

GÁBOR KISS

Hungarian Dictionaries of Synonyms

Introduction

The most popular Hungarian monolingual dictionaries are dictionaries of sayings, dictionaries of proverbs and orthographic dictionaries. The next in line are dictionaries of synonyms, right before defining dictionaries of foreign words and phrases as well as monolingual defining dictionaries. This order of popularity is primarily due to Hungarian primary and secondary education, where considerable emphasis is laid on the teaching of sayings and proverbs as well as that of correct, flawless Hungarian spelling. One of the important traditions in the education of composition in Hungarian grammar classes is the requirement that we avoid word repetitions and colour our writing and speech with synonyms instead. Therefore, dictionaries of synonyms can be found in a number of homes and school libraries. Sadly enough, in the second half of the 20th century, up until the political changes in 1990, practically no dictionary of synonyms other than the one called *Magyar szinonimaszótár* (Dictionary of Hungarian Synonyms) was available in bookstores (O. NAGY-RUZSICZKY 1978). Despite the fact that this book was published and sold in a great number of copies, and thus was widely known, it could not be successfully used in education, and it did not prove to be an effective reference tool in everyday life either, as it applied a too narrow concept of synonyms and synonymy. After the 1990 political changes, the state monopoly in Hungarian book publishing ceased to exist. Private book publishing, recognizing the need for a new dictionary of synonyms on the market, republished Ferenc Póra's dictionary of synonyms containing conceptual classes (PÓRA 1910) in reprint edition several times in the 1990s. Then, in 1998, *Magyar szókincstár* (A Treasury of Hungarian Vocabulary) appeared on the market (KISS 1998a), which applied a wider concept of synonyms and took the us-

er's needs greatly into consideration. This dictionary, with its rich content and user-friendly structure, became widespread in a short period of time. In the last two decades, a number of small collections of Hungarian synonyms were published, primarily for use in schools.

Sándor Károly summarizes his stance on the research of synonyms as follows: "Synonyms make up a very important layer of lexis. Their importance was already noted by the ancient Greeks, yet synonyms only came to occupy a central part in the attention of linguists in the second half of the 20th century, since the research of speech and text production, the so-called 'parole-linguistics' began to play its deserved part in the discipline. We encounter synonyms in the course of text production as one another's rivals, and the choice between them is one of the most important and inevitable activities of the text production process. [...] Language professionals have long noted the importance of synonyms in language use and composition. It was the French that first became aware of the subtleties of language use and who first edited dictionaries of synonyms as early as in the 18th century. Their practice was soon followed by British scholars" (KÁROLY 1980: 150).

The concept of synonyms changes from time to time: if, for a period of time, a narrower definition of synonyms gets accepted, then it will be replaced by a wider definition. The following definition can be regarded as the most general one: words whose forms differ from one another, but whose meaning is wholly or essentially identical are to be called synonyms.

Dictionaries of synonyms also have a great importance in fundamental linguistic research: in the investigation of the synchronic state as well as in that of the history of a language. Dictionaries of synonyms have a number of domains of application. The most widely known domains are first and second language education, translation to and from foreign languages, interpreting as well as other oral and written language production activities.

Dictionaries of synonyms published in various languages show a large variation in the definition and the interpretation of the concept of synonyms as well as in dictionary structure. Some dictionaries simply list the synonyms of a given lexical entry. Defining dictionaries of synonyms, on the other hand, present in detail what difference in meaning there is between a given entry and its synonyms.

Collections of synonyms

Before the discussion of the relatively comprehensive dictionaries that contain the elements of the Hungarian lexis from the letter A to the letter Z, let us consider two larger collections of synonyms which only contain the synonyms of one or a small number of conceptual classes.

Gyula H. Németh: *Az észbeli gyarlóság kifejezése a magyarban*
(Expressing Mental Frailty in Hungarian)

Gyula H. Németh's 76-page paper entitled *Az észbeli gyarlóság kifejezése a magyarban* (Expressing Mental Frailty in Hungarian) was published by the Hungarian Linguistic Society (H. NÉMETH 1941). In the first half of this paper, the author reviews previous research on Hungarian synonyms, and discusses in detail in what way synonymous words come about, namely 1. by word coinage, 2. by metaphor or metonymy, and 3. by borrowing loanwords from foreign languages.

According to the author, not only words can be synonymous in a language, but also lexical units larger than words, such as sayings, forms of saying, similes and proverbs.

At the end of the introductory paper, we find a discussion of the reasons why synonymous words become extinct.

The dictionary part listing the synonyms of "mental frailty" is 50 pages long. The author groups the synonyms of the conceptual class in question into the categories of origin discussed in the introductory paper. Among the synonymous words published, there are a large number of regional words, which were only used by a relatively small linguistic community already at the time the paper was written. There are 1,200 synonymous words which appear together with their exact literary source, while the book contains about 300 lexical units larger than words.

Here are some examples of the proverbs published:

A bolondnak fegyvere a nyelv. 'Fools use language as their weapon.'

Bolond beszél, okos hallgat. 'Fools speak, wise men keep silent.'

Egy bolond százat csinál. 'One fool makes a hundred fools.'

Ló mellett gyalogolni bolondság. 'It is foolish to walk next to a horse.'

Gyula H. Németh's work is significant and pioneering, because it does not list the synonyms of "foolishness" mechanically, in alphabeti-

cal order, but it presents this material in an analyzed form, grouped into categories of origin and modes of word formation. It is a pity that this form of publishing synonyms has not become widespread in Hungarian lexicographic circles.

