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**Introduction**

word language meaning speech

The word is one of the fundamental units of language. It is a dialectal unity of form and content. Its content or meaning is not identical to notion, but it may reflect human notion and is considered as the form of their existence. So the definition of a word is one of the most difficult in linguistics, because the simplest word has many different aspects: a sound form, its morphological structure, it may occur in different word-forms and have various meanings.

E. Sapir takes into consideration the syntactic and semantic aspects when he calls the word “one of the smallest completely satisfying bits of isolated “meaning”, into which the sentence resolves itself.” Sapir also points out one more, very important characteristic of the word, its *indivisibility*: “It cannot be cut into without a disturbance of meaning, one or two other or both of the several parts remaining as a helpless waif on our hands.”

A unit which most people would think of as ‘one word’ may carry a number of meanings, by association with certain contexts. Thus *pipe* can be any tubular object, a musical instrument or a piece of apparatus for smoking; a *hand* can be on a clock or watch as well as at the end of the arm. Most of the time, we are able to distinguish the intended meaning by the usual process of mental adjustment to context and register.

Word meaning is not homogeneous, but it is made up of various components, which are described as types of meaning. There are 2 types of meaning to be found in words and word forms:

1. the grammatical meaning;
2. the lexical meaning.

As the world’s global language, English has played a very important role in bringing people from different countries closer and closer, thus yielding great mutual understanding. The author argues that the mastering of the grammatical features of English words together with that of their semantic structures helps to make the communication in English successful. The study on English words in terms of grammar and semantics is, therefore, hoped to be of great value to teachers and learners of English as well as translators into and out of English. In this essay, English words are discussed in terms of their meaning, which poses several problems for the teachers, learners and translators.

**Chapter 1. The word as the basic unit of language**

*The word* may be described as the basic unit of language. Uniting meaning and form, it is composed of one or more morphemes, each consisting of one or more spoken sounds or their written representation. The combinations of morphemes within words are subject to certain linking conditions. When a derivational suffix is added a new word is formed, thus, “listen” and “listener” are different words.

When used in sentences together with other words they are syntactically organized. But if we look at the language “speech”, it becomes apparent that words are not neatly segmented as they are by spaces in graphological realization. The pauses in speech do not consistently correspond with word-endings; many languages, including English, do not make it clear to a foreign listener where the utterance is divided into words.

The definition of a word is one of the most difficult in linguistics because the simplest word has many aspects. The variants of definitions were so numerous that some authors collecting them produced works of impressive scope and bulk.

A few examples will suffice to show that any definition is conditioned by the aims and interests of its author.

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), one of the great English philosophers, revealed a materialistic approach to the problem of nomination when he wrote that words are not mere sounds but names of matter. Three centuries later the great Russian physiologist I.P. Pavlov (1849-1936) examined the word in connection with his studies of the second signal system, and defined it as a universal signal that can be substitute any other signal from the environment in evoking a response in a human organism. One of the latest developments of science and engineering is machine translation. It also deals with words and requires a rigorous definition for them. It runs as follows: a word is a sequence of graphemes which can occur between spaces, or the representation of such a sequence on morphemic level.

Within the scope of linguistics the word has been defined syntactically, semantically, phonologically and by combining various approaches.

According to John Lyons “One of the characteristics of the word is that it tends to be internally stable (in terms of the order of the component morphemes), but positionally mobile (permutable with other words in the same sentence)”.

A purely semantic treatment will be found in Stephen Ulmann’s explanation: with him connected discourse, if analyzed from the semantic point of view, “will fall into a certain number of meaningful segments which are ultimately compose of meaningful units. These meaningful units are called *words*.”

The semantic-phonological approach may be illustrated by A.H. Gardiner’s definition: “*A word is an articulate sound-symbol in its aspect of denoting something which is spoken about.”*

The eminent French linguist A. Meillet combines the semantic, phonological and grammatical criteria and gives the following definition of the word: *“A word is defined by the association of a particular meaning with a particular group of sounds capable of a particular grammatical employment.”*

This formula can be accepted with some modifications adding that a word is the smallest significant unit of a given language capable of functioning alone and characterized by positional mobility within a sentence, morphological uninterruptability and semantic integrity. All these criteria are necessary because they permit us to create basis for the oppositions between the word and the phrase, the word and the phoneme, and the word and the morpheme: their common feature is that they are all units of the language, their difference lies in the fact that the phoneme is not significant, and a morpheme cannot be used as a complete utterance.

