

The Role of Lexicography in Enrichment and Development of Language

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Abstract

Lexicography, as a linguistic subfield of scholarly discipline, is a scholarly discipline that involves compiling, writing, or editing dictionaries. In its both forms of theoretical and practical types, the discipline serves as the reliable source of information for language users. If lexicography is made the area of focus for scholars, it can contribute effectively in enriching and developing the language. The current study investigates descriptively the effect of lexicography as an academic discipline has on language development and enrichment. To this end, a group of bilingual English/Kurdish Kurdish/English dictionaries are examined as the material to be investigated the extent to which they can serve as a reliable information source for language users. The dictionaries are tested to find out whether they meet the criteria of a reliable source of information found in the group effort exerted in creating them. The results of the study show that most of the lexicographers served as the lexicographer and terminologist at the same time reaching to the extremist case of playing all the roles at the same time. The insights gained from the results of the study include assertion on group effort to create language for specific purpose dictionaries. It also opens windows through which theoretical areas of language enrichment can be achieved through lexicography. Dictionaries and lexicographers make the information available for language users. Language users, in turn, make the dictionaries the authoritative source of information and hence rely on them. Language is developed through development of its terminology. The role of the terminologist is to create terms and the lexicographer includes them in the dictionary. If the dictionary is the result of a group effort, then it can be considered a reliable source of information. By group effort the role the lexicographer, terminologist and subject expert play is referred to.

Introduction

In answering the question “what requirements must a dictionary meet in order to be called a dictionary?”, Van Sterkenburg (2003) refers to three criteria by which a verifiable answer to the question can be provided. These are formal criteria, functional criteria and criteria regarding content. Based on the above quote, any type of dictionaries ought to meet the criteria to function efficiently and be used as a reliable resource. Bilingual dictionaries, in particular, since their function doubled as the companion for language learners, are required to be qualified as reliable resource. This can only be done by examining the extent to which bilingual dictionaries provide the features language learners find dictionaries should have. In the current paper, apart from being judgmental, attempts to find the answer to the question above with regard to Kurdish-English/English-Kurdish bilingual dictionaries. To this end, a feasible method is adopted that can achieve the intended aim objectively. However, a general overview of lexicography and dictionaries is inevitable.

The paper consists of three sections: Lexicography, Methodology and Conclusion. The first section comprises the subsections Terms and definitions of lexicography, theoretical lexicography and practical lexicography. The second section includes the role lexicography in preserving language, criteria to assess the dictionary and methodology. At the end, results are analyzed and discussed with conclusion.

Lexicography: Terms and definitions

Lexicography is defined as the “Theory and practice of compiling dictionaries. (Hadumod, 2006:682). Hadumod (2006) maintains that lexicography provides the principles that are necessary for documenting the vocabulary of a language, a dialect or a profession by drawing on lexicology with its theoretical bases and materials for lexicographic codification and by taking practical concerns such as marketability, user-friendliness, etc. into consideration. The form of presentation depends on whether one intends to compile a single or multi-language lexicon, a diachronic or synchronic record of a specific vocabulary, or a descriptive or prescriptive reference work. The distinct purpose of the individual types of dictionaries determines how the materials are to be organized. While alphabetic ordering is by far the most frequent type, some dictionaries are systematically compiled according to semantic principles. A variant of alphabetic indexing is the so-called ‘backwards dictionary’ which is based on rhyme dictionaries of the Middle Ages. Entries (lemma) are ordered alphabetically according to their final letters or syllables. This type of dictionary is particularly useful, since morphological relationships between words become transparent through their presentation. In contrast to these paradigmatically oriented dictionaries, style dictionaries codify the material according to syntagmatic principles by listing catchwords within syntactic constructions (e.g. idioms or phrases). So-called ‘valence dictionaries’ are also syntactically oriented; verbs, nouns, or adjectives are compiled according to their valence (i.e. their compatibility with obligatory complements). Lexicography is divided into two related areas which are explained below.

