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## Problems of exemplification in bilingual dictionaries

Thomas Szende

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# Contents

## Thematic Part

### Mediostrukturen in Printwörterbüchern / Mediostructures in Printed Dictionaries

Editor of the thematic part: Herbert Ernst Wiegand

HERBERT ERNST WIEGAND: Zur Einführung [Foreword; Introduction] .....	1
RUFUS H. GOUWS: Mediostructural representation, textual condensation and user-orientation in the WAT X [La configuration médiostri- culturale, la condensation de texte et la référence à l'utilisateur dans le WAT X; Me- diostrukturelle Gestaltung, textuelle Verdichtung und Benutzerbezug im WAT X] .....	4
MARGARETE LINDEMANN: Mediostrukturen in modernen italienischen Wörter- büchern [Mediostructures in Modern Italian Dictionaries; Médiostri- cures dans des dictionnaires italiens modernes] .....	38
PETER O. MÜLLER: Mediostrukturen in der frühneuzeitlichen Lexikographie [Mediostructures within the Early Modern Lexicography; Médiostri- cures dans le cadre de la lexicographie en début des temps modernes] .....	66
SANDRO NIELSEN: Mediostructures in Bilingual LSP Dictionaries [Mé- diostri- cures dans des dictionnaires spéciaux bilingues; Mediostrukturen in zweisprachigen Fachwörterbüchern] .....	90
SVEN TARP: Theoretical foundations of the so-called cross-reference structures [Fondement théorique des structures de renvoi prétendues; Theoretische Fundierung der sogenannten Verweisstrukturen] .....	114

## Thematic Part (continued from volume 13/1997)

### Fachwörterbücher zur Linguistik / Special Purpose Dictionaries of Linguistics

HERBERT ERNST WIEGAND: Vorbemerkung [Preliminary Remark; Avant- propos] .....	138
MARGARETE LINDEMANN: Die Technik des Wörterbuchschreibens im DICTIONNAIRE TERMINOLOGIQUE DE LA SYSTÉMATIQUE DU LANGAGE [The Practice of Dictionary Writing in the DICTIONNAIRE TERMINOLO- GIQUE DE LA SYSTÉMATIQUE DU LANGAGE; La technique d'écrire des dic-	

NOMENCLATURA NAVALIS (n.p. 1678)
NOMENCLATURA SEU DICTIONARIUM LATINO-GERMANICUM (Sibiu 1629)
NOUVEAU DICTIONNAIRE DU VOYAGEUR ... NEUES DICTIONARIUM (Genève 1683–4, Genève 1695)
NOUVEAU DICTIONNAIRE FRANÇOIS-ALLEMAN ET ALLEMAN-FRANÇOIS QU'ACCOMPAGNE LE LATIN (Basel 1669, Basel 1675, Basel 1683, Genève 1683) [also: NEUES DICTIONARIUM ...; NEUES TEUTSCH-FRANTZÖSISCH-LATEINES DICTIONARIUM]
NOVUM DICTIONARIUM LATINO-SUECO-GERMANICUM (Hamburg 1700)
NOVUM LEXICON LATINO-SUECO-GERMANICUM (Hamburg, Stockholm 1700–16)
NOVUS SYNONY MORUM ... THESAURUS LATINO-GERMANICUS (Frankfurt/M 1687, Frankfurt/M 1690, Frankfurt/M 1700)
NUCLEUS GRAMMATICAE SEU BREVE LATINO-BOHEMO-GERMANICUM DICTIONARIUM (Praha 1681)
QUADRILINGUE DICTIONARIUM ... BOHEMO-GERMANICO- ET LATINO-GRÆCUM (Praha 1683)
TEUTSCH-REDENDER VAUBAN (Mainz 1695, Mainz 1696)
TRÉSOR EN TROIS LANGUES ... THESAURUS TRILINGUIS ... NOMENCLATOR LATINO-GALLICO- GERMANICUS (Basel 1679)
VOCABULAIRE FRANÇOIS ET ALLEMAND (Strasbourg 1682)
VOCABULAIRE FRANÇOIS-LATIN-ALLEMAND (n.p. 1650 ?)
VOCABULARIUM GERMANICO-LATINUM (Augsburg 1683)
VOCABULARIUM LATINO-GALLICO-GERMANICUM (Genève 1669, Basel 1675, Basel 1683)
VOCABULARIUM LATINO-GERMANICUM (Lüneburg 1682)
VOCABULARIUM TRILINGUE (Olomouc 1689)
VOCABULORUM LATINO-GERMANICO-GALLICUM CONGERIES (Wittenberg 1606, Hanau 1616)
VOKABULARZ POLNISCH UND DEUTSCH (*Kaliningrad? 1606)
WOKABULÁR ... VOCABULARIUM TRILINGUE (Olomouc 1636)

Thomas Szende

## Problems of Exemplification in Bilingual Dictionaries

1	Lexicographer and Syntactician	10	Collocations
2	Example and Functions	11	Problem with the Host Headword
3	Example and Listed Equivalents	12	Example and Lexical Functions
4	Example and Non-Listed Equivalents	13	Cited Example versus Coined Example
5	Example and Non-Equivalence	14	Example and Cultural Aspects
6	Example and Actualization	15	Example and Neutralization
7	Example and "Vouloir-Dire"	16	Example and Ambiguities
8	Relations Ruled by Chance and by Tendency	17	Conclusions
9	Idioms	18	References

### 1 Lexicographer and Syntactician

We cannot assume that lexicographers simply deal with words while syntacticians are only interested in word combinations. Both disciplines can hardly be separated.

By its nature, a word only exists in a given environment and the way it functions is governed by countless restrictions, which are dictated by usage. In order to put words together into a significative sequence, one must follow specific rules, which constitute the basis of syntax and are unique to each language.

Within a "discourse", a term only acquires its "value" because it is confronted to what precedes it, to what follows it, or to both.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, any word which occurs in a given discourse takes place in either one of two types of context:

- a co-text (linguistic surrounding of the sentence) and
- a situation context (circumstances, time, place, interlocutors).

These two types of context play an essential role from the speaker's point of view, since they influence his choice of words and the necessary selections among the senses which are virtually possible.

1 "C'est dans le discours, actualisé en phrases, que la langue se forme et se configure. Là commence le langage. On pourrait dire, calquant une formule classique: nihil est in *lingua* quod non prius fuerit in *oratione*." (BENVENISTE, 1974: 131)

Although each headword consists of a word, one does not find isolated words within the article of a bilingual dictionary, but rather *segments of discourse* of diverse types (their number usually increases along with the frequency of the word), namely:

- syntagma (e.g. Adjective + Noun),
- syntactic patterns (e.g. Infinitive verb followed by its Object),
- reduced or neutralised sentences and sometimes even
- complete sentences<sup>2</sup>

which bring the lexicographer a step closer to syntax.

Language proceeds through utterances or fragments of discourse. We learn new words by hearing them in new sentences and situations. The meaning of a word can thus be considered to be the way in which it is used as an element of various sentences. Thus, remarks R. H. ROBINS (1973: 33), "la tâche du dictionnaire, c'est d'essayer de recenser d'une manière exhaustive pour chaque mot ses utilisations possibles, selon les types de phrases dans lesquels on peut le trouver".

According to G. MATORÉ (1968: 252-254), the role examples play in dictionaries is **threefold**, in that they:

1. give the reader sentences in which the meaning of the word is made clear by the context;
2. show the word in a certain environment;
3. remind the user of the existence of locutions and clichés.

Wondering which translexical units must be included in a bilingual dictionary, P. A. MESSELAAR (1990: 79) reaches the conclusion that four factors can be decisive:

1. the existence of interlinguistic oppositions which play a role in the production of synonymous utterances (for example, the presence of co-occurents which are logically unexpected but favoured by usage, etc.);
2. the identity of syntactic constructions in both languages, and the limitation in the number of combinations which are logically possible;
3. the fact that the headword cannot be translated in one of the ways which are mentioned in the article;
4. the probability of an incorrect translation.

For RAOUL BOCH (1989: 78-83), "la phraséologie exemplificatrice [...] constitue la véritable richesse d'un dictionnaire, qu'il soit monolingue ou bilingue".

In the following part of the article, we will attempt to clarify the rules to which the elaboration of this illustrative phraseology must obey within the framework of a bilingual dictionary.

2 As CH. BALLY (1950: 103-115) mentions, interjections are only employed as "monoremes" (i.e. sentences constituted of only one articulated term), which bear intonations which confirm their identity as sentences.

## 2 Example and Functions

It must be noted that

- every example given in a dictionary presents a particular, fragmented image of the linguistic reality;
- examples must necessarily fulfil a function of information;
- the information provided by the examples is of a variable nature.

Examples in a bilingual dictionary may present—implicitly or explicitly—difficulties which can be of a semantic, grammatical, stylistic, cultural, etc., nature: they may illustrate, on the one hand, specific *faits de langue*, and, on the other hand, establish the semantic field of a word, in order to bring out the greatest possible number of meanings.

Examples must be able to fulfil several functions at once.<sup>3</sup> They are *proofs* and also *models* of possible analogous utterances, sometimes simply having an illustrative role, sometimes a function of semantic *desambiguation*, or even fulfilling both functions simultaneously.

In some cases, the example has only one purpose: to show the reader how the word can be used in a sentence. In other cases, the example seeks to better define the meaning of the term, or is used to support an unexpected equivalent, which is nevertheless deemed essential.

In general, the presence of an example may be useful every time that the relationships between the source and target languages are asymmetrical:

*eladó lány* (literally: "daughter for sale") ⇒ "jeune fille à marier" (daughter of marriageable age)  
*él, mint Marci Hevesen* (literally: "to live like Marcel in Heves") ⇒ "être heureux comme un roi / comme un pape" (to be happy as a king / as a pope).

However, the existence of an unexpected symmetry between two languages may also warrant the presence of an example:

*dádmkosztűmben* ⇒ "en costume d'Adam" (in the altogether, in his birthday suit)  
*akasztott ember házában kötelet emleget* ⇒ "parler de corde dans la maison d'un pendu" (to bring up a sore point, to make a tactless remark).

All this makes the functional classification of examples rather complicated.

In order to illustrate the use of a word, some dictionaries almost systematically register the expressions in which a word is translated more or less easily into the target language, and eliminate, even if they are relatively common, word combinations which do not lend themselves to a straightforward translation (GAK, 1992).

