

Lexicographical Techniques Adopted in Tranquebar Tamil–English Dictionary

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ABSTRACT

The Dictionaries are prepared to serve different practical needs of the people. The Dictionaries are looked at by the readers as reference book with multi various information on the words – i.e. the pronunciation, etymology, usage, etc. and as reference point to distinguish the proper or improper usage. Dictionaries are of many kinds such as Monolingual, Bilingual and Multilingual ones. Though there are many dictionaries, the present paper is taken up the Bilingual one. This paper concentrates on evaluating the lexicographical techniques adopted in the compilation of Tranquebar Tamil – English Dictionary. It is also attempted to interpret the principles adopted in compiling the dictionary.

KEYWORDS: Tranquebar Tamil-English dictionary, lexicography, monolingual, bilingual, multilingual, tarangam, derivatives, etymology, synonyms, antonyms

1. INTRODUCTION

Lexicography has been defined as the writing of the words in some concrete form that is in the form of dictionary, the writing or compiling of a lexicon or dictionary, and as the art or practice of writing of dictionaries or the science of methods of compiling dictionaries. The word dictionary was used as Dictionarius in the sense in the 13th century by an English man John Garland. The Dictionaries are prepared to serve different practical needs of the people. The Dictionaries are looked at by the readers as reference book with multi various information on the words – i.e. the pronunciation, etymology, usage, etc. and as reference point to distinguish the proper or improper usage. Dictionaries are of many kinds such as Monolingual, Bilingual and Multilingual ones. Though there are many dictionaries, the present paper is taken up the Bilingual one.

This paper concentrates on evaluating the lexicographical techniques adopted in the compilation of Tranquebar Tamil – English Dictionary. It also attempts interpreting the principles adopted in compiling the dictionary.

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Tarankampati is a small village near the seacoast of Tanjore district. As the sea waves i.e. 'tarankam' in this area touch the shore with a kind of music or sound, this area was identified by the name tarankampati. The Denmark people who lived there were unable to pronounce the word Tarankampati and adopted the word as Tranquebar. This dictionary was compiled by John Philip Fabricius in the year 1779. Tranquebar Tamil-English dictionary consisting of 11,509 Tamil primitives and 21,305 derivatives includes both spoken and written forms. The second revised edition of this dictionary printed in 1992 is taken into account for the present study.

1.1. Entries in Dictionary

Generally one who involves in the preparation of a normal dictionary, he/she should come across the three divisions as such 'collection and selection', 'setting of entry' and the 'press copy' which are adopted in the process of preparing dictionary. The current paper dwells around in exploring the 'setting of entries', employed by Winslow in the dictionary.

The setting of entries in the dictionary presents characteristics of the lexical unit as whole other

lexical units in larger constructions. An entry in a general dictionary consists of the following information such as a) Head word, b) Spelling and Pronunciation, c) Grammatical information, d) Meaning, e) Illustrative examples, f) Derivatives, g) Idioms and Phrases, h) Etymology, and i) Synonyms and Antonyms.

1.1.1. Head word

Head word is also christened as the entry word or the citation form. The form and meaning are the main criteria for the selection of the headword in a dictionary. Paradigm method is the device used by the lexicographer for the selection of the headword in a dictionary. All the forms of the paradigm cannot be given in a dictionary. The lexicographer abstracts one form from the total paradigm, which is labeled as 'Canonical form'. When a word has two different meaning, separate entries are given for such type of words. But if a word has more than one related meaning they are not given in separate entries. They are represented by serial members one after the other in according with their frequency or chronology under the same head.

The tranquebar Tamil-English dictionary considers the nominative form of the noun paradigm as the head word in all the cases.

E.g.
ayal - mother
elumpu -bone

The compounds and derived forms of the head words are given as sub-entries

E.g.
Eri - glow, shine, give light
eri karumpu - fuel
eri kolli - fire brand
kal - a stone
kal naṭam - green vitriol
kal naar - a kind of fossil
kal neñcan - a hard-hearted man

As far as the verbs are concerned the imperative forms are taken into the account as the headword. The imperative form being the root of Tamil verb, it is treated as the headword.

