

Begoña Sanromán Vilas\*  
and Margarita Alonso Ramos\*\*

\*University of Helsinki, \*\*Universidade da Coruña

## Collocation dictionary as an elaborate pedagogical tool for Spanish as a foreign language<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Introduction

After examining English monolingual collocational dictionaries, Nuccorini (2003: 387) concludes that a dictionary of collocations has to be “appropriate to individual needs”. The author takes into consideration that very often the intended addressees of a dictionary cannot coincide with the final users, and even the same individual can use the dictionary according to different roles, namely, as a language teacher, translator, etc.

From our viewpoint – trying to specify Nuccorini’s claim – a dictionary of collocations has to satisfy both advanced learners of a foreign language and native speakers. The former need to learn collocations in L2 because either it is not possible to translate them word by word (*to pay attention* (Eng.), *prestar* ‘to lend’ *atención* (Sp.), *fare* ‘to make’ *attenzione* (It.), *kiinnittää* ‘to fix’ *huomiota* (Finn.), *die Aufmerksamkeit schenken* ‘to give (as a present)’ (G.)) or there are no symmetrical correspondences (*a piece of news* (Eng.) vs. *una noticia* (Sp.); *to queue* (Eng.) vs. *hacer cola* (Sp.)). The latter, the native speaker – but also the learner – could need to have quick access to all the ways of expressing a particular meaning through different perspectives according to the participants of the situation designated by the lexical unit (LU). If the LU were *analysis* (*person X’s A/analysis*) of *phenomenon Y*, the combinations could be: *X carries out an A of Y*; *Y*

<sup>1</sup> This paper was written within the framework of the following research project HUM2005-08052-C02-02/FILO (Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia and partially funded by FEDER).

*underwent A (by X)*; *the A of Y is due to X*; *X’s A concerns Y*; *X submits Y to an A*; *Y leads X to an A*; *X’s A of Y is in progress*, etc.<sup>2</sup>

In this paper, attention will be paid to learners of Spanish. Our experience with Finnish-speaking learners confirms that even our most advanced students can make mistakes when using Spanish collocations (Sanromán Vilas 2006a, 2006b). One of the reasons for this situation is the lack of pedagogic material to teach and learn collocations in Spanish as a foreign language (SFL). Within this context, the compiling of a Spanish collocational dictionary has been claimed for several specialists (see Higuera 2005, among others) as a basic need.

In light of this, our paper pursues two objectives: firstly, presenting the *Diccionario de colocaciones del español* (DiCE), a research project being developed at the University of Coruña in Spain (Alonso Ramos 2002a, 2003); and secondly, proposing specific exercises to improve and check the collocational competence of learners.

DiCE follows the theoretical and methodological framework of the Explanatory and Combinatorial Lexicology (Mel’čuk, Clas and Polguère 1995). Within this framework, collocations are described by means of lexical functions (LFs, Wanner 1996). A LF encodes the relation between two LUs in such a way that one of them (the base of the collocation) controls the lexical choice of the other one (the collocate). For instance, the LF *Magr*<sup>3</sup> encodes the relation between the following adjective-noun pairs: *miedo cerval* ‘great fear’, *lluvia torrencial* ‘heavy rain’, and *voluntad férrea* ‘iron will’. Each of the adjectives (the collocates) is selected by the corresponding noun to express the meaning ‘intense’. As well as describing the meaning, LFs also describe the actantial structure of the collocation. For example, the verb-noun collocations *dar un consejo* ‘to give a piece of advice’ and *recibir un consejo* ‘to receive a piece of advice’ are represented respectively by means of the LF *Oper<sub>1</sub>* and *Oper<sub>2</sub>*. *Oper* refers to a semantically empty verb<sup>4</sup> (the collocate) that takes the noun (the base of the collocation) as the direct object. The subindices refer to the grammatical subject of the verb: subindex “<sub>1</sub>” is the 1<sup>st</sup> actant of the noun (X in *el consejo de X a Y*) and subindex “<sub>2</sub>” is its 2<sup>nd</sup> actant (Y in *el consejo de X a Y*). LFs have been used in the four volumes of the French *Dictionnaire*

<sup>2</sup> Examples of *analysis* are taken from Mel’čuk (1998: 39). Only one of the verbs used (*to carry out*) was found in the *Oxford Collocations Dictionary*; and another one (*to undergo*) in *The BBI Dictionary of English Word Combinations*.

