

LINGUISTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGLISH DICTIONARIES AND THEIR NEW TECHNOLOGIES OF COMPILING

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Annotation:

The thesis deals with the linguistic peculiarities of dictionaries. The research highlights the peculiarities of the range and scope of dictionary material, the arrangement of dictionary and polysemous word meanings, information type of dictionary items and dictionary purposes.

Key words: morphological, syntactic, lexical-semantic, pragmatic features, reference book, grammatical information, etymologies, illustrations, usage guidance.

Dictionary is a systematically arranged list of socialized linguistic forms compiled from the speech habits of a given speech – community and complemented on by the author in such a way that the qualified reader understands the meaning. Obviously, the very fact that the dictionary is consulted rather than read is obviously linked to its content, because definition dictionaries are reference books that are resorted to in the case of need; and the need may be simply defined by saying that people consult dictionaries in order to find explicit information about the meanings of particular words that are usually yet not exclusively arranged in an alphabetical order of the headwords. Dictionaries are of many kinds and usually do provide phonological, morphological, syntactic, lexical-semantic, pragmatic, and stylistic information about the native or non-native language.

Furthermore, dictionaries are prepared to serve different practical needs of the people. A reader looks at the dictionary mainly from the following points of view:

- as a reference book for different types of information on words e.g. pronunciation, etymology, usage etc.¹

This may be called the store house function of the dictionary which comprises different kinds of words in alphabetical order.

- as a reference point for distinguishing the good or proper usage from the bad or wrong usage.

¹ Hydekkel S.S. and others. Readings in Modern English Lexicology. L., 1975. pp.202-212



This is the legislative or the court house function of the dictionary. Dictionaries are tools, and they are much more complicated, and capable of many more used than students suspect. All of us know students need encouragement and guidance in the use of dictionaries. Composition books for freshmen point out the need for this kind.

The Dictionary is a most helpful thing for the student to learn that they are filled with interesting information from which one can derive much pleasure and instruction, even though he may not be confronted with an urgent problem of any kind, and, indeed, dictionaries are the most of only used guide books. Their importance is extremely great in the development and perfection of speech culture of native languages and the importance of this fact can scarcely be exaggerated in learning foreign languages too.²

The word 'dictionary' comes from neoclassical Latin, *diction*, meaning simply 'word'.

ON SOME PROBLEMS OF COMPILING DICTIONARIES

If we speak about the 'dictionary' as a linguistic term, it is a list of words with their definitions, a list of characters, or a list of words with corresponding words in other languages. Many dictionaries also provide

- pronunciation information;
- grammatical information;
- word derivations;
- histories, or etymologies;
- illustrations;
- usage guidance; and
- examples in phrase or sentences.

Dictionaries are most commonly found in the form of a book, but more and more dictionaries are produced as software runs from electronic PDA – Personal Digital Assistant or a general purpose computer. Most dictionaries are produced by lexicographers.

Since words and their meanings develop over time dictionary entries are organized to reflect these changes. Dictionaries may either list meanings in the historical order in which they appeared or may list meanings in order of popularity and most common use.

² Bergenholtz, Henning, Bergenholtz Inger. 2011. A Dictionary is a Tool, a Good Dictionary is a Mono-functional Tool. Fuertes-Olivera, Pedro A., and Henning Bergenholtz eds. 2011: pp. 187-207



Dictionaries also differ in the degree to which they are encyclopedic, providing considerable background information, illustrations, and the like, or linguistic, concentrating on etymology, nuances of meaning, and quotations demonstrating usage.

Any dictionary has been designed to fulfill one or more dictionary functions. The dictionary functions chosen by the makers of the dictionary provide the basis for all lexicographic decisions, from the selection of entry words, over the choice of information types, to the choice of place for the information, for example, in an article or in an appendix. There are two main types of function.

- The communication-oriented functions comprise text reception
- understanding,
- text production,
- text revision, and
- translation
- The knowledge oriented functions deal with situations where the dictionary is used for acquiring specific knowledge about a particular matter, and for acquiring general knowledge about something.

The phonetic alphabet is used in dictionaries to tell us about the pronunciation of a word, and a special indication will help us get the stress in the right place. The most important problems lexicographers face are:

1. The selection of items for inclusion and their arrangement. The questions to be

decided upon are:

- The type of lexical units to be chosen for inclusion;
- The number of items to be recorded;
- What to select and what to leave out in the dictionary;
- Which form of the language, spoken or written, or both, is the dictionary to reflect
- Should the dictionary contain
- obsolete and archaic units,
- technical terms,
- dialectisms,
- colloquialisms etc ³

There have been two competing and disputing trends – approaches:

- normative and

³ Hartmann R.R.K. *Lexicography: Dictionaries, compilers, critics and users.* Routledge, 2003. pp.21-40.



- registrative:
- Normative. Adherers of normative approach consider a dictionary an instruction as to proper usage of good words and forms. Samuel Johnson 1755 Dictionary laid the foundation of modern lexicography.

- Registrative: The dictionary should be mirror of language and speech.

2. The setting of the entries. The entries can be given in a single alphabetical listing

or arranged in nests, based on some principles, for example, in descending order of their frequency, in synonymic sets etc.

3. The selection, arrangement and definition of meanings. The choice of meanings depends on:

- 1) What aim the compilers set themselves;
- 2) What decisions they make concerning the extent to which obsolete, archaic, dialectal or highly specialized meanings should be recorded, how the problem of polysemy and homonymy is solved etc. the meanings of words may be given through a group of synonyms, description or so-called 'meta-language'.

There are three different ways in which the word meanings are arranged:

- a. In the sequence of their historical development – historical order;
- b. In conformity with frequency of use, i.e. with the most common meaning first – actual order;
- c. In their logical connection – logical order.

Meanings of words may be defined in different ways:

- a. by means of definitions that are characterized as encyclopedic;
- b. by means of descriptive definitions or paraphrases;
- c. with the help of synonymous words and expressions;
- d. by means of cross - references.

4. The illustrative examples to be supplied. The purpose of these examples depends

on the type of the dictionary and the aim the compilers set themselves.

5. The supplementary material. It can be a list of geographical names, standard abbreviations pertaining to the public, political, economic and industrial life, rules of pronunciation, brief outlines of grammar etc.⁴.

⁴ Knight, Susan. (1994) Dictionary use while reading: The effects on comprehension and vocabulary acquisition for students of different verbal ability. *The Modern Language Journal*, 78(3), 285-299.
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Used Literature:

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