
Importance of the Issue of Partial Equivalence for Bilingual Lexicography and Language Teaching

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Abstract

The paper addresses the paramount importance of the issue of semantic equivalence of interlingual synonyms for various aspects of general linguistic, lexicological, and lexicographic research and related activities.

Drawing on the studies conducted by prominent lexicologists and lexicographers, the authors highlight several aspects making the successful solution of the problem of semantic equivalence especially important: (a) the production of adequate, comprehensive bilingual dictionaries reflecting whole spectrum of semantic fields of words included in their wordlists and thus bridging the divide between semantic systems of various languages; (b) the role of such dictionaries for successful acquisition of foreign languages; and (c) the role of dictionaries with maximum number of native equivalents of foreign headwords in their word-entries, for the preservation of lexical richness of languages and linguistic diversity in general.

In the article the authors also describe the methods they have been using for several decades in order to interconnect the semantic systems of Georgian and English. The semantic asymmetry between these languages and different methods of its treatment are shown on the examples extracted from the Comprehensive English-Georgian Dictionary (CEGD).

Keywords: partial equivalence; bilingual lexicography; Comprehensive English-Georgian Dictionary; linguistic diversity

The impetus to writing this article was given by the paper of Arleta Adamska-Sałaciak (2014) “Bilingual Lexicography: Translation Dictionaries”, discussing among many other issues related to bilingual dictionaries, the role of the bilingual dictionaries in the teaching of foreign languages. For several years, we have been trying to raise the same issue in our country. Professor Adamska-Sałaciak’s paper helped us realize that Georgia is not the only country where the problem is high on the agenda. In order to highlight this question we need to address the problem of semantic anisomorphism between languages and the importance of successful solution of this problem for the production of adequate bilingual dictionaries. The paper describes the problem of equivalence in the way as we had to face it while working on the Comprehensive English-Georgian Dictionary (CEGD), taking at the same time into consideration the opinions of the linguists who had also studied and written about the problem of linguistic equivalence. In our article we also describe the methods we have been using for more than three decades in order to bridge the divide between the semantic systems of Georgian and English and to solve the issue of lexico-semantic equivalence between the two languages. The paper demonstrates, why the dictionaries, composed by use of such methods are in our opinion vitally important not only for translators, but also for the learners of

foreign languages. We also discuss the role of bilingual dictionaries in protecting the lexical richness of languages and thus preserving the linguistic diversity.

1. Background

For decades, the issue of semantic equivalence has elicited the interest of many renowned lexicologists and lexicographers, who discussed it in their papers, articles and lectures presented on various linguistic fora. For instance, the Dictionary of Lexicography by R. R. K. Hartmann and G. James defines EQUIVALENCE as ‘The relationship between words or phrases, from two or more languages, which share the same meaning’ (Hartmann & James 1998). The authors proceed to state that ‘Because of the problem of anisomorphism, equivalence is ‘partial’ or ‘relative’ rather than ‘full’ or ‘exact’ for most contexts’ (*ibid.*), thus outlining the very essence of the issue of equivalence as it is perceived by lexicologists and lexicographers.

Various descriptions and classifications of equivalence and equivalents have been proposed by scholars who had to address the said issue of semantic equivalence of interlingual synonyms (i.e. ‘words or phrases, from two or more languages, which share the same meaning’, according to the above quotation). Prof. Rufus H. Gouws, author of publications on lexicography, singles out three principal types of equivalents (which we should term as equivalents classified on the *qualitative level*). In particular, Mr. Gouws writes: “Three major types of equivalent relations prevail, i.e. full equivalence, partial equivalence and zero equivalence. These different relations of equivalence confront lexicographers with different challenges to ensure that the users will be able to achieve an optimal retrieval of information from a given dictionary article” (Gouws & Prinsloo 2008). It is interesting to note, that in his article Mr. Gouws mainly addresses the problem of zero equivalence, describing some possible ways of rendering country- and culture-specific phenomena in bilingual dictionaries.

