

# Typological Classification of Dictionaries

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## 1.1 Introduction

Zgusta (cf. 1971:222-3) observes that when a lexicographer sets out to compile a dictionary, he has to take two basic decisions- (1) what part of the total vocabulary of a language the proposed dictionary will cover and (2) to what type the proposed dictionary will belong.

Both the aspects will get answered when we understand the typological classification of dictionaries and locate the proposed dictionary in that classification. Therefore, to facilitate this a typological classification of dictionaries is discussed here. While the general aspects of the dictionary typology will be discussed very briefly the aspects which will have a bearing on the proposed dictionary will be discussed elaborately.

Dictionaries can be classified into various types on the basis of different criteria. To begin with we have to differentiate between dictionary proper and dictionary like works. Zgusta (cf. 1971:197-9) calls these linguistic and non-linguistic dictionaries respectively. The linguistic dictionaries are concerned with the words or lexical units of languages and they are called **word books**. The non-linguistic dictionaries are not concerned with words, but with realia or denotata (thing) and they are called encyclopaedias, or **thing books** (cf. Singh 1982 : 13-4). They are similar to dictionaries only in their alphabetical arrangement of words denoting the realia. Anyhow the aspects of the realia which are called encyclopaedic features such as description, photos, diagrams etc., are given in certain types of dictionaries to add to the utility of the dictionary.

Classification of linguistic dictionaries has been attempted by a number of scholars such as Shcherba (1940), Sebeok (1962), Malkiel (1959, 1967), Cornyn (1967), Gelb (1968), Zgusta (1971), Al Kasimi (1977), Singh (1982) and Svensen (1993). Of these different scholars Malkiel introduced a type of feature analysis to classify dictionaries. It is difficult to classify dictionaries on the basis of clearly demarcated categories because of overlapping of the categories among the actual dictionaries compiled. Malkiel's feature analysis helps to classify dictionaries in terms of combinations or bundles of features of various kinds allowing for the overlapping.

After taking into consideration the various classifications of dictionaries given by scholars, a new classification is attempted in this paper based on contrast between features. Though the feature approach of Malkiel is followed the features identified are based on different factors incorporating the classification of many other scholars. Also the place of the proposed dictionary in this classification is located and explained in this paper.

## **1.2 Contrasting features of typological classification**

Contrasting features of dictionary typology are divided into two basic classes viz., internal or external features. Internal features are concerned with the aspects of the nature of language such as paradigmatic vs. syntagmatic contrast, aspects of form /meaning, time and area of vocabulary covered. External features are concerned with the target group or user of the dictionary for whom the dictionary is compiled, size, purpose, arrangement of entries or words, number of languages etc. Internal features are theoretical in nature and are dependent on the nature of linguistic data, whereas the external features are applicational or are concerned with the use or practical utility of the dictionary. They are also methodology oriented, as alphabetical or other arrangement of entries are concerned with the processing and presentation of data. As number of languages such as bilingual, trilingual etc., are decided by the lexicographer based on the needs of the target group of users it is included

under the external features. Initially the various internal features will be discussed followed by a discussion of external features.

### **1.3 Internal features**

The following are the important internal features on the basis of which the dictionaries can be classified.

1. Paradigmatic vs. syntagmatic aspect of the language.
2. Word as form/ meaning complex or aspects of form or meaning only.
3. Time-particular point of time or passage of time.
4. Area of the vocabulary covered - the whole vocabulary or a part of the vocabulary of a language.

#### **1.3.1 Paradigmatic vs. Syntagmatic aspect**

The first set of internal features of the language which differentiate dictionaries are paradigmatic and syntagmatic aspects. Most of the dictionaries are concerned with individual lexical units which are in paradigmatic contrast with the other lexical units of a language.

Syntagmatic aspects also serve as data for dictionaries like the meaningful collocations, rection of verbs, applicational restrictions of words etc., which contribute to the study of meaning in the construction of entries in all types of general dictionaries. But, certain dictionaries concentrate exclusively on the syntagmatic aspects and study lexical collocations or combination of words. Paradigmatic aspect is the basis of selection of words in most of the dictionaries which are concerned with form and meanings of words. Syntagmatic aspects only provide a supportive data base for those dictionaries. But, in a syntagmatic dictionary the purpose of the dictionary is to show the combinatorial

properties of the lexical units. Dictionaries of idioms and or phrases, dictionary of collocations etc., belong to this category.

