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ENCYCLOPEDIA DEFINITIONS IN LANGUAGE DICTIONARIES – A TREASURY OF CULTURE

Abstract: *This paper discusses encyclopedic module of definitions in language dictionaries as a source of historical and cultural information. The main aim of the study is to reveal and compare the encyclopedic modules of definitions in early dictionaries of Australian and Indian English. The method applied consists in the analysis of the definitions and in the review of citation. The data was selected from two dictionaries on historical principles – Austral English (Morris, 1898) and Hobson-Jobson (Yule and Burnell, 1886). The corpus consists of 320 and 292 articles respectively. The study showed that in both dictionaries encyclopedic module of the definitions overshadows the linguistic one. At the same time, specificity of the nascent varieties of English and particularities of the linguistic situation in Australia and India determined the framework of these dictionaries, mainly the criteria of the entries' selection and, as a consequence, the lexical domains covered by encyclopedic modules of the definitions.*

Keywords: lexicography, definition, encyclopedia, language dictionary, culture, Austral English, Hobson-Jobson.

Introduction

Since the middle of the 20th century, after the publication of the first paper in modern theoretical lexicography, *Towards A General Theory of Lexicography* (Scherba, 1940), this branch of linguistics has been thriving (see Zgusta and Farina, 1988). There are two interrelated areas of research in this field – applied and historical. Within the first area, all aspects of the dictionary compilation process are discussed and methods of their

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improvement are suggested (e.g. Svensén, 2009; Zgusta, 1971). Within the second area, the evolution of lexicography is observed and the history of national lexicographic traditions is investigated (e.g. Béjoint 1994, 2010; Balabakki, 2014; Skybina, 1984; Starnes and Noyes, 1946; Vogel, 1979). Also, a critical analysis of several dictionaries is provided along with a portrayal of their compilers' life and activities (e.g. Green, 1996; Landau, 1984; Murray, 1977).

Recent years have also seen much interest in the discussion of the role that dictionaries play in the history and culture of the language speaking community. Thus, socio-cultural validity of dictionaries has been noted and discussed in multiple studies (e.g. Benson, 2002; Bytko, 2013a, 2013b; Considine, 2008; Dawson, 2013; Pruvost, 2006; Karpova and Kartashkova, 2007; Kendall and Morey, 2011; Oguibénine, 1998; Skybina, 2010, 2011, 2013a, 2013b; Kachru and Kahane, 1995, to mention only the latest publications). It is emphasized that the user can obtain information on cultural issues in multiple ways: by studying the history of dictionary projects and compilers' biographies, by understanding the selection criteria of entries and dictionary typology, by observing dynamics of national lexicographic tradition. But most obviously, attentive reading of definitions enables the user to retrieve culturally relevant information in every detail and in pertaining context. Understandably, those are encyclopedic definitions that better serve this task.

The differentiation of language, dictionaries and encyclopedias is generally recognized. Definitions in the former are aimed at the description of words as linguistic units, in the latter – at the representation of the notions of extra-lingual reality – things, objects, and phenomena. In the English language, lexicography dictionaries that combine the two main types of definitions have been published and analyzed as a fairly new development. However, observations on the early dictionaries of native and non-native varieties of English support the belief that encyclopedic modules have been incorporated into language dictionaries for at least two centuries.

Lexicography of English is multidimensional: it reflects, in its specific way and form, the history of the language and its phenomenal variability. Every dictionary – most of all, the one compiled on historical principles – is an invaluable source of information, not only on lexis, but also on socio-cultural phenomena that are encoded in lexical units, illustrated in examples and unfolded in citation. This is most vivid in dictionaries compiled on the material of the varieties of English, both national and non-national. Moreover, there are situations when encyclopedic information becomes an indispensable component of (language) dictionaries.

The aim of this paper, which consists of four parts, is to evince the reasons behind the incorporation of encyclopedic modules into language dictionaries, to evaluate the volume of the encyclopedic module in definitions, and to demarcate the lexical domains covered by them. First, theoretical background is developed and data and methodology explained. Second, dictionaries, *Austral English* (Morris, 1898) and *Hobson-Jobson* (Yule and Burnell, 1886), are analyzed individually. Third, the comparison of the results obtained in part two is provided. Fourth, the conclusions are drawn.

