

Avoiding Information Overload — Ways of Exemplifying in Bilingual e-Dictionaries Depending on the Systematicity of the Linguistic Data

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Abstract: Although monolingual dictionaries have received more academic attention, bilingual dictionaries are essential for learners at all levels. Today's electronic dictionaries for language learning have no space limitations, so the information they offer can be exhaustive. This brings with it the risk of information overload — users may feel overwhelmed and find it difficult to find the information they are looking for. E-dictionary editors must therefore balance comprehensiveness with usability and decide which linguistic data to present. Since examples are the entry component that takes up the most space, several types of examples are considered, and the systematicity of the information to be presented is the criterion for adopting specific lexicographic solutions. Research shows that shorter examples, such as infinitive phrases, support generalisable patterns, while full sentences and supplementary examples highlight more complex, unpredictable uses. This article proposes an innovative type of example, the translated context item, to help users infer usage rules. Ultimately, the study emphasises that dictionaries should help learners to intuitively distinguish predictable structures from language-specific expressions, thereby enhancing their ability to use the target language idiomatically.

Keywords: INFORMATION OVERLOAD, USABILITY, ELECTRONIC BILINGUAL LEXICOGRAPHY, ENTRY COMPONENTS, DICTIONARY EXAMPLE, LANGUAGE SYSTEMATICITY

Opsomming: Die vermyding van inligtingoorlading — Metodes om toeliggting in tweetalige e-woordeboeke volgens die sistematieseit van die taalkundige data weer te gee. Alhoewel eentalige woordeboeke meer akademiese aandag geniet het, is tweetalige woordeboeke op alle vlakke noodsaaklik vir leerders. E-tydse elektroniese woordeboeke vir taalleer het geen spasiebeperkings nie, en die inligting wat hulle aanbied, kan omvattend wees. Dit bring die risiko van inligtingoorlading mee — gebruikers kan oorweldig voel en dit moeilik vind om die inligting waarna hulle soek, te identifiseer. E-woordeboekredakteurs moet dus omvattendheid met bruikbaarheid balanseer en besluit watter taalkundige data aangebied moet word. Aangesien voorbeeldmateriaal die data-inskrywing is wat die meeste ruimte in beslag neem, word verskeie tipes voorbeelde oorweeg, en die sistematieseit van die inligting wat aangebied

moet word, is die maatstaf vir die goedkeuring van spesifieke leksikografiese oplossings. Navorsing toon dat korter voorbeelde, soos infinitiewe frases, veralgemenende patrone ondersteun, terwyl volsinne en aanvullende voorbeelde meer komplekse, onvoorspelbare gebruike uitlig. Hierdie artikel stel 'n innoverende tipe voorbeeld, die vertaalde koteksitem, voor om gebruikers te help om gebruiksreëls daarvan af te lei. Uiteindelik beklemtoon die studie dat woordeboeke leerders moet help om voorspelbare strukture intuïtief van taalspesifieke uitdrukkings te onderskei, om sodoende hul vermoë om die doeltaal idiomaties te gebruik, te verbeter.

Slutelwoorde: INLIGTINGOORLADING, BRUIKBAARHEID, ELEKTRONIESE TWEETA-LIGE LEKSIKOGRAFIE, DATA-INSKRYWINGS, WOORDEBOEKVOORBEELD, TAALSISTEMATISITEIT

1. Introduction

In this article the language dictionary is considered as a reference work used as a tool for learning a foreign language (Dubois and Dubois 1971: 11; Tarp 2011: 223) and for improving language proficiency. Foreign language learners acquire second language (L2) skills in language courses, with language handbooks, learner's grammars, apps, and by exposure to the language. The (monolingual or bilingual) dictionary is one learning tool among others, but it is a qualified tool, because it is designed by specialists in the language or languages being described to show the user the meaning and usage of the lexical items of one or two paired languages. The dictionary is also an essential aid for translators.

