Scraps of Reflective Writing on some Challenges and Achievements in the Field of Anglo-Romanian Lexicography

Constantin MANEA*

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1. Introduction

This paper aims to present, mainly reflectively, some of the difficulties and achievements that we encountered, in our capacity as a dictionary compiler, in collecting and arranging, adapting, translating and processing the lexicographic material needed. It can be said to be – figuratively, of course – the account of the *adventures* of a lexicographer (and translator) who tried to grapple with the lexical (and, to some extent, also cultural) material of the vocabulary of English and Romanian languages. It is a continuation of a similar paper (Manea, 2012), where we focused on new ways of devising better, more comprehensive and informative dictionaries, in keeping with a number of essential issues related to the lexicon within the scope of TEFL – such as contrastive semantics, collocation, anomalous grammatical forms, divergent spelling and pronunciation, divergent phraseological and syntactic structures, idiom, proper nouns, lexical and semantic fields, synonymy and related terms. We primarily set off from the empirical observations and the modest "revelations" occasioned by the work on those two bilingual dictionaries of a traditional type, into which, however, we tried to instil novelty. The examples selected helped us to synthesize some more general conclusions on the main paths to follow in order to improve Romanian lexicography, which is currently – we have to recognize it – at a relative standstill, while the various (admittedly versatile and user-friendly) electronic materials that have emerged in recent years seem to contribute few new things towards any notable progress in the field, especially from a qualitative standpoint.

Although relatively despised, or at least neglected, by some circles of linguists, the lexicographer's work can be said to come very close (in point of intrinsic quality) to that of the archaeologist or of the detective; for instance, when trying to prioritize the glossing of terms or meanings, based on a process of diachronic and synchronic analysis, when attesting the reality of a certain use, based on the form of the word in question, spotting and elucidating (if need be) the so-

* University of Piteşti, Romania.

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called *False Friends*, or comparing the proposed glossary with what can be found in, and used from other dictionaries, including those edited abroad, etc. (To illustrate such instances, we could use a Romanian term – which is, incidentally, a seeming Anglicism, the glossing of which we have done correctly for the first time; no previous Romanian dictionary provided the following meanings: "**handball** *sn.* **1.** joc englezesc asemănător cu pelota. **2.** mingea folosită. **3.** handbal (continental). **4.** henţ"; and its counterpart "**hạndbal** *sn.* (continental) handball"). Similarly, here are some shades of meaning for the Romanian language, which we have found glossed nowhere in the bilingual dictionaries printed in this country: "**or** *adv.* now, and; and yet"; "**supęrb** *adj.* **1.** superb; splendid; excellent, exquisite. **2.** majestic". This expert activity has, in fact, very much in common (even if in passing) with the *translator's* work – which, in the final analysis, leads to the age-old dilemmatic question, "Is translation a science or an art?" We believe – also based on the examples we used to support the analysis in the present paper – that it is rather a kind of *craft*, which, at its topmost best, can be said to combine the accomplishments of art with the analytical and modelling (though not always conscious) perfection of science.

2. Material and discussion

Setting off to build the inventory (or the database) for the two general-purpose bilingual dictionaries mentioned above (a pair of small-to-medium size dictionaries), we thought that, at best, most of the words encompassed by the Romanian-English dictionary would be found among the terms used as explanations for the entries in the English-Romanian dictionary… and vice versa. The outcome turned out to be entirely different. Instead, we tried to use more or less the same main phraseological units in both dictionaries, which revealed to us – if further proof was needed – the paramount importance that phrasal verbs have in the English language, and, respectively, the significance and versatility of the various kinds of idiomatic and nonce-words in the Romanian language, e.g. *a sosi la ţanc* ("to arrive in the nick of time"), etc.

Establishing and ordering the meanings of the terms and phrases glossed (in both the English- Romanian dictionary and the Romanian-English dictionary) had to be done in a fairly sensible manner, first, in order to let the user confirm their expectations – which is normal for a native speaker of the target language. No less judiciously should be treated the meanings, the words and forms or variants recently appeared or coined (in either of the two languages in contact). As mentioned in other papers (Manea 1998, Manea 2004), the grammaticalization of the language material (based on predominantly contrastive and didactic principles) should occur as consistently and substantially as possible in bilingual dictionaries. We were somewhat surprised to find that, in many cases, it was very hard to establish the sense structure of polysemants in Romanian, and match it with the corresponding meanings of the entries in the target-language (incidentally, and quite paradoxically, the process was harder for Romanian than it was for English). It became apparent for us that the work of ordering and clarification of meanings forces the lexicographer to divide his/ her energy and place himself/herself astride the semantic clues and illustrations in Romanian dictionaries (such as *DEX*$_2$), and in dictionaries of English such as *MacMillan*, *Collins*, *Oxford*, etc. Of course, appealing to

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glossaries of most frequent words in either language (Costăchescu, Iliescu 1994, *Longman*, etc.) helped us decisively, e.g. "**successful** *adj*. **1.** reuşit, izbutit; eficient. **2.** de succes; popular"; "**introduce** *vt.* **1.** to introduce. **2.** to insert. **3.** to let○ in. **4.** to include"; "**preciș I.** *adj.* **1.** certain. **2.** precise, definite; accurate; exact. **3.** distinct. **4.** correct"; "**răutăcios** *adj.* **1.** malicious. **2.** malignant. **3.** wicked, mischievous"; "**vicleạn** *adj*. scheming; cunning, sly, artful, devious; *(şi bun de gură)* slick"; "**ţărm** *sn.* **1.** shore. **2.** *(de lac şi)* border. **3.** *(de râu)* bank, riverside". As far as establishing the accurate meanings is concerned, we had to make selections, which were sometimes rather difficult and painstaking, especially in so far as they were based on the context of use and/or the specific semantic nuance of the respective terms or phrases, e.g. "**rụbrică** *sf.* **1.** heading; *(căsuţă şi)* cell; box. *(coloană)* column. **2.** *fig. (caz)* pigeonhole"; "**sfert** *sn*. quarter; *(pătrime şi)* (one) fourth"; "**şatẹn** *adj*. **1.** *(d. păr)* brown. **2.** *(d. oameni)* brown-haired"; "**slụgă** *sf.* servant; menial; *şi fig.* lackey"; "**spinos** *(şi fig.)* thorny, prickly; *fig.* ticklish, delicate"; "**vạcă** *sf.* **1.** cow. **2.** *fig*. bitch, cow", etc.

