Children's Dictionaries as a Form of Edutainment? User-orientation, Engagement and Proximity for Learning

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Abstract

This paper addresses the construction of ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings (Halliday 1985) in children's dictionaries that are primarily a form of edutainment (Buckingham and Scanlon 2002). Working against the background of research into multimodal lexicography (Lew 2010; Chan 2011; Liu 2015; 2017) in the electronic dictionary age (De Schryver 2003; Tarp 2008; Granger 2012), I shall concentrate on the interplay of content, form and composition space in the *Oxford Children's Dictionary* (2015) and the *Oxford Illustrated Children's Dictionary* (2018) vis-à-vis other paper dictionaries within the family. As will be seen, joint compositions of intentionally co-present text and images interact in diverse ways and to different extents in the interest of user-orientation on the content level, guidance, and user-engagement and proximity on the textual and interpersonal levels.

Keywords: children's dictionaries, edutainment, engagement, proximity, user-orientation.

1. Introduction

This paper discusses the construction of ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions (Halliday 1985) in children's dictionaries that are primarily a form of edutainment (Buckingham and Scanlon 2002) – the *Oxford Children's Dictionary* (2015; OCD7) and the *Oxford Illustrated Children's Dictionary* (2018; OICD2), both suitable for age 8+.

OCD7 and OICD2 are multimodal paper dictionaries (Lew 2010) and mixed-media products that target both parents and children. In line with the ever-expanding domestic market for the curricularisation of family life and education at the home (Walkerdine and Lucey 1989, in Buckingham and Scanlon 2002: 6), they come

with free enhancing content in the form of online advice for parents and teachers, and downloadable fun activities for children (e.g., Oxford Owl and Oxford Dictionaries for Children). Meanwhile, engaging with the young user, entertaining and educating is an essential preliminary in, and a key concomitant to, communicating lexicographical meaning in the paper publication.

While I have to set aside discussion of fun activities, games and play, there is one side to entertainment that is especially relevant to my analysis. That is, the inclusion of proximity and associative devices, elements of pleasure and surprise, and stimuli that arouse motivational states such as curiosity – which interact in order to evoke situational interest and contribute to form more stable individual interest. Importantly, "[w]hen interest is high, focusing attention and cognitive activity feel relatively effortless" (Seel ed. 2012: SITUATIONAL INTEREST).

In this context, I look at the ways in which OCD7 and OICD2 construct composition space and text-image relations, form and content. After providing working definitions for key terms in multimodal lexicography (Lew 2010; Chan 2011; Liu 2015; 2017) in section 2, I therefore briefly consider, in section 3, textual meaning and composition space. In section 4 I turn to intertextual and ideational meanings, focusing on verbal and visual *explanations* (i.e., definitions and examples, drawings and pictures; Moon 2016: 125ff.). Without any intention of providing a comprehensive review of OCD7 and OICD2, a restricted number of instantiations along the dimensions of space, form and content have been semi-randomly selected as representative of their approach to meaning multiplication. These are variously compared and contrasted with the approach taken in an earlier edition (OCD3 – *Oxford Children's Dictionary*, 1993), and in other Oxford Dictionaries for Children currently on the market: for age 5+: OFD4 – *Oxford First Dictionary* (2018); for age 7+: OJID4 – *Oxford Junior Illustrated Dictionary* (2018); for age 8+, OPD7 – *Oxford Primary Dictionary* (2018), which has many of the same explanations as found in OCD7 and OICD2. I proceed on the assumption that in the highly competitive market of children's reference tools and information (e-)books, diversity across dictionaries correlates with reflection on the national curriculum and is evidence of the diversity inherent in the specific user profiles (cognitive age, experience and knowledge background), situations,

needs and goals (Tarp 2008). In this context, I draw some preliminary conclusions about best practice in the Oxford family of children's dictionaries in section 5.

2. Key terms

An important function of children's dictionaries is to generate motivation among their users to look up and research unfamiliar words at home, whenever they encounter any. Meanwhile, it is widely acknowledged that children are now becoming increasingly visually sophisticated users and that reference tools must appeal more as multimodal forms of edutainment. On these grounds, the Oxford paper dictionaries play on the interaction of verbal (written) and visual modes.

