

Lexical, Semantic Meaning of the and it's Functions

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Annotation: This article examines the lexical, semantic structure of words, the functions of their use in the text, and how they act in composition, as well as the relationship between specific meanings and uses of words. Also, there is highlighted the lexical meaning of words, the structure of words in speech related to their functions.

Key words: Lexical meaning, semantic meaning, linguistics, connotations of words, componential analysis, stylistic coloring.

An exact definition of any basic term is no easy task altogether. In the case of lexical meaning it becomes especially difficult due to the complexity of the process by which language and human conscience serve to reflect outward reality and to adapt it to human needs. The definition of lexical meaning has been attempted more than once in accordance with the main principles of different linguistic schools. The disciples of F. de Saussure consider meaning to be the relation between the object or notion named, and the name itself. Descriptive linguistics of the Bloomfieldian trend defines the meaning as the situation in which the word is uttered.

Both ways of approach afford no possibility of a further semantic problems in strictly linguistic terms, and therefore, if taken as a basis for general linguistic theory, give no insight into the mechanism of meaning. Some of Bloomfield's successors went so far as to exclude semantics from linguistics on the ground that meaning could not be studied objectively, and was not put of language but an aspect of the use to which language is put. This point of view never generally accepted. The more general opinion is well revealed in Jakobson's pun. He said: "Linguistics without meaning is meaningless."

In our country definitions given by the majority of authors, however different in detail, agree in one basic principle: they all point out that lexical meaning is the realization of the notion by means of a definite language system. It has also been repeatedly stated that the plane of content in speech reflects the whole of human consciousness, which comprises not only mental activity but emotions as well. The notional content of a word is expressed by the *denotative* - meaning (referential or extensional meaning) which may be of two types, according to whether the word's function is signficative or identifying (demonstrative). To denote, then, is to serve as linguistic expression for a notion or as a name for an actually existing object referred to by a word. The term denotatum (PI. denotata) or referent means either a notion or an actually existing individual thing to which reference is made. The *emotional* content of the word is its capacity to evoke or directly express emotion. It is rendered by the emotional or expressive counterpart of meaning, also called emotive charge, intentional or affective connotations of words.

The denotative meaning may be of two types according to whether the word function is signficative and evokes a general idea, or demonstrative, i.e. identifying. To find words in their signficative meanings it is best to turn to aphorisms and other sayings expressing general ideas. Thus *A good laugh is sunshine in the house* (THACKERAY) or *A man cannot be too careful in the choice of his enemies* (WILDE) contain words in their signficative meanings. The second type (demonstrative meaning) is revealed when it is the individual elements of reality that the word serves to name. *Some large blue china jars and parrot-tulips were ranged on the mantelshelf and through the small leaded panes of the window streamed the apricot colored light of a summer day in London* (WILDE) [12, 78].

The expressive counterpart of meaning is optional, and even when it is present, its proportion with respect to -the logical counterpart may vary within wide limits.

The meaning of many words is subject to complex associations originating in habitual contexts, verbal or situational, of which the speaker and the listener are aware, and which form the connotational component of meaning. In some words the realization of meaning is accompanied by additional stylistic characteristics revealing the speaker's attitude to the situation, the subject-matter, and to his interlocutor.

Within the affective connotations of a word we distinguish its capacity to evoke or directly express: a) emotion, e.g. *daddy* as compared to *father*, b) evaluation, e.g. *clique* as compared to *group* c) intensity, e.g., *adore* as compared to *love*, d) stylistic coloring, e.g. *slay* as compared to *kill*.

The complexity of the word meaning is manifold. Apart from the lexical meaning including denotative and connotative meaning it is always combined with the grammatical meaning.

More than that, every denotational meaning is itself a combination of several more elementary components. The meaning of *kill*, for instance, can be described as follows: {cause [become (not+alive)]}. One further point should be made: *cause*, *become*, *not* and *alive* in this analysis are not words of English or any other language; they are elements of meaning, which can be combined in various ways with other such elements in the meaning of different words. In what follows they will be called semantic components. To illustrate this idea of componential analysis we shall consider the word *adored* the following epigram by Oscar Wilde: "*Men can be analyzed, women — merely adored.*" *Adored* has a lexical meaning and a grammatical meaning. The grammatical meaning is that of a Participle II of a transitive verb. The denotational counterpart of the lexical meaning realizes for corresponding notion, and consists of several components, namely — feeling, attachment, intensity, respect. The connotation component is that of intensity and loftiness. The definition of *adore* is 'to feel a great attachment and respect, to worship'.

It is very important to distinguish between the lexical meaning of a word in speech and its semantic structure in language. The meaning in speech is contextual. If one examines, for example, the word *bother* in the following: "*ANY woman will love any man who bothers her enough* (H. PHILIPPS) one sees it in a definite context that particularizes it and makes possible only one meaning: to cause trouble'. This notion receives the emotional colouring of irony revealing the protagonist's view of love as cynical and pessimistic. This colouring in the word *bother* is combined with a colloquial stylistic tone. Actually used it has only one meaning, it is mono semantic but it may render a complicated notion or emotion with many features.

Other oppositions are abstract: concrete—main of primary: secondary, central, peripheral, narrow extended, general 'particular and so on [5, 88]. One readily sees that in each of these the basis of classification is different, although there is one point they, have in common. In each case the comparison takes place within the semantic structure of one word.

Take, for example, the noun *screen*. We find it in its direct meaning when it names a movable piece of furniture used to hide something or protect somebody, as in the case *offer screen* placed in front of a fireplace. The meaning is figurative when the word is applied to anything which protects by hiding, as in *smoke screen*.

We define this meaning as figurative comparing it to the first that we called direct. Again, when by *a screen* the speaker means a silver-coloured sheet on which pictures are shown, this meaning in comparison with the first will be secondary. When the same word is used attributively in such combinations as *screen actor*, *screen star*, *screen version*, etc.,

To sum up the semantic structure of a word I return to its definition as a structured set of interrelated lexical variants with different meanings. These variants belong to the same set because they are expressed by the same combination of morphemes, although in different conditions of distribution. The elements are interrelated due to some common semantic component. In other words,

the word's semantic structure' is an organized whole comprised by recurrent meanings and shades of meaning a particular sound complex can assume in different contexts, together with emotional or stylistic colouring and other connotations, if any.

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