REVIEWs


The papers collected in this volume cover a wide range of topics dealing mainly with phraseology, but also with lexicology, lexicography, semantics, sociolinguistics and contrastive linguistics. Anna Wierzbicka’s opening paper (‘Primitivos semánticos y universales léxicos: teoría y algunos ejemplos’) advances a Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) for the description of semantic and grammatical primitives on the grounds of a universal, innate *lingua mentalis*. She illustrates her point by studying the expression of emotions such as anger, surprise and sadness in English, German, Polish and Russian. Dimitrij Dobrovol’skij and Elizabeth Pirainen’s contribution (‘Sobre los símbolos: aspectos cognitivos y culturales del lenguaje figurativo’) focuses on the idea of shared mental images as a key to interpreting the relationships between literal and figurative meanings of words and phrases. Cognitive semantics provides a sound theoretical framework for the analysis of conceptual metaphors in several cultures. However, cognitive models should be complemented by cultural semiotics (e.g. secondary codes) in order to explain adequately culture-bound figurative language. The analysis of three symbolic domains (animals, colours and numbers) and their translation equivalents is a good example of the kind of methodology to be used. Idioms with body parts as constituents (somatisms) form another well-studied group of phraseological units. In a paper entitled ‘Revisando los fraseologismos somáticos’, František Čermák reflects on anthropomorphemic somatisms and kinegrams, i.e. somatic phraseologisms associated with a particular movement or gesture in Czech, English and Chinese. ‘La especificidad nacional y cultural en fraseología’ is the title of another paper by Dimitrij Dobrovol’skij. The author explores the cultural specificity of idioms in Russian and German from a two-fold perspective: the contrastive approach (interlinguistic comparison) with a bias to introspection (psycholinguistic salience and intralinguistic analysis).

A redefinition of linguistic taboo (taboo words) and linguistic interdiction (taboo concepts) is provided by Miguel Casas Gómez (‘Tabú de palabra e interdicción conceptual’) with a view to defining euphemism and dysphemism from a discoursal, pragmatic and psycholinguistic point of view. Elena Mironenko Bielova (‘Lexemas “adjuntos” en la terminología rusa: acerca de la reubicación léxica entre lenguajes especializados’) proposes a classification of commonly shared scientific and technical terms (adjunct terms) into obligatory, thematically conditioned and complementary with special reference to the railway sublanguage in Russian. Miriam Olejarová’s paper (‘Las propiedades de las locuciones idiomáticas’) revolves round the much debated topic of the defining properties of idioms as compared to free word-combinations: a major characteristic appears to be the fixation of internal anomalies. Harald Burger’s contribution (‘El concepto de variación en fraseología’) revises the notion of variation in phraseology. The author points out the overlapping nature of diasystematic variants, on the one hand, and the psycholinguistic dimension of variation in connection with discourse manipulations and the creative effects of phraseological units in speech and writing. In a similar vein, Barbara Wotjak establishes a distinction between puns or wordplay (Wortspiel) and language games (Sprachspiel) in a paper entitled...
Consideraciones sobre las conexiones y las modificaciones cotextuales de los fraseologismos: aspectos semánticos y cognitivos, donde también considera el complejo interplay of both readings (literal and idiomatic) of a given phraseologism, account being taken of its surrounding co-text. Mª Auxiliadora Castillo Carballo’s paper (‘Un nuevo tipo de locuciones: las adjetivo-adverbiales’) propone a new, distinctive category of idioms in Spanish, the adjective-adverbial locution, which can modify either nouns or verbs (e.g. unos caballeros como Dios manda / trabajar como Dios manda). Maribel Tercedor Sánchez (‘Hacia una taxonomía de unidades fraseológicas en el discurso biomédico’) aplica el Meaning-Text Model to the description of collocations in English medical texts within the framework of the OncoTerm project (Ref. PB98–1342, 1999–2002). Ludmila Meškova’s paper (‘Las expresiones fijas en el francés de los negocios’) also reflects a growing interest in the phraseological units that characterize specialized communication, with special reference to the teaching of terminological phraseological units in business French. Eva Muñoz Raya (‘El giovanilese: incorporación del léxico de la drogadicción’) se centra en un tema de interés de jóvenes de diferentes contextos sociales.

