

Oil and Gas Terminology in Explanatory Dictionaries

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Article History

Received on 27 December 2025

1st Revision on 16 January 2026

2nd Revision on 07 February 2026

Accepted on 09 February 2026

Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to examine how oil and gas terminology is presented in explanatory dictionaries of the Uzbek language. This study seeks to understand how these dictionaries define, simplify, and standardize technical terms within the general language system.

Research Methodology: This study used a qualitative lexical analysis of printed and digital Uzbek explanatory dictionaries. A descriptive and comparative approach was applied to examine the definitions, meanings, polysemy, stylistic features, and normative aspects of oil and gas terms through document and textual reviews.

Results: The findings show that explanatory dictionaries present oil and gas terms in a simplified and generalized way. Although they provide normative and lexical meanings, they often do not fully reflect the scientific and technical depth of the terms. The analysis also revealed the presence of polysemy, stylistic neutrality, and the integration of oil and gas terminology into the broader general language system.

Conclusions: This study concludes that explanatory dictionaries play an important normative role in standardizing oil and gas terminology in the Uzbek language. However, their definitions are limited in representing the full scientific and technical complexity of specialized terminology.

Limitations: This study is limited to explanatory dictionaries of the Uzbek language and does not include encyclopedic dictionaries or specialized technical glossaries for comparison.

Contributions: This study contributes to lexicography, terminology studies, and applied linguistics. It is useful for linguists, lexicographers, oil and gas specialists, and language planners interested in the development and standardization of technical terminology in Uzbek and other languages.

Keywords: *Explanatory Dictionary, Oil and Gas Terms, Scientific and Technical Vocabulary, Terminology*

How to Cite: Qizi, J. D. K. (2026). Oil and Gas Terminology in Explanatory Dictionaries. *Universal Teaching and Learning Journal*, 2(1), 1-10.

1. Introduction

The terminology of the oil and gas industry occupies a significant position in the scientific and technical lexicon of many modern languages, including Uzbek. As industries develop and technological processes become increasingly complex, language inevitably adapts to accommodate new concepts, tools, and systems. Terminology serves not only as a linguistic mechanism for naming specialized concepts but also as a structured system that reflects the evolution of knowledge within a specific field. In contemporary terminology theory, terms are understood as linguistic units that represent clearly defined concepts within a domain, and their stability and precision are essential for effective communication (Felber, 1980). In Uzbekistan, the oil and gas sector has played a strategic economic and industrial role for decades now. The expansion of exploration technologies, drilling systems, refining processes, petrochemical production, and transportation networks has led to the emergence of numerous specialized terms in the field (Syafrinaldi, Suriaatmadja, & Firman, 2025). These terms are used in professional documentation, higher education materials, technical standards, and increasingly in public

discourse through media, policy discussions, and environmental debates. The interaction between specialized terminology and general language usage creates a dynamic linguistic environment in which dictionaries become crucial mediators between expert knowledge and the broader society.

Lexicography and terminology studies emphasize that dictionaries are not neutral repositories of words; rather, they shape linguistic norms and conceptual understandings (Faber & Cabezas-García, 2019). Explanatory dictionaries are designed to provide definitions that reflect common usage and normative standards within a language community. Their primary function is to explain lexical meanings clearly and accessibly, often prioritizing comprehensibility over technical depth. In contrast, encyclopedic dictionaries tend to provide more detailed conceptual explanations, including historical, scientific, and technical background. This distinction is central to analyzing how oil and gas terms are represented in Uzbek dictionaries. Recent developments in terminological research highlight the importance of concept-oriented descriptions rather than purely word-based analyses (Felber, 1980). According to modern terminology principles, definitions should reflect the position of a concept within a broader system of related concepts. In technical domains such as oil and gas engineering, terms rarely function in isolation; they are interconnected within structured knowledge networks that involve processes, equipment, materials, and regulatory frameworks. Therefore, a simplified lexical definition may not fully represent the technical and scientific dimensions of a term (Faber, 2011).

