



English Lexicography in Japan: its History, Innovations and Impact

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1. Introduction

It is only recently that Japan has been recognized as one of the world's major lexicographic powers, producing quality bilingual dictionaries, especially English-Japanese ones. Two examples of early innovative features of such dictionaries are: some eighty years ago, an attempt to indicate the un/countability of nouns, in Hidesaburo Saito's *Jukugo Honi Ei-wa Chu-jiten* ('Idiomological English-Japanese Dictionary', 1915) and fifty years ago a large-scale dictionary of collocations, Senkichiro Katsumata's *Eiwa Katsuyo Dai-jiten* ('New Dictionary of English Collocations', Kenkyusha, 1939). Regrettably, this dictionary has never been well known outside Japan.

Nowadays, however, the world knows more, though still not enough, about the generations of ingenuity, endeavor, competition and interaction which have made Japanese lexicography what it is today: a massive, complex, and highly competitive industry. Bilingual lexicography in Japan owes a great deal to European and American lexicography, but has in turn made a number of significant contributions to Western lexicography, in particular to EFL dictionaries – the most advanced and successful of all dictionary genres as the importance of English for global communication increases. This paper attempts to provide a guide to the world of lexicography in Japan, especially with regard to English-Japanese dictionaries (EJDs).

2. History²

During the period when Japan followed a policy of seclusion (1639-1853), it allowed business transactions only with the Netherlands, and depended solely on that country for contact with the outside world. Because of this, Dutch studies were very important and prominent. However, the Phoeton Incident (1808), in which a British warship in Dutch guise raided Nagasaki, made the Shogunate – the Japanese government of the time – realize keenly the necessity of shifting its foreign-language emphasis from Dutch to English. It therefore immediately

commissioned a team of official Dutch-Japanese interpreters to compile an English textbook (1811) and an English-Japanese vocabulary (1814) for governmental (but not public) use.

It is generally agreed that the first proper English-Japanese dictionary was published in 1862:

Tatsunosuke Hori's *Ei-wa Taiyaku Shuchin Jisho* ('A Pocket Dictionary of the English and Japanese Languages'. This work was based on the English-Dutch half of H. Picard's *A New Pocket Dictionary of the Dutch and English Languages*, 1843, 2/e 1857), which Hori aligned with the Dutch-Japanese halves of existing dictionaries of Dutch and Japanese. The Dutch language therefore served as a 'bridge' or mediating medium between the English and Japanese languages.

Half a century was required before the publication of Saito's dictionary (above, 1915). This innovative work was compiled with the needs of Japanese students in mind, unlike its predecessors, which drew considerably on such works as Webster's dictionaries in the United States and W. Lobscheid's *An English and Chinese Dictionary* (4 vols., 1866-1869, Daily Press, Hong Kong). As its English title suggests, Saito's dictionary laid emphasis on idiomatic expressions, and in particular on collocability with prepositions. Thus, he discriminated the meaning of *interfere* into two senses, the first collocating with *in* in the bracketed phrase *in a matter*, the second with *with* in the phrases *with one's work*, *with business*, and *with a plan*. In addition to his novel indication of the countability of nouns, Saito's work provided notes on points of difficulty for Japanese students. The Fowler brothers' *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1911) also influenced Saito's dictionary and its contemporaries, especially Jukkichi Inoue's *Ei-wa Dai-jiten* ('English-Japanese Dictionary', 1915).

Yoshisaburo Okakura's *Shin Ei-wa Dai-jiten* ('New English-Japanese Dictionary', 1927) was the precursor of Kenkyusha's *New English Japanese Dictionary* (now 5/e, 1980), generally considered the most authoritative of its kind. Okakura's dictionary was the cutting-edge dictionary of its day, incorporating both etymology and IPA transcription, and with this publication Kenkyusha established itself as a major dictionary publisher. The other (and indeed most) traditional company in this field has been Sanseido, which started producing dictionaries in 1884. Jujiro Kawamura's *Crown Ei-wa Jiten* ('Crown English-Japanese Dictionary', 1939) and Tamijei Iwaskai's³ *Kanyaku Ei-wa Jiten* ('Concise English Japanese Dictionary', 1941) were published respectively by Sanseido and Kenkyusha. The major characteristics of the former was the inclusion of a vast number of examples, while the latter claimed to be the abridged edition of Okakura's work (2/e, 1936),

and spared much space for functional and other basic words. These two works are said to be the forerunners of the now flourishing genre of English-Japanese learner's dictionaries (EJLDs).

