

## Phraseology – the Hornby legacy

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### **Abstract**

The theme of this paper is A. S. Hornby's contribution to the treatment of phraseology in the EFL dictionary. It focuses on three types of collocation: lexical collocations, as adapted by Hornby to meet the needs of the learner as reader and writer; grammatical collocations, specifically noun + preposition and adjective + preposition types; and phrasal verbs. The paper shows how Hornby's grasp of the analytical problems was strengthened by grammatical and lexical research and how difficulties of retrieval and use were skillfully overcome in the dictionaries themselves. A number of dictionary traditions are referred to in order to show how different approaches to design can deal effectively with problems of presentation that all must face.

### **1. Introduction**

In 1998, I was invited to speak at the Liège conference in celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of A. S. Hornby's birth. Now, thanks to the initiative of the Hornby Trust in establishing a lecture in Hornby's name, and to the kindness of the organizers in inviting me to give the first talk in the series, I have the honour and pleasure of speaking to you again.

Hornby's generosity was exceptional, and always directed to practical ends. In 1961, several years before his retirement from active dictionary-making, he set up the Hornby Educational Trust, a far-sighted as well as generous initiative whereby a considerable part of his income from royalties was used to improve the teaching and learning of English, chiefly by enabling teachers from overseas to come to Britain for advanced professional training. And now, not only has the Hornby lecture been established, but funds have been donated to help meet some of the costs of this congress.

I began by referring to the Liège conference. This was the first Euralex venture into *francophonie* and marked an important stage in extending the ties which already existed on a personal level between many anglophone and francophone lexicographers, and in bringing before a wider English-speaking public the achievements of French lexicography. These connections have been further strengthened by the events of more recent years, not least by a number of outstanding contributions by French, Belgian and French-Canadian lexicographers to IJL – including a special number entirely devoted to French dictionaries of the past fifty years, with Jean Pruvost as guest editor – and now, as a further achievement that we all welcome and applaud, by a conference organized in the ancient province of Brittany, with participants from all over France, and beyond.

## **2. Phraseology in the learner's dictionary**

In my Liège paper, I ranged over the full extent of Hornby's achievements as a lexicographer and grammarian (Cowie 1998). Here, I should like to focus more narrowly but explore in greater depth. My theme is Hornby's contribution to the treatment of phraseology in the learner's dictionary. I shall focus on three collocation types in particular and give emphasis to aspects of dictionary treatment aimed at supporting the learner as reader and writer. I shall begin by referring to a design feature first associated with Hornby's *Idiomatic and Syntactic English Dictionary* (ISED), but later destined to have a wider currency. This was the widespread use of example types that gave prominence to 'lexical' collocations, of which *a low wall*, *a low voice* (adjective + noun) and *to lose one's balance*, *to lose one's senses* (transitive verb + noun-object) are representative. We shall investigate the kinds of examples by which such combinations are represented in Hornby's editions and how similar types, with similar intended functions, are to be found in the learners' dictionaries of today. In examining the Hornby line of descent, though, I shall not overlook fruitful but independent lines of development.

*A low voice* and *to lose one's senses* are lexical collocations; *anxiety about* and *desperate for* – each with an open-class and a closed-class word – are grammatical collocations (Benson 1989). Many examples of both types were included in ISED, but by the mid-fifties Hornby felt the need for a fuller and more rigorous analysis of grammatical collocations (specifically noun + preposition and adjective + preposition) than had appeared in the dictionary – one that would complement his existing and much admired *verb* pattern scheme. We shall look at the analysis of one major type – noun with prepositional complement – and determine to what extent and in what forms the pattern is represented in later Hornby editions – and in more recent works within other dictionary traditions.

A third topic brings us firmly into the zone where grammar cuts across phraseology. The theme is the phrasal verb and its associated constructions (Cowie 1978). The key to dealing with this thorn in the side of the foreign learner is partly to draw a clear distinction between the grammatical and the semantic – or, strictly, the phraseological. It is a mistake, for instance, to suppose that because a combination of verb and adverb has been identified as an idiom or restricted collocation, and thus as a semantic unit of some kind, it is also a grammatical unit. Hornby never made this mistake. We would probably agree that *bring down*, as in *bring down the price*, is more idiomatic than the same combination in *bring down the suitcases*. Yet they are identical with regard to adverb movement and passivization, both of which presuppose the separation of verb and adverb, not their fusion (cf. Cowie 1999a: 67). We shall return to this broader theme later on. In the meantime, we shall see how, from beginnings which owed much to the example of Harold Palmer, Hornby laid the foundations in research for his own more systematic and detailed treatment of phrasal verbs.

