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FROM CLASSROOM TO RESOURCE: CO-CREATING
A USER-CENTERED ENGLISH-ROMANIAN PSYCHOLOGY DICTIONARY

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Abstract: *This paper details the four-year long lexicographic, terminological and translational process of gathering and editing terms for an English-Romanian dictionary of psychology with the help of sources licensed under Creative Commons. It discusses the process of collaboration between four teachers and students in Psychology from the West University. At the same time, it seeks to expound on a previously published paper (Bran & Pele, "Bridging the Language Gap in Psychology. Challenges in Developing and English-Romanian Dictionary," 2025) with further theoretical content, more figures, and different examples. As we shall discuss, the result is a specialized bilingual dictionary suitable for anyone interested in psychological concepts and terminology.*

Key words: *bilingual dictionary, Creative Commons, Open Educational Resources, psychology, translation*

1. Introduction

The dictionary *Mic Dicționar englez-român de termeni din psihologie* (2025) was developed collaboratively with students in Psychology from The West University of Timișoara. In 2020, during the pandemic lockdown, Lecturer Ramona Bran, who teaches English for psychology, tasked her students, as part of their semestrial assessment, with finding three specialized terms and a short English definition for each, and then translating both the terms and their significance into Romanian. In what was to become the first iteration of the dictionary (V1), the students were given a list of concepts from psychology, a model explaining how they should work (i.e., how to translate, adapt, and format the dictionary entries), and a number of Creative Commons online sources from where they could extract more terms and their respective definitions.

That represents the second innovative element: all the resources were available online and, very importantly, free to use, mix, or adapt. Approximately 1200 terms were selected from the specialized literature that the students had to read in English for their psychology classes. This second version (V2) gathered all the terms, their meanings, and the translated counterparts in Romanian, and was edited in collaboration. From a pedagogical point of view, we had several aspects in mind. We wanted to encourage students to check the meanings of words for themselves, to use both languages, and at the same time, exercise their creativity. As part of the initial task, the students also had to use Creative Commons sources to look for an image, drawing, or painting that resonated with them and illustrated the psychological term they were working on. The goal was to compile an illustrated English-Romanian Dictionary of

psychology terms. However, this aim was deemed too subjective and, therefore, difficult to vet, so the idea was shelved for a potential future edition.

Ultimately, the activity was meant to enrich the students' terminological knowledge and understanding of the vast field of psychology, while working creatively and in collaboration with peers. Moreover, the students had the opportunity to practice accurate citation, and think of the definition of the terms, but also their history, related phrases, concepts, and applications in diverse contexts in both English and Romanian.

The third version (V3) of the dictionary *Mic dicționar englez-român de termeni din psihologie* (2025) was overhauled and edited by Bran and Pele, who reviewed all the entries and translations. The accuracy of all the terms and their definitions was verified by a third collaborator on the dictionary, namely Iuliana Costea, who is a clinical psychologist and a Lecturer in Psychology with the Faculty of Psychology. The accuracy of the all-important CC licenses used in the dictionary was scrutinized by Associate Professor Gabriela Grosseck, the fourth collaborator on the dictionary.

All four of us believe that the dictionary can be useful to Romanians studying psychology, but it can also be browsed by any Romanian speaker interested in psychological concepts and terminology.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. What are Creative Commons (CC) licenses and Open Educational Resources (OER)

This dictionary would not have existed without Creative Commons (CC) licenses and Open Educational Resources. These innovations that favour the propagation of shared knowledge on the internet allow copyright owners to maintain ownership of their original works while also giving the public “the right to use, share, and expand upon those works under certain conditions” (Copyright Information, 2021). It provided open sources from which the students could find the concepts, terms, and their definitions. This is why the students were instructed to strictly use a shortlist of dictionaries and glossaries where the content was free to use and modify.

