
THE TREATMENT OF TABOO AND OFFENSIVE WORDS IN THE ISICHAZAMAZWI SESINDEBELE (ISN): AN ANALYSIS

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Abstract: This paper identifies and analysis taboo and offensive words in the *Isichazamazwi seSiNdebele* henceforth referred to as the ISN. Focus is on these headwords as they are seen as requiring special attention in their definitions because they tend to be sensitive to the user. This is linked to the interrelationship that exists between language and culture. The paper seeks to find out how these words have been defined in the view of their being sensitive. Culturally, as has been highlighted above, the selection and definition of these need special consideration. The problem that therefore arises is how these should be treated in dictionaries which are designed for public usage, they being a guardian of the moral and ideological values of the society on one hand and being a collective knowledge of the language on the other hand.

Keywords: DICTIONARY, LANGUAGE, CULTURE, HEADWORDS, TABOO WORDS, OFFENSIVE WORDS, DEFINITIONS, USER'S NEEDS, TRANSPARANCY, LEXICOGRAPHER

Isifinqo: Ukuhlaziya indlela amagama azilayo lathukayo aphantswe ngayo kuSichazamazwi seSiNdebele (ISN). Leliphepha likhangela liphinde lihlahiye amagama azilayo lathukayo kuSichazamazwi seSiNdebele okuzabizwa ngokuthi ISN. Inhloso ikulamagama ngoba izikhathi ezinengi adinga ukuba aphantswe ngonanzelelo kuzingcazelo zawo ngoba engaletha imizwa engajabulisiwo kubasebenzisi besichazamazwi. Lokhu kungenxa yobudlelwano obukhona phakathi kwamasiko lolimi lomuntu. Leliphepha lijonge ukuhlolisisa ukuthi lamagama achazwe kanjani ngenxa yalobudlelwano. Ngesiko lesiNdebele, njengoba kuvezwe ngaphambilini ukukhethwa lokuchazwa kwalamagama kudinga ukuthi kwenziwe ngonanzelelo. Inkinga esuka ibekhona yikuthi lamagama kumele aphantswe njani kuzichazamazwi ezenzelwe uzulu eziyizo ezilondoloza ubuntu lesimilo sabantu ngakolunye uhlangothi ziphinde zibe yisiphala solwazi ngolimi ngakolunye uhlangothi.

Introduction

A dictionary that sells well is seen as one that responds to the social needs of the society and monolingual dictionaries like the *Isichazamazwi sesiNdebele* henceforth, ISN (2001) reflect the moral and ideological values of the Ndebele society. It highlights those ideas that reflect the social needs of the Ndebele culture which might not be practised but are at least seen as ideal. This paper thus analyses the treatment of taboo and offensive words in the ISN and how these reflect the moral and ideological values of the society. These set of ideas or beliefs obviously have implications on lexicography in general. The paper seeks to find out how these words have been defined in the view of their being sensitive to the user. Culturally, as has been highlighted above, the selection and definition of these need special consideration. This is linked to the observation that the culture of a people will always reflect in a dictionary as culture and language are inextricably intertwined. It is therefore always a problem for the lexicographer to know what to include and what to exclude in a dictionary pertaining to the cultural aspect of lexical items. The problem that therefore arises is how these should be treated in dictionaries which are designed for public usage, they being a guardian of the moral and ideological values of the society on one hand and being a collective knowledge of the language on the other hand. Lexicographers are therefore caught between conforming to a set of beliefs that form the basis of a social system whilst at the same time, as lexicographers they must be truly descriptive and say exactly what the words refer to.

Culture can be defined as that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, morals, customs and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of a society. It is an organized system of behavior. It encompasses the attitudes, manners and social norms of a society. Thus while there is need to know about the meaning of words in a dictionary there is also need for cultural competence which is the knowledge of attitudes, manners and social norms expressed by the words. In Ndebele culture, words relating to sex, sex organs, and natural body functions make up a large set of taboos and this is so in many cultures. Ideologically it is unacceptable to use these words in public. Offensive words include disparaging or simply insulting words which also make part of the sensitive language. The defining of these words pose a lot of challenges for lexicographers as they are usually caught between being explicit thus violating the moral values of the society or being euphemistic thus violating lexicographic principles. Landau (1989) states that taboo words in many dictionaries are usually defined inadequately thus are rendering no meaning to the dictionary user. Bejoint (2000:125) also indicates that 'when words themselves are dirty, the lexicographer finds them even more difficult to include, even though most may be extremely frequent in everyday conversation'. From the viewpoint of these scholars, the paper analyses how these words have been defined. The bulk of these obscene words have been interpreted inadequately in the ISN owing to the dictionary being regarded as a guardian of the purity of a language. As the focus of the paper is to analyze how the editors of the ISN dealt with these terms, it will also investigate the challenges presented by such terms in lexicography. The paper therefore seeks to point out that such words will not go away simply because their use in public is unacceptable; in fact if people cannot get accurate information about them from a dictionary then they have the excuse of treating them as acceptable. To make an informed analysis, the researcher takes into cognizance field research findings carried among Ndebele mother tongue speakers

