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**Adjectives in English and
their lexicographical
treatment:
morphological, syntactic
and semantic aspects**

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ABSTRACT

English adjectives, a major word class, are a complex area within English linguistic studies because of their peculiar features and syntactic functions. Therefore, this essay is aimed at providing a brief description of English adjectives considering their morphology, syntax and semantics, and also at surveying their lexicographical treatment. We have based our own analysis and views on the distinct theories that some authors have proposed about this wide area. As a practical activity, we also analyze how these adjectives are treated within two specialized dictionaries taking the theoretical description as a basis: the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2015, 9th edition) and the *Gran Diccionario Oxford Español-Inglés, Inglés-Español* (2008, 4th edition).

RESUMEN

Los adjetivos ingleses, una de las principales clases de palabras, constituyen un tema complejo dentro de los estudios lingüísticos de la lengua inglesa debido a sus funciones sintácticas y características peculiares. Por ello, el objeto de este ensayo es proporcionar una descripción breve de los adjetivos ingleses teniendo en cuenta su morfología, sintaxis y semántica, así como analizar su tratamiento lexicográfico. Hemos basado nuestro propio análisis y nuestros puntos de vista en las diferentes teorías que algunos autores han propuesto sobre esta amplia área. El estudio también incluye como actividad práctica un análisis del tratamiento de los adjetivos en dos diccionarios especializados, tomando como criterio el análisis teórico ya realizado anteriormente: el *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2015, 9^o edición) y el *Gran Diccionario Oxford Español-Inglés, Inglés-Español* (2008, 4^o edición).

KEYWORDS

English adjectives, morphology, syntax, semantics, lexicography, monolingual and bilingual dictionaries.

1. INTRODUCTION

This study examines English adjectives, particularly their morphological and semantic features and syntactic functions as well as their lexicographical treatment. This particular topic was chosen because of its complexity in the English language, which also entails the investigation of two different dictionaries. The main aim of this essay is to reinforce and consolidate my own knowledge about English adjectives taking into account their morphology, syntax and semantics. Hence, the analysis of dictionaries has contributed to introducing me into the field of lexicography providing me with a great opportunity to discover relevant aspects about dictionaries, particularly about English entries.

The lexicographical works are a monolingual dictionary and a bilingual one and they are used to determine how adjectives function in the English language in terms of their morphological, syntactic and semantic features. So, as a practical part of the paper, we will analyze how these adjectives appear and are treated in two specialized dictionaries on the basis of the previous theoretical background: *the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2015, 9th edition) and *the Gran Diccionario Oxford* (2008, 4th edition).

The first section of the study offers a short depiction of English adjectives. This representation explains and evaluates the definition of adjectives proposed by some traditional grammarians, the evolution of that description proposed by other linguists and the description of their most relevant morphological, syntactic and semantic aspects. Finally, we will refer to some important and key aspects concerning lexicography, including general definitions, dictionary typologies, macrostructure and microstructure.

The second part of the project comprises the analysis, investigation and comparison of the two dictionaries mentioned above. We will focus on the lexicographical treatment of the use of adjectives in these dictionaries, mainly from the morphological, syntactic and semantic point of view. These areas will be deeply discussed on the basis of the study carried out in the first part of this study. At the end of both dictionaries' analysis, we will offer some conclusions.

The last part includes the bibliography which was used during the process of investigation and elaboration of this paper and an annex with some extracts from the dictionaries.

With respect to methodology, we based our theoretical background on some of the most prestigious grammars of English, as well as on key monographs in the area of lexicography. Moreover, the different examples that are going to be illustrated along the essay are taken from the *British National Corpus*, which contains 100 million words of written and spoken British English. They are numbered appropriately following by a legend between parentheses that combines numbers and letters which indicate the origin of each particular example, e.g. (A05).

2. SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ENGLISH ADJECTIVES: A THEORETICAL OVERVIEW.

2.1. Introductory definition of English adjectives

Adjectives, as well as other word classes, play an important role in any language, especially in English because they are commonly used with some particular characteristics. Hence, we have to take into account their morphology, syntax and semantics.

At a general level, adjectives are defined as “as a syntactically distinct class of words whose most characteristic function is to modify nouns” (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002: 527). This clearly means that adjectives are characterized as expressions that typically modify nouns providing information about them. Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 527) also note that adjectives typically denote properties being the most central ones: size, shape, colour, worth and age. In other words, adjectives express a particular feature about the referent they modify

2.2. Morphological features

To start with, the concept of *morphology* could be defined as a branch of linguistics that studies and describes how words are formed and structured in a language.

It is important to give a brief historical definition of adjectives. According to Jespersen (1909-49), who is one of the most important traditional grammarians, adjectives constitute a major word class in English and they could be defined as

Words that could be formed from nouns without endings or even with a particular ending, being the most common ones: “**-al**: commercial; **-ar**: oracular; **-ary**: fragmentary; **-ory**: contributory; **-ed**: talented; **-ese**: journalese; **-ful**: doubtful; **-ic**: heroic; **-ine**: labyrinthine; **-ish**: childish; **-less**: endless; **-ly**: scholarly; **-ous**: venomous; **-y**: bloody (Jespersen, 1909-49, vol. VII: 44-45).

He also noted that adjectives may be formed as well from verbs by adding other endings such as **-ant**: triumphant; **-ative**: talkative; **-ble**: eatable; **-ive**: active; **-ful**: forgetful, among others. (Jespersen, 1909-49, vol. VII: 45).

Apart from all this, Quirk *et al.* (1985: 402), Biber, D. *et al.* (1999: 190) and Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 528), like most grammarians, agree that most adjectives have no identifying form, that is to say, they always have a base form with a *positive* degree referring to the simple form of the adjective itself. In other words, they are not marked inflectionally for number or gender because they do not have any suffix to express number or gender; they express indistinctively feminine or masculine depending on the context in which they occur:

- (1) Forward planning and **good** *communication* are the two foundation stones (A00)¹.
- (2) It is very much like **good** *investigative journalism* (A03).
- (3) It is a **beautiful** country which is being devastated by a disease (A00).
- (4) The people with the **beautiful** faces were also, mysteriously, the ones it was most fun to be with (A05).

However, Quirk *et al.* (1985: 402) note exceptional cases of adjectives which are formed by adding some particular endings. The most common ones are: **-able**: *acceptable* (A0H); **-al**: *practical* (A00); **-ish**: *foolish* (A1F); **-ous**: *disastrous* (A02), **-ful**: *helpful* (A00); **-ic**: *mathematic* (KDB); **-y**: *cheeky* (A0U) and **-ly**: *lovely* (A0D).

¹ The abbreviations in brackets identify each example as belonging to a specific text in the *British National Corpus*.

2.3. Syntactical behaviour

Syntax is defined as a discipline which deals with the combination of words in order to form phrases, clauses or sentences.

Jespersen (1909-49) defines syntax as a discipline that “looks at grammatical facts from their side of their meaning or signification” (Jespersen, 1909-49, vol. II: 1). According to him, syntax deals with grammatical facts taking into account the meaning of words.

It is now appropriate to mention Dwight Bolinger (1967). His contributions about English syntax is a bit different from the traditional one because he uses different terminologies which vary with respect to other grammarians like Quirk *et al.* (1985), Biber, D. *et al.* (1999) and Huddleston & Pullum (2002).

According to Bolinger (1967: 3), there are shortcomings of *be* predications. In Quirk *et al.*’s grammar “*be* predications” refers to predicative function. Moreover, Bolinger points that this distinction between attribute and predicative adjectives leads to cases of ambiguity: “Instead of clearing up ambiguity, the traditional predicative-attributive transformation creates it” (*op. cit.*: III).

He notes that there are many adjectives that can never be predicative such as *main*, *crack*, *fond*, *runaway* or *total* (Bolinger, 1967:2). So, these adjectives allow attribution in their own sense.

- (5) **Main** characteristics of the period (A04); * [The] characteristics of the period are main.
- (6) A **crack** salesman; * The salesman is crack (Bolinger, 1967: 2).
- (7) A **fond** memory (A0L); * The memory is fond.
- (8) **Runaway** children (A0U); * Children are runaway.
- (9) **Total** charitable donations (A01); * [The] charitable donations are total.

Bolinger also notes that other adjective lack an attributive counterpart and are predicative, like *asleep*, *flush* or *sorry* (Bolinger, 1967: 3).

- (10) She fell **asleep** dreaming dragonflies (A0L).
- (11) They are **flush** with the wing surface (A0H).
- (12) I sometimes feel **sorry** (A08).

In addition, Bolinger speaks about “syntactic sources of attributive adjectives” (Bolinger, 1967: 4). He uses that expression in order to name some special cases of attributive adjectives. Thus, he makes some subdivisions:

- a) Adverbial predications where the adverb is mainly recovered by an adjective, that is to say, there is an adverb in the predication that functions as an adjective:

(13) **Daily** exercise (A03) → [The] exercise is [made] daily.

(14) He is a fair shot → He shoots fairly (Bolinger, 1967: 4).

- b) Bolinger also points that there are some predications where the verb and the complement are recovered in the sentence. In these cases, he speaks about compound ending in *ing* or ending in *ed*.

Moreover, it would be possible to convert these attributive adjectives into *be* predications (predicative adjectives according to other grammarians):

(15) The man walks slow → a **slow-walking** man; The man is **slow-walking** (Bolinger, 1967: 6).

(16) The girl loves home → a **home-loving** girl; The girl is **home-loving** (Bolinger, 1967: 6).

Quirk *et al.* (1985: 413) also note in this regard that there is a distinction between adjectives and participial adjectives. According to him, adjectives that “have the same suffixes as participles in *-ing* or *-ed* are called participial adjectives (Quirk *et al.* 1985: 413) and they are indistinctly used in attributive or predicative function, although participial adjectives are more commonly used in attributive function:

(17) His views were very **surprising** → his **surprising** views (Quirk et alii, 1985: 413).

(18) The man seemed very **offended** → the **offended** man (Quirk et alii, 1985: 413).

(19) A white parsley sauce is unappetizing purely because of its **boring** appearance (A0C).

(20) It is never dry or **boring** (A0C).

(21) I was **bored** and lonely (A0F).

