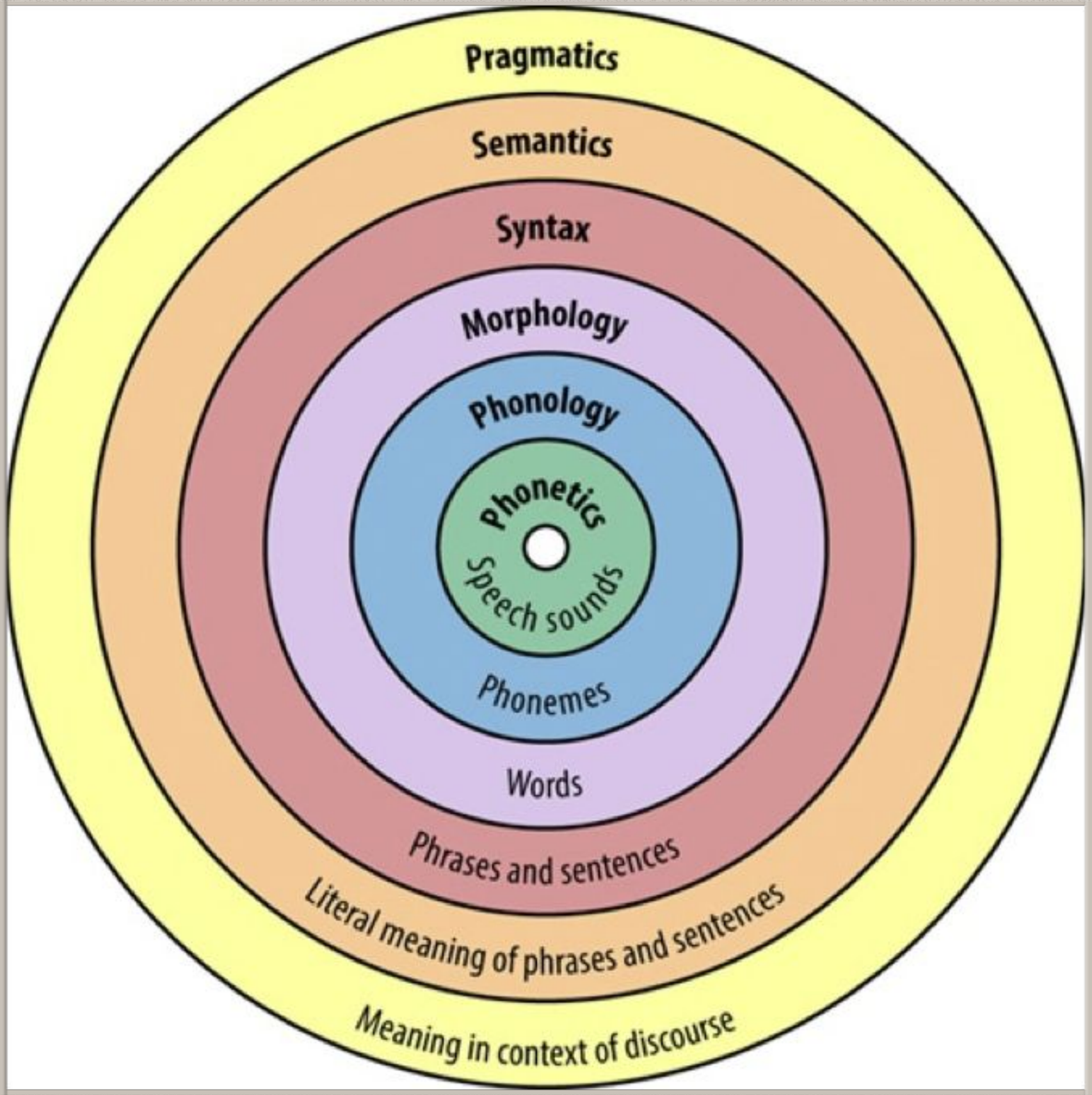
MEANING AS FORM


Pragmatics
Semantics
Syntax
Morphology
Phonology
Phonetics
Speech sounds
Phonemes
Words
Phrases and sentences
Literal meaning of phrases and sentences
Meaning in context of discourse

	Тема занятия	Основное содержание занятия	Вопросы, на которые мы получим ответ
1	Имена, концепты и фреймы	Основные понятия семантики. Значения слов как концепты. Семиотический треугольник. Уровень значения и уровень коннотаций. Природа понятий. Классический и прототипический подходы к категоризации. Фреймовая структура концепта.	Что необходимо, чтобы понять и описать значение слова? Как именно слова относятся к явлениям окружающего нас мира? Почему у большинства слов есть несколько уровней значений? Как охарактеризовать концептуальное содержание слова? Почему одно и то же содержание может быть концептуализировано и оформлено по-разному?
2	Семантические отношения	Синтагматические семантические отношения (коллокации). Парадигматические семантические отношения (синонимия, антонимия, гипонимия, меронимия).	Как организованы слова в наших ментальных лексиконах? Почему только некоторые из бесконечного множества возможных комбинаций слов доминируют в реальном языковом употреблении?
3	Смысловое варьирование и причины семантических перемен	Неопределенность в сравнении с двусмысленностью. Полисемия против однозначности. Смысловые изменения и его причины. Тропы и фигуры речи. Метафора и метонимия. Конверсия и грамматикализация.	Почему одна и та же языковая форма иногда имеет много разных значений? И насколько в действительности различаются эти значения? В силу каких исторических процессов форма приобретает множественные значения? Насколько систематичны и широко распространены эти процессы? Откуда берутся служебные слова?
4	Значения высказываний	Композициональность и идиоматичность. Пропозиция. Структурная двусмысленность. Отношения между пропозициями (включение, контрадикция, пресуппозиция).	Можем ли мы перенести наши аналитические принципы со значения слов на значение более крупных языковых единиц: фраз и предложений? Что именно означает предложение и как можно охарактеризовать отношения между предложениями?
5	Прагматика и прагматические принципы в действии	Основные понятия прагматики. Перформативы, речевые акты, иллокуции. Импликатуры. Принцип кооперации и речевые максимы. Понятие о контексте. Нарушение максим и пренебрежение максимами. Вежливость с лингвистической точки зрения.	Как делать дела словами? Как отличить смысл высказывания от его коммуникативного (=прагматического) эффекта? Как формируются умозаключения? Как фоновые знания влияют на нашу интерпретацию высказываний? С какой целью мы нарушаем речевые максимы?
6	Социолингвистика	Основные понятия социолингвистики. Измерения и уровни языкового варьирования.	Каким образом использование языка варьируется в зависимости от географических, социальных и контекстных факторов?

BASIC NOTIONS OF SEMANTICS

PLAN FOR TODAY

- Word meaning: concepts and reference, sense and denotation
- Linguistic signs and the semiotic triangle
- Layers of word meaning and connotations

1

Compare a linguistic symbol like *'cat'* to the road sign below. What are the similarities and what are the differences?

LINGUISTICS AS THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF NATURAL LANGUAGES

<cat>

form

LINGUISTICS AS THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF NATURAL LANGUAGES

concept, meaning

LINGUISTICS AS THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF NATURAL LANGUAGES

icon

LINGUISTICS AS THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF NATURAL LANGUAGES

<cat>

symbol

LINGUISTICS AS THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF NATURAL LANGUAGES

<cat>

symbol

icon

"The link between form and meaning in linguistic symbols is fixed."

– In which respects is this statement true, and in which respects is it not true?

THE LINK BETWEEN FORM AND MEANING IN SYMBOLS IS FIXED?

<cat>

<koshka>

That depends on how one understands the word *fixed*.
The correct formulation is that the link is conventional, i.e. agreed upon (or shared)
by the speech community and in this sense stable across different conversations, texts, etc.

LINGUISTICS AS THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF NATURAL LANGUAGES

<cat>

analysis of linguistic form/structures (phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax)

LINGUISTICS AS THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF NATURAL LANGUAGES

<cat>

analysis of linguistic form/structures (phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax)

analysis of linguistic meaning

SEMANTICS

reference

denotation

In what way do the following uses of the English word *mean* relate to different aspects of linguistic meaning?

(1) I think ***tavşan*** means ‘rabbit’ in Turkish.

(2) I brought you your coat. You meant this one, didn’t you?

REFERENCE

<coat>

Please bring me my coat.

REFERENCE

<coat>

I brought you your coat. You meant this one, didn't you?

REFERENCE

<coat>

I brought you your coat. You **meant** this one, didn't you?
= an act of REFERENCE: establishing a relationship between a linguistic form and an entity in the world on a specific occasion of language use.

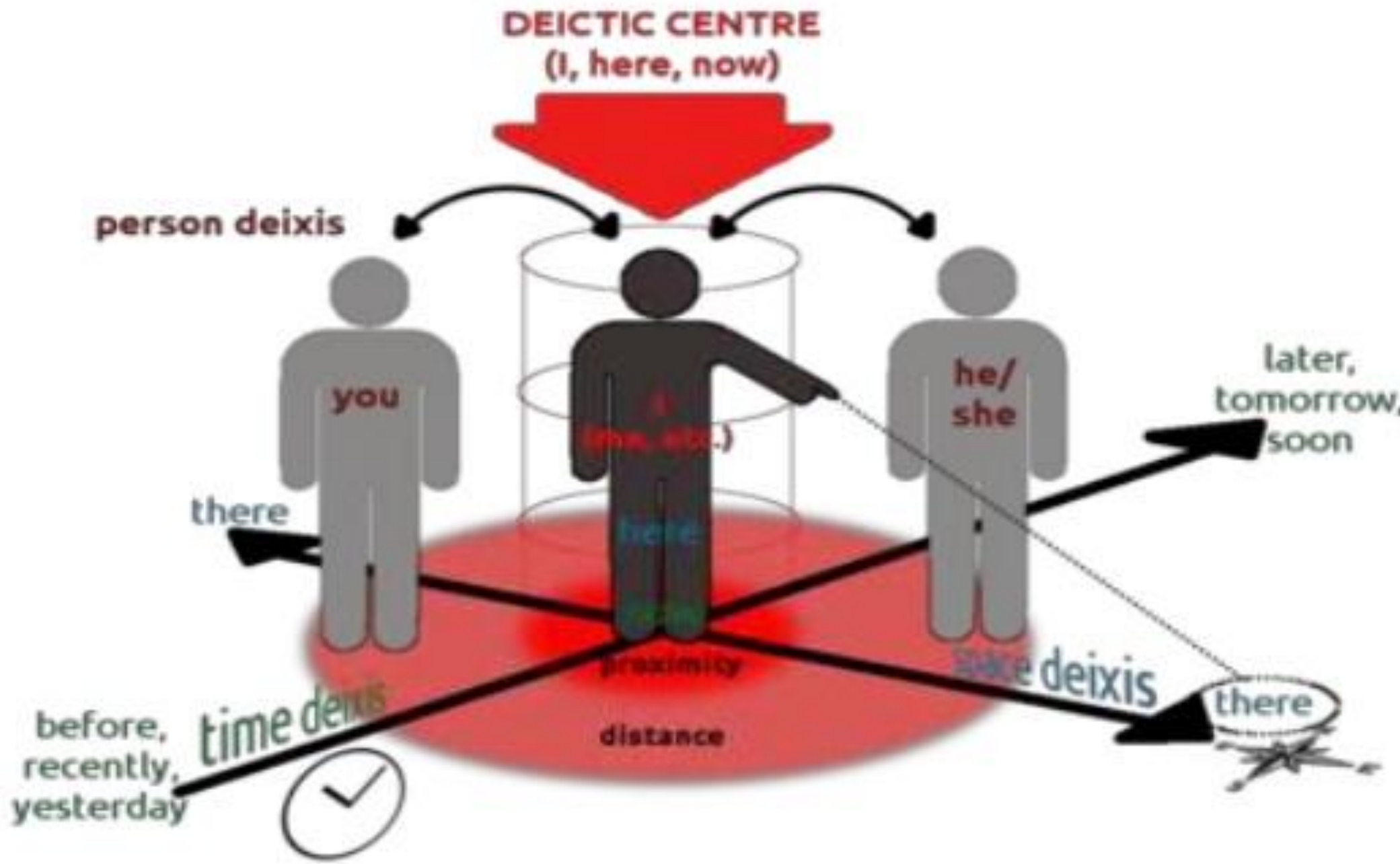
DEFINITE REFERENCE

I brought you your coat. You meant this one, didn't you?

= definite reference
entity is unique or has been mentioned before in the current discourse and is thus activated in the speaker's mind

= deictic expression
(definite) reference is accomplished on the basis of the immediate situational context

DEICTIC CENTER =origo



“Well, eh, as you enter the door, immediately to the right of it is the desk against the wall, connected to it is the bed and then comes the corner going up to the window, and there between the window and the wall is this bookshelf, and on the other side, um, there isn’t much space left, there I have the couch, ...”

–The hearer is taken on an “imaginary gaze tour” led by a fictive observer (Linde and Labov 1975)

DENOTATION

<rabbit>

< tavşan>

I think *tavşan* means ‘rabbit’ in Turkish.
= The Turkish sound form *tavşan* symbolises the same concept that is expressed in English with sound form *rabbit.*

"The most direct connections of linguistic forms (phonological or syntactic) are with conceptual structures [...]. Concepts are vital to the efficient functioning of human cognition. They are organized bundles of stored knowledge which represent [...] events, entities, situations, and so on in our experience.

If we were not able to assign aspects of our experience to stable categories, it would remain disorganized chaos. We would not be able to learn from it because each experience would be unique.

It is only because we can put similar (but not identical) elements of experience into categories that we can recognize them as having happened before, and we can access stored knowledge about them. Furthermore, shared categories are a prerequisite for communication."