László Balassa: Garmada. Rokon értelmű szócsoportok és
írói kifejezésformák

(Pile. Synonymous Groups of Words and Writer's Expressions)

László Balassa is a literary historian, linguist and textbook writer. He collected the synonyms of the six groups of Hungarian words (conceptual classes) that appear in his work (BALASSA 1958) for more than a decade with the help of the students who attended his special classes at Eötvös József High School in Budapest. The six groups of words are the following: *hajnalodik* 'day is breaking', *alkonyodik* 'night is falling', *alszik* 'sleep', *megy* 'go', *folyóvíz* 'riverwater' and *mindjárt* 'soon'.

Balassa's collecting endeavour was motivated by the following thesis: "The living Hungarian language is decaying!" According to the introductory part of his work, Balassa meant his collection to help the school education with respect to composition. A vivid part of the introduction is a parallel account of a short story. First, this story is told with simple words. Then the same story is told with the use of a number of synonymous words and sayings. Balassa contends: "Our mother tongue is a common asset of every single one of us, and it is our duty to keep it and to enrich it!" (BALASSA 1958: 14).

A special feature of the collection is that all words in the string of synonyms are interpreted. Moreover, 5 to 10 literary examples illustrate the use of every word.

One of the word groups contains the synonyms of the verb *megy* 'go'. In this 80-page long section, we find the words grouped into the following 5 large categories:

- A) going – in general;
- B) categorization according to the number of goers;
- C) categorization according to the aspects and directions of going;
- D) categorization according to the place of going;
- E) categorization according to the modes of going.

The author identifies the aim of his publication in the afterword as follows: “My main purpose with this collection has been to draw attention to the almost unexploitably variable means of expression present in the Hungarian language, and to make the readers aware how much we can do to enrich linguistic style” (BALASSA 1958: 16). The present-day reader can only consider this publication with due respect, since, unfortunately, it has not been continued with a series of similar collections. Balassa’s work is one of many precious endeavors that purport to prove the richness of the Hungarian language by compiling lists containing as many synonymous words belonging to a given conceptual class as possible. Apart from the merits of the collection, we also need to acknowledge the great teacher, who not only acquainted his students with the regular school materials, but also introduced them to lexicographic research and the classification of the collected sources.

School dictionaries of synonyms

In the last two decades a number of small collections of Hungarian synonyms were published. With their limited set of headwords, these publications were primarily meant to serve the purposes of education, mainly in elementary schools.

Éva Ruzsiczky: Szinonimaszótár diákoknak (Dictionary of Synonyms for Students)

Éva Ruzsiczky is a justifiably acknowledged lexicographer, known as the co-author of *Magyar szinonimaszótár* (Dictionary of Hungarian Synonyms) (O. NAGY–RUZSICZKY 1978). Her student dictionary (RUZSICZKY 1998) was published 20 years after the previous volume appeared. The blurb of the dictionary reads as follows: “This volume is meant to be a reference tool for all primary and secondary school students who would like to express their thoughts as precisely and clearly as possible. Whoever strives for a mode of expression that is variable, colorful and attractive will find the right expressions here, both for speech and for writing. The users of the dictionary will be able to acquire a more thorough knowledge of their mother tongue, learn to speak and write more elo-

quently, and familiarize themselves with the older and regional Hungarian vocabulary. As a consequence, the dictionary can also be of valuable help in understanding and getting to like the required school readings.”

At the beginning of the volume we find a 6-page thorough theoretical introduction. The author writes about the content of her dictionary as follows: “This dictionary contains pairs of synonyms (such as *arany málinkó–sárgarigó* ‘golden oriole’–‘firebird’; *asztali-tenisz–pingpong* ‘table tennis’–‘pingpong’; *autonómia–önkormányzat* ‘autonomy’–‘self-government’) as well as sets of synonyms (*alkony–alkonyat–esthajnal–naplemente–napnyugta–szürkület* ‘twilight’–‘night-fall’–‘dusk’–‘sunset’, etc.)” (RUZSICZKY 1998: 5). Then the introduction summarizes the main points of the notion of synonymy. For example, there is a discussion which mentions the changes in the concept of synonyms: “Most lexicographers today no longer refer to words with ‘identical meaning/value’ with the term *synonym*. Instead, they regard those elements of the lexis synonyms proper which have an identical conceptual content (referent or denotation), even though these words may differ from the point of view of stylistic value, connotation and domain of application” (RUZSICZKY 1998: 5).

The description of the concept of pairs of synonyms is followed by the discussion of rows of synonyms, the elements of which show a difference in intensity. “We cannot consider those lexical units which express a decreasing (weakening) intensity to be synonymous with those which refer to an increasing (strengthening) intensity. For example, the elements of the set *csepeg–csepereg–eseget–szemel–szemereg–szemetel–szítál* ‘drizzle’–‘mizzle’, etc. are not to be regarded as synonymous with the verbs *csurog–zuhog–ömlik–szakad–záporoz* ‘shower’–‘pour’, etc., which refer to rains with an increasing intensity. The members of these rows of synonyms are only synonymous with the verb *esik* ‘rain’, which is not specific about the intensity of the rain” (RUZSICZKY 1998: 8). The theoretical introduction excludes further instances from the concepts of synonymy: “Words signifying notions that are in a superior-subordinate or a type-token relationship do not count as synonyms either, because they are not interchangeable if we would like to keep the communicative content of the utterance” (RUZSICZKY 1998: 8).

The introduction of the dictionary is followed by three diagrams. The first diagram is a graphic representation of the grades of differ-

ence between the synonymous words belonging to the verb *esik* 'rain'. The second diagram is about the stylistic differences between the synonyms of the words *azonnal* 'immediately' and *megeszik* 'eat', respectively. The third diagram illustrates the synonyms of the 12 senses of the verb *szakad* 'tear'.

The dictionary part consists of 160 pages and lists the synonyms of about 8,000 lexical entries in total. Great emphasis is laid on the stylistic labeling of words. All synonymous words that also appear as lexical entries are marked so that the user can look up the synonyms of these words as well.

