

INFLUENCE OF CONTEXTS ON DEFINING BUSINESS ENGLISH VOCABULARY

Wuttipong Malisa *, Anantachai Aeka **, Angvarrah Lieungnapar***

*, **, ****Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Bangkok, Thailand*

*E-Mail: * s62123405091@ssru.ac.th, **anantachai.ae@ssru.ac.th,*

****angvarrah.li@ssru.ac.th,*

ABSTRACT

A lot of Business English Vocabularies have multiple meanings. Each meaning can be influenced by different contexts, meaning that context plays a crucial role in defining the meanings of words. The purpose of this research was to investigate the influence of contexts on defining business English vocabulary. Six words (i.e. engagement, value, growth, capital, cost, and interest) that are normally found in business contexts and have more than meaning were selected to investigate across nine contexts, including movie, television, fiction, magazine, website, news, blog, academic, and spoken contexts. All meanings of those were identified from the sentence examples (concordance line) produced by the Corpus of Contemporary American English, which provides the concordance of the vocabulary in nine categories of contexts. It was found that some meanings were likely to be used only in only a specific context whereas some were used in several contexts. The implication of the influence of contexts on defining vocabulary in EFL teaching was discussed.

Keywords: Business English vocabulary, Multiple meanings, Word defining

INTRODUCTION

Business English Vocabularies can be considered as a basic requirement for worldwide communication [1], especially in business contexts [2] and job opportunities [3], [4]. Without having a thorough understanding of vocabulary's context of use, the use of the vocabulary can lead to a communication failure. In other words, in order to be able to use vocabularies for a successful communication, context is one of the key [5].

Normally, one Business English word can have more than one meaning. However, most of foreign/second language learners (EFL/ESL) are likely to focus on word memorizing by listing the meaning of most common word used instead of understanding its contexts and how to use the word correctly in the right contexts [6]. This also leads to a problem of EFL/ESL learners in guessing the meanings of Business English vocabularies. The cause of the problem is not due to the specific terms of the vocabularies but the unawareness of a diversity of meanings of vocabularies in different contexts tends to be one of the main cause of the fact that EFL/ESL learners cannot guess meanings of the unknown words [7].

Due to an importance of the awareness of a diversity of meanings of vocabularies in different contexts, the main goal of this study is to point out a diversity of meanings of Business English vocabularies in different contexts. According to the point that vocabulary is

one of the most important factors to improve English communication skill and to better understanding language contexts required by many areas of business industries [8]. It is believed that this research can benefit those who are studying English as a second language and those who are applying English in their careers.

OBJECTIVES

1. To identify a variation of definitions of Business English vocabularies studies
2. To study a diversity of meanings of vocabularies in different contexts

METHODOLOGY

Data

Data comprises of six Business English vocabularies: engagement, value, growth, capital, cost, and interest used in 100 sentences in Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) in nine contexts: academic, newspaper, magazine, web-general, fiction, spoken, blog, movie, and TV contexts.

Tools

Tools used for the analysis in this study were COCA, Corpus of Contemporary American English and five online dictionaries: Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, Cambridge Dictionary, Macmillan Dictionary, Longman Dictionary and Collins Online Dictionary.

Research process

- 1) Find the meaning of six business words selected by using five common online dictionaries, and record all meanings.
- 2) Sort all of the meaning of each word from all dictionaries into groups.
- 3) Find 100 sentence examples of each vocabulary selected in Corpus of Contemporary American English (See Figure 1).
- 4) Identify the meaning of each word of each context found in COCA (from a total of six words and nine contexts). After sorted into groups of meanings, the frequency of each meaning in each category was calculated (See Figure 2).

Figure 1
Identifying Meanings of the Vocabularies by Corpus of Contemporary American English

