

Ulrike Rothe. *Das einsprachige Wörterbuch in seinem soziokulturellen Kontext: Gesellschaftliche und sprachwissenschaftliche Aspekte in der Lexikographie des Englischen und des Französischen.* 2001, vii + 282 pp. Lexicographica. Series Maior 108. ISBN 3 484 39108 1. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer. Price: €68.00.

The main title of this work might be a bit misleading, because it creates the impression that a very wide and general topic will be discussed. The subtitle, however, is much more to the point, since the author specifically investigates English and French monolingual dictionaries in view of certain aspects. The author makes it clear (2001: 210) that she does not want to describe general "influences" of a socio-cultural nature on the contents of dictionaries, but rather how socio-cultural trends and traditions had an impact on the methodological aspects of lexicography in Britain and France. This means that generalisation for other languages will only be possible after further in-depth studies.

The author sets out to demonstrate systematically and empirically how, in the two particular societies, differences exist in the conception of dictionary writing because of differences in the two language communities, and poses as a sub-question (2001: 2) whether one could say that dictionaries are "culturally-determined". She investigates five contemporary general monolingual dictionaries in French (*Le Nouveau Petit Robert* (1993) (NPR); *Le Petit Larousse Illustré* (1995) (PL); *Dictionnaire de la Langue Française*; *LEXIS* (1994) (LEXIS); *Le Robert Micro-Poche* (1988) (MR); and *Dictionnaire du Français au Collège* (1995) (DFColl)), and four contemporary general monolingual dictionaries in English (*Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English* (1995⁹) (COD); *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* (1995⁵) (AOLD); *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (1995³) (LCODE); and *Collins COBUILD English Dictionary* (1995²) (COBUILD)). For testing the results of her analyses, several other French and English dictionaries are also occasionally involved in her investigation. Rothe (2001: 2) states that her study is not intended as a contribution to the field of dictionary criticism, and therefore her main aim is not to suggest ways of improving the dictionaries discussed.

Rothe lists the criteria for the selection of dictionaries (2001: 14), which include that the chosen dictionaries should already have been on the market for a while, and should have undergone at least one new edition. They should more or less address the same target groups, and have more or less the same range with regard to their lemma collection and their microstructure. Even though her own study is mainly synchronic, Rothe places the dictionaries under discussion in their historical context.

The exposition starts, in Chapter 1, with contemplations on the notion of "culture" and how Rothe interprets this notion in her study. Reference is made to Hausmann's (1983, 1985) expression "dictionary landscape" ("*paysage dictionnaire*") (2001: 3-4) and Rothe (2001: 213) formulates her basic premise on Hausmann's (1997: 184) statement that "dictionaries, as cultural products, follow the cultural guidelines of the society". She also draws on Rey's publications

(1987a and 1987b) and Rey and Delasalle (1979) for her definition of "culture". Rey (1987a: 20, 34) contends that the influence of culture on dictionaries can be discerned most clearly in items for labelling, definitions, lexicographical examples, and the structure of dictionary articles. Other aspects identified by Rey are also taken into account by Rothe, such as preference for diastatic versus diaphasic criteria, preference for citations versus examples constructed by the lexicographer, the question whether the sources of citations are given, and the market situation of the dictionary in the country of origin. Ideological issues, such as the degree of normativity, should also, Rothe (2001: 8) explains, be taken into account.

Therefore, central issues investigated in this publication are: (a) metalinguistical attitudes as exemplified by traditions of linguistic politics, research results on language attitudes, and the presence of special-purpose dictionaries dealing with particular aspects of language (for example, new words or slang); (b) attitudes towards the dictionary as an institution and the social tasks of lexicography (inferred from statements from the mass media, from reports on user surveys, and from the front matter of the dictionaries); (c) linguistic theories and popular points of view on language that were developed or which prevail in a given society; and (d) the situation of the dictionary market and the dictionary as a commodity (Rothe 2001: 11, 277). In addition, consideration is given to structural differences between the two languages concerned, which may also have an influence on the methods used in dictionaries.

