Why and How does Word Formation have a Place in Dictionaries?

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Approach to the question

Language

Word formation

Dictionary

What is a language?

A dictionary describes a language

Dictionary

Approach to the question

What is Catalan?

words

e.g. espelma

e.g. plural formation

e.g. use of definite article

how?

Filter

Performance

Competence and performance

Competence

Other types of knowledge

Free will

Performance

Two perspectives of language

Competence

Performance

Performance

Performance

Performance
Catalan as a language

• Catalan is not a performance
  – performance contains errors
  – performance is bound in time
• Catalan is not a competence
  – competence is bound to individual

A dictionary of Catalan does not describe performance or competence.

I-language vs. E-language

= competence

Collection of forms (words, sentences) paired with meanings

Chomsky (1986)

Catalan?

Problems with E-language

“languages in this sense are not real-world objects but are artificial, somewhat arbitrary, and perhaps not very interesting concepts.”

Collection of forms (words, sentences) paired with meanings

Chomsky (1986)

Catalan?
The origin of E-language

- Who has the authority to determine that an expression is Catalan?
- How can they determine whether an expression is Catalan?

Not without using competence

Non-linguistic criteria

but how…?

Empirical vs. Applied Science

Astronomy

Medicine

describe and explain

analyse and solve

Dictionary use as problem-solving

User

Dictionary

Linguistic problem

The nature of a dictionary

- A dictionary does not describe a language (performance, competence, E-language).
- A dictionary of Catalan is not a description of the vocabulary of Catalan.
- A dictionary gives information about words.
- A good dictionary of Catalan solves the problems its users have with Catalan words.

Approach to the question

Language

Word formation

Dictionary

Approach to the question

Language

Word formation adds words to the language

Dictionary

What is a word?
**Saussure: word as a sign**

Signifiant

Signifié

form
noun fem.
meaning

**Jackendoff: word as interface**

linking rules
formation rules
phonological representation
syntactic representation
conceptual representation

noun fem.

**Word Formation Rules**

falsificador
Complex Entries

falsificar
Complex Entries

fals
Simple Entries

**Two Perspectives on WFRs**

Formation of new words

Efficient storage and retrieval

Speaker

Extension

Recognition of unseen words

Hearer

Structure

Priming of related related words

**Extension of the Lexicon**

Word formation

new concept
Lexicon of another language

Lexicon

Meaning extension
Lexical borrowing

**Properties of the Mechanisms**

- **Word formation**
  - New form predicted by WFR
  - Meaning range with lexicalization effects

- **Semantic change**
  - Existing form
  - Specialization or generalization of meaning

- **Borrowing**
  - New form in borrowing language
  - Meaning based on source language

pseudo-fruit
illa
hardware
Lexicalization effects

The nature of word formation

- Word formation is a rule-based process for the formation of new words.
- A word is a link between (partially specified) phonological, syntactic and conceptual information.
- A word formation rule is triggered by the need to name a new concept.
- A word formation rule specifies phonological and syntactic properties of the output and constrains its conceptual properties.

Approach to the question

Questions to be asked

Example: -dor suffixation

Example: pseudo- prefixation
Learner’s dictionary

- learner of Catalan
- native speaker of another language
- small Catalan vocabulary
- extending vocabulary
- understanding a new word
- expressing a new concept

Central: degree of regularity

- extending vocabulary
- applying structure to the lexicon
- what does the word mean?
- can I use this word?
- understanding a new word
- connecting concept to context
- how are words related?
- expressing a new concept
- applying rule to form new word

Representation mechanisms

- Lemmata for derived words
  - reference to base word
  - reference to word formation mechanism
- Lemmata for word formation mechanisms
  - indicate regularity and productivity
  - examples that are representative and connect to existing lexical knowledge

Native speaker’s dictionary

- native speaker of Catalan
- good proficiency in Spanish
- maintaining lexicons distinct
- understanding a new word
- expressing a new concept

Central: norm/distinction

- maintaining distinction
- understanding a new word
- expressing a new concept
- applying structure to the lexicon
- connecting concept to context
- applying rule to form new word
- what does the word mean?
- how are words related?
- can I use this word?

Representation mechanisms

- Lemmata for derived words
  - reference to base word
  - reference to word formation mechanism
- Lemmata for word formation mechanisms
  - indicate regularity and productivity
  - examples that are representative and connect to existing lexical knowledge
  - etymology
- Lemmata for word formation mechanisms
  - circumscribe potential for productive use
  - examples of correct application
  - potential for interference
Conclusions

• Dictionaries are not descriptions of the language but problem-solving tools.
• Word formation is a mechanism for producing names for new concepts.
• In a learner’s dictionary, word formation should be explicit and focus on regularity.
• In a native speaker’s dictionary, word formation rules should specify the domain.