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***Make us difficult*: Portrait of a non-standard construction**

Seth Mehl

University of Sheffield

This paper introduces a previously undiscussed English construction, termed the *make us difficult* construction. Examples of the construction are presented, from the *International Corpus of English* and the *Corpus of Global Web-Based English*, and a quantitative analysis is conducted of the construction's text frequency and variant rates. Quantitative data on specific usage patterns is employed to inform an analysis of the construction and its productivity, and recommendations are made for future research.

Keywords: corpus linguistics, International Corpus of English, GloWbE, World Englishes, complex transitive, extraposition

1. Introduction

Examples (1) and (2) represent a previously undiscussed non-standard phenomenon, which I call the *make us difficult* construction.

- (1) Because I may have come from a background which <,> makes me very difficult to understand uh comedy for instance for example I mean <ICE-HK:S1B-009#98>
- (2) Some lines in which you know like or things like money does not make us happier it'll only make us more difficult to be happier then you know it's <ICE-SIN:S1A-074#123>

A standard paraphrase of Example (1) might be composed as follows:

- (3) Because I may have come from a background which makes it very difficult for me to understand comedy for instance for example I mean

Example (3) includes complex transitive *make*, extrapositional *it*, the predicative complement (PC) *difficult*, and an extraposed direct object (DO), the content clause (*for me*) *to understand comedy* (cf. Huddleston and Pullum 2002: 247, 963). *Make* is a typical verb in this type of construction (cf. Quirk et al. 1985: 1196; Huddleston and Pullum 2002: 963). The predicand of the PC *difficult* is the extraposed DO (*for me*) *to understand comedy* (cf. Huddleston and Pullum 2002: 252–253).

In Example (1), there is no extrapositional *it*. Instead, the personal pronoun *me* is in DO position, followed by the PC *difficult*, and the extraposed DO *to understand comedy*. The predicand of *difficult* would seem to be *me*, such that the speaker is the one who is difficult. The interpretation that *to understand comedy* is “difficult” is perhaps less straightforward, as is the interpretation that “I” (*me*) am the one who “understands comedy”.

In this focus paper, I present examples of the *make us difficult* construction, measure the text frequency and variant rates of the construction, and analyse specific usage patterns to better understand the construction and its productivity, in each component of the *International Corpus of English* (ICE), and the *Corpus of Global Web-Based English* (GloWbE; Davis 2013).

2. Preliminary observations on the standard in GloWbE

GloWbE contains about 1.9 billion tokens from around 1.8 million web pages in 20 countries, collected in 2012 (Davies 2013). GloWbE was first searched using the search strings below, designed to return examples of the standard form.

- `_v* it _j* for *_pp to *_v`
- `_v* it _j* for *_nn to *_v`

In GloWbE, the standard form is most frequently used with the resultative verb *make* (cf. Quirk et al. 1985: 1196; Huddleston and Pullum 2002: 251; Hampe 2011) and the adjectives *difficult*, *hard*, *easy*, *impossible*, or *possible*, which Biber et al. (1999: 717) label “adjectives of ease or difficulty”. Combinations of *make* and those adjectives constitute 4,471 tokens

of the 5,699 true positives yielded by the search strings. Combinations with verbs other than *make* include *render* (36 tokens), *find* (69 tokens), *consider* (54 tokens), and *deem* (25 tokens). A second semantic field occurs as adjectival PC at much lower frequencies than the field of ease or difficulty: deontic modality, via the adjectives *compulsory*, *obligatory*, *mandatory*, *permissible*, *necessary* and *unnecessary*. There are 494 instances of this semantic field in the standard construction in GloWbE (discussed further in Section 5).

3. The *make us difficult* construction: Corpus examples

3.1 The ICE corpora

ICE is sampled to represent spoken and written English from eight countries (Greenbaum 1996). Each component includes five hundred texts of around 2,000 words each. There are around 2,000 instances of lemma *make* in each ICE component, so reading each example in its full sentential context is a manageable task. The ICE corpora contain six examples of the *make us difficult* construction, all in speech.

