

## Words, Words, Words . . . but what exactly is a ‘word’ in Anglo-Norman?

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The *Concise Oxford-Hachette French Dictionary* offers the following entry for **plane**:

**plane** /plein/ I *n* 1 AVIAT avion *m*; 2 (in geometry) plan *m*; (face of cube, pyramid) face *f*; 3 TECH (tool) rabot *m*; 4 BOT (also ~ tree) platane *m*.

II *adj* (flat) plan, uni.

III *vtr* raboter [*wood, edge*]; to ~ sth smooth lisser qch au rabot.

IV *vi* [*bird, aircraft, glider*] planer.

I am sceptical that this conflation of noun, adjective, and verb, and within the noun, of a series of quite different senses, is an accurate reflection of a native speaker’s intuitive understanding of the situation. For most native speakers, I suspect, the putting together of the senses glossed here as *avion*, *plan*, *rabot*, and *platane*, would evoke the reaction that “they are not the same word.” The article, and the dictionary, thus present a case which is strikingly unusual in lexicography, bilingual or monolingual, in respect of the degree to which priority goes to form over both grammatical function and meaning. The introduction makes this implicitly clear:

Each entry in the dictionary is organized hierarchically, by grammatical category, then sense category. [. . .] As a general rule, all meanings of a word are to be found in one single entry, provided they are pronounced in the same way, exclusive of stress shifts.<sup>1</sup>

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1 Corr ard and Grundy, *Concise Oxford-Hachette Dict.*, x.

Underlying this method (and the article **plane** is, of course, only one example) is a particular conception of the idea of a “word”: a “word” is primarily defined by form. Grammatical categories and sense(s) are secondary considerations. There is, of course, a common etymon somewhere in the distant background, although had that been the determining factor, then the entry would also have to incorporate the separate article **plain** since it and **plane** are both ultimately derived from CL *PLĀNUS*. But that (in English) would have disrupted any formal unity.

A brief glance at a typical headword (rather, the two most related headwords) and their associated variants in the *Anglo-Norman Dictionary*<sup>2</sup> demonstrates how far from such a conception the AND is:

**plain**<sup>1</sup>, **plan**, **plane**, **plein** (f. *plenge Apoc 3085*) [adj.]  
**planer**, **planir**, **planier**; **plainer**, **pleiner**, **pleinier**; **plaigner** [v.]

In the first place, obviously, the AND does not put under one headword two grammatically distinct categories: it hardly could, given the nature of the languages concerned where the citation-form differs (although there are cases where, for example, a noun and an adjective share an entry).

Secondly, and more pertinently, it is immediately evident that form is not a criterion except in this, the broadest definition of the idea of “form,” which is in fact not form at all, but a formal expression of grammatical category. In part the AND’s rejection of “form” as a defining criterion is a direct function of the variability inherent in medieval languages in general, and (seemingly) in Anglo-Norman in particular: a dictionary of a pre-standardized language where orthography is not fixed can hardly make form and morphophonology central in the definition of what is meant as a word-unit. Moreover, at some level (and maybe only before Anglo-Norman became increasingly a written language), the fact that scribes were endeavouring to represent speech-forms is bound to have contributed to the degree of variability.

But it seems to me that these apparently banal observations hide a more interesting and more complex issue, for the problem is not, I think, exclusively a modern (and anachronistic) lexicographical one — although it is that, too. In this essay, I shall look at two aspects of the problem, or more accurately, perhaps, two related problems:

- (1) the purely lexicographical problem of word-attribution and of the definition of a “word” for lexicographical purposes; and
- (2) the definition of a “word” and the semantics and onomasiology of Anglo-Norman.

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<sup>2</sup> Rothwell, ed., *Anglo-Norman Dict.*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition (henceforth AND or AND1; AND2 refers to the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, ed. Rothwell, Gregory, and Trotter).

