
Lexical Isolates

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Abstract

This paper samples some problems with the lexical description of words that have unique semantic or syntactic properties, comparing the performance of familiar dictionaries with evidence from corpora. The set examined here includes *let alone* and its multidimensional description, *mention* and the special treatment it needs in the presence of *name* and *word*, *else* and its relation to *(an)other*, *wrong* and its behavior in singular definite noun phrases, and *ilk* and how it differs from other words of its ilk.

1. Introduction

At a symposium a decade ago which brought linguists into conversation with lexicographers, Sue Atkins offered the suggestion that if linguistic semanticists really wanted to make a contribution to lexicography, instead of just criticizing dictionaries, they could work at building a typology of lexical items in terms of which groups of words could be paired with the kinds of definitions they needed. In her words:

There is one aspect of meaning explanation that linguists could meaningfully address ... : the many different defining techniques that are needed to cope with the whole wordstock of the language. One of the biggest challenges to the theoretical lexicographer is to devise a typology of vocabulary items and a parallel typology of defining strategies suited to each. A list of such vocabulary items should include referring expressions, non-referring expressions, action words, qualifying adjectives, classifying adjectives, deictics, quantifiers, transitive and intransitive prepositions, modal verbs, and so on.

(Atkins 1992/93, p. 26)

Any dictionary's style manual will include directions for the ways in which entries for the members of certain semantic classes of words are to be handled. Such divisions will not only be of the global sort suggested by Atkins's list, but will include content-based divisions such as those recognizing words designating colors, chemical elements, plant and animal species, days of the week, compass points, left versus right, military titles, insult vocabulary, and, one might expect, hundreds of others.

FrameNet is an NSF sponsored research project¹ aimed at building a

¹ The FrameNet project, "FrameNet++: An On-Line Lexical Semantic Resource and its Appli-

computational lexical resource for English. Work on this project groups words² into classes according to their membership in *semantic frames*, that is, according to the shared conceptual structures that underlie them. Instead of progressing through the lexicon from A to Z, or, in fact, instead of considering all senses of a word at the same time, the FrameNet researchers work on word senses frame by frame. One example of lexical units that can be treated together is the group whose meanings relate to the activity of giving linguistic expression to a message content in a particular way (words like *couch*, *express*, *formulate*, *phrase*, *put*, *word*, etc.); we say that these words, when they are used in this sense, belong to the *Encoding* frame. In our work we do not ourselves create proper definitions for the words we analyze³; rather, we seek to characterize the commonalities in the frame structures they evoke, and to display the ways in which aspects of the underlying frames are grammatically expressed inside the phrases and sentences containing the words. Predicating words – verbs, adjectives, verb-derived or adjective-derived nouns, and relational nouns, when functioning as governors – can be thought of as presenting a kind of questionnaire listing the expected types of participants and props (*frame elements*) in their respective frames. The central work of the FrameNet project is that of recording in *lexicographically relevant contexts*⁴ those parts of the surrounding sentence where information about those frame elements is expressed.

Thus, in the case of verbs of *Encoding*, we find structures in which the

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- ² More accurately, lexical units (Cruse), each of these being a lemma paired with a sense – in our terms, a lemma paired with a frame. For ease of exposition, the word "word" will frequently be used in these pages to refer to such lexical units.
- ³ For easy recognition by users, however, we include, where appropriate, definitions taken from the Concise Oxford Dictionary (Tenth Edition), for which we have received permission from Oxford University Press.
- ⁴ Our criteria for lexicographic relevance combine what we need to know about the words as frame evokers and as syntactic governors. In particular, for governing words, we annotate those phrases that are "sister" constituents of the word itself and those which otherwise have syntactically licensed ways of standing in particular grammatical function relation to the word. The clearest cases are with verbs: the components of the verb phrase are included within the scope of lexicographic relevance, and phrases which through control or extraction relations have grammatical relations to the verb. This is distinct from the kind of annotation that needs to be done for filling in all information about a situation from a multi-sentence text.

Communicator is the primary syntactic argument (the subject of an active, *by*-complement of a passive version of the verb), a phrase corresponding to the Message appears as the secondary syntactic argument (the object of an active, the subject of a passive version of the verb), and the Manner is expressed as an obligatory complement appearing in a variety of phrasal or lexical forms such as the adverb *how*, an *as*-phrase (*as an insult*), a prepositional phrase with *in* and the dependent noun *way* (*in a clever way*), a lexical adverb (*carefully*), etc. In the following examples the *Encoding* verbs are underlined and the Manner constituents are bracketed. (The subject and the direct object in these sentences express the Communicator and the Message⁵ respectively.)

- (1) She phrased the question [awkwardly].
- (2) [How] should I put it?
- (3) Let's not word our reply [in such an insulting way].
- (4) They expressed their petition [as a demand].

