

‘Advance’:

Meaning, Syntax and the Influence of Metaphors in a Verb of Movement

Departamento de Filología Inglesa y Alemana
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Juan Carlos Rodríguez González
Tutora: María del Carmen Fumero Pérez
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Table of Contents

0. Abstract.....	2
1. Introduction.....	4
2. Theoretical framework.....	5
3. Preliminary research.....	7
4. Comparing and relating semantic frames and verb classes.....	10
5. Syntagmatic analysis.....	16
6. Discussion on Beth Levin’s and FrameNet’s classifications.....	20
6.1 Advance as a verb of change of possession.....	20
6.2. Advance as “put forward for discussion”.....	23
7. Conclusions.....	27
7.1. The concept of forward in “advance” varies in relation to the kind of lexical items that compound its argument structure.....	27
7.1.1. <i>“Advance” as a verb of self-motion.....</i>	<i>27</i>
7.1.2. <i>Time objects and subjects in “advance” as a verb of movement.....</i>	<i>28</i>
7.1.3. <i>“Advance” as a verb that causes to move a physical object.....</i>	<i>28</i>
7.1.4. <i>“Advance” as a verb of movement metaphorically associated to Progression.....</i>	<i>29</i>
7.2. “Advance” still presents semantic features of “moving upward”.....	29
7.3. “Advance” is a verb of giving and not a verb of future having.....	30
7.4. “Advance” is a verb of fulfilling inside the semantic frame of cause to perceive.....	30
8. Bibliography.....	32

0. Abstract

This project aims to provide an analysis of the grammatical features of the word “advance” as a verb in the English language in terms of syntax, semantics and paradigmatic relations with other lexical items.

By means of an exhaustive research on etymological information and the definitions given by dictionaries from the last decades, the following pages portray how the word has evolved from its original meaning and how present day English-speakers make use of it.

The theoretical framework of this work is based on two main sources: *English Verb Classes and Alternations: A Preliminary Investigation* (1993) by the linguist Beth Levin and the online database FrameNet, based on the theory of Frame Semantics developed by Charles J. Fillmore and Collin Baker. One of the major objectives of the research is to compare and study the differences and similarities between both sources and whether they reflect the real use of the word under study or not.

Furthermore, in order to achieve a better understanding of the semantic properties of the verb and how it is used in English nowadays, the research is complemented with real examples extracted from the online version of *The British National Corpus* and with ideas from the coherent system of metaphors and meaning stated by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in their book *Metaphors we live by* (2003).

The main conclusions of this study can be summarized as follows. Firstly, that the wide extended definition of “advance” as “to move forward” varies in relation to the kind of lexical items that compound its argument structure. Such a variation depends on four different conditions: “advance” behaving as a verb of self-motion; the use of time objects and subjects in a sentence that includes “advance” as a verb of movement; the use of a physical item as the direct object of the verb under study; and the understanding of movement as a metaphor associated to progression. Secondly, that the verb “advance” still presents features related to verbs that express a movement upward, even though they are not explicitly mentioned in dictionaries. Thirdly, that “advance” is a verb of giving, against what Levin states in her classification of verbs of change of possession. And, finally, that a new categorization is needed for the verb in its sense of “to put forward for discussion”, which is not yet considered in any of the main sources of the research.

Key words:

Advance, metaphors, movement, semantics, syntax

1. Introduction

Language users do not usually realize how linguistics (and language in general) reflects perceptions of reality. This project is not a discussion on whether reality builds up language or language determines the reality we are living in, it just highlights all the implications of such transcendental issues that are hidden in the syntagmatic and paradigmatic features of a single word.

“Advance” provides a compilation of features of perception, movement and time that may be unthinkable to many language users; however, they are an undeniable part of the communicative contexts in which English speakers are involved.

The main objectives of this project are to give a detailed explanation to the different kinds of movements that the verb “advance” may represent, to present an analysis on its semantic and syntactic properties and to discuss the different theories proposed by other authors, such as Levin (1993) or Lakoff and Johnson (2003), and how those theories can be applied to the verb “advance” in a wide range of contexts.

There might be statements in this research that will seem obvious and evident, realities widely known by users of the English language; nevertheless, realities which have never been given recognition or a deeper study.

2. Theoretical framework

According to Goldberg (1995), it is not only important to know the meaning components of a word in isolation, but to study how constructions affect meaning.

The study of language is, in general terms, the study of the different units of communication and the particular means that each language develops in order to create meaning and transmit a message. In Van Valin's words "*While all languages can achieve the same basic communicative ends, they each use different means to achieve them, particularly in the divergent ways that syntax, semantics and pragmatics interact across languages*".

The theoretical framework of this project is based on previous studies on how constructions determine meaning, especially in the way Beth Levin explains them in her work *English Verb Classes and Alternations: A Preliminary Investigation* (1993). Levin introduces the term "alternations" to provide a label to the different structures in which a verb can participate according to the interpretation of its arguments.

Beth Levin develops a coherent system between semantic frames, verb classes and syntactic structures to provide explanations for the different senses that a verb may adopt depending on its argument structure. Such a systematised classification presents problems when it comes to subdividing elements from the lexicon, leading to generalisations that do not always represent the real use of the language.

