The Microstructure of Bilingual Dictionaries

= precise information a dictionary gives for a headword/lemma
= meaning of a headword with definitions, syntactic and semantic information, synonyms and antonyms

Parts of the Dictionary Entry:

1. The Entry
   - entry term = lemma = headword -> identifies the word or expression
   - form chosen to represent the words (without inflexional affixes, marking number, person, ect.) = canonical form (e.g. verbs: infinitive or 1. person plural)
   - entry term can also be an inflected form with cross-reference to the canonical form
   - entry begins with headword
   - followed by information about pronunciation, inflexion and part of speech

2. The Part of Speech
   - within a given part of speech, the material is divided into meanings
   - traditionally ordered historically, starting with the oldest meaning, ending with the most recent
   - some dictionaries try to specify one or more ‘basic’ meanings ->
   - today many dictionaries put the most frequent meaning first
   - arrangement can be:
     - linear: logically ordered  
     - hierarchical: divided into subfields

3. The Individual Meaning
   - passive dictionary:
     a) equivalent, possibly supported by an untranslated example
     b) translated examples, possibly supported by untranslated examples
   - active dictionary:
     a) equivalent, often with discrimination of meaning and simple constructions
     b) translated examples

Position of Paraphrased or Translated Phrases

- in which entry?
- under the heaviest word = word with the most specialized meaning
- or under the word with the most unexpected meaning
  e.g. “jemandem grünes Licht für etwas geben” would be placed under ´Licht´ and not unter ´geben´
- where in the entry?
- either placed with the respective meaning
- or as separate sections

Equivalence

- task of bilingual dictionaries is to provide expressions in the source language with counterparts in the target language which are as near as possible, semantically and in the level of style
- complete equivalence is unusual because the conceptual world evolves differently in different languages
= result of historical, geographical, social, cultural and economic differences
- the number of concepts can differ (e.g. Inuits have many concepts relating to snow)
- conceptual system may also differ in structure (e.g. we have one name for all the legs of a horse whilst some Oriental languages can only refer to forelegs or hind legs)
- consequence: the range of meaning of possible counterparts can differ in different languages
- elimination of the differences is important
1. it is a matter of finding an equivalent that corresponds most closely
2. ascertain the degree of equivalence
3. user must be informed about the differences

Finding Equivalents

- procedure: determine the content of a headword, find a target language expression, determine the content of this expression and compare the content of the target language expression with the content of the source language expression
- verify that source and target language expressions correspond also in register
- check what degree of equivalence is present

3 Main Types of Equivalence

1. complete equivalence (expressions correspond in content and register)
e.g. leap year – Schaltjahr
2. partial equivalence (incomplete agreement of content and register)
e.g. boyhood – Kindheit
   - to equate pairs it is necessary to include additional features on the target language side
   e.g. boyhood – Kindheit (eines Jungen)
3. no equivalence
   - occurs especially for terms denoting culture-specific concepts
   e.g. Knödel

Discrimination of Meaning

- by examples of usage:
  - discriminate meaning by means of synonyms
    e.g. 1 Gehalt m (Inhalt) content
    2 Gehalt n (Bezahlung) salary
  - by means of super- or subordinate concepts
    e.g. driver n. (car driver) conducteur m; (bus/truck driver) chauffeur m; (racing driver) pilote m; (engine driver) mécanicien m
  - by information about combinational properties
    e.g. go down v.i. (of sun) untergehen; (of ship) sinken; (of aircraft) abstürzen; (of wind) nachlassen; (of swelling) zurückgehen
  - by metalinguistic information:
    - comments should be given only in the native language of the user
    - comments may consist of explicit construction statements
    e.g. ethics Subst. 1 konst. als Sg.) Ethik, Moral 2 (konstr. als Pl.) ethische Berechtigung
    - more usual type of discrimination by metalinguistic information refers to subject field an register,
    - shown by labels (currency and frequency labels, field labels or marks for style and status)
    - labels are abbreviations or symbols, mostly given in the front matter
    - by encyclopaedic information
    - necessary for culture-specific items
e.g. **Advokat** (allgem.) lawyer; (brit.: der nicht vor höherem Gericht auftreten kann) solicitor; (brit.: der auch vor höherem Gericht auftreten und zum Richter ernannt werden kann) barrister

