

# Onions and his treatment of *be surprised by* in the *OED*

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## 1. Introduction

My previous research (1999) using four computer corpora of Modern English and the *OED 2* on CD-ROM shows that the *be surprised by* construction used psychologically occurred at the rate of a little over 20 percent in late Modern English and that *by* has been increasing at such a rate as to be surpassing *at* in current English. It also shows that a number of great and popular writers of the late Modern English period already used the construction.

Evidently, the *be surprised by* construction was gaining such currency during the late Modern English period that a host of eminent writers of previous centuries seem to have given the usage popularity and legitimacy. However, the *OED* contains no reference to *by* in the definition of *surprise* in a psychological sense. Nor are any illustrative quotations presented under the entry in the dictionary. Utilizing the *OED 2* on CD-ROM and the Virginia Corpus as main data sources, this paper will examine the *be surprised by* construction in late Modern English and also the treatment of the construction in the *OED*, which apparently does not reflect the true linguistic conditions of the construction.

Considering the tremendous influence that the *OED* has exerted on later lexicographers,<sup>1</sup> who may have refrained from making a reference to *by* because of the descriptions of the *OED* even if *be surprised by* sentences were observed to be in common use, this investigation is necessary and worth conducting.

## 2. Quotations of *be surprised by* in the corpus

### 2.1 The *OED 2* on CD-ROM<sup>2</sup>

A 'text-search' of the phrases *surprised by* and its variant forms in the *OED 2* on CD-ROM and the subsequent screening of inappropriate samples yields 22 quotations containing the predicate used psychologically. As I do not take Burchfield, editor of *The Supplement to the OED* (1972-1986), into consideration in this study, the seven quotations found in his supplementary volumes were excluded. The sentences below are a selection of 15 out of the total of 22 quotations. Each quotation is used to illustrate the word in parentheses. The 1794 quotation is used to illustrate two entries, i.e. *lobster* and *unmercifully*.

- 1786 F. Burney *Diary* 27 July (1842-6) III. 37 At the desert I was very agreeably *surprised by* the entrance of Sir Richard Jebb, who stayed coffee. (*stay* v.17)
- 1794 C. Pigott *Female Jockey Club* 139 She faints at the approach of a mouse; if *surprised by* the sight of a black lobster, she screams unmercifully. (*lobster* n. 1; *unmercifully* adv.)
- 1816 *Sporting Mag.* XI. VII. 43 The other horse...determined not to *be again surprised by* a go-by. (*go-by* n.1)
- 1823 Rutter *Fonthill 7 Surprised by* the modest pretensions of the entrance. (*modest* a.5)

- 1830 W. Taylor *Hist. Surv. Germ. Poetry* II. 320 He *is surprised by* a nymph...who is at length seized by the supervening Itifal, a Sacripant of knighthood. (*Sacripant* n.)
- 1838 Lytton *Alice* 21 Miss Merton *was...surprised by* the beauty...of the young fairy before her. (*fairy* n. 5b)
- 1840 Moore *Mem.* (1856) VII. 275 Russell's berth *was...the chief* object of our attention, and I *was* most agreeably *surprised by* its roominess. (*roominess* n.)
- 1844 C. E. A. Yng, *Communicants* (1848) 21 The party of visitors... *were* much *surprised* and disedified *by* this scene in a convent school. (*disedify* v.)
- 1844 J. H. Newman *Lett.* (1891) II. 442 He *was surprised* and thrown out *by* finding I did not seem to be what he had fancied. (*throw* v.44.1)
- 1845 Darwin *Voy. Nat.* xx. (1879) 464 I *was* a good deal *surprised by* finding two species of coral...possessed of the power of stinging. (*sting* v.3)
- 1855 Macaulay *Hist. Eng.* xvii. IV. 12 In the spring of 1691, the Waldensian Shepherds...*were surprised by* glad tidings. (*spring* n.5e)
- 1865 Dickens *Mut. Fr.* II. i. 'I don't like that', said Bradley Headstone. His pupil *was* a little *surprised by* this striking-in with so sudden...an objection. (*striking* n.1b)
- 1878 Black *Green Past.* v. 37 *Surprised* and chagrined *by* the coldness of her manner. (*chagrin* v.2)
- 1879 G. C. Harlan *Eyesight* vi. 69 Old people who have been using glasses...*are* sometimes *surprised by* a return of the ability to read without them. (*return* n.3)
- 1889 Jessop *Coming of Friars* vii. 325 Prophets *are* never at a nonplus, and never *surprised by* a question. (*nonplus* n.1)
- [Italics in the quotations are mine]

