# A LEXICOGRAPHER'S REMARKS ON SOME OF THE VOCABULARY DIFFICULTIES AND CHALLENGES THAT LEARNERS OF ENGLISH HAVE TO COPE WITH – AND A FEW SUGGESTIONS CONCERNING A SERIES OF COMPLEX DICTIONARIES[1]

*Abstract*: The present paper aims at stressing the need for applied linguistics in dealing with didactic and lexicographical instruments, not only in the traditional manner, but also – or mainly – in the novel modalities suggested and allowed by the new information and communication technologies, concepts and devices. Proceeding from the contrastive and didactic view of the lexicon and the lexicographer's task, and also taking advantage of the various models that good learner's dictionaries in use have already set, the author presents the main aspects involved by compiling a complex, grammaticized Romanian-English dictionary – in fact, one of a larger series projected. In such a complex / grammaticized Romanian-English dictionary, meant as a polyfunctional, flexible, ready-to-use tool of learning, based on an interconnective approach blending the semantic description proper and the grammatical regimen, every relevant item is explained in terms of grammatical usage, and relevant diverging data about morphological markers and irregularities, collocation and syntactic rules, pronunciation, spelling are provided, as well as a number of frequent Romanian proper names with their English equivalents. To do that, an accessible code-system was used. The material that was used as illustrations in the present approach was provided by the author's experience as a lexicographer and teacher. Similarly, the development is proposed of interactive, software implements usable by advanced students, and also by translators and teachers of ESL; such devices can be a valuable help, a kind of learn-while-working instruments, combining the classical dictionary and the grammar manual, plus the efficiency and rapidity of modern ICT. After mentioning and illustrating the main problems related to the lexicon within the field of TEFL (viz. contrastive semantics, collocation, anomalous grammatical forms, divergent spelling and pronunciation, divergent phraseological and syntactic structures, idiom, proper nouns, lexical and semantic fields, synonymy and related terms), the author goes on to present the main priorities implied by the complex dictionary mentioned above (which is ready for print), and then a synopsis of the experience represented by the compilation of a pair of pocket-size bilingual dictionaries, and the main aspects of the activity in the field of applied linguistics that is involved by the lexicographer's efforts. To this were added similar illustrations, the fruits of the author's personal experience and reflective writing, meant to provide part of the database usable for furthering this didactic endeavour.

*Keywords*: didactic and lexicographical instruments, learner's dictionaries, complex or grammaticized bilingual dictionary, difficulties of EFL, contrastive approach, reflective writing, ICT, databases.

1. **Introduction.** The most extensive and mobile segment of a natural language (in our case, English), i.e. the vocabulary, is permanently reshaping and restructuring itself, and poses most recognizable problems to non-natives (Jeremy Harmer: 1996) – which does not mean to say that the grammar of the same natural language should be underestimated by educationalists or researchers in the various subfields of applied linguistics.

The fact of the matter is that it is the teacher who must be seen as the main pathfinder in the students' learning process. The real *jungle* of the English lexicon, substantiated by a huge store of words, stylistic and geographical varieties, a global presence and influence, internal and external (i.e. cultural) intricacies and 'pitfalls', must be duly and profitably explored, among others, by the experts in applied linguistics, who

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[1] Constantin Manea, University of Piteşti, Romania, kostea_m@yahoo.com.

should endeavour to come up with new, better concepts and instruments usable by EFL teachers and learners.

A fundamentally analytical and phraseological language, English is directly opposed to such languages as Romanian, French, German, Russian, Latin, which tend to place more emphasis on morphological and paradigmatic facts. English is predominantly based on the *syntactic* organization or arrangement of the items of the text. So, much of the effort devoted by a learner of English should be directed towards lexical acquisition, as even the "irregular" / "unpredictable" items of the grammatical paradigms can be assigned to the lexicon (Andrei Bantaş: 1979).

During the several decades we have devoted to TEFL, we could notice that most of the (upper-intermediate and advanced level) texts included in handbooks and workbooks tend to raise problems relating to the lexicon, which is not always properly paralleled by the corresponding exercises and tests.

1.1. **The need for comparative approaches in teaching and learning vocabulary** The present paper tries to pinpoint some of the aspects concerning the specific work devoted to vocabulary skills in (*upper-intermediate* and) *advanced* classes. The material that represented the basis of the present approach was provided by the author's experience as a lexicographer and pedagogue, and also by some of his reflective writing.

We must be aware of the fact that the TEFL materials that Romanian students can benefit by are, in an overwhelming proportion, the result of the efforts diligently conducted by English-speaking researchers and teachers. As we observed elsewhere (Maria-Camelia Manea, Constantin Manea: 2007), the specificity of the didactic materials generated by the endeavours of applied linguistics experts mainly comes from their being "filtered" through the non-native teachers' minds, being assessed, both linguistically and methodologically, in point of classroom appropriacy and benefit. So, contrastive and comparative approaches are needed in order to circumscribe only (or especially) those linguistic items that must be taught in view of their patent dissimilarity and difficulty. Hence, linguistic facts that have been proved to be prone to errors should naturally be prioritized, i.e. the most notable sources of errors, be they semantic, semantic-grammatical or morpho-syntactic.

1.2. **Main problems in vocabulary learning.** The new techniques, devices and implements that are made available – and fairly handy – by computerization and multimedia concepts can only be welcome with a view to improving both the vocabulary and grammar skills, and the general communicative proficiency with *intermediate*, *upper-intermediate* as well as *advanced* students. Such techniques and devices could be successfully utilized by translators, as well, and even as desktop implements by those who intend to write various papers in English. They can be a valuable help, a sort of learn-while-working instruments, combining the virtues of the classical dictionary and of the (normative) grammar textbook with the attractiveness and expediency of modern information means and media.

As we have already noted in one of our prior contributions (Constantin Manea: 2004), the main *problems* related to the lexicon within the broader field of TEFL seem to be the following:

• The main actors of the learning and teaching process ought to lay stress on the *comparative* and *contrastive aspects* of language and linguistic practice, mainly with respect to *linguistic interference*. So, the notorious *False Friends* or *Deceptive Cognates* – which are unfortunately the source of countless mistranslations (most of which are genuine howlers) that plague translated materials in this country, mainly in the press – should be studied more carefully, collected and built up into interactive didactic materials. Such

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"interlinguistic homonyms" as English *advocate*, *character*, *conference*, *decade*, *development*, *emphatic*, *location*, *oppress*, *period*, *reformed*, *resort*, *station*, *support*, *toboggan*, *versatile*, *vulture* should benefit by more carefully devised, interactive lexicographical and didactic supports (Bantaş, Rădulescu: 1977).