## **3. Collocations and examples: ISED and after**

### **3.1. Lexical collocations**

Innovation in Hornby's design of dictionary examples drew in part on the so-called *Second Interim Report on English Collocations* of 1933, the first full-scale, systematic analysis of

English word-combinations to be undertaken in a language-teaching context.<sup>1</sup> The basis of the organization was grammatical, so that we had VERB x ADVERB, NOUN x PREPOSITION combinations, and so on, often richly supported by examples. The scheme was also finely sub-classified, so that for instance we have noun plus noun combinations, in which the first noun is a partitive unit, as at (1), below:

(1) NOUN x of x SINGULAR UNCOUNTABLE NOUN

Article of clothing, Bit of luck, *etc.*, Cake of soap, Chunk of bread, Clap of thunder, Clot of blood, Drop of water [blood, *etc.*], Ear of corn [wheat, *etc.*], Flake of snow, *etc.*, Flash of lightning [genius, *etc.*] ...

Cutting across this grammatical description was the distinction between items that were more or less idiomatic. Hornby was well aware of this difference: he refers at this very point to items that are ‘transitional between collocations proper [that is, collocations in the narrow, present-day sense] and “construction patterns” [or as we should now say, “free combinations”]’ (1933: 99). But it was to be some time before formal and semantic criteria were put forward to mark the distinction.

Apart from the task of collecting collocations and idioms such as these – the work continued beyond publication of the *Report* to feed into an enlarged revision of 1935 – Hornby had to face up to the practical task of presenting those items in such a way that they could serve in a dictionary as models for the reader and writer. The dictionary he had chiefly in mind from about 1936, when he took over from Harold Palmer a project still at the exploratory stage, was the *Idiomatic and Syntactic English Dictionary*, to be published in Tokyo in 1942, and later to be renamed for worldwide distribution *A Learner’s Dictionary of Current English* (later still, *The Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*).<sup>2</sup>

If one examines a run of examples in ISED at all closely one is made aware that noun phrases (*a strong wind*) and infinitive clauses (*to head the ball, to roam the woods*) make up about half the total, the remainder consisting chiefly of full sentences. This was brought home to me by a study I made some years ago, when I found that out of a total of 258 examples of all types in 506 consecutive entries of ISED the majority of the 129 clause and phrase examples were simplified in a more or less uniform way (Cowie 1999a). The prominence given to phrases and clauses and the precise forms in which they appear give some backing to the view that Hornby allotted particular example types to particular learning functions and that the specific function of clauses and phrases was to serve as carefully simplified patterns (indeed, collocations) for comprehension or sentence building. Examples such as those just quoted ‘make no claim to replicate actual performance,’ as Michael Rundell helpfully points out. In fact, as he goes on to say, ‘they function as templates that learners can use as a basis on which to model ... their own utterances’ (Rundell 1998: 317).

We can see from the entry at (2) the particular forms that phrase and clause examples often

take in ISED:

- (2) **lose** ...  $\hat{o}$  (P1) have no longer; have taken away from one (by accident, misfortune, ...), as *to lose one's money*; *to lose a leg*; *to lose one's balance*.  
*He lost two sons in the war* (i.e. they were killed) ...  $\neq$  (P1) fail to keep, as *to lose one's work*; *to lose one's hair* [good looks, health, etc.]; *to lose one's temper* (i.e. get angry or impatient); *to lose one's reason* [senses] (i.e. become mad or wildly excited); *to lose one's head* (i.e. become too excited to act wisely; ...) (ISED 1942)

As we can see, in the two numbered sub-entries (from which I have omitted three full sentences in all), we find a recurring simplified clause structure consisting of a transitive verb in the infinitive and a noun object with minimal modification (*to lose one's hair*, *to lose one's reason*, and so on). French and Italian colleagues will notice at once that these forms of simplification are paralleled in 'dictionnaires de langue' such as *le Petit Robert* and in 'dizionari scolastici' such as the *Palazzi-Folena* (Cowie 1996). And returning to my remark that in ISED examples and collocations are often merged, we should note that, leaving aside *to lose one's work* (surely long since replaced by *to lose one's job*), all the clause examples are simultaneously 'restricted' collocations. So in each example the base (say *leg*) determines or shapes the figurative sense of the verb collocate (in this case *lose*). Note, all the same, that the 'orientation' of the entry favours the reader: its point is to clarify the various senses of *lose*, not to indicate to writers that *lose* is a possible collocate of *leg*.

