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EDITOR'S MESSAGE

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Again it is my great pleasure as the editor of *Teaching English with Technology* to present the subscribers with the new issue of this practical journal for teachers interested in using technology, computers and the Internet in the classroom. This time the whole issue is devoted to electronic dictionaries, also known as Machine Readable Dictionaries (MRDs). This decision has been made due to great demand for the reliable and thorough information about using these in teaching and learning, and the aim of the Journal editorial board is to provide a multi-faceted view on dictionaries, as well as to acknowledge their potential and record the breakthrough.

The Journal groups contributions on different kinds of dictionaries: online, accessible on the Web, as well as CD-ROM, demanding CD-ROM discs to be run. When talking about the former, it must be mentioned that there is a great number of free dictionaries on the Web, and language learners can use them usually without any limits. However, they are often limited in scope or use, and, what is more, are less sophisticated than commercial CD-ROM products. Also, they are less reliable in the sense that the sites supporting them may cease to exist. Thus, what seems to be necessary is to give language teachers and learners reliable information on which dictionaries should be recommended, as well as how to draw on the great multitude of information on the Web to produce one's own mini-dictionaries.

On the other hand, major ELT publishers have acknowledged the great potential of multimedia software in language learning, as a result producing more and more computer programs. Dictionaries are no exception here, and there is a new electronic dictionary published every two/three years by major publishers. This time what seems to be missing is the objective comparison of them, putting the manufacturers' claims to test, and recommending particular dictionaries for certain groups of learners. The current issue of the Journal tries to meet this objective by providing a comparative test of the dictionaries.

Finally, it must be said that making dictionaries is a work in progress, and a number of people all over the world are currently working on it. The Journal also reflects this, and we will have voices from the two opposing positions: that of an academic, saying what features a perfect Machine-Readable Dictionary should possess in order to be fully applicable in language teaching and learning; and that of a programmer, giving a detailed description of how he created and developed a Machine-Readable Dictionary that can be customised to fit one's needs.

Thus, to give a detailed outline of the Journal's contents, the readers can enjoy reading two articles: one, by Wlodzimierz Sobkowiak, is entitled "What Can Be, But Is Not (And Why), In Learners' MRDs," strives to pinpoint some deficiencies of existing MRDs, as well as proposes some ways of improving them to suit the classroom needs. On the other hand, Leszek Bajkowski, in his article "Multilingual Data Organiser (M.D.O.) - An Overview of a Small-Scale Project" presents the steps of dictionary making on the example of the one made by the author, trying to provide some solutions to the problems posed in Sobkowiak's article.

Electronic dictionaries are also prominent in the Internet Lesson Plans section, where the contributors, Beata Waligorska-Olejniczak ("Getting Ready for the Euro") and Miroslawa Podgorska ("Different Shades of Madness"), show how using electronic dictionaries in the classroom can greatly facilitate classroom instruction by providing fast and easy access searching a great amount of data.

Guo Shesen, when writing about customizing English dictionaries in A Word from a Techie section, claims that with the great abundance of materials on the Web, learners no longer have to be constrained to a single dictionary or search engine when trying to look up a word. The author gives a step-by-step instruction on how to create a simple but powerful Web dictionary, at the same time fully adaptable to one's particular needs.

As for Website Reviews, most probably there is the only one contribution possible in this special issue devoted to electronic dictionaries, namely the review of online dictionaries. This is done by Mari Carmen Campoy Cubillo in her "General and Specialised Free Online Dictionaries", where the author investigates an enormous number of Web dictionaries, devoting particular attention to such aspects as the means of access, the quality of images, the incorporation of sound, and gives some advice on the choice of a dictionary.

To balance the previous contribution, and to provide detailed information on CD-ROM dictionaries, the humble undersigned, Jarek Krajka, does a comparative review of two newly-published CD-ROM dictionaries, *Macmillan English Dictionary* and *Cambridge Learner's Dictionary*, focusing on the content of entries, searching capabilities, dictionary components, working with the dictionary, integrating the dictionary with other programs, interface and mode of use, ease of use and reliability of operation, assistance to the user and the ways of practicing the retention of words.

In Reports from Past Events section, it is also the undersigned who gives an account of the conference "Use of New Technologies in Foreign Language Teaching", which was held in Compiegne, France, from 28 to 30 March, 2002.

Finally, it is hoped that this wide array of contributions in all Journal sections will try to encompass the widest possible range of applications of electronic dictionaries in the foreign language classroom.

I wish you good reading.

ARTICLES

WHAT CAN BE, BUT IS NOT (AND WHY), IN LEARNERS' MRDS

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Abstract

Modern Machine-Readable Dictionaries (MRDs) offer users an unprecedented richness of content and form, and gradually oust traditional paper-based word books out of existence. Despite the breathtaking developments of hard- and software, however, popular MRDs, especially those made for learners of foreign languages, are still deficient in a number of respects. Two of these are dealt with in this paper: (a) width and flexibility of user access to the riches of lexicographic content, and (b) the degree and (artificial) "intelligence" of user modelling and customisation. It is argued that the two deficiencies are not due to any inherent technological obstacles, but rather to the conservatism of dictionary makers and users (both learners and teachers). A few examples of functionalities "which could be, but are not" are provided in a hypothetical case study of EFL student Tom and his MRD.

Introduction

Electronic dictionaries (computer dictionaries, machine-readable dictionaries – MRDs) are now commonplace in research, education, tourism and a number of other human pursuits around the globe. There are many reasons why they are gradually ousting traditional paper-based printed dictionaries from all these spheres and others: they are fast and convenient to use, they are up-to-date, they are small in terms of physical size (palmtops are portable), but large in terms of coverage, they are lavishly multimedialized with sound, photos, animations and video, they are often equipped with a suite of lexical exercises, games and frills of all kinds (e.g. personal notepads), and they are computer-based, a thrill for the novice, and a must for a guru. Additionally, some MRDs are partly authorable, mostly in that they offer some expansion facilities (but never allow actual editing of the firmware contents), and customizable in terms of some user interface options. They are also fashionable, and this factor of their popularity should not be taken lightly.

The variety of MRD types, hardware-, software- and content-wise is amazing. In terms of hardware, there are those on CD-ROMs to be used in ordinary PC workstations and notebooks; there are handheld devices, both dedicated MRDs and those integrated in a larger system, usually a downgraded implementation of Windows; and then there are the virtual Internet dictionaries, with no physical carrier whatsoever (at least from the point of view of the user). Software-wise there are MRDs for all popular platforms: Windows, Mac, Unix (and especially Linux), and the remains of DOS. The client-host architecture, where the user's machine is just a terminal for a remotely located MRD, works not only for the Internet (www

mostly), but also for a variety of intranet setups. Finally, and most interestingly from our point of view, the variety of lexicographic configurations reflects, and expands, that of traditional dictionaries. There are mono-, bi- and multi-lingual MRDs; there are those for native speakers and those for learners; there are "ordinary" dictionaries providing meanings for forms (semasiology) and thesauruses, doing the opposite (onomasiology); there are general dictionaries and special-purpose ones, and the latter can have coverage limited macrostructurally (e.g. a dictionary of fishing or acronyms) or microstructurally (e.g. an etymology, a pronunciation or a picture dictionary); there are MRDs with minimal content (word-lists) and those whose lexicographic and encyclopedic richness far supersedes that of large multi-volume traditional word-books. Hartmann (2001) has a readable and fairly comprehensive overview of the available plethora of lexical reference sources, with the unavoidable English focus.

With all this variety, coverage, multimediality, user-friendliness and on-line availability, one would be excused for thinking that contemporary MRDs have already reached a summit of functionality, with virtually (pardon the pun) no improvements possible. This is certainly the picture painted by reviewers of popular MRDs in computer magazines occupying at least one shelf in newsstands the world over. The gripes they do have, if they have any, relate to the absence of this or that lexical item from the entry list, some abstruse installation problems, one or two incorrect factual references, or the quality of the onboard multimedia.

And yet, there are crucial areas in MRD design where dramatic improvements are possible and necessary for the dictionaries to reach a vastly higher level of functionality than they have been on so far. The two areas which I will briefly sketch below, using a hypothetical case study, are (1) access flexibility and (2) user customization. The treatment is brief of necessity; interested readers are referred to my book on EFL MRDs (Sobkowiak 1999), from whose chapter 3 the following material is a revised excerpt. There, I develop the concept of a Multi-Access Dictionary (MAD), in which virtually all lexicographic content is available to the user for active query, and to the system for intelligent customization to the dynamically constructed profile of the user. These ideas are based not only in good pedagogical and lexicographic theory/practice, but also flow directly from a rather uncontroversial conception of linguistic data, as seen by computational linguists, a conception which is aptly encapsulated in the following quote: "The data are multidimensional, so the computing environment must be able to attach many kinds of analysis and interpretation to a single datum. The data are highly integrated, so the computing environment must be able to store and follow associative links between related pieces of data" (Simons 1998:24; my emphasis – WS; see also http://www.sil.org/computing/routledge/simons/summary.html).

Surprising as it may sound in view of the above exhortations of MRDs, a fair proportion of the content of contemporary electronic dictionaries is treated as one-dimensional in Simons's sense, and hence its actual multidimensionality is not available to the user. The integrated nature of lexicographic data is at best seen in the option of hypertextual link from word X in the definition or example of an entry to entry X (not all MRDs offer this functionality). Thus, user's access to the wealth of the "multidimensional" and "integrated" linguistic and multimedia content of an MRD is typically highly restricted. Similarly, only the rather superficial customizing options are offered, such as, for example: (a) ignoring certain elements of the entry (micro)structure for screen display (e.g. phonetic transcription) or in full-text search (e.g. example sentences), (b) hiding certain word categories (e.g. compounds), (c) changing font size, style and colours, (d) manipulating toolbars, and the like. All these must be deliberately toggled by the user, with the system not even attempting a more

intelligent approach to customization, which could capitalize on the observed exploitation by the user of the many dimensions and associative links inherent in the dictionary.

These deficiencies of MRD design are not due to any hardware shortcomings, of course. Nor is there lack of artificial intelligence, at least not the AI which could run the relatively simple user profile generator necessary to accomplish better MRD customization (see for example Bielawski & Lewand, 1991, Shapiro et al., 1992, Prat, 1994, Tarantowicz-Gasiewicz, 2000 and the references therein). The main causes why no innovative design of MRD is apparent (at least in the senses sketched above) appears to be the conservatism of dictionary makers and publishers on the one hand, and users on the other. These two types of conservatism are mutually reinforcing, of course: lexicographers claim that there is no demand for access-wise more powerful and flexible systems with built-in artificially intelligent customization; users can see no such dictionaries on the market, and are of necessity satisfied with what they have got. Realizing the hidden potential of a computer application takes a fair amount of practice, expertise and frustration with the unavailability of a useful functionality. And, as it turns out, there is very little MRD practice, at least in the Polish educational setting. In one questionnaire study only 26 out of 712 EFL students (3.6%) in all types of schools in Poland have ever used an EFL MRD (Lew, forthcoming; personal communication).

In a highly competitive market the questions of capital investment risk and return are also of paramount importance to MRD publishers, of course, even if they need not detain us here. Yet one more reason why no multi-access self-customizing MRDs are available may have to do with scarcity of (meta)lexicographic research in the field, both theoretical and empirical.

This short paper, as well as the book chapter on which it is based, is a modest attempt to suggest new areas for such research. The central part of it is a "case study" of a hypothetical Tom, a student of English as a foreign language (EFL) who is using his intelligent multi-access MRD every day. The context, in terms of some of the variables mentioned above, is thus: (a) intensive use of a learner's general mono/bilingual EFL MRD on an MS Windows platform, (b) intranet and Internet connection and full functionality, (c) educational institutional setting, further circumscribed to academic-level English philology studies. It is by looking at Tom's interaction with his dictionary that I will try to answer the question "what can be, but is not, in learners' MRDs".

1. MRD access and customization

The maximally user-customized multiple-access dictionary will require a fair amount of artificial intelligence to organize a smooth interaction between the lexical database and the user. With so many access options built into the system it would be dysfunctional to query the user every time about the desired search criteria or settings. Some of these will of course be fixed as defaults, to be changed from appropriate configuration menus. Some others must indeed be user-input every time to ensure the retrieval of just the right information at the right time. But there are areas of MRD-user interaction where the dictionary can actually dynamically adapt to the changing needs and activities of the user which will be stored in his/her user profile file. Such adaptive systems were first prophesied in the eighties (e.g. Dodd, 1989, Jonassen, Mandl, 1989, Kay, 1991), and are now being gradually introduced in hypertext access software engineering, as is evident from the growing number of books (Brusilovsky, Kobsa, Vassileva, 1998), theses (Bontcheva, 2001), periodicals (*User Modeling and User-Adapted Interaction*) and conferences (flexible/adaptive hypertext/hypermedia

workshops and conferences; for example in <u>May 2002, at the University of Málaga</u>, Spain) devoted to this subject.

These developments - while being to quite a degree instigated by arguments and forces outside of the educational scene generally, and foreign language teaching and learning in particular - indirectly correspond to the contemporary learner-centred and learner-autonomy paradigms in language pedagogy. It is the learner who is supposed to formulate his/her own educational needs and preferences, who must (in collaboration with the teacher) take the burden of designing his/her own syllabus and curriculum, of selecting his/her own learning resources and materials (including dictionaries), of fixing the short- and long-term didactic aims, of settling on the preferred learning strategies, of actively searching for information, explanation and advice, of self-evaluation and post-hoc analysis (see Wenden, Rubin, 1987, Nunan, 1988, O'Malley, Chamot, 1990, Wenden, 1991, Oxford, 1993, Rubin, Thompson, 1994, Reid, 1995, Tutor, 1996, Ely, Pease-Alvarez, 1996, Naiman et al., 1996, Benson, Voller, 1997). If such is the expectation of a (good) learner, computer-assisted foreign language resources should be adapted accordingly. Providing for maximum customization with quasi-intelligent computer assistance is one method of promoting learner autonomy.

