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American headwords used in Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary

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Table of Contents

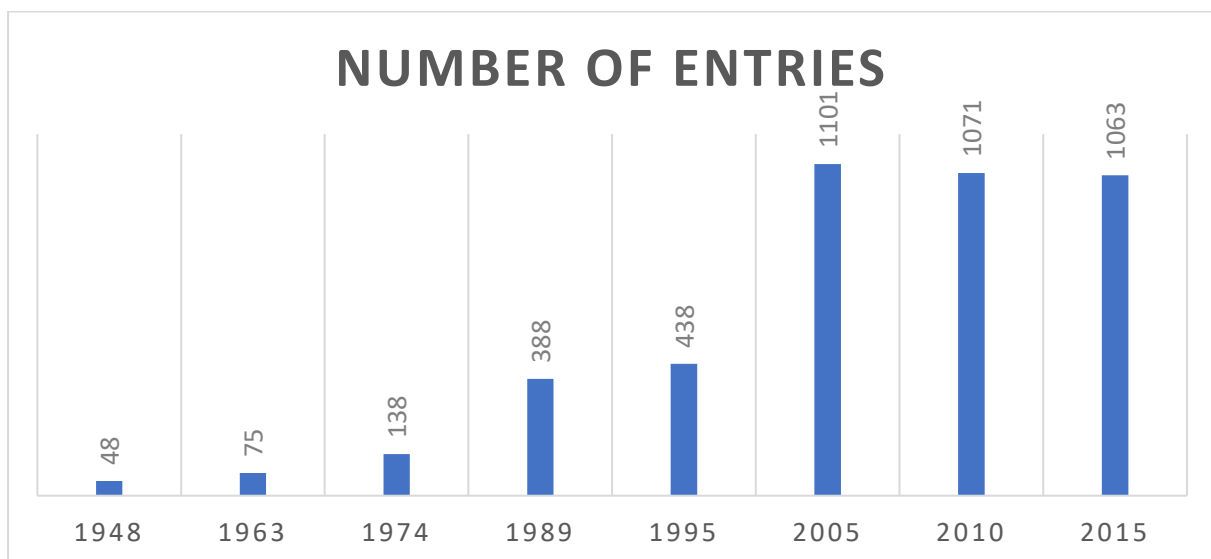
1 Introduction	3
2 Research Goals	3
3 Methodology	4
3.1 The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary	4
4 Results and Discussion	5
5 Conclusion	13
6 References	14
7 Affidavit	15

“English is the product of a Saxon warrior trying to make a date with an Angle bar-maid, and as such is no more legitimate than any of the other products of that conversation.” [1]

— H. Beam Piper, Fuzzy Sapiens

1. Introduction

This paper will present the American English that occurred in the eight editions A, B and C entries (the sixth edition could not be found) of the well-known Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionaries. More than 4300 entries were extracted from about 100,000 entries that were analyzed. The first edition (1948) set the tone of the research with forty-six entries taken from it, which six served as an example of the analyses conducted in all eight editions. All editions were compared using the copies obtained at the FAU library located in Bismarckstrasse 1, Erlangen during the period of March, April and May of 2019.



2. Research Goals

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the influence of American English on British English through a limited number of entries in almost all editions of the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary.

3. Methodology

The scope of this paper was limited to the entries that occurred in the letter A, B and C of seven editions of the OALD. It is the assumption of the author that most American slangs, inventions and business-related words are the ones most accepted into British vocabulary.

The tedious labor of acquiring the material required extreme attention. It is obvious that some headwords were missed and in order to avoid the number of missing headwords to be too high, one edition (the seventh) of the dictionaries was chosen as a pillar for all the entries that occurred in other editions.

The first step was to analyze page by page, word by word on the search of any American influence to them in the sections A, B and C of the first edition (1948), the second edition (1963), the third edition (1974), the fourth edition (1989), the fifth edition (1995), the seventh edition of the OALD (2005), the eighth edition (2010), and the ninth and final edition of the OALD from 2015.

