

**Pedro A. Fuertes-Olivera (Editor).** *Specialised Dictionaries for Learners*. 2010, IX + 237 pp. ISBN 978-3-11-023132-8 (Hardback). Lexicographica. Series Maior 136. Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter. Price: €99.95.

### Introduction

In learner lexicography, there has been a tradition of focusing on general-language learner's dictionaries, not least the well-known monolingual English learner's dictionaries. However, with the information and knowledge society, increasing attention is now being paid to various types of specialised dictionaries, including specialised dictionaries for learners. Many (language) learners need assistance from dictionaries not just to cope with situations that involve use of everyday language; very often, they have a need for dictionary assistance for coping with problems in the process of learning a specific LSP or a specific subject field. It is therefore essential that pedagogical LSP lexicography be promoted to a status that equals the more traditional lexicographic disciplines. This volume of articles is a major contribution to that endeavour.

### Purpose of the book

*Specialised Dictionaries for Learners* is meant as a Festschrift for Enrique Alcaraz Varó, a Spanish linguist, translator and lexicographer, who died in 2008. As stated by the editor in the preface, the purpose of the book is firstly "[to defend] a *function-based transformative approach* centred on the dictionary and the users, investigating which lexicographical theories and principles are best suited for learners such as those enrolled on LSP courses and/or Translation degrees" (p. 2). Secondly, it "honours Enrique Alcaraz's pioneering visions and daily activities as a teacher, translator of specialised texts, and lexicographer" (p. 2). Later the editor adds that "the organization [of the book] adds to the unity of purpose of the book: to open up new lines of research in terms of the construction of pedagogically-oriented specialised dictionaries" (p. 2).

### Contents of the book

The main sections of the book are eleven chapters dealing with aspects of pedagogical specialised lexicography. Part 1 (with 5 chapters) is devoted to the contribution of function theory to the development of specialised dictionaries for learners, Part 2 (with 4 chapters) deals with the contribution of linguistics to the development of specialised dictionaries for learners, and Part 3 (with 2 chapters) deals with future challenges for specialised learner's lexicography. The other sections of the book include a preface by the editor, a tribute to Prof.

Alcaraz written by Eva Samaniego Fernández, a selected bibliography of works by Prof. Alcaraz, an introduction by the editor describing the research presented in the individual chapters, a bibliography, notes on contributors, a name index and a subject index.

## Chapter 1

### Henning Bergenholtz / Sven Tarp: LSP Lexicography or Terminography? The Lexicographer's Point of View

Bergenholtz and Tarp start out by refuting the often-heard claim that terminographers and lexicographers are engaged in different types of tasks. The claim is that terminographers produce tools which are based (among others) on a systematic macrostructure, describe LSP terms, and are designed for text production, whereas lexicographers produce tools which are based (among others) on an alphabetical macrostructure, describe general-language words, and are designed for text reception and translation. According to Bergenholtz and Tarp, nothing could be further from the truth, since both those who call themselves terminographers and those who call themselves lexicographers are engaged in producing utility tools to satisfy specific lexicographically relevant needs of specific users in specific types of social situations.

To support their claims, Bergenholtz and Tarp first take the user situation of translation as an example. The translation process is complex and requires both cognitive and communicative skills of those who may become dictionary users in the translation process. For example, translators often need some basic knowledge of the specialised field related to the text to be translated. To cater to such a need, specialised dictionaries can be provided with a systematic introduction to the field in question, as is the case in for example the two dictionaries *English Gene Technology Dictionary* and *Spanish Gene Technology Dictionary*.

Bergenholtz and Tarp then take the user situation of reception as their second example. In this context, the authors argue that different types of users need different types of encyclopaedic information about entries. In this connection, users are divided into laypeople, semi-experts and experts. This is again illustrated with examples from the two above-mentioned dictionaries, with entries designed for laypeople on the one and semi-experts on the other hand, whereas experts will be unlikely to consult a lexicographical dictionary in a receptive user situation.

Although none of this, including the refutation of the false distinction between terminography and lexicography, is really new, the chapter provides a good overview of the central claims of the modern theory of lexicographical functions.