- (4) We think that <.> th </.> is this language barrier make us difficult to communicate <ICE-HK S1A-070 #232>
- (5) Because I may have come from a background which <,> makes me very difficult to understand uh comedy for instance for example I mean <ICE-HK:S1B-009#98>
- (6) So we are we now we work with uh Custom to educate them and to cooperate them with to recognize them <,> uh to <,> make them easier to to know what which is CD <{> <[> which </[> is pirate CD I mean <ICE-HK s1b-029 #101>
- (7) Some lines in which you know like or things like money does not make us happier it'll only make us more difficult to be happier then you know it's <ICE-SIN:S1A-074#123>
- (8) It's just that he reads you see and that makes us very hard to copy down <ICE-SIN S1A-069 #068>
- (9) And this is what makes Ato uh fail to even cope with the lifestyles of the village there and it makes Yurani uh very difficult to understand these things. <ICE-EA S1B-001T>

There is one additional example in extra-corpus text¹ in ICE-HK:

- (10) Yeah I think uhm maybe the cultural differences make us uh difficult to understand the movies <ICE-HK S1A-081 #x510>

In addition, there is one ambiguous case.

- (11) <[> And it </[> </[> makes us critical to think <ICE-HK S1A-097 #323>

It is possible that example (11) could be paraphrased as *It makes it critical for us to think*, but that is not at all certain, and the co-text provides no further clues. Such examples are not counted in the present data.

3.2 The GloWbE Corpus

GloWbE was then searched for the *make us difficult* construction, with the adjectives *difficult*, *hard*, *easy*, *possible*, and *impossible*. Search strings for the construction appear in Appendix 1. Every individual result from every search string was inspected carefully, to identify true positives, false positives, and ambiguous examples. There are 71 true positives, for a text frequency of 0.04 per million words, including the following:

- (12) These examples obviously show that rubber time should not be habit for Indonesian people, it can make us not able to do our best, and even make us difficult to pursue our dreams. <GloWbE ZA>
- (13) With all those unique ingredients/seasonings from Sichuan, it makes us difficult to recreate the real thing. <GloWbE SG>
- (14) However, the regime's past lies and current ploys make us difficult to believe in the ongoing meetings. <GloWbE BD>
- (15) Because of this, Randall argued that such behaviour makes people difficult to switch back and forth between these two identities. <GloWbE HK>
- (16) still there were water everywhere and it made the people difficult to get into the church. <GloWbE MY>

¹ Example (10) is understood to be spoken by an interlocutor who does not fit the requirements of ICE corpus data collection: the interlocutor is likely to be a foreigner in Hong Kong "from a variety of 'expat' backgrounds, including the US, UK, Australia, Europe, etc." (Kingsley Bolton p.c., 2012), but details on particular speakers' backgrounds were not recorded (Gerald Nelson p.c., 2013).

- (17) This will make you easier to get all you want in one spot. <GloWbE MY>
(18) This is the first step that will make you easier to get a buyer. <GloWbE PH>
(19) The adrenaline will make you easier to get frightened. <GloWbE PK>
(20) Finally, if you work a little on these suggested fields; it will make you easier to find the best hosting company which will give your website a unique reputation on the web. <GloWbE IN>
(21) This made him possible to build a close relationship with every class of people. <GloWbE PH>
(22) If there is such convergence, it can make foreign companies more possible to get access to the capital market of U.S. <GloWbE GB>
(23) The nationalist populist sentiment make government officials impossible to take the responsibility that may risk their own political career. <GloWbE US>

In most false positives, the DO of *make* is the recipient or undergoer of the verb in the clausal complement, rather than the agent of the clausal complement. Example (24) is a false positive.

- (24) Most of the crabs are a mottled brown colour which makes them difficult to see amongst the seaweeds. <GloWbE GB>

Interpreting the co-text, it is clear that the crabs' colour provides camouflage. *Them* refers to the crabs, such that they are the undergoer of the verb *see*; that is, they (the crabs) are seen. This is not an example of the *make us difficult* construction, where the DO of *make* is the agent of the verb in the clausal complement.

It is possible for the clausal complement to the adjectival PC to be passive:

- (25) Their short stature also can make them difficult to be seen by motorists. <GloWbE JM>

Example (25) is similar to the *make us difficult* construction in that it does not include extraposed *it*, but instead includes the pronoun DO *them*. Unlike the *make us difficult* construction, the *them* in example (25) is the undergoer of the verb *see*, rather than the agent of the verb *see*. This difference seems to be essential. I have therefore chosen to exclude such passives from the data here.

It is also possible for a copular verb to be included before the adjectival PC.

