Preface

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This special issue of *Lexicography* 5.1 features “Lexicography and Phraseology” in the digital era. It is widely acknowledged that phraseology (or formulaic sequences) is pervasive in either spoken or written discourse. Rather than the exception, phraseology represents the norm in language communication (Cowie 1998; Wray 2002; Schmitt 2004). Meanwhile, the corpus and digital revolutions have dramatically changed our field of lexicography (de Schryver 2003; Kilgarriff et al. 2014; Lew and de Schryver 2014; Kim and Han 2016). With the developments of computer corpora and corpus query tools, lexicographers are in a better vantage position to discover language patterns. The unlimited storage capacity, coupled with multimodality and easy retrieval, opens up the possibilities of wider coverage of phraseological units and lengthy treatment of them in electronic (or digital) dictionaries. When phraseology meets digital lexicography, many interesting issues arise, for instance: How are extended units of meaning identified in a corpus and how should they be recorded in a dictionary? What joint research projects between phraseologists and lexicographers are in the pipeline? Is there a model for description and presentation of extended illustrative examples? How do we deal with phraseology in a multilingual terminological knowledge base? The four papers in this issue address all these issues.

In the first paper, “Searching for extended units of meaning—and what to do when you find them”, Michael Rundell uses compelling corpus evidence to support John Sinclair’s idea of “extended units of meaning”, and discusses some solutions to present longer lexical units in digital dictionaries. By exploiting the Sketch Engine—one of the most advanced corpus-querying systems—he demonstrates that lexical items such as *wreak*, *untoward*, *remiss*, *sink in* and *vocal* occur, more often than not, in some recurrent and regular patterns, with a limited number of selectional and collocational preferences and (sometimes) semantic prosodies. This means that single

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headwords in a dictionary only have meaning potentials, and that our notions of the definiendum need to be broadened by accommodating those longer units. Rundell holds a positive view that in the digital medium, there can be a trade-off between the rich information on extended units of meaning and instant access to them.

In the second paper, “Research in the pipeline: where lexicography and phraseology meet”, Julia Miller describes the state of the art in this area and suggests avenues in future research. Her investigation shows that there is still a long way to go for the online “Big Six” English learners’ dictionaries to facilitate searches for idioms, to label idioms, and to increase the number of example sentences. Crowdsourcing may be effective in the identification of suitable examples, neologisms and emerging idiomatic expressions, and there is a need to develop new corpora. It is also still unclear how students use online dictionaries in regard to idioms and other phraseological units. While idioms in dictionaries give us an insight into a society’s ideology and way of life, the translation of idioms is nevertheless problematic. Miller then puts forward some suggestions for further research on the intersections between phraseology and lexicography.

In the third paper, “Exemplification in a phraseological dictionary: an extended illustration model”, Joanna Szerszunowicz makes a proposal for the selection and presentation of illustrative examples in an electronic phraseological dictionary. Her model consists of four gradual and scalar levels. Level 1 offers illustrative examples which show the most typical contexts of use. Level 2 provides varied examples with variant forms and/or standard modifications. Level 3 examples include non-standard modified forms. Level 4 examples satisfy those users who would like to know more about the unit or who focus on the cultural aspects of phraseology. Szerszunowicz uses a specific phraseological unit—*every Tom, Dick and Harry*—to illustrate corpus-based sentence examples to suit each level in an online dictionary for advanced learners. In addition, those illustrative examples can be customized to the needs of users.

The fourth paper, “Phraseology in specialized resources: an approach to complex nominals” by Melania Cabezas-García and Pamela Faber, extends our understanding of the role of phraseology in scientific texts and of the identification and description of phraseological units in a multilingual terminological knowledge base. In terminology, it is held that the semantics of phraseological units is the starting point in the establishment of mapping rules, which will facilitate knowledge acquisition. Cabezas-García and Faber focus on the treatment of complex nominals (CNs) in EcoLexicon. CNs can be extracted from a corpus uploaded to the Sketch Engine. The semantic analysis of CNs involves knowledge patterns (i.e., lexico-syntactic patterns), verb paraphrases (i.e., elicitation of the concealed predicates of CNs) and free paraphrases (i.e., co-occurrences of the constituents of a CN in a sentence). After extracting English and Spanish CNs, cross-linguistic correspondences are then established. According to Frame-Based Terminology, definitions of CNs can be crafted by definitional templates. Information on CNs can be accessed from a given term, a bilingual view, or their syntactic–semantic combinations.

Despite different emphases and approaches, all the four papers contribute to ongoing issues in the theory and practice of phraseology and digital lexicography.

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