

## Insights into Soviet MT

*A major conference on machine translation was held in the Georgian town of Tbilisi in the Soviet Union from November 27 to December 1989, and provided a rare opportunity for the handful of Western specialists and observers to meet the leading lights in Soviet MT research.*

The conference began with a series of six scene-setting papers, two by Soviet researchers, one on system approaches (by *A. Vorzhev* and *I. Oubine*), the other on a group of Russian MT sys-

tems (by *B. Tikhomirov*), while the other four papers were by leading Western experts (*Veronica Lawson* on users' needs in machine translation, *Professor Christian Boitet* on software and lingware engineering in modern MT systems, and *John Hutchins*, the world's leading chronicler of MT developments, on what happened to MT in the 1980s) and by *Jun-ichi Tsujii*, who spoke about developments in his native Japan.

The conference then went into a series of sessions and workshops at which something like a total of 150 papers were presented, including information on many of the Soviet projects — still heavily theoretical, it appeared — and on a number of projects not previously widely known, such as the Tamil University machine translation experiment in India, or a system for translating Russian into Georgian. The conference subjects ranged over not only machine translation, but also over

translator work-stations and terminology data banks.

Simultaneous interpreting in Russian and English was available for all the plenary sessions.

The conference was organised by the USSR Translation Centre for Scientific Literature and Documentation and the Georgian Research Institute of Scientific and Technical Research.