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Semantic Change: Bleaching, Strengthening, Narrowing, Extension

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The standard six types of semantic change (broadening, narrowing, amelioration, pejoration, metaphor, and metonymy) are introduced and discussed further in terms of how they have been construed from the perspectives of semantic fields and Cognitive Linguistics (including Prototype Theory), Neo-Gricean pragmatics (including Invited Inferencing Theory), and Grammaticalization Theory. Bleaching and subjectification, although usually associated with grammaticalization, are shown to be general types of semantic change, not unique to grammaticalization. Three constraints on semantic change are outlined: avoidance of Euclidean space in grammaticalization, avoidance of synonymy, and avoidance of homonymy.

amelioration; autohyponymy; bleaching; bridging context; broadening; dysphemism; enantiosemy; euphemism; generalization; homonymiphobia; metaphorization; metonymization; narrowing; pejoration; subjectification

Introduction

Like most terms in historical linguistics, ‘semantic change’ has been used to refer to both processes and results. Depending on the researcher's view of semantics, it has also been used to denote changes either in reference to the external world (object, cultural norms, etc.)

or in a linguistic-internal sense, including ways in which pragmatic implicatures and inferences may become semanticized (coded) over time. Of all areas of linguistic change, semantic change is most subject to public comment and prescriptive attention. This is partly because semantics is codified in dictionaries, partly because of the ostensibly referential properties of some words, and most especially because meaning is subject to preemption by particular interest groups (cf. claims to the meaning of *Yankee* and, more recently to *gay* and *terror*) and even legislation (cf. the recent definitions of *harassment* as including 'hostile work environment').

Although in the past semantic change was often considered unsystematic, recent work has suggested that significant systematicities and unidirectionalities can be identified, especially crosslinguistically. These are usually considered from one of two complementary and mutually informing perspectives. The semasiological approach takes the form (hereafter *f*) as constant, ignoring phonological and other changes, and focuses on shifts in the senses associated with *f* (e.g., from *grasp* 'clutch' to 'understand'). The onomasiological approach takes abstract things or concepts as constant and focuses on recruitment to or loss of *f*s from the domain; for example, UNDERSTAND has come to be expressed by *grasp, understand*, and *comprehend* (itself ultimately derived from Latin *prehend*-'seize'). (Note: It is customary to represent abstract meanings in capitals, as in the previous example.)

Sometimes semantic change is treated as equivalent to lexical change. However, the latter concerns word formation, borrowing, and a number of morphological and phonological factors in addition to semantic change and will not be considered here.

Categories of Semantic Change

Early work on semantic change (e.g., Bréal, 1900/1966; Stern 1931/1968, Ullmann 1957) identified a recognized standard set of categories of change. The six listed next are the most important. (The following abbreviations are used: > means 'becomes' or, better, 'is assigned the new meaning' because the language itself does not change but, rather, speakers and hearers use languages in different ways over time; Chin. = (Mandarin) Chinese; Fr. = French; Gk. = Greek; Lat. = Latin; ME = Middle English (c. 1150–1500); OE = Old English (c. 600–1150); Span. = Spanish.)

1. Broadening (also referred to as generalization or extension): A relatively restricted meaning becomes less restricted, for example, Lat. *arripare* 'to arrive at the shore' > *arrive*; Late OE *docga* 'dog of a powerful breed' > generic *dog*.

2. Narrowing (also referred to as restriction or specialization): A relatively general meaning becomes more specific, for example, OE *deor* 'animal' > *deer*; OE *hund* 'generic dog' > 'hunting dog.'

3. Amelioration (also referred to as melioration): Meanings become more positive, for example, Lat. *nescius* 'ignorant' > *nice*; *Yankee* (from prior use as a derisive term).

4. Pejoration: Meanings become more negative, for example, OE *selig* 'blessed' > *silly*; ME *huswif* 'house-wife' > *hussy*; *knowing* 'having knowledge' > 'suggestive of secret

knowledge' (cf. *a knowing look*); ME *cunning* 'knowledge, erudition' > 'deceitfulness,' ME *cur* 'dog' > a term of contempt (for dogs and humans).

