

WHAT DO WE NEED LEXICAL CONTRASTIVE STUDIES FOR?¹

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The most straightforward answer to the title question is "we need contrastive lexical studies because it is fun to do them". Assuming that such studies can be performed at all, even if nothing useful comes out of them, (which I hope is not the case), it is possible to begin our discussion of lexical contrastive studies from examining various kinds of comparisons which can be performed when one juxtaposes lexical materials in two languages, without immediately trying to evaluate theoretical or practical results of such comparisons. Only later it may become possible to decide what could be theoretically interesting and practically useful in conducting such studies. Adopting this strategy, we shall divide the present paper into three major parts. In the first part we shall delimit the area of lexicology. In the second part we shall outline possible areas of contrastive lexicology as art for art's sake, without pretending to exhaust the subject. In the third part we shall try to decide what is worthy of more detailed investigations, both for theoretical and practical reasons.

Let us start by recalling the well known fact that in the process of communication people use sentences in connected discourse, but when they learn a foreign language, their main concern is to learn words in order to be able to refer to things, ideas, events, qualities, and so on. Crudely speaking, lexicology is that branch of linguistics which deals with this particular aspect of language. In the American tradition of linguistics lexicology has never enjoyed popularity, chiefly due to the uncertain linguistic status of *word*. Word has always been considered as a notion which is notoriously difficult to define,

¹ This paper was written in early 1976, but due to editorial reasons could not be published within the usual limits of time. The time lag between the date of its submission and publication explains the absence of references to some later publications. Nowakowski's article referred to as Nowakowski (1977) was then available in its manuscript form. Preston's distinction of labelling features in dictionaries reached me as "oral communication".

Following Nida's views on the concept of word (Nida 1946), Francis says "we shall find our definition of the word a good deal more complex than at first thought seems necessary" (Francis 1958:201). It would seem, however, that just as in the case of the sentence, which cannot be given a satisfactory one-sentence definition, but rather it must be defined in terms of a device (grammar) generating sentences in a particular language, the notion of the word cannot be defined without constructing a dictionary of that language. Thus sentences are objects *generated* by the grammar of a language, while words are objects *listed* in the dictionary to the left of each lexical entry. All the same, before constructing a dictionary the investigator must delimit the scope of his data in such a way as to conform to native speakers' intuitions (unfortunately very misleading!) about what constitutes a word in a given language, i.e. about what qualifies as a potential lexical item in the dictionary that he is constructing. Therefore, some tentative definition is necessary to ensure a certain degree of consistency in constructing lexical entries. It follows that the notion *the word* can be described from two points of view. From the point of view of a linguistic theory *the word* is a linguistic unit which is listed in the dictionary of a particular language as the first element of each lexical entry. From the diagnostic point of view, providing criteria for identifying words in texts (both written and spoken), it is possible to describe *the word* in a variety of ways. In the present paper we shall describe *the word* in the way which seems to provide the best grounds for making proper recognitions of words in contrast with other units of linguistic analysis. The definition which follows is a synthesis of the definitions formulated by Arnold (1973:30) and Lyons (1968:203): "a word is the smallest significant unit of a given language, which is internally stable (in terms of the order of component morphemes), but potentially mobile (permutable with other words in the same sentence)". This definition makes it possible to distinguish between the word and the phrase (not the smallest significant unit), the word and the morpheme (not positionally mobile within a word), as well as the word and the phoneme (not significant). In this way the definition isolates lexicology from syntax (phraseology), morphology and phonology. It is needless to say that all these areas are mutually interrelated and that in the actual analytic practice it is often difficult to make categorical decisions. In the subsequent sections of this paper we shall try to show that especially the border line between lexicology and syntax is almost impossible to draw in any adequate account of language. Nevertheless, as a basis for strategies of investigation, this diagnostic description of the word will have to be accepted, especially in view of the fact that a better one is not available.²

² In those languages in which *words* cannot be easily isolated in texts the problem of separating lexicology from grammar is especially acute.

