Diagrammatic Representation of Four Categories of English Dictionaries

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0. Purpose of this Paper

Béjoint (1994: 32) states, "The basic question for anyone who attempts a typology is whether to derive categories from the observation of existing dictionaries or to create categories in theory and then see how existing dictionaries fit into them. Strictly speaking, the former would be a classification and the latter a typology." My intention of this paper is not to attempt a typology of English dictionaries from a purely theoretical viewpoint but to classify them from a historical point of view and represent them diagrammatically.

1. Four Categories of English Dictionaries

I have derived the following four categories of dictionaries from a rough survey of the history of English lexicography from the 16th to the 20th century.

1. academic dictionary versus practical dictionary
2. encyclopedic dictionary versus lexical dictionary
3. thematic dictionary versus alphabetic dictionary
4. comprehensive dictionary versus concise dictionary

These contrasts are to be briefly discussed in this section.

The contrast which has played the most important part in the history of English dictionaries is that between academic (professional) and practical (popular) dictionaries. They differ not only in the technique of lexicography but also in the type of users whose needs each type of dictionaries should meet. The following is a list of contrasting points between them.

Academic & Professional Lexicography	Practical & Popular Lexicography
linguistic purity	linguistic practicability
based on standards	based on practical use
standard-influencing	non-standard-influencing
for the language academy	against the language academy
authoritative	non-authoritative
prescriptive	descriptive
scholarly	educational
academic	practical
for the learned or scholars	for lay-people
illustrative sentences from literary works	illustrative sentences of every-day use
'good' words	'hard' words
literary words	technical words
excluding encyclopedic information	including encyclopedic information
exclusion of pictorial illustrations	inclusion of pictorial illustrations
inward development	outward development
selection of entry words	increase of entry words

This contrast began to be perceived in the 18th century. Matoré (1968: 190) referred to these types of dictionaries as 'qualitative' dictionary and 'quantitative' dictionary, but the terms seem to me not so implicative.

The second contrast is seen between a lexical dictionary and an encyclopedic dictionary. Needless to say, Johnson's English dictionary (1755) is a lexical dictionary. But it includes many quotations from several encyclopedias published in the first half of the 18th century. Therefore, it will be safe to say that Johnson's dictionary contains much encyclopedic information. In my opinion, Ogilvie's dictionary (1847–50) was the first encyclopedic dictionary including a great number of technical terms and their explanations. And under the influence of this dictionary, was compiled Webster's unabridged dictionary (1864), which is also a very encyclopedic dictionary with a variety of addenda.

The third contrasting feature is thematic and alphabetic arrangement of

entry words. Thematic arrangement was so popular in the early days of lexicography in England that we cannot turn a blind eye to it. Most thematic wordbooks which covered only several thousand English words were compiled especially for beginners and students. They developed into bigger dictionaries containing more than ten thousand entry words. Then it became difficult for a compiler to arrange the entries thematically. He had to arrange them alphabetically for users' convenience. But it took a long time to convert from thematic to alphabetic arrangement.

The fourth contrast is that between a comprehensive dictionary and a concise dictionary. This is closely related to the notions put forth by Kister (1977: 4): unabridged dictionary (more than 250,000 words), semi-unabridged dictionary (more than 130,000 words), and abridged dictionary (less than 130,000 words). The history of English lexicography indicates that the terms of 'unabridged' or 'abridged' are not adequate, because Johnson's unabridged and abridged dictionaries are supposed to have been compiled almost at the same time, and Webster's abridgement (1829) was edited by Worcester and had some characteristics totally different from those of Webster's unabridged dictionary (1828). Theoretically, it will be appropriate to use the terms 'extensive' and 'intensive' ('selective') coined by Wagner (1967: 94, 123–126), and Dubois and Dubois (1971: 13).

