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A. S. Hornby: a Centenary Tribute

Abstract

This paper records the many-sided career of A. S. Hornby – as teacher, journal editor, researcher – while dwelling chiefly on his achievements as a lexicographer. During the 1930s in Japan, Hornby was part of an important theoretical movement in EFL, and helped to lay the groundwork in lexical research that would help to shape the earliest learners' dictionaries. The chief strands in that research will be traced, and their impact on Hornby's own dictionaries described and evaluated. As will be seen, the influence of the Tokyo years extends well beyond the first publication of ALD (1942). (Hornby's work on the *Second Interim Report on Collocations* (1933) is only now coming to be fully appreciated.) There was fresh analysis (especially syntactic) in the 1950s and 1960s, and we shall see how this fed through into the second and third editions of ALD.

Keywords: Vocabulary control, verb pattern, collocation, skeleton example, encoding function

1. Introduction

It is as a master lexicographer that members of Euralex chiefly remember A. S. Hornby. But as we celebrate the centenary of his birth – he was born a hundred years ago to the month – and also, by the happiest of coincidences, the half-centenary of his classic work, we should not forget that Hornby was also, at various times, a teacher, teacher-trainer, grammarian, ELT broadcaster and pioneering journal editor – and that he often performed two or more of these functions simultaneously. If Hornby is today chiefly remembered by us, his fellow lexicographers, for his dictionaries, we should bear in mind that it was his expertise in a wide range of associated fields that lent such depth and authority to his dictionary-making.

There was another vital factor contributing to Hornby's later eminence as a lexicographer. He was fortunate enough to spend the formative years of his professional life (1924 to 1941) in Japan, and his Tokyo years (from 1931 on) happened to coincide with a new and revitalizing movement in ELT led by Harold E. Palmer. It was the research which Hornby undertook, first under Palmer's guidance, then independently, that laid the essential foundations of the *Idiomatic and Syntactic English Dictionary* (1942), later to become the first *Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (1948). The influence of Japan, in a special sense, was crucial, and in speaking now of Hornby's life and career, I shall begin with his arrival in a small provincial college, and then describe the intellectual movement, in Tokyo, which he later became part of.

2. Hornby's life and career

2.1. The early years: Oita and Tokyo

Albert Sydney Hornby, in later years always known to his friends and colleagues as 'Ash', was born a hundred years ago to the month – in August 1898 – in Chester. After service in the

Royal Navy in World War I, he entered University College London, where in 1922 he took a degree in English Language and Literature (Howatt 1984). The following year, he was recruited by a visiting Japanese to teach English at the Oita Higher Commercial School on the island of Kyushu, and travelling East by the Trans-Siberian Railway, he arrived to take up his post in 1924. Hornby's employers actually wanted him to teach English Literature, but he was quickly attracted to the teaching of language. He could see that the pressing need in Japanese schools was language teaching, not literature teaching. As he himself later put it, 'I found myself facing classes ... and I found that they were reading English literature. ... I decided that I must give much more attention to language teaching and leave the teaching of literature to their Japanese professors' (Hornby and Ruse 1974).

Hornby began to develop an understanding of linguistics, at first through reading. But he also began a correspondence with Dr Harold E. Palmer, who was Linguistic Adviser to the Japanese Ministry of Education and Director of the Institute for Research into English Teaching (IRET) in Tokyo. Through that correspondence, Hornby became 'more and more interested in linguistics, especially linguistic methodology' (or, as we should now say, linguistics applied to language teaching) (Hornby and Ruse 1974). Palmer was so impressed by his young colleague that he invited him, in the Spring of 1931, to help in the compilation of a list of collocations, a project which had been launched at IRET in 1927. A year later, at Palmer's instigation, Hornby was brought to Tokyo (Naganuma 1978). The collocations project was to lead to the publication, in 1933, of the first linguistically-based analysis of English phraseology to appear. Having moved permanently to Tokyo, Hornby was later to hold two teaching posts simultaneously, one at the Tokyo School (now University) of Foreign Languages, the other at the Tokyo Higher Normal School, a leading teacher-training institution (Ogawa 1978). Already, we can see a work pattern being established whereby Hornby would carry major teaching responsibilities, while simultaneously playing a full part in research projects set up at the Institute. Later still, he would keep all this in play, while pursuing his own research and writing plans. And as Palmer's crown prince, Hornby would sooner or later assume the burdens of the succession as well. In fact Harold Palmer retired in 1936, and at one stroke Hornby became de facto director of research at the Institute, editor of its *Bulletin*, and the inheritor of plans, already tentatively discussed by Palmer and his Tokyo publisher Naganuma, for a monolingual English learner's dictionary, to appear in due course as the *Idiomatic and Syntactic English Dictionary* (Naganuma 1978).

