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An Analysis of the *Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English*<sup>1)</sup>

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### 1. Introduction

The Oxford University Press published the *Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English* (hereafter abbreviated as *OCDSE*) in 2002 and completed its trilogy of phraseological dictionaries. Like its companions, the *Oxford Phrasal Verbs Dictionary for Learners of English* (2001) and the *Oxford Idioms Dictionary for Learners of English* (2001), the *OCDSE* was compiled mainly on the basis of the 100 million word British National Corpus (viii). The dictionary is also available in the form of the CD-ROM called *Oxford Phrasebuilder Genie*, which also contains the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, the 6th edition (2000).

It can be said that the *OCDSE* is the first *pedagogically oriented* electronic corpus-based English collocations dictionary available in the form of a paper dictionary. According to Nuccorini (2003: 373), the first English dictionary with the word *collocation* in its title is Douglas-Kozłowska and Dzierżanowska's *Selected English Collocations* (1982). The collocations in this dictionary were all drawn from a collection of British texts dating from after 1960 (p. 11). The first collocations dictionary based on an electronic corpus is *A Dictionary of English Collocations* (1994) compiled by Göran Kjellmer. It is a three-volume dictionary based on the 1-million-word Brown Corpus, and includes not only what we generally regard collocations, but also lexical bundles. This is a scholarly work, but the very small size of the corpus on which it is based severely limits its pedagogical value. *The Collins Cobuild English Collocations on CD-ROM* (1995) is a CD-ROM for teachers and advanced learners that provides

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access to 10,000 words that appear more than 500 times in the Bank of English (of 200 million words) and shows their most frequent twenty collocates. Real examples extracted from the corpus are shown in the KWIC (Key Word In Context) format and can be also shown in full sentence.

There has been no firmly established structure of a collocations dictionary so far, but as Nuccorini (2003: 367) says, there is one common feature:

English monolingual collocational dictionaries agree on one point: they are meant for encoding purposes and are consistently addressed to advanced learners and translators. This means that both the macro- and micro-structure are devised and organised to help the user write in English. Their shared purpose remains a unifying element even though the types of headwords, of collocates and of the information given are quite different in each dictionary.

The back cover of the *OCDSE* says that “Learning how words can be combined in English will allow you to say what you mean — and say it more naturally”. A collocations dictionary can help its users to produce not only *correct*, but also *natural* texts. Also, in the process of selection of a most appropriate word, users may be able to clarify or develop or even reshape the idea that they want to express. The *LTP Dictionary of Selected Collocations* (1997)<sup>2)</sup> edited by Jimmie Hill and Michael Lewis, another EFL collocations dictionary, therefore strongly encourages users to browse through the entry, explaining a beneficial effect of browsing or scanning as follows in the introduction (p. 9):

#### **Browsing**

Apart from looking for the collocation which says exactly what you mean, you can use an entry, particularly one of the longer ones, to help you to re-activate lots of half-remembered combinations. Use the entry in this way when you are preparing an essay or a talk.

The present paper aims to assess the *OCDSE*'s performance as a corpus-based EFL dictionary of collocations from the foreign learner's point of view. After giving an overview of the *OCDSE*, the focus will be on its

coverage in order to find out what kinds of collocations or word-combinations the *OCDSE* actually regards as of practical use. I will take a comparative approach in the analysis of coverage, and the following three dictionaries are used for comparison: the *BBI Dictionary of English Word Combinations* (1997) (hereafter abbreviated as *BBI*), the *Kenkyusha Dictionary of English Collocations* (1995) (hereafter abbreviated as *KDEC*), and the *Kenkyusha Luminous Japanese-English Dictionary* (2001) (hereafter abbreviated *KLJED*). (For more information about each dictionary see Section 7.)

#### **2. The definition of ‘collocation’ in the *OCDSE***

There has been so far no agreement on the definition of ‘collocation’ among linguists, and the compilers of the *OCDSE* explain collocation in the section called ‘What is collocation?’ in ‘Introduction’ as follows: “Collocation is the way words combine in a language to produce natural-sounding speech and writing” (vii). This linguistically loose definition of collocation reflects clearly the coherent editorial policy of this dictionary. It is not a linguistically precise definition of collocation, which general users would not understand or care about, but users' needs for production that forms the basis of judgement as to what collocations or word-combinations are to be included. In their paper explaining the principles and practice of the compilation of the *OCDSE*, Lea and Runcie (2002: 819) argue for “a pragmatic and fairly wide-ranging definition of collocation for the purposes of the dictionary, based firmly on the needs of the user”.

Although there is no theoretical account of collocation provided, it is explained that they see collocation on a cline with ‘free’ word-combination such as *see a man/car/book* at one end, and with ‘fixed and idiomatic’ word-combination such as *see the wood for the trees* at another, and that anything that comes between them can be seen as collocation. They divide collocation further into three categories: weak collocation, medium-strength collocation, and strong collocation. *See a film* is given as an example of a ‘weak’ collocation, while *see danger/reason/the point* are examples of ‘strong’ collocations (vii). An example of a ‘medium-strength’ collocation is *see a*

*doctor*, although it is NOT included at the entry for *doctor* or *dentist*. According to Hill (2000: 64), learners are generally unsuccessful in making efficient use of their knowledge of independent lexical items, especially in the area of ‘medium-strength’ collocations. The *OCDSE* therefore attaches pedagogical significance to ‘medium-strength’ collocations and claims to give them a good coverage.

### 3. The inclusion policies

Under this broad definition of collocation, the *OCDSE* basically tries to include lexical strings of words they believe to be pedagogically significant, rather than collocations in the linguistically precise sense. In ‘Which collocations are included in this dictionary?’ in ‘Introduction’ three basic questions asked as the criteria are given: “Is this a typical use of language? Might a user of this dictionary want to express this idea? Would they look up this entry to find out how?” (viii). In other words, what is most important as a criterion for inclusion is whether the dictionary provides what intermediate to advanced learners of English would need in order to produce *natural* or *native-like* English. More specifically, the dictionary claims to give an extensive coverage of collocations from ‘weak’ to ‘strong’ and exclude free word-combinations and idioms (viii). With some ‘strong collocations’, whose meaning may be (partially) opaque, a gloss may be provided to clarify the meaning.