As it happened, this highly condensed style of exemplification tended to give way, in later editions of ALD, to more expanded patterns, as can be seen from this extract from the *lose* entry in the fourth edition of 1989:

- (3) **lose** ... 1 [Tn] have (sth/sb) taken away from one by accident, misfortune,  
... : *lose all one's money at cards*  $\circ$  *lose a leg in an industrial accident*  $\circ$  *lose one's hair, teeth, good looks*, ie as a result of ageing  $\circ$  *He lost both his sons*  
(ie They were killed) *in the war*. ... (ALD4 1989)

Here the greater specificity of the first and second examples, made possible by the addition of adverbials (*at cards*, *in an industrial accident*), makes the examples more readable and intelligible, while indicating collocation at more than one point (Cowie 1999a: 103). Of course, in the decade beyond the seventies, a major – if not the major – force leading to innovation was the growing availability of extensive citation files, and increasingly of large-scale corpus data. In the second edition of the *Longman Dictionary of*

*Contemporary English* (1987), for instance, as compared with the first (1978), access to citation data led, at many points, to the inclusion of examples in which a collocation was established but context then provided to facilitate understanding. Look at the entry at (4), where the relevant underlying collocations are *gain a reputation*, *gain weight* and *gain speed*:

- (4) **gain** ... 1 ... *He had gained himself a reputation for unfairness.* 2 [T] to have an increase in: *I think he's gaining weight.* | *The car gained speed as it went down the hill.* (LDOCE2 1987)

Then, in the third edition of LDOCE (1995), we find a style of presentation for collocations which, at first sight, is strongly reminiscent of ISED, and yet is slanted towards 'encoding'. In extract (5), for instance, we find that collocations are once again abstracted from the contexts in which they normally appear – by now, almost universally, computer-stored texts. They are templates, abstractions from performance and, appropriately, appear in distinctive bold roman print. They are entered – perhaps several to a numbered sub-entry – as sub-headwords, with an example following each bold form. They are suitable models for writing, notice, as the orientation is from noun headword to verb collocate. All the same, there are echoes of Hornby's ISED here, with the whole collocation being presented in its simplest lexical and grammatical form – no tense, no number – and no modifying adjective:

- (5) **fight**<sup>2</sup> *n* ...  
 1 ▶ **HIT**<sup>4</sup> ...  
**get into a fight** *He's always getting into fights with other boys.* | **have a fight**  
*The cat had a fight last night.* | **start/pick a fight** *Are you trying to start a fight?* ... (LDOCE3 1995)

Skilful handling of lexical collocations, as in that example, takes us only so far. The difficulty is that grammatical collocations are more numerous and pose complex problems of analysis and presentation. To make matters worse, lexical and grammatical collocations are often intertwined, as in the first boldface form at (5). Here, *get into a fight* is a lexical collocation of which the first element is a grammatical collocation *get into* – compare *get out of* or *keep out of* in related meanings. And without wishing to dwell on details which perhaps belong in a collocational dictionary, notice that *get into a fight* has been extended in the supporting example to include another grammatical collocation, *a fight with someone*, as in: *getting into fights with other boys*.

### 3.2. Grammatical collocations

To address at least some of these complexities, Hornby had been able to call, in the mid-fifties, on the results of another analytical study. They were published in *A Guide to Patterns and Usage in English* (1954), a small teaching handbook, which though primarily a grammar also made a significant contribution to phraseology. For, in addition to setting out the verb patterns that had already appeared in ISED/ALD1, and offering an original semantic treatment of modal verbs, the *Guide* included the results of an investigation into adjective patterns and noun patterns. What was involved here? In part, Hornby meant grammatical collocations of a noun or adjective and a prepositional phrase, and this is where the main emphasis will fall in this discussion. Two examples may help to throw light on the selected types: *Readiness for a change* was a noun pattern (specifically, noun plus preposition), and *fearful of the consequences* was an adjective pattern (in particular, adjective plus preposition).