<sup>3</sup> The LF *Magr* stands for the meaning ‘intense’ or ‘in a high degree’.

<sup>4</sup> The LF used for encoding the “light” or “support verbs” is *Oper<sub>1</sub>*. We use here the term “empty” verb in a broad sense, the reader can find a more detailed description of these verbs in Alonso Ramos (2004: 85-96).

*explicatif et combinatoire* (Mel'čuk *et al.* 1984-1999), in the ongoing project *Lexique actif du français* (commonly referred to as LAF, Polguère 2000), and also in the Spanish DiCE.

Although our idea of combining a dictionary plus exercises is not a new one – the *Oxford Collocations Dictionary* (OCD), for example has done it earlier (see also Alonso Ramos 2006b) – DiCE, following the idea developed in LAF, is provided in the lexical co-occurrence section, with a description of collocations by means of a gloss (*por amor* 'como una muestra de A' (*for love* 'as an act showing feeling'); *cobrar cariño* 'empezar a sentir C' (*to receive affection* 'to start to feel A')). Glosses will be proved to be especially useful in the elaboration of pedagogic material. Learners, as is the case with the OCD, will not be forced to use a general monolingual dictionary of Spanish to understand and be able to use the collocation: each group of collocates will be preceded by its gloss or paraphrase.

This paper is organized into four sections. After this introduction, section 2 provides a description of DiCE as presented on the web. In section 3 we propose a set of exercises to check as well as to improve the collocational competence of Spanish learners. Section 4 summarizes the paper and draws some conclusions.

## 2. The *Diccionario de colocaciones del español* (DiCE)

In this section we will describe DiCE following the demonstration available in Internet<sup>5</sup> at <<http://www.dicesp.com>> and <<http://dicesp.cesga.es>>, where ten emotion nouns are presented.<sup>6</sup>

DiCE gives access to the information mainly through the base of the collocation, which is the headword (or lemma). In this sense, DiCE is oriented towards language production. So if the user needs to know which verbs combine with *admiración* 'admiration' to express the meaning 'to feel', he will find the following collocates: *sentir*, *tener*, *rendir*, *deber*, *dispensar*, *tributar* or *profesar* ('to feel, to have'). However, access through collocates is also possible. The user can select one of the previous verbs, for instance *rendir*, and check which other bases, as well

<sup>5</sup> Other descriptions of DiCE are available in Alonso Ramos (2002b, 2003, 2005).

<sup>6</sup> From the methodological point of view, we have decided to elaborate DiCE working in semantic fields. In particular we have started with emotion nouns, which have been proved to be very rich in collocations.

as *admiración*, select this verb as a collocate. By doing this, the nouns *adoración* 'adoration', *consideración* 'regard' and *veneración* 'veneration' are obtained.<sup>7</sup>

If the headword is a polysemous item, then each LU has its own entry. Let us look at the example of *CARIÑO*. For this noun, four entries are available: *cariño 1a* 'affection' (*Le tenía mucho cariño a su abuela* 'She was very fond of her grandmother'), *cariño 1b* 'cuddle' (*Los abuelos no paraban de hacer cariños a los niños* 'The grandparents did not stop cuddling the children'), *cariño 2* 'care' (*Trátame con cariño estos libros* 'Be careful with these books') and *cariño 3* 'darling' (*Cariño, no llores, que ya está aquí mamá* 'Don't cry, darling. Mum is already here'). Each of the four entries provides the following information:

- 1) The *semantic tag* that represents the generic meaning of the LU; for instance, the semantic tag for *cariño 1a* 'affection' is SENTIMIENTO 'feeling' and for *cariño 1b* 'cuddle' is MANIFESTACIÓN 'sign'.
- 2) The *actantial structure* that represents the participants of the situation designated by the noun; e.g. the actantial structure of *cariño 1a* 'affection' is '*cariño de individuo X por individuo u objeto Y*' ('individual X's affection towards individual or object Y').
- 3) One or more examples, mostly extracted from the Corpus of the *Real Academia Española* (CREA); e.g. *Tenia cariño al reloj que ha perdido porque era recuerdo de su madre* 'He was fond of the watch he has lost because it was a keepsake from his mother' (DUE).<sup>8</sup>
- 4) The quasi-synonyms and the quasi-antonyms of the LU to help the user to understand its meaning; e.g. the quasi-synonyms of *cariño 1a* 'affection' are *afición* 'liking', *apego* 'affection' and its quasi-antonyms are *desapego* 'lack of affection', *frialdad* 'coldness', *indiferencia* 'indifference'.

