

On Entries for Neologisms in English-Chinese Learner's Dictionaries

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Abstract. New words are entering the English language at an ever-increasing rate. This paper specifically discusses how neologisms are presented in an English-Chinese learner's dictionary to cater for the learners' needs. Based on Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), the researcher analyzes how these new words are used in the main five genres: spoken texts, fiction, magazines, newspapers and academic journals. In light of the results of the discussion and analysis, several practical suggestions are put forward to optimize the entries for neologisms in English-Chinese learner's dictionaries.

Keywords: COCA; neologism; entry; learner's dictionary.

1. Introduction

Words are an important part of linguistic knowledge and constitute a component of our mental grammars [1]. Without words we would not be able to communicate our thoughts through languages or understand others' thoughts. The lexicon can be expanded to include new words for changes in technology, sports, entertainments, and so on. With the proliferation of computers and widespread use of the Internet, a large number of new words take their own path in their own time and come into a language in various ways. When some of them are used frequently enough for a period of time, lexicographers describe and record them accurately to keep pace with the development of a language. How to select neologisms and plan their entries in a dictionary has always been one of the concerns of dictionary editors. The paper attempts to discuss how new words are presented in English-Chinese Learner's Dictionaries (ECLDs), analyze how these words are used in real life based on COCA, and put forward several practical suggestions for the compilation of neologisms in ECLDs.

2. Neologism and Neologism Dictionaries

2.1 Neologism

Neologism is defined as a new word or expression or a new meaning of a word in Oxford Advanced Learner's English-Chinese Dictionary. According to Hartmann and Gregory James, neologism refers to a word or phrase which has entered the language (as a borrowing or a coinage or through semantic change) relatively recently, often commented on and collected in specialised dictionaries [2]. Hartmann's definition of neologism generally points out three methods of word-formation: borrowing, coining and changing semantic features. Victoria Fromkin, Robert Rodman and Nina Hyams discussed in detail how new words can enter the language: 1) the lexicon may expand by borrowing, which results in loan words; 2) when derivational morphemes like -ify and -cation are added to a base, a new word with a new meaning is derived; 3) some verbs (edit from editor) come into the language as back-formations; 4) two or more words may be joined to form new compound words; 5) blends are similar to compounds in that they are produced by combining two words, but parts of the words that are combined are deleted (motel from motor and hotel); 6) language users tend to abbreviate words in various ways to shorten the messages they convey, such as clipping (bike from bicycle), acronyms (NASA from National Aeronautics and Space Administration), and alphabetic abbreviations (NFL for National Football League) [3]. This research will take advantage of the ways in which new words can become part of a language proposed by Victoria Fromkin.

2.2 Neologism Dictionaries

New Words are often included in neologism dictionaries or updates in other dictionaries. Lu Gusun and Wang Fufang inferred that earlier linguists and scholars were prudent about the inclusion of new words in dictionaries from Algeo's research [4]. From the 1970s on, there has been a boom in the research on neologism dictionaries. For example, the most influential neologism dictionaries were Burchfield's A Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary series. Then more and more large-scale dictionary editors, who sifted through tens of thousands of potential entries for each new edition, realized that there was a need for smaller dictionaries of new words, which could be produced quickly, such as a series of A Supplement to Webster's Third New International Dictionary published in 1976, 1983 and 1986. From the recommendation engines of some popular online bookstores, it can be seen that neologism dictionaries published in China in the 1990s are still on sale for collection and research, such as A Dictionary of New English Words (1996), by Lu Guoqiang, and The New Times Dictionary of New English Words (1999) by Fan Yue. Dictionaries published in the 21st century focus on "New concepts", such as A Dictionary of Contemporary English New Words (2002) by Gao Yongwei, A New Century Dictionary of English Neologisms with Chinese Translation (2003) by Lu Guoqiang, A New English Chinese Dictionary of Journalism (2007) by Hu Zhiyong, An English –Chinese Dictionary of Neologisms (2009) by Li Mingyi, English-Chinese Neologism Dictionary (2013) by Wu Xuemei, A Dictionary of New Chinese Phrases in English (2015) by China Daily and A Chinese-English Dictionary of New Words and Expressions (2015) by Wu Guanghua. Most of them include a rather small range of vocabulary and provide English words and Chinese equivalents. Only several, such as A Dictionary of New Chinese Phrases in English (2015), include English words, Chinese equivalents, examples and their translations.

