

Motives behind 17th Century Lexicography: A Comparison Between German and English Dictionaries of That Time

Werner Hüllen

1. There are two external conditions for dictionaries being produced in such a way and number that they can be used widely: printing technology and a sufficient interest among readers. The former condition was fulfilled at the beginning of the 17th century (and even earlier); moreover, we can assume a general interest as far as bi- or multilingual dictionaries are concerned.¹ In fact, we know that there has been an interest in translation between languages as a means of learning them since the days of the Sumerians. This led to those publications which developed into the bi- or multilingual dictionaries we know today.

In the first half of the 17th century, however, monolingual dictionaries made their appearance in England and Germany, roughly at the same time. They are word lists of the language which the people of the region used anyway and which there was no need to learn.² The question is what motivation can be found behind such enterprises and whether it is the same for German and English monolingual dictionaries. Such questions will (in due brevity) be raised and answered in this paper. The most important result will be that the motivation behind German and English dictionaries of the same period is quite different.

Characteristically, German development starts with extensive programmes and plans for dictionaries. With the exception of Henisch's monumental undertaking, word lists appear within books which aim at a comprehensive description of the German language, above all its grammar. Thus lexicography is part of a manifold linguistic analysis of the native language.

The programmes of Gueintz (1640), Schottelius (1641), Harsdörffer (1644 and 1648) and again Schottelius (1651) can be summarized as follows:³

The dictionary is meant to list as exhaustively as possible the German language without the many current foreign elements. It is bound to a non-regional norm taken from literary sources. Besides words in general usage, it must also contain (in our present terminology) words from special and scientific registers. All words are given with their grammatical paradigm and are to be *kunstföglich* and *lehrrichtig* enriched. This means that to every root word its word-formational potential—i.e. derivations, compounds and synthetic compounds—will be added. The dictionaries/word lists thus appear as an enumeration of root words together with their extensions. Implicitly, this also leads to an enumeration of German prefixes and suffixes.

This lexicographic-grammatical programme is linked to a general pedagogic aim, which contains ideas typical of the Enlightenment, but also nationalistic elements normal for that time.

„Zu wünschen were es auch (da Sprachverständige fleissige Männer sich dieser Arbeit unternehmen) und dieser alten herrlichen HauptSprache endlich auch sothane Ehreenseule der Gewisheit aufrichten (und also der Teutschen Jugend überal auf ein gewisses Ziel anweisen) und derselben

mit rechter Lust und Erlernung der redlichen Teutschen Sprache (auch Lust zur Redlichkeit) Treu und Tugent mit einpflanzen möchte".⁴

At the beginning of the century, Georg Henisch published a *THESAURUS LINGVAE AT SAPIENTIAE GERMANICAE* entitled *TEÜTSCHER SPRACH VND WEIHEIT* (1616) in whose Latin preface he praised the German language because of its age, its purity, its geographical extension, its brevity and its profusion. According to current theological ideas, brevity, i.e. monosyllabic root words, was supposed to be exemplary because it was said to mirror the ideal pre-Babylonian state of the human language. Hebrew was commonly thought to be the oldest language, because of the great number of monosyllabic root words.⁵ This provides a general reason why Henisch and the authors of later dictionaries listed root words together with the possibilities of word-formation.

Henisch's monumental dictionary followed a method which conformed to the comprehensiveness of its introductory ideas and clearly expressed pedagogic aims:

"And indeed this volume has been written according to a method which nobody has yet tried in this way (sequence), because it contains together with the words and its vocabulary respectively, synonyms, derivations, epithets, questions, proverbs and elegant sentences - sometimes according to the old style, sometimes according to the new - as their specific supplements, all of which can, in an excellent way, train people for practising religion, governing the state, developing morals or administrating their own business".⁶

Justus Georg Schottelius introduced the principle of the root-word dictionary rigorously and gave it a theoretical foundation by embedding his lists in a general linguistic analysis of the German language (1663). He has been understood as an early representative of the 'simplex dictionary' in the definition of Uriel Weinreich, and this means as an early representative of rule-governed word-formation which, in its essence, is generative.⁷

Finally, with his *Sprachschatz* Kaspar Stieler produced the first independent dictionary according to the principles stimulated by Henisch and elaborated by Schottelius. It follows the general aim of creating a normed German language by listing its lexis together with all the generative possibilities of word-formation. It also continued the technique of giving root words together with their possible extensions, which means a deviation from the alphabetical sequence in its strict sense.