- c) Finally, Bolinger also mentions some relics of the ancient perfect tense with *be* which have also attributive function. In other words, it is possible to use the perfect tense or even, the past participle functioning as an adjective:

(22) The Indians are (have) **vanished** → the **vanished** Indians (Bolinger, 1967: 5).

(23) The guests are (have) **departed** → the **departed** guests (Bolinger, 1967: 5).

Consequently, Bolinger (1967: 7, 8) makes another contribution about English adjectives. He speaks about characterization adjectives, which “confirm the existence of a set meaning for pre-adjunct adjectives”. Concerning these characterization adjectives, he speaks about perfect participles and temporary adjectives:

- a) *Perfect participles* tend to appear in attributive position when they leave a mark on something and they mainly characterize the nominal expression they accompany:

(24) It may just be possible to compete with **bruised** ribs (A0M).

(25) Generally **frozen** pasta has whole egg in it (A0C).

It is also possible to use perfect participles functioning as adjectives in predicative position when they easily appear in the predicate or in the noun phrase:

(26) **Labeled** photographs and diagrams (FYX) → The photographs and diagrams are **labeled**.

(27) **Smudged** mirrors (A7J) → Mirrors are **smudged**.

- b) *Temporary adjectives* refer to those adjectives which name qualities or features in order to characterize anything, mainly the nominal expression. These adjectives are restricted to predicative or post-adjunct position:

(28) She is indeed **ready** to die (A05).

(29) The illuminated versions can be **handy** if sited near the keyhole (A16).

Bolinger (1967: 12) also speaks about one set of temporary adjectives: he refers to those adjectives having the prefix “a-“. According to him, these adjectives are also restricted to predicative or post-adjunct position both by their “adverbial origin” and by their “sense of temporariness”:

(30) The whole mill was **afire**, with sheets of flames! (ADM).

(31) He felt he had scarcely fallen **asleep** (A0N).

(32) The foyer is **abuzz** with joshing studes and the final doof! (CK4).

In this classification of temporary adjectives, some other adjectives could be included like those expressing states of health, sensation, mind or spirits. According to Bolinger, these adjectives are *great*, *swell*, *wonderful*, *lousy*, *dizzy*, *hot*, *blue* and *fine* (Bolinger, 1967: 10). They are restricted, being attributive adjectives on many occasions:

(33) Three ***lousy*** hours! (A0L).

(34) Lucy, closed her eyes with the ***dizzy*** perfection of that moment (A0L).

(35) We look in mirrors, or on ***hot*** afternoons (A08).

What is more, Bolinger (1967) mentions *reference-modification adjectives*: they are adjectives with a typical reference, adjectives which refer to other words in the sentence. The most typical adjective is ***common***, which does not take comparison:

(36) These nouns are ***common*** (ones); * These nouns are very common (nouns) (Bolinger, 1967: 18).

Hence, Bolinger (1967) makes an attempt to sub-classify reference-only adjectives:

- a) There are adjectives that identify the reference of the noun itself by characterizing it. They are typically accompanied by an indefinite determiner and they fulfil attributive function. Some of these adjectives are *plain, arrant, utter, perfect, pure, mere, ordinary, real, total, and actual*, among others (Bolinger, 1967: 18).

(37) An ***ordinary*** man (A05).

(38) It is a ***real*** privilege for ACET to be asked to work (A00).

(39) It is desirable to obtain some ***actual*** stage experience (A06).

- b) Reference-only adjectives are also adjectives that could be called intensifiers of the determiner *the*. The meaning of these adjectives is reinforced by accentuating the word *the*, that is, these adjectives are preceded by the determiner *the*. Some examples of reference-only adjectives are *particular, identical, exact, same, selfsame* and *specific* (Bolinger, 1967: 19).

(40) Our London Home Care service saw 103 deaths in the ***same*** area (A02).

(41) It is the ***specific*** effect this religious form has in Ireland which is under scrutiny (A07).

Just as Quirk *et al.* (1985: 402-403), Biber, D. *et al.* (1999: 188) and Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 528-529) argue, adjectives could appear in different environments according to their main syntactic functions. Therefore, he concludes that ‘environment’ is understood as a structural and functional aspect, that is to say, the adjectives’ structures or constructions as well as the general functions like ‘complement’ or ‘modifier’.

What is clear enough is adjectives’ syntactic environment, that is, their typical positions in sentences. Let us summarize them:

- a) Pre-head modifiers in nominal structures. The most typical function of adjectives is that they modify mainly nouns or nominal structures providing additional information about these modified classes of words. In those cases, adjectives can occur freely in attributive function:

(42) He is an **adorable** *person* (ADP).

(43) The **amazing** *number of sheer things* (A08).

(44) There is a **great** *tendency* to want life to be as it was (A00).

(45) Training for **different** *agencies* (A00).

Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 553) note in this regard that there are some restricted functions for adjectives. The main distinction is adjectives which are restricted to attributive functions, that is, there are some adjectives which can only appear in attributive function. According to Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 553), some of these adjectives are *damn, future, principal, sole, main, utter, mock, latter, mere, frigging and eventual*, among many others (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002: 553).

(46) The compiler's **main** critical medium is the catalogue (A04).

(47) The pictures illustrated are used as **mere** decoration" (A04).

(48) The wooden panels were **mock** painted versions (A0X).

- b) According to Tucker (1998: 54), adjectives could also occur as complements of a copula in clauses. In these cases, adjectives are always preceded by a linking verb like *to be, to seem, to become, to feel, to look, or to remain*, among others. This feature is also dealt with by Quirk *et al.* (1985: 417) and Biber *et al.* (1999: 200, 201). These adjectives are used predicatively because they modify and characterize the subject of the sentence by means of a linking verb:

(49) His whereabouts remain **unknown** (A03).

(50) It seems **incredible** that we are not able to carry out this one (A3U).

Furthermore, these adjectives mainly function as *subject complement* or *object complement* within the sentence. In the case of the subject complement, it is possible to relate the subject of the sentence to the complement because there is a copular relationship in these types of clauses (Quirk *et al.*, 1985: 417):

(51) He was **afraid** of being sent back to Ethiopia (A03).

(52) Trying to feel **better** by using more never seems to work for long (A01).

Also, there is a close link between the direct object and the object complement because the latter characterizes the object describing a particular feature about it. Quirk *et al.* (1985: 417), together with Biber, D. *et al.* (1999: 200-201) and Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 528), argue that adjectives functioning as object complement express the result or a particular feature denoted by the main verb of the clause. In those cases, these adjectives are placed after the noun and describe, locate or express something about the previous noun:

(53) He shot him **dead** (Tucker, 1998: 54).

(54) He pulled the tooth **loose** (Tucker, 1998: 54).

Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 559) make the same contribution about adjectives which appear in predicative function, that is, never-attribute adjectives. According to them, there are some adjectives which only occur predicatively or postpositively, but not attributively. This is the case of some groups of adjectives. For instance, the ones composed with the “a-“ prefix like: *ablaze, afloat, afraid, agleam, alike, awake, averse, aware, alight, askew, asleep, awry, alive and alone*, among many others (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002: 559):

(55) The short game was **awry** (AJJ).

(56) Stewart 's eyes were **alight** (A0N).

Another group of never-attribute adjectives is formed by adjectives with [obligatory] complements because they cannot generally perform attributive function. Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 559) propose some adjectives that show this feature like: *able* (infinitive), *accustomed* (to), *apt* (infinitive), *conscious* (of), *desirous* (of), *devoid* (of), *fond* (of), *fraught* (with), *intent* (on) and *liable* (infinitive):

(57) From Scotland we are **apt** to look at and condemn Thatcher's England (A0U).

(58) It was now a somewhat discordant situation in a period **desirous** of change (AMY).

(59) Neither of these books, however, could be said to be **intent** on revenge (A05).

The last group of adjectives performing predicative function is composed by a small set of other adjectives that express health of condition. Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 560) speak about: *faint, ill, poorly, sic, unwell, well, bereft, content, drunk, glad, present, rife, sorry*.

(60) I am **glad** to hear it (A0D).

(61) Speculation was **rife** in the city (A3L).

- c) Finally, Tucker (1998: 54) argues that adjectives could fulfill the function of *postpositive modifiers* of some nouns or nominal constructions, i.e.: *something nice*. Likewise, Quirk *et al.* (1985:418) and Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 528) also consider this type and name it postpositive function of adjectives.

According to them, postpositive adjectives are adjectives that are placed after the noun or noun phrase structures they modify. They commonly occur after some pronouns like *someone, something, anything, nobody*, etc. like “*something nice*” (Tucker, 1998: 54). Quirk *et al.* (1985: 418), Tucker (1998: 54), and Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 528-529) coincide in their contributions about the postpositive function of adjectives. Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 560) speak about postpositive-only adjective only taking into account these adjectives: *aplenty, galore, proper, designate, elect* and *laureate*:

(62) There have been accidents **aplenty** on this cluttered but charming course (AJR).

(63) Anti-tank guns **galore** (ACE).

(64) The nihilistic Nobel **laureate** has a surprising affinity with sitcom pioneers (CAG).

Nonetheless, Quirk *et al.* (1985) go beyond this contribution explaining that adjectives with complementation, a prepositional phrase or a to-infinitive clause, cannot fulfill an attributive function, but a postpositive one:

(65) “I know an actor **suitable** for the part” (Quirk *et al.*, 1985: 420).

- d) On the basis of the previous syntactic features, Tucker (1998: 54) speaks about other types of environments of adjectives. To him, adjectives could function as complements of some prepositions such as “*in short*” or “*for good*”. In these cases, adjectives are considered central and they fulfill the predicative function because adjectives are placed after the preposition.
- e) Quirk *et al.* (1985: 424-425) also point that adjectives can fulfill the function of a verbless clause (a construction in which the verb is implied but not present; in other words, the verb can be deduced from the verbless clause) or, even, they could be the head of an adjective phrase that realizes the clause. This is what he calls *supplementive adjectives clauses*:

(66) The man, **quietly assertive**, spoke to the assembled workers (Quirk *et al.*, 1985: 425).

(67) **Glad to accept**, the boy nodded his agreement (Quirk *et al.*, 1985: 45).

