

Tribute to Kurt Opitz (1931-2021) - German Contributor to Maritime English

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This paper aims at providing an insight into the work of late Professor Emeritus Kurt Opitz, German lexicographer, and applied linguist as an ESP practitioner with special regard to Maritime English. A list of Opitz's contributions to both the above-mentioned linguistic branches has been compiled and attached to this paper. His work has been considered as contributing to identifying and providing insight into some crucial issues in lexicography, especially the production of a learner's dictionary. Familiarity with these issues was enabled by Opitz's performing the role of Maritime English lecturer. In addition, the activity in the field of maritime education and training encouraged him to envisage and organize the teacher training activities within a national association, but with a view of openness to the worldwide Maritime English teaching community, which resulted in the foundation of G.A.M.E. (Gesellschaft für Ausbildung in Maritimem Englisch = German Association for Maritime English / Association for Maritime English). The paper presents Kurt Opitz along the line of his distinctive personal and professional development, not only as a linguist with particular fascination for lexicography, but also as an applied linguist with a great enthusiasm for the promotion of constantly updated Maritime English and its teaching methodology. Other, not so widely known facets of Opitz's interests, e.g. his polyglot and literary profiles, have been discovered by the authors during this research and are brought here before our readers.

KEY WORDS

~ Kurt Opitz
~ Maritime English
~ G.A.M.E.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the last years of his life, Kurt Opitz was present at a number of G.A.M.E. meetings as Honorary President. That is where, more than 10 years ago, the first author of this paper met this humble and modest person, who contributed significantly in his active time both to the English lexicography, for which he has been widely cited, and to establishing Maritime English as a type of ESP in Germany and worldwide.

The study of Opitz's contribution was two-directional: it began with a search for his papers and presentations in the field of linguistics and continued with learning about his respectable role in the ESP field, in which Maritime English has been recognized in Germany and worldwide as a fully-fledged jargon.

Opitz's most important activities can be traced back to the times when no databases existed, i.e. to the second half of the 20th century. Therefore, it was not an easy task to collect the relevant evidence. However, for the purpose of this paper, a collection has been done, even if certainly not including all of his lexicographic and ESP practitioner's work, to allow faster access to this information in future.

In addition, the authors also refer to Opitz's role in the foundation of the German Association for Maritime English and the publishing activity related to Maritime English.

2. KURT OPITZ LANDMARKS

Kurt Opitz was born in Berlin, Germany, in 1931. In 1957, he received his Ph.D. in American literature at Freie Universität Berlin with the thesis on Eudora Welty. He went to the U.S.A. to teach modern languages. His first appointment was as Assistant Professor, at Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, New York, to become Associate Professor at Connecticut College between 1966 and 1970. As Associate Professor and then Acting Chairman of the German Department at University of Connecticut, Storrs, Connecticut¹, he was then preparing a book-length study of the contemporary novel in Europe and America. He was a contributing editor of *Books Abroad* and published various articles on literary and linguistic topics; later, he finished the translation of several of Brecht's didactic plays into English.²

He was also involved in planning and administrative work for UNESCO between 1970 and 1972. He was a guest lecturer at the University of Paris III, and since 1972 professor of applied linguistics at the University of Applied Sciences, Hamburg to the date of his retirement in 1996. Kurt Opitz contributed copiously with innumerable reviews, papers and presentations to the fields of German and American literary studies as well as to different fields of linguistics.

¹ Information retrieved from: La Du, R. R. (1964). Personalia. *The Modern Language Journal*, 48(5), 289. Available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/319829>

² Information retrieved from: Abraham, C. K. (1966). [Review of *A Survey of French Literature. Volume I: The Middle Ages to 1800*, by M. Bishop]. *The Modern Language Journal*, 50(2), 129–130. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.2307/323212>

3. LEXICOGRAPHIC ACTIVITY

Back in 1979, Opitz stated that he was not a lexicographer, he was a teacher; his lexicographic activity derived from the fact that his students had, in varying degrees, to consult dictionaries to do their work (Opitz, 1979:89). In addition, he determined his perspective as “that of the reception and use, and not so much, the production, of dictionaries” (Ibid.) Therefore, he was oriented to considering practical questions, reflecting on clarifications, and proposing tentative answers. Along the way, his perspective changed even if he may not have been fully aware of it. Thus, he came forth with some lexicographic terms that have later been recalled and used.