Each time an example is used, the usefulness and the contemporaneity of the unit must be taken into account, rather than the easiness of the translation into the tar-

get language. Instead of eliminating the cases of idiosyncrasy, we should make a point of having them in the bilingual dictionary, even if that means providing translations which are more or less approximative, in order to show the reader the possible paths he could take, should a difficulty arise.

## 3 Example and Listed Equivalents

One of the principal purposes of the example is to provide complementary information concerning the use of the equivalents. The example shows that a change in the lexical or syntactic context leads to a different translation of the headword:

**ábrázol** (*transitive verb*): **kit/mit ábrázol a kép?** qui/que représente ce tableau? (whom/what does this painting portray?); **az író művészién ábrázolja alakjait** l'auteur campe ses personnages avec talent (the author vividly sketches his characters); **élethűen ábrázol** rendre de façon vivante (to render in a lively way)

**elmarad** (*intransitive verb*): **elmarad a koncert** le concert n'aura pas lieu (the concert will not be held); **mindig elmarad a többiektől** être toujours à la traîne (to always lag behind); **ne maradj el sokáig!** ne t'attarde pas!; ne rentre pas trop tard! (don't be late!)

As can be seen with the examples above, the context specifies in which senses the word is to be taken and, consequently, which is the word of the target language that will best convey a particular sense. Through examples, the lexicographer can emphasize the *dominant significant trait*, which is specific to each meaning.

An example is more or less useless if it merely repeats the equivalent. Nonetheless, the purpose of the example may be to confirm a particular equivalence by showing how it is used in concrete terms.

**alkalmazott I** (*adjective*) appliqué, -e (applied): **alkalmazott nyelvészet** linguistique appliquée (applied linguistics)

**alkalmazott II** (*noun*) employé, -e (employee): **alkalmazotként dolgozik** travailler comme employé (to work as an employee / to be an employee)

## 4 Example and Non-Listed Equivalents

Very often, examples are made up of lexical elements which are not shown as equivalents in the microstructure. Indeed, when they are used in a context, linguistic signs can acquire meanings which are impossible to guess by simply studying the meanings of the word out of its context.

In the following examples, only through their integration in a real message can the contextual equivalences be justified:

3 "... the constant need for economy often means that a given example must fulfil several functions at once" (COWIE, 1989: 57).

**átér I** (*intransitive verb*) parvenir de l'autre côté (to reach the other side)

**átér II** (*transitive verb*) entourer (to surround): **átér egy oktávot a zongorán** il peut plaquer un accord d'un octave (au piano) (he can strike a one-octave chord on the piano)

**egészen** (*adverb*) tout à fait; exactement (exactly): **egészen az anyja** c'est sa mère tout craché (he's his mother mother all over)

The translation of *átér* and *egészen* depends respectively on the syntagma *átér egy oktávot* and *egészen az anyja*, which they are a part of, and requires an equivalent which is entirely different from that which would logically be expected. Words acquire contextual senses which are completely unpredictable out of context.

It does happen that the purpose of examples is to "unload" the "equivalence section" of certain details which are nevertheless interesting to the reader. For instance, the lexicographer will warn the reader against incorrect translations and turns of phrases which do not correspond to the usage in the target language. In Hungarian, one would say:

*Hamupipőke cipellője* (literally: "Cinderella's shoe"), and not "pantoufle de vair" (glass slipper); *Ruhr-vidék* (literally: "Ruhr region"), and not "bassin de la Ruhr" (Ruhr basin); *trójai faló* (literally: "Trojan wooden horse"), and not "cheval de Troie" (Trojan horse); etc.

## 5 Example and Non-Equivalence

Frequently, no equivalent is given for the headword in the section before the examples. As a matter of fact, every time that the headword or one of its meanings cannot be rendered by an equivalent, the lexicographer has the option of providing either a gloss (explanatory equivalent) or some examples. For instance, we will use examples in the case of lexical units which are difficult to delimit,<sup>4</sup> and which cannot be expressed through the use of isolated words:

**addigi** (*adjective*) **addigi viselkedése** le comportement qu'il avait eu jusque-là (the behaviour he had shown up to that point); **az egész addigi munkám kárba veszett** tout le travail que j'avais fait a été ruiné (all the work I had done had been ruined)

**agyba-főbe** (*adverb*) **agyba-főbe ver vkit** rouer qn de coups (to give sb a thrashing, to beat sb black and blue); **assomer qn** (to knock sb out); **agyba-főbe dicsér vkit/vmit** porter qn/qc aux nues (to praise sb to the skies); **adulter** (to adulter)

In the same vein, the lexicographer will provide examples in those cases where words or grammatical morphemes are nearly impossible to translate because of differences which exist between the linguistic structures of the source and the target languages:

4 (OXFORD) ADVANCED LEARNER'S DICTIONARY OF CURRENT ENGLISH (O.A.L.D.) calls "heavy-duty words" the words which are difficult to delimit and which require many examples, such as "hand", "foot", "put", "set".

**-e** (*interrogative particle*): **elhozta-e?** tu l'as apporté? (did you bring it?), **szorgalmas-e a fiad?** est-ce que ton fils travaille bien? (does your son work well); **nem tudom, hogy eljön-e?** je ne sais pas s'il viendra (I don't know whether he will come)

**be-** (*verbal prefix*): **bedugja a fejét az ablakon** passer la tête par la fenêtre (to stick one's head through the window); **bedugja a kezét a zsebébe** fourrer ses mains dans ses poches (to shove one's hands in one's pockets); **bedugja a fülét** se boucher les oreilles (to put one's fingers in one's ears); **az öreget bedugták egy szeretetotthonba** on a collé le vieux à l'hospice (they put the old man in a home)

The fact that the lexicographer provides some examples about the grammatical words demonstrates the importance he gives to a particular grammatical category. However, the purpose of these examples is essentially to demonstrate the incompatibility of the grammatical elements of the two languages, and mostly to indicate their conditions of integration in the discourse.

## 6 Example and Actualization

Verbs, nouns, adjectives, etc. are very often graphical or phonic units which may not bear any sense in and of themselves.

The well-known idea according to which a verb is inseparable from its subject and its essential objects may be extended to all grammatical categories: a word can only be properly described within a well defined structure.

By including diverse elements such as a subject, an object, a time, a space, etc. the example is used to show the grammatical and pragmatic *potentialities* of the word.

The semantic and stylistic identity of the word is not always sufficient to use a translation exactly as it is proposed. A translation which should theoretically be applicable to an unlimited number of situations might have to be adapted for a given context due to syntactic reasons:

**arc** (*noun*) visage; face; physionomie (face; physiognomy): **vkinek az arcába vág** frapper qn en plein visage (to hit sb in the face); **vkinek az arcába vág vmit** jeter qc à la figure de qn (to throw sth in sb's face)

**annál** (*pronoun*): **mindig annál a fánál játszik** il joue toujours auprès de cet arbre-là (he plays near that tree); **mindig annál a fánál játszik, amelyik a kert végében áll** il joue toujours auprès de l'arbre qui se trouve au fond du jardin (he always plays near that tree at the back of the garden)

The context gives the word a certain degree of actualization; put differently, it situates the word in time and space, it quantifies it and determines its degree of generality.

An adjective is actualized by the substantives that surround it. In order to describe the adjectives, we will examine the substantives which usually accompany them:

**balkezes** (*adjective*): **balkezes játékos** joueur gaucher (left-handed player, left-hander); **balkezes ütés** coup (donné) de la main gauche (left-handed shot); **balkezes olló** ciseaux pour gauchers (left-handed scissors); etc.

**édes** (*adjective*): **édes bor** vin doux/moelleux (sweet wine); **édes hazánk** notre chère patrie (our beloved homeland); **édes a blúzod** il est mignon, ton chemisier (this is such a pretty blouse); etc.

In the same way, a verb is actualized by the fact that it reveals something about a given subject. If we want to study verbs, we will pay special attention to their subjects, as well as their objects, etc.

The unit used for the exemplification in the following examples is not constituted of the simple verb, but of a group subject/verb/essential objects:

**elintéz** (*transitive verb*): **elintéztem, hogy felvegyék az iskolába** je suis intervenu pour qu'il soit admis à l'école (I intervened so that he would be admitted into school); **elintézte a bevásárlást** il a fait les courses (he ran some errands); **jól elintézték** ils lui ont fait sa fête (they bashed him up), etc.

**boldogul** (*intransitive verb*): **jól boldogul a pályáján** il réussit dans sa carrière (he is successful in his career); **nehezen boldogul a feladattal** il a du mal à faire son travail (he has a hard time doing his work); **sehogy sem boldogul a fiával** il n'est arrivé à rien avec son fils (he did not manage to do anything with his son); etc.

Although the grammatical category of the headword is given at the beginning of the article, the examples allow us to clarify the standard syntactic function(s) of this category.

So, for a noun, the examples are usually expected to yield groups such as Adj + N / N + V / V + N: etc. The article *adó* "impôt"; "contribution"; "taxe" (tax) will yield examples of syntagma in which the word is qualified:

*egyenes adó* ⇒ "impôt direct"; "contribution directe" (direct tax)  
*forgalmi adó* ⇒ "taxe à la valeur ajoutée" (value added tax)  
*örökösödési adó* ⇒ "droits de succession" (succession duty)

and verbs of which the noun *adó* is usually an object:

*adót fizet vmi után* ⇒ "payer un impôt/une taxe sur qc" (to pay taxes on sth)  
*adót vet ki vkire* ⇒ "imposer qn; soumettre qn à l'impôt" (to tax sb)  
*vmi adó alá esik* ⇒ "être imposable" (to be taxable)

At the root of this process lies the assumption that two words which have different meanings also differ to a certain degree in their distribution, that is to say that to each syntactic difference may correspond an important semantic difference.

The following sentences clearly show that any modification in the order of the words may bring some additional information:

*tegnap elutazott Skóciába* ⇒ "hier, il est parti pour l'Écosse" (yesterday, he left for Scotland)  
*tegnap utazott el Skóciába* ⇒ "c'est hier qu'il est parti pour l'Écosse" (it was yesterday that he left for Scotland)  
*Skóciába utazott el tegnap* ⇒ "c'est en Écosse qu'il est parti hier" (it was for Scotland that he left yesterday).

