A handbook of lexicography the theory and practice of dictionary making

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Lexicography and Dictionary Making**

Lexicography is the art and science of compiling dictionaries. It encompasses the systematic study of words, their meanings, and their usage. Dictionary making, a subset of lexicography, involves the creation of comprehensive reference works containing words and their definitions.

Theoretical Lexicography

Theoretical lexicography focuses on the underlying principles and methodologies of dictionary making. It explores the theoretical underpinnings of word meaning, semantic and pragmatic relationships, and the organization and presentation of dictionary information.

Principles of Lexicography

Principles guiding lexicography include:

- **Accuracy:** Definitions should accurately reflect the meaning of words.
- **Completeness:** Dictionaries should contain a comprehensive range of words relevant to the target audience.
- **Clearness:** Definitions should be comprehensible and easy to understand.
- **Objectivity:** Dictionaries should present information without bias or subjective opinions.

Lexicography vs. Lexicology

While related, lexicography and lexicology are distinct fields:

- **Lexicography:** Compiles dictionaries and focuses on the practical aspects of word meaning and usage.
- **Lexicology:** Studies the structure, history, and evolution of words and their meanings.

Dictionary Making

Dictionary making involves several key steps:

- **Data collection:** Words and their meanings are collected from various sources, such as text corpora, existing dictionaries, and expert opinions.
- **Definition writing:** Clear and concise definitions are written based on the collected data.
- **Organization:** Words are organized alphabetically or by themes for easy access.
- **Editing and proofreading:** The dictionary is thoroughly edited and proofread to ensure accuracy and consistency.

Famous Lexicographers

Renowned lexicographers include:

- **Samuel Johnson:** Father of lexicography (author of "A Dictionary of the English Language")
- **Edward Fry:** American educator and lexicographer (created Fry's Sight Word List)

Types of Lexicography

Two main types of lexicography:

- **Descriptive lexicography:** Records current word usage without prescribing usage.

- **Prescriptive lexicography:** Provides guidelines for word usage and grammar.

Theoretical Oxford Dictionary

The Theoretical Oxford Dictionary is a project that aims to establish a theoretical foundation for lexicography. It explores the underlying cognitive processes involved in understanding word meaning and usage.

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