### The Lexicographical Problem

Even from the two headword variant lists above, it will be apparent that Anglo-Norman, with its luxuriant richness of spelling variation, poses significant challenges in lemmatization (and doubtless will for computer-driven lemmatization, too). An obvious cause of difficulty, which I do not propose to deal with here, concerns the prefixed forms in A- and E-. The difficulty (eliminated in modern French) is that the apparent etymological senses of the prefix are not unfailingly reflected, and of course in any case phonetic attrition has caused (within each group) the formerly distinct AB- ~ AD- and EX- ~ EN- (< IN) forms to merge. In Anglo-Norman, and to some extent (though not always fully recognized in the lexicographical tradition) in medieval French more generally, a phenomenon that may well have had its origins in phonetic confusion seems to have contributed in many cases to a situation where a satisfactory classification can be effected only by an analysis of the context. A case in point arises in the fictitious account of Mandeville’s travels. In Mandeville’s account of the festivities at the Court of the Great Khan, transparently plagiarized from Odorico da Pordenone, is the following:

Et devant la table del emperour estoient ly grant barouns et ly autres qe ly servent. Mes nul n’est si hardy dure un mot si ly sires ne parle a ly, si ceo ne sont menestriers qe dient chanceouns et gestes ou autres reveries pur l’emperour *alesser*.<sup>3</sup>

At first sight, this appears to be a form of *alesser* and that is how the editor interprets it: “*alesser*, fatiguer (Godefroy),<sup>4</sup> employé dans le texte au sens de ‘distraindre’, traduit par *soulacier* dans des manuscrits en parler [*sic*] continental.”<sup>5</sup> In fact, the interpretation that this is *alesser* is correct, but the editor’s gloss, “fatiguer,” reveals her mistake in associating the word not with *alesser* (the form cited) but with *alasser* (the form in Gdf), which does indeed mean “fatiguer.” Semantically, however, this is far from obvious (how could “fatiguer” come to mean “distraindre”?), and rather than try to distort the senses shown by the straightforward and largely monosemic verb *alasser*, one needs to look elsewhere. In the event, it was only really by consulting the French translation of Odorico (by Jean de Vignay) that this particular riddle was solved:

Et devant li sont ses barons aussi comme [. . .] sanz ce que il puissent estre nombrez; et nul d’eulz n’oseroit parler en nule maniere se il n’en estoit requis du grant seigneur, fors tant seulement les juggleors qui en sont exceptez, qui veulent *esleescier* leur seigneur.<sup>6</sup>

3 J MandLD 374. Variants for *alesser* in continental manuscripts: *desduire*, *soulacier*.

4 Godefroy, *Dict. de l’ancienne langue française* (henceforth Gdf).

5 J MandLD, “Lexique,” 519.

6 J VignayOdoT 65.39.

This is the clue to what is going on in Mandeville. The Latin text has at this point,

Ante cuius conspectum stant barones sui, multique alii innumerabiles, nullus quorum loqui auderet ullo modo nisi a magno domino peteretur, illis etiam istrionibus exceptis qui suum dominum vellent *letificare*.<sup>7</sup>

The Latin *letificare* becomes the normal OF prefixed *esleecier* (the customary translation of the Latin) in Jean de Vignay's translation, but *alesser* in Mandeville's plagiarized version. The dictionaries of OF corroborate this analysis. The Mandeville editor's reference is presumably to Gdf 1,211c *alasser*. Tobler and Lommatzsch 1,276<sup>8</sup> *alasser* largely repeats this entry and gives no inkling that the verb might have had what is in fact the almost diametrically opposed sense of "to cheer up," for the simple reason that it did not have that sense. TL 3, 1088 *eslëecier* has no forms in a-; but Gdf 3,479c *esleecier* has, in a quotation from "*S Graal Richel. 2455*," "Moult fist le roine grant duel, ne onques par nul homme mortel ne pot estre *aleciee* de sa dolor." In other words, despite appearances, *alecier* = *esleecier*. The underlying point, however, is clear: form, here, far from helping with meaning, is positively misleading. Meaning is not embedded in form but at least to some extent independent of it. *Habitus non facit verbum*.

At the micro-level of an individual citation (to be identified and attached to one of several possible extant and fairly substantial dictionary entries), a case like this can cause difficulty. Etymology (sometimes) and form (almost always) fail to solve the problem. When one compares, though, some major AND entries from this perspective, the full scope of the problem begins to emerge in all its glory.

The following group of five apparently distinct verbs will be examined: **atendre**<sup>1</sup>, **atenir**<sup>1</sup>, **atteindre**, **entendre**<sup>1</sup>, **esteindre**<sup>1</sup>. The headword variants of these are shown below, with those forms which are problematic in bold italics:

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<sup>7</sup> Van den Wyngaert, *Sinica Franciscana*, I: 474.