**Format**
- If the headword is monosemous (has only one meaning) and the equivalent is too
  -> no comment needed
- If headword is polysemous (having several meanings) and the equivalent has the same structure of meaning
  -> User cannot know whether the equivalent can be used in all the meanings he knows for the headword
  -> Some kind of discrimination is necessary
  e.g. **nightmare** Alptraum (also fig.)
  - **liquidate** (in various senses) liquidieren
- If headword is polysemous and has several equivalents it is necessary to discriminate meaning
  e.g. **noodle** 1 (strip of dough) Nudel 2 (simpleton) Dummkopf
  - If there are several headwords with the same (poly.) equivalent
    e.g. **rudder** Ruder
  oar Ruder
  -> there is no problem translating into German
  - But for a translation from German into English a discrimination of meaning is necessary (like noodle)
  - When there is an equivalent denoting a super- or subordinate concept
    -> Headword has no exact counterpart but a number or equivalents which together cover the range of meaning -> discrimination necessary
  e.g. **hawker** (in street) Straßenhändler; (at door) Hausierer
  -> Opposite case can also occur: one equivalent has a range of meaning that extends beyond that of the headword
  e.g. **scissors** Schere
  shears (größere) Schere

**No Equivalent**
1. Emphasis on the expressional aspect
   a) Direct borrowing:
      Knackwurst knockwurst (kind of sausage)
   b) Loan-translations:
      Gastarbeiter guest worker
c) Combination of a) and b)
      Berliner Weiner Berlin white (a very fizzy light beer)
d) An already existing term in the target language whose meaning is close to that of the headword can be used -> must be marked that meaning is approximate
      Amtsgericht (approx.) magistrates’ court
e) A paraphrase is constructed for the missing equivalent
      Arzthelferin (approx.) doctor’s administrative assistant

2. Emphasis on the content aspect
   - A definition in the target language is given, perhaps supplemented by a proposed approximate translation
      Telekolleg series of lectures on television, followed by examination for a certificate, (approx.) Open University

**Style Level of Equivalents**
- Should be the same in both languages
  - Normal prose does not cause any problems
  - Colloquial and slang expressions are more complicated
    -> Complete equivalence can be given without comment
    e.g. **goggle-box** Glotze
  -> But more usual:
    e.g. **Glotze** (colloq.) goggle-box
    -> Clarification can be added:
    e.g. **Glotze** (colloq.) goggle-box (television set)

**Equivalents of Idioms**
Idioms in the source language must be as much as possible paralleled in the target language by idioms with the same content
- Same metaphor
  e.g. **hand:** von der Hand in den Mund leben live from hand to mouth
  -> No need for a comment because the agreement is very close
- Related metaphors
  e.g. **Tag:** an den Tag kommen come to light
  -> Images roughly the same -> no comment needed
- Unlike metaphors
  e.g. **katze:** herumgehen wie die Katze um den heißen Brei beat about the bush, approach the subject indirectly
  -> No corresponding metaphor
  e.g. **Wasser:** nahe am Wasser gebaut sein be one who cries easily
  -> Not a fixed expression but one the lexicographer was obliged to construct

**Respective Entries**
- Some headwords belong to sets in which the various elements are so similar that they are treated in an uniform way
  - It is preferable to deal with only one of them
  e.g. **Donnerstag** Thursday; see also **Dienstag** Dienstag Tuesday; am Dienstag on Tuesday; er kommt am Dienstag he is coming on Tuesday; eines Dienstags one Tuesday

**Electronic and Online Dictionaries**
- Much more space than in printed dictionaries
- No need for abbreviations

New Textual Content in Online Dictionaries:
- One needs some knowledge of the target language to use a paper dictionary
- Online dictionaries are also useful for people who do not know anything about the target language because there is more space for more information
  -> Inflected examples
  -> More example phrases

**References**