‘Frequency’ is a major, deciding factor in inclusion, as well as ‘usefulness to users’, and these two factors are considered interdependent. Collocations native speakers produce frequently are considered to be the ones users are also likely to need to express their idea in more natural English, and the most frequent collocations turned out to be ‘medium-strength’ collocations (Lea and Runcie 2002: 822–25). Accordingly, word-combinations which are not strictly collocations may also be included if they have high enough frequency in the corpus data.

The emphasis on the typical led to a fairly inclusive approach in terms of the perceived ‘strength’ of collocations . . . . The dictionary does include a number of items that are so fixed that they might properly be called compounds: examples are *grey area* and *learning*

*curve*; . . . . the learner is not to know the most appropriate expression is so idiomatic that it qualifies as a compound, and the distinction may not therefore be very useful.

(Lea and Runcie 2002: 821)

In their view, ‘typicality’ is judged by ‘frequency’, not by ‘lexicographer’s intuition’, and Lea and Runcie (2002: 824) conclude that “What learners of English really need to know are the collocations that native speakers actually use, in the course of writing and speaking on any subject but collocation; not necessarily what ‘springs to mind’ when a native-speaker is asked to name a collocation”.

British English is chosen as the standard, and ‘moderately formal language’, which is explained as “the language of essay and report writing, and formal letters” (viii–ix), is considered the most appropriate style level for the potential users. Collocations from some technical fields and spoken language are also included and labeled as such. Japanese learners of English would very much appreciate information about American English, however.

### 4. Methodology of selection of material

#### 4.1. The headword list

The *OCDSE* claims to contain 9,000 headwords, most of which are commonest words and considered to be familiar to upper-intermediate learners (x). The headword list, which consists of nouns, verbs, and adjectives, was drawn up based on the *Oxford Wordpower Dictionary*<sup>3)</sup>, another Oxford product for intermediate learners, and the *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*<sup>4)</sup>, one of the best-known learners’ dictionaries for the advanced (Lea and Runcie 2002: 825). How to draw up a headword list that meets users’ needs would require a full, in-depth discussion, so that I will not go further than mention some problems in this paper. First, although it is stated that very common words such as *make* and *do* ought to be excluded (Lea and Runcie 2002: 826), there seems to be some inconsistency in the inclusion. While *make*, *do*, *have*, and *give* are not included, another delexical verb *take* is given an entry, albeit very short. Treatment of verbs that usually deserve a long entry in a general dictionary, and that

generate a number of phrasal verbs does not seem quite systematic either, as *come*, *get* and *set* are not included, but *go*, *bring*, *keep*, and *put* are. Second, the headword list contains some culture-specific items. For example, are foreign learners of English likely to talk about or write about *A level*? Even when they need to do so, they can always refer to the entries for *exam* and *test*. Among *basketball*, *football*, and *hockey*, it is of course *football* that boasts the longest entry, and the entry for *cricket* is longer than that of *basketball* and that of *hockey*, even longer than that of *tennis*. Since some collocates found at these entries are common to quite a few sports and there is a special page for Sport, the relevant collocations could have been presented more efficiently. Third, some headwords such as *bailiff*, *focal point*, *firing squad* and *physique* appear to be too difficult or technical for the target users. There seems to be still room for improvement in terms of the headword list.

#### 4.2. Collocations

Basically, all the collocations in the *OCDSE* are derived from corpus data. Lea and Runcie (2002: 820) explain that lexicographers checked the frequent collocates of a given word in the corpus, going through concordance lines and using MI-score and T-score, and that “A few of the collocations included in the Oxford Collocations Dictionary have as few as three citations in the 100 million word BNC” (825). Lexicographers are also supported by a collocation-extract software program developed by the team (820). As for those new words in computing and the like, the Internet was used as a supplementary source (viii).

However, it is not the case that collocations of high frequency were blindly taken from the corpus and presented in the entries. Lexicographers’ intuition plays an important role in compiling lists of *typical* words to go with the headword, but not those of frequent words. Rare though it was, the corpus data was supplemented by lexicographers’ intuition when the data did not include items that would be expected to be in. Some words were judged to be excluded from the lists if they appeared highly frequently merely because they were semantically related to the popular topics of the time when the data was collected (Lea and Runcie 2002: 824).

#### 5. The entry structure

Now that editorial policies have been explained, the entry structure will be looked at in this section. Information contained in the entry deals almost exclusively with the combinatorial behaviour of the headword. Figure 1 is the entry for *damage*, which may be considered as a typical noun entry. The headword is presented in bold, together with its part of speech in italics. (There is no information about the pronunciation provided.) Different parts of speech of a word are given separate entries, so that the entry for the verb *damage* follows immediately after the one for the noun. Within an entry, different word senses are given separate numbered sections<sup>5)</sup>, each with a short definition or pointer to the appropriate meaning: “1 harm/injury” and “2 damages money you can claim from sb”. (However, when there is only one word sense, no definition or pointer is provided.) The plural in bold face in the definition for the sense 2 shows that the headword takes the plural form in this sense. Collocates are grouped and presented together according to their parts of speech. At the noun entry, adjective collocates are first given at the section marked with ●ADJ. Then, verb collocates that take *damage* as its object are given at ●VERB + DAMAGE, and verb collocates that take *damage* as its subject at ●DAMAGE + VERB. ●PREP. represents prepositions and contains ones that are used with *damage*. Usually at the end of the section are given other miscellaneous phrases (●PHRASES). Within each section, collocates are further, semantically or thematically grouped into subsections, which are separated by a vertical bar and are claimed to be arranged “in an order that tries to be as intuitive as possible” (x). Within a subsection, collocates are arranged in alphabetical order. For example, the first string of the adjective section goes: “considerable, enormous, great, serious, severe, substantial, untold | minor, slight | extensive, widespread | irreparable, irreversible, lasting, long-term, permanent”. Phrase or sentence examples are given to some collocate subsection: “damages incurred by the unfairly sacked workers”, “He decided to sue the company for damages”. However, the criteria for which word senses to give examples are not explained.