<sup>8</sup> Tobler and Lommatzsch, *Altfranzösisches Wörterbuch* (henceforth TL).

HEADWORD	VARIANTS LISTED	CORE SENSE
<b>atendre</b> <sup>1</sup>	attendre, <i>entendre</i> ; <i>atteindre</i> ; attender, attendre (attentre; attondre; <i>tendre</i> )	to (a)wait, wait (on)
<b>atenir</b> <sup>1</sup>	atténir	to keep
<b>atteindre</b>	ataindre, ataindere; <i>attendre</i> ; attainder, atteinder, attender; attainer, atainer; attainre, ataindre; <i>enteindre</i> , <i>entendre</i> ; <i>esteindre</i> ; <i>esteiner</i> ; <i>teindre</i>	to reach
<b>entendre</b> <sup>1</sup>	entender, etendre, <i>estendre</i> ; intendre (ententer)	to understand, hear
<b>esteindre</b> <sup>1</sup>	estaindre, estendere, estendre; esteiner, exteindre, exteinter; <i>asteindre</i> , <i>ateindre</i>	to extinguish

Leaving aside the aphetics (another characteristic Anglo-Norman trait), it will be apparent that a significant number of forms create problems for two reasons: firstly, they have the “wrong” prefix, and secondly, they have the “wrong” infinitive stem (often but not always, at least in this group, the wrong vowel, which might be explicable in either orthographical or just possibly in phonetic terms). Etymologically there “should” be no problem since the etyma are notionally distinct: *entendre* < INTENDĒRE, *atendre* < ATTENDĒRE, *atteindre* < \*ATTANGĒRE (CL ATTINGĒRE), *atenir* < AD + \*TENĪRE (CL TENĒRE), *esteindre* < \*EXTINGĒRE (CL EXSTINGUĒRE). Yet problems there are. The “core” meanings of the verbs are fairly clear and correlate (more or less) with the etyma. It is the forms which are troublesome, and which make for difficulties in allocating citations to the relevant verbs. So, for example, *sub atendre*<sup>1</sup>, “jeo devise a J. [. . .] c. marcz, sur condicioun que l’avaunt dite money *atteindra* (“will be expected in”) an lez maynez de mez executours tanque al temps que covenablez mariagez [. . .] soyent ordeignez,”<sup>9</sup> could perhaps be from *atteindre* whereas, conversely, “ke les draps soient de longur e de laur selump la ancienne asise del mester sus peine de perdre les draps ke serrunt *atenz* (“proven”) pur autres u la value,”<sup>10</sup> *sub atendre*, looks like (but seemingly is not) *atendre*. Worse still, sense (10) of *atteindre*, “to extinguish,” raises the possibility that it is, in fact, an unusual but not impossible form of *esteindre*<sup>1</sup>. *Entendre*<sup>1</sup> seems relatively unproblematic —

9 STAFFORD 392. Text not listed in Baldinger, *Dictionnaire étymologique de l’ancien français* (henceforth DEAF).

10 *Winchester* 28.17 = DEAF CoutWinchF.

except that there is also an **entendre**<sup>2</sup>, with the core sense of “extend, stretch,” which in turns looks suspiciously like **estendre**<sup>1</sup>; and of course, *sub estendre*<sup>1</sup> are listed the variant headwords *estendre* and *atendre*. The latter is unfortunately not exemplified in the article, but the former soon turns up: “Ta douçor si vers nous entende / Qe nos almes d’einfer defende.”<sup>11</sup> But enough is enough: the point, I think, is made, and could be made hundreds of times over with comparable groups of formally mixed-up words where only the semantics permits attribution of citations, with even a modest level of certainty, to the relevant verb or noun (verbs are worse because of the plethora of finite forms). For the purposes of compiling a dictionary like the AND, then, external form is often (at least in complex entries like this) of little real use: a realistic taxonomy cannot be based on morphology and orthography (external accident and external accidents). And as will be seen later, using external form as a mechanism for classification represents an attempt to straitjacket the language itself (not just dictionary entries for it) into an often entirely inappropriate framework.

