

01 – Organisation and introduction

Lexicology and Lexicography – Course Website

Dr. Quirin Würschinger, LMU Munich

October 21, 2025

Outline

1. **Organisation**: course structure, requirements, and materials
2. **Course preview**: overview of topics and methods
3. **Introduction**: what is lexicology?

Organisation

Course materials

Course website: <https://wuqui.github.io/Lex252/>

Registration

Any open issues?

Module requirements, exam registration, etc.

Course description

- This course provides an in-depth exploration of English **lexicology** and **lexicography**,
- examining **key areas** including word-formation processes, semantic analysis of word senses, and patterns of lexical innovation, variation and change.
- Grounded in **empirical language data** from dictionaries and corpora, students will develop analytical skills for studying lexis through
 - **dictionaries** like the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) and Wiktionary,
 - and **corpora** such as BNC 2014 Spoken and COCA on the corpus platforms Sketch Engine and english-corpora.org.
- The programme emphasises **practical experience** in frequency analysis, collocation analysis, and Word Sketches through collaborative group projects, enabling students to use authentic data and empirical methods for lexicological research projects.

Schedule

Date	Topic
1 21 Oct.	Organisation and introduction
2 28 Oct.	Words, dictionaries, and the lexicon
3 4 Nov.	Morphology and word-formation
4 11 Nov.	Dictionaries: fundamentals, examples, use cases
5 18 Nov.	Using dictionaries and analysing data
6 25 Nov.	Corpora: theories, methods, and applications
7 2 Dec.	Semantics: studying meanings and functions of words
8 9 Dec.	Studying lexis empirically
9 16 Dec.	Lexical innovation: new words and meanings
10 13 Jan.	Lexical change: historical and recent changes in the English lexicon
11 20 Jan.	Lexical variation: speakers and communities
12 27 Jan.	Lexical variation: text types, genres, registers
13 3 Feb.	Summary, discussion, review, and outlook

Literature

Key textbooks:

Bauer, Laurie. 2022. *An Introduction to English Lexicology*. Edinburgh University Press.

Lipka, Leonhard. 2002. *English Lexicology: Lexical Structure, Word Semantics and Word-Formation*. Tübingen: Narr.

Schmid, Hans-Jörg. 2016. *English Morphology and Word-Formation - an Introduction*. 2nd ed. Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag.

Requirements

- Active participation and preparation
- Weekly readings and short exercises
- Term paper; rule of thumb:
 - 3 ECTS: short paper (\approx 3–5 pages)
 - 6 ECTS: long paper (\approx 10–12 pages)

! Important

Please check your Studien-/Prüfungsordnung for the exact specification.

i Note

Special case: Modulprüfung → see next slide.

Modulprüfung

Wichtige Information nur (!) für Studierende im **BA Anglistik (PStO 2019)**, Studienbeginn WiSe 2019/20 oder später), die diese Lehrveranstaltung als **Modul WP 1.2** belegt haben:

- Modul WP 1.2 ist nur ein Teil des Gesamtmoduls WP 1, das mit einer **Gesamt-Modulprüfung** (gemeinsame Prüfung über beide Modulteile hinweg) endet, die erfordert, dass **beide Modulteile besucht wurden**.
- Bitte überprüfen Sie deswegen anhand der Übersicht unten und Ihres Stundenplans noch einmal, ob Sie in diesem Semester auch tatsächlich eine Veranstaltung **im anderen Modulteil WP 1.1** belegt haben und für diese auch zugelassen wurden. Sollte dies nicht der Fall sein, wenden Sie sich bitte schnellstmöglich an die Studiengangskoordination (studienberatung@anglistik.uni-muenchen.de).
- Die **Anmeldung zur Gesamt-Modulprüfung** erfolgt im Prüfungsanmeldezeitraum (7.1. – 23.1.2026). Bitte melden Sie sich dann bei dem/der Dozent*in an, bei dem/der Sie die Veranstaltung für das **Modul WP 1.1** besuchen.
- Das gleiche gilt für folgende Module in anderen Studiengängen: TUM MA (neu), Modul WP 11.2 (> WP 11.1 muss im gleichen Semester besucht werden)

 **Note**

All of The assessment for WP 1 takes place in WP 1.1.

There is no assessment in this course if you take it as WP 1.2.

WP 1 courses offered this semester

WP 1.1

→ VVZ BA Hauptfach (Studienbeginn ab WiSe 2019/20)

→ VVZ WP 1 Aufbaumodul Sprachwissenschaft A (9 credits)

→ VVZ WP 1.1 Seminar Sprachwissenschaft: Form and Structure (6 credits)

Modulprüfung zusammen mit Modul WP 1.2.

Die Restplatzvergabe ist für Studierende der anglistischen Fächer und ggf. SLK vorgesehen. Studierende anderer Fächer können keine Leistungsnachweise erhalten und werden ggf. nachrangig berücksichtigt.

Wichtiger Hinweis für Studierende der Anglistik, die einen Platz über die Restplatzvergabe bekommen haben: Bitte füllen Sie das Modulzuweisungsformular aus und schicken Sie es der Studienberatung Anglistik über das Kontaktformular.

Vst.-Nr.	Veranstaltung	Vst.-Art	Aktion
13236	The spelling of English: A diachronic perspective - Mader	Seminar & Übung	Platzvergabe Listen E-Mail
13237	19th-century English - Mader	Seminar & Übung	Platzvergabe Listen E-Mail
13536	English syntax - Arendholz	Seminar & Übung	Platzvergabe Listen E-Mail
13541	Comparing Learner Englishes and New Englishes - Keller	Seminar & Übung	Platzvergabe Listen E-Mail

WP 1.2

→ VVZ WP 1.2 WU Sprachwissenschaft: Function and Use (3 credits)

Modulprüfung zusammen mit Modul WP 1.1.

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Vst.-Nr.	Veranstaltung	Vst.-Art	Aktion
13538	Pragmatic markers in theory and practice - Benker	Seminar & Übung	Platzvergabe Listen E-Mail
13540	Sociophonetics - Yeo	Seminar & Übung	Platzvergabe Listen E-Mail
13542	Introduction to Cognitive Linguistics - Handl	Seminar & Übung	Platzvergabe Listen E-Mail
13543	North American Englishes - Laliberté-Périn	Seminar & Übung	Platzvergabe Listen E-Mail
13544	Lexicology and lexicography: The English vocabulary between reference works and usage evidence - Würschinger	Seminar & Übung	Platzvergabe Listen E-Mail
14131	Phonetik und Phonologie (BritE) (mit Tutorium) - Bauer	Übung	Platzvergabe Listen E-Mail

