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Phraseology in electronic, paper, online and mobile dictionaries

Introduction

Phraseology has always been a complex issue in lexicographical theory and practice. The most popular questions that arise during the practical work with the dictionary are: should the idiom or collocation become the separate entry or be included as a part in the other entry? And if the second option is chosen the next question arise: in which entry should we include the phraseological unit? In many cases there are several words that can be considered “basic” for the idiom or collocation.

These questions are relevant not only for the lexicographer and dictionary editor, but also for the dictionary user. Each time the user wants to find the translation or explanation of the idiom or collocation he has to decide where to find it, whether it has the separate entry or not, and if not, in which entry this phraseological unit can be found.

In this paper we describe how the phraseological units are treated in different kinds of dictionaries depending on their format: paper, electronic, online and mobile. The other point of the paper is to present the methods of describing the phraseological units in a dictionary that is planned to be published in paper, electronic, online and mobile format. Here we describe some variants of marking up the dictionary content in dictionary writing system in order to get a dictionary in different formats from one database, hoe to make this dictionary reliable and easy to use.

Phraseological units in paper dictionaries

The specifics of the paper dictionaries as opposed to electronic and online dictionaries are the problem of space. When creating dictionaries intended to be published on paper, lexicographers tend to save space, put all the information in the entry in a short form, use labels and tilde symbols. In the paper dictionaries phraseological units are often included as a list in the end of the entry.

While compiling the paper dictionary lexicographer analyses every time in which entry the phraseological unit should be included. And the answer is not always evident – sometimes it is possible to put the phraseological unit in different entries.

Often lexicographers put the collocation or idiom in the one entry and give a cross-reference to it from another entry. Some lexicographers save the space even there and do not give the cross-references, hoping that the user will look for a phraseological unit and finally find it using his own efforts.

Phraseological units in electronic and online dictionaries

Nowadays, when dictionary producers tend to save not space in the dictionary but the time of the dictionary user, a strong tendency to give the phraseological units as the separate entries can be observed. Here we must give a remark that here we consider electronic and online dictionaries as separate entities with there own functional characteristics, not just the representation of the paper dictionary in the electronic format.

What are the main features of treating the phraseological units in electronic and online dictionaries?

1. Electronic and online dictionaries give the phraseological units as the separate entries. The user searches for a whole phrase and gets the translation or the explanation of the phrase immediately as well as the examples and synonyms (if there are any). This saves the time of the dictionary user as there is now necessity to look the phrase up in the dictionary and think which entry to choose to find the coordinating idiom or collocation.

2. If the electronic dictionary includes the function of pop up translation the user can get a translation of a word or of the whole phraseological unit in a text while reading it in the web, email or text editor without switching to other applications. In this case phraseological units are treated as separate entries and the user gets their translation immediately while reading a text.

The ways of using paper dictionary and electronic dictionary are different:

in the paper dictionary the user have to decide which word is the main in the idiom, find the entry representing this word and find the idiom inside this entry;

in electronic and online dictionary the user just puts the full idiom or collocation and immediately gets the translation of the whole phrase he is looking for.

Phraseological units in mobile dictionaries

Mobile dictionaries have a specific treatment of the phraseological units. On the one hand, they tend to have the same features as electronic dictionaries just presented on the other kind of device; on the other hand, mobile dictionaries have the same problem as paper dictionaries – a problem of space. Mobile devices do not have a lot of memory, even on the flash cards and the space of mobile phone screen is limited too. The dictionary entry in the mobile dictionary should be short and informative at the same time.

Creating a dictionary for the electronic, paper, online and mobile format in a dictionary writing system

Most of the dictionaries are created within the professional dictionary writing systems (DWS). Once the dictionary created in a database, it is published in electronic, paper, online and mobile formats. It could be an unpardonable waste of time if the lexicographers created paper, electronic, online and mobile dictionaries separately as four

different dictionaries. The principle “one database – many dictionaries” saves the time and nerves of the dictionary publishers and authors and causes a headache to software engineers. Below we discuss the possibilities of creating dictionaries for different formats in one database in the aspect of representing the phraseology.

The dictionary writing system we describe here is ABBYY Lingvo Content system developed in Russia since 2003. Dictionaries created in this system are then published as paper dictionaries in ABBYY Press publishing house, as electronic dictionaries in ABBYY Lingvo format (this electronic dictionary software is used by 7 mln people worldwide), as online dictionaries at ABBYY Lingvo Online and other web and intranet portals and as dictionaries for the mobile devices. ABBYY Lingvo Content is used by different publishing houses for creating dictionaries and publishing them.

