G.-M. de Schryver et al. (Eds.). *Oxford Bilingual School Dictionary: IsiXhosa and English.* 2014, 562 pp. ISBN 978-0-19-576682-0. Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa. Price R129.95.

Oxford University Press Southern Africa has added the *Oxford Bilingual School Dictionary: IsiXhosa and English* to its impressively developing series of bilingual school dictionaries involving English and other official languages of South Africa. The series already has similar dictionaries in other languages namely isiZulu, Northern Sesotho and Afrikaans and is hoped to include the rest of the official languages of South Africa. The dictionary under review is expected to be useful for school learners, educators and the general isiXhosa-speaking community which had to make do with old and outdated dictionaries, most of which were not specifically produced with school learners in mind, especially in the present South African linguistic and educational milieu. For African metalexicographers, it is yet another moment of reflection on the direction that *school lexicography* is taking, and hopefully producing a symbiotic relationship between metalexicography and practical lexicography, given that the latter has been lacking with respect to school dictionaries.

Besides being produced by the global lexicographical powerhouse Oxford University Press, this dictionary is a result of collaboration by accomplished experts in their respective fields. Among others, Gilles-Maurice de Schryver is not only an experienced practical lexicographer, but also a globally-renowned metalexicographer; Mary Reynolds and Daphne Paizee are popular names in English school dictionaries; Sydney Zotwana is a respected scholar and writer in isiXhosa; and Fikiswa Magqashela's name would be familiar to keen readers of isiXhosa literary works. Clearly, such a team should be expected to produce a school dictionary that can contribute immensely to language learning that involves both isiXhosa and English, as well as the development of isiXhosa into a fully functional official language in South Africa.

Although the target users of the dictionary are not clearly spelt out in terms of their school and language learning levels, as is the case in the other dictionaries in the series, it is clearly indicated that this dictionary "has been designed to help people learning isiXhosa to understand and use isiXhosa better; and to help people learning English to understand and use English better" (p. vi). However, in comparison with those dictionaries in the Oxford First Bilingual Dictionary Series whose target users are clearly foundation phase learners, the size of the *Oxford Bilingual School Dictionary: IsiXhosa and English* makes it obvious that it is targeted at the intermediate and senior school phases. It may be claimed that this dictionary is intended to build on the dictionary and language skills that are developed by the *Oxford First Bilingual Dictionary: IsiXhosa and English*.

As it intends to help the learners of both languages, this dictionary is therefore a bidirectional bilingual dictionary with two wordlists. The first wordlist provides lexicographical description of isiXhosa lemmata, while English

lemmata are dealt with in the second wordlist. We are told that approximately 5 000 words (pp. ix; xi), mostly drawn from corpora of the respective languages, are treated in each wordlist, whereby frequency of occurrence in each corpus is indicated for the top 1 500 words. Stars are used as frequency indicators, with three stars for the top 500, two stars for the next 500 and one star for the third 500 words. However, not only the highly frequent words are included. Words that are not even in the corpora are said to have been included on the basis of their importance in the educational situation of the learners (pp. ix; xi). From this, it may be accepted that beyond technological lexicographic applications, this dictionary was conceived out of a careful consideration of the user needs and user situations.

In the isiXhosa wordlist, besides frequency indication where appropriate, lemmata are described by means of word-class/type of speech data, explanations of meaning in English or translation equivalents and illustrative examples in isiXhosa and their English translations. In lexicographical terms, these types of data and their indicators constitute the obligatory microstructure (Gouws and Prinsloo 2005) of the isiXhosa-English part of the dictionary. However, there are other additional types of data and data indicators that apply only to specific lemmata. For example, noun class prefixes are indicated for lemmata which fall under the speech categories of nouns, possessives, adjectives and relatives together with the indication of the noun number (i.e. whether the noun is in singular or plural), providing information that does not apply to other types of lemmata. On the other hand, some lemmata are not provided with comprehensive treatment as they are clearly considered grammatical forms of others which are described in a more comprehensive manner in their appropriate alphabetical access positions. Relations between such and other lemmata are indicated by mediostructural guidance in the form of an arrow and the guide word *See*. That way, the user is advised to seek more comprehensive treatment in the cross-reference address, thereby saving precious dictionary space while re-establishing lexical relations of related lemmata.

