CHAPTER - V
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SUGGESTION FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF ENGLISH-MANIPURI DICTIONARY

In the preceding chapter we have discussed some of the problems relating to phonological, grammatical and semantic systems in compiling English-Manipuri dictionary for Manipuri speakers. This chapter attempts to give a direction or make a way for how to elude the problems in making a standard English-Manipuri bilingual dictionary.

As a matter of fact, this chapter shows some possible devices for improvement of English-Manipuri dictionary making in the future. It is being understood that the art of dictionary making has many hurdles. It can be expected that this chapter could be used as a remedial measure particularly in making English-Manipuri dictionary for Manipuri speakers.

Suggestions for phonological problem

Information about the pronunciation becomes a primary need for a dictionary as the dictionary has been increased by new attitude towards speech. "The printed word is no longer the only means of mass communication, the spoken word has become as important in the age of radio, telephone, phonograph, television, tape recorder, video-tape recorder, cinema, and telstar." (Ali M Al-Kasimi, 1983 35). Every lexicographer has provided the pronunciation of head words at least. The transcriptions used in the dictionaries are based on purpose of the dictionary especially in bilingual dictionary. But application of transcription is the most
important task for dictionary makers. "Transcriptions can be used only in relating
the written form to a spoken one. So, the lexicographer has great responsibility in
this respect, as unreliable information may lead to wrong performance". (Tadeusz
Piotrowski, 1987). As pronunciation is to be included in a bilingual dictionary, it
is necessary to choose an appropriate type of transcription. Again Piotrowski
pointed out that "............ when selecting the appropriate transcription,
lexicographers must consider their position between two attitudes—usage of a
transcription widely known on an international scale, and keeping to the traditional
one used in their country. International transcription makes it easier for the user
to use other dictionaries (monolingual one, for example), while following tradition
is reassuring for the user and relates the dictionary to other books published in
his or her country". Berkov puts a case clearly: lexicographers in their choice of
the system of transcription are restricted only by the convenience of the user
(ibid).

The pronunciation of English words in English-Mampuri dictionary for
Manipuri speakers can be made in two levels — (i) Primary or Beginners' level
and (ii) Intermediate or Advanced level

(i) Primary or Beginners' level:

In making English-Manipuri dictionary for beginners level the adoption of
scientific transcription (International Phonetic Alphabet) has its limitations
although it is customary in bilingual dictionaries to indicate pronunciation. 
Beginners very often do not even try to master the scientific transcription, because
they think it too complicated and useless. Instead they construct their own notation
of pronunciation, based on values of the letters of their alphabet, a notation that
is most often wrong. It seems that it would be advisable for phoneticians to work out a notion based on letter values of respective languages, which would be consistent and more adequate. In the light of this statement we can observe that many English-Manipuri dictionary compilers have provided the pronunciation of English head words in different ways in Bengali script, for instance, gallop (গোলপ) here, English vowel phoneme /æ/ in /'gaelap/ is replaced by 'ɛ...ɪ' actually the notation 'ɛ' and 'ɪ' are pronounced as /e/ and /j/ respectively. Again in another dictionary it is given as (গোলপ) 'ɛ' / j / and 'ɪ' /a/ are combined to substitute the phoneme /æ/. Phonologically as transcribed in the dictionaries (গোলপ) and (গোলপ) can be manifested as /'gjelep/ and /gjalep/ respectively. As a result the pronunciation is being diverted even from near equivalent sound. It is suggested that the lexicographer has to choose the nearest possible equivalent (sound or symbol of Manipuri) to the English sound, for instance, /iː/, /i/ and /ɛ/ can be substituted by 'ɪ' /i/ of Manipuri. For different places of articulation we can employ a diacritic mark. If the sounds of the language are very different from one another the dictionary maker may use the nearest or closest letter of the target language since the dictionary is planned for the target language speakers. But he should not forget to illustrate how to articulate the different sounds of both languages in most possible way. For instance, English /ð/ does not exist in Manipuri. The nearest symbol for English /ð/ in Manipuri is 'ʂ' /d/. In such situation the lexicographer may adopt the same 'ʂ' for /ð/ by differentiating it with the help of diacritic marks or printing in bold face (for example, ʂ or ʂ for/ð/). The findings of the contrastive study of the two languages is also very important and helpful to display in the front matter of the dictionary.
(ii) Intermediate or Advanced level:

For advanced level the scientific transcription (International Phonetic Alphabet) which is used in English dictionaries viz. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of current English (1997) or Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (1998) etc. will be much beneficial to the English-Mampuri dictionary makers in providing the phonological information.

With regards to the pronunciation of English head words—the "Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English" shows the detailed information in the following ways:

a) separates British and American pronunciation, British on the left, American on the right.
b) shows main stress
c) shows secondary stress
d) shows stress shift
e) means that some speakers use /ɪ/ and some use /ʊ/
f) means that some speakers use /ʊ/ and some use /θ/
g) means that /θ/ may or may not be used, etc.

