REVIEW ARTICLE

An Overview on the Challenges and Practices Involved in Compiling a Literary Dictionary

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ABSTRACT	ARTICLE INFO
This study highlights the importance of lexicography in clarifying the meaning of words, especially those used in poetry, which often diverge from everyday language. Poetic language, rich in metaphor and imagery, requires specialized knowledge for accurate interpretation, particularly when terms carry cultural, historical, or literary significance. A key focus is on the role of literary dictionaries in documenting words that are rare, ancient, or specific to literary contexts. These words, which may not be found in standard dictionaries, hold significant value in understanding ancient literature and cultural heritage. Lexicographers have to navigate challenges such as documenting words that have fallen out of common use, coining new terms, and recognizing phonetic changes in language. This study collects data from Pashto, Arabic, and English sources, both online and in print. And the collected data is analyzed thematically. The main objective of the study is to explore first the diverse types of literary dictionaries and glossaries along with defining dictionary, glossary, lexigraphy, literal dictionary, and literary dictionary. This study particularly emphasizes the ongoing practices and particular challenges involved in compiling literary dictionaries. The study concludes that literary dictionaries are crucial for preserving linguistic heritage and supporting the contemporary understanding of literary works. The poets and writers contribute to the evolution of language by introducing novel lexicons, which enrich both the literary and general language. It also acknowledges the dynamic nature of language and the need to preserve its cultural and historical context.	

Introduction

According to McManus and Helfman (2014), a dictionary is a comprehensive reference work. It contains an extensive list of words in a particular language. It also provides the meanings, pronunciation, origin, grammatical details, and sometimes example sentences. In contrast to a dictionary, a glossary is typically a specialized list of terms which are related to a specific subject, field, or context. It usually contains terms that are more technical, jargon-filled, or specific to a particular area of study, profession, or industry. For example, medical, legal, scientific glossary.

The Available Kinds of Glossaries

Each language in the world needs to have its own glossary for each the fields and professions. Below are the commonly used types of the glossaries a language might own. *1. Dictionary Glossary* which provides definitions of terms in their most basic and straightforward form, usually in alphabetical order. These definitions are typically based on the standard, dictionary definitions of words and often offer both the meaning of the word as well as its usage in different contexts e.g., noun, verb, etc. (Merriam-Webster, 1984 & Dictionary, 1989). *2. Subject-Specific Glossary* that focuses on terms specific to a particular field of study or discipline. It defines specialized terminology used in areas such as medicine, law, technology, business, or science. This can be used in textbooks, research papers, academic journals, or industry-specific manuals. For example, a medical textbook will often have a glossary of terms at the end to explain medical jargon (Black et al., 1999). *3. Bilingual or Multilingual Glossary* which provides definitions of terms in one language alongside their equivalents in another language. This Glossary

assist users in translating and understanding terms in different languages, often used by language learners, translators, or international businesses (Bussmann, *et al*., 2006). *4. Visual Glossary* which each term in it is paired with an illustration or image that helps define term. This is particularly useful for explaining complex or physical concepts that benefit from visual representation. It is used like Common in children's educational books, instructional materials, textbooks, and guides that involve anatomy, geography, or any subject requiring visual representation (Roe-Hafer & Schroeder, 1993). *5. Glossary of Idiomatic Expressions* which are phrases or sayings that do not make literary sense but have an understood meaning in a particular language or culture (Ayto, 2010). *6. Glossary of Synonyms and Antonyms* is a collection of words that provides lists of synonyms and antonyms for each term. Its aim is to find words that are similar or opposite in meaning (Merriam-Webster, 1984). *7. Glossary of Slang or Colloquialisms* provides the meanings of slang words or colloquial phrases that are used informally in everyday speech but may not be appropriate for formal or academic writing (Thorne, 2014).

