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The Lexicographer's Creativity

1. Introduction

In 1952, when Structuralism occupied the dominant position in American linguistics, Fred Householder, Professor at Indiana University in Bloomington, wrote a review of Zellig Harris' book *Methods in structural linguistics*, published in 1951 (Householder 1952). It can be maintained that Harris' book was the last really methodologically important book written in structuralist terms; Harris himself was a teacher of Noam Chomsky, and the notion of 'transformation' belonged to his methodological apparatus. Householder wrote his review in structuralist terms as well. In the fifties, sixties and even later, it was quite fashionable among American linguists to be facetious both in the selection of examples and in their discussion. It was perhaps because of this fashion that Householder in his review had the interesting and hilarious idea of identifying among linguists two extreme positions, namely that of what he called 'God's Truth Linguistics' and 'Hocus Pocus Linguistics.' A God's Truth Linguist assumes – in simplified terms – that language has a structure which it is his duty to describe, although his approaches toward that goal may usually be of approximative character only. On the other hand, a Hocus Pocus Linguist assumes that he is faced with a corpus of data upon which it is his task to impose the descriptively most efficient structure; but he is not surprised if there are several possible equally efficient descriptions, or solutions to a problem. We all know that Hjelmslev's empirical principle was an attempt at answering the question of how to determine which, if any, of such competing solutions or descriptions should be preferred. Over a period of some 25 years of offering courses in the history of linguistics, I always found it useful to classify linguists and their methods by this simple grid (among other classificatory grids), and I believe it may be of some interest to discuss as well several – naturally, only a few – aspects of lexicography from this point of view. It would seem that in lexicography all the so-called factual information should pertain to the domain of God's Truth, whereas all the explanations are ripe candidates for Hocus Pocus status, even if they attempt to acquire, or pretend that they bear, the hallmark of God's Truth. Let us consider a few areas of lexicography from this point of view.

2. Historical dictionaries

Historical dictionaries – or, to use the more precise terminology introduced by Oskar Reichmann, diachronic dictionaries capturing the development of the lexicon – would seem to be prime candidates for belonging to the God's Truth type of dictionaries. In one way or another, the desire to know 'wie es eigentlich gewesen' belongs to and is inherent in historiography, even if the author counts himself among those who accept the position that the product of their (like every historian's) research is a text, and as such, is subject to deconstruction.

It would seem that among such dictionaries the one which tries as far as possible to present only God's Truth is Richardson (1836 et seqq.). The main component of his dictionary is a compilation of verbatim quoted contexts given in their chronological sequence. Thus, for instance, the verb, noun, and adverb ***back*** are quoted in one chronological sequence, beginning with Chaucer, without the quotations being grouped by morphological category or by polysemy. There are only two components of the entry that have a character different from this completely factual presentation. First, Richardson accepted the opinion of Horne Tooke, shared also by Jacob Grimm (1854 et seqq.), that all the senses of a polysemous word are derivable from, or are included in, one basic notion, which, in its turn, is frequently clarified by the etymology. Hence, etymology is indicated; this is, however, an element which, in any epoch of the history of linguistics, only seldom invites or bears the hallmark of being God's Truth. Second, Richardson occasionally felt that some senses of the entryword must be explained to the reader. So, for instance, there is this explication: "To *back* a friend, &c., is to stand to his *back*, to support, uphold, assist, encourage him." However, both these explanatory components are located at the very beginning of the entry, so that their unavoidably more or less personal, and therefore hocus pocus, character does not infringe on the God's Truth character of the factual bulk of the entry.

James Murray, chief editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1884 et seqq.) for many years, also tried to give his entries the factual structure of chronologically ordered quotations. However, there are at least two problem areas inherent in such chronological sequences of quotations. The first of them is caused by the vagaries of the entrywords' attestations, because sometimes the chronology of quotations does not coincide with what we surmise must have been the real development. An easy example is Murray's entry for **agony**. At the beginning of the entry, the reader is informed that the development of the senses of this originally Greek word was (1) Struggle for victory in games, (2) any

struggle, (3) mental struggle, anguish; e.g., Christ's anguish in Gethsemane. The main body of the entry then gives this distribution of the English senses: (1) anguish of mind, paroxysm of grief – ca. 1386 (Chaucer), (1b) paroxysm of pleasure – 1725 (Pope); (2) spec. "The mental struggle ...of Christ in ... Gethsemane" – 1382 (Wyclif); (3) pangs of death, the death struggle – 1549; etc. Clearly, the chronological sequence of the contexts would suggest that the so-to-say 'real' (that is, historically real) sequence was (2), (1), (3), (1b). Murray resolved the contradiction by introducing the principle that in polysemous entries, the chronological sequences start "afresh" in each individual ramification. This is clearly a reasonable – indeed the only possible – solution, but one which nevertheless introduces a degree of subjective decision-making.

