"Terms of Art and Manufacture": An Early Investigation into Late Modern English Dictionaries of Specialised Discourse

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Abstract
Johnson's *Dictionary* had omitted "many terms of art and manufacture": the 18th-century lexicographer had excused himself saying that he "could not visit caverns to learn the miner's language […] nor visit the warehouses of merchants, and shops of artificers, to gain the names of wares, tools and operations, of which no mention is found in books" (Johnson 1755: Preface). However, as times progressed, interest in – and indeed a need for – dictionaries of specialised vocabulary greatly increased. Not only did explorations and discoveries contribute new lexical items to the English language – improvements in science and technology also created a market for didactic materials addressed to a broad audience. In addition, educational materials were required overseas by those preparing to cross (or having already crossed) the ocean as emigrants.

In this contribution I aim to discuss two dictionaries explicitly meant to cater for the needs of workers at rather different points on the educational continuum: one for British readers (Ure 1840) and one for Italians emigrating to the USA (Anon. 1905). After an overview of the context in which they place themselves, I focus on their approach to elements that could be presented as significant for the envisaged readership, such as illustrations and intertextual references, assessing ways in which the relationship between codification and education is negotiated.

Keywords: Late Modern English; lexicography; language history from below.

1. Introduction

The statistics in the website of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (henceforth *OED*) provide a very interesting picture of the points in time when English vocabulary appears to have increased. Even non-experts might expect Elizabethan times to have been particularly significant, but the importance of the 19th century may come as a

surprise. However, it is precisely between 1800 and 1899 that more lexical items or new meanings were recorded for the first time than at any other point in the history of the English language (Dossena 2012: 888-889). While this may also be a function of editorial policies, it is undoubted that many of these new dictionary entries referred to the discoveries, inventions and innovations that make Late Modern times so interestingly close to, and yet still so intriguingly distant from, our own times. In addition, the 19th century also witnessed a new approach to lexicography based on the need for new, more accessible materials: readers wishing to improve their professional competence on the one hand, and prospective emigrants to Canada and the USA on the other, provided an interesting market for 'popular dictionaries'.

In what follows I intend to discuss how codification and educational purposes appear to coexist in two dictionaries, Ure (1840) and Anon. (1905), which were selected as case studies on account of their intrinsic interest. Andrew Ure was considered "an innovator of popular scientific teaching" (Copeman 1951: 656), while Anon. (1905) is a rare specimen of often ephemeral documents: readers do not normally preserve learning materials once they have mastered their contents, particularly if their circumstances do not allow them space and resources for extensive libraries. This investigation is preceded by an overview of the context in which the two books place themselves.

1.1. 19th-Century Sources of New Vocabulary and Meanings

In the second half of the 19th century as many as 42,807 new lexical acquisitions or new semantic values are recorded in the *OED*: the highest figure in the history of English. The second highest figure (32,440) is recorded in the first half of the same century. This is clearly indicative of the liveliness of the times in relation to new discoveries: life sciences, physical sciences, maths, and medicine recorded an extraordinary 17,609 new entries between 1850 and 1900, almost 7,000 more than in the previous five decades. Manufacturing and industry also record more than 1,700 new entries between 1800 and 1900; similarly, philosophy records nearly 700, again a much higher figure than at other times in the history of English. A few examples of such new entries are given below, together with their first quotation:

ANOPHELES, n. A mosquito of the genus *Anopheles*, which conveys the parasite of malaria.

1899 *Daily News* 28 Sept. 3/4 We could kill most of the anopheles grubs here in a few hours with kerosene oil.

DINOSAUR, n.1. A member of an extinct race of Mesozoic Saurian reptiles (group Dinosauria, typical genus *Dinosaurus*), some of which were of gigantic size; the remains point to an organism resembling in some respects that of birds, in others that of mammals.

1841 Owen in *Rep. Brit. Assoc.* 104 A remarkable approach in the present gigantic Dinosaur to the crocodilian structure.

