The Symposium on Bilingual Lexicography, Paris

Thierry Fontenelle

Thierry Fontenelle is a computational linguist and lexicographer with Microsoft's Natural Language Group in Redmond (USA), where he is responsible for the French lexical database used in a variety of NL applications. He is also currently President of the European Association for Lexicography (EURALEX) and an Associate Editor of the *International Journal of Lexicography*.
thierryf@microsoft.com

Thomas Szende is co-director of INALCO's Central and Eastern Europe Department and of the Research Centre. He has initiated and organises the international conferences on Bilingual Lexicography, and coordinates various lexicographic, translation, pedagogic and scientific projects, as well as cultural exchanges worldwide. He has written, edited and published extensively, particularly in the areas of dictionaries, lexicology, translation, and language teaching and learning.
thomas.szende@inalco.fr

The *4èmes Journées d'études sur la lexicographie bilingue* was held in Paris from 22 through 24 May 2003. Beautifully organized by Thomas Szende, who teaches at the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (INALCO), the symposium focused on French in bilingual dictionaries and offered over 40 papers covering a wide range of topics and languages. Given the theme of the conference, presentations were in French, but the variety of bilingual dictionaries discussed was impressive, with languages ranging from English to Chinese, Arabic, Dutch, Hungarian, Italian, German, Danish, Norwegian, Swedish, Luxemburgish, Portuguese, Yiddish, Slovak, Romanian, Ladino, Turkish, Gbaya, Swahili, Bulgarian, Serbo-Croatian and Malagasy.

For space reasons, it is not possible to list the titles of all the papers, which means that highlighting some of them is somewhat subjective. The organizer managed to attract a number of established figures in the field of bilingual lexicography, such as Paul Bogaards, who discussed L2 production with a bilingual dictionary, Alain Duval, who convincingly and elegantly analyzed the expression "appeler un chat un chat" (to call a spade a spade), or Marie-Hélène Corréard, who discussed French as a target language. Other topics were also dealt with, such as lexical-semantic relations in specialized dictionaries (Jeanne Dancette), cultural aspects in specialized bilingual dictionaries (John Humbley), or the difficulty of defining scientific terms in rapidly-changing disciplines (Yves Gentilhomme). Surprisingly, few papers alluded to the use of corpora or computational techniques for compiling dictionaries. This theme was not entirely absent, however, as was shown by Serge Verlinde, Thierry Selva and Jean Binon's presentation of their work on a computerized, corpus-based French business dictionary featuring an impressive amount of lexical-semantic, syntactic and collocational information accessible via a large number of paths.

The relationship between computers, lexicography and cyberspace was also the topic of a panel discussion. This round table, moderated by Jean Pruvost (University of Cergy-Pontoise), made it possible for the panelists to explore this relationship from the point of view of the dictionary publishing world (Laurent Catach, Le Robert; Ralf Brockmeier, Larousse), of the software world (Thierry Fontenelle, Microsoft Natural Language Group), or of the academic world (Christine Jacquet-Pfau, Collège de France; André Le Meur, University of Rennes 2; Thierry Selva, University of Leuven). The topics discussed ranged from the contents of electronic dictionaries for natural language processing to the dichotomy between electronic dictionaries for people and those for machines, as well as the increasing interest in standardization issues faced by publishers who wish to exchange data with partners. Such issues cannot be ignored, since lexical data providers who are competitors today might be partners tomorrow, and some kind of standardization is certainly desirable, as was energetically pointed out by Marie-Jeanne Derouin (Langenscheidt). Only time will tell to what extent such emerging standards for the representation of lexicographical data will gain acceptance, of course.

In a nutshell, the *4èmes Journées d'études sur la lexicographie bilingue* gave an interesting overview of bilingual French lexicography today. This was an excellent opportunity to meet representatives from the publishing world and from the academic world and to explore some of today's hot topics. Dr Szende deserves a special note of praise for his successful organization of this event hosted by the Institut Hongrois. I personally look forward to seeing the proceedings of these "Journées", which will be published by Honoré Champion, like the preceding editions. I also definitely look forward to going back to France in 2004 and hope the participants of this symposium will be eager to share their experience and expertise with a larger audience at the next congress of the European Association for Lexicography (Euralex) in Lorient (Brittany, France) in July 2004.

The conference proceedings are published by Honoré Champion, Paris, in *Collection Études de lexicologie, lexicographie et dictionnairique*, edited by Thomas Szende:
Dictionnaires bilingues: Méthodes et contenus *Actes de la Première Journée* (1998). 2000.
Approches contrastives en lexicographie bilingue *Actes des IIes Journées* (1999). 2000.
Les écarts culturels dans les dictionnaires bilingues *Actes des IIIes Journées* (2000). 2003.