Hornby did not stop at analysis, because in the 1963 edition of ALD, the second, he was able, thanks to this research, to improve on the coverage of noun plus preposition collocations that he had already provided in the first edition.<sup>3</sup> In Table 1, I have indicated, using the admittedly limited data of the *Guide*, both the increases in coverage that he achieved and the forms that the coverage took. At (a) to (c) on the left are set out all the examples of noun + preposition he discusses in any detail in the *Guide to Patterns*, while along the top are the first three editions of ALD. Worth noticing, I think, is that by 1963 patterns for all 17 nouns are recorded, either by example, or by means of a boldface code, or as part of the definition. By 1974, codes – either alone or in combination with an example – account for almost half the total.<sup>4</sup>

If we now focus in rather more depth on the pattern ‘noun plus preposition’, we can recognize two kinds of descriptive dimension of value to the lexicographer. The first has to do with the possibility of substituting a verb or adjective for the noun. (Here we go to Table 1 again.) *He’s a specialist in chest diseases* (the first example in block (a)) can be related to *He specializes in chest diseases* (verb for noun), whereas *Their anxiety about her safety* (the first example in block (b)) is convertible to *They are anxious about her safety* (adjective for noun). The nouns in block (c), you will notice, cannot be replaced by either of these word-classes. The challenge to the dictionary-maker here is to ensure that whenever there is a switch to a verb or adjective, and the preposition changes or vanishes, the user is informed of the anomaly. As Hornby warns: ‘the preposition used with a noun is not always used with the corresponding verb’ and he goes on to insist that ‘the words *discussion* and *discuss* are known only when the learner is familiar with the patterns [that is, the collocations]: *a discussion (with somebody, between X and Y) on (about) a problem; [and] to discuss a problem with somebody*’ (Hornby 1954: 132). Interestingly, the well-know learner error of producing *\*discuss about something* by analogy with *a discussion about something* is dealt with in a ‘help’ note in ALD6 (2000) and in a usage note in the Cambridge dictionary (2003).

## NOUN PATTERN 2

## CODES and EXAMPLES

Noun x Preposition x (pro)noun

in ALD 1

in ALD 2

in ALD 3

	(1948)	(1963)	(1974)
(a) With a verb pattern analogue			
A specialist in chest diseases	5	ex	ex
His attempt at the climb	5	ex	code/ex
Our discussion about/of the issue	5	ex	ex ( <i>about</i> )
The need for a change	ex	ex	code/ex
Have you any use for this?	ex	ex	code
He takes delight in teasing her	code/ex	code/ex	code/ex
An inquiry into the question	ex	ex	ex
In conformity with your instructions	code/ex	ex	code/ex
A quarrel with him about our share	ex ( <i>with</i> )	ex ( <i>with</i> ) ( <i>about</i> )	ex ( <i>with</i> ) ( <i>about</i> )
Make allowances for their youth	code/ex	code/ex	code/ex

(b) With an adjective pattern analogue

Their anxiety about her safety/for news	5	ex ( <i>about</i> )	ex ( <i>about</i> )
Our dissatisfaction at/with the result	ex ( <i>with</i> )	def	code ( <i>at</i> ) ( <i>with</i> )
Feel an aversion to seeing the man	ex	def/ex	code/ex
Not have the least interest in his plans	ex	ex	ex

(c) With no analogue

It was time for breakfast	ex	ex	ex
We have no idea of its value	ex	ex	ex
The reason for his absence	ex	ex	ex

Note: ex = example; code = pattern code (usually in bold print); def = forms part of definition; 5 = no information about the specific pattern

Table 1. Noun x Preposition x (pro)noun (after A. S. Hornby 1954).

The second descriptive relationship that interests the lexicographer concerns the replacement of the prepositional phrase by some other constituent. For example, instead of *It was time for breakfast* (block (c)), we can say *It was time to have breakfast* (replacement by a *to*-infinitive), while instead of using *The reason for his absence* we can use *The reason why he was absent* (replacement by a finite *wh*-clause). In all such cases, of course, the two or more post-noun elements (phrases and/or clauses) should be presented together as substitutes in the entry for the noun and, ideally, illustrated. From the appearance of its first edition, COBUILD has been very successful in meeting these particular needs. Intelligible codes, set out in the 'grammar column' and divided by obliques, indicate the range of alternative complements. In the entry for *reason*, at (6), only 'WH' (for *wh*-clause) is missing

from the grammar column and, when the noun is 'count', as it is in this extract, only the *to*-infinitive pattern has no illustration.