The American scholar of Czech descent Ladislav Zgusta (1971), styled as “the twentieth-century godfather of lexicography” by the Dutch lexicographer Piet van Sterkenburg (2003), distinguished between the *equivalents of meaning*, he otherwise termed as *explanatory* or *descriptive equivalents* (serving as headwords for dictionary entries) and *translational*, otherwise *contextual* or *insertable equivalents* (appearing in the illustrative phrases of a dictionary entry to better highlight the meaning within the context of the entire phrase). Such approach, in our opinion, constitutes the qualification of equivalents on the *functional level*, since they are distinguished with regard to their function within a dictionary word-entry. This approach, as we believe, has considerable practical, lexicographic (rather than abstractly theoretical and lexicological) relevance. We also believe that Zgusta’s dichotomy: explanatory versus contextual / translational equivalents can serve as some sort of useful guideline for practising lexicographers, especially in complicated cases when above-mentioned culture-specific phenomena, or notions and concepts from a given source language, not lexicalized in respective target language, are involved.

The Polish lexicologist, lexicographer and specialist in the history of linguistics, Arleta Adamska-Sałaciak (2010), whom we have already mentioned above, in her article entitled “Examining Equivalence”, highlights the necessity of the adoption of certain creative approach to the process of determining the degree of semantic equivalence between interlingual synonyms: “[...] equivalence judgements – like all similarity judgements – are creative processes in the mind of equivalent-seeker (more generally, the comparison-maker) [...]. As a result, the outcomes not only show more inter-subjective variation, but are also less stable for the same individual on different occasions.” A few pages below, Ms. Adamska-Sałaciak mentions “equivalence – understood as a broad spectrum of relations, from similarity to identity [...] (Adamska-Sałaciak 2010: 403)”. This demonstrates how complex and even ambiguous the issue of equivalence may be.

Responding to some critical and sometimes even nihilistic views on the very existence of semantic equivalence as such, the author concludes: “All in all [...]: despite the lack of one universal definition of equivalence, and despite the (not unrelated) fact that the equivalents found in bilingual dictionaries are normally less than perfect, **there is nothing inherently wrong with the notion of equivalence** [...] (emphasis added). Equivalence is likely to remain a concept central to bilingual lexicography. The foundations of our discipline would be much more shaky without it.” (Adamska-Sałaciak 2010: 404).

2. Semantic Asymmetry between Languages

2.1 Semantic Assymetry between English and Georgian

We will resort to a concrete example to illustrate this issue. In the paper semantic asymmetry is discussed at the lexical unit level, i.e. the level of individual lexical-semantic variants of a polysemous word. What is the correlation between the English word ‘rough’ and its Georgian equivalent *ukheshi*? The definition of ‘rough’ in the Oxford English Dictionary on historical principles (OED) reveals the following components of its meaning:

(1) **rough** ‘having a surface diversified with small projections, points, bristles, etc., so as to be harsh or disagreeable to the touch; not even or smooth’.

Apart from stating that the surface is not even or smooth, the definition of the English word also points to the reasons of its being uneven - small projections or points or bristles, etc. As a result of such diversified reasons, ‘rough’ in this meaning can be used with the following nouns: road, edges, cloth, skin, hands, *etc.*

The definition of the Georgian counterpart of ‘rough’ is looked up in the Explanatory Dictionary of the Georgian Language (the so-called KEGL). KEGL defines *ukheshi* in the following way:

(2) *uxeshi* ‘which is not tender, rigid; not processed, unrefined’.

As can be seen from this definition, there is no indication of the reasons for not being even like it is in the definition of OED. Consequently Georgian *ukheshi* is not the equivalent of English ‘rough’ in all contexts, given below:

(3) ‘rough road’ *oghrochoghro gza* (lit. bumpy road); ‘rough edges’ *ustsormastsoro kideebi* (lit. uneven edges); ‘rough skin’ *khorkliani kani* (lit. calloused skin); ‘rough cloth’ *mkise ksovili* (lit. coarse cloth).

Another example of English ‘restless’ and its Georgian corresponding word *mousvenari*.

Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (OALD) defines the word ‘restless’ in the following way:

(4) **restless** ‘unable to stay still or be happy where you are, because you are bored or need a change’.

Like the OED definition discussed above the OALD definition points to the reasons, why someone is unable to stay still or be happy: he/she is bored with his/her situation and lifestyle, or needs a change. Consequently, the word can be used in the following contexts:

(5) The children had been indoors all day, and were getting restless;
The audience was becoming restless;
After five years in the job, he was beginning to feel restless.

KEGL gives the following definition of the Georgian word *mousvenari*:

(6) *mousvenari* ‘Who or which can find no rest, cannot stay calm’ (KEGL).

The meaning of *mousvenari* does not contain the indication of the reasons for not being able to stay still. As a result, the illustrative phrase ‘the audience was becoming restless’ is translated in Georgian not by *mousvenari*, but by *motminebas kargavda* (lit. was losing patience), while in the third sentence ‘after five years in the job, he was beginning to feel restless’ **restless** is translated in Georgian by *guls ver udebda* (lit. could not lay his heart to).

Such examples may be cited *ad infinitum*. This disparity between the seemingly similar words of the two languages represents a linguistic regularity and is a well-known fact to any proficient linguist. As a result of this, the semantic structure of an English word corresponds to some part of that of a Georgian word, whereas its other parts relate to completely different Georgian words, requiring the use of different Georgian words in the process of translation.

2.2 Semantic Asymmetry between English and Some Other European Languages

Semantic asymmetry between English (which is an Indo-European language) and Georgian – a language isolate spoken in the Caucasus, should not seem quite unexpected. On the other hand, in many cases even the lexical units from very common and frequently used vocabulary strata display lexical and semantic anisomorphism even in the most closely related languages. For instance, one would expect to find evidence of relatively high-degree lexico-semantic symmetry or parallelism when comparing, say, the semantics of the English adjective ‘fragile’ and its counterparts in other European (mostly Germanic) languages. In reality, the semantic fields of these seemingly close synonyms from English and other languages (if we should choose to represent them in the form of a Venn diagram) are showing relatively small area of overlapping of their semantic fields, thus allowing us to reiterate that, like in many other cases, there is only *partial equivalence* in evidence here. Such asymmetry may be due to the high incidence of multiple synonyms with approximately same lexico-semantic *valeur* in each particular language (e.g. English ‘fragile’, ‘brittle’, ‘breakable’, ‘fine’, ‘delicate’, *etc.*; Swedish ‘*bräcklig*’, ‘*spröd*’, ‘*skör*’, ‘*bruten*’; German ‘*brüchig*’, ‘*zerbrechlich*’, ‘*spröde*’; Dutch ‘*breekbaar*’, ‘*broos*’, ‘*onbestendig*’, *etc.*).

More specifically, the German for ‘fragile’ or ‘breakable’ is ‘*spröde*’ (e.g. “*sprödes Glas* fragile glass”); but in order to translate ‘*spröde Fingernägel*’ we need another English adjective, synonymous with ‘fragile’, *viz.* ‘brittle’ (**brittle** fingernails); translating ‘*spröde Haut*’ or ‘*spröde Lippen*’ we would need to use adjectives other than ‘fragile’ or ‘brittle’ and to say ‘**crispy**’ or, maybe, simply ‘**dry** skin/lips’; ‘*spröde Gotik-Mauern*’ (The Sketch Engine 2003: deTenTen10) have to be rendered approximately as ‘**delicate**’, ‘**subtle**’ or ‘**fine** Gothic walls’. Conversely, in other contexts the English adjective ‘fragile’ may be matched up by German equivalents such as ‘*brüchig*’, ‘*zerbrechlich*’/‘*gebrechlich*’, and so on.