Taking a specific LU as the starting point, the user can choose between five types of information search:

- 1) Attributes of the participants: in this section, the user finds the attributes or nouns referring to the participants of the situation designated by the LU; e.g. under *celos 1a* 'jealousy', the user finds adjectives such as *celoso 1* 'jealous',

<sup>7</sup> This is the orientation followed in the *Diccionario combinatorio del español contemporáneo*, known as REDES (Bosque 2004), where the main access to the information is via the collocate.

<sup>8</sup> When the examples are extracted from other sources rather than CREA, it is explicitly marked, as is the case with DUE (*Diccionario de uso del español*, Moliner 1989).

*muerto de celos* 'very jealous' to name the experiencer of the jealousy and nouns such as *victima de los celos* 'victim', *rival* 'rival', *objeto de los celos* 'object' to name the experiencer, the cause and the object of the feeling, respectively.

- 2) LU – Adjective: we include here the adjectives that combine with the LU (either in an attributive or predicative position); e.g. *estrecha* co-occurs with *amistad* 'friendship', *profundo* with *cariño* 'affection', *rabiosas* with *ganas* 'wish'.
- 3) Verb + LU: this section contains the verbs that take the LU as the direct object or a prepositional object; e.g. *ganarse la admiración* 'to gain the admiration (of someone)', *despertar celos* 'to arouse jealousy', *levantar sospechas* 'to give rise to suspicion'.
- 4) LU + Verb: here, the user finds the verbs that take the LU as a grammatical subject; e.g. *la alegría reina* 'joy reigns', *le entran celos*, literally 'jealousy comes into him'.
- 5) Noun de LU: under this heading, we group collocate nouns followed by the preposition *de* 'of' that introduces the LU; e.g. *lazos de amistad* 'bonds of friendship', *un ataque de celos* 'a fit of jealousy', *una sombra de sospecha* 'a cloud of suspicion'.

We should point out that DiCE includes not only items in syntagmatic co-occurrence with the lemma (e.g. *despertar alegría* 'to arouse joy') but also those in paradigmatic co-occurrence (e.g. *alegrar* 'to make happy'). Both types of information are complementary and, in that sense, necessary for the user to produce text.

All the sections introduced above are presented in DiCE in lists. When the user consults one of these sections, he will find a list of collocates preceded by a gloss and followed by the government pattern<sup>9</sup> and examples showing its usage. If the user wants to see with which LF the collocation is represented, he can just click on the LF icon and the specific LF is shown. Some examples of verb + noun (*alegría* 'joy') collocations will now be given in order to illustrate this point. Here the glosses are in English (in DiCE, they are in Spanish) and the LFs are provided as a subscript.

<sup>9</sup> In the government pattern we describe, for example, the possibility or the obligation of cooccur with an article or not. The notation is the following: [ART ~]. See examples in the entry for ALEGRIA.

### ALEGRIA 'joy'

#### 1a. SENTIMIENTO 'feeling'

TO FEEL ~ Oper1 **llevarse** [ART ~] Soy de izquierdas de toda la vida y nunca he votado al PSOE, pero cuando ganó en el 82 me llevé la mayor alegría de mi vida.

TO FEEL AN INTENSE ~ Magn - Oper1 **no caber en sí** [de ~] La empresa promotora le ha comunicado que mañana le entregarán las llaves de su nueva casa. No cabe en sí de alegría.

TO START TO FEEL ~ BECAUSE OTHERS ALREADY FEEL IT **contagiarse** [de ART ~] Los cerca de 200 policías [...] se contagiaron de la alegría general y comenzaron a dar brincos...

TO CONTINUE FEELING ~ ComOper1 **conservar** [ART ~] Conserva el optimismo, la alegría, la amistad eufórica de siempre.

TO STOP FEELING ~ FinOper1 **perder** [ART ~] María del Carmen, que siempre era la alegre, la marchosa como se dice ahora, y yo la sensata, perdió su alegría.

