Presenting Knowledge System of International Trade Terms in Business English Learners' Dictionaries*

HE Jia-ning, ZHOU Zhi-yi, XIE Zi-jun, WU Ming-hui, XU Rong

School of English for International Business, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, Guangzhou, Guangdong, China

Dictionaries should present business encyclopedic knowledge as well as business linguistic knowledge. This paper, taking Incoterms for international trade as an example (with "CIF" as the case for analysis), introduces 7 types of dictionary structures (overall structure, frame structure/megastructure, macrostructure, microstructure, distribution structure, cross-reference structure/mediostructure and access structure), summarizes the knowledge system of international trade terms (consisting of "international trade", "sets of rules of international trade terms", "Incoterms® 2010", and "CIF"), and illustrates the methods of systematically presenting the knowledge system of international trade terms through dictionary structures in an English-English-Chinese bilingualized business English learners' dictionary with *Oxford Business English Dictionary for Learners of English* (New Edition) as a reference. Such presentation is intended for enhancing business English learners as dictionary users to grasp the knowledge of international trade terms as a whole.

Keywords: business English learners' dictionary (BELD), dictionary structure, terminological knowledge system, international trade term, knowledge presentation, business English

1. Introduction

In order to learn business English (BE) in an efficient and effective way, BE learners are required to master a large BE vocabulary. BE learners' dictionaries (BELDs) are useful tools for this requirement. One of the main differences between BELDs and general English learners' dictionaries lies in their vocabularies in that BE vocabulary contains not only business linguistic knowledge but also business encyclopedic knowledge which serves as the vital part in BELDs. Knowledge is embodied in terms, as in the case of trade terms in business. Therefore, it is worth discussing how to present knowledge system of international trade terms in BELDs so as to help BE learners to build a business knowledge system.

Previous studies on BELDs mainly focused on (1) experience-based compilation of BELDs, including the selection of information on articles[1] in BELDs (De Cock, 2006), the standards, principles and methods of lemma translation (Li & He, 2013), and the effect of BELDs on BE learning and BE translation (Zhou, 2016), (2) corpus-assisted compilation of BELDs, including advantages of corpora in compiling BELDs, and methods of and suggestions for further BE corpus construction (Hu & He, 2013), and (3) investigation of learners' use of BELDs, including the status quo and problems using BELDs by BE learners at higher vocational colleges (Xie, 2015).

However, it is found that there is not a study on presentation of business knowledge in BELDs. This paper, taking an international trade[2] term "CIF" (Cost, Insurance and Freight) as an example, aims to discuss the appropriate means to present the knowledge system of international trade terms in a proposed English-English-Chinese bilingualized BELD with *Oxford Business English Dictionary for Learners of English (New Edition)* (*Oxford BELD*) (Parkinson & Li, 2011) as a reference. The following three questions are to be answered: (1) What are the dictionary structures? (2) What is the knowledge system of international trade terms? (3) How to present knowledge system of international trade terms through dictionary structures?

2. Dictionary Structures

There are mainly 7 types of dictionary structures in a dictionary, namely overall structure, frame structure/megastructure, macrostructure, microstructure, distribution structure, cross-reference structure/mediostructure and access structure (Bergenholtz & Tarp, 1995, p. 188; Hartmann & James, 1998, p. 93; Zhang, 2008) (See Figure 2).

Overall structure is the overall structural model of a dictionary designed in accordance with the objective and principles of compiling the dictionary, shaping the dictionary's overall scale and layout (Zhang, 2008).

Frame structure is "the overall structure of all the components constituting the dictionary" (Bergenholtz & Tarp, 1995, p. 188). It is also called megastructure which consists of "the totality of the component parts of a reference work" (Hartmann & James, 1998, p. 93) comprising macrostructure and outside matter[3] (front matter, middle matter and back matter) (Hartmann & James, 1998, p. 93). Frame structure/megastructure is the organizational form or layout of the information in a dictionary (Zhang, 2008).

Macrostructure is the overall word list structure (Hartmann & James, 1998, p. 91), or the relative arrangement of articles in a dictionary (Svensén, 1993, p. 223). It can be divided into alphabetic macrostructure and systematic macrostructure (Bergenholtz & Tarp, 1995, pp. 190-199).