Practical and Theoretical lexicography

The process of compiling, editing and writing of dictionaries is known as practical lexicography. “The analysis or description of the vocabulary of a particular language, and the meaning that links certain words to others in a dictionary, is known as Theoretical Lexicography.” (cited in Bergenholtz & Gouws 2012). Theoretical lexicography deals with the structural and semantic aspects of the vocabularies of a particular language. Theoretical lexicography is also known as metalexigraphy. “In case of bilingual dictionaries the efficiency can be increased by making use of existing electronic files of monolingual or bilingual dictionaries.” (Honselaar, 2003, p.325). Consequently bilingual dictionaries differ from monolingual dictionaries, not only because the number of languages they contain is different, as some metalexigraphers clarify, but because different sets of options operate and are selected for each participant in the communicative model (Yong and Peng, 2007). Lexicographers need to incorporate just a choice of the things found in the corpora, and they describe only some meanings, or utilizations, of a lexeme, those which appear to be most frequent and typical. Dictionaries need to contain only generalizations about what is the most common in language. (Bowker, 2006)

The role of lexicography in preserving language

Lexicography as the linguistic discipline to compile, write and edit dictionaries can have a substantial role in preserving, developing and enriching language. Dictionaries are sorted out to be used as references, didactic tools and “an ideological weapon” in Hartmann’s (1987:124) terms, safeguarding “the moral and ideological values of the society” (Bejoint,1994:124). The traditional primary function of a dictionary is to serve as reference. Yong and Peng (2007) state:

The dictionary may be designed to give an exhaustive description of a dead language like Latin or a selective description of the lexicon of a living language, thus functioning as a storehouse for the vocabulary of a language, a branch of knowledge or even an individual person, i.e. a writer. (p. 3)

Dictionaries, bilingual dictionaries in particular, function as instructive tools providing guidelines for correct usage and improving inter-cultural communication. They offer the best ever company to the language learners and users as they are the mere instrument by which understanding and comprehension of the target language is enhanced. Hence, lexicographers tend to carry on the responsibility of designing, compiling and making dictionaries in a way that they can be considered reliable sources of knowledge, fulfill the overall purposes and meet the criteria or live up to the user expectations. “Lexicographers will have to formulate their own guidelines for entry selection in the process of dictionary-making to live up to user expectations in their retrieval of lexical information and guarantee the greatest utility and efficiency possible for their work as a reference tool.” (Yong & Peng, 2007, p. 2). Yong and Pen state:

Whoever decides to embark upon a new dictionary project will have to think, before they actually set to work, about such rudimentary questions as for whom and for what purpose the dictionary is to be compiled, how entry words are to be selected, how dictionary structure is to be organized, how pronunciation is to be transcribed, how words are to be defined, how meanings are to be differentiated, and so on. (p. 11)

Yong and Peng (2007) contend that twelve recommendations are made the most comprehensive criteria by which bilingual dictionaries can be assessed and evaluated. The recommendations provide the basic elements of dictionaries, both passive and active bilingual dictionaries, should have and bilingual lexicographers should abide by. The following are the main criteria.

Criteria to assess dictionaries:

1. Lexicographic purposes and choices:

Bilingual lexicographic communication is mainly conducted for “encoding” and “decoding” purposes. Bilingual lexicographers ought to have a clear idea of what aim their work is planned for and how the choices they select will best suit the dictionary purpose and reflect their lexicographic strategies and choices. There is a functional differentiation between the active type (dictionaries for production or encoding) and the passive type (dictionaries for comprehension or decoding). This separation has not been put into wide practice, as is regularly recognized.

At the present stage it is maybe most practical and realistic to maintain the division of bilingual dictionaries into active (encoding) and passive (decoding) types. It is basic for bilingual lexicographers to have a general picture of what each of the two dictionary types ought to resemble and highlight the components and elements of the two particular sorts when they are being planned and to choose lexicographic alternatives appropriately.

2. Active and passive dictionary designs

Different bilingual dictionary types differ in information focus and selection. Bilingual dictionaries for “encoding” should focus on such information varieties as to promote active language use and enhance linguistic output.

A bilingual dictionary for “encoding” should be an active dictionary plus a thesaurus. The explanation behind such a combination is that an active dictionary must help produce texts, which requires not only the effective use of the grammar and vocabulary of the source language but also a good choice of source language lexical items to express ideas appropriately and idiomatically.

The bilingual dictionary for “decoding” should focus as much on semantic functions as possible to promote text comprehension. Furthermore the bilingual lexicographers’ essential task is to assist dictionary users to overcome anisomorphism in intercultural communication. Information concerning lexical usage should be restricted. The description of word grammar, for instance, should be restricted to word classes, their division into subclasses and their morphological features.

3. Macrostructural organization

In active bilingual dictionaries the nest alphabetic arrangement of entry words should always be favored over the straight alphabetic strategy or the letter-by-letter arrangement, and derivatives and compounds should be treated in the nest under the lemma.

Passive bilingual dictionaries, however, should embrace the straight alphabetic or the letter-by-letter arrangement of entry words and list derivatives and compounds as lemmata in the macrostructure if their significant structure is relatively independent of the lemma.

