

From translation to analogy: The birth of the Etymon in sixteenth century French lexicography

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In early lexicography the headword often reveals the lexicographer's sense of a minimal unit of meaning and significant paradigms. The preparation of computer concordances highlights our need to be sensitive to an accurate yet economical representation of the individual article's typography. Sixteenth century lexicography is complicated by the compilers' sense of an inherent duplicity in the purpose of the lexical item. Consequently, the sixteenth century lexicographer's attempts to exploit headwords as significant categories, reflecting a deeply embedded yet unarticulated linguistic theory, complicates the contemporary lexicographer's task. Redundancy in such articles suggests semantic impression or even illogicality. However, our contemporary sense of semanticity is derived from a schizophrenia within the sign where conflicts between the sign's immanence as icon are measured against its arbitrariness as symbolic introspection and identification (McLuhan 1962).

The sixteenth century attracts the contemporary lexicographer's attention because the parameters for a schizophrenic relationship between form and content are obvious in the rapid evolution of lexicography in the period. However, sixteenth century schizophrenia focuses on a complex predecessor of the contemporary arbitrary sign. In France where lexicography is at fever's pitch during the sixteenth century, mere signs assume the density of epistemological indices marking the separation and conjugation of two epistemologies in a single conceptual frame. This schizophrenia focuses upon Renaissance Latin's duplicate nature which Alain Rey describes as follows (Rey 1970: 169): "une langue modèle ou langue de passage, le latin est pris comme véhicule des signifiés, instrument analytique et intemporel."

Generally speaking man's need to reflect upon the constitution of his expressive modes and their fundamental role as a vehicle for his identity coincides with the birth of his linguistic schizophrenia.¹ The "ego's" crisis, expressed as auto-referentiality, is precipitated in the sixteenth century by the need to reassign Latin's role as an extratemporal paradigm to the vernacular models. Latin's shift from a universal model to a source language influences the vernacular languages

¹ In *La construction du réel*, Delachaux & Niestlé, Genève, 1950, 2nd ed. p. 186, Jean Piaget relates the interplay between space and identity as follows:
L'espace est donc l'activité même de l'intelligence en tant qu'elle coordonne les tableaux extérieurs les uns des autres.

and Latin both in form and content. In the preface of the first edition of the *DICTIONNAIRE DE L'ACADÉMIE FRANÇAISE* the compilers frame the issue of a nascent duplicity in Romance languages clearly in respect to orthography (*DICTIONNAIRE DE L'ACADÉMIE FRANÇAISE* 1964):

l'ancienneté Orthographe receüe parmi tous les gents de lettres, parce qu'elle ayde à faire connoistre l'Origine des mots.

In effect, the conflict between ancient and modern orthography is a contributing factor in the inflation of lexicographical articles in dictionaries like *THRESOR DE LA LANGUE FRANÇOYSE*. Such encyclopedic dictionaries juxtapose archaic forms and dialectical usages with incorrect and undesirable forms. In the sixteenth century, the conflict between the ancient and the modern constitutes the principle axis of evolution in both language and lexicography. The ancient is synonymous with a genealogical authenticity emerging as a citation model based not upon simple translation equivalences but upon the desirability of ancient languages as authentic sources and genealogical distinctions. Among the most prodigious and perhaps most dubious exponents of French's distinguished genealogical origins is Henri Estienne (e.g. *Traicté de la Conformité du langage françois avec le grec* 1565: rpt. 1970). Although Henri Estienne's prodigious attempts at proving French's distinguished genealogy with Greek etymologies might inspire the scorn of etymologists, one must take the inventories of Robert Estienne's "De la Mutation des Lettres des mots Latins faicts François" in *Traicté de la grammaire françoise* 1557 very seriously.