Another important aspect regarding the isiXhosa wordlist is the lemmatisation approach. Lemma selection and ordering of lemmata in Nguni dictionaries is an old debate that gets re-opened whenever a new dictionary is compiled or critiqued (cf. De Schryver 2008; 2010, Gouws and Prinsloo 2005; 2005a, Kropf 1899). Inevitably, to "make this dictionary exceptionally easy to use" (p. x) entailed adopting an approach that would ensure that the users of the *Oxford Bilingual School Dictionary: IsiXhosa and English* are able to find answers regarding words that prompt dictionary consultation and do so as punctually as possible. To this end, the compilers of this dictionary depart from the traditional method of listing nouns in isiXhosa and other Nguni dictionaries using the first letter of the stem, the so-called stem method, to the new method that lists nouns and other words using their first letters, the so-called word method. This sees words *abafundi* (learners), *ekufundiseni* (in the teaching), *isifundo* (lesson) and *umfundi* (learners) respectively lemmatised under letters **Aa**, **Ee**, **Ii** and **Uu**

respectively instead of letter **Ff** as would have been the case if the stem method had been used. This means that the dictionary users do not have to worry about dissecting the word into its different formatives to isolate the stem, which could be difficult for them and even insurmountable in some words. All they need to do is to look up the full word that they have encountered using its first letter. They will only look under letter **Ff** for information regarding the verb *-funda* (learn) and its included extended verbal forms. What is noteworthy is that the dictionary user may still get information regarding the morphology of lemmata as word stems are frequently indicated through bold font while prefixes remain in regular font. Thus for the word *abafundisi* (learners), class 2 prefix *aba-* is in regular font while the stem *–fundisi* is in bold. Unfortunately, this is not done consistently. For example, immediately under the lemma 'aba**khi**' (builders) in which regular and bold fonts respectively distinguish between the prefix and stem, no similar distinction is made regarding the lemma **abakho** (yours) which is entirely in bold while *aba-* in the same word is a prefix as it is the case in *abafundi* (learners) and *abakhi* (builders). Although it appears that the distinction between prefixes and stems is made regarding nouns, lexical items belonging in the speech-type categories such as possessives, adjectives, relatives, etc. also display the prefix-plus-stem structure, thereby making the distinction made regarding nouns also relevant.

A possible criticism of the word lemmatisation method adopted for the *Oxford Bilingual School Dictionary: IsiXhosa and English* is that it results in the inclusion of closely related words which leads to unnecessary redundancy, assuming that once one knows the meaning of *–funda* then the meaning related words such as *umfundi* (learner), *abafundi* (learners), *fundisa* (teach), *umfundisi* (teacher/preacher), etc. would be predictable. Such criticism is amplified by the economics of dictionary-making which includes limited but precious time and space. However, it is important to quell such concerns by recalling that this dictionary is based on a corpus and is aimed at specific users (learners) whose use will be linked to specific situations (school-work). The corpus-based approach to the various lexicographic tasks involved in the compilation of this dictionary and the fact that this approach did not exclude items which are less frequent or even absent in the corpus indicate that the compilation of the dictionary never lost sight of balance between the economisation of the precious lexicographic resources and the satisfaction of user needs. That the user who may not establish the lexical relations intuitively may get information that may be considered redundant should in this case be considered as sensitivity towards the inexperienced language learners/users and dictionary users. Such sensitivity becomes a necessary condition for user-friendliness in relation to dictionaries.

Unlike the isiXhosa wordlist, the English wordlist of the *Oxford Bilingual School Dictionary: IsiXhosa and English* does not present novelties that require introduction to anybody who has previously used an English dictionary. Any user who has mastered the alphabet, as it may be expected, even though not

guaranteed, of the target users of this dictionary, should be able to locate all the included words with relative ease. Attention should perhaps be paid to the microstructural aspects of the English–isiXhosa side which differ from those of the reverse side. In addition to the type of speech information, isiXhosa translation equivalents, grammatical data that applies to respective lemmata, e.g. singular/plural forms for nouns or tenses for verbs, as well as cross-references where applicable and pronunciation data form part of the obligatory microstructure for English lemmata. The pronunciation information is not provided by means of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) transcription as is the case in most dictionaries but in a manner that is intended to help the learners who may not be familiar with the IPA. For example, with respect to the word *acquire*, the user is told to "say uh-**kwy**-uh" (p. 239). While this could be seen as a worthwhile departure from the use of the IPA symbols, whether the non-mother-tongue learners of English, who have isiXhosa as their mother-tongue in this case, will not pronounce *uh-* in the same way as they pronounce *u* in their mother-tongue is an issue that could be determined through dictionary user-research. At this stage, the lexicographers may be commended for their effort which goes beyond adopting this approach to pronunciation indication but also for the guidance that they provide regarding this approach (p. xiii).

