

Understanding Contextual Aspects of the Word 'Look' in Corpus of Contemporary American English: Semantics Study

Hani Rahmah¹

Ervina CM Simatupang²

^{1,2} Universitas Widyatama, Bandung

¹ hani.rahmah@widyatama.ac.id

² ervina.simatupang@widyatama.ac.id

Abstract

This research investigates the contextual aspects and lexical semantics of the word "look" within the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). By examining how "look" functions across different contexts, this study aims to uncover the multifaceted nature of its meaning and usage. The research is grounded in semantic theory, drawing on the works of Leech, and other prominent linguists to explore how meaning is constructed and conveyed through language. Key focuses include the categorization of "look" across various parts of speech, such as verbs, nouns, and interjections, and the examination of its idiomatic, non-idiomatic, and compositional meanings. The study employs a qualitative research methodology, analyzing linguistic data from COCA to identify patterns and themes in the usage of "look." This research aims to elucidate the complex interplay between context and meaning, offering insights into the cognitive processes involved in language comprehension and production. The findings highlight the significance of semantics in understanding language, particularly how specific words can convey a wide range of meanings depending on their contextual usage. Overall, this research contributes to the field of lexical semantics by providing a comprehensive analysis of the word "look," demonstrating its versatility and the intricate mechanisms by which meaning is negotiated in language. The research has implications for linguistic theory, language education, and the development of more precise language processing systems.

Keywords: *Semantics, Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), Part of Speech, Idiomatic meaning, Non-idiomatic meaning, Compositional meaning*

Introduction

The evolution of linguistic research has significantly impacted how we understand and analyze language structures. This research investigates the contextual aspects and lexical semantics of the word "look" within the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). By examining how "look" functions across different contexts, this study aims to uncover the multifaceted nature of its meaning and usage. The primary objective is to explore the structure and function of words and phrases in English, with a particular emphasis on idiomatic expressions, non-idiomatic expressions, and compositional meanings.

Semantic theory forms the backbone of this research, drawing on the works of prominent linguists like Atchison and Leech. Atchison highlights that semantics, derived from the Greek words 'sema' and 'semaino,' signifies 'to mean' or 'signify,' underscoring the foundational importance of meaning in language (Atkinson, 1978). Leech's semantics theory, which emphasizes the description of synchronic language use, serves as the primary analytical framework for this study. According to Simatupang and Tarigan, semantics refers to the meaning and interpretation of words, signs, and

sentence structures (Masri Adelina P. Tarigan, Ervina CM Simatupang, 2022). It encompasses the diverse meanings of words in terms of their sound and other attributes. Lexical meaning, a cornerstone of semantic theory, pertains to the meaning of words and their interrelations within language. According to Pateda (2001), lexical semantics involves the study of meaning within words, changes in meaning, and general insights about meaning. Lexical semantics, as defined by Simatupang and Mufid, is the branch of semantics concerned with the meaning of words (Luthfiah Ammar Mufid, Ervina CM Simatupang, 2022). It also encompasses the various ways in which words attribute meaning, including their sound and other linguistic characteristics. This study explores idiomatic, non-idiomatic, and compositional meanings of "look," offering unique insights into the nature of language and communication.

Idiomatic meanings involve phrases where the meaning cannot be deduced from the individual words. According to Nunberg, Sag, and Wasow, idioms have distinct syntactic properties that differentiate them from regular phrases, highlighting their non-compositional nature and structural idiosyncrasies (Nunberg, Sag, and Wasow, 1994). For instance, "kick the bucket" as an idiom meaning "to die" cannot be understood by analyzing the individual meanings of "kick" and "bucket" alone. These phrases often reflect cultural and historical contexts, necessitating familiarity with specific linguistic and social conventions for proper understanding. The theoretical framework for understanding idioms within Generative Grammar incorporates principles from Compositionality in Formal Semantics, as discussed by Partee (2004). This approach considers how meaning is derived from syntactic structure and lexical items. However, idiomatic expressions often violate these principles, requiring additional mechanisms for interpretation. Nunberg, Sag, and Wasow also suggest that idioms may be stored in the mental lexicon as single units, which are retrieved and processed differently from regular phrases (Nunberg, Sag, and Wasow, 1994).

