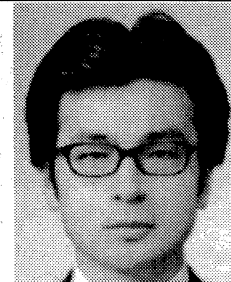




## Dictionary Use for Production among Japanese College Students of English

Yuri Komuro and Shigeru Yamada<sup>1</sup>



Yuri Komuro studied lexicography at the graduate school of the University of Exeter, UK. Her thesis deals with the inclusion, placement and presentation of collocational information in English learners' dictionaries. She is currently a part-time English instructor in Tokyo. [DZC0655@nifty.ne.jp](mailto:DZC0655@nifty.ne.jp)

Shigeru Yamada studied lexicography at the graduate schools of Waseda University, Tokyo, and the University of Exeter, UK. His interests include EFL dictionaries, and their use and instruction. He contributed as a lexicographer to Kenkyusha's *College Lighthouse English-Japanese Dictionary* and *Japanese-English Dictionary* (both 1995). He is currently an associate professor at Waseda University. [shyamada@mn.waseda.ac.jp](mailto:shyamada@mn.waseda.ac.jp)

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The text, with the addition of full Appendices, is available on <http://www.kdictionaries.com/newsletter/kdn8-3.html>]

### 1. Introduction

Ordinary Japanese learners of English should have two suitable bilingual dictionaries at their disposal: an English-Japanese dictionary (EJD) for (mainly) reception and a Japanese-English dictionary (JED) for production. The first dictionary they obtain should be an EJD. However, the second position is not automatically filled by a JED, which may give way to a second EJD, or even a monolingual English dictionary (MED), especially for learners. In foreign language learning, understandably, reception should precede production. Considering this basic idea, however, the type of dictionary associated with reception seems to have had precedence in demand, use, the value and attention attached and paid by users, teachers, researchers, and publishers over that associated with production.

Thus, while the EJD has developed into a world-class genre, the JED has stagnated. It is a fundamental fact that the JED is difficult to compile since models to draw on are limited, unlike the EJD's case (Nakao 1998: 44). In addition, it is largely explained by the following unfortunate circumstances and factors:

- The number of Japanese who write and speak in English is smaller than those who read and listen to it.
- Japan's English language education has placed an overwhelming emphasis on the receptive side, especially on reading.
- JEDs have always been in much less demand than EJDs.
- Publishers have invested fewer resources in the production of commercially less promising JEDs.
- Fewer JEDs (titles, varieties<sup>2</sup>, and revisions) have been published.
- Lack of competition has limited breakthroughs and innovations.

Hence, there has been a considerable mistrust of JEDs among Japanese teachers of English, based on their

experience (Nakamoto 2000). Some discourage (or even ban) their use by students not only because they can spoil them by providing ready-made answers but also because they are unsatisfactory and unreliable. JEDs are narrow in scope, concentrating on formal and out-of-date English, and are not sufficient in themselves (like L2 thesauri, which list synonyms without semantic discrimination). Some teachers advise students to check the information found in their JED against an EJD.

Yet, the picture has been changing in favor of the JED: (1) the arrival of a new type of genuine learner's JED (JELD) in the mid-1980s, (2) the 1994 shift of emphasis to oral English in the country's English language education policy (see Section 3), and (3) the rapid spread of the computer as a new communication tool, which has increased chances to write in English.

This article complements our first contribution that focused on the EJD (Yamada and Komuro 1998), by looking into the JED and dictionary use among Japanese college students of English, especially for production. Starting from this framework, we also attempt to make suggestions for an ideal ELT situation with better use of dictionaries for production. We begin with a quick look at history.

