Proposal for a Dictionary of Syntactic and Semantic Complementation of Old English Adjectives

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1. Introduction

I am currently working on a dictionary of complementation of Old English (henceforth OE) adjectives. It will describe the syntactic and semantic structure of clauses whose predicate is a complemented adjective and of NPs with a complemented adjectival noun modifier. This work is the natural continuation of the lexicographic part of my doctoral thesis (Alcaraz Sintes 2003), which I intend to increase in scope and precision.

I collected all occurrences in the *Dictionary of Old English Corpus in Electronic Form* (henceforth *DOEC*) of 710 adjectives, selected on the basis of their frequency of use.[1] Five hundred and ten of these adjectives turned out to be used with complementation structures, the total number of occurrences being 34,429, of which 9,378 were instances in which the adjectives are complemented. I studied all these occurrences and entered the description and frequencies of all the various complementing structures in spreadsheets. I therefore believe that my data is complete and reliable, being based on the description of all the examples found in the *DOEC* for each particular adjective. In order to show the relations holding between adjectival entries, I established a 15-class semantic taxonomy (an *a priori* classification aimed at establishing correlations between semantic classes and complementing structures). The main purpose of my thesis was to describe all the syntactic patterns associated with each particular adjective and semantic class, and to explain why adjectives of the same semantic class show systematic correlations with specific complementation structures. I have presented the results of my research relating to predicative adjectives at ICEHL 13 (2004) in Vienna and those relating to attributive adjectives at SELIM 16 (2004) in Seville.

I would like to submit a lexicographic project in this forum, based on the tentative dictionary section of my thesis. Since 2003, I have seen the need to modify a number of things in my work: I have reduced the number of semantic classes from 15 to 14 and re-classified a number of adjectives (see Table 1),[2] I have subdivided the meanings of certain adjectives or merged different meanings, and I have decided to include roles or semantic arguments in the description of the adjectives. I have also decided to use a theoretical framework which would allow to describe the argument, constituent and function structures of the adjectives, and to establish associations between entries on the basis of semantic opposition and similarity, and class (semantic domain) membership. These objectives coincide in the main with those of the Functional Lexematic Model,[3] whose overall principles will guide the design of my entries to some extent. As far as the actual dictionary-building process is

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[1] I initially selected all the adjectives contained in the lists of adjectives studied by Wülfing (1894), Callaway (1904), Visser (1963–1973) and Mitchell (1985), which I complemented with adjectives from Toller (1898) and the *TOE*. From the resulting list of adjectives (710), I chose those which had between 245 and 75 occurrences in the *DOEC*, which produced a list of 195 adjectives. Then I randomly added adjectives with more and fewer examples, 299 and 86, respectively, which made a total of 500. Finally, I added a few adjectives which I felt should not be left out because of the semantic relations they held with adjectives already selected and the likelihood that they would present complementation patterns correlating with particular semantic classes.

[2] In view of the difficulty of giving a single comprehensive name to each class, I identify the classes by a number and offer an approximate definition. By way of example, I have included five members for each class.

[3] See Dik (1997), Martín Mingorance (1998), Faber and Mairal Usón (1999), among other references.

concerned, I am going to use a software programme specifically designed to compile dictionaries, *TshwaneLex*.[4]

Table 1. Semantic classes of adjectives.

CLASS 1	These denote a person's mental disposition or degree of willingness towards abstract things and performing actions. Members: *bysig, caf, cene, fus, gearo…*
CLASS 2	These denote the state or exercise of a person's mental, intellectual or cognitive capacity. Members: *behydig, carful, cræftig, gleaw, þancol…*
CLASS 3	These denote a person's mental disposition or attitude as it affects another person or abstract thing. Members: *bilewit, bliþe, eaþe, swicol, wraþ…*
CLASS 4	These describe the moral or emotional effect upon somebody or the state or condition of something, caused by another person or thing. Members: *acumendlic, bitterlic, deop, dysig, eaþe…*
CLASS 5	These denote the religious, moral or social consensus about an action or abstract thing. Members: *andfenge, deaflic, rædlic, riht, weorþ…*
CLASS 6	These describe a person from the point of view of their relation with another person or a thing, in their standing as debtor or creditor. Members: *clæn, fah, freo, scyldig, weorþ…*
CLASS 7	These indicate a person's or a thing's standing as far as the amount of material or abstract things, whether owned or given, is concerned. Members: *ælfremed, æmtig, earm, gesælig, spedig…*
CLASS 8	These denote a person's physical or mental state. Members: *alefed, gesund, hal, seoc, untrum…*
CLASS 9	These describe a person, thing or action with respect to the opinion other people may have of them. Members: *forcuþ, frod, glæd, laþ, unweorþ…*
CLASS 10	These denote a person's state of mind and/or mental capacity as regards things or actions, performed or unperformed. Members: *acol, afyrht, dyrstig, mihtig, werig…*
CLASS 11	These indicate the degree of public or common knowledge of a thing or action. Members: *cuþ, dyrn, gesyne, open, sweotol…*
CLASS 12	These denote the degree of certainty or likelihood which is attributed to an action or abstract thing. Members: *forestiht, toweard, toweardlic, ungewiss…*
CLASS 13	These denote the degree of likeness or similarity between people, things or actions. Members: *anlic, gelic, syndrig, ungelic, unwiþmetenlic…*
CLASS 14	These describe physical characteristics of things, related to measurement and position in the main. Members: *deop, feor, gehende, lang, neah…*

