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**Course paper**

**Types of dictionaries**

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# Introduction

There is a vast amount of different dictionaries available for users of the English language. All these dictionaries share the aspect that they provide information about English words and items, but they are also very different and need to be distinguished from each other. One may need a dictionary in one case and the same dictionary may be absolutely useless when one tries to solve another problem.

“Monolingual learners’, general monolingual, and bilingual dictionaries present a problem: in spite of what may be advertised on the outside cover of these texts, no single dictionary can adequately serve all users. A variety of dictionaries is required to suit the backgrounds, needs, and expectations of individual language learners” (BATTENBURG 24).

So different users and different questions require different dictionaries. One needs to know where to find the information asked for in a particular case, and one certainly needs more than one dictionary for different aspects of the English language. To avoid getting lost here, it is necessary to distinguish between the different types of dictionaries that exist.

This report provides some suggestions for distinction, amongst other things established through empiric research.

First, an outline of the different types of dictionaries is given, including general dictionaries (monolingual, bilingual), learner's dictionaries, historical dictionaries and encyclopedias.

Moreover, the typical structure of an entry in a dictionary is explained, because the dictionary entries examined later are mainly checked according to these parts of an entry; it is looked what parts they in- or exclude and how the parts are realized.

After the theoretical part, the empiric research is documented. Five dictionaries (monolingual American and British, bilingual English-German, learner's dictionary, historical dictionary) and one encyclopedia are compared in the way that three different items (general, encyclopedic, and regional) are looked up and the entries are compared in order to find differences and in this way get a guideline how and when to consult what dictionary.

# History of dictionary

A dictionary is a collection of words in one or more specific languages, often alphabetically (or by radical and stroke for ideographic languages), with usage of information, definitions, etymologies, phonetics, pronunciations, translation, and other information; or a book of words in one language with their equivalents in another, also known as a lexicon. It is a lexicographical product designed for utility and function, curated with selected data, presented in a way that shows inter-relationship among the data.

A broad distinction is made between general and specialized dictionaries. Specialized dictionaries do not contain information about words that are used in language for general purposes—words used by ordinary people in everyday situations. Lexical items that describe concepts in specific fields are usually called terms instead of words, although there is no consensus whether lexicology and terminology are two different fields of study. In theory, general dictionaries are supposed to be semasiological, mapping word to definition, while specialized dictionaries are supposed to be onomasiological, first identifying concepts and then establishing the terms used to designate them. In practice, the two approaches are used for both types.[3] There are other types of dictionaries that don't fit neatly in the above distinction, for instance bilingual (translation) dictionaries, dictionaries

of synonyms (thesauri), or rhyming dictionaries. The word dictionary (unqualified) is usually understood to refer to a monolingual dictionary of general-purpose.[4]

A different dimension on which dictionaries (usually just general-purpose ones) are sometimes distinguished is whether they are prescriptive or descriptive, the latter being in theory largely based on linguistic corpus studies—this is the case of most modern dictionaries. However, this distinction cannot be upheld in the strictest sense. The choice of headwords is considered itself of prescriptive nature; for instance, dictionaries avoid having too many taboo words in that position. Stylistic indications (e.g. ‘informal’ or ‘vulgar’) present in many modern dictionaries is considered less than objectively descriptive as well.[5]

A multi-volume Latin dictionary by Egidio Forcellini.

Although the first recorded dictionaries date back to Sumerian times (these were bilingual dictionaries), the systematic study of dictionaries as objects of scientific interest themselves is a 20th-century enterprise, called lexicography, and largely initiated by Ladislav Zgusta.[4] The birth of the new discipline was not without controversy, the practical dictionary-makers being sometimes accused by others of "astonishing" lack of method and critical-self reflection.

