

## Just Run with It: The Nature of Lexis

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### Abstract

Through a literature review and corpus investigation, the researcher highlights the polysemous nature of lexis, and argue the necessity of context in language learning and teaching to illustrate the range of uses, especially in an English as a Foreign Language setting such as South Korea, to enable language learners to conceptualize learning for effective and appropriate language use. First, through a literature review on the nature of lexis, polysemy in lexis is clarified as shown through contextualized usage, that is the role of context in language learning. Then, this is detailed through a corpus investigation of the word *run* to illustrate just how polysemous a lexical unit, even a simple one like *run* may be, and that meaning depends on the context of use, and that isolating units for teaching and learning purposes can only lead to confusion among students. In short, the researcher advocates for a shift from decontextualized language learning to contextualized language learning based on authentic use with a focus on polysemy.

**Keywords:** context, curriculum, EFL, EFL teachers, English, language learning, lexis, polysemy, run

### 1. Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to create awareness for the need for a contextualized English curriculum with a focus on lexis by drawing attention to the polysemous nature of lexis. This paper was fueled by the researcher's needs for a practical approach when teaching lexis in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context where language learners do not have opportunities to directly experience language in different contexts and therefore become aware of the different uses and meanings of lexis.

EFL countries often lack opportunities for contextualized language use, particularly outside the classroom. In an EFL country such as South Korea where English is only spoken inside a classroom, and the first language (L1) everywhere and for everything else, students simply do not get sufficient, never mind authentic or systematized, exposure to the second language (L2) usage patterns across different contexts. Unfortunately, it is still common for English to be taught as a rule-based language, void of context (Nam, 2010; Zaid, 2009), resulting in students being confused or incorrect in authentic language use. As a rule, grammar takes the lead in the curriculum when it comes to language learning and meaning gets lost in translation (Kim & Oh, 2019; Seo, 2015), quite literally, and along with it, effective and operational possibilities when speakers are selecting lexical items during production. When vocabulary acquisition happens through L2 word lists with L1 translations instead of inferring meaning from the contexts in which it occurs, researchers such as Zaid (2009) found that students have difficulties understanding the global meaning of language. Therefore, in line with other researchers, the researcher strong believes that lexis, and not grammar rules, drives effective communication (Vermeer, 1992; Coady, 1993; Rot, 1999, as cited in Zaid, 2009).

More specifically, based on more than 12 years' experience in an EFL setting, the researcher feels there is a dire need for a curriculum shift from decontextualized grammar rules and word lists, to contextualized lexical learning and use to establish effective language development and conceptualization that affords usage across different contexts with different speakers to achieve various functions. The first reason is because language development and usage are grounded in context as context plays a vital role in acquiring, interpreting, and using a language. According to Mason and Just (2007), "(o)ne of the building blocks of language comprehension is the ability to access meaning of words as they are encountered and to develop an interpretation that is consistent with the context" (p. 115). More importantly, language is a cognitive function that employs the perception, attention, emotive, and memory systems to categorize and associate usage patterns (meaning) to forms (Ellis & Robinson, 2008). From a

cognitive linguistic perspective, language is acquired through experience, matching forms to meaning, and interpreting meaning from stored forms and their associations (Holme, 2012). With this view in mind, contextualized language usage should inspire curriculum and material development. Simply put, the way language is naturally structured and acquired through usage should drive curriculum and materials development. Furthermore, the study of polysemy, showing the multiple meanings, or senses a word may have, depending on its patterns of use and the functions in context, should be a pedagogical focus (Gries, 2019). This means that L2 teachers should not fall into the trap of giving their students lists to memorize or even use translations of the L1 to teach the L2 (Zaid, 2009) to help them learn a language or for testing purposes. Word lists with fixed meanings and translations cause students to isolate words, detached from their true meaning and range of possible uses. Doing this is like taking a dead lion, and deciding on one thing that defines lions. Like any living creature, language runs between its users and should not be analyzed in isolation and without a wide range of different contexts of use.

Therefore, by means of a literature review on lexis, context and polysemy, followed by an investigation into corpus, the researcher aims to demonstrate the necessity of context when leaning and using a language. The researcher selected the word *run* to create awareness of the importance of context to understand and use lexis even in the case of such a seemingly familiar and common word. By doing this, the researcher wishes to express the importance of considering and incorporating context when planning language learning curricula and activities.

## 2. Literature and Research Review

### 2.1 Lexis

Lexis views linguistic items a system of use and patterns that goes beyond single words as the basic vocabulary unit in its complexity and systematic analysis (Krishnamurthy, 2005). Lexis looks at language units, from the smallest to the biggest and this includes multiple words, or chunks, that carry meaning (Krishnamurthy, 2005). Also, lexis from a lexical approach suggests that the individual parts of language do not have standalone meaning and cannot be understood without context and sufficient background knowledge of its usage patterns (Krishnamurthy, 2005).

Though, lexis is better understood from a cognitive perspective. Cognits or mental units in the brain, store experiences and language forms together which make up our memory systems (Lieberman, 2000) which becomes available for interpretation and retrieval through repeated experiences. In this light, lexical items are mentally conceptualized experiences with references and senses grounded in the real-world (Falkum & Vicente, 2015). More specifically, language learners develop prototypes through a wide range of varied experiences in the real-world while using language with other speakers (Falkum & Vicente, 2015; Gries, 2019; Ungerer & Schmid, 2006). These prototypes are the frequent mental and therefore more salient representations of a linguistic form that developed through a large amount varied input and opportunities for output (Gries, 2019). In a nutshell, a person's language can only be constructed through uses (Ellis & Robinson, 2008).