Non-idiomatic meanings are straightforward and literal, like "look at," which simply means to direct one's gaze. These expressions are easier for language learners to grasp because they do not require additional contextual or cultural knowledge. Compositional meanings involve constructing the meaning of a phrase or sentence from the meanings of its individual components, following syntactic rules. For instance, the sentence "The cat sat on the mat" derives its overall meaning from the meanings of "the cat," "sat," and "on the mat," combined according to grammatical rules. This principle, known as the Principle of Compositionality, posits that the meaning of a whole expression is a function of the meanings of its parts and the rules used to combine them.

Understanding the categories of words and phrases in English is fundamental to grasping the structure and function of the language. These categories, often referred to as parts of speech, each play unique roles in sentence construction and meaning. The primary word categories include nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, interjections, and articles. Nouns are words that name people, places, things, or ideas, serving as the subject or object in a sentence. According to Simatupang and Merialfianti (2023), O'Grady (1997) asserted that nouns generally designate entities such as individuals and objects. Pronouns replace nouns to avoid repetition and simplify sentences. Verbs are action words or state-of-being words that indicate what the subject does. Adjectives describe or modify nouns, providing more information about them. Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs, providing context such as time, manner, place, and degree. Prepositions show the relationship between a noun (or pronoun) and other words in a sentence.

Understanding phrases is crucial as they form the backbone of sentence structure and meaning. The primary types of phrases include noun phrases, verb phrases, adjective phrases, adverb phrases, and prepositional phrases. Noun phrases function as nouns within a sentence. According to Biber, noun phrases are fundamental in sentence construction, often carrying the main ideas and providing specificity and detail (Biber, 1999). Verb phrases include the main verb and its auxiliaries, objects, or complements, as emphasized by Quirk, are central to the predicate structure of sentences, indicating actions, processes, or states of being. Adjective phrases consist of an adjective and its modifiers (Quirk, 1985). Huddleston and Pullum discuss how adjective phrases enhance descriptive detail and contribute to the richness of language by allowing thorough descriptions (Huddleston, Rodney and Pullum, Geoffrey K, 2002). Adverb phrases modify a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. Prepositional phrases begin with a preposition and include its object, typically a noun phrase.

The study addresses two primary research questions: 1) What category of word is "Look" used in different contexts? and 2) What is the lexical meaning of the word "Look" based on the context in which it is used? The analysis reveals that "Look" can function as a verb, noun, and interjection, demonstrating its versatility across various grammatical categories. Furthermore, the study explores the nuances of lexical meaning, differentiating between idiomatic, non-idiomatic, and compositional uses of "Look." By analyzing a wide range of examples from different genres, the research provides a comprehensive understanding of the semantic landscape surrounding the word "Look" and its dynamic interplay with context.

By examining idiomatic and non-idiomatic expressions, as well as compositional meanings, this research aims to contribute to the understanding of language complexity and its implications for language learning and teaching. The findings highlight the significance of semantics in understanding language, particularly how specific words can convey a wide range of meanings depending on their contextual usage. This research builds on these theoretical foundations to analyze the selected texts, providing insights into how these linguistic elements interact to convey meaning.

Method

The research methodology of this research centers on a qualitative approach to analyzing the word "look" as used in contemporary American English. The qualitative method involves the collection and analysis of non-numerical data, focusing on understanding phenomena through detailed descriptions and interpretations (Dornyei, 24). This approach is well-suited to the study's objectives, which aim to explore the various contexts and lexical meanings of the word "look."

The primary data source for this study is the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), a comprehensive linguistic resource that includes texts from various genres such as spoken language, fiction, magazines, newspapers, and academic texts. COCA, compiled by Mark Davies at Brigham Young University, contains over 560 million words from 1990 to the present, providing a rich and balanced representation of contemporary American English (Davies, 2008). This extensive corpus allows for an in-depth examination of the word "look" across different contexts and genres.

The research object is the word "look" itself, focusing on its usage across various contexts within COCA. The analysis involves identifying the categories of parts of speech in which "look" appears, such as verb, noun, and interjection. Additionally, the study explores the lexical meanings of "look," considering how these meanings shift based on

contextual factors. This detailed examination aims to uncover the semantic versatility of "look" and its implications for understanding language dynamics in modern American English.

