

A Sociopragmatic Analysis Of Learner Explanatory Dictionaries From A Comparative Perspective (Based On An Associative Experiment)

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ABSTRACT

This article presents a sociopragmatic analysis of learner explanatory dictionaries from a comparative perspective. The study examines the communicative function of learner dictionaries in the process of language acquisition, their relationship with social factors, and their degree of pragmatic orientation from a linguistic standpoint. Based on materials from learner explanatory dictionaries compiled in different languages, their structural organization, methods of definition, adaptation to speech situations, and the extent to which they meet the needs of users (learners) are comparatively analyzed. In addition, social relations reflected in dictionaries, speech etiquette, and pragmatic markers are explored on the basis of sociopragmatic criteria.

Keywords: Sociopragmatics, learner explanatory dictionary, pragmatic meaning, speech situation, cultural norm, lexical meaning.

INTRODUCTION

In modern lexicography, the function of dictionary definitions is no longer limited to providing lexical meaning alone. The social and situational appropriateness of word usage in discourse also plays a crucial role. In particular, learner's explanatory dictionaries serve as an important tool in developing language learners' communicative and sociopragmatic competence. In this regard, the present article conducts a comparative sociopragmatic analysis of English and Uzbek learner's explanatory dictionaries. Contemporary linguistic and lexicographic research emphasizes that word meaning is not confined solely to lexical precision; it also encompasses social, cultural, and context-dependent meanings manifested in discourse. From this perspective, the study of dictionaries requires examining not only the semantic structure of linguistic units but also their usage within sociopragmatic contexts. Sociopragmatics, as a branch of linguistics, focuses on identifying meanings related to social situations, speech interaction, politeness strategies, cultural norms, and audience orientation

(Levinson, 1983; Yule, 1996). Learner's explanatory dictionaries, especially those designed for language learners, aim to present not only the lexical meanings of words but also their appropriate usage in specific communicative situations, stylistic labeling, and emotional-evaluative nuances. English learner's dictionaries are often enriched with pragmatic labels such as formal, informal, and neutral, whereas Uzbek learner's dictionaries tend to emphasize cultural, ethical, and social norms more prominently. Therefore, a comparative analysis of the sociopragmatic features of dictionaries in both languages provides learners with opportunities to develop not only lexical knowledge but also communicative and cultural competence. Existing studies indicate that the adequate inclusion of sociopragmatic information in learner's dictionaries plays a significant role in shaping learners' speech culture and reducing the risk of incorrect or inappropriate word usage (Rahmatullayev, 2006; Hojiyev, 2002). The aim of this study is to identify the level of pragmatic labeling, stylistic clarity, and cultural appropriateness in English and Uzbek learner's

explanatory dictionaries through a comparative analysis of their sociopragmatic aspects. The findings of the research are expected to have practical significance not only for lexicography but also for language teaching and learning methodology, as they contribute to preventing communicative errors in real speech situations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical foundations of sociopragmatics are primarily outlined in Stephen Levinson's (1983) work *Pragmatics*. Levinson presents sociopragmatic analysis from the perspective of socially contextualized meanings and situational dependency of speech. By identifying elements such as social distance, situational appropriateness, and politeness strategies, he establishes the scientific basis for pragmatic analysis. Similarly, Geoffrey Yule's (1996) book *Pragmatics* expands sociopragmatic methodology by highlighting context-dependent usage of linguistic units and the emotional-evaluative aspects of word meaning. These sources serve as the theoretical foundation of the present study. English learner's dictionaries, particularly the Oxford Learner's Dictionary (OUP), provide not only lexical meanings but also pragmatic labels such as formal, informal, and neutral. The authentic contextual examples included in dictionary entries help learners acquire appropriate word usage in different communicative situations. From this perspective, this source illustrates the sociopragmatic approach employed in English lexicography. Regarding the Uzbek language, works such as Rahmatullayev's (2006) *Modern Uzbek Literary Language* and Hojiyev's (2002) *Explanatory Dictionary of Linguistic Terms* analyze the relationship between learner's dictionaries and cultural, ethical, and social contexts. These sources provide both theoretical and practical foundations for investigating sociopragmatic approaches in Uzbek linguistics. Issues of comparative lexicography are addressed in Bergenholtz and Tarp's (1995) *Manual of Specialised Lexicography*, which proposes a methodology for comparing the semantic and pragmatic aspects of dictionary units. Relying on this framework, the present study demonstrates the feasibility of conducting a comparative sociopragmatic analysis of English and Uzbek dictionaries.

