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CONTENTS

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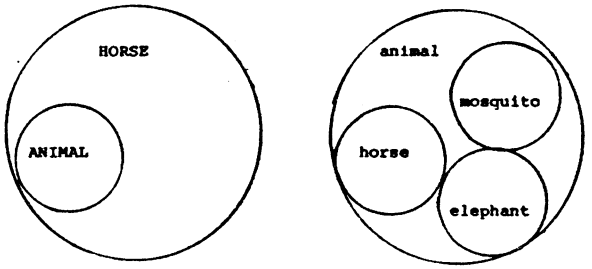
SEMANTIC COMPONENTS OF ENGLISH NOUNS AND VERBS AND THEIR JUSTIFICATION

1. *GENERAL PROBLEMS.* This paper is about the metalanguage of linguists, with which they analyse and describe the meaning of elements of the object-language, in this case: English. In order to make this discussion of the metalanguage clear, I must first define my own metalanguage. i.e. my use of such terms as *meaning, sense, denotation, reference,* and *referent.*

1.1. I will use *meaning* in a relatively loose and imprecise sense, as it is normally found in everyday language. Since 1923, when Ogden and Richards published their book on *The Meaning of Meaning* the lack of agreement about this basic terms is common knowledge in linguistics. Lyons (1977:50f) distinguishes three types of meaning: descriptive, social, and expressive meaning, which for him are correlated with three different functions of language denoted by identical labels. Leech (1974:26f) distinguishes seven types of meaning: conceptual,connotative, stylistic, affective, reflected, collocative, and thematic meaning, and uses the alternative term *communicative value* for the wide sense of *meaning,* while identifying *conceptual meaning* with *sense.* I shall here use the term *sense* for the conceptual communicative value of words and lexical morphemes, and will oppose it to *denotation* which stands for the relationship between the full linguistic sign and a class of objects, states, events, and processes. Such extra-linguistic denotata will be called - as generally in current linguistic terminology - the *referents* of linguistic signs or lexemes. *Reference* is here regarded as a speech-act, performed by a speaker or writer, successfully or unsuccessfully, and not a property of single lexemes in isolation.

1.2. Perhaps our position can be seen more clearly if we look at the distinction between *meaning* (or *sense*) *inclusion* and *referential inclusion* (derived from the noun *referent*) as represented in Figure 1. As pointed out by Leech (1974:101) there is an inverse relationship between the two, and I will add that this is, of course, equivalent to the traditional logical relationship between the intension and the extension of a term. It might seem that the distinction between *sense*

inclusion and *referential inclusion* is so obvious that it should not be explicitly discussed here.



Sense (meaning) inclusion vs. referential inclusion.

FIGURE 1

However, even in a recent book by Nida (1975:15f), where "meaning inclusion" is represented by concentric circles, the complementary nature of the relationship is not recognized, as the following quotation shows:

> The meaning of *poodle* can be said to be included in the meaning of *dog*, and the meaning of *dog* included in the meaning of *animal*.

Clearly, it is not the meaning but the class of referents of *poodle* that is included in the class or set of *dogs*. An example such as this demonstrates how important it is to make a distinction between *sense* and *denotation*. It may be difficult to draw in practice at times, but it must be made in principle in order to avoid confusion. This position has been advocated in his published work by Eugenio Coseriu for example in Coseriu (1973:49), where *Bedeutung* is separated from *Bezeichnung*.

1.3. Coseriu's position can perhaps be characterized as a language-intrinsic or language-immanent approach to structural semantics. In his theory lexical items are opposed to each other and this opposition or contrast yields specific distinctive features or semantic componets. The methods and techniques of phonology, as a functional and language-intrinsic discipline, are carried over to lexical and semantic structures and applied in semantic analysis. Componential analysis in the tradition of Hjelmslev (see 2.1.1.) is a further example of a language-intrinsic approach to semantics. On the other hand, many linguists have concentrated on the properties of the referents denoted by linguistic signs, and can therefore be said to be doing referential

semantics. A paradigmatic example is Leisi's book *Der Wortinhalt* (1952; 1975), in which the second chapter bears the title: "Die Darstellung *des Bezeichneten*" [my italics]. Nida - and to some extent Leech - are also concerned with referential semantics, when they use words denoting properties of the referents as labels for semantic components i.e as elements of their metalanguage.