5. Metaphor: One concept is transferred, projected or 'mapped' onto another that is in a different conceptual domain but has some resemblance to it, for example, Middle Fr. *grue* 'crane [bird]) > 'prostitute'; Lat. *musculus* 'little mouse' > 'muscle'; SPACE > TIME as in *before* 'in front' > 'earlier.'

6. Metonymy: One word is associated with another along the lines of already existing connections. Often-cited examples involve reference to perceived nonlinguistic contiguities, for example, the material that the object is made of for the object as in Gk. *papyrus* 'papyrus plant' (used as material for writing on) > *paper*; the form for the function as in OE *feoh* 'cattle' (used as payment) > *fee*; cause for effect as in *prove* 'test' > 'establish truth of'; and color for a plant associated with it as in 'the fruit of the orange tree' > *orange* 'color.' Metonymy is, however, also used with reference to language-internal associations, including ellipsis, for example, Fr. *rien* 'nothing' (from Lat. *res* 'thing,' typically used in the context of *ne* 'not'). Part for whole (synecdoche), as in *hands* 'laborers' and Span. *braceros* 'laborers' from *brazo* 'arm,' is sometimes treated as a subtype of metonymy and sometimes treated as separate from both metaphor and metonymy.

Because all six categories refer to both processes and results of change, it would be best to use forms derived with *-ation* for the last two, that is, 'metaphorization' and 'metonymization.' The six are discussed in this article in terms of how they have been construed from the perspectives of (1) semantic fields and Cognitive Linguistics, including Prototype Theory; (2) Neo-Gricean pragmatics, including Inviting Inferencing Theory; and (3) Grammaticalization Theory. For a history of early work on semantic change see Nerlich (1992), and for a brief partial account of more recent developments, see Traugott and Dasher (2002).

Although the pairs of changes that occur in the six types of semantic change may seem contradictory, they establish that later meanings of a form are linked to earlier ones; an arbitrary shift that breaks continuity of meaning is excluded. They also imply that change results from the use of language in context. Sometimes the context is cultural (value judgments about certain qualities, groups of people, etc., as with *hussy, silly,* and *nice*); sometimes it is linguistic (e.g., *rien*). Many words can be shown to have undergone several semantic changes over time. For example, originally Fr. *bureau* was borrowed into English to refer to a woolen cloth covering tables; by metonymization it came to be used for the furniture under the cloth, and by specialization it came to be used for desks; later it was generalized metonymically to offices with several desks and then to the function of those offices. Likewise, Fr. *toilet* was borrowed meaning 'a cloth for wrapping,' restricted to 'a cloth covering a dressing table,' metonymized to the table and to dressing at it (cf. *do one's toilet*), and finally used euphemistically for *lavatory*. Sometimes different changes occur in different syntactic functions. For example, OE *prættig* 'crafty, deceitful' came by metonymic association with artfully devised appearances to be ameliorated as 'handsome'; by

narrowing it came to be associated largely with children and females; used as an adverb meaning 'in a fair way' it came by broadening (and ultimately bleaching) to mean *very* (cf. *that's pretty ugly*). Many metonymic pejorations can be seen to result from euphemism and taboo, in which case they are called 'dysphemisms.' Smells are often associated with objectionable experiences. This accounts for the pejoration of *stink* (originally OE s*tincan* 'to smell (sweet)') and even of the word that replaced it, *smell*; this in turn is being replaced by *odor* and *scent* (the movie title *Scent of a Woman* would have had an entirely different connotation if *smell* or even *odor* had been used). Note that although the pejoration of *smell* is semasiological, its substitution by another word (*scent*) is onomasiological. A similar example is *undertaker* (originally 'someone who undertakes a job'), which by specialization, and hence pejoration, > 'funeral director'; in this meaning, *undertaker* has been replaced by *mortician* (borrowed terms are often considered at least initially to be neutral, but they may then undergo semantic change).

