

ENGLISH-LITHUANIAN LEXICAL PSEUDO-EQUIVALENTS

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The paper presents a contrastive description and analysis of English and Lithuanian lexical units identical or similar in form (spelling and/or pronunciation) but having some differences in meaning. The semantic structure of lexical pseudo-equivalents has been investigated in order to establish the level of their systemic equivalence in the two languages. The results of the research show that 26% of the selected word pairs do not share any denotative/propositional meaning (absolute lexical pseudo-equivalents). The rest 74% share at least one meaning and have at least one different meaning (partial pseudo-equivalents). Among them, cases when the English word has all the meanings of the Lithuanian word and some of its own (the inclusion of Lithuanian into English) account for 51%, while the reverse (Lithuanian words having developed their own meanings in addition to the shared ones) constitutes only 6%. About 17% represent cases of meaning overlap.

The comparison also allows us to make some conclusions about the nature and character of borrowing in the two languages. The Lithuanian lexemes in the word pairs are mostly borrowings of either Greek or Latin origin, which are more or less isolated in the lexical system of the Lithuanian language from both formal and semantic point-of-view. This is reflected in their narrow, often specific/terminological meaning. Borrowed words tend to remain isolated and very rarely (6%) develop their own meanings. In English lexemes of the same origin are motivated elements of the system with all the properties typical of the 'native' word.

Introduction

The paper presents a synchronic contrastive analysis of lexical units, identical or similar in form (spelling and/or pronunciation), but different in propositional (denotative) meaning in English and Lithuanian, e.g. *carton* 'a box/container made from cardboard or plastic': *kartonas* 'cardboard'. Word pairs have been investigated and contrasted in order to establish the level of their systemic equivalence in the two languages, because only systematic research can provide implications for translation theory and practice as well as language teaching/learning and bilingual lexicography.

Comparative analysis of both related and non-related languages presents a large corpus of similar or identical lexemes, even in non-related languages this phenomenon would reach the proportion of 10 to 20% (Veisbergs 1998:12). A considerable share of these lexemes are pseudo-equivalents. The most notorious are absolute pseudo-equivalents – words that look and/or sound similar but do not share a common meaning, e.g. *prospect* 1 'an outlook for the future, expectation, hope', 2 'a view or scene': *prospektas* 1 'brochure', 2 'avenue'. Yet just a brief look at the whole corpus of externally similar words will reveal that such straightforward cases are in a minority - much more often we are dealing with pairs of words whose meanings overlap,

i.e. with partial pseudo-equivalents, e.g. *minister* 1 'a person administering department of state', 2 'a pastor': *ministras* 'a person administering department of state'. Used as equivalents in another language, they lead to false associations, wrong use, misunderstanding, distortion of text, or imprecision. Here are some examples from recent Lithuanian-English and English-Lithuanian translations illustrating the problem:

- (1) *The reading hall of LSC stores *prospectu (prospectuses, brochures, Lithuanian – prospektai) of registration of securities and periodically received copies of issuers' annual and semi-annual reports...* (LSC Annual Report 1999:39).
- (2) *'Merry Christmas, everyone,' I said with a gracious smile. 'I expect we'll see you all at the Turkey Curry Buffet'* (Fielding 1996:305)

translated

– *Visiems linkiu linksmų Kalėdų, – palinkėjau elegantiškai šypsodamasi. – Tikiuosi susitikti kalalautienos troškiano *bufete (vakarėje, pabūvyje)* (Fielding 1999:266).

- (3) *It was then that the noise got to be as loud and frightening as it ever would be, that it went from pathetic to pathological* (Wurtzel 1995:82)

translated

*Tada sumaištis mūsų namuos pasidarė triukšminga ir klaidi kaip niekad ir iš *patetiškos (apgailėtinios, varganos) virto patologiška* (Wurtzel 2000:94).

With the recent influx into Lithuania of mass media, films, commercials, and literature from the West, misunderstandings caused by lexical pseudo-equivalents become even more numerous.