There is hardly a limit of which data can be profitably stored and manipulated in the MRD user profile file. Age, sex, proficiency in the foreign language are obvious choices. To users who only need the MRD for ad-hoc translation from L2 the system would show a "different face" of the dictionary than to those who use it as a learning resource in acquiring new vocabulary. Those who mainly need the dictionary for encoding would see it differently from those who mostly decode. The pronunciation-oriented learners would have a Phonetic-Access Dictionary (PAD; Sobkowiak, 1994, 1998, 1999) in front of them, whereas those who need a dictionary for writing in a foreign language would have one which would focus on spelling and style analysis and correction. Those users who customarily refer to one variety of the foreign language, say American English, would have this variety foregrounded across different levels of dictionary content and use: spelling, pronunciation, grammar, stylistics, examples, realia, exercise module, etc. The system would keep a running log of the different circumstances of use to 'guess' what is the currently best MRD profile to present to the user.

In a flash of foresight, Dodd (1989: 92) sketched the following customizable elements in his "personal dictionary": "Each of the various styles of definition that are stored could be to the liking of a given user or group"; the "profile would cover everything from the choice of colours used to pick out different elements displayed, to the sorts of information proffered by the machine and the order in which they were presented"; "some would want etymology, history and evolution of words; others would actively avoid this". Between 1989 and now, other elements joined the customizable user profile thanks to the developments of computer technology and programming. The following is my own vision, suited to the needs of a prototypical Tom.

2. Tom and his MAD: a case study

Tom is a first-year student of English as a foreign language in a neophilology department of a Polish university, a higher vocational school (*wyzsza szkola zawodowa*) or a teacher-training college. He is using the networked version of a customizable bilingual multi-access machine-readable dictionary of English for his work in preparing class assignments and in preparation for the practical English exam at the end of the semester. Most of the time he needs to look up difficult words which he finds in the assigned reading which comes from British magazines

and newspapers as well as American literature readers and anthologies. From time to time he must write a narrative essay on an assigned topic. After a few sessions, Tom's user profile will start to adjust to his needs and preferences.

First, Tom is never interested in pronunciation so this aspect of lexical information is switched off. Words appear without phonetic transcription and the audio icon is hidden. Phonetic access functions (for example requesting words with a given number of syllables, or with a given stress, or containing specified sounds, or differing between British and American accents) are backgrounded, as are phonetic drills in the exercise module. The phonetic difficulty index (Sobkowiak, forthcoming), tagging each headword in the dictionary for pronunciation problems, is unplugged from the exercise module. Tom can, however, be alerted to the particularly high value of the index, if he wishes so (and sets the index threshold appropriately).

Second, as Tom is a highly advanced learner, some of the more common and "easy" senses of most lexical items are hidden or demoted to the bottom of the entry [1]. Tom is unlikely ever to look up the word-senses of words like *write, like, make, water* which are normally listed at the top of their entries. On the other hand, he may need senses such as: "to raise the par value of (issued capital stock) without a corresponding increase in the real value of assets" (28th sense of *water* in Collins) in reading the assigned *Economist* article, and he may need "any fluid secreted from the body, such as sweat, urine, or tears" (7th sense of *water* in Collins) to understand the graffito inscribed on the table where he is currently working: *All is shit except water*. These senses will, then, be retained.

Third, a complex syntactico-semantic network will be in place to assist Tom in his essay writing: (a) comprehensive coverage of collocations [2] (not only *mistake* will be listed, but also its left- and right-hand collocates: *make a mistake, by mistake, serious mistake, mistakes creep in, mistakes abound, to mistake sb/sth for*), (b) easy listing of words falling into particular morphosyntactic categories or "parts of speech": non-ly adverbs, pluralia tanta, hyphenated vs. spaced compounds, etc., (c) prompts of useful lexico-semantic relations (see Wordnet), such as: antonyms (*mistake ---> accuracy, precision*), hypernyms (*mistake ---> failure*, *dog ---> canine*) or hyponyms (*mistake --> blunder, faux pas, goof, slip-up, oversight, typo*).

Fourth, because Tom has often opened the British and American "culture component" of the dictionary where he consulted some vocabulary entries of strictly contemporary relevance, e.g. *militant, molestation, cloning, Bin Laden, Euro*, this stratum of the dictionary will henceforth be highlighted: contemporary cultural items will be preferentially linked to the properly formatted (keyword-in-context concordanced) text-corpus and on-line multimedia evidence, their multiply conditioned frequencies will be displayed, and the vocabulary exercise module will grade them as especially desirable in constructing tests and exercises (plus many other adjustments, of course).

Fifth, the advanced L2-to-L1 decoding view of the MRD will be prioritized: only the monolingual English dictionary will appear as default, with no restriction on the definition language (Sobkowiak, Kuczynski, forthcoming) or presented grammar coding (Tom has rarely looked up words from the definition or part-of-speech and subcategorization codes). When Tom requests to see the encoding Polish-English view, *woda* will not be there (pending his decision to change the default), but there will be cross-references to *Euro* from *zloty, zjednoczony* and *waluta*.

Sixth, because Tom' special preoccupation is with British journalese and American literary language (which the system discovered from a number of sessions Tom had with it), this will be the bias of the lexical frequency data when Tom requests it. The figures will be taken from British contemporary press corpora on the one hand, and from the American prose of the period Tom has mainly consulted through the built-in encyclopedia and literature reader, on the other. Unless of course the targeted corpus turned out to be too small to generate reliable frequencies for the requested lexical items, or unless Tom wanted custom-weighted frequency figures, in which case the system would act accordingly.

Seventh, as Tom has not shown a special predilection for MRD multimedia elements in the past, the picture library option is dimmed and the videos showing WTC blasts and Bin Laden's TV releases are not linked to the headword *terrorism*, while the animation explaining AIDS infection is not connected to *HIV*. The recorded (or text-to-speech synthesized) audio accompanying the animation in the multimedia view is displayed as plain text instead. All this subject to deliberate override from Tom, of course.

Eighth, because Tom has checked the advanced exercise module option, each of the words he looks up is linked to a number of appropriate exercises. For example, *HIV* appears in a word-formation exercise on the Latinate forms with <o>-final prefixes (*immuno-*) as well as in an irregular plurals exercise as a distractor (*virus* pluralizes regularly), and in an acronym deciphering exercise. Advanced level exercises are offered only, with little Polish involvement and no phonetics, but with an enhanced cultural content and a rich supply of mnemonic devices (imagery keywords, etc. [3], see Hulstijn 1997 for an overview), all of this according to Tom's profile.

Ninth, because Tom needs to make frequent notes about, and bookmarks to, the visited entries and MRD areas, this option is elaborated and always active: all searches take it into account, the notebook is interactively connected with Tom's favourite word-processing package and the Internet, the line drawings and sketches which Tom makes there can be converted into search keys, so that ☺ will retrieve *smiley* (among other hits), the word which he temporarily forgot, and whose Polish equivalent escaped him, too. Needless to say, entering search parameters such as "round and red on green background" will retrieve pictures and photographs of, among others: rose, cherry, tomato, beef patty, blood drop, ruby on green velvet, etc. (see, e.g. Blobworld or Google's image search facilities).

Tenth, if Tom ever needed on-line help, a text-oriented English-only facility would be activated, explaining the topic required in advanced English, with roughly the same amount of detail which Tom always requested from the dictionary in his past sessions with it. American English would be used for help because this is the option which Tom selected in his previous encounters with the help facility.

Eleventh, because the system is networked, Tom can access some statistics on dictionary use in his school as a whole (and beyond [4]). Other users' preferred choices and shortcuts can be accessed, so that he can indirectly learn from his colleagues how to put the dictionary to even better use. Indeed, the system itself will be able to gain from a variety of user profiles. If it discovers that 87% of all student users in the school prefer to have phonetic transcription placed after the English equivalent in a Polish-English encoding view of the dictionary, it will duly be placed there (this is the actual proportion obtained in my questionnaire study of 645 students; see Sobkowiak 1999, insert after p. 148). If it takes most users longer to locate entry senses when they are arranged by their etymology/chronology (as they are in OED, for

example), the system will reorder them by frequency of occurrence, or by whichever order which has proved empirically to ensure fastest lookup (with the current population of users).

Twelfth...

3. Why not?

Such MRDs do not exist yet. But the direction in which electronic lexicography is moving is exactly this: towards more content, more flexibility and customization, more user-friendliness, better access and more connectivity with other sources of knowledge, lexicographic and beyond.

If there is anything worrying in this generally optimistic picture, it is the tempo at which the changes are taking place. In his "after-cocktail fantasies" of 1984, David Crystal predicted voice-operated multimedia remote-access lexicopedias with some of the functionalities which are now standard in EFL MRDs, and some which are still not. His "ideal users in their ideal lexicographical world" would access their lexical database which

> "is now available in electronic form, which their terminal allows them to access, and to which they can plug in one of several lexicographical computer games. If they wish to look something up, they have the option of referring to their lexicopaedias, or addressing the data base direct through their voice-activated terminal. They know their access code words. [...] 'Meaning', 'Pronunciation', 'Usage', 'History', 'Picture', 'Spelling', 'Idioms', or whatever, as required — the information to be made available in sound, on screen or in print, depending on which mode selection they make" (Crystal 1986:79; my hyperlink -- WS).

Similar prophesies were made by many other lexicographers and media specialists at that time, which saw the beginning of the global computer network connectivity (e.g. McArthur, 1986: 174, 179). Ten years later, and two computer generations further down the line, in a skeptically titled paper of 1994, "Have we wasted our time?", Nancy Ide and Jean Vé ronis, two of the leading MRD lexicographers, prophesied that:

> "future dictionaries will likely be very similar to linguistic workstations, and provide many of the same facilities [...] Computerization of dictionary-making at the semantic level could involve things such as the creation of explicit semantic links (hypernym, part, colour etc.) between words or entries in electronic (hypertextual) dictionaries with sophisticated navigation and query capabilities. Information could be linked to images and sounds, and displayed in template form; or ultimately, we could achieve real-time/on-line generation in natural language in any desired form (concise version, learner's version, full-blown version, etc.) from a common internal representation. The possibilities are endless" (Ide, Vé ronis, 1994: 1).

Eight years later, precious little of their vision has come true in popular marketed MRDs, or even in this paragon of all modernity, web-based dictionaries and encyclopedias. The problem does not appear to be a lack of lexicographic or computational expertise and advanced technology. Rather, as it turns out, language education - native and foreign alike - is not yet ready to apply machine-readable dictionaries and encyclopedias on a large scale. The potential of electronic lexicography remains unexplored because educators and educatees see no place for multiple-access electronic dictionaries of radically innovative design in the process of language acquisition, be it in school [5] or at home. Sadly, this conclusion is not terribly revelatory either. In her 1995 paper on "Machine-readable dictionaries and education", Kegl agreed that "little in the way of progress has been made" since a large policy-charting conference on educational uses of word processors with dictionaries had been held thirteen years before (Kegl, 1995: 271). Her closing line also remains valid today: "the

best future applications of MRDs in education will be those most able to respond to the insights and the needs of their users" (ibidem: 280). It is predominantly with users in mind that I have, in this paper, sketched the shape of things to come.

Notes

1. Modern learner's dictionaries provide for an <u>expanding</u> window of proficiency: the more advanced the target user is the larger the dictionary will be. Yet, this is wasteful of space and resources because the learner will gradually "grow out of" some basic lexicographic information, which can, then, be deleted. I believe the right metaphor to apply here is a dynamically <u>moving</u> proficiency window, where the discarded information does not burden the dictionary. The issue deserves a separate discussion, of course. See Bé joint, 1994: 95-7, 153 and 186, Scholfield, 1997: 281 and Perry, 1997 for recent short appraisals of this idea. As early as 1984, Kipfer noticed that "it would probably be best if some words were presented in chronological order, others were presented in decreasing order of frequency, and still others presented by grouping basic meanings together into subcategories" (ibidem: 108).

2. Because "users may simply wish to know which word, or words, function at *one structural point* other than that of the headword consulted" (Cowie, 1999: 137). For ingenious ways to extract and access collocations in an ordinary general bilingual dictionary, see Fontenelle, 1997.

3. Building mnemonics into "teaching" dictionaries has been suggested a few times, for example by Nation, 1989: 69 or Scholfield (1997: 298): "...compiling L2>L1 bilingual dictionaries (or L1 specific monolingual dictionaries) with suggested keywords added to entries, so that when an item is looked up, a means of actually retaining the information is directly offered by the dictionary".

4. Compare this vision of Aust, Kelley, Roby (1993: 72): "Wide-area databases could then compile data on such variables as the most commonly looked-up words, which texts prompted the greatest number of consultations, and the percentage of consultations by part of speech. These data would assist educators in teaching reading and vocabulary more effectively...".

5. These trends extend more widely to any FLT computer use in a formal educational setting in Poland, as demonstrated in a number of empirical studies (see Sobkowiak, 2002).

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MULTILINGUAL DATA ORGANISER (M.D.O.)

- AN OVERVIEW OF A SMALL-SCALE PROJECT

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Introduction

This paper is an overview of an ongoing, small-scale project whose aim is to create a multi-modal Windows environment for foreign language material handling, tentatively called Multilingual Data Organizer or M.D.O. (http://merlin.in.uj.edu.pl/mdo/, where some more information about it can be found and a trial version downloaded). Some aspects of its development, its functions and possible implementations are presented.

The idea behind M.D.O. is to create a multi-function, multi-purpose, multi-language Windows environment which would enable the user (ideally a teacher, a learner, a translator, a lexicographer or a linguist) to collect and organise linguistic data in accordance with their individual needs. It would be then suitable for complementing teaching, self-study, or other professional or non-professional objectives of linguistic nature. The central module of the application, from which the work started, is the dictionary. A distinction is sometimes made in computational lexicography between lexicons "for computers" and dictionaries "for humans". In this paper the terms lexicon and dictionary are used interchangeably. A few other terms should also be regarded as loose concepts as they seem imprecise descriptions of some of the dynamic electronic entities under discussion (basic definitions used in lexicography can be found in Burkhanov, 2000)

M.D.O. is designed to hold and represent language data differently from regular publishers' electronic dictionaries like Webster's or Longman's (LDOCE). First and foremost, it is designed to build an empty database that the user fills in with lexical input. In fact, the Polish and English language files are not totally empty as, in the process of the project development, several thousand entries have been included in the main tables. For instance, approximately 16,000 English lexical items already exist. Some helpful functions have been created which make it possible to use the existing ASCII files (with texts or word lists) to fill in the M.D.O. by either reading all the words off the list or, semi-automatically, by asking the user first which words to add. This method was used to obtain the first 14,000 English database records.