Conjugational indication is one of the lexicographic techniques used to identify the complicated verb inflections. Tranquebar Tamil-English dictionary has adopted the method of indication of conjugational class number after the verb stem and it follows Graul's conjugational classification of verb. The Conjugational numbers are given after the root form in Tranquebar Tamil-English dictionary.

The first class of Graul's classification has three different verb viz., *cey* 'do', *aal* 'rule' and *kol* 'kill'. His fifth conjugation has two sub-classes in which the first sub-class the verbs *uṇ* 'eat' and *tiṇ* 'eat' are included and in the second sub-class of fifth conjugation the verbs *keel* 'hear' and *kal* 'learn' are included. Hence the fifth conjugation consists of four different verbs. Tranquebar Tamil-English dictionary indicated five classes to the following verbs based on the above classification.

E.g.
man, manu (vvi) become excellent
tiṇ (vvt) eat
vel (vvt) sacrifice
nuul (vvt) spin

The above verbs cited are inflected differently. This type of conjugational inflections has not helped the user identifying verbal inflections easily. Irregular verbs are constructed with tense paradigms and infinitives in Tranquebar Tamil-English dictionary as follows:

E.g.
vaa (hor *varum*) imper. of the irreg.
int. verb *varukireen* (come)
taa imper. of the irreg. tr. verb
tarukireen (vulg. *tareen*)

This kind of entry construction will help the user to identify the inflectional pattern of the irregular verbs.

There are some defects in the indication of conjugational numbers in Tranquebar Tamil-English dictionary given

E.g.

Entry word	Conjugational number	Correct Given in the dictionary	Conjugational number (Graul's)
<i>iru</i>	VI		IV
<i>uṭai</i>	II		IV
<i>kaaṇ</i>	V		irregular
<i>caappiṭu</i>	VI		IV

In a few instances the conjugational numbers are not given. They are:

E.g.
ayil (*ayilu*) VI
talū VI

The failure seems to recheck the entries of dictionaries responsible for the errors in denoting the conjugational numbers.

Simple adverbial and adjectival forms are given as separate entries in this dictionary whereas derived and adverbial and adjectival forms are given as sub entries.

E.g.

appuram (adv) - that side
appurattile - on that side
appurapata - to go further onto another side

The uninflected stems are identified as particles and are given as separate entries in this dictionary.

kol-expressing doubt or used as an expletive

um-connective particle

All the derived forms of a single lexical unit are treated as sub entries of the headword in the Tranquebar Tamil-English dictionary. Run-on-words are generally indicated by using *um* dash. But in the above said dictionary run-on-words are also given as sub entries.

1.1.2. Spelling and Pronunciation

The headword is followed by pronunciation. If the dictionary is not meant for the native speakers the pronunciation should be given. There is no need to give pronunciation for the languages in which there is no difference between graphemes and phonemes. Pronunciation is not given for the headword in the Tranquebar Tamil-English dictionary. As it is learners' dictionary, giving pronunciation for the headword would help a lot in the readers so as to correct pronunciation of the word.

1.1.3. Grammatical information

The purpose of giving grammatical information is to indicate the morphosyntactic peculiarities of lexical unit. The lexicographer gives only the morphologically and syntactically important information. However it also gives additional information of the meaning. The usual method is by providing grammatical labels. In the Tranquebar Tamil-English dictionary, grammatical information is given for every word. The method of using labels is used for indicating the grammatical information and it helps the learner to use the word in a proper context. Only minimum grammatical information is given to every word i.e. parts of speech of the word alone is indicated by providing grammatical labels.

E.g.

kal (v)-learn
añcul (s)- five
añcu (v)- fear
aṭṭam (adv)-across
arrai (adj)-that day

1.1.4. Meaning

There are various methods of giving meaning to lexical units such as description and definition of the lexical unit, equations, illustrative examples, illustrative pictures, glosses, cross references, etymology and labels.

The description of a lexical unit for giving the meaning of the lexical unit is followed by the Tranquebar Tamil-English dictionary. It gives the full information about the lexical unit.