2.2. Teheran and London

The few short years between 1936 and the outbreak of war in the Far East were for Hornby a period of intensively productive activity, including the compilation of two dictionaries, but brought to an abrupt halt by the events of December 1941. Hornby was at first interned and then eventually repatriated aboard the same ship as the diplomatic staff. On his return to England, he was recruited by the British Council and spent the rest of the war in Teheran, teaching at the university and at the Anglo-Persian Institute (Hornby 1966). One of his achievements was to train a number of British servicemen as EFL teachers. In 1945, Hornby was appointed to the headquarters of the Council in London and to the not entirely congenial post of Linguistic Adviser. Remote from the classroom, and feeling that whatever knowledge he possessed was 'not being used in the right way', he obtained permission to start up a periodical to be devoted to the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (Hornby 1966). The new journal – *English Language Teaching* – was inspired by the *IRET Bulletin* which Hornby had edited in Tokyo, and in fact some use was initially made of material from that source.

English Language Teaching soon acquired a reputation for combining practical classroom advice with contributions from linguists written in a non-technical style, including two articles on lexicography from the editor, which have since been much quoted from (Hornby 1949, 1965). Hornby was also at this time contributing to the BBC series 'English by Radio', though he never received full credit for his leading role.

In 1950 Hornby's career underwent a further shift of direction. He took up an offer from his publisher to work at home in the country, producing lower-level monolingual dictionaries based on ALD and also a number of language courses. *The Progressive English Dictionary* (1952) and *An English-Reader's Dictionary* (1952) both date from this period, while the *Oxford Progressive English for Adult Learners* appeared from 1954 onwards. Hornby did not lose interest in, or cease to develop, the grammatical descriptions on which he had worked in the 1930s (Hornby 1931, 1932) and which provided much of the backbone of the first ALD. His *Guide to Patterns and Usage in English* (1954) was a crucial stage in this progression. On the one hand it was a practical reference text, reflecting the approach to analysis and tabular style of presentation adopted in ALD 1 and designed to be of help to teachers and advanced learners. On the other, it broke new ground in providing a fresh approach to the description of modality and in tackling the analysis of the complementation of adjectives and nouns. As we shall see – and this was characteristic of Hornby's feeding across of grammatical information from analysis to lexicographical description – he made good use of the work on complementation in the second edition of ALD (1963).

The intense activity so characteristic of Hornby in his fifties and sixties – and indeed seventies – is somehow at odds with the genial but mild and self-effacing teacher and scholar who emerges from the photographs on display at this conference. A kind of quiet tenacity was needed to carry through the complex and ambitious projects I have described, and Ash was – until his final debilitating illness – constantly at work. As in Tokyo in the 1930s, so in London and at home in Surrey in the 1950s, he would normally be engaged on two fronts at once: as journal editor and educational broadcaster, or as materials writer and lexicographer. And as if this was not enough, he would occasionally undertake a long lecture tour overseas for the British Council (Hornby and Ruse 1974).

Hornby seldom spoke of these remarkable achievements. He always described himself as 'a simple teacher', but this is belied by the scholarship, the commitment to applied research, and the tireless energy with which he disseminated his ideas through his editorship of *English Language Teaching* and his lecture tours overseas. He was a master lexicographer, and one of the greatest applied linguists of his or any other generation. But there is another side to the man, reflected in his setting up of the Hornby Trust in 1961. This was a far-sighted initiative as a result of which the greater part of his royalties was set aside to help teachers from overseas to come to Britain for professional training (Collier, Neale and Quirk 1978). Thanks to Ash's imaginative generosity, hundreds of teachers have been helped to extend their knowledge and teaching expertise through British Council Summer Schools, or postgraduate courses in Linguistics and ELT at British Universities.

