

# English-Japanese Lexicography and the *Unabridged Genius*

Kosei Minamide



Kosei Minamide teaches English linguistics at Osaka Women's University. He studied discourse analysis and educational linguistics at the University of London from 1986 to 1987 and attended the first International Lexicography Course held at the University of Exeter in 1987. Professor Minamide has been engaged in editing English-Japanese dictionaries, is the chief editor of *Taishukan's Unabridged Genius English-Japanese Dictionary* (2001) and *Genius English-Japanese Dictionary* (3/e 2001). His current interest is in the incorporation of findings and insights of linguistics, specifically cognitive linguistics, pragmatics and discourse analysis, into lexicographical description.  
mkosei@kcn.ne.jp

## 1. Introduction

In April 2001, *Taishukan's Unabridged Genius English-Japanese Dictionary* was introduced in Japan and has been promoted by its publisher as a revolutionary addition to the competitive English-Japanese dictionary market. The *Unabridged Genius* contains 255,000 entries and bears the hallmarks that have distinguished the *Genius* brand for decades: accessible and readable description style; helpful usage notes; comprehensive coverage of new computer and Internet terms along with newly coined words in science, politics, business, etc; updated definitions, especially in the fast-moving areas of technology; and the addition of entries on people and places of worldwide note. These features will make the dictionary a useful companion for Japanese who wish to explore the English language in all its dimensions.

From my viewpoint as an editor of the *Unabridged Genius*, I will review the history of English-Japanese lexicography and discuss its particular features and problems. This task is undoubtedly a daunting one, and in the limited space available I can offer only a brief and limited overview, commenting on a few English-Japanese dictionaries which stand as landmarks in the history of English-Japanese lexicography, and including discussion of the *Unabridged Genius*.

## 2. The English-Japanese Dictionary roots

A vast number of English-Japanese dictionaries, almost exclusively designed for Japanese learners of English, have been published since the year 1862, when *Eiwa-Taiyaku-Shuchin-Jisho* (A *Pocket Dictionary of the English and Japanese Languages* [sic]), which can bear the honor of being the first printed English-Japanese dictionary, was edited by several Dutch-Japanese interpreters, with T. Hori as the chief editor. They used, as their primary sources, the Dutch-English part of Picard's *A New Pocket Dictionary of the English and Dutch Languages* (2nd edition, 1857), adopting from it about 35,000 English entry words, and a few Dutch-Japanese dictionaries, most significantly Katuragawa's *Oranda-Jii* (A *Dutch-Japanese Dictionary*, 1855-58),

which was relied on for translation of the Dutch definitions into Japanese. Why was Dutch involved in editing an English-Japanese dictionary? Until Japan abandoned its national isolation policy in 1855 and began to trade with the West, the only window initially opened to the outside world was to the Netherlands. Though extremely limited in number, Dutch books on medicine, surgery, pharmacology, astronomy and some other related areas were brought in by Dutch merchants through this interaction which continued for some time on the Island of Dejima in Nagasaki. Dutch was at that time practically the only foreign language with which Japanese people, more specifically a very limited number of Japanese who were allowed to study Dutch by the Tokugawa Shogunate, were in contact. Several kinds of Dutch-Japanese dictionaries, such as *Oranda-Jii*, were produced solely for decoding purposes prior to the advent of English-Japanese dictionaries.

This first English-Japanese dictionary was produced in response to the urgent need to learn about Western culture in the wake of the US navy's visit in 1853, as mentioned just above, it was compiled by several Japanese interpreters of Dutch who had little or no experience of speaking or hearing English actually used by native speakers. In Europe, the origin of most bilingual dictionaries can be traced back to the practice in the early Middle Ages of writing interlinear glosses. These glosses, mostly Latin-English and French-English put together, rearranged and enlarged developed into glossaries, finally in bilingual dictionaries. In Japan, however, just as we have seen, the first English-Japanese dictionary was a literal fusion of Dutch-English and Dutch-Japanese dictionaries, a fusion of dictionaries compiled on the basis of totally different principles and assumptions. The uniquely edited dictionary was abridged and enlarged in subsequent editions at many imitated or pirated versions were published. Crude and inaccurate by today's standards, these dictionaries had their own personality as a result of policy decisions taken by the dictionary editors, and they made their own distinctive contribution to early studies of English in Japan.

