

Edward Finegan and Michael Adams. *The Cambridge Handbook of the Dictionary*. 2024, 801 pp. ISBN 978-1-108-83624-1 (Hardback), ISBN 978-1-108-81887-2 (Paperback), ISBN 978-1-108-86443-5 (eBook). Cambridge/New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. Price: US\$ 170.00 (Hardback), US\$ 170.00 (eBook)

Before the publication of *The Cambridge Handbook of the Dictionary*, a number of handbooks on lexicography (Durkin 2016; Fuertes-Olivera 2018; Hanks and De Schryver 2020; Hartmann and James 1998; Jackson 2013, 2022) had already established a clear and well-defined process of dictionary making. These earlier works focused primarily on practical aspects such as orthography, sense division, phonetic transcription, collocation, corpus construction, and the use of labeling and metalanguage, treating dictionaries largely as utilitarian reference works. However, they frequently disregarded the broader social implications of lexicography, thus omitting crucial non-lexicographical subjects necessary for a deeper understanding of dictionaries. Dictionaries, in fact, serve purposes far beyond mere tools – they act as lenses that illuminate cultural nuances, as well as records that capture the essence of specific times, places, and human activities. It is within this context that *The Cambridge Handbook of the Dictionary* emerges, offering a holistic perspective of dictionaries in their social contexts. By examining the dynamic interplay among dictionary makers, users, cultural contexts, historical aesthetics, and the material embodiment of ideas, this handbook bridges the gap left by earlier works. Bringing together cutting-edge research from an international team of experts, it aims to foster dialogue among lexicographers while inviting a broader audience to approach dictionaries with more thoughtfulness.

This handbook consists of 31 chapters in six parts, covering a wide array of topics, from dictionary types and visual design to their role in book history and significance as material objects. It also delves into the ideologies embedded in dictionaries, their role in specialized fields like law and history, and the business contexts of their production. Additionally, it looks ahead to the future of dictionaries. Below is a brief introduction to each part within the handbook.

Part One introduces dictionary typology as a classification system to delineate the characteristics of dictionaries. However, due to the variations both within and across the types, their classification remains inherently complex. This part provides a wide scope and depth of dictionary types, including historical and specialized dictionaries, thesauri, general-purpose or commercial dictionaries, bilingual dictionaries, learner's dictionaries, children's dictionaries, and dictionaries of quotations and of proverbs. It stresses their crucial roles in cross-cultural communication, historical documentation, systems of cultural concepts, pedagogy, reference, as well as entertainment. Each type is meticulously curated by lexicographers to meet the diverse needs and interests of their respective user bases.

Part Two concentrates on dictionaries as books, exploring their distinctive features such as typography, illustrations, page layout, and book design. These elements enhance dictionaries' appeal to readers and facilitate ease of reference. Additionally, the chapters in this part emphasize the significance of dictionaries as tangible artifacts in book history, highlighting their materiality, intrinsic value, influence, and status.

Part Three delves into ideological underpinnings of dictionaries, both directly and indirectly embedded in the usage, language contact, language attitudes, religious history, etc. Usage information in dictionaries reflects ideological preferences, mirroring potential social hierarchies. The complexity of language contact in dictionary production is inextricably bound up with socio-political relationships. Attitudes towards dictionaries reveal the extent of authority granted to them and how ideologies – political, social, or personal biases – are manifested, thereby influencing the inclusion and exclusion of dictionary entries, definitions, paratexts and beyond. Also, dictionaries involved in interpreting texts in domains such as religion are inherently shaped by ideological considerations.

Part Four discusses the domains of use of dictionaries, accentuating their mutual impact and value to the fields of linguistics, philology, writing and editing, and law. It also reflects their roles in intellectual, social, and cultural history, as well as their significance as literary artifacts where literature unfolds.

Part Five details the commercial aspects of dictionary making, such as preparation, planning, organization, editing and publication. Operating under organizational and commercial constraints, dictionary projects require extensive collaboration among diverse teams, encompassing editors, assistants, copyeditors, proofreaders, marketers, and sales teams. Legal and ethical considerations further affect the internal dynamics of dictionary business, ultimately shaping the nature and quality of the final product.

Part Six reviews the past and present, and primarily explores the future trajectory of dictionaries. As interest in print dictionaries wanes, attention has increasingly shifted towards digital dictionary compilation, a process driven by machines, enabling faster, automated analysis and continuous real-time updates. This transition is particularly evident in the adaptation of dictionaries to web structure and online use, revealing the evolving nature of dictionary use in the digital era.

