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What Web Ads, Blurbs and Introductions Tell Potential Dictionary Buyers about Users, User Needs and Lexicographic Functions

Abstract

The present article deals with an investigation aimed at establishing the extent to which existing dictionaries provide potential dictionary buyers/borrowers with clear, unmistakable and easily understandable information about user need situations that might prompt consultation of the dictionary in question. The investigation analyses four monolingual English phrasal verbs dictionaries and five monolingual English specialised dictionaries. The primary sources of such information are identified as back cover blurbs of dictionaries, introductions to dictionaries and web ads for dictionaries. In the analysis, statements about user need situations extracted from these information sources are first classified as clear vs. unclear statements. The clear statements are then classified under the lexicographic function to which they are related. The results of the analysis disconfirm the hypothesis that the more well-defined and constrained the intended user group or groups for a given dictionary are, the more likely it is that the sources of information will provide the potential dictionary buyer/borrower with clear, unmistakable and easily understandable information about lexicographic function(s).

1. Introduction

For someone who finds himself/herself in a situation that requires the consultation of a dictionary to solve a particular problem, there are various sources of information which – in the ideal case – can tell the potential dictionary user whether a given dictionary will satisfy his/her needs. If the need for consultation requires the purchase of a dictionary, the following sources of information are available. Students for example may ask teachers (and perhaps also fellow students) for advice. Other information sources include reviews, publishers' printed and online book catalogues, publishers' ads including publishers' web ads (usually linked to publishers' online catalogues), blurbs and book introductions (also called 'prefaces' or 'forewords').

This study will analyse publishers' ads (in this case web ads), back cover blurbs and book introductions for a number of monolingual English dictionaries with the purpose of establishing whether these sources of information provide the kind of information potential dictionary buyers or borrowers need. The analysis will be based on the functional theory of lexicography in the sense that it will attempt to uncover whether the three sources of information give clear, unmistakable and easily understandable information about the kind of user group or user groups the given dictionary is intended for and, more importantly, whether they provide the potential dictionary buyer with clear, unmistakable and easily understandable information about the lexicographic function(s) covered by the dictionary¹, so that the potential dictionary buyer can readily establish whether the given dictionary will satisfy his/her extra-lexicographic needs.

The three sources of information mentioned have been selected for this study because they are readily available to the potential dictionary buyer (provided he/she has access through a computer

¹ For the functional theory of lexicography in general and lexicographic functions in particular, see for example Tarp (2008)

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to the Internet). Not all dictionaries are reviewed, and it may furthermore be difficult and time-consuming for a potential dictionary buyer to locate a review of a particular dictionary. Also, publishers' printed book catalogues are rarely readily available.

With respect to 'introductions' (or 'prefaces/forewords'), they have only been included in the analysis if they are not too long or integrated into another front matter text. The longest introduction included in the study is the one found in Longman Phrasal Verbs Dictionary, stretching over three pages. The reason why long introductions or introductions integrated into other front matter texts should be excluded from the analysis is that potential dictionary buyers in the actual purchase situations are unlikely to read through very long texts in their search for relevant statements that can tell them whether the dictionary will satisfy their needs.

The dictionaries analysed fall into two groups:

- a) Four monolingual English phrasal verbs dictionaries
- b) Five monolingual English specialised dictionaries (all published by Oxford University Press)²

The hypothesis is that the more well-defined and constrained the intended user group for a given dictionary is, the more likely it is that the sources of information will provide the potential dictionary buyer with clear, unmistakable and easily understandable information about lexicographic function(s). This is based on the assumption that it is much easier to define lexicographic function(s) for a clearly defined intended user group than for a diffuse user group.

The three types of information sources have previously been studied from a variety of perspectives, mainly by genre analysts who have studied them with the aim of establishing communicative purpose(s) for these genres. Bhatia (1997) is a study of academic book introductions in which he establishes that such introductions mix a descriptive communicative purpose with a promotional communicative purpose. It also includes a discussion of possible differences between the terms 'introduction', 'preface' and 'foreword', for example with respect to authorship of these texts. His conclusion is that it is largely impossible to set up any clear-cut distinctions with respect to communicative purpose, authorship, etc. between 'introductions', 'prefaces' and 'forewords'. For this reason, no distinction between them will be made in this study. Bhatia (2004: 168-181) analyses three book blurbs (two from academic works and one from fiction) and concludes that in fact all three blurbs share the same communicative purpose (description and evaluation), but there are differences between the fictional work on the one hand and the academic works on the other in terms of lexical choices in the blurbs, particularly with respect to adjectives. Gea-Valor (2005) investigates publishers' web site ads from four publishing companies (Penguin, Ballantine, Routledge, and Barnes & Noble). She finds that these ads share communicative purposes (persuasive and informative) with blurbs to such an extent that they constitute a single genre. Kathpalia (1997) is a study of cross-cultural differences between book blurbs of international publishers and local Singapore-based publishers. Cacchiani (2007) is an investigation of evaluative language in book blurbs taken from what she calls 'lazy reads', whose communicative purpose is almost exclusively promotional, whereas Gesuato (2007) is a study of evaluative language in back-cover blurbs of academic books. Basturkmen (2009) is a study of the blurbs of seven English as a Foreign Language course books with a view to identifying the values of the English Language teaching community. This is done through a study of the key lexical items in the blurbs. Finally, Cronin/La Barre (2005) define blurbs as book recommendations on dust jackets written by named authors (called 'blurbers'), so that a book may contain more than one blurb. Their analysis of 450 non-fiction books (history and business) with a total of 1850 blurbs had the aim of discovering whether there exist 'serial blurbers' (authors writing inordinate numbers of blurbs) or 'back-scratching blurbers' (authors writing blurbs for each other's books on a regular basis), but this could not be confirmed by their study.

2 For references, see the bibliography.

All of these studies are concerned with either works of fiction or academic prose works. None of them have studied web ads, blurbs or introductions for reference works such as dictionaries or encyclopaedia. There is every reason to expect that web ads, blurbs and introductions for utility tools such as dictionaries and encyclopaedia will differ in content and structure from web ads, blurbs and introductions for both fictional and academic prose works.

First of all, the genuine purpose of dictionaries and encyclopaedia is to fulfil punctual (either communicative or cognitive) needs that arise in a range of extra-lexicographic situations, although some dictionaries contain outer matter texts with a genuine purpose that resembles that of academic prose works, i.e. to satisfy global cognitive needs. On the other hand, the genuine purpose of fictional works is to satisfy emotional, entertainment (and possibly other) needs, and the genuine purpose of academic works is to satisfy global cognitive (often educational) needs, although textbooks in particular are often provided with indexes to allow consultation to satisfy punctual cognitive needs.

Secondly, since dictionaries are compiled to cater for sometimes just one type of extra-lexicographic user need (monofunctional dictionaries), sometimes a multitude of extra-lexicographical user needs (polyfunctional dictionaries), potential dictionary buyers have a legitimate right to demand that those text genres that exist with the purpose of providing information about the user needs they were designed to fulfil give clear, unmistakable and easily understandable information about the data included in the dictionary to satisfy those user needs.

