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## **A STUDY OF DICTIONARY USE BY INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

### **AT A BRITISH UNIVERSITY**

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**Hilary Nesi and Richard Hail**

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#### **Abstract**

This paper reports on an investigation into the dictionary-using habits of international students studying in the medium of English at a British University. Over a period of three years, six groups of students were set assignments requiring them to report on the way they had consulted dictionaries to find the meanings of unknown words in texts of their choice. Eighty-nine assignments were analysed, to reveal subjects' choices of reading material, look-up words and dictionaries. The data also showed that whilst the majority of words were looked up successfully, more than half the subjects were unsuccessful in at least one out of five dictionary consultations. Subjects were found to have particular difficulty in selecting appropriate entries and sub-entries in their dictionaries. Some consultation problems resulted in serious errors of interpretation, which subjects were largely unaware of.

## 1. Introduction

Dictionary use while reading is normally a very private matter, occurring as the need arises, and often behind closed doors. Most studies of dictionary use have therefore relied on the retrospection of users via questionnaires or interviews (for example Tomaszczyk 1979, Béjoint 1981, Bogaards 1988, Atkins and Varantola 1998), or have artificially created occasions for more readily observable dictionary consultation, under controlled conditions (for example Summers 1988, Tono 1989, Knight 1994, McCreary and Dolezal 1999). Questionnaire-based research has been criticized, however, because it relies very heavily on respondents' perceptions of the look-up process, and data can be distorted by respondents' desire to please or to conform (Hatherall 1984). Experimental research has the advantage of obtaining first-hand data on dictionary-using behaviour, but may require users to look up words that they would not necessarily wish to look up, in dictionaries that they would not normally consult, for purposes that they may not understand or subscribe to.

The study reported in this paper attempts to monitor dictionary use under somewhat more natural conditions, permitting subjects the freedom to use whatever dictionary they wish, to look up the words they want, in a text of their own choice, at their own pace. All the subjects were international students studying at university level in the medium of English. Other variables were not controlled, however, and the successes and failures that the subjects encountered during the look-up process may have been affected by more than one of several possible factors – their mother tongues, language ability, dictionary-using skill, choice of dictionary, choice of look-up word or choice of text. For this reason the study does not attempt to compare satisfaction ratings for different dictionaries, or draw anything other than broad conclusions about subjects' vocabulary knowledge. The study does intend, however,

to provide a portrait, albeit imperfect, of international students' normal receptive use of dictionaries, including an overview of the problems they experience, and some insights into the kinds of texts they read, the kinds of words they look up, and their attitudes towards the look-up process.

## 2. Background to the study

The study draws on assignments produced for the module 'Key Academic Skills for International Students' at Oxford Brookes University. This module is taken by some international undergraduate students, and all students enrolled on Oxford Brookes' International Foundation Diploma, which leads to undergraduate study. Work produced for this module is therefore typical of the work produced by international students in the early stages of their degree programmes at Oxford Brookes. As its name suggests the module aims to provide an introduction to some of the essential study skills all university students need.

One of the four assignments set for the module focuses on library research skills, and contains a section on dictionary use. In this section students are asked to choose a text (from any source), select from the text five lexical items previously unknown to them, and answer a set of questions about dictionary consultation in relation to these items. The full assignment, of which the dictionary use section is only a part, constitutes 20% of the students' overall mark for the module. Students are given several weeks to complete it, out of class. The pedagogic purpose of the section on dictionary use is to provide practice in certain academic skills, and to raise students' awareness of dictionary types and the kinds of information dictionaries provide.

The dictionary use section of the library research assignment was first introduced in 1997 and since then has been slightly modified each year to elicit more

detailed answers regarding dictionary ownership and dictionary-using habits. We have also placed increasing emphasis on critical evaluation, requiring students to discuss the extent to which they are satisfied with their dictionaries. The October 2000 version of this section is reproduced in full in Appendix 1.

Eighty-nine assignments were examined, collected over a three-year period from October 1997 to October 2000. The distribution of the data is as follows:

October 1997: 8  
October 1998: 26  
February 1998: 8  
February 1999: 6  
February 2000: 12  
October 2000: 29

Thirty-seven of the student contributors were international undergraduates (either first-year or SOCRATES exchange students), while the majority (52) were from the International Foundation programme. Only one student was a native speaker.

Students came from the following parts of the world:

Asia: 39  
European Union: 22  
Eastern Europe: 14  
Middle East: 8  
South America: 4  
Africa: 1

### 3. Dictionary ownership and use

Most of the 89 students claimed to own more than one dictionary (in one case as many as seven), but only one student denied owning any dictionary at all. The following were the dictionaries most frequently named by the students:

<i>Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary</i> 5 (1995) and 6 (2000)	30
<i>Concise Oxford Dictionary</i> (various editions)	17
<i>Collins Cobuild Dictionary</i> 1 (1987) and 2 (1995)	13
<i>Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English</i> 2 (1987) and 3 (1995)	14
<i>Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture</i> 1 (1992) and 2 (1998)	8
<i>Collins English Dictionary</i> (various editions)	6
<i>Longman Language Activator</i> (various editions)	6
<i>Oxford Wordpower</i> (1993 and 1997)	4
<i>Chambers English Dictionary</i> (1989 and 1996)	4

The five most popular dictionaries listed here are referred to in later parts of this paper by their usual abbreviations (OALD, COD, Cobuild, LDOCE, and LDELIC).

There is a certain vagueness in the way students record the titles and dates of dictionaries, but it was possible to identify another 54 dictionaries of various ages and editions, the vast majority of these being published by Oxford University Press, Collins or Longman, but including publications from Reader's Digest, Websters, Wordsworth, Heinemann, and the BBC. Of these 54 dictionaries, 10 were bilingual (English with Chinese, German, Russian and Spanish), and 4 were specialist

dictionaries of Business, Science or Technology. In addition students claimed ownership of 17 unnamed bilingual dictionaries (English with Chinese, German, Greek, Japanese, Polish, Spanish and Thai), and two unnamed specialist dictionaries (for Mathematics and Law). References to bilingual dictionaries tended to be particularly vague, and although no restrictions had been placed on their use, few students consulted a bilingual dictionary for the assignment task. For this reason this study is essentially concerned with monolingual dictionary use. Only two students listed electronic bilingual 'translators'. We have, however, observed many students (especially from Asia and the Middle East) making use of pocket electronic dictionaries in class work for the module.

