A Brief Sketch of English Lexicography in Japan*

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As I pointed out in my plenary lecture at the Third ASIALEX (2003), information about EFL/ESL and general dictionaries published in Britain and the United States is widely disseminated in Japan. On the other hand, not much is known to overseas lexicographers about English lexicographical work in Japan. Generally speaking, Japanese lexicographers and publishers have not been so eager to make their dictionary-making known to lexicographers abroad. Shutting themselves in their small world, they have tended to be content with praising or criticizing each other among themselves. The result is that English lexicography in Japan tends to be viewed as obscure and not to be duly appreciated. A certain British lexicographer, for instance, says, that it is quite common for even large bilingual dictionaries to give a list of possible translations for each verbs such as *go*, *take*, or *work*, with little information about which meaning applies in which context (cf. Bright, 1998). A mere look at any of the large or even most of the learner English-Japanese dictionaries will reveal this is not really the case

In order to redress this imbalance and to help overseas audience

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have a better understanding, I will give a brief review of the history of English-Japanese lexicography and discuss its particular features and problems, commenting on a few English-Japanese dictionaries which stand as landmarks in the history of Japanese lexicography so that audience at home as well as abroad will understand their own field of work with greater clarity by standing outside of it and looking at it from foreign perspective.

Commodore Perry and Tastunosuke Hori

As described by Blumberg (1985), people in the fishing village of Shimoda were astonished to see "four black giant dragons puffing smoke" approaching the shore. (To be precise, the two ships were steam-powered and the other two were three-masted.) Secluded from the outside world, very few Japanese in those days knew that the Western world or a country called America even existed. This historic incident occurred in 1853, panic running through the Land of the Shogun. Commodore Mathew. S. Perry came with "four black ships of evil men" with a letter from the President asking Japan to open its harbors to American ships. Talks began toward the first tentative steps to the Treaty of Kanagawa. Eventually the Edo Government abandoned its national isolation policy in 1855, and Japan, which had deliberately cut itself off from contact all but a very few traders from Dutch, finally was opened to the world. In order to take in information about Western culture and institutions flooded into Japan, the Edo Government ordered several Dutch-Japanese interpreters to edit an English-Japanese dictionary, with Tastunosuke Hori as chief editor. Hori is believed to be the Japanese who rowed close to the Commodore's flagship and shouted in English "I can speak Dutch." (For more information, see

Murata(1993)) In 1862, they published *Eiwa-Taiyaku-Shuchin-Jisho* (『英和対訳袖珍辞書』) (*A Pocket English-Japanese Dictionary*), which can bear the honor of being the first printed English-Japanese dictionary. 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* (『和蘭字彙』) (*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? As mentioned above, until Japan abandoned its national isolation policy in 1855 and began to trade with the West, the only window initially opened to the outside 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 Shognate, had been 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.

Thus 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. It is like gathering information about something alien to them from two different dictionaries without studying them at first-hand but writing their own definition in their own language. In a sense, this might be a case of plagiarism and

some people even say that English lexicography in Japan is a history of plagiarism. It should be noted, however, copyritghtability is in its strict sense in the form of expression rather than in knowledge and ideas. Japanese lexicographers translated the original definition, incorporating in it their own ideas. In this sense, they 'passed off' but they did not 'steal'. We must also remember that we do not have to reinvent every wheel.

Anyway this uniquely edited dictionary was abridged and enlarged in subsequent editions and 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 each of the dictionary editors, and they made their own distinctive contribution to early studies of English in Japan.

The Meiji Restoration and J. C. Hepburn

In contrast to the first English-Japanese dictionary just mentioned above, the first Japanese-English dictionary, *A Japanese and English Dictionary with an English and Japanese Index* (『和英語林集成』) was edited not by a Japanese, but by J. C. Hepburn, an American missionary and physician, with the help of a few Japanese, in 1867. For spoken data, he depended on the speech of those who came to see him. To borrow his words, these Japanese visitors or patients were 'living teachers', and for written data he used literature and journals written in Japanese. The dictionary was primarily intended for native speakers of English visiting Japan, but it was widely used among Japanese learners of English. A landmark in the history of Japanese-English lexicography, it was updated and enlarged and went through successive editions to the 9th edition in

1910. But after this edition, most Japanese-English dictionaries followed the same path as English-Japanese dictionaries. That is, they were mostly edited by Japanese lexicographers and intended more or less exclusively for Japanese learners of English.

