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Bilingual Dictionary as a Mirror of Language Change and Modern Lexicographic Challenges

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ABSTRACT

The paper summarizes the author's findings which result from his experience as the chief lexicographic editor, as well as co-author, of the *New Comprehensive Russian-English Dictionary*, now being prepared for print by Russky Yazyk Publishers in Moscow, Russia, to replace the well-known but long outdated dictionary by A. Smirnitsky. It is demonstrated how a bilingual dictionary may need to be revised and restructured in line with language evolution over time. The Russian / English language combination serves as a particularly interesting illustration of that need, considering the sweeping changes both languages, but especially Russian, went through in the last two decades of the 20th century. The author's analysis indicates that those changes did not simply involve a large number of new additions to vocabulary and phraseology, but also some broader and more subtle tendencies, which were far from obvious and may have even gone unnoticed by the general community of language speakers.

KEYWORDS

Translation; Russian; bilingual; lexicography; dictionary

The observations and findings presented in this paper seek to summarize my years of work as the chief scientific and lexicographic editor, as well as co-author, of the *New Comprehensive Russian-English Dictionary* (hereinafter abbreviated as NCREd), now being prepared for the print by the Russky Yazyk Publishers in Moscow, Russia. Drawing on this experience, I would like to demonstrate how a bilingual dictionary may need to be revised and restructured in line with language evolution over time. The Russian / English language combination is a particularly interesting illustration of that, considering the rapid and sweeping changes both languages, but especially Russian, went through in the last two decades of the 20th century.

The NCREd dictionary was not put together from scratch. It builds on the lexicographic tradition and much of the material embodied in *The Russian-English Dictionary* by Professor Aleksandr Smirnitsky (hereinafter referred to as the “legacy

dictionary” for brevity’s sake). Although Aleksandr Smirnitsky died in the middle of the 20th century, his name has been included in the list of the authors of NCRED out of respect for his large contribution to bilingual lexicography and as a sign of the gratitude for his work of many generations of translators, teachers, and students.

When I began working on NCRED, I already knew only too well as a linguist, university professor, translator, and interpreter that the dictionaries then available to language experts and students were very out of date, and finding a suitable equivalent in them was considered a rare piece of good luck.

Therefore the goal of my effort (as well as that of my collaborator Tatyana Krasavina) was not simply to make some additions to the legacy dictionary. We felt there was a pressing need to do the following:

(a) to critically analyze Smirnitsky’s legacy, both its Russian and English parts, in order to determine its fullness and suitability for contemporary use — and that not only with respect to neologisms but, no less importantly, also from the viewpoint of how the dictionary treats older well-established words and phrases;

(b) on the basis of that analysis, to fill the gaps, correct inaccuracies, and redress imbalances across semantic fields and stylistic registers;

(c) to collect and present systematically a huge backlog of unrecorded modern words and phrases. Their absence had previously rendered Russian-English lexicography almost hopelessly incapable of catching up with the practical requirements of dictionary users;

(d) to seamlessly combine legacy material with updates on uniform lexicographic principles relying both on tradition and on contemporary linguistic approaches.

This whole effort would have been impossible without a consistent conception. This article also expounds the principles, approaches, findings and solutions that underlay my work on the Dictionary.

Changes in Russian vocabulary caused by objective changes occurring in the last decades of the 20th century

The last serious revision of the legacy dictionary was completed in 1982, i. e. shortly before the well-known landslide events causing serious changes in the language mentality and speech patterns of Russian speakers. This article does not seek to give a detailed analysis of those changes, but their main lexicological effects were as follows.

(1) Numerous words and phrases (so-called Sovietisms) became obsolete and went out of common use because their underlying concepts and phenomena had begun to disappear as a new social system and new living conditions were forming.

(2) Speech patterns and stylistic norms became much more liberal whereas the previously authorized ideologically colored vocabulary moved from the core word stock into the periphery of Russian and was no longer considered as the norm.

(3) Simultaneously, the reverse process took place: the linguistic status of a huge part of the former substandard periphery of Russian (including colloquialisms, slang, jargon and vulgarisms) got upgraded, such peripheral units penetrating into the more common word stock of the language.

(4) Quite a number of lexical units that had long fallen out of active use were revived and became common currency again, including religious and ecclesiastical terms, words related to mysticism, esoteric sciences, alternative medicine, and to some aspects of the history and economics of Russia and foreign countries.

(5) Numerous foreign word stems were actively borrowed (mainly from the English language) using the transcription or transliteration method, especially in such areas as politics, economics, finance, computer science, information technology, education, the media, show business, communications, tourism, commerce, certain sciences and industries. The foreign words thus borrowed not only filled in lexical lacunas, but sometimes ousted other words that seemed well-established in the language (for example, *прайс-лист*, the Russian respelling of the English *price list*, seems to be winning over its synonym *прейскурант*, a word of German origin with a far longer history in Russian).

(6) There emerged or came into broader use a considerable number of words and expressions which, too, had foreign prototypes, but were structured as loan translations (or calques) rather than transcriptions, e. g. *пользователь* ‘user’, *многозадачность* ‘multitasking’, *архивировать* ‘to archive’, *полупансион* ‘half-board’, *малобюджетный фильм* ‘low-budget film’, *добавленная стоимость* ‘added value’, *пакетная сделка* ‘package deal’, etc.

(7) The internal resources of the Russian language itself were drawn upon to designate new notions and connotations. That included, in the first place, the development of new senses of polysemous words and the formation of new words and phrases under productive models. In other words, along with the numerous transcriptional / transliterational borrowings and loan translations of foreign lexical units, the Russian language produced a lot of new words and idioms with fully original lexical motivation (inner form) and without resort to any external sources (a few examples of such neologisms are *барабашка* ‘poltergeist’, *коленочный* ‘primitive, made without proper tools’, *междусобойчик* ‘party’, *оживляж* ‘lively details’, *оклемяться* ‘recover’, *пофигизм* ‘don’t-care attitude’, *самовывоз* ‘self-delivery’, *чересстрочный* ‘interlaced’, *чернуха* ‘gory stories or movies’).

It is sometimes believed that barbarisms are introduced into Russian through the linguistic negligence of information technology experts and computer users, who tend to resort to foreign-language words where they can well do with an equivalent of Russian origin. That is partly true, but it must also be recognized that people coining new computer-related terms often display great linguistic ingenuity and resourcefulness while employing the Russian language's own resources.

It is owing to that ingenuity and resourcefulness that Russian computer science terminology is not made up entirely of barbarisms and loan translations, but also has quite a few homegrown innovations, e.g. *прошивка* 'flashing of firmware', *разогнать процессор* 'boost / overclock the processor', *скачивать информацию* 'download data', or *приглашение* 'prompt'.

The above-mentioned processes encompassed large lexical fields and were among the most visible signs of language evolution, attracting the attention of both researchers and common speakers. However, Russian vocabulary and phraseology were also susceptible to more subtle tendencies which were far from obvious and may have gone unnoticed by the general Russian-speaking community. One can make some conclusions about those tendencies only through careful comparison of word lists in dictionaries relating to different periods.

