

# The Effect of Context on the Comprehension of English Idioms

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## ABSTRACT

*This paper presented that the vocabulary is different from one context to another. So this means that the meaning of the vocabulary is also different depending on the context itself.*

*The problem of this paper is to explain how the meaning of the vocabulary varies from one context to another. Depending about the problem, the researcher's aim for this paper is identifying how the meaning of the vocabulary differs from one context to another depending on some linguists that explain context in the second chapter in detail.*

*The hypothesis of this paper is that some of the students able to recognize the meaning of the vocabulary is different when it used within the text or without of the text, while the producers of this paper is that the researcher identifying the context based on different linguists, after that explaining the context in a situation and how is differed from one situation to another. And then the researcher selected some of the conversation in BBC program and selected some of the students at the and asked them to show how the meaning of the vocabulary differed when it used within or without of the context. And he makes the result in which he depends on the answer of the students.*

## INTRODUCTION

In this paper , the researcher shows that the effect of the context in creating the vocabulary differs from one context to another one depending on the meaning itself. The researcher states different definitions of the context based on different linguists and he also explains how each definition is different from the other. After that , he explains the context in a situation and also clarifies the meaning of the vocabulary from one situation to another one .

After this explanation, the researcher shows the relation between information and situation, this means that the information has been taken as an information in some situations.

The researcher explains the vocabulary in detail and also states the different definition depending on different linguists and he reached from all the definition that he explains 'vocabulary is the total of word that are necessity to communicate ideas and express the speaker's meaning' .

In addition to that, he explains that there are some principals to the learning vocabulary in which he explains these principals in detailed the section two.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### What is a context

A context is an expression which used in linguistics and phonetics. It is used to refer to specific part of an utterance near to a unit which is the main focus of attention. It is mentioned that the occurrence of any unit is specified context

by its context .Putting the word in the context referring to the "contextualization" . It is suggested that the words can have a meaning only after seeing in a context (Crystal, 2003: 103) .

Context has an important role in both semantics and pragmatics.

Loyons (1977: 572- 573) shows that many philosophers have a condition that a matter of pragmatics rather than semantics.

Malinowski (cited in locastro , 2003: 12 )generated the term of context of situation . this term is used to explain that " the situation in which words are uttered can never be passed over as irrelevant to linguistics expression " . He looks the language as it is root in a sociocultural scope and can't be expound outside its local use .

Hymes (1964), specifies the features of context

- 1) **The role of addressor and addressee: The former is the speaker or writer who produces the utterance and the latter is the hearer or reader who is recipient of the utterance.**
- 2) **Topic: What is being talked about?**
- 3) **Setting : the time and place that the event is located**
- 4) **Channel: How do the participants connect with each other by speech, writing, singing, smoke signals?**
- 5) **Code: The language, style or dialect of language that is used.**
- 6) **Event: The nature of the communicative event within which a genre may be embodied?**

He adds that the context of situation is substantial for understanding of the word .

Ochs (locasrto , 2003: 13) mention that the context includes the following:

- Setting : it means the social and locative scope in which encounters are situational .
- Behavioral environment : it indicates how the participants can used their bodies and behavior as a source for their talk.
- Language as a context : it inserts the idea of contextualization which is "the way language itself provides a context for other language."
- And the last one is the extra situational context that includes social cultural , historical ,political structure in which local examples needed to be interpreted .

Dey (1999) demonstrates context as any information that can be used to characterize the situation of any entity. An entity of person , place or object that is considered relevant to the interaction between user and application .

Context can be realized as a situation in which there is a consideration for ourselves ,and the actual adverbs of time or place for example :

### **The chalk is over there**

In this example , people make a connection between the language and the context of the utterance . The listener can be comprehend what the speaker means by utterances.

#### **2.1Situation**

In everyday life , people use the word situation to talk about the context and vice versa . Although , both of situations and context have different meaning that can be seen clearly in many dictionaries . There is a definition that reflects their relationship.

Learner's dictionary prepares a definition for this relationship.

Situation is a set of things that are happening and the condition that exist at particular time and place . The context is the situation of the within which something exist or happens and can explain it . The relationship between situation and context illustrate why people used situation and context in the spoken language.

## 2.2 Relation Between information and Situation:

K . Devlin describe the relationship between situation and information . According to Devlin , information is taken to be information about some situation in situation theory . This statement shows that the information context is situation dependent which explains the renowned place of situation theory within semantic and logical analysis of information .

## 2.3 The Definition of Vocabulary :

(Neuman and Dwyer, 2009, p.385) defines vocabulary as " Word we must know to communicate effectively ; words in speaking ( expressive vocabulary ) and words in listening (receptive vocabulary) .

