

Re: Plausibility Check

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- *From:* Patric Mueller <bhaak@xxxxxxxxxxxx>
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"Franz Gnaedinger" <frgn@xxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

Peter T. Daniels wrote:

Swiss radio broadcasts in Swiss dialect? That's surprising. What are the words that are much less different than "zwanzig tausend" and "zwei hundert tausend"?

Sloppily pronounced zwAEnz(g) tuusig – zwEI hnr tuusig

Which dialect exactly? To me this is unpronounceable.

Now you're wending back to the incredible ... no normal adult human has a vocabulary of 700 words, or of 7,000 words.

Milton may have used only 7000 different words in his writings (though I rather doubt that), but his writings are rather limited in subject matter.

I found those numbers on a website, quotes from one Craig: a farmer some centuries ago had a vocabulary of 700 words,

+----[<http://www.sirbacon.org/covocab.htm>]----+
| It is said that a common farm labourer uses 500 words, and educated
| business man 3,000, the average novelist 5,000 and great scholars and
| public men 7,000. "Shakespeare" in his poems and plays uses 21,000, the
| largest vocabulary ever possessed by any member of the human race.
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Although they don't say who this "It" is.

Milton a vocabulary of 7,000 words, Shakespeare one of

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21,000 words, 3,000 of them introduced by himself, mostly form Latin. Google for

+-----[<http://www.sirbacon.org/links/BaconEnglishLanguage.htm>]-----

| Max Muller, in his "Science of Language," Vol. 1, 1899, p. 278,says:

| "A well educated person in England who has been at a public school and
| at the university.... seldom uses more than about 3,000 or 4,000
| words.... Shakespeare, who probably displayed greater variety of
| expression than any writer in any language, produced all his plays
| with about 15,000 words."

| This is an underestimate. There are about 22,000 different words in
| the plays, of which 7,000 are new words, introduced— as Murray's
| Oxford Dictionary tells us— into the the language for the first time.
| Neither Dickens nor Thackeray made use of more than 7 or 8,000 words.
| Dös anyone suppose that any master of the Stratford Grammar School,
| where Latin was the only language used, knew so many as 2,000 English
| words, or was the illiterate householder of Stratford, known as
| William Shakespeare knew half or a quarter so many?

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At <http://www.uni-heidelberg.de/institute/sonst/adw/goethe/> they claim Goethe should have had a vocabulary of 90'000 words. Although with Goethe there are more writings of different types (eg plays, personal letters, clerks documents) passed down to us than with Shakespeares works so there is an advantage for Goethe I don't quite believe this number. Moreover as I didn't find how the different words were counted or who counted or when were they counted.

By the way for Goethe the letters A to G of his vocabulary are online:
<http://germazope.uni-trier.de/Projects/GWB>

Is there something similar for shakespeare?

Bye
Patric

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