

## DISTINCTIVE SYNONYMY IN TRANSLATION DICTIONARIES

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### ABSTRACT

Users of translation dictionaries often have problems to make the right lexical choice while translating source language form into another target language. This is mainly due to the lack of information needed to make the appropriate choice during the translation process because the translator, given its work, needs more than a repertoire of equivalents. The purpose of this paper is to solve some of the lexicography and translation issues by discussing the so-called distinctive synonymy and the advantage of its integration into bilingual lexicography. It is an attempt to propose a new bilingual synonym dictionary by developing an original methodology for the active dictionary designed solely and exclusively to the translator. The study concludes that both synonyms and equivalents are salient and relevant data categories in the translation dictionary and that introducing semantic distinction between close synonyms can thoroughly assist the translator in decision making. Therefore, this research opens up some interesting and still little-explored perspectives in bilingual lexicography.

**Keywords:** Distinctive synonymy, translation dictionaries, bilingual lexicography, near synonyms, equivalents.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Distinctive synonymy is a linguistic phenomenon largely used in synonym dictionaries (thesauruses). The semantic distinction is the process of distinguishing between words which are so related and close in meaning or in applicability that it is hard to identify the slight difference between them. That is to say, the distinction process works on the relation of synonymy, it deals particularly with close synonyms that have in common the same main meaning (e.g. *see /look*), but it cannot deal with distant words (e.g. *see/go*) or antonyms (e.g. *open /shut*) because they are already differentiated.

Besides, since there are different types and classifications of dictionaries having different lexicographic purposes and perspectives, it is important to define our conception of translation dictionary, its purpose and its perspective in order to define the scope of the study. Moreover, a terminological distinction between bilingual dictionary (BD) and translation dictionary (TD) must be done here since there is a terminology chaos in using these two concepts interchangeably.

A TD is a specific bilingual dictionary that deals with two languages: source language (SL) and target language (TL), it is a special-purpose dictionary which is compiled only to meet the needs of the translators as producers of new texts into the TL, excluding lay users. Regarding its perspective, it is an active dictionary intended for the production of the texts in TL within the translation process. Thus, a BD is more general than a TD because it has no specific purposes and users. It is worthy of mention to define the special-purpose dictionary

as the one which serves a specific group of users, while the specialized dictionary includes the terminology of a specific domain.

In general, BDs are the most used by novice translators than experienced ones because of the lack of experience or of the limited knowledge of the foreign language. However, instead of assisting them in achieving their translation as they expect, they are extremely misleading and helpless in decision making. The problem lies mainly in the fact that the existing BDs are not designed for the translator and that real and effective TDs do not exist.

We think that the main problem with the existing dictionaries is that they are just inventories including lists of equivalents, that is to say, they are excessively poor and do not give enough information needed by the translator like near synonyms and the subtle nuances between them.

The following examples from Al-Mawrid (Arabic - English dictionary) explain deeper the matter:

- *Boyhood* : *Shabeb*, *Sebba*

Neither '*Shabeb*' nor '*Sebba*' is the exact equivalent for '*boyhood*' because '*boyhood*' means the period or the state of being young boy, it is restricted to male children. But the Arabic words which are proposed as equivalents mean the period or the state of being young for both boys and girls.

- *Handsome*, *beautiful*, *pretty*, *good-looking* ... : *wassim*, *jamil*, *hassan*

The problem with this example is that the lexicographer not only considers '*handsome*' and '*pretty*' as exact synonyms in English, but also as full equivalents of "*wassim*", whereas there is a semantic difference on the grounds of sex; we say *handsome* for a good-looking man and *pretty* for a good-looking woman. Therefore, examples of this kind are as numerous as they reveal a methodological anomaly in the dictionary.

In order to meet the translators' needs, we propose a quite new lexicographic conception of TD which is a translated version of the synonym dictionary. It combines two different methodologies: one adopted in monolingual synonym dictionaries, and the other in bilingual dictionaries, meaning that the suggested TD includes both synonyms and equivalents, as well as the differences between close synonyms in both SL and TL; what is referred to as 'distinctive synonymy'.

This paper explains in detail this conception by surveying the following points:

- First, we study intralingual and interlingual synonymy and their degrees since they are both indispensable tools for TD making in Sec.2 & 3.
- Then, Sec.4 exposes the relevant theorists' opinions that support the idea of the combination of synonyms and equivalents.
- In Sec.5, we expose the most known synonym distinction criteria and strategies adopted by classical Arab lexicographers as well as those proposed by English semanticists.
- We propose, in Sec. 6, the appropriate data arrangement for the suggested TD.

