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Introduction to the Thematic Section: Towards Lexicographic Authority in Dictionaries of Economics

In HERMES 50 the editors of the thematic section on the Lexicography of Economics announced that the publication of the section would be followed by an international symposium in the field of Lexicography of Economics in general, and of Dictionaries of Economics in particular. This actually happened to be the case in November 2013, where the first *International Symposium on Dictionaries of Economics* was held at the Aarhus University from November 13-15. The Symposium was arranged by the Centre for Lexicography at the Department of Business Communication, and to the knowledge of its organisers, it was the first ever to take place entirely dedicated to Dictionaries of Economics in the broad sense of the word, i.e. Dictionaries of Macro- and Micro-Economics, Business, Trade, Commerce, etc.

In this present thematic issue of HERMES 52, the editors have chosen to follow up on this event and publish five selected papers from the Symposium that can be read as the direct continuation of the papers published in HERMES 50, which initiated the theoretical discussion on problems related to Dictionaries of Economics. The new contributions presented here have all a strong focus on innovation and on methodologies specifically designed for the development and quality insurance of dictionaries that can cater for the information needs of their users of today and tomorrow. As was introduced in HERMES 50, it should be stressed that such methodologies are particularly needed, as no systematic scientific study has ever been carried in the field. This is quite paradoxical when one takes into consideration the utmost importance in society of Economics in general, and of Dictionaries of economics in particular, and the very fact that a great number of Dictionaries of Economics of various kinds have been published for centuries. Nobody in fact knows their exact number. Besomi (2011) has listed 650 titles published since 1709, the overwhelming majority in the European languages. However, if dictionaries from other language groups and the various subfields of economics as well as dictionaries conceived to transmit knowledge or facilitate communication – including those made available on the Internet – were included, then we are probably talking about tens of thousands of dictionaries published during the last few centuries in relation to the broad field of economics.

The dictionaries published during this long period constitute an immense body of knowledge which, as far as we know, have never been subjected to a systematic study in order to draw theoretical and practical lessons for future works. Surprisingly, within lexicography – the academic discipline supposed to deal with dictionaries – only a few studies have been conducted in order to analyse economic dictionaries. In addition, these studies seem always related to a single or a limited number of such dictionaries, or to a specific approach (see for instance Kwary 2011). No lexicographical conference, symposium, or special issue of any journal has so far been dedicated to this subject (perhaps with Leroyer/Tarp 2013 as the sole exception). Within economics, or the history of economics, such systematic studies do exist, but mainly through the prism of economics and without taking the necessary account for the specific lexicographical aspects. Baruc-

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ci (2001) and Gemelli (2001), for instance, have discussed dictionaries and encyclopedias as sources of science and history of economic thought. Astigarraga, Zabalza & Almodovar (2001) have looked at the treatment of political economy in Spanish and Portuguese Dictionaries of Economics from the 18th to the 20th century. Guidi (1994) has done the same with Italian dictionaries published from 1726 to 1861. Besomi (2011) has analysed the treatment of crises and business cycles in economic dictionaries and encyclopedias during the last three hundred years. Patalano (2001) has shown the importance of Savary du Bruslons' *Dictionnaire universel du commerce* for the independent economic discourse, etc. By contrast, in the second volume of the *Oxford History of English Lexicography* (Cowie 2009), entirely dedicated to "specialized lexicography", the perhaps most important British Dictionary of Economics from the Enlightenment Era, Malachy Postlethwayt's *Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce*, published in four editions between 1751 and 1774, is not even mentioned. The same fate is shared by Richard Rolt's *New Dictionary of Trade and Commerce* (1756), Thomas Mortimer's *New and Complete Dictionary of Trade and Commerce* (1766), and many of their influential successors. Due to the evident importance and relevance of Dictionaries of Economics in education, communication and social and economic life in general, this surprising state of affairs in the field of dictionaries of economics goes against all logic.

The first paper by **Nigar Hashimzade, Georgina A. Myles, and Gareth D. Myles**, *Can Authority be Sustained while Balancing Accessibility and Formality?* addresses the central issue of crafting user-friendly, functional definitions. The authors argue that this has become an increasing lexicographic challenge for authors of dictionaries as the field of economics has recently developed into a quantitative discipline that makes extensive use of mathematical and statistical concepts. When writing a dictionary for a general audience it has to be recognised that many users will not have the necessary training in mathematics to benefit from formal definitions of mathematical concepts. In fact, it is more than likely that the user will want the dictionary to provide an accessible version of a definition that avoids mathematical notation. Providing a verbal description of a mathematical concept has the risk that the outcome is both verbose (compared to a definition using appropriate mathematical symbols) and imprecise. For the author of a dictionary this raises the question of how to resolve this conflict between accessibility and formal correctness. The authors use a range of examples from the *Oxford Dictionary of Economics* to illustrate this conflict and to assess the extent to which a non-formal definition can be viewed as authoritative.

