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Dinu Moscal*

"A. Philippide" Institute of Romanian Philology, Str. Th. Codrescu 2, 700481 Iași, Romania

The defining feature of associative dictionaries is represented by their non-traditional approach of lexis. A classical dictionary consists of words displayed in alphabetical order, each word being provided an explanatory definition. Throughout the history of lexicography there have been various attempts of non-traditional/non-conventional treatment of the lexis. Their aim was to amend the traditional organization that follows (the strictly formal) alphabetical order by introducing the indication of meaning-based relationships or even of the relationships with the immediate context where the designated reality is to be found. The degree of usefulness is thus superior, since such associations also lead the user to the denomination of associated ideas or realities, even if these aspects are not familiar. Associative dictionaries partially preserve some of the characteristics of the previous non-conventional dictionaries. This is specifically why they could be included in this category. However, they are also based on a different approach, which opens up new perspectives. More concretely, the associations are not actually subject to the lexicographer's attention; he only records the (free) associations made by the speaker. This trait indicates that the approach is not a metalinguistic one, since the lexicographer has no intervention in the associations made by the subjects chosen as a representative group for the speakers of a language. Moreover, associative dictionaries focus on just a part of the fundamental lexis of a language, the one that helps attain a certain affective perception of the world. A short review of other types of dictionaries in which association had a structuring role, as well as a comparison with these dictionaries could shed light in distinguishing the specificity of associative dictionaries, considering the fact that some aspects are similar.

First and foremost, one should emphasize the difference between linguistic and extra-linguistic associations. Linguistic associations are based on either the meaning or the form of a word, while extra-linguistic associations are based on the signified (the object) the word refers to. Linguistic associations constitute the basis for dictionaries of synonyms or antonyms (associations based on the significance of the words), dictionaries of homonyms, paronyms or rhymes (associations based on the form of the words). Associations based on meaning are also to be found in traditional dictionaries, yet they have no part in the organization of these dictionaries, occurring just within lexicographic articles (the meaning in certain collocations; allusions to synonyms, but also to hypernyms, hyponyms or antonyms within the definition). Extra-linguistic associations, namely the ones based on the signified (the signified reality) occur in dictionaries that fructify the semantic fields theory oriented/deviated towards the natural order of the signified reality.

The first such non-conventional dictionary is *Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases* (Roget, 1946 [1852]), which defines it by means of its different objective:

> "The purpose of an ordinary dictionary is simply to explain the meaning of words; and the problem of which it professes to furnish the solution may by stated thus – The word being given, to find its signification, or the idea it is intended to convey. The object aimed at in the present undertaking is exactly the converse of this: namely, – The idea being given, to find the word, or words, by which that idea may be most fitly and aptly expressed. For this purpose, the words and phrases of the language are here classed, not according to their sound or their orthography, but strictly according to their *signification*."

*Email address: dinu.moscal@gmail.com.

(Roget, 1946 [1852], p. xiii).

Sanders's dictionary (1873–1877) represents such an achievement for the German language. The title itself reveals the manner in which lexis is treated: *Deutscher Sprachschatz, geordnet nach Begriffen zur leichten Auffindung und Auswahl des passenden Ausdrucks*. The same perspective, combined, however, with the conventional one is also to be found in *Dictionnaire analogique de la langue française. Répertoire complet des mots par les idées et des idées par les mots*, elaborated by P. Boissière, according to whom "un dictionnaire, pour être complet, devrait se diviser en deux parties distinctes dont l'une peut servir à trouver la signification, et l'autre à trouver la forme" (Boissière, 1862, *Prèface*, p. II).

The justification for such dictionaries is their high degree of usefulness. They serve not only to defining a word more clearly, but also to finding an unknown word, about which the user only has some idea. One of Boissière's explanations (1862, *Explications indispensables*, p. I) in this respect is related to finding the word for the ensemble of colourful petals in a flower: a traditional dictionary would not be useful in such an instance, yet his dictionary provides this association within the article dedicated to *floare* 'flower', where the user can find the word *corolă* 'corolla', together with the corresponding definition.