**damage** noun**1 harm/injury**

- ADJ. **considerable, enormous, great, serious, severe, substantial, untold** | **minor, slight** | **extensive, widespread** | **irreparable, irreversible, lasting, long-term, permanent** *The incident did permanent damage to relations between the two countries.* | **criminal, malicious, wilful** *He was prosecuted for criminal damage to a vehicle.* | **accidental** *The insurance policy covers the building for accidental damage.* | **emotional, environmental, mechanical, psychological, structural** | **brain** *She suffered serious brain damage at birth.*
- VERB + DAMAGE **cause, do, inflict** *The earthquake caused widespread damage to property.* ◇ *They inflicted severe psychological damage on their opponents.* | **suffer** | **repair** | **prevent**
- PREP. ~ **by** *The palace suffered extensive damage by fire in 1825.* ~ **from** *Crops are sprayed with chemicals to prevent damage from insects.* ~ **to** *lasting damage to the environment*
- PHRASES **the cost/value of the damage** *The cost of the damage is estimated at around \$2 billion.* **the extent of the damage** *At the moment it is difficult to assess the extent of the damage.*

**2 damages** money you can claim from sb

- ADJ. **heavy, substantial**
- VERB + DAMAGES **incur, suffer damages incurred by the unfairly sacked workers** | **claim, seek, sue (sb) for** *He decided to sue the company for damages.* | **assess** *The court will assess the damages.* | **apportion, award (sb)** | **pay (sb)** | **obtain, receive, recover, win** | **be liable for, be liable in (law)** *If goods are lost in transit, the carrier will be liable for damages.*
- DAMAGES + NOUN **action, claim** *A woman is to bring a civil damages action against the men she alleges murdered her son.* | **award**
- PREP. **in~** *They are claiming £45 million in damages.* | **~for** *He received damages for personal injury.* ~ **of** *She was awarded damages of £90 000.*
- PHRASES **an action/a claim for damages** *The judge upheld her claim for damages against her former employer.*

Figure 1: the entry for *damage* (noun) from the *OCDSE***6. The types of collocations covered****6.1. Formal categories**

As is mentioned above, collocates are grouped together according to their parts of speech. The types of collocation dealt with in the *OCDSE* are shown with some examples below:

**1. Under noun headword:**

- adjective + noun collocations
- quantifier + noun collocations

- noun + verb collocations

- verb + noun collocations

- noun + noun collocations

- preposition + noun collocations

- noun + preposition collocations

- phrases

*brief conversation, mutual cooperation  
an element of compulsion, a cup of coffee*

*controversy arises, a competition takes place*

*carry on a conversation, go into competition*

*credit account, credit limit, crisis management*

*on credit, under curfew*

*a crime against . . . , competition between . . .*

*a letter of credit, the scene of the crime*

**2. Under verb headword:**

- adverb + verb collocations
- verb + verb collocations

- verb + preposition collocations

- phrases

*fully comprehend, exactly coincide  
fail to comprehend, refuse to compromise*

*correspond with . . . , compromise on . . .  
curse the day, pick and choose*

**3. Under adjective headword:**

- verb + adjective collocations
- adverb + adjective collocations
- adjective + preposition collocations
- phrases

*go crazy, remain calm  
totally convincing, absolutely correct*

*be crazy at . . . , be curious about . . .  
fed and clothed, chilled to the bone*

Unlike some other collocations dictionaries such as the *BBI* and the *KDEC*, the *OCDSE* includes no grammatical construction patterns. It may be wise to exclude descriptions of grammatical behaviour of a headword, regarding it as being outside the scope of a collocations dictionary,

and focuses on lexical behavior of a headword, especially when the dictionary is subject to severe space restrictions. Such grammatical patterns as the *BBI* and the *KDEC* cover are found in general learner's dictionaries, so that they may be left out unless more detailed semantic information about their use is provided.

It must be noted that 'VERB' at the noun entry contains not only verbs, but also any kinds of phrases that take a headword noun as an object or a subject, and that can form the predicate of a sentence. For example, at the entry for *rule*, *be bounded by*, *be fettered by*, and *be governed by* are listed under the VERB + RULE section, and similarly, *be applicable* is listed together with *apply* and *operate* under the RULE + VERB section.

When a constituent of a collocation typically takes a certain grammatical form, it is shown in that form. For example, the collocation *be teething* at the BABY + VERB section at *baby* shows that the verb is typically used in the progressive in this collocation (viii). Another example can be taken from the adjective section in the entry for *happy*. It includes a list of adverbs that *happy* goes with typically in the negative: "far from, not altogether, not at all, not entirely, not exactly, not particularly, not too, not totally". There is observed another way to indicate the grammatical context. At the entry for *believe*, among the adverbs *seriously* is listed with a gloss saying "only used with negatives"; however, no other example of this kind can be found by the writer.

## 6.2. 'Word collocation' and 'category collocation'

The ties between the components of a collocation are lexical, as *little* cannot be used instead of *small* in *small fortune* though they are synonymous. Collocations of this type are called 'word collocations' in the *OCDSE* and equate to collocations in the general sense. The *OCDSE* recognizes and includes another type of collocations named 'category collocations'.

There is another area of collocation that might be called 'category collocation', where a word can combine with any word from a readily definable set. This set may be quite large, but its members are predictable, because they are all words for nationalities, or measure-

ments of time, for example. At the entry for *walk*, one of the groups of collocates is given as 'three-minute, five minutes', etc.: the 'etc.' is to indicate that any figure may be substituted for 'three' or 'five' in these expressions. (ix)