The crude definition of lexicology given above defines it as a study of words. Considering the definition of words as *significant* units of language, it is inevitable that what lexicology must be concerned with is, among other things, the *meaning* of words. Now, the study of the meaning of words is impossible without examining linguistic and extralinguistic *contexts* in which words appear and in which they assume various senses within the limits characterizing a particular word.

Therefore, any productive approach to the meaning of words must be through the contexts in which words appear.

The definition of the word given above allows to include among words not only compounds such as *blackboard* or *typewriter*, in which constituent morphemes cannot be permuted within a given sentence, but also set phrases (fixed expressions) of various degrees of fixedness, ranging from such non-motivated phraseological fusions as *red tape* (bureaucracy) or *kick the bucket* (die), which are equivalents of words, to highly motivated phraseological collocations such as *alarm clock* and *night-school*, all of which express certain integrated notions. Some of these expressions happen to have one-word equivalents in another language (cf. Polish *biurokracja*, *budzik*, etc.). All such combinations of linguistic units which also function as words (*red*, *tape*, *night*, *school*, *alarm*, *clock*, *kick*, *the bucket*) and which express fixed integrated notions naturally fall within the scope of lexicology and it would be useless and impractical to pretend that they do not (see also Nowakowski 1977).

However, if one accepts the view that lexicology has to deal with compounds and fixed expressions of the types exemplified above, one faces a formidable task of delimiting the upper bound of lexicology, separating it from syntax. The basic problem is to what extent constraints on collocations of particular lexical items in syntactic constructions are subject to listing in a dictionary and to what extent they are storable in terms of rules. This in turn is connected with a more general problem of what may be called 'precision' of grammars. Early transformational generative grammars, written in the framework provided by Chomsky's *Syntactic structures* (1957), were extremely crude in that they imposed no constraints on the co-occurrence of various content words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs) in syntactically well-formed preterminal strings. These models generated both semantically acceptable sentences such as "John admires sincerity" and semantically unacceptable "Sincerity admires John". However, right from the start Chomsky made the proviso that an adequate grammar should be endowed with means for eliminating such semantic anomalies. One way to do it was to subcategorize verbs and nouns in such a way as to allow only some verbs to occupy positions after abstract nouns functioning as subjects of these verbs, and only some verbs in positions before human nouns, etc. This led to the formulation of the theory of selection restrictions expounded in Chomsky 1965. The elimination of all

possible semantic anomalies through the operation of selection restrictions requires the introduction of an appallingly large number of theoretical concepts called semantic markers. This fact is noted by Bolinger, who writes: "If we are to account for the fluent speaker's ability to recognize an anomaly — as well as an ambiguity — through the markers at his command, then the number is indeed legion." (Bolinger 1965:564). All the same there is no doubt that contextual features, strictly subcategorizing verbs in terms of syntactic categories with which verbs can co-occur in sentences, are syntactically relevant. However, neither contextual features nor markers (in whatever number) are helpful in accounting for ill-formedness of a large number of collocations such as *carry a grudge* as opposed to *bear a grudge* or *strong rain* as opposed to *heavy rain*, or *take hatred* as opposed to *take a liking*. On the other hand, as is claimed by McCawley, markers have no syntactic relevance at all, since "the matter of selectional restrictions should be totally separate from the base component and (...) the base component thus be a device which generates a class of deep structures without regard to whether the items in them violate any selectional restrictions." (McCawley 1968:135). This claim leaves collocations totally outside the scope of the linguistic theory, since the selection of particular words in collocations must be decided on at the level of "deep structure" and lexical anomalies such as *take hatred* or *carry a grudge* are syntactically well-formed. The theory does not provide any framework for considering them as semantically ill-formed either, unless lists of collocations are systematically introduced into the theory at some prior (?) level of representation. This problem will be taken up in the third section of the present paper. Here I would like to claim that notwithstanding theoretical problems with finding a place for collocations in an overall account of language, they do fall within the scope of lexicology, constituting its upper-bound and being an area which shades into syntax in a non-discrete way.