The Creative Commons project has several types of licenses that are available to the authors and the public, as you can see in Figure 1. For example, CC0 is a tool that encourages authors to renounce their copyright over their work entirely, thus making the said work a public domain (A Simple Guide to Creative Commons 2025). Another Creative Commons License type, called CC BY, allows users to redistribute, alter, and develop the material in any manner and any media, even commercially, as long as it gives credit to the original creator (BY). CC BY-NC-ND is another license in which others can replicate and share the content in any medium or format but without alterations (derivatives), and exclusively for noncommercial use, provided that credit is attributed to the original author.

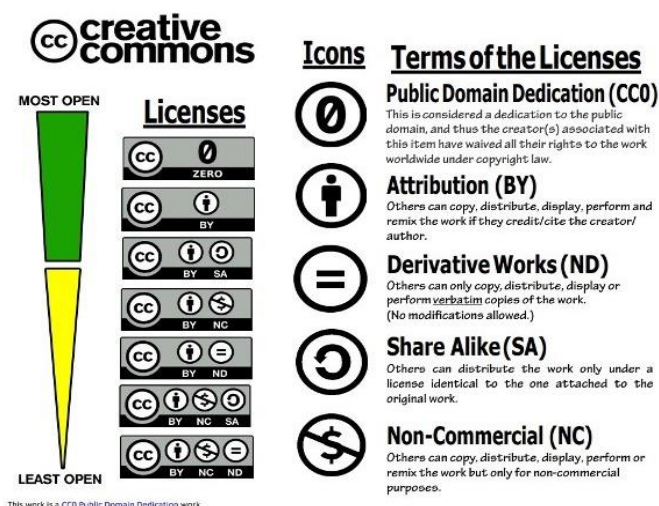


Figure 1. This work is a CC0 Public Domain Dedication. Access a transcript of the graphic. (A Simple Guide to Creative Commons, 2025).

This open-source context allowed Open Educational Resources (OER) to flourish. OER are resources in any format that exist in the public domain or are available under an open license, allowing free access, use, adaptation, and redistribution with minimal or no limitations (Rhodes 2019). Thus, they align with CC licenses in an attempt to facilitate access to information and education.

Consequently, creating a bilingual dictionary of psychology with openly licensed resources offers significant benefits. The most important one is that vital knowledge in the discipline could be readily available at no cost to students, educators, researchers, and the public. Another advantage is that such lexicographic work could be a more up-to-date resource than one achieved through proprietary methods (traditional copyrighted materials). Moreover, by utilizing content under licenses that permit adaptation and sharing (such as, for instance, CC BY or CC BY-SA), the dictionary could further evolve through community contributions. The OER in psychology that we used included textbooks and educational resources (primarily on sites such as Pressbooks) that included glossaries of psychology. These open glossaries offered CC licensed definitions that could be modified, translated, and integrated into an extensive English-Romanian psychology dictionary.

Nevertheless, building a dictionary that includes and adds changes to definitions is a form of derivative work. Therefore, we had to carefully choose content under licenses that clearly allow the creation of similar works (e.g., CC BY, CC BY-SA, CC BY-NC, and CC BY-NC-SA, which all permit remixing and modifying the original content). Making sure we credited authors properly was also extremely important. The title (if available), the creator, the source (be it URL or hyperlink), and the license under which we accessed the source (*Research Guides: Creative Commons Licenses: Attributing CC-Licensed Works*, n.d.) must all be mentioned. Keeping these things in mind, we developed a detailed acknowledgements section that enumerates all the CC licensed sources utilized. Since the dictionary is primarily an online resource, we also hyperlinked each concept in English to the original source. And for publication, we selected a CC license (CC BY-SA 4.0) that closely matched the licenses of the source materials and the main objectives of our project.

2.2. Bilingual Lexicography and Equivalence

There are many debates surrounding lexicography – whether it is a science, an art, whether it can exist independently as a field, or whether it falls under the larger umbrella of linguistics. Regardless of how we define it, lexicography provides the theoretical framework, a well-established set of principles that guide dictionary-making.

