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THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING THE REGIONAL DICTIONARIES OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Abstract

Essential part of English lexicography is to make comparison between regional dialects of the language and to identify similarities and differences between them. In this article we'll try to analyze this issue and to find out why it is so important. For writing this article, the authors based on the investigations of foreign scientists on this issue.

Key words: lexicography, glosses, dictionary, national, regional, historical dimension, compilers, compiling.

If we speak about the dictionary as a linguistic term, it is a list of words with their definitions, a list of characters, or a list of words in other languages. Dictionaries are most commonly found in the form of a book. The optimal dictionary is one that contains information directly relevant forthe needs of the users relating to one or more functions. It is important that the information is presented in a way that keeps the lexicographic information costs at a minimum.Vocabulary study has a long history, going back in the Western world to Plato's *Cratylus.*The elaborate, large-scale dictionaries of today envolved by stages from simple beginnings. In the seventh and eighth centuries, the practice arose of inserting in Latin manuscripts explanations (or 'glosses') of difficult words, in Latin or in Old English (sometimes in both). Later, the glosses were gathered together into 'glossaries'. It is a matter of convention that the early collections are called glossaries and the later ones dictionaries. Moreover, terminology in the Middle Ages was unstable. One picturesque name or another could be used in any given case. Two centuries would pass before a variety within English would begin to assert its independence. That revolution began in Scotland with John Jamieson's Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language.

The study of English lexicography has a national and regional as well as a historical dimension: it encompasses the distinctive words and meanings used in the United States and in the independent countries of the Commonwealth, and the dictionaries in which they are recorded. By the 1850s in America, lexicography had moved away from its earlier concern with lexical origins. **The Dictionary of American English (DAE)** was the first of these to be produced.

Dictionaries of national usages have appeared in several other countries, including India. But they are most comprehensive and scholarly in countries where there are long-established native-English-speaking populations, such as

Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa. In all those territories, with minor differences, a particular pattern of dictionary development has come about. First, typically, a single scholar or individual enthusiast will appear and start noting down the vocabulary peculiar to the territory-often complaining as a result that the OED is deficient in covering those usages. A small scholarly dictionary might be the next step, as in South Africa at Rhodes University, where a modest 'dictionary unit' was established, resulting in the production of a **Dictionary of South African English (1978).**

Scottish National Dictionary (SND) is considered as the second major work to be produced by Scottish lexicographers.Much of the collecting and preliminary editing was carried out by volunteers. Togather spoken evidence, the country was divided into dialect areas according topronunciation. Written quotations, also excerpted by volunteers, came from a considerablenumber and variety of works.

Regional dictionaries and glossaries werevaluable, but many of these source books were descriptions of local dialects. The first serious undertaking, as Jeannette Allsopp explains, was **A Dictionary of Jamaican English on historical principles (1967)**, by Frederic Cassidy and Robert LePage. This was designed to be a complete inventory of Jamaican Creole as well as arecord of more educated Jamaican speech. The bulk of its data was made up ofrecorded responses to a questionnaire, devised by Cassidy, which focused on theworking lives of farmers, Wshermen, and so on.

The next major title was **The Dictionary of Bahamian English** by J. Holmand A. W. Shilling (1982). It was intended to form 'a link between the CaribbeanCreoles such as Jamaican English and the English spoken today by many blackpeople in the United States'. Analysis was restricted to the language of the mostaccessible islands of the chain.Richard Allsopp, eventually to assume the chief editorship of **the Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage (1996)**, became aware while a student in Europe ofdifferences between his own usage and British Standard English. Then, running in parallel with the expansion of text corpora, and of exceptionalimportance for the further development of the OED, have been thechanges made possible by online editing and publication. One significant aspect has been the editorial revision of the dictionary, now on going, which has resulted in the online publication of large amounts of new and revised dictionaries.

In the heyday of the British Empire, conditions were far from auspicious for thedevelopment of an autonomous variety of English in India. Macaulay's policypaper in 1835 had raised English above the classical languages of the region-Sanskrit and Persian-and set as a goal the creation of a new class. In the course of the nineteenth century, this policy was largelysuccessful among Indian elites, and not until the twentieth did Gandhi (amongothers) point to English used by Indians as a sign of cultural subordination.The first dictionary of Anglo-Indian appeared in 1885 as the result of a decadeof work by an official in India, George Clifford Whitworth. He saw it as a"Supplement to the English dictionary': "An Anglo-Indian Dictionary" shouldcontain all those words which English people in their relations with India havefound it necessary or convenient to add to their own vernacular, and should givealso any special significations which pure English words have acquired in India"

Though not a citation dictionary, it is an excellent work mostly devoted to loan-wordsfrom Indian languages like sari or stupa. Distinctive English usages are alsotreated (e.g. serpent race, settlement, state railway.

Into this cultural mix came a remarkable volume celebrating Indian English:**A Glossary of Colloquial Anglo-Indian Words and Phrases (1886)**by Henry Yule and A. C. Burnell. Here was a work of profound scholarship withprecisely identified quotations from a copious bibliography showing the evolutionof expressions in the subcontinent. James Murray was an enthusiast of thework and cites it nearly five hundred times in the OED— for instance in theetymology of so English a word as elephant. The compilers were broadly interestedin words that had entered English from the region and more particularlyconcerned with 'the common Anglo-Indian stock' in commercial and administrativeuse. Many of these were well established in British English: curry, toddy,veranda, cheroot. Others were more specialized and had retained connotations oftheir origin: pukka, mahout, nautch. The compilers were further interested in newsenses of English words acquired in the region: bearer, cot, belly-band, collegepheasant, chopper, summer-hand, eagle wood, jackass-copal, bobbery.

Ambivalence about the role of English after independence did not lead toconsequential lexicography of distinctive uses of English in the region. Collectorsnational and regional dictionaries of English still publish lists of borrowings (like loofa for the product of the vegetable spongevine) and innovative senses (like denting for smoothing of dents in automobilebodies). (For an example of a dictionary of this type, see Hankin 2003.)As the example of Pickering reveals in the American context, recognition ofdistinctive English may begin with a treatment of differences between the superordinateand the subordinate variety. A rich example of this practice in India wasprovided in the usage dictionary by Nihalani and his collaborators. Most entriesare designed to alert users to differences (for instance, jotter 'ball-point pen').

Beyond south Asia:Malaysia hasadopted BahasaMalayu as the 'national language' and marginalized the use ofEnglish for some purposes, so conditions for such work are hardly any better there.

In Singapore, government action has discouraged the recognition of a distinctiveSingaporean English. Nonetheless, an edition of the Chambers Dictionary designedfor Malaysia and Singapore contains an appendix of borrowed words in commonuse (for instance, angmoh, Mat Salleh, orang putih, all three expressions used todesignate a Caucasian person). Within the main alphabet there is a category forSingapore-Malaysian English 'informal English', as shown in this entry:(2) lamp post2. (SME informal) You might be called a lamp post if you are in the companyof two people who would rather be alone together. Wei Ming, I don't wanta lamp post around whenMei Ling comes afterwards, all right (Seaton 2002,s.v. lamp post).These varieties— known as Manglish and Singlish—are as revealing of theirhistory as any of the other national kinds of English. Thus gostan 'move backwards,go slow' is derived from go astern and zap 'to photocopy' from internationalEnglish. Only very recently has the power of the Internet allowed wordenthusiasts, despite official indifference, to create ambitious citation dictionariesdesigned on historical principles.

The list of used literature

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