## 7 Example and "Vouloir-Dire"

Examples in a bilingual dictionary answer the question: "If I have an idea to express, which word should I or could I use in the target language to do it?"

The speaker has a "vouloir-dire", an intention in mind, which is of a conceptual nature, and which he will be able to express by respecting the constraints of the language, albeit with more or less freedom of choice. This freedom of choice can be:

- paradigmatic (the abstract milieu of the relations of sense and form among words) and
- syntagmatic (the real and observable milieu of constructions and combinations).

Thus, the lexicographer must make sure that the lexical elements which exist in the real environment of the object in question figure in the article. He must also make sure to draw up as exhaustive as possible a list of the phrases which are justified by the situation of communication. The role of the examples will be to demonstrate the most common syntactic constructions as well as the most usual semantic associations.

When one thinks of a horse, one thinks less about the "large solid-hoofed herbivorous mammal (*Equus caballus*, family Equidae, the horse family) domesticated by man since a prehistoric period and used as a beast of burden, a draft animal, or for riding" (dictionary definition) than one does about the horse's mane, its hooves, and all the ingredients which belong to its equine character. As J.-B. GRIZE (1990) said, to each logico-discursive object is attached a "faisceau d'objet" (object network) made up of "propriétés" (properties), relations, and "schèmes d'action" (schemes of action); thus, in the network of the *rose*, there are properties like being red, having thorns, etc., relations like *être plus belle que* (to be more beautiful than), *être fraîche comme une rose* (to be fresh as a daisy), and schemes of action like *se faner* (to wilt), *se cultiver* (to cultivate), etc.

Some words have, by the nature of their sememe, affinities with some conceptual cases. On that subject, let us recall that the conceptual case is of a logical nature, as opposed to the linguistic case, which is the solution given by a natural language to the manifestation of the conceptual case.<sup>5</sup>

As B. POTTIER (1985: 119) mentions, it would be possible to say that, in the framework of our civilisation, a "clé" (key) has a predisposition to work as an "instrumentalis": "ouvrir quelque chose avec une clé" (to open something with a key). It is possible to say, in the same way, that professions will work as an "essivus": "en tant que ministre" (as a minister), "en tant que médecin" (as a doctor), etc.

It is important to note that any given word can only be used within certain limits, and that these limits may have a different scope. For the most part, vocabulary is made

5 Compared to other languages, like Latin (six), Russian (six) or German (four), Hungarian has a very high number of cases and inflexions (twenty-seven). The Hungarian "declension" is made up of a disparate ensemble of inflexions which are stuck to the word and which express relations in time and in space, as well as diverse modes. The twenty-seven cases of Hungarian correspond to twenty-seven types of suffixes used in the formation of adverbial phrases.



up of words which have a *limited range* and which can only be used in association with a reduced number of other words.

There are some units, of various length, whose components cannot be replaced or recombined, according to the current linguistic rules. In some cases, the word has lost all autonomy and can only be used in one construction. In French, the adjective *coi*, *coite* is an inseparable element of the segments of discourse which have it as a component (*rester coi*, *se tenir coi* ⇒ to remain silent), and cannot, as a consequence, be part of other Noun + Adjective constructions (\* *un enfant coi*, \* *une maison coite* ⇒ a silent child, a silent house). In the same way, in Hungarian, the adjective *árgus* is only used in the expression *árgus szemmel/szemekkel* "avec une vigilance suspicieuse" (with a suspicious vigilance), while *amondo* is necessarily followed by a verbal form: *amondó vagyok / volnék* "je suis/je serais d'avis que" (I think that).

The affinities among the words create a phenomenon of co-occurrence for some words which lead to some preferential groupings on the syntagmatic chain of discourse. As we say in lexicology, words are attracted to each other like magnets.

The association of several significative units is a phenomenon common to all languages, one that is essential to the functioning of languages. The syntagma which have been fixed by usage are a source of difficulty for anyone who tries to express themselves in a foreign language. It would be impossible to use the vocabulary of a language without any prior knowledge of these combinations, which constitute the greatest part of phraseology. Their knowledge is thus essential for mastering the foreign language, especially once a certain degree of fluency is reached. But these syntactico-semantic affinities, that is to say the way in which these words are narrowly connected semantically within a syntactic structure, are of interest not only to those learning the language, but also to translators, who need to know just how much freedom, from a syntactic and semantic point of view, they have when they use a given word.

## 8 Relations Ruled by Chance and by Tendency

Words which are almost never isolated<sup>6</sup> and which are connected to other words in a context, establish among themselves relations ruled by chance or by tendency.

From the exemplification point of view, the relations which we find most interesting are not those ruled by chance. Free combinations such as

6 "Il est capital de bien saisir que les mots isolés sont aux énoncés en contexte ce que les notes sur les portées sont aux sonorités produites par les instruments de musique. Bien que la musique existe sur les partitions, elle ne "vit" réellement que sous sa forme acoustique. De même, les mots ne vivent vraiment que dans des énoncés destinés à transmettre un message." (DELISLE, 1993 : 131)

*a gonoszok kettéfűrészelték az ajtót* ⇒ "les méchants ont scié la porte en deux" (the bad guys sawed the door in two)  
*ezeket az ajtókat Bécsben vettük* ⇒ "ces portes-là, on les a achetées à Vienne" (we bought these doors in Vienna)

taken from our data bank (which is constituted of segments of modern Hungarian discourse) have no reason to appear under the *ajtó* (door) article of a bilingual dictionary. The sentence *a bárány szaladgál a réten* "l'agneau court dans les prés" (the sheep runs in the meadows) would be a bad example, because the verb *szaladgál* and the object *réten* "dans les prés" (in the meadows) could be applied to a series of other situations. The example must bring out *specific characteristics* and *typical actions* :

*az ajtó az udvarra nyílik* ⇒ "cette porte donne sur la cour" (this door opens onto the backyard);  
*rácsapja vkire az ajtót* ⇒ "claquer la porte au nez de qn" (to slam the door in sb's face);  
*a bárány béget* ⇒ "l'agneau bêle" (the lamb bleats); etc.

These examples may be very useful to any Hungarian-speaking person trying to write in French, but also to any French reader who is interested in knowing the most common uses and associations linked to a given word.

Generally, it is the cohesion of the component elements and the degree of autonomy which they keep in the new unit which are used as a classification criterium in a fixed expression.

By taking a closer look at them, we see that there is a gradation which goes from the most fixed to the least fixed : by always being associated with the designation of a referent which is frequently evoked, certain sequences of words progressively become binded more closely than others. The combination of words thus varies between two extremes :

- the association falls apart as soon as it is formed, and the words which were part of it recover their ability to get into new associations ;
- the words are so consistently used together that they eventually lose all autonomy, cannot be separated, and only make sense when taken altogether.

Between these two extremes, there is a multitude of intermediary cases. S. Karoly (1970) distinguishes five types of phraseological units (*frazeológiai egység*) in Hungarian :

1. simple clichés :  
*zöld mező* ⇒ "verte prairie" (green meadow)  
*baráti udvözléssel* ⇒ "amicalement vôtre" (sincerely yours)
2. locutions which have a certain degree of semantic and structural fixation :  
*fát vág* ⇒ "couper du bois" (to chop wood)  
*iskolába jár* ⇒ "aller à l'école" (to go to school)
3. phrasemes :  
*lépésről lépésre* ⇒ "pas à pas" (step by step)  
*esküdt ellenség* ⇒ "ennemi juré" (sworn enemy)



## 4. idioms

- kezbe venni a dolgot* ⇒ "prendre les choses en main" (to take things in hand)  
*ránvismja a belyegét vmire* ⇒ "marquer qc de son empreinte" (to leave one's print on sth)  
 5. phrasemes and idioms whose motivation has disappeared  
*csütörtököt mond* (literally: "to say Thursday") ⇒ "to be in a lull" (to break down)  
*holnapután kiskeddén* (literally: "the day after tomorrow, the day of the little Tuesday") ⇒ "à la saint-glinglin" (when hell freezes over)

The following is how P. THOIRON and H. BÉJOINT (1989: 664) summarize the various relations among the component elements of preferential groupings:

1. "idiotismes": groupings whose meaning cannot be guessed by looking at the sum of the elements composing them. They are locutions such as *tirer son chapeau* (to take off one's hat to sb; literally: "to pull one's hat");
2. "quasi-idiotismes": groupings whose meaning can partially be guessed by looking at the sum of the elements composing them, such as *sabler le champagne* (to drink champagne; literally: "to sand the champagne");
3. groupings whose meaning can be guessed by looking at the elements composing them, such as *mesurer une température* (to measure a temperature).

This classification is similar to that of COWIE's (1983: XII–XIII), which distinguishes between: "Pure idioms", "Figurative idioms", "Restricted collocations" and "Open collocations".

For these expressions, the freedom in syntactic construction is reduced one way or another, but this reduction can reach any one of various degrees and will change from one expression to the next.

With "idiotismes", if one element is taken away, it creates an imbalance for the other element; with "quasi-idiotismes", one of the elements keeps its normal lexical meaning (*champagne*, in *sabler le champagne*). In the third type of groupings, each component keeps its original meaning: the global meaning of the expression is the sum of all the components.

## 9 Idioms

In the French terminology, there is a distinction between "idiotisme" and "expression idiomatique". We feel that it is simply a difference of point of view. It seems that the term "idiotisme" emphasizes the fact that a certain construction is specific to a language and does not correspond to any syntactic construction in other languages, whereas "expression idiomatique" emphasizes the necessity to take such an expression globally in order to understand its meaning.

Obviously, it is important to include in the bilingual dictionary as many idioms (expressive, evocative and striking turns of phrases) which are in usage in the contem-

porary language as possible. As it is the case with all natural languages, Hungarian is full of fixed formulas and of locutions which are full of imagery.

Idioms also have to be considered as constructions with an idiosyncratic meaning. Thus, in a perspective of contrasts between the languages, idioms may lead to a faulty analytical decoding by someone whose command of the language is inadequate, that is to say someone who is a normal user of bilingual dictionaries. Each element would then be interpreted as having its own semantic meaning. Idioms are generally presented together within sub-entries (in our dictionary, they are introduced by a diamond and appear after the "non-idiomatic" combinations).

