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**FOREWORD**

The meaning of a word can change in the course of time. Changes of lexical meanings can be proved by comparing contexts of different times. Transfer of the meaning is called lexico-semantic word-building. In such cases the outer aspect of a word does not change.

The causes of semantic changes can be extra-linguistic and linguistic, e.g. the change of the lexical meaning of the noun «pen» was due to extra-linguistic causes. Primarily «pen» comes back to the Latin word «penna» (a feather of a bird). As people wrote with goose pens the name was transferred to steel pens which were later on used for writing. Still later any instrument for writing was called « a pen».

On the other hand causes can be linguistic, e.g. the conflict of synonyms when a perfect synonym of a native word is borrowed from some other language one of them may specialize in its meaning, e.g. the noun «tide» in Old English was polisemantic and denoted «time», «season», «hour». When the French words «time», «season», «hour» were borrowed into English they ousted the word «tide» in these meanings. It was specialized and now means «regular rise and fall of the sea caused by attraction of the moon». The meaning of a word can also change due to ellipsis, e.g. the word-group «a train of carriages» had the meaning of «a row of carriages», later on «of carriages» was dropped and the noun «train» changed its meaning, it is used now in the function and with the meaning of the whole word-group.

Semantic changes have been classified by different scientists. The most complete classification was suggested by a German scientist Herman Paul in his work «Prinzipien des Sprachgeschichte». It is based on the logical principle. He distiguishes two main ways where the semantic change is gradual ( specialization and generalization), two momentary conscious semantic changes (metaphor and metonymy) and also secondary ways: gradual (elevation and degradation), momentary (hyperbole and litote).

**CHAPTER I. SEMANTIC CHANGES. TYPES OF SEMANTIC CHANGES.**

***1. Definition.***

The development and change of the semantic structure of a word is always a source of qualitative and quantitative development of the vocabulary.

All the types discussed depend upon some comparison between the earlier (whether extinct or still in use) and the new meaning of the given word. This comparison may be based on the difference between notions expressed or referents in the real world that are pointed out, on the type of psychological association at work, on evaluation of the latter by the speaker or, possibly, on some other feature.

The order in which various types are described will follow more or less closely the diachronic classifications of M. Breal and H. Paul.No attempt at a new classification is considered necessary. There seems to be no point in augmenting the number of unsatisfactory schemes already offered in literature. The treatment is therefore traditional.

M. Breal was probably the first to emphasize the fact that in passing from general usage into some special sphere of communication a word as a rule undergoes some sort of specialisation of its meaning. The word *case,* for instance, alongside its general meaning of 'circumstances in which a person or a thing is' possesses special meanings: in law ('a law suit'), in grammar (e.g. *the Possessive case),* in medicine ('a patient', 'an illness'). Compare the following:

*One of Charles's cases had been a child ill with a form of diphtheria.* (C. P. SNOW) *(case = a* patient).

*The Solicitor whom I met at the Holfords’ sent me a case which any young man at my stage would have thought himself lucky to get.* (Idem) *(case = a* question decided, in a court of law, a law suit)

The general, not specialized meaning is also very frequent in present-day English. For example: *At last we tiptoed up the broad slippery stair­case, and went to our rooms. But in my case not to sleep, immediately at least.* (Idem) (case = circumstances in which one is)

This difference is revealed in the difference of contexts in which these words occur, in their different valency. Words connected with illnesses and medicine in the first example, and words connected with law and court procedures in the second, form the semantic paradigm of the word *case.*

The word *play* suggests different notions to a child, a playwright, a footballer, a musician or a chess-player and has in their speech dif­ferent semantic paradigms. The same applies to the noun *cell* as used by a biologist, an electrician, a nun or a representative of the law; or the word *gas* as understood by a chemist, a housewife, a motorist or a miner.

In all the examples considered above a word which formerly represen­ted a notion of a broader scope has come to render a notion of a narrower scope. When the meaning is specialized, the word can name fewer objects, i.e. have fewer referents. At the same time the content of the notion is being enriched, as it includes -a greater number of relevant features by which the notion is characterized. Or as St. Ullmann puts it: "The word is now applicable to more things but tells us less about them." The reduction of scope accounts for the term "narrowing of the meaning" which is even more often used than the term "specialization". We shall avoid the term "narrowing", since it is somewhat misleading. Actually it is neither the meaning nor the notion, but the scope of the notion that .is narrowed.

