

## 'Delexical Verb + Noun' Phrases in Monolingual English Learners' Dictionaries

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### Abstract

This paper discusses the optimal lexicographical treatment of certain types of collocation in English monolingual learners' dictionaries. The phrases involved are those which have the grammatical structure VERB + NOUN, and in which the verbal component is a high-frequency delexicalized verb, specifically *do*, *give*, *have*, *make* or *take*. The phrases themselves incorporate one of the usual meanings of the noun, as in *make an effort* and *have a wash*, rather than being semantically opaque. Suggested optimal dictionary coverage is compared with actual dictionary presentation in the latest print (but not electronic) editions of the five major advanced-level dictionaries. Topics discussed include: where and how phrases are presented (in terms of both dictionary macro-structure and entry micro-structure); optimal presentation seen in terms of probable look-up tasks; quantitative coverage of the phrases; and the raising of learner awareness of this particular phrasal type and, more generally, of high-frequency delexical verbs.

### 1 Introduction

In this paper I discuss the presentation of certain types of verbal phrase in monolingual learners' dictionaries (MLDs), specifically those which incorporate high-frequency delexical verbs. The verbs considered are *do*, *give*, *have*, *make* and *take*, and the dictionaries investigated are the print versions of the most recent editions of the leading corpus-based, advanced-level dictionaries, hereafter referred to as CALD, COBUILD, LDOCE, MEDAL, and OALD (see References).<sup>1</sup> I focus specifically on phrases which have the grammatical structure 'DELEXICAL VERB + NOUN / NOUN PHRASE' (hereafter 'delex.v + N' phrases).

#### 1.1 Delexical verbs and their phrasal realizations

Live (1973) states that 'in the development of the English language there has been a trend in the direction of splitting the verb into two parts. The first part is almost devoid of lexical meaning but embodies the associated grammatical information, being the bearer of inflectional endings ... The second part carries the lexical load, conveying verb-like meaning' (p.

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<sup>1</sup> For reasons of space, only 'print' dictionaries are discussed: electronic dictionaries have much greater flexibility and would need to be treated separately.

31). The same author points out that this tendency to split the verb into two parts 'has, since the sixteenth century, crystalized in the use of periphrastic verb forms for interrogative and negative expressions and in the establishment of the progressive tenses, with *do* in the former cases, and in the latter case, *be*', but that, 'the "phrasal verb" pattern obtains in a less systematic way with a number of other light verbs, its lack of consistency suggesting a trend which has not jelled'. (The term 'phrasal verb' is being used by the writer in a general sense, not in its sense of 'verb + preposition / adverb'.)

To exemplify this general tendency, Live first describes the most basic pattern, the 'VERB + NOUN' construction, together with some of its variants. She then describes a number of other 'light verb' structures. These include (i) idiomatic phrases which occur with an adjective, e.g. *take a dim view*, *make a clean sweep*, *give due weight*; (ii) combinations with adjectives in which the light verb functions as a sort of copula, for example *have the better*, *make bold*, and *fall ill*; (iii) the copular verb *be* followed by a prepositional phrase (e.g. *be in the lead*, *be in a rush*); and (iv) verbal phrases with *it* as a pseudo-object (e.g. *take it easy*).

In most 'delex.v + N' phrases, the delexical verb functions as a 'support verb', with extremely general meaning. Examples are *do the washing up*, *give a sigh*, *have a shower*, *make a suggestion* and *take a photograph*. Algeo (1995) uses the term 'expanded predicate' to refer to such expressions, and defines this phrasal type as 'an idiomatic verb-object construction in which the verb (e.g. *do*, *give*, *have*, *make*, or *take*) is semantically general and the object is semantically specific (such as *somersault*, *nod*, *rest*, *promise*, or *walk*)' (1995: 204). The same author observes that 'the effect of the expanded-predicate construction is to transfer the semantic focus of the clause from the verb to the eventive noun object while leaving a semantically less specific verb in the syntactically central position'. Live (1973: 34) notes that one of the features of the 'phrasal verb' is that it can stand alone 'where complementation would be superfluous or undesirable, much as the passive transformation obviates the need to indicate the agent': one of the examples given is the predicate in 'He had a swim' (as opposed to 'He swam'), which may be contrasted with the simple verb use in 'he swam in the pool'.

