

Modern Lexicography

Written by Assistant Professor Tetyana Skibitska

Lecture 1. An Introduction to Dictionaries

- 1) Subject matter of lexicography
- 2) Dictionary and Glossary
- 3) Origin of dictionaries

The theory and practice of compiling dictionaries is called *lexicography*.

There is some disagreement on the definition of lexicology, as distinct from lexicography. Some use "lexicology" as a synonym for theoretical lexicography; others use it to mean a branch of linguistics pertaining to the inventory of words in a particular language.

It is now widely accepted that lexicography is a scholarly discipline in its own right and not a sub-branch of linguistics, as the object of study in lexicography is the dictionary.

The pursuit of **lexicography** is divided into two related disciplines:

- Practical lexicography is the art or craft of compiling, writing and editing dictionaries.
- Theoretical lexicography is the scholarly discipline of analyzing and describing the semantic, syntagmatic and paradigmatic relationships within the lexicon (vocabulary) of a language and developing theories of dictionary components and structures linking the data in dictionaries. This is sometimes referred to as metalexicography.

Practical lexicographic work involves several activities, and it is important to note that the compilation of really crafted dictionaries require careful consideration of all or some of the following aspects:

- ✓ Profiling the intended users (i.e. linguistic and non-linguistic competences) and identifying their needs
- ✓ Defining the communicative and cognitive functions of the dictionary
- ✓ Selecting and organizing the components of the dictionary
- ✓ Choosing the appropriate structures for presenting the data in the dictionary (i.e. frame structure, distribution structure, macro-structure, micro-structure and cross-reference structure)
- ✓ Selecting words and affixes for lemmatization as entries
- ✓ Selecting collocations, phrases and examples
- ✓ Choosing lemma forms for each word or part of word to be lemmatized
- ✓ Defining words
- ✓ Organizing definitions
- ✓ Specifying pronunciations of words

- ✓ Labeling definitions and pronunciations for register and dialect, where appropriate
- ✓ Selecting equivalents in bi- and polylingual dictionaries
- ✓ Translating collocations, phrases and examples in bi- and polylingual dictionaries

Theoretical lexicography concerns the same aspects, but leads to the development of principles that can improve the quality of future dictionaries.

A **dictionary** is a book of alphabetically listed words in a specific language, with good definitions, etymologies, pronunciations, and other information; or a book of alphabetically listed words in one language with their equivalents in another, also known as a lexicon.

In many languages, words can appear in many different forms, but only the undeclined or unconjugated form appears as the headword in most dictionaries. Dictionaries are most commonly found in the *form of a book*, but some newer dictionaries, like StarDict and the *New Oxford American Dictionary* on Mac OS X, are *dictionary software* running on PDAs or computers. There are also many *online dictionaries* accessible via the Internet.

Printed dictionaries – Printed dictionaries range from small pocket-sized editions to large, comprehensive multi-volume works.

Handheld Electronic dictionaries – Electronic dictionaries are small devices that receive input via a miniature keyboard, voice recognition or a scanning device that reads printed text, and outputs the translation on a small LCD screen or speaks the translation audibly.

Dictionary programs – Computer software that allows words or phrases to be input and translated.

Online dictionaries – Online dictionaries similar to dictionary programs, these are often easy to search, but not always free to use, and in some cases lack the credibility of printed and electronic dictionaries.

Glossaries. A **glossary** is a list of terms in a particular domain of knowledge with the definitions for those terms. Traditionally, a glossary appears at the end of a book and includes terms within that book which are either newly introduced or at least uncommon.

A **bilingual glossary** is a list of terms in one language which are defined in a second language or glossed by synonyms (or at least near-synonyms) in another language.

In a more general sense, a glossary contains explanations of concepts relevant to a certain field of study or action. In this sense, the term is contemporaneously related to ontology (a subject of study in philosophy that is concerned with the nature of existence).

A **core glossary** is a simple glossary or defining dictionary which enables definition of other concepts, especially for newcomers to a language or field of

study. It contains a small working vocabulary and definitions for important or frequently encountered concepts, usually including idioms or metaphors useful in a culture. In computer science, a core glossary is a prerequisite to a core ontology.

Searching glossaries on the web. The search engine Google provides a service to only search web pages belonging to a glossary therefore providing access to a kind of compound glossary of glossary entries found on the web.

A *defining vocabulary* is a published, stable, and culturally accepted core glossary specifically used by dictionary publishers to standardize their use of simple words to explain complex words, and culture-specific idioms or metaphors. It can also be published as a **defining dictionary**, but the most common use of such dictionaries is to assist in creating new dictionaries. In English, the commercial defining dictionaries typically include only one or two meanings of under 2000 words. With these, the rest of English, and even the 4000 most common English idioms and metaphors, can be defined.

An example of a useful published vocabulary is Basic English (850 words). The defining vocabulary used by Longman's to define its 4000 most common English language idioms is about 2000 words long. The English variant E-Prime is designed to avoid any judgmental statements, and so also may be useful for a neutral defining vocabulary.

The origins of dictionaries. Dictionaries are a recent invention. Human language, in a form that must have resembled modern languages pretty closely, has existed for at least 50,000 years, and it may have been developing in ways unique to humans for more than a million years. But writing systems of any kind are quite recent, originating in the Near East no more than a few thousand years ago. Obviously writing systems have to exist before there is any need for dictionaries. The earliest alphabetic writing system, the kind that is universally used in western languages, is that of Greek, developed around the Aegean Sea less than a thousand years before the birth of Christ, and from it all the others are descended, either in the eastern version (Cyrillic) or the western (Roman). But inventive as the ancient classical civilizations were, they did not invent dictionaries— they invented grammars, they invented geometry, they invented the Olympic games, but not dictionaries. Dictionaries, curiously, are a quite accidental by-product of ignorance. The monks working in scriptoria (places where books were copied by hand, since printing had not been invented) in the Middle Ages often did not know Latin very well. Most of the texts they were copying were written in Latin; but the monks could not read it easily, and they joggled their memories as any elementary language student might do today. They wrote translations ("glosses") between the lines. Other monks later made lists of the glosses, and these were the earliest Latin-to-English "dictionaries." All this took place about 700 years before someone realized there might be money to be made by publishing's lists of hard words with explanations of their meanings. The earliest dictionaries were bilingual dictionaries. These were glossaries of French, Italian or Latin words, along with definitions of the foreign words in English. An early nonalphabetical list of 8000 English words was

the *Elementarie* created by Richard Mulcaster in 1582. The first purely English alphabetical dictionary was *A Table Alphabeticall*, written by English schoolteacher Robert Cawdrey in 1604.

However, alphabetical ordering continued to be rare until the 18th century. Before alphabetical listings, dictionaries were organized by topic, i.e. a list of animals all together in one topic. The first moderately complete English dictionary was another 150 years later, the work of Samuel Johnson published in 1755. Modern lexicography is therefore only 250 years old.

Today, dictionaries of most languages with alphabetic and syllabic writing systems list words in lexicographic order, usually alphabetical or some analogous phonetic system.

In many languages, words are grouped together according to their root word, with the roots being arranged alphabetically. If English dictionaries were arranged like this, the words "import," "export," "support," "report," "porter," "important" and "transportation" would theoretically be listed under the Latin "*portare*," "to carry." This method has the advantage that all words of a common origin are listed together, but the disadvantage is that one has to know the roots of the word before one can look it up. Some Hebrew, Sanskrit, and Arabic dictionaries work this way.