2. Justification

Existing historical and OE dictionaries and thesauri, such as Toller (1898, 1921), Hall (1960), the *DOE*, the *TOE* and the *OED*, provide some grammatical information, apart from the usual expected sense information, normally by resorting to Modern English one-word equivalents, synonyms, or reflexes, as bilingual dictionaries do. However, they do not present the grammar of adjectives in a systematic way and by means of a notation system observed throughout, nor do they indicate all the syntactic-semantic potential of adjectives. As far as adjectives are concerned, these dictionaries observe in different degrees the principles governing a good lexicon: observational, descriptive, explanatory, and functional adequacy (see Cortés Rodríguez and Mairal Usón 2002: 5). However, they do not do justice to the complementation potential or reality of OE adjectives, since the syntactic information of lexemes is given a secondary position, and, in the case of the *OED*, 'in most cases reference is made only to attested recurrent collocation patterns' (Cortés Rodríguez and Mairal Usón 2002: 11).

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[4] It is fully customizable and allows creating as many different fields in each entry as necessary. Results can be exported to different formats, including .doc, .rtf , .xml, and .htm, or added to an ODBC database. The examples included in Section 4 of this paper have been generated with *TshwaneLex*.

3. Description of the Proposed Dictionary

The **syntactic description** will be conventional and follow that used in Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik (1985). I thus talk of *complements* of an adjective, which may be realised by means of Noun Phrases inflected in the accusative, genitive, dative and instrumental, Prepositional Phrases introduced by an assortment of different prepositions, and Clauses, both finite (introduced by such complementisers as *þæt*, *hu*, *hwæt*, etc.) and non-finite or infinitival (where the infinitive is a simple infinitive ending in *-an* or an inflected infinitive, that is, *to*+V-*enne*). However, when I talk of *complementation*, I refer both to personal constructions (those in which the subject is realised by a NP) and impersonal constructions (those in which the subject is an anticipatory pronoun (*hit*, *þæt*, *þis*) or a clause (finite or non-finite), or *zero*). Both types of construction will be recorded in my entries.

The **semantic roles** that will be used (cases, arguments, participants; see Table 2 below) are a pertinent selection from those suggested by Comesaña Rincón (2001b: 40–46) and Garrudo Carabias (1991, 1996 and personal communication), whose definitions of roles I have loosely adapted to the description of adjectival predicates. I am fully aware that this is a very slippery area and differences between cases are not always easily made. My proposal must therefore be considered as tentative and open to much improvement. But it is clear that, since the adjective is the controlling element, the choice of one particular lexical entry has a semantic effect on the type of elements (semantic arguments or participants) which co-occur with that entry within the ascriptive sentence (Comesaña Rincón 2001b: 32).

Table 2. Semantic Roles.

AGENT	=	Intelligent actor who consciously and deliberately takes part in an action.
INSTRUMENT	=	Entity consciously used by the agent engaged in the action.
CAUSE	=	Entity which provokes an effect.
BENEFICIARY	=	Entity affected by the quality denoted by the adjective.
RECIPIENT	=	Entity which receives sensory, cognitive or emotional perceptions.
OBJECT	=	Action or entity in or with which the agent is involved.
THEME	=	Entity unconsciously or passively involved in a state or action.
LOCATIVE	=	Entity in which a state or action is located.