Course preview

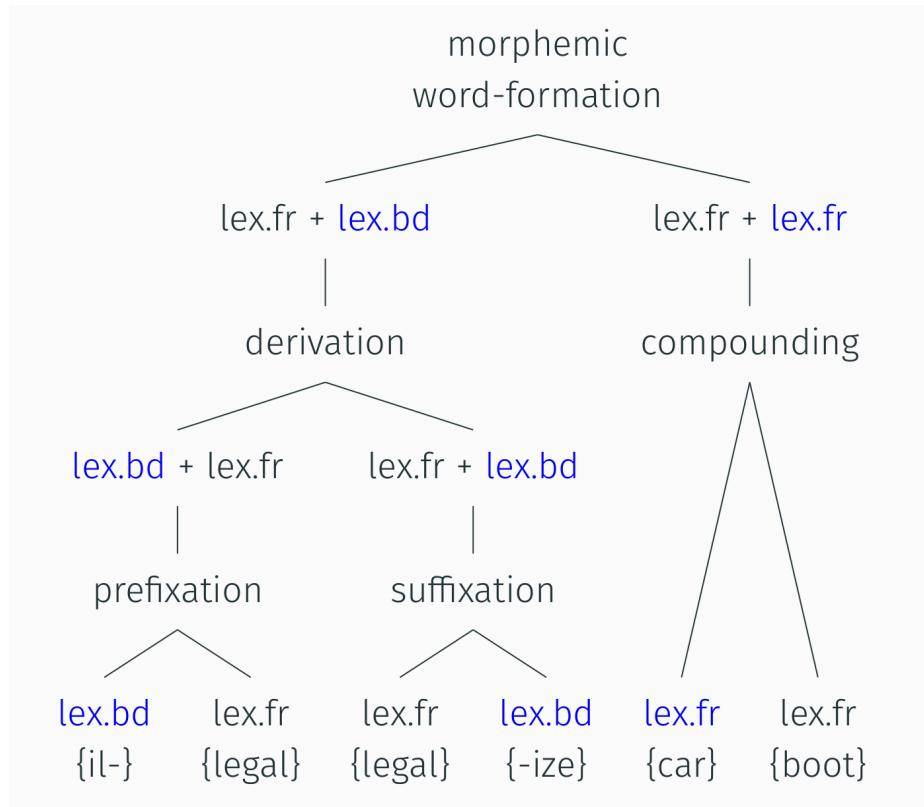
Words, dictionaries, and the lexicon

- What is a word? ([Bauer 2022](#))
- What is the lexicon? ([Lipka 1992](#))
- Is there structure in the lexicon or is it just a “bag of words”?

The screenshot shows the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for 'Entries (518,827)', 'Meanings (878,485)', 'Quotations (3,840,299)', and 'Historical Thesaurus (794,871)'. Below the navigation is a search bar and a sidebar with filtering options for 'SEARCH TERMS' (Headword, Definition, Etymology, Forms) and 'DATE OF USE' (Use, First use, From/To date range). The main content area displays search results for the term 'the'. It shows three entries under the heading 'Old English-' with red progress bars indicating frequency. The first entry is 'the, adj., pron.², & n.¹', defined as 'Before a noun denoting a thing or person that is unique or considered to be unique, or of which there is only one at a time (e.g. the sun, the earth...)'. The second entry is 'be, v.', defined as 'In progressive (chiefly non-perfect) tenses. With dynamic sense: to exist as some particular thing or as having some particular quality at a specific...'. The third entry is 'of, prep.', defined as 'Preceded by a word of number or quantity.' At the bottom left, there's a reference to '?a1160-' and at the bottom right, 'a. adj.'

Morphology and word-formation

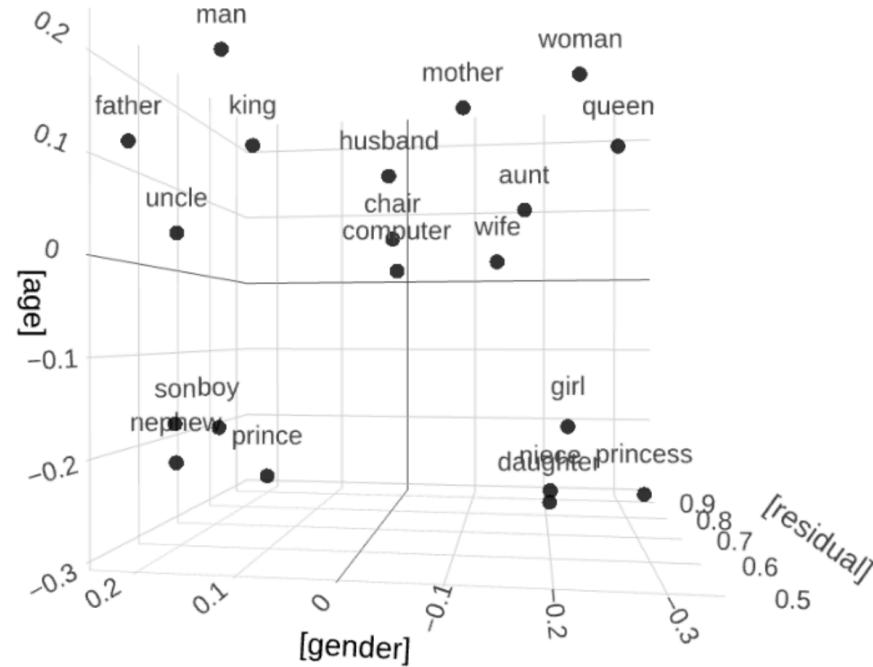
- Cover basics of morphology and word-formation based on the framework by Schmid (2016)
- Apply theoretical foundations to analyse word-formation processes.
- What are differences in behavioural profiles and productivity of morphemic and non-morphemic word-formation processes?
- How can we study morphology and word-formation based on empirical data?



Dictionaries: fundamentals, examples, use cases

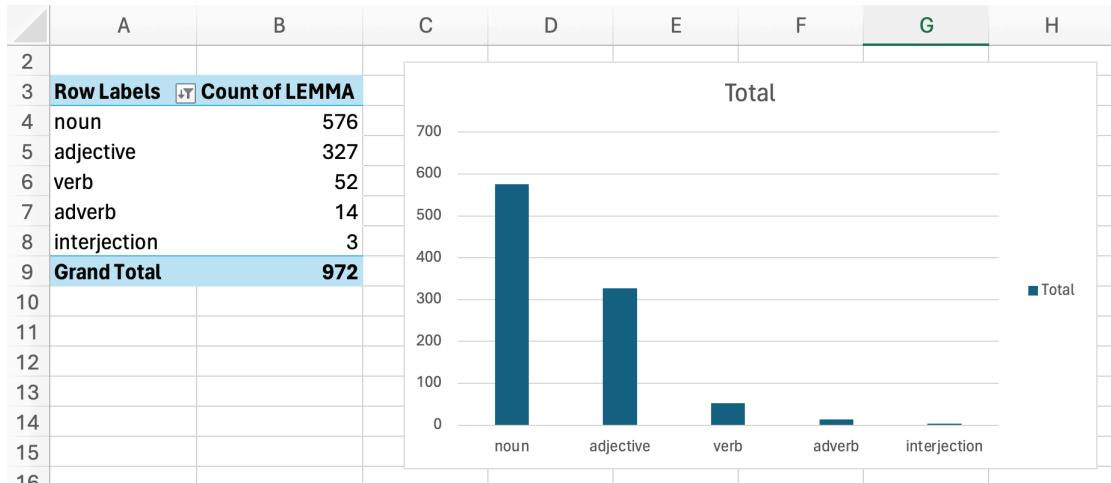
- What is the difference between dictionaries and the lexicon?
- What is the mental lexicon?
- What kinds of dictionaries are there?