- (6) **reason** ... 1 The **reason** for something is a particular fact N COUNT: USU + or situation which explains why it happens, or which *for*/REPORT-CL/ causes it to happen. ... EG *I asked the reason for the deci- to-INF sion ... One of the reasons for coming to England is to make money ... the reason is, of course, that people feel safer in well-lit streets ... There are several reasons why we can't do that ...* (Sinclair et al. 1987)

#### **4. Phrasal verbs and their associated patterns**

##### **4.1. Analytical approaches**

As the dominant element in his *Guide to Patterns and Usage in English*, Hornby provided a tabular layout of the same twenty-five verb patterns that had appeared in the first edition of ALD, though now treating them 'in greater detail and with fuller notes and explanations' than before (Hornby 1954: 15). This reworking, of course, also affected those patterns that were devoted to verbs with adverbial particles – later to be widely referred to, though with various meanings, as 'phrasal verbs'.

Perhaps the first point to make concerning the subsequent treatment of the topic is that the second edition of ALD did not appear till 1963, and though time was found for a number of improvements, as we have just seen, this edition did not reflect the rethinking and elaboration of the verb patterns that had featured in the *Guide* – including those dealing with the phrasal verb. Apart from a few minor details, the description of 1963 remained what it had been in 1942. The explanation is partly that,



Verbs with adverbial particles and prepositions	A: Without a post-verbal NP	B: With a post-verbal NP
1. With an adverbial particle	The plane <i>took off</i> . The lights <i>went out</i> . []	Fred <i>tipped</i> the police <i>off</i> . They <i>turned</i> the lights <i>out</i> .
2. With a preposition phrase	I can <i>count on</i> their support. The children <i>went for</i> a walk. []	They <i>cheated</i> her <i>of</i> her savings. Jo <i>took</i> the children <i>for</i> a walk.
3. With an adverbial particle and a preposition phrase	I won't <i>put up with</i> any more! They <i>came round to</i> our way of thinking. []	Don't <i>take it out on</i> me! We <i>brought</i> them <i>round to</i> our way of thinking.

Table 2. Verbs with adverbial particles and prepositions ('[]' = systematic links between patterns in particular cases).

following the deaths of his collaborators, Gatenby and Wakefield, the work of revision was left entirely in Hornby's hands. He also had much more to attend to, including a substantial increase in the coverage of scientific and technical vocabulary (Cowie 1999a: 185).

We had to wait until the third edition of 1974 before the restructuring of 1954 was made use of. The *Guide* had introduced two important changes affecting verbs with adverbial particles and the related verbs with prepositions. Perhaps these can best be made clear if we look at the scheme of patterns shown in Table 2. Hornby's first change was to make the separation shown in Table 2 as B1 and B2 (i.e. to the right of the table). In other words he separated transitive verbs with adverbs (such as *take your coat off*, *turn the lights out*) from transitive verbs with prepositions (*show him to the door*, *take them for a walk*). These had been conflated; now they were distinct. Hornby could now, of course, demonstrate the integrity of the new pattern (here, B1), by showing the possible movement of the particle either side of the object (*take your coat off*, *take off your coat*). And he could show that shift, not in a note, but in a separate VP both in the *Guide* and later in ALD3.

Did the *Guide* also capture the contrast – in parallel with that between B1 and B2 – between A1 (*come in*, *go out*) and A2 (*the children went for a walk*, *I count on their support*)? Not yet. However, ideas introduced in the *Guide* were pushed further in ALD3. Consider the point about parallel structures and the intransitive phrasal verbs (A1). The table containing these was made more homogeneous by the removal of misplaced prepositional phrases. Then, turning to the equivalent of my pattern B2, Hornby removed any example *not*

containing a prepositional phrase. More interestingly, he chose as examples verbs and prepositions with implicit links to B1, the adverbial particle pattern. I have made the relationship explicit here, at (7).

