



日中韓辭典研究所 The CJK Dictionary Institute

Compilation strategies for pedagogically effective bilingual learner's dictionaries

Jack Halpern

CEO, The CJK Dictionary Institute, Inc.

jack@cjki.org

Abstract

Chinese, Japanese and Arabic bilingual dictionaries suffer from shortcomings rarely seen in works of other major languages. These include archaic headwords and senses, an overly prescriptive approach, learner-unfriendly sense ordering, and the omission of important multiword expressions. This paper describes how three bilingual learner's dictionaries address these issues, focusing on compilation and design innovations that increase learner usability, and on comparing with other dictionaries that do not meet these goals adequately.

Firstly, sense ordering must take into account the complex interlingual equivalences between the source and target languages. Logico-semantic ordering achieves the highest pedagogical benefit, while frequency-based ordering and chronological ordering may be counterproductive. This paper describes how logico-semantic ordering is implemented in Japanese and Chinese dictionaries.

Secondly, Chinese characters form a network of interrelated parts that function as an integrated system of high morphological productivity. Of special benefit to learners is an entry structure that allows them to grasp the logographic characteristics of each character and the interrelatedness between senses. This paper describes techniques for making the semantic transparency and morphological productivity of each character clear.

Thirdly, part-of-speech labels, while critically important for learners, are often omitted or inaccurate, especially in Chinese dictionaries. This paper analyzes the main issues related to the treatment of POS labels in Chinese dictionaries.

Fourthly, headword selection criteria are discussed. This includes the selection and treatment of multiword expressions in Arabic dictionaries, an often neglected aspect of Arabic lexicography.

Finally, the paper presents a context-sensitive dictionary that is dynamically linked to an *Interactive Parallel Text* engine, an innovative technology that enables learners to read parallel texts enjoyably and interactively (Libera).

Keywords: learner's dictionary, pedagogical lexicography, Chinese, Japanese, Arabic

References

Arts, T. (ed). (2014). *Oxford Arabic Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Buckwalter, T. & Parkinson, D. (ed.) (2011). *A Frequency Dictionary of Arabic: Core Vocabulary for Learners*. London: Routledge.

Dong, X. (1999). Cong weici dao tici de zhuanhua tan hanyu cidian biao zhu cixing de biyaoxing. *Lexicographical Studies 1*. 24-32.

Halpern, J. (ed.). (2013). *The Kodansha Kanji Learner's Dictionary*. Tokyo: Kodansha USA.

Yu S., Zhu X., Wang H., and Zhang Y. (1998). *The Grammatical Knowledge-Base of Contemporary Chinese -- A Complete Specification*. Beijing: Tsinghua University Press, Guangxi Science and Technology Press.