The original idea dates back to 1997. The project sprang up out of the author's professional needs and experience of an English language teacher as well as his personal interest in humanities computing. One of the primal motives was to create a flexible, customizable tool

for organising English language lexicographic data and, more generally, English language teaching material. The dissatisfaction with the existing (available) multimedia educational software and educationally-oriented electronic dictionaries was a stimulus to take interest in database development environments and programming languages. The development of the author's own programming skills was a welcome spin-off.

The choice of the database structure

By its nature any Machine Readable Dictionary (MRD) is a kind of a database. Large-scale software engineering projects often use UNIX-based ASCII databases and tools to re-format information in human-readable texts using text markup.

Standard Generalised Markup Language (SGML) is a well-known coding system widely accepted in lexicography (cf. The WWW Consortium which sets the SGML standards, http://www.w3.org). In this system labels in brackets carry the extra-textual information, which in lexicographic contexts indicate the micro- and macrostructure features. The best-known derivative of SGML is HTML used to code WWW documents. Extended Markup Language (XML), which is another sub set of SGML, has also been proposed as a flexible source interchange format to describe the information in different dictionaries. The textual format of the above solutions ensures common readability and transfer of the same material across many systems and coding conventions. This is one of the reasons why a relational database using a particular data file format and working on one platform is not regarded as suitable for electronic lexicons and MRDs, especially ones used in computational lexicography contexts. On the other hand, any existing, Windows-based relational database management system can be taken advantage of in making a functional lexicographic application for home use.

Computerised lexicographic databases are traditionally based on a relational model. In short, a relational database can be visualised as a set of tables, storing the content information or the relations (or links) between the content records. M.D.O. stores each headword, label, word sense definition, etc in a separate table (file) in a pre-defined format. The records are made of fields. One of the basic requirements of a relational database is that an ID number should exist for each record for its unique identification. Since an index of numbers can be searched and filtered faster than textual data, relational databases tend to be faster than text-processing tools in returning output.

As mentioned above, lexicographers' databases work on texts and one possible way of structuring the data is by annotation. Annotation (also called tagging) is a practice where each headword is provided with descriptive codes (for examples of MRD inner structures see Gazdar's examples for LDOCE and COMLEX). This way of representation inflates the data to be filtered. M.D.O. database is formatted according to a principle of the minimum number of component fields. It is through linking that the higher level of structuring is achieved. The word *entry*, therefore, is meant here as more or less synonymous to *record*. Entry blocks are virtual graphic representations automatically generated by way of collecting and filtering the data sets on the basis of links.

M.D.O. has been made using *Clarion for Windows 2.0* (a product of *Softvelocity*, http://www.softvelocity.com/core/default.html), a rapid database development environment, which is capable of building complex, dynamic relational databases in an object-oriented language, and may be compared with the widely used Access, Paradox, or FoxPro. In the

"wizard" mode *Clarion* can generate the application's code based on the predefined templates and in such a mode creating an unsophisticated, conventional database is a question of minutes. Any major alterations or a move towards sophistication, however, will unavoidably complicate the matter by involving some hand-coding. Opting for the hand-coding mode (hand-coding from scratch) makes the task much more arduous and time-consuming but, at the same time, allows for invention limited only by the programmer's skills and the restrictions of the tool itself. The executable is relatively small and a well-built application works fast.

Reusability of resources

Technically, the project primarily aims at achieving a level of flexibility and manageability not possible with the existing mono- and bi-lingual commercial products of this type. Its other objective is to provide means for extensive data sharing, referred to as reusability of resources. This can be done on two levels: (1) the newly added modules could use the same data for a variety of purposes, (2) the same data (entries) could be used in a variety of ways. The first rule is not different from any modern software development procedure. It allows designers to change the user-end interfaces, or add new features to the existing applications. It is not clear, however, how common the second approach to database design is. Since the M.D.O. entries must be provided manually, making extensive use of them seems a simple way of avoiding redundancy. In practice, the reusability of data can take several forms. For example, the same first language headwords can be linked with any number of foreign language headwords. Reusing sentences, on the other hand, means that every constituent string of characters inside a sentence is considered for display and the same sentence appears to illustrate the use of a number of words found in it.

Overview of the M.D.O. basic features

The M.D.O. database consists of the following components: native language (L1, e.g. Polish) headwords, foreign language (L2, e.g. English) headwords, L2 pronunciations, L2 usage and user-defined labels, L2 sense definitions, L2 lexical co-occurrence notes, L2 etymology notes, and L2 example sentences. All records are automatically sorted in alphabetical order. Additionally, there are tables storing relational information on synonyms, antonyms, related headwords, irregular forms, etc. Some features link the database with the user's untagged corpus of text files (in txt format) as well as multimedia files – audio (.wav format), images (.jpg, .gif, .wmf, .bmp or .pcx formats), and movie clips (player-dependant formats), which can be collected and accessed from within the program through API calls to Windows standard or user-defined tools. The user can add, delete and change entries, which become resources used by testing or material-building modules incorporated in the environment. Teacher-oriented modules might include: a vocabulary test-maker (creating printable tests), a simple corpus-based sentence extractor (for finding relevant samples of language usage), or a text vocabulary extractor (for deriving a list of words from an electronic text). Student-oriented modules might include: a word meaning tester (multiple-choice vocabulary test), a spelling game (for instance 'hangman'), a grammar book (again using the collected sentences to illustrate the structures covered), or a concordancer (to study word use and collocations).

M.D.O. is a Windows application with the 'mother' window against whose background all modal windows open. The modules are available from that 'mother' window menu. The program loads the necessary information at the start and operates on the tables stored in RAM unless the user changes the data, in which case the hard disk files are engaged and the RAM-

stored information is updated. By default the dictionary module opens first, and the last-accessed item automatically becomes the first query request.

Prior to the appearance of the 'mother' window the user is offered a choice of the foreign language s/he wants to work with. The choice list simply reflects the existing subdirectories in the program's main folder. Creating a new folder adds a new language to the start-up selection window. (In fact the procedure has not been automated and the help file is needed to guide the user through the process of adding a new language, which happens to be a little more complicated.)

The program opens two 'languages' at the same time, one of which must be the native language (L1). Since English is the foreign language of the designer's choice, the application's metalanguage is English and most functions are geared towards that language. Working with languages other than English is possible, although functionally restricted. Windows allows the user to switch the keyboards in order to use a different font needed for writing in any of those languages. At this point, however, M.D.O. is unable to cope with the limitations arising from the morphological (inflectional) nature of those languages.

The same L1 table is used with all foreign languages. The dictionary works both ways and once a link has been made between headwords, both L1-L2 and L2-L1 queries are possible. Interestingly, the publishers' MRDs being but electronic representations but the hardcopy dictionaries, 'two-way' queries of the same database information do not seem to be the attitude of all electronic dictionaries developers, who tend to have both the L1-L2 and L2-L1 volumes separated. (It is not difficult to imagine that looking up a Polish word among the definitions in a traditional English-Polish dictionary and looking up the Polish sense in the Polish-English dictionary would yield different results.)

The dictionary module

The screenshot of the dictionary window can be seen at this location. By using the drop-down combo list it is possible to incrementally access any headword of the selected language (L1 or L2). It is also possible to type in the query string without locating it in the list. The language (LG) button switches the combo box between L1 and L2.

The dictionary search is a two-step procedure. First, the main list of entries is checked against the query string and a set of matching lexical items is retrieved. For example the query string 'design' will make the dictionary retrieve 'design (n1)', 'design (n2)', 'design (v1)', 'by design', 'randomized block design' etc. These are put into a special list of pre-selected records. In the second step, the user may highlight any of the items on the list to bring up the related information. By default, the first entry is automatically selected for the display. Since it is one of the design principles that the same data can be reused and exploited in a variety of ways, it is possible to link one L1 headword with numerous L2 headwords. This approach eliminates the need to have homonymous forms repeated. Unless the user decides in favour of precise L1 definitions, the same form is applied to a number of L2 entries, regardless of the sense differences between them. For instance, the Polish word 'rzad' can be linked to many English headwords ('government', 'administration', 'cabinet', 'rule', 'row', 'line', 'rank', 'tier', 'file', 'order', etc), irrespective of the sense distinctions and saving on retrieval time.

Each L2 headword can be linked to one or more L2 definitions. It is interesting to see how the time spent with the program invisibly increases the time a person spends with numerous paper and electronic dictionaries in search of data and information to feed the database. In the course of the study the material gathered allows for making at least superficial comparisons of the sources. One of the most interesting observations of the author is that, for a non-native speaker of English, the final understanding of an English item was, in many cases, a build-up process through a series of complementing definitions, equivalents, and illuminating examples accumulated from those sources. One thing it suggests is that the information in such dictionaries, drastically simplified and shortened for lack of print space, is often confusing and inconsistent. It may be indeed insufficient to allow the learner full insight into the meaning of an item. With M.D.O. the user is able to collect and combine information from a variety of sources to arrive at a comprehensive compilation.

Synonyms, antonyms, etymology notes, and relatives and friends can also be linked to the L2 headwords. In accordance with the reusability of resource principle, synonyms and antonyms come from the same file as the L2 headwords. Etymology notes can be more than informative pieces; they can be used by learners to foster certain items by making mental connections to its origins and thus remember it better. Some entries can be forced to be displayed automatically together with a given headword. These can be either 'relatives' - morphologically related forms, like derivatives, different enough to be normally ignored by the look-up mechanism ('designer' is not called up when looking up 'design') or 'friends' - items associated on any other basis (for instance 'turtle' and 'tortoise' and other words frequently confused for their formal similarity).

Sentences and phrases - the use of annotation

The sentences collected and typed in by the user are displayed with each entry if the query string has been found inside the string of the whole sentence. In order to avoid confusion with homographs ('spelling look-alikes') and, consequently, to retrieve only those examples relevant for the active entry a simple annotation system has been implemented. The L2 entries can be labelled to distinguish between headwords identical in form but different in meaning or function. The form of the tags is user-dependent and the system will work as long as it is consistent. In the existing demonstration version 'n' stands for a noun, 'v' stands for a verb, and so on. Thus 'design (n1)' - a noun sense number one - is separate from 'design (n2)' - a noun sense number two and from 'design (v1)' - a verb sense number one, and so on. Since the same tags may be used in sentences, an example such as 'Has she made the design (n1) for her dress herself?' will appear to illustrate 'design (n1)' while the sentence 'An architect is designing (v1) a house for us' will pop up if the highlighted entry is 'design (v1)'. The English suffixes (-ing, -ed, -s, etc) are also recognized by the retrieval procedure so various inflected word forms - 'designed', 'designing' or 'designs' - will be found and displayed. The 'SENT' button offers an alternative display of the long sentence examples in bigger font and wrapped-up in the box.

Multi-word lexical items have always been lexicographer's nightmare (cf. Baddorf, 1996). The M.D.O. solution is by the strategy of problem avoidance. A sentence to be found illustrating a complex multi-word expression (phrasal verb, idiom) must be tagged with that expression in its canonical form, as it appears in the L2 headword list. Thus, to make a sentence illustrate 'give sb a telling-off' a sentence would have to be coded as '(give sb a telling-off) Diana gave the children a severe telling-off when she saw them playing near the road.' The phrase would be detected but not displayed.

Unlike the above, the phrase/collocation search is done by way of parsing the text entry of the phrases file. The entries require that the headwords be in the same form as in the main L2 list (tagged, if necessary). The plus sign (+) must be used on one or two sides of the headword to indicate the possible collocational or syntactic context. A possible entry for the word 'faint' is an illustration of this method: 'be, feel + faint (adj) + voice, murmur, sound, idea, chance, hopes, traces of' reads: the adjective 'faint' can occur in the following contexts: be faint, feel faint, faint voice, faint idea, etc. The same information can be separated by having two entries: be, feel + faint (adj) and faint (adj) + voice, idea, ..., but the plus sign must be there for the program to consider the entry at all.

Multimedia

M.D.O. displays any multimedia file linked with the active headword but the multimedia files must be stored in their respective folders, called 'SOUNDS', 'IMAGES', and 'MOVIES'. If audio files have been linked with the active entry, the 'play sound' button is enabled (otherwise it appears as dimmed). The linked audio (.wav) files are played one by one at each consecutive press of the button. If an image file or a video clip is related to that entry, the appropriate display button is similarly enabled.

The corpus

Selecting the corpus option allows to access text (*.txt) files stored in the 'CORPUS' folder and pieces of texts including the query string are retrieved. The text button calls Windows Notepad showing the whole (con-)text for a given corpus example. The mechanism does not look for tags in those texts and therefore it is not a corpus-query tool proper. It will tend to find the string rather than the word and, naturally, fail to distinguish between homonyms. Corpus search result display is illustrated in screenshot that can be accessed at this location.

The concordancer makes it possible to view all examples in the appropriately structured manner. A 'history' list can be used at any time to go back to any of the previously accessed entries.

Filtered searches

A number of search mechanisms are available, including a label filter and a number of 'only in' searches. Filtering of output means extracting of only a subset of the headwords according to a specified criterion. One possible way of performing a filtered look-up is to scan for all headwords that have been linked to a particular label, e.g. all nouns, all phrasal verbs, or all adjectives. In the future it will be possible to combine the search criteria and look for all adjectives, referring to people, and used in American English. 'Only in definitions' procedure looks up only those records whose definitions contain the query string. 'Only in sentences' and 'only in corpus' browse the respective resources in search of the query sub string. The phonetic query ('only in pronunciations') allows a query with International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols. Only those headwords will be displayed whose pronunciations contain the IPA query string.