Algeo (p. 204) emphasises the fact that the expanded predicate is not just a lexical phenomenon but lies at the grammar-lexis interface. This opinion is endorsed by the fact that the structure is discussed in a number of published descriptions of English grammar (Biber et al 2002: 134, 136-7; *Collins Cobuild English Grammar*, p. 147-151; *Collins Cobuild Student's Grammar*, p. 154, Quirk et al 1985: 750-752).

The noun used in the expanded predicate may be identical in form to an analogous single-word verb (e.g. *to sigh* / *to give a sigh*), though sometimes there are obvious semantic differences between the resulting pair, for example *to love* / *to make love* (this example, and those which follow, are taken from Algeo 1995: 205-6). In other cases, there may be phonetic or affixational differences between related verb and noun. Some examples are *protést* / *make a prótest*, *breathe* / *take a breath*, and *compare* / *make a comparison*. In some cases, there is no single-word verbal equivalent in current usage (e.g. - / *do homework* and - / *have a haircut*), while in other cases there is a non-cognate equivalent (e.g. *hide* / *take cover*).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> For further discussion of delexical (support) verbs, as well as additional references, see Claridge (1997: 70), Jes-

## 1.2 Delexical verb phrases, the MLD, and the language learner

The treatment of 'delex.v + N' phrases in MLDs is of interest for a number of reasons. Firstly, and most generally, all phraseological phenomena of prominence in the language should be dealt with as well as possible in the MLD. Secondly, the choice of delexical verb is a potential source of learner error (see Altenberg and Granger 2001, Nesselhauf 2003 and 2004). Thirdly, in the case of cognate noun and verb pairs, learners may not be aware of the possibility or preference of using support verb constructions as opposed to single-word verbs. Fourthly, the verb forms in question are extremely common, and ones with which learners have been familiar since the early days of language study. This means that the verbs, and their entries in the dictionary, may be considered by many higher-level learners to be too banal to be of interest to them: that is, the entries for *do*, *give*, etc. may rarely be consulted. Finally, the delexical verbs being discussed form part of long dictionary entries. This means that every effort must be made to ensure that entries are as well organized as possible: learners must not be put off by the sheer length of the entries, nor must they be confounded in their look-up tasks.<sup>3</sup>

## 2 'DELEXICAL VERB + NOUN' phrases in the monolingual learners' dictionary

In this central section of the paper, I discuss the treatment of 'delex.v + N' phrases in current learners' dictionaries, as well as treatment of the delexical verbs themselves. I begin (2.1) by indicating the different ways (in terms of graphics and microstructure) in which such phrases are presented. After that (2.2), I discuss dictionary presentation from the point of view of perceived user needs. Here, discussion is based around production tasks, reception tasks, and vocabulary learning. Also, in two sub-sections I discuss, respectively, criteria for the inclusion of 'delex.v + N' phrases in the dictionary, and (quantitative) coverage of such phrases in the MLDs examined. In section 2.3, I consider how the MLD might be of benefit in raising learner awareness of 'delex.v + N' phrases in general.

### 2.1 Ways of signalling DELEXICAL VERB + NOUN phrases

A number of different strategies are used for signalling 'delex.v + N' phrases in the various dictionaries. These are described and exemplified in the list below. All the examples are taken from noun entries, where it is more probable that the language learner will be looking for information. The same strategies are also found at the verb entries (and presumably coincide with general policy on collocation in the various dictionaries).

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persen (1942: 112-120), Nuccorini (2000), Renský (1964), and Stein (1991), as well as the various articles in Gross and de Pontonx, eds. (2005).