As the considerable corpus of our project illustrates, the transmutation of Latin orthography into French constitutes a major source of citation references. The fundamental problem in specifying an article's relationship to its headword is ascertained in the sixteenth century by juxtaposing a genealogical paradigm, source, and a translation paradigm, meaning. During the sixteenth century these two paradigms merge until both source and meaning originate in the vernacular. In this process, not only does the vernacular replace Latin in the fundamental paradigms but it also serves as a rule for generating Latin supplements based upon a partial equivalence between French and Latin.

Thus the typographical and conceptual divisions in the sixteenth century dictionary constitute macro-lexemes which the computer concordance must preserve and, hopefully, highlight. Nonetheless, the computer concordance and its compilers are products of the twentieth century. Given this state of affairs, how does the twentieth century lexicologist highlight a sixteenth century macro-lexicology never explicitly dealt with in the context of the dictionary? Proceeding with care to preserve the total integrity of a corpus pregnant with ambiguities and hidden meanings, one must address three fundamental relationships: 1) the translation equivalence between the headword and the Latin or French in the article, 2) the reciprocity between headwords and phrases as citation models and paradigms, and 3) the genealogical inference of citation references (Why is an apparently redundant citation included in the article?).

Often, as is the case for Robert Estienne's THESAURUS, the typography appears to serve as a guide in the distribution of the articles. Headwords in Roman capitals. However, there are inconsistencies in Estienne's typographical distinctions, and difficulties also arise because of the size of the articles. Some articles are so inclusive that they give birth to a notion of meaning which originates in neither the signified nor the signifier. The peculiarly large breadth of a sixteenth century article emphasizes the fundamental presuppositions inherent in sixteenth century lexicography. The THESAURUS's purpose and organization summarize these basic tenets influencing the birth of a sixteenth century unit of meaning. Principally, the THESAURUS, as is the case for most dictionaries of the period, is the descendant of the "dictionarium." As a continuation of the "dictionarium" the THESAURUS serves basically as a phrase book translating Latin into acceptable French. Such translation exercises give rise to a sign theory in which Medieval thinking, superficially creating a sense of homogeneity between diverse cultures and languages, intersects with the Renaissance.

Actually Estienne's project in compiling the THESAURUS proposes the standardization of Latin rather than French. Commissioned to reform Calepinus' chaotic DICTIONARIUM and unable to find a scholar willing to tackle the formidable task, Estienne took responsibility for the work himself which he describes as follows in the frontispiece of the 1531 edition:

Dictionarium, seu Latinae linguae Thesaurus, Non singulas modo dictiones continens, sed integras quoque Latine & loquendi, scribendi formulas ex optimis quibusque auctoribus accuratissime collectas. Cum Gallica ferè interpretatione.

A Thesaurus of the Latin language, not only containing single words, but also complete expressions from the best Latin authors, accurately recorded. With a French commentary.

Three significant decisions about the contents of the THESAURUS, two of which are reflected in this introduction, would change lexicography in the sixteenth century: 1) whole phrases which imply context, and the meta-structure of language would be represented, not isolated words; 2) a French commentary would be provided as an afterthought although fully integrated into the dictionary (the commentary is not a translation but rather the comparison of synonyms); and 3) grammatical categories would be indicated: conjugations, genders, etc. These three decisions transfigured an ancient tradition of translation shifting the "dictionnaire de mots" into a context in which the "dictionnaire de notion" would give birth ultimately to the "dictionnaire de langue" as we know it today (Quemada 1967: 11-24).

