Dictionaries and the Order of Knowledge SIMS 290, Sect. 10 Oct. 20, 2004

Outline

The survival of the print dictionary The dictionary as a document genre Features of the dictionary Historical emergence of the dictionary: its symbolic importance to print discourse ?Dictionaries in a digital discourse Beyond the dictionary

10/23/04

Books? Where we're going we don't need books.

A clash of fetishisms

"Nobody is going to sit down and read a novel on a twitchy little screen. Ever." — E. Annie Proulx

"Paper is just an object that [some] information has been sprayed onto in the past..." — Ted Nelson







"Twitchy little screens" and the future of the book



Diverging Futures: Dictionaries and Encyclopedias



Reasons for the Disparaties

Demands for recency of information Affordances of technology -- multimedia, hypertext, etc. Cost considerations Modularities of knowledge -- where does the encyclopedia end?

The Online Encyclopedia



baseball

pocket-billiards game, named for the similarity in its scoring system to the American game played with bat and ball, in which players attempt to score runs by pocketing 21 consecutively numbered ...

baseball

game played with a bat, a ball, and gloves between two teams of nine players each on a field with four white bases laid out in a diamond (i.e., a square oriented so that its diagonal line is ...

BASEBALL Britannica Book of the Year 1994

Major league baseball added two expansion teams for the 1993 season, and an attendance record was broken for the seventh time in nine years. With the new Colorado Rockies and Florida Marlins creating

BASEBALL Britannica Book of the Year 1996

baseball

"Whoever wants to know the heart and mind of America had better learn **baseball**, the rules and realities of the game," wrote American author and historian Jacques Barzun. **Baseball** has been called America's national pastime, and for more than 150 years people of all ages have enjoyed playing or ...

All-American Girls Professional Baseball League

women's competitive teams formed by Chicago Cubs owner Philip K. Wrigley in 1943 when manpower shortages of World War II threatened to stop play and close down major league parks; debuted with 4 teams, ended with 10; skillful athletes often coached by former major-leaguers; players required to ...

Baseball Immortals

"Comprehensive data on baseball players. Contains statistics and career highlights, as well as daily team-by-team reports."

Slam! Baseball

Slam! Sports Baseball news and information. Provides statistics, standings, schedules, team reports, a bulletin board, recent photos, "Today in History," and Jr. Jays CyberMag, offering news and fun activities for children.

The Science of Baseball

The Exploratorium Innovative and upbeat site using interactive exhibits that teach the basics of **baseball**. Includes a section to test users' fastball reaction time, a scientific slugger exhibit that explains the variables required for every type of

baseball with these databases: • Journals and magazines

- Britannica Concise Encyclopedia
- Britannica Elementary Encyclopedia

Video & Media

Results 1-5 of 9.

Baseball Greats: Ty Cobb (1:57)



Between the years of 1905 to 1929, Ty Cobb set or broke more **baseball** records than any player in history.

Baseball Greats:Babe



Dictionaries & the Dictionary

Its first sense of itself...

dictionary, n.(AHD4)

 A reference book containing an alphabetical list of words, with information given for each word, usually including meaning, pronunciation, and etymology.
 A book listing the words of a language with translations into another language.

3. A book listing words or other linguistic items in a particular category or subject with specialized information about them: a medical dictionary.

4. Computer Science A list of words stored in machine-readable form for reference, as by spelling-checking software.

The Dictionary as a genre

The D characterized by its...

Material embodiment

Social role & institutional setting

Compass/ subject matter

Format & Mode of presentation -- division into entries, columns, etc.

Descriptive template -- e.g., form of definitions, etc.

Materiality of the D.





The Social Setting of the D

Characteristic function, role: ("reference book" from 1859; *œuvre de référence* from 1879) Published under imprimatur of publishing house, compiled by committees, etc.

Cf "She works for a dictionary." (newspaper, travel guide, *cookbook, *novel) Surrounded/supported by specific institutions, tropes, etc.

Supported by classroom instruction, surrounded by official pieties:

[The dictionary] is the national key to human knowledge.... It behooves all those who are concerned in the education of the young to place this book on the same plane as the churchmen of old placed the English Bible. The dictionary should be placed on a lectern in every school throughout the land. Frank Vizetelly, 1915

In America, best predictor of D. ownership is presence of children... of any age.