### 2.2 Importance of Context

These large amounts of varied experiences imply that lexis should be put in context for language users to understand and speak language effectively and appropriately (Schmitt, 2007). It is in context that language learners come across the different patterns of use as well as frequency of use (Mason & Just, 200), which are essential for prototype and association construction as well as use.

Crucially, lexical units do not exist on their own, but rather in a setting. The setting is situational relating to the setting or location, linguistic relating to language patterns and the topic of discussion as well as cultural related to shared background knowledge. The meaning of lexical items needs to be framed by context as well as a back swell of knowledge of the word, that includes prototypes (Gillmore, 1975, 1982, as cited in Gries, 2019). Without context, meaning does not have anything to hold onto (Gries, 2019), rendering it meaningless. In other words, lexical items do not have a true sense of meaning on their own and need to be paired or used in the presence of other lexical units to be understood (Hoey, 2005).

More importantly, prototypes are constructed and activated in context (Ungerer & Schmid, 2006). Here it is important to mention that there are more connections to a linguistic form than the main or more salient prototype (Falkum & Vicente, 2015; Gries, 2019). Initially, categories of use are built, and prototypes are eventually culled and strengthened based on different experiences (Falkum & Vicente, 2015; Gries, 2019). With continued exposure and use, a category becomes configured around the prototype (Falkum & Vicente, 2015; Gries, 2019). Additionally, prototypes may also be appropriated from others' overt use or teaching, from which a category would be build. The system is flexible yet depends on experience to be formed and strengthen in the first place (Falkum & Vicente,

2015; Gries, 2019). From here, radial categories develop from the central prototype, with chain senses allowing for multiple senses to be encoded with a linguistic form, or lexical unit (Falkum & Vicente, 2015; Gries, 2019). These radial categories allow for different interpretations and applications of single linguistic forms to suit the need of the speaker in context (Gries, 2019). Furthermore, Beck et al. (2002, as cited in Frishkoff, Perfett, & Collins-Thompson, 2010) argues that a variety of encounters of a lexical unit in context is necessary to promote not only prototypes, but also their radial connections of semantic associations, as the collective experiences afford deeper processing of meaning. Again, these radial categories develop and expand through the language learner's experiences with the language in context. Then, as the context is associated to use, and instances of form use are usage events, context is an integral part of the mental representations, categories and prototypes (Beck et al., 2002, as cited in Frishkoff, Perfett, & Collins-Thompson, 2010; Gries, 2019). This means that there are also prototypical contexts in which certain forms might be used and others not, despite being grammatically correct.

Moreover, research on lexis in context only amplifies the importance of context. In terms of inference and understanding, Zaid (2009) found that contextualization allows EFL students to infer and conceptualize meaning. In other words, students can understand an unknown word due to the context in which the word is used. This is made possible by contextual clues. Contextual clues help students understand a text globally, instead of focusing individual meanings of words or unfamiliar lexical items (Zaid, 2009). Through contextual clues, meaning is framed which proved effective in helping students acquire and respond to meaning (Zaid, 2009). In texts, lexical items that antecedes or follows a specific lexical item will trigger associations and patterns of use to construct the ultimate meaning, or sense of the meaning (Hoey, 2005).

Then, regarding encoding and memory, Frishkoff, Perfett and Collins-Thompson (2010) found that supportive contexts and the application or use of lexical units to express meaning in context allowed for deeper processing and intensified learning of lexical units. They also found that there was a shift from frontal to posterior activation areas, pointing to memories being encoded for the meaning of the vocabulary learned. Similarly, Mason and Just (2007) found that when their test subjects came across lexical ambiguity, both left and right hemispheres were activated to access several meanings, stored in memory, and that meaning was disambiguated by the brain's ability to suppress the unfit meaning of the lexical item. Additionally, Mason and Just (2007) found that when the brain is unable to suppress an inappropriate meaning, lexical items will be misunderstood and used incorrectly or awkwardly.

In summary, lexical items are conceptualized knowledge, encyclopedic knowledge, and senses of meaning that are linguistically coded in memory (Falkum & Vicente, 2015; Gries, 2019). Therefore, lexical items and their true meaning cannot be divorced from the context during initial input storage, nor for subsequent appropriate interpretation and application.

### 2.3 Polysemy as Evidence

Next, polysemy is proof of the importance of context to interpret meaning, the encyclopedic knowledge language learners stored for lexical items, as well as the prototypes and radial categories that exist for lexical forms (Gries, 2019).

There are various approaches to polysemy, and they often don't fully support each other (Falkum & Vicente, 2015). However, due to the scope of this paper, the paper will not discuss the various approaches to polysemy that exists in the field of lexis. Instead, the paper will focus on conceptual polysemy, that is polysemy based on the central prototype or prototypical sense and the radial categories and senses that extends from the prototypical sense in some way or another (Falkum & Vicente, 2015).

As mentioned, radial network consists of the stored memories of language functions (Falkum & Vicente, 2015). In other words, a single linguistic form has extensions in memory that allow said form to be associated with different meanings and senses, depending on the functions and the context, such as word pairings and multiword units, and the physical environment or topic of discussion, in which it appears. Simply put, a word does not have only one meaning connected to it.

To illustrate the importance of context for interpreting meaning, look at the following sentence. The sentence has two interpretations.

*Mary began the book.* (Hogeweg & Vicente, 2020).

Here *began* can refer to either Mary starting to read the book, or starting to write the book, depending on the context (Hogeweg & Vicente, 2020). To know which meaning is appropriate here, a context is necessary. If Mary sat down in front of her computer and/or one knows that Mary is a writer, *began* claims the meaning of *starting to compose* a book. If Mary went to sit down on the sofa with a hot cup of tea, and/ or one knows that Mary loves

reading, *began* is associated with the meaning of *starting to read* the book. As demonstrated here, *began* does not have a single meaning that can be applied to every single context and across topics. Just as *begun*, all words are polysemous as their interpretation and use are completely tied to the context of use and its function in the specific context. Put differently, linguistic forms are flexible in their use and applications, and are entirely dependent on a context for encoding, constructing, and interpreting meaning.