The Art of Writing Dictionary

It is to note that a lexicography is the art and science of compiling, writing, and editing dictionaries. It involves both the theoretical study of dictionary-making and the practical process of creating dictionaries that document the meanings, usage, and etymology of words (Hartmann & James, 2001). To enhance human understanding, the compilation of words and their meanings has a long and storied history. This endeavor can be traced back to the Sumerians, who engaged in this practice approximately three thousand years before the Common Era. They translated words to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge. A similar process was evident during the early Islamic period, particularly in the first century of Islam. Notably, Khalil Ibn Ahmad al-Farahidi is recognized as a pioneering figure in this field; he authored the *Kitab al-Ain*, which is considered the first systematic dictionary in the history of the Arabic language (Ibni Khaldon, 2020). And, the practice of dictionary compilation continues to this day, aimed at defining challenging words, elucidating their meanings, and clarifying terms that may be difficult for laypersons to understand. Dictionaries, which are organized according to an alphabetical system, adhere to specific rules and conventions in their creation. This process necessitates a professional approach; thus, a lexicologist who lacks knowledge of the requisite writing principles cannot be considered fully competent in the field. Consequently, it is essential to possess a thorough understanding of the rules governing dictionary writing. Additionally, knowledge of morphology, syntax, phonology, and semantics is critical for elucidating the relationships among words and their meanings. Many words carry not only their semantic meanings but also historical, cultural, political, and literary contexts. Therefore, a dictionary compiler has to possess the ability to differentiate meanings within these broader contexts. Expertise in both grammatical and lexical meanings is also indispensable. As such, it is imperative that a writer adhere to all established rules and guidelines in the compilation of a dictionary (Ibni Khaldon, 2020).

The Literary Dictionary

There is a clear difference between a literal dictionary and a literary dictionary in terms of their focus and purpose. The former refers to a standard dictionary of language that provides definitions of words, pronunciations, etymology, and usage in a literal or general sense. This is, this type of dictionary is often used for understanding the basic meanings, translations, or standard usages of words in everyday language. Whereas the former - *Literary Dictionary* – focuses on terms and concepts related to literature and literary studies. It provides definitions and explanations of literary terms, genres, techniques, and theories (e.g., "allegory," "metaphor," "postmodernism"). For an example, a literal dictionary defines "irony" as "the use of words to express the opposite of their literal meaning." Whereas a literary dictionary might discuss types of irony (verbal, situational, dramatic) with examples from literature.

The language utilized by poets, poetry, and poetic expression significantly diverges from everyday language, as poetry often conveys meanings that transcend conventional eloquence. The content of a poem is imbued with specific and nuanced meanings that may not align with common interpretations (Wasie, 2014). Moreover, given this divergence from standard meaning, each term within a poem can be considered extraordinary, lacking the straightforward definitions typically associated with everyday language. Poetry is composed of evocative imagery and sensations, constructed from words that are often employed in unconventional ways. As a result, the general audience may struggle to grasp the meanings of these poetic words. This necessitates the intervention of an individual skilled in elucidating the meanings embedded within the text. Such a person, often referred to as an interpreter or explicator, have to possess a thorough understanding of the techniques required for this task. Importantly, a scholar engaged in this endeavor should be well-versed in lexicography, particularly the methodologies involved in creating literary dictionaries. A lexicographer has to exhibit expertise in various branches of lexicology and vocabulary. Furthermore, the influence of languages other than the poet's native tongue is a critical consideration in the preparation of a literary dictionary. For instance, classical Pashto poetry is profoundly influenced by Arabic and Persian, thus

necessitating that the compiler of a literary dictionary be familiar with these languages (Wasie, 2014).

According to Wasie (2014) and Gostalibon (2001), these considerations represent fundamental principles essential for the creation of a literary dictionary. The writing of literary dictionaries and the translation of poetic terminology is not an unprecedented task; it has already been undertaken in various living languages. Globally, languages that possess rich literary heritage—where human imagination has reached remarkable heights, and literature encapsulates profound emotions—have seen the development and sustained practice of literary dictionaries and poetic traditions. This has been a customary endeavor throughout history.

