

Chapter 6

The “New China Dictionary” *Xinhua Zidian* 新華字典

The “New China dictionary” *Xinhua zidian* 新華字典, whose compilation was led by Wei Jiāngōng and which was first published in 1953, is not only the first dictionary published after the establishment of the PRC,¹ but also “the world’s most popular reference work” of which more than 400 million copies were sold until 2015.² Since its compilation was not state-commissioned, it cannot be called a language planning measure in the narrow sense. However, due to its huge influence, it could actually be considered one.

Different dictionaries play different roles in a range from description to prescription. Even if they claim to simply describe the language, they may also play a normative role whenever users look up a “correct” pronunciation or spelling. This is the reason why the content collected and recorded in a dictionary is so important. Wei Jiāngōng was aware of this role that dictionaries play. As this chapter explains, he wanted to not only record the language that was actually spoken but also wanted to create a tool for the learning the standard language.

The *Xinhua zidian* was compiled by Wei Jiāngōng and his team at a time of drastic change in Chinese lexicography, which was spurred by two main reasons:

1. The adoption of “modern” Western linguistics, including the introduction of a concept for “word” and phonetic spelling.
2. The promotion of the written vernacular *baihua*(*wen*) and a spoken standard language, which comprises a large portion of polysyllabic words.³

1 Huang Wenxing 黄文兴, Wan Fucheng 宛福成, Zhang Changcai 张长才, Wang Dongyan 王东艳, *Cishu leidian* 辞书类典 [Encyclopedia of dictionaries], Beijing 北京: Zhongguo guangbo dianshi chubanshe 中国广播电视出版社, 1993, 129.

2 Glenday, Craig (ed.), *Guinness World Records 2015*, New York: Guinness Publishing Ltd., 2015, 172. This number is the sum of all sales numbers from the different print editions, the most recent being the 11th edition that appeared in 2011.

3 For example, 88% of the words in the *Xiandai Hanyu pinlü cidian* 現代漢語頻率詞典 (Frequency dictionary of Modern Chinese) are bisyllabic or longer. See Schindelin, Cornelia, “Word Length”, in:

Until the 20th century, most monolingual Chinese dictionaries focused on the classical language and the lemmas were monosyllabic⁴ and consisted of one character. While bilingual dictionaries compiled by Western missionaries for spoken language varieties included polysyllabic words,⁵ they are neither discussed by Wei Jiangong nor by other actors in monolingual lexicography. He and his contemporaries stress that the polysyllabic nature of Modern Standard Chinese (regardless of its label, *guoyu* or *putonghua*) calls for a concept of “word” that transcends the single character.

This chapter begins with a discussion of Wei Jiangong’s views on the recently published “National language dictionary” *Guoyu cidian* 國語辭典, which indeed collected polysyllabic words. But within one entry, the sub-entries are not strictly ordered according to semantics. Wei Jiangong defined the word as a unit of meaning. This, in turn, led him to the question of dictionary structure, which had to negotiate all three dimensions of (written) language: the script, the meaning, and the pronunciation. Wei’s discussion in the course of the preparation for and the compilation of the *Xinhua zidian* about the order of linguistic units within the dictionary addresses crucial issues in lexicology and morphology. It can also be considered groundbreaking in 20th century Chinese lexicography.⁶

6.1 Wei Jiangong on the *Guoyu Cidian* 國語辭典

The promotion of the national language called for a dictionary that was more than a rhyme book simply indicating the pronunciation of single characters.⁷ The compilers of the *Guoyu cidian* aimed for comprehensiveness. It was published by the Commercial Press (Shangwu yinshuguan 商務印書館) in eight volumes over a span of six years, from 1937 to 1943. It was “the first large philological dictionary of vernacular Chinese”,⁸ or:

Encyclopedia of Chinese Language and Linguistics, ed. by Sybesma, Rint, et al., vol. 4, Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2017, 584–589, see 585.

- 4 Shengli Feng describes the process from presumably monosyllabic Archaic Chinese to Medieval Chinese (100 BCE–100 CE) that is characterized by an increase of the number of disyllabic words. Feng, Shengli, “Disyllabification”, in: *Encyclopedia of Chinese Language and Linguistics*, ed. by Sybesma, Rint, et al., vol. 2, Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2017, 108–113.
- 5 See, for example: Masini, Federico, “Notes on the First Chinese Dictionary Published in Europe”, in: *Monumenta Serica* 51 (2003), 283–308, see 290–291. Henning Klöter also discusses this fact and also mentions that “polysyllabic expressions” can be found in earlier dictionaries or rather rhyme books. See: Klöter, Henning, “China from c. 1700”, in: *The Cambridge World History of Lexicography*, ed. by Considine, John, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019, 317–339, see 324, 332ff. Some of these bilingual dictionaries compiled by missionaries are important sources for the pronunciation of Mandarin (*guanhua*) during the Ming and Qing dynasties or non-standard language varieties.
- 6 Many thanks to Dr. Stefan Schneider for his recommendations on lexicography literature.
- 7 Such as the *Guoyin changyong zihui* (already mentioned on pages 106 and 117, discussed again on page 159) or the *Zhonghua xinyun*.
- 8 Kholkina, Liliya, “Lexicography, Modern”, in: *Encyclopedia of Chinese Language and Linguistics*, ed. by Sybesma, Rint, et al., vol. 2, Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2017, 594–600, see 595.

《國語辭典》是我國第一部描寫性詳解型現代漢語詞典。⁹

The *Guoyu cidian* is China's first descriptive, detailed dictionary of Modern Standard Chinese.

Its compilation started in 1928 under the leadership of Li Jinxi,¹⁰ with Wang Yi 汪怡 (1878–1960) as chief editor, and a group of ten or more people.¹¹ Wang Yi was a *guoyu* phonetician who had already participated in the Conference for the unification of reading pronunciations (Duyin tongyi hui) in 1913 and was a member of the *Guoyu tongyi choubai weiyuanhui*. He taught the national pronunciation (*guoyin*) at several institutions before he became the leader of the compilation group for the *Guoyu cidian* that was called “National pronunciation common dictionary group of the ‘Great Chinese dictionary’ compilation office” (*Zhongguo da cidian bianzuan chu guoyin putong cidian zu* 《中國大辭典》編纂處國音普通辭典組).¹²

Naturally, this dictionary became a major point of interest for the *guoyu* enthusiast Wei Jiangong. He was, however, not quite satisfied with it, and would plan and compile a dictionary of his own. This chapter section discusses Wei Jiangong's views on the *Guoyu cidian* as well as some crucial points about Chinese lexicography of the first half of the 20th century.

6.1.1 Going beyond *Guoyin* 國音: The Sounds in the *Guoyu Cidian*

Wei Jiangong enters the discussion of lexicography via phonetics. In his first article about the *Guoyu cidian*, he discusses “special sounds” (*tebie yin* 特別音),¹³ which are sounds included in the dictionary that do not officially belong to *guoyu* phonetics. He begins with a retrospect of the key reference work for the national language, the *Guoyin changyong zihui* (Glossary of commonly used characters in the national pronunciation), officially published by the Ministry of Education in 1932, to compare the *Guoyu cidian* with it.

The *Guoyin changyong zihui* is “the first officially sponsored dictionary to use the northern dialect, especially that of Beijing, as the basis of the national lan-

9 Yang Wenquan 楊文全, *Jin bai nian de Zhongguo Hanyu yuwen cidian* 近百年的中國漢語語文辭書 [Chinese language dictionaries of the past hundred years], Chengdu 成都: Bashu shushe 巴蜀書社, 2000, 180.

10 Kholkina, Liliya, “Lexicography, Modern” (2017), 595.

11 Yang Wenquan 楊文全, *Jin bai nian de Zhongguo Hanyu yuwen cidian* (2000), 180.

12 Xu Youchun 徐友春 (ed.), “Wang Yi (1878–1960) 汪怡 (1878–1960)”, in: *Minguo renwu da cidian* 民國人物大辭典 [Large biographical dictionary of Republican China], ed. by Xu Youchun 徐友春, Shijiazhuang 石家莊: Hebei renmin chubanshe 河北人民出版社, 1991, 412. He also developed a shorthand system for stenography that was employed not only by the KMT government but also by the Communists in Yan'an. He went to Taiwan in May 1947 and remained there until his death. Kaske, Elisabeth, “Stenography”, in: *Encyclopedia of Chinese Language and Linguistics*, ed. by Sybesma, Rint, et al., vol. 4, Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2017, 202–208, see 204.

13 Wei Jiangong 魏建功, “*Guoyu cidian* li suo zeng shou de yin” 國語辭典裏所增收的音 [The sounds that were additionally included in the ‘National language dictionary’], in: *Wei Jiangong wenji* 魏建功文集 [Collected works of Wei Jiangong], ed. by Ye Xiaochun 叶笑春, Rong Wenmin 戎文敏, Zhou Fang 周方 and Ma Zhenxing 馬鎮, vol. 4, Nanjing 南京: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe 江苏教育出版社, 2001, 343–47, see 343.

guage.”¹⁴ In it, 411 syllables or “standard sounds” (*biaozhun yin* 標準音, ignoring the tones) are listed.¹⁵ In the appendix, the *Guoyin changyong zihui* lists “special sounds” that vary from the national pronunciation (*yu guoyin bu tong* 與國音不同).¹⁶ Like in the rest of the dictionary, they are indicated with the respective character first, followed by the pronunciation in Zhuyin, and then in Gwoyue Romatzyh.¹⁷ Among these special sounds are for example exclamations (*gantanci* 感嘆詞) like *hng* ㄏㄥ 哼 to express contempt (*biao bichi* 表鄙斥). As this example illustrates, some special Zhuyin-letters are employed to describe these sounds. ㄥ is used here for a syllabic [ŋ], while the [ŋ] as initial or final would be spelled ㄥ. There are also dialect readings, such as *gaam* ㄍㄚㄞ¹⁸ 咁 (“so”) in the Guangdong dialect (*Guangdongyu* 廣東語). Beiping (= Beijing) readings are not labeled “dialect” (*fangyan*) readings (like the other) but as “Beiping” readings, showing that the Beiping dialect has a special status as the basis for the standard language, in contrast to other dialects. For transcriptions (from foreign languages), the final -m (ㄇ *mu* 姆)¹⁹ is listed. Wei Jianguo argues that dialect words shall also be a part of *guoyu*:

我們國語的意義決不是死說北平話。凡是誤解國語標準的人，忘了中華民國的人民共同建設的國家是文化凝結性最大的國體，不是由壓力來強制脅迫成的；又忘了他們的語言也是如此這般的在演化。²⁰

The purpose of our national language is not at all to speak the Beiping dialect come hell or high water. All people who misunderstand the national language standard forget that this country jointly built up by the people of the Chinese Republic is the state with the strongest cultural cohesion. It is not forcefully coerced by pressure, and they also forget that their language is developing exactly like that.

- 14 The former “old national pronunciation” that still included the entering tone had been reflected by the *Guoyin zidian* (Dictionary of national pronunciation, 1919). See Creamer, Thomas B., “Lexicography and the History of the Chinese Language”, in: *History, Languages, and Lexicographers* (Series Maior 41), ed. by Zgusta, Ladislav, Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1992, 105–135, see 128–129.
- 15 In Zhuyin and Gwoyue Romatzyh, the alphabetic order proceeds according to the initials in the highest order and the rhymes in the second order and the tones in the third. It begins with: *ba, bo, bai, bei, bau* (Pinyin: *bao, ban, ben...* and ends with: *iu* (Pinyin: *yu*), *iue* (*yue*), *uan*, (*yuan*), *iun* (*yun*), *iong* (*yong*).
- 16 Compare: Jiaoyu bu Guoyu tongyi choubi weiyuanhui 教育部國語統一籌備委員會 [Preparatory committee for the unification of the national language of the Ministry of Education] (ed.), *Guoyin changyong zihui* 國音常用字彙 [Glossary of commonly used characters in the national pronunciation], Shanghai 上海: Shangwu yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1932, 282–286.
- 17 I additionally indicate the tones or the IPA transcription only if necessary for understanding.
- 18 The Zhuyin-letter ㄞ is used here for a syllabic [m] in contrast to ㄇ as initial or final [m]. Jiaoyu bu Guoyu tongyi choubi weiyuanhui 教育部國語統一籌備委員會 [Preparatory committee for the unification of the national language of the Ministry of Education] (ed.), *Guoyin changyong zihui* (1932), 284.
- 19 For example, it is used in the entry for Dumdum bullet. Zhongguo cidian bianzuanchu 中國辭典編纂處 [Chinese dictionary compilation office] (ed.), *Guoyu cidian* 國語辭典 [National language dictionary], vol. 1, Shanghai 上海: Shangwu yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1943, 274.
- 20 Wei Jianguo 魏建功, “*Guoyu cidian li suo zeng shou de yin*” (2001), 343.

Wei Jiāngōng stresses that the special sounds of the *Guoyin changyong zihui* are mere examples (*juli* 舉例).²¹ Therefore the dialects from different places (*gedi fangyan* 各地方言) could still be part of *guoyu*.²²

The *Guoyu cidian* also included special sounds, in Wei's words. The neutral tone (*qingsheng* 輕聲, lit. "light tone") syllables were of particular interest to him, given that Beijing Mandarin is said to have four tones. However, there is the neutral tone as fifth tone, first comprehensively described by Zhao Yuanren (Yuen Ren Chao) in the 1920s "to describe the pitch pattern of some syllables in Beijing Mandarin which show variability as a function of the preceding lexical tone. These syllables are also short and reduced in segmental articulation."²³ This neutral tone has been studied most in Beijing Mandarin and in Modern Standard Chinese.²⁴

While a considerable number of neutral-tone syllables obtained an independent entry in the dictionary, Wei points out that many of the neutral tone-syllables have not been indicated separately. He believes they are a "flexible phenomenon" (*huodong de xianxiang* 活動的現象)²⁵ and occur only in combination with other tones. This feature of the neutral tone is key for Wei Jiāngōng, as I will explain below on page 162.