To conclude, the phenomenon of polysemy is evidence of the amount of rich experiences language users need to successfully construct meaning and encode meaning in different contexts. This brings us back to the importance of context when learners learn the L2. Without context to illuminate and frame meaning of a lexical unit, prototypes and radial categories in memory will not be constructed in any practical sense.

### 2.4 Corpus Investigation

Again, lexical units do not exist on their own and nor should they be learned or understood as such. To illustrate this, the researcher further demonstrates polysemy by means of a corpus search. This type of search is available to both teachers and students, where they can investigate and find contextualized examples of lexical items. The researcher selected the lexical item *run* to highlight its polysemous nature based on its patterns of use, for example its various meanings in collocates as well as across different contexts. *Run* is such a common word that it could tempt teachers and students to strap it down with one meaning, removed from context with only one translation. However, *run* is the most polysemous word according to the Oxford English dictionary, followed by *put* and *set* (OED.com).

Starting with the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), *run* has a frequency rate of 264014. *Run* can be a verb, noun, adjective, or adverb, depending on the lexical unit it appears with as well as the context. The following two figures respectively illustrates *run* as a verb and noun. The figures include synonyms, along with topics and texts where *run* is used, along with collocates in which it appears.

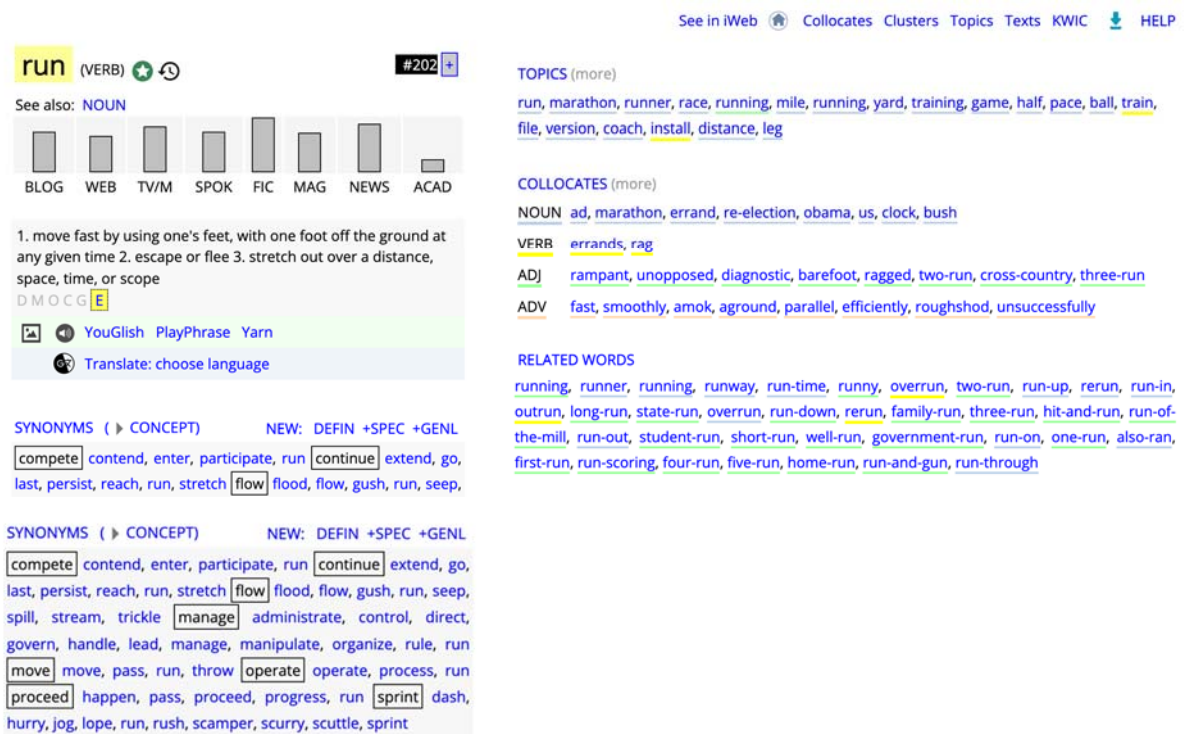


Figure 1. Run as a Verb (Taken from COCA)