## Chapter 2

### **Sven Tarp: Functions of Specialised Learners' Dictionaries**

The purpose of Tarp's contribution is to present and discuss the possible functions of specialised learners' dictionaries "with the aim of presenting ideas for developing specialised learners' dictionaries of a new type, designed to assist users in both the learning of practical skills and the acquisition of knowledge about a specific subject field" (p. 39).

First, however, Tarp finds it necessary to define a learners' dictionary which is "a dictionary compiled with the genuine purpose of assisting learners in an on-going learning process" (p. 40).

Tarp then makes a very important distinction between two types of learning, although there are important relationships between them: learning a skill (either a communicative/linguistic skill or a practical skill) and acquiring knowledge. For example, consulting the data of a dictionary in order to improve one's communicative skills in a foreign language may add to one's knowledge of that particular foreign language. Similarly, practical skills can be improved either indirectly by consulting lexicographical tools that will transmit knowledge about a given subject field, or directly by consulting lexicographical tools that provide information which can be used to solve specific problems.

With respect to cognitive user situations, Tarp argues for two things: text books should be planned in such a way that they can satisfy not only global information needs but also punctual information needs, and dictionaries (perhaps specialised dictionaries in particular) should be arranged in such a way that they give a systematic overview of or introduction to a specific subject field.

More than giving concrete and detailed recommendations for the structure and contents of "specialised learners' dictionaries of a new type, designed to assist users in both the learning of practical skills and the acquisition of knowledge about a specific subject field", Tarp's (rather abstract) contribution is more a scene-setter for discussions of the practical achievements of these goals.

## Chapter 3

### **Rufus H. Gouws: The Monolingual Specialised Dictionary for Learners**

Gouws's contribution starts by pointing to an essential aspect of the concept of 'learner' in the context of specialised dictionaries for learners, namely that 'learner' can be understood in two ways: as "learner of the language in which the dictionary is presented or learner of the subject field treated in the dictionary" (p. 56). This is a very important distinction to have in mind when planning specialised dictionaries for learners, and Gouws gives examples of dictionaries which have successfully taken account of this distinction.

Using this distinction, it is also possible to "classify" both of these two types of learners, language learners into beginners, intermediate and advanced, and subject field learners into laypeople, semi-experts and experts.

The rest of the chapter is devoted to a thorough discussion of a large number of structural parameters, which, if carefully considered in the dictionary planning process, will "ensure successful dictionary consultation procedures by enhancing the access to the desired data and ensuring an optimal retrieval of information by the intended target user" (p. 60).

The structures discussed include the data distribution structure, access structures, the microstructure, definitions and data on grammar, although specialised dictionaries, including those for learners, will usually exclude grammatical data since their functions are normally receptive and cognitive.

Gouws's contribution also includes a discussion of types of specialised monolingual dictionaries for learners (single-field, multi-field and subfield) and suggestions for the structural planning of (normally multi-field) dictionaries that could be integrated with other learning material into a study package.

As can be seen, Gouws's treatment of the requirements for the optimal specialised dictionary for learners is quite comprehensive, and, although practical examples of the recommendations offered are scarce (or actually non-existent), planners of such dictionaries will find here invaluable guidance to their decision-making processes.

## Chapter 4

### **Sandro Nielsen: Specialised Translation Dictionaries for Learners**

As the title of his contribution indicates, Nielsen deals with specialised translation dictionaries for learners. In LSP translation, focus has traditionally been on terms and terminology, but noting with Laurén (1993: 99-100) that "terms generally make up less than 20 percent of any LSP text", Nielsen calls for increased attention to the translation of what he describes as domain-specific syntactic structures and genre conventions. His main contention is that specialised translation dictionaries for learners "should be augmented reference tools" (p. 69) by incorporating data on language- and domain-specific syntactic structures and genre conventions.

He has to admit, however, that incorporating such data into multi-field specialised dictionaries would result in a much less thorough treatment of relevant syntactic and genre-related LSP phenomena, than what would be possible in a single-field specialised dictionary.

Nielsen gives a few examples of these LSP phenomena. For syntax, his illustration is the structure of a particular noun phrase found for example in legal genres in Danish and German, but structurally impossible in, for example, English and French. The ideal "augmented reference tool" would contain an

integrated outside matter section on all such language- and genre-specific syntactic structures.