Another non-conventional direction is represented by the dictionaries attempting at fructifying the semantic fields theory (Casares, 1942; Niobey, 1979), to which Dornseiff (1934) can be added, a direction that makes the transition from an order of signification towards an order of the signified, as clearly indicated by the title of the dictionary: *Der deutsche Wortschatz nach Sachgruppen*.

The above-mentioned dictionaries are also based on association, which implies going beyond the elaboration of an ordinary lexicographic work, characterized by alphabetical order and definitions of words. However, semantic associations are the result of the lexicographer's analysis. Dornseiff's dictionary itself (1934) reflects an organization that follows a well-determined methodology. Their objective is to increase usefulness, aiming thus at a better knowledge of the lexis of the respective language.

As opposed to the above-mentioned dictionaries, an associative dictionary provides an order of associations which is not subject to metalinguistic analysis. The semantic associations the above-mentioned dictionaries are based upon largely correspond to the observations made by Saussure with regard to the associative or paradigmatic fields (mentioned in the introduction of the paper we are analysing, p. 5). An associative dictionary reproduces associations of any type made by the speaker, associations based on signification, non-specific, also occurring in the previous non-traditional dictionaries (for instance, in the case of the word *codru* 'woods', out of the 812 responses, 230 are associations with *pădure* 'forest'), on the signified (object) (*cal* 'horse' – *căruță* 'carriage', 796/49), on an individual perception of the signified reality (*părinte* 'parent' – *totul* 'everything', *înger* 'angel', 825/3, 2) or on the general experience related to the reality signified by the word (*foame* 'hunger' – *mîncare* 'food', *sete* 'thirst', 799/263, 31; *ou* 'egg' – *găină* 'chicken', *pui* 'chick', *mîncare* 'food', 860/296, 67, 45). This last component represents the basic feature of associative dictionaries as far as their content is concerned. Associations based on general experience trace the way in which a linguistic community represents the world (starting from words). As opposed to all other types of dictionaries, whose objective is the knowledge of words, the objective of an associative dictionary is to understand the way in which a linguistic community gains a representation of the world starting from words. Undoubtedly, the perspective is completely different from the ordinary lexicographic works, this aspect being explained by the very origin of associative dictionaries.

The concept of associative dictionary is mainly due to the Russian psycholinguistic school and especially, during the last three decades, to the Moscow psycholinguistic school. The basic works this direction of research is rooted in belong to Kent & Rosanoff (1910) and Vîgotski (1972 [1934]). The former is a psychiatry study, while the later is a psychology and psycholinguistic study.

Kent & Rosanoff (1910)[1] establish, based on frequency, a list of 100 stimulus-words, providing

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[1] Their study is based on the research method of psychologist J.M. Cattell (1886a, 1886b, 1887), used for noticing the difference between perception and thought, starting from the measurement of the amount of time necessary for the sensation triggered by the stimulus (its recognition) and the time required by the mental process triggered by the stimulus (the word designating the respective stimulus).

statistics of normal responses based on the answers provided by 1000 respondents, followed by statistics of associations for the same list of words for groups with certain mental disorders, with the aim of obtaining a palpable result as far as the degree of deviation from normality is concerned. As a general result, the normal association tendencies represented in percents are 6,8% – individual reactions, 1.5% – doubtful reactions and 91.7% – common reactions, as opposed to patients affected by various mental disorders, for whom the percents were quite different: 26.8% – individual reactions, 2.5% – doubtful reactions and 70.7% – common reactions (Kent & Rosanoff, 1910, p. 40, 317). The finality of the study performed by the Kings Park State Hospital psychiatrists consists in observing the differences in the way patients diagnosed with a mental disorder form their representation of the world.

Lev S. Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist well-known for his sceptical view on the behaviourist theory, asserts that human psychic develops due to the perception of the world through language. According to his perspective, "the meaning of words *is developing*", while the "association connecting the word and its meaning can get either stronger or weaker, can be enriched by a series of connections with other objects of the same type, can extend over a larger circle of objects or, on the contrary, the respective circle can narrow down or become limited" (Vîgotski, 1972 [1934], p. 252–253). A first conclusion deriving from this fact concerns the linguistic level, namely "if the meaning of the word can be altered in its inner nature, it means that the relationship between thought and word is also altered" (*ibidem*, p. 258). The second conclusion concerns the representation of the world within human consciousness through language: "If the consciousness, which perceives and thinks, has various means of reflecting reality, then these also represent different types of consciousness. This is why thinking and language are the key elements for a good understanding of the nature of human consciousness" (*ibidem*, p. 307).