La próxima contribución (‘Acerca de los refranes machistas ucranianos: enfoque contrastivo’), de Olga Tarnovska que compara male chauvinist proverbs in Spanish and Ukrainian. Aunque sus hallazgos reflejan ambos contextos, en un contexto más machista y paternalista, los refranes revelan un mayor mesquindad y patronizante hacia las mujeres. Este tema se desarrolla en la próxima contribución de Eva María Mansfeld de Agüero y Antonio Pamies Bertrán (‘La relación hombre-mujer en los refranes paraguayos’), que se centra en Guaíra proverbs que se refieren a hombres y mujeres, cuyo principal rasgo es un androcentrismo marcado que refleja una relación íntima entre lenguaje, pensamiento y creencias. ‘La expresión semántica de la muerte: entre la etnolingüística y la paremiología’ es el título de la próxima contribución de Zuzana Profantová, que examina expresiones populares de muerte en la folklore eslovaca. La próxima contribución (‘Los dialectos y sus aportaciones al diccionario de una lengua: el caso del veneciano y el español’), de Luis Luque Toro se centra en el estudio de la mecanización de las lenguas Bettinian y Venetian dialect - con referencia a los términos de uso y a las unidades fraseológicas diarias. Además, el autor aborda la relación entre Catalán y Venetian. In ‘Aspectos sociolingüísticos de la semántica léxica’, Francisco J. García Marcos critica el modelo de Labov y argumenta en favor de otros discursos y comunicaciones que se refieren a la semántica. Un libro de Julio Calvo Pérez (‘Entrada en diccionarios monolingües y bilingües’) redefine el concepto de entrada en diccionarios monolingües y bilingües (Spanish-Quechua) en el contexto de contrastivo y tipológico metalexicografía; y Esperanza San Román Vílas ilustra la posibilidad del modelo de Meaning-Text Model para la compilación de un diccionario combinatorio y explicativo de español (‘Presentación de una entrada lexicográfica para un Diccionario Explicativo y Combinatorio: “Esperanza”’). Juan de Dios Luque Ramos (‘Procedimientos universales de formación de términos abstractos y técnicos’) trae el tema a un ojo con su tratamiento de nomenclaturas de Latin and Greek origen y técnicas especializadas para la expresión de conceptos abstractos y complejos.

As can be easily inferred from the above comments, most papers appear to be influenced by the various approaches to phraseology developed in Russia and other East European countries – small wonder since both editors have been involved in several EC funded Tempus-Tacit projects (T–100676/95 and CP–20025/98) on combinatorics, foreign languages and new technologies. However, the incorporation of foreign theories has posed some problems. Unfortunately, the translation into Spanish of all the original papers has proved to be a questionable decision in the end. There are many translation errors in the book, as when *creature* has been rendered as *Sp. criatura*, instead of a more...
appropriate equivalent in this context, such as reptil or animal (p. 54); or Westmünsterländisch² (p. 49) has been kept as a German direct loan; and the Meaning Text Model (MTM) has been left untranslated in one place (p. 145), but appears in Spanish as Teoría Sentido-Texto (TST) in another (p. 277). Other examples illustrate grammatical, terminological and orthographic mistakes. For instance, corpus extensivo (p. 30) instead of corpus extenso; numero (sic), on page 63; no estándar, no-estándar and estandarizados as standing variants (pp. 66 and 72); experimento (p. 67) instead of experimento; importuno (p. 68) instead of inopurtuno; locutions (sic) idiomáticas on page 99; or con una edad comprendida entre 14 y 16 años (p. 67), instead of the correct wording con edades comprendidas entre los 14 y los 16 años; no significa que este sistema terminológico representa (sic) una cantidad (p.5), instead of the correct verbal form represente; dotadas de un alto especificidad (sic) nacional y cultural on page 63, and so on. There are even further problems in connection with the transliteration of Russian proper names due to the unclear and asystematic romanising system that has been used, thus Dimitriï Dobrovol’skii on pages 29, 30, 63, etc., but Dimitrij Dobrovols’kij on pages 42, 51, 77, etc.; Mel’cuk on pages 277, 283 and 284, but Mel’čuk in other parts of the book (pp. 145, 156, 157).

Despite such shortcomings, however, the present volume represents no doubt a major landmark in the advancement of phraseology as a discipline in Spain. This emerging field of research has been progressing geometrically throughout the whole Iberian Peninsula, as witness the number of recent books, monographs and collections that have appeared in the last ten years (cf. René Pellén 2001; Corpus Pastor and Morvay 2002; Corpus Pastor 2003). This provides much food for thought.

Notes
1 This is clearly a calque, as criatura usually means “young child” and (poet.) “human being”, but very rarely and only in literary works, “creature” (cf. DEA).
2 In Spanish, “diálecto hablado al oeste de la ciudad de Münster (Alemania)”.

References

Gloria Corpas Pastor
University of Malaga
gcorpas@uma.es
This bilingual dictionary was first published in October 2001. The German-Italian section is edited by Susanne Kolb, whereas Luisa Giacoma is responsible for the Italian-German section. The dictionary presents over 122,000 entries and over 210,000 translated senses. The German orthographic reforms of 1998 are taken into account, so that both the old and the new spellings are given for each unit involved in the reform of the writing system.

The work offers a fresh picture of present-day German and Italian. Moreover, differences in style and register as well as rare or unusual entries or senses are taken into account and are appropriately labelled.

Both sections include the most relevant new technical, political, and business terms. However, entries or senses of an entry which belong to specific fields are taken into account – and are assigned a label corresponding to that field – also if they are used in the common core of the Standard variety described. For example, the Italian word ipoclorito enters the Italian-German section, but not the word anidro, which is seemingly considered not to belong to the common core of Standard Italian. The same requirement must be met by entries and/or senses of a given entry which take the label slang and have been developed into a diastratically marked sub-standard variety of the language considered. Some widespread usages do not enter the dictionary, e.g. fett is also equivalent to betrunken in everyday usage. It can be intensified giving the form vollfett, and young people use these forms with the same meaning as cool. But such innovations are too recent and perhaps ephemeral. So to neglect them is wholly justified.

A serious effort is made to describe German as a pluricentric language, hence Austrian and Swiss variants of many items are given (e.g. besides ‘Binnendeutsch’ Kohl, Austrian Kraut and Swiss Kabis are mentioned). With regard to Italian, particular attention is paid to its most relevant regional variants (with an amusing misprint: it. pirla – a Northern Italian form – is labelled ‘norrd’, i.e. Northern German).

