Dictionary Use Training in Secondary School EFL Textbooks in Taiwan

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Abstract: As a rare study on English language textbook design for dictionary use training, this research examines four series of secondary school textbooks available on the Taiwan market. The content analysis method was adopted in finding out (1) how effectively the existing secondary English textbooks can help learners develop the necessary dictionary skills based on the guidelines from the government; and (2) how the existing textbooks could be improved to better meet learners' needs for dictionary skills training. The results show that none of the surveyed series follow the Curriculum Guidelines of the Ministry of Education (2018) regarding dictionary use training, although they all claim to have designed the book based on the government-set curriculum. Suggestions are made regarding how the present textbook designs could incorporate dictionary skills, with recommended resources. The study reveals the conspicuous neglect of dictionary use skills training in secondary school textbooks, and calls for similar review to be made in other countries to fully appreciate the (un)availability of dictionary use training in secondary schools. The study should provide useful information to relevant government authorities, dictionary compilers, textbook writers, and English language teachers and researchers alike for improving the situation.

Keywords: DICTIONARY USE TRAINING, TAIWAN, SECONDARY SCHOOL EFL TEXTBOOK, CONTENT ANALYSIS

Opsomming: Woordeboekgebruiksopleiding in sekondêre skool-EVT-handboeke in Taiwan. As minder gebruiklike studie van die ontwerp van Engelse taalhandboeke vir woordeboekgebruiksopleiding word in hierdie navorsing vier reekse sekondêre skoolhandboeke wat op die Taiwannese mark beskikbaar is, ondersoek. Die inhoudsanalisemetode is toegepas om te bepaal (1) hoe effektief die huidige sekondêre Engelse handboeke leerders kan help om die nodige woordeboekvaardighede gebaseer op die riglyne van die regering, te ontwikkel; en (2) hoe die huidige handboeke verbeter kan word om beter voorsiening te kan maak vir die leerders se behoeftes aan woordeboekvaardigheidsopleiding. Die resultate toon aan dat geeneen van die nagevorste reekse die Kurrikulumriglyne van die Ministerie van Onderwys (2018) rakende woordeboekgebruiksopleiding volg nie, alhoewel almal daarop aanspraak maak dat hulle die boek ontwerp het deur dit op die voorgeskrewe regeringskurrikulum te baseer. Voorstelle word gemaak oor hoe die huidige handboekontwerpe met die aanbevole hulpbronne woordeboekvaardighede kan inkorporeer. In die studie word die opvallende afwesigheid van opleiding in woordeboekgebruiksvaardighede in sekondêre handboeke blootgelê, en word soortgelyke studies in ander lande versoek sodat die (on)beskikbaarheid van woordeboekgebruiksopleiding in sekondêre skole ten volle begryp kan

word. Hierdie studie behoort bruikbare inligting aan relevante regeringsowerhede, woordeboek-samestellers, handboekskrywers, en Engelse taalonderwysers en -navorsers te kan voorsien om die situasie te verbeter.

Sleutelwoorde: WOORDEBOEKGEBRUIKSOPLEIDING, TAIWAN, SEKONDÊRE SKOOL-EVT-HANDBOEK, INHOUDSANALISE

1.   Introduction

The habit and the skills of the use of reference tools are instrumental to self-learning of a language. As with other autonomous learning abilities, such skills and habits should be trained as early as possible. However, dictionary use research overwhelmingly found that the training of dictionary use has been in neglect for decades (Herbst and Stein 1987, Nesi 2003, Li and Hai 2015). English teachers of the foreign language classroom, who have little prior training themselves, spare little time, with few ready-made materials, for students in this area. With a focus on the training resource on the secondary school level, this study, aims to examine the design of dictionary skills teaching in English textbooks in Taiwan for their effectiveness in following the guidelines set by the government, and how they could be improved for students to become more independent in language learning. It is hoped that this study could shed light on lexicographical pedagogy, and draw the attention of all stakeholders concerned, be they teachers, textbook compilers, and the government, for improvement.

2.   Literature review

2.1   Research on dictionary use

Dictionary use research mostly focused on how tertiary students used the dictionary for English reading comprehension, with questionnaire survey and interviews being the major instruments, e.g., Chi 2003, Huang 2003, Thumb 2004, Li and Hai 2015, Campoy-Cubillo 2021. While Chan (2005) applied the think-aloud approach for her enquiry, some others used performance tasks to examine students' dictionary use strategies or needs for vocabulary learning (e.g., Chen 2012, Chan 2012, Esfandiari and Hezari 2019), or translation, e.g., Li 2003 and Law 2009, with the latter applying the think-aloud protocol, too. Tono (2003) discussed the methodological considerations on the research on dictionary use.

