The evolution of learners’ dictionaries and Merriam-Webster’s Advanced Learner’s English Dictionary

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Abstract
Since the first edition of the OALD was published in the 1940s, lexicography for learners of English as a second or foreign language has seen tremendous changes. The “Big Five” learners’ dictionaries have been at the forefront of a great number of lexicographic innovations. In this paper I would like to sketch the evolution of the monolingual learners’ dictionaries (MLDs) of English that have been published over the years. A selected vocabulary, simple definitions, and explicit information about use are the common characteristics of this type of dictionary, but the implementation of these features is quite varied from one dictionary to the other. The recently published Merriam-Webster’s Advanced Learner’s English Dictionary will be analyzed in light of recent trends in this particular field.

Keywords
grammatical information, defining vocabulary, vocabulary selection, signpost, full-sentence definition, illustrations

1. Introduction
The publication of the ISED in Tokyo in 1942, which was to be better known a few years later as the OALD1 (1948), may be considered a decisive step in the creation of a new genre of dictionary (for more details concerning the early period of development of learners’ dictionaries, see Cowie 1999). As is well known, during three decades the OALD was the only dictionary that tried to serve foreign learners of English in special ways. However, from 1978 on, when the first edition of LDOCE was published, several other dictionaries having the same aims have been compiled. In 1987 there was the first edition of COBUILD, followed in 1995 by CIDEx (now with the title CALD), in 2002 by MEDAL, and, finally, in 2008 by MWALED.

The first edition of OALD that appeared in 1948 was a photographic reprint of the dictionary that had been published in 1942 in Tokyo, with about 250 recent words in an addendum. In the introduction, the general editor, A.S. Hornby, explained that the dictionary had been called “Idiomatic and Syntactic” because the compilers had “made it their aim to give as much useful information as possible concerning idioms and syntax.” The main characteristics of this new type of dictionary were:
(a) a selected vocabulary—not a “complete” list of English words, but just those elements that “the foreign student of English is likely to meet in his studies up to the time when he enters a university”;
(b) simple definitions—that is to say, no traditional phrases as were up to then typically found in dictionary definitions, but as natural descriptions of the meanings as possible, in order to make sure that advanced learners of English would be able to understand them easily;
(c) explicit information about use, the dictionary being meant to be useful not only for reading purposes but for writing as well.

These three aspects are still characteristic of how learners’ dictionaries are set apart from all other dictionaries. But these aspects have been implemented in quite different ways. A comparison between a page taken from OALD1 and the same run in the recent edition of this dictionary (OALD7, 2005) gives a good idea of the distance that has been covered on the way to what Herbst and Popp (1999) called the “Perfect Learners’ Dictionary (?)”

2. A brief comparison between OALD1 and OALD7
Figure 1 presents two columns taken from OALD1. Figure 2 shows the same run, from pulverize to punctilious, in OALD7. What immediately catches the eye is the clearer presentation of the lexical units in OALD7, where all entries, idioms, and phrasal verbs are given in blue and where all senses are numbered in a consistent way. It is evident also that fewer pictures are given and that the one that is given in OALD7 is of another, less documentary or encyclopaedic nature. In the 2005 edition of the OALD, pronunciation is systematically given for the British as well as the American varieties of English. One also notices the presence of some old-fashioned words, such as puncheon, Punchinello, and punctilio in OALD1, and of modern words like pump-priming and punch card (although already marked with “in the past”) in OALD7. Finally, one easily sees that the total number of lexical units treated is about fifty percent higher in OALD7 (about sixty as compared to forty lexical units for OALD1). The number of
idiomatic expressions and phrasal verbs accounts for most of this difference in quantity.

When focusing more on details, other differences appear, some of which are quite fundamental. One of the first things is the number of examples given. Whereas in OALD7 the majority of the lexical units treated have one or more examples, in OALD1 we find only two examples with the second sense of *pump* as a verb, not counting the one used to illustrate the meaning of *pun* as a noun.