Ur (1998) explains vocabulary as words that teach in the second language while Hornby ( 1995) clarifies vocabulary as " The total number of words in a language vocabulary is a list of words with their meanings ". Also , Diamond and Gutlohn (2006) define that vocabulary is the understanding of words and the word meaning."

Lubbadeh's definition (1993: 105) is that vocabulary is "a word or item taken from a book or a paragraph that the teacher will explain or collect in a kind of list, used by the teacher who is teaching a foreign language."

Hornby (2000: 1447) explains that vocabulary is "a list of words with their meanings especially in a book of foreign language."

Younan (2005: 10) demonstrates that vocabulary is "a lexical unit is considered only as it attaches to the cultural meaning of a speech community regardless of its grammatical functions."

All the definition above explain that vocabulary is the total of word that are necessity to communicate ideas and express the speaker's meaning.

## 2.4 Some Basic Principles for Learning Vocabulary:

1. Students must have deep understanding of the meaning of a word if they see the same word in different contexts.
2. The Students need time to acquire new vocabulary.
3. Students word toward building a large vocabulary of words they understand without hesitation.
4. Context is used in order to learn most of the words that they don't understand frequently e.g. sky, diving.
5. New words are linked by the students with the ones they already know and group words together, e.g. to talk, to speak.
6. Students remember words they find meaningful and useful in their learning (FAQ, 2004: 2).

## 3. METHODOLOGY

In this section , the researcher is going to collect several conversation about vocabulary from the BBC website ; present it to undergraduate students ;analyzing their comprehension of the meaning of the vocabulary .

### 3.1 Data Selection

The data comprise of 10 commonly used vocabulary found in conversations ,and collected from a BBC program called "the English We Speak".

All the conversations can be found in the following link:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02pc9zn/episodes/player>

### 3.2 Participant

The participant selected for this study from secondary School for girls . All the participants are female and their ages range from (12-15) years old.

### 3.3 Procedures

At the beginning , the researcher gives a brief explanation about the vocabulary and also explain how the vocabulary differs from one context to another .

After that the researcher asked the students whether they can guess the meaning of the vocabulary. And then he handed each student a paper containing the selected conversation .

The students were told to read the conversation out loud and were asked about the meaning of the vocabulary in each conversation . The correct answer was given to them by the researcher after they guess the meaning of the vocabulary .A record was kept to the students' answer about the meaning of the vocabulary from one context to another .

### 3.4 Data Analysis

The table below shows the number of the students who guessed the meaning of the vocabulary with and without context .

No.	Vocabulary	Meaning	No. within context	No. without context
1.	Awkward	feeling uncomfortable, self-conscious or embarrassed in a social situation.	85	23
2.	implicit	not spoken or written down, but still understood.	122	88
3.	Social rules	the way we behave in society in particular situations so that we can live together peacefully.	59	17
4.	To govern	To control, to rule	148	93
5.	To illuminate	to make something easier to understand, to clarify	144	114
6.	a fan of something	Keen on something	90	36
7.	Endemic	very common or strongly established in a place or situation	105	40

8.	A warren	an underground area where rabbits live, but also a building or a part of a town where there are lots of confusing passageways or streets where it is easy to get lost.	98	34
9.	A predator	an animal that hunts and kills another animal	88	29
10.	A paradoxical	to make something easier to understand, to clarify.	133	109
11.	A trickster	someone who deceives people to get what they want.	88	51
12.	floordrobe	collection of clothes untidily kept on the floor rather than in a wardrobe	73	14
13.	clutter	untidiness caused by having too many things. To declutter is the process of getting rid of things	95	79
14.	To tackle	to deal with a problem and try to fix it	168	95
15.	Sentimental	with an emotional and/or nostalgic connection	47	22
16.	Make do and mend	an expression that means to use what you've got and fix something if it breaks rather than buying new things	59	12
17.	To make ends meet	to have just enough money to pay for the things you need	99	27
18.	Sideline	an extra job you do alongside your main job	138	59
19.	Sacrificing	giving up or going without something.	61	38
20.	Accustomed	Familiar with .	79	53
21.	Creative balance	a good mix of doing creative and uncreative tasks.	188	114
22.	Grind	something tiring, difficult or boring which involves lots of effort.	99	81
23.	Fad	something that is popular but only for a short time	74	49
24.	Mainstream	something that has become accepted by most people as normal	158	94
25.	polarised	a situation that causes people to divide into two groups with opposing views	42	19
26.	Immoral	something that society thinks is wrong or not acceptable	141	115
27.	Peripheral	relates to things that are not as important as the main argument but	83	44