Monolingual learner's dictionaries enjoy a well-deserved prestige, which has led to bilingual dictionaries being regarded as second-class works (Svensén: 2009: 19; Nomdedeu-Rull and Tarp 2018: 10). Yet bilingual dictionaries have always been the preferred aid in learning a foreign language and not only in the first stages (Béjoint 2004: 144-145; Corpas Pastor et al. 2001: 239-273; Bogaards 2003: 27; Adamska-Salaciak 2006: 25; Frankenberg-Garcia 2011: 97; Lettner 2020: 20). While it is true that research on monolingual dictionaries is far superior to the attention paid to bilingual dictionaries (Béjoint 2004: 65-74; Lettner 2020: 12), it cannot be denied that quality bilingual dictionaries are now published (Oxford and Collins, for example). These dictionaries not only give the equivalents of headwords but also provide a large number of source language (SL) examples whose target language (TL) translation includes alternative equivalent to the one initially given, and even translations whose syntactic structure does not correspond to that of the SL example (see *supplementary example* below). Thus, in the example in the following entry the translation of the example does not include the equivalent, and the nature of the predicate is different:

tie NOUN (obligation, constraint) atadura

the children are a tie los niños atan mucho (literally 'children tie parents down a lot')
(Oxford Spanish)

One of the aims of bilingual dictionaries is the contrastive representation of two linguistic systems — mainly lexically, but also grammatically and pragmati-

cally — so that users learn one of the two languages with the help of a language they master (L1). Although they are considered as a first aid to learning a foreign language (Svensén 2009: 19), they should be compiled to the same high standards as their monolingual counterparts.

There is no need to emphasise the importance of electronic dictionaries today (Dziemianko 2018). The e-dictionary allows lexicographical data to be presented more explicitly than print dictionaries — e.g., without abbreviations. Additionally, since the given data is typically presented more vertically than horizontally on a screen, a sense of dispersion is created, as opposed to the concentration found in print dictionaries. It offers much faster access to information, which can be more comprehensive. However, the screen does not cover as much information as a page in a print dictionary — the latter contains many articles, while the screen does not always fit the entire entry, and the user loses the overview of the article and must scroll down (Torres del Rey 2009: 49). In principle, e-dictionaries have no space restrictions, because the capacity of the databases that support them is unlimited. This format gives free rein to exemplification, as the example is the component that takes up the most space and is the least condensed. This, however, is where the danger of information overload lies: excessive exemplification can clutter the page to the point that the user feels overwhelmed.

The expression *information overload* was popularised by Toffler (1970) in his book *Future Shock*.¹ He drew attention to the inability of human intelligence to process all the information it receives: "By classifying information, by abstracting and «coding» it in various ways, we manage to stretch these limits, yet ample evidence demonstrates that our capabilities are finite" (1970: 350).

Drucker (1968, 1989, 1993) developed the concept of *knowledge society*, initially referring to the field of business management, but it was soon to be extended to all areas of society with the introduction of ICT. It is precisely in this environment that information overload is most prevalent. Referring to electronic lexicography, Fuertes-Olivera and Tarp (2014: 63) state: "In recent years [...] it has developed into an international plague, especially when browsing and searching for information on the Internet, where the user is increasingly stressed with too many data and frequently placed in a situation similar to the search for the proverbial needle in a haystack" (cf. Gouws and Tarp 2017: 394).

Lexicographers became enthusiastic about the possibilities offered by the electronic format, which allows much more information to be provided than in the print dictionary. However, just as compiling a paper dictionary requiring data selection and condensation, "devising an e-dictionary calls for smart information management and sensitive design on the part of the editors and the software engineers" (Atkins and Rundell 2008: 240, 139; cf. Gouws and Tarp 2017: 412). In today's lexicographic research, *user-friendliness* is a recurring concept, as it is a necessary criterion to avoid information overload, but it always clashes with the aim of providing exhaustive information on each lexical item.

The Collins dictionary is regarded as one of the best bilingual dictionaries, at least as far as English–Spanish pair is concerned, and can be used for free on

the Internet.² It offers exhaustive information, with many well-chosen and adapted examples. Nevertheless, sometimes the way of presenting that information is fairly crowded, as per the entry below (which presents the text that can be viewed on the screen, before scrolling down):

love

[lʌv]

NOUN

1. (= affection)