In the past several decades some very serious changes have taken place which affected usage of the core vocabulary while not really arising from the need to designate any new notions nor resulting from the practice of borrowing words. Among those tendencies the following deserve special mention:

(a) A model which has become more productive is that of verbs giving rise to suffix-free nouns of the masculine gender, i.e. pure word-stem nouns. This is evidenced by the fact that the legacy dictionary never registered such common words of the modern language as *засор* 'clogging up', *вылов* 'catch (of fish)', *дозвон* 'dialling', *жор* 'feeding period' (of fish), *замер* 'measurement', *лёт* 'flying, flight', *останов* 'stoppage', *перехват* 'interception', *повтор* 'repeat, repetition', *расклад* 'layout', *соскоб* 'scrape', *соскок* 'dismount' and many others. Nor did it mention the contemporary senses of such words as *заслон* (in its nonmilitary uses as 'screen, cover, block, barrier', etc.), *разворот* 'newspaper spread', *наклон* 'bent, lean' (in gymnastics), *сбой* 'malfunction', etc.

Perhaps the absence of those words from the legacy dictionary was simply a deplorable omission, but the fact that such omissions are rather numerous suggests that many verbal nouns built according to this model have become significantly more common over the last decades. Far from all of these words are new to Russian, but it seems that earlier they were mainly limited to professional use.

The data of other lexicographic sources also testify to that effect. For example, the word *засор* ‘clogging up’ was missing both from the Ozhegov (1973) and Lesser Academic (1981) dictionaries. It was not included in Ozhegov’s dictionary until its 21st edition in 1989, where it was marked as “technical”.

It may seem surprising now, but the word *вокал* ‘vocalism, singing’ had not been recorded by any of the general explanatory Russian dictionaries until it appeared in Ozhegov (1989), though as a “technical” word again. Volume 3 of the uncompleted Greater Academic (1991) dictionary did not mark the word as “technical”, which means it was about the time lexicographers began to consider it as a neutral word of the standard word stock.

No editions of the Ozhegov dictionary nor its revised version, Ozhegov, Shvedova (1993), recorded the word *повтор* ‘repeat, repetition’, though as a technical literary term it had been registered far back in Ushakov (1939). The word was finally recognized as part of the standard word stock only in the Lesser Academic (1984) dictionary, treating it as a synonym of *повторение* ‘repetition’. A similar evolution is typical of many other words in the category in question.

The productive model of deriving nouns by isolating verb stems is actively used in informal, colloquial and slang usage. Some examples of such new coinages are *беспредел* ‘outrage’, *закидоны* ‘antics, quirks, advances’, *навороты* ‘frills’, *наезд* ‘blackmail, armtwisting’, *откат* ‘kickback’, *отпад*, *улёт* ‘something impressive, a scream’, *отстой* ‘junk, trash’, *прикид* ‘clothes, threads’, *прикол* ‘trick, prank’, *стёб*, *трёп* ‘patter, gab’, etc.

The main conclusion that can be drawn from analyzing this lexical group is that the process of lexical innovation based on the model specified has affected not only peripheral vocabulary, but also a significant stratum of the core lexicon, i.e. of the standard neutral word stock of the Russian language.

(b) In the domain of verbs, a comparison of dictionaries dating back to different periods testifies to a tendency towards stronger aspect differentiation. A number of former bi-aspectual verbs (i.e. verbs with identical forms for the imperfective and perfective aspects) dropped out of the category. For example, Smirnitsky (1982) used the label *несов и сов* (“imperfective and perfective”) for the following verbs (among many others): *демонстрировать* ‘to demonstrate’, *дублировать* ‘to duplicate; dub’, *визировать* ‘to visa’, *резервировать* ‘to reserve’, *финансировать* ‘to finance’ (all imperfective in modern usage), and *нейтрализовать* ‘to neutralize’, *организовать* ‘to organize’, *реализовать* ‘to implement’ (these are now used almost exclusively as perfective verbs). The first group (having the suffix *-ировать*) have developed separate perfective-aspect forms by means of prefixes (*продемонстрировать*, *продублировать*, *завизировать*, *зарезервировать*, *профинансировать*), whereas the second group (having the suffix *-изовать*) have derived

their imperfective forms using the suffix *-изовывать* (*нейтрализовывать, организовывать, реализовывать*).

It should not be concluded, however, that aspect differentiation has affected all or most verbs of the types mentioned. Many such verbs, especially those with prefixes, retain the same form for the two aspects. In parallel to that, a large number of new bi-aspectual verbs have emerged lately, mostly with the suffix *-ировать* (*акционироваться* ‘to become a public company’, *деноминировать* ‘to denominate’, *зомбировать* ‘to turn into a zombie’, *клонировать* ‘to clone’, *педалировать* ‘to overaccentuate’, *перепрограммировать* ‘to re-program’, *позиционировать* ‘to position’, *реструктурировать* ‘to restructure’ etc.).

In some verbs, aspectual forms have changed as a result of vowel and consonant alternations in the root. For instance, the legacy dictionary included the verbs *провёртывать* ‘to bore’ and *стлать* ‘to spread’, but did not list their synonymous forms *проворачивать* or *стелить*, which are labeled as informal by some Russian dictionaries, but which actually appear to be more commonly used now than the other forms.

One should also note the emergence in many cases of new forms for the perfective aspect based on the prefix model. They have either replaced the old forms or have come to be used in addition to them. As an example, the legacy dictionary listed *прокорректировать* ‘to correct, to proofread’ as the perfective aspect of *корректировать*. However, Kuznetsov (1998) does not register this form altogether, but lists *скорректировать* instead. There is also an additional variant of the perfective aspect of this verb, namely *откорректировать*.

Generally, intensive derivation of new verbs according to the prefix model was a characteristic lexical tendency of Russian in the last decades of the 20th century. If we are to consider current verbs which were not listed by the legacy dictionary as new coinages, then the following new verbs (as well as many, many others) have come into existence in Russian: *заиметь* ‘to obtain’, *зависать* ‘to hang’ (of a computer), *замылиться* ‘to lose freshness of vision’, *залипать* ‘to get stuck’, *отлаживать* ‘to fine-tune’, *отлавливать* ‘to catch’, *подстраиваться* ‘to adjust oneself’, *подсуетиться* ‘make the most of good times’, *просматриваться* ‘to be noticeable’, *уделать* ‘to beat’, *ужимать* ‘to shrink to fit’.

In the above list I have included new derivatives of verbs which belong to the core of the Russian standard vocabulary (*иметь* ‘to have’, *делать* ‘to do, make’ etc.), in order to demonstrate more graphically the power of the tendency in question. But, of course, it also involves broad strata of peripheral, i.e. professional, colloquial and slang vocabulary, where prefixed verbal neologisms have emerged on a very large scale (*отформатировать* ‘to format’, *прозванивать* ‘to ring out’, *отксерить* ‘to make a photocopy’, *выкаблучиваться* ‘to show off’, *скопыхнуться* ‘to collapse’, *присобачивать* ‘to attach’, *отмазывать* ‘to help escape’, to give only a few examples).

(c) In the field of phraseology, we have witnessed large-scale formation of new idioms not really caused by any obvious lexical lacunas. It would be difficult, of course, to give any exact mathematical estimate of the relative intensity of the process compared to the previous period, but my general impression is that in the last two decades of the 20th century the influx of new phraseology did speed up.

That impression grows stronger still if one compares phraseological dictionaries relating to different periods, such as Molotkov (1967) and Lubensky (1995), whose lists of entries differ drastically. But even the most detailed Lubensky (1995) dictionary, which indeed almost closed the huge gap in the lexicographical reflection of new Russian idioms, fell behind the stormy process and failed to record such idioms of the most recent times as *мало не покажется* ‘you’ll wish it had never happened’; *лечь на рельсы* ‘to dig one’s toes/heels in’; *сойдёт для сельской местности* ‘this will do for the occasion’; *по полной программе* ‘at full scale; with both barrels’; *накрыться медным тазом* ‘to fail; to go kaput’; *в одном флаконе* ‘all in one’; *средней паршивости* ‘so-so, no great shakes’; *ломать через колено* ‘to ride roughshod (over)’; *стоять на ушах* ‘to go out of one’s way’; *работать на автопилоте* ‘to work on automatic pilot’ (to be tired), to mention but a few.

