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

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IDEOLOGY

- There is no single and simple definition for Ideology.

- A material process of production of ideas, beliefs, values in social life.

- 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, it is also a suasive device.

EAGLETON'S IDEOLOGICAL STRATEGIES (2007)

- *Rationalizing*: provides plausible explanations for social behaviour which might otherwise be the object of criticism;

- *Legitimating*: establishes one's interests as broadly acceptable;

- *Action-oriented*: extends from an elaborated thought to the minutiae of everyday life;

- *Unifying*: lends coherence to the group/classes holding it and bestows unity upon society;

- *Universalizing*: values and interests that are specific to a certain time and place are projected as the values and interests of all humanity;

- *Naturalization*: 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.

IDEOLOGY IS ALSO DISCOURSE

- "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

- 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 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" (Benson 2001, p. 4).

- 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" (Benson 2001, p. 8).

A GREAT RESPONSIBILITY IN MAKING LANGUAGE CHOICES

- In Britain and USA no academies of the English language exist: dictionaries stand in for such language academies.

- 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: deciding what is central and peripheral.
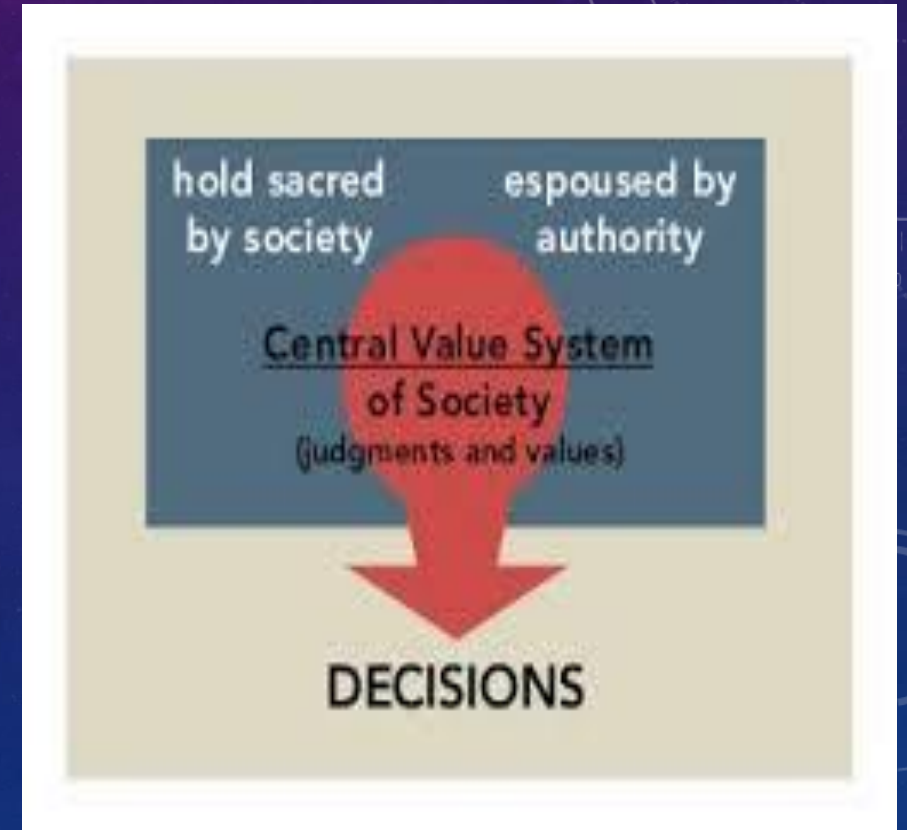
RESEARCH METHOD

- Synchronic and diachronic examination of the macro-structural level (the wordlists) and the micro-structural level (the definitional styles) of 21st century learner's dictionaries of English.

- Comparison between: 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) **in order to investigate lexicographical choices and not purely ontological ones.**

- Restricted to topics regarding daily life, business and jobs, clothing and fashion, computer technology, education, politics and government, religion, and society.

RESULTS

- Each dictionary categorizes or *rationalizes* its wordlist differently.

- The differences in the number and types of descriptive labels across the five dictionaries *legitimate* different evaluations on language use.

- In advising how to use language, such labels can have different *action-orienting* functions that can range from descriptive, prescriptive, and proscriptive in each dictionary.

- The similar layout and structure of word senses and examples of use give *unity* to all five dictionaries.