3.1 The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary

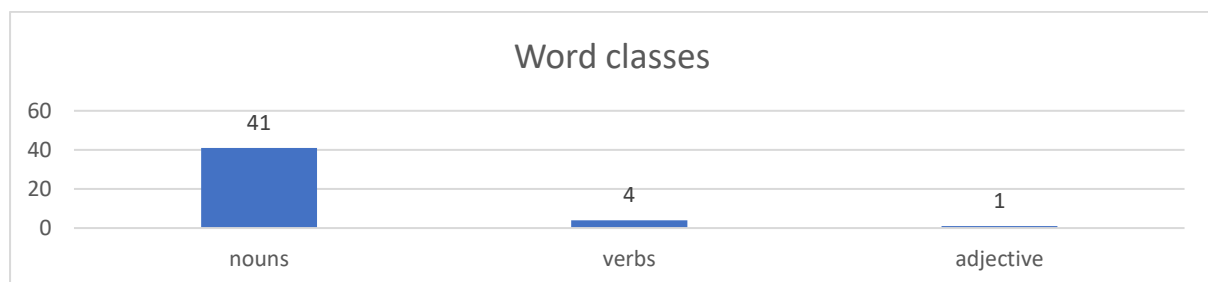
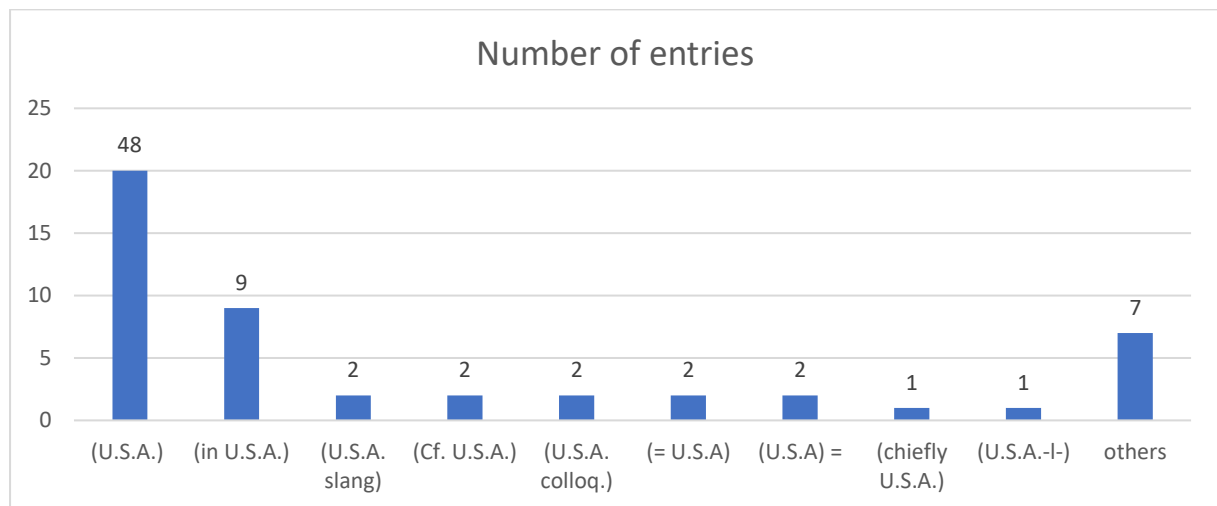
The nowadays famous Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (OALD) was first published in 1948 with the name of *The Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* and it contained an average of 19 words per page which would total around 28000 words, which around 5400 were analyzed and 46 were collected. The second edition from 1963 called *The Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* contained an average of 26.5 words per page which would total around 31000 words, of which around 6490 were analyzed and 76 were collected.

The 1974 edition called *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* contained an average of 30 words per page which would total around 30000 words, there were analyzed 6500 entries and 138 were collected. The 1989 edition of the OALD contained an average of 30 words per page which would total around 48000 words, there were analyzed around 9700 words and 388 were collected. The 1995 edition, which is the first edition that had at their disposal the British National Corpora, the OALD contained an average of 28 words per page which would total around 38000 words, there were analyzed around 8000 words and 438 were collected. Ten years later came 2005 edition of the OALD. This is the biggest difference between the previous and contained 183,500 words, there were analyzed around 39,000 words and 1101 were collected. It took another five years for the 2010 edition of the OALD to come

around containing 184,500 words, there were analyzed around 38,800 words and 1071 were collected. Just five years after the 2010 edition the 2015 edition appeared, this time it is containing 185,000 words, there were analyzed around 38000 words and 1063 were collected.

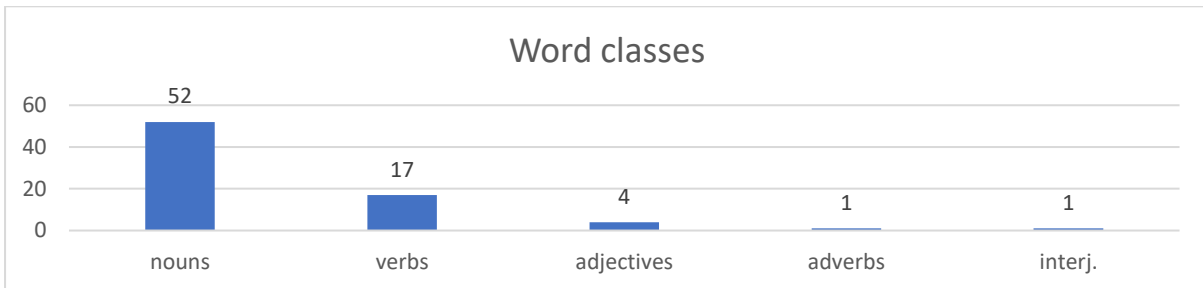
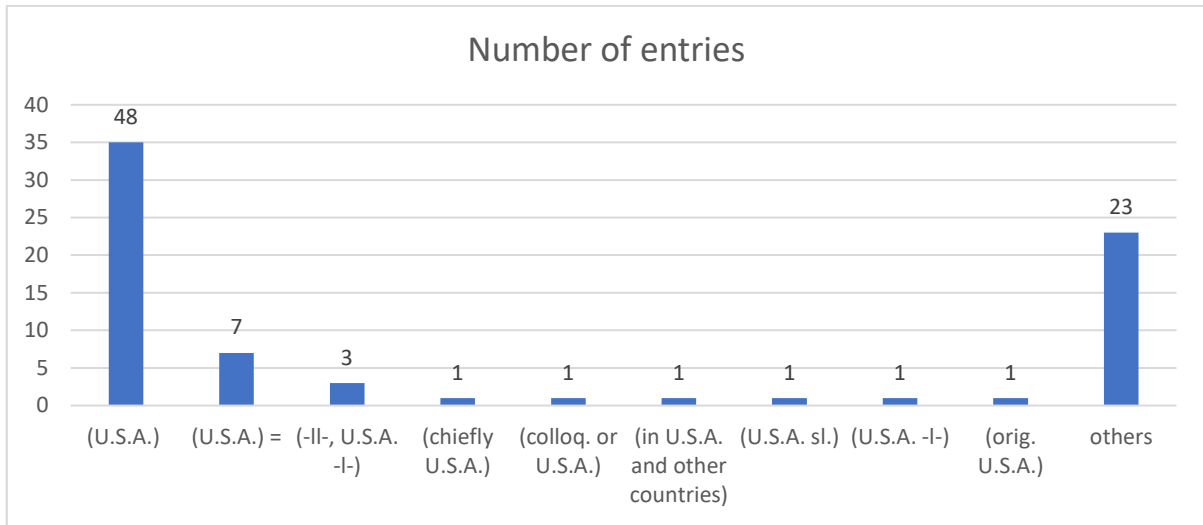
4. Results

In the first edition (1948) this occurred by the use of (U.S), (U.S.A.), (=U.S.A.), (Cf. U.S.A.), (Chiefly U.S.A), (especially in the U.S.A.), (in U.S.A.), (U.S.A.) =, (U.S.A. slang), (U.S.A. informal), (U.S.A. -l-), (U.S.A. colloq.), (U.S.A. only), (U.S.A., etc.) and (U.S.A. *and the word spelled as it is in America*).