		are connected to it / situated on the edge		
28.	Decent	Good or good enough	126	112
29.	Food allergies	medical problems that are caused by eating certain foods	68	27
30.	Robust studies	detailed, thorough and accurate research	31	11
31.	Prevalence	a noun referring to how often or how frequent something is	52	13
32.	Eczema	a medical condition of the skin	177	110
33.	A significant increase	a large, noticeable rise in the number of something	78	32
34.	To put something down to something	to say that one thing is the reason for another	151	50
35.	Oppression	being forced to do something by someone more powerful	188	69
36.	Glamour	the quality of looking fashionable and attractive	149	87
37.	Transformative	great improvement or positive change	117	68
38.	Otherworldly	belonging to an imaginary world rather than the real world	23	15
39.	Act of subordinate	making someone do something to give them less authority or power	120	58
40.	To draw parallels	to highlight the similarities between two distinct things	177	110
41.	Work ethic	belief that working hard is morally right	32	17
42.	Down in the dump	(informal) feeling of unhappiness, sometimes with no hope	73	19
43.	Imperfection	fault or weakness	131	79
44.	Gild	cover something in a thin layer of gold	122	118
45.	jolly	cheerful and happy	99	120
46.	Coping mechanism	something someone does to deal with a difficult situation	41	30
47.	dogma	a set of beliefs that are strongly held and which are not challenged	36	20
48.	Prefrontal cortex	an important part of the brain involved in many complex mental actions like planning and personality	37	18
49.	Cognitive tasks	mental activities that we consciously have to think about like making plans and taking decisions	79	50

50.	Adolescent	the adjective to describe behaviour of someone who is in adolescence. Also, the noun for someone who is in adolescence	40	17
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### 3.5 The Result Of Analysis

The table above explain that a bit of the students can understand the meaning of the vocabulary within or without of the text . Some of the students find a difficulty in understanding the meaning vocabulary without of the text. It is known that the meaning of the vocabulary differs from one text to another and this effects on the context as a whole.

### CONCLUSION

The researcher concludes when he explaining the meaning of the vocabulary from one context to another in some situation which is also differed .

The researcher concluded that some of the learning is being able to know the meaning of the vocabulary when it used within the context . A little bit of the students have the ability to know the meaning of the vocabulary without of the text and we can call this is the intelligent student .

So that the meaning of the vocabulary is different from one situation to another one . This means that we must understand the situation in order to know the meaning of the vocabulary .

### APPENDIX

#### The First Conversation

Neil :Hello. I'm Neil.

Dan :And I'm Dan.

Neil :Now then, Dan, do you ever feel awkward?

Dan :Awkward?

Neil :Yes, feeling uncomfortable, embarrassed or self-conscious in a social situation where something isn't quite right.

Dan :Sometimes. I remember always feeling very awkward watching TV with my parents if there was an explicit love scene.

You know, people canoodling.

Neil :Oh yes, me too! And that feeling of awkwardness is what we are looking at in today's 6 Minute English, and how it is all connected to social rules.

Dan Social rules are the unspoken rules which we follow in everyday life - the way we interact with other people and particularly with strangers.

Neil :Yes. For example, if you're waiting at a bus stop, it's OK to talk about the weather to a stranger.

Dan

But it would be very awkward if you broke that social rule by asking them about, oh I don't know, how much money they earned.

Neil :Oh yes, that would be wrong, wouldn't it?

And we'll find out about another awkward situation on the underground railway later in the programme.

Before that though, a quiz. Which city has the oldest underground railway? Is it:

- a) London
- b) New York or
- c) Tokyo

Dan :Aha! Well, I'm pretty confident about this! I think it's London.

Neil :Well, I'll have the answer later in the programme.

Dr. Raj Persaud: is a psychologist. He was a guest on the BBC radio programme Seriously.

He was talking about social rules. How does he say they affect our lives?

Dr Raj Persaud : How do we understand what the implicit social rules are that govern our behavior?

They're so implicit. They're so almost invisible - yet we all obey them - i.e. they're massively powerful that the only way to get at them, because you couldn't use an MRI brain scanner or a microscope...

What's the tool you would use to illuminate the social rules that actually govern our lives?

Neil :How do they affect our lives?

Dan :He says that they govern our behaviour, they govern our lives - this means that they 'control' our lives. They 'rule' our lives.

Neil : What's interesting is he says these social rules are implicit. They are not written down anywhere. They are unspoken but understood.

Dan :If they are unspoken and not written down, how can scientists and sociologists study them? How can they find out about them?

They need a way to illuminate the rules. This means a way of shining a metaphorical light on them to see what they are.

Neil: Here's Dr Persaud again.

Dr Raj Persaud :How do we understand what the implicit social rules are that govern our behavior?

They're so implicit. They're so almost invisible - yet we all obey them - i.e. they're massively powerful that the only way to get at them, because you couldn't use an MRI brain scanner or a microscope...