The reason why scholarship uses these often defective taxonomic tools is to be found in the history of philology and in the intellectual context in which the discipline emerged. Marco Passarotti observes that it is no accident that the ground-breaking contributions to (Indo-European) comparative philology should have been made in the same era as the pioneering work of Karl Lachmann on textual editing, and at almost exactly the time when Charles Darwin was writing. Darwin’s *Origin of Species* (1859) was followed, for example, in 1861–62 by August Schleicher’s comparative grammar of Indo-European.<sup>12</sup> Romance philology, of course, simply adopted the tools and the mind-set of the Indo-Europeanists. The model for all three nineteenth-century approaches to science — Lachmannism, Darwinism, comparative philology — was essentially the same: to show evolution (metaphorically represented in all three cases by tree-models) by the identification and taxonomic classification of significant variants. Inevitably, the obvious variants to select are the external, morpho-phonological features; and it is interesting, in fact, to observe to what extent not only the tree-model, but also the terminology of taxonomic features, overlaps between the different disciplines: all talk of “families,” all sometimes make use of cladistic modelling, and biology and philology concur in their use of “morphology.”<sup>13</sup> This is not, of course, to say that this methodology is wrong simply because it is old: on the contrary, it remains basic to all three disciplines. But what is also needed, in diachronic linguistics as in modern (diachronic) phylogenetics, is not just a detailed

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11 Ross 5203.

12 Passarotti, “Towards Textual Drift Modelling,” 64.

13 Cf. also van Reenen/van Mulken, *Studies in Stemmatology*.

morphological (surface) analysis, but access to the DNA: to the semantic content or to what Frankwalt Möhren calls “le noyau sémantique.” There is no shortage (especially recently) of discussion of such definitions — often highly theorized — in the field of historical semantics,<sup>14</sup> and the recent explosion in all things cognitive has further focused attention on questions of this type.<sup>15</sup> But it is worth remembering that the notion of the importance of meaning is not new: the *Oxford English Dictionary*<sup>16</sup> defines **word** (sense II) as

A combination of vocal sounds, or one such sound, used in a language *to express an idea* (e.g. to denote a thing, attribute, or relation), and constituting an ultimate minimal element of speech *having a meaning* as such. (emphasis added)

Meaning is thus the primary issue here.<sup>17</sup> The OED definition, interestingly enough, is not very far from the fundamental point made in Frankwalt Möhren’s seminal analysis of “le concept du noyau sémantique,” which holds that words (in medieval French, but not solely in medieval French) have a “core” meaning, related to but not, of course, identical with etymology.<sup>18</sup> The lexicographer must seek to “décéler le champ sémiologique complet du mot pour en distiller le noyau sémantique”;<sup>19</sup> the assumption should be that this “sens de base”<sup>20</sup> is what is present until something else can be conclusively demonstrated — and the onus is on the investigator who is trying to prove that there is another sense to be found. In particular, this is an invaluable control discipline which guards against two dangers: the first, of furnishing not the meaning but its context-specific application: “le vice invétéré qui consiste à définir en fonction de chaque réalité que le mot désigne, comme si le mot, avec chaque emploi, modifiait son sens,”<sup>21</sup> and secondly, that of supplying, in effect, a “sense” which (whilst arguably applicable in the context as a *gloss*) is either an idiosyncratic authorial usage, or just downright wrong.

Möhren exemplifies the first type of error by the (AND1) entry for **gisarme**, which, on the strength of two medieval glosses, supplied two senses, as follows:

*broadsword*: brameam: gleyve, gisarme *Gloss Nequam* 252 (DEAF: AlNeckUtensH);  
*javelin*: gesa: gwisarmes *Vernac Glosses* 18.

14 A useful overview is provided by Lebsanft and Gleßgen, eds. *Historische Semantik*.

15 E.g., Blank, *Prinzipien des lexikalischen Bedeutungswandels*; at a more practical level, Lyons, *Linguistic Semantics*, 22ff.

16 Simpson and Steiner, *Oxford English Dict.* (henceforth OED).

17 Intriguingly, at least in the last clause, this could stand as the definition of a phoneme.

18 Möhren, “Unité et diversité,” 129.

19 Möhren, “Unité et diversité,” 129.

20 Möhren, “Unité et diversité,” 133.

21 Möhren, “Unité et diversité,” 130.

This is inherently problematic on several fronts: *glaive* is not unambiguous (cf. AND **glaive**),<sup>22</sup> although it probably does have a “noyau sémantique” (DEAF G801 argues that the first sense is “lance,” with “sword” only much later) and *bramea* is a corruption, apparently, of *framea*, which can mean either “spear, javelin” or (in late Latin) “sword” — so that does not help much.