A dictionary should not be a reflection of how individuals *believe* language ought to be used, according to Kory Stamper. Its function is not just to catalogue words that are correct or valuable, but to maintain the richness of a language over time for future generations (Stamper in Ogilvie, 2020:7). Interestingly, Kory Stamper notes that bilingual dictionaries probably predate monolingual ones, with their initial versions being medieval Latin-English and English-Latin glossaries.

The Oxford Handbook of Lexicography outlines the primary purpose of a bilingual dictionary, which is to provide equivalents, words, or expressions that semantically correspond to a word or expression in a different language (Durkin 2016:403). In other words, the bilingual lexicographer's central task is to establish equivalence between words and concepts in the source and target languages. Although equivalence can seldom be considered complete, there is a greater likelihood of that happening when it comes to scientific or technical terminology. Bo Svensen (1993:140) concurs that full equivalence between words and phrases from two different languages is uncommon because concept systems develop uniquely across various languages shaped by historical, geographical, societal, cultural, and economic distinctions in the nations where the languages are spoken.

Eugene Nida (1964) introduced the foundational concepts of formal equivalence (focused on matching the structure and form of the source text) and dynamic/functional equivalence (focusing on ensuring the target audience understands the message in the same way as the source audience). Our project utilizes dynamic equivalence when direct, word-for-word (formal) translations of terms are insufficient to convey the psychological concept and its cultural weight in Romanian. Therefore, Nida's work provides us with a theoretical basis for justifying our translation choices.

Additionally, Monika Doherty's work (2006) explored the difficulties of establishing translation equivalents in specialized dictionaries. Doherty highlighted how technical terms often lack perfect one-to-one matches across languages and how lexicographers must make use of context, collocations, and explanatory notes to manage partial equivalence. She offered useful methodological guidance for managing the linguistic and conceptual gaps inherent in technical translation.

Sven Tarp's work (2008) centered on the Function Theory of Lexicography, which dictated that a dictionary's design and content had to be determined by the user's specific information needs and situation (e.g., communicative, cognitive, or operational). Our focus was on easily accessible definitions, high-frequency terms, and the didactic structure of the dictionary as a learning resource. Hence, the main stages of building a bilingual specialist dictionary can be summarized as follows: clearly defining the scope of the dictionary, including the specific areas of the field to be covered and the intended audience (e.g., students, professionals, general public); selection of core vocabulary, which entailed identifying key concepts, theories, and methodologies; sourcing accurate and comprehensive definitions and explanations; translating and adapting sourced content; organizing the information within each entry in a clear, consistent, and logical manner; and making decisions regarding the inclusion of pronunciations, etymologies, related terms, cross-referencing, or examples of how the terms are used in context (Becker in Durkin 2016:393-407).

2.3. Psychological Terminology and Cross-Cultural Translation

According to Atkins (2002:3), “the ideal dictionary should be tailored, or at least tailorable, to one particular type of user” since “bilingual dictionaries are produced with the needs of specific users in mind.” Psychological terms often carry nuanced meanings, are subject to ongoing theoretical developments, and can be deeply rooted in cultural contexts. The translation of these terms requires not only linguistic proficiency but also a profound understanding of the underlying psychological concepts and their cross-cultural applicability (Shen 2022).

As Lilienfeld et al. (2015) point out, many terms commonly used in everyday language, may have more precise or altogether different meanings within the academic discipline of psychology. The challenge, then, was to build a bilingual dictionary that met the needs of Romanian psychology students studying English for special purposes at faculty. Such a dictionary should cover comprehensive definitions of the specialized terms and appropriate examples to avoid misuse, or even misdiagnosis or misinterpretation of research findings. Therefore, we relied on the *International Classification of Diseases* (ICD), which is the global standard, developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) specifically to facilitate diagnosis and ensure consistency across diverse health systems and cultures. The WHO’s extensive process of testing and ensuring equivalence of translations in many languages for ICD-10 and subsequent revisions provided an authoritative model for how psychological terms and concepts were formally translated to maintain clinical integrity across cultures.