METEORITE, n. A fallen meteor; a mass or fragment of rock or metal that has reached the surface of the earth (or of another planet or planetary satellite) from space, having failed to burn up completely during its passage through the atmosphere. […]

1823 *Monitor* Sept. 305 That meteorites do really fall from the upper regions of the air to earth, can no longer be doubted.

SEQUOIA, n. A genus of large American coniferous trees belonging to the Abietinæ; a tree of this genus. Cf. redwood n.[1] 2. Popularly often called *Wellingtonia*, the name given by Lindley, 1853.

1866 J. Lindley & T. Moore *Treasury Bot.*, *Sequoia* (including *Wellingtonia*). A genus of the Abietinæ tribe of *Coniferæ* from North-western America, closely allied to *Sciadopitys*.

As for sources, the *OED* lists the following as the ten most frequently occurring authors or publications in which items are first cited in the first and the second half of the century – see Tables 1 and 2 respectively:

TABLE 1
Sources of first citation (1800-1849)

Source	No. of entries	OED ranking
Blackwood's Magazine	569	The 21st most frequently quoted source: 7808 quotations, ca. 0.25% of all *OED* quotations.
Samuel Taylor Coleridge	542	The 56th most frequently quoted source: 4578 quotations, ca. 0.14% of all *OED* quotations.
Walter Scott	455	The 3rd most frequently quoted source: 17059 quotations, ca. 0.55% of all *OED* quotations.

TABLE 1

Source	No. of entries	OED ranking
John Lindley	449	The 93rd most frequently quoted source: 3368 quotations, ca. 0.1% of all *OED* quotations.
The Penny Cyclopaedia of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge	445	The 71st most frequently quoted source: 4098 quotations, ca. 0.13% of all *OED* quotations.
William Kirby	445	The 207th most frequently quoted source: 1919 quotations, ca. 0.06% of all *OED* quotations.
Todd's Cyclopaedia of Anatomy and Physiology	444	The 162nd most frequently quoted source: 2248 quotations, ca. 0.07% of all *OED* quotations.
Thomas Carlyle	411	The 25th most frequently quoted source: 6822 quotations, ca. 0.22% of all *OED* quotations.
Robert Southey	333	The 54th most frequently quoted source: 4776 quotations, ca. 0.15% of all *OED* quotations.
Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country	295	The 105th most frequently quoted source: 3124 quotations, ca. 0.1% of all *OED* quotations.

TABLE 2

Sources of first citation (1850-1899)

Source	No. of entries	OED ranking
The Century Dictionary	996	The 49th most frequently quoted source: 4894 quotations, ca. 0.15% of all *OED* quotations.
Robert Mayne	763	The 194th most frequently quoted source: 2027 quotations, ca. 0.06% of all *OED* quotations.
The New Sydenham Society's Lexicon of Medicine and the Allied Sciences	572	The 146th most frequently quoted source: 2381 quotations, ca. 0.07% of all *OED* quotations.
Journal of the Chemical Society	516	The 209th most frequently quoted source: 1907 quotations, ca. 0.06% of all *OED* quotations.
The Times	505	The most frequently quoted source: 39506 quotations, ca. 1.27% of all *OED* quotations.

TABLE 2

Source	No. of entries	OED ranking
James Dwight Dana	499	The 166th most frequently quoted source: 2217 quotations, ca. 0.07% of all *OED* quotations.
Henry Watts	491	The 149th most frequently quoted source: 2359 quotations, ca. 0.07% of all *OED* quotations.
The Daily News	417	The 12th most frequently quoted source: 10027 quotations, ca. 0.32% of all *OED* quotations.
Encyclopaedia Britannica	359	The 5th most frequently quoted source: 14189 quotations, ca. 0.45% of all *OED* quotations.
Webster's American Dictionary of the English Language	357	The 292nd most frequently quoted source: 1451 quotations, ca. 0.04% of all *OED* quotations.