Dates were provided for 60 dictionaries, and of these 45 were published in or after 1990, suggesting that students on the whole were acquiring their dictionaries first-hand. In response to the first of the assignment tasks (see Appendix 1) 63 of the 89 students commented on the frequency with which they used the dictionaries they owned. Of these only three wrote 'not very often' or 'rarely'. The rest claimed to use their dictionaries very frequently.

The majority of the students made use of their own dictionaries when completing the task. A few, however, availed themselves of the various dictionaries held in the University Library and Languages Centre, as they had been encouraged to do by their tutors. Others borrowed dictionaries from friends. The most frequent choices of borrowed dictionaries were as follows (some of these figures are higher than those cited earlier, but this can be explained by the fact that several students sampled three or even four dictionaries before deciding on the entries to use for their assignments).

<i>Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary</i> (various editions)	26
<i>Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English</i> (various editions)	21
<i>Concise Oxford Dictionary</i> (various editions)	18
<i>Collins Cobuild Dictionary</i> (various editions)	15
<i>Collins English Dictionary</i> (various editions)	7
<i>Chambers</i> (title unclear)	6
<i>Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture</i> (1992 or 1998)	5
<i>New Oxford Dictionary of English</i> (1998)	4
<i>Oxford English Reference Dictionary</i> (1996)	3

In all, the students named 63 different dictionary titles. Only 23 of these seem to be explicitly intended for learners – ‘school’ or ‘study’ dictionaries for young native speakers, or bilingual or monolingual dictionaries for non-native speakers. The remaining titles seem to be intended primarily for adult native speakers, although few students commented on this fact.

#### 4. Students' choice of texts

Students were free to choose any text for the assignment, and this freedom is reflected in the wide range of sources and genres selected. These can be categorised as follows:

Subject textbooks	26
Magazine features	20
Newspaper articles	10

Class hand-outs	7
Fiction	6
Non-fiction books	5
Academic articles	5
Publishers' blurbs	2
Government publications	2
Shakespeare play extracts	2
Internet	1

Three subjects did not give any indication of the source of their texts.

Magazine articles were taken from *Business Week*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Enquiry*, *FHM*, *Guitar World*, *Hello*, *Heritage*, *Hospitality Review*, *New Statesman*, *Newsweek*, *National Geographic*, *The Wire*, and a skateboarding magazine, while newspaper items were taken from *The Guardian*, *The Telegraph*, *The Times* and (in one case) *The Daily Mail*. Texts and topics broadly reflected either the students' own interests (music, popular psychology, sport, and so on), or their required reading for their university courses. There appears to be little reading of fiction for pleasure, and some of the few texts we have placed in the 'fiction' category may well have been prescribed course reading (for example a short story by Conrad, and *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*).

##### 5. Students' choice of lexical items to look up

A full list of the 427 words that students looked up is provided in Appendix 2. Four hundred and forty-four look-ups were recorded in total, but 16 words were selected by two, and in one case three, students. On the whole, the words are not of the type

included for explicit teaching on intermediate to advanced English language courses. The majority were quite rare, only 136 (32%) occurring ten times or more per million words in the British National Corpus (according to word frequencies given in Leech, Rayson and Wilson 2001), and only 58 (14%) belonging to families listed in the Academic Word List (Coxhead 1998). A few of the items were archaic (*adage, bourn, fardel*), and a few were highly technical (*googly, post-structuralist, self-reflexivity*) but on the whole we think that the look-up words were of the kind which subject lecturers would expect British university students to recognize, and would therefore not feel the need to explain in class. As the students had freedom to choose whatever words they wished, provided that they were previously unknown, we regard the list in Appendix 2 as a representative sample of the words advanced learners at university level are likely to look up whilst reading.

## 6. The outcomes of dictionary consultation

Although 89 assignments are referred to in this study, 12 of the 89 subjects did not provide sufficient information to enable us to judge whether dictionary consultation had been successful. (7 did not have texts attached, and a further 5 did not indicate the perceived meaning of look-up words.)

The 77 subjects whose assignments were complete looked up 390 words in total. (72 Subjects followed the instruction to look up 5 words, 1 subject looked up 8 words, 3 looked up 6 and 1 looked up only 4.)

Thirty-four of these subjects appeared to have found the correct contextual meaning of all the words they looked up. The remaining 43 subjects were unsuccessful with one or more of their dictionary consultations, and failed to find the correct meanings of 65 words (16.4% of the total number analysed).

Five categories of look-up problem were identified:

1. The subject chose the wrong dictionary entry or sub-entry (34 cases).
2. The subject chose the correct dictionary entry or sub-entry but misinterpreted the information it contained (11 cases).
3. The subject chose the correct dictionary entry or sub-entry, but did not realize that the word had a slightly different (often figurative) meaning in context (7 cases).
4. The subject found the correct dictionary entry or sub-entry, but rejected it as inappropriate in context (5 cases).
5. The word or appropriate word meaning was not in any of the dictionaries the subject consulted (8 cases).

In addition subjects reported a variety of difficulties encountered during the process of dictionary consultation which did not necessarily lead to look-up failure.

Of the five categories of look-up failure, the first was by far the most common. In 23 of the 34 cases the problem was due to the subject's failure to identify the word class of the look-up word. This kind of error must have affected the subject's overall interpretation of the passage to varying degrees. For example, the subject who cited the meaning of *chafe* (verb) instead of *chafe* (noun) probably did not find this a great obstacle to his understanding of the text because the noun and verb are close in meaning. This is reflected by the fact that in COD 8, one of the dictionaries he consulted, the entry for *chafe* (noun) runs on from the verb entry and is defined as "a sore resulting from this". This subject had identified the most appropriate main entry, but had simply failed to acknowledge the different syntactic behaviour of the derived form. On the other hand, the subject who looked up *bust* as a noun instead of a verb

had to use all her ingenuity to make sense of the text she was reading, and the subjects who mistook *composed* and *dissipated* for adjectival forms completely failed to understand the words in context.

A sample of category-one errors resulting from word class confusion are given in Table 1 below. In this and subsequent tables the column headed ‘Perceived meaning’ lists the explanations the subjects themselves wrote for the look-up words. Some of these explanations were copied from dictionary entries, others are interpretations and summaries of information gathered from more than one dictionary, and still others are example sentences invented by the subjects themselves. Here, and in subsequent tables, explanations and example sentences that were written in the students’ own words are in italics, and explanations that the students have (or seem to have) copied from dictionary entries are placed within double quotation marks. The context in which the word is met is given in roman print within single quotation marks.