To conduct the analysis, the researcher employs Leech's semantics theory, which provides a framework for examining the meanings of words and their contextual variations (Leech, 1977). The process involves selecting relevant examples from COCA, coding the data based on word category and context, and presenting the findings descriptively. Throughout the research, the researcher acts as the primary instrument, guiding the data selection, analysis, and interpretation processes.

In summary, this qualitative study leverages the vast and diverse data available in COCA to explore the semantic complexity of the word "look." By analyzing its usage across different contexts and parts of speech, the research aims to contribute to broader linguistic theories on lexical meaning and provide insights into the dynamic nature of language in contemporary American English .

Finding

To address the research questions and achieve the study's objectives, the sample data from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) was meticulously analyzed. This analysis sought to thoroughly comprehend the different contexts and lexical meanings of the word "look." The aim was to investigate its usage across various settings, its grammatical functions, and its broader implications for understanding language dynamics in contemporary American English. The data will be classified into word categories, source of data, context, and genre, that consist of sentences. Each sentence that contained the word "Look" will be underlined provided with context to support the analysis. A comprehensive analytical methodology was employed in this research to present findings that could significantly enhance knowledge in the field of linguistic studies.

Table 1. Usage of the word 'Look' in Different Context in COCA

Data	Source	Part of Speech	Genre
"She certainly showed up at the right time, as I went to the Shack to think of a reason to look forward to tomorrow."	Queen's Quarterly Vol. 124, Issue 2 – Inuit Dreams by Donald O and Brien Fraser	Verb (V)	FIC
All the guys are even fatter and balder than the last time you saw them, but the women look remarkably the same,"	The Maine Review Vol. 4, Issue 1 – Friend for Life by Hannah Harlow	Verb (V)	FIC

<p>"Daily Star Snow in southeast Arizona, north of Sonoita, sports a chilly winter look after the second round of winter storms brought snowfall to the surrounding metro Tucson area and southeast Arizona,"</p>	<p>Arizona Daily Star – Snow falls in parts of Tucson this morning (2019)</p>	<p>Noun Phrase (NP)</p>	<p>NEWS</p>
<p>"Look, I don't want to burden you with these things, Portia,"</p>	<p>Carnival Row Series (2019)</p>	<p>Interjection</p>	<p>FILM/TV</p>
<p>"Megan gave me a dirty look."</p>	<p>What doesn't Kill You Will Build Toward A Testimony (2018-Issue 24)</p>	<p>Noun Phrase (NP)</p>	<p>FIC</p>
<p>"I will now trace first poetry then other creative processes in a brief look at what has been written in professional literature."</p>	<p>Advocating for the Use of Poetry and Mixed Media Work in Analytic Processes</p>	<p>Noun Phrase (NP)</p>	<p>ACAD</p>
<p>"With a fresh bright and attractive new look"</p>	<p>Travel health Update by Chiodini, Jane (2014, Vol. 44 Issue 2, p.43)</p>	<p>Noun Phrase (NP)</p>	<p>ACAD</p>
<p>"Whenever I had an open look, I tried to be more aggressive (Saturday),"</p>	<p>Virginian-Pilot Cavaliers make short work of Florida State in ACC opener</p>	<p>Noun Phrase (NP)</p>	<p>NEWS</p>
<p>"Open your eyes, look up to the skies and see Gaga deserved more than 1 win and 2 nominees."</p>	<p>New York Times – The Best and Worst of the Golden Globes (2019)</p>	<p>Verb Phrase (VP)</p>	<p>NEWS</p>
<p>"But then I look at his eyes, and I-I see that his left is just a tiny smidge bigger than his right, like yours,"</p>	<p>Don't Take My Sunshine Away (2019)</p>	<p>Verb Phrase (VP)</p>	<p>FILM/TV</p>

Discussion

To address the research questions and achieve the study's aims and objectives, the collected data will be meticulously analyzed. The focus of this analysis is to understand the contextual aspects of the word "Look" within the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). This analysis will achieve several key objectives:

Firstly, the study will identify the word category of "Look" in different contexts. This involves classifying instances of "Look" based on its grammatical function as a verb, noun, interjection, or part of a noun phrase or verb phrase. Secondly, the analysis will delve into the lexical meaning of "Look" based on context. This involves examining the specific meaning of "Look" in each instance, considering whether it is used idiomatically, non-idiomatically, or compositionally.