The question of the interests of dictionary users, raised at the beginning, has now been answered, at least in outline. The German dictionaries/word lists are not meant to be of practical use for the individual user, but are theoretically based and ambitious attempts to develop the German language towards a standard with general validity. The supporters of this attempt were the so-called language societies (*Sprachgesellschaften*). They turned against the general coarseness of expression of their time and wanted to mould a German language which was cleansed of alien French influences. They did not envisage an individual user for dictionaries, but addressed themselves to everybody. As the majority of members—e.g. of the *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft*, founded in Weimar 1617—were noblemen, it is nat-

ural that (if at all) they thought of lawyers, scribes in the so-called *Kanzleien* and courtiers as potential users of such dictionaries.

The development of English monolingual dictionaries is quite different from that of the German ones. There are no elaborate programmes and plans; there is no embedding of dictionaries/word lists in comprehensive grammars. Instead there are, from the beginning of the 17th century onwards, self-contained, smallish dictionaries which give their theoretical foundations either in short introductions and/or in the long titles, common at that time, which were much more modest than their German counterparts.

Of course, there had been attempts at grammatical descriptions of English in England at that time just as in Germany, where authors tried to describe English with a terminology of their own, independent of the almighty model of Latin school grammar. Even pride in one's own language and the establishment of norms played a great role. However, lexicographical enterprises in England were at that time not integrated into grammatico-graphical ones, as was the case in Germany.

It is comparatively easy to find the reason for this. Since Robert Cawdrey (1604), monolingual English dictionaries had been compiled in order to familiarize their readers with that vocabulary of their own language which is generally called *hard*, *strange*, *learned* and *ynkhorne terms*. The titles mirror this intention clearly: Robert Cawdrey (1604): A TABLE ALPHABETICALL, CONTEYNING AND TEACHING THE TRUE VVRITING, AND VNDERSTANDING OF HARD VSUALL ENGLISH WORDES; John Bullokar (1616): AN ENGLISH EXPOSITOR: TEACHING THE INTERPRETATION OF THE HARDEST WORDS VSED IN OUR LANGUAGE; Henry Cockeram (1623): THE ENGLISH DICTIONARIE: OR, AN INTERPRETER OF HARD ENGLISH WORDS; Thomas Blount (1656): GLOSSOGRAPHIA: OR A DICTIONARY, INTERPRETING ALL SUCH HARD WORDS, WHETHER HEBREW, GREEK, LATIN, ITALIAN, SPANISH, FRENCH, TEUTONICK, BELGICK, BRITISH OR SAXON, AS ARE NOW USED IN OUR REFINED ENGLISH TONGUE; Edward Phillips (1658): THE NEW WORLD OF ENGLISH WORDS: OR, A GENERAL DICTIONARY: CONTAINING THE INTERPRETATIONS OF SUCH HARD WORDS AS ARE DERIVED FROM OTHER LANGUAGES. . .

Such dictionaries are the consequence of the well-known historical development which made Middle-English and Early New English so receptive to Latin vocabulary and which, in the course of the Renaissance with its arts and sciences, gave rise to such a great number of Latinized words that the English language tended to become unintelligible for those native speakers who did not know any Latin.⁸ Hard words are thus not foreign words, but lexemes adapted to the phonological and morphological system of English which, because of their foreign etymology, remain unmotivated for most speakers and have to be learned by heart, if at all. Although many of the new lexemes were later discarded, that structure of English lexis was shaped during the Renaissance, which even today allows us to speak of two English vocabularies with clear stylistic demarcations.⁹

While German dictionaries/word lists, as explained above, were intended to enumerate root words and their potential extensions, English dictionaries were intended to explain the meanings of selected words. This means that English dictionaries have special users. They are those speakers who lack the education for understanding hard words and who, in certain situations or even in general, understand their own language only badly or not at all. Such dictionary users and circumstances of usage are mentioned in the titles. Most frequently "Ladies,

Gentlewomen, or any other unskillfull persons" are mentioned (Cawdrey, Bullokar, Cockeram), but also "young Schollers, Clarkes, Merchants" (Cockeram) and "Strangers" (Cockeram, Philipps) appear. Places are associated with such groups of persons where the dictionaries are supposed to give help with hard words: universities, offices, ports. With reference to "Gentlewomen", Cawdrey mentions "Sermons".