TO SPOIL THE ~ CausDegrad **nublar** [ART ~] Yo no había pegado ojo y les había estado dando vueltas a obsesiones ingratas, de las que acentúan esa difusa conciencia de culpa que tantas veces me nubla la alegría.

TO CAUSE ~ TO DISAPPEAR LiquFunc **quitar** [ART ~ a N] Entre lo del herrero de Torelló, que me había quitado la alegría, y aquello, vimos claro que estábamos entrapadas, que debíamos escapar de nuevo.

TO EXPRESS BODILY THE ~ Symp1 **dar brincos** [de ~] El corazón le dio un brinco de alegría al oír descolgar el aparato al otro lado del hilo.

The purpose of the gloss is to provide hints to the user about how to select the suitable collocate among those presented. From our viewpoint, a gloss is "a brief indication of the meaning of the collocate in connection with the base" (Alonso Ramos 2005: 22). In other words, we can also say that a gloss is a translation of the LF into a natural metalanguage. This semantic information is not found in English collocational dictionaries such as the English *BBI Dictionary of English Word Combinations* (BBI), the *LTP Dictionary of Selected Collocations* (LTP) or OCD. These dictionaries order collocations into word classes and within these classes collocates are grouped together according to semantic similarity.

The particular case of OCD is contradictory. Although the intended users of this dictionary are students of English, there is no semantic information that helps the learners to choose a particular collocate. In the introduction, the authors say that the order of the groups of collocates "tries to be as intuitive as possible" (Crowther, Dignen, and Lea 2002: x). However, a learner may have difficulties wondering what the difference between *a great idea* and *a big idea* is, taking into consideration the fact that both adjectives can be seen as synonyms, but in OCD they are presented in different groups. We consider that the use of intuition does not help much if the user is a non-native speaker; for instance, how could he find out that *to take a chance* does not have exactly the same meaning as *to have a chance*, but *to have a shower* means the same as *to take a shower*? Similarly, Klotz

(2003: 60), in his review of this dictionary, offers some examples of collocates that are grouped together but they are not synonyms (e.g. *biting* and *brilliant* as collocates for *satire*, and *delicately* and *lightly* for *scented*).

The coverage of the lexical co-occurrence in DiCE is very extensive. Two randomly chosen LUs presented in the web demonstration, *admiraçión 1* and *sospecha 1*, contain 92 and 137 related LUs, respectively. BBI has only 21 for *admiration* and 34 for *suspicion*. OCD contains 29 for *admiration* and 57 for *suspicion*. LTP includes 31 collocates for *admiration* and 73 for *suspicion*. Even if a strict comparison between DiCE, on the one side, and BBI, OCD, and LTP, on the other, is not possible because we are dealing not only with different languages but also with different concepts of collocation, this can give a rough idea of the exhaustivity DiCE is trying to achieve.

Additionally, DiCE's demonstration on the web includes an exercise module that contains production- and comprehension-oriented questions. The program gives the percentage of correct answers.

### 3. Elaboration of pedagogic material from DiCE

After the presentation of DiCE, we will concentrate on its pedagogic application. As we commented in the introduction, the idea of combining dictionary and exercises is not a new one. OCD, for example, has already included some exercises as "study pages" in the middle of the dictionary.<sup>10</sup> One of the authors of LTP has edited a book, *Teaching Collocations* (Lewis 2000), where six out of the eleven chapters are written by classroom teachers describing how they introduce collocations and create activities and exercises based on them. The importance of collocations in the teaching and learning of a foreign language has been emphasized for many authors as an essential knowledge required in fluency and nativelike selection (see Nation 2001: 317-318). Within the application field, we should mention two books of English vocabulary exercises, *The Words You Need* (Rudzka, Channell, Putseys, and Ostin 1981) and *More Words You Need* (Rudzka, Channell, Putseys, and Ostin 1985), including several collocational activities. In the chapter dedicated to emotions ("Do You Love Me?", Rudzka *et al.* 1981: 118-137), for instance, there are exercises which focus on collocates such as (1):

<sup>10</sup> The reader can find some commentaries about OCD exercises in Alonso Ramos (2005: 23-24).

- (1) Find appropriate adjectives to fill in the blanks.  
1. a(n)... stranger; 2. a(n) ... feeling; 3. a(n) ... grasp, etc. (Rudzka *et al.* 1981: 133.)