In order to test whether the data given by Levin are correct, it is necessary to carry out a research on real examples that support Levin's theories or, by contrast, that lead to different conclusions from the ones stated by this author. By means of the *British National Corpus (BNC)* in its online version and the translation tool *Linguee.com*, a specific corpus of examples will be created to illustrate the behaviour of the verb "advance" in different alternations and combining it with a variety of arguments. Being the *BNC* a great database of written and spoken pieces of the English language and *Linguee* a search engine of bilingual translations it will be possible to define an accurate pattern of use for the verb under study.

On the other hand, and taking into account that Levin aims to construct a coherent system between semantic domains and syntactic structures, it will be essential to analyse the semantic

properties of the verb “advance” and how its meaning is related to alternations and Levin’s verb classes. To achieve this aim, the online database FrameNet will be used in order to obtain a classification of verbs according to the kind of arguments involved and their relationship with the type of event expressed by the verb itself. FrameNet is based upon a theory of meaning developed by Charles J. Fillmore and Collin Baker among other researchers known as Frame Semantics, which will allow us to delimit the number of examples of the final corpora in relation with the kind of arguments needed for this research.

Furthermore, the study of semantics should always be supported by research in different types of dictionaries. Even though many sources have been consulted, this project will be based on the definitions given by the *Collins Cobuild Dictionary* (1995), being the one that provides a wider range of senses to conform a paradigmatic list of definitions for further analysis. The *Oxford English Dictionary* must be cited as a source of paramount importance to understand the diachronic evolution of the word and its etymological origin, providing indispensable information for the comprehension of the semantic changes that the verb “advance” has undergone in the last centuries. Other tools such as *Thesaurus.com* or *Wordreference.com* provide synonyms to make a more precise description of the verb in terms of its paradigmatic relations, thus comparing different lexical elements before categorising the verb “advance” in any of the groups.

Finally, in the case of the verb “advance” as a verb of movement, it is interesting to consider how the concept of motion is represented by the verb depending on its arguments. Metaphorical uses of the word will be explained by means of the system stated in the work “*Metaphors We Live By*” (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003), giving a connection between the semantic and syntagmatic features and the implicatures of the verb in the mental conceptualization of language users.

3. Preliminary research

Latin influences are clearly perceivable in the etymology of the verb “advance”. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* we have written presence of this word since the 13th century. It was adopted from Old French around the 12th century (“*avancier*”), source of the previous form in Latin “*abante*”.

From all the forms of the verb, it was around 15th-16th century that its spelling first included the letter *-d-*. Previous forms kept a similar spelling to its French source such as *avaunce* or *avance*. However, *-d-* was inserted later due to the mistaken notion of the first *a-* coming from the Latin prefix *ad-*. This word presents a case of *hypercorrection*.

Furthermore, the *Oxford English Dictionary* adds an entry that considers “*to move upward*” as one of the possible meanings of the verb. However, most present-day dictionaries do no longer consider this meaning in any of the different senses that they present. During the development of the project, it will be noticed how “*to move upward*” is still a meaning component of the verb, especially in metaphorical extensions.

The main source to analyze the meaning components of this verb in the following sections will be the definitions given by the *Collins Cobuild Dictionary* (1995), being the dictionary that provides a wider vision of the word in its five different senses:

1. *to move forward, often in order to attack someone.*
2. *to make progress, especially in your knowledge of something.*
3. *If you advance someone a sum of money, you lend it to them, or pay it to them earlier than arranged.*
4. *to advance an event, or the time or date of an event, means to bring it forward to an earlier time or date.*
5. *When a theory or argument is **advanced**, it is put forward for discussion (passive form).*

One of the objectives of this project is to confirm and evaluate whether these definitions are applicable in real examples extracted from corpora and whether the semantic frames exposed in FrameNet and the verb classes proposed by Levin in her work *English Verb Classes and Alternations: A Preliminary Investigation* actually portray the features of the verb in study.

FrameNet provides six semantic frames for the lexical unit “advance” as a verb. The first enlisted frame consists of words that set a change of position on a scale. Secondly, “advance” might also function as a verb that provokes the change of the timing of an event. Thirdly, there is a close semantic relation between this verb and a process of improvement or progression, thus being part of the semantic frame of progress and cause to make progress. Self-motion and giving are also considered in the research as possible semantic frames for “advance” under specific circumstances.

The following chart shows the different possibilities that FrameNet establishes as semantic frames and other verbs included in the same classification that may be similar and comparable to “advance” itself; they will be used during the development of the project in order to support the final conclusions.

Semantic Frames	Verbs that share Semantic Frames with “advance”
Change position on a scale	Rise
Change event time	Postpone
Progress	Improve (intransitive)
Self-motion	Walk
Giving	Give
Cause to make progress	Improve (transitive)

Table 1.Examples of verbs that share the same semantic frames as “advance”.

On the other hand, according to Levin (1993), “advance” can be classified in just three groups, thus reducing the six-fold division proposed in FrameNet to verbs of future having, change of state verbs and verbs of inherently directed motion. The following chart represents Levin’s classification and other verbs which are defined in the same terms as “advance”:

Verb Classes (Levin, 1993)	Verbs classified in the same class as “advance”
Verbs of future having	Offer
Change of state	Improve
Verbs of inherently directed motion (VIDM)	Descend

Table 2. Examples of verbs that are classified in the same class as “advance” in Levin, 1993.