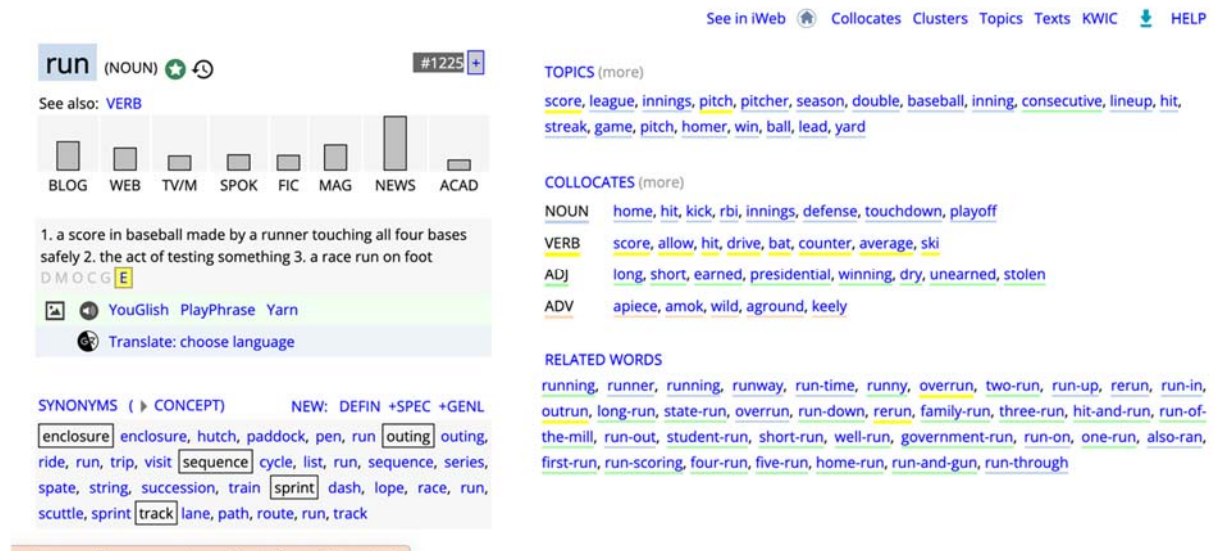


Figure 2. Run as a Noun (Taken from COCA)

From the first search on COCA, *run* has different functions. Then, simply based on the list of synonyms, words loosely related to the lexical item under investigation, the synonyms of *run* diverge along with the function of the lexical item in context.

Furthermore, *run* does not stand alone when conveying meaning. *Run* appears with other words in collocates, that is two words used together to create a lexical unit that carries its own meaning. The following two figures show the different collocates in which *run* appears as a verb and as a noun, along with their frequency in texts. The dark blue represents tight or close collocates, light blue medium, and white loose or distant collocations that are understood together despite the distance.

COLLOCATES **RUN** **VERB** See also as: NOUN Advanced options

+ NOUN	NEW WORD	?	+ ADJ	NEW WORD	?	+ VERB	NEW WORD	?	+ ADV	NEW WORD	?
6303	2.18	home	1163	2.33	wild	880	2.38	scream	11501	3.11	away
5656	2.01	business	756	2.11	dry	64	2.53	bike	7484	2.06	off
4887	2.34	office	555	5.02	rampant	52	2.13	cycle	7273	2.58	around
3816	2.69	campaign	540	2.01	scared	18	4.38	rag	3094	3.18	fast
2669	2.29	risk	409	2.19	naked				1294	2.74	deep
2477	2.10	test	291	2.02	nonprofit				1163	2.70	late
2295	2.90	finger	246	6.47	unopposed				898	5.19	smoothly
2294	3.50	ad	227	3.00	diagnostic				842	7.83	amok
2163	2.23	mile	216	2.03	faster				507	7.75	aground
2022	2.28	ball	200	3.97	barefoot				456	2.81	upstairs
1978	2.18	candidate	147	2.75	day-to-day				395	4.85	parallel
1939	2.66	yard	139	3.32	ragged				379	3.79	efficiently
1606	2.45	governor	110	4.89	two-run				272	2.68	downstairs
1484	2.05	operation	95	2.12	consulting				244	7.55	roughshod
1426	5.26	marathon	92	2.58	incumbent				207	4.63	unsuccessfully
1416	6.48	errand	85	2.93	cross-country				190	2.32	privately
1336	4.84	re-election	76	4.97	three-run				159	2.36	backward
1032	2.43	train	71	3.67	front-page				158	2.18	backwards
962	3.14	clock	52	2.13	for-profit				152	2.62	continuously
949	3.67	touchdown	45	4.10	full-page				131	4.66	concurrently

Figure 3. Collocate, Run as a Verb (Taken from COCA)

COLLOCATES **RUN** **NOUN** See also as: **VERB** Advanced options [Collocates](#) [Clusters](#) [Topics](#) [Texts](#) [KWIC](#) [↻](#) [↓](#)

+ NOUN	NEW WORD	?	+ ADJ	NEW WORD	?	+ VERB	NEW WORD	?	+ ADV	NEW WORD	?
4877	4.38	home	8962	5.36	long	2901	6.57	score	19	2.25	ie
1411	2.32	game	1790	4.29	short	1396	2.93	allow	14	2.95	apiece
1070	5.40	hit	796	8.75	earned	1265	3.37	hit	12	4.26	amok
834	6.58	kick	496	3.67	presidential	858	2.80	drive	9	2.34	eg
775	7.22	innings	305	5.44	winning	463	2.55	fail	6	2.86	wild
515	2.67	defense	266	3.17	dry	324	6.23	bat	5	3.65	aground
467	5.22	touchdown	227	2.20	successful	292	2.05	finish			

Figure 4. Collocates, Run as a Noun (Taken from COCA)

Besides collocates, *run* commonly appears in clusters or multiword units, changing its meaning as it is paired or grouped with other lexical items.

CLUSTERS (more)

run *	running for * run for * run by * run into * ran into * run out * running back * ran for
* run	i ran * he ran * n't run * you run * can run * she ran * will run * i run
run **	running for president * run for president * run away from * run the risk * running away from * running for office * run for office * ran away from
** run	going to run * want to run * do n't run * have to run * ca n't run * he was running * gon na run * up and running
run ***	running out of time * run out of time * run out of money * ran away from home * run out of gas * running out of money * ran out of money * ran out of gas
*** run	you ca n't run * you want to run * n't want to run * i got ta run * not going to run * i want to run * i have to run * do n't you run

Figure 5. Clusters (Taken from COCA)

The following two figures illustrates the frequency of the clusters for first *run* as a verb, and then *run* as a noun.