The weak point of all the above definitions is that they do not establish the relationship between language and thought, which is formulated if we treat the word as a dialectical unity of form and content, in which the form is the spoken or written expression which calls up specific meaning, whereas the content is the meaning rendering the emotion or the concept in the mind of the speaker which he intends to convey to the listener.

 Still, the main point can be summarized: *“The word is the fundamental unit of language. It is a dialectal unity of form and content.”*

Its content or meaning is not identical to notion, but it may reflect human notions, and in this sense may be considered as the form of their existence. Concepts fixed in the meaning of words are formed as generalized and approximately correct reflections of reality, therefore in signifying them words reflect reality in their content.

**Chapter 2. The meaning of the word**

**2.1 Grammatical meaning of the word**

Every word has two aspects: the outer aspect (its sound form) and the inner aspect (its meaning). Sound and meaning do not always constitute a constant unit even in the same language.

It is more or less universally recognised that word-meaning is not homogeneous but is made up of various components the combination and the interrelation of which determine to a great extent the inner facet of the word. These components are usually described as types of meaning. The two main types of meaning that are readily observed are the grammatical and the lexical meanings to be found in words and word-forms.

We notice, e.g., that word-forms, such as *girls, winters, joys, tables*etc. though denoting widely different objects of reality have something in common. This common element is the grammatical meaning of plurality which can be found in all of them.

Thus grammatical meaning may be defined ,as the component of meaning recurrent in identical sets of individual forms of different words, as, e.g., the tense meaning in the word-forms of verbs *(asked, thought, walked, etc.)* or the case meaning in the word-forms of various nouns *(girl’s, boy’s, night’s etc.).*

Ina broad sense it may be argued that linguists who make a distinction between lexical and grammatical meaning are, in fact, making a distinction between the functional (linguistic) meaning which operates at various levels as the interrelation of various linguistic units and referential (conceptual) meaning as the interrelation of linguistic units and referents (or concepts).

In modern linguistic science it is commonly held that some elements of grammatical meaning can be identified by the position of the linguistic unit in relation to other linguistic units, i.e. by its distribution. Word-forms *speaks, reads, writes*have one and the same grammatical meaning as they can all be found in identical distribution, e.g. only after the pronouns *he, she, it*and before adverbs like *well, badly, to-day,*etc.

It follows that a certain component of the meaning of a word is described when you identify it as a part of speech, since different parts of speech are distributionally different (cf. my work and I work).

**2.2 Lexical meaning of the word**

Comparing word-forms of one and the same word we observe that besides grammatical meaning, there is another component of meaning to be found in them. Unlike the grammatical meaning this component is identical in all the forms of the word. Thus, e.g. the word-forms *go, goes, went, going, gone*possess different grammatical meanings of tense, person and so on, but in each of these forms we find one and the same semantic component denoting the process of movement. This is the lexical meaning of the word which may be described as the component of meaning proper to the word as a linguistic unit, i.e. recurrent in all the forms of this word.

The difference between the lexical and the grammatical components of meaning is not to be sought in the difference of the concepts underlying the two types of meaning, but rather in the way they are conveyed. The concept of plurality, e.g., may be expressed by the lexical meaning of the world *plurality;*it may also be expressed in the forms of various words irrespective of their lexical meaning, e.g. *boys, girls, joys*etc. The concept of relation may be expressed by the lexical meaning of the word *relation*and also by any of the prepositions, e.g. *in, on, behind*etc.

It follows that by lexical meaning we designate the meaning proper to the given linguistic unit in all its forms and distributions, while by grammatical meaning we designate the meaning proper to sets of word-forms common to all words of a certain class. Both the lexical and the grammatical meaning make up the word-meaning as neither can exist without the other. That can be also observed in the semantic analysis of correlated words in different languages. E.g. the Russian word *сведения* is not semantically identical with the English equivalent *information*because unlike the Russian *сведения* the English word does not possess the grammatical meaning of plurality which is part of the semantic structure of the Russian word.