Similarly, Swedish has multiple equivalents corresponding to the English adjective ‘fragile’, such as ‘*skör*’, ‘*spröd*’, ‘*bräcklig*’, ‘(lätt) *brytbar*’, ‘*ömtålig*’, *etc.* – the adjectives with slightly different shades of meaning determining their application in various specific contexts or situations. E.g. “*skör* is fragile ice”; “*ett skört vinglas* a fragile wineglass”; “*en ömtålig vas* a fragile vase”; “*bräckliga möbler* fragile furniture”, “*sprött porslin* fragile porcelain”. Likewise, other English synonyms of ‘fragile’, such as ‘brittle’, ‘breakable’, ‘frail’, *etc.* may each have multiple context-specific equivalents in Swedish.

Very similar examples can be quoted from the Dutch language as well, where the adjective ‘*breekbaar*’ (approx. meaning ‘breakable’ or ‘fragile’) may require different English equivalents for their different contexts, as clearly demonstrated by the following data retrieved from a parallel Dutch-English corpus (The Sketch Engine 2003: DGT, Dutch): “*breekbaar ladingen* fragile loads”; “*breekbare producten* brittle products”; “*breekbaar glas* breakable glass” and so on.

What we witness in this particular case, is another instance of small-scale or limited-extent overlapping of the semantic fields of the Dutch *'breekbaar'* (and synonyms thereof) on the one hand, and the corresponding English adjective *'fragile'* (and other synonymous English adjectives) on the other hand.

As mentioned above, there are three possible types of equivalence between and among interlingual synonyms, namely (a) complete equivalence; (b) partial equivalence; and (c) zero equivalence. Statistically, the instances of complete equivalence between interlingual synonyms are fairly rare. On the contrary, zero equivalence, in cases of culture-specific or other concepts/lexical units having markedly unique semantic profile, is encountered very frequently. Cases of zero equivalence however do not pose any insurmountable problems for lexicographers – their meanings can be expressed in target language by means of the combined use of explanatory and translational/insertable equivalents [see Chapter 3 below]. Comparing semantic profiles of interlingual synonyms from various European languages, we mostly encounter the cases of different degrees of *partial equivalence*. In fact, it is partial equivalence which makes lexicographers have major difficulties in finding the exact matches in a target language for the words in a source language, as far as multiple shades of meanings of relatively but not fully synonymous lexical units (as it has been shown above) are making the task of finding the exact and most suitable correspondence invariably complicated. Thus, in most cases it is the problem of partial equivalence which the lexicographers have to address in the course of their work.

3. Treatment of Equivalence in the CEGD

The Board of Editors of CEGD developed different techniques for dealing with the problem of equivalence back in the 1980s independent of the lexicographic theories and practices of European lexicographers formulated in the works of Hartmann (2007), Zgusta (1984), Snell-Hornby (1984), Neubert (1990), Sundström (1992) and others.

In order to better clarify our point, we would like to give here some examples. We have adduced above a meaning of the English adjective *'rough'* (3), which requires different Georgian equivalents in different contexts: *'rough road'* *oghrochoghro gza* (lit. bumpy road); *'rough edges'* *ustsormastsoro kideebi* (lit. uneven edges); *'rough skin'* *khorkliani kani* (lit. calloused *skin*); *'rough cloth'* *mkise ksovili* (lit. coarse cloth).

What is the equivalent of the English adjective *'rough'* in this particular sense in Georgian? *oghrochoghro* (lit. bumpy)? *ustsormastsoto* (lit. uneven)? *mkise* (lit. coarse)? *dakozhrebuli* (lit. calloused)?

The above-cited words are translational equivalents of *'rough'* in specific contexts, they are words with more specific contents and do not equate with the definition of *'rough'* cited above in the definition of OED. *oghrochoghro* (lit. bumpy), *ustsormastsoto* (lit. uneven), *mkise*, (lit. coarse), *dakozhrebuli* (lit. calloused) are translational/contextual equivalents of *'rough'*, whereas the Georgian equivalent of the English meaning, the *'surrogate equivalent'*, in the terminology of Hartmann and James, is created with a small definition-type equivalent: *'ustsormastsoro, khorkliani, ukheshi/aragluvi zedapiris mkone* (lit. uneven, of rough/coarse surface)'. The entry for *'rough'* looks the following way in the CEGD:

(7) **Rough:** *ustsormastsoro, khorkliani, ukheshi/aragluvi zedapiris mkone* (lit. uneven, of rough/coarse surface); **rough road** *oghrochoghro gza* (lit. bumpy road); **rough edges** *ustsormastsoto kideebi* (lit. uneven edges); **rough hands** *ukheshi / dakozhrebuli khelebi* (lit. rough / calloused hands); **rough skin** *khorkliani kani* (lit. calloused *skin*); **rough cloth** *mkise ksovili* (lit. coarse cloth).