Lexicology thus appears to be concerned with formal and semantic properties of the following phenomena: one-morpheme words, constituting the lower bound of lexicology (e.g. *table, man, dog, radio*, etc.), complex words (e.g. *engulf, writer, disagreeable*, etc.), compound words (e.g. *blackboard, arm-chair*), compound-complex words (e.g. *type-writer, radio-announcer*), phraseological fusions or idioms, i.e., non-motivated combinations of words which are semantically integrated (e.g. *red tape, kick the bucket*, phraseological unities, i.e., partially motivated combinations of words (e.g., *to show one's teeth, to wash one's dirty linen in public*), and phraseological collocations, i.e., combinations of words characterized by lexical valency but highly motivated from the semantic point of view (e.g. *bear a grudge, bear malice, take a liking*).

Both formal and semantic properties of these units can be the object of contrastive analysis across languages. We shall discuss some of these properties under the following headings: (1) one-morpheme words (simple words); (2)

word formation; (3) phraseological fusions, unities and collocations; (4) semantic relations; (5) emotive and stylistic charge.³

(1) A simple word is a word which consists of a single base with or without inflexions. A large number of simple words in English correspond to simple words in another language, at least in some of their senses, for example *dog — pies, bed — łóżko, room — pokój*, etc. In some cases a simple word in English corresponds to a polymorphemic word in Polish and vice versa, for example *handle — u-chwył, floor — podłoga*. Such comparative statements are theoretically uninteresting, though it is by no means obvious on what grounds particular words in one language should be matched with their equivalents in another language.

All types of words and their equivalents may exhibit various degrees of formal and semantic similarity. Lado distinguishes six possibilities: 1. similar in form and meaning (e.g. *map — mapa, nose — nos, pilot — pilot, son — syn*); 2. similar in form but different in meaning (e.g. *dog — dog, toast — toast, record — rekord*); 3. similar in meaning but different in form (e.g. *table — stół, tree — drzewo, chair — krzesło*); 4. different in form and meaning (e.g. *public school — szkoła prywatna*); 5. different in their type of construction (e.g. *put on — na-kladać, write out — wy-pisywać, call off — od-wolywać*); 6. similar in primary meaning but different in connotation (e.g. *bloody — krwawy*) (Cf. Lado (1955)). A more detailed discussion of these possibilities is given in Krzeszowski (1971:78ff).

(2) Word formation involves derivation by means of affixation, back-formation, word-composition, shortening, acronymy and some minor types such as sound interchange, distinctive stress and sound imitation (see Arnold (1973:93ff)). The investigator faces a vast area here as lexical equivalents across languages may display a large range of differences with respect to particular means employed in the formation of words. No systematic correspondences seem to be in view, since a one-morpheme word in one language may correspond to a compound word in another language or a complex word may correspond to a simple word and so on, in all possible combinations. Below are some example of such correspondences:

English	Polish
<i>simple word</i>	<i>complex word</i>
seat	siedzenie
bitter	gorzki

³ Outside the scope of the present paper remain some further phenomena which could also be studied contrastively, for instance diachronic distinctions (archaisms, geographical distinctions (regionalisms), metaphorizations, as well as semanto-syntactic and morphophonological nets in what Nowakowski (1977) calls the LEXICON. See also footnote 5.

darn	cerować
moral	moralny
<i>simple word</i>	<i>compound word</i>
hedge	żywopłot
porcupine	jeżozwierz
<i>complex word</i>	<i>simple word</i>
rubber	guma
whiteness	biel
flight	lot
gift	dar
poster	afisz
<i>compound word</i>	<i>simple word</i>
rain-bow	tęcza
armchair	fotel
father-in-law	teść
man-of-war	okręt
hedge-hog	jeż
moon-calf	kretyn
<i>compound word</i>	<i>complex word</i>
telltale	plotkarz
sightseeing	zwiedzanie
book-keeping	księgowość
car-ring	kołczyk
ash-tray	popielniczka
knee-cap	rzepka
<i>complex word</i>	<i>phrase</i>
percolator	maszynka do kawy
Christmas	Boże Narodzenie
ratter	człowiek (pies) łapiący szczury
<i>complex word</i>	<i>compound word</i>
foreigner	cudzoziemiec
Easter	Wielkanoc

Since formal comparisons of individual lexical items across languages do not seem to yield themselves to any significant generalizations, a contrastive analysis of word formation is probably better off if it is based on some conceptual

framework. Such an analysis could, for example, involve a comparison of means (affixes, etc.) employed in the derivation of nomina actionis, nomina agentis, nomina loci, of adjectives of intensity, inclination, possibility, ability, or of verbs of process, causation, instrument, and so on (Cf., for example, Sehnert and Sharwood-Smith 1974).