The novelty of the research

Lexical pseudo-equivalents, often referred to as 'false friends', or '*faux amis*', have long been a familiar problem in language learning, translation and interpreting practice. Since the original work of Koessler and Deroquigny in 1928, the concept of 'false friends' has received a lot of attention from scholars abroad¹, although, according to Hayward and Moulin, "they have never granted it the status it deserves in mainstream research" (1984:190). Yet their significance is considerable if one takes into account not only the high frequency of the words involved but also the importance of clear understanding and exact translation in the commercial, political, and scientific fields as well as in many others.

In Lithuanian-English studies, lexical pseudo-equivalents have been recognized by linguists and EFL practitioners but have never been described systematically in a way which could benefit EFL teachers, students, textbook and dictionary writers. Because the great majority of lexical pseudo-equivalents are loan words in Lithuanian, they have been discussed in the context of loan words and borrowing in the works of Rudaitienė & Vitkauskas (1998). A number of Lithuanian linguists² dealt with various other aspects of loan words, such as terminology, usage norms, etc. Aprijaskytė & Pareigyte (1972; 1975), Aprijaskytė (1982), Laptėvaitė (1978) discussed

¹ Beheydt & Colson (1996), Budagov (1976), Don Nilsen (1977), Gorbahn-Orme & Hausmann (1991), Granger & Swallow (1988), Hammer (1976, 1979), Hartmann (1991), Hartmann & James (1998), Hayward & Moulin (1984), Le Huche (1975), Lipczuk (1992), Malone (1982), Markov (1997), McCulloch (1998), Muravyev (1969), Nicholls (1995), Pateau & Barrie (1999), Perkins (1977), Sansome (2000), Sheen (1996, 2000), Spence (1987), Spillner (1991), Veisbergs (1997, 1998), Viberg (1999), Weberovj & Skochovj (2000), Wilczyńska (1992), Woulfe (1981), etc.

² Girčienė (1997), Kvašytė (1999), Mikulėnienė (1999), Pupkis (1994), Rudaitienė (1996), Stoškus (1996), Švambarytė (1997), etc.

English-Lithuanian lexical pseudo-equivalents in the context of native language interference and students' error analysis. Gaivenis (1987) introduced the phenomenon to the general public by allocating lexical pseudo-equivalents and paronyms a chapter in his book, while Gudavičius (1977) touched upon the problem of pseudo-equivalents in the conditions of Lithuanian-Russian bilingualism.

This is the first attempt at a comprehensive study of English-Lithuanian lexical pseudo-equivalents. As has been mentioned, the importance of precise translation is becoming even more acute with the expansion of language contacts and the influx of international lexis into the Lithuanian language.

Selection criteria and data sources

It is hard to establish strict criteria for the selection of lexical pseudo-equivalents: "...there is no yardstick by which one can establish the degree of semantic or formal difference that justifies the classification of lexemes as *faux amis*" (Spence 1987:170). This category is usually associated with mistakes in foreign language usage arising from ascribing to the foreign language lexeme the meaning the analogous lexeme has in the native/source language; however, the analysis of 'false friends' dictionaries as well as other literature on the subject shows a very broad approach to the problem. Often diverse linguistic phenomena are included – diachronically diverging words of common etymology, synchronically accidental words of common spelling and/or pronunciation, just similar words, international words, etc.

A list of pseudo-equivalents between any two languages is likely to depend essentially on who is compiling it – a theoretician, a linguist, or a practitioner (either an interpreter/translator or a foreign language teacher). The linguist will be tempted to base his/her selection on the dictionary data, while practitioners will tend to include examples proved by their experience. The difficulty is enhanced by the fact that very often the existence of a semantic difference in the list of formally similar lexemes does not cause a translation mistake. That is why if the selection is based exclusively on the error analysis of some informants, the effect may turn out to be not very representative and reflect an individual level of foreign language competence. In our opinion, it would be most rational to combine dictionary data analysis and learners' error analysis with the widest possible didactic and interpreting practice.

In some authors' opinion (Don Nilsen 1977; Gottlieb 1972) phonetic/graphic similarity is not enough for selecting words as prospective candidates for pseudo-equivalents: word-pairs have to share some semantic similarity. That is why they exclude from their research absolute pseudo-equivalents, "which are not semantically similar enough" (Don Nilsen 1977:174). Other authors (Gorbahn-Orme & Hausmann 1991; Hammer 1976, 1979; Hartman 1991; Hartmann & James 1998; Veisbergs 1997, 1998; Wilczyńska 1992, etc.) base their selection criteria not on the similarity but on the difference of meaning of formally similar words, which seems more appropriate to us. Thus, our criterion for selecting lexical pseudo-equivalents was a formal similarity accompanied by a difference in propositional meaning which has a potential for interlingual interference or which may cause something broadly defined as 'translation mistake'.