The combination of the two research directions

led to the necessary norms for the elaboration of an associative dictionary that would represent the mark of the perception upon the world of a linguistic community. The works providing the guidelines of the associative structure of language are issued during the 7th and the 8th decades of the last century and belong to A.A. Leontiev[2], a Russian linguist with a psychologist[3] orientation, who held an important position among the Russian researchers. This type of research is properly identified by the outcomes of Russian psycholinguistics[4], especially by the direction assumed by the Moscow school of psycholinguistics:

> "Depuis les années 90 l'école de psycholinguistique de Moscou a commencé à élaborer une nouvelle base théorique pour les études d'ethnopsycholinguistique, centrées sur l'analyse de la particularité de la conscience linguistique spécifique d'une culture nationale donnée et sur l'idée que l'incompréhension dans la communication interculturelle est due à la différence des consciences nationales des acteurs de la communication. La recherche de nouvelles voies de travail a amené les spécialistes à la conception de l'ontologie interculturelle de l'analyse des consciences nationales (ethniques), quand les images de la conscience d'une culture nationale sont analysées en contraste avec celles d'une autre culture."
> (Debrenne *et al.*, 2008, p. 1117–1118)

The research carried out by the Russian school of psycholinguistics on the topic of linguistic associations focus primarily on the Russian language, yet they are also applied to other languages such as French, English and Spanish (cf. Debrenne & Ufimsteva, 2011). According to the authors of the *Foreword* reviewed here, up to the present date „associative dictionaries for tens of languages have been elaborated and edited" (p. 7).

The authors of *Dicționarului asociativ al limbii române* (Gheorghe Popa, Ala Sainenco, who also sign the *Foreword*, Valentina Prițcan, Viorica Popa, Elena Lacusta, Lilia Trinca și Lucia Popa) are all from the

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[2] The son of psychologist A.N. Leontiev, colleague with and follower of Lev S. Vygotsky. Furthermore, A..A. Leontiev is the author of monographs dedicated to each of them.

[3] The first doctoral dissertation is a monograph study of Baudoin de Courtenay's linguistic perspective, while the next two works belong to the field of psycholinguistics.

[4] Orientation with a well-known history, especially due to the Harkov school.

Republic of Moldova, having thus a direct contact with the theories and outcomes of the Russian school of psycholinguistics, as well as a close collaboration with the group of researchers of the Russian Science Academy (who elaborated *Dicționarul asociativ al limbii ruse*). This collaboration materialized in an internship at the Russian Academy attended by all of the authors (p. 8–9).

The dictionary comprises 508 stimulus words, the responses being provided by approximately 5000 linguistic surveys conducted throughout the Romanian territory (Romania and the Republic of Moldova) based on questionnaires made of 100 words (p. 9–10). The ratio between the number of stimulus-words included in the dictionary (508) and the number of stimulus-words included in the questionnaires (100) results into a variable total number of responses (associations), generally between 750 and 800 (yet 650 for *orgolios* 'vain', 840 for *familie* 'family'). The responses to the stimulus-words are not evaluated by the authors of the dictionary, an aspect reflected in the recording of the following associations: a) different morphological forms for the same word, for instance, *degete* 'fingers' (47 out of 801) and *deget* 'finger' (14 out of 801) for the stimulus-word *palmă* 'palm'; b) individual responses and doubtful responses (according to the classification provided by Kent & Rosanoff, 1910, p. 40, 317), for instance the individual associations with the names of settlements *Avram Iancu, Bălți, Brăila*, etc. for the stimulus-word *acasă* 'home', the date when the questionnaire was filled in or the date/year of birth for the stimulus-word *an* 'year' or the stimulus-word *dată* 'date', respectively doubtful associations such as the response *verde* 'green' (2 out of 755) for the stimulus-word *ac* 'needle'. These signs of spontaneity and free association of the investigated respondents provide a vivid image for the dictionary user.