Suggestion for grammatical problems

The grammar of the source language (English) should be introduced in the front matter (preface) of the dictionary. As the two languages have existed in different grammatical systems of their own, the compiler should explain and include it in the dictionary. It is also unforgetable to illustrate the policies or devices
adopted in the dictionary. For example, the English verbal roots are free morphemes but not in Manipuri. In such cases every compiler should try to correspond all the English verbs to Manipuri 'verbal roots + nominaliser suffix' (-ba). The reason for corresponding English verb to Manipuri verbal noun should also be properly indicated.

The lexicographer may also provide a brief grammatical information along with word level illustration in both the languages where there is no possible way to make a suitable matching, for instance, the English future tense will and Manipuri /-geni/: will eat /cageni/. shall read /pageni/ etc. The reason is that in Manipuri /-geni/ is a suffix and if it is separated from the verbal root it seems meaningless.

In simple present indefinite tense, the suffix '-s', as in "He wants bread," cannot exactly be corresponded to Manipuri. For such cases the dictionary maker needs to give the grammatical information as provided in a monolingual dictionary of English.

About natural gender, the distinction between masculine and feminine he and she of English can not exactly be corresponded to Manipuri. As we know Manipuri has only one word ma for both he and she. The compiler, therefore, should not forget to indicate the varied forms of English. On the contrary, the English pronoun you is used both for singular and plural numbers. But it is impossible to show it in a single word in Manipuri. Because Manipuri has it in two separate forms — /neij/ (singular) and /nekboj/ (plural) so the lexicographer should furnish 'you' /neij/ in singular and 'you' /nekboj/ in plural. Again possessive pronoun and adjective of English 'my', 'mine', etc. can be related only to the
Manipuri word /े, जि/. The English Manipuri dictionary compilers should explain the difference of such forms with illustration in their dictionary. The users may not get the real information without illustrative examples.

There are many more grammatical affixes in English, for example.

\textbf{\textit{a\textsuperscript{1}}}- prefix in particular condition or way: in \textbf{alive} (=living), \textbf{atiling} (=tingling), \textbf{abed} (=in bed), \textbf{afar} (=far away).

\textbf{\textit{a\textsuperscript{2}}}- prefix showing an opposite or the absence of something, not, without. \textbf{amoral} (=not moral), \textbf{atypically} (=not typically). etc.

\textbf{\textit{un}}- prefix especially in adjectives and adverbs: 1. shows a negative, a lack or an opposite, not: \textbf{unfair}, \textbf{unhappy}, \textbf{unfortunately}. 2. especially in verbs show an opposite: \textbf{to undress} (take your cloths off). etc.

\textbf{-ly} suffix 1. [in adverb] in a particular way. He did it very \textbf{cleverly} (=in a clever way). 2. [in adverbs] considered in a particular way Politically speaking it was rather an unwise remark. 3. [in adjectives and adverbs] happening at a regular period of time: an \textbf{hourly} check (done every hour). They visit \textbf{monthly} (once a mouth) 4. [in adjective] like a particular thing in a manner, nature, or appearance: a \textbf{motherly} women (showing the love, kindness, etc. of a mother) etc.

\textbf{-ness} suffix [in nouns] the condition, quality, or degree of being something. \textbf{landness}, \textbf{sadness}, \textbf{warmheartedness}. etc.
The above examples are the real existing approach and technique in making English monolingual dictionary.

In giving the grammatical information in a bilingual dictionary it is absolutely imperative that the lexicographer should try to explain the grammatical elements of the source language with examples. He should also be aware of possible problems created by the different grammatical natures of the two languages. In such a critical situation, it will be an unavoidable task to explain with example in word or sentence level. If the lexicographer clearly knows the problems of the users, it will certainly be a wise policy to define in both languages.

**Suggestion for Semantic Problem**

Translation from source language to target language is the most important work for a bilingual lexicographer. Words may have numerous meanings in different situations. The first approach is the identification of word. The identification of word also depends upon its contextual situation. Some linguists argue that contextual meaning is more important than the dictionary meaning. But to define all contextual meanings is impossible in a dictionary, since it changes from place to place and from situation to situation. Many positive senses are used as negative and vice versa. For example, ironic meanings are not provided in monolingual or bilingual dictionary.

Normally, in a good dictionary the compiler gives the polysemous meanings of a head word under the same entry. "A polysemantic word, has several, often quite different, meanings all derived from same basic idea or concept" (Imoba Singh, 1985). If the words are homonym they are entered separately. "Homonym
is a word which is identical in written form and in sound with another word of the same language, but is different in origin and meaning” (ibid).