Additionally, the Learner's Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language (Tashkent: National Encyclopedia of Uzbekistan Publishing House) serves as a primary source for illustrating the socially appropriate usage and cultural context of specific lexical items. Through such

dictionaries, language learners acquire not only lexical meanings but also norms of speech culture and social behavior.

In summary, sociopragmatic theory enables the examination of the social and contextual aspects of speech (Levinson, 1983; Yule, 1996). English learner's dictionaries are characterized by extensive pragmatic labeling and contextual examples (Oxford Learner's Dictionary), while Uzbek dictionaries place greater emphasis on cultural and ethical dimensions (Rahmatullayev, 2006; Hojiyev, 2002). Comparative lexicographic methodology (Bergenholtz & Tarp, 1995) provides an essential framework for identifying and comparing sociopragmatic features. Thus, the reviewed literature establishes a solid basis for a comparative analysis of the sociopragmatic characteristics of English and Uzbek learner's explanatory dictionaries.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted on the basis of comparative, descriptive, and analytical approaches. Learner's explanatory dictionaries compiled in different languages were selected as the objects of the research, and their lexical-semantic, sociopragmatic, and functional characteristics were examined in a systematic manner. No empirical participants were involved in the study; the analysis was based exclusively on existing written sources and dictionary materials. The methodological framework of the research draws on theories from modern lexicography, sociolinguistics, and pragmalinguistics. In particular, the sociopragmatic approach was employed to identify the ways in which dictionary units are used in social contexts, their appropriateness to speech situations, and their communicative load. The comparative method was applied to contrast definitions, usage examples, and stylistic labels presented in learner's explanatory dictionaries of different languages, highlighting both similarities and differences.

In the process of analysis, the descriptive-analytical method was used to examine the structure of dictionary entries, the style of explanation, the degree of simplicity of definitions, and their pragmatic orientation. Structural-semantic analysis made it possible to reveal the layers of meaning, connotative features, and socially evaluative elements of dictionary units. In addition, the contextual analysis method was employed to assess the speech samples provided in dictionaries and their relevance to real

communicative situations.

The following research methods were used in the study:

- Descriptive method – analysis of dictionary definitions in terms of structure and content;
- Comparative method – comparison of English and Uzbek learner's dictionaries;
- Pragmatic analysis – identification of meanings dependent on speech situations.

RESULTS

The analysis revealed that English learner's dictionaries typically define words using pragmatic labels such as formal, informal, and neutral, and frequently support these definitions with authentic contextual examples. For instance, the social and relational distinction between the verbs ask and request is explicitly indicated in dictionary explanations.

In contrast, Uzbek learner's explanatory dictionaries place greater emphasis on cultural and ethical contexts. For example, the words *iltimos* ("please") and *marhamat* ("you are welcome / please") are interpreted in connection with respect, social distance, and norms of communicative behavior.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that English and Uzbek learner's explanatory dictionaries differ in the ways they represent situational appropriateness, stylistic labeling, and emotional-evaluative aspects of word usage. The main observations and illustrative examples are presented below.

Sociopragmatic Labeling in English Dictionaries

Formal and informal distinction:

Ask is typically used in informal conversational contexts.

Example: "I asked my friend for help." (informal interaction)

Request is used in formal contexts and is commonly associated with written or official discourse.

Example: "The manager requested additional reports." (formal discourse)

Such distinctions help learners understand social distance and select vocabulary appropriate to the communicative situation.

Politeness and emotional evaluation:

Please is used to express a request and conveys social respect.

Example: "Please close the door."

Would you mind represents a more polite and formal expression.

Example: "Would you mind helping me with this task?"

