

# Semantic Primes

## Introduction and Some Conventions

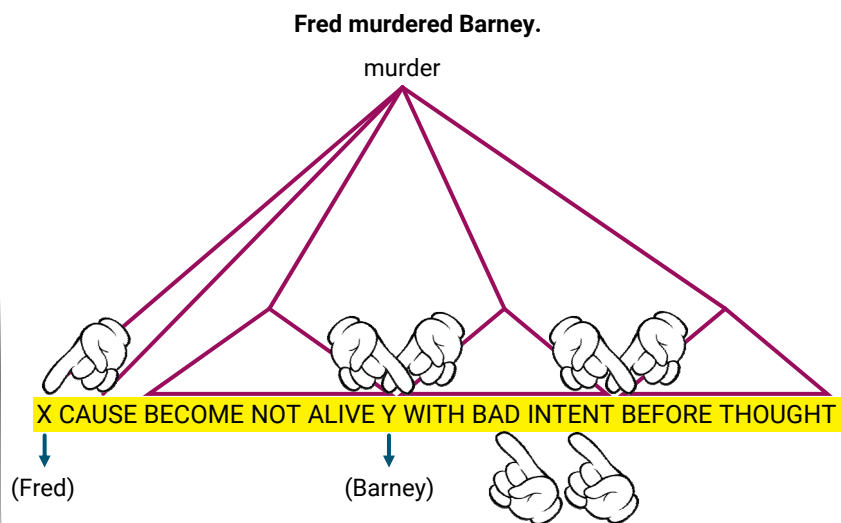
I	first person singular	BECOME
YOU	2 <sup>nd</sup> person singular	AND
SOMEONE	indefinite human	GOOD
WANT	desire for something	BAD
HEAR	resonating ear drum	WORD
NOT	opposite of something else	MALE
CAUSE	something causing something else	FEMALE
		HAVE

## Introduction and Some Conventions

alive	ALIVE
dead	NOT ALIVE
live	BE ALIVE
die	BECOME NOT ALIVE
kill	CAUSE TO BECOME NOT ALIVE
murder	CAUSE TO BECOME NOT ALIVE WITH BAD INTENT BEFORE-THOUGHT
assassinate	CAUSE TO BECOME NOT ALIVE WITH BAD INTENT BEFORE-THOUGHT FOR SOCIAL INTENT

Hand: Noedelhap/iStock/Thinkstock

## Semantic Composition - Murder



Hand: Noedelhap/iStock/Thinkstock

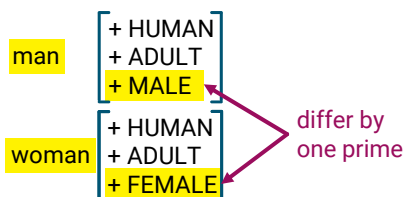
## Semantic Primes and Event Schemas

Event Schemas	Semantic Primes
Being	BE
Happening	HAPPEN
Doing	DO
Experiencing	FEEL
Having	OWN
Moving	GO
Transferring	CAUSE - GO

## Reductive Paraphrase

Expressing words in terms of their elemental semantic constituents.

Reducing words into semantic primes.



Semantic primes and **antonymy**

- Antonyms are words that differ on one semantic prime.
  - up, down
- UP, DOWN

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## Reductive Paraphrase

Expressing words in terms of their elemental semantic constituents.

Reducing words into semantic primes.

man	$\begin{bmatrix} + \text{HUMAN} \\ + \text{ADULT} \\ + \text{MALE} \end{bmatrix}$	$\begin{bmatrix} + \text{HUMAN} \\ + \text{ADULT} \\ - \text{FEMALE} \end{bmatrix}$
woman	$\begin{bmatrix} + \text{HUMAN} \\ + \text{ADULT} \\ - \text{MALE} \end{bmatrix}$	$\begin{bmatrix} + \text{HUMAN} \\ + \text{ADULT} \\ + \text{FEMALE} \end{bmatrix}$



Semantic primes and **antonymy**

- Antonyms are words that differ on one semantic prime.
- up, down  
UP, DOWN

Naked: Baluchis/iStock/Thinkstock

## Reductive Paraphrase

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Semantic primes and **homonymy**

**bear**, Noun

- ANIMATE, NOT HUMAN, 'ursus'

**bare**, Adjective

- NOT WEAR CLOTHES



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

## Reductive Paraphrase

Expressing words in terms of their elemental semantic constituents.

Reducing words into semantic primes.

Semantic primes and **synonymy**

**drunk, Adjective**

- STUPEFIED, 'with alcohol'

**inebriated, Adjective**

- STUPEFIED, 'with alcohol'



Barney: Fox Flash. Photo of The Simpsons character Barney Gumble. Wikimedia Commons.

## Reductive Paraphrase

Expressing words in terms of their elemental semantic constituents.

Reducing words into semantic primes.

Semantic primes and **polysemy**

Semantic primes offer insight into all  
onomasiological phenomena.