Arabic, recognized as one of the most vibrant languages in the Eastern linguistic landscape, possesses a rich array of compilations akin to literary dictionaries. These works encompass a diverse range of poetic traditions and cultural expressions, which, while not traditionally classified as dictionaries, serve to document and reflect the depth of Arabic literary heritage.

The Persian Language also has materials written in the form of Footnotes and annotations on certain Collection of Poetry, such as Hafiz's Divan. And the renowned scholar Professor Habibullah Kandahari has written an extensive scholarly commentary on the famous Arabic Dramatic Prose work *Maqamat Harir*. If we look to it, the linguistics analysis is predominant. Making it serve as a sort of Literary Dictionary and cultural guide for the meaning of the original Arabic Literary work. However, the scholar has written this commentary in simple and beautiful Persian language.

The Words Registered in a Literary Dictionary

As poetry diverges from common language and common concepts, the lexicon employed within its structural system differs significantly from that used in everyday conversation. This distinction facilitates the work of lexicographers who endeavor to collect and define terms within poetic texts that may pose challenges in translation and comprehension. Such undertakings necessitate a specialized approach to both the writing and compilation processes. The lexicographer's objective is to document words that are seldom encountered in the colloquial speech of society and that remain unaddressed in existing dictionaries. These lexical items are present in every language; however, they tend to be more prevalent in languages that maintain a rich historical authenticity, which is often intertwined with literary significance and influenced by various sociocultural factors over time (Wasie, 2014).

While this endeavor presents certain challenges, it is not insurmountable. The lexicographer can draw upon historical literary works in the language to aid in this comprehensive documentation.

An additional critical aspect that can be identified as a principle in the compilation of a literary dictionary is the necessity for the compiler to effectively gather lexicon from poetry and literature that is comprehensible within a specific dialect of the language. If the lexicon is not widely recognized, it indicates that the general populace who speaks that language may encounter difficulties in comprehension. Many languages contain archaic vocabulary, which is primarily preserved within literary works. The endeavor to revive these archaic terms and reintroduce them to the public offers several advantages. On one hand, this revival enhances our understanding of ancient literature and provides insights into the literary and scientific vibrancy of past cultures. On the other hand, it also sheds light on various social activities and practices that were prevalent during the periods when these words were in common use. Archaic words possess a dual status, they can be revived and utilized by scholars in their academic writings, thereby facilitating their reintegration into everyday language for the general populace. This process not only enriches contemporary discourse but also fosters a deeper appreciation for linguistic heritage (Hotak, 2007).

The second scenario involves the obsolescence of a particular term, rendering it no longer functional within the language due to the absence of its associated meanings and implications. In both instances, archaic words that possess literary significance and originality should be incorporated into the dictionary and have to not be disregarded. This inclusion is crucial for lexicographers who seek to identify words that may elude their comprehension across various dialects of the language, particularly those that have not been accurately documented in the original form in existing printed dictionaries. This information is also essential for the dictionary author, who seeks to identify words that remain unrecognized in any dialect of the language. Such words may not be documented accurately in existing printed dictionaries, thereby necessitating further investigation and inclusion in the lexicon.

The lexicon of the Pashto language, in particular, exhibits a substantial presence of certain lexical items. This abundance allows for the straightforward identification and incorporation of numerous such terms into our linguistic repository (Adamic, L.W, 1980).

Writers, particularly those well-versed in linguistic theories and possessing a strong literary acumen, often contribute novel elements to their literary works. This includes the creation of new lexicon, wherein they invent words that enrich the language and expand the expressive potential of literature. It is natural that newly coined terms will emerge in accordance with established linguistic norms and conventions. However, it is likely that these

terms will not yet be documented in authoritative dictionaries, nor will they have reached a threshold of widespread usage within the linguistic community. Consequently, it is imperative for the compiler of a literary dictionary to acknowledge and include such terms in their work (Khapal, 2011).