Several honours came to Hornby towards the end of his life – an OBE, a Fellowship at University College London, an MA degree from Oxford. An event which affected him as deeply as any, though, was a collective gesture of appreciation from his fellow-professionals, shortly before his death in 1978. This was the publication, as a mark of affection and esteem

on his eightieth birthday, of the volume *In Honour of A. S. Hornby*, edited by Peter Strevens, and with contributions by many of his friends and former colleagues.

3. The vocabulary control movement

The intellectual climate in which the earliest EFL dictionaries, including those by Hornby, first appeared was exceptionally favourable, as Harold Palmer, Michael West and Hornby himself all contributed to, and benefited from, important programmes of lexical research. At the Tokyo Institute for Research into English Teaching, where Hornby was based from the early 1930s, no activity had a deeper or more lasting effect on the early history of the learner's dictionary than the so-called 'vocabulary control' movement. And there is an irony at the heart of this. On the one hand, it would be no exaggeration to say that research into vocabulary control gave birth to the EFL dictionary. On the other, none of the key participants was aware until the mid-1930s – almost ten years after Palmer was first commissioned to prepare a controlled vocabulary for Japanese middle schools – that nothing short of a special *dictionary* could draw together fully and satisfactorily the manifold complexities which that research had brought to light.

The leading figure in the vocabulary control movement based at IRET was of course Harold Palmer, who had been interested in vocabulary limitation since 1903, when he opened a language school at Verviers, about thirty kilometres to the east of Liège. Palmer was motivated by the desire to lighten the learning load of the foreign student by identifying those words which could be shown to carry the main weight of everyday communication. He realized early on that a remarkably high level of natural communication in English could be achieved by using a vocabulary of as few as 1000 words, though the work which began to bear fruit in Tokyo in 1930 was based on an upper limit of 3000 words (Palmer 1930). It was not long before Hornby was making his own contribution to this work. Shortly after arriving in Tokyo in 1931, Hornby offered Palmer a word-list, initially of 900 words, which was later to be refined by them both and published in 1937 as *Thousand-Word English*.

With hindsight, it is not hard to see why the word-lists produced in the 1930s by Palmer, and then by Palmer and Hornby in collaboration, should evolve into dictionary-entry designs suitable for foreign learners. Both men believed that a word-list should be based on entirely different principles from those of the American Edward Thorndike, who since the early 1920s had been producing simple alphabetical inventories of spelling-forms based on frequency of occurrence. This meant, for instance, drawing no distinction between *chair* (noun) and *chair* (verb), or *bow* (i.e. of a ship) and *bow* (weapon), or *read* [ri:d](present tense) and *read* [red] (past tense). Although Palmer and Hornby used the American word-lists in order to check their own, the principles on which their work was based were diametrically opposed to those of Thorndike. We can see these principles in operation in *Thousand-Word English*. First, the listed units are roots, or lemmata, rather than the inflected forms by which they are realized. Secondly, the choice of items was based not so much on their frequency as on the analyst's perception of their functional load, polysemy, and range of occurrence in derivatives and compounds. Thirdly, even so small-scale a compilation as *Thousand-Word English* was a 'structured lexicon'. By this I mean that the list was an alphabetical arrangements of 'word-families', each entry, or family, being headed by a simple word, or root, and consisting of a cluster of inflectionally and/or derivationally related forms and, occasionally, idioms. Important differences of meaning were displayed. You can see how these features are

presented in the entries for DRAW and SOFT, which are set out at (1)(a) and (1)(b). In the DRAW entry, irregular inflected forms are included and basic meanings conveyed by means of possible collocates. In the SOFT entry, common meanings are expressed by means of antonyms, while the listed derivatives – as in many parallel entries – are an adverb, an abstract noun and a verb.