which focused on their needs concerning the definition of these words. The paper also highlights possible solutions to the problems of handling such terms in dictionaries.

The interconnection between language and culture and its implications on lexicography.

Widely recognized in lexicography is the interconnection that exists between language and culture. Goodenough in Hudson (1980:74) points out that "...a society's culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members". Lexicographers thus have to operate in a way that is acceptable to society while still maintaining the scientific purpose of the dictionary. Sapir (1921:213) notes that while culture may be defined as what a society does or thinks, language is the particular how of thoughts. This observation is a pointer to the fact that language is itself part of a culture and reflects social structures and attitudes. Therefore, this explains why a people's language in any society is important as it defines that people as well as preserves its cultures. Halliday (1978:124) points out that

as a child learns a language, he also learns through language. He

interprets text not only as being specifically relevant to the context of

situation but also as being relevant to the context of culture.

Language therefore captures everything that occurs in a society. Culture thus includes beliefs, morals, customs and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of the society. It is notable that language and culture are very crucial in lexicography in so far as dictionaries stand as culture products serving cultural purposes. The written form of language is central to language and culture promotion as it becomes a permanent reference for the future generations. A lexicographer therefore has to take into cognizance various cultural aspects, which include the certain norms and beliefs that are embodied in a language in the compilation of a dictionary as dictionaries are culture repository sources. In this case, since language and culture share a complementary relationship, the language used in the dictionary and the ISN in particular depicts the worldview of the Ndebele people. In light of this, there seems to be a definite relationship between the linguistic system and culture system.

This interconnection between language and culture makes it impossible to talk about one of these without referring to the other. The lexicographer thus has to be sensitive to the culture of that people. Among many cultures and the Ndebele and Zulu in particular, it is also taboo to refer to terms with sexual connotations in a direct way and these tend to be evident in dictionaries. For example, in these cultures the literal meaning of the "**icansi/ucansi**" reed mat which is a cultural object reflecting a certain type of worldview is extended its meaning to indirectly refer to terms with a sexual connotation. Thus having sexual intercourse is referred to as "**ukuya emacansini**" (visiting the reed mat). In this instance, the concepts of culture can be captured in the language that is the literal meaning of the reed mat is extended its meaning. Therefore, from an Afro-centered perception of language and its importance in lexicography, lexicographers have a specific social

mandate to engage in the dialogue of the society using proper discourse. Lexicographers therefore find themselves torn in-between adhering to the user's needs and also trying to abide by the rules of lexicography, which consider explicit meaning to be central in any defining process.

Analysis of the definitions used in taboo and offensive words.

As has been highlighted elsewhere above, language is a major vehicle for the transmission of a people's cultural values and beliefs. The definitions used in the ISN indicate some cultural aspects about the Ndebele language and as such reflect that the Ndebele culture has certain words and natural acts which are regarded as taboo and offensive and as such their public use is unacceptable in the society.

Taboo words

The word taboo refers to acts that are forbidden or to be avoided. Although taboo words vary widely, it should be noted that words relating to sex, sex organs and natural bodily functions make up a large set of taboos of many cultures. Wardhaugh (1986:230) points out that "taboo is one of the ways in which a society expresses its disapproval of certain kinds of behavior... because such behavior is held to violate the moral code". Taboos therefore highlight an organized system of behavior which in turn reflects the culture of a society. In Ndebele culture the public use of such words is normally unacceptable. For example "isende" (testis) is defined in the ISN as follows:

Isende bz.5 Isende liphambili lowesilisa njalo kulapho okulenhlangano yobudoda. Igama leli liyahloniphisa alikhulunywa emphakathini nje. (2001:208)

(A testicle is the front of a male, which contains seeds of manhood. The use of this term requires politeness, it is not uttered in public.)

