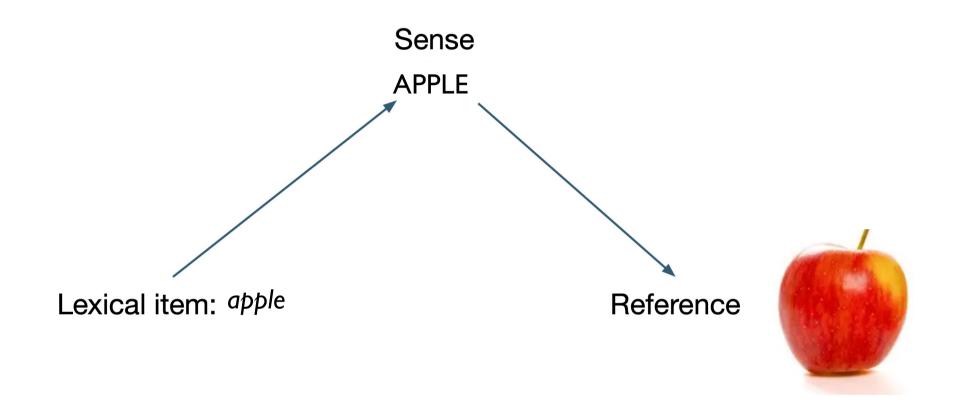
# **INTRODUCTION TO LINGUISTICS II**

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#### FACULTY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE SPRING 2025

Α-ΚΑΡ, Π-Ω



# SEMANTICS

SAME FORM, DIFFERENT MEANINGS

# TODAY'S TOPICS

- Polysemy, homonymy and homophony.
- Prototypicality, or prototype effects.
- Metaphor and metonymy.
- Reading: Yule, ch. 9, p. 119-121.

# WORD AND MEANING

POLYSEMY, HOMONYMY AND HOMOPHONY



# POLYSEMY

- When the same form is associated with different but related meanings, we have what is technically known as polysemy.
- Polysemy can be defined as one form (written or spoken) having multiple meanings that are all related by semantic extension.
  - One word with different but *related* meanings.
- "Put this hat on to keep your head warm."
- "I went for a walk to clear my head."
- "She is the **head** of our department."



# HOMONYMY

- We use the term homonyms when one form (written or spoken) has two or more unrelated meanings, as in these examples:
  - bank (of a river) bank (financial institution)
  - bat (flying animals) bat (used in sports)
  - race (contest of speed) race (ethnic group)
- Homonyms are words that have separate histories and meanings but have accidentally come to have exactly the same form.

# HOMONYMY VS POLYSEMY

- Dictionaries have single entries for polysemous words but separate entries for homonymous words.
- <u>Homonymy</u>: Identical form (same pronunciation and spelling) but completely different and unrelated meanings => different words (lexical categories)
  - Date (thing we eat) date (point in time): homonyms.
- Polysemy: One form with more than one (could be several) meanings, which are related => one word (lexical category)
- Date as in 'point in time' is polysemous (a particular day and month, a social meeting with someone we like...)
  - "What's your date of birth?"
  - "I have a date tonight".

#### POLYSEMY VERSUS HOMONYMY

Polysemy is the coexistence of many possible meanings for a word or phrase Homonymy refers to the existence of unrelated words that look or sound the same

Has different, but related meanings

Has completely different meanings

Has related word origins

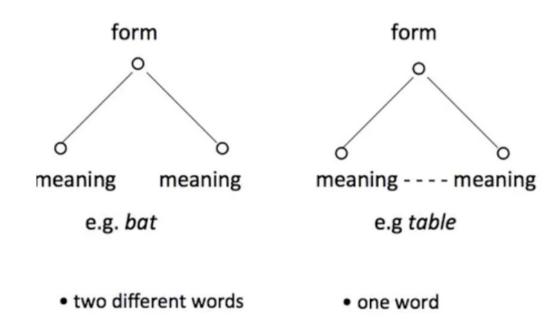
Polysemous words are listed under one entry in dictionaries Has different origins

