

Seminar 17312

Introduction to Linguistics

Institute for English Philology
Winter Semester 2020/2021

Academic Instructor: Magdalena Borowik
Semantics II: Sense relations

Exam questions: syntax II

Consider the following concordance lines extracted from the British National Corpus. List **three** of the different **argument structures/complementation patterns (phrase type + participant role)** of the verb PAY that are exemplified. (The role labels are arbitrary, they should clearly pick out each participant of the COMMERCIAL TRANSACTION frame that is explicitly mentioned.)

A Commercial Transaction Event/ "Paying Event" contains

- a) payer/buyer (giver of money)
- b) goods (objects that are bought/ payed)
- c) seller (receiver of money)
- d) money (e.g. 50 Dollars)

These are the participants. The phrase types are usually noun phrases (NP) or prepositional phrases (PP).

- 1) **A price** that had to be paid. PAY <NP:PRICE>
- 2) **Two thirds** have not paid. PAY <NP:BUYER>
- 3) **You** are just paying **for it**. PAY <NP:BUYER,PP:GOODS>
- 4) I'll only have to pay **him a dollar**. PAY <NP: BUYER,NP: SELLER,NP:MONEY>
- 5) pay **reparations to Israeli fund**. PAY <NP:MONEY,PP:SELLER>

Semantic frames and valency

Those shoes, seventy dollar?

I'm not paying **that** for **them**!

PAY <NP:PRICE, NP:MONEY, PP:GOODS>

Exam questions: semantics I

Question 1

Consider the sentence in (1):

(1) My landlord has finally sent someone to at least repair the doorbell.

Which two of the following sentences are **not entailed** by (1)?

- a) It took my landlord many days to send someone to repair the doorbell. **X**
- b) My dishwasher needs repairing as well. **X**
- c) The doorbell is what is to be repaired by the person my landlord has sent.
- d) It was my landlord who has sent someone to repair the doorbell.

Question 2

Consider the sentence in (2):

(2) *Everyone in the royal family loved our king's dog, who disappeared under mysterious circumstances.*

Which two of the following sentences are ***not* presuppositions** of 2)?

- a. Our king's dog was loved by everyone in the royal family. **X**
- b. The king had a dog.
- c. The king's dog has vanished. **X**
- d. There was at least one person in the royal family except for the king.

Question 3

Which two of the following statements are incorrect?

- a) The first constituent in a clause always carries special focus. **X**
- b) A passive can be used to mark the semantic patient of an even as topic.
- c) Cleft constructions are typically used to move a particular constituent into focus.
- d) The first constituent in a sentence tends to be reserved for information that is new in the active discourse. **X**

Sentential semantics

Entailment


“(...) the truth of one sentence entails (or implies) the truth of another sentence”
 (Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 143).

Fig. 6.13

Entailment


(7a) *The cat killed the mouse*

(7b) *The mouse is dead*

 entails

(8a) *Anna likes every single kind of fruit*

(8b) *Anna likes oranges*

 entails

Asymmetrical entailment

1a) Anna likes every single kind of fruit.

1b) Anna likes oranges.

1a) entails that 1b) is true but 1b) does not entail that 1a) is true.

(Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 142-143).

Contradiction (negative entailment)

Sentences that contradict each other” -> “(...) the falseness of one sentence implies the falseness of the other (...)” (Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 143).

(9a) *Cheeky is a dog*

(9b) *Cheeky is a cat*

(10a) *It is freezing in here*

(10b) *It is hot in here*

 contradicts

 contradicts

| Fig. 6.14

Contradiction

(ibid.)

“Presupposition: A proposition assumed by a speaker when making an assertion. So a speaker saying *Harry has stopped sending his ex-wife Christmas cards* presupposes that Harry used to send his ex-wife Christmas cards. Traditionally this was viewed as a semantic relationship between two propositions but the assumption’s sensitivity to context has led some scholars to view it as a pragmatic phenomenon, reflecting Participants’ management of shared assumptions in a conversation (Saeed 2016: 451).”