The above four categories of English lexicography can be paraphrased in more general and theoretical terms like these:

1. qualitative lexicography versus quantitative lexicography
2. macro-lexicography versus micro-lexicography
3. semantic lexicography versus formal lexicography
4. extensive lexicography versus intensive lexicography.

However, it should be born in mind that "The conclusion to be drawn from all the typologies proposed by various authors over the years is that it is impossible to classify dictionaries in a way that would be both orderly and applicable to all societies. Dictionaries come in more varieties than can ever be classified in a simple taxonomy." (Béjoint 1994: 37)

2.   The Validity of Diagrams in Representing Typical Features of English Dictionaries

Before exhibiting a diagram to represent these four categories, I have to discuss the diagram itself in terms of validity or usefulness.

The four categories mentioned above not only characterise a whole picture of dictionaries so far published in Britain, but also turn out to be essential features for the description of an individual dictionary. An English dictionary can be described as a set of these features. For example, X is a comprehensive academic dictionary with entries alphabetically arranged, and Y is a concise practical dictionary with much encyclopedic information. However, this kind of statement about a dictionary may tend to remain diffuse or unfocused.

It is very difficult or nearly impossible to make a typology which shows distinctive characteristics of a dictionary explicitly. If Johnson's dictionary, for example, is classified into a category of an academic dictionary, it is thought to contain no practical element. This is not true. Johnson included many phrasal verbs in order to render his dictionary more practical. We can roughly say that the dictionary has 95% 'academicity' and 5% 'practicality'. We have to represent the degree of 'academicity'/'practicality', which is easy to include in a diagram. With the help of a diagram, we are able to form a true picture of each dictionary.

McArthur (1986b: 158) was the first to try diagrammatic representation of contrasting types of English dictionaries. He located four options of dictionaries on each corner of a 'reference rectangle'. Two points across the rectangle represent a contrary concept between two options. In the rectangle, there are two contrasting concepts, which have frequently been discussed in the history of English lexicography.

the 'encyclopedic' option   the 'wordbook' option

the thematic option   the alphabetic option
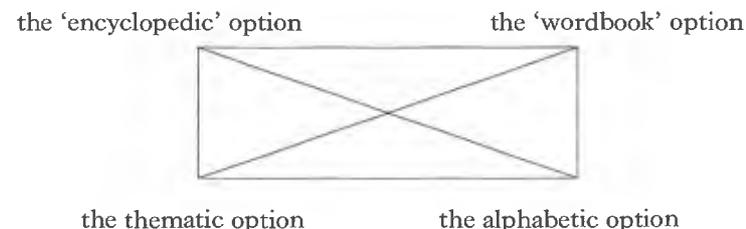
McArthur's original 'reference rectangle' may be very useful, but it is difficult to show some other features in his rectangle. It should be modified in two respects. One is the incorporation of other options or features in the diagram, and the other is the representation of the relative proportion of each feature. These two points are going to be fully considered in the next section.

## 3. Diagrammatic Representation of the Four Features of English Dictionaries

With a view to grasping a true picture of an English dictionary, I would like to propound diagrammatic representation incorporating the above four features into a triangle. The following is an alternative diagram, in which the four features and their comparative extent can be illustrated.

formal arrangement

lexical information

extralexical information

semantic arrangement
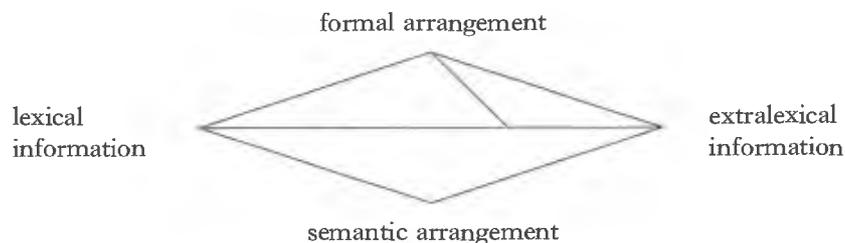
The first contrast between formal (alphabetic in English dictionaries) arrangement and semantic (or thematic) arrangement is exhibited by means of the upwardness and downwardness of a triangle.