<sup>3</sup> In the five dictionaries examined, the entries for all 5 verbs take up more than one column, and of the total 25 entries, 15 take up more than 2 columns. This includes all functions of the verbs (including phraseological uses) which appear under the (single-word) headwords; it excludes separate, ensuing entries for phrasal verbs. On the problems of consulting long entries, see Bogaards 1998a.

- 1) within an example of noun usage, the verb is highlighted as a probable collocate: e.g. *He winked and gave me a smile* (at the entry for *smile* in CALD).
- 2) within an example of noun usage, both the noun and verb are highlighted as a probable collocational phrase: e.g. *She gave them a little smile* (at the entry for *smile* in LDOCE); *She made helpful comments on my work* (at the entry for *comment* in OALD).
- 3) within an example of noun usage (indicated as such through the use of italics), both the noun and verb are highlighted as a probable collocational phrase, but the 'example' consists only of a verbal expression in the infinitive. For example: *to have a shower* (at the entry for *shower* in OALD). This sometimes occurs without highlighting, e.g. *to take a free kick* (at the entry for *free kick* in OALD).
- 4) the verb appears, but is not highlighted, within an example of usage: e.g. *He gave a start of surprise and astonishment* (at the entry for *start* in COBUILD).
- 5) the verbal phrase (or a set of phrases) is presented by itself in bold upright type, and is followed by one or more examples (in which highlighting is not necessary). For example, **do a dance** *They did traditional Scottish dances* (at the entry for *dance* in MEDAL); **take/have a walk** *Why don't we take a walk in the garden?* (at the entry for *walk* in LDOCE); **have/make a great / fine / excellent etc start** *Hakkinen had a great start and was in second place by the first corner. ◇ Waddle has made an excellent start to his new career.* (at the entry for *start* in MEDAL)
- 6) the verbal phrase is presented by itself in bold upright type and constitutes (rather than being an example of) one of the meanings/uses of the noun. The following example is the third use of the noun *strip* in LDOCE (in which there is a definition but no example). **strip 3) do a strip** 'to take your clothes off, especially in a sexually exciting way as a form of entertainment'.
- 7) the verb appears within the definition of the noun (and the latter alone is highlighted): e.g. 'If someone makes **a stink** about something they are angry about, they show their anger in order to make people take notice' (at the entry for *stink* in COBUILD). The example/s that follow the definition may or may not contain the verb in question. Only very occasionally are verb and noun both highlighted in the definition. This seems to happen when the phrase is presented as constituting one of the meanings/uses of the noun, e.g. **stride 4** 'If you **make strides** in something that you are doing, you make rapid progress in it' (at the entry for *stride* in COBUILD).

While this analysis is not a cross-dictionary comparison of methods used, it is worth pointing out that COBUILD differs radically from the other dictionaries. In COBUILD important collocates may be found both in examples and within definitions, but they are not highlighted in any way, a fact which probably decreases the usefulness of the information. I would also prefer to see both verb and noun highlighted within examples. For example, *He winked and gave me a smile* is preferable to *He winked and gave me a smile*, because it is more successful in underlining the holistic nature of the 'delexV + N' combination.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> For some further data regarding the presentation of collocations (involving, in particular, the verb *make*) in MLDS, see De Cock and Granger (2004).

## 2.2 Production tasks, comprehension tasks, and lexical knowledge

In this section I indicate what type of information may be of use to the learner for these three didactic purposes, as well as where the information is to be found, or should be found, in the dictionary.

In production tasks, the learner will find help above all at the noun entries, since the type of information most likely to be needed is the choice of support verb for a given noun. Examples have already been given above (2.1). Data concerning frequent learners' errors might also be useful in this respect. Both CALD and LODCE have information on learners' errors, based on evidence from learner corpora, but, as far as I can see, few of the relevant notes relate to delexical verbs. (For information regarding the use of learner corpora in compiling learners' dictionaries, see Gillard and Gadsby, 1998).