According to the statistics from Social Science Citation Index and China National Knowledge Infrastructure, the research on neologism and dictionaries started from the 1970s and has been steadily increasing in recent years. Xu Haijiang discussed several ways of how English-Chinese neologism dictionaries should be compiled in the following aspects: inclusion of words, translation of headwords, and choice of illustrative examples [5]. Wang Fufang, one of the editors of The Chinese-English Dictionary, exchanged the ideas about Chinese lexicography and presented the new thoughts and principles about how to select new words and expressions and enter them in modern bilingual dictionaries [6]. Some scholars proposed the establishment of a variable called neologic value to determine the inclusion and censorship of neologism in the general dictionary [7]. This research will discuss and analyze how entries for new words need to be presented from a different perspective.

3. Entries for Neologisms

A learner's dictionary, also named a pedagogical dictionary, is for learners worldwide of the dictionary's language [8]. Oxford Advanced Learner's English Dictionary, introduced on wikipedia, is one of the largest English-language dictionaries from Oxford University Press aimed at non-native speakers, first edition published in 1948, second 1966, third 1974, fourth 1989, fifth 1995, sixth 2000, seventh 2005, eighth 2010, ninth edition 2015. It can be seen that this large-scale dictionary was updated every five years since 1995. There is a necessary time lag in collecting and verifying new words and checking their exact information and then publishing a large book. The English-Chinese edition of Oxford Advanced Learner's English Dictionary (ninth edition) was published by the Commercial Press by arrangement with Oxford University Press in 2018. Oxford Advanced Learner's English-Chinese Dictionary (OALECD) ninth edition was used in the research.

Nealy 1000 new words and modified definitions have been added to the latest version of OALECD. The researcher chose ten new words randomly from A-Z in the dictionary: crowdfunding, fracking, guanxi, live-steam, lolz, micropayment, photobomb, ransomware, shonen and upcycle. Then the information about the entries of these words in OALECD was collected and presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Entries of Ten New Words in OALECD 9

Entry Words	Pronun- ciation	Part of Speech	Construc- tion	Defini- tion	Equiva- lent	Exam- ple	Label	Others
crowdfunding	1	n.	0	1	2	1	0	0
fracking	1	n.	0	1	1	0	2	1
guanxi	1	n.	0	1	2	1	0	1
live-stream	1	v. n.	0	2	4	0	0	0
lolz	2	excla	0	1	1	1	1	1
micropayment	2	n.	0	1	1	0	0	0
photobomb	2	v.	1	2	2	1	1	2
ransomware	2	n.	0	1	2	0	0	0
shonen	2	n.	0	1	1	1	0	1
upcycle	1	v.	1	1	2	1	0	2

Table 1 illustrates that all the new words are content words, of which the majority are nouns and verbs. As for word formation, crowdfunding, live-stream, and photobomb are compounds, and guanxi and shonen are loan words from Chinese and Japanese respectively. When derivational morphemes like micro- and up- are added to the bases payment and cycle, new words micropayment and upcycle are derived. Ransomware is a blend of ransom and software. Lol is an acronym for laughing out loud and often used online as a slang. According to Urban Dictionary, in leet speak, plurals are generally denoted by a z instead of an s, so lols becomes lolz. The phrase hydraulic fracturing is abbreviated to form a new and shorter one: fracking.

The entries of the ten new words in OALECD were analyzed from the following aspects:

(1) Pronunciation

Information about pronunciation is in principle needed in dictionaries for foreign language learners. It can be seen from Table 1 that OALECD provides British pronunciation and American pronunciation for lolz, micropayment, photobomb, ransomware, and shonen when they can be pronounced in different ways.

(2) Construction

Information about constructions carries a higher degree of precision about the combinational properties of the words. It is particularly noticeable that the dictionary compilers only offer construction information about verbs, such as photobomb and upcycle. The information about the construction of nouns is not given.

