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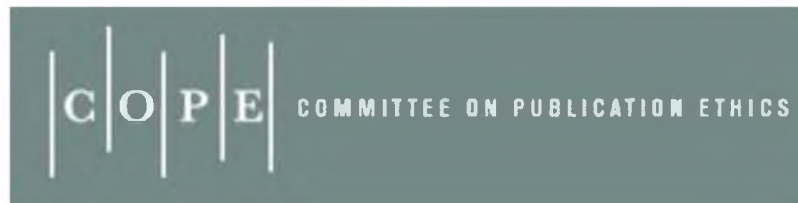
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# TATAR LANGUAGE TEACHING: LINGUO-DIDACTIC AND INFORMATIONAL POTENTIAL OF THE LEARNER'S COMPREHENSIVE ELECTRONIC DICTIONARY

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Modern civilization is a civilization of dictionaries  
Alain Ray

## Abstract

The article describes the learner's comprehensive electronic dictionary (CED) of the Tatar language, the principles of its creation, peculiarities of its structure, its linguo-didactic and information potential and advantages.

The analysis of the dictionary creation and its prospects confirms the significance and the long-term benefits of creating comprehensive educational dictionaries using new technologies, i.e. electronic reference books.

The benefits of electronic language reference books are as follows: 1) a wide range of users; 2) user-friendly; 3) multi-entry, multi-feature search; 4) the possibility to maintain the dictionary updated, the possibility of further development and enhancement; 5) fewer restrictions as to the amount of data included in the dictionary; 6) vast opportunities to establish communication with similar network reference books and form linguographic Internet complexes.

The CED includes the basic vocabulary of the Tatar language and provides a multidimensional description of properties and features of the most common words such as their semantic, functional, grammar, phonetic, word-formation and frequency characteristics (word structure and derivatives), synonyms, antonyms, homonyms, compatibility, phraseological units, proverbs and sayings, historical and etymological commentary, etc.

It is intended to be used as both a monolingual (the Tatar language) dictionary, and bilingual or multilingual reference book (with translations, commentary in Russian and other languages).

Comprehensive electronic language reference books, being the most important component of the linguo-didactic educational process, enhance the learning process, increase its efficiency, effectiveness, and contribute to the individualization of the language training process.

**Keywords:** learner's comprehensive dictionary, electronic reference book, Tatar language, informational potential, linguo-didactic potential, linguography/lexicography

## Introduction

The role of dictionaries in accumulating and transferring information is significant. Presenting data using a dictionary is gaining popularity in our dynamic, information-intensive century. Dictionaries allow the efficient acquisition of information in a condensed and concise form and play "an increasingly important role in accumulating and transferring information" [LES 2002: 462].

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Voltaire marked this tendency in the 18th century: "The multitude of facts and writings has been growing so quickly that in the near future everything will have to be reduced to extractions and dictionaries".

It is no coincidence that today linguography<sup>3</sup> is one of the leading fields of Applied Linguistics in developed countries.

Linguistic (language) dictionaries (along with encyclopedic dictionaries) hold a unique position among dictionaries.

Linguistic dictionaries provide a set of important functions:

- 1) language description,
- 2) language research,
- 3) language standardization,
- 4) interlinguistic communication (bilingual and multilingual dictionaries, phrasebooks),
- 5) language teaching.

This article focuses on learner's dictionaries and the linguo-didactic application of language reference books.

It is a known fact that dictionaries hold a special place in teaching both the native [Gross 1989: 174-180] and non-native, foreign language [Hartmann 1989: 181-189].

One of the tendencies in modern linguography is that it strives to create multi-aspect, multi-parameter language reference books (it is especially noticeable in learner's linguography).

Creation of a multi-aspect, multi-parameter language reference book is the task that has remained urgent for the craft of dictionary compilation for many decades. It is no coincidence that both in the foreign and domestic linguography there have been and are being published conventional, "print" dictionaries that aim to reflect as many parameters as possible (for example, "The Large Universal Dictionary of the Russian Language" [BUS 2016]; unfortunately, there is not a similar conventional comprehensive dictionary in the Tatar linguography). However, experience indicates that an increase in the number of parameters causes technical challenges and a print dictionary turns bulky and not user-friendly.

Computer-assisted realization of a dictionary in many respects erases the problems facing a comprehensive dictionary, allowing for an unlimited number of potentially possible parameters.

#### **Methods**

The analysis of the condition and the prospects of the dictionary compilation craft confirms the significance and the long-term benefits of creating learner's comprehensive dictionaries using new technologies, i.e. electronic reference books [Computational Linguography 1995: 10-47; Binon 2013: 1035-1046].

The benefits of electronic language reference books are as follows:

- 1) a wide range of users; due to fact that computer technologies have been reinforced by the Internet technologies, which in itself represents yet another information revolution, language reference books have become globally available;
- 2) user-friendly;
- 3) multi-entry, multi-feature search;
- 4) the possibility to maintain the dictionary updated, the possibility of further development and enhancement (a timely adjustment of dictionary entries, introduction of the necessary amendments, etc.);
- 5) fewer restrictions as to the amount of data included in the dictionary;
- 6) vast opportunities to establish communication with similar network reference books and form linguo-graphic Internet complexes based on the resources located on the same or different portals (websites).

If, at first, the objective was to create an electronic dictionary similar to a print dictionary, to create its digitalized analogue, now, on the contrary, the point at issue concerns the fundamental impossibility to create a print analogue of an electronic dictionary if it has been compiled with the application of modern technologies (for example, hypertext, multimedia, etc.).