Another type of information sometimes found at the noun entry, and useful especially for production purposes, is additional collocational data: that is, the 'delexv + N' phrases may themselves be part of longer collocational patterning. Some examples are: under the headword **look** (MEDAL): *have a good / close look*; under the headword **step** (CALD): *take a step towards*; under the headword **effort** (LDOCE): *make a concerted effort*; and under the headword **cry** (OALD): *to give a cry of anguish / despair / relief / surprise / terror etc.* Examples in COBUILD also contain this sort of phraseology, but they are not highlighted in any way.

With regard to comprehension, it again seems most unlikely that learners will look up any of the five high-frequency verbs in order to find the meaning of a given phrase. The verbs *do*, *give*, *have*, *make* and *take* are so frequent in the language (in their many different uses), that learners are very unlikely to pay much attention to them.<sup>5</sup> If there is a problem in understanding, the learner will turn to the noun entry. It should also be added that, in the case of the verbs being examined, it would in any case be impracticable to include at the verb entry all phrases of potential interest to the learner: there are too many nouns which link up with such common verbs (which is one reason they are so common).<sup>6</sup>

At the noun entry, the definition and examples of the noun itself will usually be enough to clarify the meaning of the phrase, which is only natural since the verb is 'delexicalized', or more pertinently 'desemanticized'. An example is the phrase *give a start*, which is explained in MEDAL through the threefold combination of (i) the definition of *start* ('a sudden movement that you make because you are surprised or afraid'), (ii) an indication in bold type of the phrase **give a start**, and (iii) an example of usage (*She gave a nervous start as the door suddenly opened*). It should also be remembered that a dictionary explanation will usually be supplemented by the original example of usage in which the learner came across the phrase.

The various points made above with regard to production or comprehension tasks are also of relevance to the third didactic purpose, the acquisition of lexical knowledge. A further

<sup>5</sup> Research findings confirm that common words are not looked up very frequently: see Béjoint 1981: 217; Bogaards 1998b: 152-156, Hatherall 1984, Marelllo 1989: 109, and Sora 1984: 40-46 (quoted in Marelllo, 1989).

<sup>6</sup> In the case of some other structurally and semantically similar phrases, the learner may decide to look up the verb in order to resolve comprehension difficulties. This may happen with a less frequent verb, for example, *cast* as in *cast suspicion*, or with a familiar verb being used in an unfamiliar way, such as *pay in pay a compliment*.

type of information, best seen in terms of increasing lexical knowledge, is the description of semantically related noun groups used with a given delexical verb. A learner may, for example, come across the usage *give a sigh*, and want to find out whether other related nouns may be used with the verb *give*. It would be useful, therefore, to include such information at the verb entry. All five MLDs include information of this sort. LDOCE is especially rich in detail. For example, at the entry for *give*, use 4 ('tell somebody something'), the following nouns appear either alone in bold type or within examples: *to give information, details, advice, orders, instructions, directions, example, evidence, account and description*.

With regard to the learning of lexis, it might also be useful to include a separate table containing lists of nouns frequently used with delexical verbs. This would also allow comparison between the different verbs. Such a list could form part of the study pages which are now found in most editions of MLDs. None of the dictionaries examined contains this sort of information, though it was present in CIDE (1995: 405), the predecessor of CALD. Here, there was a list of over 100 nouns often used with the verbs *give, have, make, take, do, pay* and *hold*. Of course, space is at a premium in print dictionaries, and whatever is included as extra material means that something else has to be excluded.