Microstructure, is the structure of the information commented on the lemma (Bergenholtz & Tarp, 1995, p. 200) and thus is the total set of information items following the lemma (Hausmann & Wiegand, 1989), providing detailed information about the headword on its formal and semantic properties (Hartmann & James, 1998, p. 94). It may contain grammatical information, pronunciations, collocations, synonyms, antonyms, examples,

---

[1] As the proposed BELD is an encyclopedic dictionary, the term "article(s)" (usually in an encyclopedia or an encyclopedic dictionary) is used throughout this paper instead of "entry(ies)" (usually in a dictionary) (see Hartmann & James, 1998, p. 8).
[2] In this paper "international trade" is used to refer to "international trade practice".
[3] Outside matter is an "overall term for dictionary components which are not part of the word list" (Bergenholtz & Tarp, 1995, p. 15).

equivalents, encyclopedic notes, encyclopedic labels, and cross-references (Bergenholtz & Tarp, 1995, pp. 200-211).

Distribution structure refers to "the structure of the linguistic and encyclopedic information distributed across or occurring in different places in the dictionary" (Bergenholtz & Tarp, 1995, p. 188).

Cross-reference structure, also called mediostructure (Nielsen, 1999), refers to the network of cross-references (Hartmann & James, 1998, p. 32). It includes dictionary-internal cross-references within a dictionary and dictionary-external cross-references between a dictionary and the resources outside the dictionary (Bergenholtz & Tarp, 1995, p. 215).

Access structure refers to "the structure of the indicators directing the user into the dictionary and further on to the information required" (Bergenholtz & Tarp, 1995, p. 188), allowing "the user to search for a particular item of information" (Hartmann & James, 1998, p. 3). It has the outer access structure and the inner access structure. The former directs the user to the lemma and the latter to the information inside the dictionary article (Hausmann & Wiegand, 1989; Bergenholtz & Tarp, 1995, p. 219).

3. Knowledge System of International Trade Terms

The knowledge system of international trade terms consists of (1) "international trade" serving as the background knowledge, (2) "sets of rules of international trade terms", (3) "Incoterms® 2010" (the main target discussed in this paper), and (4) the "CIF" term (the case for analysis in this paper) (See Figure 1).
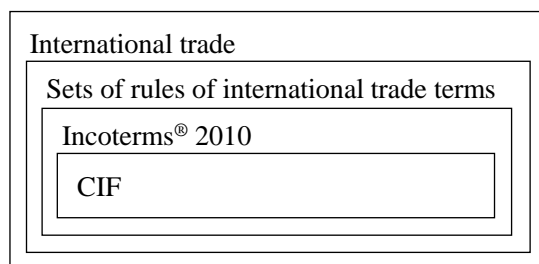

Figure 1. Knowledge system of international trade terms.

(1) International Trade

The main content of international trade was generalized from 3 textbooks *International Trade Practice* (Third Edition) (Zhou, Wang, & Xu, 2015), *Practice of International Trade* (Second Edition) (Xie, 2015), and *International Trade Practice* (Cheng & Bai, 2017). It consists mainly of 9 parts: (1) introduction, (2) international trade terms, (3) negotiation, (4) payment, (5) documentation, (6) transportation, (7) insurance, (8) inspection, claim, force majeure and arbitration, and (9) cross-border E-commerce.

(2) Sets of Rules of International Trade Terms

Three typical sets of rules of international trade terms are employed in international trade: "Warsaw-Oxford Rules 1932", "Revised American Foreign Trade Definitions 1941" and "International Rules for the Interpretation of Trade Terms 2010" (Incoterms® 2010). The first set is concerned with CIF contracts (Berman, 1965). The second set consists of 6 terms, namely Ex Point of Origin, FOB, FAS, C&F, CIF, and Ex Dock, which "laid the ground for easier trading communication especially in the area of North America" (Zhou, Wang, & Xu, 2015, p.

31). The third set aims to "provide internationally accepted definitions and rules of interpretation for most common commercial terms used in contracts for the sale of goods."[4]

(3) Incoterms® 2010

"Incoterms® 2010", a universally applied rule in international trade, helps "traders avoid costly misunderstandings by clarifying the tasks, costs and risks involved in the delivery of goods from sellers to buyers."[5] It comprises 11 trade terms: EXW (the "E" group term), FCA, FAS, FOB (the "F" group terms), CFR, CIF, CPT, CIP (the "C" group terms), DAT, DAP, DDP (the "D" group terms) (Zhou, Wang, & Xu, 2015, p. 36).

