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IDENTIFYING IDEOLOGICAL STRATEGIES IN THE MAKING OF MONOLINGUAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER'S DICTIONARIES

Abstract The aim of this paper is to show how lexicographical choices reflect ideological thinking, singled out by Eagleton (2007) into the strategies of rationalizing, legitimating, action-orienting, unifying, naturalizing and universalizing. It will be carried out by examining two twenty-first century editions of each of the five English monolingual learner's dictionaries published by Cambridge, Collins, Longman, Macmillan, and Oxford. The synchronic and diachronic analyses of the dictionaries and their different editions at the macro-structural level (the wordlists) and at the micro-structural level (the definitional styles) will show how the reduction and change of data, derived from heterogeneous social and cultural contexts of language use, to abstract essential forms, involves decisions about the central and peripheral aspects of the lexicon and the meaning of words.

Keywords English monolingual learner's dictionaries; ideology; British twenty-first century lexicography

1. Introduction

There is no single and simple definition for Ideology. Generally, it refers to a material process of production of ideas, beliefs, values in social life. A less general meaning of ideology refers to ideas that symbolise life experiences of a socially significant class. In attending to the promotion and legitimation of the interests of a social group in the face of opposing interests, ideology also appears as a suasive device. Indeed, ideology can also signify ideas and beliefs which help to legitimate the interests of a ruling group or class by distortion and dissemination as naturalization and universalization. Whether positively or negatively connoted, ideology is above all a matter of discourse. It is especially the "relation between an utterance and its material conditions of possibility, when those conditions of possibility are viewed in the light of certain power-struggles central to the reproduction of a whole form of social life" (Eagleton 2007, p. 223).

Dictionaries are discourse. They tacitly shape our view of the structure of language. They give us insight into the power-struggles that are at the basis of social life. "Dictionaries represent a specific form of discourse embedded within broader discourses that represent knowledge of the world" (Benson 2001, p. 4). The knowledge of the world that the dictionary represents "is inscribed within the structured version of the language that the dictionary presents to the user. It is not simply a question of the content of the statements that the dictionary makes about the language. It is equally a question of the structures that make those statements possible" (ibid.).

The knowledge of the world that dictionaries represent imply a set of structures that position one's own culture as a centre for the production and distribution of knowledge of other cultures, which are to various degrees peripheral to it" (ibid.). "The process of lexicographical representation, constrained by rules and principles of lexicographical practice, leads not to the production of a direct reflection of the language 'as it is', but to the production of a version of the language with

a definite form and shape. This version of the language both represents and conditions our conceptions of what the language is, what it is made of and the ways in which its component parts are related to each other" (ibid, p. 8).

In Britain and USA no academies of the English language exist. Dictionaries stand in for such language academies. Dictionaries of English describe and prescribe language use, implicitly telling us what it is and what it is not, but they are ultimately the result of the decisions lexicographers must make at macro- and micro-structural levels. At the macro-structural level, they must decide upon the wordlist; at the micro-structural level, they must think about the definitional style, defining vocabulary, presentation of lexical and encyclopaedic information, choice of illustrative examples. In making such choices, lexicographers have thus a great responsibility towards their readership, because they frequently involve decisions about the central and peripheral aspects of the lexicon and the meaning of words, based on procedures that involve the reduction of data, derived from heterogeneous social and cultural contexts of language use, to abstract essential forms. If the ideological-discursive aspect of lexicography has been strongly argued with reference to English language dictionaries for native speakers (see Adams 2015, 2020; Benson 2001; Kachru/Kahanej 1995; Moon 1989), much less debate has ensued for English dictionaries for learners, who, unlike native speakers, are less inclined to their own opinion and/or language instinct and are in more need of ideological enlightenment.