There is also a third term for the same phenomenon, namely "differentiation", but it is not so widely used as the first two terms.

H. Paul, as well as many other authors, emphasizes the fact that this type of semantic change is particularly frequent in vocabulary of pro­fessional and trade groups.

H. Paul's examples are from the German language but it is very easy to find parallel cases in English. So this type of change is fairly universal and fails to disclose any specifically English properties.

The best known examples of specialization in the general language are as follows: OE *dēor* 'wild beast' > ModE *deer* 'wild rum,inant of a particular species' (the original meaning was still alive in Shakespeare's time as is proved by the following quotation: *Rats and mice and such small deer);* OE *mete* 'food' *>*ModE *meat* 'edible flesh', i.e. only a partic­ular species of food (the earlier meaning is still noticeable in the com­pound *sweetmeat).* This last example deserves special attention because the tendency of fixed context to preserve the original meaning is very marked as is constantly proved by various examples. Other well-worn examples are: OE *fuзol* 'bird' (cf. Germ *Vogel)* > ModE *foal* 'domestic birds'. The old, meaning is still preserved in poetic diction and in set expressions, like *fowls of the air.* Among its derivatives, *fowler* means 'a person who shoots or traps wild birds for sport or food'; the shooting or trapping itself is called *fowling; a fowling piece* is a gun. OE *hund* 'dog' (cf. . *Germ Hund) >hound* 'a species of hunting dog'. Many words connected with literacy also show similar changes: thus, *teach<.OE tæcan* 'to show', 'to teach'; *write* <OE *wrītan* 'to write', 'to scratch', 'to score' (cf. Germ *reiβen)<* writing in Europe had first the form of scratching on the bark of the trees. Tracing these semantic changes the scholars can, as it were, witness the development of culture.

In the above examples the new meaning superseded the earlier one. Both meanings can also coexist in the structure of a polysemantic word or be differentiated locally. The word *token* < OE *tāce,* ║Germ *Zeichen* originally had the broad meaning of 'sign'. The semantic change that occurred in it illustrates systematic interdependence within the vocabulary elements. Brought into competition with the borrowed word sign it became restricted in use to a few cases of fixed context *(a love token, a token of respect, a token vote, a token payment)* and consequently restricted in meaning. In present-day English *token* means something small, unimportant or cheap which represents something big, important or valuable. Other examples of specialization are *room,* which alongside the new meaning keeps the old one of 'space'; *corn* originally meaning 'grain', 'the seed of any cereal plant': locally the word becomes special­ized and is understood to denote the leading crop of the district; hence in England *corn* means 'wheat', in Scotland 'oats', whereas in the USA, as an ellipsis for Indian corn, it came to mean 'maize'.

As a special group belonging to the same type one can mention the formation of proper nouns from common nouns chiefly in toponymies, i.e. place names. For instance, *the City,—* the business part of London; *the Highlands —* the mountainous part of Scotland; *Oxford —* Univer­sity town in England from *ox+ford,* i.e. a place where oxen could ford the river; *the Tower* (of London) — originally a fortress and palace, later a state prison, now a museum.

In the above examples the change of meaning occurred without change of sound form and without any intervention of morphological processes. In many cases, however, the two processes, semantic and morphological, go hand in hand. For instance, when considering the effect of the agent suffix *-ist* added to the noun stem *art-* we might expect the whole to mean any person occupied in art, a representative of any kind of art, but usage specializes the meaning of the word *artist* and restricts it to a synonym of *painter.*

The process reverse to specialisation is termed generalisation  
and widening of meaning. In that case the scope of the new  
notion is wider than that of the original one (hence widening), whereas  
the content of the notion is poorer. In most cases generalisation is combined with a higher order of abstraction than in the notion expressed by  
the earlier meaning. The transition from a concrete meaning to an ab­stract one is a most frequent feature in the semantic history of words. The  
change may be explained as occasioned by situations in which not all   
the features of the notions rendered are of equal importance for the  
message.

Thus, *ready* <OE *ræde* (a derivative of the verb *rīdan* 'to ride') meant 'prepared for a ride'. *Fly* originally meant 'to move through the air with wings'; now it denotes any kind of movement in the air or outer space and also very quick movement in any medium.

