

Aspects of Sindhi Lexicography: A Critical Analysis of Selected English Sindhi Dictionaries

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Abstract: *The importance of a dictionary as a reference book for pedagogical purposes is universally accepted. Bilingual dictionary is an important and vital area in the field of general purpose lexicography. In this paper, I have studied some selected English-Sindhi dictionaries. In this study, the microstructure of dictionary with particular emphasis on presentation of meaning, pronunciation and grammatical information were studied. Research paradigm for this study is qualitative and 'content analysis' was used as the research tool. It was found that these dictionaries qualify as a good work and carry many merits but in one aspect or in another. No one dictionary can be categorized and found on the sound principles of modern Lexicography. A user friendly dictionary based on the needs and requirements of learners and perfect in all aspects is still to come. The need for a standard dictionary covering all aspects of the macro and microstructure is suggested.*

Key Words: *Bilingual, Sindhi, lexicography, dictionary, microstructure*

Introduction

Lexicography is a professional activity as well as an academic field concerned with dictionaries and various kinds of reference works. It has two basic divisions: lexicographic practice, and lexicographic theory, or dictionary research. This study falls into the second category of lexicography. This covers different aspects of lexicographic theory i.e. history, typology, criticism, and use with respect to Sindhi.

Since the early period of British rule over Sindh, a good work has been done in dictionary making in Sindhi in order to make the local people familiar with English language. Two monumental works appeared in this period i.e. English-Sindhi and Sindhi-English dictionaries. In 1849, Captain George Stack, a Deputy Collector of Hyderabad compiled the English-Sindhi Dictionary which was published from Bombay. In the year 1855, Sir Barrow Ellis edited this dictionary. Both these dictionaries were compiled in Devnagri script. The first monumental work in the field of bilingual dictionary making in Sindhi was Sindhi-English Dictionary (1879)

jointly compiled by an English man Mr. Shirt and two Sindhi scholars M/s. Udha Ram Thanwardas and Mirza Sadiq Ali Beg. This was the first dictionary published in Arabic-Sindhi script.

Before the creation of Pakistan, one prominent dictionary was Permanand Mewaram's English-Sindhi Dictionary (1933) and the other by Anandram T. Shahani (1939).

After the creation of Pakistan many attempts were made in this vital field. Abdul Hussain Memon (1959), Ghulam Mustafa Shah(1972), Ali Dino Shah and Bashir Mangi (2006), Abdul Rashid Memon (2007) and Abdul Nabi Pirzado (2007) are among the pioneers of English-Sindhi dictionary making after independence.

No work has yet been done in the field of lexicographic theory or dictionary research in English-Sindhi dictionary. In the present research an analytical descriptive study of the above-mentioned dictionaries is conducted in detail and an objective evaluation is made.

Methodology

The present investigation is qualitative and critical in its approach. It is carried out through objective observation and critical analysis (Hartmann, 2001). The research tools used in this study are 'critical analysis' (Hartmann, 2001; Akasu, 2013) and 'content analysis' (Scott, 2006; Julien 2008; Cohen, Manion,; & Morrison, 2009). This research is qualitative and descriptive in nature. It is carried out through objective observation and analysis.

'Content analysis is an accepted method of textual investigation...In content analysis, researchers establish a set of categories and then count the number of instances that fall into each category' (Silverman, 2001, p.183).

Keeping in mind all the details of the 'content analysis' and 'critical analysis' in dictionary criticism, the in-depth analyses of the existing English-Sindhi dictionary is made which will provide insight about the important information given in these dictionaries.

Hartmann (2001, p. 116) declares that 'a critical review is an attempt to assess a particular dictionary, usually combining personal opinions with factual evaluation based on relatively objective criteria.' Structure of a Dictionary

For the present study only three components of the microstructure i.e. meaning description, pronunciation, and grammatical information (Jackson 2002) are studied in detail.

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English and Sindi Dictionary By Lakshuman Vishnu Parajpye (1868)

This is perhaps the first bilingual English Sindhi dictionary in Arabic script. This dictionary was published in 1868 by Education Society Press, Bombay. Written by a headmaster of Anglo Vernacular School, Hyderabad Mr. Lakshuman Vishnu Parajpye this dictionary was prepared for the education department. It is spread over 300 pages covering an average of 28-30 words per page.