## 2. Intralingual Synonymy

Intralingual synonymy is a commonly known semantic relation and widely used by monolingual lexicographers, it is even the centerpiece of monolingual lexicography. We say generally that it is about synonymy when one signified is represented by two or more different signifiers in the same language.

Approaches to synonymy differ from one linguist to another. Taylor (2002 : 263/264) considers it as a deviation from the semiotic ideal of the language 'one form –one meaning' i.e. the principle that aims to relate a limited number of signifiers with an equal number of signifieds. Furthermore, Cruse (2004 : 154) gives a more in-deep definition for synonymy when he describes synonyms as 'words whose semantic similarities are more salient than their differences...' i.e. they are not identical in meaning, but they share the main traits and differ in respect of their peripheral traits. Moreover, other linguists and philosophers mention the criterion of interchangeability in their definitions of synonymy (S.Ullmann 1967, J.Lyons 1977, W. Quine 1951, H. Jackson 2014, George Mounin 2004, Dirk Geeraerts 2009). Quine (1951) sees that 'the synonymy of two linguistic forms consists simply in their interchangeability in all contexts without change of truth value'. Earlier Arab linguists had also taken this view, namely Sibawaih, Al-Ansary, Al-Fairouzabady, Al-Asmaey, Ibn Jinny and others. However, this requirement makes synonymy impossible or rare in language because almost all synonyms cannot be used similarly in all contexts.

Cruse (1986 : 286-270) distinguishes four degrees of synonymy, which represent four types of synonymy, namely absolute synonymy, cognitive synonymy, near synonymy (plesionymy) and non-synonymy. He then places these four degrees on a so-called scale of synonymy having two points: a zero point that represents non-synonymy, and the end point, i.e. the other edge of the scale, that represents absolute synonymy. He proposes that if we inverse the same scale with the same degrees, it will be a scale of semantic difference rather than of synonymy. But non-synonymy is not part of this study, this is why we focus only on the first three degrees as follows:

- **Cognitive Synonymy :**

Cognitive synonyms, also called propositional or descriptive synonyms, are generally known as lexical items that are not identically synonymous but share some semantic features. Cruse (1986 : 88 – 2004 : 155) defines cognitive synonymy in terms of entailment considering that cognitive synonyms can be replaced in any sentence without effect on truth-conditional properties. E.g., '*violin*' and '*fiddle*' *violin* can be substituted by *fiddle* and vice versa without changing the semantic content of the sentence.

Furthermore, cognitive synonymy is approached differently by Lyons based upon the distinction between the cognitive meaning (also called descriptive and referential) and emotive meaning (expressive and social meaning). According to him (1981 : 150 - 1995 : 44), cognitive synonyms have the same cognitive meaning without having the same emotive meaning. That is to say, they have the same denotative sense and differ in their connotative sense.

- **Near-synonymy**

Generally confused with cognitive synonyms, near-synonyms exist largely in language and are commonly defined as words that have close but not identical meaning. Cruse points out (1986 : 285) that near-synonyms, or what he calls plesionyms, yield sentences with different truth-conditions, i.e. different semantic content, so that there is no mutual entailment between sentences which contain different near synonyms such as '*misty*' and '*foggy*'. Then this is what makes the difference between near-synonymy and cognitive synonymy.

- **Absolute Synonymy**

Absolute synonyms are defined as words having the exactly identical meaning, which makes linguists assert that they do not exist in language or are rare (J. Taylor 2002, A. Cruse 1986, W.Quine 1951, S. Ullmann 1967, J.Lyons 1981). Moreover, when Cruse (1986 : 266) argues that 'synonyms must not only manifest a high degree of semantic overlap they must also have a low degree of implicit contrastiveness', he disapproves

implicitly absolute synonymy and demonstrates at the same time on the existence of slight differences between synonyms .