Wei Jiāngōng provides a list with ten neutral-tone entries and sub-entries in the *Guoyu cidian*. Among these are the negation (*fouding ci* 否定詞) *bù* 不.²⁶ For its neutral-tone reading, Wei Jiāngōng uses the example of *láibuji* 來不及 (to be too late to do something).²⁷ His example of *nang* 囔 shows that the neutral-tone reading usually appears in combination with syllables in other tones. There is no single-character word known to be represented by *nang*, since it needs to combine with another character to obtain a meaning. We will discuss below the case of a character that cannot stand alone. In this case, the complete word is *dūnang* 嘟囔 (to mumble to oneself). The *Guoyu cidian* lists the neutral-tone syllables, such as *nang*, additionally after the other tones and marks them with a dot (·) before its Zhuyin or Gwoyue Romatzyh transcription. This occurrence gives the impression that there is a fifth tone. *Nang* has its own entry on page 902 of volume 2, where the reader is referred to the entry of *dunang* on page 666. In turn, this page lists a number of other possible compounds starting with *du* 嘟.

21 Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, "Guoyu cidian li suo zeng shou de yin" (2001), 343.

22 Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, "Guoyu cidian li suo zeng shou de yin" (2001), 344; Interestingly, this thought resembles the principles behind the old national pronunciation (*lao guoyin*) that was discarded in favor of the Beijing dialect. Simmons describes the wide reach of the ideal of an eclectic pronunciation in the early 20th century. Simmons emphasizes, however, that *lao guoyin* comprised different varieties within the Mandarin dialect family. Simmons, Richard VanNess, "Whence Came Mandarin? Qing Guānhuà, the Běijīng Dialect, and the National Language Standard in Early Republican China" (2017).

23 Chen, Yiya, "Neutral Tone", in: *Encyclopedia of Chinese Language and Linguistics*, ed. by Sybesma, Rint, et al., Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2017, 168–176, see 168.

24 Since the 1980s, there has been an increase in studies about the neutral tone in other dialects. Southern Min and Cantonese are an exception, as they "rarely, if at all, exhibit neutral-tone syllables"; Chen, Yiya, "Neutral Tone" (2017), 169, 171.

25 Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, "Guoyu cidian li suo zeng shou de yin" (2001), 344.

26 Zhongguo cidian bianzuanchu (ed.), *Guoyu cidian*, vol. 1, (1943), 165.

27 Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, "Guoyu cidian li suo zeng shou de yin" (2001), 344.

Wei Jianguo continues with a second list of 35 special sounds from the *Guoyu cidian* not limited to neutral-tone syllables. Among these is *niá* ㄋㄧㄚˊ 娘 (the variant form 孃 is listed on the following page),²⁸ which denotes (1) a married woman, (2) mother and children or (3) elderly women and children in the expression *niamen’r* 娘們兒 or *nia’rmen* 娘兒們.²⁹ Another one is *diāng* 噹; *diāngdi-ang’r* is a person who has no knowledge and has not seen the world, and in the Beijing area, *diāngdiang’r che* 噹噹兒車 refers to a streetcar (*dianche* 電車).³⁰ The *Guoyu cidian* also employs *fanqie*: in a square, two characters, in this case *di* 低 and *yang* 央, are printed. A dot at one of the 4 corners of the square indicates the tone. The first tone, as it is the case for *diang*, is indicated with a dot in the bottom left corner.³¹

With all these special sounds and five tones (including the neutral tone), Wei Jianguo believes that *guoyu* should actually have 1345 sounds.³² He encourages readers to write down these 35 special sounds in the back of their *Guoyin changyong zihui* or the pronunciation table (*yinbiao* 音表) they might be using.³³

Wei Jianguo concludes that the neutral tone and other tone sandhi or variant reading issues (*bianyin wenti* 變音問題) should only be included as long as they make a semantic (*yiyi* 意義) difference. This point brings us to the next text. If there is only a phonetic difference, such as the difference between the *wenyan* and the *baihua* reading,³⁴ they do not need to be included.³⁵ With this argument, Wei Jianguo, who entered the lexicography discussion in the field of phonetics, arrived in the field of semantics and morphology. These play the key role in his next text about the *Guoyu cidian*.

6.1.2 Review of the *Guoyu Cidian*

Wei Jianguo wrote a rather encompassing review of the *Guoyu cidian* that tackles the aspect of semantics: “*Guoyu cidian* lunping” 國語辭典論評. Written on February 12th, 1947, during his sojourn in Shanghai, it was first published in the *Tushu zhoukan* 圖書週刊 (Books weekly) supplement of *Dagong bao* 大公報 (Impartial newspaper), vol. 12, on July 6. Wei Jianguo was on the Mainland from November 1946 to April 1947: he traveled first to Beijing to find staff for the *Guoyu tuixing weiyuanhui* and to convene with members of the different cultural and educational circles (at that time he also agreed to become professor at Peking University as soon as he finished his stint in Taiwan); then to Shanghai to attend the founding of the “Chinese Linguistics Association” (*Zhongguo yuyanx-*

28 *Zhongguo cidian bianzuanchu* 中國辭典編纂處 [Chinese dictionary compilation office] (ed.), *Guoyu cidian* 國語辭典 [National language dictionary], vol. 2, Shanghai 上海: Shangwu yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1943, 912–13.

29 Wei Jianguo 魏建功, “*Guoyu cidian li suo zeng shou de yin*” (2001), 345.

30 Wei Jianguo 魏建功, “*Guoyu cidian li suo zeng shou de yin*” (2001), 345.

31 *Zhongguo cidian bianzuanchu* (ed.), *Guoyu cidian*, vol. 2, (1943), 654.

32 Wei Jianguo 魏建功, “*Guoyu cidian li suo zeng shou de yin*” (2001), 654.

33 Wei Jianguo 魏建功, “*Guoyu cidian li suo zeng shou de yin*” (2001), 347.

34 Wei Jianguo does not provide an example of the different literary and colloquial readings of a character. A well-known example might be 白: *bái* (colloq.) vs. *bó* (lit.).

35 Wei Jianguo 魏建功, “*Guoyu cidian li suo zeng shou de yin*” (2001), 347.

uehui 中國語言學會)³⁶ with Ye Shengtao.³⁷ Having access to the *Guoyu cidian*, however, was also one of his aims for this trip.³⁸

The foreword for the *Guoyu cidian* was written in February 1943 by the chief editor Wang Yi.³⁹ In his review, Wei Jiangong quotes extensively from this foreword and cross-references the quotes with the content of the dictionary. He comments on the dictionary's approaches and frequently refers to the history of and current debates in Chinese lexicography. His arguments are presented in the following and are placed into context of some major issues in linguistics at the time.

History of Lexicography: Dictionary types and the linguistic units collected in them

Wei begins his review with an overview over the extant modern dictionaries. Since the start of the “movement for a new literature” / “movement for the rebirth of literature” (*xin wenxue yundong* 新文學運動), there has been considerable progress (*jinbu* 進步) in the use (*yingyong* 應用) of language and script (*yuyan wenzhi* 語言文字). However, there is still a lack of reference material (*cailiao* 材料). Up to that point, teachers relied on character dictionaries (*zishu* 字書) such as the *Kangxi zidian* 康熙字典⁴⁰ (“Character classic of the Kangxi emperor”, first published 1716),⁴¹ revised and republished as *Zhonghua da zidian* 中華大字典 (Great Chinese character dictionary) in 1915.⁴² The *Kangxi zidian* is a good example of a character dictionary. As Harbsmeier put it:

The cultural importance of the Khang Hsi Dictionary can be gauged by the fact that the modern Chinese word for ‘dictionary’ *tzu-tien* 字典 actually derives from the title *Khang Hsi Tzu Tien*. The Khang Hsi Dictionary became synonymous with the general concept of a dictionary, and in fact, it has all but replaced its pioneering predecessors (excepting the *Shuo Wen Chieh Tzu* 說文解字) on modern scholars’ bookshelves. One consequence of the

36 This is not the same body as the current association with the same name that is affiliated with the Chinese Association of Social Sciences, CASS (Zhongguo shehui kexue yuan 中國社會科學院).

37 Cao Da 曹达, “Wei Jiangong nianpu” (1996), 14.

38 Wei Jiangong 魏建功, “*Guoyu cidian lunping*” 國語辭典論評 [Review of the ‘National language dictionary’], in: *Wei Jiangong wenji* 魏建功文集 [Collected works of Wei Jiangong], ed. by Ye Xiaochun 叶笑春, Rong Wenmin 戎文敏, Zhou Fang 周方 and Ma Zhenxing 马镇, vol. 4, Nanjing 南京: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe 江苏教育出版社, 2001, 376–87, see 383.

39 An earlier version of Wang Yi’s foreword, which was printed in volume 1 in 1937, was published in *Guoyu zhoukan*, see: Wang Yi 汪怡, “*Guoyu cidian xu*” 國語辭典序 [Foreword to the ‘National language dictionary’], in: *Guoyu zhoukan* 國語週刊 [National language weekly] 278 (1937), 1–2. The foreword in the 1943 *Guoyu cidian* edition, however, is consistent with Wei Jiangong’s quotes. He does not specify the edition he used.

40 Wei Jiangong 魏建功, “*Guoyu cidian lunping*” (2001), 377.

41 Harbsmeier, Christoph, *Language and Logic (Science and Civilization in China 7.1)*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, 79.

42 Kholkina gives a short summary of the different revisions of the *Kangxi zidian*. The editor-in-chief of the 1915 *Zhonghua da zidian* edition was Lufei Kui 陸費達 (1886–1941; Lufei founded the Zhonghua Book Company (Zhonghua shuju 中華書局 in 1912), see: Kholkina, Liliya, “Lexicography, Modern” (2017), 594–95.

official character of the Kang Hsi Dictionary was that it concentrated entirely on the educated literary language and omitted non-literary meanings of characters. This was a matter of policy, and it constitutes an unfortunate shortcoming of the book.⁴³

In short, the *Kangxi zidian* coined the term for ‘dictionary’. However, it is not a descriptive lexicon of actual spoken Chinese in the 20th century. As Wei Jianguo points out, it is also one of many “character dictionaries” (*zidian* 字典) that only deals with separate single characters (*yi ge ge danzi* 一個個單字). At that point in time, reference books only began collecting “words” *ci* 辭 or *ci* 詞,⁴⁴ and dictionaries like the *Ciyuan* 辭源 (Origin of words), *Ci tong* 辭通 (Lexical Compendium)⁴⁵ or *Cihai* 辭海 (Sea of words) were published.⁴⁶

This development from “character dictionaries” *zidian* to “word dictionaries” *cidian* 詞典/辭典⁴⁷ occurred in Japan before coming to China and began as early as in the 1890s. For example, Nishimura Shigeki 西村茂樹 (1828–1902), an official in the Ministry of Culture, explained in the preface to the 1891 “Japanese Word Dictionary: Sea of Words” (*Nihon jisho genkai* 日本辭書言海) that Japan and China (the former because of the latter) only had character dictionaries, unlike the West. Word dictionaries, in contrast, would show a higher cultural level.⁴⁸

43 Harbsmeier, Christoph, *Language and Logic* (1998), 80. The main lexicographical features of the *Kangxi zidian*, such as the sorting according to section headers (*bushou*), or “classifiers” (also known as Kangxi “radicals”), a classification system consisting of “214 recurrent graphic elements selected to organize the classification of characters in dictionaries” into sections. Bottéro, Françoise, “Lexicographical Ordering, Premodern”, in: *Encyclopedia of Chinese Language and Linguistics*, ed. by Sybesma, Rint, et al., Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2017, 590–593. See also page 170 in this book. This sorting principle was developed by its predecessor, the 1615 *Zihui* 字匯 (Compendium of Characters). See: Harbsmeier, Christoph, *Language and Logic* (1998), 79. Title translation of the *Zihui* after Creamer, Thomas B., “Lexicography and the History of the Chinese Language” (1992), 116.

44 The concept and terminology of “word” in Chinese is discussed below. Wei uses *ci* 辭 and *ci* 詞 interchangeably. Note that the character 詞 was used to replace the homonymous 辭 as early as 174 CE. Cf. Bökset, Roar, *Long Story of Short Forms: The Evolution of Simplified Chinese Characters* (Stockholm East Asian monographs 11), Stockholm: Department of Oriental Languages, Stockholm University, 2006, 175.

45 Translation of the title after: Boltz, William G., “Binomes”, in: *Encyclopedia of Chinese Language and Linguistics*, ed. by Sybesma, Rint, et al., vol. 1, Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2017, 299–304, see 304.

46 Wei Jianguo 魏建功, “*Guoyu cidian* lunping” (2001), 377.

47 Henning Klötter emphasized that the *zidian-cidian*-dichotomy is exaggerated and that that a *cidian* does by no means *only* collect words but also single characters, proverbs, and other units of language. He defines *ci* as expression “written with any number of characters” and *cidian* as “multiple-character-dictionar[y]” with both “single-character and multiple-character expressions”. See Klötter, Henning, “Chinese Lexicography”, in: *Dictionaries. An International Encyclopedia of Lexicography. Supplementary Volume: Recent Developments with Focus on Electronic and Computational Lexicography* (Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft / Handbooks of Linguistics and Communication Science (HSK) 5.4), ed. by Gouws, Rufus H., et al., Berlin / Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, 2013, 884–893, see 885.

48 Doleželová-Velingerová, Milena, “Modern Chinese Encyclopaedic Dictionaries: Novel Concepts and New Terminology (1903–1911)”, in: *Chinese Encyclopaedias of New Global Knowledge (1870–1930): Changing Ways of Thought*, ed. by Doleželová-Velingerová, Milena, and Rudolf G. Wagner, Berlin Heidelberg: Springer, 2014, 289–328, see 297–298.

Nishimura's view would be reiterated well into the Republican period,⁴⁹ as we can see by Wei Jiāngōng's statements.

