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Lexis:
Word Association and
Lexical Development

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Aim

- To explore the relationship between word-association and learners' lexical development.

□ Procedure

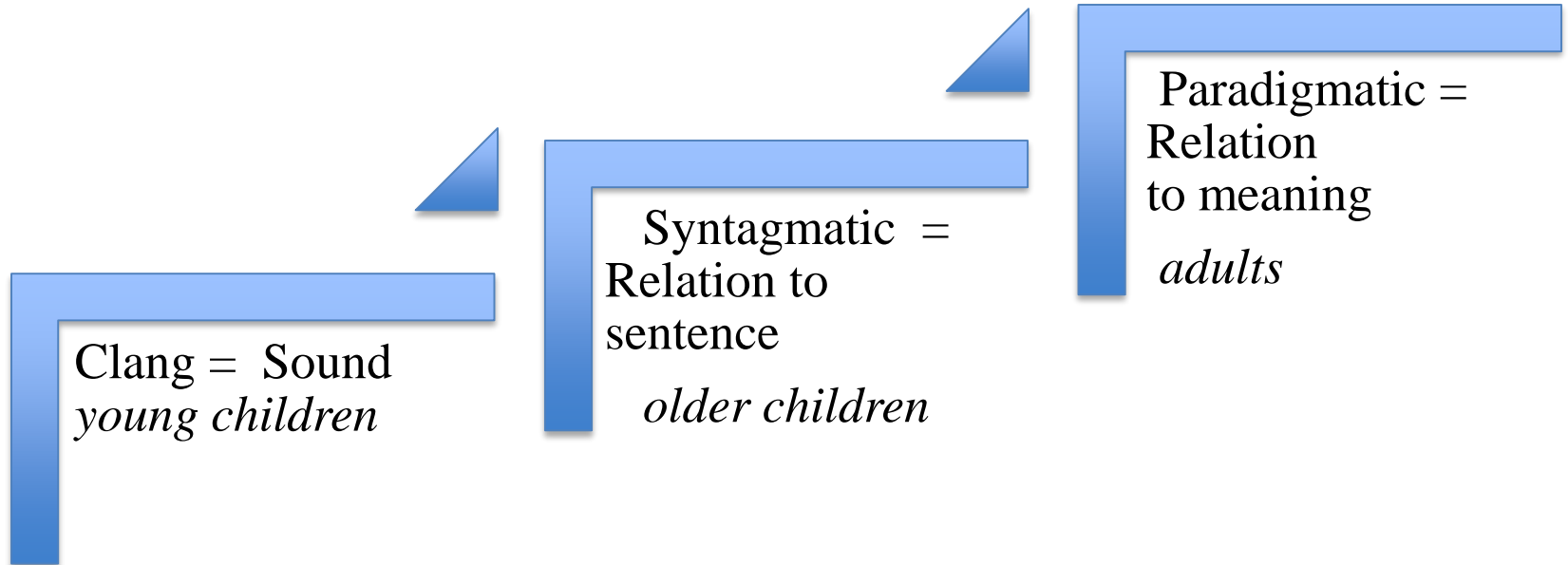
- Draw up a list of six to eight words to be used as stimuli in a simple word-association test.
- at least one **grammar/function word** (e.g. preposition, pronoun).
- one or two items from the **everyday physical environment** (e.g. “table”, “car”).
- a relatively uncommon or **low frequency word** but one which your students will nonetheless know.
- a **mix of word-classes** (e.g. noun, adjective, verb).

- Deliver the test to the class, asking them to write down the very first word that occurs to them when each item heard.
- Gather in the results and see if any **patterns** emerge from the responses.