The above definition merely gives a synonym "liphambili" (front) which does not help in explaining it directly. It indicates that society disapproves of uttering this term in public as this violates the moral code. Thus the definition warns of that mistake. While the use of the synonyms indicates the sensitivity that is associated with the term the most essential elements of meaning are lost as the word "liphambili"(front part) sacrifices precision in meaning. The definition of "isende" thus offers only a vague idea about what the word means because when one looks at the definition of "liphambili" (front) it is defined in the following manner:

Iphambili bz 5. Iphambili yindawo ebonwa ngumuntu uma ekhangele lapho ayakhona.(2001:192) (This is a place seen by someone when looking in the direction in which she/he is herding)

While Landau indicates that "with a monolingual general dictionary the meaning of a word used can be looked up and found defined" the definition of the above word makes it even harder for someone to understand the meaning. To further highlight that words pertaining to sexual parts have been dismissed as taboo words, a definition of testicle by Pelling's *Practical Ndebele Dictionary* (1966) appears in the following way:

Testicle -n: isende (ili/ama), iphambili (ili/ama) Pelling (1966:137)

In Pelling's definition "**iphambili**" (front) a euphemistic word is used as a synonym of the word testicle. This shows that the lexicographer has to take into cognizance various cultural aspects and taboos that are embodied in the language in the compilation of the dictionary. To handle such terms in a culturally acceptable manner in the dictionary, the definition language used tends to be polite. English dictionaries have also handled taboo terms in a similar manner. The Oxford Advanced Dictionary (1989:619) defines the word "penis" as follows:

Penis – organ of urination and copulation of a male animal.

In the Random House College Dictionary (1988:982) it is entered in this manner:

Penis- the male organ of urination and copulation (a tail, the penis) Flexner S.B et.al

In the ISN the definition appears as follows:

Ubolo bz 11. Ubolo yisitho sendoda kumbe inyamazana enduna esisetshenziswa

Ukuchema kumbe ukwandisa uhlobo. (2001:404)

(A penis is a body part of a male being or animal that is used for urinating as well as increasing species).

From the definitions above it should be highlighted that, while the Ndebele definitions would resort to the use of euphemistic expressions like "**ukwandisa uhlobo**" (increasing species), English dictionaries resort to using scientific words like "male mammal" and "male animal" as well as "copulation". The "male animal" in this case represents both animals and the humans. In such an instance, the accurate information, which is supposed to be conveyed to the reader, is lost. Such definition styles tend to sacrifice precision in meaning for increased acceptance in the society and as such defy the basic aims of lexicography as a discipline, which considers meaning to be central.

Another taboo word treated in a similar manner is "**satha**" (engage in sexual intercourse). Landau (1989:184) observes that "dictionaries generally do not define sexual intercourse, preferring to abandon the basic principles of lexicography all in the name of culture. In the ISN, the word "**satha**" is defined as:

-**satha** sz . mwa. Leli ligama elihloniphisayo elichaza isenzo somuntu wesilisa

uma ezeka owesifazana.(2001:374)

(This is a word which requires respect that describes the act of a man having
intercourse with a female.)

The definition also resorts to giving a synonym "**zeka**" instead of defining. This shows that lexicographers find it imperative to consider social norms when defining these words. However, the definition of "**satha**" defies one of the basic principles of lexicography which is precision in meaning in that the word "**zeka**" used to define the act is usually used when referring to the mating of animals as shown by the following definition:

zeka -sz Uma inkunzi ikhwela inkomokazi iyabe iyizeka.(2001:532)

(if a bull climbs on top of a female cow, it will be mating with it)

Even the above example is not a definition in the real sense because it merely states the synonym "**khwela**" (climb) without defining the word. Synonyms thus serve as euphemistic expressions while also defying the sense of the definitions. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1989:987) enters sexual intercourse in the following way:

sexual intercourse = coitus.

