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In this paper, I wish to examine the relations between the English lexicon and the discourse phenomenon that consists in quoting or mentioning a linguistic object, as in *The word* **'why'** *was spelt incorrectly* (henceforth, 'autonymy'). Autonymy turns out to underlie the formation of a substantial number of lexemes, all of which may be assumed to derive from a <u>quoted</u> word or sequence rather than from an 'inert' item. This is a word-formation process that has been largely overlooked by lexicographers, who have tended to consider that the input to word formation was provided by lexemes, stems and affixes, in other words, by elements in the system rather than by occurrences in discourse.

I will start by defining autonymy, go on to consider the best way to tackle the question how autonyms can find a way into the lexicon, then quickly go over the existing literature (mainly devoted to so-called 'delocutives'). When that has been done, I will review what I regard as the four major guises in which autonyms can serve as input to word-formation processes. It will turn out that a general consequence of the incorporation of autonyms into the lexicon is that they lose most of their reflexivity, i.e. they stop denoting something very much like themselves (as in *We don't have any time to look into the* **why** *of things*). Yet, the fourth category examined will raise the intriguing question whether the lexicon does include some autonyms after all. This hypothesis is supported by some lexicographical data, but also, more decisively, by the finding that, in the case of those items that derive from words or phrases whose utterance carries illocutionary force (e.g. a *bravo*), it is often difficult to draw a precise line between what is a purely reflexive occurrence (a one-off autonym) and what is a minimally reflexive occurrence (a lexeme derived from an autonym). The question also arises whether one and the same lexical item can be instantiated now as an ordinary lexeme, now as an autonym. If my hypothesis is correct, it sheds new light on the relationships between discourse phenomena and the language system: not only do the former, trivially, nourish the later, but they also connect with it in such a way that certain items do not clearly belong to one domain rather than the other.

1. Autonymy

'Autonymy' is the name I have chosen to name a phenomenon that has been widely studied, especially by philosophers of language, under such labels as 'mention' or 'quotation'. It is in essence a discourse phenomenon that consists in using a word, phrase, sentence, not with its ordinary denotation, but in order to highlight that word, phrase or sentence itself, or some relevant linguistic aspect of it. Here are a couple of examples (the autonyms are in boldface):

(1) Do you really think **Prague** rhymes with **plague**?

(2) She shouted, **"Why don't you let me go?"**.

(3) And anyway, she only said that she hasn't slept with him *yet* [...]. But it doesn't stop me worrying about the **'yet'**. (Hornby 1995: 121-23)

There exist several major semantic and pragmatic accounts of autonyms, from the most straightforward theory, which assumes that autonyms are 'words that refer to themselves', to more subtle and complex proposals. My preference goes to a theory that treats autonyms as metalinguistic 'demonstrations' that have the effect of turning whatever sequence is highlighted into an NP that refers to, or an N that denotes, 'some linguistic object' that is iconically related to it.[1] In (1), the utterer displays two words, *Prague* and *plague*, not in order to conjure up a Czech city or a deadly contagious disease, but to highlight their phonological make-up. The word-tokens displayed are used to refer to their corresponding word-types and to demonstrate a characteristic — the pronunciation of their final syllable — on which hinges the meaningfulness of the question asked. In (2), an instance of direct speech, the token displayed is used to refer to a previous utterance by another speaker (the one designated as *she*). Whereas that utterance – the referent of the sequence in boldface – is a main clause with its ordinary meaning, the quoted sequence does not operate as a main clause in the sentence in which it is embedded. Rather, it functions as an NP endowed with reference. In (3), *'yet'* is the autonymous head of an NP. This NP is an anaphor of the homonymous token at the end of the first sentence and presumably refers to the token *yet* in the utterance of the female speaker whose words are reported indirectly.

The basic presentation above will suffice for my present purposes: in the end, whichever theory of autonymy is adopted has very little impact on the discussion I want to embark on. The very existence of autonyms and their reflexive metalinguistic nature — two facts not denied by any writer — is sufficient to warrant an investigation of the penetration of autonyms into the lexicon. This is the central business to which I now turn.

2. Autonymy and the lexicon

The relationships between the lexicon and autonymy have not been a key topic in contemporary linguistic scholarship. Among the few writers who have addressed the issue, let me cite Jespersen (1961); Benveniste (1966); Rey-Debove (1975, 1978); Droste (1983); Anscombre (1985); Ducrot & Schaeffer (1995). (Richard (1986) and Lepore (1999) have also looked into the metatheoretical implications of these relationships.) Initially, the problem lends itself to two main approaches, one diachronic, the other synchronic. In other words, one can ask if a given lexeme can be traced back to an original autonym or, alternatively, if the meaning of this lexeme is judged by the current community of speakers to rest in part on a homonymous autonym (in other words, if this lexeme is understood in terms of that autonym).

It might well turn out that some lexemes are judged to be derived from an autonym on one approach but not on the other. This is a familiar problem to those linguists who have attempted to inventory homonymy and polysemy in the vocabulary of a language: there too, the two approaches sketch different maps of the lexicon. For practical reasons, however, I could not afford spotless methodology in this paper. In other words, I was in no position to

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[1] This theory owes a lot to the framework presented in Recanati (2001).

provide either a fully diachronic or a fully synchronic account. Diachronic evidence is scarce. The lexemes that derive from autonyms (henceforth 'de-autonymous lexicalisations', or 'de-autonyms', for short)[2] have rarely been given due consideration by lexicographers. I have used what little evidence can be collected from dictionaries, but that remained fairly patchy.[3] On the other hand, I could not afford to offer a purely synchronic account either. There were too many potential de-autonyms to be dealt with. For each, I would have had to consult native speakers on whether they understand the lexeme in terms of a homonymous autonym. This proved unfeasible.

Let me use a set of examples (adapted from Rey-Debove 1978: 160) to illustrate the sorts of problems I was confronted with:

(4) Why is he going back? [interrogative adverb: « for what reason? »]

(5) Your *why* makes no sense; the question is when he is going back. [autonym « (use of) the word *why* »]

(6) What I'm interested in is the why, not the where or the when [lexical noun: « the reason »]

I regard (5) as containing a true autonym and (6) as containing candidate <u>de-</u>autonyms (*why*, *where*, *when*) for the following reasons: the '*why*' in (5) is a genuine autonym, not a lexicalised one, because it is fully reflexive, i.e. it denotes a lexeme that is iconically related to it. By contrast, the *why* in (6) is far from being fully reflexive, since it does not denote a formally similar linguistic object but a mental one that is in no iconic relation with *why*. This being clarified, the question that arises is how to show that the *why* in (6) 'stems from' an autonym as in (5), not from the plain adverb as in (4). The dictionaries I have consulted offer no direct evidence that the <u>diachronic</u> transition from the stage represented by (4) to that represented by (6) must have involved the autonymous stage, as exemplified in (5). As for synchronic evidence, one should ideally be able to check with a representative number of English-speaking informants that they 'sense' a direct connection between the *whys* in (5) and (6), that they understand why_6 in terms of why_5. I have settled for the following adjustment: the question whether why_6 is understood in terms of why_5 is rephrased as the question whether the definition of a putative de-autonymous item includes, or may include, a morphologically close autonym.[4]

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[2] As one says 'deverbal', 'denominal' or 'de-adjectival'. Rey-Debove (1978: 157-62) had suggested 'autonyme lexicalisé', but I prefer a term that makes it clear that, rather than with an autonym, one is dealing with an item derived from an autonym.