One of the most interesting aspects in the case of “advance as a verb of giving or as a verb of future having is the slight difference that both sources present, considering “advance” as a verb with the same status as “give” in the case of FrameNet, whereas Levin classifies “advance” as a verb of future having like “offer”, a different subcategory to the one of verbs of giving in which “give” is included.

Considering both classifications, their differences and similarities, it is necessary to provide a detailed explanation of what they mean and how they affect the meaning of the verb. By means of examples extracted from BNC (*British National Corpus*) and *Linguee.es* this project aims at discovering whether this information is appropriately and adequately stated or whether some modifications should be made on the treatment of “advance” as a verb.

4. Comparing and relating semantic frames and verb classes

In order to understand the use of the verb “advance” in present day English it is necessary to consider not only how English speakers use it today, but also the way in which the word has evolved throughout history in terms of meaning or syntagmatic features.

In synchronic terms, the verb “advance” is a regular verb that, in English, may be used both as transitive (1) or intransitive (2). This change on the transitivity value of the verb will involve a change in meaning, as can be observed in the following examples extracted from the BNC.

- 1) GTB 988 - He advanced money, in ever-growing sums, especially during the second and third Anglo-Dutch wars
- 2) APM 389 Dr Hensman advanced toward the door.

Paradigmatically it has a close relation with verbs of movement, especially those considered verbs of “inherently directed motion” (Levin, 1993), however, there are other meaning frames (or groups of verbs that share a core meaning) which might be connected to “advance” in specific contexts.

In order to establish the main frames in which the verb “advance” may participate, the classification made by FrameNet and in Levin (1993) will be compared and interrelated, thus providing a more accurate semantic frame for the verb.

As stated before, Beth Levin (1993) provides a three-branch classification of the word in relation to verbal typologies: verb of future having, change of state verb and verb of inherently directed motion. Such a classification might be seen as problematic when comparing it with the one mentioned earlier given by FrameNet, which establishes six different semantic frames in which the verb “advance” may appear: change position on a scale, change event time, giving, progress, self-motion, cause to make progress.

In this section it will be discussed how both classifications are related and real examples that confirm such divisions will be given, comparing the verb under analysis with other verbs that share the same classifications.

a) Verbs of Future Having (Levin)/Giving (FrameNet)

It seems obvious that the verb “advance” can be used as a verb of giving. Furthermore, the verb itself has a time component that differentiates its features from the ones shown in a verb like “give”. In contrast with other verbs of the same typology, “advance” can only behave as a verb of future having when its direct object makes reference to money or a specific amount of it- as explained in the *Collins Cobuild Dictionary (1995)*: *If you advance someone a sum of money, you lend it to them, or pay it to them earlier than arranged*. These features will be analyzed in depth in following sections.

- 3) BPH 897 After the First World War which ended in 1918, local authorities would also advance money for house purchase,
- 4) AA9 770 I might even give money to The Campaign for Heavier Helmets today.

b) Change of state (Levin) / Change of position on a scale-Progress-Cause to make progress (FrameNet)

While Levin classifies “advance” as a change of state verb, FrameNet makes a deeper differentiation, noticing three variations from the one given by Levin: change of position on a scale, progress and cause to make progress.

In the case of changing position on a scale, there are always positive connotations related to the sense of the word. The idea of a scale does not only imply a movement forward but also a progression that the English language tends to associate with a movement *upward* (see epigraph c on *Verbs of inherently directed motion*), as shown in the following examples:

- 5) A3L 494 as if to celebrate the move into their brand-new all-seater stadium, St Johnstone have advanced to the leadership of the division.
- 6) AMG 1506 Indeed it is remarkable that transferring males have the persistence and strength to rise in rank and gain mates for themselves in the face of such opposition.

Following the same criteria, not only a physical scale or classification is valid to show a change of state. A scale of evolution towards perfection may be considered in this case too. *Progress* is defined by the *Collins Online Dictionary* as “to move forwards or onwards, as towards a place or objective” when it is intransitive and as “to move towards or bring nearer to completion, maturity, or perfection” in transitive and intransitive forms. In a scale of evolution, “advance” would imply that a subject (7-8) and/or a direct object (9-10) which is not perfect yet is changed and improved, getting closer to perfection. In order to compare “advance” as a verb meaning progression or a change of state, the following examples show variants of the verb “advance” and the verb “improve”, which as mentioned before is classified in the same class as “advance” in FrameNet and Levin (1993):

Intransitive forms:

- 7) A7N 749 Techniques in hairdressing have advanced enormously and it's fantastic what you can do, but unfortunately some hairdressers abuse that power.
- 8) CEN 6146 Doctors say he is not conscious and will never improve.

Transitive forms:

- 9) APD 418 Syria and Iraq have advanced rocketry systems and in the case of the latter — if not Syria also — a chemical and biological warfare capacity.
- 10) ARJ 1162 I wanted to improve my skills, so I joined a weekend course in ‘Listening Techniques’ at the Earnley Concourse in Sussex.

c) Verbs of inherently directed motion (Levin)/Change Position on a scale - Progress - Self Motion - Change Event Time (FrameNet)

Movement might be the most complex issue in the verb “advance” and, at the same time, it is a feature of paramount importance for the understanding of its semantic and syntagmatic properties.