(4) CIF

"CIF" is an important and commonly-used international trade term and it "means that the seller delivers the goods on board the vessel or procures the goods already so delivered."[6] The term stipulates the transfer of and insurance against the risk of loss of or damage to the goods, the costs and freight to transport the goods to the named port of destination, etc.[7]

4. Methods of Presentation in BELDs

(1) Overall Comparison

Taking the term "CIF" of Incoterms as an example, Table 1 compares the presentation of knowledge system of international trade terms in the renowned *Oxford BELD* and a proposed BELD which aims to better present the knowledge system.

Table 1

Presentation of Knowledge System of International Trade Terms in Oxford BELD *and a Proposed BELD*

Dictionaries / Knowledge system	*Oxford BELD*		Proposed BELD	
	Included	Structures	Included	Structures
Trade term: CIF	√	Frame Structure/ Megastructure (Macrostructure); Microstructure	√	Frame Structure/ Megastructure (Macrostructure); Microstructure
Incoterms 2000/ Incoterms® 2010	√	Frame Structure/ Megastructure (Outside matter [Middle matter])	√	Frame Structure /Megastructure (Outside matter [Middle matter])
Sets of rules of international trade terms	×	/	√	Frame Structure /Megastructure (Outside matter [Back matter])
International trade	×	/	√	Frame Structure /Megastructure (Outside matter [Back matter])

---

[4] https://iccwbo.org/resources-for-business/incoterms-rules/ (Accessed: July 24, 2018)
[5] https://iccwbo.org/resources-for-business/incoterms-rules/ (Accessed: July 24, 2018)
[6] https://iccwbo.org/resources-for-business/incoterms-rules/incoterms-rules-2010/ (Accessed: July 24, 2018)
[7] https://iccwbo.org/resources-for-business/incoterms-rules/incoterms-rules-2010/ (Accessed: July 24, 2018)

(2) Presentation in *Oxford BELD*

Oxford BELD presents the term "CIF" in both the macrostructure and the microstructure. It also presents all the trade terms of Incoterms 2000 in the form of a table in the middle matter (Parkinson & Li, 2011, pp. S8-S9), offering different aspects of information on "CIF" and trying to illustrate differences among the trade terms. In the microstructure, the dictionary explains "CIF" as "COST, INSURANCE AND FREIGHT" which is explained briefly in both English and Chinese in the article "cost, insurance and freight", including the grammatical information (*phrase*), subject field (*Trade*), English definition, Chinese equivalents (with an explanation of the English definition), English example with Chinese translation, and a cross-reference to INCOTERM (Parkinson & Li, 2011, p. 189). However, the "sets of rules of international trade terms" and "international trade" have not been covered in *Oxford BELD*.

(3) Presentation in a Proposed BELD

Our proposed BELD will cover all the trade terms and display them in the dictionary structures which are assumed to be the appropriate structures in the dictionary as shown in Table 1 and Figure 2. The term "CIF" is to be placed in the macrostructure in the form of a linguistic sign. The more comprehensive and detailed information on the term "CIF" is to be placed in the microstructure (See He, 2015). The information is composed of both linguistic information such as subject label(s), equivalent(s), translation(s), example(s), collocation(s) and so on, and encyclopedic information introducing the detailed knowledge about the term "CIF" and its relationship with the other parts of the knowledge system of the international trade terms within the BELD and beyond.

A summary of all the 11 terms of Incoterms® 2010 are to be presented in the outside matter (middle matter). The "sets of rules of international trade terms" are to be put in the outside matter (back matter) in the form of an appendix, so is the "international trade" comprising the 9 parts listed above.

In addition, from the perspective of distribution structure, all the related parts of knowledge system of international trade terms are distributed and inserted into the appropriate places based upon the common practice of dictionary making, the compilers' judgement, and the users' needs of and preferences to consulting dictionaries.