Word embeddings.



Using dictionaries and analysing data

- How can we use dictionaries to study the lexicon?
- How do we access data from dictionaries?
- How do we store and process data?
- Hands-on: Practice working with lexicological data.



Corpora: theories, methods, applications

- Introduce corpus linguistics as a usage-based method and contrast it with introspection.
- Tour Sketch Engine (BNC 2014 Spoken) to collect frequency and collocation methods.
- Learn how to search corpora, do frequency analysis and collocation analysis.

Sketch Engine

The screenshot shows the Sketch Engine Concordance interface. The search term is "brother". The results list 8 examples from the English Web 2020 corpus. The interface includes a sidebar with icons for corpus selection, search, and export. A green box highlights the KWIC button in the toolbar above the results table.

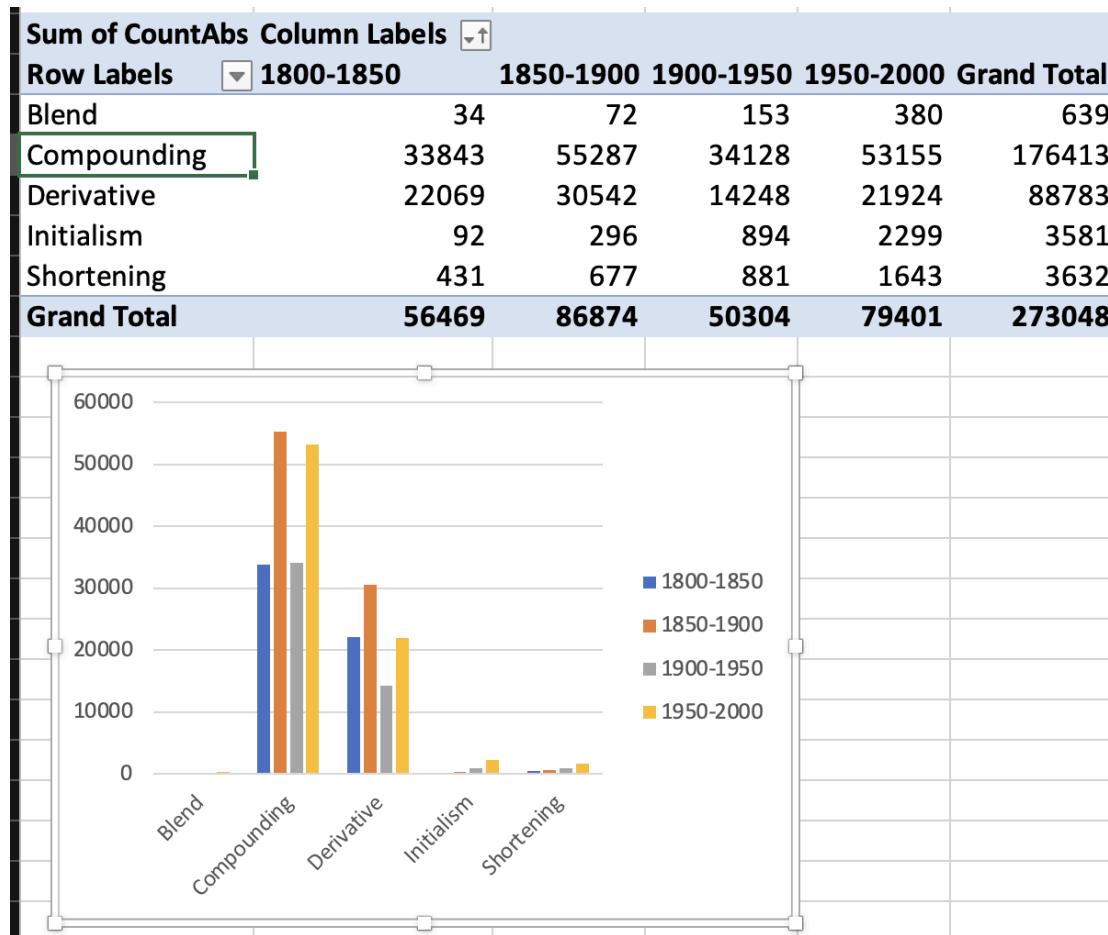
Rank	Source	Text Excerpt
1	suntimes.com	at 38 on Saturday from a heart attack, his younger brother Matthew Morton revealed.</s><s>Animated films &
2	societalsecurit...	vacy and the greater intrusion of new forms of 'big brother' surveillance in people's daily lives.</s><s>On the
3	gilmerfreepress...	sister, was seen at a propaganda event beside her brother and his wife.</s><s>Millennials are buckling under
4	dailymail.co.uk	aced as they reunited.</s><s>Mya Piper (left) and brother Jonah entered the deep main swimming pool at the
5	wikidot.com	I expectant.</s><s>He turned, showing to his little brother who's face practically glowed with envy.</s><s>"He
6	wikidot.com	'ess and they send you free stuff!"</s><s>His little brother got a greedy glint in his eye.</s><s>"What is it?</i>
7	arkansasonline....	Monday that killed a college athlete and injured her brother . by Nyssa Kruse</s><s>Little Rock man pleads guilty
8	gilmerfreepress...	ers, Gladys Snyder and Clara Turner of Ohio; one brother , Junior McCumbers of Grafton, OH; 24 grandchild

Semantics: meanings and functions

- How can we study meaning in the lexicon?
- How can we use collocation analysis and Word Sketches based on empirical corpus data in Sketch Engine?
- How do we interpret the results?
- Hands-on: Case study on the meaning of source and full forms of clippings (e.g. *brother* vs *bro*)

Studying lexis empirically

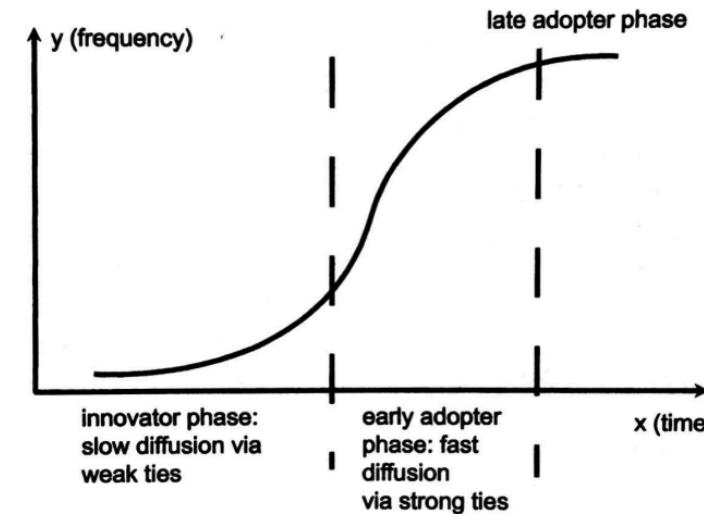
- More practice on using dictionaries and corpora to study the lexicon.
- How can we obtain data?
- How can we store and organise these data effectively?
- How can we analyse these data in Excel?
- How can we create visualisations of our results?