Category labels

One of the strongest features of M.D.O. is the table of user-defined category labels. Standard categories, such as 'noun', 'verb', 'countable', 'intransitive', as well as custom indicators can be

introduced into the database. Custom labels can be of any type, for example 'level: proficiency', 'from Masterclass Unit 10', 'refers to movement or way of walking', 'symbolizes healing, growth or newness', or 'synonym group: blame' (the last one based on the idea of *Longman Language Activator*). When English is the active foreign language, shortcuts are available on the dictionary window to label the active headword as any of the main part-of-speech labels (N, V, ADJ, etc). 'Make Links' and 'Delete Links' functions, available from the dictionary menu, create and delete relations between the selected items, respectively. Additionally, the labels belong to groups, which are introduced only to help arrange and locate them in the display window. One obvious example is 'POS' (part of speech) group, with such members as 'noun', 'adverb' or 'preposition'. The group labels are also user-defined.

Editing and selecting

The individual lists can be altered and updated through Editor windows available from the main menu. It enables the user to add new items, delete existing entries, and change the currently highlighted ones. Any entry can be linked with a sound file (in .wav format) as long as the user can provide it. The audio files are played out using the standard Windows device sndrec32.exe. The same windows are used to edit and select records. Screenshot available from this location shows the pronunciation list editor.

Some technical considerations

Basic computer skills are needed to operate M.D.O., but intermediate computer understanding is expected from the user to take full advantage of some of its more intricate solutions. The required skills include things like managing the phonetic alphabet key strokes or the recognition of the importance of the space (the empty character) in entries. The user, for example, must be aware of the difference between the headword + the space + the tag string like 'design (n1)' as opposed to a string where the tag directly follows the headword, in which case the machine recognises the whole form as one ('design(n1)'). At this stage M.D.O. assumes the user's accuracy in the creation of entries.

The system of tags and the example sentence hand-made annotation imposes a duty on the user to ensure congruity and coherence within the database. The tags are user-defined but there is no procedure to verify their actual application and concurrency across the data sets. Referential integrity constraints the user to be careful, but the program itself will be performing well even if the user's input is chaotic. Any instance of incoherence can be edited the moment it is spotted as the sentences are easily available for editing and the annotation is easy to add and change. Total automation or the creation of a semi-automatic tagger is beyond the scale of the project and the programming capabilities of its author.

Another two issues are the absence of the syllabification indicators and the tool's inability to parse compounds. To make sure that flowerpot, flower pot, and flower-pot are all retrievable regardless of the form of the user's query, the alternative spellings inside square brackets would have to be provided (in this case the following entry would have to be added: 'flowerpot [flower-pot , flower pot]')

Possible applications of M.D.O.

M.D.O. has a wide range of possible applications. It was first designed as a language teacher's help. The results of Sobkowiak's survey (Sobkowiak, 2001), done to examine the attitude of

Polish teachers of English towards the use of electronic dictionaries, show that more than half of subjects know and use at least one computer dictionary, but none of them has used it in the classroom. This observation, however, may be reversed: in spite of teachers' reluctance to use electronic dictionaries in the classroom, many of them use them at home. It can be safely assumed that they also use word processors and other software to prepare, directly or indirectly, for work. Those individuals in the profession who like to arrange and adapt their own teaching materials, may clearly benefit working with the M.D.O.'s support.

Professional translators and lexicographers may also find it useful in building their own field-specific glossaries (a 'glossary of building tools and materials', or a 'glossary of roofing terms' are examples based on the list of online specialty dictionaries at YourDictionary.com - www.yourdictionary.com).

Learner-oriented features can make M.D.O. a valuable learner's aid. Computer-assisted vocabulary acquisition is but an obvious example. Language learners are in constant need of material revision. They spend a lot of time taking notes, highlighting words in printed texts, compiling glossary lists, and otherwise working with new and old vocabulary. What has been done with paper and pencil can now be done with a screen and keyboard. Despite the change of the medium, the practice of vocabulary note-taking need not disappear. However, it has to be borne in mind that computers lend themselves to home study better than classroom use. Blok et al. (2001), who reviewed courseware comparing the effectiveness of traditional as opposed to computer-assisted acquisition of words found out that both brought similar results. Concluding, the researchers point out that

> "... probably the most important advantage the computer has to offer is the fact that the computer allows for individually tailored learning. Students may choose the words they want to study, the way the words and word meanings are presented, the kind of learning activities they prefer, the pace in which they want to process the information and the frequency of processing, the moment they want to take a self test, the time of the day they want to study, and so on."

They also regret that "...most of these advantages have not been implemented in the courseware we have reviewed ...."

M.D.O. offers mechanisms to collect and accumulate lexical data. From the student's perspective, saving the word stock in a database makes it available for future exploitation and keeps the words from falling out of memory (at least the computer memory). The recollection, consolidation, and fostering techniques can put into effect at any time through testing and learning modules of the program. 'Writing' the notes into an electronic database, and thus authoring one's own lexical database (making a well-motivated learner into a sort of 'lexicographer') could raise the student's knowledge of the foreign language vocabulary and the awareness of the foreign language itself. This is not far from the conclusions of a study presented by Nikolova (2002), which produced some evidence of the positive effects that student participation in authoring of multimedia instructional materials has on vocabulary acquisition. It would be unrealistic to expect many learners to self-study in this way, but learners whose motivations are typically computer-related are potentially among M.D.O.'s first users. Moreover, for the computer-generation learner, computer-assisted learning may become the first thing that comes to mind and a more natural choice.

A comprehensive point of view has been expressed by Rundell (1996), who points to the general shift in pedagogy towards a more learner-centred paradigm and traditional distinctions

losing significance in the technologically diversified reality. He makes a comment that appears to be relevant in the present context:

> "Liberation from the tyranny of print will have profound consequences because it completely invalidates a whole range of long-established binary notions about reference materials. In the electronic medium, many of the old distinctions - e.g. dictionary vs. grammar, dictionary vs. encyclopedia, onomasiological vs. semasiological dictionary, global-monolingual vs. bilingual dictionary - become much less relevant, and it is possible, for example, to envisage an all-purpose learners' dictionary that could be customized according to the specific first language, level of competence, and field of interest (e.g. Business English) of an individual user."

Other custom oriented dictionaries

Very few non-commercial tools have been made that can serve the same purpose or purposes as M.D.O. The author of this article is aware of two such projects, namely KURA and the Customized Lexicon. KURA (Nepali for 'language') was made by Boudewijn Rempt (http://www.xs4all.nl/~bsarempt/linguistics/index.html). It is a UNIX/Windows MySQL database application for language description. It is different from and by far more sophisticated than Customized Lexicon, which in turn is a vocabulary tool aimed at enriching and testing English vocabulary. The Customized Lexicon is a project by Cosmin Grigorescu (www.cs.rug.nl/~cosmin/) of the Faculty of Automatics and Computers at the University of Bucharest. The designers of the CALLE system present a very similar attitude by building

> "a generic environment for learning foreign languages, (...) a personal companion for the user, who starts to learn a new language from scratch together with the user. The language student can use CALLE in combination with a textbook to assist him in understanding and translating new texts as well as for the fast retrieval of the meaning of foreign words. Because of its symmetric system architecture CALLE provides also translations of words and sentences into the foreign language. Furthermore, CALLE can perform several types of exercises, e.g. inserting missing words in sentences, correcting the sequence of words..."

Commercial dictionaries, many of which offer testing modules, games and other learner-oriented features, are increasing in number. Major publishers are developing their well-established products. For instance, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* has pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary activities for advanced learners, and language learning games 'providing hours of fun through countless permutations.'

Only few of those products allow for the addition of user-defined data (for example *Leksykonia,* http://www.lexland.com.pl), but are restricted in functionality in other respects when compared to M.D.O. Predictably, well-known publishers like Merriam-Webster (www.m-w.com), Pearson Education Limited (http://www.pearsoned-ema.com) or Collins (http://titania.cobuild.collins.co.uk/) are determined to keep the original content of their learners' dictionaries intact.

Final remarks

The next step in the development of M.D.O. is to continue improving the application, adding new modules, and ensuring their reliability. A step further would be to create a similar application that would combine the full client-server capability of online resource browser (including access to corpora, dictionaries and Distance Learning centres) with the flexibility of a user-controlled database.

Since work on M.D.O. commenced and has continued with no external funding and in the designer's spare time only, and the project tends to be delayed by technical difficulties, it should not be surprising that it has taken quite a long time for such a small project to take shape. In spite of the drawbacks of the underdeveloped application (like the lack of language content and the need to correct its weak or defective components), the simple Windows program has shown a potential of being a very effective teacher's aid, and as such it has proved, in more than one respect, to be more useful than well-known professional applications. Perhaps more than a working tool, it could be an inspiration, or a working model, for any better application to be built in the future.

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INTERNET LESSON PLANS

GETTING READY FOR THE EURO

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Time: 90 minutes

Level: intermediate to advanced

Objectives:

- to obtain some background information about the euro
- to practise using online dictionaries
- the lesson can also be the supplementary material to unit 9 "Money" (*Market Leader Intermediate*)

A teacher should try not to explain new words during the lesson. Students should find definitions/Polish equivalents themselves in online dictionaries.

Procedure

Pre-stage activity:

Students are divided into pairs and given names of countries. They are responsible for providing the whole group with the adjectives for person, languages and currency. One pair should concentrate only on one country to make the activity dynamic and interesting. Suggested names of countries: Japan, Egypt, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Belarus, Monaco, Belgium, Holland etc.

The following online dictionaries can be used: www.oed.com, http://www.m-w.com/dictionary.htm, http://dictionary.cambridge.org, http://www.yourdictionary.com, http://www.poltran.com

At this stage I recommend going to http://www.m-w.com/dictionary.htm. Then, students click on **Collegiate Dictionary** and enter the name of a given country. They will be provided with some basic information about the region. To find more there is also the link to www.Britannica.com and Top 10 Most Popular Sites for the country.

While-stage activity:

1. Students go to the site: www.euro.ecb.int and click on **History of the euro.** Students try to explain the following dates:

- 1957
- 1986
- 1992
- 1 January 2001

2. Students click on **Glossary** and complete the sentences:

a. The graphic symbol for the euro was inspired by _____ and refers to
_____. The parallel lines represent _____. The official
abbreviation for the euro is _____.
b. The European Central Bank was established in _____ and is situated in
_____.
c. The Eurosystem is governed by _____ and its main objective is
_____.
d. The abbreviation EMU stands for _____.

3. Students are divided into groups/ pairs. They prepare presentations either on the euro bank notes or coins. They click on **Euro bank notes & coins.** They should refer to the following questions:

     a. coins

- How many denominations are there?
- Who designed them?
- What do the sides of coins feature?
- Technological details (security features)

     b. bank notes

- Security features – how are they protected from being counterfeited?
- How many bank notes are there?
- Describe symbols and names used in the design (windows, gateways, stars, bridge etc.)

4. Students click on **Conversion rates** to do the task: The current price for Newsweek International is EUR 3.80. Where is it the most expensive? Convert the price into the former currency and then into Polish one. Students are divided into groups and concentrate on one country.

Post-stage activity:

1. Students can go to ***Children's zone*** and download games there testing their recognition of particular coins and bank notes.

2. With an ambitious class you can revise the core vocabulary on money giving the list of Polish words (for example: dług, premia, prowizja, łapówka, oprocentowanie, mandat, brutto, netto etc.) making the students translate them with the help of Polish online dictionaries. If they use www.poltran.com they should enter the Polish word and click on ***into English***. When they have English equivalents, they should look for synonims, idioms and related words in a monolingual dictionary, for example www.yourdictionary.com, clicking on ***Thesaurus***. Then, they can use the phrases preparing funny sentences in English, which should be translated by their classmates into Polish with the help of dictionaries if necessary.

3. You can turn students' attention to the abbreviations used during the lesson and make them find what other popular business abbreviations stand for. They can go to www.yourdictionary.com, click on ***Business*** and then, ***Business Glossary and Acronyms***.

Suggested abbreviations: P.T.O; VAT; SOS; M.D; WHO; OPEC; FAO; F.O.B; UNO etc.

Homework:

1. At home students can complete the following text on the EU and Poland. They should use **will** or **won't** checking unfamiliar words in online or CD ROM dictionaries if they have ones at home or in a library. To revise the future tense they can go to www.englishpage.com, click on ***verb tenses*** and then, ***future.***

> Since the collapse of communism, the countries of East and Central Europe have been knocking on the door of the European Union. And what _will_ the EU tell them? "We have a set of rules, and if you want to join, you (1) _____ accept all the rules of the club." Those conditions (2) _____ scare off anybody. Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Estonia and Cyprus (3) _____ be considered in the first turn. "Enlargement of the EU (4) _____ be seen as the final stage of a process that has been going on since 1989 in Poland"-says Balcerowicz. But membership (5) _____ come cheap. EU officials (6) _____ spend 80 billion euro on helping the newcomers. The cost for each applicant (7) _____ be several times larger than the EU aid it receives. According to estimates, Poland (8) _____ have to spend about 34 billion euro on its environmental cleanup efforts. But there (9) _____ be only costs. There (10) _____ be huge benefits as well.

2. They can also revise vocabulary connected with money. To choose the correct answer they should use a monolingual online dictionary clicking on ***Thesaurus***.

> 1. I have my savings account in Bank Zachodni WBK S. A. At the end of each month they send me _____.

a) my bills   b) my bank statement   c) my receipts   d) my premium

> 2. The profession of a teacher is one of most ethical. Teacher hardly ever take _____.

a) bonuses   b) rewards   c) bribes   d) fines

3. My friend earns quite well. He is paid a very high _____ on goods he sells.

a) fee   b) provision   c) salary   d) commission

4. I didn't have money so I paid for my stereo in 6 monthly _____.

a) rates   b) instalments   c) interest   d) parts

5. He lost his job and I had to pay off his _____.

a) owes   b) cash   c) debts   d) rents

6. Our company _____ a record profit last month.

a) did   b) got   c) made   d) gave

7. I couldn't find a job so I had to be on the _____.

a) dole   b) pension   c) grant   d) state ration

DIFFERENT SHADES OF MADNESS

by Miroslawa Podgorska

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Level: Intermediate and above.

Time: 90 minutes.

Aims:

- To teach vocabulary describing mental disorders
- To revise noun suffixes
- To broaden students' knowledge through reading about mad historical characters and their influence

Technical requirements: one computer per group of 2 students, with the Internet connection.

Knowledge: Students should be skilled at typing the URLs.

