

# INTRODUCTION

## New features

In the new, revised edition, the following major changes were made: (a) leaving out the obsolete Hungarian entries and expressions, (b) including new Hungarian and English standard and specialist words, (c) incorporating new meanings of Hungarian words already in the dictionary, (d) updating the Hungarian expressions and examples, as well as their English equivalents, (e) including new Hungarian and English slang words, and (f) changing the various grammatical and usage labels.

### Leaving out obsolete Hungarian entries and expressions

As with any dictionary, the entries in the unabridged Hungarian–English dictionary become obsolete with the passage of time, and so they need to be changed and replaced on a regular basis. Standard language keeps changing, and it does so much faster than the roughly 30 years that have elapsed since the last revision. Replacing old words with new ones was particularly justified because of the political changes that have taken place in Hungary in the past decade. Many of the words introduced into the Hungarian language during the past 50 years had to be cut from the dictionary, especially the ones which were simple derivatives of some ideological keywords. However, the ideological keywords themselves were kept. Whether we love or hate them, they form a part of our recent history and thus our language. The reader interested in the full repertory of these words and expressions can find them in previous editions of the dictionary.

Another group of words that were omitted include entries which denote out-of-date things, actions and qualities in such specialist areas as engineering, technology, commerce, sports, etc. If a thing, action, or quality is not known to members of a language community, nothing justifies keeping the word denoting it in a dictionary designed for today's user.

We felt we should part with yet another group of words, those coined between the two world wars or in the 1950s and 1960s and that turned out to be transient fad words.

We also left out those vernacular or regional words or expressions that are not in common use by speakers of Hungarian, not even by those who can be regarded as authentic speakers of these varieties and dialects of language. However, we kept those items that we feel form a part of our national linguistic heritage.

### The inclusion of new standard and specialist words in Hungarian and English

In the course of revising the last edition, alongside the omission of obsolete words and phrases, a great deal of attention was paid to including in the dictionary new items in the standard and specialist vocabulary of both Hungarian and English. The vocabulary of standard everyday Hungarian has changed considerably in recent decades. These new items had to be identified in various sources, especially new dictionaries, and then their English equivalents had to be found. We know that we did not, in fact could not, identify every new Hungarian word or phrase, but we hope that we included most of them in the dictionary together with their nearest English counterparts.

It is a commonplace that changes in such specialist areas as technology, engineering, business, culture, science, etc. produce changes in language. We have collected and included several thousand specialist words and provided their English equivalents in the new edition. We made an attempt to represent in the dictionary specialist areas that either haven't existed before or that have been thoroughly renewed, including areas such as information science, electronics, media, new branches of biology, modern linguistics and psychology, aviation and space research. We greatly modified the language of other specialist areas, such as economy, commerce, and finance, and we made sure to include the most important concepts of the legal language of the European Union, as well as the internationally equally important language of environmental protection.

### Including the new meanings of already existing Hungarian words

Over time, the words in a language may acquire new senses. We have found a large number of cases where the application of already existing Hungarian words has been widened or extended by means of a variety of semantic processes. We made a special effort to find these changes of meaning and to provide their nearest English equivalents. We believe that this widening of meaning is especially characteristic of the vocabulary of slang. (We will say more about slang below.)

### Updating the Hungarian phrases and examples and their English equivalents

Within the entries of the dictionary, Hungarian phrases and examples are often given that are based on the headword in question. These longer expressions raise two typical problems in previous editions that needed to be amended in the new one. One is that some well-known and characteristic phrases involving an entry are simply not given in the dictionary, or that the Hungarian expression is not typical of the entry under which it is given. When either of these happened, we provided the missing Hungarian phrase or changed the existing but inappropriate Hungarian example.

The other problem involves cases where the English translations of the Hungarian examples were not precise enough or they were simply mistranslations of the Hungarian examples. We identified and corrected many such cases with the help of our bilingual readers.

### Including new Hungarian and English slang words

One of the peculiar "blind spots" of the previous editions edited by László Országh was the fact that he almost completely ignored Hungarian slang words. This is peculiar given that the Hungarian–English dictionary contained a disproportionately large number of English slang words. The English slang words were given by the previous editor under various standard Hungarian entries. This treatment of slang is, in our view, indefensible because it distorts linguistic reality. Consequently, we have made every effort to include at least the most common Hungarian slang words in the dictionary. Naturally, this has resulted in an increase of the English slang words as well.

### Changes in grammatical and usage labels

In revising the labelling system of the dictionary, the major change we made involved the replacement of almost all the grammatical labels of the Hungarian entries used in the previous editions. We did this in order to make the labels more consistent and more in line with those used in Hungarian linguistics, thereby making them more accessible to the Hungarian user.