In the case of words that occur in grammatically governed rather than governing positions, we annotate them with respect to the governing words with which they typically collocate, and the roles they commonly serve within the governing frames. For example, we would want to document, with corpus evidence, that the noun⁶ *knife* occurs as the Patient of *sharpen*, the Instrument of *cut* or *stab*, the Theme of *brandish*, and so on.⁷

In respect to the combinatorial properties of lexical items, the FrameNet project aims (in principle) to produce a lexical resource that can serve *production* (*encoding*) as well as *recognition* (*decoding*) purposes. A human user should be able to learn from our entries how to build appropriate phrases and sentences around the words they look up.⁸ We will achieve this not only by associating with each sense of a word a collection of annotated sentences taken from our Corpus⁹, but also by providing each entry with a representative display

⁵ The frame element name Message in this context refers not to the content of the message but to some general type description.

⁶ To say that the noun occurs in such-and-such a role is a shortcut to saying that the noun serves as the lexical head of a NP that occurs in such a role, or that it occurs in a NP that is the object of a role-indicating prepositions. Thus we allow ourselves to say that the noun *knife* occurs in an Instrumental role in a sentence about slicing something "with a dull knife".

⁷ In these examples, Patient is used to indicate something which undergoes a change of state, Theme to indicate something of which movement or location is predicated.

⁸ And given an appropriate representational format, a computer application should be able to use the same combinatorial information for generating grammatical sentences with appropriate information expressed in appropriate grammatical contexts.

⁹ Our major Corpus is the British National Corpus, which we use through the courtesy of Oxford

(in easy* cases, a complete display) of the grammatical patterns in which the word figures, or a formula from which such a set of patterns can be straightforwardly derived. There is not space in these pages to indicate how this is done; I will instead be satisfied to point out how dramatically the dictionaries we examine have failed us in this regard.

The day-to-day work of the FrameNet project, then, consists of characterizing frames, inventing names¹⁰ for the elements of a frame that can get expressed in sentences containing words from the frame, assembling from our Corpus a collection of annotated sentences illustrating the meaning and use of each word in the frame, and discovering and displaying the most important linking patterns by which, word by word, the frame elements are grammatically expressed. For some frames the linking is fairly straightforward: verbs of *Motion* tend to express the Mover, the Origin, the Trajectory, the Destination, the Manner, etc., in largely predictable ways; in other cases there can be major differences from word to word.¹¹

2. Lexical Isolates

One kind of lexical item that I have been perversely interested in over the years is that of words that appear to be of unique semantic or syntactic type; these are the *lexical isolates*, words that to one degree or another require their own private description. Careful study has invariably revealed that such words were often not as isolated from the rest of the vocabulary as I thought. For present purposes, then, I will try to combine my interest in these outliers with obedience to the Atkins plea to fit words to classes, in a way that might permit parallel modes of description and definition. That is, I will look at words that have unique properties while attempting to show their fit with, or departures from, other words in the same or a related semantic domain. The words I'll use for illustrating this predilection of mine can indeed be associated with their semantic and functional peers, so the lexicographically proper way to treat them

University Press, in the lemmatized version provided us by the Institut für Maschinelle Sprachverarbeitung of the University of Stuttgart.

¹⁰ For the purposes of this paper, the names of the frame elements can be thought of as devised ad hoc frame by frame. At a metagrammatical level, efforts are being made, through principles of frame inheritance, to see frame-specific frame elements as instances of higher-level, more abstract, role names. Inasmuch as many words are simultaneously instantiations of more than one frame – allowing us, for example, to treat the verb *argue* (in the 'quarrel' meaning) as both an instance of *Fighting* and *Conversing* – it cannot be the case that all frame-specific frame element names are *simply* instances of more abstract roles.

¹¹ In in-group terminology, this list would read Theme, Source, Path, Goal and Manner.

is to follow patterns of descriptions that have been devised for the related vocabulary and showing carefully how these isolates differ from them.

Among the coordinating conjunctions, there is the fascinating phrasal conjunction *let alone*. Figuring in various frames dealing with linguistic communication, there is the special verb *mention*. Among qualifiers of non-sameness (*other, different*, etc.) there is the special word *else*. Among adjectives indicating departure from what is true or correct there is the word *wrong* and its special semantics. And among the collection of nouns illustrated by *category, breed, type, kind*, and *sort*, there is the isolate *ilk*.

3. *Let alone*

A clear example of a word that needs some sort of special treatment is the phrasal word *let alone*, discussed in excruciating detail in Fillmore, Kay & O'Connor (1988). Before we look at the facts, let us first consider how well some familiar dictionaries lead their customers to an understanding of the meaning and use of this word.

First, it is not a word that invites *definition* so much as one that requires a *function description* – a quite long-winded description, as we will see – showing how constructions using it can shape the informational or argumentative structure of a sentence or discourse.

The *American Heritage Dictionary* (AHD) and the *Longman Dictionary of the English Language* (LDOEL) choose to give definitions rather than use [ju:s] descriptions. In AHD the defining phrases are *not to mention; much less*; in LDOEL they are *to say nothing of, esp. still less*. Strictly speaking these are not definitions in the sense of being expressions that explain what the words mean: instead, they are phrasal units which themselves have conventional uses quite similar to that of *let alone*.