[3] None of the etymological dictionaries consulted mention the process of de-autonymisation (by any of its names...) as a source of neology (see Onions 1966; Klein 1966-67). Symptomatically, reference books on the science of lexicography do not record this process either (Hartmann & James 1998; Gaudin & Guespin 2000). Neither do the big descriptive grammars of English, notably Quirk et al. (1985) or Huddleston & Pullum (2002), even though both provide an extensive survey of word-formation in English. The two major historical dictionaries of the English language, the *OED* and *WEB3rd*, occasionally point out that a given lexeme is derived from an autonym (what they call 'the utterance of a word or phrase'). The *OED*, in particular, proves quite hospitable to autonyms and their derivatives, but it does so in a disorderly fashion. This question is resumed in 4.4.

[4] This means that I have attempted my own reconstructions. In so doing, I am not sure I was acting any differently than a significant proportion of linguists when they make claims about native speakers' competence. A look at Rey-Debove (1978: 161) or Anscombre (1985) confirms that impression.

In the end, I have chosen to use both the diachronic evidence available and my own intuitions to answer the following question, "what can become of an autonym in the lexicon?". There seem to be four possible outcomes, which can be broken down as follows:

(i) an autonym can yield a lexeme whose citation-form is identical with it, and whose conventional lexical content includes the original autonym ('form-preserving lexicalisation'):

And as to how she behaved to your mother you'd never believe it — cigarettes, mess, gin in the teacups, and never **a please** or **thank-you**. (BNC A0D 1504)[5]

(ii) it can go through derivation or compounding and survive as an autonymous morpheme in the resulting lexeme ('autonym as morpheme of lexeme');

The evaluations are replete with mentions that he 'was not a **yes-man**,' and 'says what he thinks.' (Website)

(iii) it can exist temporarily as a virtual member of the lexicon, as it were, without eventually finding its permanent abode there ('virtual de-autonymous lexicalisation');

Don't **Jimmy** me! From now on I'm Mr. James Malloy.

(iv) it may, exceptionally, enter it as an unadulterated autonym. This is a controversial category, the only one likely to attest to the presence of genuine autonymy in the lexicon. At this stage I prefer to offer no illustration. (See 4.4. — 'autonym in the lexicon')

3. Previous work on a related topic: 'délocutivité' (henceforth *delocutivity*)

Although I believe that I am exploring some untrodden paths, it would be wrong to assume that there had been no previous investigations into the domains that I am seeking to explore. In 1958 (the paper was included in a 1966 collection), the French linguist Émile Benveniste examined at some length a category of verbs ostensibly derived from nouns, but actually originating in the <u>formulaic utterance</u> of a noun (which formulas Benveniste called 'locutions'). For this reason, Benveniste refused to treat them as standard denominals and coined his term 'delocutive'. His initial example is that of the Latin verb *salutare*, which, Benveniste says, is derived from the 'formula' *salus!* (1966: 277-78) rather than simply from the inert lexeme *salus*. That *salutare* is not a plain denominal, he adds, should be evident from the fact that it must be paraphrased not as *to perform a salus* (which would be its meaning were it a regular denominal) but as *to say 'salus'*.

Over the years, Benveniste's groundbreaking ideas have inspired a number of linguists, especially in France. Among those, Jean-Claude Anscombre probably stands as the one who has offered the most complete reworking of Benveniste. I shall not develop his views in any detail here. The interested reader can turn, for instance, to Anscombre (1985). I will be

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[5] The reference stands for an occurrence found on the search engine of the British National Corpus.

content with highlighting one aspect of his contribution. Anscombre makes out three related phenomena: delocutivity, mention (= autonymy), citativity, on the basis of three different senses of the verb *dire*. The distinction he draws between autonymy and delocutiviy is presented as follows: verbs or verbal phrases of mention (*dire « bonjour »*) report only a locutionary act, whereas delocutives (*dire bonjour*) do an <u>ill</u>ocutionary act. As for the intermediate category of citative verbs, they are like mentioning verbs but meet the extra requirement that the word they are derived from is understood to be used as a term of address; for instance, *dire tu* is citative because it entails that *tu* is the term used to address the addressee. As we can see, Anscombre, like Benveniste and a host of other writers on delocutivity, e.g. Ducrot or Recanati, lays the emphasis on the illocutionary dimension of delocutivity. That is why he keeps delocutivity separate from autonymy.

However, it is apparent that some writers on delocutivity have been tempted to relax the constraints on the illocutionary force requirement. Larcher (1985) points out that, in various languages, quite a few 'delocutives' (in his terminology) support either a locutionary or an illocutionary interpretation (cf 1985: 105), an observation which prompts him to distance himself from Anscombre's requirement. Larcher's eventual conclusion is that a delocutive may entertain a variety of relationships with the locution or formula from which it is derived. More recently, Frans Plank has supplied an as yet unpublished survey of delocutive verbs across many languages. He has notably put forward a classification of delocutive verbs in terms of the type of words, phrases or other that can serve as a derivational base for delocutives. Included are such items as the German verb *ächzen*, i.e. « to say "ach!", to groan » or the Russian verb *togokat*, meaning « to use the demonstrative "togo" a lot, to be incapable of fluent speech ». These are clearly not derived from locutions whose utterance may suffice to peform an illocutionary act, a fact that Plank explicitly acknowledges.

Like the last mentioned writers, I do not wish to restrict my study to those lexemes derived from illocutionary formulas. Though the utterance of a formula is not an autonym, any appeal or reference to an uttered formula 'creates' an autonym. That is exactly what happens in Benveniste's account of *salutare*, for which he needs to appeal to the uttering of *salus!*, i.e. for which he needs to rely on an autonym. Indeed, the formulas that occur in all delocutive derivations, occur there as autonyms. In other words, I regard all delocutives as de-autonyms. But the converse is not true: not all autonyms at the basis of a metalinguistically derived lexeme can convincingly be described as uttered formulas. Thus, it is unlikely that Anscombre would treat *an if*, *a but*, *the when* as delocutives: an utterance of *if*, *but* or *when*, does not normally suffice to perform an illocutionary act of, respectively, 'supposing', 'conceding', 'explaining (a temporal relation)'. Whereas a delocutive is a lexeme whose content includes an autonym <u>as performing an illocutionary act</u>, a de-autonym, more broadly, is a lexeme whose content includes an autonym (<u>in whatever capacity</u>).

4. The various categories of de-autonyms

4.1. Form-preserving lexicalisations

I have divided this potentially abundant category into four subcategories. What they all have in common is that (a) a case can be made that they derive from autonyms; (b) the derived

lexicalisation has undergone no formal alteration. The first three subclasses consist of de-autonymous <u>nouns</u>, which are grouped on the basis of the syntactic/pragmatic role played by the autonym from which they are assumed to derive. The fourth subcategory largely overlaps with Anscombre's delocutives, as it comprises <u>verbs</u> denoting the act of uttering the autonym from which they have been converted.

Before I tackle each group separately, I wish to dwell some more on the ways of distinguishing de-autonyms from genuine 'active' autonyms. Given that autonyms behave grammatically like NPs or Ns, this issue can only arise in relation with de-autonymous nouns, which is eactly what the first three subclasses under 4.1 are. In my discussion of examples (4) to (6), I offered what I believe to be the only useful distinctive criterion, namely the degree of reflexivity of the item under consideration. A genuine autonym like why_5 is maximally reflexive because it denotes a form, a lexeme, a type with which it is iconically related. A de-autonym like why_6 is only marginally reflexive. *Why*$_6$ can be defined as meaning « reason, motive », as I initially suggested. On this definition there is actually no reflexivity to be made out at all. But, since I assume that why_6 is a de-autonym, I can bring that out by presenting its meaning as « the answer to a question initiated by the adverb *why* ». Both definitions indicate that why_6 is different from a maximally reflexive autonym, but I prefer the second one because it underlines the connection with an initial autonym.

