# Fact and Fiction of the Bilingual Dictionary

Albrecht Neubert

It is an obvious and age-old truism when experts and laymen alike assert that the words of two languages never or at least rarely ever are the same. Let me quote, first, three famous 19th century scholars who give concise expression to this seemingly undisputed fact. In 1816, Wilhelm von Humboldt stated:

> «It has often been said and investigation as well as experience have confirmed, that not one word in a language totally matches another in another language» (Humboldt 1909, 129).

After him Jakob Grimm, in a paper read at the Prussian Academy in Berlin, in 1847, put it even more succinctly:

> «Form and content (Form und Gehalt) of the words in two languages never coincide, one language either winning or losing» (Grimm 1988, 44).

Actually, a couple of decades earlier, in 1813, Friedrich Schleiermacher had already clinched the issue by bluntly insisting:

> «that not a single word in one language has its equal in another» (Schleiermacher 1838, 212).

Side by side with this expert opinion there has come down as common experience of everyone learning a foreign language, trying to communicate in it or translating from and into it, that foreign words do not only sound different but are nothing but approximations of what we think and feel by means of our own native words.

In the glaring light of such a state of affairs, equally striking the philologist as well as the common learner, should the author of a bilingual dictionary ask himself seriously whether he has embarked on a Quixotic enterprise. After twenty years of enduring the labours and —to a minor degree— enjoying the satisfactions of compiling a new English-German dictionary of about 120,000 entries I feel a need now to give vent to what I would like to call the lexicographer's dilemma. It consists simply in his brave attempt to do the impossible. And this is precisely my theme today; how to justify the compromise between insupportable claims and legitimate aims, between the **fictions** of the bilingual dictionary, what it erroneously sets out to be, and the **facts** that cut it down to its down-to-earth status. To be even more explicit: the **fictitious claims are the lexical equivalences.** The **factual aims are the alphabetical entries enabling the user to build hypotheses about the relations between words in two languages.** These **relations** are a **fact**, the **equations** are a **fiction**. In other words, I would like to focus on what a bilingual dictionary can seriously be expected to achieve, and, on the other hand, what it should not be inadvertently consulted about. To refer to our quotations at the beginning, the dictionary should not purport to be an easy source of word-matches to be exploited by the unwary user filling word-gaps like in a crossword puzzle when he hits upon an unknown lexical item. The user's stubborn belief in the direct one-to-one equivalence offered by at least one of the items on the right-hand side of the bilingual entry is an illusion. It is the fiction. The user, so to say, fictionalizes the dictionary. For dictionaries to be useful and not misleading, the user must know what is fact and what is fiction. Lexicography should more often heed Aldous Huxley's advice when he said: «Facts do not cease to be facts because they are ignored.» But how can the user, as well the lexicographer in the first place, get to facts?

I would like to approach in a number of steps what a bilingual dictionary can be realistically expected to offer as **reliable facts instead of questionable fictions.** How can we separate fact from fiction? Or perhaps rather how can the user **turn the fictitious word equations into factual information?** How can he get behind the glib surface of the word-matches and achieve the information he urgently needs to bridge the gulf between the words in two languages?

The *first* step to a realistic attitude towards the bilingual dictionary is to appreciate the nature of an entry as a piece of text. The dictionary entry, for that matter, is a descriptive statement about the lexical relations between two languages. But the textual feature «description» is actually presented in disguise. Below the surface the entry acts out the textual feature «directive». It provides the user with information as to how to use target words **for**, that is, as **substitutes** for source words. An entry, then, turns out to be a «Sprachinstruktionstext» (Wiegand 1983, 105), a text giving instructions about language, or more directly, how to use language. It gives answers or advice in response to inquiries about how to fill gaps in continuous text understanding and, often enough, text recoding or translation. But these answers normally and necessarily abstract from the texts that contain the words. Here we come to the first level of fictitiousness: **the illusion that dictionary words function as text words**. In reality, speakers of two languages, or rather, their discoursive practices differ with regard to their sequential, context-specific and context-sensitive utterances. The dictionary breaks up this continuity, where each item is dependent upon and supported by other elements in the nearer and wider environment, into single blocks of meaning. The discourse fragments listed upon a page of dictionary text are, it is true, made up of the words that have historically evolved. Their sign shapes (Zeichengestalten) and their semantic content have been stored as social norms in the lexicon of a speech community. They make up the «Wortschatz», the treasury of words, as it is aptly put in German. They have been compiled in alphabetical order in the great monolingual dictionaries, such as the *Oxford English Dictionary (on Historical Principles)* or the *Grimmsche Deutsche Wörterbuch.*

But there is a striking difference between the monolingual and the bilingual dictionary text. The former pursues the strategy of **defining** its lemmata and **illustrating** their specific range of meaning by way of historical and contemporary quotations. They put the discourse fragments back into a kind of communicative continuum. This is particularly well put into practice by the various modern (monolingual) learners' dictionaries, which compete with each other in their attempts to supply the communicative reality of **words in context.** By contrast, the bilingual text dares to jump into a very different linguistic reality. It puts together what naturally never occurs together, since it is not shared in any communicative situation. A bilingual entry projects $L_1$ words onto $L_2$ words. The lexical stock of $L_1$ is represented from the point of view of $L_2$.