The process went very far in the word *thing* with its original mean­ings 'cause', 'object', 'decision', 'meeting', and 'the decision of the meeting', 'that which was decided upon'. (Cf. Norwegian *storting* 'par­liament'.) At present, as a result of this process of generalisation, the word can substitute nearly any noun, and receives an almost pronominal force. In fact all the words belonging to the group of generic terms fall into this category of generalization. By generic terms we shall mean non-specific, non-distributive terms applicable to a great number ; of individual members of a big class of words. The grammatical meaning of this class of words becomes predominant in their semantic components. Notice the very general, character of the word *business* in the following: *"Donald hasn't a very good manner of interviews."—"All this good-manner business," Clun said, "they take far too much notice of it now in my opinion"* (A. WILSON) ,

It is sometimes difficult to distinguish the instances of generalization proper from generalization combined with a fa-ding of lexical meaning ousted by the grammatical or emotional meaning that take its place. These phenomena are closely connected with the peculiar characteristics of grammatical structure typical of each individual language. One ob­serves them, for instance, studying the semantic history of the English auxiliary and semi-auxiliary verbs, especially *have, do, shall, will, turn, go,* and that of some English prepositions and adverbs which in the course of time have come to express grammatical relations. The weakening of lexical meaning due to the influence of emotional force is revealed in such words as *awfully, terribly, terrific, smashing.*

***2. Metaphor.***

"Specialization" and "generalization" are thus identified on the evid-' ence of comparing logical notions expressed by the meaning of words. If, on the other hand, the linguist is guided by psychological consider­ations and has to go by the type of association at work in the transfer of the name of one object to another and different one, he will observe that the most frequent transfers are based on associations of similarity or of contiguity. As these types of transfer are well known in rhetoric as ; figures of speech called metaphor (Gr *meta* 'change' and *phero* 'bear') and metonymy (Gr *metonymia* from *meta* and *onoma* 'name') and the same terms are adopted here. A metaphor is a transfer of name based on the association of similarity and thus is actually a hidden comparison. It presents a method of description which likens one thing to another by referring to it as if it were some other one. A cunning person, for instance, is referred to as *a fox.* A woman may be called *a peach, a lemon, a cat, a goose,* etc. In a metonymy, this referring to one thing as if it were some other one is based on association of contiguity. Sean O'Casey in his one-act play "The Hall of Healing" metonymically names his personages according to the things they are wearing: *Red Muffler, Grey Shawl,* etc. Metaphor and metonymy differ from the two first types of semantic change, i.e. generalization and specialization, inasmuch .as they do not originate as a result of gradual almost imperceptible change in many contexts, but come of a purposeful momentary transfer of a name from one object to another belonging to a different sphere of reality.

In all discussion of linguistic metaphor and metonymy it must be borne in mind that they are different from metaphor and metonymy as literary devices. When the latter are offered and accepted both the author and the reader are to a greater or lesser degree aware that this reference is figurative, that the object has another name. The relationship of the direct denotative meaning of the word and the meaning it has in the literary context in question is based on similarity of some features in the objects compared. The poetic metaphor is the fruit of the author's creative imagination, as for example when England is called by Shakespeare(in "King Richard II") *this precious stone set in the silver sea,* or when A. Tennyson writes: *What stamps the wrinkle deeper on the brow?/ To view each loved one blotted from life's page.*

In a linguistic metaphor, especially when it is dead as a result of long usage, the thing named often has no other name. In a dead metaphor the comparison is completely forgotten, as for instance in the words *gather, source* and *shady* in the following example dealing with some information: / *gathered that one or two of their sources were shady, and some not so much shady as irregular in a most unexpected way.* (SNOW)

The meaning of such expressions as a *sun beam* or *a beam of light* are not explained by-allusions to a tree, although the word is actually derived from OE *beam* 'tree' || Germ *Baum,* whence the meaning *beam* a long piece of squared timber supported at both ends' has also developed. The metaphor is dead. There are no associations with hens in the verb' *brood* 'to meditate' (often sullenly),'though the direct meaning is 'to sit on eggs'.