What's the tool you would use to illuminate the social rules that actually govern our lives?

Neil : One way to find out about a rule is to break it.

Another word for 'break' when we're talking about rules is breach and breaching experiments were used to learn about social rules.

Here's Dr Persaud describing one of those experiments.

Dr Raj Persaud : You breached the social rule on purpose.

So a classic one - people would go into the Metro, the underground railway - Tube - and there'd be only one person sitting in a carriage.

You would go and sit next to that person.

And if that led to awkwardness or discomfort, where the person got off the tube stop immediately, you had discovered a social rule.

Neil :So, what was the experiment?

Dan :Well, quite simply, find a nearly empty train carriage and then go and sit right next to someone rather than a distance away.

If that person then feels uncomfortable or awkward, and that's something you can tell by watching their behaviour - for example, do they change seat, move carriage or get off the train completely?

If they do, then you know you've discovered a rule.

Neil : So you find a rule by breaking it or breaching it. OK, time to review our vocabulary, but first, let's have the answer to the quiz question.

I asked which city has the oldest underground railway. Is it:

- a) London
- b) New York and
- c) Tokyo

Dan, you were pretty confident.

Dan :I was! I said London, but now I'm having second thoughts. I think it might be New York.

Neil :Oh... That's a little bit awkward, isn't it?

Well, it is London, so I don't know if you're right or wrong! I feel a bit uncomfortable now.

The facts are that London opened in 1863. New York was 1904 and Tokyo, 1927.

Well done, and extra bonus points if you knew any of those dates.

Now it's time for our vocabulary. I hope it doesn't make you feel awkward, but you can you start, Dan?

Dan :Of course! And the adjective awkward, and its noun awkwardness, are on our list for today.

They mean 'an uncomfortable feeling in a social situation.'

Neil :This is all connected with the idea of social rules - unspoken, but well known rules which we follow in daily life to avoid awkward situations.

Dan :The rules, as Neil said, are not spoken and they are not written down but we know them and understand them. They are implicit.

Neil :And these implicit rules govern our lives. The verb govern means to 'control and rule.'

Dan :To see something clearly, either in reality or metaphorically, you need to put some light on it. You need illuminate it.

And that was the next of our words, the verb illuminate.

Neil :And finally we had a word which means, when we're talking about rules, the same as break, to breach.

Dan In experiments they breached the rules to learn more about them.

Neil : Well, we don't want to breach any rules so it's time for us to leave you for today. But don't worry we will be back.

In the meantime, you can find us in all the usual places online and on social media, just look for BBC Learning English. Bye for now.

Dan :Bye-bye!

### **The Second Conversation :**

**Neil**

Hello. I'm Neil. And joining me is Rob.

**Rob :** Hello.

**Neil**

Rob, when we think of Easter, what do you think of?

**Rob**

Chocolate!

**Neil**

Well, yes chocolate Easter eggs are an obvious symbol of Easter. But there is an animal people often associate with Easter...

**Rob**

Rabbits! Cute, adorable and fluffy - what's not to like about a rabbit?

**Neil**

Well, not everyone is a fan of them - by not a fan of I mean they don't like them. Some people think they are a pest. But we'll be telling you more about rabbits shortly.

**Rob**

That's good to know. Well, I'll tell you what I am a fan of and that is your quiz questions - so what are you going to ask me today?

**Neil**

It's all about wild rabbits. In the last rabbit survey in 1995, how many were estimated to exist in the UK? Is it...

- a) **370,500**
- b) **3,750,000, or**
- c) **37,500,000?**

**Rob**

I know rabbits are everywhere in the UK but not 37 million of them - so I'll go for b) 3,750,000.

**Neil**

Well, you'll have to wait until the end of the programme to find out. But you're right when you say rabbits are everywhere in the UK. It's probably true in other countries too.

You could say they are endemic - meaning very common or strongly established in a place or situation.

**Rob**

But are they a typically British wild animal?

**Neil**

They are now but it's believed they were brought to the country by invaders - some say The Romans, others The Normans. But they eventually spread across the UK.

Victoria Dickinson is author of a book called Rabbit and she's been telling the BBC Radio 4 programme Costing The Earth about what helped them spread...

**Victoria Dickinson, author**

It was really by the middle of the 17th Century when people really started to think about rabbit as being particularly British... and certainly there were more rabbits in Britain than in the rest of Europe. There was a calculation done that there are over 400 villages and towns in Britain with the word warren in their name.

So the rabbits were raised in Britain but they really kept to their warrens until there was the rise of fox hunting - when their predators disappeared rabbits do what rabbits do best, and they started to multiply and become wild, feral rabbits throughout the land.

**Neil**

So Victoria knows a thing or two about rabbits - and said the word warren used in town and village names, is evidence that they've been in the UK since the mid-17th Century.

