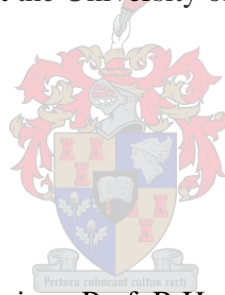


**A critical evaluation of bilingual Chinese/English dictionaries for  
elementary and intermediate Mandarin learners at Stellenbosch  
University**

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Thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of  
Philosophy at the University of Stellenbosch



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March 2012

### **Declaration**

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

Signature:

Date: March 2012

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## Abstract

The number of Chinese-learners in South Africa has increased rapidly in recent years, but the quality of the dictionaries that are available for their use has not improved much. The more students study Chinese, the more it becomes necessary to create suitable dictionaries to facilitate their studies. In the hope of meeting this need, this study selects two written dictionaries commonly used by students at Stellenbosch University in South Africa, namely the *Oxford Beginner's Chinese Dictionary* and the *Concise English-Chinese Chinese-English Dictionary*, to analyze, comment on and compare in terms of structure and equivalence. Using the results of this analysis, this study offers suggestions for improving the quality of future Mandarin learner's dictionaries.

This study takes into consideration the situation faced by students when learning Chinese abroad, especially in South Africa, the development of pedagogical lexicography in Chinese-learner's dictionaries in China and abroad, the relationship between online dictionaries and written dictionaries, and some special characteristics of the Chinese language, all of which factors greatly influence the making of a dictionary.

Theoretically and methodically, this study is based on Function Theory as presented by Sven Tarp. According to Function Theory, before writing a dictionary, lexicographers must analyze specific types of users in specific types of situations. This study attempts to follow Tarp's suggestion by analyzing a small group of dictionary users with the help of a survey conducted by the author in an attempt to get a general idea of how Mandarin learners at Stellenbosch University use dictionaries.

The main focus of this study is the frame structure, microstructure, macrostructure and dictionary equivalence in two dictionaries--*Concise* and *Beginner's*. After carefully analyzing these aspects of the dictionaries, the author identifies the sections of these dictionaries which successfully present information in a way that will be most beneficial for their intended audiences. The study goes on to

pinpoint less-successful sections of the two dictionaries and provides suggestions for improvement. In sum, this study focuses on using the principle of Function Theory to determine what features should be included in Mandarin learner's dictionaries to make them more suitable for elementary and intermediate learners of Mandarin at Stellenbosch University, in South Africa, and, by extension, in other parts of the world.

## OPSOMMING

### **'n Kritiese evaluering van tweetalige Sjinees/Engels woordeboeke vir elementêre en intermediêre Mandarynse studente aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch**

Die afgelope paar jaar het die aantal studente van Sjinees in Suid-Afrika aansienlik toegeneem, maar die standaard van beskikbare woordeboeke het nie veel verbeter nie. Hoe meer studente Sjinees bestudeer hoe noodsaakliker is dit om gepaste woordeboeke te ontwikkel om hulle in hulle studie te help. Om aan hierdie behoefte te voldoen, kies hierdie studie twee woordeboeke wat gereeld deur studente aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch benut word, naamlik die *Oxford Beginner's Chinese Dictionary* en die *Concise English-Chinese Chinese-English Dictionary*, om hulle te ontleed, kommentaar te lewer en hulle met mekaar in terme van struktuur en ekwivalensie te vergelyk. Met behulp van gevolgtrekkings uit hierdie ontleding word voorstelle gemaak oor hoe om die standaard van toekomstige woordeboeke te verbeter.

Die studie neem die situasie in ag waarmee studente wat in die buiteland Sjinees studeer, veral in Suid Afrika, te doen kry, die ontwikkeling van pedagogiese leksikografie in woordeboeke in Sjina sowel as die buiteland, die verhouding tussen aanlynwoordeboeke en gedrukte woordeboeke en sekere spesiale eienskappe van die Sjinese taal - alles faktore wat die opstel van woordeboeke beïnvloed.

Teoreties en metodologies is hierdie studie op die funksieteorie, soos aangebied deur Sven Tarp, gebaseer. Volgens die funksieteorie moet leksikograwe voor die opstel van 'n woordeboek spesifieke tipes gebruikers in spesifieke situasies analiseer. Hierdie studie poog om Tarp se voorstelle te volg deur 'n klein groep woordeboekgebruikers, met behulp van 'n ondersoek, uitgevoer deur die outeur, te analiseer om sodoende 'n algemene idee te formuleer van hoe Mandarynse studente aan die Universiteit van

Stellenbosch woordeboeke benut.

Die hoofokus van hierdie studie is die raamwerk, mikrostruktuur, makrostruktuur en ekwivalensie in die twee gekose woordeboeke – *Concise* en *Beginner's*. Nadat hierdie aspekte van die woordeboeke noukeurig ontleed is, identifiseer die outeur die dele wat inligting op die voordeligste manier vir die bestemde gebruiker aanbied. Ook identifiseer hierdie studie die minder suksesvolle dele en stel moontlike verbeteringe voor. Samevattend fokus hierdie studie daarop om die beginsel van die funksieteorie te benut deur vas te stel watter eienskappe in woordeboeke ingesluit moet word om hulle meer geskik te maak vir elementêre en intermediêre Mandarynse studente aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch in Suid-Afrika, sowel as in ander dele van die wêreld.

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I would also like to thank all my students at Stellenbosch University. They were the inspiration for this thesis, and they helped me to complete my survey by providing me their valuable perspectives as dictionary users. I would also like to specifically thank the following colleagues, friends and students at Stellenbosch: Robert Kotzé, who supported me financially during this study; Fenglei, who introduced me to this masters programme and helped me in countless ways; Tanya Fouché, who always appears when I'm in crisis; Inge Wessels and Susan Conradie, who lent me their dictionaries and shared the problems they've had using them; and Mark Volkmann, who is always on Skype to offer me help whenever I need it.

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# **1. CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Background**

### **1.1.1 Background on Chinese learning and dictionary use in SA**

China's strong economic position has resulted in increased interest in learning Chinese throughout the world. According to XuLin, the head of the Office of Chinese Language Council International (Hanban), in March 2009 there were more than forty million foreign learners of Chinese worldwide. XuLin also notes that, "In the period up to October 2009, a total of 523 Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms have been established in 87 countries and regions over the world; among which 282 are Confucius Institutes in 84 countries. 70 in 28 Asian countries, 21 in 15 African countries, 94 in 29 European countries, 87 in 11 American countries and 10 in 2 Pacific Island countries, and 241 are Confucius Classrooms in 25 countries (Burma, Mali and the Bahamas have independent Confucius Classrooms, not affiliated with an institute): 27 in 10 Asian countries, 2 in 2 African countries, 34 in 7 European countries, 176 in 5 North and South American countries and 2 in 1 Pacific Island country." Compared to other continents, however, Chinese language teaching in Africa is relatively undeveloped.

Two South African universities offer academic Chinese courses at an elementary to intermediate level, namely Stellenbosch University and Unisa. There are also four Confucius Institutes (CI) in South Africa that offer courses in Chinese: the CI of Stellenbosch University, the CI of Tshwane University of Technology, the CI of Rhodes University and the CI of University of Cape Town.

Stellenbosch University has taken the lead in Chinese teaching in South Africa for the past ten years. It was also the first South African university to have a Confucius Institute. This year, there are about one hundred students studying Chinese as part of their degree programme in the Modern Foreign Language Department, and about forty

students who are studying Chinese at the Confucius Institute as an extramural programme.

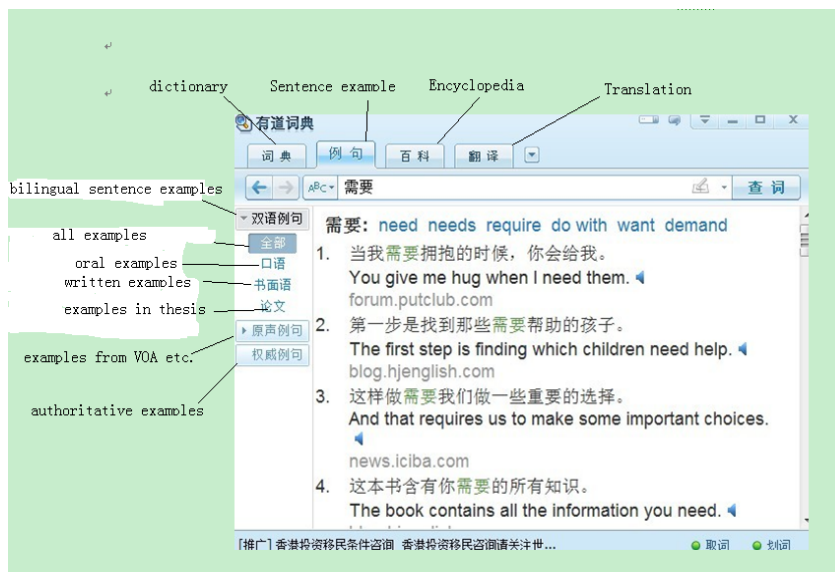
The dictionary is an essential tool in second language learning. “Learner’s dictionaries in the modern sense of the word arose when English became a dominant world language in the period around the Second World War (Cowie; 1999), while on the other hand there are languages which a large group of non-native speakers need to learn for which there are no learner’s dictionaries-or at least no learner’s dictionaries of the required quality (cf. Gouws; 1993, 1996, 2000 and Gouws/Tarp; 2004, for instance)” (Tarp; 2008:5). South Africa suffers from this lack of suitable learner’s dictionaries. There are no specific bilingual dictionaries for the many different mother-tongues spoken by South African Chinese learners (i.e. there are no Afrikaans/Chinese, Xhosa/Chinese or Zulu/Chinese dictionaries). The students at Stellenbosch University usually use English-Chinese and Chinese-English dictionaries bought by themselves or provided by the Chinese library. These dictionaries include some learner’s dictionaries published by Oxford University Press and some dictionaries published by Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press in China. It is not surprising, then, that most of the mistakes students made on their assignments or tests resulted from direct or literal translation from English to Chinese. The main source of this problem is the negative language transfer from the learning language or mother language of the learners, as well as the improper translations found in the Chinese/English or English/Chinese dictionaries used by the students. The proposed research hopes to use an analysis of the learner’s problems in doing Chinese/English or English/Chinese translation with the help of dictionaries to identify the kind of dictionary that would help students at Stellenbosch University learn Chinese more accurately and efficiently.

### **1.1.2 Online dictionaries and written dictionaries**

At present, none with an interest in dictionaries can avoid the topic of online dictionaries and search engines. It is hard not to wonder whether it is necessary to work on creating better written dictionaries at a time when online dictionaries and all

kinds of search engines are gradually replacing the traditional written dictionary as people's main sources for knowledge about words. Does the rise of the online dictionary leave any space for the development of the written dictionary?

Online dictionaries and search engines have obvious advantages: with the help of a computer, people can quickly and easily go online to get virtually any information in which they might be interested. They can even become personally involved in compiling entries on internet if they wish. When traveling, they do not need to worry about whether there is enough space in their suitcase for a paper dictionary or whether their luggage is overweight. Compared with the expensive written dictionaries, online dictionaries are much cheaper. Being able to link freely to a horde of rich information is the main advantage of an online dictionary. For language learners, online dictionaries can provide numerous example sentences for consultation, as seen in the following picture which is a screenshot I took while I was using an online dictionary.



Example 1.1

From Example 1.1, one can see that, with the help of the internet, users can access many different kinds of oral and written examples with the click of a mouse.

However, online dictionaries and search engines are double-edged swords, since their advantages may turn into disadvantages. The huge amount of information available on the internet makes it difficult for users to choose the information they want. What at

first seems like a more convenient way to look up a word; sometimes ends up being more time-consuming than it would have been with the help of a traditional dictionary. The free and flexible characteristics of the internet may also lead to users being misled by incorrect information. Incorrect information is often mixed with correct information on the internet, making it easy for users to blindly make mistakes. Maybe this uncertainty about the quality of online information is the reason why most language learners still want to buy a written or electronic dictionary. According to the *Survey on Chinese Learners Dictionaries* which will be discussed in Chapter three, all of the first year Chinese students at Stellenbosch University are planning to buy a dictionary if they carry on with their studies. Having a reliable dictionary in hand is still something that most language learners value.

Actually, the concept of the written dictionary discussed above should not be limited to the “paper dictionary”. The dictionaries that users consult when they use electronic dictionaries, cell phones, Mp4s, or other electronic products are all electronic versions of paper dictionaries. Therefore, the written dictionary still serves as the basis of dictionaries in other mediums. A good written dictionary can be used by itself, or it can be transformed into an electronic dictionary.

Most of the online dictionaries and search engines are free and open to everyone. Their target users normally include everyone. It has a distinct advantage over traditional dictionaries when it comes to text-reception. Text-reception requires a dictionary that can provide a large vocabulary as well as rich background knowledge on some proper nouns or special word usages, both of which can be gained by linking to all kinds of online dictionaries. Thanks to the infinite space available to them, online dictionaries can provide the largest vocabulary and can even provide links to encyclopedias which can provide additional knowledge about the words. Although the internet may provide too many possible equivalents for a single word, the user can still easily pick out the right one with the help of the context given by supplementary reading materials. When it comes to text-production, however, the situation is much more complicated than it is for text-reception. Although online dictionaries can

provide the user with all kinds of helpful examples, it is still time-consuming and difficult for users to judge and analyze the examples in order to choose the right one.

In contrast to online dictionaries, which can afford to cater for an extremely wide and varied audience, the best choice for a written dictionary is to first identify the specific group of target users for which it is intended, as well as the specific functions it is intended to perform. Lexicographers can then concentrate on a limited selection of functions and the specific requirements of the target users in order to create a dictionary that fits its intended purpose precisely. This sort of tailoring to fit a specific function and group of users is what Function Theory emphasizes. A good dictionary, designed according to language learner's characteristics and requirements, can be extremely helpful. To achieve efficiency in language learning, the relationship between the language learner and the dictionary should be closer in the future.

New mediums and new technology have provided the opportunity for many breakthroughs in the field of dictionary creation which have rendered modern dictionaries increasingly convenient. Thanks to the invention of touch screen cell phones and electronic dictionaries, users can search for an unknown character without any knowledge of the rules for using a radical index. Instead, users can simply write the desired character on the screen by copying its appearance. Before they even finish writing the character, the system can provide several characters according to the writing for the user to choose. By touching the right one, the user can go directly to the correct entry.

The cooperation and mixture of different mediums in the field of dictionary creation, already the source of many important advances, will surely develop further in the future. The central problem of making a learner's dictionary, however, is still the same---that is, how to bridge the differences between the two languages to come up with good equivalents, and how to design the most scientific structures to help users get their answers quickly and easily. The best way to answer these questions is the theme that will be carefully discussed in this thesis.



## **1.2 Statement of the research areas**

### **1.2.1 Statement of monolingual and bilingual Chinese learner's dictionaries in China and abroad**

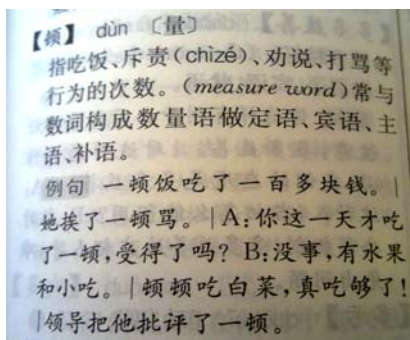
The field of pedagogical lexicography has been growing rapidly for many years, but its primary focus has always been on English dictionaries. When it comes to studying Chinese as foreign language (CFL), the field of pedagogical lexicography is still relatively undeveloped and can hardly meet the needs of the rapidly increasing number of Chinese learners. In recent years, the pedagogical lexicography of CFL has gradually gained attention in China. International Workshops on Pedagogical Lexicography of CFL were held in Hong Kong (2005), Beijing (2006), Nanjing (2007), and Yantai (2009). However, most of the participants focused on the primarily monolingual dictionaries used by intermediate and advanced level Chinese learners in China.

According to a survey made in Guangzhou, however, most foreign students studying Chinese in China considered these monolingual Chinese learner's dictionaries too difficult to use. In fact, none of the learners surveyed reported using any kind of Chinese learner's dictionaries. One of the most important reasons cited was that the learners were afraid of reading a dictionary written solely in Chinese Characters. Moreover, they felt unable to understand the meaning of a word based only on an explanation written in Chinese. The results of this survey not only exposed the shortcomings in making monolingual learner's dictionaries in China, but also revealed a psychological fact about all foreign language learners. "In a study of foreign language learner's habits and preferences concerning dictionary use as early as in 1980, it was already found that foreign language learners prefer to use bilingual dictionaries for exercising both receptive and productive skills"(Tomaszcyk; 1983). According to one researcher, "to the least advanced users, the bilingual dictionary was the most useful in both reception and production. The intermediate group achieved the best results using a monolingual dictionary in reception and a bilingual one in production, while the most advanced users did best using monolingual dictionaries for both tasks". He concludes

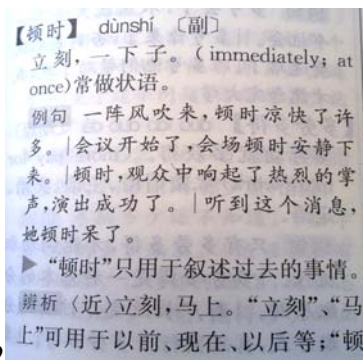
that, “a good bilingualized dictionary will be the best alternative for all the user groups” (Svensén; 2009: 464)

From the middle of the 20th century, many monolingual English learner’s dictionaries in China were bilingualized, such as the most popular *Oxford Advanced Learner’s English Dictionary* which “was rendered into Chinese as the *Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English with Chinese Translation*, and published at Oxford University Press in Hong Kong in 1962. Bilingualized (English-Chinese) editions quickly emerged after new editions in 1974, 1989, 1995, and 1999. Other well-known dictionary publishing houses such as Longman, Collins, and Random House, soon followed suit, turning out learner’s dictionaries and bilingualizing them. It is worth noting that in recent years not only small-sized or medium-sized monolingual dictionaries have been transmuted into bilingualized ones, but some desk dictionaries or college dictionaries have also been or are being translated into Chinese.” (Yao; 2004)

Compared to the strong trend of bilingualizing in the field of English learner’s dictionaries, only one Chinese dictionary was bilingualized into English, namely *The Contemporary Chinese Dictionary*. This authorized and hugely influential monolingual Chinese dictionary had its Chinese-English edition published in 2002. However, most of the Chinese learner’s dictionaries in China are still focused on monolingual editions, such as the influential *The Commercial Press Learner’s dictionary of Contemporary Chinese* (2006). Some dictionaries, such as *A Learner’s Chinese Dictionary: Illustrations of the Usages*, used only minimal English translation, and can hardly be treated as real bilingual dictionaries.



Example 1.2



Example 1.3

In Example 1.2, there is only one English translation, “measure word”, while the Chinese explanations are much more complicated than “measure word”. The Chinese behind “measure word” explains the context of the word and its grammatical usage.

Example 1.3 shows that the dictionary only translates the word itself and has no translation for the usage or examples of the word.

From the examples above, one can see that for most students of Chinese this kind of Chinese learner’s dictionary is not very helpful. It seems the real target readers of such dictionaries are not the students of Chinese, but the Chinese teachers. Therefore, a strange circle has formed in the lexicography field in China: the Chinese teachers and lexicographers make the dictionaries, and they are also the ones who use and comment on the dictionaries. Meanwhile, the students, who are supposed to be the most important target readers, are in silence outside the circle.

As for Chinese learners abroad, whose numbers are increasing rapidly, bilingual dictionaries are more necessary. Compared to the insufficient work on bilingual learner’s dictionaries in China, Oxford has made great contributions when it comes to the creation of Chinese-English bilingual dictionaries for the learners abroad in recent years. Examples of such fine bilingual dictionaries include *Oxford Beginner's Chinese Dictionary* (2006), first published as *Oxford Starter Chinese dictionary 2000*; *Oxford Chinese Mini Dictionary* (2008); *Pocket Oxford Chinese Dictionary* (Fourth edition, 2009); and the first edition of *Oxford Chinese Dictionary*, which is based on the *Pocket Oxford Chinese Dictionary* and which was published in September 2010.

Oxford has worked in relatively close cooperation with Chinese publishers when it comes to producing English learner's dictionaries such as the above-mentioned *Oxford Advanced Learner's English-Chinese Dictionary*, which was published by The Commercial Press of China and Oxford University Press. However, most of the Oxford Chinese learner's dictionaries frequently used by students were created by Oxford and published outside China. Only the *Oxford Chinese Dictionary*, which has yet to be published, was written in cooperation with Foreign Language Teaching & Research Press (FLTRP). This lack of good Chinese learner's bilingual dictionaries published within China demonstrates the inadequate development in the field. More research urgently needs to be done in the field to correct this deficiency.

### 1.2.2 Brief introduction to two Oxford dictionaries

A survey of students learning Chinese at Stellenbosch University revealed that the dictionaries they are using are all bilingual dictionaries published by Oxford. Among them, *Oxford Beginner's Chinese Dictionary* ("Beginner's") and *Concise English-Chinese Chinese-English Dictionary* ("Concise") are the most popular. There are many similarities between *Beginner's* and *Concise*, such as that both of them are foreign language learner's dictionaries published by Oxford, as well as that both consist of two sections. However, there are more differences between them than similarities. According to the information provided by these two dictionaries in their respective introductions, a table can be drawn to compare some of their basic characteristics.

	<i>Beginner's</i>	<i>Concise</i>
vocabulary	15,000 words and phrases and 20,000 translations	Comprehensive coverage of 26,000 words and phrases in each side of the dictionary, new words and phrases from every major field of reference, including the vocabulary of science and technology.
Publishing history	First published as <i>Oxford starter Chinese dictionary</i> , 2000	First published 1986

	Republished as <i>Oxford Beginner's Chinese Dictionary</i> , 2006	Second edition 1999
Page	524 pages 156 for Chinese-English dictionary 280 for English-Chinese dictionary 88 for front matter and back matter	1161 pages 509 for Chinese-English dictionary 607 for English-Chinese dictionary 46 for front matter and back matter
Order	Chinese-English dictionary comes before English-Chinese dictionary	English-Chinese dictionary comes before Chinese-English dictionary

The basic differences between the dictionaries listed in the table above help reveal the differences between their respective functions, all of which will be discussed in detail in the chapters that follow.

### 1.3 Aims

By analyzing and criticizing the dictionaries available for South African students who are learning Chinese, it is possible to determine what features should be included in dictionaries to make them suitable for elementary and intermediate learners of Chinese at Stellenbosch University as well as those students studying in other parts of the world. It will be helpful for lexicographers to improve dictionaries for Chinese Learners who are learning Chinese outside China, and help Chinese students and teachers abroad effectively use dictionaries for their learning and teaching.

### 1.4 Methodology

#### 1.4.1 Theoretical framework

This topic connects to at least three fields, namely lexicography, translation and second language teaching. Therefore, the discussion on the theoretical framework will be done on these three fields.

### 1.4.1.1 Lexicographical theories

#### 1.4.1.1.1 Definitions of the word *dictionary*

It is very difficult to define dictionary. “Dictionary is a term with a wide extension and a complex intension. If the definition is too precise, it will not encompass all types of existing dictionaries.”(Béjoint: 2000: 8)

According to Zgusta(1971:17)

a dictionary is a systematically arranged list of socialized linguistic forms compiled from the speech-habits of a given speech-community and commented on by the author in such a way that the qualified reader understands the meaning...of each separate form, and is informed of the relevant facts concerning the function of that form in its community.

The above definition is very academic and attempts to situate the concept of a “dictionary” within a social context. Two key words used in this definition are “list” and “function”. “List” describes the organization of a dictionary, and “function” is used to describe what dictionaries aim to accomplish.

Another definition from Wikipedia reads:

A dictionary is a book or collection of [words](#) in a specific language, often listed [alphabetically](#), with definitions, etymologies, pronunciations, and other information;[\[1\]](#) or a book of words in one language with their equivalents in another, also known as a [lexicon](#).[\[1\]](#) According to Nielsen 2008 a dictionary may be regarded as a lexicographical product that is characterised by three significant features: (1) it has been prepared for one or more functions; (2) it contains data that have been selected for the purpose of fulfilling those functions; and (3) its lexicographic structures link and establish relationships between the data so that they can meet the needs of users and fulfill the functions of the dictionary

Even in this relatively new definition, “function” is still the key word used to define a “dictionary”. All three significant features of dictionary are circled with the “function”.

#### **1.4.1.1.2 Function Theory**

It is no coincidence that so many definitions of the word “dictionary” consider “function” to be such an important component. A theory directed at the usage situation, called “Function Theory” has been a popular subject of research among lexicographers since the 1990’s when researchers at the Centre for Lexicography at the Aarhus School of Business in Denmark, especially Tarp and Bergenholtz, started to advocate the theory. Tarp and Bergenholtz established their own theory based on a new scientific approach. The principle of the Function Theory is to shift the focus “from the actual dictionary users and dictionary usage situation to potential users and the social situations in which they participate” (Tarp; 2008: 40). This theory will be discussed further in the following chapter.

#### **1.4.1.1.3 Dictionary structures**

When it comes to the topic of dictionaries, “macrostructure” and “microstructure” are terms which cannot be avoided. These two terms are used to describe the selection and arrangement of a dictionary’s contents. “Deciding on the types of entry the dictionary will include, and organizing the headword list, are macrostructure decisions”, while “planning the entries in the dictionary and deciding on their structure and components are microstructure decisions” (Atkins & Rundell; 2008). Hausmann & Wiegand (1989) explain it like this: “Roughly speaking, the structure of information within the article is called the *microstructure* (G. Mikrostruktur, F. microstructure). In the classical conception of the microstructure (6.), the lemma does not belong to the microstructure”. Furthermore, “it is the macrostructure that determines under which lemma the

lexicographical item is to be found”.<sup>1</sup> In other words, “macrostructure” primarily refers to the ordered selection of items included as lemmata in the dictionary, while “microstructure” refers to decisions about data order within a dictionary article. Aside from microstructure and macrostructure, “frame structure”, which refers to different textual components such as the front matter, back matter and middle matter of a dictionary is also very important for this research. A detailed discussion of frame structure can be found in Chapter four.

#### **1.4.1.2 Equivalence**

The focus of an article in a bilingual dictionary is the translation between two languages. Therefore, the question of how to achieve equivalence between the two languages concerned is crucial for any learner’s dictionary. If one considers all facets of equivalence including semantic content, collocational context, vocabulary type, message (communication), and function, few Chinese words can find their full English equivalent. That is to say, most Chinese and English words are only partially equivalent. This partial equivalence often confuses learners and causes all kinds of mistakes. How to bridge the gap between the two languages is a big challenge for lexicographers trying to create a Chinese learner’s dictionary.

#### **1.4.1.3 Teaching Chinese as foreign language**

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<sup>1</sup> In Atkins & Rundell’s (2008) description, “article” which is made up of “The lemma and the whole set of information items which are addressed to the lemma” is used as the lexical unit to explain microstructure and macrostructure, while Hausmann & Wiegand use “entry” to refer to the same concept. “Entry is often used for any data-set, regardless of its format.” (Riggs; 1989) When used as part of the terminology of lexicography, “entry” is similar to the concept of “article”. European lexicographers often use the term “article”, while Americans and British lexicographers often use the term “entry”. In this thesis, “article” will be adopted except in some quoted passages.



Learners in different learning environments have different requests and goals, which is also an important fact to consider while making dictionaries. On the one hand, a dictionary is one of the most important tools for language teaching and learning, on the other hand, “teaching and learning foreign languages has had a great bearing on lexicography and dictionary making” (Yao; 2004). “Second language teaching” was the umbrella term used to describe all forms of such pedagogy. The second language teaching theories can be traced back to something called the Grammar-translation Approach which was current in the nineteenth century. This approach relied a lot on equivalence between the native language and target language. The person implementing this approach was confident that it was possible to master the target language using his or her native language. According to Yao, students using this approach “were drilled thoroughly in the new language’s grammar and then required to apply their knowledge of grammar to translating texts into and out of the target language. (Richards and Rodgers; 1986:3) The student’s native language was the chief medium of instruction. Students were encouraged to use it to learn the meanings of the new words and phrases and to make comparisons between the foreign language and their own.” (Yao; 2004)

Because of the reliance this approach on the students’ native language, the bilingual dictionary was the most supportive learning tool. Yao also notes, however, that this understandable over-use of bilingual dictionaries results in what he calls, “the bad habit of using a bilingual dictionary whenever a word needs to be looked up and assuming that the equivalent is completely authoritative”. (Yao; 2004) Since the beginning of the twentieth century, new approaches have been developed, most of which take a view on language learning quite different to the Grammar-translation Approach. At one time, the most popular one was the Direct Method, “which emphasized that the language teaching should be conducted exclusively in the target language, with grammar taught inductively and translation strictly restricted. It was strongly recommended that learners should use a monolingual dictionary.” (Yao;

2004) New Method Dictionary, a monolingual dictionary compiled by Michael West and James Endicott, which focused on this method, emerged at the right moment.

Although the Direct Method has remained popular in the field of second language teaching until now, new methods and ideas never stop developing. “A study begun in 1923 on the state of foreign language teaching concluded that no single method could guarantee successful results.” (Richards, Rodgers, Swan; 2001) The standard on judging the teaching method is decided according to the target user and their learning situation. Therefore, the Grammar-translation Approach and Direct Method both have their advantages and can be used in their limited suitable fields. Currently, the research on language teaching is more flexible and the learner-oriented methods are more popular, e.g. the research on the distinction made between second language teaching and foreign language teaching. In English teaching, this distinction can be seen in the use of the terms TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) and TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language). TESL focuses on teaching English to students who have immigrated to an English-speaking country. It is an English program offered to immigrants and students who come from other countries to learn the language. TEFL, on the other hand, focuses on teaching English to students in a country where English is not readily used and not spoken as a native language. When it comes to teaching Chinese, the corresponding terms are TCSL (Teaching Chinese as a Second Language) and TCFL (Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language). Obviously, learners at Stellenbosch University are taught Chinese in the context of TCFL.