(d) Concerning phraseology, it is also necessary to mention the occurrence of idioms whose main lexical components duplicate combinations already existing in the language, but are built on a different syntactic model. These include, for example, the expressions *без разницы* (‘it makes no difference’, *без вопросов / проблем* ‘no problem’, *(быть) без понятия* ‘to have no idea’, *по жизни* ‘generally, in one’s life’, which are synonymous to the phrases *нет разницы, нет вопросов / проблем, не иметь понятия, в жизни*. True, those neologisms carry a certain colloquial flavor, but they seem to be quickly rising in status, claiming a position among neutral phraseology and tending to compete with the older collocations.

In summary, the last two decades of the 20th century were characterized by the following trends:

- the Russian language was actively developing new and restoring some of the previously lost conceptual-semantic fields;
- numerous culture-specific words, idioms and speech clichés of the previous period lost their status and moved to the periphery of the language;
- the ideologically labeled lexicon dropped out of the neutral stratum and style;
- the generally accepted stock of standard literary and informal words and phrases came to incorporate a large number of units which had been perceived earlier as either

substandard or peripheral (specialist terms, colloquialisms / slang, social dialects, jargon, vulgarisms), now upgrading their status in terms of functional style and general acceptability;

— there was a large-scale influx of foreign words which came into the Russian language in various ways: through practical transcription / transliteration and through loan translation;

— the internal resources of Russian were used for active word creativity leading to the emergence of numerous word and phrase neologisms which did not necessarily fill lacunas in lexical nomination;

— some noun and verb families became the object of morphological and derivational innovation, a process affecting not only peripheral, but also core strata of the standard Russian literary and informal vocabulary.

The legacy dictionary as a picture of its author and epoch

The legacy dictionary was, until now, the largest Russian-English dictionary for the basic (i.e. non-technical) lexicon based on scientific lexicographic principles. Professor Aleksandr I. Smirnitsky was an eminent researcher and expert in English. When compiling his dictionary, he implemented the lexicographical concepts of Academician Lev Shcherba and his own.

In the first place, he sought to provide a detailed and structured description of polysemous Russian words so as to prevent the user from confusing English equivalents which are not synonymous with each other. Secondly, he tried to give both Russian and English words and phrases labels and explanations clarifying their usage. Thirdly, he provided a lot of examples of how they could be used in short speech contexts, thus showing their syntactic combinatory ability. In addition, the legacy dictionary was practically the only one where English equivalents were accompanied by pronunciation tips backed up by a detailed set of rules for reading English words specifically developed by the author. All these advantages of the legacy dictionary made it deservedly a most valuable aid in the study of the English language by Russian speakers and in Russian-English translation.

Those who use a dictionary in their work or studies, resort to it periodically as necessity arises. Depending on what share of the dictionary searches prove successful, such practical users develop a general impression of the dictionary's scope and value. Few people, however, read a dictionary page by page like a book. This task falls only to a lexicographer trying to analyze or review their predecessor's legacy.

From reading the legacy dictionary in such a way, I got a completely new impression of it, which had not arisen when consulting it occasionally, long as I had made use of it. I became acutely conscious of the fact that the legacy dictionary still mainly reflected the

Russian and English lexicon and speech patterns of the first half of the 20th century. The first edition of Smirnitsky's dictionary came out in 1948 and the author died in 1955, so later additions and changes were made by other collaborators. But, in spite of all additions and revisions, the work remained too closely tied to the epoch in which the original author had lived and worked.

This feature of the legacy dictionary is very noticeable even in its last, substantially revised, 1982 edition (with which all further comparisons will be made).

For example, one of the senses of the word *въезжать* 'to drive in' was accompanied by the explanation *в экипаже* 'to drive one's carriage into a place', and similar explanations were given for the following words: *дверца (экипажа)* 'the door of a carriage', *задок (экипажа)* 'the back of a carriage'. But it would be in vain to search the 1982 edition for translations of phrases like *въезжать в автомобиле* 'to drive one's car into a place' or *задок автомобиля* 'the back of a car'.

In the pre-automobile epoch, horses and horse-drawn vehicles were the basic means of transportation, so the legacy dictionary naturally accords a lot of space to terms associated with horses and horse-grooming: *запалённый* 'broken-winded', *насос* 'lampas' etc. Today, these words and notions have long gone out of the general Russian vocabulary and remained only in the professional jargon of riders and veterinarians.

Smirnitsky's translation of a phrase cited under the headword *дело* is an interesting case: *то и дело раздаются звонки* 'the bell keeps on ringing'. It is clear from this translation that by *звонок* the author of the dictionary meant only the ringing of a door bell, but never a telephone (which would be the most natural understanding of the phrase today).

The expression *заливать галоши* 'to mend galoshes', literally 'to pour liquid rubber on galoshes' dates back to the period in the early 20th century when holes in galoshes were mended by pouring a sealing resin onto them, but a century later, when galoshes are no longer worn, let alone repaired, this phrase can only be of narrow historical interest.

In Smirnitsky's time the word *лампа* 'lamp', when used without an attribute, was not really associated with electricity. As can be seen from the entry *копоть* 'soot', where one of the English translations has this qualifier: *от лампы* 'from a lamp', the author means a kerosene lamp, the only possible source of soot, or lampblack.

The legacy dictionary abounded in the names of foreign makes of cameras available on the domestic market until the 1930s, such as *лейка* 'Leica', *кодак* 'Kodak' (pronounced in Russian with the accent on the second syllable) and many others. Later those cameras stopped being sold in Russia and were almost forgotten, but their trademark names remained in all the subsequent printings and editions of the dictionary. It was not until the 1990s that

Kodak cameras and labs found their way back into Russian life, this time with the stress on the first syllable of the trade name as in the original, but in spite of that all editions of the legacy dictionary still stuck to the long outdated *кодак*.

I would take the audacity to assert that by analyzing the legacy dictionary one can paint a portrait of its compiler. He certainly belonged to a generation of the intelligentsia of the pre-Soviet epoch. He was used to driving and riding, and knew much about horses and hunting. He was also familiar with photography, but it is unlikely that he could drive a car or that he had flown on board an airplane even once in his life. (The entry *peÿc* ‘trip’ did not include the meaning ‘the flight of a plane’).

Thus, as early as the mid-20th century the legacy dictionary began to lag behind the rather intensive development of the Russian and English vocabularies after the Second World War. In addition, it was rather lopsided in favor of what was then seen as the “social order of the day”: the dictionary was overloaded with political and ideological terms while having glaring gaps not only in the general terminology of certain branches of learning and industry (such as arts, public health, sports, media, religion, foreign history and economics, etc.), but also in the vocabulary of people’s everyday life. Examples of that will be given below.

Lexical innovations of NCRED

□ a. Updating the Dictionary with new neutral and technical Russian words

The most obvious task of the NCRED right from the start was to close the yawning gaps that had opened in bilingual Russian-English lexicography in the last two or three decades of the 20th century. It must be admitted with regret that during that period no other publishing houses either in or outside Russia made any serious attempt to catch up with the times.