- (1) (a) DRAW [drɔ:], v.
drew [dru:], *pret.*
drawn [drɔ:n], *past ppl.*
 (1. *e.g.*, a picture)
 (2. *e.g.*, a line)
drawing ['drɔ:ɪŋ], *n.*
- (b) SOFT [sɒft], *adj.*
 (1. *contrasted with hard or rough*)
 (2. *contrasted with loud or harsh*)
softly ['sɒftli], *adv.*
softness ['sɒftnis], *n.*
soften ['sɒfn], *v.*

Structured lexicons reached their most sophisticated level with the *General Service List* of 1936, which was compiled by West, Palmer and Lawrence Faucett, and for which Hornby provided the collocations and idioms.

The significance of all this work for the direction initially taken by the learner's dictionary cannot be overemphasized. First, extreme vocabulary limitation gave special prominence to function words and general-purpose lexical words, including *draw* and *soft*. These were the basic building-blocks of sentence construction. Second, as we have just seen, research into vocabulary control had bequeathed an entry structure in which derivatives were clustered around their roots, again with potential benefits for encoding (Cowie 1997). Third, and as we shall see later, thought was given in the mid-1930s to the role of examples, and Hornby would develop standard patterns of exemplification for the *Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, which would certainly, though not exclusively, benefit language production. Lastly, Hornby was able to draw dividends in the later 1930s on the research into phraseology to which he had made a major contribution earlier in the decade. Phraseology, too, was to provide firm support for dictionary users wishing to write in the foreign language.

4. Research into phraseology

I said earlier that a programme of research into phraseology had been set up at IRET in 1927 (at the same time as the decision was made to compile a limited vocabulary for Japanese middle schools). The project, the only large-scale analysis of English phraseology ever to be undertaken on behalf of the foreign learner, was initiated and directed by Harold Palmer, though much of the collection and analysis was carried out by Hornby. Its findings were published in 1933 as the *Second Interim Report on English Collocations*. The *Interim Report* was a major landmark, providing a detailed and rigorous classification of word-combinations in English, but also reflecting the pervasiveness of those combinations in everyday speech and writing (Cowie 1998, and forthcoming).

One abiding strength of the project is that, having first put to one side 'sentence-like' combinations such as sayings, catchphrases and familiar quotations, Palmer and Hornby set out to provide a detailed and rigorous classification of the much larger group of 'word-like' units – that is, combinations which could function as elements in the simple sentence. These could be broken down initially into verb-collocations, noun-collocations, adjective-collocations and so on, but much finer subcategories were eventually recognized within those broader divisions, and I am illustrating two of them here. Note the adverb-collocation (no. 35111) at (2)(a), and the verb-collocation (no. 31211) at (2)(b):

(2) (a) PREP x SINGULAR OR UNCOUNTABLE NOUN (no. 35111)

- At ease
- By accident
- From choice
- In future
- Out of fashion

(b) VERB x SPECIFIC NOUN (x PREP x N₃) (no. 31211)

- To catch a cold
- To entertain a belief
- To give notice (x of x N₃)
- To hold one's tongue
- To keep good [bad, *etc.*] company

Despite this meticulous subcategorization, the approach had certain limitations. The term 'collocation', it will be noticed, was applied not only to the very large class of 'word-like' combinations which the *Report* actually treated, but in fact to the entire range of word-combinations that can be recognized. Most phraseologists would now limit the term collocation to word-like combinations which are not idioms, but which are in the 'fuzzy' part of the scale between idioms and free word-combinations. So the idiom-collocation difference was not recognized or formally defined, with the result that, in the *Interim Report*, and sometimes in ALD too, idioms are not given the special prominence that is called for. In the list at (2)(b), for instance, the phrase *To hold one's tongue* is both fixed and unmotivated. So it is an idiom. But *To catch a cold* can be internally modified, as in *To catch a chill, a fever*. It is clearly a collocation.

