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Understanding the Lexicon

Meaning, Sense and World Knowledge
in Lexical Semantics

Edited by
Werner Hüllen and Rainer Schulze

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LEONHARD LIPKA

A ROSE IS A ROSE IS A ROSE:
ON SIMPLE AND DUAL CATEGORIZATION IN NATURAL LANGUAGES¹

1. Introduction

It seems to be a well-established fact in lexical semantics that a *rose* is a *flower* - thus illustrating the relation of hyponymy - and, obviously, that a *rose* is a *rose*, viz. a case of lexical identity. This could be seen as an extreme case of synonymy, which itself has been defined as symmetrical hyponymy.

1.1 But sometimes a rose is not a rose - nor an element of the category of flowers - just as a *dog* may not be an *animal* or a *house* a type of *building*. Thus, when Sampson (of the house of Capulet) in *Romeo and Juliet* (I, 1, 8) utters the words: "A *dog* of the *house* of Montague moves me" ['to strike'], he is neither speaking of animals, nor of buildings.

1.2 Figurative language, or semantic transfer (hereafter ST) - in particular metaphor and metonymy - is not only a matter of stylistics and figures of speech in *parole*, but provides generalizable and productive regularities for the language system, also from a historical point of view. Dynamic processes of ST -, in many ways similar to word-formation (or WF) and in combination with it (Lipka 1987b) - impose a dual (or even multiple) categorization on extralinguistic reality. This observation can only be accounted for by a dynamic, interdisciplinary theory of semantics which transcends structuralism and includes referents and our perception and cognitive models of the world.

1 I should like to thank Mandy Jackson, Monika Krenn, Eva Leitzke, and Wolfgang Weiß for helpful comments on an earlier version of this article.

2. Categorization

For the naive speaker, there is a simple one-to-one correspondence between words and things, or classes of things. Words are simply names for preexisting categories of objects. Philosophers and linguists have long recognized that the relationship between language and extralinguistic reality is far more complex. In 1973, before the advent of cognitive linguistics, Leisi first emphasized in his *Praxis der englischen Semantik* that languages divide up the same world in different ways by drawing boundaries between classes of objects differently. He (1973, 1985: 13) stresses that: "die Kategorien der Dinge, Vorgänge, Eigenschaften etc. ... erst durch die Sprache geschaffen [werden]".

Since then, this issue has become fashionable, and much work has been done on the concept of *categorization* by psychologists like Rosch and linguists like Fillmore, Lakoff, and Labov (Rosch 1977, 1978; Craig 1986; Lipka 1987a). While Labov, in his research on denotational structure, concentrates on the question of the fuzzy boundaries of linguistic categories, Prototype Semantics (or PS) focusses on their centre or kernel (Lipka 1986b, 1987a).

2.1 Simple categorization may refer either to the naive view of language or to the correlation of a single lexeme with one category. In the first sense it is opposed to philosophical nominalism (Leisi 1973, 1985: 13, 20; Lyons 1977: 109ff.), in the second one to figurative language. There is, furthermore, a twofold indeterminateness with lexical categorization. Referential boundaries may be vague as to where an object ends, e.g. a *mountain*, and also about where to draw the line between the categories *mountain* and *hill*, *cup* and *bowl*, *green* and *blue*, *girl* and *woman*. The first indeterminacy gives rise to metonymic semantic shift, for example with names of body-parts, where no precise boundaries for the referents of a term exist. The second one is the main concern of PS and Cognitive Linguistics (or CL).

2.2 Leisi (1973, 1985: 14f.) points out that even in the animal kingdom, where denotational boundaries seem to be clear, categorial differences between languages are far greater than one should think. Furthermore, although natural classes are based on the likeness of individual elements, it is for the language (or rather the speech community) to decide which objects are sufficiently alike or 'the same' to form a category. There is no objective criterion to decide whether the English and French are correct - in distinguishing between *snail* and *slug*, *escargot* and *limace* - or the Germans in establishing a single category of *Schnecke*. Let me add that the presence or absence of

a shell, as a distinctive feature or prototypical attribute (Lipka 1986b), can be easily objectively verified. Also, it is quite obvious that within the category of *dog*, *chien*, and *Hund* there may be enormous differences along the dimensions of SHAPE and SIZE between a St. Bernard, a poodle, a dachshund, and a Pekinese. The problems of attributes of the prototypical bird are well-known and have become a stock-example in linguistic discussion (Lipka 1987a: 284f.).