The other difficulty associated with the presentation of the polysemous entryword's senses (and the examples that illustrate them) in the historical or even chronological order is that the relations of those senses to one another may not be easy to perceive. To take a very simple example, one can perhaps grasp the connection of *patent ambiguity* with *patent letters* and with *patented inventions*, but why should there be something called *patent leathers*? The synchronic, descriptive lexicographer does not necessarily feel the duty to explain; that is why Gove in *Webster's Third* (1961) simply lists the lexical unit with the lexicalized meaning 'shoes made of patent leather' and tells the reader only that patent leather is one of high lustre, whereas Morris in *American Heritage* (1969) offers the explanation that patent leather is so named because it is produced by a once-patented process. There is probably some degree of certainty, or God's Truth, in a factual explanation such as this; but in most cases, particularly when dealing with old languages, such explanations are of a highly conjectural nature.

The lexicographer who systematically tried to remove any such unclarity from the entries of his Greek-German dictionary (1831) and who wished to present the senses of the entryword as a historically developed whole was Franz Passow. For instance, the Greek word **télos** has basically the following senses: 'end, goal, completion; the limit, time limit, purpose; completion, perfection; a troup of soldiers; toll, taxes; citizen class; mysteries, initiation.' Translated into English, an abbreviated version of Passow's entry reads as follows: (1) an end *accomplished and so the* fulfilment, completion...; (2) a body of soldiers, *probably of a definite, complete number, though this is nowhere stated...*; (3) *the highest or last station in civil life, i.e.* a magistracy, office...; (4) (a) *that which is paid for state purposes,* tax, duty, toll... (b) *property of a citizen, that at which he was rated for* taxation, *and according to the amount of which he belonged to a* certain class...; (5) *consummation by being*

consecrated *or by* initiation.... We can only admire how adroitly the hocus pocus of the lexicographer's ingenuity achieves the desired result; the cleverly invented semantic bridges create an entry with an easily comprehensible polysemy. One detail must yet be mentioned. Passow differentiates, through the printing fonts, what he finds in the contexts (i.e. what we would call the 'God's Truth') from his semantic bridges (i.e. what we call the 'Hocus Pocus').

The translation given above comes from the Greek-English dictionary of Liddell and Scott, which in this edition (1843) had the subtitle "based on the German work of Francis Passow." This English edition abandons the differentiation of the two fonts (what is indicated above in the example is transferred from the German edition to illustrate the principle), so that the two types of information, the equivalents and the semantic bridges, are not presented separately. It is interesting to observe how over several editions of the Greek-English dictionary, the whole Passowian model slowly disintegrates, until the last, ninth edition (1940) completely abandons it, not only by failing to indicate the explicit semantic bridges, but also by presenting the polysemy as the outcome of a quite different development whose source is a quite different notion. The sequence of the senses (here abbreviated) is: (I) (1) coming to pass, performance, consummation... (2) power of deciding, supreme power... (3) magistracy, office ... . (5) service, duty... (6) service or offerings due to the gods... (10) a military station or post with defined duties... (II) (1) degree of completion or attainment ... (2) state of completion... ... (4) end, cessation... (III) (1) achievement... (2) ... goal... (3) ... full realization, highest point, ideal ... (4) the end or purpose of action.

This example is important, because it shows us that the line that we perhaps conceived of as dividing the domain of God's Truth from that of Hocus Pocus is neither clear nor located where we thought it to be: the corpus of Ancient Greek literature was more or less the same about 1940 as it was around 1831, so although the factual substratum of contexts the Oxford lexicographers had at hand may have been perhaps slightly richer quantitatively in 1940, it certainly was, for the most part, identical with what was at hand in 1831; the etymology of the word was not fully clear in 1940, just as it had not been in 1831, and yet it was possible to reorganize completely the basic pieces of information and give them a new derivation. It follows that it is not only in synchronic, descriptive dictionaries that what the organizing principle of the polysemy will be depends more or less completely on the lexicographer's decision; for instance, if the decision is to organize entries by the frequency of occurrence of the individual senses, one gets a work like the Funk and Wagnall's English dictionary.

