

Oskar Reichmann. *Historische Lexikographie. Ideen, Verwirklichungen, Reflexionen an Beispielen des Deutschen, Niederländischen und Englischen.* Studia Linguistica Germanica 111. 2012, 586 pp. ISBN 978-3-11-028255-9. e-ISBN 978-3-11-028269-6. Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter.

In the introduction to this substantial work, Oskar Reichmann states his three objectives with the publication. Firstly, he wished to describe the scientific (especially linguistic and philological) and cultural-pedagogic activity called "historical lexicography" within its social context. As a result, he wanted to expose the ideas and interests behind dictionary writing that inspired lexicographers to compile dictionaries in their own languages about historical eras, works of authors, linguistic variation, etc. since the early modern period in German, Dutch and English societies which consequently made historical lexicography possible. Secondly, he wished to disclose the presuppositions in both the theory of language and the theory of history through which historical lexicography became a reality. His third objective was to identify the entire specialised apparatus comprising the methods used in lexicography. According to Reichmann, one can describe these three objectives as "ideological", "linguistic-theoretical" and "methodical". The reason for involving the lexicographical works of three languages is to highlight correlations and differences within a certain part of Europe, which can serve as a norm in the cultural sciences and declare such correlations as being normal.

Reichmann uses numerous examples from German, Dutch and English historical lexicography to illustrate his theoretical discussions, even though the examples from German historical lexicography appear more frequently — especially examples from the *Frühneuhochdeutsches Wörterbuch (FWB)*, on which he himself worked intensively for many years. He affords attention to the lexicography of phases in the history of these languages as well the development of the lexicography of *langue*, including for example, author lexicography. He maintains that lexicography traditionally was usually oriented more towards semasiology than towards syntax or morphology, and therefore concentrated more on semantic and pragmatic issues than on grammatical ones. Nouns received more attention than, for example, particles. He admits that his focusing so much on German lexicography may not be interesting to speakers of English for instance, but he did not aim to write a comprehensive and detailed history of German, Dutch and English lexicography. For scholars interested in historical lexicography, however, this publication will nevertheless be of invaluable assistance.

It is impossible to deal in detail with every aspect of this comprehensive study. Therefore, I will simply give a brief overview of some important aspects of the content and mention some issues for those interested in using the book as a reference source.

The first part of the book (Part A) deals with historical lexicography in social and scientific contexts when societies wanted to document their own history in order to understand the present better. Often, this was motivated by

their interest in language and literary texts. Reichmann asserts that lexicographers usually aim to do something meaningful in their societies when they decide to compile a dictionary, and their personal convictions play a role here. Historical lexicography concentrates on putting a historical perspective on the content; it also takes into account proven theoretical guidelines, for example, with regard to language phases. Historical dictionaries, however, are not simply linguistic special-field publications for specialist use only: they are also tools in the process of establishing and strengthening a language-historical textual and literary culture within a specific nation.

Lexicographers encounter several problems during the compilation process. These include the problems of collection, the ordering of the collected data, the treatment of the data, and deciding on the structure of the data, resulting in the problem of data accessibility. In addition, they have to decide *what* needs to be documented, having to make selections from all available data, and having to decide what is more important. Finally, they have to decide which medium of publication they will use, e.g. printed or electronic.

In their decision on an approach, historical lexicographers have a choice between a purely *historical perspective* or a *perspective relevant to present times*. In the first approach, one would typically document an earlier stage of a language (e.g. Old High German) or authors or groups of authors who used earlier stages of a language (e.g. Martin Luther or the Minstrels). One could then describe the text elements diachronically or synchronically. The latter would only concentrate on the specific language phase as if there were no past or future, whereas a diachronic description would take into account different developmental phases in language use. When a historical dictionary approaches the data from a perspective *relevant to present times*, on the other hand, it will contain all available etymological and historical semantic information on the language items. One example of this type of approach is the *Deutsches Wörterbuch (DWB)* by the brothers Grimm. Reichmann (2012: 20) presents an illuminating figure depicting the various approaches.

Reichmann also looks at the production processes of historical dictionaries, which vary according to type. Nowadays, historical lexicography in the German-speaking countries seems to be mainly limited to academic circles, but there are no empirical studies to determine the reception of historical dictionaries. Funding always remains a problem in the realisation of these dictionaries. According to Reichmann, historical lexicography — be it in the old style or electronically produced — needs a new ideology and concomitant new implementations.

