

Lexicography in Asia, Vol. 3 **Call for Papers**

Lexicography in Asia appeared on October 1, 1998 (editors Tom MacArthur and Ilan Kernerman, <http://kictionaries.com/lia.html>). It comprised mainly a selection of papers from the Dictionaries in Asia Conference, that was held the previous year at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and that served as a forum for the establishment of the Asian Association for Lexicography (ASIALEX; <http://kictionaries.com/kdn/kdn5-3.html>, <http://kictionaries.com/kdn/kdn6-4.html>).

K Dictionaries is happy to announce that, to celebrate the tenth anniversary of this collection, we will publish a new volume to be entitled *Lexicography in Asia, Vol. 3* on October 1, 2008. The proposal of papers for this new publication is open to the public.

Papers are invited on all relevant topics of lexicography in Asia, and will be distributed to referees for anonymous review. The deadline for proposals is December 31, 2007. Notifications of acceptance/rejection will be provided by March 31, 2008, and the deadline for final versions is May 15, 2008.

Full details on the submission process, including a styleguide, are available online: <http://kictionaries.com/lia3.html>. Please address all enquiries to the project coordinator, Anat Kravitz, lia3@kictionaries.com

school or college, in their own country. For example, authors of the Big Five might define conventional medicine as that type of medicine which is practiced in the West, and alternative medicine as what is practiced in the East. Yet, the Chinese consider their own medicine to be conventional, not alternative.

English is studied in the non-English-speaking countries as the global lingua franca, not as the mother tongue of natives of Britain or the US. Sentences should refer to local events and personalities only if these are familiar to the user and relevant to his society.

In short, these dictionaries assume that the learner is studying English for ‘integrative purposes’, in order to assimilate and integrate in the USA, the UK, Australia, etc., whereas in most cases they are learning the language for ‘instrumental purposes’, in other words, for professional or communication purposes, often in order to confer in English with people in other non-English-speaking countries – as the ‘global lingua franca’.

Recommendation: Each country should have its own dictionaries, written, or, at least edited, if not in that country, then for it.

3. Learning in the language you think in

No teaching can eliminate the need to know the equivalent for a new word in the mother tongue. The generation of total submergence in the language being learned is far behind us. Submergence, yes, but not total. Naturally, teachers would like their students to endeavor to think in the new language. The more they live and breathe it, and the more they speak and read it, the more they can be involved in it and internalize it. But language learners need the confirmation of knowing the mother tongue equivalent, because they inevitably search for it. That’s a fact that I don’t think I need to spend more time on.

Recommendation: Publishers should publish bilingualized editions of their MLDs, that is, with the headwords translated.

4. Over-writing and over-explaining

Competition has been causing dictionary publishers to overshoot the mark. The competition is stiff, and the investment required is huge. You have to compete in order to regain your investment and make profit. So each dictionary publisher, in each new edition, tries to outdo the others by adding something new and original. The result is that MLDs are becoming more encyclopedic with each new edition, thus diminishing, rather than enhancing,

their learner-friendliness. They contain too much extraneous material. Users generally want to know mainly the basic information, such as meaning, use or spelling. But they have to wade through an unnecessarily large amount of information in order to find what they want.

Even the linguistic items are often geared to language-teaching professionals, rather than learners. For example, two pages in OALD7 are devoted to explaining their phonetic symbols – a text seemingly written for phoneticians. Likewise, in MEDAL there are pages devoted to how to write an academic paper, to explaining what a metaphor is for (as if they don’t have metaphors in other languages), and pages devoted to pragmatics, that are a way beyond the language level of the learners. CALD2 has a whole page devoted to the comma.

Recommendation: Cut down on the non-lexical (usually grammatical and encyclopedic) information that is cluttering up the dictionary.

5. Standardizing the dictionary parameters

It’s high time dictionary publishers got together to unify many aspects of their dictionaries. It would make life easier for users, as well as for teachers. Standardization would promote familiarity with dictionary use, and familiarity would facilitate and encourage dictionary usefulness and usability. For how much longer will we continue to be at the stage where almost the only thing that can be taught in the classroom about dictionary use is the order of the letters of the alphabet, because the systems are so different from each other?

For example, the International Standards Organization (ISO) is preparing a revised version of standards called ‘Presentation/Representation of Entries in Dictionaries’, the aim of which is to facilitate the production, exchange and management procedures for the creation and use of dictionary content (André Le Meur and Marie-Jeanne Derouin, ISO 1951: a revised standard for lexicography, 2006. *KDN14*). But will dictionary publishers adopt it?

Recommendation: Out of consideration for the users, publishers should coordinate parameters, rather than strive to be original.

6. Determining the order of meanings by didactic criteria, not by corpus frequency

The information derived from corpora is very interesting and undoubtedly useful for linguists. But must dictionaries indeed be based on corpora? Giving the “basic” meaning of a word first may be more