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SUMMARY

In an effort to harmonize existing versions of LanguaL, a first international version of the thesaurus, called LanguaL Version 0, was published on the Internet by the International LanguaL steering Committee in 1996.

Since then, the LanguaL thesaurus has been significantly modified in order to include alternative international classification systems, allowing description and retrieval of foods according to different legislations or needs.

The latest version of the thesaurus, LanguaL 2000, has been published by the COST Action 99 – Eurofoods (1,2,3).

It is available on the new LanguaL Internet site:
<http://www.langual.org>.

INTRODUCTION

LanguaL stands for 'Langua aLimentaria' or 'language of food'. It is an automated method for describing, capturing and retrieving data about food.

LanguaL is a multilingual faceted thesaurus for describing foods, specifically for classifying food products for information retrieval. Each food can be described by a set of standard, controlled terms chosen from facets characteristic of the nutritional and/or hygienic quality of a food, as for example the biological origin, the methods of cooking and conservation, and technological treatments.

The work on LanguaL was started in the late 1970s by the Centre for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN) of the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as an ongoing cooperative effort of specialists in food technology, information science and nutrition. Since then, LanguaL has been developed in collaboration with the US National Cancer Institute (NCI), and, more recently, with its European partners, notably in France, Denmark, Switzerland and Hungary. Since 1996, the European LanguaL Technical Committee has administered the thesaurus.

LANGUAL 2000 - THREE NEW PUBLICATIONS

In the COST Action 99 project (1995-1999) three LANGUAL 2000 publications reports were published:

1 Introduction to the LanguaL thesaurus¹

This report presents the basics of the LanguaL 2000 thesaurus with an explanation of the structure as well as for each facet of the thesaurus the rules and use in indexing.

2 The LanguaL thesaurus²

This report presents the details of the present version, LanguaL 2000 thesaurus, according to the international thesaurus standards, an alphabetical display of descriptors and synonyms (non-descriptors) as well as the systematic display of the thesaurus hierarchy.

3 Documentation of changes from version 0³

This report presents the documentation of the changes and additions from the previous version of LanguaL, ver. 0 (1995) to the present version of the LanguaL 2000 thesaurus.

LANGUAL 2000 - WHAT IS NEW ?

LanguaL 2000 introduces a series of additions and changes from the previous version of the multilingual thesaurus. The most important additions are:

1 Addition of multiple food classification systems.

An important difference from previous versions of the LanguaL thesaurus is that the facet A. Product Type has been changed from being a mono-hierarchical food classification scheme to being poly-hierarchical. This means that LanguaL can now handle multiple food classification schemes in parallel. These changes allow for the addition of well established food classifications, such as the Codex Alimentarius Commission's food classification for food additives, for pesticides and for contaminants, the CIAA food classification for food additives used in EU, the Eurocode 2, and others.

2 Addition of specific food additive information.

LanguaL 2000 includes all food additives definitions according to the European food additive framework directive (94/34/EC) and the underlying directives (94/35/EC, 94/26EC, 95/2/EC) on specific food additive classes.

3 Additions from the EU-FAIR BASIS project.

The BASIS project on BioActive Substances in Food Plants Information System is a concerted Action under the EU FAIR framework (CT98-4419). Using LanguaL in its database, the BASIS project has proposed a series of additions and modifications to the thesaurus. More information about BASIS can be found on the projects website: www.vfd2.dk/basis

4 BALATON

The French-Hungarian BALATON program (1996-1999) endeavoured to harmonise activities on food databank management with special regards to food description and to existing food coding systems. Based on modern industrial methods of food preservation and packaging, the working group proposed a series of additions and modifications of LanguaL concerning these issues.

LANGUAL 2000 - NEW WEB SITE IN PREPARATION

LanguaL has generously been hosted by the Technical University of Zürich for the last three years at the site.

A new web site is being developed with the support of the Danish Veterinary Food Administration at www.langual.org.

LANGUAL 2000 - NEW SOFTWARE

Currently, a thesaurus manager for LanguaL Version 0 is available from the <http://food.ethz.ch/langual> site.

A new thesaurus manager for LanguaL Version 2000, as well as food description software, are under development.

REFERENCES

1. Møller A., Ireland J. (2000) *LanguaL 2000: Introduction to the LanguaL thesaurus*. COST Action 99 report - EUR 19542 (ISBN 92-828-9163-1)
2. Møller A., Ireland J. (2000) *LanguaL 2000: Documentation of changes from version 0*. COST Action 99 report - EUR 19541 (ISBN 92-828-9839-3)
3. Møller A., Ireland J. (2000) *LanguaL 2000: The LanguaL Thesaurus*. COST Action 99 report - EUR 19540 (ISBN 92-828-9758)

Reports are available from Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, <http://eur-op.eu.int/general/en/>

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