After some sections dealing with groups of users and reasons for the use of historical dictionaries (amply illustrated with examples), Reichmann concludes the first part of his book with a discussion of ideologies influencing the making of historical dictionaries. Dictionaries may often serve political, patriotic or nationalist ends, but they may also aim at educating the broader society with regard to their own history, literature, environment and culture. These ideological viewpoints may lead lexicographers to apply value judgements

during the processing of the material. For example, qualitative categories may appear, such as "high literature". Certain word fields may be restricted, as Reichmann (2012: 76, note 102) mentions, where, for example, *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles (NED)* of 1928 would highly value words from literature but at the same time limited inclusion of words from the scientific, technical and sexual fields. An extreme example of this approach can be found in *Trübners Deutsches Wörterbuch* (Trübner) which displays nationalist and fascist ideas (see also Mückel 2005 for an analysis of the first four volumes of this dictionary which were compiled during the National-Socialist era in Germany). Fortunately, German lexicography is nowadays pluricentric, which means it tries to be neutral and be inclusive of diverging viewpoints.

Part B of *Historische Lexikographie* classifies historical dictionaries into different types (see pages 98-99 for a comprehensive list of types and their features as suggested by Reichmann), whereas Part C describes the corpora and corpus excerption. The latter involves the extraction of citations and the interpretation of the word occurrences in historical texts.

Aspects taken into account here are, amongst others, the size and nature of the corpus — the number of existing texts and the possible regional and field-specific varieties to be excerpted. The method of selecting the lemmas and the information to be included will depend on the type of dictionary envisioned, its size and aims and the medium of publication (whether printed or electronic). In addition, one should distinguish between primary and secondary corpora. The former consist of the actual texts from a particular period, and the latter are scientific works from later periods discussing and interpreting texts or lemmas from the period. Of course, preference is given to primary corpora, and secondary corpora mainly function to verify the data in the primary corpora. Reichmann deplores the fact that none of the historical dictionaries of the older language phases in German, Dutch and English contains any information on the way in which the compilers selected and balanced their corpora, the only exception being the *FWB*.

Reichmann discusses different methods used in corpus excerption. One distinction is between *linear* and *punctual* excerption. The former occurs when the person doing the excerption reads a source from beginning to end and selects potential units for inclusion in the dictionary. It is also possible to do linear excerption by working through the glossary of a text. Usually the person doing excerption here is not the same person who will determine the corpus and/or formulate the dictionary articles. Punctual excerption, on the other hand, is the exact opposite, when the same person doing the excerpts is also the one who has to write the dictionary articles. In this process, the person proceeds from the lexicographical units which need to be included, and then accesses the texts at the exact points where these units occur in the texts — so that the text is not read as a whole. Of course, only someone who is an expert in a particular field can do this type of work.

Only after the successful excerption of the lexical units, can the actual lexi-

cographical process start. Reichmann explains this in Part D, which forms the most comprehensive part of the book. This lexicographical process includes the compilation of hundreds of thousands of dictionary articles accompanied by items that give more or less a paraphrase of their meanings and refer to other information. The types of lexicographical information and the components included in such dictionary articles receive attention against the background of the ideological assumptions, theoretical objectives and specific methods of historical lexicography underlying specific dictionaries. Reichmann adds his critical comments, drawn from his lifelong experience with historical lexicography, especially with the *FWB*.

In Part D of the book, Reichmann devotes many pages to the presentation of a systematic and theoretical foundation for the approach to meaning explanations. He also discusses the value of lexical signs, onomasiological networks, the treatment of phrases and syntax, word formation and word families and finally the citations.

The first aspect with which Reichmann deals is the conventions according to which information is selected for inclusion. At least the lemma sign, the meaning(s) and citations/examples should appear in the dictionary. Additional information could include variations in spelling and form, morphological inflections, syntax and phrases; pragmatic information on its distribution across language regions, historical eras, social strata and groups, as well as text types, similar expressions to which it is related or stands in opposition, etc.