3.1. Segmental dictionary

Opitz considered the delimitation or clear distinction of different kinds of lexicographic work, such as an encyclopaedia, dictionary, glossary, reference list; he proposes the term “segmental dictionary” (Opitz, 1983:58), by which he implies “an attempt to isolate a distinct register”, but this reference sometimes seems not to be helpful enough (Davies, 1993:103). However, the production of a *segmental dictionary* certainly is an attempt to isolate a distinct register rather than simply compiling a list of technical terms in the field, which seems to come closer to the definition of a glossary. In a nutshell, a segmental dictionary tends to include more than a glossary: it is, as the term states, a dictionary in its own right, including all the features of a comprehensive dictionary, but restricted to a segment of language, or a distinct register. Fuertes-Olivera (2005:44) states some 20 years later that “the segmental dictionary defended by Opitz (1983:164) has started to adopt a pedagogical lexicographical approach.” These words support Opitz’s belief about the specialized lexicographer in the production of the segmental dictionary as well as emphasize his/her pedagogical role, i.e. the role or purpose to “suit the needs of specialists, would-be specialists, and the informed layperson” (Ibid., 47).

3.2. Metalanguage

Opitz finds the term *metalanguage* inherent to lexicography; however, Opitz states that the word is “more often used than defined”. An early reference to the word’s meaning was attempted in his paper (1983:174) as “language used to comment on items in the dictionary”, which seems to be rather vague. In Opitz’s paper (1988: 71) another attempt at designating the meaning of the term is made as: “... glossing that defines or otherwise explains lexemes in dictionary articles beyond the use of synonym, antonyms, or their various hypo- and hyperonymic variants, and excludes direct illustrating quotes.” However, the negative-value approach, i.e. defining a word by what it is not, does not seem to be clarifying as it does not provide the *differentia specifica*, but Opitz resorts to it because he thinks that explanation of words through other words confounds the source, medium, and target of lexicographic operation, and proposes to focus on the lexical activity. Opitz (1988:72) explains why lexicography has developed its metalanguage, and he states that the reason is its growth into “a scholarly exercise of theory and learning aimed at many specialized applications”. In all this stated above, Opitz sees the “neglect of the user’s convenience in many dictionaries” (1988:74). He thinks that in a general language dictionary it is better to use synonyms than explicatory glosses (Ibid.) and warns of the fact that monolingual dictionaries are often used as “interlingual devices of foreign language learning” (1998:75), in which use he points to the special attention to be paid to pedagogic needs affecting the metalanguage. Therefore, he suggests that “only systematic cooperation of lexicographers and language teachers ... can be expected to achieve satisfactory results” (Ibid.) in the approach to learner’s dictionary. Further on, Opitz identifies the real problem behind the use of metalanguage in monolingual general-language dictionaries: it is “not the difficulty or inaccessibility of their metalanguage but its profusion, which can create an impenetrability of its own” (Ibid.). In order to achieve all-inclusiveness, the authors of dictionaries often lose sight of the target user to which the product may seem rather unfriendly. As Opitz (Ibid.) describes it, “This fusion of grammar-book, lexicon, and encyclopedia function, and the ensuing need to fit all into the limited space and rigid structure of a language dictionary, the metalanguage necessarily leads to practices of glossing which affect the metalanguage in

indirect, though marked, ways.” Finally, Opitz refers to the problem of “lexicographic carelessness” (1988:76) in the metalanguage of dictionaries, in cases where the lexicographer “is simply not sufficiently precise (Ibid.)”.