4. Lexical classes discriminated

The lexicon is one of the subsystems constituting the language system and contains different classes. Bilingual dictionaries should distinguish between these categories of lexical items in the source language and adopt steady lexicographic policies and methods of treatment within the same classification and treat different categories of lexical items according to their separate qualities.

5. Equivalence presentation

Methods of equivalence presentation should differ with active and passive bilingual dictionary types. The active type should mainly employ translation and explanatory equivalents to present the signification of source language lexical items and the passive type should employ translation equivalents as the major technique lemma

6. Meaning discrimination

Meaning discrimination can facilitate textual comprehension. In distinguishing between meanings, bilingual lexicographers should use one or more time-tested monolingual dictionaries as the base and focus on what lexical items essentially mean rather than what they mean in individual contexts.

Bilingual dictionaries should provide their users with the basic conventionalized meaning of the word and guide them towards the right understanding of the word instead of offering full substitutes for the word characterized. Bilingual lexicographers must look at what is around the word, yet more importantly they should first look at what the word implies in itself.

Hartmann (2004) believed that there are two types of translation: from L1 to L2 and from L2 to L1. Both types present difficulties of a different scope to the translator, or to the learner. Translation into one's own language is typically considered simple, as the translator can rely on his or her own competence. When translating into a foreign language the translator's competence cannot be relied on, mainly if the translator is a beginning learner.

7. Grammatical description

Active and passive bilingual dictionaries show a marked difference in their needs for grammatical description. For passive bilingual dictionaries, grammatical description should be restricted to the simplest levels (e.g. labels of word classes, their classification into subclasses and the indication of morphological features). For active bilingual dictionaries, however, it should be extended to include such "larger" information items as syntactic, combinatory and contextual features and idiomatic usage.

8. Lexical combination

Bilingual lexicographers must tell dictionary users what lexical items routinely co-occur to form larger linguistic units. It is especially significant to reflect this habitual co-occurrence and remind dictionary users to avoid possible lexical mismatches and traps in the active bilingual dictionary. and traps in the active bilingual dictionary.

9. Labels and glosses

Labels and glosses are employed to specify, enhance, supplement and/ or delimit the semantic content of target language equivalents and to suggest the stylistic and register range of the source language item. Labels and glosses are essential supplementary approaches of creating equivalence between the language pair and facilitating text comprehension and production.

10. Exemplification

Bilingual dictionaries need examples to display the semantic content and morphosyntactic behavior of source language items. It is purpose and effectiveness that determine the choice between authentic and invented examples, and regarding their arrangement, it is recommended to adhere to the principle of their arrangement, it is advisable to follow the principle of it is advisable to adhere to the principle of o the principle of “examples immediately after definitions” in both active and passive bilingual dictionaries.

Examples in bilingual dictionaries may be arranged in two ways. One way is to provide examples immediately after the definitions they illustrate. The other way is to collect examples and present them all together in corresponding numbers after lexical definitions.

11. Idiom treatment

In working with idioms, bilingual lexicographers are faced with two fundamental problems: location and translation. In the course of dictionary compilation, bilingual lexicographers will have to rely on one or more time-tested monolingual dictionaries and strive to provide the closest translation equivalents on a comparative basis to match their monolingual definitions conceptually and non-conceptually. The main procedures include literal translation, free translation, a combination of literal and free translation, literal translation plus explanation and transferred translation.

12. Word histories

Word histories in bilingual dictionaries can help to trace the historical evolution of the meaning and use of lexical items, cultivate cultural consciousness, increase vocabulary power and facilitate text comprehension.

Methodology: materials, tools for examining the materials.

The method of the current paper is diagnostic descriptive approach. The design is to examine bilingual dictionaries against criteria by which a sound dictionary is identified. The primary aim of the paper is to explore the extent to which Kurdish-English and English-Kurdish bilingual dictionaries meet the established features found in other bilingual dictionaries of which English language is a part. Additionally, the method is to find out the defaults of those dictionaries that created a sort of confusion among their users. Hence, the paper has a diagnostic feature by which areas of weakness, which affect the dictionaries to lose the main objective found in language enhancement and development, are identified and described. The purpose of identifying and describing weakness areas is intended to be constructive in nature

aiming at finding and offering solution to the problems by which the inter-cultural communication and foreign language learning is impeded.