As for the **elements composing the entries**, I intend to resort to Comesaña Rincón (2001a, b) and Garrudo Carabias (1991, 1996 and personal communication), with a few modifications. Each entry must describe the syntactic and semantic behaviour required by one single form. Following Comesaña Rincón (2001a: 32), the adjectival entry will be 'introduced in a predicative ascriptive structure'. The description will not account for structures which have undergone rearrangements motivated by thematic changes (extrapositions, questions, inversions, ellipses). In other words, I will present an untransformed level of description, prior to all syntagmatic alteration. In this way the variety of possible syntagmatic arrangements will be substantially reduced and the description will be more accurate and unified, particularly in the case of a language such as OE, with a freer word-order than Modern English. Since the copulative verb is almost always *beon* ('to be'), it will not be explicitly disclosed in the description. The entries of the lexicon and their corresponding patterns of syntactic behaviour may be interconnected through different processes (deletion, ergativity, subject-to-subject raising, object-to-subject raising, reversibility, reciprocity; see Comesaña Rincón 2001b: 31), which will be explicitly stated in the entries. The entries will account for both complemented and non-complemented uses of adjectives and provide information about subcategorisation features and selectional and/or collocational restrictions. The elements that an adjective subcategorises for may be obligatory, or optional and syntagmatically dispensable (see Matthews 1981: 125). However, since the distinction between just what was obligatory or optional in OE cannot be refuted by native speakers, it must necessarily be based on the empirical evidence in extant texts, i.e., whether it is found or not in the *DOEC*. Thus, I intend to present the inherent grammatical features which make one adjective differ from another and which can constitute differentiated lexical entries (homonymous forms will be easily differentiated).

This will also help distinguish typologies of grammatical behaviours or adjectival patterns. The entry components are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Entry components.

1.	Adjectival entry (divided into meanings).
2.	Semantic class.
3.	Meaning (modern English equivalents).
4.	OE synonyms.
5.	OE antonyms.
6.	Positional / syntactic information of the function of the adjective: predicative (normally complement of the subject) and non-predicative (noun modifier, either in attributive or postpositive position).
7.	Semantic roles.
8.	Syntactic structure as predicate.
9.	Realization of each syntactic function, that is, type of complement.
10.	Type of referent: animate, inanimate, action.
11.	Semantic role of each element of the structure (subject and complement(s)).
12.	Transformational relations.
13.	*DOEC* example and reference for each potential structure.

The **notation system** I propose is presented in Table 4, still at a preliminary phase. Again, I have resorted to Comesaña Rincón (2001a, b) and introduced a few personal modifications to it.

Table 4. Notational system.

(#)	=	Semantic class to which the adjective belongs.
(C)	=	Optional complement.
*	=	Unattested or invented for illustrative purposes.
/	=	Elements in paradigmatic relationship.
[ ]	=	Author's comments within lexical entry.
+	=	Elements in syntagmatic relationship.
<<	=	Lexical entry is syntactically and semantically derived from another one.
=	=	Synonym; realization of an element.
≠	=	Antonym.
A	=	Adjunct or peripheral complement.
acc	=	Noun phrase inflected in the accusative.
Act	=	Action, event, process (usually expressed through a clause).
Adj	=	Adjective.
anim	=	Animate referent.
C	=	Obligatory complement (*i.e.*, attested in all extant examples).
CASE	=	Semantic case, argument, role… (the actual case label is used).
Cl	=	Clause.
dat	=	Noun phrase inflected in the dative.
gen	=	Noun phrase inflected in the genitive.
inanim	=	Inanimate referent.
Inf	=	Infinitive; infinitive clause.
Inf_{-an}	=	Non-inflected infinitive.
Inf_{Inf}	=	Inflected infinitive.
Mod	=	Modifying adjective (attributive or postpositive).
nom	=	Noun phrase inflected in the nominative.
NP	=	Noun phrase.
O	=	Object.
Ø	=	No complement.

PP	=	Prepositional phrase.
Pred	=	Predicative adjective (controlling element).
S	=	Subject.
S←O	=	Object-to-subject raising.
S←S	=	Subject-to-subject raising.
þæt	=	*Þæt* clause (or any other complementiser).
V	=	Verb.

