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Scope

- 1 This dictionary provides a valency description of English consisting of 511 verbs, 274 nouns and 544 adjectives. The selection is justified (xl) on the basis of interesting but potentially conflicting criteria: “frequency, complexity of valency structures and potential difficulty for the foreign learner”. Though the last criterion deserves praise as it meets a real demand for EFL learners in terms of competing patterns, the convergence of the three criteria could be re-examined. Some constructions may be difficult for EFL learners solely because they are different in their native languages, not least because the most frequent conflicting valencies on different languages are often for cognates. There is no entry for *preside*, whereas French, Italian and Spanish have

different constructions than English in this case. The most frequent patterns may not be described for advanced learners (a standpoint adopted for example in the bilingual English-French dictionary *Le Petit Ophrys* where common nouns are omitted). Even so, the dictionary offers the most complex cases of frequently occurring lexical items, and that is undeniably of the utmost importance to EFL learners.

- 2 In this conception of valency, subjects count as a kind of complement, hence the recognition of a tetra- or quadrivalent active use, that is a pattern with four complements as in *Someone had suggested it to him as an investment*. The valency description comprises statements about the quantitative valency of the lexical units established, an inventory of their obligatory, contextually optional, and purely optional, complements as well as systematic information on the semantic and collocational properties of the complements. An outline of the model of valency theory used in this dictionary is provided in the introduction. This review will tackle some of the points, such as frequency, sampling, semantic comments and metalexicographic insight.

Frequency estimates

- 3 The frequency guidelines are useful though not systematic. Strict percentages (eg “more than 30 %”) are rare. The usefulness of the distinction *frequent* vs. *very frequent* might be questioned, as well as the relevance of the label “rare” in some cases. The notion that the construction “*tendency that*” should be “rare” (862) seems dubious to the present reviewer. That being said, the example in context (“*There’s always the strong tendency that I’m going to fall asleep or, even worse, not be able to perform properly.*”) provides a relevant collocational adjective (176 occurrences in Google) though “central tendency” sounds much more promising. Some other EFL dictionaries (like the modestly acronymed MEDAL dictionary) distinguish three levels of frequency but they do so with tokens, not with types of constructions, which is a much more challenging issue.
- 4 The number of nouns appears to the reviewer to be slightly underestimated in comparison, as evidenced by their only accounting for 20.6 % of this 1,329-entry dictionary. Since the number of nouns is relatively small, a recapitulative table of the different constructions would have been helpful, as is the case with the appendix of Schmid 2000. The consequence is that there are no entries for the letters X and Y and only zeal for Z. As to W, the list of entries reads as follows: *wait* (V), *wake* (V), *walk* (V), *wander* (V), *want* (V), *war* (N), *warn* (V), *wary* (adj), *wash* (V), *waste* (V), *watch* (V), *weak* (adj), *wear* (V), *weary* (adj), *weigh* (V), *welcome* (V), *well-informed* (adj), *well-known* (adj), *well-off* (adj), *whisper* (V), *whistle* (V), *wicked* (adj), *wild* (adj), *will* (N), *win* (N), *win* (V), *wise*(adj), *wish* (V), *witness* (N), *wonder* (V), *word* (N), *work* (N), *work* (V), *worry* (V), *worth* (adj), *worthy* (adj), *wrap* (V), *write* (V), *wrong* (adj). This short list is almost self-explanatory in terms of issues still pending: compounds, conversions and derived forms might appear to be somewhat under-represented, though the complexity of the different patterns was a criterion for inclusion. The unfortunate consequence is the common absence of the derived noun (*commit* V, but no *commitment*) so that potentially diverging patterns between nouns and verbs cannot always be systematically compared in the dictionary.