– Cruse 2004: 125

GAVAGAI PROBLEM

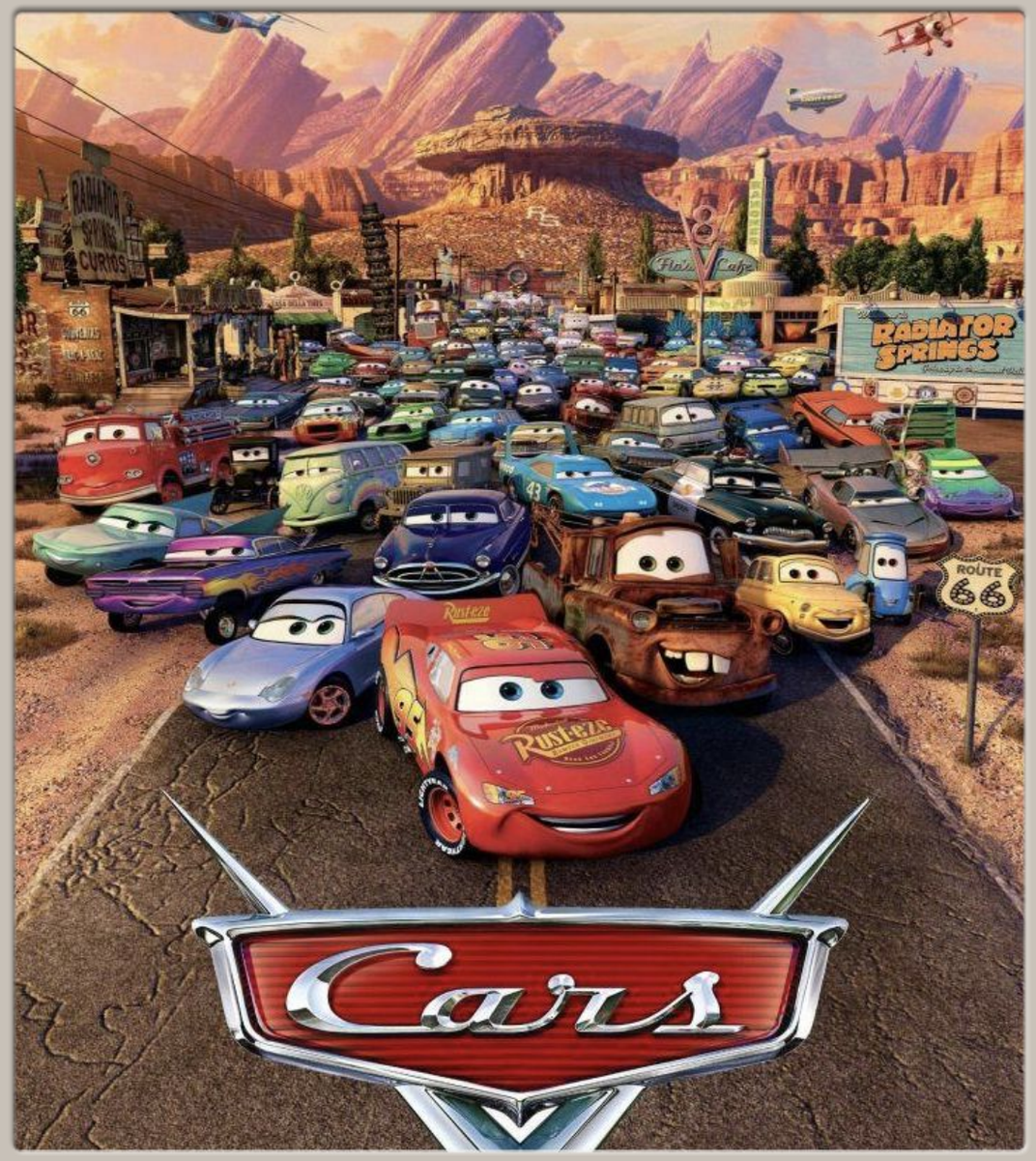
- Imagine a linguist who comes across a culture whose language is entirely foreign to him.
- The linguist tries to learn all he can about this new language.
- Then one day a rabbit scurries by, the native says ‘Gavagai’, and the linguist notes down the sentence ‘Rabbit’ (or ‘Lo, a rabbit’) as tentative translation.
- But how good is this translation?

2

In their early stages of language acquisition, young children often initially apply a word like *'car'* only to a specific toy car or the family car, but not any other cars. Please describe what these children still have to “discover” or “learn”.

UNDEREXTENSION

initial failure to accept that words do not usually have a single referent but a set of possible referents (= denotation) and hence symbolise concepts (entire categories/types of things)

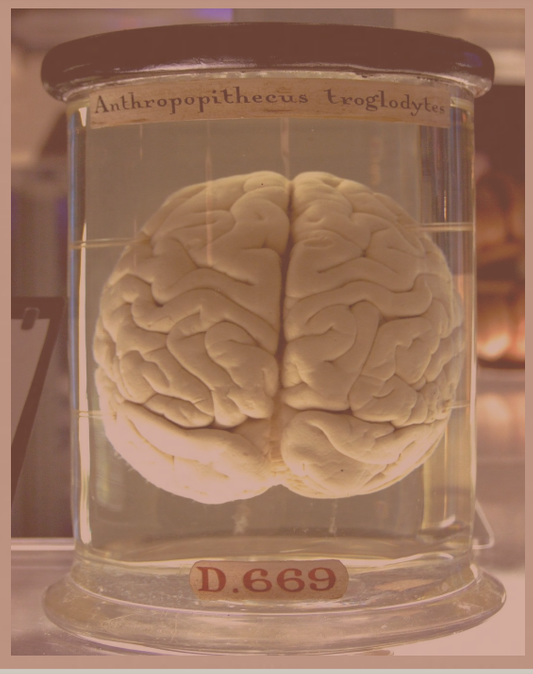


SEMIOTIC TRIANGLE

SEMIOTIC TRIANGLE

<CAR>

SEMIOTIC TRIANGLE



mental category, concept

<CAR>

Concepts can be described in terms of properties which are important for classifying an object as an instantiation of that concept.

Concepts have fuzzy boundaries.

SEMIOTIC TRIANGLE

mental category, concept

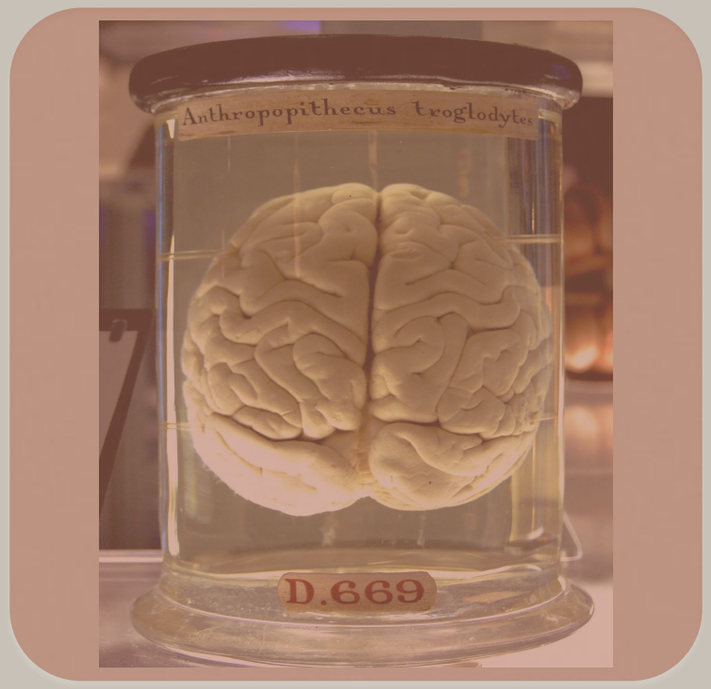
means

linguistic sign

<CAR>

Meaning is the relation between a linguistic expression (i.e. an arbitrary form, e.g. a word) and a mental category that is used to classify objects, i.e. a concept.

SEMIOTIC TRIANGLE



mental category, concept

means

denotes

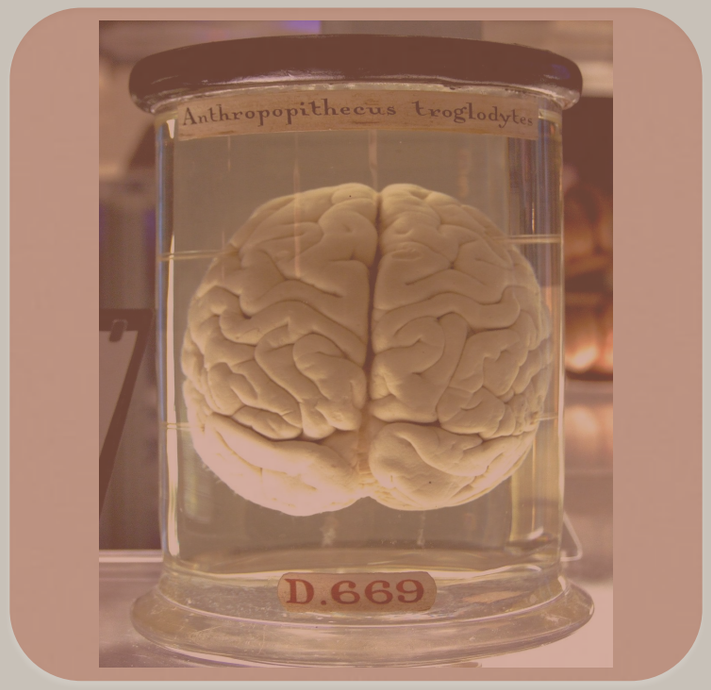
linguistic sign

possible referents

<CAR>

Denotation is the relation between the entire class of objects to which an expression correctly refers and a mental category that is used to classify these objects.

SEMIOTIC TRIANGLE



mental category, concept

means

denotes

linguistic sign

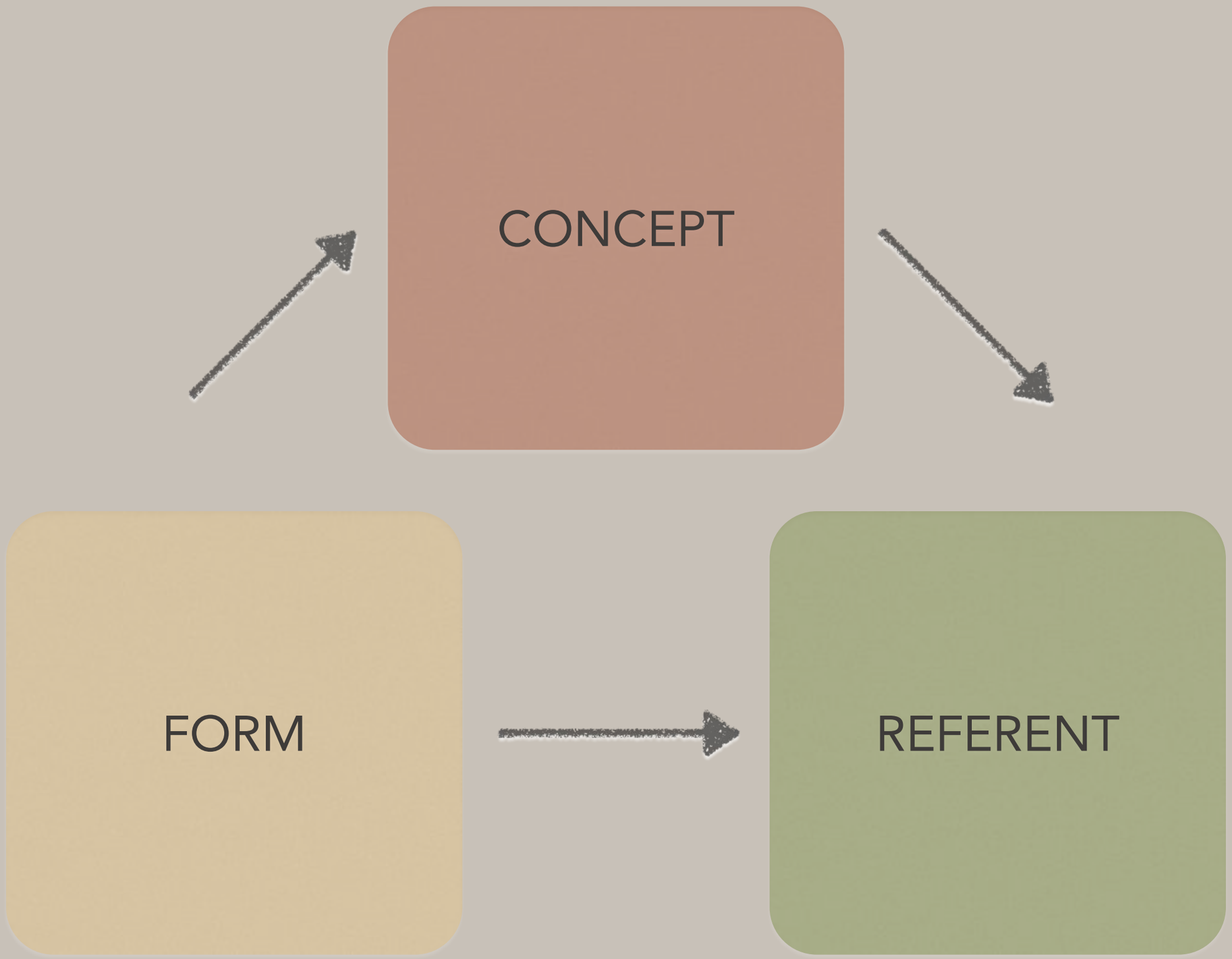
possible referents

<CAR>

refers to

Reference is the act of establishing a relationship between a linguistic expression and an object in the world on a specific occasion of language use.

SEMIOTIC TRIANGLE



In which respect are the following linguistic expressions remarkable?

(1) the unicorn in the woods / a diamond as big as the Ritz

(2) Hi! / Please, … / Ouch!