Chapter 2 gives a survey of recent developments in the dictionary market in Britain and France. It is interesting that English dictionaries are more focused on advanced foreign learners, whereas French dictionaries are more targeted towards a general group of educated French-speaking users. This means that in English, learner's dictionaries emphasise the encoding function of the dictionary (to help foreign learners), and general monolingual dictionaries are meant for decoding (for first-language speakers). In French dictionaries, this distinction between the two functions is not important, because dictionaries are targeted towards French-speaking users who would not have problems with encoding. In addition, "user-friendliness" is a concept which is of great importance in English dictionaries. This includes several characteristics of dictionaries, such as the clarity of the metalanguage in items used for the construction of articles and in definitions, as well as the ease with which information can be found.

Rothe carefully and precisely describes the actual empirical work in Chapters 3 to 7. Chapter 3 deals with the selection of lemmata, usage labels and usage notes. Even though labelling practices are arbitrary in many instances, and dictionary compilers tend to copy from other dictionaries and in the process may violate the linguistic realities of the languages described, Rothe detects certain interesting trends with regard to usage labels and usage notes.

Normativity is very important in this respect. Reference is made to Ripfel's (1989) distinction between "normative", "descriptive" and "covertly normative" dictionaries. The last-mentioned category is found when dictionaries exclude

certain lemmata because of e.g. vulgarity (as sometimes happens in school dictionaries). Normativity therefore has an impact on the selection of material to be used as lemmata. It also affects the choice of lexicographical examples and the formulation of definitions. To determine the theoretical points of departure of the dictionary editors, Rothe (2001: 35) recommends that one should compare the scrutinised material with the explanations given in the front matter of the dictionary. For example, the number of markers given is not necessarily, according to Rothe (2001: 58), an indicator of the normativity in the dictionary. It is quite possible that a particular dictionary sets its standards of "standard language" very high, and that certain lemmata were excluded before compilation started. Then, of course, such examples of "low" or "offensive" usage would not be included in the dictionary, and also not marked as such. This method would constitute a policy of covert normativity.

Labelling practices of stylistically and diachronically marked vocabulary are also investigated in Chapter 3 because they shed light on the issue of normativity. Interesting differences between the two countries come to the fore, as well as some common trends. French dictionaries tend to work more with diastatic criteria indicating levels of social stratification (such as *argot*, *populaire*), whereas English dictionaries prefer to use diaphasic criteria indicating register (such as *slang*, *spoken*, *written*). Rothe (2001: 46) concludes that English dictionaries use pragmatic and non-evaluative considerations for the grouping of labels, whereas French dictionaries tend to make use of a continuum which distributes labels according to a hierarchical and evaluative system. It is even possible to ascribe these differences in the dictionaries to parallels with recent theoretical linguistic trends which developed in both countries. Pragmatics has been very popular in English linguistics, but in France this has not been the case.

Another interesting fact given by Rothe (2001: 50) is that in English, class stratification is usually determined by pronunciation and not so much by lexical differences. In French, however, the opposite is true. Rothe (2001: 51-52) ascribes this to the fact that in France, the Académie Française was very influential in establishing the *bon usage*, while there has never been such an important, unifying body in English-speaking countries. In England, Rothe (2001: 72) claims, the "spirit of English liberty" did not tolerate too much state intervention in language matters. The *bon usage* in France was, from the beginning, defined diastatically. Literary usage by *les bons auteurs* (the great authors) was set as a good example of *bon usage*, and the label *littéraire* can still be seen abundantly in French dictionaries as a way of encouraging "correct" usage. When looking at current corpora, it is clear that in England actual spoken language and written "non-literary" language (such as texts taken from the mass media) play an important role.

According to Rothe's analyses (2001: 60), English dictionaries are also more prepared to include material with "lower" diastatic marking. French dictionaries, by contrast, generally tend to filter their inclusion of everyday lan-

guage. Rothe's conclusion is that French dictionaries are on the whole more normative than their English counterparts, and that in the case of French learner's dictionaries, there are certain tendencies towards covert normativity. In addition, it seems that French general monolingual dictionaries and French learner's dictionaries are much more homogeneous than the English ones, where general monolingual dictionaries differ in many respects from learner's dictionaries (2001: 81). This might once again be traced back to the fact that English learner's dictionaries are usually compiled for non-English speakers.