### **1.3.2 Form-meaning complex vs. either form or meaning in isolation**

The second aspect of the internal features is the treatment of word as a form-meaning complex or treating either form or meaning alone. Most of the general dictionaries belong to the first category treating words (lexical units) as form-meaning complexes. Dictionaries such as orthographical, orthoepical, dictionary of acronyms, abbreviations are concerned only with the aspects of form. Synonym dictionaries, conceptual dictionaries, dictionary of antonyms, thesaurus etc., give importance to the aspect of meaning.

### **1.3.3 Time-particular point of time or passage of time**

On this basis dictionaries can be classified either as diachronic or synchronic.

#### **1.3.3.1 Diachronic dictionaries**

Diachronic dictionaries are concerned with the development or change in the form and meaning which the lexical stock of a language underwent during the course of its history. Under diachronic dictionaries three types of dictionaries are included. They are (1) historical (2) etymological and (3) comparative dictionaries (cf. Zgusta 1971: 200-2).

#### **1.3.3.2 Synchronic dictionaries**

Synchronic dictionaries deal with the lexical stock of a language at a given time of its development. "First, the concept synchronic is not synonymous with "contemporary". Any epoch in the development of language can, at least ideally, be treated synchronically" (Zgusta 1971: 202). For example, the dictionary of Old Tamil may cover the period from 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C to 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Or this period may be divided into Early Old Tamil (3 B.C - 5 A.D), Middle Old Tamil (5 A.D - 6 A.D) and Late Old Tamil (6 A.D

- 7/8 A.D) and consequently three synchronic dictionaries can be compiled (cf. Zgusta 1971: 194-5).

#### **1.3.4 Area of the vocabulary covered - the whole vocabulary or a part of the vocabulary**

The fourth aspect of the internal features is the coverage of the portion or part of the total vocabulary of a language. It can be either the whole vocabulary or a part of it. On this basis dictionaries can be classified as (1) general or (2) restricted.

##### **1.3.4.1 General dictionaries**

These dictionaries deal mainly with the general language (in contrast to restricted dictionaries) i.e., with the standard national language as it is used generally. They are of three important types (1) standard descriptive dictionary (2) overall descriptive dictionary and (3) academic dictionary (cf. Zgusta 1971: 209-13).

##### **1.3.4.2 Restricted/Special dictionaries**

Restricted dictionaries are dictionaries in which words and phrases listed have been selected from only a certain part of the total lexicon of a language. "The restriction can be based on any perceivable (or only supposed or postulated) variation of language, on any classification of its texts, or any principle or combination of principles determined by the author of the dictionary" (Zgusta 1971:204).

###### **1.3.4.2.1 On the basis of variation in language**

Dictionaries compiled on the basis of variation in language, regional or social, are called dialect dictionaries. They may describe either the total lexicon of a single dialect or show the lexical differences between different dialects.

###### **1.3.4.2.2 Text dictionaries**

They describe the vocabulary of different types of texts i.e., literary, philosophical, religious etc. Text dictionaries will be discussed in detail as the Bible dictionary belongs to this class.

Text dictionaries can be dictionaries of a single text or group of texts.

#### **1.3.4.2.2.1 Single text or group of texts**

They can be dictionaries of a single text or group of texts of a single author or several authors. For example, Dictionary of Gorkhy is based on a single text written by a single author. Dictionary of Shakespeare is based on group of texts written by a single author. Bible dictionary is an example for a dictionary of a single text written by several authors and Sangam dictionary is an example of a group of texts written by several authors.

Text dictionaries are classified in another way into indices, concordances and exegetic dictionaries on the basis of the structure and content of entries.

#### **1.3.4.2.2.2 Indices**

Index is a systematic alphabetical arrangement of all the grammatical words (Lyons. 1968: 194-206) occurring in a text or group of texts presented with citation references, i.e., the indication of the name of the author, book, chapter number, section number, page number, line or verse number etc., but without contexts or quotations. Indices are also compiled on the basis of selective principles such as words of difficult meanings, names of flora and fauna, personal names etc. In addition to the alphabetical listing with citation references, indication of grammatical categories, meanings are also sometimes provided which adds both to the value and the usefulness of an index (cf. Sappler 1989 I: 1567-1572). E.g. Index of *pur\_ana:nu:ru* (Subramoniam 1962)

#### **1.3.4.2.2.3 Concordances**

A concordance is a restructuralization of a text that permits locating or spotting of all the words of a text. Concordances of the words of the chosen or selected text are compiled by placing words alphabetically one below the other and furnishing every word as the key word (or the entry word or the headword) with its natural context both on the left and right. A concordance is therefore considered as a specific stock (or inventory) having exhaustive lists of the quotations (or contexts) of the concerned words (or lexical units) recovered by means of words and phrases. (cf. Hanon. 1989. I: 1562-6)

Hanon (cf. 1989: 1564-6) classifies concordances on the basis of four binary sets of parameters which are not mutually exclusive.

