Josette Rey-Debove was a highly respected linguist who devoted her professional life to the study of words and the making of dictionaries. Her incisive and impassioned approach to linguistic issues earned her a reputation as both a scholar and a provocateur. She wrote books on lexical semantics and semiotics, and advised official bodies on spelling reform and the feminization of French nouns. Her main contribution to semiotic theory, entitled Le Métalangage, deals with a central topic in lexicographic studies. Josette Rey-Debove made a fundamental contribution to several prestigious dictionaries, including the Grand Robert and Petit Robert. She also created the Robert méthodique/Brio, an innovative dictionary that analyses the lexical morphology of the French language, and a dictionary for learners of French, the Dictionnaire du français (Le Robert/CLE).

Josette Rey-Debove was at the heart of the 2004 conference, and the idea for organizing another such event was inspired by her. Her work, both metalexicographic and lexicographic, again serves as a thematic basis of the conference, in particular her learners dictionaries for different audiences: le Petit Robert des Enfants, le Robert méthodique/Brio, le Robert quotidien, and le Dictionnaire du français.

Josette Rey-Debove passed away suddenly on 22 February 2005. The conference Le Dictionnaire maître de langue is dedicated to her memory. Alain Rey will deliver the opening memorial address.

The program contains the following themes:

- **Learning to learn:** learning from the dictionary; learning first words
  A dictionary, whether bilingual or monolingual, always plays an important role in vocabulary acquisition, especially in electronic applications. But prior to that, one must “learn” the dictionary itself – its codes, its abbreviations, and its structure. What does lexicography do in order to facilitate this learning? What should it do? (cf. P. Bogaards’ paper).

- **Monolingual dictionaries**
  A dictionary is an archetypal didactic piece of work. Its “didacticity” may be more or less premeditated, more or less evident, or more or less hidden. We can always reveal in it some didactic aspect, in relation to its size, its status, and the targeted audience and age group (French as a foreign language or French as a native language, professionals or language learners, adults, students or children, etc). The wide category of bilingual dictionaries serves to uncover the didactic features of various types of dictionaries (cf. R. Brockmeier, V. Schnorr, M. Back, I. Kernerman, M.-Cl. Jadin, S. Schneider, A. Farina).

  - The didactic aspects of different types of bilingual dictionaries
    A dictionary in book form does not help vocabulary acquisition in the same way as the same dictionary in electronic form. A traditional printed dictionary that has been computerized does not have the same qualities as one conceived a priori for electronic usage. A dictionary in book form, but produced on computer, looks different than a dictionary in book form that was not created by electronic means. Similarly, a learners dictionary on CD has different constraints than an online dictionary. What are the merits, the shortcomings, and the difficulties concerning these different forms, and electronic media in particular? (cf. U. Heid, J. Binon / S. Verlinde, I. Kernerman, M. Back).

  - **Dictionary and electronic medium**
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- **Monolingual dictionaries – some particular lexicographic information**
  It is rare to find non-professional users who are familiar with how to use a dictionary for purposes other than word search. Yet good dictionaries offer many more kinds of information, often unsuspected. These include details about grammar, morphologic relations, etc. (cf. B. Gaillard, F. Martin-Berthet).
Using information boxes (a device that turns out to be more and more frequent in contemporary dictionaries, whether monolingual and bilingual) enables lexicographers to address users in a less rigid style than entries with a fixed information structure (cf. M. Heinz).

- The dictionary as a countermeasure against linguistic insecurity
  For a large number of French speakers, a word or meaning “which is not in the dictionary” is considered to be stigmatized or linguistically inexistent. This attitude derives from a linguistic insecurity encountered not only by non-French native speakers of French (such as in Belgium, Switzerland, Québec), who speak another variety of the French language than that spoken in France, but also by some Frenchmen living in regions outside Paris, whose spoken language deviates from the (implicit) Parisian norm. Dictionaries have the power to deal with such insecurity by endorsing (or not) the regional or “popular” words when registering them (or not) in their pages. The lexicographic treatment of these words requires a certain didactic presentation because the dictionaries that record diatopic varieties also serve as learning tools, and not only for reference purposes (cf. M. Berré, L. Mercier, A. Thibault).

  In the past, not long ago, when many Frenchmen spoke regional languages other than French, bilingual dictionaries were made for such audiences (cf. P. Rézeau).

- Pictures and dictionaries
  Since the publication of Comenius’ Orbis Pictus (1658), the pedagogic and didactic power of images in the process of learning words has not been refuted. Particularly, dictionaries for children and pupils cannot be but illustrated. But modern techniques enable the illustration of dictionaries for adults as well. What is the relation between a picture and a lexicographic description? Should figurative phrases be illustrated, and if so how? What are the didactic effects of typically French “iconophores”? (cf. M.-Cl. Jadin, J. Wolfbauer / E. Worbs, T. Van Male; see also the discussion between J. Rey-Debove and F. Corbin in the first Klingenberg conference, 2004).

- Larousse, master of language
  For over a century, Pierre Larousse and the dictionaries that bear his name have been synonymous with “masters of language”. What has led Pierre Larousse to the Petit Larousse? (cf. J. Pruvost).

Michaela Heinz
Conference organizer
heinz.michaela@t-online.de