Problems in selecting lemmas (whether one-word or multiword lemmas) include asking oneself whether a word is "worthy" of being included, in the sense of the lemmas having a general or specialised meaning. Other issues include the orthography of the lemmas with their variants and the order in which one would list them. Reichmann (2012: 178-179) shows some examples of markers that are used to help with the identification of lemma forms within the dictionary articles. The famous "finding problem" is also relevant here, because a dictionary user will not be able to find a particular word if its written form is unknown. Here, Reichmann finds approaches from several perspectives, such as:

- (i) a linguistic approach, dealing with the fact that lexicographers want to select, from a series of connotations and variant forms, a form that could serve as a so-called "construct lemma" (problematic concepts here are *inter alia* "basic form", "construct lemma", "citation lemma", etc.);
- (ii) an ideological language-historical approach, which for example gives preference to certain historical periods, such as Middle High German, as the ideal form;
- (iii) a historical-teleological approach, which claims that earlier forms can be found more easily when they are classed with later forms from later periods (which are more familiar to users);
- (iv) a location-oriented approach, which considers one particular region as the most important area and uses the forms of that area;

- (v) an explanatory approach, which believes older forms to be insufficient and need to be "corrected";
- (vi) a practice-oriented approach which, amongst others, deals with the identification of similar lemma signs on the basis of one's prior knowledge;
- (vii) an approach oriented towards the present, trying to link older forms to present-day forms;
- (viii) a frequency-oriented approach, which takes the most frequently used form as lemma; and
- (ix) an approach compliant with convention, building on current lexicographical conventions.

Reichmann also investigates the use of indices in historical dictionaries. In addition, compounds and inflections receive attention in relation to the "finding problem", as well as the etymology of the words. He gives examples of the treatment of etymological items in dictionary articles (2012: 191-210) and lists methods which different historical dictionaries use to deal with them. The Grimm brothers, for example, attempted to include all the meanings of a lexical expression, all the meanings of all the units that could be established in a word family, all historical, vernacular and social variants of each member of the word family, plus all similar units in other, genetically related languages. This led to the formation of a construct called the *Urbegriff* or *original concept*. The *Third Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary* (OED 2000 online), on the other hand, after its long preceding history, now has a sceptical approach towards tracing back words to their roots. In its foreword, it states: "References are no longer made to hypothetical reconstructed Indo-European forms. Instead, etymologies refer to recorded cognates formed from the assumed base" (2012: 197, note 62). This is in stark contrast to early dictionaries, such as that by Samuel Johnson, who even stated his intentions in the dictionary title: *A Dictionary of the English Language: in which the Words are Deduced from their Originals [...]*. Reichmann, however, mentions that Johnson's idea was not feasible, because combining the writings of the "best writers" with the original meanings of the words was not very practical.

The Dutch *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal* (WNT), under influence of the Grimm brothers, gives much attention to etymology, but is on the other hand critical of the Grimms' approach (Reichmann 2012: 206). Reichmann lists some excellent etymological dictionaries, among which the Dutch *Etymologisch Woordenboek van het Nederlands* (*Et. Wb. Ned.* (2003)), of which three volumes have so far appeared, as well as that by J. de Vries (1997) and that by P.A.F. van Veen and N. van der Sijs (1997).

The next section of the book deals with the meaning of the lemma signs. Reichmann discusses this aspect in detail, using amongst others the example of the Early Modern High German word "geschichte" (2012: 255-278). Lexicographers follow certain steps when they want to determine the meaning of lemma signs. The first step is to read all the citations at least once, in order to orientate

themselves in the field and the contexts in which the lemma signs appear. Then follows the interpretation of the citations, which in its turn is followed by sorting them into classes. The question of how a lexicographer systematically determines the meanings, especially if there is only one lexicographer at work, has up to the present not been described in detail. There is, he maintains, no metalexicographical literature in German, Dutch or English which explains how a dictionary article comes into being (2012: 255). Reichmann states that this could become a very impressionistic procedure when done by a single lexicographer. He gives examples of methods that could guarantee objective descriptions of lemma signs. Synonymous expressions found in the citations could be one such method, as are expressions showing a high degree of similarity. In addition, expressions which have been used across different time periods may also be helpful. One of the problems is that historical texts mainly originated as spoken texts, and only gradually found their way into written documents. The lexicographer only has the written texts with which to work — the social and historical-actional contexts have to be considered.