(3) the morning star / the evening star

Distinguishing between sense and reference solves a number of puzzles:

CONCEPTS & REFERENTS

- Some words/phrases do not have referents in the real world:

  the unicorn in the woods, a diamond as big as the Ritz.

- Some words/phrases never have a referent in any kind of real or imaginary world: Hi! Please, ... Ouch!

- Some words/phrases (can) have the same referent, but they

LAW OF DENOTATION

CONCEPT

Intension

Extension

LAW OF DENOTATION

CONCEPT

Intension

the internal content of
a concept
that constitutes its
formal definition

Extension

LAW OF DENOTATION

CONCEPT

Intension

the internal content of a concept that constitutes its formal definition

Extension

the range of concept's applicability to particular objects

LAW OF DENOTATION

CONCEPT

Intension	Extension
sememe 1	object 1
sememe 2	object 2
sememe 3	object 3

LAW OF DENOTATION

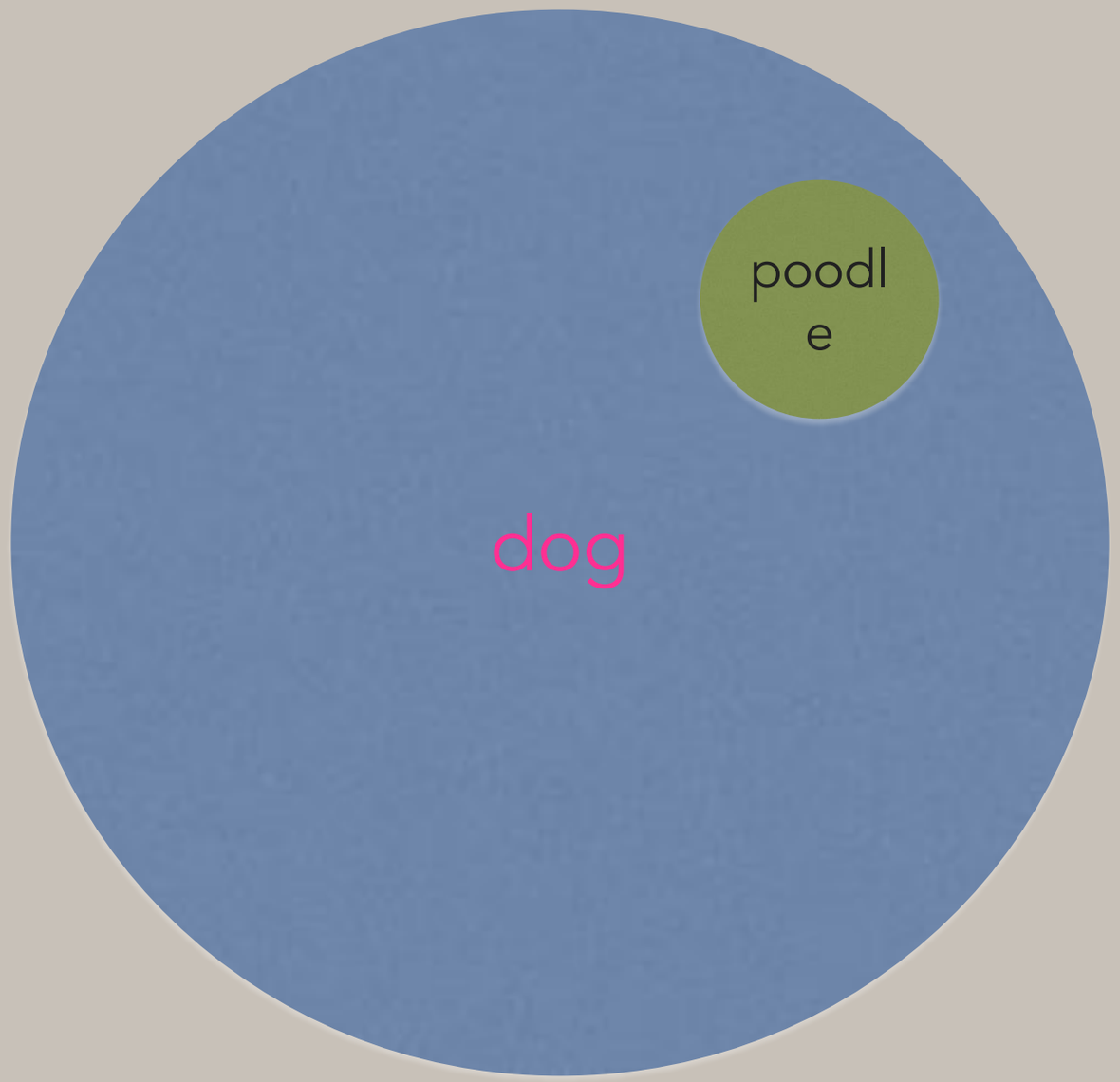
‘SHIP’

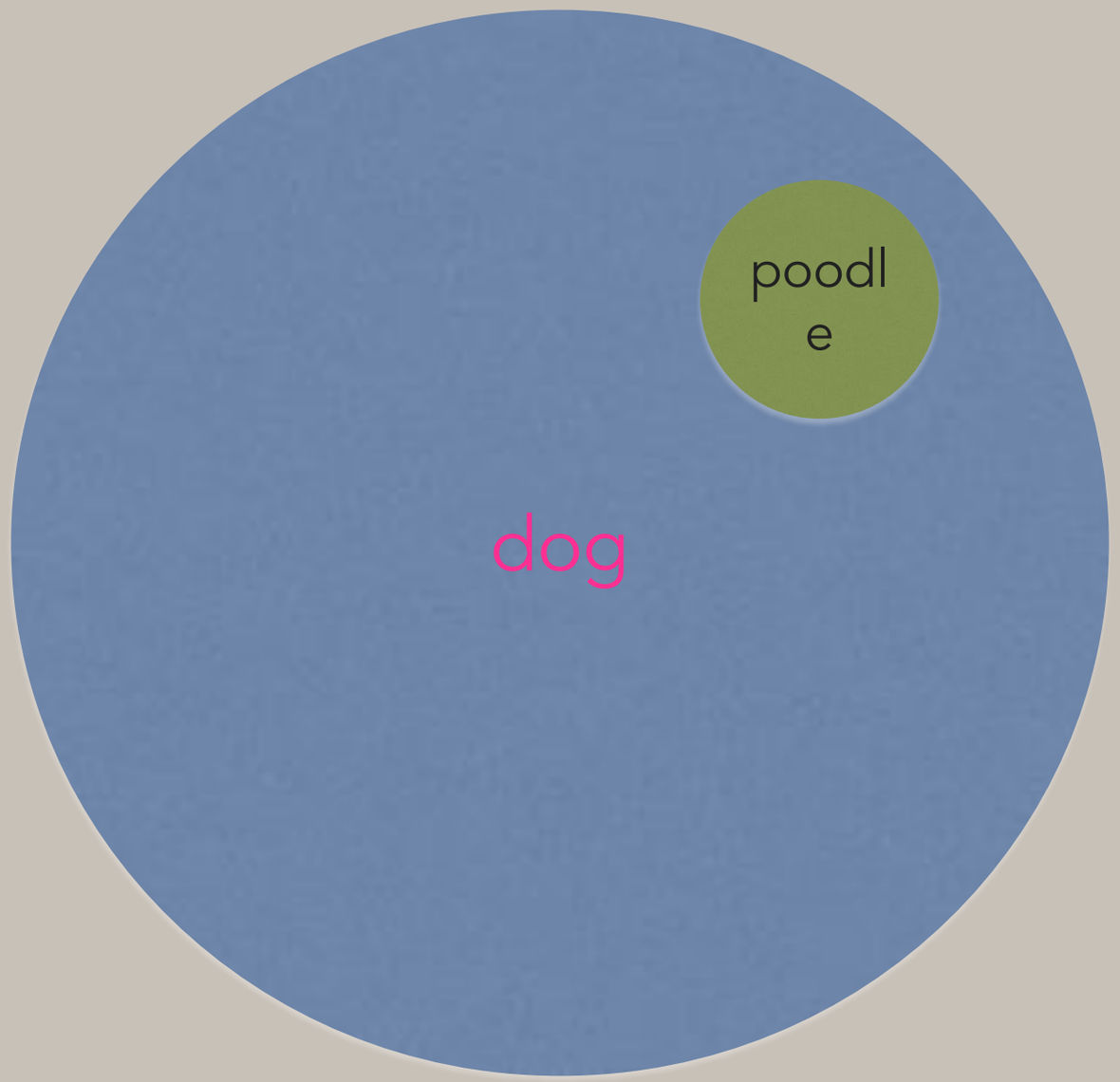
Intension	Extension
vehicle	cargo ship
for conveyance on water	battle ship
	passenger ship

LAW OF DENOTATION

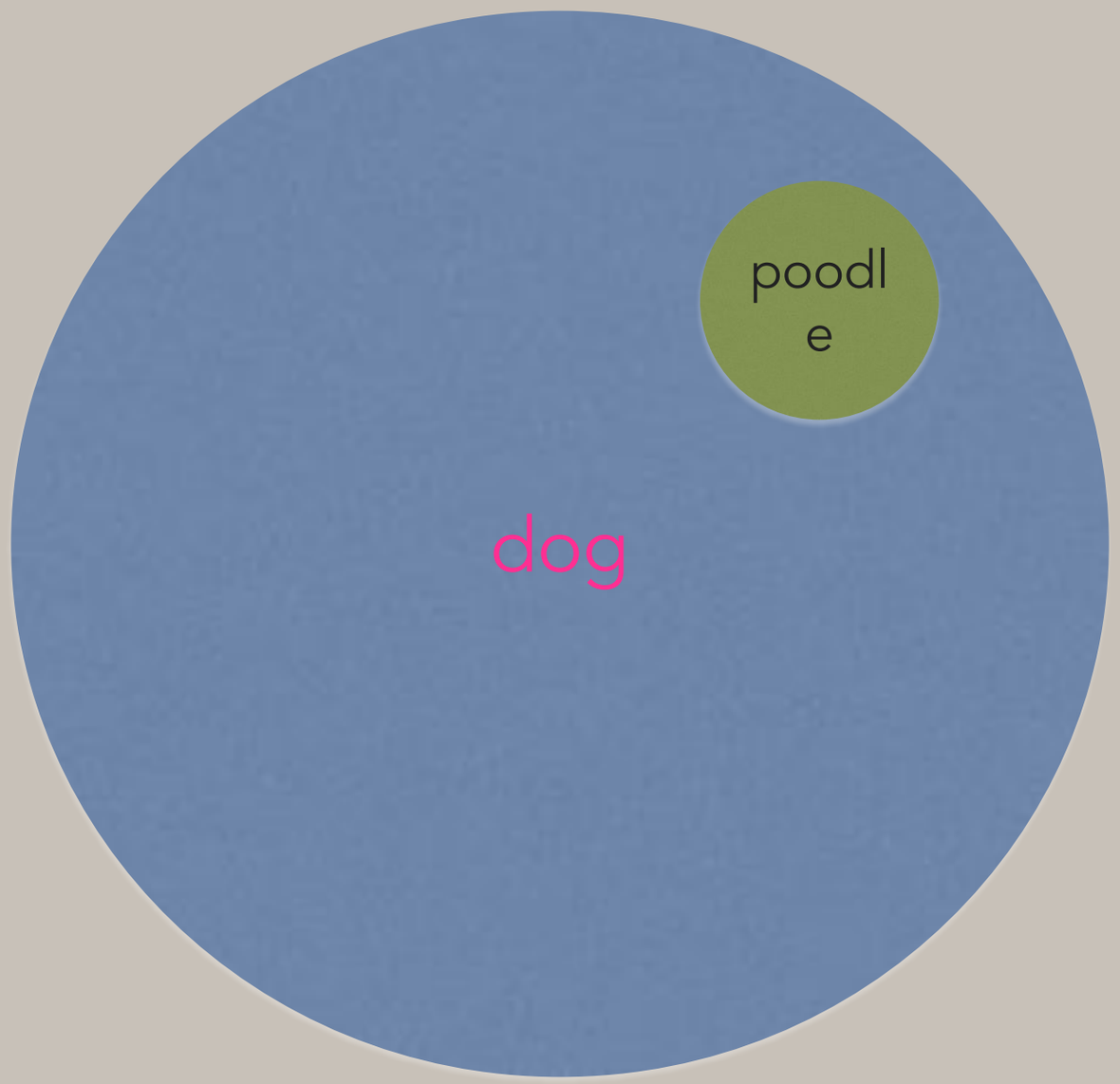
“The more semantic features are specified in a word’s intension,

the smaller its extension.”


poodl
e
dog



domestic
mammal
closely related
to the gray wolf



any of a breed
of intelligent
dogs
that have a curly
dense
solid-colored
coat
and that are
grouped
into standard,
miniature,
and toy sizes
which are often
considered
separate breeds