Some other examples of 'measurements of time' are *7-night, two-week* etc. at the entry for *holiday* and *three-year, two-year* etc. at *contract*. This may be quite useful if users do not know the grammatical rule that attributive nouns are normally singular and proceeded by a hyphen (Quirk *et al.* 1985: 1333). Or some users may not know that they can simply say "a three-year contract" instead of "a contract valid for three years" or "a contract that runs [holds good] for three years". Examples of the same kind are *five-point, etc.* at the entry for *agenda, five-mile, etc.* at *run*, and *200-piece, etc.* at *jigsaw*. Ordinal numbers also form category collocations. For example, *first, second, etc.* is given under the adjective section of the noun entries for *anniversary, act* (sense 4), *gear* (sense 1), and *round* (sense 4). A set of adjectives such as *weekly, monthly* and *yearly* also belong to this group, and they are found at entries such as *subscription* (annual, monthly, yearly, etc.), *tenancy* (weekly, yearly, etc.), *basis* (daily, monthly, weekly, etc.), and *check-up* (annual, monthly, etc.). Below are shown some examples of entries that have 'nationalities' as collocates:

*capital* (British, Japanese, etc.), *currency* (European, Japanese, etc.), *speaker* (Japanese, Russian, etc.), *ambassador* (British, French, etc.), *blood* (Mediterranean, Spanish, etc.), *silk* (Chinese, Thai, etc.) *passport* (EU, Mexican, French, etc.), *cheese* (Dutch, Swiss, etc.), *cooking* (Chinese, Italian, etc.), *ancestry* (Celtic, French, etc.)

It is interesting to see national characteristics reflected in some entries. However, is it really necessary to include *Dutch* and *Swiss* at *cheese* and *Chinese* and *Thai* at *silk*? As for *cooking*, a phrase example "traditional English cooking" is provided for the adjective collocate *traditional*, and this may kill two birds with one stone. (Although "French regional cooking" is given as an example of *Chinese, Italian, etc.*, this can be an example for *regional* and illustrate two collocations.)

## 7. Coverage

This section will look into some of the formal categories (cf. Section 6.1) and argue the utility of the kinds of collocations actually included from the perspective of foreign learners of English.

First, verb + noun collocations will be looked at. According to the semantic function they perform in a piece of writing, collocations can be divided into two types: collocations that convey particular ideas economically and precisely and those that add meanings or describe ideas more accurately or vividly (Hill *et al.* 2000: 93). For example, if a learner does not know the verb + noun collocation *live up to expectations*, it would be difficult to express the idea of it concisely and produce a sentence like *The show failed to live up to our expectations*. On the other hand, the adverb *totally* in *I was totally exhausted at the time I advanced to the final* merely intensifies the adjective *exhausted*, and is not an essential element to make the main point. Verb + noun collocations (as well as verb + adjective + noun collocations) can be considered to be “the single most important kind of collocation” (Hill *et al.* 2000: 116).

Second, adjective + noun collocations will be examined as they play both semantic functions mentioned above. Suppose a user is looking for an adjective to describe a change made which is only superficial and not important at the entry for *change*. The user may be unable to express his or her idea until he or she finds *cosmetic*. In this case, *cosmetic change* is a collocation that enables the user to name a concept. At the same time, it can be a collocation that enables us to express an idea *more* accurately. Suppose a user is not quite happy about describing a certain change as *small* or *minor change*. The user seeks for a more appropriate word and finds *cosmetic*, which may be better to mark his or her disapproval at the change.

Third, verb + adverb collocations and adverb + adjective collocations will be examined particularly in terms of intensification. Lorenz (1998: 53) explains the communicative effects intensification brings about as follows:

By amplifying and downtoning adjectival qualities, as in *crucially important* or *hardly significant*, we express assertion or caution, emphasis or doubt, and we take a committed or a non-committal stance

towards the message in question. More than their mere denotation would suggest, intensifiers therefore convey speaker-stance, in some cases even to the point of creating a sense of identity and group membership.

Since correct use of intensifiers can be considered a step forward to natural English, it will be interesting to see how the *OCDSE* treats this issue.

Another type to be analyzed is verb + verb collocations, which are unique to the *OCDSE*, and they are not generally called ‘collocations’. Lexical patterns treated here are quite different from ones in the other sections. What are included in this category seem to be auxiliary verbs, adjectives used predicatively followed by to-infinitive, verbs followed by to-infinitive, and anything that often or typically goes with the headword and that can form the predicate of a sentence as a whole. It will be discussed how helpful users would find this type of collocational information.

In order to throw light on character of the *OCDSE*, the analysis will be made in parts in comparison to two other dictionaries dealing (mainly) with collocations and one Japanese-English learner’s dictionary, though it is difficult to make a direct comparison since all the dictionaries that will be examined differ considerably in their editorial policies, compilation process, size etc. (See the table below.) It is claimed on the back cover that 150,000 collocations of 9,000 nouns, verbs and adjectives are provided with over 50,000 examples in context in the *OCDSE*. The *BBI Dictionary of English Word Combinations* (1997), a monolingual collocations dictionary for advanced learners of English, was compiled by three native speakers of English, with little or no access to corpus data, and makes a contrast to the *OCDSE* in that it relies largely on the compilers’ linguistic intuitions and theories. It is claimed on the front cover that the *BBI* contains 18,000 entries and 90,000 collocations. The number of entries is twice as large as that of the *OCDSE*, but the amount of collocational information per entry is much smaller. The *Kenkyusha Dictionary of English Collocations* (1995), a bilingual English-Japanese dictionary of collocations compiled on manually collected citations, will be also examined in order to see the difference or similarity between a monolingual

collocations dictionary and a bilingual one. There is no mention of the number of headwords; however, according to my estimate based on sampling, the *KDEC* has about 19,295 headwords<sup>6)</sup>. The headword list consists mainly of nouns, verbs and adjectives, but includes a few adverbs, prepositions, and pronouns as well (vii). All the collocations are basically shown in phrase or sentence examples in this dictionary, so that the number of examples amounts to as many as 380,000 (vi). Sometimes more than one example is given for one collocation, so that the number of collocations contained is likely to be smaller. However, the *KDEC* is the largest of all the dictionaries being discussed.