To explain and convey the meaning of the lemma signs systematically, Reichmann distinguishes between different types of meaning explanations, namely, (i) "simple" versus "complex" meaning explanations, (ii) explanations making use of "synonyms" and those using "paraphrases", and finally (iii) "compact" versus "diffuse" meaning explanations. The simple explanation usually consists of only one or a few synonyms, or a short paraphrase. Complex explanations, on the other hand, contain longer series of synonyms and more detailed, syntactically complex word groups (which could be synonyms, but do not have to be). They usually contain paraphrases rather than merely synonyms and mention relationships such as frames to which a particular lemma sign may belong, as well as all kinds of additional descriptions. Such complex explanations also have comprehensive citations.

As for the second type of meaning explanations, describing the meaning of lemma signs by means of synonyms and paraphrases is not exactly the same as the dichotomy of "simple" and "complex". When making use of synonyms, the lexicographer tells the user that a particular synonym can take the place of the lemma in the context. Synonym explanations indicate that the meaning has remained more or less stable throughout the ages. Paraphrases, on the other hand, indicate the possibility, not the reality, that the explanation has the potential to fulfil the interpretative gap. They indicate however that there is no specific synonym or equivalent for the particular lemma sign, and that the lemma sign is used differently at present from its use in historical texts. These two types of explanations occur in combination in all historical dictionaries.

According to Reichmann, one can directly perceive the distinction between "compact" and "diffuse" meaning explanations when looking at their typographical layout. Compact explanations contain letter types in different sizes and blocks of citations, whereas diffuse explanations contain all the article items in one microstructural unit. This distinction is purely descriptive and not

subject to evaluative judgement. However, Reichmann discusses reasons for using compact explanations, and they definitely make a dictionary article visually more accessible. On the negative side, they use more space, which is problematic in printed dictionaries. If they become too long, they become complex, making it tedious to work through all the hierarchical structures.

One issue with which Reichmann deals is that of the governing criteria for approaches to meaning explanations: the measure of abstraction, the delimitation of one meaning from another, the number of explanations and their internal ordering, as well as the networks between them. Here, Reichmann distinguishes five procedures of verification, namely, (i) a field test, (ii) testing opposites, (iii) testing word formation, (iv) testing syntagmas, and (v) testing the value of the signs.

In the field test procedure, the lexicographer draws up a network field of meaning-related expressions, based on the citations. The more citations, the more comprehensive such a field will be. The testing of opposites, on the other hand, rests on the same principle as the field test, but deals with antonyms. In testing word formation, the lexicographer will look at the possibilities for compound words to be formed in relation to the particular lemma sign, and the syntagma test comprises of drawing up lists of syntagmas which cluster around a specific distinguishable meaning (of a particular lemma sign or expression). Testing the value of the signs means that the lexicographer can verify particular meanings, based on the citations.

One can also order single meanings in historical dictionaries by applying various criteria. Reichmann distinguishes between historical criteria, geographical and sociological ones, the criteria of frequency, generic relations, specificity, concreteness, the possibilities for word formation, closeness in content, syntactical structure, etymology, alphabetical order, and practical considerations. He discusses each of these criteria (2012: 341-351), using interesting examples to illustrate his arguments.

When consulting historical dictionaries, users can get help through different designs for or markers within a dictionary article. These include the medium of language (e.g. by listing synonyms), but also explicit and implicit items of separation within the dictionary article, so that readers may find different sections more easily. Reichmann also discusses the use of labels (2012: 369-379), which is not only relevant for marking lemma signs according to historical periods, linguistic and geographical areas, social groups and levels, but also according to text types. Once again, he gives many examples from Dutch, English and German historical dictionaries (2012: 372-379).

An entire section is devoted to onomasiological networks and the way they are treated within the articles of historical dictionaries (2012: 379-404). Reichmann's conclusion is that citations in existing historical dictionaries often do not give clearly discernible onomasiological demarcations for the synonyms in a particular field, which hampers user-friendliness. Nevertheless, even in dictionaries focusing on a semasiological approach, onomasiological informa-

tion is necessary in order to reveal relationships of synonymy to the user. Reichmann singles out the newly published *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary* (HTOED 2009) as a giant leap towards describing the origin and history of a word as well as "tracing how a *meaning* emerged and came to be expressed in words". The authors built up a taxonomy that distinguishes on the first level between the "external world", the "mental world" and the "social world". On lower hierarchical levels, they then form "categories" and "subcategories" — creating onomasiological links in this way. The precursor to this *Historical Thesaurus* is the *A Thesaurus of Old English* (TOE). In this dictionary, which is "conceptually arranged", there are eighteen large groups, which include the "physical world", with subdivisions such as "earth", which once again has subdivisions such as "surface of the earth", which in their turn is subdivided into categories such as "north", and so forth.