This is not to say that the *Report* did not have positive and lasting effects on the treatment of phraseology in learners' dictionaries. The overwhelming majority of the items it recorded were ready-made combinations likely to present problems for foreign learners. The *Report* showed, too, that short, colourless idioms (*at a price, in a sense, in general*) were more common and more useful than longer colourful ones (such as *come a cropper* or *not touch somebody with a bargepole*) (cf. Moon 1988). It gave much greater prominence to the former. And this emphasis was carried forward into ISED, later to be the first ALD. We also owe to the *Interim Report* the depth of grammatical analysis that is found in idiom dictionaries such as the *Longman Dictionary of English Idioms* (1979) and the *Oxford Dictionary of Current Idiomatic English* (1983/1993). Once the *Report* had laid down that word-combinations should be classified according to structure and function, it was natural, as a next step, to provide a more detailed syntactic description, especially by showing their possible transformations (Cowie 1998).

5. The design of the *Idiomatic and Syntactic English Dictionary*.

As we have seen, the idea of a monolingual general-purpose dictionary designed particularly for advanced Japanese learners of English first arose from discussions between Harold Palmer and Naoe Naganuma of the Kaitakusha Company which took place shortly before Palmer's departure from Japan in 1936. Its brief design specification included, not surprisingly, lexical and grammatical priorities which had also been a feature of IRET research – the distinction between countable and uncountable nouns, the presentation of as many collocations as possible and the introduction of a system of construction patterns (Naganuma 1978: 11). The dictionary eventually appeared in 1942 as the *Idiomatic and Syntactic English Dictionary*, later, in 1948, to be published world-wide as *A Learner's Dictionary of Current English* and, later still, in 1952, as *The Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*.

The words 'idiomatic and syntactic' in the title of the new dictionary, by making direct reference to two of IRET's most cherished research priorities, proclaimed its commitment to the productive or encoding function. This was a commitment that was strongly echoed in the front matter of ISED, which was almost entirely taken up by a description of function words and verb patterns.

But this was hardly enough for the high school, pre-university students for whom the dictionary was intended. ISED would need to be a decoding dictionary as well, and it is greatly to Hornby's credit that he was able to design a model which, while fulfilling the students' productive needs, went a long way to meeting their receptive requirements as well. And of course it was a model which was bequeathed to all subsequent compilers of advanced-level monolingual learners' dictionaries. For a reading vocabulary broad enough, and diversified enough, for its intended users, Hornby turned to the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, the third edition of which had appeared in 1934. Hornby went to great pains to ensure that items unlikely to be useful to foreign learners were set aside. From a sequence of 115 main entries in COD 3 that I have examined, 58 entries, including such rare items as *mandola*, *mandragora* and *manducate*, were removed (Cowie forthcoming). To some extent, Hornby also drew on the definitions of COD 3, but what is striking here is the extent and nature of the adaptations and replacements made to meet the special needs of foreign learners. Among the various types of change the following are common.

In the first type, the definition phrase has the same structure as COD, but uses simpler vocabulary:

- (3) **malevolent**, a. Desirous of evil to others. (COD 3)
malevolent ... *adj.* (Cf. *benevolent*.) wishing to do evil to others ... (ISED)

But as Hornby realized, ease of understanding depended as much on the grammatical structure of the definition as on the choice of words. In another common pattern, a defining phrase containing a learned or technical word is replaced by a non-finite construction made up of simpler words. (In this example, by the way, Hornby adds a crucial defining detail – 'the right sort of food' – lacking in COD.)

- (4) **malnutrition**, n. Insufficient nutrition (COD 3)
malnutrition ...n. [U] not getting enough food or the right sort of food. (ISED)

6. Verb-patterns in ISED

As we have just seen, function words and syntactic patterns were among the most prominent and carefully thought-out features of ISED. In a way that was to become a standard feature of later editions, the verb-pattern scheme was set out, with accompanying notes and examples, as part of the front matter. As in Palmer's earlier dictionary *A Grammar of English Words* (1938), each pattern was identified by means of a number code, and one or more codes were included, as appropriate, in verb entries. However, Hornby's presentation of the VPs in the Introduction was a great improvement on Palmer's. Hornby was the first to arrange patterns and illustrative examples in a series of tables, and he was much more consistent in his inclusion and positioning of codes in individual entries. If we consider his presentation of the pattern 'Verb x Object x Past Participle' (VP 9), we can see straight away the advantages of a tabular arrangement:

Table 1 Verb Pattern 9 (ISED/ALD 1).