### 2. The development of Japanese-English dictionaries

The first JED published in Japan was *Wa-ei Gorin Shusei (A JE and EJD, 1867<sup>3</sup>, 26.5x17.7cm)<sup>4</sup>*. The editor was an American missionary, James Curtis Hepburn, who lived in Japan from 1859 to 1892. He compiled his JED on the basis of two existing dictionaries: a small JED (*An E and J, and J and E Vocabulary*, 1830) published by an English missionary Walter H. Medhurst in Batavia (now Jakarta, Indonesia), and a Japanese-Portuguese dictionary (*Vocabulario da Lingoa Japon*, 1603-04) compiled by Jesuits. Hepburn's dictionary consists of the J-E part (20,772 refs, 555pp) and the E-J index (10,030 headwords, 132pp). It was intended to serve

the receptive purposes of English speakers and therefore contained information unnecessary for Japanese (e.g. definitions or explanations of headwords). Nonetheless, this sophisticated dictionary enjoyed great popularity with Japanese students of English toward the end of the 19th century.

The departure from Hepburn's influence and the prototype of the JED exclusively for Japanese was realized by *Shin-yaku Wa-ei Jiten* (Inouye's JED, 1909, Sanseido, 16.5x8.6cm, 1,872pp; Kojima 1999: 375). The editor, Jukichi Inouye (1862-1929), went to London at the age of 11, where he stayed for ten years and received elementary to college education. He is renowned for the lexicographic expertise exhibited in his EJDs and JEDs, which are remembered to this day. Being Inouye's debut work, this JED is not so famous as his other works. He made it clear that it was intended to help "the Middle-school pupil as he treads gingerly the thorny path of English composition and conversation" (Preface). It was the first dictionary geared to the productive needs of Japanese learners. Inouye's endeavor is noteworthy for the inclusion of a great many commonly used Japanese words and expressions with their English translations, while JEDs commonly tend toward bookishness and archaism.

This dictionary marked the beginning of the history of JEDs solely for Japanese. However, a prolonged period of stagnation with no major progress or innovations also set in, which continued until quite recently (Kojima 1989: 282-3). Inouye's first JED was followed by large dictionaries, such as:

- *Takenobu Wa-ei Dai-jiten* (Takenobu's JED). 1918. Ed. Takenobu, Yoshitaro. Tokyo: Kenkyusha. 16.9x9.2cm. 2,504pp. (Revised as *Shin Wa-ei Dai-jiten* [Kenkyusha's New JED, 1931], which is the only large-size JED currently in print [now 4/e, 1974].)
- *Standard Wa-ei Dai-jiten* (A Standard JED). 1924. Ed. Takehara, Tsuneta. Osaka: Hobunkan. 21.7x14.7cm. 1,677pp. (Uniquely based on about 60,000 out of some 300,000 examples the editor amassed over 14 years from reading English books and periodicals. He translated the selected examples into Japanese and arranged them to compile his dictionary.)
- *Saito Wa-ei Dai-jiten* (Saito's JED). 1928. Ed. Saito, Hidesaburo. Tokyo: Nichieicha. 21.2x15.3cm. 642pp. (The largest JED then available with 50,000 headwords and 120,000 examples.)

The last two JEDs are in sharp contrast to each other. Saito states that "... the English of the Japanese must, in a certain sense, be Japanised" (Preface). Takehara harshly criticizes as imprecise the JEDs based on the editors' intuition (and the foregoing dictionaries) (Preface), and demonstrates the beauty of his authentic-example-based JED by listing some

incorrect examples found in other JEDs against those of his own (Appendix). Medium and small-size JEDs were also published, especially after World War II.

The period of stagnation ended with a major breakthrough in the mid-1980s. Two dictionaries appeared (Nakao 1998: 44-5, and Yamagishi 1997: 94-5):

- *Lighthouse JED*. 1984. Eds. Kojima, Yoshiro, and Shigru Takebayashi. Tokyo: Kenkyusha. 12.0x18.5 cm. 1,754pp.
- *Progressive JED*. 1986. Eds. Kondo, Ineko, and Fumi Takano. Tokyo: Shogakukan. 13.5x18.5cm. 1,900pp.