The only two exceptions were originally published abroad, namely Marder (1995) and Lubensky (1995). I will not make any attempt here to provide a detailed analysis of those works, but it must be noted that they played a major positive role. Still the gap was closed only partially.

The Marder dictionary contained quite a few good finds relating to the lexical core of the Russian language, but on the whole it presented a rather fragmented picture of the new vocabulary. Contrary to its title and purport, the dictionary did not become a true supplement to the major Russian-English dictionaries, as it was built on very different principles and criteria of lexical selection. Marder’s collection was too heavily loaded with nonce words, accidental specimens of slang, sophisticated curse words, fast-forgotten catch phrases, and quotations from urban folklore, i.e. phenomena which lie on the extreme periphery of

language or pop up in that part of the speech continuum that is too far removed from the codified language system.

Another deplorable fact concerning Marder (1995) is that the author erroneously interpreted many Russian words and phrases, which naturally led to mistakes in their English translation.

As for Lubensky (1995), it would be no exaggeration to characterize it as a very comprehensive and thorough work of the highest linguistic and professional merit. It almost completely closed the gap in the recording and translation of new phraseology, but the evolution of Russian has been so fast that in the short years that have elapsed since it was published a lot of new idioms have come into existence.

Understandably enough, the most pressing need when writing this Dictionary was adequately describing the almost unrecognized wealth of Russian neologisms. As was mentioned above, even the neutral Russian word stock has gone through major changes. It is well known that entirely new words are rarely formed in a language (apart from borrowed words). An overwhelming majority of neologisms emerge by derivation, word composition or by means of familiar words developing additional meanings. In the latter case, lexical novelties are very inconspicuous as they manifest themselves in the plane of content rather than form and are often overlooked when revising or updating dictionaries.

The major lexicographical challenge in writing NCRED was to methodically identify those new meanings, which may have smoothly and often imperceptibly added themselves to the semantics of long-known and seemingly well-described dictionary entries.

To cite a few examples, there was no previous record of the verb *вести* having the meaning 'to lead' (when used with reference to a competition), the noun *включение* having the meanings 'connection' and 'impurities', the noun *исполнение* having the meanings 'make, version' and 'workmanship', or the noun *флюгер* having the figurative meaning of 'weathercock' with reference to a person.

When writing this dictionary, I made use of the extensive card file of lexical novelties which I had compiled over the years. Unfortunately, the data of the explanatory Russian dictionaries published in the last two decades of the 20th century badly lagged behind actual speech practice. It was not until the publication of Kuznetsov (1998) that one could speak of a dictionary reflecting the current state of the principal Russian word stock to a satisfactory degree of completeness and adequacy.

New Russian words have also been arising from specialized branches of learning and professional speech. NCRED will give extensive coverage to the top layers of new terminology. Some areas of knowledge, such as information technology, will be represented

here for the first time (among general Russian-English dictionaries). The stormy development of that branch of technology has brought a powerful influx of neologisms both into the Russian and English languages. Virtually all of its basic lexicon had to be developed from scratch for NCRED. However, while adding a lot of terms to the dictionary (including new words, such as *дискковод* ‘disk drive’, *баннер* ‘banner’, *утилита* ‘utility’, *перезагрузка* ‘rebooting’; new terminological senses of common words, such as *каталог* ‘directory’, *безадресный* ‘zero-address’, *выделенный* ‘detached; enhanced’, *мышь* ‘(computer) mouse’, *окно* ‘(program) window’, and terminological word collocations, such as *база данных* ‘database’, *электронная почта* ‘e-mail’, *диалоговый режим* ‘dialog mode’, I nevertheless tried not to go too deep into professional jargon or into technical programming concepts, and confined myself to the vocabulary of practical users within the limits in which those subjects are dealt with by general-interest newspapers.

Apart from computer science, NCRED will contain the new terminology of many other sciences and industries which have updated or expanded their terminological bases. Among them are market economics, the energy sector, accounting, finance and banking, consumer electronics, the media, mass culture, etc.

b. Filling the gaps in the lexicographic description of the ‘old’ lexicon

A close analysis of the legacy dictionary revealed that it failed to equally represent different parts of the general word stock of Russian. It abounded with glaring omissions of many lexical units long existing in both Russian and English.

I have done my best to increase the word lists of those branches of learning and industry which were reflected rather scantily in the legacy dictionary — primarily the terms for general technology and industry, but also in the fields of chemistry, biology, public health, sports, arts, history, and many others. On the other hand, some entries in the legacy dictionary have been left out, especially those which appeared to be too detailed for a general dictionary, such as a number of nautical terms. The former overemphasis on them was likely due to the personal preferences of some contributors.

Most importantly, it was found that for some reason the legacy dictionary failed to include numerous words and phrases from the well-established ‘old’ vocabulary of general use. Therefore, a major feature of NCRED, one distinguishing it from the legacy dictionary, will be recording for the first time a huge stock of words from the lexical treasury of Russian that were in active use not only towards the end of the 20th century, but also in much earlier periods. Among them are such words as *генеральша* ‘general’s wife’, *громкость* ‘loudness, volume’, *гызка* ‘rump’, *жирность* ‘fat content’, *каравелла* ‘carvel’, *кенар* ‘male canary’, *кисломолочный* ‘fermented milk’ (adjective), *кладоискатель* ‘treasure-hunter’, *крепленый* ‘fortified’ (wine), *марсианский* ‘Martian’, *мюзик-холл* ‘music hall’, *негоже* ‘it is

inappropriate’, *непредсказуемый* ‘unpredictable’, *непреходящий* ‘intransient’, *неприкасаемый* ‘untouchable’, *нечастый* ‘infrequent’, *патологоанатом* ‘pathoanatomist, autopsist’, *прилюдно* ‘in public’, *примерочная* ‘fitting room’, *расслабляться* ‘to relax’, *самообеспечение* ‘self-sufficiency’, *самоотдача* ‘enthusiasm’, *сминаться* ‘to get rumples’, *содеянное* ‘one’s doings’, *столешница* ‘table top’, *усыновитель* ‘adoptive parent’, *фундук* ‘hazelnuts’, *хряк* ‘boar’ — to mention only an insignificant portion of a very, very long list.

The legacy dictionary gave very uneven coverage to lexical units which seemed to equally deserve inclusion. One can cite numerous cases when some word was included in the dictionary while another word from the same lexical field with equivalent status and usage was ignored. For example, it included the chess term *вертикаль* ‘file’, but not *горизонталь* ‘rank’. It had *пиастр* ‘piaster’, but no *песо* ‘peso’ or *песета* ‘peseta’. There was *подсемейство* ‘subfamily’, but no *подотряд* ‘suborder’. You would find *медянка* ‘grass snake’ there, but never *полоз* ‘whip snake’. The dictionary listed *пойнтер* ‘pointer’ and *болонка* ‘lap dog’, but there was no *леветка* ‘Italian greyhound’, *пекинес* ‘Pekinese’ or very many other popular dog breeds. It recorded the interjection *зав-зав* ‘bow-wow’, but it would be fruitless to search for the interjections *кря-кря* ‘quack-quack’, *хрю-хрю* ‘oink, oink’ or *му* ‘moo’ in it.

