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Not Business as Usual: The Lexicography of Economics in the 21st Century

Introduction to the thematic section

In the European context, specialized dictionaries within the broad field of economics have a several hundred year-old history expressed in the publication of thousands of monolingual, bilingual or plurilingual dictionaries with various functions, sizes, languages, specific subjects, qualities, etc. However, although these dictionaries – or at least some of them – have been discussed and subjected to scientific analysis from various angles in the literature on economics or economic history (see e.g. Besomi 2011), they have only occasionally been treated in the lexicographical literature and, according to our knowledge, so far no systematic study of this branch of lexicography has been carried out. In order to start remedying this evident and surprising lacuna within theoretical lexicography, this special issue of *Hermes* makes up a first step which will be followed up by an International Symposium on Dictionaries of Economics with a special view to online dictionaries, organized by the Centre for Lexicography, Aarhus, in November this year.

The main objective of the thematic section is to take new steps in the theoretical discussion of the problems related to these dictionaries, whether printed or electronic. It deals with present and future dictionaries of economics, i.e. dictionaries of the 21st Century. The recurrent theme of this special issue is the need for dictionaries of economics within business and education, their respective functions, the problems related to the various types of economic dictionaries as well as their content, structure and accessibility. The special issue also includes a discussion of the type of expert knowledge needed to design and produce high-quality dictionaries of economics that meet the needs of the 21st Century users, as well as a discussion of manuals of economics. Although not dictionaries in a strict sense, manuals share some of the functions and features of dictionaries (see e.g. Tarp 2008) and they can therefore be seen as lexicographically structured information tools.

Dictionaries – and manuals – must be regarded as needs-adapted information tools (see e.g. Leroyer 2011), designed to help their users in relevant situations in which specific information on economics or the corresponding specialised language is needed. Such tools do not only play a central role for business people within and across borders, but are also extremely important in business studies, and particularly business language studies, including the formation of professional translators. The internet as the new global media platform has provided the framework of new dynamic information systems, in which dictionaries, manuals and other lexicographic tools will play a central role. This calls for the development of innovative dictionary concepts featuring the use of cutting edge internet technologies (see e.g. Tarp 2012). But this development also calls for expert knowledge, and for interdisciplinary cooperation.

The first paper *Economic dictionaries on the web* (**Daniele Besomi**) deals with ‘classical’ dictionaries (most of them being originally published in the 19th century, reposted in pdf form or as images by libraries or Google books or payment services of similar). It also deals with ‘modern’ dictionaries, some of them having a double life in paper and online, others being only online. The article deplores the lack of true lexicographic adaptation to new online technologies, as many dic-

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tionaries available on the web are simply reproductions of paper-based design. This calls for innovative developments in the field.

The second paper *Specialised Dictionaries of Economics and Translation* (**Pedro A. Fuertes Olivera**) describes the “Dictionary of Economics” in terms of the Function Theory of Lexicography. It defends the thesis that such information tools must be designed for assisting specific users to solve the specific needs they have in a translation situation. In particular, it focusses on the solutions offered for individualizing data retrieval, which in turn will eliminate the so-called *information stress* or *information death* produced when users retrieve so much data that they cannot cope with it. Such a process is illustrated in two recent online dictionaries, the *Diccionario Inglés-Español de Contabilidad: Traducción* (Fuertes-Olivera et al. 2012a) and the *Diccionario Inglés-Español de Contabilidad: Traducción de Frases y Expresiones* (Fuertes-Olivera et al. 2012b), designed for translating English accounting texts into Spanish. These two dictionaries are considered high quality 21st Century dictionaries, e.g., as candidates for assisting in the training of professional translators within the field of Economics, one of the topics discussed in this Special Issue of *Hermes*.

The third paper *Domain-specific knowledge in lexicography: how it helps lexicographers and users of accounting dictionaries intended for communicative usage situations* (**Sandro Nielsen**) deals with the crucial importance of specialized knowledge in a user-needs determined framework. It also shows some of the shortcomings of conventional terminology management in the development of specialized dictionaries, and reconciles past experience and new opportunities in e-lexicography.

The fourth paper *Specialised dictionaries for LSP learners in Hungarian theory and practice of lexicography* (**Ildikó Fata**) investigates the pedagogical dimension of dictionaries of economics in the Hungarian context, particularly the expectations and requirements articulated by Hungarian specialised lexicographers towards modern, innovative, printed and electronic specialised dictionaries for LSP learners. The paper also includes the presentation of a Hungarian publishing company that plays an active role in publishing modern specialised dictionaries. In this connection, three bilingual dictionaries of economics are reviewed as to how much they comply with the expectations from modern, up-to-date printed and electronic specialised dictionaries for LSP learners.

The fifth paper *Principles for the Design of Business Dictionaries on Mobile Applications* (**Deny A. Kwary**) takes as its point of departure the rapid growth of mobile applications for smartphones in the past few years, which has consequences on lexicography and dictionary products in general, and dictionaries for business in particular. The idea is that business people on the move need fast and easy access to economic information in specific situations. The review of current mobile business dictionaries reveals that these dictionary applications have not taken into account the needs of the users and the technological features of smartphones. The current mobile dictionaries still resemble either their electronic versions or even worse their printed versions, and the paper tries therefore to formulate principles for the efficient design of business dictionaries for mobile applications.

The sixth paper *The function theory and its application on manuals of economics* (**Ángel Rodríguez Gallardo**) analyses manuals of economics from the function point of view. A classification and typology of manuals based on the communication purposes is established. The paper also suggests improvements in the internal composition of the manuals based on a detailed analysis of their contents architecture and the rhetorical movements in which they are arranged. It is concluded that the new generation of manuals of economics, which quite often are of the multi-modal kind, is going to be a significant step forward in the relationship between situations of use and learning processes.

Many other topics could have been included in this special issue, but we hope the reader will be inspired and contribute to new and even better future dictionaries and manuals of economics.

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