Möhren argues that “le mot [*guisarme*] désignait une arme qui, elle, pouvait prendre des formes assez diverses. Mais le concept, lui, restait le même; il faut une définition unique.”<sup>23</sup> In other words, by this definition of “sense,” it is monosemic: hence the DEAF definition, “sorte d’arme d’hast, d’estoc et de taille de longueur variable.” AND2 **gisarme** [Derrien] provides one gloss: “broadsword or javelin” for eight citations including some which are from non-glossary sources, and then a sub-sense of “dagger” for two glossary citations from Hunt.<sup>24</sup> This comes close to reflecting the idea of the “noyau sémantique” and its multiple *usages*.

At another level, then, Möhren is distinguishing in practice between *langue* (“le noyau sémantique,” “le sens de base”) and *parole* (manifestations of which are evident in the context-specific usage of a word). This he makes explicit in a later study:

Ein historischer Text ist immer *parole*. Aus der Summe von historischen *parole*-Äußerungen, also aus Belegen, müssen wir auf die *langue* schließen. Denn eine Definition eines Wortes bezieht sich auf seine Stellung in der *langue*.<sup>25</sup>

The key point is that usage is not meaning. Glossaries to editions are frequently not particularly useful to lexicographers for the legitimate reason that they are above all destined (*pace* Chambon)<sup>26</sup> to elucidate the text for the reader. Thus it is not surprising that editors’ glossary entries, even when broadly correct, are often far too specific for ready incorporation into a dictionary.<sup>27</sup> The problem is not helped by the apparent failure of many editors to consider the lexicographer’s needs — which is fair enough — but also (less excusably) their failure actually to consult lexicographical works whilst compiling their glossaries. The Mandeville editorial gloss discussed above illustrates several of

22 *Espee* < \*SPATHA and *espié* < SPEUTA is similarly tricky. AND divides the meaning(s) between “sword” etc. *sub espee*<sup>1</sup> and “spear” etc. *sub espeie*<sup>1</sup>, as do Gdf and TL (with different headwords), but in Anglo-Norman there is some overlap of forms between the two words.

23 Möhren, “Unité et diversité,” 130.

24 Hunt, *Teaching and Learning Latin*.

25 Möhren, “Seme und Sachen,” 74.

26 Chambon, “Lexicographie et philologie.”

27 This observation about the shortcomings of the glossarial approach may also apply to medieval glossaries particularly if the context is lacking, as is almost without exception the case in, for example, Tony Hunt’s voluminous and invaluable *Teaching and Learning Latin* (Rothwell, “From Latin to Anglo-French”).



these points: the word was correctly glossed, but incorrectly traced to the verb from which the textual attestation comes, thus wrongly analysed, and an entirely spurious sense is then attached to an innocent verb which has nothing to do with the case in hand. This, of course, demonstrates eloquently the need for the glossary to a text to make use (and proper use) of the lexicographical tools available and, conversely, emphasizes why lexicographers should not rely on editorial glossaries.

### The Definition of a “word” and the Semantics of Anglo-Norman

Möhren’s analysis has implications which go far beyond the rather pedestrian task of constructing a modern dictionary of Anglo-Norman. If his approach is adopted, then it cannot only be for pragmatic and practical reasons: it must also reflect underlying linguistic realities. This is where the daily challenge of lexicography encounters (and also sheds light on) the functioning of the language which is the object of study. The matter was raised forty-five years ago in a short but characteristically perceptive article by William Rothwell.<sup>28</sup> The core point of that study was to make it plain that modern semantic methodology (and this, of course, refers to the semantics of the 1950s) does not satisfactorily take account of — and cannot be indiscriminately applied to — medieval French and Anglo-Norman. The argument in Rothwell’s paper is that modern semantics presupposes concerns for disambiguation and equivalence which are not manifest in medieval French, which, instead, functions precisely with the type of semantic structure subsequently and brilliantly outlined by Frankwalt Möhren in his contribution to the volume in honour of Rothwell himself.<sup>29</sup> It is not that medieval French is imprecise: like the celebrated and probably apocryphal stories of Lappish terminology for reindeer with different sizes of testicles, medieval French can be and is very precise when it needs to be and when it wants to be. To take an obvious and banal case, there are far more words for “horse,” and other domestic animals fulfilling similar functions, in medieval French than in standard modern French. The semantic distribution is, of course, rather different, so that a word like (for example) *affre* does not refer exclusively to one animal, but to animals which discharge the same functions of transport and labour (AND *affre*).<sup>30</sup> There *is* semantic precision, but it operates differently, and rather than being semasiological, it looks in fact suspiciously onomasiological, starting not with the word (*signifiant*) but the concept (*signifié*) and with the latter functioning as the controlling element in the relationship. There is here a potential contradiction