“Presupposition trigger: A linguistic element that signals the speaker’s presuppositions, such as lexical items like the English factive verbs *realize* or *regret*, and constructions like clefts, such as *It was the butler who murdered the guests*, which presupposes somebody murdered the guests (ibid.).”

<i>The mayor of Boston is in town today</i>	}	presupposes	<i>There is a mayor of Boston</i>
<i>The mayor of Boston is not in town today</i>			
<i>I do regret leaving Boston</i>	}	presupposes	<i>I left Boston</i>
<i>I don't regret leaving Boston</i>			

(Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 147)

Difference between presupposition and entailment

“(...) presuppositions also hold true when the presupposing sentence is negated”

<i>The mayor of Boston is in town today</i>	}	presupposes	<i>There is a mayor of Boston</i>
<i>The mayor of Boston is not in town today</i>			
<i>I do regret leaving Boston</i>	}	presupposes	<i>I left Boston</i>
<i>I don't regret leaving Boston</i>			

Presuppositions

(Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 147)

Presuppositions aren't part of the truth-conditional content.

Presupposition triggers (choice)

1. Definite descriptions:

John saw/didn't see *the man with two heads* -> there exists a man with two heads

2. Factive verbs: *regret, to be aware, realise, know, be proud that, be sorry that, be glad that, be indifferent that, be sad that*

Martha *regrets/doesn't regret* drinking John's home brew. -> Martha drank John's home brew.

3. Implicative verbs: *manage, try to*

John *managed/didn't manage* to open the door. -> John tried to open the door.

4. Change of state verbs: *stop, began, continue, return (from), finish, carry on*

Joan *began/didn't begin* to beat her husband.

-> Joan hadn't been beating her husband.

Presupposition triggers (choice)

5. Temporal clauses: *since, after, while*

Since Churchill died, we've lacked/haven't lacked a leader. -> Churchill died.

6. Iteratives: *another time, again, to come back, repeat, for the nth time, restore*

Carter *returned/didn't return* to power -> Carter held power before.

7. Cleft sentences and pseudo-cleft sentences:

It *was/wasn't* Henry that kissed Rosie -> someone kissed Rosie

What John *lost/didn't lost* was his wallet. -> John lost something. (pseudo-cleft)

(Levinson 1983: 182-184)

“**Information structure:** The linguistic marking of a speaker’s assumptions about the knowledge surrounding a conversation, in particular the distinction between shared assumptions and new information. This distinction is sometimes termed given versus new information. Another distinction in information structure is between **focus** and **topic**” (Saeed 2016: 444).

“**Focus:** (...). In information structure it can refer to new information that is marked as most salient by the particular mechanisms of a language, e.g. intonation, syntactic structure, or specific morphemes.” (ibid., p. 442).

“**Topic:** This term has several uses in linguistics. In information structure it is used at sentence level for a sentence constituent in languages that mark a topic/focus or a **topic/comment** distinction by syntactic structure or special morphemes. At a higher level the term is used for a unifying element in the unfolding structure of discourse, the discourse topic, which is what participants understand the discourse or conversation to be about” (ibid., p. 455)

“**Topic/comment structure:** The proposal that some languages, e.g. Chinese, Japanese, present a sentence structure that distinguishes between a topic, which is what the sentence is about and that links to the previous discourse, and the comment about the topic, which is new information. Some writers see the traditional subject-predicate sentence division as a subset of this distinction” (ibid.)

Topic, focus, comment

Topic: “what the clause is about” (Cormack & Smith 2000: 387)

Focus: “(...) ‘focus’ refers to the portion of an utterance which is especially informative or important within the context, and which is marked as such via some linguistic means (...): Focus can be signaled prosodically (e.g., in the form of a strong pitch accent), syntactically (e.g., by moving focused phrases to a special position in the sentence), or morphologically (e.g., by appending a special affix to focused elements), with different crosslinguistic focus marking strategies often carrying slightly different restrictions on their use.” (Pragmatics of Focus, 2021)

Topic, focus, comment

Example (an ordinary declarative sentence):

[He] _{Topic} **[married her[in 1968]** _{Focus} **]** _{Comment}

he = Topic

married her in 1968 = Comment

in 1968 = Focus

[He] _{Topic} **[married her]** _{Comment}.

