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# Lexical change - lexical motivation - ambiguity - synonymy: A comprehensive cognitive approach

On the basis of the three associative relations similarity, contrast and contiguity, which were identified by Aristotle and rehabilitated by gestalt psychology and phenomenological philosophy (Koch 2007), we can put forward a set of seven more differentiated cognitive relations that hold between concepts: identity, contiguity, metaphorical similarity, taxonomic similarity, taxonomic superordination, taxonomic subordination, and contrast. These cognitive relations can be shown to constitute a comprehensive frame for cognitive lexicology.

First of all, they account for any kind of diachronic relation between lexical items, underlying processes of semantic change, of conversion, of word-formation, of phraseology, etc. So these relations are part of an overall approach to *diachronic lexicology* (cf. Roudet 1921; Ullmann 1962, 211-227; Schifko 1979; furthermore Blank 1997; 2003a; Koch 1999; 2000; Gévaudan 2007).

Second, the same relations are indispensable for dealing with lexical *motivation in synchrony*, encompassing phenomena of onomatopœia and of polysemy as well as the synchronic semantics of conversion, of word-formation, of phraseology, etc. (Koch 2001, 1156-1168; Blank 2003b; Koch/Marzo 2007).

Polysemy, which has been mentioned above as a problem of motivation, is also part of the linguistic complex of phenomena of lexical "*ambiguity*". It will be shown that the different degrees of construal of sense boundaries, extending from polysemy proper to more subtle forms of lexical variability (cf. Croft/Cruse 2004, 109-140), can be analysed in terms of these cognitive relations.

Finally, from an onomasiological point of view, *synonymy* too is accessible to this approach. The semantic relations between (quasi-)synonyms, in so far as the latter are not truly identical, correspond to some of the cognitive relations discussed in this contribution.

The question arises to what extent these cognitive relations play a role in grammatically and pragmatically relevant change as well (cf. e.g. Detges 1999; Detges/ Waltereit 2002; Waltereit 2002).

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