- (26) An aimless working attitude would make you feel hard to reject others' requests, as you don't really know what you are <GloWbE HK>

Example (26) is not a resultative construction, but a causative construction, in which the subject referent of the matrix clause causes the DO referent to do what is described in the clausal complement (cf. Gilquin and Viberg 2009; Chatti 2012). *Make* in example (26) could be glossed as ‘cause’ rather than ‘render’ (cf. *OED* s.v. *make* v. 3; *Collins* s.v. *make* v. 2). There is no clear standard paraphrase that retains all elements of the causative construction. Paraphrases of example (26) include:

- (27) *An aimless working attitude would make it feel hard for you to reject others’ requests.
(28) *An aimless working attitude would make it hard for you to feel reject others’ requests.

Examples like (27) and (28) are not attested in the corpora, and neither appears to be acceptable. Causative constructions like example (26) are not included in the data here.

4. Variant rates for the *make us difficult* construction

4.1 The ICE corpora

To analyse variant rates, I compare instances of the non-standard *make us difficult* construction to instances of the standard alternate. Because all examples of the *make us difficult* construction occur in speech, I measure variant rates in speech only. In speech, there are 37 instances of the standard construction, and 6 instances of the *make us difficult* construction.

Table 1. Raw frequencies of the *make us difficult* construction and its standard alternate, and observed probability (selection preferences) for the *make us difficult* construction in all ICE components

Region	Instances of <i>make us difficult</i> construction in ICE	Instances of standard construction in ICE	Observed probability of <i>make us difficult</i> construction
East Africa	1	7	1/8 (0.13)
Hong Kong	3	6	3/9 (0.33)
Philippines	0	6	0/6 (0.00)
India	0	5	0/5 (0.00)
Singapore	2	9	2/11 (0.18)
Canada	0	4	0/4 (0.00)
TOTAL	6	37	6/43 (0.14)

Given the small number of examples, it is difficult to make confident claims about variant rates in the populations represented by ICE, but it is reasonable to hypothesise that the selection preferences for the *make us difficult* construction in speech in some regions may be comparable to that of well-known standard alternations such as the dative alternation in British and American English (cf. Szmrecsanyi et al. 2017).

Table 2 displays selection preferences in ICE for a pronoun or noun in DO position, and each adjectival PC conveying ease or difficulty.

Table 2. Raw frequencies of the *make us difficult* construction and its standard counterpart, and variant rates, in the spoken portion of ICE components, with various combinations of DO and adjectival PC

Construction and Region	Instances of <i>make us difficult</i> construction in spoken ICE component	Instances of standard construction in spoken ICE component	Observed probability of <i>make us difficult</i> construction
<i>make</i> [pronoun] <i>easy</i>			
East Africa	0	0	0/0
Hong Kong	1	1	1/2 (0.50)
Philippines	0	1	0/1 (0.00)
India	0	0	0/0
Singapore	0	4	0/4 (0.00)
Canada	0	0	0/0
TOTAL	1	6	1/7 (0.14)
<i>make</i> [noun] <i>easy</i>			
East Africa	0	3	0/3 (0.00)
Hong Kong	0	1	0/1 (0.00)
Philippines	0	0	0/0
India	0	1	0/1 (0.00)
Singapore	0	2	0/2 (0.00)
Canada	0	1	0/1 (0.00)
TOTAL	0	8	0/8 (0.00)
<i>make</i> [pronoun] <i>difficult</i>			
East Africa	0	0	0/0
Hong Kong	2	1	2/3 (0.66)
Philippines	0	0	0/0
India	0	0	0/0
Singapore	1	0	1/1 (1.00)
Canada	0	0	0/0
TOTAL	3	1	3/4 (0.75)

<i>make</i> [noun] <i>difficult</i>			
East Africa	1	2	1/3 (0.33)
Hong Kong	0	1	0/1 (0.00)
Philippines	0	2	0/2 (0.00)
India	0	1	0/1 (0.00)
Singapore	0	2	0/2 (0.00)
Canada	0	2	0/2 (0.00)
TOTAL	1	10	1/11 (0.09)
<i>make</i> [pronoun] <i>hard</i>			
East Africa	0	0	0/0
Hong Kong	0	1	0/1 (0.00)
Philippines	0	0	0/0
India	0	0	0/0
Singapore	1	0	1/1 (1.00)
Canada	0	0	0/0
TOTAL	1	1	1/2 (0.50)
<i>make</i> [noun] <i>hard</i>			
East Africa	0	0	0/0
Hong Kong	0	0	0/0
Philippines	0	0	0/0
India	0	0	0/0
Singapore	0	0	0/0
Canada	0	0	0/0
TOTAL	0	0	0/0
<i>make</i> [pronoun] <i>possible</i>			
East Africa	0	0	0/0
Hong Kong	0	0	0/0
Philippines	0	1	0/1 (0.00)
India	0	1	0/1 (0.00)
Singapore	0	0	0/0
Canada	0	0	0/0
TOTAL	0	2	0/2 (0.00)