1. A concordance can be complete in the sense of covering all the words occurring in a source text or it can be a selective concordance which includes certain categories of words and leaves certain others based on certain principles of selection.
2. A key word for the grouping of contexts can be the grammatical word as it occurs in the context or the lemmatised canonical form representing a number of actual concrete forms occurring in the contexts.
3. Concordances may differ in their typographical presentation. It may follow the Keyword-In-Context (KWIC) method, in which the key word is presented in the context itself or the Keyword-Out-of-Context (KWOC) method, where the word is typographically isolated from the contexts as an entry word or headword.
4. The concordance can be verbal in the sense, it is concerned with the word itself or notional/ topical in the sense, it is concerned with the concept or notion denoted by the word.

The New Strong's concordance of the Bible (1996), is an exhaustive or complete verbal concordance of non-lemmatised grammatical words presented in the Keyword-Out-of-Context (KWOC) format. *ve:ta porut>kan>n>a:t>i* (1971) is a selective Tamil topical concordance giving biblical concepts or theological concepts as headwords.

#### **1.3.4.2.2.4 Exegetic dictionaries**

Exegetic dictionaries give importance to the contents of the text itself “with the entry words used as indexes to the crucial passages and or with broad encyclopaedic treatment of the philosophical or other concepts expressed by the works” (Zgusta 1971:207). These dictionaries contain “(1) linguistic information (the meaning of the words) (2) encyclopaedic information (realia; denotata referred to in the text) (3) exegetic information (contents of the texts, its nuances and overtones and the single ideas expressed in it, etc.)” (Zgusta 1971:207).

For compiling such a dictionary each part of the text is interpreted in its context and this means not only its immediate verbal context, but the wider context of time (historical), place, (geographical) and human situation to which it belongs. With regard to the Bible it involves not only the interpretation of the several text parts, books, but their interpretation as part of the Bible, having regard to the way in which each part contributes to the purpose of the Bible as a whole (cf. Bruce 1962: 566-8). The proposed Tamil Bible dictionary belongs to this class.

#### **1.3.4.2.3 On the basis of special lexical units**

Restricted dictionaries can be compiled on the basis of certain special lexicon of the total stock of the vocabulary. Some of the important types of dictionaries based on this criteria are (1) dictionary of obsolete and archaic words (2) dictionary of neologisms (3) dictionary of borrowed words (4) dictionary of proper names, place names, etc.

#### **1.4 External features**

The following are the important external features on the basis of which the dictionaries can be classified.

1. Number of languages covered
2. Target group or user
3. Purpose
4. Size

## 5. Arrangement of entries

### 1.4.1 Number of languages covered

On the basis of number of languages covered dictionaries can be monolingual, bilingual, multilingual etc.

The monolingual dictionary describes the vocabulary of a language by means of one and the same language. In other words both the left-hand side and the right-hand side of the entries make use of one and the same language. It is normally intended for the users who are native speakers of the language (cf. Svensen 1993:20; Hartmann & James 1998: 95, b). E.g. The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English, The Random House Dictionary of the English language.

The bilingual dictionary shows how lexical units of one language (source language) can be coordinated with those lexical units of another language (target language) which are equivalent in their lexical meaning. In other words the lexical meaning of the source language words which are presented as headwords is explained in terms of the equivalents in the target language (cf. Zgusta 1971:294, Svensen 1993:20-1, Hartmann & James 1998: 14 a, b).

In the case of multilingual dictionaries the lexical units of more than two languages which are equivalent in lexical meaning are coordinated.

### 1.4.2 Target group or user

Users belong to different groups such as children, students, teachers, scientists, trainees, technicians etc. The needs of the users are different. Hartmann (cf. 1983:10-1) classifies the needs of the users into two types - (1) **Information:** It is one of the factors for which the users seek the help of a dictionary to check spellings, meanings, synonyms, pronunciation, etymology etc. (2) **Operations:** That is, when the user performs tasks as reading, writing and translating he refers to the dictionary to find words and meanings. From the point of view of types of users and their two types

of needs, dictionaries fall into different categories such as dictionaries for children, students, translators, learners, scholars, general public, creative writers and other word finders such as those who play word games etc. Categorisation of the dictionaries from the point of view of user, influences the articulation of the work in the collection of material, selection of entries, choice of defining words while constructing the entries etc. Therefore, this is an important factor in dictionary making and the compiler has to clearly decide on the type of the user and their needs.