Data and method

To this end, we analyzed two lexicographic “celebrities” - *Austral English: A Dictionary of Australasian Words, Phrases and Usages* (Morris, 1898) and *Hobson-Jobson: A Glossary of Colloquial Anglo-Indian Words and Phrases, and of Kindred Terms, Etymological, Historical, Geographical and Discursive* (Yule and Burnell, 1886). The choice of the dictionaries was based on three criteria. First, they define two different types of the varieties of English – native (Australian) and non-native (Indian); second, they are dictionaries on historical principles; third, they cover the time of the varieties incipience – the period of the most active derivational and word-building processes.

320 articles from *Austral English* and 292 articles from *Hobson-Jobson* of the letter ‘S’ entries constitute the corpus.

The applied method consists of a semantic analysis of the entries' lexical meanings and a review of citation. The empirical analysis consists of three parts. First, *Austral English* definitions are scrutinized, second, the definitions from *Hobson-Jobson* are examined, and third, the results obtained are juxtaposed to evince the similarities and differences. A short historical overview for each dictionary precedes the empirical analysis.

Analysis and discussion

Austral English, the first comprehensive study of the origin of Australian English, was published at the end of the 19th century, only 100 years after the first settlers arrived in Australia. The new land was different from the home country in every possible detail and survival was a priority for the settlers. Notably, the majority of the settlers belonged to a marginal strata of the society. Understandably, first settlers had to explore the new land and acquire as much knowledge of it as possible in the shortest time. As such, it was the nature that got special attention from the settlers and hundreds of new terms for flora and fauna entered English. Edward Ellis Morris, a scholar and educator, must have recognized this fact and applied relevant selection criteria of the entries, resulting in the prevalence of flora and fauna terms in the word-list.

Consequently, those are encyclopedic definitions for the entries in the 'Natural objects' lexical domain that occupys most of the semantic space of the dictionary (see Table 1).

Lexical domain	Semantic space covered by encyclopedic component of definitions
Nature:	67.7 %
Flora	○ 18 %
Fauna	○ 47.5 %
Miscellaneous	○ 2.2 %

Table 1– Percentage of semantic space covered by encyclopedic component of definitions in the 'Natural objects' domain in *Austral English*

The encyclopedic component of definitions in the 'Natural objects' domain and the pertaining citation provide both general and country-specific encyclopedic information.

General encyclopedic information:

- Latin names for flora and fauna:

Stump-tailed Lizard, n. an Australian lizard, *Trachydosaurus rugosus*, Gray.

Country-specific encyclopedic information:

- Reference to local lands, rivers, territories:

Spider-Orchid, n. name given in Tasmania to the Orchid *Caladenia Pulcherrima*<...>

- Some characteristics of local flora and fauna objects:

Sting-moth, n. an Australian Moth, *Doratiferavulnerans*. The larva has at each end of the body four tubercles bearing stinging hairs. ('Standard.')

- Details of the terrain:

Scrub, n. a country overgrown with thick bushes. Henry Kingsley's explanation (1859), that the word means shrubbery, is singularly misleading, the English word conveying the idea of smallness and order compared with the size and confusion of the Australian use.

- Historical allusions:

Sergeant Baker, n. name given to a fish of New South Wales, *Aulopus Purpurissatus*, Richards., family *Scopelida*.

1882. Rev. J. E. Tenison-Woods, 'Fish of New South Wales,' p. 82:

"The Sergeant Baker in all probability got its local appellation in the early history of the colony (New South Wales), as it was called after a sergeant of that name in one of the first detachments of a regiment; <...>"

To explore the new world and learn to live in it, the settlers developed a way of life that best suited their needs.

Austral English depicts the lexicon of the time relating to the settlers' life with the encyclopedic modules providing multiple details. The amount of semantic space covered by the lexical domain concerning people and the way of life accounts for around 24% of the dictionary space.