The collapse of the Tokugawa Shogunate was followed by the Meiji Restoration

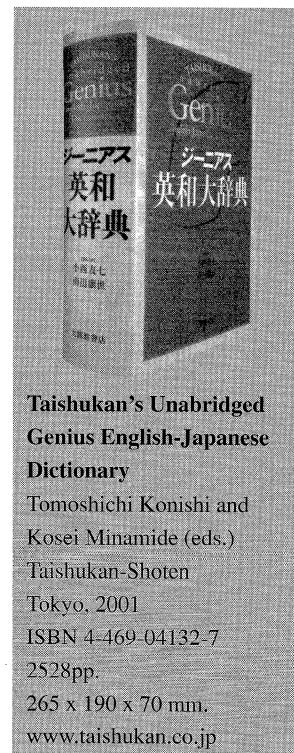
(1868), established in the desire for 'an enriched domain and strengthened military power'. The government therefore eagerly encouraged scholars to 'translate' the West. The number of Japanese who had opportunities to hear or read real English gradually increased and English began to be taught at a considerable number of schools. Copies of dictionaries compiled by William Lobscheid, John Ogilvie, P. A. Nuttall, Noah Webster, and a series of revisions and abridgments of these dictionaries, were brought back by people dispatched abroad to study Western culture or imported by foreign-book traders. By this time English-Dutch dictionaries had been totally discarded as dictionary resources, replaced by these English-Chinese and English-English dictionaries. By taking full advantage of the newly introduced repositories, English-Japanese dictionaries have made remarkable progress in format, content (pronunciation, definition, sense division, illustrations, usage labels, etc), typography, quality of paper, printing and binding.

### 3. English-Japanese Lexicography in the 20th Century

In the Meiji Period (1868-1912), and the subsequent Taisho (1912-1926) and the early Showa Periods (1926-1940), the government was not only eager to import Western culture through books but also invited experienced foreign scholars and scientists as teachers and engineers, among whom were Harold Palmer and A. S. Hornby, the great pioneers of ELT in the 1930s and 1940s who made Japan a test ground for ELT innovations, just as Michael West did in India (Cowie 1999). Fully aware that the existing dictionaries, whether monolingual or bilingual, failed to meet the needs of his Japanese students, Hornby published the first monolingual EFL dictionary, *Idiomatic and Syntactic English Dictionary (ISED, 1942)*, in which he refined and elaborated lexicographic devices which were first introduced by Palmer in his *Grammar of English Words* (1938), such as construction patterns, the difference between countable and uncountable nouns, and syntactic patterns of 24 anomalous finites. This dictionary was republished by OUP under the name of *A Learner's Dictionary of Current English* (1948), which underwent many revisions to finally become *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (OALD)*. Today there proliferate on the global market various monolingual learner's dictionaries which incorporate Hornby's ideas of verb patterns and countable/uncountable noun distinction, and West and Endicott's ideas of a limited

defining vocabulary, creating a unique identity and carving out a niche in the EFL market. They are exported to Japan and all over the world. It is worthy of note, however, that the root of these modern sophisticated learners' dictionaries trace back to Japan and India.

Influenced by Palmer and Hornby, English-Japanese dictionaries began to change. They were more or less made on the model of *ISED* and some other monolingual general dictionaries such as *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English* (1911), *The Pocket Oxford English Dictionary of Current English* (1924), shortened and updated versions of Webster's *An American Dictionary of the English Language* (1859) and Daniel Jones' *An English Pronouncing Dictionary* (1917). Digesting lexicographic information from these more advanced and sophisticated resources, the Japanese lexicographers began to improve their dictionaries by supplementing them with illustrative examples, illustrations, encyclopedic information, analyses of learner errors, brief etymologies, and grammar and usage notes at many entries, in addition to performing their basic work of defining English words in Japanese and presenting pronunciation in IPA, modified IPA or respelling systems. Worthy of special note among the general dictionaries published prior to *ISED* are *Sanseido's Concise English-Japanese Dictionary* (1922) and *Kenkyusha's New English-Japanese Dictionary* (1927). The Sanseido dictionary, mostly following the British tradition of dictionaries for words and encyclopedias for facts, was so popular that a part of the title '*konsaisu*' (= *concise*) was metonymically used for a long time to refer to a small-sized English-Japanese dictionary in general. Revised and updated, this dictionary has developed into the current 13th edition (2001), still sought after by people who prefer a handy dictionary they can grab to look up a word when reading to a learner's dictionary with complicated grammar codes and lengthy usage notes. The Kenkyusha dictionary, on the other hand, was a large-scale volume of about 100,000 entries, with encyclopedic features. This dictionary has been updated and further enlarged several times and in March of this year a 6th edition appeared, expanded to 260,000 entries. Like the earlier editions, it enjoys a unique position of authority in the matter of accuracy and sophisticated presentation of pronunciations, etymologies and definitions of words, particularly technical terms for which a group of expert consultants were employed.