Overall, one of the most notable features of *The Cambridge Handbook of the Dictionary* is its all-encompassing account of dictionaries in context. Throughout the handbook, each part, to some degree, concerns dictionaries in their social contexts, and addresses the relationships such as those among dictionary makers, users, and cultural contexts. No other work on this topic today is as detailed or compelling. For instance, previous handbooks like Jackson's *The Bloomsbury Companion to Lexicography* (2013, 2022), Hanks and De Schryver's *International Handbook of Modern Lexis and Lexicography* (2020), and Durkin's *The Oxford Handbook*

of *Lexicography* (2016) have given scant attention to the issues of ideology and society. Similarly, in Fuertes-Olivera's *The Routledge Handbook of Lexicography* (2018), ideology is only briefly mentioned in the context of cultural considerations, whereas *The Cambridge Handbook of the Dictionary* dedicates considerable space to portraying how values, ideologies and attitudes shape dictionaries, revealing societal norms and personal biases. Linguists, in fact, have identified ideology in dictionaries in some detail (e.g. Kachru and Kahane 1995). Arguably, the most significant contribution of this handbook is its extensive treatment of lexicographic subjects such as ideology and relational dynamics, enriching readers' understanding of dictionaries in the present day. This emphasis makes the handbook particularly valuable for scholars and practitioners concerned with the convergence of lexicography, ideology, and social contexts.

Another significant aspect of *The Cambridge Handbook of the Dictionary* is its effort towards achieving sufficiency in the coverage of important and diverse dictionary types. These types range from historical dictionaries to thesauri and to children's dictionaries and dictionaries of quotations and proverbs, with this handbook exploring their development, structures, features, and influence in great depth. By comparison, *The Bloomsbury Companion to Lexicography* and *International Handbook of Modern Lexis and Lexicography* neglect to address specific dictionary types. *The Oxford Handbook of Lexicography* categorizes specialized dictionaries based on their microstructural features such as place names, surnames, spelling, and pronouncing. Approaching dictionary classification through functions and purposes — text production, reception, and translation, *The Routledge Handbook of Lexicography*, though it touches on specialized dictionaries, does not provide as detailed a breakdown of types as *The Cambridge Handbook of the Dictionary*. Instead, it emphasizes broader criteria such as the degree, range, and type of specialization, along with the number of languages used, and macro- and microstructural aspects. This distinction underscores *The Cambridge Handbook of the Dictionary* as an invaluable resource for those seeking a comprehensive understanding of the diverse types of dictionaries and their uses.

Additionally, the handbook presents a unique perspective by viewing dictionaries not only as reference tools but also as books, material artifacts, and commodities. It unveils the complexities of the relationship among dictionary makers, dictionary content, and their users. These aspects receive substantial attention, particularly in the parts covering domains of use and business of dictionaries, which were often treated briefly in earlier handbooks. By exploring the commercial and contextual dimensions of dictionaries, this handbook highlights their role influenced by business decisions, consumer demands, technological advancements, and social contexts.

Like any scholarly endeavor, *The Cambridge Handbook of the Dictionary* is not without its limitations. While the handbook offers a comprehensive overview of the state of the field within this significant sub-discipline of linguistic research, it notably falls short in its discussion of the use of corpora in the lexicographic

process. In contrast, earlier handbooks such as *The Routledge Handbook of Lexicography* and *The Oxford Handbook of Lexicography* devote substantial sections to the construction and practical application of corpora in dictionaries, acknowledging corpus-based lexicography as the standard practice (Kilgarriff 2000; Kilgarriff and Kosem 2012). *International Handbook of Modern Lexis and Lexicography* explores electronic and corpus-driven approaches in modern lexicography across all major and rare languages. Similarly, *The Bloomsbury Companion to Lexicography* discusses the role of corpora as essential data sources for dictionaries and highlights their significant contributions to various aspects of dictionary compilation. The lack of a more in-depth discussion on this topic in *The Cambridge Handbook of the Dictionary* — likely due to thematic constraints rather than an oversight of lexicographic principles — indicates a missed opportunity to thoroughly engage with advancements in corpus-based research relevant to lexicography.

To conclude, *The Cambridge Handbook of the Dictionary* addresses pivotal issues in lexicographic scholarship, offering an unparalleled and comprehensive overview of the field. By integrating diverse perspectives, contemporary theories, and findings, it presents a unified perspective on dictionary studies, demonstrating both breadth and depth. These elements collectively establish it as an indispensable reference for scholars and practitioners. Moreover, the handbook catalyzes future scholarly inquiry into the dynamic relationship between dictionaries and society, pointing towards potential avenues for lexicographic studies.

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