2. *SEMANTIC COMPONENTS IN THE LITERATURE.* Let us now look at some semantic components of English lexical items which have been proposed in the literature. A detailed review of recent work in semantics up to 1972 is found in chapter two of my book (Lipka, 1972:30-83) in which I introduced a terminological distinction between *component* and *feature* (1972:35). In the present paper *feature* will be used as a hyponym of *component*, with a greater tendency to indivisibility, universality, and the possibility of a binary feature notation. Consequently, all *semantic features* will be *semantic components;* but not all *components* are necessarily *features*.

2.1. Semantic components of English nouns have been frequently discussed in the literature. The classical method of componential analysis as derived from Hjelmslev (cf. Lipka, 1972:35) may be regarded as an example of the language-intrinsic approach. Other linguists,such as Leisi and Nida, concentrate on referential semantics.

2.1.1. It has often been observed that sets of English words such as *man, woman, child; bull, cow, calf; stallion, mare, foal* have certain senses in common which allows the setting up of proportional equations. Both Lyons (1968:470ff) in his *Introduction* and Leech (1974:98f) in his book on semantics have described the resemblance to the arithmetical process of factorizing a number and the results for the technique of componential analysis. If we represent the common semantic components by capitals, since they are elements of the metalanguage, the techinque can be illustrated as in Figure 2.

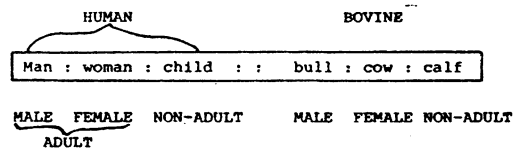


FIGURE 2

According to Leech (1974:96f) three "dimensions of meaning" can be distinguished in the left-hand side of Figure 2, viz. sex, adulthood,

and human species. He further points out that if "feature symbols" are used, the meanings of individual items can be expressed as a combination of features and represented by what he calls "componential definitions" such as in the following:

woman: + HUMAN + ADULT - MALE
boy: + HUMAN - ADULT + MALE.

Lyons (1968:472) had already pointed out in 1968 that the technique of componential analysis has a long history and:

> is inherent in the traditional method of definition by dividing a genus into species and species into subspecies; and this method of definition is reflected in most of the dictionaries.

It should further be noted that definitions such as *a stallion is a male adult horse* or *a calf is a young bovine animal* necessarily contain paraphrases of the word in subject position (cf. 4.2.) Although the component MALE denotes a property of the referent, obvious differences in size and colour of the referents do not play a role for distinguishing for example *rooster* and *hen* or *drake* and *duck*. The most prominent distinguishing feature of the male lion, the presence of a mane, is not a distinctive semantic feature opposing the lexemes *lion* and *lioness*. In general, although properties of the denotatum or referent play a role in componential analysis, it is basically a language-intrinsic approach to semantics.

2.1.2. The problems of a purely referential approach to semantics become apparent if we look at the so-called "diagnostic components" which Nida (1975:34) gives for the word *porpoise*, namely: 1 "mammal", 2. "totally aquatic", 3. "toothed", and 4. "relatively small". Such properties of the referent distinguish it from: 1. fish, 2. lions and seals, 3. some whales, and 4. whales generally.

Leisi's approach to the content of a word (*der Wortinhalt*) that is defined as the conditions for its use (*Gebrauchsbedingungen*) also largely depends on properties of the extra-linguistic referent. Although such conditions of use, in his theory, may be relatively complex, they basically depend on properties of the referent, which in the case of verbs may be states, processes, and relations. To illustrate with simple concrete nouns, Leisi (1952; 1975:29) notes that for the correct use of *clot* and *nugget* as opposed to *lump*, the substance of the referent plays a role: it must be blood in one case, gold in the other. For

the distinction between *tower, steeple, spire,* and *turret* - which can all be translated by *Turm* in German - according to Leisi (1973:34-36) the form or shape of the denotatum is relevant. This is not surprising if we recognize that the same extra-linguistic world may be categorized differently in different languages, as expressed by the structure of their vocabulary. To quote another example from Leisi (1973:13): in both English and French *snail* and *slug* as well as *escargot* and *limace* may be distinguished, but they all fall together in a single class of referents in German, denoted by the lexeme *Schnecke*. For this distinction we may postulate a binary semantic feature [± SHELL], whose presence or absence will account for the linguistic difference between the two words. As a final example for the problems of referential semantics illustrated by English nouns, let me mention the distinction between *town* and *city*. The distinguishing feature taught at British schools, and even used for testing children, is the presence or absence of a bishop or, equivalently, of a cathedral. On the other hand size apparently functions as a distinctive feature, especially if one does not know whether a particular place has been granted the rights of a city by some sovereign in the past.