It is therefore the aim of this essay to show if and how lexicographical choices in the compiling of wordlists and definitional styles in learner's dictionaries reflect ideological thinking singled out in Eagleton's terms (2007). In other words, we will analyse the makeup of five English monolingual learner's dictionaries by attempting to identify the following six strategies: the rationalizing strategy that provides plausible explanations for social behaviour which might otherwise be the object of criticism; the legitimating one that establishes one's interests as broadly acceptable; the action-oriented strategy that extends from an elaborated thought to the minutiae of everyday life; the unifying one that lends coherence to the group/classes holding it and bestows unity upon society; the universalizing strategy whereby values and interests that are specific to a certain time and place are projected as the values and interests of all humanity; and lastly, naturalization, whereby social reality is redefined by the ideology to become co-extensive with itself, in a way which occludes the truth that the reality in fact generated the ideology.

2. Method

To carry out this research, we focussed on the synchronic and diachronic examination of the macro-structural level (the wordlists) and the micro-structural level (the definitional styles) of the five English monolingual learner's dictionaries published by Cambridge (CALD), Collins (CCELD), Longman (LDOCE), Macmillan (MED), and Oxford (OALD). From a diachronic point of view, the latest editions of each dictionary were compared with an earlier edition of the same dictionary: CALD2 (2003) with CALD4 (2013); CCELD4 (2003) with CCELD9 (2018); LDOCE4 (2003) with LDOCE6 (2014), MED2 (2007) with MED (online), and OALD7 (2005) with OALD10 (2018). From a synchronic point of view, all the earlier editions were compared and so were all the latest ones. The temporal constraints that prevented the examination of all the words in the dictionaries led us to circumscribe the investigation to a select series of topics regarding the themes of daily life, business and jobs, clothing and fashion, computer technology, education, politics and government, religion, and society.

As the dates of the publications show, the examination was restricted to the new millennium editions only. The reasons for this stem from methodological and socio-cultural concerns. From a methodological perspective, it seemed important to examine editions published roughly in the same period and that is within the first twenty years of the twenty-first century and with a 10- to 15-year gap between the latest and earlier edition. Had we decided to examine the latest editions with the first editions of each dictionary, there would have been a clear temporal unbalance between the two: the first editions of OALD, LDOCE, CCELD, CALD, and MED date back to 1948, 1978, 1987, 1995 and 2002 respectively. This explains further why we chose to compare the latest edition of MED with its second edition dated 2007: the comparison with the earlier edition would not only have implied a comparison between a first and last edition, but also a much wider temporal gap between editions compared to the other dictionaries.

Apart from the methodological inconsistency that this decision might have represented, choosing not to focus on first editions and/or pre-millennium dictionaries was also grounded upon the attempt to provide a similar social and cultural setting for the research, both lexicographically and ontologically speaking. Differences in the temporal gap between first and last editions would necessarily have determined marked differences between dictionaries in the composition of the wordlists due to the ontological changes in the use of English, with the more evident inclusion of neologisms and exclusion of obsolescences in the dictionaries with a greater temporal gap between first and last editions. Differences in the temporal gap would have determined major differences in the lexicographical method too. Learner's dictionaries have indeed come a long way since their first editions: lexicographers in the twenty-first century are much more aware than they were in the past of the importance of laying out entries clearly, defining them intelligibly and providing fitting examples. Having chosen to analyse twenty-first editions of the five dictionaries meant envisaging results that would depend on lexicographical choice rather than on lexicographical inexperience.

3. Results

The findings of the research will be presented in the following sections devoted to each ideological strategy.

3.1 Rationalizing

The first and foremost feature that emerges from the examination of the five dictionaries is how each categorizes or *rationalizes* its wordlist differently. Unlike MED and CCELD, CALD, LDOCE, and OALD classify their words rigorously into a vast array of topics. Indeed, it is possible to consult all three dictionaries by searching for words under topics that range from arts, business, clothes, colours, economics, education, food, games, geography, hard science, leisure, medicine, military, nature, philosophy, politics, religion, society, sport, to technology. That Cambridge, Longman, and Oxford consider it important to classify lemmas according to their semantic domain is proven by the fact that topic searches are possible in the earlier editions as well as in the latest ones – albeit in different ways. Whilst the differences between the number and types of topics found in CALD2 and CALD4 are slight (apart from the introduction of biology, environment, government and politics in the last edition, the topics from the second edition to the last do not change whatsoever), the differences