Our corpus represents the following sub-domains of the 'People & Way of life' domain (numbers in brackets indicate the meaning as registered in the dictionary):

- People: scrub-rider, scrubber (3), shagron, scullbanker, slusher, sonny, squatter, squatterarchy, squatterdom, squattocracy, squattocratic, sticker-up, stock-agent, stockholder, stock-keeper, stock-man, stock-rider, sundowner, super, swag, swagger, swaggie, swagman.
- Way of life: settlers' matches, shanghai-shot, shanty, settlers' twine, shed, shearer's joy, sheep-wash, she-oak nets, shepherd, v., n., shicer, shout, silver-tail, sool, spell, spotting, squat v., squatting, station-jack, steamer (food), stick-up, sticker-up, stingareeing, stock-up, stonewall, swag n., (2) swag v.
- Disease: sandy-blight.
- Land as an object of economic activity: sheep-sick, snow-line, soak, soakage, squattage, stock-route, surfacing.
- Cattle: scrub-cattle, snailey stock stock-horse, store, store-cattle, sheep-farming: skirting soak-hole.
- Lumbering: slab, spearwood.
- Dwelling: slip-panel, slip-rail, station, stock-hut, shantie.
- Equipment: shanghai, slush lamp, spade-press, sprag, stamper, stock-whip ,stump-jump, plough swamp-broom, swing-gate.

The encyclopedic component of the definitions for these lexicon's articles provides the following information:

- Methods of land exploration

- **Surfacing** *verbal n.* (2) gold-digging on the surface of the ground
- Occupation:
 - **Shanty-Keeper**, *n.* keeper of a sly-grog shop.
- Leisure activities:
 - **Stingagreeing**, *n.* The sport of catching *stingrays*, or *Stingarees*
- Domestic animals specialization
 - **Stock-horse**, *n.* horse accustomed to go after cattle in mastering and *cutting-out* (q.v.)
- Local legislation
 - **Stock-route**, *n.* When land is first let in survey blocks to a *Squatter* (q.v.) and is, of course, unfenced, the lessee is required by law to leave passages through it from two or four chains wide, at certain intervals, as a right-of-way for traveling sheep and cattle <...>
- Parliamentary practices:
 - **Stonewall**, *n.* (1) A Parliamentary term: to make use of the forms of the House so as to delay public business
 - “Entrepreneurship” of some settlers:
 - **Sundowner**, a tramp who takes care to arrive at a station at sundown, so that he shall be provided with *'tucker'* (q.v.) at the squatter's cost: one of those who goes about the country seeking work and devoutly hoping they may not find it.
 - **Shepherd**, *n.* a miner who holds the claim but does not work it.
- Life in the bush:
 - **Swag**, *v.* (2) A special Australian use: a tramp's bundle, wrapped up in a blanket, called a *Bluey*(q.v.). Used also for a passenger's luggage.
 - **Swagman**, *n.* a man travelling through the bush carrying a *swag* (q.v.), and seeking employment.
- Common diseases:
 - **Sandy-blight**, *n.* a kind of ophthalmia common in Australia, in which eye feels as if full of sand. Called also shortly, *Blight*.
- Way of life particulars:

Settlers' Matches, *n.* name occasionally applied to the long pendulous strips of bark which hang from the Eucalypts and other trees, during decorticating, and which, becoming exceedingly dry, are readily ignited and used and used as kindling wood.

- Settlers' nicknames

Shagroon, *n.* When the province of Canterbury, in New Zealand, was first settled, the men who came from England were called *Pilgrims*, all others *Shagroons*, probably a modification of the Irish word *Shaughraun*.

- Dwelling

Shanty, *n.* 1) a hastily erected wooden house; (2) a public house, especially unlicensed: a sly-grog shop. The word is by origin Keltic (Irish). In the first sense, it's use is Canadian or American; in the last Australian. <...>

- Changes in the way of life as reflected in the word meaning and illustrated in citation:

Squatter, *n.*(1) one who squats; that is settles on land without a title or licence. This is an English use.

1897. Australian Steam Navigation Company, 'Guide Book', p. 29:

"Nowaday squatters may be interested and possibly shocked on learning that in March, 1836, a petition was being largely signed for the prevention of 'squatting', through which so much crime was daily occurring', inasmuch as 'squatting' was but another term for sly grog selling, receiving stolen property, and harbouring bushrangers and assigned servants. The term 'squatters', as applied to the class it now designates - without which where would Australia now be? - was not in vogue till 1842."

