CLASSIFICATORY TERMS

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The preliminary terms with which the discipline of classification starts -- the term 'Classification' itself, the term 'Schedule of classification' and the term 'Classifying' -- and the ideas denoted by them are studied comparatively as they obtain in the writings of Ranganathan, Sayers and Bliss. They all agree in the idea plane. But they differ widely in the verbal plane causing difficulties to students and confusion in communication. The attempt of the Indian Standards Institution to establish a standard glossary of classification terms is welcomed.

Abbreviations Used

BC

Cl and Comm
RANGANATHAN (S R). Classification and communication, 1951.

Manual

Prol
RANGANATHAN (S R). Prolegomena to library classification, ed 2, 1957.

1 TERMS AND IDEAS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ser No</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Ranganathan</th>
<th>Sayers</th>
<th>Bliss</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>EXISTENT</td>
<td>Undefined, assumed term</td>
<td>Not used</td>
<td>Not used</td>
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<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>INDIVIDUAL</td>
<td>Not used</td>
<td>Not used</td>
<td>Undefined assumed term</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>ENTITY</td>
<td>Any existent, concrete or conceptual - that is, a thing or an idea</td>
<td>Not used</td>
<td>Not used</td>
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VP Vij is the librarian of the Indian Standards Institution.
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<th>CLASSIFICATORY TERMS</th>
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<td>2</td>
<td>AGGREGATE (of entities)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>GROUP</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>CLASS</td>
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**11 Entity**

The word 'Entity' of Ranganathan is equivalent to the word 'Individual' of Bliss. In Ranganathan 'Entity' is a defined term, its definition leans on 'Existent' used as undefined assumed term. Sayers has no equivalent word. Therefore he uses the phrase 'Concepts or Things' in its place.

**12 Aggregate**

The word 'Aggregate' of Ranganathan is equivalent to the word 'Group' of Bliss. Sayers uses the word 'Group' in the sense of the word 'Aggregate' or Sub-Aggregate', though he does not define it explicitly.

**13 Group**

The word 'Group' of Ranganathan is equivalent to the word 'Class' of Bliss as well as of Sayers. For their definition of 'Class' brings out only fact that all the entities in a class have likeness with reference to the characteristic chosen. It does not imply the position of the class in an arrangement or sequence of classes, as the epithet 'Ranked' in Ranganathan's definition denotes.

**14 Class**

The word 'Class' as defined by Ranganathan has no distinctive equivalent term in Sayers or Bliss. The word 'Class' is used by them indifferently both in the sense of the word 'Group' and in the sense of the word 'Class' as defined and distinguished by Ranganathan. In other words, the word 'Class' is a homonym in the terminology of Sayers and Bliss. A homonym always makes communication difficult. It should be avoided, particularly in a scientific discipline.

**2 NEED FOR STANDARDIZATION**

This difference in the use of terms, pertaining to one and the same discipline, viz Classification, is bound to puzzle students beginning to
learn the subject. It is also bound to make communication ineffective even among veterans. It is necessary, and it should be possible, to have a standard terminology. Section 1 discloses that the same concepts are handled by all the three authors though with different terms. So long as there is no difference as regards to concepts — that is there is no difference in the idea plane — the difference in the verbal plane can be removed. This is the purpose of establishing a Standard Glossary of Terms. It is, therefore, a real help that the Documentation Committee of the Indian Standards Institution has set itself on the task of establishing a Standard Glossary For Classification Terms.

3 'CLASSIFICATION' AND ITS VARIANT USES

The term 'Classification' is used in different senses by the three authors being studied in this paper.

31 Ranganathan

311 Classification (First Sense - Primitive Use): Division of a universe into a multitude of groups on the basis of a system of characteristics (Cl and Comm S 11). The word 'Division' is used by Ranganathan to denote 'Classification' in this sense (Prol S 121).

312 Classification (Second Sense - Common Use): Classification in the first sense and the arrangement of the resulting groups in a preferred sequence. The groups then become classes. (Cl and Comm S 12). The word 'Assortment' is used by Ranganathan to denote 'Classification' in this sense (Prol S 131).

313 Classification (Third Sense - Library Classification): Classification in the second sense and representation of the resulting classes by ordinal numbers (Cl and Comm S 13). The term 'Classification' is reserved by Ranganathan for use in this sense only.

314 Scheme of Classes: Statement showing the filiatory sequence of the classes - that is, pseudo entities — alone that arise in the course of the complete assortment of an amplified universe, ignoring the entities themselves (Prol S 166). (The terms "Filiatory Sequence", "Complete Assortment", and "Amplified Universe" are defined prior to arriving at this definition. The term "Pseudo-Entity" also is introduced and defined as a convenience).

315 Scheme of Classification: Scheme of classes fitted with terminology and notation (Prol S 171).

32 Sayers

321 Classification: The intellectual process by which our mental concepts or pictures of things are recognized to have likeness or unity and by this likeness or unity, are set in relation to one another (Manual S 48(a)). This is the same as the second sense in which this word is used by Ranganathan. In other words, it is used as equivalent to the word 'Assortment'.

322 Scheme of Classification: Assembly of classes in a systematic order (Manual S 118(5)). This is equivalent to Ranganathan's 'Scheme of Classes'.

