Lexical Meaning: Denotation and Connotation

Denotation

Denotation ← set membership

The entities, actions, or qualities in the world picked out by the words.

The cat is on the mat.

I saw Maggie at the rave.

Parties at warehouses

Maggie: Brooks, J. L., Groening, M., & Simon, S. (Executive Producers). (2015, March 21). *Caption this!* [Facebook, Timeline Photos] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/TheSimpsons/photos/a.473850413696.246070.29534858696/10152787105933697; Party people: zacky24/iStock/Getty Images; Cat: wenchiawang/iStock/Thinkstock; Mat: University of Waterloo;

Connotation

Connotation	Denotation
Distinct from truth value.	Picking members out of a set.
The feelings, attitudes, moods, implied by term.	denotation ↓ {abstract set} ↓ world

connotations are all different
{
Gay
Queer
Homo
Homosexual
Batting for the other team
}
denotations are the same

Denotation: Intension and Extension

Intension
- The definition
- The criteria of set membership

Extension
- The members

Criteria:
- functionality
- support
- legs

Denotation: Intension and Extension

Phrase	Extension	Intension
Homer's daughter	Lisa Simpson Maggie Simpson	Female progeny of Homer Simpson.
The assistant to Monty Burns	Smithers	The individual paid to assist Montgomery Burns
Selma's secret under-garment	Rocket bra	An article of Selma's clothing that is intimate and known only to a few

Denotation: Intension and Extension

Phrase	Extension	Intension
Prime Minister of Canada	Brian Mulroney Pierre Trudeau Jean Chrétien	Leader of governing party.
Stanley Cup Champions	Red Wings Stars Beelzebubs Avalanche	Winners of Canada's annual summer NHL tournament.
Capital of Manitoba	Winnipeg	City containing provincial legislature of Manitoba.

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Synonyms and Antonyms vis-à-vis Denotation

Synonyms

Words which have largely the same intensions and extensions.
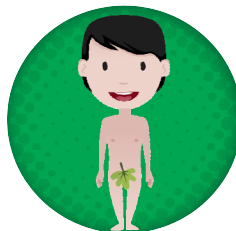
drunk
inebriated

Hand: Noedelhap/iStock/Thinkstock; Barney Gumble: Fox Flash. Photo of The Simpsons character Barney Gumble.

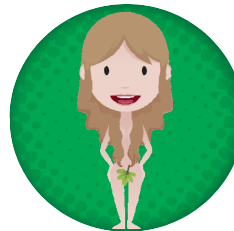## Synonyms and Antonyms vis-à-vis Denotation

Antonyms

Words which have largely the same intensions, but with one crucial opposition.

man
Noun, human, adult
male

woman
Noun, human, adult
female

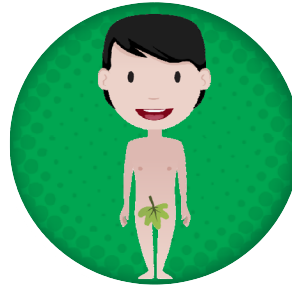Naked: Baluchis/iStock/Thinkstock

Homonyms and Polysemy

Homonyms

Homonyms are orthogonal to denotation.

Words whose intensions (signifieds) have little or nothing in common, but whose phonetic forms (signifiers) are the same.

bear

bare

Bear: coffeee-in/iStock/Thinkstock; Naked: Baluchis/iStock/Thinkstock

Homonyms and Polysemy

Polysemy

A signifier with a cluster of related intensions (signifieds).

Bear (verb)

It will bear over two tonnes.

It bears fruit.

She will bear a child.

Cujo can't bear Quinn.

She bears him a grudge.

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