Gouws (2007) and Andersen/Fuertes-Olivera (2009) offer suggestions as to how this information can be formulated so as to give the potential dictionary buyer a clear indication of the communicative and/or cognitive needs a specific dictionary is meant to satisfy.

Gouws (2007) suggests that information about lexicographic function(s) could be given in the front matter texts of the dictionary. For a dictionary with both receptive and productive functions a formulation such as *Help with the writing and understanding of texts* would be very helpful. Likewise, for a dictionary with an exclusively cognitive function, the front matter texts could include a formulation such as *Help with knowledge about language* (or some other specific subject field).

Andersen/Fuertes-Olivera (2009) is an investigation, based on the functional theory of lexicography, of five English monolingual business dictionaries with the aim of suggesting a functionally based classification of such dictionaries. In addition, and more importantly in this context, they give some proposals for adding extra information (for example in the blurb) about the specific functions (and types of users) the dictionary is adequate for. They give the following proposals for the five business dictionaries investigated (adapted from Andersen/Fuertes-Olivera (2009: 236):

Dictionary	Captions in the blurb
Parkins, D. (ed.) 2005. <i>Oxford Business English Dictionary for Learners of English</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press	A communicatively oriented dictionary for semi-experts and interested laymen with mostly text production needs
Summers, D. (ed.) 2007. <i>Longman Business English Dictionary</i> , 2 nd ed. Harlow: Pearson Longman	A communicatively oriented dictionary, with a cognitive touch, for semi-experts and interested laymen with both text production and text reception needs
Collin, P.H. 2001. <i>Dictionary of Business</i> , 3 rd ed. London: Peter Collin Publishing	A balanced cognitively and communicatively oriented dictionary for semi-experts and experts with mostly text reception needs
Law, J. (ed.) 2006. <i>A Dictionary of Business and Management</i> , 4 th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press	A cognitively oriented dictionary for experts and semi-experts with text reception needs
Pass, C., B. Lowes, A. Pendleton, L. Chadwick, D. O'Reilly & M. Afferson 2005. <i>Collins Dictionary of Business</i> , 3 rd ed. Glasgow: Collins	A cognitively oriented dictionary for experts and semi-experts with text reception needs

Whether the theoretically oriented expressions such as *A communicatively oriented dictionary*, *text production and text reception needs*, etc. are adequate for a potential dictionary buyer with no knowledge of theoretical lexicographic terms can be questioned, but the proposals at least indicate in an unmistakable way which function(s) each dictionary is meant to satisfy.

2. Methodology

The methodology of this study consists in the extraction – from the three sources of information – statements that are judged to contain more or less clear descriptions or expressions of extra-lexicographic need situations that might prompt consultation of the dictionary in question and therefore a desire to buy (or borrow) it. The statements are simply divided into statements that are judged to be clear statements about user need situations and statements that are judged to be unclear statements about user need situations. All statements appear from Appendix A.

A statement such as

- *it [i.e. the dictionary] explains their meaning [i.e. the meaning of the phrasal verbs] using uncomplicated language* (Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus/Intro)

is judged to be a clear statement about the user need for assistance with respect to looking up the meaning of a phrasal verb whose meaning is unknown to the dictionary user. On the other hand, a statement such as

- *up-to-date information about phrasal verbs in general English, as well as in business, Internet and computing contexts* (Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus/Blurb)

is judged to be unclear, since it is not at all evident what sort of information is meant here. The term '*information*' does not give any specific clues as to what specific user need or needs the data referred to by means of the term '*information*' serve to satisfy. The statement

- *all information needed to understand phrasal verbs* (Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus/Intro)

however, has been classified as a clear statement, since the term '*information*' here is clearly linked to the user need of finding out the meaning of a given phrasal verb.

In a few cases, statements have been classified as clear, although the sources of information have used terms that may be slightly confusing to potential dictionary buyers with respect to the satisfaction of user needs. Examples include

- *clear explanations* (Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus/Web ad)
- *new entries to explain the concepts, vocabulary and jargon associated with current theories of leadership, motivation, and team building* (Oxford Dictionary of Business and Management/Preface)

where it is doubtful whether all potential dictionary buyers will interpret ‘*explanations/explain*’ as ‘*definitions/define*’ and thus conclude that the dictionary is intended to meet receptive needs. Another example is the statement

- *explication of the new and sometimes baffling vocabulary associated with structured finance and the subprime lending crisis* (Oxford Dictionary of Business and Management/Preface)

where it is even more doubtful that potential dictionary buyers will interpret the term ‘*explication*’ to mean that they will find definitions that will help them understand the meaning of the vocabulary items in question. The same applies to the statement

- *clarification of everyday business terms* (Oxford Dictionary of Business and Management/Web ad)

However, since at least some dictionary users (perhaps the more experienced ones) may be able to unravel the probable intended meaning of these statements, they have been classified as clear statements.

In the lists of statements (see Appendix A), all extracted statements have been classified first as ‘clear statements’ or ‘unclear statements’. Secondly, ‘clear statements’ have been classified under the lexicographic function to which they are related. A statement such as

- *information about whether or not a phrasal verb is passive* (Longman Phrasal Verbs Dictionary/Intro)

has been classified under the lexicographic function ‘Production’ since the statement is intended to provide the potential dictionary buyer with information about the capability of the phrasal verb to appear in the passive voice.³

A statement such as

- *recommended web links for many entries – these links are a valuable source of extra information* (Oxford Dictionary of Economics/Web ad)

has been classified under the lexicographic function ‘Cognition’, because it tells the potential dictionary buyer that the dictionary is capable of guiding him/her to other sources of information where additional knowledge about the entry word in question can be obtained.

A few statements in Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus, Cambridge Phrasal Verbs Dictionary and Oxford Phrasal Verbs have been classified under the lexicographic function ‘Vocabulary Building’. This applies for example to the following statement:

- *hundreds of synonyms and antonyms help build your vocabulary* (Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus /Blurb)

In the traditional functional theory of lexicography, ‘Vocabulary Building’ will probably be viewed as a sub-function under ‘Cognition’. However, since these learner’s dictionaries explicitly refer to this (important) aspect of language learning, ‘Vocabulary Building’ has been set up in this study as a separate lexicographic function.

³ The statement might perhaps have been given a wording that more clearly indicates what the data about ‘*passive*’ can be used for, for example: ‘*information about whether or not a phrasal verb can be used in the passive*’.

The following two statements in Oxford Dictionary of Law have been related to two different functions, namely both ‘Cognition’ and ‘Production’:

- *the Writing and Citation Guide provides detailed advice on how to write and present essays on legal subjects* (Oxford Dictionary of Law/Preface)
- *a useful Writing and Citation Guide that specifically addresses problems and establishes conventions for writing legal essays and reports* (Oxford Dictionary of Law/Web ad)

In most cases, consultation of this Writing and Citation Guide will be for cognitive reasons, i.e. not related to any specific communicative-productive situation, but we cannot rule out the possibility that on rare occasions, the Guide may be consulted in a specific communicative-productive situation.

The same might perhaps apply to the following statements:

- *Language Study articles on pronunciation, register, grammar, metaphor and learner errors* (Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus/Blurb)
- *explanations of how particles contribute to the meaning of phrasal verbs* (Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus/Blurb)

However, in these cases it is very unlikely that users will consult these outer matter texts to solve communicative problems. They have therefore been classified only under the function ‘Cognition’.