Subsequently, the Japanese terms *cishu* 辭書 (Jap. *jisho*) and *cidian* 辭典 (*jiten*) for “dictionary” were introduced in China.⁵⁰ In 1915, the “first major *cidian* type dictionary of the 20th century” was published, the “Origin of words” *Ciyuan*. It was compiled under the leadership of Lu Erkui 陸爾奎 (1862–1935), who was head of the Commercial Press (Shangwu yinshuguan) dictionary section in 1908. This dictionary first appeared in 1915. Its 98,994 entries were ordered according to the Kangxi “radical” system.⁵¹

The structure of the *Ciyuan* was groundbreaking. While 19th century dialect dictionaries compiled by Western missionaries already included polysyllabic entries to depict the spoken language,⁵² the *Ciyuan* was the first Chinese-compiled, entirely character-based dictionary to introduce the widespread two-level structure of today. An article is headed by a (single) head-character and is ordered according to the stroke count. Entries to these head-characters comprise compound words or phrases starting with that head-character, ordered according to the stroke count of the following characters. This two-level approach to include both single characters (as main- or head-entry or -lemma) and compounds (as subentries or sub-lemmata) was developed by more than 50 members of the *Ciyuan* compilation team and had tremendous influence on future dictionaries. Because of its inclusion of polysyllabic words, the *Ciyuan* marks a watershed in

49 See Doleželová-Velingerová, Milena, “Modern Chinese Encyclopaedic Dictionaries: Novel Concepts and New Terminology (1903–1911)” (2014), 298. See also Wang Jiarong 汪家熔, “*Ciyuan*, *Cihai* de kaichuangxing” 《辞源》、《辞海》的开创性 [The pioneering nature of the *Ciyuan* and the *Cihai*], in: *Cishu yanjiu* 辞书研究 [Dictionary research] 1 (2001), 130–140, 94.

50 Yang Wenquan 楊文全, *Jin bai nian de Zhongguo Hanyu yuwen cidian* (2000), 3–4.

51 Kholkina, Liliya, “Lexicography, Modern” (2017), 594.

52 The 1873 *Chinese-English dictionary of the vernacular or spoken language of Amoy* by Carstairs Douglas introduced the grouping of polysyllabic entries under the monosyllabic head-lemma. It describes the Southern Min spoken in Amoy (Xiamen 廈門). It employs romanization exclusively. Klöter argues that the character structure remains visible, since syllables are separated with hyphens. See: Douglas, Carstairs, *Chinese-English Dictionary of the Vernacular or Spoken Language of Amoy, with the Principal Variations of the Chang-chew and Chin-chew Dialects*, London: Trübner & Co., 1873. (accessible online: <https://archive.org/details/chineseenglishdi00doug/>) and Klöter, Henning, “China from c. 1700” (2019). Alsford and Fuehrer believe it had a major influence on other Western lexicographers of the Amoy dialect and also the Taiwanese Ministry of Education's online dictionary *Taiwanese Minnanyu changyongci cidian* 臺灣閩南語常用詞辭典. Before Douglas, Walter Henry Medhurst (1796–1857) included a few compound words in subentries in his 1832 *A Dictionary of the Hok-k'een Dialect of the Chinese Language, According to the Reading and Colloquial Idioms*. See: Alsford, Niki, and Bernhard Fuehrer, “Carstairs Douglas (1830–1877) and his *Chinese-English Dictionary of the Vernacular or Spoken Language of Amoy* (1873)”, in: *Journal of Translation Studies* 1.1, 137–182, see 148, 162. The missionaries' works did not play a role for Wei Jiāngōng (Trigault's *Xi ru er mu zi* 西儒耳目資, referred to by Wei only for its transcription, is an exception, see page 201) or other Chinese historians of lexicography. Cf. for example: Yang Wenquan 楊文全, *Jin bai nian de Zhongguo Hanyu yuwen cidian* (2000), 33ff. See also: Liu Yejiu 刘叶秋, *Zhongguo zidian shilue* 中国字典史略 [Short history of Chinese dictionaries], Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中华书局, 1992, 233ff. Only Yong and Peng mention Douglas briefly, but misspell his name, cf. Yong, Heming, and Jing Peng, *Chinese lexicography: A history from 1046 BC to AD 1911*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, 389.

Chinese lexicography for Wei Jianguong⁵³ and others.⁵⁴ However, one question still remains: how should “word” be defined?

Wordhood

Along with the adoption of new terminology for dictionaries, the modern concept of the “word” came to be phrased. It is a key concept for discussing Wei Jianguong’s *Guoyu cidian* review. The definition most widely accepted today is Bloomfield’s “minimum free form”.⁵⁵ If we want to find out how the Chinese linguists defined the concept of “word” for the Chinese language, we need to start a little earlier: The best known starting point in the research about Chinese grammar studies is “Mr. Ma’s grammar” (or “Basic principles for writing clearly and coherently by Mister Ma” *Mashi Wentong* 馬氏文通, 1898) by Ma Jianzhong 馬建忠 (1845–1900). Written in the literary language *wenyan*, it is famous for being “[t]he first grammar of Chinese written in Chinese”.⁵⁶ However, Ma was often criticized by later linguists for merely copying Western grammar theory and terminology. This criticism opened up the debate about the use of Western methodology in Chinese grammar studies. While Kurhofer in 1998 diagnoses a certain obsession among Chinese linguists for criticizing Ma Jianzhong as copycat and calling for a genuinely Chinese approach towards language and grammar,⁵⁷ Peyraube embarked on a journey to find out which Western grammars did actually act as models.⁵⁸

Peyraube concludes that the main influence must have been the *Grammaire de Port-Royal* (1660),⁵⁹ written in French about the French language by Antoine Arnauld (1612–1694) and Claude Lancelot (1615?–1695). Peyraube states, “Ma Jianzhong, believing in Universal Grammar, was trying to find similarities between Western and Chinese syntax”.⁶⁰ However, he was not only exposed to Western language grammars. Another important influence must have been *Notitia linguae sinicae* (1831) by Fr. Joseph de Prémare (1666–1735). It explains both classical and vernacular Chinese and is written in Latin.⁶¹ Just like Prémare, “Ma

53 Wei Jianguong 魏建功, “*Guoyu cidian* lunping” (2001), 377–378.

54 See Wang Jiarong 汪家熔, “*Ciyuan* – jindai di yi ben cishu” 《辞源》—近代第一本词书 [*Ciyuan* – the first modern dictionary], in: *Chuban shiliao* 出版史料 [*Publication archives*] 1 (2001), 110–113. Wang summarized the findings on the *Ciyuan* and placed them within the context of the *Cihai* in: Wang Jiarong 汪家熔, “*Ciyuan*, *Cihai* de kaichuangxing” (2001).

55 Bloomfield, Leonard, “A Set of Postulates for the Science of Language”, in: *Language* 2.3 (1926), 153–64, see 156.

56 Zádrapa, Lukáš, “Māshì wéntōng 馬氏文通”, in: *Encyclopedia of Chinese Language and Linguistics*, ed. by Sybesma, Rint, et al., vol. 2, Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2017, 682–689, see 682.

57 Kurhofer, Horst Friedrich Wilhelm, “Chinesische Grammatikforschung und -schreibung von 1898 bis 1949: Bestandsaufnahme und Analyse”, *Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität*, 1998, 11.

58 Peyraube, Alain, “Some Reflections on the Sources of the *Mashi Wentong*”, in: *New Terms for New Ideas. Western Knowledge and Lexical Change in Late Imperial China*, ed. by Lackner, Michael, Iwo Amelung, and Joachim Kurtz, Leiden: Brill, 2001, 341–356.

59 A reproduction is accessible online: Arnauld, Antoine, and Lancelot Claude, “*Grammaire générale et raisonnée; contenant les fondemens de l’art de parler, expliqués d’une manière claire et naturelle...*”, URL: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k50417t/f1> (visited on Sept. 21, 2019).

60 Peyraube, Alain, “Some Reflections on the Sources of the *Mashi Wentong*” (2001), 352.

61 Peyraube, Alain, “Some Reflections on the Sources of the *Mashi Wentong*” (2001), 351.

takes the *zi* (littera) as the basic grammatical unit”.⁶² Ma made no attempt to define a concept of “word” that was distinct from “character”.⁶³ His successor Lai Yuxun 來裕恂 (1873–1962) also made no such attempt in his *Hanwendian* 漢文典 (Chinese classical language grammar, 1906).⁶⁴

The first attempt to define a concept for “word” distinct from “character” was made by Zhang Shizhao in his 1907 *Zhongdeng guowendian* 中等國文典 (Intermediate Chinese grammar). It was written in classical Chinese and described the classical language.⁶⁵ He stated that “a character can be a word, but a word is not necessarily a character” (一字可為一詞，而不必為一字).⁶⁶ The “first useful” (“erste brauchbare”)⁶⁷ definition of “word” was created by Li Jinxi in his “New national language grammar” (*Xinzhu Guoyu wenfa* 新著國語文法, 1924), the first grammar of Modern Standard Chinese. In contrast to the literary language, it was definitely polysyllabic:

字與詞

字就是一個一個的「單字」。詞就是說話的時候表示思想中一個觀念的「語詞」(註3)。有時一個字就是一個詞，如“人”、“馬”、“紅”、“來”等。有時要兩個字以上組合起來才成功一個詞，如“鸚鵡”、“老頭子”、“便宜”、“吩咐”等。文法中分別詞類(註4)，是把詞作單位；不問他是一個字或是幾個字，只要是表示一個觀念的，便叫做詞。⁶⁸

Character and word

Characters are separate “single characters”. Words are “expressions”⁶⁹ that express an idea in one’s thoughts when one speaks (note 3). Sometimes, one character is one word, such as “*ren*” [person], “*ma*” [horse], “*hong*” [red], “*lai*” [come]. Sometimes, two characters or more need to be combined to form a word, like “*yingwu*” [parrot], “*laotouzi*” [old man], “*pianyi*” [cheap], “*fenfu*” [instruct]. In grammar, the parts of speech are distinguished (note 4)⁷⁰ by treating each word as one unit. Regardless of the fact that it comprises one or several characters, as long as it represents one concept, it is called a word.

According to his definition, having established that what represents one “idea” (*guannian* 觀念) is one word, Li Jinxi adds some detail and historical background

62 Peyraube, Alain, “Some Reflections on the Sources of the *Mashi Wentong*” (2001), 352.

63 Yan Fu also used “*zi*” for “word”. Lackner, Michael, “Circumnavigating the Unfamiliar: Dao’an (314–385) and Yan Fu (1852–1921) on Western Grammar”, in: *New Terms for New Ideas. Western Knowledge and Lexical Change in Late Imperial China*, ed. by Lackner, Michael, Iwo Amelung, and Joachim Kurtz, Leiden: Brill, 2001, 357–369, see 366.

64 Kurhofer, Horst Friedrich Wilhelm, “Chinesische Grammatikforschung und -schreibung von 1898 bis 1949: Bestandsaufnahme und Analyse” (1998), 58.

65 Kurhofer, Horst Friedrich Wilhelm, “Chinesische Grammatikforschung und -schreibung von 1898 bis 1949: Bestandsaufnahme und Analyse” (1998), 58.

66 Zhang Shizhao 章士釗, *Zhongdeng guowendian* 中等國文典 [Intermediate Chinese grammar] (*Min-guo congshu* 民國叢書 2.54), Shanghai 上海: Shanghai shudian 上海書店, 1990 [originally published in 1907; this is a reprint from 1935], 1.

67 Kurhofer, Horst Friedrich Wilhelm, “Chinesische Grammatikforschung und -schreibung von 1898 bis 1949: Bestandsaufnahme und Analyse” (1998), 58.

68 Li Jinxi 黎錦熙, *Xinzhu guoyu wenfa* 新著國語文法 [New national language grammar], Shanghai 上海: Shangwu yinshuguan 上海印書館, 1924, 2–3.

69 Below, he makes clear that *ci* is an abbreviation of *yuci* 語詞: it can be translated as “word” as well.

70 As footnote 4 is not relevant to this discussion, it is not further mentioned.

in the footnote number 3, also adding the respective English key technical term. He explains that in Chinese, one character represents one syllable (*yinjie* 音節). In the past, when the Chinese characters were created, one form (*xingtǐ* 形體) represented one distinct syllable, and one syllable in the most cases represented one concept. That is reason why the linguists of the world say that Chinese belongs to the monosyllabic language family (*danjie yuxi* 單節語系, Li only writes “Monosyllable” in English). However, Li Jinxi continues, sometimes one character does not have a meaning (*yiyi* 意義), or the meaning is not clear. Furthermore, in most cases (especially in the modern spoken language), it is necessary to combine (*fuhe* 複合) two characters to create a word. Li indicates that while the full term for “word” is *yuci* 語詞, it is abbreviated as *ci* 詞. Li Jinxi also explains his concept of “idea” (*guannian*) and establishes its connection with “word”:

一切外界的感覺、內心的直覺、想像、乃至概念等，凡由是認知作用而來的，都可做觀念。用聲音或文字來代表這些單體的整個的意象，都叫做詞。⁷¹

An external perception, an inner intuition, imagination, even a concept or the like – as long as it is a cognitive action – all of these can be an idea. If sound or script is used to represent these elementary, whole images, they are all called words.

A more handy definition of “word” in Chinese was developed in the 1940s. The linguists Lü Shuxiang, Wang Li and Gao Mingkai 高名凱 (1911–1965)⁷² define “word” *ci* as “smallest semantic unit” (*zui xiao yiyi de danwei* 最小意義的單位).⁷³ With this definition, we are very close to that of Wei Jiāngōng’s as a “semantic unit” (*yiyi danwei* 意義單位)⁷⁴ from 1949⁷⁵ that he would repeat again in 1976.⁷⁶ As Wei Jiāngōng’s arguments are laid out in the following, it will be

71 Li Jinxi 黎錦熙, *Xinzhū guoyǔ wénfā* (1924), 3.

72 Gao Mingkai was a grammarian who had studied in Paris 1936–1941 with Henri Maspero (1883–1945) and published a Chinese translation of de Saussure’s *Cours de linguistique générale* in 1963. Romagnoli, Chiara, and Pei Wen, “A New Chinese Translation of the ‘cours de linguistique générale’”, in: *Cahiers Ferdinand de Saussure* 60 (2007), 191–216.