between LDOCE4 and LDOCE6 and between OALD7 and OALD10 are far greater. Compared to the earlier editions, the latest ones not only introduce a more exhaustive list of topics, but also arrange them differently. If in OALD7, for instance, there is only one main topic entitled politics, in OALD10, politics is one out of seven subtopics (crime and punishment, law and justice, people in society, religion and festivals, social issues, wars and conflicts) that all belong to the main topic entitled politics and society. On the other hand, if folklore, mythology, occult, philosophy and religion all belong to the main topic of religion and thought in LDOCE4, in LDOCE6 folklore, mythology, occult, philosophy, religion, and religion and thought are all main topics. Compared to Collins and Macmillan that concentrate less in arranging their words into topics (in MED2 and CCELD9, it is possible to consult the dictionary by means of a limited subject area search only; MEDonline does not provide this search possibility), we might venture to say that, by allowing users to access the dictionary via topics, Cambridge, Longman, and Oxford provide an added perspective to their world of words.

It is a principle of descriptivist lexicography that dictionaries should not evaluate words by including some and excluding others. Whilst this is a main prerogative of historical dictionaries whose wordlists naturally continue to grow, the findings concerning our synchronic dictionaries have shown that the latest editions do not necessarily exclude words that appear in the earlier ones. Even in the short 10-15-year gap of analysis, the number of words in all the learner's dictionaries increases, as is clearly stated in their front matters: hundreds of new words have been added to CALD4 (p. viii); "a wealth of new words and meanings" to CCELD9 (p. xi); compared to OALD7, OALD10 has "added 2,000 words to the core list for advanced level students" (p. vi); and compared to LDOCE4, LDOCE6 (p. vii) "contains thousands more collocations and synonyms, as well as additional words and phrases". As far as MEDonline is concerned, given it has also been an open dictionary since 2009, "thousands of words and phrases have been added [,] about half of [which] have been "promoted" to become full entries in Macmillan Dictionary". Indeed, if in the mid-twentieth century lexicographers had to find compromises between the inclusion of new words and exclusion of old ones in view of the space restrictions that paper dictionaries imposed upon them (see Pinnavaia 2013), the unlimited space provided by the internet and by other electronic supports has eliminated the need to sacrifice words in twenty-first century dictionaries. In fact, the exclusion of dated words is no longer necessary. For example, items such as *bloomers* and *fatigues* that were out of fashion, or terms such as *corsets*, *nylons*, and *tweeds* that were dated already by the beginning of the twenty-first century can still be found in all the latest editions. Thanks to technology, "how to decide what cannot be left out and how to compress that into the space available" (Landau 1991, p. 42) is a challenge that twenty-first century lexicographers should no longer have to face.

That said, there are words that certainly cannot be left out of synchronic dictionaries; namely, the ones that reflect the state of the language at one set moment in time. It explains why so many new words in the learner's dictionaries point to new scientific and technological achievements. However, the findings of this research have shown that the new words in the learner's dictionaries are not solely the record of an evolving ontological world: they also point to a new way of thinking. The inclusion of items of clothing such as *burqa*, *chador*, *hijab*, *salwar kameez* in the latest editions of the dictionaries suggest that there is a new concern on behalf of editorial teams to foster a change of attitude and acceptance of the other. Were it simply the reflection of a new ontological state, these words would not have existed in the earlier editions of the dictionaries, but they do in some and inconsistently:

burqa/burka, chador are included in LDOCE4, MED2, OALD7; *dirndl, hijab, salwar kameez* in MED2 and OALD7, none of them appears in CCELD4 and CALD2. The lack of consistency in the recording of these terms across the early editions shows that at the beginning of the century to include such terms was purely a lexicographical choice. The fact that they all appear in the latest editions points to a moral obligation lexicographers now have to acknowledge that English society is made up of people and customs having different geographical, cultural, and political origins. In the name of tolerance and acceptance, a wide spectrum of variety seems to be *prioritized* in these latest editions, which no longer just mirror “the prevailing cultural view of our society that science and technology are of the highest importance” (Landau 1984, p. 21).

