Bilingual Dictionaries- General Facts and Macrostructure

1. Dictionary and User

- To establish the target group of a dictionary, dictionary compilers have to obtain information about this target group → purpose: ascertain the lexicographic needs of target group → dictionary can be designed for those specific needs
- compilers must choose a group of core users → will provide compilers with relevant information
- users are only able to use dictionary optimally if it fulfills their lexicographic needs
- → dictionary user profile: tells dictionary makers which types of information are needed by the intended user

1.2 Dictionary target Group (Intended Users)

- a dictionary should fulfill as many of the target groups needs as possible
- number of possible users = infinite (anybody may use a dictionary for some purpose)
- potential user = user who may be expected to use the dictionary according to the general functions of the dictionary

3 different levels of target group:

I LSP used in communication between specialists within the same field
II LSP used in communication between specialists + semi-specialists
III LSP used in communication between specialists + non-specialists (or laypersons) about a topic within the specialists field

- I+II = field internal communication, III = field external communication
- basic difference between level II and III = pre-knowledge:
  level II: receiver is supposed to have some knowledge of the relevant subject
  level III: receiver has no pre-knowledge
- no clearly defined dividing line between the levels → different levels overlap
- if dictionary is bilingual → target group has to be concerned with interlingual communication (e.g. English and German) → people with no knowledge of either language fall outside the definition of the target group
2. Dictionary User Research

a) The Brain-Storming Approach

- carried out by dictionary compilers
- result merely reflects what compilers imagine may be the information that user needs in use situations → result = unreliable picture of user, too vague and unprecise

b) Questionnaires

- written set of questions which dictionary user is asked to answer
- two basic ways: 1. write out answers in full, 2. tick boxes
- formulation of questions is important: each question has to be formulated in such a way that each one can only be understood in one way

  **Example:** “Do you regularly use a library?” yes [ ] no [ ]

  - questions often provide the informant with a limited number of possible answers
  **Example:** “How often do you use the main OED elements (listed below)?”

    | (e.g. for spelling) | Daily | Weekly | Monthly | Never |
    |---------------------|-------|--------|---------|-------|
    | Headword            | [ ]   | [ ]    | [ ]     | [ ]   |
    | Pronunciation       | [ ]   | [ ]    | [ ]     | [ ]   |
    | Usage indicators    | [ ]   | [ ]    | [ ]     | [ ]   |

- hypothetical questions should be avoided because answers are not reliable on actual dictionary use

  **Example:** “Assuming you had ready access to an electronic version of the OED, irrespective of cost, please estimate how often you might use it (a) for simple and (b) for complex queries.”

c) Dictionary Use Records

- written (or recorded on tape) account of individual steps of dictionary use and the results obtained by the dictionary user
- ideally written by user
- best way to observe the dictionary user in real life situation
- sort of log-book kept by user → useful to draw clear dict. user profile
- contains information about problems which researchers might not have experienced
- complicated, time consuming to interpret information because there are no standardised questions and answers
3. Macrostructure

- separate parts into which the entire dictionary may be divided=
  macrostructural components
- organisational structure of the dictionary which is concerned with the
  sequential relationship between the macrostructural components
- applies to a dictionary as a whole rather than to a single part of it (i.e. word list)

2 types of macrostructure:

a) simple macrostructure: lexicographic macrostructure which applies to only two
   macrostructural components
b) complex macrostructure: applies to more than two macrostructural
   components

- each macrostructural component should be directly related to one or more of
  the other m.c.'s
- dictionary should ideally have complex macro
- underdeveloped macro.: complex macros. in which the functional elements
  (e.g. abbreviations) are not defined or explained
- fully developed macro: complex macro which has no insufficiencies in respect
  of the interrelationship between it's m.c.'s

Macrostructural Components

I List of contents

- show user what the dictionary actually contains
- provides a guide or reference to the organisational structure of the dictionary
- position: should be in the front matter
- should contain a reference to each m.c. following it

II Preface (Introduction/ Foreword)

- presents the author’s explanatory remarks, shows function, scope and
  application of the dictionary

III Users Guide

- explains how the user may use the dictionary optimally
- explains how the information can be found (e.g. the order in which the words
  are lemmatised in a word list)

IV Table (List) of Abbreviations

- list of the abbreviations used in the dictionary which explains their meaning to
  the user
- field abbreviations inform the user of the field in which a lemma is used
- geographical abbreviations: inform about the geographical area in which a
  lemma is used
- bibliographical abbreviations etc.

**Word List**

- 2 types:
  a) Continuous word list: no inserts, no middle matter articles
  b) discontinuous word list: at least one insert or middle matter article
  - is usually related to front or back matter

**Appendix**

- contains illustrations
- lemma in the appendix which refers to an illustration should contain explicit reference to the illustration
- selection of illustration is very much user-dependent

**Cross-References**

- may be references to synonymous expressions, related expressions to grammar or to the field introduction
- information item which directs user from one place in the dictionary to another
- 3 types:
  article-internal: user is directed from one place in the article to another within the same article
  word list-internal: user is directed from one article to another within the same word list
  word list-external: user is directed from a word list to an address outside the word list
- cross reference items could be right pointing arrows (→) or word such as “see”, “see also”, “compare”

**4. Conclusion**

- dictionary is no merely a list of words arranged according to a particular principle
- macro structure= ordering structure applied to entire reference work
- most inadequate dictionary= one with simple macro.
- optimal dictionary: highly developed macro. and interrelationship between the m.c.’s
- optimal bilingual LSP dictionary. each macrostructural component in front and back matter is related to at least one of the other m.c.’s, usually the word list

**Quellen:**
