

Language Analysis for Lesson Planning (LALP): LALP#1: LALP Lexicon Review

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LALP Lexicon Review

Instructions: See detailed instructions in the PDF posted to Moodle titled “Lexicon Review Options”.

1. Lexicon Terms

a) With **ALL** of the following terms: (1) give a one-sentence definition; (2) give at least one example.

b) Choose **three** terms you feel are important for language teachers to know about, and give a short rationale for each selection.

Parts of speech / word class: In grammar, a part of speech (also *word class*, *lexical class*, *lexical category*) is a linguistic category of words (more precisely, lexical items) defined by the item's syntactic or morphological behavior. Common categories include *noun* and *verb*, among others. There are **open** word classes, which regularly acquire new members, and **closed** word classes, which acquire new members infrequently, if at all. (From Wikipedia). *(This is very interesting; I'd be interested in learning why certain classes are closed. Seems like language changes so much that it would be hard to disqualify any future members!)*

Examples: Noun (*book, storm, arrival*), Verb (*push, sit, know*), Adjective (*good, blue, Polish*), Adverb (*quickly, very, unfortunately*), Pronoun (*you, this, nobody*), Preposition/adposition (*on, for, because of*), Conjunction (*and, if, while*), Numeral (*one,*

twice, third), Article (*the, a*), Interjection (*ouch, oh, tsk*).

Open word classes: adjectives, adverbs, nouns, verbs (except auxiliary verbs), interjections.

Closed word classes: auxiliary verbs, conjunctions, determiners (articles, quantifiers, demonstratives, possessives), particles, prepositions, postpositions, pronouns, contractions, cardinal numbers.

Morpheme: A morpheme is the smallest component of a word (or other linguistic unit) that has semantic meaning. The concepts *word* and *morpheme* are different; a morpheme may or may not stand alone. *Important distinction.* One or several morphemes compose a word. A morpheme is **free** if it can stand alone (e.g., *one, possible*), or **bound** if it is used exclusively alongside a free morpheme (e.g., *im-* in *impossible*). Its phonetic realization is the **morph**; different morphs (*in-*, *im-*) representing the same morpheme are grouped as its **allomorphs**. (From Princeton.edu)

Free morpheme: Free morphemes like *town* and *dog* can appear with other lexemes (as in *town hall, dog house*) or stand alone—i.e., “free”.

Bound morpheme: Bound morphemes like *un-* appear only together with other morphemes to form a lexeme. Bound morphemes generally include prefixes and suffixes. Unproductive, non-affix morphemes that exist only in bound form are known as “**cranberry**” morphemes, from the *cran-* in that very word. (*I’m intrigued by this; you’ve done some excellent research! What is it about cran that is not a prefix in this lexeme?*)

Inflectional morpheme: Modifies a word's tense, number, aspect, etc., without deriving a new word or a new grammatical category (e.g., *dog* + plural *-s* → *dogs*). They carry grammatical information. *(Excellent definition and example.)*

Allomorphs are variants of a morpheme; e.g., the English plural marker is realized as */-z/, /-s/, or /-iz/.

Derivational morpheme: Added to a word to create (derive) another word; e.g., adding *-ness* to *happy* → *happiness*. They carry semantic information. *(Yes, true. I would also argue they carry very specific grammatical information since they change the word class. And inflections do carry grammar but the semantic difference is almost greater comparing dog to dogs. Sounds like I should contact the linguists at Princeton to argue!)*

Affix / Suffix / Prefix:

An **affix** is added to the root of a word to change its meaning.

An affix added to the **front** of a word is a **prefix**; one added to the **back** is a **suffix**.

Sometimes prefixes are hyphenated.

Most common prefixes: *dis-* (not, opposite of: *disagree*), *in-/im-/il-/ir-* (*injustice, impossible, illogical, irresponsible*), *re-* (again: *return*), *un-* (not: *unfriendly*). These account for over 95% of prefixed words. *(And therefore should be the core of our teaching and learning!)*

Most common suffixes: *-ed* (past tense verb: *hopped*), *-ing* (verb form/present participle: *running*), *-ly* (characteristic of: *quickly*), *-s/-es* (*books, boxes*). These account

for over 95% of suffixed words. (*Core, core, core! And so helpful to learners looking for patterns and regularity in otherwise messy language.*)