The year 1942 witnessed the historic publication by Kaitakusha of the *Idiomatic and Syntactic English Dictionary (ISED)*, compiled in Japan by A.S. Hornby, E.V. Gatenby, and H. Wakefield in the 1930s, and completed before the outbreak of war in 1941. This was the first EFL dictionary, initiating a genre that has dramatically and excitingly evolved into its many complex present day forms. *ISED* has exerted a profound influence on the shape of future learner's dictionaries both within and beyond Japan. Kaitakusha published an EJD based on *ISED* in 1981: *Kaitakusha's Contemporary English-Japanese Dictionary* (eds. Kasahara, Goro, Gatenby, and Wakefield).

Sanseido's Crown series enjoyed considerable commercial success until it was overtaken by Kenkyusha's *Ei-wa Chu-jiten* ('New Collegiate English-Japanese Dictionary', 1967) with its more sophisticated categories of information. The triumph of this dictionary continued into the 1980s⁴ until other companies entered the market. The appearance of new rivals (such as the *Progressive English Japanese Dictionary*, Shogakukan, 1967; *Genius English-Japanese Dictionary*, Taishukan, 1988; *Proceed English-Japanese Dictionary*, Fukutake, now Benesse, 1988) was responded to by the traditional houses with publication of new titles (such as the *Global English-Japanese Dictionary*, Sanseido, 1983; the *Lighthouse English-Japanese Dictionary*⁵, Kenkyusha, 1984). As dictionaries with ever further innovative and user-friendly features appear each year⁶, the present scene of the EJD, especially the EJLD, has become highly competitive, versatile and specialized.

3. Major Characteristics

3.1. A great number and variety

In large bookshops, it is overwhelming and dazzling to look at dictionary shelves crowded and stacked with various colorful kinds of dictionaries. English dictionaries take up the most space because many companies publish various books, specialized according to levels and purposes. Over 100 titles of EJDs are in print, excluding such specialist works as EJDs for students of economics. Kenkyusha alone has published the main EJDs listed in the accompanying table.

- ◆ EJDs for readers and advanced students (college and above):

<i>New EJD5</i>	(1927, 5/e 1994)	235,000 ref
185x260 mm	2,478pp	¥13,200
<i>New Collegiate EJD6</i>	(1967, 6/e 1995)	90,000 ref
125x190 mm	2,099pp	¥ 2,910
<i>College Lighthouse EJD</i> (1995)		78,000 ref
125x195 mm	2,100pp	¥ 3,110

- ◆ For intermediate students (senior high school):
Lighthouse EJD3 (1984, 3/e 1996) 65,000 ref
125x195 mm 1,703pp ¥ 2,820
- ◆ For beginners (junior high school⁷):
Green Lighthouse EJD (1994) 56,000 ref
125x190 mm 1,361pp ¥ 2,430
- ◆ For travelers:
New Little EJD6 (1929, 6/e 1994) 62,000 ref
87x165 mm 644pp ¥ 1,460

Three dictionaries in the table bear the name 'Lighthouse'. Likewise, a family is formed by *Genius EJD* (with *Young Genius EJD*) and *Progressive EJD* (with *Learner's Progressive EJD*). Other dictionaries worthy of special mention are: *Kenkyusha's EJD for the General Reader* (1984, 260,000 ref, 130x190 mm, 2,540pp, ¥6,410) for advanced readers and translators, with a supplement (1994, 190,000 ref); *New Shogakukan Random House EJD2* (1973, 2/e 1994, 345,000 ref, 195x265 mm, 3,180pp, ¥14,400), based on the *Random House Dictionary of the English Language* (2/e Unabridged, 1987), with 30,000 references and 50,000 senses added to cater for Japanese needs.

3.2. Characteristics of the EJLD

We may now focus on EJLDs for advanced students, which are the most important: that is, the best-selling, the most competitive and the most innovative. They typically pack some 90,000 references into a portable size within an affordable price range of around 3,000 yen, because they are targeted at students, who are usually supposed to bring their dictionary to school. They come in flexible plastic covers, are placed inside cardboard boxes, use quality India paper, and have an A-Z indication down the edge of the page like a thumb index. They deal with both American and British English, but primarily the former, and their back matter includes digests of grammar and phonetics. Some other characteristics are:

- **English teachers as lexicographers** An overwhelming majority of bilingual English lexicographers themselves teach English at university or high school. They can consequently put their teaching experience to good use in writing dictionary entries.
- **A highly encyclopedic dimension** An EJLD incorporates extralinguistic information in order to give its users a well-rounded knowledge of the culture of English. This information is generously provided on all levels – encyclopedic headwords and senses, notes on aspects of culture and society, half-tones of familiar things or typical landscapes, drawings of gestures, and so forth. Maps of the USA and the UK are frequently found on the inside covers.
- **Easy access** The pages of an EJLD seem to appear threateningly complicated to some foreigners – too much is crammed in – but this does not cause much trouble for Japanese. Three methods are widely employed for the purposes of quick reference, by

presenting important headwords and translatable equivalents in bold, large type and/or color (often red).

