**CHAPTER 8**

Paradigmatic sense relations of

inclusion and identity

**~~8.1 The nature of sense relations~~**

**8.2 Paradigmatic relations of identity and inclusion**

**8.1.3 Varieties of sense relation**

Sense relations situate themselves on one of three major axes: paradigmatic,

syntagmatic, or ~~derivational.~~ The significance of each of these three types of

relation is different.

**8.1.3.1 Paradigmatic relations**

Paradigmatic relations reflect the semantic choices available at a particular

structure point in a sentence. For instance:

I'll have a glass of — .

beer

wine

water

lemonade

etc.

Typically, paradigmatic relations involve words belonging to the same syntactic

category, although not infrequently there are minor differences:

We bought some — .

knives

forks

spoons

cutlery

Here, *cutlery* is a mass noun, whereas all the others in the list are count nouns.

In principle, paradigmatic relations may hold between members of any of the

major syntactic categories. The following are examples involving verbs and

adjectives respectively:

John — across the field,

ran

walked

crawled

I'd like a glass of — sherry.

dry

sweet

Notice that the pairs *knives/forks, knives/cutlery,* and *dry/sweet* exemplify different

paradigmatic sense relations.

**8.1.3.2 Syntagmatic relations**

Syntagmatic relations hold between items which occur in the same sentence,

particularly those which stand in an intimate syntactic relationship. For

instance, it is by virtue of syntagmatic sense relations, in this case between

adjective and head noun, that *I'd like a glass of dry sherry* is normal, whereas

*I'd like a glass of striped sherry* is odd. For similar reasons,

(1) The girl ran across the field.

is normal, but

(2) The girl sat across the field.

and

(3) The smell ran across the field.

are odd. Notice that in (2) it is the combination of verb and prepositional

phrase (i.e. *sat* and *across the field)* which causes the oddness, whereas in (3), it

is the combination of subject and verb (i.e. *the smell* and *ran).*

**8.2 Paradigmatic relations of identity and inclusion**

For convenience of exposition, we shall divide paradigmatic sense relations

into two broad classes, first those which express identity and inclusion between

word meanings, and second, those expressing opposition and exclusion. We

shall begin with the former.

**8.2.1 Hyponymy**

One of the most important structuring relations in the vocabulary of a language

is hyponymy. This is the relation between *apple and fruit, car* and *vehicle,*

*slap* and *hit,* and so on. We say that *apple* is a hyponym *of fruit,* and conversely,

*that fruit* is a superordinate (occasionally hyperonym) *of apple.* This relation is

often portrayed as one of inclusion. However, what includes what depends on

whether we look at meanings extensionally or intensionally. From the extensional

point of view, the class denoted by the superordinate term includes the

class denoted by the hyponym as a subclass; thus, the class of fruit includes the

class of apples as one of its subclasses. If we are dealing with verbs, we have to

say that, for instance, the class of acts of hitting includes as a subclass the class

of acts of slapping. Looking at the meanings intensionally, we may say that

the meaning (sense) of *apple* is richer than that *of fruit* and includes, or contains

within it, the meaning *of fruit.*

**8.2.2 Meronymy**

Another relation of inclusion is meronymy (part-whole relation). Examples of meronymy are: *hand:finger, teapot:spout, wheel:spoke, car:engine, telescope:lens, tree:branch,* and so on. In the case of *finger:hand, finger* is said to be the **meronym** (the term **partonym** is also sometimes found) and *hand* the **holonym.** Meronymy shows interesting parallels with hyponymy. (They must not, of course, be confused: a dog is not a part of an animal, and a finger is not a kind of hand.) In both cases there is inclusion in different directions according to whether one takes an extensional or an intensional view. A hand physically includes the fingers (notice that we are not dealing with classes here, but individuals); but the meaning *of finger* somehow incorporates the sense of *hand,* (Langacker says that the concept "finger" is 'profiled' against the domain "hand".)

**8.2.3 Synonymy**

If we interpret synonymy simply as sameness of meaning, then it would

appear to be a rather uninteresting relation; if, however, we say that synonyms

are words whose semantic similarities are more salient than their differences,

then a potential area of interest opens up.

Let us first distinguish three degrees of synonymy: absolute synonymy,

~~prepositional synonymy~~, and near-synonymy.

**8.2.3.1 Absolute synonymy**

Absolute synonymy refers to complete identity of meaning. Here a contextual approach will be adopted, according to which meaning is anything which affects the contextual normality of lexical items in grammatically well-formed sentential contexts. Against this background, absolute synonyms can be defined as items which are equinormal in all contexts. Among the items sometimes suggested as candidates for absolute synonymy, and for which differentiating contexts are hard to find, are *sofa:settee,* and *pullover: sweater.*

**8.2.3.3 Near-synonymy**

Near-synonyms are lexemes whose meaning is relatively close (mist/fog, stream/brook, dive/plunge). Near-synonyms can contrast in certain contexts. For example, consider the following:

 (i) *brave:courageous*

Little Billy was so brave at the dentist's this morning. (+)

Little Billy was so courageous at the dentist's this morning. (-)

(ii) *calm:placid*

She was quite calm just a few minutes ago. (+)

She was quite placid just a few minutes ago. (-)

(iii) *big:large*

He's a big baby, isn't he? (+)

He's a large baby, isn't he? (-)

(iv) *almost:nearly*

She looks almost Chinese. (+)

She looks nearly Chinese. (-)

(v) *die:kick the bucket*

Apparently he died in considerable pain. (+)

Apparently he kicked the bucket in considerable pain. (-)

**CHAPTER 9**

Paradigmatic relations of exclusion

and opposition





Pairs of words like *buy: sell, lend: borrow, give: receive, parent: child, husband: wife, host: guest, employer: employee, teacher: student, above: below, before: after* belong to a class of antonyms known as **converses**. This is a special type of antonymy in that the members of a pair do not constitute a positive-negative opposition. **They show the reversal of a relationship between two entities.** *X* *buys* something from Y means the same as*Y* *sells*something to X. *X is the parent of Y* means the same as *Y is the child of X.*It is the same relationship seen from two different angles.

This type of antonymy is typically seen, as the examples show, **in reciprocal social roles, kinship relations, temporal and spatial relations.** It is in this sense that they are also **known as RELATIONAL OPPOSITES.**There are always two entities involved. One presupposes the other. This is the major difference between this type and the previous two.

**Markedness**

The notion of **markedness** is often applied to pairs of opposites: one term is designated as the **marked** term and the other as the **unmarked** term of the opposition. Unfortunately, this concept is used in a variety of different ways by different linguists, so it is necessary to be more specific. Lyons (1977) distinguishes three major conceptions of markedness, which may or may not coincide in a particular instance or type of instances. The first is **morphological markedness,** where one member of the opposition carries a morphological 'mark' that the other lacks. This mark is most frequently a negative prefix:

possible: impossible happy: unhappy

kind: unkind true: untrue

The second notion of markedness is distributional markedness: the unmarked

term according to this conception is the one which occurs in the widest variety

of contexts or context-types. By this criterion it could be argued that *long* is

unmarked with respect to *short* because it occurs in a variety of expressions

from which *short* is excluded:

This one is ten metres long.

What is its length?

How long is it? (neutral question)