The legacy dictionary did provide an equivalent for the collocation *рваная рана* ‘lacerated wound’, but failed to mention *рубленая рана* ‘slash wound’. The name of the tree *сикомор* ‘sycamore’ was included, but the far better known *секвойя* ‘sequoia’ was left out. One could find *сверхсрочник* ‘extended service man’ and *сверхсрочная служба* ‘extended service’, but not *срочник* ‘conscript’ or *срочная служба* ‘statutory service’. The words *рапирист* ‘foil fencer’ and *саблист* ‘sword fencer’ were recorded, but not *шпажист* ‘epee fencer’. This list of omissions goes on and on.

Therefore my work on NCRED has included careful verification, to the extent reasonably possible, of how regularly various semantic fields were covered, and all the omissions revealed were rectified.

c. Coverage of some special lexical categories

Some lexical spheres will be presented and detailed in a fuller and more systematic way by NCRED in comparison with its predecessor. They include the following categories:

(i) **The household vocabulary of everyday life**, i.e. words and expressions designating objects and concepts which one deals with on a daily basis. It should be noted that this sphere has been among the least developed in Russian lexicography. But while the absence of a scientific or industrial term in a general dictionary can be compensated by

recourse to a specialized dictionary, there is no way to make up for the absence of a word relating to household affairs or everyday life. Therefore I have made a great effort to see to it that NCRED provides an adequate record of that category.

Words and phrases in the following lexical subcategories were added:

- domestic goods and items (e.g. *жидкость для мытья посуды* ‘dishwashing liquid’, *тормозная жидкость* ‘brake fluid’, *коврик для ванной* ‘bath mat’, *пятновыводитель* ‘stain remover’, *подковка* ‘tip (on the heel of a shoe)’, *обувная ложечка* ‘shoehorn’, *подставка под чайник* ‘trivet’, *подставка для ножей* ‘knife rest’, *подставка для сушки посуды* ‘dish rack’, *подставка для книг* ‘book rest’);
- items and styles of clothing, undergarments and footwear (e.g. *сетчатые чулки* ‘fishnet stockings’, *дудочки* ‘slim-legged trousers’, *бананы* ‘tapered leg trousers’, *пояс-трусы* ‘panty girdle’, *грация* ‘long line bra’, *танкетки* ‘wedgies’, *яловые сапоги* ‘cowhide boots’);
- items of personal hygiene and cosmetics (e.g. *жидкость для снятия лака* ‘nail polish remover’, *тушь для ресниц* ‘mascara’, *химическая завивка* ‘perm’);
- hairstyles (e.g. *каре* ‘bob’, *сессун* ‘Sassoon haircut’).

Quite a number of entries containing erroneous translations had to be rehashed or corrected. For example, the word *заутюживать* was translated in such a way that it could reverse the meaning in some cases, namely *iron out*, which means ‘to smooth out with an iron’, whereas the Russian phrase *заутюживать складку* has just the opposite sense, i.e. ‘to make a crease well-defined’ and should be translated as *iron in the crease*.

It has to be admitted that household vocabulary is recorded with numerous omissions also in many explanatory Russian-Russian dictionaries. For example, the word *венчик* (or its variant, *веничек*) ‘eggbeater’ did not appear in any Russian dictionary, not even the 20-volume Greater Academic (1991), until it was finally included in Kuznetsov (1998). And that despite the fact that it had been in use since at least the 1940s. Among the principal Russian-foreign dictionaries it was registered only in Maizel, Skvortsova (1977) (as *веничек*). Similarly, not a single dictionary had the word *подплечник (подплечик)* ‘shoulder pad’. The list of such examples could go on.

(ii) **Interjections and interjectional-predicative verbal words.** The legacy dictionary gave an extremely fragmentary picture of them. In NCRED, there will be a large number of interjections which were missing from the Smirnitsky (e.g., *виват, гули-гули, угу, ух ты*), including onomatopoeic words (such as *бабах, вжик, динь-динь, пиф-паф, бе, кря-кря, ку-ку, мяу*) and interjectional-predicative verbal words (*бац, бряк, цап-царап, шарах,*

шлёп, шмяк). Special mention should perhaps be made of baby-talk interjections, a class of words totally missing from the legacy dictionary (such as *а-а, атата, агу-агу*), and of interjectional meanings of other parts of speech (*класс!*, *мамочки!*, *шайбу-шайбу!*).

(iv) **Geographical names.** The list of geographical names has been expanded to include the missing names of countries and their capitals, a wider range of place names from English-speaking countries, and historical toponyms (such as *Альбион* ‘Albion’, *Ганза* ‘Hansa’, *Эллада* ‘Hellas’).

(v) **Words derived from geographical and astronomical names.** Something new in NCREД compared with the legacy dictionary is the incorporation of a large number of words derived from place names and astronomical names: adjectives (designating reference to a place or heavenly body) and nouns (designating residents of some cities, areas, countries, etc., and also ethnonyms). This has been done primarily to take account of foreign readers’ needs, since in Russian such words are written starting with a lower case letter, and foreign students may find it difficult to trace the origin and meaning of words like *вятнич* ‘resident of Vyatka’, *минчанин* ‘resident of Minsk’, *вологодский* ‘of Vologda’, or *нижегородский* ‘of Nizhny Novgorod’. However, Russian speakers are also in need of a source where they could find the equivalents of such words as *генуэзец* ‘Genoese, Genovese’, *барселонец* ‘Barcelonese’, *ломбардский* ‘Lombard’, *неаполитанский* ‘Neapolitan’, *венерианский* ‘Venusian’, *лунянин* ‘lunarian’, etc., which do not invariably follow regular patterns in being derived from corresponding proper names.

(vi) **The titles of certain widely known literary works and plays.** As a matter of fact, some titles were given by the legacy dictionary, too, e.g. «*Детская болезнь ‘левизны’ в коммунизме*» ‘Left-Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder’ under the headword *левизна*, «*Тысяча и одна ночь*» ‘Arabian Nights’ under the headword *тысяча*, «*Слово о полку Игореве*» ‘The Song of Igor’s Campaign’ [sic]) under the headword *слово*. In NCREД, it has been decided to add more such titles to that list, especially those of certain popular plays, operas, ballets and fairy tales. Indeed, as they already exist in English, no translator should try to provide a version of his or her own, but the sources where the established versions may be found are not always easy to access. Among the titles that have been added, are, for example, «*Послеполуденный отдых фавна*» ‘The Afternoon of a Fawn’, «*Тщетная предосторожность*» ‘La Fille mal gardée’, «*Сладкоголосая птица юности*» ‘Sweet Bird of Youth’, «*Укрощение строптивой*» ‘The Taming of the Shrew’, «*Принцесса на горошине*» ‘The Princess and the Pea’, etc. It should be emphasized, however, that the number of titles included in the Dictionary had to be limited only to some very well-known works which cannot be translated on a word-for-word basis.

(vii) **Religious and ecclesiastical vocabulary and phraseology.** It is well known why words in this category were very sparsely included in Russian dictionaries of the atheistic Soviet period. NCREd has significantly broadened coverage of this lexical field, adding some new word and phrase categories, i.e. adjectives frequently included in the names of Orthodox churches and monasteries (*Всехсвятский* ‘of All Saints’, *Богоявленский* ‘Epiphany’, *Успенский* ‘Assumption, Dormition’ etc.), certain religious formulas, and the names of some events, icons, and prayers. The user should remember, however, that, just like any other special area of terminology, this lexical field cannot be given the same degree of detail in a general dictionary as in specialized sources;

(viii) The so-called **baby talk**, i.e. words and expressions used primarily by children or by adults when talking to children. Baby-talk words and phrases are special in that, though they have nothing to do with vulgarisms, they often have the same objective content, since many such words name things and actions associated with bodily functions (e.g. *писать* ‘to pee’, *описаться* ‘to wet oneself’, *сходить по-маленькому* ‘to do number one’, *сделать а-а* ‘to do caca’ etc.). In the past, both bilingual and Russian explanatory dictionaries used to leave these words out, together with other, absolutely innocent baby-talk words (*попка* ‘buttocks, fanny’, *ата-та* ‘spanking’, *бяка* ‘nasty thing, baddy’, *спатки* ‘to sleep’, *дразнилка* ‘teasing rhyme’, *считалочка* ‘counting-out rhyme’, *задавака* ‘show-off’, *воображала* ‘nose-in-the-air’, *фантик* ‘candy wrapper’ etc.). NCREd has made the first attempt to close the gap.