Meaning Description

The meanings in the dictionary are very simple, accurate and usually one word equivalents. The dictionary looks very useful for the students and teachers of English language of that time. It might well have fulfilled the aim and objective of its compilation. Both ways of presenting meaning-definition and one word equivalent-are used. Examples of one word equivalents are:

Abode	رھڻ جي جاءِ، گھر
Absent	غير حاضر
Acacia	ببر
Wrest	کسي وٺڻ، کسڻ
Write	لکڻ

The examples of definition are:

Abyss	اهڙو غار جهنجي اونھائي جو انت نہ آھي
Actively	چالاڪيءَ سان؛ تڪاڻي سان؛ ڦرتاڻي سان
Admiral	جنگي جھاز جو وڏو سردار
Yew	ھڪڙي قسم جو وڻ

English-Sindhi Dictionary By. Nanikram D. Mirchnadani (1928)**Meaning Description**

The meaning of English words has been explained as clearly as possible. The compiler tried his best to give simple one word or two word equivalents of English words in Sindhi.

Definition style has also been adopted where necessary. Few lexical items and terms, which cannot be clarified with one or two equivalents, are explained by definition:

free-wheel (a device in a machine by which machine and wheel are attached separately)

galvanism (a kind of electricity, which is produced from acid)

interregnum (time between the death of a king and enthroning of another)

luff (the part of ship which faces air)

optimist (the man who believes there is good in everything)

The most interesting and remarkable feature of the meaning presented in this dictionary is that of the 'archaic' and 'obsolete' words.

Here are few examples of such kind of words with the given meaning,

ceft (hill)

canteen (wine shop)

cess (octroi)

chest (box)

cimeter (sword)

dingle (small valley)

English-Sindhi Dictionary By. Dulamal Bulchand (1928)

The other important English-Sindhi bilingual dictionary, which we find in the period of British rule in Sindh, is that of Dulamal Bulchand (1932). This is also one of the earliest dictionaries in Sindhi. From the point of lexical coverage and presentation, this is a very important dictionary of that period.

Meaning Description

There are two main ways to present meaning in a dictionary. One is to explain the word or lexical item by definition. The other is to give lexical equivalent in the target language. Dulamal Bulchand has adopted the second way. He has tried to give Sindhi equivalents to English words, placed side by side. Somewhere just a single equivalent is given as for *arrears*, *arrest*, *cheque*, *cravat*, *flying*; and some where the number goes to eight and ten. For example items '*consolation*' (p.53) and '*occasion*' up (p.175) are given eight Sindhi words as their meaning, and word '*charm*' (p.40) and '*termination*' (p.26) ten words.

The compiler has given Sindhi meaning to English words, which may cause ambiguity or misleading. For example, the one meaning of the word '*fool*' (p.101) is given as '*gadaho*' the Sindhi word for 'donkey'.

As it is common in everyday use to call 'fool' '*gadaho*' (donkey), yet it is misleading in a dictionary.

Some words have been given meaning, which is changed over the years. For example '*fillet*' (p.97) is given the meaning of 'tape thread, piece of cloth used as tape etc' while 'OALD7' defines it as 'a piece of fish or meat that has no bones in it.' The word '*fillip*' (p.97) is given the meaning as 'striking (by finger), but 'OALD7' says 'a thing or person that causes sth to improve suddenly'. The word '*Infecundity*' is defined as 'infertility', which is no more in use.

The word '*grain*' (p.112) has been given one meaning of 'temperament or nature' besides 'small seeds'. No other dictionary gives the sense of 'nature or temperament' to '*grain*'. Some

words with particular European context are defined in local way, for example 'Franklin' (p.104) as 'land lord' and 'Grandee' (p.112) as 'Ameer, Nawab'.