thematic arrangement

alphabetic arrangement

alphabetic-cum-thematic arrangement

thematic-cum-alphabetic arrangement
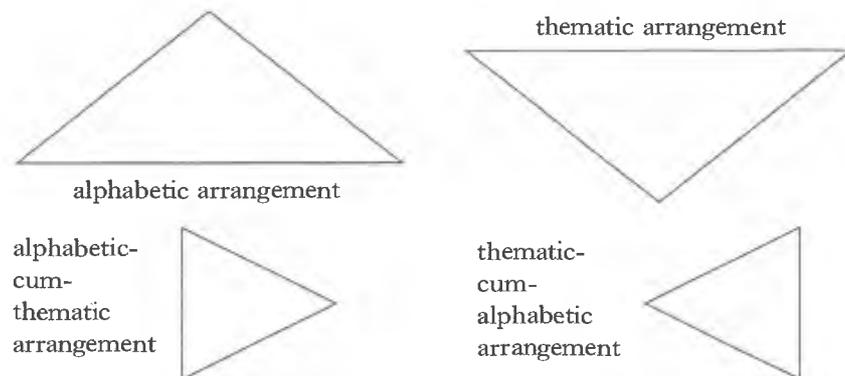
The upwardness of alphabetic arrangement suggests the primacy of alphabetisation over thematisation in the history of English dictionaries. Let us take two examples of thematic arrangement.

Latin Glossary

Roget's Thesaurus
(1879 New Edition)
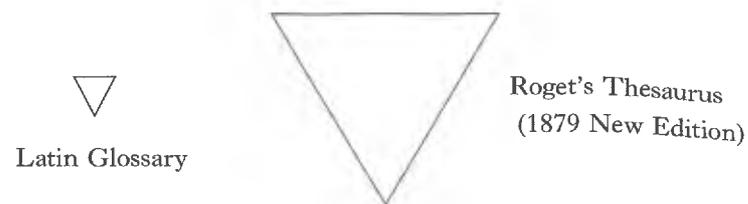
The left represents a Latin thematic glossary published in the 16th century, while the right represents an authoritative dictionary of English synonyms.

The choice must be made between thematic and alphabetic lexicography, while it is not a matter of choice between lexical and encyclopedic (extralexical) lexicography. Rather, it is a matter of degree, because most dictionaries contain both types of information. In order to represent the degree of 'encyclopedicity', it will be more adequate to use a diagram than any other means. It is quite easy to depict its degree in a triangle.

Dictionary with much encyclopedic information

Dictionary without encyclopedic information
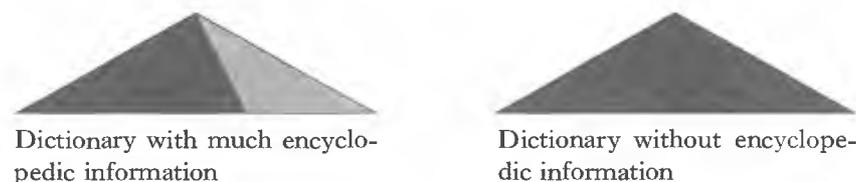
A dark grey area covers lexical information, and a light grey area covers encyclopedic information. The proportion of these two areas varies from dictionary to dictionary. The left diagram shows that about 60% of the dictionary is connected with lexical (interlinguistic) information and the remaining 40% encyclopedic (extralinguistic) information, which is sometimes included as the description in lexical entries and is sometimes contained in appendices inserted into the back part of a dictionary. The former is represented by an area separated by a broken line, and the latter by an area separated by a solid line.