This reality allows us to notice an important problem with the lexicographic practice of seeking inter-substitutability of definiens and definiendum wherever possible (see Landau 1989, 132-4). We find that in many of the sentences in which the conjunction *let alone* occurs, the defining phrases suggested by these dictionaries could do just as well, suggesting that an intersubstitutability criterion is satisfied. But if language learners who don't know how the defining phrases are used believed that they could count on substitutability, they might produce meaningless sentences like the following:¹²

¹² A reverse replacement would fail as well; one cannot communicate a desire to be let alone by saying *I want to be much less*.

- (5) *I use *let alone* sugar in my coffee than you do
(where **let alone** means 'much less' or 'still less')
- (6) *I need to ask you *let alone* our friendship to your mother.
(where **let alone** means 'not to mention' or 'to say nothing of')

That was unfair, I know: definitions are not the only thing these dictionaries have to offer. They also both have examples illustrating the word's use, and we know that examples chosen for a dictionary entry can often be more helpful and informative than the definition. In AHD the example, from Garrison Keillor, is (7); in LDOEL it is (8).

- (7) *Their ancestors had been dirt poor and never saw royalty, let alone hung around with them.*
- (8) *can't run, let alone walk*

On seeing these examples, our innocent dictionary user might still be puzzled but would at least suspect that there is something more to *let alone* than what could be derived from a literal reading of the defining phrases themselves.

By contrast, the *New Oxford Dictionary of English* (NODE) chooses to describe the function: *let alone*, we learn, is

- (9) *used to indicate that something is far less likely, possible, or suitable than something else already mentioned.*

While I celebrate the NODE attempt to provide a functional explanation, I would find it difficult to interpret this explanation while looking at actual sentences containing *let alone*.¹³ Use of this word, we are told, indicates that "something" is more likely than "something else", the latter having been "already mentioned", the former being "far less likely ..." than the latter. Where do we find each of these somethings?

Any *let alone* sentence can be segmented in such a way that one part of it has the general form X let alone Y. Limiting ourselves to just that segment, we can extract expressions like

- (10) *[five cents], let alone [a hundred dollars]*
- (11) *[walk], let alone [run]*
- (12) *[to the next village], let alone [all the way to New York City].*

Whatever it is that the NODE definer thinks a use of this word "indicates", it must be either the X part or the Y part. Generally the surrounding context of a *let alone* conjunction has something negative about it – often enough, simple

¹³ I am not trashing the dictionary. The Fillmore et al. (1988) paper on this word took years to finish, underwent numerous revisions before publication, profited from the advice of dozens of colleagues, and still has a number of known flaws.

sentence negation; the role of this negativity has to be taken into account while we seek to understand the intention behind the NODE definition. If we take "something else already mentioned" as referring to the X part of the phrase, since obviously it comes first, then the Y phrase has to be what the word "indicates". In that case we do not include the negation: assuming normal motivations, giving someone a hundred dollars can be construed as less likely than giving someone five cents; making it to New York can easily be considered less likely than getting to the next village. But this ignores the fact that the basic function of a *let alone* construction is to respond to something that has arisen in the conversational context (which Fillmore et al. 1988 call the *context proposition*). This contextually given proposition is picked up in the "Y" part of the conjunction, so the less likely attribute must belong to the "X" part – but in that case the negation has to be included! *Not* being able to walk is less likely than not being able to run; *not* being willing to give you five cents is less likely than not being willing to give you a hundred dollars.

But that isn't enough. What is less or more likely, possible, etc., has to be a kind of event or state of affairs, not just something that can be expressed as a simple phrase; and that has to be built up by integrating the X and the Y, separately, with the rest of the sentence, in order to produce two propositions that can be compared with each other. The example sentence accompanying the NODE definition is *he was incapable of leading a bowling team, let alone a country*. Here the X and Y are noun phrases: *a bowling team* and *a country*; the two states of affairs that need to be constructed from the sentence are *he was incapable of leading a bowling team* and *he was incapable of leading a country*, and these are the propositions whose likelihood or suitability are being compared. Again, in a sentence like *I am not able to walk, let alone run*, the syntactic constituents connected with *let alone* are *walk* and *run*, but the situation descriptions have to be understood in terms of being (or not being) able to walk, being (or not being) able to run.

The affiliation of *let alone* to other parts of the lexicon of English is various. First of all, *let alone* behaves in some ways like an ordinary coordinate conjunction (with important differences, in that the other conjunctions can form not only separate propositions but joint or 'set' elements within a single proposition); in some ways it has commonalities with other *negative polarity items* in the language; and in its function it joins with other devices that contrast the argumentative force of two propositions, these being not only the sentence-internal expressions like *much less* and *not to mention*, but also certain discourse-connectors, linking syntactically complete sentences to each other,

such as *in fact*. (The last mentioned gives the more informative proposition second rather than first: *No, I won't give you a hundred dollars. In fact, I wouldn't even give you a dollar.*)

The full story of this word requires its recognition as a special kind of conjunction with subtle semantic properties; as participating in a semantic structure which invokes entailment within a "scalar model" (as characterized by Paul Kay; see Fillmore et al., 1988); and as requiring description in terms of both conventional implicatures and conversational context.