Furthermore , many classical Arabic linguists share this view . According to Abu-Hillal Al-Askary (2002 : p.11 ) , two words of the same language cannot have the same meaning because divergent forms entail necessarily divergent meanings . Adopting this principle in his distinctive dictionary , he deals with the majority of Arabic synonyms as near-synonyms and tries to reveal the slight nuances between them. Absolute synonymy thus is logically impossible and what we find in language are just near-synonyms or cognitive synonyms. But **how do lexicographers deal with these degrees of synonymity ?**

In monolingual dictionaries , lexicographers introduce close words as absolute synonyms having identical senses and cluster them in long lists . For instance, the adjective 'insane' , in the existing synonym dictionaries , corresponds to crazy , foolish , irrational , mad , batty , psychotic, irresponsible ... whereas this cluster represents its near-synonyms .

Therefore, refuting absolute synonymy , theorists assert the existence of distinctive synonymy . This is why lexicographers must give due regard to the semantic differences while compiling a dictionary .

### 3. Interlingual Synonymy

Interlingual synonymy , commonly called equivalence, is a semantic relation that holds between two lexical items from different languages having more or less the same meaning . It is the elementary instrument for the bilingual lexicographer . Lyons (1995 : 78) points out that 'bilingual dictionaries rely heavily on the notion of interlingual synonymy' e.g. , in an English-Arabic dictionary , the English word '*listen*' has roughly the same meaning as the Arabic word '*asghaa*' , then the words '*listen*' and '*asghaa*' are interlingual synonyms.

According to Gouws (2002 : 196) , in the translation equivalent paradigm , the relation that holds between the SL items (the lemma) and the TL items in TDs manifests in three degrees – or types - of equivalence : full equivalence (congruence) , partial equivalence (divergence ) and zero equivalence (surrogate equivalence) :

- **Full Equivalence**

It means that both source and target language units have exactly the same meaning (Gouws 2002 : 196). Therefore , the main requirement of full equivalence is that the identity of meaning should be absolute in all levels : referential , connotative , stylistic ,... which urges an inquiry if there are absolute equivalents between languages.

Zgusta (1978 : 537) thinks that absolute equivalents are rare and that the majority of the existing equivalents are partial . Therefore , the absolute equivalence between languages does not exist , particularly between distant languages such as English and Arabic.

- **Partial Equivalence**

It means that the meaning of the SL word corresponds partially to that of the TL word. R.H. Gouws (2002: 197 - 198) points out that in partial equivalence one lexical item of the SL has two or more translation equivalents , which are in fact partial synonyms in the TL . That is to say, the divergence occurs when the SL item is a polysemous word , and each sense corresponds to a specific translational equivalent. Moreover , Zgusta (1978 : 537) thinks that we usually use the term 'equivalent' to designate partial equivalent i.e. there is no exact correspondence between languages .

- **Zero Equivalence**

In many cases , the lexicographer , as well as the translator, cannot find any lexical equivalent in TL for a given SL word . This lack of equivalence , so-called anisomorphism of

languages, refers to the existence of lexical gaps in all languages , which poses a great semantic problem for bilingual lexicography. ( See A. Al-kasimi 1977 ,L. Zgusta 1971 , R.H. Gouws 2002 )

Furthermore, 'culture-bound words' are considered as being the cause of the lack of equivalence between languages , but Zgusta (1971 :296) says that 'it would [...] be completely wrong to limit the concept of anisomorphism and the discussion of it to the ' culture-bound words' only . Anisomorphism thus must be expected in all lexical units and can be found in most of them , i.e it is managed by both linguistic and extra-linguistic factors. But how would the bilingual lexicographer deal with anisomorphism cases?

Gouws ( 2002:200) answers that when the lexicographer faces lexical gaps of any kind , he is compelled to create a surrogate equivalent and that there are different categories of surrogate equivalents , and their choice depends on the nature of the lexical gap which could be linguistic or referential . This is then the only solution to fill the vacuum.

• **Translational and Explanatory Equivalents :**

According to Zgusta (1971 : 319) and Al-Kasimi (1977 : 60) , there are two types of entry words as translated in bilingual lexicography :

a- **Translational Equivalents:** are lexical units which can easily insert into a sentence in the TL , this is why they are also called insertable equivalents . Gouws (2002 : 195) defines them as TL items used to substitute the SL items in a specific occurrence depending on specific contextual and cotextual restrictions. E.g. the English translational equivalent for the Arabic word '*talaq*' is '*divorce*' .

b- **Explanatory Equivalents :** (also called descriptive equivalents) are lexical items that cannot always be inserted into a sentence in the TL . For instance, the Arabic word "*Edda*" is a culture-bound word which denotes a particular concept in Arabic culture , a concept that does not exist in English and cannot have a translational equivalent in English language , then the explanatory equivalent '*Waiting period*' is the appropriate choice for this case ( i.e. *the period prescribed by Islamic law for a woman during which she may not remarry after being widowed or divorced*).

