
Considering the Merits, and Some Demerits, of the *Longman English–Japanese Dictionary*

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Abstract: After comparing English monolingual and bilingual learner's dictionaries, the author discusses the *Longman English–Japanese Dictionary* (LEJD), compiled on the basis of three large-scale corpora. It impresses especially by its user-friendliness, seventeen aspects being listed which accounts for this. The parts comprising the macrostructure of LEJD are then enumerated, giving an overview of the useful information contained in the front, middle and back matter. The microstructure excels especially by the clear and simple definitions, the abundant and appropriate illustrative examples and the colourful and impressive pictorial illustrations. After considering these merits, the author mentions some demerits which will hopefully be reduced or eliminated in revised future editions.

Keywords: ENGLISH LEARNER'S DICTIONARIES, LANGUAGE CORPORA, USER-FRIENDLINESS, DEFINITIONS, ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES, PICTORIAL ILLUSTRATIONS

Opsomming: 'n Beskouing van die voordele, en sommige van die nadele, van die *Longman English–Japanese Dictionary*. Ná die vergelyking van Engelse eentalige en tweetalige aanleerderswoordeboeke word die *Longman English–Japanese Dictionary* (LEJD), wat saamgestel is op basis van drie grootskaalse korpora, bespreek. Dit beïndruk die outeur, veral weens die gebruikersvriendelikheid daarvan. Sewentien aspekte hiervan word gelys. Die dele waaruit die makrostruktuur van die LEJD bestaan, word daarna genoem wat 'n oorsig gee van die bruikbare inligting vervat in die voor-, middel- en agterwerk. Die mikrostruktuur is uitnemend, veral weens die duidelike en eenvoudige definisies, die talryke en toepaslike illustratiewe voorbeelde en die kleurvolle en indrukwekkende illustrasies. Ná 'n beskouing van hierdie voordele, noem die outeur ook sommige nadele wat hopelik in hersiene toekomstige uitgawes verminder of uitgeskakel kan word.

Sleutelwoorde: ENGELSE AANLEERDESWOORDEBOEKE, TAALKORPORA, GEBRUIKERSVRIENDELIKHEID, DEFINISIES, ILLUSTRATIEWE VOORBEELDE, ILLUSTRASIES

The *Longman English–Japanese Dictionary* (ロングマン英和辞典, henceforth LEJD), co-edited by the British and Japanese linguists Geoffrey Leech and Yoshihiko Ikegami and first published in 2007 by Pearson Education, is the first genuine bilingual learner's dictionary exclusively intended for Japanese English learners. This dictionary has created many innovative breakthroughs, revolutionized the making of English learner's dictionaries, showcased the latest

developments in bilingual learner's dictionaries and embodied high achievements in British English learner's dictionaries in an endeavour to broaden the horizon of English learner's dictionaries. Only when LEJD is placed in a historical context can its significance be fully understood. Therefore, it is necessary to first take a retrospective look at the history of English learner's dictionaries.

With the rapid improvement of language processing technologies using computers and the establishment of the position of English as an international language, dictionary compilers and publishers of English-speaking countries came to realize that the special needs of non-native English learners had long been neglected and that the traditional way of making English dictionaries ought to be fundamentally changed to cater to the special needs of these non-native English learners. This change in the concept of dictionary making finally gave birth to English learner's dictionaries. Since the mid-twentieth century, this serious defect of monolingual English dictionaries has received more and more attention and many English dictionary compilers and publishers have made efforts to address it by compiling more and more excellent and innovative learner's dictionaries.

British dictionary compilers and publishers are pioneers in the compilation and publication of monolingual English learner's dictionaries capable of satisfying the special needs of non-native English learners in respect of English grammar, syntax, collocation, usage and cultural background. Later American dictionary compilers and publishers joined their British counterparts in compiling and publishing high-quality monolingual English learner's dictionaries. They took pains to make various innovations in compiling monolingual English learner's dictionaries, resulting in the production of excellent dictionaries enabling non-native English learners to acquire a better command of English. Generally speaking, British learner's dictionaries are more innovative than their American counterparts. Since the advent of the first generation of monolingual English learner's dictionaries represented by *The New Method English Dictionary* (West and Endicott 1935), *A Grammar of English Words* (Palmer 1938) and *Idiomatic and Syntactic English Dictionary* (Hornby, Gatenby and Wakefield 1942), monolingual English learner's dictionaries have evolved until the appearance of the British "Big Five" Learner's Dictionaries, namely, *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (McIntosh 2013), *Collins COBUILD Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (Collins COBUILD 2014), *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (Pearson Education 2015), *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners* (Rundell 2007) and *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (Deuter et al. 2015), and the first American learner's dictionary, namely, *Merriam-Webster's Advanced Learner's English Dictionary* (Perrault 2008). As a matter of fact, British and American learner's dictionaries have been learning from each other to improve themselves so as to better cater to the ever-changing varied needs of their target users, helping them to gain a good English knowledge. For many English learners, especially those non-native English learners not living in English-speaking countries, English learner's dictionaries have become indispensable