In an effort to shake off the JED's bad name, the editors made their dictionaries self-sufficient (i.e. without requiring an additional look at an EJD for confirmation). Both dictionaries were careful in their selection of headwords so that they comprise contemporary, well-balanced lists. Both were generous in the provision of example sentences and illustrations. Kojima, editor of the former, spells out the main objectives he aspired to while preparing his JED (Kojima 1984: 38-9<sup>5</sup>):

- (1) Distinguish between the meanings of English equivalents; provide phonetic and morphological notes if necessary.
- (2) Provide detailed columns of synonyms if necessary, based on the contrastive study between Japanese and English from the Japanese point of view.
- (3) Provide clear style labels (relative style labels for more than one equivalent).
- (4) Do not automatically match the parts of speech between Japanese headwords and English equivalents. Give a commonly used equivalent first, regardless of the part of speech of the headword.
- (5) Provide abundant notes on usage.
- (6) Examples should be thoroughly checked by English consultants.

Some of the other special features of the dictionary are:

- Indication of the difference in the way of thinking where the gap between English examples and their corresponding Japanese is irreconcilably great.<sup>6</sup>
- Seventy-five full-page (more or less) features on culture, etc., and 85 articles on grammar and punctuation.<sup>7</sup>
- Strict entry of compounds under their first elements.
- Abundant cross-references within the dictionary and with its companion EJD.

Kondo and Takano, editors of the latter, say that they began their work by closely analyzing the meanings of

Japanese headwords and, for important items, separated the original senses from the metaphorical ones (Preface), so that users could pinpoint the information they seek. Their JED boasts 70,000 entries with 100,000 examples. They put to good use the expertise of their lexicographers, many of whom have had long experience in teaching Japanese-to-English translation at high school or university.

The insights and ambitions of the editors of both dictionaries were translated into the innovations and features of their respective dictionaries. Carefully planned and compiled with due consideration to the user's productive needs, the dictionaries truly cater to such needs. Breaking away from the traditions of notorious, user-hostile JEDs, they opened the long-awaited age of user-friendly JEDs. *Lighthouse JED* underwent revision in 1990 and 1996, and *Progressive JED* in 1992. *College Lighthouse JED* (1995), the enlarged edition of the former, and new products from other companies have now entered into the increased competition.

### 3. The teaching of English and dictionary use in the Japanese education system

In Japan, English learning officially begins when students enter junior high school (JHS) at the age of 13. It may be safe to say that this motivates the majority of them to acquire their first EJD (and JED), although they only vaguely perceive the necessity of having one on starting to learn a foreign language.

Dictionary use is not much encouraged at JHS, however, and students are actually quite happy with using just the glossary at the back of their English textbook<sup>8</sup> as a mini dictionary. The glossary consists of the words to be learnt in the book with their translation equivalents appropriate to the context. Recently, the traditional grammar-translation method has been severely criticized, and some effort has been made by changing the curriculum, to place more emphasis on developing students' listening and speaking skills. Generally, frequent use of dictionaries in class is not considered effective to promote fluency, though it may be of great help with grammatical accuracy.

After three years of compulsory education at JHS, more than 95% of the students go on to senior high school (SHS) for another three years. The recent trend in teaching has had considerable influence over the English curriculum at SHS, too. In 1994, a new type of lesson called 'Oral Communication' was introduced. Some changes have been taking place with writing classes as well. A while ago, a typical writing class usually consisted of vocabulary and grammar exercises and translation exercises from Japanese into English at the sentence level. The main aim was not to write a free composition or learn how to organize, write and revise an academic essay, but to learn and practice the grammatical patterns each lesson introduces. Some of the recent textbooks are designed to encourage students to write more, and

contain exercises that make students produce a passage of text rather than writing or translating isolated single sentences (Takeuchi 1997).

