

J. K.'s dictionary (1702) reconsidered

ABSTRACT: J. K.'s A NEW ENGLISH DICTIONARY (NED, 1702) has generally been considered the first English dictionary that listed daily words as well as a "forerunner" of Samuel Johnson's A DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE (DEL, 1755). These observations are found to be superficial, and even misleading, when we closely compare NED with the dictionaries of John Bullokar and Elisha Coles, and Johnson's DEL. We should not fail to notice the grammatical aspects of NED, which are conspicuous in the history of English lexicography.

1. NED and its previous dictionaries

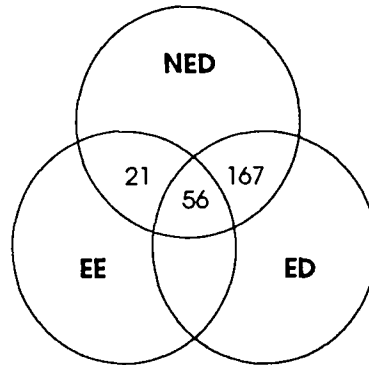
In the preface to A NEW ENGLISH DICTIONARY (NED, 1702), J. K. remarks "there are two, which seem to come near our present Design; Viz. a little Tract first set forth by *John Bullokar* Doctor of Physick, under the Title of AN ENGLISH EXPOSITOR, and Mr. *E. Coles's* ENGLISH DICTIONARY." J. K.'s intention was, in a sense, to compile a work surpassing the two dictionaries. He critically comments on, "The former is defective in several respects, and yet abounds with difficult Terms, which are here purposely avoided ... neither is the latter free from the like unprofitable Redundancy." J. K. saying thus, NED will not be assessed at its true worth if we fail to compare it with John Bullokar's AN ENGLISH EXPOSITOR (EE, 1616) and Elisha Coles' AN ENGLISH DICTIONARY (ED, 1676). Hereafter, taking each 'L' section mainly as a sample, I will observe similarities and differences between NED and EE/ED in terms of entry words, definitions and grammatical aspects.

EE and ED are basically dictionaries of hard words which reflect the influx of foreign words into the English vocabulary in the Renaissance period. The phrase "it is familiar among best writers to vsurpe strange words" seen in 'To the Courteous Reader' of EE was the very slogan for the neologists. And the title page of ED reads "CONTAINING Many Thousand Hard Words." As for NED, its position is contrary to theirs. This, however, does not mean NED excludes all hard words listed in EE and ED. Fig. 1 shows the number of words in NED seen in EE and ED as well.

NED lists 841 words in 'L', and the number 244 (21+56+167) occupies 29 percent of the total number. In this respect, Bolton is incorrect in saying that most of the words listed in NED "had never before appeared in an English dictionary ..." (1982, 241). Incidentally, some of the 56 words common to the three dictionaries are, according to THE OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY (OED), daily words, and neither newly borrowed words nor archaic. They are, for instance, *laborious*, *laudable*, *laureate* and *lecture*. Therefore, the opinion Mossé (1958, 124), Barber (1976, 111) and others hold, that NED is the first English

Figure 1

The Words Common to EE/ED in 'L' of NED



dictionary to have listed daily words, although widely accepted, is also misleading. For our information, Osselton (1979, 555) shows, with concrete examples, that Henry Cockeram's *ENGLISH DICTIONARIE* (1623) and anonymously published *GAZOPHYLACIUM ANGLICANUM* (1689) list 'vulgar' terms.

As far as I know, the definitions of NED have always been made light of or totally disregarded. Close observation, however, shows that NED often follows EE and ED in this respect. For instance:

(a) to EE

- lair** EE: The place where any Deer harboureth by day.
 NED: A place where Deer harbour by day.

(b) to ED

- label** ED: ribbons hanging at garlands, mytres, &c. slipp[sic.] of Parchment at Indentures, &c. also the three lines which hang from the file of an Escutheon, denoting the Elder brother.
 NED: ribbons of a mytre, or Garland; a ship of Parchment hanging at an Indenture, &c. Also the three lines that hang down from the file of a Scut heon [sic.] and denote the elder brother.

(c) to both EE and ED (mixture)

- loriner** EE: One that maketh bits for bridles, and such like instruments.
 ED: a trade and Company in London that make Spurs, and all small Iron-work.
 NED: that makes bits for bridles, and such sort of small iron-ware.

At least thirty definitions in 'L' of NED show unmistakable signs of EE/ED's influence.

As we have seen above, there are not a few points of similarities between NED and EE/ED. This, however, does not deny the historical innovativeness of NED. In my opi-

nion, the essential qualities of NED are observed in its grammatical aspects, and they are the very points which differentiate NED from its previous dictionaries. The grammatical aspects of NED can be described from four angles; (1) the manner of listing words, (2) originally inserted words, (3) the spelling, and (4) the original manner of defining words.