[of person] **amor** *m*

I no longer feel any love for or towards him **ya no siento amor or cariño por él**

it was love at first sight **fue amor a primera vista ♦ fue un flechazo**

her love for or of her children **su amor *m* por sus hijos**

her children's love for her **el amor de sus hijos por ella**

don't give me any money, I'm doing it for love **no me des dinero, lo hago por amor**

al arte (*hum*)

to marry for love **casarse por amor**

for love of her son, out of love for her son **por amor a su hijo ♦ por el amor que le**

tiene/tenía a su hijo

for the love of God or Mike! **¡por el amor de Dios!**

to be/fall in love (with sb) **estar enamorado/enamorarse (de algn)**

they are in love (with each other) **están enamorados (el uno del otro)** (*Collins Spanish*)

Information on the usage of the headword *love* is comprehensive — there are usual constructions, and they are quite well exemplified. However, constructions and examples are presented in a long sequence, some in italics and some in roman type (it is not clear to which typeface each kind of information each typeface correspond),³ and can produce a sense of clutter. For other examples of overload in dictionaries, see Gouws and Tarp (2017: 398ff.).

One of the advantages of the electronic format, is that it allows the elements of the entry to be displayed in such a way that users can access the information contained in it as they need it. Thus, an electronic dictionary can offer a menu of the different meanings of the headword and users can click on the one for which they are looking, and it is displayed with all the information (Lew and Tokarek 2010: 193). Otherwise, after providing one or two basic examples, the entry offers the possibility to view more examples on a box or line marked "more examples" (as in Spanish Oxford online dictionaries, when they were available, or in the electronic Lithuanian–German now under construction, *LiVoLi*).

All these technical possibilities depend on IT specialists and designers, but it is up to lexicographers to decide how to present lexicographic data according to linguistic criteria: how to combine the different entry components (lemma, semantic gloss, cotext item, syntactic construction, examples, etc.) so that the linguistic data are described and presented in a comprehensive yet clear and user-friendly way.

In this study, the focus is on how to present examples considering the systematicity of the linguistic data on the headword being described, how to manage the entry components, especially examples, in order to display information

that ranges from more to less systematic or generalisable. Since dictionary users are usually not specialists in linguistics, lexicographers must help them perceive which linguistic facts can be inferred from the lexicographic data provided intuitively, and which facts should be highlighted as more idiosyncratic and therefore explicitly learned.

Here some conclusions from research will be presented that was carried out on a corpus of more than three thousand examples collected from Lithuanian–Spanish/French/Italian dictionaries (cf. Rascón Caballero 2021). One of its aims was to determine what kind of information is conveyed by different types of dictionary example. The practical guidelines drawn from the research, are being implemented in the *Lithuanian–Spanish online dictionary*.

To determine the ways of exemplifying the linguistic data in the bilingual e-dictionary, two coordinates are handled: firstly, types of examples and their relation to the components they illustrate, and secondly, the degree of systematicity of the linguistic phenomena for which the dictionary accounts. From the analysis of examples and the information they convey, a criterion can be drawn, and this criterion will be applied to several samples of dictionary entries to be presented later.

2. Bilingual dictionary entry components and examples

The dictionary example is a fundamental component that helps the user to understand the lemmatised lexical unit and also shows how to use it. It is an instance of the metalinguistic information provided by the other components in the entry and provides additional information (Rascón Caballero 2024: 92-93; WLWF 2010: 660 s.v. *Beispielangabe*). It is generally the least condensed component, closest to the real language, but also the most likely to overload the entry.

The example illustrates the information provided by the other entry components (Blanco Escoda 1996: 156; Drysdale 1987: 215; Rascón Caballero 2024: 147):

- a. It shows a form of the *headword* and of the equivalent according to the word class: for instance, in the fragment below, sequence *judrios akys* — *ojos vivaces* ('sparkling eyes'), offers the feminine and plural form of the Lithuanian word *judrus*, a lemma marked with the *morphological indication* "adjective". In this example, the adjective is acting as a modifier of a noun. In the translation, the plural form of the equivalent *vivaz* is also provided, *vivaces*. This form includes a particular spelling, which increases the informative value of the example:

judrus, -i adj vivaz; **judrios akys** *ojos vivaces* (*Lith–Sp*)

- b. It is used in a context that confirms the meaning explicitly expressed by a *semantic gloss* (Hausmann and Werner 1991: 2737; Lettner 2020: 315; Rascón Caballero 2024: 42) conveying the concrete sense of the word concerned;

for instance, the phrase *devėti žiedą* ('wear a ring') illustrates the sense indicated by the gloss in brackets in the entry for *žiedas*:

žiedas (*papuošalas* 'ornament') bague; **devėti žiedą** porter una bague (*Lith–Fr*)

- c. It illustrates the collocational information provided by the *cotext item* (Hausmann and Werner 1991: 2734-2737; Atkins and Rundell 2008: 11, 217, 470; Svensén 2009: 263; Jacinto García 2015: 29, 117; Lettner 2020: 317; Rascón Caballero 2024: 43),⁴ which is a word that combines with the lemma sign. Thus, a sentence such as *we don't run a car* — *no tenemos coche* exemplifies the cotext item in square brackets "[car]" presented before equivalent *tener*:

run [car] tener
we don't run a car no tenemos coche (*Collins Spanish*)

- d. It shows an instantiation of the syntactic pattern presented by the *constructional item* (Zgusta 1971: 138-139; Hausmann and Werner 1991: 2732; Atkins and Rundell 2008: 218-219; Svensén 2009: 141; Jacinto García 2015: 21, 117, 118; Lettner 2020: 356; Rascón Caballero 2024: 45). Here the example *siųsk man laišką* — *envíame una carta* ('send me a letter') illustrates the construction *siųsti ką kam*:

siųsti enviar ('to send')
siųsti ką kam enviar algo a alguien ('to send something to someone')
siųsk man laišką envíame una carta (*Lith–Sp*)⁵

Bilingual dictionary examples can be classified in two ways: according to syntactic range and depending on whether the equivalent is included in the translation of the SL example. According to syntactic range or integrity and on the basis of the classification made by Rey-Debove (1971: 302-307) (cf. Cowie 2002: 77-80; Atkins and Rundell 2008: 225; Rascón Caballero 2024: 122-126), examples can be distinguished into:

- a. (Condensed) non-verbal phrases:
laukinis kapitalizmas capitalisme sauvage (*Lith–Fr*); **labai gerai** muy bien ('very well') (*Lith–Sp*, s.v. *laukinis*)
- b. (Condensed) infinitive phrases:
išbandyti laimę probar suerte ('to take a chance') (*Lith–Sp*, s.v. *laimė*)
- c. Sentences or free examples:
leisk vaikams žaisti déjales jugar a los niños ('let the children play') (*Lith–Sp*, s.v. *leisti*)

On the basis of Model's (2009: 131-134) classification, depending on whether or not the translation of the example includes the given equivalent, the example can be (cf. Rascón Caballero 2024: 134-136, 166-179):

- a. Illustrative: when it includes the given equivalent:

offer

siūlyti(s); pa(si)siūlyti

to offer for sale siūlyti parduoti (*En–Lith*)

- b. Supplementary:⁶ when it provides another equivalent not given before (here *to direct*)

dirigir

(*empresa*) to manage, run

(*debate*) to lead, chair

dirigió la operación de rescate he led or directed the rescue operation (*Oxford Spanish*)

or the translation of the example has a different syntactic structure:

castigar to punish

lo castigaron sin postre as a punishment he was made to go without dessert (literally 'they punished him without desert') (*Oxford Spanish*)

3. The degree of systematicity of the language to be learned

Every language fluctuates between systematicity and regularity (learners can infer word combinations and constructions from others previously learned), and restrictions, irregularities, or unpredictable difficulties with which only a competent speaker is able to cope (cf. Atkins and Rundell 2008: 9). The dictionary entry is an attempt to reflect the language as a system at the level of the lexical item being described. Among all entry components, examples, within their formal variety, also fluctuate in an intermediate zone situated between *langue* and *parole* (Olimpio de Oliveira Silva 2009: 96; Jacinto García 2015: 19, 76; Rey-Debove 1971: 302–303).

Lexicographers therefore must arrange the entry in such a way that the components conveying more explicit metalinguistic information (grammatical, collocational, and pragmatic indications) are illustrated by the examples. That examples in turn complement this information, serving as a model for users to use the headword with some guarantee that their concrete linguistic realisations are idiomatic (Jacobsen et al. 1991: 2783). However, since language does not always function according to grammatical and lexical regularities, the examples must also show linguistic phenomena that are unpredictable for the user.