The dictionary is intended mainly for students, and the approach to the description of the entries is quite traditional, though with some relevant innovations.

As regards homonymy, there may be more than one entry for a form, if the different senses have no relationship or are considered not to be easily semantically related. A striking instance is the treatment of the German verb bestehen, which corresponds to four different entries, depending on its syntactic behaviour (the first entry is for the transitive verb, the second is for the intransitive without complements, the third is for the intransitive verb with the constructions auf etwas/in etwas and the last is equivalent in meaning to existieren). One may well wonder whether such proliferation could be reduced.

Headwords are printed in bold characters. Unfortunately, no phonetic transcription is given. However, for German entries word-stress is indicated by signs under the letter or letters corresponding to the stressed vowel or diphthong: for short vowels there is a point (e.g. kindisch), while for the long ones a line is used (e.g. Rätsel). For Italian entries, word-stress is indicated by a grave accent, which is acute in the case of closed [e] and [o], e.g. vönti, bòtte.

With regard to entries having a paradigm of forms, the form chosen to represent verbal entries is the infinitive; German adjectives are given in the endungslose Form, which can also function as an adverb. Nouns deriving from Past Participles through
conversion enter the dictionary with the case ending –e, e.g. *Abgeordnete*. Since the form can correspond both to the masculine and the feminine gender, this choice is well-founded. The other entries having a declension paradigm are given the form of the Nominative singular, with the obvious exception of *pluralia tantum* – only.

The description is structured in quite traditional terms. First of all, nominal and verbal entries are followed by morpho(no)logical information about the various relevant word-forms. Such elements are put in angle brackets: for nominal items of the German-Italian section, the Genitive singular and the Nominative plural are given, e.g.

Kompless <-es, -e>

The ‘difficult’ or irregular plural endings for Italian nouns are given in the Italian-German section, e.g.

chirùrgo, (-a) <-ghi rar, -ghe>

– where the label ‘rar’ is indicative of a rare form and applies to the following ending -gi.

Tense forms – i.e. the 3rd p.sing. in the Präsens, the 1st p.sing. in the Präteritum, and the Past Participle – are given for the German non-weak verbs, i.e. both for strong and for irregular verbs, e.g. *fahren* <-fährt, fuhr, gefahren> and *nennen* <-nennt, nannte, genannt>. This represents valuable support when building most forms of the paradigm of a given verb. In the Italian-German section, only a few forms of Italian irregular verbs are given: for example, *andäre* is followed by <-irr vado, andai, andato>, which is clearly not enough for students of Italian. Perhaps such information should be enriched with further frequent irregular forms.

As for adjectives, the comparative and superlative are indicated for German items when the vowel in the stem undergoes metaphony (*Umlaut*), as in *alt* <-älter, älteste> or in *größ* <-größer, größte>. A certain discrepancy between the two given forms in brackets can be observed: the Superlatives have also a Nominative case-ending –e adjoined to the Superlative morph, whereas the corresponding treatment is not given for the Comparative form. This could be explained by the typical position of Superlatives, which are preceded by a definite article. But students of German could be misled by it. In fact, a possessive pronoun could precede as well, requiring a ‘strong’ declension, as in *mein größter Erfolg*. Moreover, this item can be used as an adverb, too. But in this case the Superlative would be *größten*, as in *am größten*. It seems that Superlative forms like *größte* could be best replaced by forms without case endings, e.g. *größt-*.

German strong verbs with inseparable prefixes receive the label ‘irr’, i.e. ‘irregular’, because they do not take the affix ge- of the Past Participle, as in the following case: *betréffen* <-irr, ohne ge->. But weak verbs with the same kind of prefix and with the same behaviour in the Past Participle are not labelled as ‘irregular’, e.g. *beantworten* <-ohne ge->. This discrepancy seems difficult to explain.

This bracketed sequence of information is followed by symbols indicating morphological categories, such as grammatical gender for nominal and the ‘genus verbi’ (being transitive or intransitive) for verbal items. Interestingly enough, this careful and valuable analysis makes it unnecessary to adjoin a symbol for the word-class of verbs and nouns. For example, in the Italian-German section the analysis of the unit *cerotto* begins as follows:

cerotto m Pflaster n
where a further symbol indicating 'substantive' is redundant, although it could be helpful for students.

The morphological introductory notes can be followed by labels pointing out stylistic or field-specific usages. If the item under consideration admits a quite elementary analysis, the translation(s) follow(s) immediately. In this position various possible renderings may appear, which are taken to be in a relation of synonymy. For each of them, grammatical notes are also given, as in the following description of a nominal item in the German-Italian section:

**Kla.mm** <-, -en> f forra f, orrido m, gola f

The analysis of polysemic items – i.e. the great majority of the entries – is organized as a hierarchical structure. At the first level the various usages are grouped according to grammatical features and to each group is assigned a Roman letter. This method is employed in particular to distinguish (a) the adjectival and the adverbial usage of German units like *schnell, gut, interessant*; (b) the two grammatical classes of an Italian unit like *amico*, which functions both as an adjective and as a noun; (c) the transitive, intransitive, reflexive and/or impersonal usages of verbal units in both languages.