At SHS it is quite common for English teachers to choose a certain EJD and require all the students to buy a copy of it, or list a couple of EJDs as their recommendations<sup>9</sup>. Whether or not it is compulsory to do so, this is probably when students obtain their second EJD. Naturally, recommendation by schoolteachers has significant influence on students' selection and purchase of dictionaries<sup>10</sup>, which is also clear from the results of our questionnaire survey shown below (cf. 4.2.2). However, no systematic instruction in dictionary use is provided for students.

Students are hardly ever advised to buy a JED. Actually, they are not very often required to consult their dictionaries even in writing class since models to follow are presented in their textbook. Nevertheless, it appears that some students perceive the necessity of getting themselves a JED especially if they do not have one. According to Hagiwara (1991), 129 out of 190 second- or third-year SHS students (67.9%) own a JED at his high school. However, they receive virtually no instruction in how to make the best use of their purchase.

It, therefore, is often the case that first-year university students, who have studied English for six years at least, own a couple of dictionaries, but are not fully aware of how helpful and valuable they can be.

### 4. Dictionaries used by Japanese students of English: a questionnaire-based study

#### 4.1 Procedure

I (S.Y.) distributed the 167 take-home questionnaires in January 2000 to my students (mostly freshmen and sophomores) at the School of Commerce, Waseda University, Tokyo. Ninety-nine of them (59.28%) were returned. When handing them out, I advised the students to (1) state the edition number of the dictionaries they use, and (2) give specific answers to the questions.

#### 4.2 Results and discussion

##### 4.2.1 University students' dictionary use

First, the type(s) of dictionaries the students use on a regular basis are examined. A total of 114 EJDs, 40 JEDs, 25 MEDs, and 12 electronic dictionaries were reported, and the average number of dictionaries the students used on a regular basis is 1.97 (rounded off to two decimals). Most of the EJDs (92.1%) and the JEDs (95%) used are learners' dictionaries, and the most popular type of MEDs (80%) is the British EFL dictionary. Thirty-nine students (39.4%) made regular use of only one dictionary, which was an EJD (except in one case). About the same proportion of students (35.4%) use two dictionaries, and the combination of an EJD and a JED is the most popular (16.2%).

Hatakeyama (1997) carried out a questionnaire survey of dictionary use with 167 Osaka International University (OIU) students (not specializing in

English), who may be considered as parallels to our subject. The survey reports how many EJDs the students *own*, and the comparison of the dictionary ownership of OIU students and the dictionary use of Waseda students (see the table below) seems to indicate that dictionary ownership is not necessarily identical with dictionary use.

number of EJDs	OIU (167)	Waseda (99)
none	0%	1.0% (1)
one	39%	82.8% (82)
two	45%	15.2% (15)
three or more	16%	1.0% (1)

Table 1: Dictionary *ownership* (OIU) compared with dictionary *use* (Waseda)

The same might hold true for the JED. We may surmise that more students actually *own* a JED (cf. Section 3), but they simply do not have much opportunity to produce English, by using it. Apart from JEDs, few students use dictionaries designed especially for productive use, such as collocation dictionaries and thesauri. Only one student listed *Longman Essential Activator*, and three students *Oxford Wordpower Dictionary*<sup>11</sup>.

#### 4.2.2 Dictionary acquisition

From our experience in teaching at university, we had been under the impression that most students do not buy a new English dictionary for university studies, and we were, therefore, interested in finding out when students had acquired the products they use now. Our assumption proved to be right (see Appendix 3): more than half of the dictionaries students use were bought during their high school years, and quite a few, back in their junior high school years; or they use dictionaries that their siblings had used, or one they found at home. Accordingly, many of the listed dictionaries are out of date, and are not appropriate for their academic work.

Regarding reasons for acquisition (see Appendix 4), recommendation by schoolteachers has the greatest influence on students' choice. It also attracts our attention that not a few students bought a dictionary to study for university entrance exams. University entrance exams are a source of motivation for students to purchase a new dictionary, though dictionary use is not allowed in these exams. A number of high school students who wish to go on to university, or who failed at their first trial, go to a college preparatory school, and the recommendation of teachers concerning dictionary use also weighs heavily with them.

