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# What is in the Entry of a Collocational Dictionary?

#### Abstract:

The present article provides an overview on the typical content of entries in collocational dictionaries. Firstly, attention is devoted to the headwords of the dictionaries under discussion. Secondly, the article focuses on the entry structure and the arrangement of collocates. Finally, it examines various types of additional information which is included in the entries. The above-mentioned questions are discussed based on some previous lexicographic research on collocations (e.g. S. Nuccuroni 2003, R. Przybylska 2007, S. Coffey 2012) as well as on eight collocational dictionaries of the Polish and English language (Ch. Douglas Kozłowska/ H. Dzierżanowska 1993, E. Jędrzejko et al. 1998, D. Osuchowska 2002, J. Crowther et al. 2002, Ch. Douglas Kozłowska 2004, M. Bańko 2006, E. Geller/ A. Dąbrówka 2007, M. Rundell 2010).

## Introduction

Despite their unquestionable usefulness to language users, collocational dictionaries still seem a rarity, especially when one searches for those bilingual, multilingual or devoted to languages for specific purposes (LSP). Perhaps the reason is that the compilation of a collocational dictionary is a particularly time-consuming and challenging task. To make matters worse, collocational dictionaries have been devoted scarce academic research.

Some honorable exceptions include works by D. Osuchowska (2002), S. Nuccorini (2003), A. Tutin (2005, 2010) and S. Coffey (2011). D. Osuchowska (2002) presents some problems encountered in the course of compilation of a bilingual dictionary of collocations. S. Nuccorini (2003) describes several collocational dictionaries searching for an 'ideal' dictionary of English collocations. A Tutin (2005) compares in terms of collocational content two dictionaries of French collocations with two general monolingual dictionaries. A. Tutin (2010) focuses on the approach to the notion of collocation adopted in six collocational dictionaries. S. Coffey (2011) provides a review of *Macmillan Collocation Dictionary for Learners of English* (M. Rundell 2010). Finally, some researchers devote attention to the process of collocational dictionary compilation (L. Nerima et al. 2003, L. Wanner et al. 2005, G. Vetulani 2000, 2008).

The entries of collocational dictionaries significantly differ from the entries of a prototypical general purpose dictionary, which aims most of all at providing definitions or translations. The presentation of collocations as the most basic dictionary information requires specific entry arrangement and may make the entry particularly long and complex. Nevertheless, the entries of collocational dictionaries frequently contain

some data which are traditionally found in other kinds of dictionaries. For the sake of example, aside from collocations, they may contain semantic information, grammatical information, syntactic information, usage examples, etc.

The aim of this article is to provide an overview on the typical content of entries in collocational dictionaries. In particular, attention will be devoted to the headword lists, the arrangement of collocates and the additional information within entries. The abovementioned questions will be discussed based on some previous lexicographic research on collocations (e.g. S. Nuccuroni 2003, R. Przybylska 2007, S. Coffey 2012) as well as on eight collocational dictionaries of the Polish and English language:

- 1. Selected English Collocations (Ch. Douglas Kozłowska/ H. Dzierżanowska 1993)
- 2. Słownik polskich zwrotów werbo-nominalnych. (E. Jędrzejko et al. 1998)
- 3. English at Work. An English-Polish Dictionary of Selected Collocations (D. Osuchowska 2002)
- 4. Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English (J. Crowther et al. 2002)
- 5. English Adverbial Collocations (Ch. Douglas Kozłowska 2004)
- 6. Słownik dobrego stylu (M. Bańko 2006)
- 7. Słownik stylistyczny języka polskiego (E. Geller/ A. Dabrówka 2007)
- 8. Macmillan Collocations Dictionary for Learners of English (M. Rundell 2010)

The above-mentioned dictionaries are assumed to be collocational dictionaries, since their authors state that they are devoted to collocations. Nevertheless, the statements are sometimes formulated in indirect ways (e.g. M. Bańko 2006: VI-VII). The notion of collocation is defined in various ways both in the dictionaries under discussion and in linguistic literature. The definitions differ in terms of their scope. To give an example, E. Geller and A. Dąbrówka (2007: XIV) state that idioms constitute a kind of collocation, whereas J. Crowther et al. (2002: vii) claim that they are a different type of word combination. For the purpose of this article, it is sufficient to assume the definition of collocation proposed by T. Odlin (1994: 318) who postulates that collocation is "the tendency of a word or words to appear in the context of (...) another word significantly more often than would be expected on the basis of chance".