There may be transitory stages: *a bottleneck* 'any thing obstructing an even flow of work", for instance, is not a neck and does not belong to a bottle. The transfer is possibly due to the fact that there are some common features in the narrow top part of the bottle, a narrow outlet for road traffic, and obstacles interfering with the smooth working of administrative machinery.

Metaphors, H. Paul points out, may be based upon very different types of similarity, for instance, similarity of shape: *head of a cabbage, the teeth of a saw.* This similarity may be based on a similarity of function. The transferred meaning is easily recognized from the context: *the head of the school, the key to a mystery.* The similarity may be supported also by position: *foot of a page, of a mountain,* or behaviour and function: *bookworm, wirepuller.* The word *‘whip’* a lash used to urge horses on' is metaphorically transferred to an official in the British Parliament appointed by a political party to see that members are present at debates, especially when a vote is taken, to check the voting and also to advise the members on the policy of the respective party, etc.

In *the kg of the table* the metaphor is motivated by the similarity of the lower part of the table and the human limb in position and partly jn shape and function. Anthropomorphic metaphors are among the most frequent. The way in which the words denoting parts of the body are made to express a variety of meanings may be illustrated by the following: *head of an army, of a procession, of a household; arms and mouth of a' river, eye of a needle, foot of a hill, tongue of a bell* and so on and so forth. The transferred meaning is easily recognized from the context: ... *her feet were in low-heeled brown brogues with fringed tongues.* (PLOMER>

Numerous cases of metaphoric transfer are based upon the analogy between duration of time and space, e.g. *long distance:: long- speech; a short path :: a short time.* The transfer of space relations upon psychological and mental notions may be exemplified by words and expressions concerned with understanding: *to catch (to grasp) an idea; to take a hint; , to get the hang of; to throw light upon*.

This metaphoric change from the concrete to the abstract is also represented in such simple words as *score, span, thrill. Score* comes from OE *scoru* 'twenty' from ON *skor* 'twenty' and also 'notch'. In OE time notches were cut on sticks to keep a reckoning. As *score* is cognate with *shear,* it is very probable that the meaning developed from the twentieth notch that was made of a larger size. From the meaning 'line' or 'notch cut or scratched down' many new meanings sprang out, such as 'number of points made by a player or a side in some games', 'running account', 'a debt', 'written or printed music', etc. *Span* from OE *spann* 'maxi­mum distance between the tips of thumb and little finger used as a meas­ure of length', came to mean 'full extent from end to end' (of a bridge, an arch, etc.) and 'a short distance'. *Thrill* from ME *thriven* 'to pierce' developed into the present meaning 'to penetrate with emotion'.

Another subgroup of metaphors comprises transitions of proper names into common ones: *an Adonis, a Cicero, a Don Juan,* etc. When a proper name like *Falstaff* is used referring specifically to the hero of Shakes­peare's plays it has a unique reference. But when people speak of a person they know calling him *Falstaff* they make a proper name generic for a corpulent, jovial, irrepressibly impudent person and it no longer denotes a unique being. Cf. *Don Juan* as used about attractive profligates. To certain races and nationalities traditional characteristics have been attached by the popular mind with or without real justification. If a person is an out-and-out mercenary and a hypocrite into the bargain they call him *a Philistine,* ruthlessly destructive people are called *Vandals.*

***3.Metonymy***

If the transfer is based upon the association of contiguity it is called metonymy. It is a shift of names between things that are known to be in some way or other connected in reality. The transfer may be condi­tioned by spatial, temporal, causal, symbolic, instrumental, functional and other relations.

Thus, the word *book* is derived from the name of a tree on which inscriptions were scratched: ModE *book* < OE *boc* 'beech'. ModE *win <.* OE *winnan* 'to fight'; the word has been shifted so as to apply to the success following fighting. *Cash* is an adaptation of the French word *caisse* 'box'; from naming the container it came to mean what was con­tained, i.e. money; the original meaning was lost in competition with the new word *safe.* Spatial relations are also present when the name of the place is used for the people occupying it. *The chair* may mean 'the chair­man', *the bar* 'the lawyers', *the pulpit* 'the priests'. The word *town* may denote the inhabitants of a town and the word *house* the members of the House of Commons or of Lords. *Cello, violin, saxophone* are often used to denote not the instruments but the musicians who play them.