2.3 We have to acknowledge that - in spite of objective differences - linguistic categorization is to a large extent arbitrary and a matter of our cognitive, culture-specific perception and classification of extralinguistic reality (Lipka 1987a; 289ff.). Lyons (1977: 110f.) distinguishes between 'objective concepts' and 'mental concepts' and defines the latter as: "an idea, thought or mental construct by means of which the mind apprehends or comes to know things". In contrast to the structuralist ban on mentalism, the rediscovery of the psychological aspects of language has given rise to the new discipline of CL. One of its main proponents, George Lakoff (1982: 48) has introduced the notion of Idealized Cognitive Models (or ICMs). In Lakoff (1986), widely diverging categorization is illustrated with examples from Dyirbal, an aboriginal language of Australia, and from Japanese and English (in connection with a distinction between 'prototypes' and 'social stereotypes', e.g. *bachelor*, *mother*, and *working mother*). Two of the four types of 'cognitive model' (Lakoff 1986: 31) are the 'metaphoric model' and the 'metonymic model'.

3. Semantic transfer and dual categorization

Categorization is certainly not simple in either sense of the term mentioned (see 2.1). ST, i.e. figurative language - in particular metaphor and metonymy - is a wide-spread phenomenon in natural languages, both synchronically and diachronically. For this, I propose the term dual categorization (Dirven 1985: 86). As opposed to the literal meaning of a word, its figurative use can be said to impose a second way of categorizing extralinguistic reality.

3.1 *Metaphor* and *metonymy* are notational terms, which can be used in principle in a narrow and a wider sense (Leisi 1973, 1985; Dirven 1985; Nöth 1985). I am here using both not in the sense of stylistic tropes in *parole*, but as productive processes on the level of the lexicon (Lipka 1987b). This use is equivalent to the narrower sense of *metaphor* (i.e. not including metonymy and synaesthesia) in Dirven's concept of 'word metaphor'. I am fully aware of the enormous difficulties of establishing hard-and-fast criteria for metaphor and metonymy (Leisi 1973, 1985: 176-193). Following Ullmann (1962: 212, 218) I take

similarity and contiguity as the basic defining criteria for metaphor and metonymy respectively. I further agree with Leisi (1973, 1985: 189) who, when discussing Weinrich's (1958) theory of metaphor, makes the point that in this approach: "die Metapher noch deutlicher ... in den Bereich des (mehr oder weniger konstanten) Sprachsystems gerückt wird". I shall return to Weinrich's theory presently (see diagram (4) in 3.2).

3.2 For my argument I have chosen from the vast sea of literature on metaphor a few reliable pilots who, it is to be hoped, will guide us into safe waters. First of all, with regard to terminology, I will follow Leech (1969) and Leisi (1973, 1985: 185) who are more or less in the same boat. Weinrich (1958, 1976: 276-341), Ullmann (1962), and Lakoff/Johnson (1980) also belong to the crew. Leech (1969: 151) sets up the following 'metaphoric rule' (1) illustrated by (2a) and (2b):

- (1)

'F = like L'

 X Y
 (2a) Life is a walking shadow
 (2b) A human elephant
 X Y

According to Leech (1969: 151) every metaphor has the following form, which I represent as diagram (3), supplemented with Leech's and Leisi's equivalent terminologies (the English terms go back to Richards 1925):

- (3)

X	is like	Y	in respect of	Z
---	---------	---	---------------	---

 | | |
 TENOR VEHICLE GROUND
 (Gehalt) (Träger) (Träger-Gehalt-Beziehung)