This is where multimodal lexicography (Lew 2010; Chan 2011; Liu 2015; 2017) comes in handy. Taking inspiration from Halliday's (1985) work in Systemic-Functional Linguistics, multimodal lexicography posits three closely intertwined and intrinsically related metafunctions – ideational, for the content domain; interpersonal, regarding addresser-addressee interaction (form), and textual, about the distribution of information in discourse (space) – and concentrates on their construction and diverse interaction in different semiotic modes (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006; Unsworth 2006).

The same semiotic device may serve multiple functions. For instance, colour can convey ideational meaning, stir emotions, or help frame and foreground elements in space (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006). Moving away from drab, monotone black and white, OCD7, OICD2, OFD4 and OJID4 thus use polychromatic colour schemes in diverse ways[1], e.g., for pictorial images, photographs and other semiotic devices that have textual meanings in the composition space.

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[1] Because it was not possible to replicate images and two-page spreads, I describe visual devices and images as the argument unfolds. Individual articles are given in examples that only approximate the original typography; images are described in square brackets. By doing so, it is hoped that the reader can still get a feel for what visuals can do in the dictionaries.

2.1. Ideational meanings

As regards ideational meanings, one important point concerns user-orientation, or the ability to select and present meaningful information, in order to connect with the user.

The main emphasis here lies on written lexicographical definitions and (mutually supporting) visuals within the headword's microstructure (taking Bateman's multimodal perspective, "modules") (2008: 102). Within Liu's (2015: 219-222) framework of analysis (based on Unsworth 2006; Chan 2011), individual entries in OCD7 and OICD2 almost exclusively illustrate the case of "co-occurring" texts and images, with images qualifying as equivalents, expositions, and exemplifications. To take some examples, (1a-b) are cases of "equivalence"; the images in (2a-b) serve as "expositions", which reinforce the information offered by the text; (3a-b), instead, serve as "exemplifications", with a class-member relationship to the text and different degrees of generality.

(1a) **boat** *noun* a vehicle designed to float and travel on water
[Drawing of a boat; medium visual modality; top-bottom arrangement] (OCD7: BOAT, *noun*)
(1b) **fighter** *noun*
1 someone who fights
2 a fast military plane that attacks other aircraft
[High-modality colour photograph of a flying fighter; top-bottom arrangement]
(OICD2: FIGHTER, *noun*)
(2a) **chess** *noun* a game for two players played with sixteen pieces each on a board of 64 squares
[Naturalistic, picture-like colour drawing of the two opponent kings, black and white, as the most important pieces in the game of chess; top-bottom arrangement] (OCD7: CHESS, *noun*)
(2b) **salmon** *noun* (**salmon**)
a large fish with pink flesh, used for food
[High visual modality; colour image of a salmon swimming upstream during the salmon run; top-bottom and left-right arrangement as border image for subsequent articles; text wrapping; flowing water along the bottom margin as framing passing image] (OICD2: SALMON, *noun*)
(3a) **dog** *noun* a four-legged animal that barks, often kept as a pet

[High visual modality colour image of a Rough Collie dog; top-bottom arrangement within the module, with neat margins] (OCD7: DOG, *noun*)
(3b) **dog** *noun*
a four-legged animal that barks, often kept as a pet
[High visual modality image of a Rough Collie dog; left-right arrangement, with text wrapping and border image on the right] (OICD2: DOG, *noun*)

In co-occurring "homospatial" configurations, the verbal and visual modes create a spatially bonded entity, e.g., the SHAPES word list from the end matter of OFD4 (4a), or CRESCENT (4b) in the SHAPES word box of OJID4.

(4a) TRIANGLE, DIAMOND, SEMICIRCLE, CIRCLE, RECTANGLE, SQUARE, STAR, OVAL
[In the SHAPES rectangle (white background; coloured discontinuous line as framing border; top label for the superordinate domain), all hyponyms (white font) are given within the matching shape (deep lilac)] (OFD4: SHAPES, end matter)
(4b) CRESCENT
[In the SHAPES rectangle (white background; coloured discontinuous line as framing border; heading in black font, centred, above the top border), the word crescent (black) is written in a curving line along the inside of a crescent shape (deep sky blue)] (OJID4: SHAPES, end matter)

When "intermodal complementarity" is at play, OCD7 and OICD2 make exclusive recourse to "projection", in the form of tips and curiosities in separate bubble-like rectangles (5a-b)[2].

