

**On the Instability of Meaning: English**  
**in Time and Place**

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**Doctor Of Philosophy**  
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**By**

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# ***On the Instability of Meaning: English in Time and Place***

Ghsoon Reda

## ***Abstract***

This study is concerned with semantic change in English along two dimensions: time and place. The second dimension considers controversies that have arisen after the global spread of English and the subsequent emergence of ‘deviant’ semantic norms as perceived by native speakers. This is linked to the puristic role that English pedagogy has been playing since the heyday of ‘etymology’. The thesis argues as follows. Although the prevalence of the Saussurean (1915) principle of ‘arbitrariness’ has contributed to the sanctioning of semantic change, it has not freed modern linguistics from the shackles of linguistic purism. This purism, however, has acquired a nationalistic face now that English derives its high status from belonging to English-speaking nations. The ‘true’ meanings of English words are now commonly seen as those that have developed with the rise and development of the Anglo-Saxons’ language. These are evolutionary processes and must be accounted for validly in historical semantics. The thesis contributes to the field by offering a corpus-based study of semantic change using the case of the lexical category *to show* in a diachronic version of Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) work on metaphor. The aim is to stress the role of metaphor in semantic change on both levels of semasiology and onomasiology. A second contribution highlights the extent to which the study of meaning in time in western linguistics is thought to be worthwhile as compared to that of meaning in place. Meaning in place is a synchronic, controversial issue commonly examined along sociolinguistic parameters in which the role of conceptual metaphor in generating local innovations is neglected. A third contribution shows how the focus on spreading the ‘core’ and ‘fixed’ norms of the English vocabulary through ELT has shifted attention from the centrality of metaphor to language use. An empirical study is also offered to demonstrate the influence of nationalism on the design of the EFL/EIL lexical syllabus.

To my very dear husband and son,  
the backstage warriors,  
whose sufferings tortured my soul  
throughout the battle of performing this work



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-I-

## *INTRODUCTION*

*Words strain,  
Crack and sometimes break, under the burden  
Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,  
Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place  
Will not stay still.*

T. S. Eliot

### *1.1 Preliminaries*

It has long been a convenient figure of speech to speak of language as a living organism<sup>1</sup> that grows and changes like everything else in this universe. Jean Aitchison (1981:16), for example, wrote that:

*Language, ... like everything else, gradually transforms itself over  
the centuries. There is nothing surprising in this. In a world where  
humans grow old, tadpoles change into frogs, and milk turns into  
cheese, it would be strange if language alone remained unaltered.*

A glance at the language of Beowulf, for example, shows clearly that the English language has undergone such change in the course of time that it is now impossible to read Old English (450-1100) without special study (From Hock 1986:331):

bēowulfe wearð gūðhreð gefeþe

‘to beowulf glory was given’

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<sup>1</sup> The conception of language as an organism involves attributing creativity in language (eg. Muller 1881:33) to the power of language itself and not to its speakers (From Milroy 1992:22). Aitchison's lines, however, are free from this connotation. This shows that although “organism” as a theory for language change has died, yet the metaphor has not been buried with it.

Texts written during the Middle English period (1100-1500) also require some preliminary study on the part of the modern reader: the understanding of Chaucer is possible only with the help of a glossary. For, in addition to differences in spelling and pronunciation, many of Chaucer's words have either dropped out of usage or survived with considerable alteration of meaning.

Modern English is, then, the product of many centuries of development. However, the present era is not to be thought of as static. Modern English has changed greatly over the last five centuries and it is understood that it will continue to change so long as it lives in actual usage. In describing the inevitability of language change, Sapir (1921) noted that:

*Language moves down time in a current of its own making. It has a drift<sup>2</sup> ...Nothing is perfectly static. Every word, every grammatical element, every locution, every sound and accent is a slowly changing configuration, moulded by the invisible and impersonal drift that is the life of language (In Ullmann 1962:193).*

This chapter introduces the present study; it concerns itself with the semantic aspect of the life of English. The next part introduces this aspect and provides discussion of key issues that are particularly significant for an understanding of the process of semantic change. Against this background, the third part is concerned with attitudes towards the instability of meaning. It brings into focus puristic and non-puristic perspectives concerning the development of meaning in

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<sup>2</sup> 'Drift', as an explanation for language change is deeply ingrained in the view of language as an 'organism'. The 'drift', however, does not only refer to the independent life of language, but also to a teleological aspect of that life. Such a standpoint (e.g. Prokosch:1939) interprets the parallel linguistic changes in related languages on the assumption that the 'parent' language was programmed to undergo specific types of change. These conditions were then handed down to the 'daughter' languages (From Milroy 1992:29-30).

time. Attention is then drawn to how the emergence of semantic change in place (i.e. in countries like India and Singapore where English is used as a second language) has contributed to the two opposing positions in question, settling their disputes and unifying into a puristic movement. The argument is that the attitudes of 'Western' linguists to semantic change are polarized only with respect to the development of meaning in time. This polarization figures in responses to the question as to whether or not standard English should be planned. When it comes to semantic change (as well as other types of linguistic change) in place, western linguists assume a puristic role that is, in a way, similar to the eighteenth century proposals (e.g. Swift 1712) to stabilize English (i.e. to establish it in a norm which would be permanent) (Baugh & Cable 1978:259). The norm argued for in modern times is a 'monolithic' standard as the medium of communication in all-English-speaking countries<sup>3</sup>. Both puristic trends may be regarded as attempts to suspend the process of change which characterizes a living language: the former attempt is directed towards *change in time* and the latter towards *change in place*.

It is worth noting at this point that these trends claim that their purism has to do with the question of 'intelligibility'. The voiced concern in the earlier period was that the works of writers would not continue to be understood as a consequence of the changing nature of language. However, a closer reading of the following lines by Swift is apt to show that the real drive behind his proposal to fix English is to promote the status of the language in a way that might make its writers as famous as those who write in Greek and Latin<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> This standard (World Standard English) refers to the language of writing and education in core English speaking countries, namely Britain and America.

<sup>4</sup> Swift and others who talked about 'fixing English' (e.g. Thomas Sheridan 1756) had worked under the mistaken notion that the classical languages, particularly Greek, had continued unchanged for many centuries, and that the high status of these languages derived from their stability (See Baugh & Cable 1978:259-61).



*The fame of our writers is usually confined to these two islands, and it is hard it should be limited in **time** as much as in **place** by the perpetual variations of our speech* (Swift 1712, in Baugh & Cable 1978:260).

Similarly, the question of intelligibility between native speakers and speakers of English as a second language is often raised by modern linguists in order to justify their attitude which has given rise to the concept of a ‘monolithic’ standard, namely their non-recognition of the standardization of the local varieties of English as it can lead to the fragmentation of English and, in the long run, to the language losing its status as a world language. Thus, the puristic trends in question may both be seen to be principally motivated by the desire to plan the future of English.

The shift of attention from fixing English in time to fixing the language in place after its global spread may be said to have resulted in linguistic purism acquiring a nationalistic face. Linguistic nationalism can be defined as love of the language of one’s nation, which is often associated with the belief that this language is a private property of its original speakers. As such, and as far as semantic change is concerned, the process of change which the language undergoes should continue to reflect the cognitive and socio-cultural norms of its owners. It is only these norms that may be standardized and recognized as correct on a global scale. In this thesis, ‘nationalism’ will be interpreted in a very broad sense, to cover certain effects of the concept of a ‘monolithic standard’ on the field of applied linguistics (i.e. the branch of linguistic studies that concerns itself with designing the world version of English).

The last part of this chapter draws a picture of the overall structure and plan of the thesis. The next section offers an introduction to the study of semantic change.

## ***1.2 Semantic Change***

Semantic change takes place whenever a new meaning becomes attached to a form and/or a new form to a meaning (Ullmann 1957:171). Current surveys of historical linguistics confirm that although all the linguistic elements are perpetually in a state of change, yet change of meaning happens with the utmost ease (Ullmann 1957; Anttila 1972). The section which follows focuses on a number of factors facilitating semantic change.

### ***1.2.1 Factors Facilitating Semantic Change***

Semanticists have referred to several factors which facilitate semantic change. The ones mentioned below are of vital importance.

#### ***1.2.1.1 The Structure of Vocabulary***

The vocabulary system is more open-ended than the phonological and the grammatical systems of language. New words can always be added, existing words can easily change their meanings, and old words fall as easily into disuse (Anttila 1972:136; Ullmann 1962:195).

#### ***1.2.1.2 The Flexibility of Lexical Items***

One of the most important characteristics of lexical items is their ability to undergo semantic change. For instance, the same expression is allowed to convey many different meanings without necessarily losing its earlier meaning(s). This can result in two semantic situations: simple and multiple (Ullmann 1957:174). The former refers to instances in which the new meaning drives the old one or ones away. This is change by substitution. For example, *capable* in Shakespeare's days meant 'susceptible' and this is the meaning in *Hamlet* (1602), where Hamlet

says of the ghost:

*His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,  
Would make them capable.*

However, the current meaning of *capable*, 'able or having the capacity', was also current at that time. It ousted the old meaning around 1700 (Room 1986:51).

The latter situation, multiple meaning, arises when the old sense or name survives alongside of the new, thus giving rise to *polysemy* and *synonymy*. This is change in which parallel uses continue. Polysemy occurs when a word retains its previous sense or senses and at the same time acquires one or more new senses. The word *mouth*, for example, is a polysemous word; it is "one lexeme with several different senses (organ of body, entrance of cave, etc.)" (Lyons 1977:550). In the case of synonymy (one sense-several names), when a new word is attached to a meaning, the newcomer will generally modify the meaning of the previous one(s). The meanings of the synonymous words *vessel* and *ship*, for example, are by no means identical (Vendryes 1925:192). The two terms are not merely parallel but come to modify each other's meaning or value, in a Saussurian-type system. Bréal explains this phenomenon on the assumption that complete synonymy cannot be tolerated in language. Hence, as his 'law of distribution' states, if two terms are interchangeable and equipollent, one of them will probably be either discarded or differentiated (In Ullmann 1957:177).

It is worth noting at this point that even morphological elements undergo semantic change. Consider, for example, the semantic development of the affixes *en-* and *-ee* which illustrate reduction and extension of meaning respectively. The prefix *en-* was used to form transitive verbs that describe two meanings: 'making

into a noun' (as in *enslave*) and 'putting into a noun' (as in *entomb* and *encage*). In the course of time, the productivity of *en-* became limited to the latter meaning (Bauer 1983:217).

Conversely, the suffix *-ee* has undergone semantic extension. This suffix was once used to denote humans only, like the use of *appointee* as the direct object of the verb *appoint*; of *payee* as the indirect object of *pay*, or the object of the preposition (pay) *to*; and of *absentee* as the subject of a verb. In the twentieth century, the use of *-ee* has developed in such a way that it is now capable of denoting non-humans as well, especially in technical terms in linguistics. For instance, the word *deletee* (first recorded in 1979) "is a principle that allows deletion/substitution where the character of the deletee is recoverable" (Bauer 1994:40, 42-3). An example from another field is the word *mortgagee* which refers to 'a bank or building society as the creditor in a mortgage'.

On the basis of large numbers of parallel examples it can be argued that the whole lexicon, starting from its smallest semantic units, is susceptible to change. This flexibility plays a decisive role in facilitating semantic change.

### **1.2.1.3 Semantic Vagueness**

Vagueness<sup>5</sup> in meaning is another factor that facilitates semantic change. The notion of vagueness in language is attributed to Peirce. Peirce (1902:748) was the first linguist to note that vague words are those which speakers use without having determined their limiting criteria (From Channell 1994:7). Peirce regards vagueness as an inherent property of language. Ullmann (1962:118) goes on to distinguish between two aspects of vagueness: those "inherent in the very nature of the language" and those that "come into play in special circumstances".

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<sup>5</sup> This factor was identified by Meillet in his *Linguistique et Linguistique Générale* (1921).

Ullmann ascribes vagueness to four factors. These will be discussed in turn: the first one is the ‘generic’ nature of English words. Except for proper names and a small number of common nouns referring to unique objects, words denote a wide range of referents linked by some properties (ibid). The word *animal*, for example, can be used to refer to (Hock 1986:283):

1. any breathing , mobile, food-consuming organism (except certain “plants” which come uncomfortably close to the definition).
2. mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish
3. mammals and birds
4. mammals

Yet the application of words such as the above mentioned example, *animal*, is restricted in comparison with the words *case* and *matter* which imply a whole variety of concepts. *Matter* can refer to a chemical substance as well as a subject of discussion. And these are only two uses of the term (Waldron 1967:146-8). “This “multiplicity of aspects” [says Ullmann (1962:124)] is another important source of vagueness” and the interpretation of heterogeneous meaning is, therefore, context-bound. In commenting on this point, Channell (1994:6-7) wrote that:

*Ullmann’s implication is that context will permit an exact interpretation to be put on any word...I shall suggest that there exist at least some expressions which are always vague and for which a precise interpretation or analysis is not possible.*

For example, the meaning of the English quantifiers, except for *all* and *never*, is never precise. It “is determined relationally. That is to say, by knowing how the term in question relates to other quantifiers which indicate either more, or less” (ibid:118).

The third factor making for vagueness identified by Ullmann is the ‘lack of clear cut boundaries’ in the real world. The demarcation line between *yellow*, *orange* and *red* is very difficult to draw, as is apparent in a rainbow. In a more abstract sense, difficulties arise from the indeterminate meaning of words. A female of eighteen years can be referred to as a girl, but also as a woman. It is difficult to establish linguistically when a girl turns into a woman (Ullmann 1962:125; Waldron 1967:147).

The last point which Ullmann made about vagueness is that vagueness can occur because of variation in social and cultural background which has a high impact on unfamiliar words. Excellent examples can be found in political terms such as *conservative*, *progressive*, *democrat*, *European*<sup>6</sup>, and *socialism* (Ullmann 1962:127; Waldron 1967:147).

In sum, the various kinds of semantic vagueness discussed above, the flexibility of language, and the structure of vocabulary are all factors that conspire to facilitate semantic change.

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<sup>6</sup> The term “European” has more than geographical vagueness. Since the 19th century, at least, it has cultural vagueness, partly in opposition to nationalism. In Britain, since the 1970s, it has had connotations of being politically pro-European community. The European union has, of course, dramatically changed in recent years: its enlargement over the years has changed its political definition, while financial and legal arrangements have changed its meaning in daily life for those who live within it.

### 1.2.2 The Rate of Semantic Change

Another important fact about semantic change is that it can happen with the utmost speed compared to other types of linguistic change. This explains the reason why speakers are conscious of some examples of the process taking place: speakers now living have seen the word *gay* changing its meaning from ‘bright’, ‘cheerful’ to ‘homosexual’; the word *presently* from ‘soon’ to ‘now’; and many more changes<sup>7</sup> (Bright 1992:387; McMahon 1994:174-5). Lyons (1977:621) referred to this consciousness as “a kind of diachrony-in-synchrony”<sup>8</sup>. The following article which appeared in a New Zealand newspaper during (1988) illustrates everyday awareness of changes taking place in the lexicon (Quoted in Bauer 1994:30-1).

*A senior citizen is one who was here before the pill, before television, frozen food, credit cards or ball point pens. ... In our day, ... grass was for mowing and pot was something we cooked in. A gay person was the life and soul of the party, and nothing more, while AIDS meant beauty lotions or help for someone in trouble. We are today's senior citizens. A hardy bunch, when you think how the world has changed and of the adjustments we have had to make.*

On the assumption that changes in the lexicon mirror changes in the outside world, as suggested by the lines above, and on the assumption that this is why words change their meanings, is it also the main reason why meanings change their words? Is the notion of language as an ‘organism’ or as a ‘drift’ adequate as an explanation for the necessity of semantic change, let alone the other types of linguistic change?

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<sup>7</sup> There are a range of obvious examples here where language use, and therefore meaning, has changed in many circles to accord with notions of political correctness.

<sup>8</sup> Diachrony refers to historical variation and synchrony to language as it exists at a given moment.

Imagine a state of the art whereby linguists continue to feel content with any of the above explanations without exerting any effort to explore further possibilities. One can assume that had the quest for more satisfactory explanations for semantic change not been launched, the older view would not have been abandoned. But the question that needs to be asked is: had this been the case, would it have remained so after English words changed their meanings in non-native contexts? In other words, is the view of meaning as an evolutionary process attached to the concept of the 'ownership of language'? Are new meanings that have been delivered beyond the native speaking territories to be regarded as a deformed generation of English?

It is true that semantic changes in the native varieties of English are often referred to as errors, but this is probably the opinion of conservative speakers only. Linguists, purists and non-purists alike, distinguish between the synchronic and the diachronic dimension of language. However, as will be shown in the section to follow, non-purists, or descriptive linguists, are also prepared to play the prescriptive role of purists when they see the need arise. When semantic change is believed to abuse the national language, all functional views about linguistic change can be abandoned and prescription is called for.

### ***1.3 Attitudes to Semantic Change***

Before considering the attitudes of linguists towards semantic change in time versus place, it is worthwhile discussing lay people's attitudes. Lay people's attitudes to semantic change might be divided into two categories: conservative and non-conservative. The conservative attitude, on the one hand, conceives of semantic change (no matter where it happens) largely as a process of decay. Therefore, conservative speakers recommend, it should be brought under control, as is clear from the following comments from the press (Quoted in Strang



1970:4):

*Sir, - Every so often a familiar word takes on a new and senseless life. 'Superb', for instance, is now commonly abused. 'Literally' - 'he literally exploded with rage' - seems to be on the way out, but virtually has taken its place. In the course of a day influenza-bound recently I heard speakers on various B.B.C. programmes use this verb improperly nine times.*

*With superb diffidence, I am, Sir, virtually yours.*

*Sir, - Can anything be done to stop the appalling new word 'escalate' from escalating into the next edition of the Oxford Dictionary? The hope is being expressed that the Viet-Nam business may not 'escalate' into a major war. What's wrong with the simple word 'develop'?*

*Your obedient servant*

The non-conservative attitude, on the other hand, finds the evolution of meaning generally acceptable. The following comment from the press represents this viewpoint (Quoted in Strang 1970:5):

*Sir, - English is a living language. Meanings change, and dictionaries cannot always keep pace with current usage.*

*If the majority of English-speaking people use the word sophisticated to describe something which is highly refined, then that is its meaning.*

*Yours faithfully*

This view, upon which conservative speakers would frown, encapsulates the position of modern linguists. The introduction of Saussure's doctrine of 'arbitrariness' into linguistics, (in 1915), paved the way for the sanctioning of semantic change. Arbitrariness makes it possible to regard the signifier (e.g. the word 'pen') and the signified (the object pen) as independent elements; either may therefore change over time. Before Saussure's doctrine became dominant, the prevalent belief was that the original meaning of a word (i.e. the first used meaning in the mother language) is its true one. This etymological argument (which fails to capture the distinction between synchrony and diachrony) is still called upon by conservative speakers whose fanaticism blinds them to its fallacy<sup>9</sup> (Hughes 1988:224; Thomas 1991:3-4; McMahon 1994:177-8). Trudgill (1975:14-5) wrote that:

*Some people feel that the word aggravate 'really' means 'to make more serious' (because of its Latin etymology) and that the more recent meaning of 'to irritate' is therefore 'wrong'. It is simply the case, however, that aggravate, while preserving its original meaning, has also acquired another. Most people use it to mean 'to irritate', so that is what it does mean. The English language has lost nothing. Misunderstanding will not occur, since 'to aggravate a situation' (with an abstract object) and 'to aggravate a person' (with an animate object) can never be confused. And even if the original were lost, English still has a number of other words that could replace aggravate in different contexts. In some cases, too, change can even mean 'growth' - when language is adapted, consciously or subconsciously, to handle new topics and ideas.*

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<sup>9</sup> A major aspect of the etymological argument is that it is prone to infinite regression. How far back in time do we need to go to locate the 'original' meaning? At any given time, however remote, there will always be the possibility of a prior meaning, which can of course equally claim to be the 'real' meaning, and so on, *ad infinitum*.

Milroy (1992:31-2) has also made the following observation on conservative attitudes to language change:

*The belief that language change is dysfunctional is most clearly expressed in popular attitudes to language. These commonly conceive of languages as ideal and perfect structures, and speakers as awkward creatures who violate these perfect structures by misusing and corrupting 'language'....These attitudes are strongly expressed and highly resistant to rational examination.*

Trudgill's and Milroy's remarks are representative of the non-puristic position with respect to the evolution of meaning in time. As for the puristic position, it is based on both rational and non-rational attitudes. To purists, language should be capable of extending its repertoire in order to keep pace with the ever-developing conditions of life (the polyvalency criterion). Language should also be capable of modification (the elasticity criterion), but at the same time it should preserve its prestige and national identity by resisting change due to foreign influence (the stability criterion) (Thomas 1991). Hence, a stable, pure standard from this perspective refers to the sought after Anglo-Saxon norm for English. Thomas (1991:12) defines purism as:

*the manifestation of a desire on the part of a speech community (or some of it) to preserve a language from, or rid it of, putative foreign elements or other elements held to be undesirable (including those originating in dialects, sociolects and styles of the same language). It may be directed at all linguistic levels but primarily the lexicon. Above all, purism is an aspect of the codification, cultivation and planning of standard languages.*

Purist attitudes are shown in concern about figures for the English adoption of foreign words are constantly on the rise. Bliss (1966:26) studied this phenomenon and summarized the findings in the table quoted below.

