

Semantics and Pragmatics

Lexical Relations

Hyponymy

- In linguistics and lexicography, hyponym is a term used to designate a particular member of a broader class. For instance, daisy and rose are hyponyms of flower. Also called a subtype or a subordinate term. Adjective: hyponymic.
- Words that are hyponyms of the same broader term (that is, a hypernym) are called co-hyponyms. The semantic relationship between each of the more specific words (such as daisy and rose) and the broader term (flower) is called hyponymy or inclusion.
- Hyponymy is not restricted to nouns. The verb to see, for example, has several hyponyms—glimpse, stare, gaze, ogle, and so on. Edward Finnegan points out that although "hyponymy is found in all languages, the concepts that have words in hyponymic relationships vary from one language to the next language."

Meronymy

- In semantics, a meronym is a word that denotes a constituent part or a member of something. For example, apple is a meronym of apple tree (sometimes written as apple<apple tree). This part-to-whole relationship is called meronymy. Adjective: meronymous.
- Meronymy is not just a single relation but a bundle of different part-to-whole relationships.
- The opposite of a meronym is a holonym—the name of the whole of which the meronym is a part.
- Apple tree is a holonym of apple (apple tree>apple). The whole-to-part relationship is called holonymy. Adjective: holonymous.
- Part meronym: a 'tire' is part of a 'car'
- Member meronym: a 'car' is a member of a 'traffic jam'
- Substance (stuff) meronym: a 'wheel' is made from 'rubber'"

Causative Verbs

- In English grammar, a causative verb is a verb used to indicate that some person or thing makes — or helps to make — something happen. Examples of causative verbs include

make, cause, allow, help, have, enable, keep, hold, let, force, and require, which can also be referred to as causal verbs or simply causatives.

- A causative verb, which can be in any tense, is generally followed by an object and another verb form—often an infinitive or a participle — and are used to describe something that happens because of a person, place, or thing whose actions bring about change in another entity.
- The English verbs let, make, have, get, and help are called causative verbs because they cause something else to happen.
- Grammatical structure:

LET + PERSON/THING + VERB (base form)

Examples:

- I don't let my kids watch violent movies.
- Mary's father won't let her adopt a puppy because he's allergic to dogs.
- Our boss doesn't let us eat lunch at our desks; we have to eat in the cafeteria.
- Oops! I wasn't paying attention while cooking, and I let the food burn.
- Don't let the advertising expenses surpass \$1000.

Agentive Nouns

- An agent is a grammatical term for a type of noun. An agent noun is a person who performs an action.
- The agent in English grammar is always a noun. That is because the agent (also called the actor) is the “doer” of an action, which usually makes it the subject.
- Agents generally have the endings “-er” or “-or.” These suffixes, when added to a root word, mean someone who does something.

For example:

- Agent: employer
Meaning: someone who employs
- Agent: prosecutor
Meaning: someone who prosecutes

Color Terms

- An important idea is the differences of color terms in languages.
- Berlin and Kay investigated that languages vary in number and range of their basic color terms.
- To them, there are various ways of describing colors, including comparison to objects, languages have some lexemes which are basic in the following sense:

Basic color term

- The term is monolexemic, i.e. not build up from the meaning of its parts – the term blue-grey are not basic.
- The term is monolexemic à terms like blue grey are not basic
- The term is not a hyponym of other colour term à English red is basic, scarlet is not.
- The term has wide applicability.--> this excludes term like English blonde.
- The term is not semantic extension of something manifesting that colour. à turquoise, gold, and chestnut are not basic.
- Brent Berlin and Paul Kay (1969) catalogued the color terms of 98 different languages. They presented speakers of different languages with an array of 329 color chips.
- Every language has at least two basic color terms
- basically: dark (“black”) and light (“white”)
- Bassa is a two-color language (Danià New Guinea)
- Languages with three color terms add red (Tiv à Nigeria ; Pomo à Hokan)
- Languages with four color terms add green or yellow (Hanunoo à Austronesian, phillippines)
- Fifth color term: either green or yellow (Tzetal à Mayan;Mexico)
- Sixth color term: blue (Tamilà Dravidian; India)
- Seventh color term: brown (Nez perceà Penutian;Idaho)
- The rest: purple, pink, orange or gray (Lebanese Arabic, English)