• *Collocation* – defined as: "a grouping together of things in a certain order, as of the words in a sentence", or "the habitual juxtaposition of a particular word with another word or words with a frequency greater than chance" – must enjoy close attention from lexicographers and didacticians. Most (upper-intermediate and advanced) Romanian students of English have difficulties in combining, or discriminating between the various combinatory possibilities of, say, *to lay* and *egg*, *to make* or *to deliver* and *speech*, *to stage* and *demonstration*, *to make / to take* and *decision*, *to take* and *examination*, *to have / to make* and *contribution*, *misfortune* and *pursue* (*someone*), etc. Collocative phrases like the ones below should be part of an advanced (or even upper-intermediate) student's command of English: *a <u>dramatic</u> variety (of smth.)*, *to <u>brew</u> the tea / coffee*, *the <u>literal</u> truth*, *an <u>ill</u> opinion*, *to <u>give</u> a puff / a smile / a scream / a stamp / a twist*, *to <u>form</u> a judgment / vision*, *a <u>course</u> of action*, *a <u>head</u> of cabbage / lettuce / celery*, *to <u>bear</u> a (strange, strong*, etc.*) resemblance to smb.*, *to be initiated into (a movement)*, *to <u>deal</u> a blow / the cards*, *a <u>lame</u> excuse*, etc.

• Distinguishing the *irregular / anomalous* forms of particular lexical items, as part and parcel of those terms; such (semantically and stylistically) divergent nominal or verbal forms as *cactuses* and *cacti*, *geniuses* and *genii*, *indexes* and *indices*, *struck* and *stricken*, *loaded* and *laden*, *cleft* and *cloven* should benefit by the learners' increased awareness. (As any TEFL can aver, the real jungle of the noun paradigms in English is fraught with such 'ambushes' as: *brother–brethren*, *ox–oxen*, *mouse–mice*; *alga–algae*, *persona grata–persoane gratae*; *bacillus–bacilli*, *locus–loci*, *stimulus–stimuli*; *focus–foci–focuses*, *fungus–fungi–funguses;* *apparatus–apparatus–apparatuses*, *hiatus–hiatuses–hiatus*; *addendum–addenda;* *radix–radices*, *apex–apices–apexes*, *calyx–calyces–calyxes*, *vortex–vortices–vortexes*; *analysis–analyses*, *axis–axes*; *abscissa* – pl. *abscissas* or *abscissae*, *minimum* (pl. *minima* or *minimums* – usually in sing.); *species*, *series*, *means*; *sheep*, *deer; fish*, *fruit*; *colours* "the flag of a regiment or ship; a national flag" (cf. *colour*), *effects* "personal belongings" (cf. *effect*), *grounds* "(solid) sediment or dregs, typically from coffee; solid residue" (cf. *ground*), *quarters* "rooms or lodgings, especially those allocated to servicemen or to staff in domestic service" (cf. *quarter*), *rubbers* "(Amer. Engl.) rubber boots; galoshes" (cf. *rubber*), *sands* "an expanse of sand, especially along a seashore or in a desert; a beach"; *die* – pl. *dies*, *dice*; *creeps*, *doldrums*, *savings*, *tantrums*; *dozen*, *brace*, *yoke*, *gross*; *the aristocracy*, *crew*, *coterie*, *Cabinet*, *Parliament*, *party*; *noodles*, *alms*; *pound*, *stone*, *inch*, *ounce*, *pint*, *quart*, *gallon*, *fathom*; *a <u>wedge</u> of cheese*, *a <u>sliver</u> of cheese*, *a <u>squirt</u> of perfume / catchup*, *a <u>loaf</u> of bread / meat / sugar*, *a <u>pinch</u> of salt*, *a <u>segment</u> of orange*, *a <u>scrap</u> of paper*, etc.

• A fair number of *idiomatic elements* (e.g. *acid test*, *safety valve*, *to leave no stone unturned*), or else frequent clichés (e.g. *nothing to write home about*, *white elephant*), and even some *proverbs*, be they in an abbreviated, or "quoted" / "repeated" form (e.g. *all his geese are swans*, *an eye for an eye*), should be judiciously and didactically selected for classroom use (mainly from the vocabulary associated with current speech, the common jargon of the press, etc.). A similar status should be recognized for the best-known proper names that are as a rule implied by given idioms or (cultural) contexts, e.g. *Adonis*, *Brutus*,

*Damocles*, *Goliath*, *Halcyon*, *Helen (of Troy)*, *Jezebel*, *Job*, *Moloch*, *Pandora*, *Rubicon*, *Sisyphus*, etc.[1] Incidentally, some lexical items compel recognition both as items of vocabulary and grammar – for example, the comparative set phrases conveying a superlative sense, e.g. *as busy as a bee*, *as bold as brass*, *as clean as a whistle*, *as cool as a cucumber*, *as dead as mutton / as a doornail*, *as like as two peas*, *as proud as a pancake*, *as right as rain*, *as sharp as a razor*, *to drink like a fish*, etc.

- Acquaintanceship with those *proper names* which have equivalent (or *translation*) forms in the learners' language – and which, incidentally, pose major difficulties for most students, and even teachers and translators; here are a few such examples: Rom. *Birmania* : Eng. *Burma*, Rom. *Eschil* : Eng. *Aeschylus*, Rom. *Carol cel Mare* : Eng. *Charlemagne*, Rom. *Genova* : Eng. *Genoa*, Rom. *O mie şi una de nopţi* : Eng. (*The) Arabian Nights / The Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, Rom. *Torino* : Eng. *Turin*, Rom. *Arlechino* : Eng. *Harlequin*, Rom. *Şeherezada* : Eng. *Scheherazade*, Rom. *Azincourt* : Eng. *Agincourt*, Rom. *Micene* : Eng. *Mycenae* etc. (Bantaş, Manea: 1990). Moreover, we think that even adjectives derived from certain popular proper names should be included in the interactive lists that could hopefully be generated by didacticians and experts in applied linguistics, e.g. *C(a)esarean / C(a)esarian*, *Caroline*, *Catullan*, *Chicagoan*, *Christic*, *Dantean*, *Hanoverian*, *Hitlerite*, *Jacobean*, *Liverpudlian*, *Mancunian*, *Marlovian*, *Ricardian*, *Shakespearean*, *Shavian*, etc.

