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Michael Hann (2004). *A Basis for Scientific and Engineering Translation*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins. Pp. 250 and a CD. 105 € (hard copy) 65 € (paperback) ISBN: 90 272 2608 3 (hard copy) ISBN: 90 272 2609 1 (paperback).

This work — a printed handbook plus a CD — is encyclopaedic in its broad coverage, its helpful hints for students and teachers and its wealth of useful information. It includes extensive presentations of key scientific and engineering concepts, illustrations, units and symbols, linguistic and terminological explanations, orthographic conventions, topic microglossaries, bilingual dictionaries, thesauri and hints for teachers faced with the need to design translation courses.

It is aimed at professional translators as well as teachers and students of translation involved in the fields of mechanics, electricity, electronics, material science, nucleonics, semiconductor technology, circuit technology, automotive engineering, machine technology, chemical engineering, computer engineering, construction engineering and mathematics. According to the author, its overall purpose is to tackle the most crucial difficulties encountered by native and non-native English speakers when translating scientific and engineering material from German. Most of these difficulties relate to the two main phases in the translation process - understanding the source text and producing the target text. In my view, the purpose of the work is to help its readers both to acquire the conceptual background necessary to understand their source texts and to become familiar with the corresponding terms in the two languages.

The handbook is a useful introduction to the disk. It contains a preface, an introduction, a user guide and 24 units. Unit 1 deals with access facilities. Units 2 to 21 provide the reader with elementary samples of the conceptual information that is further developed on the disk. It also takes the linguistic and lexical components presented on the disk a stage further. There are appendixes on the approach followed by the author, on American English and on general aspects of the book.

The CD is the larger and more important of the two components. It contains three volumes. Volume 1 is an expansion of the information presented in units 2 to 21 of the handbook. It provides the reader with solid background knowledge common to the main branches of engineering, together with a selection of bilingual term lists, microglossaries and microthesauri relevant to these areas. Concepts are not presented in isolation but in meaningful networks of logical

relationships. This approach helps both comprehension and retention. It also promotes self-study and stimulates learner autonomy.

Volume 2 focuses on terminology for translation purposes and offers three didactically organised dictionaries: the Technical Polyseme Dictionary (TPD), the Technical Thesaurus (TT) and the Technical Collocation Dictionary (TCD). Volume 3 contains two alphabetic dictionaries, German -English, English - German.

Part of the terminology of the three major dictionaries (TPD, TT, TCD) derives directly from a previous publication by the author: Michael Hann, *The Key to Technical Translation*, 1992, Amsterdam / Philadelphia, Joh Benjamins. However, this new work is not only updated, reorganised and enhanced in relation to its predecessor but offers a much better way of accessing the conceptual and terminological information contained in it. Special care has been taken to provide ease of navigation, making it a useful tool for both the professional translator and for the translation student in the age of the Internet.

There appear to be three underlying assumptions. One is that the more unfamiliar translators are with the subject matter the more difficult it is for them to read and understand the source text and the less readable and reliable their translations are likely to be. The second is that scientific and technical translation is not restricted to scientists and engineers, and that linguists trained as translators can and should also undertake such tasks. The third is that the type of conceptual and terminological knowledge required by scientific and technical translators differs from that required by scientists and engineers. I believe these three assumptions are well founded. In my opinion, the main achievement of this work is to have selected, summarised, organised and presented effectively the conceptual and terminological knowledge required by the scientific and engineering translator. While it is not a complete compendium of knowledge, it provides a firm foundation on which to build.

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