CLUSTERS **RUN** **VERB** See also: **NOUN** LIMIT: **Loose** **Medium** **Tight** **Phrasal** [Collocates](#) [Clusters](#) [Topics](#) [Texts](#) [KWIC](#) [↻](#) [↓](#)

10520	running for	9790	i ran	2769	running for president	3390	going to run	1438	running out of time	641	you ca n't run
10313	run for	8809	he ran	2115	run for president	2037	want to run	566	run out of time	461	you want to run
9398	run by	7085	n't run	1710	run away from	1939	do n't run	518	run out of money	405	n't want to run
7297	run into	6896	you run	1271	run the risk	1766	have to run	284	ran away from home	358	i got ta run
6674	ran into	5237	can run	1248	running away from	1683	ca n't run	278	run out of gas	355	not going to run
6186	run out	4686	she ran	1079	running for office	1462	he was running	277	running out of money	309	i want to run
5402	running back	4388	will run	1063	run for office	1437	gon na run	268	ran out of money	295	i have to run
5346	ran for	4175	i run	878	ran away from	1291	up and running	267	ran out of gas	275	do n't you run
5171	run away	3771	who runs	815	ran for president	1219	how to run	244	run into each other	252	i do n't run
4742	run in	3527	he runs	662	run the ball	1200	i was running	242	run away from home	252	i ca n't run
4656	running out	3378	who ran	638	running the show	1182	you can run	234	run for president in	245	hit a home run
4396	run on	3303	they run	619	run over by	1075	able to run	230	run the gamut from	237	i had to run
4087	running around	3189	we ran	528	run away with	1011	did n't run	220	ran out of time	237	n't have to run
3792	run out	3036	had run	519	run a business	945	trying to run	198	running for the senate	237	i wanted to run
3660	ran out	3006	have run	513	run with it	903	had to run	198	runs in the family	228	you do n't run
3551	run it	2999	they ran	500	run the country	864	wanted to run	197	ran all the way	224	going to be running
3355	running in	2946	would run	473	run off with	811	used to run	195	running up and down	222	you have to run
3183	run to	2830	home runs	447	running a business	753	not to run	195	running for president in	212	i did n't run
3020	running on	2637	we run	443	ran off with	753	got to run	192	ran into each other	201	know how to run

Figure 6. Clusters, Run as a Verb (Taken from COCA)

CLUSTERS **RUN** **NOUN** See also: VERB LIMIT: Loose **Medium** Tight N+N Collocates Clusters Topics Texts KWIC

3176	run for	8127	long run	424	run for it	3396	on the run	173	run for the presidency	6610	in the long run
1855	run in	3133	home run	206	run for president	809	make a run	158	run of the mill	1203	in the short run
1735	runs in	1511	short run	203	run up to	691	for a run	142	run for their money	454	over the long run
1231	run at	1507	home runs	183	runs counter to	447	in the run	116	run for his money	259	hit a home run
1132	run on	964	two runs	158	runs batted in	427	against the run	108	runs in the first	231	for the long run
753	run to	905	one run	106	run for governor	262	into a run	89	run of the season	190	go for a run
633	run with	650	three runs	102	runs per game	255	on a run	74	run of bad luck	164	had a good run
627	run by	586	first run	94	run of bad	243	stop the run	66	run in the first	103	in the longer run
570	run from	565	to run	91	runs in light	206	in a run	60	run of the place	101	broke into a run
530	runs on	536	good run	78	run for office	206	making a run	59	run for its money	78	going for a run
491	run game	432	four runs	55	run and i	184	made a run	59	runs in the family	77	out for a run
397	runs scored	421	presidential run	53	run for its	164	let me run	57	run for the senate	71	life on the run
353	run defense	403	earned runs	53	run for congress	163	born to run	49	run for her money	69	went for a run
349	runs for	387	me run	53	run at it	145	at a run	48	run for its money	69	with a home run
321	run through	318	earned run	50	run health care	137	cut and run	45	run of the game	69	still on the run
283	run up	302	five runs	49	run and then	129	had a run	44	run in the second	68	drove in three runs
280	run it	300	in runs	48	run for mayor	126	money and run	42	run on the bank	61	drove in two runs
212	run into	278	winning run	48	runs in five	121	during the run	41	run in the third	61	in the winning run
						117	stopping the run	38	run from the law	58	them on the run

[https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/x2\\_clusters.asp?L1=run&c1=v](https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/x2_clusters.asp?L1=run&c1=v) jns in six

Figure 7. Clusters, Run as a Noun (Taken from COCA)

The following figure shows different sentences and how run is used and interpreted depending on its use.

68	MAG: 2001: MotherEarth	When I got there, however, I found his tomatoes running <b>well</b> <b>with</b> no supports. The ground was a jungle of
69	NEWS: 1997: USAToday	software on its own. Using WinFrame, the 286 can run <b>Windows</b> <b>95</b> <b>and</b> Microsoft's Office 97 via a network connected to
70	WEB: 2012: newyork.cbslocal.com	fellowship that loves Him.Do n't let Catholics or anybody else run <b>you</b> <b>AWAY</b> <b>from</b> the Source of your salvation in eternity! That
71	MAG: 1994: Compute	; any x86 chip you but today will be <b>able</b> <b>to</b> run <b>your</b> <b>software</b> <b>!</b> # A much harder question to answer is how
72	MAG: 2010: SportingNews	baseball career- in ruins. Now an All- <b>Star</b> <b>three</b> <b>years</b> running <b>!</b> <b>Hamilton</b> <b>is</b> out of the darkness; hitting in front of
73	NEWS: 1997: USAToday	Phillies # Park: Veterans Stadium # <b>Rating</b> : <b>Home</b> <b>run</b> <b>!</b> <b>the</b> <b>best</b> . A reason to go to the game #
74	NEWS: 2012: Denver	. The kid is hitting .282. He <b>has</b> <b>eight</b> <b>home</b> <b>runs</b> <b>!</b> <b>25</b> <b>RBI's</b> and a .354 on-base percentage. " I like
75	NEWS: 2003: Denver	interest in running. But in the end, <b>only</b> <b>four</b> <b>ran</b> <b>!</b> <b>three</b> <b>African-Americans</b> and one Vietnamese-American. #
76	FIC: 2015: AntiochRev	packing. She knew I was looking for an <b>opportunity</b> <b>to</b> run <b>!</b> <b>She</b> <b>gave</b> me a sack lunch and a Pepsi wrapped in
77	FIC: 2017: Bk:Stronghold	# When the Mexicans - the Nakay - <b>came</b> , she ran <b>!</b> <b>The</b> Old One grabbed the rifle. " Do not
78	MAG: 1995: Inc.	the damage, " she says. So <b>when</b> <b>sales</b> <b>were</b> <b>running</b> <b>20%</b> <b>below</b> <b>projections</b> in March of 1993, the managers at Hanna