All semantic change arises by polysemy; that is, new meanings coexist with earlier ones, typically in restricted contexts. Sometimes these new meanings split off and are no longer conceptualized as variants; for example, *mistress* used to mean 'woman in a position of authority, head of household,' but it came to be pejorated as 'woman in a sexual relation to a man.' The original meaning still survives but largely in restricted contexts (*mistress of the household, school mistress*). Most people nowadays probably think of the meaning in these phrase as distinct (homonymous).

Notations such as *stincan* 'smell (sweet)' > *stink* 'smell bad' not only suggest that the older meaning was replaced rather than being in a polysemous relation to the newer one but also that the change was instantaneous. In reality, the old and the new meaning typically coexist for a long time, at least in different communities and in different text types (e.g., conversation on the job, letters, drama, legal language, and poetry). For example, ME *estate* originally meant 'condition, status' and then, in legal contexts, 'interest in property including land'; only in the 18th century did it come to be used primarily for buildings (of the landed gentry). The original meaning persists but is largely restricted nowadays to religious and philosophical contexts, and the property meaning is largely restricted nowadays to legal ones (except in phrases such as *housing estate, real estate*).

From the Perspective of Semantic Fields, Cognitive Linguistics, and Prototype Theory

As attention turned during the 20th century from reference to sense and to relationships between abstract meanings, categories of change took back stage to the study of 'semantic fields': abstract meaning relationships that hold between sets of words and how they change over time (see Gordon, 2001, for early work). Some of these studies identified unidirectional changes. For example, Stern (1931/1968) noted that English words meaning RAPIDLY (e.g., OE *swifte* 'swiftly') came in the context of perfective verbs to mean IMMEDIATELY before 1300 but not later and suggested that semantic change was subject to 'laws' similar to those in phonology. Because 'laws' were, by hypothesis, exceptionless, but semantic change is

not, this particular suggestion was problematic, but the observation of directionality proved to be highly fruitful because it drew attention to systematicities of change. Work was conducted in domains such as color (Kay, 1975); perception (Viberg, 1983); and synesthesia, the metaphorical extension of terms for the five senses into the domain of other sense and social behaviors, language, and so on (e.g., *soft sound* and *bitter comment*) (Viberg, 1983). This work suggested that terms for touch are extended cross-linguistically to hearing and sight and that terms for taste are extended to smell and sound, but not vice versa, so we would not expect *sweet touch*. In a study of metaphorization in the lexical field of English animal names, Lehrer (1985) showed that many came to be used pejoratively in the 15th and 16th centuries; for example, terms for primates, birds, and scavenger birds came to be used to signal brutishness, foolishness, and greed, respectively (e.g., *baboon, pigeon,* and *vulture*).

Metaphorical extension of meaning came to play a central role in Cognitive Linguistics, in which abstract meanings are interpreted as cognitive schemas, scenes, and frames. In a book that proved seminal for later work on semantic change, Sweetser (1990) suggested that one way to conceptualize the synchronic polysemic relationship between verbs of perception and cognitive states (cf. *I hear you* 'I understand you') or of root (obligation, or 'deontic') and epistemic (inferential) modality is in terms of metaphorical mapping of image schemata. Building on aspects of Talmy's (1988) theory of force dynamics, she hypothesized that the *may* of permission (*Kim may leave; I allow it*) expresses "an absent potential barrier in the sociophysical world," and epistemic *may* (*Kim may be there*) "is the force-dynamically parallel case in the world of reasoning" (Sweetser, 1990: 59). Root *must* (*you must go*) indicates a real-world force that compels the subject to act, whereas epistemic *must* (*you must be tired*) indicates that "an epistemic force applied by some body of premises" compels the speaker to "reach the conclusion embodied in the sentence" (Sweetser, 1990: 64). Seeking to account for the abstract patterns of thought underlying regular tendencies of change, she argued that meaning change in the modals is a unidirectional metaphorical mapping from content > reasoning meanings, not vice versa, because "viewing X as Y is not the same as, and does not imply, viewing Y as X" and metaphorical mapping is "inherently unidirectional" (Sweetser, 1990: 19).

