

The History of Compiling Big American Dictionaries in the USA

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Abstract

Lexicography, the science of dictionary compiling, is closely connected with lexicology, dealing with the same problems the form, meaning, usage and origin of vocabulary units and making use of each other's achievements.

On the one hand, the enormous raw material collected in dictionaries is widely used by linguists in their research. On the other hand, the principles of dictionary making are always based on linguistic fundamentals, and each individual entry is made up in accordance with the current knowledge and findings of scholars in the various lexicological problems always finds reflection in the selection and arrangement of the material. The lexicography studies the compiling just linguistic dictionaries unlike Encyclopedia. But we can't draw a blunt distinction between the Dictionary and Encyclopedia. But not in vain, there exists such Explanatory-Encyclopedic Dictionaries, which are extremely convenient for our usage.

Keywords: dictionary, encyclopedia, lexicography, volume, meaning, neologism.

It was the first dictionary, on the one hand, its orientated to the mass of readers, and on the other hand, it reflected only scientific, objective and deeply up-to-days description of lexical systems of modern English language on its page. The study of principles of compiling big dictionaries, types of dictionaries. In spite of existences of more different types of dictionaries, the more of them had a lot of similarities *in* techniques of design and presentation of materials. By the structure of the dictionary of English language often consists of the main five parts which present as a rule in the next order: 1) introduction or foreword; 2) part "How to use dictionary"; 3) the key to the system of transcription which is used in dictionary; 4) the list of abbreviation and it's explanation; 5) the main list of words, (dictionary); 6) additional material,, different (oppositions), supplements; E. x. In the explanatory dictionary of Webster (Webster's New World Dictionary of th`e American Language. College edition. N. Y. World Publishing Co.) has the next part: 1) Foreword; 2) Guide to the use of the dictionary; 3) Key to pronunciation; 4) Information about the English Language; 5) Abbreviation and symbols in this dictionary; 5) The dictionary of the American language; 7) Supplements;

Let's examine each transferred parts. Foreword of the dictionary, how many person read or had read whenever the foreword of the dictionary which they use or used? Of course, few of them. Because, foreword contains such information about the dictionary, which helps more rational using it and getting more large information. Foreword usually begins from the description of the history of compiling dictionary and then briefly defines its volume and tasks.

This material must be attentively read, to know exact, what you can find in it or not. For instance, if the reference book which you work with, which is explanatory dictionary in foreword, it's possible, there will be shown, does this book contain old words or not; and what chronological limits of inclusion have in it; may we meet neologism in it and etc.

“The last part of foreword will be, certainly, exposition of the more general information about, how this dictionary present material, commonly what principles, which was guided by considerations of the author. At last, final paragraph will be devoted for expressing of thanks to experts and assistants who helped to compose the dictionary. It's impossible for the quality as value of the dictionary, we may judge with this, who and how did they take part in its composition.

Unilingual dictionaries are further subdivided with regard to the time axis.

Diachronistic dictionaries, of which the Oxford English Dictionary is the main example, reflect the development of the English vocabulary by recording the history of form and meaning for every word registered. They may be contrasted to synchronic or descriptive dictionaries of current English concerned with present-day meaning and usage of words. The boundary between the two J, however, not very rigid: that is to say, few dictionaries are consistently synchronistic; chiefly, perhaps, because their methodology is not developed as yet, so that in many cases the two principles are blended. Some synchronistic dictionaries are at the same time historical when they represent the state of vocabulary at some part stage of its development.

Both bilingual and unilingual dictionaries can be general and special.

General dictionaries represent the vocabulary as a whole with a degree of completeness depending upon the scope and bulk of the book in question. The group includes the thirteen volumes of the Oxford Dictionary alongside with any miniature pocket dictionary. Some general dictionary may have very specific aims and still be considered general due to their coverage. They include, for instance, frequency dictionaries, i.e. lists of words, each of which is followed by a record of its frequency of occurrence in one or several sets of reading matter.

There are many different ways to approach the problems of meaning, since meaning is related to many different functions of language. The meanings of words in a language are interrelated and they are defined in part by their relations with other words in the language. Analyzed in the same semantic domain, words can be classified according to shared and differentiating features.

Breaking down the sense of a word into its minimal distinctive features, componential analysis of meaning can be a useful approach in the study of meaning, particularly in determining the meaning of a lexeme. Although componential analysis has some difficulties and limitations in its application, it is still used in modern linguistics. Finegan distinguishes three types of meaning, i.e. linguistic, social, and affective meaning. Linguistic meaning encompasses both sense and reference. One way of defining meaning is to say that the meaning of a word or sentence is the actual person, object, abstract notion, event, or state to which the word or sentence makes reference. Referential meaning may be the easiest kind to recognize, but it is not sufficient to explain how some expressions mean what they mean. For one thing, not all expressions have referents. Social meaning is what we rely on when we identify certain social characteristics of speakers and situations from the character of the language used. Affective meaning is the emotional connotation that is attached to words and utterances.

