

An Analysis of *A Valency Dictionary of English: A Corpus-Based Analysis of the Complementation Patterns of English Verbs, Nouns and Adjectives*

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1. Introduction

A work of special interest came out in 2004 from a German publisher Mouton de Gruyter entitled *A Valency Dictionary of English: A Corpus-Based Analysis of the Complementation Patterns of English Verbs, Nouns and Adjectives* (*VDE*, hereafter) by Thomas Herbst, David Heath, Ian F. Roe, and Dieter Götz. This is a unique book in that it is specifically intended “to provide a scholarly, sound, and, as far as possible, comprehensive description of the valency properties of English verbs, adjectives and nouns” (p. vii). I hasten to add that this is a very heavy, voluminous book.

The aim of this paper is to compare and contrast this dictionary, in terms of valency description, that is, complementation patterns of verbs, nouns, and adjectives, with two other dictionaries, namely *Collins COBUILD Advanced Learner's English Dictionary*, Fifth Edition (*COB*, hereafter) and two-volumed *Collins COBUILD Grammar Patterns*¹⁾ (*GP*, hereafter) in order to bring into relief the advantages and disadvantages of the dictionary in question. This comparison is of immense interest for the simple reason that these three works were all compiled using data from the Bank of English, though, when each of the above-mentioned works was compiled, the number of words used from the Bank of English varied.

I must make it clear, before going into details, that I am not going to debate, in this paper, the theoretical aspects of valency, including the theoretical framework employed in *VDE*. Issues, such as the concept or

definition of valency itself, or its validity or usefulness, deserve further discussion, inquiry and consideration in a separate paper.

2. Comparison

2.1. Sampling

I randomly selected the following pages of *VDE*: 101–103, 401–403, and 701–703, a total of nine pages equivalent to about one percent of the whole book. The main body of this valency dictionary consists of 962 pages. The headwords on these particular pages are thirteen in all, namely, **burn** verb, **burst** verb, **ignorance** noun, **ignorant** adjective, **ignore** verb, **ill-advised** adjective, **illegal** adjective, **illogical** adjective, **illusion** noun, **image** noun, **ripe** adjective, **rise** verb, **risk** noun. In terms of parts of speech, there are four nouns, five adjectives, and four verbs. Incidentally, *VDE* claims that it “contains 511 verbs, 274 nouns and 544 adjectives” (p. xl).¹⁾ These entries were compared with the corresponding entries of *GP* and *COB*.

The types of information contained and the framework for presentation are basically the same for the three categories of nouns, adjectives, and verbs, though the format for nouns and that for adjectives have much more in common. The entry for nouns and adjectives consists of two components: a pattern-and-examples section and a box called the “note block” containing semantic information. For verbs, on the other hand, a list of valency patterns called the “complement inventory” precedes the pattern-and-examples block and, in addition, there is an added section of “idiomatic phrasal verbs” at the end.

2.2. Nouns

I begin by looking at noun entries. The results of the comparison of the four noun entries are given in Tables 1 to 4 below:

Table 1

| ignorance | | |
|--------------------------------|--|------|
| GP2 | VDE | COB |
| none | P1 | none |
| ✓ | P2 + about N/ about wh-CL/ wh to-INF | ✓ |
| ✓ | P3 + as to N/as to wh-CL | none |
| ✓ | P4 + of N/of wh-CL/ wh to-INF (<i>frequent</i>) | ✓ |
| none | P5 + on N | none |
| <i>in N</i> <i>out of N</i> | | |

Notes: (1) The check mark "✓" shows that the valency pattern in question is found in the relevant dictionary in some way, e.g. by way of explicit marking, illustrative examples, or sentential definition, whereas the word "none" indicates otherwise; (2) "P1" or "Pattern One" under VDE, with no pattern specified, "indicate[s] a use of the noun without any further valency complementation" (p. xiv), and it corresponds, as it were, to "Z" for verbs, meaning "zerovalent"; (3) Structure patterns given in the bottom-left or bottom-right boxes are those found in the dictionary concerned which are not found in VDE, and they are given exactly as they are in the dictionary in question.

