

ENGL 306A

Personal Notes

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Chapter 1: Cognitive Basis of Language

NEUROCOGNITIVE AFFINITIES

💡 "Neurocognitive affinities" are patterns in language that we can recognize.

💡 Types:

- ① Identity;
- ② Resemblance / similarity (ie metaphors)
 - comparing things to others because they are similar
- ③ Correlation (ie metonymy)
 - when we associate 2 things because they happened together in time/space
 - eg "the Kremlin invaded Ukraine"
- ④ Subsets (ie meronymy / synecdoche)
 - "meronymy": subsets, wholes & parts;
eg fingers are part of a hand
 - "synecdoche": where a part is made to describe the whole or vice versa
(eg "Toronto made it into the finals")
- ⑤ Opposition (ie antithesis)
 - when something is used in place for another thing that contrasts it
 - eg "that tall person is tiny"
- ⑥ Repetition (ie multiplicity)
 - when something is repeated multiple times
 - eg "Go, go, go!"
- ⑦ Sequence
 - when we process things based on their order
 - eg before/after, etc

MODES OF MEANING

💡 We understand about the world through neurocognitive affinities, but communicate about them through modes of meaning.

💡 Types:

- ① "symbolicity": relation of convention
eg dog / 狗 / 犬
- ② "indexicality": relation of association
 - this can be causal or correlational
eg the sound of dropping a book is associated with it hitting the floor
- ③ "iconicity": relation of resemblance
 - we recognize things because they look / feel like other objects we are familiar with
 - eg we know everyone in class is a human

SIGNS

1. "Signs" consist of two components:

- the "signans", which describe the physical/sensory component of the sign. & eg a sound/image
- the "signatum", which describes the concept or meaning the signans represent.



2. Types of signs / dimensions of meaning:

- "Indexicality": defined by causation/correlation
eg thought of a cow ~ recording of a cow mooing
- "Iconicity": defined by resemblance
eg thought of a cow ~ picture of a cow
- "Symbolicity": defined by convention
eg thought of a cow ~ the word "cow" in English

FIGURATION / TROPES

1. "Tropes" occur when something (the "source") carries the primary signification for something else (the "target") that ordinarily holds that signification.

2. Types:

- Metaphors;
- Metonymy; &
- Synecdoches.

INDEXICALITY IN LANGUAGE

1. "Indexicality" occurs when one element of a set/relationship (the "source") is singled out to stand for other elements (the "target")

eg "the law is here", "Toronto wins at OT"

ANALOGY IN LANGUAGE

1. "Analogies" occur when one element (the "source") represents another element (the "target") to which it is unrelated.

eg metaphors; ie "the sun is like an orange"

POLYSEMY

1. "Polysemy" is when a word has multiple meanings.

eg "pussy" — sexual organ, cat, insult

PHONAESTHEMES

1. "Phonaesthemes" are units of sound that are thought to carry meaning, although there is no conventional basis for that meaning.
eg "gl-" in glow, gleam, glistening connotes to "light/shine"

STRUCTURAL PRINCIPLES IN LANGUAGE

1. All language is founded ultimately on "contiguity"; ie there must exist physical, temporal or conceptual relations between expressions & what they reference for a communicative code to exist.

2. Thus, all language is symbolic in nature.

INDEXICALITY

💡 Recall indexicality is metonymic, as it is defined by correlation/causation.

EGOCENTRICISM / ME-CENTRICISM

💡₁ "Egocentricism" refers to the tendency to use language to communicate one's own thoughts, feelings & experiences.

💡₂ This is achieved via "deixis" (pointing words), which point to specific individuals, objects & locations.

eg "this dog. that house"

💡₃ We can use "proximals": ie

① Speaking location:

eg here, there, near, etc

② Speaking time: &

eg now, today, then, etc

③ Relative location to the speaker.

eg this, that, etc

💡₄ We can also use "pronouns":

① ego = 1st person

② ego + others = 1st person plural

③ hearer of ego = 2nd person

④ hearer of ego + others = 2nd person plural

⑤ not ego or hearer of ego = 3rd person

⑥ not ego or hearer of ego + others = 3rd person plural

ANTHROPOCENTRISM / HUMAN-CENTRISM

💡₁ "Anthropocentrism" refers to using language to name objects according to their relation to us; ie we project ourselves onto objects.

eg front/back of a car, since that is how we use cars

ICONICITY

💡 Recall iconicity is "metaphorical", as it is defined by similarity & resemblance.

QUANTITY

💡 "Quantity" refers to when the amount of language resembles the amount of events / concepts.

eg - "dinosaurs lived a long, long, long time ago"

- plurals are longer than singulars

SEQUENTIAL ORDER

💡₁ "Sequential order" refers to when the order of language resembles the order of events / concepts.

💡₂ In particular, the order of words/sentences usually mirrors the order of events.

eg "don't drink and drive", "stop, drop & roll"

DISTANCE

💡 "Distance" refers to when the closeness of linguistic elements resembles the closeness of events/concepts.

eg "greenhouse" vs "green house",
"wetsuit" vs "wet suit"

CONSTRUCTIONS

💡 "Constructions" are patterns/templates that are used to build larger units of language, like phrases or sentences.

ie the building blocks of language

💡 Examples:

- ① Fossilized expressions;
eg now and then, kick the bucket
- ② Partially-filled fossilized expressions;
eg jog X's memory
- ③ Abstract syntactic patterns;
eg NPVP (active), NP be V by NP (passive)
- ④ Words:
- ⑤ Morphemes;
eg pre-, -er, -ed, etc
- ⑥ Phonemes, syllables & features;
eg /p/, /b/, higher/lower voice

ANALOGIC FRAMES / CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS

💡 "Analogic frames" are cognitive structures that allow us to understand complex or abstract concepts by mapping them onto concrete & familiar experiences.

eg "time is money", "she shot me down";
"he attacked my point", etc

CORRELATIONAL FRAMES / CONCEPTUAL METONYMY

💡 "Correlational frames" are cognitive structures that allow us to understand complex or abstract concepts by replacing them with related/associated concepts.