In relation to this feature, they speak about the so-called *contingent adjectives*. They are a particular type of supplementary adjective clauses which express a condition or circumstance about what is said in the superordinate clause:

(68) **Whether right or wrong**, he always comes off worst in an argument (Quirk *et al.*, 1985: 427).

(69) **If wet**, these shoes should never be placed too close to the heat (Quirk *et al.*, 1985: 427).

- f) Finally, Jespersen (1909-49, vol. II: 273) notes that adjectives frequently turn into nouns, e.g. “*the known*”. Jespersen’s contribution about substantivized adjectives coincides with Quirk *et al.*’s (1985: 421) when they speak about adjectives as heads of noun phrases. Just as they note, adjectives can perform the function of heads in noun phrases, which could be the subject, complement, object or prepositional complement of sentences. These adjectives, unlike nouns, do not inflect for number and gender but they require the use of the determiner before the adjective. Adjectives are commonly used as head of the noun phrases in order to refer to different types of persons, e.g. “*the brave*”; “*the elderly*” or “*the underprivileged*” (Quirk *et al.*, 1985: 421). Moreover, adjectives denoting nationalities could be also heads of noun phrases, e.g. “*the Americans*” (A08) or “*the Chinese*” (A03).

In other cases, Jespersen (1909-49: 272, 273) points that it is possible to use adjectives as principals, that is, adjectives without making them nouns or adding the pronoun “*one*”. In this sense, adjectives remain uninflected as principals when they appear in pairs like “*rich and poor*”.

Finally, Quirk *et al.* (1985: 424) speak about adjectives as heads in noun phrases when the adjective makes reference to something abstract. In these cases, adjectives are used with an abstract reference, e.g.: “*the worst*” (A05) or “*the natural*” (A04).

2.4. Semantic characteristics

Semantics is defined as a discipline that deals with the study of meanings in a particular language.

Jespersen argues (1909-49: 272) that adjectives are characterized by “the possibility of qualifying them by means of an adverb”, e.g. “*the really poor*” (Jespersen, 1909-49,

vol. II: 272). This contribution coincides with Huddleston & Pullum's (2002: 231) and Aarts's (2008: 31) when they speak about adjectives preceded by degree adverbs.

Jespersen remarks that adjectives sometimes express the meaning of a quality-noun, e.g. "the *agreeable* of her speculation was over for that hour" (Jespersen, 109-49, vol. II: 274). Furthermore, there is a tendency to add the word "thing" to the adjective when the notion to be expressed is perfectly concrete like in "the only *thing good*" (Jespersen, 109-49, vol. II: 274).

Just as Tucker (1998: 51) notes, adjectives can be defined as a part of speech that can appear without any identifying form or even with some inflected forms such as suffixes typical of adjectives or comparative or superlative forms:

(70) This procedure is perfectly *acceptable* (A01).

(71) There were a lot of people *older* than me (A06).

Tucker (1998: 57), also points that "the semantic resource associated with adjectives is primarily concerned with **qualities of things**". He constantly insists on the idea that adjectives express a wide range of attributes or properties associated with things they modify. These adjectives mainly denote material, color, size, shape, worth and age:

(72) A kind-looking man with bright **blue** (color) eyes and tattoos (A03).

(73) He knew only too well, a small, **scrawny** (size) creature (ASN).

(74) These people had no **deep** (shape) connection with the politics of Trinidad (A05).

(75) AIDS is affecting more **young** (age) people (A01).

Therefore, the relationship with nouns and adjectives should be taken into account. There is also an important distinction between *inherent* and *non-inherent* adjectives proposed by Quirk *et al.* (1985: 435). The former characterize and express attributes or qualities directly about the referent of a noun like "a firm handshake" or "a true report" (Quirk *et al.*, 1985: 435). The latter are not related to the noun directly or in the same way, that is, these non-inherent adjectives express properties or qualities which are less direct to the noun they modify like "a firm friend" or "a true scholar" (Quirk *et al.*, 1985: 435).

Apart from all this, adjectives have a distinct feature called "gradation", that is, they can be inflected by taking comparative or superlative forms. They are called *gradable*.

As stated by Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 531), “the prototypical adjective is gradable”, that is to say, a gradable adjective is the one that denotes a property in several degrees:

(76) Nationalist vote in a *smaller* number of constituencies (A07).

(77) It is suitable for even the *smallest* gardens (A0G).

–*Er* and –*Est* are suffixes typical of comparison that we add to the base form when adjectives are made up of only one or two syllables such as *long-* er (A00) / *long-* est (A01); *loud-* er (A0N) / *loud-* est (A0B). It is also possible to compare adjectives using the adverbs *more* or *most* also typical of comparison. In this case, this type of comparison is called *periphrastic* and it is used when adjectives have three or more syllables such as *more beautiful* (A0G) / *most beautiful* (A04); *more delicious* (CA4) / *most delicious* (CAN).

We could say that most adjectives can take comparative or superlative forms and all of them have the ability to occur attributively or predicatively. Adjectives that fulfill these features are the so-called *central adjectives* (Quirk *et al.*, 1985: 404).

(78) “The library user who looks for books of art criticism is not necessarily going to have an **easy** task” (A04).

On the contrary, *peripheral adjectives* are the ones that do not fulfill these features because they cannot be graded (*non-gradable*) nor can they occur both attributively and predicatively.

(79) “He felt he had scarcely fallen **asleep**” (A0N).

Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 231) state that gradable adjectives can also be preceded by the so-called *degree adverbs* such as *very*, *a little*, *rather*, *extremely*, among many others, which express the degree of intensity of adjectives:

(80) It was a **rather** *different* story (A04).

(81) The situation is still **very** *unstable* (A00).

Aarts (2008: 31) notes that when adjectives are preceded by these intensifying adverbs, they mainly indicate the degree or the extent to which the adjective is applied: “*very helpful*”, “*extremely nasty*” or “*less interesting*”.

Finally, Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 531) and Quirk *et al.* (1985: 435) consider that there are other adjectives which are *non-gradable*, that is, adjectives which cannot convey any degree of intensity. These non-gradable adjectives cannot take grade adverbs because they already express the idea of “very” in their definition. According to Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 531), some of these adjective are: *alphabetical, latter, phonological, ancillary, left, pubic, chief, residual, syllabic, utter, federal, glandular, obtainable*, and *marine*, among others:

(82) She had early ambitions to be a **marine** biologist (A4J).

(83) Materials which are as specific as **obtainable** for the purpose should be used (EER).

(84) It contains a few of my **pubic** hairs.

3. SOME KEY LEXICOGRAPHICAL ASPECTS

3.1. General definitions

After examining the grammatical features of English adjectives, it is now appropriate to deal with some aspects of lexicography. There is a wide variety of lexicographical descriptions in English.

According to Béjoint (2000: 6), “the main object of lexicography is to define words and terms”. Hartmann and James (1998: 85) define lexicography as “the professional activity and academic field concerned with dictionaries and other reference works”. Even more important is the definition of “dictionary”. Rey-Debove (1971: 27), cited by Béjoint (2000: 25), proposes the following definition,

Un dictionnaire est un ouvrage didactique qui décrit un ensemble (généralement structuré) d'éléments linguistiques, présentés en messages séparés et ordonnés, permettant la consultation. Les éléments, qui se situent entre la lettre et l'unité supérieure à la phrase, sont suivis ou non d'un énoncé (deux structures ou une seule structure). L'information implicite (une structure) ou explicite (deux structures) réalise un programme, et concerne toujours, au moins partiellement, le signe; dans l'information explicite qui semble ne concerner que la chose, la présence de la définition vaut comme information sur la signe.

Hartmann and James (1998: 85) note that a dictionary is “the most common type of reference work”. According to them, “the title *dictionary* has been used for an increasingly wider range of alphabetic, general and monolingual works”.

In Webster's Third New International Dictionary, it is generally defined as "a reference book containing words usually alphabetically arranged along with information about their forms, pronunciations, functions, etymologies, meanings, and syntactical and idiomatic uses" (Béjoint, 2000: 7). Thus, a dictionary is composed by a series of separate paragraphs, which are the entries or sub-entries. It is also an instrument to be consulted, not read and this is due to the form of the text itself. Rey-Debove notes that every dictionary should contain information arranged in a way that users can find it easily and quickly. He also notes that words appear organized alphabetically (Béjoint, 2000: 10).

3.2. Dictionary typology

To start with, Swanepoel (2003: 45) defines typology as "a system for the classification and description of items". The main aim of this typology is to provide dictionary users with a classification based on some features that show an overview of different categories and subcategories of dictionaries with their most distinctive features and also that makes it possible to explain differences within the categories or subcategories.

There are several dictionary typologies taking into account their most outstanding features (Béjoint, 2000: 32-37):

- a) *Morphological typologies*. These dictionaries are classified depending on their most outstanding formal features. Kister (1977: 4), cited by Béjoint (2000: 32), distinguished between different types of morphological dictionaries depending on the number of words. Thus, there are unabridged dictionaries, composed by more than 250,000 words; semi-unabridged, characterized with a number of words between 130,000 and 250,000 and finally, abridged dictionaries, with less than 130,000 words. Wagner (1967: 94, 123-6), cited by Béjoint (2000: 33), proposed another classification concerning morphological typology. He makes a distinction between 'extensive' and 'selective' dictionaries according to the length of the word-list.
- b) *Functional typologies*. In this case, dictionaries are classified depending on the linguistic operations they are designed for. According to Matoré (1968: 190), cited by Béjoint (2000: 36), there is an important distinction within this functional classification: the one between 'quantitative' and 'qualitative dictionaries'.

Quantitative dictionaries are designed for a public who needs information quickly about different types of things and qualitative dictionaries are designed for people who want precise and concrete information about the language.

- c) A “*genetic*” *typology*. This classification is based on “chronologically ordered choices” (Béjoint 2000: 36); this means that lexicographers have to make choices of words ordered and linked in a chronological way when they are designing or compiling a dictionary.

Apart from all this, dictionaries can be *general* or *specialized* either in their macrostructure or in their microstructure (Béjoint, 2000: 37). Rey-Debove associates “macrostructure” with an English word-list where entries are arranged in a particular way and he defines “microstructure” as the contents or information provided to each entry of dictionaries (Béjoint, 2000: 11).