There is no doubt that the users of Nielsen's augmented reference tool need such syntactic and genre-related data. However, there are no suggestions in Nielsen's contribution as to how these syntactic structures and genre conventions could be identified and presented. All that we are given is an index for such a section on p. 80.

## Chapter 5

### Ildikó Fata: The Bilingual Specialised Translation Dictionary for Learners

Fata's contribution first outlines the metalexicographical basis for the planning and production of the ideal specialised LSP dictionary for translation purposes. Noting that this requires an interdisciplinary approach based on a discussion of the translation process (as outlined in Tarp 2007), Fata concludes that if a translation-oriented specialised dictionary is to be of assistance in the translation process, it must "combine knowledge of specialised language and knowledge of the system, and convey structured knowledge of the given domain, in this way helping the translator through the various phases of translation" (p. 88).

Fata then proceeds to a discussion of the place of the bilingual specialised dictionary in a typology of translation auxiliary materials (based on Nord 2002), noting that everybody seems to agree that existing bilingual LSP dictionaries are not suitable for translation purposes, since they generally ignore such relevant features as text, situation and culture.

Fata further lists (in quite some detail) the types of information needed in the ideal specialised dictionary for translation purposes. Here some exemplification might have been in place.

The final section of Fata's contribution is a project report on a translation-oriented bilingual LSP dictionary of *pension insurance*, the *Magyar–német, német–magyar nyugdíjbiztosítási szakszótár*. Noting first that the dictionary is intended for a very wide range of user groups (from Hungarian and German translators and interpreters to students of translating and interpreting as well as pension experts, social politicians, interested laypeople and future pensioners) with widely differing levels of professional knowledge on the one hand and linguistic knowledge on the other, Fata then lists the types of user situations (however, specifying under knowledge-oriented and operational-oriented user situations not user situations, but data types), concluding with a discussion of the pedagogical dimension of the dictionary.

Notwithstanding a few misunderstandings of aspects of the functional theory of lexicography, Fata seems to have conceived a dictionary solidly based on the theoretical framework of that theory.

## Chapter 6

### **Aquilino Sánchez: The Treatment of Cultural and/or Encyclopaedic Items in Specialised Dictionaries for Learners**

Sánchez notes: "Dictionaries [...] have rarely paid direct attention to the cultural dimension of words. The emphasis has been on the linguistic component disregarding the potential of cultural features for a more complete understanding of the language" (p. 111). Therefore he first emphasises the importance of including cultural elements in various types of dictionaries, including specialised bilingual dictionaries. He then provides a large number of examples where dictionaries will present the dictionary user with a full understanding of the entry word by including, in some way or another, a note explaining the cultural dimension(s) of the entry word in the individual dictionary articles.

This would apply not only to monolingual learner's dictionaries, but more importantly to bilingual dictionaries, since terms in two different languages are often part of differently structured semantic fields. A bilingual Inuit-English dictionary, for example, would not serve the needs of its users, if, for the many terms of *snow* in Inuit, it gave only the equivalent *snow* for all of them. This would not capture the fact that each individual term carries a unique extended meaning, specifying what kind of snow is covered by the term.

It is possible to find single instances of dictionaries trying to accomplish this, for example the *Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture*, where we are told for example about the adjective *fat* that "in Britain and the US it is not considered attractive to be fat, and many people, esp. women, worry that they are too fat and try to lose weight". However, the very format for these cultural notes, a note attached as "an extra bonus" to the strictly linguistic definition, may have the consequence of reinforcing the perception that language and culture are two separate things.

When it comes to specialised lexicography, Sánchez stresses the need for inclusion of the cultural dimension of entry words and asserts that "specialised dictionaries have been more sensitive than general purpose dictionaries in the inclusion of cultural features as a necessary ingredient for grasping the meaning of the words" (p. 127).

However, Sánchez has to conclude that there have been few analyses and proposals in this area, and he himself offers very few, if any, concrete recommendations for the way in which cultural dimensions can be incorporated into any type of dictionary, for example regarding the format for such features.