Research by user surveys (Law 2009, Chen 2010, Müller-Spitzer et al. 2012, Liu, Zheng and Chen 2019, Ma 2019) on other media of the dictionary, i.e. electronic, online, or mobile dictionaries found that these dictionaries are gaining acceptance among students, and have become the common reference tools to find or check the meaning of English words. These empirical studies established and affirmed the educational value of electronic dictionaries in L2 learning, and identified both positive features and contribution to L2 learning. However, in

terms of research validity, Chi (2013: 175) commented that "when the reported data of these studies are to be referenced for decisions by a dictionary compiler, which may claim to meet the needs of millions…. [in Hartmann's (2001: 94) words], 'the results of various studies are of limited generalizability'."

In terms of subjects, although dictionary use skill is commonly regarded as elementary to basic learning, there are strangely far fewer studies on secondary school students vis-à-vis their dictionary use patterns (e.g., Wang and Wei 2009, Investigation Team 1999 targeting other professionals, too). In understanding user needs, Kwary (2018) stated that only a small handful of references have discussed the variables to be considered in determining dictionary user profiles. Other studies on this aspect included Chan 2011, Hamouda 2013, Lai and Chen 2015, while Mavrommatidou et al. (2019: 401-402) developed and validated the strategy inventory for electronic dictionary use with 32 items.

Overall, the findings of these studies and others (e.g., Chi 2011) revealed that learners in general are ignorant of what can be found in dictionaries, and of how to use them to meet their needs. One of the major reasons is the lack of dictionary skills training in secondary and tertiary education (cf., Chi 2003, Li 2003, Li and Hai 2015, Lopera 2019, Campoy-Cubillo 2021). One direct negative consequences of such lack is inadequate English vocabulary for study. Both McNeill's (2006) and Chi's (2011) research evidenced that Hong Kong university entrants generally fell far short of the 5000 words necessary to cope with university study in English, although they have studied under the local English language curriculum for twelve years in primary and secondary schools.

In the light of these findings, the call for dictionary skills training through integrating the learning topics in the language curriculum is almost unanimous among researchers and students (cf., Lan Li 1998, Investigation Team 1999, Miller 2008, Chi 2011), including doing regular dictionary usage exercises on authentic tasks (Herbst and Stein 1987, Wong 1996, Wingate 2004), and introducing to students the various types of dictionaries available in the market, in addition to bilingualized ones (Chi 2003). Similar conclusions are also drawn from studies in the U.K. (Barnes, Hunt and Powell 1999, Wingate 2002, 2004), and Japan (Mochizuki 2011). Official syllabuses for secondary schools in Hong Kong (Curriculum Development Council 1999) stipulated that using references such as the dictionary and thesaurus is essential to independent learning. Similar recommendations are found in the National Curriculum for England (Wingate 2004).

2.2   Dictionary skills training

In response to numerous calls for encompassing training of dictionary use in school and academic curricula (e.g., Campoy-Cubillo 2015, Lopera 2019, Al-Harbi 2024, Bothma and Fourie 2024), some workbooks and other materials aiming to improve dictionary users' reference skills have appeared (see Stark 1990 for an informative overview; Kipfer 1984, Chi 2003), and actual research into

the effectiveness of training in dictionary reference skills have been carried out gradually in recent decades, e.g., Bae 2011, Cote González and Tejedor Martínez 2011, Liu 2014, Prćić 2020, Al-Harbi 2024, Bothma and Fourie 2024. However, these workbooks tend to be dictionary-specific and "emphasize the advantages of their attendant dictionaries to the almost total exclusion of any shortcomings" (Stark 1990: 4).

In the few studies targeting primary and secondary school EFL learners, Kipfer (1984) used a workbook accompanying the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* to train American high-school students in dictionary use, and concluded that the instruction was effective. Lew and Galas (2008) measured the effectiveness of lexicographic training for primary-school-level Polish learners of English prior to and following a 12-session specially designed training programme. Pousi (2010) trained ninth grade EFL class dictionary use in Finland, and studied the effect on the dictionary use of her pupils. These studies predominantly demonstrated the positive results from trainees after the training, who became more effective in dictionary use and in self-learning, compared with the control group. However, on the teachers' end, the scenario is not very encouraging. Over the generations, much as their students, teachers have barely received any dictionary skills training themselves (cf., Herbst and Stein 1987, Oh 2006, Chi 2011). They may assess dictionary consultation as inferior to contextual guessing (Wingate 2002, 2004).