Furthermore, the data will be categorized based on source, context, and genre. This involves organizing the data based on the source of the text (e.g., fiction, news, academic), the context in which "Look" is used, and the genre of the text. Finally, the findings will be presented descriptively, providing a detailed description of the observed patterns in the data, including examples and explanations of how the word category and lexical meaning of "Look" vary across different contexts.

This research employs an analytical framework based on Leech's semantics theory to provide conclusions that may significantly enhance knowledge about the semantic versatility of the word "Look" in contemporary American English.

Verb

*"She certainly showed up at the right time, as I went to the Shack to think of a reason to **look** forward to tomorrow."*

(Queen's Quarterly Vol. 124, Issue)

The passage follows the protagonist's interaction with May, who provides cultural insights and guidance. In the sentence "She certainly showed up at the right time, as I went to the Shack to think of a reason to look forward to tomorrow," the word "Look" is a verb. Grammatically, it is part of the infinitive phrase "to look forward," which acts as the object of the preposition "to." Here, "Look" is used in its infinitive form to express the action of anticipating or expecting something positive in the future, contributing to the overall meaning of seeking optimism for the upcoming day.

In the sentence "She certainly showed up at the right time, as I went to the Shack to think of a reason to look forward to tomorrow," the word "Look" is used as an idiomatic expression "look forward to," which means to anticipate something with pleasure or eagerness. Its meaning cannot be directly inferred from the individual meanings of the words "Look," "forward," and "to." Instead, "look forward to" collectively means to anticipate or await something with positive expectation. This idiomatic usage is well-established in English and conveys a sense of hopeful anticipation. The idiom does not pertain to the literal act of looking or directing one's gaze; rather, it refers to a mental state of positive anticipation about future events.

*"All the guys are even fatter and balder than the last time you saw them, but the women **look** remarkably the same,"*

(The Maine Review Vol. 4)

The passage depicts a conversation between Tivvie and Lily, where Lily discusses her recent reunion experience. In the sentence "All the guys are even fatter and balder than the last time you saw them, but the women look remarkably the same," the word "Look" is a verb. Specifically, it is a linking verb that describes the state or condition of the subject, "the women." The verb "Look" connects the subject to its description, "remarkably the same," indicating how the women appear or seem. "Look" as a verb can be used to describe the appearance or perception of someone or something. It is commonly used in this way to link the subject of the sentence with a complement that provides more information about its state or condition. This construction is grammatically correct and follows standard English usage where linking verbs connect the subject to an adjective or noun that describes it.

In this context, "Look" is used in a non-idiomatic, literal sense. The word "Look" here refers directly to the appearance or visual impression of the women. It describes how they seem or appear to someone observing them. The phrase "remarkably the

same" indicates that the women's appearance has not changed much over time, making this a straightforward, literal use of "Look." By saying that the women "look remarkably the same," she is noting that, in contrast to the men who have visibly changed by becoming "fatter and balder," the women have maintained their appearance over time. This observation provides a point of comparison and highlights the difference in how the men and women have aged since the last time they were seen.

Noun

*"Daily Star Snow in southeast Arizona, north of Sonoita, sports a chilly winter **look** after the second round of winter storms brought snowfall to the surrounding metro Tucson area and southeast Arizona,"*

(Arizona Daily Star - 2019)

The passage describes the occurrence of snow in Tucson, Arizona, on January 2, 2019. Tucsonans woke up to snow on New Year's Day, followed by more snow on Wednesday morning. In the sentence "Daily Star Snow in southeast Arizona, north of Sonoita, sports a chilly winter look after the second round of winter storms brought snowfall to the surrounding metro Tucson area and southeast Arizona," the word "Look" is a noun. Specifically, "Look" refers to the appearance or visual aspect of the snow-covered landscape. It is the object of the verb "Sports," which means to display or exhibit in this context. "Look" can function as a noun denoting an appearance or aspect. The phrase "a chilly winter look" serves as a noun phrase where "Chilly" and "Winter" are adjectives modifying the noun "look." This noun phrase describes the visual impression created by the snow in the area, which is typical in English where nouns can be modified by adjectives to convey more specific meanings.