In the previous section it has already been commented how “advance” may determine a change of position on a scale (already defined as a change of state in Levin’s words). However, that change

of state cannot be understood on its own without considering the role of movement in the semantic components of the verb “advance”. This verb is defined in most dictionaries by means of the word “forward” as a direct association with the idea of progression. Being progression an idea focused on perfection as its main objective, according to the definition that we have analyzed until now, there is a metaphorical connection between both meanings and an inherently directed motion.

As seen in *Metaphors we live by* (Lakoff& Johnson, 2003), the English language relates *good* and *up*, so as to identify a change for the *better* as a movement *upward*. Thus a change of state supposes a change of position on a scale that is, by definition, only possible in a down-up direction (from an initial state to a better final one), recalling example 5 in epigraph b:

5) A3L 494 as if to celebrate the move into their brand-new all-seater stadium, St Johnstone have advanced to the leadership of the division.

On the other hand, according to FrameNet’s classification, conceiving “advance” as a verb of progress or self-motion, the path of the movement is already defined by the verb itself. The path of the movement in the following examples is determined by the position of the object that moves, which is the subject of an active sentence. Examples 11 and 12 show how the path of the movement is always forward in relation to the position of the grammatical subject, regardless of whether it is upwards or downwards. In this case, “advance” will be compared with “walk”, considered a paradigmatic word inside the group of verbs of self-motion:

11) HV9 61 And this started a stampede amongst the rest of the herd and as I advanced down the field with them all in close pursuit I somehow managed to clear a four stranded barbed wire fence like an Olympic champion.

12) A0U 2600 It was growing dark as I walked down the pier alone, his jacket draped over my shoulders, and I wondered if I should really look for Wilde at all.

Finally, FrameNet also classifies “advance” as a verb that can be used to express a change of the time of an event. This verb needs a transitive construction in which someone “moves” the position of an event in a timeline to a different one closer in time.

The direct object for this sense must be a moment in time that will be reset or moved. The main difference that this sense presents is the nature of the direct object. The path of the movement is

not determined by the subject as in the previous examples, but by the time object. English language perceives time as a moving object that “receives a front-back orientation” (Lakoff& Johnson, 2003). Time always faces the grammatical subject in this kind of structures, thus meaning that the orientation of the grammatical subject is the opposite to the one presented by the time object. What the verb “advance” implies in this sense is to cause a date to move in a position nearer the subject, in contrast with its initial position. The presence of a time object changes completely the perception of the path of the movement and redirects it towards the subject itself in a relation of time and space, considering the grammatical subject as an element placed in present time and the direct object an item set in the future.

In other words, “advance” provides a change of the time of an event bringing it closer in time to the grammatical subject (closer to present), whereas other verbs for changing the time of an event, such as “postpone”, cause a date to move further from the subject. “Postpone” implies a change to an even further future, in contrast with “advance” which causes a change to present or, at least, a closer future.

13) [...] the possibility of advancing CEART's special session from 1997 to 1996 [...]

- Decisions Adopted By The Executive Board at its 146th Session – Page 45
(Paris, 16 May – 2 June 1995; Fez, 3-4 June 1995)
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0010/001005/100560e.pdf>

14) ABK 1517 When the Soviet parliament invoked emergency laws to postpone the strike for two months, the union refused to call it off — in effect, daring the government to end it by force.

FrameNet	Beth Levin
Giving	Verbs of future having
Progress	Change of state Verbs of inherently directed motion (VIDM)
Cause to make progress	
Change position on a scale	
Self-motion	
Change event time	

Table 3. Comparison and relation between Levin's (1993) and FrameNet's classifications.

5. Syntagmatic analysis

Syntactically speaking, “advance” changes its features depending on whether it is functioning in one of the frames previously mentioned or the other.

Considering “advance” as a verb of giving or of future having, it must be taken into account that the verb will always be transitive. Furthermore, its selection restrictions only allow MONEY as a direct object in any of the forms, as shown in the following examples:

15) **BOY 1812** He combines the occupations of rent collector, moneylender, and shipbreaker, and gets Nell's grandfather into his power by advancing him money at exorbitant interest.

16) **GSX 1237** Ashe was a prominent parliamentarian; but Shaw advanced £1,810 for the purchase of arms for the king's army, and during the Interregnum he provided the principal channel of communication between the English Royalists and the exiled court.

17) **HGV 4220** ‘I advanced him a goodly sum, yes.

In the case of “advance” as a verb of self-motion, the verb will only appear in an intransitive form (18-19). If a direct object is included the verb will maintain its inherent pattern of motion, but would change to the meaning frame of progress or cause to make progress (20-21):

18) **FSR 1829** Slowly constrained by muscles mostly in the grip of rigor mortis, the zombies advanced inexorably on the few remaining Marines.

19) **HHA 1257** She left the towpath and advanced towards him, brushing her way through tall grasses, where bees buzzed somnolently and grasshoppers whirred their summer sounds.

20) **GV2 1484** Leary had been diffident about approaching Joseph although it might have advanced his career, but Durance appeared to have done it for him.

21) **ADK 210** Colleagues in politics and commerce still belittle my commitment to advance work.

In examples 20 and 21 it can be observed how what has been defined as an “inherent pattern of motion” is closely related to the metaphorical implications of the verb that have been briefly mentioned in previous sections.