In the second half of the 19th century there appears to be an increase in first quotations derived from periodicals, dictionaries and magazines. If in the first half of the century we find two magazines (*Blackwood's* and *Fraser's*) and two encyclopaedias (*Penny* and *Todd's* – the latter specialising in medical discourse), in the second half *The Times* is the fourth most frequent source of new vocabulary, and in time it becomes the most frequently quoted source. *The Daily News* also features quite prominently, as it is the 12th most frequently quoted source. As for journals, an important source is found in the field of chemistry, with the *Journal of the Chemical Society*. Many significant innovations that were introduced in medicine appear to have been first recorded in the *New Sydenham Society's Lexicon of Medicine and the Allied Sciences*, based on Robert Mayne's *An Expository Lexicon of the Terms, Ancient and Modern, in Medical and General Science*. As for the world-famous *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, with 14,189 quotations it is the 5th most frequently quoted source, following closely the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, from which 15,441 quotations are taken. It is equally worth observing that *Webster's American Dictionary* is the 292nd most frequently quoted source; the growing importance of transatlantic materials is

also highlighted by the fact that the *Century Dictionary*, published in New York, is the 49th most frequently quoted source in the *OED*.

As for individuals, the first half of the century appears to acquire new vocabulary mostly from literary figures: Sir Walter Scott is the third most frequently quoted source, and follows William Shakespeare, to whom a total of 33,130 quotations (about 1.06% of all *OED* quotations) are due. Only two scientists feature among the ten most frequently occurring sources in the first half of the 19th century: a botanist, John Lindley, and an entomologist, William Kirby; to them we owe the first quotations for the following items, among others:

Himalayan, adj. 1. Of or pertaining to the Himalayas, a system of mountains forming the northern boundary of India, and containing the highest summits in the world. Hence, in names of species of plants and animals native to this region.[…]
1866 J. Lindley & T. Moore *Treasury Bot.* II. 979/1 Himalayan Rhubarb.

Entomological, adj. Of, or pertaining to, entomology or insects.
1815 W. Kirby & W. Spence *Introd. Entomol.* I. viii. 233 The utility of entomological knowledge.

In the second half of the century the presence of scientists is more prominent: in addition to Mayne, whose *Expository Lexicon* has already been cited, we find Henry Watts, a chemist, and James Dwight Dana, a geologist, zoologist, and teacher, to whom we owe the first entries for the following items, among others:

Interplay, n. Reciprocal play, free interaction; mutual operation of two things or agents in influencing each other's action or character.
1863 J.D. Dana *Man. Geol.* 45 The two [series of winds] pass into one another in mutual interplay.

Pterosaur, n. Any of numerous extinct flying reptiles of the Mesozoic order Pterosauria, which had the fourth digit of each forelimb prolonged to a great length to support a wing membrane for active flight. […].
1863 J.D. Dana *Man. Geol.* 346 Pterosaurs..or Flying Saurians.

Watts's works, instead, provide first quotations for the following items, in addition to other specialised ones:

Carbon monoxide, n. A colourless, odourless, flammable, extremely toxic gas formed by the incomplete combustion of carbon. Formula: CO. Formerly called *carbonic oxide*.
1868 H.B. Jones & H. Watts *Fownes's Man. Elem. Chem.* (ed. 10) ii. 177 Carbon monoxide is a combustible gas.

Vanillin, n. 'The neutral odoriferous principle of vanilla' (Watts).
1868 H. Watts *Dict. Chem.* V. 994 *Vanillin*..was first recognised as a peculiar substance by Bley.., further examined by Gobley,.. and afterwards by Stokkebye,.. who designates it as *vanillic acid*.

Focussing on the texts from which these quotations are taken, we see that – interestingly – they all appear to belong to (semi-) popularising genres: dictionaries, manuals, and introductory texts, presumably aimed at future experts, but possibly also to readers wishing to acquire *useful knowledge*, in line with the ideology of (self-)improvement that characterised Late Modern times (Tyrrell 2012; Howe 2012; Secord 2014). Such dictionaries will be the object of the next section.