Procedure:

Pre-stage activities

1. The teacher asks students if they know any vocabulary used to define disorders (suggested answers: *nuts, crazy, stupid, unstable, mad*). To come up with more words, they are advised to use CD-ROM dictionaries available in the classroom or online dictionaries.

2. The teacher asks for the definitions of given words to make students realise the fact that some of the words are used in a wrong way.

While-stage activities

3. Students are given task sheets with definitions and they are to try and match adjectives to the definitions.

1.	Behaving in a crazy or dangerous way
2.	Thinking only about yourself

3.	Believing unreasonably that you can't trust other people or that they are trying to harm you
4.	Believing you are extremely powerful or important
5.	Unreasonably worried or frightened
6.	Completely stupid or crazy, often in a dangerous way
7.	Mentally confused or behaving strangely, because of old age
8.	Typical or connected with schizophrenia

The adjectives are: *schizophrenic*, *deranged*, *insane*, *paranoid*, *megalomaniac*, *egocentric*, *neurotic*, *senile*. (The key: 1.deranged, 2.egocentric, 3.paranoid, 4.megalomaniac, 5.neurotic, 6.insane, 7.senile, 8.schizophrenic.)

4. Then the teacher triggers a discussion about a potential dangers of the above-mentioned disorders.

5. The teacher asks students to make nouns from the given adjectives. Students are advised to use electronic dictionaries to check their answers. (The key: *derangement*, *egocentricity*, *paranoia*, *megalomania*, *neurosis* (pl.-es), *insanity*, *senility*, *schizophrenia*)

Online

1. Students are asked about the names of famous people suspected of being mentally ill (suggested answers: *Vincent Van Gogh*, *Calligula*)

2. The teacher asks students to type the URL: www.xs4all.nl/~kvenjb/madmon.htm, look at the page to see whether they recognise any names (*Tsar Ivan IV of Russia*, *Calligula*)

3. The teacher divides the class into three groups. Because not all the links contain topics appropriate for under-aged students I suggest asking students to follow the links to:

       Eric XIV Wasa of Sweden (1st group)

       Amalie of Orange-Nassau (2nd group)

       George III of Great Britain: section about his disease (3rd group)

Each group is to identify vocabulary describing mental disorders as well as to answer two questions:

       1st group: 1.What caused the King's inferiority complex?

2.What mental disorder did he suffer from?

2nd group: 1.When did Amelia show the first signs of mental confusion?

2.Who did she inherit her mental condition from?

3rd group: 1.What were the first symptoms of the King's illness?

2.What method did Dr Francis Wilis use to help the King?

Post-stage activity

1. Having answered the questions and informed the class about the content of each page, students try to think about the reasons for mental disorders. The aim is to come to the conclusion that some of the diseases are **hereditary**, others are caused by **incestuous marriages**, or **traumatic experiences in childhood**.

A WORD FROM A TECHIE

CUSTOMIZE YOUR OWN ENGLISH DICTIONARIES

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In the March issue of this journal Jarek Krajka emphasizes the importance of embedding an English dictionary in building an English-learning Website (Jarek Krajka, *Enhancing the Class Website with Additional Features (Web Statistics, Chat Room, Search Engine, Dictionary), Teaching English with Technology, A Word from a Techie*, vol. 2, no. 2, March 2002, http://www.iatefl.org.pl/call/callnl.htm). I do agree with him and will discuss the topic from a different angle.

The Internet is changing all aspects of life and work and it also exercises impact on traditional methods of acquiring English. For centuries printed books and dictionaries have been the most important tools for non-native English speakers to learn the language, being the main source of reference when they have difficulty doing problems by themselves. Generally, they would prepare several print dictionaries on hand for consultation. All of us know the disadvantages of this method, namely low efficiency, unsatisfactory consulting results and, moreover, limited resources as we do not have dictionaries covering all fields.

As the Internet grows rapidly and tremendously, more and more online dictionary websites such as Wordsmyth and Lexical FreeNet come out and provide services 24 hours a day. More influential and traditional dictionary publishers such as Cambridge International Dictionary of English and The American Heritage Dictionary are joining in this mainstream as well. These online dictionaries greatly enrich resources on the Net and give all people, native and non-native English speakers alike, free and easy access to them for reference through the Internet. The opportunities for English learners to acquire information all over the world are open and equal. This greatly pushes English study forward and accelerates the exchange and spread of the English language and its culture.

However, as we are surfing on the Net enjoying free ESL/EFL resources, we also feel its inconvenience which really prevents searching efficiency. For example, if you want to consult an English word on the website of Yahoo or Cambridge International Dictionary of English, you must first log in the homepage of search engine of these two websites, fill the keywords

in the search box and then click the "Search" button. After that you can get the search result within seconds. When you want to search keywords on Alta Vista, again you have to visit the search page of Alta Vista, introduce the keywords in the search box and click the search button to show the search result. Even if you open several windows simultaneously at the cost of speed and system resource it is relatively troublesome to switch between windows.

I thought over the inconvenience and studied the markers of some well-known and powerful search engines including some English dictionary search engines. For example, if we search the word "teaching" in Yahoo, we can find in the location box the search marker http://search.yahoo.com/bin/search?p=teaching. The matched search result is shown in the page. So, we can of course enter the word only once and replace it with variable. With the aid of web search active control, we can customize our own English dictionary. We declare 2 string type variables. One is valued http://search.yahoo.com/bin/search?p= . The other is that of edit box which captures what search word is input. Then with simple addition of the two variables, we can directly and quickly capture the search result in our own application. More importantly, you can add as many search engines or dictionaries as you like in a list, whose items are indexed and can replace the value of the first variable.

For example:

item a:=' http://search.yahoo.com/bin/search?p=' (Yahoo search marker)

item b:=' http://dictionary.cambridge.org/cmd_search.asp?searchword='+'&dict=B' (Cambridge Dictionary search marker)

item c:='http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/thesaurus?book=Thesaurus&va=' (Collegiate Thesaurus search marker)

…

…

variable s:= editbox.text (searched target word, here it is "teaching".)

The search command which is activated by Clicking search button in the source code is only one line:

a+s (if you want to consult Yahoo for the word "teaching")

or b+s (if you want to look it up in Combridge International Dictionary of English)

or c+s (if you want to consult Collegiate Thesaurus)

We can add any types of English dictionaries in the list and input the search word only once to have the search results or definitions of the word from the different dictionaries without having to log in their search homepage, which is a waste of time and tedious job. It really raises efficiency.

After collecting markers of search engines or dictionaries, we can integrate them into the project and build a customized and professional English dictionary search program, including

functions of editing and navigation if you like. A new and efficient Internet searching and browsing tool, especially for the English learners and teachers, is then created. I built it and named it *Findictionary*, which embeds search markers of the following categories:

1. **General Dictionaries**: including 9 important English dictionaries such as *Cambridge International Dictionary of English, Collegiate Thesaurus, Collegiate Dictionary* and so on.

2. **English Study**: including 6 famous and commonly used dictionaries such as *Acronyms/Abbreviations Search, Audible Webster Dictionary, The Biographical Dictionary* and so on.

3. **Encyclopedia**: including *Encyclopedia Britannica* and *TechEncyclopedia*.

4. **Search Engines**: including 7 powerful search engines such as *Yahoo*, *Excite* and so on.

5. **Medical Dictionaries**: including 5 influential medical search engines such as *Medical References, Index for Medical Dictionary* and so on.

6. **Law Dictionaries**: including 5 important law dictionary engines such as *Webster's Dictionary of Legal, Lawful Terms, International Law Dictionary* and so on.

Findictionary supports locally direct keywords search, that is, instead of logging in the search page of the above mentioned dictionary you just fill the keywords you want to search in the local program and select from the list of dictionaries. The searching result will be directly shown in the browser. Of course you can perform functions of navigation such as Prev or Next, as in Internet Explorer or Netscape. *Findictionary* is a free and stand-alone executable. It has been tested and included in the libraries of the software review website ZDNET/CNET (www.zdnet.com) and the download site DOWNLOAD/CNET (www.download.com). The permanent review pages made by them are :

http://www.zdnet.com/downloads/stories/info/0,10615,86581,00.html

http://download.cnet.com/downloads/0-1635474-100-7273222.html

It can also be downloaded at:

http://huagong.3322.net/download/findic.zip

http://person.longcity.net/home2/guoshesen/download/findic.zip

The source codes of the application are also open and free. Anyone who is interested in the full codes or suggestions may contact me.

In fact, many famous and professional Internet search tools such as MP3 search, news search, book search, lottery search or auction search are based on the above fundamental methodology and the algorithms or rules. We may develop an even better program by adding in multitask or multithreads.

Example activity:

Objectives:

- Build the learner's vocabulary power
- Develop the learner's ability to select right dictionary
- Develop computer literacy skills

Procedures:

1. After launching *Findictionary*, instruct the learner to find Search Word Box, Dictionary Selection Box and Find Button on the clear and well-organised screen. Briefly introduce the only 3 operation steps which are typing search word, selecting dictionary and clicking search button. There are 20 dictionaries accessible in Dictionary Selection Box.
2. Learners are divided into 2-4 groups. Tell each group to use one dictionary which should be different from any other groups'.
3. Ask students to search simultaneously the same target word in a given sentence from the handout given by the teacher. Ask the groups to describe the definitions they get. Tell the groups to compare and point out the differences in the definitions. Ask the learners which meaning is the most appropriate and fitting the given sentence.
4. In groups or pairs, talk about how to select the right dictionary for a given purpose or context.
5. Make sentences with the different definitions they get. Compare the meanings of the new sentences with those of the given sentences from the handout.
6. Regroup the learners and redo Step 2 - Step 5.

WEBSITE REVIEW

GENERAL AND SPECIALISED FREE ONLINE DICTIONARIES

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Introduction

Dictionaries in general are an essential tool for (autonomous) language learning. However, they have been devoted little attention as part of the language learning process. Researchers such as Aust, Kelley and Roby (1993) indicate that the use of hyper-reference dictionaries promotes a higher consultation rate than that of paper dictionaries, which in turn will probably enhance vocabulary acquisition. But as Sobkowiak (2002) rightly suggests in the previous issue of *Teaching English with Technology*, motivation to use dictionaries on the part of the learner very much depends on the teacher's knowledge of available reference tools. It is hoped that the online dictionaries referred to in this article are varied enough to motivate both teachers and their students.

The emergence of a wide range of available dictionaries on the Web should be welcome by language learners in general and by ESP students in particular. It is a well-known fact that specialised dictionaries are much more expensive and difficult to obtain than general ones, and they do not always satisfy the needs of language learners but rather those of professionals. Online dictionaries fill in two important gaps in this respect: there is a wide specialty dictionary offer for the various knowledge areas and some websites offer the opportunity to simultaneously search general and specialised dictionaries at the same time.

CD-supported or Machine Readable Dictionaries (MRD) together with web or online dictionaries have expanded the dictionary typology in which their paper counterparts were classified regarding the categories of range, perspective and presentation as described in Malkiel (1967). Some products are available both online and as MRDs, others offer an online demo and advertise the CD. In this paper we will focus only on Web dictionaries although most features are shared with CD dictionaries (See Walter, 2002 to learn more about the advantages of CD dictionaries). Several features stand out as typical of online as opposed to paper dictionaries:

I. THE MEANS OF ACCESS:

1. Accessing from one part of the dictionary to another

In paper dictionaries the user decides which entry to look up first and then continues the search consulting other entries if the first choice was not successful. Much of this look-up process is filtered out in online dictionaries because searches are carried out by typing in words that allow Boolean searches yielding one or several results, thus simplifying the whole look-up process. *AllWords.com*, for instance, allows the user to find words starting, ending, containing, or matching the search, and select one or several languages in which to translate the results (http://www.allwords.com/). Cross-referencing is also speeded up by means of links which directly take the user to related words or concepts (see for instance: synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, hypernymy, and meronymy in *WordNet* http://www.cogsci.princeton.edu/~wn/w3wn.html; or the conceptual organisation in the *Global Legal Information Network (GLIN) Thesaurus* at http://www.loc.gov/pmei/lexico/liv/brsearch.html).

2. Linking the dictionary to external and/or other types of information

From the pedagogical perspective the most interesting advance is made in terms of the alternative information sources that usually appear in online dictionaries. Links may be both internal (within the dictionary) and external (to other sites). The most frequent options are:

- links to other pedagogical materials (such as grammars, vocabulary tasks and the like), or to specific information on usage, grammar, worksheets, etc. Thus, *Cambridge Dictionaries Online*, http://dictionary.cambridge.org/, provides links to activities in which the dictionary may be used: http://uk.cambridge.org/elt/reference/activity.htm, while *AllWords.com,* quoted above, provides links to pedagogical materials, and especially lexical resources including other dictionaries and thesauri. Furthermore, a dictionary may be integrated as one of the tools in a language learning site (*The Linguist List* at http://www.emich.edu/~linguist/www-vl.html; or *Online Resources for ESL Students and Teachers* http://chabotweb.clpccd.cc.ca.us/maj/lahum/esl/resources.html). Thus, we have both online dictionaries taking us to other sites and educational sites with the dictionary as a resource.

- links to educational pages (directed to the teacher, the learner or both) or professional pages (in specialised dictionaries, addressed to a particular community which may provide access to research groups and other links to various online materials).

An excellent material for the use of dictionaries in the classroom is found at *KiDs*, part of the *Macquaire Dictionares* (http://macquarienet.com.au), which comprises, among other things, comprehensive notes for the teacher, worksheets, overhead transparencies and very detailed lesson procedures.

A specialised glossary with internal links to related pedagogic material is *The Biocomputing Glossary* (http://www.cryst.bbk.ac.uk/BCD/bcdgloss.html), with extra material on how a biologist deals with computer programs and their use. *The Dictionary of Computing and Digital Media* is defined as Digital Media Reference Source (http://www.hansenmedia.com/) and provides tables, tutorials, and annotated links to URLs. *Glosario de Términos: Laboratorio de Genética*, incorporates sound, statistics, images and links from the term to research in that area (http://www.geocities.com/maorera/hglaes2n.htm).

A peculiarity of some online dictionaries is that some sites have taken the dictionary format to organise their contents and lead the user to further explanations and advice. Thus, there are dictionaries for community special needs as *Diabetes Dictionary* which includes the latest information, advice and testimonies from children with diabetes (http://www.childrenwithdiabetes.com/dictionary/).

