Bringing closure
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This WiP will report on a study of the sequence V + *closure*, where the meaning is achieve "a sense of personal resolution" (OED). It is situated within the framework of empirical phraseology and Sinclair's (e.g. Sinclair 1991; 1996) notion of extended lexical units. In addition, it will draw on insights gained from two recent papers by Stubbs (2013; 2014). The latter, in particular, "compares central concepts in the work of John Searle […] and John Sinclair […] and considers whether these concepts are compatible" (Stubbs 2014: 243).

A search for the word *closure* in the Corpus of Historical American English (COHA) yields a striking result regarding its frequency of use. It has gone from 0 to 5.45 occurrences per million words in approx. 200 years. A sharp increase is especially noticeable between the 1980s and the 1990s (2.53 vs. 4.78 occ. per mill. words).

SECTION (CLICK FOR SUB-SECTIONS) (SEE ALL SECTIONS AT ONCE)	FREQ	SIZE (M)	PER MIL	CLICK FOR CONTEXT (SEE ALL)
1810	0	1.2	0.00	
1820	0	6.9	0.00	
1830	1	13.8	0.07	
1840	1	16.0	0.06	
1850	2	16.5	0.12	
1860	9	17.1	0.53	
1870	1	18.6	0.05	
1880	2	20.3	0.10	
1890	4	20.6	0.19	
1900	12	22.1	0.54	
1910	13	22.7	0.57	
1920	56	25.7	2.18	
1930	13	24.6	0.53	
1940	28	24.3	1.15	
1950	48	24.5	1.96	
1960	39	24.0	1.63	
1970	44	23.8	1.85	
1980	64	25.3	2.53	
1990	136	27.9	4.87	
2000	161	29.6	5.45	
TOTAL	634			SEE ALL TOKENS

Figure 1. *closure* in COHA per decade

According to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), the word is attested as far back as Chaucer and has a wealth of (related) meanings to do with that which encloses or the act of (en)closing or ending. The meaning we are interested in was added in 2006 by the editors of the OED, and reads:

> orig. U.S. A sense of personal resolution; a feeling that an emotionally difficult experience has been conclusively settled or accepted. In early use chiefly Psychoanal.

> One example is:

(1) 1987 Social Casewk. 68 546/2 The social worker's goal should be to help bring closure to relationships in such a way as to minimize unresolved feelings and issues.

In his discussion of extended lexical units such as "par for the course" and "smelling of roses", Stubbs (2014) underlines that "if we could not interpret the connotations of such phraseology, we would not be able to understand how other people interpret the social world and would be permanently socially disoriented" (ibid. 256). This, it seems, ties in with Searle's notion of how we create and maintain social "institutions" ("objective cultural reality", Stubbs ibid. 252), e.g. marriage or professorship. We create state of affairs (reality/meaning) when we utter, write and repeat near-equal sequences of words, whether this state of affair is an institution of a more obvious kind or an experience encoded as "coming out smelling of roses" or "bringing closure". "[T]hey are all social constructs maintained by language" (ibid. 253). What Stubbs misses in both Searle's and Sinclair's work is "empirical research – both textual and ethnographic" (ibid. 257), since the units of meaning we are discussing here can be, and most likely are, tied to different categories of speech acts (Searle 1979), can appear in different genres or registers of text and may have a (clear) cultural basis.

Drawing on data extracted from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), this WiP report will explore V + *closure* as a speech act of the Directive type and as a an emerging extended lexical unit, where it has the meaning quoted from the OED. The focus will be on the type of verbs *closure* collocates most frequently with and the pattern's frequency and distribution in COCA between 1990 and 2015.

Sources
COCA: Davies, Mark. (2008-) The Corpus of Contemporary American English: 520 million words, 1990-present. Available online at http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/.
COHA: Davies, Mark. (2010-) The Corpus of Historical American English: 400 million words, 1810-2009. Available online at http://corpus.byu.edu/coha/.
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