Evaluation

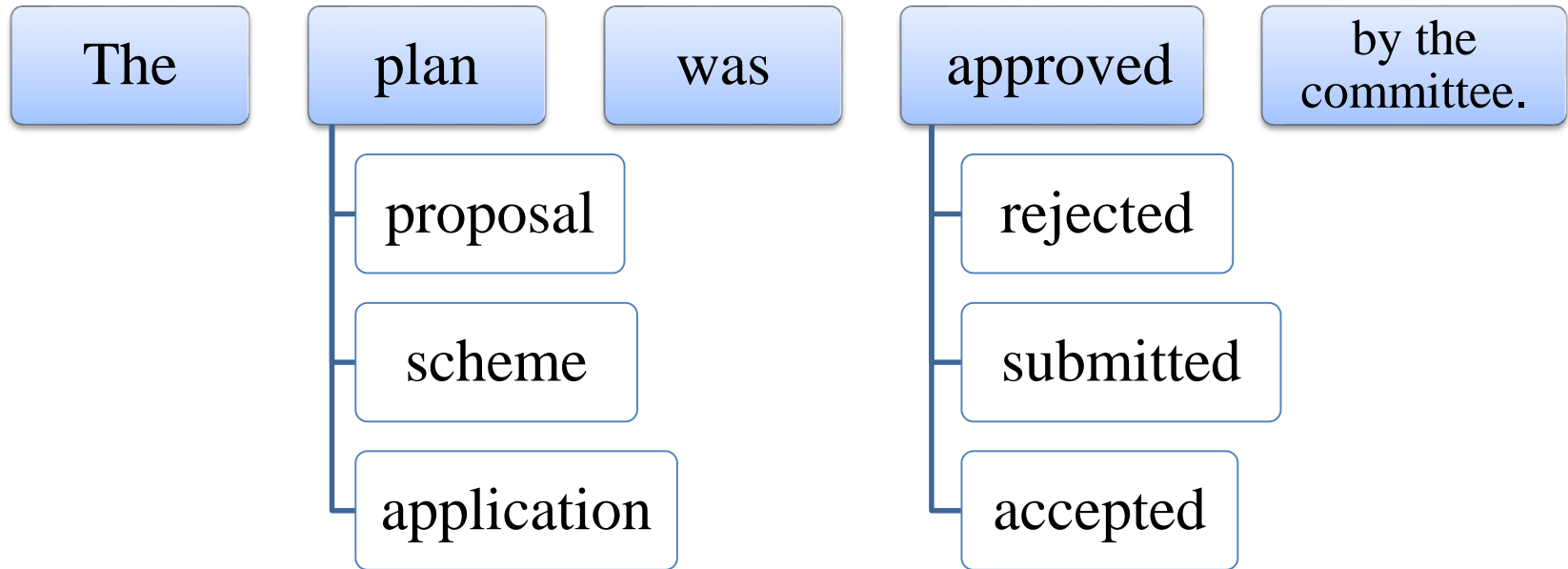
- ❑ Does the word-association test tell you anything about how your learners are **making mental links between words** they have learnt?
- ❑ At lower levels, are **phonological similarities** playing an important role?
- ❑ Do the results bear out **the characteristic types of response** discussed in Vocabulary (1990 McCarthy)?

Syntagmatic/Paradigmatic Shift in L1



The syntagmatic /paradigmatic relationship

Vocabulary, McCarthy (1990)



Response types

Wolter (2001)

| Classification | Category | Prompt | Response |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Syntagmatic | collocation | dog | bite//bark |
| Paradigmatic | coordinate | dog | cat |
| | Superordinate | dog | animal |
| | Subordinate/hyponym | dog | terrier |
| | synonym | dog | canine |
| Phonological | clang | dog | bog |

Word Association Test

- Please write the first word you think of when you read each word given. Write ONE word only.

1. legal _____

2. of _____

3. energy _____

4. money _____

5. respond _____

6. quickly _____

7. data _____

8. her _____

- In the space below you may explain any of your choices.

