



An overview of YBM and *Si-Si ELITE* *English-English-Korean Dictionary* Chung-ui Park

Chung-ui Park graduated from the College of Law at Korea University. He wrote a guide to TOEIC reading comprehension, translated novels and reference books, and operated a private school for elementary and secondary school students. Mr Park is the Editor-in-Chief of the Lexicographic Department and a member of the Editorial Committee of YBM Si-sa-yong-o-sa.

YBM Si-sa-yong-o-sa is the largest English Language Teaching company in Korea. It has a variety of educational, commercial and societal interests that far exceed merely publishing ELT materials.

Since its foundation in 1961, YBM has been the leader in introducing new methods, technologies and delivery systems to the local language study sector. Today, it is the acknowledged front runner in the field, and is highly respected throughout the country for the quality of its products and the strength of its brand name.

The YBM enterprise began in the early 1960s, with the publication of *The Study of Current English* magazine, well before this subject became popular in Korea. In the decades that followed, YBM has consolidated its reputation as a market innovator and proceeded to diversify its scope of activities.

The most notable highlights of YBM operations can be summarized as follows:

- publishing printed, audio, video and multimedia ELT and general titles, including well over 1,500 products
- a nationwide network of over 100 ELT institutes for children and adults
- preparing students for English proficiency tests and producing TOEIC, TOEFL and SEPT study aids
- a cable television education channel, broadcasting foreign language, culture and information programs
- counseling services for overseas study, including language learning programs
- rights import and export cooperation with major publishers worldwide
- distribution of foreign books and international popular periodicals
- leading the protection of international copyright in Korea and establishing the first local agency for foreign rights registration
- producing and marketing a variety of music products
- financial holdings, real estate, business management, and social services
- a new publishing house and language schools in North America

The main users of dictionaries in Korea are upper-secondary school and college students, who prefer medium- or pocket-size dictionaries. Accordingly, dictionaries in these ranges have 70% of the local dictionary market share. Since ELT courses were initiated in elementary schools two years ago, a great variety of dictionaries for beginners have appeared, but sales for this audience are still very poor.

There are four major dictionary publishers in Korea, including YBM, and scores of minor publishers. More than 200 bilingual English / Korean dictionary titles are available at bookstands, and the annual sales turnover of English dictionaries is estimated at approximately USD 30 million. However, in the last year there has been a steep decrease of 50% in dictionary sales, due to the country's economic crisis and consequent recession.

YBM Si-sa-yong-o-sa is Korea's prime publisher of English dictionaries, with a current total of fifty large-, medium- and small-size titles. Beginning with the *New World English-Korean Dictionary* (1970), the Si-sa list includes a Korean translation of the unabridged *Random House Dictionary of the English Language* (1986), English dictionaries from Obunsha in Japan and Longman in the UK, and its own creations under the *New World*, *Crown* and *Elite* names. The latest to appear, in the *Si-sa Elite English Dictionary Series*, is a Korean version of *Kernerman Semi-Bilingual Dictionaries: the Si-sa Elite English-English-Korean Dictionary*.

The *Si-sa Elite English-English-Korean Dictionary* is foremost for students who prepare for the state-held college entrance exam. Supplemented new entries were selected among the most commonly-used loan words and abbreviations from newspapers and magazines, as well as from high-tech terminology. In addition, the appendices were expanded to specifically suit the needs of the target Korean high school students. The dictionary is printed in two colors, to highlight both the headwords which are more frequently looked-up as well as the Korean translations.

The dictionary appeared on the market earlier this year in the midst of a difficult financial period. It is promoted through the YBM monthly bilingual magazines and other media, to gradually make it familiar to its prospective users. We trust that once our country overcomes its current economic crisis, the *Si-sa Elite English-English-Korean Dictionary* will find its place in the forefront of English learner's dictionaries in Korea.