I perfectly agree with the following passage taken from a thorough review of the dictionary: "It is a pleasure to acknowledge that with this work Éva Ruzsiczky entered the group of the most excellent Hungarian linguists who care a lot about teachers and students. These experts not only pursue their theoretical goals, but they also compile scientifically exact, modern and reliable textbooks, reference books or dictionaries that are of great help in primary and secondary school education. Unfortunately, there are some textbooks used in our schools at present which had either not been reviewed by a specialist reader or did not take the reader's opinion into consideration. These books, as a consequence, are full of mistakes. A further problem is that unreliable dictionaries and reference books in pirate editions are widely sold in the street. Since the uninformed customer might be tempted to buy one of these, it is absolutely necessary that our scholars prepare reliable, precise works that preserve and re-create our values, with the help of which the students can acquire a solid basic knowledge" (V. RAISZ 2000).

István Tótfalusi: Színes szinonimatór
(A Colorful Collection of Synonyms)

István Tótfalusi is known for his books popularizing various subjects in linguistics and literary culture. His small-format dictionary of synonyms entitled *Színes szinonimatór* (A Colorful Collection of Synonyms) was published in 1997 (TÓTFALUSI 1997). The volume contains a 6-page preface; the dictionary part is 158 pages long, while the word index occupies 80 pages. The author describes his work in the preface as follows: "This book is less and more than Hungarian dictionaries of syn-

onyms available on the market or in public libraries” (TÓTFALUSI 1997: 5). “Among the small-format dictionaries, this is the first which made its grounding principle that sayings and set phrases be given equal emphasis – so much so that it contains lexical entries only with at least two-member synonyms. By applying this practice, I have automatically excluded the members of the most populous part of speech, that is, nouns, with the exception of those few which can figure in a predicative function” (TÓTFALUSI 1997: 7). The author argues for his editorial principles as follows: “Sayings, similes and set phrases can express synonymy as much as synonymous words. Or, in some instances, they can express synonymy even more. Especially when the language users aim to colour the oral or written expression of their thoughts. Sayings almost always evoke a picture, an action or lively sites for a moment, thereby being able to make whatever we would like to express more vivid” (TÓTFALUSI 1997: 136). *Szines szinonimatár* contains about 1,200 headwords in alphabetical order. The word list consists of about 4,200 words. The first half of all lexical entries contain one-member synonyms, whereas the second part introduced by an empty square consists of sayings and phrases. The synonym units are stylistically labeled. It is peculiar that not only stylistically non-neutral items are marked, but standard-language units as well:

[köz] abbreviation of *köznyelvi* ‘standard-language or stylistically neutral’, [biz] abbreviation of *bizalmas* ‘colloquial’, [hiv] abbreviation of *hivatalos* ‘official-style’, [irod] abbreviation of *irodalmi műből vett* ‘taken from a literary piece’, [sajtó] abbreviation of *sajtónyelvi* ‘press-language’, [szleng] slang, argot, [táj] abbreviation of *tájnyelvi* ‘regional language’, i.e. items that occur in the language use of village communities, [tud] abbreviation of *tudományos* ‘scientific-language’, [vál] abbreviation of *választékos* ‘sophisticated-style’, * rude, obscene.

In 2000, the second edition of *Szines szinonimatár* was published (TÓTFALUSI 2000). The new edition includes an additional index which contains lexical units larger than words, i.e. synonymous sayings and phrases. This index consists of about 5,500 sayings and phrases.

Gábor Kiss and Vilmos Bárdosi: *Szinonimák – 20 000 rokon értelmű szó dióhéjszótára* (Synonyms. A Concise Dictionary of 20,000 Hungarian Synonymous Words)

This is not the first joint publication of the authors: Gábor Kiss and Vilmos Bárdosi have already published the dictionaries *Szólások* (Sayings) and *Közmondások* (Proverbs) together. The following passage by the great Hungarian novelist Géza Gárdonyi is quoted at the beginning of the volume: “Nevertheless, writers know the various differences that exist between linguistic expressions as well as the various colours and forces of these differences. Thus, they glance at them and choose [from the words] similarly to the way the craftswoman picks and threads her beads” (KISS-BÁRDOSI 2008: II). The book contains a 15-page introduction, in which the authors state the main purpose of the dictionary as follows: “The concise dictionary entitled *Szinonimák* (Synonyms) is meant to be an effective aid for the readers who wish to use their mother tongue consciously and eloquently” (KISS-BÁRDOSI 2008: V). Another aim of this dictionary compiled primarily for educational purposes is “to get the students acquainted with the use of a monolingual dictionary, thereby also preparing them to make use of dictionaries with a much larger collection of data and a more complicated structure” (KISS-BÁRDOSI 2008: V).

Szinonimák contains 4,200 headwords and 20,000 synonym types listed under them. Synonym tokens number 33,000 in total. The main source of this dictionary is Gábor Kiss’s *Magyar szókincstár* (A Treasury of Hungarian Vocabulary) (KISS 1998a). The authors describe this work in the introduction to the dictionary as follows: “The 928-page dictionary with its rich content contains 25,000 headwords and lists 80,000 synonymous words in total. Of these, those headwords and synonyms were chosen to be included in *Szinonimák* which we regarded as most important and typical. The synonyms taken from the corpus of *Magyar szókincstár* (A Treasury of Hungarian Vocabulary) were complemented with the newest, often slangy words: *laptop*, *notebook*, *megcsörget* ‘call’ | ‘give somebody a buzz’, *teleszík* ‘give somebody a call’ | ‘be on the horn’, *span* ‘friend’ | ‘accomplice’, *kecő* ‘apartment’ | ‘pad’.” (KISS-BÁRDOSI 2008: IX–X).