Sometimes we were surprised to see we were compelled to clarify the semantic or field-related nuance in a rather paradoxical way, i.e. in a privative, or restrictive manner, e.g. "**disc**, Δ *AmE* **disk** *sn.* disc *(şi de pick-up; nu sport)*". In other cases, it all boiled down to disambiguating several meanings of the term or phrase, e.g. "**habạr** *sn.: **a nu avea ~** (de ceva) **(1)*** to have○ (absolutely) no idea *(of sth.)*, not to have the faintest / least / foggiest idea *(about smth)*; ***(2)** fig*. not to give○ a damn". In some particular cases, it was mere disambiguation of meanings for the entries, starting from their phonetic aspect cf. their spelling, e.g. "**direc̦tor**[1] *sm.* **1.** manager. **2.** *(de şcoală)* headmaster, principal. ◊ ***~ul filmului*** producer", "**direc̦tọr**[2] *adj*. guiding". Rarely did we come across terms whose subsidiary meanings, or shades of meaning could only be clarified and/or defined through our own personal, self-assumed effort of delimitation, e.g. "**sufrageri̯e** *sf.* **1.** dining room. **2.** *fam.* sitting room".

Here are some examples of words, forms, meanings, usage, in both English and Romanian, which we had to thoroughly and repeatedly check over, like a diligent private investigator, in order to be sure they can aptly stand among the terms glossed, or that a certain sense, some grammatical use, a stylistic or contextual shade, or some specific form are well chosen and fully accountable for. For example, the Romanian verb *a lista* is only recorded by $DOOM_2$, unlike DEX_2; judging by its English meanings ("(tr) to make a list of; (tr) to include in a list" *COLL*), it should logically mean "a trece pe o listă, a alcătui/face o listă"; similarly, *char* is usually rendered as *lipan* (cf. Lat. *Salvelinus*, Fr. *omble chevalier*), although *COLL* glosses it as "any of various troutlike fishes of the genus *Salvelinus*, esp. *S. alpinus*, occurring in cold lakes and northern seas", so we finally glossed **char**(**r**) as "varietate de păstrăv *(Salvelinus)*; lipan"; **chub** was glossed by *DER* as *clean*, and by *COLL* as "a common European freshwater cyprinid game fish, *Leuciscus* (or *Squalius*) *cephalus*, having a cylindrical dark greenish bodyany of various North American fishes, esp. certain whitefishes and minnows", so our own gloss was "**1.** clean. **2.** peşte marin asemănător cu cleanul". In terms of form, we had to hesitate between *pintă* (cf. Fr. *une pinte*), and **pint** *s.m*. (according to *MDN*), to render the lemma corresponding to Eng. *pint*. We also drew distinctions based on criteria of grammatical functioning, on the one hand, and style and register, on the other hand;

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in order to do that we had to match our knowledge of Romanian as a native speaker with our expert knowledge as a linguist: "**după** (…) **II.** *adv. fam.* **1.** *(apoi)* after(wards), later, subsequently. **2.** *(în spaţiu)* behind; below"

In addition to the main meanings, the semantic shades and nuances of the terms had to be detailed and expounded, possibly amplified, and at all times sequenced carefully, especially to avoid redundancy or informative duplication, and also for the very precision of the glossing act itself – in terms of onomasiology, contextual or functional load, or purely semantic information, style and register information, etc. Here are some examples that we considered to be more illustrative: ● From an onomasiologic, or purely semantic standpoint: "**appeal II.** *vi.* ***(to** sb.)* a apela (insistent) *(la cineva)*"; "**brink** *sn*. margine; buză (de prăpastie)"; "**cow** *sf., sn.* **1.** vacă. **2.** femelă *(de elefant, focă, balenă etc.)*"; "**hose** *sn.* **1.** furtun. **2.** ciorapi *(ca produse din comerţ: şosete, ciorapi, ciorapi-pantalon)*"; "**electric** *adj*. electric *(acţionat sau producător de electricitate)*", "**electrical** *adj*. electric *(care foloseşte electricitatea)*"; "**delve** *vi.* **1.** ***(in, into)*** a căuta *(informaţii etc.)*. **2.** a răscoli. **3.** a săpa *(d. oameni: înv.)*"; "**journeyman**○ *sm.* **1.** calfă. **2.** muncitor calificat *(*Δ *angajat cu ziua)*"; "**mount I.** *sn.* munte *(lit., cu np.)*"; "**cutremur** *sn*. earthquake; *(redus)* (earth) tremor"; "**dinte** *sn.* **1.** tooth○. **2.** *(colţ de animal)* fang. ◊ **~ *de elefant*** *sau* ***morsă*** tusk; **~ ***de pieptene*** *sau* ***angrenaj*** cog", etc. ● In terms of context or functional load: "**demult** *adv.* a long time ago, long ago; *(înainte de alt eveniment trecut)* long before"; "**dispozitiv** *sn.* device, contrivance; set-up; *(*Δ *de uz casnic)* appliance; *(mic, interesant)* gadget"; "**duminică I.** *sf.* Sunday. **II.** *adv.* (on) Sunday; *(în fiecare duminică)* on Sundays, every Sunday; *(duminica viitoare)* next Sunday. ◊ ***duminica*** *adv.* every Sunday, on Sunday(s)"; "**evreiesc** *adj*. **1.** Jewish. **2.** *(idiş)* Yiddish. **3.** *(israelian)* Israeli"; "**garoafă** *sf.* carnation; *(garofiţă)* pink"; "**prânz** *sn.* **1.** lunch; midday meal; *(masă principală şi)* dinner. **2.** *(parte a zilei)* lunch time; *(amiază)* noon; midday"; "**primărie** *sf.* **1.** town / city council; mayoralty. **2.** *(local)* town / city hall; *(de sat)* village hall"; "**spumă** *sf.* **1.** foam; *(albă şi)* froth; *(în baie)* foam, bubbles *(v. pl.)*; *(de săpun)* suds *(v. pl.)*, lathe; *(de şampanie, cidru)* bubbles *(ac pl.)*. **2.** *(la fiert)* scum. **4.** *culin.* mousse"; "**stol** *sn.* **1.** flock; *(*Δ *în zbor)* flight; *(de prepeliţe)* bevy. **2.** *fig.* swarm; bevy"; "**seară** *sf.* (…) **2.** *(târzie)* night. **3.** *(înserare)* nightfall, dusk"; "**izbuti I.** *vt.:* ***a** ~ **să*** to succeed *(in doing sth.)*, to be○ able *(to do○ sth.)*; *(cu greu)* to manage *(to do○ sth.)*"; ● In terms of stylistic, cultural, etc. information: "**gimnaziu** *sf.* **1.** middle school. **2.** *ist.* gymnasium○"; "**popă** *sm.* **1.** parish priest; parson; *(ortodox şi)* pope; *gen*. clergyman○; priest"; ● As a combination of semantic and functional criteria and parameters, e.g. "**grupare** *sf.* **1.** group *(v. sg. / pl.)*, grouping; collection. **2.** *(facţiune)* faction. **3.** *(clasificare)* classification"; "**înalt I.** *adj*. **1.** tall *(pt. persoane, copaci, clădiri)*; high. **2.** *fig. şi muz., el., tehn.* high; *fig.* lofty; superior".