The integration of specialized terminology into general dictionaries raises questions regarding semantic adaptation and simplification. Studies in lexicography show that when technical terms enter general-language dictionaries, they often undergo semantic reduction, retaining only the most general features (Topal, 2025). This reduction may facilitate accessibility for non-specialist users, but it can also limit the conceptual accuracy required in professional contexts. In the case of oil and gas terminology in Uzbek, explanatory dictionaries frequently provide generalized definitions that describe a term's broad function while omitting detailed technical characteristics of the term. Polysemy is another important issue in the representation of technical terms. Traditional terminology theory often promotes the principle of one-to-one correspondence between terms and concepts. However, contemporary linguistic research has demonstrated that polysemy is a natural and systematic feature of language (Li, 2024). A term may acquire additional meanings when used in different subfields or when it transitions into general discourse. For example, terms that originally referred to specific engineering processes may develop metaphorical or extended uses in everyday language. Therefore, lexicographers must determine how to structure dictionary entries to distinguish between specialized and general senses while maintaining coherence (Harahap & Yosepha, 2025).

In addition to polysemy, stylistic neutrality is a defining feature of explanatory dictionaries such as the DCE. These dictionaries typically avoid strongly marked technical or professional labels, unless necessary. As a result, oil and gas terms included in explanatory dictionaries are often presented without explicit domain markers, which may blur the distinction between specialized and general usage. Research on terminology management suggests that domain labeling and contextual information are essential tools for maintaining clarity in dictionary entries (Tran et al., 2018). The absence of such markers can reduce the user's awareness of the term's technical specificity. Another significant dimension is the normative function of the explanatory dictionaries. In many language communities, including Uzbek, explanatory dictionaries serve as authoritative references for spelling, morphology, and the standard usage. The inclusion of oil and gas terms confirms the integration of these units into the national lexical system. Terminology planning and language policy research underline that dictionary codification contributes to linguistic standardization and supports educational and administrative consistency (Felber, 1980). Thus, explanatory dictionaries not only describe oil and gas terms but also legitimize their status within the language they describe .

Simultaneously, digital transformation has reshaped lexicographic practices. Contemporary lexicography increasingly relies on corpus-based methods, computational analyses, and digital platforms to document usage patterns and semantic variations (Topal, 2025). Corpus-based terminology studies enable researchers to analyze real textual data from technical manuals, academic articles, and media sources. Such approaches allow for a more precise identification of context-dependent meanings

and collocational behavior. In oil and gas terminology, corpus analysis can reveal how terms function differently in scientific, regulatory and journalistic contexts. Recent research has also emphasized the use of automatic term extraction and computational tools in terminography (Tran et al., 2018). These methods enhance the systematic identification of domain-specific vocabulary and support the development of comprehensive terminological databases. However, explanatory dictionaries are often limited in scope compared to specialized terminological resources. This limitation highlights the need to analyze the effectiveness of explanatory dictionaries in capturing the conceptual complexity of oil and gas terminology (Bako, 2024).

Within Uzbek linguistics, studies on terminological development have noted that many scientific and technical terms are borrowed from international languages and are later adapted phonologically and morphologically to Uzbek norms. Such adaptation processes influence how terms are recorded in dictionaries and perceived by users. The stabilization of spelling variants, integration of loanwords, and clarification of semantic boundaries are essential tasks in lexicographic work. When explanatory dictionaries standardize oil and gas terms, they contribute to the harmonization of professional communication across education, translation, and industry sectors. Nevertheless, explanatory dictionaries cannot fully replace specialized glossaries and encyclopedic references. The frame-based terminology theory suggests that definitions should reflect conceptual relations within event structures and process systems (Faber & Cabezas-García, 2019). Oil and gas terminology is deeply embedded in operational frameworks such as drilling, extraction, refining, and transportation. Without reference to these frames, dictionary definitions may be conceptually shallow. This raises an important question regarding the balance between accessibility and technical precision in explanatory lexicography.