And the cross-reference structure/mediostructure is set to direct the users, step by step, from the term ("CIF") they look up to the Incoterms® 2010, then to the "sets of rules of international trade terms", finally to the "international trade", and even to those resources outside the dictionary like other dictionaries, books or websites which can help the users to broaden the knowledge of international trade terms not included in the proposed BELD. At the same time, cross-references are to be made among the 11 trade terms, the "sets of rules of international trade terms", and between all these information items and the "international trade" which is planned to be placed in the back matter. This will establish a comprehensive and complete knowledge system of international trade terms in the dictionary.

What's more, in the access structure, besides the macrostructure which has the function of accessing the lemmata in the dictionary and the "table of contents" which provides the guides to the components on knowledge system of international trade terms, more directors such as "indexes" in the outside matter (back matter) will be set to guide the users to the information on knowledge system of international trade terms which they are looking for. All these will form a multiple means for accessing the desired information in the dictionary.

The above presentation of knowledge system of international trade terms through dictionary structures in the proposed BELD is illustrated as follows:
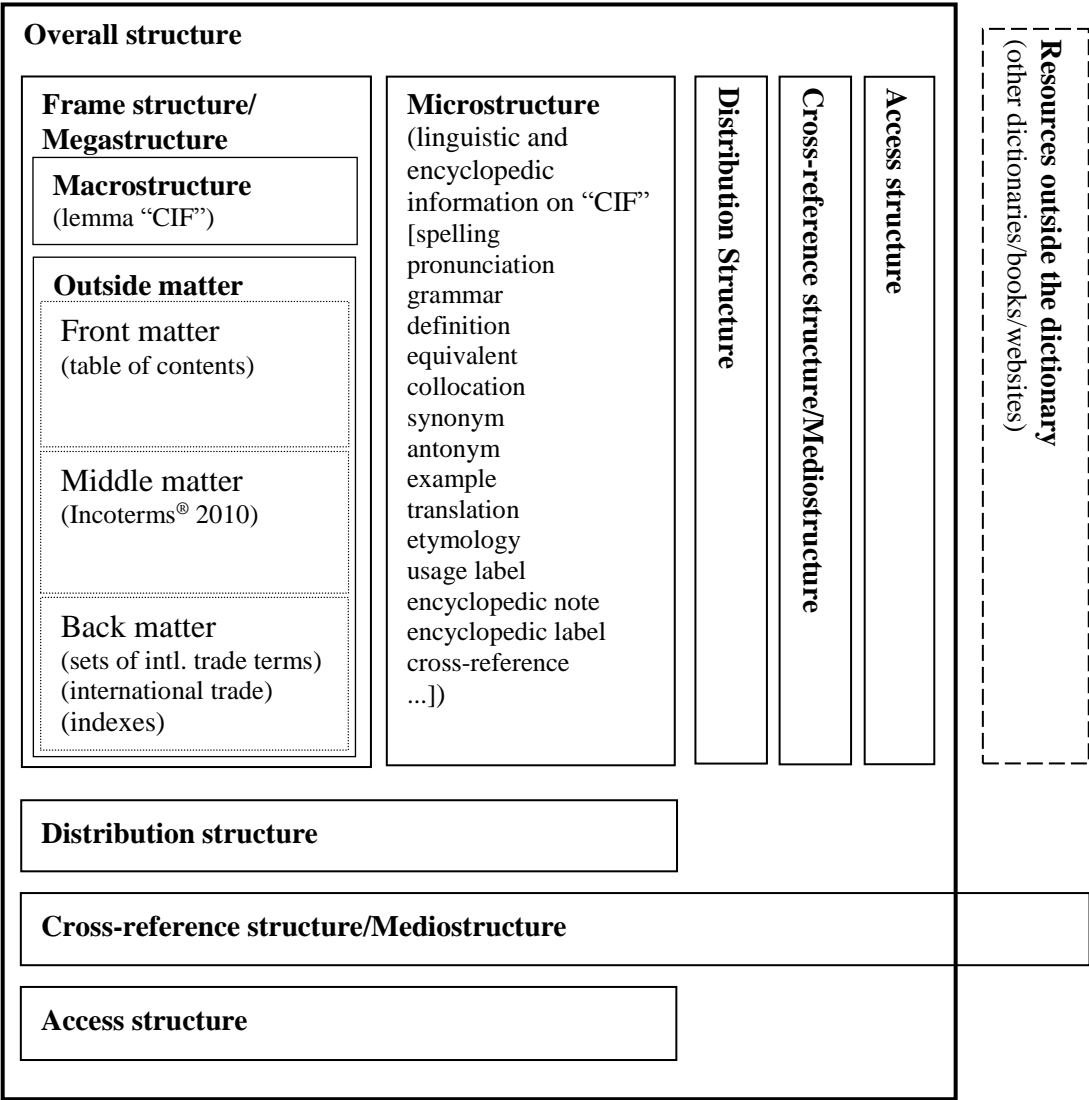

Figure 2. Presentation of knowledge system of international trade terms through dictionary structures.