Pronunciation

The pronunciation part of the microstructure of dictionary is completely missing. Pronunciation of English words is not given, perhaps because this dictionary was meant for the Europeans who are supposed to be familiar with the pronunciation of English words. Certainly, this is a main inadequacy on the part of the compiler. The other main lacking is not providing diacritics (*a'raabs*) on Sindhi words. Sindhi words express different meanings with different diacritics, that is why the lacking in diacritics can cause the confusion in the meanings of Sindhi words, as

acting	ڪچو
affiliate	گڏڻ
barely	مس
braid	مڙهڻ
bruin	رڇ
crooked	ڏنگو
deaf	پورو
hurdle	بند

A New English–Sindhi Dictionary By: Permanand Mewaram (1933)

Another important bilingual English-Sindhi dictionary is that of Permanand Mewa Ram (1865–1938). This dictionary was first published in 1933. Mermanand Mewa Ram is a well-known Sindhi scholar, writer and 'one of the pillars of early Sindhi prose'. He was editor of Sindhi newspaper 'Jote' (lux) for about fifty years and contributed many books and two dictionaries i.e. Sindhi–English Dictionary (1910) and English–Sindhi Dictionary (1933).

Since its first edition in 1933 this dictionary was out of print. Its second edition was published by Institute of Sindhology in 1979 in photo-offset to 'preserve the authenticity of the original work'.

Meaning Description

The simple, one word Sindhi equivalent is commonly given as the meaning of English lexical items. The overall style of dictionary is to give Sindhi translation and simple equivalents to English words. This has been explained by the compiler in the Preface 'as for the collection of new words I have made special efforts to find single appropriate words as equivalents for the English words in place of the tedious definitions which have often been resorted to by others.'

The most important feature in the meaning description of this dictionary is mentioning of the context in which a particular word may be used. The connotation of the word is mentioned in parenthesis.

- actionable (*law*)
- adjunct (*gram*)
- adjournment (*of court*)
- anthology (*of poems*)
- cluster (*of flowers, etc*)
- confluence (*of rivers*)
- dissolution (*of body*)
- gill (*of fish*) (*of cock*)
- ingot (*of gold*)

The style of mentioning connotation is more frequently used in the Sindhi part of the dictionary than that of English. The style of mentioning context and connotation runs through out the dictionary, mostly in Sindhi part of it. Because, different English words have different connotations, this information seems to be most useful and necessary.

In order to provide the accurate sense of the complex definitions, the context of the word is given in parenthesis in the Sindhi meaning of the English word:

- | | |
|-----------|---------------------|
| auricular | بڏل (ڳالهه) |
| attack | بيماري جو ٿيڻ |
| attempt | مارڻ جي ڪرڻ |
| attend | مڪتب ۾ وڃڻ |
| cock | بندوڪ جو ڀڃ ڀڙو |
| fork | ٽنگن جي پرهانگ |
| foul | جهڙالو (ڏينهن) |
| negotiate | ناه لاءِ ڳالهون ڪرڻ |

English–Sindhi Dictionary By: Anandram T. Shahani (1939-41)

The English-Sindhi Dictionary compiled by Anandram T. Shahani remained perhaps the most popular dictionary till few years back.

This is the first English-Sindhi dictionary with pronunciation of English words in Sindhi. As we have seen in the study of earlier bilingual English-Sindhi dictionaries that were lacking in pronunciations. It was for the first time that pronunciation of English words was given in Sindhi characters in any English-Sindhi dictionary.

Meaning Description

It has been said earlier that the beauty of this dictionary lies in its simple and easy to access method of presentation. The meaning description is also very simple and straight. English lexical items in first column are explained in the third column with multiple simple equivalents in Sindhi. The definition style is deliberately avoided. But where it was inevitable, simple definitions are also given for English word.

buffer	گاڏي کي ٽڪرڻ کان روڪڻ لاءِ جهلو ڌڪي جي زور گهٽائڻ لاءِ اسپرنگ
cruse	مٽي جو باسڻ جنهن ۾ سونارو سون يا چاندي ڳاريندو آهي
pug-dog	ننڍڙي بيچ ۽ گهنج پيل منهن وارو ڪتو جنهنجو نڪ وريل هوندو آهي