The negative character of the context is not made explicit in any of the three dictionaries, though it is present in their examples: *incapable of* in NODE; *never* in AHD; *can't* in LDOEL.

The syntactic-semantic properties can be seen in the following examples, excerpted from sentences in the BNC; it shows a sample of the kinds of constituents that can be conjoined with *let alone* and the formal variety possible for the negative context. The negation-indicating feature is underlined in the context column, the conjuncts are separately bracketed in the conjunction column.

- | | | |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (13) | <i>We <u>hadn't</u></i> | <i>[seen a fish], let alone [hooked one]</i> |
| (14) | <i>have <u>not</u> even</i> | <i>[drawn their gun], let alone [fired it]</i> |
| (15) | <i><u>few</u> in authority</i> | <i>[cared much], let alone [had the power to assuage the people's meagre needs]</i> |
| (16) | <i>it was <u>impossible</u> to theorise coherently</i> | <i>[about the beginning of the universe], let alone [about the end]</i> |
| (17) | <i>totally <u>refused</u> to</i> | <i>[acknowledge], let alone [operate]</i> |
| (18) | <i><u>too</u> scared to go out alone</i> | <i>[in broad daylight], let alone [after dark]</i> |
| (19) | <i><u>without</u> worrying about</i> | <i>[whether or not it will sell], let alone [whether it will sell at an "economic" price]</i> |
| (20) | <i><u>without</u> reference</i> | <i>[to Kursk] let alone [to Moscow]</i> |
| (21) | <i>there is <u>limited</u> room in the curriculum</i> | <i>[for the twentieth century], let alone [for the period from when the text books end and memory begins]</i> |

The conjunction *let alone* has many properties of a *negative polarity item*, meaning that typically (but not always) the first preposition has to be grammatically "negative" or expressed in some way to convey a negative interpretation. Notice the simple negation in examples (13-14); the adjective *impossible* in (16); the negation-including verb *refuse* in (17); and the proposition *without* in (19-20).

The phrases conjoined can be of many types: past participial VPs, as in (13-14); finite VPs as in (15); prepositional phrases, as in (16, 18, 20-21); *whether*-clauses as in (19).

Let alone constructions contrast two propositions that differ from each other within an assumed scalar model, such that the first of these is (in the non-negative form) the weaker of the two: seeing a fish is less demanding than hooking one (13); drawing a gun is less advanced than firing a gun (14); being alone in daylight is less scary than being alone at night (18).

The second proposition is based on or derivable from a "context proposition", some statement or question that is assumed in the context: one can imagine sentence (18) being a response to a question about going out alone at night, or sentence (14) responding to a dispute about whether some people have fired a gun.

Any use description of this word, as we have seen, would have to be a description of the entire construction that it can be used to build. Such constructions are used to respond to a context proposition (such as the interlocutor's question) by asserting the proposition built up with the Y constituent, while emphasizing the *a fortiori* argumentative force of that response by asserting that it is contextually entailed by something that is even more informative, the proposition built up with the X constituent (No hand-held dictionary could be expected to provide all that information, along with the background assumptions that would make it intelligible.)

4. *Mention*

The other examples are much less complex. The verb *mention* seems at first like an ordinary verb of speaking. Like its frame mates *say* or *state*, it occurs with following clausal or nominal objects, these expressing the Message¹⁴ of a communicating act. In the following examples from the BNC, the phrase representing the Message is bracketed:

(22) *He already mentioned [that a girlfriend was back in town].*

¹⁴ This time "Message" stands for the message content.

- (23) *Neither of them mentioned [what had taken place outside the school].*
 (24) *Wendy mentioned [the importance of physical activity as relaxation].*
 (25) *I mentioned [that], too.*

The verb *mention*, in this use, is an elaboration of the simple *Statement* frame. Regarding the nature of that elaboration, dictionaries agree that this verb carries with it the idea that its message is not the overtly primary message in the reported discourse: things that are *mentioned* are said *incidentally*, *in passing*, *without getting into detail*.

The dictionaries often use *refer (to)* to express this: NODE's definition is *refer to something briefly and without getting into detail*; AHD4 has *to refer to*, especially *incidentally*; and LDOEL has *to make mention of*, *refer to*, with the entry for the noun being the location of the temporal or non-centrality qualification: *a brief reference to something; a passing remark*. Of the three dictionaries, only NODE gives example sentences:

- (26) *I haven't mentioned it to William yet |*
 (27) *[with clause] I mentioned that my father was meeting me later.*

The verb *refer* does not suggest to me a major communicative act, but maybe that is because I think of it as a term of art in linguistics or philosophy. Again, inter-substitutability surely fails: *refer to* does not welcome a *to*-phrase indicating the addressee (the *to William* of the NODE entry), or a *that*-clause indicating a message. The dictionary user has to suspect that the lexicographer did not intend with *refer* the simple meaning of 'bring to someone's attention'. We come to suspect this by noticing the qualifications *briefly and without getting into detail*; simple reference doesn't allow that much expansion.

