

# Re: Plausibility Check

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*Source:* <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.lang/2006-08/msg00191.html>

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- *From:* "Peter T. Daniels" <[grammatim@xxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:grammatim@xxxxxxxxxxxx)>
  - *Date:* 31 Jul 2006 04:24:13 -0700
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Franz Gnaedinger wrote:

Peter T. Daniels wrote:

That is not a quote; that is your recollection of what you (think you) heard (and it is translated as well, but the possibility of distortion in translation is here minimal).

How many times must I repeat myself? I is a quote, a direct quote from a brief radio program, 11:40 – 11:45 on DRS 1, and I remember it very accurately, since it was one of those fine confirmations of an insight of mine from 1974/75, when I not only defined language but stated a correlation between human made things and words. Which is the reason why I picked up that sentence, and why I remember it accurately.

See your own refutation of the claim below.

That is not a "source." A source would be the date of the broadcast, and preferably it would identify the authority for the statement.

It is my source, I got that sentence from that radio program, and if you don't believe me you can ask them, as I proposed twice. Why don't you do that instead of wasting my precious time?

See Richard's response.

I gave you the link to the website, you

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can contact the editors of the Mailbox, I even wrote a draft of a letter to them. Can you ask for more?

Petrarch wasn't a Renaissance man?

Eras are'nt so clear-cut.

The beginning of the Renaissance is very clearly dated to the activities of Petrarch.

If that number were remotely accurate, as many words would have had to be lost from English as you claim were added by "information technology" alone. The counts of words in unabridged dictionaries include all the terms used in all the sciences and average ca. 500,000 today.

It is not my claim, it's what I quote from that radio program: English in the time of Shakespeare had 200,000 words, information technology alone created 200,000 new words.

This is incredible.

Plenty of words are missing in my Webster's Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language. Tell me of an unabridged dictionary, and I shall mention words missing therein.

Merriam-Webster's Third International Dictionary (unabridged), 1961

(do not list words that entered the language after 1961, of course, or that went out of use earlier than the period it covers)

Yet you are unable to identify them or state those qualifications.

Linguists from Swiss universities. No qualification?

This is the first time you have mentioned "linguists from Swiss universities." Unfortunately the only linguists from Swiss universities I can offhand think of are Ferdinand de Saussure and Roman Jakobson (who stopped off in Geneva for a short time during his refugee

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wanderings). But they are neither living nor lexicographers.

A very big assumption when it comes to questions of language.

Far out to assume that linguists from universities rely on publications?

Linguists aren't lexicographers.

Why are you afraid to consult the OED database?

I told you before that we have the OED in print, the online version offered by the university library of Zurich is the same you find online, with no word counting function, but offering

Funny, contributors to aue are always using its database functions to provide evidence of this and that.

new words such as bouncebackability. And, besides, not all the English words in Shakespeare's time made it into the OED, words come and go with crafts, trades, professions.

Here's your refutation of the claim of an immense 16th-century English vocabulary — you now claim that it is impossible to know how many words were in use. Yet you manage to claim that there were many more words in use then than now, even though we have far more varieties of science and technology now than they did then.

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