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COMMONLY CONFUSED WORDS IN CONTRASTIVE AND DYNAMIC DICTIONARY ENTRIES

Keywords Paronyms; lexicography; contrastive entries

In German, as in other languages, there are lexical items with related morphological roots and similarities in sound, spelling and/or meaning. These are easily confused by native speakers and language learners. They are referred to as paronyms, and examples include *effektiv/effizient*, *legal/legitim*, *autoritär/autoritativ* and *sensibel/sensitiv*. Paronyms have so far only been documented in two printed dictionaries (Ammon 2004; Wulf/Shea 2002, p. 211). Both reference books base their descriptions on introspection and arbitrary evidence taken from fiction. They are traditional dictionaries, prescriptive in nature, their entries are limited to specific aspects of meaning, and they do not cover polysemous items in detail. Their central aim is to guide users to the allegedly correct use and describe a clear distinction between the items in question.

Among other criteria, it is the referential/ontological categories underneath the definitions that enable users to distinguish patterns and help them to encode/decode contexts and identify metonymic and metaphoric mappings (cf. Delbecque/van der Auwera/Geeraerts (eds.) 2005). Users can more easily relate the adjectives to their meanings and then relate these to the preferred contextual reference (here modified nouns), e.g.

- 1) *sportlich* means ‘concerning sports’ with respect to a PROCESS, EVENT or MATTER, for example performance, pursuit, success, ambition, highlight,
- 2) *sportlich* means ‘powerful and sleek’ with respect to a CAR, for example car, Sport Utility Vehicle, chassis, SUV, coupé,
- 3) *sportlich* means ‘comfortable’ with respect to CLOTHES, for example clothing, leisure wear, apparel, casual clothes, evening dress.

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