

T-Shirt Lexicography¹



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ABSTRACT

This article presents a study of graphic inscriptions on garments such as T-shirts, inscriptions that resemble entries in general monolingual dictionaries of German. Referred to here as "T-shirt lexicography," the collected material is analyzed in terms of its form, content, and function, focusing on lexicographical aspects. T-shirt lexicography is an example of vernacular lexicography inasmuch as different lexicographical traditions are assumed (correctly as well as erroneously) by the (unknown) authors, but also adapted to their specific needs.

Keywords: T-shirt lexicography, vernacular lexicography, German definitions on garments

INTRODUCTION

Information about a word presented in the form of a dictionary or encyclopaedia entry is used in very different contexts, for example in a product presentation by Apple (Fig. 1) or as part of an image campaign for the city of Mannheim (Fig. 2).

¹Editor's note: this article is one of seven in a forum on the topic of vernacular lexicographies appearing in *Dictionaries* 41.2.

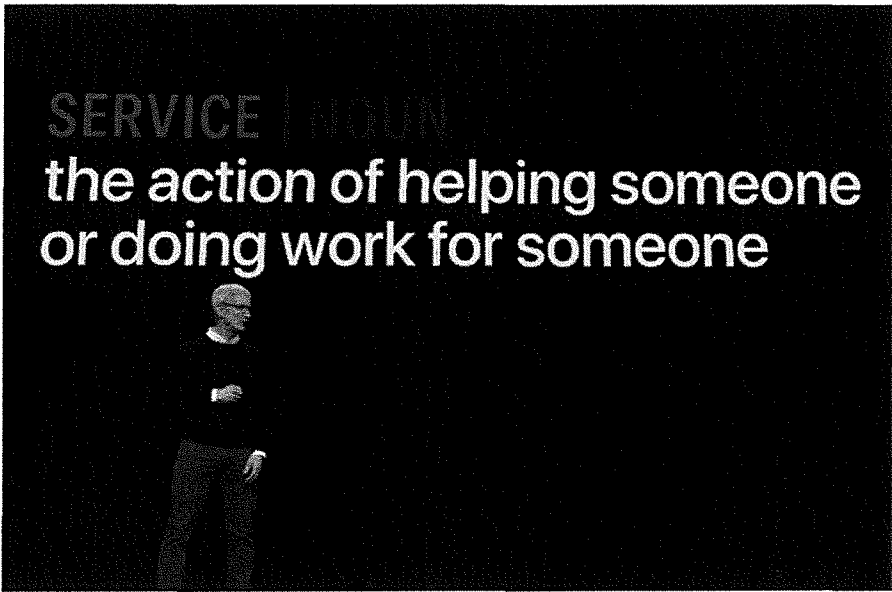


FIGURE 1 Screenshot with Dictionary Entry from Video of Apple Event, March 2019²



FIGURE 2 Fictitious Dictionary Entry on Tram of "Verkehrsverbund Rhein-Neckar"

True dictionary entries are sometimes used (as in Fig. 1) to give authority to one's claims or voice one's beliefs, but there are also fictitious

²Source: www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZmBoMZFC8g. Screenshot at 00:03:29.

dictionary entries (as in Fig. 2), where unknown authors create a text that looks like a dictionary entry but presents unexpected content—for example, the declaration of Mannheim as “Hauptstadt der deutschen Sprache” [capital of the German language]³—thus surprising readers in order to create a particular image in the context of promotion. The specific typography of true dictionary entries or dictionary pages seems to be so attractive to the human eye that lexicographical entries or images of whole dictionary pages can also be found on mugs and cups,⁴ as print on fabric (showing dictionary entries of words such as *appliqué*, *button*, *embroidery*, *needle*, *pattern*, *quilt*, *seam*, and *selvage* or reprints from old English dictionary pages with random entries) or printed on paper as posters,⁵ postcards, or wrapping paper. There is even a type of graphic art where reprints of dictionary pages or entries are used together with other graphic elements.⁶ As these examples illustrate, dictionaries and dictionary entries have a life outside lexicography: there are many people who “play around” with what dictionaries offer, either with their look or their content.