# 1. The headwords of collocational dictionaries

There are two major strategies for presenting collocations in a dictionary. Firstly, each collocation may constitute a headword and may be devoted a separate entry. The technique is based on presupposition that collocations constitute lexical items and should be treated in the same way as lexemes. As for the second strategy, it consists in presenting collocations in entries headed by one of their lexical constituent parts. The strategy is based on assumption that collocations constitute "realizations of syntagmatic potentials of their components" (I. Burkhanov 2003: 110, cf. P. Żmigrodzki 2003: 103). In a typical dictionary of collocations, the majority of headwords are single words and the microstructure contains information on their combinational properties, i.e. collocations (S. Nuccorini 2003: 368). This is the case in most dictionaries analysed for the purposes of this article.

The headword lists of the dictionaries under discussion encompass various lexical items. For instance, the entries in the dictionaries by Ch. Douglas Kozłowska and H. Dzierżanowska (1993) and E. Jędrzejko (1998) are headed by nouns. As for the dic-

tionaries by D. Osuchowska (2001), J. Crowther et al. (2002) and M. Bańko (2006), they comprise entries headed by nouns, verbs and adjectives. Besides, Ch. Douglas Kozłowska (2004) includes in the headword list of her dictionary adjectives, verbs, some phrasal verbs and adverbs. Finally, the headword list compiled by E. Geller and A. Dąbrówka (2007) contains verbs and nouns which are accompanied by their derived forms, for instance adjectives (see Figure 1). Additionally, some entries in the dictionary under discussion are headed by common collocations, such as *brać udzial*, i.e. *to take part*.

# zagadka/zagadkowy

KTO? – [nieznajomy] zagadkowa postać; zagadkowy jegomość (osobnik,) CO? – [problem do rozwikłania] zagadka kryminalna (naukowa, archeologiczna, przyrodnicza,); [niewiadoma] zagadka umysłu ludzkiego (istnienia życia na Marsie, powstania wszechświata, Trójkąta Bermudzkiego, Boga,); [tajemnica] zagadka zniknięcia dokumentów (śmierci sędziego, starego mlyna,) [] zagadkowe miejsce [] zagadkowy uśmiech (spojrzenie, wygląd,); [rozwiązanie] klucz do zagadki; pomoc w wyjaśnianiu zagadki; rozwiązanie zagadki

JAKA? – ciekawa, frapująca, pasjonująca, dręcząca, intrygująca zagadka; niepojęta, niezrozumiała, tajemnicza, mroczna zagadka; niewytłumaczalna, nierozwiązywalna zagadka; nierozwiązana, nierozwikłana, nieodgadniona zagadka; zagadka nie do rozwiązania, nie do rozwikłania; zagadka bez rozwiązania; banalna, prosta, latwa, dziecinnie latwa, trywialna zagadka

JAK? – [tajemniczo] zagadkowo; w zagadce; w obliczu (takiej) zagadki; [orwarcie] bez zagadki; po rozwiązaniu zagadki; dzięki rozwiklaniu zagadki

CO ROBIĆ? – [pytać] ułożyć, wymyślić zagadkę; komuś dać, powiedzieć, zadać zagadkę; bawić się w odgadywanie zagadek; oto (jest) zagadka!; [nie wiedzieć] dla kogoś stanowić zagadkę; pozostawać, być zagadką; coś, ktoś dla kogoś jest, pozostaje zagadką; coś kryje w sobie zagadkę; [zastanawiać] kogoś rozwiązanie zagadki dręczy, zajmuje, pochłania; komuś zagadka nie daje spokoju; szukać rozwiązania zagadki; szukać wyjaśnienia, wytłumaczenia zagadki; szukać klucza do rozwiązania zagadki; coś jest, stanowi, staje się kluczem do zagadki; coś stało się pomocne w rozwiązaniu zagadki; rozwiązać, pojąć, przeniknąć, zrozumieć sens zagadki; odgadnąć, rozwiązać, wytłumaczyć, objaśnić, wyjaśnienie zagadki