**Table 1.** A sample of cases where subjects chose the entry or subentry for the wrong word class (category one)

Word	Context	Perceived meaning
<i>Bust</i> (verb mistaken for noun)	‘Stress-busting Yoga. To cope with my manic schedule, I need to find time to relax totally – both mind and body. I have a personal yoga trainer.’	<i>Bust means the chest of a human being. I understood this word as stress-chests yoga or yoga that helps to relax through right breathing.</i>
<i>Chafe</i> (noun mistaken for verb)	‘Discussion of chafe leads me to the question of hand sewing’	“make or become sore or damaged by rubbing/to rub so as to wear away”

<i>Composed</i> (past participle of verb mistaken for adjective)	'Many of the images were composed using photographic imagery'	"calm, with one's feelings under control/seeming calm and not upset or angry"
<i>Dissipated</i> (past participle of verb mistaken for adjective)	'the clouds that had hung in high puffs for so long in the spring were dissipated'	"behaving in a foolish and often harmful way"
<i>Feature</i> (verb mistaken for noun)	'it features a behind-the-scenes account'	"one of the parts of the face"
<i>Lure</i> (verb mistaken for noun)	'Miami still holds a sheen that lures scores of urban destroyers to its harbours'	<i>Lure is a noun here and means the attractive qualities of something</i>
<i>(Be) poised</i> (verb mistaken for adjective)	'An official poised with blue pencil or sharp scissors to cut offending material from books, films or news reports'	"dignified/composed/self-assured"
<i>Secure</i> (verb mistaken for adjective)	'Arthur hoped to increase profits, secure sources of supply, maintain control over specifications'	<p><i>There are four different meanings in the dictionary:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Free from anxiety</i></li> <li>• <i>certain, guaranteed</i></li> <li>• <i>unlikely to involve risk; firm</i></li> <li>• <i>safe</i></li> </ul> <p><i>When I put the different definitions in context – secure source of supply – and match the example phrase, I think the second one is best.</i></p>
<i>Segment</i> (verb mistaken for noun)	'The firm segments its offering by moving from Duplo, through	"a part or portion"

	trains, zoos and farms, on to classic models'	
<i>Setback</i> (noun mistaken for verb <i>set back</i> )	'after suffering a further injury setback'	"cost (person) a specified amount"

Words of all three major classes – nouns, verbs and adjectives – were confused.

There were 8 cases of verbs being mistaken for nouns, 7 cases of nouns being mistaken for verbs, 4 cases of verbs being mistaken for adjectives, 3 cases of adjectives being mistaken for nouns and one case of a noun being mistaken for an adjective. In most cases, both word classes were morphologically identical, although one subject confused the phrasal verb *set back* with the noun *setback*, and three subjects failed to recognize the function of noun derivational endings, treating *allocation*, *enhancement* and *deployment* as verbs because, in the dictionaries they used, these derived forms were run on without definitions at the end of verb entries.

The remaining category-one errors did not involve any confusion over word class, but were the result of selecting an inappropriate definition for a polysemous word, or looking up the wrong word form. Selection errors in entries for polysemous words are given in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Cases where subjects chose the wrong definition for a polysemous word (category one)

Word	Context	Perceived meaning	More appropriate meaning in context
<i>Assembly</i>	‘They urge England, Scotland, and Northern Ireland to follow the lead of the Welsh Assembly’	“a group of people esp. one gathered together for a special purpose such as worship” (first definition, LDOCE 1)	“a law-making body, esp. the lower of 2 such bodies” (fourth definition, LDOCE 1)
<i>Bastion</i>	‘reports sent back to countries which would regard themselves as bastions of free information’	“projecting part of a fortification” (first definition, <i>Pocket Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus</i> , 1996)	“something protecting or preserving particular principles or activities” (second definition, <i>Pocket Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus</i> , 1996)
<i>Grant</i>	‘English nature, which fought to stop the granting of the first licence to grow commercial quantities of genetically modified oil seed rape’.	“admit as true” (second definition, <i>Chambers 20<sup>th</sup> Century Dictionary</i> , 1988)	“to bestow” (first definition, <i>Chambers 20<sup>th</sup> Century Dictionary</i> , 1988)
<i>Lame</i>	‘Mick Jagger’s toe-curling bad guy Victor Vacendak in lame sci-fi offering <i>Freejack</i> ’	“unable to walk well because of an injury to the leg or foot” (first definition, OALD 5)	“(of an excuse, explanation etc) weak and difficult to believe” (second definition, OALD 5)
<i>Pure</i>	‘a new era of pure, disinterested politics’	“not mixed with any other substance, colour, emotion” (first definition, <i>Collins English Dictionary</i> , 1989)	“without evil or sin, esp sexual sin; innocent or morally good” (third definition, <i>Collins English Dictionary</i> , 1989)

<i>Remission</i>	'He has suffered from a rare form of bone cancer, which was in remission when he arrived in Russia earlier this year'	"the cancellation of a debt, charge or penalty" (first definition, COD)	"temporary diminution of the severity of disease or pain" (second definition, COD)
<i>Waste</i>	'For even if every household in the world recycled practically everything it used, solid waste would be reduced by a mere 2%'	"an act (or instance) of using or expending something carelessly, extravagantly" (first definition, COD)	"material that is not wanted; the unusable remains or by-products of something" (second definition, COD)
<i>Wield</i>	'Sting's knife-wielding maniac Feyd-Rautha in <i>Dune</i> '	"To have and use power" (first definition, OALD 5)	"to hold sth, ready to use it as a weapon or tool" (second definition, OALD 5)

In almost every case it seems that this kind of error arose because subjects unthinkingly selected the first meaning provided for the headword, rather than a more appropriate definition listed later in the entry. Only one subject selected a later definition and ignored the first and most appropriate one ('to bestow' for *grant*), and in this case the difficulty of the defining language may have influenced the subject's choice.

A further type of category-one error was made by four subjects who looked up entirely the wrong entries for their target words. One selected the entry for *bane* instead of *ban*, and another selected the entry for *lay* instead of *lie* (a particularly understandable error, given that *lie* and *lay* are differentiated by valency rather than meaning). Another two failed to recognize that *agony aunt* and *far-fetched* were

multi-word units with their own separate entries. These four category-one errors are listed in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Cases where subjects looked up the wrong word entry (category one)

Word	Context	Word looked up
<i>Agony aunt</i>	'we will be using evidence from the discussions of the agony aunt of one well-known women's magazine'	<i>Agony</i> = "a very difficult, sad situation"
<i>Banned</i> (past tense of <i>ban</i> )	'vilified, banned and protested by politicians, preachers and parents alike'	<i>Bane</i> = "a person or thing that causes misery or distress. Eg the neighbours' children are the bane of my life"
<i>Far-fetched</i>	'certainly not a far-fetched proposition'	<i>Fetch</i> = <i>to sell the amount</i> (this meaning seems to have been taken from the LDOCE 3 definition "if something fetches a particular amount of money it is sold for that amount")
<i>Lay</i> (past tense of <i>lie</i> )	'this square inch of skin covered part of an embryonic dinosaur, perhaps its spine, as it lay in its shell'	<i>Lay</i> = "to put in a lying position; to flatten"

Many of the subjects who made category-one errors did not comment about their dictionaries, but the majority of those who did expressed satisfaction. For example:

‘When I was looking for *set back* both dictionaries gave me plenty information on *set* – information [that] was [so] good that I could straight away start writing it correctly.’