### **1.4.3. Purpose**

Purpose of the compilation of a dictionary can be any one or, more of the following.

1. The description of the lexical structure of a language or its varieties. The standard descriptive dictionaries and overall descriptive dictionaries belong to the descriptive type.
2. To help the comprehension of different types of texts in a language. Text dictionaries and scholarly dictionaries belong to this type. Sometimes dialect dictionaries are also helpful for comprehension.
3. To prescribe the norm or standard as different from the substandard or non-standard. They are prescriptive or prohibitive dictionaries.
4. The production of texts either in the native language or second or foreign language can also be a purpose. A thesaurus type of dictionary helps the creative writers to find the suitable word in his language while producing literary texts. A bilingual dictionary can also be compiled to help production of texts in the target language.

Purpose is a category which sometimes overlaps with the category of target group or user. Zgusta (cf. 1971:214) includes pedagogical dictionaries under the category 'purpose'. While the target group of a pedagogical dictionary is learners, its purpose is to help teaching and learning.

#### **1.4.4 Size**

It is an elusive category. It is concerned quantitatively with two aspects. (1) Number of entries or density of entries within a dictionary. (2) Amount or depth of information within each entry. Based on these two aspects scholars classify dictionaries into different classes such as unabridged, semi-unabridged, college, desk dictionaries, big, medium, small, pocket, little etc., (cf. Zgusta 1971:218-20; Landau. 1989: 17-9; Svensen 1993:35-8). There seems to be no agreement among the scholars and practitioners regarding classification and naming on the basis of size. Assimilating and comparing different approaches a classification of dictionaries of different sizes is arrived at here.

##### **1.4.4.1 Comprehensive, academic or scholarly dictionaries**

These are multivolume dictionaries which are not constrained by restrictions on space or number of entries. They are usually compiled by research institutions such as Universities, research institutes etc. They are comprehensive in the sense that they will try to include all the words that occur in all the types of general language texts from the earliest to latest, that have been produced in the language, excluding highly technical ones. The depth of information within the entry will also be rich (cf. Zgusta 1971:213). They cover exhaustively the polysemy of words, account for most of the contextual nuances and provide multiple quotations. Some of these dictionaries may have historical nature as the senses and quotations are arranged according to the chronological order of their occurrence. The Oxford English Dictionary (1989), is such a dictionary. Tamil Lexicon ((1924) 1926-1936), University of Madras, is a comprehensive dictionary covering the literature from the early days to modern times.

##### **1.4.4.2 Big or unabridged dictionaries**

“It is a dictionary which gives full coverage to the lexicon in general use at a particular time in the history of language and substantial coverage to specialized lexicons, with quotations to support definitions and suggest typical varieties of usage” (Landau 1989: 18). The data will be restricted to

the specific period which will normally be the contemporary period. Obsolete and archaic words from the texts of the earlier period will not be included. It may contain about 100000-400000 words. E.g. Webster's Third New International Dictionary.

#### **1.4.4.3 Medium**

These dictionaries describe the standard national language. The number of entries may vary from 50000-150000. The depth of information is rich with detailed polysemy, ample quotations and usages etc. Medium dictionaries are also called college or desk dictionaries. However, in the case of special dictionaries such as text dictionaries, if the depth of information is rich with exhaustive coverage of polysemy with a number of quotations then they are qualified to be called medium dictionaries even though the number of entries may be restricted to a few thousands. *Kriya's tar\_ka:la tamil\_ akar:ti* (1992) is a medium dictionary of Modern Tamil belonging to the standard descriptive type.

#### **1.4.4.4 Small**

These types of dictionaries will be smaller from the point of view of number of entries and information content of the entries. Less frequent and unimportant lexical units will be omitted and less frequent senses of the entries will not be included. Definitions will be briefer. Quotations or examples will be absent. The number of entries will be around 35000-60000.

#### **1.4.4.5 Pocket**

They present information on spelling and contain fewer number of words, no definitions are provided and meanings are explained in terms of synonyms with no examples or quotations. These dictionaries contain a number of additional word lists with encyclopaedic information (cf. Landau 1989:19).

Still smaller dictionaries contain very commonly used words with one or two synonyms instead of definitions. They are of varying sizes and

are referred to as little, mini etc., and are not based on any clearly contrastive criteria or any specific criteria. They are so called not only on the basis of the number and information content of the entries, but also on the basis of the physical size of the book which is smaller than that of the normal book size so as to be kept in vest pockets, shirt pockets etc.