**Taishukan's Unabridged  
Genius English-Japanese  
Dictionary**

Tomoshichi Konishi and  
Kosei Minamide (eds.)

Taishukan-Shoten

Tokyo, 2001

ISBN 4-469-04132-7

2528pp.

265 x 190 x 70 mm.

[www.taishukan.co.jp](http://www.taishukan.co.jp)

a column from the  
*Unabridged Genius*

### Jackie

**Jackie** *jack-i-* *yo* (英) 1 (英) (NZ) (英) ジャッキー (先住民の男); (PC) native Australian, native New Zealander. 2 [Jackie] ジャッキー (英) (少年向けの雑誌) *Jackie Robinson Rookie of the Year Award* (野球) → Robinson.

*stiff up like Jackie* ずうずうしくえらそうに坐る.

*jack-hanger* (英) (鳥) = fiscal strike.

*jack-hangman* (英) (鳥) = fiscal strike.

**jack-in-a-box** (英) = jack-in-the-box.

**jack-ing** (英) (鳥) (鳥) 籠をすること.

**jack-in-office** (英) (鳥) (鳥) [時に] 専大な小説人.

**jack-in-the-box** (英) (鳥) = es, jacks. [時に] 1 (ふたを開けると人形などが飛び出す) ひっくり返し; (しばしば) 上下に運動する物人. 2 (英) 毎時 (ポ) の時報 (鐘).

**jack-in-the-green**, **Jack-in-the-Green** (英) (鳥) = jacks. (英) 青葉のジャック (昔 May Day の祭り、青葉で覆った木の村に、またはおかしな人).

**jack-in-the-pulpit** (英) (鳥) = jacks. (鳥) 1

*Arisaema triphyllum* (北

米) のサトイデ科ランシウ

ウ属の一種. 2 (鳥)

*cuckoo-pint*.

**jack-knife** (英) (鳥)

*knife* 1 ジャックナイフ

(cf. *clasp knife*). 2

(水泳) = dive. 3 (英)

計) ジャックナイフ法 (金)

から 1 変数の値を 1 に計

算を何回か繰り返す。デ

タの

変数性を決定する方法。

— 節 (鳥) 1 中央部で折れ

曲る。2 (水泳) エビ型泳法を

する。3 (鳥) ジャ

ックナイフで切る。…を(2)に折り曲げる。

**ja-lap-y**, **-py** *ja-lap-yi* (英) (鳥) はら自動車 (飛行

機) (鳥) *jolly*, *jolly*, *jolly*, *jolly* などともいう。

**ja-louse** *ja-louse* (英) (鳥) (鳥) …を怪しいと思う

(suspect) …を怪疑する。

**ja-lousie** *ja-lousie*, *ja-lousie*, *ja-lousie* [ラフ

ス] (鳥) 1 振られ。2 ガラス製より。

**jam** *jam* [初] 18c:

*jam* (鳥) 18c: 1

ジャム (鳥) 18c: 1

strawberry (鳥) 18c: 1

スーテン1杯1杯のジャ

ム 2 (鳥) 18c: 1

間のかみかみ) 1

*jam today* → *jam to-*

*tomorrow*.

**jam tomorrow** (英)

18c: (鳥) 18c: 1

バウ色の未来 (Lewis Carroll の *Through the*

*Looking Glass* 中の句: *jam today* はすくはい物)

を待つ) 1 There is little point in promising peo-

ple - tomorrow when they are losing their jobs

because of the recession. 不況のため失業者が彼出

している時に明日の夢を約束してもほとんど意味がない

(鳥) 18c: 1

**jam on it** (英) (鳥) 18c: 1

18c: 1

18c: 1

18c: 1

18c: 1

18c: 1

18c: 1

18c: 1

18c: 1

(reduced from the original)

During World War II, English was denounced as an enemy's language and English-Japanese lexicography declined. After the war, over-simplified and carelessly edited dictionaries or wordlists proliferated, and it took about two decades for the lexicography to rise from the ashes, recover its strength, and produce modern, comprehensive and practical dictionaries which surpass those published before the war.

