

Introduction to the Round Table “Bilingual Lexicography”

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This roundtable involves uncommon or less common language pairs, such as Italian and Swedish, Estonian and French, Japanese and Slovenian, Galician and Italian, Italian and Hindi, English and Slovenian.

Bardel's contribution deals with an Italian and Swedish bilingual dictionary under construction, aiming at a lemma selection which takes into account the monolingual register and frequency annotation proposed by the De Mauro Italian monolingual dictionary.

Chalvin-Mangeot show how European Union expansion brings the need of new large bilingual lexicographical tools. Their French and Estonian dictionary was developed from an online platform designed to build a bilingual dictionary from monolingual databases. This work was carried out by lexicographers who meet together only in that virtual domain.

Erjavec et al. report the making of a learner's bilingual dictionary for the few hundreds of Slovenian students of Japanese: a collaborative bottom-up editing which benefits from the immediate feedback of users.

Sorli's description of the English-Slovenian dictionary is a survey of the decisions taken when a lexicographer means to serve an audience formed of native speakers of only one of the two languages paired, namely Slovenian.

Sanmarco points out that the still-under-construction *Diccionario italiano-galego galego-italiano* is also mainly unidirectional, i.e. devoted to Galician users. Her main interest is to show that when the bilingual dictionary pairs two cognate languages the treatment of cultural words has to go in the direction of showing difference, not only similarity.

Sharma's contribution stresses why he felt the necessity of incorporating in his Hindi-Italian Italian-Hindi Dictionary verb patterns which do not just tag entries within each grammatical systems, but show that a *common syntactic ground* between the two language structures is established. He also argues for providing pragmatic elements of meaning in lexical entries, e.g. in the entries for Hindi, negative markers and causative verb forms.

These six contributions share topics which have also been aired in previous debates about bilingual dictionaries of the more used languages, but since in most cases they have – for the moment or programmatically – given up the idea of serving both language communities, they show clearly which are the evergreen difficult points in bilingual lexicography, once the lexicographic team is freed by at least some of the commercial pressure.

Some are also free from paper-printing constraints and take advantage of many aspects of electronic editing. On the side of dictionary making procedures, it is interesting to notice

that electronic working platforms to build dictionaries (from scratch or, more usually, out of pre-existing electronic resources) allow to keep track of any addition or change, not only to improve the working protocol, but also to quantify (and therefore pay) the contribution of each lexicographer. On the side of dictionary use, when a prototype of dictionary is online the lexicographer can monitorize which pieces of information are more sought, and can act in consequence.

Most of them are the result of a totally or partially university or state funded research and it cannot be otherwise for at least two intertwined reasons: the markets for such works are small and the publishers could not afford to pay for a lexicographic team, the experts able to tackle seriously such an engaging work are to be found mainly in the university language centres and faculties. As a consequence the planning phase is sometime too long and ambitious: since the advent of computer supported lexicography, however, results come earlier and the influence of fresh linguistic comparative studies can be seen. Not only do authors of new dictionaries involving less common language pairs in the university milieu have easier access to advances in other languages lexicography and lexicology, and are often also authors of grammars and language courses handbooks, but they also have the advantage of being inspired by these other roles of theirs while carrying out bilingual lexicography. Thus, they can positively impact on the overall knowledge of the foreign culture and language in the community in which they work.