It would be nice if there were other, non-semantic, ways of differentiating between nominal autonyms and de-autonyms, but there are none. Take the morphosyntactic behaviour of a nominal de-autonym. This behaviour clearly sets it apart from its ordinary homonym. Thus, why_6 behaves very differently from *why*$_4$:

— it has apparently undergone conversion from adverb to common noun.[6]

— that it is a bona fide noun is confirmed by its ability to take a plural marker -*s*, as in the collocation *the whys and wherefores*.

— it is accompanied by the sort of determiner that occurs with singular countable nouns.

But these remarkable features are shared with nominal autonyms. These too can take the plural marker and occur with a determiner. Here are more examples like why_5:

(7) His own papers were works of art on which he laboured with loving care for many hours, tinkering and polishing, weighing every word, deftly manipulating ***eithers*** and ***ors***, judiciously balancing [...]. (Lodge 1978: 18)

(8) [...] Mr. Beavis began to tell them about the etymology of the word "primrose." "*Primerole* in Middle English," he explained. "**The 'rose'** crept in by mistake." They stared at him uncomprehendingly. "A mere popular blunder," […]. (Huxley 1954: 66)

The autonyms in (7) and (8), are active (not lexicalised) because they are fully reflexive. Yet, their grammatical behaviour is the same as that of why_6. This means that, however considerable the grammatical distance between a de-autonymous noun and its corresponding homonym (*why*$_4$), grammar does not help to distinguish between nominal autonyms and de-autonyms.

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[6] Conversion is also known as 'zero-derivation', namely the "process whereby an item is adapted [...] to a new word class without the addition of an affix" (Quirk et al. 1985: 1558).

So far, we have only one test, a semantic criterion, for the differentiation between autonyms and their nominalised derivatives. But it is not even clear that this test is always clear-cut. Take, for instance, this other sense of the substantivised *why* in:

(9) She could supply the ready 'because' to many of the old philosopher's **'whys'**. (*OED*, XX, 307, col. 2)

The *OED* defines such an occurrence as meaning « A question beginning (or consisting of) the word 'why?' », a definition which it completes with « a question as to the reason of something; hence, a problem, an enigma » (ibid.). Just as with why_6, there is reflexivity or there is none, depending on which part of the definition is under the spotlight. Yet, it is hard to deny that why_9 'feels' more autonymous than why_6, an impression probably borne out by the use of quotation marks and by the fact that it is not inconceivable that the philosopher's question might have boiled down to nothing more than repeated utterances of the elliptical *why?*. In (6), it is impossible to make a similar assumption. One cannot supply reasons or motives simply by uttering *why*. This suggests that the boundary between a nominal de-autonym and an active autonym may have to remain ill-defined, or, alternatively, that there may be intermediate positions between unadulterated autonyms and minimally reflexive de-autonyms. Why_9 would fall somewhere between why_6 and why_5 because it admits of a minimally reflexive reading (« a question as to the reason of something ») <u>and</u> a maximally reflexive one (« repeated utterances of *why?* »).

The picture could probably be further refined by giving due consideration to such signals as quotation marks, but these never bring more than additional evidence. They are not of themselves decisive factors, as many active autonyms occur without any markers at all, be it quotation marks, italics or other indicators. In the meantime, I shall keep this notion of a continuum or gradient with several positions at the back of my mind and reassess it in section 4.4.

4.1.1.
Among Rey-Debove's examples of hypothetical de-autonymous lexicalisations, one finds an interesting subclass of nouns that may all somehow be assumed to originate in the object-position in the structure *dire + x*, with '*x*' standing for an autonym. They are nominalisations of expressions that can singlehandedly form complete utterances, and can therefore be assimilated to what Anscombre calls formulas (see 1985: 11-12 for details). This means that *dire* (or *say*) is to be taken in the sense of « to perform an illocutionary act » rather than simply « to utter vocal sounds ». It is all the more surprising, therefore, that Anscombre should not mention these as obvious cases of delocutivity in his 1985 paper. Among these nouns, there are such very robust examples as *un merci, un bravo, un mea culpa*.[7] The English equivalent of the first of these, *a thank-you*, is described by the *OED* as having originally been the phrase *Thank you!* uttered as a token of one's gratitude (as early as the 15th c.). The converted noun, first attested three centuries later, is defined as « An utterance of this phrase. Also, an unspoken expression of thanks » (XVII, 866, col. 3). Among the illustrations supplied, one finds *He looked even extremely gratified ... & bowed expressively*

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[7] Since de-autonymous nouns never occur in isolation, they will be quoted with a determiner.

a thank you and *We had not said nearly enough 'thank-yous'*. The first is situated at the less autonymous end of our hypothetical continuum, while the latter would be located around the intermediate position identified above. Indeed, it is equally possible for the denotatum of *'thank-yous'* to have been utterances of the very phrase, though without *-s* (close to a maximally reflexive reading), or to have been utterances with a like contextual meaning (e.g. *I'm so grateful that…*; *Thanks so much for…*). As regards *bravo*, it too receives a twofold definition, reflexive (« an exclamation of *bravo!* ») and non-reflexive (« a cheer ») (II, 498, col. 2). Intriguingly, one of the examples for *bravo* as an interjection (not the noun) actually includes a bona fide autonym: *His 'bravo' was decisive*, thus testifying to the hesitations of lexicographers when confronted with the autonyms of short utterances possessing illocutionary force (see 4.4). Finally, as regards *mea culpa*, the *OED* symptomatically files its uses as an interjection <u>and</u> a converted noun under a single entry (IX, 510, col. 2).

There are more nouns that presumably stem from the utterance of interjections (*a good-bye*, *a hello*) and, more generally, from utterances that are short sentence-fragments (*a yes*, *a no*, *a maybe*, *a how are you?*, *a whadyacallit*, *a whatchamacallit*, *a whatsit*, etc.; Rey-Debove 1975: 248 mentions *un au revoir*, *le qu'en-dira-t-on*). As was observed previously, examples of these seem to be strung along a continuum:

— minimally reflexive de-autonyms:

Herr Nordern waved a **goodbye** and walked along the familiar road to the S-Bahn station. (BNC A7A 2399)
He smiles a **hello**, but his eyes only touch mine briefly, a disquieting sign. (BNC CA9 468)
There are too many **maybes** in the City, too many dreams within Dreams. (BNC GVL 969)
To break up old associations and **what-do-you-callems** of that kind (Jespersen 1961: 31)

— slightly more reflexive de-autonym:

Maybe she wasn't such a nice girl. Maybe that old lady that Nash killed was somebody's loving granny. Maybe [...], and maybe [...].
Lee balled his fists. 'You got any other **maybes**?' (Ellroy 1987: 92)

Here, *maybes* stands for sentences beginning with *maybe* rather than just the repeated occurrences of the word itself. At the same time, it probably does not stand for mere expressions of doubt that would not require the presence of *maybe* in these utterances.

— either autonym or de-autonym (intermediate position):

Not even a **hello**, **how are you**, my, how well you're looking? (BNC JY8 3741)[8]
[…] hand-shakings and **"*How are you's*"** (George Eliot; quoted in Jespersen 1961: 31)
There was a chorus of nervous **'yesses'**, and one or two cheerful ones. (BNC HTH 3042)

In some cases, a location along the continuum can hardly be determined with any certainty. In the following example, it would take access to at least the co-text to make a decision:

If you are going to launch yourself publicly into this great conspiracy theory, you will have a very sceptical audience who will want more than a few **'maybes'**. (BNC FR1 763)

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[8] I have not highlighted *my, how well you're looking* because it is not recorded in dictionaries. It is a 'virtual lexicalisation' and therefore fits in 4.3.

The maximally reflexive reading is less likely than for the three examples in the intermediate position, but cannot, however, be entirely ruled out.