A warren is the area underground where rabbits live with lots of holes and connected passages.

**Rob**

But today we use the word warren to mean a building or a part of a town where there are lots of confusing passageways or streets. It's a kind of place where you get lost.

**Neil**

But it was rabbit warrens where rabbits would live until hunting, particularly fox hunting, was introduced and that killed many of the rabbit's predators. A predator is an animal that hunts and kills another animal.

**Rob**

Now, Victoria was talking about feral rabbits - so wild rabbits - not the sort people keep at pets in a rabbit hutch. Moving on - I'm interested to know why not everyone loves these cute little creatures, I mean, think of the rabbit characters in the Beatrix Potter stories.

**Neil**

Well they weren't always well behaved. And Victoria Dickinson spoke to the Costing the Earth programme about this. What word did she use to describe rabbits having the two opposite sides to their character?

Victoria Dickinson, author

The rabbit is a paradoxical animal; it has a lot of faces if you will. It's both wild and tame, it's timid but also has its reputation as trickster rabbit - if you think of Peter Cottontail, or you think of Br'er Rabbits - and I think our relationship with rabbit is the rabbit of the nursery rhyme, the rabbit of childhood or you think of Peter Rabbit.

**Rob**

She said that rabbits are paradoxical animals - that's the word that describes them having two opposing characteristics.

**Neil**

Yes - we think of them as wild, maybe a trickster - someone who deceives people to get what they want. Like Peter - what a cheeky rabbit!

**Rob**

But we also think.

of rabbits as tame - we have nursery rhymes about them, kids have soft cuddly rabbit toys. I say they're the perfect symbol for Easter.

**Neil**

OK Rob, if you say so. But now let me answer the question I set you earlier. In the last survey of rabbits in 1995, how many were estimated to exist in the UK? Was it...

- a) 370,500
- b) 3,750,000, or
- c) 37,500,000?

**Rob**, what did you say?

**Rob**

I said b) 3,750,000.

Neil

Well, you're wrong Rob! A government survey put the population in the UK at 37.5 million - so a lot more.

But despite its reputation, a recent survey suggests rabbit numbers in the UK have declined by around 60 per cent over the last 20 years.

Rob

That is sad news. But let's cheer ourselves up with a recap of the vocabulary we've discussed today, starting with a fan of.

Neil

When someone is a fan of something, they are keen on it, they like it a lot. If you're not a fan of something - you don't like it.

**Rob**

We mentioned endemic - meaning very common or strongly established in a place or situation.

Neil

And we talked about a warren - an underground area where rabbits live, but also a building or a part of a town where there are lots of confusing passageways or streets where it is easy to get lost.

**Rob**

A predator is an animal that hunts and kills another animal.

Neil

Paradoxical describes things that have two opposing characteristics making it hard to understand.

**Rob**

And a trickster is someone who deceives people to get what they want.

Neil

Well, I'm no trickster, it really has been six minutes so it's time to call it a day. Please join us next time.

**Rob**

Bye for now.

**Neil**

Goodbye

### **The Third Conversation**

**Rob**

Hello. This is 6 Minute English. I'm Rob.

**Neil**

And I'm Neil.

**Rob**

Now, Neil, are you a tidy person?

**Neil**

Me? Oh dear no! You should see my floordrobe!

**Rob**

Your Floordrobe?

**Neil**

Yes. Tidy people keep their clothes in a wardrobe.

I just dump a lot of my clothes on the floor, so - a floordrobe.

**Rob**

Ah yes, well it sounds as if you could use a bit of decluttering.

Clutter is the word for general mess and untidiness when you have too many things, too much stuff.

These days the idea of decluttering is very popular.

**Neil**

Oh, I love a good declutter - trouble is, I hate throwing things away.

**Rob**

Well, we might have some advice for you in today's programme. But first, a question. It's about cleaning up.

The vacuum cleaner is a machine we use to clean our houses.

When were the first mechanical floor cleaners, which later became vacuum cleaners, invented? Was it:

A) the 1860s?

B) the 1890s? Or

C) the 1920s?

**Neil**

Well, you know what? I have no idea! So, I'll say the 1890s.

**Rob**

OK, well, I'll have the answer later in the programme.

The decluttering techniques of Marie Kondo are very popular these days.

A UK decluttering expert, Lesley Spellman, appeared on the BBC radio programme *You and Yours* to discuss the topic.

She was asked to describe the basics of the Marie Kondo method.

What's the first thing she recommends people start with?

Lesley Spellman

She basically says you have to do things in a certain order.

You have to start with your clothes. Then you move on to your books. Then you move on to paperwork.

Then you go on to something called 'komono', which is kind of everything else: kitchens, bathrooms, garages, lofts etc. And then finally you tackle sentimental things.