(2) A pastoral tenant of the Crown, often renting from the Crown vast tracts of land for pasturage at an almost nominal sum. The term is still frequently, but incorrectly, used for a man rearing and running stock on a freehold land. *Pastoralist* is now the more favoured term.

Culturally relevant are also some words and geographic terms repeatedly used in the definitions: *Colonial, Aboriginal, Indigenous, Native, Bush, Bushmen, Australia, New Zealand, Tasmania, etc.*

The second part of the research deals with *Hobson-Jobson*. Sir Henry Yule, a Scottish Orientalist and engineer, and Arthur Coke Burnell, an English scholar in Sanskrit, both amateur lexicographers, compiled the dictionary. The dictionary was published in 1886; three centuries after the colonization had taken off. It was the first sound lexicographic work compiled on historical principles with the objective to represent all classes of words that “recur constantly in the daily intercourse of the English in India” (Yule and Burnell, 1886). Apparently, the main objective of the dictionary was to facilitate communication of the British with their local counterparts. The academic goal was secondary.

In accord with the main goal, the word list primarily pertained to the concepts relevant to the activities of the British administration. Thus, entries related to material and spiritual culture constitute more than a half of the dictionary articles while only 20% of the articles relate to the natural world. Accordingly, semantic space covered by encyclopedic component of definitions for the ‘People & way of life’ domain greatly exceeds that of the ‘Nature’ domain (see Table 2) by almost a factor of four.

Lexical domain	Semantic space covered by encyclopedic component of definitions
People & way of life	53.6%
○ Material culture	○ 51.1%
○ Spiritual culture	○ 2.5%
Flora	13.5%
Fauna	4.9%
Geographical terms	21.5%

Table 2– Percentage of semantic space covered by encyclopedic component of definitions in *Hobson-Jobson*

In definitions and citations of the articles in the 'Natural objects' domain, encyclopedic component plays a significant role. Much like with *Austral English*, encyclopedic module in *Hobson-Jobson* provides both general and country-specific information.

General encyclopedic information:

- Latin or Greek names for flora and fauna:
SEER-FISH, s. A name applied to several varieties of fish, species of the genus *Cybium*.<...>

Country-specific information:

- Flora and fauna objects as used in local cuisine or/and economic activities:
SEER-FISH , s. <...> When of the right size, neither too small nor too big, these are reckoned among the most delicate of Indian sea-fish. Some kinds salt well, and are also good for preparing as **Tamarind-Fish**.
SAGWIRE , s. A name applied often in books, and, formerly at least, in the colloquial use of European settlers and traders, to the **Gomuti** palm or *Arengasaccharifera*, Labill., which abounds in the Ind. Archipelago, and is of great importance in its rural economy. <...>Its most important product, however, is the sap, which is used as **toddy** (q.v.), and which in former days also afforded almost all the sugar used by natives in the islands. <...>. There is also found in a like position a fine cotton-like substance which makes excellent tinder, and strong stiff spines from which pens are made, as well as arrows for the blow-pipe, or Sumpitan (see **SARBATANE**).
- Reference to local lands, rivers, territories:
SHOLA , s. In S. India, a wooded ravine; a thicket.
- Socio-historical references:
SARNAU, **SORNAU**, n.p. A name often given to Siam in the early part of the 16th century; from *Shahr-inao*, Pers. 'New-city'; the name by which Yuthia or Ayodhya (see **JUDEA**), the capital founded on the Menam about 1350, seems to have become known to the traders of the Persian Gulf. Mr. Braddell

(*J. Ind. Arch.* v. 317) has suggested that the name (*Sheher-al-nawi*, as he calls it) refers to the distinction spoken of by La Loubère between the Thai-*Yai*, an older people of the race, and the Thai-*Noi*, the people known to us as Siamese. But this is less probable.<...>.

However, the main amount of encyclopaedic information is accumulated in definitions and citations of the articles constituting 'People & Way of life' domain. Our corpus represents the following sub-domains in 'People & Way of life' domain in *Hobson-Jobson*: 'People and their occupation', 'Associations', 'Organizations', 'Activities', 'Titles', 'Way of life objects' with further subdivision into 'Means of watercraft', 'Products and drinks', 'Cloth/es', 'Constructions', 'Weapons', 'Currency'.