In this article, we are interested in yet another creative use of dictionary entries outside dictionaries: we present data on T-shirts, tank tops, hoodies, sweaters, and jackets showing dictionary entries—that is, “T-shirt lexicography.”⁷ We use the terms “(dictionary) entry” or

³The slogan “Hauptstadt der deutschen Sprache” was invented at a time when the Duden publishing house, the most well-known publisher of German dictionaries in Germany, the Leibniz Institute for the German Language, and a large Goethe Institute, where hundreds of students study German as a foreign language, were located in Mannheim. The Duden publishing house has since relocated to Berlin, but the tram with the slogan can still be seen in Mannheim. Photo by Annette Klosa-Kückelhaus.

⁴We collected data on mugs with German dictionary entries for *Braut* ‘bride’, *Bräutigam* ‘groom’, *Bruder* ‘brother’, *Chemiker* ‘chemist’, *Glück* ‘happiness’, *Landwirt* ‘farmer’, *Lehrer* ‘teacher’, *Mama* ‘mum’, *Mutter* ‘mother’, *Oma* ‘grandma’, *Onkel* ‘uncle’, *Opa* ‘grandpa’, *Papa* ‘dad’, *Patenonkel* ‘godfather’, *Patentante* ‘godmother’, *Rente* ‘retirement’, *Schwester* ‘sister’, *Stiefmama* ‘stepmum’, *Tante* ‘aunt’, *Uroma* ‘great-grandma’, *Uropa* ‘great-grandpa’. The predominance of terms for relatives is obvious.

⁵For dictionary entries on posters and wall stickers, see Klosa-Kückelhaus and Stähr (2019).

⁶A search for the term “dictionary art” on Etsy (www.etsy.com) yields many examples.

⁷We have not yet found dictionary entries on other garments, especially for the lower body, such as pants, skirts, or socks. For an overview on existing studies on T-shirts “as genre for playful metacultural displays,” see Järlehed (2019, 60–61).

"lemma" here, although what is printed on garments as a single lemma is actually not part of a dictionary and is published without recognizable authorship. Nevertheless, T-shirt lexicography is of interest from a lexicographical point of view, because the entries printed on garments refer to actual dictionary articles in three ways (see. Fig. 3): first, the products replicate the external form of dictionary articles in printed general monolingual dictionaries (typography as well as arrangement of the text elements); second, they contain typical lexicographical information; and, finally, they use wording and patterns that are typical of dictionary definitions. In this article, we also examine the extent to which such dictionary entries differ from true dictionary entries.

Garments with dictionary entries can also be studied with regard to their economic benefit (e.g., a comparison with sales of other tops with slogans or without printed text) or from a sociological point of view (e.g., reasons for purchasing or wearing these products in specific age groups or societies). As linguists and lexicographers, we are not qualified to discuss why people buy T-shirts with fictitious dictionary entries, but we do discuss possible reasons for the choice of specific lemmas by authors writing these entries or for wearing those T-shirts. In this, we follow Chilwa and Ajiboye (2016) and consider dictionary entries printed on tops as "forms of 'pragmatic acts'" (2016, 436) with which their wearers "construct for themselves particular identities" (2016, 437). As Cullum-Swan and Manning (1994, 430) state, "These shirts publicly transmit messages about one's self, status, life style, and attitude(s) to life, as well as what one wishes to be known as." Thus, an "ordinary item of clothing" is transformed into "a powerful sign for communication of identity" (Eizenberg, in progress, 12). Note that when a garment with a fictitious dictionary entry is given as a present, the donor also constructs particular identities for the recipient.



FIGURE 3 T-shirt with Entry *Liebe*⁸

At the same time, T-shirt lexicography on the whole contributes to general ideas about certain types of people (e.g., family members such as *Oma* 'grandma' and professionals such as *Lehrer* 'teacher'; for more examples see below), feelings (*Liebe* 'love', as shown in Fig. 3), or activities (e.g., *studieren* 'to go to college') and more. Johnstone (2009, 161) stresses that shirts with words or images on them have an added value: "A linguistic variety or a set of varieties is commodified when it is available for purchase and people will pay for it." Thus, dictionary entries

⁸*Liebe* 'love'; Translation: the feeling of never wanting to sleep again because reality is more beautiful than any dream. Source: www.spreadshirt.de/shop/design/liebe+definition+der+liebe+frauen+t-shirt-D5bf9a82122250968ea210fec?sellable=wQwJ2pLypkTYa78RVggY-631-8&view=1_2162.

are commodified when printed on tops of any kind,⁹ just as “all T-shirts are commodities put on sale in a market” (Järlehed 2019, 61).