**Table (1. 1): Loan-words in English (Bliss 1966:26).**

<b>Medieval</b>	<b>15c</b>	<b>16c</b>	<b>17c</b>	<b>18c</b>	<b>19c</b>	<b>20c</b>
French	19	42	166	316	736	1103
Classical	89	237	371	173	328	250
Italian	-	26	48	100	90	153
German	-	2	2	4	58	240
Spanish	-	13	14	14	47	32
Other European	4	10	13	22	49	53
Non - European	2	12	56	35	97	55
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>664</b>	<b>1405</b>	<b>1886</b>

c = century

Note that French is the most important source of English loan-words. Corson (1985:30) records that:

*During ... [the] Middle English period it is the Central French that exerts the crucial influence, displacing Old English words entirely where they are synonymous. The Central French, which is closer to the source of Latin both geographically and politically, provides words to fill gaps as well in semantic fields, with religious terms like 'requiem' and 'gloria', legal terms like 'client, executor, conviction and memorandum', medical and scientific words like 'recipe, dissolve, distillation, concrete, comet and equator' and numerous 'intensional' words like 'adoption, conflict, dissent, imaginary, implication'. Now for the first time the Latinate terms are beginning to fill the role that they assume more fully later on: that of providing*

*the English Lexicon with much of its learned and difficult terminology, founding and populating semantic fields in the language in the process.*

The purists' effort to maintain the socially more prestigious language variety of the past, to purify the language from foreign influence, and to achieve national solidarity is justified by the 'intelligibility' argument. They claim that the employment of natively formed words to denote material and intellectual changes will render the language more intelligible. And this is the only way to attain intercomprehensibility among educated and uneducated speakers. It is argued that the misinterpretation of borrowed words can build a "language bar" between these two masses (Ullmann 1962:114; Thomas 1991:50-3,65). This is because foreign words are *opaque*; that is to say, "their meanings cannot be deduced from their constituent parts by an unlearned speaker" (Barber 1965:247). Puristic linguists went so far as to suggest Anglo-Saxon substitute terms for borrowed ones<sup>10</sup>. In the early fifties, William Barnes, for example, suggested a number of items for replacing Graeco-Latinisms in English<sup>11</sup>, such as *downcast* (a poetic word) for 'horizon', *gleecraft* (an archaism) for 'music', *starkin* (a calque of German *Sternchen*) for 'asterisk', and *fireghost* (a neologism) for 'electricity', and *mainland* (an old word with somewhat different meaning) for 'continent' (In Corson 1985:37; Thomas 1991:93).

According to Corson, who adopts a non-puristic attitude to the development of English in time, the silliness of such words "is now fairly obvious in the light of more modern knowledge about conceptual development" (1985:37). He further

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<sup>10</sup> The use of many loans from Greek and Latin into French and English can be interpreted as pedantry (using them would make you appear civilised not brutish). Pedantry can thus appear in both the pro-loan *and* contra-loan groups.

<sup>11</sup> Speakers of English as a second language can coin new English words for equally negative and nationalistic reasons. This study, however, will limit itself to the above-mentioned side of the argument.

pointed out that “Even those who attempt a criticism of the use of intruder words cannot avoid using them” (ibid). Corson illustrates his observation by quoting Grove who wrote that (*italicized terms are G-L derivatives*):

... to *recover* its primitive *flexibility* and *plastic power*, to *discard* the *adventitious aids* and *ornaments* borrowed from Greece and Rome, to *supply* the *place* of *foreign* by *domestic compounds*, to clothe again our thoughts and our feelings *exclusively* in a garb of living, *organic, native* growth (Grove 1949:97-98).

To Haugen (1966:23), the intelligibility argument is merely a mask behind which puristic linguists hide their real motive, namely “the sense of national pride which derives from “doing it yourself”.” The purists’ point is to question the need to resort to borrowing when the native language is not lacking in creativity. As early as (1708), Defoe in his *Review* complained:

*I cannot but think that the using and introducing foreign terms of art or foreign words into speech while our language labours under no penury or scarcity of words is an intolerable grievance* (In Baugh & Cable 1978:286-7).

English has, after all, a variety of devices for forming new words from its existing resources. Consider Table 1.2 below (Examples and definitions from Algeo:1991; Katamba:1994):

**Table (1.2): English methods of forming new lexical items.**

Method	Definition of method	Types	Definition of types	Examples
<b>1. Creating</b>	The process of making new words without using existing ones.	<b>Onomatopoeia</b>	Forming of words which sound like the noise of the thing they are describing.	-The <i>moo</i> of the cow. -The <i>pow</i> of a blow to a chin.
		<b>Coining</b>	Making words completely from scratch	The use of <i>byte</i> in information technology
<b>2. Combining</b>	The process of combining words or word parts into a new form.	<b>Derivatives</b>	Combining a base with one or more affixes.	-The use of <i>aer(o)-</i> to denote the new meanings of <i>aeropause</i> and <i>aeropolitics</i> .  -The use of <i>-genic</i> as a source of the new meanings <i>phonogenic</i> , <i>mediagenic</i> and <i>radiogenic</i> .
		<b>Compounds</b>  1. suffix-like 2. prefix-like 3. letter compounds 4. alphanumeric compounds 5. respelled compounds 6. compound phrases 7. sound patterns in compounds	Combining two or more full words or bases.	1. <i>Blockbuster</i> 2. <i>Big money</i> 3. <i>A-bomb</i> for atom 4. <i>Vitamin B12</i>  5. <i>Kwik-Fit</i> , trade name, 6. <i>Behind the curve</i>  7. <i>jet set</i> <i>zero-zero</i>
<b>3. Shortening</b>	The process of omitting some part of an old word(s) to form new words.	<b>Clipping</b>		
		1. Internal clipping	Clipping at a morpheme boundary.	<i>Biopic</i> (from <i>bio</i> (graphical) <i>pic</i> (ture)).
		2. Innovative clipping	Clipping at a point that does not correspond to any part of the original word structure.	<i>Cominch</i> (from <i>com</i> (mander) in <i>ch</i> (ief)).
		3. Alphabetism	Using the initial letters of the words of an expression	<i>IBM</i> (for international business machine).
		4. Acronymy	Forming new words from the initial letters of the words of an expression.	<i>Yuppie</i> is an acronym for 'young urban professional' plus the suffix <i>-ie</i> .

		5. Phonetic elision	Omitting a sound (the elided form may be treated as a new word.	<i>Stonewash</i> 'bleached in streaks', is an opocopated form of <i>stone- washed</i> .
		6. Back-formation	Forming a word by omitting an affix or other constituent morpheme.	<i>Typewrite</i> (from <i>typewriter</i> ).
4. Blending	The process of joining two or more forms but omitting at least part of one.	1. Blending with clipped first element  2. Blending with clipped second element  3. Blending with both elements clipped		<i>Alcometer</i> (from <i>alco</i> (hol) <i>meter</i> ).  <i>Middlebrow</i> (from <i>middle</i> and (high/ low) <i>brow</i> ).  <i>Fortran</i> (from <i>formula translation</i> ).

Table 1.2 shows that the methods of forming words in English have the potential for bridging any gap in the vocabulary without recourse to any other language. Although 'coining' is rare, yet the other methods will suffice to fill lexical gaps (Algeo 1991). However, from the viewpoint of historical linguistics, "When a language becomes exclusive or limited in range, it is considered a dead language" (Sayyid Ahmed; in Thomas 1991:185). Classical Latin is a dead language because it has not interacted with living languages (i.e. has not been influenced by them) for nearly two thousand years. For this reason, as non-puristic linguists would argue, those who are on the watch for the status of English should not interfere with the natural course of linguistic history.

The non-puristic position is not against the establishment of a standard norm for English. It is just the concepts of 'pure' and 'stable' that have been abandoned. Within this framework, the dynamism of standard English (i.e. the language of writing, education, and most mass media) is seen to be healthy as long as it arises



spontaneously; that is, without the interference of prescriptivism. This attitude is developed by Robin Lakoff (1990:298) who asserts that:

*For change that comes spontaneously from below [i.e. from the unconscious behaviour of speakers], or within [the inherent tendency of language for change], our policy should be, Let your language alone, and leave its speakers alone! But other forms of language manipulation have other origins, other motives, other effects, and are far more dangerous.*

The basic differences between linguistic purism and non-purism concerning language change in time and standardization can be summarized as follows.

<b>Purism</b>	<b>Non-Purism</b>
1. An attempt to establish a ‘pure’ norm for English (i.e. pure of foreign elements).	1. An attempt to standardize the norm of the educated.
2. Insistence on the stability of the Anglo-Saxon norm.	2. Acceptance of the inevitable contact with other languages.
3. It is to be held as the prestigious norm.	3. It is the norm of education, writing, reference books, etc.

Looking at the above bases one is likely to think that the difference between purism and non-purism lies in the fact that while the former position is founded on the principle ‘back to older times’; the latter is based on ‘welcome to modern times’. This, however, is not the case when it comes to the development of English in place. Prescriptivism as a trend is at the heart of many a language

policy<sup>12</sup>. This is admitted by Cameron (1995:10), saying that:

*in a crucial sense things could not be otherwise; there is no escape from normativity.*

Cameron further says, “If normativity is an inalienable part of using language, to abandon prescription in the broad sense is to abandon language itself” (ibid). Even Milroy, who adopts a non-puristic, or descriptive, approach to language change in time, used the ‘intelligibility’ argument as a justification for supporting prescriptivism. He (1992:32) wrote:

*The purpose of prescriptivism “seems to be the maintenance of communicative efficiency in carrying information-bearing messages over long distances and periods of time. For conveying information in these ways, uniformity and standardization of language are highly valued...”*

The prescriptive position Milroy adopts in these lines does not seem to be very much different from that of Swift. The only difference is that Swift’s prescriptivism is concerned with *English in time*, whereas Milroy’s prescriptivism is directed towards *English in place* so that English continues to be the world language over long periods of time. This example shows that descriptive linguists can potentially turn to prescriptivists if they find their national language to be in danger of free diversification and divergence. And deviations from the standard norm that have been observed in the local varieties of English (e.g. Indian English, African English, etc.) happen to unveil the tendency of ‘Western’

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<sup>12</sup> If this is true in a “broad sense” of language, it is certainly broadly true of teaching English as a foreign or second language, where arguably the long term effort of teachers is in general aimed at inducting learners into norms of target language use.

linguists towards prescriptivism (Chapter four, section 4.4.4, offers more examples of this position).

Kachru (1987:126) attributes the reluctance of 'Western' linguists to adopt a descriptive attitude towards the local varieties of English to their rejection of non-western influence:

*True, the English language shows typical characteristics of a 'mixed' language development in its layer after layer of borrowings, adaptations, and various levels of language contact. But even there the earlier main intrusion [, unlike later intrusion,] has been essentially European and more or less consistent with the Hellenistic and Roman traditions.*

However, words such as Indian *sari* and Chinese *kungfu* refer to aspects of non-European traditions. Yet, they are incorporated into English as basic vocabulary items. This implies that 'Western' linguists are not concerned about the western identity of the language but about preserving its accepted (and hence correct) norms. Fishman's (1971) viewpoint regarding standardization can reflect this point:

*a language variety is said to be standardized if a set of norms defining 'correct' usage has been codified and accepted within a speech community. Typically, these codified norms are available in the form of dictionaries, grammars, style manuals and prototype texts. The acceptance of the codified form of a language variety is normally advanced by the power elites of a society ... and confirmed via social institutions such as government, schools and the mass*

*media* (Summarized by Ryan, Giles & Sebastian 1982:3).

What is worrying about the non-native varieties of English (to some linguists) is that they have developed semantic norms that are completely alien to native speakers. It is here that the need for prescriptivism is sometimes called for. ‘Prescriptivism’, however, remains an act of interfering with the natural course of linguistic history<sup>13</sup>. Prescriptivism interfering with English in time is a puristic movement, since it attempts to purify English from foreign influence as the language develops over time. Prescriptivism interfering with the development of English in place may be seen to be a nationalistic trend, because it insists on maintaining a ‘monolithic’ standard for the expression of the diversity of experience across cultures. This standard refers solely to the codified norms of native speakers (either the British or the American norms).

#### ***1.4 The study***

One aim of this study is to stress the role played by conceptual metaphor<sup>14</sup> in the semantic development of English along both dimensions of time and place. Another aim is to draw attention to the bearings that the concept of a ‘monolithic’ standard has on the study of meaning in place and ELT. These bearings are:

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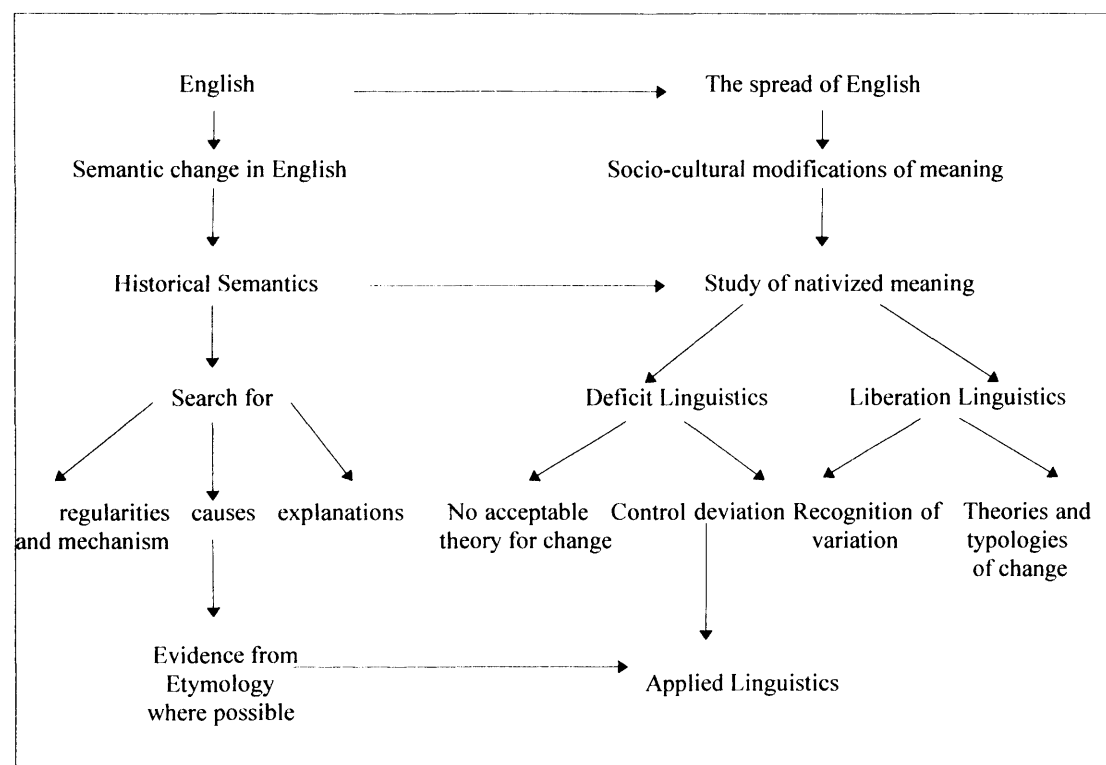
<sup>13</sup> This statement assumes that ‘prescriptivism’ probably derives from smaller sectors of a language community. However, an interesting alternative consideration is that at certain times and, perhaps, in certain places prescriptivism is extremely widespread (e.g. aspects of political correctness in language in Britain and North America in 1980s and 1990s (Cameron 1995)). This might mean that the uptake of prescriptivism accelerates development to the extent that it is part of that development. This alternative consideration could be extended to argue that prescriptivism of one sort or another is a normative notion of language and therefore part of normal language development.

<sup>14</sup> Cameron and Low (1999:78) give a very clear definition of ‘conceptual metaphor’. They write: “A conceptual metaphor is ... a unidirectional linking of two different concepts, such that some of the attributes of one ... are transferred to the other ...”. For example, IDEAS ARE MONEY is a conceptual metaphor that explains the thinking about IDEAS in terms of MONEY, as in the metaphoric expression *he has a **wealth** of ideas* (ibid).

1. The failure of linguists to examine the regional varieties of English as languages in their own right, in terms of their semantic development. It is shown that metaphor is a major force behind the development of meaning along both dimensions of time and place. However, the pre-occupation of linguists studying English in place with the questions of 'correctness' and 'standardization' has resulted in the non-recognition of the crucial role played by this mechanism in the development of regional varieties. The emergence of the concept of a 'monolithic' standard after the global expansion of English, and after the pluralization of the language into 'world Englishes' is said to have the consequence of research on the instability of meaning turning from a diachronic study into a synchronic, nationalistic issue.
2. The focus of some western linguists on a 'monolithic' standard together with their bracketing of learning English as a second language and English as a foreign language as identical learning situations have the unintended side effect of associating the 'monolithic' standard not only with the norms of an ideal native speaker (i.e. the correct, accepted norms of British/American English), but also with the belief that English as a world language is English for a limited range of purposes. This has shaped ELT in the sense that it has given rise to teaching methods and EFL/EIL lexical syllabuses that focus on the 'fixed' and 'basic' norms of the English vocabulary. The consequence of this is bleaching the world version of English of a major part of the semantic richness of the language. In particular, this richness is an important aspect of the flexibility of the English vocabulary and its creative change (e.g. change based on metaphor).

In the study, ‘deficit linguistics’ (as nationalistic work on the non-native varieties of English is often referred to) and ‘liberation linguistics’ (the opposing approach to deficit linguistics<sup>15</sup> which has branched out from the study of regional varieties) are treated as offspring of ‘historical semantics’. As for modern pedagogical approaches to meaning, they are seen as nationalistic faces for ‘etymology’. They are claimed to be the outcome of adjusting etymology to fit the model of a ‘monolithic’ standard. This adjustment is also shown to be reflected in the design of the EFL/EIL lexical syllabus. Diagram 1.1 below represents the conceptual structuring behind the thesis.

**Diagram (1.1): The conceptual structuring behind the thesis.**



<sup>15</sup> The term ‘deficit linguistics’ was coined by Kachru in (1991) as a reaction to Quirk’s (1988 [1991]) model in which he referred to work on regional varieties as ‘liberation linguistics’.

The study is divided into three parts. Part one focuses on meaning in time. It contains a summary of research which is responsible for dividing the history of historical semantics into four sub-periods: the pre-structuralist, the structuralist, the cognitive, and the functional. Research within the first three periods can be subsumed under two trends: ‘semasiology’ and ‘onomasiology’.

“The pair *onomasiology/semasiology* is generally regarded as identifying two different perspectives for studying the relationship between words and their semantic values. The semasiological perspective takes its starting point in the word as a form, and describes what semantic values (as dependent variable) the word (as independent variable) may receive. The onomasiological perspective takes its starting point on the level of semantic values and describes how a particular semantic value (as independent variable) may be variously expressed by means of different words (as dependent variables). In actual practice, onomasiological research is rather concerned with sets of related concepts than with single semantic categories; as such, it traditionally coincides with lexical field research. ...While the prestructuralist phase in the history of lexical semantics had a predominantly semasiological focus (concentrating as it did on the changes of meaning in individual words), the structuralist [and cognitive] stage[s] stressed the necessity of complementing the semasiological perspective with an onomasiological one” (Geeraerts, Grondelaers, & Bakema 1994:5-6). The functional explanation soon merged with the structural and cognitive principles to draw attention to the social dimension of language change (including semantic change).

The main difference between semasiology and onomasiology as approaches to semantic change, then, is that while the former is concerned with the different senses of a polysemous word, the latter is concerned with the existence of synonymy in language (i.e. the naming of a referent by means of various conceptually distinct lexical categories). The second chapter of part one

contributes to the field of historical semantics by showing that semasiological and onomasiological variations in language are interrelated. In other words, the development of polysemy in language is not independent of the development of synonymy. The phenomena are correlated. The position adopted is a cognitive one which regards language and semantic change to be metaphorical in nature. The whole framework may be regarded as a historical face for linguistic traditions concerned with the role of conceptual metaphor in processing human experience and language (e.g. Lakoff & Johnson 1980).

The argument in the study, which is corpus-based, is that there exists a tendency for the polysemous senses of a word to break and be named by means of different lexical items through metaphorical mapping; that is, there exists a tendency for each of the polysemous senses of a word to turn into a sub-domain of meaning and be indicated by a number of synonyms through metaphorical mapping. It is also argued that the same conceptual metaphors which determine the polysemous structure of a word are also at play behind the selection of its synonyms. And here lies the interrelationship between semasiology and onomasiology. The argument is demonstrated by the semantic development of *to show* and its synonyms (e.g. reveal, illustrate, lead, etc.)

The shift in part two is toward meaning in place. One concern of this part is to sketch out the story of the spread of English. Another concern is to investigate the extent to which studies of semantic change need to consider place, not just time, with respect to the regional varieties of English. The important role played by metaphor in the development of these varieties will be highlighted. Debates on the concept of a 'monolithic' standard as the medium of communication in all-English-speaking countries are claimed to have distracted the attention of linguists (western and non-western alike) from examining the regional varieties of English in their own right, in terms of their semantic development.