A word or lexeme presents a complex semantic structure. A lexeme is built up of smaller components of meaning which are combined differently to form a different lexeme. The meaning of a lexeme is a complicated structure where elements of meaning have definite interrelation. All semantic elements in a word are not equally important. One (or some) of them is the dominant semantic element and it organizes around itself all the other ones, which may be more or less important for the meaning of a lexeme [14].

A lexeme can be analyzed and described in terms of its semantic components, which help to define different lexical relations, grammatical and syntactic processes. The semantic structure of a lexeme is treated as a system of meanings. To some extent we can define a lexeme by telling what set it belongs to and how it differs from other members of the same set. Some obvious sets of this sort are sports (*tennis, badminton, soccer, golf, basketball,...*), colors (*red, blue, yellow,*

green, pink, ...) and creative writing (*novel, poem, short story, essay, biography,...*). It is not difficult to say what the members of each set have in common.

According to Semantic field (or semantic domain) theory, lexemes can be classified according to shared and differentiating features. Here are more examples. Wasp, hornet, bee and other items denote 'flying, stinging insects'; moth and housefly, among others, denote insects that fly but do not sting; ant and termite are names of insects neither fly nor sting. The semantic features explain how the members of the set are related to one another and can be used to differentiate them from one another. The determination of such features has been called componential analysis. This writing treats only the componential analysis of referential meaning. Palmer says that the total meaning of a word can be seen in terms of a number of distinct elements or components of meaning. Components have a distinguishing function and serve to distinguish the meaning of a lexeme from that of semantically related lexemes, or more accurately they serve to distinguish among the meanings of lexemes in the same semantic domain. To determine the meaning of any form contrast must be found, for there is no meaning apart from significant differences. Nida states "If all the universe were blue, there would be no blueness, since there would be nothing to contrast with blue. The same is true for the meanings of words. They have meaning only in terms of systematic contrasts with other words which share certain features with them but contrast with them in respect to other features" Jackson in "Words and their meaning" dan Nida in "Componential Analysis of Meaning" categorize the types of components into two main types, i.e. common component and diagnostic or distinctive component.

The first American dictionary of the English language was compiled by a man whose name also Samuel Johnson Jr., a Connecticut Schoolmaster, was published in 1798 a small book entitled "A School Dictionary". This book was followed in 1800 by another dictionary by the same author, which showed already some signs of Americanization. I included for instance, words like tomahawk, wampum and Cincinnati, borrowed into English from the Indian language. It was Noah Webster, universally considered to be the father of American lexicography, who emphatically broke away from English idiom, and embodied in his book the specifically American usage of his time.

Every word gets in the dictionary extremely detailed characteristics of its whole side. Especially exact characterization is presented to orphoepia of the word; its etymology and semantics. This dictionary is the best and authoritative references in Modern English and American word using.

This dictionary is used and using all those, so called Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English language. was published in 1961. By the existing of the third edition is not reediting on the contrary A New Dictionary of Modern English Language.

It is very useful to know for the person who studies the English language what types of Encyclopedia's references exist in Great Britain & USA. We have often attended to the references mainly to Encyclopedia, especially when we want to get the main, initial information about the subjects, characters or phenomena. The Encyclopedia usually gives us the opportunity to establish the fact, the basic information about that certain objects, matters and sources of the next information. The first Encyclopedia in English appeared in 1704. In England since the compiling of such kind of Dictionaries have been undergoing great changes in England & USA.

Nowadays the publication of Dictionaries have acquired valuable range and turned into the business-print Enterprise.

At the end of XIX century, in spite of that Webster's and Vuster's dictionary continued republishing, an American firm created plans of publishing new explanatory dictionary, which excelled quality of remembered two dictionaries. One of this firm which could (convert) these plans into reality, it was the company "Century publishing company. First dictionary was published in 1889-1891. The dictionary of "century" began considerably landmark in the history of American Lexicography.

The history of the dictionary “Century conducts its source from 1838, when Englishmen John Ogilvie began compiling new dictionary of the English language, setting about the base of the first edition of Webster’s dictionary in 1828. In 1847 Ogilvie finished his work and the dictionary was published in two volumes under the several big titles: Ogilvie J. “The Imperial Dictionary of the English Language”: A Complete Encyclopedic Lexicon, Literary, Scientific and Technological on the Basis of Webster’s English Dictionary. 2 volumes London 1847-1850. American Dictionary of the English language”, appeared in two volumes in 1828 and later sustained numerous revised and enlarged editions. In many respects Webster follows the lead of Dr Johnson (The British lexicographer). But he has also improved and corrected many of Johnson’s etymologies and his definitions are often more exact. Webster attempted to simplify the spelling and pronunciation that were current in the USA of the period. He devoted many years to the collection of words and the preparation of more accurate definitions.

