

The Study of the Place of Example and Illustration in the Bilingual Persian-French Dictionaries

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Abstract

Nowadays, it is necessary to use semantic examples in lexicography: example, quotation and semantic evidence of the work of contemporary and classic poets and writers and of the current literary texts and articles and newspapers accompany definitions of the words, and consequently support the use of words. This is not limited only to monolingual dictionaries but is also true for the bilingual dictionaries, especially those provided for the academic and specialized level: quotations and examples are used to help understand the meanings and definitions of words; on the other hand, the facilitative role of using the illustrations cannot be ignored in the bilingual dictionaries. This article discusses the place of example and illustration in bilingual Persian-French dictionaries. Study of the common bilingual Persian-French dictionaries (Lazar, Moallem) and even dictionaries that have been recently published (Parsayar, Lesani, Tahami, and Soltani) would show that lexicographers have not used the illustration and example in compiling these dictionaries whereas example and illustration play an important and undeniable role in better and more accurate explanation of the entry meanings. On the other hand, the determinant role of bilingual dictionaries in education and learning (French) verifies the need to use illustration and example in these dictionaries. Therefore, it would be no exaggeration to say that the use of example and illustration in bilingual Persian-French dictionaries is a forgotten necessity and it is hoped that lexicographers consider this necessity and we see the compilation of bilingual Persian-French dictionaries with such a feature in the near future.

Keywords: Lexicography, Bilingual dictionaries, Persian, French, Illustration

Introduction

Lexicography is a branch of linguistics that is less known. Therefore, speaking of lexicography is as difficult as lexicography. Despite the difficulties in lexicography, it should be acknowledged that it has been prospered in our country in recent years, which is also true for the bilingual dictionaries including Persian-French ones. The compilation and publication of five Persian-French dictionaries within 8 years (2002 to 2009) and re-edition of two dictionaries in the recent decade confirmed this fact (see Table 1) (Amid, H. 2011). In addition to the quantitative expansion of lexicography and the increased number of dictionaries, we also see qualitative changes and evolution of this category; there is no doubt that bilingual dictionaries are not an exception; today, the purpose of compiling bilingual dictionaries is not limited to define and explain difficult words and these dictionaries are not just used for semantics. In other words, bilingual dictionaries are no longer only a collection of compiled and arranged words but are references to express the meaning, construct and use the words language, and introduce them from various aspects. Therefore, new ideas have emerged in the area of dictionary and lexicography and the inclusion of example and illustration in dictionaries are among these applied and modern approaches. This article aimed to

investigate the achievements of this approach. However, it should be noted that we would probe only the above-mentioned issue in the bilingual Persian-French dictionaries in order to avoid general statements. Thus, educational aspect of the bilingual dictionaries will be first studied and new audiences are introduced and then the determinant role and place of illustration and example in these dictionaries will be explained. Key functions of example and illustration will be introduced in the bilingual dictionaries below and finally the practical and functional aspect of the above-mentioned perspective will be emphasized by an overview of a number of Persian-French dictionaries (Blanco, Xavier, 2009).

Bilingual dictionary, an instrument for learning

The word “dictionary” is defined in Larousse dictionary as: “it is derived from the Latin *dictio* meaning the word, refers to a set of words that are arranged in an alphabetical order and its meaning or equivalent has been written in another language in front of it”. It is defined in the small Robert dictionary as:

"A set of words that are arranged in a specific sequence and a definition or information have been included about it in front of each word." According to these definitions, the dictionary can be understood as an educational and informative writing; in other words, it is an educational work that transfers information and knowledge. Thus, it can be inferred that dictionary is a completely educational work (Clas, 2010). The educational dimension of bilingual dictionaries is undoubtedly clearer and more tangible: in the process of language teaching and learning, bilingual dictionaries have an important and undeniable role and are considered as an educational aid for language learning. It is no exaggeration to say that the bilingual dictionary is one of the most important educational tools for language learning: one learning a new language needs to know and understand the vocabulary of that language for better understanding and speaking with that language and a bilingual dictionary provides access to the new language (target) through the language of the learner (source). Therefore, a basic learner of French and even new learners of French are considered as the users of bilingual Persian-French dictionary (and vice versa). This indicates that the bilingual dictionary is an invaluable and essential tool in the process of language learning (Duval, 2000).

