

Introduction to Semantics and Pragmatics

Class 2 – Meaning in words and between words

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Revision from last week

Key words

meaning - sign

concept - *signifié*

form - *signifiant*

Categorisation – What is a concept / *signifié*

Two models of the sign

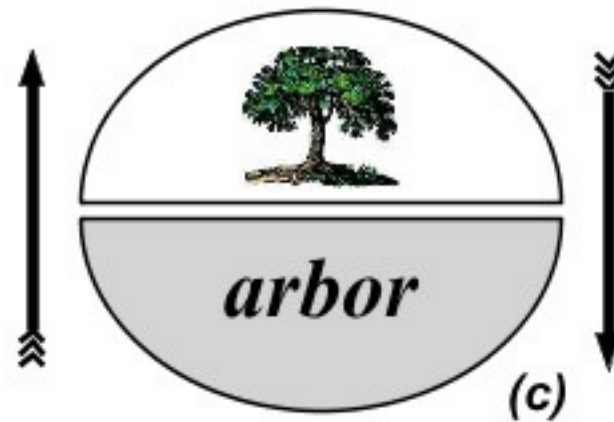
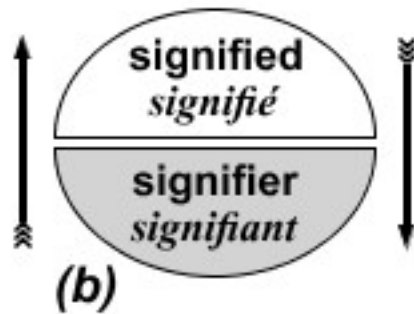
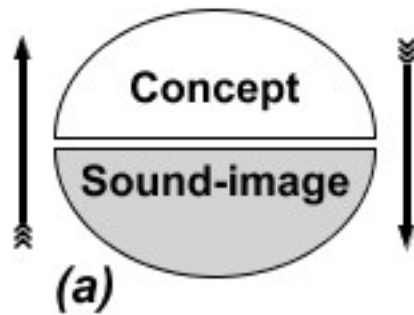
De Saussure

Perice

Revision – Meaning – What is it and where is it?



Revision – The Sign – Form-Meaning / *Signifiant-Signifié* Pair

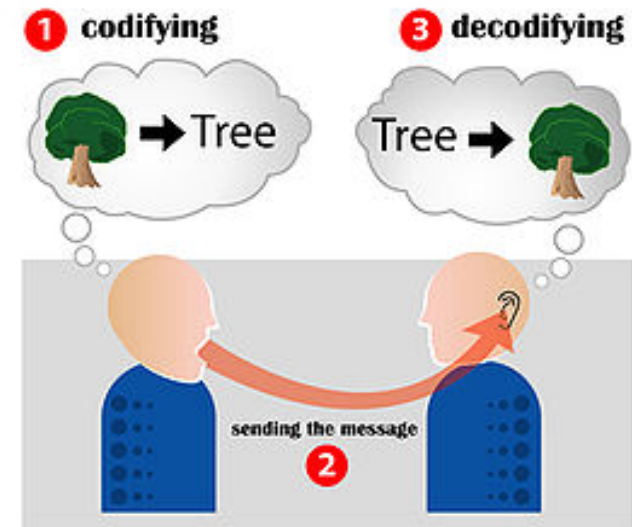


Revision - Model of Communication

Coder → medium → Decoder

Intended meaning – signs – Inferred meaning

But how do we decode?



Revision - Categorisation – What is a concept / *signifié*

What are
they?



Revision – Categorisation – A category is a set based on experience

Note – in Linguistics, a general rule!

‘inverted commas’ are used for concepts / *signifiés*

italics are used for forms / *signifiants*

Problem 1 – The concept ‘tree’ only exists in your mind, it is a construct!

Is it the same concept for every language?

Is it the same concept for every person in a given language?

Problem 2 – Every tree is different, really every single tree!

How do we know it is a tree?

How do we distinguish it from a bush or from a crab?

Revision – Concepts

So, the meaning side of the form-meaning pair – the sign

does not really exist except as a judgement of similiarity (categorisation)
in your head

and

how you do that is different from person to person

Lexical Semantics –

Meaning in words and between words

Most of this should be revision from first year

Revision - Semasiology and Onomasiology

A fundamental distinction

The conceptual structure of a form

The formal structure of a concept

We can ask two fundamental questions

1. What meaning(s) does a word have? (Dictionary)
2. What word(s) do we have to symbolise a meaning?

(Thesaurus)



you have to choose...



Revision - Semasiology and Onomasiology

Start with the *signifiant* and ask what meanings does it have

vs.