#### 4.2.3 University students' dictionary use for production

This section deals with the kind(s) of dictionaries students use for encoding tasks (see Appendix 5), and the concrete purpose(s) of consultation (see Appendix

6). What is noticeable is that EJDs, which are generally classified into 'decoding' dictionaries, are actually utilized for encoding activities. The above-mentioned Hatakeyama survey (1997) also reports that 63% of his subjects use EJDs for writing.

Students seem to choose which type of dictionary to use according to the kinds of information they want. They look up EJDs mainly to check whether they are using a certain lexical item correctly or appropriately in order to express their idea, or to see how these items can be used. Students consult JEDs mostly for Japanese translation equivalents. Browsing through the purposes of consultations, we notice that only a small number of students reach out for a dictionary to seek a more appropriate word/expression to express an idea. On the other hand, students are more careful about grammatical properties of words. (This attitude might well be a reflection of grammar-oriented teaching at school.) The students' strategies inferred from the above may be that they first try to express a (given) idea within the vocabulary they possess, and when they are not sure about the usage of a word in mind, they look it up in their EJD for confirmation. When they cannot think of any words to start with, they reach out for a JED to find a translation equivalent for their idea.

It certainly is important for learners to learn to manage only with familiar words to express their ideas, and those who can actually do so may be considered to be at the advanced level. The next step, then, will be to enhance one's vocabulary, or to express oneself precisely in appropriate and idiomatic English. This is exactly what is provided in a new type of encoding dictionaries (cf. Section 5) and the latest JELDs, which deserve more attention.

#### 4.2.4 Instruction on dictionary use

The results of our questionnaire reveal that, so far, little instruction on dictionary use has been provided for students. Although 46 subjects (46.5%) answered that they had been given some kind of instruction before, nearly two thirds (29 subjects) of them received it only once. In most cases, what they were offered was *guidance*: a teacher merely introduces types of dictionaries and/or recommends certain products with some comments on them at the beginning of the school year. A smaller number of students received *instruction*: a teacher provides training in how to retrieve information effectively. Some students are advised, for example, to mark headwords they looked up once, or to read examples and usage notes. However, none were taught where to find compound words or multi-lexical units, or how to get (quickly) to the wanted meaning of a word in their EJD. No explanation about abbreviated grammar codes or about style/register labels seems to have been given, either.

It is also clear from our survey that the importance and necessity of instruction on JED use has not been fully recognized by teachers (see Appendix 7). Kishi

(1999) points out some difficulties in JED consultation and claims that successful use of a JED depends on the users' vocabulary and ability to analyze the Japanese language. For example, when the Japanese word which a user first thought of to express her/his idea is not listed as a headword, s/he has to try another synonymous entry since the headword list in a JED is essentially limited.

### 5. Conclusion

Although much is left to explore about learners' dictionary use for production, a low level of 'dictionary awareness' among students is clearly observed, and it may be blamed on that of English teachers. As briefly mentioned in 4.2.1, the variety and availability of encoding dictionaries of high quality do not seem to be widely known to teachers, nor to students. First of all, English teachers must be educated about dictionaries, and how to introduce and use them effectively in study programmes.

University students can benefit from JELDs, encoding dictionaries designed solely for Japanese learners, especially when they are at intermediate level and/or when they deal with culture-bound topics. Advanced students should be able to use learners' MEDs not only for reception but also for productive purposes, under the guidance of teachers.

New types of encoding dictionaries, which are designed to lead users from a word they are familiar with to a more sophisticated word/expression to express their idea best, are now also available, with the *Longman Language Activator* (1993) at the top of the list. Collocation dictionaries, which tell their users which words a certain word typically goes with, may also be introduced even at the upper-intermediate stage of learning.