Besides the microstructural data that is provided in relation to different types of lemmata in both the isiXhosa and English wordlists, constituting single articles, the dictionary provides additional information in the form of complex articles (Gouws and Prinsloo 2005: 91-92). The most obvious of these in the *Oxford Bilingual School Dictionary: IsiXhosa and English* consist of texts that are boxed and highlighted at the end of the simple articles. For example, after giving the relevant data regarding the second lemma sign **ache**, the user is advised to "[n]note that *iingqaqambo* and *iintlungu* are used in the plural sense. Sentences that use the noun *ache* are often translated using the relative *-buhlungu* in isiXhosa" (p. 239). In a similar way, a note is made under the lemma 'i**lantshi**' that "[a] more formal term for *lunch* is *isidlo sasemini*" (p. 69). That way, the lexicographers are able to extend the supply of data beyond the default article structure constituting the obligatory microstructure, thereby drawing the attention of the user to critical nuances regarding the usage of a particular lexical item.

The final aspect of the two wordlists that is highlighted is the use of illustrations in the *Oxford Bilingual School Dictionary: IsiXhosa and English*. Illustrations seem to be used to elucidate the paraphrases of meaning, but some of them also appear to increase the cognitive value of the dictionary. For example, the illustration of the plant under the lemma 'isi**tyalo**' will not only give a learner a picture of how a plant looks like but also the labelled different parts of plants (p. 112) which constitute important knowledge in the natural sciences curriculum. The same goes for the illustration provided to supplement the description of **pivot** in relation to science and technology (p. 446).

Besides the main text of the dictionary, which comprises the two wordlists

discussed above, the user will learn a lot from the outer texts of *Oxford Bilingual School Dictionary: IsiXhosa and English*. In the front matter, texts such as 'Iimpawu zesichazi-magama/Dictionary features', 'Intshayelelo/Introduction' and English pronunciation provide useful background information regarding the dictionary or its aspects. Such information has the potential to provide the much needed dictionary pedagogy, especially among speakers of African languages, such as the isiXhosa-speaking target users of this dictionary. Users are oriented on the use of this dictionary, the experience of which may be useful in their search for knowledge in other lexicographic products. The same applies to 'Imisebenzi yesichazi-magama/Dictionary activities' and 'Indlela yokusebenzisa isichazi-magama/How to use your dictionary' in the middle matter. Texts such as 'Incwadi youshishino/Formal letter', 'I-imeyile yoshishino/Formal email', 'Upelo lweSMS/Text messages or SMSes', among others, will enable the dictionary users to produce texts that are appropriate in specific situations, while the various texts dealing with some aspects of isiXhosa and English will increase the user's knowledge regarding the respective languages. That way, the lexicographers go far enough in trying to ensure that, as its genuine purpose, the dictionary helps "people learning isiXhosa to understand and use isiXhosa better" and those who are "learning English to understand and learn English better" (p. vi).

In light of the above, the publication of the *Oxford Bilingual School Dictionary: IsiXhosa and English* can be celebrated as a great milestone in the lexicography of isiXhosa and can be expected to have a positive impact in the learning of both isiXhosa and English. Obviously, this review is too brief to proclaim itself as comprehensive enough to provide an exhaustive commentary of this new dictionary. However, it hopes to have given major insights regarding this dictionary, but more comprehensive and in-depth studies remain relevant in order to expand knowledge regarding isiXhosa lexicography and key issues in relation to school dictionaries in general. For now, we can celebrate its publication and encourage the target users to use it to its maximum potential. Even for university students of isiXhosa, it may be considered as an upgrade rather than a downgrade, given that the popularly used Fischer's *Oxford English Dictionary* has been printed for not less than twenty-one times but without a single revision.

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