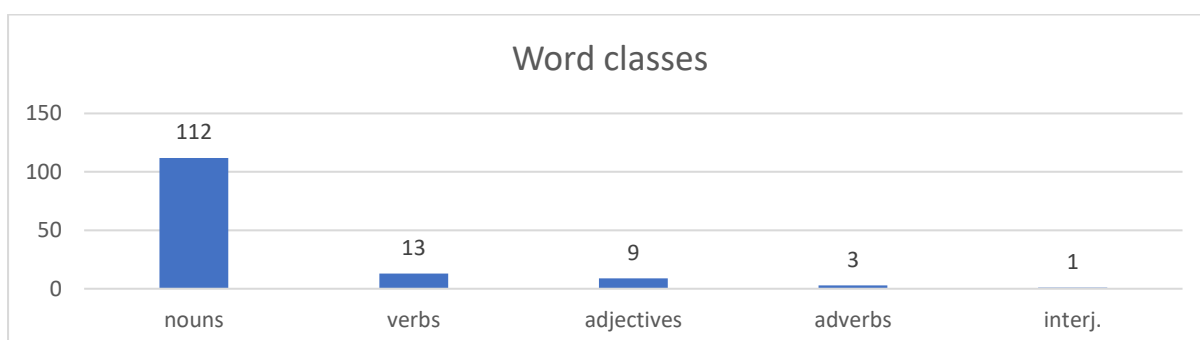
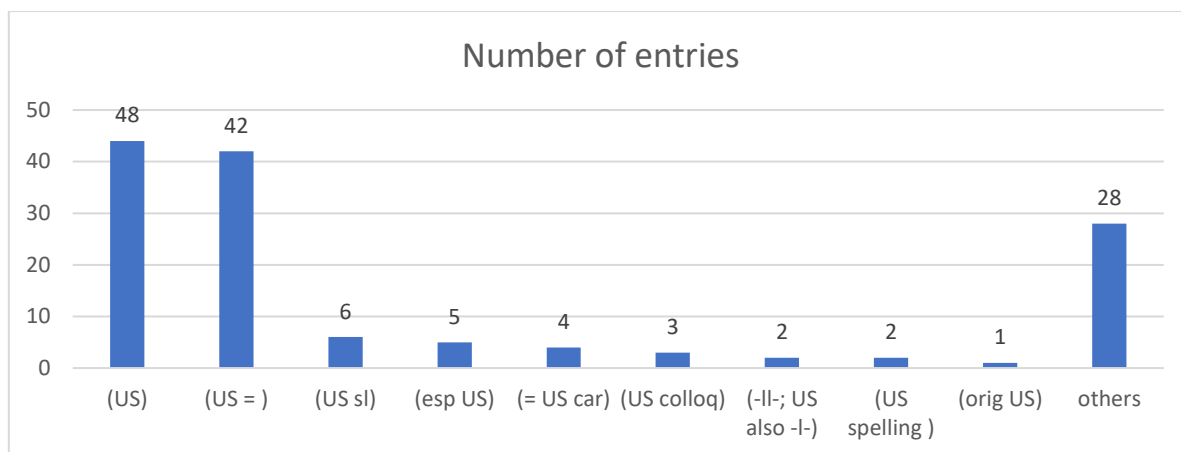


The second edition (1963) used (= *its American version* (e.g. *fall*), U.S.A), (= U.S.A. *and its English version* (e.g. *window-shade*), (Cf. U.S.A), (colloq. or U.S.A.), (esp. U.S.A.), (Gr. Brit., -ll-; U.S.A. -l-), (in U.S. universities), (in U.S.A. and other countries), (-ll-; U.S.A. -l-), (-ll-: also -l- in U.S.A.), (more usu., except in U.S.A.), (not U.S.A. cf. *the American version* (e.g. *druggist*), (orig. U.S.A.), (Scot. And U.S.A.), (France and U.S.A.), (U.S.A.), (U.S.A. also, *and its American version* (e.g. *councillor*), (U.S.A. colloq.), (U.S.A. -dor), (U.S.A. -lyze), (U.S.A.