Lexical innovation: new words and meanings

- New products and practices enter the linguistic system on the level of lexis.
- Why do speakers coin new words?
- Which new words are being coined and spread successfully?
- Are there patterns among recent neologisms? (e.g. word-formation processes, semantic domains)
- Which trajectories of spread do we observe?

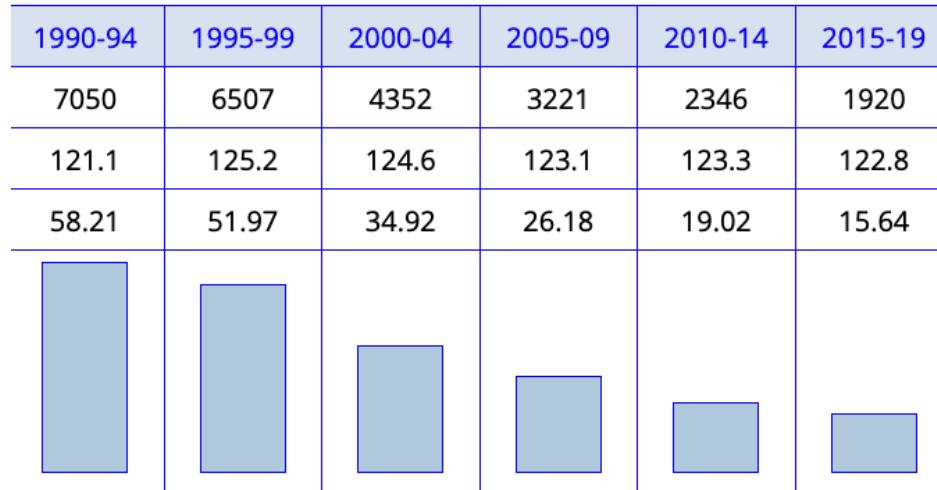
Kerremans (2015)



Lexical change: historical and recent shifts

- How has the English lexicon changed over time?
- Which kinds of recent changes do we observe?
- How can we use diachronic data to study language change in the lexicon? (dictionaries, corpora)

Decline in usage of the term *telephone* in the COCA.

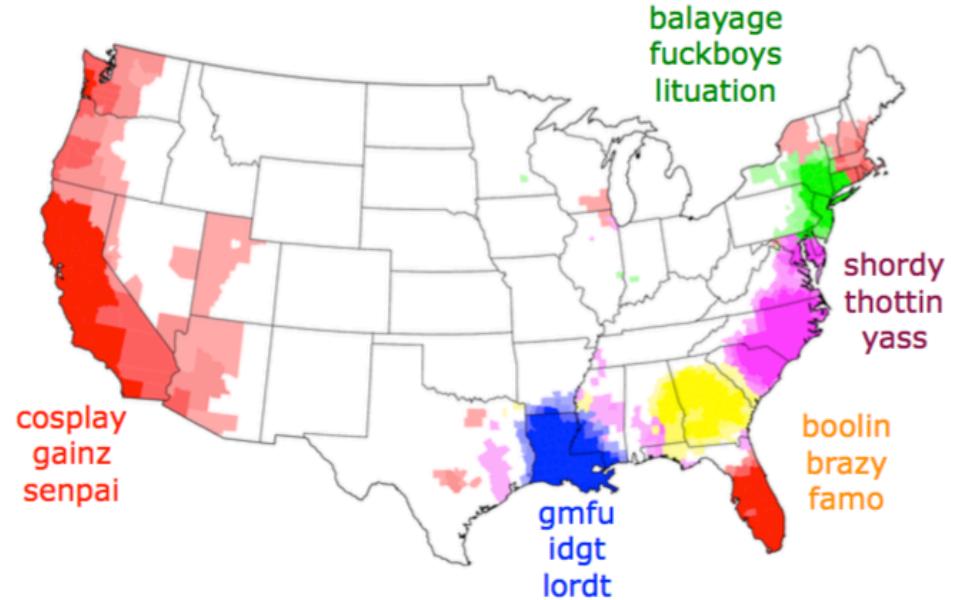


Lexical variation: speakers and communities

- How do speakers use language in different contexts and communities?
- Can we observe individual variation between speakers?
- How can we study this based on empirical data from dictionaries and corpora?

Grieve, Nini, and Guo (2018)

Hubs of Lexical Innovation: Examples (Factor Loadings)



Lexical variation: text types, genres, registers

- How can we model variation in language use between text types, registers, genres, and medium?
- How do speakers use language in different contexts? (e.g. formal vs informal)
- Does variation in use between text types correlate with language change?
- Shift focus to diaphasic variation and register-sensitive vocabulary.
- Case study: language change in the system of modal verbs ([Hilpert and Mair 2015](#))

Introduction to Lexicology and Lexicography

What is a *word*?

How many words?

Paul was drinking beer in his favourite bar. He enjoyed having a drink every now and then. He thought he did not drink much, but his wife thought that he drank.

How many words?

Paul was drinking beer in his favourite bar. He enjoyed having a drink every now and then. He thought he did not drink much, but his wife thought that he drank.

→ 31 running words/tokens

Types vs tokens

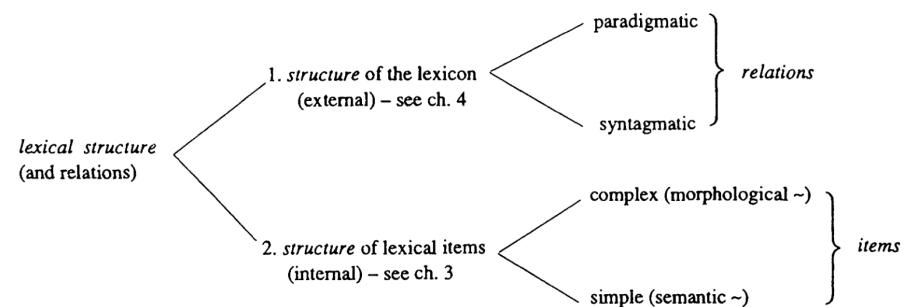
type	token
1 DRINK ^v	<i>drinking</i>
	<i>drink</i>
	<i>drunk</i>
2 DRINK ⁿ	<i>drink</i>

- tokens: *he¹*, *he²* ...
- word forms: *drinking*, *drank* are word-forms of DRINK^v
- types/lexemes: e.g. DRINK^v

What is the lexicon?