Figure 8. Sample Sentence of Run in Context (Taken from COCA)

It is clear from examples in the corpus that a common word such as *run* does not function alone in reality. It is used differently across different contexts and performs different functions. In other words, *run* is polysemous and should be taught in context and not through a sterile word list that grossly underrepresent its use.

COCA is a massive database that some might find difficult to navigate. Additionally, one is limited to the number of searches in 24 hours. Fortunately, teachers can rely on different internet sources to look up polysemous words and their functions. In what follows, *run* as a polysemous word will be investigated using different websites. These websites are easily accessed by teachers without subscriptions, logins or daily limits.

<a href="#">run used as a verb</a>	<a href="#">run used as a noun</a>	<a href="#">run used as an adjective</a>		
run + adverb	run away	1557	run parallel to	343
	run down	277	run again in	223
	run out	201	run entirely by	187
	run aground	178	run annually at	172
	run again for	142	run faster	138
				>>> more
verb + to + run	continued to run	612	used to run	440
	decided to run for	363	designed to run on	224
	began to run	213	declined to run for	206
	allowed to run	193	required to run	167
	needed to run	151	decides to run away	121
			>>> more	
run + preposition + noun	run for re-election in	498	run for office	228
	run for reelection in	226	run for president	187
	run for governor	174	run by volunteers	173
	run away from home	150	run for mayor	146
	run in conjunction with	144	run out the clock	127
			>>> more	
run + noun	run average	334	run its course	244
	run the risk of	179	run afoul of	177
	run the length of	124	run the company	111
	run the gamut from	101	run candidates in	90
	run the business	89	run time	72
noun + to + run	ability to run	248	intention to run for	241
	order to run for	166	users to run	91
	seat to run for	72	decision to run for	69
	plans to run for	68	time to run	67
	attempt to run	63	woman to run for	63
			>>> more	
adverb + run	currently run by	302	privately run	274
	originally run by	82	independently run	78
	jointly run by	77	previously run	75
	usually run by	61	well run	54
	generally run	53	formerly run by	49
			>>> more	
adjective + to + run	able to run	452	possible to run	175
	unable to run	92	eligible to run for	85
	ready to run	74	necessary to run	74
	expensive to run	49	first to run	31
	ineligible to run for	29	free to run	24
			>>> more	
run + personal noun + adjective	run themselves high	1	run themselves sweaty	1
	run themselves unfettered	1	run you ragged	1
	run him short	1	<a href="#">click to see more</a>	



<a href="#">run used as a verb</a>	<a href="#">run used as a noun</a>	<a href="#">run used as an adjective</a>		
run + adverb	<b>run</b> away	1557	<b>run</b> parallel to	343
	<b>run</b> down	277	<b>run</b> again in	223
	<b>run</b> out	201	<b>run</b> entirely by	187
	<b>run</b> aground	178	<b>run</b> annually at	172
	<b>run</b> again for	142	<b>run</b> faster	138
				>>> more
verb + to + run	continued to <b>run</b>	612	used to <b>run</b>	440
	decided to <b>run</b> for	363	designed to <b>run</b> on	224
	began to <b>run</b>	213	declined to <b>run</b> for	206
	allowed to <b>run</b>	193	required to <b>run</b>	167
	needed to <b>run</b>	151	decides to <b>run</b> away	121
				>>> more
run + preposition + noun	<b>run</b> for re-election in	498	<b>run</b> for office	228
	<b>run</b> for reelection in	226	<b>run</b> for president	187
	<b>run</b> for governor	174	<b>run</b> by volunteers	173
	<b>run</b> away from home	150	<b>run</b> for mayor	146
	<b>run</b> in conjunction with	144	<b>run</b> out the clock	127
				>>> more
run + noun	<b>run</b> average	334	<b>run</b> its course	244
	<b>run</b> the risk of	179	<b>run</b> afoul of	177
	<b>run</b> the length of	124	<b>run</b> the company	111
	<b>run</b> the gamut from	101	<b>run</b> candidates in	90
	<b>run</b> the business	89	<b>run</b> time	72
				>>> more
noun + to + run	ability to <b>run</b>	248	intention to <b>run</b> for	241
	order to <b>run</b> for	166	users to <b>run</b>	91
	seat to <b>run</b> for	72	decision to <b>run</b> for	69
	plans to <b>run</b> for	68	time to <b>run</b>	67
	attempt to <b>run</b>	63	woman to <b>run</b> for	63
				>>> more
adverb + run	currently <b>run</b> by	302	privately <b>run</b>	274
	originally <b>run</b> by	82	independently <b>run</b>	78
	jointly <b>run</b> by	77	previously <b>run</b>	75
	usually <b>run</b> by	61	well <b>run</b>	54
	generally <b>run</b>	53	formerly <b>run</b> by	49
				>>> more
adjective + to + run	able to <b>run</b>	452	possible to <b>run</b>	175
	unable to <b>run</b>	92	eligible to <b>run</b> for	85
	ready to <b>run</b>	74	necessary to <b>run</b>	74
	expensive to <b>run</b>	49	first to <b>run</b>	31
	ineligible to <b>run</b> for	29	free to <b>run</b>	24
				>>> more
run + personal noun + adjective	<b>run</b> themselves high	1	<b>run</b> themselves sweaty	1
	<b>run</b> themselves unfettered	1	<b>run</b> you ragged	1
	<b>run</b> him short	1	<b>run</b> you ragged	1
				<a href="#">click to see more</a>