3.2 Legitimizing

Acknowledging that variation exists in society is not only conveyed in dictionaries by inclusion but also by descriptive labels. And even more than inclusion, descriptive labels legitimate evaluations. In representing a judgement on the items to which they are applied and on the categories to which they belong, labelled items indicate something that is peripheral to the norm, as opposed to unlabelled items that are the normative centre of language. The full range of information provided by labels available in English language dictionaries has been noted, among others, by Landau (1984), Quirk et al. (1985), Hausmann (1989), reiterated more recently, among other scholars, by Bergenholtz/Tarp (1995), Atkins/Rundell (2008), and Svensén (2009), and can comprise up to eleven types of restrictions covering the three macro socio-cultural functions of language: the ideational (etymological origins, temporal span, frequency of use, the region of use, subject field), the interpersonal (level of formality, if used by certain social groups only, the linguistic community's attitude, deviation from the cultural standard) and the textual (whether literary or poetic, if employed in written or spoken texts).

As the front matters report, all three types of labels are used in the five learner's dictionaries. As to their distribution, MED2¹ uses 44 labels, CCELD9² 33, OALD10³ 31 labels, CALD4⁴

- ¹ MED2 has 12 style and attitude labels (formal, humorous, impolite, informal, literary, offensive, old-fashioned, showing approval, showing disapproval, spoken, very formal, very informal); 14 regional labels (American, mainly American, Australian, British, Canadian, Caribbean, East African, Indian, Irish, New Zealand, Scottish, South African, Welsh, West African), and 18 subject field labels. It is worth pointing out that we were not able to retrieve this information from MEDonline. We presume it remains the same however.
- ² CCELD9 has 21 labels of style and attitude (approval, dialect, disapproval, emphasis, feelings, formulae, formal, humorous, informal, literary, offensive, old-fashioned, politeness, rude, spoken, technical, trademark, vagueness, very offensive, very rude, written), 6 regional labels (American, Australian, British, Irish, Northern English, Scottish), and 6 subject field labels.
- ³ OALD10 has 16 labels of style and attitude (approving, disapproving, figurative, formal, humorous, informal, ironic, literary, offensive, slang, specialist, taboo, dialect, old-fashioned, old use, saying) and 15 regional labels (Australian English, British English, Canadian English, East African English, English from Northern England, English from the United States, Indian English, Irish English, New Zealand English, North American English, Scottish English, South African English, South-East Asian English, Welsh English, West African English).
- ⁴ CALD4 has 21 labels of style and attitude (abbreviation, approving, child's word/expression, disapproving, female, figurative, formal, humorous, informal, literary, male, not standard, offensive, old-fashioned, old use, polite word/expression, saying, slang, specialized, trademark, written abbrevi-

30, and LDOCE6⁵ 20. As far as the differences across editions are concerned, some dictionaries innovate more than others. CALD and LDOCE introduce slight changes: the attitudinal labels “approving” and “disapproving”, inexistent in LDOCE4, are added to LDOCE6, whilst the temporal label “dated” in CALD2 is replaced by “old-fashioned” in CALD4, which also adds the regional labels “Indian English”, “South African English” along with the label indicating the medium “written abbreviation”. OALD introduces a few more changes: besides the replacement of “technical” with “specialist”, OALD10 removes the examples of use to define the labels “offensive”, and “taboo”,⁶ and changes the examples of use for “humorous”, “slang”, “old-fashioned”.⁷ The editions that differ most belong to CCELD, because CCELD9 provides new definitions and examples of use for the pragmatic labels “approval”, “disapproval”, “emphasis”, “feelings”, “formulae”, “politeness”, “vagueness”.⁸

What is and what is not labelled is not always a clear reflection of the state of the language but what each editorial team considers important for its readership. That MED2 includes more subject field labels than other dictionaries (even though paradoxically access to the dictionary via such topics is limited in this edition and not possible in MEDonline) discloses the importance the editorial team places upon presenting specialist vocabulary, given that “4000 new items of specialist vocabulary” have been introduced in the English language in the last twenty years (MED2, p. viii). The intention to record the state of the English language in such fine detail is reflected also in the number of geographical labels that not only the MED but also the OALD includes, in order to provide a thorough “coverage of World English” (MED2, p. viii). Whilst these labels marking specialist and/or regional lexemes may be synonymous of a more descriptive lexicographical method (Verkuyl/Janssen/Jansen 2008), the labels pointing to the interpersonal and textual functions of language reflect a more prescriptive method, which has characterised learner lexicography right from the outset.