- The *lexical fields* the English terms belong to should be made clear and duly illustrated in order to enable the students to more fully and flexibly understand their interrelationship, which is, almost invariably (and also naturally) different from that in Romanian, e.g. *healthy*, *sound*, *sane*, *wholesome*, or *edge, brink, verge, border, boundary, margin, limit*, terms that display a lot of semantic overlapping and blurring; or *to accept* and *to admit*. Similarly, students should be helped to better grasp the comparative degree of 'semantic and / or stylistic force' of the elements within the sets of so-called Related Terms, e.g. *amaze, astonish, astound, bewilder, confound, daze, dumbfound, flabbergast, shock, stagger, startle, stun, stupefy, surprise*, or the style and register strata that such terms belong to (which can be signalled by dictionaries as: *archaic*, *obsolete*, *obsolescent*, *historical, colloquial, formal, rhetorical, jocular, poetical, literary, substandard, technical vulgar, taboo, derogatory, pejorative, racist, sexist*).

- *Synonymy*, as dealt with by both (bilingual) dictionaries and didactic materials of various types, uses and descriptions, must be more amply made use of, even to the point of resorting to what one can call 'phrastic synonymy' (i.e. the kind of equivalent rewording that TEFL exercise books include under the heading *Rephrasing* exercises).

- Likewise, highlighting the *'grammaticalness'* inherent in the lexical items that are dissimilar from their Romanian counterparts, e.g. *a abandona* (vs Eng. *to renounce* + *something*), *a se abţine* (vs Eng. *to refrain* + <u>*from*</u> *something*), *acustică* (vs Eng. *acoustics*, Uncountable noun + singular agreement), *a adora* (vs Eng. *to adore* – no progressive form), *a beneficia (<u>de ceva</u>)* vs Eng. *to benefit* (+ <u>*from*</u> *something*), etc.

2. **Complex bilingual dictionaries – past and present** Therefore, the vocabulary and the phraseology as captured by dictionaries – be they bilingual or monolingual – should by no means ignore the other (would-be *"minor"*) section of the lexicon, namely the question relating to contextualization, manifest as (underlying) grammar and

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[1] Moreover, such details can help (younger) translators to overcome obstacles such as rendering set phrases containing proper names into… proper Romanian, e.g. *Trandafirul de Ierihon*, rather than *\*Trandafirul de Jericho*.

(communicative) style. Hence, the necessary interrelated and complex, many-sided character of lexicographical activity: the various branches of linguistics have obviously to concur in the work of the people who compile dictionaries. The late Professor Andrei Bantaş (1930-1997) used to say that a dictionary must not only be a means of communication, but also an instrument of research and learning. Along the same lines, we should add that (good) dictionaries must put to effective use the comparative and contrastive dimension of applied linguistics.

As a didactic means, a good (complex) bilingual dictionary must give a correct and comprehensive image of the norms of the target-language itself (primarily, at the level of the vocabulary), but not in a rigid manner. It should have recourse to an approach based on an appropriate amount of flexibility with respect to the so-called *'acceptability test'*. The descriptive character of any learner-oriented dictionary has to include the necessary usage notes of the relevant items, which should be expounded and clarified in all their shades of emaning and stylistic implications, and also in keeping with the most representative tendencies of today's English.

Such complex (or learner's / didactic) dictionaries have already established an appreciable tradition in this country, e.g. Leon D. Leviţchi's or Irina Panovf's dictionaries, in which an elaborate set of scientific implements is consistently made use of, with a maximum condensation of linguistic information through the use of an astounding range of abbreviations, special signs, etc., or Andrei Bantaş's *grammaticized* English-Romanian and Romanian-English dictionaries. This is, we think, an ideal for today's generation of dictionary authors, who must contribute to enlarging and perfecting bilingual dictionaries by utilizing the most recent acquisitions of lexicography in the English-speaking nations, and worldwide.

The integrated corpus of information meant to provide the learner (especially the student) with guidance in the field of the English language should not however turn such complex, many-sided *grammaticized* dictionaries into bulky, freakishly plethoric or unwieldy books, inaccessible or inconvenient for the general public. Instead, they will have to be improved – in keeping with models provided by such dictionaries as A.S. Hornby's *Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, the *Collins COBUILD English Dictionary*, the *Macmillan Dictionary*, the *BBI Combinatory Dictionary of English*, or the *Larousse Dictionnaire général (français-anglais / anglais-français)* –, with a view to offering the user a good knowledge of the living structures, contextual and semantic nuances and valencies of the English language (and also Romanian!). A complex dictionary must be a specialized manual-glossary, treating the complexity of the vocabulary viewed as living language material, not a mere selection of inert lexical items. It will be meant to spare the reader the effort of rounding off the information he or she tries to get, by having recourse, in turn, to a phonetic dictionary, a book of grammar, then a dictionary of synonyms and related terms, a dictionary of collocations, a dictionary of phraseology and proverbs, a dictionary of proper names, etc.

2.1. **Personal projects** The result will be a somewhat voluminous book, intended, among other things, to arouse the user's awareness of the fact that English is a most complex language, whose levels are interrelated. It will be the very opposite of the kind of simplistic vocabulary lists, microdictionaries and glossaries currently produced by some *computer-wizards* in this country and elsewhere, which virtually lack all context or interrelated indications. Such a dictionary will try to approximate, by summarizing and "humanizing" it, the abundance of information currently to be found in complex software dictionaries. (Of course, we are also thinking of an integrated software variant, where a

mere click will provide the usage of the term with the clarifying explanations and examples).