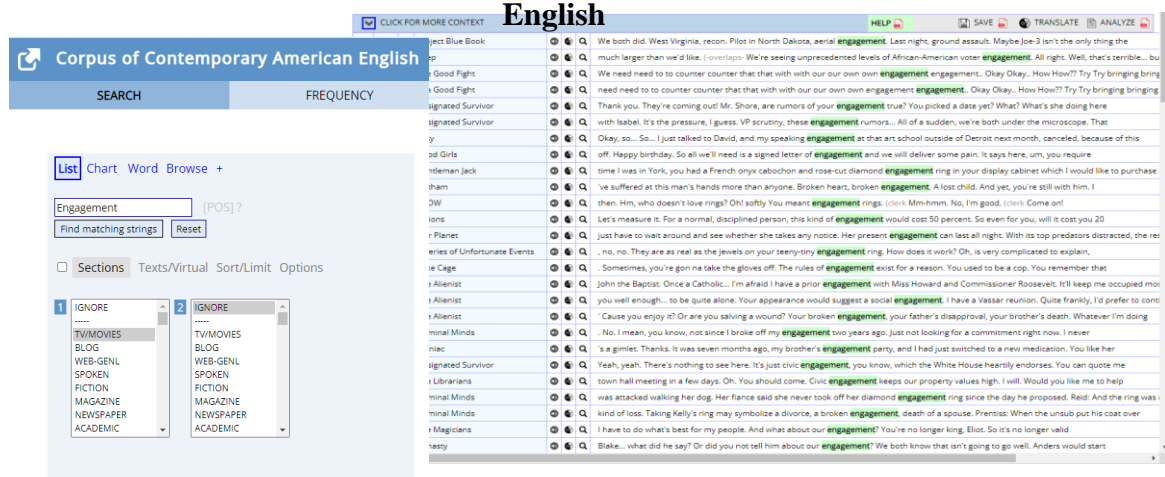


Figure 2
List of Sentences Example and How to Define Type of Definition

| | A | B | C | D | E | F |
|----|----|------|-------|-------------------------------------|---|------|
| 1 | TS | Year | Genre | Name | Sentences | Type |
| 2 | 1 | 2019 | TV | Project Blue Book | We both did. West Virginia, recon. Pilot in North Dakota, aerial engagement. Last night, ground assault. Maybe Joe-3 isn't the only thing the | D |
| 3 | 2 | 2019 | TV | Vesp | much larger than we'd like. I-overlaps- We're seeing unprecedented levels of African-American voter engagement. All right. Well, that's terrible... but also inspiring. Welcome | C |
| 4 | 3 | 2019 | TV | The Good Fight | We need need to to counter counter that that with with our our own own engagement engagement... Okay Okay... How How?? Try Try bringing bringing | D |
| 5 | 4 | 2019 | TV | The Good Fight | need need to to counter counter that that with with our our own own engagement engagement... Okay Okay... How How?? Try Try bringing bringing more | D |
| 6 | 5 | 2019 | TV | Designated Survivor | Thank you. They're coming out! Mr. Shore, are rumors of your engagement true? You picked a date yet? What? What's she doing here | A |
| 7 | 6 | 2019 | TV | Designated Survivor | with Isabel. It's the pressure, I guess. VP scrutiny, these engagement rumors... All of a sudden, we're both under the microscope. That | A |
| 8 | 7 | 2019 | TV | Easy | Okay, so... So... I just talked to David, and my speaking engagement at that art school outside of Detroit next month, canceled, because of this | C |
| 9 | 8 | 2019 | TV | Good Girls | off. Happy birthday. So all we'll need is a signed letter of engagement and we will deliver some pain. It says here, um, you require | A |
| 10 | 9 | 2019 | TV | Gentleman Jack | time I was in York, you had a French onyx cabochon and rose-cut diamond engagement ring in your display cabinet which I would like to purchase and for which I | A |
| 11 | 10 | 2019 | TV | Gotham | ve suffered at this man's hands more than anyone. Broken heart, broken engagement. A lost child. And yet, you're still with him. I | A |

RESULTS

From Table 1, it can be found that some words have different meanings when they are used in different contexts. For the word *Engagement*, the word usually means an agreement between two people to marry in contexts related to entertainment context: movie context (81%), fiction context (74%), and TV context (66%). In contrast, the word tends to mean to involve with something or someone in academic context (73%), magazine context (68%), blog context (64%), newspaper context (60%), web-general context (54%) while it can also mean the act of fighting in war in spoken context (44%).

For the word *Value*, it mostly means the amount that something is worth compared to the money that it costs – in academic context (93%), newspaper context (88%), magazine context (81%), web-general context (70%), fiction context (67%), spoken context (63%), blog context (53%) and movie context (43%), whereas it specifically means the importance of something only in TV context (31%).

The word *Growth* is usually used to refer to an increase in the success of a business or economy - in academic (63%), newspaper (58%), spoken (50%), blog (47%) and magazine (40%); and it can also mean the development in physical size or strength on fiction (52%), TV (38%) and movies (26%). In web-general (35%) it could mean an increase in amount, number or size.

For the word *Capital*, it is normally defined as a city that is the centre of government of a country in spoken (75%), fiction (74%), newspaper (64%), TV (61%), magazine (60%), movies and web-general contexts (51%). It tends to refer to the meaning more related to business context as a property for using to start a business in academic (63%) and blog contexts (60%).

The word *Cost* always means, in business terms, money that spend on things which are found in newspaper (57%), fiction (52%), magazine (46%), spoken (37%), movies (36%), TV (33%) and web-general (23%); and it also means to cause someone to lose something valuable which might be found on blog (30%).

For the last word *Interest*, it normally means a feeling of wanting to know about or take part in something which is mostly found in fiction (94%), movies (74%), TV (73%), web-general (63%) magazine (50%), spoken (42%), and newspaper contexts (39%). The word can be

defined as a benefit to someone being found in academic context (45%) or a share in a business in blog context (41%).