Lecture 2. Classification of dictionaries

Classification of dictionaries. All dictionaries are divided into **linguistic** and **encyclopedic** dictionaries. *Encyclopedic* dictionaries describe different objects, phenomena, people and give some data about them. *Linguistic* dictionaries describe vocabulary units, their semantic structure, their origin, their usage. Words are usually given in the alphabetical order.

Dictionaries can vary widely in coverage, size, and scope. One way to classify dictionaries is based on the number of entry words they contain and give information about, i.e. their coverage. A **maximizing dictionary** lists as many words as possible from a particular speech community. An example of a maximizing dictionary (also spelled maximising dictionary) is *the Oxford English Dictionary*, as it attempts to lemmatise (i.e. show as entry words) as many words as possible. A dictionary is **minimizing** if it attempts to include only a limited selection of words from a particular speech community. An example of a minimizing dictionary (also spelled minimising dictionary) is a dictionary containing the 2,000 most frequently used words in the English language, as it attempts to lemmatise (i.e. show as entry words) only a very limited number of English words using a specific principle for their selection. (e.g., a dictionary of Basic English words).

Linguistic dictionaries are divided into general and specialized. To **general dictionaries** two most widely used dictionaries belong: **explanatory** and **translation** dictionaries. There are a lot of *explanatory* dictionaries (*NED*, *SOD*, *COD*, *NID*, N.G. Wyld's *Universal Dictionary* and others). In explanatory dictionaries the entry consists of the spelling, transcription, grammatical forms,

meanings, examples, phraseology. Pronunciation is given either by means of the International Transcription System or in British Phonetic Notation which is different in each large dictionary, e.g. /o:/ can be indicated as /aw/, /or/, /oh/, /o/. etc.

Translation dictionaries give words and their equivalents in the other language. There are English-Russian dictionaries by I.R. Galperin, by Y. Apresyan and others. Among general dictionaries we can also mention *Learner's dictionaries*. They began to appear in the second half of the 20-th century. The most famous is *The Advanced Learner's Dictionary* by A.S. Hornby. It is a unilingual dictionary based on COD, for advanced foreign learners and language teachers. It gives data about grammatical and lexical valency of words.

A **specialized dictionary** is a dictionary that covers a relatively restricted set of phenomena. The typical type of specialized dictionary is that which in English is often referred to as a technical dictionary and in German as a Fachwörterbuch. Specialized dictionaries can have various functions, i.e. they can help users in different types of situation. Monolingual dictionaries can help users understand and produce texts, whereas bilingual dictionaries can help users understand texts, translate texts and produce texts. **Specialized dictionaries** include dictionaries of synonyms, antonyms, collocations, word-frequency, neologisms, slang, pronouncing, etymological, phraseological and others. The distinction between a minimizing dictionary and a maximizing dictionary is also important in connection with specialized dictionaries. A law dictionary that contains 2,000 words is minimizing in that it cannot reasonably be claimed to cover more than a limited number of legal terms. This should be contrasted with a law dictionary that contains more than 20,000 entry words, which is a maximizing dictionary, as it attempts to include nearly all legal terms.

According to the *Manual of Specialised Lexicography* a **specialized dictionary** (also referred to as a technical dictionary) is a lexicon that focuses upon a specific subject field. Specialized dictionaries can be classified in various ways. Following the description in *The Bilingual LSP Dictionary* Lexicographers categorize specialized dictionaries into three types. A *multi-field dictionary* broadly covers several semantic fields (e.g., a picture dictionary), a *single-field dictionary* narrowly covers one particular subject field (e.g., law), and a *sub-field dictionary* covers a singular field (e.g., constitutional law). For example, the 23-language *Inter-Active Terminology for Europe* is a multi-field dictionary, *the American National Biography* is a single-field, and *the African American National Biography Project* is a sub-field dictionary. In terms of the distinction between "minimizing dictionaries" and "maximizing dictionaries", multi-field dictionaries tend to minimize coverage across lexical fields (for instance, *Oxford Dictionary of World Religions*) whereas single-field and sub-field dictionaries tend to maximize coverage within a limited subject field (*The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*).

A **multi-field dictionary** is a specialized dictionary that has been designed and compiled to cover the terms within two or more subject fields. Multi-field

dictionaries should be contrasted with single-field dictionaries and sub-field dictionaries. The typology consisting of these three dictionaries is important for a number of reasons. First of all, a multi-field dictionary is an example of the ordinary technical dictionary, covering a large number of separate subject fields, e.g. banking, economics, finance, insurance and marketing. The main problem with multi-field dictionaries is that they tend to cover one or two subjects extensively, whereas the vast majority of subject are only represented by a very limited number of terms. Secondly, the typical multi-field dictionary tends to be a minimizing dictionary, i.e. it covers only a limited number of terms within the subjects covered. Thirdly, if the lexicographers intend to make a bilingual, maximizing multi-field dictionary they run into problems with the large amount of data that has to be included in the dictionary.

A **single-field dictionary** is a specialized dictionary that has been designed and compiled to cover the terms of one particular subject field. First of all a single-field dictionary is an example of a very specialized dictionary in that it covers only one single subject field. Examples of single-field dictionaries are a dictionary of law, a dictionary of economics and a dictionary of welding. The main advantage of single-field dictionaries is that they can easily be maximizing dictionaries, i.e. attempt to cover as many terms of the subject field as possible without being a dictionary in several volumes. Consequently, single-fields dictionaries are ideal for extensive coverage of the linguistic and extra-linguistic aspects within a particular subject field. Secondly, if the lexicographers intend to make a bilingual, maximizing single-field dictionary they will not run into the same problems with the space available for presenting the large amount of data that has to be included in the dictionary, cf. a multi-field dictionary.

A **sub-field dictionary** is a specialized dictionary that has been designed and compiled to cover the terms of one (or possibly more) sub-fields of a particular subject field. It is therefore a sub-division of single-field dictionaries. First of all a sub-field dictionary is an example of a very specialized dictionary in that it covers only a limited part of one single subject field. Examples of sub-field dictionaries are a dictionary of contract law and a dictionary of fusion welding. The main advantage of sub-field dictionaries is that they can easily be maximizing dictionaries, i.e. attempt to cover as many terms of the sub-field as possible without being a dictionary in several volumes. Consequently, sub-fields dictionaries are ideal for extensive coverage of the linguistic and extra-linguistic aspects within a particular subject field. Secondly, if the lexicographers intend to make a bilingual, maximizing sub-field dictionary they will not run into the same problems with the space available for presenting the large amount of data that has to be included in the dictionary, cf. a multi-field dictionary. Consequently, the best coverage of linguistic and extra-linguistic aspects within the subject field covered by a dictionary will be found in a sub-field dictionary. The best coverage of a subject field will then be to compile a number of sub-field dictionaries that together cover the entire subject.

A **Language for Specific Purposes dictionary (LSP dictionary)** is a dictionary that intends to describe a variety of one or more languages used by experts within a particular subject field. The discipline that deals with LSP dictionaries is usually called specialised lexicography and is a branch of lexicography.

LSP dictionaries are often made for users who are already specialists with a subject field (experts), but may also be made for semi-experts and for users who may be laypeople relative to a particular subject field. In contrast to LSP dictionaries LGP (language for generic purposes) dictionaries are made to be used by an average user. LSP dictionaries may have one or more functions. LSP dictionaries may have communicative functions such as help users to translate texts, help users to understand texts and help users to produce texts. Dictionaries may also have cognitive functions such as help users to develop knowledge in general or about a specific topic, such as the birthday of a famous person and the inflectional paradigm of a specific verb.