(5a) Qq
[Big capital (lime green) and small letter (sunny lime) introducing the new letter section]
Bubble: No English words end in the letter q; words that sound like antique and technique always end in -que.
[White font against solid orange in a bubble-like solid orange square; top-bottom arrangement] (OCD7: QQ)

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[2] Meaning can be expanded from the article microstructure to other parts of the dictionary, and hyperlinking be taken to unprecedented levels in remediated e-dictionaries and dictionaries designed for online use. (cf., e.g., De Schryver 2003; Tarp 2008; Lew 2010; Granger 2012; Liu 2017). Considering my focus on paper dictionaries, however, I set aside this dimension.

(5b) **saxophone** *noun*
a wind instrument with a tube that curves upward with a wider opening

Bubble: WORD ORIGIN / The word **saxophone** comes from the name of
Adolph Sax, a Belgian instrument maker.
[Word origin cell: heading in white capitals against solid blue; information
in black against lime green; lemma in bold; top-bottom arrangement]
[Highly realistic colour image of a saxophone, with high visual modality, as
border between SAXOPHONE, subsequent articles in the column and articles
in the next column; left-right arrangement] (OICD2: SAXOPHONE, *noun*)

2.2. Interactional meanings

Interactionally, dictionaries involve a compiler/writer and specific
target users. As is natural, a clear redefinition of the user's role as
consumer should come with, among other things, the ability to
build or modulate the presentation of content based on their needs
(De Schryver 2003; Tarp 2008; Lew 2010; Granger 2012; Liu 2015),
and access to word games and other forms of edutainment (e.g.,
along the lines of the Oxford Owl platform). While I set this issue
aside, my interest lies in interlocutive dialogic devices (Bres 2005)
and visuals that create proximity (adapted from Hyland 2010) and
enable the compiler/writer to associate with the user (Barnbrook
2012).

2.3. Textual meanings

Textually, boundaries are used to connect and disconnect (Kress
and Van Leeuwen, 2006: 177) content areas in the composition
space, hence "framing" elements based on relative "salience"
(i.e., the degree of attention they are intended to command) and
"information value" (i.e., importance). For instance, semiotic
devices such as colour and contrast, font, size, lines and spacing
interact for salience and framing (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 203;
Liu 2017: 304).

3. Composition space

My central concern in this section is with the textual metafunction.
As indicated above, this should be seen in relation to the proliferation

of edutainment publications, the curricularisation of family life, as well as children's multiple cognitive abilities (including their ability to read images).

3.1. Two-page spreads

The standard arrangement option for the Oxford children's dictionaries appears to be a modular grid layout emerging from the interaction of multiple vertical columns on the page and clearly spaced microstructures/modules with information fixing headwords (lemmas in flagship blue or blue tint) in left-right horizontal compositions for Given-New information (definiendum and definiens). The examples in section 2.2 show that in OCD7 images tend to follow explanations in a top-bottom structure (1a, 2a, 3a, 5a) moving from Ideal to Real (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006), while realisations with combinations of top-bottom and left-right arrangements are possible in OICD2 (2b, 3b, 5b). This section provides further insights into the visual arrangements of OCD7 and OICD2, compared with OFD4 and OJID4. To this purpose, I gathered data from the pages under letter A, and the two-page spreads around FILM. Table 1 summarises the findings, arranging dictionaries from lower to higher levels of image modality.

With a relatively short wordlist, large empty space and big font, neat margins and a bright colour palette for images that "help understand meanings", OFD4 addresses users in the 5+ to 6+ age range, who are learning to read and look up words. It covers the "first 5000 words to build vocabulary and language skills" (OFD4: Back-cover blurb), and 90+ headwords under letter A. As is natural, the older the intended user, the longer the word list: 270+ headwords under letter A in OJID4, which addresses more experienced users; up to 500+ lemmas for letter A and 30,000+ headwords in OCD7 and OICD2, aimed at more competent readers. Also, statistically there is considerable variation in image-text ratios: from 1:4.5 in OJID4, through 1:6 in OFD4 and 1:31 in OICD2, to 1:62.5 in OCD7. Thirdly, the older the intended user, the more sophisticated and realistic the images, and the more densely packed the page, with smaller font, tighter margins and inclusion of borders, also in the form of images in OICD2 (3b: DOG; 5b: SAXOPHONE; section 3.2).

