Taxonomy change
  - Taxonomy management/ownership responsibility
  - Merging or combining additional taxonomies
- Translations/additional language versions will need frequent reviewing and updating.



- Multilingual taxonomies can serve various goals.
- Design the taxonomy with the goal(s) in mind.
- There are advantages/disadvantages to translating a taxonomy vs. mapping pre-existing taxonomies of different languages.



# Contact

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