

THE SCHOOLS OF ARABIC LEXICOGRAPHY

PhD Zakhra Begmatova, Sadullayeva Nodira, Usmonova Nasiba,

Uzbekistan, Tashkent, Tashkent State Institute of Oriental Studies

DOI: https://doi.org/10.31435/rsglobal_ijitss/28022019/6372

ARTICLE INFO

Received 10 December 2018

Accepted 20 February 2019

Published 28 February 2019

KEYWORDS

Arabic lexicography, Muslim world of Middle Ages, Explanatory, Technical dictionaries, Translation (bilingual) dictionaries.

ABSTRACT

By writing this article, it is intended to give information about when lexicography, one of the branches of Arabic linguistics, emerged and how it developed; what kinds of dictionaries were more attractive to Arabic linguists; which school scholars, who were engaged in lexicography, belonged to and what their popular dictionaries are.

Citation: Zakhra Begmatova, Sadullayeva Nodira, Usmonova Nasiba. (2019) The Schools of Arabic Lexicography. *International Journal of Innovative Technologies in Social Science*. 2(14). doi: 10.31435/rsglobal_ijitss/28022019/6372

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Introduction. Lexicography is a branch of linguistics dealing with the theory and practice of compiling dictionaries and investigating them. The subject is concerned with dictionary types and development of scientific foundations of their creation. Moreover, it operates relying on lexicology, stylistics, phonetics, history of language and grammatical structure of language.

Linguistics, which is an important branch of Arabic linguistics, played an important role in the development of medieval culture Arabian peoples. To distinguish lexicographers from linguists, Arabs called lexicographers “nahviyyun” and named linguists “lugaviyyun”.

Orientalist V. M. Belkin in his book “Арабская лексикография” (“Arabic lexicography”) argues that Arabs got the idea of compiling a dictionary from the Greeks. However, the origin of Arabic lexicography is a completely different issue according to its content and developmental character [2, 4].

Arabic lexicography appeared when in Europe nobody knew about the existence of such activity. The spread of Islam religion led to the emergence of Arabic linguistics and Arabic lexicography which is considered one of the branches of Arabic linguistics. The development of Arabic language as a cultural and scientific language in the Muslim world of Middle Ages, rapid development of Arabic literature, the diversity of Arabic dialects prompted the early emergence of Arabic lexicography and its prosperity for centuries.

Research results. All dictionaries available in Arabic languages can be categorized as following in terms of their content:

- 1) Explanatory (Monolingual) dictionaries
- 2) Technical dictionaries
- 3) Dictionaries of synonyms
- 4) Dictionaries of rare words
- 5) Dictionaries of acquired words

6) Translation (bilingual) dictionaries

Dictionaries are different from one another in terms of words location. They are divided into three types as following:

1. Dictionaries which are compiled based on sound principle, that is, the place of formation of word consonant. In this case the sound principle is followed and the number of consonants in word base is also taken into consideration.

2. Dictionaries which are compiled in alphabetical order according to the last letter of the word.

3. Dictionaries which are compiled in alphabetical order according to the first letter of the word base [3, 145].

Arabic explanatory dictionaries are thought to have emerged in connection with the study of the Qur'anic lexicon for various reasons. The first Arabic dictionaries provide the definitions of words in the Qur'an. They were named "Gharib al-Qur'an" (Unfamiliar words in Qur'an), "Maaniy al-Qur'an", (The meaning of words in the Qur'an), "Tafseer al-Qur'an" (The comment of the Qur'an). These dictionaries were compiled to explain some difficult and unknown words in the Qur'an. The first dictionary which was based on Qur'anic words was written in the early VIII century.

Dictionaries of "Gharib al-Qur'an" category can be found in all periods of Arabic lexicography history. The dictionaries of "Gharib al-Qur'an" type that have been saved up to our time give definition of different quantity of words. For instance, "Gharib al-Qur'an" of Ibn Kutaiba which has been saved in Cairo Library gives the definition of 1205 words whereas dictionary written in the 10th century by Muhammad ibn Uzaiz Sijistoni consisted of 230 pages in the edition of the year 1936 [4, 17].

Afterwards dictionaries describing the difficult and rare words in Hadiths emerged and they were called "Gharib al-Hadith". The first dictionary of this type is "Gharib al-Hadith" by Abu Ubaida Muammar bin al-Muthanna and Abu Adnon Abdurakhman bin Abdulla. Our ancestor Makhmud Zamakshari has a special place among the scholars who engaged with compiling this type of dictionaries. Because the dictionary "al-Faik fi Gharib al-Hadith" by the scholar is well-known compared to others and it was published several times.