2. Science for the People

As the *OED* indicates, the first instance of *sequoia* occurs in Lindley and Moore's 1866 *The Treasury of Botany. A Popular Dictionary of the Vegetable Kingdom*. Popular dictionaries were important for readers aiming to improve their competence outside school. Other 19th-century titles include

– *The Treasury of Natural History; Or, a Popular Dictionary of Animated Nature. To Which Are Added, a Syllabus of Practical Taxidermy, and a Glossarial Appendix*, London, 1854;

– *A Popular Dictionary of Architecture and the Allied Arts*, London, 1879;

– *The Standard Electrical Dictionary. A Popular Dictionary of Words and Terms Used in [...] Electrical-Engineering*, London, 1893.

If we look at the *OED* sources in which the words *cyclopaedia* or *dictionary* are seen to occur, we find that encyclopaedias are of course very significant sources of new vocabulary – see Table 3:

TABLE 3
(En)Cyclopaedia in *OED* sources

Name	Dates	Quotations (total no.)	First evidence for word	for sense
Encyclopaedia Britannica	1768-	14101	890	2916
Penny Cyclopaedia	1833-1858	4104	455	1257
Chambers's Cyclopaedia	1751-1753	2373	331	857
Todd's Cyclopaedia of Anatomy and Physiology	1835-1859	2245	539	1106

As for dictionaries, not only is the contribution of American works quite remarkable, but we also find several instances from Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary* – see Table 4:

TABLE 4
Dictionary in *OED* sources

Name	Dates	Quotations (total no.)	First evidence for word	for sense
Century Dictionary	1889-1891	4881	1102	3521
New English Dictionary	1884-1928	2980	116	822
Webster's American Dictionary	1847-1880	1447	427	953
Webster's New Internat. Dict.ry	1909-	1407	228	901
English Dialect Dictionary	1896-1905	1318	63	237
Dictionary of National Biography	1885-	1047	10	41
Univ. Etymological Eng. Dict.ry	1721-1800	920	211	309

However, the distinction between dictionaries and encyclopaedias was not always clear for 19th-century readers: several publications included both words in their titles, signifying that the publication intended to provide more than mere definitions, as in the following examples concerning texts published on both sides of the Atlantic:

– *Encyclopaedia Americana. A Popular Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, Literature, History, Politics and Biography Brought down to the Present Time*, Philadelphia, 1829;

– *The New American Cyclopædia: A Popular Dictionary of General Knowledge*, New York, 1858-1863;

– *The Popular Encyclopedia;* […] *a General Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, Literature, Biography, and History*, Glasgow, 1882.

As we have seen above, the use of the qualifier *popular* in titles stressed the attention given to non-specialists; indeed, some dictionaries listed the types of readers they envisaged. They could also draw attention to the presence of illustrations, a very valuable paratextual element if comprehension was to be facilitated, and which may have made the book seem even better value for money, as pictures obviously increased printing costs – see the following examples[1]:

– *A Popular Dictionary of Facts and Knowledge, for the Use of Schools and Students, with Several Hundred Engravings, etc.*, London, 1827;

– *The London Encyclopaedia; Or, Universal Dictionary of Science, Art, Literature and Practical Mechanics: Comprising a Popular View of the Present State of Knowledge. Illustrated by Numerous Engravings, a General Atlas, and Appropriate Diagrams*, London, 1829;

– *Beeton's Dictionary of Every-day Gardening: Constituting a Popular Cyclopaedia of the Theory and Practice of Horticulture. Embellished with Coloured Plates, etc.*, London, 1871.

Many publications also stressed their importance for self-education; the following titles highlight the value of the books for practical purposes, especially under specific circumstances, such as in case of "diseases […] frequent in warm climates":

– *A Dictionary of Medicine and Surgery, Designed for Popular Use. Containing an Account of Diseases and their Treatment, Including Those Most Frequent in Warm Climates* […], Edinburgh, 1845;

– *Haydn's Dictionary of Popular Medicine and Hygiene; Comprising All Possible Self-Aids in Accidents and Disease*, London, 1874.