Part three concerns itself with the influence of the concept of a ‘monolithic’ standard on the field of applied linguistics. The first chapter of this part shows modern vocabulary teaching methods to be the outcome of adjusting etymology to fit the model of a ‘monolithic’ standard. The argument is as follows. The main difference between etymology and modern methods is that instead of going back in time to determine ‘prototype’ vocabulary norms by consulting families of languages (i.e. the norms of mother languages from which sister languages derive), which is the case in etymological studies, modern methods focus on the ‘prototype’ norms of the English vocabulary and claim that they meet the needs of learners. It is often argued that these norms are adequate for the expression of the diversity of experience across cultures. The implication of this is that English is treated as though it is the mother of cultures and thought. Another difference between etymology and modern vocabulary teaching methods is that within the framework of etymology the original meaning of a word (i.e. historically the first used meaning in the mother language) is the only or major meaning that is held to be true, whereas, in modern methods, the meanings of words are seen to be correct (and hence true) only or mainly when they are used within the limitations of the ‘standard’ English discourse. All this has the unfortunate side effect of modern methods focusing on the ‘core’ and ‘fixed’ norms of the English vocabulary, avoiding such social and cognitive factors as metaphor. The fact that learners’ errors/mistakes may be due to their ignorance of the metaphorical structure of the target language and/or to transferring the metaphorical structure of L1 into L2 has received little attention, even though this can be a major reason why English is diversifying in place. One of the facts about non-native speakers of English is that they speak English with foreign minds.

The second chapter of the third part of the thesis reveals how the adjustment of etymology is reflected in the design of the EFL/EIL lexical syllabus. It shows that the unwitting ‘nationalistic’ trend in English pedagogy is not restricted to

‘stereotyping’ (i.e. the focus on the cultural norms of the English nation) and ‘Anglocentrism’ (the exclusive focus on the linguistic norms of the native speakers of English). This may also be said to be behind what can be referred to as ‘prototyping’; that is, incorporating vocabulary into a multi-level course in a prototypical manner, placing at the centre of the programme ‘general interest’ topics (e.g. travel, education, sports, etc.). In other words, instead of building the different levels of the EFL/EIL lexical syllabus on the basis of different topics, coursebook writers tend to expand the lexical contents of graded courses within the limitation of topics that are deemed central to learning a target language. One consequence of this is a restriction of the EFL/EIL lexical syllabus to the common core of the English lexicon (This point is demonstrated by a comparison between West’s (1953) *General Service List* and the vocabulary indexes of sample courses). Another consequence of building the EFL/EIL on the basis of central topics is bleaching the English lexicon of a major part of its semantic/metaphoric richness (This is demonstrated by a semantic comparison between the concordances of certain words obtained from the British National Corpus and the use of these words in *The New Cambridge English Course*). The implication of all this is that English is treated as a private property of the English nation, so to speak. Consciously or unconsciously it is seen by pedagogues as belonging to this nation and exported elsewhere without loss of ownership. The admission of non-natives is restricted to the ‘visitors’ wing’, namely the core area of the English vocabulary. The final sections of the chapter demonstrate the relative lack of attention paid to flexibility and creativity in the lexicon which are important aspects of semantic change in time. Specifically, this study argues that these aspects should be brought more centrally into language teaching and particularly into the teaching of learning vocabulary<sup>16</sup>. Low (1988) draws attention to the importance of incorporating metaphor into the EFL/EIL lexical syllabus. It is on the basis of this direction that suggestions for teaching vocabulary in EFL/EIL instructional programmes will be made in this chapter.

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<sup>16</sup> It is known that different languages exhibit different conceptualization of socio-linguistic experience. This conceptualization is reflected in the unique metaphorical and semantic structures

The closing part of the thesis, chapter seven, summarizes the study, discusses how aims have been met, outlines limitations, and draws attention to important issues concerning the development of English in time and place. This part ends with suggestions for further research.

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of a language. If these structures are not given their due weight in the process of teaching a target language, it is very likely that learners will resort to their L1 to fill gaps in the vocabulary of their L2. If the norms transferred into a target language through direct translation become established in a speech community (due to ignorance of the correct norms of the target language), the outcome of this is semantic change in place. Semantic change in place brought about by using the target language creatively is another story. However, this change can be avoided if learners are helped to approach the competence of native speakers. In this case the learners will think in English and not in their background language.

# *Part One*

## MEANING IN TIME

## -II-

### ***SEMANTIC CHANGE***

#### ***2.1 Introduction***

This chapter addresses the question of semantic change in the context of historical semantics. The reason why this field is incorporated into the study is not only to explore and review relevant literature, but also to draw attention to the degree to which the study of meaning in time is thought to be worthwhile, as compared to that of meaning in place. As will be shown, meaning in time is not a questionable issue, but a postulated fact that is accounted for in terms of scientific theories. For one school, the process is so systematic across languages that it can be explained in terms of laws. These laws are now seen by some linguists as innate faculties of thought and not as inherent properties of language as an ‘organism’ or as a ‘drift’. Jespersen (1946:212) argues that:

*There are universal laws of thought which are reflected in the laws of change of meaning ... even if the science of meaning ... has not yet made much advance towards discovering them* (In McMahon 1994:176).

For another school, the non-randomness of semantic processes simply reflects the systematic categorization of human experience. At the other extreme, there are these ‘typological’, ‘structuralist’ and ‘functional’ approaches which regard semantic change to be the product of the interaction between language and culture in specific socio-linguistic settings. Sweetser (1990:12) points out that work in historical semantics has tended to view meaning in one of two different ways:

either meaning is potentially formalizable or basically unformalizable. The latter view had a great bearing on the study of semantic change. Ullmann (1957:154) wrote that:

*the existence of ... regularities is in most cases extremely hard to demonstrate, and their very possibility is still doubted by many scholars.*

The irregularity of semantic changes, according to Ullmann and his supporters, arises from the fact that language is interwoven with culture. That means to understand a change in meaning, one also requires a grasp of the socio-cultural context of the speech community. Take as an example the semantic development of the word *money*. *Money* is related to the Latin ‘moneta’, from the name of Juno Moneta in whose temple money in ancient Rome was made. The development of *money* from a name of a person into its present sense is due to a historical accident that does not generalise to other changes (Ullmann 1957:173; McMahon 1994:175). There is a limited number of other examples: *Wellington* (boots), *Macintosh* (raincoat), *Biro* (ball-point pen), *Thermos* (vacuum flask), and the like.

It is this sort of issue that is controversial in the field of historical semantics. The question of whether semantic changes are ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ is never addressed. Moreover, as the lines above show, the cognitive basis and the socio-cultural context of language are given due weight in historical semantics. These contexts, however, are not recognized in ‘deficit’ linguistics which adopts a prescriptive position towards meaning in place. What is considered as a semantic *innovation* in ‘liberation’, or ‘descriptive’, linguistics is seen in ‘deficit’ linguistics as a *deviation* due to L1 transfer/interference. The development of research on the instability of meaning from a diachronic study into a synchronic, controversial issue after the emergence of meaning in place is left to chapter four. This chapter will limit itself to the study of historical semantics and its controversies.

## 2.2 Approaches to Semantic Change

Semantic change has been a subject of interest for many centuries. Modern work on the subject dates back to the late nineteenth century when Michel Bréal (1897), following the Neogrammarian model of sound change, sought to formulate a number of binary principles or laws that govern change of meaning in natural languages, such as the law of ‘specialisation’ vs. the law of ‘generalisation’. This work is closely linked to the Aristotlean dichotomy of semantic primitives (i.e. the universal set of basic atoms of meaning (e.g. [+human], [-human]))<sup>1</sup> which are considered as indications of the cognitive capabilities of man that correspond to external reality. This so called semantics of ‘truth’, or ‘real-world atomism’, claims that categories like DOG (i.e. the range of entities which may be called dogs) and RED (the set of colours that may be described as red) exist independently of language and its users, and that the words *dog* and *red* merely name these pre-existing categories<sup>2</sup> (Ullmann 1962:5; Lakoff 1987:197; Taylor 1989:vii). Accounting for regularities of semantic processes in terms of the Aristotlean traditions involves viewing the postulated set of universal semantic features as an innate, stable linguistic dimension, generating new meanings on logical grounds; that is to say, on the basis of the relationship between the word and the reality, or the correspondence between the image and the reality. This implies that semantic change would not be all that dramatic, but would achieve ‘sameness of meaning’.

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<sup>1</sup> This principle was later taken up in generative semantics and in Chomskian linguistics (e.g. Chomsky:1965).

<sup>2</sup> The Aristotlean model of ‘linguistic categorization’ (i.e. the process by which people, in using language, necessarily categorize the world around them) divides the universe into two sets of entities - those that possess a feature and those that do not. This involves viewing a lexical category as having clear boundaries, and all its members as having equal status: entities either do or do not exhibit the defining features of a category, and so they either are or are not members of that category. There are no ambiguous cases, and no entities which are better members of a category than others (Taylor 1989:vii, 23-4).

In the thirty years that followed Breal's study, the field witnessed a shift toward typology. This shift is due to the interest in particular languages that arose at the time. During this period, some giant strides were taken, in recognising recurrent types of semantic changes of particular languages, and in classifying them according to linguistic and extra-linguistic factors (e.g. social, cultural, and other criteria) (Ullmann 1962:6-7; Asher & Simpson 1994:1567).

The emergence of 'structuralism' (around 1930) marked a new era in the history of historical semantics. Saussure's so called 'theory of semantic fields'<sup>3</sup> had a high impact on the study of semantic change. The attention shifted from change of meaning in isolated words to changes in lexical fields (Ullmann 1962:8; Asher & Simpson 1994:1567). Change within this framework is seen as something external (i.e. not determined by any innate faculty) causing a disturbance in the system or "as a mechanism that helps to clear up internal weaknesses of the system" (Keller 1994:53). In this way, the structural thesis can be said to follow from the Humboldtian principle of isomorphism, i.e. the tendency towards "one form, one meaning" exhibited by language development. The departure from the logical basis of semantic change is, however, motivated by another Saussurean principle, namely the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign. To Saussure, there are no pre-existing meanings independent of language; that is to say, "The lexicon of a language is not simply a nomenclature for some universally valid inventory of concepts" (Taylor 1989:6).

In the early seventies, the shift of interest toward generative semantics led to the emergence of new works in the field. Accounts for semantic change developed during this era seem mainly to have restarted traditional classifications in a

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<sup>3</sup> "A semantic field is a set of lexemes which cover a certain conceptual domain [i.e. a sphere of experience] and which bear certain specifiable relations to one another" (Lehrer 1985:283). An example of a simple semantic field would be the conceptual domain of 'color'. It should be noted that structuralists conceive of fields as closely-knit sectors of the vocabulary, in which a particular sphere is so neatly organized that its elements delimit each other and build up a kind of mosaic without any gaps or overlaps (Ullmann 1962:245).



generative mode, rather than to have arrived at an independent explanation based on new theoretical assumptions. In other words, change began to be understood in such terms as rule addition, simplification, loss, and re-ordering. One example (which will not be discussed here) is Paul Werth's (1974) model.

In the late twentieth century, the cognitive interest in the psychological basis of language has renewed the prestructuralist search for regular patterns of semantic change in natural languages. But this era differs from the prestructuralist one in a number of respects. First, the psychological orientation of this approach creates a different view of semantic primitives. They are now understood as cognitive universals (evolutionary rather than innate) figuring in the ability of concept-formation and the ability of thinking and interpreting diverse phenomena (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 1985:308). Aaron (1952:235) argues that certain shapes, or bundles of features recur in our experience, and we use similarity and contiguity to organise them into classes. This is the basis of real universals. Within this framework, thought has gestalt and not atomistic properties: "What is perceived by human beings as gestalt (that is, overall shapes that characterize basic-level<sup>4</sup> categories) do not necessarily correspond to categories of the external world" (Lakoff 1987:200). The mental images formed by human beings do not necessarily correspond to objectively existing categories of the external world. For example, "uses such as *bitter* anger and *sweet* personality seem relatively distinct from any direct physical taste-response of sweetness or bitterness" (Sweetser 1990:29).

Thus, realizing that meaning is a gestalt tendency has led to viewing linguistic categorization as prototypical and features as graded (not binary). As far as the prototype-theoretical trend goes, the shift necessarily involves the notion of structure, namely investigating the effects of change on semantically related sets. The cognitive approach, however, stresses the non-discreteness (i.e. the semantic

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<sup>4</sup> For a definition of the term 'basic-level categories', see chapter III, footnote 7.

overlap) within the inner boundaries of semantic sets and not its mosaic-like character (as in the tradition of structuralism) (Geeraerts, Grondelaers & Bakema 1994:124). The structural stability and dynamic capability of prototype categories suggest that the tendency toward isomorphism is not the only principle at work in semantic change. Rather, it is the interplay of isomorphism and non- isomorphism that characterises developmental semantic processes.

In this same period, the functional approach has developed to complement the structuralist and cognitive approaches to semantic change. The functional explanation is a socially-based approach. It starts from the assumption that linguistic change is a product of social practice, which cannot be wholly explained from within the properties of the language system or from within speakers' conceptualization of experience. Milroy (1992:4) wrote that:

*language is a social phenomenon: it is used by speakers to communicate with one another in social and cultural contexts in which the language system ... is not the sole means of communication and personal interaction. Furthermore, it is commonly observed that **languages which have no speakers do not change**; therefore, it seems reasonable to inquire into the role of speakers in language change.*

Within this framework, the main concern is to address the question of how and why speakers initiate linguistic (including semantic) change.

These theories will be the main focus of this chapter.

### **2.2.1 The Search for Laws**

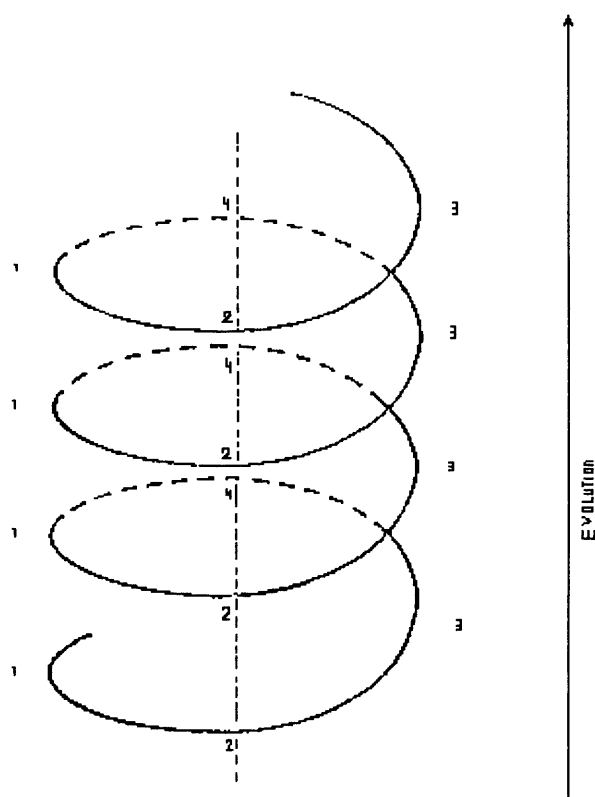
In an attempt to order the received chaos of semantic change, Bréal sought to formulate universal laws that govern semantic change in natural language. This work has its roots in the logico-rhetorical classification, developed by Cicero, Quintilian, and Vico on the basis of Aristotle's analysis of metaphor. The logico-rhetorical framework tackled the problem of semantic change "as if the speech-form were a relatively permanent object to which the meaning was attached as a kind of changeable satellite" (Bloomfield 1933:426). Their thesis follows from the assumption that semantic change achieves "sameness of meaning". That is, if the areas of meaning, the semantic range before and after the change, are set against each other, only three possibilities are conceivable: the new sense may be narrower than the old, wider than the old, or on the same footing, as in transfer (e.g. the use of *tongue* in the sense of 'language') (Ullmann 1957:203-4).

This view has led to the depiction of language change as a process that reaches a state of ideal equilibrium. Nöh (1983), with reference to Laszlo (1969), attempted to illustrate this state by modelling linguistic evolution in a helical shape with the following four phases (See Diagram 2.1 overleaf):

- 1). equilibrium
- 2). disturbance
- 3). disequilibrium
- 4). compensation phase

Besides the state of ideal equilibrium implied in Nöh's model, implied in it is also the presence of an absolute parallelism or one-to-one correspondence between the new and the old system, although on different levels around the putative stable dimension of language (linguistic universals) (From Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 1992).

**Diagram (2.1): Helix model of language change (After Laszlo 1969; Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 1992:233).**



Such a standpoint has failed to capture two important points: first, had meaning been developing on such a logical basis, diachronic meaning would not have departed from its synchronic counterpart to the extent of becoming unintelligible to modern speakers. An important fact about semantic change is that it is a “diachronistic notion completely untranslatable into synchronistic language” (Ullmann 1957:171). Second, all identical words in all languages would have undergone parallel semantic development. However, the mistakes, and even errors, that can be observed in the language of non-native speakers of English and which are often attributed to L1 transfer are a very clear example of the invalidity of the logical concept of ‘sameness of meaning’. In fact, parallel semantic developments in different languages are a phenomenon that cannot be ignored. But, this phenomenon is due to the systematic categorization of human

experience in the world. When this experience is not coloured with any specific cultures, the result is universal semantic processes. It has been observed, for example, that in most languages terms for seeing have become intellectual terms for understanding, as in *I see*, meaning ‘I understand’ (Sweetser 1990). “The experiential basis in this case [of metaphorical change] is the fact that most of what we know comes through vision, and in the overwhelming majority of cases, if we see something, then we know it is true” (Lakoff 1993:240). “These correspondences in real experience form the basis for correspondences in the metaphorical cases, which go beyond real experience” (ibid).

The laws of Breal and his followers involve showing that groups of words having a particular set of feature(s) in common undergo parallel semantic developments. These laws, however, impose restrictions on possible changes: postulating a particular set of general mechanisms embodies the predictions that in every *normal* semantic process there must be a close *logical* relationship between the successive meanings, otherwise the change is implausible or inexplicable (Asher & Simpson 1994:3800). The schema of these so called ‘deductive-nomological’ explanations would be something like: “X becomes Y or Z with certain observable regularity, but we do not know the “causes” of the differential manifestation of X” (Romaine 1983:227). Bloomfield (1933:426-7) summarised the mechanisms set up by earlier scholars under a number of categories as follows:

**Narrowing:** Old English *mete* ‘food’ > *meat* ‘edible flesh’.

**Widening:** Middle English *bridde* ‘young birdling’ > *bird*.

**Metaphor:** Primitive Germanic \*[‘bitraz] ‘biting’ (derivative of \*[‘bi:to} ‘gbite’) > *bitter* ‘harsh of taste’.

**Metonymy :** The meanings are near each other in space or time:

Old English *cēace* ‘jaw’ > *cheek*.

**Synecdoche:** The meanings are related as whole and part:

pre-English \*[ˈstobo:] ‘heated room’, (compare German *stube*, formerly ‘heated room’ now ‘living room’ > *stove*).

**Hyperbole:** From stronger to weaker meaning:

Pre-French \**ex-tonäre* , ‘to strike with thunder’ > French *étonner* ‘to astonish’ (from Old French, English borrowed *astound*, *astonish*).

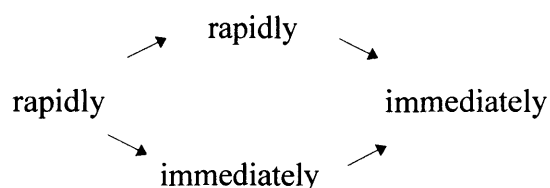
**Litotes:** From weaker to stronger meaning:

Pre-English \*[ˈkwalljan] ‘to torment’ (so still German *quälen*) > Old English *cwellan* ‘to kill’.

**Degeneration:** Old English *cnafa* ‘boy, servant’ > *knave*.

**Elevation:** Old English *cniht* ‘boy, servant’ > *knight*.

These mechanisms are highly general in the sense that they may be applicable to any word whatsoever. The general principle behind these mechanisms, namely that semantically related words share similar semantic development is also applicable to members of restricted lexical sets. Take as an example Gustav Stern’s (1931:185-91) study of words meaning ‘rapidly’ in Old and Middle English. Stern noted that although there are clear chronological differences between the moments when the various words have acquired the new meaning, all words exhibit the following developmental pattern:



However, words meaning ‘rapidly’ that were incorporated into English after 1400 do not exhibit the shift. *Speedingly* and *rapidly* itself, which came in during the

17th and 18th centuries did not undergo this change. The same deficiency can be observed in Lehrer's (1985) study. Lehrer (1985:286) has attempted to show that:

*semantically related words are more likely to undergo parallel semantic changes than semantically unrelated ones precisely because of their semantic relationships. Semantic relationships tend to remain constant, so that if one word changes meaning, it will drag along other words in the domain.*

Lehrer illustrates his argument from the domain of animal metaphors. He found that the word *ape* developed its metaphorical meaning 'a fool' in 1330 and somewhat later, around 1500, *baboon* became used as a general abusive term. The meaning 'a brutish person' appeared for all of these words more recently - first for *gorilla*, in 1884, then for *ape* and *baboon*. The earlier metaphorical meaning for *ape*, 'fool', became obsolete. In current English, 'monkey' seems to have followed the same process but not 'chimpanzee' or 'primate', etc..