A basic assumption of Cognitive Linguistics is that meanings are not discrete but overlapping. They are prototypical and some representations are more central ('stereotypical' or 'salient') than others. Furthermore, there are often "clusters of overlapping and interlocking meanings" (Geeraerts, 1997: 61). From the perspective of prototype theory, broadening and narrowing can be seen as the result of metaphorization and metonymization. The key issue is change in the saliency of a meaning; for example, the salient meaning of the brand-named container known as *Thermos* came to be generalized to all vacuum containers designed to keep liquids hot or cold; the salient meaning of *liquor* 'generic liquid' came to be narrowed to 'alcoholic liquid'; and *meat* 'generic food' came to be 'food from animals.' Geeraerts (1997) provided a detailed account of historical prototype semantics, and Eckardt (2001a) formalized it in terms of Montague semantics.

From the Perspective of Neo-Gricean Pragmatics and Invited Inferencing Theory

Another strand of work has highlighted ways in which pragmatic polysemies can become coded as semantic polysemies (see e.g., Horn 1984, Levinson 2000, Enfield 2003). Building on Levinson's (2000) revival of Grice's distinction among (1) utterance token implicatures that are by hypothesis universal and arise on the fly in the context of strategic interaction between speaker and hearers (and writers and readers), (2) utterance type implicatures that are conventionalized in particular communities and languages, and (3) coded meanings that are conventions of a language at a given time, Traugott and Dasher (2002) developed the Invited Inferencing Theory of Semantic Change. According to this model, utterance token implicatures may become salient and normative types in a community; at this point, meanings may be indeterminate or ambiguous. Change occurs when these utterance type implicatures are semanticized, that is, when the earlier meaning of an item would not make sense in a particular utterance (the earlier type implicature has been reanalyzed as a distinct meaning of *f*). The inference may, of course, not always be semanticized and may persist for centuries, even millennia (cf. *after*, the causal implicature of which has not been semanticized). Enfield (2003: 29) referred to ambiguous or indeterminate utterances at the intermediate stage as "bridging contexts"; here "an interpretation of *f* as merely implicating 'q' (on the basis of 'p') or as actually meaning 'q' (as distinct from 'p') become functionally equivalent."

The term 'invited inferencing' is used to highlight the fact that change occurs in strategic interaction: Speakers/writers invite hearers/readers to infer meanings beyond what is said. It is an associative process in the syntagmatic flow of speech and, therefore, has much in common with metonymy. Metonymy has, however, often been restricted to language-external associations (e.g., *paper, fee, orange,* and *bureau*). By contrast, invited inferencing is strictly language-internal, conceptual metonymy.

One recently much discussed type of semantic change is 'subjectification.' Langacker (1990) restricted subjectification to changes in the interpretation of the syntactic subject characteristic of raising constructions, for example, the shift from the restriction to animate subjects in motion in *be going to* or in the speech act verb *promise* constructions to the availability of inanimate or expletive subjects in future/epistemic constructions (*there is going to be an earthquake; it promises to be a fine day*). However, subjectification can be more broadly construed as a metonymically based association of what is said to the speaker's attitudes and speech act purposes by which speakers and writers recruit meanings to express and to regulate beliefs, attitudes, and so on (Traugott 2002, Traugott 2003). At the most basic level, subjectification encompasses the evaluative, emotive changes known as amelioration and pejoration (cf. *silly* and *nice*) and euphemism (*scent*). But it also encompasses shifts from obligation to epistemic attitude, whether or not raising occurs, for example, *actually* 'in the act' > 'in reality,' as well as *promise* 'oblige/commit oneself to' > 'be likely to.' Subjectification also includes shifts from concrete descriptive meanings to focus particles and discourse connectives, for example, *only* 'single' (*an only child*) > 'focus particle' (*only Jane left*) > 'dismissive discourse connective' (*they are lovely*; *only, they have*

thorns) (Brinton, 1998), as well as shifts from ultimately spatial terms to performative verbs (Lat. *pro-miss-* 'forward-sent' > *promise*).

