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The Syntax and Semantics of English Adjectives (1)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to show the necessity to introduce the concept of the "adjective pattern," like the "verb pattern," for the improvement of description of English. The concept of the "verb pattern" was, to my knowledge, first introduced in Hornby (1954), later revised in Hornby (1975), in which he classified English verbs into 25 patterns according to the types of complementation. Hornby's idea of classifying verbs into types has been put into practice in such dictionaries as *ISED*, *ALD*, *OALD*, but the idea of classifying adjectives into patterns has not. Since *ALD* was published, several monolingual dictionaries for learners of English have been published in Britain, all of which used a lot of energy and space for classifying verbs into types and gave detailed syntactic information to each frequently used verb. English-Japanese dictionaries published in this country, especially the ones for learners of English, quickly adopted the idea first introduced by Hornby and it is now common to see frequently used verbs classified into patterns in those dictionaries. It seems, however, that dictionary editors' attempts to classify adjectives into patterns have not been successful. In the remainder of this paper, I will review, first, how adjectives have been classified in the literature and in dictionaries for learners of English; second, I will propose criteria for classifying adjectives into patterns according to their semantic types and each of the complement types like *that*-clauses, *to*-infinitives, and so on.

In the first half of this paper, classifying adjectives into six major types of syntactic patterns and four major semantic types will be proposed, and how those syntactic patterns and those semantic patterns correlate with each other will be discussed.

Key words : adjective patterns; semantics of adjectives; adjective classification.