Another barrier to the learning of dictionary skills at school seems to be the limited amount of time spent on teaching them. The topic is commonly considered peripheral in foreign language teaching (Herbst and Stein 1987). Even if teachers could spare the time for such training, "up until the present moment, there is no framework or guidance to advise teachers how to teach dictionary use at junior secondary level. Such teaching at school, if it exists, has been incidental and sporadic, depending mostly on individual teacher's judgment" (Chi 2011: 80). While electronic dictionaries are becoming more popular among students, many teachers are either unfamiliar and/or skeptical about them (e.g., Taylor and Chan in Nesi 1999, Boonmoh 2010). Study results indicated that students would spontaneously look up a large number of unknown or unclear words with the device simple out of curiosity (Guillot and Kenning in Nesi 1999: 64). Chi (2020) established the need to introduce the use of dictionary training into formal EFL teaching. One suggestion to bridge the gap between the dictionary and EFL teachers is to provide training to English language teachers on "dictionary literacy".

2.3   Research on the textbook in dictionary skills training

The textbook works as a major determiner of schools' curricular, helps teachers organize their teaching, and is the main instructional material in class (Yen 2000). For learners, it may be the most important language input other than that from the teacher (Lee and Bathmaker 2007). It can be used to enhance learners' vocab-

ulary building, reception, and production skills, and should thus be treated as an integral part of foreign language teaching (Herbst and Stein 1987; Law 2009). Normally, the training of dictionary use skills is incorporated into the textbook. Some dictionary publishers produce companion workbooks to their dictionaries. Stand-alone workbooks for dictionary skills are scanty. Stark's (1990) work remains a rare study on textbooks for dictionary use training. He proposed that the training should emphasize application to overcome linguistic problems rather than on the dictionary per se. Thornbury (2002) mentioned dictionary use training as one of the ways to teach vocabulary, and this topic is often included in course books.

While dictionary use training does not necessarily require a textbook, it is much easier and systematic to be carried out by teachers with a textbook designed according to the curriculum. It could consistently reach a large group of students at their elementary level. However, compared with the robust research on dictionary use and training shown above, study on dictionary skills training based on a textbook is scarcely explored. In July 2022, this researcher made a simple bibliometric search with keywords like 'textbook,' 'dictionary,' and their Chinese counterparts ('教科書', '詞典', '字典') at the following English or Chinese specialized journal websites: *Lexicographica* (https://www.degruyter.com/journal/key/lexi/html?lang=en), *Lexicography* (https://journal.equinoxpub.com/lexi/about), *Lexikos* (https://lexikos.journals.ac.za/pub), and the three associations' conference proceedings; two other prominent journals on lexicography: *International Journal of Lexicography* (https://academic.oup.com/ijl), and *Cishu yanjiu* (*Lexicographical Studies*; 中國期刊全文數據庫 (sris.com.tw)), as well as two major websites with academic bibliography: Google Scholar (Google Scholar) and WorldCat (WorldCat.org). Further searches were narrowed down to Taiwanese platforms. Airiti Library (Airiti Library) is a significant provider of digital academic bibliography, and *Curriculum & Instruction Quarterly* (see on Airiti Library) a major journal on the eponymous subject in Taiwan. Predictably, the searches delivered no results. This is a huge gap in dictionary use research which this study aims to fill.

Williams (1983) developed criteria for English language textbook evaluation: up-to-date methodology of L2 teaching, guidance for non-native speakers of English, needs of learners, relevance to socio-cultural environment in different aspects. Sheldon (1988: 242) proposed some other criteria. Tsai (1995) examined the varied aspects of an ESL/EFL textbook from a user's perspective. Tzong-Wei Li (1998) discussed the editing mechanism of textbook with particular considerations. Chou (2005) made a critical study of textbook research in Taiwan from 1979 to 2004 (cf. Tsai 2015). Chou (2005) pointed out that content analysis was the earliest and most popular method, while the quantitative approach the least common. Although not targeting the Taiwan context, Fan (2013) reviewed many studies on the textbook, and came to the same conclusion that their methodology was primarily content analysis, and also textbook comparison (see Meunier and Gouverneur 2007). Using both quantitative and qualitative con-

tent analysis of Taiwan's high-school English textbooks, Ke (2012) investigated the projected roles of English in Taiwan's high school English textbooks over the past 50 years. Chou and Cheng (2016) stated that the limitation of content analysis is that one cannot infer the intentions or the reception from the text content itself, as both depend on situational factors. To this, Shieh (2016) proposed an integrated approach of textbook research. Fang et al. (2015) targeted electronic textbooks for elementary and secondary schools.

Law (2013) examined the dictionary use instruction of some secondary Chinese language textbooks in Hong Kong, and concluded that although basically adhering to the guidelines of the education department of the government, the books nonetheless spare far from desirable space on it. This study is similar to Law's, yet on the English counterpart in a different geographical setting, so as to cover more ground in this subject.

2.4   EFL in Taiwan

Taiwan recognises written Chinese and its spoken form Mandarin Chinese as official language. Presently, Taiwanese students start to learn English as a Foreign Language (EFL) since grade three in primary school up to grade 12 in senior high school. The total study time is 10 years, although there are only one to two periods (45 minutes each) a week in grades three to six (Ministry of Education 2014: 15).

