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Introduction

- Traditionally, nominality has been associated with the lexical class 'noun', which is said to denote either "persons, places, or things" (Fontaine 2013:26). However, traditional lexical classes, such as 'noun', have shown to be "unsatisfactory" (Lyons 1977:423) due to variably applied criteria which inconsistently mix morphology, syntax and semantics. One approach that attempts to account for lexical class structure is 'Prototype Theory'. Prototype theory presents a flexible approach to categorization where category members are viewed on a continuum ranging from 'prototypical members' to 'peripheral members'. The boundaries of categories according to Prototype Theory are 'fuzzy', and no one feature is considered essential for category membership. However, by not clearly identifying the boundaries of categories, the category status of peripheral members is left ambiguous. For instance, where could we place the nominal *fire* on a prototype continuum of nominality? *Fire* behaves verbally, like a deverbal noun, but this meaning is not inherited from a verb (Vendler 1967:141). In only working with a continuum of similarity, we restrict ourselves by only examining peripheral instances on their similarity with prototype instances.

Nominal Semantics and Semasiology

- Hanks' (2013) proposes the viewpoint that lexical items do not possess inherent meaning or class, but "meaning potential", which is activated when placed in context. In the field of Lexical Semantics, which broadly concerns the study of word meaning, the focus of the 'Semasiological' perspective is the exploration of how meanings come to be associated with a lexical item (Geeraerts 2000:78). The semasiological perspective involves the shift of Prototype theory into the study of polysemy. By taking account of polysemy relations, we are no-longer restricted to a continuum of similarity. We can investigate the multidimensionality of lexical meaning (Geeraerts 2010:192). These polysemy relations take the form of clusters in 'Radial Networks'.

- However, while the semasiological perspective allows us to explore the semantics of nominals at a deeper level than classifications of lexical class, it does not provide empirical data on the semantic behaviour of these nominals. One tool, which can facilitate access to this semantic behaviour in use is 'Lexical Aspect'.
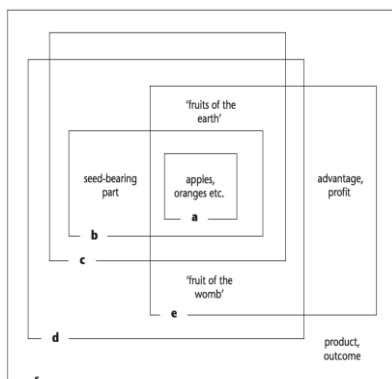

Figure 1. Radial network for the nominal fruit (Geeraerts 2010:194).

Lexical Aspect

- Lexical Aspect covers the 'inherent' temporal structures of construals denoted by individual lexical items (Smith 1997). The structures are binary features which centre around the lexical item's '**Dynamism**', '**Durativity**' and '**Telicity**' (Vendler 1967).

- **Dynamism** distinguishes situations which involve change and activity, e.g. *the run*, from those which do not, e.g. *the love*.

- **Durativity** distinguishes situations which occur over time, e.g. *the swim*, from those that transpire instantaneously, e.g. *the explosion*.

- **Telicity** distinguishes situations which express an internal endpoint, e.g. *the walk to school*, from those which do not, e.g. *the walk*.

- These 3 features combine to create 5 different 'Situation Types': **States; Activities; Accomplishments; Achievements; and Semelfactives** (Smith 1997).

Situation Type	Dynamic/ Stative	Durative/ Punctual	Telic/ Atelic
States	Stative	Durative	N/A
Activities	Dynamic	Durative	Atelic
Accomplishments	Dynamic	Durative	Telic
Achievements	Dynamic	Punctual	Telic
Semelfactives	Dynamic	Punctual	Atelic

Research Aims

1. To determine how the nature and degree of nominality can be evaluated.

2. To determine how object, state, and event meaning come to be expressed in nominal forms.

3. To examine the relationship between the syntactic behaviour and the semantic properties of underived event nominals (UENs).

Research Design (Split into Two Studies)

- Part 1 will focus on the relationship between nominal temporal semantics and nominal form. Approximately 5000 nominals will be extracted from the BNC using 'part-of-speech' tagging. An SFL experiential metafunction analysis will be undertaken on the nominals, to establish how each nominal is functioning within its context of use. The nominals will then be analysed for their Lexical Aspect features, through applying diagnostic syntactic tests, e.g. 'can NOMINAL take place?'. Afterwards, the etymology of each nominal will be located using the Oxford English Dictionary (2020). A Chi-Squared test for independence will then be used to assess the relationship between nominal temporal semantics and nominal form.

- Part 2 will examine the interactions between the syntactic and semantic properties of underived event nominals (UENs). The semantic similarity of the UENs (found in Part 1) will be identified using a distributional semantic model. 10000 'features', e.g. 5 collocates each side of the UEN, will be imputed into the distributional model to generate the semantic space of all the UENs. An SFL experiential metafunction analysis will then be applied on the UENs to analyse their typical surrounding syntactic contexts.
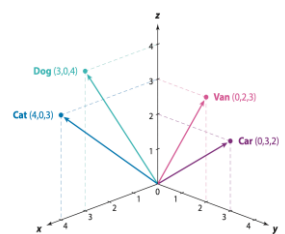

Figure 2. Distributional vectors of the lexemes car, cat, dog, and van (Lenci 2018:153).

Problems/Difficulties

1. Are there any specific features that you think would be interesting to explore in my distributional semantic model, apart from '5 collocates each side of the UEN'?

2. As my visit at KU Leuven was cut short, I did not get to fully learn about distributional semantics. Do you know any relevant literature, or online tutorials which focus on setting up a distributional semantic model?

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