**Rob**

She says that you have to start with your clothes before moving on through different categories of clutter.

**Neil**

The verb she uses for dealing with these things is to tackle.

To tackle something means 'to deal with it, to sort it out.'

**Rob**

And the last things she says you need to tackle are sentimental things.

These are things that you have an emotional connection to, such as old letters and photographs.

I have to say those are the things I find most difficult to get rid of! I'm very sentimental like that.

**Neil**

I think you just have to be ruthless, Rob! Either that or buy a bigger house.

Right, let's listen to Lesley Spellman again.

**Lesley Spellman**

She basically says you have to do things in a certain order.

You have to start with your clothes. Then you move on to your books. Then you move on to paperwork.

Then you go on to something called 'komono', which is kind of everything else: kitchens, bathrooms, garages, lofts etc.

And then finally you tackle sentimental things.

**Rob**

So why is it that decluttering is such big business these days, and there are many people and companies offering advice and services?

Here's Lesley Spellman again with her thoughts on this.

Lesley Spellman

I think there's been a big shift really.

So my generation, my parents, you know, definitely came from that make do and mend era post war in the sort of 20th century. And then all of a sudden people started to get a little bit more money.

Things became more affordable. You can buy five tops for five pounds each and people have done that. And that's allowed the consumerism to kind of go crazy in the 21st century.

**Rob**

So what does she put our need for decluttering down to?

**Neil**

Well, first she says that there has been a shift in our behaviour.

This is a way of saying that there has been a change in the way we behave.

We used to make do and mend much more.

This phrase means that we made full use of what we had and if something broke, we tried to fix it.

**Rob**

And these days, we seem to have more money and many goods have got cheaper, and we just like buying stuff - or as she says, consumerism has gone crazy.

Let's listen to her again.

Lesley Spellman

I think there's been a big shift really.

So my generation, my parents, you know, definitely came from that make do and mend era post war in the sort of 20th century.

And then all of a sudden people started to get a little bit more money.

Things became more affordable. You can buy five tops for five pounds each and people have done that.

And that's allowed the consumerism to kind of go crazy in the 21st century.

**Rob**

Time to tidy up today's vocabulary, but first, let's have the answer to the question.

Earlier I asked you: When were the first mechanical floor cleaners invented? Was it in:

A) the 1860s?

B) the 1890s? Or

C) the 1920s?

And Neil, you said?

**Neil**

I guessed at the 1890s.

**Rob**

Sadly not! The correct answer is the 1860s.

So, well done anyone who got that right. Now on with today's vocabulary . The first word we had was floordrobe.

**Neil**

Yes, this is a word to describe a pile of clothes that someone keeps on the floor rather than in a wardrobe.

**Rob**

Well I don't have a floordrobe, but I do have a chairdrobe - I guess you can work out what that means!

Anyway, it seems we both have too much clutter, which is the untidiness caused by having too many things.

**Neil**

And this leads us to the popular pastime of decluttering, which is throwing away things to make our homes neat and tidy.

**Rob**

Clutter, in my life, is an issue I haven't tackled yet. I haven't tried to fix it or sort it out.

**Neil**

One area that the experts say you need to tackle is sentimental things.

These are things which you have an emotional connection to - maybe old letters and photographs for example.

**Rob**

We then looked at the word shift, which was a way of saying change.

There has been a shift or a change in the way we think about things.

**Neil**

Yes, rather than an attitude of make do and mend, which means an attitude of being content with what you've got and fixing things if they break, we have become part of a consumerist culture where we like to buy more and more stuff.

**Rob**

But we still find it hard to throw things away!

**Neil**

Yes, indeed, we do. Well it's time for us to collect our scripts and declutter the studio.

We look forward to your company next time and until then you can find us in all the usual places online and on social media, just look for BBC Learning English.

**Bye for now.**

**Rob Bye-bye!**

**The Fourth Conversation**

**Neil**

Hello. I'm Neil.

This is the programme where in just six minutes we discuss an interesting topic and teach some related English vocabulary. Joining me to do this is Rob.

**Rob**

Hello.

**Neil**

Now Rob, we know your main job is to work here at BBC Learning English but do you have a second job?

**Rob**

There's no time for two jobs Neil, but if there was, I think I'd take photographs and sell them. I do love photography so I might as well make some money from it.

**Neil**

Good thinking, Rob! And having a second job, particularly one that involves using your skills and allows you to follow your interests, is called a side hustle.

**Rob**

Yes, a side hustle. It's something more and more of us are involved with these days. And that's what we'll be talking about shortly.

**Neil**

Well, my side hustle should be quiz master, because I'm always asking questions and today is no exception.

According to the employee ratings website Glassdoor, which job is thought to be the best to have in the UK this year? Is it...