In the following, we describe the collection of our data and analyze it in form (different product types, parts of speech of the lemmas, different lemma types, typography of the entries)¹⁰ and content (types of lexicographical information, lexicographical definitions with their form and content), showing how standards in professional lexicography are adapted by the (unknown) creators of dictionary entries on tops. Finally, some conclusions are presented.

DATA COLLECTION

When first researching this phenomenon, we amassed over 400 entries (in German) printed on cups, wall decorations such as posters and stickers, and, needless to say, clothing. This last group outnumbers the rest by far—294 T-shirts, polo shirts, sweaters, jackets and tank tops bearing dictionary-inspired designs have been collected. In the following, we describe our search method and discuss the popularity of some designs.

Online search. The first approach was to conduct a Web search query “wörterbuch definition” (‘dictionary definition’) by using a common Internet search engine and to display all the findings in a spreadsheet. It soon became apparent that this method was not particularly suitable, mainly because of the large number of duplicates and the changed sorting caused by the search algorithm in each new sitting. For this reason, we decided to focus on one major distribution channel of print-on-demand clothing, the e-commerce company Spreadshirt.¹¹ Founded in 2002 in Germany, Spreadshirt has evolved into an internationally active company trading in over 170 countries and is mainly known for the customizability of products like clothes, accessories and household items. In addition, customers can buy pre-designed products from more than 100,000 so called “marketplace designers” who range

⁹On the commodification of language, see more specifically Heller (2010).

¹⁰Chiluwa and Ajiboye (2016) focus on the message content of their material but also mention that other “semiotic aspects (e.g. colours, graphic symbols etc.)” (2016, 441) could be taken into account. See also Järlehed (2019, 61): “the T-shirts are not just using linguistic resources, but also images, colour, and typography.”

¹¹Source: www.spreadshirt.de/.

from big brands such as DC Comics, Sesame Street and BMW to lesser known, independent designers.¹² It is arguable that there is no “typical” Spreadshirt customer since the offered designs cover seemingly any market niche. We perceived this as an advantage because the site displays a wide variety of products that are not catered to a specific group. Unfortunately, little is to be known about the sellers themselves—some of them have a shop description that points in a certain direction (e.g., lemma *Waffennarr* ‘gun freak’ in a shop called “letsshootshow” that features designs revolving around weapons) but some don’t even have a meaningful name but instead just a series of numbers. However, all shops bear a location which shows that most of our findings come from German shops and some from German-speaking countries like Austria and Switzerland but also a few from the United States (e.g., *Chihuahua* ‘chihuahua’, *Zockerin* ‘gamer girl’) or Indonesia (e.g., *Patenonkel* ‘godfather’). We do not know with certainty if the designers are all native speakers of German, but it is safe to say that most of them are sold from German-speaking countries. The site and all of the designs are searchable via a catalogue. We proceeded to use “definition” as a query, which resulted in an outcome of around sixty pages, most of them containing products featuring English dictionary entries. The relevant findings (tops with German dictionary entries) were put down in a spreadsheet and evaluated in relation to product type and lexicographical information, as well as formal and graphic aspects of the entry. In addition, our database includes a picture of the product and its Web address for further reference. We also tried to deduce the popularity of the products by noting the page number on which they appeared—because the catalogue sorting was set to “relevant”—but it soon became clear that the sorting method was rather random and changed with every search.

Popularity of the products. Since this article’s main interest is not to examine the sociological or economic implications of dictionary entries of T-shirts, we will discuss only briefly whether these products are selling well. Nevertheless, it is important to ask this question, because the answer may yield further information about the intentions behind the creation and composition of these special designs.

¹²Source: Factsheet Spreadshirt. www.spreadshirt.de/newsroom/files/2019/09/Factsheet-DE-Sept-2019-1.pdf, last update: September 2019.

