The Structure of Lexicon

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Presentation outline

- **What is a lexeme?**
- **What is a semantic structure ?**
- **How is lexicon structured?**
- **What is a semantic field?**
- **Neatness vs. fuzziness?**
- **Is the stylistic factor important?**
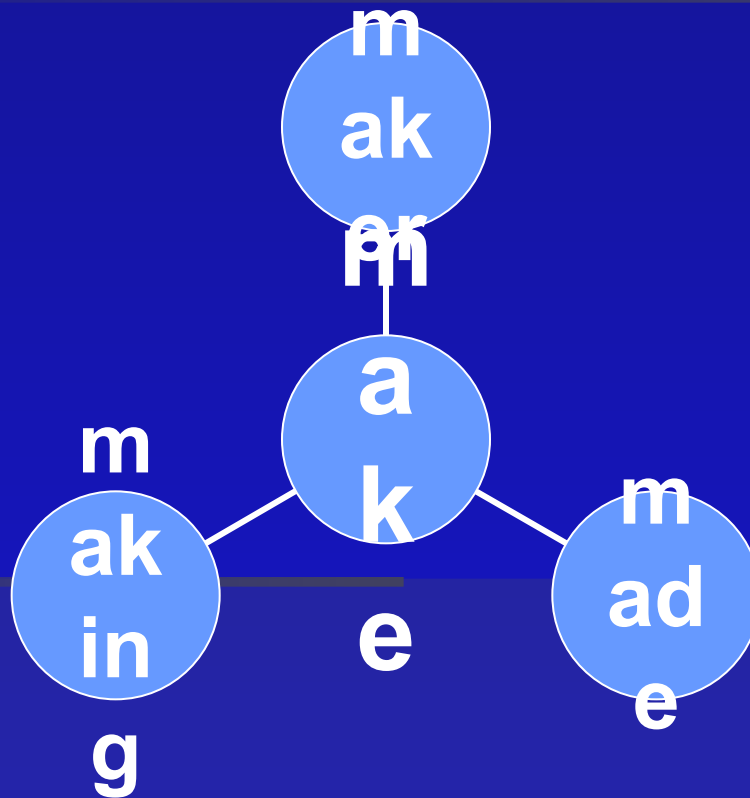- ***In vino veritas*, or truth comes out from wine!**

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What is a lexeme?

"**A lexeme is** a fundamental unit

of the vocabulary of a language"

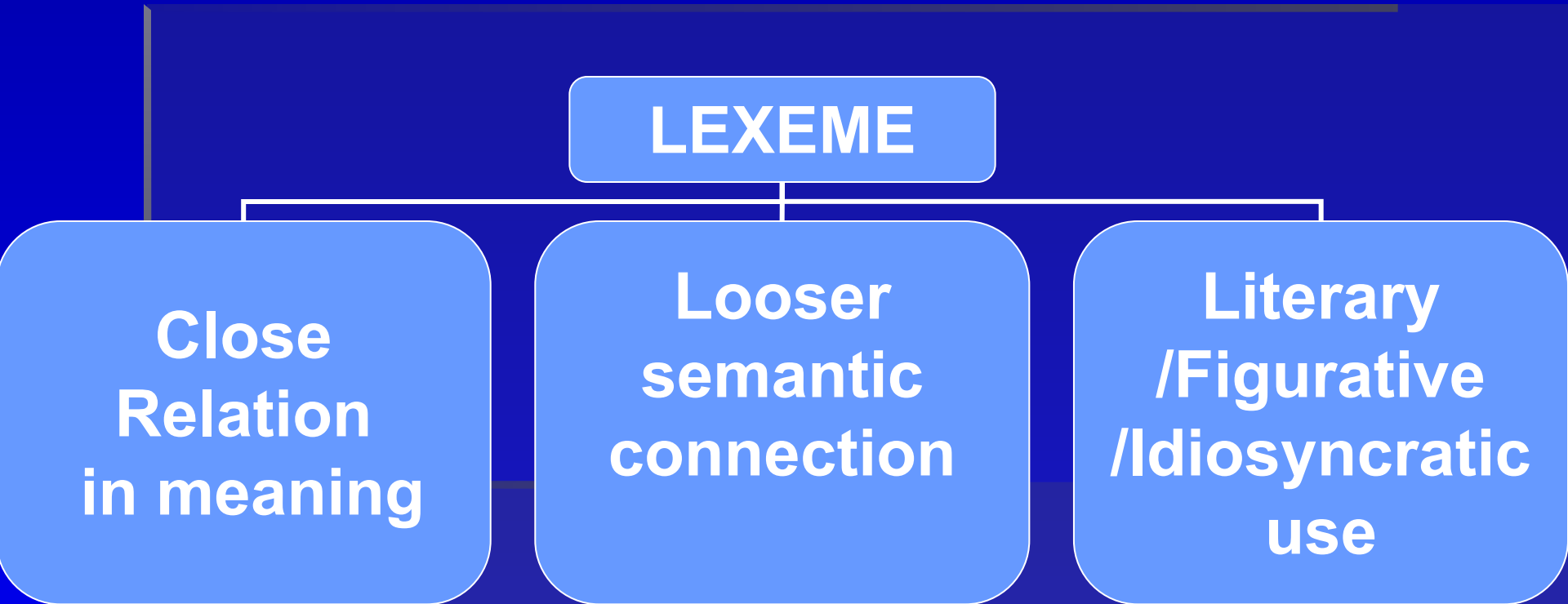[Mid-20th century. Coined from lexicon + -eme .]