Additionally, there exist words that historically possessed a specific pronunciation but have since undergone phonetic changes, while retaining their original meanings. These words also warrant inclusion in the dictionary, with appropriate annotations to indicate both their historical and current pronunciations. Furthermore, there are types of words that, despite not being commonly employed in everyday discourse and lacking representation in standard dictionaries, still hold significant literary value and are utilized by renowned literary figures. It is essential that these words be identified and incorporated into the literary dictionary to enrich its content and reflect the full spectrum of linguistic expression (Jackson, 2013).

In the realm of literary scholarship, a comprehensive literary dictionary encompasses not only the lexicon of one's native language imbued with historical and cultural significance but also accommodates terms that emerge anew within the literary landscape, thereby acquiring distinct contextual and aesthetic meanings. Furthermore, it provides a platform for words deemed forbidden, whose literary originality is both safeguarded and celebrated, thus enriching the tapestry of literary expression (Khapal, 2011).

Research Methodology

This study which is entitled *An Overview of The Challenges and Practices Involved in Compiling a Literary Dictionary* was based on a methodology which can be divided into several key components such as the research design, data collection, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative approach to explore the multifaceted aspects of compiling a literary dictionary. The approach emphasizes gathering and analyzing textual data from various sources, including academic literature and practical examples of existing literary dictionaries so that it can provide a comprehensive overview of the topic.

Data Collection

The data collection process involved only one method which was the literature review of the literary studies relevant to dictionaries. Basically, the data were primarily gathered from various Pashto books. And, it was not sufficient to complete the study so some other sources in English and Arabic were also found needful

that supported the research topic. The Pashto and Arabic texts relevant to the study were translated into English either that focused on identifying the recurring challenges and best practices in the field or completing a literary dictionary.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed through thematic analysis after reviewing the most relevant previously published sources. Any pertinent theme important for the research topic was codified and then listed in a file so that the emerged challenges and practices are seen in an up-bottom hierarchy. Key themes both challenges and practices are identified based on patterns emerging from the literature review mentioned in the result section. The main challenges emerged were the divergence between poetic and everyday speech in defining the scope of the dictionary (e.g., genre, era, or region). **The role of lexicographers in literary contexts to b**alance comprehensiveness with usability. Global impact and cross-cultural lexicographical practices addressing linguistic and cultural nuances. Adapting to technological advancements in digital lexicography. Best practices were extracted by synthesizing recurring strategies and recommendations from the sources. The analysis aimed to present actionable insights for future dictionary projects.

Ethical Considerations

All data collection activities adhered to ethical research guidelines. Secondary data from published sources were appropriately cited to maintain academic integrity.

This methodology ensures a thorough and reliable examination of the challenges and practices in compiling a literary dictionary, offering valuable guidance for researchers and practitioners in the field.

Results

The findings of this study highlighted some diverse and essential roles. These roles were played in the language comprehension, communication, and learning by different types of literary glossaries and dictionaries. Some glossaries demonstrated the flexibility of language resources so that they could meet the needs of various users across different fields and contexts. These types of glossaries were for example, general dictionary, specialized subject-specific, bilingual, and visual glossaries. The literary dictionaries in their various forms are indispensable tools for language learning, professional communication, and cross-cultural understanding. They served as fundamental resources to clarify meanings, bridge linguistic gaps, and enhance both formal and informal communication across a wide range of fields. There were several key

observations and insights related to the challenges and practices involved in compiling a dictionary for poetic and literary expressions. Below are the ones which have to be taken into account:

1. **The divergence between poetic language and everyday speech**

- *Challenge: the complexity of poetic lexicon –* the poetic language diverges significantly from everyday language. Poetic expressions often employ words in non-literal, figurative, or unconventional ways. This creates a challenge for lexicographers, as these words cannot be defined using standard meanings.
- *Practice: interpretation and context –* in poetry, a practice to bear in mind is the meaning which is often multifaceted, rely heavily on imagery, symbolism, and the emotional resonance of words. Lexicographers have to be skilled in interpreting these facets and understand the various contextual meanings so that they could accurately define words within literary works.