Homonyms are listed separately in dictionaries

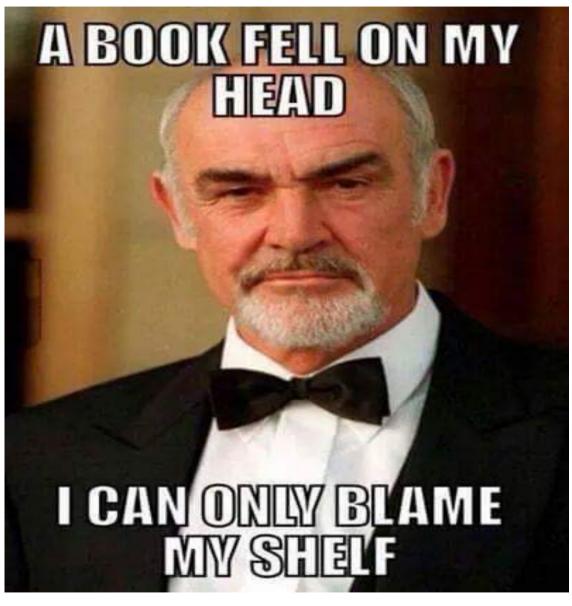
Polysemous words can be understood if you know the meaning of one word

Meaning of homonyms cannot be guessed since the words have unrelated meanings





- <u>unrelated</u> meanings
- related meanings



# HOMOPHONY

- When two or more different (written) forms have the same pronunciation but different spelling, they are described as homophones.
- Common examples include:
  - meat/meet
  - right/write
  - sew/so
  - to/too/two
- Also, in Greek: τύχη/τείχη, πιάνω/πιάνο, κενή/Καινή, λύπη/λείπει/λίπη, όμως/ώμος, νίκη/νοίκι

# IN SUM

- Polysemy: One word, different but related meanings.
  - head of the body and head of the company.
- Homonymy: One word, different but not related meanings.
  - bank (= financial institution) and bank (= side of a river).
- Homophony: Different words and meanings, but same pronunciation.
  - meet and meat.
- Exercises I-2.

# OUR FOCUS: POLYSEMY

- How can we distinguish between the different senses of a polysemous word?
- How are the different senses related to one another?
- What is the central sense? How does it extend to other senses?

# POLYSEMY

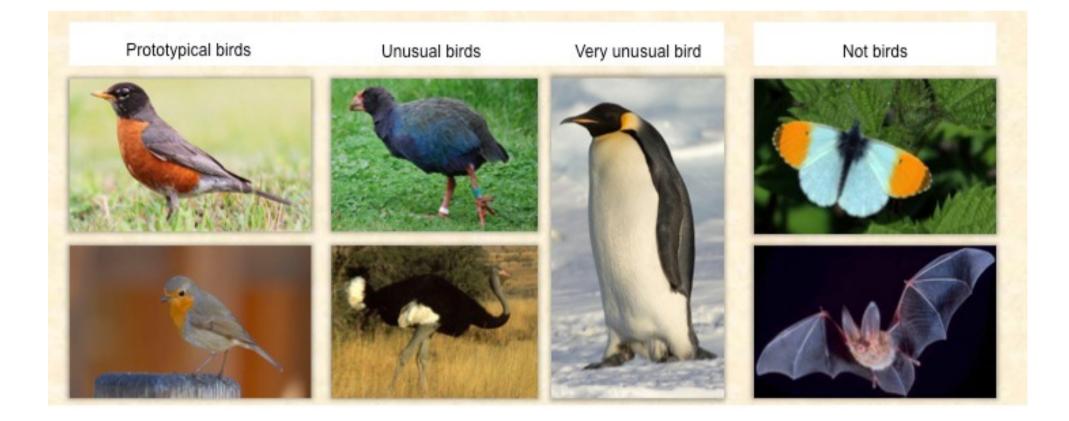
PROTOTYPICAL MEANING, METAPHOR AND METONYMY



- A polysemous word has a central, *prototypical* sense and non-central senses which are *extended*, that is, derived from the prototypical one.
- Word senses are related to one another in terms of mechanisms like *metonymy* and *metaphor*.

# WHAT IS A PROTOTYPE?

- A prototype is the most 'characteristic instance' of a category.
  - e.g., take the category BIRD.