Thus, the macrostructure of dictionaries is general if it includes elements of a lexicon in all its varieties. For example, the macrostructure of the new *Oxford English Dictionary* is general. On the contrary, a dictionary is specialized if its macrostructure is restricted to one variety, dialect or slang or if it restricted to one type of entry-word such as verbs, adjectives, idioms, etc. (Béjoint, 2000: 37, 38).

Another distinction between dictionaries is the one related to language. The teaching and learning of a particular language, in this case of English, could be carried out through grammatical studies as well as through research based on a large range of dictionaries, either monolingual or bilingual (Rizo Rodríguez, 2004: 29).

Dictionaries can be *monolingual* when the language being used in dictionaries is the same as the language which is described. Thus, dictionaries can be *bilingual* when the information is provided in two different languages. Béjoint (2000: 38) notes that the two languages involved in bilingual dictionaries are the one used as “the object of description” and the other is the one used as “the instrument of description”. At the same time, we could distinguish between monolingual dictionaries for native speakers and pedagogical dictionaries.

Béjoint (2000: 40, 41) speaks about *the monolingual general-purpose dictionary*. This dictionary is characterized mainly by one language, used as “the object of description and tool for that description”. Moreover, it provides a general linguistic or

mixed word-list and a general microstructural program, which defines each entry word. According to Swanepoel, pedagogical dictionaries are also monolingual dictionaries that can be subdivided depending on their target users. Monolingual dictionaries are intended for speakers of the mother tongue and pedagogical dictionaries are aimed at people who are learning a language as a second or foreign language (Swanepoel, 2003: 56- 57). Hartmann and James (1998: 107) describe the pedagogical dictionary as “a reference work, specifically designed for the practical didactic needs of teachers and learners of a language”. They also note that pedagogical dictionaries are “aimed primarily at non-native learners of a language” (Hartmann and James, 1998: 82).

Zgusta (1971), in turn, makes a distinction between *diachronic* and *synchronic* dictionaries, which is a classification also proposed by Swanepoel (2003: 51, 52). Zgusta defines diachronic dictionaries as the ones that are concerned with the history or evolution of lexical words both in form and meaning.

He divides diachronic dictionaries into historical and etymological. Historical dictionaries focus on changes in form and meaning of lexical words on the basis of historical evidences. Etymological dictionaries focus on the origin and development of these lexical words. Zgusta (1971: 200) notes that these dictionaries deal with the pre-history of words.

Hartmann and James (1998: 38) coincide with Zgusta’s and Swanepoel’s contribution about diachronic and synchronic dictionaries and they define

A diachronic dictionary as the one that “traces the origins and developments of words through one or more periods of the history of the language, in contrast to a synchronic dictionary, which concentrates on the contemporary language.

Finally, it is appropriate to mention the main differences between *linguistic dictionaries* and *encyclopedias*. These differences are related to the “status of entry words” and to the kind of information contained in those entry words. In a linguistic dictionary, the information is given about the lexemes of the language and their linguistic features such as “lexical item’s syntactic category, pronunciation, inflectional morphology and its meaning” (Swanepoel, 2003: 48). On the contrary, on encyclopedias, the information is also included on the linguistic features of words. Another difference between linguistic dictionaries and encyclopedias is the fact that

encyclopedias contain proper names and provide users with extensive information about the chosen entries. In linguistic dictionaries, proper names are excluded because they have no “denotative categorical meaning” but “referential and individual meaning” (Swanepoel, 2003: 49).

3.3. Types of bilingual dictionaries

Just as mentioned above, a bilingual dictionary is the one that contains two different languages in order to provide the information. According to Hannay (2003), there is a classification of bilingual dictionaries.

The first distinction is made between active (or production-oriented) dictionaries and passive (or reception-oriented) dictionaries. Users of an active dictionary attempt to know the expressions they need in another language different from their own language in order to express a particular idea and, at the same time, they want to establish how they would use these expressions. By contrast, users of a passive dictionary attempt to understand lexical words in another different language, in order to make sense of a text or to translate the expressions into their own language (Hannay, 2003: 146).

Hannay (2003: 146, 147) notes that there are some elements of great importance within active and passive dictionary classification. According to him, headwords are important so that users can determine what are the lexical forms in which users are interested. Moreover, these headwords should include some examples in use related to lexical, syntactic and discourse level. Hannay also notes another element of paramount importance: the information provided in dictionaries. This information should be relevant and precise in context, involving information related to grammar, collocations or discourse analysis, among others. With these features, users can decide between two or more translation options more quickly. Hannay summarizes the distinction between active and passive dictionaries saying that an active dictionary needs to provide enough information “about the translational equivalents of a headword and much less information about the headword itself” (Hannay, 2003: 147).

Finally, there is another distinction between *unidirectional* and *bi-directional* dictionaries. On the one hand, in unidirectional dictionaries, all the information provided is relevant for one group of users because the dictionary maker takes into account what users are supposed to know and not to know.

On the other hand, Hartmann and James (1998: 32) define bidirectional dictionaries as “a type of bilingual dictionary in which the translation equivalents can be accessed equally from each of the two languages”.

3.4. Monolingual learners' dictionaries.

In the field of English lexicography, Rizo Rodríguez (2004: 31) notes that “the term *monolingual learners' dictionary* is taken to refer to a work specially compiled for students of English as a second or foreign language”. This clearly means that these dictionaries are highly recommended to students who are learning a language as a second or foreign language due to their text clarity, accessibility and simplicity in the use of the dictionary itself. However, these dictionaries include a restricted macrostructure, that is, limited entries, often selected in accordance with their frequency; and they also include a very detailed microstructure so that users can easily understand the contents of an entry. Likewise, monolingual learners' dictionaries show simple grammar codes that are associated with each specific meaning and also concerning grammar, they give details about collocations and idioms used with these chosen words. “They also show which words are grammatically correct, semantically adequate, lexically idiomatic and stylistically appropriate depending on the context” (Rizo Rodríguez, 2004: 31-32).

In general, monolingual learners' dictionaries can be an effective and useful tool to users in order to read and comprehend texts. According to Rizo Rodríguez (2004: 32), “their definitions usually provide a remarkably accurate description of a word meaning, of its subtle nuances and connotations, as well as precise information about its register and usage”. He notes that these dictionaries are effective because they include all types of information such as aspects of syntax, pronunciation features, spellings... and their definitions provide precise and concrete meanings of a word.

The illustrative examples contained in these monolingual learners' dictionaries are also important because they can facilitate and reinforce users' comprehension (Rizo Rodríguez, 2004: 32). This means that every entry is accompanied by different examples that illustrate the meaning of words. The abundance of examples, together with the inclusion of language study pages and varied appendices with colour illustrations helps users to understand the meaning of entry words better.

It is appropriate to mention that there are different types of dictionaries and they could appear in different formats: printed, CD-ROM and online. Atkins & Rundell (2008: 24) call these formats “the dictionary medium”, the way in which these dictionaries appear: printed, electronic and web-based.

Dictionaries on CD-ROM in particular are attracting more and more people’s attention due to their huge potential to improve language description. They are very practical because they have some features that are not peculiar to printed versions of dictionaries (Rizo Rodríguez, 2008a). Obviously, CD-ROM dictionaries are based on their printed versions.

3.5. Macrostructure

Hartmann and James (1998: 91) define macrostructure as “the overall list structure which allows the compiler and the user to locate information in a reference work”. In other words, macrostructure refers to the alphabetical list of entries (Rizo Rodríguez, 2008a: 27).

Rey Debove (1971: 21), cited by Béjoint (2000: 11) defines ‘macrostructure’ as a word-list. This arranged word-list has to be correspondent to a set of lexical words that exists somewhere else, not only in users’ minds. In other words, it is a set of entries arranged in a particular order which makes users find information easily and quickly. Rey-Debove and others use the term “nomenclature”² to refer to macrostructure.

3.6. Microstructure

Hartmann and James (1998: 94) define microstructure as “the internal design of a reference unit”. They also note that the microstructure “provides detailed information about the headword, with comments on its formal and semantic properties”. Dictionaries may vary depending on the amount of information and how they present it in every entry.

Rey-Debove defines microstructure as “the contents of each entry” : “l’ensemble des informations ordonnées de chaque article, ... qui se lisent horizontalement à la suite

² Some authors use *macrostructure* as a synonym of *nomenclature*. It is preferable to use the latter to refer to a word-list, while the former may be used in order to refer to an organized set of entries. These two terms have not been widely adopted by English-speaking metalexicographers because they prefer to use the traditional terminology.

de l'entrée" (Rey-Debove, 1971 : 21) cited by Béjoint (2000 : 11). So, microstructure refers to the ordered pieces of information, which are meant to be read after the entries.

Swanepoel (2003: 46) notes that taking into account the microstructure of dictionaries, it would be appropriate to compare them in relation to the grammatical information provided for each lemma and also to the order of the information categories. He argues that "dictionaries differ in the profile they present of the grammatical features of a lemma" (Swanepoel, 2003: 46). There are different types of dictionaries depending on the information they provide. Swanepoel (2003: 47) notes that there are some grammatical information categories. In other words, dictionaries may provide different data, which could be associated to different aspects of the language:

- a) Orthographic data (spelling, formal variants).
- b) Phonetic data (aspects related to pronunciation or stress of words).
- c) Syntactic data (syntactic category of words or even, collocations. In general, aspects related to the syntax of words).
- d) Morphological data (aspects related to the meanings of words).
- e) Stylistic data (labels such as "euphemistic, formal, humorous", etc.).
- f) Distributional data (geographical or sociolinguistic aspects; frequency in a corpus).

4. TREATMENT OF ENGLISH ADJECTIVES IN DICTIONARIES: A SAMPLE ANALYSIS

4.1. General introduction

"One of the areas within the field of "dictionary research" is the teaching of dictionaries reference skills as well as the specification of the information categories contained in dictionaries" (Rizo Rodríguez, 2008b: 445). The dictionary is a useful complement to the grammar because it explains lexical items and their behavior and use in a language.