## Chapter 7

### **Geart van der Meer: The Treatment of Figurative Meaning in Specialised Dictionaries for Learners**

Van der Meer investigates the feasibility of making users of specialised

learner's dictionaries aware of the link between the metaphorical use(s) and the literal use of a given word, claiming that this will give the dictionary user an understanding, comparable to that of a native speaker, of the full meaning of the word.

Examples taken mainly from the *Oxford Dictionary of Business English for Learners of English* demonstrate that no special effort has been made to link metaphorical use(s) of words to the literal use. In *Harrap's Dictionary of Business and Finance*, there are however occasional attempts to indicate such links implicitly as in the following definition of the metaphorical use of *bubble* where there are implicit links to the literal sense in the form of the verbs 'bursts' and 'exploded':

Industry or trend with no substance to it. A bubble usually bursts with more-or-less disastrous consequences for those financially involved. Probably the most famous bubble was the South Sea Bubble which exploded in 1720.

If a dictionary entry for the metaphorical sense of *bubble* should include an explicit link to the literal sense, van der Meer would formulate it as follows:

Industry or trend like buying shares that is like a real bubble (made of soap and water) in that it has no substance and is of short duration; like real bubbles, such bubbles are also said to *explode* or *burst*.

According to van der Meer, however, explicit links to literal senses in definitions of metaphorical senses would require rather much space and would also change the dictionary's character of being a specialised dictionary. He therefore recommends that specialised learner's dictionaries employ "sense definitions using a vocabulary (e.g. collocations) that at least strongly hints at the field of discourse from which the metaphor was originally taken" (p. 139). This also means that in cases where the literal sense of the word is not used or where the origin of the metaphorical sense is rather vague, the metaphorical sense will have to remain unexplained, a solution which the author finds unsatisfactory.

## Chapter 8

### **Marie-Claude L'Homme: Designing Terminological Dictionaries for Learners Based on Lexical Semantics: The Representation of Actants**

L'Homme reports on a project designed to transform a terminological database containing French terms relating to computing and the Internet into a specialised learner's dictionary.

L'Homme first notes that specialised dictionaries (including specialised dictionaries for learners) have focused on conceptual and encyclopaedic information, neglecting users' needs for data on the function of terms as linguistic units. Users need such data in order to solve for example communicative

problems in connection with (foreign) language production, (foreign) language reception, translation, etc.

In her contribution, L'Homme deals specifically with how to handle and represent actants (or arguments) mainly of verbs, adjectives and (deverbal) nouns "in a more user-friendly version" (p. 142) than the database.

L'Homme's terminological database, called DiConInfo, represents actants in a variety of forms, including actantial roles, which are not judged to be transparent to users of a learner's dictionary. L'Homme's suggestion for the specialised learner's dictionary, based on the DiConInfo database, is that actantial (or semantic) roles be supplemented with typical terms, instantiating the actants. For the verb *cliquer* (Eng. to click), it would mean that the semantic roles of Agent, Patient and Instrument are supplemented with typical terms for these actants, thus (p. 151):

CLIQUER 1, v.tr.

Structure actancielle: cliquer : **Agent** {utilisateur 1} ~ sur **Patient** {icône 1, fichier 1} avec **Instrument** {souris 1}

L'Homme's suggestions are very useful not only of course for the transformation of the DiConInfo database into a functionally adequate specialised learner's dictionary. It may also serve as a model for projects involving the transformation of functionally and user-type restricted databases of similar kinds to make them accessible to a wider user group with specific needs.

## Chapter 9

### Lynne Bowker: The Contribution of Corpus Linguistics to the Development of Specialised Dictionaries for Learners

Bowker's contribution starts out with an overview of a number of central lexicographical concepts such as specialised dictionary, learner's dictionary and specialised dictionary for learners in order to pave the way for a discussion of the contribution that corpus-based approaches have made to pedagogical lexicography in general and specialised lexicography in particular. This overview is very useful, because "these concepts do not necessarily mean the same thing to all people" (p. 155). In the discussion of specialised dictionaries for learners, Bowker mentions the hybrid learner's dictionaries, which combine data on general-language words and specialised terms.

