Examples in *Macmillan English Dictionary*

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This paper compares illustrative examples between *MED(US)* and *MED(UK)* and also between *MED* and three other English learners' dictionaries (*LDOCE*[3], *OALD*[6], and *CIDE*). Ten parts[1] are selected from every 150 pages of *MED(US)*, and the examples are compared in number, content, sexism, and collocation.

1.1. Comparison between *MED(US)* and *MED(UK)*

The examples in the 10 parts are classified into sentence examples and phrase examples,[2] and the numbers of the examples are counted in total, by type, and in terms of which occur in only one of the two editions. In this section, we determine if there is any difference in number and content between the two editions.

1.1.1. Number

The total number of examples in the 10 parts is 405 in *MED(US)* and 424 in *MED(UK)*. *MED(US)* has a higher percentage of sentence examples (US: UK = 70.9%: 68.6%), while more phrase examples appear in *MED(UK)* (US: UK = 29.1%: 31.4%). Thus the difference in number between the two editions is not significant in the 10 parts. Fifteen examples (sentence: 10, phrase: 5) are found only in *MED(US)* and seventeen (sentence: 12, phrase: 5) only in *MED(UK)*, suggesting that *MED(UK)* has slightly more unique examples than *MED(US)*.

1.1.2. Content

In *MED*, linguistic and cultural differences between the UK and US seem to be shown in two ways: by modifying some of the words or expressions in the examples and by adding new examples. Here, *MED(UK)* is examined as a standard for comparison.[3]

1.1.2.1. Partly modified examples

Two ways of modifying words or expressions can be seen in the examples: one is the addition or deletion of words or phrases, and the other is the replacement of words or phrases. The American and British editions also use different spellings.

Most of the replaced words are typical ones that indicate cultural differences between the UK and US. One such typical word pair is 'underground/subway' in the entry travel, and they are given the labels *BrE* and *AmE*, respectively.

> *MED(UK)*: *Travelling by underground is fast.*
> *MED(US)*: *Traveling by subway is fast.*

Other examples include 'football/soccer', 'holiday/vacation', 'tidy/neat', and so on.

We then examined whether such typical word pairs are exchanged systematically in other entries. For example, 'lift/elevator' were switched systematically in 10 out of 13 entries, while 'underground/subway' were changed in only 2 out of 12 entries. For instance, in the entries **convenient** and **dodger**, the word 'subway' is replaced with 'underground', while 'metro', 'train', 'rail', and 'railways' are substituted in the entries **size, rush (n.)** and **stand, access to, corresponding,** respectively (Table 1). This shows some typical word pairs are not necessarily applied to this systematic exchange and have other corresponding words.

Table 1   Correspondence of 'subway' in *MED(US)* to other words in *MED(UK)*

MED(US)	*MED(UK)*	Entry words
subway	underground	travel
	metro	size
	train	rush (n), stand
	rail	access to
	railways	corresponding

Other examples show cultural differences by changing or adding place names and content:

MED(UK): *The menu changes daily, though the specialty is seafood.*
MED(US): *Seafood gumbo soup is one of the specialties in New Orleans.*

MED(UK): *a pilgrimage to the war cemeteries of northern France*
MED(US): *a family pilgrimage from Washington to my father's hometown of West Chester*
MED(UK): *The independent candidates are making waves in the election campaign.*
MED(US): *The independent candidates are making waves in the presidential debate.*

Overall, the examples shown in this section suggest that the compilers chose culturally typical words and expressions for the examples. Both devices help the user understand cultural differences in the two countries. However, as mentioned above, the word 'subway', which is mainly used in the US, is changed to several corresponding words including 'underground', which is mainly used in the UK (Table 1). This shows, if examples are natural, systematic exchanges are not necessarily applied to these types of words in *MED*.

1.1.2.2. Examples given in one edition

As mentioned in 6.1.1, 15 examples appear only in *MED(US)* and 17 only in *MED(UK)*. Among them, three examples in *MED(UK)* (*Europe(an)*, *Oxford, the West*)[4] and one example in *MED(US)* (an *NFL* trade) show the regional and cultural characteristics of the respective countries. 'Oxford', for instance, is used in 29 examples in *MED(UK)* but only 4 examples in *MED(US)*, indicating the regional and cultural preferences of the examples in each edition. In *MED(UK)*, the other four examples included *BrE* phrases such as 'no bother'[5], while most of the other examples in *MED(US)* (*a bear* **track**, *I bought this spaghetti sauce on* **special**., etc.) convey little regional or cultural information.