The main point made in Weinrich's (1958) article '*Münze und Wort*' is that future research on metaphor should concentrate on 'ground', not only on 'tenor' and 'vehicle', as has traditionally been the case. The reason for this is his observation that in all Western languages certain 'field-correlations' exist (cf. his statement: "Das Abendland ist eine Bildfeldgemeinschaft" (Weinrich 1958: 519)). Weinrich (1958: 514f.) introduces the term '*Bildfeld*' (in explicit analogy to '*Wortfeld*') and stresses the point that metaphors must not be seen as isolated phenomena, but as relating a '*bildspendendes*' and a '*bildempfangendes Feld*'. These terms are equivalent to *vehicle* and *tenor*. The point is made in the following quotation (1958: 515): "wie das Einzelwort ... gehört auch die Einzelmetapher in den Zusammenhang ihres Bildfeldes". Leisi (1973,

1985: 188), who replaces Weinrich's '*bildspendendes*' and '*bildempfangendes Feld*' by '*Trägerfeld*' and '*Gehaltfeld*' represents some of Weinrich's examples for *Bildfelder* in the following way (labelling these '*Feld-Zuordnungen*')

(4) <i>Gehaltfeld</i>	=	<i>Trägerfeld</i>
Liebe	=	Krieg
Leben	=	Reise
Welt	=	Theater
Wort	=	Münze
Verstand	=	Licht
moralische Schuld	=	finanzielle Schuld

3.3 One is reminded of this when one looks at the following examples of metaphors from Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 4, 7ff. , 46ff.), with a single metaphorical field under (5a) and a number of other fields under (5b):

(5a) ARGUMENT is WAR: your claims are *indefensible*, he *attacked every weak point* in my argument, his criticisms were *right on target*, I *demolished* his argument, I've never *won* an argument with him, You disagree? Okay *shoot!* If you use that *strategy*, he'll *wipe you out*, he *shot down* all of my arguments.

(5b) TIME is MONEY, COMMUNICATION is SENDING, THEORIES are BUILDINGS, IDEAS are FOOD (people, plants, products, commodities, fashions), LOVE is a PHYSICAL FORCE (a patient, madness, magic, war).

Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 41) stress the fundamental and vital nature of ST for all natural languages and explicitly state that: "metaphors and metonymy are not random but instead form *coherent systems* in terms of which we conceptualize our experience [my emphasis LL]".

3.4 This is in blatant contrast with part of the concluding Thesis 4 in Nöth (1985: 12), an otherwise very sound, useful, and convincing article. In fact, I agree with its first sentence, but take exception to the italicized section of the following quotation: "Thesis 4: Any linguistic sign can become a metaphor for another linguistic sign ... the metaphoric relation presupposes *no particular level of objectively given similarity or of shared features* (pace Leisi 1973: 172). Creative metaphors can arise even from apparently completely dissimilar objects". The position rejected in Thesis 4 is labelled earlier (1985: 10f.) the "objectivist myth of similarity". The reference in the quotation is to the first edition of Leisi's *Praxis*. In both editions

Leisi (1973, 1985: 183) states that: "Es gibt also ein Maximum der Bedeutungsverschiedenheiten, das nicht überschritten werden kann, wenn noch von Metapher die Rede sein soll". The point I shall try to make in the following demonstration is that - in spite of the basically unrestricted creativity of ST - there are certain generalizations and productive patterns, objectively verifiable, which occur in many languages. I shall concentrate on similarity of SHAPE for metaphor and on locative contiguity, i.e. PLACE for metonymy.

4. Regularities in metaphor and metonymy

Counter-evidence to Nöth's claim can be found in many natural languages. Lakoff's (1986) discussion of Dyirbal and Japanese *hon* is a case in point. Dirven's (1985: 102, 108) detailed analysis of *cup* and *heart* provides further evidence. It should also be noted that taboo, which results in euphemism, is a powerful stimulus for ST. I shall here concentrate on data from English, German, and Romance languages.

4.1 In linguistic research, a certain number of general types of ST are mentioned. With regard to metaphor, Leech (1969: 158) sets up the following 'notional classes' that are also found in Ullmann (1962: 214-216):

- (6) a) concretive b) animistic c) humanizing (anthropomorphic)
- d) synaesthetic.