Start with the *signifié* and ask what words represent it

OR

Meaning structure of a word

vs.

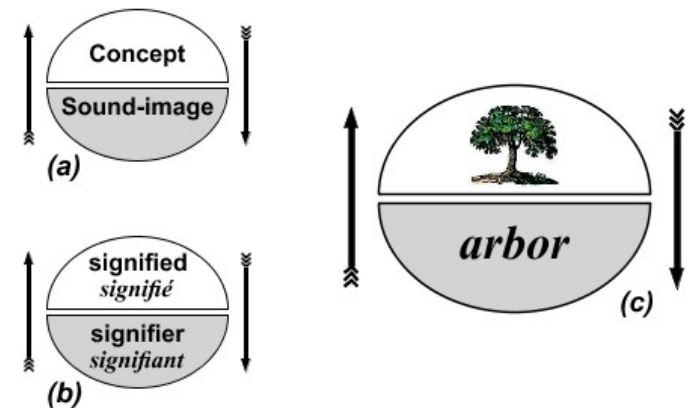
Meaning between words

OR

Polysemy

vs.

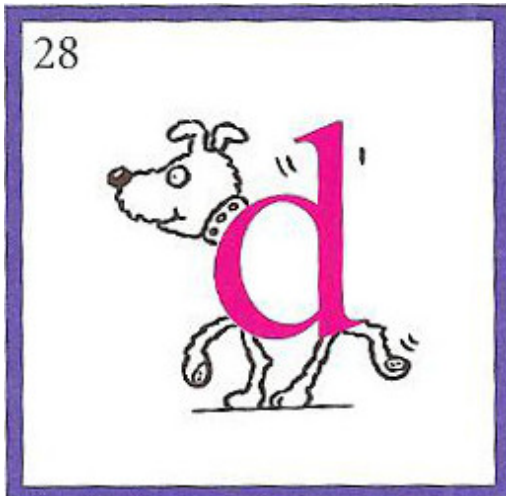
Synonymy



Revision - Units of Symbolism

Phonemes

/d/



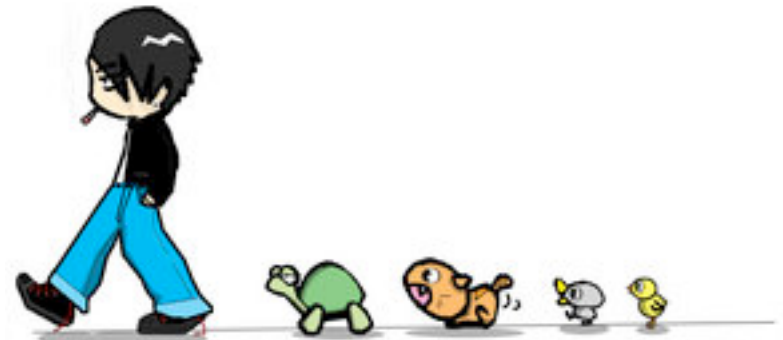
Morphemes

/dog/ + /(g)y/



Lexemes

/to dog/



Morphemes (forms)

What is the semasiology of the morpheme *-s* ?

She runs

Jim's coat

Two tigers

Grammatical Categories

What is the onomasiology of the PLURAL in English

Two tigers	two cherubim	two data
Two fish	two pizze	two theses
Two criteria	two chateaux	two radii

but also

they	we
------	----

and

these	those
-------	-------

Exercise

Work in groups

1. Find a speaker of a language other than French or English, what is the onomasiological structure of PLURAL in that language.
3. Try to think of a morpheme, in any language, that is semasiologically complex
What is the semasiological variation of that morpheme



Revision - Morphology

Reading and Revision – Words don't exist

Northern Sotho (Bantu, Niger-Congo),

(1) *re tlo e bua ka thipa ya gagwe.*

1PLS FUT 3SGO skin INST knife 9 his

we shall skin it with his knife

(2) *retloebua kathipa yagagwe*

we shall skin it with his knife

(3) Hunagiran (Finno-Ugric)

Vagyok a buszban

am the bus-in

(4) German (Germanic, Indo-European)

Pre-1998 spelling

Current spelling

eislaufen

Eis laufen

‘skate’

aufsein

auf sein

‘to be up’

gefangenhalten

gefangen halten

‘keep prisone

wieviel

wie viel

‘how much’

(5) Swedish (Germanic, Indo-European)

Ge mig lådan

give me box-the

Reading and Revision – Morphemes, Onomatopoeia, Idioms

Is “write up” a word?

I’ll write up the story.

Is “kick the bucket a word”

She kicked the bucket

Is “whoa” a word?

The bear went whoaaa...



Is “l” a word?