Noun governing that-clauses

- 5 For each of the 1,329 entries taken into account in the dictionary, a list of the complementation patterns given as “*comprehensive*” was established with the COBUILD/Birmingham corpus. Though some of the occurrences in his ongoing corpus of *that* clause complement-taking nouns would probably be appropriately deemed rare, this reviewer believes that some nouns could occur with the N-that constructions. CLUE would be a case in point, as well as JOKE, GIFT, HABIT, TRICK and TROUBLE.
- 6 In the case of noun complement clauses, the reviewer appreciated the distinction made between *a comment from* / *a comment by*, in line with stance-taking strategies expressed in the PP, but wondered whether the genitive may not require the introduction of another pattern / valency requirement. *Fault* or *comment* are labelled as [it] + that CL but this seems to ignore the in these two cases, as evidenced in the example given under *fault* (*It was not entirely Edward’s fault that he never quite fulfilled expectations*). In the analysis of valency for nouns, the genitive could be considered for inclusion, just like the by-phrases are (see *insistence by developed countries that*) as in this example of *insight* (*Reagan’s book confirms Christopher Matthews’s insight that Reagan’s calling in life was not as an actor but as an announcer, 432*)

Examples

- 7 Interestingly enough, in spite of the all-encompassing Bank of England that was used for the dictionary, the need was nevertheless felt to resort to some invented examples (but rightfully signalled as such) as with *He closed on an excellent 67 after 18 holes* (143). This pattern also exemplifies a pattern likely to occur in the press, the SCORE construction, an innovative but realistic assumption that numbers play such a role in newspapers (sport) that they ought to be signalled as such in the guise of specific labels.

Metalexicographic perspective

- 8 From a metalexicographic angle, the dictionary bears testimony to the possibility of maintaining a high standard of values while proposing numerous innovations in the description of patterns. Among the many innovations, the distinction is indicated for many complements between active and passive constructions with the A / P distinction:
 - A complement can occur as subject of a finite active clause (if no patterns are specified, this complement can act as subject in all patterns of that sense),
 - P complement can occur as subject of a finite passive clause,
 - A/P:it when occurring as subject, extraposition with a dummy subject *it* is obligatory,
 - A/P(it) when occurring as subject, extraposition with a dummy subject *it* is possible, (though such a general scheme may tend to override extraposition as a syntactic feature).
- 9 The interest in passive and active feature may have led to an underestimation of the importance of extraposition, since some extraposition features are listed under active/passive. The boundary is not always clear-cut, as evidenced by the remark about PRAY

(605) + for that – CLP (only passive) as in *That rain should come was prayed for by the congregation*. In this (invented) example, the passive form affects the verb, not the *that*-clause, which the label seems to imply.

- 10 Among other innovative symbols is the indication of alternative word orders, for example <--> links two elements of a valency pattern where the order of the elements is not fixed.
- 11 Even so, special status is granted for “particle” word order: <--> only in pattern + N + ADV <-->. In other words the ADV-complement can be realised by a particle, i.e. an adverb such as *in, over, up*, which can precede or follow the N-complement, for example:
 Oily waves *washed* ashore seaweed and general decomposition.
 Oily waves *washed* seaweed and general decomposition ashore.
- 12 Semantically, the dictionary offers subtle labels such as [ADV:QUALITY] (*the car rides well*) for middle voice constructions or the label [DESCRIPTION] for autonymic uses of verbs (the file marked “divorce”). Among the distinctions that may appeal to utterance-based grammarians, are *that*-omitting constructions and the taking into account of *to* as a specific marker. Semantic categories reveal the quest for ever more finely grained distinctions of patterns. The relevance of quotatives is acknowledged in the dictionary, as with *explode* (D2, 291). The relevance of the indirect / direct speech distinction is maintained in the labels QUOTE / SENTENCE. Though quotatives should definitely be included (for uses of the verb like *he offered, he exploded*), it might be debatable whether this stylistic distinction need be maintained, especially since most entries appear with QUOTE / SENTENCE as a mixed label.
- 13 Some metalexigraphic subclassifications may have to be substantiated, especially for corpus-based studies. The ontology (and typology) of patterns is not necessarily established beyond all argument and some choices may appear to be debatable. At least the dictionary does give food for thought in the classification of patterns (whether it be p. 300 for the seven alternative patterns acknowledged for *fall behind / against* or in the apparent subcategorisation of God as a specific NP for the verb *pray*, [N:God]P). It begs the question as to whether some patterns are really valency-ruled, and lexically constrained by the selectional properties of the lexical units concerned. This is the case for NEED, where the extraposed form with premodifier is listed as being a specific construction:
 P3 [it] + [with premodifier] + that-CL (rare) It’s almost a psychological need that I have to have my car with me.
- 14 The question of the rarity of such a pattern needs to be raised, in the light of the existence of the need + that-CL construction (unattested in the dictionary but found in the BNC in “But I have yet to be convinced of the need that these should be taken at two particular times in a student’s school career”, BNC, ASY: 1338). Such a valency pattern seems to postulate that the pattern is lexically constrained and that extrapositions are not plausible otherwise, though *the need that I have to have my car with me is almost psychological* would sound acceptable to me. It also seems to imply that only NEED may enable such a construction, which I think is dubious. The underlying question is whether we should consider these “valency patterns” as being lexically constrained or grammar-ruled. In that sense, because of its finer-grained valency patterns, the dictionary clearly tends to treat extraposition as lexical.