Often, the lexicographer found himself under a strenuous effort of compiling and glossing that needed quite a lot of punctiliousness in marking the necessary meanings: (1) Starting from relatively simple things, e.g. "***on one's feet*** *(1)* în picioare; *(2)* sănătos"; "**madman**○ *sm.* **1.** zăpăcit, aiurit, nebun, ţicnit, apucat. **2.** *înv.* nebun, alienat mintal, dement, psihopat"; "**canapea** *sf.* couch; divan; *(mai mare)* sofa; *(mică)* settee"; "**lucrător I.** *sm.* **1.** worker, working man○ / *fem.* woman○. **2.** *(necalificat)* labourer"; "**violet** *adj., sn.* violet; purplish-blue; mauve"; "**zăpadă** *sf.* snow. ◊ **~ *topită*** *(şi murdară)* slush"; "**vânăt** *adj*. **1.** blu(e)ish, purple; (somewhat)

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violet. **2.** *(învineţit)* blue; *(lovit)* bruised"; "**var** *sn.* **1.** *(ca substanţă)* lime. **2.** *(de văruit)* whit(en)ing, whitewash", etc.; (2) Passing sometimes through more complicated determinations and sense delineations, which are very likely to represent genuine, enduring pitfalls for both learners and translators, e.g. "**turtle** *sn.* **1.** broască ţestoasă *(de apă; AmE şi de uscat)*. **2.** *înv*. turturică"; "**grămadă I.** *sf.* **1.** *(şi teanc)* pile; *(Δ dezordonată)* heap"; "**mezeluri** *sn. pl.* **1.** sausages. **2.** *(gustare)* snack; frugal breakfast / lunch. **3.** *(antreu)* hors d'œuvre; appetizer"; "**speria** (…) **II.** *vr*. to be○ frightened *(by sth.: "într-o anumită ocazie"; of sth.: „de obicei")*, to be○ scared"; (3) And attaining issues that presuppose even finer issues in terms of use and / or implications, e.g. "**zâmbi** *vi.* to smile *(şi at)*; to beam. **2.** *(afectat, superior)* to snigger, *AmE* to snicker, to smirk. **3.** *(prosteşte)* to simper"; "**rugbi** / **rugby** *sn.* rugby; *fam. BrE* rugger"; "**horă** *sf.* (traditional Romanian) circle / ring dance; folk round dance; *(şi israeliană)* hora (dance)".

More often than not, things were further complicated by the need to recognize and demarcate particular meanings, which are affected by cultural determinations, within the semantic space lying in between English and Romanian, e.g. "**hârciog** *sm.* hamster" (cf. *COLL*: "**hamster** any Eurasian burrowing rodent of the tribe *Cricetini*, such as *Mesocricetus auratus* (golden hamster), having a stocky body, short tail, and cheek pouches: family *Cricetidae*. They are popular pets"). Exceptionally, in his effort to define meanings, the lexicographer can even have recourse to giving bracketed illustrations of the term or meaning in question, e.g. "**limbă** ◊ ***frântură de ~*** tongue twister *(de ex. she sells seashells on the seashore)*", and "**tongue** (…) ***~ twister*** frântură de limbă *(de ex. şase saşi în şase saci)*". We think a special discussion should be reserved for the rather quirky issue of collocation. However, the two dictionaries that we used as illustrative material for this paper failed to deal with collocation very thoroughly and consistently, primarily because the (small to medium-size) type of dictionary they represent precluded it: "***a atinge un obiectiv*** to achieve / fulfill an aim; to achieve / reach / attain a goal; ***a-şi propune / stabili un ~ / scop*** to set / establish a goal".