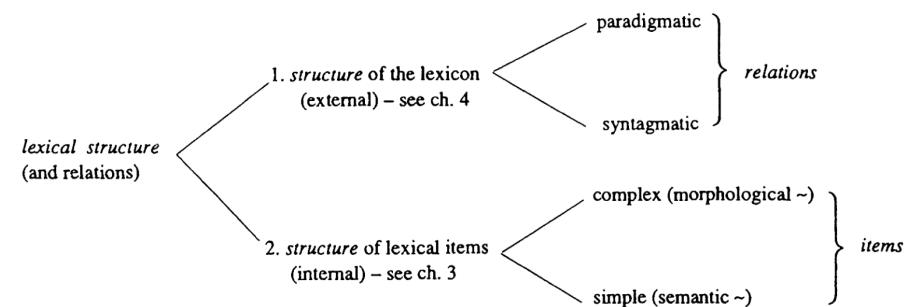
Does the lexicon have structure?

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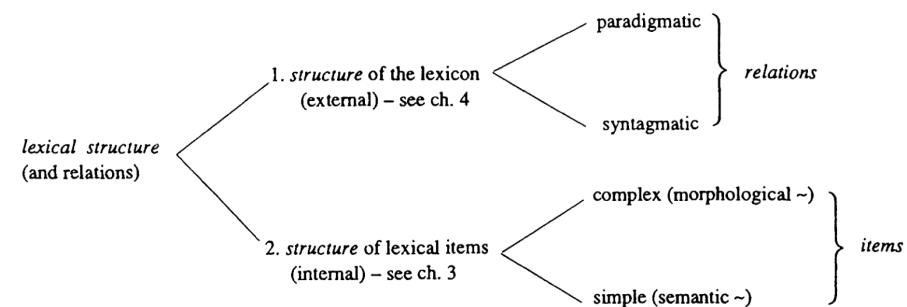
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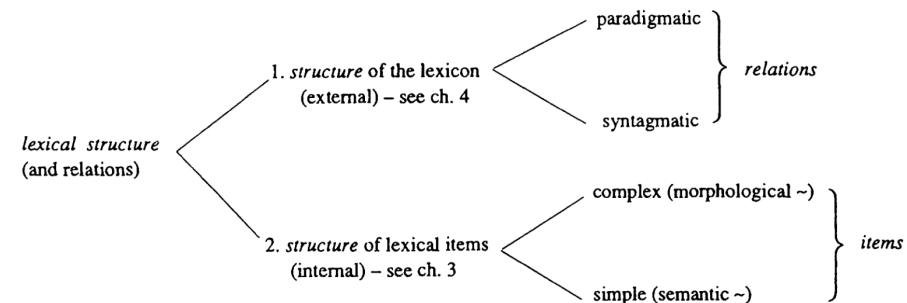
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- **External** structure of the lexicon (relations):



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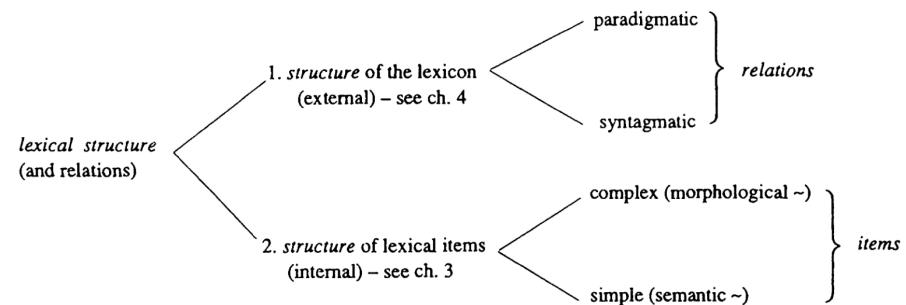


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→ **paradigmatic**: substitution in the same slot (synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy), e.g., *big* ↔ *large*; *car* ↔ *vehicle*.

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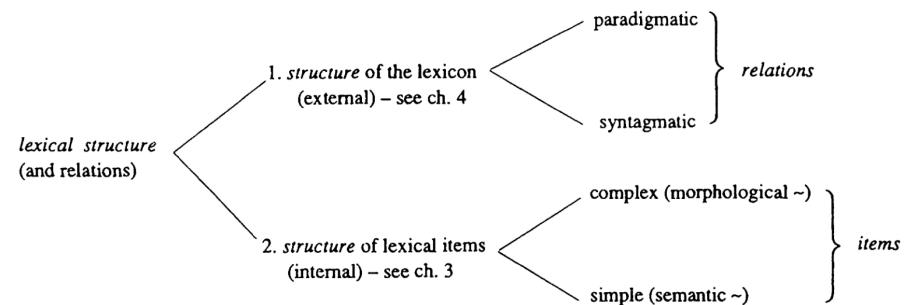


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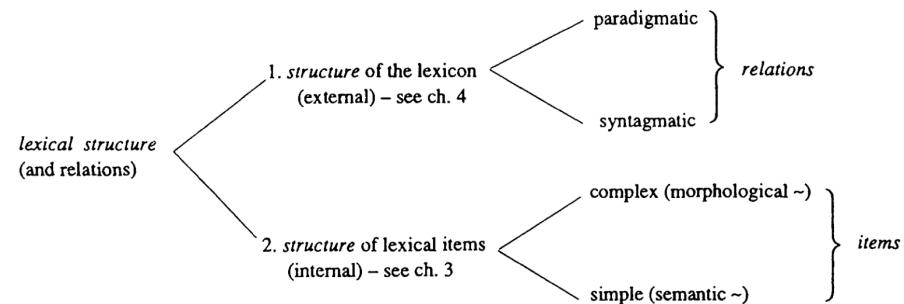
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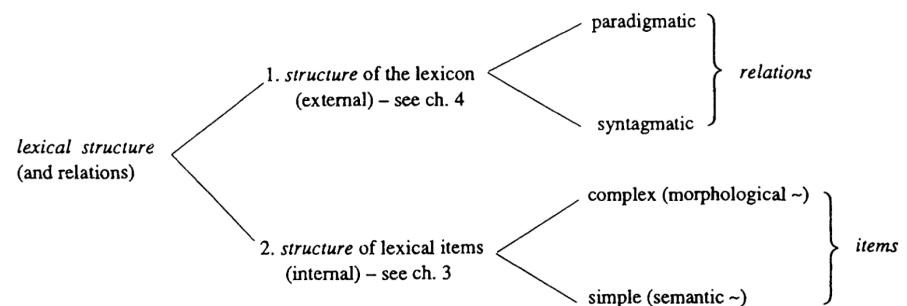
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 - **complex** (morphological): built from morphemes, e.g., *un-happy-ness*, *blackbird*, *rethink*.