Incidentally, the projection of one language in terms of another can be effected in **four** different ways, which accounts for the well-known **directedness**, first described by Ščerba (1990), (see also Kromann, Rieber, Rosbach, 1984, in their paper read at The First Euralex Congress in Exeter 1983). **Active** or **passive** dictionaries attempt to bridge the gulf between $L_1$ and $L_2$ with the target language being either the user's foreign or native language respectively. Being aware of the «default setting» of a particular dictionary, to borrow a very apt computer metaphor, marks the *second* step in a realistic appraisal of the individual entries. Believing that any bilingual dictionary can present the same information both ways, that is for $L_1$ speakers as well as for $L_2$ speakers, is another fiction. Why? A passive dictionary, English-German for speakers of German for instance, the one I compiled myself, presupposes a native competence with regard to the comprehension, semantic and stylistic, of every $L_2$ item offered. An English user, on the other hand, would not have an equal comprehension of the German words placed in the $L_2$ position.

I shall return to this important distinction later. First, I must consider another alternative besetting the work of the lexicographer as well as intriguing the unsuspecting user. A bilingual dictionary always has to choose between **defining** the meaning of an $L_1$ item or **translating** it by way of $L_2$ material. Of course, one normally has to compromise between the two options. But dictionaries tend to streamline their policies and are either of the predominently defining, or of the translating, kind. If one looks more closely, however, the two procedures are intrincately linked together, often within a single entry.

Let us look at some examples where $L_1$ words and their meanings are either defined by **explanations** or **paraphrases**, or translated by **substitutions** or **reconstructions:**

Take the English compound *index-linking*, also used as a verb *to index-link* and, in particular, as an adjective *index-linked*. Since it is derived from *cost-of-living index*, **«Lebenshaltungskosten-Index»**, a good paraphrase would be **«Anpassung der Löhne und Gehälter an die gestiegenen Lebenshaltungskosten»**. The verb and adjective, however, are best translated by **«dynamisieren»** and **«dynamisch»**, e.g. **«dynamische Renten»** for *index-linked pensions*. Now what about titles such as the American *assistant professor*. Should I define **«niedrigste Stufe eines (amerikanischen) Professors»** or should I substitute it by **«Oberassistent»**, the roughly equivalent position in a German university? Or would just a loan-translation **«Assistenz-Professor»** do? The latter would no doubt tax the German reader's understanding of US university norms, or else raise the status of the person called **«Professor», «Assistenz-»** notwithstanding, considerably. A typical case of «promotion by dictionary», not fact, but fiction in action!

Another example of the definition/translation dichotomy is *jetborne*. We can **explain** it by **«mit einer Düsenmaschine befördert (Sachen)** *od* **reisend (Personen)»**. It will give a clear advice for the German user. Of course, he will still have difficulties **translating** *a jetborne businessman* as in *today's jetborne businessman, who often zips in and out of two or three cities in a single day* (Barnhart: 235). But the defining entry will help the competent speaker of German —remember my remarks about the passive dictionary— to lead him on to adequate translations such as **«ein moderner Geschäftsmann, der mit dem Düsenjet an einem Tage zwei oder drei Städten einen Blitzbesuch abstatten kann»**. The above definition is also flexible enough to enable the user to tackle the word in another context, e.g. *the President climbed aboard his* *jetborne White House for the flight back* (Barnhart: 235) which may be turned into **«der Präsident stieg in seine Regierungsmaschine** *od* **seinen White House Jet und begab sich auf den Rückflug»**. Clearly a case of how dictionary definitions, not translated entries help avoid fictions, but promote factual information.

The bilingual lexicographer is constantly torn between the Scylla of a cumbersome explanatory definition and the Charybdis of a too free translation. With both methods he runs the risk of distancing himself from communicative reality. In both cases he faces the *di-lemma* —in the original Greek sense of the word— of being either too abstract or too concrete, too much aloof from the real world or too much focused on a particular word. He is like a builder of the Tower of Babel engaged in working on different floors. Defining an $L_1$ item, abstracting from its down-to-earth sense and explaining its semantic potential, is like working high up on the upper floors of the Tower of Babel. Translating an $L_1$ word on the spot, substituting a unique equivalent and filling a semantic gap for the moment, is like toiling on the gound floor. Both procedures can be justified, in fact one cannot fail to employ the one as well as the other. But there is always a risk of not getting all the distinctions right from the view above with its thin semantic air, or of being overly specific on the ground level, of getting bogged down on a seemingly good translation but one which is, however, utterly inappropriate in a great number of other contexts. It's like a nasty fall from an upper floor of the Tower onto a sharp rock.

How can the lexicographer avoid the pitfalls of the builders of the Tower of Babel? Take the adjective *industrial*. There is (1) a straightforward link to the German **«industriell»**, such as in *industrial development* **«industrielle Entwicklung»**. This $L_2$ substitute is evidently to be preferred to the explanatory circumlocution **«die Industrie betreffend»**. Similarly, a translation by the determinant **«Industrie-»** is the only apt reconstruction in *industrial worker* **«Industriearbeiter»**. The paraphrase would prove more difficult, if we also take **«Industriediamant»** for *industrial diamond*. The definition would have to be more refined such as **«in der Industrie beschäftigt»** and **«in der Industrie verwendet»**. This would clutter the entry with too specific information. The German user would anyway, due to his native competence, make his own intelligent guesses as to when to say **«industriell»** and when **«Industrie-»**, or when to say both, e.g. **«industrielle Fertigung / Methoden / Anwendungsmöglichkeiten / Umwälzung / Revolution»** or **«industrielles Bauen / Potential»** as against **«Industrieabgas / -anlage / -ausstellung / -bahn / -gewerkschaft / -gigant / -kapi-tal / -kapitän / -kombinat / -konzern / -preis / -produkt / -produktion / -revier / -unternehmen / -ware / -wasser / -werk / -zentrum / -zweig** (all examples taken from the WDG (3, 1948-9). Several of the latter have variants with **«industriell»**, e.g. **«-abgas / -anlage / -kapital / -produkt / -produktion / -unternehmen / -zentrum»** –in short, the translation **«industriell / Industrie-»** of sememe or sense **1** of the English adjective *industrial*, i.e. «of things which relate to or are used in industry» (cf. Cobuild 1987, 743).

