

Edith is having breakfast.

Jim approaches.

“Er good morning.” says Jim.

“Good morning.” replies Edith, cheerfully.

“I was wondering um could you possibly give first lecture this morning please something about the use of localizable sentences something technological rather than er yes, something technological please?”

“Yes certainly.” says Edith, diplomatically and cheerfully.

“Thank you yes thank you.” says Jim.

Jim turns and goes.

‘Hmm,’ thinks Edith ‘it looks like he had two lectures planned and the rest just discussions amongst manufacturers and now he has us and the press here he is trying to get a lecture programme together. But no matter, it seems to be working out alright.’

Edith thinks for a while.

‘Ah yes, I brought two sets of digit discs with me. I can build my lecture around those.’

Edith had packed for the journey to Mainz in rather a hurry but had put the two sets of digit discs into her suitcase just in case they might be needed. However, Edith had not thought that she might be presenting a formal lecture at the conference. Lecture programmes are usually planned well before a conference takes place. But Caroline, John and now Edith have all been asked to present a lecture at short notice.

‘It looks like this so-called conference was going to be the talks by the two Managing Directors and then discussions and negotiations between the various attendees.’ thinks Edith.

The lecture room.

Jim introduces Edith.

Edith speaks.

“Most usage of localizable sentences is in electronic applications, yet the system is designed for use in other, non-electronic situations as well.

“For example, please imagine a clinician interviewing a patient through the language barrier, just across a desk, no electronic equipment involved.

“For such a use, it can be helpful if each of them - the clinician and the patient - have a set of nine plastic discs, each carrying a digit, a different digit on each, digits from 1 through to 9. We call these digit discs. Each of them - the clinician and the patient - also has a list of code numbers and meanings in their own language, printed on pieces of paper. The

clinician sets out a code number using some of the discs, the patient reads the number, looks it up on the sheet of paper, finds that it is a question, looks at the replies available, chooses the most appropriate, sets up the number using the digit discs, the clinician looks it up on the sheet of paper and then decides on the next question, or to apply treatment, as the clinician decides.

“This is facilitated by there being a lot of three-digit code numbers designed for such circumstances, each of which contains three digits different from each other, with no use of zero. Zero is not used in this set of codes because there could possibly be occasions when communication is by speech, perhaps over a telephone link, and when languages are taught numbers are often taught starting at one and increasing, with zero never mentioned. We have in mind that someone using a telephone link might, for example, not know enough of another language to describe his or her problem, yet know the digits in that other language. Or maybe the digits in a language of which both the patient and the clinician have just a basic knowledge. For example, if the patient knows, say, German but no English, and the clinician knows English but no German, the digits could be passed over a telephone link using French if the patient and the clinician know the basic digits in French. Three digits different from each other means that there is no code number where two identical digits are next to each other.

“In fact, the avoidance of two digits the same next to each other continues throughout the system no matter how long the code number. This is to try to eliminate some errors that could possibly otherwise occur.

“Also for some code numbers longer than three digits we use a rule that no digit shall appear more than twice, so that two sets of discs can be used to express such a code number - just in case that might be helpful at some future time.

“It is possible for there to be a zero in a three digit code number, in the middle digit. However, no sentence using one of those code numbers is encoded at this time, but the possibility is there if some suitable application idea arises. For that reason each set of digit discs does include a zero as a tenth disc.

“In setting the discs out to indicate a code number there are three possibilities. Which one to use is the dependent upon the particular situation. Usually for two people each having a European language as his or her language, the order is left to right, if both people use right to left in his or her native language, then right to left could be used. If there is a possibility of confusion in the matter, then up to down may be used.

“We have allowed for the possibility that someone may not recognise the glyphs for digits used by the other person, so we also have discs with each disc having a number of spots on it, with a blank disc for zero included in the set of discs.

“Finally, I mention that one of the codes - five seven three - is used to indicate a desire to use this system for communication. So, for example, someone could arrive at reception in a doctor's surgery or a hospital and present a card with the number 573 printed upon it and staff could be trained to understand the situation.”

Jim stands, then thanks Edith for her interesting presentation, announces a break for twenty minutes and invites applause for Edith.

There is a applause. Edith smiles and says "Thank you."

People gather in the lecture room after the break. Jim goes to the front of the room and speaks. "I suggest that we now split into two groups, the people from LocSARA and the journalists in here and the manufacturers in the other room. The purpose of the exercise is that each group prepares a section for a communiqué to be issued at the end of the conference, then we will all meet together in here after lunch for a short afternoon session where we put the two sections together and polish it ready for publication by the conference organizers."