(3) Another area of investigation covers what we have called phraseological fusions, unities and collocations. The differences between the three kinds of units can be attributed mainly to varying degrees of idiomaticity, or, in other words, semantic motivation involved in the combination of words within particular units, with fusions being semantically non-motivated, unities being partially motivated and collocations being motivated.⁴ Since discrete boundaries between the three types of phrases are difficult to draw, we shall discuss them jointly under the cover term 'phraseological units' (Cf. Ginzburg et al. 1966:100ff).

Phraseological units constitute a unit intermediate between a compound word and a free phrase (loose phrase) in that like compound words phraseological units are severely constrained with regard to the co-occurrence of their constituents but represent the same *syntactic* types as do loose phrases (cf. Arnold 1973:148ff). In many cases phraseological units are functionally and/or semantically equivalent to single words, which is another reason why they should be considered as the subject matter of lexicology rather than of syntax. Phraseological units may exhibit considerable differences across languages both with respect to lexical congruity as with respect to syntactic congruity. Below are some examples illustrating the lack of lexical congruity:

English	Polish
<i>small hours</i>	<i>wczesne godziny</i> 'early hours'
<i>fountain pen</i>	<i>wieczne pióro</i> 'eternal pen'
<i>man and wife</i>	<i>mąż i żona</i> 'husband and wife' archaic <i>mąż</i> = man
<i>heads or tails</i>	<i>orzeł czy reszka</i> 'eagle or tails'
<i>heavy storm</i>	<i>silna burza</i> 'strong storm'

⁴ Skorupka divides phraseological units into "związki frazeologiczno stałe, łączliwe i luźne". "Związki stałe" correspond to our phraseological fusions (idioms) and unities, "związki łączliwe" correspond to our collocations, and "związki luźne" correspond to what we chose to call free phrases (Skorupka 1967: 6-7).

The lack of lexical congruity in those pairs of equivalent phraseological units resembles the lack of congruity of constituent words in compound words, e.g.:

scarecrow	strach na wróble (sparrows)
wrist-watch ¹	zegarek na rękę (hand)
night-school	szkółka wieczorowa (evening)

The following examples illustrate the lack of syntactic congruity of equivalent phraseological units:

English	Polish
N+N	Adj+N
maiden name	nazwisko panieńskie
N+N	N+N+genetive
brains trust	trust mózgów
N's+N	Adj+N
cat's paw	kocia łapa
VP+NP	V+Prep+NP
influence somebody	wpłynąć na kogoś
N+N	N+Adj
prize money	nagroda pieniężna

In the last example the modified noun in English corresponds to the modifying adjective in Polish.

In addition to comparisons of various syntactic patterns characterizing equivalent phraseological units across languages, it is also possible to examine and compare various *degrees of valency* of lexical items in compounds and phraseological units. Notice, for example, a higher degree of lexical stability in the English unit *calf love* than in its Polish equivalent 'cielęca miłość'. In Polish one also meets 'cielęce lata' (years), 'cielęcy rozum' (mind), 'cielęcy mózg' (brain), and 'cielęcy zachwył' (delight).

(4) The next area of investigation embraces various types of semantic relations between lexical items and provides a convenient dimension for interlinguistic comparisons. Among others, the following types of semantic relations can be described and compared: (a) polysemy; (b) homonymy; (c) synonymity; (d) antynomy; (e) semantic fields. Let us look briefly at each of these types of relations.