In some entries, such as 'pack up', examples are given for each of the four definitions in *MED(UK)* compared with only one example (*) in the first definition in *MED(US)*. The reason is presumably that this expres-

sion is specifically used in the UK and examples are given to explain the usage more completely.

> **pack up:**
> **He simply packed up his belongings and moved out on Tuesday.* [UK][US]
> *The camera had packed up.* ⟨BrE informal⟩ [UK]
> *The workmen have already packed up and left.* ⟨informal⟩ [UK]
> *Do you think he's going to pack up this job, too?* ⟨BrE informal⟩ [UK]

In the entry 'wave', however, one example is given only in *MED(UK)* even though it is also an American expression.

> **wave:**
> *Officials have called the new plane the wave of the future.* ⟨AmE⟩ [UK]

1.2. Comparison of *OALD*[6], *LDOCE*[3], and *CIDE* with *MED*
1.2.1. Number

The total number of examples in the 10 parts was counted for five dictionaries: *MED(US)*, *MED(UK)*, *OALD*[6], *CIDE*, and *LDOCE*[3]. Cowie (1995) counted the number of phrase and sentence examples, suggesting that "sentence examples can come close to simulating active speech and writing, and can convey information more fully and explicitly" (p. 286) compared with phrase examples. He also suggested that the more sentence examples there are in learners' dictionaries, the more user-friendly the dictionaries will be. As shown in Fig. 1, sentences account for the majority

Figure 1   Sentence-phrase ratio in dictionary examples
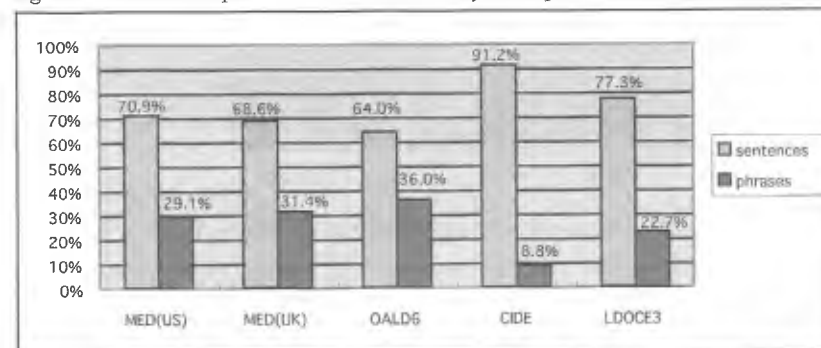
of the examples, suggesting that all of the dictionaries consciously have tried to be learner-friendly.

CIDE has the highest percentage of sentence examples (91.2%) among the five dictionaries, i.e., approximately 1.3 times as high as the other dictionaries, and *CIDE*'s ratio of sentence to phrase examples (91.2% vs. 8.8%) is strikingly high as well. Meanwhile, the percentage of phrase examples (36.0%) is highest in *OALD*[6]. Fig. 1 shows that the ratio between sentence and phrase examples in *MED* is on a par with the other dictionaries, excluding *CIDE*.

1.2.2. Sexism

We examined if there is any difference in the consciousness of sexism between *MED(US)* and *MED(UK)* and between the other three dictionaries and *MED*. Along the lines of Cowie (1995, p. 287), we counted the numbers of masculine and feminine subjects in the sentence examples from the selected 10 parts[1]. We were careful not to include nouns or pronouns that are coreferential with an earlier noun or pronoun in the same example. In the example "*He's so boring — his only topic of* **conversation** *is football.*", for instance, *his* is predictable from the subject *He*, so *his* is ignored.