reference books. For the time being, the compilation and publication of various monolingual English learner's dictionaries have overtaken the momentum of the compilation and publication of other types of English dictionaries. Why have monolingual English learner's dictionaries nowadays become so successful and popular? The underlying reason is that with the rapid development of economic globalization and advancement of science and technology, English has now become the most widely used language in the world. Under the strong influence of the success of monolingual English learner's dictionaries, monolingual learner's dictionaries of other languages are now being compiled or have been published.

In spite of the fact that monolingual English learner's dictionaries have resulted from ordinary monolingual English dictionaries, the former are very different from the latter in quite a few aspects:

- (1) Monolingual English learner's dictionaries are usually compiled on the basis of large-scale corpora and the headwords included in them are mainly core words and less frequently used words, while the headwords included in ordinary monolingual English dictionaries are common and frequently used words.
- (2) In monolingual English learner's dictionaries, the words used to define headwords are usually limited to about two or three thousand basic words to make it easier for users to understand the definitions of headwords, the ways in which headwords are defined are more diversified (sometimes a sentence may be used to define a headword), high-frequency headwords are usually marked to remind users that these words are of special importance, so that more attention should be paid to them and a greater effort be made to have a good command of them, and the arrangement of the different senses of a polysemous headword is usually presented according to the frequency of the use of each sense or the logical order of these senses, while in ordinary monolingual English dictionaries, the words used to define headwords are not limited to a small number, the ways in which headwords are defined are traditional and less diversified, high-frequency headwords are usually not marked and the arrangement of the different senses of a polysemous headword is usually given according to their historical or logical order.
- (3) Monolingual English learner's dictionaries contain more examples illustrating in which contexts and in what ways these headwords should be used than ordinary monolingual English dictionaries.
- (4) Monolingual English learner's dictionaries include more collocations than ordinary monolingual English dictionaries.
- (5) Monolingual English learner's dictionaries contain far more detailed labelling on the parts of speech of the included headwords than ordinary monolingual English dictionaries.

- (6) Monolingual English learner's dictionaries contain abundant and detailed pragmatic information about headwords that can help users to speak and write English properly and correctly, while ordinary monolingual English dictionaries usually do not pay much attention to the pragmatic information of headwords.
- (7) Monolingual English learner's dictionaries usually include a large number of instructive illustrations to help users acquire a better command of the meanings of the headwords, while ordinary monolingual English dictionaries traditionally contain only a very small number of illustrations or no illustrations at all.

As an English learner's dictionary, LEJD has all the above-mentioned conspicuous features shared by all learner's dictionaries. Nevertheless, LEJD is Longman's latest and most innovative dictionary deserving special attention and careful study, because it has made a number of significant breakthroughs:

- (1) It is the first genuine bilingual English–Japanese learner's dictionary intended exclusively to help Japanese English learners to acquire a good command of English. Although there are many other bilingual English–Japanese dictionaries in the domestic Japanese market, they can hardly be called genuine bilingual English–Japanese dictionaries.
- (2) It has been compiled on the basis of three large-scale corpora, the first one being the 330-million-word Longman Corpus Network, an English corpus previously developed by the Longman Company, the second being the Longman Learner's Corpus, an English corpus of the various typical errors likely to be made by non-native Japanese English learners newly created by the Longman Company, and the third being the 50-million-word Contemporary Japanese Corpus, a Japanese corpus newly developed by the Longman Company to verify whether the Japanese equivalents of the English headwords, illustrative examples and collocations in this English–Japanese dictionary are genuine idiomatic expressions of contemporary Japanese.
- (3) The greatest strength of LEJD is that the naturalness of its English, especially the naturalness of the illustrative English examples, can be guaranteed, because of the following two measures:
 - (a) All the illustrative English examples included in LEJD have been carefully selected from a huge corpus of British and American English by the editorial staff of the Longman Company who have long been renowned for compiling excellent original and innovative monolingual English dictionaries. Although there are many other so-called "corpus-based English–Japanese dictionaries" in the domestic Japanese market, the naturalness of the English in those dictionaries has not been guaranteed, because their illustrative examples are