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' (「富国強兵」). The government therefore eagerly promoted the 'oyatoi' system, by which they hired foreigners, especially specialists, engineers and teachers to assisit in modernization of Japan. With the increase of the number of 'oyatoi-gaikokujin' (hired foreigners) or more simply 'oyatoi', the number of Japanese who had opportunities to hear or read real English gradually increased and English and other foreign languages began to be taught at a considerable number of schools. Copies of dictionaries compiled by William Lobscheid, John Ogilvie, P. A. Nuttall, and Noah Webster and a series of revisions and abridgments of these dictionaries were brought back to Japan 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-making resources, replaced by these English-Chinese and English-English dictionaries. By taking full advantage of these 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.

H. Palmer, A. S. Hornby and M. West

The oyatoi system was officially terminated in 1889 when extrater-

ritoriality came to an end in Japan, In the Meiji Period (1868-1912), and the subsequent Taisho (1912-1926) and in the early Showa Period (1926-1940), however, similar employment of foreigners persisted in Japan, particularly within the national education system and various fields of profession. It is estimated that until 1899, more than 800 hired experts were employed by the government, and many others privately.　This government was eager not only to import Western culture through books but also to invite 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.　In 1935, West and Endicott's *New Method English Dictionary*, the first monolingual EFL/ESL dictionary, appeared in India. It first adopted the limited defining vocabulary system, which was succeeded *by Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (1978) and subsequent EFL/ESL dictionaries. Working out the research findings on collocations he undertook at the Tokyo Institute for Research in English Teaching, and paying special attention to construction patterns, the countable-uncountable noun distinctions, and the peculiar behavior of twenty-four anomalous finites, Palmer bought out *Grammar of English Words* in1938, an innovative attempt to relate his work on lexis and syntax to the needs of Japanese learners of English. This dictionary pointed the way forward by incorporating a systematic presentation of learners' productive needs, which Hornby elaborated and refined in his *Idiomatic and Syntactic English Dictionary* (1942), coauthored with E. V. Gatenby and A. H. Wakefield. Palmer and Hornby's research done in the 1930s and 1940s in Japan bore further fruit in the UK after World War II, in such important publications *as The General Service List of English Words* (1953) edited by

West, and *A Learner's Dictionary of Current English* (1948), the renamed edition of ISED, which underwent a series of revisions to finally become *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (OALD). Today monolingual learner's dictionaries other than OALD have proliferated on the global market. These include *LDOCE, Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (CALD), *Collins COBUILD English Dictionary for Advanced Learners* (COBUILD), *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners* (MED), and many others. These dictionaries incorporate Hornby's ideas on verb patterns and countable-uncountable noun distinctions, and also West & Endicott (1935)'s idea of using a limited defining vocabulary. These features give such dictionaries a unique identity and have enabled them to carve out a niche in the global EFL market. It is worthy of note, however, that the roots of these modern sophisticated learner's dictionaries trace back to Japan and India in the 1930s and 1940s..

The Taisho (1912–1926) and the Showa Period (1926–1988)

Influenced by Palmer and Hornby, English-Japanese learner dictionaries began to change. They began to be edited primarily on the model of ISED, with constant reference to 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's *An English Pronouncing Dictionary* (1917). Digesting lexicographic information from these more advanced and sophisticated resources, 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 in many entries, while still designing them to perform the 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 *Saito's Idiomological English-Japanese Dictionary* (1915), *Sanseido's Concise English-Japanese Dictionary* (1922) and *Kenkyusha's New English-Japanese Dictionary* (1927). The title of the Saito Dictionary attracts our attention. H. Saito is claimed to have created the term *idiomology*, but he himself did not give a clear definition of the area the term was meant to cover. We can, however, obtain a rough idea of what he meant by the term from the remarks he made in the preface to his dictionary. What he seems to have had in mind has much in common with what is now often referred to as phraseology. In the Western applied linguistic and language teaching circles, however, Saito's innovative and pioneering ideas are largely unknown and even here in Japan, they are destined to be forgotten.

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 small-sized English-Japanese dictionaries 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 they are 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 2002, the 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.