Sometimes extra explanatory word/words are used in parenthesis () to clarify the meaning;

bamboo	بانس (ڪاٺي)
banyan	بڙ (وڻ)
bastard	تلور (پڪي)
coot	آڙي (بڌڪ جو قسم)
dissociate, to	(سمجھائي) ارادي تان لاهڻ
distemper, to	(تيل ڪانسواءِ) رنگڻ

Pronunciation

The one thing for which this dictionary is popular is its presentation of pronunciations of English words. Before this dictionary, no other bilingual English – Sindhi dictionary made attempts in this area. As the compiler explains this in the preface, it is very difficult to give pronunciation of an English word in another language, because even two native speakers don't pronounce a word exactly as the same. Yet, the compiler has tried his best to give more standard pronunciations commonly found with the native speakers.

As the pronunciations are given in Sindhi, the compiler makes them clear by placing diacritical marks on almost every letter. In this way pronunciations become intelligible and clear.

The dictionary gives two pronunciations of an English word where necessary as native speakers sometimes use both pronunciations, as,

aged	ايچيد ، ايجد	album	آئل بم ، آلبم
alarum	الارم ، النرم	bastard	بئسٽرڊ ، باس ٽرڊ
alas	الاس ، النس	barrage	بئريچ ، براج
bias	بايس ، باءِ نس	beloved	بلويد ، بلويد
century	سين چري ، (ٽيويٽري)	commons	ڪامنس ، ڪامنز

Sindhica English to Dictionary (2003)

Established in 1991, Sindhica Academy, Karachi is a well-known prestigious publishing academy working on Sindhi language and literature. In 2003, Sindhica Academy produced 'Sindhica Dictionary'. It was recognized as a good step forward in the field of Sindhi lexicography particularly in bilingual English Sindhi dictionary. The dictionary spreads over 1045 pages and is produced by a board of scholars.

Meaning Description

As has been described by the publisher, this dictionary is a translation of *Webster's*, so the translation of original words is given in Sindhi:

irrigate: آبپاشي ڪرڻ، پاڻي يا ريچ ڏيڻ (زمين کي)
طب ٽوڻ يا صاف ڪرڻ، (چير، ڦٽ يا گهاءَ وغيره)

The method of meaning description is maintained same throughout dictionary. If the original dictionary gives one word equivalent, the translation of the same word is given in Sindhi. If the original dictionary gives definition, the same is translated into Sindhi.

There are certainly more than one word in the meaning section, and more than one meaning. Different meanings are numbered separately. The different uses of the words are described separately and are mentioned in that way as the example cited above shows.

The headword *check* (p.189) is explained in detail with more than 20 meanings. The different uses of the word *check* with different prepositions are explained, as with *out*, *off*, *on*, *upon*, etc. Some meanings are explained with full sentence examples. As mentioned earlier, the method of giving prepositions and usage examples is maintained only up to three letters (A, B, and C).

Kifayat's Comprehensive English to English and Sindhi Dictionary (2001)

Kifayat's comprehensive English to English and Sindhi Dictionary is a monumental work done in the field of Sindhi lexicography. Though the compiler is mentioned as Abdul Rasheed Memon, this work is a result of a board working as a team. In the introduction, the compiler has mentioned those people who worked on the project.

The dictionary is English to English and Sindhi; we are concerned only with the Sindhi portion of it in this study.

Pronunciation

To give correct pronunciations in a dictionary is always a most challenging job. This becomes even more difficult when pronunciations are to be given in Sindhi. This is the third English-Sindhi Dictionary in which pronunciations are given in Sindhi characters. The dictionary by A. T. Shahani and Yadgar's dictionary are predecessors to this one in this regard.

After the careful study of pronunciations in these dictionaries, it becomes quite clear that without diacritic marks on them, English pronunciations are not possible to produce in Sindhi.

