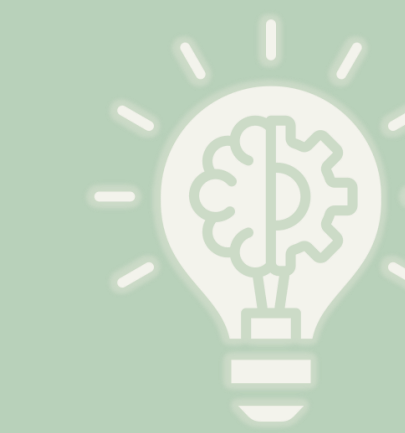




# HOW USEFUL IS THE VOCABULARY IN SCHOOLBOOKS?



## VOCABULARY IN *GREEN LINE 1* AND *2* AND THE *OXFORD 3000* REGARDING THE CEFR LEVELS A1 AND A2

### Introduction

Many teachers use the schoolbook to assign vocabulary to students. The Standards of Education prescribe a **CEFR level of A2** to students after completing grade 6.

How much of the vocabulary in schoolbooks *actually* aids in achieving this level?

### Background and Method:

Outline of CEFR A1 and A2:

- **A1:** simple interactions about familiar topics, dependent on cooperation of conversation partner
- **A2:** navigation of common social situations and everyday-life, active participation in conversations  
(Council of Europe, 2020)

Core aspects of vocabulary learning

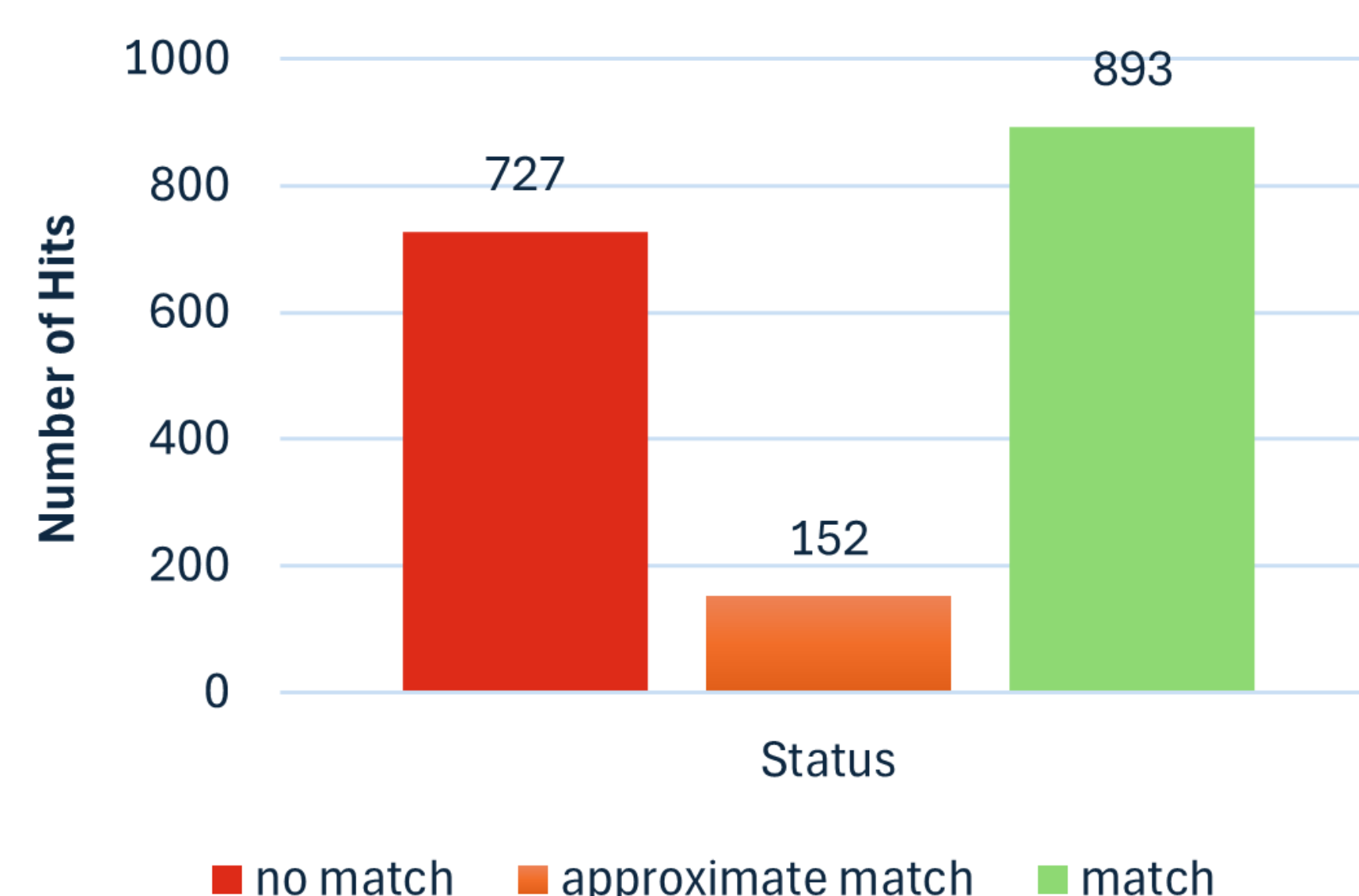
- Most common words should be learned first
- a balance of repetition and variety is crucial  
(Milton, 2010; Nation, 2017).

