

## A Glance at Porto Editora

Graciete Teixeira



Graciete Teixeira was born in Porto. Her studies of Roman Philology arose her interest in the Portuguese language and lexicography in particular, and in languages in general. She has broad experience in teaching at Strasbourg and Poitiers Universities, and in translation and terminology at the European Union, and a strong passion for dictionaries. Dr Teixeira is managing director of Porto Editora.  
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Porto Editora is a publishing house based in Porto, Portugal, specializing in educational books, dictionaries, and off and online multimedia products.

It was founded in 1944 by Vasco Teixeira, my father, who managed to interest a group of teachers in his idea of creating high quality schoolbooks. Motivated by a commitment to promote high standards in education, the company was highly successful, and an independent organization developed from the visionary project. Over the years, Porto Editora established itself as a leading educational publisher, and in the process underwent periods of great change, which, in fact, mirror the major transitions within the Portuguese society.

The need for high quality printing at specific periods of the year soon resulted in buying a printing house, Bloco Gráfico, which, to this day, takes care of all production. From the beginning, a large amount of money was invested in advanced typesetters and printing machines, which allowed for high efficiency and regular production. In the late 1990s, a modern building was designed to fit the increasing printing turnover, with innovative technical capacity, and an automatic warehouse.

Our products are distributed by ourselves or by subsidiary companies, Arnado, in the central area of Portugal, and Fluminense, in the south. This policy allows us to be present all over the country.

Meanwhile, the implementation of new technologies has enabled us to step into multimedia products, providing the Portuguese market with educational and reference CD-ROMs and DVDs. Our presence on the Internet is both institutional and commercial, with a bookstore online and four sites addressed to students, parents and teachers. Since 2003, we offer a paid service – Infopedia.pt – with encyclopaedic articles, dictionaries and multimedia resources.

### Dictionaries at Porto Editora

The publication of the first edition of the *Dicionário Editora da Língua Portuguesa* (DELP) took place in 1952, as Vasco Teixeira soon realized dictionaries were an essential part of culture. That year really marked the beginning of a trend in dictionary making that has prevailed up to the present. New editions of Portuguese dictionaries, as well as bilingual dictionaries for English, French, Spanish,

Italian, German, Japanese, Modern Greek, Polish, Serbo-Croatian, Romanian, Dutch, Swedish and Latin were launched, providing the market with learning tools that have grown increasingly popular among students, teachers and the general public.

At first all the work on dictionaries was done on paper, and relied on the author's capacities. Authors were chosen by their reputation and language competence, and many titles appeared. It soon became clear that the process and quality should be controlled in-house, and, as a result, some of the staff became lexicographers. This was suitable for that time, as entries were hand-written, notes were kept in a system of card-based inventory, and texts had to be manually typeset. New editions were revised using the same hard time-consuming methods.



Vasco Teixeira, 1916-1987

When I joined the company, coming from a translation service where I had done a lot of work in terminology, I had a strong feeling that we need to control the content much more than the form – as was the practice until then – if we wanted to maintain our leading position in dictionaries and be able to face the rising competition. So, in the mid-1990s, a new dictionary division was set up, and a whole new team of lexicographers was recruited. Most of them went through training programs, while they developed their own skills as language researchers, as at that time there were no university courses on lexicography in Portugal. By then the dictionary program of the company had, as its prime concern, the

formation of in-house, full-time, skilled staff, and the development of editing software for dictionary making, using available computer technologies. It took a few years before the work done in the dictionary division became almost completely automated: dictionaries were converted into databases, information was gathered and tagged so as to permit data retrieval, and there was a huge investment in electronic devices for storing information and optimizing the productive process. We were very happy to produce our first dictionaries coming directly out of our database in 1998, and we took the opportunity to redesign the cover and change the format, while maintaining



Main building in Porto

the colour orange which immediately identifies Porto Editora's dictionaries in the Portuguese market.

The use of databases has allowed us to produce three complete CD-ROMs: Portuguese, English and French, including dictionaries of verbs, and to introduce other features. At the same time, we put DELP online for free, then English/Portuguese, Portuguese/English, French/Portuguese and Portuguese/French dictionaries. A Portuguese illustrated dictionary, dictionaries specially created for primary school students and substantial revisions of different dictionary ranges were undertaken, helped by the advance of new technologies.

Today, our policy is to produce the most updated dictionaries suitable for the target users. Thus, DELP has had the year of publication on the cover for the past two years, in order to stress its actuality.

#### A brand new masterpiece

For the 60th anniversary of our publishing house this year, we decided to publish a dictionary of one volume, including the main work done by Porto Editora on the Portuguese language database, and thus to create a new lexicographical reference book in Portugal.

Our *Grande Dicionário da Língua Portuguesa* appeared in May 2004. It presents the actual state-of-the-art of the Portuguese language not only in

Portugal, but also in Portuguese-speaking countries, including Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, and São Tomé and Príncipe. This important geographical coverage includes both a large degree of common language as well as special domains.

It was a great challenge to coordinate the collaboration of many specialists who updated our databases and introduced new concepts in different areas, from mathematics to medicine, music or biology. This specialized revision was done on paper, and our lexicographers were in charge of dealing with the experts, adapting their explanations to a dictionary definition and finally introducing the new version in the database. Besides, our team dealt with common language entries and some areas of their knowledge, such as linguistics or literature.

With its prestigious physical features, the *Grande Dicionário* stands as a symbol of the company's long experience in dictionary making and of its high standard of quality.

#### PE Group details

- 7 companies
- 600 persons
- 44% market share in schoolbooks
- 70% market share in dictionaries

#### Dictionaries in numbers

- 15 languages
- 102 titles
- 9 ranges



#### Grande Dicionário da Língua Portuguesa

- 220 cm x 302 cm
- 1624 pages
- Cloth hardcover with engraved design and gold lettering
- Protection box
- ISBN 972-0-05000-4

## Lexicography organization founded in Taiwan

Taiwan's first lexicography organization, the Dictionary and Corpus Research Center (DCRC), was founded on 7 March 2004 in Taipei. This formation was initiated at the plenary meeting of the Taiwanese Association for Translation and Interpretation, held on 20 December 2003, and the DCRC will function as an interest group within the Association. Founding members include lexicographers, corpus linguists and publishers. The DCRC aims to become an active organization of lexicography theorists and practitioners, and to serve as a confluence of dictionary and corpus resources. Its short-term goals include making the general readers and specialized researchers in Taiwan aware of the different kinds of dictionaries and corpora that are available, advising the public on dictionary purchases and use, and evaluating dictionaries and related reference books that are on the market. Its long-term goals include publishing newsletters, books and academic journals, and hosting conferences. The DCRC intends to hold quarterly meetings with keynote lectures. The current coordinator is Dr. Hugo T. Y. Tseng, of the English Department of Soochow University, Taipei. The contact person is Ms. Meihua Sun, [meihua@bookman.com.tw](mailto:meihua@bookman.com.tw).