selected from various English corpora and their English has not been confirmed as genuine natural English by native English speakers, especially well-trained and -qualified native English dictionary compilers. It is often the case that an illustrative English example may appear in a corpus, but turns out not to be natural English. Although the various corpora have become more and more powerful, it must be borne in mind that every corpus has its own limitations. LEJD has avoided these limitations by having the illustrative English examples confirmed as natural English by well-trained and -qualified compilers who are native English speakers.

- (b) The English used in this dictionary is Standard English and the basis for its compilation is the Longman Corpus Network, a huge and reliable corpus containing both British and American spoken and written English.
- (4) The most marked breakthrough made by LEJD is its user-friendliness. When compared with LEJD, well-known English–Japanese dictionaries such as *Collins COBUILD English–Japanese Advanced Dictionary of American English* (Collins COBUILD 2008), *Genius English–Japanese Dictionary* (Minamide 2014), *Kenkyusha's English–Japanese Dictionary for the General Reader* (Takahashi 2012), *Kenkyusha's New English–Japanese Dictionary* (Takebayashi 2002), *Shogakukan Random House English–Japanese Dictionary* (Konishi 1993) and *The Wisdom English–Japanese Dictionary* (Inoue and Akano 2012), will pale by comparison as far as user-friendliness is concerned. The user-friendliness of LEJD lies in the following aspects:
- (a) On the basis of the statistics of the Longman Corpus Network, the 3,000 most frequently used words in spoken English and the 3,000 most frequently used words in written English presented as head-words in LEJD are all printed in red to make them conspicuous to dictionary users; the 1,000 most frequently used words in spoken English and the 1,000 most frequently used words in written English are marked in red "S1" and in red "W1" respectively; the 2,000 most frequently used words in spoken English and the 2,000 most frequently used words in written English are marked in red "S2" and in red "W2" respectively; and the 3,000 most frequently used words in spoken English and the 3,000 most frequently used words in written English are marked in red "S3" and in red "W3" respectively.
 - (b) According to the classification of JACET (The Japan Association of College English Teachers), the 1000, 2,000, 3,000, 4,000, 5,000, 6,000, 7,000 and 8,000 most frequently used English words used as head-words in LEJD are marked in red "J1", "J2", "J3", "J4", "J5", "J6", "J7" and "J8" respectively to remind Japanese dictionary users that these words fall into the category of the basic vocabulary that they should strive to

master to complete their school education effectively at different learning stages.

- (c) The Japanese equivalents of the 3,000 most frequently used words in spoken and the 3,000 most frequently used words in written English given as headwords in LEJD are all printed in red to make them conspicuous to users.
- (d) The different senses of each polysemous English headword are all arranged in order of frequency so as to enable users to obtain access to their most needed information as quickly as possible, with higher frequency senses being presented before lower frequency senses.
- (e) The nuances of English headwords, and the occasions on which these headwords should be used are also correctly reflected in the Japanese equivalents of these English headwords.
- (f) On occasions when two or more Japanese equivalents of an English headword are provided, LEJD clearly indicates which Japanese equivalent should be used in which context so that its users can acquire a better command of the usage of each English headword.
- (g) All illustrations are printed in full colour to reduce eye strain when its users look up words.
- (h) All English collocations are printed in bold type to make them salient.
- (i) All English sentence patterns are printed in bold type without using complicated and confusing signs.
- (j) Exclamation marks are widely used to call the attention of users to spellings and pronunciations that are prone to be misspelled or mispronounced.
- (k) All the mistakes frequently made by Japanese English learners are first analyzed in detail by using the Longman Runners Corpus and then clearly pointed out.
- (l) When two or several English words or expressions may be used to describe a certain situation in life, study or work, LEJD always points out which English word or expression is the more or the most idiomatic so that its users are enabled to speak or write English correctly and properly.
- (m) Many important grammatical items in English are provided with a linguistic differentiation column to help explain them clearly and plainly to users so as to reduce mistakes that are highly likely to be made by ordinary Japanese English learners.
- (n) Language notes are frequently provided on the etymology of English headwords, the nuances of words listed in thesauri, and words for

which it is difficult to find Japanese equivalents, explaining the British and American cultural backgrounds to broaden the horizon of Japanese English learners and enable them to become proficient in English.

