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DICTIONARIES: BRIDGES, DYKES, SLUICE GATES

Abstract In a multilingual and multicultural society, dictionaries play an important role to enhance interlingual communication. A diversity of languages and different levels of dictionary culture demand innovative lexicographic approaches to establish a dictionary landscape that responds to the needs of the various speech communities. Focusing on the South African situation this paper discusses some aspects of a few dictionaries that contributed to an improvement of the local dictionary landscape. Using the metaphors of bridges, dykes and sluice gates it is shown how lexicographers need a balanced approach in their lemma selection and treatment. Whilst a too strong prescriptive approach can be to the detriment of the macrostructural selection, a lack of regulatory criteria could easily lead to a data overload. The lexicographer should strive to give a reflection of the actual language use and enable the users to retrieve the information that can satisfy their specific communication and cognitive needs. Such lexicographic products will enrich and improve the dictionary landscape.

Keywords Bilingualised dictionary; dictionary+; dictionary culture; dictionary portal; monolingualised dictionary; prescription

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