

Lawrence A. Reid, 1976. Bontok-English Dictionary
Pacific Linguistics C36. Canberra: Australian
National University. xxiv + 500.

This is an excellent dictionary of Bontok, an Austronesian language spoken in Mountain Province, Philippines. It is generally clear, with a consistent format and thorough information given for each entry.

The author states his purpose as being 'for the people to enrich their understanding of English' and for English speakers 'to gain a fuller understanding of the language and culture of Bontok' (v), and I believe he achieves these goals quite well. I do feel that the Bontok speaker would need a great deal of linguistic experience to use the Bontok-English side of the dictionary because of the many abbreviations for each entry, but the English-Bontok side, which is in the form of a finder list, is very clear and uncomplicated and should be quite helpful in meeting this first goal.

The introductory portion of the dictionary shows us the phonemic system and explains the orthography of this language. There is a preliminary explanation of entry arrangements as well, which consists of:

A. Headwords:

- 1 - Homonyms appear with the second word subscripted; affixes and clitics appear as main entries, as well as some derived forms.
- 2 - Cross-reference is given for stem allomorphs, synonyms, phonological variants, and dialect variants.
- 3 - Other dialects are listed with their town in parentheses.
- 4 - Loan words and their source are indicated. The only other label included is 'archaic'.

B. Body of entry:

1 - Grammatical information

20 'word classes' are listed which include parts of speech as well as kinship terms. I am not sure why kinship terms are included in this grouping without including other topical sets such as body parts, flora and fauna, etc. Perhaps because they are obligatorily possessed they are included under grammatical information.

The verbs are accompanied by their case frame with the proper affixes given if any noun phrase is to be the subject of the sentence.

2 - Gloss

The gloss includes pertinent collocational information for each entry, such as qadang 'to be grown up, of people'.

3 - Examples

The illustrative sentences are very good; short but containing semantic clues to the meaning of the entry.

There is usually a sentence for each sense discrimination when there are only 2 senses, but not one for each if there are several senses. Sometimes there is only one sentence for two senses which can be a bit confusing. For example, on p.81 one reads dakig 'to place a bar across a doorway...' and 'a cross bar...'. Only one sentence follows with no indication whether this illustrates the noun or the verb. But I suppose the author presupposes some knowledge of the language.

Sometimes there are two sentences for one sense which seems a bit redundant: for example, p.112 gabok 'to mix water and rice'.

There are very good encyclopedic phrases for cultural terms.

4 - Semantic field

This means 'word families' but this designation is not made too clear in the introduction as there are no examples of it there.

There are no topical lists. However, complete lists are given in the English-Bontok side for trees, birds, etc.

The finder list is concise but thorough, done with the aid of a computer.

All Bontok words appear in bold face and the general layout is clear and easy to read.

No examples were noted of idioms, familiar expressions or warnings about negative connotations but this may be an oversight on my part.

To sum up, I feel that this dictionary is comprehensive and easy to use.

Shirley Litteral
Summer Institute of Linguistics