Total Responses as a %

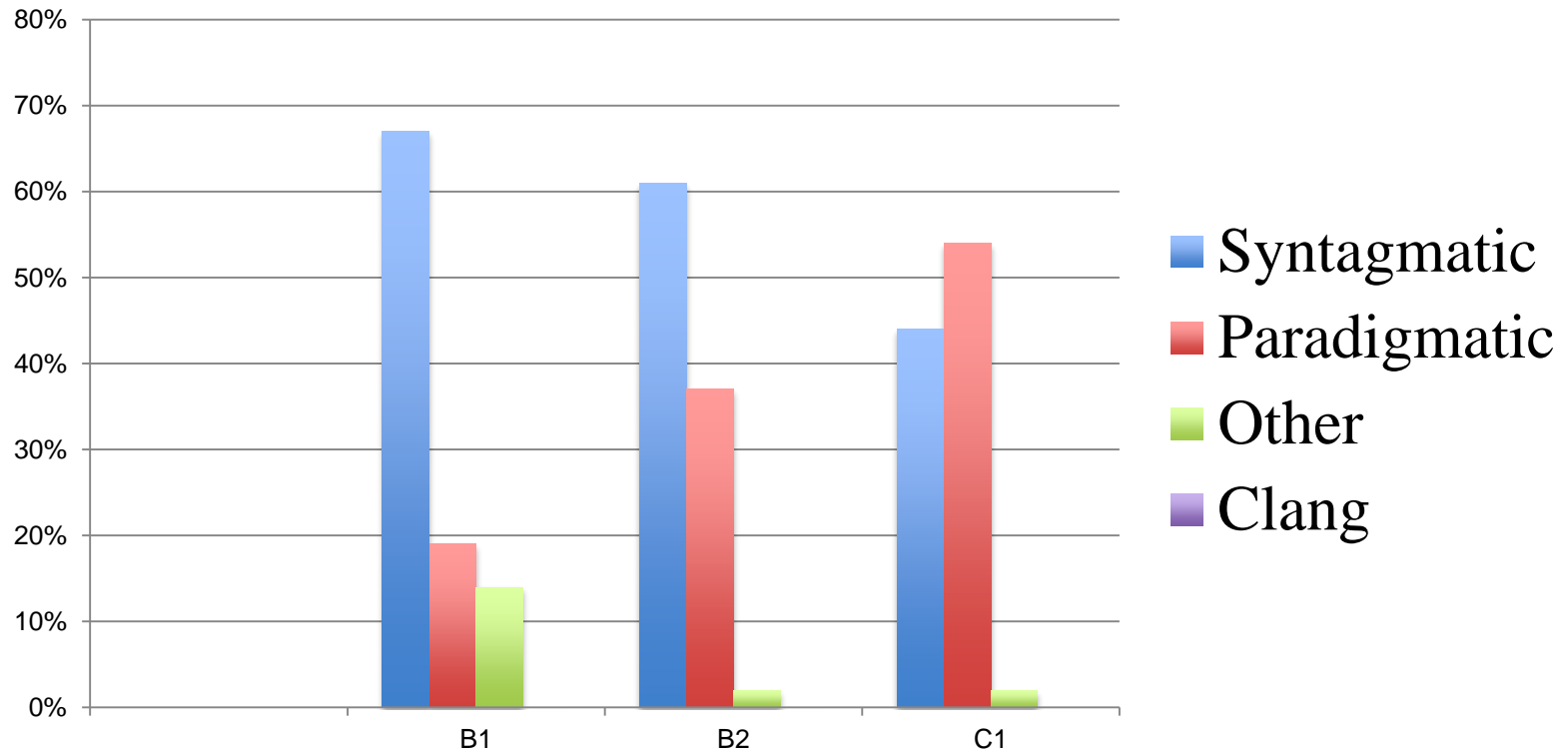
| All Responses | Total % |
|---------------|---------|
| Collocation | 50 |
| Coordination | 20 |
| Synonym | 14 |
| Phonological | 1 |
| Orthographic | 1 |
| Superordinate | 4 |
| Hyponym | 2 |
| Compound | 2 |
| No Link | 6 |
| | 100% |

