

Preliminary notions

1) linguistics-> scientific study of language or of particular languages and how it works;

- Monosomic word-> one meaning;
- Monoreferential-> one referent->one entity in the world.

2) language-> communication between people, usually using words;

- polisemy-> more than one meaning;
- Polysemy-> numerous senses but related.

We also talk about signs, movements, sounds and other methods of communicating information, feelings or idea.

- Language, in English, is a system of idea and communication.

COMMUNICATION → sharing informations, idea using language (spoken, body, written...)

3 WORD = a linguistic unit, orthographically preceded and followed by spaces or punctuation marks, phonologically preceded and followed by pauses, having one main stress and expressing a single meaning.

- WORD TYPES → HOMOPHONES - which are pronounced the same, but have different spellings and meanings.

• Phonological criteria → a word is a linguistic unit surrounded by pauses and having only one main stress.

- HOMOGRAPH • Same spelling, different meaning and pronunciation
- HOMOPHONE - same pronunciation, different meaning and spelling
- HOMONYM- same spelling and pronunciation but different meaning.
- Orthographical criteria - spelling, the written form of a word
- Semantic criteria = meaning.

Grammatical Criteria and Word Analysis

The role of grammar is to identify and describe words and their various types. Ambiguities often arise in linguistic analysis due to specific grammatical reasons.

1. Word Identity: Same Word or Different Words?

Consider the set: *girl, girl's, girls, girls'.*

- **Semantically:** These represent the **same word**, as they all refer to the same concept (a young female).
- **Grammatically:** These are **different word forms**. They vary based on number (singular/plural) and case (genitive/possessive).

Differences in **spelling** and **pronunciation** often reflect these underlying grammatical shifts. Words change their form depending on the syntactic environment in which they occur.

2. Lexemes vs. Word Forms

To distinguish between a "vocabulary unit" and its variations, we use two specific terms:

- **Lexeme:** An abstract unit of the lexicon (the "dictionary" idea of a word). It serves as the base for all its variants.
- **Word Forms:** The concrete grammatical variants of a lexeme.
- *Example: Do, does, doing, did, and done* are all **word forms** of the single **lexeme DO**.

3. Headwords and Lemmatization

- **Headword:** The word placed at the beginning of a dictionary entry. This is the "citation form" we look up.
- **Verbs:** The base form is typically the **infinitive** (e.g., *to walk*).
- **Nouns:** The base form is typically the **singular** (e.g., *child* rather than *children*).
- **Fixed Classes:** Some word classes (like prepositions) do not have multiple grammatical forms; therefore, the only form they have serves as the headword.

Word Classes (Parts of Speech)

English words are categorized into several classes based on their function:

1. **Nouns**
2. **Verbs**
3. **Adjectives**
4. **Adverbs**
5. **Conjunctions**
6. **Prepositions**

7. Determiners**8. Pronouns****Focus: Determiners**

Determiners are words used before a noun to clarify its reference (to "determine" which specific thing is being talked about). Common types include:

- **Articles:** *a, an, the*
- **Demonstratives:** *this, that, these, those*
- **Possessives:** *my, your, his, her, its, our, their*
- **Quantifiers:** *some, many, few, all, every*

1. Classification of Word Classes

Word classes (or Parts of Speech) are divided into two main categories based on their size and how they evolve:

Major Word Classes (Open Classes)

These include **Nouns, Lexical Verbs, Adjectives, and Adverbs.**

- **Open:** They are not stable; new words are constantly added to these categories (e.g., through technology or slang).
- **Quantity:** They comprise the vast majority of the vocabulary in a language.

Minor Word Classes (Closed Classes)

These include **Conjunctions, Prepositions, Determiners, Pronouns, and Auxiliary Verbs.**

- **Closed:** They are relatively stable. New words in these categories are rarely created.
- **Function:** They primarily provide grammatical structure rather than content.

2 Word Formation and Variation

New words and forms are created through several morphological processes:

- **Conversion (Zero Derivation):** When a word changes its class without adding an affix (e.g., the noun *email* becoming the verb *to email*).
- **Prefixation & Suffixation:** Adding morphemes to the beginning or end of a base (e.g., *child* → *childish*).
- **Grammatical Variants:** These are different forms of the same word (e.g., *child, children, children's* or *run, runs, running, ran*). These variations represent tense, number, or case rather than a new meaning.

3. Semantics: The Study of Meaning

Semantics is the branch of linguistics that focuses on how words and expressions communicate meaning.