2.4 Terminological Definitions

One more theoretical aspect we would like to dwell on refers to the types of definitions that we considered acceptable for *Mic dicționar englez-român de termeni din psihologie* (2025) since, as we will exemplify below, the raw material compiled by our students did not always meet terminological and lexicographical standards not only with regards to the terms and their translations, but also when it came to the actual definitions.

According to the 2022 *International Standard 704* (ISO 704), the ideal specialized definition of a term is of two kinds: intensional or extensional. And out of the two, an intensional definition is preferred because it is the only one consisting of a superordinate, intrinsic elements and extrinsic elements as well as distinguishing characteristics. The superordinate shows how a concept is related to others in a system of concepts, whether hierarchically (generically or partitively) or associatively. For instance, in our dictionary, the definition of the term *dermatilomania* (Figure 2) begins with the superordinate, a compulsive obsessive disorder, thus connecting it with its system of concepts and offering the first clues to the readers as to the meaning of the term. The superordinate is ideally accompanied by intrinsic and/or extrinsic details regarding the concept, as is the case with the definition below (see Figure 2).

Dermatilomania
(Excoriation disorder)

An obsessive compulsive disorder characterized by the repeated urge to pick at one's own skin, often to the extent that damage is caused. Skin-picking may be done unthinkingly and the person may have tried multiple times to stop.

Figure 2. Example of intensional definition of the concept of *dermatilomania* from *Mic dicționar englez-român de termeni din psihologie* (2025).

It is also important to point out that the structure of the definitions from a terminological point of view depends on the Creative Commons source where the definition is taken from. Since the Romanian definition is a translation, it is also heavily dependent on the structure of the English definition. Most of the CC resources we used were chosen specifically because they allowed us to change and adapt the source text, which, in turn, allowed us to edit and adapt it to the required standards.

ISO 704 postulates that, in cases in which intensional definitions are difficult to formulate, a definition could consist of a list of subordinate concepts, be they linked through generic or partitive relations. *Mic dicționar englez-român de termeni din psihologie* (2025) includes adapted versions of such extensional definitions, in fewer numbers. See two examples from the final version (V3) of the dictionary in Figure 3 below.

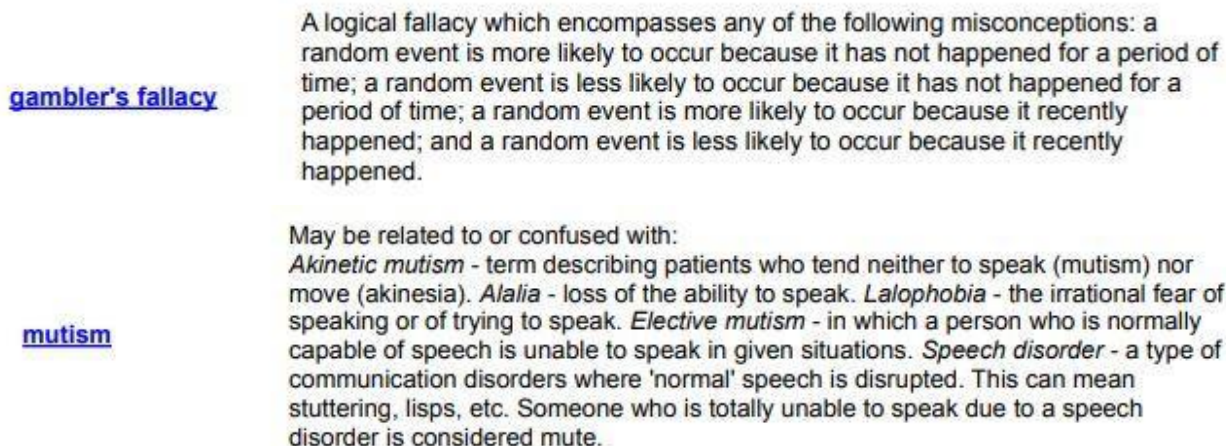


Figure 3. Extension-like definitions from *Mic dicționar englez-român de termeni din psihologie* (2025).

