



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR LEXICOGRAPHY

EURALEX NEWSLETTER

Autumn 1996

Editors: Henri Béjoint and Carla Marello. Address for correspondence and contributions: Henri Béjoint, Université Lyon 2, 86 rue Pasteur 69365 Lyon Cedex 7, France

The EURALEX Newsletter

This quarterly Newsletter is intended to include not only official announcements but also news on EURALEX members, their publications, career moves and (it is hoped) their opinions. Please try to support this by sending newsletter contributions to Henri Béjoint at the above address. The deadlines for winter, spring, summer and autumn issues respectively are 15 September, 15 December, 15 March and 15 June annually.

Lexicography in Lithuania

The Department of Lithuanian Linguistics of Vilnius Pedagogical University is working on the publication of German-Lithuanian manuscript dictionaries of the 17th and 18th centuries in East Prussia.

So far, the project has produced:

—*Lexicon Lithuanicum*, a manuscript German-Lithuanian anonymous dictionary of the 17th century, with a leading article and an index of Lithuanian words by V. Drotvinas, Vilnius, Bibliotheca Baltica Lithuania, 1987, 587 pages.

—Friedrich Prätorius, *Clavis Germanico-Lithuana*, a manuscript German-Lithuanian dictionary of the 17th century in four parts. Part I, A-E, with “Notes on *Clavis Germanico-Lithuana* by Friedrich Prätorius”, by V. Drotvinas, Vilnius, Bibliotheca Baltica Lithuania, 1995, I-XLII + 629 pages.

—Friedrich Prätorius, *Clavis Germanico-Lithuana*. Part II, F-L, 1996, in print.

—Jacob Brodowski, *Lexicon Germanico-Lithuanicum*, a manuscript German-Lithuanian dictionary of the 18th century in two parts. Part I: phototype edition; Part II: index of Lithuanian words, in preparation.

The project is due to finish in 2005.

For more information, contact: Prof. Dr. Vincentas Drotvinas, Viršuliškių St. 14-21, 2056 Vilnius, LT-Lithuania.

A Dictionary of Frisian

Frisian, the language spoken in the Dutch province of Friesland, is of West Germanic origin and in its oldest stage belonged, with Old English and Old Saxon, to the North Sea Germanic group.

Traditionally, three stages are recognized – Old, Middle and Modern Frisian. These three stages do not coincide, however, with the periodization of the other Germanic dialects. Old Frisian is the language found in a number of manuscripts and charters

that date from the 11th to 16th centuries and which derive from an area ranging from the German river Weser in the East to the IJsselmeer in the West. Middle Frisian is the term used for the language of the period 1550-1800. Consequently, Modern Frisian starts in 1800.

Frisian is the second official language in the Netherlands and it forms the main object of investigation of the department of *Lexicographical Projects* of the Fryske Akademy (Frisian Academy). This institute is involved with research into all aspects of the Dutch province of Friesland – its inhabitants, their language or their history. The Fryske Akademy is subsidized by the KNAW (Royal Dutch Academy of Sciences) and the province of Friesland.

Ever since 1938 people at the lexicographical department of the Fryske Akademy (FA) have been working on a comprehensive scholarly dictionary of Modern Frisian, i.e. the *Wurdboek fan de Fryske Taal/Woordenboek der Friese Taal* (WFT). When the entire project is finished, over 125,000 words will have been defined, taking up 24 volumes of 400 pages each.

Preamble

One might say the history of the WFT begins with the Mennonite minister and language lover Joast Hiddes Halbertsma (1789–1869). He was the first to make extensive collections of (Modern) Frisian language material and also the first to describe such material in a dictionary format. In 1872, his son Tsjalling posthumously published the *Lexicon Frisicum*, which contained material his father had finished in manuscript, the part *A* to *Feer*. In 1879 the Provincial Executive of Friesland decided there should be a comprehensive dictionary of Modern Frisian, taking as its point of departure the *Lexicon Frisicum* and the dictionary material Halbertsma had left to the province of Friesland. The first volume of this new dictionary, the *Friesch Woordenboek*, appeared in 1900 and the third and last volume in 1911. Fairly soon there were critical comments on the *Friesch Woodenboek* and there was an increasingly strong demand for a more complete dictionary. Eventually, this was one of the reasons for the founding of the Fryske Akademy in 1938. The main project the FA embarked on was the scholarly *Wurdboek fan de Fryske Taal/Woordenboek der Friese Taal*. The material from the manuscripts and the dictionary of Halbertsma is incorporated into the WFT, as is that of the entire *Friesch Woordenboek*.

The beginning

Towards the end of 1938 FA-chairman Sipma launched a plan to establish a large alphabetic card index system, which was to supply the words for the new dictionary. That card index system would have to contain a collection, as complete as possible, of words and phrases in contemporary and earlier Frisian, including the dialects. In practice, material was gathered from 1800 onwards. In any case the material from existing dictionaries, studies, collections etc. had to be included. Furthermore, attention would have to be paid to (technical) jargon, dialect words, proverbs, sayings and set expressions. The plan was so ambitious, that it could only be realized with the help of volunteers. Those volunteers occupied themselves mainly with the making of excerpts from books and other texts, taking note, as they read, of words and expressions that seemed interesting enough for inclusion in the prospective dictionary.

