Principles for Compiling the ECD

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Introduction

Proposed by *Igor Mel'čuk* and *Aleksandr Žolkovskij* (late 1960s), the *Explanatory Combinatorial Dictionary (ECD)* is an attempt of a reference work describing and embodying the theoretical lexicon of a language, in the framework of the Meaning-Text approach.

Intended as a complete record of the lexicon, *under 1% of the vocabulary* was barely covered *for Russian and French ECDs published* : this shows the *challenge of compiling an ECD with the zero tolerance rigor* required by its designers.

The Principles

(1) *Formality*

(2) **Lexical Unit Internal Coherence**

(3) **Semantic Field Coherence** *(= Lexical Inheritance)*

Coherence

(4) **Lexical Unit Uniform Treatment**

(5) **Vocable Uniform Treatment**

Uniform Treatment

(6) *Internal Exhaustivity*

(7) **Vocable Generalization**

(8) **Semantic Field Generalization**

Maximal Generalization

(9) *No Regularly Produced LUs in the Lexicon*
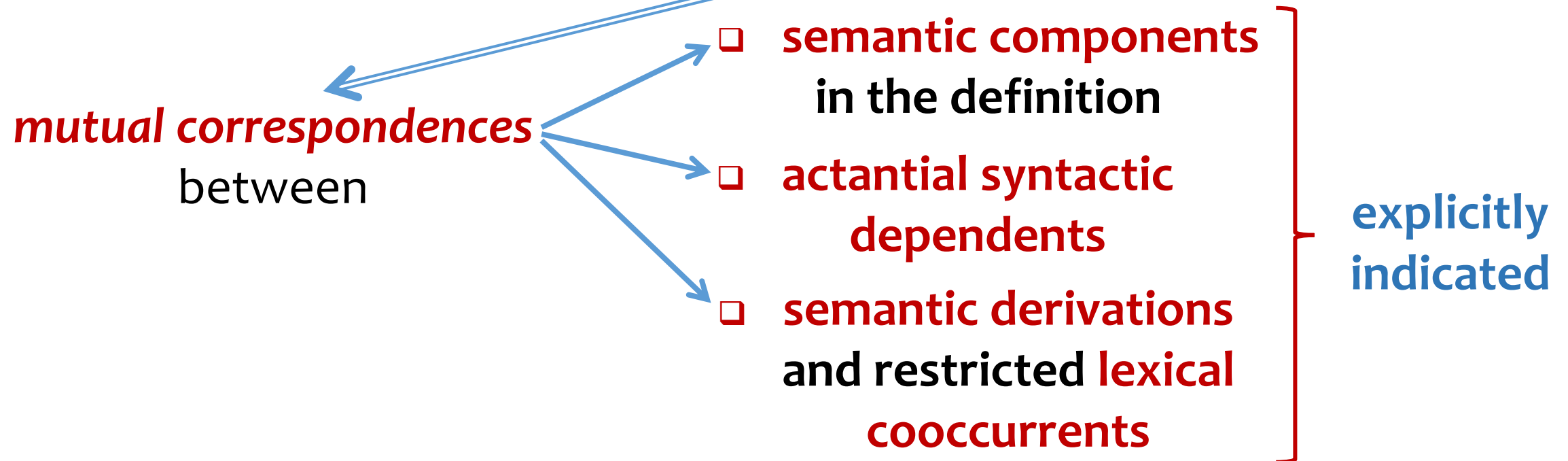
1. Formality Principle

Any lexicographic statement has to be *formal*.

written in a preestablished metalanguage

completely explicit

2. Lexical Unit Internal Coherence Principle

The *semantic*, *syntactic* and *cooccurrence* descriptions of the head LU L should be *in complete agreement*.

mutual correspondences
between

- ❑ **semantic components in the definition**
- ❑ **actantial syntactic dependents**
- ❑ **semantic derivations and restricted lexical cooccurrents**

explicitly indicated

3. Semantic Field Coherence Principle

LU L entry should be ***in complete agreement* *with*** the ***entry for L'*** that expresses the communicatively dominant node in the definition of L.

systematically check that ***all Sem- and Dsynt actants of L'*** are ***inherited by L***

4. Lexical Unit Uniform Treatment Principle

All **LUs** belonging to the **same semantic field described in a similar way** — to the extent that language L allows.

ECD
based on semantic fields

necessity of determining the **generalized schema** for description of LUs of the same semantic field.

5. Vocable Uniform Treatment Principle

Vocables belonging to the **same lexical field** presented according to the **same schema** (= described *in a parallel fashion*).

definitions formulated the most **similarly** possible

appear in the **same order** within each vocable

semantic distances between vocables **represented** as **similarly** as possible (i.e., by the same/almost the same means)

6. Internal Exhaustivity Principle

Rather than external exhaustivity, in an internal perspective the *lexical entry for L must contain all lexicographic data concerning L necessary*:

to *utilize* L correctly
in any possible context
*(ECD = production dictionary)

to *find* any other *LU L'*
semantically linked to L

(7) Vocable / (8) Semantic Field Generalization Principles

For the sake of
maximal generalization

(7)

(8)

information valid *for all LUs*
of a *vocable*

information valid *for all LUs*
of a *semantic field*

extracted from individual LU entries

extracted from individual LU entries

transferred directly to the vocable name

(=thus, stated only once
for the whole vocable)

*transferred directly to the entry
for the LU which is the
semantic field name*

9. No Regularly Produced LUs in the Lexicon Principle

LU L´ of L related to another LU L in a completely regular way
(the lexical entry for L´ can be computed by general rules from L's lexical entry)

→

L´ should not be explicitly entered as a separate lexical entry
(it must be specified in the lexical entry for L)

3 CASES:
REGULAR COMPOUNDING
REGULAR DERIVATION
REGULAR POLYSEMY

Conclusion

Is it possible to compile a (complete) ECD for a language?

Yes, provided that the main **focus** be rather **on the internal exhaustivity** than the external one.

For 2 reasons :

(1) The difficultly numerable extent of the lexicon;

(2) The complexity of one ECD article compiled in accordance with the rigorous principles devised by the authors.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!
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