<i>make</i> [noun] <i>possible</i>			
East Africa	0	2	0/2 (0.00)
Hong Kong	0	0	0/0
Philippines	0	1	0/1 (0.00)
India	0	2	0/2 (0.00)
Singapore	0	0	0/0
Canada	0	0	0/0
TOTAL	0	5	0/5 (0.00)
<i>make</i> [pronoun] <i>impossible</i>			
East Africa	0	0	0/0
Hong Kong	0	1	0/1 (0.00)
Philippines	0	0	0/0
India	0	0	0/0
Singapore	0	1	0/1 (0.00)
Canada	0	1	0/1 (0.00)
TOTAL	0	3	0/3 (0.00)
<i>make</i> [noun] <i>impossible</i>			
East Africa	0	0	0/0
Hong Kong	0	0	0/0
Philippines	0	1	0/1 (0.00)
India	0	0	0/0
Singapore	0	0	0/0
Canada	0	0	0/0
TOTAL	0	1	0/1 (0.00)
TOTAL	6	37	6/43 (0.14)

The *make us difficult* construction is used with *difficult*, *easy*, and *hard*, but not with *possible* or *impossible*, and tends to be used with a personal pronoun in DO position. Again, it would be unreasonable to suggest confident conclusions based on these selection preferences, given the small number of examples, but it certainly welcomes additional research.

4.2 The GloWbE Corpus

Variant rates were then calculated for the *make us difficult* construction in GloWbE, using search strings in Appendix 2. I have only identified instances of the standard construction in regions where the *make us difficult* construction is attested. I read every result of every search string for the relevant regions.

Table 3. Raw frequencies of the *make us difficult* construction and its standard alternate, and variant rates, in GloWbE components that contain the *make us difficult* construction, with various combinations of DO and adjectival PC

Construction and Region	Instances of <i>make us difficult</i> construction in GloWbE	Instances of standard construction in GloWbE	Observed probability of <i>make us difficult</i> construction
<i>make</i> [pronoun] <i>easy</i>			
Malaysia	6	54	6/60 (0.10)
Hong Kong	1	76	1/77 (0.01)
Philippines	3	95	3/98 (0.03)
India	6	180	6/186 (0.03)
Pakistan	3	89	3/92 (0.03)
Australia	1	248	1/249 (0.00)
Great Britain	3	607	3/610 (0.00)
Jamaica	1	73	1/74 (0.01)
<i>make</i> [noun] <i>easy</i>			
Hong Kong	2	138	2/140 (0.01)
Great Britain	1	1436	1/1437 (0.00)
Sri Lanka	1	113	1/114 (0.01)
Tanzania	1	89	1/90 (0.01)

<i>make</i> [pronoun] <i>difficult</i>			
Malaysia	2	42	2/44 (0.05)
Hong Kong	2	29	2/31 (0.06)
India	1	65	1/66 (0.02)
Singapore	1	21	1/22 (0.04)
Pakistan	2	21	2/23 (0.09)
Bangladesh	2	16	2/18 (0.11)
South Africa	1	27	1/28 (0.04)
Sri Lanka	1	39	1/40 (0.03)
<i>make</i> [noun] <i>difficult</i>			
Australia	2	220	2/222 (0.01)
Malaysia	3	52	3/55 (0.05)
Great Britain	1	518	1/519 (0.00)
Hong Kong	3	88	3/91 (0.03)
<i>make</i> [pronoun] <i>hard</i>			
US	1	206	1/207 (0.00)
Great Britain	1	254	1/255 (0.00)
Australia	2	69	2/71 (0.03)
India	2	28	2/30 (0.07)
Sri Lanka	1	8	1/9 (0.11)
Pakistan	1	25	1/26 (0.04)
Bangladesh	1	8	1/9 (0.11)
Singapore	1	19	1/20 (0.05)
Malaysia	1	27	1/28 (0.04)
Hong Kong	1	18	1/19 (0.05)
<i>make</i> [noun] <i>hard</i>			
Pakistan	1	37	1/38 (0.03)
<i>make</i> [pronoun] <i>possible</i>			
Philippines	1	31	1/32 (0.03)
India	1	51	1/52 (0.02)