In 1954 there were already 300,000 cards in the card-index system. Yet that appeared to be too small a basis for a scholarly dictionary, partly because the people making

excerpts had gathered many special and rare words and expressions, but hardly any 'common' ones, like articles and prepositions. Then the decision was made to establish a second card-index system, which was to contain integral (parts of) texts. With the help of volunteers this second card-index system was established during the years 1956 to 1958. It was called 'trochsneedapparaat' [cross-section system], and it contained all the words of a selection of 4875 pages of text from the period of 1800 to 1950. All in all, about two and a half million citations from over 1,200 books, articles, newspapers etc. have been incorporated in both card-index systems.

The writing begins

In 1960, at last the writing could begin. Partly because the FÅ was understaffed, the editing process of the dictionary quickly lost momentum, but in the seventies, the situation improved considerably. In 1977 there was a lexicographical staff of six. Yet it would take a long time for the first volume to be published. One of the reasons for the delay was that the first card-index system had been substantially expanded through the years. Consequently, many of the earlier dictionary texts had to be adapted. Another hurdle to be dealt with before the first volume could be published was the spelling reform that was announced in 1976 and came into effect in 1980. To the editorial staff this meant that many words that had already been described had to be respelt and moved.

Metalanguage

Around 1960, Sipma raised the question of the dictionary's metalanguage. He thought the metalanguage should be Frisian and this stirred up a lot of commotion. The members of the then dictionary committee were unable to agree on the matter. Some members opted, for scholarly and ideological reasons, for Frisian. The lexicographers in the committee were in favour of Dutch as the metalanguage. They argued it would allow them to describe the Frisian words in a more simple and compact way. Moreover, with Dutch as the metalanguage, the dictionary would be more accessible to non-Frisian speakers. Eventually Dutch was chosen as the dictionary's metalanguage. In 1982 the matter of the metalanguage was raised again. In January 1983 it was decided to take Frisian as the metalanguage of the WFT, but the Minister of Education and Science overruled this decision.

When the matter of the metalanguage had been settled, there was nothing left to prevent the publication of the WFT. Towards the end of 1984, editor-in-chief Klaas van der Veen presented the first volume of the WFT to the Queen of the Netherlands. The thirteenth volume will be published in the autumn of 1996.

Type of dictionary

The WFT in its final form may be described as: a scholarly, alphabetically arranged, historical dictionary, which explains in Dutch, and covers the period 1800–1975. The description of the words is based on the material contained in both card-index systems. All the meanings of a word are demonstrated by the accompanying citations from which the meaning has to become clear. By means of these citations the user may verify the work of the lexicographer. As a result of the choice of Dutch as the dictionary's metalanguage, the WFT has become something of a hybrid. On the one hand it is an explaining dictionary, because explanatory definitions are used. On the other hand it

is a translation dictionary, because often a merely translated equivalent is given, especially where compounds are concerned. In the latest volumes of the WFT, for that matter, we see an increasing tendency to give explanatory definitions instead of short translations.

Computer

Up to circa 1985, every lexicographer wrote his or her dictionary text with a pen. The editorial staff has, however, kept up with the times and now everybody is at the computer-keyboard. Each handwritten text has been entered into the computer too. Thus a computer version of the ultimate paper dictionary is created, which may be published on CD-ROM. The dictionary program, a text-database, has been developed by BRS-software products, now part of Dataware in London.

Other dictionary projects

The Fryske Akademy has published a number of concise dictionaries, the most important of which are the Frisian/Dutch dictionary (1984) and the Dutch/Frisian one (1985). A monolingual Frisian and a bilingual Frisian-English dictionary are planned to be published around the turn of the century. Recently, the first steps have been taken towards a Middle Frisian dictionary, which will describe the period 1550–1800. Furthermore it is the intention to compile an Old Frisian dictionary.

For more information, contact Ms. Anne Dykstra, Fryske Akademy, Coulonhûs, Doelestrjitte 8, postbus 54, 8900 AB Ljouwert/Leeuwarden, Holland. Tel.: 58 213 14 14. Fax: 58 213 14 09. e-mail: adykstra@fa.knaw.nl.

Literature on Dutch loanwords in other languages

Nicoline van der Sijs is currently collecting material for a book on Dutch loanwords in other languages. Readers who have suggestions for articles or books on this subject can send them to: Nicoline van der Sijs, Hooghiemstraplein 76, 3514 AX Utrecht, Holland, tel.: 30 276 92 18, fax: 30 276 92 19, e-mail: 101765.3626@compuserve.com.

New dictionaries

Allsopp, Richard, *Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage*, Oxford University Press, 1996.

Bussman, Hadumod (translated and edited by Gregory P. Trauth and Kerstin Kazzazi), *Routledge Dictionary of Language and Linguistics*, Routledge, 1996.

Forthcoming Events

1996

December

27–30: Modern Language Association of America. Location to be announced.

1997

July

20–25, Paris, France: XVIth International Congress of Linguists. Info: CIL 16, CNRS LLACAN, 4 ter route des Gardes, 92190-Meudon, France. Tel.: 33 1 45 07 50 21. Fax: 33 1 45 07 51 12. E-mail: cil16@cnrs-bellevue.fr.

August

5-7, Jerusalem, Israel: Post-Congress on Problems of Teaching Modern Hebrew. Info: Ben-Zion Fischler, Council on the Teaching of Hebrew, P.O.B. 7413, Jerusalem 91073, Israel.

December

27-30: Modern Language Association of America. Location to be announced.