Coitus -[u] (formal) sexual intercourse to the point of (mutual) orgasm between

the two human beings, the insertion of the penis into the vagina (1982:161)

From the first example, the definition resorts to using circularity as a way of defining in that it merely gives a synonym of sexual intercourse. Circularity in this case does not offer the most essential elements of sense as well as meaning. The definition of "**satha**" is therefore not explicit as it does not give accurate information about the word. Mphasha (2002:49) observes that "many people ask for arbitrary decisions in usage choices but a reasonable number of linguists feel that when a dictionary goes beyond its function of recording accurate information on the state of the language, it really becomes a bad dictionary". This is what is evident in the treatment of words with a sexual connotation in the ISN as such words tend to be defined using synonyms.

Offensive words

Offensive words in this study will be taken to refer to those words that are impolite, derogatory or simply insulting. In Ndebele language such terms include words that refer to migrant laborers,

other ethnic groups and people viewed as misfits in the Ndebele society. Offensive or disparaging words are also evident in the ISN.

In Ndebele culture, it is impolite to refer to the act of giving birth as "**ukuzala**" for humans. This term is normally used to refer to animals although there are instances when it can be used for humans. The entry of the word "**zala**" appears in the dictionary as follows:

-zala sz gmwa 1. ukuzala yikwanda kolutho ngokuba labantwana.

2. ukuzala komfazi yikukhupha usane esiswini.(2001:531)

(1. Giving birth is the increase of something in number through producing young ones.)

(2. Giving birth of a woman is the act of removing an infant from the womb.)

While the first definition is appropriate, the second definition is inaccurate as the removing of a baby can imply the act of aborting. When referring to the act of giving birth by humans one does not say '**uzele**' (has given birth). As such the saying above may arouse bad feelings when it is referred to a human being. A much more polite term, "**beletha**" or "**khululeka**" is usually used. Landau (1981:187) observes that "terms of insult are taken to be offensive under certain conditions and it is important that these words be labeled" to notify those unfamiliar that these words can be offensive. Thus the ISN editors should have pointed out that when referring to people in this manner the term "**zala**" might be offensive. Pelling defines the word '**zala**' in the following way:

-zala: give birth (of animals) (NB: pass form -zalwa is used for both animals and people) (1966:75).

Pelling's definition is in this case more culture sensitive hence is unlikely to arouse any bad feelings from the users as he states clearly that **zala** can only be used when referring to the act of giving birth of animals. Only the passive form of "**-zalwa**" can thus be used for both animals and people.

It should also be noted that words referring to certain individuals and groups reflect our individual non linguistic attitudes and may also reflect the culture of a society as the culture of people is expressed in the language. As pointed out earlier on, in Ndebele culture, women are usually presented in an unfavorable light as compared to men. This attitude is reflected in the language and because dictionaries are culture repositories such words reflect these cultural attitudes. For example "**isifebe**" (adulterer) is defined as follows:

isifebe bz 7.2 Isifebe ngumuntu wesifazana othethweyo oba lobudlelwano bensitha labesilisa angendelanga kubo. FAN iwule.(2001:219)

(An adulterer is a married woman who involves herself in private relationships with males who she is not married to).

Also the word "**feba**"(commit adultery) is defined in the following way:

feba sz gmwa. Ukufebeba yikuwula komuntu wesifazana owendileyo (2001:61)

(This is when a married woman commits adultery)

The senses of these definitions imply that it is only the females who behave in a manner unacceptable to the society. This cultural attitude about women indicates male sexist prejudices about women and thus the language tends to reflect this. This cultural attitude about women indicates male sexist prejudices about women and thus the language tends to reflect this. It is therefore necessary for the lexicographer to warn the dictionary user of the sensitivity of such words.

Challenges faced by lexicographers in defining cultural words

Studies have shown that taboo and offensive headwords have always posed a lot of challenges in lexicography. Landau (1989), states that the basic rules of lexicography are usually violated when it comes to defining taboo as well as offensive words. He observes that taboo words in many dictionaries are usually defined inadequately thus rendering no meaning to the dictionary user. Therefore, it has always been a challenge to the lexicographer to know what to include and what to exclude in the dictionary bearing in mind that the "dictionaries are repositories of words" (Jackson H. et al 2000:161)

The editors of the ISN pointed out that they faced quite a number of challenges in defining taboo and offensive words. The ISN editors being mother tongue speakers of the Ndebele language have their backgrounds deeply rooted in Ndebele culture. They pointed out that as speakers of Ndebele language they are immersed in the culture of the Ndebele and thus they found it difficult to define taboo words because in Ndebele culture such words are not uttered in public. Also as mother tongue speakers of Ndebele language, they were also aware of the social attitudes of the Ndebele people. The use of words referring to private parts and sex organs of the human beings and animals are usually avoided in polite speech. Also the description of some natural acts performed by these organs is not acceptable in polite conversation. Therefore, knowing the expectations of the Ndebele people, the ISN editors were faced with the dilemma on how to define these words. The exclusion of these words would compromise the representativeness of the dictionary as these words are part and parcel of the Ndebele language. Therefore they felt that these terms were supposed to be included in the ISN, as they are part of the Ndebele language.

