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## TYOLOGICAL CLASSIFICATION OF DICTIONARIES

**Abstract:** Dictionary explains the meaning of either information about the described words or their translation in different languages; every dictionary serves a clear purpose. General purposes of monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual language dictionaries are derived from the communicative and cognitive needs of the society. In this article, we discuss compared typological classification of the dictionaries offered by majority of scholars.

**Key words:** dictionary, monolingual, bilingual, multilingual, compare, typology, classification, language,  
**Language:** English

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### Introduction

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French philosopher Voltaire defines the dictionary as “the universe in alphabetic order”. The scholar Landau offers the following explanation of the term: “a dictionary is a text that describes the meanings of words, often illustrates how they are used in context, and usually indicates how they are pronounced”. He says that modern dictionaries often include information about spelling, etymology, usage, synonyms, and grammar, and sometimes include illustrations as well (Landau, 2004). Such “classical” view of dictionaries was criticized by Yong and Peng, who found the definition of dictionary as “a wordlist or a wordbook providing information about orthography, pronunciation and meaning of words in a language” to be narrow (Yong and Peng, 2007). The dictionaries were classified by many lexicographers. Scholars give different criteria on the basis of which dictionaries can be classified. One of the most obvious typology of dictionaries was offered by Ilson Rey who

distinguished between four major kinds of dictionaries: a) monolingual, linguistic dictionaries, which can range anywhere between short, simple synchronic learner’s dictionaries and vast cultural, often historical descriptions; b) bilingual and multilingual general dictionaries; c) terminological works involving one or several languages; d) ethnographic dictionaries (Ilson, 1986).

### Materials and methods

According to Malkiel, dictionaries are classified based on three categories: range, perspective and presentation: the category of range primarily covers the questions: how well does the dictionary cover the entire lexicon? And how many numbers of languages are covered (whether it is monolingual, bilingual or multilingual) and what is the extent of concentration on lexical data; the category of perspective is based on how the compiler views the work and what approach is taken. The key issue is to distinguish between diachronic (covering an extended time) and synchronic (focused on one period of time)

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approaches and the organization of the dictionary: whether it is organized alphabetically, by sound, by concept, or by some other means. (Malkiel, 1968). According to Landau, the category of presentation offered by Malkiel is concerned with how material of a given perspective is presented. This category deals with the problem of completeness of definitions. For instance, explanatory dictionaries tend to have fuller definitions than bilingual dictionaries. Furthermore, the category of presentation also deals with the form of verbal documentation employed. Forms of verbal documentation may include cited quotations, invented phrases, bibliographic references, etc. (Landau, 2004).

Crystal suggested that there are certain elements ever present in the dictionary entry, on the basis of which systematic comparison between different dictionaries. These elements are as follows:

1. An abstract definition;
2. An illustration of its use from the reader's language;
3. An illustration of its use from other languages;
4. An amplification of the definition or some of its terms;
5. An account of its historical provenance or current theoretical status;
6. An evaluation of its significance;
7. A list of historical sources or corpus citations (Crystal, 1997).

Another typological classification of dictionaries was offered by Arnold who distinguished between unilingual and translation (bilingual and multilingual) dictionaries. Unilingual or explanatory dictionaries are further subdivided with regard to the time into diachronic and synchronic dictionaries (Arnold, 1986:272).

Diachronic dictionaries display the development of English vocabulary by recording the history of form and meaning for every word registered, whereas synchronic or descriptive dictionaries are concerned with the present-day meaning and usage of the words. (Arnold, 1986:273). Moreover, Arnold states that both bilingual (or multilingual) and unilingual dictionaries can be subdivided into general and special. General dictionaries usually present vocabulary as a whole, they bare a degree of completeness depending on the scope and bulk of the book. A fine example of general dictionaries is "The Oxford English Dictionary". According to I.V. Arnold general dictionaries often have a very specific aim, yet they are still considered to be general due to their coverage. Examples of such dictionaries may include frequency dictionaries or even rhyming dictionaries (Arnold, 1986:273). Furthermore, general dictionaries are often compared to special dictionaries that aim at covering only a certain specific part of a vocabulary. Special dictionaries may be further subdivided according to certain criteria. First of all, according to the sphere of human activity in which words covered by a dictionary are used (Cf.: technical terms). What is

more, these dictionaries can be classified according to the type of units themselves (e.g. phraseological dictionaries) and relationship existing between words may also be used as a criterion for classification (e.g. dictionary of synonyms).

The last pattern of classification was offered by Arnold that suggested division of dictionaries into linguistic and non-linguistic. Arnold states that non-linguistic dictionaries give information on all branches of knowledge and are also known as the encyclopedias. Encyclopedias deal with concepts rather than words. Whereas, linguistic dictionaries deal with all the possible aspects of lexical items, including spelling, pronunciation, categorical features, semantics, etc. (Arnold, 1986:274).