When a buyer on Spreadshirt chooses a particular style from a designer, they pick a garment or other item to have it printed on and the company conducts the whole production process. Despite this being a successful business model for both parties, it made the research a bit tricky. First, our attempt to find a correlation between product type and lemma type was pointless, because the selection is completely random and the customer has free choice anyway.¹³ Second, the print-on-demand service that the website provides makes it easy for sellers to offer a vast number of designs, in an attempt to appeal to as many customers as possible, but this results in a lot of repetition regarding the definition of many entries. More than a few designers follow the approach of using the same definition for a variety of job titles such as *Ingenieur* 'engineer' or *Schreiner* 'carpenter' ("Eine Person, die Probleme löst, von denen du nicht einmal wusstest, dass sie existieren, auf eine Art und Weise, die du nicht verstehst" [someone who solves problems you didn't even know existed in a way you don't understand]). In our database, almost half of all findings have the same or a similar definition and the percentage of products displaying an "individual" definition is only 53 percent. This leads to the assumption that tops sharing the definition above, even though they are not very creative or customized, must be well-received products. However, it is questionable how significant these findings are for the purpose of this article, since it is obvious that these dictionary entries are not well thought out but are rather the result of copying and pasting. We decided to include them after all as they represent a large range of different lemmas.

The only way of being certain about the popularity of the products in our collection would be to ask the designers themselves for sales numbers. Since our spreadsheet features eighty-four sellers and the website Spreadshirt does not offer contact details or the option of messaging the designers directly, we were unfortunately not able to do this. We therefore do not have reliable information about the popularity of specific entries in T-shirt lexicography.

¹³Contrary to our findings for T-shirt lexicography, we noticed a correlation between product types and lemma types for wall stickers and posters in our data collection: for example, lemmas on wall stickers include names for different rooms in a house/apartment (e.g., *Küche* 'kitchen', *Schlafzimmer* 'bedroom'), which we didn't find on posters (see Klosa-Kückelhaus and Stähr 2019, 28).

ANALYSIS OF LEMMA TYPES AND FORMAL ASPECTS

As mentioned above, the corpus consists of 294 dictionary entries. Two T-shirts feature entries with two lemmas, which were counted separately. Of the lemmas, 208 are non-recurring, thirty-four appear twice (including morphologically and semantically varied lemmas ranging from *Stuckateur* 'stucco plasterer' to *vegan* 'vegan'), two appear three times (*Informatiker* 'computer scientist', *Polizist* 'police officer') and two appear six times (*Ingenieur* 'engineer', *Lehrer* 'teacher'). Most of the lemmas (270) are nouns, making up ninety-two percent of all collected material, but we also found fifteen verbs, seven adjectives, and two phraseologisms.

Semantic categories. To become acquainted with the collected material and show the variety of lemmas, we decided to sort the lemmas into topical groups and three large categories to begin with: concrete words (80%), abstract words (16%) and other (4%). Table 1 illustrates the distribution of concrete lemmas into these groups and subgroups.

The vast majority of lemmas in our material are job titles and we presume that there are two reasons for this: first, we presume that these products are mainly bought as gifts, and since most people prefer personalized gifts, customers look for a connection—often the most obvious one—between their present and the gift recipient. Second, as mentioned above, the use of “copy-paste”-definitions is very prominent, especially with this group of lemmas. Job titles work quite well with definitions such as “someone who solves problems you didn’t even know existed in a way you don’t understand” and so it is possible for sellers to appeal to a larger market. The fact that the category of job titles is followed by the categories “family” and “person” can be linked to the designated use of these products as gifts as well.

Furthermore, it must be mentioned that there is a greater variety of lemmas in terms of their semantic content than in the findings in our previous research. Evaluating the dictionary entries on wall decorations, we concluded that the lemmas were chosen to bring out a positive, “cocooning” atmosphere when the products were displayed at

TABLE 1 Semantic Categories of Lemmas in T-shirt Lexicography

			Total	Percent
concrete words	personal names	occupation	175	59
		person	32	11
		family	13	4
	objects	drink	3	1
		item	7	2
		animal	2	1
	animals	animal	2	1
		place	3	1
	other	holiday	2	1
		abstract term	18	6
abstract words		(character) trait	7	2
		field of	3	1
		expertise		
		feeling	3	1
		action	11	4
		condition	5	2
		proper name	4	1
miscellanea		phraseologism	5	2
		other	1	1
			294	100

home (see Klosa-Kückelhaus and Stähr 2019, 33). Clothing works differently, since shirts are worn for a shorter period of time and chosen according to what is appropriate for a particular context. This allows a more varied selection of lemmas relating to different parts of the wearer's life, such as hobbies, fitness, and politics, or simply aiming to make a joke.