Opitz makes a special reference to “specialized monolingual dictionaries devoted to technical subject areas, in which he sees a number of factors shaping the metalanguage.” Here, he identifies two possible approaches: “a defining approach, which tends to create a more scholarly metalanguage accessible primarily to the subject specialist, and a descriptive method attempting to ‘translate’ terms into common language for the benefit of the outsider, generally the untrained or lay user” (Ibid.). Opitz proposes a third way, which would eliminate the shortcomings of the above-mentioned ones and that is “direct quotation, providing contextualized instances of the glossed lexeme” (Ibid.), i.e. “the substitution of examples for descriptive or defining metalanguage (Ibid.). Further on, Opitz (1998:77) refers to the application of the use of examples in “interlingual lexicography, where it can – particularly in specialized dictionaries ... become an element of paramount importance to ... the lexicographer’s uncontextualized gloss in all cases of interlingual semantic incongruence or of lack of equivalence”. This brings Opitz to the point of wondering “whether it may be possible to dispense with the lexicographer’s metalanguage altogether in favor of authentic textual illustrations” (Ibid.). He sees the major disadvantage of the method in applying it to non-highly-specialized dictionaries. He supports the contextualization method by its application in the BBI Combinatory Dictionary of English (1986)³ as “the key to keeping metalanguage in a dictionary at bay” (1998:79). Opitz points out that “Specialized interlingual dictionaries must ... cope with frequent non-equivalence resulting from historical and cultural discrepancies between societies”. Opitz argues that the need to make use of metalanguage, in this case, brings forth the issue of authenticity and, consequently, reliability (Ibid.). Even so, he concludes that “specialized interlingual dictionaries will always be dependent upon a certain amount of metalanguage to bridge the gap between lexical equivalent and contextualization example” (1998:80) in cases non-equivalence exists when the translator can be faced e.g. with the choice of different ‘equivalents’, of which one is purely descriptive, while the other one refers to the function. To conclude, Opitz (Ibid.) is of the opinion that, if general lexicographic workmanship has been exercised at a satisfactory level, there is no need to be alarmed about the metalanguage; in other words, it is necessary to take an eclectic path and see what works in each specific case.

3.3. Denotation vs. connotation

Opitz (1992:397) questions the semantic invariance of lexical phenomena or invariable denotations. He argues that “connotation possibly plays a much larger role than denotation in all types of language use...”. As a declared practitioner, Opitz (Ibid.) recognizes the “dynamism of language (which) seems to conflict with the very essence of dictionaries as stabilizing social instruments”. He contemplates the role of dictionary and its change over time, referring to a process in which “linguistic stability and semantic invariance” (1992:398) started to open up to the “semantic function” (Ibid.). It is actually the ancient question of mind over matter, concepts over words, or lexemes over words. What Opitz questions and concludes in this paper is of great importance to those who decide to undertake the production of a dictionary, especially a segmental dictionary. He points out the importance of contexts in which lexemes with denotative functions find their articulations in pragmatic settings (Ibid.) Therefore, Opitz sees the compilation of a segmental dictionary as a compilation of connotative meanings of words in pragmatic settings. This means that in a segmental dictionary the farther we distance from the “near-perfect denotation” (Ibid.), the closer the relative lexeme is getting to represent the actual word in a certain context. Again, Opitz, the practitioner, points out the role of human consciousness in the formation of the actual meaning of a word in context rather than resorting to dealing with abstracting the synthetic denotative meanings of lexemes. Opitz argues that the latter depends on “the ensemble of procedural and world knowledge the individual recalls in a given instant” (1992:399), the knowledge that is not “structurally homogeneous” (Ibid.).

³ The BBI Combinatory Dictionary of English: Your Guide to Collocations and Grammar, by Morton Benson, Evelyn Benson, and Robert Ilson, 3rd Revised Edition (2010), 567 pages, John Benjamins Publ. Co., with about 20% increased content with regard to the 1st edition in 1986 and 2nd edition, known as New Printing, in 1997.

He states that “denotation ... has lost its persuasiveness as an irrefutable basis of lexicography” (Ibid.). Furthermore, Opitz continues to reflect on invariance, which he perceives as a condition for lexicalization, constantly juggling with the ideas of connotation and invariance, seeing the two phenomena as starting points of a two-way road and the producer of a dictionary starting from the side he has chosen to light for the target users. However, to enable the target users to understand the connotative meanings of lexical items, they are required to have “some measure of shared world knowledge and knowledge structures” (1992:400). This shared knowledge is seen by Opitz (Ibid.) as “the necessary minimum of invariance which is indispensable to any social function”. Thus, while connotation can only be associated with a denotative lexical meaning, close to denotative invariance, and sought for by lexicographers, denotative meaning can be abstracted only from a number of variations in meaning rooted in specific fields of human activity, cultural knowledge, social groups, generations, which would lead to the production of very specialized field or segmental dictionaries representative of vernaculars or jargons, such as Maritime English. Along this line of thought, a segmental dictionary could also be seen as accounting for the existing metaphorical meanings of its items and the creation of new ones. Olivera (2007:3) mentions, thus, Opitz’s view (1996) that “if we consider LSP as a pedagogical concept, the current lexicographic practice seems to take almost no notice at all of LSP as a phenomenon and potential field of action.” Again, Opitz, the practitioner, never lets Opitz, the lexicographer, lose sight of the target user.