- a) a software engineer
- b) a teacher, or
- c) an audit manager?

**Rob**

Hmm, well, I suspect b) a teacher.

**Neil**

Well, you'll just have to wait until the end of the programme to find out.

But let's talk more about side hustles - or a second job. For some people having two jobs is a necessity - a way to make ends meet.

That means 'having just enough money to pay for the things you need.'

**Rob**

That's true but it now seems that more people want to put their skills and passions into practice to make extra money.

**Neil**

According to research by Henley Business School, around one in four workers run at least one side hustle business, half of which were started in the past two years. Those aged 25 to 34 are most likely to be involved with 37% thought to run a sideline of some kind.

A sideline also describes an extra job you do alongside your main job.

BBC Radio 5 Live spoke to someone whose side hustler was so satisfying that that it turned into her day job.

Here is Elspeth Jackson, founder of Ragged Life, to explain why.

Elspeth Jackson, founder of Ragged Life

It's a different environment entirely because you're leaving essentially a very regular wage that you'd get the same amount in month after month, you can put aside savings, the same amount every month and you have that certain amount of security.

But now I don't think I could go back to one of these big companies because you'd essentially be sacrificing the flexibility, which is something I've become very accustomed to now.

**Neil**

Things have worked out well for Elspeth. But there were risks - for example, leaving behind the security - the safety - of a regular job and of course, a regular income.

**Rob**

Elspeth liked making rag rugs. This has given her flexibility in her life and returning to work at a big company would be sacrificing that. That means 'giving something up' or 'going without it.'

**Neil**

And for Elspeth, her side hustle has become a full-time job and she's become accustomed to her lifestyle. It's become familiar or normal.

**Rob**

The BBC also spoke to Becci Mae Ford, who works some of the time for a telecommunications company to pay the bills, but spends the rest of her time developing her own crafting company Ellbie Co= .

How did she find having two jobs?

Becci Mae Ford, Ellbie Co.

I think it just gives me creative balance, and obviously working for the telecoms firm it gets me out the house and gets me to meet people in a social environment.

It can be difficult to juggle the two though definitely.

It's definitely a grind. It's a lot harder than people think it's going to be.

**Neil**

So Becci implies that it's not always easy to have a side hustle. The benefit for her is the creative balance - a good mix of doing office-based work, regular tasks and a routine with working creatively, making things and getting pleasure from it.

**Rob**

But juggling - or balancing these two things is difficult and she described her side hustle as sometimes being a grind - hard work, tiring and occasionally boring.

But overall, it does make her happy.

**Neil**

Now something that would make me happy is to give you the answer to today's quiz question.

Earlier I asked you, according to the employee ratings website Glassdoor, which job is thought to be the best to have in the UK this year? Is it...

- a) a software engineer
- b) a teacher, or
- c) an audit manager?

**Rob**

Yes and I said b) a teacher - always the best job in the world!

**Neil**

Sadly not, Rob. Apparently, it is c) an audit manager that is considered to be the best job to have this year.

Audit managers are responsible for organising and overseeing internal audits.

The result was based on three factors: average annual base salary, the current number of job openings, and job satisfaction, according to ratings shared by employees on the website over the past 12 months.

**Rob**

So sounds like an interesting job for a side hustle, but before I head off for a career change, let's remind ourselves of the main vocabulary we've discussed - starting with to make ends meet.

**Neil**

When we make ends meet, we have just enough money to pay for the things we need.

**Rob**

Next, we mentioned a sideline which describes an extra job you do alongside your main job.

**Neil**

Then we had sacrificing. That means 'giving up something important' or 'going without something.'

**Rob**

Accustomed is a word to mean 'usual or normal'. If you get accustomed to doing something, it becomes the normal way of doing it - it becomes familiar.

**Neil**

We also talked about the expression creative balance. That describes getting the best mix of doing creative and uncreative tasks.

**Rob**

And finally, grind describes doing something that is tiring, difficult, sometimes boring and involves lots of effort.

**Neil**

Well this programme has not been a grind, Rob. It's been six minutes of pleasure. Don't forget you can learn more English with us on our website [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com).

Rob :Bye for now.

Neil : Bye.

### **The Fifth Conversation**

**Dan**

Hello and welcome to 6 Minute English. I'm Dan and joining me is Rob.

**Rob**

Hello.

**Dan**

Here at BBC Learning English, we're always discussing diets.

**Rob**

I am on a sea-food diet. When I see food, I just have to eat it!

**Dan**

I suppose there's no chance of converting you to a vegan diet, is there?

That seems to be the most talked about food fad at the moment - a fad is something that is popular but only for a short time.

**Rob**

Of course, veganism - that's not eating or using any products that come from animals - may be more than a fad.