Every dictionary provides information about a rich variety of language aspects: orthographic, phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, lexical and pragmatic (Rizo Rodríguez, 2008b: 446).

4.2. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2015, 9th edition)

This dictionary was the first advanced learner's dictionary of English. It is one of the most commonly used monolingual dictionaries and its latest edition was published in 2015. We will focus on its electronic version on CD-ROM.

4.2.1. Morphological description

Every entry offers different features of a headword: morphology, syntax, semantics, lexical and pragmatic information. The morphological information, as well as the other information, is provided by means of symbols or codes, which are called grammatical codes. Thus, this information appears in parentheses, written in bold type and it is placed on the right side immediately after the phonetic transcription of the headword (see figure 1 in the annex).

What is even more important is that the accidence of adjectives is restricted to comparison morphemes. Some adjectives accept the suffixes *-er* and *-est*, which indicate comparative or superlative indistinctly. The *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* provides the regular forms of the comparative and superlative by means of bold type and in parentheses as was mentioned above (figure 2).

Moreover, we can note that some headwords also include examples with comparative and superlative forms in order to illustrate them better, e.g.

- (1) Progress was *slower* than expected ³.
- (2) The *tallest* building in the world.
- (3) The *fastest* rate of increase for years.

This monolingual dictionary also provides information about the “consonant doubling” in front of *-er* and *-est*, e.g. *thin- thinner*. In those cases, this morphological information appears, as we already know, in parentheses written with bold type. It is important to mention that the “double consonant” appears separated from the other consonant, forming just one syllable (figure 3) so that users can notice that they have to double the final consonant when they add the suffixes *-er* or *-est*, e.g.

- (4) He grew *fatter* and *fatter*.
- (5) It is the world's *biggest* computer company.

³ The illustrative examples are taken from *the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*.

- (6) It was hot and getting *hotter*.
- (7) It was the *hottest* July on record.

What is more, when authors do not indicate the comparative or superlative forms in some headwords, the adjective takes periphrastic comparison (with *more* and *most*). This is the case of gradable adjectives with more than two syllables, e.g. *beautiful*, *modern* or *expensive* (figure 4) and, as we can check, there is a lack of indicators considering comparison.

Another interesting point is that authors do not indicate adjectives which accept degree adverbs in an explicit way, but in an implicit one. This means that some adjective entries have examples where the adjective is intensified by adverbs. In those cases, users need a general knowledge about these aspects so that they can recognize these adjectives intensified by adverbs only by looking at illustrative examples (figure 5) e.g.

- (8) She looked *stunningly* beautiful that night.
- (9) I called the police but they weren't *very* helpful.
- (10) Her calls became *less* frequent.

In other cases, authors do not indicate comparison because there are some adjectives that cannot take comparative or superlative forms. This is the case of non-gradable adjectives, e.g. *wonderful* or *impossible* (figure 6). In those cases, authors commonly use adverbs in order to intensify the meaning of the non-gradable adjective, e.g.

- (11) You've all been absolutely *wonderful*!
- (12) I fail to see what women find so *fascinating* about him.
- (13) She was *very* rude about my driving.
- (14) We were all *too* polite to object.

Apart from this, the monolingual *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* also provides irregular comparatives and superlatives of adjectives (see figure 7), e.g. **Good**⁴ (**better**, **best**); **bad** (**worse**, **worst**).

⁴ We have employed the blue colour, e.g. **mathematical** in order to show how headwords are illustrated in the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2015, 9th edition). Moreover, every example is taken from this monolingual dictionary.

- (15) You'll feel *better* after a good sleep.
 (16) My headache is getting *worse*.
 (17) It was the *worst* experience of her life.

As we know, adjectives could be formed from nouns or verbs without the addition of endings or even, with some suffixes typical of adjectives. But this morphological information is not indicated as such with symbols or codes.

On the one hand, we could know if an adjective is formed by suffixes only by looking at the headword because the addition of suffixes in adjectives is separated by means of a dot (·), e.g. **mathematic · al**, **help · ful** or **fool · ish** (figure 8).

On the other hand, there are other adjectives which have no identifying form, that is, they appear without any suffix. In those cases, this morphological information is not indicated but we can notice that adjectives that appear without suffixes are not separated with a dot like in the previous examples, e.g. *mauve* (see figure 9).

4.2.2. Syntactic aspects

The syntactic information in this dictionary is provided by means of grammatical codes, as was mentioned above. Thus, this information appears in square brackets and it is placed on the right side of entries just before the definition (figure 10).

The basic syntactic patterns are as follows:

[Only before nouns]	Attributive function
[Not before nouns]	Predicative function
[After nouns]	Postpositive function
Absence of indications	Both attributive and predicative function

The authors of the dictionary do not directly speak about attributive, predicative or postpositive function of adjectives as such but rather about the position of adjectives in sentences. In other words, the syntactic information is shown in an implicit manner but users can easily recognize the adjective function because it is expressed in a simple manner, not using complex terminology. Perhaps the authors thought that this simple terminology could be easier for users because it indicates the position of adjectives in

sentences. So, users can learn where they have to place the adjective without having the knowledge of adjective functions.

Coming back to the codes or indications, we can state that the syntactic information of adjectives appears between square brackets as mentioned above. The [only before nouns] pattern stands for attributive function, “attributive-only adjectives” like *chief*, *runaway*, *future*, *actual* or *mere* (figure 11). By “only before nouns” the authors mean the possibility of placing the adjective only before nouns, e.g.

(18) The *Chief* Education Officer

(19) The *eventual* winner of the tournament.

(20) *Future* developments in computer software.

(21) It took her a *mere* 20 minutes to win.

[Not before nouns] stands for “predicative function”, for “never-attributive adjectives”, e.g. *agleam*, *alone*, *liable* or *rife* (figure 12). The authors speak about predicative function saying that these adjectives cannot be placed before nouns, e.g.

(22) They are *certain* to agree.

(23) Are you *afraid* of spiders?

(24) I don’t like going out *alone* at night.

(25) He seemed more *content*, less bitter.

Furthermore, the authors also speak about the [after nouns] pattern referring to postpositive function of adjectives (figure 13), e.g.

(26) An interview with the director *designate*

(27) The president *elect*.

What is more, when the authors do not indicate the syntactic patterns of adjectives (lack of indicators), the adjective could function both attributively (as pre-modifier of nominal constructions) and predicatively (as complements with a copular verb), e.g. *haptic*, *euphoric*, or *tireless* (see figure 14) and, as we can check, there is a lack of indicators between square brackets, e.g.

(28) Topics of *crucial* importance.

(29) The next few weeks are going to be *crucial*.

(30) A *grammatical* error.

(31) The sentence is not *grammatical*.

Apart from the previous grammatical aspects explained, there are also some relevant aspects that an entry may include and which may require explanation. These notes are called “grammatical collocations”. Benson, Benson and Ilson (1997: IX), cited by Rizo Rodríguez (2008b: 455), define a grammatical collocation as “a dominant word – noun, adjective / participle, verb – and a preposition or grammatical construction [such as an infinitive or a clause]”.

These grammatical notes are expressed in an explicit manner after the definitions and the examples so that users can easily recognize them and pay special attention to them, among other things because they are written in bold type in order to catch users’ attention to some relevant aspects of headwords. Moreover, every grammatical construction is accompanied by examples that clearly illustrate them (figure 15).

We can describe grammatical collocations as:

-An extension of the basic pattern by relating it to a larger syntactic pattern of which forms parts. In those cases, the adjective itself is often followed by some grammatical constructions such as an infinitive, an *-ing* form or a clause (see figure 16), e.g.

Glad to know, to hear, to see...⁵; Glad to + infinitive:

(32) I’m *glad* to hear you’re feeling better.

(33) I’m *glad* to meet you.

Surprised that + Clause:

(34) You shouldn’t be *surprised* (that) he didn’t come.

-A tendency to use [obligatory] prepositions with some adjectives, that is, there are some adjectives which rule some prepositions (figure 17), e.g.

Disappointed (at / by something):

(35) They were bitterly *disappointed* at the result of the game.

(36) I was *disappointed* by the quality of the wine.

⁵ We have used bold type in the “grammatical collocations” in order to show how they are illustrated in the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary. The examples are taken from this dictionary.

Scared (of somebody / something):

(37) He's *scared* of heights.

4.2.3. Semantic behavior

The semantic description of words is a fundamental aspect of lexicographical entries because it establishes the main difference between monolingual learner's dictionaries and bilingual dictionaries. According to Steiner (1989: 249), cited by Rizo Rodríguez (2008b: 456), the importance of meaning in monolingual dictionaries is that they "offer definitions that constitute a text". It is appropriate to mention that lexicographical definitions provide an accurate explanation of a word meaning with their main nuances and connotations.

In the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, every definition is illustrated with different examples which perfectly show the meanings of entries. These definitions are placed just before the examples (figure 18).

It is necessary to mention that definitions are the most important element in a monolingual dictionary, as mentioned above, because the description of meaning clearly establishes a marked difference with bilingual dictionaries. This is why authors of the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* provide concise and readily intelligible statements of meaning which include the selection of syntax and vocabulary. In other words, the different meanings of each headword are very easy to understand so that users can associate the headwords with their meanings.

Sometimes, when a given headword has two or more meanings, two or more definitions are provided, enumerated with numbers. In those cases, every definition contains in parentheses in what sense users have to apply the headwords (figure 19).

These indications between parentheses are known as "guidewords". They are words that permit users to locate headwords in a given context, e.g.

Wise

1. (*Of people*) able to make sensible decisions and give good advice because of the experience and knowledge that you have.
2. (*of actions and behavior*) sensible; based on good judgement.

Regarding illustrative examples, every entry is accompanied by a great number of examples that clearly illustrate the meaning of headwords so that users can reinforce their comprehension only by looking at these examples. They are also placed just after the definitions, written in italics and they are provided with an orange dot (•), (see figure 20), e.g.

Impolite 'not polite'

(38) • Some people think it is impossible to ask someone's age.

The authors do not indicate the origin of the examples, e.g. a corpus or other sources of information, so we can suppose that illustrative examples are created by them. At least, this fact is not indicated in the electronic version of this dictionary.