The final data type I will mention in this section is something I have not yet explored in any depth, though it might turn out to be useful for all three didactic purposes. The data type concerned is the differences between the predicate constructions and analogous single-word verbs (in those cases where there is a lexical parallel). If, for example, there is a difference between *to walk* and *to have a walk*, then it may be useful to explain it, or at least to have a cross-reference to the phrase from the single-word verb. Semantic/pragmatic comparison of this sort is best suited to a thematically organized reference work, but it may also be possible in the alphabetical dictionary, especially since the key words are in close proximity to one another. I have not found information of this sort explicitly stated in the dictionaries examined. (The only sort of cross-reference I have found is at the verb entry, and is used to help explain the meaning of a set of verbal phrases. For example, in COBUILD, the first use of *give* is explained in the following way: 'You can use **give** with nouns that refer to physical actions. The whole expression refers to the performance of the action. For example, **She gave a smile** means almost the same as *She smiled*'.)

### 2.2.1 Which DELEXICAL VERB + NOUN phrases to include in the dictionary

As with all lexical units, the decision must be made as to which phrases to include in the dictionary. This decision would ideally be based on their perceived usefulness to higher-level second language learners, especially as regards their active and passive communicative needs. In practice, this criterion will probably overlap considerably with the notion of frequency in the language, the most useful yardstick for a very general dictionary, where different learners may have different needs. Error analysis based on learner corpora might also make its contribution.

Where lexico-semantic units are concerned (as opposed to word forms), the notion of frequency is open to different interpretations. 'Frequency' could mean the frequency of the phrase itself (e.g. *have a shower*), or the combined frequency of two alternative phrases (e.g. *take / have a shower*). It could also mean the frequency of the noun alone (*shower*), as long

as this was backed up by a certain minimum number of corpus tokens of the delexical verb. One could also give importance to the combined lexical frequency of a semantic group of nouns associated with a particular verb. For example, the frequency of the lexico-semantic set of phrases *give something a shake / rattle / tug (etc)* could result in *give* being indicated at the various noun entries, even if some of the individual phrases were not very common.

### 2.2.2 The inclusion of DELEXICAL VERB + NOUN phrases in current dictionaries

In a recent article in a language teaching journal, Koprowski (2005) reports on a study to assess the 'usefulness' of the lexical phrases which were chosen for explicit presentation in three contemporary English language course books of an (upper-)intermediate level. There were a number of different phrasal types, one of which was collocation. One of the points to emerge from the study relates to the number of phrases which the books have in common. I quote directly from the article (p. 330): 'Another striking finding involves the number of lexical phrases the three coursebooks have in common. The data reveals that, of the 822 multi-word items collected, only *seven* items, less than 1 per cent, are shared by any of the course books. Even more surprising is that not one lexical phrase is shared by all three coursebooks despite them being British general coursebooks targeted for intermediate level students'. These findings are not only surprising but also worrying, and they led me to check the analogous situation in learners' dictionaries. The latter are presumably a very different case since so much of their content is based on the analysis of large corpora, which, presumably, are fairly similar in composition.

In order to assess the current situation in learners' dictionaries, I investigated the inclusion of 'delex.v + N' phrases in the 5 MLDs. To do this, I chose a particular section of 'the dictionary' and compared the five MLDS from the point of view of how many and which phrases were included. The section chosen for analysis began at the noun *start* and finished at the end of the letter S; this amounted to about 60 pages of the dictionary. In order to be included, a given 'delexV + N' phrase had to be indicated through explicit signalling: that is, it either had to appear in bold type (e.g. **make a statement**), or be highlighted within an example (e.g. *I thought Simon's food looked nicer than mine, so we **did a swap***), or be part of a short unmarked phrasal example (type 3 in the list in 2.1), or be part of the wording of the definition. Although I would not count the latter as 'explicit signalling', it was generally included so as not to exclude virtually all COBUILD entries. An exception to this was delexical verbs which appeared in COBUILD definitions but which were not backed up with examples and were not explicitly signalled in any other dictionary.