Another point is the presentation of the senses of forms or words. In OALD1, the system is based on etymological grounds, as is well shown in the treatment of *punch*. There are three entries for this form, two for nouns and one for verbs. As the "tool or machine" sense is quite different from the "drink" sense, these two etymologically different elements are not treated in the same entry. The verbs having this same form are partly treated under the first noun and partly in the third entry, where, in addition, two or three more noun senses are provided. This last case shows another aspect of the presentation: it is not always clear to what extent two definitions separated by a semicolon have to be taken as two different, but etymologically related, senses or as two more-or-less equivalent descriptions of one sense. The presentation of *pumpkin* with two numbered senses—one for the fruit and one for the plant—only adds to the puzzlement.

As to the definitions provided, there are again big differences. During the 1930s and 1940s, much had been done about the selection of vocabulary in Japan, especially by Harold Palmer and Michael West (see Bogaards 1994: 103 ff. for an overview), and it might have been expected that Hornby and his collaborators would have selected a special definition vocabulary. However, they clearly state in the introduction of OALD1 that they did not, because "the compilers could have no confidence that the definition vocabulary would be known to the prospective users of the dictionary."

Remark that this is contrary to what has been suggested by Rundell (1998: 317). As can be seen in Figure 1, words like *porous*, *volcano*, *fist*, or *piston* are used to define words like *pumice*, *pummel*, and *pump*. In OALD7, the definition of the first sense of *punch* (verb) includes the word *fist*, but it is given in capitals and is immediately followed by a short explanation. Indeed, OALD7 sticks to what is called the "Oxford 3,000," a list of 3,000 key words that are selected in order to serve as the defining vocabulary and that are marked by a key in the dictionary (see *punch*). Moreover, in OALD1, definitions are mostly very short and often take the form of one or more near synonyms (see *punch* noun 2: "energy; strong effect").

The grammatical information has changed in important ways also. In OALD1, verbs are given with a global characterization as transitive, intransitive, or both, and their use is then described with a letter and a number. These verb codes are explained in the introduction, in which a full list of verb patterns is given, with a fair number of examples. In OALD7, grammatical constructions are presented in a much more straightforward manner.

What has changed in a somewhat less radical way is the tendency to add a kind of encyclopedic explanation to some definitions in order to make concepts clearer. However, neither the entries that include such extra explanations nor the nature of the information are the same. In OALD1, we find this type of supplementary data in the case of *pump* and *Punchinello*, in which some additional technical or cultural facts are presented that were deemed essential for the audience. In OALD7, extra information is given with *pumpkin*, but here the authors have tried to complete the concept with information that is sociolinguistically important because it is shared by all native speakers.

All these changes have been introduced over the more than sixty years of existence of the OALD. The publication of competitive learners’ dictionaries has been one of the motors for these quite spectacular modifications. Research has played an important role as well. In the sections that follow, I will discuss in more detail the evolution of the three fundamental aspects distinguished above. As will become clear, every new MLD has proposed new elements and has provoked changes in the other MLDs.

3. The evolution of the three fundamental characteristics of monolingual learners’ dictionaries

3.1 A selected vocabulary

All English MLDs are now based on the analysis of big language corpora. It is important to realize that it was only a bit more than twenty years ago that COBUILD was the first dictionary project to exploit this approach. In a collection of papers that accompanied its publication (Sinclair 1987), the whole procedure of building up a corpus and extracting data from it—which was entirely new at the time—is explained in detail. In hindsight, this approach may seem rather cumbersome and small-scale: the corpus included 20 million words in
daily use, with another 20 million words coming from more specialized texts. But it was groundbreaking, and it was bound to set new standards—not only for MLDS but also for dictionaries as such all over the world. It is this renewed contact with language data that leads to the discovery of senses and uses of words that had been overlooked up to then (and to the outdated of old ones that were no longer in use), to a better representation of idioms and collocations, and to the introduction of more authentic examples.

