f) Linguistics and classification of texts

In **T 1177/97** the board held that the use of a piece of information in a technical system, or its usability for this purpose, may convey a technical character to the information itself in that it reflects the properties of the technical system, for instance by being specifically formatted and/or processed. Such information when used in or processed by the technical system may be part of a technical solution to a technical problem and form the basis for a technical contribution of the invention to the prior art. Information and methods related to linguistics may thus in principle assume technical character if they are used in a computer system and form part of a technical problem solution.

Methods of text classification per se did not produce a relevant technical effect or provide a technical solution to any technical problem (**T 233/09**, **T 1316/09**, and **T 1358/09**).

In **T 1358/09** claim 1 defined a method for classifying text documents essentially in terms of an abstract mathematical algorithm. The board noted that the classification of text documents was certainly useful, as it could help to locate text documents with a relevant cognitive content, but in the board's view it did not qualify as a technical purpose. Whether two text documents in respect of their textual content belong to the same "class" of documents was not a technical issue. The board noted that the same position was taken in decision **T 1316/09**, which held that methods of text classification per se did not produce a relevant technical effect or provide a technical solution to any technical problem (see also **T 233/09**). In **T 1358/09** the board pointed out that not all efficiency aspects of an algorithm are by definition without relevance for the question of whether the algorithm provides a technical contribution. However, such technical considerations must go beyond merely finding a computer algorithm to carry out some procedure (see **G 3/08**, OJ 2011, 10; see also **T 2418/12**, **T 22/12**). In **T 22/12** too, the board thus decided that the classification of emails as spam was not technical. In **T 2363/16** the board cited **T 22/12** and held that the classification criteria regarding which emails should be blocked were determined by the user of the system based on non-technical considerations regarding which emails the user did not want to receive.

In **T 817/16** the board held that merely assigning a score to a document for a search engine in a memory-efficient manner was not a technical effect even if the score is somehow based on the frequency and the amount of changes made to the document. The appellant suggested that providing good scores improved the search results and therefore reduced the number of search queries, which amounted to a saving of resources. A similar argument was dealt with in decision **T 306/10** in the context of recommendation engines. The board in that case considered that a reduction in the number of search queries and the corresponding saving of resources did not qualify as a technical effect of the (improved) recommendations, as they depended on subjective choices made by the user. It referred to decision **T 1741/08**, where the argument was made that a chain of effects could not be used as evidence of a technical effect if one of the links between the effects was not of a technical nature (but, for example, of a psychological nature).