The decision to introduce English learning on the elementary school level in 2001, and the elimination of senior high and college entrance examinations effective in 2001 and 2002, respectively, are among the more important moves in the teaching of EFL in Taiwan. In addition, to reflect the features of communication-based teaching and to guide instruction material development and classroom practice, the Ministry of Education (MOE) has published new curricula for English teaching in both junior and senior high schools (Wang 2000). These new curricula have become a guiding concept for curriculum development and syllabus design, and sparked an array of language teaching innovations in EFL contexts in Taiwan (Wang and Savignon in Huang 2003).

3.   Methodology

Notwithstanding the sets of assessment criteria for textbooks mentioned above (cf. Williams 1983, Sheldon 1988, Tsai 1995, Tzong-Wei Li 1998), this study will not adopt them for analysis, as detailed as they are, since our purpose is not thorough examination of the worth of a textbook, but a particular area of skills. In evaluating textbooks, Fan (2013: 771) analyzed that there are three types of variables: independent, intermediate, and dependent (Figure 1). This study will focus on the former two: the curriculum set by the government, which would affect the design of textbooks, and the textbooks themselves as in intermediate variable.
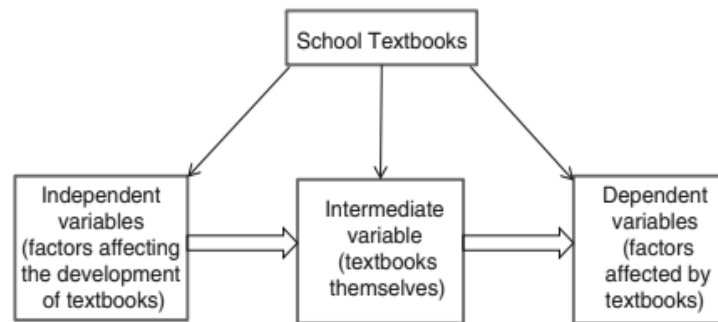
Figure 1:   Textbooks viewed as an intermediate variable in the context of education

McDonough and Shaw's (in Meunier and Gouverneur 2007: 124) concepts of external and internal evaluation will be used in the study framework. What they two called "external" or "macro-evaluation," is what the books say about themselves, or what the author and/or publisher explicitly states as to the organisation and content of the book. The external evaluation can be achieved by analyzing the claims made on the front or back covers of the teacher's or student's book, in the introduction section, and finally in the table of contents of each textbook. The internal or micro-evaluation of a textbook consists in "analys[ing] the extent to which the […] factors in the external evaluation stage match up with the internal consistency and organization of the materials as stated by the author/publisher — for […] strong claims are often made for these materials" (ibid.: 125).

In a qualitative approach by document analysis, this study aims to find out:

(1)   How effectively can the existing secondary English textbooks help learners develop the necessary dictionary skills based on the guidelines from the government; and
(2)   How the existing textbooks could be improved to better meet learners' needs for dictionary skills training.

Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents, to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge. It yields data that are organized into major themes, categories, and case examples specifically through content analysis (Bowen 2009: 27-28).

The evaluation criteria are based on the Curriculum Guidelines of the Ministry of Education (2018) (henceforth Guidelines), rendered in English from the original Chinese, and tabulated below in Table 1 for easy reference. Among the five curriculum objectives for the English Language (Ministry of Education 2018: 4),

the pertinent one is: "to build up effective learning strategies for the English language, to strengthen self-learning capability, and to lay the foundation for lifelong learning".

Learning stage	Students' learning performance by nine learning and assessment factors
Third (grades 5-6)	7. Learning methods and strategies — can search for the pronunciation and meanings of words from dictionaries
Fourth (grades 7–9)	6. Learning interest and attitude (p. 14) — should actively make use of diverse search tools to understand the English language information they come across. 7. Learning methods and strategies (p. 14) — can make use of the dictionary to find suitable word meanings in context.
Fifth (grades 10–12)	6. Learning interest and attitude (p. 14) — can actively seek relevant English language learning resources from the Internet or other channels, and share with teachers and peers. 7. Learning methods and strategies (p. 15) — can actively use reference tools (e.g., dictionaries, encyclopaedias) or other online resources to understand the English content they come across

Table 1:   Students' learning performance by grades in the English language curriculum as set by the MOE of Taiwan

The core attributes of the learning of the English language subject in Appendix 1 of the Guidelines (pp. 34-26) are the same as those listed in Table 1.

These guidelines are close to the six put forward by Mochizuki (2011). As well, in reference to Nesi's (2003) classification of dictionary reference skills, the guidelines coincide with a few of the skills mentioned: 1. Knowing what types of dictionary exist, and choosing which dictionary/ies to consult and/or buy; 2. Knowing what kinds of information are found in dictionaries and other types of references works; 3. Contextual guessing of the meaning of the look-up item; 4. Interpreting IPA and pronunciation information; and 5. Interpreting the definition or translation. But there is gross negligence of the skills for deciding the information for consultation, and locating the information wanted in an entry. The functions available on electronic or internet dictionaries are also not mentioned.