Thus, if learners of Spanish using a dictionary learn the lexical combination *cumplir la ley* — *to observe the law*, they can deduce that one can also say *cumplir una regla* or *una norma* — *to observe a rule, a norm*; or that just as one says *cumplir una promesa* — *to keep a promise* it is also possible to say *cumplir un juramento, la propia palabra* — *to keep an oath, one's own word*. However, a Lithuanian student of Spanish can hardly foresee that in Spanish one also says *cumplir años* — *he cumplido veinte años* (*I have turned twenty years old*) and that this in Lithuanian corresponds to *man sukako 20 metų*, where the syntactic structure is different ('for me twenty years was completed').

The dictionary must therefore account for the more or less systematic lin-

guistic facts, but it must present them in such a way that users intuitively distinguish what is more predictable and what is more idiomatic, more restrictive and therefore unpredictable. This is where it is important to manage the different entry components in combination with different types of examples, and to arrange the entry so that the information is as explicit as possible, but at the same time user-friendly.

Rascón Caballero (2021: 746ff.) has shown that a first criterion for accounting for the more or less systematicity of the language at the lexical item level is this — the more abstract the linguistic data are, and therefore the more generalisable, the shorter, more standard and more condensed are the entry components that convey it, especially cotext items and phrase examples. On the other hand, more specific and more restricted information has to be shown with larger examples, especially sentences and explicit glosses as usage notes. A second criterion is the word class of the headword — an entry for a noun it is not the same as for an adjective, a verb, etc.

4. Samples of bilingual e-dictionary entries

The mentioned criteria can be illustrated with the following samples of bilingual e-dictionary entries in which different linguistic data are presented with different types of examples. The assumption is that both SL and TL linguistic data provided in the entry are intended for showing how the headword and equivalent are used and how the meaning expressed by the headword in syntagmatic relation with other words is verbalised in TL, i.e. information provided is valid for production in both ST and TL (Adamska-Salaciak 2006: 495; Yong and Peng 2007: 33; Svensén 2009: 16).

In these samples the concern is the type of information, and the components and exemplification conveying it, not the page design (spacing between lines can be larger, components can be presented in different typefaces and colours, etc.). The following entries are from the planned Spanish–Lithuanian dictionary and the *Lithuanian–Spanish online dictionary* in progress. Examples can be provided in different ways, but this format of exemplifying is proposed according to the abovementioned criteria.

This is how the entry for the mentioned Spanish verb *cumplir* might be presented:⁷

- cumplir** /kumplír/ conjugación
 VERBO TRANSITIVO
- 1 (la ley, una regla +) **laikytis** (ko) (įstatymo, taisyklės +)
 - 2 (una orden, una indicación, un objetivo +) **(į)vykdyti** (įsakymą, nurodymą, tikslą +)
 - 3 (una promesa +) **ištesėti** (pažadą +)
 - 4 (una misión, una función +) **atlikti** (misiją, funkciją +)
 - 5 (un deseo, un sueño +) **išpildyti, įgyvendinti** (norą, svajonę +)
 - 6 (una edad) *asmuo, kuriam sukanka yra veiksnys, kiek laiko - papildinys* **sukakti**
he cumplido veinte años man sukako dvidešimt metų
mi hijo va a cumplir nueve años sūnui sukaks devyni metai

VERBO TRANSITIVO / INTRANSITIVO

- 7 **cumplir (con) una obligación / un deber** atlikti pareigą
+ ejemplos
- 8 **cumplir (con) los requisitos / las condiciones** atitikti reikalavimus / sąlygas
+ ejemplos
→ **ajustarse**

VERBO INTRANSITIVO

- 9 (comportarse según los estándares sociales / elgtis pagal socialines normas)
hemos comprado un regalito a Ana, así que ya hemos cumplido nupirkome
dovanėlę Anai, pareigą atlikome (*padarėme tai, ko tikimasi tokiose situacijose*)
en el trabajo Tomás siempre cumple Tomas darbe visada atlieka savo užduotis