(Krifka 2007: 42)

Passive voice

The dog chased the cat.

The cat was chased by the dog.

Cleft sentences

Some types:

It-cleft: It is linguistics that we should study.

Wh-cleft (also called pseudo-cleft): What we should do is study linguistics.

(Lambrecht 2001; cleft sentences | Grammmaring, 2021).

Lexical semantics

- **SEMANTICS** (*from Greek: sēmantikós - meaningful*) is the systematic study of meaning (Mair 2012: 89; Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 127); "the study of the structure of meaning" (Plag et al. 2009: 15)

Branches of semantics:

- **LEXICAL SEMANTICS** is the study of word meaning of individual words and relations between the words (Mair 2012: 90; Bieswanger & Becker 2010: 128);
- **SENTENTIAL SEMANTICS**: meaning of units larger than words, such as phrases, clauses, sentences and their relations (Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 141);
- The unit of semantic description is the **LEXEME** – the abstract entity subsuming the various inflectional forms of a **WORD**.

e.g. The lexeme *go* comprises the word forms *go*, *goes*, *went* and *gone*.

Sense relations: synonymy

- **SYNONYMS**: "words with the same meaning" (Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 129); sense relations in which words are "fully interchangeable in all contexts of use" (Mair 2012: 95); in practice it is the extent of overlap between words;
- Synonymy is frequently called "extensive semantic similarity", because words with exactly the same meaning are rare to find (Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 129);
- Words may differ when it comes to their:

stylistic level: *buy* – *purchase* – *acquire*

and social/regional variety: lift (BrE) – elevator (AmE) (ibid., p. 129)

Sense relations: antonymy

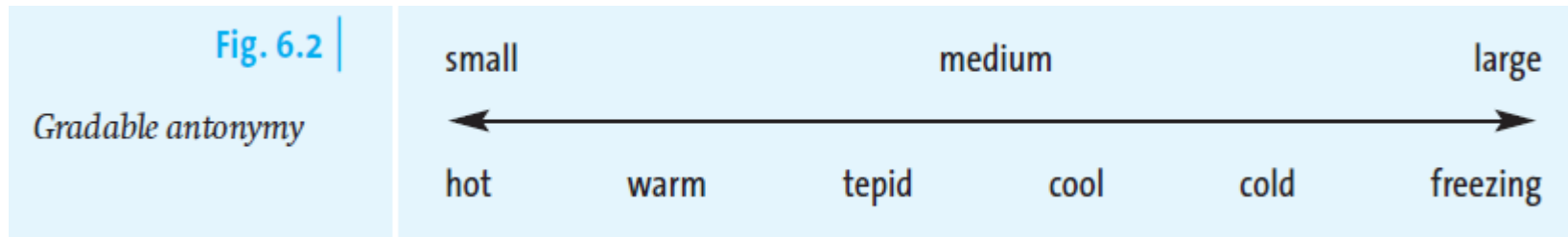
ANTONYMS:

- "word pairs that are opposite in meaning"; with respect to at least one aspect of their meaning (Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 129);

Types of antonymy

- **Complementarity (complementary antonymy)** (*present/absent; dead/alive*). A binary relation: you are either *present* or not (Kortmann 2005: 201; Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 130);
- **Gradable antonymy (polarity)** (*big/small; hot/cold; old/young*)

Opposite poles of a continuum. There are intermediate stages: something can be bigger, hotter, older etc. Words with wider range of use: marked; words with narrower range of use: unmarked (Kortmann 2005: ; Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 130-131);



Types of antonymy

- **Converseness (relational antonymy)** (*buy/sell; husband/wife; teacher/student; employer-employee*)

One term implies the other: If I want to *sell* my old books, someone else needs to *buy* them; it involves *two perspectives on the same situation* (Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 131; Kortmann 2020: 152-153)

- **Directional antonymy/directional oppositeness** (*push/pull; open/close; leave/return*)

Involves the change of direction. (ibid.)