This study addresses these issues by examining the representation of oil and gas terminology in Uzbek explanatory dictionaries. It investigates the lexical and normative nature of definitions, the degree of simplification applied to technical meanings, the treatment of polysemy, and the stylistic neutrality of the entries. By comparing the characteristics of explanatory dictionary entries with the general principles of modern terminology theory, this study seeks to identify both the strengths and limitations of the current lexicographic practice. Understanding these features is important for several reasons, including the following. First, oil and gas terminology continues to expand because of technological innovation and environmental transformation. Second, effective communication in industry, education, and translation requires consistent and conceptually accurate definitions of terms. Third, lexicographic research contributes to broader discussions in applied linguistics, terminology management, and language planning. As global research increasingly emphasizes interdisciplinary approaches to terminology and digital lexicography, examining national dictionary practices has become an essential component of scholarly inquiry (Topal, 2025; Tran et al., 2018)

In conclusion, the terminology of the oil and gas industry reflects industrial progress and linguistic development. Explanatory dictionaries of the Uzbek language play a fundamental role in codifying and standardizing these terms in the general lexical system. However, their simplified and normative orientation may limit the representation of scientific and technical complexities. By situating the analysis within contemporary international research in lexicography and terminology studies, this article aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how specialized knowledge is mediated through general-language dictionaries and how terminological precision can be strengthened in future lexicographic practices (Bowker & Pearson, 2002).

2. Literature Review

Research on the representation of oil and gas terminology in explanatory dictionaries is closely related to developments in modern lexicography and terminology studies. Explanatory dictionaries traditionally function as normative reference sources that clarify lexical meanings for general users rather than provide detailed scientific or technical descriptions. Gouws and Tarp (2017) explains that general-purpose dictionaries must balance informativeness and accessibility, as excessive technical detail can result in information overload and reduce usability. This principle helps explain why oil and gas terms such as *oil*, *gas*, and *well* are often defined in simplified and generalized ways in explanatory dictionaries, focusing on essential characteristics rather than industrial complexity.

Contemporary terminology theory emphasizes that terms represent structured concepts rather than isolated lexical items. According to Felber (1980), terminology work should be concept-oriented and recognize hierarchical and associative relationships between concepts within a domain. In the oil and gas field, terms such as *drilling*, *reservoir*, *refinery*, and *pipeline* form interconnected conceptual systems that reflect exploration, extraction, processing, and distribution processes. However, explanatory dictionaries typically limit their definitions to core semantic features and do not elaborate on conceptual relations. Frame-Based Terminology offers a useful framework for evaluating this limitation. Faber and Cabezas-García (2019) argue that specialized meanings are structured through cognitive frames that include participants, instruments, processes, and outcomes. When technical terms are detached from these frames, their definitions may lose conceptual depth. Therefore, analyzing oil and gas terminology in explanatory dictionaries involves assessing whether the definitions preserve the minimal conceptual distinctions necessary for accurate interpretation.

Polysemy plays an important role in dictionary representation. Traditional terminology theory favors a one-term–one-concept principle, yet modern research acknowledges that polysemy is a natural feature of language development (Temmerman, 2000). Murphy (2010) noted that words frequently develop multiple related meanings depending on the context. In oil and gas terminology, certain lexical items may function as both general language words and technical designations. Explanatory dictionaries must carefully organize these meanings to avoid ambiguity. However, domain labeling is often limited or inconsistent in general dictionaries, which can blur the distinctions between specialized and non-specialized meanings. Studies on subject-field labeling highlight its importance in clarifying domain-specific usages. Nová and Mžourková (2017) demonstrated that subject labels serve both descriptive and normative purposes, guiding users in interpreting technical vocabulary. Similarly, Stachurska (2018) emphasized that labeling contributes to lexical codification by marking the functional context of usage. In Uzbek explanatory dictionaries, the relative absence of explicit domain labels for oil and gas terms reflects their orientation toward a general readership rather than specialized professionals.