**2.2.1 Part-of-Speech Meaning**

It is usual to classify lexical items into major word-classes (nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs) and minor word-classes (articles, prepositions, conjunctions, etc.).

All members of a major word-class share a distinguishing semantic component which though very abstract may be viewed as the lexical component of part-of-speech meaning. For example, the meaning of “thingness” or substantiality may be found in all the nouns e.g. *table, love, sugar,* though they possess different grammatical meanings of number, case, etc. It should be noted, however, that the grammatical aspect of the part-of-speech meanings is conveyed as a rule by a set of forms. If we describe the word as a noun we mean to say that it is bound to possess a set of forms expressing the grammatical meaning of number *(table — tables),* case *(boy, boy’s)* and so on. A verb is understood to possess sets of forms expressing, e.g., tense meaning *(worked — works),*mood meaning *(work! — (I) work)*etc.

The part-of-speech meaning of the words that possess only one form, e.g. prepositions, some adverbs, etc., is observed only in their distribution (*to come in (here, there)).*

One of the levels at which grammatical meaning operates is that of minor word classes like articles, pronouns, etc.

Members of these word classes are generally listed in dictionaries just as other vocabulary items, that belong to major word-classes of lexical items proper (e.g. nouns, verbs, etc.).

One criterion for distinguishing these grammatical items from lexical items is in terms of closed and open sets. Grammatical items form closed sets of units usually of small membership (e.g. the set of modern English pronouns, articles, etc.). New items are practically never added.

Lexical items proper belong to open sets which have indeterminately large membership; new lexical items which are constantly coined to fulfil the needs of the speech community are added to these open sets.

The interrelation of the lexical and the grammatical meaning and the role played by each varies in different word-classes and even in different groups of words within one and the same class. In some parts of speech the prevailing component is the grammatical type of meaning. The lexical meaning of prepositions for example is, as a rule, relatively vague *(one of the students, the roof of the house).*The lexical meaning of some prepositions, however, may be comparatively distinct *(in/on, under the table).*In verbs the lexical meaning usually comes to the fore although in some of them, the verb *to be,*e.g., the grammatical meaning of a linking element prevails (*he works as a teacher and he is a teacher).*

**2.2.2 Denotational and Connotational meaning of the word**

Proceeding with the semantic analysis we observe that lexical meaning is not homogenous either and may be analysed as including denotational and connotational components.

As was mentioned above one of the functions of words is to denote things, concepts and so on. Users of a language cannot have any knowledge or thought of the objects or phenomena of the real world around them unless this knowledge is ultimately embodied in words which have essentially the same meaning for all speakers of that language. This is the *denotational meaning*, i.e. that component of the lexical meaning which makes communication possible. There is no doubt that aphysicist knows more about the atom than a singer does, or that an arctic explorer possesses a much deeper knowledge of what arctic ice is like than a man who has never been in the North. Nevertheless they use the words *atom, Arctic,*etc. and understand each other.

The second component of the lexical meaning is the *connotational component*, i.e. the emotive charge and the stylistic value of the word.

**2.2.3 Emotive Charge**

Words contain an element of emotive evaluation as part of the connotational meaning; e.g. *a hovel*denotes ‘a small house or cottage’ and besides implies that it is a miserable dwelling place, dirty, in bad repair and in general unpleasant to live in. When examining synonyms *large, big, tremendous*and *like, love, worship*or words such as *girl, girlie***;** *dear, dearie*we cannot fail to observe the difference in the emotive charge of the members of these sets. The emotive charge of the words *tremendous, worship*and *girlie*is heavier than that of the words *large, like*and *girl.*This does not depend on the “feeling” of the individual speaker but is true for all speakers of English. The emotive charge varies in different word-classes. In some of them, in interjections, e.g., the emotive element prevails, whereas in conjunctions the emotive charge is as a rule practically non-existent.

The *emotive charge* is one of the objective semantic features proper to words as linguistic units and forms part of the connotational component of meaning. It should not be confused with *emotive implications* that the words may acquire in speech. The emotive implication of the word is to a great extent subjective as it greatly depends of the personal experience of the speaker, the mental imagery the word evokes in him. Words seemingly devoid of any emotional element may possess in the case of individual speakers strong emotive implications as may be illustrated, e.g. by the word *hospital***.** What is thought and felt when the word *hospital*is used will be different in the case of an architect who built it, the invalid staying there after an operation, or the man living across the road.