In reality, there should be no difference in the way non-idiomatic examples, idioms and words are treated, because the analysis of the meanings must be done on the basis of semantic units, and not grammatical units. Thus, idioms can be given usage markers:

- hű az áldóját!* (regional) ⇒ "flûte!"; "zut!" (darn!)  
*mi az úbra?* (informal) ⇒ "quoi de neuf?" (what's new?)  
*átszenderül a másvilágra / az örökkévalóságba* (literary) ⇒ *partir paisiblement pour un monde meilleur / pour l'autre monde* (to depart for the great beyond)

Idioms are usually recorded in a fairly systematic fashion in bilingual dictionaries. Furthermore, there are now a great number of books listing the most characteristic idiomatic expressions between the most diverse pairs of languages, even between French and Hungarian (BÁRDOSI: 1995).

## 10 Collocations

We pay closer attention to those expressions which are not as fixed, stereotypical, socialized, those which are generally called "collocations".<sup>7</sup> Through their frequent use, those forms and expressions have become so commonplace that they risk turning into real "clichés".

- tisztes aggastyán* ⇒ "vénérable vieillard" (venerable old man)  
*megrögzött alkoholista* ⇒ "alcoolique invétéré" (inveterate alcoholic); etc.

Indeed, such a high degree of interdependence may exist among words which tend to be used jointly in the discourse that it seems reasonable to describe their collocability (the possibilities of collocation) as part of their meaning. Collocations are the type of elements which are spontaneously mastered by native speakers, while the foreign speaker must learn them as if they were words (FIRTH, 1957: 197).

<sup>7</sup> "Collocations are affinitive, bipartite lexical combinations which, in terms of the attractive force between their two component parts, can be situated between free combinations and idioms..." (COP, 1991: 2275)

The difficulties that arise in learning and translating these groupings with a variable degree of fixation, reveals their importance for languages. One cannot learn a language simply by learning its grammatical rules, its words and idioms, but must learn all the other "pre-coded" elements of the discourse.<sup>8</sup> In order to master a language, it is essential to learn the "combination rules" which lead to the automatic production of collocations based on the situation, which come naturally to native speakers.

The inclusion of collocations in the dictionary allows us to show which adjective works best with a given substantive, which adverb works best with a given verb, etc. that is to say the *lexical co-occurrence*. The lexical attraction is, in a way, the selection of one term by another. This selection principle of a term by another term may affect the relations between:

- a substantive and a verb:  
SUBSTANTIVAL BASE + VERBAL COLLOCATE  
e.g.: *ellenállást kifejti* ⇒ "opposer une résistance" (to put up a resistance)
- a substantive and an adjective:  
SUBSTANTIVAL BASE + ADJECTIVAL COLLOCATE  
e.g.: *aljas rágalom* ⇒ "calomnie odieuse" (odious slander)
- a verb and an adverb:  
VERBAL BASE + ADVERBIAL COLLOCATE  
e.g.: *elismerően nyilatkozik vkaról* ⇒ "parler de qn en termes élogieux" (to speak very highly of sb)
- an adjective and an adverb:  
ADJECTIVAL BASE + ADVERBIAL COLLOCATE  
e.g.: *súlyosan beteg* ⇒ "gravement malade" (seriously ill)

The terms thus selected may vary from one language to the other, depending on their extension. In Hungarian, the same adverb *súlyosan* is used to express both *gravement* (*malade*) (seriously ill) and *grièvement* (*blessé*) (seriously injured); also, as opposed to the Frenchman who *étanche sa soif* and *assouvit sa faim*, the Hungarian only uses the verb *csillapít* to appease both his urge to eat and drink.

Without being actual idioms, these groups of words are characterized by the fact that they seem so natural to the native speaker.<sup>9</sup> It would be normal for bilingual dictionaries to provide them systematically and in such a way that they would easily be found.

## 11 Problem with the Host Headword

Collocations are poorly, if not hardly ever, listed in monolingual dictionaries, and the same flaw is found in bilingual dictionaries. If we take a very commonplace Hungarian example: *döntést hoz* "prendre une décision" (to make a decision), many dictionaries, if they mention syntagmatics at all, put this article under the verbal component "*hoz*". This is very natural, since one has to consider the possible combinations in order to give the meanings of such verbs as *döntést hoz: áldozatot hoz* "faire un sacrifice" (to make a sacrifice), *szerecsét hoz* "porter bonheur" (to bring luck), *világra hoz* "mettre au monde" (to give birth), etc., which are highly unpredictable if one considers the general meaning of the verb, which is roughly "to bring". Only, for this to be useful to someone who is trying to produce a text, these collocations have to be listed under the articles *döntés* "décision", *áldozat* "sacrifice", *szerecsse* "bonheur", *világ* "monde" as well, because the foreigner has a difficult time putting the word in context, even though that word may seem like an easy one.

On the French side, if one looks, for example, for a verb that goes with the substantive *inflation* (*juguler l'inflation*, *ramener l'inflation à*, *enregistrer une inflation de*, etc.), or an intensifier that goes with the substantive *abandon* (*abandon total*, *abandon complet*, *abandon pur et simple*, etc.), the reader will look for them in vain in *Le Petit Robert* which is yet, the best monolingual dictionary of contemporary French.

When the collocations are nonetheless listed in dictionaries, they are listed in the entries of any word that makes them up.

If a collocation appears in a single entry rather than in the two or three entries which make it up, a lot of space can be saved. However, it is impossible to know where the reader will look up the various combinations. Like P. BOGAARDS (1990), we wonder if there is a possible systematicity in the behaviour of dictionary users. According to his research, it appears that this behaviour is only partially predictable.

For any type of expression, the lexicographer may find valid reasons to decide one way or another. But, while we await the electronic versions which might ensure better access to those lexical units which are listed by the dictionaries, the groupings of words which occur frequently, whether they are modifiable or unmodifiable, and which are constituted, by definition, of more than one word, should appear under several headings in lexicographical works.

Thus, for the convenience of the reader, idioms could appear under several components (except for grammatical words, obviously), each time in the phraseological zone of their section. Also, collocations could be repeated under the base-word entry and under the collocate-word<sup>10</sup> entry, while taking into account, of course, editorial constraints.

8 "There is no doubt that natural language has a certain block character. Words tend to occur in the same clusters again and again." (*A Dictionary of English Collocations*, 1994: IX)

9 "Ce qui est au bout de la langue ou qui vient au bout de la plume, ce n'est pas le mot tout seul, c'est une certaine quantité de mémoire. Un mot n'arrive jamais nu. Appendus à lui et invisibles, tous les autres collent à lui à divers degrés. Nous n'avons dans la tête que des agglutinations... nées du moirage de ces habitudes de locutions héritées." (LAFON et alii, 1992: 68)

10 "We thus see that the collocations should ideally be accessible under both base and collocator entries." (COP, 1991: 2777)

It is true that lexicographers can decide to list a fixed or semi-fixed expression following the idea of the strongest semantic attraction, i.e. placing the expression under the headword which enjoys the strongest semantic attraction. However, this is a concept which very few dictionary users are aware of, and therefore it has very little usefulness.

However, the redundancy thus created can be reduced. For example, to avoid the repetition of a lexical co-occurrence under various grammatical forms, the derived forms (such as *aljas rágalmazó* "calomniateur odieux") may not be listed when the word at the source of the derivation (*rágalom* "calomnie") appears as the base-word of the collocation.

## 12 Example and Lexical Functions

As I MEL'ČUK (1984, 1988), we can note that as a general rule, bilingual dictionaries simply seek to reunite equivalents, (i.e. to translate words by others) and do not seem to be overly concerned with the limitations of the equivalents they suggest.

In our methodology, we refer to the EXPLANATORY-COMBINATORIAL DICTIONARY (ECD) (MEL'ČUK et alii, 1984, 1989, 1993) which introduces ways to compensate these shortcomings, although we do not attempt by any means to copy its formalism and exhaustiveness. The ECD is not meant for the casual user, but some of its principles could be adapted for a bilingual dictionary.

We think that a bilingual dictionary, just like a monolingual one, must provide usual lexical co-occurrences whose combinatory patterns are determined neither by their semantics nor their syntactic properties.

The method of analysis developed by I. MEL'ČUK and his collaborators at the Université de Montréal represents, in our opinion, the most advanced attempt to structure the collocations of a given language according to a set of criteria which are rigorously mechanical yet functional. This conception confirms once again that, in order to express themselves, native speakers of any language make choices within a combinatory pattern which is more or less fixed in the structure of the language.

We commonly say

*süket, mint az ágyú* (literally: "to be deaf as a canon") ⇒ *sourd comme un pot* (to be as deaf as a post) and

*alszik, mint a tej* (literally: "to sleep like the milk") ⇒ *dormir comme un loir* (to sleep like a log),

and we cannot interchange these expressions:

\**süket, mint a tej* ("to be deaf as the milk") or

\**alszik, mint az ágyú* ("to sleep like a canon")

Nothing in the semantics nor in the syntax forces the user to make this choice; the corresponding expressions are not predictable at all and must be learned as units.

To specify systematically the frequent lexical co-occurrences comes down to listing the characteristic expressions which are associated with the word and might be expected to arise at a certain moment to express a given idea.

To give information about the headword by means of co-occurrent terms comes down to illustrating the way in which the headword behaves around other lexical elements, and notably with the terms which are closely associated with it. By doing this, the lexicographer provides the reader with words which are usually adjacent in the discourse.

Here are the lexical functions (LF) which we systematically use in the elaboration of our bilingual dictionary. For MEL'ČUK, a LF is a function which associates a group of lexical units to a lexical unit (called "argument" of the function). For the numbering of the functions, we used the classification proposed by MEL'ČUK, CLAS and POLGUÈRE (1995: 125–152).