‘Yes I am satisfied with the amount of information in the dictionary.’

‘I didn’t have any problem finding the correct meaning of the items.’

‘Of course some words had a lot of meanings, but if I look at context I can choose quite easy the meaning I need.’

‘Actually I did not have any problems this time with finding those words.’

Only one subject who had made a category-one error expressed any doubt about the definition she had chosen. After looking up *assembly*, she wrote: ‘It was impossible to be sure [of] the choice of explanation.’

Category-one errors involved failing to identify the correct entry or subentry, and were largely due to the subjects’ lack of dictionary-using skills (although entry organization and wording made dictionary use harder in some cases). Errors in subsequent categories, on the other hand, involved problems with the interpretation of correctly located dictionary information, and could be caused either by the subjects’ lack of skill, or by the dictionary’s failure to supply information that was appropriate to the specific context.

Some category-two errors of interpretation probably passed undetected in this study, because when subjects simply cited the appropriate part of the correct dictionary entry they usually gave the impression that the look-up process had been successful. Only in cases where subjects summarised or paraphrased entry information was it possible to detect whether they had thoroughly understood the definitions they had read.

Table 4 lists all 11 category-two errors. The 7 subjects who made errors in this category are identified by numbers in the table and in the subsequent discussion.

**Table 4.** Cases where subjects misinterpreted dictionary entries (category two)

Word	Context	Source	Perceived meaning
<i>Appraisal</i> (Subject 1, using LDOCE 3)	'Your microphone will give you more feedback than a year's worth of appraisals'	LDOCE 3 "a statement or opinion judging the worth, value or condition of something"	<i>A year's worth of appraisals = esteem for a whole year.</i>
<i>Autobiographical</i> (Subject 2, using LDOCE 3 and OALD 5)	'issues of self-reflexivity have hinged less on questions of autobiographical writing and more on the significance of the researcher's identity'	LDOCE 3 autobiography = "literature that is concerned with people writing about their own lives"  OALD 5 an autobiographical novel = "one that contains many of the writer's own experiences"	<i>What geographers have written about.</i>

<i>Canonical</i> (Subject 3, using Cobuild 2)	'a restricted canonical patriarchal approach to the subject'	Cobuild 2 "if something has canonical status, it is accepted as having all the qualities that a thing of its kind should have"	<i>Accepting (the way of dealing with the subject).</i>
<i>Cling</i> (Subject 3, using Cobuild 2 and the <i>Oxford English Reference Dictionary</i> , 1996)	'Clinging to "safe" practices'	No part of the entry in Cobuild 2 or the <i>Oxford English Reference Dictionary</i> , 1996, supports this interpretation.	<i>Clinging = promoting (safe practices).</i>
<i>Coral</i> (Subject 4, using LDOCE 3)	'a scaffold out of coral in the shape of a thumb bone'	No part of the entry in LDOCE 3 supports this interpretation.	<i>Human body system.</i>
<i>Inbound</i> (Subject 5, using LDOCE 3 and an English- Japanese dictionary)	'The nation's official government tourist office charged with developing tourism policy, promoting inbound tourism from abroad, and stimulating travel within the United States'	LDOCE 3 "an inbound flight or train is coming towards the place where you are"	<i>An inbound flight or train is coming towards the place where you are. I often take inbound vacation trip with my family.</i>
<i>Mangle</i> (Subject 4, using OALD 5)	'the mangled remains [of the patient's thumb] were kept alive by sewing them onto his chest'	No part of the entry in OALD 5 supports this interpretation.	<i>Rest of the material or cells.</i>

<i>Mortal</i> (Subject 6, using Cobuild 2 and LDOCE 3)	'too many people think that working in a factory is beneath them, something that should be done by lesser mortals'	LDOCE 3 "mortal fear /terror/dread = extreme fear"	<i>Something that should be done by lesser mortals = something that should be done by lesser extremes, losses (in production, distribution etc).</i>
<i>Pave</i> (Subject 4, using LDOCE 3 and OALD 5)	'the surgery paved the way for other body parts to be grown to order'	No part of the entry in LDOCE 3 and OALD 5 supports this interpretation	<i>Something not in order as arranged or predicted.</i>
<i>Porous</i> (Subject 4, using LDOCE 3 and OALD 5)	'bone cells were injected into the porous material'	No part of the entry in LDOCE 3 and OALD 5 supports this interpretation	<i>Alive.</i>
<i>Seam</i> (Subject 7, using OALD 5)	'Kent's richest seam of writing hails from the 20 <sup>th</sup> century'	OALD 5 "a thin layer of coal or other material, between layers of rock under the ground" and "bursting/bulging at the seams = to be very full, especially of people"	<i>Layer/full</i>

Table 4 indicates a variety of causes of misinterpretation. Subjects 1, 2, 3 and 6 seemed to have adopted the 'kidrule strategy' (Miller and Gildea 1988, Nesi and Meara 1994), whereby a short familiar segment of the dictionary definition is taken out of context as an equivalent for the unknown headword. Thus *appraisal* is taken to mean *esteem*, presumably because of the words *worth* and *value* in the LDOCE 3 definition, 'what geographers have written about' echoes 'people writing about' in the

LDOCE 3 entry for *autobiography*, and ‘accepting’ echoes ‘accepted’ in the Cobuild 2 entry for *canonical*. Although LDOCE 3 has a separate entry for the idiom *lesser mortals*, it seems that Subject 6 focussed her attention on the Cobuild and LDOCE definitions for the intensifying adjective, and in particular the word *extreme* in the LDOCE definition.

She comments: ‘The only meaning I guessed was of the word *mortal* ... I knew it had a negative meaning relating to the word death, that is “loss”. The word *mortal* has more than six meanings and only one, which is used rather seldom, suits the context.’

