

## Teaching the semantic meaning of lexical blends

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### Abstract

Lexical blending, a regular, creative, and productive word-formation mechanism whereby a lexeme combines two (or more) source words, one of which at least is shortened (e.g., *Janxiety* < *January* + *anxiety*), is becoming more and more popular in present-day English (Peña, 2022: 276). Thus, learning how to come to terms with the meaning, form, and function of blends contributes to enhancing learners' receptive and productive skills. The main objective of this proposal is to teach B2 and C1 students of English who are native speakers of Spanish how to interpret the semantic meaning of lexical blends by designing a series of activities. First a distinction is made between idiomatic and non-idiomatic blends. In the former, the meaning of the blend does not exactly result from the sum of the meanings of the source words making up the blend (e.g., *mansplain* < *man* + *explain*; to explain something to a woman in a patronizing way that assumes she is stupid). In the latter, the semantic import of the blend is the result of the juxtaposition of the meanings of the base words (e.g., *spork* < *spoon* + *fork*; a utensil that is both a spoon and a fork). Another set of exercises focuses on the semantic relationship between the source words involved in a blend: contrast (e.g., *glamping* < *glamorous* + *camping*; camping that is more luxurious than traditional camping); parameterization (a type-of relation) of the rightmost segment (e.g., *lockstalgia* < *lockdown* + *nostalgia*), or similarity (e.g., *fantabulous* < *fantastic* + *fabulous*).

**Keywords:** lexical blending; vocabulary; semantic meaning; idiomatic blends; non-idiomatic blends