E.g.

kiṭa - a thorny shrub bearing sour fruit
kaaṭu -an uncultivated tract of land covered with forest trees

For unwritten languages especially the tribal language to which giving equivalents for the Flora and Fauna is a problem. The meaning of Flora and Fauna are given separately in this dictionary so that learner finds it easy to understand the word.

E.g.

Alli - water lilly, ambal
Aal - the banyan tree
Erutu - an ox

Illustrative examples for the lexical units and illustrative pictures are used for the further clarifying and distinguishing the slight shades of meaning. The compiler of the Tranquebar Tamil-English dictionary has not given illustrative examples and pictures even though it is meant for foreign language learners.

Glosses indicating the grammatical, syntactical or semantic peculiarities of the lexical unit are of two kinds as grammatical gloss, which is given to a few lexical items.

E.g.

Atu - pron.1. that
 2. termination of the sixth or possessive case
Al - the chief termination of the third case or instrumental ablative

Encyclopedic gloss providing information of encyclopedic nature is given in the Tranquebar Tamil-English dictionary to a few lexical items.

Gross reference is used in this dictionary to show the interrelationship between lexical items of a language in terms of their similarity, contrast, and complementaries.

Etymology can help in clarifying the meaning of certain lexical units whose meaning otherwise appear to be obscure. The Tranquebar Tamil-English dictionary does not give etymology of the lexical units. However, there are instances where the origin of borrowed and dialectal forms is given in this dictionary.

E.g.

kailaasam (s) - mount kailas
kangu (s) (vul)- coarse blue cloth

Labels are different from glosses and are used for a group or class of lexical units whereas the glosses are

used for individual lexical units. There are three types of labels such as i) functional labels, ii) subject labels and iii) status labels.

The Tranquebar Tamil-English dictionary includes functional labels and status labels. They are in given in brackets here

E.g.

un - (fut. – *unpeen*)

unakku-vt - (vulg. *unatu*)

1.1.5. Illustrative examples

The purpose of giving examples is to show concretely that a lexical unit exists in a language with a particular meaning. Illustrative examples are not given for all the words in Tranquebar Tamil-English dictionary.

1.1.6. Derivatives

The derivatives whose forms and meanings are generally predictable are given either in the nested form or as a separate entry. The Tranquebar Tamil-English dictionary treats the derivatives as separate entries. Following are the examples.

E.g.

kanru -a calf, the young of the cow

kanrukutti -cattle

1.1.7. Idioms and Phrases

Idioms and Phrases are generally nested with the headword. They are not taken into consideration in the Tranquebar Tamil-English dictionary.

1.1.8. Etymology

Etymology can explicate the meanings of some obscure words. Etymology of lexical units is not given in Tranquebar Tamil-English dictionary.

1.1.9. Synonyms and Antonyms

Synonyms and Antonyms are used for defining lexical units. In this dictionary synonyms are only used for defining the lexical units but antonyms are not taken into consideration in compilation of dictionary.

1.2. Conclusion

To conclude, in the Tranquebar Tamil-English dictionary, the following are inferred in terms of compilation of dictionary. They are:

1. The nominative form of the noun and the imperative form of the verb are treated as head words for the noun and the verb.

2. Graul's verbal classification is followed by the author. Irregular verbs are constructed with tense paradigms and infinitives.
3. Compound forms and derived forms are treated as sub entries of the head word.
4. Simple adverbial and adjectival forms are given as separate entries.
5. The uninflected stems are identified as particles and they are treated as head words.
6. Even though it is a learners' dictionary, the author has not given the pronunciation of the head words.
7. Regarding grammatical information, minimum quantity is given i.e. parts of speech alone is mentioned for the head word.
8. To define the meaning of the head word semantic definitions and equivalents are given to every entry.
9. Illustrative examples and Illustrative pictures are not given in this dictionary.
10. To classify the meaning of the head word, gloss, labels and cross reference are used.
11. Idioms and phrases, and antonyms are not taken into account for thee clarification of meaning of the head word.

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