Fiqh, that is, dictionaries which define the terminology and concepts that occurred after the birth of Islamic jurisprudence, was also made. The most famous dictionaries of this type are "az-Zahir fi Gharib al-alfaz imam ash-Shafi" (Notes about the unknown words related to the madhhab of Imam Shafi) by Abu Mansur Muhammad bin Akhmad al-Azhari (895 – 980) and a copy of this dictionary is kept in the Library of Egypt under the number 351. Another example would be "Al-Mugrib fil Gharib min al-alfaz al-fiqh al-Hanafi" (the unknown of the unknown from the words of Hanafi fiqh) by Abdelfatkh Nasir bin Abusaid al-Mutarizi al-Khorazmi. The works in the area of explaining the words and terminology related to Islamic jurisprudence were satisfied with only interpretation of these dictionaries [4, 20].

In addition, a lot of special thematic dictionaries related to different fields were created in Arabic lexicography. Tribal words, adjective, noun, subject, participle, names of insects, animals and geographic places can be seen in these dictionaries.

In Arabic lexicography explanatory dictionaries of common character have a specific importance. Explanatory dictionaries of common character are many and diverse and they are different from one another in terms of principles of lexical coverage, placing the words and structure. However, when checked carefully, it can be felt that these dictionaries are separated into similar groups in terms of structure principle in which dictionaries are dependent on one another to some extent and other characteristics. Taking into consideration all the facts, Arabic scholar Husain Nassor categorizes explanatory dictionaries of common character into 4 schools [6, 10]. These schools are the following:

First school.

Studying Arabic lexicon and making its first explanatory dictionary started in the second half of the 8th century. First dictionary was called كتاب العين as it started from the letter ع (the book starting from the letter "ain") and it was written by Halil bin Ahmad Farahidi (712-778). The dictionary was written according to phonetic principle [1, 73].

In the book words were placed according to the place of sound appearance and pronunciation of sounds was taken into consideration. Halil ibn Akhmad started the book from the letter "ain" as he considered the letter as the deepest sound. Besides placing the words originally, he considered the base of words and he placed the words with two bases, three bases and many bases in the given order. The important advantage of the dictionary is that Halil ibn Akhmad used anagram method to categorize word bases.

In the west and in the east scholars followers of Halil bin Ahmad made some changes in the placement of the word bases, added some figurative words and identified the definition of words.

In the east in the 10th century followers of Halil ibn Ahmad were Abu Mansur ibn Akhmad Azhari and Cahib Abulqasim Ismail bin Abbad and in the west were Kaliy and Zubair.

Because the structure of dictionaries, such as, “Al-Bari” by Al-Qasim Al-Qali (901-967), “Tazhib al-Lugha” (collected words) by Abu Mansur Mukhammad Al-Azhari (895-980), “Al-Muhit” (Ocean) by CahubAbulqasim Ismail bin Abbad (938-995), “Al-Muhkan” (complete dictionary) by Abulhasan Ali bin Ismail bin Sida al-Andalusi (1007-1066) was made relying on the system accepted in “Kitab al-Ain” by Halil bin Akhmad, Husain Nassor unites them in the same school.

The dictionary system chosen by Halil Akhmad did not change for two centuries. The system could not be widespread since it was quite difficult to use this type of dictionaries [5, 91].

Second school.

“Al-Jamhara” (widespread words) by Abu Bakr Muhammad bin Al- Husan bin Duraid, “Mujmal al-Lugha” (Dictionary of rarely used words) by Ibn Faris and “Ketab Al-Maqais” (Dictionary of measure words) belong to this school and they were compiled based on the current alphabetical order.

The main purpose of these dictionaries is to avoid the structure that was used by the members of first school as their phonetic principle of making dictionaries caused some serious difficulties for users. That is why, scholars of second school placed words alphabetically taking into account the first letter of the words.

The scholar of second school Ibn Duraid in his dictionary “al-Jamhara” collected only widely used words of the Arabic language and avoided including archaic words. Halil bin Akhmad provided unique and difficult words in chapters whilst Duraid added such words at the end of the book in a special chapter [5, 91].

Ibn Duraid, first of all, accepted alphabetical order. Now the dictionary continues alphabetically till the last letter, such as “The book of Hamza”, “The book of Bo”, “The book of To” and so on. Ibn Duraid categorized the words according to bases, however, he made some changes into widely accepted rules.

“Jamhara” was divided into three-letter and five-letter chapters, but Duraid added some appendixes as well. Nevertheless, some avoidance of general linguistic rules can be seen in some of the appendixes.