For metonymy Leisi (1973, 1985: 190f.) lists the following eight traditional types:

- (7) 1. *pars pro toto*
- 2. *totum pro parte*
- 3. *continens pro contento*
- 4. *Inhalt für 'Gefäß'*
- 5. *Mittel für die Handlung*
- 6. *Eigenschaften für den Träger*
- 7. *Material für den Gegenstand*
- 8. *Organ für die Eigenschaft*

Ullmann (1962: 218ff.) mentions 'spatial relations' and 'temporal relations' as well as:

- (8) content - container; place of origin - food, drinks; garment - person; characteristic quality - person, object; action - result.

Lakoff/Johnson (1980: 41), in addition, give:

- (9) producer - product, object - user, controller - controlled,
institution - people, place - institution, event.

4.2 I shall now give examples of lexicalized metaphors, collected from the literature on the subject and personal observation, with special focus on SHAPE as the 'ground'. So my starting-point is the 'ground' of comparison, not the 'vehicle' or 'tenor' used traditionally in research. The human body is a rather obvious source for comparison in dual categorization. Within this common 'ground', body-parts and their SHAPE can function either as 'vehicle' or 'tenor'.

4.2.1 Body-parts as 'vehicle' are found in:

- (10) *arm* (of tree, sofa), *eye* (of needle, potato), *face*, *hands* (of watch),
foot, *leg* (of chair, table, sofa, etc.), *head* (of nail), *lip* (of cup),
mouth (of cave), *neck* (of bottle, violin).

The result of the reverse process is body-parts and their SHAPE functioning as 'tenor' in: *Adam's apple*, *balls*, French *pomme d'Adam*, *globe de l'oeil*, Latin *musculus* 'little mouse'. In *apple of the eye* the 'ground' of comparison is not SHAPE. In many more cases we have a combination of ST and WF, as in:

- (11) *armpit*, *eyeball*, *shoulderblade*, German *Adamsapfel*, *Augapfel*, *Kohl-*
kopf, *Pfeifenkopf*.

4.2.2 If we go beyond the human body, we find the following combinations with SHAPE as 'ground' (often with German and French equivalents):

- (12) *buttercup*, *black-eyed susan*, *sunflower*, *crescent*, *hedgehog*, *seahorse*,
drumstick 'cooked fowl's leg', *herringbone* 'cloth pattern', *dovetail*,
to fan out/ausschwärmen, *Schwalbenschwanz*, *Fuchsschwanz*, *Buchdrucker*
(kind of beetle), *Gebirgskamm*, *Glockenblume*, *Glühbirne*, *Hirschkäfer*,
Löwenzahn, *Seerose*, *Luftschiff*, *Kirchenschiff*, *Weberschiffchen*/
croissant, *dentelle*, *crête*, *dent-de-lion*.

An extremely culture-specific coinage involving SHAPE is *penny-farthing* for an old type of high bicycle (cf. also Lipka 1987a: 288f., 292f. for *ship's decanter* and *Schreibtisch*).

4.2.3 Animal metaphors in English, with a specification of possible 'ground', are treated in great detail in Lehrer (1985: 286-291) and Tournier (1985: 239-243). As regards their function as terms of abuse, e.g. *Schwein*, *Esel/pig*, *ass*,

Leisi (1973, 1985: 177, 183, 189) points out that the metaphorical link is rather loose and that they have to be placed within the field of the animal kingdom (cf. *She's a cat*, also Weinrich 1958 and 3.2 above). Another fruitful insight in Leisi (1973, 1985: 184) is the observation that we usually do not have a single 'tertium comparationis', but that "eine Metapher enthält oft eine ganze Situation". This is illustrated with the comparison of a warrior with a boar in a Middle English poem, and with *crane*, in the sense of machine, not only metaphorical with the SHAPE of the bird's long neck and beak, but (1973, 1985: 184): "wahrscheinlich auch ... [due to] typische Tätigkeiten: geschäftiges Hin- und Hergehen, Auflesen vom Boden". Rephrasing this in modern technology, we could say that the 'ground' for the metaphor is a whole 'scene' involving the prototypical bird *crane* (cf. also Leisi's remarks on *bottleneck*). This explanation, to my mind, would be further strengthened by *bombardier beetle/Bombardierkäfer* and French *vomitoire* 'large issue servant à évacuer la foule (d'un amphithéâtre, d'un théâtre)', *charcuter* 'opérer maladroitement (un malade)', in all of which a complete 'scene' is visualized, and ST is not explained by a single feature. Other examples are *shuttle* (concerning a bus, railway, airplane, or spacecraft), *Weberknecht*, and *Schaukelbörse*.