	Subject x Verb	Object	Past Participle
1	<i>You must get</i>	<i>your hair</i>	<i>cut.</i>
2	<i>Where did you have</i>	<i>them</i>	<i>printed?</i>
3	<i>She had</i>	<i>a new dress</i>	<i>made.</i>
4	<i>Have you heard</i>	<i>Italian</i>	<i>spoken?</i>
5	<i>His actions made</i>	<i>him</i>	<i>respected.</i>
6	<i>King Charles I had</i>	<i>his head</i>	<i>cut off.</i>
7	<i>The soldier had</i>	<i>two horses</i>	<i>shot under him.</i>

The chief advantage of presenting a pattern in a table, as the example shows, is that its vertical divisions are made to correspond to the major structural elements of the pattern. Here, the eye running down the columns easily confirms what 'Object' suggests – that here we have a set of noun phrases, in which the determiners, where they occur, are also helpfully aligned. Notice, too, that throughout the scheme, we have a coupling-up of subject and verb in a single column. This allows the inversion of subject and verb found in interrogative sentences (as in nos. 2 and 4), and the deletion of the subject associated with imperatives, to be included alongside plain declaratives without distortion of the tables.

Two other new features deserve comment. The first is that Hornby often provides detailed explanatory notes. These may point out the various factors which determine the choice of one variant of a pattern rather than another (compare *Don't throw stones at the dog* and *Don't throw at the dog anything that might hurt him*), or they may indicate cases where the verbs used in one pattern may also be used in another. Hornby also provides – for many of the transitive patterns that allow the passive transformation – examples illustrating how it is formed. This guidance is provided in notes, and is especially helpful in cases where the passive requires an initial *it* (as it does in Pattern 11):

- (5) He explained that nothing could be done.
 ⇒ It was explained that nothing could be done.

As for the positioning of VP codes in entries, ISED is a considerable improvement on GEW as regards consistency of placement. In complex entries, verb-pattern codes are positioned immediately after the numeral introducing the sub-sense and before the definition, as in this entry:

- (6) **find** ... *vt. & i.* ...1 (P1, 18, 19) get back a thing or person that has been lost, left behind or forgotten.

In entries for the 'heavy-duty' verbs – such as *make* and *take* – there are blocks of phrasal verbs, with each fresh combination of the headword and an adverb or preposition being introduced in bold print. Here, the difference between transitive and intransitive phrasal verbs is helpfully indicated by introducing the appropriate code after the form in bold:

- (7) **take** ... *vt. & i.* ...16 (combined with adv. & prep. in special uses) ... **take out**, (P 10) ... *to take out a stain* ... **take over**, (P 10, 23) ... *When shall you be ready to take over (the business)?*

7. Examples in ISED

It will be clear from these entries that, except for the introduction of VP codes, the microstructure of ISED follows a pattern familiar from some mother-tongue dictionaries, with the various senses of the headword being introduced by numbers and supported by example phrases or sentences. However, it is worth noting that, by the time the *General Service List* was compiled (early in 1936), careful thought had been given to the role of examples as models for sentence-building. In fact, two types of examples were discussed by Palmer in this year. The first type, to which he gave the name 'skeleton-type example', is illustrated at (8), below:

- (8) to be used to something or somebody
 to get used to something or somebody
 to be used to doing something
 to get used to doing something (Palmer 1936)

Of course, these are not examples at all, if by examples we mean instances of *performance*, whether real or simulated (Cowie 1997). They are the result of *simplification* (notice the absence of a grammatical subject) and *abstraction* (the words 'something' and 'somebody' stand for a whole range of specific noun phrases). I call these examples 'minimal lexicalized patterns' (Cowie 1995) and their value has long been recognized in French and Italian monolingual dictionaries, as well as in English learners' dictionaries (Cowie 1996).