Besides its importance in the field of linguistics, *The Associative Dictionary of the Romanian Language* can be useful in many other fields. Anthropologists, sociologists, ethnologists and culturologists alike shall find in this dictionary real evidence for various features of the Romanian linguistic community. For instance, the stimulus-word *stînga* 'left' (with 807 responses) also has, besides its common associations with *dreapta* 'right' (387), *mînă* 'hand' (79), *direcție* 'direction' (22), *parte* 'side' (15), *mîna* 'the hand'

(13), etc. some associations such as: *ghinion* 'bad luck' (6), *rău* 'evil' (6), *neserios* 'untrustworthy' (4), *nedrept* 'unfair' (2), *neîncredere* 'distrust' (2) or even *Hitler* (1) and *totalitarism* 'totalitarianism' (1). Most probably, the associations for the stimulus-word *dulce* 'sweet' (with 781 responses) could also be useful outside the field of Humanities: *ciocolată* 'chocolate' (109), *amar* 'bitter' (80), *miere* 'honey' (67), *zahăr* 'sugar' (61), *prăjitură* 'cake' (53), *bun* 'good, tasty' (50), *acru* 'sour' (32), *bomboană* 'candy' (18), *bomboane* 'candies' (18), etc. Associations with human beings for the stimulus-word *asculta* 'listen' (with 784 responses) are (with more than one occurrence): *părinții* 'the parents' (5), *professor* 'teacher' (5), *mama* 'mother' (4), *copil* 'child' (3), *părinți* 'parents' (3), *profesori* 'teachers' (3), *psiholog* 'psychologist' (2). Some associations indicate not only the diversity of the interviewed respondents but also less-known realities from the rural area: the stimulus-word *miez* 'core' (with 768 responses) includes the response *coasă* 'scythe' (2).

An analysis of the concept of 'beauty' for Romanians contains, in the responses to a series of stimulus-words in the dictionary, an image with a higher degree of objectivity. For the stimulus-word *frumoasă* 'fem. beautiful' (with 776 responses) the highest occurrence association is *fată* 'girl' (85), followed by the antonym *urîtă* 'ugly' (42), the synonym *drăguță* 'pretty' (37), then *femeie* 'woman' (36), *eu* 'I' (17), *minunată* 'wonderful' (17), *plăcută* 'pleasant' (15), *atrăgătoare* 'attractive' (13), *gingașă* 'delicate' (13), etc. Things are completely different in the case of the stimulus-word *frumos* 'masc. beautiful' (with 763 answers): *urît* 'ugly' (76), *plăcut* 'pleasant' (39), *drăguț* 'nice' (38), *băiat* 'boy' (24), *chipeș* 'handsome' (21), *copil* 'child' (20), *minunat* 'wonderful' (16), *peisaj* 'landscape' (15), *eu* 'I' (13), *atrăgător* 'attractive' (11), *bărbat* 'man' (11), *arătos* 'good-looking' (10), *natură* 'nature' (10), *suflet* 'soul' (10), etc. For the stimulus-word *fată* 'girl' (with 826 responses) the highest occurrence association is *frumoasă* 'beautiful' (101), followed by *băiat* 'boy' (88), *frumusețe* 'beautiness' (40), *domnișoară* 'maid' (28), *femeie* 'woman' (24), *frumos* 'handsome' (21), etc. For the stimulus-word *băiat* 'boy' (with 797 responses) the highest frequency associations are *fată* 'girl' (129), *copil* 'child' (60), *frumos* 'masc. beautiful' (38), *bărbat* 'man' (22), *om* 'person' (22), *bun* 'good' (18), etc. The situation of *frumos* 'masc.

beautiful' as compared to *frumoasă* 'fem. beautiful' is reflected in relation to *fată* 'girl'. *Femeie* 'woman' does not occur as a stimulus-word, although it probably should. For the stimulus-word *bărbat* 'man' (with 798 responses) the highest occurrence associations are *femeie* 'woman' (134), *om* 'person' (79), *putere* 'power' (75), *puternic* 'strong' (44), *soţ* 'husband' (30), *tata* 'father' (22), *frumos* 'masc. beautiful' (19), *înalt* 'tall' (19), *barbă* 'beard' (14), etc. The data about the respondents, mainly differentiations according to the gender criterion, as well as age (information that is undoubtedly available in the project database) could successfully contribute to a deeper analysis.