However, a good portion of the definitions in the dictionary often included more details and context for certain buzzword concepts since our main targets (and contributors) were semi-specialists (students) who might require a more detailed definition of a specific concept as illustrated below in the case of *Munchausen syndrome by proxy* (Figure 4).

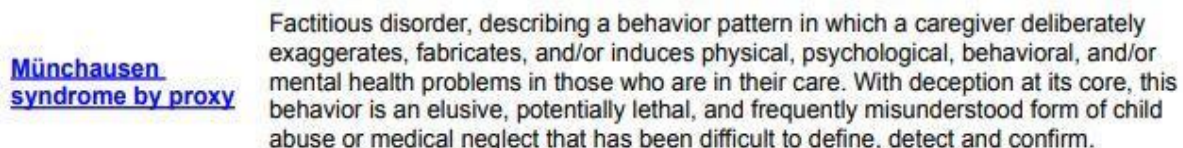


Figure 4. A context-rich definition from *Mic dicționar englez-român de termeni din psihologie* (2025).

2.5 Co-Creation of a Dictionary as an Open Educational Resource

Co-creating a bilingual dictionary with students, focused on a single field, utilizing definitions solely from open licensed sources, presented various pedagogical opportunities, but also confronted us with some notable difficulties. The latter will be detailed and examined in the subsequent sections.

Sager (1990) provided us with a systematic approach to terminology management (or processing), covering the linguistic, cognitive, and communicative dimensions of specialized vocabulary. Key topics included the methodical compilation of terminology and standardization of definitions, which offered a solid framework for applying rigor to the project after the initial student word selection. It helped transition the dictionary from a student project to an open educational resource of applied terminography, reinforcing the checking and validation process by our expert team.

After defining the dictionary's scope (to encompass terms from various dimensions of psychology) and identifying our primary audience (namely, psychology students or researchers), we proceeded to decide on the terms that would be included.

The students received a short list of core terms (including frequently-used terms like *anxiety*, *empathy*, or *depression*) and a list with a number of CC license glossaries/dictionaries and additional open sources with definitions that they could use. A sample entry (Figure 5) was created so they could have a model.

	EN	RO	Semnificație EN	Semnificație RO	Imagine	Sursa
1	depression	depresie	"a psychological disorder that affects millions of people worldwide and is known to be caused by biological, social, and cultural factors."	"tulburare afectivă de care suferă milioane de oameni, cauzată de factori biologici, sociali și culturali"		Imagine de Yuris Alhumaydy de pe Unsplash Yuris Alhumaydy (@yrsas) ... unplash.com Depression Pictures Do... unplash.com
2			https://www.saskoer.ca/introductiontopsychology/back-matter/glossary/#D			
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Figure 5. Model entry (from V2).

The semester assignment required students to begin with this material and search for other specialized words/phrases that they encountered most often in all the literature existing round psychology, extract and include them in the dictionary, choose a brief English definition, and translate everything into Romanian. The primary challenges during the review of V2 included recognizing terms and definitions that appeared two or three times, as well as identifying irrelevant terms or common English words (non-specialized vocabulary) that had been mistakenly included.

As soon as we had decided on the headwords that we would keep, we moved on to verify the sources of the definitions. Some were absent from the list of CC licensed resources we had shared, yet could still be added due to the compatibility of their licenses. Others, on the other hand, despite the shortlist provided, were sourced from copyrighted materials. Therefore, a large part of our proofreading consisted of consulting glossaries and other specialized OERs, like journal articles, to replace them with content licensed under CC.

At times, we were unable to find an appropriately licensed source, which was a major setback because, even though the term was important for psychology, we had to exclude it to avoid incompatible licensing or even copyright infringement. We also dealt with numerous entries where the terms had no sources at all, or the links were nonfunctional. As mentioned earlier, some CC licenses are not suitable for developing derivative works; thus, careful handling of source licenses and proper attribution were essential to maintain legal compliance and prevent unintentionally causing a license conflict.