Recent advances in digital lexicography have influenced the documentation of terminology. Fuertes-Olivera and Bergenholtz (2011) argues that digital dictionary platforms allow integration with terminological databases, providing layered information for different user groups and contexts. Topal (2025) bibliometric research shows that contemporary lexicographic studies increasingly incorporate corpus linguistics and technological tools. In oil and gas terminology research, corpus-based approaches can reveal authentic usage patterns in industry documents and academic texts, complementing simplified definitions. Automatic Term Extraction (ATE) has become a key development in terminology research. Tran et al. (2018) demonstrated that computational extraction tools enhance efficiency and consistency in terminology management. Applying such approaches to Uzbek oil and gas terminology could improve lexicographic documentation and identify newly emerging terms.

User-centered research emphasizes the importance of balancing simplicity and conceptual adequacy. (Márkus, Fajt, & Dringó-Horváth, 2023) show that dictionary users differ significantly in their expectations and competence levels. While general readers benefit from simplified explanations, specialists require more detailed conceptual information on the same topic. Therefore, explanatory dictionaries serve an essential normative and pedagogical function but may not fully satisfy professional needs in technical domains such as oil and gas extraction. Overall, the literature from the past decade suggests that explanatory dictionaries effectively integrate specialized terminology into the general language system; however, they often simplify scientific meaning and omit conceptual relations. The present study builds upon these insights to evaluate how oil and gas terminology is represented in Uzbek explanatory dictionaries and to assess the adequacy of such representations in light of contemporary terminology theories (Atkins & Rundell, 2008).

3. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design grounded in modern terminology studies and lexicographic theory. The objective of the methodology is to analyze how oil and gas terminology is represented in explanatory dictionaries of the Uzbek language, particularly focusing on semantic simplification, normative features, stylistic neutrality, and polysemy. The primary data source for this

research consists of officially published explanatory dictionaries of the Uzbek language, including both printed and digital editions issued by recognized academic and lexicographic institutions. These dictionaries were selected because of their normative authority and role as fundamental reference sources in Uzbek linguistic practice. The unit of analysis includes oil and gas related lexical items such as oil, gas, well, drilling, pipeline, reservoir, refinery, and other core terms representing extraction, processing, and transportation concepts (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

Data were collected through a systematic document analysis. Relevant entries were identified using keyword searches and thematic grouping within dictionaries. Each selected term was extracted along with its definition, grammatical information, stylistic labels (if any), and structural features. The data were organized into analytical categories to allow a comparison between lexical explanations and technical conceptual content. The analytical framework is based on the principles of terminology work and lexicographic theory. The concept-oriented approach outlined in Felber (1980) was applied to examine whether the dictionary definitions reflect the conceptual relations within the oil and gas domain. In addition, frame-based terminology theory (Faber & Cabezas-García, 2019) was used to evaluate whether the definitions incorporated essential conceptual components such as function, structure, process, and domain relations.

To assess semantic simplification, this study compared explanatory dictionary definitions with conceptual descriptions found in specialized oil and gas glossaries and academic textbooks. This comparative step enabled the identification of differences between general language explanations and technical definitions. The analysis focused on identifying omitted scientific attributes, the reduction of technical parameters, and the absence of relational conceptual structures. Polysemy was analyzed by examining whether the entries contained multiple senses and how these senses were organized. This study applied contemporary semantic perspectives on lexical meaning and polysemy (Murphy, 2010) to determine whether technical and general meanings were clearly distinguished. Attention was also paid to the presence or absence of domain labels, which are considered important tools for lexicographic clarity (Atkins & Rundell, 2008).

