

Historical development of British lexicography

Periods

- **British lexicography in (VIII-XVIII cc.)**
- **British lexicography in (XIX-XX cc.)**

Points to discuss

- Historical backgrounds from classical times
- The origin of English lexicography:
 - manuscript glossaries;
 - bilingual glossaries;
 - translating dictionaries.

Points to discuss

- A new stage of development: from a glossary to explanatory dictionary:
 - hard word dictionaries
 - common words dictionaries
 - dictionaries of new words
 - etymological dictionaries
- Samuel Johnson's personality and his innovations
- The origin of the OED

What is “dictionary”?

“dictionary”

comes from the Latin

“dictio”

“the art of speaking”

“dictionarius”

“a collection of words”

Encyclopaedia Britannica definition

“dictionary is used to denote a book listing words of a language with their meanings and often with data regarding pronunciation, usage and/or origin”

Medieval scholastics

- Papias the Lombard
- Alexander Neckham
- Johannes de Garlandia (John Garland)
- Hugo of Pisa
- Giovanni Balbi of Genoa

The 1st stage of English lexicography (VII-XIV cc)

- Corpus Glossaries
- Leiden Glossaries
- Epinal Glossaries
- Erurt Glossaries

called after their keeping place

The 2nd stage of English lexicography (XIV-XV cc)

French – English vocabulary for the use of travellers,
by William Caxton, England, 1480.

Words and expressions appeared in parallel columns on 26
pages.

The 2nd stage of English lexicography (XIV-XV cc)

Latin-English vocabulary

by John Stanbridge

published by Richard Pynson, 1496

The 2nd stage of English lexicography (XIV-XV cc)

English-Latin vocabulary

called the

Promptorius puerorum

(“Storehouse [of words] for Children”)

by Pynson in 1499

The 3-d stage of English lexicography (XV-XVI cc)

English-French dictionary

by John Palsgrave, 1530

“les claircis-ement de la langue francoise”

(“Education of the French Tongue”)

The 3-d stage of English lexicography (XV-XVI cc)

Welsh-English dictionary

by William Salesbury, 1547

The 3-d stage of English lexicography (XV-XVI cc)

Latin-English dictionary

by Sir Thomas Elyot, 1538

the 1st author who used the word 'dictionary'
to his reference book in English

The 4th stage of English lexicography (XVI c)

**“Introductory to write and to pronounce
French”**

by Alexander Borel, 1521

**“Introductory for to lerne to rede, to
pronounce and to speke French trewly”**

by Giles du Guez, 1527

The 4th stage of English lexicography (XVI c)

“Ductor in Linguas”, the Grude into Tongues

by Richard Minshen, 1599

dictionary of English and ten other languages,
**British or Welsh, Low Dutch, High Dutch, French,
Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Latin, Greek and
Hebrew**

The 5th stage of English lexicography (XVII c)

“A Table Alphabetical of Hard Words”

by Robert Cawdrey, 1604

- 120 pages /the proper spelling and meaning of some 3.000 words
- archaic words
- Latin non frequent borrowings
- slang jargon words

The 6th stage of English lexicography (XVIII c)

**“A New English Dictionary: or, a lompleat
Collection of Most Proper and Significant
Words, Commonly Used in Language...”**

By John Kersey,

London, 1702

The 6th stage of English lexicography (XVIII c)

“New World of Words”

by Edward Phillips, 1658

**“The New World of Words: or a Universal
English Dictionary”**

by John Kersey, London 1706

this edition is called **“the Dictionary of Kersey-Phillips”**

The 6th stage of English lexicography (XVIII c)

“Universal Etymological English Dictionary”

by Nathaniel Bailey, 1721

Samuel Johnson

The 1st modern dictionary of English-Latin

“A Dictionary of the English Language in Which the Words are Deduced from their Originals and Illustrated in their General Significations by Examples from the Best Writes”

by Samuel Johnson, 1775

Samuel Johnson

task

to make a different kind of dictionary

Samuel Johnson

- includes all the words in English, not just the difficult ones
- shows how to divide words into syllables and where words came from
- establishes a consistent system of defining words
- contains illustrative quotations from famous writers

Samuel Johnson

- 43.000 words
- more than 114.000 supporting quotations from literature
- This task took nearly nine years
- two huge tomes, each the size of a lectern Bible, each of which would fill about five fat volumes today

Samuel Johnson

Lexicographer

" a writer of dictionaries, a harmless drudge that busies himself in tracing the original and detailing the signification of words"

Samuel Johnson

Dedication

A servile address to a patron

Samuel Johnson

Goat

A ruminant animal that seems a middle species
between deer and sheep

Samuel Johnson

Lunch

As much food as one's hand can hold

Samuel Johnson

Oats

A grain, which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people

Samuel Johnson

“I am not yet so lost in lexicography, as to forget that words are the daughters of earth and that things are the sons of heaven”

“Dictionaries are like watches: the worst is better than none, and the best cannot be expected to go quite true”

Samuel Johnson

basic principles of vocabulary entry arrangements:

- clear differentiation and numbering of word meanings
- including a lot of illustrations providing quotations
origin

The end of XVIII-th century

- “A New Dictionary of the English Language”

by Dr. William Kenrick, 1773

- “A General Dictionary of English Language”

by Thomas Sheridan, 1780

- “Critical Pronouncing Dictionary and Expositor of the English Language”

by John Walker, 1791

British lexicography in XIX c

Jacob Grimm, Franz Bopp, and Rasmus
Rask

developed a rigorous science of “comparative philology” and a new era of dictionary making was called for

British lexicography in XIX c

Franz Passow, 1812

set forth the canons of a new lexicography, stressing the importance of the use of quotations arranged chronologically in order to exhibit the history of each word

British lexicography in XIX c

Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish language

by John Jamieson, 1808

British lexicography in XIX c

New Dictionary of the English Language

by Charles Richardson (1836 – 1837)

continues to be a valuable repertory of illustrations

British lexicography in XIX c

Richard Chenevix Trench

called upon the Philological Society (1842) to complete the work already done by other lexicographers

such dictionary would register all omitted words and senses and supply all the historical information in which these works were lacking, and should give every notable point in the life-history of every word

British lexicography in XIX-XX c

- Finished in 1928, in over 15.000 pages with three long columns each
- Reprinted, with a supplement, in 1933 (12 vol) with the title “**The Oxford English Dictionary**”
- The **OED** it has been known ever since, a definitive historical dictionary of the English language.