Conversely, some activities ask for bases of the collocations (2)

- (2) Add appropriate nouns to the following adjectives:  
1. (a) confidential...; 2. (an) innovative...; 3. (a) positive... (Rudzka *et al.* 1981: 132.)

One characteristic of the exercises in Rudzka *et al.* (1981: 132-133) which we share is that they do not only concentrate on syntagmatic relations, but also on the paradigmatic ones. So there are also activities where learners must look for synonyms or make nouns from verbs, and vice versa. However, we noticed that Rudzka *et al.* make fine-grained distinctions about the meaning of terms belonging to the same semantic fields – using componential analysis – but when they deal with collocations, no semantic support is given to the learner.

In the following, we will describe some of the exercises we propose to teach the use of collocations from the perspective of SFL. Because of the semantic information included in DiCE by means of glosses, learners will be able to find the answers to the exercises without using a general dictionary. As DiCE is mainly oriented towards production, but can also be used as a comprehension oriented dictionary, we will divide the exercises into two groups depending on the production or comprehension orientation. However, more attention will be paid here to the production-oriented exercises and to verbal collocations.

The first set of exercises will be focused on production activity. One type of exercises is a multiple-choice test. In this case, the learner is provided with the gloss of the collocation and is asked to search for the collocate (3):

- (3) Rodea la respuesta que mejor se corresponda con la glosa 'causar pánico en varias personas' [Circle the answer that best corresponds to the gloss 'to cause panic in several people']:  
a. esparcir el pánico;  
b. reproducir el pánico;  
c. sembrar el pánico;  
d. extender el pánico.

Type (3) exercises are suitable when collocates are specific to one particular base. However, we can create exercises that can be reproduced in several bases or

semantic fields. Exercises (4) and (5) deal with a particular type of verb + noun collocation:

- (4) Transforma las siguientes oraciones de manera que se pueda sustituir el verbo en negrita por una expresión equivalente: un verbo de apoyo seguido del nombre que aparece entre paréntesis [Transform the following sentences replacing the verb in bold with an equivalent expression: a light verb followed by the noun in brackets]:
- Firme** este documento, por favor. (FIRMA)
  - Castigarán** a los culpables. (CASTIGO)
  - No se preocupe: su vida no **peligra**. (PELIGRO)
- (5) Encuentra sinónimos para los verbos que aparece en cursiva [Find synonyms for the verbs in italics]:
- Sentí* una gran ALEGRÍA, que todavía ahora no podría explicar.
  - Sufrió* una grave DOLENCIA que le mantuvo retirado durante un tiempo.
  - Le *dio* un PUNTAPIÉ a un objeto duro que rodó unos pasos delante suyo.

In these examples the verb (in this case, the collocate) is a semantically empty (or quasi-empty) verb that can be combined with the noun to verbalize the meaning of the noun. These collocations are codified in terms of LFs as *Oper*. In particular, in exercise 4 we combine paradigmatic and syntagmatic co-occurrence, which is not separated in real texts. Thus, the learner has to relate the full verb *firmar* 'to sign' to the collocation *echar/ poner una firma* 'to put/ write a signature'. Both types of information would be available in DiCE under the entry of *firma* 'signature'. This exercise is also useful because the user has to be aware of the different actantial structure of *firmar* (*X firma el documento Y*) and *echar/ poner* (*X echa/ pone una firma en el documento Y*).<sup>11</sup> Exercise (5) offers collocates and asks for synonyms of these collocates. One should note here that when the collocate is an empty meaning, as in (4) and (5), it is impossible to make a gloss or paraphrase. For this reason, our preliminary decision is to introduce a generic collocate into DiCE for each semantic field (Alonso Ramos 2006a). In (5) we have offered *sentir* 'to feel', *sufrir* 'to suffer' and *dar* 'to give' that co-occur with feelings, diseases and nouns designating blows, respectively. Other collocates that could replace *sentir* in (5a) would be *tener*, *experimentar*, or *llevarse*. In (5b), the learner could use *tener* or *padeecer*, instead of *sufrir*, and for *dar* in (5a) there are several synonyms, such as *propinar*, *asestar*, *arrear*, *soltar*, *sacudir*, *lanzar*, etc.

