p. 59 phenomenon of interest, the ↳ criteria used to identify Instrumental case in Language A may be difficult to apply or not relevant at all to Language B. Moreover, because a form stands in paradigmatic relation to other forms within a system, comparable forms across languages will not be equivalent since they will stand in different oppositional arrangement to each other (Boas 1911; Saussure 1966[1916]). Finally, this approach fails to capture the affinities between the job done by case in one language and that done by a prepositional adjunct phrase or serial verb construction in another. That is, the same function can be expressed in different forms across languages, and a purely bottom-up approach will miss these interesting points of comparison.

2.2.3 Beginning 'top-down'

In the top-down approach, we begin with a conceptual domain, such as 'colour' or 'body'. This approach has been criticized on various grounds. An often-voiced objection against studying domains such as 'colour' or the 'body' stems from questioning whether the domain actually forms a coherent construct for speakers. Critics point out that there are languages which lack superordinate terms for such domains and suggest therefore there is no universal *concept* for colour or body or whatever (Wierzbicka 2005; 2007). The assumption is that subordinate terms are not deemed to be a cohesive set by speakers, if the superordinate concept is not lexicalized. But this inference relies on two faulty premises. First, it supposes an isomorphism between words and concepts. Lack of a word does not imply lack of a concept. In fact, there is a whole research agenda devoted to uncovering how linguistic semantics and conceptual structure are related —and if our concepts are indeed limited to those which find lexical expression in language. This consequence is accepted grudgingly by some. Wierzbicka (2005: 220) states: 'It is true that the absence of a word does not prove the absence of a concept; but how does one prove the *presence* of a concept for which there is no word?' Non-linguistic behavioural responses, such as sorting pictures or videos, can provide such evidence (see e.g. Boster and Johnson 1989; Khetarpal et al. 2010; Malt et al. 2008). The second faulty premise is that terms do not form a semantic domain without a lexicalized superordinate. Words form a semantic domain if they have related meanings, are deemed similar to one another by speakers (synonymy), or opposites in meaning (antonymy). None of this requires the presence of a lexicalized superordinate. People access information from memory based on the semantic closeness of terms. If I say to you 'cat, sheep, horse...what other things are like this?', you are likely going to respond with 'dog, cow, goat, etc.'. There is a set of related terms here, whether the language has a word for 'animal' or not.

Another line of critique against a top-down approach worries about the neglect of the emic perspective, and lack of attention to language-internal structural considerations. By ignoring structural encoding, it has been
p. 60 argued, non-equivalent ↳ objects are being studied: in essence apples are being compared with oranges (see Lucy 1994 for a critique of the work on space, and Lucy 1997 on colour). Lucy argues that it is essential to begin with a structural analysis of the language, that is, first establish that the domain of study forms a coherent category on formal grounds. This is because a crucial component of the meaning of a word is determined by its combinatorial properties: the meaning of *A*, is determined by what construction *A* can enter into, and what other words, *B, C, D...*, enter into that construction, since these provide information about how these terms contrast. In the weak interpretation of Lucy's critique, paying attention to structural facts can reveal meaning components that cannot be discovered otherwise. In the strong interpretation, ignoring structural facts means the analyst is imposing categories that may not exist in the language in the first place: 'Lexical items are grouped together and analysed as a coherent set not because speakers of those languages group them together in a set as revealed, for example, by common grammatical treatment, but because the analyst so groups them' (Lucy 1994: 624).

Lucy (1997) argues that differences in meaning components exist with each difference in formal encoding. While English uses adjectives to express colour, in Kilivila nouns are used,[2] in Chinook particles, and in Samoan verbs (Dixon 1982). Examination of the distributional properties of English colour terms shows that