Another factor that lexicographers specifically need to consider when making a Chinese dictionary is the fact that there are many special characteristics of Chinese language and culture. Such special characteristics of Chinese can be seen by comparing it with English. One example is that in Chinese the lack of a comprehensive morphological process, i.e. verbal inflections in English tenses, are

compensated for by function words. Some meaning and information conveyed by inflections in English are expressed by additional or functional words in Chinese, e.g.

I was a teacher. wǒ yǐqián zuò lǎoshī (Literal translation: I before be teacher.)

I have been a teacher for ten years. wǒ zuò lǎoshī shí nián le. (Literal translation: I be teacher ten years [Function word])

In the Chinese sentences, the verb “zuò” does not suffer any grammatical changes. In the first sentence, the word yǐqián is added before “zuò” to express the situation in the past, while in the second sentence, le is put at the end of the sentence to show the perfect tense.

How to deal with the lack of equivalency among languages and cultures is a big challenge for lexicographers. Putting aside theoretical questions for a moment, it is important to remember that “Chinese learners” and what is best for them is what is really under discussion. All of the theoretical work must be focused on how to answer the question “How to help learners learn Chinese?” Therefore, the present research will focus on this theme and all discussions will be connected to what constitutes the special characteristics of Chinese and how these relate to meeting the needs of the learner. The survey mentioned below and any feedbacks of the students are the source evidence.

#### **1.4.2 Practical framework**

The present study will be conducted from a survey which was conducted by the author in an attempt to get a general idea of how Chinese learners at Stellenbosch University use dictionaries. The subjects of this survey included all the Chinese students at Stellenbosch University. Examples from assignments and tests given to these students will be cited as well to support this research.

## 2. CHAPTER TWO INTRODUCTION TO CHINESE LANGUAGE AND ORTHOGRAPHY

The language of the Chinese is commonly thought of in the West as the most difficult foreign language to learn. It is difficult to objectively say which language is the most difficult language in the world, since different learners find different languages difficult to learn depending on their linguistic and/or cultural backgrounds. However, as the only hieroglyphic language that is still in use, Chinese is certainly very special and different from all the other modern languages. This difference makes it exceptionally difficult.

### 2.1 Chinese characters

“Chinese is only one of a few contemporary languages whose history is documented in an unbroken tradition extending back to the second millennium BC.” (Norman; 2006: ix) Characters, which are the written unit of the language, are the carriers of this unbroken tradition. The writing of characters originated from imitating the shapes of the things in the world. The character 羊(goat) and the character 山(mountain) are good examples of this phenomenon since they still resemble the objects they represent.



Example 2.1 (Wu; 2006:11&27)

The pictures above also show the development of the writing of the characters. The straighter lines and sharper angles replacing the pictographic round, circular and wavelike lines are called “strokes”. “There are altogether twenty-four basic strokes for

writing all the characters.” (Gao; 2000:75) These include a dot (丶), a horizontal line (一), or a vertical line (丨). (At the opening ceremony of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, the order of the countries’ presentation was arranged in a Chinese style. The reason that Guinea (jǐ nèi yà 几内亚) was the second country presented is because “几”, the first character of Guinea’s Chinese translation, only has two strokes, whereas Australia’s presentation (澳大利亚 ào dà lì yà) came very late since 澳 is a character that has many strokes.)

Strokes form radicals. A radical may consist of one or more strokes. “A radical is the smallest meaningful unit in a character. Some radicals can be characters themselves while other radicals have meanings but cannot appear by themselves as characters”. (Gao; 2000:77) In the character 请 qǐng (please), the left part “讠” (speech) is only a radical and cannot be used as a character by itself, whereas 木 (mù, tree), which is a part of the character 林 (lín, forest), can be used as a character as well as a radical. Since there was no alphabet in Chinese, radicals were used as the only index in traditional Chinese dictionaries. Radicals were first used as an organizational tool in *Shuōwénjiězì*, a dictionary completed in AD 100 by *lúxié* and they are “in principle still used commonly in present-day dictionary making” (Norman; 2006:170). Nowadays, Pinyin, an alphabetic Chinese phonological spelling system, is used as the alphabetic index in Chinese dictionaries alongside the traditional radical index. The radical index is still necessary on occasions when a user knows how a character is written but not how it is pronounced.

In order to find the pronunciation and definition of a character in a dictionary, one must first identify the radical which is part of that character. From the radical index one is then able to find the group to which the character belongs. Thus, in order to find a character with the insect radical, one must refer to the radical index to find out on which page characters having the insect radical are located. Finally, in order to locate the needed character amongst many, one must count the number of strokes in the character (the counting of which, by the way, does not include the

number of strokes of the radical itself) and go to the relevant section” (Gao; 2000:80)

This is how the radical index works in most Chinese dictionaries, and it is also why we need to introduce the concepts of “stroke” and “radical” before explaining how to use a Chinese dictionary.

When it comes to the characters themselves, there are two writing systems nowadays, namely traditional characters and simplified characters. The former, which inherited the traditional way of writing, is used in Taiwan and Hong Kong, while the latter, which was created in order to make the characters easier to write, is used in Mainland China and Singapore. Here are some examples to show the differences between simplified and traditional characters.

湾 穷 让 体 万 艺 飞 点 (simplified)

灣 窮 讓 體 萬 藝 飛 點 (traditional)

Bay poor let body ten thousand art fly point

In contrast to the congruent relationship between pronunciation and writing in phonetic languages, some scholars argued that written Chinese was separate from spoken Chinese in the beginning. The relative independent role of the written system in Chinese may be one reason that a country as large as China has managed to remain relatively unified for so long. Although people in different areas of China speak totally different dialects and cannot understand each other when speaking, they can read and write the same characters and share the same feelings through their appreciation of and contributions to a shared cultural and literary tradition.

## 2.2 Mandarin and Chinese

English speakers use several words to refer to the Chinese language, including “Mandarin” and “Chinese”. The Modern Foreign Language Department in Stellenbosch University chooses the word “Mandarin” for this academic subject.

The Chinese language is called “hànyǔ” (汉语) in Mandarin, which literally means “the language of Han nationality” (According to a 2006 report from the State Statistics Bureau in China, about 90.56% of Chinese people belong to the Han nationality ). “Strictly speaking, “hànyǔ” may refer to any variety of spoken or written Chinese, as in such terms as gǔdài hànyǔ ‘old Chinese’, hànyǔ fāngyán ‘Chinese dialect’ etc., but it is more and more coming to be accepted as a way of referring to the standard national language.” (Norman; 2006: 137) In most dictionaries and books, the word “Chinese” is more widely adopted than Mandarin and other words.

Mandarin is a phonetic translation from mǎn dà rén(满大人), which was a polite form used to address government officials in the Qīng dynasty. The term “Mandarin” also came to be used by Westerners to refer to the language the Chinese officials were using. In Chinese, their language was called “guānhuà” (官话), which literally means “official standard spoken language”. Later on, in the early part of the 20th century when the nationalism was booming, “guānhuà” was replaced by “guóyǔ”, meaning “national language”. (Norman; 2006:136) “Guóyǔ is the national language as opposed to foreign languages, non-Chinese languages within China, and non-standard dialects. In its codified form it is in effect a form of the Peking dialect, stripped of its more restricted localisms and enriched with a certain number of words and phrases from other dialects”. (Norman; 2006:136) As a new Chinese equivalent word for “Mandarin”, the term “guóyǔ” now is only used in Taiwan. In mainland China, “Pǔtōnghuà”(普通话), which means “the common language”, was used to translate “Mandarin”. This term was invented by a communist called Qǔqībái who wanted to “distinguish it from the Peking-based guóyǔ, which he considered an upper-class, bureaucratic form of Chinese not easily accessible to the masses” (Norman; 2006:135). Now Pǔtōnghuà is defined as, “the common language of China, based on the northern dialects, with the Peking

phonological system as its norm of pronunciation” (Norman; 2006: 135). The Pinyin system is based on the pronunciation of Pǔtōnghuà.

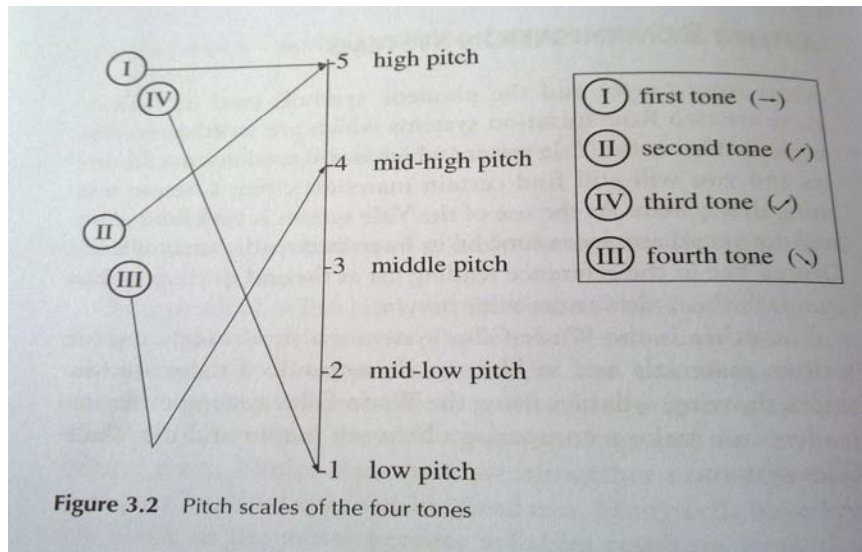
### 2.3 Pinyin

In the beginning of the 20th century after Mandarin (Pǔtōnghuà) was officially defined and popularized, Pinyin, the alphabetic Chinese phonological spelling system, was invented to help popularize the newly standardized pronunciation. This system is widely used in Mainland China and overseas. In Taiwan, a different system called the “National Phonetic Letters” (zhùyīnzìmǔ) is used as well as Pinyin. “National Phonetic Letters” is “a partly alphabetic, partly syllabic script devised specifically for indicating the pronunciation of Chinese characters; this script, inspired partially by the Japanese kana syllabaries, was given official status in 1919” (Norman; 2006:177).

Each character has its corresponding Pinyin. Wikipedia introduces the history of Pinyin: “the romanization system was developed by a government committee in the [People's Republic of China](#) (PRC) and published by the Chinese government in 1958.[2] The [International Organization for Standardization](#) adopted pinyin as the international standard in 1982.[3] This romanization system also became the national standard in the [Republic of China](#) (ROC, commonly known as Taiwan) on January 1, 2009.” (2010)

The Pinyin version of a Chinese syllable normally includes three parts: an initial, a final and tones. In the syllable “hàn” (Chinese), “h” is the initial, “an” is the final, and the stroke on top of “a” shows the tone of this syllable. There are some exceptions to this rule, such as “ān” (peace), which has no initial. Initials are composed of consonants, and there are altogether twenty-three consonants, all of which, with the exception of “ng” and “r”, can function as initials within a syllable. Finals are composed of vowels. There are seven basic vowels in Pinyin which can combine in different ways to form many different finals. Chinese, along with many other contiguous languages, is a tonal language. In languages of this type, each syllable is characterized by a fixed pitch pattern. There are five tones in Mandarin:





Example 2.2

(Gao; 2000: 62)

The fifth tone is a neuter tone. Characters with different tones have different meanings. A common example often used to demonstrate how tones contribute to changes in meaning is the syllable “ma”. When pronounced with different tones, “ma” can have many different meanings, such as mā 妈(mum) má 麻(hemp) mǎ 马(horse) mà 骂(scold) ma 吗(a function word which, when put at the end of a sentence, turns it into an interrogative sentence).

Pinyin is only a spelling sound system used under special circumstances. Chinese people do not use Pinyin in their everyday writing and no books are written in Pinyin, except those used for special purposes. Almost all younger Chinese people are familiar with Pinyin, however, since it is used to type Chinese on computers. As an alphabetic system, it is easy to access for most foreign learners and has become an important language-learning tool for them. It is now also used as one of the most important indexes in Chinese dictionaries.

Traditional Chinese lexicographers were “concerned with the explication of ancient texts. Only very rarely did they record elements of the spoken language, or even characters associated with vulgar vernacular literature” (Norman; 2006:172). In the past, understanding the meaning of the ancient texts was more important than

understanding how to correctly read the texts aloud. At one time, the same text would have been read aloud in many different ways by different people, since people from different places would each have used their own dialect to read it. Chinese literature has a long poetic tradition, however, which meant that writers in the past had to concern themselves with rhyme. Some rhyme books, such as *Qièyǎn* began to use a system called 反切(*fǎnqiè*) to prescribe pronunciation. *Fǎnqiè* uses two relatively simple characters to indicate the desired pronunciation of a given character. The initial of the first character and the final of the second character are combined into a new syllable in order to indicate the pronunciation of the third character. For example, the character 宴 (**yàn**) can be indicated as 一(**yī**) 万(**wàn**) 切. Users of this phonetic system still need to know the pronunciation of some basic characters in order to understand which rhyme was called for. This system was not considered scientific enough and was abandoned after the Latin alphabetic system was invented.

The rise of bilingual dictionaries began in the late Ming dynasty when foreigners, most of them missionaries, began to arrive in China. They found it was necessary to learn both spoken and written Chinese, and began to use the Latin alphabet to transcribe Chinese pronunciation. In the beginning of the 20th century, “China faced the problem of establishing a new written and spoken standard language” (Norman; 2006: 176) and so the compilation of dictionaries also helped to codify the new rules for how to pronounce and write standard Chinese. The emphasis on spoken language at that time contributed to the rapid development of independent phonetic systems. An early system of Romanization known as Wade-Giles was adopted for the Herbert A. Giles Chinese-English dictionary in 1912. This system was found to be relatively effective and so for some time it “served as the standard transcription in scholarly sinological works in English” (Norman; 2006:173). Around the same time, the National Phonetic Letters system was also invented and used in some dictionaries. However, the Wade-Giles system of Romanization “is now slowly but surely yielding its place to the newer pinyin system” (Norman; 2006: 173), which is now the most commonly used system in the field of Chinese lexicography in China and abroad.

## 2.4 Classical Chinese and modern Chinese

Before the 20th century, written Chinese and spoken Chinese were totally separated for about 3000 years. The pronunciation, words and word-order of the language had changed a lot during its long history, but the written language was fixed. The use of characters, which remained almost the same for thousands of years, is one of the main reasons that the written language remained fixed for so long. Because written Chinese changed so little over the years, the works of Confucius and other philosophers can be read by many generations of Chinese people. From the middle of the 19th century, however, China's continuing defeat at the hands of Western countries and Japan made Chinese intellectuals reevaluate every aspect of traditional Chinese culture: values, political systems, culture and even the written language were all subject to scrutiny. The characters and the written language were criticized as too difficult to learn. Due to the development of translation, among other things, problems at the level of language became more obvious and urgent. Aside from a lack of adequate equivalent words for the new academic ideas of the Western world, the concise, formal and elegant classical Chinese also faced great difficulty when it came to translating the less formal or colloquial Western literatures. Moreover, the exotic Western grammar and sentence structures made it hard for translators to find proper equivalent expressions in the ancient-style Chinese language. For many years, scholars debated whether to maintain the ancient style Chinese or to adopt some Westernized version of Chinese for use in translations.

While the debate was raging, first generation translators like YanFu (1854-1921) and LinShu (1852-1924) translated Western works into classical Chinese as best they could. However, many of them, including the first successful literary translator, LinShu, knew no foreign languages, and so should be treated as "rewriters" rather than "translators". LinShu's literary translations were successful because in the beginning it was much easier for Chinese readers to accept translations in classic Chinese for the expressions were familiar to them. However, LinShu's translation method eventually became his

weakness and was challenged and criticized by the translators and writers of the new generation. This new generation of translators paid more attention to the structure of the foreign language itself, and promoted the use of Baihua (oral language) to replace Wenyan (classical written language). In the year 1920, Baihua received its official approval.

After the popularization of the use of Baihua, Chinese written language entered a new stage. The promoters of Baihua expressed their philosophy as: “my hand writes what I say”. However, written language cannot be exactly the same as oral language, and so a hybrid modern written Chinese developed which included a mix of literary translations, translations in classical Chinese, and translations using Baihua. These three translation styles still make up the written Chinese in use today.

At the time of the first early translations, a lot of new words and some sentence patterns were borrowed from translated literatures. One example of such a borrowed word is “democratic”, which was first translated phonetically or given the nick name 德先生 (Mr De). Later, it was translated using the word 民主 (rights of people) which was borrowed from Japan. Some Western language patterns were also borrowed and blended into modern Chinese. One example of this phenomenon can be seen in the following sentence from *The Analects* of Confucius:

In classical Chinese and word for word translation:

不 患 人 之 不 己\_知， 患 不 知\_人 也。

Not worry person (grammatical word) not yourself know, worry not know person ((grammatical word)

In modern Chinese and word for word translation:

不 担 心 别 人 不 了 解 我， 担 心 的 是 自 己 不 了 解 别 人。

Not worry others not understand me, worries are myself not understand others

Literary Translation by Waley Arthur:

(The good man) does not grieve that other people do not recognize his merits, his only anxiety is lest he should fail to recognize theirs.

Classical Chinese is not only concise, but also more flexible than English. Objects can be put in front of (like 已知[oneself understand]) or behind (like 知人[understand person]) the verb according to the desired rhythm of the sentence. In modern Chinese, however, the objects are usually put behind the verb (such as 了解我[understand me], 了解别人[understand others]). The structure of modern Chinese is closer in many ways to the structure of the Western languages it used as its models than it is to the structure of Classical Chinese.

As mentioned above, the current system of written Chinese is a combination of styles including classical Chinese, literary translations and oral Chinese. Therefore, classical Chinese is still an unavoidable topic while talking about language style. One of the biggest difficulties encountered by foreign language learners is how to choose an appropriate word from among many synonyms and how to use it in the right context. The inability of students to differentiate between the three styles which combine to form written Chinese contributes greatly to this problem of stylistic choice.

## **2.5 Chinese grammar**

The systematic study of grammar in China only started from the late nineteenth century. *Mǎ shì wén tōng*, written by Mǎ Jiǎnzhōng, was the first book that looked at classical written Chinese from the perspective and structure of the western grammatical system. His book is considered the beginning of the study of Chinese grammar.

Since the publication of Ma's book, scholars have continued to debate many aspects of Chinese grammar. While many of these debates focus on word order or how to identify parts of speech, some scholars even doubt whether it is necessary to try to create a Western-style system for understanding Chinese grammar.

### 2.5.1 Morpheme and word

A morpheme is the smallest meaningful unit in a language, while a word is the smallest meaningful unit that can be used freely in a language. One major source of confusion for students of Chinese is the overlap between words and morphemes. In English, morphemes usually cannot stand alone. They have no meaning unless they are attached to a word. For example, “un” has no meaning until it is attached to a word such as “comfortable” to form “uncomfortable”, at which point it takes on the meaning of “not”. In Chinese, by contrast, most morphemes are also words that can either stand alone or be combined with others, and which can therefore function either as words or as morphemes. This is especially the case in classical Chinese, since most words are monosyllabic, meaning that one character normally represents a word. In modern Chinese, however, most of the words are polysyllabic, with the majority being bisyllabic. Hence, a character can be a part of either a morpheme or a word. One example is the word 蜘蛛 zhīzhū (spider), in which the character 蜘 itself has no meaning, and only comes to mean “spider” when combined with 蛛. A lot of translated words belong to this category, such as 可卡因 kěkǎyīn (cocaine) or 沙发 shā fā (sofa). Scholars separate morphemes into free morphemes and bound morphemes according to “their propensity to combine with other morphemes” (Norman; 2006: 154). Actually a morpheme may be free in one context and bound in another context, such as 狗 (gǒu), which when used alone as a free morpheme means “dog”, but which can also be used as a bound morpheme in words such as 狗熊 (gǒuxióng) (black bear) and 母狗 (mǔgǒu) (bitch).

Another confusion caused by Chinese morphemes is that they “are strung together one after another without any indication of word boundaries” (Norman; 2006: 155), a fact which causes confusion even for Chinese people. (I was once surprised by glancing at these five adjacent characters “先进性教育” in a newspaper. There are two ways to separate this phrase: one is “先进性”(advancement) “教育”(education), or “先

进”(advanced) “性教育”(sex education). I needed to read through the whole sentence to find the right place to separate the words.)

Words in Chinese were often divided into monosyllabic, disyllabic and multisyllabic words. Monosyllabic words dominated in classical Chinese while disyllabic words dominate in modern Chinese. Statistics show that among 8000 high-frequency words in modern Chinese, 71% of them are disyllabic, 26% are monosyllabic, and the 3% of multisyllabic words are basically trans-pronunciation. However, in spoken Chinese, monosyllabic words amount to 61%, while the disyllabic words are used at a frequency of 37%. (Lu; 2005: 7) Most disyllabic words are compound words. There are three important ways to form words in Chinese. The first way is to double the morphemes, such as in *bàba* (father, papa) or *māma* (mum). The second way is to add word-formative suffixes or prefixes. Two common noun suffixes of this type are *-zi* and *-r*. *Lǎo-* is an example of a common prefix. The third way, known as “word-compound”, is the preferred way to form words. Examples of words formed using the “word-compound method include “*bàitáng*”(white sugar), formed by combining *bài* (white) and *táng* (sugar) and *xuéxí* (study), formed by combining *xué* (study) and *xí* (practice). (Lu; 2005: 7) This method of compounding words causes a confusion of word and word phrase. Since both the “*bái*” and “*táng*” components of “*bàitáng*” can be used as free words, from the point of view of word structure, “*bàitáng*” is like a word phrase. However, when considered from the point of view of the meaning of the concept and how closely the two components of the word are bound together, *bàitáng* as a whole can also be treated as a word.

As mentioned above, most words in classical Chinese are monosyllabic, while most modern Chinese words are polysyllabic. Therefore, many words in classical Chinese have come to serve as morphemes in modern Chinese. For example, the character 桌 *zhuō* (table, desk) can be used freely by itself in classical Chinese, but in modern Chinese only with the addition of the suffix 子 *zi* can the two characters 桌子 be used to refer to a table. Even though modern written Chinese has now been in use for many

years, the conciseness and the beauty of classical Chinese is still very attractive for many Chinese people. According to Feng Shengli (2010), contemporary written Chinese must “alternate between classic/formal expressions and oral/informal expressions”. He chose a short paragraph to show the proportion of classical Chinese (the highlighted sections) and modern Chinese in normal written Chinese (Example 2.3):

吝嗇的人，我們說他小氣；妒忌的人，我們也說他小氣。小氣，  
 1                      2    3    4                      5  
 自然不夠偉大；即使不是十足的小人，至少該說是具體而微  
 6    7    8  
 的小人。但是，如果小氣的人就算是小人之一種，則小人滿天  
 9    10                      11  
 下，而足稱為君子者，實在太少了。  
 12    13

### Example 2.3

According to statistics on standard written Chinese articles collected by Professor Feng, around 40% of words used in modern written Chinese are classical in origin. In modern written Chinese, moreover, there are many monosyllabic words with disyllabic requirement. These “monosyllabic words are used productively, yet they are constrained prosodically. That is, they cannot stand-alone and must be used with another monosyllabic word to form a disyllabic PrWd (Prosodic Word, 韵律词). The Prosodic requirement demands that the words combined with the following monosyllabic words cannot be disyllabic, even if the disyllabic words are synonyms of the monosyllabic ones used to form a PrWd.”(Feng) One example of this rule is the word 爱 (lovable, adorable, beloved) which can be used with other words to form words such as 爱妻 (beloved wife), 爱车(lovable car), 爱子( beloved son) in spite of the fact that in modern Chinese wife is 妻子, car is 车子, and son is 儿子. Although modern Chinese forms these three words by adding the suffix “子” behind the



classical Chinese words “妻” “车” “儿”, because of the rule cited about one cannot say 爱的妻子, 爱的车子, or 爱的儿子. Feng’s research on PrWd also challenged the definition of “word” as being a freely used unit of language. The many complexities of Chinese make the separation of morphemes and words more difficult and will affect the arrangement of dictionary articles.

### 2.5.2 Word class

The problem of word class is one of the most controversial problems in Chinese linguistics. “Traditional Chinese philologists divided words into ‘full words’ (*shící*) and ‘empty words’ (*xūcí*). Full words are those that have a concrete meaning and empty words are words which have more abstract meanings and are for the most part employed to show grammatical relationships; the distinction is similar to that drawn by some modern linguists between content and function word” (Norman; 2006:157). Ma Jianzhong is the first person who adopted the Western system of word classes and used it to divide Chinese words into nine categories. Most subsequent linguists followed his lead while creating even more detailed classifications, such as the 12 categories found in Mr Zhang Zhigong’s book, the 13 categories in Hu Yushu’s *Modern Chinese*, and the 14 categories in Huang Borong and Liao Xudong’s *Modern Chinese*. (The last two books have been used as textbooks for Chinese university students for many years.)

The classification of parts of speech in English is as follows:

There are two basic approaches to the categorization of words. One is to look at the **forms** of the words themselves in order to find out what structural characteristics they have and what kinds of changes occur as they are used in phrases, clauses, and sentences. In this approach we look at words in isolation in order to see what their formal characteristics might tell us about them: *cat* has another form *cats*, *bite* has the form *bitten*, and *big* has both *bigger* and *biggest*. (Of course, if words have no special formal characteristics, as *the*, *very*, *must*, *in*, *etc.*, such an approach is inherently limited.) The other approach, therefore, is to look at the **distribution** of

words in the belief that words that regularly fill the same slots in basic recurring patterns in the language, e.g., as subjects, objects, complements, etc., may be said to belong to the same general category. In this way we will find that *cat* distributes like *plate*, *bite* like *take*, *big* like *old*, and so on. We will also find with words that show no changes in their forms that *the* distributes like *a*, *very* like *rather*, *must* like *can*, *in* like *under*, and so on. (Wardhaugh; 1995:5)

Using the two approaches Wardhaugh describes, English words are traditionally classified into eight parts of speech. They are nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections. In the context of the Chinese language, however, the first approach is almost irrelevant because, except for a very few suffixes (such as 子) that indicate parts of speech, there is no inflectional morphology in Chinese. The second approach is also difficult to apply, as many words in Chinese can be used as subject, object, predicate, etc. depending on the context. One good example is the word 研究 yánjiū (research) as used in the following Chinese sentences with literal English translation:

他 喜欢 搞研究 1。 这些年， 他 研究 2 基因，

He like do research 1. These years, he does research 2 on gene

研究 3 取得了进展， 获得了可喜的 研究 4 成果。

Research 3 got an improvement, gain delightful research 4 achievement.

(Rewritten from Lu Jianmin's example)

In these sentences, “research1” is used as object; “research2” is used as predicate; “research3” is used as subject; and “research 4” is used as attribute.

Words like these are common in Chinese, which increases the difficulty of their classification. That is also why many Chinese dictionaries, such as the first and most authorized modern Chinese dictionary *The Contemporary Chinese Dictionary* (first

published in 1978 and revised in 1996 and 2002 by Commercial Press) and its Chinese-English edition (2002, Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press ), do not indicate the parts of speech of the words they contain. Another important dictionary *A Chinese-English Dictionary (Revised)* (first published in 1995, and republished in its 11<sup>th</sup> edition in 2003) and the old edition of *A Modern Chinese-English Dictionary* also do not indicate parts of speech.

Over the years, more and more dictionaries have begun to indicate parts of speech. According to the preface of *A Modern Chinese-English Dictionary (new edition)* (first published in 2001): “The foreigners said in the past that there was no grammar in Chinese, even our Chinese felt it is difficult to divide words to different parts of speech. These made most Chinese dictionaries didn’t indicate word classes. Now the situation has been changed, people all realized Chinese did have grammar and the words can be divided into different classes, only with many multi-category words. This dictionary tried to indicate word classes for monosyllabic words”<sup>2</sup> (Yao; 2001). Although this dictionary only indicated word classes for monosyllabic words, its authors believe in the necessity of indicating word classes in Chinese dictionaries. The famous Chinese linguist Lǚ Shuxiang said: “The classification of word classes will be convenient for grammar teaching” (Lu: 2005:32).<sup>3</sup> Actually this classification is also convenient for second language teaching.

In 1992, *The HSK Scheme of Vocabulary and Characters* (shorted as Scheme) was published. HSK is an abbreviation of the pinyin term for “Chinese language proficiency tests”, which is an official Chinese test for foreigners inside and outside China. The Scheme was created by Hanban HSK department and Beijing Language Institute (nowadays’ Beijing Language University) HSK center. More than 30 experts, professors and language teachers from different universities collaborated to finalize the

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<sup>2</sup> Translated by the author of the thesis.

<sup>3</sup> Translated by the author of the thesis.

Scheme. 8822 words were collected in the Scheme and were separated into 4 levels according to frequency of use; moreover, each word was identified by its part of speech. The Scheme has since become the model and the most important reference for Chinese learner's dictionaries. Indicating word classes became common practice. Recently published dictionaries now often separate words by grammatical category, as is the case in *A Learner's Chinese Dictionary: Illustrations of the Usages*, classifies words into twelve categories, namely noun, verb, adjective, numeral, measures, pronoun, adverb, preposition, conjunction, particle, interjection and onomatopoeia. (Xu; 2006) The dictionary *177 Groups of Frequently Used Chinese Synonyms* divides words into categories as below:

附录：

一、汉语词类简称表

名称	简称	英文
1. 名词 míngcí	(名)	noun
2. 代词 dàicí	(代)	pronoun
3. 动词 dòngcí	(动)	verb
离合词 líhécí		discrete verb
4. 助动词 zhùdòngcí	(助动)	auxiliary verb
5. 形容词 xíngróngcí	(形)	adjective
6. 数词 shùcí	(数)	numeral
7. 量词 liàngcí	(量)	classifier
8. 副词 fùcí	(副)	adverb
9. 介词 jiècí	(介)	preposition
10. 连词 liáncí	(连)	conjunction
11. 助词 zhùcí	(助)	particle
(1) 动态助词 dòngtài zhùcí		aspect particle
(2) 结构助词 jiégòu zhùcí		structural particle
(3) 语气助词 yǔqì zhùcí		modal particle

Example 2.4

In the list above, under the category of particle, there are three subcategories. “Discrete verb” is one subcategory under the category of verb, but auxiliary verb is an independent category. Therefore, one can infer that one reason why the number of categories for word classification varies depending on the dictionary is because of the existence of different standards for category and subcategory.