The phrase "chilly winter look" has a compositional meaning that can be analyzed by combining the meanings of "Chilly," "Winter," and "Look." According to the principle of compositionality, the meaning of a complex expression is derived from its parts and the rules used to combine them. Here, "Chilly" (cold), "Winter" (season characterized by cold weather), and "Look" (appearance) combine to form a phrase that means an appearance characteristic of cold winter weather. This compositional meaning is straightforward and directly interprets the combined meanings of the words. This usage exemplifies compositional semantics, where the combined meanings of "Chilly," "Winter," and "Look" create a clear and understandable description of the scene. Understanding this literal and compositional use provides clarity in interpreting the sentence and aligns with grammatical and semantic principles in English.

Interjections

*"**Look**, I don't want to burden you with these things, Portia."*

(Carnival Row Series - 2019)

In this passage, Philo is confronted about injuries to his hand and head, and Portia expresses concern for his well-being, urging him to seek medical attention. In the sentence "Look, I don't want to burden you with these things, Portia," the word "Look" is an interjection. As an interjection, "Look" is used to capture attention or to emphasize what follows. This usage is common in spoken English and often serves as a way to draw the listener's focus to the speaker's next words or point of view. Interjections are typically standalone words or phrases that convey emotion, pause, or exclamation. They

do not necessarily fit into the standard grammatical structure of a sentence but instead serve a pragmatic function. In this case, "Look" is used to introduce the speaker's statement and signal its importance or urgency to the listener, Portia.

In this context, "Look" is used idiomatically. While "Look" generally means to direct one's gaze, as an interjection, it has a figurative meaning. It does not refer to the physical act of looking but rather serves as a verbal cue to draw attention. This idiomatic usage is common in English, where "Look" as an interjection emphasizes the importance of what the speaker is about to say. Given the context of the passage, where Philo is being confronted about his injuries and Portia expresses concern for his well-being, the use of "Look" as an interjection is significant. Philo uses "look" to preface his statement, emphasizing that he does not want to burden Portia with his issues. The interjection underscores his reluctance to share his problems and aims to direct Portia's focus to his desire not to cause her worry.

Noun Phrase

*"Megan gave me a **dirty look**,"*

(What doesn't Kill You Will Build Toward A Testimony - 2018)

This passage appears to be a conversation or inner monologue about religious scripture and personal reflection, likely within a larger narrative focused on themes of faith, identity, and possibly belonging. In the line "Megan gave me a dirty look," "dirty look" is a noun phrase. In this case, the adjective "dirty" modifies the noun "Look." The term "dirty" describes the "Look," suggesting an unfavorable, disapproving, or accusing glance. Since "dirty look" refers to the item Megan is offering, the phrase as a whole is a noun phrase. "Look" is a noun that can refer to an eye or facial expression. When coupled with the word "dirty," it designates a specific type of look—one that is disdainful or unpleasant. Therefore, "dirty look" is a well-chosen noun phrase that expresses a certain kind of visual encounter in a concise manner.

In this context, "dirty look" is used idiomatically. An idiomatic expression is one whose meaning cannot be directly inferred from the meanings of the individual words. Here, "dirty look" does not mean a gaze that is literally dirty or unclean, but rather one that conveys disapproval or annoyance. This idiomatic usage is well understood in English, where "dirty" figuratively enhances "Look" to mean a hostile or contemptuous gaze. Megan's "dirty look" might symbolize disapproval or judgment in the context of personal beliefs or actions. The phrase suggests a moment of interpersonal conflict or misunderstanding, possibly tied to deeper themes of moral scrutiny or spiritual judgment within the larger narrative.

*"I will now trace first poetry then other creative processes in a **brief look** at what has been written in professional literature."*

(Advocating for the Use of Poetry and Mixed Media Work in Analytic Processes)

The passage explores the intersection of creativity and analytical processes in research work. In the sentence provided, the phrase "brief look" is a noun phrase. Here, "Brief" serves as an adjective modifying the noun "Look." The adjective "brief" describes the duration or extent of the "Look," indicating that it will be short or concise. Together, the phrase "brief look" acts as a noun phrase because it is the object of the preposition "in," which introduces the prepositional phrase "in a brief look." In this context, "a brief look" means a quick examination or overview. This is consistent with the noun form of

"Look," which refers to a momentary glance or examination. By placing the adjective "Brief" before "Look," the sentence specifies that the examination will be concise, fitting the overall context of summarizing or overviews written material in professional literature.