Connotation: Connotation refers to a meaning implied by a word apart from what it explicitly describes. Words carry cultural and emotional associations in addition to their literal meanings (*denotations*). For instance, *Wall Street* literally means a street in Lower Manhattan, but connotatively refers to “wealth” and “power.” (*What a perfect example. You are really helping ME learn here Mohamed, with these thorough explanations.*)

Examples: *the White House, the West, the East, dove.*

Positive and Negative Connotations: Words may carry positive or negative connotations depending on social, cultural, and personal experience. For example, *childish, childlike*, and *youthful* share a denotation but differ connotatively: *childish/childlike* often negative; *youthful* positive. (*It's easy to see how connotation is a challenge to any learner of any language. It takes multiple encounters or feedback to understand the unstated meanings.*)

Denotation: Denotation is the literal or dictionary meaning of a word, in contrast to its connotative or associated meanings.

Example: A dictionary defines *dove* as a type of pigeon; in literature it often symbolizes peace. (From Literarydevice.net)

Collocations: In linguistics, “the habitual juxtaposition of a particular word with another word or words with a frequency greater than chance.” (Online Dictionary) A **collocation** is two or more words that frequently occur together. These combinations sound “right” to

native speakers; others may sound “wrong.” *(Just like connotation, this aspect of language requires exposure in multiple contexts. One example is ‘take a seat’ or ‘have a seat’ – why not just ‘sit’ or ‘sit down’ which is literally intuitive. To ‘take a seat’ implies one might pick it up and take it somewhere! But learners understand this quickly because it is highly contextual while others are not. The onus is almost on the learner to be highly perceptive and notice these frequently co-occurring words.)*

Sample collocations *(EnglishClub.com)*

1. **Adverb + adjective:** *utterly stupid; richly decorated; fully aware*
2. **Adjective + noun:** *regular exercise; maiden voyage; excruciating pain*
3. **Noun + noun:** *round of applause; ceasefire agreement; bars of soap*

Compound noun: A noun made up of two or more words, most commonly **noun + noun** or **adjective + noun**, though other combinations exist. Each compound noun functions as a single unit and can be modified by adjectives or other nouns.

Forms: open/spaced (*tennis shoe*), hyphenated (*six-pack*), closed/solid (*bedroom*).
(This must be a headache, or head-ache, or head ache? – for learners!!) (Source: EnglishClub.com)

Idiom: A combination of words whose meaning differs from the literal meanings of the individual words. It may be literal in one situation and idiomatic in another and does not always follow regular rules of meaning or grammar.

To sit on the fence can literally mean sitting on a fence, but idiomatically means not clearly choosing a side.

The politician sat on the fence...

Many English idioms resemble expressions in other languages and can be approachable for learners. (*I liked the point that you raised in class that was similar to this idea. Students enjoy comparing L1 idioms to English, and this can be a great 'clarify' or 'internalize' activity.*) Other idioms come from older phrases that have shifted meaning, e.g., *hold your horses* (wait patiently).

"Hold your horses," the man said...

Sports also supply idioms requiring cultural knowledge, e.g., *cover all of one's bases* (prepare thoroughly). (*From Idiomconnection.com*)

Lexical phrase / chunks / formulaic sequence

- **Lexical phrases:** Multi-word chunks of varying length, from fixed phrases (*in a nutshell*) to slot-and-filler frames (*the ___er, the ___er*). Because they are “pre-assembled,” they support fluent communication and organize discourse, providing cues to listeners/readers about flow. (bogglesworldesl.com)

Examples: *get out of the habit (of doing), come in handy, make a choice, take notice of, I can't take it any more* (quizlet.com).

- **Chunks:** Groups of words commonly found together—fixed collocations or frequent grammatical patterns. Knowledge of chunks aids prediction and real-time processing. Chunks include lexical phrases, set phrases, and fixed phrases. (*Any difference here? I know some chunks are separable and others are inseparable, like phrasal verbs.*)

Examples: *utter disaster; by the way; at the end of the day; encourage +*

someone + infinitive; dependent on.

In the classroom: Work with idioms, collocations, and verb patterns; encourage learners to identify and record lexical and grammatical chunks.

[\(<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk>\)](https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk)

- **Formulaic sequence:** “A sequence, continuous or discontinuous, of words or other elements which is, or appears to be, prefabricated... stored and retrieved whole from memory at the time of use, rather than generated by the grammar.” (Wray, 2002:9). Researchers differ on what counts as formulaic; candidates include idioms, collocations, preferred turns of phrase, routines, set phrases, rhymes, songs, prayers, proverbs. We notice formulaic language in ritualized/structured events (e.g., weather forecasts), young children’s language, beginner materials/phrasebooks, and in the speech of people with aphasia.

