were to be excluded from the list of 'lexical words')

2 take with a **pinch** of salt (least frequent lexical word, assuming that relative frequency of words is available in the database)

3 take with a **pinch** of salt (the first or only noun)

4 take *with a pinch of salt* (first or only verb)

Lexicographers could present the various results to potential users for testing. Probably they would formulate an additional rule that results in *salt* as a headword. For example, the occurrence of variation in the first lexical word (*take with a pinch/grain of salt*) could be a reason for an additional rule that marks the second lexical word as the headword. Of course, it would also be possible to place the MWE in several entries, if the size of the dictionary allows it. An in-between solution would be a cross-reference. OGPL briefly mentions the possibility of referring from a potential headword to the headword under which the MWE is treated as a common feature in a DWS (dictionary writing system). However, in 'Building the dictionary entry' (chapter 12) we do not learn how to deal with this feature. It is simply not mentioned again.

Seminar on Learner's Dictionaries

DSNA XVII Biennial Meeting, Bloomington, 2009

The 17th biennial meeting of the Dictionary Society of North America, held at Indiana University in Bloomington on 27-30 May 2009, included a first-of-its-kind seminar on learner's dictionaries. The seminar was an experiment in program structure and was generally restricted to its participants, although some 20 other persons attended in the audience. The participants all read each other's papers in advance, and the seminar served as a forum for further discussion. Three participants were unable to attend the conference and took part in the discussion using Skype. The participants included Arleta Adamska-Sałaciak, Henri Béjoint, Paul Bogaards, Mari Carmen Campoy-Cubillo, Don R. McCreary, Wendalyn Nichols, Michael Rundell, Peter Sokolowski and Shigeru Yamada, and the organizer was Ilan J. Kernerman. The seminar proceedings, along with two more papers on this topic that were presented at the DSNA meeting, will be published by K Dictionaries, as the second volume in its new Papers on Lexicography and Dictionaries series. For the list of contents, see p.3.

In my view, the use of cross-references for MWEs is an attractive time-saving feature. For example in Cobuild we find a reference to *salt* under *pinch* for *take something with a pinch of salt*. In a concise dictionary, a reference to just the headword without the full MWE is already helpful to a user who will recognise the reference as part of the phrase he or she has in mind.

The distribution of MWEs among articles offered a case for looking into the way database and final product relate to each other in OGPL. I am sure that this book will be a success and that it will go through a large number of reprints and I am curious to see if further automation of the dictionary making process will receive more attention in future editions.

Non-natives read English too

Finally, I would like to make a remark on the blind spot that many native speakers – even those who write for an international public – seem to have for the problems that non-natives may have with infrequent idiomatic English. They should realise that we already have to deal with a double handicap. Not only do we read/study in a language that is not our mother tongue, in addition to that all the example material is drawn from a language that is not our own. What is immediately instructive or illustrative to a native speaker often requires some additional study from a non-native speaker. A little consideration would be appropriate.

In general the language in OGPL is plain and lively English, but here and there an infrequent idiom suddenly enforces the consultation of a dictionary. On page 5 the authors quote the great Dr. Samuel Johnson from 'The plan of an English Dictionary', 1747. Then follows: "Crudely paraphrased this tells us that no amount of theoretical rigour is worth a hill of beans if the average user of your dictionary can't understand the message you are trying to convey." It is ironic that many readers will only be able to understand the paraphrase because the original text is perfectly understandable for an advanced EFL-student. The paraphrase – ideally intended to clarify the quotation – introduces the rare and opaque idiom 'a hill of beans'. No problem for those who remember the famous ending of the film *Casablanca*, in which Humphrey Bogart says '… it doesn't take much to see that the problems of three little people don't amount to a *hill of beans* in this crazy world'. For many others the Americanism introduces a puzzle.

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