The contrastive analysis of the responses for the synonym terms also leads to deeper understanding. The bilateral opposition *noapte* 'night' – *întuneric* 'darkness' reveals a rather unsuspected contrast as far as the feeling of fear is concerned, although the first association is reciprocal. For *noapte* (817 responses) the following associations occur: *întuneric* 'darkness' (204), *zi* 'day' (103), *stele* 'stars' (71), *somn* 'sleep' (58), *lună* 'moon' (46), *linişte* 'silence' (21), *lungă* 'long' (19), *negru* 'black' (19), *albă* 'white' (14), *bună* 'good' (12), *albastră* 'blue' (10), *romantic* 'romantic' (10), *seară* 'evening' (10), *frică* 'fear' (9), *beznă* 'pitch-dark' (8), etc. For *întuneric* 'darkness' (808 responses) the associations are: *noapte* 'night' (173), *frică* 'fear' (95), *negru* 'black' (83), *lumină* 'light' (81), *beznă* 'pitch-dark' (70), *teamă* 'angst' (17), *linişte* 'silence' (12), *lună* 'moon' (10), *moarte* 'death' (9), *seară* 'evening' (8); 6 occurrences are recorded for *spaimă* 'fright', while 2 occurrences are recorded for *groază* 'terror' and *înfricoşător* 'dreadful'. For the stimulus-word *teamă* 'angst' (808 responses) the order of the first associations (according to their frequency) is: *frică* 'fear' (468, that is 57.9%), *spaimă* 'fright' (25), *întuneric* 'darkness' (23), *mare* 'big' (9), *durere* 'pain' (7), *nesiguranţă* 'incertitude' (5),

singurătate 'loneliness' (5), *şarpe* 'snake' (5), followed by 9 responses with a frequency of 4, among which *de întuneric* 'of darkness', 10 responses with a frequency of 3, 24 responses with a frequency of 2, among which *noapte* 'night'. *Frică* 'fear' was not selected as a stimulus-word.

The dictionary provides valuable information for various fields and topics. The stimulus-word *codru* 'woods' elicits *Eminescu* 12 times (out of 812 responses) occupying thus the 8th position, while for the stimulus-word *pădure* 'forest', *Eminescu* is recorded with a frequency of 1 (out of 803 responses). For the stimulus-word *poveste* 'story' (with 821 responses), *Ion Creangă* occurs with a frequency of 16, *Harap-Alb* with a frequency of 8, *Petre Ispirescu* does not occur at all, yet there occur *Decameron* [*Decameron*], *Decameronul* [*The Decameron*], *Grimm* and *fraţii Grimm* [Brothers Grimm] with a frequency of 1. For the stimulus-word *poet* 'poet', the associations with poets are: *Eminescu* (116, the first position), *Bacovia* (5), *Vieru* (3), *Creangă* (2), *Puşkin* (2), followed by names with a frequency of 1: *Ana Blandiana*, *Arghezi* and *Stănescu*. The highest frequency for the stimulus-word *politic* 'political' (789 responses) is recorded for *minciună* 'lie' (69) and *minciuni* 'lies' (26), along with *partid* 'party', (26). The highest frequency for the stimulus-word *politică* 'politics' (765 responses) is recorded for the words *minciună* 'lie' (74), *minciuni* 'lies' (35) and *corupţie* 'corruption' (25).

The frequency of associations indicates cognitive schemas that most often represent social stereotypes. Researchers from various fields should take full advantage of this information. The authors make no mention in the first volume about what the second volume will contain. We assume it will be a reverse dictionary of associations that could contribute substantially to the use of the data included in the first volume.

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