Up to that time MLDS (that is, OALD and LDOCE) had been compiled by experienced language teachers like A.S. Hornby and P. Procter on the basis of existing general-purpose dictionaries. These compilers were, quite rightly, supposed to know what was essential and helpful for their students, and they did whatever they could to present and explain authentic English to them. It goes without saying that they were not able to give as faithful an image of the language as is nowadays possible with the aid of huge corpora and the sophisticated techniques to analyze them (see for instance Fontenelle 2003 as well as Atkins and Rundell 2008). The availability of more and more spoken corpora and the attitude toward colloquialisms has also changed the content of these dictionaries. But the target group of the MLDSs seems to have changed somewhat also. Whereas OALD1 was meant to be useful up to the time the foreign student entered university (see above), nowadays most of the MLDSs seem to be aimed at university students as well, if not in the first place. They all contain a far greater number of lexical items, including academic words (from about 70,000 to about 100,000 lexical units). In addition, more expressions that are used in English-speaking countries like New Zealand, Australia, and South Africa are included, especially in CIDEB and MEDAL.

COBUILD1 did not only introduce a new kind of selection of the lexical material; it also debuted a totally different type of presentation. All senses and uses of a given form were given in a strict order of descending frequency. This was a radical shift away from the etymologically driven presentations that had survived in OALD and LDOCE up to that time. One of the drawbacks of this type of presentation, however, was that in longer entries the list of uniformly presented senses and uses could reach a discouraging length, and it was not clear to what extent the users were really served by this new layout (see Bogaards 1998).

Nowadays all MLDS include some kind of differentiation that permits a more direct access to particular lexical units. In its third edition LDOCE (1995) has introduced “signposts,” simple words or phrases that should easily evoke the type of meaning a user is looking for. In the same year, CIDEB presented a system of “guide words,” which try to catch the gist of a cluster of senses and uses. The latter presentation, where a form such as bank has five entries and like eight, is based on semantic (and therefore partly etymological) principles: all derivatives are presented in the context of the sense that is treated in a specific entry (e.g., the verb bank in the financial sense under bank organization). This system has not changed in the newer edition, known as CALD2. OALD has followed in its sixth edition (2000) with the introduction of “shortcuts,” words or phrases that show the context or the general meaning of a lexical unit. MEDAL (2002 and 2007) has a system where menus are given for all forms having more than five senses or uses, but different grammatical classes are systematically

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**Figure 1** a page from OALD1

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3.2 Simple definitions

The first dictionary to adopt a defining vocabulary was LDOCE1 (1978). At the end of the book, a list is presented of "the words that have been used for all the explanations ... in this dictionary, except those words in small capital letters." As is well known, however, the general policy that was established in this way was a far cry from what was found in practice (cf. Bogards 1996: 289 ff.). In some cases, words not belonging to the about 2,000 selected items were used in definitions without being marked by small capital letters. In other cases, elements included in the list were used in meanings that were not necessarily very familiar to the users. In addition, words were constructed with the use of elements such as prefixes and affixes that were in the list, but these did not always seem to be easily understood by the users. Moreover, combinations of elements such as idiomatic expressions and phrasal verbs were to be found in a way that did not always help the non-native learners in their struggle with unknown words. The list of defining elements has been refined in different ways in later editions. In LDOCE3, for instance, it was stated that only the most common and central meanings of the words in the list were used, so as to exclude less frequent senses of frequent words. In addition, in the more recent editions, the number of prefixes and affixes (rather extensive in the first edition) has been cut down. Phrasal verbs are used only as far as these have been explicitly included in the list, e.g., look after, look for, and look up.

Other learners' dictionaries have followed this new trend. In the most recent editions of the "Big Five," we find defining vocabularies that are described as sets of "important words" (OALD7), "common words" (MEDAL), "essential words" (CALD), or as belonging to the highest "frequency bands" (COBUILD). Although there is a big overlap in the contents of these lists, there are also noticeable differences that are not always due to the various numbers of elements that are contained in the lists (cf. Bogards 2008).