Several significant elements regarding the actual translation process need to be discussed. First and foremost, it was essential to verify the precision of the term and definition - as a reference and benchmark, we relied on The VandenBos (2020) *APA Dictionary of Clinical Psychology*, translated in Romanian as *Dicţionar de Psihologie Clinică* (2020), and *Dicţionar de Psihologie* by Şchiopu (1997) to review terminology related to clinical psychology, given that the definitions and equivalents we included stemmed from accessible resources.

In the field of psychology, dominated academically and scientifically by Western, English-speaking cultures, many terms do not have an equivalent correspondence in Romanian. This conundrum is called anisomorphism (Adamska-Salaciak in Durkin 2016:147). When we examine the term *tantrum*, for instance, none of the possible Romanian equivalents (*acces de furie* or *criză*) completely encompass the meaning and application of the English term and idea, namely that such behaviour is deemed typical for a child. They only give a partial equivalence (Liu 2018). Thus, our selection for the Romanian translation involved the translanguaging

borrowing of the English term, as it was already common and utilized by Romanian experts (see Figure 6).

Sometimes, psychological terms were already employed in actual professional settings with multiple variations. For example, a single word in one language may have multiple translations in another, each with its own subtle shades of meaning and usage. The translator must carefully consider the context in which each word is used to determine the most appropriate translation.

There were also cases in which finding the right equivalent in the target language proved difficult (e.g., ‘mastery-approach goals’ or ‘mastery-avoidance goals’), due to the structure of the term in the source language. As one can see in Figure 7, the initial translation of ‘mastery-avoidance goals’ in V2 is rather descriptive and had to be replaced in V3 with the specialized one (see Figure 8).

mastery-avoidance goals	obiective de evitare a învățării/a măiestriei/ob. de evitare a necunoasterii	Eforturi pentru a evita pierderea competențelor și abilităților (sau stagnarea dezvoltării lor), uitarea a ceea ce a fost învățat, neînțelegerea materialului sau lăsarea unei sarcini incompletă sau neînvățată	Entail striving to avoid losing one's skills and abilities (or having development stagnate), forgetting what one has learned, misunderstanding material, or leaving a task incomplete or unmastered. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goal_orientation
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Figure 7. Descriptive translation (V2).

mastery-avoidance goals	Goals that represent a focus on avoiding misunderstanding or the failure to master a task. For instance, athletes who are concerned about falling short of their past performances reflect a mastery-avoidance goal.	obiective de prevenire a eșecului	Obiective care se bazează pe evitarea neînțelegerii sau a eșecului de a stăpâni o sarcină. De exemplu, sportivi care sunt îngrijorați de faptul că nu își pot atinge performanțele anterioare reflectă un asemenea obiectiv.
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Figure 8. Specialized translation from *Mic dicționar englez-român de termeni din psihologie* (2025).

When evaluating the students’ work, we found that, at times, they had strayed from their primary task, which was to translate a selected definition from English to Romanian, and instead offered a completely different variant of the definition in Romanian (Figure 9).

Jealousy	Gelozie	Sentiment chinuitor și obsedant provocat de bănuiala sau certitudinea că ființa iubită este necredincioasă.	Typically refers to the thoughts, feelings, and behaviours that occur when a person believes a valued relationship is being threatened by a rival. This rival may or may not know that he or she is perceived as a threat.
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Figure 9. The Romanian definition of ‘jealousy’ is not an actual translation of the English one (V2).

Another detail of the making of this dictionary that we would like to argue in favour of is the way in which we went about gathering the material, namely by involving our students. Crowdsourcing has historically served as a method for creating dictionaries (Stamper in Oglivie, 12) alongside the industrialization of society and the introduction of trains, dependable mail, or the telegraph. The first use of computer technology in dictionary-making came in 1966, it resulted in *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language* (Rundell et al in Oglivie). It goes without saying that the emergence and growth of the Internet facilitated collaboration and technology on an unparalleled level.