“Advance” as a verb provides a meaning extension related to our metaphorical understanding of reality and language. As it has already been explained, “advance” can involve a change of position on a scale, in the case of a transitive construction, it is the direct object that changes its initial position to a higher one in the rank, always in a positive direction of progression which represents the statement “up is good” (Lakoff& Johnson, 2003). However, this is not absolutely true and depends deeply on the nature of the direct object itself. Different objects or different metaphors could interact in the same syntactic construction, thus provoking a variation in meaning:

20) **GV2 1484** Leary had been diffident about approaching Joseph although it might have advanced his career, but Durance appeared to have done it for him.

13) [...] the possibility of advancing CEART's special session from 1997 to 1996 [...]

22) **AKM 94** Karpov decided to enter an end game in the hope of relieving the pressure, but Short skilfully took control of the only open file on the board with both his rooks and activated the king and advanced his pawn majority on the queenside.

Examples 20, 13 and 22 differ on their representations of movement. In the case of example 20, the direct object is represented by an abstract entity that is involved in a process of improvement in a hypothetical context, a progression metaphorically related to a movement upward.

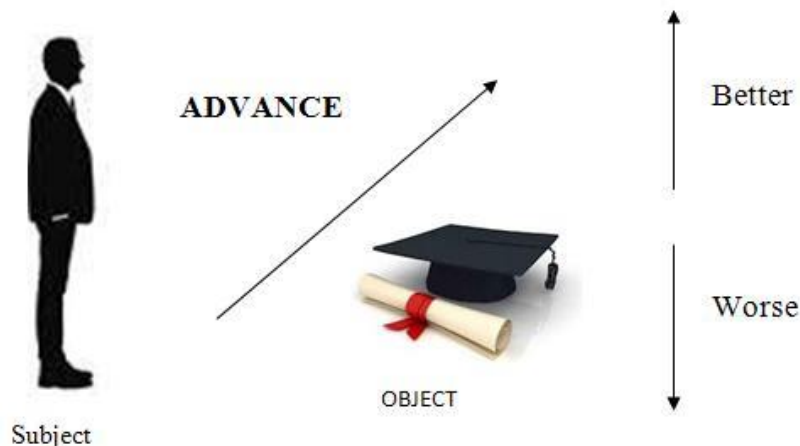


Figure 1. ‘Advance’ as a verb that indicates progression.

In example 13 the function of direct object is carried out by an event placed in time, treated as a scheduled date. Considering time as a moving object that faces speakers, the date is moving in a time in a specific direction determined by the verb and its combination with a placed-in-time object. The orientation of the time element is the one that directs the path of the movement. In philosophical terms, it could be said that this sense of the verb does not imply an anthropocentric vision, but a clear superiority of time features, even though a human being might be the subject it is the direction of the object which prevails.

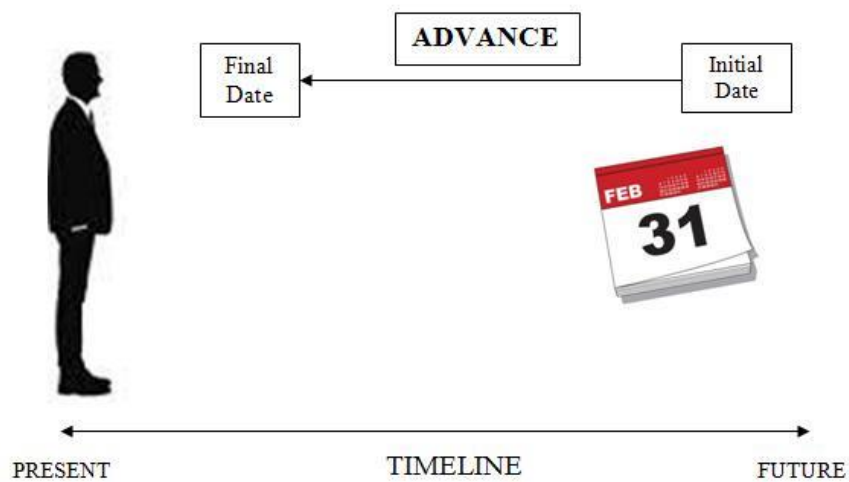


Figure 2. 'Advance' as a verb that indicates a change of time for an event.

In example 22 the object portrays a basic example of the standard definition given by sources such as the *Collins Cobuild Dictionary* “to move forward”. Even though it is one of the most widespread definitions of the verb, it is evident that the idea of “forward” changes its meaning according to the syntactic structure in which it participates.

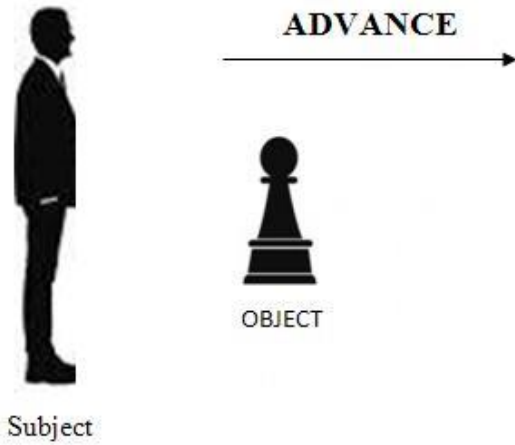


Figure 3. ‘Advance’ as a verb that indicates a change of position for a physical entity.

6. Discussion on Beth Levin's and FrameNet's classifications

6.1 Advance as a verb of change of possession

In previous sections it has been defined indistinctively what Levin considers verbs of future having and what FrameNet includes as verbs of giving.