This makes the motivation behind English lexicography in the 17th century clear, at least in outline. The German monolingual dictionaries of the time are inventories of the language with linguistic foundations and pedagogic aims. The English monolingual dictionaries of the time are actually a special case of bilingual dictionaries. They treat their English entries like those of a foreign language. This is why they are practically orientated aids to communication. Generally speaking, they are, of course, in accordance with the stylistic tendencies of their time, as becomes apparent in Glanville's self-corrections¹⁰ or in Wilkins' prescriptions for sermons.¹¹ Thus, they harmonize with those stylistic tendencies which became effective around the Royal Society after its re-foundation in 1662. In spite of this, and unlike in Germany, each dictionary of the time is, by its very selection of words, author-dependent.

The differences between monolingual German and English lexicography during the 17th century are accounted for by the external situation with its societal interests (establishment of a standard language vs. communication in certain situations) as well as by the internal, i.e. linguistic, conditions of the two languages at a given moment (German word formation vs. Latinized English).¹²

Monolingual lexicography in Germany and England, which comes into being at the same time, thus proves not to be isomorphic at all. They are two phenomena in the history of linguistics which have only a name in common but which are different in their causes and intentions.

2. This general historical explication of German and English monolingual lexicography in the early 17th century will now be supported by four short case studies.

Henisch's enormous *THESAURUS LINGVAE ET SAPIENTIAE GERMANICAE* (1616), which only extended from *A* to *Gixerle*, demands a much more minute analysis than can be given here. A typical article contains the lemma together with German and/or Latin synonyms. In some cases, German and/or Latin definitions are also given. Sample sentences, frequently in a proverbial style, are added, which again can have Latin translations. For different meanings, the lemma is repeated—though not made typographically distinct—and semantically explained and embedded in the same way. Examples of typical usage are numerous and show a general tendency to elaborate entries by contextualization. Many entries give translations into English, Flemish/Dutch (called Belgian), French (called Gallic), Greek, Spanish, Italian, Hungarian and Polish. Such translations, however, are in most cases limited to single words. For substantives, entries can contain 'der(ivations)', i.e. derived verbs, and 'comp(ounds)', i.e. derived nominals of any sort. In many, though not in all, cases, the latter are given a lemma of their own which is made visible typographically and disrupts the alphabetical order. Derivations and compounds in the above sense are explained with synonyms, definitions, phrases, proverbs, translations just like root lemmata. For verbs, entries can contain participles and adjectives; moreover, morphologically related adjectives and substantives. Proper names or parts of proper names are frequently explained

in an encyclopedic way, i.e. metalinguistically. There is a non-typical, but interesting, entry for the lemma *Abet*, which—under the heading ‘Compos.’—enumerates verbs and substantives with the prefix *ab-* over half a column of the (quarto) book.

Such lexicographical principles make the enterprise of a complete inventory of the German language visible, in which the morphological possibilities of word formation, related to root words, and the different contexts of usage are particularly important. Examples of the latter are quite numerous, in long entries up to one hundred. They show the importance which the author obviously attaches to the semantic-pragmatic embedding of lemmata. Such examples are either taken from everyday language or are given as quotations with their sources. The juxtaposition of German and Latin synonyms or definitions is undoubtedly for the purpose of semantic explanation and not of translation. Nevertheless, it shows how much Latin was present as a metalanguage, even at that time.

The lexicographical work of Justus Georg Schottelius is contained in his *AUSFÜHRLICHE ARBEIT VON DER TEUTSCHEN HAUBTSPRACHE* (1663). In the so-called *10. Lobrede* of part I, he gives a sketch of what a complete dictionary of the German language should look like. He mentions Henisch critically, though with admiration.

For Schottelius, the nucleus of a dictionary is the enumeration of all German root words, together with their Latin, French and Greek equivalents. Low-German root words are also to be included. Furthermore, derivations and *verdoppelte Wörter*, i.e. compounds, are to be given. Schottelius characterizes the principles of compounding (*Doppelkunst*) in German as important and of a particular kind. Enumeration of compounds will lead to insight into the meanings and functions of suffixes and prefixes which, as Schottelius suggests, are different from those in Greek and Latin.

Similarly to Henisch, Schottelius wants to take the German explanations of lemmata from everyday usage and from books. Finally, it is noteworthy that his dictionary is supposed to embrace the language of craftsmen and scientists in addition to everything else. As an example, all possible extensions of the lemma *Bruch* are given (around 100) as well as the verb *lauffen* with about 110 prefixes.

The linguistic principles of derivation and compounding (*Doppelung*) are explained in special chapters of the book. Book 5, covering around 170 pages, contains the long list of German root words with markings of word classes and with German and/or Latin equivalents. Only very few entries contain derivations, compounds and examples or definitions.