The problems of register and style, functional status and use, considered in themselves, constitute a separate chapter, comprising meanings and forms that are, more often than not, rather ticklish. Therefore, they can give rise to errors in dealing with the lexicographical material (and, to make matters worse, they can even be taken from dictionary to dictionary and disseminated via the successive new editions of the bilingual dictionaries in a country). However, it is clear they are absolutely necessary in order to achieve the ideal of accuracy towards which every well-done work tends, in any human pursuit, not only in linguistics. Among the various synonyms and related words, which actually make up the basic substance of a dictionary article, it is essential to earnestly and consistently mark the words and meanings characterized as: *fam.* ("colloquial"), *elev.* ("formal"), *euf.* ("euphemism"), *glum.* ("jocular"), *lit.* ("literary"), *înv.* ("old-fashioned, obsolete"), *spec.*, *tehn.* ("technical"), *rel.* ("religion"), *bibl.* ("Biblical"), etc., e.g. "**comunist I.** *sm.* (...) *fam.* Red"; "**leşina** *vi.* (…) *lit.* to swoon"; "**ocărî I.** *vt.* **1.** (…) *elev.* to chide○; *înv.* to scold"; "**pensionar** *sm.* (…) *şi euf.* senior citizen"; "**persoană** *sf.* (…) ◊ ***persoane*** people *(v. pl.)*, *elev.* persons"; "**concedia** *vt.* (…) *euf.* to make○ redundant"; "**culoare** *sf.* (…) ◊ ***de ~*** coloured (…) *euf. AmE* African-American"; "**demodat** (…) *glum.* worm-eaten"; "**nenorocire** *sf.* (…). **2.** distress, *înv., elev.,*

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glum. woe"; "**căsătorit** *adj*. married, *elev.* wedded"; "**căuta I.** *vt.* **1.** to look for, Δ *elev.* to seek○ *(for)*"; "**comod** (…) **2.** *(d. casă şi)* roomy, *elev., lit.* commodious; Δ *fam.* cosy / cozy", etc.

3. Synonymy

Although we firmly believe that the use of synonymy in compiling dictionaries and in glossary making is an extremely useful method (the more so as the acquisition of a large number of synonyms largely accounts for the flexibility and richness of one's vocabulary), we did not treat it merely as ordering the words in longer or shorter synonym strings (in which case the lexicographer's task would have been too easy and rather simplistic – not to mention the fact that, as a rule, such lists make virtually no reference to collocation). We believe that the dictionary compiler should insist on the idea that synonymy should also be used as an (implicit or explicit) teaching tool for educating and cultivating the students' / dictionary users' (a.s.o.) language skills, including its exploitation through dictionaries, glossaries, manuals, guides, etc.. Here are some examples of synonymy-based glossing: "**stealthily** *adv*. pe furiş, pe nesimţite; tiptil; într-ascuns; hoţeşte"; "**mention** ◊ ***don't ~ it!*** n-a(veţ)i pentru ce!; pentru nimic!; cu plăcere!"; "**besides** (…) **II.** *adv*. în plus (de asta), afară de asta; mai mult; de asemenea; (şi) mai (e şi…); dealtfel"; "**thriller** *sn.* carte / piesă / film de suspans; roman de senzaţie; roman / film de groază; thriller"; "**hei** *interj*. heigh! / hey!; look here!; *BrE* I say!"; "**degeaba** *adv.* (…) **3.** *(gratis)* gratis, free(ly), free of charge, for nothing; *fam.* for free"; "**denumi** *vt.* to name, to call; to designate *(by a name)*; to style; to term"; "**descrie** *vt.* to describe; *(şi în cuvinte)* to depict, to picture, to portray"; "**dramaturg** *sm.* playwright, dramatist, dramaturge"; "**experimentat** *adj*. experienced, seasoned; skilled, tried; competent"; "**plănui** *vt.* to plan, to intend; to mean○; to have○ in mind / view; to contemplate"; "**gâfâi** *vi*. to pant, to breathe hard; to (huff and) puff; *(sufocându-se)* to gasp"; "**interna I.** *vt.* **1.** to hospitalize, to commit; to take to hospital"; "**omenie** *sf.* humaneness, humane behaviour; kindness; (human) sympathy". (**NOTE**: More often than not, we used synonymy for more than one particular meaning of the term being glossed, e.g. "**povestitor** *sm.* **1.** narrator; relater, reporter. **2.** *(autor)* storyteller; author, writer"). Occasionally, the synonymy provided for the phrases, expressions or structures being glossed was pretty rich, e.g. "**ticălos I.** *sm.* scoundrel, rascal, rogue, villain. **II.** *adj.* **1.** wicked, knavish, rascally. **2.** vile; good-for-nothing"; "**torid** *adj*. torrid, burning; parching, scorching, sweltering; tropical"; "**totdeauna** *adv.* **1.** always, ever; perpetually, eternally. **2.** all the time; at all times, every time. **3.** *(constant)* usually, as a rule; forever, constantly"; "**turti I.** *vt.* to crush, to batter; to squash. **II.** *vr*. to be battered / crushed / squashed / flattened; to be pressed flat". At times, we used synonymous series for both the term being glossed and its correspondent in the target language, e.g. "**pour** (…) ◊ ***it's ~ing (with rain)***, ***it's pouring down*** plouă tare / cu găleata / cu spume". Finally, we must admit having noticed that, on accasion, we somewhat exaggerated by giving a tryingly large number of synonyms all in an explanatory sequence, and thus the glossary became rather plethoric, e.g. "**grăsuţ** *adj*. fattish, plump; stoutish; *(bucălat şi)* chubby"; "**ignora** *vt.* to ignore; to overlook, to neglect, to disregard, to pass over, to take○ no notice of, to pay○ no attention to; to turn a blind eye to; to