Besides, it should be noted that there is a difference between an explanatory equivalent and an explanation (L . Zgusta 1978 : 547) (A. Al-kasimi 1977 : 60) . As stated in the above-said example : the explanatory equivalent '*waiting period*' is similar to a translational unit , whereas the explanation '*The period prescribed by Islamic law for a woman during which she may not remarry after being widowed or divorced*' is similar to a lexicographic definition or a description and cannot be a lexical unit.

But TDs lexicographers may hesitate to decide whether they would prefer translational or explanatory equivalents . Zgusta (1984 : 147) points out that they should opt for translational equivalents because they are real lexical units of the TL which insert easily into the context and produce a smooth translation. He also notes that it is hard to follow this requirement in all cases.

#### 4. The Combination of Intra- and Interlingual Synonymy in TDs

Interlingual synonyms are always regarded to be the most salient data category in TDs by many theorists, whereas both interlingual and intralingual synonyms are salient and relevant data categories in our lexicographic conception. Then when compiling a translation dictionary , the lexicographer must focus on the translator's needs , as a first user, and on the operations he performs during the translating process , meaning that his main goal must be to help him choose among many words , the one which is more corresponding to the SL meaning and more appropriate for the TL text . For this purpose, he should combine close synonyms and equivalents in one dictionary.



Zgusta (1978 : 547) demonstrates our conception of combination when he insists on the necessity of citing close synonyms in TL and considers that translational equivalents, synonyms, mutually disambiguating synonyms, mutually complementing synonyms, explanatory equivalents, and explanations are all essential tools that the bilingual lexicographer works with, and that they have the purpose of informing the user about the signification of the word of SL, of supplying him with lexical units in TL, and of including in him a recollection of other suitable near-synonymic lexical units of the SL. He (1984 : 152) further points out that a dictionary which provides just equivalents without any other information is not useful for the writer in the production of texts -- i.e. also the translator as a second writer of the text in the foreign language -- because it does not indicate to which equivalent correspond the different meanings of a polysemous word, it can be just an aid for the reader who wants to understand a given text because the polysemous word will be systematically disambiguated by the context including it.

For his part, Pinchuck (1977: 225) argues this idea when he mentions that a dictionary perfectly made must be an instrument of semantic discrimination, a helping hand for the user in picking among different alternatives the appropriate counterpart for a given context. It must also inform him about the position of a lexical item and its value within the lexical structure. He also indicates that both the definition and the single word equivalent are not sufficient to fill the translator's needs and that the ideal is to draw the entire area of signification of the words of a given language through series of equivalents, so that these equivalents will make meanings and usage clearer and will propose the most appropriate translation for the context.

Indeed, the TD lexicographer has to perform two tasks together : the monolingual lexicographer when defining words ; and the bilingual lexicographer when translating them into TL. Moreover, since most synonyms are partially synonymous words in SL and most translational equivalents are partially synonymous words in TL, as afore proven, he should fulfill a further task of distinguishing between close words in both languages by shedding light on semantic differences. Since the distinction process is not random, it must comply with some specific criteria asserted by semanticists and previously used by lexicographers, which is discussed in the next section.

## 5. Synonym Distinction Criteria

Synonym distinction is largely used in monolingual lexicography, i.e. in thesauruses or synonym dictionaries, but theorists like Zgusta and Al-Kassimi stress its importance in bilingual lexicography.

Emphasizing the importance of semantic distinction between synonyms and equivalents in bilingual dictionaries, Zgusta (1978 : 540) says ' If the dictionary is intended to help the Chinese user produce German texts, it is necessary to indicate the difference between the two German partial equivalents, so that the user can make the right choice'. He (1978 : 541-542) also indicates that involving close synonyms in BDs helps the user to find various expressions he can use, if only for stylistic variation; and that even if the difference between synonyms is imperceptible, there is usually some slight difference between the meaning of even such close synonyms, so that if close synonyms are indicated, the information is richer and the user is inspired to imagine yet other possible translations and synonyms.

Furthermore, the semantic distinction between synonymous words cannot be done arbitrarily, it is based on some specific criteria proposed by semanticists or adopted by lexicographers in their dictionaries whose purpose is to discriminate near synonyms.