Figure 1. An example entry of Slownik stylistyczny języka polskiego (E. Geller/ A. Dąbrówka 2007: 747)

It should be pointed out that according to Burkhanov (2003: 110) numerous collocational dictionaries have excessively limited headword lists. The restrictions in the choice of headwords are often imposed by dictionary authors themselves. Unfortunately, they frequently additionally complicate the task of dictionary compilation (cf. A. Tutin 2005: 47). If, however, the headword list of a given dictionary needs to remain short of necessity, some lexical items, such as compounds, may be devoted subentries within the corresponding headwords instead of separate entries (S. Nuccorini 2003: 379).

# 2. The arrangement of entry content

The authors of collocational dictionaries typically place various kinds of collocates within one entry, which generates the need to order the provided information. The most

common ordering systems are based on parts of speech or semantic features of the collocates.

To give an example, in the dictionary by M. Bańko (2006), the noun-headed entries firstly list adjectival collocates, then noun collocates and finally verbal collocates. Besides, the collocates within each part-of-speech category are arranged semantically. Accordingly, semantic relationships constitute the basis for a 'second-level' ordering system. The collocates within each semantic set are typically ordered alphabetically, thought the above-mentioned ordering is sometimes violated to show some relations of meaning (M. Bańko 2006: XI, see Figure 2):

UCZeln|ia · dobra ~ia, prestiżowa, renomowana · wyższe ~ie · macierzysta ~ia · ~ie państwowe, niepaństwowe, prywatne · ~ie artystyczne, ekonomiczne, medyczne, muzyczne, rolnicze, techniczne, wojskowe · ~ie katolickie · dyplom ~i · mury ~i, teren · absolwent ~i, pracownik, profesor, rektor, student, władze · studiować na ~i, pracować · opuścić ~ię (z jakimś dyplomem), ukończyć ~ię

Figure 2. An example entry of Slownik dobrego stylu, czyli wyrazy, które się lubią (M. Bańko 2006: 322)

Some authors decide to divide the entries of their collocational dictionaries into subentries. The division is often based on the parts of speech of collocates (e.g. Ch. Douglas-Kozłowska and Dzierżanowska 1993, J. Crowther et al. 2002, M. Rundell 2010). Besides, it may demonstrate the position taken by a given headword in a sentence (S. Nuccorini 2003: 379, R. Przybylska 2007: 72). For the sake of example, the entry for *night* in *Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English* contains subentries VERB + NIGHT and NIGHT+VERB (see Figure 3, J. Crowther et al. 2002: 524).

Furthermore, various collocational dictionaries differ in the approach to collocations of more than two words. If the collocations under discussion are included in a given dictionary, they may not be separated from two-word collocations (e.g. Ch. Douglas Kozłowska/ H. Dzierżanowska 1993, E. Geller/ A. Dąbrówka 2007, see Figure 1) Alternatively, they may be placed in separate subentries reflecting their structures (S. Coffey 2011: 334). To give an example, the entry for the noun *impatience* from the dictionary by M. Rundell (2010) contains a subentry devoted to the category *noun+of+noun* (see Figure 3). Last but not least, collocations of more than two-words may be placed all in one subentry. This is the case in the dictionary by J. Crowther et al. (2002), where the subentries in question are labelled *phrases* (see Figure 3, cf. S. Coffey 2011: 334).

# night noun

- 1 when it is dark and most people sleep
  - ADJ. last, tomorrow | Friday, Saturday, etc. | early, late I think I'll have an early night (= go to bed early). | long | winter, etc. | bad, restless, sleepless | black, dark | clear, moonlit, starlit, starry | cold, stormy | wedding
  - VERB + NIGHT have | spend They spent the night in Bristol. | stay Ask your Mum if you can stay the night.
  - NIGHT + VERB fall When it came the night fell quickly.
     progress, wear on As the night wore on it grew colder.
  - . NIGHT + NOUN air, sky | duty, shift
  - PREP. at~lying awake at night by Paris by night during/in the ~ I woke in the night. for a/the ~, on Friday, etc. ~, per ~ The hotel costs £65 per person per night. through/throughout the ~
  - PHRASES all night long, at this time of night, day and night/night and day (= all the time), a good night's sleep, good night She kissed him good night. in the dead of night (= in the middle of the night), morning, noon and night (= all the time)
- 2 time between late afternoon and when you go to bed
  - ADJ. last, tomorrow | Friday, Saturday, etc. | the other I saw her the other night (= a few nights ago).
  - · NIGHT + NOUN school
  - PREP. at She doesn't like to walk home late at night. by ~, on Friday, etc. ~