Bowker then embarks on a thorough discussion of the contribution of corpus-based lexicography to learner's dictionaries. One fundamental aspect that receives special attention is the information about frequency that can be derived from a corpus-based approach, and which can be turned to good use in the structure of the dictionary, both at macro- and micro-level. Bowker mentions for example that the frequency data can be of assistance in the selection of lexical items to be included as headwords. More specifically, she claims that

"learners are typically interested in finding out about the words and phrases that are in common use, rather than those which are rare or obscure" (p. 163). Bowker also claims that frequency data can assist the lexicographer in deciding the order of meanings in cases where a lexical item has multiple meanings. The claim is here that "the majority of learners will typically be seeking information about the most common meaning of a word, so these meanings can be listed in an order based on frequency of occurrence in the corpus, with the most frequent meaning coming first" (p. 164).

In this reviewer's opinion, these claims can be questioned. It may be true that users of learner's dictionaries may more often seek data about the most frequent words and the most frequent meanings of words in situations involving language production, but when it comes to language reception, it may be argued that users (at least advanced users) will more often seek data about the less frequent words and less frequent meanings of words.

On the whole, however, the section provides us with very convincing arguments for relying on corpus-based approaches to lexicography in general and to learner's lexicography in particular.

Bowker ends with a discussion of the potential of a corpus-based approach for enhancing specialised dictionaries for learners, emphasising that compilers of such dictionaries can benefit from the insights gained in the use of corpora in compiling general-language learner's dictionaries.

## Chapter 10

### **Zhang Yihua/Guo Qiping: An Ideal Specialised Lexicography for Learners in China Based on English-Chinese Specialised Dictionaries**

Zhang and Guo start by noting a great need in China for bilingual specialised dictionaries for learners, since existing dictionaries of this kind cater only for the needs of professionals.

The authors have undertaken a study to investigate whether existing English-Chinese specialised dictionaries satisfy the needs of students who either attend compulsory courses in English for their specialty or who attend specialised courses taught in English. The results show that there is indeed a need for English-Chinese specialised learner's dictionaries that include data on matters such as pronunciation, examples, grammatical patterns, etc., all data types that are prominent in general learner's dictionaries.

Zhang and Guo outline a number of requirements for aspects of the ideal English-Chinese LSP dictionary using first a discussion of distinguishing features between on the one hand specialised learner's dictionaries and specialised general dictionaries and between on the other hand specialised learner's dictionaries and general learner's dictionaries, and then a discussion of communicative and cognitive functions and structural features (megastructure, microstructure, data distribution structure and access structure).

To begin with, they outline three so-called definition principles: the multi-dimensional definition principle, based on the findings of cognitive semantics and requiring definitions to accurately represent their cognitive domain; the holistic definition principle, based on the findings of Frame Semantics and recognising that words are not isolated linguistic units, but rather systematically related, which should be reflected in their definitions; and finally the pertinence principle, stating that definitions should be written in conformity with the corresponding academic field. Much of this is based on linguistic-semantic theories and is not related to any reflections on actual user needs in this respect.

In the concluding section on translation strategies of culture-bound words, Zhang and Guo come up with what seem to be very valuable recommendations concerning cases where Chinese lacks an equivalent for a specific English term. Their recommended solution is to use various types of calque translations (semantic, morphological, and phonological plus combinations of these) although this would involve the lexicographer in the invention of new terms.

## Chapter 11

### **Pedro A. Fuertes-Olivera: Lexicography for The Third Millennium: Free Institutional Internet Terminological Dictionaries for Learners**

After an introduction giving a brief discussion of the present state of lexicography (and its relationship with terminology), Fuertes-Olivera reviews approaches to typologies for electronic dictionaries. De Schryver's three-step typology (De Schryver 2003) is supplemented with three further criteria: Who has compiled the dictionary? Is it free or accessible through subscription? For whom has the dictionary been compiled?, which leads Fuertes-Olivera to propose a distinction between two main types of Internet dictionaries (with subtypes): (a) institutional Internet reference works and (b) collective free multiple-language Internet reference works. Disregarding the latter, he further subclassifies the former into restricted institutional Internet dictionaries and free institutional Internet reference works, which are the ones focused on in the remainder of Fuertes-Olivera's contribution.