The verb *cumplir* has many equivalents in Lithuanian, which depend on the words with which it combines.⁸ In bilingual dictionaries, in verb entries, the usual component for discriminating equivalents is the cotext item, along with the indication *transitive, intransitive*, etc., but here the cotext indications are translated after the equivalent, becoming a kind of condensed example. The example, in principle, has to include the headword and the equivalent in the translation, but the translated cotext is a clear solution that avoids repeating both the headword and the equivalent, as they are taken for granted, and provides more general and more systematic information (Rey-Debove 1971: 258; Model 2009: 53; Svensén 2009: 281; Lettner 2020: 171; Rascón Caballero 2021: 152-154; Rascón Caballero 2024: 153-156).⁹ In sense 1, when Lithuanian users read *la ley, una regla* ('the rule, a norm') and the translation, they can understand that they are the normal objects of the verb and implicitly form the combinations *cumplir la ley — laikytis įstatymo* ('to observe the law'). It is a hint for users to make other phrases, such as *cumplir una norma, un código* ('to observe a norm, to comply with a code'). But the electronic dictionary even allows showing explicitly more collocates of the same lexical set — by clicking on the plus sign more words are displayed in both SL and TL:

cumplir /kumplír/
(...)

- 1 (*la ley, una regla, una norma, un código*) **laikytis** (ko) (įstatymo, taisyklės, normos, kodekso)

The same applies in the meaning 2 to the set *una orden, una indicación, un objetivo* ('to fulfil an order, to comply with an indication, to meet a goal') and their equivalents. Users can predict other words that combine with the headword, which can be completed with *un plan, un proyecto* ('to comply with a plan, to fulfil a project'). By clicking on the plus sign they can also access these collocates:

- 2 (*una orden, una indicación, un objetivo, un plan, un proyecto*) **(į)vykdyti** (įsakymą, nurodymą, tikslą, planą, projektą)

The same is true for the following senses: Meaning 3 *una promesa* ('to keep a promise') can be completed with *un juramento, la propia palabra* ('an oath, one's

word'), and so on.

Sense 6 is *cumplir una edad* ('to reach an age'). As mentioned, this is a rather idiosyncratic use of the word *cumplir* that a learner of Spanish cannot predict: in Lithuanian the person who turns twenty is in the dative case and the years in the nominative case, but in Spanish the person is the subject and the year the object. That information should be explained in more detail with a usage note (here in italics and it can be highlighted in another colour) and sentence examples to draw attention to the syntactic changes:

- 6 (*edad*) *asmuo, kuriam sukanka yra veiksnyys, kiek laiko - papildinys* ('the birthday person is subject, the age is object') **sukakti**
he cumplido veinte años ('I have turned twenty years old') *man sukako dvidešimt metų* ('for me twenty years was completed')
mi hijo va a cumplir nueve años *sūnui sukaks devyni metai* ('my son is going to be nine years old')

In senses 7 and 8, complete examples are provided (*complete* in the sense that they include the headword, that is, they are not translated cotexts):

- 7 ***cumplir (con) una obligación / un deber*** *atlikti pareigą*
 + *ejemplos*
 8 ***cumplir (con) los requisitos / las condiciones*** *atitikti reikalavimus / sąlygas*
 + *ejemplos*

Here the information is not as straightforward as in the previous meanings, because the verb can be used transitively or intransitively with the same meaning, so this is the best way to show the optional use of the phrases *cumplir (con) un deber, una obligación* ('to fulfil a duty, an obligation') and *cumplir (con) los requisitos, las condiciones* ('to meet requirements, conditions') with or without a preposition. These examples are supplementary, because any equivalent has been provided before for these senses. It would be possible to give the equivalent *atlikti*, but the syntactical optionality and the lexical restriction make it advisable to present the equivalent embedded in the example. Here it is also possible to add optional sentence examples that can be viewed by clicking on + *ejemplos*.

More interesting is the intransitive use of *cumplir*, which means *to do one's duty*, and is even more idiosyncratic to Spanish:

- 9 (*comportarse según los estándares sociales / elgtis pagal socialines normas*)
 ('behave according to social standards')
hemos comprado un regalito a Ana, así que ya hemos cumplido *nupirkome dovanėlę Anai, pareigą atlikome (padarėme tai, ko tikimasi tokiose situacijose)*
 ('we have bought a little present for Ana, so we have already done our duty', *we have done what is expected in this situation*)
en el trabajo Tomás siempre cumple ('at work, Tomás always does his duty')
Tomas darbe visada atlieka savo užduotis ('Tomas always makes his tasks')¹⁰

In this case, there is no clear Lithuanian equivalent for this meaning and the best way to show this usage is to give an explicit semantic gloss in italics and supplementary and preferably sentence examples. For the first example, a gloss

is added. It is up to lexicographers to consider whether or not the provided information is excessive.