Diachronic dictionaries too are products of the lexicographer's decision: the incontestable veracity of the chronological sequence of contexts, independent as it is from the lexicographer himself, is not sufficient, as we have seen, to determine the organization of the entry; assuming that the historical development had a logic, the lexicographer can only draw on his own logic to sketch a picture of what happened in the past, or at least to fill in the gaps in what the contexts do tell him. Therefore, what is usually termed the historical ordering of senses is, in reality, a partly historical, partly logical one. The historical component is in part independent of the lexicographer, in part his construction; the logical component is fully a result, in adhering to Householder's terms, of the lexicographer's hocus pocus.

In addition, there is the following consideration: it is doubtful whether any single speaker of a language really knows all the senses of a polysemous word as indicated in a diachronic or synchronic dictionary. For instance, even a simple case such as *patent leathers* or *patent leather shoes,* as mentioned above, may be known only by people such as concert singers and such, who perform in evening clothes, or else by shoe merchants. If we consider the matter from this angle, the whole entry in a dictionary is the lexicographer's creation, his hocus pocus, if you will.

3. Quasi-bilingual dictionaries

Let us only quickly mention in this context that similar explanatory remarks are frequently made in bilingual dictionaries, particularly those that I usually call 'quasi-bilingual'; these quasi-bilingual dictionaries have the purpose of not only facilitating translation from a foreign language, but also describing terms in the language. In many cases, they function in the same way as the monolingual dictionaries of contemporary, well-known, standardized languages. We find quasi-bilingual dictionaries in situations where it would not be possible or advisable to compile a monolingual dictionary. Usually it is dictionaries of ancient languages such as Akkadian, Greek, Sanskrit, or Sumerian, or languages such as Ahtna or Ossetic, that belong to this category. They should not be confused with dictionaries having the character and structure of monolingual ones, but wherein the definitions and explanations are written in another, better-known or more-developed language; an example of such a dictionary is Koneski (1961 et seqq.): a dictionary of the Macedonian language that uses Serbo-Croatian as the language of the definitions. Because of their descriptive purpose, quasi-bilingual dic-

tionaries give many explanations. The text of the entry should be formulated in such a way as to clearly mark the explanatory information. The lack of such a clear differentiation can sometimes confuse the reader because what may be regarded as the factual, God's Truth information and the lexicographer's explanatory, Hocus Pocus additions are not kept separate. Let us compare three such dictionaries, which show a decreasing adroitness in the handling of this differentiating necessity.

Böhtlingk (1855 et seqq., II, 627) has a short entry in his large Sanskrit dictionary for the word ***gaganapusya***, which he translates as "eine Blume im Luftraum, s[o] v[iel] a[ls] ein Unding" (= 'a flower in the airspace, hence an absurdity'). The lexicalized meaning of the entryword is merely 'absurdity', but the lexicographer adds an explanation concerning the morphemic meaning of the compound from which the lexicalized meaning originated. This treatment seems ideal, because all the necessary information is given and is well distributed; the explanation could perhaps have followed, not preceded, the actual equivalent, but that is a matter of the microstructure of the entry. By the same token, the entryword ***gaganecara*** has (in English) the lexicalized meanings 'bird, planet, a position of the moon, a celestial being.' Who could understand such a polysemy were it not for the indication of the morphemic, nonlexicalized meaning of 'something that moves in the airspace'? Yet it should be understood that the creation of this unified concept stems from the lexicographer's explanatory effort.

Another example: Radloff (1893 et seqq., II, 965ff) lists in his comparative Turkic dictionary the collocation *boghaz kulu* with the translation 'der Feinschmecker' (= gourmet). The translation is correct, but it would have been an improvement had Radloff told the reader that the morphemic meaning is 'servant of the throat,' because that would have warned the dictionary user that a negative connotation is inherent in the lexicalized meaning.

