

WEEK 2: Semantics

Topics: Polysemy, homonymy, homophony.
Prototypes, metaphor, metonymy.

Exercise 1: Decide whether the formally identical words in the following sentences should be treated as instances of homonymy or polysemy. Justify your answer.

1. They reached the *foot* of the mountain.
2. My *foot* hurts
3. The wind *blew* hard.
4. He *blew* all his money on gambling.
5. There are 20 *pupils* in the class.
6. Her *pupils* were dilated from the eye-drops.
7. His motives were *pure* and honest.
8. This ring is *pure* gold.

Exercise 2: Consider the following list of words and identify instances of polysemy, homonymy, homophony, synonymy, and antonymy in it:

freedom, flower, polite, cold, fruit, race, house, profound, tail, expensive, liberty, high, rude, table, hot, apartment, flour, cheap, kind, deep, low.

Exercise 3: Which do you think is the prototypical member of the category of chairs and birds respectively (choose from the following lists):

- (a) rocking chair, swivel chair, kitchen chair, armchair, highchair, wheelchair.
(b) sparrow, penguin, eagle, ostrich, parrot, flamingo, pelican.

Exercise 4: For each word in italics specify whether it occurs in its prototypical or in one of its extended senses. Come up with appropriate synonyms, paraphrases, or descriptions for each sense.

1. My *head* is full of strange thoughts.
2. My *head* is aching.
3. We asked the *head* of the school for permission.
4. Write your name at the *head* of each page.
5. We paid ten pounds a *head* for the meal.

6. There is a hole in the *skirt* of her dress.
7. She bought a new *skirt*.
8. They found him at the *skirts* of the village.
9. A new road is *skirting* the suburb.
10. He was *skirting* the issue.
11. The letter was written on good quality *paper*.

12. I need this quotation on *paper*.
13. The examination consisted of two 3 hour *papers*.
14. The next speaker is due to give his *paper* at 4 o'clock.

Exercise 5: In the following sets of sentences identify the words or phrases which are used metaphorically. Identify also the general metaphor involved from the list provided and specify the source and the target domain of each metaphor.

1. She gave him an icy stare.
He gave her the cold shoulder.
They have a fairly warm relationship.
Mary is an iceberg.
2. The eye of a needle.
The foot of the bed.
The hands of the clock.
The arm of a chair.
3. I'm looking forward to it.
I can remember back to when I was two years old.
You must plan ahead for retirement.
Try to go back to when you were little.
4. This book is easy to digest.
Chew on this thought for a while.
This is a juicy piece of gossip.
It's wrong to spoon-feed the students.

List of metaphors: TIME IS SPACE / THE FUTURE IS IN FRONT/ THE PAST IS IN THE BACK,
EMOTION/A RELATIONSHIP IS TEMPERATURE, OBJECTS ARE PEOPLE, and IDEAS ARE FOOD.

Exercise 6: Identify the different meanings of *in* in the following sentences. Then identify its prototypical sense and its metaphorical extensions. Note that the metaphors involved are: TIME IS SPACE and STATES ARE LOCATIONS.

1. They are deeply *in* love.
2. I put the new gloves back *in* their box.
3. She lived her final days *in* misery.
4. I graduated from high-school *in* 2002.
5. *In* four short days, we finished up the whole project.
6. I washed the puppy *in* the bathtub.

Exercise 7: For each word in italics specify whether it occurs in its prototypical sense or in one of its metaphorical or metonymic extensions. Note that the metonymies involved in this exercise include the following: PART-FOR-WHOLE, WHOLE-FOR-PART, MATERIAL-FOR-PROCESS, MATERIAL-FOR-CONTENT, and MATERIAL-FOR-ACTIVITY.

1. My *head* is full of strange thoughts.
2. My *head* is aching.
3. This book goes over my *head*. I can't understand it.
4. We asked the *head* of the school for permission.
5. Write your name at the *head* of each page.
6. We paid ten pounds a *head* for the meal.

7. There is a hole in the *skirt* of her dress.
8. She bought a new *skirt*.
9. They found him at the *skirts* of the village.
10. A new road is *skirting* the suburb.
11. He was *skirting* the issue.

12. The letter was written on good quality *paper*.
13. I need this quotation on *paper*.
14. The examination consisted of two 3 hour *papers*.
15. The professor is due to give his *paper* at 4 o'clock.