All types of dictionaries can be **monolingual** (excepting translation ones) if the explanation is given in the same language, **bilingual** if the explanation is given in another language and also they can be **polylingual**. **Monolingual dictionaries** contain entries in one language and the data related to those entries are in the same language. These dictionaries can have a number of different, though interrelated functions. Monolingual dictionaries can assist users who produce texts, help users read and understand texts, and assist users who write texts.

Monolingual learner's dictionaries are written for learners of a foreign language. Most such dictionaries are aimed at advanced learners, but in English there are ones for elementary and intermediate users too. These tools of language education are based on the supposition that learners must move from a bilingual dictionary to a monolingual one as they advance in their study of the target language, but that general purpose dictionaries compiled for native speakers are too complex and indeed confusing for their needs. Learners' (or learner's) dictionaries include a lot of information on grammar, usage, common errors, false friends, collocations, and so on, which a native speaker knows intuitively. Conversely, these dictionaries leave out etymology and quotations, although they do include example sentences.

The first English monolingual learner's dictionary was *The Idiomatic and Syntactic Dictionary of English* by A. S. Hornby published in 1942. This was republished as *A Learner's Dictionary of Current English* by Oxford University Press in 1948. The second edition came in 1963, the third in 1974, both in several impressions. The dictionary was a huge financial success. This unparalleled success was, of course, the result of the boom in the English language teaching industry worldwide. It is now in its seventh edition as the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*.

The *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* was published in 1978. The editors, led by Paul Proctor, introduced several innovations. The most striking was the use of a restricted defining vocabulary, which has now become a standard

feature of learners' dictionaries. Almost a decade later another new player, the *Collins Cobuild English Dictionary*, came out, a significant milestone in corpus-based lexicography.

1995 was the 'year of the dictionaries': Oxford published its fifth edition, Longman its third, Cobuild its second, and yet another player appeared, the *Cambridge International Dictionary of English*. 2002 saw the entrance of yet another competitor: the *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners*.

The current editions in 2008 are the seventh for OUP (2005), the fourth for Longman (2003, reprinted in 2005 with Writing Assistant), the fifth for Collins Cobuild (2006), and the third for CUP (2008). In May 2007, Macmillan released its new (second) edition of advanced learner's dictionary.

In *bilingual dictionaries*, each entry has translations of words in another language. In dictionaries between English and a language using a non-Roman script, entry words in the non-English language may be either printed and sorted in the native order, or romanized and sorted in Roman alphabetical order. Bilingual dictionaries may have several functions: communicative functions, e.g. they can help users read and understand foreign-language texts, help users to translate texts and help users to produce texts in a foreign language. They can also have cognitive functions, e.g. they can help users who want to know something about a foreign language in general or about a specific issue such as the inflectional paradigm of a foreign-language word.

A **bilingual dictionary** is a dictionary that is usually used to translate words or phrases from one language to another. Bilingual dictionaries are sometimes used to understand texts read, often, in a foreign language. Bilingual dictionaries can be *unidirectional*, meaning that they list the meanings of words of one language in another, or can be *bidirectional*, allowing translation to and from both languages. Bidirectional bilingual dictionaries usually consist of two sections, each listing words and phrases of one language alphabetically with their translation. Other features sometimes present in bilingual dictionaries are definitions, lists of phrases, usage and style guides, verb tables and maps.

The most important challenge for practical and theoretical lexicographers is to define the function(s) of a bilingual dictionary. A bilingual dictionary may have as its function to help users translate texts from one language into another, or its function may be to help users understand foreign-language texts. In such situations users will require the dictionary to contain different types of data that have been specifically selected for the function in question. If the function is understanding foreign-language texts the dictionary will contain foreign-language entry words and native-language definitions, which have been written so that they can be understood by the intended user groups. If the dictionary is intended to help translate texts, it will need to include not only equivalents but also collocations and phrases translated into the relevant target language.

Perhaps the most difficult aspect of creating a bilingual dictionary is the fact that lexemes or words cover more than one area of meaning, but these multiple meanings don't correspond to a single word in the target language. For example, in English, a **ticket** can get you into the movie theater, or can be given to you by a

police officer for exceeding the posted speed limit. In Ukrainian these two meanings are not covered by one word as in English, but rather there are several options: **КВИТОК** and **КВИТАНЦІЯ** or **ТАЛОН**.

To combat the above problem, the user can perform *a reverse lookup*. In the above-mentioned example in English and Ukrainian of the word **ticket**, after finding that ticket is translated into *квиток* and *квитанція* in the English-Ukrainian dictionary, both of those Ukrainian words can be looked up in the Ukrainian-English section to help to identify which one has the meaning being sought. Reverse lookups can usually be performed faster with Dictionary programs and online dictionaries.

Bilingual dictionaries are available in a number of formats, and often include a grammar reference and usage examples.

Visual dictionaries – A visual dictionary is a printed dictionary that relies primarily on illustrations to provide the user with a reliable way of identifying the correct translation. Visual dictionaries are often multi-lingual rather than bilingual – instead of containing translations between two languages they often cover four or more languages.

A **picture dictionary** is a dictionary containing word entries that, for all or most such entries, are accompanied by photos or drawings illustrating what the words mean. Picture dictionaries are usually used with young children. Related to this, many picture dictionaries exist to help children learn foreign languages. There do exist, however, several foreign-language-teaching picture dictionaries that are geared towards, or also suitable for, older audiences.

Picture dictionaries explain concepts from soup-tureen in the 1904 *Engelska bild-glosor med textöfningar ...* to supersonic in the 1998 *Visual Encyclopedia*.

Another beneficial use of picture dictionaries, aside from the aforementioned, is for when one knows (or has an idea of) what something looks like, but lacks the correct term for it. For example, an adult or teenager may not be familiar with the term "platen," but wants to know what a particular part of an old typewriter is called, which happens to be (it will be learned) the platen. To find out the term, one consults a "comprehensive, image-sleuthing" picture dictionary (usually using a table of contents or index) and finds an image of a typewriter – then locates the part of the dictionary-image typewriter that one wants a word/descriptor for. If the pre-existing image *in the term-hunter's mind* reasonably verifiably matches the typewriter-image part *in the dictionary* that's labeled "platen," he or she now has a word learned (and available) for the researched item/concept – as well as having found its correct spelling.

Lecture 3. Unabridged dictionaries

- 1) The Oxford English Dictionary
- 2) Merriam-Webster and its competitors
- 3) Writing dictionaries

General-purpose dictionaries are of two types also: (1) so-called unabridged

dictionaries, and (2) desk dictionaries, which are shortened forms of the full dictionaries, either for college use or for use at lower educational levels. Desk dictionaries are the ones that we consult most of the time, in part because the unabridged dictionaries are ungainly and over-sized, in part because most of us don't have access to an unabridged dictionary at home or in our offices.

Unabridged. What does "unabridged" mean? First, it does not mean, as one might think, that an "unabridged dictionary" contains every English word. Nobody knows how many words English has. The blurbs on the jackets of various dictionaries may state that the dictionary contains "more than" 200,000 words, but that is difficult to determine. All one can count is "entries" or "headwords," and even that turns out to be a slippery notion because what is a headword in one dictionary may be subordinated – listed below the main entry – in another. Landau (*Dictionaries: The Art and Craft of Lexicography*, p. 84) characterizes the American system of entry counting thus:

- 1) Every word or phrase that is explicitly or implicitly defined, so long as it is clearly identifiable, usually by appearing in bold-face type, is an entry.
- 2) The more entries one has or can claim, the better.