<sup>11</sup> As said above, DiCE contains only emotion nouns. However, we have used nouns like *firma* or *castigo* to propose a model of exercises following DiCE's methodology.

Another type of exercise allows practice with phasal verbs, that is to say, the learner must search for collocate verbs denoting 'to start to' (LF *Incep*), 'to continue' (LF *Cont*), 'to finish' (LF *Fin*). Exercise (6) can serve as an example:

- (6) Rellena los huecos valiéndote de las glosas ente paréntesis [Fill in the gaps according to the glosses within brackets]:
- Pedro le \_\_\_\_\_ MIEDO a los aviones. ('Pedro started to feel fear')
  - No deberías \_\_\_\_\_ le RENCOR por tan poca cosa. ('you continue feeling bitter')
  - De repente, le \_\_\_\_\_ el RESPETO. ('I stop feeling respect').  
[a. *tomó*, *cogió*; b. *guardar*; c. *perdió*]

Exercise (7) tries to draw attention to the difference between two verbal collocates, namely, to semantically empty verbs and realization verbs. The former type was treated in exercises (4) and (5); the latter one is a value of the LF *Real*, that is, a collocate with the meaning 'to do what you are supposed to do with the referent of the LU'. For instance, a realization verb for *promesa* 'promise' is *cumplir* 'to fulfil' and an anti-realization verb is *romper* 'to break', while the semantically empty verb is *hacer* 'to make'. With these notions in mind, we can ask students to do (7):

- (7) Completa los huecos con el verbo adecuado [Fill in the gaps with the appropriate verb]:  
Si Pedro le **promete** a Ana que irá al cine el sábado, Pedro le \_\_\_\_\_ una PROMESA a Ana. Si el sábado Pedro va al cine, Pedro \_\_\_\_\_ su PROMESA; pero si no va, Pedro \_\_\_\_\_ su PROMESA.

As we can observe, (7) also combines paradigmatic (*prometer* 'to promise') and syntagmatic (*hacer una promesa* 'to make a promise') co-occurrence. Similar exercises can be done to distinguish collocations such as *hacer una invitación* 'to make an invitation' and *aceptar una invitación* 'to accept an invitation', *tender una trampa* 'to set a trap' and *caer en una trampa* 'to fall into a trap', *tener una tentación* 'to feel temptation' and *caer en una tentación* 'to yield to temptation'.

A relatively frequent problem for Spanish learners is the use of pronominal verbs. Within the semantic field of emotions, the pronominal/non-pronominal verb contrast is a productive phenomenon that can be exploited. So, on the one hand, many pronominal verbs, for instance *alegrarse* 'to be happy', are equivalent to a collocation whose collocate is a semantically empty verb, *sentir alegría*, which takes the experiencer of the emotion as its grammatical subject (LF *Oper*<sub>1</sub>). On the other hand, non-pronominal verbs, such as *alegrar* 'to make happy', correspond to the same type of collocation, *causar alegría*, but here the grammatical subject is

the cause of the emotion (LF Oper<sub>2</sub>). Thus, both verbs and collocations express the same meaning showing an opposite diathesis, as can be seen in exercise (8):

- (8) Construye oraciones equivalentes siguiendo estos requisitos: 1) transforma los verbos plenos en colocaciones verbo - nombre de emoción, o viceversa; 2) invierte las funciones de sujeto y objeto preposicional de la oración original [Construct equivalent sentences following these two procedures: 1) transform full verbs into verb + emotion noun collocations, or vice versa; 2) reverse the subject and prepositional object functions in the original sentence]:
- Sentía vergüenza de su cuerpo.* ⇔ [*Su cuerpo le avergonzaba.*]
  - La entrevista *ha provocado el enfado* de la familia real británica.
  - Los comentarios del profesor *preocuparon* a María.
  - Pedro *se asombró* con la noticia.

From the point of view of the comprehension activity, we can propose exercises where learners have to choose the most suitable gloss for one particular collocation, such as (9):

- (9) Si leemos en el periódico "el gobierno de EEUU tiene fuertes sospechas de que Irán ha desarrollado programas de armas bacteriológicas", entenderemos que las **sospechas** son FUERTES porque...
- se refieren a un hecho considerado muy malo;
  - el Gobierno está muy seguro de que el hecho es cierto;
  - duran mucho tiempo;
  - son compartidas por varias personas.