Interestingly, Hornby developed for ISED a type of skeleton *clause* example which was less abstract than those I have just illustrated, and for that reason more user-friendly, but which at the same time was sufficiently simplified to provide a sound model for imitation and expansion. Here are some examples from ISED:

- (9) to cut steps in a rock
to cut a tunnel [road, etc.] through a hill
to cut a canal
to cut a figure in stone (ISED).

Notice that these are subject-less clauses, that the verb is in the infinitive form, and that modification of objects is cut to the minimum.

We should bear in mind that, in the mid-1930s, there was also discussion of examples that showed no abstraction or alternation at all. These were called the 'sentence-sample type' by Palmer, and they are familiar today from those dictionaries which stay close to examples as they are delivered by the corpus, but also from those which include grammatically complete *made-up* sentences. Interestingly, it was recognized that the example-type chosen for a particular dictionary would depend on the preferences of its users, and specifically on whether they liked information to be set out fully and in detail, or in a concise, organized form (Cowie 1997).

In practice, this often means providing a *variety* of example types, as Hornby was to demonstrate in the *Idiomatic and Syntactic English Dictionary*. A few years ago, I analysed a run of 506 entries and sub-entries in ISED/ALD 1, and found that, out of a total of 258 examples of all types, the bulk of the 129 phrase and clause examples were simplified – that is, made into skeleton examples – in a more or less standardized way (Cowie 1995). The clauses typically consisted of a transitive verb in the infinitive form, and a noun with little or no modification functioning as the direct object. (Look again at the examples at (9)).

However, examples like these made up only half of the total in my study. In the same run of entries there was an almost equal number (115) of 'sentence-sample' examples which, because they were grammatically complete, came closer to simulating actual speech or writing. These could be used to convey cultural or encyclopaedic information. Look at the full sentence examples at (10):

- (10) Can you manage another slice of cake?
Harvey discovered the circulation of the blood.
I hope the builders won't exceed their estimate. (ISED)

8. Grammatical research and ALD 2 and ALD 3

As we have already seen, Hornby's grammatical research continued in the intervals between the editions of his dictionary so that when, for example, he came to compile the second edition (of 1963), he was able to draw on a published grammar – *A Guide to Patterns and Usage in English* – which reflected some of the grammatical categorization of the first edition of ALD, including the verb patterns, while at the same time introducing a good deal of fresh analysis.

The *Guide to Patterns* was not a full teaching or reference grammar, but a selective work, which set out to emphasize certain key areas of English syntax. It was first of all remarkable for taking a fresh approach to the treatment of modality. Hornby's idea was to treat modality not from the point of view of the modal verbs, taken one by one, but from the viewpoint of

the notions (e.g. of certainty or probability) which the various modal verbs expressed. This idea was eventually made use of in the fourth edition of ALD (1989), where usage notes were set up to deal with such notions as certainty, bringing together the various modal verbs by which they were realized.

As regards the patterns which the *Guide to Patterns* introduced for the first time, these were the complementation patterns of nouns and adjectives (e.g. *a decision to leave* and *unwise to accept his offer*). In the *Guide*, Hornby referred to these categories by means of codes (e.g. NP2, AP1C, etc.) which, as it happened, were never incorporated in ALD 2 itself. However, there is clear evidence from the dictionary that Hornby's analysis of adjective complementation was used during its compilation, leading to a marked increase in the number of relevant examples.

As regards the verb-pattern scheme, no changes of any importance were made for the second edition. For ALD 3, though, radical restructuring was in the air, and there is no doubt that Hornby absorbed and adopted in part the verb-complementation scheme of *A Grammar of Contemporary English*, compiled by Randolph Quirk and his colleagues and published in 1972. The most significant alteration reflecting this influence was that the arrangement of the patterns was changed, so that, taking account of the major verb-classes represented, they now followed the order copular and intransitive (VPs 1-4E), monotransitive (VPs 6A-10), di-transitive (VPs 11-21) and complex-transitive (VPs 22-25) (Cowie 1989). By grouping together VPs that had the same major function, Hornby brought about a great improvement in the *system*, and hence in the way the VPs were perceived and understood.