4. MARITIME ENGLISH PRACTITIONER

Everything Opitz wrote during his teacher’s and linguist’s career is in some way related to ESP, and Maritime English in particular. As a German, Opitz (1998: 1215) early noted that the seamen’s language “... always enjoyed relatively great popularity in the German-speaking world ...” and also pointed out in his relative studies on the development of a maritime technical language the fact that “... in the 11th century, in addition to the nomenclature of the ship based on the Middle Low German common language, a socially conditioned professional language of the seafarer developed.” (Ibid.). This first interest in Maritime German soon led to arousing his interest in Maritime English, which was already then seen as prevailing over national languages in the shipping industry. Therefore, the need to support the use of Maritime English as the common language in shipping as well as the need to train novice teachers in its use and expand their knowledge in maritime-related topics were considered a mission. For example, during G.A.M.E. 1988 meeting, held at Delfzijl Nautical College in the Netherlands, with support and cooperation provided from other Dutch colleges, a number of actual shipping documents were presented as samples by the experts in the fields, relative issues illustrated, and suggestions provided regarding the extent to which the documents should be treated in the Maritime English classes. The Introductory Note points out the role of the Master in different trades, where situations may be radically different, and a variety of conditions are mentioned that can be expected in a ship’s operation. In addition, some publications are listed, related either to the substance or terminology of shipping and chartering. At this point, it is important to state that an ESP teacher, regardless of his/her potential knowledge in the field of maritime law or management, is not qualified to lecture on the topics in the field, but should certainly have clear ideas about them; otherwise, it would be unrealistic to expect him/her to teach the language related to the topics with which he/she is not closely acquainted. This was the guiding principle of G.A.M.E. seminars. A good example of preserving the seminar contributions for non-participants and later generations of Maritime English practitioners is G.A.M.E., Hamburg 1989 publication, with Opitz as editor. In this particular seminar, a selection of shipping documents, “written and printed materials ... meant to serve as samples” (Opitz, 1989: 1), was analysed with regard to their language and meaning, and some teaching suggestions were provided for “teachers of Maritime English at nautical colleges” (ibid.) or, more precisely, “teachers engaged in preparing students for careers in ship management and tramp or short sea operations, respectively (ibid.). It is of utmost importance to emphasise the added authentic teaching material “illustrative of the topic” (ibid.), and provided by excelling maritime professionals to Maritime English teachers as “a useful contribution to their store of background materials.” (ibid.) Opitz as editor, in the Introductory note (1989:2), first points out different roles of the shipmaster in different trades, and then refers to a variety of conditions a ship can expect in its operation. In addition, the publication (1989: 5) provides referenced publications related to some other ship’s processes and

documents. The following discussions address the issues of how to approach students, present the reasons why they learn about a topic, to make a lecture interesting. The first contribution included refers to words and clauses that reappear in different documents, their acronyms, forms, functions and importance, specific terms such as *clean* or *sound*, with the meanings specific in the maritime jargon, and a number of others.

The first contribution ends with the expert's view of how he sees speaking to Maritime English teachers: there is always a feeling of incompleteness. However, no lecture is meant to teach the attendee all about a subject, but as long as it provides an insight and serves as a teaser to the attendee's hunger for knowledge, it has fulfilled its purpose.

Next, there is a contribution by another expert, a shipbroker (1989: 10), providing an "insight into the business of fixing vessels with cargoes" (ibid.) and presenting the chain of events in the process, its participants, again with the emphasis on the specific language forms and acronyms used. So, the aim is to familiarise the Maritime English teachers with the contents of the trade, i.e. what is negotiated, the role of the broker, as well as the specific language of the trade.