Table 1
Diversity of Meanings in Different Contexts

| <i>Vocabulary</i> | <i>Meaning</i> | <i>MOV</i> | <i>TV</i> | <i>FIC</i> | <i>BLOG</i> | <i>NEWS</i> | <i>ACAD</i> | <i>MAG</i> | <i>WEB</i> | <i>SPOK</i> |
|-------------------|---|------------|-----------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| <i>Engagement</i> | an agreement between two people to marry, or the period of time they are engaged. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | when you become involved with someone or something in order to understand them | - | - | - | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | - |
| | the act of beginning to fight someone, or a period of time in a war | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | ✓ |
| <i>Value</i> | the amount that something is worth compared to the money that it costs | ✓ | - | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | the importance or worth of something for someone | - | ✓ | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| <i>Growth</i> | an increase | - | - | - | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | - | ✓ |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | in the success of a business or a country's economy, or in the amount of money invested in them | | | | | | | | | |
| | The development of the physical size, strength etc of a person, animal, or plant over a period of time | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | an increase in amount, number, or size | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | ✓ | - |
| <i>Capital</i> | a city that is the centre of government of a country or smaller political area | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | - | ✓ | - | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | money or property that you use to start a business or invest to earn more money | - | - | - | ✓ | - | ✓ | - | - | - |
| <i>Cost</i> | money that an individual or organization | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | - | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | must spend regularly on things like electricity, rent, and travel | | | | | | | | | |
| | to cause someone to lose or destroy something valuable | - | - | - | ✓ | - | - | - | - | - |
| <i>Interest</i> | a feeling of wanting to know about or take part in something | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | - | ✓ | ✓ | - | ✓ | ✓ |
| | an advantage or benefit to someone or something | - | - | - | - | - | - | ✓ | - | - |
| | a share in a business or company and its profits | - | - | - | ✓ | - | - | - | - | - |

DISCUSSION

Overall, this study shows that meanings seem to be influenced by contexts of use. It seems that movie, TV and fiction can be classified as the same entertainment context, since almost all of the meanings of six words in these entertainment contexts share the same meanings.

Many studies (e.g. [9]) pointed out that online dictionaries are preferred over other forms of dictionaries because they can quickly obtain word definitions and provide sample sentences; however, it can be seen in this study that corpus can also show the meanings of vocabularies with the preference context of use. This study reflects a diversity of meanings in different contexts by using corpora as a source of information, which is similar to a study of a corpus-based investigation of English synonyms [10]. It is well noted that lexical approach may have played a pivotal role in improving students' reading comprehension ability [11], however, applying this to lexical approach can help students not only increasing their reading comprehension ability but also increasing their vocabulary size also using words more accurately and appropriately in different contexts.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University for invaluable help throughout this research.

REFERENCES

- [1] Boonpattanaporn, P. (2019). Grammar and Communicative English Language Teaching in the Thai Educational Context. *University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce Journal Humanities and Social Sciences*, 37(2), 152–169. Retrieved from <https://so06.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/utccjournalhs/article/view/165589>.
- [2] Rimkeeratikul, S. (2022). Needs Analysis on an English Textbook Entitled English for International Business. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, 15(1), 748–774. Retrieved from <https://so04.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/LEARN/article/view/256745>.
- [3] Sasum, S., & Weeks, B. (4, May 2018). Why Some Thai Students Cannot Speak English Fluently? [research article]. Retrieved from <https://rsucon.rsu.ac.th/proceeding/article/139>.
- [4] A. Lieungnapar, P. Akkarathanakul, S. Yordchim, C. Bunchutrakun. (2022). The Development of Technology-based Training Program in English for Logistics, *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, vol.5(2), pp. 108-123, 2022.
- [5] Liangpanit, C. (2013). Integrating Vocabulary into an English Course in the Thai Context for Thai EFL Learners: Research to Practice. *Journal of Education Naresuan University*, 15(2), 108–116. Retrieved from https://so06.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/edujournal_nu/article/view/9232.
- [6] Jirawat, R. (2020). Does Context Matter in Vocabulary Learning? *Suthiparithat*, 30(95), 37–47. Retrieved from <https://so05.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/DPUSuthiparithatJournal/article/view/244153>.
- [7] Coxhead, A. (2021). Vocabulary in English in Tertiary Contexts: Connecting Research and Learning. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, 14(1), 1-14.
- [8] Chansopha, N. (2018). The Use of International Business Management Collocations by Thai EFL Speakers. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, 11(1), 87–109. Retrieved from <https://so04.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/LEARN/article/view/135872>.
- [9] Fauzanz, A., Basthomi, Y., & Ivone, F. M. (2022). Effects of Using Online Corpus and Online Dictionary as Data-driven Learning on Students' Grammar Mastery. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, 15(2), 679–704. Retrieved from <https://so04.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/LEARN/article/view/259945>.
- [10] Sumonsriworakun, P. (2022). A corpus-based investigation of English synonyms: Disadvantage, downside, and drawback. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, 15(2), 649-678.

- [11] Zhong, Y., & Suwanthep, J. (2022). Effects of a lexical approach to Chinese English major students' reading comprehension ability. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, 15(2), 468-497.