73 Kurhofer, Horst Friedrich Wilhelm, “Chinesische Grammatikforschung und -schreibung von 1898 bis 1949: Bestandsaufnahme und Analyse” (1998), 58. For example, Wang Li defines the word *ci* as “smallest semantic unit of language” (語言的最小意義單位). Wang Li 王力, “Zhongguo yufa lilun” 中国语法理论 [Chinese grammar theory], in: *Wang Li wenji* 王力文集 [Collected works of Wang Li], vol. 1, Jinan 濟南: Shandong jiaoyu chubanshe 山東教育出版社, 1984, 16. He furthermore puts it as follows: “We call a linguistic unit that can represent one meaning word” (我們把能代表一個意義的語言成分叫做詞). He mentions items like *ma* 馬 (horse) that is not only one character but it can also stand as one word. He contrasts them to items like *pu* 葡 that can not stand alone as word, as it needs the second character *tao* 萄 to form a the complete word *putao* 葡萄 (grape). Wang calls these “disyllabic words” (*shuang yin ci* 雙音詞). Wang Li 王力, “Zhongguo xiandai yufa” 中国现代语法 [Modern Chinese grammar], in: *Wang Li wenji* 王力文集 [Collected works of Wang Li], vol. 2, Jinan 濟南: Shandong jiaoyu chubanshe 山東教育出版社, 1985, 29. Both “Zhongguo yufa lilun” and “Zhongguo xiandai yufa” are based on Wang’s 1938 Xinan lianhe daxue lectures.

74 Also: *biaoshi yiyi de danwei* 表示意義的單位, see Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, “Bianji zidian jihua” 編輯字典計畫 [Plan to compile a dictionary], in: *Wei Jiāngōng wenji* 魏建功文集 [Collected works of Wei Jiāngōng], ed. by Ye Xiaochun 叶笑春, Rong Wenmin 戎文敏, Zhou Fang 周方 and Ma Xingxing 馬鎮, vol. 4, Nanjing 南京: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe 江蘇教育出版社, 2001, 403–409, see 403.

75 Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, “Bianji zidian jihua” (2001), 404.

76 Here, Wei specifies that a lemma or head-character (*zitou* 字頭) should be an independent semantic unit. Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, “Dui 1976 nian xiuding *Xinhua zidian* fang’an (caoan) de yijian” 對 1976

shown that the question of wordhood is a core link between all different aspects of lexicography.

An overview of the different ways to define “word” is given by Packard, and Wei Jiāngōng’s definition would fit into Packard’s category of “semantic word”, which he calls “one of the most traditional ways”.⁷⁷ However, as Packard points out, the definition of word as “semantic primitive” is actually more the definition of morpheme.⁷⁸ Wei Jiāngōng’s definition of the word is in reality the definition of free morpheme. In turn, his definition led to compilation of a *zidian* instead of a *cidian*. A more detailed explanation will follow in the subsection on Morphology (page 176) and in the section on the *Xinhua zidian* (page 188).

Packard himself therefore concludes that the syntactic definition of the word is the most useful. With this conclusion, we return to Bloomfield’s “minimum free form” (emphasis added). Packard defines the syntactic word as “a form that can stand as an independent occupant of a syntactic form class slot”.⁷⁹ This view would be formulated for Chinese by Lu Zhiwei in 1960 with words as “units of sentence construction” that need to be “extract[ed] from connected speech”.⁸⁰

Usability

Another key lexicographical aspect for Wei Jiāngōng is the question of usability. For Wei, it is crucial that a dictionary must shed light on the language it describes. If it wants to be a modern dictionary of the spoken standard language for an ordinary speaker, it needs to provide the information that this user would be looking for. Wei complains:

普通的工具書就很少有合於工具應用條件的了。⁸¹

Common reference works are rarely suited to being used as a tool.

Wei acknowledges that an all-encompassing corpus of the Chinese language would be very complex. Implicitly, he acknowledges the challenge of creating a homogenous standard language for all of China. For example, there can be huge variances in pronunciation within a large space (in the respective geographical locations) and over time (history). If a dictionary focuses entirely on the pronunciation, it might be too confined to the use in one particular place. While it is difficult to draw a boundary between the Chinese language and script (中

年修訂《新華字典》方案(草案)的意見 [Suggestions for the plan (draft) to revise the ‘New China dictionary’], in: *Wei Jiāngōng wenji* 魏建功文集 [Collected works of Wei Jiāngōng], ed. by Ye Xiaochun 叶笑春, Rong Wenmin 戎文敏, Zhou Fang 周方 and Ma Zhenxing 马镇, vol. 4, Nanjing 南京: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe 江苏教育出版社, 2001, 676.

77 Packard, Jerome L., *The Morphology of Chinese: A Linguistic and Cognitive Approach*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, 9.

78 Packard, Jerome L., *The Morphology of Chinese: A Linguistic and Cognitive Approach* (2000), 10.

79 Packard, Jerome L., *The Morphology of Chinese: A Linguistic and Cognitive Approach* (2000), 12.

80 Lu still acknowledges the difficulty of defining the word for the Chinese language. Lu, C. W. [Lu Zhiwei 陸志章], “The Status of the Word in Chinese Linguistics”, in: *Beiträge zum Problem des Wortes im Chinesischen* (Ostasiatische Forschungen 1), ed. by Ratchnevsky, Paul, Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1960, 34–47, see 36.

81 Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, “*Guoyu cidian* lunping” (2001), 377.

國語和文之間的界限不容易分割),⁸² the script may help to bundle different pronunciation habits so that more users can use the dictionary.

Wei Jiangong argued that the *Kangxi zidian*, *Ciyuan* and *Cihai* rely on a philological (*xiaoxue*, the “minor studies”) tradition and therefore include specialized (*zhuanmen* 專門) information that is only of interest to a small proportion of the Chinese speakers. For example, teachers would use the existing dictionaries (*zidian* or *cishu*) merely to look up the pronunciation of a character indicated in the *Qieyun*-method (i.e. *fanqie*) or the source where a character was first found (*chujian de “chuchu”* 初見的“出處”). Therefore, these dictionaries include historical pronunciations or meanings that are no longer used in everyday language. Wei calls for a careful investigation into language changes over time and in different locations; dictionaries should include only the information about pronunciation, meaning and use (*yin* 音, *yi* 義, *yongfa* 用法) that modern users would be looking for.

The *Guoyu cidian*, in contrast to the above-mentioned dictionaries, does not include *fanqie* spelling or *chuchu* 出處 (sources). As a result, Wei Jiangong believes that it is a reliable (*kekao* 可靠) reference book. Wei continues his review by commenting on the four aspects the editor Wang Yi raised in his foreword: Sorting (*liexu* 列序), transcription (*zhuyin* 注音), lexicon (*shouci* 收詞) and definitions (*shiyi* 釋義).

Sorting and transcription

Wei Jiangong begins with quoting the passages about “sorting” (*liexu*) and “transcription” (*zhuyin*) from Wang Yi’s *Guoyu cidian* foreword. Wang Yi wrote that character dictionaries (*zidian*) until that point in time were sorted by “classifiers” (*bushou* 部首),⁸³ and in many of these dictionaries one could look for a character according to the stroke count (*bihua* 筆畫). In word dictionaries (*cidian*), a word (*ci*) also needs to be looked up in the same method, which is via the characters. The *Guoyu cidian*, in contrast, uses the national pronunciation (*guoyin*) for sorting. The sorting of the highest order (*gang* 綱) is according to the initials, the sorting of the second order (*mu* 目) according to the rhymes (*yunmu* 韻母). They are all in *Zhuyin fuhao*. Single characters and compound words (*fuci* 複詞) are all listed according to the same rule. Wang Yi praises the dictionary as very advanced: Readers just need to follow *Zhuyin* and they can look up a spelling or a meaning, saving time. If the pronunciation is not known, the *Guoyu cidian* has a “classifier index” (*bushou jianzibiao* 部首檢字表).⁸⁴

82 Wei Jiangong 魏建功, “*Guoyu cidian lunping*” (2001), 377.

83 *Bushou* have also been called “section headers”. This is a literal translation, since dictionaries were divided into sections according to the classifier of a character. They have also been called “radicals”, from the Latin ‘radix’ = root, since they point to a semantic field. It was assumed they could play a role like the root in morphology of Indo-European languages. The term “radical” actually led to many terminological inaccuracies and misunderstandings about the Chinese language and script. Wilkinson, Endymion, *Chinese History: A New Manual* (2013), 34. The actual “semantic component” or “signifier” of a character is termed (*xingfu* 形符), see chapter 8 on page 218.

84 Wang Yi 汪怡, “Xu” 序 [National language dictionary], in: *Guoyu cidian* 國語辭典, ed. by Zhongguo cidian bianzuanchu 中國辭典編纂處 [Chinese dictionary compilation office], vol. 1, Shanghai 上海:

Wei Jianguo continues discussing Wang Yi's passage on "transcription" (*zhuyin*); since the *Guoyu cidian* is sorted phonetically, sorting and transcription are interdependent issues. Wang Yi compares the *Guoyu cidian* to older dictionaries which used the *fanqie*-spelling: this practice rendered their use difficult for non-specialists. Furthermore, previous dictionaries usually limited the transcription to the single character (*danzi* 單字), and the pronunciation of a complete compound word, phrase, or idiom was not indicated. The *Guoyu cidian* transcribes every character in every word in the "First" (*Di yi shi* 第一式) and "Second national pronunciation alphabets" (*Di er shi guoyin zimubiao* 第二式國音字母標; i.e. Zhuyin and Gwoyue Romatzyh). Tones are indicated as well. The pronunciation of single characters are also indicated with a homophone character (*zhiyin* 直音); characters that were formerly pronounced with the entering tone are also indicated. The actual spoken pronunciation in *guoyu* is provided for syllables whose pronunciation changed in the spoken language, such as the neutral tone or rhoticization (*erhua*). This transcription of every single syllable (*yingjie*) is the main reason for this dictionary's innovative nature, according to Wang Yi. Foreigners learning Chinese can benefit from that as well. In both transcriptions, the method of "writing words together" (*cilei lianshu* 詞類連書) is employed.⁸⁵ *Cilei lianshu* was presented in 1923 by Li Jinxi within the context that "Chinese is definitely not a monosyllabic language" (漢語絕不是單音語) and that "often, a word needs to be expressed by two characters or more" (一個語詞往往要用兩個以上的漢字來表達).⁸⁶ I have discussed this issue in the subsection 6.1.2 Wordhood above; here, it is connected to the question of Zhuyin and Gwoyue Romatzyh orthography: the *Guoyu cidian* employs spaces to indicate word boundaries. Multi-syllable words are written without a space between the syllables.

Wei Jianguo begins his comment with a compliment: The *Guoyu cidian* made good use of transcription and the indication of word boundaries. This caters to the promotion of *guoyu*. For Wei, the challenge in defining a polysyllabic word is caused or at least aggravated by the evolution of Chinese dictionaries (中國字書的演變). The earliest dictionaries were "semantic books" (*xungu shu* 訓詁書)⁸⁷ of the *Erya* type that categorize their lemmas according to their meaning (*yi yi wei lei* 以義為類).⁸⁸ As the next step in the development, he lists dictionaries in the style

Shangwu yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1943, 1–9, see 4–5. Wei Jianguo quotes it in: Wei Jianguo 魏建功, *Guoyu cidian lunping* (2001), 377.

85 Wang Yi 汪怡, "Xu" (1943), 5–6. Wei Jianguo 魏建功, *Guoyu cidian lunping* (2001), 377.

86 Li Jinxi 黎錦熙, "Hanzi gemingjun qianjin de yi tiao dalu" 漢字革命軍前進的一條大路 [A big road for the advancement Chinese character revolution soldiers are advancing], in: *Guoyu zhoukan* 國語週刊 [National language weekly] 1.7 (1922), 27–65, see 34.

87 *Xungu(xue)* also encompasses etymology.

88 The *Erya* can be described as a thesaurus or compendium of synonyms and near-synonyms. They were most probably collected from annotations to early texts, i.e. the *Erya* glosses a word with all the words that were used to explain that specific word in a commentary about the text where it appeared. Von Rosthorn called it a "synonymicon" and compares its title ("approaching what is correct, proper, refined", Coblin) to the Latin "gradus ad parnassum". See Rosthorn, A. von, "Das Er-ya und andere Synonymiken", in: *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 49 (1942), 126–144, see 126–130. and Coblin, W. South, "Erh ya 爾雅", in: *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide*, ed. by Loewe, Michael, Berkeley: The Society for the Study of Early China et al., 1993, 94–99, see 94. (Note that

of the *Shuowen jiezi* that establish connections according to the shape (*ju xing xian* 據形繫聯). After that, the type of books that order according to the sound (*yi yin pailie* 以音排列) like the *Qieyun* and other rhyme books (*yunshu*) appeared. This was further developed during Tang and Song times, when a combination of both (i.e. definitions and pronunciation) produced the *Leipian* 類篇 and the *Guangyun*.⁸⁹ The *Guangyun* is based on the *Qieyun* and includes glosses.⁹⁰

According to Wei Jianguo, the need of foreigners (*waizuren de xuyao* 外族人的需要) to work with the Chinese language and script led to an increase of sorting sections according to the stroke count (*shu hua fen bu* 數畫分部) and sorting according to the pronunciation (*yi yin pailie*). Example for books compiled under “foreign” rule (Liao 遼, 916–1125, ruled by the Kitan and Jin 金, 1115–1234, ruled by the Jurchen) given by Wei are the *Long kan shou jing* 龍龕手鏡 (Handy Mirror in the Dragon Shrine, 997) and the *Sisheng pian hai* 四聲篇海 (Sea of chapters under the four tones, 1208). The first is ordered according to the tones; the second according to tones, initials and cross-referenced with the stroke count.⁹¹

The reason for the absence of word dictionaries (*cidian*) identified by Wei Jianguo is that semantic dictionaries of the *Erya* type disappeared.⁹² Since the *Shuowen jiezi*, he complains, compounds (*fuci*) have been ripped apart into individual single characters, destroying the evidence (*yanmie* 湮滅) of many ancient [polysyllabic] words (*gudai yuci* 古代語詞).⁹³ Wei assumed that spoken Old Chinese was polysyllabic and only the written language – completely different from the spoken – was monosyllabic.⁹⁴

This leads Wei Jianguo to his major point of criticism: lemmatization. It essentially decides which words become dictionary entries. While he acknowledges that the *Guoyu cidian*, like the *Ciyuan*, collected multiple-character/syllable words,⁹⁵ it still lists each of its characters individually. If a character is not a com-

also in von Rosthorn’s text, we find the juxtaposition of the “correct” (*ya* 雅 and *zheng* 正) and the “vulgar” (*su* 俗) and also its association of *yayan* 雅言 with Mandarin (*guanhua*.) Von Rosthorn’s article also appeared in an English translation: von Rosthorn, A. [translated by Wolff, Ernst], “The Erh-ya and other Synonymicons”, in: *Journal of the Chinese Language Teachers Association* 10 (1975), 137–145.