The fusion of the various levels, in the shape of an instrument of learning, will certainly lead to a comprehensive, minutely nuanced assimilation of the target-vocabulary, which should be not only correct, but also extensive (e.g. the difference between to *recall*, *to remember* and *to reminisce*; *to threaten* and *to menace*, etc.); these are matters concerning the *grammatical regimen* of the respective verbs more than matters of vocabulary proper – in the sense of *semantic* description and contents. Therefore, entries should be carefully re-cast in keeping with their meaning or sense, which is *semantic + grammatical*. A complex dictionary must necessarily contain indications referring to: (relevant) variations of *spelling*; (significant) variations of *pronunciation*; *geographical* distinctions or *distribution*; *morphology*; *syntax* (i.e. grammatical regimen, collocations, etc.); lexical *strata* and /or *style* /registers. Larger dictionaries can even provide asterisked specifications to *word frequency* – for instance, the *Collins Cobuild Dictionary* uses bullets to that effect. In much the same way, indicating the direct *etymology* can be a valuable implement; anyway, we believe that in any size-type of dictionary, etymology ought to result in grouping entries according to their origins, thus distinguishing between what we could call etymological homonyms, e.g. *hock*[1] and *hock*[2].

2.2. **Overview of the projected series of dictionaries.** This dictionary series, projected by the late professor A. Bantaş and begun jointly with the author of the present modest contribution, will hopefully provide, as principal elements of novelty, the following: ● a selection of *new meanings* (whose Romanian equivalents may be either single words or idiomatic phrases, e.g. *articulate* "able to express oneself fluently and coherently", "distinct, clear, or definite; well-constructed" (Romanian "fluent", "închegat", "bine organizat / structurat"), *vocal* "frequently disposed to outspoken speech, criticism" (Romanian "critic"), etc.; some of these have until recently been ignored, or else little favoured by lexicographers compiling Romanian-English dictionaries); ● *proper names* having well-established Romanian equivalents (appearing side by side with the other / "regular" words in the Romanian language: one must concede that there are huge differences, both of spelling and pronunciation, between, say, Rom. *Arhimede* and Eng. *Archimedes*, *Birmania* and *Burma*, *Carol cel Mare* and *Charlemagne*, *Socrate* and *Socrates*, *Terra Nova* and *Newfoundland*, etc.). It also seemed natural that a welcome osmosis should be established between the "general use" status of a dictionary and its "specialized / technical" aspects (i.e. more *technical-scientific* terms were provided, and, on the other hand, indications of "grammatical regimen" were given for them); ● *grammatical indications*, in the form of illustrative contextualization parentheses (explaining matters having to do with *grammatical collocation* – meant as "the arrangement or juxtaposition, especially of linguistic elements, such as words").

These grammatical indications are short, carefully codified in order to be readable, easy to use, and generally provided in the form of various graphical and typographic devices (*viz.* letters, figures. abbreviations, various signs and marks; bracketed explanations and normative examples or illustrations were only provided incidentally); the indications in the dictionary refer to: ● *I. Spelling* (i.e. variants: capitalized or not, hyphenated, solid-spelt, separate words). ● *II. Pronunciation*: variants, e.g. *ate* ([et], [eit], [æt]); *hospitable*, *hospitable*, etc.; the pronunciation of the so-called *weak forms* was given (in first position, as they are actually far more frequent than the *strong forms*); also, the pronunciation of such inflected forms as *baths*, *houses*; relations to sentence stress; changes in stress or segmental pronunciation related to the grammatical status of the word and / or to its

position in the sentence; sometimes, such reduced variants as ['præps] were indicated, too. *III.* ● *Morphology*: irregular forms, changes of spelling and pronunciation due to inflection (*see above*); restrictions of use; (the idea in older dictionaries to refer the reader to tables and lists at the end of the volume can make reference procedures rather unwieldy – so, we preferred bracketed explanations). ● *IV. Syntax*: collocation, agreement, etc. ● *V. Style and lexical stratum*, e.g. *archaic*, *obsolete / obsolescent*, *hist.* (i.e. historical terms); *colloquial*, *formal*, *rhetorical*, *jocular*, *poetical*; *substandard*, *vulgar*, *taboo*; optionally, bracketed indications in reference to synonymy and antonymy can be given.

      2.3. In the first volume of the intended series of complex dictionaries, namely the complex / didactic English-Romanian dictionary (a medium-sized dictionary), which has already been completed by the author of the present paper, using some of the lexical material provided by the late Professor Andrei Bantaş, the following codifications were meant to provide grammatical explanations: **(a)** For **nouns**: 1. *(U)* for uncountable nouns, e.g. *butter*, *wood*, *mutability*; or *(C)*, only when there are distinctions of meaning, e.g. *old salt* "lup de mare"; 2. for foreign or irregular plurals, the full forms were given, e.g. *oxen* ['oksᵊn], *radii* ['reidiai]; or, if in variation: *sanatorium (~s, sanatoria* [sænə'to:riə]*)*; 3. specific determinatives or modifiers, if any, e.g. *florist (at / to the ~'s)*, *father (! pos.+ ~; ø art. ~: in direct address)*; 4. numericalization through specific means *(CS)*, e.g. *a pair of scales*; *a streak / stroke / bit of luck*; *a wisp of smoke*, etc. 5. agreement (i.e. sing. / pl. agr.), e.g. *acoustics (U) (+ sing.)*, but *The ~ (of the hall) <u>are</u> excellent*. Special attention was paid to the so-called collective uses, e.g. *trout*, *salmon*, *buffalo (+ pl. agr.)*; *parliament*, *gang*, *coterie (+ sing. / pl. agr.)*. 6. possible (relevant) substitutes.