**2.2.4 Stylistic Reference**

Words differ not only in their emotive charge but also in their stylistic reference. Stylistically words can be roughly subdivided into literary, neutral and colloquial layers.1

The greater part of the *literаrу layer* of Modern English vocabulary are words of general use, possessing no specific stylistic reference and known as *neutral words*. Against the background of neutral words we can distinguish two major subgroups – *standard colloquial* words and *literary or bookish* words. This may be best illustrated by comparing words almost identical in their denotational meaning, e. g., ‘*parent - father - dad’*.In comparison with the word *father*which is stylistically neutral, *dad*stands out as colloquial and *parent*is felt as bookish. The stylistic reference of standard colloquial words is clearly observed when we compare them with their neutral synonyms, e.g. *chum - friend, rot - nonsense***,** etc. This is also true of literary or bookish words, such as, e.g., *to presume (to suppose), to anticipate (to expect)*and others.

Literary (bookish) words are not stylistically homogeneous. Besides general-literary (bookish) words, e.g. *harmony, calamity, alacrity,*etc., we may single out various specific subgroups, namely: 1) terms orscientific words such as, e g., *renaissance, genocide, teletype,*etc.; 2) poetic words and archaisms such as, e.g., *whilome* - ‘formerly’, *aught* - ‘anything’, *ere* - ‘before’, *albeit* - ‘although’, *fare* - ‘walk’, etc., *tarry* - ‘remain’, *nay* - ‘no’; 3) barbarisms and foreign words, such as, e.g., *bon mot* - ‘a clever or witty saying’, *apropos, faux pas, bouquet***,** etc. The colloquial words may be subdivided into:

1. Common colloquial words.
2. Slang, i.e. words which are often regarded as a violation of the norms of Standard English, e.g. *governor*for ‘father’, *missus*for ‘wife’, a *gag*for ‘a joke’, *dotty*for ‘insane’.
3. Professionalisms, i.e. words used in narrow groups bound by the same occupation, such as, e.g., *lab*for ‘laboratory’, *a**buster*for ‘a bomb’ etc.
4. Jargonisms, i.e. words marked by their use within a particular social group and bearing a secret and cryptic character, e.g. *a sucker* – ‘a person who is easily deceived’, *a squiffer*– ‘a concertina’.
5. Vulgarisms, i.e. coarse words that are not generally used in public, e.g*. bloody, hell, damn, shut up,*etc.
6. Dialectical words, e.g. *lass, kirk*,etc.
7. Colloquial coinages, e.g. *newspaperdom, allrightnik,*etc.

**2.2.5 Emotive Charge and Stylistic Reference**

Stylistic reference and emotive charge of words are closely connected and to a certain degree interdependent. As a rule stylistically coloured words, i.e. words belonging to all stylistic layers except the neutral style are observed to possess a considerable emotive charge. That can be proved by comparing stylistically labelled words with their neutral synonyms. The colloquial words *daddy, mammy*are more emotional than the neutral *father, mother;*the slang words *mum, bob*are undoubtedly more expressive than their neutral counterparts *silent, shilling,*the poetic *yon*and *steed*carry a noticeably heavier emotive charge than their neutral synonyms *there*and *horse***.** Words of neutral style, however, may also differ in the degree of emotive charge. We see, e.g., that the words *large, big, tremendous,*though equally neutral as to their stylistic reference are not identical as far as their emotive charge is concerned.

**Chapter 3. Word meaning and motivation**

From what was said about the distributional meaning in morphemes it follows that there are cases when we can observe a direct connection between the structural pattern of the word and its meaning. This relationship between morphemic structure and meaning is termed morphological motivation.