It is evident from the list of the quotations that *surprised by* began

to appear in the late 18th century and seems to have become common during the 19th century to such a degree that such eminent figures as Dickens, Darwin and Macaulay used it.

As compared to the latecomer *by*, *at* has been the most predominant preposition in the *be surprised* construction throughout the Modern English period since its first appearance in the 16th century. A text-search of *surprised at* and its variant forms with the screening of inappropriate examples produces 59 quotations (with quotations in Burchfield's *Supplement* excluded).

In comparison with 59 quotations of *surprised at*, 15 quotations of *surprised by* do not seem to be too small an amount to be disregarded. Besides, the occurrence rate of *by* of the late Modern English period, when the editing of the *OED* took place, is assumed to have been approximately a little over 20 percent. A more than 20 percent occurrence rate does not seem to be a small figure, either.

## 2.2 The Virginia Corpus<sup>3</sup>

From the Virginia Corpus, which mainly contains texts of the 19th and early 20th centuries, 93 examples of *surprised by* were collected (cf. 343 *surprised at* examples). As the publication of the part of the *OED* containing the entry *surprise* took place in 1918 (see section 3.1), it follows that more than 70 out of 93 examples containing *surprised by* are in the works written before 1918 in the Virginia Corpus and they may have stood a chance, however remote, of coming into the hands of the editor or at least may have caught the eyes of the editor by the time the editing of *surprise* began (see section 3.2).

The writers of these 70-plus examples include the following great and popular writers: Joseph Conrad (1857-1924), Charles Dickens (1812

-70), George Eliot (1819-80), Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-64), Samuel Johnson (1709-84), Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832), Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-94), Anthony Trollope (1815-82), H. G. Wells (1866-1946) and Edith Wharton (1862-1937) among others. In the corpus, Trollope's use of the *be surprised by* construction appears 6 times, Dickens and Johnson 5 times each, Conrad and Hawthorne 4 times each, George Eliot twice and so forth.<sup>4</sup>

The first writer who is found to have used the *be surprised by* construction in a psychological sense was Samuel Johnson, one of the most influential men in the history of Modern English. Dr. Johnson used five examples as in the following in *the Rambler* (1750-52), which antedate the first citation in the *OED* (i.e. the 1786 quotation) by more than 30 years:

[H]e *is surprised by* sudden alterations of the state of things, and changes his measures according to superficial appearances.

Dryden being determined not to give way to his critiks, never confessed that he had *been surprised by* an ambiguity.

[B]ut impelled by the violence of desire, *surprised by* the suddenness of passion, or seduced by the soft approaches of temptation, . . .

I turned about, and *was surprised by* the sight of the loveliest object I had ever beheld.

[E]ither speaker . . . uttered a short phrase of admiration, as if *surprised by* such cogency of argument as he had never known before.

[Italics are mine]

In addition, my research into the computer concordance of Dickens (<http://concordance.com/dickens.htm>) reveals that 40 *surprised by*

sentences and 40 *surprised at* sentences are found in his 18 works contained in the electronic concordance (the equal number of occurrence is purely coincidental). More importantly, Dickens seems to have gradually shifted the use of *at* to *by*. In his earlier works *surprised at* was put into frequent use, which, however, declined drastically in his later works. *David Copperfield*, the 10th work in the concordance, is the turning point, in which the occurrence rate of *at* and *by* was reversed (6 *surprised by* vs 4 *surprised at*). After this novel, *surprised at* was outnumbered by the use of *surprised by* and never regained the upper hand.