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<sup>3</sup> Linguography is a cross-disciplinary field of linguistics concerned with the theory, and practice of compilation of language reference books (dictionaries); the sections of linguography are as follows: lexicography, morphemography, phraseography, paremiography, etc. [Computational Linguography 1995: 5-9].

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Taking into account the current linguography development trends, the high didactic value of dictionaries and the enhanced potential of electronic language reference books, the staff of the Institute of Philology and Intercultural Communication of the Kazan Federal University in collaboration with the specialists of the Institute of Language, Literature and Art of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan have been developing a learner's comprehensive electronic dictionary (CED) of the Tatar language.

**Results**

The CED includes the basic vocabulary of the Tatar language and provides a multidimensional description of properties and features of the most common words such as their semantic, functional, grammar, phonetic, word-formation and frequency characteristics (word structure and derivatives), synonyms, antonyms, homonyms, compatibility, phraseological units, proverbs and sayings, historical and etymological commentary, etc.

It is intended to be used as both a monolingual (the Tatar language) dictionary, and bilingual or multilingual reference book (with translations, commentary in Russian, English and other languages).

The experimental versions of the main CED data components have been created and are currently in operation.

The CED database is created based on both the learner's dictionaries (more than 60 didactic dictionaries were published over the period from 1951 to 2015), and the general dictionaries of the Tatar language, with emphasis on modern dictionaries – the 21st century dictionaries. The CED expansion is also facilitated by the composite contemporary Tatar dictionary that is based on the data from the main linguographic sources [Karimullina 2016: 214-218].

Experience confirms that the linguo-didactic and informational potential of the created language reference book is perceptible in terms of its volume and essence.

The CED, unlike conventional dictionaries, gives its user a variety of convenient sampling tools. When working with a conventional dictionary sampling can be rather time-consuming, requiring a long dictionary data viewing process. As a rule, convenience of material sampling depends on the quantity and the nature of dictionary entries. In a conventional dictionary, there exists only one kind of entry and that is alphabetical.

A computer-aided CED provides an unlimited number of entries, thus allowing to enter the dictionary through any characteristic or a set of characteristics contained herein (see the list of parameters, characteristics above); for example, in the CED the "inflexions" zone contains a sampling of Tatar verbs with an account for over 180 forms.

An important advantage of the electronic CED is that it allows to arrange data as hypertext, i.e. as nonlinear sets of texts (information blocks) connected with each other by various associative links, thus forming a system; see in the CED, for example, a link between the part-of-speech and inflectional characteristics; to display the system links within the topic sets and lexical-semantic sets (kinship terms, names of animals).

In the CED the modern multimedia means provide for such parameters and their realization which are impracticable for a conventional dictionary, for example, visual semantization of verbs of motion (*üözepepeḡä* 'to be running, to run', *cukepepeḡä* 'to jump') by means of a video sequence.

It should be noted that in comparison with a conventional dictionary, the CED has a higher level of socialization; when its data are connected to the network and become an Internet resource, we deal with a transition from the individual use mode to the global access mode.

An electronic version, unlike a conventional linguographic source, provides means for adding new data without disrupting the CED's structure, thus allowing a component-based development of the reference book.

Using the created comprehensive electronic dictionary a user will be able to create any type of aspect dictionary with the materials provided in the CED; for example, grammatical, synonymic, word-formation, etc.

A large CED will offer an opportunity to create various dictionaries oriented to a recipient, a learning stage, a specific course, or a textbook. This refers to different parameters: the number of the described units, the amount and presentation of information zones, as well as meta language, data explication, etc.



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There are various CED applications in teaching. On the one hand, the CED can be used as an independent reference product that exists autonomously. On the other hand, the language reference book can be incorporated, as a module, in the teaching, training, monitoring software.

In software development, computer-aided CEDs can be used not only as an information module (i.e. a dictionary in its entirety or its selective version), but also as a source for a linguistic dataset that is offered to students as training exercises, tasks, etc. [Fatkhullova 2014: 507-511].

Aside from the software products, the CED materials can be used in different conventional textbooks, manuals, etc., contributing to the increase in efficiency of teaching the Tatar language to both the natives and nonnatives [Shakurova 2014: 674-677; Yusupov 2015: 158-164].

Furthermore, a teacher can use the CED when selecting material for a lesson or a discipline. Thus, schoolteachers feel the need to use a computer as means of information acquisition when preparing for their lessons (for searching, selecting, creating, and replicating information). The CED is a useful tool that enables the realization of tasks of this sort.

At present, it is impossible to ignore such an up-and-coming form of education as distance learning. The increase in the number of local and international networks and large numbers of their subscribers leads to a broader socialization of data resources, as well as their more optimum, active and diversified utilization. Distance learning offers a wide range of possibilities by means of providing individualization of learning, supporting self-training, offering the students equal opportunities to access updated data, etc.

An important component of distance learning is electronic language reference books. Connecting the CEDs to a computer network as a data resource will make it possible to use their content more effectively and will allow them to become a reference resource for a broad spectrum of interested readers [Abel 2013: 1115-1136].

Analysis shows that the comprehensive electronic dictionary is a more advanced tool for data arrangement, storage, search and conversion than a conventional language reference book. Analysis also indicates that, not only does the electronic dictionary provide all the information options of a conventional linguographic dictionary, but also it considerably expands them.

Elaborating on the image by Alain Ray provided in the epigraph to this article ("modern civilization is a civilization of dictionaries"), modern civilization, in all certainty, may be called a civilization of electronic dictionaries (reference books).

#### **Conclusion**

Comprehensive electronic language reference books, being the most important component of the linguo-didactic educational process, enhance the learning process, increase its efficiency, effectiveness, and contribute to the individualization of the language training process.

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