INTRODUCTION TO LINGUISTICS II

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Α-ΚΑΡ, Π-Ω

LAST WEEK

- 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.*

QUESTIONS

- Is it that for a particular concept (or meaning) we have only one word?

- Or, is it that one word stands for only one concept or meaning?

- Previous lecture:

  - How the senses of a polysemous word are related.

- Today:

  - How different words that name the same concept are related.

STUDYING WORD MEANING

- Words can be looked at as:

    - 'containers' of meaning (semantic features),

    - fulfilling 'roles' in events (semantic roles),

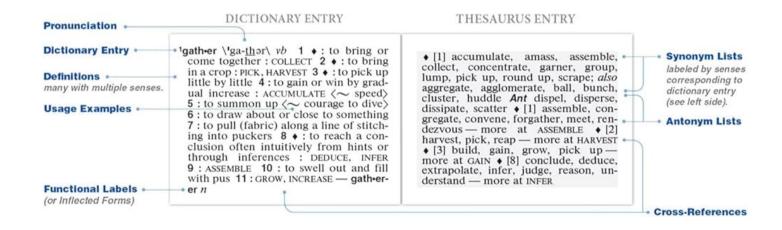   - having 'relationships' with each other (lexical relations).

TODAY'S TOPICS

- Lexical, or semantic fields.

- Hierarchical taxonomies.

- Synonymy.

- Antonymy.

- Collocations.

- Reading: Yule, ch. 9 p. 116-119.

DICTIONARY VS THESAURUS

- In a dictionary we find a number of concepts or meanings for the same word form.

  - What a dictionary does: *from a word form to meaning* (polysemy and homonymy).

- In a thesaurus we find a number of words for the same concept.

  - What a thesaurus does: *from form and meaning to concept*, i.e. expressions used to denote the same concept.

DICTIONARY VS THESAURUS

LEXICAL RELATIONS

1. *conceal* is 'the same as *hide*'.

2. *shallow* is 'the opposite of *deep*'.

2. *daffodil* is 'a kind of *flower*'.

- Synonymy (1)
- Antonymy (2)
- Hyponymy (3)

LEXICAL RELATIONS

- **Synonymy**: different words with same (or similar) meaning.

  - *rich* and *wealthy*.

- **Antonymy**: different words with opposite meanings.

  - *deep* and *shallow*.

- **Hyponymy**: the meaning of one form is included in the meaning of another.

  - *flower, rose, daffodil*.

SEMANTICS

LEXICAL FIELDS, BASIC-LEVEL TERMS AND SALIENCE

LEXICAL, OR SEMANTIC FIELDS

- A group of conceptually related words is called a lexical field, also known as semantic field.

    - A collection of words that name things in the same conceptual domain.

        - e.g., *apples, pears, melons, strawberries* > name things in the domain "fruits".

ON PROTOTYPICALITY AGAIN

- Prototypicality, or centrality effects mean that:

    - some elements in a category are more salient than others.

- Salient means that some elements in a category:

    - come to mind **first**,

    - are most **frequently** used,

    - are the most **basic**.

GENERIC VS SPECIFIC

- *fruit, apple, Cox apple:*

  - From more general to more specific.

- A **general organisational principle** for classification of biological domains:

  - From very broad, or generic to more narrow, or specific.

    - The most general category is at the **highest** level (e.g., *fruit*)

    - The most specific category is at the **lowest** level (e.g., *Cox apple*).

    - The most salient category is the **basic-level** term (e.g., *apple*).

BASIC-LEVEL TERM

- A word which is most readily used to refer to a given phenomenon.

- Basic-level terms are more salient than other terms.

- How can we decide on the salience of basic-level terms?

SALIENCE OF BASIC-LEVEL TERMS

- From the perspective of language acquisition, basic-level terms tend to be acquired first.

    - e.g., *tree, cow, horse*, before *plant, animal, vehicle* or *oak tree, labrador, jeans*.

SALIENCE OF BASIC-LEVEL TERMS

- Linguistically, basic-level terms tend to be shorter and morphologically simpler.

    - e.g., *spoon* (basic-level term) compared to *teaspoon* or *coffee spoon*, which are more complex.

SALIENCE OF BASIC-LEVEL TERMS

- A clear visual image can be formed.

    - Compare, e.g., image for *vehicle* to image for *car*.

- Basic-level terms are used for everyday reference.

SALIENCE OF BASIC-LEVEL TERMS

- **Conceptually,** individual members have the most in common with each other and the least in common with members of a related basic-level category.

    - Example:

        - The category CHAIR compared to the category TABLE.

        - Both are members of the category FURNITURE.

BEYOND THE BASIC LEVEL

- **General**: FURNITURE, VEHICLE, ANIMAL, CUTLERY, CLOTHING.