These facts are significant for two reasons. First, the writers mentioned above were all such popular and influential writers that *be surprised by* may have come to be recognized as legitimate by the populace simply because they used it. Second, *be surprised by* sentences in these great writers' works must have been cited for quotations by voluntary readers for the *OED*.

It has been shown that *surprised by* began to become increasingly common during the 19th century. In fact it became so popular as to be used by a number of people of renown and influence of the period. Why then is there no reference made to *by* in the descriptions of *surprise* nor are there any illustrative quotations? My speculation is that this seemingly insufficient treatment has to do with the editorial attitude of Onions, the fourth editor of the *OED*, who compiled the entry *surprise*.

### 3. Onions, the fourth editor of the *OED*

#### 3.1 The editors of the *OED*

There were four editors, who dedicated themselves to the compila-

tion of the *OED*. First of all, there was James Murray,<sup>5</sup> who set out to do this next-to-impossible task in the history of lexicography and edited more than half of the pages of the *OED* as Editor-in-Chief.<sup>6</sup> He is referred to as the greatest lexicographer by Burchfield.<sup>7</sup> Without Murray, this great achievement in the history of dictionary-making may not have been accomplished, or even started.<sup>8</sup> The dictionary was once justifiably called *Murray's Dictionary* and with good reason (e.g. Imazato and Tsuchiya 1984: 91-92).

Henry Bradley joined Murray as another editor, then came William A. Craigie, and finally Charles Talbut Onions, as the fourth editor. The following table shows who edited which sections and in what dates (*OED*: xvii-xix). In actuality, the *OED* was published in 124 install-

Table 1 Four editors of the *OED* and their compiled volumes and the dates

Murray	Bradley	Craigie	Onions
AB 1882-88			
C 1888-93	E 1888-93		
D 1893-97	F 1893-97		
H 1897-99	G 1897-1900		
IJK 1899-1901			
	L 1901-03		
O 1902-04		Q 1902	
		R-Re 1903-05	
P 1904-09	M 1904-08	N 1906-07	
		Re-Ry 1907-10	
	S-Sh 1908-14		
T 1909-15	St 1914-19	Si-Sq 1910-15	
		V 1916-20	Su-Sz 1914-19
	W-We 1920-23	U 1921-26	XYZ 1920-21
		Wo-Wy 1927	Wh-Wo 1922

ments, or fascicles over a period of nearly 50 years. It was Onions who edited the entry *surprise* in compiling the fascicle 'Supple-Sweet' in 1918 (*OED*, Vol. I, p.xxv-xxvi). In the *Supplement* to the *OED* published in 1933, Craigie edited L-R and U-Z and Onions edited A-K, S and T.

### 3.2 Onions's treatment of *be surprised by*

I have presented 15 quotations of *surprised by* in section 2.1. Table 1 and the information of the *OED Supplement* enables us to determine who adopted which quotation and to obtain the following list of the editors and their quotations represented by the date (As the 1794 quotation was used by two editors (i.e. Bradley and Craigie), it is counted as two occurrences):

Murray: 1844, 1844, 1878

Bradley: 1786, 1794, 1816, 1823, 1830, 1838, 1845, 1865

Craigie: 1794, 1840, 1855, 1879, 1889

Onions: none

Eight out of the 15 quotations are in Bradley's volumes, five quotations in Craigie's and three in Murray's. There is no quotation of *surprised by* in the volumes that Onions compiled (i.e. Su-Sz, X, Y, Z, Wh-Wo, and A-K, S and T of the *Supplement*).