The Oxford beginner’s Chinese dictionary also indicates word classes. Since it includes a Chinese-English dictionary and an English-Chinese dictionary, its “glossary of grammatical terms” covers both the Chinese and the English sections, but does not specify how many word classes are found in its Chinese-English dictionary. Further comments on this dictionary can be found in the following chapters.

The basic grammatical concept of “parts of speech” found in Western language systems doesn’t fit very well in the Chinese context. Using this classification in Chinese is like putting one person’s shoes on another person’s feet: the feet may be too short or too long, too wide or too narrow to fit inside the shoes. That is why there are more categories of word classes in Chinese than in English, and why there are still all kinds of “exceptions” emerging from these categories. On the other hand, the concept of “parts of speech” is an unavoidable topic when it comes to any discussion of grammar, lexicography, or language teaching, especially second language teaching. Therefore, it is one of the basic factors that must be considered when writing a Chinese learner’s dictionary.

### **2.5.3 Lexicography and the pedagogical grammar of Chinese**

As mentioned earlier, the fact that there are so many big differences between Chinese and other languages is a major reason why Chinese is so difficult to learn. Compared to English, there is no inflectional morphology in Chinese, since “word order, particles and prepositions carry most of the burden of showing how the elements of a sentence relate to one another” (Norman; 2006:159). In *Teaching and Learning Chinese as a Foreign Language*, Janet Zhiqun Xing (2006) separates the pedagogical grammar of

Chinese (PGC) into primary and secondary elements. The primary elements of PGC are:

1. Contextual sentential markers (e.g., 了 le, 吗 ma, 吧 ba, 呀 ya, etc.)
2. Special constructions (e.g., the 把 bǎ construction, the causative construction, the 被 bèi construction, etc.)
3. Complements (e.g., resultative, potential, etc.)
4. Discourse connectors (e.g., 就 jiù, 才 cái, etc.)
5. Discourse devices (e.g., emphasis, contrast, etc.)
6. Word order alternatives

(Xing; 2006:42)

Many of these elements, such as 1, 2 and 4 concern word usage. These words are also entries in Chinese dictionaries.

The Chinese students at Stellenbosch University who participated in the survey on which this research is partially based were using *Contemporary Chinese* series (edited by WU Zhongwei and published by Sinolingua) as their text books. This series of four books of increasing difficulty is used in four modules of Chinese classes. Chinese 178 (M178) uses Book One; M278, Book Two; M318, Book Three and M348, Book Four. Most of the grammatical items are introduced in the first three books. In the preface of its teacher's book, the editor explains the grammar teaching method used like this: "There are three levels in our grammar teaching: The first level which will be lectured in Book One includes the introduction on interrogative sentences; adjectival predicate; measure words; attributives; and adverbials. The second level which is lectured in Book Two includes the introduction on the use of le 了, zhe 着, guo 过, the '是---的' ('shi---de') construction, complement, the 把 bǎ and 被 bèi construction. The third

level which will be lectured in Book three includes the summaries of empty words and complex sentences”. (Wu; 2003: 6)

From this introduction, one can find that except for some basic sentence patterns, most of the grammatical content in Chinese concerns the usage of empty words, such as function words or preparation words. Therefore, lexicographers must consider how to deal with these words when writing a Chinese learner’s dictionary. In Chapter four, dictionaries’ treatment of these important empty words will be discussed in more detail.

## **2.6 Cultural factors concerning teaching**

When teaching or learning a foreign language, one can never avoid talking about culture, since, as Kramsch (1991:217) puts it, culture and language are “inseparable and constitute a single universe and domain of experience”. Brody (2003:40) also emphasizes the close relationship between language and culture in the field of second language teaching, stating that, “In second language classrooms, language and culture are inextricably intertwined. Culture is negotiated in large part through language, and language codifies many cultural assumptions and values”.

The importance of culture in language learning manifests fully in communication. Thomas (1983, 1984) “appears to believe that appropriateness is the key in associating language with culture. That is, if one can communicate using appropriate language, this person then has the appropriate cultural knowledge. Without the appropriate cultural knowledge, the purpose of communication cannot be fulfilled.”

Lexicographers in the process of writing Chinese learner’s dictionaries simply cannot afford to neglect Chinese culture. They should consider such things as what cultural knowledge or background information should be chosen for inclusion in the back matter or front matter; what kind of culture-related words should be chosen for each article; and how to explain the communicational function of words which are influenced heavily by culture, such as, for example, some words used as forms of polite address.

There are five thousand years of history and fifty-six ethnic groups in China, all of which makes Chinese culture very complex and makes it difficult to create a criterion for selecting and pinpointing what cultural content is most essential for Chinese learners to understand. The preface of *Contemporary Chinese* outlines some principles of how to choose what cultural content to include in a textbook: “First, the content of the text should adapt the background of China and the learner’s country, but the background of China is recommended. Second, the content should reflect both traditional and modern culture, and the modern culture should dominate. Third, the content should show the differences and the commonalities between the Western and Eastern culture.” The *International Curriculum for Chinese Language Education* edited by Hanban in 2008, explains culture awareness as:

**1.5 Cultural Awareness**

Awareness	Description of Objectives
<b>Cultural Knowledge</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. know the benefits of using different languages locally;</li> <li>2. understand development and achievement in education and culture locally and in China;</li> <li>3. learn to know cuisine and costumes of Chinese culture;</li> <li>4. know the essence of simple Chinese stories, allusion making and connotation;</li> <li>5. know both linguistic and non-linguistic means of communication in Chinese culture;</li> <li>6. know simple social etiquettes and customs in Chinese culture;</li> <li>7. know interpersonal relations in Chinese culture.</li> </ol>
<b>Cultural Understanding</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. develop interest in Chinese culture;</li> <li>2. experience Chinese cultural elements and understand the relationships between culture and language learning;</li> <li>3. experience the Chinese cultural value-systems;</li> <li>4. experience cultural multiplicity and permeability between cultures.</li> </ol>
<b>Cross-cultural Awareness</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. examine commonalities and differences between Chinese culture and their own culture;</li> <li>2. learn the importance of cross-cultural awareness via Chinese culture.</li> </ol>
<b>Global Awareness</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. experience cultural phenomena in China and locally;</li> <li>2. learn to view the world from different perspectives via learning about Chinese language and culture;</li> <li>3. experience global citizenship.</li> </ol>



### Example 2.5

Compared to these general principles, Xing's proposed criteria for the selection of cultural content for Chinese learners (2006) is more reasonable and practical. She suggested: "Any traditions, attitudes, rituals, beliefs, behaviors that are unique to Chinese society and people and crucial to learning and understanding the Chinese language, the people and their behaviors may be considered as part of the Chinese culture content to be taught and learned by non-native students of the Chinese language". She later categorized the items under these five headings:

#### *Tradition*

- Personal names
- Formation of Chinese characters
- Festivity
- Legendary figures
- Influential historical events
- Painting
- Music
- Martial art
- Medicine
- Family

#### *Attitude*

- Friendship
- Respect
- Modesty
- Manhood
- Female virtue
- Interpersonal relationships
- Family

- Social status
- Patriotism
- Education (e.g. learning)

*Ritual*

- Weddings (or Marriage)
- Funerals (or Death Rituals)
- Birth of a child
- Kinship
- Courtship

*Belief*

- Life and death
- Confucianism
- Daoism
- Buddhism
- Marriage
- Education

*Social behavior*

- Eating
- Drinking (liquor, tea)
- Social gathering and interaction
- Working
- Learning

(Xing; 2006: 243)

Although not all the items will be used in compiling a dictionary, these categories can be a good reference to help lexicographers organize their ideas on cultural contents.

After cataloging these cultural topics vertically according to different fields, Xing proposes horizontal categories of cultural concepts at different levels. For the purposes of this thesis, I will only introduce her elementary and intermediate level lists:

*Elementary level*

- Chinese names (formation, meaning, implication)
- Chinese characters (formation, development)
- Chinese standard language and dialects
- Color terms
- Four precious articles for intellectuals
- Chinese food and drink
- Chinese family
- Chinese zodiac
- Social gathering and interaction
- Simple interpersonal relationships
- Simple habitual activities (greeting, praising, expressing gratitude, etc.)

(Xing; 2006: 245)

*Intermediate level*

- Chinese festivals and their implications
- Chinese ethnic groups and their characteristics
- Chinese family life (e.g. marriage, family relationships, etc.)
- Interpersonal relationships (e.g. friendship)
- Education
- Major events and figures in modern history (e.g. the Cultural Revolution, Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping)
- Chinese food and its characteristics
- Chinese thoughts (e.g. Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism)
- Chinese living standards and social status

- Chinese fine arts (e.g. Beijing Opera, painting, musical instruments)
- Chinese civilization (e.g. Chinese medicine)
- Sports (e.g. martial arts)
- Current affairs

(Xing; 2006: 247)

As these lists indicate, Chinese language and culture have many special and unique characteristics. How to deal with these various characteristics is the most difficult challenge for lexicographers who wish to write a Chinese learners dictionary.

### **3. CHAPTER THREE FUNCTION THEORY AND FUNCTIONAL STUDY OF LEARNER'S DICTIONARIES**

#### **3.1 Background: the origin and independence of lexicographical theory**

According to some scholars, “the first dictionaries were produced about 4,000 years ago”. (Tarp; 2008: 4) However, lexicography, or “the science of dictionaries”, as Tarp calls it, was treated for many years as a subfield of linguistics. A “true lexicographical theory” consisting of a “systematic set of statements about dictionaries and their relationship to social needs” didn't actually arise until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. (Tarp; 2008: 4). If it's true that dictionaries have been produced for thousands of years without the help or direction of an independent theory, then why do we need lexicographical theories nowadays? And what are such theories about?

One of the most important characteristics of academic fields in the modern age is the exact classification of subjects. New individual subjects and interdisciplinary subjects are emerging quickly; each new theory within a broader area of study usually gets its own specific title. Such titles can be seen as an indication of the independence of these new theories. For example, the subject of translation has grown into an independent subject distinct from comparative linguistics or literary studies and is now called “translation studies”. Lexicography likewise needed to establish its own status independent of linguistics, which can be seen as one of the reasons for the formation of lexicographical theory.

In recent years, more and more dictionaries, including all kinds of specialized dictionaries and learner's dictionaries, have been created to satisfy various users' practical requirements. The development of specialized dictionaries follows from the development of science and technology and the resultant increase in the number of precise classifications within these fields. The development of learner's dictionaries, in the meantime, follows from the rapidly increasing intercommunication among people all over the globe. People need to do business with each other, something

which is greatly facilitated by learning each other's languages. All kinds of bilingual and monolingual dictionaries are needed to fulfill the requirements of this highly globalizing world. The "home-made" way of making dictionaries may have been practical when the world's requirement in the field of dictionaries were small. However, the constant and great amount of requirements recently placed on dictionaries have made the problems in this field more urgent. Many general and practical problems emerge while making dictionaries, such as how to criticize dictionaries, how to make better dictionaries, and how best to categorize so many dictionaries. All of these questions call for the independent existence of lexicographical theory.

However, some scholars still doubt the necessity of lexicographical theory, such as the Australian researcher Anna Wierzbicka, who writes:

>>lexicography has no theoretical foundation, and even the best lexicographers, when pressed, can never explain what they are doing, or why. << (Wierzbicka 1985:5 in Tarp; 2008:7)

The practical characteristics of lexicography can cause people to ignore its theoretical background.

Another characteristic of lexicography is that it has a stabilized working format.

Béjiont (2000: 178) said:

"It is difficult to find a 'new idea' in lexicography since what evolution there has been in lexicographic practice has been slow indeed: '--- we will agree, I think, that there is no abrupt or revolutionary change in the more than 250 years of English lexicography' (p. 124). (Frawley 1988: 189-90) Makkai goes even further, stating that, 'Nothing significantly new has happened in lexicography since the first printed dictionaries after Gutenberg invented the printing of books' (Makkai 1976:55)"

Even of the fact there are still some doubts about lexicographic theory, and some of them have their reasons, the development of lexicographic theory continues. Before

its independence as a theoretical field, lexicography had a complicated relationship with linguistics. According to B ejiont (2000: 168), lexicographers “have tended to be considered as non-linguists, and to be rejected by the academic world of linguistics”. The first reason is that the dictionary, “was regarded as a commercial product, an artifact that had not changed much since its origins and that has often been produced without the help of any linguistic theory. The dictionary was seen as too unscientific to be worthy of academic interest”. This reason is very similar to Makkai’s comment on lexicography. This lack of respect for the theoretical factors involved in lexicographical theory blocked its development for many years. The second reason is that the dictionary was considered to be “only an impure by-product of linguistics. Also, as a book about words, it shared the relative absence of prestige of lexis and semantics in the linguistics of the nineteenth and first three-quarters of the twentieth century” (Rey 1982:17). As for lexicographers, they were concentrating on their practical work and “failed to see what linguists could contribute to the practical task of dictionary-making: they thought that academics would be of little use in lexicographical work.” (B ejiont; 2000: 169)

The relationship between lexicography and linguistics changed when these two reasons became obsolete. The change happened first in the USA, perhaps due to the early American acceptance of a commercial society. Even in the USA, however, the early relationship between linguists who took an academic interest in lexicography and the makers of dictionaries for commercial use was strained, as McArthur describes:

“The interplay and tension between ivory-tower academic lexicography and clearcut commercial lexicography (as for example in Oxford) has tended to sustain a kind of scholarly suspicion of the commercial, whether in terms of dictionaries or encyclopedias. Something that might be sold in a dimestore or hawked from door to door did not necessarily appeal to the cultural aesthetics of university men. Although such men might be capitalists, they did not want to be seen as hucksters, and often their academic susceptibilities and principles were at odds with the

marketplace interests of the publishers who more and more went to them for advice and information.” (McArthur 1986)

Even so, “some lexicographers started being interested in linguistic theory,” and, after several years of cautious courtship, “the relations between the linguists of the academic world and the lexicographers are now intense in the English-speaking world, and go both directions.” (Béjiont; 2000: 172) Several well-known linguists “have published papers or books on dictionaries. Some have even been closely involved in the compilation of dictionaries.” (Béjiont; 2000: 172)

For years, lexicography was simply regarded as a sub-discipline of linguistics. Some famous lexicographers, such as Scena and Hausmann, were linguists as well. Indeed, lexicography first gained respect as a theoretical field by adhering to linguists, one of the most theoretical subjects in existence. Although the close relationship between linguistics and lexicography will never end, the gap between lexicography and linguistics continues to exist. As Béjiont explains, “theoretical linguistics is not easily applied to lexicography, particularly new approaches, which are typically ill-fitted for a general-purpose dictionary that is meant to be used by the man in the street. Also lexicographers have always been wary of linguistic bandwagons” (Béjiont; 2000: 173). This continuing incompatibility is also why lexicographers continue working to affirm the independence of lexicography as a distinct theory. Lexicography didn’t gain independence as a theory until the introduction of the paradigm of Wiegand. Tarp (2008: 9) later explained his definition of *lexicography theory* using the definition of *theory* in PHILOSOPHISCHES WÖRTERBUCH:

A theory is a systematically organized set of statements about an area of objective reality or consciousness, i.e. logical structures reflecting the fact that certain things have certain properties, or that certain relationships exist between these things. (cf. PHILOSOPHISCHES WÖRTERBUCH: 155, 1083ff.) As a result, the term *lexicography theory* in general is taken to mean a systematically organized set of



statements about dictionaries and their relationship with specific types of social need.

This definition makes two interesting points:

Firstly, this definition refers to systematic research in the field of lexicographic theory. This kind of research on lexicography didn't start until the 20th century. "Since then, lexicographical thinking has developed using a range of competitive and successive paradigms, of which the following examples from western cultural circles are worthy of particular attention: Scerba's >>Draft for a general lexicographical theory << (Scerba 1940); Hausmann's theoretical considerations (Hausmann 1977); Kromann et al.'s >>active-passive theory<< (Kromann et al. 1984, 1992); Wiegand's >>general lexicographical theory<< (Wiegand 1977a, 1998a) and the lexicographical Function Theory". (Tarp; 2008:5)

Secondly, the definition states that the object of research is dictionaries as well as the interaction between dictionaries and social needs. Wiegand (1989a) outlined what he calls the "four main components" when it comes to dictionary research, namely: "research in dictionary usage, critical dictionary research, historical dictionary research, and systematic dictionary research" (Tarp; 2008: 6). This classification, according to Tarp (2008:6), "constitutes a sound framework for a branch of research which is distinguished from other disciplines because dictionaries are the object of its study. In other words, lexicography is fundamentally different from linguistics because its object of study is a culture-specific product (dictionaries); while the object of study of linguistics is something inherent in mankind without which Man would not be Man (language)". Determining lexicography's object of research is a big step towards its independence as a theory. After analyzing the works of many lexicographers, such as Wiegand, Bergenholtz, etc., Tarp sums up by listing the five points he thinks can be used to claim lexicography "to be a separate science or area of academic study:

1. it has its own object of study: dictionaries, or to be more precise, the production,

structure and dictionary usage and the close relationship between dictionaries and specific types of social need;

2. it is rooted in the form of concepts, categories, theories and hypotheses;
3. it comprises both the history of dictionaries and its own history, including pre-theoretical ideas;
4. it contains independent contributions to methodology;
5. it includes directions for practical action. (Tarp 2008: 6)

These five points are not only arguments for the independent status of lexicography, but also an explanation of the research area. Against the backdrop of such a “declaration of independence” by the field of lexicography, Sven Tarp and Henning Bergenholtz started to construct the Function Theory of lexicography.

## **3.2 Function Theory**

### **3.2.1 The formation of Function Theory**

Function Theory is quite like the “skopos” theory in translation studies, in that it is a kind of user-oriented theory. According to Tarp (2008: 33), “The tangible evidence of the development of Function Theory was the establishment of a professorship in lexicography at the Aarhus School of Business in Denmark in 1987”. After that, Tarp and some scholars in Denmark published a series of articles and works to establish Function Theory, including the following:

1. Tarp’s PhD dissertation (published in 1994) which “consisted of a critical assimilation of previous lexicographical thinking accompanied by the independent development and presentation of the basic elements of the new theory” (Tarp; 2008: 34) ;
2. *Manual i Fagleksikografi*, a manual “written by a team of authors who (apart from one member) were all members of staff at the School of Business” (Tarp; 2008: 35). Another important step in the development of Function Theory, is

that it “was based on the central postulates in the new theory on lexicographical functions, seeking to develop this theory in the new areas” (Tarp; 2008: 35);

3. Tarp’s “*Lexicography on its own feet. Distribution structures and component parts in a user-oriented perspective*” (1998a), which he himself describes as a “key work” of Function Theory, because “it defines lexicography clearly as an independent science, which was not yet the case in Tarp (1992), and all the basic elements of Function Theory were presented far more clearly and logically than previously. For the first time there was a final showdown with some of Wiegand’s basic postulates, which the two theories had shared until this date” (Tarp; 2008: 35).

Upon examining the list above, one can find that, on one hand, Function Theory shares some principles with Wiegand’s theory, such as the independent approach to lexicographical theory and the emphasis on user’s perspective. Function Theory also adopted some concepts invented by Wiegand, such as the idea of potential users. On the other hand, Wiegand was criticized by Tarp for his continued reliance on aspects of traditional theory:

Wiegand “did not fully make a break with the previous tradition for a linguistic approach to lexicography. This was perhaps due to his own background in linguistics, where he has also made a contribution of significant scientific value and interest”. (Tarp; 2008: 31)

Wiegand divided dictionaries into “language dictionaries, encyclopedic dictionaries and all-round dictionaries”, (Tarp; 2008: 35) which represents a traditional typology of dictionaries. As Andersen (1990) states: “dictionaries are traditionally divided into language dictionaries, encyclopedias and encyclopedic dictionaries. This classification is used most consistently in a librarian context”. What is the difference between these three classifications? Usually one thinks a dictionary contains relatively brief information, while an encyclopedia contains more detailed information and an encyclopedia dictionary should be betwixt and between. This classification has its

reasons and may be convenient for librarians. In practice, unfortunately, the difference between the three types is not clear enough, making it difficult to distinguish one from another. “The difference between the various dictionaries is what they intend to inform about, not which information type they contain” (Bergenholtz, 1997). That is the core of Function Theory: dictionaries are no longer regarded as authorities that people are asked to worship, but as a practical tool for people to use. As the field of lexicography developed, the basic elements of the traditional general lexicographical theory, such as “dictionary typology and the distinction between semantics and encyclopedics—were analysed and found to be useless from the lexicographic, user-oriented perspective” (Tarp; 2008: 37). By criticizing Wiegand’s theory and criticizing itself, Function Theory got its new foundation and was ready to develop into a new independent theory.

### **3.2.2 The principle of Function Theory**

Tarp (2008: 43) emphasises that:

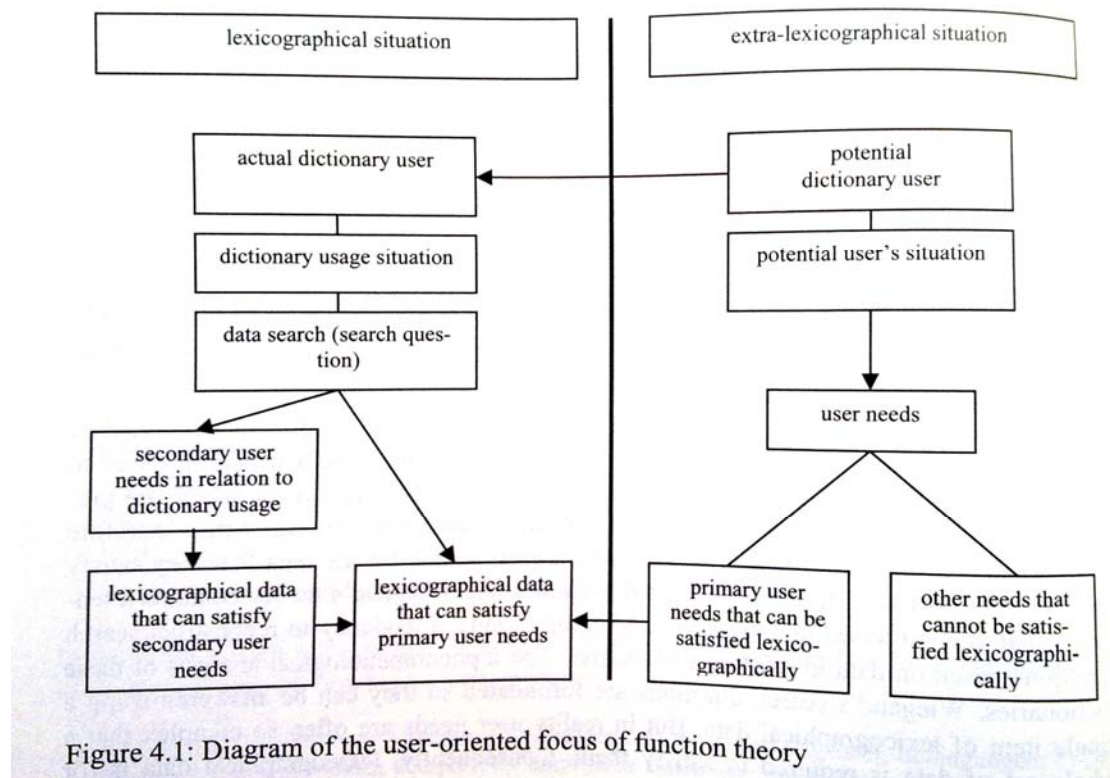
“Lexicography is a separate science whose object of study is dictionaries and their production and use. Consequently, there is a need to develop a general theory for this object of study. The theory of lexicographical functions is just such a theory, and is based on the idea that dictionaries are objects of use which are produced or should be produced to satisfy specific types of social need. These needs are not abstract—they are linked to specific types of user in specific types of social situation. Attempts are made to cover these needs using specific types of lexicographical data collected and made available in specific types of dictionary.”

Here “the specific types of user in specific types of situation” is equal to the “potential users and the social situations” in the following description:

“The basic difference between Wiegand’s general theory and the theory of lexicographical functions is that the latter shifts the focus from actual dictionary

users and dictionary usage situation to potential users and the social situations in which they participate". (Tarp; 2008: 40)

There are two important things to note about the concept of "potential users and the social situations in which they participate". Firstly, the theory takes into account the fact that potential users are not living in a vacuum. Each user must use a dictionary in a certain situation. Secondly, the concept of "potential" users widens the scope of users that lexicographers have to consider, allowing lexicographers to open their minds and explore all possible users' needs and extend the research field from lexicographical situations to extra-lexicographical situations, as shown in the diagram below:



Example 3.1

(Tarp; 2008: 42)

Some dictionary users may have simple questions to consult and may be satisfied with a minimum lexicographic data. While in other situations user needs might be very

complex and can only be met with a combination of different kinds of lexicographic data. The user might need (Tarp; 2000: 195-196):

- information on the native language;
- information on a foreign language;
- a comparison between the native and a foreign language;
- information on culture and the world in general.

These needs identified by Tarp are primary user needs, because they are the needs that impel the user to consult the dictionary (2000: 196). And secondary user needs are the needs that arise when a user is in the process of consulting the dictionary in order to satisfy a primary need (Tarp; 2000: 196). Therefore, the concept of *primary user needs* in extra-lexicographical user situations is “known as function-related user needs” and *secondary user needs* in actual lexicographical situation is “known as usage-related user needs”. This classification makes a clear distinction between the different functions that a user may expect a dictionary to perform, depending on what kind of information he or she is looking for about a word. . Therefore, “this shift of focus also makes it possible to draw a far clearer and more subtle distinction than that performed by Wiegand between expert and non-expert users” (Tarp; 2008: 41).

### **3.2.3 The elements of Function Theory**

The diagram above also indicates some elements of lexicographical functions, such as “user”, “user situation”, “user need”. According to Tarp (2008: 43), there are four main elements included in the function concept, including different types of *potential user*, *user situation*, *user need*, and “the *assistance* that dictionaries can provide to cover these needs”. These four elements or categories “are interlinked” and need to be “analysed separately and then compared with the other categories to make it possible to synthesise the elements that are identified by analysis.” (Tarp; 2008: 44)

There are two fundamentally different situations included under the heading of “situation of potential users”, namely “communicative situations (situations in which problems arise in connection with current or planned communication) and cognitive situations (situations in which there is a wish for knowledge about a given topic)”. The cognitive situation relates to the area of knowledge which is relatively fixed and which is not so complicated to study, while the communicative situation is comparatively much more complex. There are many dynamic factors to consider in any communicative situation, such as: Is it a simple “sender-receiver” model communication or communication via translation? Does the receiver or sender use their mother tongue or foreign language? To consider all possible communicative situations sounds impossible and unnecessary, but Tarp thinks “the role of science is to reveal all types of problem and indicate solutions—whether or not publishers of dictionaries choose to use the solutions provided” (Tarp; 2008:63). This endeavor is reasonable on a scientific level, but difficult to cope with in practice. Since Function Theory’s *raison d’être*, namely the fulfillment of user’s needs, is extremely practical, the work done on Function Theory should also remain as practical as possible. Therefore, the most important thing is not to enumerate all possible communicative situations to meet the strict requirements of science, but to analyze, categorize, and emphasize the possible and practical situations for the real requirement of making dictionaries. When it comes to lexicographical theory, the operability of any given idea should be put first.

Analyzing the characteristics of potential users is also not an easy job. “The criteria on which a typology of potential dictionary users should be based must have its own lexicographical perspective, and must be viewed in connection with user situations and needs that can be satisfied lexicographically.” (Tarp; 2008: 54) Tarp lists nine criteria “depending on the specific type of user, user situation, language and special area in question”, and goes on to summarize his ideas by presenting nine questions:

-- What is the mother tongue of the users?

- To what extent do they master their mother tongue?
- To what extent do they master a specific foreign language?
- To what extent do they master a specific specialized language in their mother tongue?
- To what extent do they master a specific specialized language in a foreign language?
- How much experience of translation do they have?
- How great is their general cultural knowledge?
- How great is their knowledge of culture in a specific foreign-language area?
- How much do they know about a specific subject or science?