Three of the lemmas we found are neologisms not yet recorded in any German dictionary and not easily translated into English: *kovacen* (the definition of which reads "the making of a statement that suggests one hundred percent reliability, but which is relatively easy to revise within a short period of time" and refers to football coach Niko Kovač, who repeatedly said he would not leave the football club "Eintracht Frankfurt" before finally becoming the new coach for "FC Bayern München" for the 2018–2019 season); *leyenhaft* (the definition of which

reads “spineless, blindly actionistic, (also: badly coiffed)” and refers to the German politician Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission since 2019); and *Snackosaurus* (the definition of which reads “a greedy person”). All these examples illustrate playfulness and creativity in T-shirt lexicography.

Graphic design and typography. The aim of the dictionary-inspired designs we collected is to attract attention, but they have to do it a bit differently from, for example, posters, since the reading time is often much shorter. (On the street, somebody wearing a top with a dictionary definition passes by quickly, but stickers and posters stay on the wall for long periods of time.) We would therefore assume that T-shirt designs would appear in larger print or contain less words than the ones from our previous research into wall decorations, making them easier to read. This is true for the most part, but some T-shirt designs are also typed in a very small font, becoming almost unreadable from a distance.

Most of the tops in our collection go for a very effective, graphic look (see Fig. 3): they place the lemma prominently at the top and display it in uppercase letters or even a special, eye-catching font. After all, it is this particular word that the wearer wants to be associated with (or the donor of the T-shirt wants the recipient to be associated with). Comparing the designs, it became obvious that almost all of them aim for the specific “dictionary” look: lemma on top, definition in smaller font and justified text below. Some designs use frames, lines or other graphic elements to achieve a more structured look, and some include pictures (e.g., T-shirt with the entry *Gehirn* ‘brain’ where a graphic depiction of a human brain precedes the definition) or symbols (e.g., T-shirt with the entry *Jäger* ‘hunter’ where several large asterisks are arranged in a horizontal line before the fictitious dictionary entry itself).

It is interesting to see which elements the (unknown) designers, who presumably are not professional lexicographers, associate with dictionary entries. We assume that their intention is to create the impression of a dictionary on the surface, so phonetic transcription, syllabification using hyphens or middle dots, grammatical information such as noun markers, genitive singular or nominative plural suffixes and other elements (see also below) are used. In addition, square and curly brackets can be found repeatedly in our material, together with hyphens or

middle dots, a rather uncommon feature in everyday typography. Quite often, the laic character of the dictionary entries in T-shirt lexicography is expressed in the clearly unfounded use of certain typography, for example, when the lemma itself is written in square or curly brackets. This is further evidence that the authors are only alluding to dictionaries as a concept and have only a general idea of how a true dictionary entry typically looks.

ANALYSIS OF LEXICOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Lexicographical traditions are followed in T-shirt lexicography not only in the outer form of printed dictionary entries, but also in terms of content. A number of lexicographical information types known from general monolingual dictionaries are replicated (e.g., information on part of speech or syllabification), with the lexicographical definition playing a central role.

Types of lexicographical information. In our data, the following types of lexicographical information (besides the lemmas) are found: syllabification, pronunciation, grammar (part of speech; gender and inflection of nouns), definition, examples, pragmatic information, and references (see Table 2). There are no examples of etymological or encyclopaedic information, which is possibly due to the fact that very long dictionary entries would not fit on tops and that the intended graphic effect could be impaired.

In most of our cases the entry contains only information on one sense (although the lemma may be polysemous, as with *Liebe* in Fig. 3, where only the sense 'romantic feeling' is given, but none of the metaphoric or metonymic senses such as 'kind person'). There are a few examples where more than one sense is contained, for example, the lemma *Chef* ('boss') contains the following sense information: "1. Jemand, der immer da ist, wenn du zu spät kommst, 2. Der aber immer zu spät kommt, wenn du zu früh da bist."¹⁴ [1. Someone who's always there when you're late, 2. but who's also always late when you're early.] While in this case

¹⁴Source: www.spreadshirt.de/chef+definition+maenner+t-shirt-D142113248.

TABLE 2 Occurrences of Types of Lexicographical Information
(total = 294)

Lexicographical Information	Occurrences	Percentage
syllabification	205	70
pronunciation	47	16
part of speech	242	82
gender (nouns)	100	37 ¹⁵
inflected forms (nouns)	2	1 ¹⁶
definition	292 ¹⁷	99
examples	3	1
pragmatic information	10	3
references	184	62.5

both parts of the definition are humorous (see also next section), we also have cases where a true dictionary definition is given under 1., followed by a humorous one under 2., for example for lemma *Gitarrist* ('guitar player'): "1. Ein Musiker, der Gitarre spielt. 2. Jemand, der nicht weiß, wie verdammt laut er ist." [1. A musician who plays the guitar. 2. Someone who doesn't know how damn loud he is.].