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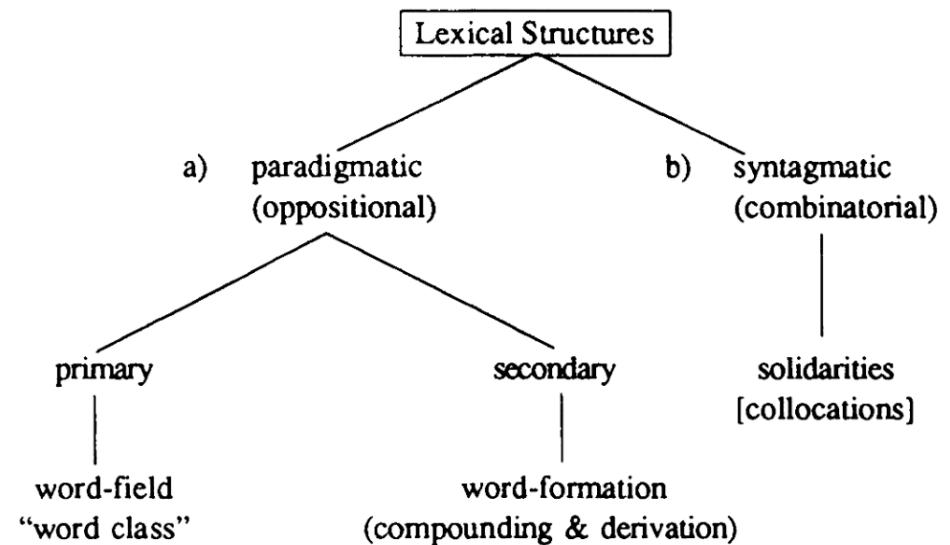
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 - **simple** (semantic): monomorphemic with sense structure, e.g., *bank* (money vs river), semantic features like [+ANIMATE] for *dog*.

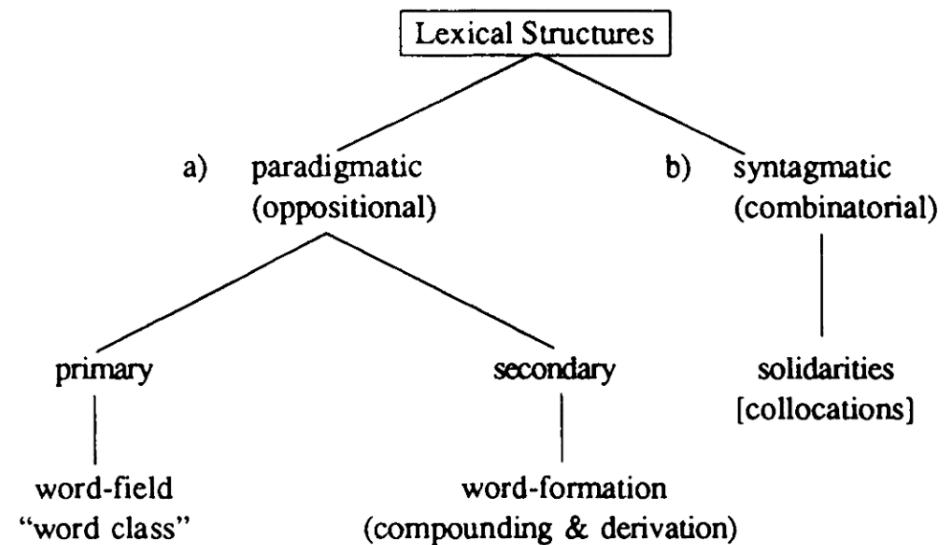
Fundamental types of lexical structures

Lipka (1992)



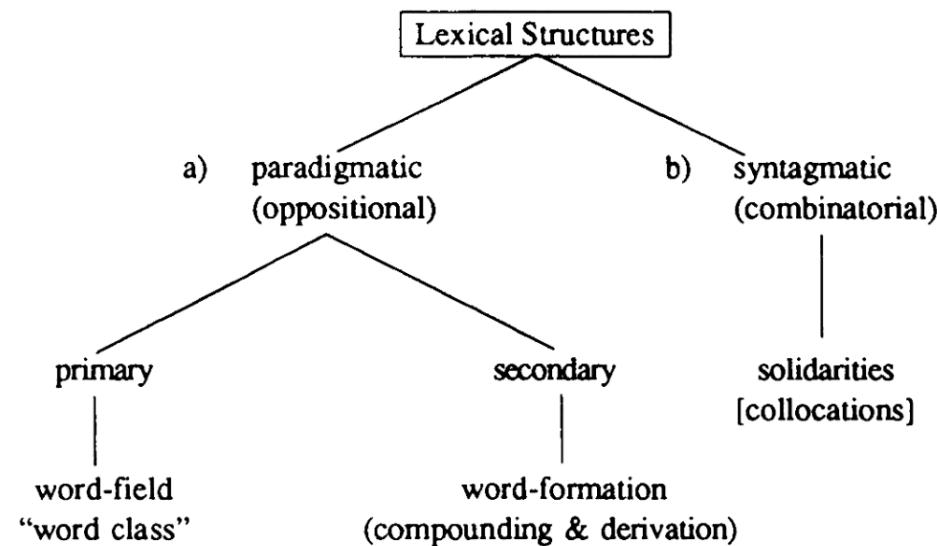
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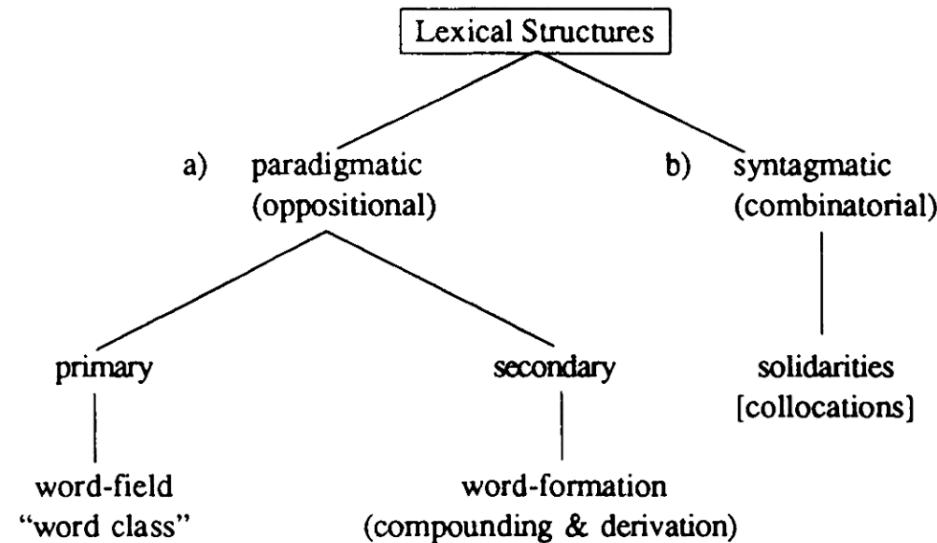
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- **Paradigmatic:** red – blue – green; car ↔ vehicle; alive ↔ dead.

