

## HOW TO (RE-)LEARN WORDS:

### GUIDELINES FOR **LEXICAL CONSOLIDATION**

Every time you (re-)learn a new word, make sure you:

- a. look it up on a good corpus-based dictionary (*like COBUILD*), then search for it on the web to study how it is used in context;
- b. know its frequency: master FREQUENTLY-used expressions for active use, NOT fancy, rare ones
- c. know exactly what it means (*denotation and connotation, register, etc*)
- d. know how to pronounce it properly (*stress, etc.*)
- e. know how to use it (*in a sentence, etc.*)
- f. compare it to some useful synonyms, antonyms, and related words, and understand their different nuances
- g. know some idiomatic and clever way to translate it in a few different contexts
- h. master at least 5 collocations/phrases/patterns using that word, and memorise some recyclable productive frames into which you can slot words to make your own sentences

= **MULTI-WORD UNITS**: language consists to a large extent of **PREFABRICATED CHUNKS** (Lewis, 1997)

> even truer of the routinised language we encounter in technical or political speeches!

- CREATION OF A DEDICATED **ACTIVE VOCAB NOTEBOOK**:
  - a. Record whole expressions containing the **HEADWORD** (= the word of interest) ;
  - b. Start with the expression you initially encounter, and then find more;
  - c. Useful methods:
    - collocation dictionaries and corpus-based advanced learner dictionaries
    - authentic texts
    - relevant websites, targeting your search (ex. 'site:europa.eu')
    - online corpora (ex. COBUILD, BNC, Time magazine corpus of American English)
    - 'web-as-corpus' query and concordance tools (ex. IATE, Linguee.com)
    - asking native speakers.

**NB**: DO NOT RECORD ALL THE EXPRESSIONS you find. Look for:

- a. strong and frequent collocations;
- b. patterns that are new to you;
- c. expressions and frames that look particularly useful;
- d. words and phrases which seem difficult to translate into your A language.