All this shows that the flaw in this framework lies in its adoption of a logical rather than cognitive approach. The principle '*if A in condition B then C*' does not work in language. Although Lehrer is a structuralist, yet the logical element in his work is clear to see. That *speedingly* and *rapidly* have not developed the meaning 'immediately' may be due to the general understanding that what is *rapid* or *speedy* is not always *immediate*. Similarly, the deviation of *chimpanzee* from the pattern of semantic shift observed in related words may be attributed to the word having 'comic' or 'endearing' rather than 'brutish' associations. Accordingly, it is more tenable to argue that the semantic development of semantically related words is sub-directional and not unidirectional. Lehrer (1985: 290) found, for example, that the animal words *mule* and *donkey* have come to indicate a 'silly person' and *buzzard* and *vulture* a 'greedy person'. This

sub-directionality of the semantic development of animal words is grounded on human understanding and knowledge of the world; and the distinct characteristics of distinct groups of animals is a part of this knowledge. It is this point that Lehrer has failed to capture.

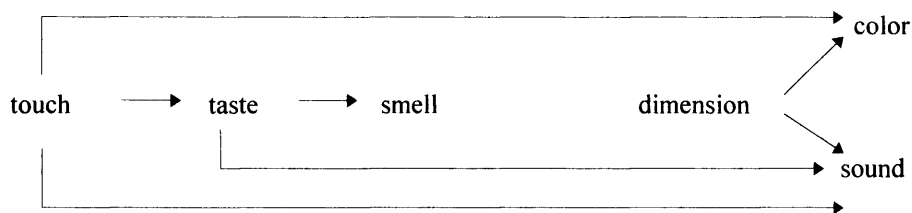
However, looking at the mechanisms investigated above, it is clear that they point to a tendency which seems to be an organizing force behind semantic change, namely abstract meanings largely grow out of concrete ones and not vice versa. This principle which was abstracted by Bloomfield (1933:429) may well be confirmed. It can be demonstrated that the shift from concrete to abstract, or at least from less to more abstract, is a major force at play behind any mechanism: elevation or degeneration, metaphor and (occasionally) metonymy, etc.. The shift from *boor* 'farmer' to 'a crude fellow'; from Old English *hüswif* 'housewife' to *hussy*; from *defending* a country to *defending* a case; from *brilliant* light to *brilliant* mentality 'intelligent' are all examples in favour of the argument (Ullmann 1962:216; Traugott 1986:158-9). Studying the development of synaesthetic adjectives, Williams (1976:464) observed that:

*Sensory words in English have systematically transferred from the physiologically least differentiating, most evolutionary primitive sensory modalities to the most differentiating, most advanced, but not vice versa.*

The major generalisation that Williams has arrived at is this: if a lexeme metaphorically transfers from its earliest sensory meaning to another sensory modality, it will transfer according to the schedule shown in Diagram 2.2.



**Diagram (2.2):** Schedule for metaphorical transfer of sensory words in English (Williams 1976: 463).



The schedule depicts touch and dimension as areas of relatively concrete reference, drawing on words that represent more abstract meanings. It gives the following information (ibid:464):

1. If a touch-word transfers, it may transfer to taste (*sharp tastes*), to color (*light colors*), or to sound (*soft sounds*). With one exception (*sharp angles*), tactile words do not shift to visual dimension or directly to smell.
2. Taste-words do not transfer back to tactile experience or forward to dimension or color, but only to smell (*sour smells*) and sounds (*dulcet music*).
3. Dimension lexemes transfer to color (*flat color*) or to sound (*deep sounds*).

Another illustration of the generalisation that there is a tendency of meaning to develop from less to more abstract is offered by Traugott (1986). Traugott has investigated semantic change in the process of grammaticalization and found ‘space’<sup>5</sup> (being recognised by vision, the salient perception), to be a source of more abstract terms in a wide number of different, predominantly cognitive, domains. They developed, for instance into (ibid:160-3):

<sup>5</sup> Not specific metric spaces such as particular size, length, distance, angle, or contour, but those based on the immediate paths of human vision: basically axes running front and back or up and down.

**temporal meanings:** *before* and *after*, for example, started out as spatial ('in front of' and 'in back of'). The same is true of *up* and *down* (as in *slow up* and *slow down*), of *ahead* in *the years ahead*, of *until* (this used to mean 'up to'), and of *on* in *drink on*.

**grammatical relation markers:** such as the use of originally spatial *to* to express the indirect object relation of giving something *to* someone, or of *by* to express agency in the passive construction.

**speech act verbs:** Traugott noted that about 75% of the English speech act verbs (whether native or borrowed) listed in Fraser (1975) originate in spatial terms. *Suggest*, for example, is from Latin *sub* + *gerere* 'under + carry' and *insist* from *in* + *stāre* 'stand upon'.

**mental verbs:** *suppose*, for example, is derived from the Latin spatial *sub* + *Pōnere* 'put under'; *intend* from *tendere* 'stretch'; and *deduce* from *dūcere* 'lead'.

**connectives:** *anyway*, *hereupon*, *therefore*, and similar connectives are all examples that illustrate how spatial terms are used to express more abstract relations, namely cohesion between clauses.

The semantic shift from less to more abstract is not only characteristic of English, but is a universal phenomenon. In many languages, for instance, verbs meaning 'to catch' or 'to grasp' (concrete) are used figuratively in the sense of 'to understand' (abstract) (e.g. English *catch*, *grasp*; French *comprendre* (from *prendre* 'to take'; German *begreifen* (from *greifen* 'to grasp'), etc.). Williams (1976:470-1) also found his program to be applicable to more than just English. Some examples are:

- TOUCH TO TASTE: **Irish** *gēar* 'sharp' > *gēar* 'acid'  
**Sanskrit** *tiktá-* 'sharp' > *tiktá-* 'bitter'
- TOUCH TO COLOR: **Kōjien** *suzushi* 'cool' > *suzushi* 'clear color'  
**Indo-European** *tep-* 'warm' > **Sanskrit** *tap-* 'glowing'

Other examples of universal developments from concrete to abstract meanings are given by Traugott (1986:162). In this work Traugott showed that, as the case of many English mental verbs, a number of mental verbs in Japanese, develop out of spatial, as in the following examples:

- *zonjiru* 'think, know (humiliative)' < *zon* 'put, place, keep' + *suru* 'do'
- *omoitatsu* 'resolve/plan to do' < *omou* 'think' + *tatsu* 'stand up'
- *kokorozasu* 'intend to do' < *kokoro* 'heart, mind' + *sasu* 'to point'

In the light of the above examples which show Bloomfield's (1933) principle to be a universal phenomenon, it becomes somewhat difficult to argue against it. The only point that cannot be supported is the status of 'law' conferred on this principle, because it is merely a tendency that allows for exceptions. It has been demonstrated by Fries (1945:42) that the concrete meaning of a word does not always precede its abstract extension. For the word *key*, for example, the more abstract meaning 'a solution or explanation' preceded the concrete meaning 'an instrument for moving the bolt of a lock'. This shift, however, does not seem to be random. The affinity between the primary and secondary meanings is metaphorical: a key concept is a psychological instrument that helps one get into a mental field. If this interpretation is possible, then the understanding of the similar function of the psychological and physical instruments is behind the later application of *key*. Aitchison (1987:149) pointed out that:

*when humans consciously use metaphor they subconsciously follow certain guidelines. They tend to compare items which come from different semantic fields, which share minor but obvious characteristics. This enables hearers to realize that an unusual*

*comparison is being made, and helps them to pinpoint the relevant similarities.*

For example, a concoction of narcotics is colloquially referred to as a *fruit salad*. The comparison between the legal and innocuous fruit salad served as a dessert is plain to see (Katamba 1994:180).

It is obvious that metaphor is present in all the instances supporting the studies investigated above (Recall Lehrer's and Williams' works). As such, and since it is possible to regard the shift from 'spatials' to 'mental' verbs to be metaphorical (i.e. conceptualizing mental experience in terms of physical experience), it can be argued that metaphor operates over and above any other mechanisms: first it includes the tendency from concrete to abstract (under which other mechanisms can be subsumed) and, second, it overrides exceptions to the tendency. Although metaphor is recognized as a general mechanism in this era, yet it is classed as one among other, *equally important*, logical mechanisms.

Another point about this era is that it interpreted the universality of the process of semantic change on solely logical bases, thus, ignoring not only the cognitive basis (i.e. experiential) of universal semantic processes, but also the influence of languages on one another. It often happens that languages (related and unrelated) borrow from one another appropriate metaphors. A case in point is *sky scraper*. Although the emergence of the expression is due to the need to name a new architectural structure, yet the success of the metaphor in many languages (French 'gratte-ciel', Italian 'grattacielo', German 'Wolkenkratzer', Chinese 'mǒ tiān dà xià', and Arabic 'natiḥat saḥab') bears witness to the appropriateness of the analogy after translation (Ullmann 1957:183). Another example is *satellite*. The word was borrowed from Latin *satelles* 'attendant, life guard' to describe a smaller planet revolving round a larger one (Ullmann 1962:210). The application

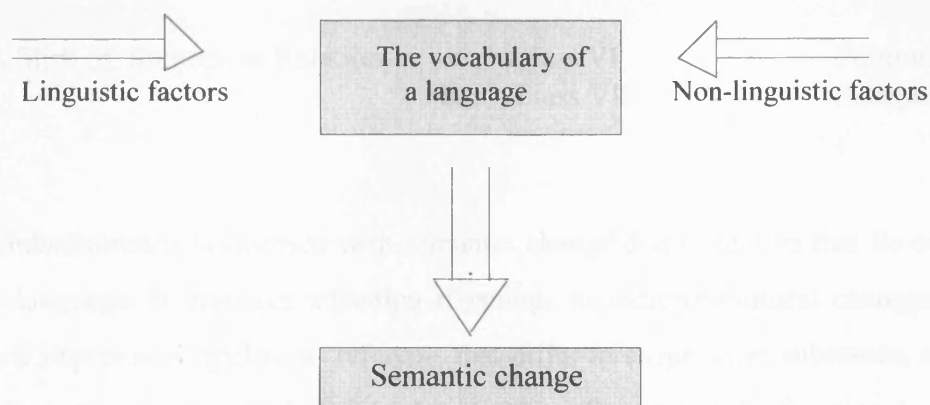
of the word to earth-satellites in modern times was so appropriate that *satellite* has become an international term. These examples further demonstrate that metaphor, as a major force behind semantic change, is not a mechanism for reflecting objective reality, but for creating new meanings and new realities. This creation is deeply ingrained in human understanding and experience in the world and has nothing to do with 'truth' (Lakoff & Johnson 1980:196).

Finally, the logical approach has ignored the socio-cultural specifications of particular languages which are responsible for the divergent developments of parallel words in different languages. This gap in the field was bridged by the typological approach.

### **2.2.2 The Shift Toward Typology**

The shift toward typology in the first three decades of the twentieth century is due to the interest in specific languages that arose at the time. The picture this approach draws for the process of semantic change can be illustrated as follows:

**Diagram (2.3): The process of semantic change from the perspective of the typological approach.**



What is important about the typological approach is that it places analogy and metaphor at the centre of attention as tendencies behind both linguistic and non-linguistic causes; and analogy is by no means different from metaphor as far as the psychological basis of language is concerned. This phase of research witnessed several attempts to classify the recurrent changes according to the associations underlying them. This section will focus on the two most influential schemes of classification, namely those of Stern and Ullmann.

Stern (1931:175) divided semantic changes into seven classes: substitution, analogy, shortening, nomination, transfer, permutation, and adequation. He grouped these classes in his scheme according to the nature of the primary causes of change.

<b>A. External Causes</b>	Class I	Substitution
<b>B. Linguistic Causes</b>		
<b>I. Shift of Verbal Relation</b>	<b>a.</b> Class II	Analogy
	<b>b.</b> Class III	Shortening
<b>II. Shift of Referational Relation</b>	<b>a.</b> Class IV	Nomination
	<b>b.</b> Class V	Transfer
<b>III. Shift of Subjective Relation</b>	<b>a.</b> Class VI	Permutation
	<b>b.</b> Class VII	Adequation

**1.** Substitution is concerned with semantic change due to factors that lie outside the language. It involves adjusting meanings to indicate cultural changes. The word *ship* is now applied to referents that differ in shape, size, substance, and so on from the ones to which the word originally referred. Yet the functional criteria to which ships conform is the main reason why the term has been preserved.

2. Analogy, to Stern (ibid), is one of the most important causes behind semantic change. Hoffding defined it as “identity of relations between separate objects, not identity of the single characteristics”<sup>6</sup>. Stern distinguished three kinds of analogy: ‘combinative analogy’, ‘correlative analogy’ and ‘folk etymology’.

2.1. Combinative analogy is “consisting in the isolation and fresh combination of meanings, basic or relational” (ibid:207). A case in point is the adjective *fast*. The earlier meaning of this adjective is ‘firm, immovable’. The original usage can still be seen in such expressions as ‘fast asleep’, ‘hard and fast’, and so on. In the sixteenth century the adjective *fast* acquired its current meaning ‘quick, speedy’. The adverb *fast*, on the other hand, meant ‘quickly’ from the thirteenth century (Room 1981:109). Stern explained the development of the adjective *fast* from one sense (firm) to an apparently contradictory one (quick) on the assumption that “When the adverb had acquired the new sense, it was by analogy, extended also to the adjective. Our linguistic feeling is accustomed to adjectives and adverbs of the same stem having strictly correlated senses” (1931:167).

2.2. As for correlative analogy, it was defined by Stern as “consisting in the naming of a referent with a word that is evoked owing to its semantic correlation to another known word, in the same, or in another language” (1931:207). Words forming a correlative group within one language often influence each other’s meaning. For example, the meaning of *high* in ‘High Church’ is a metaphorical extension of the meaning of the word *high*. The meaning of *low* in ‘low church’ must have been arrived at by analogy with the corresponding phrase (High Church) (ibid:219). When two languages are involved, the process is quite different. In this case, it often happens that words from one language borrow their meaning from similar words in another language. The word *earl* meant originally

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<sup>6</sup> Cited in Stern (1931:199).

‘man from noble rank’; it borrowed its modern sense from the Scandinavian word *jarl*. The phonetic similarity between the two words was an obvious factor. Later still, *earl* was applied to all feudal nobles and princess bearing the Romantic title of Count. This time there was no phonetic similarity but, perhaps, semantic similarity (ibid:220).

**2.3.** Similarity of names can also lead to ‘folk etymology’. Folk etymology changes both the form and the meaning of a word by wrongly connecting it with another term to which it is similar in sound (Ullmann 1962:220). For example, the word *sand-blind* (half-blind, dim-sighted) is considered to be a deformation of Old English *samblind* whose first syllable, the prefix ‘sam-’ (half) became opaque and was wrongly identified with *sand* (ibid:102).

**3.** Ellipsis, on the other hand, or the omission of a redundant word(s) from a sentence, often induces loss of motivation. When words habitually occur in the same linear order they acquire a meaning that is motivated by their collocational company, “and if part of the collocation is lost, the remainder changes meaning, when it takes on the semantics of the earlier phrase” (Anttila 1972:138). It is worth noting here that this case of semantic change involves a change of grammatical function: an adjective, or attributive noun, acquires the role of a ‘missing’ or elided noun (e.g. *epic* (poem), *periodical* (paper)); a head stands for a whole phrase ((swimming) *pool*, (electric) *telegraph*); and a verb absorbs a following object or complement (*clap* (for clap hands), *the hen won’t lay* (for the hen won’t lay eggs)). In brief, ellipsis contributes to semantic change in that it brings about loss of motivation.

Loss of motivation is always beneficial to semantic change, even when caused by sound change. The word *daisy*, for example, was a compound of *day* and *eye*, a metaphorical expression for the sun to which the flower was compared. When the



relation between *day* and *eye* was obscured by phonetic development, all motivation was lost<sup>7</sup>. Consequently, the word *daisy* acquired its current, non-metaphorical meaning (a small white flower with a yellow centre) (Anttila 1972:93). The word *holiday* which was also a compound of *holy* and *day*, meaning ‘religious festival’ faced the same fate.

4. Nomination refers to transfers in which a name is transferred from one referent to another (Stern 1931:168). An example of this is the use of old words, or parts of them, to form new names (e.g. *Air-ship*). Another example is the use of proper names to denote scientific units of measurement (e.g. volt, ampere) or the use of place names for products of place (China, Holland).

5. Transfer is a shift of meaning that is based on two types of similarity between Tenor and Vehicle<sup>8</sup>: formal (e.g. *teeth* of a comb) and functional (*flash* of wit).

6. Permutation is defined by Stern as “a shift in the point of view concerning a detail of a total situation” (ibid:351). The word *beads* meant originally ‘prayer’; later on, the word acquired the meaning ‘balls’. Stern believes that the change is due to a shift in the interpretation of such sentences as “he is counting (or telling) his beads”.

7. Adequation, says Stern (ibid:169), “is, essentially, an adaption of the meaning to the actual characteristics of the referents which the word is employed to denote”. *Horn*, for example, meant originally ‘an animal’s horn’. The same word

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<sup>7</sup> This loss of motivation is reflected in the spelling of ‘daisy’ to the extent that the original metaphor and compound are probably no longer part of most English speakers’ knowledge of the word meaning.

<sup>8</sup> The term ‘Tenor’ refers to the Topic, i.e. what is being talked about, whereas ‘Vehicle’ refers to lexical items transferred to the Topic from a different mental domain, or sphere of experience (Cameron & Low 1999: 78-9). In the above cases, for example, ‘comb’ and ‘wit’ are tenors and ‘teeth’ and ‘flash’ are vehicles.

was used to denote an animal horn used for music. Later on *horn* was applied to a musical instrument made from animal horn. That instrument was denoted by the same word even when animal horn was no longer the material from which it was made. In this way, the condition of transfer was the preceding adjustment of meaning.

Ullmann (1957:220), on the other hand, divided the types of semantic change into three classes, as follows:

- A. Semantic change due to **linguistic conservatism**
- B Semantic change due to **linguistic innovation**

I. Transfers of names

- (a). Through similarity between the senses;
- (b). Through contiguity between the senses;

II. Transfers of senses

- (a). Through similarity between the names;
- (b). Through contiguity between the names;

III. Composite changes

This scheme reveals Ullmann's special distinction between 'sense' and 'name'. To him, 'name' is not synonymous with 'sense' but there is a "reciprocal and reversible relationship between name and sense: if one hears the word one will think of the thing, and if one thinks of the thing one will say the word. It is this reciprocal and reversible relationship between sound and sense which I propose to call the 'meaning' of the word" (1962:57).

Scheme A, 'linguistic conservatism', is concerned with change of meaning due to change of referent. This scheme can include more changes than those referred to

by Stern's substitution class, such as the semantic shift of terminology and social key terms.

A number of changes of meaning are due to scientific discoveries and the advance of knowledge. While many scientific concepts have changed, old terminology is still applied. As a consequence, many terms acquired meanings that are completely different from their original definitions. Atom, for example, meant 'indivisible' in Latin; now it is used for a (divisible) part of a molecule (Ullmann 1962:199).

The conservatism of language is also the main reason why social key terms reflect the history of social developments. The fact that *money* became a symbol of power in modern times is reflected in the development of *fortune* from a force dominating human life (luck, good luck) into something that allows man to control his own life, 'an amount of wealth'; the development of *finance* from its sense of 'ending' and 'settlement of a debt' (still evident in *fine*) to one of its modern meanings 'borrowing money at interest' also reflects the liberating power of money (Hughes 1988:6-7). Another social change reflected in sense-change is found in the history of the word *freedom*. The semantic development of *freedom* (from being a quality limited to the nobility to a democratic right) mirrors the evolution of society from having a feudal to a democratic basis.

The first part of scheme B, 'transfers of names', is concerned with instances in which a given sense acquires a new meaning, as in metaphor and metonymy; According to Waldron (1967:67-8), "metaphor is one means, perhaps the principal means, through which novelty can enter the language at the level of reference". As later chapters will attempt to show, this proposition is crucial to semantic change.

The second part of scheme B, ‘transfer of senses’ refers to cases in which a name is transferred to a different sense, as in folk-etymology and ellipsis. As for the third part, “composite changes”, it refers to any change that has been brought about by a combination of causes. An interesting example is the development of *Belfry* (ME *berfray*). The word once meant ‘a movable tower used in attacking a walled position’. The current meaning of this is ‘bell tower’. The change can be attributed to both the similarity of the first syllable *ber* to *bell* (Name-similarity or folk-etymology) and the fact that bells were often hung in watch-towers to give warning or that church towers containing bells were used for defense (sense contiguity) (Waldron 1967: 137-8).