Also contributing to the orderliness of the VP scheme was Hornby's treatment, within those major categories, of various types of complementation. Consider the patterns illustrated by the examples at (11):

- (11) I couldn't decide who to speak to.
 I suppose he'll be standing for election.
 She asked why I was leaving.

Here, the verbs are all monotransitive, but the clauses functioning as direct objects have different constituent structures. These differences within functional similarity were reflected in ALD 3 by juxtaposing the relevant patterns and tables (in this case, VPs 8, 9 and 10). This again was a great improvement on the arrangement in the first two editions, where those patterns had alternated with others of a radically different functional type.

9. The enduring legacy

We continue to be the beneficiaries of A. S. Hornby's achievements as a lexicographer. Hornby was, with Harold Palmer and Michael West, a key figure in the movement of ideas and research which gave rise to the earliest learners' dictionaries. In the *Second Interim Report on English Collocations* – that much-neglected classic – he greatly extended our analytical understanding of phraseology and helped to develop a sense of its centrality to language learning and language use. After the *Interim Report*, no advanced-level EFL dictionary could fail to give due prominence to collocations and idioms. Hornby was also involved – almost from the time of his arrival in Tokyo in 1931 – in grammatical description,

and in due course, as chief editor of ISED, he was able to take Palmer's pioneering verb-pattern scheme, reorganize it along more systematic lines, and facilitate the learner's access to it by the introduction of verb-pattern tables.

We should bear in mind that dictionary-making was not among the original objectives of IRET research: the work on phraseology and vocabulary control into which Hornby was drawn was originally intended to produce improved syllabuses for Japanese schools. It was the particular direction taken by the vocabulary-control movement which indicated that the logical end-point should be dictionaries, and, at the same time, decided that language *production* should be their primary function. As chief editor of a dictionary whose title included the words 'idiomatic' and 'syntactic', Hornby placed himself firmly within that tendency, a fact which the emphasis on phraseology, construction patterns, and the small but vital 'function' words like prepositions and modal verbs, served to underline. Without doubt, Hornby deserves the greatest credit for recognizing, in ISED, the importance of the user's encoding needs, and also for understanding precisely how those needs should be met. Here we remain permanently in his debt. Perhaps his finest achievement as a lexicographer, though, was to go beyond this model and to produce a design which met encoding needs superlatively well, while also fulfilling many of the advanced student's decoding needs. Though it was only with the second edition of 1963, through the extension of technical and scientific coverage, that something like the present balance between help for the reader and support for the writer was achieved, the essential first step was taken with ISED/ALD.

When it first appeared, ISED was very much in advance of its time, and thanks to the conservatism of even its chief beneficiaries, an informed understanding of its content and structure was slow to emerge. We had to wait till the late 1970s for the publication of the first detailed linguistic analyses of ALD. These appeared, appropriately enough, in the volume dedicated to Hornby on his eightieth birthday (Stevens 1978). One of the ironies of recent EFL history is that the beginnings of the scientific study of lexicography in Britain coincided with the high tide of the communicative movement. Learner lexicography had little impact at the time on mainstream ELT thinking, while the development of functional and notional syllabuses and the emphasis on meaning as something negotiated rather than learnt – at least initially – to have little need of dictionaries. By the mid-1980s, though, growing recognition of the vital importance of vocabulary learning had put the dictionary back centre-stage, and this in turn led to a much fuller recognition of the achievements of A. S. Hornby. Despite the fundamental changes in the management and compilation of EFL dictionaries which have accompanied the computer revolution of the past twenty years, the great cornerstones of the Hornby legacy are still clearly visible in the best work of the 1990s: a balanced concern for the needs of the learner as reader and writer; a continuing recognition of the central importance of grammatical words and patterns; an insistence on descriptive rigour as well as usability; and, above all, perhaps, an acknowledgement of the crucial role in language learning and use – and thus in the dictionary record – of collocations and idioms.

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