Here we describe how the phraseological units were described in *Lingvo Universal English-Russian Dictionary*. This dictionary contains about 90 000 entries and 26 000 phraseological units. The dictionary was published on paper in 2007 and the second edition was launched in 2010. The dictionary is also included in electronic dictionary software ABBYY Lingvo, published at http://www.lingvo.abbyyonline.com/ and as a mobile application for the different mobile devices.

When creating and editing the dictionary entries the team of lexicographers often faced the problems of treating phraseological units: collocations and idioms in a dictionary. The problems that arose were:

- one and the same collocation or idiom must be treated as a part of the main entry in a paper dictionary and as a separate entry in electronic and online dictionary;
- not all of the collocations and idioms can be treated as a separate entry even in the electronic and online dictionary;
- some phraseological units have the variants of the form and it is a challenge to represent both forms in the electronic dictionary as separate entries;
- there is no much space in mobile dictionaries but still the phraseological units must be presented there.

These and other problems were solved with the means of the special markup in ABBYY Lingvo Content dictionary writing system and appropriate algorithms of export in different formats for the publication of one and the same dictionary in paper, electronic, online and mobile formats.

Marking up the phraseological units in the DWS and exporting the data

When creating and editing the dictionary entry lexicographers distinguished collocations and idioms that could form the separate entry in electronic and online dictionary from those that are better to be included in the main entry. Here we must remark that in the paper variant of this dictionary the collocations and idioms do not have a separate entry, but in the most cases are included in the main entry. We will proceed to this principle further while describing the export algorithms.

Generally there were **two zones** in the dictionary: **collocations** and **idioms**, but there were two types of markup in each zone: collocation or idiom that will have a separate entry in online and electronic dictionary and collocation or idiom that will be included in the main entry. Finally we have four different types of markup: 1) collocation to be included in the main entry in electronic and online dictionary; 2) collocation that forms the separate entry in electronic and online dictionary; 3) idiom to be included in the main entry in electronic and online dictionary; 4) idiom that forms the separate entry in electronic and online dictionary.

Collocations and idioms that had separate entries in electronic and online dictionary could be described in a detailed way: with examples, comments and synonyms. While exporting such kinds of phraseological units to paper format only the translations of such idioms and collocations were exported to paper dictionary. These idioms and collocations were included in the main entry in paper dictionary and only their translations were represented, while in the electronic and online dictionary these phraseological units had separate entries with examples and synonyms. The transformation for the paper version was made automatically.

The idioms and collocations that had alternative variants of the form were described in a special way. Considering that in electronic and online dictionary user just puts the full collocation and gets the translation, it is almost impossible for the user to match all the alternative forms of the phraseological unit. For example, in the idiom “as cold as ice / stone” there are two variants of the same idiom: “as cold as ice” and “as cold as stone” and the user is likely to look for one of these forms and it is hard to imagine that the dictionary user is looking for “as cold as ice / stone” form. In such cases there was a special markup: phraseological unit got two types of the heading. The first, short type with alternative form included in it was for the paper version: “as cold as ice / stone”, the second heading was for the electronic version and it was represented in both variants in full form: “as cold as ice” and “as cold as stone”. While exporting phraseological units of this kind, different forms of the idioms and collocations were represented differently in paper and electronic dictionaries.

Publishing the dictionary in mobile format

Mobile dictionaries tend to have the same functional characteristics as electronic dictionaries but the same problem as paper dictionaries – the lack of space. Mobile dictionaries are limited by the memory size and mobile screen size. It means that lexicographers preparing the dictionaries for the mobile devices have to make brief and informative entries. In the situation when one and the same dictionary was published in different formats – paper, electronic, online and mobile, we used the special algorithms of exporting the dictionary data for the mobile representation. The dictionary for the mobile devices treated the phraseological units in the same way as electronic and online dictionary – they formed the separate entries. But these entries as well as all the other

entries in the mobile dictionary were represented in short form – synonyms, comments and some other zones were automatically cut off the entry while exporting the dictionary to the mobile format.

Conclusion

In the process of dictionary creation it is important to have a good and sophisticated style guide, a good team of lexicographers and editors, and a professional dictionary writing system with the appropriate functions. These are the main conditions for making a dictionary with a high quality content in a short time and publish this dictionary in paper, electronic, online and mobile formats. In case of phraseological units a clear methodology and appropriate functions of the dictionary writing system can serve lexicographers' and dictionary users' needs and enable the lexicographer to create a dictionary that have reliable content and is easy to use.

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