The ISN, being a monolingual dictionary posed a challenge to the editors as they shared the same repertoire of speech with the speaker- readers of the Ndebele language. The definitions of taboo words thus required politeness about any obscenities. However, a dictionary is supposed to convey the full meaning and sense of words. In the light of this, the ISN editors were also supposed to be clear and elaborate in their definitions of taboo words. Therefore, when it came to the defining of taboo and offensive words, the ISN editors pointed out that they were faced with a challenge either of being polite when defining these words and hence sacrifice meaning which is central in lexicography or being explicit and thus create a dictionary that would be unacceptable to some speaker- writers of the language.

The composition of the editorial team also posed a challenge to the defining process as the team was composed of both females and males. The editorial team was composed of two women and seven males and thus defining taboo words was a difficult and uncomfortable exercise owing to the presence of the opposite sex. The age dimension between the ISN editors was also a challenge to the defining of these taboo words. It therefore became difficult to define such words associated with sex, excretion and the act of sexual intercourse in an explicit manner.

User's needs

The field research that was carried out focused on the user and the user's needs concerning the definition of taboo and offensive words. From the research findings, it is observed that the user's needs tend to vary greatly in terms of age. A few students in the 15-20 age group were of the view that taboo words should be omitted in the dictionary highlighting that the use of taboo words is unacceptable in Ndebele culture as it can inculcate bad behavior and lack of respect to the younger generation. However, words that are forbidden only reflect the particular customs, views and values of the society not that there is anything obscene about the language itself. This age group is likely to be influenced by their parents in the way they perceive these words, and presumably their family values. Thus in forming one's worldview the older generation tends to encourage the use of euphemistic words when referring to tabooed subjects and acts.

The elderly (40 and above) were against the defining of taboo words in an explicit manner as they felt that doing so would destroy the dignity of the language. This shows that the elderly are more conservative in their use of language. Mareme (2002:42) in a paper entitled "Prejudice and Reality in a Setswana Monolingual Dictionary- The Systematic and Deliberate Biasing of Cultural Issues" indicates that:

The culture of the Setswana has it that there are certain words and natural acts of life, which are regarded as taboo. Some of these are common in all the tribes of the Batswana.... Such words are excluded in writing but may be heard from one speech community to the other....

In this, Mareme seems to be suggesting that such a dictionary cannot be a convincing book of resolutions. The response of the over forty age group indicates that the adults still need a dictionary of an "...era where kids were told that the babies were not born, but being dropped by an airplane" (Mareme 2002:42)

In so far as transparency is concerned seventy-three out of eighty three respondents argued for a transparent dictionary in all terms. This might have been due to an increased awareness in the purpose of dictionaries in so far as accuracy matters are concerned. The majority of these age groups suggested the strategy of striking a balance between being euphemistic and being explicit when defining taboo and offensive words. This also indicates that people are aware of the importance of maintaining culture in a dictionary. They observe that while there is need to know about words and their meanings there is also need to know attitudes, manners and social norms of the society that highlight cultural competence. Therefore, from time to time there is need for a lexicographer to examine and reassess what is needed or expected by the users of a dictionary. From evaluating and assessing the response of the dictionary users, it is evident that while the elderly point out that it is unacceptable in Ndebele culture to talk about taboo and offensive words in a direct fashion, the younger generation indicates that while culture is important in the defining process, its accommodation does not mean that clarity and precision in meaning have to be sacrificed in the name of culture.

Questionnaire results.

