(Review) Xu, J.J. (eds.) (2022). *Tiyu Yingyu Cihui Shouce* (The Wordbook of Sports English). Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press

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Abstract

In this article, the advantages and disadvantages of *Tiyu Yingyu Cihui Shouce* (The Wordbook of Sports English), a recently published corpus-based English wordbook related to sports, will be reviewed and discussed. This wordbook has some highlighting features including vocabulary and example sentences based on sports-related corpus, especially Olympic-related corpus which displays some encyclopedic information about the Olympic Games especially the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 in both content and appendixes. To cater to mobile learning, the book integrates all the headwords into the smartphone application, which offers multiple ways to memorize vocabulary. However, this book has something that needs to be improved in the following edition, including the unclearness of icons which indicates the usage scenario, lack of the function to review previous learning, translation of some entries, etc. In general, this wordbook is a useful tool for those who want to learn words about sports in China.

Keywords: *Tiyu Yingyu Cihui Shouce*, SportCOPE, Corpus-based compilation method, Appendix, Mobile learning

1. Introduction

Tiyu Yingyu Cihui Shouce (The Wordbook of Sports English) (abbreviated as *Shouce*) is one of the corpus-based wordbooks of occupational purposed English. The wordbook selected 365 words in terms of frequency from the Corpus of English for sports industry (SportCOPE), one of the eighteen sub-corpora of the Corpus of Occupational Purpose English (COPE) developed by Dr. Jiajin Xu of Beijing Foreign Studies University and classified them into

different kinds of situations. To date, SportCOPE had included around 300k words with texts which were extracted from the sports industry. The glossary of the *Shouce*, which had been carefully analyzed in terms of the frequency of use based on the statistical comparison between SportCOPE and a two-million general-purpose English corpus also appeared in the textbook of Sports English published by Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press. Likewise, phrases or expressions of each entry are picked up from statistically important collocates with the help of AntConc. All the examples and collocations are based on the data from SportCOPE.

2. Advantages of *Tiyu Yingyu Cihui Shouce*

It is no doubt that there are so many advantages in this wordbook, among which three would be worthy to be shown in this review, inspiring authors who are compiling or planning to compile wordbooks for other specific purposes. First, the author used a corpus-based method to compile this wordbook, refreshing the cognition of those who are compiling wordbooks. By using such a method, learners can see the most useful lexical information at hand including frequency and settings, phrase(s), and example sentence(s) related to sports, especially the Olympic Games (because the *Shouce* is made for sports-related practitioners and one of the intentions of the author is to promote sports culture according to what the author had said in the preface). In addition, many words are equipped with pictures, offering readers a different perspective. Take the entry of "athlete" as an example (see Figure 1).
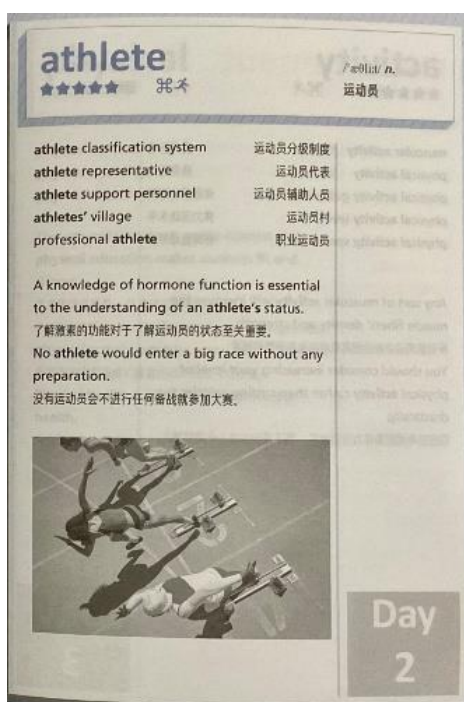

Figure 1. The entry of "athlete"

In Figure 1, there are five stars below the word "athlete" indicating its frequency level for learners, and two icons indicating the settings—generic scenario and sports training. The author mentioned that all the words are selected from SportCOPE, and the number of five-star and four-star words are 100 respectively and there are 165 three-star words, but only