List of Kurdish-English and English-Kurdish dictionaries with examples:

* *Rebin Dictionary*

Author: Rebin Ali 2014-2015

book:/bok/ Pertuk, dagre, tomardakat

* *FREELANG Kurdish-English and English-Kurdish*

Author: Erdal Rohani 2014

Taking an example of a word in *FREELANG Kurdish-English and English-Kurdish*

book: pirtûk

Discussion of analysis and results

In the above part two bilingual dictionaries were chosen randomly and examined by taking examples from them. The results of the analysis show that the first dictionary has got transcription and three different translations for the word (book). Whereas the second dictionary just translated the word (book) in one word without any transcription. According to these examples the definition of lemma didn't meet the recommended criteria by Yong and Peng (2007). None of these dictionaries meet the criteria as a reliable source for language users. They are different in other bilingual dictionaries that could be used as reliable sources for language users. Indeed, the above dictionaries have yet more to offer.

A feature which most learners who utilize their dictionary not only for decoding but also for encoding have constantly discovered valuable is the indication of syllabification by dots in the headwords. Phonetic information is given in IPA signs, and part-of-speech information is marked in full since abbreviations at this stage of foreign-language competence were considered an impediment to easy reference.

A question might be raised 'should dictionaries describe words only or words together with their contexts?'. Johannes P. Louw (1995:357) has provided a convincing answer. "It is of the utmost importance to distinguish lexical meaning from contextual meaning". Despite of the fact that failing to do so causes the danger of assuming or suggesting the meanings of (book) are defined which may be applied to other contexts where they may not fit.

Conclusion

Most of the Kurdish-English/English-Kurdish dictionaries are categorized as passive bilingual dictionaries tested against the criteria of sound bilingual dictionaries. The main criterion is that passive bilingual dictionaries provide users assistance in understanding the source language texts, i.e. they employ translation equivalent as the major technique.

One can recommend and state that with regard to dictionary production certain conditions have to be met. In the first point, there should be a lexicographic planning and sufficient funding. In the second place, there should be professional training for lexicographers at university and college level. In the third place, lexicographic tools such as databases, corpora and reference lexicons should be developed. As all the above recommendations are interrelated, lacking of these criteria makes the bilingual dictionaries not to function properly in serving their role of preserving the language. Hence, the dictionaries analyzed in the current study could not play their role to enhance and develop of a language because they didn't meet the recommended criteria. We conclude that the role of lexicography in enhancing and developing language cannot be achieved, or it is not played efficiently if the bilingual dictionaries couldn't make a reliable source for dictionary users.

What we want to say is this: if we are serious about producing high-quality educationally oriented bilingual dictionaries we also have to consider measures of quality control. This could perhaps be achieved by a kind of convention between quality conscious dictionary publishers or by recommendations presented by expert networks like this who are involved in cultural education. If we were able to achieve a certain standard product level for bilingual learners' dictionaries across Kurdistan, future buyers would then be able to distinguish between trash and quality.

To achieve better dictionary production, specialist university courses and degrees in Lexicography (and Metalexicography) will be required, together with the establishment of the essential institutional infrastructure and finance.

The essential factor of this paper is the set of Recommendations of how to increase dictionary awareness and explore the effect of lexicography as an academic discipline has on language development and enhancement.

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المخلص

علم المعاجم او صناعة تأليف القواميس، كأحد فروع اللغوي من المعرفة العلمي، هو الفرع المعرفي العلمي الذي ينطوي على تجميع وكتابة، أو تحرير القواميس. الفرع المعرفي، في كل أنواعه النظري والعملي، يستخدم كمصدر موثوق للمعلومات لمستخدمي اللغة. في حال إتخاذ المعاجم مجال التركيز للباحثين، يمكن أن تسهم بشكل فعال في إثراء وتطوير اللغة. يتناول هذه الدراسة الحالية بشكل وصفي تأثير المعاجم كفرع أكاديمي على تطور اللغة والإثراءها. تحقيقا لهذه الغاية، يتم دراسة مجموعة من القواميس ثنائية اللغة الانجليزية / الكردية الكردية/ الانكليزية كمادة ليتم التحقيق فيهما إلى أي مدى يمكن أن تكون مصدر معلومات موثوق بها لمستخدمي اللغة. يتم اختبار القواميس لمعرفة ما إذا كانت تلي معايير المعجم الذي يمكن ان يكون مصدرا موثوقا للمعلومات وجدت في جهد جماعي المبذولة في صناعته. أظهرت نتائج الدراسة بأن معظم معجمي شغل منصب معجمي وأخصائي مصطلحات في نفس الوقت والوصول إلى حالة لعب كل الأدوار في نفس الوقت. وتشمل الخبرات المكتسبة من نتائج هذه الدراسة التأكيد على جهد جماعي لتأليف القواميس لغرض محدد. كما اظهر النتائج بفتح الوافذ من خلالها يمكن تطوير الجانب النظري للغة لا يمكن أن يتحقق الا من خلال المعاجم. القواميس ومعجمي تجعل المعلومات متاحة لمستخدمي اللغة. مستخدمي اللغة، بدوره، يجعل القواميس مصدر موثوق به للمعلومات، وبالتالي الاعتماد عليها. ومن ثم يتم تطوير اللغة من خلال تطوير مصطلحاته. دور أخصائي مصطلحات هو الكشف عن مصطلحات والمعجمي يدخلهم في القاموس. إذا القاموس هو نتيجة لجهد جماعي، ومن ثم يمكن اعتباره مصدرا موثوقا للمعلومات. من خلال جهد جماعي، الدور الذي يلعبه كل من معجمي، أخصائي مصطلحات وخبير الموضوع يشار بيه.