- links to encyclopaedic information on special topics, where an example is *Webopedia*, a dictionary and search engine for computer and Internet technology (http://pcwebopedia.com/). It should be noted that the boundaries of what is a dictionary and what is an encyclopedia are somehow blurred on the Web since online references are frequently integrated (*Diccionario del Vino Espańol*: http://www.filewine.es/dicciona.htm).

3. Multiple dictionary access

The possibility to carry out a search in more than one dictionary has been made easier regarding two online possibilities. On the one hand, some online dictionaries carry out searches in more than one dictionary and from that outcome the user may choose which information to look up and where. Examples of this kind are: *Xrefer*, http://www.xrefer.com/; and *OneLook Dictionary*, http://www.onelook.com/, which we shall comment on below. On the other hand, there are several sites which provide an extensive list of available online dictionary pages. *The Linguist List* quoted above includes an index of dictionaries. Other examples are:

- *A Web on Online Dictionaries* (http://www.yourdictionary.com). This is a very comprehensive site including dictionaries classified according to language and specialty. It also includes links to other reference works and pedagogical online material.

- *1000Dictionaries.com* is an excellent source for specialised dictionaries and other specialised reference materials arranged according to thematic categories (http://www.1000dictionaries.com).

- Several Internet guidebooks devote one of their sections to dictionaries related to the topic of the book, as in http://www.ifgb.uni-hannover.de/extern/ppigb/glossary, which is part of *Plant Pathology Internet Guide Book.*

4. Bi-/Multilingual access or using the dictionary in one of several languages

The information in both general and specialised bilingual and multilingual dictionaries is accessed in an easier way than when used online. Additionally, some of these dictionaries instantly translate the whole page into one of the languages of the dictionary. The following are examples of specialised multilingual dictionaries: in *The Technical Translator* (http://www.mouli-net.com/translator/) one word is translated into another language according to field, thus "power" has different uses and translations whether used in agriculture, electricity or mechanics. *The Astronomy Thesaurus* hyperlinks allow the search of specialised terms which are translated into English, French, German, Italian and Spanish. The pages may be accessed in any of these five languages (http://msowww.anu.edu.au/library/thesaurus/). The *Multilingual Glossary of Cereal Cultivation* is compiled in four languages: English, Spanish, French and Italian (http://www.inea.it/udi/).

II. THE "WORD OF THE DAY" FEATURE

A new dictionary feature that has come up with the introduction of online dictionaries is the "Word of the Day" and other similar proposals in which the dictionary puts forth an entry each day with the intention of drawing the user's attention to strange or less used words, or simply to learn about a word that is chosen daily to provide a full explanation.

New Words in English, (http://www.owlnet.rice.edu/~ling215/NewWords/page1.html) includes the *Word of the Day* in *Wordsmith.org,* organised by date, theme and alphabetically; today's and yesterday's words include sound, definition and example (http://wordsmith.org/awad/index.html); the *Word Play,* a long list of several web pages related to words http://www.wolinskyweb.com/word.htm); the *Word of the Day* in *OED* (http://oed.com/cgi/display/wotd); the Collins Cobuild Idiom of the Day (http://titania.cobuild.collins.co.uk/Idiom.html); or pages such as *The Monthly Idiom* (http://www.comenius.com/idioms/), where the user has a definition and may listen to a short conversation in which the idiom appears.

III. THE QUALITY OF IMAGES AND THE INCORPORATION OF SOUND

Related to the images is the concept of design. While paper dictionaries achieved improvements in design according mostly to letter size and type as well as page layout, online dictionaries make the most of colour, movement, sound and the use of icons that take the user to different kinds and sources of information. Good quality images may be found in different specialised dictionaries: *Biotech Life Science Dictionary* (http://biotech.icmb.utexas.edu/search/dict-search.html); *Online Biology Book Glossary* (http://gened.emc.maricopa.edu/bio/bio181/BIOBK/BioBookgloss.html); or *Medical Herb Garden. Pictures/Data Accessible by common or Botanical Name*, a glossary with more than one picture and close-up shots per term (http://nnlm.gov/pnr/uwmhg/index.html).

Images improve not only in quality and size but also in the possibility to add movement or animation and even sound where required. A good example of considerable improvement as opposed to paper dictionaries is the case of movement in sign language dictionaries. See for instance *A Basic Dictionary of ASL Terms* (American Sing Language) at http://www.masterstech-home.com/ASLDict.html.

Sound may be used as illustration for certain words (*whistle*, *quack*, *beep*, *weep*), as in *Sounds of the World's Animals* (http://www.georgetown.edu/cball/animals/animals.html); as decorative element of the device, that is, background music; and to inform about the pronunciation of words, a feature that has been gradually incorporated in most online general and some specialised dictionaries. Learners usually welcome the option of listening to the pronunciation instead of interpreting phonetic symbols as this requires less effort.

Music Dictionaries and Encyclopedias obviously improve with the inclusion of audio files as in *Online Music Encyclopedia*, with both high quality pictures and files for listening to music (http://library.thinkquest.org/10400/html/).

IV. THE CHOICE OF DICTIONARY

One of the advantages of using dictionaries on the Web is that sites containing a classified list of dictionaries have become a useful guide for dictionary choice (i.e., dictionary typology)

both for teachers and students. This may be seen for instance in the first page of *A Web of Online Dictionaries,* the user soon realises that there are different categories: monolingual dictionaries organised alphabetically by language, specialty dictionaries, general multilingual dictionaries, bilingual or multilingual dictionaries designed for translation purposes, and the *'nyms* category which contains thesauri, acronyms and pronunciation and others.

Another important step in dictionary choice for ESP learners is made in online dictionaries such as *X.Refer* and *OneLook Dictionaries*. In the former (http://www.xrefer.com/) the user may select the domain or topic so that the information is only searched in that domain. *X.Refer* also highlights the looked-up word and provides a sample sentence and the reference media from which it has been taken in order that the users may decide which of the options is more convenient for her/him. Moreover, the entries in some of the dictionaries and encyclopaedias included have linked cross-references.

OneLook Dictionaries (http://www.onelook.com/) is a very useful site too. Here the user may ask for the spelling and the language of the definition, and then results are classified according to fields (starting by general dictionaries and following with an alphabetical classification of different domain areas). This dictionary is an excellent solution to the problem we pointed out at the beginning of this paper, namely that specialised dictionaries do not always satisfy the needs of language learners but rather those of professionals. In *OneLook Dictionaries* the student may use both the information in general learners dictionaries and in the specialised ones complementing each other. In this way the learner has access to grammar, pronunciation, examples, etc. in an "easier" format and may also enter the (usually) more detailed definitions found for particular terms in specialised dictionaries.

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SOFTWARE REVIEWS

MACMILLAN ENGLISH DICTIONARY AND

CAMBRIDGE LEARNER'S DICTIONARY - A COMPARATIVE REVIEW

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System requirements:

	Macmillan English Dictionary	*Cambridge Learner's Dictionary*
Platform	IBM-compatible PC	IBM-compatible PC
CPU	Minimum Pentium 133 MHz	Minimum Pentium 166 MHz
RAM memory	32 MB	32 MB
Hard disc space	120 MB available (560 MB for full installation)	20 MB available
Operating system	Windows 98, 2000, NT4, ME	Windows 95, 98, 2000, NT4, ME
Sound card	16-bit Windows-compatible sound card	Soundblaster-compatible sound card
Graphic card	DirectX-compatible, 16-bit colour, supporting 800x600 resolution or higher	Super VGA, 16-bit colour or higher supporting 800x600 resolution or higher
Others	Speakers or headphones, microphone, Microsoft-compatible mouse or a pointing device	Speakers or headphones, a mouse or a compatible pointing device

Description

Macmillan English Dictionary is a program for upper-level students, a comprehensive dictionary containing over 100,000 references, with 30,000 idioms and phrases, produced by a team of 100 lexicographers studying the corpus of 200 million words to provide up-to-date and accurate information on words, their forms, meanings and uses. The dictionary, apart from giving all these in traditional entries, provides also pronunciation practice and allows

quick access to words while working in other applications. MED makes it possible to choose the window size, find a word, check the spelling while writing, listen to the pronunciation of a word, find a word using another program, build one's vocabulary and add one's own note to a word. As a learning tool, it enables pronunciation practice, lets students build up their grammar knowledge by providing study pages, gives easier access to meanings by illustrated words, and facilitates learning words by adding them to personal wordlists. As for teachers, they are able to teach words using illustrations, create teacher-made wordlists, and print their own vocabulary lessons.

Cambridge Learner's Dictionary (CLD) on CD-ROM is an interactive electronic dictionary for intermediate learners of English. Its entries contain sound recordings by both British and American native speakers, as well as a feature that lets you record and hear your own pronunciation. CLD also has a 'Related Words' feature that works like a thesaurus, and a 'Word Families' feature that provides an easy way to build vocabulary. In addition, CLD has a number of study pages, which explore different areas of English language and culture, and interactive exercises based on the study pages, which help the user practise the learnt words. CLD is combined with an application called Bookcase, a software program that helps use CLD and is automatically installed on the computer when installing CLD. What is more, the dictionary consists also of a picture component, as well as vocabulary exercises. It enables copying, printing, annotating entries, as well as simple and advanced searches.

General considerations

MED is said to be directed for advanced learners, but when looking at the defining vocabulary it seems that intermediate and upper-intermediate students could profitably use the tool as well. It is widely accessible through Macmillan ELT representatives all over the country, as well as in language bookshops. There are separate British English and American English versions, created from the same language database, but differing in vocabulary, contexts, spelling styles, punctuation and phraseology.

In comparison to MED, CLD claims to be directed to intermediate learners of English, and probably due to this assumption the interface of the program is much simpler, there are just a few icons and no drop-down menus, most probably not to overwhelm the user with a multitude of instructions in the target language. The authors of the program are consistent in this respect, and the defining vocabulary, icons, instructions, examples seem to be suited to that language level. However, this does not mean that more advanced learners would not benefit from the product - on the contrary, CLD is especially useful in building up learner's vocabulary, also on more advanced level, due to its sophisticated mechanism of providing related words. CLD is equally widely available, however, no mention is made of separate BE and AmE versions - it is only the pronunciation files that reflect this distinction.

Entries

MED entries contain the following pieces of information: the word, phonetic transcript, the icon to play back its pronunciation, the category of the word (noun, verb etc.), countable/uncountable, transitive/intransitive, definition of a word in its different meanings, example sentences, idioms/fixed phrases the word is used in, finally the words derived from it. Once the word is typed in, the dictionary searches automatically for other expressions it appears in, so the learner may research the dictionary contents in this way. Some words have also usage notes, as is the case of 'should', where the difference between 'should' and 'would'

is focused on. The novelty is frequency information, expressed in the form of stars next to the word, with three stars denoting the highest frequency down to no stars at all. Thanks to that feature, students can get the idea of which words should become their productive vocabulary, and which could remain receptive only. One thing missing in the entries of MED is the lack of related words option, which would enable the user to research the dictionary contents for words of similar meaning or relating to the same language area.

The entries in CLD are fairly similar, and the following information can be found there: the word, its BE and AmE pronunciations to be played, the phonetic transcript, definition, example, word category, countability/uncountability, varieties of the word in case of AmE. When a word has a number of meanings, these are preceded by guidewords, telling the user what the general area/category of the meaning is, in this way providing faster access to particular meanings of words. In case of certain words, the definition also includes usage notes, giving some basic information on how to use the word. There is no frequency information, but some words are preceded by a "key" icon, which symbolises the importance of the word to learn.

Searching

It must be said that MED has well-developed and advanced searching capabilities. As was said before, the dictionary automatically searches its contents for the phrases with the word requested, the list of which is given in the box at the bottom of the screen. Another search option is using "WordSearch", which makes it possible to look for a given word, specifying whether it is a headword, derived word, compound, phrasal verb, phrase or collocation. If that does not work, the user may try "TextSearch", looking for some text in definitions, examples or editorial notes. Another search facility, "SmartSearch", enables searching using AND, OR, NOT operators, applying at the same time the following filters: part of speech, grammar, region, style, frequency, irregular inflection, defining vocabulary, number of senses, illustration, menu, summary and editorial notes. The final feature of the program is "SoundSearch", a novelty in electronic dictionaries, where a student can type in the pronunciation of the word (or choose the phonetic symbols from the list) to get the requested words. The possibility of using wildcards (putting in ? or * for one or more symbols) makes it possible to work on minimal pairs, homophones, homonyms.

CLD has two windows, one being the Search Panel, the other the Content Window. In order to find a word, the user types in the word in the search box and clicks "Find". Under the typing box, there is the list of all words from the dictionary, which changes according to the letters typed in. The search results are visible in the box under the typing box, and are displayed in the following order: headwords, phrasal verbs, idioms and phrases, usage notes, definitions and examples, all colour coded. Thus, the user gets the instant access not only to the headword, but to all instances of the use of the word in the dictionary, which is especially useful when trying to look up idioms or do research on the meaning and applications of particular words. When searching, one can use the following filters: category, part of speech, grammar label, usage label, UK/US label, keyword, in order to further refine the search. Once any of the filters is chosen, then the user must make further choices as for the specific part of speech etc. CLD has a well-developed "Related words" search engine, which can be accessed either from the entry for any word (by clicking on "Related words") or as one of the filters in search box. By clicking on "Related words" in the dictionary, one gets a list of words that belong to the same category (in case of oxygen, it was "Chemistry - Chemical elements"), which is automatically detected by the dictionary. It is possible also to use that feature

manually, by specifying the category and subcategory one wants to research. The well-developed "Related words" option makes this dictionary especially suitable for learning vocabulary in a given field. However, more advanced users would certainly miss advanced search with Boolean operators, or search by giving the pronunciation of a word.

Dictionary components

As said before, MED has the basic A-Z component, with alphabetic list of entries, definitions, examples, pronunciation recordings and usage notes. Apart from that, there is the illustrations component, where some words are explained with pictures. The words appearing in the picture are given in the box below, and by moving the mouse over the picture one can see the words and get their meanings. Thus, it is not only easier to understand some words, but learners can acquire new words in meaningful contexts by associating an object with a word.