Using an analysis and criticism of the quality of a number of such reference works, Fuertes-Olivera makes a number of proposals for the construction of pedagogically-oriented, free institutional Internet terminological dictionaries. The central question the author deals with is "how we can reconcile theoretical demands related to different users and their specific needs in different social situations with the reality of free institutional Internet terminological dictionaries which have usually been compiled for all users, regardless of their needs and use situations" (p. 202).

The proposals fall into two classes: lexicographical requirements and Internet requirements. The lexicographical requirements deal with issues such

as lemma selection, indications of meaning, semantic relationships, grammatical information and access structure, whereas the Internet requirements deal with issues such as visibility, placement of search field, readability of articles, instant results, reduction in the number of results, etc. (based on Almind 2005).

All these requirements seem quite logical. However, they are characterised by Fuertes-Olivera as obligatory requirements. It is an open question whether they should apply in their entirety to each and every Internet reference work, or whether there is the possibility that they can be applied selectively according to the function, target user group, etc. of the individual reference work.

## Conclusion

As a lexicographical discipline in its own right, specialised learner's lexicography is still in its infancy, and very few specialised lexicographical tools for learners have been produced so far. However, *Specialised Dictionaries for Learners* is a major contribution to the establishment of a theoretical foundation for this relatively new lexicographical discipline. As observed already, very few of the contributions offer much in the way of practical recommendations for the compilation of specialised lexicographical tools for learners, but this collection of articles certainly not only paves the way for continued theoretical discussions within the discipline, but also lays a strong theoretical basis for more practically-oriented endeavours to produce tools for those who may seek lexicographical assistance in cognitive, communicative or operational situations involving specialised language.

## Bibliography

### Dictionaries

- English Gene Technology Dictionary* = Kaufmann, Uwe and Henning Bergenholtz (Eds.) in cooperation with B. Stummann, S. Tarp, L. de la Rosa Marabet, G. la Serna Miranda, and N. la Serna Torres. 1998. *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Gene Technology. Volume 1. English (with Spanish Equivalents)*. Toronto: Lugus Libros LatinAmerica Inc.
- Harrap's Dictionary of Business and Finance* = *Harrap's Dictionary of Business and Finance*. 1988. London: Harrap's Reference.
- Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture* = *Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture*. 1992. London: Longman.
- Magyar-német, német-magyar nyugdíjbiztosítási szakszótár* = Fata, Ildikó. 2005. *Magyar-német, német-magyar nyugdíjbiztosítási szakszótár*. Szeged: Grimm.
- Oxford Dictionary of Business English for Learners of English* = Tuck, Allene (Ed.). 1993. *Oxford Dictionary of Business English for Learners of English*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Spanish Gene Technology Dictionary* = Kaufmann, Uwe and Henning Bergenholtz (Eds.). 1998. *Diccionario Enciclopédico de Ingeniería Genética. Español (con equivalentes in inglés)*. Toronto: Lugus Libros LatinAmerica Inc.

### Other literature

- Almind, Richard.** 2005. Designing Internet Dictionaries. *Hermes, Journal of Linguistics*: 34: 37-54.
- De Schryver, Gilles-Maurice.** 2003. Lexicographers' Dreams in the Electronic-Dictionary Age. *International Journal of Lexicography* 16(2): 143-199.
- Laurén, Christer.** 1993. *Fackspråk. Form, innehåll, function*. Lund: Studenterlitteratur.
- Nord, Britta.** 2002. *Hilfsmittel beim Übersetzen: Eine empirische Studie zum Rechercheverhalten professioneller Übersetzer* (FASK/Johannes-Gutenberg-Universität: Reihe A, Abhandlungen und Sammelbände 32). Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- Tarp, Sven.** 2007. Qué requisito debe cumplir un diccionario de traducción del siglo XXI? Fuertes Olivera, Pedro A. (Ed.). 2007. *Problemas lingüísticos en la Traducción Especializada*: 227-256. Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid.

Birger Andersen  
Centre for Lexicography  
Department of Business Communication  
School of Business and Social Sciences  
Aarhus University, Aarhus  
Denmark  
(ba@asb.dk)