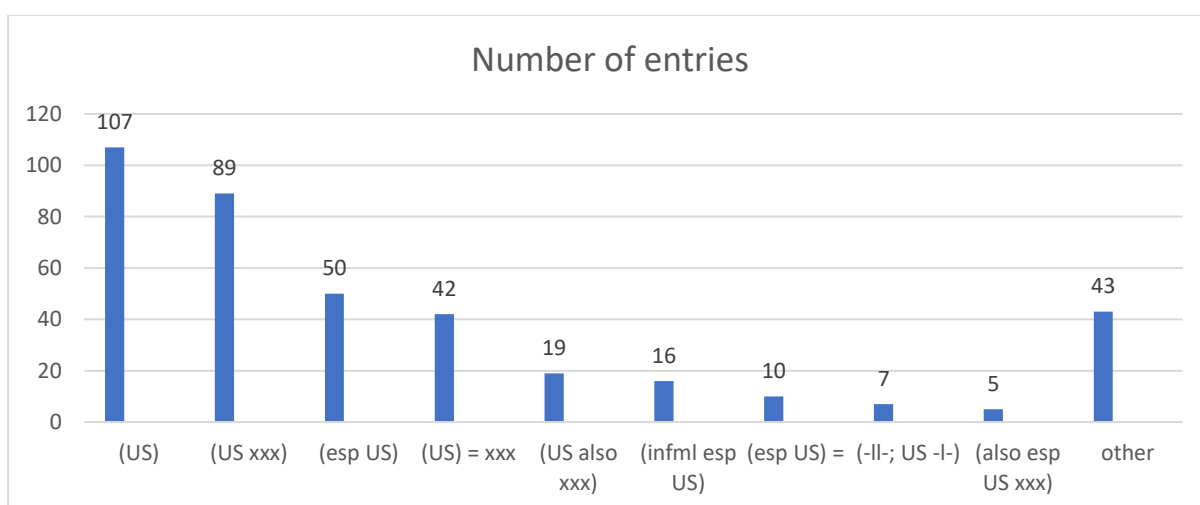
-l-), (U.S.A. pl.), (U.S.A. sl.), (U.S.A. spelling of), (U.S.A.) =, (USA) see *draughts*, (U.S.A. also) and finally (USA.; cf. Brit. e.g. *sweets*).

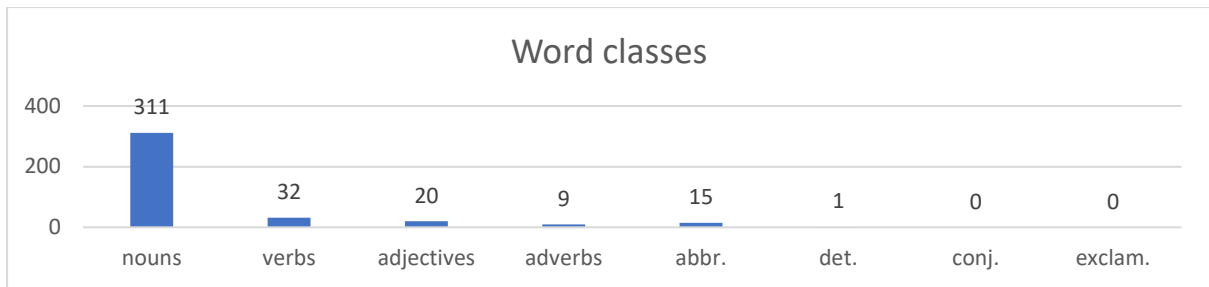


The third edition (1974) used (=US *and its American version* e.g. *airplane*), (in the US), (chiefly US), (esp. US), (formerly US but now also GB), (GB -ll-; US -l-), (in GB, US), (in US and other countries), (in US), (-ll-, also -l- in US), (-ll-, US also -l-), (-ll-, US: -l-), (more usu., except in US, *and the American version* e.g. *luggage*), (now chiefly US), (orig. US), (pl -los, US also -loes), (US = *and its American version* e.g. *anemic*), (US = -gor), (US = ior), (US = -lyze), (US = -meter), (US = -dor), (US = -eled), (US = -elated), (US = -ter), (US also *and its American version* e.g. *catalog*), (US colloq), (US sl), (US), (US spelling e.g. *for*), (US) *and its American version* e.g. *crib* and (US, comm).

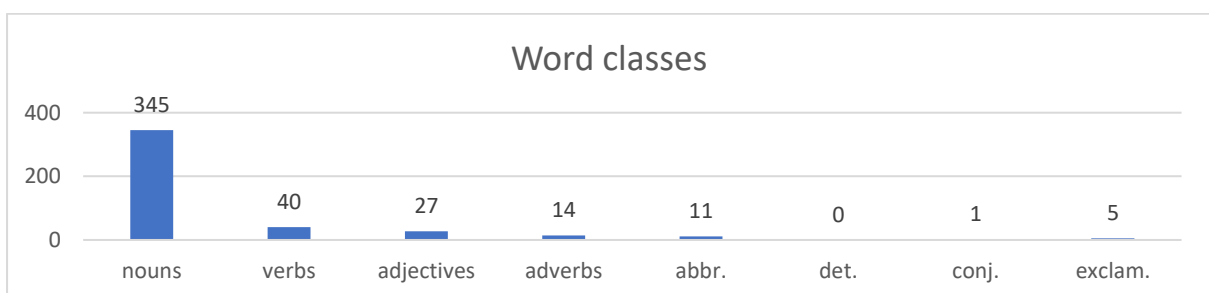
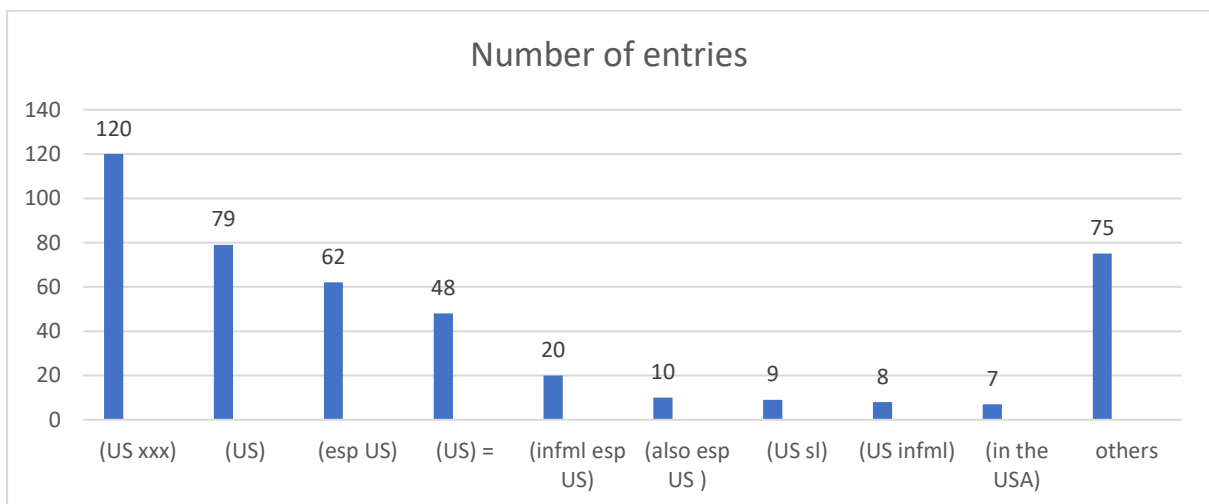