(ix) **Idioms.** Russian idioms, including very traditional ones, were covered by the legacy dictionary in a rather fragmentary way. Numerous common stock phrases and idiomatic expressions were missing, such as *орудие труда* ‘work tool’, *разрыв сердца* ‘broken heart’, *вечный огонь* ‘eternal flame’, *круговорот воды в природе* ‘hydrologic cycle’, *знай себе* (делает что-л.) ‘keeps on doing something’, *как я погляжу* ‘it seems’, *очень приятно* (‘glad to meet you’), *до потери сознания* ‘till one is ready to drop’, etc. In some entries, not just isolated idioms were missing, but long lists of them. To give a few examples, NCREd has filled the glaring idiomatic void under such headwords as *корова* (*как корове седло* ‘it's like putting a saddle on a cow’, *чья бы корова мычала* ‘look who's talking!’), *как корова языком слизала* ‘disappeared without a trace’), *край* (*пойти на край света за кем-л.* ‘to follow somebody to the ends of the earth’, *услышать краем уха* ‘to hear from a distance’, *краем глаза* ‘out of the corner of one’s eye’, *хватить через край* ‘to go overboard’), *ухо* (*ни уха ни рыла не понимать* ‘not to know a thing (about)’, *за уши не оттащишь* ‘wild horses couldn’t drag somebody away (from)’, *и ухом не вести* ‘not to bat an eyelid’, *поставить на уши* ‘to make somebody work like mad’, *стоять на ушах* ‘to bend over backwards’, *тянуть за уши* ‘to drag up the ladder’, *хлопать ушами* ‘not to hear the penny drop’) and many others.

d. Dictionary coverage of colloquial and substandard vocabulary

As mentioned before, the sources of new Russian vocabulary also include colloquial speech, slang, dialects, jargon, and vulgarisms. The legacy dictionary followed the general policy of Soviet lexicography to reject all language matter which lay outside the prescribed standard of written expression.

The legacy dictionary excluded not only taboo words, but virtually all substandard vocabulary, along with words and phrases which were not vulgar in the strict sense of the word, but were somehow associated with taboo subjects, such as *блатной* ‘criminal or common among thieves’, *извращенец* ‘pervert’, *бандерша* ‘bawd, madam’, *мат* ‘dirty language’, or simply strong disparaging words, like *шлюха* ‘whore’, *стервозный* ‘bitchy’, *паскудный* ‘creepy, stinking’, or *вишувый* ‘lousy’. The legacy dictionary did not mention any of the numerous colloquial expressions with the words *фиг* (‘fig’, associated with a gesture of contempt), *хрен* (‘horse radish’, a euphemistic substitute for a curse word) or the like.

Recent years have witnessed a liberalization of both the lexical norms of Russian speech and this country’s lexicographic practices, and lexicographers have, to a great extent, reverted to the principles professed by the Russian lexicographer Ivan Baudouin de Courtenay, who saw the primary function of a dictionary as descriptive rather than prescriptive.

In view of the active penetration of peripheral language elements into the lexical core of the Russian language, the softening of language norms, and the fact that these processes are continuing, it has been decided to expand the limits of covering colloquialisms, slang and other substandard words and phrases, including vulgarisms (compared to the legacy dictionary).

Exceptions were made for the few lexical units which remain generally tabooed. On the whole, the lexical sphere of offensive and obscene words is reflected in approximately the same measure as in Kuznetsov (1998).

In addition, the Dictionary includes certain dialect words which, though not actively used by most Russian speakers, are rather well known to and understood by most of them (e.g. *рушник* ‘towel’, *майдан* ‘market’, *цимус* ‘sapidity’, *тикать* ‘run away, escape’, *старшой* ‘senior; boss’, *фатера* ‘flat, apartment’, *nonepёд* ‘ahead of’, etc.).

As for the English equivalents of vulgarisms, I have tried, in contrast to the western lexicographic tradition, to avoid using English taboo words, offering both neutral and ‘mild slang’ translations instead. This was done with the practical tasks facing Russian-speaking students and translators in mind: a person without full mastery of a foreign language can put

himself or herself in an extremely uncomfortable situation when using vulgar or taboo words out of place. As for English speakers using the dictionary, I assume that upon seeing the more neutral translation, they will find the taboo equivalent themselves, if need be.

The lexicographic approaches and principles of NCRED

The writing and general editorship of NCRED required not only making additions and corrections, but also refining and developing certain lexicographic solutions associated with the systematization, organization and presentation of lexical material in the dictionary.

□ a. The presentation of polysemous words

The presentation of polysemous words in a bilingual dictionary may be different from how the same word would be treated in a monolingual (explanatory) dictionary. Though in most cases it is possible to identify the various meanings of a word more or less in accordance with the objective concepts reflected in those meanings, the interpretation of word meanings (which is done in the same language in a monolingual dictionary and through foreign correspondences in a bilingual one) depends to a great extent on subjective factors, including the semantics of words and phrases chosen as the means of such interpretation.

In a monolingual dictionary the semantic scope of the synonyms employed for explanation partly determines how the meanings of a word are defined and grouped. In contrast to that, it is the semantic scope of the possible foreign correspondences that determines the structure of a bilingual dictionary entry. It is not surprising therefore that the semantic structure of the same word may be presented through different sets of meanings in an explanatory (monolingual) dictionary and in a bilingual dictionary of the same volume.

Here is a typical example of that. The word *лампочка* ('lamp') seems to have just one meaning in Russian according to monolingual dictionaries. But when looking for correspondences for the word, one finds that it may denote rather different objects: a bulb in lighting appliances or a light-emitting diode indicator on instrument panels. In English, the names of those objects are different, too. This seems sufficient reason not to lump together the two English equivalents of the Russian word within the same numbered meaning, but to show them as two different meanings. At any rate, this is the approach that has been taken in NCRED.

The separation of additional 'meanings' also appears reasonable if foreign correspondences each cover only a part of the meaning of a Russian word with diffuse semantics. Thus, in Kuznetsov (1998) the words *шаромыга* and *шаромыжник* are considered as monosemantic (i.e. having one meaning only). The legacy dictionary, too, provided only one, and rather inexact, correspondence for them: 'parasite'. By comparison, NCRED identifies 3 broader meanings and 5 shades of meaning in this word. There are now

13 correspondences for the word altogether ‘loafer, idler; sponger; freeloader; tramp, vagabond; hobo, bum; shady type, goon; trickster, fraud, con man’.

It may well be true that such a presentation of correspondences may somewhat complicate the translator’s task, because instead of just one “equivalent” which the user, it might seem, could apply without thinking, a choice must be made from among numerous versions. To make that choice, the translator has to analyze the source context thoroughly, to decide which aspect of the word’s meaning is the most relevant, and then to use one of the dictionary correspondences on the basis of that decision. However, this is a far better way to provide an adequate translation than if the translator were left with no other choice than to use just one very approximate correspondence.