89 Wei Jianguo 魏建功, “*Guoyu cidian lunping*” (2001), 378.

90 On *Leipian* and *Guangyun* see: Harbsmeier, Christoph, *Language and Logic* (1998), 73, 76.

91 Wei Jianguo 魏建功, “*Guoyu cidian lunping*” (2001), 378. Söderblom Saarela calls it “hybrid order somewhere in between the radical and stroke count system and the new phonological arrangement.” Söderblom Saarela, Mårten, “Manchu and the Study of Language in China (1607–1911)” (2015), 74.

92 Wei does not mention the 1903 “*New Erya*” *Xin Erya* 新爾雅 by Wang Rongbao 王榮寶 (1878–1933) and Ye Lan 葉蘭 (1875–?; both had studied in Japan) that was compiled to return to this semantic dictionary approach. See Doleželová-Velingerová, Milena, “Modern Chinese Encyclopaedic Dictionaries: Novel Concepts and New Terminology (1903–1911)” (2014), 299.

93 Wei Jianguo 魏建功, “*Guoyu cidian lunping*” (2001), 378.

94 Lin, Xiaoqing Diana, *Peking University: Chinese Scholarship and Intellectuals 1898–1937* (2005), 112–13.

95 Wei discusses compound words (*fuci*) and single-morpheme words with two or more syllables in one bulk. While Wei did not use this terminology, the terms used today are *shuangyinjie danchunci* 双音节单纯词 and *duoyinjie danchunci* 多音节单纯词 for two- and multiple-syllable-single-morpheme words. Furthermore, “binomes” (*lianmianzi* 聯綿字 - 連綿字 or *lianmianci* 聯綿詞; formerly *lianyu* 連語) have been described for Classical Chinese. Type II binomes are “not analyzable into two morphemes”; the “native” examples are “monomorphemic binomes” such as *furong* 芙蓉 (lotus) and others. Boltz, William G., “Binomes” (2017).

plete morpheme by itself, this is, according to Wei Jiāngōng, a major mistake. This also leads to the large number of entries in the dictionary: 100,000. Many of these should not have the “qualification” (*zige*) to be a “unit” (*danwei* 單位). He illustrates this reproach with the lemmas starting with *ba* 芭, which the *Guoyu cidian* lists alphabetically, such as *bamang* 芭芒 (*Miscanthus sinensis* or maiden silvergrass) used in hedges, *bali* 芭籬 (fence), *bajiao* 芭蕉 (banana/plantain), *bajiaobu* 芭蕉布 (cloth woven from plantain fiber).⁹⁶ Instead of simply listing the entries alphabetically, Wei Jiāngōng suggests that they should be attributed to two semantic categories: grass and banana. The two entries (*tiao* 條) that Wei Jiāngōng suggests are *ba* 芭 as in “sweet grass” (*xiangcao* 香草), and *bajiao* 芭蕉, “banana”. The respective compounds would be listed as examples in the respective entry: *bali* would be an entry to *ba* 芭 (“sweet grass”); *bajiaobu* would be an entry to *bajiao* 芭蕉 (“banana”).⁹⁷

Wei concludes this section by stating that the *Guoyu cidian*'s concept (*gainian* 概念) of word (*ci* 辭/詞, used synonymously) lacks correctness (*qian zhengque* 欠正確). This leads him to question which words should be included (*shouci* 收詞): the lexicon.⁹⁸

Lexicon

Wang Yi claims in his foreword that the *Guoyu cidian* encompasses approximately 100,000 entries. While it may contain more entries than the other dictionaries in circulation, it was not enough for an ideal dictionary. The items collected are characterized by the feature that they “compose a word independently and have one meaning by themselves” (獨立成詞, 自具一義). According to Wang, these words were collected from all kinds of written sources, from the spoken language, from *baihua* texts since the Song and Yuan times, “notwithstanding if they were ancient or contemporary, elegant or vulgar” (*wu lun gu jin ya su* 無論古今雅俗). For many single characters (*danzi*), variant (*yiti* 異體) and abbreviated (*jianti* 簡體) characters have been included.⁹⁹

Wei Jiāngōng states that three aspects about the lexicon included in a dictionary are key: standard (*biaozhun*), source (*laiyuan* 來源), and scope (*fanwei* 範圍). A precondition for lexical items to be the standard is that they are words, not characters. Expressions like *shenme* 甚麼 (what)¹⁰⁰ or *zenme* 怎麼 (how)¹⁰¹ should not be separated into two separate characters but kept as one lemma.¹⁰²

96 Zhongguo cidian bianzuanchu (ed.), *Guoyu cidian*, vol. 1, (1943), 5.

97 Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, “*Guoyu cidian* lumping” (2001), 379.

98 Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, “*Guoyu cidian* lumping” (2001), 379.

99 Zhongguo cidian bianzuanchu (ed.), *Guoyu cidian*, vol. 1, (1943), 6–7.

100 Zhongguo cidian bianzuanchu 中國辭典編纂處 [Chinese dictionary compilation office] (ed.), *Guoyu cidian* 國語辭典 [National language dictionary], vol. 3, Shanghai 上海: Shangwu yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1943, 3231.

101 Zhongguo cidian bianzuanchu 中國辭典編纂處 [Chinese dictionary compilation office] (ed.), *Guoyu cidian* 國語辭典 [National language dictionary], vol. 4, Shanghai 上海: Shangwu yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1943, 3409.

102 In the *Guoyu cidian*'s defense, both *shenme* and *zenme* do indeed appear as entries but as sub-entries to *shen* 甚 and *zen* 怎.

ical performance of at least one, mostly two, and sometimes more artists that often relies on puns, accents or other linguistic jokes as the comical element. The punchline of this particular piece relies on *gudu* 孤獨 ('lonely') and *gudu* 咕嘟 ('to boil', 'to bubble') being homophones and containing several possible meanings, interpretations and connotations of *gudu* 咕嘟.¹¹⁵

Wei Jiangong concludes his discussion of the lexicon, stating that a veritable national language dictionary would need not only to include a lexicon that is truly alive and used by the speakers on a daily basis, but also the definitions and glosses need to be in exactly that language. Since all the calls for language and script reforms and Hu Shi's advocacy of a vernacular literature (here, Wei Jiangong writes "national language literature" *guoyu de wenxue* 國語的文學), not enough progress has been made – and the *Guoyu cidian* is no exception – in implementing a national language standard.¹¹⁶

In his preface, Wang Yi stresses how in the definitions (*shiyi*) of the terms (*yongyu* 用語), the *Guoyu cidian* strives for simplicity and avoids ambiguity (*hanhun* 含混) while indicating the etymology, examples, sources and usage (*yongfa*). Apart from the standard reading, some alternative readings are provided, since the pronunciation is presented by Wang as the most important feature of the dictionary. The definitions, Wang Yi proclaims, are "concise but not lacking, simple, but not crude" (簡而不漏, 淺而不陋). However, Wang Yi states that the compilers tried to limit the length of the definitions in order to stop the dictionary from becoming too thick and therefore too expensive for users.¹¹⁷

Definitions

This reasoning is mocked by Wei Jiangong. He begins with a sarcastic reply: how "interesting" (*youqu* 有趣) it is to consider the buyers of the book but not the definitions themselves! The reason why the *Guoyu cidian* was published in eight volumes was not that the definitions are too long, but, as he has already explained above, that too many expressions not really belonging to the core lexicon of *guoyu* are included.¹¹⁸ As Wei complains, the *Guoyu cidian* compilers did not make enough effort in distinguishing between "commonly used" (*changyong* 常用) or "not commonly used" (*xian yong* 閑用) vocabulary. He does not believe that Wang Yi's proclaimed aim of the dictionary being "concise but not lacking,

115 The modern transcript of the piece makes the pun obvious by writing "孤独 (咕嘟)", see Bi Yongnian 薛永年, Chen Xin 陈新, *Zhongguo chuantong xiangsheng xiaoduan huiji* 中国传统相声小段汇集 [Collection of Chinese traditional xiangsheng short pieces], Beijing 北京: Wenhua yishu chubanshe 文化艺术出版社, 2002, 218–219. In the relevant part of the piece, one of the two performers claiming that the phrase "*gudu yi zhi*" can be used in fortune-telling to explain any possible number of siblings a person can have: be it one lonely "branch" (*zhi*), three sitting (squatting) on individual (lonely) branches, or many more that were born one after the other like bubbles in boiling water. This polysemy constitutes the comical element for the audience and exposes the fortune teller as charlatan.

116 Wei Jiangong 魏建功, "*Guoyu cidian lunping*" (2001), 382.

117 Zhongguo cidian bianzuanchu (ed.), *Guoyu cidian*, vol. 1, (1943), 7.

118 Wei Jiangong 魏建功, "*Guoyu cidian lunping*" (2001), 382.

simple but not crude” was achieved. The definitions are too short¹¹⁹ and too many marginal lexical items are included. The lexicon including personal names and idioms is completely exaggerated.¹²⁰ He concludes that the *Guoyu cidian* is not worthy of its name. Because of the shortness of the definitions, it should rather call itself “National pronunciation dictionary of common words” (*Guoyin putong ci dian* 國音普通辭典).¹²¹

Morphology

Wei Jianguo concludes his discussion of the *Guoyu cidian* with his views on morphology and on the conception of an ideal dictionary. He believed that linguists paid too much attention to the single characters (*danzi*) and their shape, and that a “tool that objectively describes the morphology of the language” (*keguan miaoxie yuyan xingtai de gongju* 客觀描寫語言形態的工具) was missing.¹²² The historical development of Chinese dictionaries, where the semantic approach to lexicography (with the *Erya* as model) disappeared and was replaced by a graphematic approach (since the *Shuowen jiezi*¹²³), is also to blame for a lack in the description of morphology. The morphology of Chinese goes beyond the single character; hence, the distinction between *zi* and *ci* is necessary. Wei names the linguistic unit that should be collected in a dictionary as lexical item: the morpheme, although he does not employ that specific term.

For Wei, the unit of pronunciation (or ‘sound’, *shengyin de chengfen* 聲音的成分) was often literally buried (*shenmai* 深埋) under the shape (*xing*) of a character. As a result, even grammar specialists did not have a clear idea (*guannian*) of the difference between character (*zi*) and word (*ci*). That was why many reference works would limit themselves by merely indicating the use of single characters (*danzi yongfa* 單字用法). A good dictionary, in contrast, would need to pay more attention to morphology (*xingtai* 形態) and describe it with the aid of a phonetic transcription. The ideal dictionary is described by Wei Jianguo as follows:

我相信好的辭典，應該著重以注音描寫語言的形態。因此，理想的新辭典，例如以標準國語為主的，開始應該有極扼要的語音學音系的說明，內容裏要把聲音記錄在先，有字對照的隨後寫出，沒有字的用空匡表示。¹²⁴

I believe a good word dictionary should attach importance to describing the morphology of the language with a phonetic transcription. Consequently, the ideal new word dictionary, such as one that concentrates on the standard

119 Wilkinson also calls them “telegraphic”, see Wilkinson, Endymion, *Chinese History: A New Manual* (2013), 86.

120 Wei repeats the argument that the glosses are too short and that the lexicon is too encompassing several times: “The scope of the collected words is too wide; this has added to the length [of the dictionary]” (收詞範圍過泛加多了篇幅), in: Wei Jianguo 魏建功, “*Guoyu cidian lunping*” (2001), 385–386.

121 Wei Jianguo 魏建功, “*Guoyu cidian lunping*” (2001), 383.

122 Wei Jianguo 魏建功, “*Guoyu cidian lunping*” (2001), 384.

123 Wilkinson traces the development from the *Shuowen* to the *Kangxi zidian*, see Wilkinson, Endymion, *Chinese History: A New Manual* (2013), 78–80.

124 Wei Jianguo 魏建功, “*Guoyu cidian lunping*” (2001), 384.

national language, should begin with an extremely brief but accurate explanation of the phonetic system. In the content, it must display the phonetic transcription first, and the respective characters behind it, and what has no character will be represented by an empty square.

For Wei Jiangong, the key was that a lemma could be several characters and syllables long. He stresses that the issue of word boundaries can be answered by morphology (*xingtaixue*). However, there are two issues that need some clarification. First, Wei concentrates on word boundaries and not word formation (*goucifa* 構詞法), therefore ignoring a large portion of morphology. This second issue is that he is actually not discussing *word* boundaries, but rather *morpheme* boundaries. This is symptomatic of the state of flux of Chinese linguistics in the 1940s. The linguist Lu Zhiwei wrote in 1964:

二十年代以來，構詞法問題總是結合着聲音文字提出來的。拼音文字怎樣把音節按字聯寫，規範化詞典該投哪樣的詞 [...]。¹²⁵

Since the 1920s, the question of word formation was always raised in connection with phonetic writing: how the phonetic script should spell each syllable character by character or together, what kind of words should a standardized dictionary include [...].