The fourth edition (1989) used (also esp US and the American version e.g. annex), (*the American version* e.g. cornstarch US), (dated sl esp US), (esp US), (esp US) =, (in Britain, USA, etc.), (in the southern USA), (US), (US) =, (US infml esp US), (US infml usu derog), (US infml), (US infml) =, (US and the American version e.g. janitor), (US and the American suffix e.g. -orist), (US sl derog), (US sl), (US) = and the British version e.g. shanty, (US) and finally *the American version* e.g. accomodations (US).



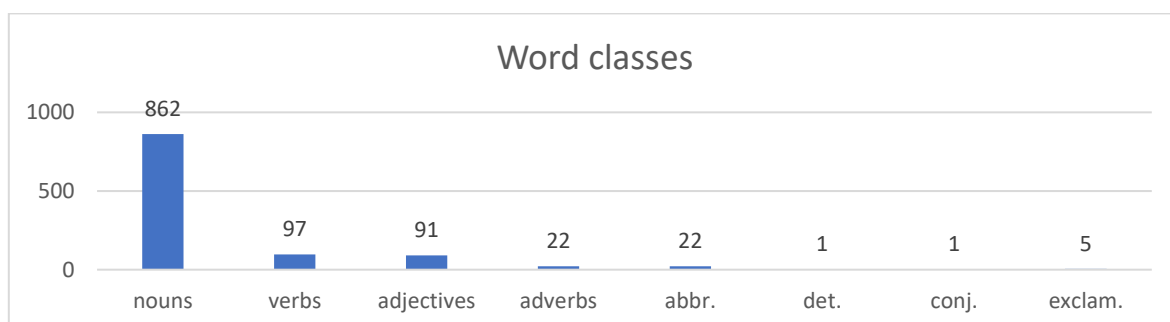
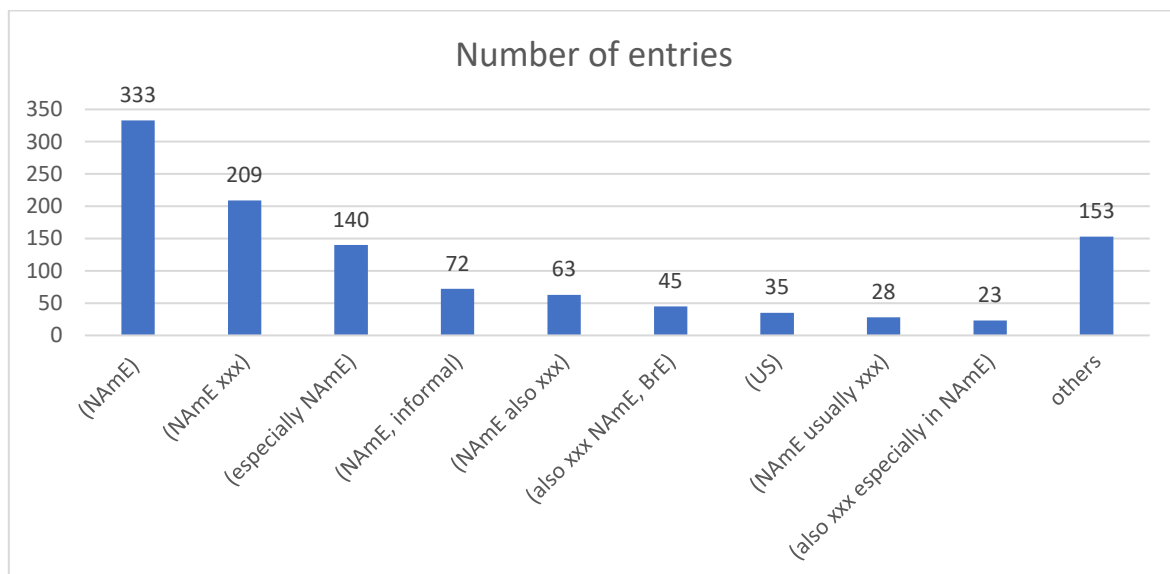


The fifth edition (1995) used (US also the American version e.g. afterward), (US), (also the British version e.g. camping site, US campground), (also esp US and the American version e.g. caliper), (esp in the USA), (esp US and the American version e.g. talk show), (esp US often derog), (esp US), (esp US) =, (in Britain, the USA, etc.), (in senses 3 and 4 US and the American version e.g. around), (in the USA), (-ll-; US also -l-), (-ll-; US -l-), (sl esp US), (US and the American version e.g. *airplane*), (US), (US) =, *the British version e.g. braces* (US *suspenders*), *the American version e.g. airplane* (US sl).