Compared with that of Henisch, Schottelius' list is noteworthy for the lack of any contextualization. His, indeed, is just a list. As it is part of a book devoted to the grammar of German, with extensive chapters on derivations and compositions, it must be evaluated in the light of the rules given in those chapters. Schottelius elucidates the word-formative potential of German by *first* explaining the generative potential of every kind of word formation and *second* by enumerating the lexematic elements with which this potential functions.

John Bullokar's *ENGLISH EXPOSITOR* (1616) was published in the same year as Henisch's dictionary. In his short preface, the author says that he compiled his book on the basis of "observation, reading, study, and charge". This suggests an orientation towards everyday language and book language similar to that of Henisch and

Schottelius. In view of this special orientation of his dictionary, it is less surprising that Bullokar should pay attention to words from special registers than in the case of Schottelius. The general aim of the dictionary is given in the sentence:

“... for considering it is familiar among best writers to vsurpe strange words, (and sometime necessary by reason our speech is not sufficiently furnished with apt termes to expresse all meanings) I suppose withall their desire is that they should also be understood...”

Bullokar differentiates between words which have been in use for a long time but are still unintelligible, words which are new, and words whose meanings have changed. If we look up the first appearance as given in the OED of Bullokar's first 90 entries, we see that 30 appear for the first time between 1549 and 1616 (the year of publication of the dictionary)¹³ and must thus indeed have appeared “modern”, given the slower speed of linguistic innovation at that time. Twenty more lexemes have their first attestation in the 16th century, and there are 9 from the 15th century. The 27 words which are first attested even earlier are those which have changed drastically in meaning.

Bullokar's word list, in fact, deserves a more precise analysis with reference to usage and “hardness” than can be given here. But our rough count shows the principle of assembling “new words” in a dictionary selectively without paying any attention to the language as a whole.

The principles of explanation in this dictionary are very simple. There are some encyclopedic explanations for special expressions and proper names. In most cases, however, the lemma is juxtaposed with an English word which is supposed to be simpler to understand. In many—though not in all—cases this leads to the equation of lexemes of Latin and Germanic origin. Thus, *abandon/forsake*, *abbet/helpe*, *abbreviate/make short*, etc. are placed vis-à-vis.¹⁴ This technique clearly shows the covert bilingualism in the dictionary.

Such simple explanatory techniques were continued by later dictionaries. Thomas Blount, for example, in his *GLOSSOGRAPHIA* (1656) adds only the Latin words corresponding to the English hard words in order to give the etymology. Otherwise, he retains the juxtaposition of Latinized English words with their Germanic equivalents. His more elaborate preface shows differences in the conception of what a hard word is. Obviously, Blount looks upon foreign words and hard words as very much the same phenomenon. He also refuses to favour a style in which hard words are used frequently. Generally speaking, he seems to be sceptical of fashionable changes in language use. His book, however, is concerned with communication, for example when legal, medical, and heraldic terminology is explained in such a way that the common man can understand it.

Finally, it is to be noted that the number of entries in hard-word dictionaries increases, not because more and more of these words were used, but because the compilers of dictionaries exploited the work¹⁵ of their predecessors.¹⁶

Notes

- ¹ See Stein 1985 (for England).
² See Lehnert 1956 and Hayashi 1978 (for England), and Henne 1975 (for Germany).
³ According to Henne 1975a.
⁴ Schottelius 1663: 165/66.
⁵ See Borst 1957-63, vol. III; Katz 1982.
⁶ Translation from Latin by R. Haas/W. Hüllen.
⁷ See Ritt (forthcoming).
⁸ See Scheler 1977 (history of English vocabulary), Grove 1950 and Leisi 1985 (linguistic and social problems of hard words).
⁹ The juxtaposition of Latin and Germanic vocabulary is incorrect in so far as Latin (and Greek) lexemes which came into English before the Renaissance are not *hard*.
¹⁰ See Jones 1930/1965.
¹¹ See Hüllen 1989.
¹² For the difference between an external and internal history of linguistics and for general reflections on a historiography of linguistics see Hüllen 1989, chapter 1.
¹³ There are also lexemes which have their first manifestation after 1616, according to the OED. This shows that many of the dates given in the OED are problematic; still, they are irreplaceable for historical studies.
¹⁴ Frequently one lexeme is juxtaposed with a synthetic phrase.
¹⁵ See Dolezal 1985.
¹⁶ I owe thanks to Dr Renate Haas for a translation of Henisch's Latin preface into German, and to Roland Aley for his preparatory work.

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