### 5.1. Early Arab Linguists Criteria

Early Arab lexicographers like Ibn Faris, Abu Kaem Aljawzia, Abu Hamid Alghazali, Abu Hillal Al-Askary began compiling distinctive synonym dictionaries before Europeans and before the French synonymist L'Abbé Gerard (1718). They also adopted some specific criteria of distinction appropriate to their language. This type of dictionary making is called in Arabic 'Maajim Al-Furooq' (i.e. dictionaries of differences) and was prevalent in classical Arabic lexicography. 'Mujjam Al-Furooq Fi Al-Lugha' compiled by Abu Hillal Al-Askary is one of the most known and interesting dictionaries of this kind who deals with the main Arabic near synonyms and reveals the slight nuances between them by adopting accurate criteria that sum up almost all those used by other Arabic lexicographers. These criteria are mentioned in his dictionary as follows:

- **Distinction Based on Syntactic Use :**

E.g. : in Arabic, '*ilem*' (i.e. science) is a transitive noun with two objects, whereas '*maarifa*' (i.e. knowledge) is transitive with one object. (Al-Askary 2002 :18). But the existing bilingual dictionaries neglect this criterion. For example, the Arabic/English dictionary 'Al-Mawrid' considers these two words as full synonyms without revealing any nuance as follows :

Maarifa : *ilem*, *Itilaa*, *Idrak*                      Knowledge, learning, lore ....  
*Ilem* : Science, knowledge, learning, lore

- **Distinction Based on Contextual Use :**

According to this criterion, the lexical item should be examined in its context and its usage and not isolated in the lexicon, so that the difference in contextual use entails the difference in meaning. Abu Hamid Alghazali (1987 : 41-42) gives more attention to this criterion, he substitutes one word by another in several contexts in order to make distinctions between close meanings. For instance, he considers that '*Akbar*', '*Aadam*', '*Ajjal*' (i.e. older, greater or the most glorious) are near synonyms by surveying the relevant contexts : we usually say '*Fulan akbar sinan min fulan*' (i.e. someone is older than someone else), in this sentence we use '*akbar*' to mean older and we cannot use '*aadam*' or '*ajjal*', and on this basis he differentiates between '*Akbar*' and the other synonyms.

- **Distinction Based on Collocation :**

Earlier Arabic scholars found out, before Firth, that words tend to collocate with some words and not with others, they studied the cooccurrences of words to distinguish between near-synonyms (Al-Taaliby 1972 : 89). E.g. we say '*faker modki*' (i.e. abject poverty) and '*ajez dhaher*' (i.e. apparent deficiency), but we can not say '*faker dhaher*' nor '*ajez modki*', thus, the difference in collocation between '*faker*' and '*ajez*' entails the difference in meaning.

- **Distinction Grounded in the Qualities that Words Denote**

Al-askary (2002 : 18) thinks that words include features and qualities that constitute part of their meaning. E.g. : '*hilem*' (i.e. patience) and '*imhal*' (i.e. respiting) are near-synonyms that denote different features; the former implies 'good /graceful' whereas the latter can imply both 'good/graceful' and 'bad/ disgraceful'.

- **Distinction Based on What Words Imply**

Synonyms can designate divergent meanings, they can imply pejorative or appreciative denotations such as '*mozah*' (i.e. joking) and '*istiheza*' (i.e. mockery); '*mozah*' does not imply the idea of insult or offense from the joker to the person with whom he jokes

, whereas '*istiheza*' includes the idea of depreciation of the other person . (Al-askary 2002 : 19)

- **Distinction Based on the Prepositions that Go with Synonymous Verbs**

The synonymous verbs '*afaa*' and '*ghafara*' (i.e to forgive or pardon) go with different prepositions '*afaa*' with '*aan*' , and '*ghafara*' with '*li*' , this difference entails different meanings so that the former means to efface the punishment , whereas the latter means to cover or hide others faults , i.e. not to expose or reveal somebody's faults and sins . (Al-askary 2002 : 19)

It is worthy to mention here that the nuance between '*afaa*' and '*ghafara*' does not exist between their equivalents in English 'forgive' and 'pardon' ; such cases are numerous between languages and this gives rise to problems in bilingual lexicography.