In this sentence, the word "Look" is used in its non-idiomatic, literal sense. It refers to an act of viewing or examining something, specifically the written material in professional literature. It is concluded that the phrase "brief look" functions as a noun phrase where "Look" is a noun modified by the adjective "Brief." Its meaning in the sentence is non-idiomatic, straightforwardly indicating a short examination or overview of the professional literature. This analysis aligns with the principles of lexical semantics, providing a clear understanding of how meaning is constructed in this context.

*"With a fresh bright and attractive new **look**,"*

(Travel health Update by Chiodini, Jane - 2014)

In the sentence "with a fresh bright and attractive new look," the phrase "new look" is a noun phrase. Here, "new" is an adjective modifying the noun "Look." The adjective "new" describes the quality or state of the "Look," indicating that it is recently changed or updated. Together, the phrase "new look" acts as a noun phrase because it represents a particular aspect or appearance that is being described. "Look" can function as a noun meaning appearance or aspect. When combined with the adjective "new," it specifies that the appearance or aspect being referred to is recent or updated. This is consistent with standard English usage where adjectives modify nouns to provide more specific descriptions

In this context, "new look" is used in a non-idiomatic, literal sense. The word "Look" refers to the appearance or visual aspect of something, and "New" simply means recently created or updated. Therefore, "new look" literally means a recently updated appearance. This usage is straightforward and directly interprets the meanings of the individual words combined. Given the context of the passage, which discusses updates regarding the management of yellow fever vaccines and associated documentation, the phrase "new look" likely refers to the updated appearance of the documentation or the way the information is presented. This might include visual changes such as design, layout, or formatting intended to make the documents more attractive and user-friendly. The adjectives "fresh," "bright," and "attractive" further describe this new appearance, emphasizing that the changes are positive and enhance the visual appeal.

*"Whenever I had an **open look**, I tried to be more aggressive (Saturday),"*

(Virginian-Pilot Cavaliers make short work of Florida State in ACC opener)

The passage describes a basketball game between the University of Virginia (U.Va.) and Florida State University (FSU). In the sentence "Whenever I had an open look, I tried to be more aggressive (Saturday)," the phrase "open look" is a noun phrase. Here, "Open" is an adjective modifying the noun "Look." The adjective "Open" describes the quality or condition of the "Look," indicating that it is unobstructed or clear. Together, the phrase "open look" acts as a noun phrase because it represents a specific situation or opportunity in the context of a basketball game. "Look" can function as a noun, meaning an opportunity to see or a chance to shoot, particularly in sports

contexts. When combined with the adjective "Open," it specifies that the opportunity is clear and unobstructed. This usage aligns with standard English grammar where adjectives modify nouns to provide more specific descriptions

From a compositional perspective, the phrase "open look" can be analyzed by combining the meanings of "Open" and "Look." According to the principle of compositionality, the meaning of a complex expression is derived from its parts and the rules used to combine them. Here, "Open" (unobstructed) and "Look" (opportunity) combine to form a phrase that means an unobstructed opportunity to take a shot. This compositional meaning is clear within the specific jargon of basketball. The phrase "open look" combines the meanings of "Open" and "Look" to form a specific and understood term within basketball, aligning with principles of compositional semantics and contextual usage.

Verb Phrase

*"Open your eyes, **look up** to the skies and see gaga deserved more than 1 win and 2 nominees."*

(New York Times - 2019)

This passage appears to be discussing reactions to the winners and events at a prestigious awards ceremony, likely the Golden Globe Awards or a similar event. In the sentence "Open your eyes, look up to the skies and see Gaga deserved more than 1 win and 2 nominees," the phrase "look up" is a phrasal verb. A phrasal verb is a combination of a verb and one or more particles (such as prepositions or adverbs) that together create a meaning different from the individual words. In this case, "Look" is the verb, and "up" is the particle. "look up" is directing the action of the verb "Look" towards a specific direction or location—in this case, "to the skies." The phrase "look up" thus acts as a single unit that denotes the action of directing one's gaze upwards. The verb "Look" on its own would simply mean to direct one's gaze, but when combined with "up," it specifies the direction of the gaze, which is upwards towards the skies.