<a href="#">run used as a verb</a>	<a href="#">run used as a noun</a>	<a href="#">run used as an adjective</a>		
noun + run	home <b>run</b>	5571	touchdown <b>run</b>	1317
	production <b>run</b>	974	yd <b>run</b>	974
	yard <b>run</b>	962	print <b>run</b>	645
	year <b>run</b>	399	playoff <b>run</b>	363
	school <b>run</b>	338	<b>run</b> rate	325
				>>> more
adjective + run	long <b>run</b>	1905	short <b>run</b>	774
	successful <b>run</b>	666	entire <b>run</b>	585
	original <b>run</b>	583	limited <b>run</b>	536
	initial <b>run</b>	417	unbeaten <b>run</b>	348
	single <b>run</b>	324	theatrical <b>run</b>	322
			>>> more	
run + preposition + noun	<b>run</b> for governor	108	<b>run</b> for the only score	83
	<b>run</b> from the police	69	<b>run</b> for their money	68
	<b>run</b> from the law	59	<b>run</b> in the bottom	56
	<b>run</b> in the first innings	53	<b>run</b> for president	48
	<b>run</b> for the presidency	46	life on the <b>run</b>	46
				>>> more
run + of + noun	<b>run</b> of form	347	<b>run</b> of the series	219
	<b>run</b> of the show	174	<b>run</b> of success	153
	end of its <b>run</b>	150	<b>run</b> of results	144
	home <b>run</b> of the season	121	<b>run</b> of the game	79
	home <b>run</b> of his career	62	<b>run</b> of play	50
verb + run	ended its <b>run</b> in	99	ended its <b>run</b> on	99
	winning <b>run</b>	95	made an unsuccessful <b>run</b> for	72
	bombing <b>run</b>	37	stop the <b>run</b>	37
	began its <b>run</b> on	33	tying <b>run</b>	30
	began its <b>run</b> in	27	ended its <b>run</b> with	26
				>>> more
run + to + verb	touchdown <b>run</b> to give	39	<b>run</b> to make	20
	<b>run</b> to take	20	<b>run</b> to win	19
	home <b>run</b> to tie	18	home <b>run</b> to give	18
	<b>run</b> to put	16	<b>run</b> to avoid	10
	home <b>run</b> to center	8	home <b>run</b> to help	8
				>>> more
verb + preposition + run	go on the <b>run</b>	105	defeated in his <b>run</b> for	13
	remained on the <b>run</b> for	9	retreated on the <b>run</b>	9
	depending on <b>run</b>	8	fixed in the short <b>run</b>	8
	opened by land <b>run</b>	7	start on the <b>run</b> for	5
	living on the <b>run</b>	5	released during the <b>run</b> of	4
				>>> more
adjective + preposition + run	most of its <b>run</b>	107	much of its <b>run</b>	21
	successful in the long <b>run</b>	13	least in the short <b>run</b>	12
	sustainable in the long <b>run</b>	9	criminal on the <b>run</b>	8
	unsustainable in the long <b>run</b>	6	better in the long <b>run</b>	6
	effective in the long <b>run</b>	6	successful during its <b>run</b>	5
				>>> more

<a href="#">run used as a verb</a>	<a href="#">run used as a noun</a>	<a href="#">run used as an adjective</a>		
noun + run	home <b>run</b>	5571	touchdown <b>run</b>	1317
	production <b>run</b>	974	yd <b>run</b>	974
	yard <b>run</b>	962	print <b>run</b>	645
	year <b>run</b>	399	playoff <b>run</b>	363
	school <b>run</b>	338	<b>run</b> rate	325
>>> more				
adjective + run	long <b>run</b>	1905	short <b>run</b>	774
	successful <b>run</b>	666	entire <b>run</b>	585
	original <b>run</b>	583	limited <b>run</b>	536
	initial <b>run</b>	417	unbeaten <b>run</b>	348
	single <b>run</b>	324	theatrical <b>run</b>	322
>>> more				
run + preposition + noun	<b>run</b> for governor	108	<b>run</b> for the only score	83
	<b>run</b> from the police	69	<b>run</b> for their money	68
	<b>run</b> from the law	59	<b>run</b> in the bottom	56
	<b>run</b> in the first innings	53	<b>run</b> for president	48
	<b>run</b> for the presidency	46	life on the <b>run</b>	46
>>> more				
run + of + noun	<b>run</b> of form	347	<b>run</b> of the series	219
	<b>run</b> of the show	174	<b>run</b> of success	153
	end of its <b>run</b>	150	<b>run</b> of results	144
	home <b>run</b> of the season	121	<b>run</b> of the game	79
	home <b>run</b> of his career	62	<b>run</b> of play	50
verb + run	ended its <b>run</b> in	99	ended its <b>run</b> on	99
	winning <b>run</b>	95	made an unsuccessful <b>run</b> for	72
	bombing <b>run</b>	37	stop the <b>run</b>	37
	began its <b>run</b> on	33	tying <b>run</b>	30
	began its <b>run</b> in	27	ended its <b>run</b> with	26
>>> more				
run + to + verb	touchdown <b>run</b> to give	39	<b>run</b> to make	20
	<b>run</b> to take	20	<b>run</b> to win	19
	home <b>run</b> to tie	18	home <b>run</b> to give	18
	<b>run</b> to put	16	<b>run</b> to avoid	10
	home <b>run</b> to center	8	home <b>run</b> to help	8
>>> more				
verb + preposition + run	go on the <b>run</b>	105	defeated in his <b>run</b> for	13
	remained on the <b>run</b> for	9	retreated on the <b>run</b>	9
	depending on <b>run</b>	8	fixed in the short <b>run</b>	8
	opened by land <b>run</b>	7	start on the <b>run</b> for	5
	living on the <b>run</b>	5	released during the <b>run</b> of <a href="#">click to see more</a>	4
>>> more				
adjective + preposition + run	most of its <b>run</b>	107	much of its <b>run</b>	21
	successful in the long <b>run</b>	13	least in the short <b>run</b>	12
	sustainable in the long <b>run</b>	9	criminal on the <b>run</b>	8
	unsustainable in the long <b>run</b>	6	better in the long <b>run</b>	6
	effective in the long <b>run</b>	6	successful during its <b>run</b>	5
>>> more				