💡 Examples:

- ① Producer for product;
eg "I only read Dr. Seuss"
- ② Container for contained;
eg "that's a tasty dish"
- ③ Person for instrument;
eg "I'm parked out back"
- ④ Place for institution;
eg "Ottawa sent my rebate"

Chapter 2:

Words

WORDS

💡₁ A "word" is the smallest unit of language that can be uttered in a context with objective or practical meaning.

💡₂ Note that words are arbitrary.

LEXICALIZATION

💡 "Lexicalization" is the process of turning a concept/idea into a word or set of words.

eg the ringing of a phone → "ring"

WHERE WORDS COME FROM

💡₁ Words can come from

① the imagination; or

eg hobbit, googol, quark, etc

② the world.

eg bang, crackle, spark

💡₂ They can also come from other words; these can be distinguished via the following:

① "structural" (ie permutations of form)

- ie when a word comes from borrowing other words, combining words, or reducing words

② "onomasiological" (ie permutations of meaning)

- eg metaphors

SIMPLE VS COMPLEX WORDS

💡₁ "Simple words" are those with only one morpheme.

eg "Fred", "sane", "disc"

💡₂ "Complex words" are those with ≥ 2 morphemes.

eg "quicker", "blackbird"

SEMASIOLOGY VS ONOMASIOLOGY

💡₁ "Semasiology" is concerned with the question "what does the word X mean?"

💡₂ "Onomasiology" is concerned with the question "how do you express X?"

SEMASIOLOGY

POLYSEMY

💡 "Polysemy" refers to when a single word has multiple meanings.

💡 Types:

- ① Specialization - correlates with narrower sense
- ② Generalization - correlates with wider sense
- ③ Metaphorization - correlates with resemblance
- ④ Metonymization - correlates with correlation/contiguity

HOMONYMY

💡 "Homonymy" refers to when two or more words have the same form (spelling and/or pronunciation) but different meanings.

eg bank (of water) vs. bank (the financial institution)

DERIVING WORDS FROM OTHERS

💡 Words can be formed from others in several ways:

- ① "Metaphorical" - a new signatum from comparison
eg broadcast (to cast out seeds → to send out a signal)
mouse (rodent → computer device)
- ② "Metonymical" - a new signatum from physical/conceptual association
eg horn (animal projection → instrument)
- ③ "Specialization" - narrowing of signatum
eg pill (small unit of medication → birth control)
school (learning institution → K-12)
- ④ "Generalization" - broadening of signatum
eg ship (send by boat → send by any means)
- school (learning institution → an intellectual/creative group)

WORD CLASSES

💡 Types:

- ① "Content words": carry the semantic burden & are less important syntactically
- nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs
- ② "Function words": carry the syntactic work, are relatively light semantically
- prepositions, particles, qualifiers, determiners, etc.

WORD CLASS DIAGNOSTICS

💡 Types:

- ① "Semantics": the type of signata the category involves;
- ② "Morphological": the shape the signata possess; &
- ③ "Syntactic": the other words the class occurs with & the order in which they do.

ENGLISH NOUNS

💡 Semantic: a person/place/thing.

💡 Morphological: takes plural & possessive abilities.

eg dogs, dog's

💡 Syntactic: follows articles & adjectives.
eg the green dog, a dog

ENGLISH ADJECTIVES

💡 Semantic: a quality attribute/property.

💡 Morphological: takes comparative/superlative suffixes.

eg quickly, quickest

💡 Syntactic: precedes nouns, follows degree words

eg the very big boy

ENGLISH VERBS

💡 Semantic: action or state.

💡 Morphological: takes 4 suffixes:

- ① past tense;
eg nodded
- ② third person singular present;
eg nods
- ③ past participle; &
eg has nodded, had nodded
- ④ present participle.
eg is nodding, was nodding.

💡 Syntactic: can follow an auxiliary verb.
eg he can nod his head.

ENGLISH ADVERBS

- 💡 Semantic: modifies an action/state.
- 💡 Morphological: none (although many end in -ly)
- 💡 Syntactic: follows a verb
eg he nods vigorously

ENGLISH PREPOSITIONS

- 💡 Semantic: establishes spatial locations, relations or directions.
eg at, in, on, by, etc

ONOMASIOLOGY

SYNONYMY

- 💡 "Synonymy" occurs when the signata are different, but the signatum is the same.
 - neurocognitive affinity: resemblance/similarity
 - eg dog, doggo, doge, etc

PLESIONYMY

- 💡 "Plesionymy" occurs when the signantia are different, & the signata are similar but not the same.
 - neurocognitive affinity: resemblance/similarity
 - eg the n word, the p word

ANTONYMY

- 💡 "Antonymy" occurs when the signantia are different & the signata are opposite.
 - neurocognitive affinity: resemblance/similarity
 - eg black/white, up/down, etc

MERONYMY

- 💡 "Meronymy" occurs when the signantia are different & the signata are in a super/subset relation.
 - superset = hypernym, subset = hyponym
 - neurocognitive affinity: meronymy
 - eg for dog: hound, terrier

WHERE WORDS COME FROM – STRUCTURAL PROCESSES

- 💡 Words can arise from structural processes:

- ① Borrowing other words;
- ② Combining other words/phrases: &
eg through "blends"; eg smoke + fog → smog
- ③ Reducing words.

