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Interlingual Diversity: how Cornish and other languages differ in the ways they structure their vocabularies

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Abstract

Different languages vary in the ways in which they systemically structure their respective lexicons. Interlingual lexical relations exist between the lexical systems of Cornish and other languages. Every language is a unique conceptual system. The lexicon of any language is not a mere list of words; it is a system of signs, which are not defined independently of others in the system, but relative to them. In this manner, individual languages differ in the way they classify our experience of the world. A typical example is the semantics of colour words. The colour spectrum is a continuum with no discrete boundaries between one gradation of hue and another. However, languages categorise these colours systemically. Thus, lexical anisomorphism exists between pairs of languages. In other words, there is a relative absence of one-to-one translation equivalents. Most commonly, there is partial equivalence, whereby two or more words in one language are translated by a single word in another language. The equivalence relation may be posited between a lexeme and its equivalents or between the individual senses of a lexical item and the particular meaning of its equivalent word. This leads to very different results from a user perspective.