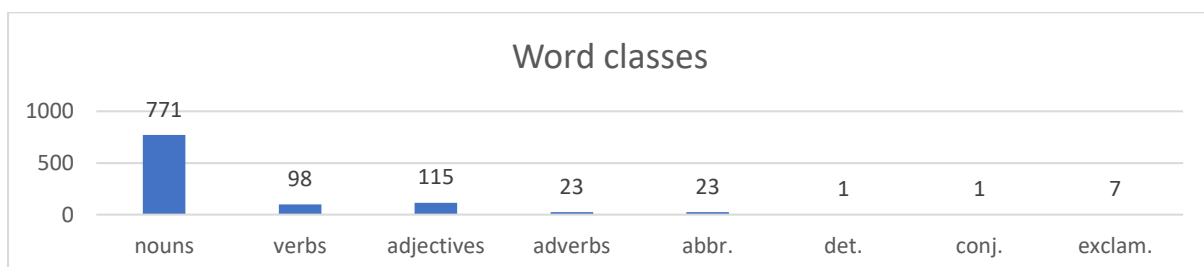
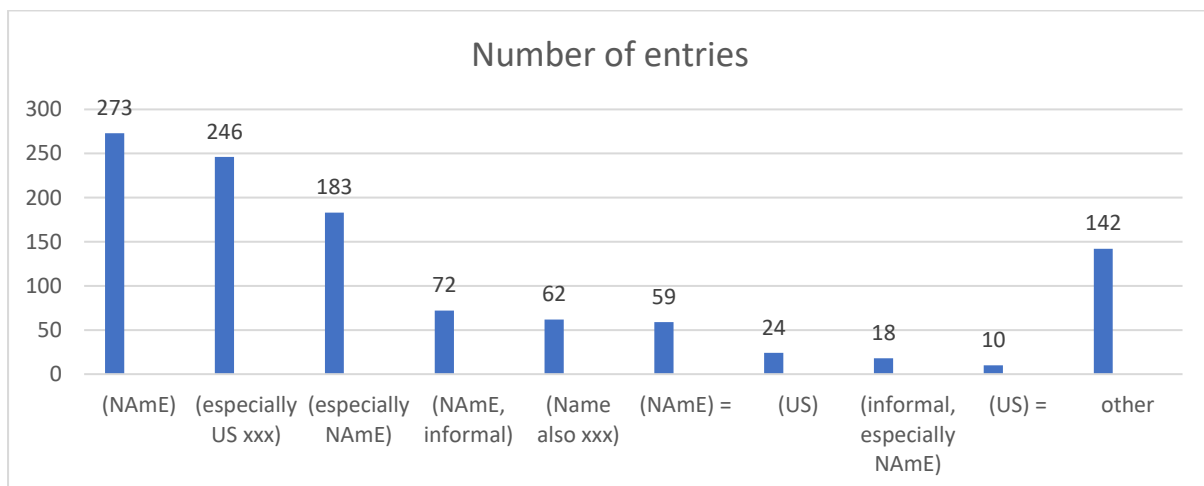


The seventh edition (2005) used (also *the American version e.g. balcony* NAmE, BrE), (also *the American version e.g. airplane* especially NAmE, BrE), (also *the American version e.g. airplane* US, BrE), (also NAmE *the American version e.g. airplane*), (also US informal *the American version*), (both NAmE) =, (*the American version e.g. disapproving* especially

NAmE), (especially NAmE), (especially NAmE) = *the American version* e.g. *airplane*,
 (especially US *the American version* e.g. *airplane*), (in the US and Canada), (in the US),
 (informal *the American version* e.g. *tub* NAmE, BrE), (informal, especially NAmE),
 (especially US), (especially US, from Spanish), (formal, especially NAmE), (-ll-, especially
 US -l-), (-ll-, NAmE also -l-), (-ll-, US also -l-), (NAmE *the American version* e.g. *airplane*),
 (NAmE usually *the American version* e.g. *balk*), (NAmE), (NAmE) = *the British version* e.g.
aeroplane, (NAmE disapproving), (NAmE, formal), (NAmE, from Spanish), (NAmE,
 humorous), (NAmE, informal), (NAmE informal) = *the American version* e.g. *action movie*,
 (NAmE, old-fashioned or humorous) = *the American version* e.g. *cowboy*, (NAmE, slang),
 (slang, especially NAmE), (US *the American version* e.g. *ameba*), (US also *the American*
version e.g. *airdrome*), (US or old-fashioned), (US *the American version* e.g. *savings and loan*
association), (US usually *the American version* e.g. *ax*), (US), (US) = *the British version* e.g.
aeroplane, *the American version* e.g. *braces* (NAmE suspenders), *the American version* e.g.
Buckeye (US, informal) and finally (US, informal).