Our last example will show what is to be avoided: Miller (1927 et seqq., II, 1043) has in his Ossetic dictionary the entry ***sau*** 'black.' (The dictionary gives translations in Russian and German, which we have translated here into English.) There are also some collocations such as *sau xox* 'black mountain,' *sau bon* 'black, unlucky day,' *sau dur* 'black stone, whetstone,' *sau k'oppa* 'black head, a kind of plant,' *sau läppu* 'black boy, bold boy.' From the text of the entry, it is impossible to determine whether *sau läppu* really has both of the meanings indicated or – what is more probable – is lexicalized only as 'bold boy,' the indication 'black boy' here serving to tell the reader only what the morphemes mean. In situations like this, the domains of God's Truth and

of Hocus Pocus cannot be clearly discerned by the user of the dictionary, unless they are demarcated by the lexicographer.

4. Individual contexts

Up to now we have dealt with the interplay of what would seem to be God's Truth information and the lexicographer's Hocus Pocus additions in historical lexicography and in a type of bilingual dictionary. Let us now turn our attention to the molecular scope of some of the lexicographer's decisions that must be made concerning single words or even single contexts. The factual character of the contexts would seem to guarantee that we are headed for the territory of God's Truth – but is that really the case?

In what follows, only English examples are used. The reason for this restriction is that English will be understood by most people present here. The disadvantage of this choice of language is that frequently we shall have to imagine that English is not a well-known language, or that it is a language without a stabilized standard or such. One further disadvantage is, of course, that I am not a specialist in English; however, nearly all the examples here considered were discussed in several American classes, and many of them with English linguists. What's more, I have yet to be present at a lecture dealing with English in which a part of the audience has not maintained that in their dialect, matters are quite different from what the speaker maintains. And last but not least, the more disagreement there is over my interpretation of these examples, the better for the point I intend to make.

(1) In an interview, a professor at the U. of Ill. explains what reasons the US has had for subsidizing wool production:

"We could *export* wool much cheaper from Australia and New Zealand. But during World War II, we could not get wool from abroad because of submarines." (*News Gazette,* 15 Nov. 1992.)

No doubt a slip, either on the part of the professor or of the reporter. However, cf. that *immigrate* has, among others, the meaning 'to send as immigrants' (verb transitive) as well, so directional confusions are possible. However, without many more such attestations of *export* in this sense, nobody would feel justified in listing this meaning in a dictionary; nevertheless, it would be good to have it in a database for future reference.

(2) A report on the French presidential elections in 1988 (*News Gazette,* 8 May 1988) has a caption "Candidates," which gives the names of François Mitterand and Jacques Chirac, and then the caption "Who is *eligible*," informing the reader with the answer: "38.3 million voters, including those in French territories...."

Eligible here is clearly a slip, caused by the concern to have the section headings as short as possible. (The next headings are "The system" and "The issues.") My decision would be to put this context into the database but not into the dictionary, or perhaps not even into the database, unless completeness is the goal.

(3) A trustee of an institution, discussing finances, is reported to have opposed some expenditures (*News Gazette,* 10 Feb. 1990) by saying: "Is this the appropriate time to buy these expensive items *in lieu* of recent events?"

Clearly a malapropism pure and simple. I would treat it as in (2).

(4) There is an article about Howard Cosell in the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* (12 Sep. 1986). One of the sentences begins: "Cosell, who *teached* a course called 'Big-time sports in contemporary America' at Yale..."

Again this is a slip. However, a slip such as *eligible* in the sense of 'endowed with the right to' is a merely occasional mistake. By contrast, given the many nonstandard forms that one can find in the sports pages of provincial newspapers and the many strong verbs used as weak ones in some varieties of language, one cannot be sure whether *teached* here is merely a performance error, or rather a case of code-mixing, a slip into nonstandard language, or at least a systemic error that approaches that status.

(5) A character in a novel by Elizabeth Peters (1987, 48) is admiring a creche in the Bavarian Alps. The description contains this context: "... the Virgin's rich blue robe, the scarlet mantle of *the second Magi,* the crimson-and-gold brocade tunic of the third King."