3. Analysis

3.1. Users

With respect to statements about intended users it clearly appears from the analysis that the four phrasal verbs dictionaries see themselves as English learner’s dictionaries. This is explicitly stated in Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus/Intro, Cambridge Phrasal Verbs Dictionary/Intro, and in Oxford Phrasal Verbs/Blurb (front cover). Longman Phrasal Verbs Dictionary/Blurb further specifies that the dictionary is intended for ‘advanced’ and ‘upper intermediate’ learners of English.

Longman Phrasal Verbs Dictionary/Web ad, Cambridge Phrasal Verbs Dictionary/Intro and Oxford Phrasal Verbs/Web ad mention ‘learners’ as an intended user group without further specification of type of learner. The same implicit information is given through the use of the term ‘students’ in Longman Phrasal Verbs Dictionary/Blurb, Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus/Web ad, Cambridge Phrasal Verbs Dictionary/Web ad, and Oxford Phrasal Verbs/Web ad.

However, since all four dictionaries are monolingual English dictionaries, we must assume in all these cases that potential buyers of these dictionaries will take this information to mean that the dictionaries are intended for ‘learners of English’.

Three of the phrasal verbs dictionaries restrict their intended user groups to this category whereas Longman Phrasal Verbs Dictionary/Blurb further gives ‘general’ as an intended user group. ‘General’ will probably have to be interpreted as ‘the general public’ and is probably included by the publishers in an attempt to reach as large a user market as possible.

However, on the whole it can be concluded that the four phrasal verbs dictionaries indicate that their intended user groups is quite clearly defined and constrained to learners of English.

With respect to intended user groups for the five specialised dictionaries, the picture is quite different. They all mention ‘students’ and ‘professionals’ (mainly of the relevant subject field, i.e. the subject field covered by the dictionary) as intended user groups, and with the exception of Oxford Dictionary of Accounting, they also see ‘teachers/lecturers’ (also mainly of the relevant subject field) as potential dictionary users. ‘Teachers/lecturers’ as potential users are mentioned mainly in the web ads. But then the picture becomes blurred, cf. the following statements:

- *all those interested in the financial world* (Oxford Dictionary of Accounting/Preface)
- *anyone who encounters accounting terms in their work* (Oxford Dictionary of Accounting/Web ad)
- *anyone needing a guide to economic terms* (Oxford Dictionary of Economics/Blurb)
- *wide audience* (Oxford Dictionary of Economics/Preface)
- *anyone who has to deal with economic data or writing* (Oxford Dictionary of Economics/Web ad)
- *anyone wanting a handy guide to legal terminology* (Oxford Dictionary of Law/Blurb)
- *laypeople who are affected by the law* (Oxford Dictionary of Law/Preface)
- *anyone needing clear definitions of legal terms* (Oxford Dictionary of Law/Web ad)
- *anyone involved in public finance or financial trading* (Oxford Dictionary of Finance and Banking/Blurb)
- *anyone needing clarification of commonly used business terms* (Oxford Dictionary of Business and Management/Blurb)
- *the general reader looking for clarification of everyday business terms* (Oxford Dictionary of Business and Management/Web ad)

These statements alone clearly show that the compilers/publishers of these specialised dictionaries have had the intention of appealing to so far-reaching a user market that we are left with the impression that they have had no clear perception of whom the dictionaries are intended for. We must therefore conclude that the five specialised dictionaries have no clearly defined and constrained intended user group(s).

3.2. Functions

As mentioned in the Methodology section, statements about lexicographic functions of the dictionaries have been classified as clear, if there is no doubt about which user need(s) the statement refers to. That section provided a few examples. In the following, a few more examples are given, classified according to lexicographic function:

(a) 'Reception':

- *clear simple definitions using the Longman 2000-word Defining Vocabulary* (Longman Phrasal Verbs Dictionary/Blurb)
- *over 100 cartoons illustrating meaning* (Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus/Blurb)
- *meanings are explained clearly and simply* (Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus/Blurb)
- *definitions of terms, concepts and jargon* (Oxford Dictionary of Accounting/Blurb)
- *2,500 key economic terms, with clear, concise definitions* (Oxford Dictionary of Economics/Web ad)

(b) 'Production':

- *clear grammar patterns show you how to use phrasal verbs* (Longman Phrasal Verbs Diction-

ary/Blurb)

- *lists of collocations help you speak and write more naturally* (Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus/Blurb)
- *clear advice on grammar and usage* (Cambridge Phrasal Verbs Dictionary/Blurb)
- *clear information about how formal or informal phrasal verbs are* (Cambridge Phrasal Verbs Dictionary/Intro)
- *12,000 grammar codes show you the correct word order* (Oxford Phrasal Verbs/Blurb)

(c) ‘Cognition’:

- *a collection of articles [...] on topics such as syntax, register and pronunciation, to help students to develop a better awareness of how phrasal verbs work and why they are so useful* (Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus/Intro)
- *highlighted worked examples to help clarify difficult concepts* (Oxford Dictionary of Accounting/Web ad)
- *detailed appendices include Nobel Prize winners, the Greek alphabet, and commonly used acronyms* (Oxford Dictionary of Economics/Blurb)
- *highlighted feature entries discuss key topics in detail, for example adoption law, the appeals system [...]* (Oxford Dictionary of Law/Web ad)
- *recommended web links for many entries* (Oxford Dictionary of Business and Management/Blurb)

(d) ‘Vocabulary Building’:

- *over 100 striking two-colour cartoons to illustrate common phrasal verbs [...] making them more memorable* (Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus/Web ad, 2nd level)
- *a thematic section shows phrasal verbs in topic groups for vocabulary expansion* (Cambridge Phrasal Verbs Dictionary/Web ad)
- *synonyms and opposites help learners build their vocabulary* (Oxford Phrasal Verbs/Web ad)
- *hundreds of synonyms and antonyms help build your vocabulary* (Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus/Blurb)

Not only do potential dictionary buyers have a legitimate claim to be told to what extent a given dictionary can satisfy (a range of) user needs. They also have a legitimate claim to be given this information in a language they can understand. We already touched upon this issue in the Introduction where it was questioned whether the formulations containing theoretical lexicographic terms suggested in Andersen/Fuertes-Olivera (2009) will be understood by potential dictionary buyers. Statements have therefore been classified as clear only if they avoid the use of such terms. In fact, no statement extracted from the nine dictionaries analysed have used theoretical lexicographical terms, and we can therefore conclude that all clear statements are also easily understandable statements.

