

LEXICOGRAPHICA Series  
Maior

# LEXICOGRAPHICA

## Series Maior

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117

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*To my loving parents*

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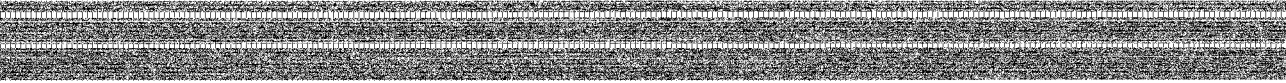
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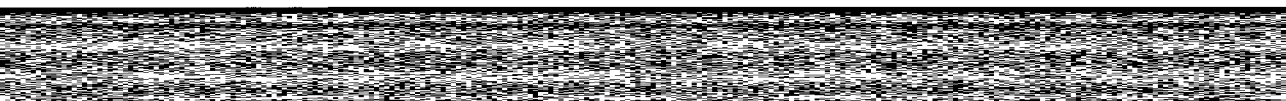
Das Werk einschließlich aller seiner Teile ist urheberrechtlich geschützt. Jede Verwertung außerhalb der engen Grenzen des Urheberrechtsgesetzes ist ohne Zustimmung des Verlages unzulässig und strafbar. Das gilt insbesondere für Vervielfältigungen, Übersetzungen, Mikroverfilmungen und die Einspeicherung und Verarbeitung in elektronischen Systemen. Printed in Germany.

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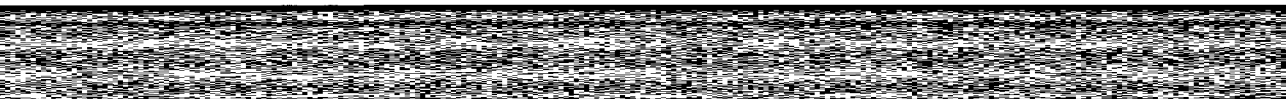


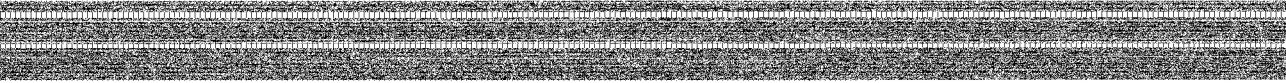


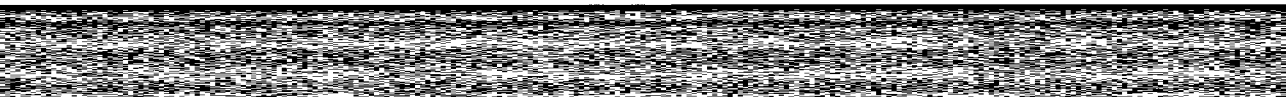












## Notes on Transcription and Translation

Transcription adapted from Van Someren and Sandberg (1994).

..	Short pause
...	Long pause
.....	Unusual silence
(       )	Action protocols are inserted in brackets next to a cognitive operation code, e.g. (turning dictionary pages)
'       '	Utterances originally in English are placed within single inverted commas, e.g. 'stroke down'
(       )	Romanized Chinese equivalents are placed within brackets next to a communication unit, e.g. (sing <sup>2</sup> )

Cantonese sounds and tones are represented according to Lau's (1977) system of romanization.

Six basic Cantonese tones are used:

Tone	High falling	Middle rising	Middle level	Low falling	Low rising	Low level
Tone No.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Example	Wan <sup>1</sup>	Wan <sup>2</sup>	Wan <sup>3</sup>	Wan <sup>4</sup>	Wan <sup>5</sup>	Wan <sup>6</sup>

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Use of dictionaries in Hong Kong schools – popularity of bilingualised learner's dictionaries

Bilingualised learner's dictionaries are "the result of an adaptation of unilingual English learners' dictionaries which have all or part of their entries translated into the mother tongue of the learner" (Hartmann 1994a: 243). High sales figures show that two bilingualised dictionaries have been especially well received by the Chinese learners of English in Hong Kong: *Oxford Advanced Learner's English-Chinese Dictionary* (OALECD) and *Longman English-Chinese Dictionary of Contemporary English* (LECDCE). However, the commercial success of bilingualised learner's dictionaries has not acted as a catalyst for serious research on how Chinese learners actually use their bilingualised dictionaries (Hartmann 1994a: 244).

