LEXICAL MEANING AS A LINGUISTIC CATEGORY

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POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

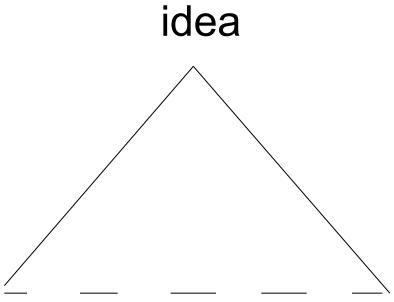
- What is meaning?
- Semantic structure of the word. Polysemy.
- Types of lexical meaning.
- The process of development and change of meaning.
- Homonymy.



"Meaning is the reverberation in the human consciousness of an object of extralinguistic reality which becomes a fact of language because of constant association with a definite linguistic expression."

Prof. Olga S. Akhmanova





word referent

Polysemy – the existence within one word of several connected meanings as the result of development and changes of its original meaning.



Context -

- the linguistic environment of a unit of language which reveals the conditions and the characteristic features of its usage in speech;
- the semantically complete passage of written speech sufficient to establish the meaning of a given word



context

Minimum

Ex:

Blind monk
Blind handwriting

Dull pupil
Dull book
Dull weather

Second-degree

Ex:

The man was large.

But his wife was even fatter.

Semantic structure with the main (direct) meaning holding it together

Bar, n

I any kind of barrier

II profession of a lawyer

III counter for drinks

Sama

Semantic structure with a common component holding it together

Dull, adj.

- A dull book not interesting
- A dull student not clever
- A dull day not bright
- A dull knife not sharp
- Dull eyes not seeing well

implication

of

deficiency



Diachronic and synchronic approaches towards meaning quick, adj.

Diachronic:

- Etymological flexible
- Archaic alive (Ex: the quick and the dead)

Synchronic:

- Main fast
- Secondary

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TYPES OF LEXICAL MEANING

- Nominative
- Nominative-derivative
- Linguistically (colligationally and collocationally) bound
- Phraseologically bound

The processes of development and change of meaning

- Transference based on similarity (linguistic metaphor)
- Transference based on contiguity (linguistic metonymy)
- Generalization and specialization of meaning
- "Degeneration" and "elevation" of meaning

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Homonyms – words identical in sound form and spelling (or, at least, in one of these aspects) but different in their meaning

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Sources of homonymy

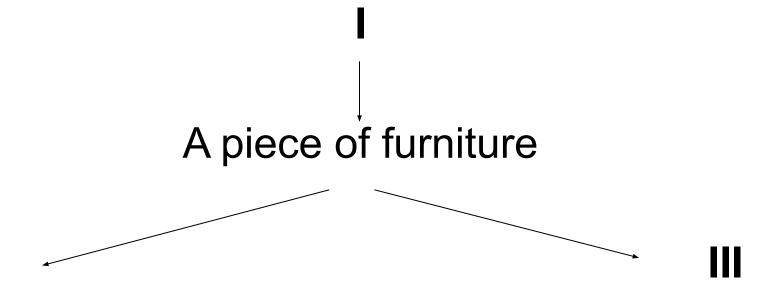
- Phonetic changes;
- Borrowing;
- Word-building: conversion
 - shortening sound-imitation
- Split polysemy

Split polysemy

I - board, n – piece of timber

II - board,n - daily meals for pay

III – board, n – an official group of people





Split polysemy

I − board, n − piece of timber

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I



Professor's A.I.Smirnitsky's classification of homonyms

Full lexical homonyms

Ex: match, n – match, n

Partial homonyms

- Simple lexico-grammatical partial
 Ex: to found (Inf) found (Past Ind.)
- Complex lexico-grammatical partial

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Ex: rose, n – rose, v
maid, n – made, v
left, adj. – left, v
one, num. – won, v
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Partial lexical