- LF 3: [Anti]—antonym  
[Anti] *elkötelezett* "engagé" (committed) ⇒ *el nem kötelezett* "non-engagé" (non committed)  
[Anti] *megértés* "compréhension" (understanding) ⇒ *meg nem értés* "incompréhension" (lack of understanding)
- LF 4: [Contr]—contrastive  
[Contr] *ég* "ciel" (sky) ⇒ *föld* "terre" (earth)  
[Contr] *hegy* "montagne" (mountain) ⇒ *völgy* "vallée" (valley)
- LF 5: [Epi]—current empty epithet  
[Epi] *tragédia* "tragédie" (tragedy) ⇒ *megdöbbentő* "cruelle" (cruel)  
[Epi] *nyertes* "gagnant" (winner) ⇒ *boldog* "heureux" (lucky)
- LF 11: [Sing]  
[Sing] *szőlő* "raisin" (grape) ⇒ *szem* "grain" (seed)  
[Sing] *víz* "eau" (water) ⇒ *csepp* "goutte" (drop)
- LF 12: [Mult]  
[Mult] *méh* "abeille" (bee) ⇒ *raj* "essaim" (swarm)  
[Mult] *barbár* "barbare" (barbarian) ⇒ *horda* "horde" (horde)
- LF 13: [Cap]  
[Cap] *egyetem* "université" (university) ⇒ *rektor* "président" (rector)  
[Cap] *hajó* "avion" (plane) ⇒ *kapitány* "capitaine" (captain)
- LF 16: [Centr]  
[LocinCentr] *szív* "coeur" (heart) ⇒ *szíve mélyén* "dans le fond de son coeur" (in his/her heart)  
[LocinCentr] *éjszaka* "nuit" (night) ⇒ *(kellős) közepén* (au coeur de) (in the middle of)

For [Loc], see LF 30 below.

- LF 21: [Magn]—"very"; "intense[ly]"  
[Magn] *vágy* "désir" (desire) ⇒ *ellenállhatatlan* "ardent" (burning)  
[Magn] *iszik* "boire" (to drink) ⇒ *mint a hejékötő* "comme un trou" (to drink like a fish)
- LF 22–23: [Plus], [Minus] respectively "more" or "less"; [Plus] and [Minus] are mostly used in complex LFs, combined with [Pred] and a phasal verb.

[**IndicepPredPlus**] *láz* "fièvre" (fever) ⇒ *felmegy* "augmenter" (to rise)  
 [**IndicepPredPlus**] *láz* "fièvre" (fever) ⇒ *lemegy* "baisser", "diminuer" (to fall)

For [**Incep**], see FL 39 below; [**Pred**] which only appears in combinations with other FLs corresponding to a verb meaning "to be".

- LF 24: [**Ver**]—"as it should be"; "meeting intended requirements"  
 [**Ver**] *siker* "succès" (success) ⇒ *megérdemelt* "bien mérité" (well deserved)  
 [**Ver**] *félelem* "peur" (fear) ⇒ *jogos* "justifiée" (founded)
- LF 25: [**Bon**] The LF [**Bon**] is often used in conjunction with the LF [**Anti**], to show the speaker's disapprobation.  
 [**Bon**] *tanács* "conseils" (advice) ⇒ *értékes* "précieux" (invaluable)  
 [**Bon**] *választás* "choix" (choice) ⇒ *szerencsés* "heureux" (good)  
 [**AntiBon**] *kritika* "critique" (criticism) ⇒ *éles hangú* "virulente" (harsh)
- LF 26: [**Pejor**] Expresses the meaning "MinusBon", "worse", and is used mostly in complex LFs.  
 [**IncepPredPejor**] *helyzet* "situation" (situation) ⇒ *rosszabbodik* "s'aggraver" (to worsen)  
 [**IncepPredPejor**] *idő* "temps" (weather) ⇒ *romlik* "se gâter" (to change for the worse)
- LF 27: [**Pos**] By its nature, it can easily be combined with [**Anti**].  
 [**Pos**] *vélemény* "avis" (review) ⇒ *kedvező* "favorable" (positive)  
 [**AntiPos**] *vélemény* "avis" (review) ⇒ *kedvezőtlen* "défavorable" (negative)
- LF 28: Actancial adverbial semantic derivations [**Adv**]  
 [**Adv**] *öröm* "joie" (joy) ⇒ *örömmel* "avec joie" (joyfully)  
 [**Adv**] *harag* "colère" (anger) ⇒ *haraggal* "avec colère" (angrily)
- LF 29: [**Instr**]—"by means of"  
 [**Instr**] *kéz* "main" (hand) ⇒ *kézzel* "avec la main" (with the hand; by hand)  
 [**Instr**] *telefon* "téléphone" (telephone) ⇒ *telefonon* "par téléphone" (by telephone)
- LF 30: [**Loc**] Expresses the meaning "to be in spatially or temporally" [= **Loc<sub>in</sub>**], "moving from" [= **Loc<sub>ab</sub>**] or "moving to end up in" [= **Loc<sub>ad</sub>**].  
 [**Loc<sub>in</sub>**] *apály* "marée basse" (low tide) ⇒ *apálykor* "à marée basse" (at low tide)  
 [**Loc<sub>ab</sub>**] *ókor* "Antiquité" (Antiquity) ⇒ *az ókortól kezdve* "depuis l'Antiquité" (since Antiquity)  
 [**Loc<sub>ad</sub>**] *vidék* "campagne" (countryside) ⇒ *vidékre* "à la campagne" (in the countryside)
- LF 33–35: Support verbs [**Oper**, **Func**, **Labor**] These are verbs which are semantically empty (or emptied in the context of their key-word). [**Func<sub>0</sub>**] does not have an object: this LF represents absolute intransitive verbs whose meaning is approximately "to take place".  
 [**Oper<sub>1</sub>**] *lista* "liste" (list) ⇒ *listát készít* "dresser" (to make up)  
 [**Oper<sub>2</sub>**] *lista* "liste" (list) ⇒ *a listán szerepel* "figurer sur la liste" (to appear on the list)  
 [**Func<sub>0</sub>**] *tanácskozás* "réunion" (meeting) ⇒ *zajlik* "être en cours" (to be in progress)  
 [**Func<sub>1</sub>**] *felelősség* "responsabilité" (responsibility) ⇒ *vkire hárul* "incombe à qn" (is incumbent upon sb)  
 [**Func<sub>2</sub>**] *lista* "liste" (list) ⇒ *vmi tartalmaz* "comprend qc" (includes sth)  
 [**Labor<sub>1,2</sub>**] *becs* "estime" (respect) ⇒ *becsben tart vkit* "tenir qn en estime" (to have a lot of respect for)  
 [**Labor<sub>1,2</sub>**] *elemzés* "analyse" (analysis) ⇒ *elemzésnek vet alá vmit* "soumettre qch à une analyse" (to subject sth to an analysis)
- LF 36–38: Fulfillment verbs [**Real**], [**Fact**], [**Labreal**]. These LFs are semantically full verbs, however their syntax is identical to that of LFs [**Oper**, **Func**, **Labor**], so that [**Real**] corresponds to [**Oper**], [**Fact**] to [**Func**] and [**Labreal**] to [**Labor**]. Thus, [**Real**] takes its

keyword as its Direct Object, [**Fact**] as its Grammatical Subject, and [**Labreal**] as its Indirect Object.

[**Real<sub>1</sub>**] *csapda* "piège" (trap) ⇒ *csapdát állít* "tendre un piège" (to set a trap)

[**Real<sub>1</sub>**] *bírság* "amende" (fine) ⇒ *bírságot szab ki vkire* "infliger une amende à qn" (to impose a fine on sb)

[**Real<sub>2</sub>**] *büntetés* "peine" (sentence) ⇒ *büntetését tölti* "purger sa peine" (to serve one's sentence)

[**Real<sub>2</sub>**] *csapda* "piège" (trap) ⇒ *belesik a csapdába* "tomber dans le piège" (to fall into a trap)

[**Fact<sub>0</sub>**] *gyanú* "suspicion" (suspicion) ⇒ *beigazolódik* "se confirmer" (to turn out to be true)

[**Labreal<sub>1,2</sub>**] *emlék* "mémoire" (memory) ⇒ *emlékében megőriz* "conserver qc en mémoire" (to keep in one's mind)

LF 39–41: Phasal verbs [**Incep**, **Fin**, **Cont**] These LFs are semantically full verbs which have the following meanings: [**Incep**] = "to begin doing sth"; [**Fin**] = "to stop doing sth"; [**Cont**] = "to keep on doing sth".

[**IncepOper<sub>1</sub>**] *tűz* "feu" (fire) ⇒ *tűzet nyit* "ouvrir le feu" (to open fire)

[**IncepFunc<sub>0</sub>**] *vihar* "orage" (storm) ⇒ *kerekedik* "éclater" (to hit)

[**FinOper<sub>1,2</sub>**] *jelentőség* "importance" (importance) ⇒ *elveszít jelentőségét* "perdre son importance" (to lose one's importance)

[**ContOper<sub>1</sub>**] *befolyás* "influence" (influence) ⇒ *megőrzi befolyását* "garder son influence" (to maintain one's influence)

LF 50: [**Son**]—verb meaning "to emit characteristic sound"

[**Son**] *madár* "oiseau" (bird) ⇒ *csicsereg* "gazouiller" (to chirp)

[**Son**] *ágyú* "canon" (canon) ⇒ *dörög* "gronder" (to rumble)

This system does not cover all lexical co-occurrences. There exist, in every language, countless semi-fixed locutions which cannot be accounted for with the standard LFs. It is important to note that MEL'ČUK makes a distinction between the standard LFs and the non-standard LFs, which would be especially typical for words which are strongly marked culturally (names of food, clothes, political or religious activities, etc.)

We do not believe that it is possible to adopt without any restriction the whole model proposed by MEL'ČUK. However, thanks to a methodical utilisation of the functions listed above, we feel that we let shine through the articles of our dictionary some very important mechanisms by which both linguistic systems manage to transform a same word into a multitude of other words which are considered to be equivalent, and this way, we believe there is less of a need for the non-native speakers to rely solely on their intuition.

The application of MEL'ČUK's principles will have allowed us to be infinitely more explicit than previous Hungarian-French dictionaries had been—notably those of AURÉLIEN SAUVAGEOT (1937) and SÁNDOR ECKHARDT (1958)—as far as the lexical combination of words is concerned.

### 13 Cited Example versus Coined Example

The examples that we fabricate ourselves are the source of at least two problems: that of their acceptability, and that of the ideology which they convey. As our lexicographical project has developed and evolved, we have learned to question the intuition that we have about the usages of others, but also about our own.

We have firmly believed for a long time that, as long as the essential objective of learning a language (be it Hungarian or French) is written or oral communication, it would be unacceptable to include in a bilingual dictionary examples made up from start to finish, because those would risk having only weak links with the linguistic reality.