Subject 5 partially understood the meaning of *inbound*, but seems to have misinterpreted the definition’s ‘folk’ style. Is his ‘inbound vacation trip’ a trip towards where we, his readers, are? Or is it simply a vacation that does not involve travel abroad? Imperfect translation equivalents may explain the confusion, as he admits: ‘I was not able to understand meaning of *inbound* immediately. After I looked up my English-Japanese dictionary I got it.’

Like the subject who found the approximate meaning for *stress-busting* by sheer ingenuity (Table 1), Subject 7 arrived by tortuous means at a satisfactory interpretation of the word *seam*, combining the literal sense with that of the idiom *bursting at the seams*. Exceptionally, she was able to recognize the figurative meaning of the word in context, and wrote ‘I regard this expression as metaphorical’.

Subject 3 (with *cling*) and Subject 4 allowed contextual guessing to override entirely the information in their dictionaries. These subjects indulged in the kind of ‘sham use’ of dictionaries described by Müllich (1990) in his study of German dictionary users studying French and English:

Students believed they had found their solution in the dictionary, but in reality, they had only read enough of the entry to confirm a preconceived idea, or simply deviated from the dictionary information on the grounds of interpretation and (personal) association (1990: 487).

In fact, like Müllich's students, many of the subjects who made category-two errors claimed to be satisfied with their erroneous explanations of word meaning, as can be judged from the following comments:

'I had no problems to find the probably correct meaning, because the most meanings of all of the chosen words lay close together.' (Subject 3)

'No difficulty in finding the correct meaning of the items.' (Subject 4)

'I was satisfied and pleased by the information provided by the dictionaries.'  
(Subject 6).

Only Subject 1 remained doubtful about her final choice: 'I did not understand the explanation of *appraisal* [in LDOCE 3]. The information [in COD 1995] was only in part sufficient to enable me to understand the items in context. Entries like "the act or an instance of appraising" are not very helpful.'

Category-three errors are rather like those in category two but had perhaps less serious consequences. The correct dictionary entries were located, and the definitions appeared to have been understood, but no effort was made on the part of the subject to use the more generally applicable dictionary information to create context-specific 'value glosses' (cf. Widdowson 1978).

Table 5 lists all category-three errors, which were produced by seven different subjects.

**Table 5.** Cases where subjects failed to adapt the correct definition to the context (category three)

Word	Context	Perceived meaning
<i>Eloquent</i>	'the boy's eyes, eloquent with terror'	"speaking fluently and expressing ideas vividly. Speech or writing that is eloquent is well-expressed and effective in persuading people. A person who is eloquent is good at speaking and able to persuade people"
<i>Foray</i>	'Laura, who made her first foray into the world of modelling last year'	"a sudden attack; a raid or incursion/capture booty; to make a raid"
<i>Grab</i>	'his headline grabbing <i>Dead to the World</i> tour'	"to seize hold of something eg do not grab – there is plenty for everyone"
<i>Pious</i>	'despite all the pious words spoken at international conferences'	"religious, devout etc"
<i>Sear</i>	'eyes ... that had seared into his heart like a brand'	"burn the surface"
<i>Topography</i>	'scientists still aren't sure what asteroids are made of, or even if they're one piece or just flying piles of rubble. If ever they have to push one out of an earthbound trajectory, they'll need to know a lot more about composition, density and topography'	<i>In the articles, it means a detailed description, representation on a map etc. eg the features of a place or district, especially the position of its rivers, mountains, roads etc.</i>
<i>Vintage</i>	'He was austere with himself; drank gin when he was alone, to mortify a taste for vintages'	<i>Year when the grapes are taken.</i>

In most of the contexts where category-three errors occurred the look-up words had taken on a metaphorical meaning – eyes do not really speak or burn, fashion models do not attack, tours do not seize things and conference participants are not noticeably devout in anything but a figurative sense. Subjects who made category-three errors did not comment on the mismatch between definition and contextual meaning, and we therefore assume that they had not recognized it. However, some of the metaphors are fairly commonplace (in particular those relating to the communicative powers of eyes) so some subjects who appeared to make category-three errors may in fact have understood these words in context.

In the case of *topography* the contextual meaning is not figurative, but is somewhat narrower than the meaning the subject presents. The surface of an asteroid can be described in detail, but the description will not include mention of rivers or roads. The subject's definition summarises the entries for *topography* in two dictionaries, but does not take into account the topic of the reading passage.

A discussion of meaning in context was required by the assignment task, and some subjects who managed to avoid category-three errors commented on the process of adjusting definitions to fit their texts. For example:

'I was satisfied with the amount of information provided by the dictionary ... I agree with the explanations, except the explanation of the word *frontrunner*, it was written in the dictionary that it is a person, in my case it is a country' – and:

'I recognize that a dictionary does not give a single, definitive meaning especially for abstract words. It is not a good way to totally rely on meanings given by a dictionary, because meaning varies depending on context.'

It is impossible to indicate in a dictionary entry all possible figurative meanings, but users might expect some guidance with words that are commonly used in a metaphorical sense. No suggestion, however, of a likely figurative meaning was given in the entries for *sear* (*Oxford Pocket School Dictionary* 1996, *Cobuild* 1995) or *foray* (*Concise Oxford Dictionary* 1995, *Longman Modern English Dictionary* 1976).

Unlike those subjects who failed to adjust general definitions to context, subjects who made category-four errors seem to have searched in vain for ‘value glosses’ in their dictionaries, neglecting those ‘signification glosses’ which explained word meaning in a less context-specific way (cf. Widdowson 1978). Table 6 lists all instances of this kind of error.

<b>Table 6.</b> Cases where subjects found appropriate definitions, but rejected them (category four)		
Word	Context	Comment on rejected meaning
<i>Bayonet</i>	'The sun flared down on the growing corn each day until a line of brown spread along the edge of each green bayonet'	"a sharp blade attached to the end of a rifle" ( <i>but none of my dictionaries give the right meaning of the word that will suit the context</i> )
<i>Brackish</i>	'fishing in a brackish pool'	"Impure, slightly salt of an unpleasant taste" – <i>not useful in this context</i>
<i>Fare</i>	'But Kiriyenko faced a rocky reception in the Duma, with only one deputy out of 450 speaking in his favour. His boss didn't fare much better.'	<i>The information in the dictionary was insufficient to enable me to understand the items in context. For example, fare. I have found its meaning was "to get on or progress", but when I put them into the sentence 'his boss didn't fare much better' I still could not make myself clearly understand it.</i>
<i>Mantra</i>	'The authority of personal experience was a central tenet of 1970's British and North American feminism, epitomised by the mantra of the time "the personal is political"'	"a word, phrase or sound that is constantly repeated" – <i>has no relevance to the text whatsoever</i>
<i>Spontaneously</i>	'His work has been criticised as being over-romantic, with subjects rarely photographed spontaneously.'	<i>When I first skim though I thought it means voluntary, without external incitement. But as I read the text again carefully, I've found that it doesn't really suit the text.</i>