At a lower level the various senses of the given entry are given. Although Arabic numerals are chosen to distinguish between them, there is not a primary, ‘literal’ usage followed by secondary, ‘derived’ ones. They tend to be treated as belonging to the same rank, and the ordering refers to usage frequency.

Senses are described as a rule both from a paradigmatic and a syntagmatic perspective. The former has to do with paraphrases, hyperonyms and/or explanations for each meaning of a given item, before it is properly translated into the target language, while the latter not only concerns the grammatical construction(s) which an item best fits into, but also indicates the lexical solidarities via collocations. This method of description is a decisive tool for obtaining an appropriate translation. In fact, collocation offer ‘condensed’ examples. They appear in the form of labels playing the role of instructions for the correct use of a given lexical item. They are written in small capitals and are put in braces, thus accompanying the translation proposed. There are three kinds of collocators, according to their grammatical relation with the explained occurrence of the given entry. If the collocator is a subject related to a verbal entry, then small capitals are italicized, as with {MILCH, WASSER} in

`{+ MILCH, WASSER} bollire: etw zum Kochen bringen, far bollire qc, portare qc a ebollizione`

Small capitals are not italicized in other types of relation to the occurrence of the given entry, e.g.

2 <sing> (Verteilung) {+ DECKEN, ESSEN, HILFSGÜTER, MEDIKAMENTE, PROVIAN1} distribuzione f
3 <sing> (Aushändigung) {+ BÜCHER, GEPÄCK, POST} consegna f; distribuzione f; {+ DOKUMENTE} rilascio m
4 <sing> (Verkauf) {+ FAHRKARTEN} vendita f; {+ AKTIEN, ANLEIHEN, BANKNOTEN, BRIEFMARKEN} emissione f

Finally, small capitals are not italicized in all other types of relation to the occurrence of the given entry, e.g.
This kind of information is consistent with a ‘lexical approach’ (Lewis 1993): the occurrence of a unit depends on the other units on the syntagmatic level.

While many two-way dictionaries take into account grammatical constructions, mainly for verbal items, thus incorporating (morpho-)syntactic information into the lexicon, only a few propose a comparable attempt to describe the system of collocations (see Blumenthal and Rovere 1998).

One of the editors’ purposes is to facilitate the search for any idiom and its counterpart(s) in the target language. They have adopted a grammatical criterion. First, an idiom appears only once. Then there is a preference hierarchy of the following type: if an idiom contains a noun, then it must be looked up under that entry: so e.g. er versteht nur Bahnhof appears under Bahnhof. If there is more than one noun, then the first must be considered (e.g. cogliere la palla al balzo is to be found under palla). In the absence of nouns, the first verb is taken into account, e.g. predicare bene, razzolare male is to be sought under predicare; in the absence of a verb, the adjective is relevant, e.g. ricco sfondato can be found under ricco, but povero in canna appears under canna. The same hierarchy holds also in the ordering of idioms within an entry. This criterion is very useful and makes it easy to find idiomatic expressions. It is undoubtedly a great advantage of the Giacoma-Kolb dictionary.

However, some inaccuracies arise when comparing the treatment of idioms in both sections, as the translation proposed in the one may be absent in the other. For example, in the Italian-German section the idiom predicare bene, razzolare male is translated Wasser predigen und Wein trinken, which can by no means be found in the German-Italian section. Similar problems may arise with proverbs: a German idiom like kommt Zeit, kommt Rat is translated as la notte porta consiglio, but the same proverb is translated as die Nacht bringt Rat in the Italian section. As a result, an Italian student of German will never come across the proverb kommt Zeit, kommt Rat.

Nevertheless, all such difficulties, which are to be found in all dictionaries, can easily be overcome. They by no means prejudice the value of the whole work. In fact, thanks mainly to the methodology adopted, this could well be considered one of the best bilingual dictionaries of any language pair anywhere. The editors are to be congratulated on such a work, which will be relevant and useful for years to come.

References


Giovanni Gobber
Dipartimento di Lingue
Università Cattolica
20121 Milano
giovanni.gobber@unicatt.it
The twenty-four papers published under this title cover an extremely broad range of topics relating to both phraseology and European languages and include references to lexicology, lexicography, sociolinguistics, and contrastive linguistics. There is a non-explicit but clear three-way division in this volume, the first dealing mainly with general phraseology. John Sinclair’s opening paper, ‘The Search for Units of Meaning’, questions the status of the word as the primary unit of lexical meaning, since dictionaries demonstrate that this is not always the case, as for example in the case of compounds, phrasal verbs, and phraseological units, ‘where the independence of the word is compromised in some way’ (p. 10). In order to confirm this claim, Sinclair makes use of a corpus, The Bank of English, consisting of more than 210 million words, and analyses the collocations naked eye and true feelings and the verb brook. Stefano Federici, Simonetta Montemagni and Vito Pirrelli’s contribution (‘Analogy-Based Automatic Acquisition of Phraseology’), uses a highly technical analysis to study the way syntactically local contexts are associated with a given lemma. The article concludes that the so-called ‘open-choice principle’ is not followed as frequently as it is assumed to be. Josep Guia i Martín (‘Hacia una caracterización fraseológica de los estilos literarios’) suggests the use of a series of corpora, comparison between which may give some idea of different levels of equivalence as a way of defining the style and methods used in the translation of phraseological units in literary texts. This paper is, however, just an introduction to a method that needs to be further developed.