In the sample pages of the five MLDS, the total number of different phrases found was 55. The number of these found in each dictionary was as follows: LDOCE 40, MEDAL 29, CALD 28, OALD 26, and COBUILD 12. With regard to the number of phrases the dictionaries had in common, the situation is the following. Found in all five dictionaries – 5 phrases (9.1%); in four dictionaries – 7 phrases (12.7%); in 3 dictionaries – 11 phrases (20%); in 2 dictionaries – 17 phrases (30.1%); in only 1 dictionary – 15 phrases (27.3%).

With respect to this particular feature, the dictionaries would appear to be much more heterogeneous than I would have expected.

The results of a similar sort of analysis may be found in De Cock and Granger (2004: 237-8). Here, phrases were investigated which were 'essentially *make* + N sequences where *make* is used as a delexical verb' (p. 237). Although the type of phrase is the same as the ones I was investigating, there were a number of differences, which makes it difficult to compare this study with my own. Firstly, only the verb *make* was investigated; secondly, the list of collocations was pre-compiled, MLDs being just one of the sources; thirdly, many more collocations were investigated (239); fourthly, one of the dictionaries in the study was a different edition (OALD 2000). The following are the percentages of '*make* + NOUN' collocations found in the 5 dictionaries in the De Cock and Granger study: OALD (2000) 82%, LDOCE 79.5%, MEDAL 73.5%, CALD 70.5, COBUILD 62%.

### 2.3 Raising awareness of lexical types

In section 2, I discussed the types of information which it may reasonably be supposed learners would look for in the dictionary. Now, I consider the MLD as an instrument for raising awareness of lexical types. This aspect of a dictionary's potential should not be underestimated. Dictionaries are authoritative works and, since they are constructed around specific macro- and micro-structures, every time they are consulted they underline a certain vision of the lexicon.

MLDs already do a lot to raise awareness of collocation in general. Signalling in bold type is an ubiquitous feature of most MLDs, and is probably the most important way of raising awareness. In addition, in three of the dictionaries there is occasional use of special boxes wholly or partly devoted to collocation. LDOCE has 'collocation boxes', MEDAL 'Words frequently used with ...', and OALD 'patterns and collocations' (a sub-section of 'synonym boxes'). LDOCE and OALD also have short study sections devoted to 'collocation'.<sup>7</sup>

I think that in the case of phrases which involve frequent delexical verbs, it may be useful to increase awareness still further. This is because most learners probably do not appreciate how important these verbs are in phraseology. Indeed, the opposite is probably true: the verbs are very frequent, therefore banal, and therefore not worth learning about. Their importance, then, needs to be emphasised to the learner.

How could this be achieved? Well, study pages could help point out the importance of delexical verbs, and, with regard to 'delexV + N' phrases in particular, comparison could be made with other 'VERB + NOUN' collocations. Inclusion in the dictionary of lists of 'delexV + N' phrases, as suggested in 2.2, would also help raise awareness.

Apart from study pages, the other obvious place to re-inforce the importance of delexical verbs is the verb entries themselves. Here, however, there is an immediate problem since, as mentioned above, learners may be little inclined to look up the entries for words they perceive as banal. A partial solution may be to have cross-references from the proposed study section. A more useful strategy would be to give special status to the entries for high-frequency verbs.

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<sup>7</sup> For more information regarding the treatment of collocations (in general) in learners' dictionaries, see Heuberger (2000: 94-107), Herbst (1996: 335-337), and Mittmann (1999: 101-111).

They are, after all, special verbs, and they should therefore be presented in a special way to the learner. It would be useful, in the first instance, if they stood out graphically from other entries. This could be achieved by giving the entries some sort of distinctive typographical presentation, or else by removing them from the main (alphabetical) body of the text and placing them together in a special section. Apart from being visually distinctive, the entries should also succeed in showing the reader that these banal verbs have special characteristics. (On the notion of special words requiring special treatment in the MLD, see also Coffey 2006).

What exactly a more attractive high-frequency verb entry might look like cannot be discussed in any detail in the present article. I will, however, try to make one or two relevant points by commenting on certain aspects of presentation in current MLDs, especially as regards the overall structure of the entries and the prominence given to the notion of delexicality. (In the remarks that follow I ignore completely those parts of the entries that deal with multiword expressions).