Lu's *Hanyu de goucifa* 漢語的構詞法 (Chinese word formation) was a pioneer in the 1960s, two decades after Wei's discussion of the *Guoyu cidian*. In the 1940s, Wei was still preoccupied with exactly the issues that Lu mentions. The term for "morpheme" (*yusu* 語素) used by Lu Zhiwei and that is most commonly used today was not used by Wei Jiangong in his writings. Lu Zhiwei defines it in 1964 as a "meaningful syllable" (*you yiyi de yinjie* 有意義的音節). He adds that if such a morpheme cannot be used freely (*ziyou yunyong* 自由運用), it needs to be combined with another morpheme in order to become a word (*ci*).¹²⁶ Lu's overall conclusion about Chinese word formation is that words can have the same syntactic structures like sentences.¹²⁷ Note that the Western word "morpheme" was coined by the Polish linguist of French descent, Jan Ignacy Niesiślaw Baudouin de Courtenay (1845–1929) around 1880.¹²⁸

Wei Jiangong concludes his review of the *Guoyu cidian* with an example that makes it clear that the kind of words he is preoccupied with are multi-syllable single-morpheme words. In other words, they are simple words that consist of two or more characters. The example he discusses in detail is "water chestnut" *biqu* 荸薺. Comprising two syllables and two characters, it is one single morpheme. Therefore, it would not make any sense to list either of the characters individually, since they represent one single semantic unit. The entry would list

125 Lu Zhiwei 陸志韋, "Hanyu de goucifa" 漢語的構詞法 [Chinese word formation], in: *Lu Zhiwei yuyanxue zhuzuoji* 陸志韋語言學著作集 [Collection of linguistic works of Lu Zhiwei], ed. by Zheng Renjia 鄭仁甲, vol. 3, Beijing 北京: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1990, 263–372, see 265.

126 Lu Zhiwei 陸志韋, "Hanyu de goucifa" (1990), 268.

127 Münnig, Mariana, "Lù Zhiwéi 陸志韋", in: *Encyclopedia of Chinese Language and Linguistics*, ed. by Sybesma, Rint, et al., Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2017, 653–658, see 656.

128 Glück, Helmut, "Morphem", in: *Metzler Lexikon Sprache*, ed. by Glück, Helmut, and Michael Rödel, Stuttgart 3: J. B. Metzler Verlag GmbH, 2016, 445–446, see 445.

the pronunciation in Zhuyin first, followed by the two characters.¹²⁹ Wei Jianguong’s ideal dictionary would then adhere to this principle. But did the *Xinhua zidian* follow this criteria?

6.2 Compilation Plan and Realization in the *Xinhua Zidian*

After returning to Beijing in April 1949, Wei Jianguong invited Zhou Zumo 周祖谟 (1914–1995),¹³⁰ Jin Kemu 金克木 (1912–2000),¹³¹ Zhang Keqiang 張克強 (Jianmu 建木, 1917–1989)¹³² and Wu Xiaoling 吳曉鈴 (1914–1995)¹³³ to his home to discuss the compilation of a pocket dictionary (*xiaoxing zidian* 小型字典).¹³⁴ While the preparations for the dictionary compilation took place during the Chinese civil war,¹³⁵ Zhou Zumo remembers his enthusiasm after the war with Japan rather positively and recalls how people of the education and culture circles met (many had been displaced before) to discuss all kinds of ideas. Wei Jianguong came to speak about the need for an up-to-date dictionary for primary and middle school students to spread education (*puji jiaoyu* 普及教育).¹³⁶

129 Wei Jianguong 魏建功, “Guoyu cidian lunping” (2001), 384.

130 Zhou Zumo was a linguist, phonologist and Peking University professor. He also became an advisor to the small group in charge of planning the reorganization and publication of ancient books (Guji zhengli chuban guihua xiaozu 古籍整理出版规划小组, established 1958) of which Wei Jianguong was a member. See: Lin Liantong 林连通, Gu Shixi 顾士熙 (ed.), “Zhou Zumo (1914–1995.1.14)” 周祖谟 (1914—1995.1.14), in: *Zhongguo yuyanxue nianjian* 中国语言学年鉴 [Chinese linguistics yearbook] 1995–1998, 882. See also: Ma Si 马嘶, *Yidai zongshi Wei Jianguong* (2007), 214.

131 Jin Kemu was also a Peking University professor, a researcher of Sanskrit and Buddhism, and a polyglot translator and author. Huang Dehai 黄德海, “Dushu, du ren, duwu – Jin Kemu biannianlu” 读书·读人·读物——金克木编年录 [The book, the author, and the literature: a chronological biography of Jin Kemu], in: *Jiangnan* 江南 [Jiangnan Magazine] 5 (2021), 129–207.

132 Zhang Keqiang appears on group photos of the Peking University Chinese department (Zhongwenxi, 1950) and of the *Xinhua* cishushe, see page 179 (1951) together with Wei Jianguong printed in *Wei Jianguong wenji* vol. 4. He was also a renowned scholar of Tibetan. Danzhu Angben 丹珠昂奔 [Tondrub Wangben], *Zangzu wenhua fazhanshi* 藏族文化发展史 [Developmental history of Tibetan culture], vol. 2, Lanzhou 兰州: Gansu jiaoyu chubanshe 甘肃教育出版社, 2000, 1141–1142.

133 Peking University professor, linguist, scholar of Classical document studies, Chinese and Indian drama and literature. He had spent one part of the Second Sino-Japanese war at Xinan lianhe daxue and the other part in India. Tang Xian 唐咸, “Wu Xiaoling” 吴晓玲, in: *Manzu xiandai wenxuejia yishujia zhuanlue* 满族现代文学家艺术家传略 [Short biographies of modern Manchu authors and artists], ed. by Guan Jixin 关纪新, Shenyang 沈阳: Liaoning renmin chubanshe 辽宁人民出版社, 1987, 178–181.

134 Zhou Zumo 周祖谟, “Wu ji’ yu *Xinhua zidian*” “伍记”与《新华字典》[‘The records of the five-men squad’ and the *Xinhua zidian*], in: *Wenjiao ziliao* 文教资料 [Data of culture and education] 3 (1995), 21–24, see 21.

135 Wu Haitao 吴海涛, “Zai paohuo zhong yunyu de yi bu gongjushu – shouban *Xinhua zidian* de gushi” 在炮火中孕育的一部工具书——首版《新华字典》的故事 [A reference book bred under artillery fire – the story of the first edition of the *Xinhua zidian*], in: *Dushu wenzhai* 读书文摘 [Reader’s digest] 2 (2012), 71–74. See also: Wu Haitao 吴海涛, “Paohuo zhong yunyu de *Xinhua zidian*” 炮火中孕育的《新华字典》[The *Xinhua zidian* that was bred under artillery fire], in: *Xin Xiang pinglun* 新湘评论 [New Hunan review] 20 (2012), 60–61.

136 Zhou Zumo 周祖谟, “Wu ji’ yu *Xinhua zidian*” (1995), 21.

They drafted a “Plan to compile a dictionary” (*Bianji zidian jihua* 編輯字典計畫) with 10 “characteristics” (*tese* 特色) that their dictionary should have:¹³⁷

1. Compilation based on linguistic principles using scientific methods suited to the actual language phenomena (根據語言學原理, 用科學方法, 就實際語言現象編定)
2. Ordering the shape according to the pronunciation (*yi yin tong xing* 以音統形)
3. Listing words according to their meaning (*yiyi pai ci* 以義排詞)
4. Dividing characters according to words (*yi yu fen zi* 以語分字)
5. Determining the meaning via the use (*yi yong jue yi* 以用決義)
6. Broad inclusion of the living language (*guang shou huo yuyuan* 廣收活語言)
7. Getting to the character via the sound (*you yin qiu zi* 由音求字)
8. Choosing words because of their meaning (*you yi xuan ci* 由義選詞)
9. Adapted to the masses (*shihe dazong* 適合大眾)
10. Appendix (*fulu* 附錄)

In the following subsections, I will explain and discuss these characteristics one by one and cross-reference them with the first *Xinhua zidian* edition of 1953. To begin, I will summarize the compilation process.

While Zhou Zumo and the others were enthusiastic at first and enjoyed working and discussing with the elder Wei Jiangong, the group dissolved.¹³⁸ That Wei Jiangong was able to realize his idea of a dictionary happened thanks to Ye Shengtao. Ye, formerly editor-in-chief at the Kaiming shudian 開明書店,¹³⁹ was appointed vice chief (*fushuzhang* 副署長) of the Publishing head office of the Central government of the people (Zhongyang renmin zhengfu chuban zongshu 中央人民政府出版總署) when it was founded in 1949. He approached Wei Jiangong about the compilation of a dictionary. They formed the New China dictionary society (*Xinhua cishushe* 新華辭書社)¹⁴⁰ that would provide the name for the dictionary.¹⁴¹ The actual compilation process began in 1950. That year, Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe 人民教育出版社 (People’s education press) was founded, Ye Shengtao was appointed director, and the *Xinhua cishushe* was incorporated into it.¹⁴² In 1952, the *Xinhua cishushe* was renamed Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe Cishu

137 Wei Jiangong 魏建功, “*Bianji zidian jihua*” (2001).

138 Zhou Zumo 周祖謨, “*Wu ji’ yu Xinhua zidian*” (1995), 22–23.

139 Wang Jiarong 汪家熔, “Kaiming shudian chuanshi xiaoji” 開明書店創世小記 [Notes on the foundation of Kaiming bookstore], in: *Chuban shiliao* 出版史料 [Publication archives] 3 (2002), 88–90.

140 Liu Qinglong 刘庆隆, “*Xinhua zidian bianxie xiuding de licheng*” 《新华字典》编写修订的历程 [The process of the *Xinhua zidian*’s compilation and revision], in: *Zhongguo cishu lunji* 中国辞书论集 • 1999 [Collection of essays on Chinese dictionaries]: Shanghai cishu chubanshe 上海辞书出版社, 2000, 280–85, see 280.

141 Zhou Zumo 周祖謨, “*Wu ji’ yu Xinhua zidian*” (1995), 23.

142 Liu Qinglong 刘庆隆, “Ye Shengtao xiansheng he *Xinhua zidian*” 叶圣陶先生和《新华字典》 [Ye Shengtao and the *Xinhua zidian*], in: *Yuwen jianshe* 语言建设 [Language Planning] 11 (2000), 47.

bianji shi 辭書編輯室¹⁴³ (Dictionary compilation office); the first edition of 1953, however, still bore “edited by Xinhua cishushe” (新華辭書社編).¹⁴⁴

While Wei Jianguo is often called the “father” (*fu* 父) of the *Xinhua zidian*, Ye Shengtao has been called “godfather” (*jiaofu* 教父) by the authors Jin Xinxin and Chen Yue.¹⁴⁵ This is not exaggeration, since Wei Jianguo had to admit that he was not capable of being a real leader for the compilation team. Ye Shengtao managed the compilers and proofreaders (*shendingzhe* 審訂者) and the compilation process as a whole. He took responsibility for the final content and layout. He participated in the discussion about many singular entries, in the design of the *bushou* index,¹⁴⁶ and made substantial alterations in the dictionary’s “user’s instructions” (*fanli* 凡例) drafted by Wei Jianguo.¹⁴⁷

Wei Jianguo and his team, comprising Xiao Jialin,¹⁴⁸ Du Zijin (= Du Tongli), Zhang Keqiang, Kong Fanjun 孔凡均 and Li Jiukui 李九魁,¹⁴⁹ produced a first draft in 1951. It was mimeographed (*youyin* 油印, i.e. duplicated with a mimeograph machine or stencil duplicator) and distributed to a number of “leaders, specialists, cadres with a lower middle school education level and primary school teachers” (领导、专家、初中文化程度的干部和小学教师) to collect feedback.¹⁵⁰ Zhou Zumo estimates that about 1000 of these preliminary copies were distributed.¹⁵¹ Wei Jianguo and a larger team (in addition to Xiao Jialin, Du Zijin, Zhang Keqiang, Kong Fanjun and Li Jiukui, the team also included Zhang Naizhi 張迺芝, Li Bochun 李伯純, Liu Qinglong 劉慶隆,¹⁵² Zhu Chongtao 朱衝涛, Wang Yunming 王蘊明, You Yucheng 游禹承, Zhao Guijun 趙桂鈞 and Li Wensheng 李文生) incorporated the submitted suggestions in the new draft, and the first edition of the *Xinhua zidian* was published in 1953.¹⁵³

Did this first edition have all the characteristics Wei Jianguo had laid out in the “Plan to compile a dictionary” in 1949? In the following, the 10 characteristics are discussed and compared with the actual *Xinhua zidian* of 1953.

- 143 Liu Qinglong 刘庆隆, “*Xinhua zidian* bianxie xiuding de licheng” (2000), 280.
- 144 Xinhua cishushe 新華辭書社 (ed.), *Xinhua zidian* 新華字典 [New China dictionary], Beijing 北京: Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe 人民教育出版社, 1953.
- 145 Jin Xinxin 金欣欣, Chen Yue 陈悦, “*Xinhua zidian* bianzuan xiuding liushi nian” 《新华字典》编纂修订六十年 [60 years of compilation and revision of the *Xinhua zidian*], in: *Zhongzhou daxue xuebao* 中州大学学报 [Journal of Zhongzhou University] 28.3 (2011), 46–51, see 46–47.
- 146 Jin Xinxin 金欣欣, Chen Yue 陈悦, “*Xinhua zidian* bianzuan xiuding liushi nian” (2011), 46–47.
- 147 Gong Mingde 龚明德, “*Xinhua zidian* chuanguan shikuang” 《新华字典》创编史况 [The historical circumstances of the creation of the *Xinhua zidian*], in: *Chuban shiliao* 出版史料 [Publication archives] 3 (2005), 31–32, see 32.
- 148 Xiao Jialin was the first to join the Xinhua cishushe; his wife also supported their work. See Gong Mingde 龚明德, “*Xinhua zidian* chuanguan shikuang” (2005), 31.
- 149 Jin Xinxin 金欣欣, Chen Yue 陈悦, “*Xinhua zidian* bianzuan xiuding liushi nian” (2011), 48.
- 150 Liu Qinglong 刘庆隆, “*Xinhua zidian* bianxie xiuding de licheng” (2000), 280.
- 151 Zhou Zumo 周祖谟, “Wu ji’ yu *Xinhua zidian*” (1995), 23.
- 152 Liu Qinglong published articles about the *Xinhua zidian* compilation. See for example: Liu Qinglong 刘庆隆, “Ye Shengtao xiansheng he *Xinhua zidian*” (2000). See also: Liu Qinglong 刘庆隆, “*Xinhua zidian* bianxie xiuding de licheng” (2000).
- 153 Jin Xinxin 金欣欣, Chen Yue 陈悦, “*Xinhua zidian* bianzuan xiuding liushi nian” (2011), 48.