Mª Auxiliadora Castillo Carballo, in ‘Lingüística del corpus y fraseología: algunas consideraciones sobre las locuciones verbales,’ makes use of corpus linguistics in order to demonstrate the usefulness of Spanish verbal locutions to the speaker in comparison with other types of multi-word units. Castillo Carballo comments that the most common pattern for verbal locutions is the one consisting of verb + direct object, for example, matar el tiempo. The reason for their widespread use is that these phraseological units have a less complicated structure and are usually more expressive than more complex patterns. Juan Manuel García Platero’s ‘Locuciones nominales en un tesoro del andaluz’ analyses the definition and boundaries of nominal locutions as a first step, while, at a second stage, classifying and identifying some of the locutions found by him in a thesaurus from the south of Spain. An approach to oaths and curses in Dutch is provided by Piet G. J. van Sterkenburg (‘A Flood of Profanity in Dutch. Phraseological Units or not?’) from both a psychological and lexicographical point of view. Van Sterkenburg notes the spread of cursing to all social classes in the past few years, but, at the same time, considers that a further study of cursing needs to be made. Germán Conde Tarrio’s paper (‘Hacia la verificación práctica de una teoría del refrán: Galicia, un ejemplo de estudio’) revises, with the help of a survey, the defining characteristics of proverbs, i.e. their anonymity, antiquity, brevity, didactic and popular nature, invariability, and rhyming structure. Conde Tarrio considers that the presence of all these features should not be insisted on, since there are proverbs by right that do not satisfy all the requirements traditionally set.

In the next paper, ‘No hay que estarse con los brazos cruzados. Algunas observaciones acerca del significado de expresiones idiomáticas verbales del español actual’, Gerd Wotjak proposes an approach to the study of Spanish idiomatic verbal expressions, focussed, in this case, on phraseological units with names of body parts as constituents. In a similar vein, Mario García-Page Sánchez analyses, in a paper entitled...
‘El numeral en las expresiones fijas’, fixed expressions whose common elements are
umeral adjectives or pronouns. García-Page Sánchez notices that the majority of
numerals contained in fixed expressions belong to the first elements of the numeric table
and, at the same time, that hyperbole is an important part of these fixed expressions.

‘Describing Diachronic Change in English Phraseology’ is the title of the next essay, by
Peter Howarth, who examines variation in phraseology and the way it can be approached,
with special reference to collocations and how they should be treated in lexicographic
nomenclatures. Lexicography in relation to phraseology is indeed the central topic of
Section Two of the volume under review. The first paper in this section is Manuel Alvar
Ezquerra’s ‘Unidades fraseológicas definidas como de sentido o significado claro en el
diccionario de María Moliner’, in which the author criticizes the way Maria Moliner’s
Diccionario de uso del español treats, especially in its first edition, some phraseological
units, labelled by her as transparent phraseological units, while, according to Alvar
Ezquerra (p. 235), ‘Cuando alguien va a consultar las páginas de un repertorio es porque
desconoce aquello que va a buscar, posee alguna duda, o desea aumentar sus saberes.’
The proof of this confusion is the fact that, attached to some of these transparent
phraseological units, are further explanations of their meaning. In the next paper, ‘El
significado de las unidades fraseológicas en los diccionarios monolingües del español:
eto de las locuciones’, Juan Martínez Marín compares the treatment of locutions
provided in five Spanish monolingual general dictionaries. The results of the comparison
conclude that common Spanish speech formulae, such as o sea or así pues, appear in
none of the dictionaries examined. However, an evolution in this area can be noted: more
recent dictionaries treat speech formulae very satisfactorily. Such is the case with Vox’s
Diccionario de Uso of 2002. A wider approach to this topic is further developed in the
next contribution by Leonor Ruiz Gurillo (‘Cómo integrar la fraseología en los
diccionarios monolingües’), who thinks that the main objections to the treatment of
phraseology by dictionaries are the absence of clear criteria and the uneven processing
of the diverse types of phraseological units. Ruiz Gurillo therefore suggests including
collocations, idioms and pragmatic formulae in general dictionaries and labelling them
according to both grammatical and semantic criteria.

In ‘Descubrir América en la fraseología’, Károly Morvay limits the focus of his study
to Latin-American Spanish phraseological units. After analysing some of the leading
Spanish monolingual dictionaries, Morvay considers the convenience of paying more
attention to phraseological and especially diatopic variation, since most of the
dictionaries mishandle these two features. Morvay provides two facts in support of his
conclusions: the extended reading of Latin-American literature by ‘peninsular’ readers
and the increasing export of movies and sitcoms from Latin American countries.