#### 3 evening when a special event happens

- ADJ. first, opening | last the last night of the play's run
   big, great, memorable | dance, election, quiz
- PHRASES make a night of it They decided to make a night of it and went on to a club. a night out Fancy a night out?

Figure 3. An example entry of Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English (J. Crowther et al. 2002: 524)

Let us now turn to the order of collocates within subentries of a collocational dictionary. J. Crowther et al. (2002) and M. Rundell (2010) decided to present the collocates within subentries in semantic sets (see Figures 3 and 4). Moreover, in the dictionary by M. Rundell (2010), the semantic sets are preceded by labels which suggest the meaning of a given group of collocates (S. Coffey 2011: 329, cf. R. Przybylska 2007: 74, A. Tutin 2010: 1084-1085). For the sake of example, in the case of adj+N category for the headword *impulse*, some semantic labels are *sudden impulse*, *first impulse*, *strong impulse*, etc (see Figure 4).

#### impatience N

the annoyed feeling you have when something does not happen as quickly as you would like

- adj+N growing, mounting His growing impatience with Robert began to show.
- v+N show impatience display, express, reveal, show Maintain normal eye contact and do not show impatience.
- control impatience conceal, control, curb, restrain I could no longer control my impatience at the delay; I climbed the stairs and opened the door.
- n+of+N feeling, gesture, sign I detect a feeling of growing public impatience.

#### impulse N

a sudden strong feeling that you must do something

- adj+N sudden sudden On a sudden impulse, I rode after him.
- first first, initial My first impulse was to go out and buy a whole new set of clothes.
- strong irresistible, powerful, strong There came to him an irresistible impulse to pray.
- natural natural, primitive, spontaneous Our natural impulses can be altruistic and cooperative as well as selfish.
- violent, destructive aggressive, anarchic, destructive, murderous, sadistic, self-destructive, suicidal, violent His life is a constant struggle to control his destructive impulses.
- generous charitable, generous On a generous impulse he gave the man his coat.
- creative artistic, creative The exhibition is a celebration of the creative impulse, which we all possess but which is so often stifled.
- not rational contradictory, irrational She will always be a woman of contradictory impulses.
- not expressed repressed Hidden motives, repressed impulses, and secret passions are revealed in the course of the play.
- v+N have an impulse feel, have He felt an impulse to assist her.
- fight an impulse control, fight, repress, resist, restrain She resisted the impulse to give him a hug.
- obey an impulse follow, obey What I really want to do is just obey my own impulses.

Figure 4. Example entries from Macmillan Collocations Dictionary for Learners of English (M. Rundell 2010: 388, 393)

By contrast, the collocates within subentries are ordered alphabetically in the dictionary by Ch. Douglas Kozłowska and H. Dzierżanowska (1993). As for the subentries, they are established based on parts of speech of the collocates. Interestingly, however, the authors decided to group some collocates according to context and place them in separate entries (Ch. Douglas Kozłowska and H. Dzierżanowska 1993: 10). To give an example, the three entries for *source* (see Figure 5) separate collocations related to something positive, to something negative and to *source of information*.