**(b)** For **adjectives**: 1. ● marking the comparison of short / Germanic adjective through their complete form, e.g. *(hotter, the hottest)*; *(easier, the easiest)*; *(the minutest)*; ● pointing out the double forms, e.g. *(the most common / the commonest)*, or the prevalence of either of them, e.g. *(! no fouler, foulest)*; no comparative (and superlative) forms: for technical terms, e.g. *atomic*; ● remarks relating to the formation of the superlative degree, e.g. *fine, certain, burning, freezing (no very ~; !! quite / absolutely ~)*, *appreciated (no very ~; !! very much ~ / highly ~)*; (a more ticklish problem concerns the use of adjectives like *complete*, *equal*, *unique*, *infinite* and *perfect* with submodifiers such as *very* or *more* or adverbs such as *really*, *quite*, or *very*). 2. adjectives having only predicative function (e.g. *ablaze*); used only in postposition (e.g. *proper* "propriu-zis"); ● adjectives with exclusively attributive function (e.g. *utter, sheer*). 3. gender restrictions, e.g *buxom, plump, pretty (!! fem.)*, *handsome (!! masc.)*, etc. 4. inanimate vs. animate uses. 5. usual or compulsory collocations (e.g. *an arrant mistake*). **(c)** For **adverbs** the full comparative forms were given (e.g. *faster, fastest)*; ● the usual position of the indefinite and frequency adverbs (e.g. *seldom, generally*). **(d)** Specific **prepositions** (both obligatory and optional): for nouns (e.g *interest (+in)*); adjectives and past participles (e.g. *reluctant (+ at / about)*; *satisfied (+ with)*); verbs (e.g. *to rely (+ on / upon)*; static vs. dynamic prepositions. (See also prepositional collocations like: *deficient in wit, different / dissimilar from the others, impatient / glad at the news, keen on learning, liable to a tax, specific to a domain, characteristic / representative / suggestive / typical of a domain, independent of central government, dependent on oil exports, popular with everybody, sympathetic with the natives)*. **(e)** For **verbs**: ● anomalous finites *(AF)*; ● full forms of the irregular past tense and past participle (e.g. *rang, rung*), sometimes also the *-ing* form (e.g. *lying*); ● restrictions in the use of the progressive / continuous aspect (e.g. *to hear, to mean (no cont.)*); ● verbs followed by gerundial constructions, or by *-ing* and / or *to infinitive* forms (e.g. *to continue*); ● verbs followed by "complex objects"; ● verbs followed by indirect object compulsorily preceded

by *to* (e.g. *to lie (+ to smb.)*); ● verbs used only / especially in negative or interrogative constructions (e.g. *to mind*); ● restrictions implied by the passive voice, etc.; ● the sense distinctions between past participle forms like *wrought* and *worked*, *hanged* and *hung*, *burned* and *burnt*, *lit* and *lighted* is explained away; likewise, the specific context and semantics will be clarified of forms like *shod*, *clad*, *proven*, *broadcast / broadcasted*; ● the different meanings of verbs like *to try* (+ *to V / V-ing*) will be made clear through specifications in appropriate contexts, e.g. *to try + Infinitive = to try to do that / sth.*, vs. *to try V-ing = to try that / sth.* (in the latter case, the idea is that of *experiencing* something); similarly, contextual information will help to clarify the difference between *permitted* vs *allowed*: *It is not permitted to take books from the shelves*, not \**It is not allowed to take books from the shelves.*

The asterisk (\*) was only used for those elements which, though rather special, are still *predictable* (as they are quite *frequent* in use), so, their use and form can be privided in the introductory section (e.g. *man\**, *woman\**; *to be\**, *to have\**, *to do\**, *to get\**, *to go\**; *factory\** (pl. *factories*); *to cry\** (*he/she cries*); *bus* (pl. *buses*), watch (*watches*), etc. (Yet, the opposite possibility should also be considered – namely, to refer the (foreign) user to the Romanian verbs with highly unpredictable past participle and preterite forms, e.g. *dus, uns, spart*, *rupt*, or to the alternative plural forms of the nouns, by means of italicized brackets). It goes without saying that the absence of special indications naturally denotes a behaviour which is common to the whole class or category.

3. **Further remarks and suggestions arising from personal experience in the field of lexicography.**

Along much the same lines, the author of the present paper had a rewarding experience compiling a pair of small bilingual dictionaries (English-Romanian, and Romanian-English), which made him (even more) aware of the many details and intricacies that toiling on such a book involves. Here are a few illustrations of the particular aspects of the activity in the field of applied linguistics implied by a lexicographer's work:

(1) Finding new, or freshly devised, things about delimiting, detailing, or supplementing the various meanings or semantic nuances of the terms explained: **argument** (…) dispută; dezbatere (aprinsă). 3. argument(are).; **astronaut** astronaut (Δ nu sovietic); cf. **cosmonaut** cosmonaut; astronaut sovietic; **bull** *sm./sn.* (…) 3. mascul *(de elefant, balenă etc.)*; **butterfly** *sn.* fluture *(colorat, de zi)* [compare with **moth**]; **change** I. *vt.* (…) 3. a schimba *(bani, un copil, viteza)*; **client** *smf.* client *(Δ al unui avocat etc.)*; **cookery** *sn.* ¢ (…) artă culinară; … **dump** *vt.* 1. a descărca. (…) 3. *fam.* a se descotorosi de; **enter**… II. *vi.* (…) 2. *(into)* a intra *(într-un acord).* 3. a începe *(o carieră).* 4. a se angaja *(într-o discuţie)*; **essay** *sn.* (…) 2. compunere (şcolară). 3. încercare; ; **expose** *vt.* (…) 2. a da în vileag / pe faţă. 3. a demasca; **fancy** (…) **II.** *adj.* (…) 4. complicat. 5. fantezist. 6. imaginar. 7. *AmE* luxos; **ferry** *sn.* 1. bac, pod plutitor. 2. feribot; **guinea pig** *sn.* cobai *(şi animal de casă)*; **illness** *sn.* ¢ boală *(ca stare)*; indispoziţie; **isle** *sn.* (…) 2. Insula… *(în nume geogr.)*; **lay○** **I.** (…) **2.** a întinde *(masa, o cursă).* **3.** a oua, a face *(ouă).* **4.** a da *(vina)*; **marsh** *sn.* loc inundabil / mlăştinos, mlaştină. [compare with **swamp**: I. *sn.* mlaştină (permanentă)]; **mystify** *vt.* a pune în (mare) încurcătură, a zăpăci (complet); **operator** *smf.* 1. maşinist; mecanic. lucrător (calificat). 2. telefonist(ă). 3. agent (de bursă); **point  I.** *sn.* (…) 4. virgulă *(la numerale; în engleză, de ex. 3,14 se scrie cu punct)*; **profile**  *sn.* (…) 3. siluetă. 4. schiţă. 5. portret *(ziaristic)*; **qualify**  *vi.* (…) **2.** a tempera. **3.** *gram.* a determina. **4.** a caracteriza; **reader** *smf.* (…) 2. pasionat de lectură. 3. conferenţiar. 4. *univ. BrE* conferenţiar; *AmE* seminarist; lector. 5. redactor; corector. 6. manual *(pt. limbi străine etc.)*; **rind** *sn.* coajă *(de măr, caş, arbore)*; piele; **spear** *sn.* lance, suliţă; harpon; ţepuşă; **stone** *sn.*

**1.** piatră *(şi de moară etc.)*; (…). 3. sâmbure *(de prună, piersică)*. 4. *(nu pl.) unitate de măsură de 6,35 kg*; **syndicate** *sn.* cartel; concern; asociere; **technique** *sn.* **1.** tehnică *(anume)*. **2.** măiestrie; **troublesome** *adj.* 1. supărător; chinuitor. 2. neastâmpărat; violent; **versatile** *adj.* 1. multilateral; polifuncţional. 2. schimbător; **vulture** *sn.* 1. pasăre de pradă; vultur hoitar / pleşuv. 2. *fig.* hienă; corb (de pradă); (ins) apucător; **ward** *sn.* **1.** sector (administrativ). **2.** ¢ tutelă. **3.** minor aflat sub tutelă, pupil(ă); **when** (…) **II.** *conj.* (…) **5.** din moment ce, având în vedere că.

