

This article was translated from Hebrew by IJK, translation edited by Raphael Gefen. General cases of using he/him/his refer to both masculine and feminine. The Hebrew version is available online: <http://kictionaries.com/kdn/kdn12-3-2-heb.html>

(defective) spelling. MS has the addition, systematically throughout the dictionary, of references from the past form of the verb to their present form. This is conspicuous in the letter *He* [H], particularly with the beginning *hu-*, where some pages contain almost only references. In fact, the subtitle of the dictionary – “according to *ha-Hoveh* method” – makes these references superfluous.

As against the compact MH, MS looks “respectable”, impressive in its dimensions, and more generous with grammatical and historical information. The reduction in this information, which was perceived by the editors of MH as a constructive breakthrough – if such an oxymoron is permitted – of the fences of Hebrew lexicographic tradition, seemed a too far-reaching dare to the editors of MS, who toed the line with “conventional” lexicography. Anyway, MS proves that *ha-Hoveh* method is applicable in dictionaries

with varied scopes and/or of a different character, as is clear from the range of *Sapphire Dictionaries* published since then.

#### Notes

1. The lecture ‘What Distinguishes a Scientific Dictionary from a Practical Dictionary?’ was given on the anniversary of the Department of the Hebrew Language at the Hebrew University (1985), and published in *Balshanut Hofshit*, 24.69-74, 1986.
2. The essence of the survey results appeared in a letter by Ilana Shkedi from Sifriyat Maariv, published in *Leshonenu La'am*, 47.43, 1996.
3. Including *Sapphire Encyclopedic Dictionary* (7 vol. 1998; 3 vol. 2002), *Sapphire School Dictionary* (1999), *Word by Word* (2000), *First Tongue* (2000).
4. From the Preface.

## From *Milon ha-Hoveh* to *Milon Sapir*

Yitzhak Shlesinger



Yitzhak Shlesinger was born in 1938 in Czechoslovakia, and immigrated to Israel in 1949. He has a BA, an MA and a PhD from Bar-Ilan University, where he is a senior lecturer. His field of research and teaching is Modern Hebrew, especially the language of newspapers. He is the chairman of SCRIPT (Israeli Association of Literacy) and is on the board of IAAL (Israeli Association of Applied Linguistics). Dr Shlesinger is editor of the journal *Hebrew Linguistics* and on the editorial board of the journal *Chelkat Lashon*, and has written and published extensively. [yitzhak@shlezinger.org](mailto:yitzhak@shlezinger.org)

The main innovation of *Milon ha-Hoveh* was in presenting the verbs in the present participle form, as opposed to other dictionaries that inscribe the verbs according to their past form. It can be assumed that, with the name *Dictionary of the Present*, the editors wanted to point to this quality of their dictionary and perhaps also to hint it is up to date in accord with the publication date.

Six years later a new dictionary appeared, *Milon Sapir*, whose chief editor was the publisher Eitan Avnion, and the scientific editorial team included Professor Raphael Nir, Shoshana Bahat (who edited MH with Mordechai Mishor) and Dr Yitzhak Shlesinger. This dictionary had a similar pattern to its predecessor, namely, edited in *ha-Hoveh* method for the lexicographic entries of the verbs.

On the one hand, there are a number of similarities in these two dictionaries, but on the other hand there are a number of differences.

The most prominent innovation in the dictionary of Bahat and Mishor is, then, editing the verbs according to the present tense form. The editors gave in the preface several reasons for this method, some pragmatic – for ease of use, and some

editorial – considerations stemming from the ambiguity of the Hebrew present tense form, which often appears both as a verb and as a noun or an adjective.

The editors adopted this editing method in MS. The contribution of this dictionary to those involved with Hebrew language research and to anyone interested in using a dictionary from time to time is primarily its scope: MH has 21,000 entries whereas MS contains over 100,000 main and sub-entries (the MH editors were sparing with sub-entries while the editors of MS treated sub-entries at length).

However, the increase in the number of entries in MS stems also from a grammatical-linguistic decision concerning the division into grammatical categories. Thus, for example, two entries for *mukpa* [frozen]: first, the verb, including tense inflections (*hukpa*, *yukpa* [was/will be frozen]), then the adjective, including the gender and number inflections (*mukpa*, *mukpet*, *mukpa'im*, *mukpa'ot* [is/are frozen]).

This division of the present tense form into two entries according to their grammatical category reflects the grammatical system of modern Hebrew, which is indeed the main aim of MS.