Thus, in the entries of CEGD we distinguish: **an equivalent of meaning** and **translational / contextual equivalents**. The editors of the CEGD have developed a technique of combining equivalents of meanings of lexical units with translational / contextual equivalents presented in different illustrative phrases and sentences selected for entries. **Equivalents of meaning** describe English meanings on a more general, systemic level of the two languages, while translational equivalents provide good, literary translations of English phrases and sentences into Georgian in particular contexts, thus providing different single contextual equivalents for an English headword. This treatment, to our mind, is exactly what is suggested by Ladislav Zgusta in his paper 'Translational Equivalence in a Bilingual Dictionary'. Zgusta discusses an entry for the transitive verb *fray* from the English-Russian Dictionary of E. A. M. Wilson (1982), where the headword is followed by a colon and concrete examples of collocations (frayed cuffs, frayed collar/rope, the carpet is badly frayed, my nerves are frayed) with their Russian translations and not a real equivalent that could be used in different contexts.

[...] would it not be useful if he [the user] were offered not only these excellent, absolutely colloquial translations, but also a Russian explanation of what *frayed* at least roughly means, say, 'damaged by wear and tear', which he could use in absence of a better, smoother Russian expression [...] this reflection brings us to the point where we started: there is a tension between the translational equivalent of the entryword and the explanation of its meaning (Zgusta 1987).

There are certain similarities between what we call equivalents of meanings, and '[...] translated cognitive orientations; [...] prototypical lexical patterns; [...] translational starting points' of Albrecht Neubert (1990: 34). 'It turns out that translation dictionaries of the right kind can have the same generating power as defining dictionaries', writes A. Neubert (1990: 37).

'Looking at language both as system and as text (or, if you like, as *langue* and *parole*), bilingual lexicography thus straddles the domains of linguistics and translatology', writes Arleta Adamska-Salaciak (2010: 389), thus stressing the necessity of demarcation of equivalence on the systemic level, as well as contextual level. In her article, Adamska-Salaciak summarises all the variety of terminology for equivalence, applied by different scholars: explanatory (descriptive) – translational (insertable) of Zgusta; prototypical vs textual equivalents of Hausmann; systemic vs translation equivalents of Hausmann and Werner; cognitive – translational of Piotrowski; explanatory vs translational of Svensen (2010 : 393)

3.1 Equivalent of Meaning

3.1.1 Definition-type equivalent

One of the ways of creating an equivalent of meaning in the CEGD is a small definition-type equivalent, or a small definition combined with one or two translational equivalents, as was the case with the entry of **rough** (7), discussed above.

(8) One of the meanings of the verb **strip** has the following definition-type equivalent in Georgian: *tsartmeva, chamortmeva, risame gareshe datoveba* (lit. to remove / take away something, to leave without something). Another meaning of the same verb is explained in Georgian as: *motsileba, moshoreba, atsla, adzroba zedapiridan* (lit. to remove, to rip off from the surface).

As was mentioned above, such equivalents of meaning are combined with translational / contextual equivalents given in different contexts, which usually require different Georgian words in translation.

3.1.2 Explanatory additions

Equivalents of meaning may be created with the help of some additional explanations in brackets.

(9) One of the meanings of the polysemous verb **rough** is: ‘having large and dangerous waves (of sea)’. This English meaning can be rendered by the Georgian equivalent *abobokrebuli* (lit. in an uproar/rage). As this Georgian verb can be used with different nouns, the equivalent of meaning is supplied with additional information in brackets, ‘said of a sea’ - *abobokrebuli (ithkmis zghvis shesakheb)*.