Similarly, sense **2** relevant in *industrial country / nation / town* should be rendered as **«Industrie-»** only. Here translation is fully compatible and sufficient although a defining paraphrase would bring out the marked difference in meaning, namely «having many or highly developed industries» (cf. OALDCE 1989, 636-7; LDCE 1987, 534). But significantly, German monolingual dictionaries do not make this distinction. They include this special sense among the alphabetic listing of the **«Industrie-»** compounds. Evidently, in German the additional meaning component «(industrially) highly developed» is not registered separately in the lexicon, but instantaneously taken into account in the respective compounds. Furthermore, it should be noted that it is never expressed just by the adjective **«industriell»**. A neat case of **factual** information supplied by a good bilingual dictionary instead of keeping up the **myth** of meaning distinctions prompted by different usages of the source language! More about this below.

But this is not the whole story about English *industrial*. A closer look at sense **1** will note meaning characteristics that are definitely absent in German whether **«industriell»** or **«Industrie-»**. LDCE defines sense **1** as «of industry and the people who work in it», ranking the collocations *industrial democracy / unrest / output* next to each other, i.e. as having one and the same meaning. Of course, this will not at all do in German. All the usages related to «people in industry» such as also *industrial action / climate / disputes / injury / insurance / psychology / relations / tribunal / trouble* as against the collocations of the *industrial output* subtype call for a clear distinction (in German only!) and seem to point to a paraphrase such as **«die in der Industrie Beschäftigten betreffend»**. But it is precisely in cases like this where the lexicographer has to search for explicitness. And in fact there are pertinent translation equivalents that get much closer to the facts of usage, i.e. **«Arbeits-, Arbeiter-, Betriebs-, betrieblich»**, triggering off in the native speaker typical German compounds like **«betriebliche Mitbestimmung, Arbeitsunruhen, Arbeitskampf (Streik), Arbeitsklima, Arbeitsstreitigkeiten / -zwistigkeiten, Arbeitsunfall / Betriebsunfall, Arbeitsunfall-Versicherung, Arbeitspsychologie, Arbeitsgericht, Arbeitsunruhen»**. But there are limits. A case in point is *industrial relations*, which, incidentally, gets a separate entry in both ALDCE and COBUILD emphasizing its semantic uniqueness. Here unspecified «people in industry» does not suffice. It refers specifically to **«dealings between employers and employees»**. The bilingual dictionary must resort to **«Beziehungen zwischen Arbeitgebern und Arbeitnehmern»**. COLLINS specifies even further **«Beziehungen zwischen Unternehmern und Gewerkschaften»**, which, I think, is perhaps overspecified, although this rendering may be perfectly legitimate in a translation of text containing the English phrase. At any rate, both versions function not only as skeleton definitions, but can actually serve as fully-fledged translation equivalents. Other examples indicative of the complexity of our bilingual entry *industrial* are, e.g. *industrial arts*, a «school subject dealing with methods of using tools and machinery in secondary and technical schools», may be «translated» as **«polytechnischer Unterricht»**, *industrial disease as* **«Berufskrankkeit»**. Again, *industrial school* even has two different translations depending upon two English senses, **«Gewerbe- / Berufsschule»** and **«(Jugend)Werkhof»**.

As our example was meant to demonstrate it certainly looks as if in recent years translation dictionaries are on the rise. One important reason seems to be, in my opinion, the desire among the growing number of modern users to get to the meaning of the unknown words by taking a short-cut, that is, by having the defining phrases cut down into the «real thing», the familiar words one can use as a native $L_2$ speaker and writer. But it is right here that the unwary user falls for the most serious illusion. Here fiction leads to the worst pitfalls. In order to avoid this trap one has to be very careful and approach the $L_2$ «correspondences» with great discretion. Here is my *third* step towards realism, and I will devote the remaining part of my paper to the problems related to the facts and fictions of the so-called «translation equivalents». As our discussion of the problems produced by the entry *industrial* has shown, quite a lot is demanded of the German user since it is impossible to print all the examples. So native competence will have to decide about **«industriell, Industrie-, Arbeits-, Arbei-**

**ter-, Berufs-, Gewerbe-»** as a suitable equivalent. The translation dictionary obviously cannot offer lexical equations which always fit. They fit only restricted contexts. In order not to overspecify or overtranslate, the user always has to be on the lookout for «better translations», i.e. those that fit a particular textual slot better.

Another example of university usage should put this problem into focus. Earlier I referred to the American *assistant professor*. Now I take the term *instructor*, defined in WEBSTER III as «a teacher in a college or university of a rank below any of the various grades of professor». A translation dictionary does not resort to this definition, among other things because an American professorial rank is not necessarily compatible with one in a German university. But what should it offer instead? «Equivalents» such as **«Dozent, Lektor, Lehrassistent, Lehrer im Hochschuldienst, wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter»**, which are, in fact, nothing but «quasi-equivalents». Or will *one* do? COLLINS and others give **«Dozent»**, indexed by «US». I doubt that this translation informs correctly, since the title **«Dozent»** signifies a much higher rank in a German university than US *instructor*. Thus the translation dictionary can lead the user astray. This is particularly so because translation equivalents evoke an atmosphere of genuine communicative needs. They even imply pragmatic assimilation where this may be altogether unjustified. (I have left out the other typically British sense of *instructor*, which is «one who instructs; a teacher; e.g. a teacher of a technical or practical subject <*a swimming instructor*>». Here the translations *«(Sport u.ä.)***Lehrer**» and «(Mil)**Ausbilder**» are perfectly OK.