Dictionaries may be classified into linguistic and nonlinguistic.

The latter are dictionaries giving information on all branches of knowledge, the encyclopedias. They deal not with words, but with facts and concepts. The best known encyclopedias of the English-speaking world are the Encyclopedia Britannica and the Encyclopedia Americana. There exist also biographical dictionaries and many minor encyclopedias.

English lexicography is probably the richest in the world with respect to variety and scope of the dictionaries published. The demand for dictionaries is very great. One of the duties of schoolteachers of native language is to instill in their pupils the "dictionary habit". Boys and girls are required by their teachers to obtain a dictionary and regularly consult it. There is a great variety of unilingual dictionaries meant for children. They help children to learn the meaning, spelling and pronunciation of words. An interesting example is the Thorndike dictionary. Its basic principle is that the words and meanings included should be only those, which schoolchildren are likely to hear or to encounter in reading.

The selection of words is therefore determined statistically by counts of the actual occurrence of words in reading matter of importance to boys and girls between 10 and 15. Definitions are also made specially to meet the needs of readers of that age, and this account for the ample use of illustrative sentences and pictures as well as for the encyclopedic bias of the book.

A dictionary is the most widely used reference book in English homes and correct spelling are of great social importance because they are necessary for efficient communication. In Great Britain where the rigid class differentiation is enhanced by a sort of language barrier, because the speech of the upper classes differs greatly from that of the lower, people are especially averse to showing by some mispronunciation a lack of education and "good breeding", and to revealing thereby an inferior social standing.

A bilingual dictionary is useful to several kinds of people: to those who study foreign languages, to specialists reading foreign literature, to translators, to travelers, and to linguists. It may have two principal purposes: reference for translation and guidance for expression. It must provide an adequate translation in the target language of every word and expression in the source language. It is also supposed to contain all the inflectional, derivational, semantic and syntactic information that its reader might ever need, and also information on spelling and pronunciation.

Data on the levels of usage are also considered necessary, including special warnings about me word being rare or poetical or slangy and unfit to be used in the presence of "one's betters". The number of special bilingual dictionaries for various branches of knowledge and engineering is ever increasing. A completely new type is the machine translation dictionaries which present their own specific problems, naturally differing from those presented by bilingual dictionaries for human translation. It is highly probable, however, that their development will eventually lead to improving dictionaries for general use.

The entries of a dictionary are usually arranged in alphabetical order, except that derivatives and compounds are given under the same headword. In the ideographic dictionaries the main body is

arranged according to a logical classification of notions expressed*. But dictionaries of this type always have an alphabetical index attached to facilitate the search for the necessary word*.

The ideographic type of dictionary is in a way the converse of the usual type: the purpose of the latter is to explain the meaning when the word is given. The Thesaurus, on the contrary, supplies the word or words by which a given idea may be expressed. Sometimes the grouping is in parallel columns with the opposite notions. The book is meant only for readers (either native or foreign) having a good knowledge of English, and enables them to pick up an adequate expression and avoid over-use of the same words. The Latin word *thesaurus* means 'treasury'. Roger's book gave the word a new figurative meaning, namely, 'a store of knowledge', and hence 'a dictionary containing all the words of a language'. A consistent classification of notions presents almost insuperable difficulties. Only relatively few "semantic fields", such as kinship terms, colour terms, names for parts of human body and some others fit into a neat Scheme.

For the most part, however, there is no one-to-one correlation between notions and words, and the classification of notions, even if it were feasible, is a very poor help for classification of meanings and their systematic presentation.

The system of meanings stands in a very complex relationship to the system of notions because of the polysemantic characters of most words. The semantic structure of words and the semantic system of vocabulary depend on many linguistic, historical and cultural factors.

The compilers of the dictionary especially underlines that it planned for wide-outlook readers. Depending on it, the principals of compiling the dictionaries directed to help to inexperienced reader to get quick reference about the word. For this, in the reference book used suitable fonts; it has a big number of pictures; definition of the word is so brief and simple. Such, more famous and authoritative explanatory dictionaries in the English language, editing and reediting up-to-day in USA and Great Britain. Accounting all the series of the dictionaries, publishing in English-speaking countries, there is no practical opportunity in there. By the following we confine with accounting and showing the number of word and pages which often met *in* explanatory dictionary of the English language, but which do not include in the list of widely spread, on which we have just stopped. The dictionaries are given in the list of their less word-list.

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