Special attention is paid to lexical and stylistic labeling in the dictionary. The 20,000 synonym types of *Szinonimák* fall into the following categories (with their frequencies in brackets): colloquial (1056), rude, obscene (91), foreign (391), derogatory (47), dated (635), technical (269), slang, argot (460), regional language (234), humorous (21), sophisticated style (167).

The dictionary has been compiled in a precise, scrupulous way, which is shown by the important feature that the understanding and disambiguation of the the meaning of verbal headwords is helped by the systematic inclusion of the complements which indicate the type of syntactic structures that the synonymous words in question fit into. Nevertheless, the complements <valakit> ‘somebody + accusative’ and <valamit> ‘something + accusative’ are included only if their absence would be particularly odd. Obviously, the headwords have complements themselves, therefore the complement that belongs to the pertinent meaning of the given headword is placed at the beginning of the row of synonyms and is followed by a colon (:):

jár (ige) [‘walk’ (verb)]

- ◆ <~ valami után> [‘<~ after something>’]: keres, kutat, kajtat [‘search’ etc.]; futkos <valami után> [‘run <about something>’]
- ◆ <~ valamiben> [‘<~ in something>’]: öltözik <valahogyan> [‘dress <in some way>’]; visel <valamit> [‘wear <something>’], hord <valamit> [‘wear <something>’]
- ◆ <~ valakinek valami> [‘<~ for somebody something+ACC>’]: megillet <valakit valami> [‘be somebody’s due’]; dukál <valakinek valami> [‘be somebody’s due’]

As *Szinonimák* is meant to be effectively applicable in schools, the rows of synonyms are often complemented by the conceptual class which the synonyms in question are characteristic of:

erős (mn) [‘strong’ (adj)]

- ◆ [bor] [‘wine’]: tüzes, testes [‘fiery, heady’]
- ◆ [hang] [‘sound’]: érces, harsány, harsogó, velőtrázó [‘sonorous, shrill’ etc.]
- ◆ [testrész] [‘body part’]: kövérkés, telt, vaskos [‘fattish, plump’ etc.]
- ◆ [tréfa] [‘joke’]: túlzó, vaskos, otromba [‘coarse, rude’ etc.]

Another “school-friendly” feature of the dictionary is that we find the most commonly used abbreviations with their full versions at the bottom of every page.

József Pethő, a reviewer of the dictionary, draws attention to the fact that in addition to its function as a dictionary of synonyms, this publication can serve another purpose: “It is to be noted that to a certain extent, *Szinonimák* can also be used as a defining dictionary, since the synonyms can help the reader understand a less known word or a word with a vague meaning. From this function, also mentioned by the authors in the introduction, schools can very well profit in many ways, at various levels and in various domains of first language education. To mention only a few: enriching the students’ active vocabulary of words and expressions, teaching the adequate choice of words, and helping Hungarian language and literature classes in teaching and practicing materials related to the study of meaning” (PETHŐ 2009).

Éva Ruzsiczky: Csak egy kicsit más. Szinonimák a kicsinyeknek
(Only a Bit Different. Synonyms for the Little Ones)

Grimm Publishing House based in Szeged became acknowledged for its bilingual dictionaries after the 1990 political changes. In addition to the bilingual dictionaries, the publishing house published some monolingual dictionaries, to which the dictionary of synonyms *Csak egy kicsit más* (Only a Bit Different) (RUZSICZKY 2000) belongs. As shown by its subtitle, *Szinonimák a kicsinyeknek* (Synonyms for the Little Ones), this dictionary of synonyms is meant for the youngest users. The 2-page introduction is entitled “Kedves Ági, Kati – Peti, Laci!” ‘Dear Little Agnes, Kate – Pete and Leslie’. This is followed by the dictionary part richly illustrated with pictures. The main body of the dictionary comprises 120 sets of synonyms. The following two are examples of these:

bot, pálca, sétatbot, sétatpálca, görbebot, mankó, istáp ‘stick, rod, walking stick’ etc.

menekül, viszi az irháját, menti a bőrét, iszkol, pucol, fut, szalad, elszel ‘flee, take flight, escape’ etc.

In this dictionary there are no lexical or stylistic labels attached to the words. However uncommon this may be, there are no headwords in the classical sense at the beginning of the sets of synonyms, either. Nevertheless, this can be regarded as a clever choice, given the young readership the dictionary is designed for.

The uses and sentential contexts of the synonyms published are exemplified by sample sentences taken from fairy tales and other books for the young written by Hungarian authors well known for the children.

In sum, this dictionary is a nice endeavour to show nursery school children that we can express ourselves in many ways. It remains the responsibility of the nursery school teachers and the parents to explain in what contexts each member of the sets of synonyms can be used.

Large Hungarian dictionaries of synonyms

Ferenc Póra: *A magyar rokon értelmű szók és szólások kézikönyve*
(A Handbook of Hungarian Synonymous Words and Sayings)

Ferenc Póra, who was a higher elementary school schoolmaster, writes about the purpose of his dictionary in the introduction as follows: “While teaching stylistics, I experienced that a considerable portion of the students did not have a large enough vocabulary, and, as a consequence, could not express their thoughts eloquently” (PÓRA 1910: III). Therefore, during his teaching practice he continuously collected synonymous words with his students. “The collection of synonymous words thus became richer and richer year by year, and by 1895 it contained 16,000 words and sayings” (PÓRA 1910: III). The author submitted the collection for the “Marczibányi Award” of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1896, which he won despite the fact some of the critiques were negative.