# PENGUINVS SPARROW

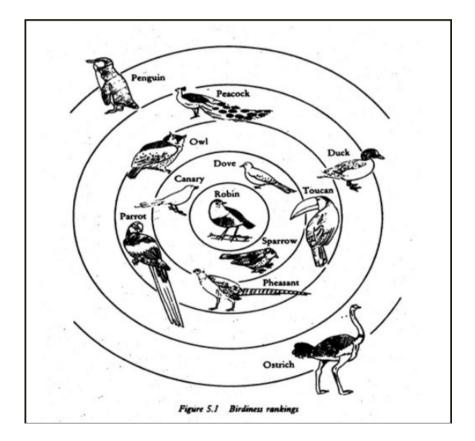


- A semantic feature analysis:
  - + animal
  - + two-legged
  - + feathered
  - + wings
  - + fly?
- Penguins don't fly but are still considered birds!
- Should we then leave out this feature so as to include all kinds of birds?
- But the "fly" feature is likely the most salient feature of the category BIRD.

# THE CATEGORY 'BIRD'

- The category BIRD covers a range of animals with different types of properties like:
  - (i) it can fly, (ii) it has feathers, (iii) it has a specific (S-like) form, (iv) it has wings, (v) it lays eggs, and (vi) it has a beak.
- However, not all birds have all of these properties.
  - For instance, some birds cannot fly (kiwi, ostrich), have a peculiar form (penguin), or have feathers that can hardly be identified as such (kiwi, penguin).
- Even though all of these animals are nonetheless birds, most people would agree that they are not particularly good representatives of that category.
  - Rather, the *average* bird is like a sparrow or a blackbird, which have all of the properties mentioned above.

# PROTOTYPE EFFECTS



- A prototype is the best member of a category, namely the most prominent or salient.
  - The one that first comes to mind when we think of the category.
- Other members are less prototypical (marginal) or even peripheral.
- The *closer* to the center, the more prototypical instance of the category.
  - The *further* from the center, the more marginal.

# Rosch 1975

Rank	BIRD	FRUIT	VEHICLE	FURNITURE	WEAPON
Top eig	ht (from more to	o less representa	tive)		
1	Robin	Orange	Automobile	Chair	Gun
2	Sparrow	Apple	Station wagon	Sofa	Pistol
3	Bluejay	Banana	Truck	Couch	Revolver
4	Bluebird	Peach	Car	Table	Machine gun
5	Canary	Pear	Bus	Easy chair	Rifle
6	Blackbird	Apricot	Taxi	Dresser	Switchblade
7	Dove	Tangerine	Jeep	Rocking chair	Knife
8	Lark	Plum	Ambulance	Coffee table	Dagger
9	Swallow	Grapes	Motorcycle	Rocker	Shotgun
10	Parakeet	Nectarine	Streetcar	Love seat	Sword
Bottom	ten (from more	to less represen	tative)		
10	Duck	Pawpaw	Rocket	Counter	Words
9	Peacock	Coconut	Blimp	Clock	Hand
8	Egret	Avocado	Skates	Drapes	Pipe
7	Chicken	Pumpkin	Camel	Refrigerator	Rope
6	Turkey	Tomato	Feet	Picture	Airplane
5	Ostrich	Nut	Skis	Closet	Foot
4	Titmouse	Gourd	Skateboard	Vase	Car
3	Emu	Olive	Wheelbarrow	Ashtray	Screwdriver
2	Penguin	Pickle	Surfboard	Fan	Glass
1	Bat	Squash	Elevator	Telephone	Shoes

# CATEGORY BOUNDARIES

- Note that category boundaries are fuzzy.
- Tomatoes: to which category do they belong?
- **Exercise 3**.



# DEFINING THE PROTOTYPICAL SENSE

- Polysemy can be looked at in terms of a prototype.
- The most central, prototypical sense of a polysemous word is:
  - the first that comes to mind,
  - the most frequent,
  - the most basic in its capacity to motivate the other senses.

#### > Exercise 4.

# AN EXAMPLE: FRUIT

- Consider the different senses of the polysemous word *fruit*:
  - Something like a banana, apple, orange, etc. as in "fresh fruit and vegetables".
  - The part of a plant, bush, or tree that contains the seeds (technical use).
  - All the natural things that the earth produces, e.g. fruit, vegetables, or minerals, as in "the fruits of the earth/nature".
  - A homosexual (old fashioned slang, derogatory).
  - The result of hard work, as in "the fruits of his labour".
  - Offspring, as in *"fruit of the womb"* (biblical).
  - Which sense(s) seem(s) more prototypical and why?