In the second paper by **Pedro Fuertes Olivera**, *Designing Online Dictionaries of Economics: Two Opposing Views*, the author explains, in line with the theses in Olivera/Tarp 2014, that lexicographers designing specialised dictionaries are mainly split into two camps. To one camp belong lexicographers who defend that specialised lexicography is basically a sub-discipline of Applied Linguistics and therefore describe the process of making dictionaries as a craft or art rooted in linguistics traditions and methodologies. To the other camp belong lexicographers who claim that specialised lexicography is an independent academic science dealing not only with theories about recently completed and also older existing dictionaries but also about future dictionaries as planned and produced by lexicographers. The two different approaches are analysed and show the main differences regarding the role of the Internet for designing dictionaries. Both views are illustrated with recently-designed online dictionaries of Economics, particularly the view adopted regarding user's needs, functions, and sources of data. In addition, the paper elaborates on the concept of *lexicographic definition*, which in line with Myles and al. (cf. the first above mentioned paper of the thematic section) is presented as a key dictionary component.

Due to its inbuilt dynamic character, the field of Economics is subject to massive neonymy, as new terms and expressions are frequently coined by English speaking economic actors in the global economy. This lexicographic challenge is even more salient in the case of print dictionaries, as these still constitute a vast body of available lexicographic resources worldwide today, and are still being updated. In the third paper, *Lexicographical and Translation Issues in the Inclusion of English Financial Neonyms in Spanish Bilingual Dictionaries of Economics on Paper*, **José**

Mateo reviews briefly the current situation of bilingual dictionaries of economics on paper and their viability in a near future. He then examines the specific lexicographical problem of translating English financial neonyms, which appear practically every day in print and internet media, into Spanish Dictionaries of Economics on paper, normally published in the lapse of years. The gap between the immediacy of the internet and the delay of printing, causes serious problems to lexicographers specialized in Economics especially when questionable translations of such neonyms are already circulating on the web. This includes the ample presence of electronic glossaries and dictionaries, easily accessible by translators and professionals but whose reliability, on the other hand, is not always guaranteed. Finally, a more active role is recommended to bilingual lexicographers in Economics by taking advantage of internet information media services and by joining efforts with finance experts and professionals.

The fourth paper by **Deny A. Kwary** *The Evolution of Dictionaries of Economics: from a Glossary to a Lexicographical Information System* investigates the future of dictionaries of economics and the needs of business people. It outlines new solutions, as recent advances in information and communication technology have created new opportunities for lexicographers working on English dictionaries for business people. Such users need to keep up with business news, and they need a dictionary to help them understand the meanings of new words and expressions in business news. Current dictionaries only focus on the reception of written text and rarely include the new words promptly. The dictionary should transform into a lexicographical information system, i.e. an organized system of components that provides information to solve lexicographical problems. The components should include a voice recognition module, a tooltip and a concordancer. The voice recognition then transforms speech into written text, the tooltip enables the users to see the equivalent or definition of a word, while the concordancer provides immediate access to the actual context of use of a word not yet included in the dictionary.

As already pointed out above in this introduction to the thematic section, the lexicography of economics is characterised by its prolific nature, hundreds of dictionaries of economics of all kind being accessible on the Web, and by the inconsistency of its general lexicographic quality, as many of these resources do not even comply with basic lexicographic quality requirements and lack any kind of lexicographic authority. How can users then make a proper choice and rely on dictionary resources they have found on the Web? In the fifth paper, *A Guide (not only) for Economics Dictionaries*, **Valerio Caruso** presents a lexicographic quality evaluation system designed to identify the best resources available to match the specific information needs of three kinds of prospective users (layman, semi-experts, and experts), both in cognitive and communicative tasks, and with special reference to two types of situations in which dictionaries of economics are frequently used, namely translation and learning. The system is based on a systematic analysis of dictionaries features in which evaluation forms are managed by a relational database which not only collects the data but also assesses quality automatically. The profiles identified and the scores assigned are then discussed critically. Such a system can help dictionary users to find the best resources suited for different consultation needs, using pre-defined options or customised searches as well.

The editors of this thematic section of HERMES 52 hope that these new contributions, in alliance with those previously published in HERMES 50, will shed some theoretical and practical light on Dictionaries of Economics of today and tomorrow, and hereby take steps to establish lexicographic authority in this kind of dictionaries, which was our main concern when preparing the Symposium.

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