4.1.2.

This class of de-autonyms is close to 4.1.1, and could perhaps be included in it. But I have preferred to keep it separate for the following reason: it is much les obvious that the items found here derive from words or phrases whose utterance in isolation carries illocutionary force. Among them, one finds the nouns *why*, *when* and *where* in (6), or nominal forms of *but*, *and*, *if*, and more infrequently *or* and *because*. Whereas the utterance *bravo!* at the basis of *a bravo* suffices to perform an act of approving and encouraging (which I regard as a type of illocutionary act), the mere utterance of, say, *if* does not usually suffice to perform an act of supposing or hypothesising. Likewise, If I simply utter *or*, it is unlikely, though perhaps not impossible, that I have been able to perform an act of — of what? let us say 'suggesting an alternative'. Perhaps the utterance of an interrogative adverb is a better candidate for an 'illocutionary formula', but even here there are qualifications. Let us take *when*. Clearly I can utter *when?* to perform an act of requesting (temporal) information. But it is unclear that just <u>this</u> *when* is at the basis of the de-autonymous *the when*. For the latter nominal expression denotes not a request for but the providing of (temporal) information. All of this leads me to think that the de-autonymous nouns in this class are obtained from key segments of utterances rather than from entire utterances (and that they actually tend to denote longer stretches of discourse <u>including</u> the homonymous adverb or conjunction). Note also that the plural forms of these lexicalisations are often coordinated:

> If his parents had not separated, and if they had remained living in Rustenburg (two big **ifs**, not necessarily related), it is likely that we should never have heard of John Cranko. (BNC ASC 308)
>
> 'The Pole should be achieved around January 4 — although there are obviously **ifs and buts** before then.' (BNC CBC 2605)
>
> 'NO **BUTS**, **MAYBES**, **IFS** OR **BECAUSES**,' shouted the Headmaster. (BNC AMB 371)

The above examples must be contrasted with the genuine (fully reflexive) autonym in the following:

> The "and then" reading of both **ands** in the first sentence can be shown to be systematically "read in" to conjoined reports of events by a pragmatic principle […]. (BNC J2K 216)

4.1.3.

Another noteworthy class of de-autonyms consists of nouns converted from the personal pronouns of English. Almost all English personal pronouns have nominalised uses, many of which are recorded in dictionaries.[9] The following list provides an illustration for each of them:

> The **'I'** of the story // Man is not an independent unit; a self-centred, self-sustaining *I*. (*OED*, VII, 591, col. 1)
>
> Haunted and blinded by some shadow of his own little **Me**. (*OED*, IX, 510, col. 1)

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[9] This subclass is less alive in French, especially as regards the 3rd person.

Take this journal for example — I've no intention of letting anybody else read it, but I can only write it as if it's addressed to a **"you"**. I've no idea who "you" is. (Lodge 1996: 22)

That's for thy selfe to breed another **thee**. (*OED*, XVII, 885, col. 3)

Because the **Thou** […] is not sufficiently honoured, nourished, soft-bedded. (*OED*, XVII, 981, col. 3)

'It isn't a **he**, it's a **she**,' answered the girl. (BNC FRE 319)

Mr. Fitz Partington shall introduce him —It ain't a ***him***, it's a ***her***. (Jespersen 1961: 216)

'Oh dear,' said Mr Mullin. 'You see, I thought you were one of us.'

— 'Perhaps I've known too many **us-es** in my lifetime.' (Barnes 1999: 246)

In all of these examples, the highlighted words stand for a person or persons who could be designated by means of the corresponding pronoun. Thus, a him is a person you could refer to by means of the pronoun *him*. Unsurprisingly, there also exist other, more autonymous, occurrences. Rather more surprising is the fact that extreme cases of autonymous use should sometimes be recorded in dictionaries. This apparent oddity is examined in section 4.4.

4.1.4.

The final category of de-autonym I wish to bring up under 4.1 is the verbal counterpart of two of the preceding nominal classes. Corresponding to 4.1.1 (and, in rare instances, to 4.1.2), we have verbs converted from interjections or fragments of utterances, and whose meaning can be captured by the formula *to say: 'x'*, with *say* meaning « to perform an illocutionary act » and with '*x*' standing for the autonymous direct object of such an utterance. This subclass includes quite a few of the delocutives originally discussed by Benveniste (the others are found under 4.2), notably his English examples: *to hail*, *to encore*, *to okay*, *to yes* and *to welcome* (1966: 281-82). One example:

He was **bravoed** and applauded. (*OED*, II, 498, col. 2)[10]

Corresponding to 4.1.3, we have transitive verbs that conform to the pattern *to call s.o. or sth 'x'*, i.e. 'citative' verbs in Anscombre's terminology. Included are verbs derived from the utterance of personal pronouns – the *OED* has entries notably for *to thee*, *to thou* (usually in the combination *to thee and thou*), *to you* – but also from the utterance of terms of address, like), *to darling* or *to dear*. Here are some illustrations:

I started **yessing** them the next day and it began beautifully. (Ellison 1965: 413)

In "Stars" there is a line "O'er the tumultuous snow"; while in my very first poem "My Butterfly," I was even guilty of **"theeing" and "thouing,"** a crime I have not committed since. (Mertins 1966: 197)

Dear Sir: Re Canon Pulford's timely letter concerning **'youing'** God. Having been brought up to pray Biblically, I look upon the modern arbitrary trend in English-speaking countries with great disdain. (www.evangelica.de/Letters_to_the_Editor/On_Youing_God.htm)[11].

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[10] More such verbs found in dictionaries: *to but* (archaic), *to damn* (in the sense «to curse, swear at (using the word 'damn') », IV, 229, col. 1), *to don't* (as in *Don't be always don'ting*, IV, 954, col. 2), *to goodnight*, *to good-morrow*, *to hello*, *to hurrah* (*hurray*), *to if* (restricted to the form *iffing*), *to nay*, *to no*, *to no-ball* (in cricket, « to condemn as a no-ball », X, 449, col. 1; i.e., of an umpire, to exclaim *no ball!*), *to yes-sir* (which has arguably a citative dimension too). The verb *to what-the-hell* probably belongs here too, though it is less clear what illocutionary act is performed by uttering *What the hell!*.

4.2. Autonyms as morphemes of larger lexical items

The phenomenon to be described in this section does not essentially differ from that reviewed under 4.1. However, the instances that fall under 4.2 are further removed from autonyms in the sense that they have been embedded within larger lexemes. As a result, in contrast to what was repeatedly observed in 4.1.1 and 4.1.2, the resulting words cannot be confused with active, one-off autonyms. Subclass 4.2 does not therefore raise the question of the gradient between maximally reflexive autonymy and autonym-based lexicalisation.

Most of Benveniste's initial examples belong here because they are taken from Latin and French, i.e. languages whose verbal morphology is much richer than English. All the same, as we saw above, he does mention several English delocutive verbs, all of which, being cases of conversion, fall under 4.1.4. The difference between 4.1.4 and 4.2, i.e. between the respective products of conversion and affixation, is not theoretically important. The fact that English has no marker for the infinitive is a mere historical contingency.

We have seen how Benveniste proposed to account for Latin *salutare*. I suggested the same account above for *to yes* or *to bravo*. Benveniste's other examples in Latin, and analogous ones in French, such as *remercier* and *saluer*,[12] are of the same ilk: in all of these, the utterance of a noun (i.e. the autonymous object of a verb of saying), has become the root of a verb whose meaning is « to say: *x* ». As Lyons (1977: 739ff) and Anscombre (1985: 12ff) remark, Benveniste failed to distinguish between several senses of the verb *to say*. That is why he also records the 'citative' *tutoyer* and *vouvoyer* as delocutives even though these are not speech-act verbs.[13]. However, the meaning of both speech-act and citative verbs includes an autonym, and this is what matters for the present purposes. It is this liberal requirement that also allows me to record a verb like French *zézayer*, which means « to pronounce /z´/ instead of /Z´/, to lisp », even though this verb can be labelled neither as citative or delocutive.