2.2. Semantic components of English verbs have perhaps been most widely discussed in connection with the method of lexical decomposition of so-called Generative Semantics, but also in Fillmore's publications and in the work of Anderson and Ikegami. My own analysis of verb-particle constructions with *out* and *up* in Lipka (1972) was based on a large corpus which tried to collect all currently used constructions of this kind.

2.2.1. We will here disregard the hierarchical tree-structure postulated for verbs in Generative Semantics, and simply consider the *atomic predicates*, which have been said to be contained in specific lexical items, as in the following examples:

kill	=	(DO) CAUSE BECOME NOT ALIVE
break	=	(CAUSE) BECOME NOT WHOLE
remind	=	STRIKE as SIMILAR, STRIKE LIKE/MAKE THINK
apologize	=	REQUEST FORGIVE
persuade	=	CAUSE BELIEVE, (DO) CAUSE BECOME INTEND

The addition of an atomic predicate DO in the paraphrase for *kill* in the later stage of Generative Semantics was motivated by the alleged three-way ambiguity in a sentence modified by *almost*. This assumption, as well as the equivalence of an atomic predicate DO to a deep case

'Agent' is discussed in greater detail in Lipka (1976). In this article it is further pointed out that lexical decomposition is based on paraphrasing, and that McCawley himself admits that a large portion of the proposed semantic structures have been postulated with little care. The notational device of using capitals for atomic predicates clearly marks the latter as elements of the metalanguage, although the distinction between the object-language and the metalanguage was drawn explicitly very rarely in early Generative Semantics. For the analysis of causative verbs a feature [± causative] has been postulated in Lyons (1968:383) as well as in Anderson (1971:66). In the last ten years the literature on causative verbs and constructions has become so overwhelming, that it is probably impossible for a single person to do justice to it. Let me therefore try to sketch briefly my own contribution to the field in Lipka (1972)

2.2.2. In this study, verb-particle construction with *out* and *up*, functioning as transitive and intransitive verbs, were regarded as one-place or many-place predicates in the sense of symbolic logic, and were broken up into semantic components. This led to the setting up of specific formulas for the semantic structure of such constructions, consisting of *formators* and *designators*, as can be seen in Figure 3. Semantic components such as BE, BECOME, CAUSE, and HAVE are regarded as 'connectives' or 'formators' which relate certain variables either to a certain place, position, or state, or to other variables. The variables, as well as PLACE, POSITION, STATE are represented by 'designators' which consist of semantic features. Those features which were found relevant in the analysis of the comprehensive corpus are listed on the right hand side of Figure 3, beginning with [± Apparent] and finishing with [± Vertical].

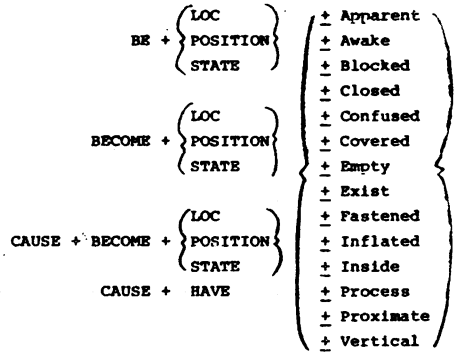


FIGURE 3

In addition, the more general features [DEGREE], [Dynamic],[Negative Evaluation] were also found relevant in the study of verb-particle constructions. The application of the formulas is illustrated as follows, where the feature [± Apparent] is seen functioning as a designator, and where the second argument of the two-place predicate is listed in brackets, with the Agent as the first argument left unspecified:

CAUSE + BE + POSITION:
hold out (arms, hand, baby)
bend up (wire, piece of metal, edge of a book)

CAUSE + BE + [+Apparent]:
blurt out (secret)
bring out (meaning of a passage/young lady, book)
call up (scenes from childhood)
conjure up (spirits, visions of the past).