A causal relationship is obvious in the following development: ModE *fear* < ME *feere* < OE *fær, fēr* 'danger', 'unexpected attack'. States and properties serve as names for objects and people possessing them: *youth, age, authorities, forces.* The name of the action can serve to name the result of the action: ModE *kill* < ME *killen* 'to hit on the head', ModE *stay* || Germ *schlagen..* Emotions may be named by the movements that accompany them: *to frown, to start.*

There are also the well-known instances of symbol for thing symbol­ized: *the crown* for 'monarchy'; the instrument for the product: *'hand* 'handwriting'; receptacle for content, as in the word *kettle,* and some others. Words for the material from which an article is made are often used to denote the particular article: *glass, iron, copper, nickel* are well known examples. The pars pro toto where the name of a part is applied to the whole may be illustrated by such military terms as *the royal horse* for 'cavalry' and *foot* for 'infantry', and the expressions like / *want to have a word with you.* The reverse process is observed when OE *cēol* 'a ship' develops among other variants into *keel* 'a barge load of coal'.

A place of its own within metonymical change is occupied by the so-called functional change. The type has its peculiarities: in this case the shift is between names of things substituting one another in human practice. Thus, the early instrument for writing was a feather or more exactly a quill (OE *pen,* from OFr *penne,* from It *penna,* from Lat. *penna* 'feather'). We write with fountain-pens that are made of differ­ent materials and have nothing in common with feathers except the function, but the name remains. The name *rudder* comes from OE *roper* 'oar' || Germ *Ruder* 'oar'. The shift of meaning is due to the shift of function: the steering was formerly achieved by an oar. The steersman was called *pilot;* with the coming of aviation one who operates the flying controls of an aircraft was also called *pilot.* For more cases of functional change see also the semantic history of the words: *filter, pocket, spoon, stamp, sail*.

Common names may be derived from proper names also metonymically, as in *macadamand diesel,* so named after their inventors.

Many physical and technical units are named after great scientists: *volt, ohm, ampere, watt,* etc.

There are also many instances in political vocabulary when the place of some establishment is used not only for the establishment itself or its staff but also for its policy: *the White House, the Pentagon, Wall Street, Downing Street, Fleet Street.*

Examples of geographic names turning into common nouns to name the goods exported or originating there are exceedingly numerous, e.g.

*astrakhan, bikini, boston, cardigan, china, tweed.*

Garments came to be known by the names of those who brought them into fashion: *mackintosh, raglan, wellingtons.*

***4. Other types of semantic changes.***

Following the lead of literary criticism linguists have often adopted terms of rhetoric for other types of semantic change, besides metaphor and metonymy. These are: hyperbole, litotes, irony, e u p h e m i s m. In all these cases the same warning that was given in connection with metaphors and metonymy must be kept in mind: namely, there is a difference between these terms as understood in literary criti­cism and in lexicology. Hyperbole (from Gr *huperballō* 'exceed') is an exaggerated statement not meant to be understood literally but expressing an intensely emotional attitude of the speaker to what he is speaking about. The emotional tone is due to the illogical character in which the direct denotative and the contextual emotional meanings are combined.

A very good example is chosen by I. R. Galperin from Byron, and one cannot help borrowing it:

*When people say "I've told you fifty times," They mean to scold and very often do,*

The reader will note that Byron's intonation is distinctly colloquial, the poet is giving us his observations concerning colloquial expressions, So the .hyperbole here is not poetic but linguistic.

The same may be said about expressions like: *It's absolutely madden­ing, You'll be the death of me, I hate troubling you, It's monstrous, It's a nightmare, A thousand pardons, A thousand thanks, Haven't seen you for ages, I'd give the world to, I shall be eternally grateful, I'd love to do it,* etc.

The most important difference between a poetic hyperbole and a linguistic one lies in the fact that the former creates an image, whereas in the latter the denotative meaning quickly fades out and the correspon­ding exaggerating words serve only as general signs of emotion without specifying the emotion itself. Some of the most frequent emphatic words are: *absolutely! awfully! terribly! lovely! magnificent! splendid!* and so on.