Grouping some of the correspondences into a separate numbered meaning plays an important methodological role: it gives added emphasis to the fact that various foreign correspondences are not interchangeable in the same context, and this causes the user to analyze the source text more thoroughly. It is especially important when dealing with nouns having a broad and diffuse meaning, and may help find a good equivalent for a contextual meaning not listed in the Dictionary by the method of semantic extrapolation, which is described in translation theory.

Polysemous words that have a rough correspondence which is also polysemous (such as *план* ‘plan’) present a serious lexicographic problem. In those cases the legacy dictionary widely resorted to the usage label *в разн. знач.* ‘in different meanings’ so as to avoid repeating the same correspondence under each of a series of numbered meanings. It was hoped that different equivalents for certain meanings could be shown through illustrative examples in phrases.

That lexicographic technique is useful for saving space in a concise dictionary. In a large dictionary, however, the method has several shortcomings: the semantic structures of polysemous Russian and English words seldom coincide entirely, therefore this approximate way of showing correspondence between words may suggest the wrong solution to the user in some contexts.

In addition to that, the semantic structure of a word, if presented in this way, may appear extremely confusing because of the large number of illustrative examples. That calls for the need to isolate different meanings and to group word collocations inside them. Therefore, in NCRED it has been decided to use the label ‘*в разн. знач.*’ on a very limited scale and only when the semantic structures of Russian and English words can be deemed as virtually coinciding or when this label does not interfere with showing their use through collocations or translations.

In all other cases the different meanings of a Russian word were described separately, even if the English correspondences to those meanings were identical. As a result of this approach, entries with semantically rich headwords were reworked in a radical way (e.g. *база, бить, блок, быть, давать, делать, залог, план, представление, программа, реакция, сеанс, серия, центр* and many others).

Also in accordance with the above approach, it was decided to give up the practice of supplying no explanations for the most widespread meaning of a polysemous word, numbered 1, as was done quite frequently in the legacy dictionary. NCRED provides Russian explanatory notes or restrictive labels (indicating the meaning of a word through the sphere of its use in that meaning) for *all* the meanings of each polysemous word.

□ **b. Illustrative examples**

A detailed bilingual dictionary is supposed to provide not only a foreign-language correspondence for a word, but also some possible translations of the most typical speech contexts (phrases or sentences) in which the word is used. This principle was implemented also in the legacy dictionary, but not in a sufficiently consistent way. When working on NCRED, it was decided to pursue the principle as fully as possible, and the number of such illustrative examples was considerably increased also in those entries where correspondences for the headword itself were not changed in comparison with the legacy dictionary.

In line with that approach, the entry *инаगत* ‘splits’ was expanded to include the phrase *сесть на инаगत* ‘to do the splits’; *дотация* ‘grant, subsidy’, to include the phrase *находиться на дотации* ‘to be subsidized’; *аллергия* ‘allergy’, to include the example *у меня аллергия на домашнюю пыль* ‘I am allergic [I have an allergy] to household dust’; and *отменять* ‘to abolish, cancel, repeal’, to include the common collocations *отменить свидание* ‘to cancel a date’, *отменить заказ* ‘to cancel an order’, *отменить визит к врачу* ‘to cancel one’s appointment with the doctor’ and others.

The range of illustrative examples used in NCRED has also been extended. Besides the traditional types of word combinations, they following have been included:

- dialogue clichés (e.g., *ему что-нибудь передать?* ‘shall I take a message?’, *я перезвоню вам, как только смогу* ‘I will call / get back to you as soon as I can’; *я ясно выражаюсь?* ‘did I make myself clear?’);
- typical signs and notices (e.g., *зона выдачи багажа* ‘luggage claim area’, *все билеты проданы* ‘all seats sold’, *возврат и обмен не производятся* ‘no return, no exchange’, *ушла на базу* ‘out for restocking’);

- axiomatic statements (e.g., *от перестановки слагаемых сумма не меняется* ‘the order of the summands does not affect the sum’, *действие равно противодействию* ‘to every action there is an equal reaction’).

□ **c. Regular derivatives**

As concerns the regular derivatives, major changes in approach (compared to the legacy dictionary) have affected the diminutive forms of nouns (and of some other parts of speech) and adverbs.

The legacy dictionary listed very few diminutive forms. For example, the words *зайка*, *зайнька* (‘little hare’) were missing, although a foreigner using the dictionary may not guess that these are derivatives of *заяц* ‘hare’, to say nothing of the fact that they may be used as affectionate forms of address to a child or an adult. There was no word *крестик* ‘small cross’ (although it is not interchangeable with the word *крест* ‘cross’ in some of its meanings and in many word combinations: e.g., the phrases *поставить крест* ‘give up for lost’ and *поставить крестик* ‘make one’s cross’ mean very different things).

At the same time the legacy dictionary was rather inconsistent with regard to diminutives: for example, the words *деньжата* and *деньжонки* ‘money, dough’ were each the headword of a separate entry, though alphabetically they follow one another and have practically identical meanings.

To sum it up, NCRED includes a larger number of diminutive and magnifying forms. They are provided mainly when the user may have difficulty restoring the source form of the word and especially when such derivatives have some special features in terms of usage and aspects of meaning.

□ **d. Translations**

Over the last several decades substantial changes have taken place not only in Russian, but also in the English language. For the purposes of NCRED the information of the English part was verified against modern monolingual dictionaries of English, primarily Longman (1997) and Random House (1995).

Most of the translations have been verified and updated, and many inexact and erroneous translations revealed in the legacy dictionary have been corrected. Here are only a few of the numerous examples: the medical term *реанимация* was imprecisely translated as ‘reanimation’ — that has been replaced by ‘resuscitation’; the term *каверна*, rendered as ‘cavity’ in the legacy dictionary, is now more correctly translated as ‘cavern’; the correspondence for *вмуровать*, ‘wall in’ (which in fact means ‘to border with a wall’ instead of ‘to build into or entomb in a wall’ has been replaced by ‘immure’; the wrong translation of *аттракцион* (*в парке*) as ‘side-show’ (whose actual meaning is ‘a minor show, as at a

circus' has been replaced by 'amusement park ride'; *двустворчатая дверь*, which had the wrong correspondence 'folding door', has now been corrected to 'double door'; *двухместная палата*, mistranslated as 'double-bed room' (i.e. 'room with a double bed', has now been supplied with the correct version 'double (hospital) room'; *партизанищина* had a very strange English version: 'arbitrariness', which has been dropped in favor of 'guerrilla tactics'; the rather remote correspondences of *политикан* as 'intriguer' and of *политиканство* as 'intrigue' have given way to true equivalents: 'politico' and 'politicking', respectively.

Not infrequently, the legacy dictionary offered long series of foreign-language versions, each being inexact, approximate, or suitable for use only in limited contexts, whereas the optimal equivalent was missing. For example, the word *знающий* was supplied with a whole set of correspondences: 'learned, scholarly, erudite, skillful, competent, able'. All of them have been dropped from NCRED and replaced by the most exact equivalent, 'knowledgeable'. Similar corrections have been made in the entry *косметолог*: instead of several inaccurate correspondences provided by the legacy dictionary, just one correct version is provided — 'cosmetologist'.