(a) Polysemy. Most content words in everyday use in all natural languages have more than one sense. Any specification of senses of a word in any dictionary is a recognition of the polysemic character of that word. Any specification of various equivalents in L_2 of a lexical item in L_1 is not only a recognition of the polysemic character of words but also an exercise in lexical contrastive studies. In so far as bilingual dictionaries of necessity contain such

specifications, the phenomenon of polysemy is among the most crucial ones in lexical contrastive studies. This is reflected in the fact that polysemous items constitute complicated networks of interconnections in any sizeable bilingual dictionary: for every polysemous lexical item in L_1 there exists a set of equivalent items in L_2 , each such item having a set of equivalent items in L_1 , etc. For example, the English lexical item *table* has the following twelve equivalent items in Polish: 1. stół; 2. towarzystwo przy stole, biesiadnicy; 3. płyta; 4. napis wyryty na kamiennej tablicy; ~ s prawa, ustawy; the ten ~ s dziesięcioro przykazań; 5. płaskowyż; 6. karnisz; 7. płaszczyzna drogiego kamienia, klejnotu; 8. dłoń; 9. blaszka kostna; 10. tablica; tabela; spis; wykaz; 11. ~ s tryktrak; 12. stół przewodniczącego parlamentu angielskiego (Stanisławski, J. (1968).

The Polish lexical item 'płyta', which is one of the equivalents of *table*, has the following equivalent items in English: 1. slab; plate; sheet; board; 2. record; 3. table-land; 4. wrest-block; wrest-plank (np. fortepianu); plaque (~ pamiątkowa) (ibidem).

In turn, the English lexical item *board*, one of the equivalent of 'płyta' has eight equivalents in Polish, and so on.

To a large extent the same is true of

(b) homonymy, i.e., the relation between lexical items which exhibit fortuitous identity as in the case of the Polish *zamek*₁ 'castle', *zamek*₂ 'flock', *zamek*₃ ('halving' (arch.)), and *zamek*₄, 'hinge ligament' (in mussels), where 'lock' has eight equivalents in Polish.

The presentation of lexical stocks in two languages in terms of such networks of interconnections is possible for a given finite set of lexical items in both languages, but it is a futile procedure if textual settings in which particular lexical items appear are not considered. In the same sense paradigms of grammatical forms are meaningless and do not constitute a grammar of a language, if they are not seen as elements of structures into which they can be inserted.

(c) Synonyms. Like almost every notion in lexicology the term *synonym* (as well antonym) is vague. Roughly speaking, synonyms are the words different in phonic/graphic form but similar in connotational meaning and interchangeable at least in some contexts. This definition of synonyms makes use of the well known distinction between denotational and connotational meaning. It also makes an appeal to the notion of context. This is so because (1) it is impossible to talk about synonyms of individual words as such. Usually a particular *sense* of the word has its synonyms in one of the senses of another word. Moreover, it is impossible to match two words as synonyms if they are isolated from the contexts in which they can appear. For example the verb *to read* in the context *read dreams* is a synonym of *to interpret*, while in the context of *read one a lesson* it is a synonym of *give*. The matching of synonyms is

thus basically no different from the matching of lexical equivalents across languages in so far as in both cases the selection of the appropriate sense, essential in choosing the appropriate synonym/equivalent is determined by the context in which the original word appears. (2) The similarity of the meaning involves only that part of the overall lexical meaning of a word which is called denotation in the well-known contradistinction to connotation, which is often different in synonymous pairs. For example, words like *live*, *dwell*, *reside* in their relevant senses are denotationally similar, but they differ with respect to their stylistic value, i.e., with respect to their connotations: *live* (neutral), *dwell* (poetic), *reside* (formal). (3) Synonyms are interchangeable only in some contexts, while in other contexts they are not only not interchangeable but also sometimes turn out to be antonymous. Such is the case with the words *exceptional* and *abnormal*. In the context of "the weather is _____", the two words are interchangeable, while in the context "my son is _____", the two words are near antonyms (cf. Quirk 1962: 120).

(d) Antonyms involve similar problems. As in the case of synonyms, one can only talk about a specific sense of a particular word being antonymous to a specific sense of another word. For example, the word *good* in most senses and in most contexts is antonymous to *bad* as in "a good girl" vs. "a bad girl", "to be good at something" vs. "to be bad at something", etc. However, *good* in the sense 'not less than a certain amount' as in "a good three miles" or "a good way" is not an antonym of *bad*, since in "a bad three miles" and "a bad way", *bad* is an antonym of *good* in its primary sense, i.e.; 'having the right quality'. The antonymous polarity in the second sense is in fact impossible to express by means of a single word, which, if it existed, would have to express the notion 'less than a certain amount'. The nearest candidate would be the word *little* as in "a little three miles" and "a little way".