The Social Setting of the D: Lexicographical Tropes

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Г	 <u>St. Petersburg Times</u>, March 3, 2003 Monday, CITRUS TIMES; Pg. 2, 1344 words, Board's sudden opposition to toll road reveals favoritism <u>Pittsburgh Post-Gazette</u>, February 9, 2003 Sunday, TWO STAR EDITION, Pg.B-7, 800 words, TOP OF THE CHARTS; TWENTY-FOUR YEARS OF CONSISTENT ADVICE FOR WRITERS 					

The Compass of the **D**.1: Spatialization of the Vocabulary

The topological conception of lexical space

Division of lexical space into "inside" and "outside" (or *scène* and *obscène* -- H. Lefebvre)

Comprehensive representation of "the language" -- "all the words" Omissions become significant -- "It's not in the dictionary" Elements of lexical space are atomized... (the D. is unstructured) Reliance on print citations

The Compass of the D., 1: Spatialization of the Lexis Canonicity of membership --

Cf James Murray, "General Explanation" to the OED: That vast aggregate of words and phrases which constitutes the Vocabulary of English-speaking men presents, to the mind that endeavours to grasp it as a definite whole, the aspect of one of those nebulous masses familiar to the astronomer, in which a clear and unmistakable nucleus shades off on all sides, through zones of decreasing brightness, to a dim marginal film that seems to end nowhere, but to lose itself imperceptibly in the surrounding darkness....

The English Vocabulary contains a nucleus or central mass of many thousand words whose 'Anglicity' is unquestioned; some of them only literary, some of them only colloquial, the great majority at once literary and colloquial,— they are the *Common Words* of the language. But they are linked on every side with other words which are less and less entitled to this appellation... And there is absolutely no defining line in any direction; the circle of the English language has a well-defined centre but no circumference. (OED: xxvii)

The Compass of the **D**., 2: The Restriction to "Lexical Information"

Restriction of lexical information to information about meaning (in theory)

submarine (AHD3) 1. A ship capable of operating submerged. 2. A large sandwich consisting of a long roll split lengthwise and filled with layers of meat, cheese, tomatoes, lettuce, and condiments.

shrewmouse (Johnson). A mouse of which the bite is generally supposed venomous, and to which vulgar tradition assigns such malignity, that she is said to lame the foot over which she runs. I am informed that these reports are calumnious, and that her feet and teeth are equally harmless with those of any other little mouse. Our ancestors however looked on her with such terrour, that they are supposed to have given her name to a scolding woman, whom for her venom they call a shrew.

musket (RHD1): a heavy, large-caliber smoothbore gun for infantry soldiers, introduced in the 16th century; the predecessor of the modern rifle.

dogwood (AHD3) A tree (*Cornus florida*) of eastern North America, having small greenish flowers surrounded by four large, showy white or pink bracts that resemble petals.

The Compass of the **D**., 2:

Omission of "proper names"

As my design was a dictionary, common or appellative, I have omitted all words which have a relation to proper names... but have retained those of a more general nature. Samuel Johnson, "Preface" to the *Dictionary* (1755)

In addition to, and behind, the common vocabulary, in all its diverging lines, lies an infinite number of Proper or merely denotative names, outside the province of lexicography...(Murray, General Explanation to the OED)

The D. as a primary source

[Present English dictionaries] are not dictionaries; they are gazetteers, mythologies, scientific encyclopedias, and a hundred things more; all, of course, most imperfectly, even according to the standard of knowledge of their own time...." -- R. C. Trench, "Some deficiencies of our present dictionaries," 1857

Linguistic usage, once established and recognized, never errs. -- J. N. Madvig

The D. as a descriptive template, 1

Genus-differentia definitions

disappointed (AHD4): Thwarted in hope, desire, or expectation.

Cf "disappointed is when..." "When we say someone is **disappointed** we mean..." etc.

Requirement of substitutivity

behest (AHD3): An order or authoritative command.

behest (COBUILD): If something is done at someone's **behest**, it is done because they have ordered or requested it

commercial (C10) 1a (1): occupied with or engaged in commerce or work intended for commerce <a commercial artist>

1a (2): of or relating to commerce <commercial regulations>

1a (3): characteristic of commerce <commercial weights>

1a (4): suitable, adequate, or prepared for commerce <found oil in commercial quantities>...

The D. as a descriptive template, 1

transitive (MW10) being or relating to a relation with the property that if the relation holds between a first element and a second and between the second element and a third, it holds between the first and third elements.

transitive (RHD) noting a relation in which one element in relation to a second element and the second in relation to a third element implies the third element is in relation to the first element....

Contrast: "A relation is **transitive** if whenever it holds between one element and a second and between the second and a third it also holds between the first and third."

•The D. as a descriptive template, 2

way (AHD3) 1.a. A road, path, or highway affording passage from one place to another.b. An opening affording passage: *This door is the only way into the attic*.

2.a. Space to proceed: *cleared the way for the parade*.