It is not surprising if we should consider the number of pages Onions edited (1,495 pages including 657 pages for the *Supplement*), which is substantially less compared to the numbers of pages edited by the three other editors (cf. Murray edited 7,207 pages, Bradley 4,590 pages and Craigie 3,062 pages including 210 pages for the *Supplement*). Nevertheless, it is still perplexing that no illustrative quotations of



*surprised by* are adopted in Onions' volumes. Did Onions fail to perceive the existence of the construction or did he lack the quotations in his editing room?

The answers seem to be negative. First, as a number of great writers of the late Modern English period had already used the construction, Onions himself may have read the works of the writers who used the construction and realized its existence.

Secondly, the Bibliography of the *OED* shows that all the writers mentioned in section 2.2, if not all of their works, were read by the voluntary readers for the dictionary,<sup>9</sup> who may have cited sentences containing *surprised by* used in their writings. This speculation may not be far wide of the mark, considering one of the 12 directions given to readers as to how they were to select words (*OED*, Vol.I, p.xv; Murray 1977: 347), which is as follows:

make a quotation for every word that strikes you as rare, obsolete, old-fashioned, new, peculiar, or used in a peculiar way.

Readers who encountered *surprised by* sentences in the writers' works and found them 'peculiar' must have made citations of them. In fact, a large number of quotations of these writers have found their way into the *OED* and it is possible to find them by the hundreds or even thousands by a 'quotation-search' of the *OED* (From Dickens, 8,536 quotations are cited, Johnson 5,751, Eliot 3,153, Hawthorne 1,651, Trollope 1,432, and so forth). Considering this, chances are probably not remote that a number of *surprised by* sentences were cited and contributed by the readers.

Onions had been an assistant editor to Murray and then to Bradley

for twenty years before he became an independent editor. While he was working under their supervision, especially when he was working under Bradley, Onions may have seen quotations containing *surprised by*. Landau (1989) explains how assistant editors collaborated with an editor.

Each of the 5 million citations had to be painstakingly collected—a process conducted largely from 1858 to 1881—subsorted (i.e., alphabetized and divided in a preliminary way by sense); analyzed by assistant editors and defined, with representative citations chosen for inclusion; and checked and redefined by Murray or one of the other supervising editors (p.69).

Onions, after becoming an independent editor, worked in the Old Ashmolen building with Bradley and Craigie, with only Murray working at the original location in Oxford. There seems to have been rapport between the editors in the Old Ashmolen, as is evidenced by Onions's statement (1917-20: 7) that "Professor Craigie was able to supply me with a quotation from an Italian novel of 1879. . . ." Onions may have been provided with citations of *be surprised by* by other editors, or the existence of the construction may have been at least suggested to him. He may even have consulted the senior editors as to how it should be treated.

It seems unlikely then that Onions failed to perceive the existence of the construction nor did he lack quotations of *surprised by* in his editorial room. Why then did Onions not make any mention of it nor utilize the citations containing *surprised by* for illustrative quotations?

There may have been several reasons. First, it may be that the

quotations containing *surprised by* were simply not utilized for illustrative quotations even if they had been in the editorial room. This is because quotations which can be used for a dictionary may be a small portion of the whole body of quotations collected during the process of dictionary-making. According to Fisher (1997: 162), out of 5 million quotations contributed by readers, 1,861,200 quotations were used in the first edition of the *OED* (see also the Preface of the *OED* (Vol. I, p.v)).

Secondly, in terms of semantics, the *be surprised by* construction seems to have been undergoing a semantic shift from a physical to a psychological sense.<sup>10</sup> The shift may be exemplified by the following sentences from (a) to (e).

- (a) The soldiers were surprised by the enemies and many were killed.
- (b) The soldiers were surprised by the bombing and took to shelter.
- (c) The soldiers were surprised by the siren of the air raid.
- (d) The soldiers were surprised by the appearance of the MP.
- (e) The soldiers were surprised by the spaciousness of the barrack.

