

Robert Ilson (ed.), A Spectrum of Lexicography: Papers from AILA Brussels 1984. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1987. vii+145 pp. \$40.00

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This book comprises ten papers which were presented at the seventh triennial World Congress of AILA (l'Association Internationale de Linguistique Appliquee) in Brussels in 1984.

Five of the papers comment on monolingual dictionaries, three on bilingual dictionaries, and one each on teaching vocabulary and the use of the computer with dictionaries.

My purpose in this review is to comment briefly on those papers which offer useful advice on lexicography, in as much as this can be applied to compiling vernacular dictionaries in Melanesia.

D. Geeraerts (Types of Semantic Information in Dictionaries) begins with a three-way classification of semantic information, which he calls the prototypical, the stereotype, and the extensional senses. The prototypical refers to the central sense around which all others are clustered. The stereotyped dimension refers to the minimal amount of semantic knowledge a user is supposed to possess, while the extensional goes further and includes the expert or encyclopedic senses. Each of these are related to the theoretical and pragmatic functions of a dictionary.

One does not learn much about dictionary methodology from Geeraerts' paper. Rather the author offers a theoretical and lexicographical framework for deciding what should be included in the dictionary.

Lara (Methodology in a non-Spanish dictionary of the Spanish Language: The Diccionario del español de Mexico) demonstrates that

dictionaries which reflect varieties of Spanish are necessary for normal non-academic readers. It is a reminder to us in the Melanesian area that dictionaries must present meanings in a form which represents real usage.

The article by Herbst (A Proposal for a Valency Dictionary of English) comments on dictionaries for foreign users. Requiring special attention is how the information is presented, its explicitness and its comprehensiveness. The valency examples, the author claims, should "serve as a sort of native-speaker substitute" (p.42). In general a valency dictionary seems out of reach for those working in Melanesia because the valency of a word is "the number of complements it takes on an active declarative sentence isolated from context" (p.32). Few dictionary compilers work within such a framework.

Neubauer (How to Define a Defining Vocabulary) is concerned with the problem that foreign language learners have when they consult a monolingual dictionary. Neubauer stresses that the kind of vocabulary used in giving definitions to such users is of primary consideration. All items which occur within definitions should be marked, and those used frequently should have any multiple senses illustrated with accompanying sentences. For example, the English sentence, "He seldom drinks alcohol" would illustrate ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE and not the sense ETHYL ALCOHOL. There is no reason why Melanesian dictionary researchers cannot choose sentence examples with such constraints in mind.

F. Ilson (Towards a Taxonomy of Dictionary Definitions) explains how "definition seeks to characterise the syntactic and semantic properties of lexical units" (p.71), i.e. to define the grammatical and meaning components of an item. The components are thus syntactic categorization and sub-categorization and semantic categorization and sub-categorization. Ilson examines various kinds of information in definitions and classifies them accordingly. In his treatment there are three kinds of classical definitions

(synonymic, analytical, and formulaic), each with only parts of the necessary syntactic or semantic information included. It is difficult to know how practical Ilson's suggestions are to implement, but researchers can test entries against his criteria.

Choul, Schorr and Baganz treat bilingual dictionaries concerned with French, English, Hindi, and German. These languages provide examples of problems of equivalents which have been dealt with.

The final two articles by B. Callebaut and N. Devons are more general in scope. The former is a discussion of teaching vocabulary bases on cognates in European languages and the latter illustrates how the computer can assist in lexicography, especially in homograph discrimination.

Taken as a whole the volume is a useful collection of papers which deal with issues common to anyone compiling a dictionary. They are beyond what most Melanesian compilers contend with, focussing as they often do on fine semantic and syntactic distinctions. For example, the paper by Devons uses a million-word corpus of American English to determine the senses, usages and contexts of 300 common, multi-meaning words. Although few lexicographers probably have 500 pages of text available in vernacular languages, the techniques described by Devons should still prove helpful.