He goes on to point out that in a particular dictionary the entry for *parachute* (*n.*) counts as five entries because the forms *parachuted*, *parachuting*, *parachute* (*v.*) and *parachutist* all appear down inside the entry. But there is surely a large difference in the "counting value" of some of these "countable" entries. Size alone, measured by number of entries, does not make a dictionary better. In fact entry-counts are good mostly for publicity purposes. "Unabridged" means only this: the dictionary is not a shortened version of some other dictionary. It was compiled from scratch, which is to say, largely from its own files of citations, with all definitions and arrangements of meanings and examples determined by its own editors. However, dictionary producers are notorious plagiarists, and in fact have to be: every dictionary of the last 250 years has depended heavily on its predecessors, simply because the job is too big to be done really from scratch. The extremely high degree of originality of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (discussed below), the only one certainly compiled from its own files of citations, is in part due to necessity: it was the first (and still the only) dictionary ever to try to include every word that had appeared in English since the Norman Conquest, barring only technical terms that had not become common parlance. Probably the best understanding of "unabridged" is therefore something like "too big to serve easily as a desk dictionary, and having considerably more entries than desk dictionaries typically do, normally at least twice as many."

The Oxford English Dictionary. The *OED*, as it is generally called (or simply *The Oxford*), is the only English dictionary compiled totally from its own citation files. Its editors, wisely, also consulted the work of their predecessors, especially Samuel Johnson. Though it excludes most technical words, it nevertheless has to be viewed as the greatest of all unabridged dictionaries – not just in English but in any language. Nothing exactly comparable to it exists for Russian, German, Spanish, French, or Italian. Its size cannot be compared with

other modern dictionaries of English because it includes, in principle, all the words that have ever appeared in the English language subsequent to 1150, a date which corresponds roughly to the beginning of the Middle-English period (the period of Geoffrey Chaucer, who died in 1400). The other great modern unabridged dictionaries like the *Merriam-Webster's* have excluded older obsolete and obsolescent words, but they considerably exceed the *OED's* coverage of technical words from all the major fields of knowledge. Of the 291,627 entries in the *OED*, half or more than half are older words that no longer occur in modern usage. To say that more than half the words are no longer in contemporary use is not a criticism: the *OED* set out to create a record of the history of the English vocabulary and the historical development of the meanings of English words. It is a historical work par excellence.

The fully-up-dated second edition of 1989 is available in three formats: (1) twenty very large heavy printed volumes, which one is likely to find only in libraries; (2) a two-volume "compact edition" in which four regular printed pages of the full-sized version are reduced to one-quarter size and printed together on a single page – and a magnifying glass is provided; and (3) a compact disk, containing the whole dictionary as well as search programs which enable you to bring up onto your computer screen information which would take days to assemble from the printed versions. Unfortunately, the only one of these three versions which might be called "inexpensive" or even "moderately priced" is the compact edition, which has on several occasions been made available at a very reasonable price as a bonus for joining one book club or another. The CD-ROM version is between \$200 and \$400, depending on which version you choose; the hard-copy version is about three times that much. A third edition in electronic form was brought out in 2005.

This great dictionary is so important to all work on the history of the English language that one should know how it came in existence. The first edition of the *OED* was compiled between 1884 and 1928; it contained about 240,000 entries. Recall, however, that this number included all the earlier as well as current words of English, so probably half the headword entries were obsolete. Furthermore, the *OED* explicitly chose not to include technical terminology from the sciences and medicine unless these terms had become common parlance outside the jargon of specialists. The policies of later dictionaries like *Merriam-Webster's* have been somewhat inconsistent on this issue, but they have generally included much more such terminology than the *OED*.

The editors. In spite of its staggering size, the *OED* is to an astonishingly large extent the work of a single individual, Sir James A. H. Murray, the first official editor after the task was taken over by Oxford University Press. Prior to that there were two very important earlier editors, under the loose control of The Philological Association which had initiated the entire project of data collection by hundreds of readers: Herbert Coleridge, a descendant of the poet, who died after two years; and Frederick Furnivall, who installed a hierarchical structure of sub-editors to organize the citation slips that were sent in by the readers. He was otherwise

negligent, and the project nearly died. But he was responsible for bringing into the work both Murray himself, and the backing of the Oxford University Press. Murray edited, starting in 1879, more than half of the first edition, the one which appeared in fascicles over a period of forty-four years, and these were assembled in the first edition of twelve tombstone-sized volumes in 1928. He worked at it continuously for the last thirty-seven years of his life, eighty to ninety hours a week. He collected and organized citations from the hundreds of individual readers who were solicited from all over the English-speaking world though mainly from England and Scotland. While it was Samuel Johnson (1755) who first provided citations to defend and illustrate his definitions, citations usually chosen by Johnson from learned authors and often written down straight out of Johnson's own prodigious memory, it was Murray who made a science of it, insisting that every nuance of every word be justified by citations from published and dated sources. He carefully sorted his citation slips and arranged them in historical order by senses, so that one can see for every word what the date of the earliest occurrence was and what the earliest sense was and how, step by step, the meaning changed or new meanings arose from older ones. The *OED* citation file, at the time that publication of fascicles began in 1884, was already in excess of six million; and it has continued to be enriched to the present day under the later editors. The editor who produced the four-volume supplement of 1986 (incorporating the 1933 supplement) was R. W. Burchfield. The second edition of the *OED*, in 1989, which fully integrates both supplements, contains two-and-a-half million quotations selected from the citation files to support the definitions. The CD-ROM versions appeared in 1992 and 1994. The second edition was produced by J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, who were also responsible for directing the work that put the dictionary into its present computer-accessible form on CD-ROM for either Macintosh or PC's.

Reduced versions of the *OED*. The *OED* has twice been the source of highly selective reduced-size versions. The first of these is *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* published in 1933. It has been revised twice, once in 1944 and most recently in 1993 under the title *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*. This version was released on CD-ROM in 1997.

The etymological portion of the *OED* – just the etymological portion – was the basis for the second selective version, *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* (1966). This version is wonderful for etymology, and it is the right size for a desk dictionary, but in fact since it has neither extended definitions nor illustrative quotations, it is not useful as a desk dictionary and is useful even for etymological purposes only if you can't get your hands on the *OED2* CD-ROM. In 1986 Oxford published *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, with a paperback reprint in 1993.

Merriam-Webster. *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language*, published by the Merriam-Webster Company in 1961, is the only other relatively complete unabridged English dictionary of recent times. It differs from the *OED* in that it does contain very large numbers of

technical words. It has some *450,000* entries. The fact that it is more than forty years old says something about the incredible expense and time required to update or replace a great unabridged dictionary. It replaced *Webster's New International Dictionary of 1934*, which remains the largest of all English dictionaries, having over 600,000 entries.

As of 2003, the company's two best known dictionaries are:

- *Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged*, the most complete current non-specialist American dictionary of English.
- *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, Eleventh Edition, the largest and most popular college dictionary, which is available in CD-ROM format for use on personal computers.