Table 2

| illusion | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------|
| GP2 | VDE | COB |
| none | P1 | ✓ |
| ✓ | P2 [it] + to-INF | none |
| ✓ | P3 + that-CL | ✓ |
| ✓ | P4 + about N/V-ing/ about wh-CL | ✓ |
| ✓ | P5 + of N/V-ing (<i>frequent</i>) | ✓ |
| <i>of wh</i> <i>under N</i> | | |

Note: The abbreviation "wh" under GP2 represents a finite wh-clause, but it should be noted that it is meant to include a non-finite wh-to-inf clause, as the case may be.

Table 3

| image | | |
|--------|--|--------------------------------|
| GP2 | VDE | COB |
| none | P1 | ✓ |
| none | P2 + that-CL | none |
| ✓ | P3 + as N/V-ing | ✓ |
| ✓ | P4 + of N/V-ing/ of N V-ing (<i>frequent</i>) | ✓ |
| poss N | | usu with supp oft with poss |

Note: The abbreviations "poss," "usu with supp," and "oft with poss" mean "a possessive determiner," "usually with supplementary information accompanying a noun," and "often with possessive," respectively.

Table 4

| risk | | |
|--|--|------|
| GP2 | VDE | COB |
| none | P1 | ✓ |
| ✓ | P2 + that-CL | ✓ |
| none | P3 + for N/ [at] + for N/V-ing | none |
| ✓ | P4 + from N/V-ing | none |
| none | P5 + in N/V-ing | none |
| ✓ | P6 + of N/V-ing/ of N V-ing (<i>frequent</i>) | ✓ |
| ✓ | P7 + to N | none |
| ✓ | P8 + for N + to-INF | none |
| adj N n N <i>the N be that</i> <i>it v-link det N-ing</i> <i>without N</i> | | |

Just a glance at the four tables above gives the impression that *VDE* covers the widest variety of valency patterns which, under closer scrutiny, proved to be the case. It seems fair to say, therefore, that the dictionary is true to its name. There are a small number of patterns only to be found either in *GP* or *COB*. However, most of them are not valency structures as defined by *VDE*.²⁾ Put another way, *VDE* would not have included those patterns in the first place, which leads to the conclusion that the dictionary would not come under fire for lack of these patterns. Incidentally, each table contains at least one pattern with the label "frequent."³⁾ It is interesting to note that all these patterns are invariably covered by the other two dictionaries.

However, with regard to what is covered in these other dictionaries, there are some disclaimers to make in this connection. First, though I put a check mark for P2 and P4 under *COB* in Table 1, it does not mean that all specific structures included in the two patterns are covered by the dictionary. *COB* only gives **about N** for P2 and **of N** for P4. In other words, the rest of the valency structures in these particular patterns, i.e. **about wh-CL/wh to-INF** in P2 and **of wh-CL/wh to-INF** in P4 are missing in *COB*. The same goes for P4 under *COB* in Table 2, P3 under *GP* and P3 and P4 under *COB* in Table 3, and P6 under *COB* in Table 4. The patterns not given in each case are, in the sequence mentioned above, as follows: **about N/wh-CL**, **as V-ing**, **as V-ing**, **of V-ing/of N V-ing**, and **of N V-ing**. Thus, even though there is a check mark in a box under *GP* or *COB*, the information given there could be less than in *VDE*. Next, for P3 in Table 4, two examples are given for the + **for N** pattern, another two for the second pattern [**at**] + **for N**, and one for the last [**at**] + **for V-ing**.⁴⁾ Given that this is the correct complementation description for P3, it is problematical that P4 is not treated in a similar manner. That is to say, the symbol [**at**] should appear in P4, as in P3. Consider the second example sentence given for this pattern in *VDE*:

The more of these points you can follow, the less you'll be at *risk* from infection.