Both sources present two different divisions that classify “advance” in two categories. Levin provides some subdivisions inside what she proposes as “verbs of change of possession”: verbs of giving and verbs of future having. The first of these classes would include verbs such as “give”, whereas “offer” or “advance” are considered part of the second class. Levin admits that in terms of verbal alternations both subcategories do not show variations, and the only differentia between them is the time when the change of possession takes place.

FrameNet does not coincide in this division and provides two semantic frames for these three verbs following a different criterion. “Advance” and “give” are both included in the semantic frame of “Giving”, opposed to “offer” which appears as a constituent of the frame “Offering”.

FrameNet establishes “advance” and “give” as two verbs that express an act of change of possession in which a donor transfers an object or theme to a recipient, thus the possession of the object does no longer belong to the donor but to the recipient.

23) **F9U 1736** He promptly re-employed Bobby as his assistant and gave him money in advance so that Hunt could, in turn, pay a nominal rent.

24) **E9V 362** Eventually, most of his estates in Northumberland were entailed upon the Percy family, who may indeed have advanced him some of the money he needed in 1332

Even though a verb such as “offer” would imply the same number of arguments, the labels used by FrameNet to define these participants are slightly different. In this case this source does not exemplify an act of change of possession but a potential change that is not implicit in the meaning of the verb: an offerer is willing to give an object or theme to a potential recipient. It is usually presupposed that the offer is accepted by the potential recipient; however the verb itself does not explain it.

25) **A7L 848** Similarly, although Rank turned down Sydney Box's first independent feature,²⁹ Acacia Avenue (1945), on the grounds that the innocuous story about an aborted premarital romp

was 'immoral', and offered him £40,000 to put the film on the shelf, he was later to give Box the job of running Gainsborough's production programme.

26) **HUA 167** Terror stricken; the little pimp had pleaded with him, offered him money.

It seems obvious that there exists a difference between the meaning components in "give" and "offering" considering the completion of the act of change of possession. Despite admitting that the verbs of giving and the verbs of future having might be the same, Levin still considers "advance" as a verb of future having due to its relation with a future time.

However, time connotations in "advance" do not specify a future time in which the act of change of position takes place. "Advance" represents an anticipation of a future deadline that can be changed to the present or to a closer future. In order to conceive whether the act of giving is completed or not, different examples of these three verbs can be analyzed in their past forms:

27) HGD 3593 It was soul-destroying to him but it gave him money for his wife and child.

17) HGV 4220 'I advanced him a goodly sum, yes.

28) HGE 2630 He knew that I would never let him marry her, and, besides, he has a girlfriend of his own, so when I offered him money to go away and leave her alone he stood me off as much as he dared, and collected a big enough stake to marry his girl and start a small business, which, he kindly informed me when he left, he intends to turn into a large one, one day.'

All of them are verbs of change of possession and, consequently, they can all present a dative construction. Nevertheless, only two of them accept a completion of the act of giving and not a future possibility of its realization:

29) *I gave to give him money.

30) *I advanced to give him money.

31) GOW 3128 The French Embassy in Britain has generously offered to give some financial assistance to French course participants.

Examples 29 and 30 show that the act of giving is implicit in the verb itself, whereas example 31 does not imply an act of giving but a future possibility. Levin (1993) considers that most verbs of future having imply that the offer has been accepted, but this information is not given by the verb itself and can only be deduced depending on the context. Examples 29 and 30 are agrammatical,

being impossible to complement verbs such as “give” or “advance” with a new act of giving, as it is already part of the semantic information of those verbs.

Therefore, “advance” is closer to the class of verbs of giving, rather than to the verbs of future having.

6.2. Advance as “put forward for discussion”

The last sense of the word “advance” presented in the *Collins Cobuild Dictionary* is “to put forward for discussion”. Curiously enough, none of the two main sources cited in this project consider this sense in any of the semantic frames or verb classes proposed.

It is, in fact, one of the most frequent meanings of the verb in different contexts.

32) **EF4 246** Yes, of course: but the change of definition and the explanation advanced in support of the change serve rather to emphasise the reality that, after 1834, emergent trade unionism moved towards a juncture with the system it could not supplant.

33) **B7M 818** Professor Otto Wolff and Dr David Muller at the Institute of Child Health and Professor June Lloyd at St George's Hospital Medical School believe they have some of the answers and have recently advanced their theories (*Lancet*, 29 January, p 225) by drawing together clues from a number of apparently unrelated diseases.

It is widely used in the passive form and it takes as subject an abstract argument usually related to ideas, theories or other mental concepts.

34) **ADB 930** No plausible argument can be advanced to defend the place.

35) **HXN 75** Indeed, the argument is often advanced that mergers bring benefits through reducing costs of production because of the attainment of economies of scale.

However, it is also possible to find this verb in an active form. In this case, the verb presents two arguments. The function of subject would be assigned to a human, a group of people or an institution, whereas the object would preserve the form shown in passive constructions.

36) **CJD 1131** Unknown to Magellan and his crew — for they lived fully three centuries before Alfred Wegener advanced his theory of continental drift — the spot where they chanced upon the new ocean is one of the great tectonic landmarks of the world.

37) **EDA 965** There was considerable applause from his listeners as he advanced his familiar protectionist argument.