Sense relations

Hyponymy: "The relation of a word with a narrower meaning to a word with a wider meaning that includes it. E.g. any tulip and any rose is also a flower: therefore the words *tulip* and *rose* are both **hyponyms**, and together are 'co-hyponyms', of *flower*" (Oxfordreference.com, 2021);

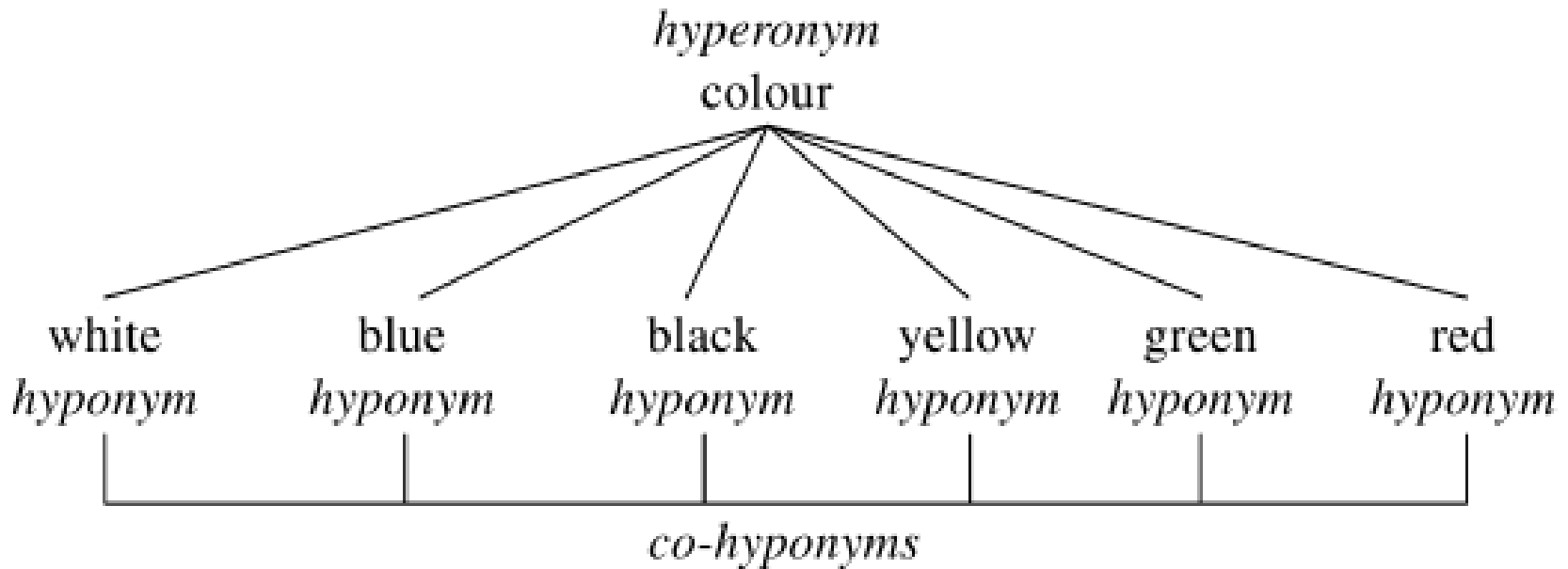
"Hyponyms have all semantic features of the hyperonym plus some additional ones, which distinguish them from the hyperonym, on the one hand, and from other hyponyms situated on the same hierarchical level, on the other hand (consider, for example, the features distinguishing *rose* from *daisy*, or *daisy* from *lily*)" (Kortmann 2020: 153).