Merriam-Webster has also published dictionaries of synonyms, English usage, geography (*Merriam-Webster's Geographical Dictionary*), biography, proper names, medical terms, sports terms, slang, Spanish-English, and numerous others. Non-dictionary publications include, *Collegiate Thesaurus*, *Secretarial Handbook*, *Manual for Writers and Editors*, *Collegiate Encyclopedia*, *Encyclopedia of Literature*, *Encyclopedia of World Religions*.

On February 14th, 2007 Merriam-Webster announced it was working with mobile search and information provider AskMeNow to launch a mobile dictionary and thesaurus service enabling consumers to access definitions, spelling and synonyms via text message. Services also include Merriam-Webster's Word of the Day and Open Dictionary, a wiki service promising subscribers the opportunity to create and submit their own new words and definitions.

The name "Webster's," at least in America, is almost synonymous with "dictionary." One should know, however, that the name "Webster's" is in the public domain. The only publishing company whose work is directly descended from that of the nineteenth-century American lexicographical giant, Noah Webster, is the G. and C. Merriam Company of Springfield, Massachusetts. Its founders, after Webster's death in 1843, bought out the rights to the 1841 edition of Webster's *American Dictionary* (first edition 1828). But the Merriam-Webster dictionaries are not the only ones that use the Webster name to add prestige to their product. One of the best desk dictionaries with the Webster name, *Webster's New World Dictionary of the English Language* (first edition 1953) is totally unrelated to the Merriam-Webster company or to the Webster family. Another great desk dictionary (also unrelated to the earlier Webster's), the *Random House Webster's College Dictionary* (1992), simply has the name "Webster's" inserted into its earlier title, which was *The Random House College Dictionary* (1968, 1975).

Webster's competitors. Although the name "Webster's" has great visibility in the modern marketplace, and though the cachet of the name certainly helps to sell dictionaries in modern America, it is worth pointing out that this is due to a considerable extent to hype and mythology. Noah Webster was not the best lexicographer even of his own time, though he was the most influential one because of his *Speller* – which was the text-book of choice throughout most of the century. In his own time the best American lexicographer was probably Joseph

Worcester, whose *Universal and Critical Dictionary of the English Language* appeared as the only American competitor for Webster in 1846, the final revised version in 1860. At both dates it was superior to Webster's in almost every way, but in 1864 a vastly improved version of the Webster's appeared (reworked by two scholars hired by Webster's son-in-law, and consequently known as the *Webster-Mahn* in deference to the German scholar who totally replaced the Webster etymologies). This was really the first "unabridged" Webster's dictionary, and it won the competition against Worcester in the marketplace. Near the end of the century William Dwight Whitney, a Sanskrit scholar at Yale University, produced the great *Century Dictionary*, which, in the words of Sidney Landau "is surely one of the handsomest dictionaries ever made." It was never revised, however, and is now of historical interest only. But Whitney was not the only end-of-century competition for Webster's place in lexicography: There was also the 1893 Funk and Wagnalls unabridged *Standard Dictionary of the English Language*, revised and enlarged in 1913 as the *New Standard Dictionary*, with 450,000 entries, making it a true competitor for the unabridged Webster's. Though it was never later fully revised, and it therefore dropped out of competition, this dictionary made many important changes in dictionary practice which are continued in the various dictionaries connected with the name of Clarence Barnhart and with the dictionaries published by Random House.

Writing dictionaries. All modern dictionaries draw much of their historical and etymological information from the *OED*. Etymologies and definitions are based on citations. What is a **citation**? It is an index card (or, these days, a computer file) which lists a word and a quotation containing that word – if possible in a context that clearly implies a specific meaning – and gives the source, author, and date of the citation. As Landau says, "In spite of other sources [such as earlier dictionaries, either your own or your competitors]", a large ongoing citation file is essential for the preparation of any new general dictionary or for the revision of an existing dictionary." We have already mentioned the citation file of the *OED*, and a bit about how it came into existence. In America, the G. and C. Merriam Company is reputed to have the largest continuously updated and current file of citations of the words they enter into their dictionaries. Both Random House and Barnhart have independent citation files. The quality of a dictionary ultimately depends on the quality of the writing and editing.

Lecture 4. Desktop dictionaries

- 1) For British users
- 2) For American users

For British users. There is really only one desktop dictionary likely to be satisfactory in Britain - *The Chambers Dictionary*. This great dictionary is available in many editions, with small variations in the title. An edition called *The Chambers 21st Century Dictionary* was ambitiously published in 1997, three years in

advance of the millennium bug. Its ultimate ancestor, *The Chambers 20th Century Dictionary*, first edition, came out in 1901. The 1998 edition does away with the centennial puffery and goes simply under the name *The Chambers Dictionary*. The one-page discussion (p. xx) of what American English is like (i.e., how it differs from British English) is about as useful as a comparable American one-page explanation of British English would be that was supposed to include the southern counties of Britain, the north country, Scotland, and Ireland. However, *Chambers* often records American usage in pronunciation, a favor which is not reciprocated by some American dictionaries. For instance, *schedule* is recorded by *Chambers* with the [sk-] pronunciation marked as "esp. US," but *The American Heritage Dictionary* (see below) does not record the British sh- pronunciation at all, even though it is widely favored in Canada. *Merriam-Webster's* (every modern edition), however, does record the difference.

The most conspicuous feature of *Chambers* is that all derived forms are listed within the entry under a single headword. Thus if you want to find the computer term *descriptor*, you have to look under *describe*. If you want to find *repentance* you look under *repent*. Thus there are many fewer headwords in *Chambers* than in typical American dictionaries, though the total number of words defined in *Chambers* is actually somewhat larger than we find in any American desk dictionary. *Chambers* also has an appendix that lists common phrases and even quotations from the classical languages and modern foreign languages, and another appendix which gives the origins of many first names. *Chambers* does not give the dates when a word entered English, which is a useful feature of several American dictionaries and of the *OED*. In general, etymology is treated with minimal detail in *Chambers*.

For American users. At least four possible choices have to be considered.

- 1) *The American Heritage Dictionary*
- 2) *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*
- 3) *Random House Webster's College Dictionary*
- 4) *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language*

The American Heritage Dictionary is an American dictionary of the English language published by Boston publisher Houghton Mifflin, the first edition of which appeared in 1969. This dictionary was innovative in two important ways:

(1) Rather than placing all the etymological information in the entry, in case the word contained a root derived from Proto-Indo-European (the parent language of most European languages) the entry provided a reference to an appendix called *Indo-European Roots*, where one can find, for every root, not only the word in question but often dozens of other words which are related by virtue of being derived from the same point of origin. Most readers found the appendix of little value because they did not know how to use it. It is unlikely ever to be valued highly by the general public.

(2) Since there had been much negative publicity about the usage labels in *Merriam-Webster's Third New International Dictionary*, the *American Heritage Dictionary* took advantage of the bad publicity to step into the breach and created

a "Usage Panel" who made judgments, reported in the dictionary, about their preferences in several hundred instances of disputed usage (e.g., as between "He laid down on the bed" and "He lay down on the bed"). The panel's recommendations were sometimes too sensitive to "establishment" usage; they were often keen to protect the language from decay and corruption, metaphorically speaking. But the *Heritage* received lots of good publicity from this ploy: as a merchandising technique it was successful. As a record of actual usage, which is what dictionaries are obligated to report, it is dubious, at best, and cannot be viewed as especially authoritative.

The AHD broke ground among dictionaries by using corpus linguistics in compiling word-frequency and other information. The AHD made the innovative step of combining *prescriptive* elements (how language *should* be used) and *descriptive* information (how it actually *is* used); the latter was derived from text corpora.