Worthy of special note is *Kenkyusha's New Collegiate English-Japanese Dictionary* (1967), equipped with elaborate codes of sentence patterns and countable/uncountable noun distinction labels. Since it appeared, "a war of learner's dictionaries" has been unceasingly carried out among publishers who wish to pre-empt the market of high school and college student users. Dictionaries aimed at this market have become increasingly oriented toward the facilitation of encoding under the influence of notional, functional and communicative teaching approaches.

#### 4. The Genius' breakthrough

The fact that linguistic theories have been rarely mentioned in English-Japanese dictionary prefaces demonstrates that most lexicographers have tended to confine themselves to collecting examples or, more often than not, borrowing them directly or indirectly from other dictionaries and classifying meanings on the basis of conventional methods with little or no background linguistic knowledge. To those lexicographers linguistics is a remote, abstract and even frivolous discipline, which makes little or no practical contribution to dictionary making. To linguists, on the other hand, lexicography is often lamentably unscientific, uneasily poised between academic discipline and the commercial world. However, as demonstrated by recently-published dictionaries, for example, *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners* (2002), which describes metaphoric expressions on the basis of Lakoff and Johnson (1980), an increasing number of lexicographers have come to realize that lexicography should be reconciled with developments in some fields of linguistics, particularly in such fields as computer linguistics, pragmatics, discourse analysis and cognitive semantics. Fully aware of the importance of a closer acquaintance with these areas of linguistics, the *Genius* editorial staff tried to incorporate insights and findings of these fields of linguistics into the *Unabridged Genius*.

Over the past two decades, computerized corpora have played a more and more

important role in editing dictionaries, to the point where lexicography is arguably incomplete without a significant component devoted to corpus linguistics. Popular myth is that the larger the corpora, the better they are suited to lexicographic task. This might lead to a conclusion that any corpus used as a database for dictionary editing should be as large as such major corpora as the British National Corpus (BNC). We are doubtful about this conclusion. Such corpora is liable to drown us in data, presenting an overwhelming number of examples usually shown in the form of KWICK-concordance where a key word is centered in a fixed-length field (e.g. 80 characters). Semantic interpretation of the examples thus presented is very difficult for non-native speakers, because meaning is usually negotiated, depending on the context and structure of the text where it occurs. Longer contexts are needed for accurate interpretation of examples. In preparation for compiling the *Unabridged Genius*, therefore, we constructed an informally produced corpus containing over 20 million words of contemporary American English, consisting of a spoken corpus of 10 million words (from interviews, newscast, TV discussions, etc) and written corpus of 10 million words (from newspapers, magazines, etc).

Compared with established corpus resources such as the BNC, which are designed to be representative, our corpus is insignificantly small and not well balanced in terms of text (or genre) types, selection of entries and decision of the order of definitions within entries. As suggested by Tribble (1997), however, the computer-driven research works best when its use is integrated. There are now available for integration various kinds of corpora, freely accessible by individuals on the Internet. Also obtainable is a vast amount of information on collocation and usage from such search engines as Google. Full text search of CD-ROM encyclopedias will serve as a coherently structured and usable resource. This increasing availability of linguistic data stored on the web and on CD-ROMs, coupled with a simple but very powerful search tool, will compensate for non-native lexicographers' limited exposure to language in use and make it possible to look at natural English in quantities large enough to see recurring patterns in texts of all kinds and to offer users up-to-date coverage of the language. These digital resources can replace the luxury of multiple exposures to English over time and in a variety of meaningful contexts, which are usually denied to non-native lexicographers. They will help to reduce the