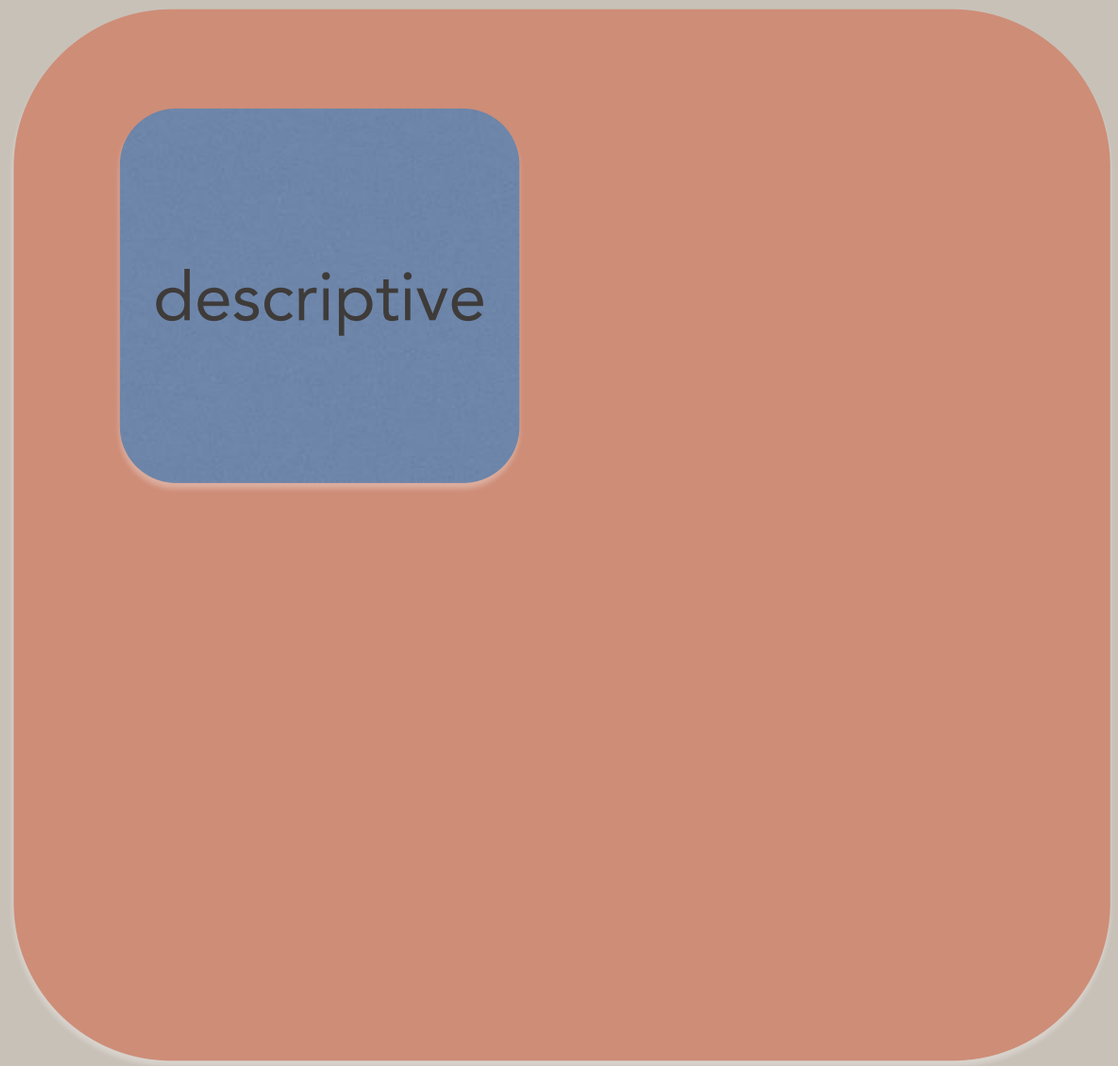
domestic
mammal
closely related
to the gray wolf

LEXICAL MEANING

{set of semantic features}

LEXICAL MEANING

a concept for the potential referents of a word



LEXICAL MEANING

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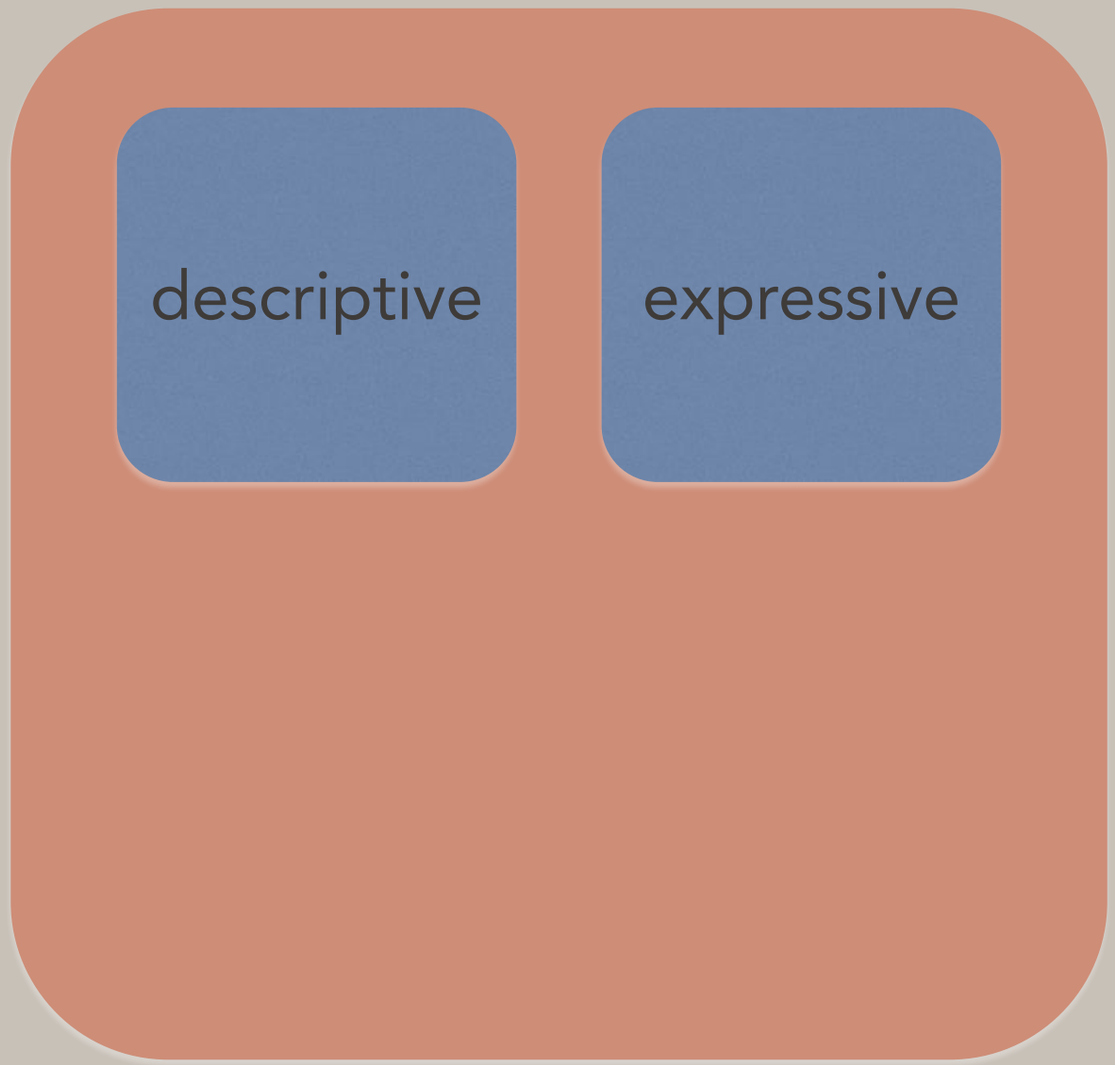


the subset that reveals our emotional attitude

A word has expressive meaning if it directly expresses (rather than describes)

LEXICAL MEANING

the speaker's sensations, emotions or attitudes.

- Words with no descriptive but expressive meaning:
  - Ouch! Oops! Wow! Gosh!
  - Someone has turned the bloody lights on!
- Words with both descriptive and expressive meaning:
  - It was damn cold.
  - Stop blubbering.

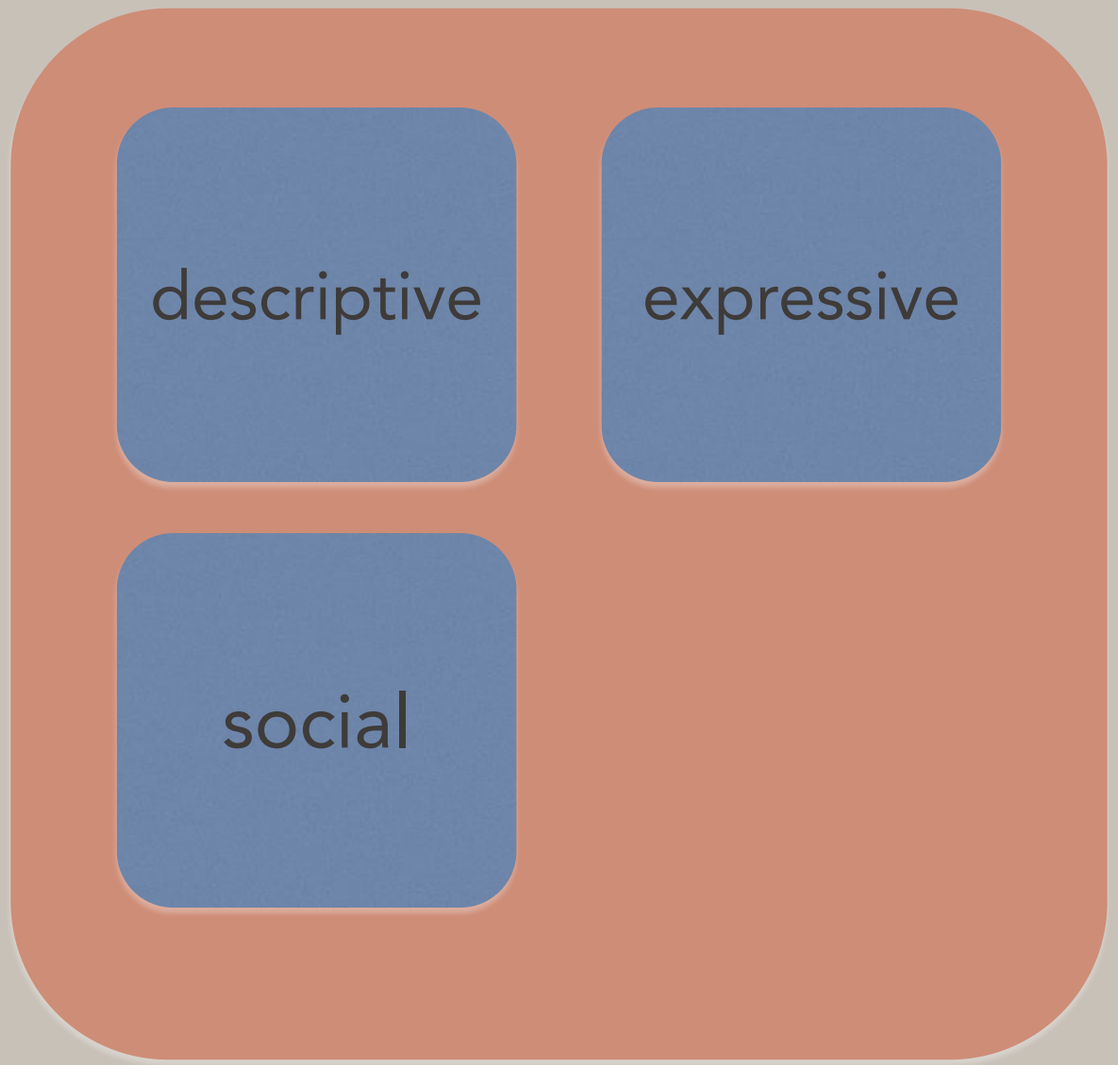
LEXICAL MEANING

- Expressive meaning does not bear on descriptive meaning. The descriptive meaning of the sentence would not change if the expressive term were left out:
  - Someone has turned the (bloody) lights on!
- Expressive aspects of the meaning of a sentence cannot be “challenged” by the hearer:
  - Oops! — *That’s not true!

LEXICAL MEANING

a concept for the potential referents of a word

the subset that does some kind of social work



the subset that reveals our emotional attitude

A word has social meaning if it conventionally serves the indication of

LEXICAL MEANING

social relations or the performance of conventionalised social interaction.

- Words with no descriptive but social meaning:
  - Hi! [informal greeting]
  - Sorry! [apology]
  - Please! [polite demand]
- Words with both descriptive and social meaning:
  - German du ['the person addressed' + informal social

LEXICAL MEANING

Some languages have rich sets of honorific forms that directly code social meaning but no descriptive meaning, e.g. Japanese:

Inu wa kiiroi sokkusu o tabe-ta.
dog TOP yellow socks ACC eat-PST
'The dog ate the yellow socks.'

close/intimate social relationships (family, lovers, good friends)

