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STUDIA LINGUISTICA

IN HONOREM

EUGENIO COSERIU

1921 - 1981

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SÉMANTIQUE

SEMANTICS

WOLF DIETRICH
HORST GECKELER
(EDD.)



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On the Interrelation of Syntagmatic Modification and Paradigmatic Lexical Structuring in English¹

LEONHARD LIPKA
(Munich)

1. General Problems

1.1. Since the days of de Saussure linguists have often distinguished between two types of relation between linguistic elements: syntagmatic and paradigmatic (the latter termed *rappports associatifs* by Saussure). As early as 1932 Charles BALLY (1965⁴: 134f) realized that there is a type of implicit syntagma in which two lexical notions are united, such as in his examples 'horse' and 'white' in German *Schimmel*, 'die' and 'hunger' in English *to starve*, and 'horse' and 'female' in French *jument*. In his *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics* John LYONS (1968: 452) sets up a «general principle» relating syntagmatic modification to paradigmatic choice: «the same information may be conveyed in language either syntagmatically or paradigmatically».

He illustrated this² with the help of the following examples:

(1a) I'm *flying* to New York = (1b) I'm *going* to New York *by air*.

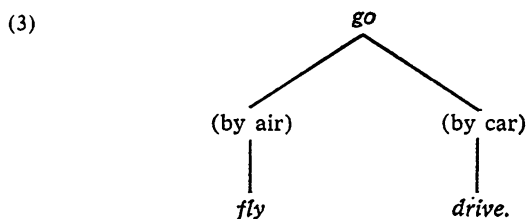
(2a) I'm *driving* to New York = (2b) I'm *going* to New York *by car*.

According to LYONS (1968:452) «in the one case the distinction is made by the paradigmatic choice of the verbs *fly* and *drive*, in the other by the syntagmatic modification of the more general verb *go*». Using a notation

¹ I should like to thank the members of a colloquium at the University of Munich for helpful suggestions. I am also grateful to D. Kastovsky and J. Monaghan for their comments on an earlier version of this paper.

² The examples are slightly modified from Lyons' wording, e. g. by the insertion of '=' which symbolizes equivalence, i. e. paraphrase. It must be noted that his examples are not complete paraphrases for two reasons. Firstly, (2a) necessarily implies that the subject be an agent, as also in *I'm cycling to New York*, which is not the case in (2b) or (1a) and (1b), nor in *I'm sailing to New York*. Secondly, from the point of view of Functional Sentence Perspective the pairs of sentences are also not identical, i. e. they have a different «thematic meaning» (cf. LEECH 1974:22f).

as it is employed for the representation of «Bedeutungsfelder» in an article by BAUMGÄRTNER (1967), the hierarchical nature of the relationship between *go* and *fly/drive* may be demonstrated in the following way³:



The addition of the syntagmatic components (by air) or (by car) to the general verb *go* leads to its more specific hyponyms *fly* and *drive*. The incorporation of such a component in the sense of more specific lexical items is called «encapsulation» by LYONS (1977:262) in the first volume of his work on semantics. Again he points out that there are «many distinctions of sense that can be made either by the syntagmatic modification of a more general lexeme or by the use of a more specific single lexeme». He gives as examples the equivalence between *kick* and *strike with the foot*, *punch* and *strike with the fist*, as well as *bachelor* and *unmarried man* (1977:262). In this context he further notes that «in many cases one language will use a syntagm where another language employs a single lexeme with roughly the same meaning» (cf. also 242). In his discussion of hyponymy (LYONS 1977:283f) he mentions that often but not always «a hyponym encapsulates the sense of some adjectival modifier and combines it with the sense of the superordinate lexeme» which could be illustrated by the equivalence of *tyrant* and *despotic ruler* or *cruel ruler*. He points out that adverbial modification with regard to verbs and adjectives parallels adjectival modification of nouns. Thus *buy* and *steal* as hyponyms of *get* are said to be distinguished by the adverbial phrases *by purchase* and *by theft* (295).

1.2. As can be seen from the examples just quoted from Lyons syntagmatic modification of general lexemes as an equivalent of more specific lexemes functions as a paraphrase of the specific items. In fact, paraphrases are normally defined as circumlocutions of linguistic expressions that are equivalent in sense, or as some say, synonymous. Although I would restrict the use of the terms 'synonym' and 'synonymous' to lexicemic equivalents, one can state that both synonyms and paraphrases are expressions that are semantically equivalent with the term they are related to. Paraphrases do not consist of single lexemes, and therefore necessarily have the form of regular syntactic constructions or of collocations.