Encyclopedic component of the definitions for the articles in these sub-domains provides the following information:

- Clothes (with some cultural and geographical remarks):
SARONG , s. Malay. *sārunḡ*; the body-cloth, or long kilt, tucked or girt at the waist, and generally of coloured silk or cotton, which forms the chief article of dress of the Malays and Javanese. The same article of dress, and the name (*saran*) are used in Ceylon. <...>
- Social attitudes:
SOY, s. A kind of condiment once popular.<...>. It is made from the beans of a plant common in the Himālaya and E. Asia, and much cultivated, viz. *Glycine Soja*, Sieb. and Zucc. (*Soya hispida*, Moench.), boiled down and fermented. [In India the bean is eaten in places where it is cultivated, as in Chutia Nāgpur (*Watt, Econ. Dict.* iii.510 seq.)]
- Local cuisine attributes:
SOOJEE, SOOJY, s. <...> It is, in fact, the fine flour, made from the heart of the wheat, used in India to make bread for European tables. It is prepared by grinding between two millstones which are not in close contact. [*Sūjī* "is a granular meal obtained by moistening the grain overnight, then

grinding it. The fine flour passes through a coarse sieve, leaving the **Suji** and bran above. The latter is got rid of by winnowing, and the round, granular meal or **Suji**, composed of the harder pieces of the grain, remains" (*Watt. Econ.Dict.* VI.pt. iv. 167).] <...>. (See **ROLONG**.)

SHIRAZ, n.p. The wine of Shiraz was much imported and used by Europeans in India in the 17th century, and even later.

- Constructions:

SHAMEEANA, SEMIANNA, s. <...> an awning or flat tent-roof, sometimes without sides, but often in the present day with **canauts**; sometimes pitched like a porch before a large tent; often used by civil officers, when on tour, to hold their court or office proceedings *corampopulo*, and in a manner generally accessible. [In the early records the word is used for a kind of striped calico.]

- Historical allusions:

SHEIKH, s. Ar. *shaikh*; an old man, elder, chief, head of an Arab tribe. The word should properly mean one of the descendants of tribes of genuine Arab descent, but at the present day, in India, it is often applied to converts to Islam from the lower Hindu tribes. For the use of the word in the sense of a saint, see under **PEER**.

Notably, the history of the notions underlying the lexical items' meaning and their usage is related not only to the culture of the language that the lexemes were borrowed from, but also to the culture and social milieu of the British in India and the region.

As mentioned above, encyclopaedic information can be drawn not only from definitions but also from numerous quotations, up to 15 in some dictionary articles:

SCYMITAR , s. This is an English word for an Asiatic sabre. The common Indian word is *talwār* (see [**TULWAUR**]). <...>. This word (*shamshīr*) was known to Greek writers. Thus:
A.D. 93. -- " . . . *KAI\ KAQI/STHSI TO\N PRESBU/TATON
PAI=DA *MORO/BAZON BASILE/A PERIQEI=SA TO\

DIA/DHMA KAI\ SOU=SA TO\N SHMANTH=RA TOU\
PATRO\S SAKTU/LION, TH/NTE SAMYHRA\N
SNOMAZOME/NHN PAR' AU)TOI=S." -- *Joseph. Antiqq.* xx. ii.
3.

c. A.D. 114. -- "*DW=RA FE/REI *TRAIANY= U(FA/SMATA
SHRIKA\ KAI\ SAMYH/RAS AI(SE/ EI)SI SPA/QAI
BARBARIKAI/." -- Quoted in *Suidas Lexicon*, s.v.

1595.- ". . . By this **scimitar**, That slew the Sophy, and a
Persian prince That won three fields of Sultan Soliman . . ."*
Merchant of Venice, ii. 1.

* In a Greek translation of Shakspeare, published some years
ago at Constantinople, *this line is omitted!*

1610. -- ". . . Anon the Patron starting up, as if of a sodaine
restored to life; like a mad man skips into the boate, and
drawing a Turkise**Cymiter**, beginneth to lay about him
(thinking that his vessell had been surprised by Pirats), when
they all leapt into the sea; and diuingvnder water like so
many Diue-dappers, ascended without the reach of his furie."
-- *Sandys,Relation, &c.*, 1615, p. 28.