6.2.1 Compilation based on Linguistic Principles

Characteristic 1 (Compilation based on linguistic principles, scientific methods, and suited to the actual language phenomena) is a direct follow-up to Wei's discussion of morphology in connection to the *Guoyu cidian*. He clearly states that the concept of "word" should not be identified with the unit of a "square character":

中國的“字”的觀念與“詞”的觀念最好暫且不在“方塊字”單位上呆分。我們可能從“語言”的觀念培養起注意聲音的意識，然後再明白的用“詞”來標目，才可以避免了“文字障”。¹⁵⁴

It would be for the best if the Chinese idea of "character" or the idea of "word" were not be stiffly allotted to the unit of a "square character". Maybe we should nourish a sense to focus on the sound and then understand how to use the "word" as head item.¹⁵⁵ Only then we can avoid a "script blockage".

Wei Jianguo wants to ensure the fixation on graphic units does not prevent semantic units from being seen: semantic units may be single characters or even more complex words. It is from this standpoint that Wei derives that the name of the dictionary: whether it would be called a "*zidian*" or a "*cidian*" may be determined later. For the time being, they aim to include single characters as well as words (*ci*) with several characters that make up one unit expressing [one] meaning (*biaoshi yiyi de danwei* 表示意義的單位).

Wei's "Plan" in 1953 after the establishment of the PRC produced a *zidian*. Its reliance on the smallest free semantic units as lexical items make it so concise and universal. Only in the rare cases of polysyllabic morphemes are headwords longer than one character. He kept this promise with the entry "water chestnut" (*biqi*, see 6.1.2 on page 177).¹⁵⁶ Compounds found their way into the *Xinhua zidian* as glosses.

6.2.2 Ordering the Shape according to the Pronunciation

Characteristic 2 makes it clear that the dictionary should have a phonetic macrostructure. In other words, it should be ordered according to the pronunciation

154 Wei Jianguo 魏建功, "Bianji zidian jihua" (2001), 403.

155 In rhyme books, *biaomu* 標目 is often rendered as "rhyme indicating character". It can also be translated more generally as "heading". In this case, Wei Jianguo uses it as a term that neither means "character" nor "word" to neutrally convey the notion of headword or head-character for a dictionary entry. He would resort to the use of "head-character" (*zitou*) and "headword" (*citou* 詞頭) in his 1976 letters to the linguist and lexicographer Cao Xianzhuo 曹先擢 (1932-2018) on lexicography. Cf. Wei Jianguo 魏建功, "Guanyu cidian bianzuan wenti zhi Cao Xianzhuo tongzhi de liang feng xin" 關於詞典編纂問題致曹先擢同志的兩封信 [Two letters to Comrade Cao Xianzhuo about the compilation of dictionaries], in: *Wei Jianguo wenji* 魏建功文集 [Collected works of Wei Jianguo], ed. by Ye Xiaochun 叶笑春, Rong Wenmin 戎文敏, Zhou Fang 周方 and Ma Zhenxing 马镇, vol. 4, Nanjing 南京: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe 江苏教育出版社, 2001, 657-672. Cao directed the revision of the *Xinhua zidian* in 1971. See: Editorial department of *Hanzi wenhua* (*Hanzi wenhua* bianjibu 《汉字文化》编辑部, "Zhuming yuyan- wenzixuejia Cao Xianzhuo xiansheng shishi" 著名语言文字学家曹先擢先生逝世 [Famous language and script scholar Cao Xianzhuo has passed away], in: *Hanzi wenhua* 汉字文化 [Chinese character culture] 24 (2018), 16.

156 Xinhua cishushe 新華辭書社 (ed.), *Xinhua zidian* (1953), 22.

of the head-characters, not according to their classifiers or the stroke count. The *Xinhua zidian* employed Zhuyin as transcription. The 411 syllables (excluding tones, identical to the *Guoyu cidian*) in Zhuyin ordering begin with the initial [b] and proceed according to the rhymes: *ba, bo, bai, ...*, ending with ... *luan, yun, yong*. The same applies to the micro-structure: different readings of one character, represented by different glosses, are listed with Chinese numbers (*yi* 一, *er* 二, *san* 三...) and spelled out in Zhuyin. Homophones (*tongyinzi* 同音字) are listed one after the other according to their stroke count.

Furthermore, “definite listing according to the pronunciation” (*juedui yi yin pailie* 絕對以音排列) has semantic implications. Wei Jianguo makes clear in his “Plan” that the characters must be ordered according to the semantic unit (*yiyi danwei*) they display/stand for (*biaoxian* 表現). This may mean that a different reading may stand for a different meaning and, as in this example, a different word class. As example, Wei Jianguo mentions the character *hao* 好 which can be pronounced in the third or in the fourth tone. In the third tone (*hǎo*), Wei defines it as “friendly” (*hehao* 和好),¹⁵⁷ in the fourth (*hào*) it means “like/love/be fond of” (*xǐhào* 喜好). Wei Jianguo does not state this explicitly, but *hǎo* is an adjective¹⁵⁸ and *hào* is a verb. According to the “Plan”, the two would be listed separately. This was not realized in this form in the *Xinhua zidian*; both *hǎo* and *hào* find themselves as subentries in the same article, numbered with Chinese numbers.¹⁵⁹ Also his deliberations regarding characteristic 5 (see below on page 184) explain this approach and state clearly that he does not want to indicate word classes. The glosses, however, reveal the functions of the words.

In the case of compounds, however, Wei prioritizes semantics over phonetics. Wei gives the example of *gan* 乾 (dry), which appears as “ending” (*mowei* 末尾) of “polysyllabic words” (*fuyinci* 複音詞) like *doufugan* 豆腐乾 (dried tofu) and *gaogan* 糕乾 (sweet rice-flour cake). Wei sees *doufu* and *gao* as modifiers to the head *gan* and therefore wants to group the two compounds as examples to the lemma *gan*.¹⁶⁰ This was realized in the *Xinhua zidian*.¹⁶¹

Wei lists another “word made up of several characters” (*shu zi hecheng de ci* 數字合成的詞) that independently becomes one semantic unit (*duli chengwei yi yiyi danwei* 獨立成為一意義單位) and must therefore not be split up (*fenkai* 分開): *doufu* 豆腐 (tofu).¹⁶² In the dictionary, we find it as a gloss (*zhujie* 注解) in square brackets and marked with *yu* 喻 (analogy, metaphor) inside a circle. The circle assigns a metaphorically derived meaning to the head-character *fu* 腐

157 *Hǎo* is nowadays usually translated as “good”.

158 There is a controversy about whether or not Chinese has adjectives or rather “stative verbs”. I follow Huang in categorizing adjectives as distinct word classes from verbs. Cf. Huang, Shi-Zhe, “Adjectives”, in: *Encyclopedia of Chinese Language and Linguistics*, ed. by Sybesma, Rint, et al., Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2017, 106–115.

159 To be fair, it must be acknowledged that the entry *hao* finds itself as last entry with the third tone; it is followed by fourth tone entries. *Xinhua cishushe* 新華辭書社 (ed.), *Xinhua zidian* (1953), 302–303.

160 Wei Jianguo 魏建功, “Bianji zidian jihua” (2001), 403.

161 *Xinhua cishushe* 新華辭書社 (ed.), *Xinhua zidian* (1953), 252–253.

162 Wei Jianguo 魏建功, “Bianji zidian jihua” (2001), 404.

(rotten/corrupt).¹⁶³ If we look up the user's instructions, the dictionary states that the square brackets mark "compound words" (*fuheci* 複合詞); these words are then listed under the head-lemma of their "key character" (*zhongdian zi* 重點字).¹⁶⁴

6.2.3 Listing Words according to their Meaning

Characteristic 3 refers to the micro-structure within one article. As Wei Jianguo put forward in his *Guoyu cidian* review, compounds that are subentries to head-characters should be grouped semantically. If we cross-examine his approach with the example of *ba* in "banana" (as opposed to "grass", see 6.1.2 on page 173), we see two distinct entries: *bajiao* 芭蕉 as banana and *ba* 笆 directing us to the entry *liba* 籬笆 (twig fence).¹⁶⁵ This example shows that Wei did not completely keep his promise of not separating polysyllabic morphemes. Single characters that do not represent¹⁶⁶ a full morpheme are included, and direct the reader to the actual, polysyllabic entry. It should be stated that the *Xinhua zidian* is much more concise and includes fewer lexical items: many of the compound words from the *Guoyu cidian* are not found.

Some compounds, however, are found in the 1953 *Xinhua zidian*. They are not listed as lemmas but as examples. The compound *dianhua* 電話 (telephone) is one such example: the head-morpheme is *dian* 電, and the two separate glosses represent the morphemes "electricity" and "lightning". "Telephone" *dianhua* is then listed as an example to the first gloss, with "electricity" (defined in the modern language as "a kind of force" *yi zhong neng* 一種能) represented by a tilde as a placeholder: ~ *hua* ~ 話.¹⁶⁷

In 1954, Zhou Zumo, who contributed to the "Plan" but was not involved in the actual compilation, praised the *Xinhua zidian* for this clear division of glosses and examples according to the morpheme, i.e. the semantic unit. Dictionaries comprising a larger amount of compounds as subentries (Zhou mentions the *Ciyuan*, which introduced this two-level approach, the *Cihai*,¹⁶⁸ and the *Guoyu cidian* as well) do not adhere to this principle. These compound subentries grouped with a head-character are listed phonetically, and it is not clear which morphemes they represent.

The grouping of compound subentries to a head-character is still a challenge today. If we take the Chinese-German dictionary *Xin Han-De Cidian* as example, we can see that the entry "道 *dào*" begins with listing 12 different glosses

163 Xinhua cishushe 新華辭書社 (ed.), *Xinhua zidian* (1953), 108.

164 Xinhua cishushe 新華辭書社 (ed.), *Xinhua zidian* (1953), 3.

165 Note that the *Xinhua zidian* team decided to include *liba* 籬笆 instead of *bali* 芭籬 in the *Guoyu cidian*.

166 The concept that the script *represents* (units of) language is also a key aspect in Zhao Yuanren's writings. Compare for example: Zhao Yuanren 趙元任, "Yuyan gen wenzi" 語言跟文字 [Language and script], in: *Yuyan wenti* 語言問題 [Language problems], Taipei 臺北: Guoli Taiwan daxue wenxueyuan 國立臺灣大學文學院, 1959, 135–145, see 136. Here, Zhao uses the term *daibiao* 代表.

167 Xinhua cishushe 新華辭書社 (ed.), *Xinhua zidian* (1953), 135.

168 Zhou Zumo 周祖謨, "Xinhua zidian pingjie" 《新华字典》评介 [Review of the *Xinhua zidian*], in: *Zhou Zumo yuwen lunji* 周祖謨语文论集 [Collection of essays on language and script by Zhou Zumo], Shijiazhuang 石家庄: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe 河北教育出版社, 1989, 172–176, see 174.

representing just as many morphemes. Then, compound words beginning with *dao* are listed as subentries in an alphabetical order, ignoring their semantic relation. The list begins with “道白 *daobai*”, “spoken part in an opera”, in which *dao* represents the morpheme “to speak”. In the following subentry, “道班 *daoban*”, “railway/highway maintenance squad”, *dao* represents “railway” or “road”. The next subentry with the morpheme “to speak” is then found a dozen subentries below (“道乏 *daofa*”, “to thank sb. for their troubles”).¹⁶⁹

6.2.4 Dividing Characters according to Words

In characteristic 4, *yu* 語 needs to be understood as “word”. Even if the same characters appear in several lexical items, they must be listed separately since they do not represent the same morpheme. The unity of monomorphemic but polysyllabic words should be preserved. The example in the “Plan” is *dong* 東 (east), *xi* 西 (west) and *dongxi* 東西 (thing); these are three distinct “units of meaning”, otherwise known as free morphemes or words, with *dongxi* being polysyllabic. This was indeed realized in the *Xinhua zidian*.¹⁷⁰

6.2.5 Determining the Meaning via the Use

Characteristic 5, “determining the meaning via the use”¹⁷¹ calls for concrete examples of the use of a word and not for its abstract explanations as a “part of speech” (*cipin* 詞品) or “word class” (*cilei* 詞類). Wei and his colleagues reject a “formalistic” (*xingshi* 形式) in favor of a “dialectical” (*bianzheng* 辯證) logic (*luoji* 邏輯) for their dictionary in an attempt to systematically record the Chinese language and its manifestation as sound and meaning. The lack of the indication of word classes can be observed in many modern-day dictionaries. The glosses and examples in the *Xinhua zidian* provide the meaning and actually reveal information about the word class. If we take *ai* 愛 as example, we find three glosses that show that *ai* represents three different morphemes that are different parts of speech:

1. *xihuan* 喜歡: “to love”, “to like”, such as “to love the people” (~ *renmin* ~ 人民) or “to love to work” ~ *laodong* ~ 勞動. [= verb]
2. *xihuan de* 喜歡的: “beloved”, such as “beloved person” *airen* 愛人, i.e. husband or wife. [= adjective]

169 *Xin Han-De Cidian* 新漢德詞典 *Das Neue Chinesisch-Deutsche Wörterbuch*, Beijing 北京: Shangwu yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1985, 170–171.

170 *Xinhua cishushe* 新華辭書社 (ed.), *Xinhua zidian* (1953), 147, 415.

171 Wei Jiangong’s approach to semantics is similar to Ludwig Wittgenstein’s use theory of meaning. In his *Philosophische Untersuchungen* (Philosophical Investigations, published 1953), Wittgenstein states that the meaning of a word is its use. See Rehbock, Helmut, “Gebrauchstheorie der Bedeutung”, in: *Metzler Lexikon Sprache*, ed. by Glück, Helmut, and Michael Rödel, Stuttgart 5: J. B. Metzler Verlag GmbH, 2016, 223. This can be counted as one of many examples in the history of linguistics in which we cannot simply speak of a reception of Western linguistics in China. Rather, we should see it as a coincidence of linguistic advisement in a time when not only linguistics as a discipline in China underwent important developments.