- (o) Both British and American English headwords are included in LEJD, which is more convenient for dictionary users to acquire a good command of both British and American English so that they need not look up these words in more than one dictionary.
- (p) As headwords, irregular verbs in both British and American English are followed by their past tense and past participle forms to assist users to apply these verbs correctly.
- (q) In the first two parts of the middle matter of LEJD, a communication guide with regard to oral communication and essay vocabulary is provided to enhance users' ability to communicate in spoken or written form more effectively and smoothly.

In the "oral communication" part, the guide tells users how to agree or disagree with somebody, how to request or invite somebody to do something, how to decline something to somebody, how to make suggestions, how to accept something, how to apologize to somebody or to accept somebody's apology, how to ask for permission, how to thank somebody or to respond to somebody's thanks, how to express one's own opinions or to ask for somebody's opinions, how to express understanding or no understanding of something, how to make proposals, how to confirm or deny something, how to make or answer phone calls, how to express one's wishes or hopes, how to express one's convictions or congratulations, how to praise somebody or to respond to somebody's praises, how to ask for road information from somebody or to give road information to somebody, how to introduce oneself or somebody else to others or how to reply to an introduction, how to greet somebody or how to reply to somebody's greetings, and how to bid farewell to somebody.

In the "essay vocabulary" part, users are provided with many useful high-frequency words closely related to the following fields: (1) art and culture; (2) books/literature; (3) business; (4) computers/the Internet; (5) describing people; (6) education; (7) exercise; (8) movies/films; (9) global issues; (10) government/politics; (11) health care and medicine; (12) hobbies and things one likes to do; (13) jobs and work; (14) music; (15) newspapers and magazines; (16) science and technology; (17) television and radio; (18) the environment; (19) vacation /holiday. Having a good command of the meanings and usage of high-frequency words from the above-mentioned fields will improve the essay writing ability of users as these words will provide them with what is essential to express their ideas freely and clearly. Without mastering a certain amount of vocabulary, no one can write a good essay.

In the last part of the middle matter of LEJD, some frequently used con-

junctions or conjunctive phrases with illustrative examples and detailed language notes on how to use them correctly and properly in spoken and written English are provided, which is very helpful to English learners, especially non-native English learners who in normal circumstances do not know the nuances of English words and often make numerous mistakes that seem amusingly odd and completely unintelligible to native English learners.

The macrostructure of LEJD comprises the following parts: (1) preface; (2) ways on how to use the dictionary; (3) ways on how to use the communication guide; (4) introduction; (5) *Longman English–Japanese Dictionary* — corpora and collocations; (6) the *Longman Contemporary Japanese Corpus* and the various new measures taken in the dictionary; (7) acknowledgements; (8) list of the editors, proofreaders and relevant cooperators of the dictionary; (9) signs and abbreviations used in the dictionary; (10) pronunciation directions; (11) list of the pronunciation signs; (12) the main body of the dictionary; (13) appendices to the dictionary. The first eleven parts form the front matter and the last part composes the back matter of the dictionary. In addition, the "communication guide" and "conjunctive phrases" constitute the middle matter. Obviously, LEJD contains plenty of front, middle and back matter, which is helpful and convenient to users who want to take full and efficient advantage of the dictionary to improve their English.

Regarding the microstructure of LEJD, three points are especially worth mentioning, namely, the clear and simple definitions of the headwords, the abundant and appropriate illustrative examples and the colourful and impressive pictorial illustrations.

The quality of the definitions in a dictionary determines to a very large extent the quality of the whole dictionary. Therefore, compilers should attach great importance to the quality of the definitions. The compilers of dictionaries have in fact for a very long time been vying with each other to contrive various novel ideas to improve the quality of dictionaries so as to better satisfy the needs of users. Generally speaking, the compilers of LEJD have done a very good job in defining its headwords in a clear and simple way so that its users can readily understand the meanings. In addition, the Japanese equivalents of all English headwords are genuine Japanese, based on the *Longman Contemporary Japanese Corpus*. Perhaps the boldest and most innovative move taken by the compilers of LEJD was to present all the main senses of each polysemous headword in a red semantic frame right under the headword, followed by all its detailed senses as well as some illustrative examples. This method of arranging the senses of each headword is very effective in saving the time and energy of users by first giving them a general picture of the rough meanings of each polysemous headword and then guide them to the meaning they are looking for as quickly and accurately as possible.