- **Distinction Based on the Antonyms of Words**

Antonymy can be used to discriminate between close meanings , so if synonyms having different antonyms denote different meanings . For example, '*hefd*' and '*riaaya*' (i.e. keeping , care , protection) are not full synonyms since the opposite of '*hefd*' is '*edaa*' (i.e. loss )and the opposite of '*riaaya*' is '*ehemal*' ( i.e. neglect ) . Al-askary ( 2002: 19)

- **Distinction Based on Words Derivation**

Al-Askary (2002 :19-20) considers that the difference in words derivation entails the difference in meaning .For instance, '*siassa*'(i.e. policy , politics) and '*tadeber*' (i.e. arrangement and planning) are close synonyms , but what makes the difference between them is that '*Siassa*' is derived from '*soos*'(i.e. a mite) which is a very small insect that lives in plants , '*siassa*' then means to examine carefully and closely the people's matters , whereas '*tadeber*' is derived from '*dubur*' (i.e. the end or the tail of things ) from which comes the idea of planning matters to reach good ends or results . Al-Askary also points out that these two meanings are related because even the arrangement needs a close examination of the matters .

- **Distinction Based on the Synonyms Wordings**

Given its distinctive nature , the Arabic language depends on wording as a peculiar distinctive criterion which does not exist in the other languages . Al-Askari (2002 : 20 ) considers the following example : '*istifhem*' (i.e asking or inquiry ) and '*sowal*' (i.e. question) have different wordings , i.e. they have not the same forms ; the former has the wording of '*istifaal*' and means that the inquirer ignores completely the thing he is asking about or he doubts it , whereas the latter has the wording of '*foal*' and signifies that the asker could know or ignore the answer for his question.

- **Distinction Based on the Origin of Words in Language**

Al-askary (2002 :21) sees that what makes a difference between the Arabic synonymous nouns '*hanin*' and '*ishtiak*' (i.e. longing , yearning ) is the divergence in their origins in language . The origin of '*hanin*' in Arabic is the cry of camels when they miss their countries, whereas the origin of '*ishtiak*' is '*shawk*' i.e when the person tends to something.

## 5.2. English Linguists Criteria

Collinson (see S. Ullmann 1967: 142, 143) lists nine means of differentiation :

- (1) One term is more general than another, e.g. refuse-reject.
- (2) One term is more intense than another, e.g. repudiate — refuse.
- (3) One term is more emotive than another, e.g. reject-decline.
- (4) One term may imply moral approbation or censure where another is neutral, e.g. thrifty-economical.
- (5) One term is more professional than another like decease- death.
- (6) One term is more literary than another, e.g. passing- death.
- (7) One term is more colloquial than another, e.g. turn down – refuse.
- (8) One term is more local or dialectal than another, e.g. Scots flesher - butcher.



(9) One of the synonyms belongs to child-talk, e.g. daddy- father.

On the other hand, Jackson (2014 : pp. 68, 73) proposes five criteria to distinguish between synonyms :

1. Synonyms that belong to different dialects such as British and American English , e.g., *lift* and *elevator*.
2. Synonyms may be differentiated by style or level of formality, e.g., *climb* and *ascend*.
3. Synonyms may be differentiated by technicality , e.g., *cardiac* / *heart*.
4. Synonyms that have different connotations , e.g., *love* and *adore*.
5. Synonyms can be distinguished by Euphemism , e.g., *die*/ *pass away*.

## 6 . Lexicographical Data Order in TDs

Before proceeding with the distinction , the compiler classifies the lexical items of both languages SL and TL into synonym sets , meaning that he gathers near synonyms in clusters , and each cluster has one headword representing the main meaning . This method makes the distinction between the synonyms much easier . But what is the appropriate ordering for these clustered words in the dictionary?

Pinchuck (1977: 225) sees that the existing dictionaries present the language as an inventory ; i.e. a list of words unconnected with one another instead of offering it as a structured and patterned system, which is the way words are used in practice . He also argues that because of this arbitrary arrangement of items from the linguistic and conceptual points of view , the user cannot find the position of a word within a series and its value within a lexical structure which are essential information that dictionaries should offer .

Therefore, the alphabetical ordering of the multilingual data is an arbitrary arrangement ; it is rather a semantic disordering since close words and near synonyms are scattered and separated , and thus inappropriate for the proposed TD .

The following example taken from ‘Al-Mawrid’ (English/Arabic dictionary) is to consider:

**B Boyhood** : Sebaa                      **Y Youth** : Shabab , Sebaa

Since these two synonyms are alphabetically ordered , they are separate ; the former is placed in section ‘B’ and the latter in section ‘Y’ .