Method:

The complete vocabulary of *Green Line 1* ( $n=1094$ ) and *2* ( $n=882$ ) was compared with the learner corpus *Oxford 3000* and its A1 ( $n=900$ ) and A2 ( $n=872$ ) items. These A1 items were searched among the *Green Line* items.

### Results and Discussion

**Allocation of Oxford 3000 items in *Green Line***

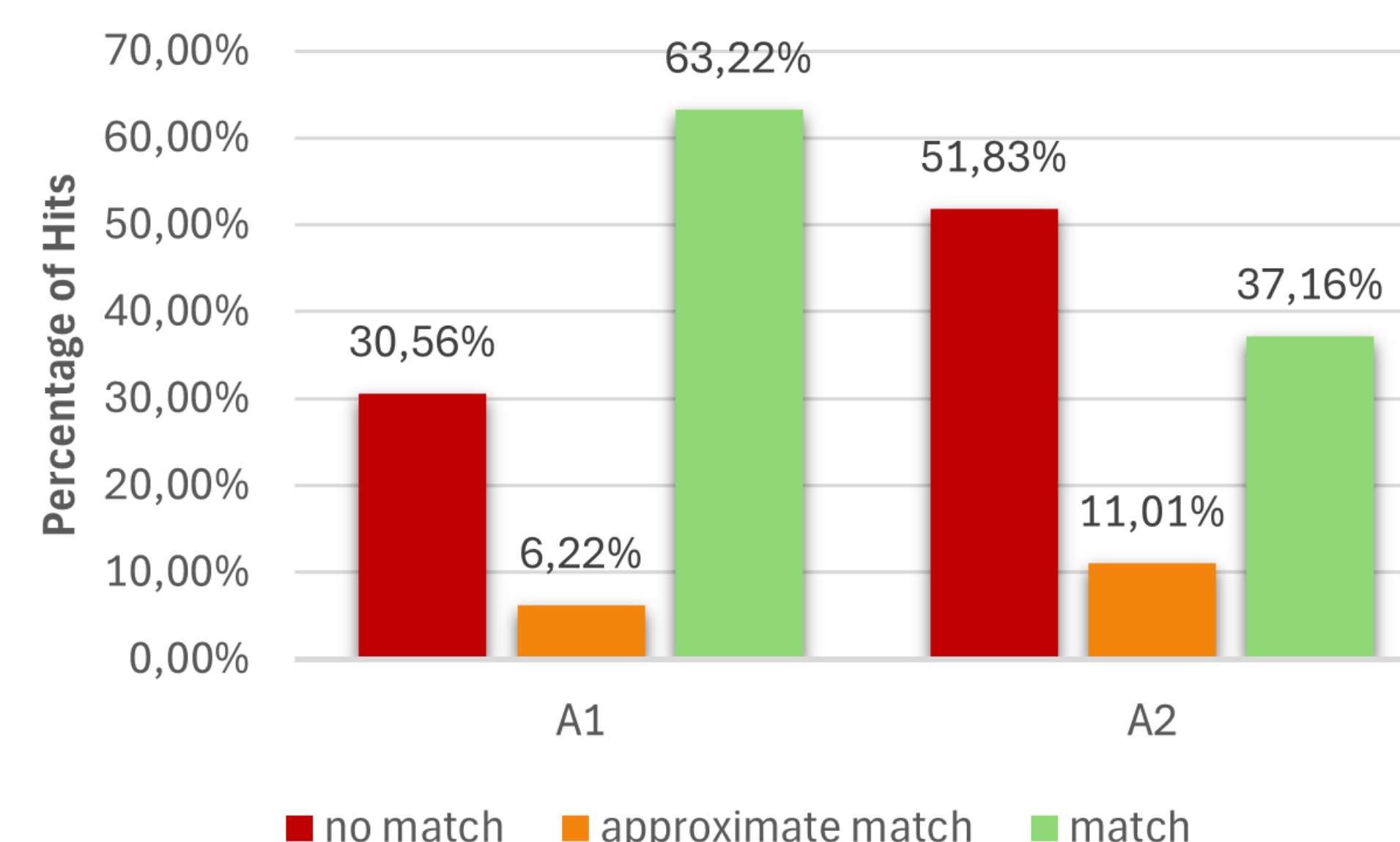


- **58.97%** of the relevant vocabulary is (approx.) **represented** in *Green Line 1* and *2*.
- **41.03%** of the relevant vocabulary is **missing**.
- Not enough to understand the books (Yang & Coxhead, 2022), nor for general use.
- **Students who already struggle will find it challenging to make transfers**
- E.g. *action* (n.), *certain* (adj.), *to send* (v.) are missing
- Instead, *Bon voyage!* and *geocaching* are included