Next to verbs, case 4.2 also covers other lexical categories. Let us start with nouns. Rey-Debove (1975) mentions *j'menfoutiste* (« the person who says *j'm'en fous* ») and *béni-oui-oui*, a noun meaning « the one who always says *oui oui* ». Similar examples can be found in English too: Rey-Debove (1978: 162) suggests that *teenager* contains the autonymous morpheme *teen*, as the word denotes adolescents whose age is designated by a word that ends in *–teen*.[14] Relying on entries found in the *OED* and *WEB3rd*, one can also mention the following nouns: *a yes-man* (*yes-girl*, *yes-woman*), *a nay-sayer*, *a hello girl* (« female telephone operator »), *an if-clause*, *a that-clause* (and many such grammatical labels).

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[11] There is an astonishing wealth of similar verbs recorded in dictionaries, especially the *OED*: *to dear sir* and *dear cousin*, *to he* (as in *I must* he *and him* him *now, for he has lost his dignity with me*, VII, 35, col. 2), *to honey* (given as obsolete by *OED* but found through the Google search engine), *to lady*, *to mama*, *to Mister*, *to sir*. More such verbs are mentioned in relation to virtual lexicalisations under 4.3 below.

[12] Other alleged examples in French are *bisser* (« to encore »), *sacrer* (in the old-fashioned sense of « to swear ») and *pester* (« to exclaim *peste!* »). There can be English verbs in 4.2 too. The one example I have in mind is *to nay-say*, i.e. an example of compounding.

[13] Not, that is to say, in their ordinary use. But let us look at the related English verb *to thou* (from 4.1.4). There is no way of saying *I Thou thee that ...* For all that, it is not inconceivable to think of *I (hereby) thou thee, thou traitor* as a declarative speech act instituting a reality (in the present case, a relationship). I owe this insight to Jean-Pierre van Noppen.

[14] As a loan-word in French, however, *teenager* has nothing to do with autonymy; it is a borrowing in the same way as *basket-ball*, *skater* or *software*.

Next to verbs and nouns, Ducrot & Schaeffer (1995: 609-11) discuss the old-fashioned delocutive French adverb *diablement*. This is not a plain *–ment* adverb. It is not derived from an adjective (unlike *diaboliquement*) and is not an adverb of manner, with a meaning like « in a devilish way » – its usual role consists in intensifying adjectives. *Diablement* can be argued to occur in situations in which using the oath *Diable!* would be suitable. So, for instance, *Elle est diablement difficile* can be uttered in a context in which the utterance of the interjection is also appropriate: the sentence could be paraphrased as *She's behaving so fastidiously you feel like letting out a 'Diable!'*. The same analysis should apply to a batch of more modern adverbs of similar meaning, notably *vachement* (from *La vache!*) and *foutrement* (from *Foutre!*). [15] The question therefore arises whether the adjective/adverb *fucking* could be derived from the uttering of the interjection *Fuck!*. On this assumption the meaning of *fucking* would be paraphrased as « to such a degree that it makes you want to let out a *Fuck!* ». Note that this hypothesis requires further evaluation: semantically similar adverbs, e.g. *bloody*, *frigging*, *blinking*, do not lend themselves to this sort of analysis. The intensifiers *goddam(ned)* and *damned*, however, are more likely candidates. And there is clearly a de-autonymous account available for the euphemistic *effing*.

4.3. Virtual lexicalisations derived from autonyms

This category does not result from a mechanism different from those brought to light under 4.1 and 4.2. It is distinguished simply by the fact that its members are momentary creations that have not been able to settle in the lexicon (yet): they are so-called 'nonce words'. The boundaries of this category necessarily fluctuate, and the examples I have chosen in order to illustrate it may be found to be partly arbitrary. This is a direct consequence of the mismatch between an ever-changing lexical component of language and the frozen a posteriori picture supplied by dictionaries.

The first recorded examples of this class that I am aware of can be found in Jespersen (1961; originally 1913). Jespersen, however, included a lot of different phenomena under what he called 'quotation-nouns' or 'quotation-substantives' (1961: 213-15). It is left to the reader to differentiate between genuine autonyms (as in *the second* **ruin** *might easily be misread as* **run**), likely lexicalised autonyms (as in *the pupils had said their* **"Good-nights"**, *I don't care* **a damn** *(or* **a hang***)*), sequences that are less clearly related to de-autonymous derivations (as in *it's a* **toss-up**; *it's* **dog eat dog** *in our business*), and, finally, what I am tempted to regard as temporary lexicalisations of autonyms. Here are illustrations of the latter: if no precise source is mentioned, they are borrowed from Jespersen (1961: 31):

— Similar to 4.1.1:

Proud of his **"Hear hims!"** (Byron)

One **"I'm sorry for you!"** weighs more than ten **"I told you so's!"** (newspaper)

He timed his nods and yesses and **'Indeeds!'** on an entirely mathematical basis, interspersing them with a sort of pucker-cum-squint that could be mild disagreement or the preface to some statement of his own. (BNC ASS 1507)

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[15] See Fradin (2003) for a comprehensive discussion of this set of adverbs and the implications their existence holds for the structure of the lexicon and for word formation rules.

the expense of ten thousand **said I's**, and **said he's**, and **he told me's**, and **I told him's**, and the like (Defoe)

"*I am afraid*." "I don't want any **'I'm afraids'**." (Arnold Bennett)

The **"Shall-Nots"** [sic] of the Bible.

[These reports'] indelible conclusions and unshakeable certainties have become the New Determinism, laying down the law with its secular **Thou Shalts**. (*The Independent, Thursday Review*, 15/03/2001: 5)

— Similar to 4.1.4 or 4.2:

I don't know what we talked about; I smiled; the same old smile; I 'yes'd' and 'no'd' and **'really'd'**, till I thought he must discover that I was listening to the band. (*OED*, XX, 733, col. 2)

"I'll **exquisite day** *you*, buddy, if you don't get down off that bag this minute. And I mean it," Mr. McArdle said. […] (Salinger 1968: 158)

[the addressee, a young kid, is pretending he has just sailed past the *Queen Mary*] "I'll **Queen Mary** you, buddy, if you don't get off that bag this minute," his father said. (Salinger 1968: 161)

Their two graces do so dear-cousin and **royal-cousin** him. (*OED*, IV, 301, col. 2)[16]

[...] my mate Chris was genuinely impressed when Dale Winton said "hello darling" and kissed me, and I didn't bother to explain that dear old Dale kisses and **hello-darlings** almost everyone. (*The Independent, Thursday Review*, 15/03/2001: 4)

The last two examples illustrate the very productive process that generates citative verbs: any proper name or nickname is capable of being turned into a temporary citative verb, especially in the context *Don't x me*, with '*x*' standing in for *Jimmy, Miss Molly*, and so on.[17] As usual, the inclusion of some delocutives in dictionaries (e.g. *to baby, to sweetheart, to sonny*) but not others is apparently no more than a matter of chance.

There is a particular variety of hyphenated strings that deserve a special mention in this section. These are especially common in certain kinds of journalistic and novelistic writing:

(10) Barry gives a **what-can-you-do-with-this-guy** shrug and walks out. (Hornby 1995: 61)[18]

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[16] Note, regarding this and the previous example, the choice made in the *OED* to record the verbs *to yes, to no, to dear-cousin*, but not the structurally identical *to really* and *to royal-cousin*. Such a choice is arbitrary, but inevitable too. The same remark applies to an earlier illustration of *to he* in the *OED*. The concurrent *to him* receives no entry. It is intriguing to note that quite a few of the examples under 4.1.4 are presented in the *OED* as 'nonce uses' or 'nonce words: clearly, a central difficulty for lexicographers is to determine what is and what is not stabilised in the lexicon.

