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Introduction

Reinhard Hartmann cautions in the Postscript against the incorrect notion "that lexicography is a uniform discipline with a Eurocentric base". He refers to the "venerable cultural traditions" of Asia, and draws attention to the vitality and diversity of lexicography in Asia. In view of this richness and diversity, co-editor Ilan Kernerman adds in the Preface that "the present selection is far from encompassing the vast potential implied by its name, and a great many related linguistic, geographical and historical aspects are not represented". The foregoing indicates the vast areas to be covered as well as the promising potential of developing Asian lexicography in all its facets, which in turn would enrich lexicography globally.

The Contents of *Lexicography in Asia*

This publication contains selected scholarly papers on Asian lexicography mostly presented at conferences and symposiums. Nine of the papers were read at the Dictionaries in Asia Conference, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, 26-29 March 1997, and two papers were presented at the Language Study and the Thesaurus in the World Symposium, National Language Research Institute, Tokyo, 29 August 1997. One paper, by Shigeru Yamada and Yuri Komuro, was published in *Kernerman Dictionary News* (No. 6, July 1998, Tel Aviv: Password). Co-editor Tom McArthur wrote an illuminating Introduction.

In the Introduction "Asian Lexicography: Past, Present and Prospective" McArthur, who attended both the Hong Kong conference (alphabetic lexicography) and the Tokyo symposium (thematic lexicography), emphasises the value of these gatherings for successfully bringing together lexicographers from all parts of Asia, even though they may be few in number. He refers to the culture, history and geography of Asia, as well as the omnipresence of English, in order to decide on a name for the book. English flourishes in various capacities in Asia. Nevertheless, Bahasa Indonesia, Hindi, Sanskrit, Persian, Malay, Arabic, Classical Chinese and Mandarin Chinese do have their regional and national roles to play. While accepting the description *Lexicography in Asia* as the most useful, McArthur expresses the hope that lexicography would be embraced by all scholars as a global endeavour, placing it in a "geographically wider and chronologically deeper frame of reference".

In the first paper, "Traditionality and Creativity in Lexicography", Lu Gusun of the People's Republic of China characterises lexicography as hard,

empirical work, very different from the theoretical nature of linguistics. He elaborates this view by referring to lexicography as "microcosmic drudgery", which is not conducive or receptive to "theorising". He further states that computers are not yet able to dispense with the human element in lexicography — editors who do the abstract work must still lead the project of dictionary making. Gusun furthermore reflects on occasions for creativity in the field of lexicography in a move away from the traditionally conservative nature of the art, particularly with the evolution of neologisms. He avers that these neologisms are often noticed by people from afar — via "alien sensitivity". He describes traditionality and creativity as complementary factors in the making of a lexicographer.

Sangsup Lee of Korea describes the Korean dictionary in the next paper, "Corpus Linguistics and Dictionary Making in Korea". The Yonsei Corpus of Contemporary Korean, a project for the development of a "usable" dictionary of Korean, was started by Lee at Yonsei University. A corpus of three million words was developed. A survey of the reading habits of Koreans and the frequency of a university library's lending of individual books was carried out. In this way the Yonsei Corpus was able to collect much new information on the Korean language. When the Yonsei Corpus reached 30 million words in 1993, a monolingual learner's dictionary of contemporary Korean was started. Whilst this is a long-term project, smaller dictionaries and other tools for language information have been produced. Bilingual dictionaries have long been known to Koreans. Monolingual dictionaries which would serve a purpose different from the "Linguistic matchmaking" of the bilingual versions, began to emerge in the 19th century. A learner's monolingual dictionary for learning a living language would assist 5 million Koreans living abroad as well as foreigners and 70 million in Korea.