(1) NED usually places 'To' before verbs, and 'A/An' before countable nouns, that is, it partly discriminates parts of speech, as "To Last" and "To Lather"; "A Latch" and "A Lemmon". This manner is not seen in EE and ED. The two dictionaries disregard parts of speech. In addition to this manner, NED hyphenates compound words minutely. For instance:

ED	NED
Ladies-bedstraw	Ladies-bed-straw
Laystall	Lay-stall
Liege-man	Liege-man

EE does not hyphenate compound words at all.

(2) 'L' of NED includes 597 words which are not listed in EE and ED. Most of them are daily words such as *laboratory*, *labour*, *lace*, *lackey* and *ladder*. It is, however, notable that not a few grammatical words are included in them. 'Grammatical words' meant here are inflections of nouns and adjectives, function words, and auxiliary words. And NED, although simple, even gives definitions to most of them. Examples are "Laid (*from to lay*)," "Lain (*from to lye*)," "Least (*from little*) as not in the least" and "Less, or lesser." Extending our view to the whole of NED here, we find it lists numerous words of this kind, most of which are not seen in the previous dictionaries:

- (a) prepositions and prepositional adverbs *at*, *before*, *by*, *for*, *from*, *with*, and so on.
- (b) comparatives and superlatives of adjectives and adverbs *better*, *best*, *more*, *most*, *worse*, *worst*, and so on.
- (c) preterits and past participles of verbs *bore*, *born*, *made*, *took*, *taken*, and so on.
- (d) auxiliary verbs *can*, *could*, *may*, *might*, *will*, *shall*, *should*, and so on.
- (e) plurals of nouns *halves*, *brethren*, *mice*, and so on.

We sometimes come across an opinion that Samuel Johnson was the first to have listed these grammatical words sufficiently. Taking a glance at NED, we immediately find such an opinion to be a gross misconception.

(3) J. K., the author of NED, boasts of his correct spelling. The "Preface" of NED reads that he intended to instruct the users "in the *Orthography*, or true and most accurate manner of Spelling ..." How, then, did J. change the spelling of words seen in EE and ED in the extent of 'L'? Firstly, J. K. changed the spelling of EE in eight ways. That is, 1) elimination of terminal silent *e* (as from *laire* to *lair*), 2) from *se* to *ce* (as from *lappise* to *lappice*), 3) from *ll* to *l* (as from *legall* to *legal*), 4) from *ke* to *ck* (as from *lyrike* to *lyrick*), 5) from *ie* to *y* (as from *luxurie* to *luxury*), 6) from *b* to *bb* (as from *libard* to *libbard*), 7) from *ci* to *ti* (as from *licenciate* to *licentiate*), and 8) from *u* to *v* (as from *leuivy* to *levity*). Secondly, the spelling in ED is changed in nine ways: 1) use of apostrophe (as from *libbards-bane* to *libbard's bane*), 2) from *se* to *ce* (as from *lappise* to *lappice*), 3) elimination of terminal silent *e* (as from *largesse* to *largess*), 4) from *er* to *or* (as from *leasser* to *leassor*), 5) from *ie* to *y* (as

liturgie to *liturgy*), 6) from *æ* to *e* as from *longævity* to *longevity*), 7) affixation of terminal silent *e* (as from *loos* to *loose*), 8) from *ane* to *ain* (as from *lordane* to *lordain*), and from *l* to *ll* (as from *lowbel* to *lowbell*). J.K., in general, seems to have intended to modernize the English spelling. Concerning *i/j*, for instance, OED says "J ... is in its origin, a comparatively late modification of the letter I" (J), and that "... after 1600 ... a differentiation was made, the consonant being expressed by the character Jj" (I). As to *u/v*, it reads "the general tendency was to write v initially and u in other positions, regardless of phonetic considerations ... From about 1700 the regular forms have been Uu for the vowel, and Vv for the consonant" (U). The words common to the three dictionaries reflect a history of English spelling. The subdivisions of 'I/J' and 'U/V' of the dictionaries seem to show the situation:

EE	'I/J'	IA, ID, IL, IM, IN, IR, IV.
	'U/V'	VA, VE, VI, VN, VO, VR, VV.
ED	'I/J'	IA, ID, JE, IE, IF, IL, IM, IN, JO, IP, IR, IS, JV.
	'U/V'	VA, VE, VI, VM, VN, VO, VR, VY, VZ.
NED	'I/J'	JA, IB, ID, JE, IF, IG, JI, IL, IM, IN, JO, IR, IS, JU.
	'U/V'	VA, UB, UD, VE, UG, VI, UL, UM, UN, VO, UP, UR, US, UT, VU.