[17] I used the Google search engine on the Internet: almost every search term I entered turned up trumps. The following are possible values for *x* in the formula *don't x me!*: *babe, babs, dad, daddy, dude, father, Jim, John, Liz, man, Milady, m'Lady, mommy, Mrs, mummy, my love, pal, sir, son, Will, Your Highness, Your Honor* (but not *Your Honour*). In the crosslinguistic survey mentioned earlier, Plank remarks that "nouns of address, and especially of abusive address" are among "the most common bases for delocutive verbs", a claim that is supported by the Google findings.

[18] The novelist Nick Hornby is an inexhaustible source for such examples (all from the same novel): *a **let's-be-grown-up-about-life's-imperfectibility** sort of conversation; an irritating **well-fancy-that** smile; this irritating **oh-Rob-I-need-time** stuff; the **get-away-that's-my-favourite-Hitchcock-film-too** part of sex; a whiny, **how-come-you've-got-yourself-into-this-mess** speech; **can't-be-bothered-to-have-it-cut** long dark hair*.

(11) But now suppose I shift into the fictional, play acting **let's-pretend** mode of discourse. (Searle 1969: 78)

(12) Hillary went all **don't-you-talk-to-your-father-like-that-ish** and then got back to her article. (Fry 2001: 5)

(13) [*Casino* is] the nearest that recent US cinema has come to producing a **"how-we-live-today"** statement of the Zola school. (*New Statesman*, 20/12/99: 107)

All of these examples (those in the footnote too) contain an utterance, often a complete sentence, that has been hyphenated and is used attributively to modify a noun. In my random corpus, only one example, the third one quoted above, displays a different grammatical behaviour (predicative use, in which case the addition of an adjectival suffix was deemed suitable). The choice of the modified head does not seem to be subject to any severe constraints, as this noun can be countable or uncountable, and can denote very different kinds of entities, from utterances to facial expressions to movements of the body to such concrete things as hair: all it takes if for the denoted entity to be regarded as capable of <u>signalling</u> something. As regards the hyphenated strings, they often provide information on the content (or meaning, or implications) of the object denoted by the headnoun: in (10), the shrug means or implies the same as an utterance of *what can you do with this guy?* In (12), Hillary's facial expression — which is not as such mentioned, but is none the less implied — means the same as an utterance of *don't you talk to your father like that*. (Most examples in the footnote are similar in kind). Although slightly different, (11) is also to be understood in terms of a situation in which the hyphenated string would have been uttered: the mode of discourse alluded to is that which would be introduced by, or result from, an utterance of *Let's pretend!*. As for (13), this example is deviant in the sense that the hyphenated string does not match a complete utterance.[19] But it is probable that hearers who seek to interpret the hyphenated string will need to reconstruct a whole utterance, *this-is-how-we-live-today,* and understand it as summarising the purpose of the film: *Casino* is meant to be a realistic depiction of contemporary life in the U.S. It is as if *Casino* 'said about itself', "This is how we live today".

To close this subsection, let me point out that some de-autonymous hyphenated strings are so standard as to be recorded in dictionaries and therefore rightfully belong in 4.1 or 4.2. Such, for instance, are the nouns *come-all-ye/you* (i.e. ballads beginning with that invitation), *a take-heed* (when denoting a warning), *a come-hither* (also used attributively before *look*, etc.); or the adjectives *take-it-or-leave-it* (e.g. *a take-it-or-leave-it attitude*), *devil-may-care* (cf *OED*, IV, 573, col. 1; Onions 1966: 262) and its less common slang synonym *what-the-hell* (as in *In cooking you've got to have a what-the-hell attitude*; *OED*, XX, 194, col. 3). *Devil-may-care* has provided a stem for further derivatives: *devil-may-careness*, *-ish*, *-ishness*, and *-ism*. It is clear that, from a diachronic point of view, these are not de-autonyms; they merely use a de-autonym as their stem. However, the test I have used for de-autonymous derivation produces the opposite answer, since it is possible to define the content of *devil-may-careness*, for instance, as « the attitude of someone reckless who, in the face of danger,

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[19] Another example is Hornby's second de-autonym in *It's not an* **ooh-I-shouldn't-really-but-I-quite-fancy-a-pint** *sort of weakness; it's an* **inability-to-say-no** *sort of weakness* (1995: 179). To conform to the general pattern, the second highlighted string should have been *I-can't-say-no*.

always seems to be exclaiming *The devil-may-care! »*: the mere presence of the autonym in the definition turns the lexeme into a synchronic de-autonym.[20]

While we are considering lexicalised hyphenated strings, perhaps the adjective *holier-than-thou* results from de-autonymisation as well, but none of the dictionaries consulted (even major etymological dictionaries like Klein 1966-67 and Onions 1966) is of any assistance on this score. One also finds, in some English-French dictionaries, the phrases *I-couldn't-care-less* and *I-don't-give-a-damn*, which, when applied to attitudes, are synonyms of the French adjectives *je-m'en-fichiste* and *je-m'en-foutiste*.

Perhaps such lexemes as *also-ran*, *free-for-all*, *has-been*, *haves and have-nots*, *might-have-been* (cf *Everlasting consideration of might-have-beens* (Kipling; cited by Jespersen 1961: 31)), *must-have*, *wannabe*, etc. can also be regarded as originating in autonyms. An also-ran is a competitor or a horse, etc. that is ranked under the heading *also ran*, or of whom/which it can be said that *it/he/she also ran*. A free-for-all is an argument or fight (or any situation in which there is something to win) in which everybody joins, and which is not subject to particular rules; i.e. a situation which can be described or initiated by an utterance of *this is free for all*. A has-been is a person who used to but no longer is successful, skilled, etc., i.e. someone of whom it might be said that he or she *has been great*, etc. At all events, these reconstructions are not altogether convincing, and doubt may linger regarding the de-autonymous nature of the lexemes under consideration. In this respect, clearly, a diachronic confirmation or invalidation would prove invaluable.

4.4. Genuine autonyms in the lexicon?

4.4.1. Names of letters

In 1978, Rey-Debove suggested that there was one class of words in the lexicon that could perhaps lay claim to the dual status of autonym <u>and</u> lexeme: the names of letters, in those languages that have adopted an alphabetical system of writing.[21] They are like autonyms insofar as they (or some of them) have not been deprived of the motivation that results from a high degree of reflexivity. But here a distinction may have to be made between the written and spoken form of names of letters. There is no doubt that if I want to <u>write something</u> about a given letter I can use a name of that letter that is formally the same as the letter. Thus, "*b*" is the name of the letter *b* that occurs in *banana*. Likewise with all other letters in English. Now let us assume that I intend to write something about a Greek letter, say α. In that case, I can use two names, either the purely iconic "α" or the more remote *alpha*. Can the latter still be said to be reflexive? No, the form (the 'signifier' of the name is different from that of its denotatum, in much the same way as the form *table* is different from the shape of a table). Now, what happens when I wish to <u>speak</u> about a letter, as will often occur? To talk about *o*, I will utter [´U]; to talk about *b*, I will utter [biˇ]. To talk about α, I will say [»Qlf´]. What does it take for these uses to be regarded as reflexive? In other words, what does it take for

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[20] Similar comments hold good for other derivations from de-autonyms, such as *nay-saying*, *yes-sirring*, *don't-carism*.