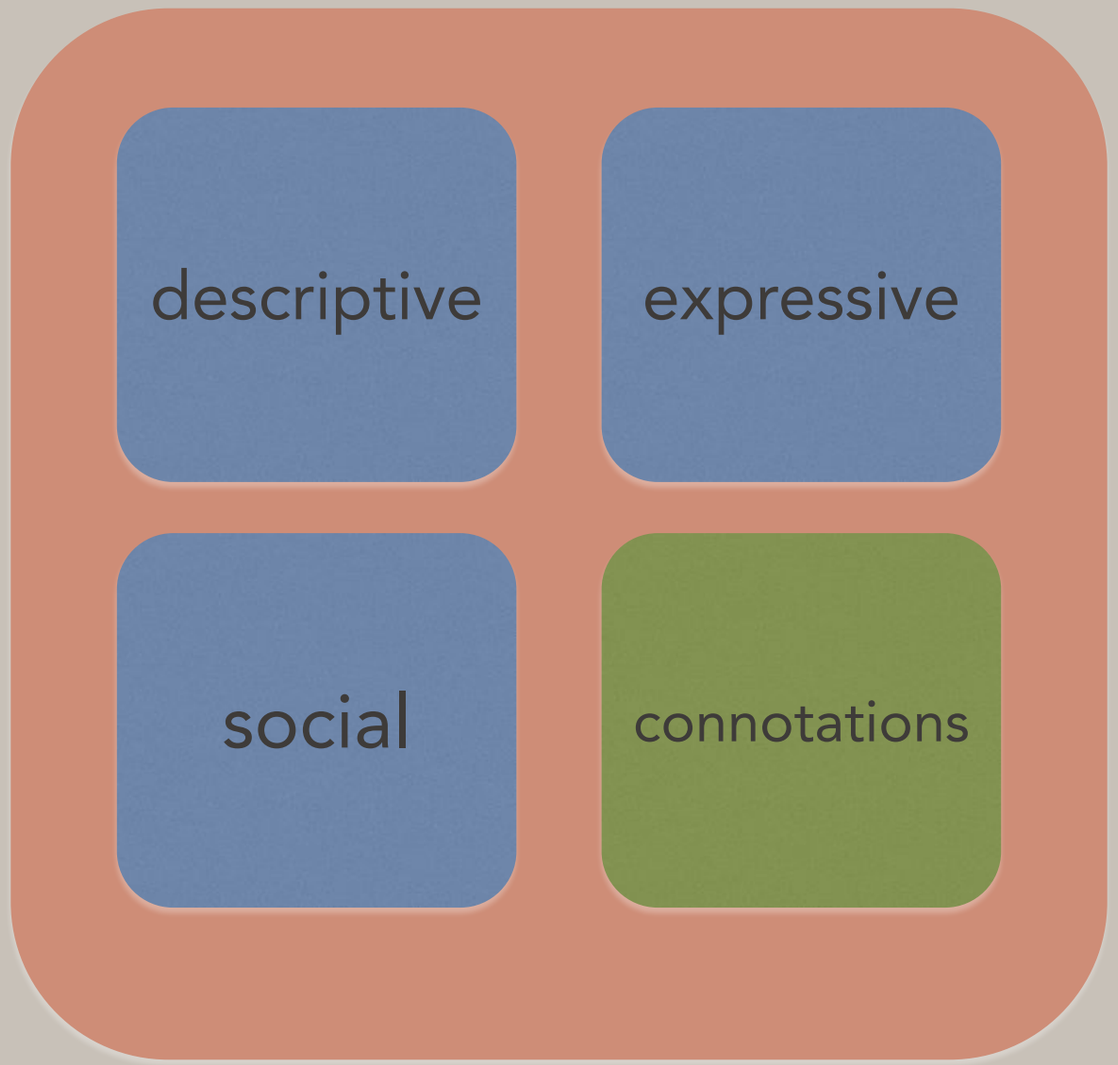
Inu wa kiiroi sokkusu o tabe-mashi-ta.
dog TOP yellow socks ACC eat-HON-PST
'The dog ate the yellow socks.'

normal level of formality, e.g. people of the same status

LEXICAL MEANING

a concept for the potential referents of a word

the subset that does some kind of social work



the subset that reveals our emotional attitude

some words come packaged with additional associations; they are indicative of particular dialect, register, style

CONNOTATIONS

Connotations are largely conventional (i.e. shared) associations of words based on their usage contexts or cultural knowledge relating to them.

- Words often evoke associations with a particular dialect, style, medium, register.
- Beyond that, words often evoke associations based on our experience with the world (rather than language as such), e.g. *black*:
  - death, funeral
  - coffee, tea
  - metal
  - night

These are connotations in a wider sense (less conventional or less widely shared) and

THE NATURE OF CONCEPTS

PLAN FOR TODAY

- How can we characterise the conceptual content of a word?
- Different kinds of approaches to the study of lexical meaning
- Some research methods and tools in the study of concepts

- The word adult can _____ humans older than 18.

4

- The terms morning star and evening star have different _____ but have the same _____.

- The word car _____ a particular set of vehicles.

- An act of _____ can be made to intangible and imaginary things like unicorns.

- The word quack differs from doctor in the dimension of

CATEGORISATION

"If we were not able to assign aspects of our experience to stable categories, it would remain disorganized chaos. We would not be able to learn from it because each experience would be unique.

It is only because we can put similar (but not identical) elements of experience into categories that we can recognize them as having happened before, and we can access stored knowledge about them. Furthermore, shared categories are a prerequisite for communication."

– Cruse 2004: 125

CATEGORISATION

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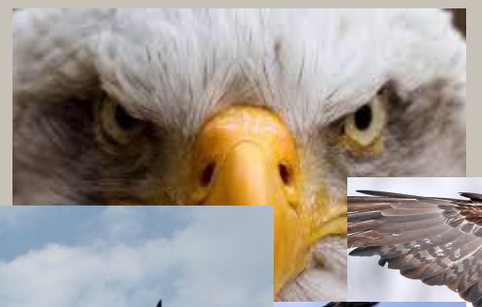

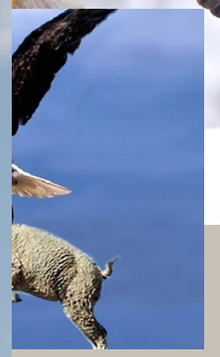

CATEGORISATION

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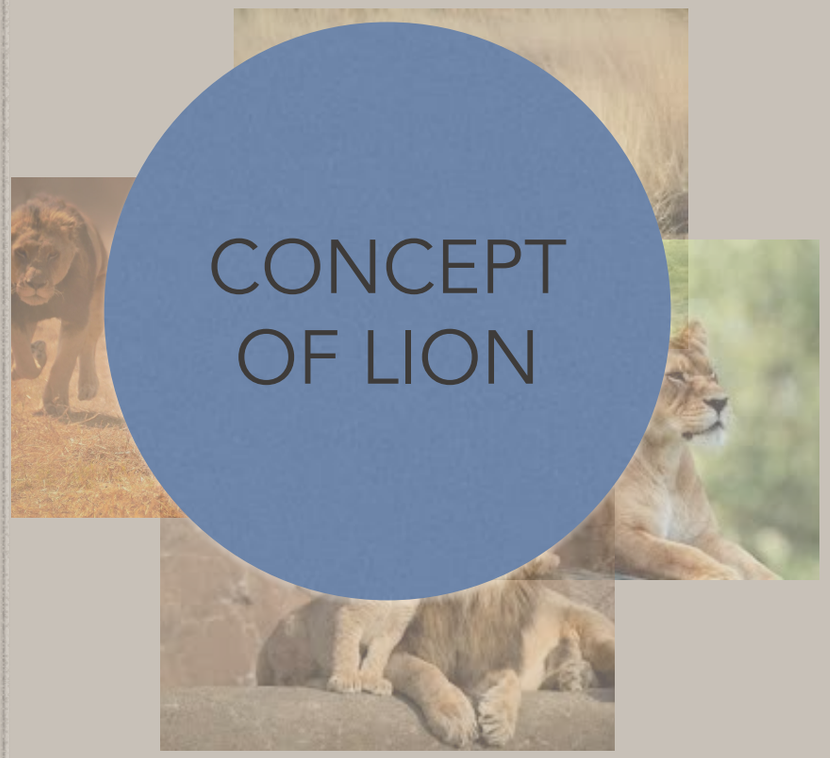

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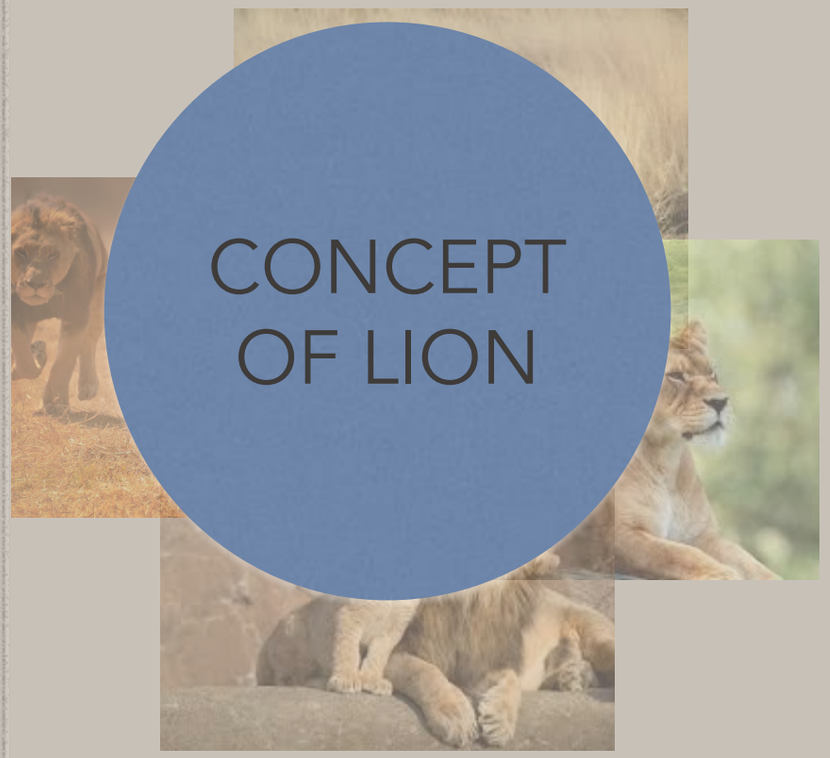
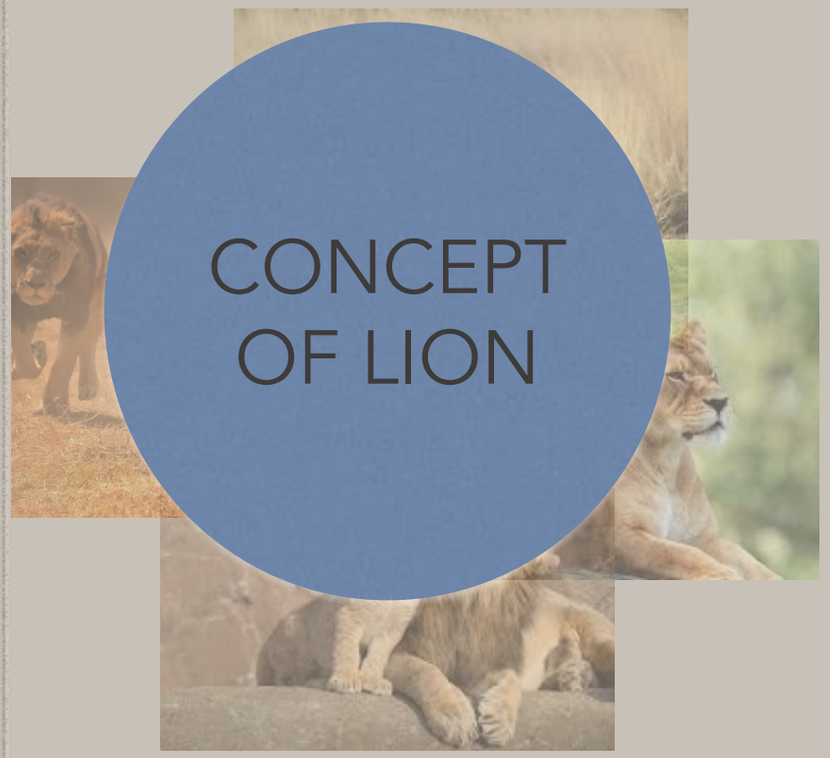


