

Cooperation on French translation of SNOMED CT

Report of Paris kickoff meeting – September 27th, 2018, 10:00 – 17:00

Document history

Version	Date	Author	Actions
V1	28/09/2018	FM	Draft report
V2	03/10/2018	FM	Integration of participants' comments

Attachment: Slides presented during first part of the meeting, delivering highlights of the situation in Switzerland, Belgium & France.

1 Participants

Nom/Name	Organisation	Courrier électronique / email	NRC	Participation
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2 Meeting outcomes

The meeting was hosted by Phast at a venue close to Phast-Service's office, in the center of Paris. It was opened by Franck Gener, chairman of Phast-Services.

2.1 Current state of play of French translations of SNOMED CT

The first part of the meeting inventoried existing translations of SNOMED CT to French language and had the various NRCs around the table share their experiences, tooling, methods and ongoing projects around translation of SNOMED CT.

There are currently 5 French partial translations of SNOMED CT:

- one from the Canada NRC (Health Infoway),
- one from the Belgium NRC,
- the latest release of the French starter set, distributed by SNOMED International, which was produced by Christian Lovis' team at Hôpitaux Universitaires de Genève and supported by the Switzerland NRC (e-health Switzerland).
- one produced by Phast, under its translation agreement signed with SNOMED International end of 2015 with the approval of the ministry of health,
- a small subset produced by Luc Mottin's and Anaïs Mottaz's team for the European cross-border eHealth digital services.

The tools used to carry these translations vary:

- Part of the tooling used by Les Hôpitaux Universitaires de Genève leverages a graph database, which facilitates the onomasiological approach (translation of the machine-readable meaning of concepts represented by the graph of their relationships). The starter set is maintained and released using the *Reference Set and Translation Service* from SNOMED International.
- Phast had started its translation using in-house tools and has now migrated its process to the *Reference Set and Translation Service* from SNOMED International, which also provides the graph of relationships of the concept under translation, thus enabling the onomasiological approach.
- Belgium NRC is working with the *Managed Services* from SNOMED International and also uses the XTM translation tool. Belgium is also producing a Dutch translation in cooperation with the Nederland NRC (Nictiz).
- Other tools mentioned by participants include spreadsheets and various database systems.

Editorial and linguistic guidelines:

The group agreed that translation is not from English to French but from the concept meaning to French. In addition, it is also necessary to base the choice of French terms upon an editorial and linguistic guideline. Phast has set up its editorial and linguistic guideline since 2016, with the help of the Canada NRC, and has maintained it since then. The Belgium NRC is in the process of finalizing a new release of its own editorial and linguistic guideline. Both Phast and Belgium NRC agreed to share their linguistic and editorial guidelines with the group.

Usages:

Luxemburg, Belgium, Switzerland and France use SNOMED CT small value sets selected by the e-health digital services built for Europe cross border care.

Les Hôpitaux de Genève make an intensive usage of SNOMED CT to annotate the content of their medical records while feeding a data warehouse of healthcare data serving multiple usages such as research, surveillance and analytics.

Phast-Services has integrated SNOMED CT to its metathesauri distributed to hospitals and clinics for supporting semantic interoperability of the medication prescription/dispense/administration workflow and the laboratory ordering/testing/reporting workflow. In addition, Phast-Services is translating subsets of SNOMED CT for new players in the French health IT market delivering SNOMED CT enabled solutions for transversal use cases such as telemedicine for instance.

2.2 Topics discussed

The group discussed the articulation between LOINC and SNOMED CT, and the cooperation between the two organizations maintaining these terminologies. The ongoing project of in vitro diagnostic (IVD) device vendors to include LOINC natively into their instruments was also mentioned. This project elicited by US FDA/CDC/ONC/NLM is also supported by IHE PaLM and HL7 International. Switzerland will boost this project by making the usage of LOINC on IVD device interfaces a requirement on the Swiss market.

The discussion on how to combine LOINC and SNOMED CT at the fine grain level within medical records is still open. Although it is somewhat beyond the current scope of this group, it is likely to be touched again alongside this francophone cooperation. This discussion is closely related to the choices of binding of standardized information models or structures to semantic resources.

2.3 Statements & decisions

SNOMED CT core terminology for healthcare:

The group agrees that SNOMED CT is to be used as the core terminology of an ecosystem of terminologies, and code systems, such as LOINC, UCUM, the WHO classifications, European code systems like EDQM standard terms, national regulatory code systems of each country, and some others covering various specialties (e.g. the oncology and pathology scoring & grading systems).

A common French language translation is a valid goal:

The group agrees to build a cooperation with the ultimate goal of producing and maintaining a common French language translation of SNOMED CT, limited to synonyms (the production of French FSN is deemed of no interest). This is likely to raise the need for variations of synonyms for some concepts, across francophone countries as well as across specialties of healthcare providers, and patients. This will also raise the issue of establishing an entity that can endorse the responsibility for this common translation. In all cases the group agrees to move forward step by step on this path.

Potential paths for collaboration:

- Les Hôpitaux de Genève offer to contribute to the semantic validation of the translated term.
- Luxembourg NRC offers to check the acceptability of the terms with the available groups of users (*groupe de travail scientifique et médical*).
- Phast-Services and Belgium NRC plan to pursue their translation effort, and to submit their terms to the group for second level validation.

2.4 Next steps identified by the group

Consolidating editorial and linguistic guidelines

1. Sharing existing editorial and linguistic guidelines. France and Belgium will share within the next couple weeks their guidelines within the group, for comments. Canada is also invited to share their own guideline within the group if they confirm their interest for this cross-NRC cooperation, as we hope.
2. One step further will be for the group to merge the existing guidelines into a consolidated single editorial and linguistic guideline shared across all francophone areas contributing to translation of SNOMED CT to French language.

Identifying a common starting base for French translation

1. Rory Davidson who has access to all translations to French language, proposes to perform a cross comparison based on the concepts appearing in two or more translations, and marking for these concepts, the number of term-matches across translations (zero match, 1 match, 2 matches ...)
2. The review of the output of this comparison will help to identify the starting base for the common French translation. The analysis of the variations will also be helpful to check the relevance of the common editorial and linguistic guideline, and to refine this guideline.