The color term hierarchy

- {white and black}< red < {green or yellow→green and yellow}< blue < brown < { purple, pink, orange, gray. }

- Berlin and Kay (1969) also found evidence suggesting that there is a standard order in which basic colour terms are added to languages. The hierarchy above shows the claim in a relation A
- In conclusion, the perception of the colour spectrum is the same for all human beings but that languages lexicalize different ranges of the spectrum of naming. As Berlin and Kay's work represents, the selection is not arbitrary and languages use the same classificatory procedure. Berlin and Kay's work can be interpreted to show that there are universals in colour naming and thus forms a critique of the hypothesis of linguistic relativity.

Core Vocabulary

- Core vocabulary could be used to trace lexical links between languages to establish family relationship between them. The implication of this approach is that the membership of the core vocabulary will be the same or similar for all languages. Thus, comparison of the lists in different languages might show cognates, related words descended from a common ancestor language.
- i.e.: Cushitic language Somali has "two" as "laba" and "nose" as "san". However, Kenyan Cushitic language has "two" as "lsama" and "nose" as "sam". The conclusion, the example above shows cognates.

Universal Lexemes

- The only way to create definitions of things that are not biased by culture is to use a natural semantic metalanguage consisting of words that are found, with the same fundamental meaning, in every language in the world, and are themselves indefinable. Linguists of Natural Semantic Language rely on Semantic Primes for analysis (that is, simple, indefinable, and universally lexicalized concepts) and reductive paraphrase (that is, breaking complex concepts down into simpler concepts). Simply, the basic idea is that we should try to describe complex meanings in terms of simpler ones.

Paradigmatic and Syntagmatic

- Paradigmatic : (The class of all items that can be substituted into the same position (or slot) in a grammatical sentence (are in paradigmatic relation with one another). Paradigmatic relations are those into which a linguistic unit enters through being substituted, in a practical environment, with other similar units. (vertical relation) e.g: I

write on the blackboard. We can change “i” with another subject. It can be you, we, they, she, etc. We can change “write” with another predicate. I write on the blackboard you.

- Syntagmatic: (From syntagm or syntagma)(A syntactic string of words that forms a part of some larger syntactic unit). Syntagmatic relations are those that a unit contrasts by virtue of its co-occurrence with similar units. (Horizontal) E.g : i write on the blackboard. We define “i” as a subject, “write” as a predicate, “on” as a preposition, etc. I write on the blackboard .You read in the library. We go to the concert. She studies in the classroom.

Semantic Fields

- In linguistics, a semantic field is a set of words grouped by meaning referring to a specific subject.
- E.g : animals _____lion, cat, fish, bird, etc
- colors_____blue, red, white, black, etc.
- There are two kinds of semantic fields Ordered Unordered

Ordered

- E.g : Months of the year begin from January until December. Also the days of the week.

Unordered

- E.g : animals can be arranged alphabetically or depending on families such as the animals of the cat family.

Collocations

- A collocation is made up of two or more words that are commonly used together in English. Think of collocations as words that usually go together. There are different kinds of collocations in English. Strong collocations are word pairings that are expected to come together. Good collocation examples of this type of word pairing are combinations with 'make' and 'do'. You make a cup of tea, but you do your homework.
- Collocations are very common in business settings when certain nouns are routinely combined with certain verbs or adjectives. For example, draw up a contract, set a price, conduct negotiations, etc.
- Here are a number of common collocations in English:

- to make the bed I need to make the bed every day.
- to do homework My son does his homework after dinner.
- to take a risk Some people don't take enough risks in life.
- to give someone advice The teacher gave us some advice on taking tests.

Idioms

- An idiom is a set expression of two or more words that means something other than the literal meanings of its individual words. Adjective: idiomatic.
- "Idioms are the idiosyncrasies of a language," says Christine Ammer. "Often defying the rules of logic, they pose great difficulties for non-native speakers"