Tarp concludes that, the answers to the questions above, “will help to characterize the *linguistic and encyclopedic qualifications* of the various types of user”. (Tarp; 2008: 55)

It is difficult to talk about users’ needs in isolation, because the needs of users must be put into the context of a specific situation, and can only be identified by identifying the characteristics of potential users, including such considerations as what needs they may have in such areas as: text reception in the mother tongue, text production in the mother tongue, text proofreading in the mother tongue, marking texts in the mother tongue, as well as their lexicographical needs in cognitive situations, etc. These needs can then be “sub-divided into two main groups: primary user needs, which are needs leading to a dictionary usage situation; and secondary user needs, which arise when users seek assistance in a dictionary.” (Tarp; 2008: 56)

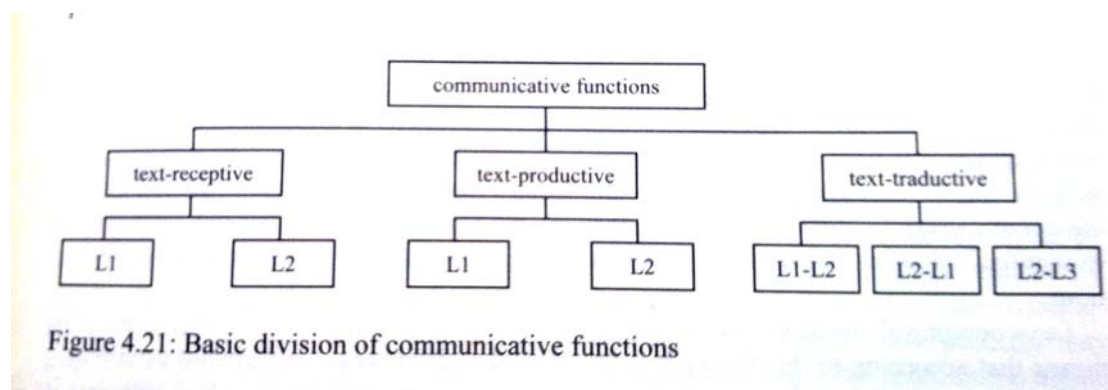
As mentioned above, assistance from dictionaries is what helps to fulfill the needs above. The content of dictionaries is an abstract element that “consists of



lexicographical data, from which users can extract information covering their needs in specific situations.” (Tarp; 2008: 58)

### 3.2.4 Lexicographical functions

There are basically two types of functions, namely communicative functions and cognitive functions. “Cognitive functions can be divided into the main categories of systematic and sporadic in accordance with the corresponding user situations” as discussed in 3.2.3. (Tarp; 2008: 85) While the division of communicative functions is more complicated, they can be divided, as Tarp has done, into “reception-, production- and translation-related functions, which can each be sub-divided in turn depending on language and language direction”, as shown in the following illustration:



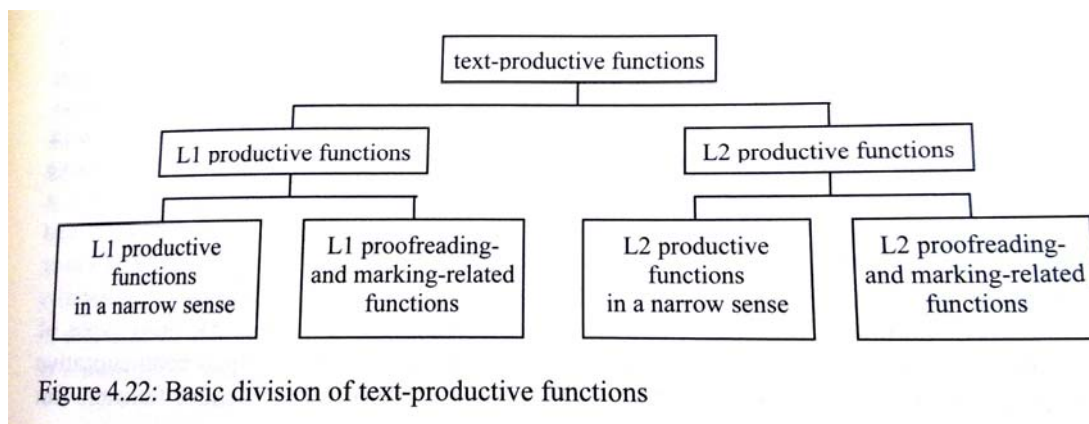
Example3.2

(Tarp; 2008:85)

After laying out his ideas on the basic division of communicative functions, Tarp goes one step further, stating that:

If we take one step down the ladder of abstraction and include user characteristics as well as language and areas of knowledge, there are in principle an infinite number of functions. Consequently, in specific dictionary projects it is necessary to make the functions specific by specifying mother tongue, linguistic and encyclopedic qualifications, language of focus, subject of focus, and the corresponding lexicographical needs. (Tarp; 2008:86)

He divides what he calls “text-productive functions” in the following way:



### Example 3.3

Specific functions, such as the functions in the bottom line of the diagram given above, are the most important reference for lexicographers when making dictionaries. All the elements of Function Theory discussed in section 3.2.3 are used to consider and analyze functions to reach those specific conclusions. In the end, a final decision is made as to what functions the dictionary will be used to fulfill and that decision works as a core for dictionary making. Around this core, the lexicographical data are collected and specific structures are adapted.

## 3.2.5 Lexicographical data and structures

### 3.2.5 .1 Lexicographical data

The terms “data”, “information” and “item” are commonly used to characterize the lexicographical content of a dictionary. According to NORDISK LEXICOGRAPHICAL ORDBOK, a dictionary “does not contain the *lemma data* or *lexicographical data*”, but instead contains what are referred to as items. An “item” is defined as:

“that part of a treatment or processing unit which is rhematic and provides information about the lemma sign or other text segments in a dictionary article, or in textual parts in the outer text of the dictionary.

The genuine purpose of an item is to enable the dictionary user to draw conclusions that provide lexicographical information. Thus, items are concrete text segments, whereas lexicographical information is the cognitive elements with which the user is left after having consulted a dictionary”

(Tarp; 2008:98)

“Data” is the new concept which gradually gets more popular than “item” in the lexicographic field. “In the years after 1989, computers started to make their mark in the world of lexicography, and the term data or lexicographical data started to appear with increasing frequency in theoretical texts on lexicography.” (Tarp; 2008:99)

Wikipedia defines “data” as follows:

“Data are often viewed as the lowest level of [abstraction](#) from which information and then knowledge are derived.---The terms [information](#) and [knowledge](#) are frequently used for overlapping concepts. The main difference is in the level of [abstraction](#) being considered. Data is the lowest level of abstraction, information is the next level, and finally, knowledge is the highest level among all three. Data on its own carries no meaning. In order for data to become information, it must be interpreted and take on a meaning.”

Although “item” and “data” sometimes refer to the same thing, “data” puts more emphasis on the idea of its being the “lowest level of abstraction”, which is why Tarp chooses the concept of “data” for use in Function Theory.

Depending on first user needs and secondary user needs, the lexicographical data, which, it must be remembered, is different from lexicographical information, “can be divided into function-related data (primary data) and usage-related data (secondary data)”. It can then be further divided into “word-class data, genus data, inflection data, etc.” according to its special content. (Tarp; 2008:100) The classification of the data does not really matter, however, only when it is used in lexicographical structures.

How to arrange the data and make it accessible to the users is one of the important aspects a lexicographer needs to consider.

### **3.2.5.2 Lexicographical structures**

In the years since lexicography was established as an independent field, attempts have been made to study the different lexicographical structures found in dictionaries. German researchers such as Herbert Ernst Wiegand were particularly active in this field. It was Wiegand who identified “dozens of types and sub-types of structure, the most important of which are overall text structure, macrostructure, microstructure, article structure, addressing structure, mediostructure, access structure and search field structure”. (Tarp; 2008:102) These types of concepts, especially macrostructure and microstructure, are very important to work on lexicographical research, and will be carefully discussed in Chapter four of this thesis.

Tarp criticizes three aspects of the existing theories on lexicographical structures:

- “1. The lexicographical relevance of all the structures that have been identified has not been explained sufficiently.
2. The structures are described formally not in relation to dictionary functions
3. No clear structure theory has been formulated which is common to both printed and electronic dictionaries.”

(Tarp; 2008:102)

These points are a little too fastidious. For example, although it is reasonable and good to construct a theory of lexicographical structures within the Function Theory, it is not really necessary to require that all the structures be described in relation to dictionary functions. Function Theory is a good way to study lexicography, but not the only way. As for the third point, the necessity and possibility of working out a common structure for both printed and electronic dictionaries seems doubtful at best. Because of the fact that they rely on different mediums, printed and electronic

dictionaries have many very different characteristics. There is a huge variety of new possibilities when it comes to the development of electronic dictionaries since the field itself is relatively new. It is important that a general theory of lexicography should not be directed at dictionaries belonging to only one medium. However, within such a theory the differences in different media of dictionaries need to be acknowledged. The advantage of Function Theory is its user-target, which makes the theory adaptable to the needs of users and allows it to focus on the specific needs of specific groups of users. This flexibility also makes it easier for Function Theory to cope with the new items and new phenomena. Therefore, to work out a general or fixed structure theory contradicts the principle of Function Theory. Structures and functions should be components of a general theory of lexicography.

To sum up, Function Theory is a great step towards reflecting the independence of lexicographical theory. Its user-orientation changed the focus from the dictionary itself to the needs of dictionary users and helped move the creation and criticism of dictionaries to a new level. According to a dictionary's desired functions, the lexicographer can choose relevant data to meet the knowledge and information needs of the user, and arrange the dictionary using the most accessible structure to help the user gain the utmost possible benefit from the dictionary.

### **3.3 Theory on learner's dictionaries**

The focus of this thesis is on the important category of the learner's dictionary. Since the theoretical basis of this thesis is Function Theory as outlined by Tarp, this discussion of learner's dictionaries will also be based on Tarp's discussion of learner's dictionaries.

According to the general information about Function Theory discussed above and with the reference to Tarp's twelve questions on learner' dictionaries, one can consider the following aspects when it comes to the functions of learner's dictionaries: the learner's knowledge of language, including the grammar and culture of his or her mother tongue; the learner's knowledge of the language, grammar and culture of the

foreign language; the learner's situation of study; and the learner's reasons for consulting the dictionary. Each aspect can lead to many questions:

**The learner's knowledge of language, grammar and culture of his or her mother tongue:**

1. Is the learner an adult or a child?
2. To what extent did the learner master his or her mother tongue?
3. How great is the learner's general grammar or cultural knowledge?

**The learner's knowledge of language, grammar and culture of the foreign language:**

1. To what extent did the learner master the foreign language? Is the foreign language learner a beginner, intermediate or advanced learner?
2. How great is the learner's knowledge of culture in the foreign-language area?

**The learner's situation of study:**

1. Why does the learner wish to learn the foreign language?
2. Does the foreign-language learning process take place spontaneously or consciously?
3. Is the foreign language being learned within or outside the foreign-language area?
4. Is the learner exposed to his/her mother tongue during the learning process?
5. Does the learner use a specific textbook or didactic system?
6. Does the learner use a specific didactic method?
7. Is the learning process related to a specific subject?
8. Does the learner use his/her mother tongue or second language to learn the foreign language?

Actually, this list could be extended if we chose to continue it.

The learner's reasons for consulting the dictionary:

1. Cognitive need
2. Communicative need: productive need and receptive need
3. Translation need

Tarp's (2008: 166)

A detailed analysis of learner's dictionary functions is the basis for selecting data and constructing structures, which will be discussed in the next chapter. As this thesis focuses on bilingual learner's dictionaries, the theory on equivalence will be discussed with practical examples in Chapter five.

All in all, Function Theory and its specific attention to learner's dictionaries provides a good method for understanding, as well as a scientific support for making and criticizing learner's dictionaries.

In order to fully implement this theory, practical work, such as a survey of users or potential users, is needed.

### **3.4 Case study**

In 3.3.1, several questions which can be used to facilitate the creation of more useful learner's dictionaries were discussed. By answering the questions using the real-world example of the Chinese learners at Stellenbosch University, we can come to some conclusions about the practical applications of Function Theory. The survey entitled "Survey on Chinese Learner's Dictionaries" (see Appendix) was created in order to obtain practical answers to the questions using a group of specific users.

Let's examine each consideration discussed in Part 3.3.1, as it relates to the group of students surveyed. The first consideration discussed in part 3.3.1 is the learner's knowledge of language, grammar and culture of his or her mother tongue.

The students who participated in the survey are university students including a few working people. Their general level of education is high and they're relatively cultured, and they have a basic knowledge of dictionaries and can easily use dictionaries. Most of them have Afrikaans as their mother tongue; others have English,

German, French, Xhosa or Zulu as their mother tongue. There are also some foreign students from France, Gabon, Bulgaria, Russia, South Korea and Belgium. Although the students have different mother tongues, most of them speak English well and can use English efficiently.

The second consideration is the learner's knowledge of the language, grammar and culture of the foreign language;

There are four Chinese modules offered at Stellenbosch University, namely M178 for first year students, M278 for second year students, M318 for third year first semester students and M348 for third year second semester students. Except for a few students who have study or travel experience in China, most of the students know very little about Chinese and Chinese culture before beginning their Chinese studies.

The third consideration is the learner's situation of study:

The students at Stellenbosch are learning Chinese as an academic course. Most of the students choose this subject because of their curiosity about the language and the country, or because they plan on working or traveling in China someday. However, most of the students, especially the first year students, have no clear motivation aside from curiosity. Students who make the decision to carry on their studies to the third year, however, often have definite targets and motivations.

There are a few Chinese classes each week at Stellenbosch University. In the university course schedule, there are 3 classes per week for first year and second year students, and 4 classes for third year students. These limited time slots are obviously not enough for foreign language learning, especially while students are constantly exposed to their mother-tongue outside the classroom. Extra work with the help of books or dictionaries is necessary for the students if they are serious about making progress.

A survey (see appendix) was created to find out more information about this group's dictionary use, and was given to the Stellenbosch students in level M178, M278 and



M318. In total, 33 forms (25 from M178, 6 from M278 and 2 from M318) were returned.

The information obtained from the survey results is as follows:

1. Among the 33 students, 13 students have a dictionary (printed or electronic), including 7 M178 students, 4 M278 students and 2 M318 students. Higher level students were found to be more likely to own a dictionary, which indicates that most language learners need a dictionary if they continue their study beyond the basic level. This idea is also supported by the answers to the following questions:

**If you carry on your Chinese study, will you buy a dictionary?**

**And in what level (or grade) do you think you need a dictionary?**

The students who do not have a dictionary all chose the answer “Yes”, and most of them indicated that they plan to buy one when they are in the second year.

The students who have a dictionary all think the dictionary is very useful. That is also the reason they bought a dictionary. However, while faced with detailed practical questions, such as:

**What do you feel about the examples in dictionaries when you are writing in Chinese and translating English into Chinese?**

Not all students agree on the answer “very useful”. (8 chose very useful; 3 chose a little bit useful; 2 chose not so useful; 1 never use this function)

2. Aside from 3 students who chose their dictionaries with the help of someone, the others all chose them by themselves. Among the 3 students who had help, 2 of them have been to China, and so they might have had their Chinese friends help them to choose a dictionary.

3. As for the students who do not have a dictionary, the reasons given are as follows:

9 students chose “too expensive”; 7 students choose “have not found a suitable

one”; 8 students choose “it is not so useful for your study till now”; and 2 chose “using online dictionary”. Therefore, it would seem that for university students, the price of the dictionary is still an important factor.

4. As for the questions on functions:

**When do you use your dictionary?**

A reading      B writing      C studying      D something else: \_\_\_\_\_

Most students had multiple choices. Four students chose all three answers. In total, 5 students chose reading; 8 students chose writing; 13 students chose studying.

And for the question:

**Which benefits more from the dictionary?**

A reading      B writing      C studying

4 students chose reading; 9 students chose writing; 4 students chose studying.

From the answers to these two questions, one can find that most of the students used the cognitive and communicative functions of the dictionary to help them with their studies. They gain most from dictionaries in the area of text-production.

5. What kind of dictionaries did the students have?

- *Chinese/English Bilingual dictionary; Usual (Dorling Kindersley)*
- *Concise English/Chinese-Chinese/English; The Commercial Press-Oxford University Press (4 students have this dictionary)*
- *Wordweb Princeton Electronic dictionary. Oxford English dictionary*
- *Oxford Beginner’s Chinese dictionary (4 students have this dictionary)*

6. Some comments from students

- Dictionaries are very helpful once you get used to it.

- I find it a bit confusing as it has a different layout from English dictionaries and English-French dictionaries I have used before.
- It's very complicated. The text book on the other hand is very nice.
- Some dictionaries do not have general words that I would like to use.
- Difficult to locate correct characters with correct meaning.
- Very complicated.
- Difficult to use, because it is only in Chinese.
- The vocabulary in my textbook is very useful. I haven't needed to use a dictionary up until recently.
- A lot of information but examples have sometimes too many unknown characters I do not understand immediately.
- Characters are too small.
- I mostly just use it to look up words I've forgotten, rather than find new words, because there are too many options and I do not know which one is correct for the context I'm using it in. Otherwise, it's a very comprehensive and useful dictionary (comment on *Concise English/Chinese-Chinese/English Dictionary*)
- Basic dictionary with radical and character index, tones, grammatical terms, basic Chinese measure words and rules for writing Chinese characters, phrase finder, numbers quick reference to life and culture and social survival guide. (comment on *Oxford Beginner's Chinese Dictionary*)
- Very easy format, easy to use for basic Chinese (comment on *Oxford Beginner's Chinese dictionary*)

About online dictionaries:

- Very useful if you can use the copy/paste function, otherwise I prefer using the paper dictionaries.
- The electronic dictionary is much faster and easier to use. I see the hard copies will not exist in the future. My e-dictionary can even search the web and find other definitions. I use it a lot. I just press one button on my computer and it comes up with an explanation of the word I am looking for.

- Comments on Google translate: translation not perfect and can cause embarrassment. Can distinctly see Google translations when receiving communication from China.

#### 7. Some suggestions

- They should be more accessible. Maybe sold by US.
- It would be helpful to have an explanation as to where certain words may be used or appropriate, for example, measure words, or have examples of the word used in a sentence.
- I am not sure how to pronounce Chinese words when I first started to study Chinese. I wish there was a way on describing the pronunciation with the help of an English word or similar pronunciation.
- Where does one start writing characters, i.e. which strokes go first and when writing a character, how do you know which strokes account for one/two etc.?
- Bigger print—only words that we are likely to use.
- It must be simple.
- An English-Chinese dictionary that explains the use of words, sentence structure, etc. would be useful.
- Must be an English-Chinese dictionary
- It would be helpful, if they could make the instructions on how to use it a little clearer
- The examples should be sometimes a little bit easier in the beginning but then one day it will be too simple if you keep the same dictionary and you will not progress.
- A dictionary with useful Chinese phrases under the definitions of words.
- The explanation of the radical index should be better.
- Examples in dictionaries should be easier and things we can use in everyday conversations with Chinese people.
- It should show the context of words to foreign speakers.
- Should provide Pinyin, translation from English to Chinese as well as Chinese

to English.

- There needs to be more synonyms to one word so I can really understand what the character means.
- Each word should have an example sentence, so that you know what context you can use it.

8. Online dictionaries provided by students:

[www.nciku.com](http://www.nciku.com)

[www.mdgb.net](http://www.mdgb.net)

[www.googletranslator.com](http://www.googletranslator.com)

## **4. CHAPTER FOUR: SOME LEXICOGRAPHIC STRUCTURES WITH REFERENCE TO TWO CHINESE LEARNER'S DICTIONARIES**

### **4.1 Frame structure and outsider matters**

The frame structure, (some scholars use “megastructure”) is used to describe the relationship and order between the main components of a dictionary. It normally includes the lemma list, which is the central component of a dictionary; the front matter section, which precedes the lemma list; and the back matter section, which follows the lemma list. In addition, some dictionaries have middle matter, which is a part that consists of “items inserted in the lemma list without actually being part of it, for instance certain types of illustrations and survey entries. A generic term for front, back and middle matter is outside matter”. (Svensén; 2009: 379) Svensén (2009:379) argued that the different kinds of outside matter should not only be classified according to their “purely physical position” in the dictionary, but also need to be considered “according to their function: whether they (a) provide information about the object language(s), (b) have a metafunction, i.e. provide information about the dictionary itself, (c) are elements of the access structure of the dictionary, or (d) have some other function”. Some lexicographers, like Bergenholtz, Tarp and Wiegand make a distinction between integrated and non-integrated outer texts.<sup>4</sup>

“Non-integrated outer texts do not adhere to the genuine purpose of the dictionary whilst integrated outer texts help to achieve the genuine purpose of the dictionary.” (Gouws; 2001)

When considered from a theoretical perspective, the importance of outside matter is usually dismissed on the grounds that outside matter is not necessary for a dictionary

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<sup>4</sup>They use the term “outer text” instead of “outside matter”. In this thesis, “outside matter” will be adopted except in some quoted passages.

since a dictionary without outside matter does not lose its status as a dictionary. From the perspective of reception, Svensén (2009: 379) also points out that “the outside-matter components of a dictionary often pass unnoticed by the users.” Is the outside matter really useless? Perhaps the design of the outside matter is not scientific and attractive enough. In practice, most dictionaries still contain outside matter. In foreign language learner’s dictionaries, especially in beginners’ dictionaries, the outside matter is normally necessary. As discussed in Chapter three, Tarp distinguishes between communicative functions and cognitive functions. The dictionaries discussed in the thesis focus more on communicative functions. “Not only text reception but also text production is at the core of the communication-orientated functions of a bilingual dictionary. The central list can assist the user in various ways with text production. This is primarily done by means of co-text entries and by referring the user to an integrated outer text in which grammatical patterns and typical word order issues are discussed. Here an interactive relation between central list and outer text is of extreme importance” (Gouws; 2004:85) In these dictionaries, the front matter acts like a doorman who can lead the learner as he or she walks into the “foreign world” of the new language. The back matter and middle matter can provide more grammatical and communicative information as well as cultural background knowledge for learners. Therefore, how to design a scientific and helpful outside matter will be the first challenge for a lexicographer of a language learner’s dictionary. These questions will be answered by practical research with regard to the outside matter /outer texts of the *Oxford Beginner’s Chinese Dictionary (Beginner’s)* and *Concise English-Chinese Chinese-English Dictionary (Concise)*. The dictionary functions and user’s reception will be the basis of the discussion.

The Chinese language is totally different from other languages. It uses characters and is non-phonological. Since all the languages spoken in South Africa are phonological, the outside matter of the Chinese learner’s dictionary should be carefully considered. Firstly, any basic differences between English and Chinese should be highlighted, and an introduction to Chinese characters, radical, strokes and the Chinese phonetic

system, known as “Pinyin”, must be included. Secondly, when it comes to a learner’s dictionary for learners of elementary and intermediate levels, clear, simple and sufficient explanation is very important. The authors must make sure that the learner with no Chinese background can understand and use the dictionary efficiently. Thirdly, outside matter dealing with text production will be very helpful for the users. Fourthly, users can be helped by phrases of common greetings. Fifthly, cultural factors can be integrated in outside matter. Sixthly, lemma selection and the ordering of lemmata are also important factors for a learner’s dictionary. A good selection and a suitable arrangement can both meet requests of learners and save their time when looking something up in the dictionary.

#### 4.1.1 Outside matter of the two dictionaries

##### 4.1.1.1 Introduction to outside matter of *Beginner’s* and *Concise*.

As mentioned above, this discussion will focus on two dictionaries, *Beginner’s* and *Concise*, each of which takes a different approach to the question of front and back matter. Firstly, there are 88 pages of front matter and back matter, in *Beginner’s* and 46 pages in *Concise*. Compared to the number of pages in each of the dictionaries (436 for *Beginner’s* and 1116 for *Concise*), the relative amount of front matter and back matter in *Beginner’s* is much higher than that in *Concise*. Secondly, the arrangement of the front matter and back matter texts in these two dictionaries is also different. The following table presents the differences between the two:

		<i>Beginner’s</i>	<i>Concise</i>
Front matter	General	1.Introduction; 2.How to use the dictionary; 3.Tones in Mandarin Chinese; 4.The structure of Chinese-English entries;	Preface



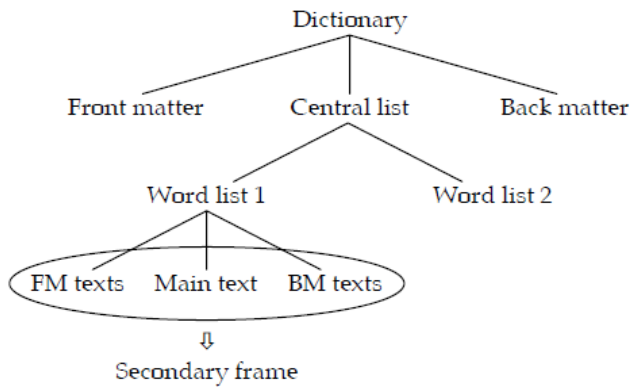
		<p>5.The structure of English-Chinese entries;</p> <p>6. Glossary of Grammatical terms.</p> <p>7. Index</p>	
	Chinese-English section		<p>1.Guide to the use of the dictionary</p> <p>2.Guide to English pronunciation</p> <p>3.Spelling</p>
	English-Chinese section		<p>1.Guide to the use of dictionary</p> <p>2.Radical index</p>
Back matter	Chinese-English section	<p>1. Basic Chinese measure words</p> <p>2. Basic rules for writing Chinese characters</p>	
	General	<p>1. Dictionary know-how</p> <p>2.The Chinese words and phrases you must know</p> <p>3. Numbers</p> <p>4. Phrasefinder</p> <p>5. Dates for your diary</p> <p>6. Quick reference guide to</p>	<p>1.Consonants and vowels of the Chinese phonetic alphabet and their corresponding international phonetic symbols</p> <p>2. Names and abbreviations of China’s provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly</p>

		life and culture 7. Social survival guide	under the central authority and their seats of people's government
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From the table above, one can see that there is one general front matter text for the whole dictionary of *Beginner's*, while in *Concise*, except for a "Preface" for the dictionary as a whole which appears at the beginning, the front matter text is divided into two parts which appear separately in front of the Chinese-English section and English-Chinese section. When it comes to the arrangement of back matter, on the contrary, there are two back matter texts in *Beginner's* and one in *Concise*.

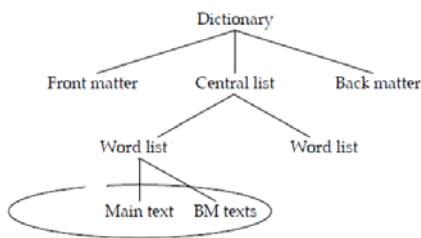
Gouws refers to front and back matter and other supplementary texts outside the main word list of a dictionary as "outer texts", and within such "outer texts, he makes a distinction between what he calls "primary" and "secondary frame structure":

"Outer texts functioning as functional constituents of the dictionary as a text compound, i.e. those texts framing the central list of the dictionary, form the primary outer texts and in combination with the central list they constitute the primary frame structure. Where an outer text displays its own complete extension resulting in a frame structure it represents a secondary frame structure. A secondary frame structure typically applies to outer texts but it can also prevail in dictionaries with more than one word list, e.g. a bilingual dictionary with a biscopal character".

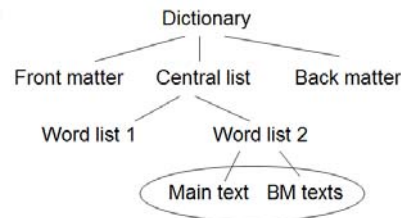


(Gouws; 2004:71)

The Chinese and English word lists of *Concise* are both prefaced by their own front matter sections which are included on top of a general preface. These smaller front matter sections constitute a secondary frame structure because they are an extension of the word list and are not part of the main front matter. The back matter attached to the Chinese-English section of *Beginner's* also exhibits secondary frame structure, as it is included in addition to the general back matter. Shown as the following tables:



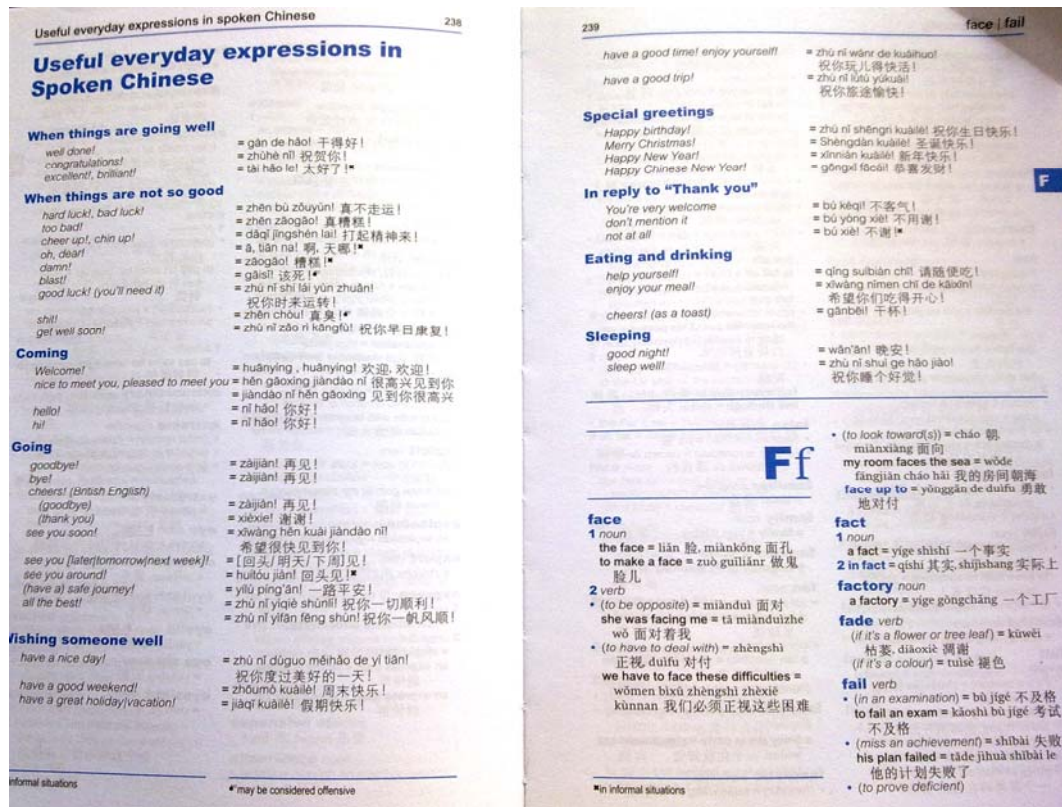
The frame structure of *Concise*



The frame structure of *Beginner's*

Another difference between *Beginner's* and *Concise* is that *Beginner's* has many inserted inner texts. All of them are in the English-Chinese section, e.g. the expressions with “age”; the usage of “be”; the category on “languages and nationalities”; “useful everyday expressions in spoken Chinese” (shown in the picture below), etc. Some inner texts occur within a given article stretch, like “age” or the usage of “be”, while some have been placed between two article stretches, as in the

following picture:



Example 4.1

#### 4.1.1.2 The proposed target user and dictionary functions

The different outside matter texts found in these two dictionaries were designed to meet the needs of different target users. The introduction to *Beginner's* states that it, “has been specially designed for beginners and is not simply a scaled-down version of a larger dictionary. It approaches the specific needs of the English-speaking learners of Chinese from a very different angle”. *Concise*, on the other hand, claims that it “is an invaluable guide to reading, writing, and speaking English and Chinese”. While the target users of *Concise* are both Chinese and English learners, *Beginner's* narrows its target users to primary level Chinese learners. However, if we take a close look at the prefaces (a Chinese preface and an English preface are both included) of *Concise*, we notice that the Chinese language preface, which is intended for English learners with Chinese as their mother tongue, provides more information than the English preface. The Chinese language preface includes such information as the fact that “more than

1,000,000 copies have been issued since it was published in 1986” and that “3000 new words (or phrases) were added to the English vocabulary” in this second edition, as well as stating that it provides “the matching preposition for the verb, noun, and adjective.” The more detailed information in the Chinese language preface indicates that the lexicographer may have considered Chinese learners of the English language to be his most important audience.