Fundamental types of lexical structures

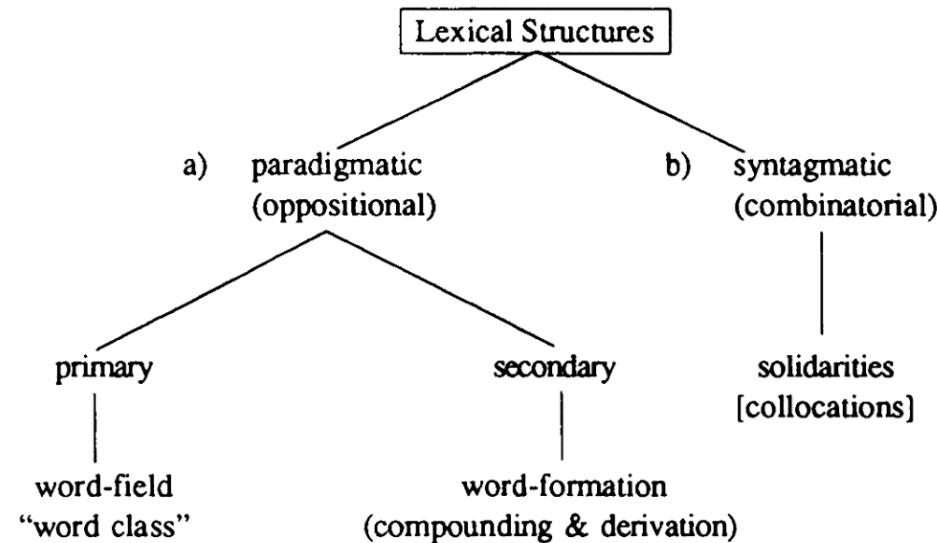
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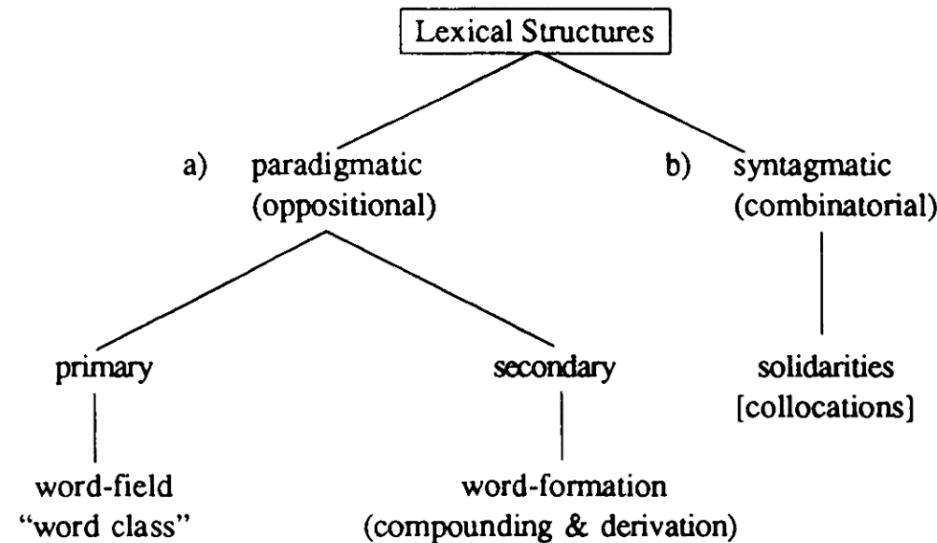
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- **Syntagmatic:** heavy rain, strong tea, make a decision, commit a crime.
- **Selectional preferences:** drink tea/coffee, pay attention, raise awareness.

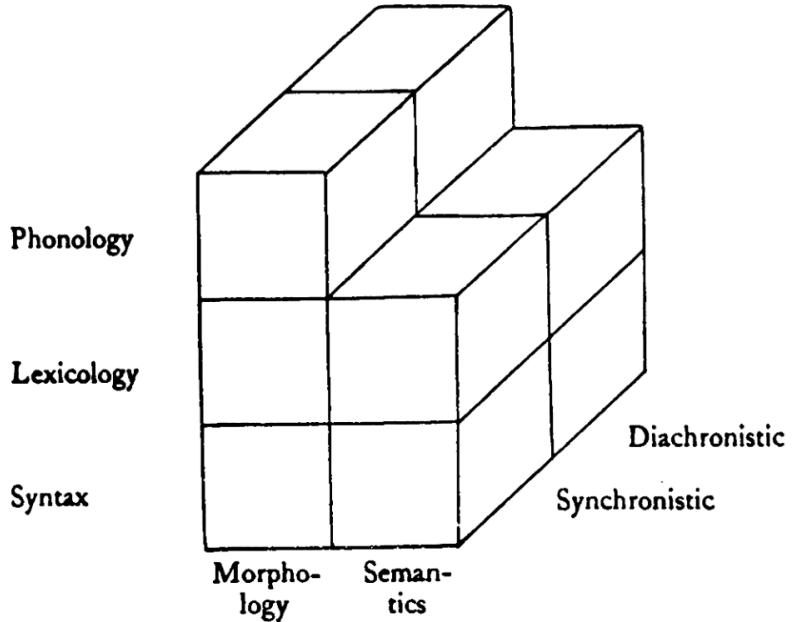
Quote

“What is most important, however, is that in lexicology the stock of words or lexical items is not simply regarded as a list of **isolated elements**. Lexicologists try to find out **generalisations** and **regularities** and especially consider **relations** between elements. Lexicology is therefore concerned with **structures**, not with a mere agglomeration of words.” (**Lipka 1992**: 1)

The role of the Lexicology in language

Lipka (1992)