(2) Details concerning the style and register of the English (and, sometimes, of the Romanian) terms − codified as *adm.* = administrativ, *elev.* = elevat „formal, learned", *fam.* = familiar „informal, colloquial", *fig.* = figurat „figurative", *foto* = fotografie „photography", *BrE / AmE* = engleza britanică / americană „British / American English", *poet.* = poetic „poetic(al)", *înv.* = învechit „old-fashioned, obsolete", *chim.* = chimie „chemistry", e.g. **appendix** *sn.* 1. anexă *(şi fig.)*; **bull** *sm./sn.* 1. taur *(şi fig.)*; **extract²** ['ekstrækt] *sn.* 1. extras. 2. *chim.* extract; **fertile** *adj.* fertil, rodnic *(şi fig.)*; productiv; **flash** I. *sn.* (…) 2. (…) rază *fig.* 3. *foto fam.* flash / bliţ; **fox** *sn. / smf.* (…) 2. vulpoi *(fig.)*; **isle** *sn.* 1. insulă *(mică) şi poet.*; **ocean** I. *sn.* ocean; mare *(şi fig.)*; **overall** I. *adj.* general, total, global. **II.** *adv.* 1. în / per ansamblu; în general. 2. per total. **III.** *sn. (pl.)* 1. pantaloni de salopetă. 2. *BrE* halat de lucru; **overworked** extenuat; tocit *(fig.)*; **parcel** *sn.* 1. pachet *(şi fin.)*; **pest** *sn.* (…) **3.** *rar* ciumă; **polyglot** *smf., adj. elev.* poliglot; **presently** *adv.* 1. *elev.* îndată, imediat. 2. *înv.* acum, la ora actuală; **reprimand** I. *sn. elev. / adm.* admonestare, mustrare; **revision** *sn.* **1.** revizuire; revizie. **2.** *BrE şcol.* recapitulare; **stenographer** *AmE smf.* stenograf(ă); **stratum**○ ['strɑːtəm] *sn.* strat *(geol., biol., soc.)*; **van** *sn.* 1. furgonetă; dubă. 2. *BrE* vagon de marfă (acoperit). 3. *fam.* rulotă; **vascular** *adj. spec.* vascular; venos; **weigh** I. *vt.* (…) 2. (…) a măsura *(fig.)*. **II.** *vi.* a cântări *(şi fig.)*; a trage la cântar; **when** (…) **II.** *conj.* (…) **6.** *fam.* în care.

(3) Grammatical and contextual-functional details − considered in the light of the comparative and contrastive approach (by means of such codifications as: ¢ = uncountable, Δ = especially, mainly): **attentive** *adj.* atent *(şi to)*; **independence** *sn.* ¢ *(şi from smth.)* independenţă; **independent** *adj. (şi of smth.)* independent; **overall** I. *adj.* general, total, global. **II.** *adv.* 1. în / per ansamblu; în general. 2. per total; **overcome**○ I. *vt.* (…) **3.** *(Δ pas.)* a covârşi, a prididi; **proceeding** *sn.* (…) 2. *pl.* operaţiuni. (…) 4. *pl.* dezbateri *(ale unei şedinţe)*; **proficient** *adj. (in)* expert *(în)*; (foarte) competent *(la, în)*; **statistics** *sn.* statistică *(¢: ştiinţă)*; **strait** *sn.* Δ *pl.* 1. strâmtoare; **substitute** I. *vt. (for)* a înlocui *(cu)*; **until** I. *conj.* (…) 2. *(în context neg.)* până nu. **II.** *prep.* (…) 2. *(în context neg.)* înainte de.

(4) Details relating to form, including phonetics: **eastward**(**s**) *adv.* spre est / răsărit [compare also with: **eastward** *adj.*, *adv.* (din)spre est / răsărit)]; **excess²** ['ekses / ik'ses] *adj.* în plus; suplimentar; **fibre** / *AmE* **fiber** *sn.* fibră.

(5) Miscellaneous (complex, combined) form-and-content (or functional and usage) details and explanations: **ash** *sn.* 1. ¢ / *pl.* scrum; cenuşă *(fig. – pl.)*; **easy** (…) II. *adv. fam.* uşor; **locality** *sn. elev.* 1. zonă, vecinătate. 2. loc, scenă *(a unui eveniment)*. 3. localizare, (am)plasare. 4. localitate; **loss** *sn.* 1. ¢ pierdere *(pl.: mil.)*; **oppress** *vt.* (…) 2. a chinui; *(Δ pas.)* a apăsa *(fig.)*; **overtake**○ *vi.* 1. a depăşi *(şi auto – BrE)*; **paint** I. *sn.* 1. ¢ vopsea *(şi strat)*. 2. culoare. 3. *fam.* fard; **pit** *sn.* (…) **3.** *AmE* sâmbure *(de cireaşă, prună, caisă, piersică)*; **slay**○ *vt. lit.. înv.* a ucide *(Δ sălbatic)*; a măcelări; **tragic** / *rar* **tragical** *adj.* tragic *(şi fig.)*.