*Concise* also explains its functions as a dictionary of “reading, writing, and speaking English and Chinese”, which are really general aims that can apply to almost all learner’s dictionaries. Compared to the ambiguous functions mentioned in *Concise*, *Beginner’s* provides a clearer explanation of its functions:

“Each side of the dictionary is shaped by its specific function. The Chinese-English side is designed to capitalize on what English speakers know about their language hence the more streamlined presentation of English-language information. *The Oxford Beginner’s Dictionary* provides generous coverage of those aspects of Chinese which are less easy to decode for English speakers.

The English-Chinese side is longer, providing the user of the foreign language with maximum guidance in the form of detailed coverage of essential grammar, clear signposts to the correct translation for a particular context, and lots of examples.”

In the introduction to *Beginner’s*, therefore, the functions of the Chinese-English side focus more on text-reception while the functions of the English-Chinese side focus more on text-production. The functions of the English-Chinese side are detailed in the section entitled “How to use the dictionary”:

“The English into Chinese side of the dictionary attempts to give full guidance on how to write and speak correctly in Chinese. Plenty of examples are given to demonstrate not only the translation of words into Chinese but also hints about their usage in Chinese sentences. You will find additional information on grammatical points, such as the use of words in certain contexts, in the

grammatical notes that occur within the entries on certain words. These notes are designed to produce correct Chinese in areas where mistakes are frequently made”.

The above paragraph was put under the wrong title, because it is not talking about “how to use the dictionary” but about the function of the English-Chinese side of the dictionary.

Comparing the outside matter texts of these two dictionaries, *Beginner's* is richer than that of *Concise*. *Beginner's* identifies its target users and functions more clearly than *Concise*. Whether each is able to fulfill the needs of its respective target users and its proposed functions will be discussed in the following parts.

#### **4.1.1.3 Comments on the outside matter texts of the two dictionaries**

As mentioned above, the success of the outside matter is not only judged by how much data it provides, but also by how much of the data the user ends up using. Therefore, a detailed study will be done on each item of outside matter in these two dictionaries, taking into account the user's potential usage and the characteristics of the Chinese language. For this type of evaluation, one should look at the outer texts with reference to the data distribution structure of the dictionary in order to understand the decisions the lexicographer has made about which data will be allocated a place within the outer texts.

As discussed above, the structure of the front matter texts in *Concise* is secondary frame structure. The English-Chinese side and Chinese-English side each has its own front matter, and there is also a general front matter provided for the whole dictionary. The front matter of the English-Chinese side includes a guide to the use of the dictionary, a guide to English pronunciation, and spelling. The “guide to the use of the dictionary”, after introducing headwords, compounds and derivatives, as well as idioms and phrasal verbs, goes directly to the explanation of word classes. Out of all the possible word classes, it only introduces nouns, adjectives, and verbs, followed by

the introduction of “prepositions to use with verbs, adjectives and nouns”. The reason for choosing these three categories is that these kinds of words have inflections (for example, the nouns have plural forms, the adjectives have comparative and superlative forms, and the verbs have past tense and past participles). These inflections do not exist in Chinese. Finding appropriate prepositions for verbs, adjectives and nouns is also one of the most difficult tasks for Chinese speakers who wish to learn English. Therefore, this concise guide actually grasps the weak points of English learners in China quite well and focuses on them. The “Guide to English pronunciation” introduces very basic knowledge of English, and the “spelling” section might be very helpful if a user wants to find a word but is not exactly sure about its spelling.

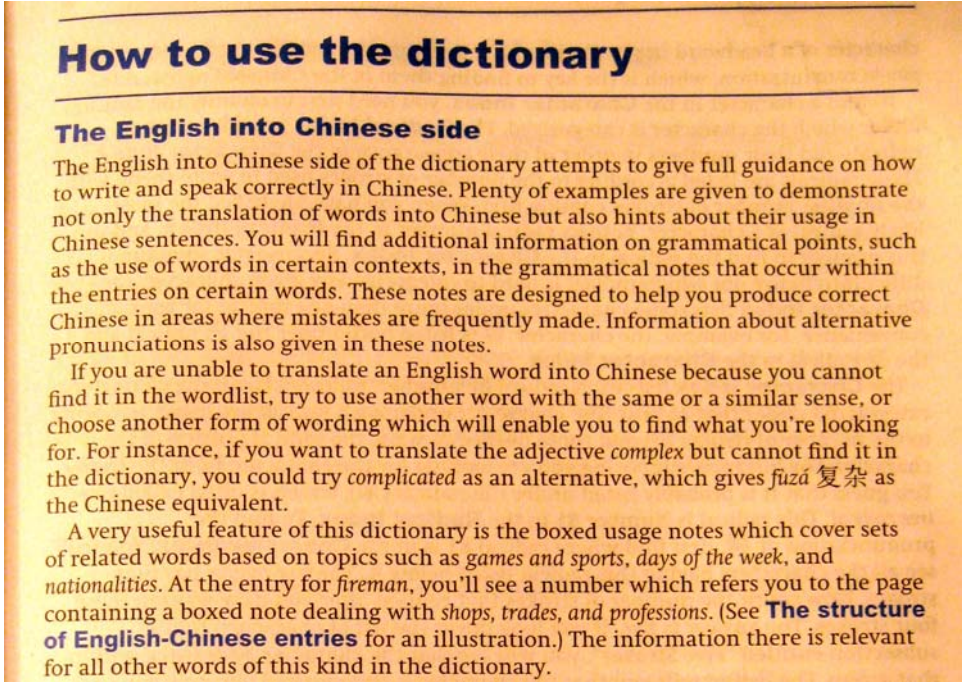
In the front matter of the Chinese-English side, there is a brief introduction on entries, phonetic notation, meanings and the indexing system. However, no grammatical explanations or other specific information for English speaking learners of Chinese is provided.

The analysis of the outside matter of *Concise* given above, further proves that the target users of this dictionary are English learners whose mother tongue is Chinese, which means that it does not exactly live up to the claim it makes on its cover to be a guide to “reading, writing, and speaking English and Chinese”.

Compared to *Concise*, *Beginner’s* organizes its outside matter in quite a different way. Since it has a very rich outside matter, it may be easier to understand with the help of a table:

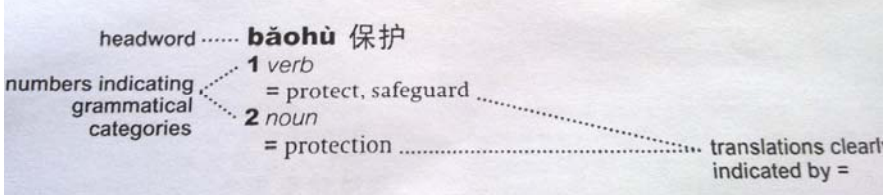
**Front matter and comments:**

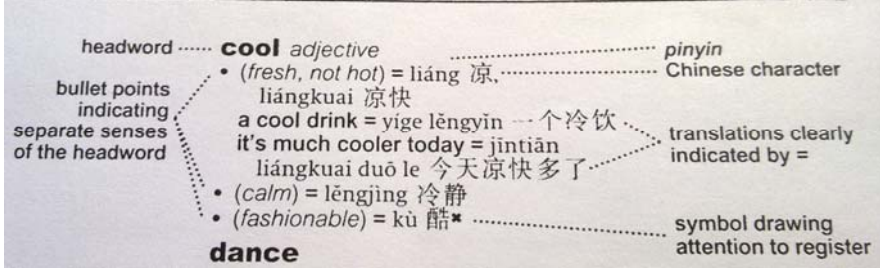
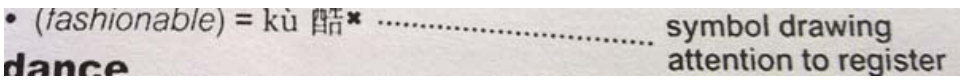
<b>Front matter text</b>	<b>comments</b>
Introduction	Aside from identifying the target user and explaining the functions of two sides of the dictionary, it also calls attention to the special aspects of

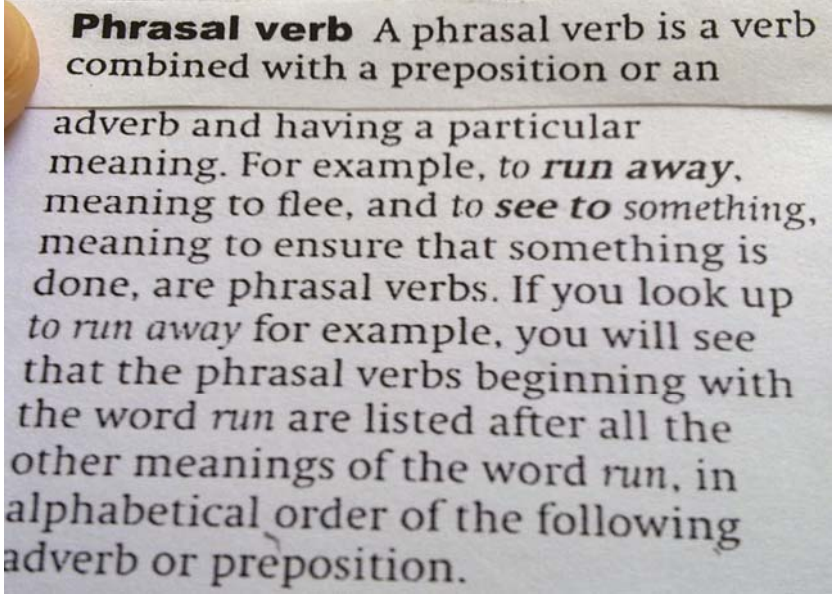
	<p>its design, emphasizing that “it looks different”, and that “it provides essential information in a new way”.</p>
<p>How to use the dictionary</p>	<p><b>The English into Chinese side</b></p> <p>The title of the first paragraph is unrelated to the content (as mentioned above). The second paragraph gives some good advice to users, such as, “if you want to translate the adjective <i>complex</i> but cannot find it in the dictionary, you can try <i>complicated</i> as an alternative.” For such a small dictionary, suggestions like these are very practical.</p>  <p><b>How to use the dictionary</b></p> <p><b>The English into Chinese side</b></p> <p>The English into Chinese side of the dictionary attempts to give full guidance on how to write and speak correctly in Chinese. Plenty of examples are given to demonstrate not only the translation of words into Chinese but also hints about their usage in Chinese sentences. You will find additional information on grammatical points, such as the use of words in certain contexts, in the grammatical notes that occur within the entries on certain words. These notes are designed to help you produce correct Chinese in areas where mistakes are frequently made. Information about alternative pronunciations is also given in these notes.</p> <p>If you are unable to translate an English word into Chinese because you cannot find it in the wordlist, try to use another word with the same or a similar sense, or choose another form of wording which will enable you to find what you're looking for. For instance, if you want to translate the adjective <i>complex</i> but cannot find it in the dictionary, you could try <i>complicated</i> as an alternative, which gives <i>fuzá</i> 复杂 as the Chinese equivalent.</p> <p>A very useful feature of this dictionary is the boxed usage notes which cover sets of related words based on topics such as <i>games and sports</i>, <i>days of the week</i>, and <i>nationalities</i>. At the entry for <i>fireman</i>, you'll see a number which refers you to the page containing a boxed note dealing with <i>shops, trades, and professions</i>. (See <b>The structure of English-Chinese entries</b> for an illustration.) The information there is relevant for all other words of this kind in the dictionary.</p>



	<p><b>The Chinese into English side</b></p> <p>The Chinese into English side of the dictionary is organized alphabetically by <i>pinyin</i> spelling. If you already know the <i>pinyin</i> romanization for a word, you can go straight to the Chinese-English side and look it up alphabetically. Words that have the same <i>pinyin</i> spelling but different tones are arranged according to tone, with the first tone first, followed by the second, third, fourth, and neutral tones. (See the section on <b>Tones in Mandarin Chinese</b> for information on tones.) Thus <i>fán</i> will come before <i>fān</i>, and <i>bǎ</i> will come before <i>bà</i>. Words beginning with the same character are grouped together to give a sense of the semantic range of that character. Words that begin with different characters having the same romanization and tone are arranged according to the number of strokes in the character, with the smaller number first. Thus <i>jiān</i> 尖 comes before <i>jiān</i> 肩 because the former has six strokes and the latter eight strokes. If words or compounds begin with the same character, romanization, and tone, they are arranged alphabetically according to the first letter of the second syllable or word in <i>pinyin</i>. For example, <i>miànqián</i> comes before <i>miàntiáor</i>.</p> <p>In the cases of <i>yi</i> 一 (<i>one</i>) and <i>bu</i> 不 (<i>not</i>), where the tone of the character changes depending on the character that follows it (see the subsection on <b>Tone Changes</b> in the section on <b>Tones in Mandarin Chinese</b>), all words and compounds beginning with the character in question are listed together, regardless of tone, and are arranged alphabetically by the <i>pinyin</i> romanization of the second character in the word or compound. For instance, <i>bùguǎn</i> 不管 is listed before <i>búyào</i> 不要 because <i>g</i> comes before <i>y</i> in the alphabet, even though <i>bu</i> in the first has a fourth tone and <i>bu</i> in the second has a second tone.</p> <p>If you have only the Chinese character but do not know how it is pronounced, or spelled in <i>pinyin</i>, you can use the <b>Radical Index</b> and the <b>Character Index</b> in the <b>Index</b> section to find the pronunciation.</p> <p><b>The Chinese into English side</b></p> <p>This section explains the three factors that influence the organization of each entry, namely <i>pinyin</i>, tones and strokes. However, the user may not have the patience to read through so many words. Giving explanations together with screenshot examples from the dictionary would be a clearer and more readable way to present this type of information.</p> <p><b>How to use the index</b></p> <p>This part uses more than one page to give an introduction to the Radical index and Character index, which most users may not have the patience to finish reading. It would be more readable if it was rewritten into a brief introduction with several typical examples, and it would be easier for the users to consult if it was at the top of the first page of the index.</p>
<p>Tones in Mandarin Chinese</p>	<p>This section introduces the four tones in the form of a list before providing a separate verbal introduction of the neutral tone. It would be more scientific to lay out all five tones together. Also, instead of using <i>ti</i>, as this</p>

	<p>section's authors chose to do, it would be better to use the syllable <i>ma</i> (mentioned in Chapter two), because there is a corresponding character 吗 for the neutral tone <i>ma</i> , whereas there is no corresponding character for <i>ti</i> with neutral tone</p> <p>This section also introduces tone changes, an understanding of which is useful for speaking Chinese.</p>
<p>The structure of Chinese-English entries</p>	 <p>This section provides detailed information about the technical terms for each part of an article, as seen in the excerpt above. Although this illustration is meaningful for lexicographers, it is not really useful for the target users. The information it provides, such as the fact that “bǎohù” is the “headword”, is part of the basic format of all dictionaries. Second language learners normally have mastered their learning language which they are used for studying the new language, which means they had the language learning experience and are already familiar with the basic format of dictionaries. When they see “1 verb”, they do not need to read the explanation of “numbers indicating grammatical categories” to get its indication. This section would be necessary only if drastic changes in the format of the dictionary to which users’ attention needed to be drawn had been made. The only uncommon symbol in the entry is the equal symbol (=), which indicates the translation equivalent. The equal symbol is not difficult to understand in an entry of a dictionary, therefore, this part could safely be deleted from the front matter.</p>

<p>The structure of English-Chinese entries</p>	 <p>This part helps the user to see the different types of data included in the dictionary article. However, few users may have the patience to read it. As explained above, this part is more helpful for lexicographers than users. It is advisable for the dictionary maker to choose few special or important indications to highlight, e.g. the special mark ×</p> 
<p>Glossary of grammatical terms</p>	<p>How a dictionary should deal with the grammatical aspects of a language is an important and challenging question. Unfortunately, <i>Beginner's</i> does not do a good job of explaining grammatical terms in this glossary since it mixes all the grammatical terms together. Word classes (such as adjective, adverb, noun, verb, etc.) are explained together with comparatives, conditionals, imperatives, phrasal verbs, pinyin and tenses. Scientifically, pinyin can hardly be categorized in grammatical terms, since it is merely a way to write Chinese characters phonetically. Furthermore, it would be clearer to separate the grammatical terms referring to words and sentences. Also, the term “phrasal verb” is not useful in a Chinese learner’s dictionary since there is no equivalent term in Chinese.</p>

	 <p>Moreover, some Chinese grammatical terms are missing, e.g. particle, interjection and onomatopoeia.</p>
Index	<p>The radical index and character index are necessary for users who want to look up words in a dictionary. However, the lexicographer should first introduce the “Basic rules for writing Chinese characters” (which was put in the back matter) before the index. If the users do not know how to separate a radical and how to count strokes, it is not easy for them to use the radical and character index. Therefore, “Basic rules for writing Chinese characters” in the back matter should be moved to the front matter and be put just before the index.</p>
<p><b>Back matter sections and comments</b></p>	
<p><b>Back matter texts after C/E dictionary</b></p>	<p><b>Comments</b></p>
Basic Chinese	<p>Measure words make up a particular word class in Sino-Tibetan</p>

measure words	languages. Therefore, for learners of other language families, it is a unique part and needs to get special attention. In practice, students who are using this dictionary think this part is quite useful.
Basic rules for writing Chinese characters	As mentioned above, this part is useful only when it is put in front of the index in the front matter.
<b>Back matter texts</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Dictionary know-how	<p>In the introduction, it is explained that “this section contains a number of short exercises that will help you to use your dictionary more effectively.” It is a good idea to include practical exercises in a learner’s dictionary. Its inclusion shows that the lexicographers are getting more active and want to be more involved in the user’s learning process. Moreover, it also indicates their intention to train users on how to use the dictionary.</p> <p>There are eight exercises in the section. Most of them focus on the special usage of Chinese words and characters and are well designed. Examples include “how Chinese characters make up words”, which shows how Chinese accepts and integrates loan words; “recognizing measure words”, which calls the user’s attention to this special word class; “Chinese prepositions” and “tense, aspect and mood in Chinese”, which highlights these grammatical terms which many learners find confusing because of the big difference between Chinese and English; and “questions in Chinese”, which provides a good summary on how to ask questions in Chinese. However, there are some questions that are not so easily answered only with the help of the dictionary, e.g. Exercise 5:</p>

**5 Identifying Chinese adjectives and their role**

In the following passage about tea, locate the Chinese adjectives, translate them into English (by looking them up on the Chinese-English side of the dictionary), and identify their role. Are they functioning as modifiers – as noted in exercise 4 often, but not always, followed by de 的, or are they functioning as stative verbs – often, but not always preceded by hěn 很 (literally ‘very’), fēicháng 非常 (‘extremely’), or similar?

中国的茶种很多。有红茶、绿茶以及各种各样的特殊茶。最香的茶可能是茉莉花茶。有的茶浓，有的茶淡。茶对身体有很大的好处。历史上，欧洲人开始喝茶很晚。不过，现在中国茶在西方非常普遍。

Chinese adjective: characters	Chinese adjective: Pinyin	English translation	modifier or stative verb?

The answer to Exercise 5:

Chinese adjective: characters	Chinese adjective: Pinyin	English translation	modifier or stative verb?
多	duō	many (different part of speech in English)	stative verb
红	hóng	red (or in the context of tea, ‘black’)	modifier

According to the answer above, the adjective “多” is a stative verb, but if one looks up the word “多” in the dictionary, no information is found about stative verbs.

The Chinese words and phrases you must know

“The words and phrases you must know” is not a very scientific expression, because it is not clear under which criteria a word can be categorized as a “must know”.

It is not convincing to say “record” (录音机) is a word you must know nowadays, and it is likewise unreasonable to require that learners in South Africa know 英格兰 England, 苏格兰 Scotland, 威尔士 Wales, 爱尔兰 Ireland, 澳大利亚 Australia, 德国 Germany, 日本 Japan and 法国 France, but not 南非 South Africa. (The dictionary does not indicate that it is only designed for the users in the above-mentioned countries.)

Without any information on the users’ situation, how did the authors

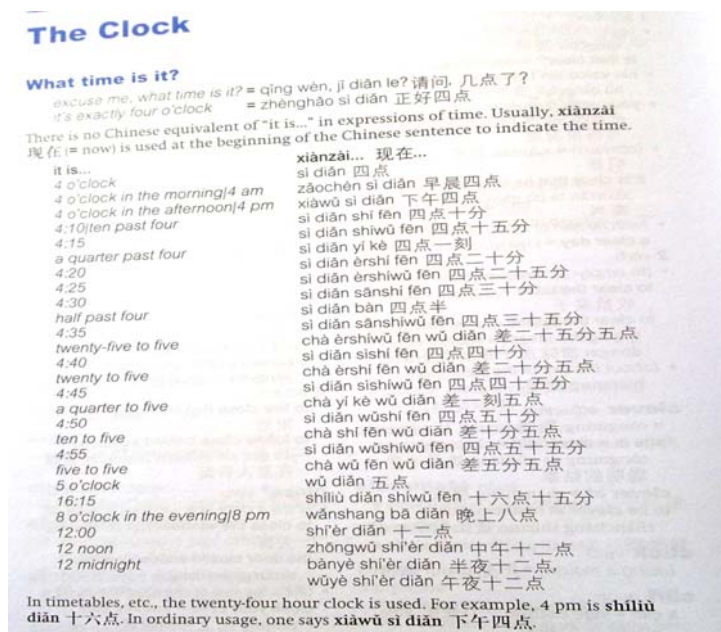
	<p>decide that learners must know the following words: 雷 thunder; 纪念品 souvenir; 表演 performance; 风俗 custom; 工程师 engineer; 污染 pollution; 展览 exhibition; etc.? The section of words in such a text can only be motivated on the basis of a frequency list in a well-balanced and representative corpus.</p>
Numbers	<p>“Numbers” is one of the most important elements in primary language learning. The inclusion of a section presenting a systematic explanation of numbers provides a good and convenient reference for users.</p>
Phrasefinder	<p>This section includes useful phrases regarding topics like going places, keeping in touch, food and drink, places to stay, shopping and money, sport and leisure, weights and measures, as well as street signs and information notices.</p> <p>This part would be very helpful for foreign travelers in China. The inclusion of this section indicates that the potential users of this dictionary are not only ordinary language learners who are learning all the skills required to master the Chinese language, but also anyone who may need basic Chinese for momentary use for communicative functions.</p> <p>However, this section includes some inappropriate translations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. <b>Yes is translated as 是(shi).</b> This translation fails to note that <i>yes</i> can also be translated as 对 (dui) , or 好(hao) depending on the situation. “No” can also be translated as “没有” and “不”.</li> <li>5. <b>“Excuse me” is translated as 劳驾.</b> 劳驾 is an old fashioned word and has much narrower applications compared with “excuse me”.</li> <li>6. <b>“Nice to meet you”,</b> which the authors translate as “认识你真好”, is normally translated as “很高兴认识你”. “认识你真好” literally means “meet you really good” and has a stronger feeling than the common greeting “nice to meet you”. So “认识你真好” is also an inappropriate translation.</li> </ol>

	<p>7. “<i>Fire exit</i>” (防火门) should be translated as “消防通道”. “防火门” means a special door that can protect against fire, which is a wrong translation for “fire exit”.</p> <p>8. When writing signs, Chinese people usually use “出售” to mean “<i>for sale</i>”, not “待售” as the authors do.</p> <p>The mistakes in these “useful phrases” show that this part needs good editing.</p>
<p>Dates for your diary</p>	<p>There are two calendars in use in China. The dates of traditional Chinese festivals, such as Spring Festival, Lantern Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, etc. are determined according to the Lunar Calendar. The dates of modern festivals such as Women’s Day, National Day, etc. are all determined according to the Gregorian Calendar (which is the solar calendar commonly used all over the world). The diary in this example uses a solar calendar on which the dates of various festivals have been circled.</p> <p>The examples given are potentially confusing, however. For example, January 1<sup>st</sup> is identified as “the New Year”. However, the example does not explain the fact that there are two calendars used in China and that the Chinese celebrate two New Years, including the international New Year which does in fact fall on January 1<sup>st</sup> according to the solar calendar, as well as the “Lunar New Year”, which is the first day of Spring Festival and which falls on a different date in the solar calendar every year.</p> <p>Instead, it introduces Spring Festival, which may give the user a misconception that January 1<sup>st</sup> is also Spring Festival.</p>
<p>Quick reference guide to life and culture</p>	<p>Most students of the Chinese language are interested to find out some basic information about Chinese culture and the daily life of the Chinese people. This section fulfills the needs of these users. There are some good examples which are closely connected to Chinese culture and Chinese people’s daily life, e.g.</p>



	<p><b>dānwèi</b> 单位 The <b>work unit</b> has been standard for social planning under Communism, responsible for not only work, but also health, marriage, family planning, housing, travel and political control.</p> <p><b>guānxì</b> 关系 Personal <b>connections</b> are vital to getting things done in China. To achieve good business relations it is important to sustain networking efforts over the long-term. When blocked by bureaucracy, it is often easier to use a personal contact or 'go through the back door' (zǒu hòumén 走后门).</p> <p>There are some irrelevant words as well, e.g.</p> <p><b>Bālùjūn</b> 八路军 or the <b>Eighth Route Army</b> was one of the Communist armies active in resisting the Japanese invaders before Liberation in 1949. The army gained a reputation for looking after the interests of the common people.</p> <p>Overall, however, this guide pays a lot of attention to important aspects of life and culture in modern China and can provide users with an easy culture reference.</p>
<p>Social survival guide</p>	<p>This section explains some social customs.</p> <p>It might prove especially useful for business people, who are another kind of potential user of this dictionary.</p>

After examining the outside matter of these two dictionaries, one can conclude that: *Concise*, as its name suggests, has a very neat and simple style, and there are few obvious mistakes. It still follows many of the traditional ideas on dictionary writing, however. The authors' conception of the potential users of the dictionary is still vague and abstract. *Beginner's*, however, narrows the profile of its potential users and comes up with many good ideas to serve them better. Its authors are more considerate and spend more time and effort on its outside matter, which provides users with an introduction to characters, a grammatical guide, cultural background, and some useful expressions. It also presents very good inserted inner texts which separate the information they provide into different categories, such as Age, Sports, clock, etc.. They are normally within a given article stretch.



Example 4.2

At the same time, as discussed above, it makes many careless and immature mistakes in contents and arrangements. Even so, its innovations and target-user oriented efforts represent a new trend in lexicography. Nowadays, the traditional idea of “the dictionary for all” can hardly meet the needs of the new generation. Lexicographers should narrow their focus to a specific group of target users and focus on specific functions when creating dictionaries.

## 4.2 The central text

### 4.2.1 Macrostructure

When it comes to the question of lemma arrangement within a dictionary, there are two main types of macrostructures: one which is “based on the expression side, i.e. the spelling of the lemmas, which means that these are arranged according to an alphabetical principle (ALPHABETICAL MACROSTRUCTURE),” and another one which is “based on the content side, i.e. the meaning of the lemmas, which means that these are arranged according to a systematic or thematic principle (SYSTEMATIC MACROSTRUCTURE)” (Svensén; 2009: 368). Most dictionaries, especially language learning dictionaries, choose to use an alphabetical macrostructure. There are two types of alphabetical macrostructures, namely strict-alphabetical macrostructure and non-strict-alphabetical macrostructure.

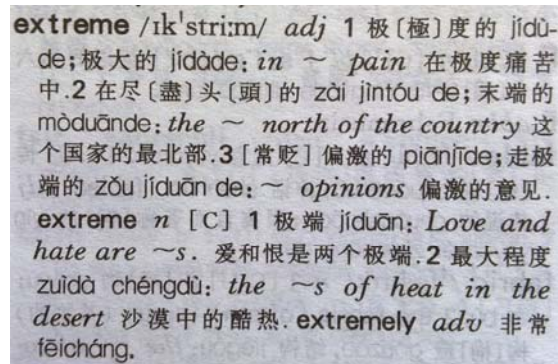
A strict-alphabetical macrostructure exists “when all the lemmas are sorted according to the access alphabet”. “A strict-alphabetical macrostructure without grouping is called a straight-alphabetical macrostructure (Example 4.3). In such a macrostructure, all the lemmas are equal, and each lemma appears at the extreme left of the column” (Svensén; 2009:371). Furthermore, “a strict-alphabetical macrostructure where grouping may occur, is called a NICHING or NESTING MACROSTRUCTURE.” (Example 4.4 & 4.5) (Svensén; 2009: 372)



Example4.3



Example 4.4



Example 4.5

There are two ways to arrange the sublemmas in niching macrostructure. One is the clustering method, as shown in Example 4.5, in which the sublemma “extremely” follows the examples of “extreme”. The other is the listing method shown in Example 4.4: each sublemma, such as 夕烟 Xiyān or 夕阳 xiāng, starts from a new line. [This illustrates the distinction between grouped and non-grouped lemmata]

Obviously, the clustering method may save space, while the listing method is clearer.

As Svensén explains, “non-strict-alphabetical macrostructure occurs only in combination with grouping---It is only the sublemmas that may deviate from the strict-alphabetical order; the order of the entrance lemmas is still a strict-alphabetical one” (Svensén; 2009: 374). When a user wants to find a sublemma in a dictionary with non-strict-alphabetical macrostructure, the user must first know the lemma that the sublemma is nested in, which is not easy for all users. Therefore, dictionaries with non-strict-alphabetical macrostructure are not as suitable for inexperienced users as a dictionary with strict-alphabetical macrostructure might be.