Underlying the structure of this collection are the following principles: “The whole material, i.e. 30,000 words and sayings, were classified into 800 logical groups. It would be highly unfair not to give due acknowledgment to the ingenious British scholar John Roget, whose brilliant work entitled *Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases* served as a

model of my own work. Roget divides the exceptionally rich vocabulary of the English language into 6 main classes. These six classes are further divided into 1,000 groups with an exceptionally and astonishingly clear-cut logic. The fact that I used only 800 groups instead of the 1,000 groups of the British model is to be explained by the differences that exist between the British and the Hungarian ways of thinking.” (PÓRA 1910: 12)

It is a one hundred year-old dilemma of dictionary editors how to fit indecent words into their collections. Ferenc Póra used the following principle: “Given the origin of the handbook, I excluded all rude, obscene and indecent expressions. I chose to include only such words that can be printed in a literary publication or a newspaper article, or can be said aloud in the company of decent, educated ladies” (PÓRA 1910: V–VI).

The dictionary consists of two parts: the alphabetical index of words and the eight hundred groups of synonyms.

In the first part of the dictionary entitled *Betűrendes szótár* (Index of words), we find the number of that logical group (or those logical groups) which contain(s) the word in question. Most words appear in one group, some words can be found in two groups, and very few words are listed in three or more groups. The word *munka* ‘work’ is to be found in two groups: number 516 (profession) and number 557 (activity).

In the second part of the dictionary entitled *800 szinonim csoport* (Eight hundred groups of synonyms) the groups fall into six larger units:

I. ABSTRACT RELATIONS. Being. Relation. Quantity. Order. Number. Time. Change. Cause. Effect. (pp. 1–169)

II. SPACE. Dimension. Form. Movement. (pp. 170–275)

III. SUBSTANCE. Inorganic substance. Organic substance. Life. Death. Sense organs. Touch. Heat. Taste. Odor. Sound. Light. (pp. 276–381)

IV. FORMATION OF CONCEPTS. Communication of concepts. Tools of the communication of concepts. Language. (pp. 382–493)

V. WILL. Individual will. Will concerning others. Will concerning possessions. (pp. 494–657)

VI. EMOTION, INCLINATION. Emotion in general. Emotion concerning the sensible individual. Sympathy. Antipathy. Ethical emotion. Law. Religion. (pp. 658–800)

Ferenc Póra's dictionary was unique on the market of Hungarian dictionaries of synonyms for seven decades. Its uniqueness will be even more conspicuous if we note that it is a dictionary containing conceptual classes rather than a dictionary of synonyms proper.

When the dictionary was published, Vilmos Tolnai, after making a list of some minor critical remarks, praised Ferenc Póra's work as follows: "Obviously, one cannot expect completeness or perfection from the first edition of a work as pioneering as this. The author himself was careful enough to dismiss such expectations in the preface. Nevertheless, it is a great achievement that we now have a dictionary of synonyms. It is a valuable asset to all cultivators of the Hungarian language. It will serve well those readers whose vocabulary is not rich enough. However, those readers who know the true richness of the Hungarian language will be able to profit from this publication even more. It will be useful for all friends of language, whether they are scholars or not; all writers and, especially, translators; and it is absolutely necessary that all school libraries buy it" (TOLNAI 1908: 8).

Gábor O. Nagy and Éva Ruzsiczky: *Magyar szinonimaszótár*
(Dictionary of Hungarian Synonyms)

The 1960s and the 1970s signaled one of the most flourishing periods in the history of Hungarian dictionary publishing. In these years voluminous works were published, such as the seven-volume defining dictionary of the Hungarian language, the first Hungarian historical-etymological dictionary in three volumes and the comprehensive etymological dictionary of geographical names. This series of publications was complemented by a similarly notable achievement, *Magyar szinonimaszótár* (Dictionary of Hungarian Synonyms), which was published for the 1978 Book Day (O. NAGY-RUZSICZKY 1978).

Gábor O. Nagy started to collect and structure the materials for the dictionary after a long period of theoretical research. The basic principle applied in the dictionary is that of interchangeability. This means that those words are regarded as synonymous that can be replaced with each other in a given sentence without this replacement resulting in a change of the meaning of the sentence (O. NAGY 1964: 16–31).

The 4-page introduction to the book is about Hungarian dictionaries of synonyms and the process that resulted in the publication of the dictionary. According to the co-editor Éva Ruzsiczky, Gábor O. Nagy “could not realize his plans due to his sudden and tragic death in May 1973 [...]; there was nobody in charge of the first draft of the manuscript until the headword *lefut* ‘run’, either. In August 1973 the management of the Research Institute for Linguistics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences commissioned me to complete the dictionary” (O. NAGY–RUZSICZKY 1978: 6).

The Introduction is followed by the 4-page Usage notes for the dictionary, which, in turn, is followed by the list of abbreviations and the explanation of symbols. Then comes the dictionary part proper.

The dictionary part consists of 425 pages. According to the Introduction, “*Magyar szinonimaszótár* contains about 30,000 synonymous lexical units, grouped around 12,500 headwords. Primarily those lexical units were included in the dictionary as synonymous words or set phrases which are close to each other from the point of view of their conceptual content (denotate), and only differ to a small extent or in grades. Sometimes these lexical units do not differ at all, and play a similar part in the communicative process as well” (O. NAGY–RUZSICZKY 1978: 7–8).

The collection of the data is described as follows: “*Magyar szinonimaszótár* is mainly based on the corpus of the seven-volume and the one-volume defining dictionary of the Hungarian language. Apart from the materials therein, László Országh’s *Angol–magyar szótár* (English–Hungarian Dictionary), Ferenc Bakos’s *Idegen szavak szótára* (A Dictionary of Foreign Words) and some further sources of minor significance were taken into consideration” (O. NAGY–RUZSICZKY 1978: 8).

At the end of *Magyar szinonimaszótár* we find the 150-page Word index, which contains those synonyms of the lexical entries that do not appear as headwords.