In the next paper, Arvind Kumar of India expounds "The Societal Contexts of Sanskrit, English and Hindi Thesauruses, and the Multilingual Possibilities of the Computer Age". Kumar notes that the first thesaurus was the Vedic *Nighantu* — a glossary of Vedic Sanskrit words listed by subject. The much later (circa 6-7 century) *Amar Kosh* (8 000 words) achieved fame as a thesaurus soon after its composition. Roget (of Roget's *Thesaurus*) acknowledges it in his introduction. The *Amar Kosh* is organized according to subject. It consists of three cantos altogether. The title of the first chapter of each canto indicates the subject matter, e.g. in canto 1 **Heaven** is followed by **Sky, Directions, Time**, etc. When Kumar and his wife Kusum embarked on a Hindi thesaurus (the *Samantar Kosh*), following Roget's *Thesaurus*, they realised that differences in religio-cultural beliefs and concepts would create problems of classification. The *Amar Kosh* was outdated in the changed historical-social contexts. This necessitated the adoption of an original method whereby one idea would lead to the next by association or juxtaposition. Already having started on a bilingual Hindi-English thesaurus, Kumar proposes the exciting concept of a "world

thesaurus". With the increasing capacity of computers, he sees infinite possibilities in this area.

Li Lan of the People's Republic of China analyses the results of a questionnaire and translation test at a science and technology university in his paper "Dictionaries and their Users at Chinese Universities: With Special Reference to ESP Learners". Users' opinions and their interactions with dictionaries are assessed in the scope of contrastive linguistics between English and Chinese. Lan reports that Chinese dictionary training is integrated into the learning process in China. However, the same is not true for English-Chinese bilingual dictionaries. Lan believes that it would be useful if the skills learned for the use of the monolingual Chinese dictionary could be applied to the use of monolingual and bilingual English dictionaries. Lan's research (questionnaire and test) showed high levels of dictionary ownership — English-Chinese bilingual dictionaries being in the lead with every student owning one. The survey showed that the 801 respondents used a dictionary 15,28 times on average per month. Students majoring in international business used the dictionary most frequently. Looking up meanings, spelling, pronunciation and etymology are the reasons for consulting a dictionary. Chinese students have no difficulty in locating the words in the dictionary: their problem is determining the correct meaning from the many meanings provided. Lan therefore proposes that dictionaries for ESP learners should be tools for language learning and language databases.

Jacqueline Lam Kam-mei of Hong Kong presented the next paper "A Corpus-Based Subject-Specific Glossary for Computer Science Related Texts". It deals with semi-technical vocabulary in Computer Science together with the problems this causes for ESP learners, concluding with the view that a glossary of semi-technical vocabulary is more effective for understanding Computer Science related literature than a conventional dictionary. Kam-mei uses the terminology "semi-technical" to characterise words that are sometimes general, sometimes technical in meaning, depending on the context. An experiment was carried out with 120 students of Hong Kong University of Science and Technology to determine whether the use of metaphor, linguistic variation in the form of lexical modification and the manipulation of verbal humour and informality affected the comprehension of Computer Science texts (in English amongst students of a predominantly Chinese-speaking background). The tests demonstrated that "semi-technical" vocabulary is semantically distinct from the same vocabulary when it appears in general texts. A shortcoming in this respect, with regard to a growing field, is the lack of English dictionaries designed for this purpose. She therefore advocates the compiling of glossaries to aid students.

In "Interacting with the Users: Research Findings in EFL Dictionary User Studies", Yukio Tono of Japan throws light on dictionary use, particularly in respect of L2 lexicography. With the spread of English learning and teaching, a much needed shift in approach on the part of dictionary publishers was per-

ceived — from the publisher's to the user's perspective of dictionary use. There is much competition in the large Japanese market for EFL dictionaries. However, these dictionaries do not serve the purpose of the users and there is need to restructure dictionaries on the basis of empirical data elicited from users. Tono discusses the research in dictionary user studies, viz. needs and skills analysis, dictionary use and performance in speaking, listening, reading and writing, teaching dictionary skills, etc. Tono advises that more empirical studies of dictionary use is required. Sharing of information among researchers, through websites etc., is encouraged.

The next paper takes us to another globally important East Asian language — Malay. Noor Ida Ramli expresses her thoughts "Towards an Active Dictionary for Writing Academic Essays" (on Economics). Ramli is of the view that there is no "universal" dictionary, and that a dictionary for Malay students capable of assisting them with writing essays in economics is now necessary. Students' essays were examined to identify their difficulties in writing. Students revealed difficulties with linguistic aspects viz. grammar, vocabulary, spelling, idiomatic expressions, etc. Finally students were not satisfied with existing reference works, including guidelines and models indicating what is expected from students.