<i>make</i> [noun] <i>possible</i>			
Great Britain	1	280	1/281 (0.00)
<i>make</i> [pronoun] <i>impossible</i>			
Nigeria	1	25	1/26 (0.04)
India	1	33	1/34 (0.03)
<i>make</i> [noun] <i>impossible</i>			
US	1	245	1/246 (0.00)

The highest selection preferences for the *make us difficult* construction are observed with a pronoun DO, and with the adjectival PCs *difficult* and *hard*, which reinforces the general observations from ICE. It would be reasonable to hypothesise, based on GloWbE and ICE, that selection preferences for *make us difficult* may be higher in speech than in writing.

The highest selection preferences are for *make* [pronoun] *difficult* in Pakistan and Bangladesh; *make* [pronoun] *hard* in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka; and *make* [pronoun] *easy* in Malaysia. Malaysia stands out for its particularly productive usage, including unusually high rates of *make* [pronoun] *easy* and the only relatively high rate with a noun in DO position, *make* [noun] *difficult*.

5. Usage patterns and productivity

Does the *make us difficult* construction occur with other resultative verbs? *Render* is the only other resultative verb in the standard construction in GloWbE. There are, however, no instances of the *make us difficult* construction with *render* in either ICE or GloWbE. It may be that the construction can occur with *render*, but that *render* itself is used so rarely that *render us difficult* simply does not occur in ICE or GloWbE.

Does the *make us difficult* construction occur with other verbs in the same syntactic structure, such as depictive verbs (cf. Huddleston and Pullum 2002: 251)? GloWbE was searched for depictive verbs in the *make us difficult* construction using search strings in Appendix C, with the following results:

- (29) I find myself difficult to secure a permanent job. <GloWbE SG>
- (30) For me part, raised and educated as a Catholic, I eventually found myself hard to remain religious as a Catholic. <GloWbE PH>

- (31) Maybe if you didn't write out of bitter envy and narcissism, you'd find yourself easier to look at yourself in the mirror. <GloWbE GB>
- (32) I find the weight hard to come off even though I *think* I'm working hard. <GloWbE IE>

Four examples across four different regions might reasonably be seen as evidence that the *find us difficult* variant is not productive.

Do we observe the *make us difficult* construction with adjectives outside the semantic field of ease or difficulty, such as the low-frequency semantic field of deontic modality observed in the standard construction (see Section 2)? I searched GloWbE using the search strings in Appendix A and the six adjectives of deontic modality identified in Section 2 (*compulsory, obligatory, mandatory, permissible, necessary* and *unnecessary*), retrieving one true positive:

- (33) Along with this solution, government must make the people aware about saving oil and companies must make employees mandatory to come office through buses/cabs. <GloWbE IN>

One example of deontic modality in the *make us difficult* construction affirms the non-productiveness of the construction with deontic modality.

Can we observe examples of complex transitive constructions such as *We are difficult to understand comedy*, parallel to example (1)? Parallel to *make us difficult*, I will refer to such constructions here as *we are difficult* constructions. As an initial exploratory step, I searched GloWbE using the following search string:

- [I|you|he|she|we|they|myself|yourself|himself|herself|ourselves|oursel
f|themselves|themselves] [be]
[easy|difficult|hard|possible|impossible|obligatory|mandatory|compuls
ory|permissible|necessary|unnecessary] to *_v

This search string yields hundreds of false positives, and 28 true positives, including the following:

- (34) though it seems like you are easy to believe in conspiracies <GloWbE US>
- (35) The main point I am trying to make is that we must always, whatever our emotional connection with an event, be prepared to engage in any discussion on the basis of accurate facts (in as far as we are possible to ascertain them)... <GloWbE GB>

- (36) If you're working in a business and can not afford full-time courses, you're necessary to attend part-time courses. <GloWbE KE>

There is one critical difference between *make us difficult* and *we are difficult*: in the *we are difficult* construction, there are 13 examples of adjectival PCs conveying deontic modality, and 15 examples conveying ease or difficulty, in contrast to the *make us difficult* construction, which occurs 72 times with PCs conveying ease or difficulty, and only once with a PC conveying deontic modality. This might indicate two distinct categories of construction – a possibility that deserves further attention.

