

Filling lexical gaps in culture-bound terms in online Polish-English dictionaries

Ideally, a bilingual dictionary should be a list of words in the source language which are paired with corresponding words in the target language. However, language anisomorphism, which includes differences in grammar and vocabulary makes an ideal bilingual dictionary impossible. In practice, on the other hand, such dictionaries feature additional grammatical information, usage notes and examples. Various solutions may be used based on the problem in a particular entry as well as based on the needs of the intended user of a particular dictionary. For instance, a Polish-English dictionary for English speakers can solve the of the lexemes *chodzić* and *spacer* both corresponding to *walk* by marking *chodzić* as a verb and *spacer* as a noun. Additionally, the concept of a walk can be briefly explained in parenthesis, in order to make the entry even clearer.

For translators and lexicographers, one very important aspect of language anisomorphism is the possible level of equivalence between a source language and a target language item. Zero equivalence means the lack of a corresponding lexical item, which is what is understood as a lexical gap. Lexical gaps can occur for a couple of reasons, for example differences in grammar: there is no Polish equivalent for the English definite article *the*. However, the most prominent source of lexical gaps are culture-bound terms which are common in the culture of one language but absent from another. For instance *Marzanna*, an effigy symbolising winter that is burn or drowned in March. There are a number of solutions for bilingual dictionary authors to cope with lexical gaps, from providing the closest cultural counterpart in the target language to coming up with an explanatory equivalent that is similar to a definition given in a monolingual dictionary.

The goal of this study is to examine the problems of lexical gaps and the available methods lexicographers use to deal with them. It focuses specifically on those lexical gaps which are caused by culture-bound terms lacking in the target language. It presents results of the research conducted on selected English-Polish online dictionaries in order to determine what methods they use in order to fill the lexical gaps caused by Polish terms which describe phenomena related to the Polish traditions (such as *Lany Poniedziałek*), music (*krakowiak*), cuisine (*żur*), clothing (*rogatywka*), history (*zabory*), geography (*Kresy Wschodnie*) and other elements of the present and past elements of the Polish culture which are not widely known in the English-speaking world. It also discusses the problems observed in the analysed entries, such as not adequate equivalents or explanations and omission of important senses and cultural context. The examined Polish-English dictionaries are Babla, Diki, Glosbe, PONS and Wiktionary.