³ As above the possible difference in the feature [\pm Agent] is neglected.

However, syntagmatic modification is not restricted to the form of collocation. Complex lexical items of various types are also based on syntagmatic modification, i.e. they consist of immediate constituents, functioning as a 'determinant' and a 'determinatum' in a lexical syntagma, according to the terminology of H. Marchand.

In the following we will look more closely at some instances of word-formation, also from a contrastive point of view.

2. *The Distinction between the Primary and Secondary Vocabulary*

2.1. Before going on to concrete examples, however, we must take up a distinction which E. Coseriu has introduced into lexicology in numerous publications, viz. that between primary lexical structures and secondary lexical structures. The former can be identified with that part of the vocabulary of a language which consists of simple lexemes, while the latter comprises morphologically complex lexical items, which traditionally belong in the domain of word-formation. In an article on methodology in the study of lexical fields (LIPKA 1979) I have argued—following Coseriu—that the term 'word-field' should be restricted to paradigmatic structures of the primary vocabulary, while 'lexical fields' might contain both simple and complex lexemes.

2.2.1. From the point of view of an analytical approach to the lexicon and in particular to word-formation (cf. BREKLE/KASTOVSKY, 1977:7f) the distinction between the primary vocabulary and secondary lexical structures is certainly necessary and useful. The domain of word-formation is limited to the study of analysable, morphologically complex lexical items. The view of word-formation as a productive process for the coining of new words also has consequences for the detection of gaps in lexical fields. These can only be claimed to exist in fields comprising simple lexemes, i.e. in word-fields, because gaps could be filled at any time by a newly coined complex lexeme, if there is a productive pattern.

2.2.2. A number of arguments, however, can be raised against an absolute distinction between primary and secondary vocabulary. KASTOVSKY (1981, in this volume) has argued that from a diachronic point of view there are transitions in both directions, viz. of complex lexical items becoming unanalysable monemes and vice versa. Instances of the first kind are OE *hlāfweard*, *hlāfdige*, *hūs-wif* becoming NE *lord*, *lady*, *hussy*. An example of the re-analysis of monemes is the backformation *peddler* as 'someone who peddles', from the noun *peddler* and *pedlar* historically recorded much earlier (1377) than the verb (1532) (see MARCHAND, 1969:391f). Kastovsky further argues that Coseriu's 'lexical solidarities' are semantically parallel to word-formation processes in that both require an implication of semantic elements. Thus, for example *bite* implies *teeth*, but does not express

this formally, while the zero-derived verb *butter* also formally contains the noun *butter* and the agent-noun *writer* contains and implies *write*. The difference therefore is based on the additional formal expression of the implied semantic element. Kastovsky also demonstrates that semantic dimensions such as INSTRUMENT, MANNER and SEX play an important role in the structuring of both simple and complex lexical items.

2.2.3. A further argument for the near-equivalence of the primary and secondary structures of the vocabulary can be derived from the parallelism of their function. This can be seen most clearly in the case of nouns, where both compound and derived nouns have the same function as simple nouns, viz. they may denote extralinguistic objects. This denotative function will be discussed in greater detail below, with reference to English and German examples from a specific field of denotata.

2.2.4. Contrastive lexicology can also provide evidence for the functional equivalence of simple and complex lexical items. It was mentioned above that Lyons notes the correspondence of a single lexeme in one language to a syntagma in another language. In his book *Praxis der englischen Semantik* LEISI (1973:13) gives the following examples for the different categorization of extralinguistic reality in English and German: the German category *Schnecke* is split up in English at least into *snail* and *slug*, and the category *Affe* corresponds to the two categories *ape* and *monkey* in English. This situation can be represented in the following way, where the extension of the English terms taken together is equivalent to the range or class of denotata of the German lexeme:

(4a)

Schn ecke	
snail	slug

(4b)

Aff e	
ape	monkey

The denotata of the class of *snails* and *slugs* together is equivalent to the class denoted by *Schnecke* in German. The same holds for the respective classes of *ape* and *monkey* on the one hand and *Affe* on the other. The distinctions made by the simple lexemes in English are based on properties of the extralinguistic denotatum, the presence or absence of a shell in one case and the presence or absence of a tail plus relative size in the other. Apes are big tailless animals, while monkeys are relatively small and possess a tail. These differences are neutralized in the German lexeme. However, they can be made in German too, if necessary, with the help of complex lexical items. The compounds *Weinbergsschnecke* and *Nacktschnecke* thus correspond to *snail* and *slug* respectively. Also *ape* is equivalent to *Menschenaffe*, while *monkey* can be rendered by the suffixal

derivative *Affchen*⁴. This can be incorporated in the diagrams in the following way:

<p>(5a)</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">Schn</td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">ecke</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Weinberg ~ snail</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Nackt ~ slug</td> </tr> </table>	Schn	ecke	Weinberg ~ snail	Nackt ~ slug	<p>(5b)</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">A</td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">ffe</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Menschen ~ ape</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Affchen monkey</td> </tr> </table>	A	ffe	Menschen ~ ape	Affchen monkey
Schn	ecke								
Weinberg ~ snail	Nackt ~ slug								
A	ffe								
Menschen ~ ape	Affchen monkey								

It is also possible that a suffixal derivative in one language may be rendered by a compound in another language. Thus the semantic dimension SEX can be syntagmatically marked by the suffix *-in* in *Freundin*, *Ärztin* while English uses compounds such as *girl-friend* and *lady-doctor*.

3. Word-Formation as Syntagmatic Modification and Lexical Fields

According to the theory of word-formation developed by H. MARCHAND (1969:3, 11f) complex lexical items are syntagmas based on a determinant/determinatum relationship. The constituents are clearly syntagmatically related, but the resulting composite form as a whole can be opposed to other simple or complex lexemes. These forms therefore contract paradigmatic relations with other lexical items, either simple or complex, as in the following lexical field.

3.1. Let us now look at a set of lexical items and some of their extralinguistic denotata, which have been extensively discussed in the literature (cf. COSERIU 1973:55f; GIPPER 1959; 1973; NIDA 1975:69-73). As early as 1959 GIPPER investigated the use of *Sessel* or *Stuhl* for various types of object and arrived at the conclusion that speakers tend to take various properties of the denotata as the basis for their choice. Thus (GIPPER 1959; 1973:384) *Sessel* is used if the object in question is comfortable, padded, has a back and usually also arm-rests, while *Stuhl* is preferred if the seat is simpler, normally not padded, and has a back but no arm-rests. He further points out that the tendency to use *Sessel* is strengthened by a «tiefliegende Sitzfläche» and that there is some deviation from this pattern especially in Southern Germany. The French word-field *siège* has been discussed by POTTIER (1963:11-18) and Coseriu, and it was pointed out

⁴ As in the above example we are here concerned with rough equivalence in the core vocabulary of both languages. Technical terminology, such as in the scientific taxonomy of biology, or idiosyncratic uses, as e. g. in *Gibraltar apes* (which are small and have a tail) are here excluded. *Affchen*, *Freundin* and similar formations are regarded by Coseriu as a special type of word-formation labelled 'modification'.

that some features of the denotatum, such as «avec dossier», «sur pieds», «pour une personne», but also their absence function as linguistically relevant distinctive features in *chaise, fauteuil, tabouret, canapé*. Incidentally, the archilexeme *siège* has no equivalent simple lexeme in German, but corresponds to *Sitzgelegenheit*. NIDA (1975:73), in his discussion of the English equivalents, notes that *seat* differs from *chair* in that it requires an object with a fixed⁵ position (*row of seats, seat in a car*), and that it may further denote the place where one sits in chairs, stools or sofas, that is a part of a chair etc. (German *Sitzfläche*). However, if *seat* is defined as in the *OALD* as 'sth used or *made for sitting on*, e.g. a chair, box, bench, the floor' [my italics LL] it may be employed as an archilexeme for the following field (6). In fact most of the words included in it are defined (i.e. paraphrased) in dictionaries such as the *DCE* and the *OALD* with the help of *seat*. The matrix (6) is adapted from NIDA (1975:71), 'o' is used instead of '±' and the field is expanded and arranged in a different order. Here *settle* is added as well as the complex lexeme *arm-chair*. Because of the latter item, the following is not a word-field, but a lexical field. The matrix representation has the advantage of showing the parallelism between the «encapsulation» or implicit modification in the case of [with a back] and [with legs] and the explicit syntagmatic modification in the case of *arm-chair*. The disadvantage of the matrix (cf. LIPKA 1979) is that hierarchical relations are not apparent. Thus *arm-chair* is only indirectly a hyponym of *seat*, but an immediate hyponym of *chair*.

