

How to plan a dictionary

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What is lexicography?

Lexicography is an activity which consists in observing, collecting, selecting, analyzing and describing, in a dictionary, a number of lexical items (words, word elements and word combinations) belonging to one or more languages.

Bo Svensén: *A Handbook of Lexicography*
Cambridge 2009

Dictionary typology

- What is the genuine purpose of the dictionary?
 - Communication-oriented
 - Knowledge-oriented

Dictionary types

- Semasiological/onomasiological
(From word to concept/from concept to word)
- Synchronic/diachronic
- Descriptive/normative
- General/specialized
- Monolingual/bilingual/plurilingual
- Non-illustrated/illustrated/pictorial

Size

- Learner's dictionary
- School dictionary
- Comprehensive dictionary

Function and organisation

- Reception/Production
- Monoscopal/Biscopal
- Intended users: native-speaker dictionary, foreign learner's dictionary

Principles for data collection

- Contemporary or arcaic languag
- General or technical language
- Written or spoken language
- Standard or regional language

Planning

- Project plan
 - Identifying the demand
 - The time and funding needed
- Dictionary plan
 - Which lemmas are to be included
 - Which information types shall be present
 - Preliminary plan
 - Pilot study
 - Revised plan
 - Final plan

Project plan: The money factor

- Cost of data collection
- Manuscript production
- Manuscript revision
- Production costs

Dictionary plan: an example

- Contemporary language
- General purpose
- Corpus based (100 mill. words)
- Written language
- Descriptive
- 150 000 lemmas

= comprehensive monolingual dictionary

Data collection and data selection

- Principles for data collection
 - Contemporary/arcaic; general/technical; written/spoken; standard/regional
- Calculating the size of each initial letter of the alphabet
- Which information types shall be present in the dictionary?

Format of presentation

- Establish the principles for the structure:
 - **Megastructure:** relations and order of the front and back matter and the lemma sign list
 - **Macrostructure:** the order of and relation between the lemma signs in the lemma sign list
 - **Microstructure:** the order and relation between the information types given for each lemma

Style manual

- Standards for spelling, pronunciation, inflection etc.
- Rules for sense division, collocations, idioms etc.
- How to present different information types
 - Definitions, etymology, frequency, usability, domain etc.
- List of abbreviations
- Instructions for use of dictionary editing system
- Use of corpus-analysis tools

Implementation

- Data collection
- Data selection
- Production of draft manuscript
- Revising the manuscript
- (Typesetting)
- Proofreading and correction x 2
- Printing and binding/release in an electronic format

Follow up

- Maintenance:
 - Correct errors discovered
 - Filling lemma lakunas