The dictionary adopts the methods of diacritic marks regularly but only for the first letter-A. Then, these marks appear less frequently. Without these marks, it becomes very difficult to distinguish two pronunciations from one another. For example the pronunciation of the following words becomes identical in the dictionary and indistinguishable.

beat	بيٽ	league	ليگ
bet	بيٽ	leg	ليگ
step	اسٽيپ	steel	اسٽيل
steep	اسٽيپ	steal	اسٽيل

It is the pronunciation part, where the dictionary is full of mistakes. In order to make the distinction clear, a few examples are quoted as under. In the column of actual pronunciation, the source is 'OALD-7'.

Pronunciation in the Dictionary		Actual RP Pronunciation	
bury	بري	/bʊri:/	/beri/
climb	ڪلائيمب	/klaɪ mb/	/klaɪ m/
Dengue	ڊينيو	/denju:/	/denɡi/
Enchant	اين چانٽ	/enʃɑ:nt/	/ɪ nʃɑ:nt/
Encourage	اين ڪريج	/enkəreɪdʒ/	/ɪ nkʌrɪ dʒ/
obedience	اوبيدينس	/əʊbidens/	/əbidəns/
obey	اوبي	/əʊbeɪ/	/əbeɪ/

These are just few examples to show that one cannot claim this dictionary as an authentic source on English language. However, one cannot deny the pain of collection and confirmation of the correct pronunciations through which the team of compilers underwent. It makes the reader obliged to appreciate them.

Many words starting with /s/ sound are pronounced in the dictionary as /is/ which is clearly Sindhi style of pronouncing English words:

spot	اسپاٽ
study	اسٽيڊي
student	اسٽوڊنٽ
stable	اسٽئبل

state اسٹیٹ

All these words are wrongly pronounced by starting with /is/ sound instead of /s/, which is the correct sound.

Meaning Description

Describing meaning is the most important area of dictionary making. It also needs careful attention in the selection of proper equivalents in the target language, or in defining them.

It seems that the bulk of all available equivalents in Sindhi was picked up and included without any second evaluation or consideration.

When we look on the Sindhi equivalents of the lexical item 'break' (p.320) we find a huge bulk of words, all in one. According to the method adopted by almost all existing English dictionaries, different senses of a lexical item are numbered separately. For example 'OALD-7' gives 22 different senses for the word 'break' (p.179). But the dictionary under study gives a combined bulk of huge words collected and placed at one place. It is understood that this way will not help the learners to come close to the meaning of the word they want to look.

Mostly, the Sindhi meanings are repetitions or rephrasing of the same meaning. For example, in the meaning of the word 'buy' (p.366) dictionary repeats (رشوت ڏيڻ) two times, and rephrases the same word. خريدار ٿيڻ، خريد ڪرڻ، خريداري ڪرڻ

It is unintelligible for the researcher to see the meaning for 'hen' (p.1252) as 'woman' or 'womanish' or 'group of women' as is described for its meaning in Sindhi as; (عورت، عورت وانگر، عورتن جو جڙو)

Compare the Sindhi equivalents of word 'place' (p.2248) and see the irrelevant meanings and repetitions:

Sindhi equivalent for 'place' as given by dictionary:

گهر (home)	عهدو (designation)	ڳوٺ (village)
ولایت (abroad)	زخم (injury)	شهر (city)
پاڙو (neighborhood)	مارڪيٽ (market)	بازار (bazaar)
ڪمر (room)	ٿيٽر (theatre)	بينچ (bench)
سيٽ (seat)	اوچائي (height)	بحث لاءِ معاملو (topic for discussion)
ڪتاب جو ٽڪر (piece in a book)	چپائي لاءِ ڇپيندڙ ادارو ڳولڻ (to look for a publisher for publishing)	
خريدار ڳولڻ (to look for customer) etc.		

These can never be the dictionary meanings of the headword 'place'. These meanings can be elaborated or understood only in context. Without context and connotation, these equivalents can mislead.

Advanced Dictionary English to English and Sindhi By: Abdul Nabi Pirzada

This dictionary was published in 2007 by Kathiwar Stores, Urdu Bazar, Karachi. The main body of the dictionary spreads over 1314 pages with 46 pages for other information at the end of the dictionary, making the total number of pages to 1360.