The easy way out of trouble here would be to suppose that the printer left out *<of the>* between *second* and *Magi*, but such a surmise would probably be wrong: the whole book is quite well edited. I think the collocation *the three Magi* is the only context in which the form *Magi* occurs with this meaning. All the dictionaries that I know of put this Latin plural form under the Latin singular *magus,* which is correct from the point of view of Latin morphology. However, I doubt that the form

magus has ever been attested with the meaning 'one of the three Magi'; normally it means 'a member of a priestly class in ancient Persia' or 'sorcerer.' This semantic difference prevents an association of *magus* and *Magi* in the speaker's mind. Seeking similar cases, one cannot fail to notice that, e.g., *data* is by now treated in most dictionaries as an entry of its own, separate from *datum*, but usually with the remark 'used with either a plural or a singular verb'; the semantic difference between *datum* and *data* is not so great, because there is a certain overlap, at least for some speakers, but the plural has nevertheless been effectively dissociated from the singular. Another example: one cannot help but notice that in letters a sentence such as "Please find enclosed my recent *vitae*" is encountered with increasing frequency today, and far from assuming that the correspondent is able to supply information not only about his present life, but also about several of his previous incarnations, one automatically supposes that the writer does not know Latin.

To sum up: given the occurrence of the form *Magi* as singular in a text by an educated person who frequently writes on classical and generally ancient topics, and given the consideration that there is a sharp semantic distinction between *magus* and *the three Magi*, I would be inclined to give the collocation a separate entry. The difference between this case and *teached* consists in the fact that we do not insist on the conformity of the Latin forms as strongly as we do in the case of domestic English words.

(6) Patrick Fermor (1977, 250) writes: "There are several instances of defenestration in Czech history, and it has continued into modern times. The Martyrdom of St. Johannes is the only case of *depontication*, but it must be part of the same Tarpeian tendency."

The italicized word here is a true nonce, a genuine hapax. *Defenestration* is used in reference to throwing someone out of the window, usually with the intention to kill him. Indeed, Prague can boast some famous cases of this type of political assassination; St. John the Nepomucene was assassinated by being thrown from a bridge to drown in the river, hence *depontication*. Can this word ever make it to a dictionary? I can imagine only two possibilities, both rather remote. Either Patrick Fermor achieves the status of a venerable, classical author, whose style and language will be studied with fervor and preserved in special dictionaries, or the doctrine of my friend Braj Kachru, who advocates the existence of many more-or-less independent varieties of English in countries where it is spoken as a second or as the first foreign language (such as Indian English, East African English, etc.) will help to establish a variety called 'Prague English,' with someone undertaking to compile a

dictionary of that variety; in such a dictionary, of course, *defenestration* and *depontication* would be what we can call 'Paradebeispiele.' In such a dictionary, even *defenestration* would be listed with a somewhat idiosyncratic meaning of its own: in this putative Prague English, the word can have only the meaning that I gave above – that of a (usually political) *attentat*. In contrast, in American classes there were students for whom the word referred simply to the act of throwing something out of a window, for whatever purpose. This use of the term would tend to show a difference between general English and what we have called its hypothetical Prague variety; however, I have always suspected that those students did not know the word at all and were only using the etymology to guess at the meaning.

(7) Father Tim Gollob (*Texas Catholic*, 29 Aug. 1986) gives us a description of his visits as a boy in a workshop: "I recall the joy of going down to the shop where my dad worked. There was the smell of well-oiled machinery. There was the din of metal being *antagonized* into farm equipment."

It is possible that this is again a case of a simple malapropism, but it seems more probable that it is quite an original metaphorical application of the word in a sense which is easily comprehensible and which I find quite graphic: the hardness of the metal makes for its resistance to the effort of molding it into the desired form. In this application the word is, I believe, a nonce. What would be its chances of getting into a dictionary (as opposed to a database)? Again, Father Gollob would have to develop into an important author, and even then, one single occurrence would probably not be sufficient. The other possibility is, of course, that Mr Urdang will one day harness one of his computers for the task of giving us a dictionary of novel, extraordinary expressions; in that case, assuming that Mr Urdang's word-hunters cared to scan the *Texas Catholic*, Father Gollob's original expression might be preserved for posterity.

(8) In a master's thesis (Dept. of Speech and Hearing, U. of Ill.) dealing with the treatment of stuttering children through interviews with their parents, one reads: "Although parental counseling has its advantages, it is not *deprived* of drawbacks."

The general usage undoubtedly is that one can be deprived of some positive value, not a negative one. The interesting thing, however, is that in several classes there were a few students who found the context quoted completely acceptable. Clearly a case of diminished criteriality for some speakers. No lexicographer, I think, would put this sense into the dictionary, but if the number and, more specifically, the frequency of

its occurrences increase with time, this sense may find its way there some day. Along the same line is the following example:

(9) A headline (*News Gazette* 18 May 89) informs the reader: "Exercise reduces blood fat *despite* diet."