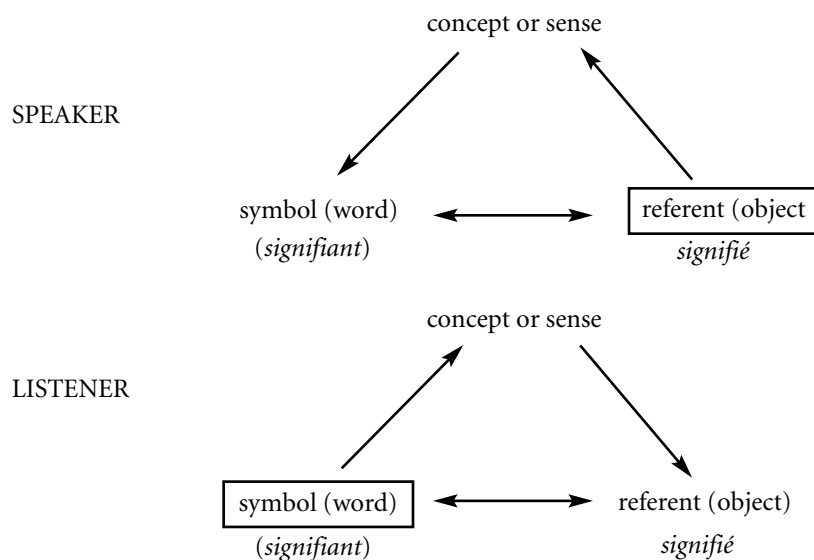
28 Rothwell, “Medieval French and Modern Semantics.”

29 Möhren, “Unité et diversité.”

30 See also Möhren, “Agn. *AFRE/AVER*,” and his *Wort- und Sachgeschichtliche Untersuchungen*, 75-76.

between what the modern lexicographer does, from a position necessarily outside the language, and how the language itself seems to operate. Whilst a dictionary like the AND is semasiological (as most are: it starts with a word or an expression and endeavours to associate meaning with it), the language itself appears in some respects to operate the other way around (it seeks terminology to convey concepts), and this raises the inevitable question whether medieval dictionaries should in fact be onomasiological.<sup>31</sup>

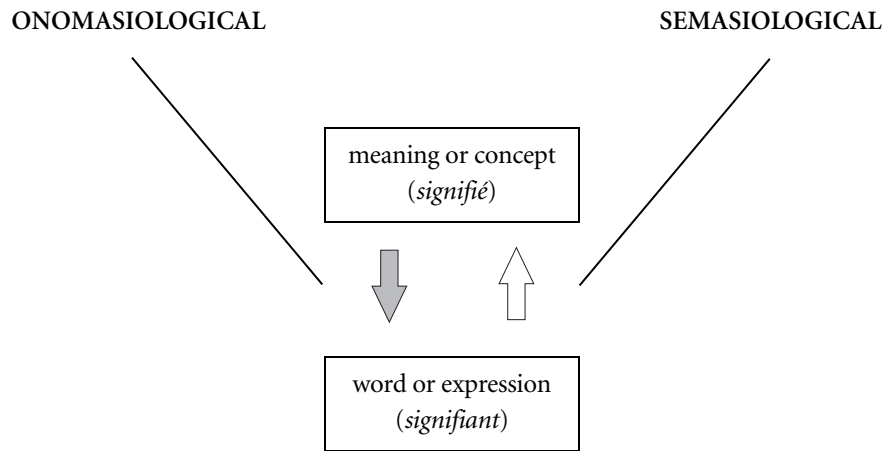
This needs perhaps some explanation. A speaker — in any language — wishes to express a meaning and so seeks a word or expression which will do this. The listener, or the lexicographer, who is in the same position (in the truly hapless case of a dead language, minus intimate knowledge of a shared language), on the other hand, first encounters the expression or word, to which he or she then endeavours to associate a meaning.<sup>32</sup> Schematically, this means that the Ogden-Richards triangle needs to have arrows attached according to whether it represents the speaker or the listener perspective:



31 Important examples of onomasiological dictionaries of medieval languages would be the *Dictionnaire onomasiologique de l'ancien occitan* and the *Dictionnaire onomasiologique de l'ancien gascon*.