- This unity makes each dictionary appear *natural and universal*: a spontaneous, inevitable, and unalterable instrument that reifies social life.

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RATIONALIZING AND *PRIORITIZING* WORLD VIEWS

- For accessing purposes, LDOCE, and OALD classify their words into a greater array of topics (e.g. arts, business, clothes, etc.): LDOCE6 and OALD10 have a more intricate and detailed classification than LDOCE4 and OALD7.

- All five dictionaries include new words (see front matters) that record ontological change.

- No need to sacrifice dated/out of fashion words in twenty-first-century dictionaries: e.g. *bloomers, fatigues, cords, nylons, tweeds.* Exclusion is a lexicographical choice and no longer a necessity!

- ALL the latest editions of the dictionaries include terms such as *burqa, chador, hijab, salwar kameez.* This inclusion *prioritizes* a way of thinking, based on tolerance and acceptance.

- It is not a new ontological state (*burqa/burka, chador* were already included in LDOCE4, MED2, OALD7; *dirndl, hijab, salwar kameez* in MED2 and OALD7, none of them in CCELD4 and CALD2).

LEGITIMATING WORLD VIEWS VIA DESCRIPTIVE LABELS

- Three functions: **ideational, interpersonal**, **textual**.

- Differences in number of labels: MED2 44, CCELD9 33, OALD10 31, CALD4 30, LDOCE6 20.

- **MED2 privileges ideational labels (18** specialist/ 14 regional): "4000 new items of specialist vocabulary" with wider "coverage of World English" (MED2, p. viii) ➡ a more descriptive method (cf. verkuyl et al. 2008)

- **OALD10 (16 labels) and CCELD9 (21 labels) privilege interpersonal ones (style and attitude):**

OALD has remained "true to the principles that Hornby established" (OALD10, p. vi), legitimating the use of labels so "that the kind or style of English [learners] are using is right in that particular context" (Hornby 1974: xxvi).

CCELD9 re-echoes Sinclair's concern that learners should be able to "distinguish between good and bad usage" (Sinclair 1987: xxi), saying that it "will help [them] to understand not only the meaning of words but also how to use them properly in context" (CCELD9, p. xi).

➡ a more prescriptive method (cf. verkuyl et al. 2008).

PRESCRIBING AND PROSCRIBING LANGUAGE BEHAVIOUR: THE *ACTION ORIENTING* FUNCTION OF TONE AND REGISTER LABELS

- **CALD2/4:**
  OFFENSIVE: very rude and very likely to offend people.

- **MED2/online:**

IMPOLITE: not taboo but will certainly offend some people.

OFFENSIVE: extremely rude and likely to cause offence.

- **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

- **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).

- **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.

THE LAYOUT OF WORD SENSES AND EXAMPLES: A *UNIFYING ACTION* IN ALL FIVE DICTIONARIES

- Twenty-first-century lexicography demands that "word senses and examples of use [be] abstractions from clusters of corpus citations" Kilgarriff (1999, p. 1), based on the theory that every lexico-grammatical structure has a meaning (Firth 1957).

- Associative senses are no longer grouped under denotational senses.

- This has changed learner lexicography and attributed a more or less *unified* identity to all five dictionaries.

S.V. *SAY* : WORD SENSES

MED2/online s.v. *say*

- 1. express something using words

- 2. have opinion

- 3. mean something

- 4. give information/orders

- 5. show what someone/something is like

- 6. imagine something happening

- 7. use something as example

- 8. tell someone to do something

LDOCE4/6 *s.v. say*

- 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

UNIVERSALIZING AND *NATURALIZING* TRUTH VIA NEUTRAL AND OBJECTIVE EXAMPLES OF USE

- Just like word senses, examples of use are included to seemingly free "the lexicographer from responsibility for the construction of the example" (Benson 2001: 96).

- Expressed as declarative sentences, they 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.

S.V. *MARRIAGE:* EXAMPLES OF USE

- CALD2/4:
- *They had a long and happy marriage*
- *She went to live abroad after the break-up of her marriage*
- 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.*
- LDOCE4/6:
- *She has three daughters from a previous marriage.*
- *In Denmark they have legalized marriage between gay couples.*
- MED2/online:
- *A long and happy marriage*
- *Too many marriages end in divorce.*
- OALD7/10:
- *A happy/an unhappy marriage*
- *All of her children's marriages ended in divorce.*
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CONCLUSIONS

- 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.

- 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 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.

- 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 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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Thank you

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