The subject who looked up *fare* seemed to have difficulty with the language of the definitions, despite the fact that she was using the *Oxford Advanced Learner's*

*English-Chinese Dictionary* and *Oxford Wordpower*, rather than dictionaries intended for native speakers. It is also probable that the subject who looked up *spontaneously* (in COD 9 and the *Longman Dictionary of the English Language*, 1991) did not really understand the defining language. The subject who rejected the correct meaning of *bayonet* clearly failed to recognize the possibility of a figurative interpretation. It is impossible to tell why the remaining two subjects rejected the meanings given in their dictionaries, but although they both claimed that they had been unable to guess what the words meant before they looked them up, it seems likely that they were in some way influenced by preconceived notions about their meaning.

A number of subjects discussed the way they had tried to work out word meanings prior to dictionary consultation, and said that they found this a useful exercise. For example:

‘I normally do not guess the word which I do not know. However, I found it efficient to guess the word before I look it up as it makes it much easier to specify the correct meaning’ – and:

‘After doing this assignment, I find guess the meaning first is good for me to understand the word.’

Some subjects were good guessers; they made sensible choices of possible meanings and were conscientious about the guessing process:

‘It was quite hard to guess the meanings of words, because I needed to look at hints from the sentences, the words’ collocations and the structures of words.’ – and:

‘Sometimes I could guess the meanings of the words by looking at their sentences before and after, and the content of the articles.’

However in many cases subjects admitted that they had no idea what the words meant prior to look-up. For example:

‘I was not able to guess the meaning of most of them.’

‘I was not able to guess the meaning of the word when I read it for the first time.’

‘All other words I did not understand at all, I did not have any guesses of them.’

‘I could not imagine that *halve* would be the verb of *half*. However, if I had considered carefully, I could have found the connection. Honestly, I could not come up to any meaning of this.’

Others found that they had guessed wrongly:

‘My guesses were all very far from the actual meaning.’

‘My guess could be described as a failure.’

‘My guess of the meaning in this case was not right and far away from the real meaning.’

Although not even the best guesser can guess correctly in every context, the data suggests that subjects often employed rather ineffectual guessing strategies, which did not include sufficient consideration of context. Evidence for this comes from many of the instances of errors discussed above, but also from the subjects’ own discussion of

the look-up process. For example, one strategy subjects adopted was to examine the words immediately surrounding the unknown word, rather than the wider context. The subject who looked at the phrase ‘secure sources of supply’, for example, understandably decided that *secure* was functioning as an adjective, whereas in fact this was a category-one error (see Table 1) as examination of the fuller context – ‘Arthur hoped to ... secure sources of supply’ – reveals.

Another common strategy was to examine the structure of the unknown word and compare it to a word with a similar orthographic and phonological form. Whilst this strategy can help shed light on word meaning it depends for its success on the ability of the guesser to recognize the meaning of morphemes and the syntactic role of the unknown word in context. Many of our subjects found the strategy of word analysis unsuccessful because they could not identify meaningful component parts, and/or did not examine the surrounding text. Examples of unsuccessful word analysis prior to look up are given in Table 7 below:

**Table 7.** Examples of unsuccessful guesses

Word	Guess
<i>Bourn</i>	<i>I guessed “bourn” could be verb and belong to verb “be born” or to noun “birth”.</i>
<i>Compassionate</i>	<i>My original guess about this word were “compassionate” = “compromise”, which is not the right meaning.</i>
<i>Culinary</i>	<i>I thought the word had originated from the word “culture” as they both began with “cul”.</i>
<i>Embargo</i>	<i>As to embargo, I deemed it to mean “trade”, as the word “embark” (which sounds “ship” to me) occurred to me.</i>
<i>Poised</i>	<i>The first word “poised” I thought it related to the word “poison”.</i>
<i>Well-heeled</i>	<i>Beautiful shoes</i>

Despite the lack of supporting evidence, some subjects maintained their false assumptions about word families and word derivations even after they had looked the words up, as Table 8 demonstrates:

**Table 8.** Spurious connections made after look-up

Word	Suggested derivation
<i>Imagery</i>	<i>The word “imagery” can also be changed as “imaginary” which is the adjective. It means existing in the imagination, not real.</i>
<i>Ingrained</i>	<i>It can change as a verb – “ingratiating”.</i>

The value of such links to the learner is open to question. Although they may seem ludicrous to the proficient language user, they may prove useful in the construction of a learner’s mental lexicon, by providing access to new words via words that are already known.

Most of the problems we have considered so far have tended to be caused by the poor strategies of dictionary users who did not examine the context of unknown words sufficiently well, and jumped to conclusions regarding word meaning. But dictionary design also played a part in look-up error, in some cases providing explanations which were misleading or difficult to interpret, and in a few cases entirely failing to supply a word or meaning that suited the texts subjects were reading. Table 9 lists those cases where the correct meaning of the look-up word was not to be found in any of the dictionaries the subject consulted.

**Table 9.** Cases where an appropriate word meaning was not provided

Missing word	Dictionaries	Context
<i>Entity</i>	<i>Chambers 20<sup>th</sup> Century</i> 1978, <i>Collins Concise</i> 1989	'The development and management of Nunavut is certain to be carefully monitored by indigenous peoples and political entities around the world'
<i>Fardel</i>	COD 1990, LDOCE 3	'Who would fardels bear, to grunt and sweat under a weary life' (Hamlet)
<i>Imagery</i>	<i>Oxford Paperback Dictionary</i> 1994, LDOCE 3	'Many of the images were composed using photographic imagery.'
<i>Lander</i>	<i>Encarta Encyclopedia</i> 1997, <i>McGraw Hill Dictionary of Scientific and Technical Terms</i> (no date given), <i>Collins English Dictionary</i> 1991	'Mars Pathfinder's operations team is continuing daily efforts to reestablish communications with the lander.'
<i>Poststructuralist</i>	LDOCE 3 and OALD 5	'under the influence of postmodernist / poststructuralist strands of thought'
<i>Reflexivity</i>	LDOCE 3 and OALD 5	'issues of self-reflexivity have hinged less on questions of autobiographical writing and more on the significance of the researcher's identity'
<i>Showcase</i>	COD 9 and LDELC 1998	'This year's Warren Miller ski movie <i>Ride</i> , sees the world's best extreme skiers, showcased in an epic travel-log of skiing from around the globe.'
<i>Subaltern</i>	COD 1990 and LDELC 1992	'Chadbourne's untidy album covers have a scummy, hobo feel – a kind of bagperson obsessiveness. Subaltern protest infects the very forms he uses.'

