



SYNCHRONIC AND DIACHRONIC APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF LEXICAL UNITS

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Annotation: *The article examines the synchronic and diachronic approaches to the study of lexical units in the English language. The synchronic approach analyzes vocabulary at a specific stage of its existence, focusing on meaning, structure, and usage. In contrast, the diachronic approach studies changes and the historical development of lexical units over time. Special attention is given to the advantages and limitations of each approach and their role in the comprehensive analysis of the lexical system. Examples illustrate shifts in the meaning and form of words, emphasizing the dynamic nature of language. The paper concludes that both approaches are essential in lexicography, semantics, and historical linguistics.*

Keywords: *Lexical units, synchronic approach, diachronic approach, semantics, historical linguistics, language change*

Vocabulary is one of the most dynamic and change-sensitive parts of a language. Understanding the nature of lexical units requires a comprehensive approach that includes both synchronic and diachronic analysis. This paper discusses the key features, advantages, and areas of application of each approach.

The Essence of the Synchronic Approach

The synchronic (simultaneous) approach focuses on analyzing the language system at a particular point in its development. Within this approach, the meanings of words, their collocational properties, grammatical characteristics, and functions in different discourse genres are examined. For instance, in analyzing the modern meaning of the word "cloud" in English, we consider not only its original meaning "a



mass of condensed water vapor in the sky" but also its contemporary meaning in information technology — "cloud storage." This helps us understand how the word functions in present-day usage and what semantic nuances it has acquired.

Features of the Diachronic Approach

The diachronic (historical) approach focuses on studying the evolution of words, their origins, and changes in meaning, form, and usage. It involves the analysis of sources from different historical periods and helps trace the development path of lexical units. Continuing with the example of "cloud," the diachronic analysis reveals its origin from the Old English word "clud" (mass, rock), its semantic shift to "cloud in the sky," and eventually to its metaphorical digital meaning in the 21st century.

Comparative Characteristics of the Approaches

Comparative analysis shows that the synchronic approach is effective for describing the current state of the language, especially in lexicography and language teaching. The diachronic approach, on the other hand, is indispensable for etymological studies and identifying patterns of language change. Both approaches complement each other. The synchronic approach offers a snapshot of the language "here and now," while the diachronic perspective provides depth and historical context.

Conclusion

Synchronic and diachronic approaches to the study of vocabulary are not competing but complementary methods. Their combined use enables a fuller and more accurate description of lexical processes, helps forecast language development, and enhances effective language instruction.

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