Phraseological treatment in the Oxford Dictionary of English Idioms (1983) and the
Collins Cobuild Dictionary of Idioms (1995) is the main focus of Patrick Hanks’
‘Dictionaries of Idioms and Phraseology in English’. According to Hanks, comparison
of the idioms selected, metalanguage and exemplification in both lexicographic works
makes the value of corpora stand out, since frequency-based lexicography is considered
to be much more accurate. Mª del Pilar Rodríguez Reina’s essay, ‘Cómo abordan la
fraseología los diccionarios bilingües italiano-español del siglo XX desde perspectivas
marinas’, studies, from a contrastive point of view, Italian and Spanish nautical
phraseology as recorded in contemporary bilingual dictionaries. The conclusions
Rodríguez Reina reaches are clear: independently of the frustrating evidence that
maritime phraseology hardly exists at all in dictionaries, quantity does not necessarily
implies quality – as a proof, the biggest dictionary is not the best one: one of the
medium-size dictionaries is the best at treating nautical phraseology. Félix Kindelán
Delís and Leonel Ruiz Mirayes’ ‘Estudio etimológico de algunos fraseologismos
provenientes del inglés' is a brief study of the influence of American – above all spoken American – English on Cuban phraseological units. The authors' proposal is, basically, the implementation of a computer-based compilation of phraseological units, because of the better opportunities for information search and storage that this would entail. Delfin Carbonell Basset's paper ('Lexicografía fraseológica bilingüe: castellano e inglés'), a conclusion to the second section of the book, expresses the author's doubts about the supposed reliability of dictionaries and, in this respect, illustrates the lack of accuracy in all the lexicographic works analysed. Similarly, Carbonell Basset comes to the conclusion that phraseology – especially with reference to informal language – is poorly treated in dictionaries. The author offers a remedy to this weakness: adequate training in phraseology is required for compilers and lexicographers to obtain high-quality dictionary treatment.

The last section of the book starts with Dmitrij Dobrovol'skij's 'Idioms in Contrast: a Functional View'. From the title of the article it is not difficult to gather that this section deals with phraseology and translation equivalence. Dobrovol'skij claims that, prior to the study of contrastive phraseology, it is necessary to provide realistic techniques to find adequate equivalents when analysing cross-linguistically. For that reason, he highlights the importance of establishing a series or parameters – semantic, syntactic, pragmatic – to aid in the search for that equivalence. German-Spanish translation in relation to idioms with the names of body parts as constituents is the theme of Carmen Mellado Blanco's contribution, 'Formas estereotipadas de realización no verbal en alemán y español: los cinegramas desde un enfoque contrastivo-histórico'. This author writes about the different equivalence levels existing between both languages, elements that are closely related to the principle of the so-called 'phraseological Europeanisms'. Immediately afterwards, in ‘Consideraciones sobre la búsqueda de correspondencias paremiológicas (francés-español)’, Julia Sevilla Muñoz illustrates the laborious task of the process of phraseological translation based on the production of terminological records. The main object of these records is to achieve Spanish equivalents for French phraseological units and to establish an adequate gradation of them. French and Spanish are also the languages involved in the next paper, 'Locuciones, giros y modismos del español y su correspondencia en francés', by Jesús Cantera Ortiz de Urbina. Cantera Ortiz de Urbina's paper is actually a brief introduction to the main difficulties posed by the translation of Spanish phraseology into French. For that reason it is necessary to approach the translation of phraseological units regarding toponyms, antroponyms and other cultural aspects, such as the translation of phraseology relating to the art of bullfighting. A good knowledge of both language and culture is required if one is to succeed in finding phraseological equivalence. Carmen Valero Garcés' ‘El estereotipo en la comunicación: uso y traducción de fórmulas rutinarias en inglés y en español’ emphasises the difficulties faced in translating routine formulae from or into English and Spanish. As regards this kind of formula, Valero Garcés notices that Spanish routine formulae are more numerous than English, which appears to be an additional obstacle to translating this type of phraseological unit, made even more severe by the presence of a strong cultural component. Gloria Corpas Pastor's last but not least ‘Acerca de la (in)traducibilidad de la fraseología’ splendidly closes the volume and also the section dealing with the difficulty of phraseological translation. Corpas Pastor considers that, even though this may be a painstaking task, adequate translations are attainable. In this spirit, she deals with the different possible equivalence levels and, especially, with various translation procedures, i.e. indirect procedures – équivalence, paraphrase, omission, and compensation – and direct procedures – loan and calque.

In conclusion, this is a well planned compilation of articles – not surprisingly, given the editor's reputation in the field – written by an impressive list of outstanding authors.
recognized not only in Spain, but also in international phraseology circles. The volume without doubt represents a milestone in phraseology, but has also been a starting point for further research on the topic, leading to more recent publications (e.g. Corpas Pastor and Morvay 2002 Corpas Pastor 2003). Long live phraseology!

References

Jorge Leiva Rojo
Universidad Pablo de Olavide
Sevilla
Spain
jjleiroj@dhuma.upo.es


‘Because dictionaries suggest authority, scholarship, and precision, they have frequently had a clear and powerful symbolic function of recognition and empowerment of a language. This is definitely the case for sign language dictionaries.’ (Lucas 2003: 323–4)

I. The history of sign language dictionaries

In 1960, the American linguist William C. Stokoe published the first paper in which the basis for the linguistic analysis and recognition of signed languages was outlined (Stokoe 1960). Five years later, together with Dorothy Casterline and Carl Croneberg, he published the first sign language dictionary based on linguistic principles, which enabled readers to view signs as linguistic phenomena: the Dictionary of American Sign Language (DASL) (Stokoe et al. 1965). There were no illustrations. Entries were presented through a notation system developed for the recording of signs, which described the signs in relation to the location, configuration and movement of the hands.

Although numerous illustrated booklets of signs had appeared from the eighteenth century onwards in many countries (Kyle and Woll 1985), the DASL was the first book to present signs in the context of a linguistic description, using a notation representing their ‘cheremic’ structure, and including appendices on deaf culture. The significance of the DASL was widely recognised by members of the American Deaf community and by
signers in other countries as demonstrating that languages often considered as collections of unstructured gestures were as formally complex as spoken languages.