Hyperonymy: "The relationship of being superordinate to another linguistic unit from the point of view of meaning. Contrasted with hyponymy" (Oxfordreference.com. 2021)

Sense relations

“**Meronymy** refers to part-whole relationships in the vocabulary (e. g. *cockpit – airplane*, *spoke – wheel*, *finger – hand*, *toe – foot*, *mouth/nose/eye – face*, *door/window/roof – house*). Such meronymic relationships hold between words on different hierarchical levels. (Caution: the term for the type of hierarchy involving such part-whole relationships is *meronymy*, but this has nothing to do with linguistics.) Thus, *door* is a meronym of *house* (the *holonym*), but the word also has its own meronyms (e. g. *handle* and *lock*). Meronymy, as opposed to hyponymy, is not necessarily a transitive relationship. If A is a *hyponym* of B, and B a hyponym of C, then A is always a hyponym of C (e. g. for A = *bobtail*, B = *dog*, and C = *animal*)” (Kortmann 2020: 154).

Hyponymy



(Plag et al 2009: 152)

Summary: sense relations

POLYSEMY deals with multiple **related senses of a word**.

HOMONYMY refers to different lexemes that happen to have the same form

SYNONYMY describes **semantic equivalence** or extensive **semantic similarity**.

ANTONYMY deals with various types of **semantic opposites**.

HYPONYMY deals with **relationships of inclusion & subordination**.

MERONYMY refers to **part-whole relationships**.

Hierarchical sense relations

hyponymy

meronymy

hyperonym

plant

holonym

face

↑hyponyms

flower tree bush ...

↑meronym

mouth nose eyes ...

↓hyperonyms

rose tulip daisy ...

↓holonym

hyponyms

rose tulip daisy ...

meronyms

lips teeth tongue ...

(Kortmann 2020: 154)

- **Reference:** "In logic and linguistics, the activity or condition through which an expression is related to another or to objects in the world" (Oxford Dictionaries | English, 2019);
- **Sense:** "In semantic theory it is used to describe lexical meaning, which is derived partly from the meaning of other words (**sense relations**), in contrast to the relationship of a word to the outside world, which is reference" (Oxfordreference.com, 2019); independent of a particular utterance and situational context (Kortmann 2020: 147);

The Leader of the Conservative Party

The Prime Minister of Great Britain

differ in sense but not in reference (Boris Johnson)

(ibid., p. 148)

- **Denotation:** "A term to capture a particular type of meaning of a word or expression. This is often thought of as an objective or factual type of meaning, much like the type of meaning we find in a dictionary entry" (Oxfordreference.com, 2021).
- **Connotation:** "An additional meaning that a word (or other linguistic unit) evokes by virtue of personal or cultural associations, in contrast to its denotation." (Oxfordreference.com, 2021); "secondary meanings which can vary according to culture, region, social class, etc. and which are often restricted to particular contexts (Kortmann 205: 197); **is not part of intension** (ibid).
- **Intension:** "the properties that define a word or concept"; "an **intensional definition** of a class will therefore specify the properties that something must have to be a member of it" (Oxfordreference.com, 2021).
- **Extension of meaning:** the development of a new sense of a lexical unit: thus, in particular, a figurative extension which involves a metaphor or other figure of speech. It is also used of the widening of an existing sense (Oxfordreference.com, 2021).

Semantic features/componential analysis

” The analysis of linguistic elements, especially lexical items, into syntactic, semantic, and/or phonological features.

Frequently cited classic examples concern terms for people and animals that can be shown to have, or lack, certain features, and these are often indicated using a binary notation of plus (+) or minus (-) signs. Thus *stallion* or *boar* can be represented as [+male] [+adult] [-human], etc. The combination ‘±’ is also used to indicate that a feature may or may not apply. Thus clauses can be analysed as being [±tensed]. However, the validity of the technique has been criticized” (Oxfordreference.com, 2021).