With regard to diachronic marking, Rothe finds that French dictionaries tend to take language use of past eras into account, continuing the tradition of *bon usage*, whereas English dictionaries lean towards contemporary usage. For example, COBUILD explicitly states in its front matter that it aims to be non-historic and that it has included material exclusively from the 1990s. This is also true of the inclusion of neologisms, where French dictionaries are generally more conservative than the English ones.

In Chapter 4, Rothe investigates differences in the formulation of lexicographical definitions. She looks at defining techniques and defining styles, and for this purpose she analyses 300 definitions for noun lemmata, and 200 definitions for adjectival lemmata in each English and French dictionary. Rothe (2001: 87) draws on the definition typology by Rey-Debove, which include defining by means of (a) the typical Aristotelian definition where interchangeability plays a role (Rey calls this type *inclusion*); (b) analysis; (c) synonymy; (d) opposition; and (e) a metalinguistic definition. In this typology, Rothe only takes the first section of a definition into account, and uses Hanks' (1987: 120) term *multiple-bite strategy* to refer to definitions which consist of more than one section. It seems that in the case of nouns, the Aristotelian (inclusion) type of definition is used most frequently in both languages, even though French dictionaries use it even more than English dictionaries. In addition to this, English dictionaries use definition by means of synonym more often than French dictionaries. The multiple-bite strategy is used far more frequently in English dictionaries than in French ones. In defining adjectives, English dictionaries clearly prefer giving chains of synonyms (as in COD *babyish* 'childish, simple') and participial constructions (e.g. *factional* 'belonging to a faction'), whereas the French prefer relative clauses (e.g. *babillard* 'qui aime à babiller').

In interpreting the data on definition types she collected from the dictionaries in question, Rothe engages in an interesting discussion about the underlying theoretical and semantic points of departure in the two countries. In French dictionaries, one can often detect connections with structural semantics, and the quite prominent use of componential analysis features, resulting in the frequent application of the Aristotelian definition with the *genus proximum* and *differentiae specifica*. For example, LEXIS states in its front matter that it uses componential analysis and rejects the use of definitions by means of chains of synonyms. Rothe, however, warns that one should not see this preference in French dictionaries as a direct influence of structural semantic theory (2001: 92-

93). It would be more appropriate to speak of a certain relationship between these theories and the preference for certain definition styles. English dictionaries, on the other hand, show preference for prototype semantics, as has been developed in the 1980s in Anglo-American circles in opposition to structural semantics. The focus is on "typification" (Hanks 1979: 33) instead of "complete analysis". Of course, COBUILD with its complete sentences which serve as "explanation" rather than "definition", presents a class of its own.

Rothe looks even deeper into linguistic theory when she distinguishes between the so-called mentalistic approach to meaning and the operational theories on meaning. The mentalistic approach proceeds from the assumption that words have a conceptual "core" meaning, and that the relationship between words and the categories of objects to which they refer exists on a mental level. Meaning is an idea, a concept, which is established independently from the use of a word. French dictionaries tend to prefer this approach in determining meaning. Rothe also points out that French lexicographers tend to take diachronic matters more seriously than is the case in English lexicography. In English dictionaries, historical information is usually limited to etymological information.

The operational theories of meaning which developed in English linguistic circles, on the other hand, are "theories of usage" and draw on Wittgenstein's thesis that "the meaning of words lies in their use". Together with this view, Firth (1957a: 180, 1957b: 194) also proposed that the collocation of a word is very important in determining its meaning. Corpus linguistics, in which word frequencies and collocations play a dominant role, also, Rothe (2001: 128, 144) asserts, influenced English lexicography in this regard.

Chapter 5 deals with article structures and the ordering of senses in articles. Rothe selected strongly polysemous verbs and adjectives for this analysis, because they would be more context-dependent than nouns. Her conclusions are that English dictionaries generally tend to use more primary meanings and less sub-meanings and glosses, whereas French dictionaries have considerably less primary meaning discriminations. Contextual information is often moved to a separate "idioms section" in English dictionaries, or treated in a separate entry altogether. English articles typically consist of many relatively short paragraphs, whereas French articles tend to be longer and more continuous.