Another innovation in defining meanings was introduced by COBUILD in the form of full-sentence definitions. Several types of complete sentences were adopted for the various word classes and adapted to the particular word to be defined. This approach is much nearer to what people do when they are asked to define a word in real life and it makes it possible to evoke

![Figure 2](https://example.com/figure2.png)
a normal context for each lexical unit. It is evident that this way of defining is quite space consuming, however, and it may sometimes be laborious for the user who has to read a lot of text before getting to the right meaning. This may, moreover, distract them from the (reading) task they were executing and may, therefore, be too big an investment (cf. Bogaards 1996: 292).

Other dictionaries have taken up the idea of full-sentence definitions, but in a less radical way. CIDE used it fairly often, but it has been applied less frequently in CALD; MEDAL uses this type of definition rather rarely (cf. Rundell 2006). Anyhow, probably thanks to the “COBUILD revolution,” the defining styles in all MLDs have become less awkward and more transparent.

As the introduction of a defining vocabulary in LDOCE1 made the definitions more comprehensible, illustrations were used in a different way. In OALDI, illustrations had been supplied with lexical units for which “definition in easy, common words was not practicable or satisfactory” (Introduction p. iv). In LDOCE1, entries like puma or pumpkin contained no drawings, but they had references to illustrations that were given elsewhere. In OALDI1, this had been done only for words used in sports and music “because all over the world to-day Western games and music are very popular” (ibid.). All the drawings in LDOCE1 were of an encyclopedic, rather than technical nature, such as “respiratory and circulatory system,” “sea mammals,” or “castle.” Each black-and-white plate was given at the alphabetical place of its title and presented a number of items belonging to a class or a context, which made it possible to better recognize the specifics of each element (e.g., guitar, violin, sitar, and cello in the case of “stringed instruments”), but also served as a means to find words that were unknown to the user or that had been forgotten.

This approach has been adopted by the other MLDs. In most cases the plates are now presented in separate, full-color sections. In LDOCE4, however, we still find plates, now in color, on the A–Z pages of the dictionary. As has been seen (Figure 2), OALD7 sometimes adds illustrations to specific lexical units. It also has classes of items in black-and-white plates accompanying one of the items belonging to the class or context (e.g., “chain,” “thread,” “string,” and “rope” at rope). MEDAL also follows this policy. This is also the case for CALD, but in this dictionary we find many “tables” illustrating the various senses of a given word, like ring (on a finger, ring road, boxing ring, etc.) or pipe (water pipe, tobacco pipe, organ pipe, etc.). One can wonder what the importance of this type of illustration in MLDs may be. COBUILD is the only MLD that does not have any illustration in the A–Z section; it has introduced a full-color section only in the latest edition (COBUILD5).

When introducing the first defining vocabulary in LDOCE1, the authors have used the list not only for making definitions, but also for writing examples. The other MLDs have not followed this innovation. COBUILD1, with its principled approach to linguistic reality as found in the corpus, gave examples only as they were literally found in the materials that made up the corpus. Although these were much more convincing in most cases than the constructed examples that were provided in the older editions of OALD and LDOCE, they had two serious drawbacks. The first was that quite often other words were introduced that were not only unknown to most of the users but were, in addition, not always explained in the dictionary itself. Secondly, some of the realistic examples referred to contexts that could be unknown to the users who did not share the same cultural background, or they lost much of their impact because the context in which they were originally used was lacking (cf. Bogaards 1996: 299).

In all MLDs, examples are now based on corpus materials. However, the examples are screened for comprehensibility outside the original context as well as for the presence of “difficult” words, and they are shortened or otherwise adapted so as to serve most effectively in a dictionary for non-native learners.