Headwords in the THESAURUS deal with a topic more often than with a single translatable "word". The shared focus for an article is the Latin which assumes metalinguistic proportions because of the rarefied context of its grammatical universe interwoven into a semantic universe. This universe defines the headword as a synonym for its occurrences rather than a directly translatable

| Nicot 1606 | Estienne 1549 | Stoer 1606 | Complex Headwords | | Latin |
|------------------|--------------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------|---------------------------------|
| | | | Poille 1628 | Marquis 1609 | |
| à bon escient | | * | * | | opera data |
| à bride avallée | | * | * | * | effusis habet |
| à ce | | * | * | * | ad hoc |
| à cheval | | * | * | * | celeuma equitum ad infiliendum |
| à coup | | * | * | * | cito propere |
| à fable | | * | * | * | pro fabula |
| à genous | | | | | congenulate |
| agré | | * | * | * | ad gratum |
| à mort | | | | | neci ac praedae omnia subdantur |
| à part | | | à part | à part | seiunctium |
| à peu | | * | * | | parvo, comitatu |
| à tard | | * | * | * | sero, tarde |
| au | | * | * | * | ad |
| | | | d'avant | | N/A |
| d'abbordée | | | | | in ipso appulsu |
| d'avantage | * | * | * | * | praeterea |
| d'arrivée | | | | | in ipso adientu |
| d'aventure | * | * | * | * | forte, fortuito |
| de (pr.) | | * | * | * | de |
| d'icy | d'ici | * | d'icy | * | hinc |
| arriere-ban | | | arriereban | arriereban | N/A |
| arriere-boutique | | 1 word | arriereboutique | 1 word | postica taberna |
| arriere-main | | 1 word | 1 word | | ictus aversa manu flictus |
| | | | arriere saison | | foenum cordum |
| ban-lieué | banlieue | banlieue | banlieue | banlieue | suburbana, praedia |
| basse-contre | | | basse contre | | N/A |
| bon-chrestien | | bonchrestien | bonchrestien | | poma panchresta |
| boute-hors | | | | | N/A |
| boute-feu | | boute-feu | | | incendiarius |
| caresme-prenant | 1 word | caresmeprenant | | | quadragesima |
| fontaine-belland | fontaine-belle-eau | | | | N/A |

gaignepain
marche-pied
mi-jour
pisse-en-lict

l'aire

l'encant
l'envers
l'hom
l'on
l'un
m'amie
m'amour
m'escolliere
s'amour

*
l'ung
*

*
*

mescolliere

*
*
*
l'un sur l'autre
*

mescolliere

*
*
*
mamie

baiulus, gerulus
scamnus
meridies
buphthalmos Gr./La.
area
praeomis voci
inversus
homo
homo
unus
mea amica
mogliema It.
meo disculpa
N/A

equivalent for them. Thus, it is French's analogy with Latin that authenticates meaning's genealogy in works like the THESAURUS. With little regard for context, translations of "acer," (*) ranging from diligent to bitter are all grouped under the single headword, "acer," while "accipio" (*) provides five pages of entries with translations ranging from "prendre" to "recevoir," from "ouyr faire mention d'aucun" to "faire paour." No longer bound by the direct equivalence of word for word translation, French discovers that it is a synonym for Latin, not a direct translation of Latin. According to this tradition enshrined in the preface of the first edition of the DICTIONNAIRE DE L'ACADÉMIE FRANÇOISE, "le synonyme ne correspond pas tousjours exactement à la signification du mot dont il est synonyme, et qu'ainsi ils ne doivent pas être employez indifféremment l'un pour l'autre." By introducing context and grammar as concerns into a dictionary guided by principles as general as the seventeenth century concept of the synonym, Robert Estienne imposed the fluidity of membership in a semantic universe upon his lexical items.

The sixteenth century's schizophrenia is modelled on the schism between Robert Estienne's scrupulous adherence to a latinate orthography for French emphasizing its genealogical validity in reference to a Latin or Greek etymon, and his reduction of the ancient principle of direct translation equivalence to the modern concept, meaning. The etymon's role in undermining formal and notional constraints in favor of originative constraints in sixteenth century lexicography generates new forms in both the vernacular and Latin through a misunderstanding of the conflict between the ancient and the modern.