There are 9 examples of the *we are difficult* construction in GloWbE that are problematic, and have not been counted in the data here, including example (37).

- (37) If the loan 400 to pay the loan complement, you are possible to pay around 500 -- agreed day, no one can move the frugality, but with the faction financial thought can not be unexploded continuously. <GloWbE PK>

It is conceivable that such non-viable examples have been translated automatically rather than written by English language users. There are no comparable instances – effectively incomprehensible and possibly machine translated - among the search results for the *make us difficult* construction in GloWbE.

In addition, there seems to be a complaint tradition in relation to the *we are difficult* construction. Example (38) appears in GloWbE, from the webpage of the Education University of Hong Kong, in a list of common English errors.

- (38) Misuse of personal pronoun with certain structures:
e.g. She is difficult to learn words, instead of It is difficult for her to learn words or They are easy to save money instead of It is easy for them to save money. <GloWbE HK>

The same page does not refer to the *make us difficult* construction. Whether or not the *make us difficult* construction is part of a complaint tradition is an open question.

6. Conclusion

The *make us difficult* construction may be a common choice among English users in Malaysia, Hong Kong, and Singapore, and in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and (to a lesser extent) India, with variant rates possibly as high as 11% in some written contexts, and over 50% in some spoken contexts, though it is impossible to be confident given limited data.

The *make us difficult* construction is most commonly used with a pronoun in DO position, and with the PC adjectives *easy*, *difficult*, or *hard*. A parallel construction has been identified in *we are difficult*, which is most commonly used with PC adjectives in the semantic field of deontic modality or with PC adjectives indicating ease or difficulty.

Future work is recommended, to look more closely at causative examples such as *make us feel difficult*; passive examples such as *make us difficult to be seen*; and non-resultative complex transitive examples such as *we are difficult*. Future work should also address the possible influence of local languages and the significance of linguistic or cognitive universals. Such considerations will help complete the portrait of this previously undiscussed construction.

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Appendix A

Search strings below were used to search GloWbE for the *make us difficult* construction. Wildcards were placed in the search strings in positions indicated by an X – individually and in all combinations of two.

- [make] X
[me|you|him|her|us|them|myself|yourself|himself|herself|ourselves|ourself|themselves|themselves] X [difficult] X to X_*v
- [make] X_*nn X difficult X to X_*v

The search strings retrieve the forms *make* noun/pronoun *difficult* to verb. The pronoun *it* is not included in the list of possibilities, because examples of the form *make it difficult* to verb yield a prohibitively large number of examples for close reading, most of which appear to be false positives; if any of those examples qualify as the *make us difficult* construction, they would likely be at least ambiguous with the standard alternate, and likely indiscernible. Subsequent searches were conducted for the adjective lemmas *easy*, *hard*, *possible*, and *impossible*, respectively, in place of *difficult*. One or two wild cards at a time are added to search strings in locations deemed logical; results with wild cards are far fewer than results without wild cards, and most searches with wild cards yield no results

Appendix B

Search strings below were used to search GloWbE for the standard alternate to the *make us difficult* construction. Wildcards were placed in the search strings in positions indicated by an X – individually and in all combinations of two.

- [make] X it X [difficult] X for X
[me|you|him|her|us|them|myself|yourself|himself|herself|ourselves|ourself|themselves|themselves] X to X_*v
- [make] X it X [difficult] X for X_*nn X to X_*v

Subsequent searches were conducted for the adjective lemmas *easy*, *hard*, *possible*, and *impossible*, respectively, in place of *difficult*. One or two wild cards at a time are added to the search strings in locations deemed logical; results with wild cards are far fewer than results without wild cards, and most searches with wild cards yield no results.

Appendix C

Search strings below were used to search GloWbE for the *make us difficult* construction with depictive or other verbs. Wildcards were placed in the search strings in positions indicated by an X – individually and in all combinations of two.

- *_v X
[me|you|him|her|us|them|myself|yourself|himself|herself|ourselves|ourself|themselves|themselves] X
[difficult|hard|easy|possible|impossible] X to X_*v
- *_v X_*nn X [difficult|hard|easy|possible|impossible] X to X_*v

Authors' addresses

Seth Mehl
Digital Humanities Institute
The University of Sheffield
34 Gell Street
Sheffield S3 7QY
United Kingdom
s.mehl@sheffield.ac.uk