The word does indeed have a sense close to that of *refer*, however, as in sentences like (28-29), even though I suspect that this is not a usage intended by the definitions we have seen.

- (28) *In his list of potential invitees, did he mention Mrs. Alston?*
 (29) *They mentioned me by name.*

A third use is the one that strikes me as special, one that is not mentioned or exemplified in the familiar dictionaries. This is the use in which the verb *mention* takes as its direct object a noun phrase headed by the noun *name*; in fact, by far the most frequent noun occurring as right collocate of *mention* in the BNC is *name*. (Examples are divided between *name* as direct object and *name* in the phrase *by name*, the former being the more frequent.) These are clearly cases in which the name in question does not stand for a message, nor does it stand for something "referred to". By that I mean, a sentence about *mentioning someone's*

name generally does not stand for a situation in which someone is drawing attention to a name as such, as when wanting to characterize someone's name as, say, hard to pronounce, or Finnish-sounding, or tetrasyllabic.

- (30) *No-one knew who he meant until he mentioned Sarah's name*
 (31) *Father Pool became very excited when I mentioned your name*
 (32) *They discovered the suicide note, which mentioned the name of the hotel*
 (33) *As always when she mentioned his name, her eyes filled with tears.*

The only other collocate I found that fits this same pattern is *word*. A BNC example is:

- (34) *When in the course of my explanation I mentioned the word pagan, he jerked as if he were on the end of a wire.*

The examples with *word* suggest that we cannot simply take *mention someone's name* as some sort of truncation of *mention someone by name*. In any case, the description we end up with has to be quite unusual: in the usage I have in mind, the word *mention* seems to mean 'utter', but only in the context of the object collocates *name* or *word*. (Notice that in examples 22-27, the word *mentioned* could be replaced by *said*; in examples 28-29, it could be replaced by *referred to* or *identified*; in examples 30-34 it could be replaced by *said*, *spoke*, or *uttered*.)

5. Else

A different kind of case is the word *else*. This word belongs to the same semantic class as *(an)other* and *beside(s)*, and could almost be seen as a kind of suppletive variant of *other and another*. They are in complementary distribution: *else* occurs as a right member of a binary construction with an indefinite (including interrogative) pronoun or adverb: *who, what, where, why, how, etc.*; *somebody, everybody, nothing, anything, etc., somewhere, somehow, etc.*, plus a small number of quantifiers such as *much, little a great deal*. *Other*, when it combines with a noun, occurs before the noun when the reference object is not mentioned, after the noun (as *other than X*) otherwise. (The post-modifying use is possible after indefinites, nominal or otherwise: *someone other than me, where other than here?*. Compare *nobody else but you*.) *Else* agrees with *other* and *another* semantically in having both a sense of 'different' and a sense of 'additional'.

Examples:

- (35) *Would anybody else like to take a break?* (besides / other than me)
 (36) *Nobody else complained.* (besides / other than you)

- (37) *Did anything else happen? (besides / other than what we were just talking about)*
- (38) *Why else do you think she'd agree to it? (besides / other than the reason we've just been discussing)*

LDOEL tries to indicate the semantic types of the companions to *else*, producing the list *person, place, manner, or time*, accidentally leaving out *thing* and *reason*. (Consider *something else, why else*.) The qualification *mentioned or understood* covers the two pragmatic possibilities for *else* (as for *other* and *another*), namely (a) the presence of some reference point in the conversational context, or (b) mention of an antecedent in the linguistic context – either a preceding context (*John didn't like it. I wonder if anybody else did*) or the following marked context (*anybody else but me*). The relevant part of the LDOEL entry is this:

else 1a apart from the person, place, manner, or time mentioned or understood <how ~ could he have acted> <everybody ~ but me> 1b also, besides <who ~ did you see> <there's nothing ~ to eat>

The LDOEL treatment of **other** separates the use in definite and indefinite noun phrases, and in definite noun phrases it subdivides the singular from the plural cases. The indefinite cases correspond to the uses with *else*, i.e., either with bare plurals or with quantified plurals. Relevant excerpts from the *other* and *another* entries in LDOEL are these:

other 1a being the one left of two or more <held on with one hand and waved with the ~> 1b being the ones distinct from that or those first mentioned <rather than the ~ boys> 2a (1) not the same; different <schools ~ than his own> ... 3 additional, further <John and two ~ boys>

another adj. 1 being a different or distinct one <the same scene viewed from ~ angle> 2 some other; later <do it ~ time> 3 being one additional; further <have ~ piece of pie>

AHD4 agrees in separating out the 'different' vs. 'additional' senses of *else*, and makes essentially the same distinctions as the LDOEL for *other*. Excerpts from the entries follow:

else 1. Other; different: *Ask somebody else*. 2. Additional; more: *Would you like anything else?*

other 1a. Being the remaining one of two or more: *the other ear*. b. Being the remaining ones of several: *His other books are still in storage*. 2. Different from that or those implied or specified: *Any other person would tell the truth*. ... 5. Additional; extra: *I have no other shoes*.

another adj. 1. One more; an additional: *had another cup of coffee*. 2. Distinctly different from the first: *took another route to town*. 3. Some other: *put it off to another day*.