Also, the dictionary features study pages, where learners can find detailed information on the dictionary (foreword, introduction, using the dictionary, grammar codes, labels, pronunciation, defining vocabulary, irregular verbs), as well as build their knowledge of the language in general by reading about numbers, phrasal verbs, academic writing, metaphor, computer words, pragmatics, spoken discourse, business English or word formation. What is more, the dictionary encompasses a mini-atlas, with general maps of continents and countries. The final component of MED are wordlists, where a user can add words in given categories, add notes to them, print the list or use flashcards vocabulary practice.

The basic part of CLD is A-Z, where the entries for words are displayed, with definitions, examples, pronunciation, usage notes, etc. Another component of the dictionary is exercises, where the user can practice grammar and vocabulary in drag-and-drop and multiple-choice exercises. The areas covered are adjectives, countability, idioms, irregular verbs, phrasal verbs, prefixes, suffixes, verb patterns. There are also picture exercises, consisting in dragging words from the list onto the objects in the picture. While doing the exercise, the user's score is kept, and it is possible to see the score, see the current answer, all answers, go to the relevant study page in the dictionary, clear the answers or go to the next exercise. It must be said that especially picture exercises are an interesting and effective way of learning and revising vocabulary, and thanks to the user identification and scorekeeping features it is possible to assess one's progress.

The other component of the program is a picture dictionary, where one can move the mouse over the picture to see the words appearing in it, and click to go to the entry of the word. Finally, the dictionary features "Study pages" section, with such parts as acknowledgements, appendices (irregular verbs, regular verb tenses, word beginnings and endings, word building, pronunciation symbols, using the dictionary) and study pages (checking work, classroom language, collocations, countable/uncountable nouns, email, formal letters, idioms, gradable and limit adjectives, informal letters, the Internet, measurements, modal verbs, numbers and dates, order of adjectives, phrasal verbs, prefixes, pronunciation, punctuation, spelling, suffixes, UK/US English, verb patterns). There one can read about some of the important aspects of language and do the exercises.

Working with the dictionary

MED, just as most Machine-Readable Dictionaries on the market, allows the following operations: copying an entry, printing an entry, adding a note to an entry (annotating entries)

and, unlike other dictionaries, adding a word to one's wordlist, in order to practice a list of words later on. Also, it is possible to play back the British English and the American English pronunciation of each word, as well as practice it by recording your pronunciation and listening back to it.

As for CLD, it is possible to find a word, listen to its BE and AmE pronunciation, practise it by recording oneself and playing back, copy the entry or example, copy it directly to a word-processor, print the entry or part of it (by highlighting the piece of text to be printed), annotate an entry, and use back and forward buttons or the history list. The Search Panel allows the user to work with annotations, namely view them, search for a word in the annotations, change and delete them.

Integrating the dictionary with other programs

Nowadays, it is becoming more and more important for a dictionary to be flexible and integratable with other Windows programs, in order to save the time and allow the user to get the definition without having to switch to the dictionary and type a word in. As for MED, it has various possibilities for such a mode of work. If the dictionary is open alongside the word-processor, simply moving the mouse pointer to any word in a word-processor text makes the dictionary display that entry. However, in order to make that possible, both programs can't be maximized, which may not be very comfortable for the user. Thus, another chance is to use the "QuickSearch" display mode, which is a small window staying always on top of other programs. Then, you do not have to switch to the dictionary window or run the word-processor minimized, and by moving the mouse pointer on any word in the text makes MED give its definition. This is the same in programs without cursor, such as an Internet browser, where positioning the mouse pointer on the word makes the dictionary give its definition in an instant. It must be said that this way of integrating the dictionary with all Windows programs is as simple as it can be.

In order to use CLD with other Windows applications, the user has two options: either follow the full installation procedure, install a special program called "Bookcase", when it will be possible to double-click a word and press Ctrl + 9 in order to get a lookup window with the word entry. If Bookcase has not been installed, then it is still possible to get instant access to the dictionary content (called "HotKey") following the same procedure of highlighting the word and clicking Ctrl + 9, but this time the dictionary must be working in the background. This way of providing instant lookup, though certainly not very difficult, is definitely less fast than just moving the mouse pointer to a word, as was the case with MED.

Another way of using CLD with other programs is to integrate it with a word-processor, so that after having pressed a relevant icon the highlighted piece of text will be automatically pasted to a word-processor document, which must be active in the background. In order to do it, one must integrate the word-processor with the dictionary using the Bookcase. However, I have tried to do it numerous times, and for some unknown reason I was unable to do it.

Interface and mode of use

As for MED, it has a clear, uncluttered interface, with tasteful colour combinations dominated by red. The program screen is divided into a few boxes: the biggest one in the centre is where the entries are displayed. To the right of it, there is the place for usage notes and user notes to appear. To the left of it, there is a small box at the top where the desired word is typed in,

under it there is the alphabetic list of all words of the dictionary, and under it there is the last box, where the results of a search for a desired word in phrases is displayed. On the top of the screen, just as in most Windows applications, there is the list of drop-down menus (View, Edit, Pronunciation, SmartSearch, SoundSearch, History, Options, Help, Quick/Full switch). While clicking on these, the user gets a list of commands enabled in a given menu. The requested word opens in the central window, and scrolling it up and down one can get through previous or next entries. All the words accessed before can be quickly recovered from the History menu. The creators of the dictionary decided not to use icons, and instead gave text instructions everywhere in the program, which seems to be a good idea, having in mind that icons can be interpreted differently.

CLD has a very simple and intuitive interface, with the dictionary divided into two windows. One is the Search Panel, where the user types in a word, chooses a word from a list of words, uses filters to search the entire contents of the dictionary. From the Search Panel the user can access also the website of Cambridge dictionaries and the user annotations. The main dictionary window opens next to the Search Panel window, and at the top of it there are a few icons giving access to the options, as well as the underlined hyperlinks to exercises, pictures, study pages or related words. The program is intended for intermediate users, and consequently the program is much easier to use and the icons are the same as in other applications. The user does not have to look through the program to find the desired option mainly due to the fact that the dictionary is much simpler than MED.

Ease of use and reliability of operation

MED is easy to install and uninstall. It does not have heavy hardware requirements, so it does not take too much time for it to load or look up a word. No crashes have been observed, and it has not caused any malfunctioning of the system. It is quite flexible in use also in that while installing the program the user can choose the 'Normal' installation, copying all the disc contents but the sound files to the hard disc, and requiring the disc in the CD-ROM drive for use; or 'Full' installation, copying the entire contents of MED to the hard disc, making the dictionary fully functional without the CD-ROM. This demands 560 MB of hard disc space, but thanks to such a solution it might be possible to use two dictionaries alongside: a monolingual one (MED) and a bilingual one, put into the CD-ROM drive.

CLD is equally easy to install and uninstall as MED. It is reliable in its operation, does not cause any crashes or stalls. It does not take too much RAM memory when working in the background, so it is perfectly possible to use it alongside with other applications. Just as with MED, it is possible to install the program in the full version, copying all dictionary data to hard disc, and taking 96 MB hard disc space. However, in this case sound files stay on the CD-ROM, so it is still necessary to make full use of the program, and it is not possible to use another dictionary (e.g., a bilingual one) at the same time.

Assistance to the user

MED is relatively user-friendly, as it has a number of features giving assistance to the user while learning how to operate the program. Above all, the program is accompanied with a printed CD-ROM user guide, giving advice on installation, getting started, display modes and menus, notes and lists, advanced searching, study aids, printing and copying. In this way, the user can get basic information before starting the program. Another help facility is the guided tour, with onscreen animations explaining what MED is, how it is different from other MRDs,

how to get started with it, how to use advanced searching options, how MED can help in teaching and learning. Next, users who are connected to the Internet can use online guide. Finally, there is a dedicated dictionary website (http://www.macmillandictionary.com), containing further information, tips of advice and ideas for use in the classroom. Thus, it seems that no user should have any problems with making the most of MED, due to such an extensive and varied set of help tools.

As for CLD, it is intuitive and easy to use enough, and most probably because of that it does not have such elaborate help facilities as a guided tour or online help. It also has a printed User's Guide, with the most important aspects of working with the dictionary explained in simple instructions accompanied by pictures. As in case of most programs, CLD has a Help facility, where all features of the program are explained, such as how to get started, how to search for a word using the search panel, how to use the content window, launch and quit the program, copy and print, use exercises, study pages or the picture component. Another way of getting assistance in using the dictionary is to consult the study pages, where the explanations of grammar labels, pronunciation, regular inflections, usage labels and UK/US labels are given. It seems that taking into account the fact that CLD is a simple program without many advanced options, the above ways of providing help are enough.

Customising the dictionary

The key to using MRDs by students and teachers is finding the ways to subject the tool to the people's needs, rather than using the tool as it allows to be used. Usually, commercial-made dictionaries give little possibilities for being customized. In the case of MED, there are two options making it possible for the user to suit the tool to his/her needs. One is the possibility of creating wordlists, namely adding selected words to custom-made categories, adding notes to them, then checking one's retention by reviewing the wordlist, going to selected entries, and reviewing the notes. Wordlists are flexible enough in that they allow adding new words, deleting them, printing the entire wordlist, renaming it. Another way of customizing the dictionary is to add one's own comments to the entries, which are displayed to the right of the entry proper. However, as is the case with other MRDs, it is not possible to input one's own words or to update the dictionary in any way (e.g., via the Internet).

CLD is even less flexible for the user to adapt it to his/her needs. Although it is possible to use the options menu to change the layout of the dictionary, the possibilities available are fairly limited: it is possible only to display phonetics, UK/US sound icons, grammar labels, irregular inflections, related words, word families. As usually the user of the dictionary needs all of the above features, then the user does not get much help here. In fact, the only way of making the dictionary work to your purposes is to use the annotations, and add your own notes to the selected words. Then it will be possible to quickly retrieve them using the annotations button in the Search Panel, but nothing else is possible. It is not possible to add your own words, nor to update the dictionary in any way. In contrast with MED, it is not even possible to create wordlists or practice selected words in any way. Thus, it seems that in the future software manufacturers could think about providing such tools which could allow greater customisation of MRDs.

Practising the retention of words

As noted by Sobkowiak (2002), electronic dictionaries stop being dictionaries only, and become more and more versatile tools, encompassing also grammar reference and vocabulary

exercises. Indeed, most MRDs available on the market make it possible for the user to test the retention of selected words in exercises or games of various kinds. It must be said that MED is quite poor in this respect, and the only kind of exercise that it allows is practicing the words from a wordlist in a 'Flashcard' game. Here, the user may choose to see a headword only, the entry without a headword, a note or a note and an entry without a headword. Especially option 2 and 4 (with headwords hidden) seem to be quite good for vocabulary practice, but this could be better developed by adding scoring, feedback or multiple choice answers.

As was noted before, CLD has an exercises component, divided into study pages exercises and picture exercises. The tasks are mainly of drag-and-drop or type-in kinds, and the user can do the exercise, see the current answer, see all the answers, go to the reference material (word entry, a picture or a study page). Thanks to the options of user identification and score keeping, the exercise component of the dictionary can be used by many students, e.g., in a school computer lab. What should be especially noted here is the existence of picture exercises, thanks to which the user can practise the retention of words starting from the picture. However, what seems to be missing about the exercise component of CLD is the lack of exercises testing the knowledge of words defined by the user, which would be extremely helpful when learning vocabulary form some coursebook.

Recommendation

On the whole, it must be said that *Macmillan English Dictionary* is an extremely well-developed machine-readable dictionary. Its strongest sides are probably advanced searching capabilities (word, text, complex text and sound search), easy and quick integration with all other Windows programs, great amount of information included in the dictionary, frequency hints as based on the corpus counts, the existence of separate British English and American English editions and informative and helpful assistance tools. However, when developing future versions of the dictionary its manufacturers could consider releasing also a Mac version, including more vocabulary games and exercises of different types, as well as the possibility of Internet update. Also, another area where some improvement could be made is crossreferencing and linking words to related words, so that the user could start with some word and make lexical research into other words in the given thematic area.

When summing up CDL, it can be said that it is an intuitive, easy-to-use dictionary for intermediate learners, providing immediate access to the required language information, definitions, examples, BE and AmE pronunciation, usage notes and many more. Because the program is directed to intermediate learners, it does not have very sophisticated options, and could be enhanced with more advanced searching tools and the feature of creating wordlists. The program is highly recommended because of the well-developed related words engine, which automatically detects the lexical category of the word and searches for other related words. In this way, the dictionary is especially suitable for students doing thematic research. Thus, it seems that the program is most suitable for lower level students because of its ease of use and intuitive icons, but it can be also profitably used by more advanced users.

Reference

Sobkowiak, W. (2002) "The Challenge of Electronic Learners' Dictionaries". *Teaching English with Technology*, vol. 2, no. 1, http://www.iatefl.org.pl//call/j_article7.htm.

REPORTS FROM PAST EVENTS

UNTELE 2002

Use of New Technologies in Foreign Language Teaching

Compiegne, France, March 28-30

http://www.utc.fr/~untele/welcome.html

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The conference, organised by UTC (Universite de Technologie de Compiegne), was held in Compiegne on March 28-30. This three-day event was attended by over 150 participants from all over the world, with the biggest groups of participants coming from France, Belgium, the USA and the UK, with participants coming also from Italy, Sweden, Greece, Brasil, Germany, the Netherlands, Malaysia, the Czech Republic, Poland, Israel, Hong Kong, Switzerland, Ireland, Slovenia, Russia, Canada, Spain, Hungary, Egypt and Denmark. The conference was mainly attended by university teachers and researchers, either from the field of Computer-Assisted Language Learning, Second Language Acquisition, or Information and Communication Technology, coming from universities or technology universities, but the educational sector was also represented by some secondary and primary school teachers. Universite de Technologie de Compiegne provided the excellent venue for the conference, with magnificent *amphitheatre* for plenary sessions and some presentations, as well as three other smaller rooms for sessions held in a less formal atmosphere.

After the opening ceremony on Thursday, all conference participants had the chance to attend the plenary lecture by Robert Galisson and Arnaud Galisson on the usage of new technologies in education. The speakers brought into light some interesting issues such as *disciplinarite* and *operationalite*, providing interesting introduction and philosophical background to more practical sessions that followed.