The same argument should go for P6. Examine one of the examples

therein:

At the *risk* of appearing a philistine, many people suggest letting red wine breathe before drinking to improve the flavour.

2.3. Adjectives

Next, adjective entries are examined. The comparable results of the five adjective entries are provided in the following Tables 5 to 9:

Table 5

| ignorant | | |
|---------------------|--|------------|
| <i>GP2</i> | <i>VDE</i> | <i>COB</i> |
| none | P1 attr | none |
| none | P2 pred | ✓ |
| ✓ | P3 + that-CL | none |
| ✓ | P4 + about N/V-ing/ about wh-CL | ✓ |
| ✓ | P5 + of N/V-ing/ of wh-CL/wh to-INF (frequent) | ✓ |
| none | P6 + on N | none |
| ADJ <i>as to wh</i> | | |

Note: The labels "attr" and "pred" in P1 and P2 stand for "attributive" and "predicative" use of the adjective, respectively, with no further complementation.

Table 6

| ill-advised | | |
|-------------|----------------------------------|------------|
| <i>GP2</i> | <i>VDE</i> | <i>COB</i> |
| none | P1 attr | none |
| none | P2 pred | none |
| ✓ | P3 + to-INF | ✓ |
| none | P4 [it] + to-INF | none |
| none | P5 + in V-ing (rare) | none |
| none | P6 [it] + for N to-INF (rare) | none |
| none | P7 [it] + of N + to-INF | none |

Table 7

| illegal | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|------|
| GP2 | VDE | COB |
| ✓ | P1 attr | ✓ |
| none | P2 pred | ✓ |
| ✓ | P3 [it] + to-INF (<i>frequent</i>) | ✓ |
| ✓ | P4 [it] + for N to-INF | none |
| v it ADJ that v it ADJ to-inf v it ADJ for n to-inf there v-link something/nothing/anything in n/-ing there v-link something/nothing/anything about n/-ing | | |

Table 8

| illogical | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|------|
| GP2 | VDE | COB |
| none | P1 attr | none |
| none | P2 pred | none |
| ✓ | P3 [it] + to-INF (<i>frequent</i>) | ✓ |
| ✓ | P4 [it] + that-CL | none |
| ✓ | P5 [it] + for N to-INF | none |
| v it ADJ to-inf there v-link something/nothing/anything in n/-ing | | |

Table 9

| ripe | | |
|------|---|------|
| GP2 | VDE | COB |
| none | P1 attr | ✓ |
| none | P2 pred | ✓ |
| none | P3 + to-INF | none |
| ✓ | P4 + for N/V-ing/ for N to-INF (<i>frequent</i>) | ✓ |
| ✓ | P5 + with N | none |

Several points that I made in the preceding subsection concerning noun entries also hold for the adjective entries here. Specifically, *VDE* covers more types of complementation structures than do *GP* and *COB*. Patterns labeled as *frequent* in *VDE* are all covered by the other two works. A check mark in the box is no guarantee that all structures in the *VDE* pattern are fully covered in the other dictionaries concerned. To be more specific on this last point, *COB* covers two structures **for N/V-ing**, but not the remaining **for N to-INF** in P4 in Table 9.

I have a disclaimer about the semantic aspect of the description of adjectives, but this will be taken up later in connection with the "note block" as the authors call it.

2.4. Verbs

Third, and lastly, let us look at verb entries. The comparable results of the four verb entries are shown in Tables 10 to 13 below:

Table 10

| burn | | |
|------|------------------------------|------|
| GP1 | VDE | COB |
| ✓ | M | ✓ |
| ✓ | D1 + N _P | ✓ |
| ✓ | D2 + to-INF | ✓ |
| none | D3 + for N | none |
| none | D4 + into N | none |
| ✓ | D5 + with N | ✓ |
| ✓ | T1 + N _P + ADJ | none |
| none | T2 + N _P + as N | ✓ |
| none | T3 + N _P + for N | none |
| none | T4 + N _P + into N | none |
| none | T5 + N _P + with N | none |
| none | + away ↔ N _P | none |
| ✓ | + down | ✓ |
| ✓ | + down ↔ N _P | ✓ |
| ✓ | + off ↔ N _P | ✓ |

| none | + out | none |
|---|------------------------|--------------|
| ✓ | + out + REFL PRON | ✓ |
| none | + out ↔ N _P | none |
| ✓ | + up | ✓ |
| ✓ | + up ↔ N _P | ✓ |
| V adj get V-ed V pron-refl V adv V way prep/adv | | be V-ed to n |

Note: The symbols "M," "D," and "T" stand for "monovalent," "divalent," and "trivalent," respectively. A more familiar term for *monovalent* would be "intransitive."

Table 11

| burst | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------|
| GPI | VDE | COB |
| ✓ | M | ✓ |
| ✓ | D1 + N _P | ✓ |
| ✓ | D2 + ADJ | ✓ |
| none | D3 + to-INF | none |
| ✓ | D4 + into N (<i>frequent</i>) | ✓ |
| ✓ | D5 + with N | none |
| ✓ | D6 + ADV (<i>frequent</i>) | ✓ |
| none | + in (+ on N) _P | none |
| ✓ | + out | ✓ |
| ✓ | + out QUOTE/SENTENCE | none |
| ✓ | + out + V-ing | ✓ |
| V way prep/adv V into n | | V P into n |

Note: The symbol "V" of "V into n" at the bottom under GPI stands for the phrasal "burst out," not for the simplex "burst" in this particular case.

Table 12

| ignore | | |
|----------|-------------------------------|------|
| GPI | VDE | COB |
| ✓ | D1 + N _P | ✓ |
| none | D2 + that-CL _{P(it)} | none |
| none | D3 + wh-CL _{P(it)} | none |
| get V-ed | | |

Table 13

| rise | | |
|------|--------------------------------|------|
| GPI | VDE | COB |
| ✓ | M | ✓ |
| ✓ | D1 + N: QUANT | ✓ |
| none | D2 + to-INF | none |
| ✓ | D3 + above N | ✓ |
| ✓ | D4 + against N | ✓ |
| ✓ | D5 + by N: QUANT' | ✓ |
| ✓ | D6 + from N | ✓ |
| ✓ | D7 + in N | none |
| ✓ | D8 + out of N | ✓ |
| ✓ | D9 + through N | ✓ |
| ✓ | D10 + to N (<i>frequent</i>) | ✓ |
| none | D11 + with N | none |
| none | T1 + N: QUANT + against N | none |
| ✓ | T2 + from N + to N | ✓ |
| none | T3 + in N + against N | none |
| ✓ | + up | ✓ |
| ✓ | + up + against N | ✓ |
| none | + up + to N (<i>rare</i>) | none |
| none | + up + to-INF | none |

There are a number of items worth pointing out about the four tables here. In the box for the pattern + **out** + **REFL PRON** under *COB* in Table 10, there is a check mark because this particular pattern is covered by the dictionary. If one looks more closely, however, one will see that there is an interesting difference here. In *VDE*, a metaphorical use of *burn oneself out* is referred to, as demonstrated by the example "It was the time of The Sex Pistols *burning themselves out* on the rock'n'roll life-style. (= exhausting unrecoverably)," whereas, in *COB*, a literal sense of the phrase is attested to, as manifested by the example "Fire officials let the fire burn itself out."⁵⁾

The phrase **burst into** is given in pattern D4 in Table 11. One finds another instance of this phrase among the six examples listed for D6 + **ADV**:

Two people have died after masked men *burst* into a pub in south-east[sic] London.

This leads me to suggest that *VDE* might have added a second sense **D (A person, animal, or vehicle can burst into or through a place, i.e. rush in or through or appear unexpectedly.)** to this pattern of D4, where **B (A person or a group of people can burst into some kind of behaviour, i.e. start doing it suddenly and energetically.)** is now the only sense identified therein and should instead include the above-mentioned example sentence in order to accommodate this wider use and meaning. Although it is a matter of judgment whether or not to add this meaning of **burst into** to D4, my belief is that the addition would render the phrase more easily accessible to the user if it did.