Stylistic neutrality and normative features were examined by analyzing grammatical markers, usage notes, orthographic standardization, and morphological adaptation of borrowed oil and gas terms. This step was guided by terminology harmonization principles and terminology management research Cabré (1999); (Roche, Calberg-Challot, Damas, & Rouard, 2009). The goal was to determine how explanatory dictionaries contribute to the stabilization and integration of technical vocabulary into the general Uzbek language system. The study did not employ statistical software or quantitative corpus analysis; instead, it relied on qualitative textual analysis and conceptual comparison. However, where necessary, examples of usage were consulted through publicly available Uzbek language corpora and academic publications to confirm contextual meaning. This methodology enables a systematic evaluation of how explanatory dictionaries represent oil and gas terminology in terms of semantic depth, conceptual structure, normative role, and accessibility. By combining lexicographic analysis with contemporary terminology theory, this study provides a structured approach to assess the strengths and limitations of explanatory dictionaries as sources of technical vocabulary representation.

4. Results and Discussions

Explanatory dictionaries occupy a central position in the codification and stabilization of the Uzbek literary language. Their primary function is to systematize lexical units, provide standardized meanings, and reflect accepted usage within a speech community. In this framework, oil and gas terminology is incorporated not as a highly specialized technical subsystem, but as part of the broader lexical structure of the language. The analysis of Uzbek explanatory dictionaries demonstrates that oil and gas terms are generally recorded as general-language lexical items and are defined in a simplified, accessible form. This reflects the communicative purpose of explanatory dictionaries, which prioritize clarity and normative stability over technical comprehensiveness (Pustejovsky, 1991).

Modern lexicographic theory emphasizes that general-purpose dictionaries are designed for wide audiences rather than domain experts (Lew, 2015). Consequently, definitions tend to focus on essential

semantic features that enable comprehension without requiring professional knowledge. In the case of oil and gas terminology, this tendency results in condensed definition. For example, the term “oil” is defined as a flammable liquid mineral resource that is found underground. Although this definition accurately captures the fundamental characteristics of petroleum, it does not address hydrocarbon composition, sedimentary basin formation, refining processes, or petrochemical derivatives.

This simplification aligns with the principles discussed by Atkins and Rundell (2008), who argue that general dictionaries must avoid excessive encyclopedic detail to prevent cognitive overload. Similarly, Béjoint (2000) noted that explanatory dictionaries aim to describe words as elements of language rather than as scientific objects. Therefore, oil and gas terminology in explanatory dictionaries primarily functions as lexical information rather than technical documentation. The absence of detailed technological descriptions does not imply inadequacy; rather, it reflects the structural limitations and communicative objectives of explanatory dictionaries. Standard (2008) distinguishes between terminological resources, which are concept-oriented and domain-specific, and general dictionaries, which are word-oriented and usage-based. The Uzbek explanatory dictionaries examined in this study clearly fall within this category.

Another notable finding is the absence of specific domain labels. Oil and gas terms are frequently presented without markers such as “industry,” “technology,” or “geology.” Research on subject-field labeling indicates that such markers help users distinguish specialized meanings from general ones (Salgado, Costa, & Tasovac, 2021). However, in the Uzbek explanatory dictionaries analyzed, the omission of domain labels suggests that oil and gas terminology has been integrated into the general lexicon. This integration reflects the socio-economic importance of the oil and gas sector in Uzbekistan, where such terms are no longer confined to narrow professional discourse but also appear in media, education, and public communication (Jumaah, 2025).

From a normative perspective, explanatory dictionaries play a stabilizing role in language. By recording standardized spelling, morphological adaptation, and accepted semantic interpretation, lexical consistency is ensured. According to Cabré (1999), terminology codification is essential for harmonizing communication across institutions and educational contexts. In this regard, explanatory dictionaries contribute to the normalization of oil and gas terminology in Uzbek, even if they do not provide full conceptual details. Nevertheless, limitations are evident in this study. The oil and gas industry is a highly complex technical domain characterized by interconnected conceptual systems. Frame-Based Terminology research emphasizes that technical terms should be analyzed within event structures and conceptual frames (Faber & Cabezas-García, 2019). When a term such as “well” is defined simply as a structure drilled into the ground to extract oil, gas, or water, the operational complexity of drilling techniques, pressure control systems, and safety mechanisms remains unrepresented in the definition. Thus, explanatory dictionaries cannot serve as sufficient resources for engineers, geologists, and industry specialists. To clarify this distinction, the conceptual differences between explanatory and specialized representations can be illustrated.