An analysis of the main reasons for classifying statements as unclear with respect to the potential satisfaction of user needs reveals that for the phrasal verbs dictionaries many of these statements refer to linguistic data included in the dictionary articles or in outer matter texts, however

without giving any clues as to which user needs they were included to satisfy. This applies for example to the following statement about synonyms and antonyms:

- *if a phrasal verb has a synonym or a word that has almost the same meaning, this is shown at the end of that sense of the phrasal verb* (Longman Phrasal Verbs Dictionary/Intro)

In two of the dictionaries, there are in fact clear statements about synonyms and antonyms, but there is not total agreement as to what this kind of linguistic data can be used for in terms of satisfying user needs. Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus states that synonyms and antonyms have been included to support ‘Vocabulary Building’:

- *hundreds of synonyms and antonyms help build your vocabulary* (Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus/Blurb)
- *hundreds of synonyms and antonyms [...] help build students’ vocabulary* (Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus/Web ad 2nd level)

Oxford Phrasal Verbs, however, states that the inclusion of synonyms and antonyms supports both ‘Vocabulary Building’ and ‘Production’:

- *synonyms and opposites help learners build their vocabulary* (Oxford Phrasal Verbs/Web ad)
- *2,000 synonyms and opposites help you choose the right word* (Oxford Phrasal Verbs/Blurb)

Other unclear statements about linguistic data include the following:

- *nouns and adjectives which are related to a phrasal verb are shown after the meaning of the phrasal verb they are derived from* (Longman Phrasal Verbs Dictionary/Intro)
- *an index of single-word verbs that have phrasal verb synonyms: using the index you can look up a word like inherit and find a phrasal verb – come into – with the same meaning* (Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus/Intro)
- *‘collocation boxes’ providing invaluable information about the most frequent and natural-sounding combinations* (Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus/Intro)
- *thousands of example sentences based on the Cambridge International Corpus* (Cambridge Phrasal Verbs Dictionary/Blurb)
- *a list of single verbs that have a common phrasal verb equivalent* (Cambridge Phrasal Verbs Dictionary/Intro)
- *‘Guide to Particles’ explains the most important meanings of the main adverbs and prepositions used in phrasal verbs to help learners see problems* (Oxford Phrasal Verbs/Web ad)

Some statements refer to special layout features such as highlighting or the use of symbols, but again it is difficult to deduce from these statements which specific user needs the features were included to satisfy. Examples include:

- *most common phrasal verbs are printed in blue boxes to show you that they are important to learn* (Cambridge Phrasal Verbs Dictionary/Intro)
- *most frequent verbs are highlighted in red* (Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus/Blurb)
- *most frequent phrasal verbs are highlighted [...] to show [...] how important they are for students to learn* (Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus/Web ad 1st level)

- *key symbol shows the 500 phrasal verbs you really need to know* (Oxford Phrasal Verbs/Blurb)

In the Methodology section we have already mentioned and given examples of nouns such as ‘*information*’ and ‘*coverage*’ whose meaning is too general to give clues as to the data referred to, unless the noun is modified in some way so as to give the potential buyer a clue to the user needs the data are intended to satisfy. Examples from the phrasal verbs dictionaries include the following:

- *up-to-date information about phrasal verbs in general English, as well as in business, Internet and computing contexts* (Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus/Blurb)
- *we have identified just over 1,000 of the most frequently used English phrasal verbs [...] students and teachers have told us how useful this information is* (Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus/Intro)
- *coverage of phrasal verbs used in General English as well as in business, Internet and computing contexts* (Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus)

However, this practice is especially widespread in the specialised dictionaries, particularly through the use of the noun ‘*coverage*’. Examples include:

- *coverage of terms commonly used in financial accounting* (Oxford Dictionary of Accounting/Preface)
- *comprehensive coverage of financial accounting, management accounting [...]* (Oxford Dictionary of Accounting /Web ad)
- *strong international coverage of economic organizations and institutions* (Oxford Dictionary of Economics/Blurb)
- *expanded coverage of common econometric concepts* (Oxford Dictionary of Economics/Web ad)
- *expanded coverage of criminology and law enforcement* (Oxford Dictionary of Law/Web ad)
- *generous coverage of the terms used in government finance, the money supply* (Oxford Dictionary of Finance and Banking/Preface)
- *full coverage of the new and comprehensive Companies Act* (Oxford Dictionary of Business and Management/Preface)

In a few statements, the verb ‘*cover*’ is used in the same way:

- *covers all aspects of economics, including economic theory, applied microeconomics [...]* (Oxford Dictionary of Economics/Web ad)
- *covers important new legislation in company law, constitutional law [...]* (Oxford Dictionary of Law/Web ad)

The verb ‘*include*’ is used in the same fashion in the following statement:

- *includes marketing, accounting, organizational behaviour, global finance, business strategy, and taxation* (Oxford Dictionary of Business and Management/Blurb)

In fact, the number of statements in the information sources for the specialised dictionaries with ‘*coverage/cover*’ without some form of modification to explain which user needs the ‘*coverage*’

intends to satisfy is 26, i.e. almost half of the 56 unclear statements in the information sources for the specialised dictionaries.

A few statements for the specialised dictionaries refer to the dictionary as a whole using such terms as 'guide', '(source of) reference', 'reference work' or 'source of information'. Examples include:

- *guide to assist professional advisers in their work* (Oxford Dictionary of Accounting /Preface)
- *an essential source of reference* (Oxford Dictionary of Economics/Blurb)
- *a handy guide to legal terminology* (Oxford Dictionary of Law/Blurb)
- *the authoritative A-Z guide to the world of money* (Oxford Dictionary of Finance and Banking/Blurb (front cover))

These terms do not in any way in themselves give any assistance to the potential dictionary buyer with respect to revealing information about intended lexicographic functions.

Rough calculations of the proportion of clear statements to unclear statements about user needs in the three sources of information for the dictionaries analysed give the following results⁴:

Longman Phrasal Verbs Dictionary	Clear statements	Unclear statements
Blurb	100.0%	0.0%
Intro	57.1%	42.9%
Web ad	100.0%	0.0%
Total	84.2%	15.8%
Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus		
Blurb	63.6%	36.4%
Intro	54.5%	45.5%
Web ad	59.1%	40.9%
Total	59.1%	40.9%
Cambridge Phrasal Verbs Dictionary		
Blurb	28.6%	71.4%
Intro	70.0%	30.0%
Web ad	60.0%	40.0%
Total	54.5%	45.5%
Oxford Phrasal Verbs		
Blurb	69.2%	30.8%
Web ad	80.0%	20.0%
Total	73.9%	26.1%
Total Phrasal Verbs Dictionaries	65.7%	34.3%

Table 1. Proportion of clear statements to unclear statements in the three sources of information for the phrasal verbs dictionaries

⁴ See Appendix B for the absolute numbers of statements.

Oxford Dictionary of Accounting	Clear statements	Unclear statements
Blurb	75.0%	25.0%
Preface	25.0%	75.0%
Web ad	71.4%	28.6%
Total	60.0%	40.0%
Oxford Dictionary of Economics		
Blurb	40.0%	60.0%
Preface	50.0%	50.0%
Web ad	36.4%	63.4%
Total	40.9%	59.1%
Oxford Dictionary of Law		
Blurb	57.1%	42.9%
Preface	71.4%	28.6%
Web ad	50.0%	50.0%
Total	58.3%	41.7%
Oxford Dictionary of Banking and Finance		
Blurb	33.3%	66.7%
Preface	14.3%	85.7%
Web ad	62.5%	37.5%
Total	38.1%	61.9%
Oxford Dictionary of Business and Management		
Blurb	42.9%	51.1%
Preface	33.3%	66.7%
Web ad	33.3%	66.7%
Total	36.4%	63.6%
Total specialised dictionaries	46.2%	53.8%

Table 2. Proportion of clear statements to unclear statements in the three sources of information for the specialised dictionaries

If we look first at the total proportion of clear statements to unclear statements in the sources of information for the two groups of dictionaries (phrasal verbs dictionaries vs specialised dictionaries) (Tables 1 and 2), it is evident that the phrasal verbs dictionaries do better than the specialised dictionaries with respect to providing the potential dictionary buyer with clear statements about the user needs the dictionaries are intended to satisfy.