3.3 Explicit information about use
The evolution of syntactical information, especially that attached to verbs, has been described by Cowie (1999) and by Bogaards and van der Kloot (2001). From a fairly incomplete and abstruse system of verb codes as given in OALD1, this type of indication has evolved to far more straightforward data that are given in an explicit way. Whereas in OALD1, pump as a verb is marked as “(P 1, 7, 10, 18)” for the first sense, we find in OALD7 a number of examples, each of which is preceded by quite simple codes like [VN] or [VN-AD] (see Figures 1 and 2). Other MLDs have more or less equivalent, relatively transparent coding systems. For the same sense of pump we find, for instance, in CALD2: [T usually + adv or prep] and in COBUILD5, where this type of information is given in the extra column next to each example: “V n with adv,” “V prep,” “V n” and “V.” MEDAL2 has gone a step further in simplifying the grammatical information given with verbs. In this dictionary, most verbs are classified  

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only as transitive (marked with a [T]) or intransitive (marked with an [I]), whereby the use of other explicit grammatical terminology is avoided. The examples are supposed to give all the other information that is needed to use the items correctly.

It is as yet unclear what type of grammatical information or which particular form of presentation of this information best serves the non-native users of the MLDs. What seems to be important, in any case, is the presence of good examples that can serve as models for what students want to formulate. This is what can be deduced from the results of empirical research conducted by Bogaards and Van der Koot (2002) and by Dziemianko (2006). The former researchers add that more advanced learners may profit also from explicitly given information on grammar, but these learners hardly benefit from traditional codes given in grammatical terms. The latter author states that COBUILD-style definitions may serve as well and that, contrary to what had been found in other experiments, the information given in the extra column in COBUILD can, under certain conditions, be useful.

As has been said above, OALD1 was first published as *Idiomatic and Syntactic English Dictionary*. What is a bit surprising is that, whereas the introduction is followed by a section called “Notes on Syntax”—almost twenty pages long and mainly devoted to the famous verb patterns—nothing more is said about idioms. One of the reasons for this absence of any comment on idioms may be that at that time it was generally thought that nothing very interesting could be said about language use if it was outside the realm of grammar. So, everything that was outside syntax could only be listed and semantically explained, but, being a list of basic irregularities, could hardly be commented on. In that view, idioms and syntax form two opposing parts of the language, and a dictionary would be incomplete if one of these two parts was left out. The innovative aspect of OALD1 was, therefore, the syntactic part, which had to be explained in a comprehensive way. In contrast, the idiomatic part was a simple continuation of common practice in English dictionaries.

Comparing OALD1 and OALD7, it can be seen (Figures 1 and 2) that in the more recent edition idioms are clearly marked (IDM)—whether they are treated in the entry itself, such as those under *pump* as a verb, or whether they are referred to because they are treated in other entries, as in the case of the four idioms listed under *punch* as a noun. None of these idioms are mentioned in OALD1. What is more, other combinations with the headwords are only rarely treated or mentioned as well. Collocations, which are essential for a user who wants to produce “natural” English, are also lacking. *Throw a punch and land a punch*, which are given in bold in OALD7, are missing in OALD1. The same goes for phrasal verbs.

### 3.4 Conclusions

What this brief overview of the development of MLDs makes clear is that all aspects of this type of dictionary are liable to change and that many different solutions have been proposed for the same problems over the years. In most cases, the publication of a new MLD was something of a revolution. This was, understandably, the case for OALD1, the first dictionary of this category. But the appearance of a real competitor thirty years later, LDOCE1, introducing a restricted defining vocabulary, was quite a shock also. A few years later, COBUILD1 not only introduced the use of language corpora but also broke with many conventions on the level of defining practices and the presentation of grammatical information. CIDE (and later CALD) experimented with new types of semantically clustered entries, trying to avoid the drawbacks of the old, etymologically founded presentation and to underline the semantic relationships between words of different grammatical classes. Finally, MEDAL tried to exploit all the successes that had been achieved so far. It did so in a quite satisfactory way, improving, for instance, on the clever use of a well-chosen defining vocabulary and of defining templates as well as on the possibilities users have to find items they did not know or had forgotten (see Bogaards 2003).