(Cardiff FLARN)

Lexical set: In general, a group of words that share a specific form or meaning. *(And this first definition is the one I had in mind, I didn’t even realize there was a link to phonology. Interestingly lexical sets can be difficult for students to remember if the list is too long; by contrast, lexical themes like ‘things you’d find at a party’ are easier to recall, according to a 2000 article by Nation.)* More specifically (Wells, 1982), a set of words in which particular vowels are pronounced the same way. (grammar.about.com)

Standard lexical sets

(RP vowel values with some variants, after Wells 1982)

Short vowels		Long vowels		Rising diphthongs	
KIT	/ɪ/	FLEECE	/i:/	PRICE	/aɪ/
DRESS	/e/	PALM	/ɑ:/	MOUTH	/aʊ/
TRAP	/æ/	BATH	/ɑ:/	CHOICE	/ɔɪ/
LOT	/ɒ/	THOUGHT	/ɔ:/	GOAT	/əʊ/
CLOTH	/ɒ, ɔ:/	GOOSE	/u:/	FACE	/eɪ/
STRUT	/ʌ/				
FOOT	/ʊ/				

Centring diphthongs / rhotacised vowels; Unstressed vowels

NEAR	/ɪə/	/iə/		
SQUARE	/ɛə/	/eə/		
CURE	/ʊə/	/uə/		
START	/ɑ:/	/ɑ:ɪ/	COMMA	/-ə/
NORTH	/ɔ:/	/ɔ:ɪ/	LETTER	/-ə/ /-ə/
FORCE	/ɔ:/	/o:ɪ/	HAPPY	/-ɪ/
NURSE	/ɜ:/	/ɜ:/		

(https://www.uni-due.de/SVE/SNDS_ENG_WhatAreLexicalSets.htm)

Homonym: (Also called “homophones” in some sources.) Words that sound alike but have different meanings. Some share spelling (*bark* ‘dog sound’ vs. *bark* ‘tree covering’); others differ in spelling (*one* vs. *won*). (This is a nice definition that accounts for both the spelling and sound similarities.)

Note: Some guides reserve **homophones** for sound-alikes with different spellings and use **homonym** more broadly to include same-spelling words with different meanings.

Examples: *ad/add, by/bye/buy, dear/deer, eye/I, feat/feet, gnu/knew/new, heard/herd, incite/insight, jeans/genes, knight/night, lessen/lesson*. (enchantedlearning.com)

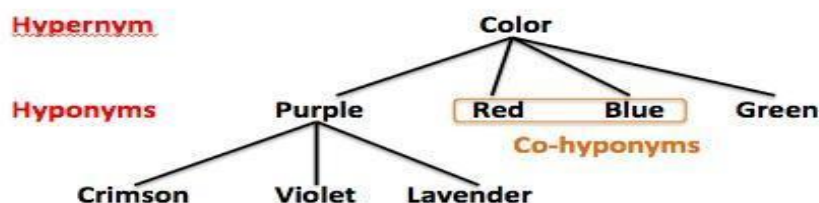
Synonym: “One of two or more words or expressions of the same language that have the same or nearly the same meaning in some or all senses.” (Merriam-Webster)

Examples: *about* ≈ *approximately*, *nearly*, *almost*, *approaching*; *also* ≈ *moreover*, *besides*, *as well as*, *in addition to*, *too*; *amazing* ≈ *astonishing*, *startling*, *stunning*, *dazzling*, *remarkable*; *awesome* ≈ *impressive*, *fabulous*, *astonishing*, *outstanding*.

Antonym: A word whose meaning is opposite to another.

Examples: *happy* # *sad*; *hard* # *soft*; *harmful* # *harmless*; *hate* # *love*; *healthy* # *unhealthy/ill/diseased*; *here* # *there*; *heavy* # *light*; *height* # *depth*.

Hypernym & Hyponym: In linguistics, a **hyponym** is a word or phrase whose semantic field is included within that of another word, its **hypernym**. In simpler terms, a hyponym is a type of its hypernym. For example, *pigeon*, *crow*, *eagle*, *seagull* are hyponyms of *bird* (their hypernym); *bird* is a hyponym of *animal*.



