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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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