This section has shed some light on the typological, or prestructuralist, position. It is abundantly clear that this approach is describing mechanisms (i.e. showing *how* words in a particular language change their meanings) rather than offering an overall explanation. However, the failure to offer an explanation does not imply that this approach is fruitless. Studying semantic processes in the light of factors that are both internal and external to language, the typological approach has contributed to a better understanding of semantic change. However, the points which the typological approach has failed to take into account are: first, the role of systematic metaphor in organizing human experience and language change. In other words, metaphoric transfer (including analogy) in this period is depicted as simply motivated by formal and/or functional similarity. Hence, it is vaguely linked to the systematic conceptualization of one cognitive domain in terms of another. “Form” and “function” as bases for metaphoric transfer cannot account, for example, for the figurative use of verbs meaning ‘to catch’ in the sense of ‘to understand’, because this use is not based on any of them. An adequate account can be reached if this development is looked at from a cognitive perspective (e.g. Lakoff & Johnson 1980). It will, then, be seen as based on the systematic conceptual metaphor UNDERSTANDING IS GRASPING (Reconsider the definition of ‘conceptual metaphor’ in chapter I, footnote 14, p.23). As shown in the next chapter, conceptual metaphors play a major part in the semantic

development of language. The second point that this approach has not taken into account is the onomasiological (i.e. the structural) dimension of semantic change. This dimension is placed at the centre of attention within the structuralist position.

### ***2.2.3 The Structural Explanation***

With the shift towards a structuralist approach, around 1930, historical semanticists began to cast their nets wider in order to catch changes of meaning in complete semantic fields. The first to introduce field study into semantics was Trier (1931). His theory of semantic fields is influenced by Saussure's structuralist principle that every language is an organic whole in which elements delimit each other and derive their value from the general framework in which they are placed:

*Within one language, all words which express neighbouring ideas delimit each other reciprocally: synonyms like redouter ('to dread'), craindre ('to fear'), avoir peur ('to be frightened' or 'afraid') have no real value except through their opposition to one another; if redouter did not exist, its whole content would go to its rivals (1955:160)<sup>9</sup>.*

Trier's conception of fields involves dividing up the vocabulary into clearly separated sectors. Each sector formulates a particular sphere in which elements are organised in such a way that the meaning of one can be dealt with only in comparison with others. "The image on which this conception is based is that of a *mosaic*: the conceptual substance of language is divided into a number of adjoining small areas, in the way a mosaic divides two-dimensional space" (Geeraerts, Grondelaers & Bakema 1994:119). Trier illustrates this point by

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<sup>9</sup> Translation from Ullmann (1962:244).

studying the development of the intellectual semantic field in German. This field included three key-terms: *kunst*, *list* and *wisheit*. These terms embodied the principles of medieval civilisation. The distinction between *kunst* and *list* expressed the feudal system:

- Kunst: ‘higher branches of knowledge’ (courtly knowledge and chivalric attainments).
- List : ‘lower knowledge and skill’ (those which fall outside the courtly sphere).
- Wisheit: ‘man’s intellectual, social, religious, and courtly aspects’ (a global term. It could act as an alternative to *kunst* and *list*).

By around 1300, a different picture emerges from this intellectual field. First of all, *wisheit* developed its new meaning of ‘religious and mystical knowledge’; secondly, *kunst* lost its social connotation and acquired a more restricted sense concerned with art; and finally, *list* dropped out of usage and the new general word for knowledge, *wizzen*, joined the field. The case is not simply that one word has been lost and another introduced. The meaning of each element in the field; its whole structure; and the philosophy behind it have also changed.<sup>10</sup>

Trier’s assumption has come under criticism for two points: first, “the image suggests that the mosaic covers the whole surface of the field, i.e. that there are no *gaps in the lexical field*, that no pieces are lacking in the mosaic” (Geeraerts, Grondelaers & Bakema 1994:119). This apparent absence of gaps is contradicted by subsequent linguistic research. Quoting Lehrer’s (1974) study of English cooking terms, Geeraerts, Grondelaers and Bakema (1994:121) pointed to the non-existence of an English word for the preparation of food in a pan without

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<sup>10</sup> From Ullmann (1962:245, 248-9); Lehrer (1985:284); McMahon (1994:186); Geeraerts, Grondelaers and Bakema (1994:119).

water and oil, and a word for cooking with oil on a flame (See Diagram 2.4). This can be taken as evidence of the invalidity of Trier’s conception of fields as closed systems<sup>11</sup>.

**Diagram (2.4): English cooking terms (after Lehrer 1974; Geeraerts, Grondelaers & Bakema 1994:121):**

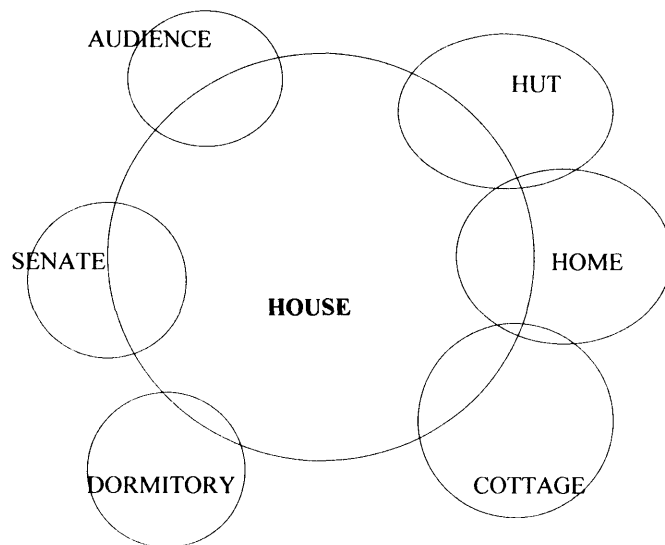
	Conducted heat (oven)	Radiated heat (fire)	Contact heat (pan)
With water without oil	steam		
vapor- ized			
not vapor- ized	boil		
with oil without water	(oven-fry)		fry
without water, without oil	roast		
	bake	broil	

The second point for which Lehrer’s image of the mosaic has come under criticism is that it depicts the words in a field as separated by means of sharp lines. Such a stand point does not take into account the fact that the existence of partial synonymy is very common in language. Lehmann (1962:198) represents this fact diagrammatically (Diagram 2.5), using the field of human habitation as an example.

<sup>11</sup> However, the existence of gaps does not, in itself, deny the general notion of ‘system’, but perhaps ‘system’ needs a more open, flexible interpretation.

The right section of the circle represents the meaning of *house* as ‘dwelling abode’; the section on the left represents it as ‘a building belonging to the university’, ‘a governing body’ and ‘a group of onlookers’, respectively, leaving space for still other meanings. Note that the circle for *house* overlaps with the other circles.

**Diagram (2.5): the semantic field of human habitation.**



Trier’s belief, which is the basis on which the structural framework is built, gave rise to two structural principles concerning semantic change: ‘avoidance of homonymy’<sup>12</sup> and ‘avoidance of polysemy’. The basic idea of these principles is that the inconveniently ambiguous lexical configurations will eventually be dropped from language use. Structural semanticists aim at explaining the reason why an element of a lexical set changes its meaning in one language, while this meaning remains unaltered in another. Thus, the structural explanation does not deal with the type of change that involves the individual speaker’s expressive needs, but with that motivated by the supraindividual structure of language (Asher & Simpson, 1994:1569).

<sup>12</sup> Homonymy is a kind of ambiguity. “The term “homonym” is used to denote word-forms belonging to distinct lexemes that are written and pronounced in the same way. There are separate



### 2.2.3.1 Avoidance of Homonymy

This principle was first stated by Gilliéron (1912). Gilliéron studied semantic change in relation to particular lexical sets. He found, for example, in an area in the south west of France, that a homonymic clash between the ‘cock’ (Latin *gallus*) and the ‘cat’ (*cattus*) has caused the two words to merge into the form *gat*. It happened in that area that final (-ll) has changed to (-t); as a result, the two words fell together with the name of the cat. Because this homonymous configuration is inconvenient in an agricultural society, *gat* in the sense of ‘cock’ has been replaced by local forms of French *faisan* ‘pheasant’ and *vicaire* ‘curate’. This shift did not happen in other areas where there was no confusion between *gal* and *gat* (From Ullmann 1962:185; Asher and Simpson 1994:1569).

### 2.2.3.2 Avoidance of Polysemy

Goossens (1963) formulated this principle by analogy with the above principle. Goossens contended that when a term acquires more than one meaning capable of arising in the same context a polysemous clash arises. This clash often ends by the polysemous word losing its conflicting senses. One of Goossens’ examples is the case of the Belgian word *haycocks*. This word refers to two kinds of haystacks: ‘a small pile of hay that is only half dry and that is raked together in the evening to be spread out again in the morning’ and ‘a larger pile that is completely dry and that is ready to be taken out of the field’. Goossens noted that in the East of Belgian Limburg, the small haycock is called *opper* and the large one *heukel*; whereas in the West of the province, exactly the opposite is the case. Between both areas, there is a small area where *opper* does not occur. Goossens attributes this situation to the idea that the disappearance of *opper* in this area was

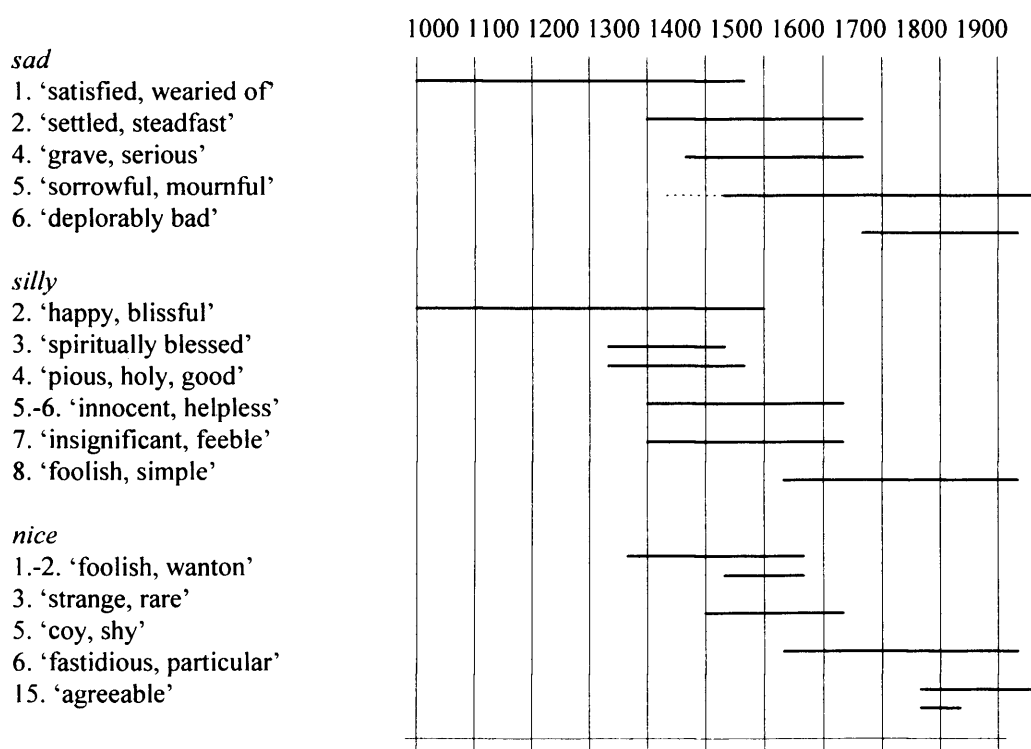
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dictionary entries for such words” (Katamba 1994:22). An example of homonyms is *bat* ‘a small flying mammal’ and *bat* ‘a wooden implement for hitting a ball in cricket’ (ibid).

necessary to end the confusion which results from using the same word with two different meaning by people from the two sides of the border.<sup>13</sup>

Similarly, Menner (1945) pointed out that the intolerance of different senses or the need for more precise designations has resulted in English adjectives continually reducing their range of meaning. He has shown, for example, that for frequent adjectives such as *sad*, *silly* and *nice* only a limited range of meanings was available at any given time. *Sad* and *silly* have not exhibited an overlap of different senses synchronically (See Diagram 2.6; numbers stand for dates) (In Gorlach, 1974/1994:130-1).

**Diagram (2.6): A representation of the limited semantic range of frequent adjectives at any given time (Menner 1945).**

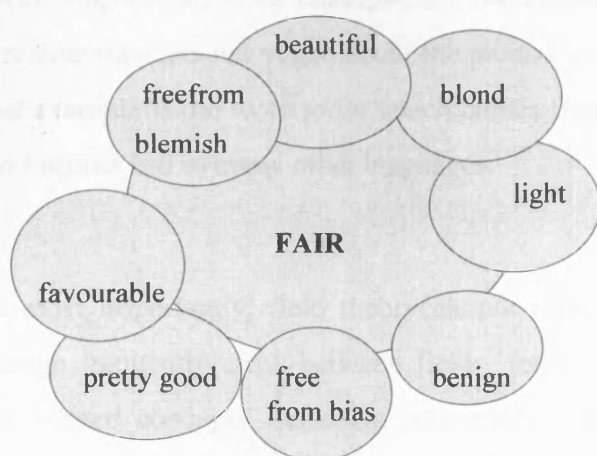


<sup>13</sup> From Geeraerts (1985:145).

The structural explanation discussed above can be subsumed under a single principle, namely ‘avoidance of ambiguity’ which derives from what Humboldt calls the tendency toward “one form, one meaning” exhibited by natural language development.

The structuralist reasoning is convincing, but it is valid only where it applies. First, words seldom change their meaning or fall into disuse just because of homonymy or polysemy; and that is why these two cases of ambiguity are obvious characteristics of language. Second, ambiguity itself is not an obstacle to communication. This can be seen more strikingly when the same word has two or more different meanings which live side by side without any risk of misunderstanding. A case in point is the polysemy of *fair* whose different senses do exhibit overlap and yet are tolerated (Gorlach 1974/1994:132). See Diagram 2.7 (The overlap is based on the judgement of a native speaker):

**Diagram (2.7): The polysemy of *fair*.**



Channell (1994:35) argues that “ambiguity is rarely a factor in real communication, because hearers read off a meaning without even realizing that there could have been another one”. Moreover, the use of ambiguity in literary or humorous style (e.g. puns based on polysemy and homonymy) is a very witty and clever word-play device (Ullmann 1962:188). Breal saw in multiple meaning a sign of the superiority of language: “The more meanings a word has accumulated, the more diverse aspects of intellectual and social activity it is likely to represent” (In Ullmann 1962:167).

In fact, it can be argued that some degree of ambiguity, at least in certain areas of language, is functional. Indirectness, for example, is a very important aspect of conversation. Direct imperatives (demanding actions), and direct interrogatives (demanding responses), for instance, are quite rare in conversation. This is because speakers are more concerned with being ‘polite’ than with being ‘clear’ and ‘explicit’ (Milroy 1992:41). This is consistent with one of Grice’s maxims of conversation, namely the maxim of ‘quantity’ [be informative, but not overinformative] (In Channell 1994:32). It can even be claimed that the search for ambiguity is one reason behind not only change of meaning, but also the birth and death of words. Euphemisms, for example, are sometimes borrowed from other languages because speakers are vague about the precise meaning of the borrowed word. A clear example is the word *toilet* which comes from French *toilette* and is still in use in English and in many other languages.

Finally, and most importantly, field theory cannot explain why polysemy and semantic change frequently cross between fields, for example, why should *see* and *know* be related concepts. Semantic polysemy relationships, and semantic changes, frequently involve such metaphorical mapping, which cannot be explained by structuralist theory at all. It involves the systematic conceptualisation of one cognitive domain in terms of components more usually associated with another cognitive domain (Sweetser 1990:25).

Accordingly, the structural thesis is neither necessary nor sufficient as an explanation for semantic change. Yet, its shortcomings should not obscure the important role it has played in developing the study of semantic change. By introducing the structural principles into semantics (i.e. showing that the histories of words in a particular language are not completely independent), structuralism has contributed greatly to broadening the horizon of historical semantics.

#### ***2.2.4 The Renewed Search for Regularity***

In the late twentieth century, the quest was restarted for the patterns of thought underlying the regular tendencies of semantic change. This renewed interest is motivated by a number of works demonstrating regular developments of meaning. Sweetser (1990), for example, has demonstrated that in most languages terms for seeing, hearing, and other senses become intellectual terms for understanding, as in the case of French *bien entendu* ‘agreed, understood’ (literally ‘well-heard’), Spanish *entendido* ‘understood’ and Chinese *tīng dong* (hear/understand). But, as Sweetser (ibid) has shown, normally terms denoting sense experiences, such as touching/feeling, tasting, and smelling come to name terms for emotion (*feelings*), personal preference (*taste*, e.g. French *bon goût*) and personal values. Another example of regular change is that in many languages the words for brightness in colour turn into words for intellectual ability (as in *bright* and *dull* (Williams 1976:469) or Chinese *míng bái* ‘bright-white’), whereas it appears that those for the basic hues, *red*, *yellow*, *green*, *blue*, typically turn into words for moral and emotional qualities (Traugott 1986:158) (e.g. the shift of *yellow* to the meaning ‘cowardly’; *green* for ‘novice’ or ‘innocent’).

Such facts about differential paths of change for words in different conceptual domains and subdomains suggest that words do not randomly acquire new meanings. This has led to the adoption of a view that takes into account human

cognition, human experience, and the perception of the world. Within this view, the Saussurean doctrine of the arbitrariness is no longer seen as valid when it comes to the historical development of word meaning. Sweetser (1990:5) wrote that:

Saussure (1959 [1915]) was right of course, that there is an essential arbitrary component in the association of words with what they mean. For example, in *I see the tree*, it is an arbitrary fact that the sequence of sounds which we spell *see* (as opposed to the sound sequence spelled *voir* in French) is used in English to refer to vision. But, *given this arbitrary fact*, it is by no means arbitrary that *see* can also mean “know” or “understand,” as in *I see what you’re getting at*. There is a very good reason why *see* rather than, say, *kick* or *sit*, or some other sensory verb such as *smell*, is used to express knowledge and understanding<sup>14</sup>.

Thus, researchers have begun arguing for a systematic analysis of semantic change as rooted in human conceptualization and mental imagery (as in metaphor and metonymy). As a consequence, the semantics of ‘truth’, or ‘logic’, was replaced by the semantics of ‘understanding’ (frame theory) and ‘pragmatics’; and the concept of ‘semantic primitives’, or ‘real-world atomism’ by the theory of ‘prototype’.

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<sup>14</sup> It must be recognized that Sweetser’s work has been challenged particularly in the recent proposal for a revision of Sweetser’s approach by Traugott. Traugott (in Hopper & Traugott 1993) claims that the precise paths of change do not, on close examination, follow the ones predicted by Sweetser’s metaphors. The role of metaphor is fairly abstract and does not guide change. Traugott therefore claims that metaphor has a more indirect overarching role which constrains, but does not determine, development. In this later proposal, metaphor is recognized as one process at work but other processes which depend on contiguity (or conceptual association) and reanalysis rather than on analogy are more influential.

Fillmore (1976, 1977, and elsewhere) and Coleman and Kay (1981) maintain that:

*the internal structure of word meaning is not autonomous but exists against a background of our general assumptions about the world (sociocultural beliefs included), and word meaning is frequently prototype-based rather than being composed of checklists of features* (summary in Sweetser 1990:16-7).

In other words, physical and functional similarities pile up in experience and we get our concepts. Aaron (1952:167-8) has rightly said that words are combined gestalts and meaning is a gestalt tendency. “When a semantic change such as “white” coming to mean “candid” occurs, any perceived sharing of parameters between whiteness and honesty is completely dependent on a broader understanding of moral qualities in terms of color - an understanding which is neither objective nor readily expressible in terms of features” (Sweetser 1990:25-6).

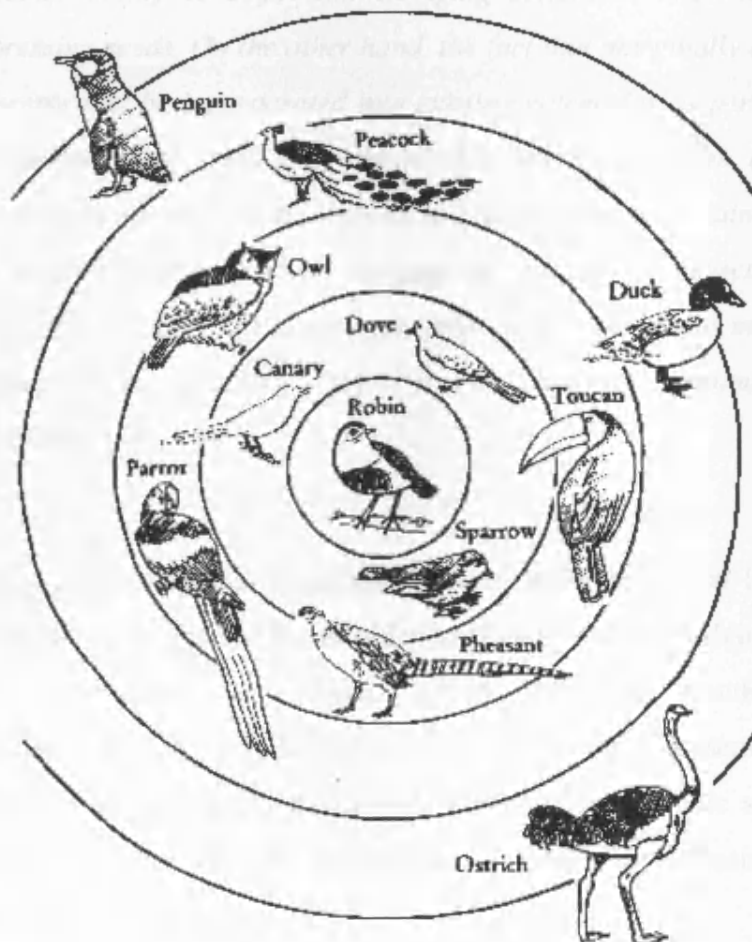
#### ***2.2.4.1 Semantic change as a Tendency Towards Prototypicality***

Rosch's work (1975, for example) on category membership investigates the absence of clear-cut boundaries in the real world. She carried out a set of experiments which showed that categories such as ‘vegetables’ and ‘birds’ are internally structured. That is to say, they are composed of a ‘core meaning’ which consists of the clearest exemplars (the prototypes) of the categories, surrounded by other category members of decreasing similarity to that core meaning. For example, for birds, she found that some types of birds (e.g. robins and eagles) are considered as ‘birdier’ than other birds (duck, peacock, ostrich, penguin), depending on the degree of their representativity of the central characteristics of ‘birdiness’ (flying, perching in trees, etc.) (see diagram 2.8). However, the family

relationship which holds between the various types of birds is the main reason why they are classified as belonging to one category.