The reverse figure is called litotes (from Gr *lītos* 'plain', 'meagre') or understatement. It. might be defined as expressing the affirmative by the negation of its contrary: e.g. *not bad* or *not half bad* for 'good', *not small* for 'great', *no coward* for 'brave'. Some understate­ments do not contain negations: *rather decent; I could do with a cup* of *tea.* It is, however, doubtful whether litotes should be considered under the heading of semantic change at all, because as a rule it creates no per­manent change in the semantic structure of the word concerned. The purpose of understatement is not to deceive but to produce a stronger impression on the hearer.

Also taken from rhetoric is the term irony, i.e. expression of one's meaning by words of opposite meaning, especially a simulated adoption of the opposite point of view for the purpose of ridicule. One of the meanings of the adjective *nice* is 'bad', 'unsatisfactory'; it is marked off as ironical and illustrated by the example: *You've got us into a nice mess!* The same may be said about the adjective *pretty: A pretty mess you've made of it!*

Changes depending on the social attitude to the object named, connect­ed with social evaluation and emotional tone, are called ameliora­tion and pejoration of meaning. Amelioration or elevation is a semantic shift undergone by words due to their referents coming up the social scale. For instance OE *cwen* 'a woman'> ModE *queen,* OE *cniht* 'a young servant' > ModE *knight.* The words *steward* and *stewardess* (the passengers' attendant on ships and airliners) have undergone a great amelioration. *Steward* < OE *stigweard* from *stigo* 'a sty' and *weard* 'a ward', dates back from the days when the chief wealth of the Saxon landowner was his pigs, of whom the *stigweard* had to take care. The meaning of some words has been elevated through associations with aristocratic life or town life. This is true about such adjectives as *civil, chivalrous, urbane.*

The reverse process is pejoration or degradation; it involves a lowering in social scale connected with the appearance of a derogatory and scornful emotive tone reflecting the disdain of the upper classes towards the lower ones. A *knave* < OE *cnafa \\* Germ *Knabe* meant at first 'boy', then 'servant', and finally became a term of abuse and scorn. Another example of the same kind is *blackguard.* In the lord's retinue of Middle Ages served among others the guard of iron pots and other kitchen utensils black with soot. From the immoral features attrib­uted to these servants by their masters comes the present scornful ' meaning of the word *blackguard.* A similar history is traced for the words *boor, churl, clown, villain.*

Euphemism (Gr *euphemismos* from *eu* 'well' and *pheme* 'speak') is the substitution of words of mild or vague connotations for expressions rough, unpleasant or for some other reasons unmentionable.

Within the diachronic approach the phenomenon has been repeatedly classed by many linguists as taboo. This standpoint is hardly accep­table for modern European languages. With primitive peoples taboo is a prohibition meant as a safeguard against supernatural forces. Names of ritual objects or animals were taboo because the name was regarded as the equivalent of what was named. S. Ullmann returns to the conception - of taboo several times illustrating it with propitiatory names given in the early periods of language development to such objects of supersti­tious fear as the bear (whose name originally meant 'brown') and the weasel. He treats both examples as material of comparative semantics. The taboo influence behind the circumlocutions used to name these anim­als becomes quite obvious when the same phenomenon is observed in similar names in various other languages. There is no necessity to cite them here as they are given in any book on general linguistics. It should be borne in mind that taboo has historical relevance. No such opposition as that between a direct and a propitiatory name for an animal, no matter how dangerous, can be found in present-day English.

With peoples of developed culture, euphemism is intrinsically differ­ent, has nothing to do with taboo and is dictated by social usage, moral tact and etiquette. Cf. *queer* 'mad', *deceased* 'dead', *perspire* v 'sweat'.

From the semantical point of view euphemism is important because meanings with unpleasant connotations appear in words formerly neutral, as a result of their repeated use instead of other words that are for some reason unmentionable.

The material of this chapter shows that semantic changes are not arbitrary. They proceed in accordance with the logical and psychological laws of thought, otherwise changed words would never be understood and could not serve the purpose of communication. The various attempts at classification undertaken by traditional linguistics, although inconsistent ( and often subjective, are useful, since they permit the linguist to find his way about an immense accumulation of semantic facts. However, they say nothing or almost nothing about the causes of these changes.

