Is there a place for orthographic dictionaries in the 21st century?

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Defining orthographic dictionaries as works that present orthographic information (Hartmann and James 1998) does not facilitate a clear understanding of what these works really are, since any language dictionary does the same. Our first concern was to clarify what an orthographic dictionary is, and in asking this question, we explored the main characteristics of orthographic dictionaries. Language dictionaries can be categorised into general language dictionaries and specialised dictionaries. An orthographic dictionary belongs to the latter subcategory since its object is a specialised element of the linguistic description, that is the orthographic form of the lemma, whereas normativity is the central functional feature (Buchmann 2015). Our second concern was related to Portuguese orthographic dictionaries as they still have not been the subject of in-depth study that considers the long and rich tradition of orthographic vocabularies (Hartmann and James 1998) in Portugal. This contribution also aimed to offer an overview of the history of Portuguese orthographic vocabularies (Verdelho 2013) where they play(ed) an essential role as a normative instrument. On the other hand, we sought to question the usefulness of this type of works in a digital environment in which they are overtaken by general dictionaries themselves and spellcheckers.

This paper has three main sections: 1) First, we address the theoretical framework, focusing on orthographic dictionaries. The notions of orthography and normativity are discussed, and we question if there is a place for orthographic dictionaries in this century. 2) Then, we engage in the macrostructural and microstructural analysis of the *VOLP-1940 – Vocabulário Ortográfico da Língua Portuguesa* [Portuguese Language Vocabulary] (4: 5), published by the Lisbon Academy of Sciences, and explore the main characteristics of this work. 3) We discuss the pertinence of this type of dictionary and its role and place in a digital environment, aiming to preserve the original and historical work, pointing out the added value that these works bring compared to contemporary spellcheckers.

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