

Avis de recherche

Demosten

DEMOSTEN stands for *Dictionnaire Européen Multilingue Omnidirectionnel Servant à la Traduction et l'Enseignement des lexiques-Noyaux*, and the concept (together with its impressive label) was the idea of Jean-Claude Rolland, Director of International Relations at the French Ministry of Education's *Centre International d'Etudes Pédagogiques* in Sèvres. Jean-Claude Rolland had already produced DICOFILE, a computer-based learner's dictionary of French, and his work on what he calls the *hyperfréquents*, a core vocabulary of French (the *lexique-Noyau*) derived (and slightly augmented) from standard frequency lists, was described in a paper presented to the AFLS Paris conference, September 1995. Proceeding from this, and from the observation that with the items of this 600-word basic vocabulary several thousand common expressions could be generated, he went on to elaborate the idea of a CD-ROM multi-language European dictionary of these expressions, and set about recruiting his partners.

Given the high profile of Hull's School of European Languages and Cultures in CALL and TELL, it was logical to approach the University of Hull, and Stephen Noreiko attended the first exploratory meeting in Sèvres in June 1995, before coming back to spend a summer working out a budget and trying to meet the SOCRATES deadline. The project has applied for continuation funding, and is now embarked on its second year.

The team as currently constituted includes the Aarhus School of Business, the Institute for Language and Speech Processing in Athens, the *Zentrum für elektronische Ressourcen europäischer Sprache* at Bochum, the distance learning department of the *universidade Alberta* in Lisbon, and Lockhart College in Pamplona. Though a climate of close personal friendship has grown up among the team members (cultivated in the dining room of the Palais de Sèvres and the restaurants of Brussels), contact outside their yearly strategy meetings is almost entirely electronic: the lists of French expressions are sent by e-mail from Sèvres, first draft translations are sent back, debated and then form the basis which the rest of the team work from.

Complete omni-directionality is obviously not possible, but by refining syntagms, it is hoped to eliminate the grosser ambiguities, and the project is now reaching its verification stage. Six thousand or so French syntagms have been translated, items that do not cross cultural and linguistic boundaries have been eliminated, and the translations of the syntagms are being back-checked and cross-checked.

Expression of interest have been received from other countries and institutions, and the group is going to be expanded to include Dutch and Italian, as well as perhaps Hebrew.

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