In both LDOEL and AHD4, the reader needs to learn the distributional constraints from the examples. Only NODE makes such information explicit, with the qualification "[with indefinite pron. or adv.]. That information is further emphasized by highlighting (bold font) the words that *else* combines with in the example sentences.

else adv. 1 [with indefinite pron. or adv.] in addition; besides: *anything else you need to know?* | *I just brought basics—I wasn't sure **what else** you'd want* | *they will offer low prices but **little else***. 2 [with indefinite pron. or adv.] different; instead: *isn't there **anyone else** you could ask?* | *it's fate, destiny, or **whatever else** you like to call it*.

other adj. & pron. 1 used to refer to a person or thing that is different or distinct from one already mentioned or known about: [as adj.] *stick the camera on a tripod or **some other** means of support* | *other people found her difficult* | [as pron.] *a language unrelated to any other*. ... 2 further; additional: [as adj.] *one other word of advice* | [as pron.] *reporting three stories and rewriting three others*.

another adj. & pron. 1 used to refer to an additional person or thing of the same type as one already mentioned or known about; one more; a further: [as adj.] *have another drink* | *I didn't say another word* | ... 2 used to refer to a different person or thing from one already mentioned or known about: [as adj.] *come back another day* | *his wife left him for another man* | ...

The co-occurrence of *else* with interrogative words requires the specification (a) that the interrogative word cannot be in construction with a noun, and (b) that it must be consistent with the requirement of indefiniteness. There is a contrast between indefinite and definite interrogative determiners ("what reason" vs. "which reason"), and *else* cannot occur with either of these. The word *which* can stand alone, but its non-occurrence with *else* in that case could be explained with reference to a definiteness feature, because even then it cannot combine with *else*. Thus, we do not find **what else reason*, **which else reason*, or **which else*.

An interesting problem arises with the word *whose*. When *whose* occurs as a determiner, we cannot get **whose else hat*, or the like.¹⁵ But we can get *who*

¹⁵ The Atkins influence is weak here: the "cannot get" in this paragraph is based on my native speaker judgment. The BNC contains in very small numbers both "whose else" and "whose

else's; and this suggests that what we write as a special word *whose* really functions as if it were *who's*, and the suffix has to be treated as the phrasal suffix (or clitic) rather than as something that forms a direct morphological construction with *who*. Compare *who else's problems*, *who the hell's problems*, *who the hell else's problems do we need to solve*, to give other examples of the interruptibility of the underlying components of *whose*.

6. Wrong

The concept of *singular definite description* is typically illustrated with grammatical constructions comprised of a singular noun in construction with a definite determiner and a modifier. Phrases like *the old man*, *the photograph on the left*, *the other cup*, *the next stop*, used referentially, generally point to an entity that is uniquely identifiable in the current context by virtue of the combined meaning of the modifier and the noun. The adjective *wrong*, occurring in this context, seems to be an exception to this, and this is a fact that lexicographers have generally not noticed or have not made clear. Examples of the sort I have in mind:

- (39) *You said the wrong thing. (≠You said the bad thing.)*
 (40) *I dialed the wrong number. (≠I dialed the false number.)*
 (41) *I gave the wrong answer. (≠I gave the inaccurate answer.)*

The parenthesized examples in 39-41 suggest that there was only one bad thing that fit the context, or one false number, or one inaccurate answer. The sentences with *wrong* indicate that what was said or dialed, etc., was wrong, but not necessarily the only thing that could have been wrong. These sentences fit situations in which one could just as well have said, *I said a wrong thing*, *I dialed a wrong number*, *I gave a wrong answer*.

LDOEL gives a reading of *wrong* as *not according to truth or facts; incorrect* and gives as its only example *gave a wrong date*. AHD4 gives numerous senses (differing according to the nature of the conventions with which something is not in conformity), and offers as examples *said the wrong thing* and *the wrong way to shuck clams*, but without comment. Similarly, NODE, illustrating the sense *not correct or true* gives as its example, *that is the wrong answer*.

Intuitively we know that this distinction exists, but it may be hard to tell from

else's". My inclination is to declare them simply wrong, in the sense that their creators would have rejected them on a moment's reflection. I should probably know better by now, but old habits tend to hang on.

corpus examples whether what we find is the intended, i.e., non-definite-description, usage. Where we find sentences about taking the wrong approach, putting something under the wrong door, or getting on the wrong bus, it's always possible that the author had in mind only one alternative to the intended approach or door or bus. But here are some BNC examples that I think at least welcome the non-unique reference interpretation.

- (42) *Imagine if the wrong person opened it*
 (43) *It's so easy to marry the wrong person.*
 (44) *the wrong person has been murdered*
 (45) *Keeps giving the wrong answer.*

The value of using a corpus is that it can show that one's intuitions about word use can be incorrect. In giving examples of near-synonyms of *wrong* in which only the definite description interpretation is possible, I used to include the adjective *incorrect*. When I examined concordance lines with this word, I found these:

- (46) *The nerve gas would only be released if the incorrect code was programmed twice into the computer.*
 (47) *It would be a neat trick of fate if he survived the plasma energy weapons of the platforms only to be burned to a crisp because the pod entered the upper atmosphere of Tarvaras at the incorrect angle.*

For something as important as the messages in 46 and 47, it's hard to imagine that there could be only one "incorrect code" or only one "incorrect angle".

