

Lexico-grammar

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Language is traditionally described as grammar and lexis ie: separately. Lexico-grammar sees language as meaning conveyance of words working in grammatical parameters. To an extent this follows Ferdinand de Saussure’s ideas on syntagmatic grammar.

Consider the meaning changes in the following:

1. (Poor) John ran away (poor)
2. She ran up a huge hill/bill
3. The man with a dog saw me/The man saw me with a dog.

Lexical substitution

“If Tony Blair does not grasp the nettle now and replace Mr Blunkett, it is difficult to see why he should remain in office any longer himself.”

(George Jones. Daily Telegraph 1st November 2005)

If	TB	does not	grasp the nettle	now	and	replace	MB
		refuses to	act	at once	by	replacing	
		decides not to	take action	immediately			
				soon			
				forthwith			

it	is	difficult	to see	why	he	should	remain	in office	any	longer	himself

Why did the writer use the reflexive pronoun ‘himself’ himself?

Reformulation

You almost certain need spend time
 very begin course orientate self
 toward new environment

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You will almost certainly need to spend some time at the very beginning of your course orientating yourself towards your new environment.

From: Success on your certificate course. Brandt.C. Sage 2006

Translation

Most translations websites are not very accurate, which is what makes them so usable. I put in:

"He got married last Valentine's day after his wife got pregnant. They had a party."

This translated to:

"Él consiguió el día de Valentine pasado casado después de que su esposa consiguiera embarazada. Tenían un partido."

I then translated this back to English and got:

"He obtained the day of married last Valentine after her wife obtained pregnant. They had a party."

- The obvious lexical error here is the word 'obtained' – we can neither 'obtain' married, nor pregnant: these are beyond the parameters of what can be obtained.
- The 'day of married' is also of interest as it is not an acceptable lexical phrase CF: 'Wedding day'.
- The possessive adjective 'his' has been changed to 'her' – this is a perennial problem for Spanish speakers.
- Note also that 'Valentine's day' has become simply 'Valentine'.

A simple procedure for using the resource:

- Give each pair of students a sentence in English to translate to their L1.
- Exchange their translation with another pair who translate back to English.
- Compare their result with the original sentence and with the Babel fish translation
- Discuss differences

Go to:

<http://babelfish.altavista.com/babelfish/tr>

Concordances

<http://www.lex tutor.ca/concordancers/>

Look at these examples of the word 'even'. How many different 'uses' can you identify?

It was so posh, you know. They	even	served champagne at breakfast
The task might be difficult,	even.	
impossible		
My dad's cooking is so bad	even	the dog refuses to eat it.
Crashes are rare, but	even	so, there should be stricter regulations.
	Even	now, after all these years he can't mention her name
The floor's not	even	in our flat so all the tables and chairs wobble.
These days I'm going for a more	even	balance between work and recreation.
The room should be kept at an	even	temperature, around 20 degrees.
She argues that things were	even	worse under the last government
... to spend 13 million on the	even	then the French system will be better
railways but		

The following definitions come from the *Macmillan Advanced Learners Dictionary*. Match the definitions to the examples above.

- Used for adding a more extreme word to what you have just said.
- Used for showing that you are saying something that is surprising
- Equal in amount
- Used for emphasising that although something is, for example, big, good, bad, etc, something else is bigger, better, worse, etc
- Used for saying that it is surprising that something still continues Flat and level without any holes or raised surfaces
- Used for saying that something is surprising after what has happened
- Used for introducing a statement that seems surprising after what you said before.

From: *On-line vocabulary course. IH Barcelona*

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Colligation

Colligation is the habitual grammar that words keep. For example the verb 'ban' is almost invariably used in the passive voice as in:

"Smoking should be banned in restaurants." Or "Smoking was recently banned in all public places in California except those few designated...."

The following is a copy of the board work I built up with my students recently when teaching vocabulary relating to social customs when meeting and greeting people and other social norms.

Place	gerund	'consider' (passive)	Optional (formal)	Adjective
In Russia	hugging	is	(to be)	friendly
In China	kissing	considered		rude
In Spain	shaking hands			acceptable
In the Uk	bowing			unacceptable
	blowing your nose			obscene
	burping			