While almost all example entries contain a definition and many give information on parts of speech, syllabification, and references, other types of lexicographical information are rare, that is, examples and pragmatic information. We assume that there are two reasons for this: first, there is a general idea that dictionaries explain words, and thus, the definition is also a key element in dictionary entries from a lay perspective (see also next chapter), while other types of lexicographical information may seem less important; second, those elements of a true dictionary entry which are typographically salient (syllabification, the abbreviated and often italicized information on part of speech, the pronunciation given as IPA, references to other entries after *siehe auch/s. a.* 'see also', the numbering of senses) are used more often than other

¹⁵In our data, 270 nouns; percentage for gender is given only for nouns.

¹⁶In our data, 270 nouns; percentage for inflection is given only for nouns.

¹⁷Only two of our examples (*Schalcker* [a fan of FC Schalke 04] and *Schatulle* [casket]) do not contain a definition. Nevertheless, they are recognizable as dictionary entries because of their typography and grammatical information.

elements to make the print on garments more easily recognizable as a "dictionary entry."

There are several indicators that show that the authors of T-shirt lexicography are not always familiar with the traditions in German monolingual dictionaries: in our data there are thirty-three examples with correct IPA, but also fourteen with fake or incorrect IPA, for example the lemma *Installateur* 'plumber', where the pronunciation is given as [Ins-stal-la-tör] presenting the indication of syllabification via middle dots (including a wrong syllabification with double 's') in square brackets traditionally used for IPA transcription of pronunciation. In German dictionaries, straight vertical bars (not middle dots) are usually used to indicate syllabification (e.g., In|stal|la|teur).

Part of speech is given in German in 224 cases of our data (e.g., "Subst."), but in sixteen dictionary entries the English name for part of speech is used (e.g., "n." for "noun"), and for two lemmas both German and English part of speech are mentioned. In addition, in German general monolingual dictionaries, explicit information about the part of speech of nouns is not usually given, because they are easily recognizable as nouns due to their capitalization and their gender, which is traditionally shown by giving either the definite article or the gender as an abbreviation (m., f., n.), both followed by information on inflection, as in *Lehrer*, der; -s, - or *Lehrer* m. (-s; -).

In our data, references to other entries are quite numerous. (This occurs in over 60% of our dictionary entries.). As well as being an interesting typographic feature, they present noteworthy content. While traditionally used to refer dictionary users to paradigmatically related words or to inflected forms lemmatized separately from their uninflected form due to orthographic order (e.g., from the simple past *fuhr* 'drove' to the infinitive of the verb *fahren* 'to drive'), in T-shirt lexicography the references seem to be completely obsolete as there are no other entries on the shirt and the person reading the fictitious dictionary entry is in fact not a traditional dictionary user. The references here are used instead to add information to the definition, like an afterthought, which often brings an ironic, comic or sympathetic twist to the definition, as illustrated in Table 3.

TABLE 3 Examples of References to Other Words in T-shirt Lexicography

Lemma	Definition	Reference
<i>Lehrer</i>	jemand, der an einer Schule unterrichtet	s. a.: Superheld
teacher	somebody teaching at a school	see also: superhero
<i>Hausfrau [+ Mutter]</i>	Eine Frau, die nicht nur den Haushalt schmeißt, sondern auch Tag & Nacht für das leibliche Wohl ihrer Familie sorgt – und das ohne Bezahlung.	siehe auch: 24/7; besten Job der Welt.
housewife [+ mother]	A woman who not only manages a household, but also takes care day & night of the physical well-being of her family – without payment.	see also: 24/7; best job in the world
<i>Montag</i>	schlimmster Tag der Woche	siehe: Hass, Verzweiflung, Depressionen, Mordgedanken
Monday	worst day of the week	see hatred, despair, depression, thoughts of murder

Definitions. Following lexicographical tradition, a central part of the lexicographical data in almost all the dictionary entries examined here is the definition.¹⁸

¹⁸See Hanks 2016 and Wiegand 1989 for a detailed discussion of various approaches to writing lexicographical definitions.