This is the entry for the reflexive and intransitive verb *cumplirse*.

- cumplirse** /kumplírse/ conjugación
VERBO REFLEXIVO INTRANSITIVO
1. [un deseo, un sueño +] **išsipildyti** [noras, svajonė +]
mi deseo se cumplió mano noras išsipildė ('my wish came true')
→ **hacerse realidad**
 2. [un plazo] **baigtis** [terminas]
el plazo de presentación de solicitudes se cumple el 21 de enero paraiškų pateikimo terminas baigiasi sausio 21d. ('the deadline for submitting applications is 21 january')
 3. [un periodo de tiempo] **sukakti** [laikotarpis]
hoy se cumplen 100 años desde que murió don Tomás šiandien sukanka 100 metų, kai mirė ponas Tomas ('today marks 100 years since don Tomás died')

In intransitive verb entries the cotext item used to distinguish equivalents points to the subject of the verb, but it may not be so clear or sufficient to users. In this entry, the translation of the cotext indication is provided, but a short and simple sentence example is the best aid to show how the headword and equivalent are used. In senses 2 and 3, the sentence example is mandatory, as *cumplirse* in these meanings and their equivalents require at least two arguments to show their syntactic and collocational behaviour to users.

This is the entry for the noun *actitud*:

- actitud** /agtítu^d/ plural **actitudes** /agtítúdes/
SUSTANTIVO FEMENINO
(positiva, negativa teigiamas, neigiamas) **požiūris**
actitud hacia požiūris į ('attitude towards')
cambia / ha cambiado la actitud hacia la educación keičiasi / pasikeitė požiūris į švietimą ('the attitude towards education changes / has changed')
adoptar / mostrar una actitud laikytis požiūrio / parodyti požiūrį ('to adopt/show a responsible attitude')
adoptó / mostró una actitud responsable jis laikėsi atsakingo požiūrio / jis parodė atsakingą požiūrį ('he adopted/showed a responsible attitude')
(ella) mostró una actitud negativa a mi proyecto ji neigiamai vertino mano projektą, mano projekto atžvilgiu ji buvo nusiteikusi neigiamai ('she negatively assessed my project')

In a noun entry, at the beginning, simple cotexts with adjectives or other modifiers, such as *actitud positiva, negativa*, can be inserted, maintaining the word order in both languages: in Lithuanian *teigiamas, neigiamas požiūris*.¹¹ There is a construction item *actitud hacia* and its translation, and then a sentence example that illustrates this syntactic information and is a natural combination of *actitud*, where this word is the subject. This usage can only be shown with the sentence example format.

The most interesting are the following examples, as they show the quite frequent collocations *adoptar, mostrar una actitud*, which are infinitive phrases. The

following is a sentence example where two collocations are together: *adoptó/mostró una actitud responsable* — *adopted/showed a responsible attitude*.

The last example, *mostró una actitud negativa a mi proyecto*, is very important, because it shows that very often it is not possible to translate word for word. Although the literal translation is possible (*parodė negiamą požiūrį į mano projektą*), it is not well-sounding in Lithuanian (this sentence was checked by Lithuanian natives and translators). One of the valid translations is this one: *ji neigiamai vertino mano projektą* 'she negatively assessed my project'. This is a supplementary example, in which the given equivalent is not included, even the syntactic structure of the translation is different from the Spanish example. Such supplementary examples are very significant and valuable for bilingual dictionaries because they show that each language is a different system in its own right. This kind of example does not solve the practical problem for the users, but when the users come across many supplementary examples, they start to understand that the foreign language must be learned also from the foreign language, that the L1 only gives a first help (Rascón Caballero 2023: 19).

