

### Useful Anthology

This observation is by no means a disqualification of the book. It probably just illustrates the polysemy of the word *practical* (see illustration). I hoped for a practical book in sense no. 2. It turned out to be practical in sense no. 1. *Practical Lexicography* offers fascinating reading for people like me, who feel at home on lexicographical territory. The great merit of the editor, Thierry Fontenelle, is that he compiled a reader's digest from the huge mountain of publications in congress proceedings, in magazines and in books. He divided the field into twelve parts: I Metalexigraphy, Macrostructure, and the Contribution of Linguistic Theory; II On Corpus Design; III On Lexicographical Evidence; IV On Word Senses and Polysemy; V On Collocations, Idioms, and Dictionaries; VI On Definitions; VII On Examples; VIII On Grammar and Usage in Dictionaries; IX On Bilingual Lexicography; X On Tools for Lexicographers; XI On Semantic Networks and Wordnets; XII On Dictionary Use.

For each part, Fontenelle selected one or several articles – all of them published before – that thoroughly discuss the subject. All chapters are written by people who practice or practiced the lexicographical craft. In that sense, the title of the book is well chosen; no academic theory but results of research and thought by professionals with practical experience in dictionary making.

For someone like me there is every reason to be grateful to the compiler. All too often issues of the *International Journal of Lexicography* remained unread, all too often congress bundles landed on the bookshelf too soon. For those who work in commercial lexicography, an excuse for not reading specialist literature is always available. After all, we are at meetings all the time, busy with planning, struggling with tight budgets and timetables. If someone takes the trouble to pack the most relevant lexicographic baggage in one single volume, there is every reason for gratitude. Since Thierry Fontenelle looks beyond the horizon, with his experience as an academic researcher at the University of Liege, as former president of Euralex and as program manager at Microsoft Natural Language Group, his selection is hardly for me to criticize. I can report that from my experience as lexicographer and publisher I have the impression that all areas are being covered and that his choice of authors is excellent.

### Date: up to, or out of

Nonetheless I venture to make a few comments. A lot has changed, rapidly and

drastically, in lexicography. Not so much since 1747, but rather since the 1980s. Most articles in the book clearly illustrate this, and in some contributions change is the very subject. However, because developments have not come to a standstill, information that was published several years ago runs the risk of being somewhat out of date. A majority of sixteen out of the twenty two articles was first published over ten years ago and the bibliographical references in these articles refer to texts that are several years older. In itself that is no problem; the contribution from 1747 by Samuel Johnson proves that texts can remain relevant and valuable long after their first publication. But, for example, a phrase like "... particularly as the day of the electronic dictionary approaches" strikes as a little unworldly, until one realizes that the article dates from 1992. Because the average age of the articles is rather high, there is also a risk that important recent developments are not mentioned at all. Nothing is said for example about what I will call "Internet lexicography". The size and reputation that the Internet encyclopaedia *Wikipedia* has acquired, implies that its lexicographic counterpart – *Wiktionary* – needs to be mentioned in a volume like *Practical Lexicography*. *Wiktionary* claims to have more than 750,000 entries with an English definition. There are more than 55,000 registered users, and since it was launched, there have been more than 4 million editorial actions. Maybe its quality is disputable, but the fact that some of the constraints of traditional commercial lexicography do not seem to be applicable to this form of large-scale democratic lexicography makes it interesting enough to deserve a place in a recent book about the field.

A related phenomenon is what I call the online community dictionary. Examples include the online bilingual dictionaries for African languages to and from English, compiled within the framework of Simultaneous Feedback (<http://tshwanedje.com/sf>), as the developer calls it. Such developments are likely to influence the way dictionaries are being compiled and consulted.

### Non-natives read English too

With the people I referred to at the beginning of this text in mind, I would like to make a final critical comment. But in all honesty, I am also talking about myself. Maybe it is less a criticism than an observation and it is by no means limited to the field of lexicography. It regards every area in which the dominant publication language is English.

### Lexicography in Asia, Vol. 2 *Perspectives in Lexicography: Asia and Beyond*

*Perspectives in Lexicography: Asia and Beyond* comprises a selection of papers from the Fourth ASIALEX International Congress, which was held at the National University of Singapore (NUS) in June 2005. The papers were edited by Vincent B.Y. Ooi, Anne Pakir, Ismail S. Talib, and Peter Tan, from the English Department of NUS, who organized the conference. The book will be published by K Dictionaries on October 1, 2008, celebrating the tenth anniversary of the publication of *Lexicography in Asia* (Tom McArthur and Ilan Kernerman (eds.), Pasword Publishers, Tel Aviv, 1998). Details will be made available in September 2008 online: <http://kdictionaries.com/lia/lia2.html>