Formal criteria for selecting English-Lithuanian word-pairs are as follows:

1. Word-pairs with a similar or identical root morpheme (*organ:organas, pasta:pasta*). Because Lithuanian is an inflectional language, Lithuanian words in most cases have either a masculine (-as, -is, -us) or a feminine (-a, -ė, -i)

inflexion (*diplomat:diplomatas, diplomatė, emblem:emblema, etc*). Differences in the spelling of the root morpheme may reflect usual English-Lithuanian correspondences, such as c/k (*factious:faktiškas*), ph/f (*physique:fizika*), g/dž (*gin:džinas*), x/ks (*extract:ekstraktas*), q/k (*equipage:ekipažas*), mute 'e' in the English word (*advertisement:advertimentas*), but there may also be other slight differences, such as a double consonant (*appellation:apeliacija*) or vowel (*bassoon:basonas*), a different root vowel (*census:cenžas, premiere:premjeras, semen:sėmenys*).

2. Words with the same/similar root morpheme and affixes which are perceived as regular correspondences in both languages (*dislocation:dislokacija, denounce:denonsuoti, detective:detektyvas, demonstration:demonstracija, tactful:taktiškas, etc.*).
3. More divergent pairs, having a slightly different spelling and/or pronunciation, which can still be considered analogous because of their semantic similarity (*paper:popierius, powder:pu dra, station:stotis*).

Word-pairs belonging to different parts of speech, as long as they satisfied our criteria for external similarity, were also included for analysis (e.g. *academic adj.: akademikas n*). This was done mainly because these words are often used indiscriminately, thus causing ambiguity or error.

Word pairs were included irrespective of their origin, i.e. etymologically unconnected pseudo-equivalents were also discussed. We believe that the language user rarely knows (or cares) about the origins of the word and will use it if it seems similar enough. Specialized terminology has not been included – it would have been too much in terms of scope and interest to the general speaker/learner.

Word-pairs were selected from the following data sources:

1. Cambridge International Dictionary of English (1995).
2. Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English (1995).
3. Random House Webster's College Dictionary (1995).
4. Dabartinės lietuvių kalbos žodynas (Dictionary of Present-day Lithuanian 1993).
5. Didysis anglų-lietuvių kalbų žodynas (English-Lithuanian Dictionary 2000).
6. Tarptautinių žodžių žodynas (Dictionary of International Words 2001).

The dictionary data were checked against the examples quoted in the works of Lithuanian linguists (Aprijaskytė, Pareigyte 1972, 1975; Aprijaskytė 1982; Laptėvaitė 1978). Personal experience of the author of this paper as a teacher of English and an interpreter has also played a role in the selection process. Examples with lexical pseudo-equivalents were taken from fiction and non-fiction translations, mass media, as well as students' oral and written texts.

The concept of equivalence and types of pseudo-equivalents

One of the most important concepts for this research is the concept of lexical equivalence. It is a relation of correspondence between words in different languages, while lexical equivalents are understood as words that are closest to each other in their semantic structure and function and can be employed for translation from one language into another.

Equivalence is a gradable concept: the probabilistic character of equivalence can be expressed statistically: the more often a word is translated by a certain equivalent, the higher the degree of equivalence. The probability of appearance of a certain equivalent may vary between 0 (total untranslatability or non-equivalence) and 1 (when a given word is always translated by

the same equivalent) (Catford 1965:101). Contrastive analysis, however, often employs the three logically possible equivalence relations – full, partial, and zero equivalence (Jarošovič 2000). Partial equivalence can be further subdivided into cases of meaning overlap ($X \cap Y$, i.e. $X = a + b; Y = a + c$), when the two words share at least one meaning but both have at least one additional meaning of its own, and cases of meaning inclusion ($X \supset Y$, i.e. $X = Y + a$ or $X \subset Y$, $Y = X + a$), when a word in one language has all the meanings of the equivalent word in another language but also some additional meanings of its own (Beheydt & Colson 1996; Gudavičius 1985; Sheen 2000).