[1] The title page of Ure (1840) makes a point of mentioning that the dictionary is "illustrated with twelve hundred and forty engravings on wood". On the other hand, Anon. (1905), the price of which presumably had to be kept as low as possible so as to be marketable among its potential readers, has no illustrations.

The qualifiers occurring in titles prove of great interest: the *American Popular Dictionary*, published in New York in 1882, claims to contain:

> Every useful word in the English language, with the correct spelling, accurate pronunciation, and exact meaning according to Webster and other authorities, to which is added a vast amount of absolutely necessary information upon American history, Constitutions, laws, army and navy, Indians, land-titles, debts, cities, colleges, growth of cities, rate of mortality, rates of interest, science, mythology, biography, insolvent and assignment laws, &c. being a perfect library of reference in one handy volume.

The promise of usefulness, accuracy, correctness and completeness "in one handy volume" is of course an important marketing ploy, but the range of topics mentioned in relation to the pieces of information supposed to be "absolutely necessary" for readers is equally remarkable. Going from history, to geography, to law, to economics, it is indicative of what contents were both expected and offered to a reading public with relatively little time and resources available for self-education, but determined to acquire *useful knowledge*. Nor was practical usage disconnected from ethical considerations, as suggested by the following title on cookery:

> *The Spirit of Cookery. A Popular Treatise on the History, Science, Practice, and Ethical and Medical Import of Culinary Art. With a Dictionary of Culinary Terms*, London, 1895.

This followed Isabella Beeton's *The Englishwoman's Cooking-Book* (1862) and the *Dictionary of Every-Day Cookery* (1865), which in turn had followed her 1861 best-seller *Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management*[2]. In the 1860s a whole series of *all about it* books were published by her husband, Samuel O. Beeton: these included a *Dictionary of Useful Information* (1861), *Garden Management* (1862),

[2] Another household name was that of William Buchan, whose *Domestic Medicine; or, the Family Physician* (1769) was reprinted both in Britain and in America. A reference to it is actually found in a letter dated 15.01.1831 in which a house and ship builder in Quebec asks his brother-in-law in Scotland to send them a copy, together with other commodities: "[…] do not send any otmell, but the Barley we will want But you maight send us out Doctor Buchan Book as it will be usefull in the house I remain yours Truly […]" (19CSC, original spelling).

Home Pets, How to Rear and Manage Them (1862), and *Poultry and Domestic Animals* (1862)[3].

The mastheads of periodicals could also include explicit references to *instruction*, often combined with *amusement* for marketing purposes – see for instance *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction*, which began publication in London in 1822, and *The Family Herald: A Domestic Magazine of Useful Information & Amusement* (London, 1843–1940).

The idea of *useful knowledge* was so widespread that the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge was established in 1826[4]. Indeed, in Victorian times education relied extensively on a variety of institutions, such as parish and church schools, and even the so-called *ragged schools*, as it was not till 1880 that elementary schooling for both boys and girls up to the age of 13 was made compulsory[5]. In addition, apprentices were expected to get some education; this, however, was typically minimal, and – as Anderson (2012: 496) aptly stresses,

> much informal education was available, whether in the Mechanics' Institutes […], or from radical movements like Chartism and Owenite cooperatives.

Among such initiatives we find the one promoted by Andrew Ure (1778-1857), a Scottish chemist, scientific writer and professor at the University of Glasgow; in the same city in 1804 he

> inaugurated his series of "Mechanics' Classes" in popular science and its industrial applications for working men, which were, according to the *Dictionary of National Biography*, […] probably the first of their kind."
>
> (Copeman 1951: 657)

Ure is also famous on account of his 1835 book *The Philosophy of Manufactures*, in which he defended the entrepreneurial approach

[3] See www.ulib.niu.edu/badndp/beeton_samuel.html (last accessed July 2016).