Still today we believe that an absolute priority should be given to the selection of examples which have been produced before the intervention of the lexicographer.

Nonetheless, with time, we have become less stringent than J. SINCLAIR,<sup>11</sup> for example. One can never insist enough on the fact that the lexicographer is much more than a simple observer of linguistic facts; his role is to select and build the material which will illustrate the grammatical, semantic, stylistic and cultural problems which are unique to each dictionary article.

We must remember that textual data are never entirely reliable: there are a number of hapax legomena, authors' stylistic devices and even simple slips of the pen. Indeed, while the language used by the media seeks to eliminate all originality and attempts to be as "neutral" as possible, one of the characteristics of the literary language is that it tries to get as far away as possible from predictable word associations.

Some sentences cannot be transcribed literally into a dictionary (due to poetical, dialectal, regional, individual deviations; omissions, incoherences, etc.). The lexicographer has to modify them in such a way that they become in keeping with the necessities created by the problems treated. Many examples must then be "treated" or "improved" for the simple reason that once they are modified, they better reflect a category or a structure which is different in the target language.<sup>12</sup>

The examples found in monolingual dictionaries sometimes need to be modified before they are included in a bilingual dictionary, considering the constant evolution of social norms.

We believe that some examples have to be developed by the lexicographer, providing he is himself a native speaker of the source language. In reality, each example

11 "... invented examples... do not say 'This is how the word is used', but rather 'This will help you to understand the sense'... Usage cannot be invented, it can only be recorded." (SINCLAIR et al., 1987: XV)

12 "... often an authentic example can be abbreviated or paraphrased without losing any of its illustrative value. Besides, for a competent bilingual dictionary maker... it should be quite possible to coin examples illustrating well-established usage". (JACOBSEN, MANLEY and PEDERSEN, 1991: 2788)

listed must be the result of a confrontation between the native speaker's intuition and the data found and attested in written documents (corpora, prior dictionaries).

It is important to remember that coined examples represent potential utterances; they really could have been spoken.

The sentence *il a des yeux* (he has eyes) presents some intrinsic semantic properties. To make it viable as an example, it is necessary to add other elements which are not implied semantically. The example must describe a situation which is logically possible, e.g. : *il a des yeux bleus* (he has blue eyes).

In the same vein, it is essential to orient the examples towards the virtual senses of the words. *Köszönhetően* "grâce à" (thanks to) implies a favourable cause, while the postposition *miatt* "à cause de" (because of), tends to be defavourable.

The coined examples are usually based on a relatively simple syntax. While creating examples, the lexicographer must avoid using forced modalisations or resorting to conjunction words which would only thicken the lexicographical fabric and increase the risk of breaking the linguistic norm.

However, the obvious principle of simplicity must be reconciled with the obligation to provide government patterns.

### 14 Example and Cultural Aspects

One way or another, examples in any dictionary reflect how society has evolved. Therefore, the prefaces and advertisements for dictionaries never fail to mention that their examples demonstrate a language which is totally authentic, and that takes into account the current preoccupations of people.

Indeed, good examples are strongly marked by social realities, are presented as segments of a discourse, and help to reflect the connotations which are attached to the words.

In Hungarian, *mákos beigli* (a type of poppy-seed cake), in French *dinde* (turkey), might evoke Christmas for a majority of speakers. The same way, for Hungarian speakers, *perec* "bretzels" (pretzels) automatically bring to mind images of movie theatres, while for the French it would be *esquimaux* and *chocolats glacés*...

Those are facts of culture that have to be taken into account when putting together examples. Examples might not only reflect the linguistic competence of a community, but also its culture and way of life. From this point of view, two categories of examples have to be established.

Some simply essentially express the co-occurents of the term, as we have seen above. The role of the examples of this group is to bring to mind the linguistic context; as well, they imply a judgement of grammaticality. The cultural information con-



veyed by an example can be next to nil if the example is purely morphologic or syntactic.

But there is another category of examples: those which can be propositions about the word and refer to the cultural experience of the speakers; they can truly become cultural commentaries:

*a víz gőzzé alakul* ⇒ "l'eau se transforme en vapeur" (water turns into vapor)  
*az év négy évszaktól áll* ⇒ "une année comprend quatre saisons" (there are four seasons in a year)  
*akadozik az alkatrészellátás* ⇒ "on a du mal à obtenir des pièces détachées" (it is difficult to get spare parts)  
*a rózsza kellemes illatot áraszt* ⇒ "la rose dégage un agréable parfum" (the rose gives off a pleasant odour), etc.

Examples of this category demonstrate, admittedly, linguistic co-occurrences which are authentic; their role is, nevertheless, to demonstrate how a certain culture functions, and they imply judgements of acceptability of a cultural nature.

We can admit that, between two linguistic communities, there exists a more or less important degree of *cultural overlap*. Indeed, it is a well known fact that cultural phenomena do not know the same boundaries as languages. Some cultural elements are probably present in every society. A great number of the institutions and usages which exist in Hungary can also be found in France and in most francophone regions of the world. Thus, the lexicographer will not have to look too far to find equivalents to the following expressions (because there are plenty of opportunities throughout the world to lay down foundation stones and to make rabbits disappear):

*lerakja/leteszi vminek az alapkövét* ⇒ "poser la première pierre de qc" (to lay the foundation stone)  
*nem csalás, nem ámtás* ⇒ "rien dans les mains, rien dans les poches" (literally: "nothing in the hands, nothing in the pockets")

Other institutions or customs are unique to a country or a well-defined cultural zone. Referring to typically Hungarian realities, the following examples require a gloss to convey the meaning in French, which is what is in v-shaped brackets:

*leteszi az államvizsgát* ⇒ <"passer un examen de fin d'études supérieures"> (to take an examination at the end of one's graduate studies)  
*az anyalka hozza a karácsonyfát* ⇒ <"en Hongrie, c'est un ange qui apporte l'arbre de Noël"> (in Hungary, it's an angel who brings the Christmas tree)  
*bethlehemes játék* ⇒ <"représentation par des enfants de la scène de la Nativité"> (children's re-enactment of the Nativity scene)

Moreover, proverbs represent a guarantee of credibility, both linguistic and cultural, for bilingual dictionaries. As far as their lexicographical treatment is concerned, proverbs may appear in the microstructure as examples, followed by either an equivalent proverb in the target language, a literal translation, or an explanation. Usually, with proverbs, what counts is the general idea, and not the isolated value of the components of the expression. That is the reason why we have decided to list all proverbs exclusively in the annex of the dictionary instead of repeating them in several articles.

We must not lose sight of the fact that examples form an ensemble of *assertions about the world*. They involve the ideology of a community, but also personal ways to judge the world. When lexicographers select or make up examples, their sense of ethics and aesthetics necessarily comes into play.

It would be relatively easy to demonstrate that, besides its obvious linguistic and educational role, the example in a bilingual dictionary is also the privileged place for a subtle raising of moral standards. The approval or disapproval of a specific social phenomenon, mentioned in the examples, constitutes secondary information. In the same manner, examples which introduce gratuitous elements, and which J. HUMBLEY calls "private jokes" (HUMBLEY, 1990: 79), must be avoided altogether. Those are examples of the type "Some New Englanders look to the future with a certain anxiety", which was found in the Collins Cobuild dictionary (SINCLAIR et al., 1987).

In any case, the lexicographer must avoid examples which are embarrassing or delicate due to their potential political or ideological incidences. Thus, it goes without saying that chauvinistic statements or those which are contemptuous to other cultures simply do not belong in a bilingual dictionary.

## 15 Example and Neutralization

It is normal for dictionaries to attempt to give a character of generality to their examples. For instance, in bilingual dictionaries, there are usually no references made to the original texts from which the examples have been taken, nor to their potential "authors". As far as our dictionary goes, even the most usual associations such as:

*szemet szemért, fogat fogért* ⇒ "oeil pour oeil, dent pour dent" (an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth)  
*valami büzlök Dániában* ⇒ "il y a qc de pourri au royaume du Danemark" (there is something rotten in the state of Denmark)  
*bűs képű lovag* ⇒ "le chevalier à la triste figure" (Don Quixote)  
*lenni vagy nem lenni* ⇒ "être ou ne pas être" (to be or not to be), etc.

appear as examples, without any reference to the original text or author.

Although in general texts, the beginning of a sentence is usually indicated by the capitalisation of the first letter of the first word, while the end is indicated by a period, each bilingual dictionary develops its own system of punctuation (which might even be a system of non-punctuation) to deal with its segments of discourse.

Another method to remind the reader that the examples which appear in the articles are only reduced or "neutralized" sentences, in a sense, is the use of verb tenses.

For example, the "present tense" in dictionaries does not always indicate the present tense. In the most diverse languages, the present tense is used to refer to past event.

Praesens historicum is a fait de style: the reference to the past is understood by the context.

In Hungarian, as in French, the present tense is typically used to express general truths or eternal truths, although these truths have nothing to do with the present moment (LOTZ, 1962).

Examples in bilingual dictionaries, may constitute atemporal statements, notably when there is simply no temporal reference and when the situation which the example describes is completely out of the chronological time. They would be, for instance, gnomic elements of the language (aphorisms, maxims, precepts, wisdoms, etc.), transmitted in every culture, from generation to generation:

*a pénz nem boldogít* ⇒ "l'argent ne fait pas le bonheur" (money can't buy happiness)

*nagy baj az agybaj* ⇒ "c'est malheureux de perdre la tête" (literally: "it's a shame to go crazy")

*a baj nem jár egyedül* ⇒ "un malheur n'arrive jamais seul" (it never rains but it pours, troubles never come singly)

In Hungarian, following the lexicographical traditions, a preference is given to the present tense, and more specifically to the third person singular of the verb, every time this form can be substituted to a conjugated form of the verb. In French, this is done very naturally by using the infinitive (*átfagy* ⇒ "être transi de froid"; *belebukik vmibe* ⇒ "échoquer dans qc"; etc.).

But lexicographers may have to situate their examples in a time frame. In the following cases, the assertion includes elements of time, mode, etc.:

*átesik vmin* (*intransitive verb*) surmonter qc (to overcome sth): *öt éves koromban estem át a bárányhimlőn* j'ai eu la varicelle à cinq ans (I had chicken pox when I was five); *súlyos műtéten esett át* il a subi une grave opération (he underwent a serious operation); *ezen mindenkinek át kell esnie* tout le monde passe par-là (every one goes through that); etc.

