

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF LEXICOGRAPHY IN LINGUISTICS

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Abstract. This article gives information about the role of lexicography in linguistics , exploring its types, history, academic disciplines , problems, and importance in learning languages. Lexicography plays a crucial role in linguistics as it focuses on the study of dictionaries and the principles involved in compiling, organizing, and presenting lexical information. The main goals of lexicography are to provide a reliable, comprehensive account of a spoken language. The lexicographer must research, organize, define, and compile the words in a dictionary. For each dictionary entry, the lexicographer provides a definition, a pronunciation, a list of synonyms, an example of the word being used, and sometimes its etymology.

Keywords: lexicography, history, lexicographer, terminology, dictionaries, practical and theoretical lexicography, quotations, prescriptive commentaires, reliable source, cultural heritage.

Lexicography, as a linguistic subfield of scholarly discipline, is a scholarly discipline that involves compiling, writing, or editing dictionaries. In its both forms of theoretical and practical types, the discipline serves as the reliable source of information for language users. If lexicography is made the area of focus for scholars, it can contribute effectively in enriching and developing the language. The current study investigates descriptively the effect lexicography as an academic discipline has on language development and enrichment. To this end, a group of bilingual English/Kurdish Kurdish/English dictionaries are examined as the material to be investigated the extent to which they can serve as reliable information source for language users. The dictionaries are tested to find out whether they meet the criteria of a reliable source of information found in the group effort exerted in creating them. The results of the study show that most of the lexicographer served as the lexicographer and terminologist at the same time reaching to the extremist case of playing all the roles at the same time. The insights gained from the results of the study include assertion on group effort to create language for specific purpose dictionaries. It also opens windows through which theoretical areas of language

enrichment can be achieved through lexicography. Dictionaries and lexicographer make the information available for language users. Language users, in turn, make the dictionaries the authoritative source of information and hence rely on them. Language is developed through development of its terminology. The role of the terminologist is to create terms and the lexicographer includes them in the dictionary. If the dictionary is the result of a group effort, then it can be considered a reliable source of information. By group effort the role the lexicographer, terminologist and subject expert play is referred to.

History of lexicography

The history of lexicographical practices can be traced back to about 3200 BCE, when Sumerians began compiling word lists in cuneiform writing on clay tablets to teach literacy. The history of English lexicography dates back to the expansion of Latin Christianity into England (beginning at the end of the 6th century CE), when English-speaking priests and monks needed to learn Latin to read the Bible and conduct services in the liturgical language. In 1218 John of Garland, an English-born Parisian teacher, coined the word *dictionary* (Latin: “of or pertaining to words”) as a title for an elementary Latin textbook. The first examples of modern, comprehensive English dictionaries came in the 18th century. A *Dictionary of the English Language*, Samuel Johnson’s seminal work in precision of definition and organization, was published in 1755. It included quotations and prescriptive commentaries about word usage.

Practical and theoretical lexicography

Lexicography is divided into two fields: practical and theoretical. Practical lexicography is concerned with compiling, writing, and editing dictionaries. Practical lexicographers focus on creating user-friendly dictionaries with accurate, up-to-date, and comprehensive information. Theoretical lexicography, also called *metalexicography*, is concerned with dictionary research. Theoretical lexicographers focus on researching structural and semantic relationships among words in current dictionaries to improve information organization and structure in future dictionaries. They often focus their research on specific types of dictionaries or elements of a dictionary’s compilation. Lexicographers continually track language by reading books, newspapers, industry-specific journals, online corpora, social media, and any text in which they might discover a new word or a new use for an already recorded word. When lexicographers encounter a new word or usage, they create a citation in a searchable database, noting the word’s context and source. Then they search other databases of words from numerous different sources, including everything from

articles to popular literature to song lyrics to speeches. Using these databases, they determine if a word meets certain criteria for inclusion in a dictionary—such as frequent, widespread, and meaningful use. If a word meets the criteria, lexicographers draft a definition for the word and forward it to a series of editors for review. Once the word and definition are approved, they are entered into the system, reviewed by a copy editor, proofread, and added to a dictionary.

In conclusion, lexicography is a vital field that bridges linguistics, information science, and editorial expertise. It provides us with the tools to understand and use language effectively, contributing to education, communication, and the preservation of cultural heritage. In essence, lexicography is not merely an offshoot of linguistics but rather an integral component of the field. It provides a practical outlet for linguistic theory, a testing ground for linguistic hypotheses, and a valuable resource for linguistic analysis. The ongoing dialogue between lexicography and linguistics ensures that our understanding of language continues to evolve and deepen.

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