The meaning is clarified by the opening sentence of the article: "Regardless of diet or weight loss, exercise reduces levels of fat in the bloodstream...." Here we seem to have a case of generalization similar to that apparent in the sentence "Thanks to a sudden illness, we could not leave for our vacation yesterday." It was interesting to find out that a number of students did not find anything extraordinary about the sentence quoted. Some students would have been happier had the sentence read "exercise reduces blood fat in spite of diet," an example disclosing a complete loss of the original restriction. The decision here concerning possible inclusion in a dictionary will be the same as in the preceding case, although the loss of the original restriction in meaning here seems to have proceeded further. Naturally, if the dictionary being compiled were not limited to what is considered standard language, but aimed to include other varieties as well, this item's candidacy for inclusion would be even stronger.

And lastly, (10). *The News Gazette* (7 May 1989) reports that "... a psychologist believes violence is commonplace ... and made *mundane* by repetitive violent images in the media."

It would seem that there is nothing extraordinary in this application of the word *mundane*; all dictionaries have it in the sense of 'ordinary' or 'commonplace.' What is surprising is that a small group of students and one professor of linguistics (all of them native speakers of English) found this usage unacceptable. The case shows that disagreement among speakers over usage is even more widespread than one would have thought.

5. Conclusion

This short discussion has allowed us to touch on only a few aspects of lexicography. Vast areas beset with problems have gone unmentioned, as, e.g., practical bilingual lexicography, learners' dictionaries with their problems so specific to the theory of learning and more generally, of the acquiring of knowledge, or even dictionaries for automatic handling of linguistic material. Still, even with these restrictions, we were able to perceive that there is what Householder would likely call Hocus Pocus in

the lexicographer's work. That is strongly suggested by the fact that the entry for one and the same word can be organized in completely different ways without losing its verisimilitude; or that entries patch together information pertaining to different idiolects (since nobody knows all the words and all their meanings). Furthermore, we have seen that each of those endless molecular problems concerning one word or one context is in reality a microcosm of decisions reflecting the macrocosm of the lexicographer's cultural, societal, and even philosophical stances.

Still, one cannot deny that there is in language what Householder would call God's Truth, in the sense that there is a structure and meaning shared by speakers; yet one must accept that this God's Truth consists of many sub-Truths, one at least for each idiolect, dialect, variety, jargon, or whatever. How the sum of these is organized is a question which Uriel Weinreich has already discovered to be quite difficult to answer, when he posed the question "Is structural dialectology possible?" However, lexicography is a pragmatically oriented activity, so the fact that we can communicate and that our dictionaries are demonstrably useful for that communication will probably be taken by most of us as a sufficient proof that there is some reality in our descriptions of how lexical elements of that communication function. That is our God's Truth. Questions such as whether communication can be exact or whether it is necessarily distorted by unavoidable differences between the encoder and the decoder, or even whether the ability to communicate is built up through a learning process or consists in activating a part of what older philosophers, such as Leibniz, called *harmonia praestabilita* and what moderns term genetic endowment, are a step or two removed from our field of activities. For instance, if there *is* a difference between the encoder and the decoder, whether necessary or avoidable, our prime task is to pin it down and try to find a remedy for it.

The element of Hocus Pocus in Householder's sense – that is, the possible existence of two or more equally good descriptions of a structure, large or small – is certainly present in lexicography, as the example of the two different entries for the same word *télos* shows. However, in many – perhaps in most – cases of different descriptions of the same structure, it is not a matter of Hocus Pocus; it is rather adaptation to the purpose of the dictionary, and consideration of such matters as the intended user for whom the work is designed, the specific purpose, the nature of the data to be dealt with, and so on, as we all are well aware. These adaptations to the purposes pursued by the dictionary being compiled are not free variation in the presentation of data, in the sense of Householder; it will be far better to perceive them as a manifestation of the lexicographer's creativity in pursuing various aims by suitable

means. Far from being a mechanical occupation, lexicography is a highly creative activity. We have seen that a context in itself is, no doubt, an incontestable fact; however, it is useful only when it is interpreted within the framework of all those considerations and decisions. Porzig in his day asserted very aptly "Bis auf die Artikulation ist die Sprache Geist" (= with the exception of articulation, language is an activity of the intellect). By the same token, one could contend that "with the exception of the contexts, lexicography is a creative activity of the intellect."

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