4.3 For reasons of space, I cannot here discuss metonymy in the same detail. I shall give examples for contiguous spatial relations between PLACE and people or institutions, container and contained, and place of origin and product. Finally, I will deal with terms for body-parts again, in connection with shifting categorization.

4.3.1 Returning to the *house of Montague* - without yet asking 'what's in a name?' - we can list, more or less randomly, the following examples of names and terms for localities, standing for people or institutions:

(13a) The White House, The Holy See, Whitehall, Rome, Washington, East Berlin, Wall Street, Madison Avenue, Hollywood / l'Elysée, le Quai d'Orsay, le Proche-Orient, Outre-Manche, la Grande-Bretagne, la cour et la ville, etc.

(13b) this *house* thinks, the *chair* believes, our *street*, *village*, *hotel*, *country* / le *quartier*, *rive gauche*, *mon pays*, etc.

4.3.2 Container for content - and more rarely the reverse - is a well-known type of metonymy, as in:

- (14) a whole *plate*, an excellent *dish*, a *glass*, *bottle*, etc. (of wine) /
un *verre d'eau*, une *bouteille* de Bourgogne.

This also holds for place of origin and typical product, as with

- (15) burgundy, stilton / gruyère, champagne / Mosel, Gouda.

4.3.3 A few other cases of metonymy which do not involve PLACE, but often express a HAVE-relation, should also be mentioned, such as:

- (16) *redbreast*, *redcoat*, *redcap*, *whitecap*, *white-eye*, *white-thorn*,
bluestocking, *paleface* / *blousons noirs*, *pied-noir* (apparently
because of the boots worn by colonial soldiers), *soutien-gorge*
'*sous-vêtement féminin destiné à soutenir et embellir la poitrine*',
gorge 'ce qui entre dans la gorge'.

4.4 This brings us back to body-parts, where euphemism and taboo can lead to metonymic shift. There are well-known cases of metonymic transfer from Latin to the various Romance languages, such as from *coxa* 'hip' to French *cuisse* 'thigh', explainable from the fact that there are no sharp boundaries between these parts of the human body (Ullmann 1962: 218). *Coxa* has been replaced by Germanic *hanko* (cf. *Anke* in various German dialects) in French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese. Latin *femur* 'thigh' and *crus* 'lower leg' (old fashioned *shank*, German 'Unterschenkel', French *jambe* i.e. from the knee downwards or the whole limb) have disappeared from all the Romance languages (Wartburg/Ullmann 1943, 1962: 117). It is interesting to note that it is sometimes said jokingly that Swabians have feet which go from the toes right up to the neck, because in the Swabian and Bavarian dialects *Fuß* covers the area up to the hip. Obviously, all this demonstrates that even simple linguistic categorization is rather problematical as soon as there are no clear boundaries for extralinguistic referents.

5. Conclusions

We have seen that natural languages do not normally categorize our experience in a simple, straight-forward manner, but instead provide at least for dual (if not multiple) categorization. So Gertrude Stein was not right.

5.1 I also hope to have shown that Nöth's claim cannot be upheld, and that many objectively verifiable generalizations can be found in ST. Metaphors and metonymic shift must also be seen in connection with lexical fields, not as

isolated, anecdotal, historical idiosyncrasies. Furthermore, both are often combined with each other and also with other productive processes for the extension of the lexicon, especially WF.

5.2 If we return to Shakespeare, we can note that in *Hamlet* (IV, 5, 154) - another case of metaphor - Laertes calls his sister Ophelia a *rose of May*. From this, and the quotation from *Romeo and Juliet*, we can conclude that sometimes *dogs* are not *animals*, *houses* are not *buildings*, and a *rose* is not a *rose* but something else. Obviously, linguistic categorization is not as simple as it appears at first sight.

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