4. Entry Samples

By way of example I include the entries for five adjectives semantically akin: *abregde*, *abysgod*, *acol*, *bysig*, and *carful*.

abregde (Cl 10) **terrified, frightened, seized with fear** = *acol, aferde, afyrht, forht, forhtigend, ≠ arod, beald, cene, deor, dyrstig* Pred. LOCATIVE/CAUSE Adj = Pred: S+V+Adj+(C): S = NP anim, LOCATIVE = nom; C = PP inanim, CAUSE = *for/mid/þurh* + NP = dat; *heo ða wæs swyðe afyrht and **abreged** for ðæs engles gesihðe* (LS 18.2 (NatMaryAss 10J) 576); *he sylfa byð afyrhted 7 **abreged** mid þy mægne godra weorca þara manna* (GDPref and 3 (C) 20.222.12); *se apostolica biscop wæs swiðe **abreged** on swefne þurh nihtlice gesihþe* (GD 1 (C) 4.39.2).

abysgod (Cl 10) **busied, engaged, occupied** = *bysig¹, ≠ æmtig²* Pred LOCATIVE/OBJECT Adj = Pred: S+V+Adj+(C): S = NP anim, LOCATIVE = nom; C = NP/PP/Cl, NP inanim, OBJECT = dat, PP inanim, OBJECT = *in/mid/on/wiþ/ymb* + NP = dat, Cl act, OBJECT Fin/Inf Fin:*þæt/hu*; Inf:*-enne*; *hi swa ðæs streames brycge **abysgade** wæron* (Bede 1 7.38.10); *7 heo þa þær wunode manege gær **abysgod** in hire gebedum* (GDPref and 4 (C) 14.279.22); *Se wæs swiðe **abisgod** mid ðære ilcan spræce* (Bo 41.143.7); *And gif þin willa bið gelome **abysgod** on Godes herungum; Þa he þa wið þone here þær wæst **abisgod** wæs* (ChronA (Plummer) 894.66); *he wæs **abisgod** ymb ðæs folces ðearfe* (CP 16.101.24); *þæt mod is ... **abysgod**, þæt we ne magon myd þæs modes eagum nan þing geseon* (Solil 3 67.4); *And he þa wæs **abisgad** hu he his fæder gelædde to þam leohte 7 to soðum geleafan* (LS 30 (Pantaleon) 50); *se mæssepreost wæs unwenlice **abysgod** wingeard to settanne* (GD 1 (C) 12.88.16).

acol (Cl 10) **afraid, frightened** = *aferde, afyrht, forht, forhtigend, abregde, ≠ arod, beald, cene, deor, dyrstig* Pred. LOCATIVE/CAUSE Adj = Pred: S+V+Adj+C: S = NP anim, LOCATIVE = nom; C = NP/PP, inanim/anim, CAUSE NP = gen, PP = *for/on* + NP = dat; *Næfre hleowlora æt edwihtan æfre weorðeð feorhberendra forht and **acol*** (GenA,B 1953); *Ða wearð feonda þreat **acol** for ðam egsan* (Guth A,B 691); *Wearð he on þam egesan **acol** worden* (Dan 124).

bysig 1. (Cl 1) **occupied, diligent, laborious, busy, industrious** = *abysgod, ≠ æmtig, idel* Mod/Pred. AGENT/OBJECT Adj = Mod: Adj+NP+Ø. Adj = Pred: S+V+Adj+(C): S = NP anim, AGENT; C = PP/Cl, PP inanim, OBJECT = *æfter/mid/on* + NP = dat, = *ymb* + NP = acc, Cl act, OBJECT:*-enne*; *ne rehtlic is **bisig** sie in morgen.* (MtHeadGl (Li) 20); *Þi nu mine sawle swiþe **bysige** feondas mine fæcne ofþryhtun* (PPs 58.3); *min hige dreoseð, **bysig** æfter bocum* (MSol 59); *se bisceop wæs **bysig** mid þam cynincge, and nyste butan hi sungon þone lofsang forð on* (ÆLS (Swithun), 230); *Oft bið seo sawul on anum þinge oððe on anum geþohte swa **bysig*** (ÆLS (Christmas), 218); *Min dohtor is nu swiðe **bisy** ymbe hyre leornunga* (ApT 19.14); *Ac hire is Marthe dæl benumen, for heo nis na læng **bisig** to fostrigen hire Sune swa swa cilde* (LS 22 (InFestisSMarie) 165). **2. anxious, concerned** = *abysgod, ahogod, gehygdig, carful, cearig, hohful, sorgiende, sorhful, ymbehigdig, ≠ orsorg* Pred. BENEFICIARY/CAUSE Adj = Pred: S+V+Adj+C: S = NP anim, BENEFICIARY; C = PP = *onmang/ymb* + NP =