Indeed, Rundell (1998, p. 337) reminds us how learner lexicography moves away from “the inappropriate model of the native-speaker’s dictionary of ‘record’ towards a more ‘utilitarian’ lexicography in which the needs of the user take precedence over all other factors”. The fact that all five dictionaries include an important number of labels regarding style and attitude points to a concerted action by all the editorial teams not just to describe the English language, but also to prescribe correct usage. This is particularly evident in OALD and CCELD that include more labels of attitude than the other dictionaries and make explicit their lexicographical plan in their front matters. In claiming that it has remained “true to the principles that Hornby established” (OALD10, p. vi), OALD legitimates the use of labels so “that the kind or style of English [learners] are using is right in that particular context”

ation), 8 regional labels (Australian English, Indian English, Irish English, Northern English, Scottish English, South African English, UK, US), and 1 subject field label.

⁵ LDOCE6 has 15 labels of style and attitude (approving, biblical, disapproving, formal, informal, humorous, literary, not polite, old-fashioned, old use, spoken, taboo, technical, trademark, written), 3 regional labels (American English, Australian English, British English) and 2 subject field labels.

⁶ In the definitions of the label “offensive” and “taboo” OALD7 respectively includes the examples *half-caste*, *slut* and *bloody, shit*.

⁷ For example, *humourous* in OALD7 is exemplified with the words *ankle-biter* and *lurgy*; in OALD10 with *fisticuffs* and *ignoramus*.

⁸ For example, the definition of *approval* in CCELD4 reads “you can choose words and expressions to show that you approve of the person or thing you are talking about, e. g. *angelic*”; in CCELD9 it reads: “the label *approval* indicates that you like or admire the person or thing you are talking about. An example of a word with this is *broad-minded*.”

(Hornby 1974, p. xxvi). Similarly, re-echoing Sinclair's concern that learners should be able to "distinguish between good and bad usage" (Sinclair 1987, p. xxi), CCELD announces that the ninth edition "will help [them] to understand not only the meaning of words but also how to use them properly in context" (CCELD9, p. xi). The differences between the number and types of labels across the five dictionaries shows that evaluating what to and what not to label is not always objective, but dependent upon the aims and scopes of each editorial team, which we have seen can oscillate between the descriptive and the prescriptive.

3.3 Action-orienting

In advising how to use language correctly, labels can go much farther than to prescribe. Labels of tone and register, which "explicitly indicate attitudes towards language use" (Stein 1997, p. 162), can indeed go as far as to proscribe linguistic behaviour, as the following, defined in the front matters of the five dictionaries, may clearly show:

- (1) CALD2/4:
OFFENSIVE: very rude and very likely to offend people.
- (2) CCELD4/9:
OFFENSIVE: likely to offend people, or to insult them; words labelled OFFENSIVE should usually therefore be avoided, e. g. cripple.
RUDE: used mainly to describe words which could be considered taboo by some people; words labelled RUDE should therefore usually be avoided, e. g. bloody.
VERY OFFENSIVE: highly likely to offend people or to insult them; words labelled VERY OFFENSIVE should be avoided, e. g. wog.
VERY RUDE: used mainly to describe words which most people consider taboo; words labelled VERY RUDE should be avoided, e. g. fuck.
- (3) MED2/online:
IMPOLITE: not taboo but will certainly offend some people.
OFFENSIVE: extremely rude and likely to cause offence
- (4) LDOCE4/6:
NOT POLITE: a word or phrase that is considered rude, and that might offend some people.
TABOO: a word that should not be used because it is very rude or offensive.
- (5) OALD7/10:
OFFENSIVE: expressions that are used by some people to address or refer to people in a way that is very insulting, especially in connection with their race, religion, sex or disabilities; (e. g. half-caste, slut only in OALD7). You should not use these words.
TABOO: expressions that are likely to be thought by many people to be obscene or shocking. You should not use them. (e. g. bloody, shit only in OALD7).