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 English-Japanese dictionaries or word lists proliferated, and it took about two decades for lexicography to rise from the ashes, recover its strength, and produce modern, comprehensive and practical English-Japanese dictionaries which surpass those published before the war. Worthy of special note are *Sanseido's New Crown English Japanese Dictionary* (1954) and *Kenkyusha's New Collegiate English-Japanese Dictionary* (1967). The former is an updated and expanded version of the 1939 eidtion where copious examples the editors himself manually collected are cited to explain the meaning and the used of the words, and the latter is a new type of learner dictionary modeled on ISED and ALD, equipped with elaborate codes and symbols for sentence patterns and countable /uncountable noun distinction labels. Soon after that, 'a war of learner's dictionaries' began, unceasingly carried out among publishers who wish to preempt the market in 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.

Dictionaries and linguistics

The fact that linguistic theories have rarely been 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, MED, which describes metaphoric expressions on the basis of Lakoff & Johnson' *Metaphors we Live by* (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.

Corpora: Revolution in lexicography

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.

In addition to large-scale corpora such as the British National Corpus (BNC)(100 million words), the Collins Word Banks (50 million words),

company-owned corpora (for instance, Taishukan's Genius 4 Corpus (100 million words), there are now various kinds of corpora available, such as BNC simple search, Web Concordancer, Webcorp and WordPilot, 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 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 long-term unilateral dependence on English monolingual dictionaries for lexicographical information and change our traditional way of bilingual dictionary editing.

Corpora and intuition

It should be noted, however that large-scale corpora can drown us in data, presenting us with an overwhelming number of examples usually shown in the form of a KWICK-concordance where a key word is centered in a fixed-length field (e.g. 80 characters). A quick scan of the output is helpful for investigating frequency of occurrence and collocation patterns. But it is of very limited use where semantic interpretation is involved. Though we can get larger contexts by clicking on key items, semantic

interpretation of these examples thus presented is very difficult for non-native speakers. Accurate interpretation of natural and authentic corpora needs knowledge of cultural allusions, and idiomatic or metaphorical usage. Natural and authentic corpora are often incomprehensible to an outsider with little background knowledge and experience. Thus a vast amount of time is needed for accurate interpretation, but we are not allowed to spend as much time as we need, because dictionary making is usually a time-limited task. As pointed out by an American lexicographer, S. L. Landau, however, this may not be a limitation of the corpus itself but one imposed on it by the practical working environment of the lexicographer.

As important as a computer corpus is a native speaker's intuition. In recent years some linguists express their doubts about intuition and introspection as linguistic data on the ground that the sample of the language which native speakers, however fluent and competent they are, have met is only a fraction of the ever-changing entity called English and that corpus data therefore often provide overwhelming evidence which contradicts their intuitive judgments. It should be noted, however, that empirical data, however large they may be, do not provide us with 'negative' information (evidence of non-use), just 'positive' information (evidence of actual use). In order to obtain negative information which is often very useful to non-native learners, we devised techniques to elicit such intuitive data along the lines explored by Greenbaum & Quirk (1970). Fortunately we have now competent informants available who help to shed new light on ill-formed patterns of form and use which would have remained unnoticed if we had looked only at the surface data revealed by the computational analysis.

Because of the complicated problems concerning copyright and the

extreme difficulty of finding entirely suitable examples in the corpus, we have most of the illustrative examples invented by native speakers. It might be true that one does not study all of botany by making artificial flowers, but the metaphor is not necessarily valid. Artificial flowers are dead, but invented examples can be of great use provided they are contrived in such a way as to make apparent the restrictions and constraints on the use of a word. In this respect such examples better serve our purposes than corpus-driven examples which often do not make sense out of context.