4. **Further ideas arising from personal experience**. As personal experience, reflective writing and self-study seem to be the best store of new ideas, we thought it useful to add some more illustrations of the kind of information that complex, integrated

dictionaries and software, or interactive materials should contain. Such materials, sets of exercises and tests, interactive and multimedia devices (as many sources of illustrations and normative or usage tips), based on relevant items of vocabulary selected in accordance with the needs of the Romanian learners of English, and of course in keeping with the respective levels of difficulty, ought to include streams or integrated compartments concerning:

● Related words and semantic fields, which should be studied with due comments and examples (in minimal, or relevant contexts), e.g. **abduct**, cf. *kidnap*; **anxious** – **afraid** – **scared** – **frightened** – **timid** – **shy** – **coy**; (Cf. *apprehensive, bashful, cowardly, coy, diffident, faint-hearted, fearful, irresolute, modest, mousy, nervous, pusillanimous, retiring, shrinking, shy, timorous*); See also: **nervous**: *agitated, anxious, apprehensive, edgy, excitable, fearful, fidgety, flustered, hesitant, highly strung, hysterical, jittery* (Inf.)*, jumpy, nervy* (Inf.)*, neurotic, on edge, ruffled, shaky, tense, timid, timorous, uneasy, uptight* (Inf.)*, weak, worried*; **decent** – **discreet** – **unobtrusive** – **subdued** – **soft**: *a decent skirt*; *it was decent of you to help me out*; *a decent meal*; *a discreet perfume*; *discreet behaviour* (Rom. "purtare decentă"); *an unobtrusive design* (Rom. "neostentativ, de bun-gust"), *subdued colours / lighting* (Rom. "nestrident"); *soft music / colours*; **extravagant** (*~ use of energy, ~ prices*); **stylish** (*~ clothes / furniture*, Rom. "extravagant"); **sophisticated** (1. having refined or cultured tastes and habits; 2. appealing to sophisticates: *a sophisticated restaurant*; 3. unduly refined or cultured. 4. pretentiously or superficially wise; 5. (of machines, methods, etc.) complex and refined: *~ taste / lifestyle*); **posh** (1. smart, elegant, or fashionable; exclusive: *posh clothes*; 2. upper-class or genteel; 3. in a manner associated with the upper class: *to talk posh*; **miserable**: cf. 1. *afflicted*, *broken-hearted, crestfallen, dejected, depressed, desolate, despondent, disconsolate, distressed, doleful, down, downcast, down in the mouth* (Inf.)*, forlorn, gloomy, heartbroken, melancholy, mournful, sorrowful, unhappy, woebegone, wretched*; 2. *destitute*, *impoverished, indigent, meagre, needy, penniless, poor, poverty-stricken, scanty*; 3. *abject*, *bad, contemptible, deplorable, despicable, detestable, disgraceful, lamentable, low, mean, pathetic, piteous, pitiable, scurvy, shabby, shameful, sordid, sorry, squalid, vile, worthless, wretched*; **serious** – **respectable** – **reputable** – **quality** – **earnest**.

● Matters relevant (especially from a contrastive point of view) of style and register**: accessory** 1. usually pl. 2. also *accessary*, *Law*.; **AC/DC** *slang* "bisexual"; **activist** sometimes derogatory (cf. Romanian *militant*); **adipose** *Technical* term; **adjure** *fml* "to urge solemnly"; **alliance**… 4. *Becoming rare*: a union of families by marriage; *allianced fml*; **adulation, adoration**: (**adulate** (tr) to flatter or praise obsequiously; **adoration** 1. deep love or esteem. 2. the act of worshipping); **admonition** *fml*; **adorn** *fml*; **adumbrate** *pomp* to give an incomplete or faint idea of (esp. future events); **adverse** *fml* unfavourable; opposing, going against; **aegis**: under the aegis of *fml*; **aerate** technical term; **aether** *lit or old use* for *ether*; **aforesaid** (also, *aforementioned*) law; **afresh** *fml*: *He had to start afresh*; **afters** *BrE infml* (The part of a meal that comes after the main dish); **aggrandizement** *Usu derog.* "increase in size, power or rank, esp. when intentionally planned"; **agonize**: *informal* (+ over): To make a long and anxious effort when considering something or trying to make a decision.

● Usage difficulties (including – internal or external – False Friends)[1]: **according to**…: (Do not day *According to me…*); **adequate, enough, sufficient**: adequate, *enough*, *sufficient money. Only*, *enough, sufficient* (+ pl. nouns). For quantity, *adequate* means "good enough"; **adagio**, **adage; admission, admittance**: **Admittance** = more formal,

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[1] Pairs like *founder* and *flounder*, *taut* and *tout* can pose problems even for native speakers of English.

literary: *No admittance*. But: *Admission £2*; **agreeable** (False Friend; + *to…*); **artist, artiste** (1. an entertainer, such as a singer or dancer; 2. a person who is highly skilled in some occupation: *a hair artiste*); **aerial**[1] (also **antenna** AmE); cf. *air…*; **aggravate** (Commonly used to mean "annoy"). Correct use: a difficulty is aggravated "made worse"; **caricature – cartoon**; **billion**: two thousand million. Four *trillion* = 4,000 billion. *Billion* (= Romanian *bilion*): Br. English, old-fashioned; **actual** – *topical* – *current* – *up-to-date* – *contemporary– modern*; **actually** cf. *at present, currently*; **boss, chief, chef**; **liquor – liqueur**; **over, above**: *over / more than 3,000,000 inhabitants; children over ten; over the bay / ocean; to fight over a ball; temperatures above // below zero, sub-zero temperatures; noises coming from the room above; let's hang the painting above / over the fireplace; the bird flew over the lake; the sheep jumped over the hedge; a beauty spot over her right eye; they built a roof over the courtyard; she pulled the blanket over her head; the facts mentioned above, see the above section*; **prospect – prospectus**; **shade – shadow**; **technique – technology**.