First of all, however, the difference is not judged to be significant enough to fully support the hypothesis that the sources of information for dictionaries with clearly defined and clearly constrained intended user groups are much better at providing potential dictionary buyers with clear, unmistakable and easily understandable information about their capability of satisfying specific user needs.

Secondly, there are significant differences within each group of dictionaries in this respect. As far as the phrasal verbs dictionaries are concerned, Longman Phrasal Verbs Dictionary performs significantly better than Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus and Cambridge Phrasal Verbs Dictionary, and Oxford Phrasal Verbs performs somewhat better than Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus and Cambridge Phrasal Verbs Dictionary.

With respect to the specialised dictionaries, Oxford Dictionary of Accounting and Oxford Dictionary of Law stand out compared with the other three specialised dictionaries with respect to

providing clear, unmistakable and easily understandable information about the user needs they were designed to satisfy. In fact, both of these dictionaries perform better than Cambridge Phrasal Verbs Dictionary and almost as well as Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus.

We must therefore conclude that the analysis cannot confirm the hypothesis that sources of information about lexicographic functions for dictionaries with clearly defined and constrained intended user groups are clearly better at providing potential dictionary buyers with clear, unmistakable and easily understandable information about the user needs they were designed to fulfil compared to sources of information for dictionaries with diffuse intended user groups.

Phrasal Verbs Dictionaries	Clear statements	Unclear statements
Blurbs	66.7%	33.3%
Intros	60.7%	39.3%
Web ads	68.3%	31.7%
Specialised dictionaries		
Blurbs	48.3%	51.7%
Prefaces	40.0%	60.0%
Web ads	48.9%	51.1%
Total for all dictionaries		
Blurbs	58.8%	41.2%
Intros/Prefaces	50.0%	50.0%
Web ads	56.8%	43.2%

Table 3. Total proportion of clear statements to unclear statements in the three sources of information

If we turn for a moment to each of the sources of information (Table 3) in order to see whether there are significant differences between them with respect to the proportion of clear statements to unclear statements, we can first of all conclude that the picture is quite similar for the two groups of dictionaries. The analysis shows that for both groups of dictionaries blurbs and web ads provide the potential dictionary buyer with a higher proportion of clear statements to unclear statements than the introductions/prefaces.

These results might be interesting if we could establish with certainty the authorship of each of the three types of information sources. We might assume that introductions/prefaces are mainly written by the editors/compiler of the dictionaries as a clear and objective guide to the contents and functions of the dictionaries. After all, editors/compiler may be expected to have a clear perception of who the intended users of their dictionaries are and which user needs they designed their dictionaries to satisfy – in other words the function or functions of their dictionaries. We might also assume that blurbs and web ads are mainly written by the publishers of the dictionaries as marketing tools for the dictionaries with a less clear perception of intended users and lexicographic function(s).

In essence, under these assumptions, we might expect introductions/prefaces to have a higher proportion of clear statements to unclear statements about lexicographic functions than the other two types of information sources.

Unfortunately, the literature does not provide us with a clear picture of the authorship of the three types of information sources. As already mentioned, Bhatia (1997) was unable to establish unequivocal authorship for introductions to academic books. With respect to the authorship of blurbs, Cronin/La Barre (2005: 19) says that “Blurbs are brief, effusive and often edited by the publisher”, while Bhatia (2004: 170) says that “It is a bit difficult to decide who actually writes the blurb. Is it the author of the book or the publisher? Or may both of them have a role to play?”.

In any case, the remarks by both Cronin/La Barre and Bhatia relate to blurbs for academic books and should not be generalized so as to include also blurbs for reference works such as dictionaries. However, in four of the five specialised dictionaries⁵, the prefaces are initialled by the editor of the dictionary and in one of the four phrasal verbs dictionaries⁶, the introduction is signed by the chief editor of the dictionary, which must be taken as an indication that the introduction/preface was actually written by the editor. Table 4 shows the percentages of clear and unclear statements for these five dictionaries.

	Clear statements	Unclear statements
Specialised dictionaries		
Blurbs	50.0%	50.0%
Prefaces	37.5%	62.5%
Web ad	52.9%	47.1%
Phrasal verbs dictionary		
Blurb	63.6%	36.4%
Introduction	54.5%	45.5%
Web ad	59.1%	40.9%

Table 4. Proportion of clear statements to unclear statements in the sources of information for four specialised dictionaries and one phrasal verbs dictionary

These results are remarkable if our assumptions with respect to authorship for blurbs and web ads hold, namely that these information sources are written by publishers' marketing people, particularly with respect to the specialised dictionaries, where the editors of the dictionaries are clearly more vague in their statements about dictionary functions. However, as already mentioned, verification of these conclusions will have to await further research into the authorship of the sources of information here investigated.

4. Conclusion

The hypothesis set forth in the introduction to this study – that the more well-defined and constrained the intended user groups for a given dictionary is, the more likely it is that the sources of information, on which potential dictionary buyers can rely prior to the purchase of the dictionary, will provide the potential dictionary buyer with clear, unmistakable and easily understandable information about lexicographic function(s), could not be confirmed.

First of all, the differences with respect to proportions of clear statements to unclear statements in the information sources for dictionaries with well-defined and constrained target user groups (the phrasal verbs dictionaries) and the proportions of clear statements to unclear statements in the information sources for dictionaries with rather ill-defined and unconstrained target user groups (the specialised dictionaries) were not judged to be significant enough to provide confirmation of the hypothesis.

Secondly, the analysis revealed significant differences within each group of dictionaries with respect to proportions of clear statements to unclear statements. These differences also serve to disconfirm the hypothesis.

5 Oxford Dictionary of Accounting, Oxford Dictionary of Business and Management, Oxford Dictionary of Finance and Banking and Oxford Dictionary of Law.

6 Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus

5. References

Dictionaries

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Appendix A: Lists of statements

In the following lists, passages in italics are comments by the author of this article.