[4] Background information is at www.ucl.ac.uk/bloomsbury-project/institutions/sduk.htm (last accessed July 2016).

[5] In this respect it should always be borne in mind that the Scottish system differed from the English one (see Anderson 2012), *pace* the outline provided by the British Library at www.bl.uk/learning/histcitizen/victorians/education/victorianeducation.html (last accessed July 2016).

of his time and expressed very controversial views on child labour – views which Karl Marx would then criticise in *Das Kapital* (Farrar 1973; Nebbia 2005). In 1837 Ure published his *Dictionary of Arts, Manufactures and Mines* (2 vols); enlarged editions appeared in 1840, 1843, and 1853, and four posthumous editions were published, the last one in 1878.

2.1. *Andrew Ure's* Dictionary of Arts, Manufactures and Mines

No source appears to provide an indication of the number of entries in Ure's dictionary, but we do know that it counted a total of eight editions and was expanded and updated constantly: the 6th edition, for example, was published in 1867, after the 1851 Great Exhibition and – as a result – incorporated much new information derived from that event. The project, however, was impressive right from the start: Copeman (1951: 661) cites a review in *The Times* in which Ure's encyclopaedic work is compared to Samuel Johnson's "literary feat" as both produced their masterpieces single-handedly. The connections, however, do not seem to go much further. Ure had no interest in providing citations of appropriate usage, as Johnson had done; instead, his entries discuss meanings in relation to their scientific value and manufacturing or commercial purposes, as in the following examples:

Acids. A class of chemical substances characterised by the property of combining with and neutralising the alkaline and other bases, and of thereby forming a peculiar class of bodies called salts. The acids which constitute objects of special manufacture for commercial purposes are the following**:** – acetic, arsenious, carbonic, chromic, citric, malic, muriatic, nitric, oxalic, phosphoric, sulphuric, tartaric, which see.

Acrospire. (*Plumule*, Fr.; *Blattkeim*, Germ.) That part of a germinating seed which botanists call the plumula, or plumes. See BEER and MALT.

Additions. Such articles as are added to the fermenting wash of the distiller are distinguished by this trivial name.

As the Preface indicates, great attention is given to chemistry, i.e. Ure's field of specialisation, on the grounds that

The elaborate and costly Encyclopedias, and Dictionaries of Arts, which

have appeared from time to time in this country, and abroad, have, for the most part, treated of the mechanical manufactures, more fully and correctly than of the chemical. The operations of the former are, in fact, tolerably obvious and accessible to the inspection of the curious; […] But those of the latter are not infrequently involved in complicated manipulations, and depend, for their success, upon a delicate play of affinities, not to be understood without an operative familiarity with the processes themselves.

Ure lists seven types of readers, for whom the work is expected to serve apparently different purposes, though always with an educational aim:

In the first place, to instruct the Manufacturer, Metallurgist, and Tradesman, in the principles of their respective processes, so as to render them in reality the masters of their business, and to emancipate them from a state of bondage to operatives, too commonly the slaves of blind prejudice and vicious routine.
Secondly, to afford to Merchants, Brokers, Drysalters, Druggists, and Officers of the Revenue, characteristic descriptions of the commodities which pass through their hands.
Thirdly, by exhibiting some of the finest developments of chemistry and physics, to lay open an excellent practical school to students of these kindred sciences.
Fourthly, to teach Capitalists, who may be desirous of placing their funds in some productive bank of industry, to select judiciously among plausible claimants.
Fifthly, to enable Gentlemen of the Law to become well acquainted with the nature of those patent schemes which are so apt to give rise to litigation.
Sixthly, to present to our Legislators such a clear exposition of our staple manufactures, as may dissuade them from enacting laws which obstruct industry, or cherish one branch of it to the injury of many others: and,
Lastly, to give the General Reader, intent chiefly on intellectual cultivation, a view of many of the noblest achievements of science, in effecting those grand transformations of matter to which Great Britain owes her paramount wealth, rank, and power among the kingdoms.