[21] A quick warning: it is important not to confuse these with names of sounds. The latter are not recorded in dictionaries — there are no entries for *a* z or *an* ´ — i.e. they are not usually deemed to be part of a language's lexicon. This injustice is a matter of fact.

the name to entertain an iconic relationship with its referent? I am not sure I can offer a plausible answer to this question. Let me just point out that autonyms are often used in one medium to mention an occurrence or type in the other medium. Such is for instance the case with the first three examples in this paper. Let me repeat (2):

(2) She shouted, **"Why don't you let me go?"**.

The (written) direct speech report refers to a previous (spoken) utterance by another speaker. This does not prevent it from being regarded as an autonym, even though the iconic relation between the written form and the spoken form [waɪ»dˈʊntjʊ«letmiˌ»gˈʊ] is not self-evident (which does not mean non-existent). In a case like this, iconicity seems to be dependent on the standard correspondence rules between speech and writing. Note that if the same criterion is adopted for names of letters, then their spoken occurrences are iconically related to their written forms, even [»ɒlfˈ] for *a*, or ([eɪtʃ]) for *h*, which may appear counter-intuitive until one remembers that *Worcester* can stand iconically for [»wʊstˈ] or vice-versa.

I cannot afford to look any further into this tricky issue here, so that the only conclusion that can safely be drawn is that names of letters are 'fairly' reflexive, much more so, in any case, than ordinary words, including basic metalinguistic words (henceforth, *meta-words*).

Rey-Debove also argues that names of letters closely resemble meta-words inasmuch as they are coded names of linguistic units. Their grammatical behaviour also tends to conform to that of meta-words like *preposition* or *adverb*: they often occur as part of an NP with a determiner, as in *The word consensus[...] is spelt with an s because it is derived in the same way as consent* [...] (BNC FRA 912); they may be free of any quoting device; finally, in French, elision often occurs in front of a name of letter whose pronunciation begins with a vowel sound: *l'e muet*, something which is more typical of meta-words than of autonyms.

However, Rey-Debove herself acknowledges that names of letters sometimes behave grammatically like autonyms, rather than plain metalinguistic nouns: examples abound, notably in reference guides on language and in students' grammars. Fluctuations can be illustrated by the next trio of examples:

(14) The doubling of *c* is *k*: *picnicked*, *panicky*, etc. (Dekeyser et al. 1999: 396)

(15) The so-called 'silent' *e* of verbs such as *like*, *live*, *name*, *size*, etc. is often retained before the suffix *–able* […]. (ibid.: 397)

(16) In bases ending in *–ie*, the *ie* is replaced by *y* before the *–ing* inflection. (Quirk & Greenbaum 1980: 30)

In (14), the names of letters carry the same typographical marking as the NP-autonyms that follow (italics), while in (15) the presence of a determiner + modifier brings the name of letter closer to a metalinguistic noun (even though it occurs in italics just like the NP-autonyms of the sentence). In (16), we have the paradoxical situation in which a digraph *ie* is preceded by a determiner while the actual name *y* is not, as if the former were less autonymous than the latter.

All in all, names of letters prove to be a hybrid category indeed. In spite of that, and even though Rey-Debove will later write that names of letters are not autonyms (1997: 358, 366), I

believe Rey-Debove's initial intuition to have been well-founded. There is ultimately an important difference between the name of a letter and the nominalisations under 4.1.1 through 4.1.3. Although they share many of the characteristics of meta-words, names of letters retain quite a high degree of reflexivity at any time, which means that they are always located near the autonymous pole of our continuum. In contrast, *hello*, *why* or *he* may occur with hardly any trace of reflexivity. This alone points to the possibility of autonyms existing in a language's lexicon.

4.4.2. Entries for autonyms in the *OED*

Let us now come to an even more intriguing issue. I have pointed out earlier several instances in which lexicographers tended to waver when confronted with autonyms. Here as elsewhere, the *OED* exhibits a marked penchant for autonymy. Perhaps the most striking examples are that of *but* and *if*. Under 4.1.2, we dealt with a nominalised *but* whose meaning was something like « an expression of condition or doubt ». Here is the *OED's* definition for the noun *but*: « The conjunction *but* (sense 25), used as a name for itself; *hence* a verbal objection presented » (II, 705, col. 1; emphasis mine). The noun *if* is treated likewise: « The conditional conjunction […] used as a name for itself; hence, a condition, a supposition » (VII, 635, col. 2; ditto).

When a headword in a dictionary is defined as denoting a word (here a conjunction and a name — I am focusing strictly on the underlined segments), this means that we are dealing with a metalinguistic lexeme. When, in addition, this headword is defined as denoting a name for itself, this means that we are dealing with a headword that stands for an autonym. In other words, some dictionaries devote entries to autonyms!

Next to the nouns *but* and *if* (in the relevant sense), the *OED* records other autonyms. For some of these at least, I assume my claim to be uncontroversial. We saw in 4.1.3 that the *OED* mentioned de-autonymous senses of substantivised personal pronouns, on the pattern of « the person (or persons) that can be referred to or addressed by the pronoun in question ». But, curiously perhaps, it supplies some of these nominalisations with an additional autonymous sense. Thus, for instance, the noun *thou* has a second sense, « the word itself » (XVII, 981, col. 3). In other words, we have a word that 'denotes itself', namely, on this crude theory, an autonym. The same applies to the definitions for *thee*, *us*, *you*, and even *I*, one of whose nominal senses is « the pronoun regarded as a word » (VII, 591, col. 1). Curiously, and rather inconsequently, no such senses are recorded for *he*, *her*, *him*, *she* or *we*.

There is another group of (senses of) lexemes that can perhaps be regarded as autonyms in the dictionary. In 4.1.1, I discussed a series of alleged de-autonymous nouns, most of which could occur as direct object of the verb *to say* in its illocutionary sense. We also saw that, in the *OED*, many of these nouns receive a hybrid definition, partly reflexive, then partly not. I already gave the example of *thank-you* and *bravo*; here is the definition of the substantivised *good-bye*: « a saying 'good-bye'; a parting greeting » (VI, 675, col. 3), and of *nay*: « an utterance of the word 'nay'; a negative reply or vote (*U.S.*); a denial, refusal, or prohibition »

(X, 262, col. 2). Similar definitions are supplied for the nouns *damn*, *no*, *yes*, *yes-sir*, and probably several others as well.[22]

These definitions differ from the previous batch we examined in one important respect. The generic or superordinate term that heads the definition does not denote a unit of the lexicon, but an instantiation thereof (*a saying, utterance, exclamation*).[23] This, though, does not prevent these entries from being entries for autonymous senses. An autonym, as we have repeatedly been able to observe, can denote a variety of objects, notably other tokens of the same type. In the present case, we are dealing with autonyms of interjections (or one-word sentences), namely linguistic objects that can hardly be viewed as anything else than products of utterances. This ties in with the fact that these autonyms are to be understood as the direct objects of illocutionary *to say*, which can only be complemented by words designating tokens (i.e. sequences in use).

4.4.3. Interpreting the data

What I have just been able to establish is the presence of unadulterated autonyms in the dictionary. Yet, as is well-known, the dictionary is only an imperfect reflection of the lexicon. Hence the question: what do these findings tell us about the penetration of autonymy into the lexicon?