What has been said about equivalence and equivalents can be applied to pseudo-equivalents. The degree of pseudo-equivalence may vary just as in the case of equivalence. In our case the total absence of equivalence (or non-equivalence) will be represented by absolute pseudo-equivalents ($E \neq L$), words that do not share any propositional meaning, while partial equivalence will be covered by partial pseudo-equivalents, words in the two languages that share at least one meaning and can be used as translation equivalents in certain contexts.

Analysis and results

English-Lithuanian pseudo-equivalents can be analysed as two-member oppositions (*pathetic:patetiškas*), but sometimes the situation is more complicated, as it involves three (*exposition:exposure:ekspozicija*) or more members (*photograph/photographer/photography:fotografija/fotografas/fotografavimas*). It may happen that all members of such an opposition fall into one category (*exposition:exposure:ekspozicija* – all partial pseudo-equivalents), or into different categories (*photograph/photography:fotografija* are partial pseudo-equivalents, *photograph:fotografas/fotografavimas* are absolute pseudo-equivalents, while *photographer:fotografas* are lexical equivalents). The same happens with the multiple opposition *academia/academy:akademija* (*academia:akademija* are absolute pseudo-equivalents, while *academy:akademija* are partial pseudo-equivalents). In such cases the same word enters the classification twice.

Out of the selected 950 word-pairs, 250 (or 26%) have been classified as absolute pseudo-equivalents (ALPEs). Table 1 shows their further subdivision into the following groups.

As can be seen from Table 1, almost half (45%) of the English-Lithuanian ALPEs are monosemantic words in both languages. Added to the monosemantic words in at least one

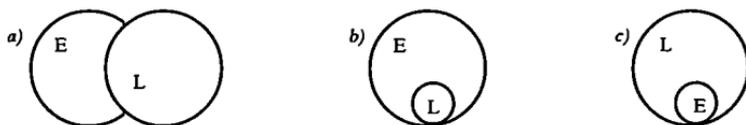
Table 1

Monosemantic ALPEs (no semantic link)	42 word-pairs	17%
Monosemantic ALPEs (some semantic link)	47 word-pairs	19%
Monosemantic ALPEs (different parts of speech)	22 word-pairs	9%
Total monosemantic ALPEs	111 word-pairs	45%
Polysemous ALPEs in English, monosemantic in Lithuanian	110 word-pairs	44%
Polysemous ALPEs in Lith., monosemantic in English	8 word-pairs	3%
Total polysemous ALPEs in one language, monosemantic in another	118 word-pairs	47%
Polysemous ALPEs with a similar number of meanings	13 word-pairs	5%
Polysemous ALPEs with more meanings in English	6 word-pairs	2%
Polysemous ALPEs with more meanings in Lithuanian	2 word-pairs	1%
Total polysemous ALPEs	21 word-pairs	8%
Total ALPEs	250 word-pairs	100%

language, they make the absolute majority of 92%. The number of polysemous ALPEs in English and Lithuanian is relatively insignificant and amounts approximately to 8%. There is almost the same amount of monosemantic ALPEs with no semantic link between the word pairs and some semantic link (17% and 19%). The share of monosemantic ALPEs belonging to different parts of speech is significant (9%). Almost half of the selected English-Lithuanian ALPEs (44%) are polysemous in English and monosemantic in Lithuanian, while the reverse holds true only for a very small number of ALPEs (3%). Among polysemous ALPEs, there is an almost equal distribution between word pairs with a similar number of meanings and with a more polysemous English word (5% and 2%), while there are only 1% ALPEs with Lithuanian words, which have developed more meanings.