The legacy dictionary did not always offer good English versions of transferred and figurative meanings of words. For example, it translated *колдовать* (when meaning 'to manipulate or adjust something') as 'concoct'; NCRED provides different correspondences: 'tinker (with), fiddle (with)'. The figurative meaning of *кухня* 'a center of secret influence' was rendered as 'machinations' in the Smirnitsky; that has been dropped in favor of 'backroom' and an illustrative example has been added: *повара политической кухни* 'backroom boys; masters of political intrigue'. Besides that, an additional figurative meaning of the Russian word has been singled out: 'internal specifics', which has been translated and provided with examples. One could go on and on with this list of improvements.

It is a truism that descriptive translation is the least convenient for practical purposes. In this dictionary, a consistent effort has been made to check the descriptive translations and, where possible, to simplify them or replace them by one-word equivalents (as long as it didn't concern culture-specific words, which are discussed below). To give a few examples, the descriptive English versions of the words *англист*, *африканист* and the like have been dropped and replaced by direct correspondences in NCRED: 'Anglist', 'Africanist', etc. The legacy dictionary gave a descriptive translation even of such a word as *портянка*. NCRED supplies its exact English equivalent, 'puttee'. The word *откачивать* in one of its meanings was rendered in the following verbose way by the legacy dictionary: 'administer artificial respiration to a drowned person'. In this edition that has been replaced by a series of synonymous phrasal verbs that cover the meaning of the Russian verb more precisely: 'bring

to, bring round, pull round'. The word *приземленность* was conveyed into English with a rather remote correspondence 'narrowly utilitarian outlook [sic]'. The shorter and closer analogs 'down-to-earth approach; prosaicness' have been used here. The legacy dictionary had a descriptive translation for the word *безбилетник*: 'passenger traveling without a ticket'. However, the English language has direct one-word equivalents for it (provided in this edition): 'farebeater' (in public transport) and 'stowaway' (on board a ship or aircraft).

The approach to translating **culture-specific words** deserves special mention. The legacy dictionary frequently just transliterated them into English. But transliteration is not technically difficult for translators or other users, and where they feel it is necessary, they can easily produce transliterated versions themselves. For all its simplicity, users normally realize all the shortcomings of transliteration (it may be difficult for the target audience to absorb, it doesn't fit easily into the target language system, etc.). The reason why they might want to look up a culture-specific word in a dictionary is exactly to find out whether the target language may offer a more natural way of dealing with such a word.

The principle adopted in NCREED is that correspondences based on transliteration / transcription are provided, as a rule, if already recorded in English-English dictionaries. What is essential in rendering culture-specific words is that, in the first place, their foreign-language correspondence should be understandable to the foreign reader or student. Because of that, descriptive translation has been widely used to deal with them in the Dictionary. For example, in the entry *суворовец* the transliteration 'Suvorovets', which is not actually in use in the English language and will not register with most speakers of English, has been replaced by a descriptive equivalent: 'Suvorov Military School student'.

Curiously enough, the previous editions of the legacy dictionary overestimated the 'originality' of some words which were transliterated into English and were thus turned into a pseudo-culture-specific words. That happened to words having standard English equivalents, e.g. *помадка* (where *pomadka* has been corrected to *fudge*, *fondant*), *капрон* (where *kapron* has been dropped in favor of *fosta nylon*), *каракульча* (where *karakultcha* has been replaced by *broadtail*), *хамса* (*khamsa* corrected to *European anchovy*), or *поролон* (*porolon* changed to *foam rubber*).

To give another example, the word *дворник* in the legacy dictionary was given the artificial equivalent *dvornik*, later picked up by Wheeler (1972), though you will not find it in explanatory dictionaries of English. It is true that in pre-20th-century Russia the functions of a *дворник* were rather unique and included certain administrative duties. Still, the word can quite satisfactorily be translated, especially in the modern context, with such English analogs as *yardman* or *street cleaner*.

Similarly, there is little reason to transliterate the word *форточка* as *fortochka* because it may be rendered with a brief descriptive correspondence or an analog (like *ventilator window* or *ventlight*).

Another striking error was the legacy dictionary's transliterated version of the word *uepum* — *Ivrit*. NCREd has the correct correspondence: (*modern*) *Hebrew*.

Apart from transliteration, the legacy dictionary sometimes resorted to what I would call “invented” translations, but mostly unsuccessfully. The word *вольнoслушатель*, for instance, was translated as “*lecture-goer*” (in inverted commas, which apparently indicated that the authors realized how imperfect the correspondence was), followed by a profuse explanation in parentheses: *permitted to attend university, etc., lecture courses without having the formal status of student* [sic]. This creates the impression that the compilers regarded the Russian word as culture-specific, which is not the case in reality because this category of students exists in universities in many countries, and there is therefore an established word for it in English: *auditor* (used, of course, in NCREd).

□ **e. Differentiation of translations between varieties of English**

In Smirnitsky's times, British English was considered as the indisputable standard. Today, the roles of the two principal varieties of English — British and American — are viewed in a different manner from both the academic and practical perspective. The majority of modern linguists consider the two varieties as having equal status, i. e. American English is no longer regarded as “peripheral”, “subordinate” or “substandard” in relation to British English. From the practical point of view, knowledge of the special features of American English is particularly important for language learners in Russia owing to the far greater number of people speaking it (compared to British English), not to mention the greater political, economic and cultural influence of the United States internationally.

The legacy dictionary did use the label *амер* for Americanisms, but it provided very inconsistent and fragmentary differentiation between words used in the two varieties of English. To begin with, it failed to mark or label Britishisms, i. e. words and phrases seldom used outside Great Britain. Secondly, many American lexemes were either not recorded at all (for example, the entry *мусор* did not list the common Americanisms ‘garbage’ or ‘trash’ or were included without any special labels.

That inconsistency often caused confusion, as is exemplified by the entry *билет*, where the expression *билет в один конец* was translated by the Americanism ‘one-way ticket’ (but given no usage label), whereas the phrase *билет туда и обратно* had the British equivalent ‘return ticket’ (also without any usage label).

To eliminate this type of confusion, a great amount of work has been done in NCRED to streamline the presentation of British and American words and phrases. Great effort has been made to distinguish between Briticisms, Americanisms and lexical units of Common English usage. For the first time, the usage label *брит* (British) has been introduced.

One cannot, of course, expect complete accuracy in how the Dictionary differentiates British and American words, since in actual speech practice the dividing line between them is rather dynamic and sometimes fuzzy. Even dictionaries published in English-speaking countries may contradict one another on this account. Having said that, I still find it indispensable that a dictionary should seek to differentiate between British and American words and phrases as far as possible, because confusion of different varieties of English has unfortunately become a typical mistake of translators and language learners. Worse still, they even think rarely about that, and NCRED should hopefully help to correct that.

In all cases the following principle was adhered to when selecting English equivalents: if a Russian word has a correspondence from one variety of English, it should necessarily be accompanied by one from the other variety of English, or from Common English. In other words, I have sought to avoid having a locally labeled (British or American) word or phrase as the *only* correspondence for a word or phrase in the Dictionary.

The development of the general lexicographic approaches and principles stated above can certainly not be considered as completed. On the contrary, the principles described above will continue to be elaborated, fine-tuned and improved.

I hope, however, that the lexicographic material presented in NCRED and its organization according to these principles will permit *The New Comprehensive Russian-English Dictionary* to become a helpful tool for all its intended users. I would also like to think that one of the contributing factors to that was my subjective approach, for I looked upon all the aspects of my work in compiling and editing NCRED not only through the eyes of a linguist and lexicographer, but also of a translator and teacher, using all my experience of working in these areas.

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