*Be surprised by* sentences with quasi-psychological senses, bordering on physical and psychological senses (i.e. (c) above, for instance), may have caused the editor to hesitate to include any reference to *by*.

Thirdly, Onions may have been influenced by the descriptions made by senior editors of such typical psychological verbs as *annoy*, *delight* and *please* (edited by Murray) and *frighten* (by Bradley). Both Murray and Bradley made a reference to such prepositions as *at*, *with* or *of*, but not to *by* in the dictionary definitions although examples of the passives of these verbs taking *by* were abundant in 19th century English.<sup>11</sup> The verb *nettle* edited by Craigie is an exceptional case and is described as

taking *by*, as well as *at* and *with*. The definition is as follows:

NETTLE v. 2b. In *pa. pple.* Irritated, vexed, provoked, annoyed.  
Const. *at, by, with*, etc.

Onions could have followed Craigie's suit and included *by* in the definition of *surprise* (the publication of the fascicle of '*N-Niche*', in which *nettle* is included, was in 1906, more than 10 years before the editing of *surprise*).

Last, but most importantly, Onions may have judged that *surprised by* in a psychological sense had not established itself as a proper usage. Because of the historical fact that *by* was a comparative newcomer as an agentive preposition of English passives, compared to other prepositions such as *through, from, of, with* (Jespersen *MEG* III: 317; Mustanoja 1960: 442; Peitsara 1993: 228, etc.) and the quotations of *surprised by* are neither as numerous as, nor have appeared as early as, those of *surprised at*, Onions may have decided that *surprised by* had not gained ground yet, just as some of today's dictionary editors still do not seem to consider it as established. Onions's decision may have been influenced by a number of great authors of the 19th century such as Lewis Carroll, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Henry James and Andrew Lang, to name only a few, who used only the *be surprised at* construction.

### 3.3 Onions' supposed prescriptivism

Onions was born in 1873. When he was growing up and acquiring the English of the late 19th century, the *be surprised by* construction in a psychological sense must have been taking root. Unlike *surprised at*, which had been in use since the 16th century, *surprised by* may not have

been deemed to be established by the editor, though it had become quite common more than a century before Onions became an assistant editor.

It is possible to speculate that Onions excluded the mention of *by* from the definition of *surprise* in a psychological sense presumably because he was a prescriptivist, whether he was conscious of it or not, and *surprised by* did not fit his prescriptive standards. Once he had written the definition (i.e. sense 5a of *surprise*) for the '*Supple-Sweet*' fascicle that he edited, in which no reference to *by* was made, Onions may have felt inhibited thereafter from adopting the quotations containing *surprised by* for other entries in subsequent parts which he compiled.

This is also a speculation, but Onions' supposed prescriptivism, consciously or not, may have to do with his educational and career background.<sup>12</sup> Onions had an education at a boarding school and at a secondary school in Birmingham, where he is said to have learnt the basics of grammar. And then he went on to Mason College (the present University of Birmingham) and later to the University of London. At Mason College, Onions was taught by Sonnenschine, a professor of classics and author of grammar books, two of which are: *A New English Grammar* and *The Soul of Grammar*. The former is a typical school grammar of English based on descriptions of Latin grammar (Konishi and Deguchi 1967: 132). A sense of prescriptivism may have been nurtured and developed during his school and university days, especially when he was under the influence of a professor who seems to have been inclined toward prescriptivism.

After obtaining a B.A. from the University of London in 1892 and also an MA in 1896, Onions became a secondary school teacher and was engaged in teaching until 1895, when he was invited to join the editorial

staff of the *OED*. He may have taught, or may have had to teach, schoolchildren how to write and read by referring to prescriptive grammars. Blake (1996: 287), for instance, says, “the private schools taught grammar from Lindley Murray’s grammar,” which was a typical prescriptive school grammar.