The fact that translation dictionaries appear to be more user-friendly thus may really be no more than a first-sight impression. They strike the user as giving more directly useful guidance because defining dictionaries seem to offer no more than the most general information, leaving the user alone to hit upon the appropriate $L_2$ variant. The way out is not just the middle road, although it is often enough taken. The solution, if one should speak about an overall solution, is to a large extent to be sought in the understanding, or rather discretion, of the user. He or she has to be constantly aware that definitions, as well as selected translations, must never be confused with lexical equations. They are fictions. The actual facts have to be discovered by the discriminating user, who has to direct his attention to what the bilingual dictionary can sensibly be expected to achieve.

To put it more succinctly, the two or three translations selected by the bilingual lexicographer as $L_2$ equivalents should never be mistaken as **the** translation of an $L_1$ item. Instead the user is to take them as a very concrete piece of advice about how and in which direction to look for possibly more appropriate $L_2$ equivalents. In a nutshell, the target words on the right hand side of the «bilingual equation» are not primarily translations but should be taken as **translated cognitive orientations**. In fact, they do not represent translation equivalents at all, although there may be a few cases where they can indeed be treated as such. Rather they are, or should be, carefully selected **prototypical** lexical patterns. Provided that they are correctly chosen they are a kind of springboard. They supply «translational starting points» from which really adequate equivalents can then be found. It is these words that the user himself has to hit upon —and not necessarily those listed in the bilingual entry!— that may serve as candidates for lexical substitutes of $L_1$ words found in the target text, which triggered the lexical search in the first place. Hopefully, the $L_2$ words that the user discovers on the basis of his native competence —mind the passive dictionary mentioned earlier!— turn out to be the closest fits. This extra work on the side of the user is decisive. The term translation dictionary does not entail that it offers the needed translation. It points the way to the translation, no more. Who thinks otherwise again takes fiction for fact.

But here the real problem for the lexicographer begins. As is easily seen everything depends upon whether the one, two, at most three $L_3$ items presented in the dictionary are such that they can function as «springboards» from which the user can dive into the vast pool of his native lexical knowledge. Do they give him the orientation he needs to reach into the multilayered strata of the $L_2$ lexicon? What the few dictionary items must achieve is to help generate the great number of all kinds of $L_2$ words that may possibly stand for one $L_1$ lexical entry. This is why I called those target offerings **prototypical**. The ideal case is when the $L_2$ word standing for an $L_1$ word has the **prototypical effects** (Lakoff 1984, 11) that allow you to find the correct, appropriate, and compatible translation according a given context, a given text-type, and on the basis of the ($L_2$) user's cognitive and communicative experience and skill. I am expanding Rosch's and Lakoff's meaning of «prototypicality» by assuming it not to be restricted to the «central members of categories exhibit(ing) different cognitive characteristics than non-central members. They are called prototype effects» (Lakoff 1984, 11). In a bilingual dictionary, prototypical refers to the property of particular $L_2$ lexemes to represent potential «reference points» towards all other $L_2$ items that are either more general or more specific, more precise or more vague, more abstract or more concrete, more formal or more informal, more everyday or more indicative of a particular functional style, more common or more terminological, more rational or more expressive, in short, more inclusive or more exclusive of denotative or connotative meaning than any neighbouring member of the lexico-semantic continuum or field from which possible choices for replacing $L_1$ words and word groups are made.

The $L_2$ prototype, in my understanding of the term, exerts the same «prototypical effect» as the «central members» of a lexical category within *one* language. Lakoff describes these important features as follows:

> «Central members are recognized faster, and are learned earlier, are used more frequently, facilitating matching tasks, and are used... as 'reference point reasoning'. On the whole, central members seem to be used in comprehending the category as a whole. They therefore both aid in recognition, recall, and learning, and form the basis from which people generalize in certain situations.
>
> Prototype effects are superficial phenomena. They arise when some subcategory or member or submodel is used (often for some limited and immediate purpose) to comprehend the category as a whole. In other words, these are cases where a part (a subcategory or member or submodel) stands for the whole category —in reasoning, recognition etc.» (Ibid.)

With regard to the bilingual dictionary, now substitute what Lakoff calls «part (a subcategory or member or submodel)» by «$L_2$ items presented by the dictionary». From these «surface items» the user draws conclusions about, i.e. «reasons», «recognizes», «recalls», which other $L_2$ choices might «match» the meaning of the $L_1$ entry, in Lakoff's phrasing «the category as a whole». (Of course, I am always talking here not about the total meaning of a polysemous $L_1$ word, but to the respective sememe or sense to be dealt with within a complex bilingial entry.)

The dictionary, then, does not aim to be a direct source of information in the sense of providing an equivalence for an $L_1$ word, but wants to supply **prototypical instruction**. It offers indirect help that calls for **considered opinion,** not **inconsiderate identification**.

Let me try to illustrate the crucial point of my thesis by some examples. This will also give an idea of the enormous work that still has to go into establishing genuine **prototypical equivalents**, which will no doubt inspire empirical lexicographical research, in fact, open new horizons of contrastive methodology.