Even though a great amount of examples of this sense exist in the corpora, there is no clear classification for this meaning in any of the categories previously exposed. Therefore, there must

be a semantic connection with the already mentioned frames or a new category for this verb should be considered.

Considering “put forward” as the core meaning of the verb “advance” in this sense, by means of the online sources *thesaurus.com* and *wordreference.com*, there are two synonyms which will contribute to a more specific categorization of “advance” in terms of “put forward for discussion”: “present” and “propose”.

FrameNet provides two semantic frames in the case of “present”: cause to perceive and condition symptom relation. This last frame is mainly devoted to medical procedures and, consequently, it has been left aside in this analysis, thus focusing on cause to perceive as the predominant frame for this research. Levin also provides a two-branch classification for “present” in two verb classes: verbs of fulfilling and reflexive verbs of appearance.

The frame cause to perceive and the verbs of fulfilling usually appear in a three-argument structure: an agent causes an object to be perceived or received by a recipient.

38) **A2X 104** Labour ministers presented their resolution to accept the Egyptian proposals.

39) **FAM 1644** A slide show of the work of one class was presented to parents but this was a familiar procedure and not regarded as ‘giving an account’ or involving parents in the evaluation of teaching .

On the other hand, considering “present” as a reflexive verb of appearance would involve a double object construction in which the subject and the object would have the same semantic relation with the verb, but being the object a reflexive pronoun:

40) GW0 1138 Christine half-turned then, and glanced at the room as if some ironic comment had presented itself in her mind; but instead she said, ‘Anyone can do anything.

41) AD1 1690 That was how insanity had always presented itself to Kathleen Lavender's imagination.

In the examples analyzed with “advance” there is always an entity willing to “advance” a grammatical object to an audience and, even though it might be possible for ideas and theories to

be presented by *themselves*, in the case of “advance” it is impossible to conceive a structure in which a reflexive pronoun referring to the subject could appear as an object.

In the case of “propose”, the second synonym of “put forward” that will be analysed, both sources coincide on giving a single classification in verb classes and semantic frames. FrameNet includes “propose” in the frame of Statements, whereas Levin classifies it in the group of say verbs. Both classifications imply a three-argument structure, based upon the standard scheme of communication that includes a speaker, a message and an addressee. However, it is also possible to find a say verb in a structure without addressee.

42) **AM9 1000** We propose the single transferable vote, by which electors cast their votes in multi-member constituencies based on natural communities.

43) **BOS 390** Any terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the authority in the course of negotiations for a contract for the acquisition or disposal of property or the supply of goods or services.

It is obvious that say verbs and verbs of fulfilling share certain features. There is always a message to be communicated to an addressee (explicit or not) by means of words, images or ideas. In contrast with Levin’s classifications, I consider that “advance” should be included in the category of verbs of fulfilling. Even though “advancing a theory” is an act of communication, there are implicit semantic features that provide further information. Advancing an argument or an idea is not only explaining it to an audience, but bringing to reality an element that could not be perceived by the audience before it was shown.

44) **HHV 22193** The hon. Gentleman and I have had similar exchanges before across the Dispatch Box, when he has advanced that bizarre and extraordinary hypothesis.

This cause-to-perceive effect has a close relation with one of the semantic frames previously discussed: verbs of change of possession.

In the case of “advance” as “to put forward for discussion” there is always a change of possession of an idea, being a person or a group of people the donors that transfer an idea, theory, argument or any other abstract entity to a wider audience, contributing to the sharing of its possession, thus

meaning that the direct object does no longer belong intellectually to the donor, but to both the donor and the recipient.

However, Beth Levin states that “advance” cannot be considered a verb of fulfilling, as one of the main features of this verb class is to present the dative alternation.

Considering the previous examples, it seems evident that the alternation is not an essential feature for the classification. “Advance” can be present in a structure that involves three entities, syntagmatic features generally presented by verbs of fulfilling.

In spite of the impossibility of the dative alternation for this sense, there are other verbs in the same class that do not always behave as ditransitive verbs. A verb like “present” may have as argument a *to*-prepositional phrase, but it is also possible not to find such an argument in a sentence and still consider “present” a verb of fulfilling. “Advance” presents a constant absence of dative alternation in this sense in the same way as other verbs admit an optional indirect object.

7. Conclusions

After approaching in depth the different semantic, syntagmatic and paradigmatic features of the verb “advance”, some conclusions can be derived from the examples and characteristics analysed.

In this section these conclusions will be presented and explained by means of the most representative examples included in the development of the research.

7.1. The concept of forward in “advance” varies in relation to the kind of lexical items that compound its argument structure

Most dictionaries and online sources state that the main definition for “advance” as a verb is “to move or cause to move forward”. Such a generalization has been proven as not absolutely true all throughout this project, considering “forward” a too wide conceptualization of possible movements that are defined depending on the nature of the verb’s arguments and the type of construction or alternation in which the verb appears.

The idea of “forward” in a verb like “advance” is relative and depends on selection restrictions and the prevalence of the orientation of certain grammatical objects over the orientation of the subject.

There are at least four types of movement to be represented by the verb under study:

7.1.1. “Advance” as a verb of self-motion

“Advance” in its intransitive forms as a verb of self motion determines a movement forward which is defined by the front-back orientation of the subject. The common subject of the verb in this case would be a living being, despite being possible to have “time” as a subject, case that will be discussed in epigraph 7.1.2.