Different forms of a lexeme

What is a semantic structure?

It is a network of meaning relationships which bind lexemes together

Lexicon structure

LEXEME

Close Relation in meaning

Looser semantic connection

Literary /Figurative /Idiosyncratic use

3 types of lexemes (uncle)

- Aunt, cousin, nephew, niece
- Relatives, family, <u>reunion</u> (*when the family gathers together*)
- Uncle Tom's Cabin, <u>Uncle Sam</u> (USA)
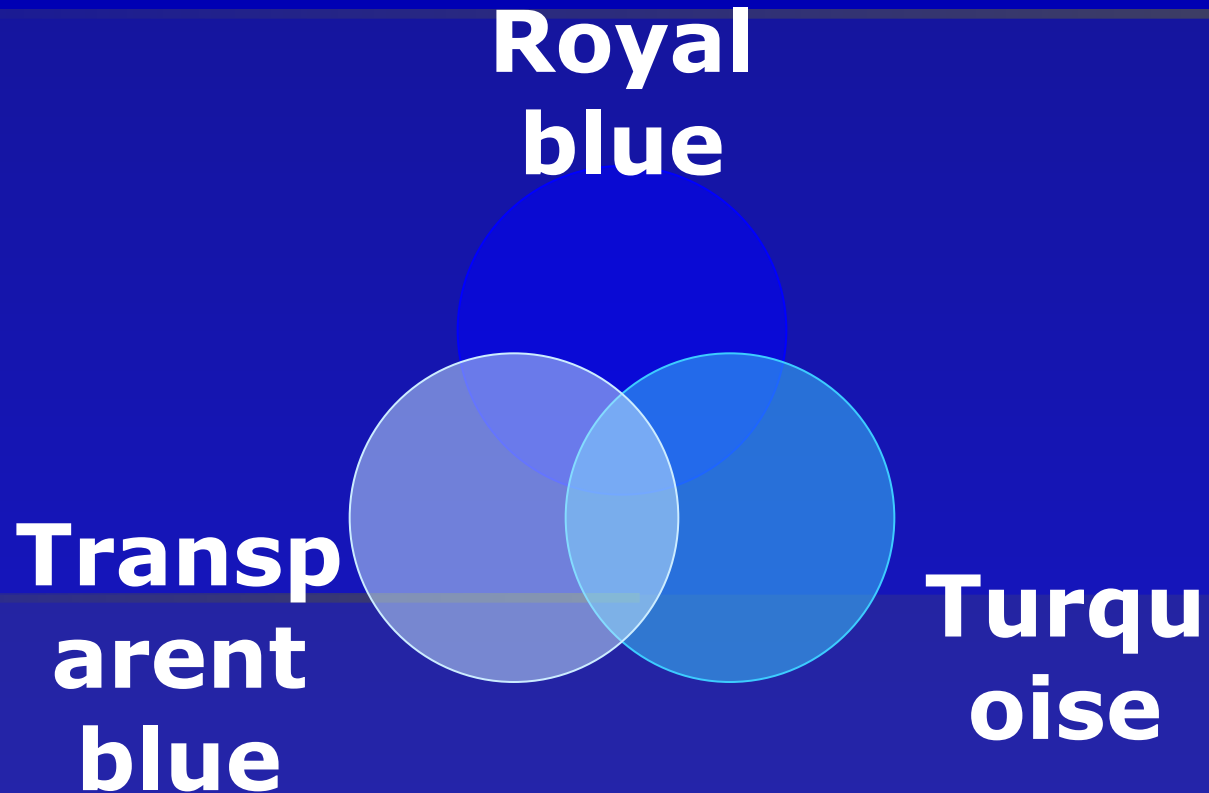- Idiosyncratic use: my looney uncle = my crazy uncle)

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What is a semantic field?

It is a named area of meaning in which lexemes interrelate and define each other in specific ways

Colour: blue

Royal blue

Transparent blue

Turquoise

Tropical Fruit

Citrus plants

Grapefruit

Orange

Lemon

Neatness vs fuzziness

NOISE:

- murmur , din , blare , clamour
- clatter, hubbub , racket
- sound , uproar
- talk and rumours
- atmospheric noise
- big noise

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What is wrong with a stylistic factor, or what is so special in the vocabulary of wine?

- **Figurative lexeme application**

- **Numerous associations**

- **Subjectivity of topic**

Wine can taste . . .

- **Bland** (implies lack of character, too mild)
- **Dry** (not sweet, sugar fully fermented out)
- **Finesse** (elegant and refined)

Wine can taste …

- **Heavy** (over-endowed with alcohol, lacking *finesse*)
- **Meaty** (thick, almost chewable flavour)
- **Tart** (tongue curling)

IN VINO VERITAS, OR
TRUTH COMES OUT FROM WINE!

Encarta Encyclopedia, Oxford Scientific Films

Conclusions

- **A lexeme: a fundamental vocabulary unit**
- **A semantic structure as a lexeme network**
- **A semantic field as an area of lexemes' interrelation**
- **The vocabulary of wine: figurative, ambiguous, subjective, and . . .**

LOVELY!

Thank you!