Like synonyms, antonyms are interchangeable only in some contexts, which is evident in the previous example. This restriction can also be illustrated by the pair *young* vs. *old* as in "a young man" vs. "an old man" but not "a young hat" vs. "an old hat".

A contrastive study of synonyms and antonyms does not basically differ from such studies of other words, since in all cases the essential problems are connected with the selection of the appropriate senses on the basis of relevant contexts.

(e) Semantic fields provide grounds for yet another kind of grouping of words. Words which share a common concept are said to constitute semantic fields (cf. Trier 1931). The basis for grouping is always extralinguistic, since words are grouped in semantic fields because things which they refer to are connected in extralinguistic reality (Arnold 1973:206). Some examples of semantic fields are: colours, kinship terms, pleasant and unpleasant emotions, military ranks, educational terms, gastronomical terms, vehicles, being

at a place, leaving, etc. Comparative studies of words constituting semantic fields in various languages constitute a rewarding activity and are so often performed that they are sometimes identified with lexical contrastive studies in general (see Duczmal 1979, Sehnert (MS)).

(5) The fifth type of comparisons involves stylistic-emotive charge of lexical items of the connotational component of their meaning. Synonyms or groups of words with similar denotational meaning usually differ with respect to their connotations. Stylistic charge of lexical items can be described in terms of features falling into keys (oratorical, deliberative, consultative, casual, intimate) and parameters superimposed upon keys (status, technicality, dignity, conformity) (Gleason 1965:385ff). Emotive charge can be described in terms of markedness of lexical items with respect to the features 'appreciative', 'depreciative' and 'neutral'.⁵

Contrastive analyses of synonyms and semantic fields, enhanced by the distinctions specified above are also successfully performed to the delight of investigators and readers. For Polish and English one such study has been conducted by Lewandowski (MS) and concerned the stylistic and emotive charge of the semantic field delimited by the concept 'female'.

After this brief overview of lexicology and possible contrastive procedures connected with it, let us now take a more critical look at some theoretical and practical issues.

Naturally enough, the theoretical status of lexical contrastive studies is strictly determined by the theoretical status of lexicology. By definition lexicology deals with those elements of language which cannot be generalized in terms of rules, constituting the domain of grammar. However, as has been repeatedly pointed out, no strict boundaries between lexicology and grammar (syntax) can be drawn. This fact creates a challenge for linguists, who so far have been unable to deal satisfactorily with the uncertain linguistic status of phraseological units, having syntactic properties of loose phrases but, like words, being much more severely constrained with respect to the selection and order of their constituents. Since these constraints are not dependent on the syntactic structure of the units in question, and since they are not systematic, like other unpredictable phenomena they are subject to listing and thus fall within the domain of lexicology.

All the same it is impossible to ignore the systematic and predictable character of some words as regards their inner structure. As Halle suggests,

⁵ Preston (MS) distinguishes as many as forty distinctive features characterizing psycho- and socio-linguistic contexts in which particular lexical items can be appropriately used. The relevance of these distinctions for contrastive lexical studies cannot be overestimated. Some implications of Preston's matrix for lexical contrastive studies will be discussed in a separate paper.

a linguistic theory should account for the native speaker's ability to distinguish between well-formed combinations of morphemes constituting words and ill-formed combinations of morphemes. Halle argues that "lexical insertion transformations take items from the dictionary rather than from the list of morphemes", while the rules of word-formation and the exception filter do not have to be fully activated in every speech act. "Instead it is possible to suppose that a large part of the dictionary is stored in the speaker's permanent memory and that the needs to involve the word-formation component only when he hears an unfamiliar word or uses a word freely invented". (Halle 1973:16). Being systematic in nature, word-formation codified in the form of rules generating words (cf. also Šaumyan's concept of 'word-generator' (Šaumyan 1968)) can be contrasted with analogous rules in another language, according to the principles which are not different from those that underlie syntactic comparisons. Such investigations may turn out to be theoretically rewarding. Pedagogical relevance of such studies should also be easy to envisage, even if one agrees with Halle that in a large number of cases learners may tend to treat derived lexical items as indivisible entities, unless they have some reasons to analyze their morphological structure.