Users of bilingual dictionaries

The main structure of monolingual dictionaries is descriptive. In monolingual dictionaries, the user looks for the word meaning and it is necessary that the dictionary defines that word for him or her and he/she rarely needs the lexical equivalent of word. However, in the bilingual dictionaries, only equivalents are given and the user of a bilingual dictionary seeks for an equivalent of a word from one language into another language. Thus, "the meaning of a word is given in a monolingual dictionary and a bilingual dictionary conveys the meaning of a word" (Moradi, 2003). In fact, a bilingual dictionary is the one equivalent and identical to the entries of the source language in the target language. Thus, the user looks for the equivalent of Persian entry in the bilingual Persian-French dictionary and only the French equivalent will satisfy his or her need. Undoubtedly, the lexicographer aims to record the French equivalent of the Persian entries and avoid the translation of definition. This results from the lexicographer's concern to meet the user requirement of this type of dictionary. One of the main characteristics of contemporary lexicography is to pay attention to the user's opinions. As mentioned earlier, the goal of compiling bilingual dictionaries has completely changed and audiences of such dictionaries have also changed in recent decades. Before, audiences of these dictionaries were just looked for the meaning of words in another language; wanted to read texts in that language, and did need the meaning of unfamiliar words. However, the new audiences want to learn the language and their objective is not limited to the search for unfamiliar and new

words: the equivalents may be sufficient for the first category but this does not apply to the second category; the second category requires the exact description of the equivalent application (semantic and syntactic), pronunciation, spelling, and different applications. Now, with regard to the changes in attitudes of the bilingual dictionaries' audiences, we can better determine the determinant role of example and illustration in a bilingual dictionary (Lepinette, Brigitte, 1990).

Function of different types of example in bilingual dictionaries

In most monolingual dictionaries, examples and quotations are used to help understand the meanings and definitions of words; prose and verse accompany the definitions of these dictionaries: examples are taken from the literature, articles and sometimes from the current and contemporary sources, such as newspapers and or made and introduced by the lexicographer. In general and apart from some exceptional cases, application of example is prevalent in monolingual dictionary. Given the large number of dictionaries with prose and verse evidence, it seems that the necessity to use examples is clear to everyone. However, this has been less paid attention to in bilingual dictionaries, especially bilingual Persian-French dictionaries. This is something that cannot simply be set aside. Thus, the main functions of example will be briefly introduced and mentioned to highlight this issue.

Explanation of the meanings of entries

This function originates from the educational and informative feature of example;

1) Different meanings (meaning) of the entry is highlighted in the context of an example. Thus, the lexicographer provides the user with more information about entry and so the exact meaning of entry is specified. It is worth noting that in modern learning theories, it is recommended to learn new words in the context. It should be acknowledged that examples are associated by transparency and simplicity of education.

2) Sometimes, example has a descriptive function: the provided equivalent is not sufficient to explain the meaning and definition of entry, example completes the meaning and sometimes it even replaces with equivalent.

Example as a pattern

Example is as a pattern for the student: examples are samples and patterns that assist and guide the user in the correct production; oral or written production (speaking and writing in a new language) is one of the main goals to learn any language and it must be accepted that it is not so simple to achieve this goal. Thus, inclusion of example in a bilingual dictionary will lead to facilitate learning a language (Robert, 1991).

Example as the support of the word usage

The correct usage of words requires a familiarity with them through tangible and concrete examples: the lexicographer uses examples to show the usage of words and prove the correctness of usage. Thus, the user becomes familiar with a specific application of a word that is necessary to know.

Illustration and illustrative and concrete example

Some monolingual dictionaries, including two-volumes Amid's dictionary, the small Larousse dictionary, and Oxford Elementary Learner's Dictionary use illustrations for better and more explicit explanation of the meanings of entry. However, this is never common for the bilingual dictionaries, such as the Persian-French ones. Nevertheless, the educational-training capability of illustrations is well known to everybody in teaching-learning the words. As mentioned above, it is not surprising that Pirlaros analogized a dictionary with no example as a "dead body"; Voltaire has applied the following well-known formula in a letter criticizing the academic dictionary (11 August

1760): "A dictionary without quotation is as a skeleton". Pierre Larousse has changed the procedure: "A dictionary with no example is as a skeleton" (Moallem, 2009).