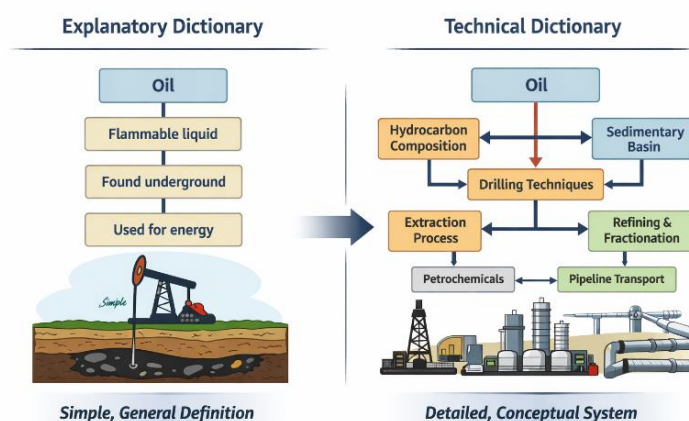


Figure 1. Lexical vs conceptual representation

Figure 1 illustrates the contrast between the lexical representation of oil terminology in explanatory dictionaries and the concept-oriented representation in technical dictionaries. The left side demonstrates how explanatory dictionaries provide a simplified, general definition of *oil*, highlighting basic characteristics such as being a flammable liquid found underground and used for energy production. In contrast, the right side presents a detailed conceptual system in which *oil* is embedded within interconnected technical processes, including hydrocarbon composition, sedimentary basins, drilling techniques, extraction, refining, petrochemicals, and pipeline transportation. This comparison visually emphasizes the difference between word-oriented lexical explanations and structured conceptual representations within specialized terminology. Another significant aspect of the analysis is polysemy. Several oil and gas terms originate from the general vocabulary and later acquire specialized meanings through industrial development. For example, the word “layer” may first denote a general arrangement of overlapping elements and subsequently refer to geological strata relevant to hydrocarbon exploration. This pattern confirms the findings of semantic research, indicating that technical terminology often emerges through the semantic specialization of existing lexical items (Murphy, 2010).

Temmerman (2000) argues that modern terminology should recognize the dynamic and evolving nature of concepts rather than rigidly enforcing one-term–one-concept principles. In explanatory dictionaries, multiple senses are typically organized hierarchically, with the general meaning presented first and the technical meaning recorded second. This structure demonstrates that explanatory dictionaries retain a lexical rather than a strictly terminological orientation. The connection between general vocabulary and specialized terminology also highlights lexicalization. As industrial activity expands, certain technical terms become sufficiently widespread to enter general discourse. Schierholz (2015) indicates that lexicographic inclusion reflects frequency and sociolinguistic relevance rather than purely technical criteria. Thus, oil and gas terms in Uzbek explanatory dictionaries symbolize both linguistic integration and socioeconomic prominence.

Stylistic neutrality is another defining feature. Explanatory dictionaries avoid evaluative or emotive language and present definitions in a neutral descriptive form. For instance, “fuel” is defined as a substance that produces energy through combustion without reference to economic value, geopolitical significance, or environmental implications. This neutrality aligns with lexicographic norms that emphasize objectivity and linguistic standardization (Svensén, 2009). The preservation of stylistic neutrality supports the primary function of explanatory dictionaries as linguistic authorities, rather than ideological or industrial commentaries. However, this also means that broader contextual dimensions, such as environmental impact or strategic importance, remain outside the scope of the definition. This reinforces the conclusion that explanatory dictionaries are fundamentally language-focused rather than knowledge-system-focused.

