

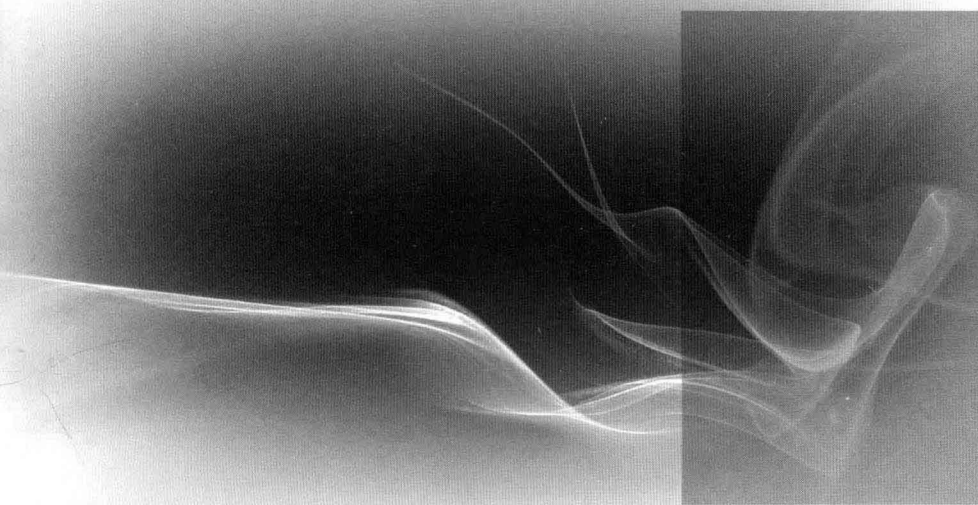
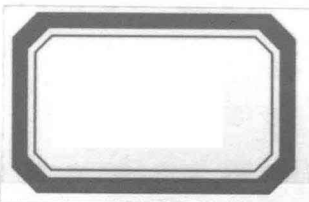
Dictionary Use and EFL Vocabulary Learning:
An Empirical Research of English Majors' Use
of Bilingualized Dictionaries in China

词典使用与英语词汇学习——中国英语
专业学生使用双解词典之实证研究

陈玉珍 / 著



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序

长江后浪推前浪,外语辞书事业后继有人。在外语界,从事辞书研究和实践活动恐怕是最为冷门的事业,因为一般人总是倾向急功近利,在社会和学界浮躁风甚嚣尘上的当下更是如此。因此,从事辞书研究和实践活动者必须具备耐得住清贫和寂寞的品质,还要具备“衣带渐宽终不悔”的精神,才能够达到“回头蓦见,那人正在灯火阑珊处”的境界。事实也证明,辞书研究和实践活动并非是人人皆能从事的事业。但是,本书的作者陈玉珍博士不仅能够从事辞书研究和实践活动,而且还是具有潜力的研究者和实践者。她既当过我的硕士研究生,又当过我的博士研究生。虽然平时话语不多,但在学时就显示出刻苦钻研的精神、严谨的治学态度、突出的科研能力以及从事辞书研究的潜质。10 年来的事实胜于雄辩。硕士毕业后数年间她在核心期刊发表了一系列有关词典使用和词典用户研究方面的论文,并主持过 3 个相关的省厅课题。每次读到她的新作,本人喜悦之色不禁溢于言表。读博期间,她又更上一层楼,在 A&HCI 收录的国际刊物 *International Journal of Lexicography* (《国际辞书学期刊》,牛津大学出版社出版) 上发表了 4 篇论文,在国内核心刊物上发表了 10 多篇论文,因此先后获得了厦门大学研究生科研成果特等奖(2010 年度)和一等奖(2011 年度)。最近,她在 SSCI 收录的国际刊物 *Lexikos* 上又发表了一篇论文。可以说,玉珍博士已经成长为词典使用和词典用户研究方面的专家了。