How are the different senses of polysemous words related to one another?

# SEMANTIC EXTENSION

The various senses of a polysemous word are systematically related to one another through cognitive mechanisms such as metaphor and metonymy.

# AN EXAMPLE: SCHOOL

- I. 'learning institution'
- 2. 'building'
- 3. 'lessons'
- 4. 'pupils and/or staff'
- 5. 'university faculty'
- 6. 'specialized course of study '
- 7. 'group of artists with similar style'
- 8. 'views held by a group of people'
- 9. 'group of big fish swimming together' A school of whales followed the ship.

She goes to school. The school is near the mall. School begins at 9 a.m. The school will go on an excursion. At 18 he went to law school. She is attending a summer school on music. Picasso followed the school of cubism. There are many schools of thought in history.

# METONYMY

- Metonymy names one aspect or element in a conceptual domain while referring to some other element in the same domain, which is contiguous to the first.
  - It's a type of relation based on close connection.

# EXAMPLES OF METONYMY

- PART FOR WHOLE:
  - We need a *roof* for tonight.
- CONTAINER FOR CONTENT:
  - They drank the whole *bottle*.
- AUTHOR FOR BOOK:
  - I love Dickens.
- PLACE FOR INSTITUTION:
  - The White House just made an announcement.
- PRODUCER FOR PRODUCT:
  - My new Sony is amazing.

# CONVENTIONALVS NON-CONVENTIONAL

- Many examples of metonymy are highly conventionalized and easy to interpret.
  - Conventional metonymies may systematically underlie the polysemy of words and therefore can be thought of as regular patterns of semantic extension (as in the case of school above).
- However, other examples depend on an ability to infer what the speaker has in mind; such metonymic links are *extrinsic*, i.e. non-permanent or non-inherent.
  - "Room 48 is not answering."
  - "The ham sandwich in the corner has asked for the check."

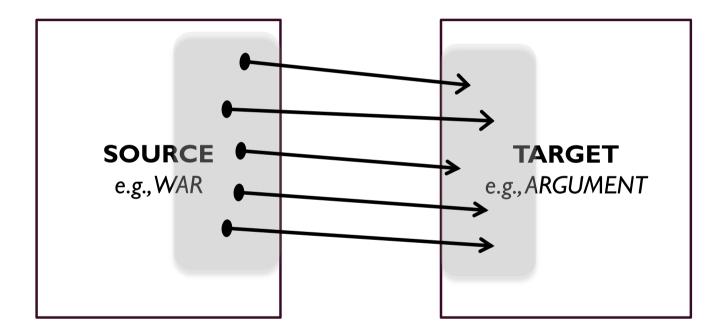
# METAPHOR

- Metaphor refers to the use of a concept A to understand and talk about a concept B, whereby A and B typically belong to *different domains*.
  - These domains are referred to as the source and the target.
- A typically abstract target domain of our experience is understood in terms of another, typically concrete source domain of our experience, usually because we perceive some kind of similarity between them.
  - It's a type of relation based on perceived similarity.
- Metaphor is therefore inherently asymmetrical.
  - Source domains are typically concrete => cognitively more accessible
    Target domains are typically abstract => cognitively less accessible

# AN EXAMPLE: ARGUMENT IS WAR

- The domains of WAR and ARGUMENT are linked through the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR:
  - She doesn't like *losing* an argument.
  - In the end she *won* the argument.
  - She *defended* her position admirably.
  - His arguments are indefensible.
  - He attacked all my views.

### CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR



# CONVENTIONALVS NON-CONVENTIONAL

 Similarly to metonymy, metaphors can also be *novel* (highly creative), i.e. not conventionalized and systematic.

"Hope" is the thing with feathers –

That perches in the soul –

And sings the tune without the words -

And never stops – at all –

("Hope is the thing with feathers", Emily Dickinson)





# SUMMARY

- Polysemy: Two or more words with the same form and related meanings.
- Homonymy: One form (written or spoken) that has two or more unrelated meanings.
- Homophony: Two or different words that have the same pronunciation and different meanings.
- Prototype: The best member of a category. Categories have prototypical, less prototypical members and peripheral members.
- Metonymy: names one aspect or element in a conceptual domain while referring to some other element, contiguous to the first.
- Metaphor: A typically abstract domain of our experience is understood in terms of another, typically concrete domain of our experience.