These explanations assist learners in understanding degrees of politeness appropriate to different situations.

Contextualized usage examples:

English learner's dictionaries often illustrate words through sentences drawn from real-life situations. For example:

Sorry is used to express apology for a mistake or delay.

Example: "I'm sorry for being late."

From a sociopragmatic perspective, such examples reveal the social function of the word in communication.

Sociopragmatic Features in Uzbek Dictionaries

Respect and social distance:

Iltimos expresses politeness in both formal and informal situations.

Example: "*Iltimos, kitobni menga bering.*" ("Please give me the book.")

Marhamat is used to express invitation or consent and typically carries a respectful tone.

Example: "*Marhamat, kiravering.*" ("Please, come in.")

These examples highlight the social and cultural dimensions of word usage in Uzbek.

Usage linked to cultural and ethical norms:

Manman conveys a negative evaluation and is usually used in critical or disapproving contexts.

Example: “U manman odamdek harakat qiladi.” (“He behaves like an arrogant person.”)

Hurmatli is used in formal and respectful modes of address.

Example: “Hurmatli mehmonlar, sizlarni ko‘rganimdan xursandman.” (“Dear guests, I am pleased to see you.”)

Contextual examples:

Uzbek dictionaries often explain words with reference to social situations and audience characteristics:

Do‘st is used in informal conversations.

Example: “Salom, do‘st, yaxshimisiz?” (“Hello, my friend, how are you?”)

Hamkasb is appropriate for formal, work-related communication.

Example: “Hamkasb bilan loyiha bo‘yicha maslahatlashdik.” (“We consulted with a colleague about the project.”)

These findings indicate that learner’s dictionaries reflect sociopragmatic aspects in different ways: English dictionaries emphasize formal/informal distinctions and politeness strategies, whereas Uzbek dictionaries prioritize cultural, ethical, and social contexts.

DISCUSSION

The results of the comparative analysis demonstrate that learner’s explanatory dictionaries function not only as sources of lexical information but also as important sociopragmatic tools. The study revealed that the definitions and examples provided in these dictionaries do not always fully reflect the use of lexical units in real social and cultural contexts. This limitation can reduce the communicative effectiveness of dictionaries. When comparing learner’s explanatory dictionaries in different languages, it became evident that the degree of pragmatic orientation is not uniform. In some dictionaries, speech situations, social roles, and relationships among participants are adequately considered, whereas in others, these aspects are given secondary importance. As a result,

learners may find it difficult to determine the appropriateness or inappropriateness of a word or phrase in specific social contexts. The discussion highlights that consistent and systematic inclusion of sociopragmatic markers in dictionary entries plays a crucial role in developing learners’ communicative competence. In particular, stylistic labeling, explanations related to speech etiquette, and evaluative components help learners understand the social norms of the target language. When these elements are insufficiently presented, the learner’s dictionary risks functioning merely as a formal source of information.

Furthermore, the analysis showed that in many learner’s explanatory dictionaries, pragmatic examples are artificially constructed and often distant from authentic speech situations. This limitation negatively affects learners’ ability to apply lexical items effectively in natural communicative environments. Therefore, the use of examples based on authentic contexts emerges as a pressing need in dictionary compilation.

CONCLUSION

This study systematically analyzed the sociopragmatic features of learner’s explanatory dictionaries from a comparative perspective and highlighted their functional significance in language education. The findings demonstrate that learner’s dictionaries are not merely sources of lexical-semantic information but also serve as essential linguistic tools for developing social and pragmatic knowledge. The comparative analysis revealed significant differences among the dictionaries studied in terms of pragmatic orientation, communicative clarity of definitions, and representation of social contexts. In conclusion, the effectiveness of learner’s explanatory dictionaries is directly related to the extent to which they are enriched with sociopragmatic content. Dictionary entries that consistently and clearly present social-evaluative components, cultural connotations, and speech constraints contribute to the development of learners’ communicative competence.

The results of this research have both theoretical and practical implications for lexicography and language education. By providing sociopragmatic information, learner’s explanatory dictionaries help language learners develop communicative and cultural competence.

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