(3) Definition

Table 1 shows most of the new words are regarded as having one single meaning. For lexicographers, they have to decide which components of meaning need to be included so as to give an accurate definition. OALECD uses definitions to convey various information about headwords. For example, Chinese and Japanese in the definitions of guanxi and shonen denote etymological information. The information in emails, comments on social networking websites, etc. in the parentheses of the definition shows in what situations lolz is used.

(4) Example

As seen in Table 1, out of ten words, six words have examples in the entries. Users can get the structure: have good guanxi with sb from the example The main reason for his company's success is that he has good guanxi with the authorities; the useful pattern through crowdfunding from They raised the money for the film through crowdfunding. However, examples are not given at the entries for fracking, live-stream, micropayment and ransomware.

(5) Label

Labels are used to state the subject field and register of words and expressions. Register can be specified in several dimensions, including style level, time register, geographical register, metaphor, speaker's attitude, and frequency [9]. In OALECD, the label informal is used to show that photobomb and lolz are often used in informal situations.

In addition, OALECD takes into account other ways to describe and illustrate neologisms. WORDFINDER NOTE is contained to suggest entries that users can look up to find vocabulary

related to the headword. For example, at the entry for fracking, WORDFINDER NOTE directs users to a group of words related to the same area energy. The blue triangle shows where the derivative section starts when some words can be easily understood from the meaning of the word from which they are derived. For instance, the words photobomb n. and photobomber are presented following the blue triangle, as derivatives, in the entry of the word photobomb v. The information only before noun in the brackets is given on use of adjectives, such as [only before noun] at the entry for guanxi.

4. COCA-based Research

4.1 Research Questions

How often are the ten new words above used in our real life? In what situations are they used specifically? Which grammatical forms do they take and what words they are used with?

4.2 Research Instrument

The research was based on the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), which was released online in early 2008 and is the first large and diverse corpus of American English. It contains more than 560 million words of text (20 million words each year 1990-2017), balanced between spoken, fiction, popular magazines, newspapers, and academic journals, and allows for a wide range of queries [10].

4.3 Research Procedure

CHART option was used to display the total frequency of the ten new words in each of the five main genres as well as the six time periods. Then the researcher chose LIST and KWIC display to see the patterns in which the most frequently used words occur and analyzed the search results.

4.4 Results and Discussion

4.4.1 Results

Table 2 Search Results from COCA

Frequency Words	ALL	SPO- KEN	FIC- TION	MAGA- ZINE	NEWS- PAPER	ACA- DEMIC	1990- 1994	1995- 1999	2000- 2004	2005- 2009	2010- 2014	2015- 2017
crowdfunding	389	4	2	131	93	159	0	0	0	0	85	304
fracking	773	155	12	308	262	36	0	0	1	0	612	160
guanxi	60	1	3	8	17	31	6	11	14	9	16	4
live-steam	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
lolz	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
micropayment	15	1	0	8	6	0	0	5	7	3	0	0
photobomb	12	10	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	7	5
ransomware	104	28	0	57	19	0	0	0	0	6	4	94
shonen	9	0	0	0	9	0	1	1	0	2	5	0
upcycle	9	1	1	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	5	4

As seen in Table 2 above, the most frequently used ones among the ten new words are fracking, crowdfunding, ransomware, and guanxi. It also indicates that the words crowdfunding, fracking, photobomb, ransomware and upcycle entered in 2010 and have been used in the recent ten years. In particular, the word fracking emerged and was used most frequently in 2010-2014, but has decreased about four times in frequency since 2015. It can be seen that fracking is most frequent in magazines, followed by newspapers and spoken texts. The word ransomware, often used in magazines, spoken and newspapers, has increased in frequency about 25 times from 2010-2014 to 2015-2017. The word crowdfunding, used in academic journals, magazines, and newspapers, nearly quadrupled in frequency between 2010-2014 and 2015-2017. It shows a steady increase in the word guanxi, often used in

academic journals and newspapers, since it arose in the early 1990s. Another six words live-steam, lolz, micropayment, photobomb, shonen and upcycle were used at a very low frequency from 1990 to 2017.