The second edition, published in 1980, omitted the Indo-European etymologies, but they were reintroduced in the third edition, published in 1992. The third edition was also a departure for the publisher because it was developed in a database, which facilitated the use of the linguistic data for other applications, such as electronic dictionaries. The fourth edition (2000) added Semitic language materials, including an analogous appendix of roots.

The Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionaries. Produced by The G. and C. Merriam Co. of Springfield, Mass. The latest edition is the 10th (1993). The 9th (1983) and the 8th (1973) are also excellent dictionaries, but the 7th (1963) is too old to use today. These dictionaries, depending on when they were printed, go by slightly different names, such as *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*, *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, *Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*. New printings with minor revisions come out almost every year, but as the dates above indicate (1963, 1973, 1983, 1993), major re-editing to produce a really new *Collegiate* takes about ten years. Several editors have been responsible for these superb dictionaries over the years, beginning with Philip Babcock Gove. The important thing to realize about all the *Collegiate* dictionaries that the G. and C. Merriam Company has produced is that they are based squarely on the citation files of the two greatest unabridged American dictionaries of this century, namely Second (1934) and Third (1961) *Webster's New International Dictionaries*, and of course all of them draw on the *OED* for etymological information and much else.

Random House Webster's Collegiate Dictionary. Based on *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language*, 1966 and 1973. The latter is claimed to be an unabridged dictionary, and is the basis of the 1993 *Random House Unabridged Dictionary*. But this excellent dictionary is just too large to serve as a desk dictionary, and one is probably better served by the 1991 College version. Both for etymology and for general use, the College version is hard to improve upon.

Versions of the dictionary have been published under other names, including *Webster's New Universal Dictionary* (which was previously the name of an

entirely different dictionary) and *Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary*.

Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language. The third edition is available in both full and college versions, like the *Heritage*. In spite of the gimmicky title (it has no special connection with Webster, and there is nothing specific to the New World or to American English about it except for the fact that it gives etymologies for American place names, a feature which is not found in other general-purpose dictionaries). The first edition was published by the World Publishing Company of Cleveland, Ohio in two volumes or one large volume, including a large encyclopedic section. In 1953, World published a one-volume college edition, without the encyclopedic material. It was edited by Joseph H. Friend and David B. Guralnik and contained 142,000 entries, said to be the largest American desk dictionary available at the time.

The second college edition, edited by Guralnik, was published in 1970. World Publishing was acquired by Simon and Schuster in 1980 and they continued the work with a third edition in 1989 edited by Victoria Neufeldt. A fourth edition was published in 1998 and contains 160,000 entries.

One of the salient features of *Webster's New World* dictionaries has been an unusually full etymology, that is, the origin and development of words and the relationship of words to other Indo-European languages. The work also labels words which have a distinctly American origin.

Lecture 5. Specialized Dictionaries

- 1) Some specialized dictionaries
- 2) Etymological dictionaries

Specialized dictionaries. The number of specialized dictionaries is vast and one cannot even judge whether a specialized dictionary is good or not unless one is a specialist in the field. There is virtually no end to specialized dictionaries – dictionaries of Old English, of Middle English, pronouncing dictionaries, reverse dictionaries, chronological dictionaries, frequency dictionaries, rhyming dictionaries, dictionaries of proverbs, dictionaries of loanwords, bibliographical dictionaries, legal terms, medical terms, music, astronomy, geography, computer terms.

Thesaurus. There is one type of dictionary which categorizes words only according to their semantic similarities, without regard for shared form or ancestry: this is called a thesaurus. The most famous such listing is *Roget's Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases*, first published in 1852 and in many editions subsequently. For expanding one's vocabulary, a thesaurus is likely to be even more useful than a standard dictionary, because it is arranged according to a universal set of concepts (e.g. *space, matter, intellect, abstract relations*) and then each of these is divided further and further until finally all the words can be grouped together which refer to closely similar meanings. Definitions are not given, or at least not normally very detailed definitions, just synonyms; and much of the book is an elaborate index to help you find the head entry under

which all the semantically similar words of a particular category are listed.

Dictionaries of synonyms. Besides *Roget*, there are dictionaries of synonyms in which the headword is more or less arbitrarily chosen, and of course alphabetically listed: i.e., the editor's choice of headwords is not part of an elaborate universal classificatory system, and in the entry all the semantically similar words are listed with explanations of the distinctions among them. *Webster's New Dictionary of Synonyms* is an excellent such dictionary, as also is the Funk and Wagnall's *Modern Guide to Synonyms, A Dictionary of English Synonyms and Synonymous Expressions* by R. Soule. In 2008 *Oxford Learner's THESAURUS A dictionary of synonyms* was published. These are basically tools for writers, to help them avoid repeating the same word in different contexts (since English style has always placed a premium on variation and non-repetition). These are monolingual dictionaries. The best known bilingual dictionary of synonyms is *English Synonyms* compiled by Y. Apresyan.

A production dictionary (activator). A production dictionary guides you to exactly the right word you need for the context. Let's say you're writing an essay about how you spent your weekend. You had a "good" time, you went to a "good" party, the film you saw was "good" and the meal in the restaurant was "good". You've used the word "good" four times! Wouldn't it have been better if you could have used some different words with similar and more appropriate meanings? If only you'd known how to find them.

This is when a production dictionary is needed. You could have looked up the word "good", and realised that actually you went to a "brilliant" party, the film you saw was "excellent" and the meal in the restaurant was "fantastic"! It's that easy, because when you look up a word in a production dictionary, you'll find lots of related words in the same section, so you can find exactly what you're looking for straightaway.

The Longman Language Activator takes you from a key word or basic idea, like 'good', and shows you more precise words or phrases with information on register, context and grammar structures. Detailed definitions help students choose the correct word and natural, corpus-based examples show words in typical usage, all the collocations and phrases you need to write correctly, index at the back of the book for easy cross-referencing. *The Longman Essential Activator* is a dictionary with a difference. It's a production dictionary.

The Longman Essential Activator works in the same way. The main difference is that the Longman Essential Activator is perfect for intermediate level students, while the Longman Language Activator is designed for students at a higher level. Besides, it includes **Essential word banks** (covering 25 topic areas based on a variety of exam task types, such as describing people, films/movies, education, environment, technology and computers. Within each section, you'll find all the vocabulary and phrases you'll need to be able to write correct English on that topic), **Essential communication section** (using clear flowcharts, it details all the essential phrases you'll need to communicate in various situations, such as saying goodbye, making hotel reservations and sending invitations), **Essential**

grammar help (covering all the major areas that cause the biggest problems for intermediate students).

Dictionaries of collocations. Judging from the hugely increased use of the term in ELT-related publications, teachers today should be very much more aware of the prevalence of collocation in language use than they were twenty years ago. We are far better equipped to recognize phraseological expressions in all varieties of language, from the most spontaneous everyday conversation to the most carefully crafted literature, and easily able to find example material in journalism, letters to the press, crossword clues, broadcast interviews etc. Trained teachers also have access to a range of descriptive frameworks for analysing such phenomena, even if alternative theoretical viewpoints can be confusing and the terminology inconsistent. As a result of this greater consciousness, they should be better able to recognize the collocational problems of their learners and to answer the question posed by Allerton in 1984: ‘So often the patient language-learner is told by the native speaker that a particular sentence is perfectly good English but that native speakers would never use it. How are we to explain such a state of affairs?’. Not only is there a substantial and growing literature on phraseological theory, there are also very many ELT textbooks that introduce and practise a wide range of collocational patterns, and a general improvement in understanding their significance can be seen in the rubric of two vocabulary books published in 1989 and 1997: ‘Some pairs of words often occur together. If you see one of them, you can expect to see the other. This makes listening and reading easier! Here are some partnerships.’ (Flower and Berman 1989: 36); ‘Collocation is the placing together ... of words which are often associated with each other, so that they form common patterns or combinations’ (Watson 1997: 7). To find the way a word collocates, teachers can look in dictionaries of collocations such as the LTP *Dictionary of Selected Collocations* (Hill and Lewis), or the *Oxford Collocations Dictionary* (2002).