Phraseology: From words to phrases

It has been generally believed that in order to be fluent speakers of English, non-native learners have to master grammar and memorize as many English words as possible: by so doing they will become able to create an indefinite number of sentences by putting memorized words in a grammatical framework. In reality, however, this procedure often results in sentences which are grammatically correct but pragmatically inappropriate. In recent years, we have come to realize that native speakers sort out memorized phrases which are appropriate to context rather than create new sentences by grammatical rules. These phrases stored in a mental lexicon as prefabricated chunks are referred to as 'lexical phrases' by such linguists as Nattinger and DeCarrico. Native speakers store these lexical phrases naturally and unconsciously in their mental lexicon as they grow older and select phrases most appropriate to relevant context whenever necessary to express complex ideas very simply and yet precisely. They are therefore not normally especially creative with the language. They can just say what they want to say. But this does not apply to non-native

learners, whose exposure to naturally-occurring English is very limited. What is worse, these phraseological units, unlike the so-called idioms, tend to slip by unnoticed, despite the fact that they are communicatively or pragmatically important. To my best knowledge, *Tishukan's Unabridged Genius English-Japanese Dictionary* (2003) is the first lingistics-oriented attempt to record as many of these lexical phrases as possible and help the users to develop their "collocational competence" by bringing to their attention the notion of phraseology. We can see a similar tendency to give wider space to phraseology in recently-published learner dictionaries such as *Shogakkan's Youth Progreressive English-Japanese Dictionary* (2004), *Kenkyusha's Luminous English-Japanese Dictionary* (2005, 2nd edition), *Sanseido's Wisdom English-Japanese Dictionary* (2006, 2nd edition) and *Taishukan's Genius English-Japanese Dictionary* (2006, 4th edition).

Monolingual or bilingual?

As I mentioned at the beginning of this paper, many arguments have been raised against the use of bilingual dictionaries: they are often claimed to be nothing but a list of possible translations for English words usually with little information about which meaning applies in which context and with no guidance about the grammatical patterns words operate in. These arguments are, however, often made by those who have in mind a small bilingual dictionary where demands of space result in drastic and misleading simplification. It must be stressed therefore that this criticism does not apply to most modern English-Japanese dictionaries. We have been fully aware that word meanings are not simply equations between the two languages, but that they grow out of and depend on specific uses and

contexts. We have attempted to reinforce supportive decoding/encoding information, with example sentences and phrases, and indicators of context and grammar, adding entries for learned words and technical, biographical and geographical words which are typically missing from monolingual learner's dictionaries, elaborating usage labeling — temporal, geographical, cultural and functional. Thus our dictionaries, whether pedagogical or general, are not just concerned with juxtaposing English words and their Japanese equivalents. They have reached a stage in which they serve as learning tools which develop the lexical and linguistic competence of Japanese users of English. This does not deny, however, that monolingual dictionaries have several decisive advantages over bilingual dictionaries. We just argue that bilingual dictionaries are not without their own advantages over monolingual ones: monolingual dictionaries complement rather than replace bilingual dictionaries.

Printed or electronic?

So far I have been concerned with printed or paper English-Japanese dictionaries. A few remarks will be in order about electronic dictionaries on the Japanese market. With the rapid development of technology, we have now three types of electronic dictionaries — CD-ROM dictionaries, online dictionaries and hand-held electronic dictionaries. Of these digital resources, hand-held (or portable) electronic dictionaries available in Japan are worthy of special mention. Most of them typically contain bilingual English-Japanese and Japanese-English dictionaries, a monolingual English-English dictionary, a monolingual Japanese-Japanese dictionary and also some other encyclopedic dictionaries, all or most of which are based on their

corresponding printed versions. The market for them have been expanding through the 1980s and 1990s. Every year new models appear equipped with far more improved and sophisticated functions. They are becoming more and more popular with high school and college students because of their handiness, ease of reference, the availability of sound and also the extended function of using inserted IC cards. A certain study shows that *Casio* alone, one of the major electronic dictionary makers, sold 2.8 million dictionaries in 2002, whereas the market for paper dictionaries shrank to 10 million copies, a decrease of 5 million copies when compared with the market in 1992. Their prices will remain well above those of paper dictionaries for some time to come. But the price may not be a crucial factor if users find multi-functional electronic dictionaries far more useful than printed counterparts. Some market researchers even predict that hand-held electronic dictionaries will replace printed ones in no distant future. It should be noted, however, that the real dictionary development is not just adding new technological functions, but improving quality of content. The latter is a lexicographer's task, whether the dictionary the lexicographer is engaged in is electronic or printed.

From the discussion above it seems reasonable to conclude that English-Japanese dictionaries with their data collected from various types of corpora, are making an important forward step beyond the conventional dictionary editing which has depended too heavily on British and American dictionaries for lexical information, to the point where English-Japanese lexicography can be considered to be, in its own right, mature and autonomous in theory and practice

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