The correct answer is (9b). In Spanish, when the person who suspects is very sure about the fact, the suspicion (*sospecha*) is strong (*fuerte*). If the suspicion refers to a fact which is considered negative, as is the case in (9a), then the suspicion is serious (*grave*) or terrible (*terrible*). For a lasting suspicion (9c), the collocate is permanent (*permanente*) and if the suspicion is shared by many people, then it is extended (*extendida*) or generalized (*generalizada*). Another exercise could deal with the difference within a polysemic collocate such as (10):

- (10) Busca otro colocativo que exprese el mismo significado que *dar* en las siguientes oraciones [Search another collocate which expresses the same meaning as *dar* (lit. 'to give') in the following sentences]:
- Le *dio* COMPASIÓN del perro y se lo llevó.<sup>12</sup>
  - Los aviones siempre le *dieron* MIEDO.

<sup>12</sup> Example extracted from DUE.

In (10), the user has to find *dar* in the entry under *compasión* 1 'compassion', read the gloss to understand the meaning, and then look for another collocate listed with the same gloss. The same operation will be repeated under the entry *miedo*. So, *dar* in *dar compasión* is equivalent to *sentir compasión* 'to feel sorry', and *dar miedo* is a synonym of *causar miedo* 'to cause fear'. Something similar could be applied to other collocates such as *tener* lit. 'to have' that can co-occur with the same LU expressing different meanings, e.g. *Los estudiantes le tienen respeto al profesor* 'the students have respect for their teacher' and *El profesor tiene el respeto de los estudiantes* 'the teacher has the respect of his students'. Another possibility is to apply the exercise to polysemic bases such as *DESPRECIO*, which is a feeling in *sentir desprecio* 'to feel contempt' and a sign in *hacer un desprecio* 'to make a sign of contempt'.

#### 4. Summary and Conclusions

In this paper we have introduced DiCE as a useful tool in SFL. We have focused on the semantic information it contains, showing in particular that DiCE provides each collocate with a gloss explaining its meaning in basic Spanish within a particular collocation. The presence of this semantic information is the main feature which distinguishes our approach from other existing collocation dictionaries. In contrast to the common practice of simply grouping collocates by part of speech and vague semantic similarity, our approach to provide a gloss makes possible the right selection between collocates which have the same part of speech, but different meanings.

Furthermore, the correspondence between the gloss and the LF opens an interesting avenue to continue further research on the use of LFs as an interlingua. Let us note the important role that LFs can play in different systems of natural language processing, such as a text generation or machine translation, and more particularly, in the line of this article, in the computer assisted language learning systems.

DiCE has been conceived as an electronic lexical database. This allows us to provide more information and to implement a flexible means of access, free of space limitations. The electronic medium and the structured information, which is systematised by LFs, facilitate the integration of the dictionary and the exercise module into an on-line language learning environment. Note that the research line started with DiCE can be continued along several different strands. Thus, the data in DiCE already contain a considerable corpus of collocations which can be used for both theoretical and computational aims; for example, to train a machine-

learning program for automatic recognition of collocations (Wanner *et al.* 2005). A further line to develop is the possibility of automatic generation of exercises based on the data included.

## References

### Dictionaries

BBI = Benson, Morton, Evelyn Benson and Robert F. Ilson. 1997. *The BBI dictionary of English word combinations*. (2<sup>nd</sup> edition.) Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

REDES = Bosque, Ignacio. (dir.) 2004. *REDES. Diccionario combinatorio del español contemporáneo*. Madrid: SM.

OCD = Crowther, Jonathan, Sheila Dignen and Diana Lea (eds.) 2002. *Oxford collocations. Dictionary for students of English*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

LTP = Hill, Jimmie and Michael Lewis. 1997. *The LTP dictionary of selected collocations*. London: LTP.

DEC = Mel'čuk, Igor *et al.* 1984-1999. *Dictionnaire explicatif et combinatoire du français contemporain. Recherches lexico-sémantiques I-IV*. Montreal: Les Presses de L'Université de Montréal.

DUE = Moliner, María. 1989. *Diccionario de uso del español*. Madrid: Gredos.