The oldest known dictionaries were Akkadian Empire cuneiform tablets with bilingual Sumerian–Akkadian wordlists, discovered in Ebla (modern Syria) and dated roughly 2300 BCE.[7] The early 2nd millennium BCE Urra=hubullu glossary is the canonical Babylonian version of such bilingual Sumerian wordlists. A Chinese dictionary, the c. 3rd century BCE Erya, was the earliest surviving monolingual dictionary; although some sources cite the c. 800 BCE Shizhoupan as a "dictionary", modern scholarship considers it a calligraphic compendium of Chinese characters from Zhou dynasty bronzes. Philotas of Cos (fl. 4th century BCE) wrote a pioneering vocabulary Disorderly Words (Ἄτακτοι γλῶσσαι, *Átaktoi glôssai*) which explained the meanings of rare Homeric and other literary words, words from local dialects, and technical terms.[8] Apollonius the Sophist (fl. 1st century CE) wrote the oldest surviving Homeric lexicon.[7] The first Sanskrit dictionary, the Amarakośa, was written by Amara Sinha c. 4th century CE. Written in verse, it listed around 10,000 words. According to the Nihon Shoki, the first Japanese dictionary was the long-lost 682 CE Niina glossary of Chinese characters. The oldest existing Japanese dictionary, the c. 835 CE Tenrei Banshō Meigi, was also a glossary of written Chinese. A 9th-century CE Irish dictionary, Sanas Cormaic, contained etymologies and explanations of over 1,400 Irish words. In India around 1320, Amir Khusro compiled the Khaliq-e-bari which mainly dealt with Hindvi and Persian words.[9]

The French-language *Petit Larousse* is an example of an illustrated dictionary.

Arabic dictionaries were compiled between the 8th and 14th centuries CE, organizing words in rhyme order (by the last syllable), by alphabetical order of the radicals, or according to the alphabetical order of the first letter (the system used in modern European language dictionaries). The modern system was mainly used in specialist dictionaries, such as those of terms from the Qur'an and hadith, while most general use dictionaries, such as the *Lisan al-`Arab* (13th century, still the best-known large-scale dictionary of Arabic) and *al-Qamus al-Muhit* (14th century) listed words in the alphabetical order of the radicals. The *Qamus al-Muhit* is the first handy dictionary in Arabic, which includes only words and their definitions, eliminating the supporting examples used in such dictionaries as the *Lisan* and the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

In medieval Europe, glossaries with equivalents for Latin words in vernacular or simpler Latin were in use (e.g. the *Leiden Glossary*). The *Catholicon* (1287) by Johannes Balbus, a large grammatical work with an alphabetical lexicon, was widely adopted. It served as the basis for several bilingual dictionaries and was one of the earliest books (in 1460) to be printed. In 1502 Ambrogio Calepino's *Dictionarium* was published, originally a monolingual Latin dictionary, which over the course of the 16th century was enlarged to become a multilingual glossary. In 1532 Robert Estienne published the *Thesaurus linguae latinae* and in 1572 his son

Henri Estienne published the *Thesaurus linguae graecae*, which served up to the 19th century as the basis of Greek lexicography. The first monolingual dictionary written in Europe was the Spanish, written by Sebastián Covarrubias' *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española*, published in 1611 in Madrid, Spain.[11] In 1612 the first edition of the *Vocabolario dell'Accademia della Crusca*, for Italian, was published. It served as the model for similar works in French and English. In 1690 in Rotterdam was published, posthumously, the *Dictionnaire Universel* by Antoine Furetière for French. In 1694 appeared the first edition of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*. Between 1712 and 1721 was published the *Vocabulario portughez e latino* written by Raphael Bluteau. The Real Academia Española published the first edition of the *Diccionario de la lengua española* in 1780, but their *Diccionario de Autoridades*, which included quotes taken from literary works, was published in 1726. The *Totius Latinitatis lexicon* by Egidio Forcellini was firstly published in 1777; it has formed the basis of all similar works that have since been published.

The first edition of *A Greek-English Lexicon* by Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott appeared in 1843; this work remained the basic dictionary of Greek until the end of the 20th century. And in 1858 was published the first volume of the *Deutsches Wörterbuch* by the Brothers Grimm; the work was completed in 1961. Between 1861 and 1874 was published the *Dizionario della lingua italiana* by Niccolò Tommaseo. Émile Littré published the *Dictionnaire de la langue française* between 1863 and 1872. In the same year 1863 appeared the first volume of the

Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal which was completed in 1998. Also in 1863 Vladimir Ivanovich Dahl published the Explanatory Dictionary of the Living Great Russian Language. The Duden dictionary dates back to 1880, and is currently the prescriptive source for the spelling of German. The decision to start work on the Svenska Akademiens ordbok was taken in 1787.