Mic dicționar was compiled using *Google Sheets*, where each letter was assigned to its own individual Sheet, but students were writing and editing in collaboration, sometimes simultaneously. Our primary concern was ensuring a uniform style and tone throughout the entries. We had to deal with instances where identical terms occurred 2-3 times (since the headwords weren’t organized alphabetically when included) and with words which had been included under the wrong letter, among other issues. It follows that, formatting the document was, in many ways, a complicated procedure. See Figure 10 for a post-formatting example from the final version (V3).

Termen în engleză	Semnificație în engleză	Termen în română	Semnificație în română
face validity	The extent to which a measurement method appears to measure the construct of interest.	validitate de fațadă	Grad în care o metodă de măsurare pare adecvată pentru măsurarea constructului de interes.
facial feedback hypothesis	A hypothesis according to which tightening of the facial muscles as in a smile or a frown can alter the way we feel.	ipoteza feedback-ului facial	Ipoteză conform căreia contractarea a mușchilor faciali într-un zâmbet sau o încruntare poate modifica modul în care ne simțim.
factitious disorder (FD)	A mental disorder where the "ill" individual's symptoms are either self-induced or falsified by the patient. Essentially, it is the act of an individual faking, exaggerating, or even inflicting self injuries.	tulburare factică	Tulburare psihică în care simptomele individului „bolnav” sunt fie autoinduse, fie falsificate de pacient. În esență, pentru a-și asuma rolul de bolnav, individul falsifică, exagerează sau chiar își produce răni în mod deliberat.
factor analysis	A statistical technique that organizes the variables into a smaller number of clusters, such that they are strongly correlated within each cluster but weakly correlated between clusters.	analiză factorială	Tehnică statistică ce presupune organizarea variabilelor într-un număr mai mic de clustere, astfel încât să existe o corelație puternică în cadrul fiecărui cluster, dar slabă între clustere.
false memory	A memory for an event that never actually occurred, implanted by experimental manipulation or other means.	amintire falsă	Amintire a unui eveniment care nu a avut loc niciodată, implantat printr-o manipulare experimentală sau prin alte mijloace.
family therapy	A therapy which involves families meeting together with a therapist, in some cases, the mission is to establish for a particular problem with one family.	terapie de familie	Terapie ce implică întâlnirea familiilor cu un terapeut; în unele cazuri, întâlnirea este

Figure 10. Screenshot of formatting outcome from *Mic dicționar englez-român de termeni din psihologie* (2025).

A final challenge we would like to mention is that online sources, and it seems especially user-generated Creative Commons sources, have an unreliable shelf-life. While some endure, others may be taken down without notice, which was our experience with one of the websites our students relied on for the project, a user-generated, user-hosted, open-sourced psychology wiki (https://psychology.fandom.com/wiki/Psychology_Wiki).

4. Conclusions

Putting together this bilingual dictionary was a challenging collaborative effort, demanding a thorough grasp of psychology, definition-making, and translation, in both English and Romanian. The joint efforts of all those involved in the project eventually produced a collection of concepts in psychology that is relevant to our students and enhances the open knowledge framework, especially when it comes to Romanian users.

This kind of work is never truly finished, as new terms that are relevant to the development of a field constantly emerge. In contrast, some terms can become obsolete, their meaning can change, thus needing to be replaced with new ones. Keeping a bilingual dictionary up-to-date with such changes requires continuous monitoring of both the source and target language psychological literature.

Additionally, online glossaries and other CC sources are sometimes taken down, which introduces unique considerations regarding usage rights, correct attribution, and license compatibility as we look for viable alternatives. Therefore, it is necessary to constantly review, check, and double-check meanings, translations, and resources.

Our intention for the future is to ensure the durability of this dictionary and broaden it by incorporating additional terms pertinent to psychological theory and practice. We aim to add more examples that demonstrate how these terms are applied in context. Ideally, we might also want to go back to the initial idea of including images as elements that could illustrate the terms and perhaps make their definitions easier to comprehend. A second edition would therefore provide a fuller understanding of the rich and ever-changing field of psychology while informing Romanian users about its advancements.

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