**CHAPTER II. CAUSES OF SEMANTIC CHANGE**

In comparison with classifications of semantic change the problem of their causes appears neglected. Opinions on this point are scattered through a great number of linguistic works and have apparently never -been collected into anything complete. And yet a thorough understanding of the phenomena involved .in semantic change is impossible unless the whys and wherefores become known. This is of primary importance as it may lead eventually to a clearer, interpretation of language develop­ment. The vocabulary is the most flexible part of the language and it is precisely its semantic aspect that responds most readily to every change in the human activity in whatever sphere it may happen to take place.

The causes of semantic changes may be grouped under two main head­ings, linguistic and extralinguistic ones. Of these the first group has suffered much greater neglect in the past and it is not surprising therefore that far less is known of it than of the second. It deals with changes due to the constant interdependence of vocabulary units in language and speech, such as differentiation between synonyms, changes taking place in connection with ellipsis and with fixed contexts, changes resulting from ambiguity in certain contexts, and some other cases.

Semantic change due to the differentiation of synonyms is a gradual change observed in the course of language history, sometimes, but not necessarily, involving the semantic assimilation of loan words. Consider, for example, the words *time* and *tide.* They used to be synonyms. Then *tide* took on its more limited application to the periodically shifting waters, and *time* alone is used in the general sense.

Another example of semantic change involving synonymic differen­tiation is the word *twist.* In *OE* it was a noun, meaning 'a rope' whereas the verb *thrawan* (now *throw)* meant both 'hurl' and 'twist'. Since the appearance in the Middle English of the verb *twisten* ('twist') the first verb lost this meaning. But *threw* in its turn influenced the development of *casten (cast),* a Scandinavian borrowing. Its primary meaning 'hurl', 'throw' is now present only in some set expressions. *Cast* keeps its old meaning in such phrases as *cast a glance, cast lots, cast smth. in one's teeth. Twist* has very many meanings, the latest being 'to dance the twist'

Fixed context may be regarded as another linguistic factor in semantic change. Both factors are at work in the case of *token*. When brought into competition with the loan word *sign,* it became restricted in use to a number of set expressions such as *love token, token of respect* and so became specialized in meaning. Fixed context has this influence not only in phrases but in compound words as well. OE *mete* meant 'food', its descendant *meat* refers only to flesh food except in the set expression *meat and drink* and the compound *sweetmeats.*

No systematic treatment has so far been offered for the syntagmatic semantic changes depending on the context. But such cases do exist showing that investigation of the problem is important.

One of these is ellipsis. The qualifying words of a frequent phrase may be omitted: sale comes to be used for *cut-price sale, propose* for *to propose marriage, to be expecting* for *to be expecting a baby.* Or vice versa, the kernel word of the phrase may seem redundant: *minerals* for *mineral waters.* Dueto ellipsis *starve* which originally meant 'die' (cf. Germ *sterben)* came to substitute the whole phrase *die of hunger,* and also began to mean 'suffer from lack of food' and even in colloquial use 'to feel hungry'. Moreover as there are many words with transitive and intran­sitive variants naming cause and result, *starve* came to mean 'to cause to perish with hunger'.

English has a great variety of these regular coincidences of different aspects, alongside with cause and result, we could consider the coincidence of subjective and objective, active and passive aspects especially fre­quent in adjectives. E.g. *hateful* means 'exciting hatred' and 'full of hatred'; *curious—*'strange' and 'inquisitive'; *pitiful—* 'exciting com­passion' and 'compassionate'. Compare the different use of the words *doubtful* and *healthy* in the following: *to be doubtful* :: *a doubtful advan­tage, to be healthy :: a healthy climate.*

The extralinguistic causes are determined by the social nature of the language: they are observed in changes of meaning resulting from the development of the notion expressed and the thing named and by the appearance of new notions and things. In other words, extralinguistic causes of semantic change are connected with the development of the human mind as it moulds reality to conform with its needs.

Languages are powerfully affected by social, political, economic, cul­tural and technical change. The influence of those factors upon linguistic phenomena is studied by sociolinguistics. It shows that social factors can influence even structural features of linguistic units, terms of science, for instance, have a number of specific features as compared to words used in other spheres of human activity.