2. **The role of lexicographers in literary contexts**

- *Challenge: expertise in lexicography and literary analysis –* a key challenge in compiling literary dictionary is the importance of lexicographers who have to possess a deep understanding of both linguistic and literary canons. Compiling a literary dictionary is not merely about defining words but involves interpreting the cultural, historical, and philosophical underpinnings that influence how words are used in literature and poetry.
- *Practice: influence of other languages –* an essential practice involved in compiling a literary dictionary for lexicographers is that they have to be familiar with the languages they are influenced by their literary canons. For example, classical Pashto poetry is influenced by Arabic and Persian languages. That is, lexicographers who compile a literary dictionary for Pashto poetry have to understand these two languages and their literary nuances.

3. **Preservation and revival of archaic words**

- *Practice: inclusion of archaic words –* one main practice involved in compiling a literary dictionary is that the lexicographers have to preserve those words that are no longer in use but retain significant cultural or historical value. These words are often found in ancient literature. And, the inclusion of these words in literary dictionaries helps understanding the past literary and cultural traditions.
- *Practice: archaic terms and cultural heritage –* another practice is the reviving of archaic

terms. This practice can help reintegrate these terms into the contemporary lexicon, thus it enriches the current discourse and provides insights into ancient practices, social activities, and intellectual traditions. Lexicographers' efforts in this regard contribute to a deeper understanding of a society's linguistic and cultural history.

4. **Handling new lexicon and evolving Language:**

- *Challenge: phonetic and semantic changes -* one challenge that lexicographers have to keep in mind is to track changes in pronunciation and meaning over time. Words that may have had a different pronunciation or meaning in the course of history need to be documented with annotations illustrating the historical usage because these words evolved historically. It is important not only for linguistic accuracy but also for understanding the progression of a language.
- *Practice: newly coined words –* a key practice involved in compiling a literary dictionary is the recognition that writers, particularly poets and authors, frequently coin new words or expressions to enrich a language. These words may not be included in standard dictionaries so far, but they can contribute to the evolving nature of the language. Literary dictionaries play a crucial role in documenting the coinages and incorporating them into the broader lexicon.

5. **Incorporation of literary value and context:**

- *Challenge: words with forbidden or unusual uses –* **another** challenge is the inclusion of words that might be considered 'forbidden' or unconventional in regular discourse. Indeed, these types of words possess unique literary significance. These words which may not be widely accepted or used can be added to the literary expression for its richness. And, they should be included so that they can preserve their literary originality.
- *Practice: words with literary value –* an important practice involved in compiling a literary dictionary is the importance of including words that may not be commonly used in everyday speech but hold significant literary value. These words are often employed by renowned literary figures and are essential for capturing the full range of a language's expressive potential. A literary dictionary is thus not merely a compilation of common words but also a reflection of the rich literary traditions and creativity within a culture.

6. **The importance of a comprehensive literary dictionary:**

• *Practice: reflecting cultural and aesthetic significance* – a comprehensive literary dictionary does more than simply defining words. It encapsulates the cultural, historical, and aesthetic significance of the language. It also documents how language is used in literature to evoke emotions, convey complex ideas, and express societal values.

• *Practice: platform for linguistic diversity* – an important practice that has to be emphasized is a well-compiled literary dictionary should serve as a platform for the diversity of linguistic expression, accommodating both old and new terms, and ensuring that the full spectrum of language is preserved for future generations across various dialects, historical periods, and cultural contexts.