Then, the words, which occur near the most frequently used words, were displayed as follows. For fracking: fracking fluids, fracking bloom, fracking in, fracking for, fracking operations, fracking process, fracking wells, fracking chemicals, gas fracking, limit fracking, regulating fracking etc are shown. For crowdfunding, there are crowdfunding sites, crowdfunding exemption, crowdfunding campaign, crowdfunding in, crowdfunding platforms, equity crowdfunding, online crowdfunding, rewards-based crowdfunding, egalizing crowdfunding, use crowdfunding etc. For ransomware, ransomware attack, ransomware infections, ransomware from, WannaCry ransomware etc. are displayed. For guanxi, guanxi zhuyi, guanxi exists, guanxi ties, of guanxi, about guanxi, use guanxi etc. are presented.

4.4.2 Discussion

As one of the most influential English-Chinese learner's dictionaries, OALECD has always been a model in lexicography. It has been updated nine times in 1948-2015, and new editions were published regularly since 1995. This means OALECD editors have paid a great deal of attention to recording new words and new senses, which guarantees the quality and popularity of the dictionary. OALECD 9 describes and demonstrates entries for neologisms in various ways to help users understand new words and use them productively. However, there are still some aspects which could be improved from learners' perspective.

(1) Inclusion of neologisms

The lexicographers have been concerned with words closely related to the social events. For example, The Guardian reported that in the US, up to 30,000 new wells were drilled and fracked between 2011 and 2014. Accordingly, COCA shows the word fracking was most frequent in magazines and newspapers in the same period. However, according to the search results based on COCA, the words live-steam, lolz, micropayment, photobomb, shonen and upcycle were used at a very low frequency from 1990 to 2017. Why did OALECD editors choose to include the new words used rarely in the texts of a corpus? The answer may lie in the chosen materials of COCA or the principles of neologism inclusion for OALECD. Regardless of the reasons, lexicographers have to take into consideration a new word's frequency of occurrence, and whether a word is used steadily in a period of time before they decide whether a word should enter a dictionary.

(2) Label

Out of the ten new words, only two words photobomb and lolz have labels in OALECD since the two labels formal and specialist at the entry are for the phrase hydraulic fracturing instead of the headword fracking. From Table 2, it is illustrated that fracking and ransomware were often used in magazines, and crowdfunding was more frequent in academic journals and magazines. It is suggested these information can be added to dictionaries with labels.

(3) Construction information

Construction information about new nouns is not given in OALECD. For example, ransomware noun [U] a type of software that is designed to block access to a computer system until a sum of money is paid.

The information about the patterns in which new words occur in the corpus is not shown in this part of the entry. Some information needs to be added to the entry, such as ~ attack and ~ from, which helps users know what prepositions, adverbs and structures can be used with the word although it is understandable the lexicographers need to save the space for more frequently used words among all the new words.

(4) Example

Those words, which occur near the new words in the corpus, are not shown in the dictionary since examples are not given to some new words, such as fracking fluids, fracking bloom, and fracking in. For native speakers, editors do not need to tell how the word lolz was created because they may often use them. From the example shown at the entry for the word lolz: The dog kept running around chasing its tail. Lolz. , Chinese English learners may know how to use the word but keep guessing

how the word came to English. Information about the word-formation, background and usage of a new word can be shown in an example.

5. Conclusion

The paper has given an account of the research on neologisms and neologism dictionaries, and presented how each part of entries for new words is designed in OALECD 9. Then, the same group of new words were examined based on COCA. The results show that 1) the majority of the new words chosen from the dictionary emerged and were used in the recent ten years; 2) some new words included in the dictionary are not most frequent words in COCA; 3) some information about the patterns in which new words occur is not shown by means of labels, construction information, examples and other parts of entries. It is also suggested that the entries for new words in the dictionary could be improved in the following aspects: inclusion, label information, construction information and examples. The present study has implications for the practice of dictionary making. There still remains some room for further research. Firstly, the study is confined to entries for neologisms in ECLDs; Secondly, how COCA is applied to the research has not been discussed in detail; thirdly, the number of new words in the research is relatively small. Further research could explore the design of neologism dictionaries, examples at entries for new words, and Chinese-English dictionaries of new words.

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