5. A course of conduct or action: tried to take the easy way out....

10.a. A specific direction: *He glanced my way*. b. A participant. Often used in combination: *a three-way conversation*.

12. Freedom to do as one wishes: *if I had my way*.Cf Have you decided on a suitable course of conduct (??way)?Mary wants more freedom to do as she wishes (??way).How many participants (??ways) were there in the discussion?

The Persistence of Form

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tions

The **D**. the most conservative and conventionalized of literary genres.

Cf Adam Makkai: "Nothing significantly new has happened in lexicography since the first printed dictionaries after Gutenberg invented the printing of books."

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10/23/04

Why is the **D**ictionary as it is?



What needs does this form answer to? Can the **D**. exist in another technological setting?

The Dictionary Online and Online dictionaries: "migration" vs secondary representations



The Dictionary & the Periodic Table

Why is the D as it is? The limits of "tradition" Contrast the encyclopedia Standard view: Dict. template the result of an intersection of user requirements and the nature of the linguistic properties and relations represented:

C. Barnhart: "it is the function of a popular dictionary to answer the questions that the user of the dictionary asks."

The Dictionary: no easy functional explanation, 1

Dictionaries systematically distort lexical information

Dictionary doesn't answer particularly well to user needs:

Algeo (1989): "Users are apparently not much concerned about the things upon which lexicographers devote their attention."

•The Dictionary: no easy functional explanation, 2

E.g. extensive treatments of polysemous common items (cf older lists of "hard words")

Omission of grammatical info., subcategorization:

antipathy. 1. A strong feeling of aversion or repugnance.

request. To ask (a person) to do something.

entreat : to ask for earnestly.

Cf S. Landau: such information not necessary because it's "more important for the person who is trying to speak or understand a foreign language than for the native speaker."

Cf also neglect of synonymy, etc. (one of Trench's "deficiencies")

The Didactic Uselessness of Definitions

Information that D. provides isn't exceptionally accessible or comprehensible.

Cf Miller & Gildea: "The cook stimulated the soup."

Dicts are good on names of concrete categories (marquis, marionette)

But def's of abstract terms are didactically useless:

circumstance (MW10) 1. a condition, fact, or event accompanying, conditioning, or determining another: an essential or inevitable concomitant.structure (OED) 2. The mutual relation of the constituent parts or elements of a whole as determining its peculiar nature or character.

Responses to Deficiencies

— "We need more public instruction in 'dictionary skills'"

• Do the Dictionary's Properties Answer to its Prescriptive Role?

Image of the Dict. as protector of linguistic virtue, which retards decay... (whether or not it actually does accomplish that role).

But prescriptive function doesn't militate for a particular form.

Cf. extensive treatments of common words

avoidance of "when-" definitions

requirements of syntactic intersubstitutivity, etc.,

distinction between encyc. & lexical information, etc.

Note that "Descriptive" and "Prescriptive" Dictionaries are formally indistinguishable.

Symbolic/Critical Role of the Dictionary

Cf historical circumstances of emergence of modern form:

Dryden (1693): "we have yet no prosodia, not so much as a tolerable dictionary, or a grammar, so that our language is in a manner barbarous.

Warburton (1747): the language is "destitute of a Test or Standard to apply to, in cases of doubt or difficulty.... For we have neither Grammar nor Dictionary, neither Chart nor Compass, to guide us through this wide sea of Words."

After 1755. Johnson's Dictionary appears to allay these anxieties:

Rob't Nares, 1777: At length, what many had wished, and many had attempted in vain, what seemed indeed to demand the united efforts of a number, the diligence and acuteness of a single man performed. The English Dictionary appeared; and, as the weight of truth and reason is irresistible, its authority has nearly fixed the external form of our language; and from its decisions few appeals have yet been made.

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The D. and the public sphere

"A nation of readers" -- the Book Written by Books

"[Johnson's] *Dictionary* was a typical achievement of print, a language book made out of still other books that would determine the language of books still to be written." Alvin Kernan

How can an autonomous and anonymous public discourse regulate and reproduce itself?

Need to interpret language in absence of knowledge of context, speaker, etc.

Need for a methodology to determine, regulate, and stabilize meanings.

The Methodology of Lexicography

Method for isolation & circumscription of relevant precedents (identification of "the language" in terms of public discourse)

Method for isolating and abstracting contributions of individual words to interpretation (independent of both syntagmatic and extralinguistic contexts)

Method of reducing use of word to "mechanical" rule that determines correct application of word.

Note that application of lexicographical argument isn't limited to use of Dictionary... method is most important for cases where Dict's actual authority is limited -- cf discussions of *obscene*, *terrorism*, etc.