#### 4.2.1.1 Lemma selection and arrangement in *Concise*

Although the dictionary does not state the level of its target users, its stated vocabulary of “26,000 words and phrases” would meet the needs of the intermediate and high level learners. For students studying Chinese, the English-Chinese section is mainly used for text-production, while the Chinese-English section is for

text-reception. Both sections in *Concise* have comprehensive coverage of 26,000 words and phrases, which settle into 509 pages in the English-Chinese section and 607 pages in the Chinese-English section. On one hand, the equal numbers of words and phrases in both sections show the dictionary wants to strike a balance between both its text-production and text-reception functions. On the other hand, the fact that the Chinese-English section is longer by 100 pages indicates that its entries contain more detailed explanations or examples, which in turn may indicate that its authors considered its role to be more important than that of the English-Chinese section.

The lemma is alphabetically arranged in the English-Chinese section of *Concise* as in most of the English dictionaries. While in the Chinese-English section, it has some special arrangement compared with other Chinese dictionaries.

In most Chinese dictionaries, the characters are arranged in the order that they are according to a three step method: pinyin is the first step to consider, tone is the second and strokes are the third. When the characters have the same pinyin, they will be ordered by their tones (from first tone to fourth tone with neutral tone at the end). Characters with the same pinyin and tone will be ordered according to their stroke number. Characters with fewer strokes are listed before those with more strokes, as can be seen in the example below, taken from *The Contemporary Chinese Dictionary* (2002):



Example 4.6

The pronunciation and tones of the characters 夕, 兮, and 西 are all the same (xī), so their order of presentation is based on the number of strokes: 夕 has 3 strokes, 兮, 4 strokes, and 西, 5 strokes.

Only in the very rare case where the characters have the same pinyin, tone and strokes, will they be listed in the order of “the first stroke”. The order of first stroke in *The Contemporary Chinese Dictionary* (2002) is “horizontal line (一), vertical line (丨), left slash (丿), dot (丶)”.

In the front matter of the Chinese-English section of *Concise*, the three step method is not detailed. It only briefly explains in its “Users’ guide” that:

single-character entries are arranged in alphabetical order of pinyin romanization (i.e. hanyu pinyin). Characters identical in romanization and tone are arranged according to their first stroke, in the following order: 丶 dot, 一 horizontal, and 丨 vertical, 丿 left-falling.

However, from the following example (Example 4.7), one finds *Concise* neither follows the general rules given in *The Contemporary Chinese Dictionary*, nor does it follow the rules explained in its own Users’ Guide:



Example 4.7

The pronunciations and tones of the four characters above are the same “xī”. Therefore, they should be ordered according to their stroke number generally or according to the order of different strokes as mentioned in the Users’ Guide of *Concise*. The first character 曦 (20 strokes), however, has more strokes than those of 熹 (16) and 嘻 (15), which goes against the rule that characters with fewer strokes are listed before those with more strokes. It also does not follow the “丶 dot, 一 horizontal, | vertical, 丿 left-falling” rule for first-strokes, since the first stroke of 曦 is “| vertical” and the first stroke in 熹 is “一 horizontal”, which, according to the rule stated above, should mean that 熹 should be put before 曦.

Comparing example 4.6 and 4.7, one finds there is another difference between them. *The Contemporary Chinese Dictionary*, along with most other Chinese dictionaries, categorize a character according to its complete pinyin spelling. While the *Concise* uses the first letter of the pinyin to categorize, as shown in example 4.7, “Xx” is used as the title for the section containing words that begin with x and no subtitles, such as “xī” “xí” or “xiā” in *The Contemporary Chinese Dictionary*, is used in *Concise*.

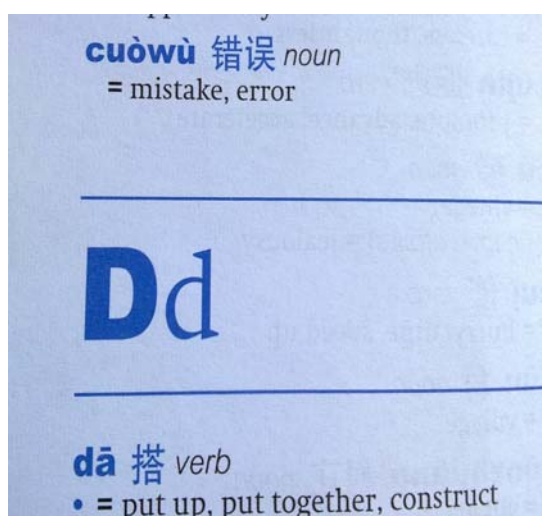
The entries in the Chinese-English section of *Concise* follow the format found in most Chinese dictionaries, as explained in the Users’ Guide of *The Contemporary Chinese Dictionary*: “the entries are classified into single-character and multi-character categories. Single-character entries are of a larger type than the rest of the text.

Immediately below most single-character entries are multi-character entries that begin

with the head character, listed in alphabetical order according to the pronunciation of the second character.” In example 4.7, 熹 is the single-character entry and appears in larger type, and the entry 熹微 follows in smaller type.

#### 4.2.1.2 Lemma arrangement in *Beginner's*

There are some similarities between *Beginner's* and *Concise*, such as that both organize words by the first letter of the pinyin spelling. Also, none of them starts a new page for words with new first letter:



Example 4.9 *Beginner's*



Example 4.10 *Concise*

**cū 粗** *adjective*  
 • = thick  
 • = careless, negligent  
**cūxīn 粗心** *adjective*  
 = careless, thoughtless

Example 4.11

There are also several differences between *Beginner's* and *Concise*. Firstly, in *Beginner's*, both pinyin and characters are in blue and are of a similar size (dā 搭 in Example 4.9). In *Beginner's*, pinyin also appears in front of the characters, while in *Concise*, the pinyin is smaller than the characters, as can be seen in the case of 捌(bā) in Example 4.10, where the character is put in front of the pinyin. Secondly, in *Beginner's*, the unit of each entry is a word, e.g. “cū 粗” and “cūxīn 粗心” (Example



4.11) are both listed as separate entries in the dictionary. In *Concise*, however, the unit of the entry is the characters, as can be seen in Example 4.10 in the case of “拗 ào” and “拗口 àokǒu”, where the single character 拗 is the main entry, while the word 拗口 is the subentry.

Compared with the more traditional article arrangement in *Concise*, there are two innovative changes in the article arrangement in *Beginner's*.

Firstly, *Beginner's* highlights the role of pinyin, which represents a good choice for a learners dictionary for a number of reasons:

One, as a Romanization system, pinyin is more accessible than characters for users whose mother tongue also uses the Roman alphabet. Two, for learners at the primary level of Chinese study, the acceptance of pronunciation usually goes further than that of the written form of the language. Highlighting pinyin shows recognition of the process of acquisition as experienced by Chinese learners at the primary level.

Therefore, this new way of arranging entries is reasonable and good for a beginner's dictionary. However, for a dictionary intended for intermediate and high level learners, the traditional way would be more helpful. As mentioned in Chapter two, pinyin is only a spelling sound system. The unit used for reading and writing in Chinese is the character. Gradually getting rid of pinyin and getting used to characters is one important step for Chinese learners.

Secondly, *Beginner's* makes an active attempt to use words instead of characters as guiding element of an article. As mentioned in Chapter two, characters, not words, are the written unit in Chinese. If one wishes to follow the example of the Chinese language, then characters should be used as the guiding elements of dictionary articles, as is done in most Chinese dictionaries. However, if the target users of a given dictionary are used to using a word as guiding element of an article, then the method employed by *Beginner's* would be easier for the users. How to balance the contradiction; either follow the habits of the user or insist on the characteristics of the language? Using characters as the guiding element seems like the better choice for

several reasons. When the character is used as the guiding element, the user can understand the formation of some words and also be made aware of the relationship between words and characters. For instance, when used as a morpheme, the character 工(gōng) can form many words. Each word formed with 工 has a meaning connected to “labor”, such as 工人(laboring person---worker) or 工具(laboring tool---tool). If learners learn the morpheme 工, they can easily learn a whole new group of words and enlarge their vocabulary. At the same time, it would be helpful to identify each entry (character) as either a word or morpheme. Otherwise, the user may treat morphemes as words and misuse them.

#### **4.2.1.3 Lemma selection in *Beginner's***

Since *Beginner's* only has 15, 000 words and phrases and 20,000 translations, it is possible to have a closer look at its lemma selection. There are 156 pages in the Chinese-English section and 280 pages in the English-Chinese section. As discussed above, for students of Chinese, the Chinese-English section functions more as a tool for text-reception, while the English-Chinese section is more focused on text-production. According to their different functions, each section has a different standard for lemma selection.

In the very concise Chinese-English section (156 pages) , some unpopular, infrequently used words can still be found, such as 碑, meaning “large stone table or stele used for commemoratives purposes, 纪念碑, meaning “commemorative monument”, 墓碑, or “tombstone”, 刺杀, or “assassinate”, 骨头架子, or “skeleton”, 髻, which is used when describing hair as curly or wavy, and 马克, or “(unit of German currency) mark”. ”Mark” 马克 represents especially strange choice, since it is has long been replaced by euro.

There are also some very popular, frequently used words missing from the Chinese-English section, such as 饼, which is a very popular Chinese cake, 可乐 (coke), 果汁(juice), etc. There are also some bad translations, some of which were already mentioned above, such as 过年, which is translated as “celebrate the New

Year”, whereas the New Year in question is actually Spring Festival, a fact which needs to be highlighted. In the front matter, the editor of *Beginner’s* writes: “The language used in examples and in sense indicators (or signposts to the correct translation) is carefully screened and reflects current English and Chinese as it is based on up-to-date corpus information.” However, all the problems mentioned above shed doubt on the idea of an up-to-date corpus.

From both sections, one can see that the words that have been included are not the same. The following are some categories of words that are popularly used and which have been included in the Chinese-English section, but which cannot be found in the English-Chinese section.

**Traditional festivals and dates:** 端午节(Dragon Boat Festival), 过年(celebrate the New Year),元宵(dumplings made of glutinous rice flour), 元宵节(Lantern Festival, the 15<sup>th</sup> of the first month of the lunar year), 正月(the first month of the lunar year), 中秋节(Mid-Autumn Festival or Moon Festival, which falls on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the 8<sup>th</sup> lunar month), 农历(the traditional Chinese lunar calendar).

**Philosophy:** 道教(Taoism), 孔子(Confucius).

**Culture:** 京剧(Beijing Opera), 功夫(Martial arts, kung-fu, skill), 师傅(master worker, teacher, instructor; a polite term of address to people who have skilled or specialized knowledge), 中药([as a drug or remedy] traditional Chinese medicine), 中医([as a field or department]) traditional Chinese medicine), 毛笔(writing brush), 名胜(famous site), 筷子(chopsticks).

**Language:** 汉字(character), 古文(classical Chinese).

**People:** 老百姓 (common people), 华侨 (overseas Chinese), 华人(Chinese person with non-Chinese nationality).

**Terms of Address:** 老大妈/老大爷 ( a “respectful address for an old woman or man”), 老太太 ([term of respect for an elderly woman]Madam old lady) , 老头儿 (rude word for an old man), 嫂子(sister in law), 妹妹(younger sister).

**Neologisms:** 补习 (take lessons after school or work), 补课 (make up for a missing lesson), 公费 (at public/state expense), 公费旅行(travel at state expense), 人民币 (Renminbi), 外汇 (foreign currency), 独生女独生子(only daughter/son).

**Historical/Political words:** 成分(composition; one's class status or family background), 大陆(mainland), 国民党(Kuomintang), 国营(state-operated), 同志 (comrade), 万岁(long live-!), 现代化(modernized, modernization), 走后门(verb1) get in by the back door,2) do business or other things by means of backdoor dealings), 共产党(communist party), 共产主义(communism).

**Foods:** 白菜 (Chinese cabbage), 包子(steamed stuffed bun), 饺子(boiled dumpling filled with meat and vegetables), 茶点 (tea and snacks, tea and biscuits), 臭鸡蛋 (rotten egg), 臭豆腐(fermented bean curd), 豆腐(bean curd, tofu), 酱油(soy sauce, soya souce), 卤鸭 (pot-stewed duck), 萝卜(turnip radish), 馒头(steamed bun), 竹子(bamboo).

**Administrative divisions:** 省 (province), 联合国 (the United Nations).

Compared with the Chinese-English side, the English-Chinese side has a bigger vocabulary. What follows is a list of the words in the English-Chinese side which cannot be found in the Chinese-English side:

**Foods and drinks:** almond; apricot; bacon; beet (beetroot); blackcurrants; brandy; carrot; celery; cheese; chewing gum; chestnut; cabbage; gooseberry; grapefruit; grape; ham, hamburger, hazelnut; ice cream; jam; lemonade; lettuce; loaf; lobster; marmalade; mashed potatoes; mineral water; mushroom, mussel, nut; mustard; olive; olive oil; omelette; onion; orange; oyster; pancake; pasta; pastry; pea; peach; peanut; pear; pineapple; pine tree; pudding; rasher; raspberry, rib; salad; salmon; salt; sandwich; sardine; sauce; sausage; spinach; steak; strawberry; toast; toffee; veal; walnut; wine; yogurt.

**Fauna and flora:** badger; daffodil; daisy; deer; dolphin; donkey; flea; fly; germ; goose; gorilla; grasshopper; hamster; hedgehog; hen; kangaroo; kitten; leopard; lion;

monkey; mosquito; mouse; oak; octopus; otter; owl; ox; parrot; peacock; puppy; penguin; pig; pigeon; pony; rabbit; racehorse; rat; robin; rose; seagull; shark; snail; spider; tiger; trout; tuna; vanilla; wasp; wolf; worm; zebra.

**Sports and related words:** aerobics; amusement arcade; billiards; canoe; checkers; cricket; darts; fishing rod; golf; hockey; ice hockey; ice rink; ice-skate; ice-skating; jigsaw puzzle; judo; jogging; Karate; roller coaster; roller-skating; rowing, rugby; show jumping; skating; skydiving; snooker; surf.

**Musical instruments:** cello; clarinet; double bass; flute; harp; saxophone; violin.

**Countries, cities and organizations:** EU; EC; Brussels; London; Luxembourg; Mexico; Netherland; New Zealand; North America; Northern Ireland; Norway; Norwegian, Pakistan; Paris; Portugal; Portuguese; Russian; Scotland and Scottish; South Africa; South America; Spain; Spanish; Sweden; Swedish; Swiss; Switzerland.

**Others:** air hostess; bald; bangs; bark; barn; blister; blouse; bonnet; bow; braid; butcher; corkscrew; caravan; carnival; denim jacket; dressing gown; escalator; fancy dressing party; felt-tip pen; fireworks display; freckle; fringe; goddaughter; hairdryer; hairbrush; heatwave; hedge; hiccups; high rise block; hitchhike; hoof; horoscope; hovercraft; kerb; lawnmower; locker; maiden name; mole; MP(member of parliament); ponytail; pantyhose; pajamas; perspire; suntan oil; tramp.

Most words mentioned above, relate closely to Western culture and Westerner's daily lives. However, there are also some popular words which were not selected in the English-Chinese section, such as "Thanksgiving" (in American English) and "United Nations".

The imbalance between the two sections of the dictionary shows who the authors intend as their audience and how they intend the dictionary to be used. When it comes to text-reception, the relatively small vocabulary of the Chinese-English section would only be useful for reading very basic texts in Chinese, while the relatively large vocabulary contained in the English-Chinese section, which normally serves for

text-production, can be used to help the learners describe their daily lives. Therefore, we can conclude that the *Beginner's* focuses more on text-production than text-reception. Normally the best text-reception dictionaries are the ones with a big vocabulary. However, the space limitations on a small and compact dictionary such as *Beginner's* make it difficult to include a large vocabulary. Therefore, it is a good strategy to concentrate on text-production, which is after all the activity for which the target audience will use the dictionary the most.

#### **4.2.2 Microstructure**

The microstructure is an ordering structure according to which the entries in a dictionary article are ordered. Therefore, “decisions in designing the microstructure relate to the separate pieces which go to make up the dictionary entries and their relationship one to another” (Atkins & Rundell, 2008). The basic structure of a dictionary article consist of monosemous lemmata. In practice, few dictionary articles contain words representing monosemous lemmata. However, they are theoretically useful, because they are the base of polysemous lemma. After analyzing the microstructure on the level of monosemous lemmata, it will be easier to discuss the microstructure on the polysemous lemma level.

##### **4.2.2.1 Microstructure of monosemous lemmata**

There are generally at least four components in an article: lemma section, formal section, semantic-pragmatic section and contextual section. The lemma section “is the representative of the lemma sign and is the most common address of the indications appearing in the entry.” (Svensén; 2009: 345) Bold type, differing typeface or larger type size are typical indicators of the lemma. “The formal section includes-besides the information about spelling, word division, etc., that has already been conveyed by the lemma-information about pronunciation, morphology and part-of-speech membership. To the extent that pronunciation is shown by means of a separate indication, this usually follows directly after the lemma” (Svensén; 2009: 346). The semantic-pragmatic section is the section in which “meaning is specified by means of

several synonyms (in monolingual dictionaries) or equivalents (in bilingual dictionaries) that are semantically equal...” (Svensén; 2009: 346). Svensén also notes that such semantically equal synonyms are often separated by commas, while “Different shades of meaning (however, still within the borderlines of monosemy) are separated by a semicolon” (Svensén; 2009: 346). Furthermore, “In monolingual dictionaries, the contextual section mostly includes idioms presented as defined examples, in bilingual dictionaries, it includes primarily constructions, collocations and idioms presented as translated examples” (Svensén; 2009: 347).

Another way of analyzing an article is to separate it into two major components, namely the comment on form and the comment on semantics. The comment on form includes the orthographic representation (including spelling variants) of the lemma and conveys morphological and grammatical information as well as information on the pronunciation of the lemma. (Gouws; 2001:69) The comment on semantics forms a separate component of the article and displays a high density of data. The nature and extent of the comment on semantics is determined by the type of dictionary. Gouws states that the comment on semantics component contains all the entries reflecting all the various aspects of the meaning of the lemma as well as pragmatic values of the lemma (2001:70)

#### **4.2.2.2 Microstructure in polysemous lemmata and comments on microstructure of *Beginner's* and *Concise***

The microstructure of polysemous lemmata is based on the microstructure of monosemous lemmata. However, the former is more complicated because “the entry has been divided into senses and the senses placed in a certain order” (Svensén; 2009: 350). The senses are usually indicated by Arabic numbers. They may follow directly one after the other or each sense may get its own new paragraph. In these entries, when “some of the information is presented outside the numbered senses, between the lemma and the first sense” (Svensén; 2009:350), it is referred to as “extrapositioning”.

However, extrapositioning cannot be used if each numbered sense has all its own specific information presented under it, with no other outside information included.

#### **4.2.2.2.1 Positioning of defined/translated examples**

When it comes to the positioning of examples, there are three types of microstructure, namely integrated microstructure, unintegrated microstructure, and partially integrated microstructure. If every example included in the article is assigned to an individual sense of the lemma and positioned immediately after the specific paraphrase of meaning or translation equivalent, the article has an integrated microstructure, and if all the examples are put at the end of the article but with a clear indication of the address of each example, it has an unintegrated microstructure. Unintegrated microstructure is not suitable for learner's dictionaries, because it may waste the users' time by forcing them to search through all the examples to get the information they need. Partially integrated microstructure is very similar to integrated microstructure, except for the fact that "only those cases that are considered to be 'safe' are assigned to their respective senses, whereas those for which it is hard to find a place are brought together into a 'residual' section" (Svensén; 2009: 353). Partially integrated microstructure can be used in dictionaries with long articles and complicated structures; it also makes the lexicographer's job easier thanks to its more flexible rules. The advantage of the integrated microstructure is that it is placed immediately after the item giving the paraphrase of meaning or translation equivalent. There is a direct addressing relation between example sentence and paraphrase of meaning/translation equivalent. The weakness of the positioning, however, is that "it is not always obvious which sense of the lemma a certain example should be considered to represent" (Svensén; 2009:354). [cf. Wiegand 1996.] Even so, for dictionaries with short articles and simple structures, an integrated microstructure may function well. Both *Beginner's* and *Concise* adapt an integrated microstructure:



**búguò 不过**

1 *conjunction*

= but, however

dàxiǎo kěyǐ, búguò yánsè bù xíng 大小可以, 不过颜色不行 = the size is fine, but the colour won't do

2 *adverb*

= only, merely

tā búguò shì ge háizi 他不过是个孩子 = he's only a child

3 *superlative emphatic*

zài [hǎo | jiǎndān | xìngyùn] búguò le 再 [好 | 简单 | 幸运] 不过了 = couldn't be [better | simpler | luckier]

**benefit** /'benifit/ *n* 1 (a) [sing, U] 利益 lì-yì; 好处 [處] hǎochù; 帮 [幫] 助 bāngzhù: *have the ~ of a good education* 从良好教育获得的好处. (b) [C] 恩惠 ēnhuì; 益处 yìchù: *the ~s of modern medicine* 现代医学的恩惠. 2 [U, C] 补 [補] 助费 bǔzhùfèi; 救济 [濟] 金 jiùjìjīn: *sickness ~ 疾病补助费*. 3 [习语] *for sb's benefit* 为 [爲] 了帮助某人 wèile bāngzhù mǒurén. *give sb the benefit of the 'doubt* 在证 [證] 据 [據] 不足的情况下, 对某人的嫌疑作善意的解释 zài zhèngjù bùzú de qíngkuàng xià, duì mǒurén de xiányí zuò shànyìde jiěshì. **benefit** *v* 1 [T] 有益于 yǒuyì yú. 2 [I] 得益 déyì; 得到好处 [處] dédào hǎochù.

Example 4.12 *Beginner's*

Example 4.13 *Concise*.

When arranging collocations, an individual numbered sense is used for collocations in *Concise*, for example, “for sb’s benefit” (Example 4.13). In *Beginner's*, collocations, which are included as “subsenses”. For example, “clever at” (Example 4.1) can be found under the entry for “clever” with smaller typeface, but it, like “clever” is distinguished from the rest of the entry by the fact that it is printed in blue:

**clever** *adjective*

= cōngmíng 聪明

she is a clever girl = tā shì yíge cōngmíng de gūniang 她是一个聪明的姑娘

**clever at** = shàncháng 擅长

to be clever at mathematics = shàncháng shùxué 擅长数学

Example 4.14

4.2.2.2.2 Order of senses

The ordering of senses is dependent upon practical and theoretical factors such as the linguistic theory being used and the needs and level of the target users. Senses can be ordered in four different ways, namely historical order of senses, logical order of senses, hierarchical order of senses and frequency-based order of senses. In practice, the historical order of sense and the frequency-based order of sense are more practical

and more widely adopted than the other two. Historical order of sense is traditionally used in diachronic dictionaries. It is very helpful for people who are interested in word origins, but for users who have no such interest, it is not helpful at all.

Furthermore, it is frequently not feasible to use historical order of sense, “as it is often impossible to decide whether or not a certain sense is older than another” (Svensén; 2009: 363). The decision of whether or not to use historical order of sense now often depends on the type of dictionary being created. Frequency-based order of sense is chosen mainly for its practical utility for the majority of dictionary readers. Since the advent of the computer corpus, frequency-based order of sense has gotten easier to perform. It is more helpful than historical order of sense for language learners, especially for second language learners.

In a learner’s dictionary, the order of senses should also closely adhere to the order in which concepts are generally introduced in language classes. In the following examples, the first sense of “there” in *Concise* is the adverbial one, while in *Beginner’s*, the first sense introduces the “there be” pattern. In the teaching process, the “there be” pattern is more important than other usages of “there”, and normally appears in the beginning of the textbook, which means that the entry found in *Beginner’s* would be the more useful one for learners.

**there**<sup>1</sup> /ðeə(r)/ *adv* 1 在那里〔裏〕 zài nàlǐ;  
往那里 wǎng nàlǐ: *We’ll soon be ~*. 不久我  
们就去那里. 2 在那点〔點〕上 zài nàdiǎn shang;  
在那个〔個〕方面 zài nàge fāngmiàn: *Don’t*

Example 4.15

**there**

**1** pronoun

- (when followed by the verb to be) =  
yǒu 有

! Note that the negative form of yǒu 有 is méi yǒu 没有.

there is a problem = yǒu yíge wèntí  
有一个问题

there aren't any shops = méi yǒu  
rènhé shāngdiàn 没有任何商店

- (when used with verbs like to exist,  
to appear, etc.)

! Note that in this case, there is not translated.

there exist many problems = cúnzài  
hěn duō wèntí 存在很多问题

there appears some hope =  
chūxiànle yìxiē xīwàng 出现了一些希望

**2** adverb

Example 4.16

#### 4.2.2.2.3 Study of the microstructure of the Chinese-English sections in Concise and Beginner's

##### 4.2.2.2.3.1 Parts of speech

If a lemma represents several parts of speech, normally each part of speech section is introduced by a special structure indicator in the form of a section mark. The section marks for parts of speech are often given in bold-type Roman numbers or capital letters. Some dictionaries may start a new paragraph for each new section, as *Beginner's* does.

In Chapter two, we discussed the difficulties that present themselves when attempting to distinguish between a word and a word phrase or when categorizing the parts of speech in Chinese. These characteristics of Chinese really puzzle lexicographers in the process of compiling a dictionary. “不好意思” in *Beginner's* and in *Concise*:

**bù hǎoyìsi 不好意思** *adjective*  
= feel embarrassed, be ill at ease, find embarrassing

不好意思 *bù hǎoyìsi* 1 feel bashful; be ill at ease 2 find it embarrassing (to do sth.): ~再提要求 hesitate to make another request

Example 4.17 *Beginner's*

Example 4.18 *Concise*

“不好意思” is treated as an adjective in *Beginner's*. In *Concise*, it is also treated as a word. Grammatically, “不好意思” should be a word phrase, because it can be separated into two words: “不” and “好意思”. According to *The Contemporary Chinese Dictionary*, “不好意思” can also be used as an expression for when you “find it inappropriate or embarrassing to do sth”.

#### 4.2.2.2.3.2 Character and word

Most Chinese dictionaries use the following format:

**伯** bó (名) 1 father's elder brother; uncle 2 the eldest of brothers 3 earl; count  
伯父 bófù (名) father's elder brother; uncle  
伯爵 bójué (名) earl; count: ~夫人 countess  
伯母 bómǔ (名) aunt; wife of father's elder brother

Example 4.19

Single-character entries are larger than the rest of the text. Multi-character entries that begin with the head character are listed underneath. As discussed in Chapter two, a character can be a morpheme or a word, or it may be a word in Classical Chinese but just a morpheme in Modern Chinese, e.g. the character 伯, which is a word in Classical Chinese but not in Modern Chinese. In Modern Chinese, 伯 can not appear alone, but must be attached to other characters, as it is in the word “伯伯” or “伯父”, which mean “father's elder brother”, or “伯爵”, meaning “earl; count”. It is very confusing for the users if there is nothing in a dictionary to indicate the fact that this character works in this way. With the help of the entry found in Example 4.19 above, it would be easy to incorrectly translate “he is my father's elder brother” into:

“他是我伯。” ×

“他是我伯伯。” √

This problem is solved in *Beginner's* because words, not characters, are used as the guiding elements of articles. Hence, there is no article with for “伯” by itself as guiding element, only an article that includes both “伯父” as well as “伯伯” (see Example 4.20 below).

**bófù** 伯父, **bóbo** 伯伯 *noun*  
= father's elder brother, uncle

Example 4.20

However, this article presents another possible source of confusion for learners: what's the difference between “伯父” and “伯伯”? How to deal with synonyms? This problem is discussed in the next chapter: Equivalence in Dictionaries.

## **5. CHAPTER FIVE: EQUIVALENCE IN DICTIONARIES**

If language were simply a nomenclature for a set of universal concepts, it would be easy to translate from one language to another. One would simply replace the French name for a concept with the English name. If language were like this, the task of learning a new language would also be much easier than it is. But anyone who has attempted either of these tasks has acquired, alas, a vast amount of direct proof that languages are not nomenclatures, that the concepts of one language may differ radically from those of another. Each language articulates or organizes the world differently. Languages do not simply name existing categories, they articulate their own.

(Culler; 1976:21-2)

As Culler succinctly points out, finding translational equivalents is not as easy as it might first appear. Many beginning language learners think that they can simply replace the word they know in one language for a given concept with a word for the same concept in a foreign language and come up with a correct and understandable translation. Unfortunately, the concept of equivalence is much more complicated than that.

Equivalence, one of the core concepts in translation studies, plays an important role in the field of bilingual dictionary creation. As Hartmann (2007:27) said, a bilingual dictionary can be regarded “as the result of many separate equivalence acts performed by the lexicographer”.

### **5.1 Equivalence in translation studies and lexicography**

#### **5.1.1 Equivalence in translation studies**

What is meant by “equivalence” depends on which approach one takes to translation studies. In Nida and Newmark’s linguistic approach, equivalence on the semantic and lexical level is emphasized. Followers of this approach try to find the best ways to use

phonemes, morphemes, and words to transfer all possible elements from SL (Source Language) to TL (Target Language). As Newmark puts it, a good translation is expected to be “as literally accurate as possible” (Newmark; 1991:111).

In the textlinguistic approach, “communicative equivalence” or “text equivalence” is pursued. To achieve equivalence, the first step is to fully understand and analyze the features of the ST (source text). Not only are words and sentences considered, but also all aspects of the ST, such as the source culture and literary genre. Keeping such details in mind, translators need to restructure the meaning and the communicative information into the TT (target text) using the TL. The aim of communication is to ensure equivalence on the communicative level.