1 Table illustrating the user's needs regarding the definitions of offensive Words

AGE GROUP	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	EXPLICIT	POLITE	EXCLUSION (the remainder advocated inclusion)
15-20	30	24	4	2
20-30	42	42	-	-
30-40	7	7	-	-
40-50	-	-	-	-
50+	4	0	2	2

Fig.2 Table illustrating the user's needs regarding the definitions of taboo words

AGE GROUP	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	EXPLICIT	POLITE	EXCLUSION (the rest for inclusion)
15-20	30	20	-	6
20-30	42	38	4	-
30-40	7	5	2	-
40-50	-	-	-	-
50+	4	-	-	4

Solutions

From the assessment of the results, it seems as though the majority of the users would want to have a dictionary that is comprehensive, that which explains words in a satisfactory and user-friendly way. It should be born in mind that when a dictionary is compiled, its greatest value is to give access to the full resources of a language. It should be a source of information to its users and in this case, a dictionary cannot be a source of information for as long as it does not define words explicitly. A dictionary also becomes a "bad dictionary" the moment it excludes some of these words regarded as vulgar and offensive. Any dictionary in this case, should reflect the lexicon of the language. Thus vulgarisms and offensive words should be entered in dictionaries and defined explicitly.

While these words were unmentionable in the Ndebele culture, they are now found to a large extent in schools (science subjects) and other reading materials like magazines. In light of this, if these words are excluded in Ndebele dictionaries owing to their sacrosanct nature, the younger generation is likely to borrow such words from the more open and transparent cultures. Thus from this point of view, it is important that the most essential elements of meaning come first in any dictionary.

In the ISN, most of the taboo words were defined in a manner that avoided giving the dictionary a coarse tone or feeling which could possibly offend users. Owing to this, precision and clarity in meaning were sacrificed. However, field research findings have shown that the majority of people who responded to the questionnaires favor explicitness of definitions to euphemism in defining taboo words arguing that use of euphemism tends to result in vague meanings. This tends to be disadvantageous to second language speakers of the Ndebele language and to some native speakers of the language. Landau (1989:32) argues that "...the lexicographer should as far as possible abstain from expressing his own opinion about any usage, though reporting his best

knowledge what the attitudes of most people are to usages regarded as questionable and obnoxious". In light of Landau's argument, the best manner of defining headwords is scientific.

Vulgar words have to be defined in more specific terms instead of using euphemisms as euphemism does not adequately capture the exact meaning but only gives a vague idea about the word. This therefore results in an unuser-friendly dictionary whose definitions are largely obscure. Taboo and offensive words should be included in dictionaries and be defined clearly. It is however, important to indicate that these words may be coarse, vulgar or otherwise offensive. A style marker has to be included in the definition, for example, (hloniph) for headwords that may be considered vulgar or having obscene connotations or "derogatory" or "insulting" in nature for words considered to be offensive to other people. Offensive words or names used to refer to different groups of people should be indicated using a style marker "**thukayo**" (insulting). The style marker will thus be serving as a way of maintaining the dignity of the language hence by so doing culture will still be recognized. After incorporating the style marker, as well as the explicit definition of taboo words, exemplification can then be used. Examples will be selected to show words in their most neutral and acceptable use. For example, the use of the word "**liphambili**" in the definition of the word "**isende**". Examples would then constitute the euphemistic expressions.

Thus the lexicographer would have given the users of the dictionary a number of alternative forms that can be used in place of the one considered to obscene or vulgar. While this might take a lot of space, which violates the idea of "economy of space", the present researcher would rather have a dictionary that consumes more space and be meaningful rather than less space and be obscure in meaning. It is also important to have this tested in the field as has been done in order to present information that will be acceptable to the users. By adopting the above named strategies of handling taboo words, the lexicographer would have succeeded in producing a comprehensive dictionary while still maintaining the decency associated with the Ndebele language.

Conclusion

This paper has investigated how existence of taboo and offensive words has led to inconsistencies and inadequacies in the definition of words in the ISN and other dictionaries. It has also investigated how the lexicographer can be caught "between calling a spade a spade and being euphemistic" in the definitions of these words owing to the inextricable relationship that exists between language and culture.

Nearly all dictionaries at one time or another have had to violate some basic rules of lexicography through sacrificing explicit meaning on account of the user's tastes. This normally results in the use of euphemism and other rhetoric expressions when it comes to the presentation of taboo words in dictionaries. This further demonstrates that culture is indispensable in the description of a language in general and in the compilation of a dictionary in particular. It therefore becomes important for a lexicographer to marry these cultural observations and still maintain a balanced dictionary representative of the lexicon of a language without compromising any information.

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