The conference was held simultaneously in two working languages, English and French, with one third of papers in English and two-thirds of the total number of 40 presentations in French, and my report will focus only on the papers delivered in English, the ones that I could attend.

Breffni O'Rourke, from Trinity College Dublin, Ireland, in the paper entitled "Metalinguistic Behaviour in a Bilingual MOO Exchange", dealt with the issue of Multiple Object Oriented (or Multiple User Domain) learning environment, explored the theoretical consequences of the fusion of different technologies that takes place in a MOO environment, and presented data from an online exchange demonstrating the metalinguistic behaviour of students to assess the practicalities of using such environments in teaching.

In his presentation entitled "Managed Learning Environments for Effective Web Based Learning", Paul Sweeney from The British Council, Milan, reviewed the current state of interactivity in English language learning materials, accessible both on CD-ROM and the Web. The author tried to show how we can build on recent developments in interactive technologies and database technologies in managed learning environments to make Web-based learning more effective.

"Native-Speaker/Non Native-Speaker Discourse in the MOO: Participation and Engagement in a Synchronous Text-based Environment", by Klaus Schwienhorst from Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland, summarised bilingual MOO projects based on tandem learning conducted by the author, looking in detail at such issues as topic negotiation and initiation, in both L1 and L2. Learner data were analysed to assess whether a combination of tandem learning and a synchronous communication technology can support learner participation and engagement in the language classroom.

Stephen Munns, from Higher Colleges of Technology, United Arab Emirates, when talking about support strategies for global learners in online written communication, argues that rather than developing the CMC skills of non-native speakers through conventional approaches to face-to-face communication or written academic discourse, an alternative strategy is required: an approach to student support based on social exchange and transfer of information.

The humble undersigned, Jarek Krajka from Marie Curie-Sklodowska University, Lublin, Poland, in his presentation entitled "Language Learning Software and the Coursebook: Do the Tools Bring Expected Solutions", provided the background into commercial ELT software available on the market, characterised main types of programs, then presented the results of a student questionnaire calling for the use of various methods of coursebook supplementation on various levels, also of ELT software use. Finally, he tried to show how the use of computer programs could solve or make less painful such classroom problems as large classes, unequal language level, different pace of work, need for vocabulary reference.

"Of Mice and Men. Can Computers in the Language Classroom Really Make a Difference", a presentation by David N. Brown from ESSTIN, Vandoeuvre-les-Nancy, France, touched upon the issue of the effects computer technology may have on integrative and instrumental motivation. Thanks to achieving measurable results due to an attitude/motivation test battery and rewards for scoring well in tasks, the author was able to arrive at a conclusion: the element of choice, fairly common in computer-assisted language learning, does not have to be beneficial for learners, as some of them may find it more comfortable to act with the choices being imposed on them from above.

The second day of the conference started with a plenary by Jan Hulstijn from the University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands, entitled "Towards a Unified Account of the Representation and Acquisition of Second-language Knowledge". The author talked about representation of

knowledge, high versus low linguistic domains, nativism, special status of lexical units in language learning, different aspects of explicit and implicit learning.

David Ma, from the University of Hong Kong, China, dealt with the issue of using the webpage as an instructional tool, and presented the experiments done with university students, who used their knowledge of webpage design to show other students (and language teachers) how to use the Web in teaching. The author's conclusion was that a survey on the needs of the users can greatly increase the impact of webpage as a teaching and learning medium.

Finally, the presentation "Design, Development, Implementation and Evaluation of Interactive Textbooks", prepared and delivered by Els Heughebaert, Wilfred Decoo and Jozsef Colpaert from Didascalia/University of Antwerp, Belgium, discussed in detail successive steps of producing language learning courseware: design encompassing conceptualisation, specification and prototyping, development with its stages of data structuring and software engineering, implementation divided into information, distribution and follow-up and evaluation consisting of surveys on usage, user satisfaction and didactic efficiency, all based on two interactive textbooks developed by the authors.

This report summarises only some of the papers the undersigned had the chance to attend, and there were many more inaccessible to me because of inadequate knowledge of French. In fact, the major drawback of attending the conference was the lack of interpreting service for participants unable to understand French or English. I felt quite bad about being deprived of the chance to listen to two-thirds of papers, and it is a real pity that the conference organisers did not provide any interpreting. Another, and the final, area where some improvement could be made by the organisers, was that of conference proceedings. If there are so many papers running in concurrent sessions, conference participants could make up for not attending the sessions by reading the entire papers, either in book form or electronic CD-ROM format. After the conference, the creation of a volume of proceedings was announced, and it is my sincere wish that it will happen so.

However, despite these objections, it must be said that UNTELE 2002 brought together the theoreticians and practitioners from many fields, and the great amount of presentations on varied topics made the conference a truly open forum for dissemination and exchange of ideas on using technology in teaching and learning foreign languages.

ANNOUNCEMENTS OF FUTURE EVENTS

CALL PROFESSIONALS AND THE FUTURE OF CALL RESEARCH

University of Antwerp, Antwerp, Belgium

August, 18-20, 2002

www.didascalia.be

The Editorial Board, the Associate Editors and the Editor of the CALL Journal extend a cordial invitation to attend the 10th International CALL Conference, *CALL PROFESSIONALS AND THE FUTURE OF CALL RESEARCH*. The goal of this conference is to increase the coherence of the CALL field by fostering discussion on research methodology and directions. The CALL conferences, a tradition initiated by Keith Cameron, remain biennial. The nine previous CALL conferences were held at Exeter University. The 10th International CALL conference will take place in Antwerp from August 18th until 20th 2002.

For further information, please contact:

DIDASCALIA

Dept. Didactiek en Kritiek, Universiteit Antwerpen

Universiteitsplein 1, 2610 Wilrijk

tel. (03)820 29 69, fax (03)820 29 86

URL: http://www.didascalia.be/

MACMILLAN POLSKA ELT CONFERENCE

Warsaw, Poland

August 21-23, 2002

We are happy to announce the second edition of Macmillan Polska ELT Conference to be held on 21st-23rd August 2002 in Warsaw. A great chance to get inspired for the next school year and work and share experience with the best ELT trainers and authors in the world:

Luke Prodromou, Maria Birkenmajer, Vaughan Jones, Marcin Smolik, Piotr Steinbrich, Gwyneth Fox, Hanna Kryszewska, Paul Davis, Grzegorz Śpiewak, Basia Ściborowska, Andreea Hodivoianu and many others.

The programme of the conference will be tailored to your needs. If you are interested please check out www.macmillan.pl or phone Macmillan Polska Teacher Training Centre on 022 622 07 33.

Magdalena Wojdyło

Macmillan Polska Teacher Training Co-ordinator

Tel: 022 622 07 33 or 0605 990 122

Email: tt@macmillan.pl

IATEFL SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS SYMPOSI UM

Sabanci University, Istanbul, Turkey

September 13-15, 2002

www.sabanciuniv.edu/iateflsig

The IATEFL Special Interest Groups Symposium at Sabanci University (Istanbul, Turkey), will be held between the 13th - 15th September 2002. It is entitled "Special Interests - Common Interests", and will feature 7 plenary speakers and a large number of talks and workshops. The keynote speakers are Michael Byram, Chris Doye, Robert Gibson, Deniz Kurtoglu Eken, Angela Hasselgren, Barry O`Sullivan and Ron White.

In the plenary sessions, each of our keynote speakers will discuss issues common to two Special Interest Groups (SIGs). In addition, a programme of workshops and discussions will be presented by each of the 14 SIG: Business English, Computers, ELT Management, ESP, Global Issues, Learner Independence, Literature and Cultural Studies, Media, Pronunciation, Research, Teacher Development, Teacher Trainers and Educators, Testing Evaluation and Assessment, and Young Learners.

Proposals for papers, workshops and round-tables are invited for each of the SIG programmes. The deadline for proposals is April 15 2002.

For further detail and to download a proposal form see: www.sabanciuniv.edu/iateflsig

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2002 FAAPI CONFERENCE

Cordoba, Argentina

September 19-21, 2002

The 2002 FAAPI CONFERENCE will be held in Córdoba, Argentina from September 19 to 21, 2002. It gives us great pleasure to invite you to attend the "CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT: MANAGING THE CHANGE" Conference, which aims to provide a forum for comparing experiences and sharing ideas of interest in the fields of EFL methodology, curriculum development and technology applied to EFL instruction. The Conference will provide an opportunity to consider what has been achieved and what new directions are available on issues such as: EFL methodology, schools curricula at various levels, teacher education curricula, ESP curricula, international examinations curricula, bilingual education curricula, literature and culture in the EFL curriculum, the place of technology in the EFL curriculum

Renowned specialists in ELT will be giving plenary talks, leading workshops and delivering papers. For further information, please contact the Conference Office:

2002 FAAPI Conference

c/o Lic. Ma. Nieves Díaz Carballo,

Av. Colón 951, 5000 Córdoba / Argentina

Telefax 0351 - 427 0022

faapi2002@hotmail.com

11TH INTERNATIONAL IATEFL PL CONFERENCE

Poznan, Poland

November 9-11, 2002

http://iatefl.org.pl/conf2002/#comad

Dear Colleagues,

We have the pleasure of inviting you to participate in The Eleventh International IATEFL Poland Conference that will be held in Poznan, 9-11 November 2002. The main aim of the conference is to network, socialise and exchange ideas with professionals from all areas of ELT. The conference will offer you an opportunity to visit stands of leading publishers, to shake hands with authors whose names you know from coursebook covers as well as familiarise yourselves with the latest publications.

Venue:
Politechnika Poznanska (Poznan University of Technology), Budynek Wydzialu Elektrycznego (Faculty of Electrical Engineering Building) Piotrowo 3A Street, Poznan

Room and board:

A very conveniently located, three star Novotel Poznan, pl. Andersa 1, Poznan is the official conference hotel. Evening meals will also be served at the hotel. Accommodation at the hotel is limited and it is recommended that participants book accommodation as early as possible. Once accommodation at the hotel has been completed, the Organising Committee will contact unsuccessful applicants.

Hotel Poznan Novotel is situated within a 15-minute walk from the Conference venue, a 5-minute walk or one tram stop from the railway station. The city plan is enclosed in the conference pack. If you wish to arrange your own accommodation you are welcome to contact Poznań Tourist Information Centre at +48 61 852 61 56, Poznań Hotel Information at +48 61 852 79 70 or visit the website www.city.poznan.pl

Lunches:
Lunches priced 12.00 PLN will be available from cash restaurants at the conference venue. No prior booking is necessary.

Registration:

Novotel (Poznan) Hotel, pl. Andersa 1 (**only** for participants accommodated in the hotel), Politechnika Poznanska (Poznan University of Technology), Budynek Wydzialu Elektrycznego (Faculty of Electrical Engineering Building), Piotrowo 3A Street, : Saturday from 9.00

In order to register for the conference, please complete the Registration Form (MS Word 522 kB) and return it together with a proof of bank payment to the 11th IATEFL Poland Conference Committee (click here for the address).

Deadline for registration: 28th June, 2002

Important note:

You are welcome to explore the IATEFL Poland Web page at www.iatefl.org.pl to access information about our organisation, membership application details, forthcoming IATEFL events, information exchange and more. For further information please contact the Organising Committee.

Conference Committee Address:

11th IATEFL Poland Conference Committee

Department of Foreign Languages, Poznań University of Technology

Piotrowo 3A, 60-965 Poznan, Poland

e-mail: conference2002@iatefl.org.pl

tel: +48 61 6652554, fax: +48 61 6652793

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION AND CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

"Teaching English with Technology" (ISSN 1642-1027) is a quarterly electronic journal published by IATEFL Poland Computer Special Interest Group. The journal deals mainly with issues of using computers, the Internet, computer software in teaching and learning languages.

The editorial board of "Teaching English with Technology":

- Jarek Krajka (Marie Curie-Sklodowska University, Lublin, Poland) – Editor-in-Chief (Lesson Plans, A Word from a Techie, Website Reviews, Software Reviews)
- Jozsef Horvath (University of Pecs, Pecs, Hungary) – Editor (Articles, Book Reviews)
- Maria Jose Luzon de Marco (University of Zaragoza, Spain) – Editor (The Internet for ESP)

To subscribe to "Teaching English with Technology," write to: Jarek Krajka, Editor, at jkrajka@batory.plo.lublin.pl In the Subject line, write: Subscription Request. You can also get the journal from the IATEFL Computer SIG website at this URL: http://www.iatefl.org.pl/call/callnl.htm, where the past issues can also be accessed.

The next issue of "Teaching English with Technology" will be published in August 2002. Submission deadline for the next issue is July 15, 2002.

We invite submissions covering the following categories:

- Article: articles describing classroom practice or discussions of work in progress, being of immediate relevance to teachers, or articles presenting case studies or work in progress

- The Internet for ESP: practical discussions of Web-based activities/classroom ideas for the ESP environment

- Lesson plan: plans of lessons done on the Internet or using computers, set in the reality of the education system, detailing the procedure, technical requirements, skills needed by students and teacher, together with URLs used in the lesson and any worksheets/checklists students are asked to complete

- Website review: discussions of websites having potential for organising Internet lessons around them or relevant in some way to the field of English language teaching and learning

- Software review: descriptions, evaluations and recommendations of widely available language learning software

- A Word from a Techie: discussions of applications of computer programs to teaching English, outlining new possibilities given by software to the process of learning and teaching, explanations of technological issues

- Reports from Past Events: brief accounts of conferences, methodological workshops, commercial presentations, courses that relate to the field of using computer technology in teaching English

- Announcements of Future Events: as above, together with contact addresses

We invite also works published elsewhere, but please give precise reference.

Please forward the following details with each submission:

- author(s) full name(s) including title(s)

- job title(s)

- organization(s) full contact details of all authors including email address, postal address, telephone and fax numbers.

Submissions should be sent by email as attachments to the Editor, Jarek Krajka, at jkrajka@batory.plo.lublin.pl, with the subject being "Journal Submission." Please specify in the letter what word-processing programme you are using, and preferably send .rtf version as well. All submissions undergo the process of blind peer review and are returned to authors with suggestions for changes/corrections.

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