	<i>OCDSE</i>	<i>BBI</i>	<i>KDEC</i>
page size	233 mm × 155 mm	216 mm × 140 mm	247 mm × 170 mm
page (A to Z)	892	386	2,782
headwords	9,000	18,000	19,295
collocations	150,000	90,000	—
examples	50,000	—	380,000

In addition, the *Kenkyusha Luminous Japanese-English Dictionary* (2001), an encoding dictionary for Japanese learners of English, will be included in this comparison because it sees the importance of collocational information in writing and provides a number of boxed sections of collocations. For example, the entry for *kiroku* (= record) has a collocations box providing the following verb + *record* collocations and adjective + *record* collocations:

### Lexical collocations at the entry for *kiroku* (= record) in the *KLJED*

<b>verb + noun:</b>		<b>adjective + noun:</b>
記録から漏れる	escape record	オリンピック記録 the Olympic record
記録する	makes record (of ...)	簡潔な[詳しい]記録 a brief [detailed] record
記録に留めておく	retain records (of ...)	空前の記録 an all-time record
記録を上回る	exceed the record	公式記録 an official record
記録を更新する	better the record	校内最高記録 a school record

記録を調べる	examine [check]	コース記録	a course record
タイ記録を出す	the record (of . . .)	国内最高記録	a national record
	equal [tie] the	古代の記録	an ancient record
	record . . .	最速記録	a speed record
		自己最高記録	a personal record
		支出記録	an expenditure record
		成長記録	one's growth record
		統計上の記録	statistical records

While the *OCDSE* and the *BBI* are targeted at learners of various nationalities, the *KLJED* tries to meet Japanese learners' needs specifically. While the *KDEC* is rather for highly advanced learners of English such as academics and translators, the *KLJED*, a learner's dictionary, may be considered to reflect the Japanese learners' needs more.

### **7.1. Verb + noun collocations**

A feature of the *OCDSE* as a corpus-based collocations dictionary becomes notable when its coverage of verb + noun collocations is compared to that of the *BBI* and the *KLJED*. Basically, the *OCDSE* aims to reflect typical or frequent use of word-combinations in a native-speaker corpus, which are what editors assume learners would need (cf. Section 3). As a result, the *OCDSE* covers fewer semantic categories in proportion to the number of collocates included, compared to non-corpus-based encoding dictionaries such as the *BBI* and the *KLJED*. For example, at the entry for *rule*, the *OCDSE* lists 35 verbs, which are grouped into ten semantic categories, under the first sense of ‘what you can or cannot do, say, etc.’ (see Table 1). For the corresponding sense, the *BBI* contains 20 verbs, and the *KLJED*, 14 verbs in the collocation box. In addition to the collocates contained in the *OCDSE*, the *BBI* lists *set down* and *comply with*, which should fall into group 1 and group 2 respectively, and four more collocates of three semantic groups: *adopt*, *stretch*, and *rescind* and *revoke*. The *KLJED* has *prescribe* and *set up*, which should belong to group 1, and *respect* and *ignore* can enter group 2 and 7, respectively. It has

Table 1: Comparison of verb collocates of *rule*

	OCDSE	BBI	KLJED
1	draw up, establish, formulate, impose, issue, lay down, make, set out	draw up, establish, impose, lay down, set down	formulate, prescribe, set up
2	abide by, adhere to, follow, go by, observe, play by, stick to	abide by, obey, observe, comply with	respect
3	be in line with, conform to		
4	be in breach of, break, disregard, fall foul of, flout, violate	be in breach of, fall foul of	be in breach of
5	apply, enforce	apply, enforce	apply, enforce
6	bend, relax	bend, relax	bend, relax
7	waive	waive	ignore
8	tighten up		tighten
9	be bound by, be fettered by, be governed by		
10	interpret, understand		
11		adopt, stretch	
12		rescind	
13		revoke	
14			remodel, rewrite, change
total	35	20	14

three more collocates, which could form another semantic category: *remodel*, *rewrite* and *change*. Although both the *BBI* and the *KLJED* contain much fewer verb collocates overall, the *BBI* covers nine semantic categories, and the *KLJED*, eight. Since the main function of verb + noun collocations is to name a concept that a user has in mind, the coverage of broader semantic categories may be given priority over that of collocations that have high frequencies in the corpus from the same semantic group.

Also, collocations included in the *OCDSE* may differ in some cases

considerably from those which Japanese lexicographers predict that users would find useful. It is interesting to see that only four out of the eleven verb collocates of the noun *delay* included in the *OCDSE* overlap with those in the collocation box in the *KLJED*. The verbs that appear in the both dictionaries are asterisked.

Table 2: Comparison of verb collocates of *delay* between the *OCDSE* and the *KLJED*

OCDSE	KLJED
be subject to, be plagued by, experience, face, suffer*, cause*, lead to, avoid*, prevent, reduce*, apologize for	suffer*, cause*, avoid*, reduce*, brook no —, create, produce, eliminate, give rise to, increase

A similar difference can be observed when the verb collocates of the noun *compliment* are compared to those in the *BBI*, the *KLJED*, and the *KDEC*. In Table 3 below, the collocates are semantically grouped together, on the basis of the categories in the *OCDSE* and the *BBI*. A glance at the table tells that the coverage of the *OCDSE* is different from the other three. Only three out of ten semantic categories are covered by all the four dictionaries, and the three collocations *pay somebody a compliment*, *accept a compliment*, and *return a compliment* are included in the all of them. One collocation, *mean something as a compliment*, is unique to the *OCDSE*. Noticeably, the *BBI* and the *KLJED* have a strikingly similar coverage. Since they are both not corpus-based, it may be said that editors' view about learners' needs are reflected more directly in the types of collocations included. It is interesting that a collocations dictionary compiled by native speakers and a Japanese-English encoding dictionary compiled by non-native speakers agreed on almost the same inclusion. The *KDEC*, the biggest of all, provides the most collocates, and is similar to the *BBI* and the *KLJED* in its coverage. *Shower, angle for, fish for a compliment*, and *bandy compliments* are included in the all dictionaries except the *OCDSE*, which may carry some implications for inclusion.

