

Antonymy and frame semantics

In this talk I will advance a frame-semantic account of antonymy, based on the idea that words are related to each other through a frame in which they participate (Fillmore 1992). This is in sharp contrast to structuralist approaches in which antonymy is regarded as a type of lexical relationships based on the opposition between two lexical items (Lyons 1968,1977, Palmer 1980, etc.). (Antonymy here is broadly defined as semantic opposites, not confined to gradable adjective pairs.)

The basic idea in the proposed view of antonymy is that two words are regarded as antonymous when their conceptual contents are placed in a certain conceptual opposition (called motivating opposition) within the frame in which they co-participate. There are two such motivating oppositions: directional opposition and polarity opposition.

The directional opposition can be found not just in spatial frames (serving as the backgrounds for *north/south*, *top/bottom*, etc.) but also in temporal frames (e.g., for *tomorrow/yesterday*), state frames (e.g., for *harden/soften*), activity frames (e.g., for *buy/sell*) and relational frames (e.g., for *husband/wife*).

The polarity opposition involves positive/negative contrast, and two subtypes are found: evaluative (i.e., good vs. bad) and logical (i.e., true vs. false, present vs. absent). Two words are regarded as antonyms when our knowledge tells us that the two notions contrast in polarity (e.g., *heaven/hell*, in terms of evaluative polarity, and *married/single* in terms of logical polarity, i.e., presence/absence of marriage). Also included in logical polarity is the opposition of change vs. no change (e.g., *stop/continue*). Polarity opposition may be bilateral in that each of the two items has its own properties that the other tends to lack (e.g., *man/woman*).

This analysis allows flexibility and multiple motivations that were not captured in structuralist analysis of antonymy. For example, a word pair may be doubly motivated as antonyms. Examples include scalar adjective pairs like *honest/dishonest*, which are directionally motivated (i.e., directions of increase is opposite in the two words), as well as polarity-based (i.e., *honest/dishonest* is evaluatively positive/negative). In addition, an item may have a different antonym depending on the (sub)frames involved (e.g., *good morning* vs. *good night* in a family life frame and *good morning* vs. *good bye* in a school or business life frame). Or an item may have two different antonyms within a frame due to two different motivating oppositions (e.g., *be born/die* on the basis of directionality of change, and *live/die* on the basis of the change vs. no change distinction). I argue that such treatment of flexibility and multiple motivations are advantages of this frame-semantic view over structuralist account of antonymy and also over discourse-based account (e.g., Justeson & Katz 1992).

Fillmore, Charles J. 1982. Frame Semantics. In Linguistic Society of Korea, ed., *Linguistics in the Morning Calm*. Seoul: Hanshin Publishing. 111-138.

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Justeson, John S. and Slava M. Katz. 1992. Redefining antonymy: The textual structure of a semantic relation. *Literary and Linguistic Computing* 7:176-184.