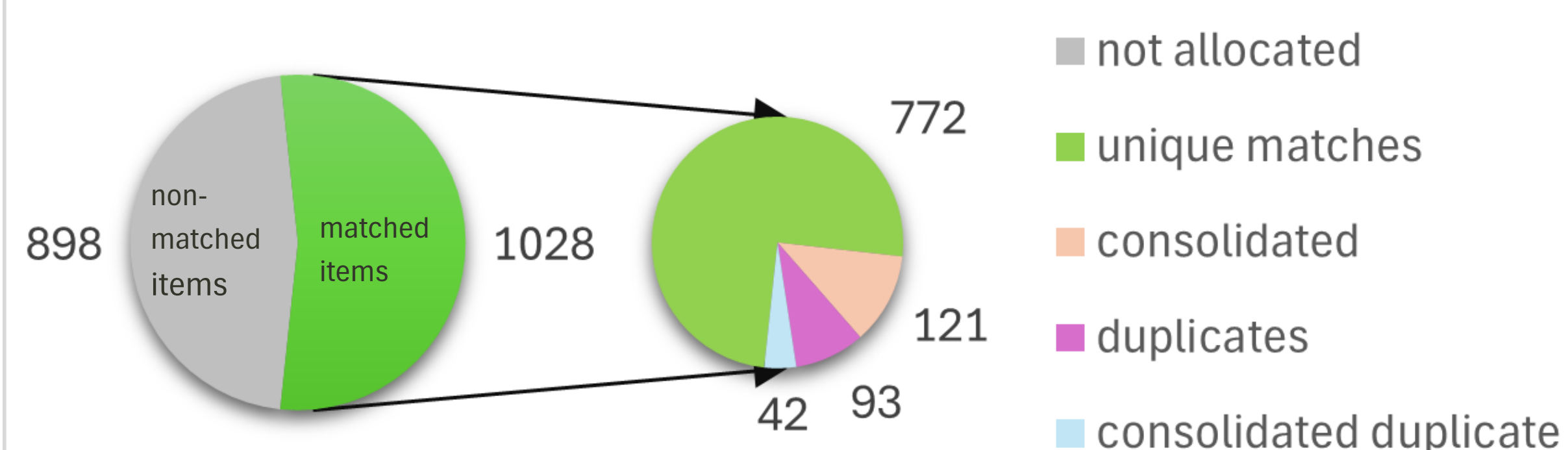
- **Oxford 3000 A1 level:**  $\approx 2/3$  of A1 vocabulary is available in *Green Line*.
- **Oxford 3000 A2 level:** Only  $\approx 1/3$  of A2 vocabulary was allocated an exact match. Over 50% of the A2 vocabulary is missing.
- **Approximate matches:** Rate is almost twice as high for A2 as for A1 (A2=11.01%; A1=6.22%).

The schoolbooks are barely suitable to teach A1 and do not aid in achieving A2.

**Distribution of matches between CEFR levels**



**Lexical variety of matched *Green Line* items and Oxford 3000 items**



- **75.1% of matched vocabulary was a unique match**
- **11.77 of matched vocabulary was consolidated** (= *Green Line* items repeated vocabulary)
  - Reduction of lexical variety at the expense of important vocabulary
  - Benefits of random repetition are extremely questionable

### Conclusion & Consequences for Teachers:

- Teachers cannot rely on schoolbooks to teach necessary vocabulary
- Only a slight majority of necessary words will be included
  - The schoolbooks are particularly unsuitable to reach A2
  - Students have to make transfers themselves, which burdens struggling students
- The schoolbooks sacrifice important vocabulary for non-essential items and unsystematic repetitions

### Limitations:

- Learning the Oxford 3000 vocabulary is not equivalent to reaching A1 or A2
- The teacher is not limited to the schoolbooks

### Important Literature:

- Council of Europe. (2020). *CEFR Companion*.
- Moore, J. (2020). *The Oxford 3000 and Oxford 5000: The Most Important Words to Learn in English*.
- Yang, L. & Coxhead, A. (2022). A Corpus-based Study of Vocabulary in the New Concept English Textbook Series. *REL C Journal*, 53 (3), 597–611.
- Milton, J. (2010). The development of vocabulary breadth across the CEFR levels. In I. Bartning, M. Martin, & I. Wedder (Eds.), *Eurosla Monograph Series: Vol. 1. Communicative Proficiency and Linguistic Development: intersections between SLA and language testing research* (pp. 211–232). Eurosla.
- Nation, P. (2017). How vocabulary is learned. *Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching*, 12(1), 1-14.

Find the complete paper here:

