

**Philip Durkin.** *The Oxford Handbook of Lexicography*. 2016, xxiii + 698 pp. ISBN: 978-0-19-969163-0. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Price £95.00.

*The Oxford Handbook of Lexicography* is a collection of papers in 37 chapters by various authors segmented in four parts with respective themes — synchronic, diachronic, specialist lexicography and specific topics related to lexicography. Contributors to this handbook with either established lexicographical methods or lexicographic and linguistic background turn their experiential compiling practices or research into their articles. The authors have included not only theories, quotations and lexicographic examples, but also references, illustrations of entries and electronic displays, which simplify the text and facilitate understanding.

Part I deals with the three types of synchronic dictionary and main micro-structure features: the dictionary for general users (DGU), the monolingual dictionary intended for L2 learners (MLD), the bilingual dictionary and definition (including definition in general, explanation in MLD and equivalence in the bilingual dictionary in chapters 7, 8 and 9 respectively). The description is in each case uniformly initiated by the original motivation, development, current issues, conclusions and future prospects. Representing a different approach from these more customised ones, such as MLD, DGU faces a somewhat declining tendency which Bejoint believes is still "a quasi-universal need" (Durkin 2016: 24). The enviable supremacy of MLD is evidenced by the creative and dynamic way of explaining meaning to learners. Among the current issues in bilingual lexicography, the "definition" in bilingual lexicography is the foremost component, the four major equivalence strategies proposed in chapter 9, i.e. cognitively, translationally, explanatorily and functionally equivalent, though with no sharp boundaries, together with a supplementary meaning-elucidating strategy, can ensure successful explanation of source language meanings. In chapters 5 and 6 corpus construction and interrogation, an indispensable methodology in dictionary compilation and research, is introduced.

Part II discusses historical dictionaries, reflecting their distinctive methodologies and approaches that are not well-known to outsiders. The structural and presentational challenges posed by the diachronic perspective in historical dictionaries are manifested by the uncertain exposition of the history of a word or a loanword and the documentation of the history of a word in an entry which reveals the duplicate effect of coincidental individual usage by negligence, subsequent gradual secularization and popularization and possibly grafting from other languages. In the electronic era, online corpora, though not specifically for the historical lexicographer, provide sufficient and well-balanced quotations for the attestation of definition on the one hand; on the other, they help ease the strain of identifying the etymology or the homonymy.

Part III presents some of the most important types of specialist dictionaries and their pertinent existence, histories and methodologies. Contributors are required to show not only the highlights and peculiarities but also commonalities connecting the universal lexicographic works. These dictionaries cover the

theoretical and practical issues of specialist lexicography in ten different domains (i.e. place names and person's names, pronunciation, spelling, slang, etymology, dead languages, thesauri, regional dialects and science and technology), roughly beginning with the history and status quo of a specialist dictionary, definition of relevant terminologies and boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, and then the basic arrangement and structure, reciprocal issues concerning specialised lexicography and academic research of other domains, and prospects and challenges in the digital age. Specialist lexicography features varied selection source and authoritative and subjective expert item selection as chapter 24 points out that "the use of corpora has limited applicability" (Durkin 2016: 398), while the consultation of experts from the respective fields withstands interrogations, because the hierarchical distinction of scientific and technical terms and general words is essential. The same applies to the DUDEN German spelling dictionaries that insist on their own principles regardless of official orthographic use. After the meticulous and systematic research of synchronic and diachronic thesauri, contributors Kay and Alexander hold that the thematic layout "becomes the most attractive hybrid" (Durkin 2016: 380) in the digital age without causing browsing problems. This part also reveals the close relationships between specialist lexicography and relevant topics that still present an instance of "the road less taken" and require in-depth research. The contributors agree with Fuertes-Olivera and Tarp, who note that "specialised lexicography is an interdisciplinary activity" (2014: 192).

Part IV deals with other lexicographic problems, most of which are yet to be solved with significant implications, as well as the discussions of the practicalities and theories in dictionary compilation. The proposed two-way traffic between cognitive linguistic theory and lexicography in chapters 26 and 27 (echoing chapter 7 in Part I) remains one of possible avenues for further lexicographic research. Complexities arise when handling multiword units and meaning and sense relations (polysemy, homonymy, hyponymy, metonymy, synonymy and antonymy) in dictionaries. Many researchers (of chapters 25, 26, 27, 28, 33, 35, etc.) recommend the combination of corpus and human methods, i.e. the interrogation of corpus together with the application of lexicographers' instinct and experience. In chapter 31 even "more versatile possibilities of electronic platforms" (Durkin 2016: 513) are called for in producing more target-oriented and problem-specific lexical tools, while in chapter 36 the web presence of the end product may help maintain the publishers' competitive edge. The chapters in this part taking up the clues left in previous parts make the whole book a unified whole. The final two chapters are innovative in topic. Nesi presents the modern digital world and numerous demanding users have influenced the way dictionaries are used and produced, while in the last chapter the correlation of political, historical and social factors with the editing and publication of dictionaries of national varieties of international languages is elaborated.

This book can be recommended for four main reasons.

First of all, it covers a broad spectrum of research topics and brims with

insights useful for the practicalities and theories of lexicography of all types. The weight placed on the treatment of diachronic lexicography and specialist lexicography makes up for the deficiency in lexicographic handbooks of the same sort, which is to "draw into focus the very many similarities in both the challenges and opportunities each faces in the contemporary environment" (Durkin 2016: 3). The well-proportioned coverage as well as cross-references within chapters make the articles written by different individuals an organic whole. Speculative research always coincides with current findings, outlooks, uncertainties and problems to be solved, such as the questions for definition writers at the conclusion of chapter 7, which are re-examinations of existing works as well as inspirations for future research.

Secondly, salutary lexicographic lessons are learned from historical and specialist lexicography. Many chapters are not purely historical accounts but history-inspired research, as lexicographical issues, although they are contemporary trends, also echo the past. The diachronic development of lexicography (general and specialised), especially the historical construction of the micro-structure of dictionaries sheds light on the present and future of lexicography. For instance, when the historical principle is at odds with the logical principle in sense ordering, Passow suggests "a conveniently ordered overview" (Durkin 2016: 168), a common practice afterwards, which was documented by Zgusta and with which Considine agrees. By the same token, some of the phenomena and issues in specialist lexicography are also universal to the general and learners' dictionaries, such as the gap between the original native use of a dead language and the indirect linguistic material consulted by lexicographers. This is the concern of any lexicographer, accordingly justifying the so-called marginal researches in specialist lexicography in the whole lexicography paradigm. Those inspiring lessons make the specialised dictionaries a boon for learners.

In addition, the volume presents a thorough methodology of lexicographical research. There is no unified writing template, as those chapters are written by different researchers. All articles, however, probe into the relevant academic study (in diachronic and/or synchronic sense) followed by the re-inspection and/or demarcation of the current issues and exhaustive study of the specific dictionary scenario or topics, particularly in the context of the electronic era. For instance, in chapter 18 the relation between orthography and graphematics is the prerequisite for research pertaining to German spelling dictionaries. The illustration combines direct quotations from existing dictionaries or corpora with references to works of predecessors or peers. With recommended readings, the points of view in the research papers seem more convincing and sophisticated.

Moreover, a chronology of major events of lexical dictionaries affixed to the content before the references pieces together the canonical lexicographic works in human history. From as early as about 3200 BC when the earliest Sumerian wordlist was written on clay tablets to 2009, the year when the Historical Thesaurus of the OED was published, the list provides a panorama of highlights in world lexicography, notably the dictionaries of English of all

sorts. It can serve both as an introduction to lexicography for beginners and amateurs as well as research clues for lexicographers and scholars.

In spite of the wide coverage and many intriguing questions authors raise, this book could have been even better from my point of view. On the one hand, it could have been more comprehensive and updated if it had incorporated more detailed microstructure discussions in Part IV and if the analysis of linguistic data had been more from the perspectives of usage-based theories such as cognitive linguistics. There are chapters and pieces of research advocating the significance of corpora and the Internet in the evidence and entry selection. The role of users played in decision-making about inclusion and exclusion as well as the format of dictionaries have been discussed in Part IV. However, also on the readers' expectation list are studies such as the semantics of concrete words and the multiword units, illustrative examples, collocations etc., and the exploration of microstructure and the user's survey from the perspective of cognitive linguistics, as proposed by Kövecses and Csábi in *Lexicography and Cognitive Linguistics*. On the other hand, many chapters represent an exhaustive study on topics related to lexicographic research and practice — so exhaustive that at some point the reader may lose track in the profound and sophisticated elaborations and the large number of references to various quotations and unparalleled compilation experiences or in the complex explanations of complicated linguistic phenomena. The reading collection is splendid, but is less easily digested. It would be more informative and useful if the language of some authors were less obscure and abstruse and more explicit and straightforward.

Interestingly, controversies arise when those sparking ideas are in disagreement for which there is no consensus today. Hanks claims the real definition in dictionaries is meaning potential, but being cautious of the distinction between norms and exploitation and the dependency of a given word's meaning on context in chapter 7, while Heuberger proposes componential analysis to "identify distinctive features" (Durkin 2016: 33) in chapter 3. Adamska-Salaćiak, however, holds the view in chapter 9 that Šcerba's principles of providing L1 explanations of meaning in bilingual dictionaries fail in practical lexicography. This is true according to Hanks. However, the dominant translatory equivalence (or translational equivalence) in bilingual dictionaries is not always qualified for bearing the meaning potential; it reflects, instead, the most salient features of the L1 headword. To serve the end of comprehension and production for perplexed users when encountering a strange word or wrestling for an unknown expression in L2, the equivalence in the bilingual dictionary should manage to provide the meaning potential in L2 in a similar way to the one in monolingual learners' dictionaries.

As a whole, this book is a valuable addition to a set of introductory books on lexicography. The good organization of the selected topics into thematic sections and a logical sequence of chapters adds to the success of the presented subject matter. It functions as a mirror of contemporary lexicography, with

equilibrium in the layout and a structure of synchronic versus diachronic lexicography; the general concepts versus learners' and specialist lexicography, as well as special topics. The volume acts as "a guide to the most significant contours in the geography of the lexicographical world" (Durkin 2016: 1). Major issues confronting lexicography today are presented in an engaging and accessible way. It is interesting and inspiring for amateur readers and scholars of lexicography for its lucid but speculative diction and clear textual design.

### References

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