## **English Dictionaries**

The earliest dictionaries in the English language were glossaries of French, Spanish or Latin words along with definitions of the foreign words in English. The word dictionary was invented by an Englishman called John of Garland in 1220 - he had written a book *Dictionarius* to help with Latin diction. An early non-alphabetical list of 8000 English words was the *Elementarie* created by Richard Mulcaster in 1582.

The first purely English alphabetical dictionary was *A Table Alphabeticall*, written by English schoolteacher Robert Cawdrey in 1604. The only surviving copy is found at the Bodleian Library in Oxford. Yet this early effort, as well as the many imitators which followed it, was seen as unreliable and nowhere near definitive. Philip Stanhope, 4th Earl of Chesterfield was still lamenting in 1754,

150 years after Cawdrey's publication, that it is "a sort of disgrace to our nation, that hitherto we have had no... standard of our language; our dictionaries at present being more properly what our neighbors the Dutch and the Germans call theirs, word-books, than dictionaries in the superior sense of that title."

On 1616, John Bullokar contributed on the history of dictionary with his "English Expositor". Glossographia by Thomas Blount published in 1656, contains more than 10,000 words along with their etymologies or histories. Edward Phillips wrote another dictionary in 1658 entitled "The New World of English Words: Or a General Dictionary" which boldly plagiarized Blount's work, and the two renounced each other. This created more interest in the dictionaries. John Wilkins' 1668 essay on philosophical language contains a list of 11,500 words with careful distinctions compiled by William Lloyd. Elisha Coles published his "English Dictionary" in 1676.

It was not until Samuel Johnson's A Dictionary of the English Language (1755) that a truly noteworthy, reliable English Dictionary was deemed to have been produced, and the fact that today many people still mistakenly believe Johnson to have written the first English dictionary is a testimony to this legacy.[18] By this stage, dictionaries had evolved to contain textual references for most words, and were arranged alphabetically, rather than by topic (a previously popular form of arrangement, which meant all animals would be grouped together,

etc.). Johnson's masterwork could be judged as the first to bring all these elements together, creating the first 'modern' dictionary

Johnson's Dictionary remained the English-language standard for over 150 years, until the Oxford University Press began writing and releasing the Oxford English Dictionary in short fascicles from 1884 onwards. It took nearly 50 years to finally complete the huge work, and they finally released the complete OED in twelve volumes in 1928. It remains the most comprehensive and trusted English language dictionary to this day, with revisions and updates added by a dedicated team every three months. One of the main contributors to this modern day dictionary was an ex-army surgeon, William Chester Minor, a convicted murderer who was confined to an asylum for the criminally insane

## **American English Dictionaries**

In 1806, American Noah Webster published his first dictionary, *A Compendious Dictionary of the English Language*. In 1807 Webster began compiling an expanded and fully comprehensive dictionary, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*; it took twenty-seven years to complete. To evaluate the etymology of words, Webster learned twenty-six languages, including Old English (Anglo-Saxon), German, Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, French, Hebrew, Arabic, and Sanskrit.

Webster completed his dictionary during his year abroad in 1825 in Paris, France, and at the University of Cambridge. His book contained seventy thousand words, of which twelve thousand had never appeared in a published dictionary before. As a spelling reformer, Webster believed that English spelling rules were unnecessarily complex, so his dictionary introduced American English spellings, replacing "colour" with "color", substituting "wagon" for "waggon", and printing "center" instead of "centre". He also added American words, like "skunk" and "squash", that did not appear in British dictionaries. At the age of seventy, Webster published his dictionary in 1828; it sold 2500 copies. In 1840, the second edition was published in two volumes.