(7) 1 Don't let the child put his head out of the car window. [B2]

□ Don't let the child put his head out. [B1]

2 The secretary showed me into the reception room. [B2]

□ The secretary showed me in. [B1]

3 Please put these papers in my briefcase. [B2]

□ Please put these papers in. [B1]

All three examples are in fact causative and directional, and though not all verbs with particles can be accounted for so systematically, the kinds of linkage I have illustrated affect a large minority of cases and are represented in Table 2 – underneath examples with no obvious connections to each other. As the table also shows, we may find connections between patterns both of which end in an adverb: *The lights went out* □ *They turned the lights out*; or an adverb and a preposition: *They came round to our way of thinking* □ *We brought them round to our way of thinking*. The last two patterns, though included in all advanced-level EFL dictionaries of the present generation, and assignable to A3 and B3, were not accounted for as separate patterns in any of the Hornby editions already referred to.<sup>5</sup>

We should not think that the much earlier *Second Interim Report*, of which I have already spoken, and in which Hornby had a leading role, had nothing to offer to the evolving treatment of phrasal verbs.<sup>6</sup> As we have seen, the *Report* played an important part in shaping examples for ALD1. And of course phraseological dictionaries compiled by Hornby's successors have been particularly in its debt. Yet if the first two editions of ALD drew chiefly, in their handling of verbs with adverbs, on the work of Palmer – freely acknowledged by Hornby himself – and the third edition was indebted to the *Guide to Patterns*, what are the particular claims of the *Report*?

- More than the *Guide*, and more even than ALD3, the *Report* – understandably, given its original stated purpose – laid most stress on the *idiomaticity* of the selected word-combinations; by contrast, the *Guide* and the dictionary treatment of verb patterns laid greater emphasis on syntax and such difficulties as the position of the adverbial particle relative to the verb – the *put on his hat/put his hat on* problem.
- It is noticeable, too, that the structural descriptions, or formulae, which head the various tables in the *Report* are strings of constituent class (part-of-speech) labels, such as: VERB x N2 x PREP x N3. These are quite widely thought to be easier to understand

than function labels.<sup>7</sup> Now it happens that, having taken over a verb pattern scheme from Harold Palmer for use in ISED, and having arrived at a more logical order, Hornby replaced many of the remaining function labels by constituent labels. These changes, with ‘noun or pronoun’ in place of ‘direct object’ being the most common, may well have been influenced by Hornby’s experience as a teacher.

- Another thoughtful decision, and one that I have welcomed and been influenced by in ODCIE1, is this. Consider in the Report the pattern VERB x PREP x N3 (this is A2 in Table 2) and the examples *to agree with someone* and *to approve of someone*. N3 in this pattern denotes a prepositional object and indicates too that here is a point at which the actual choice of object is relatively open. We can say *to approve of the move, appointment, decision, policy, mayor, candidate*, and so on. But there are many cases where choice is limited to one final noun, as in *to come of age, to set to work, to stand to reason* and so on. Hornby’s decision was to include those amplified combinations in the same major section of the *Report*, and with the same code, as those which allowed an open choice of noun. Guided by this approach, Ronald Mackin and I, in ODCIE1, placed combinations such as *go to* (‘visit, attend (a place)’, that is with open choice, immediately before expressions that are identical, except that the choice of final noun is fixed (for example, *go to bed*). They will have the same pattern code(s) and often the same transformations:

(8) **go to 1** [A2] visit, attend. **O**: school, university; market ...

**go to 3** [A2] be given to, be awarded to. **S**: special prize, gold medal ...

**go to bed** [A2] retire to bed for a rest, sleep or because one is ill ...

(Cowie and Mackin 1975)

This approach is sometimes adopted in general EFL dictionaries, too. In the *Macmillan English Dictionary* (2002), for instance, we find the extended combinations *put the rubbish out* and *put the washing out* in a block of simpler combinations headed by the simplest form of all – *put out*. And LDOCE4 includes in such blocks not only items with a single fixed noun, but combinations with a limited range of nouns (e.g. *come to a halt/stop*).

#### 4.1. Dictionary treatments

Let us now consider in rather more detail such questions of dictionary organization and design – including the use of typographical conventions – and ask whether and how the various types of verb plus adverb or preposition that we have discussed, are or have been, presented in EFL dictionaries.