Even the ordering of the different aspects of meaning in dictionary articles shows different trends in the two languages under consideration. Rothe (2001: 130) distinguishes between (a) the historical principle, where the oldest meaning is presented first; (b) the "logical" principle, where the "core" meaning is presented first; (c) the frequency-oriented principle, where the most frequent meaning is presented first, and (d) the distributional principle, where the syntactical distribution or the different semantic contexts in which a word can occur, determine the order of presentation. On the whole, contemporary English dictionaries seem to prefer the frequency principle. French dictionaries are more heterogeneous in this regard, but the logical principle seems to be the

most popular among French lexicographers.

Preferences for linear versus hierarchical structures, and macro-structural ordering — and the relation to language structures (i.e. the derivational systems of the two languages under consideration) — also receive attention. Here, French dictionaries tend to prefer formal methods to use hierarchical structures on the primary levels of meaning discrimination, linking to a well-established tradition of treating polysemy inclusively in one article by means of the logical principle. English dictionaries generally prefer linear structures in the definition, which is, for instance, constituted by the presentation of chains of synonyms. They normally only use hierarchical structures on the secondary levels of meaning discrimination, which are divided by paragraph headings. This also links to the focus on "user-friendliness" in English lexicography, where it is argued that secondary meanings can be found more easily when the typography provides for headings.

When looking at the macrostructure of the dictionaries, Rothe detects that English dictionaries in most cases show the tendency to group formal and semantically motivated suffix derivations together in one entry, even when it means that the alphabetical order is violated. Most of the dictionaries use so-called "text blocks" where derivations are grouped together by means of nesting. French dictionaries, on the other hand, generally do not deviate from the alphabetical order. They mostly use a strictly initial-alphabetical, or straight-alphabetical ordering of lemmata. The question whether this state of affairs has anything to do with the structural characteristics of the two languages is investigated by Rothe. English derivations are often much further from the original Latin-Roman forms in the word family than is the case in French, as, for example, in *father* – *paternal*. Presenting these semantically motivated derivational families in English poses a special problem which is less crucial in French.

Even in the presentation of lexicographical examples, Rothe finds differences between the two lexicographical traditions. French dictionaries generally tend to use literary citations, also preferring to give references to sources. Even if English dictionaries use citations, they normally do not give references to the sources of citations. But English dictionaries generally rely rather on examples constructed by the lexicographer, or draw on examples from computer-based corpora. These corpus-based examples are not from literary works, but usually from written texts from mass media such as newspapers and magazines. Rothe links this situation to the fact that normativity plays an important role in French lexicography, and that the statistically proven language usage of the majority is important in English lexicography.

Rothe ends her investigation of lexicographical methods and cultural backgrounds by a specific study of collocations — their lexicographical treatment have proved to be "culturally significant" in the previous chapters.

It seems that English lexicography on the whole shows more innovative tendencies than French lexicography. Rothe ascribes this to the big market for English language dictionaries, and to the fact that France has a longer lexico-

graphical tradition. French dictionaries are more homogeneous in their characteristics, and in the lexicographical methods used. French dictionaries are more "linguistically" oriented because they tend to take linguistic theories into account, and English dictionaries are generally more user-oriented because they are pragmatically oriented towards the market.

The author warns (2001: 216) against an over-interpretation of certain clues if the relationship between the dictionary structure and aspects of culture is not explicitly stated in the front matter of the dictionary. Lexicographical texts should be seen as complex products of several factors: the socio-cultural setting prevailing at the time of compilation, established lexicographical traditions, and the market which puts pressure on the lexicographer to create original dictionaries without violating certain cultural norms. Rothe concludes that an element of a given culture has the greatest chance of becoming lexicographically relevant if the methodological options which it implies are already rooted in a given lexicographical tradition, and if sales are likely to be increased.

This publication is important for scholars who study the impact of cultural and linguistic traditions on general monolingual dictionaries. Although the author focuses on general monolingual dictionaries and learners' dictionaries in English and French, the issues she raises and the procedures she uses in her investigation may inspire new thinking and new insights for other languages, and for other types of dictionaries.

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