Soekemi, the writer of the next paper, "Indonesian Dictionaries and How Students Use Them", informs us that the Indonesian national language — Bahasa Indonesia — is gradually taking the lead, displacing the first language of speakers of Javanese, Balinese, Ambonese, etc. (450 languages amongst 200 million Indonesians). English is a foreign language taught in most schools. Dictionaries written in Indonesia in the colonial period were bilingual or multilingual, compiled by foreigners. The tremendous activity in promoting the national Indonesian language after 1945 saw the emergence of dictionaries amongst other forms of literature. General monolingual and bilingual Indonesian dictionaries have been written, including some in the USA, Russia and China. The monolingual dictionary KBBI (*Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*) with 62 000 entries, was published in 1988. It is considered a standard dictionary in Indonesia. There is only one bilingualised dictionary in Indonesia, the *Password English Dictionary for Speakers of Bahasa Indonesia* (PEDSBI), which, published in 1993, has not yet reached the majority of students and teachers. He concludes that since a bilingualised dictionary is an effective means of vocabulary building, various types of bilingualised dictionaries should be published for English learners at different levels.

The next paper by Ahmad Taherian of Iran discusses "Lexicography and Lexicocomputing in the Persian Language". Whilst lexicocomputing and computational text processing has been in progress in the Persian (Farsi) language for 25 years, a plan for compiling a dictionary for the Persian language using the latest electronic methods is now being implemented. A database of Persian words is already available and is being used to create new words and equivalents for borrowed words. This is to be found in the Farsi Linguistic Database

(FLDB). Another important resource is the *Lexicon of Linguistics*. The dictionary of the Persian language is an ambitious project, and will include Persian texts since the 7th century. The FLDB will be used for this process. All varieties of the language and all dictionaries written hitherto will be put into the database. A general dictionary of the Persian language would be produced, suitable for use by people with at least secondary education.

Shigeru Yamada and Yuri Komuro of Japan were responsible for the paper "English Lexicography in Japan: Its History, Innovations, and Impact". Japan is a leading country in the field of lexicography and has contributed to the world's output of bilingual lexicography. In 1862 the first English-Japanese dictionary saw light. Then in 1915 Saito's *Idiomological English-Japanese Dictionary* for Japanese students was published. It laid emphasis on idiomatic expressions and provided notes on difficult points. Many other major dictionaries were published in Japan. However, it was in 1942 that Kaitakusha published the *Idiomatic and Syntactic English Dictionary*, compiled by Hornby, Gatenby and Wakefield in Japan. The English-Japanese Learner's Dictionaries (EJLD) contain detailed information of use to Japanese learners. Some innovations such as the indication of frequent or important words, usage notes, verb patterns etc. enhance the value of the EJLDs.

Co-editor Ilan Kernerman's paper is titled "New Dictionary Needs of Young Learners of English in Asia". Previous papers have already given some indications of needs in Japan, Indonesia, and Malaysia. Kernerman's sights are on a printed dictionary suitable to our age and its target group of users. Dictionaries shall not remain passive reference books, but must become potentially active learning tools.

The last paper included in this publication, "A Radical Change of Direction: English Lexicography in the Fifteenth Century", was presented by Reiko Takeda of Japan. Apart from the fact that the early English dictionaries were valuable forerunners of the modern dictionaries, the paper does not add much to the theme of lexicography in Asia.

Conclusion/Recommendation

The learned, insightful and informative papers constituting this publication are of interest to any language teacher and lexicographer. The editors are language teachers and lexicographers of considerable experience and have rendered a service to their colleagues with their publication. Asia is a vast continent, even if one ignores the Russian part. Its varieties of languages, orthographies, cultures and socio-political life styles are reflected through their literary outputs in their own languages. Moreover, their interaction with the global community has to be through the medium of English. The papers in this compilation reflect some of their concerns and achievements, and point towards the greater tasks ahead. Much can be imbibed by other regions of the world from the Asian experiences.

Whilst I am certain that this publication would appeal to any serious language teacher (at least at tertiary level), it is most certainly an invaluable addition to the lexicologist's or lexicographer's library.

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