The postulation of the binary semantic features functioning as designators, was based on the use of semantic tests, which will be discussed presently.

3. *COMPONENTS AND SEMANTIC FEATURES.* Before we take up the status of semantic components and features, let us look once again at the various metalinguistic constructs used in the literature for denoting a semantic element.

3.1. A referential approach to semantics, such as Leisi's may easily lead to renouncing the postulation of semantic components or features, although the author in Leisi (1973:30) implies that the term *Merkmal* may denote the same thing as his own *Gebrauchsbedingung*. That a referential approach does not necessarily mean abandoning features is demonstrated by Nida (1975:26) where meaning is defined as consisting of a "bundle of cognitive features, associated with the lexical unit, which make possible the designation of all the denotata by the lexical unit in question". Nida goes on to say that meaning consists of a "set of necessary and sufficient conceptual features" and distinguishes four types of such componential features: common, diagnostic, supplementary, and implicational features. In Leech (1974:11) it is claimed that: "the conceptual meanings of a language seem to be organized largely in terms of contrastive features", and such features, symbolized by capitals, are used throughout the book. Furthermore, "two types of semantic category" are distinguished (1974:34), viz. *designators* and *formators*. Leech (1974:123) also makes a distinction between "criterial components" and "optional features". The latter are needed for

the explanation of semantic change, as Leech demonstrates convincingly. He justifies his analyses (1974:104) with the help of so-called "basic statements" (1974:85) which amount to the evaluation of logical relationships between sentences containing lexical items, such as entailment, inconsistency, tautology, contradiction and relationships of synonymy, presupposition and semantic anomaly. The prelexical elements of Generative Semantics are considered as universal minimal semantic elements. Their status as items of the metalanguage is marked by the use of capitals. The atomic nature of the predicates is somewhat doubtful, especially if we consider that the inchoative predicate is usually symbolized as BECOME in McCawley's papers, but as COME ABOUT in an number of Lakoff's publications.

3.2. Let me now briefly sketch my present views on *components* and *features*. I regard both types of semantic elements as items of the metalanguage, as theoretical constructs postulated by the linguist. Although they are based on conceptual elements, their postulation has to be objectively justified. The symbols used for their representation in some notation are to a large extent arbitrary, but may be of considerable mnemonic value. *Features*, as a subclass of *components*, are characterized by having some value assigned to the feature, which is not necessarily a binary + or - value. Multiple taxonomies, scalar oppositions, and the other types of non-binary contrasts mentioned in Leech (1974) are therefore here considered as features. Semantic components need not have value assigned to them. Such components for German nouns and verbs are discussed in Baumgärtner (1967) in great detail. As pointed out in my book in 1972 (Lipka, 1972:42) he was up to then - to my knowledge - the only linguist who explicitly discussed how semantic components arise by transforming object-language items into elements of the metalanguage.

3.3. I propose the following typology or classification of *features* as illustrated in Figure 4 (cf. also Lipka, to appear: 5.2.).

1. Denotative features:	girl/filly	[± HUMAN]
2. Connotative features:	steed/horse smite/strike	[± ARCHAIC]
③ Inferential features:	nudge, beat nugget, holiday	[- HARD] [+ STICK] [GOLD] [- WORK]
4. Relational features:	father/son	[→PARENT] [←PARENT]
5. Transfer features:	drink	<- SOLID> or <2 PENETRABLE>
6. Deictic features:	push/pull now/then	[± PROXIMATE]
7. Distinctive Features (DF):	1.-6. except ③.	

FIGURE 4

1. *Denotative features:* these are the most important and most central inherent semantic features. They are based on conceptual features of the extra-linguistic referent.

2. *Connotative features:* they are needed to capture differences such as those between *horse* and *steed*, or between *strike* and *smite*. Such features are an inherent part of the lexeme and dictionaries normally use labels such as "archaic", or "literary", or "humorous" for them. One criterion for setting up this group is the property of the lexeme, as opposed to the property of the referent. Another one is the lesser importance and rather marginal character of such features. This criterion also applies to the following class of features.