32 There is some evidence (cf. Price *et al.*, "Hearing and Saying," 930) that brain activity takes place in slightly different parts of the brain according to whether one is speaking (posterior Broca's area) or listening (anterior Broca's area). This might support the argument that these are cognitively distinct processes. However, for the limitations of what happens in Broca's area, see Grodzinsky, "The Neurology of Syntax," and an extensive literature on the subject in general.

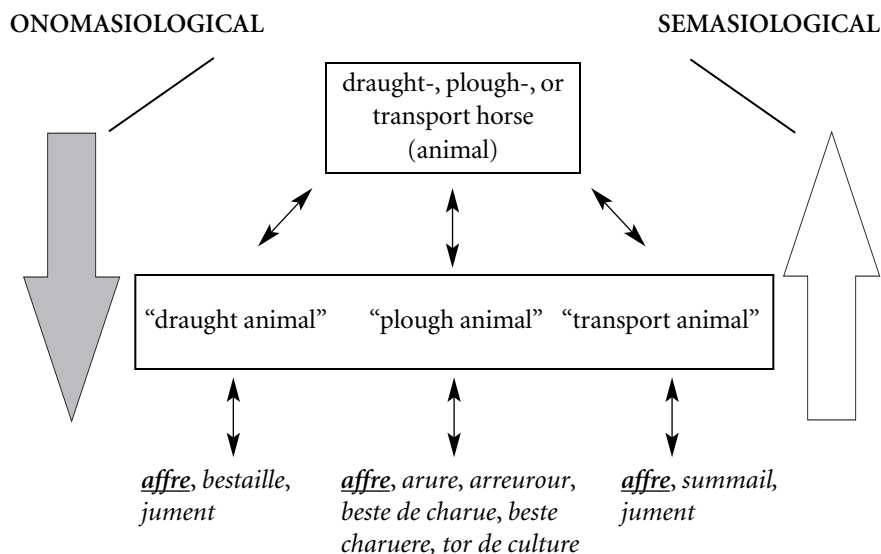
The starting point for each is different and is indicated by the box. There are more complex developments of this type of schema<sup>33</sup> but they do not materially affect my point here, regarding the direction of construction of meaning. An alternative representation of the process is that given below,<sup>34</sup> where the left-hand arrow (grey) represents the onomasiological system and the right-hand arrow (no fill) the semasiological mechanism:



There follows an attempt to demonstrate what this means in practical terms with two AND entries, the noun **affre**, and the verb **atendre**. The first is **affre**. The schema, once “populated” (but without introducing into it the added complication of what the individual animals were in terms of species), would look like this:

33 Notably, Raible’s semiotic pentagon (which differentiates word-meaning from the more abstract “concept” and establishes an “Ebene des Möglichen,” opposed to but linked to an “Ebene des Wirklichen” (Raible, “Von der Allgegenwart,” 5), or Blank’s “komplexes semiotisches Modell” (Blank, *Prinzipien*, 148), which presents the problem in four components: “einzelsprachlich” divided from “außersprachlich” on a horizontal axis, with “abstrakt” and “konkret” vertically separated.