Figure 9. Run as a Collocate (Taken from flax.nzdl)

Sample sentences can also be found on different websites. See Figure 10 for sample sentences of *run* in context.

About 272637 results found using 'RUN'. Source: 'Daily Use'.

Inside YouTube, that is the button they use when they want to **run** a live stream. (open, save, copy) [techcrunch.com](#)

From there DeKalb pushed a 10-4 **run** and maintained the lead throughout the game. (open, save, copy) [dailyherald.com](#)

The women have gotten in only one official training **run**, a split session Monday. (open, save, copy) [dailyherald.com](#)

Stanley then scored to spark a 9-0 **run** that gave the Ramblers the lead for good. (open, save, copy) [dailyherald.com](#)

In about 4 minutes, SLU went on a 15-2 **run** that effectively wrapped the game up. (open, save, copy) [stltoday.com](#)

The **run** to Clinton is about 300 miles and will take about five hours of driving. (open, save, copy) [stltoday.com](#)

For North, Nathan Elmy scored on a 28-yard **run** and on an 81-yard kickoff return. (open, save, copy) [stltoday.com](#)

She pitched seven innings allowing one **run** on four hits while striking out five. (open, save, copy) [stltoday.com](#)

Trailing by nine, 61-52, early in the third, the Bucks put together an 11-2 **run**. (open, save, copy) [thenewtribune.com](#)

Figure 10. Sample Sentences of Run (Taken from fraze.it)

*Run* is also common in idioms, proving its diverse use to express meaning in various contexts. The following figure includes examples of idioms that include *run*.

**run**

1. verb, informal To leave or depart, especially very quickly or suddenly.  
*Sorry, I've got to run. I'll call you tomorrow to go over the project in greater detail.*  
 A: "Do you want another drink?" B: "No, I'd better run. I have an early start tomorrow."

2. noun, slang A period of frequent and extended use of a particular drug; a drug binge. Usually used in combinations.  
*It turns out he had been on a cocaine run for nearly three months straight, and he had spent almost all of their savings during that time.*  
*I nearly died on that last heroin run. This time, I'm doing whatever it takes to get clean.*

**run its course**

To progress along something's natural course and conclude at its normal pace. (Used especially in reference to illness and disease.)  
*Unfortunately, there's no treatment for this kind of infection. You just have to let it run its course.*  
*Don't stress about Susan's new boyfriend. I'm sure it's just a summer thing—it will run its course before she goes back to school.*  
*The president said he would rather let the economy run its course than try to manipulate it with a stimulus package.*

See also: [course](#), [run](#)

**the runs**

slang A case of diarrhea.  
*I get the runs when I drink too much coffee, so I tend to avoid it altogether.*  
*Something I ate has been giving me the runs all day.*

See also: [run](#)

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**run**

1. n. a session or period of time spent doing something; a period of time when something happens. *The market had a good run today.*

2. tv. to transport contraband, alcohol, or drugs. *Harry the Horse used to run booze during prohibition.*

3. n. an act of transporting contraband. *Four soldiers were killed during a run.*

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**run** /take its course

To follow its natural progression or development: *Should we let the illness run its course?*

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Figure 11. Run in Idioms (taken from idioms.thefreedictionary.com).

### 3. Conclusion

In conclusion, the purpose of this paper is to create awareness on just how polysemous a lexical item can be, and how it cannot be separated from its context of use and therefore, should not be taught out of context. It is clear from the literature review and corpus search that even common lexical items, such as *run*, are polysemous and used and understood differently depending on the context and its specific functions in context. This implies that lexical items should be taught as they function in context, and not taught using word lists meant for memorization and superficial language learning (Zaid, 2009) or so-called translation equivalents (Kim & Oh, 2019; Seo, 2015).

To do this, the curriculum and related activities should change their focus and approach regarding language learning to one where their L2 learners in EFL contexts have opportunities to experience contextualized language use, that includes both reception and production. Teachers may use different websites, including the ones used in the corpus search, to exhaust the different uses of a lexical item and subsequently, based on their students' levels and goals, prepare contextualized activities and tasks. In other words, teachers can brainstorm ideas, themes and tasks that will help highlight a lexical item's usage through contextualized experiences. These firsthand experiences within a context would help students construct meaning on a conceptual level, that means prototypes and radial categories encoded with different senses of a language form, as well as use the language in context.

As a final note, language comes alive and stays alive between its users. Language should not be dissected and/or decontextualized solely for testing purposes. ESL and EFL teachers can help keep language alive in their L2 classrooms by providing contextualized learning opportunities, that will aid students in language conceptualization, development and usage. In short, people understand and extend meaning based on their experiences with meaning in context.

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#### Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

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- The Oxford English Dictionary: <https://www.oed.com/>

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