SOURCE (of information)

V. be based on/derived from, (re)check, come from, give, have, quote, refer to, stem from, use  $\sim$ 

V. ~ confirm sth, dry up, tell sb

Adj. authoritative, dependable, (in)direct, excellent, external, first-class, fruitful, impartial, impeccable, independent, obscure, official, prejudiced, private, (un)reliable, unattested, unbiased, unnamed  $\sim$ 

SOURCE (of sth negative, e.g. worry, infection, trouble, etc)

V. constitute ~

Adj. big, common, constant, continual, frequent, inevitable, perennial, recent, unavoidable ~

SOURCE (of sth positive, e.g. happiness, satisfaction)

V. provide ~

Adj. deep, great, lasting, potent, tremendous, unfailing, unique, wonderful ~

Figure 5. Example entries from Selected English Collocations (Ch. Douglas Kozłowska/ H. Dzierżanowska 1993: 207)

Alternatively, the entries of a collocational dictionary may be divided into subentries based on syntactic functions of a given collocation (e.g. E. Geller/ A. Dąbrówka 2007, see Figure 1) or various senses of polysemous words (E. Jędrzejko 1998: 69–70). Besides, in the article devoted to collocations in Polish general purpose dictionaries, R. Przybylska (2007: 72–73) recommends grouping noun and prepositional collocates according to grammatical cases. Furthermore, the researcher (2007) postulates presenting collocates in the order from the most transparent and frequent to the least should a given dictionary include idiomatic expressions. Last but not least, R. Przybylska (2007) points out that idioms should be kept graphically isolated from other collocates.

# 3. Accompanying information

Apart from collocates, the entries of numerous collocational dictionaries contain various types of accompanying information. The compilers of the dictionaries in question should bear in mind that the more types of information they includes within the entry, the more difficult the task of preserving clarity and accessibility, especially if the dictionary is not intended for electronic medium (cf. S. Coffey 2011: 340). Nevertheless, as D. Osuchowska (2001: 9, 2002: 82) points out, the additional information may make a dictionary more interesting and varied. Besides, it can prove genuinely useful to dictionary users.

For the sake of example, the entries of *Słownik polskich zwrotów werbo-nominalnych* (E. Jędrzejko [ed.] 1998, see Figure 6) contain a multitude of usage examples. The majority of the examples consist of authentic corpus fragments and are accompanied by the indication of their source. Besides, the entries of the dictionary under discussion feature cross-references to other entries related to a given headword. Finally, the dictionary authors decided to include in the entries rough definitions of collocations or groups of collocations which share similar meaning (E. Jędrzejko 1998). The above-mentioned definitions and cross-references seem a valuable aid for individuals who consult the dictionary while writing texts, since they can help to make a given piece of writing more linguistically varied.

#### WSKAZÓWKA

dawać wskazówki // dać // podać wskazówkę (komu) oficj. udzielić // udzielać wskazówki (komu) (żeby ... // jak ...) 'mówić, wskazywać, jak należy postąpić, jak robić coś; pouczać; radzić': Nie dał mi żadnej wskazówki, co zrobić na wypadek awarii. Dała mi na drogę wiele cennych wskazówek. TP 16-96. "Niedziela" pragnie ułatwić im sprawowanie tej liturgii, podając wskazówki, jak każdego dnia ją odmawiać. N 48-96. Poprawiał artykuły słownikowe, a właściwie nie poprawiał, tylko udzielał bezbłędnych wskazówek, jak należy je skorygować [...] GK 181196.

nieos; coś jest wskazówką // stanowi wskazówkę (dla kogo) 'wskazuje': Słowa te stanowią klucz i główną wskazówkę pracy ks. Wojtyły na wikariacie w Niegowici. N 46-96.

conv. otrzymać // uzyskać wskazówkę (od kogo) 'dowiedzieć się, jak postąpić', trzymać się wskazówek 'postępować zgodnie z tym, co ktoś radzi // wskazuje'; coll. korzystać // skorzystać ze wskazówki // wskazówek; pot. szukać wskazówek: Wskazówki i bezplatne mapy można uzyskać w punktach informacji turystycznej. GK 130496. Studenci ćwiczą [...] korzystając z oceny i wskazówek prowadzących zajęcia. N 23-96. Wówczas odruchowo szukamy pomocy, wskazówek, rad pozwalających wybrać skuteczne rozwiązania. N 33-96. [Trzymaj się moich wskazówek, a dobrze na tym wyjdziesz]. por. RADA, PORADA, NAUKA

[Pdic; f (x,y,z); Ag - pers; Adr - pers; Ob - prop]