As a first approximation, the English verb *to incur* gets **prototypically translated** by the two German reflexive verbs **«sich zuziehen, auf sich laden»**. This verbalizes what in a defining dictionary would have to be clumsily paraphrased as **«durch bestimmte, oft selbst verschuldete Handlungen etwas Negatives** *od* **Unangenehmes bekommen»**. Compare the definition in LDCE (1987, 531) «to receive (esp. something unpleasant) as a result of one's actions» or the gloss in WDG **«zuziehen, (etw. durch eigene Schuld) bekommen»**, the latter reference «through one's own guilt» not being universally confirmed by German usage. As is well known, common words like *incur* are rarely given abstract definitions in a bilingual dictionary. This is precisely because translational prototypes seem to be suited to «immediate $L_2$ equivalents». In particular, the prototypicality resides in the «generative effects» produced by the two items with regard to potential other German equivalents. But this process is in fact very subtle, again presupposing $L_2$ competence.

Let us look at how this procedure, the user's exploitation of the prototypical effect, gets under way. In the sentence *He incurred an injury* German has to choose **«Er zog sich eine Verletzung zu»**. **«Auf sich laden»** would be wrong. It is used with another type of object, e.g. *He incurred a debt* becoming **«Er lud sich (eine) Schuld auf»**. Now we note that **«Schuld»** *(debt)* is compatible with both German equivalents, which allows us to make our first entry «even more prototypical» by saying **«(Schuld u.ä.) sich zuziehen, auf sich laden»**. Adding this «prototypical object» amounts to incorporating semantic features of the defining dictionary by way of translational means, i.e. concretely, with surface items.

The big question is however, how can the two German verbs trigger off other equivalents? By this I mean translations that are somehow «hidden under the surface». This is indeed the test of the prototypicality of **«sich zuziehen»** and **«auf sich laden»**. First we notice that there are surely quite a number of other objects that can be taken by **«sich zuziehen»** and **«auf sich laden»**, respectively. The former is used with various diseases and injuries. The latter as well as the former fit many abstract nouns such as **«Strafe»** *(punishment)*, **«Tadel»** *(reprimand)*, **«Unwillen»** *(irritation, displeasure)*, **«Zorn»** *(anger)*, **«Ärger»** *(annoyance)*, **«Haß»** *(hatred)*, or **«Vorwurf»** *(reproach)*. **«Sich zuziehen»** seems to occur more often. Evidently, this verb is «a bit more prototypical», which would, if space limitations in a dictionary should demand it, make **«auf sich laden»** almost redundant. But there are objects that follow quite different verbs! With *debts*, used in the plural, in German we get **«Schulden machen»** or **«in Schulden geraten»**. Then we have **«Gefahr laufen / sich aussetzen»** *(incur a danger)*, or perhaps more colloquially in English, *incur a risk* becoming **«ein Risiko eingehen»**. Equally, we have **«Verpflichtungen eingehen»** *(incur liabilities)*. But this object is also possible with the verb **«(jmdm) erwachsen»**. Thus one says **«mir erwachsen Verpflichtungen»** *(I incur liabilities)*. This verb is usual with **«Nachteile»** *(disadvantages)*, e.g. **«ihm erwuchsen viele Nachteile»** *(he incurred many disadvantages)*.

Again, «**Verlust**» *(loss)* demands «**erleiden**», e.g. «**Wir erlitten keinerlei Verluste**» *(We didn't incur any losses)*.

To be sure, these are not just stylistic nuances. Still it would be asking for the impossible if we were to demand that the (passive) bilingual dictionary list all these and more German verb exemplars that the native user can successfully predict from the prototypes «**sich zuziehen, auf sich laden**». It is rather up to the competent $L_2$ speaker to do this job, i.e. to match the meaning expressed by the prototype by means of the norms and thereby conventions of the lexical system of the target language. Interpreting the bilingual equation, offered by the entry, as no more and no less than a **prototypical correspondence** and deriving the instruction to search for non-prototypical, but nevertheless just as $L_2$-idiomatic equivalents, is the road away from the myth to the truth of the bilingual dictionary.

We can draw another lesson from this. It turns out that translation dictionaries **of the right kind** can have the same generating power as defining dictionaries. If *incur* had also been translated by «**geraten, sich aussetzen, laufen, machen, erwachsen, erleiden**» confusion instead, of prediction, would have been the result. There would not have been any **prototypical effects**, or at least, they would have been severely reduced.

There are, however, ways and means to enhance the usefulness of a bilingual dictionary by offering direct support for the user's discrimination. By borrowing the method of listing collocations from the monolingual dictionary we can supply exemplary help about how to generate appropriate $L_2$ items from prototypical words. Such props, facilitating the lexical «fanning out» of $L_2$ equivalents, should be put in brackets behind the prototypical $L_2$ words. In our entry *incur* we might have <*to incur displeasure* «**keine Gegenliebe erzeugen**»; *to incur expenses* «**Unkosten machen**»; *to incur a penalty* «**eine Strafe in Kauf nehmen (müssen)**»>. Translating these collocations is to be recommended, simply because they highlight $L_2$ equivalents deviating from the prototypical. By comparison, collocations illustrating «**sich zuziehen**» (*to incur an illness*), perhaps slightly archaic, and «**auf sich laden**» (*to incur a debt*) need not be translated at all. Finally, the lexicographer has to ask himself how he can be sure he has found the right prototypes. Here again, good advice can be gained from the monolingual $L_1$ (and, of course, also $L_2$) dictionaries. *The Shorter Oxford Dictionary*, for instance, paraphrases *incur* by *To run or fall into (some consequences, usually undesirable): to bring upon oneself* (SOD 1955, 986). This gloss contains semantic features that guide us on to identify markers such as [–PLANNED, –CONVENIENT] as well as [–DESIRED] for the verbal complement. The verb meaning presupposes them. The subject of the verb can always be characterized as [PATIENT] «**to whom something unplanned, inconvenient happens**». German «**sich zuzuziehen**» or «**sich aufzuladen**» invariably contain those features too. (The other verbs like «machen, laufen, etc.» do not!). Thus in normal language use **one cannot plan «sich zuziehen»** or «**sich aufladen**» for something pleasant or convenient. On the other hand, talking of an **unplanned** verbal action of «**sich zuziehen, sich aufladen**» would be a tautology. This is ample proof that the two German verbs share these very features in their semantic structure. Here we also have the underlying reason for the **prototypical effects**, which are not normally to be expected from verbs like «**machen, laufen, geraten**» etc, occur-ring only with certain objects («**Schulden, Gefahr**» etc.). The matter is clinched by sentences like «**Da hat er sich etwas Schönes aufgeladen/zugezogen**» which are clearly ironic because they violate their prototypicality.