Theses

1. The Dictionary answers more directly to its critical function than to any other.

2. The descriptive requirements imposed by the critical function have limited the D's descriptive compass and colored the general conception of lexical meaning.

3. The critical function of the Dictionary is embedded in its history as a print genre.

4. The circumstances of electronic discourse don't impose or support the same critical role on dictionaries that print does.

• Four Types of Lexicographical Abstraction

Syntagmatic (entails strict compositionality)

Paradigmatic (abstraction from lexical oppositions)

Referential (abstraction from "encyclopedic" information)

Contextual (abstraction from circumstances of use, etc.)

The Circumscription Of "The Language" in Topological Space

Division of lexical space into "inside" and "outside" or *scène* and *obscène* (cf H. Lefebvre, *La Production de l'Espace*)

Implies a corresponding partition of discourse into public and private. (Ostensibly) based on practices of "writers of reputation"

In what concerns the words themselves, their construction and application, it is of importance to have some certain, steady, and well-known standard to recur to, a standard which every one hath access to canvass and examine. And this can be no other than authors of reputation.... G. Campbell, Philosophy of Rhetoric, 1776

In practice, sufficient to circumscribe canon in choice of words themselves; cf criticisms of MW3 for inclusion of *irregardless*, *yak*, *finalize*, etc. The displacement of social values...

"Words have been admitted in the language that are not only disreputable in origin, not only offensive in all their associations, not only vulgar in essence, but unfit at all points for survival." NY Herald on Funk & Wagnall's inclusion of *chesty* ("boastful"), 1912

The D. as an "Inscription in Space"

A monument, like a folio dictionary, is immovable and huge, inviolable and absolute in its expression of authority and its solidification of public memory; it exercises its authority as it represents it." (A. Reddick)

There is in [Johnson's *Dictionary*] a kind of architectural nobleness; it stands there like a great solid square-built edifice; you judge that a true builder did it." (Carlyle)


The **D.** as an "Inscription in Space"



(Note also the importance of visible compression...)

The Dictionary Online: Where does it End?



The D as "The file written by files"?

Assume (exclusively) electronic discourse. Problems of localization, assurance of common experience...Diffusion/accessibility no indicator of reputation

Difficulties in circumscribing the common public language; individuating subdiscourses; the deceptiveness of frequency

What does it mean to say "it isn't in the dictionary"?

The Expanding Dictionary

Online dictionaries have no principled reason for excluding entries... Online dictionaries have no principled reason for excluding information Online dictionaries have no principled reason for excluding citations...

Abstracting from "nonlinguistic knowledge":

"Lexical" and "Encyclopedic" aspects of interpretation

Someone who is assiduous takes pains.

Someone who is assiduous makes a good researcher..

Problems of circularity: lexical content is "aspects of meaning that follow from the speaker's knowledge of the rules of his language"

A four-way equation:

"words and things" ::

sense and reference ::

dictionary and encyclopedia::

"primary" & "secondary" sources

• Why are proper names nonlexical?

The "proper noun" -- a semantic or lexicographical category?

•Why are proper names nonlexical?

"Particularized sociohistorical contexts of naming"

National Socialism (MW 12): the body of political and economic doctrines held and put into effect by the National Socialist German Workers' party in the Third German Reich including the totalitarian principle of government, state control of all industry, predominance of groups assumed to be racially superior, and supremacy of the führer.

Capitalism (AHD3) An economic system in which the means of production and distribution are privately or corporately owned and development is proportionate to the accumulation and reinvestment of profits gained in a free market.

modernism (AHD3) 1.a. Modern thought, character, or practice. . . . 4. Often Modernism. A Roman Catholic movement, officially condemned in 1907, that attempted to examine traditional belief according to contemporary philosophy, criticism, and historiography.

Black Death. (AHD3) A form of bubonic plague, caused by the bacillus Yersinia (or Pasturella) pestis, that was pandemic throughout Europe and much of Asia in the 14th century.

Cf (the) Beats vs beatnik, Methodism vs deism, etc. Cf also "the fall of Communism"

Cf. Proper common nouns like Chevrolet, Oscar, Dodger, Republican, etc. (cf talk of "meaning" of pn's)

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• Why are proper names nonlexical?

The presumption that denotations of "common" nouns are independent of particularized social contexts, defined wrt to collective interests, subject to collective redefinition by discursive community.

Presumes autonomy & modularity of "public discourse" that determines what belongs to "the language"

The future of "the language"... (an 18th-c. invention).