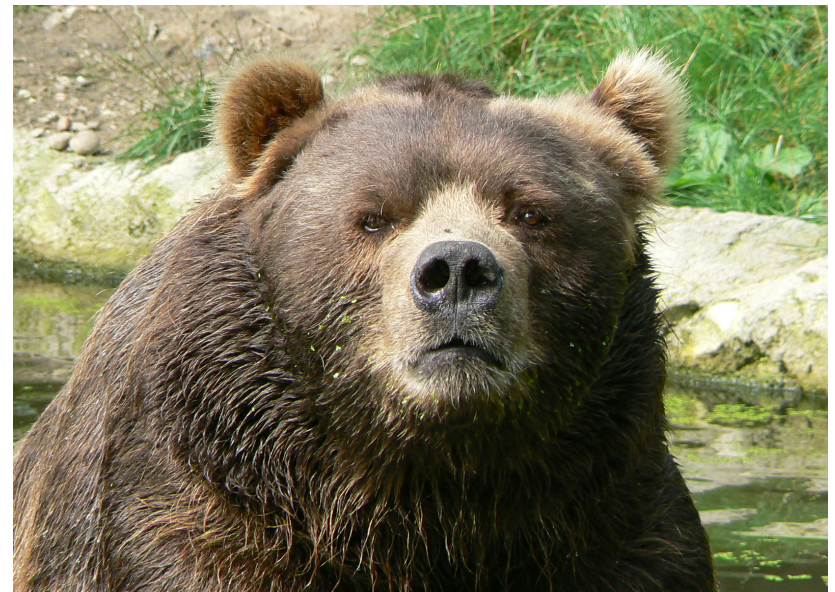
L’orange est sur la table

Is “aow” a word

Aow, that hurt?

Is “grrrrr....” a word

The bear went grrrr.....



Phoneme – morpheme – lexeme – lemma

/i/

in-

in

IN

Please...

I'm a lemur

not a lemma...



Lemmata.....!

word vs. lexeme vs. lemma...

lexemes are words including their inflections

lemmas are words including their derivations

Nota Bene

We use italics to refer to lexemes – always

We use small caps to refer to lemmata – normally

infuriate

(infuriate infuriates, infuriated, infuriating)

INFURIATE (*infuriate, infuriatingly, infuriation*)



humans say *word*

linguists say *lexeme* or *lemma*

because we don't want to confuse them



I AM A
CUNNING LINGUIST

Exercise – Lexemes and Lemmata, derivation and inflection

In groups

1. Think of a lemma – write down all its forms
2. Think of a lexeme – write down all its forms
3. Between you, think of another language, is it more or less morphologically complex than English?

Give an example of why you think it is so.

Phonesthesia

We will return to this when we do iconicity, but for now, sound symbolism can be mentioned in passing

A couple of Germanic examples

English

“gl-”

glisten, gleam, glint, glare, glam, glimmer, glaze, glass, glitz, gloss, glory, glow, and glitter.

German

kno-” and ”knö-” are mostly small and round: Knoblauch ”garlic”, Knöchel ”ankle”, Knödel ”dumpling”, Knolle ”tuber”, Knopf ”button”, Knorren ”knot (in a tree)”, Knospe ”bud (of a plant)”, Knoten ”knot”

Idioms

We will return to this when we look at meaning extension

For now, in passing

What are the meaning of these expressions? Why are they idiomatic?

The devil is in the details.

The early bird gets the worm.

Break a leg.

Waste not, want not.

Go take a chill pill.

I have butterflies in my stomach.

.... I was not sure how far we would get

POLYSEMY is probably the biggest question in semantics

we will work on it a lot in this course – the next two slides are just in case we need them

Please do the reading – it is on line.

next week we do one of the most difficult weeks of the course

Sense Relations – lost of jargon... sorry. But we will get it out of the way and get to more fun things soon!

Polysemy! - *over*

The veil is over the face (in front of)

The ball is over the fence (behind)

The car is over the hill (beyond)

The bird is over her head (above)

The cloth is over the table (on)

I reached over the table (across)

I bend over (fold)

I roll over (turn)

He is over there (distance)

He said it over the weekend (during)

The argument is over money (because)

He is over the problems (finish)

He said it over (again)

He is over this weekend (visiting)

It is over 10 minutes (more than)

Exercise - Polysemy and Semasiological Structure

1. I am over him
2. The tablecloth is over the table

Are these the same lexeme, do they belong to same part of speech?

In groups

1. The English lexeme *over* (preposition) has 19 pages of ‘meanings’ in the OED!!!

Think of 3 meanings

2. For the lemma OVER, can you think of meanings that belong to other parts of speech? Consider the nominal form and the adverbial form identify 2 different meaning