The classification of word pairs as absolute pseudo-equivalents should be considered tentative and open to modification because of a number of reasons. First of all, because word pairs do not share any common meanings, they can be associated with a different word in both languages. In most cases the association is easily predictable (e.g. *gymnasium/gimnazija*, *satini/satinas*, *velvet/velvetas*, *purple/purpurinis*, *pathetic/patetiškas*, *sophisticated/sofistiškas*, etc.) because of the high degree of phonetic and graphic similarity and some semantic link (colours, materials, buildings, qualities, etc.). There are cases, however, when it is difficult to predict if *ton* 'a unit of weight' is going to be associated with *tonas* 'a musical sound' or *tona* 'a unit of weight'. If the first assumption is true, then the words are absolute pseudo-equivalents, if the second, the words are partial equivalents. The common origin could be the criterion for checking the validity of such word-pairs, but as has been mentioned, the origin has very little importance for the average language user/learner. That is why we did not employ this criterion for the selection of absolute pseudo-equivalents.

The rest 700 word-pairs (or 74%) were classified as partial pseudo-equivalents (PLPEs). The following Venn diagrams illustrate the relationship between English-Lithuanian partial pseudo-equivalents further discussed in greater detail:



Group a) ($E \cap L$, i.e. $E = a + b$; $L = a + c$) consists of approximately 160 word pairs (17% of the total selected word-pairs). These words share at least one meaning but each word has at least one additional meaning of its own, e.g. *camera: kamera* have a common meaning of 'a piece of equipment which forms an optical image', but the English word can also mean 'an apparatus for taking photographs', while the Lithuanian word can mean 'a room/premises/compartment for specific purposes', e.g., *kalejimo kamera* – 'a prison cell', *šaldymo kamera* – 'a freezer', *padangos kamera* – 'an inner tube of the tire'.

Group b) ($E \supset L$, i.e. $E = L + a$) is definitely the most numerous: it includes about 480 word pairs (or 51% of the selected word pairs). The majority of Lithuanian words in this group (340) are monosemantic. For example, *bachelor* has at least two meanings: 1 'an unmarried man' and 2 'smb. who has taken a degree', Lithuanian *bakalauras* has only the second meaning.

Group c) ($E \subset L$, $L = E + a$) represents a less typical picture: it is an inclusion of the semantic field of the English word into that of the Lithuanian. Altogether we found 55 such word pairs

(6% of the total selected words). Some examples: *cathedral*: *katedra* share the meaning of the principal church of a diocese, but the Lithuanian word also has the meaning of a university department or chair, also a special place for the speaker/lecturer ('the rostrum'). *Reanimation*: *reanimacija* means restoring to life in both languages, but in Lithuanian it is also the name for the intensive care units. *Koliokviumas* is not only an academic conference or seminar as the English *colloquium*, but also a short pre-exam test at the university.

Conclusions

The research has revealed that the Lithuanian lexemes in the word-pairs are mostly borrowings of either Greek or Latin origin, which are more or less isolated in the lexical system of the Lithuanian language from both formal and semantic point-of-view. This is reflected in their narrow, often specific/terminological meaning. Quite a few words are terms in Lithuanian, while they have a more general meaning in English, e.g. *infliacija* is a strictly financial/economic term meaning 'a general increase in prices and fall in the currency', while English *inflation* can also mean 'distending with air'. *Intervencija* is a military and medical term meaning 'intervening as an extraneous factor'; in English the word has additional meanings of 'interference or mediation'. The same holds true for *abortas/abortavimas* (a medical term meaning 'miscarriage'), while in English it can also mean 'abandonment, termination, remaining undeveloped, shrinking, failing a project or an action'. *Koherentiškas* (of waves 'having a constant phase relationship', physics): *coherent* also 'able to speak intelligently and articulately, logical and consistent, easily followed', 'sticking together'.

In English lexemes of the same origin are motivated elements of the system with all the properties typical of the 'native' word. They have a full grammatical and word-building paradigm (e.g. *to interfere, interference, interfering; to intervene, intervention, intervening, etc.*), while in Lithuanian these are usually incomplete (*interferencija* (n), *interferuoti* (v); *intervencija* (n)). In Lithuanian these words often have synonyms of Lithuanian origin, which are more often used in speech (*vadovas* for *hyderis* (leader), *apimtis* for *diapazonas* (*diapason*), *įgyvendinti* for *realizuoti* (realize), etc.).