The term ‘phrasal verb’ was first attested in 1925, in a sense that many linguists

would still recognize: ‘an idiomatic verbal phrase consisting of a verb and adverb or a verb and preposition’ (s.v. *phrasal*, OED). Palmer and Hornby must have been aware of the existence of the term, yet neither chose to use it. My own explanation for this, as their treatment of the properties of the adverbial particle as a distinct category has suggested, is that neither was prepared to give up the idea of the verb plus particle as binary. On the strictly grammatical level, this is a view I share, though with the reservation that I am free to think of a verb plus particle as unitary on the phraseological level.

In practice, ‘phrasal verb’ has become a cover-all term in today’s learners’ dictionaries, in most cases clearly defined in usage notes, though with one or more complex types generally omitted. One cannot quibble, though, with the range of combinations actually treated – often placed in a labelled block towards the end of the entry for the relevant verb. As a scrutiny of an entry such as *put* or *take* quickly reveals, the various treatments are largely concerned with verbs plus adverbs or prepositions conforming to one or other of the six patterns we discussed earlier. So the pattern in *I put him off the idea of going* (B2) is commonly found and so is the pattern in *She put him up to it* (B3).

For ease of grouping and user recognition, a number of simple typographical conventions have been used with verbs and particles since the mid-seventies. As we saw earlier, the *Interim Report* uniformly used single capitals and numbers [‘N2’] to indicate that a place in a combination was actually filled (cf. *to live on* and *to live on* x N3), to show basic sentence functions (e.g. prepositional object), and also to point to a slot where open choice was permitted. The convention did not survive in that form. However, regular use of the proforms *sb* (*somebody*) and *sth* (*something*) did catch on. Their value was that, in addition to marking the animate-inanimate distinction and signalling the presence or absence of an object, they alerted users to the fact that a switch from *sb* to *sth* often meant a change of meaning (cf. *take sb off*, in the sense ‘imitate’ and *take sth off*, with the meaning ‘have free time’). ALD3 (1974) was the first learners’ dictionary to use the abbreviations with phrasal verbs, though chiefly in combinations featuring one of the ‘heavy-duty’ verbs. No doubt attracted by the possibility of conveying so much with such economy, several editors have since followed suit. Once, of course, the abbreviations have been attached to the various combinations of verb plus particle, the latter can be ordered alphabetically according to the spelling of the adverb or preposition. This will give us a series like the one from the Cambridge dictionary at (9):

(9) break down, break *sb* in, break *sth* in, break in/break into *sth* (CALD 2003)

## 5. Conclusion

Sixty years on from the first edition of the *Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, A. S. Hornby remains, with Harold Palmer and Michael West, a commanding presence in the development of EFL lexicography. There can be little doubt, though, that in phraseology, Hornby is the dominant influence. In the *Report on English Collocations*, he set out with great precision and insight an analysis of idioms and collocations that continues to surprise us. To give just one example outside the main brief of my paper, Hornby included – as a sub-category of

noun combinations – noun compounds such as *clothes horse*, *coast guard*, *common sense*, thus demonstrating that idiomaticity does not stop at syntax: it pervades every part of the language system.

As a grammarian Hornby could be equally ambitious and far-sighted. In referring to the *Guide to Patterns*, of 1954, I mentioned in passing a semantically-based treatment of modal verbs. Hornby's 'various concepts and how to express them' included wishes, hopes and preferences, thus anticipating some of the notional schemes of the communicative movement, twenty years later, and inspiring me in ALD4 to organize a series of usage notes, according to the meanings that the modals expressed.

As for the main line of argument in this paper, I hope to have shown how a number of key concepts and analyses in phraseology have been passed down through various channels, and handled in a variety of original ways, while still owing something to Hornby. Let me take the opening point of my survey a little farther. You will remember that I took up the relationship, well demonstrated in ISED, between collocations and the phrase and clause example types by which they are realized. The idea of a 'skeleton example', one that – by a happy idiom equivalence – would show the bare bones of a structure, originated with Palmer. A typical example would be 'get used to somebody or something'. Hornby's minimal patterns were less abstract, and for that reason more user-friendly, but still a sound template for imitation and expansion (Cowie 1999b). The successors of these patterns, I would suggest, with interesting presentational variants, are to be found in today's EFL dictionaries: first, the pattern is an integral part of a fuller sentence but is highlighted in bold italic; second, we have the same arrangement, though with preposition choices separately highlighted; third, the pattern is positioned separately, in non-italic bold, but with following examples.