Figure 2   Female-male ratio in dictionary examples
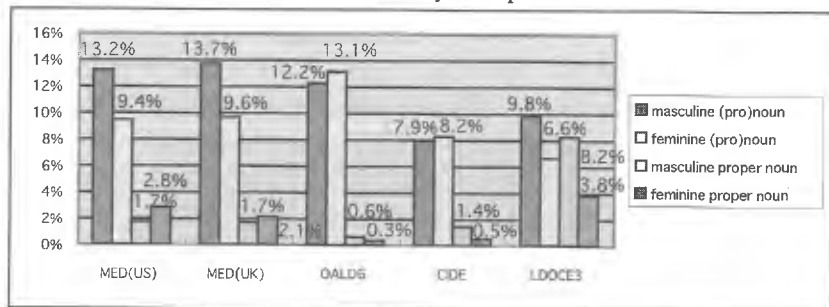
As shown in Fig. 2, the frequency of masculine (pro) nouns is higher than that of feminine (pro) nouns in both editions of *MED*, while femi-

nine proper nouns outnumber masculine ones. The difference is small between the two editions of *MED*, but *MED(UK)* tends to use more specifically masculine or feminine subjects in sentence examples. For instance, in an example for the entry **pilgrimage**, *MED(UK)* uses 'he' as the subject while *MED(US)* uses 'they'. This suggests that *MED(US)* has slightly more consciousness of sexism, at least in the 10 parts that we examined.

> *MED(UK)*: <u>He</u> *was on a pilgrimage to Tirupathi temple in south India.*
> *MED(US)*: <u>They</u> *were on a pilgrimage to Tirupathi temple in south India.*

Compared with the other three dictionaries, *LDOCE*[3] has a higher frequency of masculine pronouns and proper nouns, while *OALD*[6] and *CIDE* have a higher frequency of feminine pronouns. As for the content of the examples, take '**make** coffee' as an example. The subjects of the examples are feminine in *MED* and *OALD*[6] and masculine in *CIDE*. *LDOCE*[3] uses 'I', seemingly to avoid using 'he' or 'she'. In this one example, at least, *CIDE* and *LDOCE*[3] show more consciousness of sexism than *MED* and *OALD*[6].

> *MED*: <u>Jane</u> *made coffee while the guests were finishing their dessert.*
> *CIDE*: <u>He</u> *made us some coffee.*/<u>He</u> *made some coffee for us.*
> *OALD*[6]: <u>She</u> *made coffee for us all.* <u>She</u> *made us all coffee.*
> *LDOCE*[3]: *Shall* <u>I</u> *make* <u>you</u> *a cup of coffee?*

This survey suggests that the frequency of masculine or feminine nouns does not always correlate with the consciousness of sexism in the examples of the five dictionaries. *CIDE* seems to be relatively more conscious of sexism both in number and content, and *MED* not so strongly conscious of sexism either in number or content, compared with *OALD*[6] and *CIDE*.

1.3. Collocations

As Hoey, chief editor of *MED*, wrote, "collocations and idioms are of the greatest importance to the language learner; one of the things that distinguishes an advanced learner's language from that of a native speaker is that advanced learners often manifest grammatical correctness but

collocational inappropriateness" (Hoey 2003). This suggests that collocation should be fully described in pedagogical dictionaries, including *MED*. This section compares the differences in expressing collocational information between *MED* and the other three dictionaries.

1.3.1. Presentation of collocation

In *MED*, collocations are shown in bold (**serious/disastrous/dire consequence** in Fig. 3) and followed by example sentences in italic (*Climate change could have disastrous consequences for farmers.*) Sometimes, in addition to the examples, there is a separate collocation box listing words which collocate frequently with the entry. The large amount of information about collocation in entries like this suggests that *MED* pays significant attention to collocation.

There are some examples that have strong collocation properties but are not shown in bold. In the entries for **checkered** in other dictionaries such as *LDOCE³* and *OALD⁶*, for instance, the phrase '**checkered** past' is treated as a collocation:

> [*MED(US)*] *He remains a popular figure despite his checkered past.*
> [*MED(UK)*] *Her chequered musical career is indeed the stuff of storybooks.*
> [*LDOCE³*] **have a checkered history/past/career etc**. *The company has had a pretty checkered history. I'd think carefully before investing.*
> [*OALD⁶*] **chequered 1 ~ past/history/career** a person's past, etc. that contains both successful and not successful periods (definition + no example)

Other combinations of words which should have been given collocation status include *advertisement* **for**, *convenient* **for**, and **best** *endeavours*.