In fact, published research on the use of bilingualised learner's dictionaries elsewhere in the world has been scarce. To the knowledge of the researcher, only five such studies have been published (Hartmann 1994b, Laufer & Melamed 1994, Laufer & Hadar 1997, Laufer & Kimmel 1997, and Fan 2000). There has also been little research on look-up behaviour in dictionaries generally, in part because it is a difficult field drawing on the adjacent fields of sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics (Béjoint 1994: 154). The complex lexicographical text, the variety of dictionaries, the individual parameters of users, and the variety of situations in which dictionaries are consulted also interact to keep the number of studies on dictionary look-up at a low level (*ibid.*: 154).

One of the prevalent issues discussed in some of the published dictionary use studies is the question of whether failure to use dictionaries effectively is a result of poor reference skills or deficiencies in the dictionaries themselves (Cowie 1999: 188). Until quite recently the dictionary researchers and commentators tended to 'blame' dictionary-makers rather than dictionary users (Tickoo 1989). Their blame, however, was not based on any empirical evidence. Tomaszczyk (1979) was the first researcher to produce empirical evidence showing that elementary and intermediate learners of foreign languages used their dictionaries ineffectively because of their limited reference skills. Though the prevailing view now is that successful use of a dictionary calls for a special 'competence' (Herbst and Stein 1987: 115, Cowie 1999: 88), there is still very little published research, particularly in look-up strategies, to support this. This investigative study aims to add to our knowledge in this area in the context of bilingualised dictionary use.

### 1.2. Aim of this study

This study aims to add to our knowledge in the area of look-up behaviour by focusing on look-up strategies using the think-aloud protocol as the research method. The main aim of

the study is to examine qualitatively how Hong Kong tertiary students look up word meanings in bilingualised English-Chinese learner's dictionaries while reading. Specifically, the researcher aims to identify and describe the look-up strategies used by these students. The study focuses on recovery of word meanings because most dictionary use studies have reported that this is the most frequent user activity (e.g. Béjoint 1981: 215, Snell-Hornby 1987: 167, Summers 1988: 114, Cowie 1999: 181, Diab and Hamdan 1999: 298). The students were given a reading task because previous research indicates that one of the most common language contexts in which dictionaries are used is reading (e.g. Béjoint 1981: 216, Cowie 1999:185). The researcher's unpublished dictionary use study also suggested that reading is the most frequent linguistic activity and that looking up word meaning is the most common purpose among university students in Hong Kong<sup>1</sup>. Since think-aloud protocol was chosen as the main methodology for data collection in the present study, another important aim is to investigate if this is an effective instrument for studying look-up behaviour.

The four research questions addressed in this study are:

- 1) How can we analyze and describe look-up strategies in the bilingualised learner's dictionary?
- 2) What look-up strategies do students use when they are reading and need to find the meaning of a target word in a bilingualised English-Chinese learner's dictionary?
- 3) To what extent do different look-up strategies make use of the bilingualised entries in the English-Chinese learner's dictionary?
- 4) To what extent are look-up strategy patterns specific to individual students or are there common patterns among the students?

Investigation of the first question aims to devise a methodological framework for analyzing and describing look-up strategies. Investigation of the second question aims to identify and describe types of look-up strategies by using the newly formed coding scheme. The answer to the third question may deepen our understanding of the students' use of the bilingualised entries in the dictionary. The answer to the fourth question may enhance our understanding of the strategy use of the learners.

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<sup>1</sup> In 1994, the researcher conducted a questionnaire survey on dictionary use at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Nearly all of the 137 first-year students enrolled on the 'English for Academic Purposes' course indicated they used their bilingualised English-Chinese learner's dictionaries for finding word meanings while reading. Over half of them said they used their dictionaries several times per week while reading.