

The new KLN: Lexicalbound

The first four-page issue of this publication appeared in July 1994 under the title **Password News** as “[a] forum for discussion about the semi-bilingual dictionary”. Issue No. 2, published in January 1995, was renamed **Kernerman Dictionary News** and has since appeared each July, gradually expanding coverage to all dictionary-related topics and eventually also linking multiple language technology domains, while hosting an ever-growing variety of authors.

Over the years the newsletter has thus transformed from a single-focus promotion tool to serving a broad and diverse global community.

Since the early 2000s, at least one thousand copies of each KDN issue were printed and freely distributed every year, as well as being accessible online, making it possibly the most widely disseminated publication on lexicography (and more) worldwide.

Change being a constant factor in life, time has come to update ☺ The current issue, No. 28, appears for the first time digitally only, in PDF and HTML, and the new name – **K Lexical News** – makes explicit our interest beyond dictionaries and lexicography to everything lexical, complemented by a new look and feel.

I wish to thank the numerous colleagues and friends for their contribution in writing, consulting, reading and all other forms of support, with special thanks to the designer, Orna Cohen.

Ilan Kernerman



K LexicalNews

PASSWORD NEWS

A forum for discussion about the semi-bilingual English dictionary. Your comments are welcome.

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The Advent of the Semi-Bilingual Dictionary by Lionel Kernerman

Historically, the monolingual learner's dictionary was the outcome of the Direct Method in foreign language teaching. This meant total immersion in the target language without the use of the mother tongue, i.e. without any translation.

Given the fact that learners do not have an extensive vocabulary in the target language, learner's dictionaries employ a limited, basic vocabulary (usually 2,000-3,000 words) in order to explain meanings and to give example sentences or phrases showing how the word is normally used. Some learner's dictionaries also point out particular problems pertaining to the grammatical use of a word, its spelling, or its pronunciation.

While many professionals recognize the superiority of the Direct Method over the Indirect or Translation Method, they have also observed that monolingual dictionaries are not frequently used by learners.

Apparently bilingual dictionaries remain the choice of most learners if given a choice despite their drawbacks, such as misleading lexical translations.

It is now acknowledged that the vital element in the acquisition of a new language is associated with one's native tongue. Thus, the semi-bilingual dictionary was a natural progression in dictionary development. It contains the advantages of the monolingual learner's dictionary, combined with the native tongue translation found in the bilingual dictionary. The ambiguity of the bilingual dictionary is thus automatically eliminated. Learners are encouraged to read the definitions and examples of usage in English, since only the headwords are translated.

Eight years after its first appearance, it is clear that the semi-bilingual dictionary was indeed a step in the right direction.

It is also possible to add material to suit local requirements, as was done in the case of the Finnish, French and Hebrew editions.

Workbooks

An important feature of the semi-bilingual dictionary is its simple design and format which eliminates the need to explain how to use it. Nevertheless, some publishers have prepared additional material for teachers and/or pupils, which could be added to other geographical or cultural areas.

Workbooks or worksheets were produced for the French, Hebrew and Spanish editions, and are provided free of charge. From the publisher's viewpoint, this is a good way to promote sales in schools.

Bi-directional adaptations

Semi-bilingual dictionaries can be made bi-directional by having the computer retrieve all the translations, arrange them alphabetically and provide their English equivalents. The list must then be edited to exclude those translations which are not suitable as dictionary entries.

The remaining list does not contain all the headwords one would normally find in a dictionary, since the translators do not necessarily make use of all the words in their translations. Therefore, some headwords must be added. Otherwise, the resulting list would be merely an index of the translated words, which could have important words missing. Such indexes, however, have been included by publishers of the

Bulgarian, Finnish, French, Italian, Portuguese and Slovenian editions, with several more currently in preparation. It should be taken into account that the addition of an index increases the size of the dictionary by about one sixth.

British vs. local settings

The English-English core of *Password* dictionaries is British oriented. But it is possible to make changes in the basic dictionary text, in order to make it suited to other geographical or cultural areas.

Publishers may delete certain words, expressions, definitions or examples which they find unnecessary for users in their countries, or which are culturally unsuitable for their target populations. On the other hand, it is

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המרכז הלאומי לחקר השפה



The second issue of 'Oxford Student's Dictionary for Hebrew Speakers' was published by Kernerman Publishing and Centre Kohn in January 1993.

Forward

A number of articles on bilingualised dictionaries appeared in various publications last year. Also, there are plans by publishers to bilingualise existing monolingual EFL dictionaries. Thus, in light of the rising attention towards this genre it was decided to broaden the scope of our newsletter to the wider domain of learner's dictionaries, revise it, and devote this issue to some of the recent research in bilingualised dictionaries.

First, there was the paper presented by Barak Luedi and Lior Melamed at the EURALEX 1994 Congress in Amsterdam, and published in its Proceedings: **Monolingual, Bilingual and Bilingualised Dictionaries Which are More Effective, for What and for Whom?** It compares the effectiveness of these three types of dictionaries in terms of comprehension and production of new words by EFL learners, as tested on 123 high-school and university students in Israel. The practical conclusion of the study seems to be that a good 'bilingualised' dictionary is suitable for all types of learners. When the learner is still unable to use dictionary skills, the monolingual information will gain relevance and importance. Even when the monolingual part of the study is used to its full potential – the translation will always be helpful in measuring and reinforcing the learner's decisions about the meaning (and use of new words....).

Another paper, **Translated: A new breed of bilingual dictionaries**, by Mona Baker and Robert Kaplan in the *International Journal of Translation Studies* (40: 1), describes the ongoing bilingualisation program of Collins' Collins dictionaries. Called *Anglo* and *Anglo*, their main feature is that the explanations of the monolingual English learner's dictionary are translated into the user's native-tongue. Under preparation are versions for speakers of Brazilian-Portuguese, French, German, Italian and Spanish. Without entering into the debate about the merits of this particular feature, or the words, it appears that the rationale for

inserting L1 translations is being increasingly adopted by educators, lexicographers and publishers of learner's dictionaries worldwide.

Two recent papers by Reinhard Hartmann enhance his studious research on the subject: **Bilingualised versions of learners' dictionaries** appeared in *Fremdsprachen Lehren und Lernen* (FLuL 23), published by Günter Nettelbladt in Tübingen. It discusses the bilingualised learner's dictionary in terms of four divisions of dictionary research (history, typology, criticism, and use) and in the light of a project carried out at the University of Exeter. The project involved a reading comprehension task that assessed the reaction of 28 informants to seven bilingualised dictionaries intended for Arabic, French, German, Greek, Korean and Spanish learners of English. The paper concludes that combining L2 definitions and L1 translation equivalents is an attractive feature of such dictionaries, especially for decoding activities.

Dr Hartmann's other paper, **The Bilingualised Learner's Dictionary as a Relatively New Genre**, was published by the Language Centre of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and the Division of Foreign Languages of Jilin University of Technology, and presents an interesting and illuminating discussion on the topic.

Finally, the paper by Kyoko Nakamoto – that was originally published by Iwasaki Linguistic Circle in its annual periodical *JLCOGOL* and which follows here nearly in its entirety – I wish to express my acknowledgement and gratitude to its Chairman, Professor Shigenori Takekoshi, for granting us permission to reprint it.

This paper is supplemented by a brief response from Joseph Bell. I hope our work contributes to generating further discussion on learner's dictionaries.

Ilan Kernerman

(left) **Password News**
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(right) **Kernerman**
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