Phrasal verbs dictionaries

Longman Phrasal Verbs Dictionary		
Functions		
BLURB	CLEAR STATEMENTS	
	Reception	all the information you need to understand phrasal verbs
	Reception	clear simple definitions using the Longman 2000-word Defining Vocabulary
	Reception	understanding phrasal verbs in newspapers, books
	Reception	understanding phrasal verbs in spoken English
	Production	(to understand phrasal verbs) and to use them correctly
	Production	clear grammar patterns show you how to use phrasal verbs
	Production	examples [...] show how phrasal verbs are really used in context
	Production	unique Phrasal Verbs Activator® helps you choose the correct phrasal verb
INTRO	CLEAR STATEMENTS	
	Production	demonstrates clearly how phrasal verbs are used with grammar patterns shown at each sense [...] whether a phrasal verb takes an object, where the object goes [...]
	Production	the examples also show how this phrasal verb is used and how the position of the object can vary
	Production	information about whether or not a phrasal verb is passive [...]
	Production	Examples also show this [that the verb does not take an object]
	UNCLEAR STATEMENTS	
	[list of] labels, (<i>but no explicit mention of what they are good for</i>)	
	if a phrasal verb has a synonym or a word that has almost the same meaning, this is shown at the end of that sense of the phrasal verb	
	nouns and adjectives which are related to a phrasal verb are shown after the meaning of the phrasal verb they are derived from	
WEB AD	CLEAR STATEMENTS	
	Reception	helping you understand them [the phrasal verbs]
	Production	helping you use them [the phrasal verbs] correctly
	Production	unique Phrasal Verbs Activator® helps learners choose the right phrasal verb for the context
	Production	clear grammar patterns show how to use phrasal verbs
Users		
BLURB	a) teachers b) students (advanced and upper intermediate) c) general	
INTRO	N.A.	
WEB AD	Learners (<i>not further defined</i>)	

Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus		
Functions		
BLURB	CLEAR STATEMENTS	
	Reception	easy-to-understand definitions use a 2000-word vocabulary
	Reception	over 100 cartoons illustrate meaning
	Production	grammar patterns explained by real-life examples
	Production	lists of collocations help you speak and write more naturally
	Cognition	Language Study articles on pronunciation, register, grammar, metaphor and learner errors (<i>unlikely to be consulted in communicative situations</i>)
	Cognition	explanations of how particles contribute to the meaning of phrasal verbs (<i>unlikely to be consulted in communicative situations</i>)
	Voc. building	hundreds of synonyms and antonyms help build your vocabulary
UNCLEAR STATEMENTS		
two-colour dictionary with extra features to help you master phrasal verbs in English		
most frequent phrasal verbs are highlighted in red		
'menus' guide you quickly to the meaning you want		
up-to-date information about phrasal verbs in general English, as well as in business, Internet and computing contexts		
INTRO	CLEAR STATEMENTS	
	Reception	all information needed to understand phrasal verbs
	Reception	It [the dictionary] explains their meaning using uncomplicated language
	Production	all the information needed to use them [the phrasal verbs] well
	Production	gives an easy-to-understand description of their syntactic behaviour – how they combine with other words, where the object can be placed, where pronouns go, and so on
	Production	provides guidance on register – the types of context in which it is natural and appropriate to use a phrasal verb
	Cognition	a collection of articles [...] on topics such as syntax, register, and pronunciation, to help students to develop a better awareness of how phrasal verbs work and why they are so useful (<i>unlikely to be consulted in communicative situations</i>)
UNCLEAR STATEMENTS		
help learners deal confidently with phrasal verbs		
we have identified just over 1,000 of the most frequently used English phrasal verbs [...] students and teachers have told us how useful this information is		
menus – making it easy to find the meaning that you are looking for		
an index of single-word verbs that have phrasal verb synonyms: using the index, you can look up a word like inherit and find a phrasal verb – come into – with the same meaning		
'collocation boxes', providing invaluable information about the most frequent and natural-sounding combinations		
special entries on the 12 most common particles		

WEB AD 1ST LEVEL*)	CLEAR STATEMENTS	
	Reception	clear explanations (= <i>definitions?</i>)
	Production	a stimulus for natural-sounding English
	Production	an ideal reference to help learners [...] start using them [the phrasal verbs] with confidence
	UNCLEAR STATEMENTS	
	unique features to help students grasp this challenging and essential area of the English language	
	most frequent phrasal verbs are highlighted [...] to show [...] how important they are for students to learn	
	means for easy navigation	
	an ideal reference to help learners lose their fear of phrasal verbs	
	collocation boxes (<i>with no further explanation</i>)	
WEB AD 2ND LEVEL	CLEAR STATEMENTS	
	Reception	definitions are written in a restricted vocabulary to make them easy to understand
	Reception	over 100 striking two-colour cartoons to illustrate common phrasal verbs reinforcing their meaning
	Production	clear explanations of how to use every phrasal verb by means of grammar patterns and relevant examples
	Production	thousands of examples of phrasal verbs [...] reflect English as it is used today
	Production	Collocation boxes list the words phrasal verbs typically occur with, to help students speak and write more clearly
	Cognition	explanations of how particular particles contribute to the meaning of phrasal verbs (<i>unlikely to be consulted in communicative situations</i>)
	Cognition	information on inflections, pronunciation, stress patterns, register and derivatives widen students' knowledge of English
	Cognition	a 16-page Language Study section contains more detailed description of the pronunciation, register and grammar of phrasal verbs (<i>unlikely to be consulted in communicative situations</i>)
	Voc. building	over 100 striking two-colour cartoons to illustrate common phrasal verbs [...] making them more memorable
	Voc. building	hundreds of synonyms and antonyms [...] help build students' vocabulary
	UNCLEAR STATEMENTS	
	coverage of phrasal verbs used in General English as well as in business, Internet and computing contexts	
	the most frequent phrasal verbs are highlighted in red and graded with stars to show at a glance how important they are for students to learn	
	menus in entries with five or more senses guide users quickly to the meaning they want	

	index of single-word equivalents enable learners to find phrasal verbs by starting with single-word verbs which they already know
Users	
BLURB	<i>N.A.</i>
INTRO	learners of English
WEB	1 st level: students
AD	2 nd level: students

*) The web ad is separated into two levels. The second level is accessible from the first level

Cambridge Phrasal Verbs dictionary		
Functions		
BLURB	CLEAR STATEMENTS	
	Production	clear advice on grammar and usage
	Cognition	topic pages covering useful language areas
	UNCLEAR STATEMENTS	
	6,000 phrasal verbs explained in simple language	
	shows you the most important phrasal verbs to learn	
	lively new pictures illustrating many phrasal verbs	
	photocopiable worksheets	
	thousands of example sentences based on the Cambridge International Corpus	
INTRO	CLEAR STATEMENTS	
	Reception	helps learners of English to understand phrasal verbs
	Reception	meanings are explained clearly and simply
	Production	helps learners of English [...] use them [the phrasal verbs] in a way that is natural and appropriate
	Production	examples show how they are used in context
	Production	clear information about how formal or informal phrasal verbs are
	Production	common grammar patterns and collocation
	Production	topic pages which show ways of using phrasal verbs to talk about particular subjects
	UNCLEAR STATEMENTS	
	photocopiable worksheets to use either in class or for studying alone	
	most common phrasal verbs are printed in blue boxes to show you that they are important to learn	
	a list of single verbs that have a common phrasal verb equivalent	
WEB AD	CLEAR STATEMENTS	
	Production	clear advice on grammar and usage
	Production	thousands of example sentences show phrasal verbs in typical contexts
	Voc. building	a thematic section shows phrasal verbs in topic groups for vocabulary expansion
	UNCLEAR STATEMENTS	
	clear explanations and guidance help learners master this difficult yet essential aspect of the English language	
	most common phrasal verbs highlighted so students know which to learn	
Users		
BLURB	N.A.	
INTRO	learners of English	
WEB AD	a) learners b) students	