Tekorienė & Maskeliūnienė offer a following typological classification of English dictionaries. First of all, distinction can be made between dictionaries that are arranged alphabetically and dictionaries that follow semantic arrangement pattern. From the point of view of typological classification, dictionaries can be divided into general and restricted dictionaries. (Tekorienė, Maskaliūnienė, 2004).

Landau offered a model of typological dictionary classification based on the following characteristics:

1. *Number of languages.* According to the number of languages used in the dictionary, monolingual and bilingual dictionaries could be distinguished. Furthermore, bilingual dictionaries can be unidirectional (monodirectional) or bidirectional; that is, they may go in one direction only, from English, let us say, to French, or be combined with another dictionary that goes from French to English. There are also dictionaries in which the entry words are translated into two other languages (trilingual dictionaries) or more than two other languages (multilingual dictionaries).

2. *Variety of English.* English dictionaries vary according to the variety of English they represent. For example: Dictionary of American English, A Dictionary of Canadianisms, The Australian National Dictionary, Dictionary of Jamaican English, etc.

3. *Primary language of the market.* Monolingual dictionaries differ in the primary language of their intended users. Some monolingual dictionaries are intended for native speakers of English, and others are designed for foreign learners, a market that is divided pedagogically into English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL).

4. *Form of presentation.* Dictionaries and other language reference books differ in the manner in which access to their information is provided, especially as to whether their word list are arranged alphabetically or thematically, and, allied to this, whether they are produced in books or exist in electronic form.

5. *Manner of financing.* Dictionaries differ in how they are financed and in the expectation of profit. Scholarly dictionaries are usually funded by

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government agencies or foundation grants in addition to university support, supplemented by individual donations, and are not designed to make money for investors. Whereas commercial dictionaries are supported by private investors who expect to make money.

6. *Age of users.* Dictionaries differ in the age of the intended user: some are aimed at children, others at adults.

7. *Period of time covered.* Dictionaries differ in the period of time covered by their lexicons. Diachronic, or historical, dictionaries deal with an extended period of time with the chief purpose of tracing the development of forms and meanings of each headword over the period covered. Synchronic dictionaries, on the other hand, deal with a narrow band of time and attempt to represent the lexicon as it exists or existed at a particular point in time.

8. *Size.* Dictionaries differ in how fully they cover the lexicon.

9. *Scope of coverage by subject.* Dictionaries differ in scope in respect to the subjects they cover. Here we can make a distinction between general dictionaries, special-field dictionaries, subject-field dictionaries, etc.

10. *Limitations in the aspects of language covered.* Dictionaries differ in scope in respect to the aspect of language covered. This allows us to speak about special-purpose dictionaries (Landau, 2004).

The classification models offered by above mentioned scholars were further investigated and compared typological classification of dictionaries by many contemporary linguists.

The first person to approach the problem of typological classification of dictionaries in Russian language was Scherba. He offered typological distinction of dictionaries based on six kinds of opposition between them (Scherba, 1974).

1. *Academic dictionary – glossary.* According to the author academic dictionary was seen as a regulatory dictionary describing lexical system of a given language. It must not have any facts that would contradict synchronic usage of the words in the language in question. Glossaries, on the other hand, may include a wider variety of words that may sometimes cross the borders of regulatory literary language.

2. *Encyclopaedic dictionary – general dictionary.* The opposition between these two dictionaries is, according to the author, misleadingly obvious. The author focused on the problem of the semantic component of proper names, and whether they had to be included into the general dictionary. It was stressed that encyclopaedic dictionaries were the ones that included most information concerning proper names and terms.

3. *Thesaurus – general (explanatory or translational).* The scholar stated that any dictionary fully covering words that were used in the language in question at least once could be referred to as thesaurus.

4. *General dictionary – ideological dictionary.* According to the researcher, the concepts in the ideological dictionary should be arranged in such a way that they reflected their relationship.

5. *Explanatory dictionary – translation dictionary.* Explanatory dictionaries, as stated by the author, appeared in order to either be applied to a particular literary language, or to regulate the language (e.g. French Academic Dictionary), whereas translation dictionary emerged from the need of translating one language into another.

6. *Non-historical – historical dictionary.* A fully historical dictionary, according to the author, gave information on the history of all the words in a particular period of time. Such dictionary included not only the information on the birth of new words, but also on the “death” of words or change in their linguistic features (Scherba, 1974).

## Conclusion

A brief outline of the compared typological classification of dictionaries of this article enables the following conclusions: the typology of dictionaries were classified by many lexicographers that most of them distinguished between four major kinds of dictionaries: a) monolingual, linguistic dictionaries, which can range anywhere between short, simple synchronic learner’s dictionaries and vast cultural, often historical descriptions; b) bilingual and multilingual general dictionaries; c) terminological works involving one or several languages; d) ethnographic dictionaries. This typology is more appropriate for English dictionaries.

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