In his discussion on the use of paraphrases to describe the meanings of words, Reichmann is of the opinion that if a lexicographer uses a corpus in the compilation process, it might be difficult to prove that a specific paraphrasal description of a word is indeed acceptable as a meaning explanation. Some problems that arise here include whether paraphrases should receive the same status as the lemmas they describe and be entered as lemmas as well, and the order in which to present such paraphrases within a dictionary article. In spite of his warnings in relation to the use of paraphrases, Reichmann admits that at the beginning of his career he regarded paraphrases as less relevant, but as time went by he came to realise their usefulness (2012: 411, note 242).

Syntagmatic information in historical dictionaries should also be drawn from the corpus, and lexicographers should ask themselves whether they have space to add syntagmatic citations apart from the normal citations which explain the meaning of a word. The particular dictionary function will help to determine the nature and extent of the syntagmatic information.

The section on word formation and the treatment of word families again contain numerous examples from historical dictionaries in German, Dutch and English (2012: 432-471).

In addition, Reichmann presents a detailed discussion of citations and their treatment. Apart from the different requirements for citations, he mentions three possibilities where citations may appear within a dictionary article. It could stand *before* the meaning explanation(s), *after* the meaning explanation(s) or *within* the part of the dictionary article that explains the meaning — in the latter position, it can also take on different forms.

He presents a typology for citations with reference to the problem of selection of the lemmas. These include (i) the text-internal definition type of explanation, (ii) characterisations, (iii) identifications, (iv) frame-oriented attributive citations, (v) expressions indicating antonyms and (vi) expressions indicating hyponyms and hyperonyms. For each of these types, Reichmann offers several examples. The order for listing citations also receives attention. They may be ordered in chronological order according to historical periods, in

a specific geographical order, or in combinations using different principles.

Dictionaries sometimes present comments by the lexicographer, and Reichmann also discusses this phenomenon. Even though one could say that every dictionary article that a lexicographer writes is already a specific comment (or formulation by the lexicographer), the comment referred to here is actually rather a metalexicographical one — it documents linguistic facts *about* the language items in question. These comments can appear in any of the information types. Usually, however, they deal with the lexicographer's assessment of issues such as particularly relevant features to be taken into account, motivation for the selections or choices which may also have been motivated and selected differently, verification of particular selections and formulations, and additional knowledge of lexicographical, semantic, factual or text-historical knowledge stemming from the lexicographer's own experience and field-related expertise. Reichmann pays attention to lexicographers' comments in each type of dictionary item that occurs in the dictionary articles of historical dictionaries, illustrating his discussion with numerous examples.

The last question that Reichmann deals with is whether it is possible to give information on frequency of occurrence. According to him, this is not actually possible in historical lexicography, in the sense of submitting information for each single lemma by means of an indication of quantity or a specific number of occurrences. Absolute numbers can, of course, nowadays be obtained by using modern digital methods, usually in connection with citations. Lexicographers generally make use of additional formulations such as "relatively", "usually", "somewhat", "often", etc., for lemmatic items.

As conclusion to the book, Part E contains a comprehensive reference list of the dictionaries mentioned in the book as well as other works relevant to the topic. Apart from the many historical and other dictionaries he used in his investigation, Reichmann also worked through monographies, volumes and dissertations dealing with the topic of historical dictionaries in general and with specific dictionaries in particular; discussions of cultural, philosophical and historical issues such as memory (e.g. Aleida Assmann 2006) and other relevant aspects pertaining to historical dictionaries and their compilation. A very handy index appears right at the end of the book.

This study is very worthwhile for students of historical lexicography, and for lexicographers who intend to compile historical dictionaries. Reichmann deals conclusively and comprehensively with all aspects, and the reader can learn much from this formidable master of historical lexicography. It is a book that can be recommended without reserve.

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