  - Members have **fewer common properties** than members of basic-level categories.

- **Specific**: ALSATIAN, SPANIEL, COLLIE.

  - Categories are **internally homogeneous** but less distinct from neighboring categories than basic-level categories.

IN SUM

LEVEL	CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN	
generic	*animal*	*fruit*
basic	*dog*	*apple*
specific	*labrador*	*Cox apple*

➢ Exercise 1.

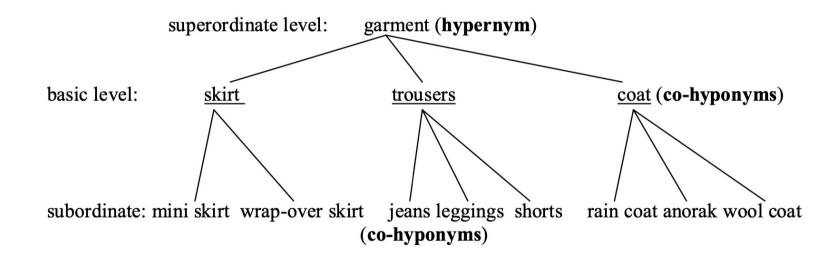# SEMANTICS

HYPONYMY AND HIERARCHICAL TAXONOMIES

HIERARCHICAL TAXONOMIES

- The generic, basic and specific levels form a **hierarchical taxonomy**.

  - E.g., vehicle > car > sports car

    - *vehicle*: a hypernym

      - Superordinate level.

    - *car*: a hyponym of *vehicle* but also a hypernym, if compared to *sports car*.

      - Basic level.

    - *sports car*: a hyponym of *car*.

      - Subordinate level.

LEXICAL FIELDS – HIERARCHICAL TAXONOMIES

- A hierarchical taxonomy (HT) is a special instance of a lexical field in that lexical items are **hierarchically ordered**.

  - E.g., *garment*: **three** hierarchical levels.

A TAXONOMY FOR *GARMENT*

superordinate level: garment (**hypernym**)

basic level: skirt   trousers   coat (**co-hyponyms**)

subordinate: mini skirt wrap-over skirt   jeans leggings shorts   rain coat anorak wool coat
                                                    (**co-hyponyms**)

HYPONYMY

- The members of a lexical field may be organized in a taxonomy, i.e. in a hierarchical way.

- Hyponymy is a **'kind of'** relationship, e.g. *rose-flower, carrot-vegetable, table-furniture*, etc.

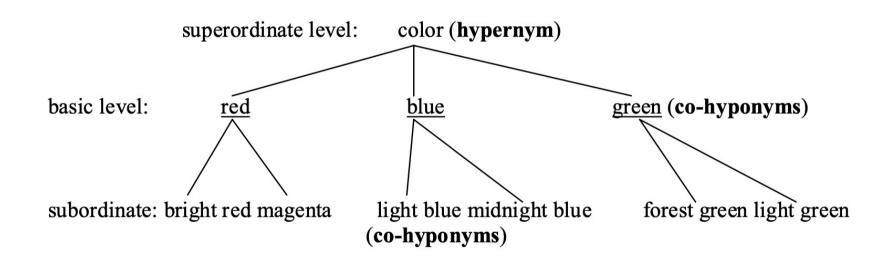 - The meaning of *flower* is **included** in the meaning of *rose*.

HYPONYMY

- When the meaning of one term is **included** in the meaning of another, there is a hyponymous connection.

  - *animal/dog, dog/labrador, flower/rose, etc.*

  - *punch*, *shoot*, *stab* are co-hyponyms of *injure*.

- Can you think of the hierarchical taxonomy for *color*?

A TAXONOMY FOR *COLOR*

superordinate level: color (**hypernym**)

basic level: red   blue   green (**co-hyponyms**)

subordinate: bright red magenta   light blue midnight blue   forest green light green
(**co-hyponyms**)

> Exercises 2-4.

SEMANTICS

SYNONYMY AND ANTONYMY

SYNONYMY

- Two or more words with closely related meanings.

  What was his answer?

  What was his reply?

- cf. *Sue had one correct reply on the test.*

EXAMPLES OF SYNONYMY

- *deep/profound*

  - *The sea here is very deep.*

  - **The sea here is very profound.*

- *big/large*

  - *He's a big baby, isn't he?*

  - **He's a large baby, isn't he?*

- *ripe/mature:*

  - *He is a mature person.*

  - **He is a ripe person.*

IN SUM

- The relation of synonymy is not homogeneous:

  - 'Sameness' of meaning does not mean 'total sameness'.

  - *sweater* and *pullover* or *sofa* and *couch* are interchangeable in almost all contexts.

  - But in most cases words are synonyms in some contexts *but not in all* (cf. *rich* and *wealthy*).