Since its publication in 1978, Akadémiai Kiadó published *Magyar szinonimaszótár* in an unchanged form for 32 years. In 2010 the second, revised edition of the dictionary appeared. The chief editor of the new edition was Ferenc Pusztai, an expert in renewing older dictionaries due to his work on the 2003 revised edition of *Magyar értelmező kéziszótár*

(A Comprehensive Dictionary of Hungarian) by Akadémiai Kiadó. In the Introduction to the 2010 edition of *Magyar szinonimaszótár* it is argued that “due to the revision of the old dictionary the structure of the lexical entries became clearer, the content of the lexical entries became more easily accessible to the general reader, and the choice of synonyms shows the changes in the Hungarian lexis since the first publication of the dictionary” (O. NAGY–RUZSICZKY 2010: 12). From the revised edition the Word index was left out. This decision is explained in the Introduction as follows: “Since the dictionary is available in an online form, all words that occur in the dictionary can be searched for in the electronic database” (O. NAGY–RUZSICZKY 2010: 8). Surprisingly enough, only a limited number of abbreviations are used in the dictionary. Stylistic labels appear in their full versions, for example: *gyermeknyelvi* ‘child language’, *szépirodalmi* ‘literary style’, *nyelvjárási* ‘dialectal’, *sajtónyelvi* ‘press language’ and *szaknyelvi* ‘technical’. The expression *tágabb értelemben* ‘in a more general sense’ also appears in its full version instead of its abbreviated form *t. é.*, which is another practice that differs from the one applied in the first edition.

In the second edition some of the old stylistic labels were renamed: for example *argó* ‘argot’ became *szleng* ‘slang’ and two categories, *népnyelvi* ‘folk language’ and *tájnyelvi* ‘regional language’ were merged and received the common label *nyelvjárási* ‘dialectal’.

Similarly to the first edition, the second edition contains a number of very precise remarks that differentiate between shades of meaning. There is a unique registration code included in all printed copies, with the help of which the customers can get access to the internet version of the dictionary.

The multiple-color explanatory part printed on the PLC of the new edition is a spectacular invention. This serves to illustrate the structure of the lexical entries, showing the components that make them up: headword, orthographic variant of the headword, index of homonyms, part of speech, synonym, comma separating the synonyms, example, label, a characteristic feature of the domain of application, complement, remark, and reference to further synonyms.

Gábor Kiss: Magyar szókincstár – Rokon értelmű szavak, szólások és ellentétek szótára (A Treasury of Hungarian Vocabulary. A Dictionary of Synonymous Words and Sayings as well as Antonyms)

Tinta Publishing House published the dictionary entitled *Magyar szókincstár* (A Treasury of Hungarian Vocabulary) for the 1998 Christmas book fair. The subtitle of the book reads *Rokon értelmű szavak, szólások és ellentétek szótára* (A Dictionary of Synonymous Words and Sayings as well as Antonyms). Project work targeting the publication of the dictionary was first reported on by chief editor Gábor Kiss at a scientific conference organized by the Department of General and Applied Linguistics at the Faculty of Humanities of Eötvös Loránd University in October 1997 (Kiss 1998a). This was followed by another talk of his delivered to the Hungarian Linguistic Society on 24th March 1998. As presented in these talks, *Magyar szókincstár* was compiled on the basis of the corpus of 28 already published mono- and bilingual dictionaries. The editors collected the relevant pairs and rows of synonyms from all these dictionaries. The collected rows of synonyms were stored on computer, and, with the help of a software tool developed in Tinta Publishing House, the rows of synonyms were paired with the pertinent headwords. Then manual editing work carried out with meticulous care and in many phases resulted in the final form of the lexical entries.

The dictionary was presented on 24th November 1998 in Szent Margit (Saint Margaret) High School in Budapest during the 1st Dictionary Day. With the choice of the venue Tinta Publishing House emphasized that the work can be used in first language education. The presentation of the dictionary was organized together with the exhibition of *The history of Hungarian printed dictionaries*, opened by linguist Lajos Kiss, a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

The publication of *Magyar szókincstár* had considerable media coverage: both daily and weekly newspapers praised the new dictionary of synonyms. The reviews emphasized that the dictionary's content was much richer than that of *Magyar szinonimaszótár* (O. NAGY–RUZSICZKY 1978) and that the editors worked with a wider concept of synonyms. Words of appreciation concerned the reference book being what the chief editor calls a “production dictionary”, which, quite correctly, presupposes that native speaker users have a reliable linguistic competence.

Thus, it is not “overexplained” which synonym is adequate in what speech situation. This philosophy is described in the preface of the dictionary as follows: “The dictionary offers the users plenty of synonyms in the case of every headword, and lets the user choose from the synonyms, which are often of various connotations and domains of application. The editors of the dictionary presuppose that the users have a reliable linguistic competence or native language command. In other words, the dictionary was compiled with the view in mind that the users themselves take part in the ‘creative process’.” (Kiss 1998: VI).

The structure of the dictionary is the following: the Introduction (pp. V–XII) is followed by the dictionary part proper (pp. 1–929). The Introduction includes an overview of the history of previously published Hungarian dictionaries of synonyms. This is followed by the description of what type of dictionary *Magyar szókincstár* is, which, in turn, is followed by the description of the structure of the dictionary. This latter section consists of several subsections, which describe the headwords, the structure of the body of the lexical entries, the “bush of synonyms”, the sayings and the antonyms. The Introduction ends with the List of the sources of the corpus. Among these sources we find 3 defining dictionaries, 4 special-language dictionaries, 4 regional-language dictionaries, 2 dictionaries of foreign words, 3 other monolingual dictionaries, 7 bilingual dictionaries and 2 collections of sayings and proverbs.