Digital lexicography further contextualizes these results. Contemporary dictionary platforms allow for integration with corpus data and terminological database (Fuentes-Olivera & Bergenholtz, 2011). If Uzbek explanatory dictionaries evolve into digital formats, they can maintain simplified core definitions while linking them to more detailed technical resources. Such hybrid models would preserve accessibility while enhancing the conceptual depth. In summary, the results confirm that explanatory dictionaries in Uzbek systematize oil and gas terminology as part of the general literary language. They provide simplified definitions, omit extensive technical details, rarely employ domain labels, maintain stylistic neutrality, and organize polysemous entries according to general lexical principles. While insufficient for professional specialization, these dictionaries fulfill crucial normative, educational, and stabilizing functions in the language system.

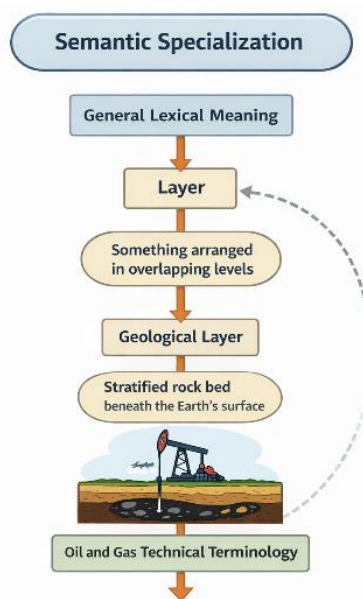


Figure 2. Semantic specialization: from general lexical meaning to oil and gas technical terminology

Figure 2. Semantic specialization of terminology

Figure 2 illustrates the process of semantic specialization, in which a general lexical unit develops into a domain-specific oil and gas term. The diagram illustrates how an everyday word, such as layer, initially carries a broad meaning and later acquires a technical geological meaning related to stratified rock formations beneath the Earth's surface. This transformation demonstrates how explanatory dictionaries record both general and specialized senses, reflecting the integration of industrial terminology into the general lexical system of the Uzbek language. Words that originally functioned in everyday language gradually acquire domain-specific meanings as industrial and scientific contexts evolve. This semantic shift does not eliminate the original meaning but instead creates a layered semantic structure in which general and technical meanings coexist in the same word. To illustrate this process, the transformation from general lexical meaning to technical terminology can be represented as follows.

5. Conclusions

5.1. Conclusion

In conclusion, oil and gas industry terminology occupies an important place in the scientific and technical lexicon of the Uzbek language, and its presentation in explanatory dictionaries is significant from the perspectives of terminology and linguistic norms. Explanatory dictionaries primarily present oil and gas terms as general lexical units and serve to reinforce their normative forms in literary language. In explanatory dictionaries, terms are explained through simplified and concise definitions, and their scientific and technical essence is not elaborated. This is due to the fact that explanatory dictionaries are intended for a broad readership. Therefore, they occupy an important place as initial and normative sources within oil and gas terminology.

5.2. Research Limitations

This study is limited to the analysis of explanatory dictionaries of the Uzbek language and does not include encyclopedic dictionaries, specialized technical glossaries, or bilingual terminological resources for a comparative evaluation. It also relies solely on qualitative textual analysis without incorporating corpus-based quantitative methods or user-oriented studies to assess how effectively the definitions meet the needs of different audiences.

5.3. Suggestions and Directions for Future Research

Future research may expand the scope by comparing various dictionary types, applying corpus linguistics to examine the real usage patterns of oil and gas terminology, conducting user comprehension studies, and exploring cross-linguistic comparisons to strengthen terminological standardization and digital lexicographic development.

Acknowledgement

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to the academic institutions and lexicographic centers whose published explanatory dictionaries of the Uzbek language served as primary sources for this research. We also appreciate the valuable insights and constructive feedback provided by colleagues and experts in linguistics and terminology studies during the development of this study. The author acknowledges the support of the affiliated institution in providing access to academic resources and reference materials necessary to complete this research. No specific external funding was received for this study.

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