Jane looks at Edith with a look of amazed astonishment at this.

"So, if the manufacturers would like to come with me please." says Jim, who then walks towards the door. The representatives of the manufacturers follow.

A pause.

"Well," says Jane "how about that!"

Edith speaks "I suppose that we might as well get on with it, where shall we start?"

"I know what I would like to write." says Jane.

Edith gives Jane one of her old-fashioned looks.

"Oh but I won't, don't worry." says Jane.

The group has Edith, Jane, John, Caroline, Edward, Simon and the gentleman from the New York Newspaper.

Jane says "Shall we start with something like 'In Mainz, the City of Gutenberg, situated next to the river Rhine in Germany, is the setting for a conference on localizable sentences.?'"

"Yes, that sounds good." says Edith.

There is general agreement.

"Then we could have something about there being five lectures. We can mention the two Managing Directors, though with a view to the other group probably having mentioned them and so we use their version for diplomacy and then we can mention the three lectures from LocSARA." says the gentleman from the New York Newspaper.

"I agree." says Simon.

They put together a good section, well written, mentioning the setting as suggested by Jane and then adding sections about the five lectures.

"It is not really complete." says Jane.

"No," says Simon "but I expect that they will put what they have decided in their section, so the final result will be complete when it is all joined together."

Everyone agrees.

“So,” says Edith “what are we supposed to do now, are we supposed to wait for Jim to come back or is that it?”

“Well, Jim didn’t say, and he did seem keen to go off to a separate meeting with the representatives of the manufacturers, so I suppose that we can break for lunch now.” says John.

Everyone agrees and they break for lunch.

Lunchtime.

Edith and the others from LocSARA, Jane and Simon are having lunch together.

“Tomorrow we can go to the Gutenberg Museum.” says Edith.

Everyone agrees.

“Jane and I walked over there yesterday lunchtime, not to go in but just to see where it is. It is not far. We then went and had a look at a statue of Gutenberg too. It’s not in the same square as the museum, but it is not much further.”

Simon speaks. “If we finish early today, shall we all walk over to see where the museum is and go and have a look at the statue so that we can spend more time in the museum tomorrow yet also see the statue.”

“Yes, that’s a good idea.” says John.

“Very well, optional guided tour to have a look.” says Edith.

After lunch.

Jim starts the meeting.

“So, could someone from the researchers and journalists group read out what you have please.”

Edward reads out their section of text.

“Well, very good.” says Jim, “Our group has some text and a photograph with the caption of ‘Participants from manufacturing industry attending the conference.’”

Jane looks indignant.

‘They have been and had a photograph taken, just them, not Edith and her colleagues. They gave most of the lectures!’ thinks Jane.

Jane looks at Edith.

Edith shrugs.

“So,” says Jim “if we can join the two sections together and then make sure it is not too long”

‘What!’ thinks Jane ‘That is probably going to mean that most of our section is going to be omitted, with perhaps just the bit about it being in Mainz.’

Jane looks at Edith.

Edith sort of body languages ‘Let it go, think of the bigger picture.’ to Jane.

Jane body languages back ‘Oh alright.’

The communiqué is issued.

In Mainz, the City of Gutenberg, situated next to the river Rhine in Germany, a conference on localizable sentences has taken place.

The opening lecture was given by the Managing Director of Gigantic Business who said “One of our competitors approached us and mentioned that they had produced a competing product with their own collection of localizable sentences to use the generic term for them though they may well have their own name for their own version and asked if they could include our InterJollies in their product and in return we could include their localizable sentences in our Locomotive device. All this being put as being to help consumers so that messages composed on one brand of device could be received and localized on the other brand of device. Well, we thought about it and, let’s face it, with a product already released and popular we wondered why we should risk giving help to give a competitor’s product market credibility. However, we considered the greater good and decided that it would be in the interests of consumers to agree and so we agreed.”

The second lecture was given by the Managing Director of Large Engineering Business who said “I announce that our device will include, as well as our own original set of localizable sentences the set of localizable sentences known as InterJollies that are in the Locomotive device, by kind permission of Gigantic Business in the interests of interoperability for the benefit of consumers.”, going on to encourage potential competitors to participate in an industry-wide agreement to each recognise the localizable sentences of competitors in the interests of interoperability for the benefit of consumers

There were then lectures by experts in localizable sentences and their applications.

There was general agreement amongst manufacturers to have interoperability of localizable sentences in the interests of consumers.

There is also a photograph with the caption

Participants from manufacturing industry attending the conference.