words with three stars and above can be included therein. These words are arranged in descending order by frequency. Thus, five-star words, which should be the highest frequency, are shown afront, and then four-star ones and so on. The advantage of such an arrangement lies in that learners could focus and acquire the most frequently used words in the sports industry and the IPA symbols enables them to pronounce correctly, and the part of speech indicator allows them to know its syntactic functions so that they can use it appropriately. In the meantime, learners will be informed of the Chinese equivalent, while phrases and examples selected from the corpus would be able to enlarge learners' application of this word. The picture provided therein assists learners to know the reference of "athlete", turning the abstract word into the concrete one and thus inspiring them to construct the extension of this word in other settings. Some additional information, written in the part "note", is provided at the bottom of the page (see Figure 2), enabling learners to get to know some background knowledge of a word or to distinguish synonymies. Moreover, the arrangement, which is similar to "word of the day", would not put a heavy load on learners to acquire new words. And the corpus-based features, together with other learning assistants, would be more helpful for learners than any other non-corpus-based one.
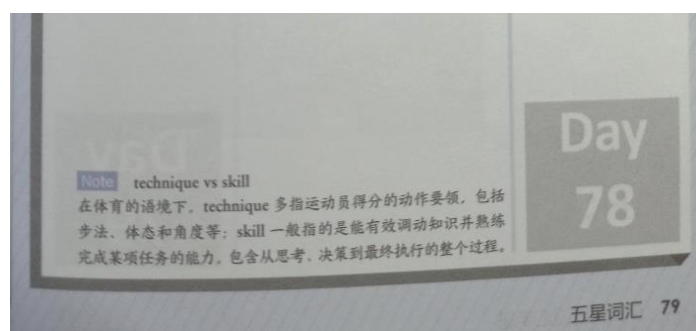

Figure 2. Note of a headword

The second highlight of the wordbook goes to appendixes. Appendix No.1 shows some summer and winter Olympic sports icons to offer some encyclopedic matter of events of the Olympic Games, while the appendix No.2 lists some common injuries in sports including skeletal injuries and soft tissue injuries so that learners could speak out the proper term of injuries towards the medical staff(s) to offer an appropriate aid for player(s). And the next appendix provides the table of phonetic symbols with exemplary words and their primary and/or secondary stress for learners to pronounce words properly. The final appendix, which is the alphabetically arranged full wordlist, gives an index for learners to locate a particular word conveniently.

The embrace of the current technology would also be one of its highlights. Since we are living in a world where mobile devices including smartphones, tablets, etc., and the Internet are playing an increasingly important role in our daily life, a revolution has already come unconsciously to the publishing industry, especially reference works like dictionaries (Dai & Xu, 2014). Since a wordbook is a kind of reference work, the necessity, therefore, of integrating the workbook with the current technology seems to be significant. This corpus-based wordbook chooses to put the entire content into a mobile application named *U*

Ci to cater to those who do not have so many chunks of time and thus have to learn words in a fragmented way, which is a new trend of national reading. The wordbook in *U Ci* has been divided into 32 scenarios including generic scenarios, social or leisure sports, sports management, etc. Learners would acquire those words by finishing various tasks in the app which should be a more active way than that of reciting vocabulary (see Figure 3). And these tasks include choosing the most appropriate Chinese meaning and then the right English one, typing the correct form of words, reading aloud after listening to the example sentence, completing the sentence, etc. When all the tasks for learning new words are accomplished, learners will be awarded a shining virtual medal to encourage them to continue to the next scenario. Despite the "Today's learning", the app also offers a button to review the previous learning, which is helpful for learners to examine words that are learned before. With these functions and tasks in the app, learners would be able to acquire words more actively and know how to apply them in an authentic situation.
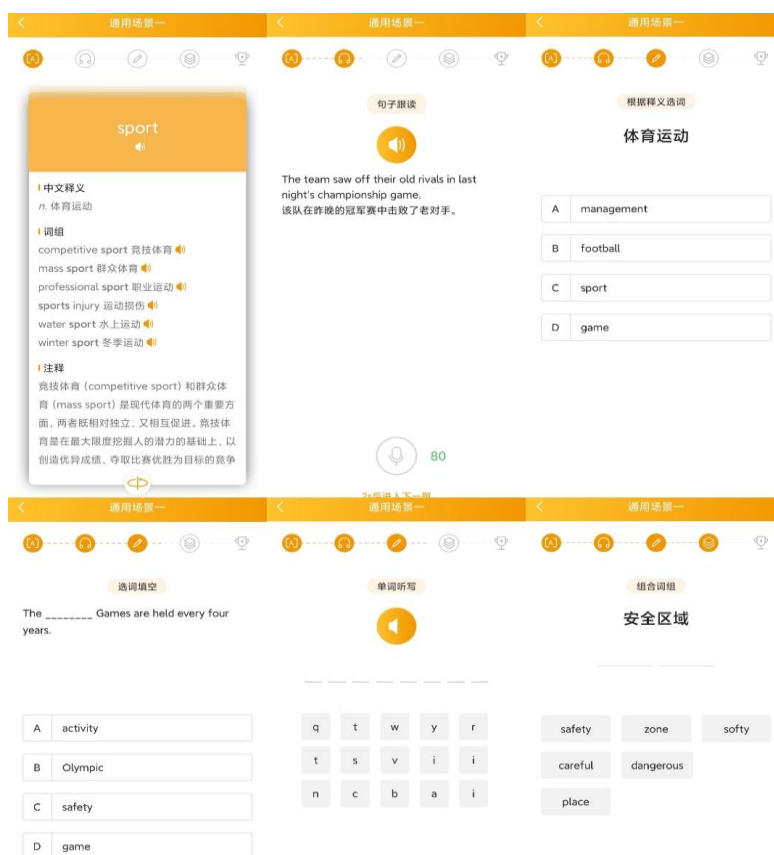