Componential analysis

- The structural approach divides complex lexical meanings into **SIMPLER COMPONENTS/FEATURES**.
- Such features are **conceived as BINARY**.
- **[-human]** stands for **absence**, **[+male]** stands for **presence** of the feature.

man: [+noun] [+concrete] [+animate] [+human] [+male] [+old]

woman: [+noun] [+concrete] [+animate] [+human] [-male] [+old]

boy: [+noun] [+concrete] [+animate] [+human] [+male] [-old]

cat: [+noun] [+concrete] [+animate] [-human] [+feline]

rock: [+noun] [+concrete] [-animal]

idea: [+noun] [-concrete]

Source: <http://www.fujisantrip.com/semantics/semantics-2/applying-theories-of-word-meaning/>

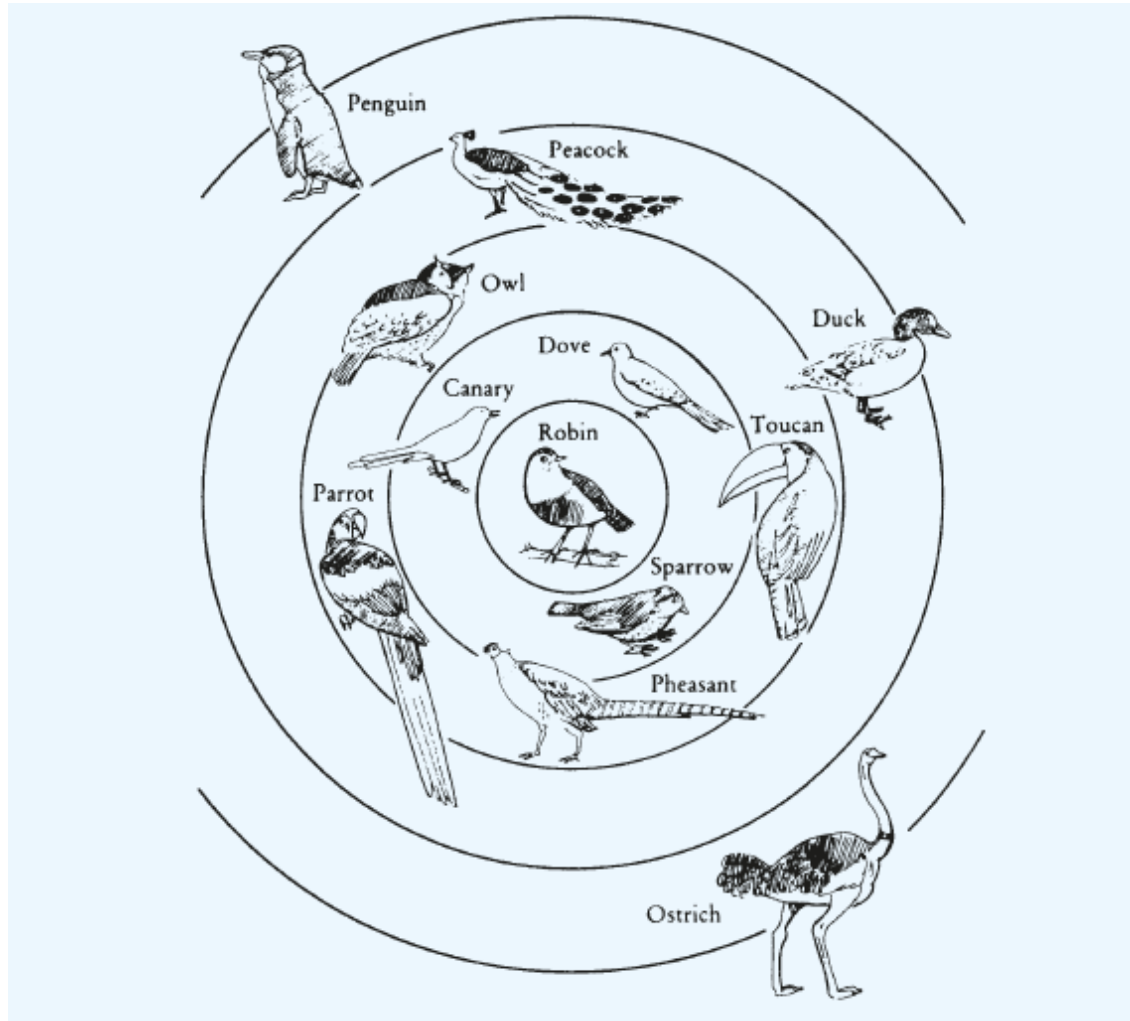
“(Originally in philosophy and psychology) the most typical exemplar(s) of a category in terms of the defining features of that category.”