TABLE 1
Text-image relations and image modality in OFD4, OJID4, OCD7, OICD2

	OFD4	OJID4	OCD7	OICD2
Age	5+	7+	8+	8+
Page size	+++	+++	+	++
Columns/page	2	2	2	3
Article framing elements	empty space +++	empty space +++	vertical: empty space +; horizontal: empty space	vertical: discontinuous line +; horizontal: empty space +;
Text wrapping and border images	---	---	---	+
Spread framing elements	multi-coloured A-Z list down external sides; highlighting for letter; catchwords against coloured leader	A-Z list down external sides; highlighting for letter; catchwords against coloured leader	A-Z list down coloured external sides; highlighting for letter; catchwords in leader	A-Z list down external sides; highlighting for letter; colour shades; catchwords against coloured leader
Font size	+++	+++	+	+
A: Headwords	90+	270+	500+	500+
A: Co-occurrence	15	60	5	10
A: Complementarity	0	0	3	6
A: Other images	0	0	0	3: passing images and reduplicated spots
Image Modality	low to medium: even, unmodulated colour, low to medium abstraction in drawings and pictures (e.g., representing kids)	medium: medium colour modulation, medium level abstraction, medium colour diversification in drawings and pictures (e.g., representing kids)	high: high quality realistic drawings and pictures with high colour modulation, differentiation and saturation, high representation of detail in pictures; photographs	high: high quality realistic drawings and pictures with high colour modulation, differentiation and saturation, high representation of detail in pictures; photographs

3.2. Articles

As suggested in Table 1 (section 3.1), images in articles are part of evenly separated multimodal modules in OCD7, where they follow the text in a top-bottom arrangement (1a, 2a, 3a). This is standard practice in dictionaries for younger users (6a-b).

(6a) **goldfish** NOUN
A goldfish is a small, orange fish that people often keep as a pet.
[High modality colour picture of a goldfish, looking right; top-bottom arrangement] (OFD4: GOLDFISH, *noun*)
(6b) **salmon** NOUN (*plural* salmon)
A salmon is a large fish that you can eat.
[High-modality colour picture of a salmon, looking right; top-bottom arrangement] (OJID4: SALMON, *noun*)

Clear design and neat layout make it easier to look words up for users that are learning to read.

With its three columns per page, text wrapping and discontinuous lines for vertical borders, OICD2 is comparatively less orderly, clean and tidy. High-quality images contribute to higher visual sophistication. Overall, visuals are used to draw in, or control (Bateman 2014), a user seen as no longer in need to learn how to look up words, but still requiring entertainment in the home. Text-image pairs can be contiguous (1b, FIGHTER, 2; 3b, DOG) or separate (2b, SALMON), and come in diverse arrangements: not only top-bottom (1b: FIGHTER), but also left-right, e.g., DOG (3b) and SAXOPHONE (5b), which cut across modules and borders. The water flowing in SALMON (2b) qualifies as a passing image, which goes all the way to framing the bottom margin of the page spread with decorative aims (i.e., for aesthetic enjoyment) – while not excluding controlling users by means of engaging their attention (in the sense of Marsh and White 2003).

Where present, overlapping text and images that are equivalent with the text from one article, stretch across other modules. For instance, in (7a), chunky exclamation marks with soft colour and little salience overlap with EXCLAIM, EXCLAMATION, EXCLAMATION MARK (with equivalent text) and EXCLUDE, down one column. Relatively more salient overlapping visual elements might draw more attention to themselves than to the overlapped dictionary

articles. Consider the visual film element, which is equivalent with the overlapping text in FILM, *noun*, *2* (column 3, left-hand page). It overlaps with FILM, *noun* and FILM, *verb*, and spans several other articles, in columns 2 and 3 on the left-hand page and columns 1 to 3 on the right-hand page. Due to relatively higher saturation, centre position across the two-page spread and sheer size, the image comes out as noise (7b).