Such additional clarifications are frequent in the CEGD.

3.1.3 General Equivalents

Equivalents of meaning are created with two or more synonymous words in Georgian, which have highly explanatory power.

(10) Georgian verbs *gaputcheba*, *dazianeba* (lit. to spoil, to damage) are selected as Georgian equivalents of meaning for the English verb **to mar**. Georgian verbs render very well the general meaning of the English verb **to mar**. Nevertheless, these Georgian verbs are not used in any of the contexts provided for this English verb in the entry. In the illustrative phrases: **to mar one’s joy; to mar one’s happiness; small-pox marred her face; smth. mars the beauty of the landscape** - the entry word **to mar** is translated by different Georgian contextual equivalents: *chamtsareba* (lit. ‘embittering’); *chrdilis miqeneba* (lit. ‘casting shadow’); *dakenkva* (lit. ‘disfiguring with pock-marks’); *daushnoeba* (‘making smb., smth. ugly’).

Sometimes, synonymous Georgian words may be used in some illustrative phrases but not in all contexts. But still they have enough explanatory power to be used as equivalents of meaning.

(11) Georgian equivalents of meaning for the English adjective **delicate** are: *dakhvetsili*, *natiphi* (lit. refined, elegant). These Georgian equivalents are also translational / contextual equivalents in some cases: **delicate taste, delicate lace, delicate features**, but not in the contexts: **delicate mind, delicate hint, delicate wine, delicate figure, delicate fingers** where the use of other Georgian words is required.

3.1.4 Illustrative phrases and sentences

As one of the main techniques, developed by the editors of the CEGD is combining equivalents of meanings of lexical units with translational/contextual equivalents presented in different illustrative phrases and sentence, the **illustrative material** becomes vitally important for the CEGD and is heavily relied upon. On the one hand, context is necessary in order to provide dictionary users with contextual equivalents of an English word, which are indispensable for adequate, competent translation. On the other hand, the editors of the CEGD have always regarded illustrative material as an important component of highlighting the meaning of English words. In many cases, the meaning of a word is fully revealed by means of illustrative material.

(12) One of the meanings of the English verb **to reverberate**, according to OED and OALD is: ‘to have a strong effect on people for a long time or over a large area’, ‘to have continuing and serious effects’, ‘often negative effects...’.

The Georgian equivalent of meaning: *didi gamoxmaurebis kona*, *didi zegavlenis mokhdena* (lit. to have great response, to have great influence) does not reveal the above-mentioned components of the English meaning, they are only revealed with the help of the following contexts: **the surge in US share prices reverberated across the global financial world** - shows one component of the English meaning, namely: ‘to have a strong, often negative effect on people over a large area’; whereas the second illustration - **the events of the September 11 will reverberate through history** - highlights the second aspect of the English definition, namely ‘to have a strong effect on people for a long time’, ‘to have continuing and serious effects’.

There are cases when equivalents of meaning and translational equivalents are the same, undoubtedly the combination of different techniques can also be applied, but the most important treatment of this problem is to combine two types of equivalents: one that explain the English meanings and those, which provide contextual equivalents for smooth translation in the target language.

The combination of equivalents of meaning and translational/contextual equivalents, the application of certain principles of explanatory dictionaries and careful selection of illustrative material enable bilingual lexicographers to fully expound the meanings of source language words and to most adequately describe all aspects, all nuances of their meanings in the target language.

4. Bilingual Dictionaries and Teaching Foreign Languages

‘It is genuinely puzzling how methods which explicitly condemn the use of the native language in the classroom, effectively banning bilingual dictionaries, could ever have been considered beneficial in the teaching and learning of foreign languages’, writes Arleta Adamska-Sałaciak (2014) in her article “Bilingual Lexicography: Translation Dictionaries”.