In four cases listed in Table 9 there were entries for the look-up words in the subjects' dictionaries, but these entries did not provide a meaning that could satisfactorily be adjusted to explain the words in context. The word *entity* is listed in both *Chambers 20<sup>th</sup> Century Dictionary* and *Collins Concise Dictionary*, and the subject decided that it meant "being, or existence" (drawing on the first definition in *Chambers* and the second definition in *Collins*). It might be argued that the first *Collins* definition ("something having real or distinct existence") and the second *Chambers* definition ("something with objective reality") provide a somewhat better explanation of the meaning in context. We feel that both still fail, however, to convey the role of *entity* as a general noun functioning with much the same sense as *body* (= "a group of people working together"), a meaning that was not provided in any of the dictionaries consulted. Similarly, although *imagery* is listed in both the *Oxford Paperback Dictionary* and LDOCE 3, neither dictionary explains that it can be used to denote "images collectively". The subject chose the first definition in LDOCE 3 ("the use of poetic phrases and images to describe something in literature") in preference to the slightly more appropriate second definition ("the representation of ideas in paintings, films, etc."). Prior to look-up, however, the subject predicted much more accurately what the word would mean in context:

'My guess was nearly right but it was the wrong type of context. I meant a physical picture not mental.'

The subject who looked up *subaltern* decided that it 'has two meanings: an army officer ranked lower than a captain, and the position of the officer'. In fact the COD entry consulted also gave adjectival meanings "of inferior rank" and (in logic)

“particular, not universal”. The first of these is more appropriate to the context (an article in the music magazine *The Wire*), but still fails to convey the intended meaning of “inferior status”. (This meaning is provided in the *New Oxford Dictionary of English* 2001, and is commonly used in the study of culture, gender, media, race, etc.)

The case of *showcase* is less serious, as both COD and the *Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture* include noun entries. Neither dictionary indicates that the word might be converted for use as a verb, but this is not surprising, given that noun-verb conversion is a fairly regular phenomenon. The subject himself was unaware of any problem with word class, and might therefore have made a category-one error had the dictionaries provided an explanation of the verbal meaning. He selected the LDELC definition (“a place or medium for presenting something (esp attractively) to general attention”) but he was aware that this did not quite fit his context:

‘In the case of *showcase* I had some problems because in the context the meaning is a bit figurative’.

None of the four remaining words in Table 9 appeared at all in the subjects’ dictionaries, although only three of the four subjects were prepared to admit that they had not found the words they were searching for. The subject who looked up *reflexivity* did not report any failure, but instead supplied his own interpretation of the word meaning – ‘Geography itself causes actions that one cannot control’. *Reflexive*, the nearest entry in LDOCE 3 and OALD 5, relates to the grammatical category of reflexive verb, and does not seem to have contributed in any way to this meaning construction.

## 7. Conclusion

This study has attempted to describe the way international undergraduate students use dictionaries receptively, in a fairly naturalistic setting, whilst studying in the medium of English. The students who provided data for the study were following a popular course in Study Skills, and were, we think, reasonably representative of international undergraduates at Oxford Brookes University. For the most part they claimed to be experienced dictionary users, owners of one or more dictionary which they used on a regular basis. Nevertheless more than half of them experienced some kind of look-up failure during the five dictionary consultations required for the assignment task.

Although it was our intention to make the look-up task as close as possible to normal dictionary use, some experimental effects were noted. Students did not name or use their bilingual dictionaries and translators to the extent that we had expected, based on our own classroom observation. Doubtless they were aware that the module tutors would not be able to read definitions provided in other languages, but we think it is also likely that some students had a lower regard for their bilingual dictionaries, and did not like to admit to using them. This may have been particularly true for bilingual electronic dictionaries, often named merely as ‘translators’, and referred to very disparagingly by two students who claimed to use monolingual paper-based dictionaries. This observation tallies with the findings of Béjoint (1981) and Marelló (1989), who both report that students express greater satisfaction with monolingual than bilingual dictionaries.

We did not find any evidence to suggest that the students chose texts other than those they would normally read, or words other than those they would normally look up (except perhaps in the case of the very few students who claimed to use

dictionaries only rarely). Little or no attempt appeared to have been made to impress us with high-brow reading material. In a few cases, however, there was some indication that students had looked up more words than those actually reported for the assignment (judging from underlinings in the texts), and it is possible that some students chose to discuss only those words that they perceived to be 'hard', rather than other simpler words that they also did not know.

Although some students were able to evaluate dictionary information critically, and some may even have developed the ability to do so while undertaking the task, on the whole our informants were unwilling to admit to any dictionary-using problems. It is possible that their claims to be satisfied with dictionary information were part of a misguided attempt to impress their course tutors (despite the fact that the task encouraged discussion of difficulties). It seems likely, however, that many students failed to report problems because they simply failed to recognize them. Fortunately our research methods enabled us to triangulate students' self-reports with hard evidence of the way they selected and interpreted dictionary entries, and with the entries themselves, normally photocopied and attached to the assignment in accordance with the assignment specifications. The obvious mismatch between student claims and consultation results demonstrates the danger of relying on introspective and retrospective reports when investigating dictionary use.

Our findings reveal that the choice of appropriate dictionary entry or sub-entry was by far the greatest problem for dictionary users. In most cases our students chose the wrong definition because they had misidentified the grammatical class of the look-up word. It is to be hoped that the increasingly sophisticated use of guide words and signposts in learners' dictionaries will help future users to avoid the mistakes reported here. There was also a fair amount of misinterpretation of dictionary definitions

(problem categories two, three and four), suggesting the need for improved dictionary skills training, and ever more careful attention to the wording of definitions.

The results of our study only confirm, of course, the problems that many teachers and lexicographers are already aware of. We hope, however, that the data we provide here will provide a basis for further discussion, and will inspire others to continue in their search for solutions.

### Acknowledgements

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## Appendix 1

### The task used to gather data (October 2000 version)

#### **PART TWO**

##### **Using dictionaries**

- 1) Before you do the rest of the assignment write a few lines about your dictionary and how you use it. First, which English dictionary (or dictionaries?) do you currently own? (Give the name and date of publication.) How often do you use it? When do you use it: when doing assignments? At other times? Do you ever carry it with you to classes or to the library?
- 2) Now choose a short text (of at least 10 lines) from any source (novel, textbook, magazine, instruction manual, etc.). The text must contain **five** items of vocabulary with which you were **completely unfamiliar** before reading.