A prototype should not be identified with a particular member of a category:

1978 E. ROSCH *By prototypes of categories we have generally meant the clearest cases of category membership defined operationally by people’s judgments of goodness of membership in the category...To speak of a prototype at all is simply a convenient grammatical fiction; what is really referred to are judgments of degree of prototypicality. Only in some artificial categories is there by definition a literal single prototype...For natural-language categories, to speak of a single entity that is the prototype is either a gross misunderstanding of the empirical data or a covert theory of mental representation...Prototypes do not constitute a theory of representation of categories* (Oxfordreference.com, 2021).

(Oxfordreference.com, 2021)

Prototype theory



(Aitchison 2003: 56, as cited in Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 140)

Monosemous vs polysemous and homonymous words

Monosemous words: words with only one descriptive meaning

Ambiguous words: polysemous words and homonymous words

(Kortmann 2020: 155)

Polysemy

POLYSEMY deals with multiple **RELATED SENSES (!)** of the same phonological unit; single lexeme having several meanings

Typically, one of these senses has developed from the other sense via metaphorical or metonymical processes

mouth (part of the body) -> river mouth (cave entry)

Words in language tend to be **POLYSEMOUS**, i.e. they have more than one sense.

POLYSEMY is **NOT A PROBLEM** in practical communication. The meaning of a word is defined by **its relations with other words in language** i.e. **context.**

(Kortmann 2020: 155)

Polysemy

hook (huk) *n.* 1. a piece of material, usually metal, curved or bent and used to suspend, catch, hold, or pull something. 2. short for fish-hook. 3. a trap or snare. 4. *Chiefly U.S.* something that attracts or is intended to be an attraction. 5. something resembling a hook in design or use. 6.**a.** a sharp bend or angle in a geological formation, esp. a river. **b.** a sharply curved spit of land. 7. *Boxing.* a short swinging blow delivered from the side with the elbow bent. 8. *Cricket.* a shot in which the ball is hit square on the leg side with the bat held horizontally. 9. *Golf.* a shot that causes the ball to swerve sharply from right to left. 10. *Surfing.* the top of a breaking wave, etc.

(Saeed 2009: 61)

Homonymy

HOMONYMS are different lexemes that happen to have the same form; **UNRELATED SENSES** that have the same phonological and orthographic form.

e.g. bank (the river bank) vs. bank (the Bank of Scotland; a bank account)

Homonyms can be identical in spelling and pronunciation (true homonyms), or can differ only in pronunciation or only in spelling.

HOMOPHONES: identical in pronunciation, but different in spelling:
see – sea /si:/; sight – site /saɪt/; flower – flour /'flaʊə/

HOMOGRAPHS: identical in spelling, but differ in pronunciation:
bass /beɪs/ low male singing voice
bass /bæs/ eatable fish

(Kortmann 2020: 155-156; Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 134-135)

Collocations

COLLOCATION: “type of construction in which particular nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, etc. form predictable connections with other words. For example, we can say *cancel an engagement* (‘call off an appointment’) or *break off an engagement* (‘call off a marriage’), but not normally **withdraw/*revoke/discontinue an engagement*”
(Oxfordreference.com, 2021)

Metaphors

- (from Greek μεταφέρω - transfer)
- Traditionally refers to a figure of speech which is based on a relationship of similarity or analogy between two terms from different cognitive domains;
- One entity (X) is understood in terms of another (Y);
- A typically more general TARGET DOMAIN is understood in terms of a typically more concrete SOURCE DOMAIN

ARGUMENT	IS	WAR
target domain		source domain

He *attacked* my idea

I *won* the *argument*.