CATEGORISATION



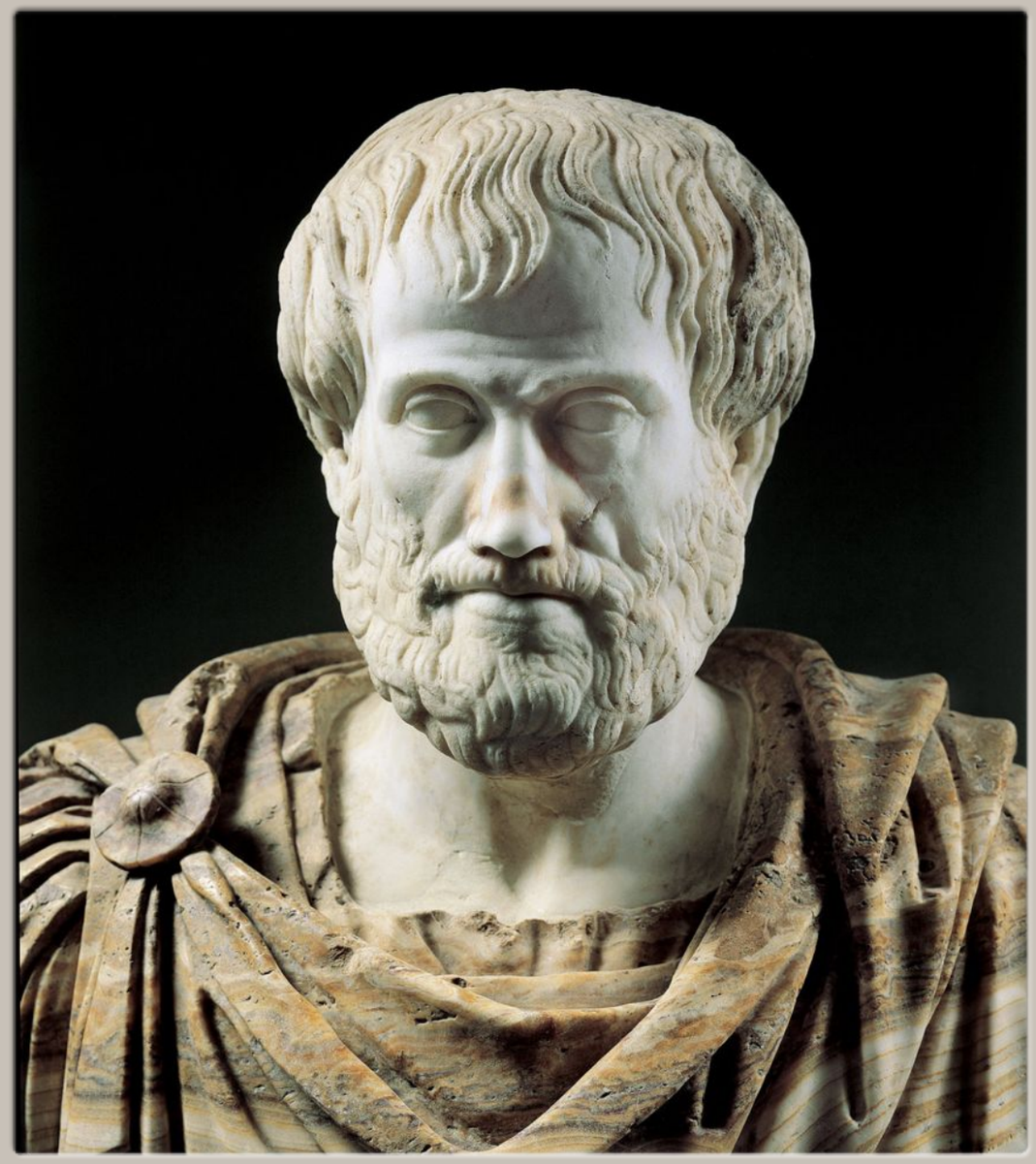
THEORIES OF MEANING

CLASSICAL ARISTOTELIAN VIEW

PROTOTYPE THEORY

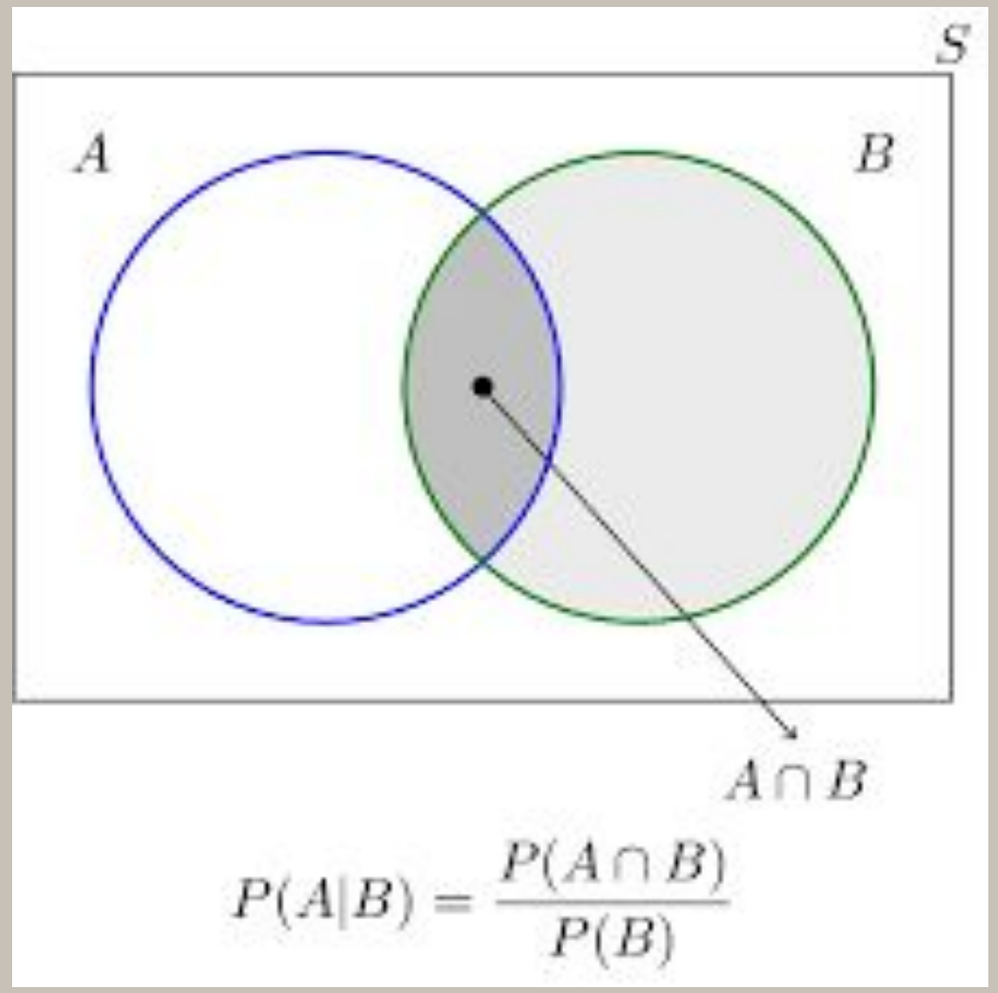
ARISTOTELIAN VIEW

- The classical Aristotelian view claims that categories are discrete entities characterized by a set of properties which are shared by all their members.
- These are assumed to establish the conditions which are both necessary and sufficient to capture meaning.



ARISTOTELIAN VIEW

- ‘Being in the shaded region’ is sufficient for ‘being in A’, but not necessary.
- ‘Being in A’ is necessary for ‘being in the shaded region’, but not sufficient.
- ‘Being in A and being in B’ is necessary and sufficient for being in the shaded region.

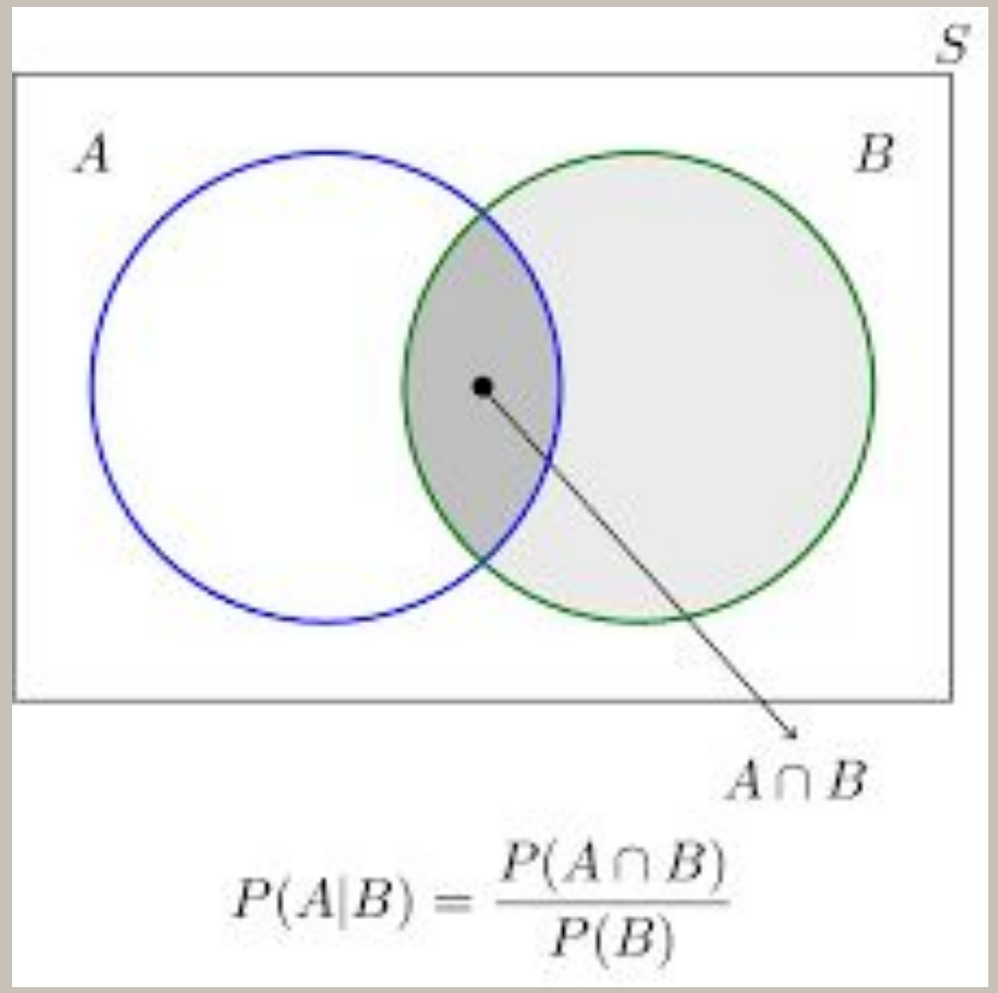


ARISTOTELIAN VIEW

- ‘Being in the shaded region’ is sufficient for ‘being in A’, but not necessary.
- ‘Being in A’ is necessary for ‘being in the shaded region’, but not sufficient.

a condition
cannot be left out

- ‘Being in A and being in B’ is necessary and sufficient for being in the shaded region.



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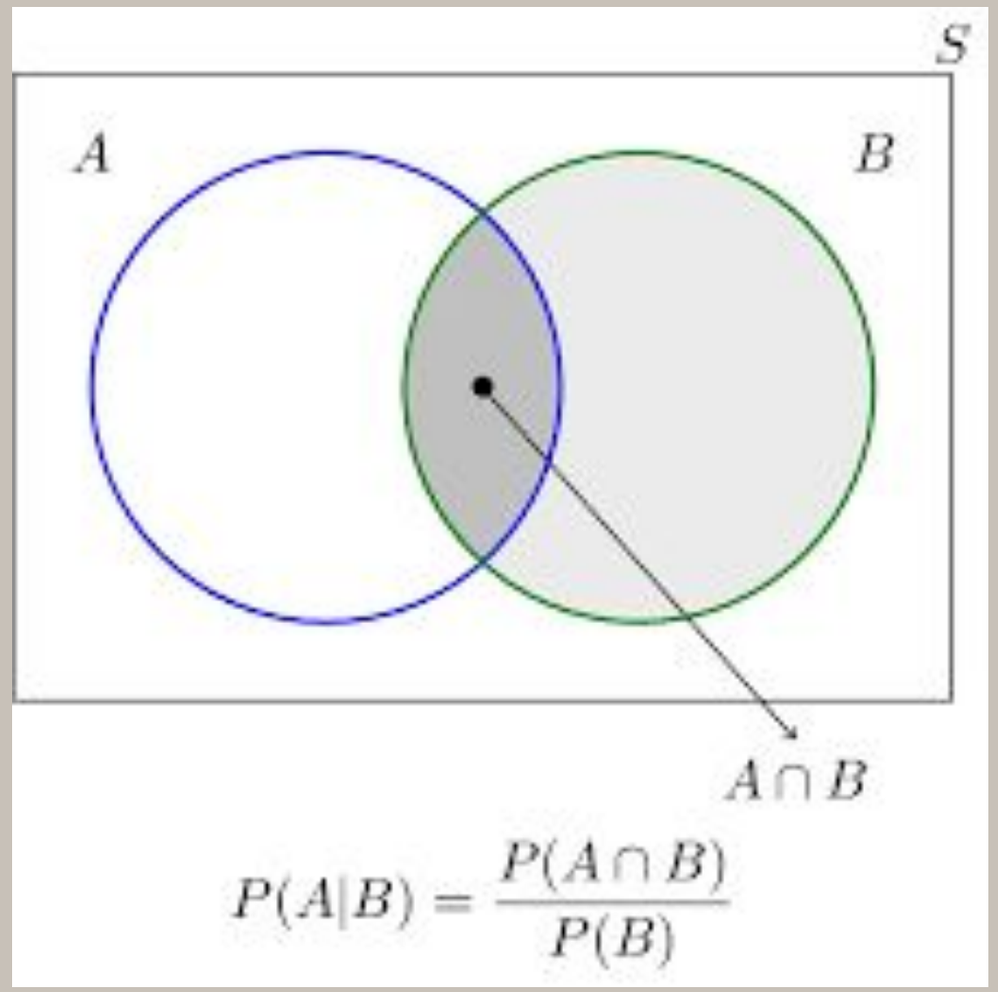
no further properties are needed



ARISTOTELIAN VIEW

- According to the classical view, categories should be clearly defined, mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive. Any entity of the given classification universe belongs unequivocally to one, and only one, of the proposed categories. This means that the boundaries of categories are fixed and clearly defined.

- In order to be a member of a category, an entity must share all properties of the category with the category itself and the notions of mutual exclusivity and collective exhaustivity, category membership is symmetrically structured. All members of a

According to third-century *Lives and Opinions of the Eminent Philosophers*, Plato was applauded for his definition of man as a featherless biped.

According to third-century *Lives and Opinions of the Eminent Philosophers*, Plato was applauded for his definition of man as a featherless biped.

Diogenes the Cynic plucked the feathers from a cock, brought it to Plato's Academy, and said, 'Behold! Here is Plato's man.'

According to third-century *Lives and Opinions of the Eminent Philosophers*, Plato was applauded for his definition of man as a featherless biped.

Diogenes the Cynic plucked the feathers from a cock, brought it to Plato's Academy, and said, 'Behold! Here is Plato's man.'

After that, the Academy added 'with broad flat nails' to the definition.

- Assumption: just as the meaning of a sentence can be regularly built up by combining the meanings of the single words, the meaning of a single word can be regularly built up by combining meaning components (‘atoms’, ‘semantic primitives’ or ‘primes’).

- Conversely, the meaning of a single word can be decomposed into smaller bits, i.e. ‘semantic

PHILSOPHY & CLASSICAL SEMANTICS

- Necessary and sufficient conditions are taken to be part of the sense of a word, while additional, encyclopedic, knowledge is taken to belong to the denotation.

- Even conditions which all members of a category share can be left out, as long as they are not necessary.

PHILSOPHY & CLASSICAL SEMANTICS

- Such compositional approach is also known as:
  - componential analysis (of word meaning),
  - lexical/semantic decomposition,
  - lexical/semantic feature analysis.