It could be a lifestyle that improves our health and the planet. And it could be here to stay.

But personally, me becoming a vegan would take some persuading.

**Dan**

I'm sure it would. And in this programme we'll be discussing the debate about veganism and how it's sometimes difficult to change people's minds.

But first a question to answer. We've mentioned what a vegan eats but what about a lacto-ovo-vegetarian?

Which one of these items can they eat? Is it:

- a) pork
- b) fish or
- c) cheese?

**Rob**

I'll say b) they can eat fish.

**Dan**

Well, you'll have to wait until the end of the programme to find out. But now back to veganism.

According to some national surveys, there are now around 3.5 million full-time vegans in the UK... and the number is growing!

**Rob**

And what was recently a radical lifestyle choice is slowly moving into the mainstream - or has become accepted by most people as normal.

**Dan**

Advocates of veganism say their healthy lifestyle would also free up space and resources for growing food and it would help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

**Rob**

Yeah, but come on Dan. Having a meat-free diet means you might not get all the nutrients you need.

**Dan**

Well, this is all part of the debate, Rob. There's always two sides to an argument and it's something that's been discussed on BBC Radio 4's Farming Today programme.

They spoke to Dr Jutta Tobias Mortlock, a senior lecturer in organisational psychology at London's City University, who explained why views about veganism are so polarised - that 'means causing people to divide into two groups with opposing views.'

Dr Jutta Tobias Mortlock

This issue touches on personal beliefs, and beliefs always trump facts and so, often when we talk about beliefs, we're touching on important values.

Values are the things that guide our opinion over what's right versus what's wrong.

And so whenever people argue over whether it's right or wrong to eat meat, they are in fact not debating the facts around this issue, they're actually debating the beliefs about what's moral or immoral about this.

**Dan**

So it seems in the whole debate about veganism we are basing our views on beliefs.

A belief is something we feel is true or real. Our beliefs are based on our values - those are the things we think are right and wrong.

**Rob**

And when we argue over the rights and wrongs of veganism, we base it on our values - not hard facts.

We talk about our view on what is immoral - so what society thinks is wrong or not acceptable. But basically, there is no right or wrong answer.

**Dan**

That's why we need facts, Rob.

**Rob**

So Dan, what can I do if I want to win you over to becoming an omnivore, like me?

**Dan**

According to Dr Jutta, there are two main routes to winning someone over: a direct, fact-based approach or a 'peripheral route', which might be more effective.

Let's hear her explain how it works.

Dr Jutta Tobias Mortlock

If I'm working with you and I'm trying to get you to come round to my side, I might not focus on the central facts. I might focus on the peripheral stuff around how I'm constructing my argument.

I'd look for ways of how they overlap as people, like what do they have in common?

And that's a way to debate an issue such as this controversial one in a way to get people to feel connected to each other and to actually feel that they value each other as decent human beings.

**Rob**

Interesting! This is a more subtle way of winning an argument.

She says we should focus on the peripheral stuff - these are the things that are not as important as the main argument but are connected to it.

**Dan**

So we could say we're looking for common ground - things that both sides agree on or at least understand.

Dr Jutta talked about making both sides feel connected. And it's a good point.

Even if you don't want to be a vegan, you should respect someone's choice to be one.

**Rob**

Yes, it's all about valuing someone as a decent human being. Decent means 'good and having good moral standards'. Like us, Dan!

**Dan**

Well, they're wise words, Rob!

Of course, it would be morally wrong - immoral - not to give you the answer to our quiz question.

Earlier I asked which one of these items can a lacto over-vegetarian eat.

**Rob**

I said b) fish.

**Dan**

Sorry, no - that's something they can't eat - but they can eat cheese.

A lacto-ovo-vegetarian is a person who eats vegetables, eggs, and dairy products but does not eat meat.

**Rob**

No meat! No steak! How can they enjoy eating!?

**Dan**

**Rob**, remember as a decent human beings, we respect all views here.

**Rob**

Just joking - but now I'm deadly serious about reviewing some of the vocabulary we've discussed today.

**Dan**

OK. Our first word was fad. A fad is something that is popular but only for a short time.

**Rob**

Next, we mentioned mainstream. Something that is mainstream has become accepted by most people as normal.

**Dan**

Then we had polarised - that describes a situation that causes people to divide into two groups with opposing views.

**Rob**

A belief is something we feel is true or real. And immoral describes something that society thinks is wrong or not acceptable.

**Dan**

We also mentioned peripheral, which relates to things that are not as important as the main argument, but are connected to it. It also means situated on the edge.

**Rob**

And finally, decent means 'good or good enough.'

**Dan**

Don't forget you can learn more English with us on our website at [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com).

**Rob** Bye for now.

**Dan** Goodbye.