The DASL was the spur to the creation of dictionaries for scores of sign languages. At the first Deaf Way conference in 1989, work in progress or completed was reported on dictionaries of Estonian, German, Namibian, Taiwanese, and Italian sign languages (Erting et al. 1994). For all these Deaf communities, sign language dictionaries have had a twin function of recognition and empowerment. For example, in their statement of purpose for writing a dictionary of Namibian Sign Language, Ashipala et al. (1994: 345) state: ‘We want people to know that NSL is a real language like Oshiwambo or English. We want deaf Namibians to be proud of their Deaf culture and sign language, and we want hearing people to respect our culture and our sign language’ (cited in Lucas 2003).

2. Lexicographical issues

Despite the publication of so many sign language dictionaries (see www.sign-lang.uni-hamburg.de/bibweb International Bibliography of Sign Language) in the past forty years and the establishment of dictionary production as an important activity for Deaf communities, there has been relatively little focus on lexicographic issues by sign language dictionary compilers. This is changing, and Sign Language Studies has recently devoted a special 2-part issue to this topic (Armstrong 2003; Armstrong in press).

Critical analysis of sign dictionaries produced all around the world shows their creators grappling with a complex set of issues. There are two essential problems for all sign lexicographers, and especially for those working in print media. The first, and most difficult, stems from the absence of orthographies for sign languages (although there are notation systems used by linguists). As Brien and Turner (1994) point out, in monolingual dictionaries, print allows both form and meaning to be adequately represented in the same medium. The form of signs can be effectively depicted using illustrations or photographs (most editors choose to annotate these with additional artwork symbolising the particular movements required in each sign). The meaning of signs, on the other hand, cannot straightforwardly be presented in the same format. Definitions, example sentences and usage notes laid out using illustrations or photographs would be impractically cumbersome. The resulting compromise – meanings presented in English text – blurs the distinction between a monolingual sign language dictionary and a bilingual signed/written language dictionary in a challenging way.

The second problem arises from the structure of sign languages. As well as an established lexicon, all sign languages have productive lexicons which are created by signers from component morphemes. For example, in verbs of motion and location, handshapes are morphemes representing classes of objects in terms of their shape or how they are handled. Such forms are usually neglected in sign language dictionaries, although they should be included and are the proper concern of lexicographers (Brennan 1994).

Thus, despite the importance of the DASL, the majority of sign language dictionaries published since 1965 have been organised according to very different principles. The complex notation and limited use of illustrations make the DASL relatively inaccessible to non-linguists. However, this does not explain why the principles that informed the organisation of entries have not been considered appropriate by the compilers of most other sign language dictionaries. Rather than seeing dictionaries as being about signs as used in signed languages, they have presented signs as supplements to or images of the words of a spoken/written language, ordered according to the principles of the spoken/written language. This has often been explained by reference to the needs and
preferences of the largest potential market for dictionaries – hearing adult learners of a sign language.

3. User requirements and preferences

Moskovitz (1994) describes a relatively extensive user requirement and preference study undertaken as part of the design of a New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) dictionary. The sample in the study included various groups of potential users, but only 65 of the 138 individuals interviewed were deaf. The majority of respondents were hearing learners and the responses reflect their perceived needs. It is therefore not surprising that about two thirds of all reasons offered by respondents for using a sign language dictionary involved some aspect of acquiring new sign language vocabulary. It is also not surprising that half of the respondents favoured an (English) alphabetical organisation and that 90% said they would be most likely to use the dictionary going from English to Sign. Moskovitz comments that this is probably due at least in part to the low status of sign language in New Zealand: both hearing and deaf people consider it something to be translated into rather than translated from (p. 428).

The majority of respondents wanted information on sign grammar and synonyms to be included as well as directions on how to produce the sign. Other requests were for usage examples, information on variation, and ‘memory aids’ or ‘hints’ for remembering how to make a sign (for example, EAT: ‘bringing food to the mouth’). Respondents were asked to look at 9 dictionary samples, one of which was an extract from the CDASL (at that time still work in progress). Respondents were asked to state which samples they liked and why, in relation to the following categories: pictures, complexity, quantity of information, words/text, layout, facial expression, organisation, arrows, print size, presence of synonyms, phonetics, memory hints, and glosses.

The Canadian Dictionary of ASL (CDASL) was for the most part in the upper ranking of dictionaries: fourth for illustration quality; third for text readability; fifth for layout; third for depiction of facial expression (the relatively large faces in the drawing were commented upon favourably); first for the use of large arrows to illustrate movement. It was one of only two samples to be rated favourably as neither too complex nor too simple, and although Costello’s dictionary of ASL (Costello 1983) was the most popular by a margin of well over four to one, the CDASL was the second most highly ranked dictionary.

4. The Canadian Dictionary of ASL

Moskovitz’s study was designed to find out about users’ preferences in order to design a sign language dictionary – and incidentally – provide an independent review of the CDASL. However the preferences of users who have not had previous access to a sign language dictionary may not provide the most appropriate guidelines. In the remainder of this review, the approach to compilation and presentation of entries in the CDASL will be described and discussed from the perspective of a linguist.

