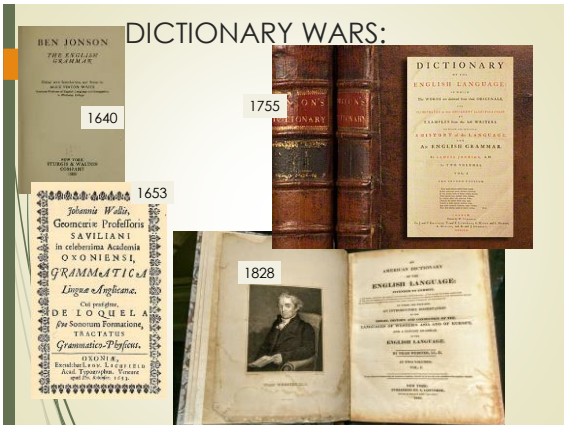


LEXICOGRAPHY

DICTIONARY WARS; SOURCES OF THE LEXICON



2 PHILOSOPHIES OF LEXICOGRAPHY

DESCRIPTIVISM

- To **document** the state of the language at a **given time**;
- Examples broadly sourced;
- Attention to cross-sectional representation;
- BUT recognizes the role and power of standardization

PRESCRIPTIVISM

- To **dictate** the **standard** of a language in order to **fix it in time**;
- Examples sourced from "standardized" or "exemplary" works;
- Application of a particular class/regional standard;

"These aren't the droids you're looking for."

BRITAIN

S. Johnson's *A Dictionary of the English Language*

1755, 40,000 words

- Descriptive in philosophy but not "impartial": aim to regulate through application of rules and standards
- Sources and examples drawn from "exceptional" and "literary" sources (Shakespeare, Dryden, Pope, Milton)

UNITED STATES

Noah Webster's *A Compendious Dictionary of the English Language*

1806, 28,000 words

- "as an independent nation... to have a system of our own, in language as well as government"
- Joseph Worcester's *A Comprehensive Pronouncing... Dictionary of the English Language*
- Elite conservatism
 - Emphasis on "refined" pronunciation

"Aren't you a little short for a lexicographer?"

Swift: *I am your father!*
Johnson: *I'LL NEVER JOIN YOU!*

Jonathan Swift

"...if [English] were once refined to a certain standard, perhaps there might be Ways found out to fix it for ever; or at least, **till we are invaded and made Conquest by some other State**; and even then our best Writings might probably be preserved with Care, and grow in Esteem, and the Authors have a chance for Immortality.

It is better a Language should not be wholly perfect, than that it should be perpetually changing."

Samuel Johnson

"When we see men grow old and die at a certain time... we laugh at the elixir that promises to prolong life...; and with equal justice may the lexicographer be derided, who being able to produce no example of a nation that has preserved their word and phrases from mutability, shall imagine that his dictionary can **embalm** his language, and secure it from **corruption and decay**."

ETYMOLOGY:

- ▀ the study of lexical history, the origins of lexemes, their relationship to one another, and their development over time

FOLK (POPULAR) ETYMOLOGY:

- an explanation of the origins of a word that seems logical and likely or simply fascinating and so takes on authority
- **EG.** "stork" from "stick" (Germanic, OE?): the "stick" brings babies

ONOMASTICS: Anthropomastics

- the study of the etymology of names
- Jane Johnston Schoolcraft
= Bamewawagezhikaquay (Woman of the Sound the Stars Make Rushing Through the Sky.
- likely a Romanticized translation, since bamewawa = "going across sounding"; gezhik = "the sky" and aquay = "woman."

Topomastics:

- The study of place names
 - Philadelphia & Washington
 - Haida Gwaii
 - Lheidli T'enneh

Mohawk Chief Joseph Brant on General John Graves Simcoe, first governor of Upper Canada (c. 1791): "Lord Simcoe, has done a great deal for this province, he has changed the name of every place in it."

COLONIZING WITH NAMES

We will give the names of our fearless race
 To each bright river whose course we trace;
 We will leave our memory with mounts and floods,
 And the path of our daring in the boundless woods!
 And our works unto many a lake's green shore,
 Where the Indian's graves lay, alone, before. (Lines 41-46)

"Song of Emigration" by Felicia Hemans (Romantic-era British poet), 1838

The LEXICON

- The total number of words in a language
- LEXEME: unit of meaning
 - Freeze
 - Anti-
 - Antifreeze

SO/
 Is "antifreeze" one lexeme or three? (affixation)
 Is "bear" one lexeme or two? (homonyms)
 Is "empty" one lexeme or two? (word class conversion)
 Is "flowerpot" one lexeme or three? (compounds)
 Is "brunch" one lexeme or three? (portmanteau, neologism)
 Is "miller" one lexeme or two? (onomastics)

ORGANIZING THE LEXICON: SEMANTIC FIELDS

- Sets of LEXEMES belonging to a particular domain of meaning:
 - Economics: market, interest, cash
- Organize lexemes beyond their individual denotations
- Etymological study allows us to make inferences about forces shaping a culture at a given time:
 - Arrival of Roman missionaries → new vocabulary; old vocabulary adopted into new semantic fields;
 - the influx of economic metaphors into E.M.E.