Also "vertical" and "horizontal" relations in Nowakowski's (1977) lexicon consisting of Weinreich lexical items may turn out to have a more systematic character than has been previously ascribed to them. However, as in the case of word-formation, any rules which might underlie such relations are probably dormant in language users and are activated to deal with new elements only in those special instances when the need to employ those rules arises.

The overlapping of grammar and lexicology is also evident in the description of lexical items themselves. A description of each lexical item, in addition to the specification of its phonological/graphological form, contains a specification of what may be called its grammatical value and its semantic value. The grammatical value of a lexical item contains its categorial and subcategorial specification expressed in terms of the same type of information that constitutes a grammatical description of a language. In so far as this type of information is grammatical it is also general in the sense that large sets of lexical items receive identical descriptions, for example as animate nouns, transitive verbs, factive verbs, relative adjectives, etc. On the other hand, semantic values may be unique, i.e. each lexical item has at least one feature which distinguishes it from all other lexical items within a given syntactic (sub)category and within a given semantic field. This explains why such words as *cat* and *dog*, or *hand* and *foot*, or *nose* and *mouth*, or *yellow* and *green*, or *Saturday* and *Sunday*, or *town* and *village*, or *walk* and *fly*, or *kick* and *stroke*, etc. are not synonyms, even if they belong to common semantic fields, sharing certain concepts. It inevitably follows that the number of semantic features required to account for differences in the meaning between particular lexical

items constituting the lexicon must be at least as large as the number of lexical items themselves. Therefore, the theoretical value of these features is nil. This is not really surprising, since everything which is systematic in the lexicon must be somehow reflected in the grammar anyway. What remains is idiosyncratic and subject to listing. Moreover, as was pointed out earlier on, most features distinguishing specific lexical items within the dictionary are strictly connected with what is called our knowledge of the world, or more exactly with the factual information about the referents of lexical items. If this sort of knowledge is disregarded, it often happens that two lexical items, obviously denoting different objects, receive identical dictionary descriptions, as is the case with *cat* and *dog*, described as "a domesticated carnivore, bred in a number of varieties" and as a "domesticated carnivore, bred in a great number of varieties", respectively (*The random house dictionary of the English language*, College Edition 1968). On the other hand, if a distinction is made between the two kinds of species, it makes a direct appeal to our knowledge of the world, as is clearly reflected in the following definitions taken from *The world book encyclopedia dictionary*, edited by Clarence L. Barnhart: *cat*— a small, four-footed, flesh-eating mammal, often kept as a pet or for hunting rats and mice (...); *dog* — a domesticated mammal, related to wolves, foxes, and jackals, that is kept as a pet, for hunting, and for guarding property.

From the contrastive point of view the decomposition of lexical items into features in order to account for lexical equivalence across languages may be justified in theoretical contrastive analyses seeking an explicit account of interlinguistic lexical equivalence (cf. Di Pietro's analysis of *flesh* and *meat* and their equivalents in various languages (Di Pietro (1971:113ff)). However, it appears that adopting this procedure would result in the necessity to construct a special "theory" for each pair of equivalent items across languages. Each feature resulting from the decomposition would be a "theoretical" construct and would have little, if any, independent motivation. The practical utility of such "theories" would be negligible, since, as it follows from our earlier observations, the number of "theoretical" concepts would be at least as large as the number of lexical items. Therefore, in practically oriented contrastive lexical studies it is usually enough to juxtapose lexical items in one language with the appropriate lexical items in another language, according to equivalent senses, expressed in terms of synonymous words, properly qualified with regard to their connotations.⁶

A bilingual dictionary, which is a tangible outcome of practically oriented lexical contrastive studies, in its large bulk, consists of lexical items in one

⁶ This is not to say that there is no need of good intralinguistic definitions of lexical items, but such definitions are relevant only in monolingual dictionaries. Direct matching of lexical equivalents along the lines suggested here is quite good enough in bilingual dictionaries.

language and their equivalents in another language, usually selected on the basis of linguistic intuitions of the compilers. A more motivated procedure would match lexical items in two languages on the basis of detailed analyses of numerous equivalent texts written or spoken in both languages. Such an analysis would provide statistical grounds not only for matching equivalents but also for listing them in the order from the most frequent ones to the least frequent ones in all those numerous instances when a lexical item in one language has more than one equivalent in another language. In any case, no decomposition of lexical items into semantic features would be required to guarantee correct matching of equivalents.