We must preserve our earlier distinction between names of letters and the rest. The former raise no issues, in this sense at least that their occurrence in dictionaries can safely be assumed to be a direct reflection of their presence in the lexicon. The inclusion of the other autonyms is more debatable. I can see two ways of treating the data concerning this second category in the *OED*. First, its (erratic) inclusion could be put down to the lexicographers' whims and waywardness. After all, the 1989 *OED* reproduces entries the first of which were published as early as 1884, a time when lexicographical systematicity was not high on the agenda. It is interesting to make a comparison with more recent undertakings like *Webster's 3rd*, whose preface announces that it is "a completely new work, redesigned, restyled, and reset. Every line of it is new" (1981, vol. 1: 4a). Here, none of the autonyms listed above is granted an entry, with the sole exception of *damn*, defined as « the utterance of the word *damn* as a curse ». Since entries in *WEB3rd* exhibit a much more systematic make-up, the dictionary can be deemed to offer a more reliable picture of English vocabulary. If we therefore take our bearings from *WEB3rd*, we will conclude that genuine autonyms are not part of a language's lexicon (except perhaps for the hybrid names of letters ... and the name of the curse *damn!*).[24]

All the same, a doubt still lingers. Though the compilers of the *OED* clearly had their quirks, these may nevertheless have been rooted in a commendable intuition. The body of

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[22] Substantivised *hello* receives no definition (!) in the *OED* but the examples illustrating the entry indicate that it is to be treated likewise, as they include both active autonyms and de-autonymous nouns.

[23] Rather unexpectedly, the substantivised *hurrah* is defined thus in the *OED:* « a <u>name</u> for this shout » (VII, 505, col. 2), rather than as « an utterance of *hurrah* ».

[24] Note that COD_8, which also claims to be a "completely redesigned edition" (1990: vii), none the less records the following autonyms: '*bravo*', '*goodbye*', '*hello*', '*nay*', '*no*', '*yes*'. COD_{10}, however, which is presented as an even more innovative edition, has almost blotted out any vestiges of autonymy, except for *a goodbye*, defined as « an instance of saying 'goodbye'; a parting » (1999: 611). Perhaps this sole remnant is enough to testify to the difficulty inherent in any attempt to do away completely with entries for autonyms in the dictionary.

data which a lexicographer sifts through will inevitably include unadulterated autonyms just as well as de-autonymous lexemes like *an if* (« a supposition ») and *a but* (« an objection »). However, as we have seen, it is at times not clear whether one is dealing with a genuine autonym or with its neutralised derivative. Hence the idea of the continuum that was tentatively illustrated under 4.1.1. A lexicographer may, with some reason, hold the view that it is the same item (i.e. instantiations of the same expression) that occurs at either end of the continuum. For example, s/he may assume that one and the same lexeme *yes* is tokened in both the following sentences: *There was a chorus of nervous 'yesses'* and *Well, he nodded, but I'm not sure that meant a yes*. If that is agreed, then it becomes necessary to define the item under consideration in such a way as to cover its uses anywhere along the continuum. Hence such 'hybrid' definitions as are offered for *thank-you, bravo, but* and *if* (all of which are quoted earlier under 4.1). Though hybrid, these definitions are consistent with the examples selected as relevant by the *OED*'s compilers, and which, in the case of hypothetical de-autonymous lexemes, often include authentic autonyms (cf the remarks about *bravo* and *mea culpa* at the close of the 1st § under 4.1.1).

5. Conclusion

In this paper, I have sought to survey the various ways in which autonyms can enrich the lexicon. This had remained a neglected area of lexicography, an unwarranted situation, especially when one realises that there are considerable numbers of words in the lexicon that are probable de-autonyms. I have distinguished four main classes of de-autonyms, on the basis of what the derivation 'did' to the initial autonym: there are de-autonyms, either nouns or verbs, whose citation-form is the same as the initial autonym; there are de-autonyms obtained through affixation from an autonymous stem; there are de-autonyms (of various sorts) that are no more than temporary or virtual lexicalisations; finally, there are probably even autonyms plain and simple (or autonymous senses of lexemes) that find a permanent abode in the lexicon. Most items under the first three classes (4.1 to 4.3) are meta-words in the strict sense, i.e. words that denote linguistic objects or properties but are not normally highly reflexive. It would be useful in future to further refine our understanding of these, for instance by exploiting such 'meaning-formulas' as *to say 'x'* or *to call s.o./sth 'x'* or *a y which includes or consists of 'x'*, where '*x*' is a variable ranging over (initial) autonyms, while *y* stands for names of speech acts. As for the fourth class, it brings together those cases where a de-autonym may still (in at least some of its senses) be an autonym. The items that fall into this category are also meta-words (indeed many belong to 4.1.1 and 4.1.2), but meta-words some of whose uses are not clearly distinguishable from genuine autonyms. What sort of items are found here?

a) a set of names of <u>specific illocutionary acts</u>: *a thank-you, a bravo, a goodbye, a hello, a how-are-you, a damn*.

b) a set of names for <u>indeterminate assertions</u>: *a yes, a no, an aye, a nay, a maybe*.

c) a set of nouns denoting <u>mental or discourse categories</u> (e.g. condition, temporal information, reason, concession): *the why, an if, a because*.

The first two sets comprise items that are <u>delocutive</u> nouns, as they denote illocutionary acts and are derived from words or phrases whose utterance carries illocutionary force. However,

not all delocutives in 4.1.1 belong here. Words like *whadyacallit* never stand on the borderline between autonymy and non-autonymy. Most of the time, these words, though they are derived from the accomplishment of a speech act (a seeming request for information), have become neutral words capable of designating any sort of entity (object, living being, emotion, etc.): they are not meta-words (or are only minimally metalinguistic). As for the third set in the grey area, which corresponds to 4.1.2, it requires some further comments. Its members are not as highly metalinguistic as those of the first two sets. Let us begin with *a/the why* (*where, when, how*): the nouns denotes either a question as to the reason or cause (place, time, manner) of something or an answer to that question. It is only in the former sense that these items can be borderline cases. When *the why*[25] refers to an answer, it cannot be taken for an autonym (probably because *why* on its own cannot constitute a full answer to a question). *An if*, though it may at times be regarded as barely metalinguistic (meaning = « a condition », « a specific mental act: supposition »), usually refers to the <u>assertion</u> of a condition or a supposition. The same applies, mutatis mutandis, to the nominalised *but*, *because*, *and*, *or*. Yet, among these items, only those that can occur as complete utterances seem to have possible borderline realisations between autonymy and meta-word. This suggests that *and* and *or* do not lend themselves to the sort of indeterminacy that may affect the nouns *why* (etc.), *if*, *but*, *because*. An *and* <u>either</u> denotes an expression of condition or doubt <u>or</u> the word *and*, but in no sentential context are both possibilities present (as a look at the example in *OED*, I, 450, col. 1-2, confirms). Likewise with *or*.

All in all, the items found in the overlapping area between strict autonyms and strict meta-words belong to classes 4.1.1 and 4.1.2. To this group can be added the first category examined under 4.4, i.e. names of letters, with the interesting difference that these are <u>inherently</u> hybrid, whereas only some tokens of the previous batch occupy an intermediate position on the continuum. And finally the oddity that is constituted by those substantivised pronouns listed under 4.1.3, for some of which the *OED* records an autonymous sense. I have no sensible explanation for the latter decision, except perhaps the fact that frequent nominalisations may be conducive to confusion between word and object (?).

Let me finally point out the following interesting consequence of my study: the present findings are grist to the mill of those who feel that the 'metalexicon' forms a more linguistically relevant sublexicon than that of botany or music. Grammatically speaking, meta-words are nothing special. Moreover, at first sight, the semantic component [+ LANGUAGE] at the heart of the set of meta-words is not in itself more interesting than, say, [+ PLANT] (for the sublexicon of botany) or [+ MUSIC] (for that of music). However, if my findings are correct, we have very good motives for exploring the metalexicon: there is a connection between the dull world of meta-words and the unquestionably fascinating world of autonyms: some items seem to have one foot in each, so to say.

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[25] In this sense, it usually occurs with the definite article.

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