

Re: Word count of minimum vocabulary

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Mok-Kong Shen wrote:

I should mention (even though possibly unnecessarily) one of the applications of the minimum-sized vocabularies. In learning a foreign language, it frequently is the case that one doesn't want to master that language perfectly (including in-depth studies of literature classics etc.) but only to be able to communicate one's own thought (in a certain domain of discourse) to the foreigners freely and perfectly.

From my experience, the hard part in literature is grammar, not vocabulary. I am at a loss to produce any italian even though I know what more than 90% of the words mean.

This is not to criticise or discourage you, but just to point out that sometimes obvious assumptions just don't hold. I wish it were otherwise, but it isn't.

Daniels: Chinese does not use ideographs.

Answer: From Collins Concise Dictionay: ideogram or ideograph: a sign or symbol, used in a writing system such as that of China, that directly represents a concept or thing, rather than a word for it.

1. Never quote a [generalist] dictionary in a discussion. It would be very surprising if the people writing the entry knew more than the ones discussing the matter. Unless, of course, the other party knows very little and you know yourself more than the entry says (and find the entry to be good). Otherwise, you'll just make a fool of yourself (appealing to discredited authority is a big no-no).

2. You should know that chinese characters do represent words and not concepts. Hint: if they did represent concepts, the japanese wouldn't

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have to have invented hiragana. Hint n° 2: instead of trying to come up with a counter–argument for the previous hint (which, oddly, is what most people do!), realise it's just that – a hint to you, so that you may picture yourself why your position isn't correct (because the mere fact that it isn't is, quite simply, unavoidable).

Herring: Just guessing here, but I doubt if those 323 million words are all different.

Answer: From the envelope of Collins Concise Dictionary: The Bank of English is a computerized collection of more than 323 million words of current English created by Collins Dictionaries and the University of Birmingham to record how language is used and is changing.

....which just indicates that Richard's suspicion that those are not distinct words is correct.

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laurus : rhodophyta : brezoneg : smalltalk : stargate

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