Rosch's model stressed the vague aspect of language that results from the fuzzy nature of words. As such, it runs counter to the Aristotelian model in which ambiguous cases are discarded due to depicting categories as having clear boundaries (Taylor 1989:23).

**Diagram (2.8):** Rosch's (1975) model of category membership (From Aitchison 1987:54).





The ‘prototype theory’ has greatly influenced work in historical semantics. Adding a diachronic aspect to the notion of prototypicality makes it possible to abandon the classical opposition between the static structure of a category and its dynamic change. Structural stability and flexible changeability are now seen as two essential requirements that determine the nature of a category:

*prototypical categories are eminently suited to fulfil the joint requirement of structural stability and flexible adaptability. On the one hand, the development of nuances within concepts indicates their dynamic ability to cope with changing conditions and changing expressive needs. On the other hand, the fact that marginally deviant concepts can be incorporated into existing categories as peripheral instantiations of the latter, shows that these categories have a tendency to maintain themselves as holistic entities, thus maintaining the overall structure of the categorical system. As expectational patterns with regard to experience, prototypical categories maintain themselves by adapting themselves to changing circumstances (Geeraerts 1985:141).*

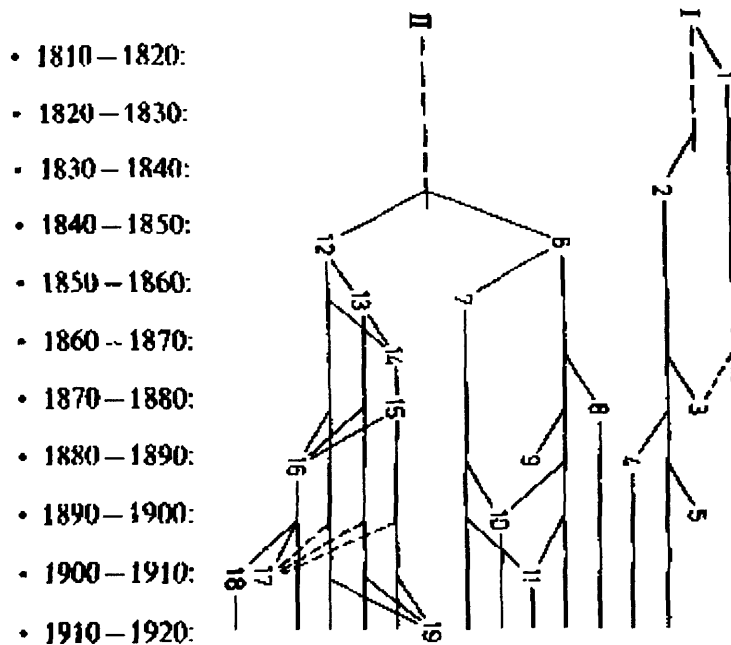
In this way, the prototypical organisation of categories in natural language links up with efficiency as a major functional cause behind semantic change (Geeraerts 1992:192). According to Geeraerts (1985, 1992), the tendency towards isomorphism is not the only efficiency principle at work in semantic change; prototypicality implies that a tendency towards non-isomorphic structures also plays a role. The latter, he calls, “the tendency to maximize polysemy”. Geeraerts (1992:194) further noted that:

*mechanisms of semantic extension such as metaphor and metonymy lie at the basis of the polysemy of categories, but at the same time, they restrict that polysemy. And more generally, the prototype-based polysemy of linguistic categories enables them to meet the expressive needs of the language users, but at the same time, it restricts the number of possible solutions that may be given to any particular expressive problem.*

Geeraerts arrived at this conclusion from his analysis of Dutch *type* where he discovered a certain clustering of meanings around three mutually related prototypical centres. These are printing form, specific characteristics, and personage characteristic (the first cluster is metaphorically related with the second and third one, and the third one is related with the second one on a metonymical basis) (Consider Diagram 2.9).

The Roman numerals in Diagram 2.9 refer to basic meanings; the oblique lines indicate the existing senses out of which a new kind of usage develops; the dotted lines indicate relations that are less outspoken; horizontal lines mean that a particular sense subsets over the period indicated by the line. Note that dividing the historical continuum into slices is merely a device to make the diagram simpler.

**Diagram (2.9):** The semantic development of Dutch *type* (Geeraerts 1985:135).



- (1) Effigy of a coin.
- (2) Small block of metal or wood used for printing characters.
- (3) Wood-cut.
- (4) Kind of typographical characters, fount.
- (5) Small block of metal or wood used for printing blank spaces.
- (6) Specific characteristic, set of distinctive properties.
- (7) Kind, sort, species, category.
- (8) Clinical picture, syndrome.
- (9) Face, head.
- (10) Norm.
- (11) Artificial/industrial kind or model.
- (12) Person characteristic for a situation.
- (13) Person characteristic for a group of people.
- (14) Ideal, ideal picture.
- (15) Person characteristic for a property.
- (16) Remarkable person.
- (17) Personage in a literary work of art.
- (18) Person.
- (19) Characteristic thing.

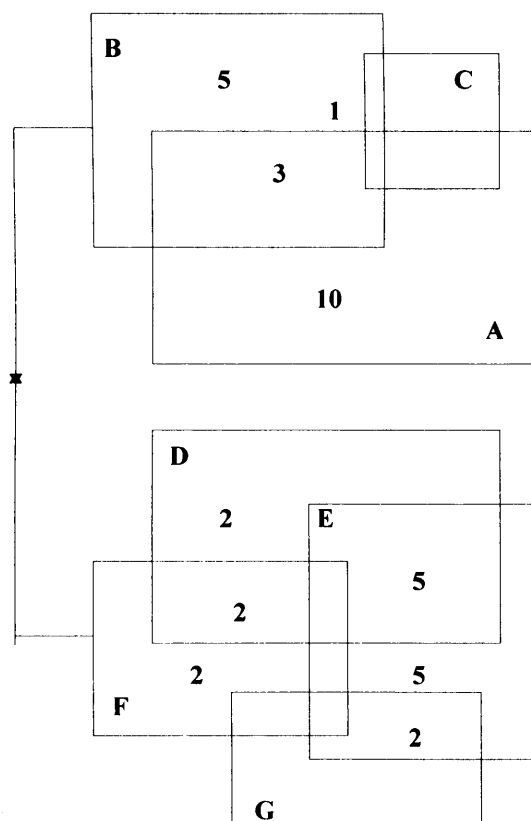
Polysemy within this framework is regarded as synchronically on a par with homonymy (the former is called ‘categorical polysemy’, and the latter ‘prototypical polysemy’). The only difference is that in the case of homonymy the etymological connection between the categorical concepts is no longer felt synchronically, so they are treated as distinct prototypical categories rather than senses or clusters within one and the same prototypically structured concept (as in the case of polysemy).

On that account, homonymic and polysemic conflicts are seen as resolved through the reorganisation of prototypically structured categories (Geeraerts 1985:144-5). In such instances, the tendency towards prototypicality, Geeraerts (1992:198-9) hypothesises, interacts with the isomorphic principle. A case in point is the formal and semantic merging of the Dutch words *verdouwen* (‘to digest’) and *verduwen* (‘to push away’), which have the same set of formal variants and which are semantically telescoped on the basis of their common metaphorical subconcept ‘to make (certain things, particularly obstacles) disappear, to overcome (difficulties, unpleasant experiences, emotional problems and so on)’. Here, a common salient subconcept becomes the prototypical centre of a new category, and the original centres become nuances of a new prototypical category.

Diagrams 2.10 and 2.11 below demonstrate the difference between the earlier and later structure of the category in question. The numbers in each box indicate the absolute number of attestations of each meaning in the corpus that has been used. Overlapping of boxes indicates that both meanings are related; in some instances, there are transitional cases that exemplify the relationship. The arrow in Diagram 2.10 points to cross-categorical relatedness; specifically, the metaphorical extension ‘to cope mentally with (something)’ of the ‘to digest’ cluster links up with the extension ‘to make (something) disappear’ of the ‘push away’ cluster. Both senses are marginal in their original clusters, but it is precisely the sense ‘to

cope mentally with something' that becomes the central one in the newly formed category.

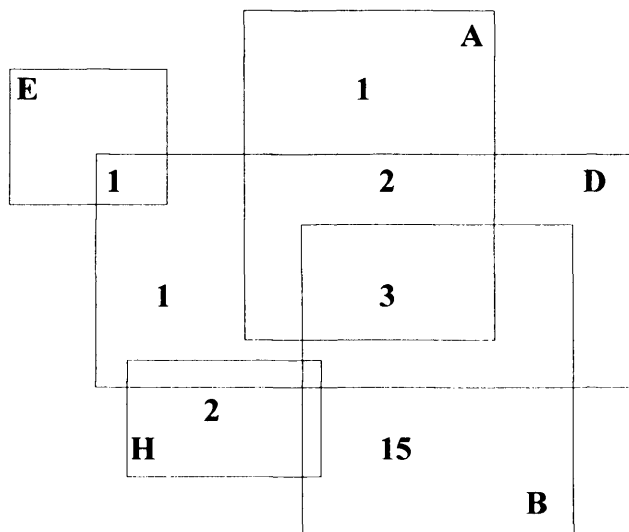
**Diagram (2.10): Dutch *Verduwen/verdouwen* in the 16th century (Geeraerts 1992:196).**



- A. 'to digest'
- B. 'to cope mentally with'
- C. 'to cope physically with'
- D. 'to push aside'
- E. 'to harm, treat badly, subdue, etc.'
- F. 'to make disappear'
- G. 'to destroy or damage by pushing aside'

Diagram 2.11 reveals that the meanings of the original clusters that cannot be reinterpreted in a straightforward fashion as a function of the new central meaning become structurally less important. Thus, for instance, sense C from diagram 2.10 has disappeared altogether. At the same time, the new central meaning gives rise to extensions that were absent in the original clusters (in this case, sense H) (Geeraerts 1992:197-8).

**Diagram (2.11): Dutch *Verduwen/verdouwen* in the 19th century (Geeraerts 1992:198).**



- A. 'to digest'
- B. 'to cope mentally with'
- D. 'to push aside'
- E. 'to harm, treat badly, subdue, etc.'
- H. 'to ignore'

Polysemic clashes can also be resolved by prototype formation rather than by simple lexical substitution. In this case, the prototypical category is reorganised in such a way that it becomes capable of covering both meanings involved in the

clash (Geeraerts 1985:144). It was on this assumption that Geeraerts (1985:146) reanalysed Goossens' example of avoidance of polysemy (the disappearance of *opper* from the border area of Belgian Limburg): "the formation of the '(large or small) haycock'-prototype is explained by the fact that both concepts are conceptually and functionally close enough to each other to be subsumed under one prototypical core ('haycock', of course), and because they are no longer lexically distinguishable (before the superfluous synonymy is removed, both can be called *opper* as well as *heukel*)".

In sum, the prototype-based approach highlights the distinction between changes affecting the centre of the internal structure of a category, and changes affecting the periphery. Changes in the prototypical centre of a category can be classified into three types:

- Splits (as in the case of Dutch *type*).
- Mergers (Dutch *verduwen/verdouwen*).
- Substitutions (Belgian *heukel*).

Although the first type is counterevidence against the structuralist view, the second two appear to reinforce the validity of the isomorphic principle. As such, to reconcile these findings, the prototype theory suggests that isomorphism and non-isomorphism play equally important roles in language change. This assumption is more plausible since semantic change exhibits both tendencies.

Geeraerts' prototype-based study of semantic change suggests that, in the case of 'splits', the different centres of a prototype are hierarchically discrete and not overlapping. Within this structure, the literal centre is more core than the other centres (Reconsider Diagram 2.9). This in turn suggests that only one prototypical centre is seen as core at any one time, as made clear in the cases of 'mergers' and

‘substitutions’. The same observation applies to Lakoff’s (1987) explanation of the radial structuring of categories. To him, this structure involves the following (ibid:204):

- A conventional choice of the center.
- Extension principles. These characterize the class of possible “links” between more central and less central subcategories. They include metaphoric models, metonymic models, image-schema relations, etc.
- Specific conventional extensions. Though each extension is an instance of extension principles, the extensions are *not* predictable from the center plus the principles. Each extension is a matter of convention and must be learned. The fact that specific extensions are instances of general principles makes them easier to learn.

As will be shown in the next chapter, the above hypotheses can be challenged with respect to two points: first, ‘splits’ (i.e. literal and figurative core centres) can be equally core to a prototype and not hierarchical; and, second, there can be an overlap between the core centres of a prototype. But more, the centres are systematically related to each other in a structural way, so that some pairs of centres are more closely related to each other than to other centres outside the pair.

However, the most important point that the prototype theory has incorporated into the field of semasiology is the idea of cognitive restrictions. Metaphoric extensions, for example, are not random. This non-randomness, however, has nothing to do with objective reality, rather it is related to experiential cognition, namely to the way humans conceptualise the world. As such, metaphorical extensions cannot be claimed to be based on principles of logic, but on human prototypical categorization of linguistic experience. This idea of cognitive restrictions became a source of inspiration for new research in the field. One



offspring of this inspiration is Nerlich and Clarke's (1992) model of semantic change. The notion of meaning they selected to fit their framework is, however, that defined by scenes and frames.

#### ***2.2.4.2 Scenes and Frames as Strategies for Meaning-Making***

Within 'frame' theory, understanding the meaning of a word is conceived as activating a scene and pointing to a certain part of that scene, perspectivized by a frame. For example, the concept of *mother* is a frame that is structured against at least five domains: the genetic domain, the birth domain, the nurturance domain, the genealogical domain, and the marital domain. However, an expression like 'birth mother' would perspectivize, or invoke, one frame-based component only, namely the birth domain in the context of child adoption (Lakoff 1987:203). "The objective world does not contain a radial category corresponding to English *mother* with the cluster described above at the center of the category and *adoptive mother*, *birth mother*, *genetic mother*, *legal mother*, *unwed mother*, *stepmother*, and *surrogate mother* all extensions" (ibid:205).

Nerlich and Clarke's (1992) model is held to have a psychological basis. They claim that semantic change is due to the interaction between three layers of knowledge: world knowledge, semantic knowledge and meta-semantic expert system (MES).

The world knowledge base contains some knowledge about certain established scripts, frames or schemas. It also contains knowledge about objects and the relations between objects which are important for metonymy. The following examples illustrate the various metonymic models in the human conceptual system: "OBJECT USED FOR USER (*The sax has the flu today*, *We need a better glove at the third base*), CONTROLLER FOR CONTROLLED (*Nixon bombed Hanoi*, *Ozawa gave a terrible concert last night*), and THE PLACE FOR THE

EVENT (*Watergate changed our politics, Let's not let Iraq become another Vietnam*). Many of these models depend on conventional cultural associations, which reflect the general principle a thing may stand for what it is conventionally associated with" (Turner 1987; Summary in Gibbs 1994:324).

The semantic knowledge base, on the other hand, has an internal structure that comprises the following:

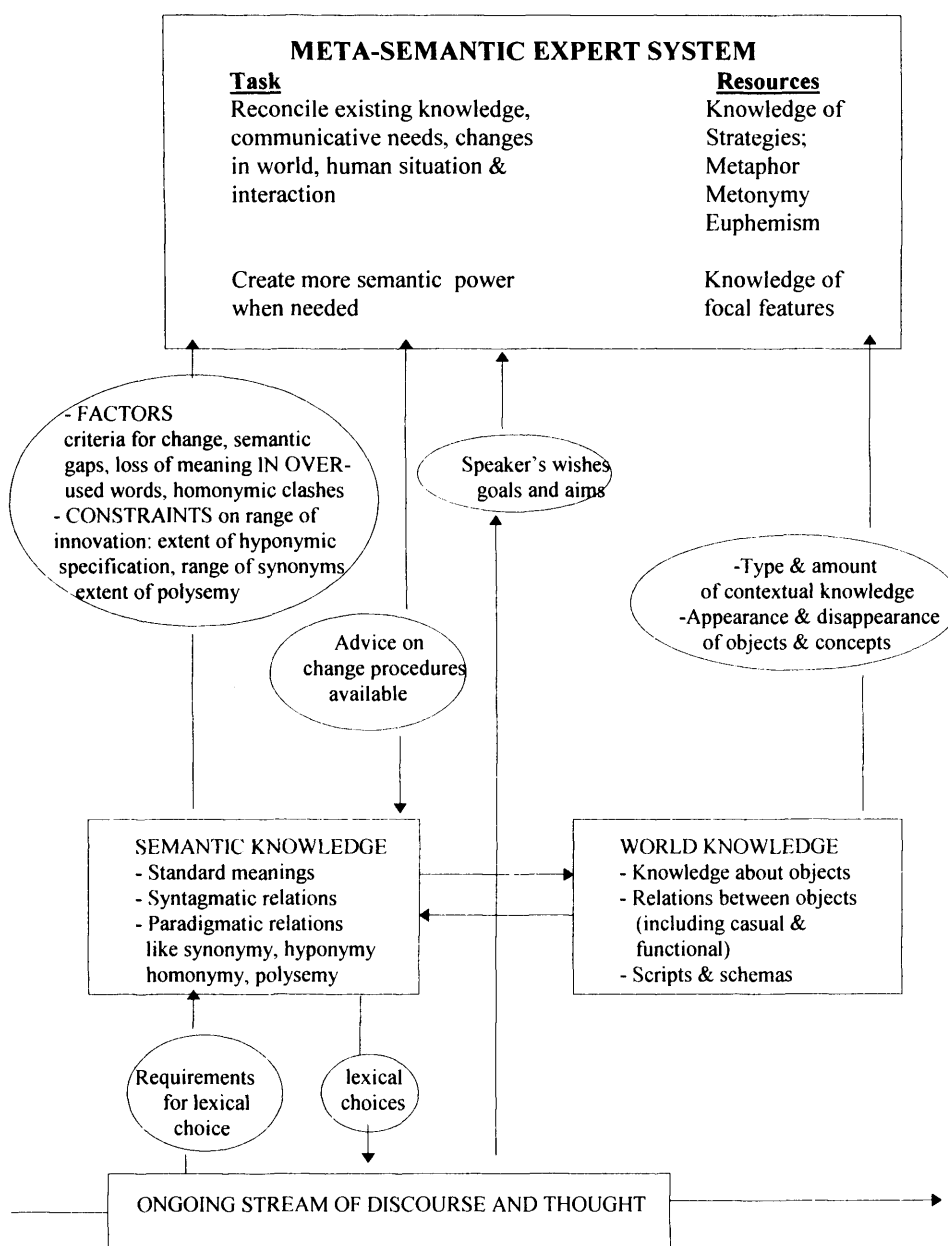
1. The knowledge of the standard or conventional meaning of linguistic units, namely their standard symbolic value.
2. The knowledge of their possible syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations, including the relation between homonyms and synonyms, as well as some knowledge about the polysemy of words.
3. Some knowledge about semantic domains.

The main feature of the model in question is the meta-semantic expert system (MES). Its task is to reconcile existing knowledge, communicative needs, and changes in the world, human situation and interaction. That is to say, when world knowledge exceeds semantic knowledge the MES 'gives advice' on how to cope. Hence, its input stems from the semantic knowledge base as well as from the world knowledge base.

The semantic knowledge base provides the MES with factors that it needs so as to see if change is necessary (such as semantic gaps, loss of meaning in overused words, homonymic clashes, and so on), as well as constraints that determine the range within which the semantic innovations can occur (the range of synonyms, the extent of polysemy, and so on).

The input factors for the MES derived from the world knowledge base are concerned with the type and amount of contextual knowledge available; the appearance and disappearance of objects or concepts, and so on. According to Nerlich and Clarke, these inputs are the real causes of semantic change (1992:128). Consider Diagram 2.12.

**Diagram (2.12): Nerlich and Clarke's (1992) model of semantic change.**



The MES includes ICMS or image schemata whose function is to constrain the production and understanding of meaning “and at the same time provide the pathways for innovation and change, pathways along which semantic change procedures such as metaphor and metonymy force words to travel” (ibid:135).

It is clear that the meta-semantic expert system is not an innate faculty (in the Aristotelian or Chomskyan sense). Rather, it is an evolutionary product whose duty is to model new developments on older shapes. And this is the cause of non-randomness exhibited by natural language development.