### Other Literature

Alonso Ramos, Margarita. 2002a. Presentación del Diccionario de colocaciones y marcadores del español: estructura y objetivos. *Actas del IV Congreso de Lingüística General*, ed. by Muñoz *et al.*, 47-61. Cádiz: Servicio de Publicaciones de las Universidades de Cádiz y Alcalá.

Alonso Ramos, Margarita. 2002b. Un vacío en la enseñanza del léxico del español como lengua extranjera. *Proceedings of the Tenth EURALEX International Congress*, volume II, ed. by A. Braasch and C. Povlsen, 551-61. Copenhagen: CST.

Alonso Ramos, Margarita. 2003. Hacia un Diccionario de colocaciones del español y su codificación. *Lexicografía computacional y semántica*, ed. by M. Martí *et al.*, 11-34. Barcelona: Edicions de la Universitat de Barcelona.

Alonso Ramos, Margarita. 2004. *Las construcciones con verbo de apoyo*. Madrid: Visor.

Alonso Ramos, Margarita. 2005. Semantic description of collocations in a lexical database. *Papers in Computational Lexicography COMPLEX 2005*, ed. by F. Kiefer *et al.*, 17-27. Budapest: Linguistics Institute and Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

Alonso Ramos, Margarita. 2006a. Glosas para las colocaciones en el Diccionario de Colocaciones del Español. *Diccionario y Fraseología*, ed. by M. Alonso Ramos, 59-88. Coruña: Universidade da Coruña.

Alonso Ramos, Margarita. 2006b. Towards a dynamic way of learning collocations in a second language. *Proceedings of the XII EURALEX International Congress*, volume II, ed. by Elisa Corino, Carla Marello, and Christina Onesti, 909-21. Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso.

Higuera, Marta. 2005. Necesidad de un diccionario de colocaciones para aprendientes de ELE. Las gramáticas y los diccionarios en la enseñanza del español como segunda lengua: desco y realidad. *Actas del XV Congreso Internacional ASELE*, coord. by M. A. Castillo *et al.* Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla.

Klotz, Michael. 2003. Review of Oxford collocations dictionary for students of English, ed. by J. Crowther, S. Dignen, and D. Lea. *International Journal of Lexicography* 16.57-61.

Lewis, Michael. (ed.) 2000. *Teaching collocation: Further developments in the lexical approach*. Hove: Language Teaching Publications.

Mel'čuk, Igor. 1998. Collocations and lexical functions. *Phraseology, theory, analysis, and applications*, ed. by A. P. Cowie, 23-53. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mel'čuk, Igor, André Clas, and Alain Polguère. 1995. *Introduction à la lexicologie explicative et combinatoire*. Louvain-la-Neuve: Duculot.

Nation, I. S. P. 2001. *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nuccorini, Stefania. 2003. Towards an 'ideal' dictionary of English collocations. *A practical guide to lexicography*, ed. by Piet van Sterkenburg, 336-87. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Polguère, Alain. 2000. Towards a theoretically-motivated general public dictionary of semantic derivations and collocations for French. *Proceedings of the Ninth EURALEX International Congress*, volume II, 517-27. Stuttgart: Universität Stuttgart.

Rudzka, B., J. Channell, Y. Putseys, and P. Ostyn. 1981. *The words you need*. London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Publishers.

Rudzka, B., J. Channell, Y. Putseys, and P. Ostyn. 1985. *More words you need*. London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Publishers.

- Sanromán Vilas, Begoña. 2006a. El papel de la información semántica en el aprendizaje de las colocaciones léxicas. *Proceedings of the XII EURALEX International Congress*, volume II, ed. by Elisa Corino, Carla Marcello, and Christina Onesti, 1037-44. Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso.
- Sanromán Vilas, Begoña. 2006b. Observaciones sobre el uso de colocaciones en aprendices finlandeses de español: hacia una aplicación didáctica. *Diccionario y Fraseología*, ed. by M. Alonso Ramos, 145-160. Coruña: Universidade da Coruña.
- Wanner, Leo. (ed.) 1996. *Lexical functions in lexicography and natural language processing*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Wanner, Leo, Bernd Bohnet, Margarita Alonso, and Nancy Vázquez. 2005. The true, deep happiness: Towards the automatic semantic classification of adjective-noun collocations. *Papers in Computational Lexicography COMPLEX 2005*, ed. by F. Kiefer et al., 255-265. Budapest: Linguistics Institute and Hungarian Academy of Sciences.