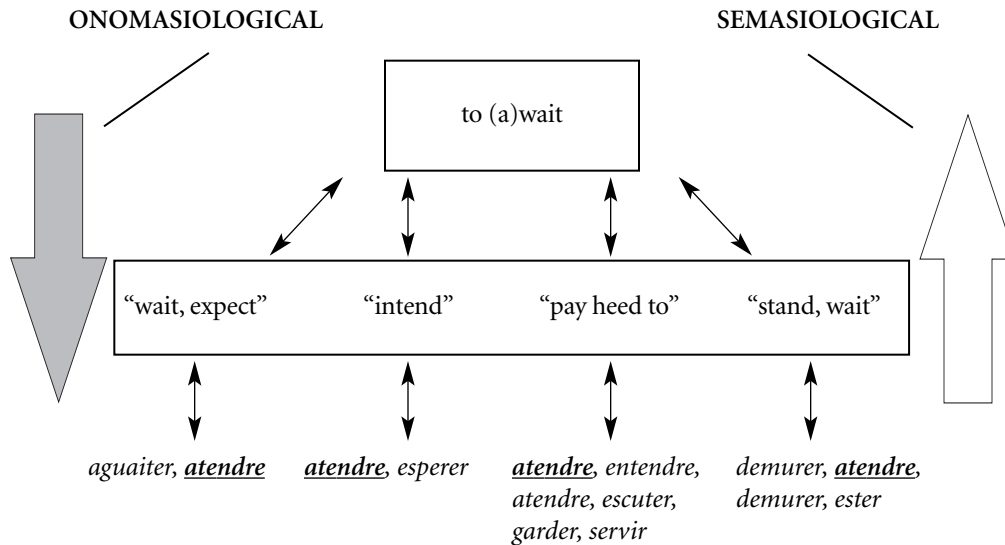
34 This schema is based on that on Christian Lehmann’s web site <http://www.uni-erfurt.de/sprachwissenschaft/personal/lehmann/Fundus/Onomasiology&semasiology.html>. Accessed 7 March 2007.



The speaker, then, starting at the top left, has in mind a type of draught animal which he or she then perhaps refines in the middle layer of the diagram, prior to enunciating the concept via one of the range of (more or less polysemic) words at his or her disposal. The listener performs exactly the reverse process: hears or reads (say) *affre* or *jument*, and then has to attach a meaning to it, which (since these words are polysemic) will entail a context-driven judgement as to which of the range of meanings is most apt. The middle layer of the diagram is a simplified version of the word’s polysemic meaning-range and clearly, a horizontal traverse has to be performed by speaker and listener, to find the appropriate route and crossing-point through this box. The centrality of *affre* as (this time) the “noyau lexical” is apparent from this schema, as is the centrality of the “noyau sémantique” which is within it, “animal or horse used for transport or draught purposes.” Other terms are more general (*bestaille*) and/or elucidated by complements, e.g., *tor de culture* (clearly *tor* minus the complement could evoke all sorts of other *tor*-functions, for which see AND *tor*<sup>1</sup>). Obviously, this does not incorporate all of the other animals (mules, oxen, donkeys, . . .) which could also fulfil some or all of these functions. It is a gross simplification of a clearly complex set of semantic relationships, in respect of which it could further be argued that the top level, “draught-, plough-, or transport horse (animal)” occupies the role and has the status of semantic prototype — which would open up another, quite different analytical possibility. But the attempt to

schematize this information does reveal the key difference between the speaker in search of expressions to convey meaning, and the listener (or lexicographer) in search of meanings to attach to expressions he or she hears. It is a case (to misappropriate Anselm) of *sermo quaerens intellectum* versus *intellectus quaerens sermonem*.

**Attendre** is predictably more complex and thus harder to fit into this analysis, but the underlying mechanics are the same, with the proviso that, on the one hand, the polysemy of the word is greater, and that, on the other, its confusability with formally identical or overlapping competitors (see above) generates a range of possible sources of interpretative error (semasiologically) or selection error (onomasiologically).



Obviously, each and every one of the verbs identified in the bottom row (and the list is only illustrative) is both inherently polysemic and to some extent overlaps with its neighbours. The appropriate representation would perhaps be either a Venn diagram or a three-dimensional network model of the type beloved of molecular scientists. Equally obviously, the subset of meanings in the middle box also shows only a few of the available senses within the semantic structure of the complex verb *attendre*. Formal identity between some graphical (phonetic?) variants of *entendre* and of *attendre* further complicates any attempt at unambiguous one-to-one mapping. Rather, what the schematization shows is that this is (except for simple words) unachievable. Semantic rather than

formal unity may be what defines words in Anglo-Norman, at the level of *langue* and the onomasiological structures of the language, but semantic unity does not preclude the appearance of kaleidoscopic disunity at the level of *parole*, which the lexicographer has to subject to semasiological analysis.

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