1614. -- "Some days ago I visited the house of a goldsmith to
see a **scimitar** (*scimitarra*) that Nasuhbashá the first vizir,
whom I have mentioned above, had ordered as a present to
the Grand Signor. Scabbard and hilt were all of gold; and all
covered with diamonds, so that little or nothing of the gold
was to be seen." -- *P. della Valle*, i. 43.

c. 1630. -- "They seldome go without their swords
(**shamsheers** they call them) form'd like a cresent, of pure
metall, broad, and sharper than any razor; nor do they value
them, unlesse at one blow they can cut in two an Asinego. . . ."
-- *Sir T. Herbert*, ed. 1638, p. 228.

1675. -- "I kept my hand on the Cock of my Carabine; and my
Comrade followed a foote pace, as well armed; and our
Janizary better than either of us both: but our Armenian had
only a **Scimeter**." -- (Sir) *George Wheler, Journey into Greece*,
London, 1682, p. 252.

1758. -- "The Captain of the troop . . . made a cut at his head with a **scymetar** which Mr. Lally parried with his stick, and a *Coffree* (**Caffer**) servant who attend him shot the Tanjerine dead with a pistol." -- *Orme*, i. 328.

Comparison of the results of the two dictionaries analysis demonstrates that encyclopaedic component of definitions is an integral part of early dictionaries of the varieties of English, both native and non-native. The encyclopaedic component significantly surpasses the linguistic one both in volume and in importance for the target user (see Table 3).

Lexical domain	Semantic space covered by encyclopedic component of definitions	
	<i>Austral English</i>	<i>Hobson-Jobson</i>
Nature	67.7%	18.4%
People & the way of life	24%	56.6%
Geographical terms	-	23%

Table 3 – Percentage of semantic space covered by encyclopedic component of definitions in *Austral English* and *Hobson-Jobson*

Both dictionaries' word-lists represent two main lexical domains, which are defined by means of utilizing encyclopaedic information – 'Nature' and 'People and the Way of life'. However, in *Austral English* the main accent is made on the 'Nature' domain while in *Hobson-Jobson* the accent is made on the 'People and the Way of life' domain. Moreover, the composition of the sub-domains of the 'People and the Way of life' domain in *Austral English* and *Hobson-Jobson* is different. Thus, in *Austral English* these sub-domains emphasize aspects of practical activities: 'Land as an object of economic activity', 'Cattle breeding', 'Lumbering'. In *Hobson-Jobson* these sub-domains accentuate aspects of social life: 'People and their occupation', 'Associations' 'Organizations, 'Activities', and 'Titles'.

Conclusion

Theory of lexicography states that language dictionaries, particularly monolingual ones, should provide information about lexemes, their functioning, and the rules of their use. However, when lexicographers face the task of compiling a dictionary of the language that is spreading beyond its initial territory and is adapting to new geographical, environmental and cultural situation, they cannot but alter the methodology. One of the main changes in methodology is conditioned by the necessity to equip the target user with the knowledge of the realities underlying the new and/or changed lexis defined in the dictionary. In practice, such a methodological change consists of adding encyclopaedic modules to definitions. And that is exactly the methodology applied by Edward Ellis Morris in *Austral English* and Henry Yule and Arthur Coke Burnell in *Hobson-Jobson*.

However, although the general approach to the compilation of these two dictionaries was identical, the encyclopedic modules in definitions of *Austral English* and in *Hobson-Jobs* have their specifics. The main reason for that seems to be the uniqueness of the linguistic situation in Australia and India at the time of the dictionaries' compilation. Consequently, the linguistic situation in each country predetermined the target audience which where representatives of the British administration and their allies in India for *Hobson-Jobson* and educated Australians as well as the national and international academic communities for *Austral English*.

The encyclopaedic data provided in the definitions of *Hobson-Jobson* presumably made the work of the British administration more effective; the encyclopaedic data in *Austral English* reflect the start of the history of the new nation in Australia and the nascence of Australian English.

The two primary semantic domains in which encyclopaedic modules of definitions prevail in both dictionaries are 'Nature' and 'People and the way of life'.

Nowadays, encyclopaedic information recorded in these dictionaries gives an insight not only into linguistic history but also into the cultural history of the English in India and Australia.

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