Table 3: Comparison of verb collocates of *compliment*  
in the four dictionaries

	OCDSE	BBI	KLJED	KDEC
1	pay sb	pay smb.	pay make present	pay make offer
2		shower lavish	shower heap	shower overdo throw toss
3	mean sth as			
4	get receive			get receive
5	accept acknowledge	accept	accept	accept acknowledge
6	regard sth as take sth as	take smt. as	take . . . as	
7	repay return	return	return	echo return
8		angle for fish for	angle for fish for	angle for fish for
9		bandy ~s	bandy ~s	bandy ~s
10				shrug off fend off
total	10	9	11	18

## 7.2. Adjective + noun collocations

Adjectives in adjective + noun collocations can be divided into two types: quality-modifying adjectives and category-naming adjectives. For example, the entry for the noun *speech* lists the following 30 adjectives for the sense of ‘formal talk’:

brief, little, short | interminable, long, long-winded, rambling | keynote; major | eloquent, excellent, good | emotional, impassioned, rousing, stirring | boring | impromptu | public | televised | political | opening | closing | acceptance, after-dinner, Budget, campaign, con-

ference, farewell, inaugural

From *brief* to *impromptu* are adjectives that modify the content of a speech, and from *public* to *inaugural* are adjectives that describes the type of a speech. These two kinds of adjective collocates serve quite a different function. In the Introduction, the *OCDSE* explains that “A student who chooses the best collocations will express himself much more clearly and be able to convey not just a general meaning, but something quite precise” (vii) by comparing the grammatically correct two sentences:

This is a good book and contains a lot of interesting details.

This is a fascinating book and contains a wealth of historical detail.

The use of quality-modifying adjectives promotes precision or vividness of expression. On the other hand, category-naming adjectives may greatly contribute to succinctness. For example, if learners do not know the collocation *inaugural speech*, then it would be difficult to describe succinctly the first speech made by a new president at the ceremony.

As for the coverage, there seems to be neither clear difference nor strong similarity between the *OCDSE*, the *BBI*, and the *KDEC*, when the entries for *speech* (in the sense of “formal talk”) are compared (see Table 4). The *KLJED* has the following adjectives at the entry for *ensetsu* (speech) and most of them are more or less the same as the ones in the table: *welcome* [*welcoming*], *stirring* [*moving*], *keynote*, *inaugural*, *acceptance*, *political*, *campaign*, *agitative*, *presidential*, *funeral*, *long and boring*, *poor*, *short* [*brief*], *pointless*. Unlike the case of verb + noun collocations, it seems that generally, the more collocates are covered, the more semantic categories are covered in the case of adjective + noun collocations in the *OCDSE*.

## 7.3. Adverb + adjective collocations

The *OCDSE* recognizes importance of intensifying adverbs and gives a good coverage of them in general. Here are some examples:

impressive    decidedly, enormously, extremely, highly, hugely, immensely, mightily, most, particularly, really, tremendously, truly, very

rich            enormously, extremely, fabulously, filthy (*informal*), im-

Table 4: Comparison of adjective collocates of *speech*

	OCDSE	BBI	KDEC
1	brief, little, short	brief, short	brief, short
2	interminable, long, long-winded, rambling	long; long-winded; rambling	long and boring, long, rambling, long-winded
3	keynote, major	keynote	keynote
4	eloquent, excellent, good	eloquent	eloquent, excellent, admirable, splendid etc.
5	emotional, impassioned, rousing, stirring	passionate; rousing, stirring	emotional, impassioned, rousing, stirring
6	boring	boring	boring
7	impromptu	impromptu, unrehearsed	impromptu, unrehearsed
8	public		public
9	televised		television, televised
10	political	political	political
11	opening		opening
12	closing		
13	acceptance, after-dinner, budget, campaign, conference, farewell, inaugural	acceptance; after-dinner; campaign; farewell; inaugural; nominating; welcoming	acceptance, after-dinner, campaign, farewell, inaugural, welcoming, etc.
total	30	21	93

successful	mensely, incredibly, seriously, striking ( <i>informal</i> ), very astonishingly, enormously, extremely, highly, hugely, outstandingly, particularly, phenomenally, remarkably, spectacularly, very
stupid	bloody ( <i>taboo</i> ), damn/damned, exceptionally, extremely, fucking ( <i>taboo</i> ), incredibly, monumentally, particularly, really, very
worried	deeply, desperately, dreadfully, extremely, frantically, genuinely, particularly, really, seriously, terribly, very

Although its full treatment of intensifying adverbs is a welcome policy, the *OCDSE* also has some adverbs whose inclusion needs to be ques-

tioned. First, as all the above examples show, the *OCDSE* includes *very* as a possible choice at a number of entries. Some entries such as *cloudy*, *fixed* and *handy* give only *very* as intensifiers. Probably, it is more instructive and space-saving to indicate the unacceptability of use of *very* when it cannot be used, since learners are not likely to be aware of the fact that even an apparently all-purpose intensifying adjective *very* is by no means universally applicable as one cannot say, for example, \**very awake*, \**very asleep*, or \**very apart* (Sinclair et al. 1992: 758). Second, taboo words such as *bloody* and *fucking* may not be suitable for inclusion, when the dictionary claims that the type of texts its target users are likely to produce is “what might be called ‘moderately formal language’ — the language of essay and report writing, and formal letters — treating all subjects — business, science, history, sport, etc . . . at the level of the educated non-specialist” (viii–ix). In addition, *bloody* and *fucking* go with almost any word. Third, a set of adverbs of ‘degree’ are often given at entries for adjectives that describe feelings; however, it is doubtful whether they merit inclusion in a collocations dictionary as they combine with quite a few adjectives without lexical restrictions.

anxious	a bit, a little, quite, rather, slightly, somewhat
annoyed	faintly, a little, quite, rather, slightly, somewhat
excited	a bit, a little, pretty, quite, rather
nervous	a bit, a little, pretty, quite, rather, slightly, somewhat
scared	a bit, a little, pretty, quite, rather

Perhaps, a series of these adverbs (*a bit*, *a little*, *pretty*, *quite*, *rather*) should be treated in such a way as avoids redundancy if they are included.