The most important feature of 'academicity' and 'practicality' has not

been shown in the above diagrams. This is also a matter of degree. And the proportion of 'academicity' and 'practicality' can be represented by the height/depth of a triangle.
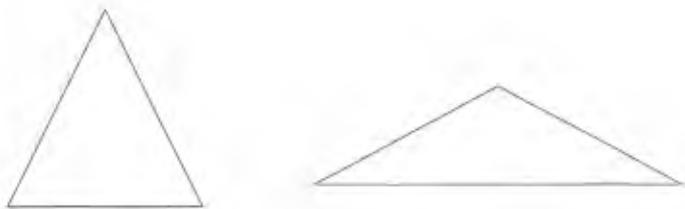

The left is a (formally arranged) academic dictionary with a high top, while the right is a (formally arranged) practical dictionary with a low top. The left represents, for example, Johnson's dictionary (1755) and the right Bailey's dictionary (1721), which were competing actively in the 18th century.

Webster's dictionaries published in 1828 and 1864 are almost identical in academicity, but differ in their total number of lexical items and the variety of addenda fixed to them. These points should also be shown in diagrams.

Webster (1828)   Webster (1864)
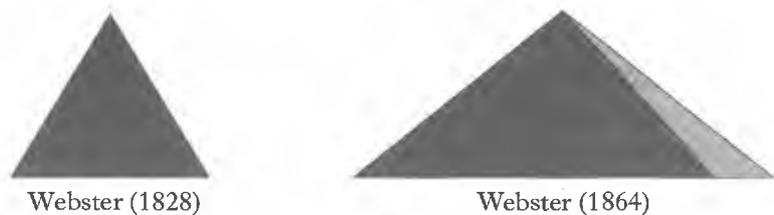
Webster (1864) occupies a larger area than Webster (1828). The larger dark grey area a triangle of a dictionary occupies, the greater number of entry words the dictionary contains. The addenda is represented by a light grey triangle in the right diagram.

It is also possible to make diagrams for specialised dictionaries, which are classified into two: specialised dictionaries such as those of etymology, synonyms, or idioms, and dictionaries of technical terms in various fields.

Special-purpose   Dictionary of   Dictionary including
Dictionary   Technical Terms   many technical terms
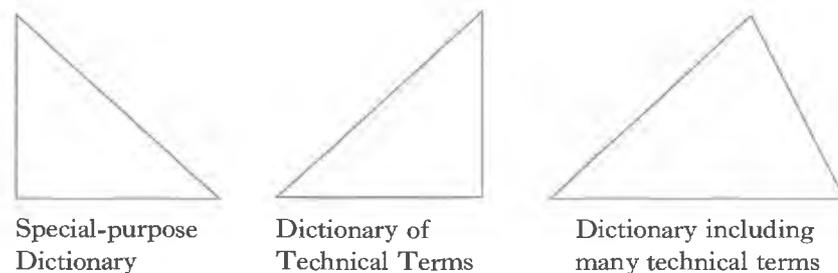
A special-purpose dictionary has a top swung to the left, while a dictionary of technical terms has a top swung to the right. Most specialised dictionaries are more academic than general-purpose dictionaries, which is represented by the height of a triangle. A general English dictionary is depicted as an isosceles triangle, but a dictionary including many technical terms has a triangle with a top slightly swung to the right.

4.   Diagrammatic Representation of Typical English Dictionaries

Let us look at typical dictionaries in the history of English lexicography and exhibit a diagrammatic representation of them.

FEATURES OF A DICTIONARY

Latin Thematic
Glossaries
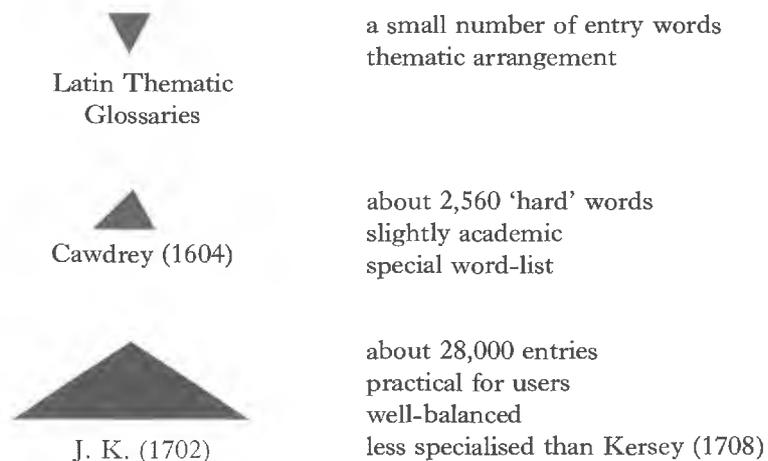
a small number of entry words
thematic arrangement