3. *rongyi* 容易: “easily”, such as “this cloth easily tears” (*zhe zhong bu ai huai* 這種布愛壞).¹⁷² [= adverb]

However, it should be noted that in some instances word classes are mentioned. Take as example gloss number 4 for *yong* 用:

在名詞前，介紹後面動詞所需的材料或工具：～筆寫字。[...] ¹⁷³

[Employed] before a noun, [*yong*] indicates the material or tool needed to perform the action of the subsequent verb: to write with a pen (lit.: to use [a] pen [to] write characters). [...]

6.2.6 Broad Inclusion of the Living Language

Characteristic 6, the “living language”, is an idea from the New Culture Movement. In light of the rather recent adoption of the polysyllabic written vernacular, Wei calls for the establishment of a “scientific system for ordinary Chinese speech” (中國人民大眾語科學系統) for which the new dictionary should be the reference tool. The *Guoyu cidian* may be taken as the basis and supplemented with New Culture neologisms coined by Lu Xun, communist terminology or colloquialisms.

6.2.7 Getting to the Character via the Sound

Characteristic 7 proposes printing stressed syllables in polysyllabic words in bolder or larger fonts. This was not realized in the first *Xinhua zidian* edition.

6.2.8 Choosing Words because of their Meaning

Characteristic 8 refers to the polymorphemic words that act as glosses to the head-character. Only the most essential ones shall be included but not idioms (*chengyu*) or technical terminology. The *Xinhua zidian* only included the most essential glosses and examples, which made it a concise dictionary. Users, especially writers, were encouraged to use the dictionary as a thesaurus and to look up polysyllabic synonyms to the head-characters. Wei Jianguo probably expected some writers to be trained in the classical language, i.e. to be familiar with single characters, and to require some help with the compounds of the modern language.

6.2.9 Adapted to the Masses

Characteristic 9, the adaption to the masses, referred to lexicon, glosses, definitions and general user friendliness. With regard to the lexicon, Wei aimed to only include items in general use (*tongxing* 通行) and gloss them with the most widely accepted contemporary semantics. Ancient sources (as it is in the case of the *Hanyu da cidian* 漢語大辭典) are not quoted as glosses. Instead, the glosses

172 Xinhua cishushe 新華辭書社 (ed.), *Xinhua zidian* (1953), 618–619.

173 Xinhua cishushe 新華辭書社 (ed.), *Xinhua zidian* (1953), 700.

were formulated in the vernacular language. The entry *zou* 走 (to walk) is a good illustration of the truly innovative nature of the glosses and definitions. The gloss provides the polymorphemic modern term for “to walk”: *zoulu* 走路. The definition is a veritable explanation in the modern spoken language: “moving forward by alternately setting the two feet [in front of each other]” (兩腳交換向前移動).¹⁷⁴ The dictionary was indeed intended as learner’s tool for students and everyone. Judging from the continued success of the *Xinhua zidian* to the present day, especially among primary school students, this idea was definitely implemented.

6.2.10 Appendix

Characteristic 10, the inclusion of an appendix, is not a novel idea of Wei and his colleagues. Appendices with linguistic or lexicographical information have existed in Chinese dictionaries for at least a couple of hundred years or longer.¹⁷⁵

An appendix with useful information for modern daily life, however, is a novelty introduced in the 20th century. Yang Wenquan points out that the “New dictionary” (*Xin zidian* 新字典), first published in 1912 by a seven-person editing team headed by Lu Erkui, was the first monolingual Chinese dictionary to include encyclopedic information in the appendix. The *Xin zidian* was based on the *Kangxi zidian*, and its appendix was to become the “prototype” or “model” (*chuxing* 雛型) for later appendices.¹⁷⁶ The appendix included units of measurement and currency of China and abroad, most notably Western countries and Russia, and a chronological table of Chinese history, beginning with the Yellow emperor (the year *Huangdi* 黃帝 100 is dated to the year 4608 before the Republic *Minguo* 民國) and ending with 1912 (*Minguo yuan* 民國元, i.e. the first year of the Republic). There are no events but just era names.¹⁷⁷ The appendix of the *Xin zidian* is followed by a blank printing error table (*kanwu biao* 勘誤表) the user can fill in and a “supplement” (*bubian* 補編) with “relatively rare characters” (*jiao pi zhi* 較僻之字).¹⁷⁸

Nevertheless, it should be said that earlier bilingual dictionaries had encyclopedic appendices. Yong and Peng¹⁷⁹ mention Baller’s 1900 dictionary whose

174 Xinhua cishushe 新華辭書社 (ed.), *Xinhua zidian* (1953), 573.

175 See, for example Liu Yeqiu 刘叶秋, *Zhongguo zidian shilüe* (1992), 88, 128.

176 Yang Wenquan 楊文全, *Jin bai nian de Zhongguo Hanyu yuwen cidian* (2000), 62.

177 Lu Erkui 路爾奎 et al. (ed.), *Xin Zidian* 新字典 [New Dictionary], Shanghai 上海: Shangwu yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1912, “appendix” *fulu* 附錄.

178 See the “notes on the use” (*liyan* 例言) of the dictionary: Lu Erkui 路爾奎 et al. (ed.), *Xin Zidian* (1912), 1. Cf. also Feng Lu 馮璐, “20 shiji chuqi Zhong Han zidian de bianzuan ji tedian - yi Zhong, Han *Xin Zidian* wei li” 20 世紀初期中韓字典的編撰及特點——以中、韓《新字典》為例 [An Overview Characteristics of Chinese New Dictionary and Korean New Dictionary in the Early 20th Century – Take Chinese New Dictionary and Korean New Dictionary as an Example [sic!]], in: *Xiandai Yuwen* 現代語文 [*Modern Chinese*] 10 (2019), 14–19, see 16. The supplement includes rare and obsolete characters like the old form 下 (= *xia* 下) for “below”, “under”.

179 Yong, Heming, and Jing Peng, *Chinese lexicography: A history from 1046 BC to AD 1911* (2008). It must be stressed that Yong and Peng’s publication, while a laudable attempt at the first comprehensive and exhaustive overview of the history of Chinese lexicography (including bilingual lexicography by

appendix provides “Selected passages from the Four Books, and Standard Commentary of Chu-hsi 四書朱熹集註”, chronological tables listing the dynasties, reign names, cyclical characters for the years, Chinese zodiacal constellations, solar terms, official ranks, and other information. The appendix is followed by a “Radical Index”.¹⁸⁰

While not a novelty at all, the appendix of the first *Xinhua zidian* is still very voluminous in comparison to other contemporary dictionaries. It seems that it serves not only descriptive but also prescriptive purposes. The linguistic and encyclopedic information given in the index’s 132 pages is:

1. Table of Zhuyin zimu (注音字母表)
2. Usage of punctuation (標點符號用法)
While punctuation in a broad sense was used since pre-imperial times, Western punctuation was received in the 19th century, and the 20th century witnessed a standardization of the punctuation.¹⁸¹
3. Common Program of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (中國人民政治協商會議共同綱領)
The seven articles were passed on September 29, 1949 and served as the provisional constitution until 1954.
4. Scheme of the PRC administrative areas and districts (中華人民共和國行政區劃)
This is a list of the provinces and their capitals. However it is not a map.
5. Chronological timeline of Chinese historical events according to the Western [i.e. Christian/Gregorian] calendar 中國歷代紀元公元紀年表
The timeline begins 2698 BC with the Yellow Emperor Huangdi 黃帝. It lists the dynasties and era names (*nianhao* 年號) and is followed by a phonetic index to the era names. It ends with the establishment of the PRC on October 1st, 1949 and includes an era name index.
6. Table with the capitals, surface area and population of “all” countries (各國首都、面積、人口一覽表)
7. Table with standard currency of “all” countries (各國本位幣名一覽表)

Westerners, which is different to the existing works in Chinese), is highly problematic. Bottéro, and to a lesser extent Pálfi and Nielsen, pointed out numerous methodical and factual inaccuracies. Cf. Bottéro, Françoise, “Heming Yong & Jing Peng (2008). *Chinese lexicography: a history from 1046 BC to AD 1911*”, in: *Cahiers de linguistique – Asie orientale* 39 1 (2010), 81–94. See also Pálfi, Loránd-Levente, and Bent Nielsen, “Heming Yong & Jing Peng. *Chinese Lexicography: A History from 1046 BC to AD 1911*”, in: *International Journal of Lexicography* 22.3, 335–344.

180 Baller, F. W. [Frederick William], *An Analytical Chinese-English Dictionary*, Shanghai: China Inland Mission and American Presbyterian Mission Press, 1900, 459ff. Accessed online (Sept. 2, 2020): <https://archive.org/details/cu31924023354743>.

181 See: Richter, Mathias, “Punctuation, Premodern”, in: *Encyclopedia of Chinese Language and Linguistics*, ed. by Sybesma, Rint, et al., vol. 4, Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2017, 46–55. and Stryjewska, Anna, “Punctuation, Modern”, in: *Encyclopedia of Chinese Language and Linguistics*, ed. by Sybesma, Rint, et al., vol. 3, Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2017, 494–501. Also Behr, Wolfgang, and Bernhard Führer, “Einführende Notizen zum Lesen in China mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Frühzeit”, in: *Aspekte des Lesens in China in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart. Referate der Jahrestagung 2001 der Deutschen Vereinigung für Chinastudien (DVCS)*, ed. by Führer, Bernhard, Bochum: Projekt Verlag, 2005, 1–42. (esp. p. 33 ff) illustrate how punctuation was used since Shang 商 times [ca. 18th–11th century BCE], contrary to popular conception.

8. Table with important commemoration days and holidays (重要紀念日及節日表)
9. Table with Chinese and foreign units of measurement (中外度量衡表)
10. Table of chemical elements (化學元素表)

This table of the chemical elements is in list form, and not yet structured like the periodic table of elements of today where the position of the items reflects their atomic structure. Later editions of the *Xinhua zidian* included the graphically standardized periodic table in their index.

Wei Jiangong and his colleagues originally stated in their “Plan to compile a dictionary” that they wanted to include even more linguistic information, such as kinship addresses in different dialects. Furthermore, the indices that stand on their own and are not part of the appendix were listed as appendix items in the “Plan”. Wei clearly stated that since he wished to abide strictly by the linguistic unit in the main body, the encyclopedic information had to be presented separately. It is safe to say that Wei’s plan was realized and that the appendix not only catered to the “convenience” (*fangbian* 方便) of the user,¹⁸² but also to the legitimacy of the dictionary as standard reference work and tool of not only language prescription but also promotion of state policy.

6.3 The *Xinhua Zidian* in Historical Perspective

Apparently, the *Xinhua zidian* was not immediately well-received by potential users. In 1954, an edition which was not ordered phonetically was published. It was instead “ordered [according to] the section headers” (*bushou pailie* 部首排列).¹⁸³ It was easier to use for those who memorized the Kangxi radicals but were not familiar enough with the spoken standard language to search for entries in the phonetically arranged book at a satisfying speed. Many new and revised editions followed, which moved away from the direction of Wei Jiangong’s first edition. Wei himself was only involved once again as an advisor in the publication of the 1971 edition.¹⁸⁴

The role of the *Xinhua zidian* for pupils in the PRC until today cannot be underestimated. It has remained an unsurpassed compromise between conciseness and universality. This was made possible by Wei Jiangong’s narrow definition of the word. The main body of the first *Xinhua zidian* edition has 700 pages; more recent editions are even more compact thanks to improvements in the paper and binding technology. The first edition’s 6840 entries (*tiao* 條, or “articles”), all single-morpheme words, contain at the micro-level an even larger number of compounds.

182 Wei Jiangong 魏建功, “Bianji zidian jihua” (2001), 408.

183 Xinhua cishushe 新華辭書社 (ed.), *Bushou pailie Xinhua zidian* 部首排列新華字典 [New China dictionary arranged according to the section headers], Beijing 北京: Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe 人民教育出版社, 1954.

184 Ma Si 马嘶, *Yidai zongshi Wei Jiangong* (2007), 193.

Admittedly, the concept of “word” nowadays is more a colloquial and rather intuitively used term.¹⁸⁵ In linguistic science, it is mostly discarded in favor of concepts like lexeme or morpheme. For Wei Jiangong and other linguists of the first half and mid-20th century, however, the concept of the word still played a decisive role, partly due to the fact that technical terminology for the science of language was still being created. Furthermore, the discussion of wordhood has yielded results for lexicography. While Henning Klöter rightfully argued that the distinction between character-dictionaries (*zidian*) and “word”-dictionaries (*cidian*) has been exaggerated, the *cidian* usually just collecting items with any character length, Wei’s discussion of the word as semantic unit has led him to compile a free-morpheme-dictionary that is both comprehensive and concise. The multi-level approach introduced to monolingual Chinese lexicography by the *Ciyuan* and the phonetic sorting popularized by the *Guoyu cidian* developed further by Wei and his compilation team resulted in the first universal pocket dictionary.

In contrast to Wei’s focus on the “semantic unit”, Klöter believes the main driving force behind Chinese lexicographical innovation is alphabetically arranged bilingual dictionaries compiled by missionaries. The phonetic transcription and the alphabetical sorting is certainly also one of Wei Jiangong’s key concerns. However, just as Klöter concluded, the exposure to Western lexicographic traditions did not at all lead to a complete rejection of the Chinese tradition. Instead, as the example of Wei Jiangong and the *Xinhua zidian* illustrates, it led to a hybridization. The digraphic (i.e. characters and transcription, which in the modern-day PRC comprises Hanyu Pinyin) two-level approach preserves the central role of the Chinese character.¹⁸⁶ Similar to other endeavors of language prescription where Wei Jiangong was involved, he and his colleagues strove to adequately conceptualize the Chinese language and script. This was with a view to achieve suitable methods of not only *describing* but also *prescribing* the use of language and script. Suitable “foreign” methodologies were utilized and traditional philological approaches were not only preserved but also refined.

185 Bußmann, Hadumod, “Wort”, in: *Lexikon der Sprachwissenschaft*, Stuttgart: Kröner, 2008, 794, see 794.

186 Klöter, Henning, “China from c. 1700” (2019), 333, 338-339.