Figure 3. The user interface of *U Ci* app

3. Disadvantages of *Tiyu Yingyu Cihui Shouce*

Some improvements are still needed to be done for the next edition although the wordbook is presently perfect for learners to acquire words. First, icons indicating usage scenarios should

be compiled on a single page or accompanied by Chinese explanations. In the current edition, the scenario indicators are not equipped with any Chinese or English explanations for each word, which might be confusing for readers to understand the meaning of such indicators though they are mentioned in the preface. A possible solution is that the author should collect all the icons, put them on a single page as well as remind learners of knowing what those icons mean before acquiring vocabulary. In addition, each entry should be "cut" into chunks for better-memorizing words, for which we can reconfigure items by grouping them on the basis of some organizing principle, or by combing them into larger patterns and thus our memory span can be greatly increased (Gerrig, 2013). In this way, the relationship between IPA symbols and word form can be clearly shown to learners. For example, the headword "National" is divided into three parts— "na", "tion", and "al" in the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (10th edition) to show the syllable characteristic of the word which would be helpful for learners to know the relationship between the IPA symbols and the pronunciation of the word.

Second, in terms of the relationship between the mobile application and the wordbook, there is a sense of separation when learners read the wordbook and use the application. As we have mentioned above, the wordbook in *U Ci* app does offer a good user experience when learning vocabulary, but the arrangement is totally different from the actual book, which would produce a sense of separation for learners if they combine the app and the book to acquire new words and be negative to the learning outcome.

Third, in terms of promoting sports culture, the current edition of *Shouce* seemed to pay more attention to Olympic-related words and thus the outcome was that the whole book had a disproportionate amount of content on the Olympics. Actually, the sports culture of the Olympics is entailed in the universe of the general one but should not be on behalf of the sports culture itself, and people would also do other sports such as Taichi, Mahjong, League of Legends (LOL), etc. in their daily life. In terms of viewership, the World Cup, the most well-known football match in the world which is also held every four years, receives almost the same audience number as that of the IOC one. According to FIFA (Note 1), the World Cup 2018 in Russia drew in an audience of 3.57 billion viewers. Meanwhile, with the development of the Internet, e-sport events like League of Legends Pro League, which is LPL for short, and The International DOTA2 Championships (abbreviated as *Ti*), are being increasingly trendy. According to Statista.com (Note 2), the number of global esports viewers keeps increasing and will be expected to reach 318.1 million in 2025 from 215.2 million in 2020. Therefore, to introduce sport culture, the next edition of *Shouce* should not be restricted to the Olympic Games but enlarge words related to other sports events.

Finally, some translations in the wordbook need to be discussed. The translation of "club", which is "球棒 *qiubang*", is not fully equivalent to the English term itself. According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (10th edition), the definition of the term "club", which is related to "球棒 *qiubang*", is that "*in golf* (also **golf club**) <u>**a long metal stick with a piece of metal or wood at one end, used for hitting the ball in golf**</u>" (the intentionally bolded sentence is the definition with an underline to emphasize the meaning of the term "club" in the dictionary)(Lea & Bradbery, 2020). Therefore, the alternative "高尔夫球杆 *gao'er fu*

qiugan" would be more concrete than the current translation and more suitable to regard it as the Chinese meaning. It is also necessary to modify the translation of an example of "intake", whose source sentence is "Inadequate calorie intake can impede athletic training and performance." and the target one is "热量摄入不足会影响运动训练和表现。*re liang she ru bu zu hui ying xiang yun dong xun lian he biao xian*". The question is not the Chinese equivalent "intake" but "impede" in the example sentence, from which we can be implied that inadequate calorie intake would produce a negative effect on athletic training and performance, while the Chinese version "影响 *yingxiang*", which contains no any other emotional color, cannot elicit such information and thus the translation of that sentence would be less appropriate. Instead, we can change the word "影响 *ying xiang*" into "阻碍 *zu'ai*", which would be able to transmit the negative effect caused by inadequate calorie intake.

4. Conclusion

In short, the current version of the wordbook is absolutely an important tool for those who want to learn sports English in China. And it can be much better if problems including the vague icons which indicate the usage scenario, lack of the function to review previous learning, translation of some entries, etc. can be fixed. The corpus-based compiling method with the integration of modern technology would surely boost learners' learning effect of occupational English and offer a new perspective for the compilation of other bilingual reference works.

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Notes

Note 1.

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xm.fifa.commore-than-half-the-world-watched-record-breaking-2018-world-cup

Note 2. https://www.statista.com/statistics/490480/global-esports-audience-size-viewer-type/

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