Translating is an act (or a process) which is performed (or occurs) over and across systemic borders. In the widest of its possible senses it is a series of operations, or procedures, whereby one semiotic entity, which is a constituent (element) of a certain cultural (sub)system, is transformed into another semiotic entity, which forms at least a potential element of another cultural (sub)system, providing that some informational core is retained ‘invariant under transformation’, and on its basis a relationship known as ‘equivalence’ is established between the resultant and initial entities. (Toury; 1986:)

In the Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) approach, “equivalence is a consequence of translation, not its precondition” (Hermans; 1994)

Functionalist approaches go even further. They do not see the concept of equivalence as the most translation process and replace it with the concept of the *skopos*, or purpose, of a text. Nord also included the concept of “loyalty” in her version of the *skopos* theory. “Loyalty is a category referring to a social relationship between people” (Nord; 2001) and should be distinguished from faithfulness which is a relationship between texts.

### **5.1.2 Equivalence in lexicography**

### 5.1.2.1 The idea of equivalence in lexicography

The concept of “equivalence” has several different variations in the field of lexicography just as it does in the field of translation studies. In traditional lexicography, “words are abstracted, seen in isolation, shorn of all their derivational, inflectional and collocational context, and taken out of their real-life discourse setting. Lexical equivalence remains static and deals with correspondence between words at stipulated structural levels of ranks” (Hartmann; 2007:16). Most contemporary lexicographers agree that “the notion of interlingual equivalence is not a fixed, single correspondence relation, but a shifting, directional process based on a number of communicative code-switching operations” (Hartmann; 2007:29). “Lexical equivalence is a relative, fluid and relational concept: it does not exist until it has been established as a result of a bilingual conscious act” (Hartmann; 2007:16). “According to Snell-Hornby (1983:247), the compiler of a bilingual dictionary should rely ‘not on the illusion of equivalence among lexemes, but on the awareness that partial coverage and non-equivalence are a reality of interlingual comparison’ ” (Hartmann; 2007:15). In both translation studies and lexicography, the concept of equivalence should follow this trend: it does not function strictly on the lexical level, but works on a more practical and communicative level.

No matter how deeply lexicographers delve into the theoretical interpretation of the concept of equivalence, the fact remains that there is still a big difference between translating for dictionaries and normal text translation. Usually, text translation deals with expressions in context (context-sensitive), while dictionary translation only deals with entries which are out of the context (context-free). Dictionary users may have no idea of the meaning of any of the foreign words offered to them as a translation; therefore, the translation should be “the most suitable equivalent to appear as the ‘direct translation’ of the headword in the entry. By ‘most suitable’ we really mean ‘safest’. The direct translation must be as near context-free as possible.” (Atkin& Rundell; 2008; 205) How to find the “safest” equivalence for each “context-free” unit from the static situation is the biggest challenge for lexicographers.



### 5.1.2.2 Types of equivalence

In bilingual dictionaries, equivalence between the source language and the target language is the most important consideration. Svensén (2009: 253) said: “the purpose of the bilingual dictionary is to provide lexical items in one language (the SOURCE LANGUAGE) with counterparts (EQUIVALENTS) in another language (THE TARGET LANGUAGE) that are as near as possible with regard to meaning and usage”. Lexicographers separate equivalence into several different categories. Equivalence of meaning is called semantic equivalence, while equivalence of usage is called pragmatic equivalence. Denotative equivalence concerns objective and cognitive aspects of a text, while connotative equivalence concerns the subjective and emotive aspects of a reader’s experience of a text. It is also worth noting the difference between translational equivalence and explanatory equivalence: a “translational equivalent is one that can be inserted in running target-language text”. Translational equivalents “have a higher degree of insertability but a lesser degree of explanatory power, whereas explanatory equivalents have a higher degree of explanatory power but a lesser degree of insertability. Obviously, the ideal is an insertable equivalent having at the same time a high degree of explanatory power” (Svensén; 2009: 257).

Lexicographers usually distinguish between three main types of equivalence: “full equivalence, partial equivalence and zero equivalence” (Svensén; 2009: 257). Full equivalence is a one-to-one equivalent relation of congruence in which the source language and target language items are equivalent on the semantic level. “Full equivalence occurs primarily in certain types of terminology, especially in science and technology, where concepts are largely formed on an international basis and in many cases are even standardized” (Svensén; 2009: 258). One example of full equivalence is the translation of “computer” as 电脑 *diàn nǎo*. Words that fall under the category of full equivalence are the easiest group of words for both lexicographer and user.

Partial equivalence means a one to more than one equivalent relation of divergence. It is the most common equivalence in most dictionaries. As Hartmann (2007:16) says: “Most equivalents are not one-to-one, one-to-two, or even one-to-many, but many-to-many”. There are two levels of partial equivalence: one on the semantic level and one on the lexical level. “Lexical divergence is a one to more than one relation between source and target language where the target language items represent the same polysemous sense of the source language item.” (Gouws; 2009) Therefore, when lexical divergence occurs, the target language items are synonyms, as are the English equivalents “road; street; avenue” given for “马路mǎlù”. The Chinese equivalents “路lù; 道路dàolù公路; gōnglù”, which are given for “road”, are also synonyms. Such lists of synonyms can be very confusing for language learners and translators when they are using a dictionary. If the dictionary does not give some supporting information on these synonyms, one can hardly make the proper choice. Semantic divergence, on the other hand, means “the translation equivalents represent different polysemous senses of the lemma” (Gouws; 2009). Unfortunately, “without additional, complementing entries the user will not be able to choose the correct translation equivalent” (Gouws; 2009). One such case is the character“神”, which can have many different meanings:

“god; deity; divinity: 鬼~ gods and ghosts; supernatural; magical;  
 miraculous: 投手~sharpshooter (in basketball);a superb shooter or scorer; spirit;  
 mind: ~耗 take up one’s energy/~双目有 have a pair of piercing eyes; expression;  
 look: 眼神yǎnshén; dial. Smart; clever: ! ~这孩子真 What a smart child!  
 /! 了~这家伙 This fellow is incredible.

According to Gouws, “Zero equivalence occurs where the target language has no lexical item as an equivalent for the source language item. Zero equivalence often prevails due to the existence of lexical gaps” (Gouws; 2009). There are two types of lexical gaps: linguistic gaps and referential gaps. Linguistic gaps occur when the meanings or the things represented by words exist in the target world, but the equivalent words do not exist. For instance, there is no word in Chinese for “puppy”,

but it can be translated into a phrase 小狗崽 [small dog) baby (]. Referential gaps occur when the equivalent meaning or thing cannot be found in the target context. The target language users simply do not know the thing to which the source language item refers. Most of these words are culturally bound. In many instances a brief explanation of meaning is given as a surrogate equivalent after the pronunciation equivalent. For example, 箫 xiāo is translated into “xiao” together with the explanation “a vertical bamboo flute”. Sometimes, however, some dictionaries only translate the words by its pronunciation. For example 禅宗 chánzōng is translated as “the chan sect; dhyana; Zen”. With no additional explanation, such a translation may be used in translation or for text-production, but cannot be used for text reception or to satisfy a cognitive function. Some idioms also lead to zero equivalence.

## 5.2 Equivalence in Chinese learner’s dictionaries

Chinese learner’s dictionaries have two functions, namely text-reception and text-production. . In second language study, text-reception is relatively easier, because words and grammatical rules are not the only things that help readers to understand a text. The users’ knowledge about the content of the text and their logical reasoning ability will also be helpful for their reception of the text. One does not need to know every single word included in a given text to understand the whole text.

Text-production, on the other hand, is very difficult for second language learners. Svensén (2009: 267) says that, “the users of an L1-L2 dictionary proceed from the known to the unknown, whereas the users of an L2-L1 dictionary proceed from the unknown to the known”. Text-reception mirrors the function of L2-L1 dictionaries and ends with the “known”. However, text-production mirrors the function of L1-L2 dictionaries and ends with the “unknown”. How to help users deal with the “unknown” is the big challenge for lexicographers of a learner’s dictionary.

Common questions users have while using a dictionary for text-production, include: How to pick up an equivalent word from all the synonyms? How to use the word in a grammatical way? How to fit the word into the sentence and context? Lexicographers

should try to find ways to help users answer these questions within the limits of the information that a dictionary can provide.

As mentioned in Chapter two, the Chinese language is very different from English on all levels. This difference makes achieving equivalence between these two languages even harder.

### **5.3 Comments on equivalence problems in *Concise* and *Beginner's***

#### **5.3.1 Equivalence on the lexical level**

“Every word (lexical unit) has---something that is individual, that makes it different from any other word. And it is just the lexical meaning which is the most outstanding individual property of the word” (Zgusta; 1971:67).

There are three main aspects to consider when it comes to dealing with equivalence between Chinese and English on the lexical level. Firstly, how to deal with zero equivalence words? Secondly, how to deal with synonyms and other problems related to partial equivalence? Thirdly, how to indicate stylistic equivalence between words?

##### **5.3.1.1 Zero equivalence words**

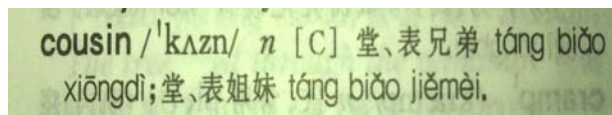
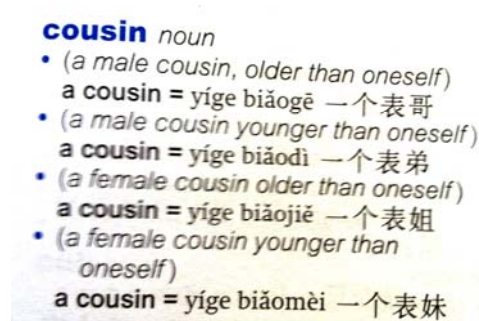
Due to the big linguistic and cultural differences between Chinese and English, there are many instances where a relation of zero equivalence exists between English and Chinese. Words for foods and some cultural words make up two important categories where zero equivalence often occurs. Some problems of zero equivalence are properly solved by explanatory translation, such as the translation “Beijing Opera” for “京剧” or “(as a drug or remedy) traditional Chinese medicine” for “中药”.

However, in *Beginner's*, some words, such as the word *cousin* (Example 5.1), do not have an appropriate equivalent translation. There is no single equivalent word for “cousin”, because the Chinese language uses different words according to a cousin’s age, gender and kinship relation. For instance, a cousin from someone’s mother’s side

who is older than him or her is called 表姐biǎojiě, as shown below in *Beginner's*.

Example 5.1 indicates different names according to different genders and ages.

However, it neglects the factor of blood kinship.



Example 5.1

Example 5.2

*Beginner's* only provides equivalent words for a cousin from the mother's side. A cousin who is from the father's side would be called correspondingly 堂(tang), 哥哥堂妹, 堂姐, 堂弟.

*Concise* indicates all the equivalent names for “cousin” (Example 5.2). However, its format is not as clear as *Beginner's*. Furthermore, since it does not give detailed explanations of each word, users with no prior knowledge of the Chinese way of thinking about family relationships would not be able to use the words properly, especially when it comes to text-production as well as text-reception.

Some zero equivalence words have conventionalized translations, such as “roller coaster”, which is translated into “过(pass)山(mountain)车(car)”, and “hot dog”, which is translated into 热(hot)狗(dog). However, *Beginner's* uses “游乐(playing)天(sky)车(car)” for “roller coaster” and “红肠(sausage)面包(bread)” for “hot dog”, which are comprehensible but inappropriate.

Zero equivalence words are normally not complicated in their usages; therefore, users only need dictionaries to explain them correctly and clearly.

### 5.3.1.2 Words with a relation of partial equivalence

Words with a relation of partial equivalence are the most difficult type of words for language learners, especially when they are doing text-production. It is easier for them to make mistakes when the meanings of a word in L1 are richer than its equivalent word in L2, as is the case with “and” and its partial equivalent word “和” (he). As a conjunction, “and” can connect words and sentences, while “和” only connects words (normally nouns or pronouns). Therefore, the following mistakes are very common among students:

I love my mother, and she loves me.

我 爱 我的 妈妈, 和 她 爱 我。×

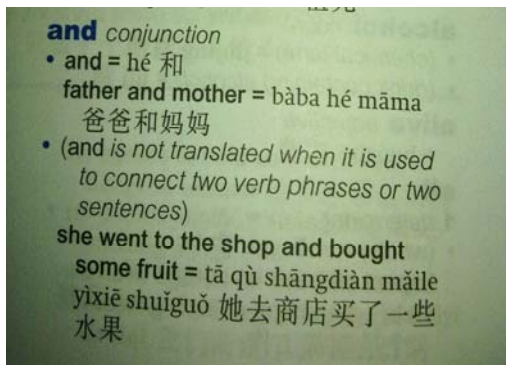
The correct translation is “我爱我的妈妈, 她也爱我。”. In this sentence, “也” replaces “和” to indicate the connection and relationship between the two sentences “I love my mother.” and “She loves me.” A similar situation exists when “and” connects adjectives, it cannot be translated into “和”, instead other words or expressions must be employed for translation. For example:

She is tall and thin.

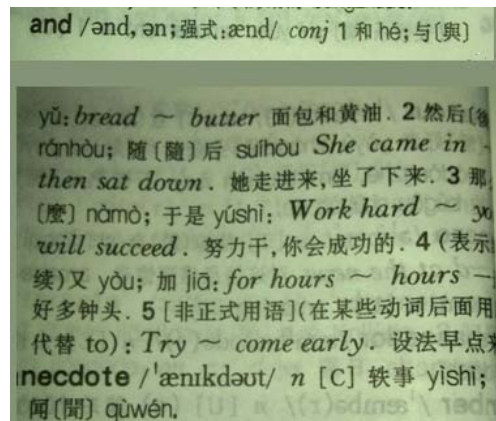
她 是 高 和 瘦。×

The correct translation is “她高高的, 瘦瘦的” or “她又高又瘦”.

The equivalent word for “and” in *Beginner’s* is given as “和”, followed by the explanation that it “is not translated when it is used to connect two verb phrases or two sentences” (Example 5.3). This, however, is an undue simplification of the differences between “和” and “and”. From the example above it is evident that users may easily make mistakes if they consult an article like this.



Example 5.3



Example 5.4

In *Concise*, more equivalents for “and” are given. (Example 5.4) However, upon closer inspection, one can find that the examples behind each equivalent translation do not really explain the equivalence, e.g. the second equivalence of “and” 随后, 然后 (“after”, “then”). In the following example “She came in and then sat down” (“她走进来, 坐了下来”, which can be translated literally as, “She walks in, sits down”, there is no 然后 or 随后 in the Chinese translation. Actually this usage of “and” is also explained in *Beginner’s* as a case when “and” “is not translated when it is used to connect two verb phrases” (Example 5.3). Compared to *Beginner’s*, the equivalences in *Concise* are very confusing for learners. While working on words like “and”, it is better for lexicographers to choose explanatory expressions accompanied by equivalent words if possible than to only use some equivalent words like “然后” and “随后. *Beginner’s* chooses a good way to introduce translation of “and”, however, it unfortunately does not compare the finer details of the differences between “and” and “和” in context. Therefore, it still does not convey the appropriate equivalence between these words. According to the analysis above, the entry “and” might be redesigned as follows:

1. when connecting noun and noun phrase, and=和
2. when “and” connects verb phrases and adverbs, it is not translated
3. when “and” connects sentences, other words like “也”(also) ,“还”(still), etc. will be used according to the relationship between two sentences

4. when “and” connects adjectives, other words or expressions like “又 adjective1 又 adjective2” will be used.

In addition, examples are required to illustrate each point.

Another example of a confusing partial equivalent word is “是” (be), which played a part in some of the most common mistakes made by students at Stellenbosch University. “是” is a word which is encountered very early by Chinese learners, because it appears in very basic Chinese sentences like:

I am Chinese.

我是 中国人。

I am a student at Stellenbosch University.

我是 Stellenbosch 大学的学生。

In the vocabulary of most Chinese textbooks, the equivalent expression given for 是 is “be” or “to be”. Once an equal sign is put between “是” and “be”, the following mistakes will accompany them from the first year to the third year:

I am sick

我是病。×

我病了。√

You are wrong.

你是很错。×

你错了。√

Stellenbosch University is beautiful.

Stellenbosch。是漂亮×

Stellenbosch 很漂亮。√



Both *Concise* and *Beginner's* provide rich explanations of “be”. Both of them use the explanatory method, because actually it is difficult to find a suitable equivalent for “be” in Chinese.

In *Concise* (Example 5.5), “be1” introduces how “be” is used for tense and voice, which is its grammatical usage. “Be2” provides some equivalence. “是” cannot be found among them. The third subentry in be2 addresses the problem of “是” and “be”. There are four example sentences under this subentry:

This is Mrs Khan.

这 是 卡恩夫人。

The film was very funny.

这部电影很 有趣。

Today is Monday.

今天是星期一。

I'll be 35 next year.

明年我 35 岁。

Two sentences use “是” to translate “to be”. Unfortunately, however, attempting to follow the above examples may confuse the learner even more about when “是” can be used to translate “be”, and would do little to help solve the common mistakes made by Stellenbosch students.

**be<sup>1</sup>** /bɪ/; 强式 bi:/ *aux v* (第一人称单数现在时 **am** /əm, m; 强式 æm/; 第三人称单数现在时 **is** /s, z; 强式 ɪz /; 第一称复数现在时, 第二人称单数和复数现在时, 第三人称复数现在时 **are**

/ə(r); 强式 a:(r)/; 第一人称单数过去时, 第三人称单数过去时 **was** /wəz; 强式 wɒz; US wʌz/; 第一人称复数过去时, 第二人称过去时, 第三人称复数过去时 **were** /wə(r); 强式 wɜ:(r)/; 现在分词 **being** /'bi:ɪŋ/; 过去分词 **been** / bi:n; (US 亦作) bi:n /) 1 [同现在分词连用, 构成各种进行时态]: *They are reading*. 他们正在阅读. 2 [同过去分词连用构成被动式]: *He was killed*. 他被弄死了. 3 [同动词不定式连用] (a) 必须 bixū: *You are to report to the police at 10 o'clock*. 你必须在 10 点钟向警察报告. (b) 打算 dāsuan: *The president is to visit London in May*. 总统打算在五月访问伦敦.

**be<sup>2</sup>** /bi/; 强式 bi:/ *v* [现在时和过去时 ⇔ BE<sup>1</sup>] [I] 1 (表示存在, 发生) 有 yǒu: *Is there a God?* 有上帝吗? 2 (表示地点): *The lamp is on the table*. 灯在桌子上. 3 (表示有特定的姓名、性质或情况): *This is Mrs Khan*. 这是卡恩夫人. *The film was very funny*. 这部电影很有趣. *Today is Monday*. 今天是星期一. *I'll be 35 next year*. 明年我 35 岁. 4 (表示所有): *The money's not yours*. 这钱不是你的. 5 成为[爲] chéngwéi: *He wants to be a teacher*. 他想成为一名教师. 6 (表示价值、数字等的等同): *That will be £80.95*. 那将会是 80.95 英镑. 7 去 qù; 访问 fǎngwèn: *Have you been to college today?* 你今天上学去了吗? 8 [习语] **be out in the open** ⇨ OPEN<sup>1</sup>.

Example 5.5

In *Beginner's*, one and a half pages are used to introduce the usage of “be” (Example 5.6).

**be**

**As an ordinary verb**

When **be** is used as a simple verb in a **subject + verb** sentence, it is generally translated as **shì** 是, which is not inflected for number, person, or tense. The tense is often indicated by the accompanying adverbial phrase in Chinese.

*she is a doctor* = tā **shì** dàifu 她是大夫  
*she was a doctor* = tā yíqián **shì** dàifu 她以前是大夫  
*we are doctors* = wǒmen **shì** dàifu 我们是大夫

- (No translation of **be**)
  - describing a physical or mental state  
*I am tired* = wǒ \_\_\_ lèi le 我 \_\_\_ 累了  
*they are very happy* = tāmen \_\_\_ hěn gāoxìng 他们 \_\_\_ 很高兴
  - indicating weather, age, location, cost  
*it is cold today* = jīntiān \_\_\_ hěn lěng 今天 \_\_\_ 很冷  
*my daughter is seven years old* = wǒ nǚ'ér \_\_\_ qī suì le 我女儿 \_\_\_ 七岁了  
*her mother was not in the garden* = tā māma bú \_\_\_ zài huāyuán li 她妈妈不 \_\_\_ 在花园里  
*this book is twelve pounds* = zhèběn shū \_\_\_ shí'èr yīngbàng 这本书 \_\_\_ 十二英镑
- (Required translation of **be**)
  - sentences expressing one's profession, identity, or nationality  
*he was a teacher* = tā yíqián **shì** yíge lǎoshī 他以前是一个老师  
*she is my younger sister* = tā **shì** wǒ mèimei 她是我妹妹  
*that is a hospital* = nà **shì** yíge yīyuàn 那是一个医院  
*my birthday is the 7th of May* = wǒde shēngri **shì** wúyuè qīhào 我的生日是五月七号  
*that year was 1948* = nà nián **shì** yījiūsìbā nián 那年是一九四八年  
*they are Chinese* = tāmen **shì** Zhōngguó rén 他们是中国人的
  - sentences expressing the colour or shape of something (in this use, **de** 的 is required at the end of the sentence)  
*her coat is black* = tāde dàyī **shì** hēi **de** 她的大衣是黑的  
*the earth is round* = dìqiú **shì** yuán **de** 地球是圆的
- (Optional translation of **be** in sentences expressing the time, day, date)  
*it is 10 o'clock* = xiànzài (**shì**) shí diǎn 现在(是)十点  
*it was Wednesday yesterday* = zuótiān (**shì**) xīngqī sān 昨天(是)星期三  
*it is the 26th of June today* = jīntiān (**shì**) liùyuè èrshíliù hào 今天(是)六月二十六号

**As an auxiliary verb in progressive tenses**

In English, **be** can be used in combination with another verb to form a progressive tense which allows us to express an idea of duration, of something happening over a period of time.

**The present**  
 = zhèngzài 正在, zài 在  
*I'm working* = wǒ zhèngzài gōngzuò 我正在工作  
*he's reading a newspaper* = tā zài kàn bào 他在看报

**The future**  
 = jiāngyào 将要, dāsuan 打算  
*we are going to Beijing next week* = wǒmen xiàge xīngqī jiāngyào qù Běijīng 我们下个星期将要去北京

**The past**  
 (dāngshí / nàshí) zhèngzài (当时/那时) 正在  
*she was watching TV* = tā dāngshí zhèngzài kàn diànshì 她当时正在看电视

**In short questions**  
 With questions like aren't you?, wasn't she?, is he?, a general Chinese translation is **shì bú shì?** 是不是?  
*you are a doctor, aren't you?* = nǐ shì yíge dàifu, **shì bú shì?** 你是一个大夫, 是不是?  
*he is not there, is he?* = tā bú zài nàr, **shì bú shì?** 他不在那儿, 是不是?

**In short answers**  
**Shì** 是 can be used as a short answer meaning **yes**.  
*'is she pretty?'—'yes, she is'* = 'tā hěn piàoliang ma?'—'shì, tā hěn piàoliang' '她很漂亮吗?'—'是, 她很漂亮'

Example 5.6

*Beginner's* identifies three ways that “be” can be used: as an ordinary verb, as an auxiliary verb in progressive tenses, and as a component of short questions and answers. In the first category, *Beginner's* gives a detailed explanation, giving students multiple examples under the categories of “no translation of be”, “required translation of be” and “optional translation of be”. The explanation is very helpful for Chinese learners and shows *Beginner's* authors’ understanding of the needs of their target users when it comes to translation and text-production. However, the explanation still has room for improvement.

Firstly, in the “as an ordinary verb” section, *Beginner's* states that “no translation of be” is required when “describing a physical or mental state” or “indicating weather, age, location, cost”. This explanation however, hardly covers all the categories that require “no translation of be”. Most grammar books used in China state that “no translation of be” is required when an adjective is used as the predicate in a sentence. There is another important detail about such sentences which *Beginner's* fails to explain, exemplified in the following sentences taken from Example 5.5.

They are very happy 他们很高兴。(Literal translation: They very happy.)

Grammatically incorrect: 他们高兴。(Literally: They are happy.)

It is cold today. 今天很冷。(Literal translation: Today very cold.)

Grammatically incorrect: 今天冷。(Literally: Today cold.)

None of the sentences use “是” for “be” and use “很” before the adjective. Actually “很” here does not exactly have its usual literal meaning of “very”. In the above-given examples, it is more like a grammatical word that must be used before an adjective when “an adjective is used as the predicate in a sentence”. This means that the adjective cannot be used alone as a predicate, but always has to be preceded and modified by an adverb or adverbs. It is a pity that this important rule is not mentioned in *Beginner's* at all.

There is yet another way to explain the usage of “是” in “to be” sentences: whether “是” needs to be included in the translation depends on the relationship between the subject and predicate that “是” connects. This fact can be seen in the sentence:

**I am a doctor.** (我是大夫。)

“I” and “doctor” are both people. Since these two parts of the sentence are equal to each other, “是” is needed to connect them. Consider the following sentence:

**I am tired.** (我很累。)

As “I” and “tired” are not the same thing, there is no “是” between them in Chinese. One may challenge this rule with the sentence “her coat is black” which is translated into “她的(her)大衣(coat) 是(is)黑 (black) 的”。One could justifiably wonder why 是 is needed between “coat” and “black”, which are not the same thing, as one is a garment and the other a colour. To explain this sentence’s grammar, we need to notice that there is an extra character “的” at the end of the sentence. The sentence is not translated as “她的大衣是黑”. “的” here indicates ownership, and “黑的” means “something black”. This sentence, then, actually means “是黑色的大衣她的大衣” (Her coat is black coat). Of course, the repetition of “大衣” makes the sentence sound clumsy, and hence it is not usually included. Including it, however, helps to show the equal relationship between the subject “her coat” and the real predicate “black coat”.

Secondly, the “as an auxiliary verb in progressive tenses” is also incomplete and may give users the wrong idea. The usage of “be” as an auxiliary verb is not limited to progressive tenses. It can also be used in the past perfect tense, but *Beginner’s* fails to mention this fact.

Since most functional or grammatical words are partially equivalent, there are many examples like 是 and 和. As these words are also the most important words for learners to study, lexicographers should first identify them and investigate the mistakes learners make and the difficulties they encounter when dealing with such

words. They should then use the information they obtain to find the best ways to deal with the question of their equivalence.

### 5.3.1.3 How to deal with synonyms and lemmas representing polysemous lexical items

Very often, several translational equivalents of one lemma are synonyms. How to pick the right synonym from amongst several possible equivalents is a big problem for users when using a dictionary for text-production. The distinction between full and partial synonyms plays an important role. There are several things to consider when attempting to distinguish between synonyms, including small differences in their exact meanings, collocations, whether the word is written or oral, differences in style and register, commendatory or derogatory.

For example:

**beautiful** *adjective*  
 = měilì 美丽, piàoliang 漂亮  
 a beautiful garden = yíge měilì de  
 huāyuán 一个美丽的花园  
 a beautiful girl = yíge piàoliang de  
 gūniang 一个漂亮的姑娘

Example 5.7

In *Beginner's*, 漂亮 and 美丽 are given as the equivalents of “beautiful” and they are also synonyms. There are two examples to illustrate the use of the words: “a beautiful garden” and “a beautiful girl”. If a user wants to translate “a beautiful heart” or “my beautiful grandma” with the help of the equivalents given in Example 5.7, which word should he/she choose? If he/she chooses “漂亮” for heart because “heart” and “grandma” seem closer to “girl” than to “garden”, he/she will have made the wrong choice. Actually 漂亮 and 美丽 can replace each other in the examples. It is also possible to say “一个漂亮的花园” (a beautiful garden) and “一个美丽的姑娘” (a

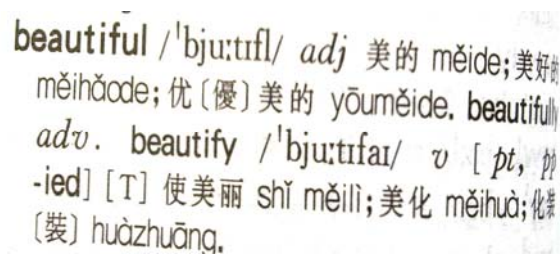
beautiful girl). Therefore, the examples the authors give are actually quite useless as they do nothing to indicate the differences between these two synonyms.

A good dictionary should assist the user in distinguishing between such synonyms. Since the English-Chinese side cannot solve the problem of 漂亮 and 美丽, let's look at the Chinese-English side:



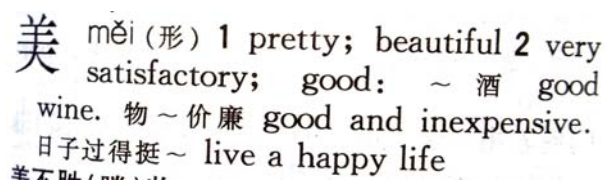
Example 5.8

From these two articles, one can see that 漂亮 has other equivalents, such as “pretty” and “good-looking”, which emphasize the appearance of people. Even with the help of this small clue, however, it is still not easy for users to make the right choice. We can continue to investigate this question by looking it up in *Concise*:



Example 5.9

The three equivalents for “beautiful” in *Concise* are “美好的, 美的, 优美”, all of which are different from the “美丽” and “漂亮” listed in *Beginner's*. *Concise* does not provide any example sentences for these words, making it more difficult to discover on how to choose a word from the synonyms on the English-Chinese side. Looking up each of these three words on the Chinese-English side, we find:



美好 měihǎo (形) (of abstract things)  
 happy; bright: ~的将来 bright future.  
 ~的日子 happy days

优美 yōuměi (形) graceful; fine; exquisite:  
 风景 ~. The scenery is beautiful and  
 exquisite.

Example 5.10

The first article lists both “beautiful” and “pretty” as its equivalents, which further complicates the problem of synonyms. In the second and third article, “beautiful” is not even given as an equivalent word. The dictionary seems to indicate that  $A=B$ , but  $B \neq A$ , which is rather illogical.

From the examples above, one can see that both dictionaries did not provide enough explanation and example sentences to allow users to make a distinction between synonymous equivalents. Such dictionaries have the potential to confuse users attempting to choose the right word for their text-production.