The word being a linguistic realization of notion, it changes with the progress of human consciousness. This process is reflected in the develop­ment of lexical meaning. As the human mind achieves an ever more exact understanding of the world of reality and the objective relation­ships that characterize it, the notions become more and more exact reflec­tions of real things. The history of the social, economic and political life of people, the progress of culture and science bring about changes in notions and things influencing the semantic aspect of language. For instance, OE *eorpe* meant 'the ground under people's feet', 'the soil' and 'the world of man' as opposed to *heaven* that was supposed to be inhabited first by Gods and later on, with the spread of Christianity, by God, his saints and the souls of the dead. With the progress of science earth came to mean the third planet from the sun and the knowledge of it was con­stantly enriched.

The word *space* from the meanings of 'extension' or 'intervening distance' came to mean 'the limitless expanse in which everything exists' and more recently came to be used especially in the meaning of 'outer space'. *Atoms* (Gr. *atomos* 'indivisible' from *a* 'not' and *tomos* 'cut') were formerly thought to be indivisible smallest particles of matter and were usually associated in layman's speech with smallness. The word could be metaphorically used in the meaning of 'a tiny creature'. When atoms were found to be made up of a positively charged nucleus round which negatively charged electrons revolve, the notion of an atom brought about connotations of discrete (discontinuous) character of matter. With the advances made since science has found ways of releasing the energy hidden in the splitting of the atomic nucleus, the notion is accom­panied with the idea of immense potentialities present, as, for instance, in the phrase *Atoms for peace.* Since the advent of the atomic bomb the adjective *atomic* distinctly connotes in the English language with the threat of a most destructive warfare *(atomic bomb, atomic warfare).*

The tendency to use technical imagery is increasing in every language, thus the expression *to spark off in chain reaction* is almost international. Some expressions tend to become somewhat obsolete: the English used to talk of people being *galvanized into activity,* or *going full steam ahead* but the phrases sound out dated now.

The changes of notions and things named go hand in hand. As they are conditioned by changes in the economic, social, political and cultu­ral history of the people, the extralinguistic causes of semantic change might be conveniently subdivided in accordance with these. Social rela­tionships are at work in the cases of elevation and pejoration of meaning discussed in the previous section where the attitude of the upper classes to their social inferiors determined the strengthening of emotional tone among the semantic components of the word.

Euphemisms may be dictated by publicity needs—hence *ready-tailored* and *ready-to-wear clothes* instead of *ready-made.* The influence of mass-advertising on language is growing; it is felt in every level of the language.Innovations possible in advertising are of many different types. A kind of orange juice, for instance, is called *Tango.* The justifica­tion of the name is given in the advertising text as follows: *Get this differ­ent tasting Sparkling Tango. Tell you why: made from whole oranges. Taste those oranges. Taste the tang in Tango. Tingling tang, bubbles*— *sparks. You drink it straight. Goes down great. Taste the tang in Tango. New Sparkling Tango.* The reader will see for himself how many expres­sive connotations are introduced by the salesman in this commercial name in an effort to attract the buyer's attention.

Economic causes are obviously at work in the semantic development o! the word *wealth.* It first meant 'well-being', 'happiness' from *weal* from OE *wela* whence *well.* This original meaning is preserved in the compounds *commonwealth* and *commonweal.* The present meaning became possible due to the role played by money both in feudal and bourgeois society. The chief wealth of the early inhabitants of Europe being the cattle, OE *feoh* means both 'cattle' and 'money', likewise Goth *faihu;* Lat. *pecu* meant 'cattle' and *pecunia* meant 'money'. ME *fee-house* is both a cattle-shed and a treasury. The present-day English *fee* most frequently means the price paid for services to a lawyer or a physician. It appears to develop jointly from the above mentioned OE *feoh* and the Anglo-French *fe, fie, fief,* probably of the same origin, meaning 'a recompense' and 'a feudal tenure'. This modern meaning is obvious in the following example: *Physicians of the utmost Fame/Were called at once; but when they came/ They answered as they took their fees,/ "There is no cure for this disease."* (BELLOC)

**CONCLUSION**

We have dialled in detail with various types of semantic change. This is necessary not only because of the interest the various cases present in themselves but also because a thorough knowledge of these possibilities helps one to understand the semantic structure of English words at the present stage of their development. The development and change of the semantic structure of a word is always a source of qualitative and quantitative development of the vocabulary.

The constant development of industry, agriculture, trade and trans­port bring into being new objects and new notions. Words to name them are either borrowed or created from material already existing in the lan­guage and it often happens that new meanings are thus acquired by old words.

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