There is also a traceable line of descent from Hornby in our current treatments of phrasal verbs. By the mid-fifties, with the *Guide to Patterns*, Hornby had made necessary progress in the separation of patterns that hitherto had been mistakenly conflated. By the time ALD3 was published, in 1974, Hornby had identified almost all the types we recognize today, and was clearly aware of the systematic relationships which can exist between pairs of types, especially those denoting movement and location. He had already, in the 1963 edition, arrived at a plan for organizing phrasal verbs incorporating items such as *come* or *go* into a single block, alphabetically listed according to the particle. With ALD3, as we have seen, the arrangement was made more orderly and accessible by using the standard abbreviations *sb* and *sth*, and by indenting with each change of particle. In essence, those are the two procedures that are followed today.

Hornby was so modest and self-effacing that it was difficult to discern what view he took of his own achievements. Speaking at the end of a long and remarkable career, he seems to have been unaware of, or even to have underrated, the part played in it by sheer professionalism. This is partly explained by modesty, but also noticeable is a quintessentially English disregard for the expert, and for theory divorced from practice (Cowie in press). Hornby saw himself as 'a simple teacher'. He was an exceptional teacher, yet even that enhanced view of himself would leave out of account his achievements as a grammarian and

lexicographer, and his firm and continuous commitment to applied research. In fact, his various achievements all bear witness to his particular strength, an extraordinary ability to link theory and practice, and to bring each of his skills as lexicographer, grammarian and teacher 'to bear succinctly and illuminatingly on the others' (Quirk 1974).

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> The use of 'collocation' in the *Interim Report* as the name of the most all-embracing category was idiosyncratic and later on led to some confusion. We know, too, that no attempt was made in the *Report* to distinguish formally or semantically between collocations, as we now understand the term, and idioms. This did not, of course, prevent Hornby – or Palmer before him – from distinguishing in practice between instances of the two categories (Cowie 1999a, 1999b).

<sup>2</sup> I say 'chiefly in mind', because in the late 1930s Hornby was also compiling, with Rinchirou Ishikawa, *A Beginners' English-Japanese Dictionary* (to be published in 1940).

<sup>3</sup> Hornby recognized four noun patterns in all: 'noun x *to*-infinitive' (NP 1), 'noun x preposition x (pro)noun' (NP 2), 'noun x *that*-clause' (NP 3), and 'noun (x preposition) x conjunctive x phrase or clause' (NP 4).

<sup>4</sup> An earlier study designed to show whether, or by how much, examples of all four adjective patterns given in the *Guide* increased in ALD2, yielded uneven results. In the case of AP 1A ('adjective x *to*-infinitive', e.g. *unwise to accept his offer*) there was a steep rise in the number of entries in which that pattern or a possible variant was illustrated (Cowie 1999a: 89-90). For a comparison of ALD3 and LDOCE1 with regard to adjective and noun patterns, and the finding that information on adjective patterns was unsatisfactory, see Herbst (1984). For a statistical comparison of verb, adjective and noun complementation in the 'big four' of 1995 (CIDE, COBUILD2, LDOCE3 and ALD5), see Klotz (1999).

<sup>5</sup> The symmetrical scheme appearing here as Table 2 is a simplified version of the framework – in which the transitive-intransitive distinction and the particle-preposition contrast were both represented – that I devised for ODCIE 1 (1975).

<sup>6</sup> Hornby was first brought into the project in 1931 by Harold Palmer. As Smith puts it, Palmer involved him 'heavily in the ongoing research work on collocations (which Hornby was later to take over)'. He goes on: 'The crowning achievement of 1933 was the long-promised report on English collocations ... which Hornby seems to have contributed much to completing' (Smith 1999: 134-5).

<sup>7</sup> Speaking of verb pattern codes specifically, Aarts declares: 'codes should contain category symbols only, not symbols denoting sentence functions; ... codes should represent surface syntactic structures; underlying structures can be ignored' (Aarts 1999: 31).

<sup>8</sup> A sign made up of two arrows facing outwards (' $\nabla$ ') is also used, currently in LDOCE4 and ALD6, to show that the particle may be moved either side of the direct object (i.e. in type B1). The arrows first appeared in LDOCE2, and featured in both subsequent editions.

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