(Wikipedia)

Demonym: A name for people who live in a particular place, such as *Londoners*, *Dallasites*, *Manilans*, *Dubliners*, *Torontonians*, *Melburnians*.

Examples: *Vermonters*, *New Yorkers*, *Texans*. (These can be tricky for learners of

English. Other languages have more strict rules about forming demonyms, while English is largely based on phonological elements of a word. But importantly students need not know every demonym, because native speakers don't either, and this is a source of an oft-repeated question: "What do you call a person from ____?")

Polyseme: A word or phrase with different but related senses; because "relatedness" is subjective, judgments can be difficult.

Examples (Wikipedia):

Man — (1) the human species; (2) males; (3) adult males.

Wood — (1) a piece of a tree; (2) a wooded area.

Crane — (1) a bird; (2) construction equipment; (3) to strain one's neck.

B) Three terms with rationales

1. **Collocation:** Collocations merit explicit instruction: their fixed/semifixed nature makes them difficult for NNS learners to acquire incidentally. Teaching them enhances vocabulary acquisition and improves both receptive and productive fluency and efficiency. *(Great point, Mohamed. When we talk about 'core' and 'peripheral' it is often the case that 'core' items are also fairly easy for students to learn and therefore do not require explicit teaching. But collocations are a core item that is not easily picked up by students, and therefore may be prioritized as something we need to teach.)*
2. **Idioms:** Idioms offer rich cultural content for exploration and significantly expand learners' ability to understand and be understood in authentic communication.

(Yes, and there is a lot 'languaging' that can be done around idioms—describing, guessing, comparing.)

3. **Formulaic sequences:** Formulaic sequences are readily processed and remembered, improve oral fluency, and help learners build meaningful, high-utility lexical repertoires relevant to real use.

2. What's in a word?

a) Word selected: eye

As a noun: (1) the organ of sight; (2) sight/vision (*a sharp eye*); (3) discerning visual perception (*the eye of an artist*); (4) a look/glance/gaze (*to cast one's eye at a beautiful necklace*).

Botany: (5) the bud of a potato/Jerusalem artichoke; a small, contrastingly colored flower center.

Meteorology: (6) the approximately circular region of relatively light winds and fair weather at the center of a severe tropical cyclone.

As a verb (with object): (7) *eyed; eyeing/eying*; (8) to fix the eyes upon/view (*to eye the wonders of nature*); (9) to observe or watch narrowly; (10) to make an eye in.

As an idiom: *be all eyes; catch someone's eye; have an eye for.*

As an adjective: (11) *eyelike*.

Collocations: *naked eye, eagle eye, evil eye, black eye, private eye, easy on the eyes, eye-opener.*

b) Core vs. Peripheral:

Core (basic): 1, 2, 7.

Core (intermediate/advanced): 3, 4, 8, 9.

Advanced only: *naked eye, eye-opener, have an eye for, be all eyes.*

Peripheral: 5, 6, and adjective *eyelike*. (*I appreciate the distinctions you make here in level and therefore whether it is a core or peripheral item.*)

3. Word Association + Lesson Brainstorming

a) Theme: *school — (reading, test, teacher, principal, science, math, learning, yellow bus, student, staff, erasers, pencil, pen, chalk, markers, blackboard, writing, exams, curriculum, class, lesson, grades, desk, fee, form).*

b) Activities:

Activity One (Clarify / Internalize / Fluency): Build on students' prior knowledge. Ask learners to narrate a school experience using as many words from the list as possible. (*Or if you are a Silent Way fan, do not do for the students what they can do for themselves; you can ask them to explain.*)

Activity Two (Clarify / Remember): Students restate/explain new words in their own words (spoken and/or written) and create a non-linguistic representation (picture/symbol). (*Oh, forgot the comment above! you were already thinking like a Silent Way master ☺.*)

Activity Three (Clarify): Students deepen knowledge by comparing/classifying words, then discuss in pairs (pair-share/elbow partners).