Before I round up my paper with some concluding remarks about the theoretical status of prototypicality in bilingual lexicography, I must still say a few words with regard to another aspect of translation equivalents. Recognizing their limitations was what I called my *third* step towards realism, away from illusion. Yet what we discussed so far was somewhat simplified: One $L_1$ entry (with one sense or sememe, for that matter), was shown to have just one $L_2$ meaning, represented,hopefully, in prototypical fashion. This is the qualitative aspect. But what about the quantitative side? If we compare bilingual with monolingual dictionaries we come up with a surprise: the number of senses rarely coincide. As a rule, getting from one language to the other the meanings tend to multiply. The bilingual dictionary makes more sense distinctions than the monolingual one.

Let's take another look at our key example. The verb *incur* is split up into two to three different senses. COLLINS (1980, 557), e.g. distinguises **1. «zuziehen, auf sich ziehen; eingehen, laufen»** and **2. «erleiden, machen»**, LANGENSCHEIDT (1975, 324) **1. «sich zuziehen, auf sich laden, geraten»** and **2. «aussetzen».** All English and American (monolingual) dictionaries available to me register only one sense! Do bilingual make subtler distinctions? Why then do they disagree so much among each other? (To be quite fair there are also deviations in the number of senses in monolingual dictionaries but to a much lesser degree.) The answer is evidently closely related to what I already pointed out about the proliferation of translation equivalents. Trying to offer adequate $L_2$ renderings the lexicographer runs into more and semantically subtly differentiated correspondences. As a consequence he cannot help noting new semantic distinctions. Expressing the $L_1$ lexicon in terms of $L_2$ words must needs involve a certain verbosity, an attempt to get around non-identity by giving additional information. In the defining dictionary this extra information can be achieved by paraphrasing. In the translation dictionary the traditional way out is «sense inflation». What began as more appropriate $L_2$ rendering of the individual senses of an $L_1$ word in its various contexts more often than not leads to new sense orderings on the basis of the adduced, perfectly legitimate $L_2$ collocations. With the best of intentions to make the dictionary more user-friendly the entry is broken up into several lexico-semantic variants. One sememe is split into two or three. Before he could turn round the lexicographer has created (invented?) new senses. Facts turn into fictions again!

The multiplication of senses on the way from the source to the target language reflects a deeper uncertaintly besetting lexicography. This seeming «generosity» of the bilingual dictionary is a symptom of a general weakness or, at least, inconsistency with regard to the treatment of **meaning** altogether. The sorry state of semantic research must bear on the unsatisfactory handling of meaning in dictionaries. Almost one hundred years algo, Hermann Paul, in a seminal paper, read in the Bavarian Academy, dealing with the «Deutsche Wörterbuch» started by Grimm, had asked the crucial question «in welcher Weise ist die Bedeutung der Wörter anzugeben (how should we state the meaning of words)?» (Paul 1984). His question has not been answered yet. What the bilingual dictionary puts up for meanings are usually projections of $L_1$ «semantic content» onto $L_2$ «lexical material» with the latter getting immensely diversified to catch the context-bound sense ramifications. The number of equivalents on the right hand side of the entry always runs the risk of being mistaken for the number of senses. Of course, I am exaggerating. To be more precise, I should say, that some equivalents rightly qualify as sense indicators, others are «embellishments» or blur the uniqueness of a particular sense. But on closer scrutiny we discover that what shows up as several semes is more likely a mix-up of **prototypical** and **non-prototypical** translations. The latter usurp the status of the former. Remember how **«sich (einer Gefahr) aussetzen»** and **«(Verlust) erleiden»** —although seeming to supply useful information —in actual fact detract the user from identifying the prototypical character of **«sich zuziehen, auf sich laden»**. They are merely context-sensitive **exemplars** of the prototypical meaning of *incur*. From a semantic point of view, i.e. with regard to Paul's question «how to state the meaning of words», they do not deserve distinct listing as a second lexico-semantic variant, a second sememe or sense.

As is easily seen this «Gretchenfrage» of bilingual lexicography is even more relevant in the case of polysemous words. In this view the number of senses is identical with the number of prototype translations. It goes without saying that —as in the one-sense entry *incur— one* prototype may consist of two (or three) equally prototypical items! In other words, prototypicality, in order to be complex and rich enough to capture a particular $L_1$ sense, can rarely do with one $L_1$ equivalent only. So it is not the fact that **several** words serve to recast the meaning of **one** source word. It is rather, as I have stressed before, that the non-prototypical items, the ones that crowd the entry and/or create superfluous senses that have to be rooted out.