Conforming to all the guidelines does not necessarily mean that the textbook is best in design in dictionary use training. It only meets the basic curric-

ular expectation of the government in English language teaching. It is hoped that, with the findings, textbook publishers, teachers, and lexicographers could help improve the situation by providing better training methods and material for learners' needs.

The textbooks aimed at grades 7–12 of general secondary schools were selected since the student population was the highest among all the secondary school types: general, comprehensive, specialized, skills based (Ministry of Education 2022). The student number in junior secondary schools was 587,000 in 2021, while that in senior secondary schools was 586,000 in the same year, among which 280,000 came from general secondary schools on the junior and the senior levels respectively, about half of the total (Department of Statistics, Ministry of Education 2022). The following four textbook publishers had a market share of over 90% (Peng et al. 2015: 3). That means their books are representative, being used by a predominant proportion of secondary schools in Taiwan. These English textbooks are published by commercial publishers rather than by the Ministry of Education after 1999. At the end of 2001, only six sets of textbooks were used in the senior high schools in the greater Taipei area (Chen 2002). School textbooks are sold en masse in secondary schools, so no retail sale is available. The researcher could only catch what was sold in the second-hand market online, and thus was unable to obtain textbook copies for each grade and each publisher. Also, space disallows a thorough review of a series for all six years (junior high school 1 to senior high school 3) from the same publisher. But a glimpse of several items in a series published in recent years (2016 to 2021) revealed that the basic structure and design are consistent in the whole series. In the light of this, it is deemed that representation of a few grades from a diverse range of publishers could reflect the organisation and design rationale of secondary school textbooks currently in use in Taiwan. The samples below will be evaluated externally as per their claims in the prefaces, and internally in the light of the MOE guidelines. For each book, one unit will be sampled for its organisation.

Below is the list of sampled textbooks:

(1)   Lin, Chia-fang (Ed.). 2019. *English Language for Junior High School (Teaching Materials)*. Vol. 1. Tainan: Han Lin Publishing Co. (Han Lin 1 hereafter)
(2)   Lin, Chia-fang (Ed.). 2021. *English Language for Junior High School (Teaching Materials)*. Vol. 5. Tainan: Han Lin Publishing Co. (Han Lin 5 hereafter)
(3)   Lin, I-ping, Chang, Hui-wen and Wu, I-chen (Eds.). 2011. *English Language for Junior High School*. Vol. 5. Tainan: Kang Huan Educational Publishing. (Kang Huan 5 hereafter)
(4)   Che, Pei-chun (Ed.). 2017. *English Language for General Senior High School.* Vol. 2. Taipei: Sanmin Book Co. (Sanmin 2 hereafter)
(5)   Che, Pei-chun (Ed.). 2016. *English Language for General Senior High School*. Vol. 3. Taipei: Sanmin Book Co. (Sanmin 3 hereafter)
(6)   Chou, Chung-tien (Ed.). 2017. *English Language for General Senior High School*. Vol. 5. New Taipei City: Lungteng Education Co. (Lungteng 5 hereafter)

(7)   Chou, Chung-tien (Ed.). 2017. *English Language for General Senior High School*. Vol. 6. New Taipei City: Lungteng Education Co. (Lungteng 6 hereafter)

Items (1) to (3) are for junior high school, while (4) to (7) for senior. The external materials of the six samples are all written in Chinese, and rendered into English by the researcher himself.

4.   Results and discussion

Han Lin 1 and Han Lin 5:
Before the main text, there is "How to use this book" to introduce the features of each unit: "the Essentials," "Vocabulary scanner," "Grammatical exploration region," "Text reading room," "the Essence City," "Test diagnosis from wide-angle lens," and "Test revision". There is no mention of the Guidelines, nor the learning performance stated therein. The "Vocabulary scanner" in Unit 1 ("Have you had breakfast yet?") of Han Lin 5 (pp. 3-4) comprises pronunciation symbols, grammatical labels in Chinese, and Chinese "equivalents" (Figure 2). Then comes the explanation of vocabulary (pp. 4-10), with pronunciation symbols, grammatical labels in Chinese, Chinese "equivalents," usage, example sentences, Chinese explanation, and practice sentences (Figure 3). There is a conversation analysis (p. 20) of the idioms used: I'm all ears (Figure 4), with Chinese explanation, example sentences, as well as Chinese translation.

