



THE CONCEPT OF DEMOGRAPHIC LEXICS

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Annotation:

This article explores the concept of demographic lexics as a specialized terminological system that reflects population processes, structures, and trends. It examines the formation, classification, and evolution of demographic vocabulary across disciplinary boundaries and in different sociocultural contexts. The paper analyzes how demographic lexics both shapes and is shaped by social attitudes toward population issues, highlighting its role in scientific discourse, policy formulation, and public communication about demographic phenomena.

Keywords: demographic terminology, population linguistics, sociolinguistics, terminological systems, demographic discourse, specialized vocabulary, interdisciplinary communication, demographic concepts, lexical borrowing, diachronic linguistics

Firstly, demographic lexics constitutes a specialized terminological subsystem of language that has developed to describe, analyze, and communicate about population structures, processes, and changes. As demographics increasingly influences policy decisions, resource allocation, and social planning, the terminology used to discuss population matters has gained heightened significance in both academic and public discourse¹. Secondly, this terminological system encompasses vocabulary related to fertility, mortality, migration, population composition, and demographic transitions—serving as an essential toolkit for researchers, policymakers, and communicators working with population data.

¹ McFalls, J. A. (2007). Population: A lively introduction (5th ed.). Population Reference Bureau, p. 3.



The study of demographic lexis lies at the intersection of terminology science, sociolinguistics, and demography itself. It addresses not merely the technical vocabulary used by specialists but also how demographic concepts permeate everyday language and shape public understanding of population issues.

Formation and structure of demographic lexis

Historical development

The terminological system of demography emerged gradually alongside the development of population studies as a distinct field of inquiry. Early demographic vocabulary drew heavily from mathematics, statistics, and administrative language, reflecting the field's roots in population counting and vital statistics. The 18th century works of Thomas Malthus introduced terms such as “population pressure” and “preventive checks” that continue to influence demographic discourse today, demonstrating the remarkable persistence of certain demographic concepts².

Additionally, the 20th century witnessed substantial expansion of demographic terminology as the field became increasingly specialized and institutionalized. International organizations such as the United Nations Population Division played crucial roles in standardizing demographic terms across languages to facilitate comparative research and global policy discussions³.

Typological Classification

Demographic lexis can be classified along several dimensions that reveal its structure and formation patterns:

1. **By origin:** Terms may derive from general vocabulary through semantic specialization (e.g., “fertility,” “cohort”), be purposefully coined within the field (e.g., “demographic dividend”), or represent borrowings from other disciplines (e.g., “carrying capacity” from ecology)⁴.
2. **By conceptual domain:** Terminological subsystems have developed around core demographic processes: natality (birth rates, fertility measures), mortality (life

² McFalls, J. A. (2007). Population: A lively introduction (5th ed.). Population Reference Bureau, p. 5.

³ Bongaarts, J., & Bulatao, R. A. (Eds.). (2000). Beyond six billion: Forecasting the world's population. National Academy Press, p. 29.

⁴ Pressat, R. (1985). The dictionary of demography. Blackwell, p. xii.



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expectancy, survival rates), migration (immigration, emigration), and population structure (age pyramids, dependency ratios)⁵.

3. **By degree of specialization:** Terms range from highly technical vocabulary used primarily by specialists (e.g., “total fertility rate,” “lexis diagram”) to semi-specialized terms that regularly appear in public discourse (e.g., “aging population,” “baby boom”)⁶.

4. **By linguistic structure:** Demographic terms include simple lexical units (e.g., “census”), compound terms (e.g., “age-specific fertility”), abbreviations (e.g., “TFR” for total fertility rate), and terminological phrases (e.g., “replacement level fertility”)⁷.

In conclusion, demographic lexics represents a dynamic terminological system that both reflects and shapes our understanding of population processes. Its development illustrates how specialized vocabulary emerges at the intersection of scientific inquiry, policy needs, and social discourse. As a bridge between specialized demographic knowledge and broader social understanding, demographic terminology plays a crucial role in how societies conceptualize and respond to population changes.

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⁵ Pavlík, Z. (2000). What is demography? In Z. Pavlík (Ed.), Position of demography among other disciplines. Charles University, p. 12.

⁶ McFalls, J. A. (2007). Population: A lively introduction (5th ed.). Population Reference Bureau, p. 7.

⁷ Pressat, R. (1985). The dictionary of demography. Blackwell, p. xiv.



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