45) **ACV 94** She advanced a little way and then simply stopped, her head inclined, her eyes appearing to take in every detail of him.

7.1.2. Time objects and subjects in “advance” as a verb of movement

The direction of the movement described by the verb “advance” will vary depending on whether any of its arguments is a measure of time or an event located in a specific moment in time.

If the subject of the verb under study is a time expression or unit, the direction of the movement will be determined by the usual front-back orientation of any object, in which the future will be placed in the front and the past at the back.

46) **BIP 826** The Latin used in medieval documents likely to be of interest to readers of this present volume was not the classical language of antiquity, nor were its standards universally high, and it varied from century to century as time advanced.

However, once an event placed in a future time acts as a direct object of the verb “advance”, the direction of the movement receives a front-back orientation in which the time responds to the metaphor “Time is a moving object” (Lakoff& Johnson, 2003). This movement corresponds to the scheme shown in Figure 2, by which the time object moves towards a physical human subject that is placed in present time.

13) [...] the possibility of advancing CEART's special session from 1997 to 1996 [...]

7.1.3. “Advance” as a verb that causes to move a physical object

In the case of “advance” functioning as a transitive verb that describes an act of causing a physical item to move, it is considered that both the subject of the verb and the object receive the same orientation, thus meaning that what is presupposed as “forward” for the agent will be the direction of the movement for the object, as shown in Figure 3.

22) **AKM 94** Karpov decided to enter an end game in the hope of relieving the pressure, but Short skilfully took control of the only open file on the board with both his rooks and activated the king and advanced his pawn majority on the queenside.

7.1.4. “Advance” as a verb of movement metaphorically associated to progression

Being “advance” a transitive verb, once the direct object is conceived as an abstract or non-physical entity, there is no physical movement but a movement in a scale of progression as shown in Figure 1. Consequently, “advance” represents a movement towards perfection in which the orientation of the movement is directed from a non-complete state of perfection to its completion.

20) **GV2 1484** Leary had been diffident about approaching Joseph although it might have advanced his career, but Durance appeared to have done it for him.

7.2. “Advance” still presents semantic features of “moving upward”

Diachronically speaking, the *Oxford English Dictionary* states that one of the senses of “advance” is to move upward. Curiously enough, such a definition is not clearly stated in most of current day sources, seeming an obsolete sense that is no longer in use by English speakers.

However, it has been proved that the sense of moving upward is still present in relation with the concept of progression defined in 7.1.4. The verb “advance” responds to another of the metaphors proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (2003) that determines that up is good. Taking into account that perfection and improvement are considered positive ideas, their consecution is always represented by a movement upward in a scale of evolution.

5) A3L 494 as if to celebrate the move into their brand-new all-seater stadium, St Johnstone have advanced to the leadership of the division.

The sense of moving upward cannot, therefore, be considered obsolete despite not being explicitly mentioned in the definitions given by most dictionaries. It is still an essential semantic element in the metaphorical conception of the word in terms of movement.

7.3. “Advance” is a verb of giving and not a verb of future having

Against Levin’s classification, I propose a change on her results, positioning the verb “advance” in the same class as other verbs such as “give”, in opposition to its current classification in the group of verbs of future having with other lexical units like “offer”.

Even though Levin admits that there are no representative differences between the kinds of alternations that both verb classes show, she labels “advance” as a verb of future having considering that the act of change of possession in which the verb is involved does not take place in the moment of the action but in the future.

I conceive this classification as a misunderstanding of the time implications of a verb such as “advance”, which is in any sense describing an event of change of possession in the future, but an act of giving that can take place in a wide range of moments in the timeline (in the past, the future and the present).

17) HGV 4220 ‘I advanced him a goodly sum, yes.

It has been proved that, syntactically and semantically speaking, the verb “advance” is closer to the group of verbs of giving rather than to the group of verbs of future having.

7.4. “Advance” is a verb of fulfilling inside the semantic frame of cause to perceive

Despite being one of the most frequent uses of the word, the sense of “advance” as “to put forward for discussion” is not considered either in Levin’s work or in FrameNet.

After analysing how some synonyms of the expression “to put forward” are treated in both classifications, I have concluded that it should be considered a verb of fulfilling in Levin’s classification and part of the semantic frame of cause to perceive.

Beth Levin (1993) explains in her work that a verb of fulfilling must present examples of the dative alternation; however, I propose an exceptional categorization for the case of “advance”. The absence of dative alternation for this sense confirms that it is not a pure verb of fulfilling, but a member of that class that does not accept an indirect object with the same ease as other lexical items of the same class. There are undeniable semantic similarities between a word like

“present”, considered a verb of fulfilling, and “advance”, which is not even mentioned as a verb of communication.

Furthermore, “advance” as “to put forward for discussion” defines a process by which an entity that has not been known before is shared with an addressee, thus promoting its perception. As explained before, this sense is similar to that of a verb of giving, since the subject of the sentence is also a donor that transfers an idea from a first owner to a second one, thus sharing the theme with the function of a direct object.

37) **EDA 965** There was considerable applause from his listeners as he advanced his familiar protectionist argument.

This explains that, even though the dative alternation is not common or frequent in this sense of the verb, there are reminiscences of such alternation in the understanding of its meaning. I consider the possibility of a dative alternation not as a requisite to be part of the group of verbs of fulfilling but as a possible reformulation of its indirect object as a non-exclusive feature of the class.

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