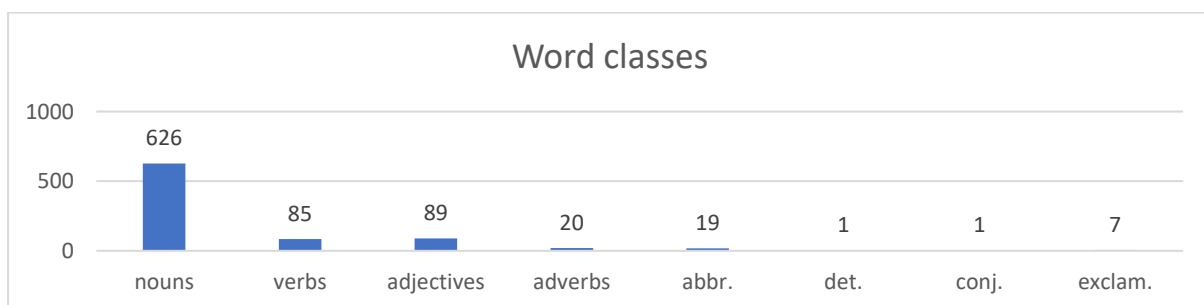
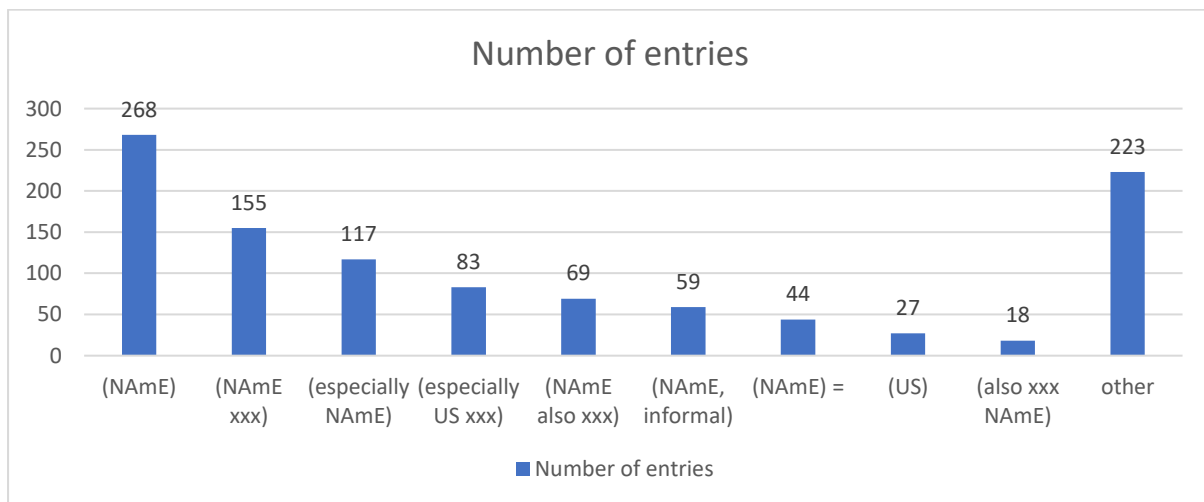


The eighth edition (2010) used (also *the American version* e.g. especially in NAmE), (also *the American version* e.g. BrE, NAmE), (both NAmE), (also *the American version* e.g. in NAmE), (also *the American version* e.g. especially US), (both US), (also US informal *the American version* e.g. altho), (especially NAmE), (disapproving, especially NAmE), (especially NAmE) =, (especially US *the American version* e.g. eolian), (especially US) =, (especially US, from Spanish), (formal, especially NAmE), (in Britain, the US, etc.), (in the US and Canada), (in the US), (informal xxx tub NAmE, BrE), (informal, especially NAmE), (informal, especially NAmE) =, (-ll-, NAmE -l-), (-ll-, US also -l-), (-ll-, US -l-), (NAmE *the American version* e.g. advice column), (NAmE also *the American version* e.g. A.M.), (NAmE usually xxx pinwheel), (NAmE) =, (NAmE, AustralE, NZE, informal), (NAmE, disapproving), (NAmE, formal or BrE), (NAmE, formal), (NAmE, from French), (NAmE, from Spanish), (NAmE, humorous), (NAmE informal), (NAmE informal) =, (NAmE, informal, becoming old-fashioned), (NAmE, informal, disapproving), (NAmE, informal, from Spanish), (NAmE, slang), (US, informal, humorous), (US, ScotE), (US, slang), (US, taboo, slang) and (US, informal).



The ninth edition (2015) used (also *the American version* e.g. Q-tip NAmE, BrE), (also *the American version* e.g. about-face NAmE), (also *the American version* e.g. English horn especially in NAmE), (also *the American version* e.g. Cdr. especially in US), (both US), (also in NAmE), (also *the American version* e.g. motor poll US, BrE), (also NAmE, informal *the*

American version e.g. actioner), (also xxx parenthesis NAmE or formal), (both NAmE), (especially NAmE) =, (especially NAmE, informal), (especially NAmE, slang), (especially US xxx anesthetic), (especially US) =, (formal, especially NAmE), (in the US and Canada), (in the US), (informal, especially NAmE), (informal, especially NAmE =, (-ll-, especially US -l-), (-ll-, NAmE -l-), (-ll-, US also -l-), (-ll-, US -l-), (NAmE *the American version* e.g. the movies), (NAmE usually xxx balk), (NAmE), (NAmE also, ScotE xxx janitor), (US also xxx absorbent cotton), (NAmE) =, (NAmE, becoming old-fashioned, often disapproving), (NAmE, disapproving), (NAmE, formal), (NAmE, from Spanish), (NAmE, humorous), (NAmE, informal), (NAmE, informal) =, (NAmE, informal becoming old-fashioned), (NAmE, informal, disapproving), (NAmE, informal, from Spanish), (NAmE, slang), (NAme, taboo), (NAmE, taboo, slang), (old fashioned, especially NAmE), (old-fashioned, NAmE, informal), (old-fashioned, NAmE, slang), (old-fashioned, US), (slang, especially NAmE), (US also xxx ameba), (US) =, (US, from Spanish, informal), (US, informal, from French), (US, informal, humorous), (US, taboo, slang), (US *the American version* e.g. check), (US or old-fashioned), (US slang) and lastly (US usually *the American version* e.g. ax).



The first five entries to have a distinction that characterized them as Americans in the 1948 edition of the dictionary were picked as examples to show the constant evolution that occurs to words in any given language.