(Ure 1840: Preface)

As for intertextual references, in Ure's dictionary they help readers acquire more insight into the processes under discussion, offering different perspectives on the same topics – see for instance the following:

Archil, […]. Hellot gives the following method for discovering if they possess this property. […]. Lewis says, however, that he has tested in this way a great many mosses, […]; but that he obtained from only a small number a liquor of a deep red, which communicated to cloth merely a yellowish-red colour. […] Dufay says, that he has seen marble tinged with this colour preserve it without alteration at the end of two years.

Black dye, […] Macquer describes a more simple process for the black by which velvet is dyed at Genoa; and he says that this process, rendered still simpler, has had complete success at Tours. The following is his description. […] Lewis states that he has repeated this process in the small way; and that, by adding sulphate of iron progressively, and repeating the immersions of the silk a great number of times, he eventually obtained a fine black.

On the other hand, intertextual references could play a very important role as validating devices. Sources were quoted to emphasise points, support views, and the author's own evaluations of the sources themselves could guide the readers' interpretation. A few examples are provided below: the first two are from Ure (1840), while the other three are from the *Penny Cyclopedia*, in which the evaluative quality of the compilers' comments is more transparent and, on occasion, even emphatic:

Gold, […] It has been supposed that the gold found in the beds of rivers had been torn out by the waters from the veins and primitive rocks, which they traverse. Some have even searched, but in vain, at the source of auriferous streams for the native bed of this precious metal. The gold in them belongs, however, to the grounds washed by the waters as they glide along. This opinion, suggested at first by Delius, and supported by Deborn, Guettard, Robilant, Balbo, &c., is founded upon just observations.
(Ure 1840: s.v.)

Leather, […] These observations show that there is sufficient foundation for the opinion of the common workmen, concerning what is technically called *feeding* of leather, in the slow method of tanning. (Ure 1840: s.v.)

Cromlech, a large stone placed in the manner of a table, but in an inclined position, upon other stones set up on end. […] Borlase, in his 'Natural History of Cornwall,' suggests that they were sepulchral. But Rowlands, in his 'Mona Antiqua,' King, Toland, and numerous other of our best antiquaries, consider them the remains of altars used for idolatrous sacrifices. (*Penny Cyclopedia* 1833-1851: s.v.)

CROMWELL, […] 'Cromwell's general policy,' says Sir Walter Scott *(Tales of a Grandfather,* vol. iii.), 'was to balance parties against each other, and to make each desirous of the subsistence of his authority rather than run the risk of seeing it changed for some other than their own.' […] Of the numerous characters of Oliver Cromwell that have been drawn by various historians, none appears to us as a whole to be more faithful than that of Dr. Smollet. *(Hist. of England.)* It should nevertheless be recollected that the bias of the writer was strongly in favour of the high prerogative of the crown. (*Penny Cyclopedia* 1833-1851: s.v.)

CULLODEN, […] This, the last charge of the Highlanders under their patriarchal discipline, and with their peculiar arms, is vividly described in Chambers's 'History of the Rebellion,' a small work replete with interest.
(*Penny Cyclopedia* 1833-1851: s.v.)

2.2. Lexical codification for learners: the case of Anon. (1905)

Anon. (1905) is a book of 352 pages, of which unfortunately it has not been possible to identify either the publisher or the author(s); as for the place of publication, this can be assumed to have been in the USA, as the flyleaf between the Table of Contents and the first section has an advertisement for an Italian book on dreams and astrological forecasts (*La chiave dei sogni*) on sale "in the same bookshop" for one dollar. A location of the publisher/bookseller in the USA is also consistent with the many references to American cities and festivities that are seen to occur throughout the text; in addition, we know the book addressed Italian immigrants because the last few pages include a model dialogue aimed to help readers applying for US citizenship. The volume is divided into four parts, namely:

1. grammar lessons – on 30 topics, pertaining to phonology, morphology and syntax;
2. a conversation manual – with 29 model dialogues set in such contexts as "On the steamship", "To rent an apartment", "The weather", "With a banker", etc.;
3. a thematic dictionary – on 38 topics, ranging from "Proper names" to "Jobs" to "The city";
4. a "secretary" – comprising 120 letters on various topics: 60 Italian texts with their English translations on the facing page (see Dossena 2008).