In a sentence where neither intonation nor syntax emphasizes a particular component, the opposition theme/rheme (which allows us to differentiate between what is already known in a sentence and what is new) is neutralized. Now, it is clear that only those examples taken out of context (dictionary or grammar book sentences, textbook manual) may seem neutral. Any real statement is unique from a spatio-temporal standpoint, since it is written or said at a specific moment or time.

Indeed, if we consider any sentence which was really produced as a statement by a speaker in a concrete situation of communication, we realize that this sentence is certainly modulated, either by thematisation, or by intonation.<sup>13</sup>

Any real statement originates from a choice: the speaker favours a particular element of the sentence and adopts a certain mode of presentation. In Hungarian, it is only a particular accent, which may be called "insistance accent", which will empha-

13 "Il n'existe plus d'énoncé isolé, tout énoncé est un parmi d'autres, épinglé par l'énonciateur dans le paquet des énoncés possibles; (d'un autre côté) il n'existe pas d'énoncé qui ne soit un phénomène unique ..." (CULIOLI, 1973: 86)

size an element of the utterance: to say "c'est mon père qui a téléphoné" (it was my dad who called) in Hungarian, we use "*az apám telefonált*" with a particular accent on the first syllable of the subject "*apám*", "mon père" (my dad). This accent, which is invisible in a dictionary, is the only real support for the opposition between this statement and one which would be considered neutral, "mon père a téléphoné" (my dad called).

The contextual environment must be as elliptic as possible to meet obvious space constraints. That is the reason why statements remain for the most part incomplete. But one should not confuse the truly incomplete statements of oral language with the elliptic expressions used in dictionaries for the purpose of lexicographic exemplification.

Furthermore, proper names may be eliminated altogether; we do not see why Péter (Peter) or János (John) should constantly appear on dictionary pages. Or they must be diverse enough to be relevant. Obviously, if a particular name has a "cultural" role, it must be retained.

But despite its simplicity, the example in a bilingual dictionary must be perfectly understandable by itself, and must meet the *minimal constraints* imposed by syntax.

## 16 Example and Ambiguities

An example is not only made up of a sequence of grammatical categories. It is also a sequence of compatible signifiés which make sense among themselves. To be understandable, the example must be interpretable, and thus respect a semic coherence.

The reason why the ambiguities in an utterance in every day speech are hardly ever noticed, and only rarely lead to misunderstandings, especially for certain interlocutors, is the fact that the context will clarify which interpretation is the right one, and the situation contributes in eliminating the ambiguities. As well, the ambiguities in sentences normally go unnoticed, because they are interpreted within the framework of a certain number of assumptions.

A crucial question then needs to be asked. How can illustrative examples be considered out of any enunciative context? How can we hope that, without the global universe, the reader will understand the micro-universe of the examples?<sup>14</sup>

If we take for example the syntactic pattern "vki vkit követ" ⇒ "qn suit qn". In both languages, several interpretations are possible:

14 Unfortunately, it is impossible for us to proceed the way Le Petit Robert des Enfants (le Robert, 1988) did; it is the first dictionary whose exemplification has the statute of a novel and whose examples refer to one another.



/space/ ⇒ *il marche derrière lui* ?? (he walks behind him)  
 /time/ ⇒ *il lui succède* ?? (he is his successor)  
 /notion/ ⇒ *il adopte ses idées* ?? (he adopts his ideas), etc.

In every day usage, chances are that one of the three semes /space/, /time/, /notion/ will be fulfilled. The verb in question will be interpreted by the interlocutor in one sense rather than in another, depending on the subject of the utterance, the preceding utterances, and the predictable utterances.

Within the restrictive framework of the bilingual dictionary, exemplification must allow for desambiguation. In the following examples:

*valaki követett az utcán* ⇒ "qn m'a suivi dans la rue" (sb followed me on the street)  
*a fia követte a trónon* ⇒ "son fils lui a succédé sur le trône" (his son was his successor on the throne)  
*mindenben a tanárait követi* ⇒ "il fait toujours ce que ses professeurs lui disent de faire" (he always does as his teachers ask him)

the immediate context which is provided is such that, of all the possible interpretations, only one remains probable or possible.

Another way to disambiguate resides in suggesting as many translations as there are possible interpretations:

*rosszul élnék* a) "ils ne s'entendent pas bien" (they do not get along very well)  
 b) "ils ont du mal à s'en sortir/ à joindre les deux bouts" (they can hardly mak ends meet)  
*befagyott az ablak* a) "la vitre est couverte de givre" (the window is frosted)  
 b) "la fenêtre est bloquée par la glace" (the window is frozen shut)

The problem of meaning comes in great part from the fact that monosemic words are a fairly rare occurrence. In most cases, lexical units which have more than one meaning are ambiguous. Thus it is preferable for some polysemic words to be left out of examples altogether in order to reduce the level of ambiguity; in Hungarian, we will avoid using such words as:

*ruha* ⇒ "costume" ?? (costume) ⇒ "robe" ?? (dress) ⇒ "veste" ?? (jacket) ⇒ "salopette" ?? (overalls) ⇒ "layette" ?? (baby clothes), etc.  
*előadás* ⇒ "conférence" ?? (conference) ⇒ "exposé" ?? (presentation) ⇒ "spectacle" ?? (show) ⇒ "séance" ?? (performance) ⇒ "cours magistral" ?? (lecture), etc.

For the exemplification, we will try not to use words whose evolution can be perceived at our level! For example, in French, the expression *une boutique bien achalandée* means, according to the dictionaries, "une boutique qui a de nombreux chaland" (a boutique frequented by many customers). But many people, confusing the cause and the effect, understand *achalandée* as meaning *approvisionnée* (well stocked). It is highly likely that, a few years from now, the first sense of this word will be considered out-of-date, and the "incorrect" sense, derived from the first one by metonymy, will be considered like the current sense.

An example may present ambiguities of a different nature, other than lexical, for example syntactic, which can also be called homonymy of construction. No one would argue that the statement:

*szerinte megbukott a vizsgán* ⇒ "il croit qu'il a échoué à son examen" (he thinks he failed his test)

can be interpreted in at least two different ways (depending on how the subjects are interpreted); it is also obvious that the ambiguity of the example directly comes from its syntagmatic structure.

In Hungarian, a verbal form like *lát* "il voit / elle voit / vous voyez" (he sees / she sees / you see), may also mean "il (me) voit / il (te) voit / il (nous) voit / il (vous) voit" (he sees (me) / he sees (you) / he sees (us)), etc. That is why a statement containing such an ambiguous form can be interpreted in several different ways. The Hungarian word *gazdag* "riche" (rich) (this is the form under which it is registered in dictionaries) may be interpreted in French as an adjective, which means that the concept it conveys is a "quality". But should it be used by itself, it will mean "il est riche" (he is rich), "elle est riche" (she is rich), "vous êtes riche" (you are rich). If we analyzed the word *katona* "soldat" (soldier), we would get "il est soldat" (he's a soldier), "elle est soldate" (she's a soldier), "c'est un soldat" (it's a soldier), "vous êtes soldat" (you're a soldier). Then again, with a word designating a concept of process or action, we would be dealing with predicative syntagma of the same kind: *él* "il vit" (he lives), "elle vit" (she lives), "vous vivez" (you live). This is how SAUVAGEOT (1992: 51) comes to the conclusion that, in Hungarian, most words used by themselves, without any form of grammatical mark, may be used as predicates. This latitude—which may be found in other languages—is not characteristic of the normal way to express oneself in French. It is impossible in French to utter words like "riche", "soldat", or "vit" without having to combine them with another word which would show their dependency. The French language could hardly accept such a simplification of the syntagma, but despite the ambiguities which are inherent to it, this simplification is part of the grammatical and syntactic structure of Hungarian, and the lexicographer will have to take it into account.

The exemplification of words is done more often with segments of discourse which do not exceed the sentence level. Indeed, the transphrastic level is hardly ever reached in bilingual dictionaries. It does however happen that the ambiguity of a statement can only be eliminated within the framework of a longer unit, which could better simulate what would actually occur in a real situation of communication, and that dialogue must be used.

*ajjaj* (interjection): *Sokat bosszankodtál?—Ajjaj!* Cela t'a beaucoup contrarié?—Ah, ça, oui, alors! / Tu parles que oui! (This really bothered you?—Oh, yes, it did! / You bet it did!)  
*átad* (transitive verb): *Add át üdvözetemet Évának!—Átadom!* Transmets mes amitiés à Eva!—Je n'y manquerai pas! (Give my best regards to Eva!—I will!)

These examples are organized as normal discourse sentences, which are syntactically complete and autonomous.

There are also some pragmatic ambiguities, which depend on the effect produced by the statement in a given context. A situation may give a statement different meanings. For instance, *est-ce que tu peux partir ?* (could you leave?) can be, depending on the case, a politely phrased order or a question, while the statement *tu ferais bien de partir* (you ought to leave) can represent a piece of advice, a threat, an order, etc. (CHISS, FILLIOLET and MAINGUENEAU, 1992: 69–71).

There is a lexical ambiguity every time the reader is faced with a choice when reading a statement. For his part, the lexicographer must always seek to select examples which suggest situations, parallels or oppositions that reveal the sense as clearly as possible.

Rare words and words which represent terminological problems should be avoided. In order to be understood immediately, the example must not require familiarity with any scientific or technical field.

However, the lexicographer will not be interested in the referential ambiguity of proper names, personal and demonstrative pronouns, etc.

In a non-lexicographical usage, a statement like "je ne l'ai jamais vu" (I have never seen him / her / it) can only be interpreted if the interlocutor is able to identify whom the personal pronoun "l'" refers to. That referent would normally have been mentioned in the co-text preceding that sentence, or in the context of the situation (identified paralinguistically by the locutor at the same time that he produces the statement). In the lexicographical usage, we are not concerned about the fact that the pronoun "l'" does not refer to an aforementioned nominal syntagma, and could thus refer to an infinity of distinct individuals.