What is Meaning?

Meaning is the thing, idea, or concept that a sound, word, or sign represents. It is deeply linked to **communication**, which can be:

- **Verbal:** Spoken or written words.
- **Non-verbal:** Signs, gestures, and expressions.

Key Semantic Concepts

The linguistic representation of "things" can be complex. We focus on two main ways words communicate meaning:

1. **Reference (or Denotation):** This is the relationship between words and the "real world."

- 2. Referential/Denotative Meaning:** This is the literal, dictionary definition of a word—the specific object or action it denotes in the world.

Note: Beyond denotation, words also enter into other **meaning relations** (such as synonymy or antonymy), where they are defined by their relationship to other words rather than just objects in the world.

1. Semantic Relations and the Lexicon

Words relate to one another within the vocabulary through a "web of sense." These relations link words based on their meanings and how they are categorized.

- **Synonyms:** Words with the same or similar referential/denotative meanings (e.g., *rich* and *wealthy*).
- **Antonyms:** Words with opposite meanings (e.g., *rich* and *poor*).
- **Hyponymy/Hypernymy:** A hierarchical relationship of inclusion.
- **Hypernym:** A category word with a general reference (e.g., *flower*).
- **Hyponym:** Specific words that fall into that category (e.g., *tulip*, *rose*, *violet*).

2. Reference and Arbitrariness

Arbitrariness of Reference: In linguistics, the relationship between a word (signifier) and its real-world referent (signified) is usually a matter of **convention**. There is no intrinsic physical reason why a "tree" is called a "tree."

Exceptions (Motivated Reference):

- **Phonological Motivation (Onomatopoeia):** Words that imitate the sound they describe (e.g., *buzz*, *hiss*).
- **Semantic Motivation (Proper Nouns):** Some names are chosen based on a specific intended meaning or to denote a unique referent.

Common Nouns vs. Proper Nouns

- **Proper Nouns:** Created to refer to a **unique referent**.
- **Common Nouns:** They do not have a unique referent; instead, they refer to **classes or categories** of things. Their reference can be generic or specific depending on the context.

3. Denotation vs. Connotation

Linguistic meaning is not just about the "literal" definition; it involves two distinct layers:

Feature	Denotation (Reference)	Connotation
Definition	The objective, dictionary meaning.	The subjective, emotional associations.
Nature	Fixed and established.	Vague, variable, and unclear.
Stability	Relatively stable.	Changes over time and across cultures.
Scope	Universal within the language.	Often personal or culture-specific.

Connotation reflects our experiences, beliefs, and attitudes toward a referent. For example, the words *youthful* and *childish* might denote the **Same** age group, but they carry very different connotations (positive vs. negative).

4. The Importance of Context

The actual meaning of a word can often only be interpreted through its surroundings:

1. **Linguistic Context (Co-text):** The other words used in the same sentence.
2. **Situational Context:** The physical or social setting, the speaker/writer, and the people involved in the communication.

5. Near-Synonyms and Language Variation

While we define synonyms as words that can be used interchangeably, **absolute synonyms** are rare. Most are "Near-Synonyms" that differ based on:

- **Dialect/Variety:** (e.g., British English *lift* vs. American English *elevator*).
- **Style/Register:** (e.g., *buy* is neutral, while *purchase* is formal).
- **Connotation:** Different emotional impacts.
- **Euphemism:** Using a mild or indirect word to talk about something unpleasant or embarrassing (e.g., *passed away* instead of *died*).

Etymological Origins (The "Triple Layer" of English)

English vocabulary is often categorized by its origin, which affects the level of formality:

1. **Anglo-Saxon:** Basic, everyday words (e.g., *kingly*).
2. **French:** More refined or literary words (e.g., *royal*).
3. **Latin/Greek:** Technical, scholarly, or highly formal words (e.g., *regal*).

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Multi word units- more than 1 word

Sequenze or combinations of word wich express one single word.

They represent single lexical units or single lexemes, they include more or less fixed and more or less semantically transparent expression

Ex: phrasal, verbo, compounds, idioms, proverbs, discourse, binomials and simile.

1) Phrasal verbs: follower by a parti le: verb + particle. Ex: give in, pass out...

A combination functioning as a single lexical unit; meaning in not always compositional.

Grammar- they have the same function as single-word verbs. The paricle mah be immediately after a) the verb b) the direct object.

Most phrasal verbs are informal.