7. *ilk* and its ilk

A small sub-project of the FrameNet work is devoted to the discovery, analysis and annotation of structures using what (after Naomi Sager¹⁶) we are calling *transparent nouns*. These are nouns that occur in constructions of the type "Noun of Noun" in which the second noun is the one that is selectionally or collocationally related to its context.¹⁷ Nouns that have this function express such meanings as quantities, aggregations, parts, units, and types. Examples that show the "transparency" of these nouns include the following, borrowed from Fontenelle (1999; case modifications and underlining are mine):

¹⁶ Although I have learned to associate the name Naomi Sager with the concept of transparent noun, I have not found the relevant literature.

¹⁷ For an important discussion of the role of transparent nouns in establishing or recognizing collocational relations (for the sake of automatic word sense disambiguation) see Fontenelle 1999.

- (48) *Verb and Object*: "These hens have laid [DOZENS OF eggs] since we bought them."
- (49) *Phrasal Verb and Object*: "Mary suffered from [A BOUT OF malaria]."
- (50) *Attribute Adjective and Noun*: "a warm [ROUND OF applause]"

Among the transparent nouns there is one class that has certain special properties, and these we refer to as Type words. The type words have a meaning like 'category'. The most familiar of them are the nouns *kind*, *sort* and *type*. The following examples show the relation between the non-head noun in the KIND OF phrase and the context external to that phrase:

- (51) *reclamation of* [THIS KIND OF scrap material]
- (52) *creates the right* [KIND OF impression]
- (53) *the* [KIND OF demands] *the profession will make*
- (54) *the* [KIND OF car] *he drove*
- (55) *the* [KIND OF people] *you are going to meet*
- (56) *this* [KIND OF objection] *rests upon a false way of thinking*
- (57) *the* [KIND OF developmental questions] *I shall be raising*
- (58) *an accident directly caused by* [SOME KIND OF technical failure]
- (59) *I can now say, without any* [KIND OF trepidation]
- (60) *to ensure that* the right [KINDS OF distinctions] *are drawn*
- (61) *the* [KIND OF dilemma] *which the American philosopher Jerry Fodor faced up to*
- (62) *the* [KIND OF demands] *he makes of actors*

There are two contrasting patterns for words in the Type class, both with a "Noun of Noun" structure, with the Type word occurring sometimes as the first noun and sometimes as the second, but with similar or identical meanings in both structures. Pattern A is exemplified with these:

- (63) *a new kind of writing implement, a certain kind of linguist, a similar/different kind of problem, this/that/the same kind of book*

Pattern B, with the nouns reversed, can be illustrated with the following:

- (64) *guitars of that type, people of your type/kind, a linguist of your ilk, linguists of a certain kind*

The A pattern needs to be distinguished from certain other usages: with *sort* and *kind*, for example, there is a hedging or "fuzzification" usage, where the speaker seems to assign inexact membership in a category; what follows *of* can be a nominal, fitting the regular pattern, but it also occurs in other parts of speech. These are the uses that have developed in U.S. English the

pronunciations represented by "kinda" and "sorta".¹⁸ Examples:

- (65) *sort of stupid*
 (66) *kind of a problem*

There is also a special pattern limited to *type*, lacking the *of*, which is generally disapproved. In this case the first element can be an adjective as well as a noun. Examples from the BNC:

- (67) *country house type accommodation, cost-benefit type appraisal, adult education type courses*
 (68) *pneumatic type wheels, wild type viruses, computationally tractable type system*

Furthermore, there is a version with a possessive determiner where the meaning seems to be a category of things preferred by the "possessor". Thus, while *her kind of woman* could mean 'a woman who is like her', it could also mean 'the kind of woman she likes'. Unambiguous instances of that construction are *his kind of woman, my kind of music*, etc.

The isolate in this set is the word *ilk*. It occurs only in the B pattern and in an independent structure derived from the B pattern.

The word is quite rare: 78 occurrences in the BNC. Only one example is plural (69); the modifier is an adjective in a small number of cases (70), but otherwise a determiner or possessive pronoun, plus combinations like *a similar ilk, the same ilk*. An early usage has the form *{Name} of that ilk* and an archaic naming pattern for landed Scotsmen. Example (72), then, will designate a man named McTavish who lives on the McTavish estate. That structure is limited to the single word *ilk*, though in the other examples the word, singular or plural, can be replaced by *kind, sort, or type*.