The labels and definitions above show how each dictionary has a different *action-oriented* or proscriptive attitude towards bad language. While caution of usage is implicit in all the labels, even among the softest, such as NOT POLITE or IMPOLITE, there is no doubt that there is a stark difference between each editorial team's approach in the application of labels.

Starting with CALD, we can see it uses one label only, OFFENSIVE. With this label lexicographers signal an unequivocal unpleasantness of use, but no explicit prohibition is made. In all the other dictionaries a prohibition is instead more or less declared. MED is prohibitive

in a covert way: the prohibition emerges from the definition of the label OFFENSIVE that contrasts with IMPOLITE which is defined as “not taboo”. The distinction between what is ‘sayable’ and ‘not sayable’ appears greater in LDOCE than in MED, because NOT POLITE signals a disagreeable word that could cause moral injury, unlike TABOO that explicitly prohibits usage.

More proscriptive still are the remaining two dictionaries. OALD uses two labels that are both powerful. Whilst in MED and LDOCE the two labels distinguish more offensive words from less offensive ones, in OALD OFFENSIVE is opposed to TABOO to indicate differing semantic areas of offence: the former signals words that offend in relation to sensitive issues; the latter words that are insulting because they are rude. In both cases users are warned not to use them. Like OALD, CCELD also pursues this typological distinction. In fact, it uses the label RUDE to highlight the words considered insulting because shocking, and the label OFFENSIVE to highlight those that are discriminatory. Although this semantic distinction is not as explicit here as it is in OALD, it is nonetheless made clear through the examples that support these definitions.

Unlike OALD, but like LDOCE and MED, CCELD also takes into account the degree of insult and offence. Words that are more than just offensive or rude are labelled as VERY OFFENSIVE or VERY RUDE. CCELD is the most precise of the five dictionaries in supplying labels. Not only does it distinguish different degrees of offense, as do MED and LDOCE, but it also takes into consideration the two typologies of offence that only OALD differentiates. In the definition of all four labels, CCELD lexicographers declare that words thus labelled should be avoided and emphasize it by means of a warning symbol.

The use of ‘harsher’ labels undoubtedly discloses a stronger action-oriented strategy by lexicographers, and there is no doubt that, of all the dictionaries examined, CCELD is the most proscriptive. Whilst this censorial attitude may seem to contrast with the principle of descriptive lexicography, it may also be interpreted as a conscious action of responsibility and protection in a highly judgmental society. Aware that bad language is “an area of usage where great skill and judgement are required for effective use”, already in the first edition Sinclair (1987, p. xx) deemed it fundamental to warn his non-expert readers that “rude, offensive, obscene, or insulting words should be treated with great care” (ibid.). Sinclair’s concern and voice evidently continues to inform CCELD’s twenty-first century editors too.

3.4 Unifying

If, on the one hand, applying labels gives editorial teams voice that may even at times hark back to the founding fathers of learner lexicography, on the other hand, the way word senses are set out and examples of use provided seems to take it away from them. Because twenty-first century lexicography demands that “word senses and examples of use [be] abstractions from clusters of corpus citations” Kilgariff (1999, p. 91), the lexicographer’s role in the construction of each entry appears less incisive, as if it were the dictionary speaking and not the compiler. As shown below, twenty-first century learner’s dictionaries list every word sense of a lemma.