The next contribution covers more shipping documents and is presented by a Dutch P&I Club solicitor, with actual documents attached. Again, a view is provided on the context in which the documents are used and their purposes. New relative acronyms and phrases are introduced and explained for the non-professionals to describe not only the legal but also the economic aspects of transactions, followed by variations of the terms mentioned. Particularly, from the standpoint of a solicitor, the importance of terminology in disputes is emphasized, in some instances also with regard to different legislations, e.g. the fact whether the lawyer is Dutch or English in some cases determines the understanding and interpretation of a phrase.

The following contribution by a Groningen lawyer tells the history of Lloyd's of London, explains how it works and introduces some aspects of salvage as well as the relative Maritime English definitions in respective clauses and terms found in the standard form of Salvage Agreement.

4.1. Founder and spirit of G.A.M.E.

It was in the late sixties of last century when the Schools of Navigation of the German Republic's coastal Federal States realized that for teaching the more and more complex subjects of their syllabi it was no longer sufficient to be a qualified Master and to have been in command of a foreign-going vessel for a defined time. So for teaching certain subjects in the fields of Maritime Law, Electronics and Automatic Data Processing a university degree was required and indispensable. This was also true for the teachers of Applied English in the Shipping environment (ESP), at that time called 'Nautical English'.

In those days on the other hand a general tendency for alignment, standardization and centralization in all fields was prominent and the particular interests of different groups had to be defended against others and especially against the authorities. Since the teachers of Nautical English in Germany were under the threat to be regarded as 'assistant teachers' only they met under the auspices of the StAK 'Ständige Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Küstenländer', at that time a consultative committee of the Federal Ministry of Transport, to underline and argue for the ever increasing importance of their subject for the safety of navigation through the always faster increasing possibilities of easier oral communication and at the same time growing internationalisation of the shipping industry in general.

This development was reflected in the activities of the then IMCO from 1959 on: firstly, by the decision to use English as the international communication tool at sea; secondly, by the resolution A.380(X) adopted by the Assembly on November 14, 1977 regarding the STANDARD MARINE NAVIGATIONAL VOCABULARY; thirdly, the establishment of IMLA, International Maritime Lecturers Association and its subcommittee and

interest group WOME, the then IMLA **Workshop on Maritime English**, today IMEC, International Maritime English Conference, and finally, in 1983, the foundation of WMU, World Maritime University, in Malmö.

The form and the way how to introduce the Standard Marine Navigational Vocabulary into the curriculum and teaching led to an intensive discussion at that time within the meetings of StAK in order to ensure comparable teaching and examination standards at all the Nautical Colleges in Germany. Here, it was Kurt Opitz who, being totally dissatisfied with the first activities and results of the IMLA MET- conferences, merely of an administrative nature, for the everyday situation in the classroom, came up with the idea of creating a formal body as a round table forum for the particular didactic and methodological needs of the teachers of Maritime English. His idea was warmly welcomed by all his colleagues at German Navigational Colleges, strongly supported and eventually in 1979 led to the foundation of 'Gesellschaft für Ausbildung in Maritimem Englisch' (G.A.M.E.) alias 'Association for Maritime English' as a non-profit organization under German law, chartered in Hamburg, Germany.

When IMLA planned their first workshop on Maritime English for 1981, Kurt Opitz, the first and in all respects engaged president of G.A.M.E., offered - now as 'German Association for Maritime English' - to organize and host it. Subsequently G.A.M.E. in conferences, e.g. ENGMART 1987 in Hamburg, in numerous workshops, seminars, colloquia and assemblies has gathered internationally throughout the over 40 years of its existence persons from all over the world engaged in shipping, maritime education and training who are working within the framework of Maritime English.

The Association following Kurt Opitz's postulation aims to contribute to the fostering and improving of the training in Maritime English and its use in the shipping industry worldwide. The establishment of a status of Maritime English as a discipline equal in status to other subjects at MET institutions like navigation or engineering, has been one of the main objectives of the work of the Association. The support of the teachers and institutions engaged in teaching that linguistic variety of the English tongue has always been the foremost issue and has governed all the activities of the Association. In this task, the close cooperation with other international organizations notably the World Maritime University (WMU), International Maritime Lecturers Association (IMLA), and the International Association of Maritime Universities (IAMU), has from the very beginning been regarded as fundamental and is reflected in the double-membership of most of its over 40 members.

G.A.M.E. has organized annual workshops and colloquia on the specific problems of teaching Maritime English, its didactics, methodology and syllabi. As a platform for the exchange of information, views and material among its members, the newsletter of the Association 'echo' was published twice a year by its respective editors, Dr. Kurt Opitz, the founder and honorary president of G.A.M.E., its later president Dr. Peter Trenkner, author of the SMCP Standard Marine Communication Phrases, and Knud Kristensen. Today 'echo' has been replaced by a more modern, faster and more efficient electronic form of communication that is open to everybody interested and linked to other websites of Maritime English interest. Bi-annually, G.A.M.E. has organized its traditional summer-seminars devoted to special features of the implementation of Maritime English. Following the concern and basic concept of Kurt Opitz, these seminars purposely avoid the standard conference routine of papers, presentations and atmosphere of delegates and are intended to provide a get-together forum for the detailed, classroom-oriented discussion of the everyday problems encountered in teaching Maritime English in all its features, at the same time offering a meeting place for the by-now predominantly international members of the Association.

In this way, always along Kurt Opitz's ideas, endeavours and merits, G.A.M.E. has rendered in all its activities the support and service to its members and to the interested public that is indispensable for promoting safety at sea and enhancing the employment perspectives of seafarers through their improved competency in Maritime English.

5. AT THE CROSSROADS OF LEXICOGRAPHY AND APPLIED LINGUISTICS

As mentioned above, Fuertes Olivera refers back to Opitz's "segmental dictionary", stating that "This connection between pedagogical and specialized lexicography can lead us to produce specialized dictionaries combining the semasiological⁴ and onomasiological⁵ approaches with some of the practices of electronic dictionaries." (Fuertes Olivera, 2005:45).

Also in 2005, Molina (2005:98) mentions Opitz's "regarding the connotational dimension as a source of confusion and exasperation with the dictionary (Opitz, 2002:262) and proposes that "lexicography should not remain apart from a steady revolution within linguistic theory which dictionary users are likely to be thankful for."

In a later contribution, Opitz (2007: 1) points out at Janus-like character of terminology as one face looks into linguistics and the other into the communicative context.

To this constant effort to define the scope of lexicography, terminology, glossary, and some other related concepts and terms, the project "Clarifying Digital Terms" by NATO StratCom COE Terminology Working Group, whose results were published in July 2020, is an important contribution. Since shipboard electronics are so widely used nowadays, and so many relative digital terms are used, this project can certainly be valuable to the maritime sector as the target user. Thus, it clarifies some linguistic terms to the field specialist, and vice versa, it is an attempt of an approach of linguists to the specialized terminology; however, despite some linguistic downsides, what this two-directional approach is based on its purpose "to encourage the use of precise and simple language that bridges the terminological divide between policymakers, soldiers, programmers. It is at the intersection of their respective fields. ... Sharing a common vocabulary is the first step." (Bolt et al., 2020:4).

In a more recent paper by Tihelkóva (2008:112), there is again reference to Opitz's view of dictionary for specific purposes; again, there is an attempt to support Opitz's (1999:163) argument against the inclusion of any valency information in terminological learner's dictionaries in order to avoid excessive complexity and comprehensiveness. However, she proposes to incorporate spelling information, pronunciation, usage labels, e.g. regional, formal/informal, specialized field, etc.), and grammar information, syntagmatic information, paradigmatic information, usage examples, encyclopaedic information, which to a large extent coincides with Opitz's determination of *connotation*.

Perhaps the most significant Opitz's contribution written in 1999 (in Hoffman et al., 2008: 1926-30) along this line aims to familiarise the lexicographers with the importance of development of the practical art of navigation for the development of specialized, maritime lexicography as one of its earliest forms. According to Opitz (Ibid.), the early interest for the specific language was noted "... at the close of the Middle Ages when the exploration of unknown seas and territories began to outgrow the strictures imposed on it by the physical and psychological environment of Christianized Europe." So, "The need for practical information about the expressions used in navigation and shipping thus developed along with the desire to learn the skills of the trade itself" (Ibid). Further in the paper (Chapter 2), Opitz uses the term "maritime lexicography" and points out the development and transformation of a thesaurus into a proper dictionary, stemming first from the Renaissance interest in seafaring driven by practical aims, and followed by a subsequent shift in interest from the very art of

⁴ As stated by Shapiro (1984:264-266), the principal English name for the study of word-meanings was *semasiology*, translated from the German *Semasiologie*, introduced in a posthumous (1839) publication of Christian Karl Reisig. The OED records *semasiology* from 1877. ... For the most part, nineteenth-century English-speaking scholars in the field of language did not innovate terminologically, but rather borrowed German or French words for their own use, ... particularly from the writings of Dr. Karl Ferdinand Becker." According to OED, *Semasiology*, later called *semantics*, is "That branch of philology which deals with the meanings of words and their sense-development." Thus, semasiology starts from forms to associate with them possibly different or related meanings.

⁵ *Onomasiology* is not found in the OED; instead, we can find *onomatology*, defined as "the science of formation of words or terms; terminology." In addition, we can find the adj. *onomastic*, defined as "Of, relating to, or connected with a name or names, or with naming; consisting of or dealing with names." Clearly, *onomasiology* or *onomastics* starts from concepts to find forms that express them.

shipping to the related language and the related change from a systematic to the alphabetical order of presentation of headwords. The next important step emphasized by Opitz (ibid.) is the passage from monolingual to plurilingual dictionaries, such as Lescallier's (1777) presenting the English maritime terms and their French equivalents. In addition, Opitz (ibid.) points out the appearance of "a new type of user: the professional expert. His aim in consulting such a dictionary was no longer to acquire basic knowledge about marine practices, but to find equivalences of meaning and expression across languages." Further on, Opitz (ibid.) emphasizes the importance of Röding (1793) as "not only the first significant maritime dictionary published in Germany but at the same time a polyglot reference work in four volumes, one of them devoted exclusively to illustrations that, ..., fell in some respects into the encyclopedic trend of past generations...". Each German technical word is accompanied by its equivalents in 8 other languages. Therefore, Opitz considers it at the same time a teaching manual, never losing from sight the learner's use of the dictionary. Among later, 19th-century publications, Opitz emphasizes Reehorst's Polyglot Marine Dictionary (1850), and Paasch's "From keel to truck: Marine dictionary in English, French and German" (1885), as well as some 20th-century ones. At the time, Opitz (Ibid.) correctly envisaged the future, 21st-century development of maritime dictionaries that "will probably lack encyclopedic ambitions while striving for a revised concept of technicality." Further on, he interestingly refers to the concept of "technicality" by reflecting on it from two different sides, that of the changes caused by maritime technological developments on the one hand, and that of the shifting interests on the part of the dictionary-user on the other. While the former seems to be rather erratic and not well-delineated as regards the "fair balance...between conservation and innovation" (ibid.), the latter is definitely considered as shifted from focus. Namely, Opitz (ibid) clearly sees the transformation of the dictionary users, i.e. the shift from the nucleus to the periphery of the shipping industry, or from navigational and marine engineering ship's staff to "a growing body of ancillary shore personnel" (ibid.). The change is due to the developing shipping industry processes and, with the shifting focus, there is an ever-smaller number of potential dictionary users due to their use of "ever smaller segments of the traditional maritime language register in highly conventionalized routine operations..." (ibid.). Already in 1999, Opitz (1999: 1928), an insider to maritime studies, makes an attempt to clarify the issues in defining the aims and content of maritime dictionaries by first pointing to the changing interpretations of technicality in maritime affairs and, thus, in technical lexicography. Since nautical science comprises "innumerable branches of learning", which even overlap to produce various terms that "may be used in various senses while sometimes several may have but one meaning" (Opitz, 1999:1929). For him, the maritime industry, in general, is not a well-defined concept, with non-delineated internal structure, which leads to confusion among maritime lexicographers as they lack objective criteria for a compilation of a corpus on which a specialized lexicon can be constructed; on the contrary, they must rely on their own assumptions on the prospective users' needs. Opitz is aware that the maritime industry is a fast-changing one and, for that reason, it is hardly possible to have new lexical entries constantly introduced as the relevance of the existing entries diminishes, calling for wiping them out. Opitz realizes that the criteria for the significance of an entry cannot be set without an agreed textual corpus and defined users. "The same lexical material that served dictionary users ten years ago may no longer be essential to today's staff found increasingly on the expanding periphery of the shipping industry, far from its seagoing nucleus..." (ibid.). Therefore, Opitz sees the possibility of a new beginning in the production and use of dictionaries, which should adapt to the industry-specific changes that should result in highly-specific multilingual terminological dictionaries to provide for the needs of the realignment of world trade for the 21st century (ibid.). Already in his 1998 (1998: 1216) paper, Opitz introduces the far-reaching idea of an entirely different future for dictionaries: "It may be a fair assumption that such dictionaries (authors' comment: multilingual terminological dictionaries) will require radically novel methods of corpus selection and glossing strategy, of editing and publication. Access and updating needs may point to the electronic data bank as an appropriate format rather than the bound print volume". With these words, Opitz has anticipated what was to appear in the following decades, e.g. in Maritime English, i.e. the creation of databases. These have come to serve the purpose of building a dictionary or developing teaching materials from authentic texts. Obviously, they have many advantages, such as a faster and in every way easier updating, which is expected to follow the increasing number of practical changes constantly introduced in the industry.

