

What's in a dictionary? Learning from the past, applying to the future.
A case study from kinship terminology in Blackfoot dictionaries
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Currently, three different printed Blackfoot-English dictionaries are available.

The oldest dictionary was published as an English-Blackfoot dictionary more than a century ago by John W. Tims (1889), a Reverend who was trained at a missionary college in England. Its data was collected while he stayed in Southern Alberta, and the dictionary was compiled for the benefit of missionaries and school-teachers. In the early 20th century, Christianus C. Uhlenbeck, a linguist from the Netherlands, arrived with his student in Blackfeet reservation in Montana and collected stories from the community. The stories were translated into English with the help of Blackfeet speakers and this formed the basis for two dictionaries (Uhlenbeck & Van Gulik 1930, 1934). The third Blackfoot-English dictionary by Frantz and Russel (1989, 1995) which is the most up-to-date printed version, was published more than half a century later. Frantz spent several decades collecting data from many Blackfoot speakers. This dictionary aims to serve both scholars, speakers of the language, and a general audience.

Beside orthographical and phonological difference between the dictionaries, it should also be noticed that the presentation of lexical items differs significantly. This can be seen for instance in the representation of kinship terms:

- Tims: 1st, 2nd, and 3rd person singular forms are presented but not plural forms.
- Uhlenbeck & Van Gulik: 1st and 3rd person singular and plural, and vocative (English-Blackfoot, 1930), OBV form is added to Blackfoot-English version (1934).
- Franz & Russell: plural form (1995, p, xx) and some irregular phonological rules.

Here are example entries of the word for *mother* in each dictionary:

- Tims (1889) Mother, n. an. My mother, niksís'ta; your mother, kiksís'ta; her mother, oksís'tsi.
- Uhlenbeck & van Gulik (1930) mother an.: my mother *niksista* (voc. also *na'á*, *na'áiau*), pl. *niksistaiks*; his (her) mother *oksístsi*, pl. *oksístsiks*.
- Uhlenbeck & van Gulik (1934) niksíta an. *my mother*, voc. also *na'á*, *na'áiau*, obv. niksístsi, pl. niksístsiks; oksístsi *his (her) mother*, pl. oksístsiks.
- Frantz & Russell (1995) iksíst *nar*; mother/maternal aunt (of male or female); niksístsiksi my mothers/aunts; oksístsi his/her mother.

These examples demonstrate how each dictionary emphasises different forms of lexical items. Frantz and Russell provide an explanation as to why and how they select and represent lexical items, but no explanation is provided in Tims and Uhlenbeck & Van Gulik.

The poster examines the differences in presentation between these three dictionaries with a focus on Blackfoot kinship terminology and discusses how we can work on the presentation of dictionary.

References

- Franz, D. G. & Russel, N. J. (1995). *Blackfoot dictionary of stems, roots and affixes* (2nd ed.). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

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- Uhlenbeck, C. C. & van Gulik, R. H. (1930). *An English-Blackfoot vocabulary: Based on material from the Southern Peigans*. Retrieved from <http://peel.library.ualberta.ca/bibliography/5517.html>
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