Cawdrey (1604)

about 2,560 'hard' words
slightly academic
special word-list

J. K. (1702)

about 28,000 entries
practical for users
well-balanced
less specialised than Kersey (1708)

much more academic than J. K.
   (1702)
about 35,000 entries
slightly specialised in word-list

Kersey (1708)

concise
practical
encyclopedic information
including technical terms

Bailey (1721)

comprehensive
practical
encyclopedic information
including technical terms

Bailey (1730)

very academic
slightly lexically specialised
much lexical information
encyclopedic information in the
   form of quotations
about 43,000 entry words

Johnson (1755)

very academic
quite specialised in the lexical de-
   scription of entries
much lexical information

Richardson (1836–37)

small
practical
6 kinds of addenda
about 28,000 entry words

Webster (1806)

rather academic
no appendix
about 70,000 entry words
well-balanced

Webster (1828)

comprehensive
various appendices
a large number of
   entry words,
   including many
   technical terms
practical

Webster (1864)

rather academic
a specialised dictionary of English syn-
   onyms
thematic arrangement

Roget (1879)

CITED DICTIONARIES

Bailey, Nathan. 1721. *An Universal Etymological English Dictionary*. London: E. Bell et al.

Bailey, Nathan. 1730. *Dictionarium Britannicum*. London: for T. Cox.

Cawdrey, Robert. 1604. *A Table Alphabeticall*. London: for Edmund Weaver. (Reprint. New York: Scholar's Facsimiles & Reprints, 1976)

Johnson, Samuel. 1755. *A Dictionary of the English Language*. 2 volumes. London: W. Strahan for J. and P. Knapton, T., et al. (Reprint. Tokyo: Yuhodo, 1983)

Johnson, Samuel. 1756. *A Dictionary of the English Language*. 2 volumes. Abstracted edition. London: Printed for J. Knapton; C. Hitch, et al.

J. K. (Kersey, John) 1702. *A New English Dictionary*. London: H. Bonwicke. (Reprint. Robin C. Alston. Menston: Scolar Press, 1969)

Kersey, John. 1708. *Dictionarium Anglo-Britannicum: or, a General English Dictionary*. London: W. Wilde for J. Phillips, H. Rhodes and J. Taylor. (Reprint. Robin C. Alston. Menston: Scolar Press, 1969)

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Richardson, Charles. 1836–37. *A New Dictionary of the English Language*. 2 volumes. London: William Pickering.

Roget, Peter M. 1879. *Roget's Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases*. New edition. Revised and enlarged by John Lewis Roget. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell.

Webster, Noah. 1806. *Compendious Dictionary of the English Language*. New Haven: Increase Cooke.

Webster, Noah. 1828. *An American Dictionary of the English Language*. 2 volumes. New York: S. Converse. (Reprint. New York: Johnson Reprint, 1977)

Webster, Noah. 1829. *An American Dictionary of the English Language*. Abridged by Joseph E. Worcester. New York: S. Converse.

Webster, Noah. 1864. *An American Dictionary of the English Language*. Thoroughly revised by C. A. Goodrich and Noah Porter. Springfield: G. & C. Merriam Company.

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Wagner, R.-L. 1967. *Les Vocabulaires français, I. Définitions. Les Dictionnaires*. Paris: Didier.