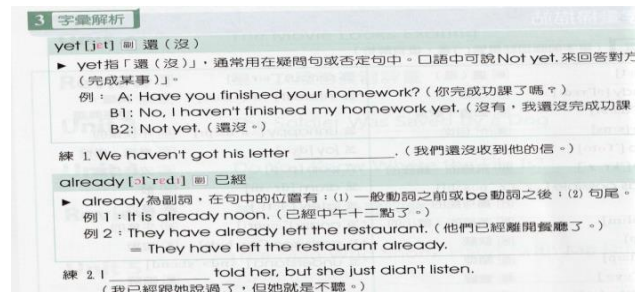**Figure 2:**   "Vocabulary scanner" in Unit 1 of Han Lin 5, p. 3

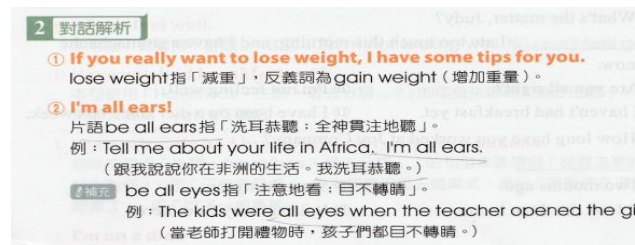**Figure 3:** Explanation of vocabulary, Unit 1, Han Lin 5, p. 4

**Figure 4:** Conversation analysis, Unit 1, Han Lin 5, p. 20

Kang Huan 5:

Kang Huan 5 includes an "Editorial Intent," with an introduction of the organisation of each unit: learning objectives, vocabulary list, glossaries, try it, conversation and reading, grammar, essentials for examination, mock examination topics, review and reading level up. Yet it does not relate to the learning performance in the Guidelines. In Unit 1 ("Have you ever tried these dishes?"), there is a Vocabulary (p. 3) section, with pronunciation symbols, grammatical labels, and Chinese "equivalents". A later section called "vocabulary learning bar" (pp. 4-8) provides more explanation of the usage of those words, with example sentences, practice sentences, and Chinese translation. Near the end of the unit, there are two short exercises: translation of words from Chinese to English (p. 9) (Figure 5), and sentence translation from Chinese to English (p. 25) (Figure 6).


Figure 5: Word translation from Chinese to English, Unit 1, Kang Huan 5, p. 9
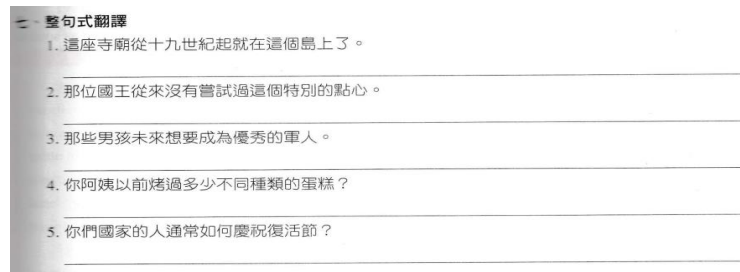
Figure 6:   Sentence translation from Chinese to English, Unit 1, Kang Huan 5, p. 25

Sanmin 2 and Sanmin 3:

The "Editorial Intent" in Sanmin2 says the book is compiled following the Guidelines (2018), but there is no mention of the students' learning performance. It lays out the structure of each unit: I. Reading (before you read, reading task, reading, after you read, words in use, patterns in use, beyond the text, writing hands-on); II. Listening and speaking (pp. i-iv). Unit One ("Animal imagery in language") includes KK pronunciation symbols (p. v), and abbreviations of grammatical symbols (p. vi). For "Words in Use: Words for production," difficult vocabulary found in the reading text is explained one by one. On pages 5-9, there are grammatical and pronunciation symbols, definitions in English, Chinese "equivalents," and example sentences (Figure 7).
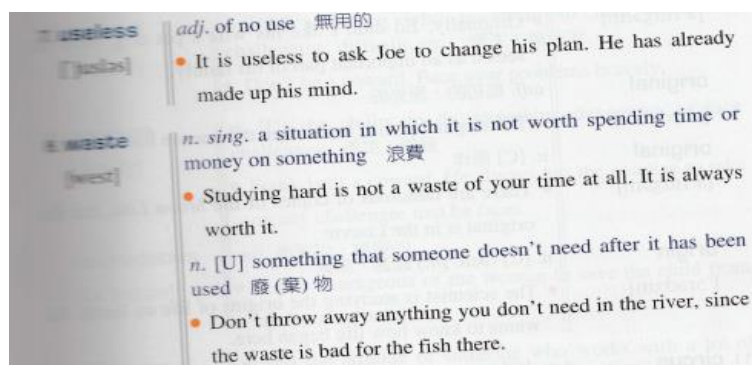
Figure 7:   Vocabulary explanation, Unit 1, Sanmin 2, p. 7

Lungteng 5 and Lungteng 6:

Lungteng 5 contains an "Editorial Intent" (pp. iv-v), which states that the organization design follows the Guidelines. The structure of each unit is like this: I. Reading (warm-up, reading selection, vocabulary, idioms and phrases, word

power, patterns in action, language in 1 & 2), guided conversations, on your own). In the main text, there is a "Pattern in action" (pp. vi-vii, ix), with grammatical symbols (Figure 8). In Unit One ("Creating magic with compliments"), there are "Difficult vocabulary" with pronunciation symbols (p. 3), vocabulary (pp. 7-12), idioms and phrases (p. 12). The "Word power" on page 13 shows synonyms (Figure 9).