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be○ oblivious to"; "**safely** *sn.* în siguranţă, fără pericol / primejdie; fără riscuri, fără probleme; liniştit; fără grijă, ferit *(de probleme / necazuri)*"; "**uluì** *vt.* to stagger, to daze, to stun, to nonplus, to dumbfound; to stupefy"; "**fermecătọr** *adj.* charming; bewitching; delightful; (very) appealing / attractive / engaging; captivating; irresistible; seductive, winsome"; "**hidọs** *adj.* hideous; (extremely) ugly / unsightly; repulsive; monstrous; detestable, loathsome, odious"; "**principạl** *adj.* main, principal; chief; capital; primary; basic"; "**neîntrecụt** *adj.* unsurpassed; unparalleled; unrivalled; matchless, peerless, unmatched"; "**ostenì I.**. (…) **II.** *vr.* to make efforts, to take great pains; to strive○; to apply oneself, to labour; to endeavour"; "**precizạ I.** *vt.* to specify; to indicate / mention / state (specifically); to name, to cite; to be specific about *(sth.)*".

4. Lexicographical complexity

Very often, however, the sheer complexity of the article (not only its semantic make-up) was striking (and somewhat unwieldy and tiresome), e.g. "**gym I.** *sn.* **1.** sală de sport. **2.** *abr.* liceu *(nu în Marea Britanie sau S.U.A.)*. **3.** *abr.* gimnastică"; "**halo**○ *sn.* **1.** aureolă *(şi rel.)*, nimb. **2.** *astr.* nimb, halo(u), cerc luminos"; "**purple I.** *sn.* **1.** (culoarea) violet. **2.** purpură *(regală etc.)*. **II.** *adj.* **1.** violaceu, vioriu, albăstriu / albăstrui; violet. **2.** *(bătând spre)* purpuriu"; "**răzbunạ I.** *vt.* to revenge, Δ *lit.* to avenge. **II.** *vr.* *(pe cineva)* to take one's revenge *(on sb.)*, to revenge oneself *(on)*, Δ *lit.* to avenge oneself *(on)*". Various degrees of complexity and intricacy naturally occurred, especially when it came to certain cases of ticklish, involved, maze-like interweaving of shades of style and functioning, or semantic-grammatical implications, e.g. "**porc** *sm.* **1.** (…) Δ *pl.* swine *(pl. inv.)*; **3.** *fig.* swine *(pl. swines)*"; "**persoạnă** *sf.* person; individual. ◊ ***persoane*** people *(v. pl.)*, *elev.* persons"; "**detectịv** *sm.* detective, *fam.* sleuth; investigator; *BrE* CID man. ◊ **~ *particular*** private investigator, *AmE* private eye"; "**dinaịnte I.** *adj.* previous *(atr.)*, preceding *(atr.)*, prior *(atr.)*. **II.** *adv.* before; in front. ◊ ***~a…*** before, in front of…; ***de ~*** fore… *(în cuv. compuse, de ex. foreleg)*; *(anterior)* former *(atr.)*"; "**dinapọi** *sn., adj., adv.* behind. ◊ ***de ~*** hind… *(în cuv. compuse – de ex.: hindlegs)*"; "**domn** *sm.* **1.** gentleman; *(bărbat şi)* man. **2.** *(stăpân)* master. **3.** *(domnitor)* (ruling) prince, hospodar, ruler. ◊ ***~ul Brad*** Mr Brad; ***~le Brad*** Sir; Mr Brad"; "**dreạptă I.** *adj.* → **DREPT**. **II.** *sf.* **1.** straight (line). **2.** *(mâna)* right hand. **3.** *pol.* right wing. ◊ ***la dreapta*** on the right(-hand side)".

Sometimes, marking itself seems a bit puzzling and disconcerting (especially for the average user, or the user whose language knowledge and skills, or theoretical linguistic expertise are below average) by its conventional complexity and sheer detail, e.g. "**orb I.** *adj.* **1.** blind *(fig. şi ~ to sth.)*; sightless"; "**vânạt** *sn.* **1.** *(şi carne)* game; *(carne) înv.* venison"; "**plin** (…) ◊ ***din ~*** plentifully, in abundance, abundantly, copiously; galore *(postpus)*; ***a fi din ~*** to teem *(with)*, to abound *(in)*; to be abundant / rife; *(there +)* be galore *(There were roses galore in the park)*; to teem *(with)*, to abound *(in)*"; "**cunoaştere** *sf.* **1.** knowledge; *(şi ca proces)* cognition. **2.** comprehension. **3.** intelligence"; "**curiọs** (…) **II.** *sm.* prier / pryer, peeper; busybody; *(care se uită împrejur)* rubberneck"; "**dẹseori** *adv.* **1.** often *(după sub. + Aux. 1)*; *arh.* oft(en)times; *(de multe ori)* many times; Δ *lit., poet.* many a time"; "**dimineaţă** *sf.* **1.** morning. **2.** *(zori)* dawn *(Δ ¢)*, daybreak. ◊ ***dimineaţa*** *adv.* in the morning;

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(repetitiv) every morning; ***azi ~*** this morning; ***dis-de-~*** in the early morning, early in the morning; at the break of day"; "**foarte** *adv.* **1.** very; highly; rather. **2.** Δ *elev. (apreciativ)* most. **3.** *(subliniat)* absolutely, extremely; utterly; *BrE* fairly, *AmE* quite"; "**garsonieră** *sf.* one-room flat, *AmE* studio (flat), *BrE* bedsitter"; "**glaciał** *adj*. icy, cold; frosty; *elev*. glacial; stony"; "**glob I.** *sn.* **1.** globe. **2.** *(Pământul)* the globe, the Earth. **II.** *sm.: **~ul ocular*** the eyeball".