From a compositional perspective, the meaning of "look up" in this context is derived from the meanings of "look" and "up" combined. According to the principle of compositionality, the meaning of a phrase is a function of the meanings of its parts and the rules used to combine them. In this case, "Look" (to direct one's gaze) and "up" (towards a higher position) combine to form a clear and literal instruction to gaze upwards. This use of "look up" exemplifies compositional semantics, where the combined meanings of "Look" and "Up" clearly convey the intended action. Understanding this literal and compositional usage provides clarity in interpreting the sentence and aligns with grammatical and semantic principles in English.

*"But then I **look at** his eyes, and I-I see that his left is just a tiny smidge bigger than his right, like yours,"*

(Don't Take My sunshine Away - 2019)

The passage depicts a conversation between two individuals, Tobe and another person, likely a partner or spouse, about the challenges of caring for their son, Jack, who appears to be ill and hospitalized. In the sentence "But then I look at his eyes, and I-I see that his left is just a tiny smidge bigger than his right, like yours," the phrase "look at" is a phrasal verb. A phrasal verb consists of a verb and one or more particles (such as prepositions or adverbs) that create a meaning from the individual words. In this case,

"Look" is the verb, and "at" is the preposition. "look at" is directing the action of the verb "Look" towards a specific object, which in this context is "his eyes." The phrase "look at" thus acts as a single unit that denotes the action of directing one's gaze towards something specific. The verb "look" alone would simply mean to direct one's gaze, but when combined with "at," it specifies the target of the gaze, which is "his eyes."

The phrase "look at" is used in its literal sense in the sentence. Here, "Look" means to direct one's gaze, and "at" indicates the object of this action—his eyes. This usage is straightforward and non-idiomatic, clearly instructing the listener that the speaker is directing their gaze towards the eyes. This literal use aligns with the primary definition of "Look" as an action verb. It is used in its literal, non-idiomatic sense to describe the act of directing one's gaze towards a specific object, which in this case is "his eyes."

Conclusion

This research, "Understanding Contextual Aspects of the Word 'Look' in Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA): Semantics Study," provides a comprehensive analysis of the semantic versatility of the word "Look" in contemporary American English. Through a meticulous examination of a corpus of texts, the study reveals the diverse grammatical categories and lexical meanings associated with "Look," highlighting its dynamic nature and the complexities of semantic interpretation.

The analysis reveals that "Look" functions as both a verb and a noun, with its meaning shifting depending on the context. As a verb, "Look" can express the act of observing, directing one's gaze, or describing an appearance. For instance, in the sentence "All the guys are even fatter and balder than the last time you saw them, but the women look remarkably the same," "Look" functions as a linking verb, describing the state or condition of the women's appearance. As a noun, "Look" can refer to an appearance, aspect, or opportunity. In the sentence "Daily Star Snow in southeast Arizona, north of Sonoita, sports a chilly winter look after the second round of winter storms brought snowfall to the surrounding metro Tucson area and southeast Arizona," "Look" functions as a noun, referring to the visual aspect of the snow-covered landscape.

Furthermore, the study explores the nuances of lexical meaning, differentiating between idiomatic, non-idiomatic, and compositional uses of "Look." Idiomatic expressions, such as "look forward to" or "dirty look," convey meanings that cannot be directly inferred from the individual words. For example, in the sentence "She certainly showed up at the right time, as I went to the Shack to think of a reason to look forward to tomorrow," "look forward to" functions as an idiom, expressing anticipation with pleasure or eagerness. Non-idiomatic uses, on the other hand, are straightforward and literal, while compositional meanings are constructed by combining the meanings of individual words within a phrase. For instance, in the sentence "Whenever I had an open look, I tried to be more aggressive (Saturday)," "open look" functions compositionally, combining the meanings of "open" and "look" to create a specific term within the context of basketball.

By examining the word category, lexical meaning, and contextual usage of "Look," this research provides valuable insights into the dynamic nature of language and the complexities of semantic interpretation. It highlights the importance of considering both grammatical function and context when analyzing the meaning of words, particularly those with multiple meanings like "Look." This study contributes to a deeper

understanding of the semantic landscape of contemporary American English and the intricate ways in which language conveys meaning.

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