3. *Inferential features:* this group is supplementary like the preceding one. However, inferential features are not inherent, but optional. They often depend on context. In my definition this class covers both, properties usually associated with a referent - such as slyness with a fox, clumsiness with an ox etc. - as well as the influence of co-text, such as in the example mentioned in Nida (1975:72) where *stool* "suggests... conviviality... or something quite lowly" depending on whether a bar or a workshop is mentioned. Inferential features, in my definition, are usually marked in dictionaries by labels such as "especially", or "usually", as when *beat* is defined as "hit (especially with a stick)", *nugget* and *clot* as denoting especially gold and blood respectively, and *nudge* is said to contain an element "slightly", or "not hard". I here use braces as a notational device for marking such features. The optional presence of a component NO WORK at an earlier stage of development in the present-day lexeme *holiday* is discussed in Leech (1974:123). This example shows, how important optional inferential features are for semantic change and diachronic linguistics (cf. 5.2.)

4. *Relational features:* they are indispensable in the analysis of lexemes such as *father* or *son*, *teacher* and *pupil*, *own* and *belong to*. Bierwisch has investigated such features carefully in various papers. As with the previous class of features, syntagmatic influence is important here. This criterion, i.e. the relevance of co-text, is even more important in the next group.

5. *Transfer features:* in the sense Weinreich (1966) defines them - viz. for example that the verb *drink* contains a feature < - SOLID > transferred to its object - they may be used to capture metaphorical processes. They are less restrictive and more active in semantic in-

terpretation than the theoretical construct of *selection restriction*. For the distinction between *solid*, *liquid*, and *gas* Leech (1974:121) uses three degrees of a single feature PENETRABLE, symbolized by numbers.

6. *Deictic features:* features such as [± PROXIMATE] may explain differences between *pull* and *push*, *come* and *go*, *now* and *then*, *here* and *there*. The criterion for setting up this class of features is clearly a pragmatic one, since it depends on the orientation of the users of linguistic signs.

7. *Distinctive features* (DF): except for the very important class of inferential features, which are not inherent in lexical items, all other features function as distinctive features. The only criterion for this comprehensive class is function, and they distinguish meanings of lexical items in the same way as distinctive features in phonology separate a different phoneme.

4. *THE JUSTIFICATION OF SPECIFIC COMPONENTS*. I have argued in various articles (Lipka, 1975:216f, 219; 1976:124) that there are at least three types of evidence for the postulation of underlying semantic elements: morphological evidence in word-formative relationships, paraphrase relationship, and semantic tests. I here leave out of consideration syntactic and logical arguments as they have been advanced by McCawley, Postal, Leech, and Lyons. There is no one-to-one correspondence between the syntactic and the semantic level, and the relationship between logic and natural language is also not necessarily a direct one.

4.1. If we look at the follwoing lexical items we can make a number of interesting observations: *dog : bitch, lion : lion/ess; teach/er, invent/or, dish/wash/er, wife/swapp/ing, de/militar/ize, legal/ize, material/ize, black/en, solid/ify, break/Ø.* The semantic complexity of simple items such as *thief, kill, dog,* and *bitch* - which is the subject of lexical decomposition in Generative Semantics - is less obvious than that of morphologically complex lexical items. The latter are the subject of the discipline of word-formation. Lyons (1977:305-307) opposes *bitch* to *lioness* and calls the latter an instance of "formal marking". With regard to the feature, or rather dimension, of SEX, *teacher, inventor,* and *dishwasher* are not formally marked. However, the presence of an animate or inanimate agent (in the last case) in the underlying semantic structure, is clearly expressed on the surface by the suffix. In the action nominalization *wife-swapping* which denotes a not particularly

moral activity, the action, the specific nature of the process, and the animate object which moves abstractly and perhaps also concretely are expressed in the surface structure. In *demilitarize, legalize,* and *materialize,* the lexical morphemes *de-, militar, legal, material,* and *-ize* can be assigned a specific meaning or sense. However, in the last two examples, *-ize* must be identified with an atomic predicate CAUSE in one instance and BECOME in the other case.

In both *blacken* and *solidify* the suffix can be claimed to represent either an inchoative or a causative semantic element cf.(Anderson 1971:67). The surface verb *break,* finally, can be regarded as either homonymously collapsing an inchoative and a zero-derived causative verb (cf. Lipka 1975:210f), or, as in an article by Fillmore, as a single verb occurring in different frames, either with or without an Agent.