Zum Wörterbuchgegenstand von allgemeinen einsprachigen Wörterbüchern gehört [...] stets die lexikalische Bedeutung der Lemmazeichen [...], so daß in allen Wörterbuchartikeln, die keine rudimentären Mikrostrukturen [...] aufweisen, wie z. B. reine Verweisartikel, wenigstens eine sog. lexikographische Definition obligatorisch ist." [The dictionary subject of general monolingual dictionaries always includes [...] the lexicological meaning of the lemma sign [...], so that in all dictionary entries which do not have any rudimentary microstructures [...], such as pure reference entries, at least one so-called lexicographical definition is obligatory.] (Wiegand 1989, 531).

The definition is either a phrase (see examples 1–4 and 6 in Table 4) or a sentence (see example 8 in Table 4); sometimes, lemma and definition together form a complete sentence (see example 7 in Table 4). In a few cases (such as example 6 in Table 4), two or more phrases or sentences are combined. Two established lexicographical traditions for definitions in general monolingual dictionaries are strongly adhered to in our material: giving the equivalent (see Haß-Zumkehr 2001, 28; see example 6 in Table 4) or naming genus proximum and differentia specifica (see Haß-Zumkehr 2001, 29; see examples 1–6 in Table 4.). Sentence-shaped definitions (as in example 8 in Table 4) are reminiscent of paraphrasing methods in learner dictionaries in which "das Lemmazeichen in vollständigen Sätzen verwendet [wird], aus denen sein Gebrauch erschlossen werden kann" [the lemma sign is used in complete sentences from which its use can be deduced] (Wiegand 1989, 570).

TABLE 4 Examples of Definition Types

	Lemma	Definition
1.	Snackosaurus [snackosaur]	ein verfressener Mensch a greedy person
2.	Sarkasmus sarcasm	Die Fähigkeit, Idioten zu beleidigen ohne, dass sie es bemerken the ability to insult idiots without them noticing it
3.	Papa	... stärkster Mann der Welt und Superheld ohne Umhang

	Lemma	Definition
	Dad	strongest man in the world and superhero without cape
4.	Familie family	Andere Menschen, mit denen du manchmal redest, wenn das Wlan nicht funktioniert Other people you sometimes talk to when the Wifi isn't working.
5.	Gehirn brain	Organ, mit dem wir denken, dass wir denken. Ambrose Bierce Organ with which we think we think. Ambrose Bierce
6.	Fachkraft für Lagerlogistik warehouse logistics specialist	Jemand mit außerordentlichen, organisatorischen Fähigkeiten; Synonym für Fleiß und Arbeitswillen; der Motor der modernen Wirtschaft; Dreh- und Angelpunkt des Handels. Someone with extraordinary organizational skills; synonymous with hard work and the will to work; the engine of the modern economy; the linchpin of commerce.
7.	Neujahr New Year	... beginnt ein neues Jahr und die Chance alles anders falsch zu machen. ... a new year begins with the chance to do everything wrong in a different way.
8.	Alman ¹⁹ [Alman]	Als ~ werden aus Deutschland stammende Menschen bezeichnet, die folgende Eigenschaften verstärkt aufweisen: Geizigkeit, Humorlosigkeit, und/oder Outdoor Kleidung im Alltag tragen. The term ~ is used to describe people from Germany who have the following characteristics: stinginess, humourlessness, and/or outdoor clothing in everyday life.

¹⁹From Turkish *alman* 'German'.

TYPES OF LEXICOGRAPHICAL DEFINITION IN T-SHIRT LEXICOGRAPHY

In our material, there are also lexicographical definitions which are in fact citations (see example 5 in Table 4). However, they still have the typical form and content of dictionary definitions. The (unknown) authors of the definitions break with tradition in other ways: they often use positive words and evoke positive images, for example the adjective *stärkster* ('strongest') and the noun *Superheld* ('superhero') in the definition of *Papa* ('Dad') (example 3 in Table 4). This is in stark contrast to the definition of *Papa* in "Duden online,"²⁰ where the synonym *Vater* ('father') is given as a definition. There are even more cases where the lexicographical definition is to be interpreted in a witty, ironic way, for example *family* (example 4 in Table 4): while the definition in "Duden online" reads "aus einem Elternpaar oder einem Elternteil und mindestens einem Kind bestehende [Lebens]gemeinschaft"²¹ [a (life) community consisting of a parent couple or a single parent and at least one child], in our example the definition is written from the perspective of somebody who will only talk with their family if their preferred form of entertainment (social media, computer, streaming service through Wi-Fi) is not available. Here, as well as in many other examples, stereotypes with positive or negative connotations are evoked; see also example 8 (in Table 4) where Germans are regarded as being stingy and humourless, and example 6 (in Table 4), where warehouse workers supposedly have extraordinary organizational skills. The definition of *Fachkraft für Lagerlogistik* also illustrates the tendency in definitions in T-shirt lexicography to work with exaggerations: here, warehouse workers are called the engine of the modern economy and the linchpin of commerce.