Take the adjective *imperative*. It is attributed three senses in English. So in German it should get three prototypical translations or listings. **1. «befehlend, gebieterisch, herrisch»** *<an imperative gesture>,* **2. «dringend, unbedingt nötig *od* erforderlich» 3. «Befehls- Imperatv-»** *<imperative mood>*. Now what about the collocation *imperative order*, translated as **«strikter Befehl»?** It is true that **«strikt»** is the «eigentliche» word for **«Befehl»**, it is the (most) appropriate translation equivalent. But nevertheless it is but a **collocational variant** of one on the three senses represented by the German prototypical adjectives. It does not stand for a new **4.** sense, but is no doubt fully covered by sense **1.** A sense expansion, on the other hand, would violate the facts and introduce a fictional sememe.

The case of English *inevitable* adds a new twist to our reasoning. At first sight, the entry poses no problems. Collocations such as *an inevitable result* or *defeat seemed inevitable* seem to warrant just *one* sense. COLLINS, for instance, takes this option (1980, 327). But when we come across uses like *his inevitable umbrella, the inevitable delays* we should have second thoughts. We have to cope with a new sense that, incidentally, is also stylistically marked as **colloquial**, sometimes also as **jocular**. OALD-CE registers this **2.** sememe as follows «so frequently seen, heard, etc. that it is familiar and expected» (1989, 638). LDCE also has this extra sense, although its gloss is less explicit: «which always happens, or is always present» (1987, 535), because it leaves out the subjective aspect («frequently seen, heard») that is so characteristc of the usage of sense **2.** Both also indicate another grammatical rstriction, namely that the adjective may only be used in this sense in attributive positions. Strangely enough, the larger LDEL (1984, 751) as well as the SOD (1955, 997) do not list this second sememe, which goes to show that the lexicographer cannot rely on the size of his reference sources alone. The bigger more encyclopedic dictionaries may have chosen to eliminate the «subjective colloquialism» for another reason, which will perhaps become obvious from the German rendering of sense **2.**: **umg**, oft **scherzhaft** «unvermeidlich (dazugehörend), üblich, obligat» *<tourists with their inevitable cameras* **«Touristen mit ihren unvermeidlichen Kameras»**; *he wore his inevitable tie* **«er hatte (natürlich) seinen üblichen Schlips dran»;** *she asked the inevitable questions* **«sie stellte die obligaten Fragen»>.** It is obvious that there are no clear-cut **logical** differences between «**unvermeidlich**» **1.** and **2.** But Hermann Paul in his address already mentioned made the pertinent remark:

> «Die verschiedenen Bedeutungen eines Wortes müssen so geschieden werden, wie sie das Sprachgefühl scheidet, nicht nach logischen Kategorien» (the different senses of a word should be kept apart according to the 'Sprachgefül' —our cognition as well as our intuition— and not on the basis of logical categories) (Paul 1984, 70).

Prototypicality is not controlled by logical considerations. it is, so to say, closer to linguistic reality, which is about what happens when we communicate, not what we set up in terms of clear-cut, yes-or-no logical categories. Although sense **2.** of *inevitable* is logically entailed by sense **1.** its being distinct is a linguistic fact. Not distinguishing it would be a lexicographical fiction.

The interplay of logical and communicative factors is a constant concern of bilingual dictionaries. Compare, for instance, the greater —communicative— distinctions in German as against English *sprinkle* and *pour*, viz. «**spritzen**» used with liquids and «**streuen**» with solids (sand, powder). German appears to distinguish more. Two sememes are the result, with prototypes such a «**spritzen**» having non-prototypical equivalents around them such as «**sprühen, sprengen, netzen, sprenkeln**». Similarly, English *pour* is to be translated into German «**gießen**» und «**schütten**». Here quantity is the relevant condition, *pour* and «**schütten**» being used for larger quantities as against *sprinkle* and «**spritzen**». But the symmetry is skewed, since German «**schütten**», in contrast to «**streuen**», is appropriate with both solid *and* liquid objects. English and German speakers have happened to cast common experience in different lexical moulds.

Such discrepancies constitute the daily fare of the bilingual lexicographer. He can only hope to bring order into the contrastive relations between the vast lexical networks of two languages by concentrating on prototypical correspondences. Thus he compromises between retrieving $L_1$ meanings and $L_2$ substitutions by achieving prototypical translational equivalence. To put it in terms of the main hypothesis of my paper, the bilingual dictionary is a brave attempt to capture the copious complexity of semantic content stored in the $L_1$ lexicon by means of $L_2$ prototypes. Definitions and too direct translations, however fitting in a specific context, abstract from or miss the facts of communication and cannot help creating fictions. Prototypes provide the **key to the general as well as to the particular.** They help to comprehend the meaning as well as to find an equivalent. They are cognitive orientation and translation in one. They evoke a mental image which serves as a criterion for the user to judge the translation he has in mind for a particular context on the grounds of his $L_2$ competence. A prototype does not claim to be *the one and only* translation, that would be fiction, it is intended to lead the user to *the* translation that is textually compatible, i.e. that fits grammatically, lexically, stylistically, pragmatically. A prototype, then, is a kind of cognitive schema, a lexical model. It supplies a potential translation, *not* the typical or even the ideal translation. It gives the user a clear notion of one sense of a word without inundating him in notional complexity. Of course, the prototype translation cannot incorporate all semantic features and aspects of an $L_1$ lexeme, which may be relevant in all its uses. It puts the meaning of a lexeme into focus. Contextually determined synonyms and quasisyn-onyms are not only not excluded but are to be expected and to be looked for.