Phraseological dictionaries describe idioms and colloquial phrases, proverbs. Some of them have examples from literature. Some lexicographers include not only word-groups but also anomalies among words. In «*The Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs*» each proverb is illustrated by a lot of examples, there are stylistic references as well. The dictionary by Vizetelli gives definitions and illustrations, but different meanings of polisemantic units are not given. The most famous bilingual dictionary of phraseology was compiled by A.V. Koonin. It is one of the best phraseological dictionaries.

An **idiom dictionary** explains idiosyncratic stock phrases and metaphors in language. Typical English idiom dictionaries, e.g. that published by Longmans, define about 4000 phrases, e.g. "buy the farm", "hit the road", "canary in a coal mine". Of these, a tiny subset, generally involving prepositions or action verbs, are very basic to the language, and are closely related to fundamental conceptual metaphors. These include forms like *out of* or *turn into*.

Idiom dictionaries, as well as dictionaries in general, may or may not rely on a defining vocabulary of terms (Longman's uses 2000) which are used only in their

simplest senses, to minimize the number of such basic conceptual metaphors and polymorphic word uses, and make definitions easier for someone unfamiliar with the language to comprehend, such as children or students of English as an additional language. Example: "bite the bullet" "let the cat out of the bag"

Pronouncing dictionaries record only pronunciation. The most famous are D. Jones' *Pronouncing Dictionary*. (CUP, 2006) and J. C. Wells' *Pronunciation Dictionary* (Longman, 2008), both available in printed and CD-ROM forms.

Dictionaries of neologisms are: a four-volume *Supplement to NED* by Burchfield, *The Longman Register of New Words/1990/*, *Bloomsbury Dictionary of New Words /1996/*.

Etymological dictionaries trace present-day words to the oldest forms of these words and forms of these words in other languages. One of the best etymological dictionaries was compiled by W. Skeat. Why should one study etymology? In view of the fact that etymology often concerns itself with aspects of language that are sometimes fossilized and no longer relevant to our ordinary synchronic understanding of what words mean or how they are used, one may legitimately ask why one should bother. The study of the etymology of words:

- ✓ enlightens us as to interesting accidents in their history;
- ✓ from a practical point of view, it gives us insights into their present meanings and into the meanings of other words which are related to the same sources, thereby expanding our vocabularies substantially and sharpening our awareness of the meanings of complex words;
- ✓ enables us to guess correctly at the meaning of a new word we have never encountered before, which happens to contain some of the parts of words we have learned.
- ✓ the most important reason is to know our language history, just as we want to know the history of our social institutions, our technology, our ancestry, our government, and so on.

How study etymology? Happily, in this area of specialization we are well served indeed. The finest historical dictionary of any language, the basis for the historical information in all subsequent general purpose English dictionaries, is the *OED*, which was discussed at some length above. However, no dictionary can meet all imaginable etymological needs. In particular, the *OED* is incomplete with respect to American English. For more information in that area, four important resources exist:

(1) *A Dictionary of American English on Historical Principles*, ed. by William A. Craigie and James R. Hulbert, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1938-44 (*DAE*), the main source of information about words that originated in the United States and words that are "representative." Dr. Craigie was one of the editors of the *OED*, and in fact received his training with Sir James Murray himself, having started to work for Murray in 1897. He moved to Chicago specifically to create an American version of the *OED*. *A Dictionary of American English on Historical Principles* is a dictionary of terms appearing in

English in the United States that was published in four volumes from 1938 to 1944. Intended to pick up where the *Oxford English Dictionary* left off, it was begun in 1925 by William A. Craigie. The first fascicle appeared in 1936 under the editorship of Craigie and James R. Hulbert.

The work was one of the sources for the *Dictionary of Americanisms*, c. 1952, prepared under the direction of Mitford Mathews. A similar, but unrelated modern work, the *Dictionary of American Regional English*, is presently being compiled to show dialect variation.

(2) *A Dictionary of Americanisms on Historical Principles*, ed. by Mitford M. Mathews, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951 (DA), specifically dealing with words or expressions that originated in the United States.

(3) *The Dictionary of American Regional English*, ed. by Frederick G. Cassidy (*DARE*) is a record of American English as spoken in the United States, from its beginning up to the present. It differs from other dictionaries in that it does not record the standard language used throughout the country; instead, it contains regional and folk speech, those words, phrases, and pronunciations that vary from one part of the country to another, or that we learn from our families and friends rather than from our teachers and books.

The *Dictionary* is based both on face-to-face interviews with 2,777 people carried out in 1,002 communities across the country between 1965 and 1970, and on a large collection of print and (recently) electronic materials, such as diaries, letters, novels, histories, biographies, government documents, and newspapers. These materials are cited in individual entries to illustrate how the words have been used from the seventeenth century through the beginning of the twenty-first. The entries may include pronunciations, variant forms, etymologies, and statements about regional and social distributions of words and forms.

The first four volumes of *DARE*, published by the Belknap Press of Harvard University Press (1985-2002, eds. Frederic G. Cassidy and Joan Houston Hall), cover the letters A-Sk. Volume V (Sl-Z) is projected to be completed in 2009 or 2010, if the project can maintain adequate funding. A sixth volume will follow with comprehensive background material (as more fully explained below) as will an electronic edition.

DARE is a record of the language of the American people, reflecting all the richness and diversity of our history and culture. It is used by teachers, librarians, researchers, physicians, forensic linguists, journalists, historians, and playwrights, as well as by readers who simply love language.

(4) *Historical Dictionary of American Slang*, often abbreviated **HDAS**, ed. by J. E. Lighter et al., vol. I (A-G) and II (H-O), of three projected volumes, published by Random House in 1994 and 1997. It is the most comprehensive and thoroughly researched dictionary of American slang and the only American slang dictionary prepared entirely on historical principles. The first two volumes, *Volume 1, A - G* (1994), and *Volume 2, H - O* (1997), were published by Random House, and the work then was known as the **Random House Historical Dictionary of American Slang**, sometimes abbreviated as **RHHDAS**.

Random House decided to discontinue publication, but Oxford University Press announced in 2003 that it would publish the two remaining volumes. *Volume 3, P - S [Part 1]* is expected to be published in February 2008, and *Volume 4, S [Part 2] - Z*, is expected to be published in 2009.

HDAS is notable for its use of historical principles, the dictionary approach exemplified by the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Each entry includes representative quotations, including the earliest quotation using the word. HDAS is edited by Dr. Jonathan E. Lighter, of the University of Tennessee.

