



Expanding your English vocabulary skills, WS 2018/2019

1 General information concerning this course

This course is designed to help students at M.A. level to increase their command of English vocabulary. It is intended primarily for Erasmus students and is offered in both summer and winter semester — each time with different contents.

At the beginning of the course, we review some of the key notions of lexical theory, such as reference, denotation, connotation, synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, meronymy, and collocation. We then analyse a small number of texts to see what kind of lexical choices the author has made, and how these choices are related to the functions that the text is serving in its situational context; here we shall refer to the dimensions of ‘field’ (social action), ‘tenor’ (social relations) and ‘mode’ (role of language), as used in Systemic Functional Linguistics.

We shall also pay particular attention to what Ruqaiya Hasan has called ‘cohesive chains’ (Halliday and Hasan, 1985).

There will be weekly exercises to complete, including gap-fill exercises, tasks involving resources such as dictionaries and thesauruses, and rewriting exercises (in which we alter the degree of formality and/or technicality of texts).

The course will be taught in weekly ninety-minute blocks and is worth 3 Credit Points; thus, the total workload is approximately 75 to 90 academic hours (including the 30 academic hours — i.e. 2 academic hours a week over 15 weeks — of class time).

ERASMUS students can obtain a graded certificate for this course (3 ECTS points) by completing all of the assessment tasks (weekly exercises plus final examination or essay).

The initial reading material to accompany the course is:

M. A. K. Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan:
Language, context, and text: Aspects of language in a social-semiotic perspective
Deakin University Press, 1985.

The initial reading material will be made available at the beginning of the semester.

Further reading materials may be distributed at the weekly sessions.

All students taking the course should make sure that their correct e-mail address is on the course mailing list. It would be appreciated if students could include the word “[lexis]” (including the square brackets) in the subject field of any emails addressed to the course leader.

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Dr. Robert Spence



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<http://www.spence.saar.de/courses/lexis>

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