The main criterion in morphological motivation is the relationship between morphemes. Hence all one-morpheme words, e.g. *sing, tell, eat,*are by definition non-motivated. In words composed of more than one morpheme the carrier of the word-meaning is the combined meaning of the component morphemes and the meaning of the structural pattern of the word. This can be illustrated by the semantic analysis of different words composed of phonemically identical morphemes with identical lexical meaning. The words *finger-ring*and *ring-finger,*e.g., contain two morphemes, the combined lexical meaning of which is the same; the difference in the meaning of these words can be accounted forby the difference in the arrangement of the component morphemes.

If we can observe a direct connection between the structural pattern of the word and its meaning, we say that this word is motivated. Consequently words such as *singer, rewrite***,** *eatable,*etc., are described as motivated. If the connection between the structure of the lexical unit and *its*meaning is completely arbitrary and conventional, we speak ofnon-motivated or idiomatic words, e.g. *matter, repeat.*

It should be noted in passing that morphological motivation is “relative”, i.e. the degree of motivation may be different. Between the extremes of complete motivation and lack of motivation, there exist various grades of partial motivation. The word *endless***,** e.g., is completely motivated as both the lexical meaning of the component morphemes and the meaning of the pattern is perfectly transparent. The word *cranberry*isonly partially motivated because of the absence of the lexical meaning in the morpheme *cran-.*

One more point should be noted in connection with the problem in question. A synchronic approach to morphological motivation presupposes historical changeability of structural patterns and the ensuing degree of motivation. Some English place-names may serve as an illustration. Such place-names as *Newtowns*and *Wildwoods*are lexically and structurally motivated and may be easily analysed into component morphemes. Other place-names, e.g. *Essex, Norfolk, Sutton,*are non-motivated. To the average English speaker these names are non-analysable lexical units like *sing*or *tell.*However, upon examination the student of language history will perceive their components to be *East+Saxon, North+Folk and South+Town*which shows that in earlier days they .were just as completely motivated as *Newtowns*or *Wildwoods*are in Modern English.

Motivation is usually thought of as proceeding from form or structure to meaning. Morphological motivation as discussed above implies a direct connection between the morphological structure of the word and its meaning. Some linguists, however, argue that words can be motivated in more than one way and suggest another type of motivation which may be described as a direct connection between the phonetical structure of the word and its meaning. It is argued that speech sounds may suggest spatial and visual dimensions, shape, size, etc. Experiments carried out by a group of linguists showed that back open vowels are suggestive of big size, heavy weight, dark colour, etc. The experiments were repeated many times and the results were always the same. Native speakers of English were asked to listen to pairs of antonyms from an unfamiliar (or non-existent) language unrelated to English, e.g. *ching – chung*and then to try to find the English equivalents, e.g. *light – heavy, big – small,*etc.), which foreign word translates which English word. About 90 per cent of English speakers felt that *ching*is the equivalent of the English *light*(small) and *chung*of its antonym *heavy*(large).

It is also pointed out that this type of phonetical motivation may be observed in the phonemic structure of some newly coined words. For example, the small transmitter that specialises in high frequencies is called ‘a tweeter’, the transmitter for low frequences ‘a woofer’.

Another type of phonetical motivation is represented by such words as *swish, sizzle, boom, splash,*etc. These words may be defined as phonetically motivated because the soundclusters [swi∫, sizl, bum, splæ∫] are a direct imitation of the sounds these words denote. It is also suggested that sounds themselves may be emotionally expressive which accounts for the phonetical motivation in certain words. Initial [f] and [p], e.g., are felt as expressing scorn, contempt, disapproval or disgust which can be illustrated by the words *pooh! fie! fiddle-sticks, flim-flam*and the like. The sound-cluster [iŋ] is imitative of sound or swift movement as can be seen in words *ring, sing, swing, fling***,** etc. Thus, phonetically such words may be considered motivated.

This hypothesis seems to require verification. This of course is not to deny that there are some words which involve phonetical symbolism: these are the onomatopoeic, imitative or echoic words such as the English *cuckoo, splash*and *whisper***:** And even these are not completely motivated but seem to be conventional to quite a large extent (cf. *кукареку* and *cock-a-doodle-doo).* **In** any case words like these constitute only a small and untypical minority in the language. As to symbolic value of certain sounds, this too is disproved by the fact that identical sounds and sound-clusters may be found in words of widely different meaning, e.g. initial [p] and [f], are found in words expressing contempt and disapproval *(fie, pooh)*and also in such words as *ploughs fine,*and others. The sound-cluster [in] which is supposed to be imitative of sound or swift movement *(ring, swing)*is also observed in semantically different words, e.g. *thing, king,*and others.

