

Procedure

Read each target word in its context; assign one of these codes to each target word:

Space (S) (long rope)

Time (T) (long nap; short term*)

Both space and time (B) (long run, long ride) — anything with motion will probably be ambiguous

Uncodable (U) — when there is not enough concordance

Other metaphorical (O) (go long on wheat; long for a time; as long as*) — might not find any

Frozen lexical item / idiom (F) (shortbread; high chair; short cut*)

Further notes

Idioms / frozen forms vs. plain old collocations: in the short term; short-term care; take a short cut

All of these are frequent collocations -- but that doesn't necessarily disqualify them!

In the short term and short-term care, I would argue, are legit instances of "short" being used temporally, in **productive (non-frozen) expressions**. How can we tell? Well, they are *systematic* and at least somewhat *productive* (search for those words in Casa 2009 JPEG for discussion: [Embodiment of abstract concepts: Good and bad in right- and left-handers](#)). They are systematic inasmuch as they can describe points throughout a continuum: short-term; long-term; you even say medium-term without seeming too cutesey or non-standard, and it's used frequently in business talk. They are productive inasmuch as you can vary the expression freely: longer term, longest term, extended term, etc.

BY CONTRAST, short cut is a fixed form. You can't say "let's take the shortest cut" or "the briefest cut" (not productive), nor can you say "we accidentally took a long cut" (not systematic) without being cute and playing with words. (Would people understand these creative expressions? Sure, in the right context, with the right prosody, but that's true of pretty much everything.)

Another question about "short cut" is: does it have "shortness" (literal or metaphorical) in its semantics? Probably -- but it's hard to say for frozen expressions (Yagmur, we were pondering whether "high chair" has highness in its semantics; hard to tell since that's just what that object is called...)

"short answer", "short sentence", "short story"

The context might matter. "The politician gave a *short answer* to the reporter" is clearly temporal.

But a "short-answer test question" or a "short sentence" could be both spatial and temporal. In CHILDES there were cases in which there was a spatial extent corresponding to a "short sentence" for example where parent-child is reading a book and a parent is saying "Look how long/short that sentence is!"