6. LITERARY CRITIC

To the authors of this paper, who knew Kurt Opitz from the Maritime English and linguistic settings, it has been a remarkable discovery that Opitz was so enthusiastic about literature and dedicated a great deal of his time to contemporary writers and literary criticism. By taking a closer look at Opitz's papers, it can be noted that from the period of working on his Ph.D. thesis in the 1950s to the mid-1980s Opitz's fascination of a book reader and critic has resulted in a vast number of literary reviews during his U.S.A. years and the following decade. It was a difficult task to put together his papers, activities and participation at conferences, as in the period of his professionally most fruitful life there were no relevant databases in the form we know today. Some databases have appeared more recently. Such an example is JSTOR digital archive treasuring all *Book Abroad* journal issues published by the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma, where a number of Opitz's book reviews were published. One of Opitz's reviews stands out, however, by providing a valuable general and particular insight into the role of art⁶. Here, the whole pattern of human activity is considered as mostly pervaded by political and economic activities, while the art is thought as necessarily organised within that pattern and not outside of it. Opitz considers the art through its social-servant aim, which is "to mold the species Man in a better, happier image". Thus, in Opitz's view, the function of the art is to instruct the society in the new truths arising, and this ultimately justifies its existence.

7. POLYGLOT AND LANGUAGE TEACHING PROMOTER

Opitz's enthusiasm for languages emerges through his constant expanding his knowledge of languages. He was an active speaker of 14 languages and could use another 6. The number mentioned does not include his last 'projects', i.e. Cantonese and Mandarin, nor does it include Esperanto, artificial language to whose creation he had actively contributed, but had to accept with disappointment that beyond the circle of its creators, it never gained wider importance. In addition, Opitz was dedicated to the study of Indonesian, which was due to the rising number of seafarers originating from Indonesia at the time⁷ when he started his journey in the maritime studies. In the mid-1980s, Opitz was employed as a Maritime English lecturer, so he was attracted to this practical branch of human activity and its issues that seized him, which obviously left him no more time for abstraction. That meant a sharp turn from humanities to technical sciences and practice in particular. However, some of his working time as an employee of the UNESCO Institutes for Education in Köln and Hamburg was dedicated to the German-as-mother-tongue educational practices in German schools as well as teacher education, when Opitz was already on his way of transformation into a teaching practitioner. Ever since, he was absorbed in Maritime English.

8. INSTEAD OF A CONCLUSION

After having studied an extensive body of Opitz's contributions, not only to Maritime English but also to general and applied linguistics and studies in literature, the first thought that strikes the mind is that at G.A.M.E.'s meetings, we were in the company of a most versatile and resourceful person with an attitude so unpretentious and courteous that is hard to find in the times of often distasteful overtakes. Those must have been tough games that his multi-faceted and curious mind was playing all the time, like a simultaneous chess exhibition. However, instead of being able to enjoy it at the time, we are now thankful for the fact that we can at least see the repeat performance. After so many years, we have brought hereunder a list in no way complete of Opitz's contributions for his old acquaintances to enjoy and possibly newer generations of readers to contemplate. In either way, his "art" performs its virtuous duty.

⁶ Opitz, K., 1964. Prodesse atque delectare? The Didactic Illusion in East German Literature. *Books Abroad*, 38(1), 20–24.

⁷ Much of the evidence on Opitz's knowledge of languages has been provided posthumously, by his son, but is also obvious from his literary reviews related to literary works in different languages.

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