Semantic glosses

- 15 Even though no systematic treatment of aspectual distinctions (processes / result) is offered, a laudable attempt to recap polysemy by means of the valency classification (three main meanings for *distinction*) is proposed for many entries. Among useful tips for EFL learners, specifications are given about classic differences such as between *economic* vs. *economical* (262).
- 16 The overall project of the dictionary has far-reaching implications as to the description of co-occurrence restrictions, maybe another name for syntax on a lexico-semantic basis. A practical as well as a theoretical consequence for EFL learners is the existence of competing patterns. Hesitations (*familiar to* / *familiar with*) or the question still pending of competing constructions are not finally settled as far as foreign learners are concerned, since it is acknowledged that competing patterns may exist without any apparent semantic distinction. A case in point is given on p. 265: *A person can be elated about, at, by, over or with some event that pleased them very much* - a useful reminder that semantic classifications such as patient / theme / source may vary subjectively because of the governing preposition. Yet, the question remains, should we not acknowledge a specific semantic interpretation for each preposition governed (see also *insight into, about* or *ona* complex situation is 'a full understanding of it or a statement that reflects such understanding', 432)?
- 17 As to the shortcomings or rather shortcuts of some of the semantic glosses, I will just pinpoint one of the interesting presuppositions contained in the definition of *engaged*. If we are to take the following distinctions as being mutually exclusive, there are progressive inferences to be drawn from this semantic characterisation:
Two people who are engaged have promised to marry each other. A person can be engaged
(i) to be married
(ii) to a person of the opposite sex.

Collocations

- 18 Attention is paid to collocations, not only in the choice of examples, but also with sub-entries. The dictionary makes strong points about the relevance of collocational constructions and proposes undeniably fascinating cases such as *drive home* (to be compared with *press home* or *hit home*). We can certainly take advantage of these examples to further our understanding of such structures, as the multiplication of agency patterns/constructions provides sound evidence of lexicalisation in the making.

Conclusion

- 19 In spite of these (inevitable) shortcomings, this dictionary represents an undeniable breakthrough in the field of corpus-based dictionaries. When they say in the preface, "*We hope the combination of corpus research and the theoretical background of valency theory has resulted in a dictionary that the envisaged users find as useful as we hope they will*", this goal has undoubtedly been achieved. This 12-year project is an achievement that will be invaluable for English teachers and researchers alike. Despite some conspicuous omissions, this dictionary will soon make a place for itself as a reference tool in

translation studies for non-native speakers of English, alongside the *BBI Combinatory Dictionary of English Word Combinations*.

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