Other possible features are: (1) Information on etymology and sense development for learning and referencing purposes; (2) The verbal and diagrammatic provision of the results of contrastive study between Japanese and English; (3) More emphasis on encoding than formerly (such as help with collocations and with the spoken language). All such innovative features have influenced bilingual dictionaries of other language pairs published in Japan.

4. Innovations: the Impact on EFL Dictionaries

In this section we briefly introduce some noticeable innovations in most of today's EJLDs. Some are unique, whereas others are common to EFL dictionaries.

4.1. Indication of frequent and/or important words

As mentioned in Section 3, most current EJLDs indicate, in one way or another, the several levels of importance of headwords. The selection of important words is not merely based on frequency of occurrence, but also on knowledge derived from the editors' teaching experience. In addition, the lists of words to be taught at junior and senior high school, which are made up by the Ministry of Education, have an influence.

Taishukan's *New Standard EJD* (1929) established this tradition. With the help of the American educational researcher Edward L. Thorndike's word list, ten thousand of the most important basic words for Japanese learners were selected. The words were then divided into groups of about one thousand each according to frequency, marked 1 to 10 to indicate the level. By contrast, in the *Oxford Wordpower Dictionary* (1993), a star is used to mark the commonest words of the language. This seems to be more or less the same policy as using numbers, although there is only one level of importance.

The information on frequency found in the second edition of *Collins COBUILD English Dictionary* (COBUILD2) and in the third edition of *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (LDOCE3) (both 1995) is based purely on statistical evidence provided by corpus analysis, and tells us significant facts about the way the English language is used. That is very useful, especially for encoding and vocabulary learning purposes. On the other hand, however, EJLDs place more emphasis on helping learners study English efficiently.

4.2. Usage notes

Another common feature is usage notes, which can be more or less grouped into two kinds: on general usage and on typical mistakes that Japanese learners make. An example of each is taken from *Genius*

EJD2 (1994), which reputedly provides detailed usage notes. Under *keep* there is a note on the difference between "keep ~ing" and "keep on ~ing": (1) *keep on doing* emphasizes continuity or repetition, and often implies irritation on the part of the speaker. Standing, in "I kept standing for an hour" is not stative, but dynamic, and means either repeatedly standing up and sitting down or standing of one's own will. (2) an adverb cannot be put between *on* and *doing*: "Mary's condition kept on (*steadily) worsening." (cf. Mary's condition kept steadily worsening.) Compare it with the explanation in *Collins COBUILD English Usage* (1992), "For emphasis, you can use *keep on* instead of *keep*."

Under *front* there is a note on the difference between *in front of* and *ahead of*, because in Japanese the two complex prepositions are often translated into the same word, thus learners sometimes get confused. The note reads:

The prepositional object for *in front of* can be either fixed or moving, while that for *ahead of* is something on the move: *There is a big park in front of [*ahead of] our office. In front of [Ahead of] us we saw another tall building.*

The usage notes in *LDOCE3* are all based on an analysis of Longman Learner's Corpus, and help users avoid making common mistakes. But *LDOCE3* is not, of course, designed specifically for Japanese learners of English, and this is where bilingual learner's dictionaries intended solely for Japanese fit the bill better.

4.3. Verb patterns

One major information category of English lexicography in Japan led the way in the presentation of verb patterns. Hornby's *ISED*⁸ was the first English learner's dictionary that systematically introduced both coded verb patterns and the abbreviated grammatical codes C and U to represent countable and uncountable nouns respectively. The publication of this illustrious learner's dictionary in Japan was a strong incentive for Japanese lexicography, which consequently brought out much earlier than any EFL dictionary elsewhere a more user-friendly system to show grammatical patterns.