In many cases, we also modified the stylistic labels found in the previous editions. We tried to make them more transparent and clearer, again with the aim of helping the Hungarian user.

One of the factors in linguistic developments is the constant change in the stylistic value of words. Of these, especially noteworthy in the dictionary are the following. Many words that were considered slang 30-40 years ago have become merely informal, colloquial words by today; many standard words that enjoyed wide currency before have become obsolete; many English words that were regarded as "American" have by now become a part of British English (or of what is called "common English") as well. We made an attempt to capture these changes as fully and accurately as possible, but we are aware that such labelling is one of the weak points of every dictionary, and opinions can, and often do, vary greatly.

The full list of the labels and abbreviations used in the dictionary is given after the introduction.

### The entries

Thus the entries in the dictionary have been changed as described above. With these changes the fourth edition includes those words that speakers of Hungarian use in the 1990s. The dictionary has been enlarged with roughly several thousand new standard (i.e., non-dialectal and non-specialist) words. In addition to the new standard words, many new specialist and slang items were added to the dictionary. The fourth edition contains the terminology of many of the most important specialist domains in our changed world, as well as those slang words and new slang meanings without which it would be impossible to get along in today's everyday linguistic environment or, as a matter of fact, in contemporary Hungarian literature.

In the new edition, only those proper names are given among the entries which have clear and well-established English equivalents.

### The English equivalents

Given the structure of entries, the dictionary contains two kinds of English equivalents: the English words corresponding to Hungarian headwords (and to their various senses) as well as the longer English phrases corresponding to the multi-word Hungarian phrases (i.e., idioms, examples) based on the entries.

The majority of adjectival phrases (an adjective and a noun) can be found in the entry for the adjective in question. However, with many cases of adjectival phrases in a specialist domain, it seemed more appropriate to place the phrase under the entry for the noun.

To ensure the precise identification of words for animals and plants, the English equivalents are followed by their corresponding Latin names.

A small number of Hungarian words have no precise and short (one- or two-word-long) counterparts in English. In these cases the dictionary provides a descriptive explanation of the approximate meaning of the word in English in pointed brackets < >. Thus the explanation in pointed brackets should not be taken as an equivalent of the Hungarian word, and it cannot be used, say, in translations. When an English item is marked with the abbreviation *kb*, the English word or phrase can be taken as an approximate counterpart (though not an equivalent) and can, with due caution, be used for the purposes of translation.

### The structure of entries

Homonyms (words with the same form but with different origin and unrelated meanings) are indicated in the dictionary in the traditional way, by superscript numbers (e.g., **vár<sup>1</sup>**, **vár<sup>2</sup>**).

Parts of speech (noun, verb, etc.) within the same entry are distinguished by bold Roman numerals (e.g., **I.**, **II.**).

The different senses of an entry are set off by bold Arabic numbers (e.g., **1.**, **2.**).

Within the particular senses of an entry, we indicate finer shades of meaning with square brackets ([ ]). Square brackets are also used for more precisely delineating the range of application of a Hungarian entry or one of its senses.

To make reference from an entry or one of its senses to another, we use the arrow sign (→).

## Labels

The labels used in the dictionary are essentially of three kinds: (a) grammatical, (b) stylistic, and (c) labels denoting specialist usage.

### Grammatical labels

Labels designating the grammatical category of headwords are given after them. If an entry belongs to more than one grammatical category, the labels are given following the bold-faced Roman numerals mentioned above.

Only two grammatical labels are used for the English equivalents. One of them is *tsz*, which stands after the English words and indicates that the English noun requires a plural verb. The other label, *ut*, indicates that the English word or phrase (mostly the latter) stands after the word that it modifies.

In addition to the labels mentioned above, the dictionary contains some important grammatical information (especially for the non-Hungarian user). This information is given after simple root words (i.e., entries that are not compounds or derivatives) and consists of spelling out the most important endings of the Hungarian entry.

### Stylistic labels

By stylistic labelling we mean the indication of the contextual restrictions that apply to the use of a word or phrase.

The stylistic labels are also given in italics. When they apply to the Hungarian headwords, their distinct senses or the Hungarian phrases, they are placed after the Hungarian headwords and phrases, or after the Arabic numbers indicating the various senses of an entry.

The stylistic labels of the English words or phrases are given only if the stylistic value of the English word or phrase differs significantly from that of the Hungarian counterpart. These labels are given after the English word or phrase, except when the same label applies to several English items. In this case, the label precedes the English words or phrases.

### Labels denoting specialist usage

The dictionary contains words and phrases from many specialist domains. These specialist domains are also marked by italicised abbreviations. With respect to English specialist usage, the abbreviations denoting this – unlike stylistic labels – precede the English words or phrases to which they refer.