

Introduction

Carole Tiberius, Instituut voor Nederlandse Lexicologie (INL), carole.tiberius@inl.nl
Carolin Müller-Spitzer, Institut für Deutsche Sprache (IDS), mueller-spitzer@ids-mannheim.de

In the field of traditional print lexicography, it has been claimed time and again that a dictionary must be designed for particular user groups and usage situations (Bergenholtz/Nielsen/Tarp (eds.) 2009; Wiegand 2001), which is reflected for example in the choice of headwords or lexicographical description. In online dictionaries, the issue of the conceptional integration of user orientation arises in a new way: to what extent can users be defined solely by what they are looking up in the dictionary on a specific occasion? How can a non-user-specific lexicographical resource be used to create access which is adaptable to what the user needs to look up at a specific moment (Müller-Spitzer 2008)? What are the limits of this user-independent and function-independent way of developing a dictionary? In order to be able to answer such questions, research into the use of online dictionaries is essential.

Research on dictionary use was the topic of the fifth meeting of the ‘Internetlexikografie’ network (funded by the Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft) which took place at the Instituut voor Nederlandse Lexicologie (INL) in Leiden, the Netherlands, on 25-26 March 2013. This volume groups contributions to this meeting and is part of a series of OPAL volumes that have been published as a result of the meetings of this network (cf. Klosa/Müller-Spitzer (eds.) 2011 and Abel/Lemmitzer (eds.) 2014). At the meeting different research methods and scenarios were discussed and actual studies on the use of online dictionaries were presented.

Robert Lew (Adam Mickiewicz University) opened the meeting with an overview of the opportunities and limitations of user studies (this volume). Starting with a distinction into two broad methodological paradigms: positivistic and naturalistic, he discussed a number of specific methods and techniques (e.g. eye-tracking and log file analysis), identifying their particular strengths and weaknesses. He also drew attention to usability studies practiced within the area of human-computer interaction, as this research paradigm shares many of the goals of dictionary user studies.

This theoretical introduction was then illustrated by practice with short presentations on log file analyses, eye-tracking studies and online questionnaires. *Carole Tiberius* and *Jan Nies-tadt* (INL, this volume) presented the results of a log file analysis for the “Algemeen Nederlands Woordenboek”, and *Alexander Geyken* (Berlin) talked about the log file analysis of the “Digitales Wörterbuch der Deutschen Sprache”. *Carolin Müller-Spitzer* (IDS, Mannheim) presented the results of an eye-tracking study which has been carried out in the context of OWID (cf. Müller-Spitzer/Michaelis/Koplenig 2014) and *Annette Klosa* (IDS, Mannheim) talked about a user study using a questionnaire in the context of the *ellexiko* project (cf. Klosa/Koplenig/Töpel 2014).

In a presentation with the provocative title “Do dictionary users need dictionaries”, *Serge Verlinde* (KU Leuven) discussed how lexicographic data can best be presented to users. Verlinde stated that studies on dictionary use (including recent efforts using log files) have not really been able to indicate an ideal format for presenting the data to the user. Instead of continuing to look for new ways of presenting lexicographic data, he proposed to enrich the data

by combining it with other data and/or by integrating it in different applications. The intention should be to offer data that match a specific need rather than to give the user an “overload of information”. In his presentation, he illustrated his proposal on the basis of a number of concrete applications, including the Interactive Language Toolbox,¹ a website where lexicographic resources are combined with translation and correction (e.g. spelling and grammar) tools in an extensive language information system.

In her presentation entitled “Empirische Daten über Benutzungskontexte bzw. extra-lexikografische Situationen”, *Carolin Müller-Spitzer* (IDS, Mannheim) focused on contexts of dictionary use, and in particular on the more offbeat circumstances of dictionary use and aims of users: to design effective electronic dictionaries, reliable empirical information on how dictionaries are actually being used is of great value for lexicographers. Contexts of dictionary use, or, in other words, the extra-lexicographic situations in which a dictionary consultation is embedded is an underresearched area. This is mainly due to the fact that data about these contexts is difficult to obtain. To take a first step in closing this research gap, researchers at IDS incorporated an open-ended question (“In which contexts or situations would you use a dictionary?”) into an online survey (see www.using-dictionaries.info) and asked the participants to answer this question by providing as much information as possible. The participants' willingness to give detailed information was higher than expected. Overall, Müller-Spitzer's results indicate that there is a community whose work is closely linked with dictionaries and, accordingly, deals very routinely with this type of text. Dictionaries are also seen as a linguistic treasure trove for games or crossword puzzles, and as a standard which can be referred to as an authority. Müller-Spitzer concluded that while it is important to emphasize that her results are only preliminary, because the question asked in the survey referred to dictionary use in general, they do indicate the potential of empirical research in this area (cf. Müller-Spitzer 2014).

Sven Tarp (Aarhus Center for Lexicography) defended the need for an advanced theory capable of transforming the discipline of lexicography (this volume). Today, all aspects of practical lexicography are penetrated by the computer, information and communication technologies and techniques. However, Tarp observed that various facts seem to indicate that the “old man” is poorly dressed to confront this climate change. He proposed a number of basic principles that may guide the design of a new generation of online dictionaries and will help to avoid the problem of information overload.

Karin Rautmann and *Melina Alexa* (Duden-Verlag) spoke about the role of the user in the Duden online dictionaries focusing on a new dictionary that was published in May 2011 at www.duden.de. They discussed the different methods that have been used in the context of the new *Duden online* to gather information about the user and the use of the dictionary (e.g. market research, online questionnaires, web analysis and user feedback). They also discussed what the implications were of this information on the further development of the dictionary.

Henrik Lorentzen (Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab, DSL) presented an updated version of a paper on user paths and user behaviour (Lorentzen/Theilgaard 2012). In general, user behaviour studies on online dictionaries have focused on user behaviour once the user is on the site. But before a potential user even reaches this stage, he or she must succeed in finding the dictionary on the web. This was the topic of Lorentzen's paper. He presented an investigation of users' linguistic search strategies before they enter a dictionary site, using www.ordnet.dk as a test case.

¹ <https://ilt.kuleuven.be/inlato/>.

Rufus Gouws (Stellenbosch University) concluded the meeting with a paper co-authored by *Ulrich Heid* (Hildesheim University) on user-oriented design of electronic dictionaries: on the one hand the results of user research can lead to new design specifications and on the other hand they can be used as evaluation criteria for existing dictionaries to determine whether they successfully respond to the needs of their target users. Both aspects were addressed in this presentation by means of reports on case studies. Gouws illustrated the process leading to a dictionary specification for school dictionaries for Namibia, and discussed the major results of this specification process. He also showed how these specifications acted as a set of criteria for dictionary evaluation in the Namibian context. Finally, he presented a case study from the “implementation” stage, namely a comparative assessment of different ways of organizing access to collocational data in bilingual dictionaries for advanced users (e.g. translation students). He showed that usability testing in the classical information science sense provided a good instrument for the assessment.

Since some of the topics presented at the Leiden meeting have already been published in other volumes by now, this volume includes only three of the themes named above.

In a separate discussion round, we discussed three further questions: (i) What would lexicographers like to know about their dictionary and its users, (ii) what would dictionary users like to know about the dictionary they use and (iii) what kind of influence does user research have on the dictionary and the lexicographical process? The debate, both in the three working groups and in the final discussion round, was very lively and inspiring. As well as the meetings previously, the Leiden meeting showed again the constructive atmosphere of the network “Internetlexikografie”.

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