Hornby's verb patterns consist of letters and numerals which are not user-friendly since the codes are neither transparent nor mnemonic. According to Herbst's classification (1996: 328-330), this is the first stage of a coding system, the second stage of which can be represented by mnemotechnically designed systems (in which, for instance, T stands for 'transitive') developed in *LDOCE1* and in the fourth edition of *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (OALD4). At the third stage, led by *LDOCE2* and *COBUILD1*, abbreviations for grammatical terms (e.g. '+ to-v' means 'followed by the to-infinitive') took the place of opaque codes, and it became immediately apparent what sort of information was being provided. In the history of EFL dictionaries *LDOCE1* played a leading role in simplifying grammar codes and applying them to nouns and adjectives. When its first

edition appeared in 1978, the Longman team had extended Hornby's syntactic approach to the English lexicon to other parts of speech: they not only developed a new coding system for verbs, but also coded noun and adjective complementation which was a huge step ahead in EFL lexicography (Stein 1989: 26-27).

As regards English-Japanese lexicography in Japan, however, lucidity of grammar codes had already been accomplished in 1967 by Kenkyusha's *New Collegiate EJD1*. The syntactic information is provided in abbreviated (Japanese) grammatical terms at the beginning of each sense, and this is done not only for verbs, but also for nouns and adjectives. While it is recognized and acknowledged that they derived from the formulas in the *OALD*, this presentational system was adapted to the needs of Japanese learners. Below is a tabulation of how the verb patterns of Oxford, Longman and Kenkyusha's dictionaries have developed, taking the verb *want* as an example. Here one of the patterns it takes, object + *to*-infinitive complementation, is shown with its example. It should be noted that both in the *New Collegiate EJD1* and in the *Union EJD1* (1972) the word in question, *want*, and another word which marks the construction, *to*, are italicized in the example, which – together with the codes – ensures the users' understanding. Another significant point concerning grammar codes is their location in the entry. *LDOCE2* was much praised because it placed its transparent codes immediately before the corresponding examples. Once again, however, a similar method was already being employed in the

Union EJD1 where each example was followed by the construction pattern.

In retrospect, we can certainly argue that Japanese lexicographers had a perceptive view, because they placed their transparent codes adjacent to corresponding examples, something that is now taken as a matter of course internationally. In 1995 *LDOCE3* introduced a new, even more user-friendly way which was already developed in the *Longman Language Activator (LLA)*, 1993⁹. Both *LDOCE3* and *LLA* spell out patterns in full in boldface type, without any metalanguage, with the result that users do not need to have any previous knowledge of grammatical terminology.

5. Conclusion

In this brief introduction to English lexicography in Japan we focused on the considerable impact that it has had on pedagogical lexicography both at home and abroad. From the very earliest stage, lexicographers have been aware of the importance of user-friendliness in learner's dictionaries, and have incorporated the findings of contrastive studies of English and Japanese into their works. However, *EJLDs* are still expected to continue to improve in order to meet the more sophisticated requirements of users, and also succeed in an intensely competitive market. Lexicographic stimulation from outside of Japan, and more communication between lexicographers and publishers, will be vital to the creation of even better *EJLDs*.

The Development of Verb Patterns

	Oxford	Longman	Kenkyusha
1942	<i>ISED</i> (P3) ... <i>He wants me to go.</i>		
1967			<i>New Collegiate EJD1</i> [+目 +to do/+目 +doing] ... <i>She ~s me to go with her.</i>
1972			<i>Union EJD1</i> <i>I want you [John] to be here.</i> <V + O(名・代) + C (to不定詞)>
1974	<i>OALD3</i> [VP17] ... <i>She ~s me to go with her.</i>		
1978		<i>LDOCE1</i> [V3] ... <i>I want him to rest.</i>	
1987		<i>LDOCE2</i> [+ obj+ to-v] <i>He wants you to wait here.</i>	
1989	<i>OALD4</i> [Tnt no passive] ... <i>She wants me to go with her.</i>		
1995	<i>OALD5</i> [V.n to inf] <i>She wants me to go with her.</i>	<i>LDOCE3</i> want sb to do sth <i>I don't want Linda to hear about this.</i>	