(6)

	for 1 person	with a back	with legs	with arms	made of wood
chair	+	+	+	○	○
bench	—	○	+	○	○
stool	+	—	+	—	○
pouf (hassock ⁶)	+	—	—	—	—
settle	+	+	—	○	+
arm-chair	+	+	○	+	○

⁵ Cf. the definition of *chair* in the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (OALD)* as 'separate *moveable seat for one person, usu with a back and in some cases with arms*' [my italics, LL]. The following assignment of features is based on NIDA (1975) and the definitions in the *Dictionary of Contemporary English (DCE)* and the *OALD*, as, for example [made of wood] and 'wooden' in the dictionary definition.

⁶ In American usage, cf. NIDA (1975:71).

Nida mentions the problem of the indeterminacy of such terms. This is referred to in QUINE (1960:125f) under the heading of «vagaries of reference» and «fuzzy edges». It is not always clear whether certain objects fall within one category or not. We will not discuss this problem here in detail.

3.2.1. In the case of *arm-chair* and German *Armsessel* or *Armstuhl*, the additional semantic component [with arms] is explicitly expressed in the determinant modifying *chair*. It is obviously parallel to the other features of the denotata functioning as linguistically distinctive features, such as [with a back, with legs] that are not overtly expressed in the simple lexical items *chair*, *bench*, *stool*, *pouf* (*hassock*), *settle*. The example therefore supports Lyons' general principle. Encapsulation of features in the former cases is equivalent to overt syntagmatic modification by *arm-* in the latter. On the other hand, the component [made of wood] necessarily contained in *settle* is not overtly expressed. Besides *arm-chair* other compounds with *chair* and German *Stuhl* or *Sessel* also contain determinants which modify the superordinate term or archilexeme in a fairly regular way. This syntagmatic modification restricts the extension of the determinatum and thus results in hyponyms, on the highest level, of the general term *seat*.

In this way, the material of which the denotatum is made, a feature not overtly marked in *settle*, may be expressed, as in *wicker chair*, or *Korbstuhl* and *Rohrstuhl*. The place where the denotatum is used may be expressed, e.g. in *kitchen chair* and *Küchenstuhl* and the time when it was made or, more precisely, the period referring to a style is marked e.g. in *Chippendale chair* and *Biedermeierstuhl*. The profession which uses a certain object is explicitly expressed in *dentist's chair* and *Zahnarztstuhl*, while the circumstances of use are mentioned in *piano stool* and *Klavierstuhl* 'stool used when playing the piano'. In all these cases the modification is fairly regular. Correct interpretation, however, requires a certain amount of extralinguistic knowledge, which always concerns the pragmatic context in which the denotata have to be situated.

3.2.2. The German term last mentioned shows some irregularity, since a *Stuhl* normally has a back, but a *Klavierstuhl* has not. One might suspect that this is a loan-translation from English, but GIPPER (1959; 1973:388f) has checked this hypothesis and found that it is not borne out. We may rather assume with GIPPER (1959; 1973:396) that here: «mit dem ersten Wortelement ein einzelnes Merkmal eines Gegenstandes hervorgehoben wird, während das zweite Element formative suffixartige Funktion erhält». This suffixoid function also accounts for the fact that *deck-chair* and its German equivalent *Liegestuhl* would not normally be considered as falling under the class of *chairs* or *Stühle*. This is especially clear in German, where the implicit semantic feature [zum Sitzen/ for sitting on] which

can be said to be contained in all hyponyms of *Sitzgelegenheit*, is explicitly contradicted in syntagmatic modification by *Liege(n)*. Idiosyncrasy is perhaps greatest in German *Fahrstuhl* which, according to KLUGE/MITZKA (1967:181) was coined in 1672 as a name for a lift. As opposed to idiosyncrasy as a result of diachronic lexicalization, such individual coinings could be termed «Einzelpprägung» (cf. LIPKA 1981:1.2.3.). Today a *Fahrstuhl* would certainly not be referred to as a *Stuhl*.

Another extreme case of irregularity is the item *love-seat*, defined as 'S-shaped bench with two seats facing in opposite directions' in the *OALD*. The compound can only be interpreted as 'seat for people who are in love' if one realizes that while the seats face in opposite directions, the people who sit in them face each other. It necessarily contains a feature [for 2 persons] and was probably coined as an «Einzelpprägung» together with the invention of the object, as in the case of *Fahrstuhl* and so many other new products which needed a name. The naming function of simple and complex lexemes is therefore responsible for idiosyncrasy in many cases.