The influence of Gricean pragmatics is particularly apparent in Horn (1984). Horn associated the Second Maxim of Quantity, Relation and Manner (Make your contribution necessary. Say no more than you must; he calls this the 'R-Principle') with semantic broadening (cf. *thermos*). Here, the specific term is understood to represent a salient exemplar of a wider class (Horn, 1984: 35). In Horn's view, the R-Principle may also give rise to narrowing, as in the case of a shift from set to subset (hyponym) denotation; that is, "a delimitation of a general term to a sense representing a salient exemplar of the category denoted by that term" (Horn, 1984: 35), as in *undertaker* and *liquor*. But narrowing may also involve what Horn called the Q-Principle, which combines Grice's First Maxim of Quantity and Relation (Make your contribution sufficient. Say as much as you can.). For example, a superordinate term in a taxonomy (e.g., *finger, gay*) may be narrowed to exclude its complement; when we say *I hurt my finger*, this is understood to exclude the thumb, and *they are gay* can be understood to exclude lesbians. In this view, the specialization of the general term is "triggered by the prior existence of the hyponym of that term" (Horn, 1984: 35), a situation called 'autohyponymy.' As Horn points out, autohyponymy is very idiosyncratic historically.

Although there is a great deal of mutual influence between Cognitive Linguistics and Neo-Gricean pragmatics in work on historical semantics, the emphasis is rather different in each theoretical tradition. The prime focus on metaphorization and metonymization in Cognitive Linguistics is on the cognitive structuring that they reveal. In Neo-Gricean pragmatics, it is on communicative strategizing as well as cognitive structuring. Furthermore, metaphorizing has played a stronger role in Cognitive Linguistics, whereas conceptual metonymization has played a stronger role in Neo-Gricean pragmatics.

From the Perspective of Work on Grammaticalization Theory

Much work on grammaticalization, "the change whereby lexical items and constructions come in certain linguistic contexts to serve grammatical functions, and once grammaticalized, continue to develop new grammatical functions" (Hopper and Traugott, 2003: 18), has focused on crosslinguistic typologies of semantic change as they interact with, and indeed in many cases trigger, morphosyntactic change (see Bybee 1994, Haspelmath 1997, Heine 2002). Standard examples include SPACE > TIME, for example, *before* 'in front' > 'earlier'; *be going to* 'be in motion toward' > 'future' OBLIGATION > EPISTEMIC, for example, *must* 'obligation' > 'conclusion'; GIVE > dative case adpositions, for example, Chin. *gei* 'give' > 'to.'

Grammaticalization has been construed as arising primarily from metaphorical conceptualization, specifically mapping of a more concrete concept onto a more abstract one (e.g., Heine *et al.*, 1991). However, arguing that what appears to be metaphorizing is in most cases an artifact of citing examples out of context and is, in fact, usually the result of implicatures that arise associatively (metonymically) in highly specific linguistic contexts. Bybee 1994, Hopper 2003 showed that grammaticalization arises not so much out of

metaphorical processes but primarily out of conceptual metonymy and invited inferencing. Texts typically reveal extensive evidence of bridging contexts at periods of transition. This suggests that, for example, *must* was not directly assigned an epistemic meaning by the mapping of obligation in the physical world onto obligation in the world of reason, as Sweetser's metaphorical model would suggest. Rather, the implication that the individual who is obliged to do something will do it became salient over time, especially in contexts in which the obligation was imposed by God or a king. Once the change has occurred, synchronically the relationships between obligation and conclusion may appear to be metaphorical, but the historical process is metonymic.

