

# Semantics

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## **Presentation By:**

Mr. Param. B. Vikhe

Dept. of English

ASC College. Kolhar

Contact: 9325238744

# Semantics

**Semantics:** It is defined as a branch of linguistics concerned with the study of the meaning of Words, phrases, and sentences. It covers a wide range of concepts, such as how meaning is constructed, interpreted, clarified, obscured and paraphrased.

# Semantics

- ❖ Language Acquisition and Language Change
- ❖ Social Context
- ❖ Symbol : word 'Child' or picture of a 'Child'
- ❖ Referent : 'Real Child'



# Semantics

## Denotative and Connotative Meanings

**Denotative meaning** is also known as cognitive, descriptive, referential or conceptual meaning.

It is essential, objective, and invariable meaning of the word recorded in a dictionary.

<b>Words</b>		<b>Kind of denotation</b>
Book, stone	:	object
Health, poverty	:	situation
Equality, beauty	:	concept

# Semantics

## Denotative and Connotative Meanings

**Connotative meaning** refers to the cultural, affective, and subjective association that contribute to the making of meaning.

*'Man'* denotes an adult male of human species but It may have different connotations like *'Bravery'*, *'virility'*. *'strength'*.

# Lexical Relations

Words also acquire meaning from the words that surround them, especially the words that are adjoining.

e.g. The cat sat on the mat.

The word '*cat*' is in a **syntagmatic relationship** with the preceding word '*the*' and the following words '*sat on the mat*'.

The word '*cat*' can be substituted by the word '*dog*' and these two words are known to be in a **paradigmatic relationship**.

# Paradigmatic Lexical Relationship

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- Synonymy
- Antonymy
- Homonymy (Homography & Homophony)
- Polysemy
- Superordination
- Hyponymy
- Metonymy

# Paradigmatic Lexical Relationship

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**Synonymy:** (Same name) words with the same meaning

- ❖ Different dialect or regional varieties

e.g. pail: bucket, lad: boy, Lass: girl, autumn: fall

- ❖ Different style or register

e.g. cop: policeman, kids: children, comely: beautiful

- ❖ Different collocations

e.g. big: large,

- ❖ Different attitude

e.g. slim: slender or skinny: scrawny



# Paradigmatic Lexical Relationship

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**Antonymy:** (opposed / different name) words with opposite meaning

❖ It is primarily a relation between adjectives, though it may apply to adverbs, nouns, and verbs also.

e.g. \* *slowly* x *quickly*, *boy* x *girl*, *agree* x *disagree* etc.

\* *young* x *old*, *hot* x *cold*, *slow* x *fast* etc. (morphologically unrelated)

\* *decent* x *indecent*, *legal* x *illegal*, *attractive* x *unattractive*,

\* *possible* x *impossible* (with negative prefixes)

❖ Gradable antonyms: difference between degree or scale, can occur in comparative and superlative forms

\* *fat* x *thin*, *cold* x *hot*

\* *fatter* x *thinner*, *fattest* x *thinnest*, *faster*, *fastest* etc.

Complementary Antonyms: *dead* x *alive*, *in* x *out* etc.

# Paradigmatic Lexical Relationship

## ❖ Converse or relational antonyms

e.g. \* *husband* x *wife*, *parent* x *child*, *brother* x *sister* etc.

\* Complementary or converse antonyms are ungradable antonyms

Beautiful	Ugly
Adequate	Inadequate
Compulsory	Optional
Cruel	Kind
Hard	Soft
Loyal	Disloyal
Reject	Accept
Virtue	Vice

Friendly	Unfriendly
Empty	Full
Optimist	Pessimist
Noble	Ignoble
Fortunate	Unfortunate
Decrease	Increase
Vacant	Full
Conscious	Unconscious

# Homonymy

❖ It refers to the presence of two words which have the same forms (written or spoken or both), but have different meanings.

Type	Spelling	Pronunciation	Meaning	Example
Absolute Homonymy	Same	Same	Different	sole- bottom of the shoe Sole – type of fish
Homography	Same	Different	Different	Lead- /led/- a kind of metal Lead - /li:d/- as in ‘to lead the people’
Homophony	Different	Same	Different	Meet - /mi:t/ Meat - /mi:t/

# Polysemy

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❖ Polysemy refers to multiple meanings of the same words. This semantic phenomenon occurs when the meaning of the word is extended metaphorically.

<b>Words</b>	<b>Primary/Core Meaning</b>	<b>Metaphorical extension of Core Meaning</b>
foot	the lower extremity of the leg, below the ankle	the base of a hill or mountain
Mouth	Part of a human body	mouth of a cave
Hands	Part of a human body	hands of a clock
Legs	Part of a human body	legs of a table
Teeth	Part of a human body	teeth of a comb

- Crane:
1. a large bird with a long neck
  2. a machine with a long arm used for lifting heavy objects
  3. to stretch your neck to see something
- Position:
1. place/location of an object/person
  2. opinion/stand on a particular issue
  3. post in a job
- Mole:
1. a small dark animal that digs tunnels under ground to live in
  2. a spy who works against enemy espionage
  3. a small dark brown spot on the skin
- Wake:
1. the consequences of an event (especially a catastrophic event)
  2. the wave that spreads behind a boat as it moves forward
  3. a vigil held over a corpse the night before burial
  4. the turbulent air left behind a flying aircraft
- Rage:
1. a feeling of intense anger
  2. something that is desired intensely
  3. an interest followed with exaggerated zeal

# Difference between Homonymy and Polysemy

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- ❖ The difference of perception: homonyms are perceived by native speakers as two different words, whereas in polysemy, despite the multiplicity of meanings, the polysemous words are perceived as a single word.
  
- ❖ The meanings of homonyms are unrelated, as in the case of ‘bank’, while the multiple meanings of a polysemous word are connected because they are metaphorical extensions of a primary meaning.

# Difference between Homonymy and Polysemy

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- ❖ Homonyms have distinct etymological antecedents: they are derived from different etymological sources, while polysemous words have the same etymology.
  
- ❖ Homonyms are generally given separate entries in dictionaries, whereas the multiple meanings of a polysemous word are given under a single entry.

# Superordination and Hyponymy

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❖ These terms refer to the relation of inclusion of meaning, inclusion occurring between a generic term and a specific term.

Superordinate terms (hypernyms) are words (nouns) that can be used to stand for an entire ‘class’ or ‘category’ of things.

(umbrella term)

e.g. ‘bird’ – peacock, parrot, crow, sparrow etc.

animal- cat, dog, cow, horse etc.

**Hyponymy** is a relationship of hierarchy in which the upper term is superordinate and lower term is the hyponyms.

e.g. *parrot* is hyponym of *Bird* , or *rose* is a hyponym of *flower*



# Metonymy

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❖ In metonymy one entity is made to refer to another entity which is closely associated with it. (From Greek word: Name Change). It involves semantic transfer or transfer of name. The name of referent is replaced by the name of an entity, which has close association with the referent.

For example, *crown* is a metonym for *monarchy* and ‘*White House*’ is for the president of *the United States of America*.

Or ‘*The pen is mightier than the sword*’





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**THANK YOU**