- (69) *aviation enthusiasts of all ilks*
 (70) *objectivity of a scientific or economic ilk*
 (71) *guitars of any ilk, people of that ilk*
 (72) *McTavish of that ilk*

Derived from the B pattern we find also cases of a coordinate conjunction in which the second conjunct refers to things or persons of the category suggested by the first conjunct. Thus:

- (73) *Willy and his ilk/type/kind/sort*
 (74) *fascists and their ilk/type/kind/sort*

In dictionaries we notice that the usage of this word that interests us has long

¹⁸ See Kay 1984

been considered wrong. All standard dictionaries I have consulted agree on this, but Webster's Dictionary of English Usage (WDEU) has the following to say:

Such usage certainly still has its enemies, but their spirited defense of the old and little-used Scottish sense of *ilk* is far more passionate than reasonable. The facts are these: *ilk* once meant "same"; it now means "sort". Such is the way of language.

Of interest for my purpose here is not that the attested usage is supported by the WDEU handbook, but the fact that declaring that *ilk* means *sort* is not saying enough. The word behaves like *sort* in only the B pattern. In fact, all of the dictionaries I have examined define *ilk* in terms of one of the other words (*type*, *kind*, *sort*), and while they exemplify *ilk* with pattern B phrases, they do not indicate that *ilk* doesn't work in the same way those words do. In fact, by examining the examples for the other words, in NODE, we notice that almost all of the examples of *type*, *sort*, *kind*, and *variety* are only in the A pattern; there was a single case of *kind* given a B-pattern example (*more data of this kind*).

NODE's method of suggesting the B pattern is by the phrase "similar to those already referred to" and with the examples.

ilk **noun** [in sing] a type of people or things similar to those already referred to: *the veiled suggestions that reporters of his **ilk** seem to be so good at | fascists, racists and others of that **ilk***

(**of that ilk**) Scottish, chiefly archaic of the place or estate of the same name: *Sir Iain Moncraiffe of that **ilk***.

As seen, the word *type* appears in the definition, but almost all of the examples of the other Type words are only in the A pattern:

breed: *a new breed of entrepreneurs was brought into being*

kind: *all kinds of music | a new kind of education | more data of this kind would be valuable*

sort: *if only we knew the sort of people she was mixing with | a radical change poses all sorts of questions*

type: *this type of heather grows better in a drier climate | blood types*

variety (in two senses): *the center offers a variety of leisure activities ; fifty varieties of fresh and frozen pasta*

The defining words in AHD4 are *type* and *kind*; in LDOEL *sort* and *kind*. In both cases the examples fit the B pattern, but the entries provide no direct explanation of the construction type that the word *ilk* actually fits.

ilk Type or kind: *can't trust people of that ilk* (AHD4)

ilk sort, kind <*politicians and others of that ~*> (LDOEL)

LDOEL, however, in its usage notes under *ilk* recommends the B pattern as a substitute for the A pattern with a plural second noun: this *kind/sort/type of books* should be replaced by *books of this kind/sort/type*. My point is that the dictionaries do not directly explain the two constructional patterns for the Type words in terms of which the structural limitations of *ilk* could be clarified.

8. Wrap-up

An interest in "the funny words", the words that don't fit generalizations that apply to other words "of the same type", especially if it is informed by a linguist's desire to find generalizations wherever they exist, leads inevitably to the realization that in important ways: [1] every word in the general vocabulary has its own unique collection of features, and [2] every word has affiliations with other words that should be reflected in parallel analysis and definition styles.

The conjunction *let alone* is in some ways like other conjunctions. But those other conjunctions are not all of a type: each of them has a unique combination of properties. Conjunctions need to be described with respect to the kinds of phrasal constituents they can connect, the number of constituents they can connect at one time, and the semantic and pragmatics functions that are served by the constructions they enter into.

The verb *mention* is like other verbs of Communication, but, especially when looked at in terms of their polysemy structure, the most common of these verbs – *say, tell, speak, talk* – also have properties that require absolutely special treatment.

The word *else* has affinities with (*an*)*other, besides*, but also *also* and *too*. My regarding it as something special seems less impressive when it is lined up with its semantic neighbors. It makes sense to find some definitional format for all of them, because of their commonalities, but they are all "special".

The adjective *wrong* continues to seem strange when compared to its paradigmatic alternatives, but only in the context of a singular definite noun phrase. It has no special uses, apart from its meaning, when used predicatively. Attested uses of the word *incorrect* in the special function that interested me came as a surprise; I think it must be extremely rare, but it shows the kind of leakage that can exist among the words of the same semantic class. And that shows the importance of examining words in semantically related sets.

If the Type words occurred only in what is here called the B pattern, the word *ilk* would simply count as one of them. The negative connotations sometimes described for this word could be attributed to certain constructions, since *people of your type* sounds almost as insulting as *people of your ilk*. The fact that there are corpus examples that seem to contradict the attitudinal flavor of *ilk* (though they may be intended as playful) also raises into question the assumed connotational specialization.

The lesson is that the search for generalizations leads to the discovery of exceptions and idiosyncrasies, just as the effort to characterize linguistic idiosyncrasies reveals general principles. In either case, it's important for the lexical semanticist to be on the lookout for generalizations and groupings, if only because being clear about these makes it obvious what the exceptions and idiosyncrasies are. And what's good for the lexical semanticist has to be good for the lexicographer.

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