In sum, *Magyar szókincstár* can be characterized as: 1. a user-friendly general-purpose dictionary of synonyms compiled with a scholarly rigor; 2. for native speakers of Hungarian; 3. it is a production dictionary, which; 4. contains 80,000 words under 25,500 headwords with 400,000 synonym tokens in total; 5. the rows of synonyms in the dictionary number 42,300; 6. it does not define the words but labels them when necessary; 7. it provides explanatory notes when necessary; 8. it contains 2,500 sayings and proverbs collected into 165 “bushes”; 9. it contains 8,500 set phrases; 10. headwords appear in alphabetical order; 11. there are no cross-referring headwords in the dictionary; 12. it is the first dictionary in print that publishes antonyms of Hungarian words; 13. it is 944 pages long.

Magyar szókincstár uses 10 stylistic labels. Here is a summary of how many word tokens have which labels as well as how many times words having the labels in question appear in the dictionary in total:

1. *bizalmas* (biz) ‘colloquial’: 3,150 / 4,670, 2. *durva* (durva) ‘rude’: 170 / 250, 3. *idegen* (id) ‘foreign’: 3,860 / 5,210, 4. *pejoratív* (pej) ‘derogatory’: 520 / 620, 5. *régies* (rég) ‘dated’: 6,570 / 7,680, 6. *szak* (szak) ‘technical’: 1,640 / 1,840, 7. *szleng* (szleng) ‘slang’: 1,940 / 3,227, 8. *tájnnyelvi / népies* (táj) ‘regional language / folkish’: 9,890 / 11,980, 9. *tréfás* (tréf) ‘humorous’: 280 / 320, 10. *választékos* (vál) ‘sophisticated style’: 2,000 / 2,340.

In *Magyar szókincstár* lexical units larger than words listed as synonyms include set phrases, sayings and proverbs. Aladár Szende writes about this as follows: “The editors are to be praised for having listed sayings as synonyms of the headwords. It is to be welcomed that due to the editorial principles, the treasury does not exclude from among the synonyms these interesting and traditionally valuable types of collocations. There are plenty of fresh or up-to-date data in the collection, for example *megkapja a dilihoppot* ‘go out of one’s mind’ as the synonym of *megebolondul* ‘go crazy’. This exemplifies that in the treasury words are not only treated as units having individual meanings but also as parts of utterances, i.e. the strings of words in the context of which they are used in the communicative process. These units thus in a way acquire the rank of a sentence and at the same time a stylistic significance as well, because they colour a concept (denotation) emotionally, thereby making it more expressive in the positive or negative sense. We can just as well regard the procedure as a dramatic technique which makes words more vivid and more effective as communicative factors in the synonymic order of values” (SZENDE 1999: 249–252).

For the first time in the history of Hungarian printed dictionaries, lexical entries include antonyms as well. Aladár Szende, in his review already quoted above, writes about the antonyms of the dictionary as follows: “The noun *antonym* appears in the subtitle of the treasury, which is justified if we consider the body of such data in the dictionary. The preface provides the definition of antonyms in 4 points. These points characterize different aspects of the communicative process. Two words can thus be regarded as antonymous if one of the following conditions applies: 1. opposition from the point of view of the participants (for example *ad – kap* ‘give’ – ‘get’); 2. mutual exclusion (*apály – dagály* ‘ebb’ – ‘flow’); 3. polar-like opposition, with an intermediate step between the poles when applicable (*forró* ‘hot’ – *langyos* ‘lukewarm’ – *hideg* ‘cold’);

4. common superordinate (*személy* ‘passenger’ – *teher* ‘freight’: *vonat* ‘train’). Note that those antonyms that can be made up predictively (for example *alkalmas* ‘competent’ – *alkalmatlan* ‘incompetent’) are omitted by the editors whenever possible. The lexical entry of *koros* ‘aged’ is in fact not followed by that of *kortalan* ‘ageless’ despite the fact that we could expect this, since the latter adjective is just as an antonym of *koros* as *időtlen* ‘timeless’ as of *idő* ‘time’; and it has a peculiar stylistic value, similarly to that of the members of the word pair *anyátlan*–*apátlan* ‘motherless’–‘fatherless’ used together or separately. Nevertheless, we find *gyökértelen* ‘rootless’ beside *gyökér* ‘root’, and *élettelen* ‘lifeless’ beside *élet* ‘life’ in the dictionary” (SZENDE 1999: 249–252).

Magyar szókincstár was reviewed in detail in Hungarian journals on linguistics (see, for example, *Magyar Nyelvőr* 1999: 249–252; *Magyar Nyelv* 2000: 163–169 and *Nyelvtudományi Közlemények* 2002: 334–338). In addition to these, enthusiastic reviews appeared in English, Czech and Japanese as well. The only exception to the row of appreciative critiques is Éva Ruzsiczky’s sharp criticism (RUZSICZKY 2000). For the fine book design, the dictionary received the 1999 “Beautiful Hungarian Book” Award of the Hungarian Publishers’ and Booksellers’ Association. The Association of Hungarian Librarians hailed the dictionary as the most important reference book of the year 1999, and awarded the book the “József Fitz Book Prize”.

Magyar szókincstár soon became popular with the public as well. This is a proven fact, since the book lead Hungarian bestseller lists for 3 months in the beginning of 1999.

Tinta Publishing House sold the electronic publishing rights of the dictionary for 5 years to the software companies MorphoLogic Ltd. and Scriptum Ltd. in 1999, which co-published the CD version of the “treasury” and distributed it successfully until 2004.

Apart from its regular use as a dictionary, *Magyar szókincstár* has been used as a language resource for linguistic and semantic (scientific) investigations. One of the research projects targeted a definition of the similarity between the meanings of Hungarian words (BÁRDOSI–KISS G.–KISS M.–RAPCSÁK 2004: 27–37).