Finally, it is striking that in some definitions, the reader is addressed directly using *du* ('you'), a practice unknown in professional German lexicography. This is the case in the oft-repeated definition²² "jemand, der Probleme löst, von denen du nicht einmal wusstest, dass sie existieren, auf eine Art und Weise, die du nicht verstehst" [someone who

²⁰Entry *Papa* in "Duden online." www.duden.de/rechtschreibung/Papa_Vater.

²¹Entry *Familie* in "Duden online." www.duden.de/rechtschreibung/Familie.

²²See also in section "Popularity of products."

solves problems you didn't even know existed in a way you don't understand], which we found with many different job titles.

Unlike dictionaries, where the authors are known by name and are (often) philologically trained, the authors of T-shirt lexicography are anonymous and probably not lexicographical experts. Nevertheless, the lexicographical definitions examined here are not so-called "folk definitions,"²³ that is, (spontaneous) definitions of words by speakers of a language. The lexicographical definitions in T-shirt lexicography are clearly formulated for two specific purposes, namely either to evoke positive thoughts or moods or to have a comic effect.

CONCLUSION

T-shirt lexicography is an amazing example of vernacular lexicography: as shown above, the (unknown) authors of dictionary entries on T-shirts, hoodies, tank tops, and so on adopt the typography and lexicographical information of entries in general monolingual dictionaries, but they adapt it to their specific needs. For example, many typographically salient elements are used to make what is printed on the garment easily recognizable as a "typical" dictionary entry. This also extends to the content, for example, when references to other entries are given although in fact the entry on the T-shirt is not part of a dictionary (not even a virtual one consisting of all shirts with lexicographical entries as a whole).

The choice of lemmas defined in the entries in our material²⁴ can also be interpreted as the result of what such garments are intended for: either to be given as a present to somebody who, for example, represents the concept denoted by one of the many names for individuals in our material, such as *Oma* 'grandma', *Lehrer* 'teacher', *Mechaniker* 'mechanic', or to be worn by somebody who is, for instance, a grandmother, a teacher, a mechanic, etc. Other lemmas postulate a belief, an idea, a preference or dislike etc. which the person wearing the top chooses to express or which is attributed to them, as with *Resilienz*

²³See Wiegand 1989, 553: "Nach Hanks 1987 (120 f.) hat man sich bei der Erarbeitung von COBUILD 1987 an 'folk definitions' orientiert." [According to Hanks 1987 (120 f.), the development of COBUILD 1987 was based on folk definitions.]

²⁴We are referring to the choice that designers and authors made for the lemmas printed on the T-shirts in our material.

'resilience', *vegan* 'vegan', *Vodka* 'vodka', *Montag* 'Monday'. In this respect, the content in T-shirt lexicography presented to us as observers is no different from any other slogan, motto, graffiti, graphic symbol, and so on, that we can see on the street every day. Similarly, we often find the use of irony, sarcasm, exaggeration, witty expressivity, or word play in entries in T-shirt lexicography to give a critical or humorous touch to lexicographical definitions which are otherwise very traditional in form and wording. Here, as well as in the formal aspects mentioned above, the (unknown) authors of the definitions in our material even stretch lexicographical tradition, for example in cases where, by referring the reader to (nonexistent) other entries, they add humor to an otherwise unobtrusive definition (see example *Lehrer* in Table 3) or in cases where a citation (from the Bible or other sources) is used as a definition.

Finally, T-shirt lexicography as well as dictionary entries depicted on mugs, posters, post cards, wall stickers, etc. is the expression of a notable fascination on the part of non-lexicographers with dictionaries. Fictitious dictionary entries and references to lexicographical traditions can be found in very different contexts either as proof of what is being said, shown, or explained by the authors of such entries, or as word play. We hope to find even more material of lexicography outside dictionaries for further studies.

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