Figure 8:   Grammatical abbreviations, Lungteng 5, p. ix

Figure 9:   Word power, Unit 1, Lungteng 5, p. 13

In summary, most series highlight the adherence to the Guidelines in general organization. But in regard to dictionary use skills, none has complied. They do comprise something that can be found in a dictionary entry, e.g., pronunciation symbols, grammatical labels, example sentences, definitions, and Chinese "equivalents". Yet they fall short of encouraging users to search for the information themselves from the dictionary or to interpret the information from any dictionary entry. This is not desirable for independent learning.

The following table summarizes the sample series' (lack of) adherence to the Guidelines in assisting students to achieve learning performance by nine learning and assessment factors.

Guideline / Textbook series	Han Lin (vols. 1, 5)	Kang Huan (vol. 5)	Sanmin (vols. 2, 3)	Lungteng (vols. 5, 6)
Grades 7–9				
(1) Students should actively make use of diverse search tools to understand the English language information they come across.	X	X	N.A.	N.A.
(2) Students can make use of the dictionary to find suitable word meanings in context.	X	X	N.A.	N.A.
Grades 10–12				
(3) Students can actively seek relevant English language learning resources from the Internet or other channels, and share with teachers and peers.	N.A.	N.A.	X	X
(4) Students can actively use reference tools (e.g., dictionaries, encyclopaedia) or other online resources to understand the English content they come across.	N.A.	N.A.	X	X

Table 2:   An evaluation of the design of dictionary skills training in four series of secondary English textbooks mostly based on the Guidelines set out by the MOE. An "X" denotes unachievable

All textbooks are organised in units according to topics. Within these units, sections are devoted to the four (or five, if translating is included) skills, but also to grammar and vocabulary. Surprisingly, none of the surveyed series conforms to the Guidelines and devotes any space to fostering users' dictionary skills. One of the possible reasons is that the compilers take into consideration teachers' perspective more than the government's. They are used to drill-focused teaching practices in English language learning (Hsieh 2011). Relying on the textbook for full information enables both teachers and students a sense of control. Resorting to the dictionary and other online resources for answers means opening to a wide range of possibilities, without definite answers. The

other possible reason may be the consistent neglect of such training in schools, no matter in Chinese language education (see Ta'ai 2006), or English one. Another barrier seems to be the limited subject lesson time. The topic is commonly considered peripheral in foreign language teaching (Herbst and Stein 1987). Even if teachers could spare the time for such training, they are not provided with many resources (cf. Chi 2011: 80). Other possible reasons may be found in Wingate (2002, 2004) and Liu (2014).

5.   Recommendations and conclusion

The following recommendations are made based on the original textbook series for the learning performance in accordance with the Guidelines.

Almost all series contain pronunciation symbols for students to pronounce words accurately in accordance to the learning performance set in the Guidelines for grades 5–6. One easy (and sometimes free) way for students to imitate and practise is to go to online dictionaries and/or dictionary apps to listen to the demonstration. For other information of a word, the compilers can choose not to provide it, but to direct users to check from a certain online dictionary, e.g., the *Collins English–Chinese Dictionary* (https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english-chinese). For example, for "compliment" in Lungteng 5, teachers could further encourage students to learn about the usage of the word by directing them to an online dictionary, such as *Collins English Dictionary* (see figure 10). Both dictionaries can be used by secondary school students of intermediate level of English.
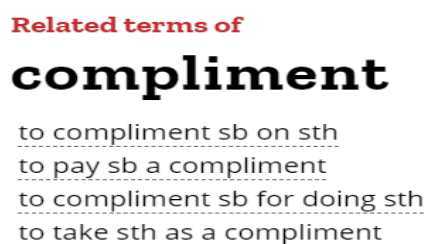
Figure 10: The usage of the word "compliment" from the *Collins English Dictionary*

Other useful online and free reference tools include:

— *Chinese–English Dictionary* (https://cdict.net/)
— *Line Dictionary* (https://dict.naver.com/linedict/#/cnen/home)
— *Reverso Context* (https://context.reverso.net/translation/)
— *WordReference.com* (http://www.wordreference.com)
— *Youdao Dictionary* (http://dict.youdao.com/?keyfrom=cidian)

Compared to the bilingual glossary with limited information provided in their textbooks, these dictionaries are certainly more complicated. That is exactly where teachers' instruction is needed. It is advised that teachers choose just one to two of them for demonstration. After this, it is hoped that learners can learn to be independent dictionary users, with occasional consultation with teachers. Thus, they can become more autonomous in lexical learning.

