

Semasiology

The branch of lexicology which deals with the meaning is called **semasiology**

P.S. Not to be confused with semiotics

Semiotics, also called or **semiology**, is the study of sign processes (semiosis), signs, is the study of sign processes (semiosis), signs and symbols, both individually and grouped into sign systems)

Ferdinand de Saussure described language in terms of *signs*, which he in turn divided into *signifieds* and *signifiers*.

The signifier is the sound of the linguistic object

The signified is the mental construction or image associated with the sound.

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Three branches of semiotics

- **Semantics** - relation between signs and the things they refer to
- **Syntactics**: relation of signs to each other in formal structures
- **Pragmatics**: relation of signs to their impacts on those who use them

There are two approaches (schools) of meaning:

the referential approach, which seeks to formulate the essence of meaning by establishing the interdependence between words and the things or concepts they denote.

- The functional approach, which studies the functions of a word in speech and is less concerned with what meaning is than with how it works.

TYPES OF MEANING

word-meaning is not homogeneous

it is made up of various components
the combination and the interrelation
of which determine to a great extent
the inner facet of the word

The two main types of meaning that are readily observed are the **grammatical** and the **lexical** meanings

Grammatical meaning - the component of meaning recurrent in identical sets of individual forms of different words

i.e. the tense meaning in the word-forms of verbs (**asked, thought, walked, etc.**)

or the case meaning in the word-forms of various nouns (**girl's, boy's, night's, etc.**).

Lexical meaning of the word - the component of meaning proper to the word as a linguistic unit, i.e. recurrent in all the forms of this word

It is the **CONCEPTUAL CONTENT OF A WORD**

Lexical meaning includes **denotational** and **connotational** components

One of the functions of words is to denote things, concepts and so on.

The **denotational meaning**, i.e. that component of the lexical meaning which makes communication possible.

The second component of the lexical meaning is the **connotational** component, i.e. the emotive charge and the stylistic value of the word:

to eat – to pig out

to begin- to commence

large, big, tremendous
like, love, worship
girl, girlie; dear, dearie

the emotive charge of the words
tremendous, worship and **girlie** is heavier
than that of the words **large, like** and **girl**

- This does not depend on the “feeling” of the individual speaker but is true for all speakers of English

Literary (bookish) words are not stylistically homogeneous.

Besides general-literary (bookish) words, e.g. **harmony (PEACE)**, **calamity (DISASTER)** we may single out various specific subgroups, namely:

- 1) terms **or** scientific words
- 2) poetic words and archaisms
- 3) barbarisms and foreign words

The colloquial words may be subdivided into:

Common colloquial words

some sort of, to be good enough at, chap, lad, bloke, stuff, kid, guy

Slang - a violation of the norms of Standard English, e.g.

- **nuts, bonkers, banana** for 'insane'.
- **dough, jack, tin, brass, slippery stuff, bones** (money),

- golden, toxic, hype, decent - GOOD
- gnarly, beige, wacky, cheesy - BAD

Professionalisms - words used in narrow groups bound by the same occupation, such as, e.g.,

lab for 'laboratory',
a buster for 'a bomb'

Jargonisms - words marked by their use within a particular social group and bearing a secret and cryptic character, e.g.

a sucker — ‘a person who is easily deceived’

- Netter, tourist
- Flamer, pain in the net
- Softy
- *computer geek, gweep, troglodyte, turbo-nerd, propeller-head*

Vulgarisms - coarse words that are not generally used in public, e.g. **bloody, hell, damn, shut up, etc**

Dialectical words, e.g. lass, kirk

**Colloquial coinages e.g.
newspaperdom, allrightnik,
shopaholic**

Stylistic reference and emotive charge of words are closely connected and to a certain degree interdependent

The colloquial words **daddy**, **mammy** are more emotional than the neutral **father**, **mother**; the slang words **mum**, **bob** are undoubtedly more expressive than their neutral counterparts

Words of neutral style may also differ in the **degree of emotive charge**

the words **large, big, tremendous** are equally neutral as to their stylistic reference

but they are not identical as far as their emotive charge is concerned