#### **1.4.5 Arrangement of entries**

The most important and useful methods of arrangement are (1) alphabetic (2) semantic and (3) arbitrary or casual

##### **1.4.5.1 Alphabetic**

This method of arrangement is the most common and convenient type, for easy retrieval of words. It is based on the alphabetical sequence of the script system of a particular language.

##### **1.4.5.2 Semantic (conceptual or systematic)**

Through this method the words are arranged into thematic groups on the basis of a conceptual system. This is done either for general language or to the vocabulary of a subject field.

##### **1.4.5.3 Arbitrary**

There are other arbitrary methods of arrangement based on the alphabetical system, but not that of the first letter order. Some of the types are (a) morphemic arrangement where words are linked which share a common form (or base) e.g. **mishap** and **happen** or all the forms ending in **-ology**, (b) reverse order dictionary (or end alphabetic dictionaries). This type of dictionary takes as basis the spelling of words and lists the vocabulary alphabetically by last-to-first, rather than first-to-last letter order. Because of the back-to-front arrangement it is also called 'a tergo' dictionary or 'reverse index' (cf. Hartmann & James 1998: 119b; Sevensen 1993:24). E.g. Lehnert's Reverse Dictionary of present day English.

### 1.5. The proposed dictionary

The proposed dictionary is a linguistic dictionary as it is concerned primarily with the lexical units in the Tamil Bible versions and their meanings. However, encyclopaedic information will find a place in certain entries. Encyclopaedic information is essential in this dictionary because of (1) the differences in the cultural and geographical setting of the Bible and (2) the long, time gap from the biblical period to the modern period. From the point of view of internal features the proposed dictionary is a paradigmatic dictionary concerned with individual lexical units which are in contrast with other lexical units in the biblical texts. Though the dictionary is not concerned with combinatorial properties as in the case of syntagmatic dictionaries, compounds which have exegetic significance from the point of view of biblical content such as *ji:va appam* 'bread of life'; *pirata:n\_a a:ca:riyan\_* 'chief priest' and phrases such as *a:piraka:mut≥aiya mat≥i* 'Abraham's bosom' are treated as multiword lexical units and are included either as subentries or as separate entries as they are in contrast with other single word lexical units.

From the point of view of the second aspect of internal features there is two way treatment in the proposed dictionary. (1) The central word list treats words as form- meaning complexes and explains their multiple meaning with exemplifying quotations. (2) The additional word list is based on meaning alone and words are grouped into conceptual categories.

From the third dimension of time it is a synchronic dictionary as it is concerned with the language used in a given time and is not concerned with either changes in the form or meaning of words. For this purpose the whole period of Bible translation into Tamil extending over two centuries (i.e., 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>) will be considered as constituting the synchronic period namely the Modern Tamil period based on Kamil Zvelebil's periodization of Tamil (cf. Zgusta 1971: 194-5).

On the basis of the fourth internal dimension of coverage of the vocabulary it is a restricted dictionary as it is not concerned with the general vocabulary of the language and within the restricted dictionaries, it

is a text dictionary as it is concerned with the language used in a set of texts namely the Tamil Bible versions. Among the different types of text dictionaries this will be an exegetic dictionary as biblical exegesis of the words will also be explained to a certain extent to help the Tamil Bible reader to understand the biblical concepts.

From the point of external features on the basis of number of languages it is a monolingual dictionary because the target group or the users of the dictionary is going to be the Tamil speakers. However, English equivalents will be provided to help the user who may want to shift to using English Bibles, there by giving the dictionary a partial bilingual character. This aspect has to be decided by the editorial advisory committee, when the compilation of work is actually taken up.

The other external feature namely the target group of the dictionary who will be Tamil speakers of average education will also have a bearing on the choice of words to be used in the right- hand side of the entry while framing definitions and giving encyclopaedic and exegetic information (cf. 4.4.14 & 4.4.15)

The purpose of the proposed dictionary is the comprehension of the Tamil Bible versions in their three aspects (1) mainly linguistic (2) partly encyclopaedic and (3) specifically exegetic.

The fourth dimension size, has to be looked into from two angles. From the point of view of number of entries which may only be four to five thousand, the size of the dictionary can be called small, but from the point of view of depth of information within the entries it can be called medium as the entries will explain the polysemy of words, include encyclopaedic and exegetic information and provide multiple quotations.

Arrangement of the entries in the dictionary will belong to two types namely alphabetic and systematic, as the proposed dictionary has two word lists i.e., central word list and additional word list (cf. 5.3). The central word list will follow the alphabetical arrangement and the additional word list conceptual or systematic.

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