پوخته

فهره‌نگ دانان وهك لقیکی زمانه‌وانی ریگیه‌کی زانستییه که خوئی ده‌بینیته‌وه له کوکردنه‌وه و نویسن و ده‌ستکاری کردن و چاک کردنی فهره‌نگدا. له‌ه‌ردوو شیوه‌ی کرداری و تیوری دا خزمه‌ت به به‌کاره‌ینه‌ر ده‌کات له به‌کاره‌ینه‌انی فهره‌نگ وه‌کو سه‌رچاوه‌یه‌کی باوه‌رپیکراو. کاتیک فهره‌نگ دانان بوار ده‌دات به تویره‌ره‌کان، فهره‌نگ ده‌توانیت رۆلیکی کارای هه‌بیته له به‌ره‌و پیش بردنی زماندا. ئەم تویره‌ینه‌وه‌یه له فهره‌نگ دانان ده‌کوئلیته‌وه وه‌کو ریگیه‌یه‌کی ئەکادیمی که کاریگه‌ری هه‌بیته له‌سه‌ر ده‌وله‌مه‌ند کردن و به‌ره‌و پیش بردنی زمان. بو ئە مه‌به‌سته کومه‌لیک فهره‌نگی دوو زمانی ئینگلیزی/ کوردی و کوردی / ئینگلیزی وه‌رگیراون و به‌کار هاتون بو لیکۆلینه‌وه: که ئایا تا چ پاده‌یه‌ک وه‌کو سه‌رچاوه‌یه‌کی باوه‌رپیکراو ده‌توانریت پشت به‌وه فهره‌نگانه به‌ستریته له‌لایهن به‌کاره‌ینه‌رانی زمانه‌وه. ئەو فهره‌نگانه هه‌لسه‌نگینراون تا بزانیته تا چ پاده‌یه‌ک ئەو پیوه‌رانه‌یان تیدا به‌دی ده‌کریت له کاتی دروستکردنی ئەو فهره‌نگانه‌دا بو ئەوه‌ی وه‌کو سه‌رچاوه‌ی باوه‌رپیکراو به‌کاربین. ده‌رئه‌نجامه‌کان ئەوه ده‌خه‌نه روو زۆربه‌ی فهره‌نگ دانه‌ره‌کان وه‌کو زاراوه دانه‌ر مامه‌له ده‌کن و هه‌موو رۆله‌کان ده‌بینن. له ژیر رووناکی ده‌رئه‌نجامه‌کان گه‌یشتییه ئەو ئەنجامه‌ی کاری به کومه‌ل بکریت بو دروست کردنی فهره‌نگ بو مه‌به‌ستی تایبته. وه له‌گه‌ل ئەوه‌شدا ریگیه‌ خوش ده‌کات بو زانیی چ جوهره بواریکی تیوری بو به‌هینز کردنی زمان له ریگیه‌ فهره‌نگ دانانه‌وه. فهره‌نگه‌کان و فهره‌نگ دانه‌ر زانیاری ده‌خه‌نه‌روو بو به‌کاره‌ینه‌رانی زمان، له به‌رامبه‌ردا به‌کار هینه‌رانی زمان فهره‌نگ ده‌کاته سه‌رچاوه‌ی زانیاری و پشتی پی ده‌به‌ستن. زمان پیش که‌وتوو به‌هۆی پیشکه‌وتنی هونه‌ری ووشه دانان ده‌وری ووشه دانه‌ر ئەوه‌یه ووشه دابنیت وه فهره‌نگ دانه‌ر بیانخاته ناو فهره‌نگه‌وه، ئەگه‌ر فهره‌نگ دانان به هه‌ولی گرووپیک بیت ده‌کریت ببیت به سه‌رچاوه‌یه‌کی زانیاری پشت پی به‌ستراو. له کاتیکدا ئەو گروپه بریتییه له فهره‌نگ دانه‌ر و ووشه دانه‌ر، وه که‌سانی شاره‌زا له‌و بواره‌دا.