One can say that much has been attained and that, in some aspects, more is known about what constitutes a good MLD than in the early days of pedagogical lexicography. Quite often the five existing MLDs are referred to as “the Big Five.” One can wonder then whether a sixth MLD was necessary and what this new MLD could add. In the next section we will analyse the MWALED in light of the evolutions sketched above.

### 4. Merriam-Webster’s Advanced Learner’s English Dictionary

Figure 3 presents the same stretch, from *pulverize* to *punctilious*, as was used for the comparison of the two editions of OALD. MWALED offers exactly the same number and about the same selection of lexical units as OALD7. The total number of lexical units can be evaluated at about 85,000, which is higher than COBUILD5 (about 72,000) and OALD7 (about 76,000).


but lower than MEDAL2 (about 91,000) and LDOCE4 (about 100,000).

The differences between the two runs that are compared here (Figures 2 and 3) can be considered marginal. Whereas OALD7 has words like pump-priming, pump room and punch ball that are not in MWALED, the latter dictionary offers more senses for words like pump (noun: “the act of pumping”) and punch (noun: “a hole made by a cutting tool or machine”) than OALD7. More interestingly, MWALED does not present some British words or senses, like pump “sports shoe” or “plimsoll” but has more lexical units that are marked as “US,” like pumped or punchy “punch drunk.” This seems to be the case in the whole of this first American MLD. Items like dime store, diner “restaurant,” and dingbat can also be found in OALD7 or MEDAL, where they are marked as belonging to North American English. However, informal or slang items that are particular to that type of English can be found only in MWALED, e.g., diddle or dim bulb. It is telling also that both MEDAL and OALD7 give the British and the American senses of dinky in that order, whereas MWALED gives them in the reverse order. In line with this, we systematically find forms in the American spelling before their British variants (e.g., pulverize also Brit. pulverise).

The preface of MWALED states that “The creation of this dictionary reflects the reality that English has become an international language, and that American English, in particular, is now being used andstudied every day by millions of people around the world.” This is certainly true. However, this greater importance of American English cannot be taken as an excuse for the absence of many Australian, Indian, or South African words, such as bathers “swimsuit,” bottler “something very good,” brumby “wild horse,” crore “ten million,” devi “goddess,” gur “brown sugar,” spaza “shop,” tsotsi “criminal,” or voorkamer “front room,” all of which can be found in MEDAL2, and many of which are present in OALD7.

The presentation of the lexical units is based partly on etymological grounds and partly on grammatical grounds. For a form like pump, we find three entries: one for the verbal uses and two for the noun. In the latter category, the activity-related senses are presented apart from the shoe-related senses. This type of presentation is similar to CIDE and CALD. In each of the two noun entries, there is a cross-reference to the other entry; this is done in a systematic way throughout the dictionary. Only research could make clear whether this type of cross-referencing is necessary and helpful. Another type of cross-reference is the one given under puma. The user is referred to cougar, where it is said that this animal (but does the user already know that it is an animal?) is also called “mountain lion, (US) panther, puma” but where no definition is given—only a new cross-reference to the “picture at CAT.” As to the placement of multi-word expressions, the policy does not seem to be very clear. Whereas “beat (someone) to the punch” and “pull punches” are treated under punch, other expressions like “(as) pleased as punch,” “pack a punch,” or “roll with the punches” are treated under the verbs they contain.

According to the preface, “The definitions in this dictionary are written in simple language.” There is no mention of a restricted defining vocabulary. This explains why a word like fist is part of the definition of one of the senses of punch. In the run studied here, some of the other less frequent words that are used for defining purposes are grind, volcano, and rye. The preface states that “Very often a word will be defined by a quite simple definition, followed by a definition that is perhaps somewhat less simple.” What is meant is what we see at punch out 2. The first definition contains words that are part of the defining vocabularies used in other MLDs, but after a semicolon, a second definition is given that uses a phrasal verb. Similar double definitions can be found with choke off 2 and marvel. Although this type of definition turns up quite regularly, they don’t seem to appear “very often.” Sometimes the difference in difficulty of comprehension seems to be very small, e.g., at gray (adj.), which reads: “having a color between black and white: having a color that is like the color of smoke.” In other cases, a word appears in small capitals after the second colon. Such words are not a part of the definition but refer to synonyms. For reasons that are not explained, sometimes full-sentence definitions are used, e.g., for buy/sell a pup (under pup): “To buy a pup means to pay too much money for something or to buy something that is worthless…”

