

BUILDING A BILINGUAL
DICTIONARY FOR ENGLISH AND
TAMIL: A CASE STUDY

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INTRODUCTION

Dictionary is a store house where informations about the lexical stock of the language is stored. Zgusta (1971 : 197)

“A book that gives a list of words of a language in alphabetical order and explains what they mean, or gives a word for them in a foreign language”. (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary 2005)



NATURE OF BILINGUAL DICTIONARY

A bilingual dictionary, as contrasted to a monolingual dictionary, deals with two languages. The lexical units of one language are defined or explained in another language.

The basic purpose of a bilingual dictionary is to coordinate with the lexical units of one language those lexical units of another language which are equivalent in their lexical meaning. Zgusta (1971)

1. EQUIVALENTS OF ONE TO MULTI WORD

There is a word in English 'after' which has equivalence of more than one word in Tamil. This is a very common phenomenon in bilingual dictionary. Here there is a selection restriction in the target language (Tamil); as whether to select root or stem form or inflectional form or frequently used form?

For example:

After – *pin', pin'n'ar, pin'n'Al, pin'bu, piRagu, piRpATu*
aTuttu, aTuttatAha, aTuttapaTi, mEl, mElE, mElAha,
mElAn'a

2. MANY WORD TO SINGLE EQUIVALENTS

There is a word 'uL' in Tamil, which has many equivalences in English. The form has many situations in a particular language. Varieties of usage have given rise to differences in the meaning. In such case, lexicographer does not apply different words. He provides single word and various context of the source language (English).

MULTY WORDS TO SINGLE EQUIVALENTS- COND...

For example:

In English

inside, interior, into, among, within , etc.,

In Tamil

uL / uLLE



3. CULTURAL GAP

Due to differences in culture, such a big vocabulary gap arises.

While one who builds the dictionary, he may give all possible cultural words from the TL with labels as – How it function in target language.

CULTURAL GAP COND...

In English Aunt – The sister of your mother or father or the wife of your UNCLE. (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary)

In Tamil *attai*, *periyamma*, *cin'n'amma/citti*

Attai: 'sister of one's father.'

periyamma: 'mother's elder sister, wife of father's elder brother.'

Cin'n'amma/citti:

1. 'mother's younger sister, wife of father's younger brother.'
2. 'father's second wife.' *mAmi* 'wife of one's maternal uncle.'

4. MULTI SPELLING SYSTEM

Proper noun as in the source language of may be with different spelling as in the target language. At that time standard monolingual dictionary entry can be used.

In English:

Christian

In Tamil

kiRittavam, kiRittuvam, kiRistavam, kiRistuvam, kiruttuvam.

kiRittavam and *kiruttuvam* are in free variation in the Cre-A dictionary.

5. BORROWED WORDS

Some words are used either in translated form or in original form. It means SL., TL words are commonly use in the language.

So, dictionaries provide both forms.

For example:

rAgi – KEzvarahu, rAgi
rowdy – pOkkiri, ravuTi

6. ADAPTATION

Sometimes there is no equivalent form in the source language.

In such cases, transliteration or adaptation is made.

For example:

Mainer – *main'r* (മൈനറ)

Dozen – *Tajan* (ടജൺ)

Soda – *sOTa* (സോഡ)



7. SEMANTIC RANGE

Sometimes there is an equivalent form in the TL language. But it will not be a complete equivalent. There will be some meaning differences. In bilingual dictionary, the entire work of a bilingual dictionary involves providing equivalents to the lexical units of the one language by the lexical units of another language i.e., “coordinating with lexical units of one language those lexical units of another language which are equivalent in their lexical meaning” (Zgusta 1971 : 274)



SEMANTIC RANGE COND...

For examples:

Eng. Hand – the part of the body at the end of the arm which is used for holding, moving, touching and feeling things.

(Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary)

Ta. Kai - the part of the body from the end of the shoulder to finger. (Cre-A Tamil Dictionary)



SEMANTIC RANGE COND...

Teacher – someone whose job is to teach in a school or college.
(Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary)

Ticcar - In Tamil female teacher (in addressing level). (Cre-A
Tamil Dictionary)

Student - someone who goes to a university, college, or school.
(Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary)

mAn'avan', *mAn'avi*, *mAn'avar* - In Tamil boy-student, girl-
student, student (in addressing level). (Cre-A Tamil
Dictionary)

8. WORD AND USAGE

Sometimes, the equivalences beautifully suit in a usage point of view, but it remains invalid. For example:

In English.

Able- 'If someone is able to do something.' (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary)

In Tamil

tiRamaiyuLL, tiRamaiyan'a,



WORD AND USAGE COND...

In the context the usage is totally different from the above form.

Equilent –

Is he able to swim?

avan'Al nInta muTiyumA?

It means even though both the grammatical category are one and same and give adjectival meaning, in usage auxiliary verb is used.

9. PARTIAL EQUIVALENCE

In compound words. Which consists of more than one noun one noun is given equivalences and the other are is the SL item. It means olive is a noun; 'oil' is a common noun. We have to retain the proper noun as it is and to provide the equivalence of the common noun.

For example:

Aliv eNNai
sOppup peTTi

Olive oil.
Soap box

10. PARTIALLY NOT EQUIVALENCE

In some other words, even though there is equivalence in the TL, it does not suit.

For example:

hEr Ayil - Hair oil.

Note in the lexical item. Hair means in Tamil 'muTi', 'mayir', and oil equivalence 'eNNai' but in Tamil corpus did not occur equivalent at Tamil word. Because whether lexical equivalences may or may not available in the combination of the lexical item equivalence may not be available.



CONCLUSION

While developing the bilingual dictionaries, one has to consider the purpose for which he/she is developing, whether it is for first language learning/teaching or second language learning/teaching and other applications such as Natural Language Processing.



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THANK YOU

ANY QUERIES

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