这里,我顺便要强调的是,玉珍博士能有今天真是不容易!她出生于贫穷偏僻的小山村,是从小吃着地瓜饭穿着旧衣服长大的孩子,直到高考前还得一边放牛一边复习功课。穷人的孩子早当家,她的成长经历,对当今年轻人的成长具有很好的激励作用。



还令我感到欣慰的是,《词典使用与英语词汇学习》终于要问世了。这部专著是作者在她的博士论文的基础上修改而成的,是其脚踏实地潜心钻研的成果,虽为一家之言,但包含了一些富有启发性的新观点、新探索、新发现和新方法。作者从词典用户的视角出发,结合英语词汇学习,对前人极少涉及的双解学习词典的使用情况进行了系统的深入的实证研究,这对国内英语词汇教学、词典使用教学和词典编纂实践具有重要的指导意义。作者对学习词典使用、学习词典用户和词典用户教育等方面的探讨之所以显得可贵,是因为这些方面均为传统辞书理论研究的薄弱点和空白点,需要大家进行深入的研究。因此,该书提供的这些方面的研究成果可供大家借鉴,可以作为引玉之砖。此外,该书附录内容也十分有价值,例如调查问卷样本、词汇水平测试样卷、词典类型与词汇习得样卷、词典查阅与词汇练习样卷等。我不想说得太多,以免有为弟子吹嘘之嫌。读者诸君开卷阅后,自会明白本人所言不虚。

我由衷地祝贺陈玉珍博士初获成功,希望她百尺竿头更进一步。同时也期待能在不久的将来有幸读到她的下一部力作。

吴建平

2012年10月

于厦门大学西村书斋



Abstract

English-Chinese bilingualized dictionaries (BLDs) are hugely popular with tertiary-level Chinese EFL students. However, this type of dictionary has drawn little attention from dictionary use researchers in China. The present research aims to investigate the use and usefulness of BLDs for EFL vocabulary learning under different contexts. It consists of four independent yet interrelated studies, each of which focuses on one of the following areas:

1. the general use of BLDs in daily learning settings, including patterns of BLD use, perceptions and evaluations of BLDs, and BLD users' needs;
2. the effectiveness of BLD use for vocabulary learning in text-length context;
3. the effectiveness of BLD use for vocabulary learning in sentence-length context; and
4. BLD users' lookup behavior and its impact on vocabulary learning in CALL context.

In addition to the above-mentioned research topics, the author also intends to examine the following aspects of BLD use which are integrated into most of the four studies:

5. the differences between BLDs of different media, i. e. paper version vs. electronic form in terms of general dictionary use and dictionary effectiveness for vocabulary learning; and

6. the differences between BLD users at different levels of vocabulary proficiency in terms of vocabulary learning through dictionary use.

Participants of the research are undergraduate English majors from several universities in Fujian Province. Different methods were adopted for different studies.

The first study is a questionnaire survey aiming to find out how BLDs are usually used in general learning settings, how they are perceived and evaluated by students, what are the differences between BLDs of different media, and what are the needs of BLD users. As a foundation for the whole research, the first study proves the huge popularity of BLDs and the favorable recognition they have gained. It also generates some assumptions which form the research hypotheses for further testing in the subsequent studies of the research.

The second study explores the role of BLD use in EFL vocabulary learning in reading context. Students engaged in a reading task were divided into three groups under different reading conditions: with the aid of a desktop electronic BLD, a print BLD of the same version, or without access to any dictionary. After the task completion, an unexpected retention test was conducted requesting the students to recall the meaning of the target words imbedded in the reading text. A week later, the same retention test was done again. The study reveals that BLD use can effectively facilitate vocabulary comprehension and enhance incidental vocabulary acquisition. There is no significant difference between the print and the electronic BLDs in their usefulness for vocabulary learning. In other words, the outcomes of vocabulary learning are not dependent on the form of BLDs. Nevertheless, the electronic BLD shows some superiority over the print one in its effectiveness for vocabulary retention. Students varying on vocabulary proficiency levels and reading conditions fare differently on incidental vocabulary acquisition.