Lecture 6. Important differences between dictionaries

- 1) Historical and logical order
- 2) Dictionary shelf-life

Most words have several different, though related, meanings. These are called senses. Dictionaries divide up their definitions into categories, one for each discernible sense. Thus the *OED*, for the noun *work*, divides the senses into 23 main categories, with up to seven or eight subcategories under each of the main ones. *Chambers* has 20, though unlike most dictionaries they are not labeled a, b, ... x, but are only set apart by semicolons. The *Heritage* has 15 categories. *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate* has 11. Such distinctions are a necessary part of providing comprehensive definitions, and it is to be expected that all dictionaries will have similar if not identical categories of sense. But the order in which the senses are presented is radically different, and has been known to lead to serious misunderstandings on the part of dictionary users.

Historical order vs. logical order. The *OED* and all the Merriam-Webster dictionaries arrange their senses according to the dates when each sense first came into English. Quoting from Frederick C. Mish, the editor-in-chief of the *Ninth Collegiate*,

The order of senses within an entry is **historical**: the sense known to have been first used in English is entered first... When a numbered sense is further subdivided into lettered sub senses, the inclusion of particular sub senses within a sense is based upon their semantic relationship to one another, but their order is likewise historical. Divisions of sub senses ... are also in historical order with respect to one another (*Merriam-Webster's Ninth Collegiate*, p. 19)

Since the word *fatal* is used in the example quoted just below by the *Heritage*, let us see how the *Ninth Collegiate* defines it:

1 obs: fated 2: fateful <a ~ hour> 3 a: of or relating to fate b: resembling fate in proceeding according to a fixed sequence c: determining one's fate
4 a: causing death b: bringing ruin.

This is terribly misleading unless you know that the first three definitions are ancient history, as it were, and only the fourth one applies to current usage. And this fact is not even made apparent in the definition itself (e.g., by saying "current meaning," or marking the ancient meanings with an asterisk (except for

the first one, marked obsolete). One understands why the Merriam Company uses historical order: using historical order is determinate. We know the history, because the history has been thoroughly investigated and reported in the *OED*. But it has a very big disadvantage for the ordinary user, as is pointed out by the editorial staff of the *Heritage*:

Entries containing more than one sense are arranged for the convenience of contemporary dictionary users with the central and often most commonly sought meanings first. Senses and sub senses are grouped to show their relationships with each other. For example, in the entry for *fatal* ... the commonly sought meaning "Causing or capable of causing death" appears first and the now obsolete sense "Having been destined; fated" comes last in the series of five. (*Heritage 3rd edn.*, xxxix)

This is called **logical order** or **frequency-determined order**, the idea being that the meanings which are most frequent or most central come before those that are less common or more peripheral. The problem is that unlike historical ordering this ordering is not determinate. Most frequent in what kinds of texts? at what style level? in what context of use? Does the "logical" order somehow reflect a fundamental fact about the mental storage system of the typical speaker of English, thereby having claim to genuine psychological reality? Are there enough frequency studies to base these preference judgments on? The answer is, there are some, but not enough yet to provide consistent answers. This means that the ordering really depends on the shrewd guesses of the editors. They will differ.

To see how editors can differ on this crucial judgment, consider the definitions of the adjective *appreciable* found in the *Collegiate*, the *Heritage*, the *Random House*, and *Chambers*. In the *Collegiate*, the definition is correctly historical: "capable of being perceived or measured." In the *Heritage*, the definition does not differ, surprisingly: "possible to estimate, measure, or perceive." In *Random House* the definition differs in a crucial way, namely it does not include the notion "measure." It says "enough to be felt or estimated, noticeable, perceptible." *Webster's New World* agrees with *Random House* from its very first edition in 1953. *Chambers* supports the latter two but includes the traditional sense "measurable."

It is clear from actual usage of the word *appreciable* in sentences like "There was no *appreciable* amount of moisture on the grass this morning" that, of these four, only *New World* and *Random House* are correct, while *Chambers* has split the difference. The modern sense of the word is clearly vague and does not include literal measurement, since with instrumentation any amount of anything can be measured, and that is not what *appreciable* means. Therefore the *Collegiate* definition is historically correct but misleading about modern usage. One would not expect this lead to be followed by *Heritage*, which agrees with *Chambers* and *Random House* as to theory of presentation and the logic on which definitions should be based. The reason they differ is that it is often difficult to know what the "most commonly sought meaning" is, or what the logical "core" meaning is, and when they are uncertain, it appears that they fall back on history. History is,

nevertheless, not only the easy way to go, but clearly the less desirable, except in an explicitly specialized historical dictionary like the *OED*.

The position of etymologies in dictionary entries. This correlates with the arrangement of sense ordering. In all dictionaries produced by the Merriam Company, where the earliest sense is first, the etymology is also first (right after pronunciation). This is also true of *Webster's New World*, which arranges senses according to their historical semantic development, except that technical meanings are at the very end. The other two desk dictionaries – *Chambers* and *Random House* – place the etymology at the end of the entry, just after the oldest senses. *Heritage* has a uniquely different manner of presenting etymologies, as we noted in our discussion of it above (the *Indo-European Roots* appendix), but when they place an etymology in the text rather than in the appendix, it is placed at the end, in agreement with *Chambers* and *Random House*.

Dating of earliest examples. The tenth *Collegiate*, like its competitor the *Random House* (both College version and the unabridged version), gives the date of the earliest example of the first sense of each word (the earlier *Collegiates* do not, nor do *Chambers* or the *Heritage*). This procedure is standard in the specialized historical dictionaries but not usual in contemporary general-purpose dictionaries, though it is an extremely useful piece of information for etymology.

Dictionary shelf-life

Several really excellent dictionaries like the *Century* and the *Funk and Wagnalls* have disappeared from the scene because they have not been updated. The language is constantly changing, constantly in flux, and dictionaries must stay current – i.e., not more than ten to fifteen years out of date. The turnover rate is fairly shocking. For example, in 1977 the *Chambers Twentieth Century* put out a supplement to its 1972 edition which included these **new** entries:

alternative, adj. – as in *alternative technology*, *alternative life-style*
amniocentesis – the testing for foetal abnormalities
bananas – adj. mad, crazy, wild
-bashing as in *union-bashing*, *boss-bashing*

Going further down the list we find: *catch 22*, *database*, *day care*, *digital clock*, *floating currency*, *gang-bang*, *greenhouse effect*, *hype*, *liquid crystal display*, *modem*, *Ms.*, *pixel*, *safari park*, *sitcom*, *skateboard*, *skin-flick*, *tunnel vision*, *up-market*, *voice-over*, *yucky*, *zap*, *zero in on*, *zilch*, *zip code*, *zonked*. These words are so much part of British as well as American vocabulary today that it is difficult to imagine that the parents of the current college student generation would not have been familiar with them. Yet they became dictionary-worthy in the UK only between 1972 and 1977!

The G. and C. Merriam Company has dealt with this problem by releasing new versions of the *Collegiate* at intervals of approximately ten years, though the *Third International* is over forty years old. Other companies like Barnhart, whose most recently released full dictionary is twenty-five years old, have tried to deal with the updating issue by periodically releasing new material

from their constantly updated citation files, such as *The Barnhart Dictionary of New English Since 1963* (1973) and at five-year intervals subsequently. This is an enormous service to the lexicographers, though it is not as obviously a valuable tool for the ordinary dictionary user. It is a terrible nuisance to look from one volume to another hoping to find the word in question. It now appears likely anyway that the updating of the future will be done on computer disks and/or CD-ROMs. This is relatively easy and relatively cheap. As we all move into cyberspace, the conventional printed dictionary may become one of the casualties, and we'll simply check in at a Web site (or, unfortunately, more likely a dozen Web sites) for the latest lexicographical information.