Nerlich and Clarke’s model is very convincing. The cognitive restrictions they have placed on the paths of semantic change, taking into account both the metaphoric (including metonymy) nature of the process and factors relevant to the development of the external world, is an important step in the right direction. The only point that cannot be justified in this approach is the adoption of ‘frame’ theory without referring to its limitation. The semantic components, or polysemous senses, of a frame are not always so clearly cut as to be activated separately (i.e. as single scenes). One of the concerns of the next chapter is to show how the understanding of a word polysemy can involve a multi-scene access.

The cognitive position investigated above has freed the study of semantic change from the shackles of classical logic and structuralistic reasoning to merge it into the context of human life, thought, and communication. However, from the perspective of the functional approach, the cognitive approach cannot claim to be conclusive because it has left open the question of the ‘mechanism’ of semantic change. This question is the focal point of the functional explanation.

### 2.2.5 The Functional Explanation

The functional approach deals with “linguistic change as being an aspect of social change in general” (Milroy 1992:28). It starts from the assumption that:

*a language system is at any given time equally well adapted to the functions for which it is used: sometimes it is said to be **perfectly** adapted. Whether this is the case or not, it is reasonable to assume that linguistic structure is very sensitive to the social and communicative needs of speakers* (Milroy 1992:29).

For Milroy, to focus on the social aspect of linguistic change “is not to exclude the possibility of also developing sophisticated internal accounts of language change. Both kinds of approach are needed - and one should contribute to the other - because although linguistic change must be initiated by speakers (and is therefore a social phenomenon) it is manifested as internal to language” (ibid).

The functional approach is primarily concerned with the *actuation* (and the question how and why speakers initiate changes) of linguistic change. Milroy (1992:11) wrote that:

*In attempting to solve the actuation problem we are concerned no less with the origin of change: we want to locate its beginnings and by any means possible attempt to explain why that particular change was initiated and diffused at some particular time and place. It seems clear that to tackle it, we must take account of how **speakers** initiate changes... .*

The focus within this framework is on the roles of intention and prestige in the dissemination of semantic innovations. In other words, it concerns itself with the structure of societies and the role of this structure in semantic change.

To begin with the question of awareness and intention, dichotomies such as intentional vs. unintentional, conscious vs. unconscious, and the like have furnished earlier semanticists with criteria for classifying changes of meaning. Stern (1931), for instance, noted that figures of speech resting on semantic foundations, such as metaphor and transfer, differ from other types of semantic changes in being intentional and conscious innovations. In the functional era, however, the role of intention and awareness in linguistic change began to be neutralized, as it is the case in Keller's theory of 'the invisible hand explanation' (See below).

#### ***2.2.5.1 The Invisible Hand Explanation***

Keller (1985,1994) put forth the hypothesis that the production or the employment of an innovation is by no means motivated by the intention of speakers to change their language: speakers do not even notice that they are generating linguistic changes, as if they were led by an invisible hand. But the case is that their intentional attempts to perform successful linguistic actions (to say something and to be understood easily and accurately) often results in linguistic changes. Milroy (1992:36) pointed out that "linguistic change is located in *speaker-interaction* and is negotiated between speakers in the course of interaction, much as other aspects of discourse are negotiated between them".

Keller based his theory on the idea that language is a phenomenon of the third kind: neither a natural process (e.g. the language of the bees) nor an artefact (e.g. a cake). As such, it is to be seen as the product of human actions without being the goal of their intentions. Language development is, however, partially directed.

It follows indirectly from behaviour strategies that are not language specific (ibid: 144-6).

The invisible hand explanation deals mainly with individual choices and the maxims governing these choices. According to Keller, language change is determined by its static (homogeneous) and dynamic (heterogeneous) nature. This nature is, however, different from the one the cognitive position argues for. It is now seen as governed by principles of communication. Keller (1994:95-107) postulates two sub-ordinate maxims that would account for stasis and dynamics in language. Here are some examples of these maxims:

**A. Static maxims:**

Talk in such a way that you are understood.

Talk in such a way that you do not attract attention.

Talk in such a way that you are recognized as a member of the group.

**B. Dynamic maxims**

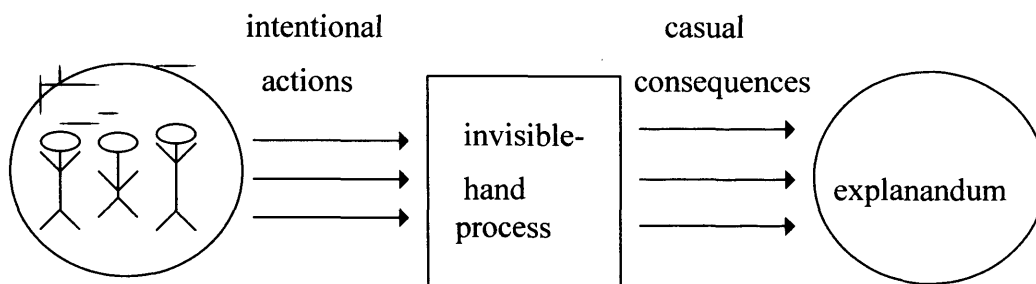
4. Talk in such a way that you are noticed.

5. Talk in such a way that you are not recognizable as a member of the group.

6. Talk in an especially polite, flattering, charming, etc. way.

The first three maxims are all variants of the simple maxim “Talk like the others talk” which can be regarded as the main factor behind language stability until change is already under way. The last three maxims bring to light the point that the interplay between invention and selection is the process that keeps language in a state of continuous alteration. “Excluding random effects, this is the case when there are, generally speaking, alternatives which are differently suitable for a certain purpose (as a given task) or in a certain environment (such as ecological conditions)” (ibid:145). Keller has illustrated his theory in the following way:

**Diagram (2.13): Keller's theory of the invisible hand explanation.**



This belief follows from the assumption that “natural language is above all an instrument or device for exerting an influence upon others” (Keller 1994:153-4). To Keller (ibid:141):

*The motto, ‘if we do nothing, everything remains the same’, does not work in language. If we ‘do nothing’, language no longer exists. But everything does remain the same if we do not change our preferences of expression. If we maintain or change them, we make in both cases a (mostly unconscious) choice, and the one is no less mysterious than the other.*

For example, what changes in the environment have forced English speakers to replace the word *cheap* with *low-cost* and *swell* with *super*? On the other hand, the *dashboard* is still used for the panel in front of the driver inside a car, although it originally protected the coach-man from the flying mud of the horse’s hooves. As such, “Changes in our world are neither necessary nor sufficient to bring about changes in our language” (ibid:5). Even the structural explanation cannot prove valid in such cases. Keller pointed out that one can find in any history of language such a statement as the following:



- The cause for the disappearance of *englisch1* (angelic) from the German language was its homonymy with *englisch2* (English).

To him, homonymy was neither necessary nor sufficient for the disappearance of *englisch1*, for *englisch2* could have disappeared and been replaced by another word (ibid:81). Milroy (1992:40-1) wrote that:

*speakers in casual social contexts are not usually concerned with avoiding homonymic clash or with being especially clear and explicit: they are satisfied if the conversation progresses successfully, and the success of the conversation is judged in social terms. If misunderstandings occur because of homonymic clash or any other reason, they can be repaired if necessary: speakers appear to accept the results of vagueness and ambiguity on the assumption that 'intended' meanings will be clarified if **necessary** as the conversation proceeds.*

He further argued that “It is clear that much of historical linguistic tradition has been based on the assumptions derived from the functions of writing, rather than speech. However, such features as redundancy, vagueness and ambiguity, which are disfavoured in writing, are wholly characteristic of everyday speech” (ibid:41). What other factors, then, determine expression preferences? Could it be prestige or some word properties?

#### **2.2.5.2 Prestige as a Mechanism**

Some linguists posited ‘prestige’ as the main mechanism of linguistic change. Bloomfield (1933:476), for instance, claimed that language change follows the language of the more prestigious group:

*In any group, some persons receive more imitation than others; they are the leaders in power and prestige ... a speaker will imitate those whom he believes to have the highest 'social' standing.*

But Labov's work in the field was seminal in the formulation of a new view. According to Labov, linguistic change does not necessarily start with imitation of forms used by the higher social classes in society. Linguistic innovations can begin with *any class* and spread outward. The only point is that "the more conscious importations are regularly the mark of the upper class, while the less conscious changes affect both classes [upper/middle and working]" (Labov 1972b:296-7).

However, Trudgill's (1974) socially-oriented study of English in Norwich contributed to the subject by concentrating on linguistic change starting from the lower class. His argument is based on the assumption that sex differentiation is the factor determining whether linguistic change is to start 'from above' or 'from below': "as far as linguistic change 'from below' is concerned, we can expect men to be in the vanguard. Changes 'from above', on the other hand, are more likely to be led by women" (p. 95). Trudgill (ibid:94-5) supports his argument by two inter-connected explanatory factors:

**1.** Women in our society are more status-conscious than men, generally speaking, and are therefore more aware of the social significance of linguistic variables. There are probably two main reasons for this:

(i) The social position of women in our society is less secure than that of men, and, generally speaking, subordinate to that of men. It is therefore more necessary

for women to secure and signal their social status linguistically and in other ways, and they are more aware of the importance of this type of signal. Trudgill was writing this in the 1970s. Arguably, there is far more awareness now of gender equality in employment and public life. This might weaken, but not invalidate, Trudgill's argument.

(ii) Men in our society can be rated socially by their occupation, their earning power, and perhaps by their other abilities: in other words, by what they *do*. For the most part, however, this is not possible for women, who have generally to be rated on how they *appear*. Since they cannot be rated socially by their occupation, by what other people know about what they do in life, other signals of status, including speech, are correspondingly more important. This last point is perhaps the most important.

2. The second, related, factor is that working-class speech, like many other aspects of working-class culture, has, in our society, connotations of masculinity, since it is associated with the roughness and toughness supposedly characteristic of working-class life, which are, to a certain extent, considered to be desirable masculine attributes (Trudgill (1974) termed this 'covert prestige'). They are not, on the other hand, considered to be desirable feminine characteristics. On the contrary, refinement and sophistication are much preferred.

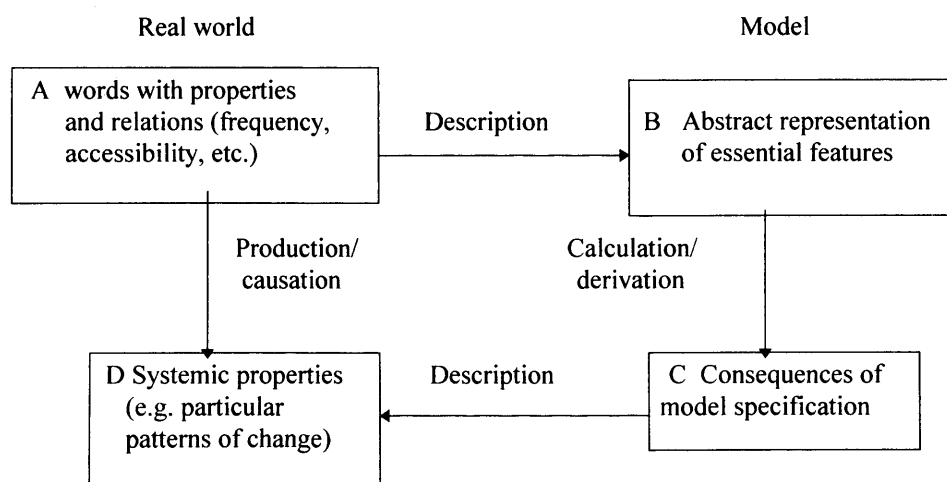
But, again, even if it is true that social class (either the upper or the working class) is the force at play in the success of an innovation motivated by prestige, it is still tenable to claim that this case of semantic change is not intentional. Because, as explained above, the planned verbal actions which result in semantic changes are by no means intended for that specific effect. Indeed, the question of any conscious awareness and intentionality behind semantic evolution remains a theoretical problem. Some changes may be intentional initially. For example, when someone invents a new phrase; whether it catches on or not may depend on

who the innovator is, what the medium is (e.g. TV, pop music, etc.), and on people's perception of fashion. Innovations of euphemisms or feminist efforts to change pronouns use ('she or he', or 'they' instead of 'he' only) and use of nouns (such as 'chair person' or 'chair' instead of 'chairman'; 'humanity' instead of the generic 'man' or 'mankind'; etc.) (Baron, 1986) do indicate that in some instances change is socially motivated, conscious, intentional, and, in fact, much discussed.

### 2.2.5.3 Word Properties as a Mechanism

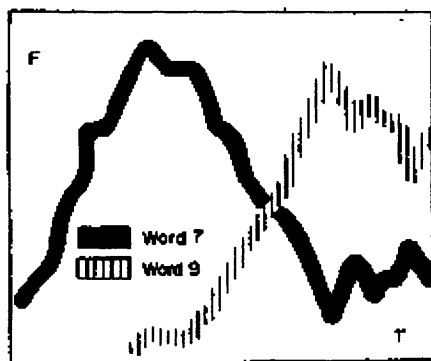
Clarke and Nerlich (1991) addressed the question as to whether certain properties of words, such as their frequency of use and accessibility (facility of memory retrieval), and certain relations between those properties, such as the tendency for an increase in accessibility to bring about an increase in frequency, would be *sufficient on their own* to produce some patterns of change which have been reported in the lexicon as a whole (ibid:229). The calculations they performed, using a special computer program, showed that, although other processes might be at work in the real case, word properties can alone create semantic changes. This finding is illustrated by Diagram 2.14 (ibid:230).

**Diagram (2.14): Clarke and Nerlich's modelling logic (1991).**



On the ground that frequency is proportional to accessibility, and accessibility is proportional to frequency, Clarke and Nerlich made nine words compete in a single semantic field (corresponding to the way that *baby*, *toddler*, or *infant* might be used to mean ‘young child’) and expected that one word, once having reached a high frequency, would take over irreversibly. But the result of the simulation was a wavelike behaviour: one word rises in frequency and then goes down again to be replaced by another (on a random basis), and so forth. Further simulations showed word-waves to be a regular feature even in cases where a word attains the highest position on the output trace or where there is only one word involved and no competition to begin with. This finding can be taken as an explanation for the birth and death of words. The same process came up when ‘expressivity’ was added to the model as a booster (The ‘expressivity’ factor is introduced as a binary variable). But this time wave patterns are of controllable steepness and height since they illustrate the transition of words from a highly normative state (low waves) to a highly creative one and vice versa. Diagram (2.15) shows a run in which word seven was initially designated as having high expressivity. When relative frequency reached a pre-set threshold of 0.95, word seven wore out its expressivity and novelty, which by random reallocation moved to word nine, which then promptly began the rising phase of a clearly marked word-wave, while the frequency of word seven fell (ibid: 234-5):

**Diagram (2.15): Frequency-accessibility-expressivity ‘boost’.**



But, could word-waves be the mechanism at work in real cases? Difficult to prove conclusively though it is, the word-waves model has contributed to the subject by showing that meanings change according to a regular pattern, and that although this pattern is determined by individual choices, the patterns which emerge are not necessarily intended by speakers. As such, the word-waves model can be regarded as evidence in favour of Keller's theory of 'the invisible hand explanation'. At least, the model might be said to have established the possibility that this may happen and to have shown the manner in which it may have occurred.

In sum, the functional thesis starts where earlier studies have left off. It claims that the invisible hand explanation is the only way language change (including semantic change) can be explained. It starts from the conception of language as a 'custom of influence' which emerges 'invisible-handedly' as a phenomenon of the third kind, without a plan or the intention to create it, through the natural behaviour patterns of humans, according to the 'known principles of human communication' (Keller 1994:154). In this way, continuity in language change is presented as a special case of sociocultural change - not necessarily superimposed by any factors: linguistic, non-linguistic or even cognitive. And here lies the flaw in the functional argument. If the only function of language change is to achieve successful communicative acts on the part of speakers, what examples support this claim? Moreover, the question of selections and preferences of innovations cannot be adequately presented without discussing the nature of innovations. The fact that language is a property of the brain makes it implausible to think of language development as divorced from any cognitive factors. The question of how human cognition adapts itself to new experiences is addressed in the chapter to follow. The claim is that metaphor is the major cognitive strategy employed for either the conceptualization of new experiences (social, cultural, etc.) or the innovative decoding of old experiences.

### 2.3 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has investigated a number of approaches to semantic change. It has been shown that every school of historical semantics has added a new dimension that has contributed to a better understanding of the process, as summarised in Table 2.1.

**Table (2.1): Approaches to Semantic Change:**

Period	School of Semantics	Characteristics
1. 1897-1930	Pre-structural (Important names: Breal, Stern, and Ullmann)	Semasiological approach. Search for laws/causes. <i>how/why</i> .
2. 1930s-1960s	Structural (Trier, Saussure, Goossens, Gilliéron, and Lehrer)	Onomasiological approach. Neglect of non-linguistic factors Explanation <i>why</i> .
3. 1970s-	Cognitive (Geeraerts, Clarke, Nerlich, and Traugott)	Semasiological/Onomasiological approach Interest in the psychological basis of language.
4. 1970s-	Functional (Trudgill, Milroy, Keller, Clarke, and Nerlich)	Onomasiological approach Interest in social embedding of language and the speaker's actuation of linguistic change.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the discussion of these approaches is as follows: semantic change, no matter what causes are behind it, is a process that is hardly activated by the speakers' will to change their language. It is also a process that has its roots in metaphor. Metaphor is not a logical mechanism for reflecting objective reality, but for creating new realities. The metaphorical nature of semantic change includes the tendency of transfer from concrete to abstract and vice versa (e.g. as is the case of *key*). Metaphorical extensions are not necessarily based on formal or functional similarity, but involve the systematic conceptualization of one cognitive domain in terms of another. This in turn suggests that semantic change is grounded on human cognition and conceptualization of the world. This conceptualization is prototype-based. This,

however, does not imply that metaphorical extensions are less central to a prototype than literal meanings. They can be so central to the extent of overlapping with literal senses.

It has been observed that metaphor, but not so much metonymy, and even less irony, are recognized as important strategies used by children to cope with their limited lexical knowledge in an almost unlimited world of experience and interaction (e.g. child points to the yellow of a fried egg and says “That’s the sun of the “egg”) (Nerlich 1996). This evidence from psycholinguistics suggests that metaphor is a major force at play behind the conceptualization of new experiences and the prototypical nature of linguistic categorization. Accordingly, it can be argued that metaphor is also a major force at work in language change.

The next chapter contributes to historical semantics by adding a diachronic dimension to the linguistic traditions concerned with the metaphorical nature of cognition and language (e.g. Lakoff & Johnson 1980). Another contribution is that it investigates the influence of metaphorical concepts on both the semasiological (i.e. polysemous) variation of a category and its onomasiological alternatives (i.e. its synonyms). The conclusion arrived at is that the semasiological and onomasiological developments of a category are correlated. In the first place, this correlation is due to the fact that the semasiological/onomasiological development of a category is determined by the same metaphorical concepts. In the second, the function of the onomasiological alternatives is to explicate the semasiology of the related category. In brief, the next chapter will highlight the point that polysemy and synonymy in language are not phenomena that exist independently of one another, but have a related history, and that this correlation is metaphorical in nature.



### -III-

#### ***METAPHOR, SEMASIOLOGY, AND ONOMASIOLOGY: A CORPUS-BASED STUDY OF SEMANTIC CHANGE***

##### ***3.1 Introduction***

This chapter investigates the metaphorical nature of semantic change using modern techniques of corpus linguistics. ‘Corpus’ is a term employed since at least the early 1950s to refer to a collection of texts, of the written or spoken language. In current linguistics the term is commonly used to refer to data which is stored and processed on computer for the purpose of linguistic research. A corpus-based study of semantic change is thought to be reliable in its ability to handle large quantities of data systematically and quickly. It can yield up authentic instances of the historically earlier and later senses of words.

The previous chapter has explored semantic change from various theoretical perspectives. It has been shown that one of the points differentiating the theories investigated lies in their employment of either a *semasiological* approach (concentrating on the changes of meaning in individual words, i.e. polysemy) or an *onomasiological* one (concentrating on the expression of a particular concept by means of different words, i.e. synonymy). This study aims at making a contribution to historical semantics by exploring the interrelationship between semasiology and onomasiology, or on the interrelationship between the development of polysemy and synonymy in language. The position adopted is a cognitive one, i.e. one that concerns itself with categorization in and through language. The whole study may be regarded as a diachronic face for the linguistic traditions concerned with the role of conceptual metaphor in processing human experience and language<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> This position is at odds with the classical view that metaphor is just a poetic linguistic expression, or a figure of speech. This entails, by definition, that: everyday language has no

The need for a metaphorical account of polysemy and synonymy will be shown. The adequacy of such an approach will be discussed in the light of original research into the semantic development of *to show* and its synonyms. The example of *to show* is taken to demonstrate how a small number of conceptual metaphors (a) relate to and (b) link the different senses as the word develops through time. It is then demonstrated how the same set of metaphors underlying the polysemy of *to show* is also at play behind the selection and semantic development of the synonyms attached to the word (e.g. disclose, uncover, impart, appear, clarify, prove, lead, etc.). Diagram 3.1 summarizes the metaphors which will be explored in this chapter.