As was said earlier a large bulk of any bilingual dictionary is a juxtaposition of lexical equivalents across languages on the basis of the identity or at least similarity of referential meaning such as *cat* — *kot*, *table* — *stół*, *wireless* — *radio*, *walk* — *chodzić*, *yellow* — *żółty*, *small* — *mały*, often — *często*, *diet* — *sejm*, *primary school* — *szkoła podstawowa*, *M. A. thesis* — *praca magisterska*, *power-plant* — *elektrownia*, etc. Any person using a bilingual dictionary certainly expects to find this sort of information in the first place. Yet he is seldom happy if his dictionary does not go beyond listing lexical equivalents, even if, or perhaps especially if, more than one equivalent is given for a given item, as indeed is the case in the preponderant majority of cases. Most dictionary users inevitably wish to be able to find information about the use of particular lexical items in both situational and linguistic contexts. They also welcome information about the possibilities of forming derived lexical items on the basis of those listed in the dictionary. A dictionary which fails to provide this sort of information is considered to be inferior to a dictionary in which such information can be found (cf. Tomaszczyk 1979). Here we arrive at a difficult problem: how much information about contexts in which particular lexical items appear should be included in a dictionary? It appears that there is no exaggeration involved in the answer that as much information about both linguistic and extralinguistic settings as is possible to contain in a dictionary should be contained. This is to say that, other things being equal, the quality of a dictionary is in proportion to its size seen as the volume of the material to the right of each lexical item. It also means that there is no such thing as the best dictionary, since a better (larger) one can always be compiled and that the lexicographer's job is never done.

Having said this we can safely accept the view that all types of lexical contrastive studies, regardless of their questionable theoretical reputation, will be of value in compiling dictionaries as they will increase the informative part of the dictionary by just this sort of information which is so often sought by the learners: the contexts. It does not matter that some of these comparisons, for example the comparisons of thematic groups, involve encyclopedic rather than linguistic knowledge. This sort of knowledge must be included

in any dictionary which is intended to help the learner to communicate in actual life situations. "Encyclopedic" descriptions of those lexical items in L_1 that have no conceptual equivalents in L_2 is often a necessity. Such words as *vicar* — (w kościele anglikańskim pastor (obsługujący parafię), *villadom* — ludzie zamieszkujący dzielnice willowe miasta, *thrasher* — ptak amerykański pokrewny przedrzeźniaczowi, *kilt* — rodzaj krótkiej spódniczki (część męskiego stroju narodowego Szkocji i Grecji) and many others have no equivalents in Polish and must be rendered as descriptions making a direct appeal to the reader's knowledge of the world. Such a situation often results in borrowings from one language to another.

Summing up, lexical contrastive studies appear to be a particularly complex area of utmost pedagogical importance with some thorny theoretical problems, which are still unsolved. Among these the notorious phenomenon of phraseological units awaits its Chomsky as in the contemporary theories of language these units do not fit anywhere. They are smuggled into dictionaries to the right of definienda (where they do not belong) with scraps of contexts dragged after them in a theoretically unmotivated way. This well reflects the 'neither fish nor fowl' linguistic status of phraseological units, which are not recognized either as lexical items (properly listed in the dictionary) or as grammatical structures (neatly generated by the rules of the grammar). The result is that the best grammar is incomplete without a dictionary and so is a dictionary without a grammar. But what is worse even dictionaries with grammars are incomplete, because so far neither grammars nor dictionaries have been able to cope adequately with linguistic contexts (leave alone extralinguistic settings) which seem to constitute the hard core of language in its everyday manifestations.

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