

**Mariusz Kamiński.** *A History of the Chambers Dictionary*. Lexicographica Series Maior 143. 2013, xii + 297 pp. ISBN 978-3-11-031250-8. e-ISBN 978-3-11-031273-7. ISSN 0175-9264. Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter. Price: €84.

As there have been few attempts at a systematic study of the history of popular general dictionaries, this book on the *Chambers Dictionary*, whose tradition goes back to the nineteenth century is especially worthy of cognisance. This study by Kamiński traces the development of the *Chambers Dictionary* through its successive editions: the three editions which appeared during the last thirty years of the nineteenth century, the first dating from 1867, the nine editions which were published during the twentieth century, the first in 1901, and the second about fifty years later in 1952, and the four editions originating from the first eleven years of the twenty-first century. This comparative approach gives scholars and students insights into the procedures followed by the *Chambers* compilers, the aims they wished to achieve and the problems they encountered during the consecutive revisions of the dictionary.

After explaining his way of numbering the editions and his method of sampling to ensure a consistent comparison of the editions, Kamiński expounds in Chapter 1 the methodological and theoretical foundations of his analysis of the structure of the successive editions of the dictionaries: the arrangement of entries, the selection of morphological forms, the choice and growth of vocabulary, defining meaning, the order and discrimination of senses, etymology, syntagmatic and paradigmatic information, pronunciation and outside matter. He discusses each of these points in the context of the original edition in Chapter 5, and of the subsequent editions in Chapters 6–15. The framework of the analysis has been based partly on Hausmann and Wiegand (1989) and their followers, for example Frączek (1999), in which one of the recurring themes is the major principle of the theory of lexicographical functions, according to which dictionaries are considered as objects of use meant for a specific group of users (Tarp 2008; Wiegand 1987).

Chapter 2 presents an outline of the biographies of the Scottish brothers William and Robert Chambers, the founders of the W & R Chambers publishing house. Robert died in 1871, a year before the publication of the second edition of the *Chambers Dictionary*, and William in 1883, after which Robert Chambers (1832–1888), William's nephew, became the head of the firm. Since the 1993 edition, the *Chambers Dictionary* has been published by Chambers Harrap.

By describing the socio-historical factors which stimulated the growth of educational publishing in Victorian Britain, Kamiński deals with the origin of the dictionary in Chapter 3, also discussing the sources of the dictionary by referring to the intellectual ideas, which might have influenced the structure of the original edition. These sources represent the overlapping of two traditions, the earlier one of philosophical etymologising, and the new one of the historical-comparative philology.

Chapter 4 provides a biographical account of the editors involved in the compilation of the different editions of the *Chambers Dictionary*: James Donald was responsible for the first two editions of 1867 and 1872, Thomas Davidson was the editor of the next two editions, the last edition of the nineteenth century in 1898 and the first edition of the twentieth century in 1901, William Geddie edited the 1952 and 1959 editions, Agnes Macdonald, also two editions, those of 1972 and 1977, while Betty Kirkpatrick edited the edition published in 1983. Catherine Schwarz was managing editor for the editions of 1988 and 1993 and, together with Robert Allen, was a consultant editor for the 1998 edition. For the editions of 2003 and 2006, Ian Brookes was the editor and for those of 2008 and 2011, Vivian Marr. Kamiński observes that recent *Chambers* lexicographers had a more professional linguistic background, being better qualified for compiling dictionaries than the early editors, whose academic training was unrelated to lexicography.

In Chapter 5, a detailed analysis of the design of the first edition of *Chambers* is presented within the framework expounded in Chapter 1. This edition is given special attention because it serves as a point of departure for the discussion of subsequent editions. Designed chiefly as a school dictionary for educational purposes, this edition of *Chambers*, in spite of its title, devoted relatively little space to etymological information, but etymology nevertheless played an important role in relation to meaning, definitions and entry structure which is examined in the first part of the chapter before the other descriptive and pedagogical considerations are dealt with.

The evolution of the dictionary is the subject of Chapters 6–15, each analysing how a particular aspect of the dictionary listed in Chapter 1 has changed over the years. The thematic approach followed in these chapters ensures a proper perspective on the changes in the consecutive editions. Each chapter is followed by a summary of the main points. Tables schematically presenting the different thematic aspects are usually given at the end of the relevant chapters. The conclusion of Chapter 6, dealing with the optimal arrangement of entries shows that editors experimented with various presentations, beginning with an etymological grouping, then a strictly alphabetical arrangement and finally nesting, which was used throughout until the latest editions.

Concerning the selection of morphological forms, Chapter 7 shows that it was not until the third edition that the dictionary could cover more vocabulary thanks to extensive nesting where main entry status was given to self-explaining derivatives and compounds in the earlier editions. Whereas certain morphological forms, such as combinations, and prefixes and suffixes, were treated in separate lists in the back matter of earlier editions, these were slowly moved to the central list in later editions.

Chapter 8 reveals the gradual growth in the dictionary's range of vocabulary, reflecting the changing image of the intended user: from the educational aim of its first edition to the broader scope of a general audience. The number of characters in the main body of the dictionary increased five times, from three

million in the first edition to nearly fifteen million in the 2003 and later editions.

Chapter 9 discusses the development of the definitions with a view to style, use of keywords and defining vocabulary. Focusing on major definition types, it investigates how these have changed quantitatively since the first editions. Separate sections deal with encyclopaedic and idiosyncratic definitions. Throughout the history of the dictionary, definitions have remained traditional.