1.3.2. Presentation of colligation

In the entry **specify**, colligation information ([V + wh-words], [V + that]) is given less precisely in *MED* than in the other three dictionaries. One example is given (*To make a claim, you must specify the date when the article was lost.*), but there is no colligation information even though **specify** is treated as a core vocabulary item (☆☆). Such information is

treated as important in the other three dictionaries, and more in-depth information is needed in *MED*.

> **specify wh-**
> [*OALD⁶*] [V wh-] *The contract clearly specifies who can operate the machinery.*
> [*CIDE*] *He would not specify which new evidence the police would be examining.* [+ **wh-word**]
> [*LDOCE³*] **specify who/what/how etc** *Did you specify where the new work station has to go?*

> **specify that**
> [*OALD⁶*] [**V that**] *The regulations specify that calculators may not be used in the examination.*
> [*CIDE*] *My contract specifies that I must give a month's notice if I leave my job.* [+ **that clause**]
> [*LDOCE³*] **specify that** *The rules clearly specify that competitors must not accept payment.*

Overall, the collocational information given in *MED* is more similar to that in *OALD⁶* than to that in the other two dictionaries. More collocations as well as idioms are given in bold in *LDOCE³* than in *OALD⁶* and *MED*. *CIDE* gives more unique examples and fewer expressions that are similar to those in the other dictionaries.

1.4. Summary

We conclude that the compilers of *MED* tried to take into account regional and cultural differences between the UK and the US in the two regional editions. There is no significant difference in the number of examples between the two editions. *MED(US)* shows slightly more awareness of sexism, but sexism seems a less important issue for *MED* than for the other three dictionaries. No less attention is paid to giving collocational information in *MED* than in the other dictionaries.

NOTES

1)   The following 10 parts (sequences of entries) in *MED(US)* were selected: (1) borrowing power — botox; (2) convenient — convert; (3) endanger — energy; (4) goblin — goggles; (5) irrelevance — ISO; (6) mobile-home — model²; (7) pilaf — pilot¹; (8) rib cage — rid-

den; (9) spearhead — specification; (10) tracing — trade[1]. Some examples introduced in this section are quoted from the other parts in the *MED*.

2) Cowie (1995) divided examples into four types — words, phrases, clauses, and sentences — and compared the examples between *ALD*[1] (1948) and *OALD*[4] (1989). Here the first three types are included in the 'phrase' type.

3) In her lecture given in Tokyo on 13 December 2002, G. Fox, *MED*'s Associate Editor, said that the two editions were edited at the same time and that the two teams of lexicographers divided up the dictionary-making and modified the examples for each dictionary.

4) The three examples given only in *MED(UK)* are the following: *Most European countries have signed up to the Geneva Convention.; a policy favouring the convergence of tax rates within Europe; the endowment of a Professorship at Oxford; the attitude of the West towards Islam.*

5) In the entry 'bother[2]', 5 examples are given only in *MED(UK)*: *I didn't want the bother of carrying a camera around.; I'll get a taxi and save you the bother of taking me.; I hope George wasn't too much of a bother.; She'll get another job, no bother.; He's in a spot of bother with the police.*

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Usage Notes of *Macmillan English Dictionary*

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1. Introduction

The *Macmillan English Dictionary* (hereafter abbreviated as *MED*), which was published in 2002, shows originality in its intensive use of usage notes. This paper defines all the columns in red boxes as usage notes, and discusses how these usage notes are organized in this dictionary.

In *MED*, there are thirteen kinds of usage notes, according to the titles used in the CD-ROM (presented here in alphabetical order):

academic writing: given to the words concerning academic writing, such as *topic, example*, or *summary*, and shows some typical expressions.

avoiding offense: comments on politeness in order to avoid the problems of race, gender, age, and so on.

better words: advising on use of more minor words instead of common words like *bad* or *nice*, according to the situation.

collocation: the words which are often used with common words are given; the connection here is looser than in idioms.

cultural note: comments on cultures in America and Britain.

etymology: the origin and derivations of words are explained.

false friends Am/Br: the difference between AmE and BrE is shown.

functional note: given to the words relating to attitudes such as *agree* or *suggest*, and listing some expressions used to show those attitudes.

learner errors: comments on the points that learners have to keep in mind such as the subtle difference between synonyms.

metaphors: indicating the metaphors behind common words to help learners grasp the concepts of those words; example sentences