Notes

- Sections 1-3 are primarily the work of Shigeru Yamada, and Sections 4-5 are primarily the work of Yuri Komuro. The authors would like to express their particular thanks to Professors Peter Sharpe, Kazuo Dohi and Richard Murto for their valuable comments on and help with the final draft.
- This section provides only a rough sketch. Those interested in more detail are referred to the on-going project on this topic (in which both authors are involved). See Kokawa, *et al.*, 1994, 1996 and 1997, and Dohi, *et al.*, forthcoming.
- The Iwasaki Linguistic Circle (whose journal is entitled *Lexicon*) developed from a study group with Tamihei Iwasaki, who was a professor at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies and significantly contributed to English lexicography in Japan as the editor of Kenkyusha's *New EJD* 3/e and 4/e, and *New Collegiate EJD* 1/e, 2/e, and 3/e.
- Some 15 years ago in S.Y.'s senior high school class almost every student owned a copy of Kenkyusha's *New Collegiate EJD* (4/e, 1977), and this has been fairly similar in other good schools. According to the blurb of the 6/e (1995), the company sold 9m copies [S.Y.].
- This dictionary is actually the renamed third edition of the *Union EJD* (1972, 2/e 1978), which uniquely combined a dictionary and a grammar book.
- Modern English Teaching* 34.10:21 (Kenkyusha, 1998) reports on 3 revised and 3 newly published EJDs in 1996: Kenkyusha's *Lighthouse* 3/e, Sanseido's *New Century* 3/e, Obunsha's *New Sunrise* 2/e, Gakken's *Super Anchor* and *Victory Anchor*, Tokyo Shoseki's *Favorite*; and, 1 revised and 2 new EJDs published in 1997: Shogakukan's *Learner's Progressive* 2/e, Kenkyusha's *Trim*, Sanseido's *Vista*.
- Formal English language education usually starts in the first year at junior high school (age 13).
- The project to publish the *ISED* was started by Harold E. Palmer. When Hornby succeeded Palmer after the latter returned to England in 1936, he realized his idea of verb patterns.
- This method is used in the *Longman Active Study Dictionary of English* (2/e 1991), but the use is not systematic.

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Appendix

Genius2 (1994)

want /wánt. (米+) wánt/ (標準) wón't) 『欠けている』という原義から「欲する」の意が生れた
 一動 (～s/wánts. (米+) wánts/; ～ed/-id; ～ing) (◆通例命令形・進行形不可)
 一① 1 ② [SVO] <人>が<物・事>が欲しい、…を<人>に望む、欲する〔with. from. of〕③ desire は堅い語: wish for は手に入りにくいものを望むこと ④ I badly ~ some coffee. コーヒーがとても飲みたい (◆I'd very much like some coffee. の方が丁寧) / What do you ~ (from me)? 何が欲しいのか (◆(1) ややぶつけない表現。丁寧な言い方としては What can I do for you? / Is there anything I can do for you? など。 (2) 通例進行形にはしないが、表現を和らげて What are you ~ing? (ing) と言ったり、話し手のいらだちを示して What is he ~ing this time? (ing) などとすることがある) / I'll give you what you ~. =(英正式) You shall have what ... あなたが欲しいものをあげよう / What does he ~ with me? 彼は私に何の用があるのだろうか。 (語源) 長い間待ち望んでいたものについて完了進行形が用いられる: Thank you so much. I've been ~ing it for ages. どうもありがとう。ずっと前から欲しいと思っていたものです。

College Lighthouse (1995)

want /wánt, wó:nt | wónt/ (=WÖNT)
 ⑤ (wants /wánts, wó:nts | wónts/; want-ed /-tɪd/; want-ing /-tɪŋ/)

「...を欠いている」動 7. 「欠乏」図 1
 「...が必要である」動 5. 「必要」図 2
 「(生活物資の)欠乏」→「困窮」図 3
 「欲する」動 1 → 「...したい」動 2
 → 「(人)に...してもらいたい」動 3 → 「用がある」動 4

一⑥ [普通は進行形なし] 1 ⑤ <人>が欲しい、欠けているものを欲する。望む、欲しがらる(【ア】類義語): What do you want? 何が欲しいのか、何の用だ(ぶっきらぼうな言い方) / I want a doll for my birthday. <V+O+for+名・代> 誕生日にはお人形が欲しい。

【語注】その場の一時的な欲求や必要を表わしたり、表現をやわらげたりするとき例外的に進行形が用いられることがある(【Is.】)(【Alg.】: What were you wanting, sir? 何を求めますか(【ア】巻末文法過去時制(5)) / I've been wanting to talk to you. かねがねお話ししたいと存じておりました(【ア】巻末文法 現在進行形(4))。

Editor's Acknowledgement

This article, originally commissioned last year for the newsletter, will now appear in the book *Lexicography in Asia*, and was thus edited also by Tom McArthur. The book version has a more extensive appendix. [I.K.]