Persian-French dictionaries

In the study of a number of bilingual Persian-French dictionaries, it can be seen that the role and place of example has been ignored in the three dictionaries of Contemporary Pocket Persian-French dictionary compiled by MR Parsayar (2009), a new complete Persian -French dictionary compiled by Morteza Moallem (1999), French- Persian dictionary compiled by Gilbert Lazar (2000). This is also true for other contemporary Persian- French dictionaries compiled by Kamrouz Parsay, Persian-French dictionary compiled by Pandora Lesani, modern Persian to French dictionary compiled by Amir Hossein Tahami Monfared, and Persian-French dictionary compiled by Rashed M. Soltani. However, some examples in the form of proverbs and slang or common terms examples can be seen but these examples are insufficient and less than the expected (Parsayar, 2005). According to above and considering the users of such dictionaries who have two totally different levels of two languages and also with regard to the great difference in both Persian and French (European language) languages on the other hand, it can be better understood why the inclusion of examples and illustrations in these dictionaries is a necessity that is neglected.

Table 1. Re-edition of two dictionaries in the recent decade

No	Title	Compiler	Publications	Date of publication
1	Persian-French dictionary	Kamrouz Parsay	Tehran: Daneshyar	2009
2	Contemporary Pocket Persian-French dictionary	Mohammad Reza Parsayar	Tehran: Farhang-e-Moaser	2009
3	Complete new Persian-French dictionary	Morteza Moallem	Tehran: Amir Kabir	2006
4	Persian-French dictionary	Pandora Lessani	Esfahan :Mani	2005
5	Modern Persian to French dictionary	Amir Hossein Tahami	Tehran: Socrates	2004
6	Persian-French dictionary	Gilbert Lazar	Tehran: Iran-e-Sabz	2003
7	Rashed's Persian-French Dictionary	M. Soltani	Tehran: Rashed	2002

It is notable that this is not a critique of such dictionaries. With regard to the content and users, these dictionaries are works that have a special place in lexicography. In other words, this deficit does not reduce even a slight respect and value that we have for these dictionaries' compilers and undoubtedly we aware of the size of work conducted to compile such dictionaries. Hard work of lexicographer is obvious to everyone: what Escalinger compares it "the work of someone who is sentenced to hard labor and maybe even harder than it..." Therefore, we appreciate the efforts and sacrifices of these lexicographers. However, it is also necessary to mention here that factors, such as financial constraints, especial structure, size of the bilingual dictionaries (rarely 2 volumes), and the need for easy use of these types of dictionaries have been also very effective. Since we did not aim to discuss the details, we just mention a partial section (Lazar, Zhilber, 2010).

Conclusion

According to what was said on the functions of bilingual dictionaries, example, and illustrations, it should be mentioned that inclusion of examples and illustrations in bilingual Persian-

French dictionaries would bring greater efficiency, ease of the use of such dictionaries, and usability for a wide range of audiences. As Johnson states on the evaluation of dictionaries, "Dictionaries are similar to the watches. Having a watch that does not work well is much better than not having a watch. However, nobody can claim that his or her time is exact and just his or her watch shows the right time". "Maybe, we can analogize compilation of a bilingual Persian-French dictionary, in which various examples and illustrations are included, to the construction of a high-quality watch.

It is noteworthy that the use of example and illustration should be systematic: examples are not used only to explain a specific and interesting application of some entries. In this case, example would have a decorative function in a bilingual dictionary, "as a cherry on the dictionary pie" (Crawley, 1994). However, what is clear is that the purpose of giving examples in a bilingual dictionary is not generalization, explanation, and description of various applications of the word as if seen in monolingual dictionaries. It is hoped that the lexicographers consider the need for inclusion of example and illustration in the bilingual Persian- French dictionaries and we see compilation of the bilingual Persian-French dictionaries with such a feature (Lazar, 2010).

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