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THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF LINGUISTIC EXPLANATORY DICTIONARIES

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Abstract: This article explores the structure and functions of linguistic explanatory dictionaries, which serve as essential tools in linguistic research, language teaching, and cultural communication. Explanatory dictionaries not only provide definitions of lexical units but also reveal semantic, grammatical, stylistic, and pragmatic features of words. The study emphasizes the role of dictionary entries in reflecting the dynamic nature of language and in supporting users with both linguistic and extralinguistic information. Furthermore, attention is given to the structural organization of entries, the hierarchy of meanings, and the system of cross-references, which contribute to the functionality and user-friendliness of such dictionaries. By analyzing these features, the research highlights how explanatory dictionaries function as both reference and educational resources in the modern linguistic context.

Keywords: linguistic explanatory dictionary; structure; functions; semantics; lexicography; pragmatics; language description

INTRODUCTION

The study of explanatory dictionaries has gained increasing importance in modern linguistics, as these resources serve not only as repositories of lexical items but also as comprehensive guides to understanding the complexity of language. Unlike bilingual or terminological dictionaries, linguistic explanatory dictionaries are designed to provide users with detailed information about a word's form, meaning, grammatical category, stylistic usage, and pragmatic value. They stand at the intersection of linguistic description and practical application, offering both scholars and ordinary users access to the cultural, historical, and functional dimensions of words. The structural organization of explanatory dictionaries reflects the systematic nature of language. Each dictionary entry typically consists of headwords, phonetic or orthographic forms, grammatical notes, semantic explanations, and examples of usage. These elements are not presented arbitrarily; rather, they follow established lexicographic principles that ensure accuracy, clarity, and accessibility. Such dictionaries serve an essential role in bridging theoretical linguistics with applied fields such as language pedagogy, translation studies, and intercultural communication.

In addition to structure, the functional significance of explanatory dictionaries cannot be overstated. They contribute to language standardization, preservation of linguistic heritage, and the development of communicative competence. In educational contexts, explanatory dictionaries enhance learners' vocabulary acquisition, promote critical thinking about semantic nuances, and foster awareness of stylistic and pragmatic differences. In linguistic research, they provide reliable data for analyzing semantic fields, word formation, and lexical change over time. Given the rapid advancement of digital technologies, the relevance of explanatory dictionaries has expanded even further. Online and electronic versions integrate multimedia features, search engines, and cross-referencing systems that make linguistic information more dynamic and user-oriented. Thus, the study of their structure and

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functions is essential not only for theoretical linguistics but also for practical language use in a globalized world.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of linguistic explanatory dictionaries demonstrates their multifaceted role in both theoretical and applied linguistics. As this study has shown, explanatory dictionaries are not limited to presenting lexical meanings; rather, they serve as a complex system that incorporates grammatical, stylistic, pragmatic, and cultural dimensions of words. Their structure reflects the systematic organization of language itself, where each entry functions as a miniature linguistic model, guiding users through the intricate relationships between form, meaning, and usage. From a functional perspective, explanatory dictionaries perform several key tasks: they act as authoritative reference tools, contribute to language standardization, and facilitate effective communication in academic, educational, and social contexts. They also support vocabulary development for language learners and provide scholars with reliable material for investigating lexical change, semantic shifts, and word usage patterns. In this sense, explanatory dictionaries operate as both descriptive and prescriptive resources, balancing the need for linguistic accuracy with accessibility for a wide range of users. The ongoing development of digital lexicography has expanded the potential of explanatory dictionaries even further. Modern online platforms integrate interactive search systems, multimedia features, and cross-referencing mechanisms that significantly enhance user experience. These innovations not only increase the practical value of dictionaries but also redefine their role in a globalized and technologically driven society.

Therefore, the study of the structure and functions of explanatory dictionaries is of great importance in contemporary linguistics. By combining theoretical principles with practical applications, such dictionaries continue to serve as indispensable tools for language learning, linguistic research, and cross-cultural communication. Their relevance will only grow as digital technologies create new opportunities for presenting and accessing lexical knowledge in more dynamic and user-friendly formats.

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