- Even if the conceptual (referential) meaning of two words is the same, differences **in the associative, encyclopaedic meaning, in dialect, or in the collocations** prevent words from being perfect synonyms.
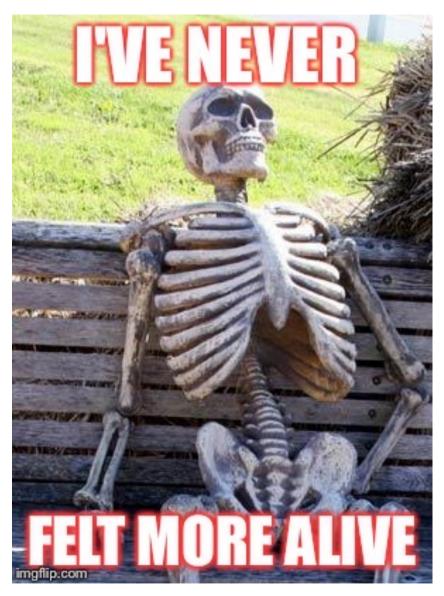
LEVEL OF FORMALITY

- *purchase/buy*: formality/informality of use

    - *She purchased an automobile.*

    - *She bought a car.*

ANTONYMY

- Two linguistic forms with opposite meanings.

- We may distinguish between three types of opposites:

  - complementary

  - gradable

  - reversives

COMPLEMENTARY OPPOSITES

- These are **non-gradable**:

    - e.g., *dead/alive, male/female, true/false, white/black, etc.*

    - They cannot be used in comparative constructions.

GRADABLE OPPOSITES

- These are opposites **along a scale**:

  - e.g,. *large/small, high/low, hot/cold, beautiful/ugly, etc.*

  - They are used in comparative constructions.

GRADABLE OPPOSITES

- Their meaning is related to the object they modify:
  - A *short skirt* is longer than *short eyelashes*.

- The negative of one term does not necessarily imply the other:
  - *Not beautiful* does not mean *ugly*.

- One term is marked and the other is unmarked; the unmarked term is the one used in *questions of degree*.
  - *How long is your new dress?*
  - *How tall is your newborn baby?*

REVERSIVES

- Movement **in opposite directions**:

    - e.g., *dress/undress, enter/exit, pack/unpack, lengthen/shorten, tie/untie, etc.*

    - *undress* does not mean 'not dress' but 'do the reverse of dress'.

    ➢ Exercises 5-6.

SEMANTICS

COLLOCATIONS

COLLOCATIONS

- A sequence of words which frequently occur together, e.g.:

  - *black coffee*

  - *salt and pepper*

  - *make a decision*

  - *take a bath*

  - *commit suicide*

COLLOCATIONS

- Certain words tend to occur together with other words **conventionally**, to the exclusion of other, semantically related, words.

    - cf. *full moon* and **complete moon*.

    - cf. *strong tea* and **powerful tea*.

- Our knowledge of a language includes **knowing its collocations**, and part of what we know about a word (besides its polysemy structure, its lexical relations, etc.) is precisely the words it collocates with.

    - Collocation serves as a way to **distinguish** between synonymous words or between the different senses of a polysemous word.

HOW CAN WE STUDY COLLOCATIONS?

- In recent years, the study of which words **occur together** and their frequency of co-occurrence has received a lot more attention in corpus linguistics.

    - A **corpus** is a large collection of texts, spoken or written, typically stored as a database in a computer.

- Those doing corpus linguistics can then use the database to find out **how often specific words or phrases occur** and which collocations are most common.

    - This type of research provides more evidence that our understanding of what words and phrases mean is **tied to the contexts** in which they are typically used.

AN EXAMPLE

(1)   more accustomed to denying our *true feelings*, avoiding reflection and self- …

(2)   We try to communicate our *true feelings* to those around us, and we are …

(3)   the ability to express our *true feelings* and creativity because we are …

(4)   we appease others, deny our *true feelings*, and conform, I suspected the …

(5)   more of us in there, of our *true feelings*, rather than just ranting on …

➤ Exercise 7.

SUMMARY

- Relation of concepts and words:

  - **Lexical fields** are groups of words that name things in the same conceptual domain.

  - **Hierarchical taxonomies:** within a conceptual domain categories are hierarchically ordered at different levels of specificity.

SUMMARY

- **Prototypicality, or centrality effects** suggest that some elements in a category are more salient than others, that is, more frequent and central than others.

- **Basic-level term:** A word which is most readily used to refer to a given phenomenon.

- **Hyponymy:** When the meaning of one term is included in the meaning of another (hypernym-hyponym).

SUMMARY

- **Synonymy:** Two or more words with closely related meanings.

- **Antonymy:** Two forms with opposite meanings. Complementary, gradable and reversive opposites.

- **Collocations:** A sequence of words which frequently occur together.