The first entry to occur in the first edition of dictionary with its American distinction is **airplane** and it reads: **airplane** n (U.S.A.). The second edition (1963) entry reads: **airplane** n (U.S.A.). The third edition (1975) entry reads: **airplane** n (US). The fourth edition (1989) entry reads: **airplane** n (US) = aeroplane. The fifth edition (1995) entry reads: **airplane** n (US) = aeroplane. The seventh edition (2005) entry reads: **airplane** n (NAme) = plane. The eighth edition (2010) entry reads: **airplane** n (especially NAme) = plane. The ninth edition (2015) entry reads: **airplane** n (especially NAme) = plane

The second entry to appear is **apartment** in the first edition (1948) and it reads: **apartment 2** n (in U.S.A) (U.S.A. apartment = English flat.). The second edition (1963) entry reads: **apartment 2** n (U.S.A). The third edition (1975) entry reads: **apartment 3** n (US). The fourth edition (1989) entry reads: **apartment** n (US). The fifth edition (1995) entry reads: **apartment 1** n (US) = flat. The seventh edition (2005) entry reads: **apartment 1** n (especially NAme). The eighth edition (2010) entry reads: **apartment 1** n (especially NAme) = plane. The ninth edition (2015) entry reads: **apartment** n (especially NAme).

The entry **back pay** is the third to appear but as it doesn't appear in any other edition, it was put aside given the fourth entry its place. The fourth entry **bartender** in the first edition (1948) reads: **bartender** n (USA). In the second, third and fourth edition the entry doesn't appear. The fifth edition (1995) entry reads: **bartender** n (esp US) = barman. The seventh edition (2005) entry reads: **bartender** n (especially NAme) = barmaid, barman. The eighth edition (2010) entry reads: **bartender** n (especially NAme). The ninth edition (2015) entry reads: **bartender** n (especially NAme).

The fifth entry to appear is **bell=hop** in the first edition (1948) and it reads: **bell=hop** n (U.S.A. slang). The second edition (1963) entry reads: **bell-hop** n (U.S.A). The third edition (1975) entry reads: **bell-hop** n (US). The fourth edition (1989) entry reads: **bellhop, bellman (pl - men)** n (US) = bellboy. The fifth edition (1995) entry reads: **bellboy** n (also bellhop) (US). The seventh edition (2005) entry reads: **bellhop** n (NAme) = bellboy. The eighth edition (2010) entry reads: **bellhop** n (NAme) = bellboy. The ninth edition (2015) entry reads: **bellhop** n (NAme) = bellboy.

The sixth entry to appear is **1 bid** in the first edition (1948) and it reads: **1 bid 2** vt & i (in U.S.A). The second edition (1963) entry reads: **1 bid 2** v.t & i. (U.S.A). The third edition (1975) entry reads: **1 bid 2** vt, vi (US). The fourth edition (1989) entry reads: **1 bid 1** v (esp US). The fifth edition (1995) entry reads: **1 bid 1** v (esp US). The seventh edition (2005) entry reads: **1 bid 2** v (NAme). The eighth edition (2010) entry reads: **1 bid 2** v (NAme also). The ninth edition (2015) entry reads: **1 bid 2** v (NAme also).

If we credit the great change on the OALD from its fifth edition to its seventh edition and analyze the last three editions independently it is notable that the main American entries are constitute by; (NAme) instead of the old (US) and (U.S.A.).

The total numbers of nouns (), verbs (), adjectives (), adverbs (), exclamations (), conjunctions () and determiners () from all eight editions constituted just a small sample, three letters, from all the 27 letters that constituted the OALD.

5. Conclusion

This paper presented a small sample, of the constant change that is present in the English language, particularly to the British English and the influence that it suffers from American English. As any current dictionary of any given language the OALD suffered tremendous changes through the years.

“Although, in a way, all dictionaries of English date back to 1755, OALD has its own unique origins in a dictionary published by Oxford University Press in 1948, with A S Hornby as its principal editor. It bore the title: A Learner’s Dictionary of Current English. Though the title has changed, OALD follows the same basic principle: how much of the English now current in the world is to be included, and how it is to be presented, will depend on who the dictionary is designed for. OALD is not just another dictionary of current English, but essentially a learner’s dictionary. And this makes all the difference”. [7]

As a learners’ dictionary it gives all the information necessary for students around the world to familiarize themselves with the English language and it shows that the headwords presented in each entry that presented it as having an American influence comes from many different fields and not specifically from any particular one as it was the preconception idea questioned in the

introduction. The American contribution to the English language used in Britain was, is and will continually be immense.

As any paper, this one presented a sparkle of light in it and further research is necessary. Every entry of every edition of the OALD should be analyzed and regarded as tiny testimony of the evolution of the English language.

6 References

- [1] <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/english-language> (accessed in 31/03/2019)
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- [5] Hornby, A S Chief Editor Cowie, A P. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (1974) Oxford University Press Fourth Edition 1989, Second Impression 1990
- [6] Hornby, A S Editor Jonathan Crowther Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (1995) Oxford University Press Fifth Edition 1995
- [7] Hornby, A S Chief Editor Sally Wehmeier Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (2005) Oxford University Press Seventh Edition 2005
- [8] Hornby, A S Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (2015) Oxford University Press Eighth Edition 2010
- [9] Hornby, A S Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (2015) Oxford University Press Ninth Edition 2015

7. Affidavit

I hereby truthfully declare that

- 1) I wrote the submitted paper independently and without illicit assistance;
- 2) I did not use any materials other than those listed in the bibliography and that all passages taken from these sources in full or in part have been marked as such and their origin has been cited individually in the text stating the version (edition and year of publication), the volume and page of the cited work, and in the case of Internet sources stating the complete URL and the date of access;
- 3) I have listed all institutions and persons that supported me in the preparation and production of the paper;
- 4) I have not submitted the paper to any other institution and that it has never been used for other purposes, neither in full nor in part.

I am aware that any violation of this declaration will result in a fail grade

(nicht bestanden).

Erlangen,

Signature