

# What determines choice of meaning or form

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



The paper "What Determines Choice of Meaning or Form" is a perfect example of an English assignment.

What is the meaning of:

The door's wide open" in the following contexts?

Mother to a child who has just come into the room

Mother informing the child that he or she should come in

Family arriving home after two weeks' holiday

In this context the meaning of the form the door is wide opening implies welcome. The family is being welcomed back home instead of the speaker using the form welcome, he uses the form the door is wide open which implies the same.

Woman to man when he says he's leaving her

The woman granting permission to the man to leave or simply informing him that he has no problem with that or simply implying he has no problem with him leaving. Similarly, it can be that the woman is bidding bye to the man. It can also mean the woman accepting divorce or separation. The meaning outlined depending on the context in which the form is presented.

Business people talking about Russia

The form implies that there are business opportunities in Russia that need to be explored.

I'm tired' in these contexts?

Secretary to a boss when asked to do extra work  
The secretary portraying her unwillingness to perform the task at hand or declining to do the assigned duties

The secretary indicating that she needs rest

Two-year-old walking to the shops

Implying that he or she is physically tired or he is incapable of making it to the shops.

Man to a woman as they go to bed  
He has had a long day/ busy day  
He should not be disturbed at night

What do the above examples tell you about language in use? Are there any rules?

How would you explain the differences to your students?

Form encodes or results in referential meaning. Nonetheless, the situations of the above forms are quite complicated due to the fact that one form can result in the encoding of one meaning or multiple meaning as the examples presented above. The meaning can be in a single context or a number of contexts (Plag, 2003, p. 8). As in the examples above, it is clear that some forms present different meanings in a single context while some present the same in multiple contexts. Additionally, it is possible for multiple forms to create the same meaning in a given context resulting in ambiguity (Plag, 2003, p. 9). Reflective Task 3. 2

She's playing soccer.'

a) How would you explain the grammatical form?

The grammatical form is realized by adding the morpheme -ing to indicate continuous tense or present continuous tense. This results in an overlap of the meaning of the sentence. This is because the tense encodes continuous action and non-punctual aspect. That is the forming denotes present continuous or can be used to encode past continuous.

b) What is the form (tense and construction)?

The test is present continuous encoded with a short form of the verb be in the present form.

c) How would you explain the meaning?

She is a player of soccer

The speaker denotes that presently or the action in progress is that the girl is taking part in an action which is soccer.

The form playing denotes different meanings in different contexts.

d) How does the meaning change in the following contexts:

- “ Where’s a mum?” “ She’s playing soccer. The finals!”

The mother is taking part in the ongoing soccer games at the time in which the speaker utters the words.

- She never wears glasses when she’s playing soccer.

She usually plays soccer/ she is a fan of soccer/ her hobby is playing soccer and during soccer sessions, she puts on glasses

- She's playing soccer on Wednesday afternoon, so she won't be able to attend

the meeting.

She will be taking part in soccer on a specific day which will be on Wednesday

- She's playing soccer with less enthusiasm lately. Is something wrong?

She has been taking part in soccer for a long period of time but her present performance is not good/ up to standard.

- Well, you see, my mum is fanatical about soccer. She's playing soccer one day.

She's got the ball and heading for a goal when out of nowhere

The speaker implies that the mother is just a fan of soccer but she is considering taking part in the game in the future and she has started to practice the same.

e) Now, what does this tell you about form and meaning?

It is evident that every form possesses a unique meaning in a given context and it's the form that is responsible for the determination of the meaning.

Additionally, there are certain rules that determine the meaning of a given form, for instance, the verb playing. Moreover, it is evident that the noun relies on the verb for interpretation of its meaning in a particular context (Beedham, 2005, p. 18).

### Reading Task 3. 3

The variables include age, proficiency level and educational background which are learners' variables while the instructional variables include register, skill and then need/ use (Cecil-Murcia, 1998, p. 67). The students can be positioned at the learner's variable and at the proficiency level. In each case will consider grammatical forms both at the beginning, intermediate and advanced levels with the aim of assisting them to attain proficiency. I will classify them as intermediate learners.