The third study involves comparisons between a BLD and two dictionaries of other types, one bilingual, the other monolingual. Students were randomly divided into three groups, each using one of the three above-mentioned dictionaries to complete the tasks about ten target words, including a definition-selection task, a sentence-translation task and a sentence-writing task. After the task completion, without advance notice, they were given retention tests about the target words, including a form-recognition test, a meaning-recognition test and a meaning-recall test, the latter two of which were repeated a week later. The study shows a clear advantage of the BLD for vocabulary task completion over the other two dictionaries. For vocabulary retention, BLD use also yields substantially better results of meaning-recall tests and it proves to be significantly more effective than the bilingual dictionary for meaning-recognition, although in terms of form recognition, these three dictionary groups do not differ sharply. The study also indicates that students using different dictionary types and varying on vocabulary proficiency levels fare differently on incidental vocabulary acquisition.

The fourth study is concerned with the use of a specially designed CALL program which includes materials of a reading task and relevant dictionary information. Ten target words were integrated into the reading text and could be consulted through button clicks. The dictionary information was taken from a paper BLD which was familiar to all participants. Each BLD entry was split into several components, including phonetic information & word class, L2 definition, L1 translation, L2 definition + L1 translation, example, and derived words. Students' clicks on the target words and the entry components were all registered by log files. After the task completion, the students were given an unexpected retention test to recall the meaning of the target words. This experimental study explores the language-oriented

lookup behavior of BLD users and its impact on vocabulary retention in CALL context. It is found that students' overall language preference is to read both L2 definition and L1 translation in BLD entries; L1 translation is also used by many students and L2 definition is the least popular lookup option. The BLD proves to be able to cater for a variety of lookup patterns, among which, the L2 + L1 lookup pattern leads to the best results of vocabulary retention. The study also manifests that there is no significant relationship between the amount of dictionary activity and the outcomes of vocabulary learning. Furthermore, students' vocabulary proficiency is not strongly associated with their lookup preference or the amount of dictionary activity, although it is a strong predictor of vocabulary learning outcomes.

As the first large-scale and systematic investigation into BLD use in mainland China, the research portrays an interesting and illuminating picture of dictionary use in EFL learning, particularly in task-based vocabulary learning. It presents the general use of BLDs in the daily learning context and reveals the positive role this type of dictionary can play for vocabulary task completion and incidental vocabulary acquisition in specific contexts. It also supports the claim that the BLD can cater for a variety of lookup patterns. In addition, the research throws some light on the differences between BLDs in the paper and electronic form and between students at different vocabulary proficiency levels. Furthermore, some specific problems with dictionary use are also identified and discussed. The findings of the research are of direct relevance to EFL vocabulary teaching, dictionary use instruction and lexicographic practices in China.

Key Words: dictionary use; vocabulary learning; bilingualized dictionaries; English majors in China

List of Abbreviations

BD: bilingual dictionary

BLD: Bilingualized dictionary

CALD: Cambridge Advanced learner's Dictionary

CALL: Computer-assistant language learning

COBUILD: Collins COBUILD Advanced learner's English Dictionary

EBLD: electronic bilingualized dictionary

EFL: English as a foreign language

FormT: form-recognition test

LDOCE: Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English

LECDCE: Longman English-Chinese Dictionary of Contemporary English

L1: first language

L2: second language; foreign language

MD: monolingual dictionary

MED: Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners

ND: no dictionary

NECD: A New English-Chinese Dictionary (4th edition).

OALD: Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary

OALECD: Oxford Advanced learner's English-Chinese Dictionary

PBLD: paper bilingualized dictionary

RT 1: retention test 1

RT 2: retention test 2

Recall T: meaning-recall test

Recog T: meaning-recognition test

Task 1: definition-selection task

Task 2: sentence-translation task

Task 3: sentence-writing task

TEM: Test for English Majors

VLT: Vocabulary Levels Test



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