Oxford Phrasal Verbs		
Functions		
BLURB	CLEAR STATEMENTS	
	Reception	understand phrasal verbs (and use them – confidently!)
	Reception	7,000 British and American phrasal verbs explained in words you understand
	Production	(understand phrasal verbs) and use them – confidently!
	Production	know when to use a phrasal verb or a one-word verb
	Production	100+ synonym notes explain phrasal verbs and one-word verbs with similar meanings so you make the right choice
	Production	12,000 examples help you use the verb correctly
	Production	4,000 collocations show you which words usually go together
	Production	2,000 synonyms and opposites help you choose the right word
	Production	12,000 grammar codes show you the correct word order
UNCLEAR STATEMENTS		
	key symbol shows the 500 phrasal verbs you really need to know	
	phrasal verbs in blue make it easy to find what you're looking for	
	photocopiable study pages help you use the dictionary effectively – and practise phrasal verbs	
	all the help you need to get plugged into phrasal verbs	
INTRO	No introduction!	
WEB AD	CLEAR STATEMENTS	
	Reception	the information they need to understand over 6,000 British and American phrasal verbs
	Reception	clear simple definitions
	Production	the information they need to [...] use them [the phrasal verbs] correctly
	Production	give students help with synonyms, allowing them to decide whether a phrasal verb or a single-word verb is the more appropriate choice
	Production	with examples to show how phrasal verbs are used
	Production	usage notes dealing with common problems help learners avoid typical mistakes
	Production	common subject and objects are shown to help learners use the verbs appropriately
	Voc. building	synonyms and opposites help learners build their vocabulary
UNCLEAR STATEMENTS		
	tips and photocopiable exercises for classroom or individual practice	
	'Guide to Particles' explains the most important meanings of the main adverbs and prepositions used in phrasal verbs to help learners see problems	
Users		
BLURB	Front cover: learners of English	
INTRO	No introduction!	
WEB AD	a) students b) learners	

Specialized dictionaries

Oxford Dictionary of Accounting		
Functions		
BLURB	CLEAR STATEMENTS	
	Reception	definitions of terms, concepts and jargon
	Cognition	web links
	Cognition	feature entries on key topics
	UNCLEAR STATEMENTS	
	New features include worked examples	
PREFACE	CLEAR STATEMENTS	
	Reception	explanation of the jargon used in the financial world
	UNCLEAR STATEMENTS	
	source of reference for businessmen and businesswomen	
	guide to assist professional advisers in their work	
	coverage of terms commonly used in financial accounting	
WEB AD	CLEAR STATEMENTS	
	Reception	straightforward definitions of the latest financial jargon
	Cognition	web links
	Cognition	mini-chronologies of key events
	Cognition	feature entries on key topics
	Cognition	highlighted worked examples to help clarify difficult concepts
	UNCLEAR STATEMENTS	
	valuable guide to the often confusing world of accountancy terms	
	comprehensive coverage of financial accounting , management accounting [...]	
Users		
BLURB	a) students b) professionals	
PREFACE	(From first edition): a) all those interested in the financial world b) students of all kinds, but especially students of accounting and business courses c) businessmen and businesswomen d) professional advisers	
WEB AD	a) students in the fields of accounting and finance b) professionals in the fields of accounting and finance READERSHIP (<i>special section at the bottom of the web ad</i>): a) students in the fields of accounting and finance b) professionals in the fields of accounting and finance c) anyone who encounters accounting terms in their work	

Oxford Dictionary of Economics		
Functions		
BLURB	CLEAR STATEMENTS	
	Cognition	detailed appendices include Nobel Prize winners, the Greek alphabet, and commonly used acronyms
	Cognition	recommended web links for many entries
	UNCLEAR STATEMENTS	
	guide to economic terms	
	an essential source of reference	
	strong international coverage of economic organizations and institutions	
PREFACE	CLEAR STATEMENTS	
	Reception	many useful definitions relating to personal finance, investments and financial markets
	Reception	new entries on econometrics provide a technical definition
	Cognition	new entries on econometrics provide [...] a brief explanation of the application of the concept
	UNCLEAR STATEMENTS	
	a convenient source of reference	
	descriptions of fundamental concepts	
	entries on technical concepts	
WEB AD	CLEAR STATEMENTS	
	Reception	2,500 key economic terms with clear, concise definitions
	Cognition	recommended web links for many entries – these links are a valuable source of extra information
	Cognition	highlighted feature entries on major theoretical concepts such as agency, competition, equilibrium, and efficiency
	Cognition	appendices include Nobel Prize winners, the Greek alphabet and institutional acronyms
	UNCLEAR STATEMENTS	
	increased international coverage of economic organizations and institutions	
	expanded coverage of common econometric concepts	
	strong coverage of international trade	
	covers all aspects of economics, including economic theory, applied microeconomics [...]	
	many entries on economic organizations [...]	
	as ideal for browsing as it is useful for quick reference	
	essential guide for students and teachers	
Users		
BLURB	a) students of economics, business and finance b) professionals of economics, business and finance c) anyone needing a guide to economic terms	
PREFACE	a) wide audience b) students taking a first course in economics c) non-specialist readers of journals such as The Economist d) more advanced students	

	e) professional economists
WEB AD	<p>a) students of economics, business and finance</p> <p>b) teachers of economics, business and finance</p> <p>c) professional economists</p> <p>d) anyone who has to deal with economic data</p> <p>READERSHIP (<i>special section at the bottom of the web ad</i>):</p> <p>a) students of economics and the related fields of social studies, business studies and finance</p> <p>b) teachers of economics and the related fields of social studies, business studies and finance</p> <p>c) professional economists</p> <p>d) those working in business and finance</p> <p>e) anyone who has to deal with economic data or writing</p>

Oxford Dictionary of Law		
Functions		
BLURB	CLEAR STATEMENTS	
	Reception	explaining the major terms, concepts
	Production	a Writing and Citation Guide to help with legal essays and reports
	Cognition	explaining the major [...] processes and the organization of the English legal system
	Cognition	recommended web links for many entries
UNCLEAR STATEMENTS		
a handy guide to legal terminology		
an authoritative source of jargon-free legal information		
companion website (<i>no specification of contents</i>)		
PREFACE	CLEAR STATEMENTS	
	Reception	a clear definition of the entry word (or words)
	Cognition	(a clear definition of the entry word [...]) which in most cases is followed by a more detailed explanation or description of the concepts involved
	Cognition	an introduction to the legal resources now available on the internet
	Cognition	references to important new cases with full citations have [...] been added [...]
	Cognition/ Production	the Writing and Citation Guide provides detailed advice on how to write and present essays on legal subjects
UNCLEAR STATEMENTS		
emphasis on accessible language		
some entries simply refer the reader to another entry, indicating either that they are synonyms or abbreviations or that they are most conveniently explained in one of the dictionary's longer articles		
WEB AD	CLEAR STATEMENTS	
	Reception	defines all the major terms, concepts
	Cognition/ Production	a useful Writing and Citation Guide that specifically addresses problems and established conventions for writing legal essays and reports
	Cognition	defines all the major [...] processes and the organization of the English legal system
	Cognition	highlighted feature entries discuss key topics in detail, for example adoption law, the appeals system [...]
	Cognition	recommended web links for many entries
UNCLEAR STATEMENTS		
covers important new legislation in company law, constitutional law, criminal law, and many other areas		
includes terms taken from European, international, human rights, and environmental law		
invaluable source of legal reference		
one-stop source of information		
expanded coverage of criminology and law enforcement		
Users		
BLURB	a) students b) professionals c) anyone wanting a handy guide to legal terminology <i>Quote from Times Educational Supplement:</i>	

