

GOLDEN RESEARCH THOUGHTS

LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF MEANING AND DICTIONARY MAKING



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Abstract:-

Determining Meaning is the indispensable. Information theory, the advance of anthropology into the realm of personality and group psychology, the inevitable necessity of structural linguists to deal with meaning (despite its lack of structural neatness), and political events in our present world have all joined to force upon us an awareness of the necessity, importance, and scientific basis of communication. An essential part of investigations in Linguistics analysis of meaning in particular, semantics is reflected in dictionary-making, a highly specialized process, which, however, too often reflects only a meager appreciation of some fundamental problems involved in the analysis of meaning. Thus, an attempt is made how to analyze the meanings of words linguistically found in Tamil, Urdu and English.

Keywords: Information theory, anthropology, structural linguists, semantics, dictionary-making.

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INTRODUCTION:

Dictionaries are essentially descriptions of the distribution of language elements -usually words- in terms of linguistic particularly lexical and cultural contexts, though in general the cultural contexts are predominated. By linguistic context one may mean the compound words, various combination of words like noun phrases, verb phrases, and adjective phrases or different types of sentences in which such words are or have been used - in general this means citing literary sources. By cultural context one can mean the description of a process or object as a part of the culture. As long as a dictionary is compiled in the same language as the words it is describing and is compiled for people who participate fully in the culture which is being described, the problems of analysis of meaning are appreciably simpler than in the case of dictionaries in which the language of description is different from the language being described. Furthermore, when there are serious lacunae, the readers can give what is lacking by virtue of their knowledge of the cultural context. However, as soon as one undertakes to compile a dictionary of another language like foreign language, the problems seem to increase with geometric proportion, based on the degree of linguistic and cultural diversity. That is to say, a dictionary of Urdu words written in Hindi is relatively simple - because of the essentially similar languages and cultures- in comparison with a dictionaries like Tamil to English, or Urdu to Tamil or Urdu to English are not sufficiently aware of the profound structural differences between languages and between cultures or they have been taken for granted that the readers will infer the essential distinctions.

There are, of course, different kinds of dictionaries, depending upon the purposes for which they compiled, but if one omits from consideration those dictionaries which have been produced solely for commercial purposes and include only those dictionaries which have been designed to provide scientifically useful data, he or she may be left with three fundamentally different types of dictionaries (Nida: 1974) as follow:

- (1) A list of words with identifying glosses,
- (2) A list of words with more or less full treatment of types of occurrences drawn from text material, and
- (3) A list of words with more or less exhaustive treatment of the kinds cultural contexts in which such words occur.

In the first type of dictionary as the list of glosses, which serves primarily as identification tags, assists one materially in an analysis of a text and in the working out of structural relationships. The second type of dictionary consists of a compendium of usage in which words are classified and illustrated on the basis of linguistic contexts. The third type is essentially an "Ethno-linguistic Dictionary", in that it relates linguistic units of semantic relevance to the total context of cultural behavior. There is little value, for example, in saying that a word means 'female puberty rite' if there is no available ethnological data on the culture in question. Similarly, to say that a word means 'good bye' is also relatively useless, unless we know under what circumstances it is uttered: at what time of day or night, in anticipation of how long an absence, to what classes of people, after or before other words or parting, combined with what variety of gestures, intonation, or voice quality, etc. In actual practice most dictionaries are a blend of the three basic types, with differing proportions of data depending upon the practical needs of the intended users.

Aim:

The main aim of this paper is to explore the problems in traditional method in dictionary making.

Objectives:

- To identify the various approaches like historical, territorial and generative or componential to the problems of semantic structures.
- To explore the context that presents two quite different aspects in making dictionary like the practical (ie non-linguistic), and the linguistic.
- To understand how languages mark the meanings of words so as to avoid the frequent ambiguities that should theoretically occur.
- To spin out various structures, in terms of classes and relationships are revealed by these marking systems.
- To understand how the structural relationships exist between components of such meanings and how the sets of meanings are structurally related to one another.