The term *motivation* is also used by a number of linguists to denote the relationship between the central and the coexisting meaning or meanings of a word which are understood as a metaphorical extension of the central meaning. Metaphorical extension may be viewed as generalisation of the denotational meaning of a word permitting it to include new referents which are in some way like the original class of referents. Similarity of various aspects and/or functions of different classes of referents may account for the semantic motivation of a number of minor meanings. For example, a woman who has given birth is called *a mother;*by extension, any act that gives birth is associated with being *a mother, e.g.*in *Necessity is the mother of invention.*The same principle can be observed in other meanings: a mother looks after a child, so that we can say *She became a mother to her orphan nephew,*or *Romulus and Remus were supposedly mothered by a wolf.*Such metaphoric extension may be observed in the so-called trite metaphors, such as *burn with anger, break smb’s heart, jump at a chance,*etc.

Ifmetaphorical extension is observed in the relationship of the central and a minor word meaning it is often observed in the relationship between its synonymic or antonymic meanings. Thus, a few years ago the phrases a *meeting at the summit, a summit meeting* appeared in the newspapers.

Cartoonists portrayed the participants of such summit meetings sitting on mountain tops. Now when lesser diplomats confer the talks are called *foothill meetings.*Inthis way both *summit*and its antonym *foothill*undergo the process of metaphorical extension.

**Chapter 4. Word meaning and meaning in morphemes**

In modern linguistics it is more or less universally recognised that the smallest two-facet language unit possessing both sound-form and meaning is the morpheme. Yet, whereas the phono-morphological structure of language has been subjected to a thorough linguistic analysis, the problem of types of meaning and semantic peculiarities of morphemes has not been properly investigated. A few points of interest, however, may be mentioned in connection with some recent observations in “this field.

It is generally assumed that one of the semantic features of some morphemes which distinguishes them from words is that they do not possess grammatical meaning. Comparing the word man, e.g., and the morpheme man-(in manful, manly, etc.) we see that we cannot find in this morpheme the grammatical meaning of case and number observed in the word *man***.** Morphemes are consequently regarded as devoid of grammatical meaning.

Many English words consist of a single root-morpheme, so when we say that most morphemes possess lexical meaning we imply mainly the root-morphemes in such words. It may be easily observed that the lexical meaning of the word boy and the lexical meaning of the root-morpheme boy — in such words as *boyhood, boyish* and others is very much the same.

Just as in words lexical meaning in morphemes may also be analysed into denotational and connotational components. The connotational component of meaning may be found not only in root-morphemes but in affixational morphemes as well. Endearing and diminutive suffixes, e.g. *-ette (kitchenette), -ie(y) (dearie, girlie), -ling (duckling),* clearly bear a heavy emotive charge. Comparing the derivational morphemes with the same denotational meaning we see that they sometimes differ in connotation only. The morphemes, e.g. *-ly, -like, -ish,*have the denotational meaning of similarity in the words *womanly, womanlike, womanish,* the connotational component, however, differs and ranges from the positive evaluation in **-***ly (womanly)*to the derogatory in*-ish (womanish):* Stylistic reference may also be found in morphemes of different types. Thestylistic value of such derivational morphemes as, *e.g. -ine (chlorine), -oid (rhomboid), -escence (effervescence)*is clearly perceived to be bookish or scientific.

The lexical meaning of the affixal morphemes is, as a rule, of a more generalising character. The suffix **-***er*, e.g. carries the meaning ‘the agent, the doer of the action’, the suffix**-***less*denotes lack or absence of something. It should also be noted that the root-morphemes do not “possess the part-of-speech meaning (cf. *manly, manliness,* to *man***);** in derivational morphemes the lexical and the part-of-speech meaning may be so blended as to be almost inseparable. In the derivational morphemes **-***er* and **-***less*discussed above the lexical meaning is just as clearly perceived as their part-of-speech meaning. In some morphemes, however, for instance *-ment*or*-ous (as*in *movement*or*laborious***),** it is the part-of-speech meaning that prevails, the lexical meaning is but vaguely felt.