(7a) **exclamation mark** *noun*
the punctuation mark (!) placed after an exclamation
[Chunky exclamation marks in pale tints; low salience and weight; text-image overlap within column margins] (OICD2: EXCLAMATION MARK, *noun*)
(7b) **film** *noun*
1 a series of moving pictures that tells a story, such as those shown in a cinema or on television **2** a roll or piece of thin plastic coated with a chemical that is sensitive to light, that you put in some cameras to take photographs **3** a very thin layer of something • *The table was covered in a film of grease* **filmy** *adjective* thin and transparent; (OICD2: FILM, *noun*)
film *verb* to film a book or story is to make a film of it
[Colour image; tints of coffee and relatively pale colours; compared to 6a, relatively higher salience, weight and saturation; text-image overlap; image at centre spread, bleeding into articles in columns to the right and to the left] (OICD2: FILM, *verb*)

This is very different from dictionaries like OPD7, which does away with pictorial images and photographs. To frame and fix content, signpost and signal information value and salience, OPD7 exclusively relies on typography and formatting: external and upper margins frame the page, with black font and a monochromatic (blue) colour scheme. With projected meanings, an interlocutive device and a direct form of address (Bres 2005; section 4), the heading *Did you know?* (white font against blue background in GRAFFITI, 8), effectively replaces the separate bubble-like rectangles found in OCD7 (5a: QQ) or in compositions of written and verbal signposts such as the *Word origin* rectangle in OICD2 (5b: SAXOPHONE).

(8) **graffiti** (*say* gra-**fee**-tee) NOUN
Graffiti is words or drawings scribbled on a wall
DID YOU KNOW? The word **graffiti** comes from an Italian word meaning 'scratches'.

4. Content and form

Layout, images and colour, sections 2 and 3 argue, can convey interactional meaning. They control the user while signalling salience and information value. In this section, I concentrate on the interaction of content and form, ideational and interactional meanings, in the microstructures of OCD7 and OICD2. The challenges are manifold: to address user-orientation in selected articles; to flesh out meaningful examples as part of lexicographical explanations in the verbal and visual modes; to identify interactional meanings in lexicographical explanations, as realised, among others, via informal definition styles.

Starting with dictionary macrostructures, OCD7 and OICD2 show a strong preference for meaningful headwords. Accordingly, the young user can look up *copy* in OCD7 and OICD2 (9a-b), but not *copyright* – which, in like manner, is not recorded in OPD7.

(9a) **copy** *noun* (**copies**) **1** something made to look exactly like something else **2** something written out a second time **3** one example of a newspaper, magazine or book that is made in large numbers • *We each have a copy of 'Alice in Wonderland'.* (OCD7/OICD2: COPY, *noun*)
(9b) **copy** *verb* (**copies, copying, copied**) **1** to copy something is to make a copy of it **2** to copy someone is to do the same as them **3** to copy a computer file or piece of text is to make another one exactly the same • *Copy and save the document to the C drive.*
copier *noun* a machine for copying pages (OCD7/OICD2: COPY, *verb*)

The wordlist comprises school-subject vocabulary and words that children are more likely to use or encounter based on the Oxford Children's corpus and their favourite readings. Likewise, where semi-general terms are included, specialised senses are left out. Hence, *damage*, though not *damages*, in OCD7 and OICD2 (10a-b). Crucially, *damages* was recorded under DAMAGE[1], *noun* in OCD3 (10c).

(10a) **damage** *noun* damage is injury or harm • *The storm caused a lot of damage.* (OCD7/OICD2: DAMAGE, *noun*)
(10b) **damage** *verb* to damage something is to injure or harm it (OCD7/OICD2: DAMAGE, *verb*)
(10c) **damage[1]** *noun* The breaking or spoiling of something. **damages** compensation for injury (OCD3: DAMAGE[1])

Removing terms like *damages* counts as a substantial shift from more comprehensive coverage of vocabulary in OCD3 to coverage of meaningful vocabulary in the interest of user-orientation in OCD7. That is, priority for inclusion of headwords and lexicographical representation is given to words that relate to the user's experience and expanding world knowledge, and might be useful to look up in the dictionary if unfamiliar. This is standard practice in O.U.P. junior and children's dictionaries, as further evidenced by the type of example sentences provided in OCD7/OICD2 (9a-b) vis-à-vis OCD3 (11a-c).