The following titles are recommended to English teachers and may be introduced to (highly) advanced college students:

- *Longman Essential Activator* (1997)
- *Oxford Learner's Wordfinder Dictionary* (1997)
- *The LTP Dictionary of Selected Collocations* (1997)
- *The BBI Dictionary of English Word Combinations* (1997)

More and more emphasis will be placed on developing students' communicative skills both at school and at university. However, it can sometimes be very difficult for teachers to provide their students with constant, attentive care during the writing process, especially when students on different proficiency levels study in the same classroom. While what students need help with may differ in some respects, it can be a practical and effective solution to utilize dictionaries of various kinds, depending on the situation. Adequate instruction on dictionary use is a prerequisite.

### Notes

- (1) Sections 1, 2 and 4.1 are primarily the work of Shigeru Yamada, and sections 3, 4.2 and 5 are primarily the work of Yuri Komuro. The authors would like to express special gratitude to Professor Richard Murto and Professor Robert Spivak for their help with the final draft.
- (2) The JED, whose source language is the user's L1, does not have to be so variously graded as the EJD.
- (3) The first JED for the general public (Tatsunosuke Hori's *Ei-wa Taiyaku Shuchin Jisho*) came out in 1862.
- (4) The details of the dictionaries are mostly due to Hayakawa (1998).
- (5) Originally published in *Eigo Kyoiku* [English Language Education], December 1976, Tokyo: Kairyudo.
- (6) For example, *Why did you come here?* can be constructed from its Japanese translation, while *What brought you here?* can not.
- (7) To the best of our knowledge, *Lighthouse JED* is the first to incorporate such articles and features on a large scale.
- (8) At school it is a requirement to use authorized textbooks and to design the courses according to *The Course of Study*, the national guidelines for curricula, set by the Ministry of Education.
- (9) Before the school year starts in April, publishers visit high schools to promote their products and very often leave free copies for teachers' reference.
- (10) Consequently, publishers are more sensitive to teachers' comments and opinions about their products, rather than to their *real* users, students (Tono 2000: 38).
- (11) Those who listed *Oxford Wordpower Dictionary* are students who took the English course by S.Y. the previous year, and the dictionary was used as a textbook at class.

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## The Establishment of ISRALEX:

### THE ISRAEL ASSOCIATION FOR LEXICOGRAPHY

After a previous attempt at Bar Ilan University, attended by Reinhard Hartmann, to set up ISRALEX, the Israel Association for Lexicography was finally founded in February this year at the Levinsky Teachers' College in Tel Aviv, with Tony Cowie as guest speaker.

The first general meeting took place on 20 June 2000 at the Academy for the Hebrew Language, the Hebrew University, Jerusalem. 21 participants gathered to discuss the new organization, and to listen to a lecture by Mordechai Mishor on "The Activities of the Academy for the Hebrew Language in the Realm of Lexicography", featuring its on-going, monumental compilation of a comprehensive historical dictionary of the Hebrew language from Biblical times to the modern era (the text of this paper is due to be published in the *International Journal of Lexicography*).

The meeting in Jerusalem confirmed the prime goal of ISRALEX as the furthering of the interests of lexicography in Israel. The association will hold meetings, lectures and seminars on topics related to lexicography, will publish a bulletin, and will maintain contact with other lexicography associations, mainly EURALEX and, hopefully, in the neighboring Arab countries. Its main languages of interest are expected to be Hebrew, Arabic and English, though in view of the considerable multilingual diversity of the Israeli society there should be room for other languages as well.

Membership is open to scholars and practitioners of lexicography from Israel and abroad, and is free of charge. Further information is currently available from Lionel Kernerman [kernermn@internet-zahav.net](mailto:kernermn@internet-zahav.net) c/o Kernerman Publishing, 46 Hagolan Street 69718 Tel Aviv, tel: 972-3-6492715, fax: 972-3-6493712.