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man:
[+FEATHERLESS] [+BIPED] [+BROAD FLAT NAILS]

PHILSOPHY & CLASSICAL SEMANTICS

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man:
[+FEATHERLESS] [+BIPED] [+BROAD FLAT NAILS]

cock without feathers:
[+FEATHERLESS] [+BIPED] [—BROAD FLAT NAILS]

COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS

	with back	with legs	for 1 person	for sitting	with arms	rigid	made of wood
chair							
stool							
sofa							
beanbag							

COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS

	with back	with legs	for 1 person	for sitting	with arms	rigid	made of wood
chair	+	+	+	+	—	+	**0**
stool							
sofa							
beanbag							

COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS

	with back	with legs	for 1 person	for sitting	with arms	rigid	made of wood
chair	+	+	+	+	—	+	**0**
stool	—	+	+	+	—	+	**0**
sofa							
beanbag							

COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS

	with back	with legs	for 1 person	for sitting	with arms	rigid	made of wood
chair	+	+	+	+	—	+	**0**
stool	—	+	+	+	—	+	**0**
sofa	+	+	—	+	+	+	**0**
beanbag							

COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS

	with back	with legs	for 1 person	for sitting	with arms	rigid	made of wood
chair	+	+	+	+	—	+	**0**
stool	—	+	+	+	—	+	**0**
sofa	+	+	—	+	+	+	**0**
beanbag	—	—	+	+	—	—	—

COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS

- Componential approaches reduce complex meanings to a finite set of semantic “building blocks” called primitives.

- A standard dictionary represents the contrast between chair and sofa through differing definitions.

- The componential analysis represents the same difference in meaning simply through the presence or absence of a single feature: [for a single person].

SEMANTIC PRIMITIVES

- Anna Wierzbicka's Natural Semantic Metalanguage.
- Can the study of meaning be rigorous and scientific? Yes, and the key to this lies in the notion of semantic primitives.

Circular definition: a definition that is circular

SEMANTIC PRIMITIVES

- We define "oak" as a tree which grows from an acorn.

- We define "acorn" as the nut from which an oak grows.

SEMANTIC PRIMITIVES

"The elements which can be used to define the meaning of words cannot be defined themselves; rather, they must be accepted as 'indefinibilia', that is, as semantic primes, in terms of which all complex meanings can be coherently represented. <…>

I will maintain that Aristotle was right, and that, despite all the interpersonal variation in the acquisition of meaning, there is also an 'absolute order of understanding', based on inherent semantic relations among words. <…>

[primitives concepts are] so clear that they cannot be understood better than by themselves and [can be used to] explain everything else in terms of these."

–Wierzbicka 1996

Wierzbicka's Semantic Primitives (54 items)

Substantives: you, I; someone, people; something

Mental predicates: think, know, want, feel, see, hear

Speech: say

Actions, events, and movement: do, happen, move

Existence and life: be (there s/are), live

Determiners and quantifiers: this, the same, other; one, two, many / much, some, all

Augmentor: more

Evaluators: good, bad

Descriptors: big, small

Time: when, after, before, a long time, a short time, now

Space: where; far, near; under, above; side; inside; here

Interclausal linkers: because, if, if … would

Clause Operators: not, maybe

Metapredicate: can

Intensifier: very

Taxonomy, partonomy: kind of, part of

Similarity: like

Using the set of semantic primitives, try to describe the meaning of *happiness*.

X feels happiness

X feels something.

Sometimes a person thinks something like this.

Something good happened to me.

I wanted this.

I don’t want anything more now.

Because of this, this person feels something good.

X feels like this.

PROBLEMS OF COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS

	Features					Label
Name	Egg-laying	Scales	Poisonous	Cold-blooded	Number legs	Reptile
Cobra	1	1	1	1	0	1
Rattlesnake	1	1	1	1	0	1
Boa constrictor	0	1	0	1	0	1
Chicken	1	1	0	1	2	0
Guppy	0	1	0	0	0	0
Dart frog	1	0	1	0	4	0
Zebra	0	0	0	0	4	0
Python	1	1	0	1	0	1
Alligator	1	1	0	1	4	1

PROBLEMS OF COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS

"In real life, [. . .], there are many things that are not clearly in or out of a category. For example, many people express uncertainty about whether a tomato is a vegetable or a fruit. People are not sure about whether a low, three-legged seat with a little back is a chair or a stool. People do not always agree on whether sandals are a kind of shoe. This uncertainty gets even worse when more contentious categories in domains such as personality or aesthetics are considered."

–Murphy 2002: 20

PROBLEMS OF COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS

Besides, many words cannot be sufficiently analysed by simple features. For example, a mere feature analysis of GIRL does not capture the fact that the word girl covers a broader age range than BOY.

Ludwig Wittgenstein

Family resemblance theory
(“Familienähnlichkeit”)

Eleanor Rosch

Prototype theory //
Exemplar theory

FAMILY RESEMBLANCE

"Look for example at board games, with their multifarious relationships. Now pass to card games; here you find many correspondences with the first group, but many common features drop out, and others appear. When we pass next to ball games, much that is common is retained, but much is lost. Are they all 'amusing'? Compare chess with noughts and crosses. Or is there always winning and losing, or competition between players? Think of patience. In ball games there is winning and losing; but when a child throws his ball at the wall and catches it again, this feature has disappeared. Look at the parts played by skill and luck; and at the difference between skill in chess and skill in tennis. Think now of games like ring-a-ring-a-roses; here is the element of amusement, but how many other characteristic features have disappeared!"

–Wittgenstein 1953

FAMILY RESEMBLANCE

Item 1

Item 2

Item 3

Item 4

Item 5

A

B

C

D

FAMILY RESEMBLANCE

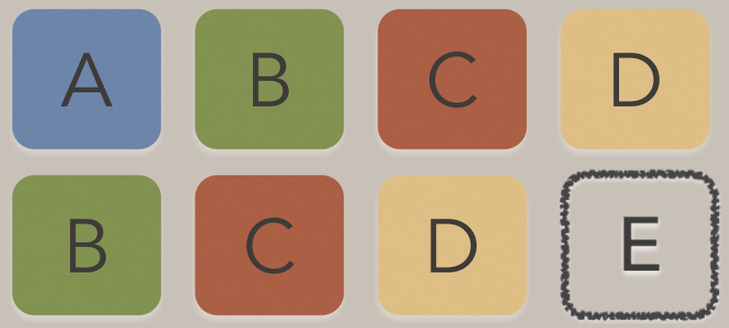
Item 1

Item 2

Item 3

Item 4

Item 5



FAMILY RESEMBLANCE

Item 1

Item 2

Item 3

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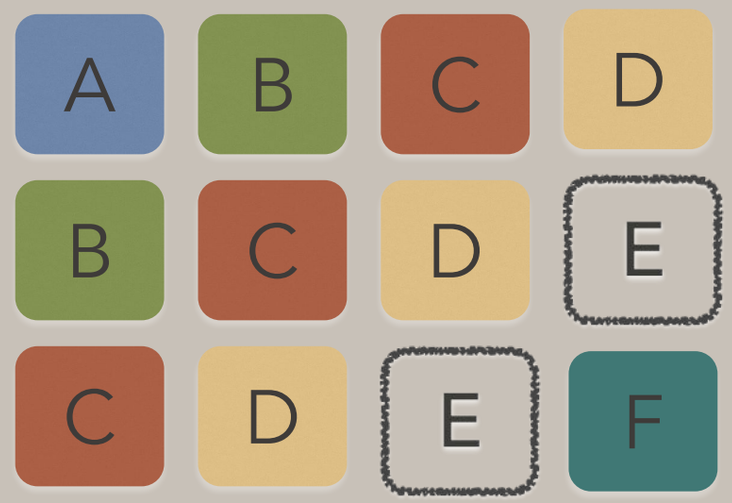

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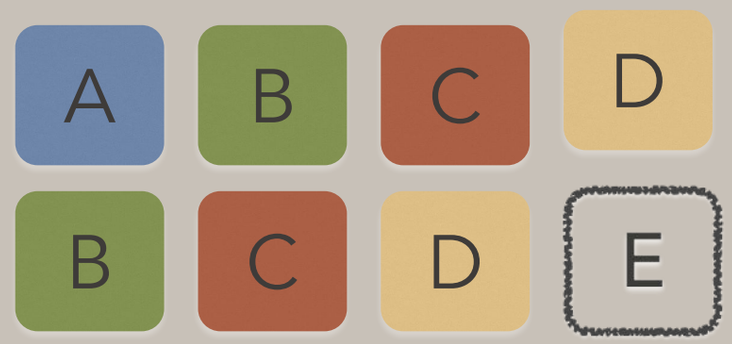

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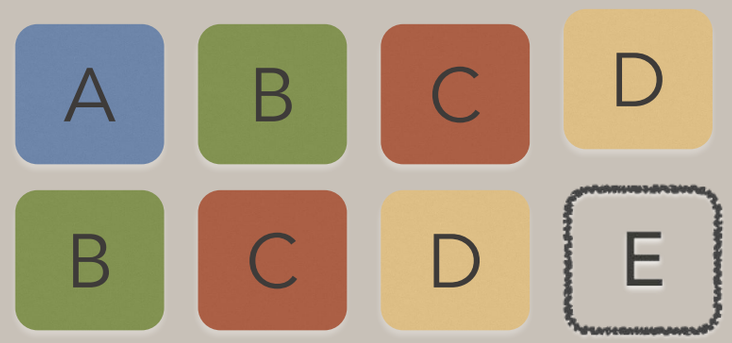


FAMILY RESEMBLANCE

Item 1

A B C D

Item 5

E F G H

PROTOTYPE (EXEMPLAR) THEORY

https://forms.gle/it5kt2wbs6fAMXGw5

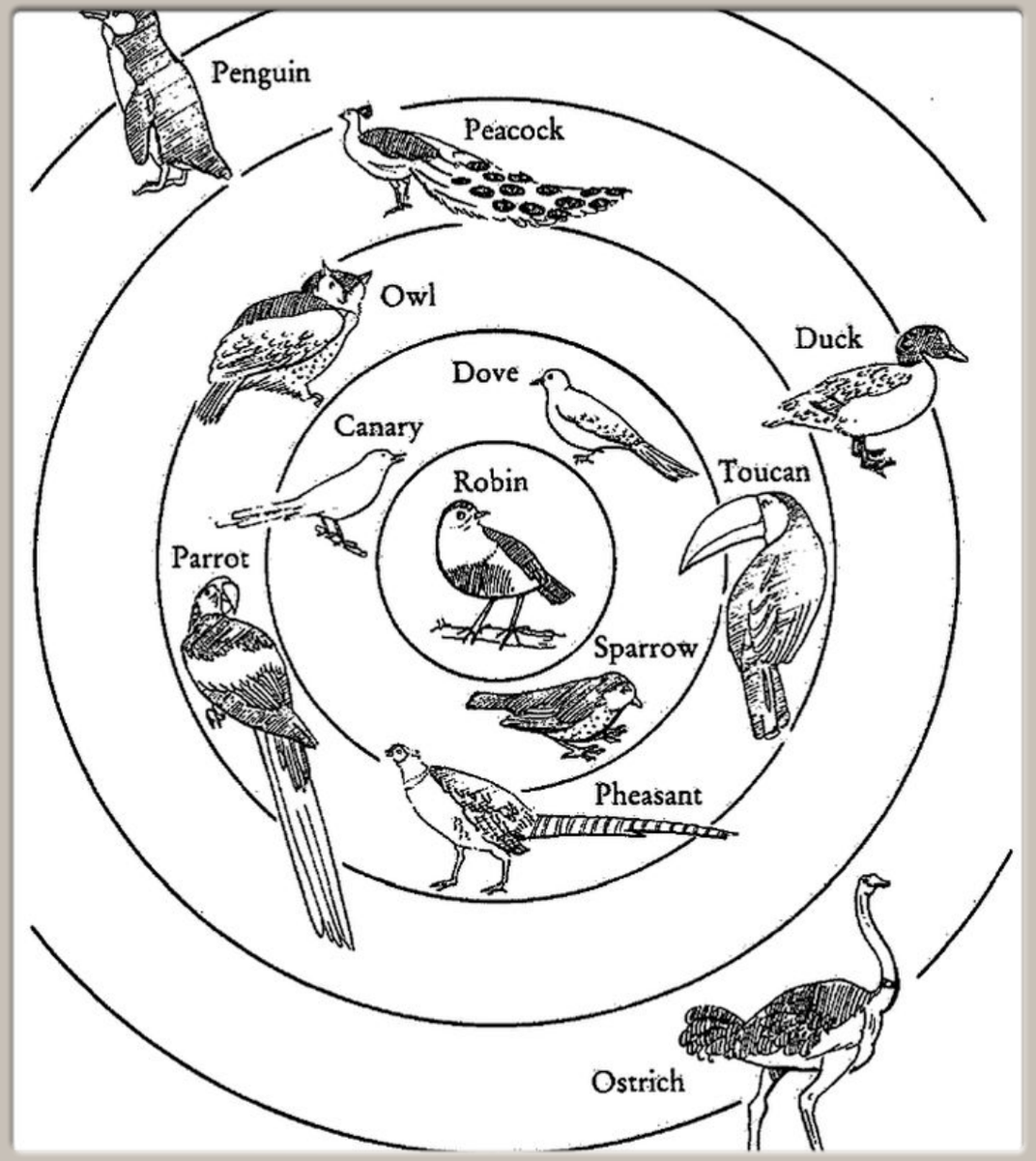
PROTOTYPE (EXEMPLAR) THEORY

Prototype effects:

- Frequency: when asked to list members of a category, prototypical members are listed by most people.
- Priority in lists: prototypical examples are among the first that people list.
- Speed of verification: people are quicker to recognise more prototypical members of a category as being members.
- Generic vs. specialised names: more prototypical members of the category are more likely to be called by a

PROTOTYPE (EXEMPLAR) THEORY

- There are categories in which some members are better exemplars of the category than others.
- There are categories in which the boundaries of membership are fuzzy, not clear-cut: it is not always possible to say whether or not something is a member of the category.