The analysis has demonstrated not only that the English words in the pair are general stock words; they are also more polysemous. In other words, it seems that the English lexemes have a wider semantic field on the level of the system of the language in comparison to the externally similar Lithuanian lexemes. For different contextual realizations of one and the same English lexeme (e.g. *solid*) a number of Lithuanian lexemes exist already on the level of the language system (*kietas, vientisas, tvirtas, stiprus, grynas, etc.*). The English lexeme, whose systemic meaning(s) not so often coincides with its realization in speech, is more flexible from the contextual point-of-view: the same word can be employed in a greater variety of contexts than the Lithuanian lexeme. Thus even when the main systemic meaning(s) of the English and Lithuanian words coincide, the English word, being more polysemous, is often used in the text in its secondary or peripheral meaning. The meaning of the English word is more context-dependent than that of the Lithuanian word, hence the specificity of English-Lithuanian translation/interpreting problems and implications for language learning and teaching as well as for bilingual lexicography. Textbook materials and dictionary entries should be construed in the way that makes such differences obvious and prevents the learners from potential mistakes due to the interference of the native language.

The comparison also allows us to make some conclusions about the nature and character of borrowing in different languages. If we compare our results with other pairs of languages, e.g. Dutch/French (Beheydt & Colson, 1996), Dutch being the language of another small European country in contact with a more popular language, we will see quite a different distribution:

Absolute D-F pseudo-equivalents	16%
Meaning Overlap	30%
Meaning Inclusion D/F	30%
Meaning Inclusion F/D	24%

The ratio between absolute pseudo-equivalence in English-Lithuanian and Dutch-French differs considerably (16 vs. 26%). Cases of meaning overlap in Dutch-French are also almost double in comparison with English-Lithuanian (30 vs. 17%). This says something about the nature of borrowing: in Lithuanian it has been an indirect borrowing through intermediary languages, hence the significant deviation from the meaning of the original word.

It is interesting that the last category (inclusion of French into Dutch) is quite frequent, viz. 24% of the cases. In comparison, the inclusion of French into English represents only about 10% of the cases in Van Roey and Granger's Dictionary. In other words, it often happens that a word borrowed from French into Dutch develops new meanings of its own in Dutch. The results seem to show the dynamic qualities of the Dutch language, borrowing a lot from neighbours but always adapting and adding new elements, which cannot be said about Lithuanian. Borrowed words tend to remain isolated and very rarely (6%) develop their own meanings. Purist attitudes towards Lithuanian have always been strong, and possibly they have also contributed to such a distribution.

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ANGLŲ-LIETUVIŲ KALBŲ LEKSINIAI PSEUDOEKVIVALENTAI

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Santrauka

Straipsnyje nagrinėjami anglų-lietuvių kalbų leksiniai pseudoekvivalentai – panašios arba identiškios formos žodžiai, turintys denotatinės reikšmės skirtumą. Tokių žodžių semantinės struktūros sutapatinimas – dažna besimokančiųjų užsienio kalbos ir net vertėjų klaidų priežastis. Atlikus sinchroninį gretinamąjį leksikografinį tyrimą paaiškėjo, kad 26% atrinktų žodžių porų visai neturi bendrų reikšmių, likusieji 74% turi bent po vieną

bendrą ir vieną skirtingą reikšmę. Tyrimas taip pat parodė, kad anglų kalbos žodžiai yra žymiai daugiareikšmiškesni kalbos sistemos lygmenyje. Taigi net jei pagrindinė sisteminė angliško ir lietuviško žodžio reikšmė sutampa, angliškas žodis dažnai naudojamas tekste savo šalutine reikšme. Angliški žodžiai yra motyvuoti sistemos elementai su visomis anglų kalbai būdingomis savybėmis. Jie turi pilną darybinę ir gramatinę paradigmą, tuo tarpu lietuviški žodžiai yra gana izoliuoti lietuvių kalbos sistemoje tiek formos, tiek semantiniu požiūriu. Dažnai tai siauros reikšmės žodžiai, terminai, neturintys pilnos darybinės paradigmos. Kadangi šie žodžiai į lietuvių kalbą pateko kaip skoliniai, tyrimas leidžia daryti kai kurias prielaidas apie skolinimosi prigimtį ir pobūdį lietuvių kalboje. Šios rūšies skoliniai lieka izoliuoti ir tik labai retai (6%) išsivysto naujos reikšmės. Galbūt tokią padėtį sąlygojo puristinės tendencijos, kurios visada buvo stiprios lietuvių kalboje.

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