Here are some illustrations of the genuinely Procrustean conditioning of the effort (specific to lexicography) the compiler needs in order to mark as much material and nuance as possible within as scanty a space as possible: "**stealthy** *adj*. furiș(at); ascuns"; "**equip I.** *vt. (with)* a echipa / înzestra / dota / prevedea *(cu)*"; "**noon** [nu:n] *sn.* amiază; miezul zilei; (ora) prânz(ului)". The cases were not infrequent where we had recourse to a type of "encyclopaedic" explanations: this was where we encountered the challenge, similar to *Procrustes' bed*, represented by the (otherwise natural) conflict between the richness and explanatory accuracy of a good lexicographic tool, on the one hand, and the type of dictionary, which is fatally restricted with respect to sheer size, that we had to complete. (We think that a pocket-size dicionary can be likened, more than in purely metaphorical manner, to a lexicographical *haiku*): "**cicada** / **cicala** *sn.* cicadă *(insectă homopteră din ţările calde, al cărei mascul emite un ţârâit caracteristic)*; *aprox.* greier"; "**flușture** *sm.* butterfly; *(de noapte sau cu antene fără măciulie)* moth"; "**Plșto** *np. astr.*, **Plșton** *astr., mit.* Pluto"; "**hitchhike** *vi.* a face autostopul *(gratis)*"; "**stag** *sm*. **1.** cerb. **2.** bărbat fără companie feminină *(la o petrecere)*". We could also add, as fit cases in point, the typical Anglo-Saxon (or imperial) measures that we included in the dictionary: *inch, pint, gallon, mile, foot*, etc.

5. Queries

In this context, such rhetorical questions can be asked as, "Is it correct (i.e. lexicographically accurate or appropriately descriptive) to gloss, by extension of meaning, such "un-English" or/and "unscientific", or else "loosely descriptive" meanings as for instance: *sepie* ("cuttlefish"), cf. *squid*; *limbă de mare* ("sole"), cf. *halibut*; *somn* ("silurid, catfish"), cf. *catfish, sheathfish*; *cod* ("cod(fish)", cf. *haddock*; *pinguin* ("penguin"), cf. *auk*; *marlin*; *morun* ("beluga"), *nisetru* ("sturgeon"), *cegă* ("sterlet"), *păstrugă*, etc.?"

Speaking of the various form-and-function scruples that a conscious lexicographer has to comply with (cf. also Bantaș, Bantaș & Rădulescu, Benson, Crystal, *Bloomsbury Guide*), we paid special attention to doing an accurate and nuanced listing of the (not very few) meanings that have been unfelicitously taken over (especially through decalcomania), as *barbarisms*, by the (increasingly) Englished variety of Romanian used/spoken in comparatively recent times, e.g. "**challenge** (…) **II.** *sn.* **1.** provocare *(la întrecere)*; sfidare. **2.** problemă *(arzătoare)*; situație dificilă / spinoasă"; "**decadă** *sf.* **1.** ten days(' time). **2.** *rar (deceniu)* decade"; "**gem** *sn.* jam; *(de citrice)* marmalade"; "**surf** *sn.* surfing".

Also under the heading of "lexicographical scruples", we tried to observe (as is but natural) the form and meaning distinctions between British English and American English, by duly marking the *BrE* and *AmE* variants, respectively, e.g.

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"**behalf** *sn.*: ***on (someone's) ~***, ***on*** / *AmE* ***in ~ of*** în numele / interesul *(cuiva)*"; "**government** *sn.* **1.** guvern(are). **2.** formă de guvernământ. **3.** conducere. **4.** *AmE* stat"; "**stat** *sn.* **1.** *pol.* state; *AmE şi* government"; "**sunrise**, *AmE* **sunup** răsăritul soarelui"; "**portar** *sm.* **1.** porter, *AmE* doorman; usher; *(de imobil)* caretaker, *AmE* janitor"; "**schimbă I.** *vt.* (…) ◊ ***a ~ viteza*** to change / *AmE* shift gear"; "**semęstru** *sn.* **1.** half-year. **2.** *şcol.* term; *AmE univ.* semester"; "**trimęstru** *sn.* **1.** trimester. **2.** *şcol.* term; *AmE şi* trimester"; "**veterinar I.** *sm(f).* veterinary surgeon, *AmE* veterinarian"; "**xeroxă** *vt.* to photocopy, to xerox; to duplicate; *AmE* to mimeograph".

We must admit that quite a number of "personal revelations" were occasioned by the rather rich phraseology, very complex and interesting structure-wise (and often marked by highly typical details – specific to either Romanian or English), which we tried to capture and gloss in the two dictionaries: "**or** (…) ◊ ***~ else*** altfel; că(ci) altfel; că de nu; ***he can't read ~ write***; ***he can't either read ~ write*** nu ştie să citească şi nici să scrie; nu ştie nici să scrie, nici să citească"; "**brink** *sn.* (…) ◊ ***on the ~ (of...)*** în pragul…; la un pas de"; "**far** (…) ◊ ***as / so ~ as I am concerned*** în (ceea) ce mă priveşte; ***as ~ as I can remember*** după / din câte îmi amintesc; ***as ~ as*** până la *(în spaţiu / ca etapă)*; ***so ~*** până acum / în prezent; până aici / în acest punct; ***~ (greater, etc.)*** mult mai *(mare etc.)*; ***by ~…*** cu mult *(mai mare etc.)*; de departe *(cel mai mare etc.)*"; "**while** (…) ***for a short ~*** o scurtă perioadă, câtva timp; ***once in a (long) ~*** din când în când; rar"; "**stag** (…) ◊ ***~ night / party*** petrecere exclusiv masculină / de burlaci"; "**ger** (…) ◊ ***e un ~ cumplit / de crapă pietrele*** it's freezing (hard), it's bitterly cold". We observed the same scruples in marking, evincing – and occasionally emphasizing – the wealth of synonyms, as well as the richness of contextual and functional detail, which emerges from such instances as those mentioned above, e.g. "**business** (…) ◊ ***that's not your ~!***, ***that's none of your ~!*** / ***(it is) none of your ~*** nu e treaba ta!; ***that's no ~ of yours*** nu te priveşte"; "**threshold** *sn.* **1.** prag. **2.** intrare. ◊ ***on the ~ (of...)***, *fig.* ***at the ~ (of...)*** în pragul…*(cu gen.)*"; "**prea** *adj.* too; quite. ◊ ***e cam ~ (fierbinte, ars, rece etc.)*** it's rather *(hot, burned, chilly, etc.)*; ***nu ~ vede (bine)*** he / she can hardly see"; "**profită** *vi.*: ***a ~ de*** to profit from *(sth.)*, to take advantage of *(sth.)*; *(a învăţa din ceva)* to profit by *(sth.)*, to derive / receive profit from, to benefit from / by, to derive / have○ benefit from *sth.*" As far as the form of the words glossed is concerned, the main difficulty we had to face was to accommodate, (accept and) gloss the sundry variants, either morphological or phonetic, e.g. "**cicada** / **cicala** [si'k□:də / si'k□:lə] *sn.* **cicadas** / **cicalas**; **cicadae** [si'k□:di:] / **cicale** [si'k□:lei]"; "**halo** (…) **2.** *astr.* halo(u)"; "**spaţiał** *adj.* spatial / spacial ['spe€‰□l]"; "**trągic** *adj.* tragic, *rar* tragical"; "**ţeapă** *sf.* (…) ◊ ***a trage în ~*** to impale / empale".