A word or lexical item can undergo grammaticalization only if it has a very general meaning and one relevant to grammatical structure; thus, *thing* is susceptible to interpretation as a pronoun, whereas *desktop* is not; likewise, *go* and *come* are interpretable as markers of temporality (especially tense) but *creep, jump,* and *drive* are not. Sometimes the contentful meaning of a word may become weaker over time, allowing it then to be subject to grammaticalization (e.g., Lat. *ambulare* 'to walk,' which was generalized to motion in general before its descendant Fr. *aller* 'to go' became available as a marker of future). Meanings are often said to be weakened, 'desemanticized,' or 'bleached' during grammaticalization. It is true that they lose concrete, referential, and content meaning and become highly abstract, but they normally do not become devoid of meaning, as 'bleaching' suggests (an exception is the *do* that is automatically required in a question as in *did you see that*?). On the contrary, in the course of grammaticalization, a former nonreferential implicature typically becomes enriched or strengthened (Sweetser, 1988). In many cases, these grammatical meanings are indexical, for example, personal and demonstrative pronouns (Span. *vuestra merced* 'your grace' > *usted* 'second-person singular polite'), scalar focus particles *(mere* 'pure, absolute' > 'nothing more than'; see König, 1991) and discourse markers (*in fact, y'know*; see Brinton, 1996). Sometimes bleaching is identified with grammaticalization. However, bleaching also occurs in the lexicon; a number of terms are used as address forms (e.g., *love* and *kiddo*), and recently the slang word for 'feces' has come to be used to mean 'stuff' (*I've got a lot of shit to do*) (note the pragmatically negative connotation, arising from association with the dysphemistic source). Eventually, such bleached forms might become grammaticalized as pronouns, but that would require them to be analogized with other pronouns, that is, made to share their distributional properties.

The term generalization (also broadening) is sometimes used synonymously with bleaching. It is, however, important to distinguish bleaching, although the latter may arise from generalization (cf. the development of degree *pretty*). Terms that broaden or generalize become hypernyms, higher, more abstract members of a semantic hierarchy. When *dog* came to be used in ME as the generic term it was generalized (it came to refer to a larger set of canines). This is not bleaching; however, use of *dog* in, for example, *you dog*! (associated with an exclamatory intonation pattern) is – the content meaning 'canine' has been lost or at least demoted, and what is salient is the evaluative, insulting meaning of the construction.

Most examples of grammaticalization involve subjectification because speakers innovate grammatical meanings precisely to mark their perspective on what is said: what role the participants have in an event (case marking, raising), when the event occurred with respect to some other time (tense marking), what temporal perspective it had (completed, ongoing, etc.; aspect), how likely it was (modality), where the speaker got the information from (evidentiality), how the speaker perspectivizes the relationship between utterances (connectives, discourse markers), and what the focus of the speaker's contribution is (focus particles, topic markers). However, as previously indicated, subjectification is not limited to grammaticalization.

Constraints on Semantic Change

A number of constraints on semantic change have been proposed, of which three are mentioned here: semantic constraints on grammaticalization, avoidance of synonymy, and avoidance of homonymy.

1. Semantic constraints on grammaticalization. As we have seen, an item can undergo grammaticalization only if it has a very general meaning. Talmy (2000: 24–31) has, in addition, proposed that, synchronically, grammatical meanings tend to be related to topological, relativistic, and qualitative (and not Euclidean, absolute, or quantitative) meanings. Grammatical meanings do not express specific quantities (e.g., *inch* and *year*) or specific geometric relations (e.g., *square* and *corner*). Therefore, by hypothesis, Euclidean geometric terms are unlikely to be grammaticalized; that is, they are much less likely to be bleached of semantic content and enriched with grammatical meaning in the way that topological ones are, for example, *head* (cf. *in the years ahead* 'in future years') and *side* (cf. connective *besides*).

2. Avoidance of synonymy. Rather than using both *dog* and *hound* as the generic term for canines, speakers of ME shifted the semantic labor between the terms essentially by reversing their genericity. When a synonymous word is borrowed, a division of labor typically occurs; famous examples include native *cow*, used for the animal, and borrowed *beef,* used for the meat of the cow; likewise, native *sheep* and *pig*, versus French-derived *mutton* and *pork* (initially, at least, the borrowed word was associated with elite cuisine).