● More complex, interrelated matters of usage: **chips** – *French fries* – *crisps*; **comfortable** – to **comfort** – **luxurious**; **control – check**: *to control production. Control yourself!*; **critic – critique – criticism** – review – censorship; **date – data – datum**; **delicatessen – delicacy** – cf. **dainty** (→ **daintiness**): "1. delicate or elegant: *a dainty teacup*; 2. pleasing to the taste; choice; delicious: *a dainty morsel*; 3. refined, esp. excessively genteel; fastidious. II *noun* a choice piece of food, esp. a small cake or sweet; delicacy"; **consequent – consistent**; **continual – continuous**; **chemist – pharmacist**; **costume – suit**; **excuse** (1. an explanation offered in defence of some fault or offensive behaviour or as a reason for not fulfilling an obligation, etc.: *he gave no excuse for his rudeness*; 2. *Informal*. an inferior example of something specified; makeshift substitute: *she is a poor excuse for a hostess*; 3. the act of excusing); – **pretext** (1. a fictitious reason given in order to conceal the real one; 2. a specious excuse; pretence); – **apology**, to **apologise**; **fatal** (accident, disease, injuries "mortal"; mistake, consequences) – **unfortunate** (business, development), **embarrassing** (situation, position) – **lethal – mortal**; **luckily – hopefully** (1. in a hopeful manner; 2. *Informal*. it is hoped: *hopefully they will be married soon*); **irritate** (his accent irritates them, spray, deodorants; Romanian "a enerva, supăra, irita") – **confuse** (*He confuses his opponents with his style*; Romanian "a intriga, irita, intimida, zăpăci") – **put off** (no knitting during my classes; it puts me off; Rom "a deranja": 1. (tr., adv) to confuse; disconcert: *he was put off by her appearance*; 2.(tr., prep.) to cause to lose interest in or enjoyment of: *the accident put him off driving*); **isolate – insulate** (*well-insulated window*, *insulated boots*, *insulating tape*.) 1. to prevent or reduce the transmission of electricity, heat, or sound to or from (a body, device, or region) by surrounding with a nonconducting material. 2. to isolate or detach; **marine – navy**; **marmalade – jam – jelly**; **menu** – *set lunch – a three-course-dinner – bill of fare*; **to mount**: *Collocation*: to mount an expedition / an attack; **oldtimer** – *vintage car – veteran car – antique car*; **overlook – oversee**; **pause – break**; **petrol** – *petroleum – paraffin / kerosene lamp*; **policy – politics**; **puzzle – jigsaw**; **recipe – receipt – prescription**; **self-conscious – self-confident**; **sensible – sensitive**; Also, pairs like: *northern* (cf. *northerly*), *peaceable* (cf. *peaceful*), *womanly* (cf. *womanish*), *childlike* (cf. *childish*), *inquiry* (cf. *enquiry*), etc.

● Grammar difficulties: **to agree to** (+ *a suggestion, proposal, plan = to accept*); cf. agree *with* smb. / smth., **agree** and **accept** (+ *that…*): **admit**; **to accept** is more formal; **afoul**: *To run afoul of* (To bring one into opposition of disagreement with: *His proposal ran afoul of the government's plans to curb expenditure*; *The boat ran afoul of a steamer*); **affair** (sense 2. *often pl.*) "matter; something needing action or attention"; **affiliate**[1]: + prep

(with, to); **afterlife** *(usu. sing.)*; **aftermath** *(usu. sing.)*; **afternoons** *adv.* esp. American English (cf. *What do you do <u>on Sundays</u>*?); **age of consent** – the + singular form; **agog** + with: *full of excitement and expectation*; **drunk** – **drunken**; cf. **shaven**, **sunken**, **laden**; **economic** – **economical**; cf. **electric** – **electrical**, **comic** – **comical**, **historic** – **historical**; **stadium** (pl. *stadiums*, *stadia*) – **stage**. Moreover, practically all specific and obligatory prepositions that are unlike their counterparts in Romanian will be marked in the links of the software materials, e.g. *indignant at smth.*, *reluctant at smth.*, *equal to smth.*, *specific to smth./smb.*, *keen on smth.*, *grateful to smb.*, *independent of smth.*, *dependent on/upon smth./smb.*, *independence from smth.*, *to depend on smth./smb.*, *to congratulate on smth.*, *out of* (*pity*, *ignorance*, etc.). Similarly, the list of conjunctions that pose problems should be provided with links of the type: No *shall/will* Future, or *should/would* Conditional after: *when / after  as soon as / the (very) moment / immediately* (glossed as: "(chiefly Brit) as soon as", as in *Let us know immediately / the moment he arrives*), etc.

● Difficulties of form: **aeon**, **eon**; **affiliate**[2] *noun.* group, organisation affiliated to another, subsidiary; **affix**[1,2]; **afforestation**: spelling; **aged**[1] [eidʒd] (*Two children, aged 7 and 4*); **aged**[2] ['eidʒid] "very old": *the aged and the infirm*; **agenda** pl. *agendas*: (Collins: "(functioning as sing.) Also called: *agendum*. a schedule or list of items to be attended to: 2. (functioning as pl.) Also called: *agendas*, *agendums*. matters to be attended to, as at a meeting of a committee"); **aggregate**[1]: *fml* "a total"; **aggregate**[2]: *fml or tech* 1. to bring or come together; 2. to reach a total or, to add up to; **aide-de-camp** *(pron. of the pl. form)*; **scepticism** / (Amer. English) **skepticism**. (We think that this compartment should also deal with the many *foreignisms* that English boasts, and certainly are a notorious source of errors for ESL learners, e.g. *a cappella*, *ad nauseam*, *aficionado*, *à gogo*, *camera obscura*, *cordon bleu*, *esprit de corps*, *fulcrum*, *gourmet*, *mantra*, *Poltergeist*, *verbatim*, *viva voce*, etc.).

5. **Conclusions**. Concluding, we have to express our hope that, if complex learning and teaching materials like the ones presented above should be generated, they will be widely circulated, meeting public acceptance through their usefulness and efficiency. Even if the main premises needed for achieving verbal communication in English are provided by the speakers' capacity to accurately use the basic grammatical structures of the language, the refinement and enrichment of those structures (so difficult and time-consuming) can only proceed from practicing with, using and repeating a considerable amount of relevant, rich, complex, genuine vocabulary items. What this (comparatively) new type of complex, grammaticized Romanian-English dictionary can offer learners of English in this country is an interconnective tool, a type of self-study, learn-while-working instrument, combining semantic and grammatical description to form a polyfunctional, interactive, flexibly informative whole. The core idea is that of contrastivity, with information filtered (and consequently appropriately focused, narrowed down and explained away) by a native speaker of the learner's language, so it will certainly raise the learners' linguistic awareness and enhance their possibility of forming durable linguistic reflexes. Using ICT in developing such materials, databases and devices will be not only a welcome side of the process, but also an absolute requirement.

We also hope that the other intended dictionaries in the same series (namely, a dictionary of difficulties and pitfalls, an English-Romanian *grammaticized* dictionary, and a visual English-Romanian lexicon) will be as profitable and worthwhile as the first two.

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