Traditional Method: Problems and Perspectives:

According to Taber et al (1964) there is no doubt much of our difficulty in dealing with bilingual and bicultural dictionary problems has been inadequacy of certain traditional methods of semantic analysis and the tendency to mix classificatory criteria and to shift methodology depending upon the ease of treating any particular lexical items. The two most commonly employed techniques have been based upon the following points:

- (1) Historical lineage, and
- (2) Central-peripheral plotting.

Where there is abundant historical data and where the line of descent seems relatively clear, one encounters few difficulties. For example, the Tamil word 'paaacam' means outward loveliness, kindness as a quality of

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personality, the word 'utavi' (an act) means help, favour, recommend and provide. This can be treated as a lineal development: appearance-character-action-object-response. However, even here we are not sure of the details in the historical development, despite a rather extensive literature, for we cannot be certain of usage during those periods represented by gaps in available data, nor can we ascertain the developments in the colloquial use of this word. Furthermore, we cannot assume that the histories of the literary and colloquial usage are strictly parallel. Synchronic functioning constantly "remakes" the historical patterning. We know, for instance, that historically the preposition 'by' in 'bylaw' is not the same by as the 'by' in 'bypath' and 'by-product', but for the average speaker of English there is no such distinction. The historical method is, of course, utterly inadequate for languages which have no available historical record, for there are no inviolate laws of semantic development. For example, one of the most generally accepted principles is that in instances of related object and process words, the latter are derived from the former, but that is not always the case for anyone working with aboriginal languages the historical method obviously has its strict limitations, except where certain reconstructions seem warranted on the basis of comparative data. As a result the tendency has been to substitute a 'logical arrangement' of meaning, on the basis that certain meanings can be logically derived from each other. These logical frameworks, however, as useful as it may be for certain classificatory purposes, does not necessarily reflect either the historical development or the relationships between different meanings as they may be understood by native speakers of the language.

In general, according to lexicographers' points of view, the logical method of analysis and arrangement of meanings are, however, very difficult to apply, for categories which are familiar to us as foreigners often seem incapable of application to the array of meanings of words in foreign language. Furthermore, the more one becomes intimately familiar with a language, especially one with widely different linguistic and semantic structures, the more it becomes evident the logical criteria drawn primarily from one language-culture complex cannot be easily or validly applied to another.

Accordingly, rather than attempt a logical ordering of meanings, those preparing dictionaries tend to describe meanings in terms of central and peripheral meanings, though usually these distinctions are not explicitly stated. What often happens is that the first meaning given is assumed to be central and that the meanings which follow are arranged more or less in terms of successive distances from the centre. Despite certain serious problems encountered in the application of this method, it must be recognized that it is distinctly superior to the practice of trying to state the fundamental "core" or the "common denominator" of meaning, sometimes described as the "central idea" inherent within each meaning and one from which the related meanings are presumably derived. Nevertheless, even the arrangement of meanings in terms of central and peripheral involves two fundamental limitations. They are:

(1) The multi-dimensional relationships of the data which cannot easily be squeezed into what is essentially a two-dimensional analysis, and

(2) The false assumption that words should or always do have "central" meanings.

In many instances it simply is neither possible nor useful to try to describe a series of meanings of a word in terms of any central meaning and peripheral uses. But this should not unduly alarm us. We have had to abandon a similar practice on a morphological level. For example, we no longer feel compelled always to choose one alternative element as the basic element from which all others are descriptively derived. Of course, if in a series of related forms one alternative element can be selected so as to make possible the accounting for alternative forms by certain generally applicable morphophonemic statements, we should set up such a central form. However, when the data do not justify any such selection, we must be content with the facts of the language as they are and not impose any arbitrary categories upon the material.

CONCLUSION:

One does not wish to imply that the logical and historical techniques, central-peripheral analysis and description are not useful in compiling a bilingual dictionary with reference to Tamil – Urdu or Urdu - English. But their usefulness is strictly limited. We hope to point out in the rest of paper; there are certain other techniques which seem to provide more fruitful results, both in terms of analytical methodology as well as a descriptive arrangement. Thus, It is obvious that insights from linguistic theory have provided important help for those interested in the scientific analysis of meaning. It would seem equally evident that the scientific analysis of meaning can provide important insights, and even correctives, for various theories of linguistics. Eventually, the scientific study of meaning may be recognized as a significant branch of comparative linguistics, providing a dynamic

RES: FERENCE

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