Instead of providing all the difficult words on the vocabulary list in a unit, the compiler can leave a few words for students to check up with the dictionary for meanings and other information. Students can also decide on which definitions to fit the context in the reading passage. To arouse interest, teachers could ask students for synonyms, e.g., "all ears" from Han Lin5 (cf. all ears | Synonyms and analogies for all ears in English | Reverso Dictionary, Thornbury 2002). As for translation exercises, given the popularity of online translation software even on dictionary websites, it may be impossible for teachers to forbid their use. Instead, teachers could use the software generated translation as the starting point for teaching how to edit the target text semantically and linguistically. This is where teacher input is necessary. In reference to Nesi's (2003) classification of dictionary reference skills, the textbooks could introduce bilingualized learner's dictionaries by major dictionary publishers like Oxford, Longman, Collins, which are popular among intermediate and advanced learners.

The suggestions above demonstrate how, with a little more attention to and resources for dictionary use training design, learners can practise more of their skills in relation to the unit theme with genuine tasks in a textbook. It does not occupy much space, but with recurrent practice in the whole textbook series, the skills can be consolidated, and the skills more sophisticated. While publishers may not be quick in revising their textbooks for this purpose, teachers can design their own worksheets based on the unit theme of the textbook. At the same time, students can still use bilingual dictionaries to assist in translation between English and Chinese during a reading, writing, or even speaking task. Teachers need to inform students of the potential benefits of an English-bilingualised dictionary, which is a hybrid of an English monolingual and an English–Chinese dictionary. Third, and probably most importantly, teachers should tell students what other options than dictionary use are available when encountering unknown words in reading English, or when unsure how to express an idea in English writing, or even speaking (Huang 2003).

None of the textbook series followed the Guidelines regarding dictionary use skills. Without ready-made teaching material, it is no wonder that teachers neglect them, and students are untrained. The results of the serious lack of dictionary use training in schools coincide with those found in mainland China (Investigation Team 1999), in Taiwan for the Chinese Language subject (Ta'ai 2006), and in Hong Kong (Law 2013). There is little room for dictionary use training in the secondary curriculum. When only the basic skills are taught, if at all, throughout students' secondary education, the more advanced skills would only be taken up by trial and error by students themselves. This means that plenty of them will probably not ever get a good grip on dictionary skills, which is far from

desirable for language learning, learning independence, and lifelong learning. It is hoped that this study can probe the parties concerned, be it the government, textbook publishers, teachers, and pedagogical lexicographers, to consider how to make better use of the textbook for such training in the future. In future studies, the reasons for textbook publishers not to include such training in their books are worth investigation.

To ensure that schools assign adequate time on dictionary use training, Herbst and Stein (1987) proposed that dictionary skills be tested in school to force the student to acquire the full range of dictionary skills, and also oblige the teacher to teach them. Law (2009) put forward the notion that dictionary use competence be considered one of the many foundational learning skills in a learner's life since secondary school up to university, and a threshold be set each year to ascertain that learners have reached them, in a way like English, Mathematics, and Computer Literacy.

With this reference study, teachers could devise suitable dictionary use activities to be conducted in the classroom. Based on this rare study on the design of dictionary use training in secondary textbooks, researchers of lexicography could consider how to further develop lexicographical pedagogy. One direction for further study is to measure the effectiveness of such training. Thumb's study (2004) focused on dictionary skills training for reception for university students, while Bishop's (2001) was on writing, both of which reported positive results, with a methodology for measurement. Another direction is a comprehensive pedagogy for training from junior secondary school to university. Chi (2011) formulated a framework for dictionary use teaching in local junior secondary schools: (1) pre-test; (2) treatment: selected dictionary use items be integrated into the existing school English syllabus and taught explicitly; (3) post-test: collecting feedback for evaluation and verification, with an implementation process over 12 months. More detailed pedagogy could be developed to help teachers, who were mostly untrained in dictionary use before, to gain more ideas about how training could be conducted, and collated with other language skills. Béjoint (1989), Bishop (2001), Nesi (2003), and Law (2009), Gavriilidou (2013) have proposed what could be covered in training in school or university. And lastly, similar studies could be conducted in other countries with their (English) language textbooks pertinent to dictionary skills training. Although EFL teachers seem to be aware of students' dictionary perceptions and their dictionary strategy use, their own beliefs about dictionaries may differ from students', and students' actual dictionary use behaviors may run counter to teachers' expectations (Huang 2003). Future studies could explore the differences between teachers' and students' expectations in dictionary use, and how this would affect the practice of dictionary use training.

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