## 17 Conclusions

*Examples are disambiguated segments of discourse, borrowed or elaborated by the lexicographer. They are reduced to the elements which are strictly necessary for and pertinent to the comprehension of the description; they refer to a given situation of communication, and provide information about the semantic, morphological, syntactic, stylistic and cultural traits of the headword in the source language and of its equivalents in the target language.*<sup>15</sup>

The selected context must present an exact attestation of the unit which is studied. The unit must be surrounded by lexical elements which are generally part of the envi-

ronment in which it normally evolves (from a linguistic point of view), and it refers to the native speaker's cultural experience.

The example must be an "expected" utterance, and not an improbable one. One must not forget that the interpretability of the statement also depends on the competence of the speakers and their capacity of imagination.

Since this is a dictionary, we must limit the focus to the immediate environment of the word. Thus, short examples play a privileged role by illustrating the use of headwords without taking up too much space. For practical reasons, it is also preferable to make the attested contexts anonymous.

The juxtaposition of several examples is acceptable, but only if every one of them brings new precisions. The example is useless if it does not inform the user about the signifié or the signifiant of the headword or its equivalents. If they are to reflect the way in which language works, examples must vary *syntagmatic contexts* by showing the themes and *fields of application* of the senses which have been selected for the dictionary, as well as the *effective conditions* of the various uses which have been listed (even though their simplicity or their triviality might be surprising).

On the other hand, the example is never gratuitous, and does not serve a decorative purpose. Nothing in a bilingual dictionary should be unintentional. The presence of every example should be motivated. The way in which the word is used in the examples is of the utmost importance since the slightest awkwardness may affect the credibility of the entire work. As a general rule, an example should not be provided when its translation can easily be figured out from its components. Examples which are too specific or not rich enough are not indicators which are sufficiently comprehensible for the reader.

Strange and deconcerting examples, formulations which border on lawlessness, and all other manifestations of this "lexicolanguage" which is so well known, should also be avoided, even though we all know that a sentence may be semantically absurd and still be perfectly correct from a structural point of view.

On the other hand, a word without an example is not necessarily one that is doomed to disappear. Sometimes, a semantic explanation is more appropriate than an example, because the latter may give the illusion of a usage which is non-restrictive and analogous.

We were disappointed to note that very few editors of bilingual dictionaries take the time to formulate their illustrative programme. And yet, one of the main functions of the examples is to *avoid predictable mistakes* (LEPPALUOTO, 1992) and such an objective can only be reached if the choice of examples is done very carefully from a contrastive and educational point of view.

The quality of a bilingual dictionary rests in large part on the quality of its examples, and the number of examples does not depend solely on the size of the dictionary, but foremost on the lexicographer's conceptions. As for us, we believe that, in the de-

15 J. R. JACOBSEN, J. MANLEY and V. H. PEDERSEN (1991: 2784) define the example "as a supplement to a translation equivalent, providing implicit information about the equivalent or headword".

scription of the lexis, we must give a vital role to the context and, therefore, give the examples a place at the forefront.

Translators, whether or not they are professionals, do not consult bilingual dictionaries simply to find equivalents; they are also looking for sequences which could be inserted into their discourse and which would form natural utterances. As a consequence, the more a bilingual dictionary provides pairs of correct and common syntagma, be they structurally symmetrical or asymmetrical, the more it will be appreciated by readers.

Examples are a way to represent meaning. The proper illustration of the various uses of a word is one of the most sacred aspects of a bilingual dictionary maker's work. A well-chosen example, referring to a possible and actual situation, will give the user the educational "push" he needs.<sup>16</sup>

However, it is impossible for the articles in bilingual dictionaries to anticipate all the cases in which the headword will be used and guarantee that it will always work according to the models.

For their part, examples do not account for all grammatical subtleties and can never cover all the possible meanings of the headword. Indeed, regarding the almost infinite variety of expressions which a word can form, it is extremely difficult to conceive of a system which would encompass all lexical categories and all constructions, which would be theoretically satisfying and easy to manipulate. No matter how sophisticated the bilingual dictionary, translators will never be safe from surprises when dealing with the unpredictable irregularities of the lexis. In order to resolve those difficulties, they will have to resort to outside help.

We have seen that, to study the semantic field of a word, it is necessary to examine its uses in various contexts, without giving greater importance to any one use, frequent though it may be.

More so, better than any linguistic analysis, a well-built lexicographical article demonstrates that, in the discourse, words can take on meanings which are completely different from those which they normally have when they are taken out of context. Indeed, they get their meaning from their association with the words surrounding them, which, in a way, "rub off" on them.

It is relatively easy to find a schoolish translation for the majority of the words in a language. But we have to be careful! For as soon as we try to illustrate them through usual sequences, we realize that lexical and grammatical skills generally are not sufficient for the production of acceptable statements.

16 One can hardly agree with M. T. Z. KALONJI (1993: 182) who wrote: "... Toutefois, ce mode de traduction, par l'exemple, est le moins approprié dans un dictionnaire d'apprentissage, parce qu'il procède non de la recherche d'un correspondant lexico-sémantique sous forme de *mot* pour l'item d'entrée, mais d'une expression des valeurs d'emploi de l'item dans une séquence discursive, généralement phrastique et figée."

Through its examples and by means of other lexicographic tools, the bilingual dictionary must introduce its users to the vast world of usages and conventions which is often designated, in French, by the expression—a little vague but so full of imagery—"génie de la langue".

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- tionnaires dans le *DICIONNAIRE TERMINOLOGIQUE DE LA SYSTÉMATIQUE DU LANGAGE*] ..... 139
- MARIA TERESA FUENTES MORÁN: *Linguistische Fachwörterbücher in Spanien [Special Purpose Dictionaries of Linguistics in Spain; Dictionnaires spéciaux de linguistique en Espagne]* ..... 149

### Non-thematic Part

- WILLIAM JERVIS JONES: *German Lexicography in the European Context (1600–1900): A report on a bibliographical project [La lexicographie allemande dans le contexte européen (1600–1900): Un rapport sur un projet bibliographique; Deutsche Lexikographie im europäischen Kontext (1600–1900): Bericht über ein bibliographisches Projekt]* ..... 175
- THOMAS SZENDE: *Problems of Exemplification in Bilingual Dictionaries [Questions d'exemplification dans des dictionnaires bilingues; Probleme des Exemplifizierens in zweisprachigen Wörterbüchern]* ..... 198
- MATTHIAS KAMMERER: *Zur framebasierten lexikographischen Bedeutungsbeschreibung von substantivischen Lemmazeichen [About the Frame-Based Lexicographic Description of Meaning in the Case of Substantival Lemma Signs; Sur la description lexicographique fondée sur des cadres conceptuels en cas du sens de signe-lemmes qui sont des substantifs]* ..... 229

### Reports

- H. YAŞAR YÜKSEKAYA: *Das erste internationale Lexikographiesymposium über Turksprachen [The First International Lexicographic Congress about Turkic Languages; Le premier congrès lexicographique international au sujet des langues turques]* ..... 264
- MARTIN GELLERSTAM: *Symposium on "Immigrant dictionaries" [Un congrès au sujet des « dictionnaires pour des immigrants »; Symposium über „Wörterbücher für Einwanderer“]* ..... 268

### Reviews

- Some Remarks on [Quelques remarques concernant; Einige Bemerkungen zu] HENRY and RENÉE KAHANE, "The Dictionary as Ideology: Sixteen Case Studies" ... by *David L. Gold* ..... 271
- DIZIONARIO ITALIANO SABATINI COLETTI ... und [and; et] Guida all'uso didattico del Dizionario Italiano SABATINI COLETTI ... by *Elmar Schafroth* ..... 281
- R. R. K. HARTMANN and GREGORY JAMES: *DICTIONARY OF LEXICOGRAPHY* ... by *Sandro Nielsen* ..... 296

HOLLÓS, ZITA: NÉMET-MAGYAR SULISZÓTÁR ... *by Herbert Ernst Wiegand* ..... 302

### Short Reviews

PHILIP E. MARGOLIS. THE RANDOM HOUSE PERSONAL COMPUTER DICTIONARY ... <i>by David L. Gold</i> .....	317
HIETSCH, OTTO: BAVARIAN INTO ENGLISH. A LEXICAL AND CULTURAL GUIDE ... <i>by Andreas Gardt</i> .....	318
CLAUDIA LIST/WILHELM BLUM: SACHWÖRTERBUCH ZUR KUNST DES MITTELALTERS ... <i>by Matthias Kammerer</i> .....	320
HANDBUCH DER DIALOGANALYSE. Hrsg. von GERD FRITZ und FRANZ HUNDSNURSCHER ... <i>by Werner Wolski</i> .....	322
METZLER LEXIKON SPRACHE. Hrsg. von HELMUT GLÜCK ... <i>by Werner Wolski</i> .....	323
SCHÜLER BERTELSMANN. SINNVÉRWANDTE WÖRTER. Von ULRICH ADOLPHS ... <i>by Werner Wolski</i> .....	324
UNGERER, FRIEDRICH; SCHMID, HANS-JÖRG: An Introduction to Cognitive Linguistics ... <i>by Thorsten Roelcke</i> .....	325
MI-AE CHEON: Zur Konzeption eines phraseologischen Wörterbuchs für den Fremdsprachler ... <i>by Thorsten Roelcke</i> .....	325
Dictionaries of Medieval Germanic Languages. A Survey of Current Lexicographical Projects ... <i>by Thorsten Roelcke</i> .....	326
Lexikalische Kategorien und Merkmale. Hrsg. von ELISABETH LÖBEL und GISA RAUH ... <i>by Thorsten Roelcke</i> .....	326
RICHARD HUDSON: Word Meaning ... <i>by Thorsten Roelcke</i> .....	327
Handbuch der mitteleuropäischen Sprachminderheiten. Hrsg. von ROBERT HINDERLING und LUDWIG M. EICHINGER ... <i>by Thorsten Roelcke</i> .....	328
Kaleidoskop der Lexikalischen Semantik. Hrsg. von ULRICH HOINKES und WOLF DIETRICH ... <i>by Thorsten Roelcke</i> .....	328
Lexicon Grammaticorum. Who's Who in the History of World Linguistics ... <i>by Thorsten Roelcke</i> .....	329
Panorama der Lexikalischen Semantik. Thematische Festschrift aus Anlaß des 60. Geburtstags von HORST GECKELER ... <i>by Thorsten Roelcke</i> .....	329
Continuous Bibliography .....	331
Dictionaries and Publications on Lexicography Received .....	336

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