This section may stray from the topic of the article. Please help improve this section or discuss this issue on the talk page. (September 2015)

Austin (2005) explores the intersection of lexicographical and poetic practices in American literature, and attempts to map out a "lexical poetics" using Webster's definitions as his base. He explores how American poets used Webster's dictionaries, often drawing upon his lexicography in order to express their word play. Austin explicates key definitions from both the *Compendious* (1806) and *American* (1828) dictionaries, and brings into its discourse a range of concerns, including the politics of American English, the question of national identity and culture in the early moments of American independence, and the poetics of citation and of definition. Austin concludes that Webster's dictionaries helped redefine

Americanism in an era of an emergent and unstable American political and cultural identity. Webster himself saw the dictionaries as a nationalizing device to separate America from Britain, calling his project a "federal language", with competing forces towards regularity on the one hand and innovation on the other. Austin suggests that the contradictions of Webster's lexicography were part of a larger play between liberty and order within American intellectual discourse, with some pulled toward Europe and the past, and others pulled toward America and the new future.

## **Types of dictionaries**

To write about different types of dictionaries first requires a definition of the term 'dictionary' itself.

“Dictionaries are alphabetically arranged works that provide information, usually in concise form, about words or topics” (GIBALDI 8).

The use of a dictionary has different aspects: information, operations, users and purposes. The information can be the meaning of a word, its synonyms, pronunciation, or spelling, the etymology, or it can mean information about certain facts or names etc. Under operations, actions like finding meanings, finding words, translating something from one language into another language etc. are

summarized. Users can be children, pupils, trainees, teachers, critics, scientists, secretaries, and so on. Their purposes can vary extremely and range from learning more about one's mothertongue to learning a foreign language, from solving crossword puzzles to decoding texts in a foreign language and of course cover writing reports as well (compare HARTMANN 11).

As there are various kinds of dictionaries which list all sorts of things in sometimes varying ways, the information given can be extremely different in one dictionary compared to another.

First of all, this depends on the size of the dictionary. "To what extent the dictionary can answer the questions of the user about any word of the language depends upon the number of words to be covered in the dictionary", and of course on the space that each item is granted (TONO 9).

Second, it depends on the type of dictionary used. These different types of dictionaries, or at least some of them, will be looked at closer throughout this report.

## **Different Types of Dictionaries**

There are, as mentioned above, various types of dictionaries, for all kinds of languages and purposes, users and words. But as this report is restricted to some

English dictionaries, their characteristics and distinctions will be explained. There are some minor distinctive features, e. g. the question whether a dictionary is printed or electronic, but as this simply refers to the form of presentation and not to the content of the dictionary, it is neglectable in this case. Also, this report does not deal with thesauruses, because they are of a very different structure than a dictionary, both in their order of entries (not alphabetically but categorized) and in the structure of the entries themselves, which contain basically synonyms and no definitions, grammar or pronunciations etc.

The first important distinction is whether one deals with a dictionary or an encyclopedia.

## **Bilingual dictionary**

Printed bilingual dictionaries come in all sizes and shapes.

A bilingual dictionary or translation dictionary is a specialized dictionary used to translate words or phrases from one language to another. Bilingual dictionaries can be unidirectional, meaning that they list the meanings of words of one language in another, or can be bidirectional, allowing translation to and from both languages.

Bidirectional bilingual dictionaries usually consist of two sections, each listing words and phrases of one language alphabetically along with their translation. In addition to the translation, a bilingual dictionary usually indicates the part of speech, gender, verb type, declension model and other grammatical clues to help a non-native speaker use the word. Other features sometimes present in bilingual dictionaries are lists of phrases, usage and style guides, verb tables, maps and grammar references. In contrast to the bilingual dictionary, a monolingual dictionary defines words and phrases instead of translating them.

## History

This section requires expansion. (July 2011)

The Roman Emperor Claudius (10 BCE – 54 CE) is known to have compiled an Etruscan-Latin dictionary, now lost.

