The Third Edition of Oxford Student’s Dictionary for Hebrew Speakers

Published on January 1, 1986, Oxford Student’s Dictionary for Hebrew Speakers (OSDHS) was not the first of its kind. Several semi-bilingual dictionaries (SBD) for learners of English at the elementary-to-lower-intermediate level were published before that:

- In 1982, Longman co-published with AO Livro Technico, in Brasil, a 10,000-word SBD, entitled Longman English Dictionary for Portuguese Speakers, by Rosa W. Konder.
- In the same year, Harrap published an SBD written by P.H. Collin, called Harrap’s Dictionnaire de 2000 Mots, Anglais-Francais.
- OUP published that year a 2500-word SBD called First Dictionary for French-Speaking Africa.

It is possible that other SBDs appeared before that have not come to my attention. Other dictionaries I have occasionally heard about turned out to be not semi-bilingual but rather, to use R.R.K. Hartmann’s term, “bilingualized”, in which not only the headword is translated, but the definitions and/or examples are translated as well.

In Israel, the appearance of OSDHS and, in 1987, Harrap’s English Dictionary for Speakers of Arabic, marked the first official recognition of the use of the mother tongue in the foreign language classroom. The acceptance was so universal, that it has eventually become the only type of dictionary permitted in the English matriculation examinations, which are themselves geared to this dictionary. Monolingual dictionaries are not permitted in the school system at all, and bilingual dictionaries may be used by students at the lower level of matriculation.

OSDHS has had over 50 reprints of two editions (2e published in 1993). This its impact on pedagogical lexicography and English learners’ dictionaries goes well beyond Israel, in many countries and languages worldwide.

Lionel Kernerman, Publisher

The new edition of Oxford Student’s Dictionary English-English-Hebrew is based on the third edition of Oxford Student’s Dictionary (OSD, Oxford University Press, 2001), and as such is a most up-to-date dictionary for learners of English as a foreign language at the upper-intermediate level, suitable for the upper grades of secondary (high) schools, universities, the professions and the general public.

The OSD has been adapted for the use of Hebrew speakers, not only by translating all the entries and subentries, but also by making it particularly relevant to Israeli users, e.g. by adding a large number of entries and subentries (especially words commonly used in Israeli educational institutions and local textbooks).

The former editions of this dictionary have been in use for over 25 years as auxiliary material in class and in examinations. When the semi-bilingual dictionary first appeared, it was soon recognized to be far more useful than the monolingual OSD used in class previously, which had been hardly referred to by examinees or indeed by students in their regular lessons. Hitherto, students had tended to use a bilingual dictionary, but the advantages of the semi-bilingual type were immediately evident, with the explanations in simple English, i.e. the language of instruction in the communicative framework of the English curriculum and methodology, and the numerous examples (after all, “meaning lies in the context”—features of the monolingual dictionary—but now also with the satisfying and confirming existence of the Hebrew translation of the headword.

This edition has been totally rewritten, taking into account advances in linguistics, teaching methodology and lexicography, and covering areas such as hi-tech in general and computers in particular, as well as business studies, the sciences and professions, education, literature and the arts, tourism and communication needs in general. Dictionary has over 47,000 references. The definitions and examples are in British spelling, but the American equivalents are also given. Thus, faucet is given as the American equivalent of tap, both as part of the entry for tap and as a separate entry.

Raphael Gefen, Editor