Grammatical prescriptivism was prevalent in those days. Michael (1991: 12) says that a total of 856 grammar books were published in Britain by a conservative estimate during a period of 100 years from 1801 to 1900. This seems to be a reflection of the prescriptivism prevalent in Britain in the 19th century. Matsunami *et al.* (1983: 436) confirm this, saying that after 1850 the British tradition of prescriptive grammar came to be in the spotlight again after having been eclipsed by American grammars during the first half of the 19th century. It is hardly surprising if Onions should have been influenced by the prevalent prescriptivism.

Onions himself wrote a grammar book titled *An Advanced English Syntax* in 1904 when he was 31 years old. Although the book is said to be a historical descriptive grammar (Konishi and Deguchi 1967: 23-25), it contains some prescriptive statements as ‘Caution(s)’ as in the following:

Avoid the erroneous use of the Perfect Infinitive which is exemplified in such sentences as ‘I should have liked *to have gone*’, ‘He had intended to have written’. We must say I should have liked *to go*, ‘He had intended *to write*’. The ‘pastness’ belongs to the finite verb and not to the Infinitive. (p.130)

The Participle must always have a proper ‘subject of reference’. A sentence like the following is incorrect because the word to which the Participle refers grammatically is not that with which it

is meant to be connected in sense: 'Born in 1850, a part of his education was received at Eaton'. Correct thus: 'Born in 1850, he received part of his education at Eaton'. (p.133)

Avoid the Split Infinitive, in which an Adverb comes between the 'to' and the verb-noun. (p.152)

Onions apparently must have possessed characteristics of a prescriptivist and by writing a grammar book, he may have further developed a sense of prescriptivism.<sup>13</sup>

I have argued that the lack of reference to *by* from the descriptions of *surprise* in the *OED* and the absence of its quotations may be ascribed to Onions' prescriptivism, which may have derived from his educational and career background. This is of course not intended to criticize Onions. I have simply provided facts and figures about the historical usage of the *be surprised by* construction and presented my own views and speculations, based on the data obtained from computer corpora, which were unavailable then. In defense of Onions, I must say that he must have made the best possible decision that could have been made, making the most of what was available to him at the time of editing, some 90 years ago, when data-collection was not as convenient as it is now and prescriptivism must have been extremely prevalent.

#### 4. Summary

There is no reference to *by* in the definition of the verb *surprise* used psychologically in the passive (i.e. *surprise* 5a) in the *OED*. Nor are there any illustrative quotations of *be surprised by* under the entry. This treatment does not seem to reflect the true linguistic conditions,

considering the occurrence rate of the *be surprised by* construction during the late Modern English period (more than 20 percent), and the number of great and popular writers of the period who used the construction (Dr. Johnson, Dickens, Trollope, etc). I have tried in this article to demonstrate that the editorial attitude of Onions, the fourth editor of the *OED*, has to do with this seemingly insufficient treatment of *be surprised by* in the dictionary.

A text-search of the *OED 2* on CD-ROM discovered fifteen quotations containing *surprised by* adopted by the editors for illustrative quotations throughout the dictionary. Onions, however, did not even use a single illustrative quotation in the volumes that he compiled. Onions must have known the existence of this construction and its popularity in late Modern English. He may have had the citations of the construction, which were contributed by voluntary readers for the *OED* and which he could have used for illustrative quotations, in his editorial room.

I have argued that the absence of *by* from the dictionary descriptions may be ascribed mainly to Onions' judgment that the construction was not an established usage and that this decision of Onions may have to do with his sense of grammatical prescriptivism. This sense of prescriptivism in Onions, whether he was conscious of it or not, is assumed to have derived from his formal education and his career as a schoolmaster, constantly exposed to the prescriptivism prevalent during the 19th century.