#### 7.4. Verb + verb collocations

The purpose of the inclusion of ‘verb + verb’ collocations, which is unique to the *OCDSE*, may be to enable users to produce natural English, that is a step forward from producing grammatically correct English or a lexically acceptable combination of words. However, there also seem to be some problems about selection of the items. The followings are examples of ‘verb + verb collocations’ randomly collected:

VERB + ACCEPT (sense 2)	be happy to, be prepared to, be ready to, be willing to   be reluctant to, be unwilling to   be unable to, refuse to   can/cannot, could (not), will/won't, would (not)   be forced to be
VERB + ADMIT	be forced to, have to, must   refuse to   be honest enough to, be prepared to, be the first to, be willing to, dare (to), have the courage to   be ashamed to, be embarrassed to, be loath to, be reluctant to, be unwilling to, hate to, not care to
VERB + AGREE (sense 1)	cannot   be inclined to
VERB + OPPOSE	vote to   continue to
VERB + ORGANIZE	seek to, try to   help (to)   be able to   manage to   fail to   learn (how) to   be difficult to   be easy to, be possible to
VERB + REFUSE	can't/couldn't, can/could hardly   be entitled to, have the right to   be/seem churlish to
VERB + THANK	must, want to, would like to

Certainly, the phrases listed above form a recurrent phrase with the headword; however, in some cases what connects a sequence of words that commonly co-occur is more grammatical than lexical. For example, *be difficult to*, *be easy to*, and *be possible to* at *organize* seem to be syntactic strings, though they may be found typical in the corpus data, and the inclusion of these phrases in a collocations dictionary is therefore questionable. Some items seem to have a pragmatic function when they are used at the sentence level. For example, *want to* at *thank* forms a spoken phrase “I want to thank . . .” used when you express your gratitude. At the entry for *want* in the *Macmillan English Dictionary* (2002) “I want to say/thank/tell etc.” is given as a spoken phrase and is explained as “used for introducing something that you are about to say, especially at the start of a speech” with an example “I want to thank you all for being here.”. Another example is *have to* and *must* at the entry for *admit*. The *Longman Advanced American Dictionary* (2000) explains “I have to admit” is “used when you are admitting something you are embarrassed about” with an example: “I have to admit I was a little drunk.”. However, inclusion of these phrases sometimes does not seem consistent. If *be willing to* is included at *accept*, why not at *help*? If *be ashamed to* is included at *admit*,

then why not at *say*? If *must* is included under *thank*, then why *cannot*, which makes an idiomatic expression “I can't thank you enough for . . .”, is not?

Inclusion of this type of phrases is beneficial to learners; however, it is quite doubtful whether users can actually put them into the typical context they are used in as they are not always accompanied by examples. At the entry for *agree*, phrases with a pragmatic function such as *couldn't agree more*, *I quite agree* and *I'm sure you will agree* are given under PHRASES with examples: *I couldn't agree more with what has just been said.* and *I'm sure you'll all agree that this issue is vitally important to the success of the company*. This approach seems better since these phrases are probably hard to be understood without any contextualization.

## 7.5. Conclusion

Although only four types of collocations have been examined, there seems to be a little bit too much emphasis placed on the corpus data in regard to coverage, as some of the examples cited in the above sections illustrate. Lea and Runcie (2002: 824) say that “What learners of English really need to know are the collocations that native speakers actually use, in the course of writing and speaking on any subject but collocation; not necessarily what ‘springs to mind’ when a native-speaker is asked to name a collocation.” Acquisition of collocations frequently used by native speakers will certainly contribute to fluency. However, it does not mean that a good learner’s collocations dictionary has only to represent accurately frequent, typical word combinations in a native-speaker corpus. Some differences observed between the *OCDSE* and the other three dictionaries may also imply that users’ needs cannot be covered simply by providing frequent collocates retrieved from a native-speaker corpus, which is designed to be a representative sample of the current English. Although the *OCDSE* does provide good models with learners, taking the foreign learner’s viewpoint may lead to improvement.

## 8. Suggestions for improvements

In this last section, I would like to make some suggestions on how to make

the dictionary an even more valuable tool. First, it is regrettable that the *OCDSE* provides no cross-references between related or synonymous headwords. With cross-references, more information would be accessible to users. For example, if the entry for *movie* is cross-referred to that for *film*, users can simply gain much more information. In addition, a cross-reference from a general word to a specific word may help users to make a more appropriate choice. Suppose that a user is trying to lexicalize a feeling of great anger and looks up the entry for *angry*. The user may be happy finding collocations such as *bitterly angry* and *extremely angry*. However, a cross-reference from *angry* to *furious*, for example, proposes another solution to the user, that is a choice of a different lexical item (as a starting point) to express the idea.

Second, information about incorrect use may be appreciated because collocations are by nature open-ended and no list could ever be exhaustive or definitive. In other words, all users find is (lists of) what is possible or correct, and here arises a problem. When a word combination a user has in mind is not listed in a dictionary, it may not be in because it is deviant. It may not be included because it is a free combination or on the borderline, but still is fully acceptable. There is no way for users to check whether or not the combination is acceptable. The *Longman Essential Activator* (1997), an encoding dictionary, tries to prevent learners from making mistakes by giving notes called ‘Essential Help Boxes’ based on the error analyses of the Longman Learner’s Corpus. For example, at the concept *crime*, a help box reads: “Don’t say ‘he made a crime’ or ‘he did a crime’. Say **he committed a crime**.” At the concept *amount/number* the note is given that “Don’t say ‘a big number’. Say **a large number**.” *Taishukan’s Genius Japanese-English Dictionary*, second edition (2003), a Japanese-English learner’s dictionary for production, takes a similar approach. It marks “less-typical” collocations with a triangle (^) and “non-typical” collocations with a cross sign (x) in order to show the degree of acceptability (x). For example, the entry for *kibishi* (severe, strict, rigid, etc.) has an example to show less-typical use in contrast to typical ones: *The doctor ordered her to go on a rigid [strict, ^severe] diet*. At the entry for *katai* (hard, firm, rigid, etc.), a set of adjective collocates to go with the noun *cover* are

shown: *a book with a hard [stiff, tough, ^rigid, ^firm, xsolid] cover*. Some examples of incorrect collocations are: *make [xdo] two mistakes in arithmetic* at *machigau* (mistake), *enter [xjoin] school, join [xenter] the line* at *hairu* (enter, join), and *She was very (much) [xbadly, xseriously] hurt to hear him say so.* at *kibun* (mood, feeling, etc.). These usage notes are made based on native speakers’ intuitions, corpus data, and Japanese lexicographers’ insights into learners’ needs (x).