(11a) *I made a neat copy of my poem.* (OCD3: COPY¹, *noun*, 1)
(11b) *Where's my copy of 'Treasure Island'?* (OCD3: COPY¹, *noun*, 3)
(11c) *We sometimes copy our parents.* (OCD3: COPY², *verb*, 2)

Indeed, comparison between (9a-b) and (11a-b) suggests an update to current users' experiences and knowledge of the world. For instance, all children are now familiar with ICT (9b: OCD7/OICD2), but very few, if any, would ever make a neat copy of a poem (11a: OCD3), which might be readily downloaded from online sources instead. This is also the case with (9a) and (11b). Considering Alice picture books, the Disney 1951 animated film, Tim Robbins's 2010 dark fantasy adventure, as well as the widespread merchandising and commodification of the title character, children in 2018 are more likely to be familiar with *Alice in Wonderland* (9a: OCD7/OICD2) than with *Treasure Island* (11b: OCD3). Still staying with this set of examples, directives like (9a) are part and parcel of the user's experience. Instead, example sentences like (11c), from OCD3, are highly likely to be constructed, less authentic examples.

   Interestingly, where OCD3 does not provide examples, OCD7/OICD2 turn to example sentences typically uttered in real-life scenarios, in the interest of user-orientation, as in (12).

(12) **correct** *adjective* **1** true or accurate; without any mistakes • *Your answers are all correct.* **2** proper, suitable • *Is that the correct way to talk to your parents?* **correctly** *adverb* to do something correctly is to do it the right way and without any mistakes (OCD7/OICD2: CORRECT, *adjective*)

The same interest for meaningful example sentences and relevant scenarios characterises OJID4 (13).

(13) **correct** ADJECTIVE
Something that is correct is right and has no mistakes. • *All my answers were **correct**.* (OJID4: CORRECT, *adjective*)

Yet, there are other ways to provide content in children's dictionaries. That is, via ostension in pictorial illustrations and photographs, as in GOLDFISH, OFD4 (6a) and SALMON, OJD4 (6b), both with partial text-image equivalence. The reason for including goldfish, though not salmon, in the wordlist of OFD4, is that the latter is considered to be less familiar and meaningful to the younger user.

As is natural, moving from concrete entities to abstract concepts, dictionaries still make extensive recourse to meaningful, user-oriented visuals. First, familiar objects – oftentimes enticing entities that recall pleasurable experiences – to illustrate abstract concepts, e.g., user-oriented (though incorrect) recourse to two slices of a birthday cake as a way to explain fractions and operations in maths in HALF, OJID4 (14). Another feature of articles in OFD4 and OJID4 are visuals that portray the user (15a and 15b, respectively).

(14) **half** NOUN (*plural* halves)
One half is one of two equal parts that the thing is divided into. It can also be written as ½.
[Medium modality colour picture of two identical slices of a birthday cake; top-bottom arrangement] (OJID4: HALF, *noun*)
(15a) **frighten** VERB frightens, frightening, frightened
If something frightens a person or animal, it makes them feel afraid.
• *Miki is **frightened** of spiders.*
[Medium modality colour picture of a girl frightened by a spider hanging on the web; top-bottom arrangement] (OFD4: FRIGHTEN, *verb*)
(15b) **freeze** VERB freezes, freezing, froze, frozen
1 When something freezes, it becomes very cold and hard and changes into ice. • *The lake froze over last winter.*
2 If you are freezing or frozen, you are very cold.
[Medium modality colour picture of boy wearing a hat, gloves and down jacket, with red cheeks and chattering teeth, crossing his arms to protect himself from the cold; left-right arrangement; picture on the right] (OJID4: FREEZE, *noun*)

Here, the user immediately identifies with the character, and recognises objects, actions, emotions and feelings that are

reminiscent of past experiences. The images encourage association and proximity with the user.

One important concomitant of user-orientation on the content dimension is proximity (adapted from Hyland 2010) at the level of form. As regards written definitions, recourse to restricted defining vocabulary is most certainly a user-oriented choice (see, e.g., Lew 2010), based on preliminary assessment of the core vocabulary for the age of the intended target user. Full-sentence definitions and informal styles, however, are more interesting for our purposes. OFD4 and OJID4 demonstrate a preference for *when-/if*-definitions with adverbs and verbs (14: HALF, *adverb*, OFD4; 15a: FRIGHTEN, OFD4; 15b: FREEZE, *1*, OJID4); OCD7/OICD2 turn to folk-inspired definitions (Moon 2016) with non-finite *to*-subject clauses (9b: COPY, *verb*; 10b: DAMAGE, *verb*; 12: CORRECTLY, *adverb*, in the nested article CORRECT, *adjective*).