The problems of morphological irregularity in word-formation can partly be solved by adopting Coseriu's concept of the 'Norm' of a language. Semantic irregularity, a phenomenon known under the term *lexicalization* in word-formation (whose ultimate result is idioms) also complicates the picture. I have investigated this phenomenon in Lipka (1977) and do not think that it poses a serious threat to morphological evidence. It must be pointed out, however, that underlying semantic structure is not directly observable in complex lexical items. *Dishwasher* and *legalize* obviously contain semantic elements expressed by the particular lexical morphemes, however, the meaning of *dish, wash, legal -er, -ize* remain unanalysed. Nevertheless, analysis with the means of modern word-formation provides some morphological evidence for semantic decomposition.

4.2. Let us now turn to paraphrase evaluation. In his article of 1967, Baumgärtner (1967:193f) claims that the componential structure of lexemes can be reduced to the fundamental relation "X is Y".

X is(t) $\begin{matrix}\text{ein}\\ \text{a}\end{matrix}$ ( ) Y.

FIGURE 5

The test formula in Figure 5 - usable for both English and German - can be developed on the basis of this claim and illustrated by the sentence (1) to (4):

(1) Gras ist eine (stielige) (schneidbare) Pflanze.
(2) Schlendern ist ein (müßiges) (bequemes) (langsames) Gehen.
(3) Der Mann läuft über die Straße = X
(4) Der Mann geht (schnell) über die Straße. = ( ) Y.

The formula can be used as the basis for paraphrase evaluation, a procedure whose importance Baumgärtner stresses throughout his article. It provides a means of establishing semantic components, if X can be replaced in the same syntactic slot by a modifier + Y, and if competent speakers in their evaluation consider the two resulting sentences paraphrases. The elements in brackets in sentences (1) and (2) can thus be shown to be contained in *Gras* and the nominalized verbal from *Schlendern* respectively. If the two sentence (3) and (4) are considered paraphrases by competent speakers, Baumgärtner (1967:182) states that the adverbial lexeme *schnell* is then converted from the object-language element into a metalinguistic element, and thereby raised to the rank of a semantic component. The substitution of paraphrases containing explicit modifiers is therefore a principalled method for establishing semantic components as elements of the metalanguage. The paraphrase relationship between sentences such as (3) and (4) mus be evaluated and accepted by more that a single speaker. Paraphrases, in the form of equative sentences such as (1) and (2) are to be found in simplified form in conventional dictionaries. They are usually accepted by more than a single speaker. However, the linguist must not take them over uncritically, and must also standardize them, in the way it is done in the following examples (cf. also Lipka, to appear: 3.1.2.) with the definitions of *kick, punch,* and *nudge: kick* = hit (with foot); *punch* = hit (hard) (with fist); *nudge* = hit {usually not hard} (with elbow) (in order to get attention). To produce equative sentences like (2) for verbs is no serious problem, if the verbs are nominalized (including infinitival nominalization).

4.3. The subject of semantic testing is discussed in Lipka (1972: 55-61) and Leech (1974:90-93). In the latter treatment, elicitation experiments for the testing of the "basic statements" postulated by Leech are considered, and among these tautology and contradiction play a prominent role. Both relations are at the basis of the *but*-test as devised by Bendix and Weinreich, that was further developed in Lipka (1972: 59-61) and supplemented by the *so*-test. That tautology can rend-

er a sentence unacceptable was already noted in Anderson (1968:308f), where the unacceptable sentence *he walked on foot as far as Norwich was given as an example (cf. Lipka, 1972:59 Fn.). The same phenomenon can be further illustrated by *he kicked John with his foot. As opposed to the paraphrasing method based on Baumgärtner's proposals, which can be used for the discovery and postulation of semantic components, semantic testing is used to confirm or disconfirm a hypothesis. The sentences (5) to (7) and (8) to (10) in Figure 6 may demonstrate how the *but*-test and the *so*-test can be combined profitably for this purpose.

BUT- and SO-test combined:

(5) *She zipped up the dress, BUT it is closed.
(6) *She zipped up the dress, BUT it is not closed.
(7) She zipped up the dress, SO it is closed. = [+ CLOSED].

(8) *She slit up the dress, BUT it is closed.
(9) *She slit up the dress, BUT it is not closed.
(10) She slit up the dress, SO it is not closed = [- CLOSED]

(11) *John opened the door, BUT it is closed... [- CLOSED]
(12) *John killed Harry, BUT he is dead... [- ALIVE]
(13) *John kicked Harry, BUT with his foot... [+ FOOT]

(14) *Harry is a bachelor, BUT he is married... [- MARRIED].