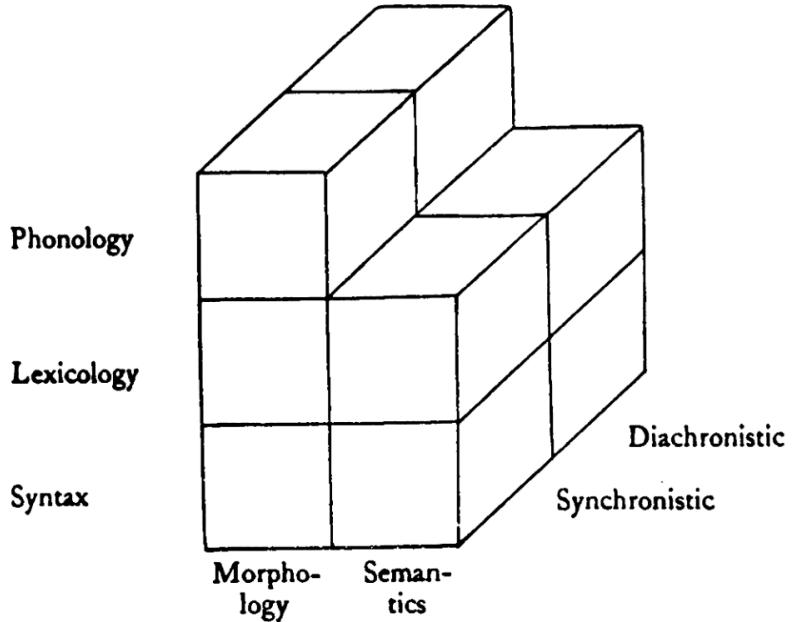
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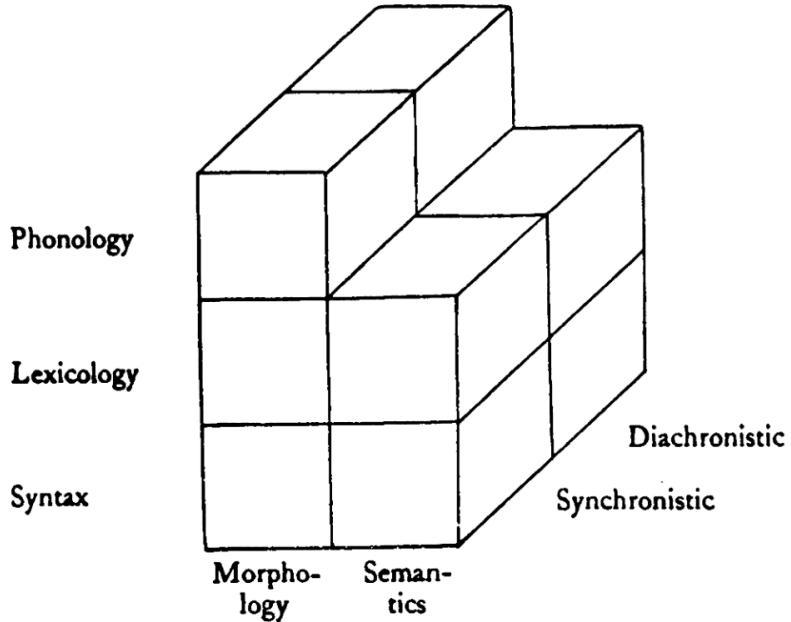
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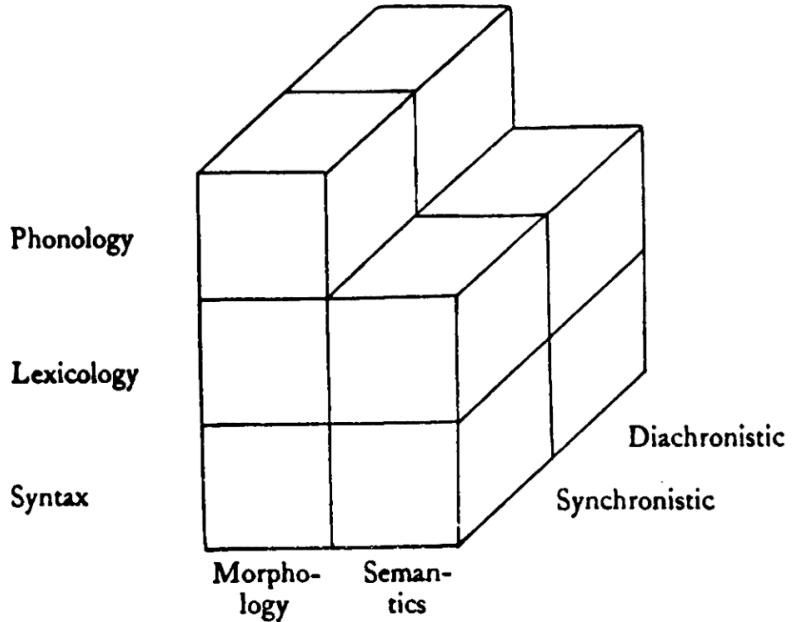


- **morphology × synchronic**: productivity of -ness (e.g., *kindness*, *happiness*); compounding patterns (e.g., *blackbird*, *laptop stand*)

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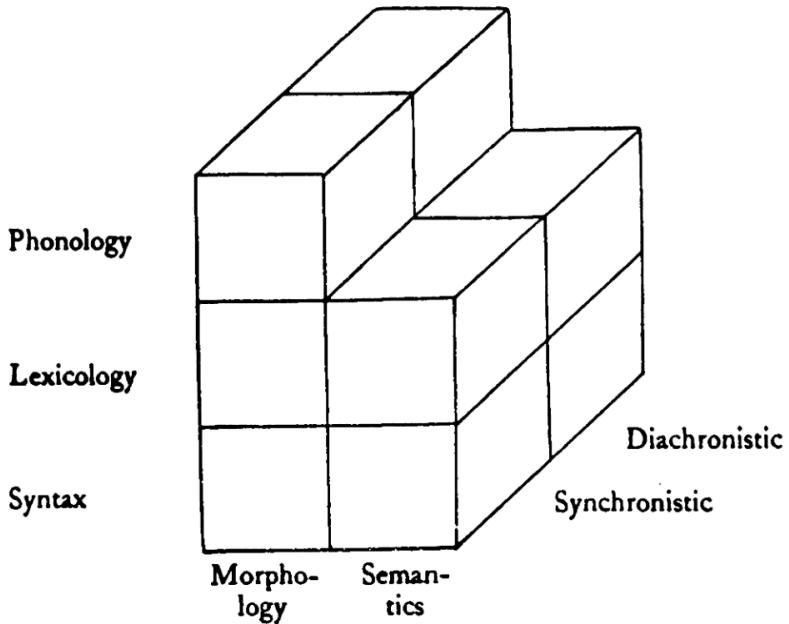


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- **morphology × diachronic**: rise/fall of -*th* (e.g., *warmth*, *width*); reanalysis in compounds (e.g., *hamburger* → *burger*, *cheesburger*)

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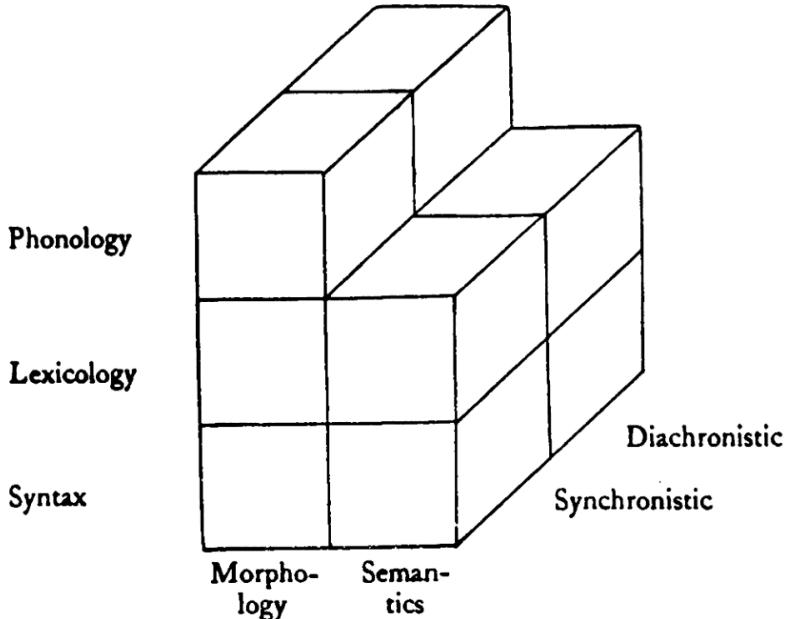


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- **semantics × synchronic**: sense network of charge (money: service charge; legal: press charges; electricity: charge a battery)

The role of the Lexicology in language

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- **semantics × synchronic**: sense network of charge (money: service charge; legal: press charges; electricity: *charge a battery*)
- **semantics × diachronic**: change in gay (cheerful → sexual identity); mouse (animal → device)

For next week

Read: Bauer (2022), ch. 1.

You can download the PDF excerpt [here](#).

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