To begin with, three out of the five dictionaries make a clear distinction, in terms of microstructure, between the verbal and auxiliary-verbal uses of the verbs *do* and *have*. The other two dictionaries (CALD and MEDAL) have only one first-level heading, **verb**: the auxiliary uses of *do* and *have* are below this, at the same level as major sense divisions, of which they are the first.

Delexical verb usage is generally given much less prominence than auxiliary verb usage. Four out of the five dictionaries give it little or no importance. Only in COBUILD does it receive more prominence, especially in the case of the verbs *give*, *have* and *take*. In the entries for these verbs, one of the first-level divisions is 'USED WITH NOUNS DESCRIBING ACTIONS'. This is at the same level of microstructure as TRANSFERRING (in the case of *give*), AUXILIARY VERB USES (in the case of *have*), and OTHER USES (in the case of *take*). Note also that the same heading is used for each of these verbs ('used with nouns describing actions'), a fact which may help to promote awareness of delexicality as a more general phenomenon going beyond the specific verb. Obviously, this would be more successful if the entries were presented together in a special section.

COBUILD also offers useful *explanations* of certain groups of 'delexV + N' phrases. For example, the entry for the verb *take* ('used with nouns describing actions') begins with a note explaining that: '**take** is used in combination with a wide range of nouns, where the meaning of the combination is mostly given by the noun. Many of these combinations are common idiomatic expressions whose meanings can be found at the appropriate nouns. For example, the expression **take care** is explained at **care**'. There are two sub-entries for this general use of *take*. In the first subdivision we read that, 'You can use **take** followed by a noun to talk about an action or event, when it would also be possible to use the verb that is related to that noun. For example, you can say "**she took a shower**" instead of "she showered" '. The second subdivision explains that 'In ordinary spoken or written English, people use **take** with a range of nouns instead of using a more specific verb. For example, people often say "**he took control**" or "**she took a positive attitude**" instead of "he assumed control" or "she adopted a positive attitude" '.

There are analogous explanations for some of the verbs in some of the other dictionaries; for example, in OALD the eleventh sense of *give* is DO / PRODUCE SOMETHING, and the first

and main subsection of this section begins 'used with a noun to describe a particular action, giving the same meaning as the related verb'. In terms of awareness-raising, however, explanations such as this are less successful than in COBUILD since they tend to appear as small fragments of information in the midst of many others.

### 3 Concluding remarks

This article has been concerned with the presentation in MLDs of collocational phrases with the grammatical structure 'DELEXICAL VERB + NOUN'. I have discussed a number of topics, in relation to a number of verbs, with reference to a number of dictionaries. To do full justice to the various points raised, a number of more detailed studies would be necessary. These would include: analysis of the differences and similarities between the five delexicalized verbs and the phrases of which they form a part; discussion of the semantics of the phrases, from the points of view of both the overall meaning and the relationship between noun and verb; assessment of the dictionaries from a comparative point of view; and more precise ideas on how to attract learners towards the entries for the high-frequency verbs. The entries for some other high-frequency verbs would also need to be investigated.

I have also been discussing two different types of lexical phenomenon. One is the set of *individual* 'delexV + N' phrases, and the other is the phrasal type which they constitute. In the former case, it is above all the noun entries which are of most relevance to pedagogical lexicography; in the latter case, it is the verb entry. As regards possible ways to improve description in the MLD, I have suggested that bold type should always be used to highlight the whole of the collocational phrase in examples. Also, it would be useful to understand why there appears to be such a difference between the phrases which are chosen for inclusion in the various dictionaries. I have also suggested that thought should be given as to how to modify the verb entries in such a way as to attract learners both to the entries themselves and, in particular, to the phenomenon of high-frequency delexical verb phrases.

### References

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