

So language is always changing. From generation to generation and from year to year. And who better to talk about language than one of its creators. Kind of.

Today on Parlerai or Will Speak in French, I, Kendall Fahey, am cracking open my book of words with someone who helped to write it.

This is Rebecca Shapiro, a professor at the New York City College of Technology and the executive secretary at The Dictionary Society of North America.

*And I have a background in Historical dictionaries and I think I'm one of the few people who have study dictionaries who also have done some freelance work editing and working on actual dictionaries currently. (1:15)*

Yeah, that too.

Rebecca is considered a lexicographer. In fact the whole Dictionary Society is full of lexicographers. It's basically the name for people who make dictionaries. And lexicography is the art of making them. They are the ones who decide on what words make the cut for the dictionary. And it isn't easy.

[CLIP OF JOBS]

[MUSIC OUT]

[“ Culture Conquest Commerce” CLIP]

[MUSIC IN]

Yallah is the arabic word for “Come on” “Let's go” and “Hurry up”.

[TALK ABOUT YALLAH]

New words like yallah pop up all the time. It's one of the many reason our dictionaries today aren't the same as they were even ten year ago. People become more literate and education increased. So the dictionaries have to change with them.

[Needs change over time (31:02)]

[MUSIC OUT]

As society moves to a more technological age, dictionaries are forced to change too. More and more online resources have been created like Urban Dictionary and Dictionary.com to deal with the online movement.

With more space, and less concern with money, more words can be added to the dictionaries and more people can access them. However, with the move to the internet, lexicographers are seeing less and less work. Don't get me wrong, dictionaries are still being made and people like Rebecca still have jobs but they just aren't as frequent or as normal.

But there is always that question. Will language ever stop? Will we ever stop questioning words or coming up with new ones? Will language ever stop evolving?

[No, language will never stop changing (39:01)]

[Personal clip]

For WHJE, this is Parlerai or Will Speak in French. Special thanks to Rebecca Shappiro for talking with me. For more stories like this and more episodes of Parlerai, visit WHJE.com.