One last and more general point. Prototypicality is not only a property of selected bilingual translation equivalents, giving a concrete linguistic shape to as many as possible or necessary semantic components (otherwise singled out in a definition). It does more. It integrates the $L_2$ word also into an $L_2$ **frame**, which —according to Fillmore— is a kind of cognitive program or scenario helping a speech community to implement the interpretation and communication of their experiences and ideas (Fillmore 1976). One final illustration. English *heat* shares at least two **frames**, namely, *heat 1* talking about something being hot, e.g. temperature or the weather, and *heat 2* conversing about the various possible, not necessarily high degrees of temperature. German prototypical translations are «**Hitze**» and «**Wärme**», respectively. What in English is lexically implicit is made explicit in German. I would even propose the hypothesis that the number of semes in a lexeme is coextensive with the number of frames this lexeme accesses. The knowledge representation made possible by a word is achieved by its prototypical senses and not by the fictitious «total meaning» of a polysemous lexeme (or **semanteme**). The bilingual dictionary, as we have seen, makes the real distinctions explicit by giving the prototypical translation of the respective senses covered up in the source items. And the translation has to be chosen in such a way that the users are able to integrate the particular semantic quanta seamlessly into their respective knowledge frames conditioned by the lexical norms prevalent in the targent language.

In his book on «Mental Models» Johnson-Laird quotes a telling thought of Paul Valery (Johnson-Laird, 1983, 205), which, I think, provides a very apt summary of my paper. The poet who was also a great thinker on language once compared the understanding of individual words to the act of crossing an abyss on a very narrow plank. Everything is fine if he keeps moving —the plank will just support him— but if he should stop to think, the plank will break beneath him.

The bilingual dictionary by definition builds planks from one language to the other. And consulting it is precisely like stopping to think about what word A means in terms of B. The dictionary maker has to ensure that the plank is wide and firm enough that the unavoidable pausing, the «stepping out», that is the taking of the $L_1$ word out of context, does not hinder the continuous sense comprehension of the text more than absolutely necessary. Using the dictionary must by no means lead to the breakdown of the text meaning. Precisely at this point the prototypical translation serves its purpose on the right-hand side of the «word equation». Every entry should have an internal structure that approximates the communicative equivalence of words in texts by means of prototypically translated senses of the $L_1$ word. Thus it systematically and effectively helps to debunk the fiction of rigid formal equations including the dubious option of enumerating far too many deceptively synonymous variants next to each other. What the bilingual dictionary aims at is a kid of «optimum programming»: it adopts the strategy of optimating the search for the right ($L_2$) word not by pandering to the user's illusion of having found it already in the entry but by guiding him on to look for it consistently using the lexical powers of his native ($L_2$) competence. It was my intention to make you again aware of the pitfalls and prospects of the bilingual dictionary. Gaining such realistic insight is what I had in mind when I called my paper fact and fiction of the bilingual dictionary.

## References

FILLMORE, Charles J. (1976), «Frame semantics and the nature of language», *Annals of the New York Academy of Science*, vol. 280, 20-31.

GRIMM, Jacob (1984): «Über das pedantische in der deutschen sprache». Jacob Grimm, *Reden in der Akademie*. Ed. by Werner Neuman und Hartmut Schmidt, Berlin, 119-146.

HUMBOLDT, Wilhelm von (1909). Introduction to «Aeschylos Agamemnon metrisch», translated by Wilhelm von Humboldt, Leipzig, 1916, quoted after W. v. Humboldts gesammelte Schriften, 1. Abteilung, Band 8, Berlin, 119-146.

JOHNSON-LAIRD, P. N. (1983), *Mental Models Towards a Cognitive Science of Language*, Cambridge.

KROMANN, Hans-Peder, RIIBER, Theis, ROSBACH, Poul (1984), «Active and 'passive' bilingual dictionaries. The Ščerba concept reconsidered». R. K. Hartmann (Ed.), *LEXeter '83 Proceedings, Papers from the International Conference on Lexicography at Exeter*, 9-12 September 1983, Tübingen, 207-215.

LAKOFF, George (1982), *Categories and cognitive Models. Cognitive Science Program*, University of Berkeley (mimeographed).

PAUL, Hermann (1984), *Über die Aufgaben der wissenschaftlichen Lexikographie mit besonderer Rücksicht auf das deutsche Wörterbuch. Sitzungsberchte der königlich bayrischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*. München, 53-91.

ŠČERBA, L. V. (1940), «Opyt obščej teorij leksikografij». *Leksikografičeskij sbornik* «, 89-117.

SCHLEIERMACHER, Friedrich (1883), *Ueber die verschiedenen Methoden des Uebersetzens*. Paper given in the Royal Academy of Sciences on June 24, 1813. F. Schleiermachers sämtliche Werke, Dritte Abteilung: Zur Philosophie, 2. Vol. ed. by Reimer. München, 207-245.

WIEGAND, Herbert Ernst (1983) «Ansätze zu einer allgemeinen Theorie der Lexikographie von heute und das Wörterbuch von morgen». *Linguistische Studien*, Reihe A, Berlin, 92-127.

### Dictionaries

BARNHART (1973). *A Dictionary of New English. New Words of the English Language*. Clarence L. Barnhard, Sol Steinmetz, Robert K. Barnhart (Eds.). Bronxville, N.Y., Berlin, München, Zürich.

COBUILD (1987), *Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary*, London, Glasgow.

COLLINS (1980) *German-English, English-German Dictionary*, London, Glasgow.

LANGENSCHEIDT (1975), *Langenscheidts Großwörterbuch Englisch-Deutsch*, Berlin.

LDCE (1987) *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, Harlow.

LDEL (1984) *Longman Dictionary of the English Language*.

OALDCE (1989) *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, Oxford.

SOD (1955) *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, Oxford.

WDG (1977) *Worterbuch der Deutschen Gegenwartssprache*, Berlin.

WEBSTER 3 (1965) *Webster's Third International Dictionary*, Springfield, Mass.