Rise to the occasion and **rise to the challenge** are fairly common idiomatic expressions, both of which are given in *COB*.⁶⁾ That is not the case in *VDE*, which I would posit as quite undesirable. In D10 in Table 13, where these chunks should belong, there is no reference made to either of them, or even to this particular sense. One saving grace is that *VDE* lists a pattern + **up** + **to N (rare)** in the phrasal verb section, giving the following example:

Government and people together can *rise up* to the challenge. (= re-

spond).

In view of the fact, however, that both *VDE* and *COB* are based on data from the Bank of English, one may well surmise that this is a most mysterious situation.⁷⁾

Last but not least, it is remarkable again that the points made in subsection 2.2 may still be carried over to the verb entries.

3. Note blocks

The note block is basically a section dealing with semantics. It contains "information about (1) the meaning of the headword in a particular pattern, (2) the words that can occur with the headword in a pattern, i.e. its collocational range, (3) important differences in meaning between various patterns, (4) other information such as whether a use is considered formal or informal, British or American etc" (p. xxi) [numbers added by the author]. A note of caution seems to be in order here: "In particular, this dictionary does not aim to provide extensive definitions of the words covered. The main function of the meaning explanations provided is to enable the user to identify the sense in which a word is used and to offer extensive coverage of the meaning of the patterns rather than the words" (p. xxii). To put it plainly, not all senses of words as they are found in ordinary dictionaries are expected to be given in *VDE*.

The note block to the headword **image** goes as follows:

- A The image of a person, etc.** is 'the picture that they seek to create and/or that other people have of them.' → P1 P2 P3 P4
- B If a person has an image of someone or something** they have a picture of them in their mind. → P4

I wonder if this is a lucid enough explanation to tell the two uses apart. What confuses the explanation is that the following example is found in **A** of P4:

I couldn't believe it 'cos that person **has an image of** being rather a nice person [bold-faced by the author].

What makes the reference even more problematic is the fact that **B** of P4 carries two example sentences, neither of which embodies in it any such pattern of **have an image of someone or something**.

The note block to **ignorant** reads:

If a person is ignorant about or of a subject, a particular fact or a particular kind of knowledge, they do not know anything about it.

It seems good enough so far, but what about the last pattern, given in this entry, "P6 + **on N** We are not totally *ignorant* on the matter"? Is it different from the preceding two patterns of + **about N** and + **of N**? If so, how are they different from each other? These are legitimate questions for this entry.

4. Some residual problems

4.1. Microstructures

Nesselhauf (2005) observes that "[w]hat greatly contributes to the user-friendliness of the dictionary is the clear structure of the entries It is also helpful that the division into different blocks is supported by the layout" (p. 398). I understand her point. However, I ought to put in a word of caution here. For ordinary dictionaries, a user will most likely go directly to the main body without opening the front-matter pages and try to find, say, the word or meaning that one is looking for. Even though a user is supposed, or even advised, to read the front-matter of a dictionary before using it, one will very often skip it because one thinks s/he is already familiar with the dictionary's system or mechanics. On the other hand, this valency dictionary is very special in the sense that it does not allow the reader to do so: the user needs to read and understand the front-matter. In particular, the first, sixteen-page section "A brief guide to the *Valency Dictionary of English*" is a must-read which, with some time and effort, helps to accustom the user to how the dictionary works. It should prove to be worth the time and effort, and if the user is interested in the theoretical dimensions of valency, s/he might want to go on to read the second section "Valency theory and the *Valency Dictionary of English*."