It is advisable to identify and illustrate the differences between synonyms when given as equivalent in an article. For the example of “beautiful”, instead of providing the equivalents “美丽” and “漂亮” with no further explanation in *Beginner's*, the article could be designed as:

**beautiful** *adjective*

1. in a general situation: 美丽&漂亮
2. regarding inner beauty: 美丽

e.g. She has a beautiful heart. 她有一颗美丽的心。

3. regarding physical beauty: 漂亮

Her handwriting is beautiful. 她字写得很漂亮。



Some synonyms also differ in style, so that the difference between them comes from the fact that one is more often used in written language while the other is more often used in oral language. This is true in the case of “伯伯” and “伯父” mentioned at the end of Chapter four, where the difference between the two words is that “伯伯” is normally used in oral language while “伯父” is used for written language. A similar example is the word 爸爸:

**bàba** 爸爸 *noun*  
= father, dad, papa

Example 5.11

A better translation for “爸爸” would be the more oral “papa”, and for “father”, the equivalent word should actually be the more formal “父亲”. There is nothing to indicate whether a word is “written” or “oral” in either the English-Chinese side or the Chinese-English side of *Beginner’s*. The dictionary’s compiler probably thought it is not necessary for beginners to know so much. However, such a view is somewhat misguided. Indicating oral and written use is a good way to distinguish synonyms. It is also important for language learners to develop good habits by learning to use words properly from the start of their study. In *Concise*, some words in the English-Chinese side include indications of whether they are written or oral, but such indications are not found on the Chinese-English side. For example:

**matrimony** /'mætrɪməni; US -məʊni/ *n*  
[U] [正式用语] 婚姻 hūnyīn; 婚姻生活 hūnyīn  
shēnghuó. **matrimonial** /ɪ'mætrɪ'məʊniəl/  
*adj.*

Example 5.12

In the above entry, [正式用语] means “formal language”.

Indications of whether the words are more commonly employed in written or spoken language are useful and necessary for text production, but are not necessarily required for text reception.

Another important way to distinguish between synonyms is to differentiate between commendatory and derogatory terms.

**ambition** *noun*

- (aspiration for success or advancement) = bàofù 抱负, xióngxīn 雄心
- (inordinate desire for power, fame) = yěxīn 野心, shēwàng 奢望

**ambition** /æm'biʃn/ *n* (a) [U] 雄心 xióngxīn; 野心 yěxīn. (b) [C] 抱负 bàofù: *achieve one's ~(s)* 实现自己的抱负. **ambitious** /-ʃəs/ *adj.*

Example 5.13

Example 5.14

The most important difference between “雄心” and “野心” is that “雄心” is commendatory and “野心” is derogatory. *Beginner's* uses a descriptive method to distinguish them, while *Concise* does not offer any explanation and, indeed, includes no indication of the difference whatsoever. Such an omission could cause the user to unwittingly make the wrong choice of words which might cause embarrassment.

From the examples above, one can see that both dictionaries still need to make many improvements when it comes to distinguishing between synonyms. Of the two, *Beginner's* is the better tool for Chinese text-production. In some articles, it tries to put synonyms or words representing polysemous lemmata into different situations, or uses examples and provides context for words.

Take, for example, the words “tough” in *Beginner's*:

**tough** *adjective*

- (strong, resilient, not brittle) = jiānrèn 坚韧, jiēshi 结实
- (sturdy) = jiànzhùàng 健壮
- (unyielding, as a policy, attitude, or view) = qiángyìng 强硬 (when describing a person) = wánqiáng 顽强, jiānqiáng 坚强
- (difficult) = kùnnán 困难, nánbàn 难办
- (rough)

a tough area = yíge hěn luàn de dìqū  
一个很乱的地区

Example 5.15

In Examples 5.15 explanatory words are added for each subentry, which shows that *Beginner's* has attempted to distinguish between synonyms as translation equivalents on some level, which is a very important step in the creation of a good learner's dictionary.

### 5.3.2 Grammatical equivalence

**Table 27.1** *Order of decreasing preference as regards types of information*

L1 dictionary (Barnhart 1962)	L2 dictionary (Béjoint 1981)	L2→L1 dictionary (Hartmann 1983)
Meaning	Meaning	Meaning
Spelling	Grammar	Grammar
Pronunciation	Synonyms	Use in context
Synonyms	Spelling	Spelling
Usage	Pronunciation	Synonyms
Etymology	Usage	Pronunciation
	Etymology	Etymology

Example 5.16

(Svensén; 2009)

One interesting way to find out how what information lexicographers consider important, and how their ideas about what to emphasize in dictionary articles has changed over time, is to compare the relative importance of various types of information in selected dictionaries over a period of several years, as Béjoint (1981) and Hartmann (1983) have done. The list in Example 5.16 above shows that, according to Béjoint and Hartmann's study of L2 dictionaries, in more recent dictionaries, grammar is second only to meaning in terms of importance. However, Béjoint later pointed out: "grammatical information is so little used because it offers too much resistance, is too hard to digest, with the consequence that the users do not think it worth while trying to utilize it. They do not want the look-up to take too much time, and they do not want to be interrupted by dictionary use. Lexicographers are thus facing a paradox: the information into which they put the greatest amount of work is hardly ever used" (Svensén; 2009: 466).

His opinion is certainly true with regards to text-reception, because reading needs to be done relatively quickly and no one wants to spend more time than is absolutely necessary consulting a dictionary while reading. However, for text-production, most users have to have the patience to read grammatical information if they wish to write a text as correctly as possible. Even so, a dictionary cannot act as a grammar book. It should deal with grammar under the basic principle of its dictionary functions. One can refer the inclusion of a mini-grammar as an outer text. By giving cross-references from the central list to the outer text this outer text becomes an integrated outer text.

As discussed in Chapter two, there is no inflectional morphology in Chinese, meaning that there is no number or gender. The tense is indicated by time adverbs and particles. Therefore, Chinese grammar is not a systematic unit, but is dependent on the specific use of each word. As discussed in Chapter two, the primary elements of pedagogical Chinese grammar underlined by Janet Zhiqun Xing include how to use grammatical words such as the contextual sentential markers 了(le) and 吧 (ba), as well as the discourse connectors 就(jiu) and 才(cai), etc.. A good test of the quality and effectiveness of a dictionary, therefore, may be to look up these words to see whether or not they achieve grammatical equivalence.

**ba 吧** particle

- (used to make a mild imperative sentence)  
**zámén zǒu ba 咱们走吧** = let's go  
 → **gěi wǒ shū ba 给我书吧** = give me the book  
 → **gěi nǐ ba 给你吧** = here, you take it

**chī bǐnggān ba? 吃饼干吧?** = how about having a biscuit?  
**bié gàosu tā ba 别告诉他吧** = better not tell him

- (used to imply agreement)  
**jiù zhèyàng ba 就这样吧** = OK, let's leave it like that
- (used to imply a degree of certainty)  
**tā jīntiān lái ba? 他今天来吧?** = he is coming today, isn't he?
- (to express unwillingness, reluctance, or hesitation)  
**nǐ quèshí xiǎng mǎi, nà nǐ jiù qù mǎi ba 你确实想买, 那你就去买吧** = if you really want to buy it, go and buy it then

**吧** ba (助) 1 [used at the end of a sentence to indicate suggestion, request or command]: 帮帮他~. Let's give him a hand. 2 [used at the end of a sentence to indicate agreement or approval]: 好~, 我答应你了. OK, I promise. 3 [used at the end of a sentence to indicate doubt or conjecture]: 他今天大概不来了~? He is not likely to come today, is he? 4 [used to indicate a pause suggesting a dilemma]: 走~, 不好, 不走~, 也不好. It's no good if we go; if we don't

Example 5.17

Example 5.118

When reading the article pertaining to the lemma sign 吧 in *Beginner's* (Example 5.17), a reader's first question may be, "what is a particle"? If he or she turns to the "glossary of grammatical terms" in the front matter of the dictionary in search of the response, there is no introductory discussion of "particle" to be found. Actually, there is no equivalent word or usage of 吧 in English. Therefore, the only way to explain it is by giving examples of how it works in sentences. Both *Beginner's* and *Concise* divides the usages of 吧 into four categories. These categories seem clear and scientific, but if we take a close look, they are not so practical. Take the last example in *Beginner's* 你确实想买, 那你就去买吧, ("If you really want to buy it, go and buy it then"), which has been included under the category of "to express unwillingness, reluctance, or hesitation", but which can also be understood as implying agreement, since the speaker seems to be encouraging the addressee to buy the item in question. To illustrate the equivalences of grammatical words, both dictionaries use explanations and examples. The explanations given in *Concise* also

indicate the correct positions of the words. Compared to *Beginner's*, its classifications are clearer and more accurate.

Another very complicated particle is 了 (le), which is used as a contextual sentential marker and tense indicator:

**le 了** particle ▶ See also **liǎo 了**.

- (indicating a past event)  
tā shàngge xīngqī qù le 他上个星期去了 = he went last week
- (indicating a completed action)  
tā zǒu le 他走了 = he has gone
- (indicating a change of situation or state)  
tā bìng le 他病了 = he's been taken ill  
'huǒchē lái le méiyǒu?' — 'méi lái'  
'火车来了没有?' — '没来' = 'has the train come?' — 'no, it hasn't'

! Note that le 了 is usually negated with méi 没, rather than with bù 不.

- (used with bù 不 to mean no longer, not any more)  
wǒ bù xiě le 我不写了 = I'm not writing (it) any more
- (used with búyào 不要 or bié 别 to stop someone from doing something)  
búyào jiǎng le 不要讲了 = stop talking about it, don't talk about it any more

Example 5.20 *Beginner's*

了 le (助) 1 [used after a verb or adjective to indicate completion of work or change]: 我们提前完成 ~ 任务. We have completed the task ahead of schedule. 水位已降低 ~ 两米. The water level has fallen by two metres. 2 [modal particle placed at the end of a sentence to indicate a change]: 他们现在是外交部的干部 ~. They are officials at the Foreign Ministry now. 3 [used at the end of a sentence to show a past event]: 上星期天, 他带孩子上动物园 ~. Last Sunday, he took his children to the zoo. 4 [used at the end of an imperative sentence to indicate advice]: 别说话 ~! Stop talking! 走 ~, 走 ~! Hurry up and let's go!  
see also liǎo

Example 5.21 *Concise*

Generally speaking, there are two possible positions of *le* in a sentence. It can appear either immediately after the verb or at the end of a sentence. *Concise* covers both usages, whilst *Beginner's* only chooses one: “end of a sentence”. Among all the grammatical words, “了” may be the most complicated one. In the authoritative Chinese dictionary, *Eight Hundred Modern Chinese Words*, more than eight pages are used to explain the usage of “了”. It is impossible for dictionaries like *Beginner's* and *Concise* to introduce “了” in such a detailed way. Therefore, these dictionaries need to choose their coverage of the word's explanation according to their target user and the functions they wish to perform. Considering the target users of *Beginner's*, another usage of 了, namely “after the main verb” actually the first usage explained in *Concise*

should have been included in *Beginner's* as well, because even a beginner student of Chinese needs to know this usage of 了. The sentence pattern“我喝了点酒。” (literal translation: I drink le a little bit wine) “I drank a little bit of wine” is very basic and needs to be understood at the beginners' level. There is a “note box” in *Beginner's*, which provides an explanation of the use of 了 in negations. Such “note boxes” can prove very useful to users as they provide a more comprehensive knowledge of grammatical words. “Note boxes” are a good way to introduce grammatical words. They can attract users' attention with their special format and can highlight some important points.

The last word to be discussed in this chapter is the adverb“才”:

### cái 才

#### 1 noun

= ability, talent, gift

#### 2 adverb

- = just

diànyǐng cái kāishǐ 电影才开始 =  
the film has just started

- = so late

nǐ zěnmé cái lái 你怎么才来 = why  
are you so late?

- = only

tā cái shí sān suì 他才十三岁 = he is  
only 13 years old

- = then and only then

wǒmen děi děng tā huílái yǐhòu, cái  
néng zǒu 我们得等他回来以后,  
才能走 = we have to wait until he  
comes back; then we can go

才 cái (名) 1 ability; talent; gift; 文~  
literary talent. 人~ a person of tal-  
ent. 2 people of a certain type: 蠢~  
fool. 奴~ flunkey

才(纔) cái (副) 1 [used before a  
verb to indicate that sth.  
has just happened or is rather late by  
general standards]: 我~喂了孩子. I've  
just fed the baby. 他四十岁~结婚. He

got married (as late as) when he was  
forty. 你怎么~来? Why are you so late?

2 [used in the main clause of a complex  
sentence to indicate that the condition  
stated in the subordinate clause is a pre-  
requisite]: 等客人都走了, 她~坐下来休息.  
She sat down for a rest only after all  
the guests had left. 只有用功, ~能通过考  
试. One must work hard if one wishes  
to pass the exam. 3 [used before a  
phrase to indicate that the number is  
small] only: 她~五岁. She is only five  
years old. 怎么~三本书? How come  
there are only three books? 4 [used for  
emphasis]: 你不知道~怪呢? It would be  
strange if you didn't know! 我~不去呢!  
I am (certainly) not going!

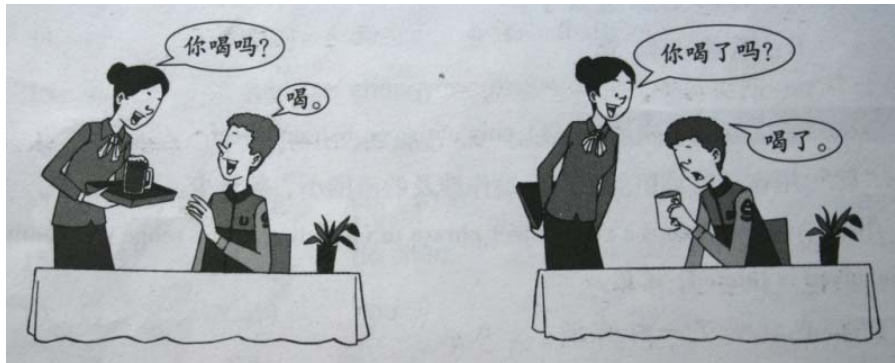
Example 5.22 *Beginner's*Example 5.23 *Concise*

It is very interesting that *Concise* and *Beginner's* choose different ways to deal with the adverb “才”. Except for item 3, there is no equivalent word for 才 in *Concise*. *Beginner's*, on the other hand, gives equivalents for each item. From the point of view of elementary level learners, the approach used in *Beginner's* looks easier. However, as discussed above, the explanatory method is more suitable for grammatical words, because providing an equivalent word in the target language may make it seem too easy to find an exact equivalent. Learners may think that they can simply plug the equivalent word into a sentence without considering the many nuances of meaning that such seemingly direct equivalences conceal. Unsurprisingly, providing equivalent words instead of grammatical explanations can cause many problems. One such problem is literal translation, which is a very common mistake found in students' assignments.

Some grammatical words in Chinese such as 吧 and 了 have no equivalent in English, while some, such as 才, have partial equivalence. It is advisable to pay special attention to zero and partially equivalent words in a learner's dictionary.

The examples discussed in this chapter can be used to suggest several improvements. First, lexicographers can highlight words using a special format, such as the “note box” used in *Beginner's*. Pictorial illustrations are very helpful for explanation as well. For example, the following picture could be included in a learner's dictionary under the entry for “了”. In the first picture, the waitress asks the customer “你喝吗?” (“Would you like a drink?”), and the customer responds “喝” (“yes”). The conversation in the second picture is “你喝了吗?” (Have you drunk it?) “喝了” (“I have”).





Example 5.24

Example 5.25 below could in turn be used beside the entry “才”. The teacher in the picture says angrily, “Why have you come at 9?” (a more colloquial way to say it would be “Why are you here at 9?” (“你怎么九点才来”), while the student offers an apologetic explanation for his tardiness. Such an illustration vividly shows that “才” indicates lateness.



Example 5.25

Secondly, lexicographers should do extensive of research on the most common mistakes learners make when attempting to use such words. Finding the weakness is the first step to solving a problem. Such research should then be used as the basis for lexicographers’ scientific and practical choice and arrangement of subentries.

Thirdly, lexicographers should provide more example sentences. These examples should be chosen according to the research done on common student mistakes.

Fourthly, it is worth trying to design some exercises which could be included in the back matter to help students better understand these words.

### 5.3.3 Communicative equivalence

Communicating with people in a foreign language is also one of the basic purposes of language learning. Svensén (2009; 1) says: “Utility lexicography serves two main purposes. One of them is to support communication (in the widest sense), either in the user’s native language or in a foreign language. The other purpose is to support the learning of language, either one’s native language or a foreign language”. Therefore, achieving communicative equivalence is also an important goal for a dictionary’s creators.

There are many communicative problems that arise when people are learning a foreign language or translating a literary work or piece of oral communication. Most problems originate from cultural differences. One such cultural difference is the differing degrees of formality used by members of different cultures when addressing people.

If we want to know how to address a person, the first thing we need to know is the person’s name. The concept of “name” in Chinese has a different formation and different communicative functions than it does in English:

**name** *noun*

a name = yíge míngzi 一个名字  
 what's your name? = nǐ jiào shénme míngzi? 你叫什么名字?  
 my name is Louis = wǒ(de míngzi) jiào Lùyìsī 我(的)名字叫路易斯

**name** /neim/ *n* 1 [C] 名字 míngzi; 名称 [稱] míngchēng; *My ~ is Tim.* 我的名字叫蒂姆. 2 [sing] 名誉 [譽] míngyù; 名声 [聲] míngshēng; *a ~ for being lazy* 由于懒惰而出名. 3 [C] 名人 míng rén; *the big ~s in show business* 演艺业的名人. 4 [习语] *in the name of sb/sth* (a) 代表某人(某事) dàibiǎo mǒu rén. (b) 凭 [憑] 借...的权 [權] wēi píngjiè... de quánwēi. *I arrest you in the ~ of the*

Take, for example, the Chinese name 王梅 (WangMei). In English, if someone asks someone named WangMei, “What’s your name?”, the common response is “My name is Mei”. The same question in Chinese would be, “? 你叫什么名字?” (“What’s your name?”) “。我叫王梅” (“My name is WangMei”). Even though “名” is the equivalent word for “name”, and 姓(xìng) the equivalent for “surname”, in conversation, Chinese people traditionally use their surname and name to answer the question of “what’s your name?”. Moreover, in Chinese, a person’s surname always

goes in front of his/her name, title, or official position. Hence, Mr. Wang in Chinese is actually Wang Mr (王先生).

In China, a person's profession or title is also important when it comes to forms of address. People address teachers and administrative staff at schools or universities as 老师teacher. (Likewise, officials or people who have official job titles, such as ministers, rectors, deans, or directors, are addressed using their respective titles.) In Chinese, there are many detailed and complicated names for different posts for which it is difficult to find equivalent words in English. In English, people are primarily addressed according to their gender, e.g. Miss, Mrs or Mr. In Chinese, by contrast, using the literal equivalent of "Miss" to address a teacher is considered very rude. The emphasis on surnames and official titles in Chinese can be seen as an indication of the hierarchical and collectivist nature of Chinese culture. Dictionaries can help make such concepts clearer to users by including relevant explanations, along with, for example, a list of common forms of address, in the back matter text. If space remains, the authors could include pictorial illustrations to make such explanations more accessible and help spark users' interest by helping them to visualize communicative situations and understand the cultural background of the language they are learning.

When people greet each other in China, they often use the expressions like 你吃了吗? (Have you eaten) or 你去哪儿? ("Where are you going?") If one uses the English equivalents to greet people in the West, most people would feel uncomfortable.

Likewise, if one were to use the common English greeting "How are you?" "I am fine, and you?" "Great! Thank you" in China, most Chinese people would find such an exchange dull and meaningless. The best way to solve the problem posed by such differing cultural conventions is to design an interesting and practical back matter text which could, among other things, include a contrastive list of common greetings in English and Chinese.

Aside from those expressions which have essentially no communicative equivalence in literal translation, there are also some expressions which have some equivalence,

but which still pose difficulties. Such cases include the popular English expressions, “Sorry!” and “Thanks!”

It is easy to find Chinese equivalents for both of these expressions: 对不起 means “Sorry” and 谢谢 means “Thanks”. However, people do not use 对不起 and 谢谢 in Chinese with as much frequency as they do in English, and the situations in which such expressions are used are not always the same. In China, people seldom say 对不起 and 谢谢 to people they know well. These words are only popular while in public or on serious occasions. In Chinese culture, it is unusual to express one’s feelings directly, and actions are more important than speech. In a Chinese family, one does not often hear “thank you” or “sorry” in the course of conversation, although such expressions are very commonly used among members of English-speaking families. Lexicographers should make an effort to clearly indicate the difference between such expressions in English and Chinese by providing explanations directly inside the relevant articles. There could also be a cross-reference to a more comprehensive treatment in the relevant back matter text.

For most communicative expressions, it is difficult to find a fixed equivalent. Sometimes the expression needs to be completely omitted, such as “sorry” and “thanks”, sometimes it needs to be elaborated on, and sometimes it needs to be entirely changed. Although such details are very important for second language learners, few dictionaries have given them enough attention. Although such problems are not easy to solve, lexicographers should make the effort to improve their explanations for the sake of users. As mentioned above, some basic communicative problems can be explained in the back matter. How to choose these communicative items and how to arrange them systematically in a clear and accessible way are problems a lexicographer should consider. The problem how to clearly identify the communicative equivalents of individual words, on the other hand, can be solved by putting explanations directly inside the article. Lexicographers should also consider using boxes or other special signs to indicate the difference between a word’s literal meanings and its usage within its cultural context.

## 6. CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

### 6.1 General conclusion

The motivations for writing this thesis originated mainly from two aspects: Firstly, Chinese-learners abroad, whose numbers have increased rapidly in recent years, require more suitable dictionaries. The situation in South Africa proves this. Secondly, compared to the users' requirements, the standard of Chinese-learner's dictionaries is generally very poor, and has to some extent hindered the development of Chinese learning and teaching abroad. There are two main reasons for the lagging behind of Chinese-learner's dictionaries. Firstly, the number of students learning Chinese abroad has only started booming in recent years, while producing a dictionary is a long-term project that needs time to accumulate experience. Secondly, Function Theory has not received enough attention in the field of producing a Chinese-learner's dictionary.

In Chapter one, it was attempted to make a clear statement on the situation of learning Chinese abroad, especially in South Africa, and the development of pedagogical lexicography in Chinese-learner's dictionaries in China and abroad. Moreover, the relationship between online dictionaries and written dictionaries was considered. Chapter one also gave an outline of the thesis, and described its aims as well as the methodology employed.

Chapter two focused on presenting the characteristics of Chinese language, concentrating on the factors which influence the making of a dictionary. First, the complicated relationship between character, word, and morpheme can influence article arrangement. Secondly, the difficulty in classifying word class explains that the same word may be attributed to different word classes in different dictionaries. Thirdly, the unsystematic grammar of Chinese elevates the importance of function words (empty words) in Chinese in sentence construction, therefore working on these words is a big challenge for lexicographers. Fourthly, when learning Chinese many

communicative problems result from cultural differences, which require particular consideration by lexicographers.

Chapter three is the theoretical support of the thesis. “Function Theory”, which is advocated by a working team at Aarhus School of Business in Denmark including Tarp and Bergenholtz, was adapted in the thesis. The most treasurable feature of Function Theory is its user-directed perspective, which meets the needs of modern lexicography and pedagogic lexicography. According to the theory, analyzing specific types of users in specific types of situations are the basic preparation required for lexicographers before they write a dictionary. Therefore, four main elements -the different types of potential user, user situation, user need, and assistance -were summarized by Tarp. These elements interact with each other and formulate specific requirements of the users. As for dictionary functions, they can be classified in two basic categories, communicative functions and cognitive functions. With the elements and functions in mind, the lexicographer can start working on the data and structure of the dictionary. Regarding Function Theory, some practical work, such as a survey on Chinese-learners at Stellenbosch University, was performed and analyzed in this chapter as well.

After a basic outline of the Chinese language and the introduction of Function Theory, the thesis selects two written dictionaries commonly used by students at Stellenbosch University, namely the *Oxford Beginner's Chinese Dictionary* and *Concise English-Chinese Chinese-English Dictionary*, to analyze, comment on and compare in terms of structure and equivalence. This is presented in Chapters four and five. Along with the comments, some suggestions were provided, all of which pertain to making good and valuable Chinese-learner's dictionaries.

## **6.2 Summary of the comments on *Concise* and *Beginner's***

Based on Function Theory and the specific characteristics of the Chinese language, two dictionaries commonly used by students at Stellenbosch University-*Concise* and *Beginner's*-are carefully discussed in this thesis. After a detailed study of frame

structure, microstructure, macrostructure and dictionary equivalence in those two dictionaries, several conclusions can be reached.

### **6.2.1 Target user**

The target user of *Concise* is not very well-defined. This fact is apparent in the design of its frame structure, microstructure and macrostructure, which do not seem to demonstrate much consideration for any specific group of users. Its format is also quite traditional. On the contrary, *Beginner's* narrowed its focus down to a specific group of users (novice students of the Chinese language) which makes it possible for the dictionary's authors to design some special features and arrange the dictionary with the specific needs of its target users in mind.

### **6.2.2 Function**

*Beginner's* clearly emphasizes its intent to function as a tool for text-production in its learners guide. The different number of pages in its Chinese-English section (156) and English-Chinese section (280) proves this to be its intended focus. The intended function of *Concise* is not so clear, and its authors seem to have been attempting to create an all-purpose dictionary. Actually, the time of one dictionary for-all has passed. Lexicographers are putting more effort into the various specific functions of dictionaries, and the corresponding theory has been greatly developed. With the help of Function Theory, a comprehensive understanding of how to work on a dictionary at best can be gained.

### **6.2.3 Dictionary structures**

Thanks to their clear identification of their dictionary's target users and its intended function, the creators of *Beginner's* were able to make some improvements on its frame structure, microstructure and macrostructure. Firstly, the dictionary has 524 pages. Such a handy dictionary can make the user feel more at ease psychologically while using it, and give them more confidence as they take their first steps towards learning a new language. Secondly, the dictionary is printed in a relatively large font,

and the blue titles and headwords make it clear and easy to read. Thirdly, it includes extremely rich front and back matter texts that provide beginners with an introduction to the background of Chinese language and culture. Fourthly, unlike most Chinese dictionaries, its articles place Pinyin, the phonetic system for writing Chinese, in front of the Chinese characters. Furthermore, its authors make an active attempt to use words as the guiding elements instead of characters. In addition, *Beginner's* tries to arrange the order of senses included in its articles according to what beginners can already be expected to know. The structures in *Concise*, on the other hand, follow more traditional rules. Such traditional rules, which are the result of practice and past experience, also have many advantages. Innovation is necessary, however, because of the continuous changes in learner's requirements and learning situation. The structures found in both *Concise* and *Beginner's* will be the basis for structures used in future Chinese learner's dictionaries. As such, it is important to remember that there is always space for improvement. For example, *Beginner's* could be improved through the use of illustrations.

#### **6.2.4 Equivalence**

The most difficult problem faced by the creators of a learner's dictionary is how to deal with "equivalence" between the two languages in question. Finding the proper equivalents for words, expressions and grammatical concepts is necessary to help the learners understand the foreign language and use it properly. In other words, a good equivalent should try to help the user avoid language mistakes. Therefore, lexicographers are firstly required to be aware of the potential mistakes the user may make. Then, by providing a good equivalent or making specific notes, lexicographers can lead the user away from the traps of language.

In *Beginner's*, the authors tried to make some improvements in the realm of equivalence by using more examples in each article. Specially designed inner texts have also been included in an attempt to create an equivalent conversation on some topics, such as age and time. However, *Beginner's* still has a long way to go towards



the goal of clearly presenting all possible equivalents to learners in an understandable way. Some of the equivalents given in *Concise* are more accurate than those in *Beginner's*, but *Concise* pays little attention to the language traps of equivalency that learners may encounter. When it comes to creating a dictionary with clear and useful explanations of linguistic equivalents, three strengths should be closely united, namely the requirements of learners, the experiences of language teachers and the professional work of lexicographers. With their close cooperation, there will be a bright future for the field of the Chinese-learner's dictionary.

## APPENDIX:

### Survey on Chinese learners dictionaries

Name (not necessary) \_\_\_\_\_ module \_\_\_\_\_  
(necessary)

Do you have a dictionary? A Yes (book or electronic) B No

#### For answer A please read the questions (multiple choices)

1. Please write the name and publisher of your dictionary. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

And briefly comment on your dictionary:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

( ) 2. The dictionary was chosen by A. yourself (the reason you choose it: \_\_\_\_\_ )  
B. someone else.

( ) 3. When do you use your dictionary?  
A reading B writing C studying D something else: \_\_\_\_\_

( ) 4. Which benefits more from the dictionary?  
A reading B writing C studying

( ) 5. What do you feel about the examples in dictionaries when you are writing in Chinese and translating English into Chinese?  
A very useful B a little bit useful C not so useful D no use

6. Please write down your requirements for a Chinese learner's dictionary according to your experience: \_\_\_\_\_

---

7. If you also use online dictionary

(Please enter the website: \_\_\_\_\_ and comment on the  
online dictionaries you  
used: \_\_\_\_\_)

**For answer B please read the questions below (multiple choices)**

(            ) **1. Why don't you have a dictionary?**

A It is too expensive

B You have not found a suitable one

C It is not so useful for your study till now

D You are using online dictionary

(Please enter the website: \_\_\_\_\_ and comment on the  
online dictionaries you  
used: \_\_\_\_\_)

E .other reasons \_\_\_\_\_

**2. If you carry on your Chinese study, will you buy a dictionary?**

A yes            B no

And in what level (or grade) do you think you need a dictionary: \_\_\_\_\_

---

(            ) **3. What do you feel about the examples in dictionaries when  
you writing in Chinese and translating English into Chinese?**

A very useful    B a little bit useful    C not so useful    D no use

**4. Please make comments on the dictionaries you have used: (you can also comment on the vocabulary in our textbook)**

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**5. Please write down your requests for a Chinese learner's dictionary according to your experience: \_\_\_\_\_**

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