In some cases the functional meaning predominates. The morpheme **-***ice*in the word *justice***,** e.g., seems to serve principally to transfer the part-of-speech meaning of the morpheme *just* – into another class and namely that of noun. It follows that some morphemes possess only the functional meaning, i.e. they are the carriers of part-of-speech meaning.

Besides the types of meaning proper both to words and morphemes the latter may possess specific meanings of their own, namely the differential and the distributional meanings. *Differential meaning* is the semantic component that serves to distinguish one word from all others containing identical morphemes. In words consisting of two or more morphemes, one of the constituent morphemes always has differential meaning. In such words as, e. g., *bookshelf***,** the morpheme **-***shelf*serves to distinguish the word from other words containing the morpheme *book***-,** e.g. from *bookcase, book-counter*and so on. In other compound words, e.g. *notebook***,** the morpheme *note***-** will be seen to possess the differential meaning which distinguishes *notebook*from *exercisebook, copybook***,** etc. It should be clearly understood that denotational and differential meanings are not mutually exclusive. Naturally the morpheme **-***shelf*in *bookshelf*possesses denotational meaning which is the dominant component of meaning. There are cases, however, when it is difficult or even impossible to assign any denotational meaning to the morpheme, e.g. *cran***-** in *cranberry***,** yet it clearly bears a relationship to the meaning of the word as a whole through the differential component (*cranberry*and *blackberry, gooseberry)*which in this particular case comes to the fore. One of the disputable points of morphological analysis is whether such words as *deceive, receive, perceive*consist of two component morphemes. If we assume, however, that the morpheme **-***ceive*may be singled out it follows that the meaning of the morphemes *re-, per, de***-** is exclusively differential, as, at least synchronically, there is no denotational meaning proper to them.

Distributional meaning is the meaning ofthe order and arrangement of morphemes making up the word. It is found in all words containing more than one morpheme. The word *singer***,** e.g., is composed of two morphemes *sing***-** and **-***er*both of which possess the denotational meaning and namely ‘to make musical sounds’ *(sing-)*and ‘the doer of the action’ *(-er).* There is one more element of meaning, however, that enables us to understand the word and that is the pattern of arrangement of the component morphemes. A different arrangement of the same morphemes, e.g. **\****ersing***,** would make the word meaningless. Compare also *boyishness*and *\*nessishboy*in which a different pattern of arrangement of the three morphemes *boy-ish-ness*turns it into a meaningless string of sounds.

**Conclusion**

So in this work word-meaning is viewed as closely connected but not identical with either the sound-form of the word or with its referent. Proceeding from the basic assumption of the objectivity of language and from the understanding of linguistic units as two-facet entities we regard meaning as the inner facet of the word, inseparable from its outer facet which is indispensable to the existence of meaning and to intercommunication.

The two main types of word-meaning are the grammatical and the lexical meanings found in all words. The interrelation of these two types of meaning may be different in different groups of words. Lexical meaning is viewed as possessing denotational and connotational components. The denotational component is actually what makes communication possible. The connotational component comprises the stylistic reference and the emotive charge proper to the word as a linguistic unit in the given language system. The subjective emotive implications acquired by words in speech lie outside the semantic structure of words as they may vary from speaker to speaker but are not proper to words as units of language.

Lexical meaning with its denotational and connotational components may be found in morphemes of different types. The denotational meaning in affixal morphemes may be rather vague and abstract, the lexical meaning and the part-of-speech meaning tending to blend.

It is suggested that in addition to lexical meaning morphemes may contain specific types of meaning: differential, functional and distributional.

We pointed out different motivations. Morphological motivation implies a direct connection between the lexical meaning of the component morphemes, the pattern of their arrangement and the meaning of the word. The degree of morphological motivation may be different varying from the extreme of complete motivation to lack of motivation. Phonetical motivation implies a direct connection between the phonetic structure of the word and its meaning. Phonetical motivation is not universally recognised in modern linguistic science. Semantic motivation implies a direct connection between the central and marginal meanings of the word. This connection may be regarded as a metaphoric extension of the central meaning based on the similarity of different classes of referents denoted by the word.

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