4.2. Selection of headwords

VDE states clearly that its headwords "were chosen on the basis of the criteria of frequency, complexity of valency structures and potential difficulty for the foreign learner" (p. xl). With this in mind, let us take a look, for instance, at the following list of headwords beginning with the letter **K**: **keen** adjective, **keep** verb, **key** noun, **kill** verb, **kind** adjective, **kiss** verb, **knock** verb, **know** verb, **knowledge** noun.

Apparently, a reasonable choice of words has been made there. One strong candidate that should be considered for inclusion is the verb **kick** for the following reasons: (1) It is a high-frequency word; (2) It has quite a few constructions, including phrasal verbs, in which the verb is used; and (3) these constructions, especially phrasal verbs, would seem to present difficulties for learners. Other possibilities would be the verb **knit**, the noun **kind**, and the verb **kid** in descending order of candidacy or suitability.

4.3. Corrections to be made

I have already had occasion to suggest that there is room for improvement on some points. In addition to these, I have found at least two errors as far as the thirteen entries examined are concerned. First, in P2 + **to-INF** of the entry for **honour** noun, there is this example:

It was an *honour* to have taken part in such a sporting and dramatic occasion.

This particular illustrative example should take the entry of P7 **[it] + for N + to-INF** because it forms a subclass of the pattern. Second, P8 in the entry for **risk** noun goes as follows:

+ **for N + to-INF** But the Gleasons have a fairly small garden, so it would have been quite a *risk* for Jim to bury Molly there. It was a *risk* for Piccolo to accept Alderson's proposal.

This, again, involves an analogous problem. The description should have **[it]** preceding the complementation pattern quoted above, resulting in **[it] + for N + to-INF**.

5. Conclusion

To the best of my knowledge, *VDE* is the first dictionary of its kind that has dealt with valency relations on such a large scale as this. Therefore, it should be safe to say that the dictionary is an invaluable tool for anyone interested in the complementation patterns of English, not just for those whom *VDE* claims that it is intended for, which are neatly summarized in Nesselhauf (2005): "four groups of users, namely linguists, advanced foreign learners (for the production of correct English), non-native teachers of English (for marking learner production), and developers of teaching materials such as applied linguists, grammarians, and lexicographers" (p. 391).

Admitting that *VDE* is a very welcome addition to the field, a more comprehensive version of the dictionary, an exhaustive one if possible, should be designed and prepared, in order to meet the expectations, as well as the needs, of earnest learners and users, for "the number of words contained in this dictionary is much smaller than in a conventional dictionary" (p. viii). *VDE*'s value and usefulness will definitely be maximized in electronic form. As it is, users will most likely be grievously disappointed to find that a rather surprisingly large number of words—that they might very well expect to be located in this valency dictionary—are not included.

NOTES

My thanks go to Mr. Joseph Justin Dilenschneider for reading an earlier version of this paper and for making constructive comments and helpful suggestions.

Section 1

1) *Collins COBUILD Grammar Patterns* consists of two volumes, one of which is *Collins COBUILD Grammar Patterns 1: Verbs (GP1)* and the other *Collins COBUILD Grammar Patterns 2: Nouns and Adjectives (GP2)*. As the names indicate, the former deals with structure of verbs, while the latter with that of nouns and adjectives. The two are identical in their orientation and purpose, however. I just use *GP* in referring to both volumes of the book.

Section 2

1) The *Valency Dictionary of English* states that "[t]he verbs, adjectives and nouns included in the dictionary were chosen on the basis of criteria of frequency and complexity

of their valency structures. These are also the words which are likely to cause problems to foreign learners" (p. viii).

2) *VDE* notes, for example, that "of-constructions which can be replaced by an 's genitive are not considered part of the valency of a noun and not explicitly listed as an of-pattern" (p. xiv).

3) There are three different labels for frequency information employed in *VDE*: >30%, very frequent, and frequent.

4) The example sentences for the [at] + for N/V-ing pattern are cited here for reference, though in somewhat abridged form: "Margolus . . . says short-term attempts to find and vaccinate adults most at risk for the disease . . . have generally failed"; "The practical implication for therapists is that we may be most at risk for lapses in judgment when we have learned a sparkling new insight"; "What scientists really need . . . are clear genetic indicators of who is at risk for developing alcoholism."

