G.-M. de Schryver (Editor). *A Way with Words: Recent Advances in Lexical Theory and Analysis. A Festschrift for Patrick Hanks*. 2010, viii + 376 pp. ISBN 978-9970-101-01-6 (Hardback). Linguistics Series. Kampala: Menha Publishers. Price: €59.95.

A Way with Words is a Festschrift volume to honour the 70th birthday of Patrick Hanks. The volume is attractively printed on thick, good quality paper, hardbound in cloth and supplied with a cover sleeve (which, I admit in shame, I have a habit of throwing away, but this one has an adorable portrait of Patrick which can be enjoyed quite independently of the book). The title on the cover is rendered in golden letters, perhaps a hint at the level of contribution the dedicatee has made to the study and description of meaning.

The book is divided into three parts, each representing a major domain of Patrick Hanks' activities: lexical theory with a bit of philosophy of language ("Theoretical Aspects and Background"), computational and corpus-driven lexicology ("Computing Lexical Relations"), and the analysis and synthesis stages of the lexicographic process ("Lexical Analysis and Dictionary Writing"). From the inspiring introductory chapter by Gilles-Maurice de Schryver, we learn that the editor has attempted to reflect, within each of the three sections, the path of development of the Festschriftee's ideas. This is a brilliant concept, and the execution is just as outstanding.

In fact, the introduction ("Getting to the Bottom of How Language Works") is an important part of the book, and it makes fascinating reading. In it, we are offered an insight into the origins of the book, and then the focus moves to Patrick Hanks himself, outlining his contribution to lexical theory (including, in some more detail, the latest *Theory of Norms and Exploitations*, the topic of a forthcoming book), corpus linguistics, and lexicography — the milestones of his professional career — as well as his publications, whose complete listing immediately follows the introductory chapter. The final section of the introduction explains the structure and content of the book, which leaves the reader well primed for the remaining nineteen contributions.

To save some space, I will not give here a full title for every single chapter, especially as these are conveniently available on the publisher's website.[1] Instead, let me say a sentence or two about what each piece has to offer, all being original, previously unpublished articles (with the possible exception of Green's contribution on French *argot* dictionaries, which is an extended version of his recent publication).

As the opening chapter in Part I of the book, we already find a veritable collector's item. This is a heretofore unpublished essay by the late John Sinclair (a close collaborator of Patrick Hanks), wherein he uses the verb *sever* to propose a descriptive approach that gives proper balance to aspects of form and meaning, all the while stressing the point that the word alone is not a unit of language. The paper is unfinished but no less worth reading. Following it is a contribution by Yorick Wilks, who makes a case for a Preference Semantics approach in the area of natural text processing. Next, James Pustejovsky and

Anna Rumshisky deploy the artillery of the Generative Lexicon to tackle the difficult issue of sense extension in verbs. Igor Mel'čuk, the giant of lexical semantics, develops the notion of the Government Pattern in the setting of the Explanatory Combinatorial Dictionary (and, more broadly, Meaning-Text Theory). This part of the book is concluded with a piece by the logician David Wiggins, who in effect probes the philosophical soundness of the lexicographer's daily work.

Part II starts with an article by Ken Church. Although titled "More is More", it happens to be the shortest of the chapters. I, for one, did not find much new in it, although some readers may actually enjoy its informal and digressive style. In contrast, I found the next chapter by Greg Grefenstette highly original and fascinating. Using the texts from the Web as indexed by Exalead,[2] he ambitiously attempts to estimate the number of two-word multi-word units in English, arriving at 200 million of (what he terms) concepts. In the next contribution, David and Louise Guthrie assess the potential of English adjectives to give away the semantic category of the head noun they modify. In their computational experiment, they predict that not all adjectives will have equally useful discriminating power, and they consider several criteria here: co-occurrence with semantically unambiguous nouns, the information-theoretic measure of entropy (a higher entropy would indicate a less distinct pattern of distribution), and the frequency of reoccurrence in the training set. Under the more favourable conditions, the accuracy of semantic category assignment is on the order of 70%, which is a promising result. German light verb constructions are the topic of an article by Alexander Geyken. His findings point to an advantage of gigaword corpora: the latter turn out to be capable of identifying most useful verb–noun expressions, but the same cannot be said of a balanced 100-million-token corpus. In the chapter to follow, Karel Pala and Pavel Rychlý take a critical look at the output produced by the Sketch Engine. Taking a close look at the word sketch for the Czech verb *vidět* 'see', they identify errors in the sketch output, concluding that the problems are mainly due to tagging errors and imperfections in the sketch grammar, and offering suggestions as to how these could be improved. The two final chapters of Part II tie in directly with the *Pattern Dictionary of English Verbs*, a project in progress coordinated by Patrick Hanks. The first is a report by Silvie Cinková, Martin Holub, and Lenka Smejkalová of an attempt to develop experimental evaluation procedures with which to test the consistency of entries already in the *Pattern Dictionary of English Verbs*, especially with respect to the assignment of Semantic Type labels to noun collocates of verbs. In the second, Elisabetta Jezek and Francesca Frontini discuss their plans to extend the Corpus Pattern Analysis technique (which underlies Pattern Dictionaries), a proposal for linking back the verb patterns to their corpus context by annotating the latter with pattern tags. The paper outlines a plan for an implementation of such a *Patternbank* for Italian, and examines the potential benefits of the extension.

Part III of the book opens with a contribution by Rosamund Moon, who undertakes a finely detailed corpus study of the English phrase *spring to mind*,

including a classification of the various uses into textual functions and speech acts. Sue Atkins then presents the new exciting Database of Analysed Texts of English, or DANTE,[3] which will soon provide the breadth and depth of lexical information for English on a level not seen before. Next, Adam Kilgarriff (also one of the chief architects of DANTE) and Pavel Rychlý revisit the enticing scenario of tick-box lexicography (which here gets the more formal, if less catchy, name of semi-automatic dictionary drafting), which may well be the most successful project so far to take the drudgery out of dictionary-making. Following this comes a thought-provoking position paper by Paul Bogaards, wherein he argues against the idea of an independent (meta)lexicographic theory. Mirosław Bańko then retells the story of how his fascination with the COBUILD dictionary led to the creation of a similar dictionary for the Polish language. The freelance lexicographer specializing in slang, Jonathon Green, presents a concise historical overview of French dictionaries of slang. Part III of the volume, and the volume itself, concludes with Michael Rundell's dissection of the concept of *elegance* in lexicography. *Elegance* is an elusive attribute, and even if the author does not fully succeed in providing the definitive genus and differentia of *elegance*, his piece offers a solid dose of lexicographic common sense, tastefully adorned with amusing anecdote. What an elegant way to wrap up this unique volume!

To conclude, in *A Way with Words* Gilles-Maurice de Schryver has managed to put together a highly coherent and worthwhile collection of articles written by a stellar constellation of authors, and artfully structured in a way that traces the achievements of Patrick Hanks, to whom the volume is dedicated. Needless to say, the level of editorship is as high as you would expect from this editor. This is a must-read for any serious student of word meaning, word use, corpus analysis and lexicography.

Endnotes

1. See http://www.menhapublishers.com/products.html#tablecontents.
2. See http://www.exalead.com, which also provides a little-known, but perhaps the most linguistically-aware search engine available (http://www.exalead.com/search/).
3. See http://www.webdante.com, which, at the time of this writing, allows searches for headwords in the M–R letter range, but access will likely soon be extended to the complete database.

Reference

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