- (6) CALD4⁹
1. SPEAK. To pronounce words or sounds to express a thought, opinion, or suggestion, or to state a fact or instruction
 2. THINK. To think or believe
 3. to give as an opinion or suggestion about something
 4. to show what you think
 5. when something or someone is said to be a particular thing, that is what people think or believe about them.
 6. To give information in writing, numbers, or signs.
- (7) CCELD4/9
1. When you say something, you speak words.
 2. You use say in expressions such as I would just like to say to introduce what you are actually saying, or to indicate that you are expressing an opinion or admitting a fact. If you state that you can't say something or you wouldn't say something, you are indicating in a polite or indirect way that it is not the case.
 3. You can mention the contents of a piece of writing by mentioning what it says or what someone says in it.
 4. If you say something to yourself, you think it.
 5. If you have a say in something, you have the right to give your opinion and influence decisions relating to it.
 6. You indicate the information given by something such as a clock, dial, or map by mentioning what it says.
 7. If something says something about a person, situation, or thing, it gives important information about them.
 8. If something says a lot for a person or thing, it shows that this person or thing is very good or has a lot of good qualities.
- (8) LDOCE4/6:
- 1 EXPRESS SOMETHING IN WORDS to express an idea, feeling, thought etc. using words
 - 2 GIVE INFORMATION to give information in the form of written words, numbers, or pictures – used about signs, clocks, letters, messages etc
 - 3 MEAN [transitive] used to talk about what someone means
 - 4 THINK THAT SOMETHING IS TRUE used to talk about something that people think is true
 - 5 SHOW/BE A SIGN OF SOMETHING to show clearly that something is true about someone or something's character
 - 6 SPEAK THE WORDS OF SOMETHING to speak the words that are written in a play, poem, or prayer
 - 7 PRONOUNCE to pronounce a word or sound
 - 8 SUGGEST/SUPPOSE SOMETHING used when suggesting or supposing that something might happen or be true
- (9) MED2/online
1. express something using words
 2. have opinion
 3. mean something
 4. give information/orders
 5. show what someone/something is like

⁹ CALD2 includes only four word senses (speak, think, give information, expression).

6. imagine something happening
 7. use something as example
 8. tell someone to do something
- (10) OALD10¹⁰
1. speak
to speak or tell somebody something, using words
 2. repeat words
say something to repeat words, phrases, etc.
 3. give written information
(of something that is written or can be seen) to give particular information or instructions
 4. express opinion
to express an opinion on something
 5. show thoughts/feeling
to make thoughts, feelings, etc. clear to somebody by using words, looks, movements, etc.
 6. show what somebody/something is like
[transitive] to show, sometimes indirectly, what somebody/something is like
 7. give example
[transitive, no passive] to suggest or give something as an example or a possibility

By giving space to each word sense of the verb *say*, all five reference works reflect a whole new method of dictionary-making that is based on the theory that every lexico-grammatical structure has a meaning (Firth 1957). Associative senses are no longer grouped under denotational senses, as was more common in the early days of learner lexicography and before the onset of corpus linguistics (Pinnavaia 2013). To do so now would probably be regarded as unnecessary tampering with the state of the language. Indeed, lexicographers are seemingly much less conspicuous than they used to be, generating wordlists based on frequency counts (Dohi 2001, p. 153), and providing definitions based on examples of use extrapolated from corpora. This has not only changed learner lexicography, but – as can be seen from the way the lemma *say* is treated – has attributed a more or less *unified* identity to all five dictionaries.

3.5 Naturalizing and universalizing

The *unified* identity that the twenty-first century learner's dictionaries take on, owing to the homogenous way in which word senses are dealt with, is further endorsed by the way illustrative material is handled. Just like word senses, examples of use are included in such a way as to seemingly free “the lexicographer from responsibility for the construction of the example” (Benson 2001, p. 96). The examples of use that illustrate the lemma *marriage* in all five dictionaries are a case in point:

- (11) CALD2/4:
They had a long and happy marriage
She went to live abroad after the break-up of her marriage
- (12) CCELD4/9:
In a good marriage, both partners work hard to solve any problems that arise.
His son by his second marriage lives in Paris.

¹⁰ In OALD7, the word senses are the same but presented in a different order.