Figure 6. An example entry from Słownik polskich zwrotów werbo-nominalnych (E. Jedrzejko 1998: 138)

Furthermore, the entries of *English at Work. An English-Polish Dictionary of Selected Collocations* contain headword synonyms, which can also be used in order to avoid repetition while writing a text. Additionally, as the dictionary under discussion is bilingual, it contains translations of collocations from English into Polish (D. Osuchowska 2001: 9, see Figure 7). The translations are certainly an excellent aid for dictionary users who are not fluent in English and who use the language for professional purposes.

acknowledge verb syn. admit, recognize, accept, endorse, certify uznać, potwierdzić, poświadczyć

- ~ obligation uznać zobowiązania
- ~ preferences uznać preferencie
- ~ receipt of a letter potwierdzić odbiór listu
- ~ a signature poświadczyć/uznać, zatwierdzić podpis

Figure 7. An example entry of English at Work. An English-Polish Dictionary of Selected Collocations (D. Osuchowska 2001: 13)

Let us now turn to the dictionary entitled *English Adverbial Collocations*. Its entries provide information on collocations which occur only in negative sentences or only in active or passive voice. Accordingly, they state how to avoid grave errors. (Ch. Douglas Kozłowska 2004: 17). To give an example, the entry for the verb *to think* indicates that the adverbs *properly* and *straight* modify the verb only in negative sentences (see Figure 8).

```
THINK (use one's brain)

Adv. aloud, clearly, constructively, fast, in a muddled way, logically, lucidly, properly (with neg), straight (with neg)

THINK (about a problem)

Adv. afresh, along the right/the same lines, carefully, coolly, deeply, disjointedly, dispassionately, dully, earnestly, feverishly, furiously, hard, idly, intensively, judiciously, long and hard, quickly, rapidly, seriously
```

Figure 8. Example entries of English Adverbial Collocations (Ch. Douglas Kozłowska 2004: 150)

In addition, the entries of collocational dictionaries include various other types of information. For the sake of example, the information may pertain to headword derivatives (e.g. E. Geller/ A. Dąbrówka 2007), countability of nouns (e.g. Ch. Douglas Kozłowska/ H. Dzierżanowska 1993) or pre-modifying or post-modifying position of adjectives (e.g. M. Bańko 2006). Besides, some collocational dictionaries provide headword definitions or short indications on their meaning, especially in the case of polysemous words (e.g. M. Bańko 2006, Ch. Douglas-Kozłowska/ H. Dzierżanowska, M. Rundell 2010). Other dictionaries specify parts of speech of their headwords (e.g. D. Osuchowska 2001, J. Crowther et al. 2002, M. Rundell 2011). Finally, the entries of a collocational dictionary may contain frequency information (e.g. M. Rundell 2010) or register and style labels (e.g. E. Jędrzejko [ed.] 1998, J. Crowther et al. 2002, M. Bańko 2006, Ch. Douglas-Kozłowska/ H. Dzierżanowska 1993, M. Rundell 2010).

### 4. Conclusions

The entries of various collocational dictionaries give headword status to different kinds of items, most of all nouns, verbs and adjectives. Less popular headword candidates include adverbs and entire collocations. Typically, numerous collocates which are presented within an entry are ordered based on their parts of speech or semantic features. Moreover, the entries of dictionaries in question are frequently divided in subentries, which follow an additional ordering system. Finally, the entries of collocational dictionaries contain varied types of additional information. Most often, they comprise register or style labels or some indications of headword meaning.

The study described in this paper allowed to identify some basic characteristics of collocational dictionaries. Besides, it has demonstrated that the above-mentioned dictionaries, despite numerous common features, vary in the content and structure of their entries and constitute an interesting subject for further research. The article should be perceived as a preliminary overview of the content of collocational dictionary entry. Numerous issues which deserve attention were left for further research. For the sake of example, the entries of collocational dictionaries should be analysed in more detail in terms of the approach to polysemous words and in terms of the provided syntactic information. Moreover, the analysis of collocational dictionaries should not be limited to the content of their entries. In particular, an interesting subject for further research is the access structure and the distribution structure of the dictionaries under discussion

Finally, an interesting issue for investigation is the relationship between the dictionary content and structure and its target user group.

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