Starnes/Noyes (1946, 72) say J. K. seems to have compiled NED referring to spelling books of his days.

(4) The definitions of NED are often slandered for their simplicity. Bolton, for example, says NED is "only a rudimentary speller" (1982, 241). Such an opinion is not necessarily correct. In case of EE and ED, most of the definitions, although given more sufficiently than those of NED, do not go beyond the description of the meaning of words. NED, instead, sometimes seems to instruct the users in the usage of words. Examples are "*The Ladies of the water-mill-wheel*," "*A Leash of hounds, hares, &C.*," and "*A Litter of pigs, puppets, & c.*" This manner can be considered a sign of the illustrative quotations which are indispensable in present lexicography. Starnes/Noyes say NED copies some spelling books in this respect (1946, 73-74). Even if this opinion is true, the service of introducing the manner into lexicography might as well be recognized.

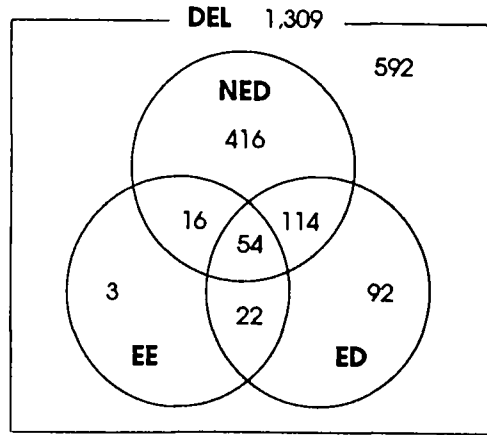
2. NED and DEL

Barber says NED is a forerunner of Johnson's A DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE (DEL, 1755) in the respect of listing many daily words (1976, 111). Such an expression, which seems to be widely used, is quite vague. Johnson lists 1,309 entry words in 'L' section of DEL. Among these words are 717, that is 55 percent, which are common to EE/ED/NED. Fig. 2 shows 416 words of 1,309 in DEL are genuinely common to NED. In this sense, NED might be said DEL's forerunner by 32 percent. It is true that most of the 416 words are daily words such as *laboratory*, *laboriousness*, *labour*, *labourer*, *lackey*, *ladder* and *lady*.

We, however, should not pass over the fact that 'L' of DEL includes many words common to EE and ED as well. They count 301 (3+92+16+22+114+54), 23 percent of the total words, 1,309. Concerning the 54 words common to the four dictionaries, not a few of them are also daily words as *laborious*, *lake* and *laud*.

Figure 2

The Words Common
to EE/ED/NED in 'L' of DEL



Comparing the words of NED with those of DEL, we find NED lists 241 words which are not seen in DEL. No less than 25 words of them are names of herbs, a kind of technical terms, which may show J. K.'s interest in botany. It is, however, notable that the following words are exclusively listed in NED.

- (a) *langued, lapsed, lattised, learnt*, and so on: preterits and participles of verbs
- (b) *landress, leaper, limpness, lonesomness*, and so on: derivatives
- (c) *latice-window, lee-shore, legateship*, and so on: compound words

DEL lists such words as *laid* (preterit participle), *languishment* (derivatives) and *language-master* (compound words), but disregards the words above. This implies that DEL's collection of grammatical words, as well as daily words, is not necessarily as complete as has been considered.

It is not appropriate to regard NED as DEL's forerunner. More than anything else, DEL was, as Monroe shows (1910, 107-22), compiled for grammarians and men of letters to satisfy their needs to purify the English language. In this respect, its intention is quite different from NED's which is, as read in the title page, designed "for the benefit of Young Scholars, Tradesmen, and Female Sex."

3. Conclusion

Up to today NED has generally been considered a dictionary divorced from the tradition of English lexicography before it. This view goes against the fact. At least 29 percent of entry words in NED are listed in its previous dictionaries, also. That is, NED is neither the first dictionary including daily words nor a dictionary excluding all hard words. It is also misleading to recognize NED as DEL's forerunner. The intention of DEL is completely different from that of NED, and NED even lists some daily words and grammatical information which are not seen in DEL.

The historical significance of NED lies in its grammatical aspects. NED lists such words as prepositions, auxiliary verbs, comparatives and superlatives of adjectives and adverbs, and preterits and participles of verbs in great number, with definitions in most

cases. Besides this manner, it partly indicates parts of speech, and sometimes shows examples of usage of words. These aspects lead us to conclude: NED is the first English dictionary to have introduced generous grammatical elements.

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