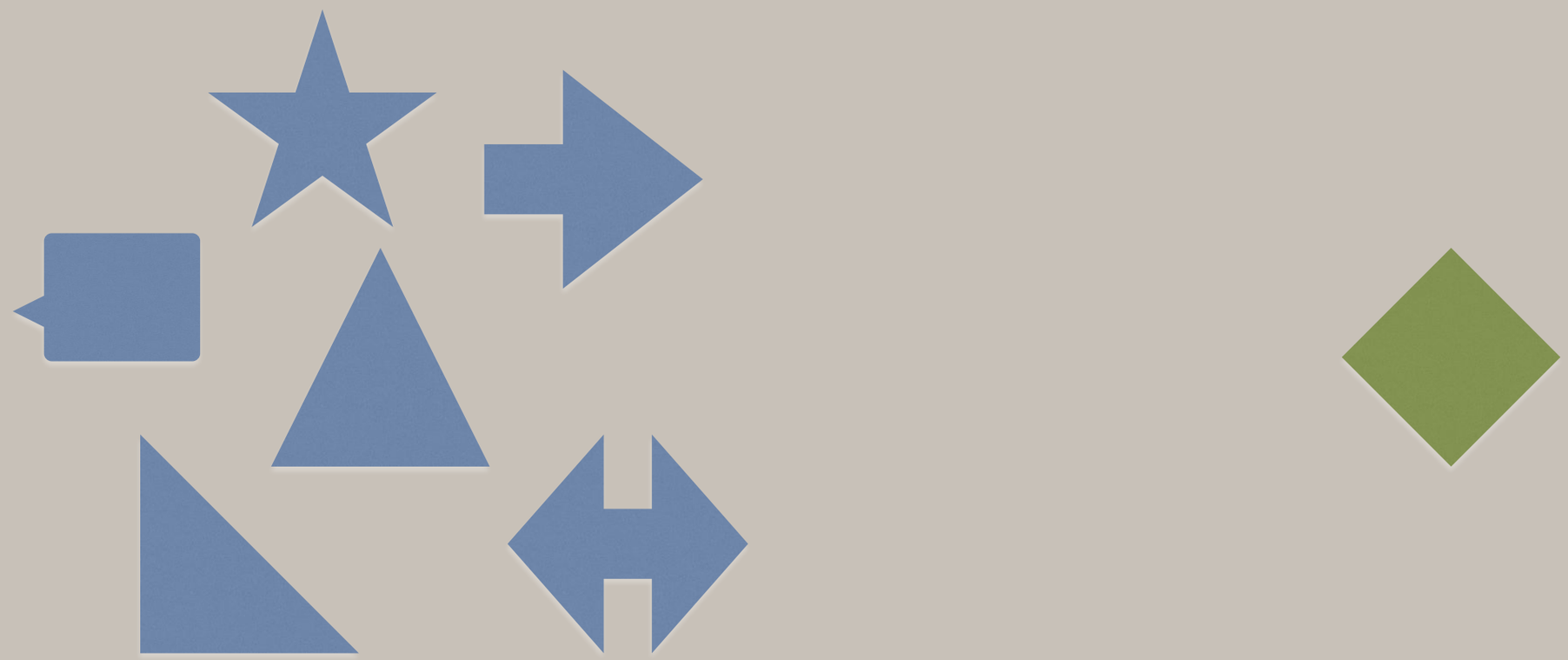


PROTOTYPE (EXEMPLAR) THEORY

The two theories are similar in that they emphasize the importance of similarity in categorization: only by resembling a prototype or exemplar can a new stimulus be placed into a category.

They also both rely on the same general cognitive process: we experience a new stimulus, a concept in memory is triggered, we make a judgment

PROTOTYPE (EXEMPLAR) THEORY



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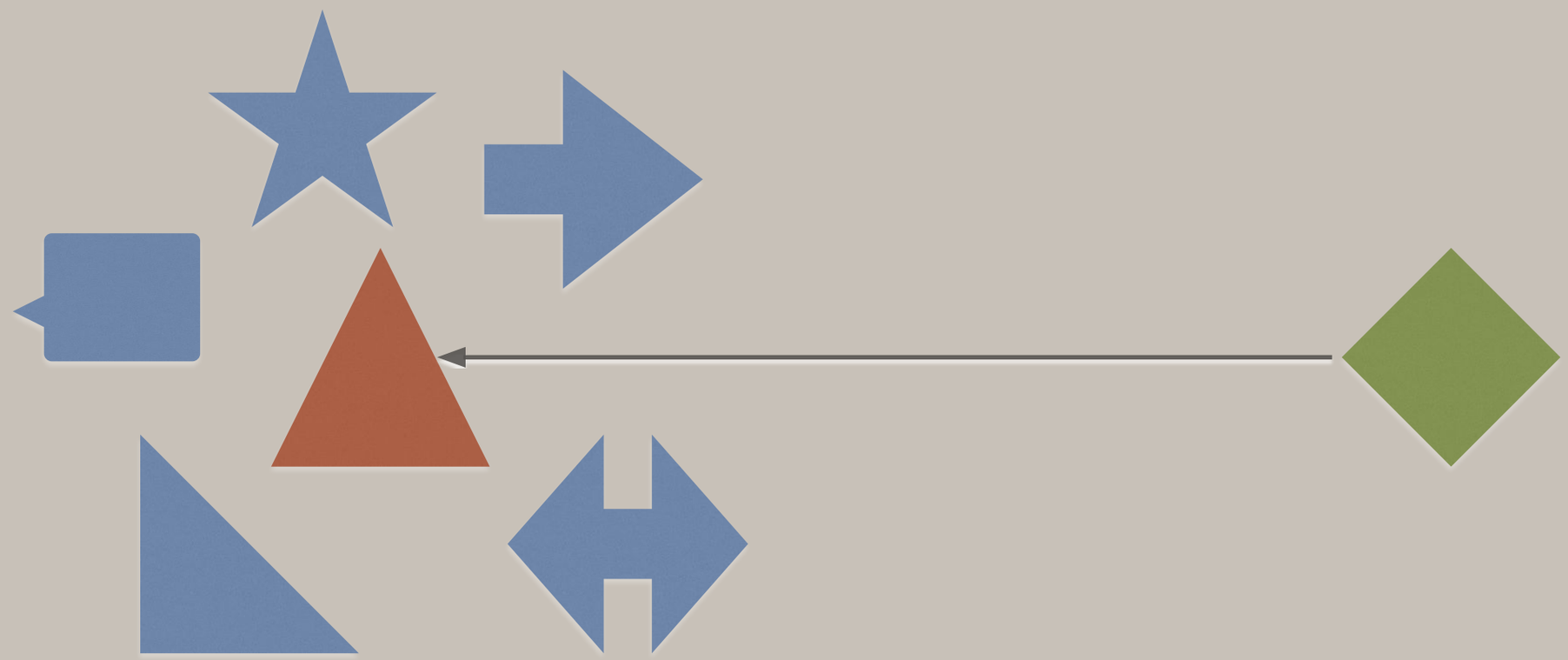
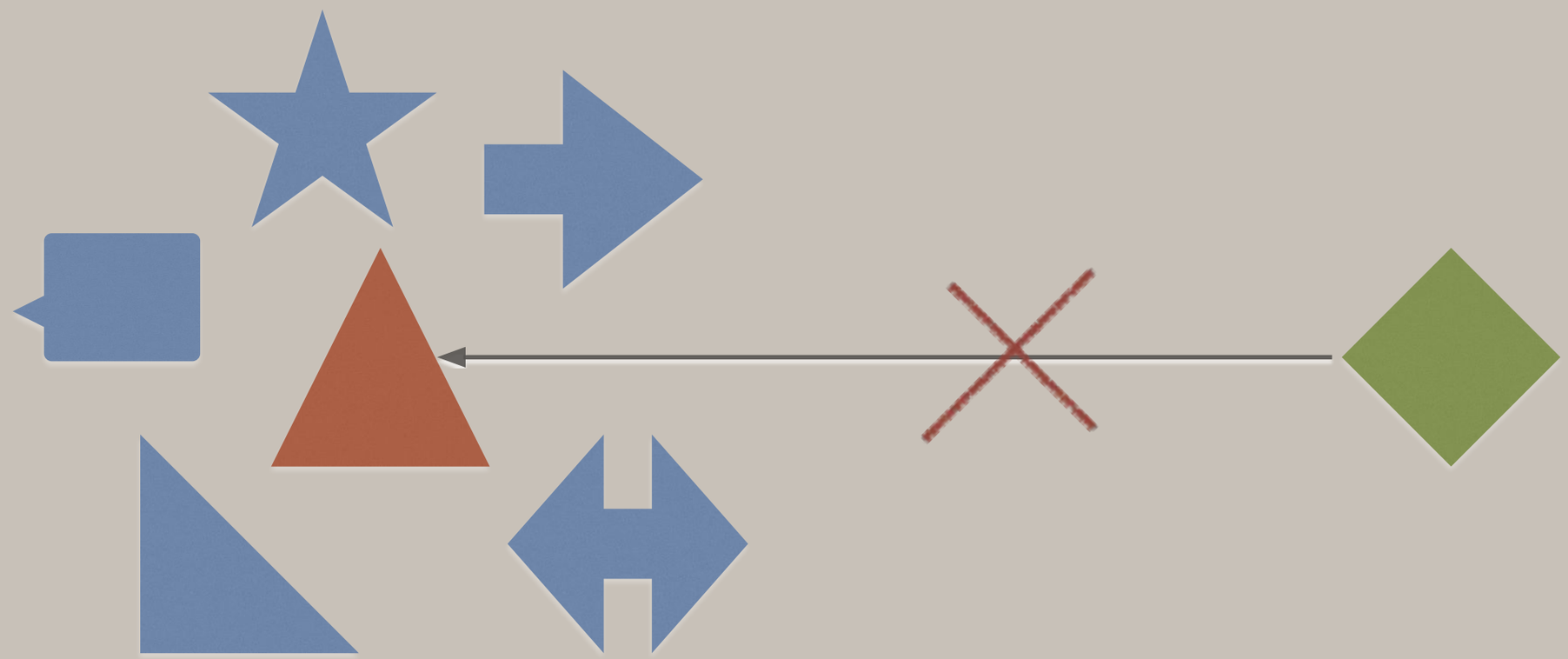
- Prototype theory suggests that a new stimulus is

PROTOTYPE (EXEMPLAR) THEORY



Prototype

PROTOTYPE (EXEMPLAR) THEORY



Prototype

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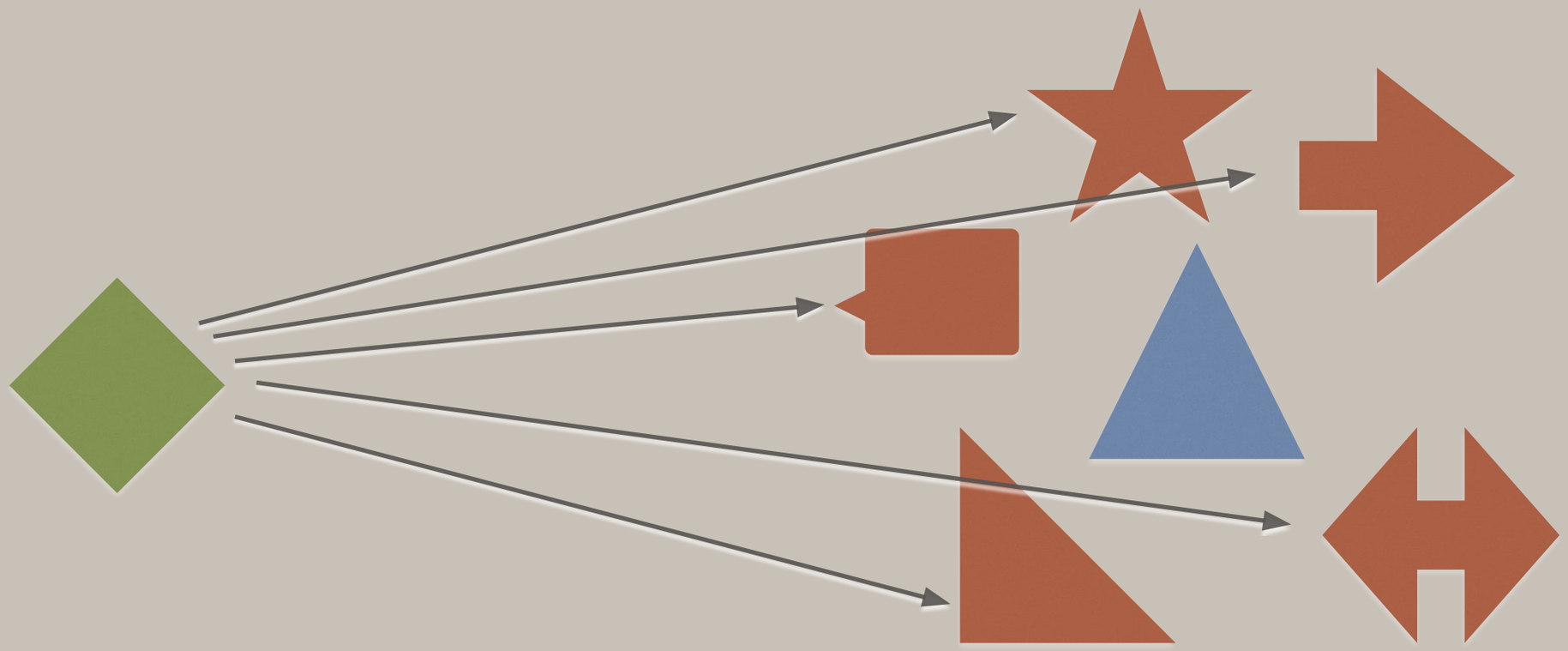
- Prototype theory suggests that a new stimulus is compared to a single prototype in a category.
- Exemplar theory suggests that a new stimulus is compared to

PROTOTYPE (EXEMPLAR) THEORY



Exemplar

- Rather than being symmetrically structures, categories

PROTOTYPICAL VIEW

have radial structures. Humans tend to consider some members of a category to be good representatives and others to be bad representatives of the category and thus there are differences in goodness of exemplar among members of the same category.

- Categories are not clearly delimited, and their boundaries tend to be fuzzy. In certain cases categories graduate into each other, some members being located in the transition