We also endeavoured to cope with the various grammatical implications, providing parenthetic explanations whenever necessary, e.g. "**soap** (…) [where we managed to make meaning and grammar agree] ◊ ***a cake / bar / piece / tablet of ~*** o bucată de săpun, un săpun"; "**death** [deθ] *sn.* **1.** *(şi sm.)* moarte; "**cod I.** *sm.* cod *(Δ pl. invar.)*, codfish *(rar pl.: „varietăţi")*"; "**comparą** *vt., vr.* to compare ***(to**: „a asemui cu"; **with**: „a examina, comparând")*"; "**grup** *sn.* **1.** group *(cu v. de acţiune: şi v. pl.)*"; "**competęnt** *adj.* competent, proficient *(at, in)*, qualified, expert *(at, in)*, adept [ə'dept] *(at, in)*"; "**datorą**, **datorį I.** *vt.* to owe *(nu cont.)*"; "**culoare** *sf.* (…) ◊ ***de ~*** coloured *(Δ atr.)*"; "**invadą** *vt.* **1.** to invade, to overrun *(Δ pas. with sth.)*";

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"**investigaţie** *sf.* **1.** investigation *(şi into sth.)*; *pl. şi* inquiry *(şi into sth.).* **2.** *(ştiinţifică şi)* research *(şi pl.; on / into)*"; "**cumnat** *sm.* brother-in-law *(pl. brothers-in-law, rar brother-in-laws)*"; "**tactică** *sf.* tactic(s) *(v. sg.)*"; "***(eu) voi veni*** I shall come; *(„cu siguranţă"; ca ameninţare, promisiune etc.)* I will come"; "**zebră** *sf.* zebra *(pl. şi inv.)*".

A rather tricky issue – which is also paradoxical, to say the very least – occurred with respect to marking *Gender* in the grammatical class of *Nomina*, where we strove to scrupulously mark membership (even if merely or theoretically possible) to the feminine grammatical gender, e.g. "**doilea** *adj., num., fem.* **doua** *(the)* second. ◊ ***a ~ zi*** the next / following day"; "**doisprezecelea**, *fem.* **douăsprezecea** *adj., num.* the twelfth"; "**douăzecilea** – *fem.* **douăzecea** *adj., num. (the)* twentieth"; "**servitor** *sm.* (man○-)servant; attendant, help(er); *fem.* maid"; "**strengar I.** *sm.* (…) colt; urchin; *fem.* romp"; "**vulpe** *sf.* fox; *(femelă şi)* vixen". Whenever we could, we marked [$_0$MALE] nouns as *sm(f)*, e.g. "**supplier** *smf.* furnizor"; "**draughtsman** / *AmE* **draftsman** *sm(f).* proiectant(ă); desenator"; "**general**. **II.** *sm(f).* general"; "**giant I.** *sm(f).* uriaş *(şi fig.)*; gigant; titan"; "**guerrilla** / **guerilla** *sm(f).* luptător de gherilă"; "**mechanic** *sm(f).* mecanic", etc. However, in some cases we believe we rather overshot the mark, e.g. "**guardsman** *sm(f).* **1.** soldat / ofiţer dintr-un regiment de gardă. **2.** *AmE* soldat / ofiţer din Garda Naţională"; "**watchman** *sm(f).* paznic (de noapte)"; "**plumber** *sm(f).* instalator". In still other cases, we have a number of doubts as to the very necessity of mentioning the feminine variant/form at all – but we had to comply with the current feminist-ridden context: "**doorman** *sm(f).* portar *(la hotel etc.)*; uşier" (cf. *COLL*: "a man employed to attend the doors of certain"); "**dwarf**○ *sm(f).* pitic"; "**poet** *sm.* poet *(sf. şi poetess)*"; "**recruit** (…) **II.** *sm(f).* recrut"; "**Viking**, **viking** *sm(f)., adj.* viking". In most cases, the grammatical-semantic implications were recorded and briefly explained, thus giving the teaching/scholarly clues to a full clarification of the respective meanings by marking the appropriate phonetic form, where this was required, e.g. "**used** [ju:zd] adj. **1.** *(to sth. / doing sth.)* obişnuit *(cu / să…)*: ***Sid is ~ to (drinking) wine*** Sid e obişnuit cu vinul / să bea vin. **2.** ['ju:st(ə)] *(v. aux. + to v.)*: ***I ~ to smoke*** obişnuiam (pe vremuri / mai demult) să fumez"; "**competent** *adj.* (…) expert ['ekspə:t]", etc.

