




Stylistics of the English Language 4

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Lexical Stylistics Outline

- Word and Connotation Types
- Word and Polysemy
- Tropes

Word

Word Meaning

grammatical meaning

(noun, verb, adjective)

lexical meaning

denotative
meaning

(logical/nominative meaning)

connotative
meaning

Task 1: Connotation and Denotation

○ “All the world’s a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays
many parts ...”

[W.Shakespeare, As you Like It]

Connotation Types

- Evaluative component (e.g. What a **wonderful** story!)
- Emotive component (e.g. He is full of **anger**/I don't want to see this **fool** again!)
- Expressive component (e.g. He **gulped** a glass of water in three seconds)
- Stylistic component (e.g. Your father is a nice **chap**)
- **Pragmatic** (sweetheart)/ **Associative** (to excavate/a tomb) / **Ideological components** (the poor= the less successful)

Emotive Versus Expressive component

EMOTIVE connotation

- always entails expressiveness but not vice versa
- depicts a **temporary** sensation – joy, fright, anger, surprise, annoyance
- is **syntactically optional** (for example it is always possible to omit interjections without any violation of syntactic structure),
- only one emotional word in a sentence is able to radiate and confer emotionality on the whole phrase

EXPRESSIVE connotation

- is conveyed via intensifiers (really, quite, frightfully, absolutely)
- suggests additional semantic component to the denotative meaning of the word (to work – to toil, to drink – to gulp, to chew – to chomp).

Task 2: Connotation Types

(evaluative, emotive, expressive, stylistic, pragmatic, associative, ideological)

‘No matter where life takes me, find me with a smile
Pursuit to be happy, only laughing like a child
I never thought life would be this sweet
It got me cheesin' from cheek to cheek
And I ain't going to wait for nothing
Cause that just ain't my style
Life couldn't get better
This 'gon be the best day ever ’

[Mac Miller, song – Best Day Ever]

Task 2 Analysis

The denotative component of the nonce expression - **cheesing from cheek to cheek** is “smiling widely from ear to ear”

There are several connotations distinguished:

- Emotive – it is humorous (play on words: ‘say cheese’, ‘to grin from ear to ear’ are regular expressions, in this context the author creates a new one– ‘to cheese from cheek to cheek’)
- Evaluative – it is positive (a shade of approval)
- Expressive – it is unexpected (“cheesing” has got its neutral counterpart in literary lexis – ‘to smile’)
- Pragmatic – it is based on a cliché ‘say cheese’ so intended for the audience with a particular cultural background, also meant to amuse
- Associative – it evokes the idea of photographing
- Stylistic – it is low colloquial

Monosemy and Polysemy

- When a word has only one meaning it is called monosemic:
 - "Monosemy is probably most clearly found in specialized vocabulary dealing with technical topics." [*The Handbook of Linguistics* by William Croft, 2003]
- Polysemy is a linguistic phenomenon when we observe one word have two or more meanings:
 - "semantic changes often add meanings to the language without subtracting any." [M. Lynne Murphy, *Lexical Meaning*, 2010]

Polysemy and Stylistic Devices

- Quite a few of stylistic devices are based on polysemy, for example, **zeugma** and **pun** draw upon the difference in meaning:
 - "...Dora, plunging at once into privileged intimacy and into the middle of the room." [B.Shaw] (to plunge= 1) to throw oneself into; dash; 2) to devote oneself to)
 - "The tallest building in town is the library — it has thousands of stories! " (story=1) a piece of fiction; 2) a floor)

Polysemy and Contextual Meaning

- contextual meaning is brought about by a specific context which emphasises certain semantic traits of a word suppressing some other ones:

“It was an idyllic day; sunny, warm and perfect for a walk in the park.”

direct meaning: idyllic=1) of or relating to an idyll;
2) picturesque

contextual meaning: idyllic=relating to a period of good weather

Polysemy: Oppositions of Meanings

- direct and derived/figurative: **nightingale** – a bird and a singer
- generalised and specific: in **flower** – a **flower**
- usual and occasional: blue **sky**-angry **sky**
- ordinary and terminological: enduring **values** – numerical **value**
- neutral and stylistically marked: **old** coat – **old** boy
- contemporary and obsolete: to **stone** the rats – she **stoned**, closing her heart to everyone

Direct and Figurative Meaning

- direct meaning names an object and can be realised outside of any context:
 - *My Watch* by M. Twain
- figurative meaning, besides naming, **describes** and **characterises** some object via its similarity or other connection with another object:
 - *She was a dynamo of activity. She was here, there and everywhere...* [Monica Dickens, *One Pair of Feet*]