There is no theoretical introduction, and no intertextual references to other sources are provided. Focussing on the thematic dictionary, we find specialised discourse listed in the following sections, here ordered according to the number of entries in each[6]:

	Entries
arti e mestieri	330
commercio	155
campagna e strumenti d'agricoltura	128
strumenti di differenti mestieri	78
abitanti, domestici e faccende di casa	49
stoffe e tessuti diversi	45
uffici ed uffici pubblici	44
metalli e pietre preziose	30

Within each section, the lexical items are listed in alphabetical order, arranged in three columns: Italian, English, and pronunciation represented as phonetic spelling – see the examples below:

Mercante di panno	Cloth-merchant	*clot-merciant*
Merciaio	Mercer	*moerser*
Merciaio girovago	Peddler	*pedler*
Metti-foglio	Press-feeder	*press-fiider*
Minatore	Miner	*mainer*
Miniatore	Miniature painter	*miniatciur penter*

The pattern follows the one that had already been presented in the conversation manual, where Italian phrases were translated and then transcribed in phonetic spelling. The aim was to provide material that the envisaged readership could find useful, practical, and for the use of which no tutorial would be required, in the best self-help tradition; also the grammar lessons consist of brief explanations, followed by short examples with their translations.

[6] These are the Italian labels for, respectively, arts and crafts; commerce; farming and agricultural tools; various tools; home and housework; fabrics; office work and public offices; metals and gems.

In practice, only essential information is offered, in what is indeed a compact, "handy volume" meant for readers whose literacy level in their own native language enabled them to acquire basic foreign language skills. At the same time, the presentation of communicative models appears to address the need for a certain degree of pragmatic competence: though on the surface the book only appears to provide lists of lexical items, and grammatical explanations are minimal, the attention given to different situations in the conversation manual and in the model letters signals the importance attached to effective communication in both familiar and professional contexts. The command of different registers (and particularly of formal ones) on the part of learners with little time even for self-education was empowering on various levels – not only in the job market, but also in a broader social context, where speakers needed to be equipped with the most efficient tools for life in a totally *new world*.

3. Concluding remarks

An overview of *OED* sources in the 19th century has shown the growing importance of scientific publications, especially as far as popularising sources are concerned. In this contribution attention has been paid to two instances of such texts: one, Ure (1840), combines instructional purposes with scientific ones, providing definitions and explanations together with the discussion of experiments and intertextual references to the works of other scientists. The other, Anon. (1905), addresses a completely different readership and takes a much more direct approach to instruction: it provides lists of lexical items together with their translations and representation of pronunciation in phonetic spelling, in addition to grammatical notions, conversation models and sample letters, so as to facilitate the improvement of the readers' communicative competence, to the point that, eventually, they might apply for US citizenship.

The prescriptive quality of the two texts is undeniable; however, it is equally undeniable that their approach is radically different. The readers of Anon. (1905) required a usage guide that would enable them to use language effectively and may be supposed to have had little interest – if any – in theoretical explanations, for which the book seems to imply there is no need. Ure (1840), instead, makes

its didactic approach constantly visible and somehow *lectures* its readers as definitions are provided. While on the surface both texts may fall into the category of *dictionaries of specialised discourse*, crucial differences appear to exist, not only because one is addressed to native speakers, while the other is addressed to learners – general aim, the kind of competence the readers are assumed to have, and the (indirect) presence of the author as a guiding instructor are seen to play a crucial part in what is provided in terms of contents. Such considerations show that in this field too, then, important distinctions ought to be made when taking into account materials that may contribute to studies of language history *from below*, an area of investigation which deserves much greater attention than it has received so far.

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This paper is dedicated to her memory.

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