33 Bliss

Classification: A system of classes in relation or order, with regard to some principle of characterisation or some purpose (BC 106, (15)). This is equivalent to Ranganathan's 'Scheme of Classes' and the 'Scheme of Classification' of Sayers.

4 NEED FOR STANDARDISATION

Here again the difference in the use of terms does perplex one and makes communication difficult. There should be an agreed standard of terminology. Homonyms should be totally removed. This is done in the terminology of Ranganathan by introducing five different basic terms to denote the five ideas involved. The terms are:

1 Division
2 Assortment
3 Classification
4 Scheme of Classes
5 Scheme of Classification

5 SCHEDULE OF CLASSIFICATION

51 Ranganathan

Schedule of Classification: Dictionary giving the meaning of each class number or ordinal name in a natural language or the jargon of a profession or a trade (ProL S 1284).

It is not clear how a 'Schedule of Classification' whose definition is reproduced in this section differs from a 'Scheme of Classification', whose definition is reproduced in Section 315. They are obviously synonymous. Is it not desirable to avoid synonym in the terminology of a scientific discipline? Or does the term "Schedule of Classification" imply either

i) Approach from a number or ordinal name to name in natural language; or

ii) Functional or operative aspect of 'Scheme of Classification'; or

iii) Both (i) and (ii)?

If so, Ranganathan should have brought out such an intention behind the use of two apparently synonymous terms.

52 Sayers

Classification Scheme: The written or printed schedule of terms which represents a system of classification (Manual 118 C).

This is perhaps equivalent to Ranganathan's 'Schedule of Classification'. It is also not clear how Sayers differentiates between 'Classification Scheme' whose definition is reproduced in this section and 'Scheme of Classification' whose definition is reproduced in section 322.

53 Bliss

Schedule of Classification: Schedule which is structural in showing the order and relations of subject in subordination, coordination and collocation, and functional in correlating the notation to the classification, in maintaining the order of the actual classification, and in locating the subject in the process of classifying (BC P 107(29)).

531 This definition is in substance the same as those of Ranganathan and Sayers, though Sayers uses a different term.

532 Bliss's words "structural... Collocation" emphasise a canon - the Canon of Filiatory Sequence - that a scheme of Classification should satisfy if it is to be of help. However, it is not necessary to load the definition of a term with this idea. It destroys the unity of the definition. And further, this is not the only canon to be satisfied.

533 Similarly, the words "in maintaining... classifying" are also not quite essential in a definition. They only denote uses of second and further remove of a schedule of classification.

534 On the other hand, the words "in correlating the notation to the classification" denote the immediate or primary use. They are in place in a definition. These words are totally equivalent to the words used in Ranganathan's definition of the term.

6 CLASSIFYING

61 Ranganathan

Classifying: Assigning an entity of a universe to the appropriate class in the scheme of classification adopted, by ascertaining the way in which each of the characteristics implied by the scheme is shared by it, and assigning the appropriate class number to it (ProL S 1287).

62 Sayers

621 Classifying: The act of arranging actual things, such as geological specimens, plants or books, so that they represent the abstract arrangement (Manual S 118(b)).
Classing: The act of placing things or books in their appropriate places in the classification scheme (Manual S 118(d)).

The term 'Classing' of Sayers is the equivalent of the term 'Classifying' of Ranganathan. His term 'Classifying' is equivalent to the term 'Assortment' of Ranganathan mentioned in section 312. Its definition is "Process of the division of the entities of a universe into groups plus that of arranging the groups in a definite sequence".

Perhaps in the world of librarians what Sayers calls 'Classifying' can be denoted by the term 'Arranging' in preferred sequence. If so, the term 'Classing' can be altogether omitted. There is indeed a trend to use the term 'Classifying' alone in the place of 'Classing'.

Bliss also distinguishes between 'Classifying' and 'Classing' as Sayers does. All the remarks made in section 62 are applicable here also.

7 SEQUENCE vs ORDER

The word 'Order' is an over worked word. Within the field of Library Science, it has several meanings as in phrases "Office-Order", "Book Order", "Order of a Class" and "Helpful Order". In a scientific discipline, it is desirable to eliminate or at least minimise the incidence of homonyms. Of the uses of the term 'Order' in the four phrases mentioned above, context will easily separate out the first into the sub-field of Office Management, the second into the sub-field of Book Acquisition and the others into the sub-field of Classification. Confusion may not arise seriously on account of these three sub-fields. But, confusion will arise on account of the two different uses of the term "Order" within the Discipline of Classification itself.

During the first 20 years of Ranganathan's teaching the subject, one of us - Ranganathan, used to find the strain caused by this homonymous term on the students. This was not expressed by the students. But as a teacher, Ranganathan could sense it. About 10 years ago, Ranganathan decided to resolve the homonym by using the word "Sequence" to denote "Order" in the fourth of contexts mentioned at the beginning of this section, and to reserve the term "Order" only for use in the third context. One is able to see the great relief it gives to the teacher and the taught alike. It also removes a subtle hurdle arising in discussions and expositions in general. Though conceding the advantage of this theoretically, the older people involuntarily use the term "Order" in practice. This should be got over by a conscious effort by teachers and writers. In this way, at least the next generation should be saved from the effect of this homonym within the relatively small area of the discipline of classification.