Illustrations have the form of on-the-spot line drawings. These can be found for words like mask, pulpit, or puppet, and they can inform about other words, such as bill, wing, tail, etc. at bird. There are also plates giving drawings of different species of a category, like lynx, cheetah, and tiger under cat. In addition, in the middle of the book there is a quire of full-color plates presenting colors, vegetables, fruits, fish, birds, clothing, and so on.

The real difference of MWALED as
compared to the other MLDs lies in the examples—or, more precisely, in the number of examples provided. The preface claims that "more than 160,000 usage examples" are to be found. Although this number seems to be a bit too high (may own evaluation goes up to about 140,000), MWALED really gives from about 50 percent to more than 125 percent more examples than its competitors. Most of these examples are "based on evidence of real English ... [and] have been carefully written to show words being used in appropriate contexts which accurately reflect their uses in actual speech and writing" (preface). A minority of the examples are quotations taken from American and British literature. As can be seen in Figure 3, most examples are full sentences, but phrases are frequent as well. Quite often examples are explained between square brackets so as to make them perfectly clear. In some cases one may wonder whether such explanations are necessary or useful. Would anyone, knowing what a bicycle is and having understood what a pump is, need the information that "a bicycle pump is "a small pump used for putting air in bicycle tires"? The explanation given with the second example accompanying the pump seems to be too long. If it is necessary at all to explain the examples, something like "Expect long lines at the pumps [gas stations this weekend]" could be preferable. In the example provided with pumped, the information given between square brackets, "[I pumped up]" cannot be interpreted as a clarification. Instead, it functions as a cross-reference.

The grammatical information given is summary but seems to be adequate. For verbs the syntactic information is given at the highest level, which means that for a verb that is transitive in all cases, the indication "[+ obj]" is given at the level of the headword (e.g., *pulverize*). But this information goes down to sense level when the verb allows for various constructions (e.g., *pump* 5), or to example level whenever a sense can be expressed in grammatically different ways (e.g., *pump 4*).

As a conclusion, it seems fair to say that MWALED meets all the standards that are common by now for MLDs. However, with the exception of the number of examples provided—which is far higher than what can be found in any other MLD—it does not add new elements to this type of dictionary. This is especially surprising when one remembers that a new publishing house entered this market. Does this mean that we have reached the stadium of the "Perfect Learner’s Dictionary"? I am not convinced that the evolution of MLDs has come to its end.

![Figure 3](image-url)
The fourth international conference on lexicography held in Germany in the French language is taking place at Klingenberg am Main on July 2-4, 2010.

The conference theme this year is ‘Dictionaries and Translation’, with the following main axes:

- Historical aspects of the Dictionaries-Translation pair
- Monolingual lexicography and translation
- Bilingual lexicography in the wide sense, including “interlingual” monolingual lexicography (e.g. old French – contemporary French; sign language)
- Bilingual lexicography itself
- Translation as a transposition of the dictionary on paper to electronic media

The event is dedicated to the memory of Henri Meschonnic—linguist, poet and translator, who passed away on April 8, 2009—who presented the opening plenary in the 2008 conference (‘Cultures and Lexicographies’, in honor of Alain Rey) and who inspired the theme of the current conference.

This biennial meeting has been organized since 2004 by Michaela Heinz, from the University of Erlangen-Nürnberg.

The conference proceedings are published by Frank & Timme, Berlin, as part of the collection Metallexicographie. http://lexikographie.eu/