The phonetic transcripts were provided wherever we considered it appropriate. Based on nearly thirty years' teaching experience, we selected and transcribed the words that the average user is likely to mispronounce, e.g. "**curat I.** *adj.* (…) *şi fig.* cleanly ['klen-li]; (…) **II.** *adv.* (…) *şi fig.* cleanly ['kli:nli]"; "**hidos** *adj.* hideous ['h€d€□s]; (…) odious ['□…d€□s]"; "**vânat** *sn.* **1.** *(şi carne)* game; *(carne) înv.* venison ['venz□n; 'ven€zŤn, -sŤn]"; "**ozon** *sn.* ozone ['□…z□…n, □…'z□…n]"; "**recreaţ I.** *vt.* **1.** to re-create [•ri:kr€'e€t]. **2.** *(a distra)* to amuse, to entertain, *rar* to recreate ['rekr€•e€t]"; "**timbru** *sn.* **1.** stamp. **2.** *muz.* timbre ['t€mb□, 'tćmb□]"; "**vijelie** *sf.* gale, storm; hurricane ['h^r€kŤn, -ke€n]"; "**conformitate** *sf.* concord ['k]nk]:d, 'k]ŋ-]". Seeking to answer the question, "What specific reasons led me to give those transcripts and explanations?", we think we can make a modest contribution (be it indirectly or tentative), based on reflection, to improving future materials for teaching English, in which the part played by applied linguistics (and especially by phonetics) should be pre-eminent. Some of those reasons may be said

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to be rather subjective, being mainly derived from our own teaching experience (e.g. *grievous*, *entrance*[1], *entrance*[2]), but most terms whose phonetic transcription was given in the various entries of the Romanian-English dictionary are widely recognized as notorious difficulties of English phonetics, e.g. *cough*, *rough*, *bury*, *tomb*, *omnipotent* [„m'nipətənt], *appropriate* [ə'prəupriit], *to cleanse* [klenz], *gratis* ['grætis; 'greitis], *intricate* ['intrikit], *purple* ['pɜ:pˀl], *southern* ['s^đ□n], etc.

Last but not least, we thought it suitable to provide, for the Romanian terms, too: (1) Variants of form: "**vọtcă** / **vọdcă** *sf.* vodka", "**trạfic** / **trafịc** *sn.* **1.** traffic"; "**taxị** / *fam.* **tạxi** *sn.*"; "**ọrice I.** *pron.* **1.** *(şi **oricẹ**)*"; (2) Indications on standardisation (be they indirect), e.g. "**datorạ**, **datorị I.** *vt.*"; "**deseạră** *adv.* → **DISEARA**"; "**diseạră** *adv.* tonight"; "**vịrus** *sn.*, *sm.* virus". (3) Semantic-stylistical variants: "**şụncă** *sf.* **1.** ham. **2.** *reg. (slănină)* (fat) bacon; *(afumată)* smoked bacon; salt pork".

6. Conclusions

We believe that the material analyzed actually serves to confirm the assertion that synonymy is virtually never perfect (so that, we may add, the databases of synonyms that are liberally provided by various online glossaries and other similar sources, as well as printed dictionaries, hardly ever attain their goal). In the lexicon of any natural language, nuances abound: differences occur due to (1) **referential** selectivity, in keeping with the objects and domains involved; to this are added (2) **stylistic** selectivity, and selectivity of **register** or functional status; (3) the selectivity governed by **collocability** itself; (4) collocation, which is dictated by both **grammar**, and the **use** of language. Therefore, such lexicographical indications are absolutely indispensable as: (1) *mar*. ("nautical"), *(d persoane)* ("about people"), *jur*. ("law"), etc.; (2) *fig*. ("figurative"), *glum*. ("jocular"), *AmE* ("North American / U.S. variant"), etc.; (3) *(m. al. pasiv)* ("esp. passive"); "oblivious *(+ of)*" vs. "oblivious *(+ to)*"; (4) *take a step / leap*, etc. It appears therefore that contextual determinations can lead to differences of meaning, not only to distinctions concerning the functional nuance of the terms in question. Providing (not only incidentally, as could be noticed from the above examples) various synonymic series, intended for the information and linguistic use of the Romanian user of the dictionaries (e.g. "***to eat one's fill*** a se sătura, a mânca pe săturate(lea)", we tried to give them a modest yet effective source of self-study to help students, etc. to further develop their appetite for nuanced expression. A well-made, fairly comprehensive and successfully informative bilingual dictionary can demonstrate, in a comparative and methodical manner, the great richness of the English vocabulary (and no less that of the Romanian lexicon); this is only one of the optimistic, inspiring conclusions, which are certainly part of the satisfaction that the author can derive from such an arduous linguistic enterprise. It will be tautologous to say that the various complexities of a natural language are literally stunning, and the effort required in order to overcome and master them should be proportionate. We firmly believe that lexicography is far from being dead or agonizing; rather it must carry on, performing its duty, as a valuable tool requisite in teaching, analyzing, storing and standardizing the lexicon of a natural language.

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Abstract

Since the contribution of applied linguistics to developing new, more efficient didactic and lexicographical instruments is undeniable, mainly when based on the contrastive and didactic view of the lexicon; and, on the other hand, given the fact that the lexicographer can derive benefit from the novel information and communication technologies and devices, we think that a dictionary compiler's own reflective writing can also be an aid in improving their products, mainly when they are didactic-oriented and open to what is new on the market. So, the present paper is about what a lexicographer can learn about compiling bilingual dictionaries from their own work. The author presents and illustrates some aspects of his experience in compiling two medium-sized bilingual (i.e. learner's) dictionaries, with specific reference to semantics, form, and functional and stylistic description in glossing.

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