Tibor Bartos: Magyar szótár – Egymást magyarázó szavak és fordulatok tára (Hungarian Dictionary. Words and Phrases Explaining each other)

Tibor Bartos is an accomplished literary translator, who translated a number of pieces from English to Hungarian. He is acknowledged primarily as the translator of first class authors such as Samuel Beckett, Truman Capote, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, John Irving, Jack Kerouac, Mark Twain and John Updike. Tibor Bartos collected synonyms systematically for many years during his career, which he later grouped into chains. The result of this work, his dictionary of synonyms appeared in 2002 (BARTOS 2002). It is a huge collection of words and phrases organized into 304 conceptual classes and within these several logical-associative rows. The author writes about the collecting work of the materials underlying his dictionary in the preface as follows: "I have collected some of the words while translating American literature. I came across some others at home, during my travels all around the country from people of the old world" (BARTOS 2002: 9). The 304 conceptual classes are not in a strict logical order. This is shown by the fact that the groups are not classified into categories that are in a superior-subordinate relationship. Instead, the groups are arranged in a linear fashion. If we take a closer look at the data in the groups, we can note that the associative connection between the words is more conspicuous than the significance of the headword of the category. The author lists not only one-word synonyms but in many cases sayings and proverbs as well.

Some examples of the categories: 106: *idő* 'time', 107: *idők járása* 'the pace of times', 108: *soká* 'for a long time', 109: *időtlen idők* 'timeless times', 110: *hamar* 'soon', 111: *időzavar* 'lapse of time', 112: *korai* 'early', 113: *kései* 'late', 114: *reggel* 'morning', 115: *déltájt* 'around noon', 116: *este, éjszaka* 'in the evening, at night', 117: *időszámítás* 'dating system', 118: *időszak* 'period of time', 119: *napra* 'for a day', 120: *órára, percre, pillanatra* 'for an hour, minute, second', 121: *akkor* 'then', 122: *máskor* 'at another time', 123: *jelen* 'present', 124: *új* 'new', 125: *múlt* 'past', 126: *régi* 'old', 127: *jövő* 'future', 128: *tavaszi* 'spring', 129: *fiatalosság* 'youth', 130: *nyár* 'summer', 131: *javakor* 'old age', 132: *ősz* 'fall', 133: *öreg* 'aged', 134: *tél* 'winter'.

Some of the conceptual classes are further divided into smaller groups. For example, we find the smaller groups *A nap* 'the sun', *A hold* 'the moon' and *A csillag* 'the star' under conceptual class No. 170, that is, *világmindenség* 'universe'.

A curiosity in the dictionary is conceptual class No. 244, that is, *állathangok* 'animal sounds'. Here the author lists 75 animal sounds altogether, of which 45 are bird sounds.

The 350-page second volume of the dictionary is entitled *Betűrendes eligazítás* (Alphabetical explanatory notes). According to our calculations, it contains, printed in three columns, about 50,000 words. Beside every word, on average we find the numbers of 2–3 conceptual classes. However, some words appear in a great number of conceptual classes, for example *zene* 'music' in 14, *szabad* 'free' in 16 and *ért* 'understand' in 10 conceptual classes.

Apparently, Tibor Bartos's dictionary is not for those users who, perhaps to avoid word repetitions, would like to quickly replace one word with another while composing a text. This book will be enjoyed by those readers, who, in a *l'art pour l'art* fashion, like to bathe in the richness of the language and to familiarize themselves with new, often infrequent words or linguistic expressions. Regardless of whether such a book can have practical everyday use, it is interesting to see the "working material" of a translator in a dictionary, which he collected in four decades. At the end of the preface the author thanks his supporters for being able to devote two years to the compilation of the dictionary in its final form, which can be thought of as writing his autobiography.

There are no bibliographic references in the book, therefore we cannot tell which previously published dictionaries were used as sources for the dictionary.

A bilingual dictionary of synonyms

It is a rather presumptuous undertaking to compile a bilingual dictionary of synonyms, since the meanings and the semantic structure of the words in the two languages can differ to such an extent that it is impossible to find the corresponding sets of synonyms. Nevertheless, learners of foreign languages might need a bilingual dictionary of synonyms so

that they can get a deeper knowledge of the vocabulary of the foreign language they learn. To our knowledge, the only bilingual dictionary of synonyms with Hungarian being one of the two languages is László Petik's Hungarian–English Dictionary of Synonyms (*Magyar–angol szinonimaszótár*) (PETIK 1992). It suffices to take a glance at the dictionary to establish that the author should have had a more thorough theoretical background in order to successfully accomplish his goals.

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A magyar szinonimaszótárak

A tanulmány a magyar szinonimaszótárakat és kiadásuk történetét ismerteti. Bemutatja a magyar szinonimakutatás kezdeteit. A szinonimagyűjtemények közül ismerteti H. Németh Gyula Az észbeli gyarlóság kifejezése a magyarban c. és Balassa László Garmada. Rokon értelmű szócsoportok és írói kifejezésformák c. munkáit. Az iskolai szinonimaszótárak oktatásbeli fontosságát hangsúlyozva kitér Ruzsiczky Éva Szi-

nonimaszótár diákoknak, *Tótfalusi István* Színes szinonimatár, *Kiss Gábor – Bárdosi Vilmos* Szinonimák. 20 000 rokon értelmű szó dióhéj-szótára, *illetve Ruzsiczky Éva* Csak egy kicsit más. Szinonimák a kicsinyeknek *c. kiadványokra. A tanulmány részletesen bemutatja és értékeli a következő négy nagy magyar szinonimaszótárt: Póra Ferenc* A magyar rokon értelmű szók és szólások kézikönyve, *O. Nagy Gábor – Ruzsiczky Éva* Magyar szinonimaszótár, *Kiss Gábor* Magyar szókincstár – Rokon értelmű szavak, szólások és ellentétek szótára, *illetve Bartos Tibor* Magyar szótár. Egymást magyarázó szavak és szófordulatok.