Now answer the following questions as fully as you think necessary:

a) Look the words/ phrases up in **at least two** different dictionaries (the more recent the better!). Give the names and dates of publication of these. It is probably a good idea to try dictionaries from different publishers, eg Oxford and Longman, or Cambridge and Collins.

b) Give the meanings (in context) of the five words/phrases you have chosen. (Be careful if your word/ phrase has more than one meaning.)

**(N.B. Please attach a photocopy of the relevant dictionary entries for the 5 items: you may cut and paste these on to one sheet.)**

c) Explain what problems you had (if any) in finding the correct meaning of the items. (For example one item may have several different meanings.) Try to give one or two detailed examples.

d) Were you satisfied with the amount of information provided by the dictionary (or dictionaries)? Please comment on the following statements, saying whether you agree or disagree with them, and giving some **specific** examples to illustrate your answers:

The information in the dictionary was sufficient to enable me to:

i) understand the items in context

ii) use the words correctly - if I had to - in both speech and writing

iv) get to know the words' collocations (i.e. the words or types of words that tend to occur before or after them)

v) know the kinds of contexts (e.g. technical, scientific) in which the words are used

vi) know whether these are common words or unusual words that are only used in certain types of text

e) Overall, which dictionary do you feel was most helpful, and why?

f) Finally, looking back at this assignment, how has it changed your view of how useful dictionaries are (or are not)? Have you changed your ideas at all about how to make the best use of a dictionary? If so, please say how.

**N.B. 1) Please attach a copy of your chosen text to the assignment and highlight the words/ items which you have chosen to talk about. Also give the date on which the text was published.**

**N.B. 2)** These questions on the use of dictionaries will be marked according to the following criteria:

- attention to detail in your research
- clarity and thoroughness of explanation
- quality of your analysis

## Appendix 2

### Words looked up by subjects

Words that occur more than 10 times per million word tokens in the British National Corpus are marked for rounded frequency and also for range across sectors (out of a maximum of 100). Words marked \* belong to families listed in Coxhead's *Academic Word List* (1998).

<b>A</b>	ablaze	appraisal 12: 96	belligerent (n.)
	absorb 27: 99	archaeologist	bemoan
	abuse 12: 97	arrears	beneficence
	accentuate (x 2)	aspire	besiege
	accessible 16:96*	assemble 17:99*	billow
	account (v) 58:100	assert 21:96	bizarre 11:96
	acorn	attorney	blame (v) 44:100
	acquire 68:99*	austere	blow (n) 24:99
	adage	autobiography	blues 12:92
	adjunct	avalanche	book-keeping
	admission 29: 99	avert	bourgeois
	aesthetic 12:86	awe	bourn
	aesthetics		bowl 30:98
	affirm	<b>B</b>	brackish
	agenda (x 2) 25:99	bald	breadwinner
	agony 10:97	ban (x 2) 28:100	brew (v)
	allocation 23:87*	bash	brisk
	allure	bastion	bulldozer
	altruism	bayonet	
	anachronistic	beacon	
	annul	bearings 4:82	<b>C</b>
		bed (v)	canonical
			canyon

capacity (x 2) 63:100*	constitution 42:93*	devastate
catwalk	contemplate 17:98	didactic
cauldron	controversy 21:91*	dignity 13:96
cavalier	convene*	dire
cease 30:100*	copse	director
chafe	coral 10:86	disaster 34:100
chaotic	coterie	discrepancy
chart*	countenance	discretion 19:98*
chasm	courtship	disparage
chirp	crease (v)	dissipate
chum	croon	doomsday
claimant*	culinary	doth
cling 17:97	cultivate	draconian
command (n) 41:100	curative	dread (v) (x2)
commit 68:100*	curator	dreary
companion 25:99	curriculum 56:96	dredge
compassion (x 2)	cynic	
compose (v) 24:97		
comprehensive 35:99*	<b>D</b> dab (n)	<b>E</b> eccentric
concession 18:98	dashing (adj)	egalitarian
concoct	dazzle	electro-magnetic
conduct (n) 29:95*	decay (v)	eliminate 24:99*
conduit	decree 11:78	eloquent
confine (x 3) 27:97*	deity	elusive
conflict (n) 70:99*	delirious	emancipation
Congress 56:94	depict 15:94	embargo
conjecture	deploy	embroider
conjunction	depopulate	embryo (x 2)
conscientious	deprive 14:99	engrave
conspicuous	detract	enhance 31:96*

enshrine		flicker	heed
enthral		foray	hefty
entity 18:94*		forth 13:99	heritage 20:95
entrepreneur		foster (v) 10:95	hobo
environment 144:100*		frontrunner	hobnob (v)
epitome		fraction 20:100	horde
equator		frown (v) 19:85	hue (and cry)
era 22:97			hurtle
erode *	<b>G</b>	gaze (v) 23:90	
euphemism		game-keeper	<b>I</b> idiosyncratic
ethnologist		garment 13:92	imagery*
exaggerate		gesture (n) 27:99	immaculate
excessive 17:98*		glitter	impeccable
expedient		goggle	implementation 30:77*
expound		googly	improper
		gouge	inbound
<b>F</b> fabric 29:99		grab 29:98	inclination*
facetious		grandeur	increment
faint-hearted		grant (v) 68:100*	indicate 124:100*
fan (n) 48:98		grasp (n)	indigenous
fardel		grieve	inequitable
fare (vb)		grunt	infringe
far-fetched		gullible	ingrain (x 2)
feature (v) 38:97*			innermost
federal 38:89*	<b>H</b>	hail (from)	innovation 24:94*
ferocious		halt (v) 15:96	institute 58:98*
fickle		halve	interim (adj) 17:85
flail		handicraft	inundation
flair		harvest (n) 11:99	irretrievable
flare		hazardous	

<b>J</b>	jagged		methodology 11:73*	perennial
	joy 27:99		meticulous	personification
<b>L</b>	lame		modular	pervasive
	lamentable		monarchy 10:82	pious
	lamentation		montage	plot (n = land)?
	lander		monument 13:97	plough
	lay (past tense) 64:100		mortal	poignant
	lean (adj)		mutuality*	poise (v)
	leap 21:97		myth 21:98	ponderous
	lease 25:97	<b>N</b>	native (adj)	porous
	leave (out) ?		nigger	post-structuralist*
	lectern		numerate	preach 11:100
	liaise			predominantly 12:87*
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