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Report on Thesaurus of Ethnographic Museum Items for 2008

Establishment of appropriate terminology is very important in documentation of museum items since it simplifies the searching process and thesaurus seems to be an adequate tool in this endeavor. It ensures classification, but also the appropriate usage of terms in data processing and searching. The key norm for the design of a thesaurus is *HRN ISO 2788:1999 Documentation – Guidelines for Design and Development of Monolingual Thesauri. Thesaurus of Ethnographic Museum Items* which is now under construction is based on that norm.

In design of this thesaurus we are using the terminological tables for control of terms from the computer program for documentation of museum items M++. In cooperation with computer company Link 2 we have activated different functions inside the terminological tables which have already been part of the program but have not been used before. We have enabled the establishment of links between related terms and improved the interface of terminological table which simplifies manipulation and actions inside the table. New interface can simultaneously display the hierarchy and positioning of terms inside the table and all data linked to one term – main terms, subordinate terms, descriptors or non-descriptors, related terms, references, notes, definitions, comments and data on liability.

In 2008 we have continued with our work on *Thesaurus of Ethnographic Museum Items*, covering the topics from the field of traditional economy, due to our decision to start with the protection of this segment of traditional life in Croatia. We have gathered terminology from the majority of museums from Northwestern Croatia and Slavonija, and many other museums from other regions of Croatia have also sent their terminology which is also currently being analyzed.

During the past year we have been including the terms into hierarchies, dealing with ambiguous terms, related and recommended terms, i.e. determining the descriptors and non-descriptors, formulating definitions, collecting synonyms, solving dilemmas, etc.

With that aim we have contacted on more than one occasion our colleagues from various museums for their help with the explication of terms, definitions and local terms. Some museums have used only standard terms for certain items and hence we had to find out the local terms since we, as ethnologists, were aiming at collecting all the local variants in order for this thesaurus to display rich lexical heritage. In the field of traditional economy, especially in the crafts practiced in Panonian region of Croatia, we have found a lot of terms of German origin, with smaller or greater regional differences. Therefore we have to decide how to classify those terms and whether to include all of them, including the ones which have been found only once, as a variant of a more common term.

The terminology we have collected originated not only from the ethnographic museums and collections, but also from municipal museums, regional museums and other museum collections. While doing this, we have encountered terms which do not belong into an ethnographic thesaurus, but which could be included in it: some of the examples of the dilemmas we have encountered originated from the Podravka's Museum of Food. The museum in its holdings has numerous ethnographic items, but also numerous items which were part of the industrial production in Podravka factory. It is dubious to which level can the tools and machinery from industry be included into an ethnographic thesaurus. It is clear that the household meat grinder belongs to our Thesaurus, but industrial meat grinder probably does not. Chicken incubator also does not belong here, neither does the labeling machine for producing marmalade labels nor the machines for closing up meat soup cans or for making small soup bricks (the world famous Podravka soup bricks were produced that way). However, many items were ambiguous: for example, the tool for cutting tobacco; without the picture, we could not tell whether that was an industrial machine (even though the name suggested the opposite), or whether it was used in rural regions for tobacco manufacturing. Basically, our opinion is that it is better to include than to exclude ambiguous items. Moreover, the thesaurus will be constantly modified and supplemented, as well as any other dictionary, since work on one dictionary could never be considered completed. Language is alive and changing and those changes should be also visible in this Thesaurus.

We have also consulted the relevant literature: firstly Croatian dictionaries, then foreign language dictionaries, dictionaries of synonyms and other relevant literature, for example, many collections of dialectal literature include the dictionaries of local dialects where we have found explications for certain items, or even their pictures, for example in the re-print of the 1938 manual titled *Šta je šta*, by Velikanović and Andrić, which has proved useful for other fields as well. This dictionary, taking into account the period of its publication, also proved to be useful for urban ethnograph-

ic terms. We have also consulted the origins of different terms and sought for definitions from various web pages.

Up to now we have managed to analyze 1255 terms. 814 of them have been classified under five groups (*Tools, Implements and Gear (Traditional Economy), Architecture; Measurement Gadgets and Pots; Storages; Transport*), i.e. twenty-five subgroups. Out of the total number, 441 term contains a definition but is currently positioned under the 'unclassified terms'. Those terms are 'candidate terms' which are prepared for the next phase in the design of Thesaurus. A large number of terms from that groups require an additional analysis by the help of curators and relevant literature. Some terms classified under this title were defined, but only partly belonged to the group *Tools, Implements and Gear (Traditional Economy)*. During the next phase of designing thesaurus they will be classified in the appropriate group or class and linked on the basis of their relations with the terms of the same level (or groups). Terms like *kotao, peka, lopar, korito, načve, ribež, stupa* and many others belong to the group with the working title *Tools and equipment for preparation and consummation of food and drinks*, which will be classified under the appropriate class and further divided into several subgroups.

During the year of 2009 we plan to start with the implementation of the Thesaurus in its present stage of completion, since we see no reason for not using the already completed thesaurus material which will anyway be supplemented and modified in the future.

Translated by Tanja Bukovčan