Verbally, interlocutive dialogic devices (Bres 2005) create proximity, encourage associating with the user (Barnbrook 2012) and foster user participation and engagement. As the user grows up, images in the articles diminish (OCD7/OICD2, for key stage 2) and page layout, typography and the verbal mode eventually remain the only devices available to draw in the reader and provide explanations. Compare FREEZE, OCD7/OICD2 (16) with FREEZE, OJID4 (15b).

(16) **freeze** *verb* **freezing**, **froze**, **frozen 1.** to freeze is to turn into ice or another solid is to become covered with ice • *The pond froze last night.* **2.** to be freezing or to be frozen is to be very cold • *My hands are frozen.* **3.** to freeze food is to store it at a low temperature to preserve it **4.** a person or animal freezes when they suddenly stand still with fright (OCD7/OICD2: FREEZE)

OFD4 and OJID4 make extensive use of the second-person feature in definitions (6b: *you*, SALMON, *noun*, OJID4; 15b: *you*, FREEZE, *verb, 2*, OJID4), while example sentences make recourse not only to the first and second person (13: *my*, OJID4), but also to names (15a: *Miki*, OJID4). In like manner, first and second person pronouns and adjectives identify the user as a communicative participant and a participant in the conceived situation in the examples from OCD7/OICD2 (9a: *We*, COPY, *noun, 3*; 12: *you*, *your*, CORRECT, *1, 2*; 16: *My*,

FREEZE, *verb, 2*). With imperatives (9b, COPY, *verb, 3*) and questions (12, CORRECT, *adjective, 2*), they contribute to creating proximity.

5. Conclusions

The focus of this study has been on the construction of ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings (Halliday 1985) in children's dictionaries that are primarily a form of edutainment (Buckingham and Scanlon 2002). Special attention was devoted to the *Oxford Children's Dictionary* (OCD7) and the *Oxford Illustrated Children's Dictionary* (OICD2), both suitable for age 8+, vis-à-vis dictionaries for younger users that are gradually learning to look up words and read (OFD4, OJID4), and, *passim*, OPD7, which does away with images.

I proceeded on the assumption that the entertainment value of children's dictionaries is given by the inclusion of visuals that encourage proximity (adapted from Hyland 2010) and association (Barnbrook 2012), serve as decorative elements, for aesthetic enjoyment and pleasure, and as control, for drawing in and engaging users, guiding and motivating them (Marsh and White 2003; Bateman 2014). Indeed, visuals turn out to be elements of pleasure and surprise, stimuli that arouse motivational states such as curiosity – which interact in order to evoke and form interest. Verbally, interest is caught and sustained by interlocutive devices such as first and second person pronouns and adjectives, imperatives and questions, and, in OFD4, names for characters in example sentences.

Thirdly, one important aspect that cuts across the verbal/visual divide is the inclusion and representation of meaningful, user-oriented content, which suits the information needs, knowledge and experiential background of the intended user. Also working towards meeting the edutainment imperative – using a less didactic style of address than that of formal school instruction (Bernstein 1990, in Buckingham and Scanlon 2002) – are informal definition styles, e.g., *when-/if-* full sentence definitions in OFD4 and OJID4, and folk-inspired definitions with infinitives as subject in dictionaries for older and more competent users (OCD7, OICD2, OPD7). Meanwhile, the second person style in definitions, and the use of first and second person, imperatives and questions in examples, encourage association and proximity.

While a general move towards longer wordlists characterises dictionaries for older users, the following visual features appear to correspond well with the changing cognitive age, experience, skills and knowledge background of the user targeted by OFD4, OJID4, OCD7 and OICD2. First, the gradual shift from relatively empty space, larger font and tidier modular grids, to tighter margins, smaller font, more columns and more sophisticated layouts. Second, increasingly complementing text-image pairs within articles/modules with text-image pairs with images as borders (and passing images in OICD2). Lastly, changing from more images and relatively lower visual modality, to fewer images with higher visual modality.

Acknowledgements

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