Dynamo=1) a device for converting mechanical energy into electrical energy, 2) *infl* an energetic hard-working person



Figurative Meaning - Tropes

TROPE

- any literary or rhetorical device that consists in the use of words in other than their literal sense
- a word, phrase, or image used in a new and different way in order to create an artistic effect

Tropes and Figures of Speech

- based on **comparison** (affinity):
 - metaphor
 - simile
 - personification
 - allusion
 - antonomasia
 - allegory
- based on **contiguity** (proximity):
 - metonymy
 - synecdoche
- based on **opposition**:
 - irony
 - antithesis
- based on **understatement**:
 - understatement
 - litotes
- based on **overstatement**:
 - hyperbole
 - periphrasis
 - euphemism



Tropes based on Affinity: Metaphor

a transfer of the meaning on the basis of comparison (affinity):

- “Guiseppe Martini said that “**Family is the Country of the Heart**”. We spend so much of our lives in exile, but on the holidays we make the pilgrimage home to the nation of our heart. Wherever that may be.” [Being Erica, S03E13]

Family is likened to a country, a big space, where our most personal, dear thoughts and actions take place.

Metaphor Types (5)

1) simple/ authentic metaphor:

“Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines”
[W.Shakespeare] (eye of heaven=sun)

2) trite/ dead/ hackneyed metaphor :

the mouth of a river, snow white dress, coral lips

Metaphor Types

3) sustained/ extended metaphor :

“He began to be frightfully jealous of everything about Clara: of her past, of her babies, of the men and women who flocked to drink deep of her cool kindness and rest their tired minds as at an absorbing play.” [F.S.Fitzgerald, This Side of Paradise, p.137]

4) mixed metaphor – a combination of metaphors which seems incongruous producing a strange image in the mind, often having a humorous effect:

“The new job has allowed her to spread her wings and really blossom.” [Cambridge Dictionary]

Metaphor Types

5) conceptual metaphor, or cognitive metaphor, refers to the understanding of one idea, or conceptual domain, in terms of another **systematically** both in language and in thought.

***The regularity with which different languages employ the same metaphors, which often appear to be perceptually based, has led to the hypothesis that the mapping between conceptual domains corresponds to neural mappings in the brain.



Conceptual Metaphor: Examples

○ LIFE IS A JOURNEY

- Without direction in life/ a path of life/ “I couldn’t stop for Death”/ I am where I want to be in life/ I’m at crossroads in my life

○ ARGUMENT IS WAR

- He won that argument/ I attacked every weak point in his speech/ She completely destroyed me at the conference

Metaphor

- can be based on different types of similarity:
 - similarity of shape: **head** (of a cabbage), **bottleneck**, **teeth** (of a saw, a comb)
 - similarity of position: **foot** (of a page, of a mountain), **head** (of procession)
 - similarity of function, behaviour: a **bookworm** (a person who is fond of books), a **whip** (an official in the British Parliament whose duty is to see that members were present at the voting),
 - similarity of colour: **orange**, **hazel**, **chestnut**

Tropes: Simile

- figure of speech that makes a comparison, showing similarities between two different things, producing a vivid image. Unlike a metaphor, a simile draws resemblance with the help of the words “like” or “as”:

“...it was so dark that Amory could just make out a patch of damp hair and two eyes that gleamed like a cat's.” [F.S.Fitzgerald, This Side of Paradise, p.215]

Tropes: Personification

- a trope in which human qualities or abilities are assigned to abstractions or inanimate objects:

“The daffodils under the boat-house continued their golden laughter, and nodded to one another in gossip, as I watched them, never for a moment pausing to notice me.”

[D.H.Lawrence, *The White Peacock* (1911)]

depersonification* - giving a human the qualities of an inanimate or non-living object; usually related to lowering the tone of the narrative



Allusion

- a reference to a famous historical, literary, mythological or biblical character or event, commonly known:

“It’s his Achilles heel!” (myth of vulnerability)

Tropes: Antonomasia

a literary term in which a descriptive phrase replaces a person's name, or a proper name is used as a common one:

- "Oh, look! The "movie star" has finally arrived!"
- "He's such a good guy. I enjoy his company so much! I just hope he's **Mr. Right.**"
- "He is a real Don Juan!"
- "Forget Mr.Right. Give Mr.Right-here a chance"
 - [Canadian series "Being Erica"]



Thank you for your attention

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