

**Introduction to
L2 Vocabulary Acquisition
& Learning:
Lecture 02**

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REVIEW

- (): *“laugh”, “make”, “box”, “window”*
– cannot be further divided
- ():
– _____ : ‘re-’ + ‘make’ = ‘re-make’
– _____ : ‘laugh’ + ‘-ter’ = ‘laughter’
- ():
– *make-believe, window-shopping, jack-in-the-box*

REVIEW

- (roots): *“laugh”, “make”, “box”, “window”*
– cannot be further divided
- (derived words):
– **prefixes:** ‘re-’ + ‘make’ = ‘re-make’
– **suffixes:** ‘laugh’ + ‘-ter’ = ‘laughter’
- (compound words):
– *make-believe, window-shopping, jack-in-the-box*

Multi-word units

- Idioms = a group of words that has a special meaning that is different from the ordinary meaning of each separate word.
- For example, “under the weather” is an idiom meaning “ill.”
- Usually idioms are quite fixed:
– e.g. ‘to bite the dust’ meaning ‘to die’
– *He chewed the dust.
– *I think he deserves a dust-biting.
- Idioms can often be grouped together according to form.

TASK

- Add more idioms to lists A and B that are similar in form:

| Verb + the + object | To be + prepositional phrase | To be + as + adjective + as + noun |
|---|---|--|
| To bite the dust To take the mickey To hit the sack | To be out on a limb To be in the know To be on the ball | To be as daft as a brush To be as dead as ... To be as clear as ... To be as clean as ... To be as bold as ... To be as flat as ... To be as keen as ... |

TASK

- Add more idioms to lists A and B that are similar in form:

| Verb + the + object | To be + prepositional phrase | To be + as + adjective + as + noun |
|---|--|--|
| To bite the dust (=fail, die) To take the mickey (=sleep) To hit the sack (=sleep) To kick the bucket (=die) | To be out on a limb (= be in danger) To be in the know (= be an expert) To be on the ball (= be very quick in thinking) | To be as daft as a brush To be as dead as dodo To be as clear as a bell To be as clean as a whistle To be as bold as brass To be as flat as a pancake To be as keen as mustard |

Idioms: properties

- Grouping on formal lines
→ mnemonic values (facilitate memorization)
- The meaning of an idiom is only retrievable from context.
→ The analysis of elements of an idiom may be at best only partially helpful and at worst utterly misleading.

Idioms: cross-linguistic perspectives

- Idioms are difficult to guess from each component.
- Idioms can sometimes seem less problematic because they share features that occur widely in other languages.
- e.g. Using an animal as an object of comparison in an idiomatic phrase is very common among the languages of the world. (Makkai 1978)

Binomials/ Trinomials

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • binomials – back to front – wine and dine (v.) – to and fro – fish and chips – ladies and gentlemen – in and out – back and forth – clean and tidy – sick and tired | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trinomials – cool, calm, and collected – ready, willing, and able – morning, noon, and night – hook, line, and sinker (=believe a lie completely) – lock, stock, and barrel (= every part of something) |
|--|--|

TASK

- Translate the following English phrases into another language known to you. Does the foreign language translation match the English word for word, or are there differences in word-order, or in the words used, or in how they are joined?
- *back and forth*
- *ladies and gentlemen*
- *I go there now and then.*
- *black-and-white film*
- *from head to foot*
- *We talked about this and that.*

Opacity of meaning

- Some idioms are more opaque than others.
– “to kick the bucket” → no clues as to its idiomatic meaning of ‘to die’
- Semi-opaque:
– “to pass the buck” → “to pass the responsibility”
- Relatively transparent:
– “to see the light” → ‘to understand’
– Fixed: *Suddenly I saw the lamp./ *We need more light-seeing here.

Opacity of meaning

- Even quite transparent phrases are often fixed in the syntax:
- e.g. talk

| | |
|---|-------------|
| – to talk turkey | opaque |
| (= talk seriously about details esp. in business) | |
| – to talk shop | ↑↓ |
| (= talk about your job in the way people find boring) | |
| – to talk business | |
| – to talk politics | transparent |

TASK

- Consider the following sentences from the point of view of opacity or transparency of the italicized phrases. Which would be more problematic for a learner of English?

- He *drinks like a fish*.
- It's time to *ring the changes* in this office.
- Please don't *make a scene* about it.
- That examination was *kid's stuff*.
- Hi! *Long time no see!* How are you?
- He thinks he's got the job, but I *know different*.
- I've been playing football since I was *knee-high to a grasshopper*.

Preferred word combination

- Examples of 'beige' and 'blond'
 - She has a *beige* car.
 - *She has *beige* hair.
 - She has *blond* hair.
 - *She has a *blond* car.
- Beige and blond, although both describing colours, are restricted in respect of what words they may combine with. 'Beige' collocates with 'car' but not with 'hair'; 'blond' collocates with 'hair' but not with 'car.'

Collocation

- Collocation: a marriage contract between words, and some words are more firmly married to each other than others.
- Strong collocation: 'blond' & 'hair'
- Weak collocation: 'brown' & 'hair'
- Languages are full of strong collocational pairs and therefore, collocation deserves to be a central aspect of vocabulary study.

Adj. of size + Noun

| | problem | amount | shame | man |
|-------|---------|--------|-------|-----|
| large | | | | |
| great | | | | |
| big | | | | |
| major | | | | |

Adj. of size + Noun

| | problem | amount | shame | man |
|-------|---------|--------|-------|-----|
| large | ? | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ |
| great | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| big | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ |
| major | ✓ | ? | ✗ | ✗ |