dat; _Onmang þyssen þingen heo wæs_ **bisig** _7 gedrefd_ (LS 22 (InFestisSMarie) 119); _Martha wæs swiðe_ **bysig** _ymbe drihtnes ðenunge_ (ÆCHom II, 34, 256.36). **3. busy, engaged** Pred. OBJECT Adj = Pred: S+V+Adj+Ø: << Erg S = NP inanim, OBJECT; _bogan wæron_ **bysige**, _bord ord onfeng._ (Mald 108) << *hie wæron bysige on / mid bogan.

carful 1. (Cl 1) **careful, solicitous, diligent** = _abysgod, ahogod, bysig, gehygdig, cearig, hohful, sorgiende, sorhful, ymbehigdig,_ ≠ _orsorg_ Mod/Pred. AGENT/OBJECT Adj = Mod: Adj+NP+Ø. Adj = Pred: S+V+Adj+(C): S = NP anim, AGENT; C = NP/PP/Cl, NP anim, OBJECT = gen, PP inanim, OBJECT = _on/to_ + NP = dat, Cl act, OBJECT Fin/Inf Fin:_þæt/hu_; Inf:_-enne_; _þa sette he hyrde [...] to þam wingearde 7 bebead, þæt hine man heolde mid_ **carfullre** _wæccean._ (GD 1 (H) 9.57.16); _geornfullice asmeagian_ **carfull** _he ongann._ (RegCGl 1.10); _ymhydig vel_ **carful** _is mines fultumiend min_ (PsGlI (Lindelöf) 39.18); _ge beon on Godes lofu_ **carfulle** (Rec 15 (Birch 106) 31); _he_ **carfull** _sig and gesceot to godcundum weorcum and to gehyrsumnysse_ (BenRWells 58.96.13); _Ac uton we beon_ **carfulle** _þæt ure tima mid idelnysse ne losie_ (ÆCHom I, 28, 414.27); _weorðe se_ **carfull** _hu he swyþast mæge gecweman his Drihtne_ (WHom 10c 128); _hi ne beoð ealles swa_ **carfulle** _to beganne þa earfoðlican drohtnunge_ (ÆCHom I, 24, 340.23); _cume broþor se ...7 ... inn ga on hus untrumra eallum for him_ **carfullum** _on hyra þingrædenum_ (RegCGl 65.1551). **2. anxious, troubled** Mod/Pred. BENEFICIARY/CAUSE Adj = Pred: S+V+Adj+(C): S = NP anim, BENEFICIARY; C = PP inanim, CAUSE = _be/for/fram/ymb_ + NP = dat; _Drusiana ..._ **carful** _be ðæs apostoles hæse ham gewende_ (ÆCHom I, 4, 60.18); _Micel heap holdra freonda ure andbidað ..._ **carful** _gyt for ure hælðe_ (ÆCHom II, 40, 302.105); _swa swa hyrda hyrde_ **carfull** _fram reaflum ortrywra geaglum swylce gynigendum wulfa gomum_ (RegCGl 3.25); _he_ **carful** _sy ymbe his þweoran geþohtas_ (BenR 7.24.17).

5. Conclusion

The finished dictionary could be published either in printed or electronic form. Since potential readers or users would be academics and research students, an electronic publication (a web page or a database, online or in a CD-ROM) would be the most useful format, since entries and meanings could be cross-referenced by means of hyperlinks. Each syntactic or semantic complementation structure of an adjective could also be hyperlinked to the collection of all the _DOEC_ occurrences of that adjective in which it is used with the same complementation structure. Besides, an electronic version where each entry component is recorded in a searchable field would also allow users to sort entries according to meaning, synonyms and antonyms, semantic class adscription, patterns of syntactic complementation, semantic roles, obligatoriness or optionality of complements, animacy/inanimacy features of NPs, _DOEC_ references, etc. Finally, the dictionary would also facilitate the tracing of relations between adjectives and other categories, such as nouns and verbs, in OE or between OE adjectives and their reflexes (or substitutes) in later periods. The availability of a dictionary with these features would in itself be a contribution to English historical linguistics, given its descriptive and predictive power. Existing electronic dictionaries do not offer all these possibilities, to my knowledge.

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