The order and discrimination of senses are considered in Chapter 10. In all editions, a strong preference for a historical ordering has been shown. Individual senses are separated by using either a colon or a semicolon, the editors, except in the first edition, not trying to develop this system further by distinguishing larger categories of senses or dividing them into sub-senses. The use of these traditional indicators implies the view of the existence of a clear-cut semantic structure, with rigid boundaries between and no overlapping of meanings.

In Chapter 11 modifications in etymology are discussed. Significant changes in the third and fifth editions were brought about by Davidson and Geddie respectively. Except for the correction of etymologies, hypothetical information that was unsupported by the comparative-historical method was deleted. Since users often found it difficult to interpret etymologies in the early editions, revisions in subsequent editions were aimed at clarifying the interpretation of punctuation marks used in etymologies. Etymologies the first editor added to a number of complex and compound forms were restricted by subsequent editors to the entries for bases only.

Chapter 12 shows that the system of usage labels has expanded both quantitatively and qualitatively. Each successive edition employed a more developed system of marking. While more labels were used, their proportions also changed: whereas there were relatively fewer source labels, labels indicating time/frequency, attitude, register/style and field increased significantly. This testifies not only to the rapid development of science and the emergence of new areas of human interest, but also to the editors' increased lexicographical competence.

As shown in Chapter 13, the *Chambers* editions provided little syntagmatic and paradigmatic information. Syntagmatic information is restricted to the indication of word-class and the sub-category (transitive or intransitive) of a verb as well as the selection of set expressions, such as prepositions complementing verbs, direct objects of verbs, syntactic phrases and citations. Paradigmatic information appeared chiefly in the form of antonyms, which was not provided on a regular basis.

Chapter 14 deals with the pronunciation system used in *Chambers*, based on respelling with diacritics over vowels, and different typeface for distinguishing between certain consonants. Revisions effected in later editions aimed at making it more phonemic, developed and precise. In all editions, the editors used respelling systematically for all headwords, and, in addition, also for some subheads. With the expansion of the dictionary, the treatment of pronun-

ciation was rethought, especially with regard to phonetically predictable terms.

In Chapter 15 the outside matter of the *Chambers* dictionaries is discussed, and the contents of the front, middle and back matter considered. The user's guides in the front matter of early editions were less detailed than those in later editions. In the earlier ones, the guides were structured very similarly, containing several usually short sections explaining the arrangement of entries and senses, and containing information on pronunciation and etymology. Except in some early editions, the middle matter in most editions was little developed, although from the 1983 edition onwards, the middle matter contains occasional lists of derivatives given at the foot of relevant pages. In all editions, the back matter incorporates a number of lists displaying encyclopaedic and linguistic types of information, the earlier editions mostly containing linguistic information, and the later ones showing an increasing amount of encyclopaedic information.

These chapters are followed by a few pages containing concluding remarks. Kamiński comments that his impression is that the greatest changes were made in the editions published in the nineteenth century (1872, 1898) and the early years of the decades of the following centuries (1952, 1972, 1983, 1993, 2003). He distinguishes two major lines of development, one regarding the comprehensiveness of coverage, and the other regarding user-friendliness.

The reorganisation of entries by means of extensive nesting in the third edition helped editors to use space more efficiently, making room for new words. Space was also saved by deleting redundant types of information and presentation, such as regularly inflected forms (since the 1898 edition), pictorial illustrations (since the 1952 edition) and punctuation in the etymologies (since the 1993 edition). Because of the space restrictions, *Chambers* also did not systematically include illustrative examples.

Although attempts have been made to produce a more user-friendly dictionary, for example by ordering senses according to the usage principle, employing more transparent labels, using punctuation marks more consistently in the etymology, dividing the entries into sections, giving more information on the use of the dictionary, and simplifying the difficult language of the definitions, certain features remained traditional, for instance brief and precise definitions sometimes at the expense of clarity, defining by reproducing morpho-semantic elements, clustering lexical items under the base word, using alternatives, enumerations and near-synonyms as definitions, the inability to delineate clear meaning boundaries and the prototypically organised structure of lexical categories.

However, in the print version of a dictionary, it is difficult to achieve the goals of comprehensive coverage and user-friendliness simultaneously. These restrictions have been overcome in many ways in the electronic version of *Chambers*, for instance, by presenting single senses on separate lines, by using full forms of labels, and by providing pronunciation audibly in combination with respelling.

In the Appendices appear examples of pages selected from the early editions published in 1867, 1872, 1898 and 1901. These are followed by Samples 1 and 2 containing excerpts from all editions of *Chambers*. Sample 1 represents the macrostructure, comprising six sections of the word-list, while Sample 2 reflects the microstructure, covering a selection of full entries. The samples were analysed in detail for statistical purposes. Throughout the analysis cross-references pointing to particular entries in Sample 2 are made. When necessary, Kamiński sometimes also considered entries from other parts of the dictionaries, especially when a particular feature did not occur in the samples.

The bibliography is divided into three sections: dictionaries (editions of the *Chambers Dictionary*, in chronological order, and other dictionaries and encyclopaedias mentioned in the text), Internet sources, and other literature referred to in the discussion. The book is concluded by an index.

From the preceding discussion, it has become clear that the book is a systematic, thorough and exemplary study of the *Chambers Dictionaries*. Scholars and students interested in the history of these dictionaries will discover much valuable and useful information in the analyses, and those intent on undertaking a similar study of the development of the same kind of dictionary will find it an excellent model for approaching such research.

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