Word Classes

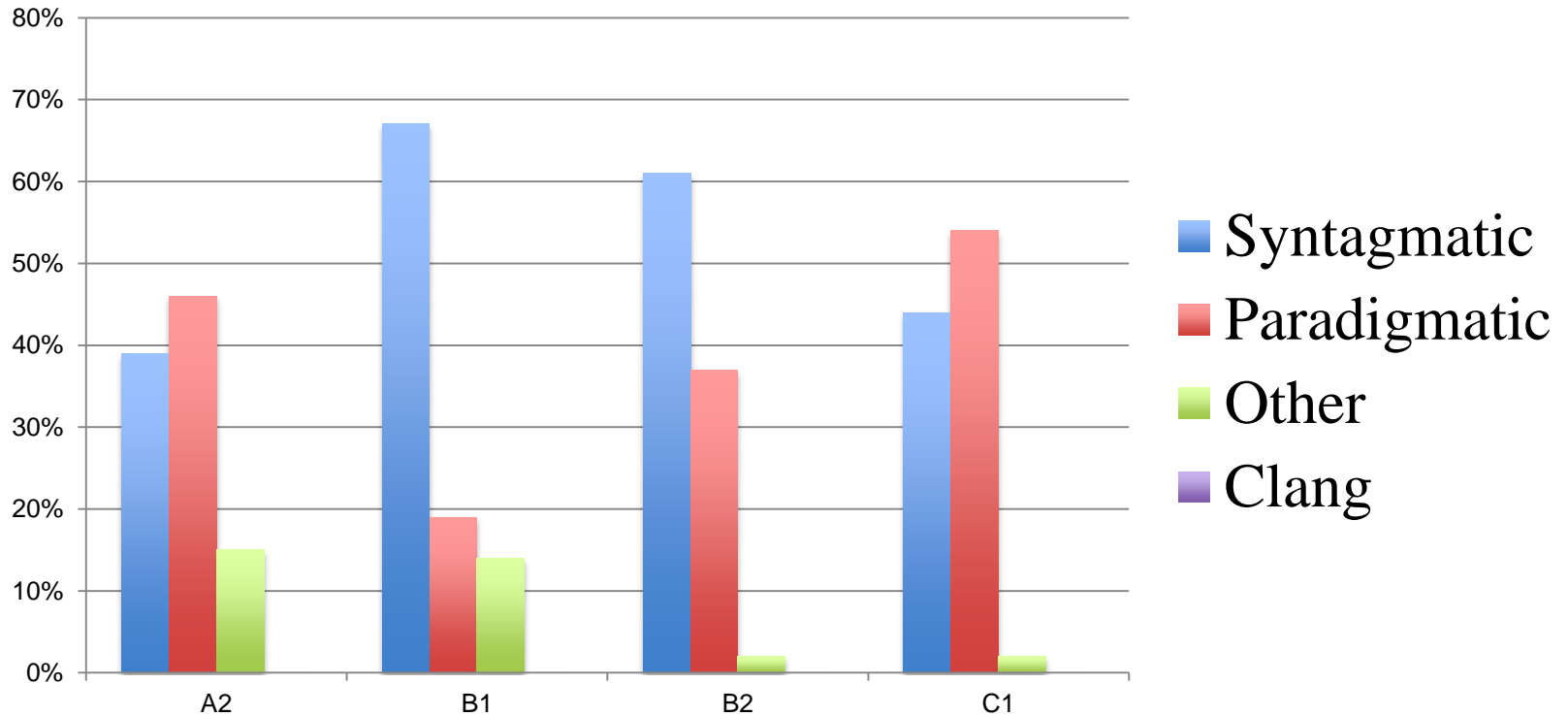
prompt and response

- Noun prompts produced nouns responses 90% of the time.
- Pronoun prompt produced Noun/pronoun response 91% of the time.
- Verb prompt produced verb 55% of time.
- The one exception was the adjective *legal* which drew 87% noun responses from semantic field of law.
- The function word **of** produced heterogeneous responses.

Syntagmatic/Paradigmatic Shift

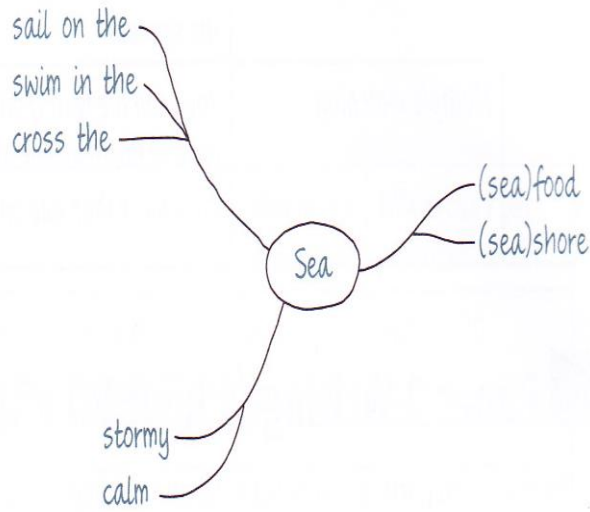


Syntagmatic/Paradigmatic Shift

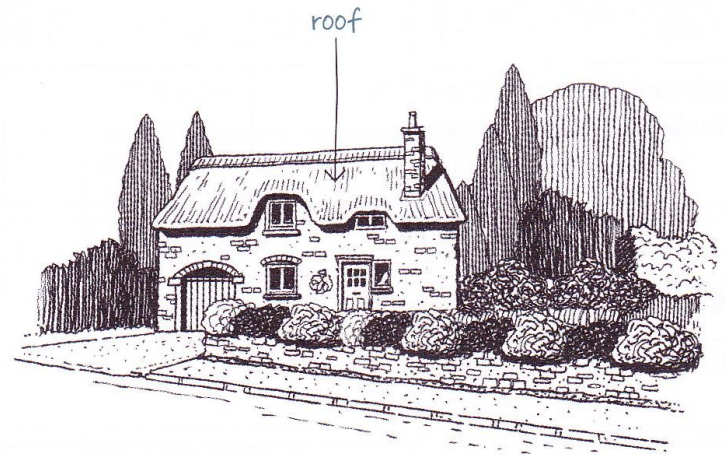


Vocabulary for First Certificate

Thomas/Mathews 2007 Cambridge



- Put the words onto a drawing , e.g.



- Draw a mind map, to learn food words, for example