Pronunciation

Pronunciation of English lexical items is given in Sindhi. Unfortunately, as with other dictionaries, this one also does not place diacritics on Sindhi words. That is why, the pronunciation part of the dictionary is deceiving and misleading. There are many words whose pronunciations cannot be differentiated without diacritic marks. Few examples are:

bale and bell (بیل)	league, lag and leg (لیگ)
lake and leak (لیک)	lodge and loge (لاج) pit and put (پت)
main and mean (مین)	mis and muss (مس)
steam and stem (اسٹیم)	steep and step (اسٹیپ)
lick and luck (لک) etc	

Meaning Description

In the description of the meaning of English lexical items, the dictionary deserves praise and appreciation. It exhibits great merit in this regard. With few exceptions, the dictionary gives accurate account of English words in Sindhi. It adopts the method of translation equivalents in Sindhi throughout. However, gives definitions, descriptions are also given where necessary.

Meaning description is given in one word equivalent, as

morass	دبٹ
mortgagee	گرویدار
mother wit	ذاتی عقل

The description of meaning goes to multiple word description from ten to fifteen equivalents, as with meet, life, life span, light footed, mush, pusser, toey etc.

There are few pitfalls in the dictionary, which cannot be ignored. There are few words in the dictionary whose meanings are ambiguous or misleading. For example:

black and white
empathy
emergency
euphuism

Oxford English-Sindhi Dictionary (2010)

Oxford English Sindhi Dictionary (henceforth *OESD*) came out in 2010 and is published by Oxford University Press, Karachi. It is a good addition in the tradition of bilingual dictionary making in Sindhi. It spreads over almost 2100 pages. Though few popular English Sindhi Dictionaries were present in the scenario, there was a persisting need for a good dictionary in the field.

This dictionary is the directed adaptation of Concise Oxford Dictionary. As mentioned on the front matter of the dictionary English text is taken from Concise Oxford Dictionary, (9th edition).

Meaning Description

As mentioned earlier, translations of word meanings as given in the original COD meanings are given. Both translation equivalent and definition methods are implied.

Translation equivalent:

gist /ˈɡɪst/ *n* ست اسم؛ خلاصو، اصل ڳالهه، نچوڙ

And definition as,

giraffe: /ˈdʒɪrɑːf/ آمريڪا جو اوڳاريندڙ جانور جنهن جي ڳچي ۽ اڳيون ٽنگون گهڻيون ڊگهيون آهن ۽ کل تي ڪارا داغ ۽ انهن جي وچ ۾ پڪيون ليڪون ٿينس ٿيون؛ دنيا ۾ سڀ کان ڊگهو جانور

Pronunciation

The system of presenting pronunciation of an English word is based on the older version of International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). All modern English dictionaries i.e., OALD, Cambridge, Longman, give pronunciations in the revised version of IPA i.e. 2005. The learner who is familiar with OALD or any other modern English dictionary will find it confusing to read the correct pronunciation of an English word.

The IPA symbols used in this dictionary are compared with IPA system in other modern dictionaries as under:

IPA in OESD	IPA Modern (2005)	Word	Pronunciation in OALD	Pronunciation in OESD
	æ	cat, fan	kæt, fæn	kat, fan
ʌ	aɪ	fine	faɪ n	fʌ n
ɛ	e	pen	pen	pɛn
əː	ɛ	girl	gɜːl	gɛl
ɛː	eə	hair	heə(r)	hɛː

Instead of /e/ it gives /ɛ/ as for *send*, or *self*.

Conclusion

From the detailed assessment and critical study of the bilingual English Sindhi dictionaries, we conclude that the tradition of dictionary making in Sindhi is a new feature of Sindhi lexicography. Many good dictionaries were compiled for a wide range of intended readers to fulfill their need of a general as well as subject field dictionary.

These dictionaries provide a good deal of meaning descriptions in their target language i.e. Sindhi. No single dictionary can be claimed as the work par with the tradition of lexicography. Most of the dictionaries are strong in one aspect or the other. The main features which most of these dictionaries lack are pronunciation, grammatical information, and usage which are the strongest features in the modern dictionaries.

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