3. Avoidance of homonymy ('homonymiphobia'; see Geeraerts, 1997). There is a supposed constraint against development of homonyms with meanings that might be confused, especially those that are antonymous. Well-known examples are the development by sound change of both Lat. *cattus* 'cat' and *gallus* 'rooster' into southwestern Fr. *gat* and of both OE *lætan* 'permit' and *lettan* 'prevent' into ME *let*. The 'rooster' and 'prevent' meanings came to be expressed by other words: *gat* 'rooster' came to be referred to as *bigey*, a local variant of *vicaire* 'curate' (creating a new ambiguity), whereas *let* 'prevent' came to be referred to by native *forbid* and borrowed *prevent*. However, in fact, the coexistence of forms with apparently contradictory meanings is quite common, as evidenced by 'enantiosemy,' the presence of polysemies in which one sense is in some respect the opposite of the

other. For example, *dust* can mean 'remove' or 'add,' but usually not in the same context (cf. *I dusted the table* 'removed dust from' and I dusted the *strawberries* with sugar 'added sugar to the top of'). The verb *sanction* can mean 'approve' or 'penalize' (e.g., for someone ignorant of current affairs, the headline *Bush sanctions Iran* could be understood in opposite ways). Eventually, enantiosemies do seem to be resolved, but this may take centuries. In English, adverbial expressions may be used (e.g., *rent to/rent out*); or there may be semantic split (often in different communities), for example, Lat. *populare* 'to devastate' appears later as Span. *poblar* 'to settle, colonize' and Eng. *populate*; also Indo-European **ghos-ti* 'stranger,' which gave rise to *guest, host,* and *hospital* but also to *hostile*. Antonymous homonyms and polysemies are puzzling to those who think in terms of discrete meanings out of context. They are not puzzling from the perspective of overlapping prototype meanings that arise and are maintained in different contexts.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the only ways of innovating meaning are metaphorization and metonymization. "The trick of being innovative and at the same time understandable is to use words in a novel way the meaning of which is self-evident. But there are only two main ways of going about that: using words for the near neighbours of the things you mean (metonymy) or using words for the look-alikes (resemblars) of what you mean (metaphor)" (Nerlich and Clarke, 1992: 137). From this perspective, it is not surprising to find that the dominant type of semantic change is subjectification: the metonymic use of words to express one's evaluative viewpoint and to acknowledge (however unconsciously) the salience of speaker–hearer interaction, the most immediate neighbor to the communicative situation. Synchronically, metonymies can be regarded as indexical and syntagmatic, whereas metaphors can be regarded as paradigmatic. Diachronically, both types of innovation involve analogized inferences about similarities, whether to near neighbors in metonymy or to more distant resemblars in metaphorization. Semanticization of both types of innovation involves the reanalysis of the semantic content of *f* (for a proposal about how to formalize semantic reanalysis, see Eckardt, 2001b).

Meanings can also be borrowed, either with the foreign form, or calqued (translated into native forms with roughly equivalent meanings). Typically, meanings are borrowed without their original cultural associations. Therefore, the borrowed meaning may only approximate the original (e.g., *weltanschauung* and *sushi*). Like all borrowings, borrowed meanings are subject to change in the adopting language; for example, *feng shui* (originally Mandarin Chin. *feng* 'wind' + *shui* 'water,' used to refer to the practice of positioning objects such as graves, buildings, and furniture according to the principles of the opposing effects of ying and yang) has been generalized to 'cause to be in a peaceful state of mind' (cf. *fengshui your commute*). In sum, semantic change is subject to the same three mechanisms of change as morphosyntax: analogy/extension, reanalysis, and borrowing (Harris and Campbell, 1995).

See also

Antonymy and Incompatibility; Cognitive Linguistics; Context and Common Ground; Grammaticalization; Hyponymy and Hyperonymy; Inference: Abduction, Induction, Deduction; Lexical Fields; Metaphor and Conceptual Blending; Metonymy; Montague Semantics; Neo-Gricean Pragmatics; Onomasiology and Lexical Variation; Polysemy and Homonymy; Prototype Semantics; Synesthesia; Synonymy; Taboo, Euphemism, and Political Correctness.

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