Finally, the main distinction between *inherent* and *non-inherent* adjectives is not illustrated in this monolingual dictionary, like in most monolingual dictionaries, because they give general information about the meanings of headwords, not about the classification of them.

4.2.4. Overall evaluation

Now, it is necessary to make a final evaluation about this monolingual dictionary. The *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* is very rich in details concerning linguistic materials, especially grammar in terms of syntactic functions and grammatical collocations, but also in terms of morphological and semantic aspects. In fact, it is exceptionally detailed and fully illustrated with many examples. Even the contrast of colours and typographies make it quite attractive and easy to use.

It is quite close to our study on English adjectives. Apart from this, this dictionary provides an outstanding description of the most relevant and significant aspects of English adjectives considering their morphology, syntax and semantics. In order to use this dictionary, the user does not need any linguistic knowledge at all because there are neither linguistic terms nor specific terminology employed throughout the dictionary.

Likewise, the grammatical codes are very easy to interpret and users do not need a considerable knowledge of linguistics to understand them fully. If somebody looks up a word and finds some grammatical or syntactic codes, he / she will spend little time

trying to understand the code. Apart from this, other grammatical notes, i.e. grammatical collocations, are also very useful to understand because, when they appear in entries, there are many illustrative and clear examples provided next to them. For this reason, they end up being relatively useful because the reader may be able to understand them and put them into practice. The same can be applied to morphology or semantics; there are some examples which clearly illustrate morphological or semantic aspects.

To sum up, other good points about the dictionary are the clarity and simplicity in the definitions and the use of vocabulary. This fact increases, in our opinion, the confidence to use the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* on the part of the reader. Generally, this monolingual dictionary, as one of the most commonly used, is regarded very favourably.

4.3. *Gran Diccionario Oxford Español-Inglés, Inglés-Español* (2008, 4th edition)

This dictionary is one of the most relevant bilingual dictionaries and its latest edition was published in 2008. This type of dictionary has its focus on non-native speakers of a language who want information about the meaning and uses of words and phrases. We will focus on its electronic version on CD-ROM.

4.3.1. Morphological aspects

The method used by the *Gran Diccionario Oxford* in order to clearly show the morphology of adjectives is to provide the headword on the top, printed in blue and the part of speech (nouns, adjectives, verbs...), together with the morphological information immediately after the grammatical word class. This information is placed on the left side of the entry and it is also written in blue like the headwords (figure 21).

The *Gran Diccionario Oxford* also provides the regular forms of the comparative and superlative by means of bold type just after the part of speech, in this case, adjectives (figure 22). This dictionary, as well as the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, also provides information about the “consonant doubling” in contact with the comparative and superlative suffixes *-er* and *-est*, but in a different manner.

When the final consonant of the adjective has to be doubled, the bilingual dictionary only provides the doubling of the consonant itself between two dashes (figure 23). These dashes clearly indicate that there are some letters before and after,

e.g. **fat** adjective **-tt-**. Before these consonant doublings, we have to add the root of the word and after, the suffixes typical of comparison. In contrast to the monolingual dictionary, there are no illustrative examples of comparison in the bilingual one.

The authors do not indicate the comparative or superlative forms of adjectives which take periphrastic comparison (with *more* or *most*). This is typical of gradable adjectives with more than two syllables, e.g. *beautiful*, *intelligent*, or *serious*, amongst others (figure 24) and as we can also check in the figure, there is a lack of comparative and superlative forms.

In other cases, when authors do not indicate comparison in adjective entries, the adjective could be non-gradable, i.e. those adjectives which do not take comparison, e.g. *wonderful* or *freezing* (figure 25). Hence, authors illustrate examples of these non-gradable adjectives with some degree adverbs, e.g.

(39) You've all been *so* wonderful ⁶.

(40) I found him *absolutely* terrifying.

(41) His characters are *totally* credible.

Likewise, the *Gran Diccionario Oxford* also provides irregular comparatives and superlatives of adjectives (figure 26). The main difference in relation with the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* is that, in the bilingual one, authors write 'comparative' or 'superlative' before the irregular forms in order to catch users' attention and facilitate to them their comprehension about comparison. These irregular forms are written before the headwords and in parentheses e.g.

Good adjective

(Comparative **better**; superlative **best**)⁷

The last point of the morphological description is that this bilingual dictionary does not give information about adjectives which are formed with suffixes and users cannot deduce it by looking the headwords like in the monolingual dictionary, because syllables in the *Gran Diccionario Oxford* are not separated by means of a dot (figure 27).

⁶ The examples contained in the section of the bilingual dictionary are taken from the *Gran Diccionario Oxford*.

⁷ We have also used the blue colour in comparative forms, e.g. **better** or **best** in order to show how they are illustrated in the bilingual dictionary.

4.3.2. Syntactic description

The syntactic information is also indicated by means of grammatical codes, in this case, in brackets and it is placed just after the indication of the part of the speech, also written in blue (figure 28).

The basic syntactic patterns are as follows:

(Before nouns)	Attributive function
(Predicative)	Predicative function
(After nouns)	Postpositive function
Absence of indications	Both attributive and predicative function

The authors of this bilingual dictionary do not directly speak about attributive or postpositive function of adjectives as such but rather about the position of adjectives in sentences. But they speak about the predicative function of adjectives in a direct manner, mentioning ‘predicative’ in adjective entries which fulfill this function. Generally, the syntactic information is shown in an implicit manner, except the predicative function, which is illustrated in an explicit manner. Hence, users can easily recognize adjective functions because they are expressed in a simple way, not using complex terminology. Perhaps the authors also thought that this simple terminology would help users more to recognize the adjective function only by indicating the position of adjectives in sentences. In this way, users could know where they have to place adjectives without having the knowledge of adjective functions.

Coming back to the codes or indications, we can state that the syntactic information in the *Gran Diccionario Oxford* appears in parentheses, as mentioned above. The (before nouns) pattern stands for attributive function, for “attributive-only adjectives” such as *main*, *principal*, *eventual* or *total* (figure 29). By “before nouns” the authors mean the possibility of placing the adjective before nouns, e.g.

(42) I have my *main* meal in the evening.

(43) His *eventual* death came as a relief to the family.

(44) He was a *total* stranger.

Another interesting point is that reference-only adjectives perform attributive function (before nouns) and they are preceded by the determiner *the*, as we already know, e.g. *selfsame*, *particular* or *same*, e.g.

(45) Every day is the *selfsame* thing.

(46) They live at the *same* address.

(Predicative) stands for predicative function logically. This pattern makes reference to “never- attributive adjectives” (figure 30) like *afire*, *ablaze*, *ready*, *devoid* or *content*. The authors speak about this function in a direct and explicit manner as was mentioned above. This predicative function makes reference to adjectives which are placed after copular verbs (*to be*, *to remain*, *to feel...*), being the most common one *to be*, e.g.

(47) The whole house was *afire*.

(48) He was *ablaze* with passion.

(49) The doctor is *ready* for you now.

(50) She is utterly *devoid* of imagination.

(51) I’m quite content with my new job.

The authors also speak about the (after nouns) pattern, which refers to postpositive function of adjectives (figure 31). In other words, when authors indicate “after nouns” in some adjective entries, they clearly mean that these adjectives are placed after nouns, e.g.

(52) The governor / ambassador *designate*.

(53) The president *elect*.

What is more, when the authors do not indicate the syntactic pattern of adjectives (lack of indications of the syntactic information of adjectives), the adjective could fulfill both functions: attributive (premodifying some nominal constructions giving information about them) and predicative (as complement with a copular verb) (see figure 32). This classification is composed by most English adjectives, e.g. *tired*, *problematic*, *rude*, *eclectic* and *heavy*, amongst many others.

(54) The most *important* thing is that you eat well.

(55) These services are *important* to the community.

(56) I wear this dress only on *special* occasions.

(57) She’s a very *special* person.

Having mentioned the main syntactic patterns of adjectives, it is necessary to speak about the distribution of grammatical collocations in bilingual dictionaries, particularly in the *Gran Diccionario Oxford*. As was defined above, they are grammatical constructions of nouns, adjectives or verbs with [obligatory] elements like prepositional phrases, infinitives or clauses. Every adjective entry is illustrated with different grammatical collocations, together with some illustrative examples, also translated into Spanish, e.g.

(58) **I'm afraid for this country's future**⁸ temo por el future de este país.

(59) **I was very surprised to hear of your engagement** me sorprendió mucho enterarme de tu compromiso.

(60) **He is terrified of failing** le aterra la idea de fracasar.

These grammatical notes are expressed in an explicit manner in every adjective entry, written in blue and red so that users can easily recognize and pay attention to them (figure 33). Every grammatical collocation is illustrated with examples translated into Spanish. We find the well-known types:

- a) Syntactic patterns which are formed by [obligatory] grammatical constructions such as an infinitive, an *-ing* form or a clause (figure 34). These grammatical constructions are printed in red, e.g.

To be ashamed to + infinitive⁹:

(1) I'm *ashamed* to say it's true.

(2) He's *ashamed* to ask.

To be glad (that)...:

(3) I'm *glad* (that) you like it.

(4) I'm *glad* (that) you've told me.

To be terrified of + -ing form

(5) He's *terrified* of failing.

(6) I'm *terrified* of being alone in the house.

⁸ We also use the blue colour in examples taken from the *Gran Diccionario Oxford* in order to illustrate how they appear in this bilingual dictionary.

⁹ We also use the blue and red colour in "grammatical collocations" in order to faithfully show how they are illustrated in the bilingual dictionary. The examples are also taken from the *Gran Diccionario Oxford*.

b) Adjectives which rule some [obligatory] prepositions, e.g.

To be afraid of somebody / something:

(7) He is *afraid* of the dark.

(8) He's *afraid* of her.

To be worried about somebody / something:

(9) I'm *worried* about Jim

(10) He's *worried* about losing his job.

Disappointed with / in somebody / something:

(11) I'm *disappointed* with the results.

(12) She was *disappointed* in love.

4.3.3. Semantic behavior

The semantic characterization of a word is the most relevant element of lexicographical entries in a bilingual dictionary because bilinguals mainly function as a translator. According to Steiner (1989: 249), cited by Rizo Rodríguez (2008b: 456), bilinguals give “equivalents for the use of a translator”.