One of the well-known scholars of this school is Ibn Faris and he is considered the founder of modern principles of compiling Arabic language dictionaries. He made two special dictionaries: “Al-Mujmal” and “Al-Maqois”. Ibn Faris placed the words alphabetically in his dictionary taking into consideration the first and second letters of the base words. The scholar used systematized lexicographic methods to make dictionaries. His system was mainly based on compliance of learning Arabic comparatively, word bases and rules of word formation.

The main feature of dictionaries by Ibn Faris is that they include literal, correct words and definitions of the words are short and well explained.

Third school.

At the end of the 10th century a new direction called “Qafia” emerged in Arabic lexicography. The lexicographers of this direction placed the words alphabetically based on the last letter of the words according to the demand of poetry.

This school is considered the most fruitful one in the history of Arabic lexicography and it includes “Sihah” (Dictionary of correct words) by Gavhari, “Al-Ubab” (Exciting waves) by Saghani, “Lisan al-Arab” (Language of Arabs) by ibn Manzur, “Al-Qamus Al-Muhit” (Ocean) by Firuzabadi and “Tag al-Arus” (The crown of the bride) by Zubaidi [4, 74]. The dictionaries of the school are characterized by being divided into chapters according to the last letter of word bases and into parts according to the first letter of the word bases. We can include “Sabat abhor” (seven seas) by Alisher Nawai in the school considering the principle of dividing into chapters and parts used by all the scholars of the school.

The first dictionary that was made using this method is “Tag al-lagha va sihah al-arabiya” by Ismail Javhari which is famous under the name of “Sihah” and it includes 40000 words of classic Arabic language. In Javhari’s book and the books written using his system, the easiness of finding rhyming words is also taken into account. This reveals that at those times interest in writing poems

was really high and even the prose was written with rhyme. That's why, it can be concluded that this type of dictionaries emerged thanks to the demand in the easiness of finding words. Short introduction of "sifah" was written as saj [4, 26].

The culmination of the development of Arabic lexicography can be seen in the dictionary "Lisan al-Arab" by Ibn Manzur. This dictionary is considered an exemplary book in terms of its size and structure. The book that was created according to rhyme method includes 80000 words and expressions.

Ibn Manzur not only defined words and expressions but also provided fragments of the Qur'an, Hadith, poems, instructions and stories so as to prove that his comments were right. The dictionary is still one of the important materials to learn the words of Arabic language [2, 172].

Fourth school.

Zamakhshari shifted the Arabic lexicography to higher level by means of his book "Asas al-balagha" (Groundwork of delicacy) and laid the foundation of a new fourth school in the history of Arabic lexicography. First of all, Zamakhshari innovated that word formation could be used easily. The difference of this dictionary from others is that the method which had been used to make only smaller dictionaries of Arabic lexicography before, was followed. This method was a principle of placing the words into chapters alphabetically based on the first letter of the word bases. And the method which was used only by Barmaki to make Arabic dictionaries, afterwards, has been widely used to make Persian-Arabic, Persian explanatory, Arabic-Persian dictionaries and it is still used in slightly changed form.

Besides giving direct definitions of the words, Zamakhshari defined metaphoric meaning of the words fully and rightly and he also provided some examples that confirmed his definitions. Moreover, he paid attention to the meaning of words in idioms and in most cases he gave the reasons of the emergence of metaphoric forms of words [1, 72].

The majority of dictionaries in Arabic lexicography are monolingual. However, we can come across some dictionaries made for translation purposes as well. Even in this sphere Zamakhshari laid the milestone. He is the author of an Arabic- Persian dictionary.

Conclusions. From the above given information about Arabian Language Schools and its representatives it can be concluded that:

1. Because of the need to understand the difficult, unfamiliar words in the The Holy Quran and in the Hadiths, the main focus of Arabic lexicography was explanatory dictionaries.

2. The first dictionary made for the words of "The Qur'an" emerged in the first half of the 7th century.

3. The first scholar who compiled a dictionary systematically was Khalil ibn Akhmad and the name of his book that was explanatory was "Kitob al-ayin".

4. The scholar Khusayn Nassor learnt all explanatory dictionaries of the Arabic language separating them into four schools. Whereas representatives of the first school compiled their dictionaries based on phonetic principle, lexicographers of the second school made explanatory dictionaries alphabetically. Dictionaries made by the representatives of the third school were compiled based on rhyme method and this school is considered the most fruitful one in the history of Arabic lexicography. Finally, lexicographers of the fourth school followed the principles of placing words alphabetically based on the first letter of word bases, which had been used to make small dictionaries before.

To sum up, we can state that, Arabic lexicography had a great impact on lexicography of both Eastern and Western countries. Moreover, the works of Arabic lexicographers are still making contributions to the development of the field.

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