This is the entry for the adjective *lygus* ('level, equal'):

lygus, lygi

(*paviršius* superficie, *laukai* tierra) **plano -a, llano -a** ('level surface, ground')

(*plaukai* pelo) **liso -a** ('straight hair')

(vienodas) (*kiekis* cantidad) **igual** ('equal amount')

lygios dalys partes iguales ('equal parts')

lygūs prieš Dievą / įstatymą iguales ante Dios / la ley ('equal before God / the law')

eiti lygiu žingsniu andar al mismo paso ('to keep in step')¹²

The more general combinations of the headword are presented here in a more condensed way, with translated cotexts, but the following ones are more specific: the phrase *lygios dalys* ('equal parts') are usually mentioned in the plural and therefore the example should reflect this formal particularity and be complete (with headword and equivalent); the expressions *lygūs prieš Dievą/įstatymą* ('equal before God/the law') show more specific uses of the headword. The last example (*eiti lygiu žingsniu*) not only is an infinitive phrase which presents a wider context for the adjective *lygus* but is supplementary — it provides a specific equivalent not given before for this particular use of the headword (*mismo* 'same').

5. Conclusion

Nowadays, there is no lack of information when it comes to learning a foreign language. The problem is rather that there is an excess of information. Bilingual dictionaries are useful tools, among others, for accessing the linguistic data to be learned. Modern technology facilitates lexicographic work, but information has to be selected, processed and provided to learners by lexicographers in a comprehensive, but also clear and user-friendly way. In this article, the focus has been placed on how to present the dictionary entry components, and especially the examples, from the point of view of the systematicity of the language paired

with another language: how to describe the linguistic data so that users could infer what is generalisable, predictable and what is more specific and unpredictable. Research on bilingual dictionary examples has shown that short components (especially cotext items) and examples (non-verbal and infinitive phrases) provide more generalisable, systematic information. An unusual example format was proposed — the translated cotext that does not include the headword and the equivalent, as they are assumed. This type of example provides a clue for users to form phrases according to this model, although an e-dictionary can explicitly display more words combining with the headword and the equivalent. When the information is more difficult to generalise (e.g. certain flexional forms, figurative senses, how to use an intransitive verb, or to show a noun as the subject of a verb), more explicit examples should be given. Sentence examples should be provided to illustrate complex syntactic structures (especially when it is necessary to show the subject and when the predicate requires more than one argument). Supplementary examples (especially, when the syntactic structure of the translation is different from the one of the SL example) form a very valuable contribution to bilingual dictionaries, as they draw the users' attention to the real fact that the paired languages are not parallel systems, that the L1 is only a first aid to learn a foreign language.

Endnotes

1. Toffler acknowledges that the expression *information overload* had already been used in the context of mental health by Miller in 1963 (1970: 350 footnote).
2. The Oxford bidirectional dictionary for the pair Spanish/English, as comprehensive as Collins dictionary, was available online for free until 24 August 2022.
3. In this online dictionary, constructions are usually presented in normal typeface and examples in italics, but in this entry and others this distinction is not kept. The author of this paper made some suggestions to the editors regarding the unclear distinction between constructions and examples in this entry and received a very grateful response to these remarks.
4. A variant of this component is proposed below: the translated cotext.
5. <https://www.webonary.org/lietuviukalba-espanol/g73277260-07e2-4d10-9a4c-fc8b063e1b5a/?lang=en>
6. This reduces to *supplementary* the two types distinguished by Model — *supplementary* and *direct*, the former being the example whose translation includes an equivalent not given before in the entry and the latter being the example with its translation given without having previously provided any equivalent for the headword or for one of its senses being illustrated.
7. It should be noted that an e-dictionary allows the different components of an entry to be represented by different colours, as is the case in the *Lithuanian–Spanish online dictionary*. Examples are translated into English in the comments of each sense.
8. On the concept of collocation in bilingual lexicography, and how collocational information is conveyed in bilingual dictionaries, see Rascón Caballero (2022; 2024: 219-232)
9. This kind of example is used in two Piesarskas' dictionaries (1991 [1981], 1984) and the Lithuanian–Spanish dictionaries.

10. These two examples were translated by translator and interpreter Nomedė Lukoševičienė.
11. Note that in these examples or translated cotexts, the SL word combined with the headword and the TS translation combined with the equivalent are together, not separately as in a verb entry.
12. Abridged from <https://www.webonary.org/lietuviukalba-espanol/ga0b77b97-2aaa-4741-a9fb-65684d23d54f/?lang=en>

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