Illustrative examples have now become a must for all learner's dictionaries. The number and quality of the examples determine to a large degree the usefulness and popularity of a dictionary. Illustrative examples have been

playing a unique and irreplaceable role in helping users to acquire a good command of the meanings and usages of the consulted words by providing users with the typical contexts of a headword and showing users how a headword should be employed in these typical contexts. A proper illustrative example is, in many cases, far better than a prolix note on the usage of an English headword. All the illustrative examples in this dictionary have been carefully selected from large-scale corpora and thus they are authoritative and reliable, which ensures the usefulness and popularity of LEJD.

The abundant and colourful pictorial illustrations in LEJD are particularly impressive and praiseworthy. Traditionally British dictionaries contain almost no illustrations, in sharp contrast to their American counterparts that traditionally incorporate many illustrations. However, since the advent of learner's dictionaries, great changes to this British tradition have taken place and a new tradition of learner's dictionaries has gradually taken form. LEJD has continued the tradition of British learner's dictionaries by including a large number of illustrations. Illustrations in dictionaries play a pivotal role, being very effective in helping users better to understand and grasp culture-loaded or culture-specific words, which are widespread in any culture, stemming from different geographical and social environments, different histories, customs and traditions, different ways of thinking and other factors. In many cases, a good illustration can make an English headword much better comprehensible than an elaborate definition, for it gives users a vivid intuitional image of the consulted word.

Despite the above-mentioned praiseworthy features, LEJD shows the following inadequacies:

- (1) It has no corresponding electronic version in CD-ROM or EPWING format that can be used on ordinary computers or cell phones, rendering it virtually impossible for its users to consult new words on ordinary computers or cell phones while other contemporary mainstream English–Japanese dictionaries like *Collins COBUILD English–Japanese Advanced Dictionary of American English*, *Genius English–Japanese Dictionary*, *Kenkyusha's English–Japanese Dictionary for the General Reader*, *Kenkyusha's New English–Japanese Dictionary*, *Shogakukan Random House English–Japanese Dictionary*, and *The Wisdom English–Japanese Dictionary* all have their corresponding electronic versions so as to provide their users with more options, and making it convenient for them to look up new words.
- (2) The colour contrast of the illustrations needs to be improved, because, although full-colour illustrations can leave a vivid impression on its users, the contrast of the colours of the illustrations is not sharp enough and may cause eye strain if users look at them long or often.
- (3) The font is not large enough to be seen clearly by users with poor eyesight.

- (4) Although it includes 102,000 headwords and phrases, 83,000 natural illustrative examples, 63,000 collocations, 2,000 error or usage notes for Japanese English learners, unique thesaurus notes as well as numerous notes about grammar, formality, sound/pronunciation, etc., it still needs the inclusion of more of these to better cater to the ever-changing needs of its users. It often proves that its editors' standards for selecting headwords, phrases, illustrative examples and collocations are not completely objective, not ruling out the possibility that sometimes the editors think that there is no need to include certain words, phrases, illustrative examples, collocations or notes, which users in fact may consider necessary.

On the whole, however, LEJD is the best English–Japanese bilingual dictionary published so far and the best representative of British learner's dictionaries, because it has revolutionized English–Japanese bilingual dictionaries and is representative of the highest achievements of British learner's dictionaries regarding the following aspects: (1) the naturalness of the English; (2) the genuineness of the Japanese; (3) the user-friendliness of the design; (4) the careful consideration of details; (5) the clarity and simplicity of the definitions; (6) the abundance and appropriateness of its illustrative examples; (7) the colourfulness and impressiveness of its illustrations; (8) the skilful and accomplished way of combining dictionary making with three large-scale corpora and advanced corpus technologies; and (9) the practicality for language learning. This epoch-making dictionary is the first and sole bilingual dictionary entirely based on English and Japanese corpora and designed to help users obtain access to their needed information as quickly and conveniently as possible for learning natural English and genuine Japanese.

Although there are still certain inadequacies in LEJD, these by no means outweigh its merits. Up till now this revolutionary dictionary is the best English–Japanese dictionary available. Most certainly its inadequacies will be gradually reduced or eliminated in revised future editions.

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