

**Henri Béjoint.** *Modern Lexicography: An Introduction.* 2000, xii + 276 pp. ISBN 0 19 829951 6. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

This book is a paperback reprint of *Tradition and Innovation in Modern English Dictionaries*, first published 1994, under a new title, *Modern Lexicography: An Introduction*.

It contains an update of the 1994 references, but no new material was added to the main text of this paperback edition. The almost ten years that have elapsed since the first edition, is very briefly covered in the "Preface to the Paperback Edition". A paragraph each is devoted to the following topics: the continuation of traditional practices in the design of new general-purpose dictionaries which were published within this period, the increasingly central role of the computer in dictionary work, and the negative effects computerization is having on lexicography as "industry".

Why the change in title? The author hints at an explanation in the "Preface to the Paperback Edition": Although the old title (*Tradition and Innovation in Modern English Dictionaries*) aptly captures some aspects of the content of the book (a sociolexicography of dictionaries in English-speaking societies), the new title captures in a more suitable way what the book has been used for these last ten years: as a general introduction to lexicography for students and young lexicographers.

The switch in title, I would suggest, could also be seen merely as a switch in focus on different aspects of the existing content of the book: from the language-specific parts (a sociolexicography of dictionaries in English-speaking societies) to those parts focusing on general metalexicographical issues.

One of the strong points of this book has precisely been the fact that the whole, including the presentation of the language-specific data, has a very strong metalexicographically guided conceptualization and structure. For example, various aspects of the general-purpose English dictionary as well as data on dictionaries are set against or analysed in terms of general definitions (e.g. definitions of *dictionary*; cf. Chapter 1), a general dictionary typology (cf. Chapter 1), the (general) functions of the general-purpose dictionary (cf. Chapter 4), and the study of the (general) reference needs and skills of the dictionary user. Each of these topics is well covered from a theoretical perspective, relevant research is discussed, and, where applicable, illustrated.

The outsider (French) perspective, user-friendly writing style, and presentation have made it a very usable textbook.

I do, however, have serious reservations about the way in which "innovations" in the field of (meta)lexicography have been dealt with in this paperback edition, namely by way of a meagre list of about 25 references to cover the period 1994–2000. The list itself reflects very little of the "evolutions" since 1994 which are referred to in the "Preface to the Paperback Edition".

For each of the innovations listed (e.g. corpus lexicography, design of machine-readable dictionaries on CD-Rom, on-line dictionaries, meaning-text type dictionaries, etc.), one can in fact come up with a host of relevant publications from which the author could at least have chosen three or four of the most

important ones and, given that this was indeed the way the publishers decided to update the book (i.e. by means of a reference list), provided the reader with an annotated bibliography.

The question, I suppose, you should ask yourself is: What kind of introduction to (meta)lexicography would you be providing to young students and lexicographers in the field if they are not introduced to these innovative aspects of lexicography? I think you would be providing them with only a partial (and in some respects a somewhat outmoded) overview of the field, and, equally important, you will be leaving out most of what makes (meta)lexicography an exciting field: the fact that there still is (in some fields, at least) even major innovation.

The fact that the publication has not been properly updated, sometimes leads to confusion. A case in point is Chapter 7. With the heading "Whither Lexicography?", it promises the reader a look into the future, and specifically into what influence research on idiomaticity and word meaning might in future have on practical lexicography. What the chapter in fact covers, is research on these two topics up to the time of the publication of the 1994-manuscript. Idiomaticity and word meaning itself, however, have been major areas of research in lexicography during the past number of years, but only a few of the publications listed in the updated references actually reflect these developments. Neither Chapter 7 nor the references themselves therefore give the reader any notion of the developments that have taken place since 1994.

As the text itself has not been revised, the reader will also sometimes come across sentences that are simply untrue. In the discussion of word meaning, for example, the author makes the following statement: "Lakoff's ideas have received little attention in metalexigraphy so far" (p. 233)! The fact is that, as one of *the* proponents of cognitive semantics, he has had a major influence on a large part of all metalexigraphic research on lexical semantics since 1994.

Of course, for whatever purpose it has been used in the past, the text remains useful as handbook. However, the burden of updating the book, and of updating your course materials (should you use the text as handbook for a course in lexicography) is shifted to you as lecturer, and this makes it a less attractive option as handbook.

The decision whether to update a book (and to what extent it should be updated) in a field in which there has indeed been much innovation nearly ten years after its first publication, is undoubtedly not an easy one, given the costs involved. However, I would have been much happier with the end-product as an introductory text if the author had at least added an additional chapter covering the innovations in the field.

Piet H. Swanepoel  
Department of Afrikaans and Theory of Literature  
University of South Africa (UNISA)  
Pretoria  
Republic of South Africa  
(swaneph@unisa.ac.za)