- (13) LDOCE4/6:
She has three daughters from a previous marriage.
In Denmark they have legalized marriage between gay couples.
- (14) MED2/online:
A long and happy marriage
Too many marriages end in divorce.
- (15) OALD7/10:
A happy/an unhappy marriage
All of her children's marriages ended in divorce.

As can be read above, the lexicographers of all five dictionaries illustrate marriage in a similar manner: a happy and long relationship that can also end in divorce. The examples offer a very generic picture of the positive and negative aspects of marriage. Unlike the more stereotypical examples one may find in twentieth-century learner's dictionaries (see Pinnaia 2013, p. 300), these examples, moreover expressed as declarative sentences, not only sound neutral and objective but also authoritative (see Wenge 2016, p. 328). By distancing the lexicographer's voice, the dictionary, appears to be *natural and universal*: a spontaneous, inevitable, and unalterable instrument that reifies social life.

4. Conclusions

The natural, universal, and unified structures of the five learner's dictionaries, created by their similar layouts and the seemingly invisible nature of their compilers, underscores the well-founded claim that dictionaries hide ideologies. Indeed, just like dictionaries for native speakers, these dictionaries for non-native speakers "are surrounded by myths of 'objectivity'" (Benson 2001, pp. 4f.) that not only lend them credibility but also and more importantly authority. Even though the corpus-based method of extracting linguistic information has made twenty-first century lexicography a more objective practice, there is no doubt that lexicographical teams are still diffusing ideas and social tendencies in different ways. In this essay, we have attempted to show that different choices made regarding the macro and the micro-structures of two twenty-first century editions of each of the five learner's dictionaries CALD, CCELD, LDOCE, MED, and OALD can be likened to the ideological strategies that Eagleton (2007) identifies as rationalizing, legitimating, action-orienting, unifying, naturalizing and universalizing.

Indeed, we have shown how the differing number, denomination, and arrangement of topics by which each dictionary divides up its wordlist, along with the different number and types of labels each applies to define words is a clear reflection of the policies and intents of each lexicographical team and the publishing house it belongs to. In fact, whilst the decision to access words via semantic topics can certainly have important advantages for the language learner, as in the case of CALD, LDOCE, and OALD, it cannot be considered a stick that measures the reliability or descriptiveness of a dictionary. It simply stems from a procedure that prioritizes and rationalizes the truth in the interest of the dictionary-user. Similarly, by restricting words to certain uses, labels almost always "represent the views and prejudices of the established, well-educated, upper classes", whose prerogative it is to preserve and make legitimate their own use of the English language (Landau 1984, p. 303). Moreover, the fact that each learner's dictionary decides what to and what not to label and accompanies each label with a personalised explanation of its meaning endorses the introspective nature

of this lexicographical classification, and reveals the position dictionaries take in the description of language. In this research, CALD and MED seem to pursue a more objective approach, while LDOCE, OALD, and CCELD an increasingly more subjective and action-oriented one.

Although there is need for more detailed research of the five learner's dictionaries in order to examine more editions and more topics, we would like to conclude by saying that even though the strategies of rationalizing, legitimating, action-orienting, unifying, universalizing, naturalization have been seen to involve the making of all five learner's dictionaries, the differences between the dictionaries are stark. Produced by different publishing houses with different editorial policies, the five dictionaries are indeed far from being homogenous and none of them displays the whole truth regarding the English language, despite the impression each one may give. Indeed, for non-native speakers any one of these dictionaries often becomes a central and determining point of reference for the reception and the production of the English language. Consequently, each lexicographical team has a great responsibility towards this readership who, unlike native speakers, is less able to disentangle objectivity from subjectivity. In meeting the specific needs of learners, lexicographical teams' actions should thus be deeply pondered and well planned, because, as is well-known, the more their choices are clear-cut, the more the ideas governing and the factors promoting them are heightened. In trying to balance the "dictates of [their] profession, the demands of the culture [they are] trying to portray, and of the people [they are] writing for" (Chabata/Mahvu 2005, p. 259), it is only natural that lexicographers disclose a world view of beliefs. It is important, however, that for non-native speakers whose English language instinct needs nurturing these beliefs be as impartial and as helpful as possible.

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