4. High-frequency words

a) What are they? “High frequency words are those which occur most frequently in written material—for example, *and, the, as, it*. They often have little meaning on their own, but contribute greatly to sentence meaning.” (*I’ve heard these called ‘grammar glue’ because they provide a connective thread to other major parts of language.*)

(HighFrequencyWords.org)

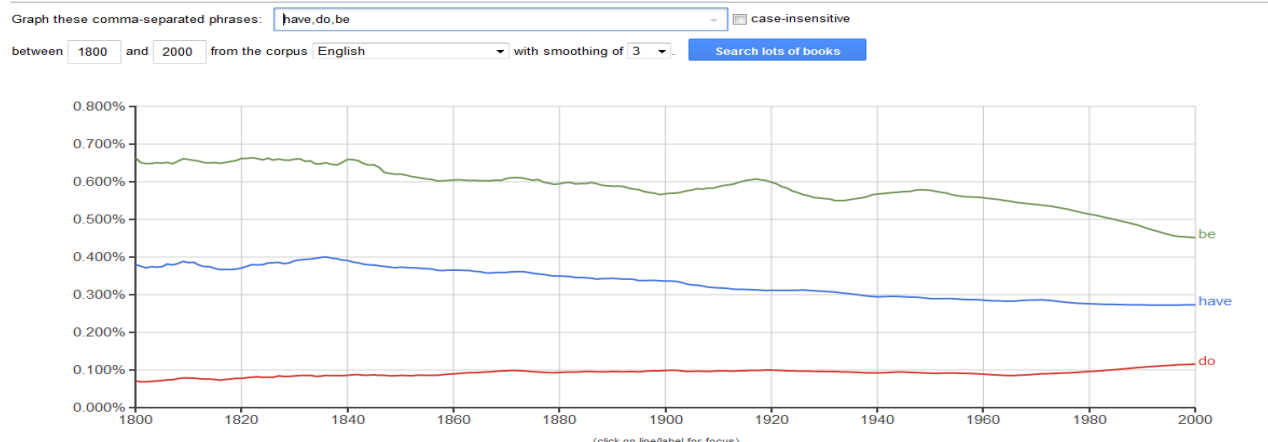
b) Categories (examples):

- **Pronouns:** *he, it, you, we, they, I, she, them, her, him, our, its*
- **Prepositions:** *on, at, in, under, over, above, into*
- **Auxiliary verbs:** *do, does, did, have, has, had, can, could, will, be, is, are, was, were*

5. Google N-Gram search

a) Language corpus (brief): A corpus is a structured collection of texts used in corpus linguistics. Corpora may be **monolingual** or **multilingual**; specially aligned multilingual corpora are called **parallel corpora**. Corpora typically target a sub-register (e.g., spoken, academic) so users can filter for context.

b–c) N-Gram site steps retained.



I personally don't think that this application is useful in the context of teaching vocabulary for ESL/EFL students. (I respectfully disagree! I'm not sure what information students would get from the graph above, but placing other items in n-gram searches may tell you something about their frequency, popularity and relevance to particular time frames. This could provide good discussion for intermediate or higher-level students.) However, I find it very useful for teachers in research and seminars if they want to support a claim or broaden perspective.

6. Interview Fairy

Prompt (d): *How does your own experience of learning vocabulary in a second language influence the way you teach vocabulary?*

My experience as a second-language learner of English was shaped by the educational context in which I learned and by the many affordances modern life offered me. First, my schooling followed traditional techniques in which vocabulary teaching relied mainly on repetition and memorization. For me, this was largely meaningless, and the vocabulary was retained only briefly because it lacked context. Faced with isolated word

lists, I had little motivation to retain items long-term without meaningful practice.

Second, growing up in the age of technology helped greatly: I used websites to print stories and see vocabulary in context; I watched series and movies and read articles, books, magazines, and journals. All of this was instrumental in boosting my vocabulary inventory. *(Fascinating. It sounds like you benefitted both from the technological age AND largely from your initiative in using these resources. You also highlight the importance of a meaningful purpose—understanding these media sources—in language learning. Without this initiative and that purpose, learning rarely progresses beyond the beginner stages.)*

I believe teachers should expose students to a wide variety of resources—spoken and written—inside and outside the classroom so learners repeatedly encounter vocabulary in diverse contexts. One of the best ways to maximize vocabulary acquisition is to select techniques informed by current research that emphasizes teaching **units/chunks** rather than isolated words.

Mohamed

(Mohamed, what can I say? This review is incredibly impressive, both in its scope, depth, and detail. It reflects your careful, thorough effort as well as your attention to the instructions and details. I hope it has been a helpful learning exercise for you; it certainly has been beneficial to me. I will always hold onto this as a resource for myself and my future students. Many thanks. —Steve)