It is known that the principal method of teaching classical languages in England, as well as in other European countries, has been the grammar-translation one. Beginning from the 1920s and 1930s, when teaching English as a foreign language became urgently important, teaching methodologies, as well as language textbooks became for the most part based on this same traditional method, which was applied by teachers, linguists and educationalists. Later there were developed alternative methods for teaching foreign language, which greatly diminished the role of translation, reduced the practice of using native language in the process of teaching foreign languages, which naturally led to the elimination of the use of bilingual / translation dictionaries, while the main accent was shifted to the use of explanatory, i.e. monolingual dictionaries. The same practice spread also to the schools and higher-education institutions of Georgia.

Later years saw the reversal back to the time-tested translation method, which was however modified to comply with the present-day requirements. In order to better study these issues, the scholars went further, initiating empirical studies into the efficiency of various methods of teaching foreign languages. Considerable part of the researches in question is linked with the efficiency of dictionary use. There were carried out studies intended to establish the efficiency of various types of dictionaries in the process of mastering foreign language vocabulary. Namely there was studied the efficiency of monolingual, bilingual and bilingualised dictionaries. These studies experimentally demonstrated the advantages of using bilingual dictionaries with respect to correct comprehension of foreign words, to their memorization, as well as with respect to the production of correct contexts for them (Laufer & Hadar, 1997; Chen, 2007).

The importance of bilingual dictionaries in the process of teaching / learning foreign language is highlighted by A. Adamska-Sałaciak (2014) who writes: [...] ‘apart from being a tool enabling quick reference, a bilingual dictionary should double as a teaching aid: it should serve both a communicative function (satisfying users’ information needs) and a cognitive one (facilitating in-depth study of the foreign language)’.

Expanding on that point, we should like to say that generally, in order to adequately master a foreign language, a person needs to expand his or her vocabulary. The best way of achieving this is, in our opinion, to extensively read texts in the given foreign language, memorizing as many new words and expressions as possible. It is only logical to assert that bilingual dictionaries seem indispensable in the process. Speaking about the importance of using bilingual dictionaries, we do not have in mind bilingual dictionaries where a foreign word is supplied with a single equivalent from the target language; instead, we rather mean bilingual dictionaries where due attention is paid to the problem of linguistic anisomorphism and it is adequately highlighted within the dictionary word-entries. In

her article quoted above, Prof. Arleta Adamska-Salaciak points out that it is necessary to make foreign language learners realize the semantic asymmetry between their respective native languages on the one hand and the foreign language they study, on the other hand. We are also deeply convinced that it is vital to enable each language learner to see how many possible equivalents a single word from a foreign language may have in his or her native language, or vice versa. While studying a foreign language, it is important to bring lexical, grammatical and syntactic information from a foreign language into correspondence with the respective lexical, grammatical and syntactic information from one's native language, and this is better and more efficiently achieved by means of bilingual / translational dictionaries, than by means of explanatory ones.

We believe that familiar language patterns and concrete concepts, provided by the bilingual dictionaries are the key factors determining also the cognitive value of such dictionaries making them the preferable tool for teaching / learning foreign languages.

In our opinion, the methodology described above, namely the combination of the equivalent of meaning and various contextual equivalents within a dictionary word-entry will definitely contribute to the adequate and high-quality foreign language acquisition and will make the application of bilingual dictionaries in the process of teaching most effective.