One substantial bilingual dictionary was the Mahāvyutpatti. The Mahāvyutpatti (Wylie: Bye-brtag-tu rtogs-par byed-pa chen-po), The Great Volume of Precise Understanding or Essential Etymology, was compiled in Tibet during the late eighth to early ninth centuries CE, providing a dictionary composed of thousands of Sanskrit and Tibetan terms designed as means to provide standardised Buddhist texts in Tibetan, and is included as part of the Tibetan Tangyur (Toh. 4346).

Dictionaries from Hebrew and Aramaic into medieval French were composed in the European Jewish communities in the 10th century CE. These were used for understanding and teaching the Talmud and other Jewish texts.

### Challenges

The most important challenge for practical and theoretical lexicographers is to define the functions of a bilingual dictionary. A bilingual dictionary works to help users translate texts from one language into another or to help users understand foreign-language texts. In such situations users will require the dictionary to contain different types of data that have been specifically selected for the function in question. If the function is understanding foreign-language texts the dictionary will contain foreign-language entry words and native-language definitions, which have been written so that they can be understood by the intended user groups. If the dictionary is intended to help translate texts, it will need to include not only equivalents but also collocations and phrases translated into the relevant target language. It has also been shown that specialized translation dictionaries for learners should include data that help users translate difficult syntactical structures as well as language-specific genre conventions.

In standard lexicographic terminology, a bilingual dictionary definition provides a "translation equivalent" – "An expression from a language which has the same meaning as, or can be used in a similar context to, one from another language, and can therefore be used to translate it." [3] The British lexicographer

Robert Ilson gives example definitions from the Collins-Robert French-English English-French Dictionary. Since French chien = English dog and dog = chien, chien and dog are translation equivalents; but since garde champêtre = rural policeman and rural policeman is not included in the English-French dictionary, they are not culturally equivalent.

Both phrases can be understood reasonably well from their constituents and have fairly obvious contrasts with garde urbain in French or with urban policeman in English. But garde champêtre has a specific unpredictable contrast within the lexical system of French: it contrasts with gendarme. Both are policemen. But a gendarme is a member of a national police force that is technically part of the French Army whereas a garde champêtre is employed by a local commune. Rural policeman has no such contrast.

Perhaps the most difficult aspect of creating a bilingual dictionary is the fact that lexemes or words cover more than one area of meaning, but these multiple meanings don't correspond to a single word in the target language. For example, in English, a ticket can provide entrance to a movie theater, authorize a bus or train ride, or can be given to you by a police officer for exceeding the posted speed limit. In Spanish these three meanings are not covered by one word as in English, but rather there are several options: boleto or entrada and infracción/multa, and in French with billet or ticket and procès-verbal, or in German by Eintrittskarte or Fahrkarte and Mahnung/Bußgeldbescheid.

Recently, an automatic method for the disambiguation of the entries of bilingual dictionaries has been proposed[6] that makes use of specific kinds of graphs. As a result, translations in each entry of the dictionary are assigned the specific sense (i.e., meaning) they refer to.

### **Multilingual dictionaries**

Multilingual dictionaries are closely related to bilingual dictionaries. In a multilingual dictionary, a person looks up a word or phrase in one language and is presented with the translation in several languages. Multilingual dictionaries can be arranged alphabetically or words can be grouped by topic. When grouped by topic, it is common for a multilingual dictionary to be illustrated.

#### **Publishers**

There are many publishers and manufacturers of both printed and electronic bilingual dictionaries. For example:

Ectaco

Velazquez Press

Franklin Electronic Publishers

HarperCollins

Langenscheidt

Larousse

Merriam-Webster

SYSTRAN

Dunwoody Press

Sample Pages of Some Dunwoody Press Publications

Alpha Dictionary Language Directory

## Conclusion

As I conclude, I want to say that dictionaries help people to connect with each other and also learn their languages, cultures, traditions etc.

During my course paper I found out a lot of information about dictionaries, its types and history.

No matter how different the types of dictionaries are in their content, they all share more or less the same structure in their entries. There are different features that can occur in a dictionary entry, and not all of them are realized in each entry or in each dictionary.

I think that, dictionary is the necessary and helpful thing for the people who learn foreign languages, for students who study at the university and of course for tourists too. It is like a map of the language.

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