

PREFACE

This volume presents most of the papers read at the international conference which brought over 270 lexicographers from 39 countries to Exeter for two and a half days of intensive shop-talk and contact-seeking. The papers range in content, length and style over a wide spectrum, but they all exude a spirit of critical optimism towards the tasks still to be achieved in the field of dictionary-making: systematic research is challenging received opinion. I have regarded my job mainly as one of coordinator, staying in the background, putting people in touch, but not necessarily avoiding all conflict. A panel of selectors helped me choose the original slate of speakers, a set of streamlined abstracts before the conference informed participants of what was on offer, and brief editorial guidelines attempted to control the shape of submitted papers. In the interest of uniform presentation I have occasionally introduced minor emendations. One liberty I have allowed myself here was to take out and unite in one place all bibliographical references to dictionaries.

The arrangement of the papers reflects roughly the organization of the conference, with three pairs of topics forming three linked parts, concerned respectively with (1) the general dictionary and the historical perspective, (2) the bilingual dictionary and the pedagogical perspective, and (3) the terminological dictionary and the technological perspective. The three pairs of plenary papers have been used as introductions to each of the three parts. I have toyed with the idea of grouping section papers into subject groups, but in the end stuck to the traditional alphabetical order of authors in the hope that the reader will discover his own cross-connections. Some of the themes were partly predictable, such as the emphasis in all sections on the needs of the dictionary user; others were unexpected but no less noteworthy: the interest in historical precedents, the willingness to apply new findings, e.g. from the linguistic sciences, the acceptance of automation, and the ability to spot and rectify the lexicographer's own limitations. For me, the chief merit of these Proceedings lies in the bringing together of almost all of the major issues facing dictionary compilers and users today. And those who have voiced opinions here should be consulted in future, too!

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Reinhard Hartmann, February 1984