The commonplace of the sixteenth century, equating linguistic origin with linguistic value, leads to the elaboration and embellishment of paradigms in the vernacular and Latin to conform with the needs of the epoch. These circumstances were imposed upon the lexicographers of the age by the underlying conflict between the etymon and the synonym. Since both were vague concepts a certain fluidity in language's evolution was facilitated. A desire for continuity persuaded lexicographers of the period that forms missing in French indubitably should avail themselves of surrogates based upon Latin or Greek synonyms and that terms missing in Latin were only apparently lacking because the Latin paradigm for the etymon was incomplete. With such assumptions already prevalent in the 1530's, the introduction of French headwords in the DICTIONNAIRE FRANÇOIS-LATIN of 1539 laid the groundwork for a major reformulation of the relationship between French and Latin.

Since the headwords in the THESAURUS are more like synonyms, its French equivalents were so closely linked to the Latin contextualized sentence that only the Latin phraseology and not any one word could serve as an indicator of an adequate French headword for articles in the DICTIONNAIRE FRANÇOIS LATIN. Consequently, few word for word equivalences were to be found suggesting that sources for notions were as important as the meaning of any isolated word in choosing headwords. Conscious of the fact that one phraseology was

synonymous with another, lexicographers faced the dilemma of deciding whether a whole phrase should represent a headword or just one word. Basically, the lexicographer was faced with judging equivalences between grammatical categories, which had become standard entries in the sixteenth century article, and notions in a phraseology to determine the semantic extension of his headword.

The word as we know it in computer technology, that is to say a grouping of symbols separated by spaces, did not limit the sixteenth century lexicographer's choice of headwords. As can be seen in the chart, complex headwords, where the Latin has been derived from entries in the THRESOR DE LA LANGUE FRANÇOYSE, the headwords are based upon both grammatical and notional judgements. Notably, Estienne uses fewer compound headwords than Nicot, (TLF 1606) Stoer, (GDFL 1606) Marquis, (GDFL 1609) or Poille (GDFL 1628). Clearly, the Latin is no longer the deciding factor in rendering these headwords as compounds. Rather what might be called "nouvelle grammaire" derived from a sense of analogy with the new orthography based upon contemporary usage serves as the measure of the headword. Thus, if concepts such as (TLF 18) "à fable," (TLF 11) "à cheval," (TLF 175) "d'avantage," and (TLF 83) "bon-chrestien" formed a single contemporary lexical notion, each should by analogy with new orthography also constitute an independent headword. Undoubtedly, in editions such as Marquis and Guichard's GRAND DICTIONAIRE FRANÇOIS-LATIN, (*) it is difficult to know, because of the poor separation of headwords from articles, whether (GDFL 1609: 438) "en bas," "en chemin," "en ce," "en partie," "en paix," and "en ce disant" constitute headwords or are just citations under the headword, "en." Inevitably, such ambiguities give rise in later compilations to new entries as the concept of the dictionary as source replaces Latin's authority as etymon.

On the other hand, Latin, itself, experiences the vagaries of a living language because of its role as etymon. In examining THRESOR DE LA LANGUE FRANÇOYSE we discover that the Latin for (TLF 175) "danse," "saltatio," and "saltatus" no longer designate only "danse": "saltatus" now designates "dansement." As is quite common the masculine, (TLF 175) "saltator" also provides "saltatrix": both additions can also be observed in the DICTIONAIRE FRANÇOIS-LATIN of 1549. However, the verb (TLF 175) "saltitare" seems to date from the THRESOR DE LA LANGUE FRANÇOYSE of 1606. Latin equivalents such as "pugio" and "sica" appearing in the THESAURUS assume semantic extension in the THRESOR DE LA LANGUE FRANÇOYSE and the GRAND DICTIONAIRE FRANÇOIS-LATIN encompassing not only the meaning "poignard" but also "dague." Although Latin and Greek carry the weight and prestige of authentic origins in antiquity, as the sense of the etymon as source replaces its meaning as genealogy, vernacular languages such as Italian contribute headwords dating from the sixteenth century. Thus, we find that whereas (TLF 391) "m'amie" has Latin origins in "mea anima," (TLF 391) "m'amour" 's origins reach back only to the Italian "mogliema." Moreover, Jean

Nicot, who has possibly contributed more to Latin and French than any other compiler, even if some of the contributions are somewhat spurious, adds to "m'amour," the headword (TLF 580) "s'amour" and (TLF 616) "t'amour" completing the paradigm logically if not soundly.

Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the lexicographer's position is being increasingly modified by a shift from authorities rooted in the classical languages to sources drawn from the vernacular of various nations which are, at the time in question, exploiting language as the genealogical validation of their nationhood. As a result, in sixteenth century lexicographical projects the cause, a genealogy, is subsumed in the effect, a linguistic dominance. As a result of this dichotomy, sixteenth century dictionaries reflect an evolutionary tension moving towards a more arbitrary set of values than the analogical genealogy inherent in the THESAURUS. Fictitious and speculative entries by lexicographers like Jean Nicot reflect not only language's role in creating national identities but also the birth of "opinion."² The opposite pole of Estienne's genealogical etymon emerges in the seventeenth century as "opinion" which not only becomes an organizing factor in lexicography but also a topic in articles compiled by Nicot, Stoer, Poille and Marquis.

In this tradition, Marquis and Guichard's LE GRAND DICTIONNAIRE FRANÇOIS-LATIN and Poille's 1628 version reflect the vernacularization of the etymon in two separate spheres of interest. Entries such as (Poille 1628: Bbii) "[<escoffion> * [F1] Escoffion, pour scofion. [F1] /S/ Rons." suggest that citation references from other vernacular sources have replaced the Latin synonyms and the rarefied grammar with a system of examples drawn from the vernacular. In this respect the comparative citation references serve several purposes including the very modern concerns of the semantic universe.

A closer study of the interrelationship between these French sources promises to reveal a semantic universe based upon the conjugation of sentiment or "opinion" with a synchronous evaluation of form and usage. In the broadest linguistic and philological tradition this event signifies the first step in the evolution of the bipartite sign. This tradition of comparative lexicography suggests a self-sufficiency in the sign with regard to the genealogical etymon. On the other hand, a growing dependence upon the purely synchronous effects of "opinion" replaces the defunct Latin etymon. Clearly, the increasingly synchronous representation of language is also generating a new status for the sign. A comparative lexicography implies not genealogy but a plurality of forms and meanings for a given entry.

One might ask if the features that Saussure finds in the twentieth century sign could be construed as the result of forces valid in the sixteenth century. How much more arbitrary do the signs of the twentieth century appear isolated from

² For at least one such speculative conjecture about language see Jean Nicot. THRESOR DE LA LANGUE FRANÇOYSE (Paris: Douceur, 1606) p. 100 s.v. Capendu.

their genesis! Throughout this process of development the prevalence of Latin as a source for translation has determined both the very concept of meaning in sixteenth century French lexicography and the evolution of language as a discursive tool in the development of "opinion" and identity. As a result this tradition should limit our reading of the entries in these dictionaries, forewarning us that reading sixteenth century dictionaries according to a completely formed twentieth century sign theory serves only to conceal the origins of arbitrariness in a static metalanguage. As can be seen in the data provided by this considerable repertory of source texts, there is no evidence that the sixteenth century lexicographer had ever consciously conceived of a bipartite sign. Nonetheless, the tension between genealogy and nationhood reflected in the comparative lexicography of the period and the increasing interest in "opinion" suggest that the pressure of the age had led sixteenth century lexicographers to split the sign as a strategy before they had conceptualized the separation of its form and content. Only by respecting the macro-structure of these sixteenth century dictionaries, can the compilers working on this project hope to shed light upon the genesis of both the concept of arbitrariness and the conceptual framework for the bipartite sign in a series of critical editions accompanied by precisely detailed concordances.

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