The significant aspect of bilinguals is the translations provided in the dictionary. It is important to mention that every headword is also illustrated with the meaning in Spanish (figure 36), e.g.

Impolite maleducado / descortés.

Forgettable poco memorable

In other cases, when a given headword has two or more senses, authors indicate the different meanings by means of numbers or letters. In those cases, every meaning contains in parentheses a definition translated into English (figure 37) or the context in which users have to apply the headword (figure 38).

Regarding illustrative examples, every adjective entry is characterized by many examples that clearly illustrate the meaning of headwords, accompanied by their correspondent translations. The aim of these examples is to reinforce users' comprehension and facilitate a good understanding so that they can put headwords into practice. Like in the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, authors do

not indicate the origin of the examples or at least, this fact is not indicated in the electronic version on CD-ROM of the *Gran Diccionario Oxford*.

Finally, as we mentioned in the monolingual dictionary, the distinction between *inherent* and *non-inherent* adjectives explained in the theoretical section is not illustrated in dictionaries because dictionaries do not give information about the semantic classification of adjectives.

4.3.4. Overall evaluation

To conclude, it is also necessary to make a final evaluation about the bilingual dictionary. In general, the *Gran Diccionario Oxford* seems to us to be a very useful and practical tool to look up and check English adjectives in terms of morphology, syntax and semantics due to its large number of entries and thanks to the clarity of its translations, examples and simple syntax.

Moreover, the addition of further grammatical constructions within the entries is a positive point of the dictionary. But, concerning specific features such as grammatical collocations or illustrative examples, they compare unfavourably with the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. The blue colour in order to illustrate grammatical constructions and examples contributes to this huge difference, since authors use the same colour so that users should pay special attention in order not to confuse grammatical collocations with examples.

On the other hand, the method used to show the morphological and syntactic information of adjectives is very clear and practical. In order to use this bilingual dictionary, the user does not need any linguistic knowledge at all because there are neither linguistic terms nor specific terminology employed throughout the dictionary. In general, translations are the key element because they facilitate users' comprehension about the different meanings of the headwords. Unlike the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, the *Gran Diccionario Oxford* has two languages, something which contributes to users' confidence and interest to use the bilingual dictionary more than the monolingual one.

Summing up, we value this dictionary quite positively and recommend it because it is quite practical and useful, especially because of the great number of examples and translations.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The study undertaken in this essay allows us to draw some clear conclusions. The first one is the complexity of the English adjectives in different areas of study: morphology, syntax and semantics, but we were aware of it before deciding to undertake this project about English adjectives.

As we have checked throughout the essay, there has been an agreement between grammarians in order to refer to their morphology, syntax and semantics. All authors discussed along this essay agree on the features of adjectives; perhaps they use a different terminology to refer to the same aspects but their contributions are very similar.

We also found that each author and grammar revised tends to have their own analysis and opinion on the matter, always supported by illustrative examples. Quirk *et al.* (1985) was considered by us to be the most consistent and clearest approach because they explain the features of adjectives in a simple manner. But, in any case, we tried to be critical and rigorous at every moment. Furthermore, it was at times difficult to assimilate Bolinger's (1967) theories. He used a different terminology in relation to other authors and his contributions were different with respect to other grammarians. In any case, Bolinger's theories are very rich with many relevant aspects.

The analysis of morphology and syntax was a rigorous task. Morphology and syntax are considered to be one of the greatest problem areas for the use of English adjectives considering comparison and syntactic functions or grammatical collocations. The user of the language has to take into account the morphology of the adjective and, even more important, the syntax of them because this is something which makes them different from other parts of speech. The analysis of semantics or meaning of adjectives was also a relevant area.

Nevertheless, all things considered, we tried to accomplish a fair, understandable and as complete as possible description and analysis of the topic because the main aim was to give rigorous explanations in the area of morphology, syntax and semantics.

The second part of the essay comprises the analysis of some key lexicographical aspects. We found that lexicography is an important area to be aware of because dictionaries are a useful and practical tool for students of a language. We also learnt that there were different types of dictionaries depending on the users' interest and each of them is rich in details with many illustrative examples.

Apart from this, we have the great opportunity to learn about macrostructure and microstructure of dictionaries, concepts which are relevant but they may be unfamiliar to users of dictionaries. This area of study was very interesting for us, especially because it allowed us to learn many key lexicographical aspects and at the same time, about dictionaries since they are an essential and practical tool for any student of a language.

The last part of this study consisted in the analysis and comparison of two specialized dictionaries under the basis of the study carried out in the theoretical background. Both dictionaries describe the morphological, syntactic and semantic aspects of English adjectives and give importance to them in the entries making the reader aware of their significance and relevance. Especially detailed and precise is the study and description carried out by the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*.

However, comparing our two dictionaries, we find a series of differences, mainly taking into account the information provided in each dictionary. Bilingual dictionaries are clearly less informative than monolingual ones but they can be very productive and useful for users because of their translations.

On the other hand, the morphological and syntactic information that both dictionaries add in entries is organized in a simple manner and this could be absolutely useful and practical for readers. This information lets users know how to use it properly and put it into practice correctly. In fact, the morphological aspects are the first piece of information provided in entries, together with the syntactic aspects. Besides, the grammatical codes are rich and very simple to understand because authors do not use complex terminology.

Definitions in the case of monolingual dictionaries and translations in the case of bilingual dictionaries, along with the illustrative examples, are very helpful and well-chosen so that users can reinforce their knowledge about some aspects of English adjectives.

To conclude, this project gave us a quite complete and general knowledge in this complex topic of the English language, especially in the area of lexicography. The different notions or aspects treated made it possible to reinforce and complete our knowledge of English adjectives and, what is more important, to be able to analyze critically the treatment of adjectives in two specialized dictionaries. All elements considered provided us with a more complex basis of linguistic knowledge but also an introductory experience in the field of lexicography.

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ANNEX: SAMPLE DICTIONARY ENTRIES.



Figure 1. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary.*

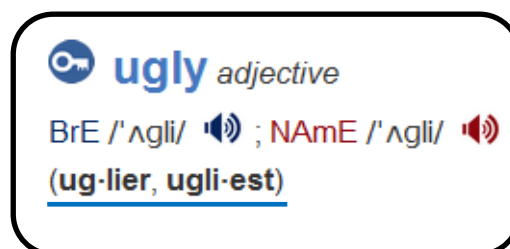


Figure 2. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary.*

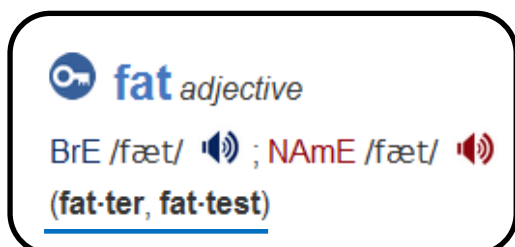


Figure 3. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary.*



Figure 4. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary.*



Figure 5. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary.*

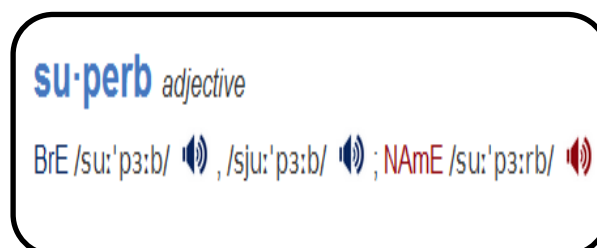


Figure 6. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary.*

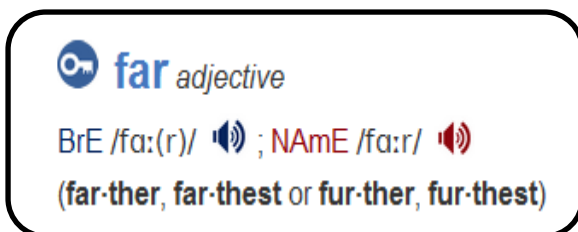


Figure 7. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary.*



Figure 8. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary.*

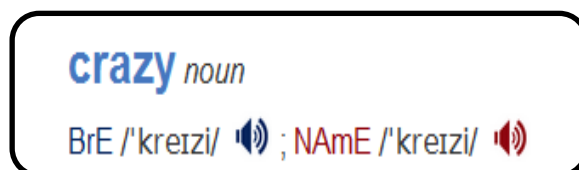


Figure 9. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary.*

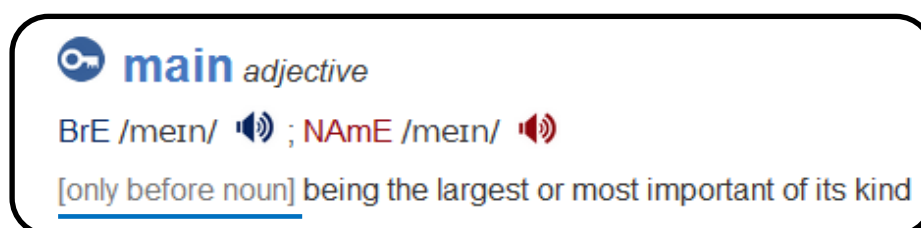


Figure 10. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary.*



Figure 11. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary.*



Figure 12. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary.*

des·ig·nate *adjective*

BrE /'deɪɡneɪt/ ; NAmE /'deɪɡneɪt/ ; BrE /'deɪɡnət/ ; NAmE /'deɪɡnət/  [after noun]

Figure 13. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*.



re·li·able *adjective*

BrE /rɪ'laɪəbl/ ; NAmE /rɪ'laɪəbl/ 

1 that can be trusted to do something well; that you can rely on

→ SYNONYM **dependable**

Figure 14. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*.



wor·ried *adjective*

BrE /'wʌrɪd/ ; NAmE /'wɜːrɪd/ 

thinking about unpleasant things that have happened or that might happen and therefore feeling unhappy and afraid

• *Don't look so worried!*

• worried about somebody/something *I'm not worried about her—she can take care of herself.*

• *Doctors are worried about the possible spread of the disease.*

• worried by something *We're not too worried by these results.*

Figure 15. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*.