Notes

- 1 Landau (1989: 69-70), for instance, says, "Every dictionary thereafter is indebted to it [*OED*]. It is . . . unthinkable that any contemporary lexicographers be without *OED*. . . ."
- 2 See Fischer (1997) for the usefulness of the *OED* 2 on CD-ROM as a historical corpus.
- 3 I call The Modern English Collection the Virginia Corpus here as it was created at the University of Virginia.
- 4 For the sake of comparison, the numbers of occurrences of *surprised at* in these writers are as follows: Trollope 11 times, Dickens twice, Johnson none, Conrad 9 times, Hawthorne 4 times, Eliot 9 times.
- 5 Herbert Coleridge was appointed the first editor of the dictionary undertaken by the Philological Society. F. J. Furnival succeeded Coleridge after his sudden death. Both Coleridge and Furnival did preliminary work for the dictionary, which, however, had been at a standstill and could have been abandoned. Then James Murray was persuaded to take up this great enterprise. It was Murray who actually began the work of editing the dictionary, compiled almost half of it and set the stage for its completion with the cooperation of three other editors (*OED*, Vol. I, Historical Introduction; Baugh and Cable 1978 § 234; Landau 68-69).
- 6 See the *OED* (Vol. I: p. xix). Let us also quote Elizabeth Murray, James Murray's granddaughter and the author of his biographical book *Caught in the Web of Words*. She writes, "It was very rarely that James' annual output was less than that of Bradley and Cragie, and in the end nearly half of the whole work (7,207 out of 15,487 pages) was produced by him" (1977: 284).
- 7 Burchfield describes Murray in the preface to *Caught in the Web of Words* as "a lexicographer greater by far than Dr Johnson, though he lacks the lustre and legend associated with Johnson, and greater perhaps than any lexicographer of his own time or since in Britain, the United States, or Europe."
- 8 Landau (1989: 69), for instance, comments, "Far from being surprised at the time required to complete the project, we should be amazed that it was ever completed at all."
- 9 Hundreds of volunteer readers contributed to the compilation of the *OED* (e.g. Baugh and Cable 1978: 333). The dictionary would not have been completed in the form as it is now, without their dedicated contribution. For instance, a reader by the name of Thomas Austin contributed as many as 165,000

citations and another reader named William Douglass (of London) made a contribution of 136,000 citations (*OED*, Vol. I, p.xxi).

- 10 My investigation into the semantic shift of the *be surprised by* construction shows that the construction used in physical senses seems to have been decreasing historically. In the Virginia Corpus its occurrence rate was about 15 percent (17/111) of all the quotations containing *surprised by*, while in the BNC the rate goes down to 1.9 percent (8/422) and in the CobuildDirect Corpus the rate is 1.4 percent (3/214).
- 11 The text-search of *annoyed (delighted, pleased, frightened) by* into the *OED* 2 on CD-ROM yields a number of quotations used for illustrations for other entries and so does a search of the phrases in the Virginia Corpus. In fact, Bradley adopted the following quotation to illustrate *frighten*, in which *by* was used after *be frightened*: 1883 In fearing that England would go into schism the pope was frightened by a shadow.
- 12 For Onions' background, see Konishi and Deguchi (1967: 10-13), Matsunami *et al.* (1983: 1140-41) and Sasaki and Kihara (1995: 256-7). Also see the "Historical Introduction" of the *OED* (Vol. I: xviii).
- 13 As compared to Onions, Bradley and Craigie may have been free from prescriptivism, considering the number of *surprised by* quotations adopted in the volumes that they compiled (see section 3.2). Especially Bradley makes a good contrast to Onions. Bradley is a self-taught scholar with little formal higher education and no career at all as a schoolmaster; rather he had a long career as a business correspondent at a cutlery company in Sheffield (Bradley 1993: 8-12; Sasaki and Kihara: 32-33; Matsunami *et al.*: 1101). He may have encountered and handled the down-to-earth English at his company and sometimes may have witnessed unacceptable, non-standard usages written by overseas clients in business letters. These background factors may have contributed to his inclination toward non-prescriptivism.

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