7. **Global impact and cross-cultural lexicographical practices:**

• *Practice: cross-cultural influence on literary lexicography* – the global practice of literary lexicography is also important. Many languages such as Arabic, Persian, and Pashto with their rich literary traditions have seen the development of literary dictionaries or similar works that served as cultural guides. This practice often reflect the deep connections among language, culture, and literature which demonstrates the global significance of literary lexicography in preserving and interpreting literary heritage.

At the end, the overall findings of this issue underscore the complexities and challenges of compiling a literary dictionary, particularly in the context of poetic and literary language. Key practices include the need for a nuanced understanding of language in its literary form, the importance of preserving archaic and newly coined words, and the value of capturing the full cultural and historical context of words. A literary dictionary is not just a tool for defining words but a comprehensive reflection of a culture's literary expression and linguistic heritage

Discussion

On the basis of the results found in the study, the practice of lexicography evolved over the centuries, particularly in relation to the documentation of poetic language. The contributions of early lexicographers and their impact on the Arabic and Persian languages has to be taken into account (Khalid Ibn Ahmad al-Frahidi, 2002). Compiling a literary dictionary presents several challenges, particularly with poetic language. This could mean that poetry often employs language in unconventional ways, creating meanings that diverge from everyday use (Chejne, 1968) so it also seems

important to understand the historical, cultural, and literary contexts behind words in poetry. This understanding enhances the appreciation of literary works as well. In this regard, Young (2014) has rightly put that there are ways that could revive archaic vocabulary which are found in poetry. This practice is important for maintaining the continuity with linguistic heritage while acknowledging the evolution of language. According to the results, new words are continually created within literature so lexicographers have to approach newly coined terms that may not have widespread acceptance yet. It is quite challenging that they prioritize these terms in their dictionaries. Another crucial factor in literary lexicography is the impact of translation. This involves the translation of poetic works that affect the understanding and compilation of language in different cultural contexts. This practice influences the languages like Arabic and Persian on Pashto poetry and it also plays a vital role in this process of compilation. However, the literary dictionaries differ from general dictionaries as the literary dictionaries contribute to our understanding of the nuances in poetic expression (Hartmann, 2002). In the process of present research, there were some limitations and challenges that really limited the study. The first was the lack of information in Pashto language. Furthermore, there was the shortage of data in English either specifically regarding the literary dictionaries. It is suggested that with the advent of digital language resources and the evolving literary practices, what future trends can be foreseen in the field of lexicography for compiling a literary dictionary and how will technology influence the compilation and accessibility of literary dictionaries in the future?

Conclusion

In the conclusion, there are different types of literary dictionaries and glossaries revealing important roles played in enhancing language comprehension and communication within various contexts. Literary dictionaries provide to the diverse needs of language users by providing clarity and insight into the meanings and usage of words, expressions, and terms. The various types of literal dictionaries and glossaries are integral to ensuring effective communication in multitude settings. Whether it is through simplifying language for general use, providing specialized vocabulary for professionals, aiding in cross-language communication, or helping learners decode figurative and informal language, these resources significantly enhance linguistic proficiency. As language is dynamic and ever-evolving, these glossaries offer the tools necessary to keep pace with the complexities of both formal and informal communication. Ultimately, the accessibility and specificity of these dictionaries contribute to greater understanding, clearer communication, and a more inclusive approach to learning and using language in diverse contexts

The compiling of dictionaries, both general and literary has a rich historical background that dates back to the Sumerians and has evolved significantly through various cultural and linguistic traditions. Lexicographers compiling literary dictionaries must deeply understand morphology, syntax, phonology, and semantics to accurately define words in various contexts. The unique challenge documenting poetic language lies in the fact that poetry often diverges from everyday speech, incorporating words with nuanced meaning and complex interpretations. Based on this, literary dictionaries have to address not only the conventional vocabulary but also archaic, original and newly made terms that enrich a language expressive potential. Ultimately, one of the main practices for the lexicographers is that they should bridge the gap between historical and contemporary language, enrich both scholarly understanding and the broader cultural discourse.

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