	Precision for the professional is combined with a layman's enlightenment
PREFACE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) legal professionals who sometimes need a quick, portable and reliable reference source b) students following law courses at all levels, who require clear explanations of legal concepts and terminology c) professionals in other fields (e.g. business people, local government officials, accountants and social workers) who require some knowledge of the law in their work d) laypeople who are affected by the law
WEB AD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) professionals b) students c) anyone else, needing succinct clarification of legal terms <p><i>Quote from 'leading university lecturers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) non-law students b) law undergraduates <p>READERSHIP (<i>special section at the bottom of the web ad</i>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) students of law b) lecturers of law c) professional lawyers d) anyone needing clear definitions of legal terms

Oxford Dictionary of Finance and Banking		
Functions		
BLURB	CLEAR STATEMENTS	
	Cognition	new feature panels on key topics including the Financial Times Share indexes and bankruptcy law
	Cognition	recommended web links for many entries
	UNCLEAR STATEMENTS	
	expanded coverage of central banking and monetary policy	
	up-to-date coverage of the world's important financial centres	
	the authoritative A-Z guide to the world of money (<i>front cover</i>)	
	this best-selling dictionary covers all aspects of finance and banking, from personal investments to international trading	
PREFACE	CLEAR STATEMENTS	
	Cognition	feature pages [...] on a number of key topics
	UNCLEAR STATEMENTS	
	up-to-date coverage of the vocabulary used in banking, money markets [...]	
	generous coverage of the terms used in government finance, the money supply [...]	
	entries for terms related to savings, stock-exchange dealing [...]	
	coverage of central banking and monetary policy has been substantially expanded [...]	
	the coverage is truly international with entries for all the world's standard currency units [...]	
	synonyms and abbreviations are usually found within brackets immediately following a headword	
WEB AD	CLEAR STATEMENTS	
	Reception	defines terms from all aspects of personal and international finance
	Reception	clear and accessible definitions
	Cognition	recommended web links for many entries
	Cognition	useful feature entries on areas requiring a fuller explanation
	Cognition	feature panels with full explanations of topical and complex terms
	UNCLEAR STATEMENTS	
	covers all aspects of personal and international finance [...]	
	expanded coverage of central banking [...]	
	provides accurate and valuable information for students [...]	
Users		
BLURB	a) students of accounting, banking and commerce b) professionals of accountancy, banking and commerce c) anyone involved in public finance or financial trading	
PREFACE	a) students in the fields of finance and banking b) professionals in the fields of finance and banking c) private investors d) readers of the financial pages of newspapers e) the private investor and borrower	
WEB AD	a) students, practitioners, private investors and readers of the financial pages alike READERSHIP (<i>special section at the bottom of the web ad</i>):	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) professionals working in accountancy, banking, commerce, public finance, and related fieldsb) private investorsc) readers of the financial pagesd) small businessese) students of finance, banking, economics, and businessf) lecturers of finance, banking, economics, and business
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Oxford Dictionary of Business and Management		
Functions		
BLURB	CLEAR STATEMENTS	
	Reception	clearly defines the very latest terminology used in business and management
	Reception	clear, concise, and up-to-date definitions for 7,000 terms (<i>front cover</i>)
	Cognition	recommended web links for many entries
	UNCLEAR STATEMENTS	
	an essential A-Z for students [...]	
	expanded coverage of modern financial jargon, strategic management, and human resources	
	includes marketing, accounting, organizational behaviour, global finance, business strategy, and taxation	
	US business terms, general management concepts, and named theories	
PREFACE (4TH ED.)	CLEAR STATEMENTS	
	Reception	new entries to explain (= <i>define?</i>) the concepts, vocabulary and jargon associated with current theories of leadership, motivation, and team building
	UNCLEAR STATEMENTS	
	greatly increased coverage of management terms and theory	
PREFACE (5TH ED.)	CLEAR STATEMENTS	
	Reception	Explication (= <i>definition?</i>) of the new and sometimes baffling vocabulary associated with structured finance and the subprime lending crisis
	UNCLEAR STATEMENTS	
	enhanced coverage of such areas as behavioural finance, strategic management, and the contemporary theory of the firm	
	full coverage of the new and comprehensive Companies Act	
	synonyms and abbreviations are usually found within brackets immediately following a headword	
WEB AD	CLEAR STATEMENTS	
	Reception	dispels modern financial and management jargon, defining entries in a clear, concise and accessible manner
	Reception	Clarification (= <i>definition?</i>) of everyday business terms
	Cognition	recommended web links for many entries
	UNCLEAR STATEMENTS	
	guide to business terminology	
	up-to-date coverage of fast-changing fields, including the new Companies Act [...]	
	full coverage of the important new Companies Act	
	expanded coverage of modern financial jargon, strategic management and human resources	
	expanded coverage of the contemporary theory of the firm and human resources	
	reference work	
Users		
BLURB	a) students b) teachers c) professionals	

	d) anyone needing clarification of commonly used business terms
PREFACE (1ST ED.)	a) students of all kinds of business courses b) teachers c) professional advisers (lawyers, bankers, accountants, managers, insurers, etc.)
WEB AD	a) business students b) teachers c) professionals d) anyone needing a guide to business terminology <i>READERSHIP (special section at the bottom of the web ad):</i> a) students on business and management courses at all levels b) business professionals including lawyers, bankers, accountants, advertising agents and insurance brokers c) the general reader looking for clarification of everyday business terms (encountered, for example, in house-buying, tax returns, or share investment)

Appendix B: Number of statements

	Clear state- ments	Total	Phrasal verbs total	Total	Spec. dict. Total	Unclear state- ments	Total	Phrasal verbs total	Total	Spec. dict. Total
Phrasal verbs										
Longman										
Blurb	8					0				
Intro	4					3				
Web ad	4	16				0	3			
Macmillan										
Blurb	7					4				
Intro	6					5				
Web ad	13	26				9	18			
Cambridge										
Blurb	2					5				
Intro	7					3				
Web ad	3	12				2	10			
Oxford										
Blurb	9					4				
Web ad	8	17	71			2	6	37		
Specialised dictionaries										
Oxf. Acc										
Blurb	3					1				
Preface	1					3				
Web ad	5			9		2			6	
Oxf. Econ										
Blurb	2					3				
Preface	3					3				
Web ad	4			9		7			13	
Oxf. Law										
Blurb	4					3				
Preface	5					2				
Web ad	5			14		5			10	
Oxf. B&F										
Blurb	2					4				
Preface	1					6				
Web ad	5			8		3			13	
Oxf. B&M										
Blurb	3					4				
Preface	2					4				
Web ad	3			8	48	6			14	56