In Figure 2, the overall structure is the comprehensive design of the proposed BELD and it comprises 6 dictionary structures (frame structure/megastructure, macrostructure, microstructure, distribution structure, cross-reference structure/mediostructure, and access structure) and outside matter (which forms a sub-category of the frame structure/megastructure together with a macrostructure). The distribution structure, cross-reference structure/mediostructure and access structure are at work both horizontally and vertically, with the cross-reference structure/mediostructure extending from the dictionary to the resources outside the dictionary.

5. Conclusion

How to display the terminological knowledge system through dictionary structures in BELDs is of great significance for BE learners. This paper introduces dictionary structures and knowledge system of international trade terms and then illustrates the methods of systematically presenting the knowledge of international trade terms in a proposed BELD through their structures. Such presentation aims at enhancing users to master the knowledge system of international trade terms by consulting and even reading the BELD which acts as a tool for learning both business language and business per se.

References

Bergenholtz, H., & Tarp, S. (1995). *Manual of specialised lexicography: The preparation of specialised dictionaries*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Berman, H. J. (1965). The uniform law on international sale of goods: A constructive critique. *Law and Contemporary Problems, 30*(2), 354-369.

Cheng, Y., & Bai, H. (2017). *International trade practice*. Beijing: Beijing Institute Technology.

De Cock, S. (2006). Getting down to business: Monolingual learners' dictionaries and business. In E. Corino, C. Marello, & C. Onesti (Eds.), *Proceedings XII European Association for Lexicography (EURALEX) International Congress* (pp. 819-824). Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso.

Hartmann, R. R. K., & James, G. (1998). *Dictionary of lexicography*. London: Routledge.

Hausmann , F. J., & Wiegand, H. E. (1989). Component parts and structures of general monolingual dictionaries: A survey. In F. J. Hausmann, H. E. Wiegand, & L. Zgusta (Eds.), *Wörterbücher/Dictionaries/Dictionnaires* (pp. 328-360). Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

He, J. (2015). Principles and methods of defining trade terms: Case study on CIF. *China Terminology, 15*(1), 15-18+37.

Hu, C., & He, J. (2013). A corpus-based study of business English lexicography for English learners: A critical review of *Oxford business English dictionary for learners of English*. *Journal of Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, 24*(6), 38-41+91.

Li, B., & He, J. (2013). A study on translation of headwords in business English learners' dictionaries—Based on *Oxford business English dictionary for learners of English*. *Journal of Changsha Railway University* (Social Sciences Edition)*, 14*(2), 160-162.

Nielsen, S. (1999) Mediostructures in bilingual LSP dictionaries. *Lexicographica: International Annual for Lexicography*, *15*, 90-113.

Parkinson, D., & Li, J. (Trans.). (2011). *Oxford business English dictionary for learners of English* (New Edition). Beijing/Oxford: Huaxia Publishing House/Oxford University Press.

Svensén, B. (1993). *Practical lexicography: Principles and methods of dictionary-making*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Xie, G. (2015). *Practice of international trade* (Second Edition). Beijing: Tsinghua University Press.

Xie, Y. (2015). An investigation into dictionary use in the process of English writing by business English majors in higher vocational education. *Journal of Hubei Radio & Television University, 35*(5), 31-34.

Zhang, Y. (2008). Constructing the mediostructure and its network in learners' dictionaries. *Modern Foreign Languages*, *31*(4), 360-368.

Zhou, R., Wang, X., & Xu, Y. (2015). *International trade practice* (Third Edition). Beijing: University of International Business and Economics Press.

Zhou, X. (2016). Business English dictionaries and their effect on business translation learning. *Journal of Kaifeng Institute of Education, 36*(11), 67-68.