Abstract


This thesis aims in classifying the six types of semantic change that is noted in English monolingual learner’s dictionaries. The six types of semantic change theory that are proposed by Breal (1900) cited in Traugott and Dasher (2004) namely broadening, narrowing, amelioration, pejoration, metaphor and metonymy are used in the analysis. The data are collected from the series of Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (OALD) from two different editions: Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary 4th Edition (OALD4, 1989) and Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary 8th Edition (OALD8, 2010). The dictionaries are chosen due to their popularity among non-native English learners. Besides, those two dictionaries are created in a different way; the OALD4 is created without employing the British National Corpus (BNC)’s database as its corpus, while the OALD8 has employed the BNC’s database as its corpus. The employment of the BNC’s database results in difference in the meaning of some words. The corpus is limited into nouns in letter “S” section by using multi-stage sampling. The letter “S” section is selected since it shows the highest number of pages in the dictionary. The research finding shows that the highest type of semantic change is narrowing in which it occurs 27 times and the second highest is broadening or generalisation which occurs 22 times, or approximately 54%. And 44% respectively. There is only one occurrence for amelioration. Meanwhile, the research did not find any pejorations, metonymies or metaphors. The narrowing appears to have the highest occurrences due to the appearance of new words and material culture. Next, broadening appears to be the second highest due to development in technology, culinary and trading. Besides, broadening seems to be triggered by the avoidance of taboo. Finally, amelioration appearance seems to be triggered by cultural change.

Keywords: entry, headword, monolingual learner’s dictionary, semantic change
If in doubts, flat out! (C. McRae)