

## Sense Relations Part 1

### Sense Relations

In lecture 2, we talked about the notion of "sense". We mentioned that the sense of an expression is the whole set of sense relations it has with other expressions in the language. In this lecture we will talk about two of these sense relations: synonymy and antonymy.

### Synonymy

- # Synonymy is the relationship between two lexical units (words) that have the same sense. Words that have the same sense are called synonyms. The following pairs are examples of synonymy:
  - buy/ purchase
  - hide/ conceal
  - wide/ broad
  - deep/ profound
- # There are, however, no real synonyms. No two words have exactly the same meaning. Perfect synonymy is hard to find because it is unlikely that two words with exactly the same meaning would both survive in a language. If we look at possible synonyms there are at least five ways in which they can be seen to differ. These ways are as follows:
  - # First, some sets of synonyms belong to different dialects of the language. For instance, the term "fall" is used in the United States and in some western counties of Britain where others would use "autumn".
  - Second, words that are used in different styles. For example words such as "gentleman", "man" and "chap" have the same meaning but are used in different styles ranging from formal to colloquial.
  - # Third, some words may be said to differ only in their emotive or evaluative meanings. The remainder of their meaning remains the same. Notice the emotive difference between "politician" and "statesman", "hide" and "conceal", "liberty" and "freedom", each implying approval or disapproval. The function of such words in language is to influence attitudes. They are chosen simply for the effect they are likely to have.
  - # Fourth, some words are collocationally restricted. In other words, they occur only in conjunction with other words. Thus, "rancid" occurs with "bacon" or "butter" and "addled" with "eggs" or "brain". It could, perhaps, be argued that these are true synonyms differing only in that they occur in different environments.

- # Fifth, many words are close in meaning, or that their meanings overlap. There is a loose sense of synonymy between them. For the adjective "mature", for example, possible synonyms are "adult", "ripe" or "perfect". For the verb "govern", we may suggest "direct", "control" or "determine". This is the kind of synonymy that is used by the dictionary-maker.

### Antonymy

Antonymy is the relationship between two lexical units (words) that have the opposite sense. Words that are opposite are called antonyms.

**There are three different types of antonymy:**

- 1- binary antonymy (complementarity)
- 2- converses (relational opposites)
- 3- gradable antonyms

### Types of Antonymy

- 1- Binary antonymy (complementarity):

Binary antonyms are lexical units which come in pairs and between them exhaust all the relevant possibilities. If one of the antonyms is applicable, then the other cannot be applicable, and vice versa.

E.g. dead/ alive  
married/ unmarried

- 2- Converses (relational opposites):

In the case of converses, a word describes a relationship between two things (or people). At the same time, another word describes the same relationship when the two things (or people) are mentioned in the opposite order. In this case, we say then the two lexical units are converses of each other.

E.g.

"parent" and "child" are converses. If we say, "Ahmed is the parent of Ali" (one order); this describes the same relationship as "Ali is the child of Ahmed" (opposite order).

The notion of converseness can be applied to examples in which three referents are mentioned as in the case of "buy" and "sell".

John bought a car from Fred. Fred sold a car to John.