The CDASL is an impressive book, with over 8700 entries, beautiful illustrations, and a very clear page layout. However, some features of the CDASL, in common with many other sign language dictionaries, make it less useful than it could be.

4.1. Dictionary format

‘… this Dictionary is listed in English alphabetical order, with which the intended audience, specifically Canadian users of ASL, is familiar.’ (CDASL: xxiii)
Apart from a small number of specific semantic fields (place names, numbers, etc.) which are given in a separate section at the beginning of the dictionary, the only way to look up sign entries is by their English translation. A learner encountering a sign he or she does not know the meaning of, or a Deaf signer looking for an English translation of a sign he or she knows, will be unable to search the dictionary. Some sign language dictionaries (for example, Radutzky, *Dizionario bilingue elementare della lingua italiana dei segni*, 1992; Brien, *Dictionary of BSL/English*, 1992; and Johnston, *Auslan Dictionary: A Dictionary of the Sign Language of the Australian Deaf Community*, 1989) offer entries arranged by handshape, with a separate English index, to enable two-way searching.

In the main section of the CDASL, entries define in English the sign illustrated. The (English) part of speech is given and a sample (English) sentence provided. The equivalent ASL sign is illustrated along with a detailed written description of how the sign is formed. Occasional sample ASL sentences are provided. In the example of an entry below, the problems with this approach can be seen.

**Tear-jerker: n.** a book, movie or drama that is excessively sentimental. Last night we watched a movie that was a real tear-jerker.

SIGN: Vertical ‘x’ hands, palms forward, simultaneously stroke downward along the cheeks, then curve forward. Movement is repeated a few times. A sad facial expression must accompany this sign. (The ASL sentence is syntactically different than the English one. In ASL: LAST NIGHT MOVIE ME CRY CRY CRY.) (CDASL: xxviii)

A user could look up the English expression *tear-jerker* in this dictionary and find out that it is a noun, and what its meaning is. This would be useful for Deaf signers for whom English is a second language. However, it would be impossible for users to look up the equivalent in ASL, since there is no equivalent noun or indeed any equivalent lexical item given. As the editors indicate, the glosses given for the ASL example describe a verb, CRY, which has undergone an aspectual inflection for duration (more equivalent to “I cried and cried”) and which clearly is not equivalent to the English *tear-jerker*.

Even where it is easier to find English-to-sign translations, word class information is not provided for signs (and this often differs from English, for example, where English adjectives have stative verbs as their ASL equivalent). Where descriptions are provided of grammatical features of ASL, these are often confusing: e.g. ‘Certain comparative adjectives are translated into ASL by using the standard sign for the adjective preceded by the sign for worse. Facial expression is a key factor in conveying degree. For example, the literal ASL translation for prettier is WORSE PRETTY, although this may strike English speakers as quite odd.’ (p. xxvi). If the sign glossed as WORSE had instead been correctly glossed as a general comparative marker, the comments about oddity would not be necessary and would better represent the linguistic features of ASL.

### 4.2. Additional features

Charts of the manual alphabet and sign handshapes are provided (over 100 are listed, arranged in a feature-type table). It is beyond the scope of this review to discuss the selection of handshapes or whether they represent a systematic attempt to define a ‘phonetic’ level, but in any case, the illustrations show the handshapes quite clearly, so it is difficult to understand why this elaborate system is provided. It is stated that ‘users will find these charts crucial in forming the signs from the written descriptions and the sign illustrations’ (p. xxxv), but in a series of separate sections at the beginning, numbers, pronouns, time concepts and ‘geographic terms’ (actually, place and country
names) are presented without these supposedly necessary handshape and written descriptions.

The usual omission of information about the productive lexicon in sign language dictionaries was discussed in Section 2 above. There are some brief and unsystematic attempts in the CDASL to include some information, but it is presented both vaguely and incorrectly.

‘From time to time, pronominals appear in ASL to portray certain nouns and/or pronouns which are already understood in the context. For example, a vertical forefinger may be substituted for the head of a person. In certain instances, a sign may incorporate a noun, adjective and verb. For example, if you were giving someone a thick stack of papers, you would indicate this with two hands, one quite far above the other, palms facing, fingers pointing forward as the hands move forward. In such a case, it must already be understood that the noun ‘stack’ refers to paper.’ (p. xxxv)

In the first paragraph above, the vertical forefinger is a pro-form representing human referents (not their heads): it contrasts with pronouns which do not contain information about class of referent; the second paragraph is a rather inaccurate description of classifiers in polymorphemic verbs of motion. In neither case is this information presented as a systematic feature of a sign language which has implications for the description of the lexicon, and which should be the concern of sign language lexicographers.

5. Conclusions

Whatever criticisms are raised here are not directed at the compilers of sign language dictionaries in general or even at the editors of the CDASL. The symbolic importance of a first sign language dictionary outweighs criticisms of format and content. Instead these comments are made in the hope that lexicographers in the future will concern themselves with the broader issues raised, so that the second generation of sign language dictionaries will not only enhance the status of sign languages and their formal recognition, but promote their use in the bilingual education of deaf children and their availability as a ‘foreign’ language for study by hearing children and adults.

References


www.sign-lang.uni-hamburg.de/bibweb International Bibliography of Sign Language, University of Hamburg.

Bencie Woll
Chair of Sign Language and Deaf Studies
Department of Language and Communication Science
City University London
B.Woll@city.ac.uk