5) Alternatively, I could have put "none," instead of a check mark, in the box of this particular pattern under *COB* and put the mark "✓," in lieu of "none," in the box next down for the + out ↔ N_P pattern under *COB*, since *VDE* gives the following example in the latter pattern: "He relaxed back into his chair, letting his pipe burn itself out in his hand. (= burn to nothing)." I refrained from exercising this option because *COB* only gives **V pron-refl P** in the Extra Column for the entry **burn out**, with no **V n P** as its verb pattern.

6) The treatment of these two fixed phrases are exactly the same in the former editions of *COB*, except for *COB1*, where **rise to the challenge** is not given as an idiom, but rather it is listed as one of the many distinct uses in the entry for the headword **rise**: 15 If you **rise** to a challenge or remark, you respond to it in some way, rather than ignoring it.

Incidentally, I received more than 300 hits for both expressions of **rise to the occasion** and **rise to the challenge**, while I obtained two hits for **rise up to the challenge** and just one for **rise up to the occasion** in the Bank of English (450 million words).

7) This particular point may coincide with the observation made by Nesselhauf (2005): [P]hraseological units figure more prominently in the *CCED* [= *COB2*] (for instance, the collocation *the error of their ways* is listed in the *CCED* but does not appear in the *Valency Dictionary*) (p. 397).

DICTIONARIES

COB: *Collins COBUILD Advanced Learner's English Dictionary*, 5th ed. Glasgow: HarperCollins, 2006.

COB1: *Collins COBUILD English Language Dictionary*. London and Glasgow: Collins, 1987.

COB2: *Collins COBUILD English Dictionary*, New ed. London: HarperCollins, 1995.

GP1: *Collins COBUILD Grammar Patterns 1: Verbs*. London: HarperCollins, 1996.

GP2: *Collins COBUILD Grammar Patterns 2: Nouns and Adjectives*. London: HarperCollins, 1998.

VDE: *A Valency Dictionary of English: A Corpus-Based Analysis of the Complementation Patterns of English Verbs, Nouns and Adjectives*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2004.

REFERENCE

- Nesselhauf, Nadja. 2005. "Review of *A Valency Dictionary of English: A Corpus-Based Analysis of the Complementation Patterns of English Verbs, Nouns and Adjectives*." *English Language and Linguistics* 9.2: 391–399.

An Analysis of Two Business English Dictionaries for Learners

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1. Introduction

This paper is a comparative critical review of two business English dictionaries (henceforth BEDs) for learners, namely, the *Longman Business English Dictionary* (2000, henceforth *LBED*), and the *Oxford Business English Dictionary for Learners of English* (2005, henceforth *OBED*). It is intended to be a comparative review wherein these dictionaries are compared not only with each other, but also with general-purpose EFL dictionaries such as *LDOCE4* and *OALD7*, and competing specialized dictionaries for English speakers (*ODAc3*, *ODBM4*, and *ODEcon2*). In order to highlight and discuss the peculiarities of the dictionaries of this specific genre, I will mainly focus on the headwords (Section 2), the subject labels (Section 3), definitions, examples and collocations (Section 4), and special features such as notes and columns in relation to a user study (Section 5). Section 6 presents the overall conclusion. Pronunciation, illustration, and middle and back matters are not mainly dealt with here, as they are not central issues of the BEDs.

For a quick survey of headwords, subject labels, definitions, and examples, I have designated the following as samples: (1) pages from the beginning of the A section to the end of the words beginning with *ac-*, (2) pages in the F section up till the end of the words beginning with *fe-*, (3) pages in the P section after the words beginning with *ps-*, and (4) from the page having the words beginning with *wi-* to the end of the dictionary text are designated as the sample, although other pages are referred to where appropriate. These four parts comprise roughly 5% of each dictionary text.