However, the thematic ordering , as applied in Roget’s Thesaurus, is more suitable for the suggested TD because the lexical items are taken as semantic categories and arranged from the semantic point of view rather than the linguistic point of view . That is to say , the arrangement of the data should be done by clustering all the synonymous words related to each headword representing the general theme of the cluster . In addition, the dictionary must also include an alphabetical index that lists all words in the alphabetical order indicating the page numbers in order to send the user directly to what he is searching for.

Reconsidering the previous example , it is better to gather ‘boyhood’ and ‘youth’ in the same entry to distinguish between them as follows:

Youth : the time of being young; *syn.*  
Boyhood : the state or period of being a boy . *Diff.* boyhood is restricted to male children , but youth for both male and female children.

**Shabab (syn. Sebaa)** : Almarhala alati yakoun fiha alinssan shaban . Alfareq beyn almoradifeyn youth (shabab) wa boyhood (Sebaa alwalad) fi alenglisia la yujad fi alarabiya , fakila men shabab wa sebaa taaniyan fatret alshabab li alwalad wa albut maan.

It is noted that 'boyhood' has no translational equivalent in Arabic, this is why a descriptive equivalent 'Sebaa el-walad' is used to express the meaning of 'youth restricted to boys'. Besides, this entry could also include all the near synonyms of 'youth' like girlhood, adolescence, juvenility, ...etc

Moreover, the thematic ordering was not formerly applied in bilingual lexicography. It was first used in classical Arabic monolingual dictionaries, so called 'maajim Al-maany wa Al-mawduaat' (i.e. thematic dictionaries), they are thesauruses that deal with meanings rather than linguistic forms, this is why they gather items in terms of subjects. Moreover, there are many dictionaries of this kind in Arabic lexicography, for instance: *Mujam Al-Mukhassass* of Ibn Sayeda Al-Andaloussi (458 anno hegirae), *Al-gharib Al-Mussanaf* of Abu Ubayd (224 A.H.), *Fikeh Al-Lugha Wa Sir Al-Arabya* of Abu Mansour Al-Thaaliby (429 A.H.) and others.

Thus, assembling near synonyms in thematic clusters helps the translator in positioning items in the lexical system, and this what makes the translation process much easier.

## 7. Related Works

Our work was firstly inspired by the idea of Baker and Kaplan about a new type of bilingual dictionary so-called 'bridge bilinguals' which is a translated version of a monolingual dictionary that contains a combination of synonyms and equivalents (in "Translated! A New Breed of Bilingual Dictionaries", 1994). Nevertheless, our own contribution adds a new dimension to the bridge bilinguals, it consists in introducing in TDs the distinctive synonymy adopted in synonym dictionaries.

Moreover, many scholars have discussed the problem of distinctive synonymy in monolingual lexicography like Rosamund Moon in "Braving Synonymy: From Data to Dictionary" (2013); Suhaila Derwish in "*Al-Furook Al-Lughawya Fi Al-Maajim Al-Arabya*" (2011). Other Arab scholars have also studied the same problem based on translated versions (from Arabic into English) of Holy Qur'an, among them we may cite: Adel El-Sayed Hassan 'Readdressing the translation of near synonymy in the Glorious Qur'an' (2014); Sana Kamel Al-Omari, 'Synonymy in English and Arabic with Reference to the Holy Qur'an: A Contrastive Study' (2014); Samia Muhsen Al-Jabri 'Lexical Synonyms in the Holy Qur'an and their Translations: A Case Study' (2012) and others; but no one has yet studied it in translation dictionaries.

## 8. CONCLUSION

The suggested methodology of introducing distinctive synonymy in bilingual lexicography can solve various problems confronting the lexicographer as well as the translator. First, since all theorists assert that absolute synonymy and full equivalence do not exist, it is crucial for the lexicographer to give due regard to nuances in the dictionary making. Moreover, it can play an important role to ensure equivalent discrimination which makes dictionaries function as essential instruments of lexical choice. Furthermore, the combination synonyms-equivalents makes the dictionary an effective assistant for the translator in decision making so that it would be easy for him to find the accurate equivalent for a given source language word. However, even if this methodology is innovative, we cannot deny the fact that even a very large dictionary cannot contain all close synonyms and equivalents as well as the slight differences between them, which makes it seem less workable.

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