Third, more semantic information about synonymous collocates may be necessary in order to prevent users from making dictionary-oriented mistakes. The presentation of synonymous collocates in the same list may lead users to think that all the collocates are interchangeable, when they are not at all. For example, at section 1 of the entry for *change*, seven adjectives meaning ‘small in degree and/or of little importance’ (*cosmetic, marginal, minimal, minor, slight, small, subtle*) form one subsection. However, while *small* is a neutral word, *cosmetic* has a negative prosody. Although it is suggested in ‘Introduction’ to consult a general learner’s dictionary such as the *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, in order to make the best choice, a general EFL dictionary sometimes fails to give distinctive semantic features (cf. Komuro 2003: 134–35) to near-synonyms. Moreover, it is more desirable for a learner’s dictionary to be self-contained.

The last suggestion to make concerns the entry structure. Although the *OCDSE* and other collocations dictionaries usually group collocates together and present them according to their parts of speech, the thematically structured entry might be able to help users more with their lexicalization of ideas (Komuro 2003). As Lea and Runcie (2002: 828) point out, it cannot be assumed that learners know from the outset the precise grammatical form that the lexical realization of their idea might take. The *Longman Essential Activator* presents words and phrases that share the same idea irrespective of grammatical categories with a heading to name the category, which may be applied to the entry structure of a collocations dictionary. Below is a proposed entry for the semantic unit *refuse* based on the data in the *OCDSE*, reorganized to give priority to meaning over form.

**REFUSAL** noun, **REFUSE** verb

**1. to refuse something in a very clear and definite way**

**refuse flatly/point-blank/categorically** (= refuse in a firm and sometimes impolite way<sup>7)</sup>

He flatly refused to discuss the matter<sup>8)</sup>. /Gerard refused point-blank to co-operate.

**give a flat/point-blank/complete refusal**

**refuse pointedly** (= refuse clearly in a way that shows you are annoyed)

**2. to be refused**

**be met with by/with a refusal** Her appeals for funds to support the cause were met with blank refusal.

+ + +

The entry shows the users that there are (at least) two different grammatical structures to express the idea of refusing something in a very clear way. For the long-term benefit of the learners, it might be more effective to show lexical bonds that lie beyond parts of speech in order to develop users collocational competence as Stubbs (2002: 30) states that "the collocation is between semantic units, irrespective of grammatical category".

### 9. Concluding remarks

It can be said that the significance of collocations has been increasingly recognized in the Oxford tradition. The *Oxford Dictionary of Current Idiomatic English* (Volume 1: Verbs with Prepositions & Particles, 1975; Volume 2: Phrase, Clause & Sentence Idioms, 1983) is "the first large-scale phraseological dictionary of English to be compiled by native speakers" (Cowie 1998: 220). 'General Introduction' shows its foresight to see pedagogical importance of acquisition of collocations, as it begins with "Familiarity with a wide range of idiomatic expressions, and the ability to use them appropriately in context, are among the distinguishing marks of a nativelike command of English" (vi). A critical appraisal of the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, the 4th edition (1989) by Takahashi *et al.* (1992) points out its good coverage and treatment of

collocations. Its fifth and sixth editions published in 1995 and in 2000 respectively, contain a language study page 'Collocation' consisting of three subsections: 'What is collocations?', 'Types of collocations' and 'Collocation in this dictionary'. A good collocations dictionary was therefore expected to come out from Oxford, and the *OCDSE* lives up to our expectations. The *OCDSE* is probably of almost maximum size as a portable collocations dictionary, and its presentation of information is typographically neat. This dictionary should go in the list of dictionaries recommended to learners of English. In order to make this dictionary more accessible for less advanced learners, bilingualized versions would be widely welcomed.

### NOTES

1) I would like to express my deep sense of gratitude to Emeritus Prof. Keisuke Nakao for his suggestions, comments and encouragement at every stage of this study. I am also truly grateful to Mr. Michael Rundell for his comments and great help with the final draft.

2) This dictionary was compiled on the basis of *Selected English Collocations* (1982) and its companion volume, *English Adverbial Collocations* (1991).

3) Although it is not mentioned which edition was used, it may be assumed that the second edition published in 1993 was made use of for the compilation.

4) There is no mention of which edition was used, but it may be assumed that the latest version at the time, that is the 6th edition published in 2000 was used.

5) Homonyms are dealt with under the same entry. For example, the noun entry *bank* has four sections: "1 for money", "2 by a river/canal", "3 area of sloping ground", and "4 mass of cloud, etc./row of machines, etc.".

6) I selected ten pages from every hundredth page from page 1 onwards as sample materials and counted headwords, which are printed in bold. The table below shows the samples pages and the number of headwords in each section.

page	from	to	no. of headwords
1~10	abacus	abuse <sup>1</sup> n.	74
200~210	babble <sup>1</sup> n.	bank <sup>3</sup> n.	80
400~410	charge <sup>2</sup> v.	child	73
600~610	cross <sup>3</sup> adj.	curious	85
800~810	dress <sup>2</sup> v.	duckling	53
1000~1010	field <sup>1</sup> n.	finger <sup>1</sup> n.	57
1200~1210	help <sup>2</sup> v.	hiss <sup>2</sup> v.	87
1400~1410	launch <sup>3</sup> n.	leaning	45
1600~1610	moneymaker	morning	52
1800~1810	pilgrimage	place <sup>1</sup> n.	62
2000~2010	queen <sup>1</sup> n.	radio <sup>1</sup>	68
2200~2210	scull	secret <sup>1</sup> n.	54

2400~2410	stress <sup>2</sup> v.	study <sup>1</sup> n.	48
2600~2610	turner	understanding <sup>1</sup> n.	133

The average number of headwords per page is 6.935714, and the estimate number of the total headwords is about 19,295.

- 7) Quoted from the entry for *refuse* of the *Macmillan English Dictionary* (2002).  
 8) Quoted from the entry for *refuse* of the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, 6th edition (2000).

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