- Linguistic expressions (metaphorical expressions) realising conceptual metaphors
- Metaphors have experiential basis, are grounded in everyday life;
- Organise the way we think; are a fundamental cognitive proces;
- Anchored in human cognition.

(Lakoff & Johnson 2008; Kortmann 2015: 212-214)

Metaphors

LOVE IS A JOURNEY

Look *how far* we've come.

We're *at a crossroads*.

THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS

The theory needs more *support*.

We need to construct a strong argument for that.

HEALTH IS UP, ILLNESS/DEATH IS DOWN

be in top shape, be in top spirits, fall into a depression

HIGH STATUS IS UP, LOW STATUS IS DOWN

rise to the top, be at the peak of your career, fall in status

(Kortmann 2020: 161-162; Kövecses 2010: 6)

- from Greek (*metonymia* = change of name)
- do not involve transfer from one cognitive domain to another
- are based on a connection two phenomena; one phenomenon stands for the other;
- are based not on similarity but contiguity;
- concerned phenomena/entities are part of the same situation or conceptual structure;

PRODUCER FOR THE PRODUCT

He owns a *Picasso* and *two Rembrandts*.

OBJECT/INSTRUMENT FOR OBJECT/USER OF INSTRUMENT

The buses are on strike.

PLACE FOR INSTITUTION

The White House is planning to attack Iraq.

INSTITUTION FOR THE PEOPLE IN CHARGE

The university will accept the proposal.

(Kortmann 2020: 163)

Recommended additional literature

Kövecses, Zoltán. 2010. *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*. CUP: Cambridge.

Lakoff, Geogre, Johnson, Mark. 2008. *Metaphors We Live By*, Chicago University Press: Chicago/London

..and:

Kortmann, Bern. 2020. *Linguistics: Essentials*. Berlin: Cornelsen, Chapter 6

- Bieswanger, Markus & Annette Becker. 2008. *Introduction to English linguistics*. Tübingen: Francke.
- Cruse, Alan. 2006. *A Glossary of Semantics and Pragmatics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Kortmann, Bern. 2020. *Linguistics: Essentials*. Berlin: Cornelsen.
- Kövecses, Zoltán. 2010. *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*. CUP: Cambridge.
- Mair, Christian. 2012. *English linguistics: An Introduction*. Tübingen: Narr.
- Oxfordreference.com. 2021. *Antonym - Oxford Reference*.
<http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199658237.001.0001/acref-9780199658237-e-84?rskey=slGq3u&result=4> [17 January 2021].
- Oxford Reference. 2021. *Collocation*.
<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199658237.001.0001/acref-9780199658237-e-226?rskey=B1bFTT&result=1> [17 January 2021].
- Oxford Reference. 2021. *Componential Analysis*.
<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199658237.001.0001/acref-9780199658237-e-257#>> [17 January 2021].
- Oxford Reference. 2021. *Connotation*.
<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199658237.001.0001/acref-9780199658237-e-287?rskey=yqWgbm&result=2> [17 January 2021].

- Oxfordreference.com. 2021. *Denotation - Oxford Reference*.
<http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199661282.001.0001/acref-9780199661282-e-340#> [17 January 2021].
- Oxfordreference.com. 2021. *Lemma - Oxford Reference*.
<http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199661282.001.0001/acref-9780199661282-e-1418?rskey=vBtqif&result=8> [17 January 2021].
- Oxford Reference. 2021. *Prototype*.
<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199658237.001.0001/acref-9780199658237-e-1926?rskey=5nvM74&result=3> [17 January 2021].
- Plag, Ingo, Maria Braun, Sabine Lappe & Marelise Schramm. 2009.
Introduction to Linguistics. 2nd ed. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Oxfordreference.com. 2021. *Sense - Oxford Reference*
<http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199658237.001.0001/acref-9780199658237-e-1343?rskey=JPpuuP&result=7> [17 January 2021].
- Saeed, John I. 2001. *Semantics*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.