FIGURE 6

According to Weinreich(1966:449) the conjunction *but* may be paraphrased as 'and... unexpectedly' and may be used for testing semantic components, if both a simple sentence and a negated sentence containing *but* are unacceptable. In the first case the unacceptability is due to tautology, in the second case due to contradiction. The *but*-test alone, however, is not sufficient to establish the exact value of a binary feature, since it does not distinguish antonymous features such as [+ CLOSED] and [- CLOSED]. It has to be supplemented by the *so*-test, and thus, three sentences are required to determine a feature. Conjunction with *so* implies consequence and thus verbs and verb-particle constructions denoting a process or action and the resulting state can be tested successfully. The pair of conjoined senteces containing *but* must be unacceptable, while the third conjoined sentece with *so* must

be acceptable. Sentence (13) as opposed to (11) or (12) may demonstrate, that the *but-* and *so*-test even works with verbs such as *kick*, that are not result verbs but momentary verbs. However, a slight modification is needed. In the third sentence, containing *so*, a superordinate term, or archilexeme (e.g. *hit*), must be inserted, as, for example, in the acceptable sentence: *He kicked him, so he hit him with his foot.* Sentence (14) is intended to show that the *but-* and *so*-test even works with morphologically simple nouns.

5. *PROBLEMS AND RESULTS.*

5.1. In my opinion there are two problematic areas for semantic components: the influence of co-text, or syntagmatic linguistic relations - which we have disregarded here - and the influence of extra-linguistic context, problems arising from a referential approach to semantics. I have concentrated here on paradigmatic lexical semantics, which does not mean that I consider syntagmatic relations and sentence semantics as irrelevant. Some indications to this effect were given in my classification of semantic features. Some problems of referential semantics, especially the question of boundaries, are mentioned in Leech (1974:122-125) under the heading "fuzzy edges". The recognition of the fuzzy nature of natural languages has received growing interest in recent linguistics. As far back as 1960, Quine (1960:125-156) has discussed referential vagueness and opacity in chapter 4 of his book *Word and Object*, entitled "Vagaries of referents". Quine (1960:125f) talks about "fuzzy edges" and mentions that terms denoting physical objects may be vague in two ways. This is illustrated with the example of the term *mountain* which is:

> Vague on the score of how much terrain to reckon into each of the indisputable mountains, and it is vague on the score of what lesser eminences to count as mountains at all.

Similar and other problems are discussed in a critical account of semantic features in a forthcoming paper by Sprenge.

5.2. We now come to a more positive evaluation. A very comprehensive investigation of the use of semantic features and components in linguistics is to be found in a forthcoming book by Kastovsky (to appear, MS). Besides many interesting observations and insights, attention is drawn (MS, 195) to the fact that semantic components have only denotative value, while object-language elements have both denotation and connotation. Let me stress once more that I regard semantic com-

ponents - and semantic features as a subclass - as theoretical constructs of the metalanguage that are based on notional or conceptual elements.

The postulation of such metalinguistic elements must be objectively justified, and some attempts and methods for such a justification have been discussed here. In my opinion there are two areas where the application of semantic components is most fruitful: diachronic linguistics and contrastive linguistics. The development of *holiday*, discussed in Leech (1974:123) is a good example. In his interpretation an earlier optional component NO WORK has become obligatory, while the earlier components OF A DAY and HOLY have disappeared. Görlach (1974:118f) interprets the semantic change of Old English *hund* and *mete* and Middle English *bird* as opposed to their Modern English equivalents convincingly with the help of binary features. The semantic differences between Modern English *starve* and German *sterben* can be interpreted both contrastively and diachronically by using the theoretical construct of semantic feature (cf. Lipka, 1977:157-161). The postulation of an underlying semantic structure, which is not necessarily universal but largely language-independent, provides a framework for contrastive analysis. This point has also been made convincingly in Ikegami (1976).

In conclusion, let me say that it is my firm believe that we can not dispense with the theoretical construct of semantic component, despite all the difficulties which still exist. We must attempt to construct a metalanguage, even if it represents a simplified and abstracted view of reality. The undesirable alternative would be that we, as linguists, remain dumb and inarticulate when talking about the meaning of language.

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