3.2.3. In a number of cases syntagmatic modification contributes partly to the meaning of a compound, while the full meaning can only be described with the help of additional semantic features not contained in the composite. Thus a *high chair* certainly has long legs, but the purpose of use also plays a role, viz. that babies or small children can sit in it, especially when eating, and therefore it often has a tray joined to the chair. As LEECH (1974:226f) has pointed out, *push-chair* and *wheel-chair* are not simply chairs which one pushes and chairs which have wheels, but (as in the case of German *Rollstuhl*) are distinguished by the additional restriction 'for children' and 'for invalids'. A *camp chair* and a *camp-stool* is not only a chair or a stool used in a camp, but one which can be folded and carried easily.

3.3. In all the examples of complex lexical items from the field of *seats* and *Sitzgelegenheiten* purely linguistic knowledge has to be supported by information from the situational context, i.e. pragmatic factors, to a greater or lesser extent. Pragmatic factors, however, may also have the opposite effect. Differences in the denotata which are quite obvious may be neutralized in specific acts of reference, just because they are so obvious and therefore irrelevant. A speaker will then refer to a specific object, not a whole class of objects as in denotation, by simply using *seat* or *chair* and *Sessel* or *Stuhl*, and syntagmatic modification is superfluous⁷. The situational context or gestures then have the function of spe-

⁷ Kastovsky (personal communication) has suggested the name «pragmatic clipping» for this phenomenon, as further exemplified by the use of *meine Frau* instead of *meine Ehefrau*.

cification, which is otherwise performed by linguistic means. This phenomenon, the use of simple items instead of complex lexemes, further shows an area of transition between the secondary and primary vocabulary.

4. Conclusions

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the preceding discussion. They are all based on the observation that certain properties of the extralinguistic denotata may play a considerable role in the lexical structuring of languages such as English and German.

4.1. With reference to the «general principle» postulated by Lyons we may say that *arm-chair* as opposed to the other hyponyms of *seat* in (6), as well as *wicker-chair* as opposed to *settle* and *pouf* (with regard to the dimension of MATERIAL of which the denotatum is made) prove the hypothesis. Lyons' remark on the equivalence of simple and complex lexemes across languages is also corroborated by our contrastive examples in (5) *Weinbergschnecke*, *Nachtschnecke*, *Menschenaffe*, and *Affchen*. On the other hand the examples discussed in 3.2.2., especially the cases of «Einzelprägung», show that syntagmatic modification in word-formation does not yield the full information expressed by a syntagma. The possible naming function of all lexemes is largely responsible for such irregularity. Lexicalization (cf. LIPKA 1981) may be responsible for minor irregularity as in the examples in 3.2.3.

4.2. The naming function of all lexemes, either simple or complex, is furthermore an argument against a strict separation of the primary and secondary vocabulary⁸. Besides this argument and others mentioned in 2.2.2. the discussion of the lexical field (6) and related lexemes was intended to demonstrate that simple and complex lexemes are in many respects functionally equivalent. The neutralization of distinctions in specific acts of reference, distinctions otherwise drawn by syntagmatic modification in word-formation, also points in this direction.

4.3. However, pragmatic knowledge about the extralinguistic denotata and their context also may have the opposite function as we have seen in 3.2.1. It accounts for the correct interpretation of complex lexemes, whose syntagmatic modification would otherwise remain ambiguous. This is especially true for compounds not containing a verbal element. A purely language-immanent approach to such lexemes would miss certain interpretative strategies available to the normal language user.

⁸ The naming function of complex lexical items is particularly prominent in the case of proper names, such as e. g. *Freeman*, *Lightfoot*, *Shakespeare*, and *Turner*.

4.4. In a contribution to a «Festschrift» a personal note will hopefully not seem out of place. To anyone familiar with Professor Coseriu's writings much of what has been said here might sound like heresy. However, close reading of his articles will reveal that even where he makes a sharp distinction between «Bedeutung» and «Bezeichnung» (as in COSERIU 1970), he acknowledges the justification of studying both (1970: 118). While at that period the study of denotation was excluded from structural linguistic description, a more comprehensive view has recently been adopted, e.g. in his lecture on «Über den Strukturalismus hinaus». In the light of this lecture, where the narrow boundaries of a purely language-immanent approach are transcended, considerations of denotational properties as well as of the pragmatic context become possible. In spite of a different origin of my approach, I am therefore here only following the master. On the occasion of his 60th birthday I would like to wish him that he will continue for many years to let fresh ideas influence and modify the important insights one can find in his numerous publications.

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