The form of definitions

The nominal realism of the genus-differentia formula

definition (C10) a word or phrase expressing the essential nature of a person or thing or a class of persons or things : an answer to the question "what is x?" or "what is an x?"

treacherous (AHD3) 3. Marked by unforeseen hazards; dangerous or deceptive: *treacherous waters*.

treacherous (COBUILD) You describe the ground, the sea, etc., as **treacherous** when it is dangerous to walk on or to sail on...

Pedantry is the unseasonable ostentation of learning. He is undoubtedly guilty of pedantry, who, when he has made himself master of some abstruse and uncultivated part of knowledge, obtrudes his remarks and discoveries upon those he believes unable to judge his proficiency, and from whom, as he cannot fear contradiction, he cannot properly expect applause. The *Rambler*, 173 [Johnson, 1969 (1750-52) #63]

The folk metaphysics of language

Things are never called by their common names. Massacre is sometimes *agitation*, sometimes *effervescence*, sometimes *excess*; sometimes too continued an exercise of *a revolutionary power*. [Burke, 1792)

Dictionaries after the Dictionary

The heterogeneous dictionary

Dictionaries can offer multiple modes of representation

tango (MW 10): a ballroom dance of Latin-American origin in 2/4 time with a basic pattern of step-step-step-step-close and characterized by long pauses and stylized body positions

The heterogeneous dictionary

Dictionaries can offer multiple modes of representation Tango



Representing derivational and polysemic complexity

punch 1, vb.

1a: PROD, POKE

1b: DRIVE, HERD <punching cattle>

2a: to strike with a forward thrust esp. of the fist

2b: to drive or push forcibly by or as if by a punch

2c: to hit (a ball) with less than a full swing

3: to emboss, cut, perforate, or make with or as if with a punch

4a: to push down so as to produce a desired result <punch buttons on a jukebox>

4b: to hit or press down the operating mechanism of <punch a time clock> <punch a typewriter>

4c: to produce by or as if by punching keys <punch out a tune on the piano> <a teletypewriter punching out the news> 4d: to enter (as data) by punching keys

5: to give emphasis to

 \sim vi:

to perform the action of punching something

punch 2n

1: the action of punching

2: a quick blow with or as if with the fist

3: effective energy or forcefulness <a story that packs a punch> <political punch>

punch 3n

1a: a tool usu. in the form of a short rod of steel that is variously shaped at one end for different operations (as forming, perforating, embossing, or cutting)

1b: a short tapering steel rod for driving the heads of nails below a surface

1c: a steel die faced with a letter in relief that is forced into a softer metal to form an intaglio matrix from which foundry type is cast

1d: a device or machine for cutting holes or notches (as in paper or cardboard)

2: a hole or notch from a perforating operation

Alternatives: FrameNet

Image: Second							
No.	frames	lemma	pos	disp.	COD/FN def	WordNet	Manual
1	Risk_action	<u>risk</u>	V	withFE	COD: act in such a way as to incur the risk of.	<u>risk</u>	help
ALL FE KDG valence Supp Gov Supp+[XPrep] Gov+[XPrep] trans.N untra. N							
Num sort = FE; risk,							
<u>18</u>	<u>18</u> Agent + risk.V + Action						
<u>01</u>	01 risk.V + Action						
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18. [Top] : Agent + risk.V + Action

[back to the main table]

- <u>1048782:</u> [<Agent>Nutty] risked^{Tgt} [<Action>looking at him]. [Top]
 <u>1048785:</u> [<Agent>He] risked^{Tgt} [<Action>a quick look at her furious face]. [Top]
- 3. <u>1048790</u>: The street ahead was clear so $[\langle Agent \rangle]$ slowed and risked Tgt $[\langle Action \rangle]$ a look in the mirror]. [Top]
- 4. 1048793: [<Agent>He] ca n't try anything, could n't risk^{Tgt} [<Action>trying to get away]. " [Top]
- 5. 1048794: They were on the choppy, wavelike hills before Milford, a narrow road with too much Friday evening traffic heading south, against them, for $[_{<Agent>}Maxim]$ to $risk^{Tgt} [_{<Action>}trying$ to overtake an 10/-2000

The localized dictionary: obviating abstraction

Locolex, f-s technology for treatment of collocations in bilingual dictionaries:

il va <u>tenir</u> le coup -- he'll hold up

gare routière -- bus station

Cf application to sense-tagging...

Through self-observation, the successfully analyzed patient <u>picks up</u> the inner signals of stress...

5a: to catch sight of: PERCEIVE <pick up the harbor lights>

5b: to come to and follow <picked up the outlaw's trail>

5c: to bring within range of sight or hearing <pick up distant radio signals>

5d: UNDERSTAND, CATCH <didn't pick up the hint>