Example of Polysemantic Word:

**lender /ˈfendə(r)/**  
1. a low metal frame placed around a fireplace to prevent burning coal from falling out.  
2. a soft solid object such as a mass of rope or a rubber tyre, hung over the side of a boat to prevent damage when it comes next to another boat or to land.  
3. (US) (a) a MUDGUARD over the wheel of a bicycle, (b) = WING 4.

In the above example meanings are separated by numbers or, when closely related by letters.

Example of Homonymic word:

**affect1 /əˈfɛkt/**  
1. to have an influence on sb/sth; to produce an effect on sb/sth: [Vn] *The tax increase has affected us all.*

**affect2 /əˈfɛkt/**  
1. (derog) to make an obvious show of using, wearing or liking sth: [Vn] *affect bright colours/bow-ties*

If the word has different grammatical functions they are treated as that of homonymic words.
For example:

**water**¹ /'wɔːte(r)/ n 1. (u) (a) a liquid without colour, smell or test that falls as rain, is in lakes, rivers and seas and is used for drinking, washing, etc.: a glass of water

**water**² /'wɔːte(r)/ v 1 to pour water on plants, etc.: [Vn] water a flower bed/lawn. The garden needs watering

It is not possible to give exact equivalent meaning from one language to another. This is why many bilingual dictionary compilers gave near equivalent meanings in the target language. On the other hand many words have their equivalents in the target language the basic meanings only, but their derived meanings and connotational meanings are absolutely different. For example, unicorn is an imaginary animal like a white horse with a long straight horn growing on its head. Here, any English-Manipuri dictionary compiler will not be able to give its exact or near equivalent in Manipuri. Searching for equivalent from English to Manipuri is very tedious. Truely speaking, if the compiler has good command in both the languages that dictionary will be highly helpful to the users.

We know that many English words have their near equivalents in Manipuri. But it is not a good policy to give only the near equivalents. Because the dictionary users do not know the semantic gap between the two words. For example, the English word i) **breakfast** and /cərəwanbe/ of Manipuri share similar semantic features. But the difference is that /cərəwanbe/ is usually for children only, not for adult. In general, Manipuris enjoy only two meals in a day — a) a meal in day time (usually 9 a.m. to 12 noon) and b) a meal in night time (6 p.m. to 9 p.m.). The day time meal of Manipuri could be corresponded to **brunch** of English. But
many English-Manipuri dictionary compilers have provided brunch and lunch identically. ii) about hare and rabbit: these two words of English are given as /tʰəba/ in Manipuri. But the above two words are defined separately in A.S. Hornby's "Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of current English", 1997 as:

**hare/heə(r)/n** an animal like a rabbit but with longer ears and back legs and able to run very fast.

**rabbit /ræbɪt/n** a small animal with greyish brown fur, long ears and short tail. Rabbit lives in holes in the ground

We can see that the bilingual lexicographer should define the two different meanings of the words in the target language distinctly.

It is also apparent that different senses of a word in the source language for instance, the English word **machine (noun)** has six meanings (*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 1998*) provides as 1) a piece of equipment that uses power such as electricity to do a particular job: a machine that fills the bottles .......................... 2) a computer: a powerful machine that is ideal for software development. 3) a group of people that controls an organisation, especially a political party: The party machine .......................... 4) like a well-oiled machine working very smoothly and effectively: The office runs like a well-oiled machine. 5) *informal* a vehicle: That is an impressive-looking machine you have got there. 6) someone who works without stopping, or who seems to have no feelings or independent thoughts: He was a running machine, born to do nothing but win medals.
The word machine itself is no longer used as a foreign word in Manipuri. But only the basic meaning or sense is used in Manipuri. The other derived meanings are not properly used in Manipuri. In the same dictionary mentioned above, the word *machine* had been treated as a head word according to its grammatical function, as:

**machine** v [: ] 1. to fasten pieces of clothes together using a sewing machine.
2. to make or shape something using or machine.

No doubt a bilingual lexicographer may give the near equivalent meaning in the target language but he should not try to distort the different meanings of the words. One of the most important devices is to illustrate or discriminate the different semantic gap of the word in both the languages.

We often found such meanings as 'a kind of bird', 'a species of herbs', 'name of a flower or plant', etc. in English-Manipuri dictionaries which land the user nowhere. For such cases, meanings should be indicated by specialized subjects in which they are so used. The New Lexicon Webster's Dictionary of the English Language, (1988) which is famous for its scientific definitions of terms can be referred to by our lexicographers.

It will also be very helpful to the users if the dictionary makers adopt the policy of pictorial illustration in the dictionary. The dictionary users may recognize the meanings of the head words through the pictures. Each and every picture should properly be described in detail so that the users could get the actual sense or meaning at a glance.
This should always be kept in the mind that a bilingual lexicographer is doing two jobs — a) translation work (from source to target language) b) explanation of head entries (as is done by a monolingual lexicographer).