- Iwasaki, T. and Y. Koine.** 1967. *Kenkyusha Eiwa-Chujiten* (Kenkyusha's New Collegiate English-Japanese Dictionary). Tokyo: Kenkyusha.
- Jones, D.** 1917. *An English Pronouncing Dictionary*. London: J. M. Dent & Sons.
- Kanda, N. and H. Kanazawa.** 1922. *Shuchin-Konsaisu-Eiwa-Jiten* (Sanseido's Concise English-Japanese Dictionary). Tokyo: Sanseido.
- Katuragawa, H.** 1858. *Oranda-Jii* (A Dutch-Japanese Dictionary). 5 vols. Facsimile edition. Tokyo: Waseda University.
- Kihara, K.** 2001. *Konsaisu-Eiwa-Jiten* (Sanseido's Concise English-Japanese Dictionary). 13th edition. Tokyo: Sanseido.
- Konishi, T. and K. Minamide.** 2001. *Genius-Eiwa-Jiten* (Genius English-Japanese Dictionary). 3rd edition. Tokyo: Taishukan-Shoten.
- Lobschied, W. / Tuda, S. et al.** 1879. *Eika-Wayaku-Jiten* (A Dictionary of the English, Chinese and Japanese Languages, with Japanese Pronunciation). Tokyo: Yamanouchi-Fuku Shuppan.
- Nuttall, P. A.** 1882. *Routledge's Desk Dictionary of the English Language*. London: George Routledge & Sons.
- Ogilvie, J.** 1864. *A Comprehensive English Dictionary*. London: Blackie & Son.
- Okakura, Y.** 1927. *Shin-Eiwa-Daijiten* (Kenkyusha's New English-Japanese Dictionary). Tokyo: Kenkyusha.
- Palmer, H.** 1938. *A Grammar of English Words*. London: Longmans, Green & Co.
- Picard, H.** 1857. *A New Pocket Dictionary of the English and Dutch Languages* (2nd edition. Revised and augmented by A. B. Maatjes). Zalt-Bommel: John Noman & Son.
- Rundell, M.** 2002. *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners* (MEDAL). Oxford: Macmillan Education.
- Shimaoka, T.** 2002. *Wordpower Ei-Ei-Wa Jiten* (Wordpower Fully-bilingual Dictionary). Tokyo: Zoshinkai-Shuppan.
- Takebayashi, S.** 2002. *Shin-Eiwa-Daijiten* (Kenkyusha's New English-Japanese Dictionary). 6th edition. Tokyo: Kenkyusha.
- Webster, N.** 1859. *An American Dictionary of the English Language* (Revised and enlarged by C. A. Goodrich). Springfield: George and Charles Merriam.
- West, M. P. and J. G. Endicott.** 1935. *The New Method English Dictionary*. London: Longmans, Green & Co.

## Sexy Dictionary

Ilan J. Kernerman

Dictionaries and sex are worlds apart, but the world is changing and words change. As it becomes more outspoken, sex and its words are increasingly attributed to denote anything but sex, and *sexy* now means *interesting, exciting, fashionable* (cf. LDOCE3, MEDAL, OALD6, and appendix).

Sex is physical and natural, sensual and essential; it embodies attraction, temptation, passion, satisfaction; it is instinctive, almost irresistible, and grabs instant attention. Now wonder, then, that in these times of consumerism, it is (as has maybe always been) the great teaser in marketing, promotion and advertising, applied for the sale of *sexy* products, ideas, etc.

Dictionaries stand in stark contrast; fruits of the mind, of studious thought and scientific labor, rationalizations, verbalizations, lists and order all put in frames and formations. Often this makes

them staid and estranged, cumbersome and complex, desireless and repelling – lacking some basic intuition that seems inherent in normal lively communication. What waste of wonderful human knowledge!

Does it have to be so? Why do many fear dictionaries, use them only if they must or not at all? Can't a dictionary be handy and friendly? Tell us about what lexicography and poetry share in common, relate dictionaries to reality and dream; give just the right information simply, clearly, fully; not patronize as a sacred know-it-all scripture, but literally speak the language of the user and be sensitive to the media that is used.

Let it appeal, seduce, be pleasant to use and easy to understand, stimulate and gratify, help to wisen us up, to broaden horizons and lead on to new ground – be a *sexy dictionary*, not just a provocative title.



Ilan J. Kernerman manages K Dictionaries and edits Kernerman Dictionary News.

Thanks to Ramesh Krishnamurthy for researching *sexy* in the Bank of English. An appendix containing his findings and analysis is online: <http://kdictionaries.com/newsletter/kdn10-sexy.html>

This contribution is a revised extract of an article in *Studs*, 2, 2001. Lund: Studentlitteratur.