 **ashamed** *adjective*

BrE /ə'ʃeɪmd/  ; NAmE /ə'ʃeɪmd/ 
 [not before noun]

1  feeling shame or embarrassment about somebody/something or because of something you have done

- **ashamed of something** *She was deeply ashamed of her behaviour at the party.*
- *Mental illness is **nothing to be ashamed of**.*
- **ashamed of somebody** *His daughter looked such a mess that he was ashamed of her.*
- **ashamed of yourself** *You should be ashamed of yourself for telling such lies.*
- **ashamed that...** *I feel almost ashamed that I've been so lucky.*
- **ashamed to be something** *The football riots made me ashamed to be English.*

Figure 16. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary.*

 **sur·prised** *adjective*

BrE /sə'praɪzd/  ; NAmE /sər'praɪzd/ 

feeling or showing surprise

- *a surprised look*
- *She looked surprised when I told her.*
- **surprised (at/by somebody/something)** *I was surprised at how quickly she agreed.*
- *I'm surprised at you, behaving like that in front of the kids.*
- **surprised (to see, hear, etc.)** *They were surprised to find that he'd already left.*
- **surprised (that...)** *You shouldn't be surprised (that) he didn't come.*

Figure 17. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary.*

 **ig·nor·ant** *adjective*

BrE /'ɪgnərənt/  ; NAmE /'ɪgnərənt/ 

1 lacking knowledge or information about something; not educated

- *an ignorant person/question*
- *Never make your students feel ignorant.*
- **ignorant about something** *He's ignorant about modern technology.*
- **ignorant of something** *At that time I was ignorant of events going on elsewhere.*

Figure 18. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary.*

 sens·ible *adjective*

BrE /'sensəbl/  ; NAmE /'sensəbl/ 

1  (of people and their behaviour) able to make good judgements based on reason and experience rather than emotion; practical

- *She's a sensible sort of person.*
- *I think that's a very sensible idea.*
- *Say something sensible.*
- *I think **the sensible thing** would be to take a taxi home.*

+ WHICH WORD?

2 (of clothes, etc.) useful rather than fashionable

- *sensible shoes*

Figure 19. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*.

 per·fect *adjective*

BrE /'pɜːfɪkt/  ; NAmE /'pɜːrfɪkt/ 

1  having everything that is necessary; complete and without faults or weaknesses

- *in perfect condition*
- *a perfect set of teeth*
- *Well I'm sorry—but **nobody's perfect** (= used when somebody has criticized you).*

2  completely correct; exact and accurate

- *She speaks perfect English.*
- *a **perfect copy/fit/match***
- *What **perfect timing!***

Figure 20. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*.

crazy¹  /'kreɪzi/ **adjective** -zier, -ziest

Figure 21. *Gran Diccionario Oxford*.

short¹  /ʃɔːrt/ ||  /ʃɔːt/ **adjective** -er, -est

Figure 22. *Gran Diccionario Oxford*.

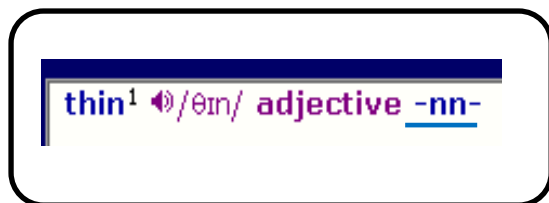


Figure 23. *Gran Diccionario Oxford*.

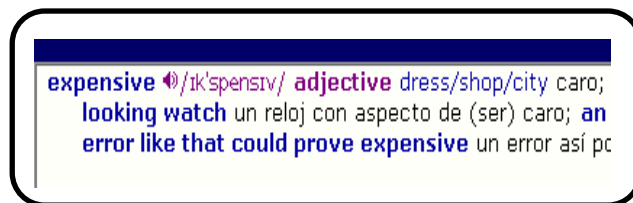


Figure 24. *Gran Diccionario Oxford*.

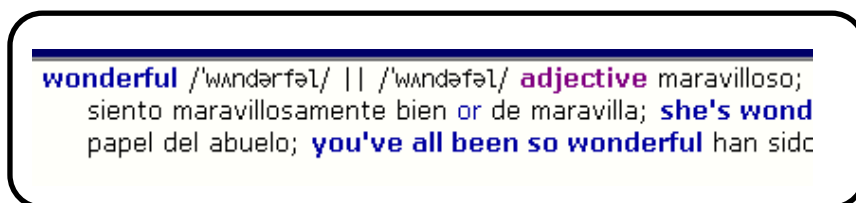


Figure 25. *Gran Diccionario Oxford*.

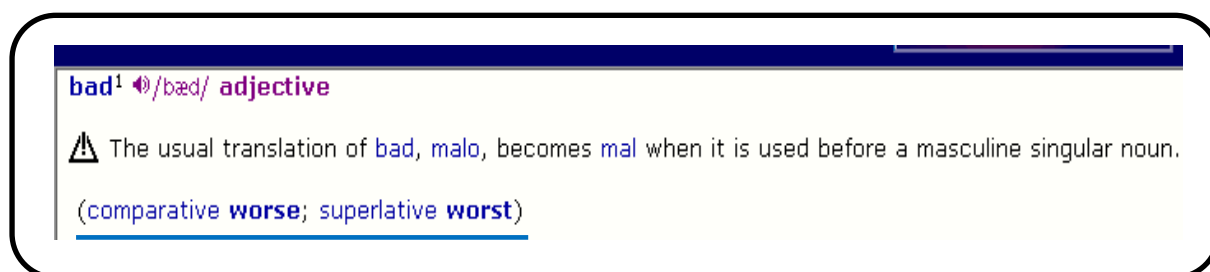


Figure 26. *Gran Diccionario Oxford*.

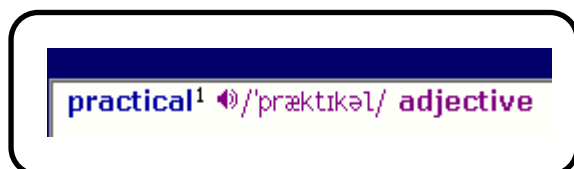


Figure 27. *Gran Diccionario Oxford*.

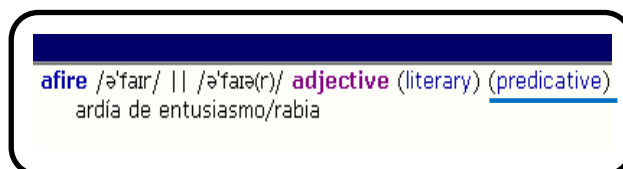


Figure 28. *Gran Diccionario Oxford*.

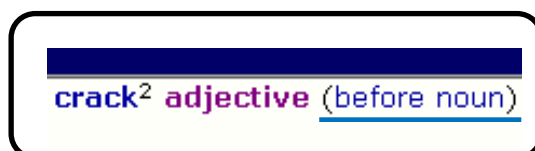


Figure 29. *Gran Diccionario Oxford*.

available ¹/ə'veɪləbəl/ **adjective**

- ① (obtainable) (predicative): **to be eas**
paquetes de 10 o 20; **these cups ar**
folletos a disposición de quien los sol
la talla más pequeña/la única marca
- ② (at somebody's disposal) resources/n
alternatives o the alternatives av
dispongas para impedirlo; **he uses ev**
consígame un billete en el primer vue
club rooms are available for hire b
options were available to us? ¿qué
ciudadanos deberían tener acceso a
- ③ (free, contactable) (predicative) libre
señor Smith no está dispuesto a form
number se me puede localizar a cua
- ④ (sexually) (euphemism) (predicative)

Figure 30. Gran Diccionario Oxford.

designate² ¹/ˈdeɪzɪneɪt/, /-nət/ || ²/ˈdeɪzɪneɪt/ **adjective** (after noun)

Figure 31. Gran Diccionario Oxford.

meticulous ¹/mə'tɪkjələs/ || ²/mə'tɪkjʊləs/ **adjective** meticuloso, minucioso

Figure 32. Gran Diccionario Oxford.

useless ¹/ˈjuːsləs/ || ²/ˈjuːslɪs/ **adjective**

- ① (ineffective) object/tool/person inútil; **these scissors are useless** estas tijeras no sirven para nada
- ② (futile) inútil; **it would be useless** sería inútil, no serviría de nada; **it's useless having one if you don't use it** de nada sir
- ③ (not capable) (colloquial) person inútil, negado (colloquial); **to be useless at something/-ing** ser negado para algo/ + inf ;
es negado para los deportes/bailar

Figure 33. Gran Diccionario Oxford.

's scared of him me parece que le tiene miedo; **to be scared of -ing** tener miedo de + inf; ·
; **to be scared to + inf**; **she's scared to go out at night** le da miedo salir de noche; **to rur**

Figure 34. Gran Diccionario Oxford.

worry verb de preocupación; person preocupado; **to be worried** estar preocupado; **to be worried about somebody/something** estar preocupado por alguien/algo;

Figure 35. *Gran Diccionario Oxford*.

problematic /ˌprɒbləˈmætɪk/ || **problematic** /ˌprɒbləˈmætɪk/, **-ical** /-ɪkəl/ **adjective** problemático, difícil

Figure 36. *Gran Diccionario Oxford*.

terrible **adjective**

- ① (very bad) movie/singer/weather espantoso, atroz, malísimo, fatal
terrible (ill) sentirse or encontrarse pésimo or muy mal; (guilty, as
terrible! ¡qué terrible!, ¡qué horror!; **you're making a terrible mi**
...; **she's a terrible one for exaggerating** es muy exagerada; **yo**
- ② (as intensifier): **he's a terrible bore** es terriblemente aburrido, es
time es una pérdida lamentable de tiempo
- ③ (terrifying) (literary) sobrecogedor (literary), imponente; **Ivan the**

Figure 37. *Gran Diccionario Oxford*.

sensible **adjective**

A

- ① person/approach/attitude sensato; decision prudente; choice acertado; price razonable;
can't do it all on your own sé razonable, no lo puedes hacer todo tú solo; **I think that!**
razonable; **quality goods at sensible prices** artículos de calidad a precios razonables
- ② clothes/shoes cómodo y práctico

Figure 38. *Gran Diccionario Oxford*.