Handout - week 7

SEMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN LEXICAL UNITS (SENSE RELATIONS): POLYSEMY, HOMONYMY, HYponomy, SYNONYmy AND ANTONYMY (complementarity, converseness).

Semantic fields - every word is determined in its meaning by the presence of other words in the vocabulary (those that are related to the same or associated ranges or phenomena). Items in the field occur in sequences or cycles, some exhibit a part-whole relationship, some are ordered hierarchically or by taxonomy.

Polysemy (Greek polúsémos = having many meanings) - words with two or more senses.

Hyperlexeme (Filipek) - a polysemic lexeme with several meanings.

Homonymy

Homonyms - two or more words that are identical in form but different in meaning.

- Real homonyms - sound and look (in written form) identical:
  - bank (= slope), bank (= an institution where people deposit or borrow money)

- Homophones - they sound identical, but are spelled differently:
  - through x threw

- Homographs - they have identical spelling, but different pronunciation:
  - lead [li:d] x [led], wind [wind] x [waind]

**Exercise 1:** Are the following expressions real homonyms, homophones, homographs, or polysemous lexemes?

dear - deer
bank (of a river) - bank (financial institution)
bar (of chocolate) - bar (of metal) - bar (room) - bar (unit of pressure) - to bar
fair - fare
lie (be in a horizontal position) - lie (not tell the truth)
cue (a tool) - cue (hint) - queue
bear - bare
peace - piece
tap (for water) - tap (on barrel) - tap (light knock or blow)
head (someone in charge) - head (part of the body) - head (in a tape/video recorder)
no - know
reed - read
read (pres.) - read (past)

**Exercise 2:** Can you give more examples of English homonyms?

**Exercise 3:** Can you adduce any homonyms from different word classes?

**Exercise 4:** Why are homonyms apparently more numerous in English than in Czech?

False friends (*faux amis*) - interlanguage homonyms.

**Exercise 5:** Examples of Czech-English false friends:

Paronymy - words similar in form, but totally different in meaning.

**Exercise 6:** Examples of paronyms:
**Hyponymy**

**Exercise 7:** Can you list any hyponyms or hyperonyms of the following expressions (if applicable)?

dog | thing | vehicle | brown

**Meronymy** - the semantic relation between a lexical item denoting a part and that denoting the corresponding whole.

Special types of the part-whole relation - the group-member relation, substance - particle relation, the feature - whole relation, class - member relation → hyponymy/hyperonymy.

**Taxonomy** - a subspecies of hyponymy.

**Synonymy**

**Synonyms** - words or phrases with the same or nearly the same meaning.

Few true synonyms; most pairs or rows of synonyms have nearly the same denotation and a different connotation.

**Exercise 8:** Give examples of the following types of synonyms:

**Absolute synonyms** - words agreeing in denotation, connotation and distribution:

**Close synonyms** differing in a single seme:

**Synonyms differing in intensity:**

**Stylistic synonyms:**

**Near-synonyms** - words which are closely related with the members of a synonym group (or a semantic field):

**Antonymy**

**Oppositeness** (Lyons) - two words have opposite meanings.

**Exercise 9:** List some words which, in your opinion, have no antonyms:

**Exercise 10:** What are the antonyms of:

| old | soft | short | light (adj.) |

- antonymy (contrary antonyms)
- complementarity (contradictory/complementary antonyms)
- converseness

**Exercise 11:** Which of the following are gradable antonyms, which are complementary pairs and which are converses?

| alive - dead | dark - light | beautiful - ugly |
| day - night | fall - rise | simple - difficult |
| lend - borrow | give - get | give - take |
| absent - present |

**Exercise 12:**

A polysemous word has more than one antonym.

What are the antonyms of the following polysemous words?

| catch | smart |
| hard | right |
Exercise 1: Complete the following definitions where necessary and give examples.

**Figurative language** - an expressive use of language when words are used in a non-literal way to suggest illuminating comparisons and resemblances (figures of speech).

**Metaphor** - a figurative expression in which one notion is described

_______________________________________________________________________.

**Metonymy** - a semantic change where an __________________ is used for the whole.

**Simile** - a figurative expression that __________________________________________.

**Taboo** - expressions which people ___________ using in polite society because they believe them _________________________________________________________.

**Euphemism** – a figure of speech in which an unpleasant, offensive, harsh or blunt word or expression is avoided and ____________________________________________________ is used instead.

**Dysphemism** – the substitution of ____________________________ for a ____________________________.

**Understatement** – (an unduly) restrained statement or expression, representing the facts as being __________________________________________.

**Hyperbole** – a figure of speech consisting in __________________________________________.

**Synecdoche** - a figure of speech in which the part is used ____________________________ or ____________________________.

**Litotes** - a figure of speech where something is ____________________________.

E.g. an affirmative is expressed by the negative of the contrary.

**Irony** - language that expresses a meaning other than ____________________________.

**Paradox** - an ____________________________ that contains a truth.
**Exercise 2:** Which figure of speech is represented by the following expressions?

- adult video
- outplacement
- to downsize
- tax haven
- a dead good book
- The new boss’ task is to break the ice with staff.
- It’s unwise of you to take a step like that without discussing it with me first.
- the tip of the iceberg
- Argentina shares with Venezuela the memory of past wealth.
- Denmark will take its turn as the EU’s president in the second half of this year.
- to stage Stoppard
- They have kept us in the dark about their intentions. Now, however, they’ll have to put us in the picture.
- Well, this is a really cosy flat. (when I’m thinking of moving away)
- He’s a little fish.
- ladies’ man
- to have teeth like pearls
- She’s out of form. (when she’s totally exhausted)
- He isn’t poor. (said of a millionaire)
- not to escape the long arm of the law
- She will never be as good as her older sister.
- (That was) an absolutely gorgeous meal.
- I don’t know what she sees in a gorilla like the guy at the bar.
- political storm
- I’m as fit as a fiddle again.
- as good as gold
- put your John Hancock at the bottom of the list

**Exercise 3:** Identify the source area of the following metaphors (and their current use).

- The electronics industry is blossoming in the south of Bavaria.
- They can never win a price war since we have enough reserves to retaliate.
- Companies have to be able to cope with the ebb and flow of demand.
- It’s necessary to branch out into new activities.
- The government is criticised for moving the goalposts.
- The ailing manufacturer does not seem to benefit from the recent recovery in the industry.
- The young actress is going to use all the weapons in her arsenal to win.
- The funding has dried up.
- The market is already saturated.
- Since the coup last year, the country has been completely paralysed.
- Very soon Italy and Spain will be flooded with North African immigrants.
- If fares are raised, it could be a knockout blow for smaller agencies.
- My brother is a casualty of a recent wave of delayering.
- European producers have already launched their counter-offensive.
- They are expected to join forces with ecological activists.