5. Bilingual Dictionaries for Preserving Lexical Richness of Languages

The observation of the processes developing within the Georgian language clearly demonstrates that the bilingual dictionaries produced basing on the methodology which we have described above, are important not only for the in-depth study of foreign languages, but also for the preservation of the lexical diversity and richness of our native language. When a Georgian learner of the English language thinks that the English word **rough** has only one Georgian equivalent '*ukheshi*', or that the Georgian words '*dakhvetsili*', '*natiphi*' are the only Georgian adjectives to correspond to the English word **delicate**, such Georgian learner of English, accordingly, stops actively using other Georgian equivalents of **rough**, such as '*mkise*' ('coarse' – said of cloth), '*dakozhrebuli*' ('calloused' – said of hands), '*khorkliani*', '*khesheshi*' ('calloused', 'coarse' – said of skin); or using other Georgian equivalents of **delicate**, such as '*tsertseta*', '*kenari*' ('slim', 'elegant' – said mainly of a woman's body); '*tlili*' ('fine', 'finely moulded', or lit. 'chiselled' – said of fingers), *etc.* Such examples can be cited to infinity. On the other hand, in the Georgian language there is a growing tendency of the emergence of word combinations like '*delikaturi kremi*', '*delikaturi retskhva*', '*delikaturi phkhvnili*', which are formed by analogy with the respective English word combinations like **delicate cream**, **delicate washing**, **delicate powder**. This happens despite the fact that the meaning of the Georgian adjective '*delikaturi*' is **not** the same as that of the English **delicate**. According to the Comprehensive Georgian-English Dictionary by Donald Rayfield, the Georgian adjective '*delikaturi*' should be translated into English as 'considerate', 'tactful'; this meaning corresponds to the Russian '**деликатный**' – '*delikatniy*' (as in '**деликатный человек**' – '*delikatniy chelovyek*' lit. 'a tactful/considerate person'), which means that this Georgian word was borrowed from the Russian language. Thus, we can witness the situation when, on the one hand, a significant stratum of the Georgian vocabulary becomes gradually eliminated from the lexis, while, on the other hand, erroneous application of words is being established in the Georgian language. Some may argue that the vocabulary of each and every language is changing constantly with some words falling out of use, others becoming archaic or obsolete, *etc.* This is true of course, but we believe that the processes described above are unnecessarily accelerating the gradual disappearance from the language vocabulary of many thus neglected and eventually superseded words.

Bilingual dictionaries with adequate representation of native lexico-semantic equivalents both on the level of meaning and context, can, in our opinion, successfully address the problem. Encouraging the active use of such dictionaries in the process of learning can, as we believe, greatly contribute to

the preservation of the lexical diversity of individual languages and, by doing so, to the preservation of linguistic diversity as well.

6. Conclusion

All above-said, in our opinion, clearly demonstrates how important it is to adequately address the issue of lexico-semantic equivalence.

First of all, the adequate solution of the issue will enable the production of high-quality, comprehensive bilingual dictionaries. In such dictionaries, the meaning of each and every foreign word will be explained by means of a full-fledged **dictionary entry**, rather than rendered by merely one or two words, as it is often the case with some modern (mostly computer-generated) simplistic dictionaries. A full-fledged word-entry can much better describe the entire polysemous semantic field of each particular word from a source language.

In addition, the meanings of words in such dictionaries will be further clarified to the point of exactness by use of illustrative examples. In such illustrative examples there will be included various translational / contextual equivalents of the entry headword, which will better fit into the particular contexts. The use of different equivalents from the target language within these contexts (like in cases with **delicate** > *dakhvetsili*, *natiphi*, *kenari*, or *tlili*) will encourage the more often and intense application of the whole plethora of the synonyms available within the lexical stock of the target language in question, thus better ensuring the preservation of such stratum of its lexis. This will, in its turn, contribute significantly to the preservation of linguistic diversity in general.

We also think that our article clearly demonstrates the importance of adequate, comprehensive bilingual dictionaries (whose implementation, as we believe, is only possible provided that the problem of lexico-semantic equivalence of interlingual synonyms is fully realized and successfully solved) for studying and mastering foreign languages. Words denoting concrete concepts and notions from native language, offered by bilingual dictionaries to foreign language learners as renderings of words from the foreign language they study, can significantly facilitate the acquisition of foreign language in question. This happens thanks to the fact that such renderings evoke familiar language patterns in the learners' minds, enabling them to associate foreign words with their familiar linguistic environments in which they are immersed during their everyday activities [see also the quote from *L. Zgusta* above].

The current importance of prompt and adequate acquisition of foreign languages is a separate issue. Proficiency in foreign languages is sure to promote the intensification of scientific and cultural exchanges among different nations. As a result, lexicography and the primary product of this type of philological activity – dictionaries will be able to perform what we believe is their main function: to serve as a bridge between different countries and cultures in our multiethnic and multinational world in the age of globalization.

These are in brief the main benefits of adequately solving the problem of lexico-semantic equivalence of interlingual synonyms.

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