Ex: jane has put out the meeting (verb+article);

Jane has put the meeting off (verb+object+particle).

In dictionaries phrasal verbs are multi-word lexeme representing single semantic units

In general-purpose monolingual dictionariespresent single headwords.

2) Compound word: prime examples of word formation processes.

Compounding si an extremely productive process: how word can combine to form compounds. Their meaning can be more or less transparent.

Ex: Blackbird and Blackboard.

Compound can be written ad 1 word, as 1 word but hyphenated, as a separate or distinct word BUT semantically they are single units of meaning.

- the word classes they are composed of;

- The word class of the resulting compound.

Frequency: noun + noun = noun ex: Country house.

Noun1 functions as an adjective and modifies the meaning of noun2:

Ex: day school or school day.

- Nouns: adjective + noun = green light;

- Adjectives: adjective + adjective= bitter-sweet;

- Adjectives: noun + adjective= bottle green;
- Verbs : noun + verbs= daydream.

In compoundig 2 or more word are combine to' form a lexeme with a new meaning wich belongs to the same/ different previus one.

3) fixed expression

- discours organizers: multi word units used to organize or structure discourse, to start a speech, explain something, to exemplify something, to conclude a speech.
- Binomials: expression Made of two fixed elements, wich are connected by conjunction wich indicate as binary relation. Binomials are fixed combination because their order cannot be modified. "Frozen expression".
- Similes: comparisons based on stereotypical associations, they are figures of speech expressed through the figurative use of language. They are more explicit than metaphores because they're based on the fixed patterns as... as... (As blind as a bat, As busy as a bee).
- Idiomatic phrases: more or less fixed sequence of words with a unitary meaning, they usually have a single word equivalent expression. Ex: spill the bean, get the wrong end of the stick, put your bags. Their meaning cannot be interpreted literally, they are figurative expression whose meaning cannot be derived by nothing. In dictionaries they are listed as an element under the most important elements in the phrase. They have lack of semantic transparency and limited flexibility.
- Proverb: they represent the accumulated folk wisdom of a colture, as express by language. They are usually long self-contained statements of knowledge. They cannot be interpreted literally. They are usually used as image.

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Collocation: the way in wich some words are often used together, or a particular combination of words used this way ex. "commit a crime" is a typical collocation

They co-select each other. Words tend to keep company whit other words, they tend to appear repeatedly together, words tend to attract one another in ways that cannot be explained only through grammatical or syntactic rule. Grammatical syntax explains how words combine with other word classes.

As opposed, they link individual words with other accompanying words based on meaning, they are another type of semantic relations between words. They explain how and why words tend to select other words in order to express a specific meaning.

Collocations are not fixed expression BUT the degree of co-selection between words is variable:

- some words co-occur rather freely with other word;
 - Some words appear to be more limited in combining with other words;
 - Some words are totally restricted in their combinability.
- 1) unrestricted collocations or free combinations;
 - 2) Restricted collocations;
 - 3) Fixed, unique or frozen collocations, wich combine with only a very few or even only one collocates.

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"The big five" Oxford, Cambridge, Collins, Longman and Mcmillan.

Lexicography; Lexicographers- professionals who write and edit dictionaries.

Focus on monolingual and learner's dictionaries.

Dictionaries are alphabetical lists of word containing descriptive definitions of those word.

Descriptive - antonym of "prescriptive". Descriptive because dictionaries are based on "corpora" (corpus), a verb large collection of texts.

Why dictionaries?

- Because they are authoritative surces of informations about English;
- Important and useful aids in language learning;
- The developement of dictionary skill: the ability to consult and use dictionaries correctly and the ability to interpret dictionaries.
- Lexical competence: understand a word in its written/spoken forms, spell it and pronounce it correctly, understand meaning, referencial, and connotative meaning, know its grammatical patterns and its collocations, know its use in communication.
- Morphology:

SFR: quadro comune di riferimento per le lingue, A1 through C2.

Types of dictionaries:

- number of languages covered (monolingual, bilingual, multilingual);

- Number of lemmas included;
- The area of language covered (general, specialized or pronunciation, collocation, idioms and proverb);
- The target user (native- speaker, foreign learner, children);
- The type of publication (paper/print or electronic/online format).

We can divide dictionaries in:

- general-purpose
- Specialist: a) subject matter: contain information wich general-propulse dictionaries not do deal with. B) target audience: they aim to address specific group o users, who are not sufficiently served by general-purpose dictionaries.