**Diagram (3.1): Conceptual metaphors determining the polysemy/synonymy of *to show*:**

<p>VISION IS THE PATH TO THE MIND / SHOWING IS TELLING<sup>2</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>VISUAL MESSAGES ARE UTTERANCES</i></li> <li>• <i>MENTAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL ENTITIES ARE PHYSICAL OBJECTS/ MENTAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL ENTITIES ARE EXTERNAL UTTERANCES</i></li> <li>• <i>MENTAL ENTITIES ARE SHARABLE OBJECTS.</i></li> </ul> <p>SHOWING AS TELLING IS NOT ALWAYS TELLING THE TRUTH / SHOWING AS TELLING NEEDS PROOF OR EXPLANATION/CLARIFICATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>CLEAR TO THE EYE IS CLEAR TO THE MIND.</i></li> <li>• <i>SHOWING/EXPLAINING IS LEADING/DIRECTING THE MIND</i></li> </ul> <p>OBJECTS OUT OF SIGHT ARE HIDDEN OBJECTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>OBJECTS OUT OF SIGHT ARE IN CLOSED CONTAINERS</i></li> <li>• <i>MIND/BODY IS A CONTAINER FOR MENTAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL ENTITIES</i></li> </ul>
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metaphor (Lakoff 1993: 202). The classical theory proved to be false after Reddy (1979) showed in his essay “The conduit metaphor” that “the locus of metaphor is thought, not language, that metaphor is a major and indispensable part of our ordinary, conventional way of conceptualizing the world, and that our everyday behaviour reflects our metaphorical understanding of experience” (Summary in Lakoff 1993:204). The appearance of Reddy’s work marked a new era in the history of metaphor research. Attention shifted towards metaphors structuring our everyday conceptual system, and underlying much of everyday language. Many systems of conceptual metaphors have since been discovered (ibid).

<sup>2</sup> The A is B structure is the form which researchers adopt to name cross-domain mappings, as in the conceptual metaphor SHOWING IS TELLING. This form refers to the set of correspondences that characterize a mapping (Consider the specific (italicized) metaphors in Diagram 3.1 in relation to the general (non-italicized) ones. Such correspondences permit us to reason about A (one conceptual domain) using the knowledge we use to reason about B (another conceptual domain) (Lakoff 1993:207).

### 3.1.1 Theoretical Background

Ushenko's (1958) division of live ideas and concepts illustrates how the cognitive and linguistic structuring of experience is grounded on metaphor. Ushenko (p.170) wrote that<sup>3</sup> "Concepts are almost dead thoughts"; they are high points in multidimensional meaning fields: "the semantic schema is a trap set by the mind in order to capture and tame if not kill, a relevant description or illustration that dwells in the field of live ideas" (p.169). "An example of a live idea is a dynamic image. Unless anchored to a concept or assimilated with one, it resists the mind that attempts to arrest for scrutiny" (p.171). And further (ibid):

*Formal logic stipulates a domain of fixed terms. Live ideas are not fixed not only because the mind fails to arrest them but also because no live idea remains unaltered through the change from one context of relevant idea to another. With the change of context live ideas may be said literally to grow and develop. In contrast to concepts - which are of the order of exposition because of being terminal results or products of thought - ideas in contextual transformation or metamorphosis, for example, through the dynamics of metaphor, belong to the order of constructive or creative thought.*

Ushenko's distinction of live ideas and concepts is mirrored rather exactly in Nietzsche's scale of development: *nerve impulse* → *image* → *sound/word* → *concept* (Anttila 1992:44). "Iconicity and sense implication allow us to understand the world around us. Only at a later stage do metaphors lose their

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<sup>3</sup> Note that the distinction between concepts and live ideas is itself drawn by means of metaphorically transferred expressions.

original characteristics and take on an abstract or symbolic quality” (Danesi 1987:162; in Anttila 1992:44).

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) point out that linguistic usages frequently reflect the inherently metaphorical understanding of many basic areas of human lives; that is, not only language but cognition (and hence language) operates metaphorically much of the time. Metaphors which exist in most linguistic systems fall out from a more holistic viewpoint, which takes language as part of the general cognitive system. “Consider the idea of love. Many of the creative uses of language that talk about love and other difficult concepts are themselves based on a much smaller set of cognitive models that constrain the way individuals think about and express their experiences. ... For instance, *I was given new strength by her love*, *I thrive on love*, *He’s sustained by love*, and *I am starved for your affection* reflect the metaphorical concept of love as some kind of nutrient. The LOVE AS NUTRIENT conceptual metaphor has as its primary function the cognitive role of understanding one concept (love) in terms of another (nutrients)” (Gibbs 1994:5-6). This example is illustrative of the point that figurative processes “constitute basic schemes by which people conceptualize their experience and the external world” (ibid:1). According to Low (1988:128), “The metaphor provides new paths along which thought can proceed in a relatively principled way”.

For Lakoff and Johnson (1980), conceptual metaphors are not arbitrary. They have arisen from human bodily experience. For example, abstract concepts like ‘amount’ are conceptualized by metaphorical projection from the bodily experience of up and down, giving rise to a number of lexicalized metaphors (e.g. The number of books printed each year keeps on going *up*; If you’re hot turn the heat *down*; My income *rose/fell* last year) (Lakoff & Johnson 1980:14).

The hypothesis claims that image-schemas<sup>4</sup> (such as UP-DOWN, CONTAINER, PART-WHOLE, LINK, SOURCE-PATH-GOAL, and so on) structure our experience preconceptually<sup>5</sup>, that this is where meaning actually comes from. It is on the basis of these preconceptual structures (i.e. image schemas) that humans build networks of meanings. For example, “We experience ourselves as entities, separate from the rest of the world - as containers with an inside and an outside” (Lakoff & Johnson 1980:58): our physical and emotional states are entities within us (e.g. He hasn’t got *an honest bone in his body*) (ibid:50). The language of containers (whether conventional or novel) is meaningful to people by virtue of their bodily experience. Thus, the basic logic of containers (i.e. *If X is in container A and container A is in container B, then X is in container B*) can be seen as following from CONTAINER schemas rather than vice versa (Lakoff 1987:273; 1993:213).

Elaborating on the above hypothesis, Goatly (1997) pointed out that our preconceptual physical experiences as infants are sufficient to provide the basic vehicular structure on which metaphorical cognition and the metaphorical lexicon are built. A baby’s interactions with objects involves first sensing them (COGNITION = PERCEPTION, UNDERSTAND/KNOW = SEE) and then dropping them, manipulating (CONTROL = HANDLE (problem, situation, numbers)) and moving them (ACTIVITY/CHANGE = MOVEMENT). When the baby becomes mobile she will move towards objects (ACTIVITY/CHANGE = MOVEMENT) and this movement forwards becomes a prototype of purposeful and successful action (PURPOSE = DIRECTION, SUCCESS/DEVELOPMENT = MOVEMENT FORWARDS, difficulty in succeeding is difficulty in moving forward (e.g. *going through a sticky patch*)). And when capable of standing and turning around, she

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<sup>4</sup> The term ‘image schema’ is often used “to describe general skeletal concepts. Thus LIFE IS A JOURNEY is specific, drawing on the generic EVENTS ARE ACTIONS and the general mapping ‘Progress is a path’. Actions and paths have characteristic shapes, locations and components, but are skeletal, and thus image schemata” (Lakoff 1993; Lakoff & Turner 1989; Summary in Cameron & Low 1999:80).

<sup>5</sup> This means that “experience is structured in a significant way prior to and independent of, any concepts” (Lakoff 1987:271).

can change her orientation to them (FUNCTIONING/HAPPENING = ON). The child's sense experiences or manipulation of objects/substances will give her a feeling for their dimension/parts (QUANTITY = DIMENSION, MENTALITY DISTURBED = DIVIDED/INCOMPLETE) and their physical properties (ABSTRACT QUALITY = PHYSICAL QUALITY, AFFECTIONATE = WARM). Even before this, from the experience of bodily processes of ingestion develops the idea that the body is a discrete object with an inside and outside (Mind = Body, Affect = Perception) (e.g. EMOTION = TOUCH/FEELING). Still more basically, the experience of the original confinement in the womb and the birth into a less constricting world is an important lesson in freedom (FREEDOM = SPACE TO MOVE) (pp. 44, 47, 48-9, 56-7).

All this shows that much of human perception and language are basically metaphorical in nature. As such, it is tenable to claim that semantic change also has its base in metaphor. In other words, the observation that humans build networks of meaning on the basis of metaphorical concepts is potentially valid both synchronically and diachronically. Even when socio-cultural factors are the main motivations behind semantic processes, metaphor (not necessarily based on bodily experience) remains the principal tool by means of which new experiences are conceptualized. Social, cultural and other similar factors only activate human imagination and the potential of prototypical categorization. Take as an example the semantic development of *gay*, the word can be seen as a 'euphemism' for *homosexual*. However, the question that needs to be addressed is: why has this word in particular succeeded as a euphemism for *homosexual*? A simple answer is: because the choice of the new lexical item was not random. Regular metaphor was the force at play behind its success: A gay person (in the earlier sense) is someone who is given to pleasure and amusement. Such a person is odd in a western society like the English society, in which seriousness and hard work are characteristic features of the life of its people. Similarly, a gay person (in the modern sense) is someone odd as far as a common perception of the normal relationships between the two sexes is concerned. This observation can further be

supported by bringing into focus the fact that the word *queer*, 'odd', has once been used offensively to refer to a homosexual person. It is therefore clear that although certain socio-cultural values are the cause behind these semantic shifts, yet these values, it can be argued, are decoded in terms of a metaphorical concept reflecting the understanding that SINGULAR MANNERS ARE ODD MANNERS. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980:7), "Because the metaphorical concept is systematic, the language we use to talk about that aspect of the concept is systematic". In other words, metaphorical mapping is systematic because it reflects the fixed schemas in terms of which lexical categories (as semantic units) are conceptualized.

The following excerpt from *Webcrawler News Channel* demonstrates that people are conscious of the systematic metaphorical concepts depicting their socio-linguistic manners, but this consciousness is not necessarily verbalised. It can be displayed by behaviour. One type of this behaviour is the acceptance of innovations reflecting these conceptual metaphors. Another is their attitudes towards the socio-cultural values expressed by metaphorical concepts. In many cases, these attitudes are polarized.

### **Gay Student Dies After Beating In United States**

*By Judith Crosson [13th October 1998]*

DENVER (Reuters) - A gay University of Wyoming student who was savagely beaten and strung up on a fence like a scarecrow died Monday after an attack that prompted nationwide calls for stronger anti-hate crime laws. ...

... a national campaigner for gay rights, said she hoped people would learn from Shepard's death that "*different is not a threat. Different is not necessarily bad*" [Emphasis added].

Another point that can be deduced from the above discussion is that although speakers can be aware of the conceptual metaphors they live by, yet, as pointed

out by Keller (1994), the application of these metaphors on meaning is not intended to generate semantic processes, but, perhaps, to reflect their understanding of and attitudes towards life experiences.

However, the fact that large numbers of semantic processes are generated on the basis of conceptual metaphors implies that metaphor is a major force behind the existence of polysemy in language. Metaphor can further be shown to be the main cause behind the existence of synonymy alongside of polysemy in language. Such a demonstration will lead to the abstraction of a tendency that can be of vital importance for understanding the role of metaphor in semantic/lexical change. This chapter argues as follows. There is a tendency for conceptual categories to break into their constituent semantic elements (polysemous senses) and to be named by means of conceptually distinct categories (synonyms) through metaphorical mapping<sup>6</sup>. This suggests that the polysemous/synonymous development of lexical categories are restricted by the same conceptual metaphor(s); and here lies the interrelationship between the semasiological and onomasiological variations in language.

### **3.1.2 Hypotheses and Goal**

The basic hypotheses of this study are:

1. Conceptual metaphors do not only restrict the expression of experiences on the synchronic level, but also on the diachronic level.
2. This restriction shapes the lexical development of language by the non-random selection of synonyms pointing at an area of meaning.

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<sup>6</sup> The fact that synonymy in language is imperfect may be regarded as a phenomenon pinpointing the function of this tendency, namely 'semantic explication'. Wierzbicka (1985:498) pointed out, for example, that *tell* (concrete term) differs from *reveal* (metaphorical expression) in its implication with regard to the message: *Revealing* a secret to somebody crucially affects the secret, as well as the addressee, because the secret comes into the open. "It is quite different with *tell*: *Tell* doesn't imply that the message is secret, as *reveal* does...". This shows that in metaphors, a certain amount of structure is often transferred, but not all structure is transferred, or one would constantly be creating synonyms.



3. The shaping of semantic change figures in the non-random polysemous development of both the conceptual category and the synonyms attached to it.
4. The polysemous development of a basic level category<sup>7</sup> precedes the emergence of the synonyms metaphorically mapped into it.

The goal is to emphasize the point that the conceptual system that emerges from human physical experience extends beyond objective reality into abstract thinking in a regular fashion. This extension which is metaphorical in nature forms the basis for the semantic/lexical development of language. However, metaphorical meanings are not necessarily less central to a category than their related core literal meaning(s), as would be argued by prototype theory. They can be inherent in that literal meaning and, hence, inseparable from it and equally central. They can even defy time and preserve their central position over historical periods.

### *3.1.3 The Study*

The study treats a lexical category as a prototypically structured conceptual domain. As mentioned in chapter II, prototypicality has four characteristics: i) absence of classical definition, ii) clustering of overlapping senses, iii) degrees of representativity, and iv) absence of clear boundaries (Geeraerts, Grondelaers & Bakema 1994:48).

It has been pointed out by Geeraerts, Grondelaers and Bakema (1994:117) that the two major “non-standard” characteristics (i.e. non-discreteness and non-equality) whose presence was revealed by a prototype-theoretical approach to the semasiology of individual words, reappears at the onomasiological level: “the same features may characterize categories at the supra-lexical level, i.e. semantic

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<sup>7</sup> This study adopts Rosch and Mervis’s (1976) definition of basic-level categories. From this perspective, they are seen to be referring to the “Shortest, most commonly used and contextually neutral words, first learned by children and first to enter the lexicon” (Summary in Lakoff 1987:47).

fields” (ibid). The internal structure of a field, for example, is “thought of as a set of smaller categories on the lexical level. If each of these categories is itself a non-discrete entity with possible fuzzy boundaries, the structure of the field to which they belong will be affected: rather than sharp divisions between the individual items within the field [as is the case in structuralism], a more blurred picture with variously overlapping subfields emerges” (ibid:118). It is this picture that is adopted in this study to represent the polysemous/synonymous development of the category of *to show*. As for the other characteristic, namely non-equality in lexical fields, the term that is placed at the centre is the basic-level one that is representative of the field investigated, namely the verb *show*<sup>8</sup>.

The focus will be on the development of the ‘core meaning’ of a prototype into polysemous sub-centres, around which synonyms come to cluster. It will be shown how the sub-centres (whether literal or figurative) of the category investigated have remained equally (i.e. not hierarchically) core to the category throughout its history. They have remained core to such an extent that if the picture of ‘frame’ theory is adopted, understanding these senses would require a multi-scene access. This further suggests that the core sub-centres of the category are in a structural overlap: they are systematically related to each other so that some centres are more closely related to each other than to other centres.

The model is developed by examining how *to show* moves into five core polysemous centres and the subsequent divergence of these centres into sub-domains of meanings (each has come to be denoted by a set of synonyms metaphorically mapped into these sub-meanings). It will be demonstrated how the same metaphorical concepts determining the basic semantic structure of the term

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<sup>8</sup> The notion of ‘centrality’, ‘representativity’, ‘good example’, and ‘typical example’ constitute a real problem with applying prototype theory to language data. If this notion is a plausible framework for studying the field of the concept ‘*show*’, it may not be the most adequate one for studying other fields. It is sometimes difficult to decide on the term to be placed at the centre of a field. This difficulty arises from the fact that it is not always possible to find a term that overlaps with all the other items in the field. This follows from the fact that there is no clear taxonomical or mosaic-like organization of the lexicon (See Geeraerts, Grondelaers & Bakema 1994:134-146).

are also the force at play behind the selection of the onomasiological alternatives. It will also be shown how the later polysemous development of the synonyms reflects the structural overlap of the category.

### **3.1.4 Corpora and Concordancer**

The category of *to show* will be tackled through time using concordancing in two corpora. The corpora are:

1. The diachronic part of the Helsinki Corpus. This is a one and half million word corpus, coordinated by Dr. Merja Kyto and Dr. Matti Rissanen at the Department of English, University of Helsinki. It consists of texts from Old English (-1150), Middle English (1150-1250, 1350-1500), and Early Modern English (1500-1710). The texts are drawn from a wide variety of areas: law, philosophy, astronomy, homilies, religion (including the Old and New Testaments of the Bible), history, biography, medicine, fiction, romances, verse, drama, comedy, educational treatises, in addition to selections of letters (private and non-private), diaries, proceedings of trials, travelogue, handbooks, prefaces, and documents. This wide scope of the corpus in addition to the various historical periods it covers makes it a rich source for researching the semantic development of a concept. As far as *to show* and its synonyms are concerned, the concordances obtained from the corpus were found to be representative of the developments of the words recorded in the historical dictionaries consulted. However, some developments were found to have taken place earlier than recorded in these dictionaries.

2. A corpus of Late Modern English Prose. This is a corpus of 20,000 words constructed between 1992 and 1994 by David Denison with the assistance of Graeme Trousdale and Linda Van Bergen of the University of Manchester. Although this corpus is limited in size, it can supply some examples of the modern use of the category in question.

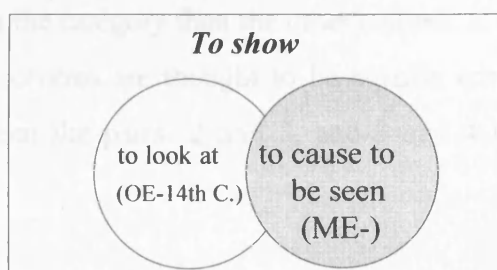
The concordancers used are 1). an unpublished concordancer developed by Dr. Daniel Robertson of the University of Leicester, and 2). *Microconcord* which is a software package developed by Mike Scott and Tim Johns and published by Oxford University Press in 1993.

### 3.2 The Story of 'To Show'

In Old English (OE)<sup>9</sup>, the verb *to show* means 'to look at', as is clear from the etymology of the word: [OE. *océawian* = O. Frisian *skawia*, *skowia*, *schoia*. O. Saxon *skawon* (Dutch *schouwen*, O. High German *scouwōn* (German *schauen*): West German weak verb *skauwōjan*, French *skau* - see, look] (*The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, 1966).

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1989:357), the sudden shift in Middle English "from this to the causative sense 'to cause to see, exhibit, manifest' is difficult to account for. (The existence of the causative sense in OE. is not really proved by the rare *āre ?escéwian* to show mercy, *grið scéawian* to grant a safe-conduct, as these uses may be explained as developed from the sense 'to look out, provide'.)" However, since the OE. sense has become obsolete, the semantic development of *to show* may be explained as a conflict between two synchronous senses that ended with the causative sense winning the upper hand. This may be represented diagrammatically as shown in Diagram 3.2:

**Diagram (3.2): *To show*: the shift into a causative sense in Middle English.**



<sup>9</sup> Following the convention of etymological dictionaries O = Old, thus OE. is Old English. O. Frisian is Old Frisian, etc.

During the Middle English period, as cited in *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* (1966), *to show* (in its causative sense) has come to be used with the following meanings:

1. cause or allow to be seen; make known; make clear; point out (from the twelfth century);
2. be seen (from the thirteenth century).

However, evidence from the Helsinki Corpus shows that the second development of the word has also taken place during the twelfth century. The following example is quoted from the Early Middle-English part of the corpus (1150-1250).

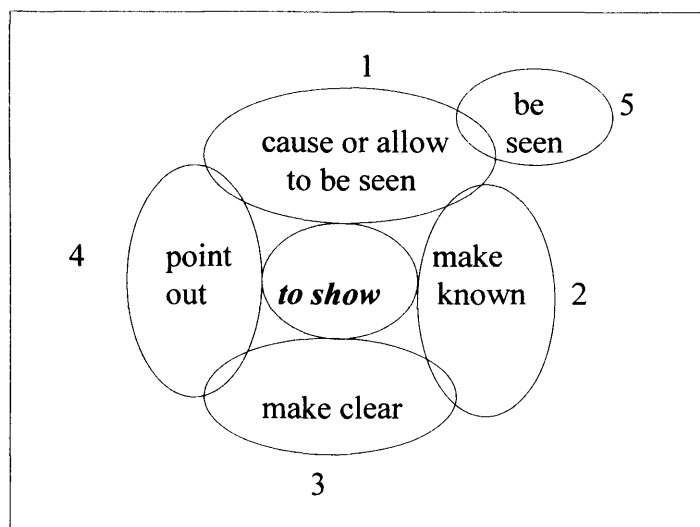
*Crist Himm shollde onn eor+te sh+awenn*

*Christ should show on earth*

Hence, the basic semantic structure of the word may be said to have developed from the twelfth century, that is to say, by the time *to show* has acquired its causative sense. This structure may be represented as shown in Diagram 3.3:

Note that centre 1 in Diagram 3.3 overlaps with the other centres. However, the reason why it has not been placed at the centre of the diagram is to indicate that it is not more core to the category than the other centres. It will be explained below why all these five centres are thought to be equally core to the concept. Other overlaps are between the pairs 2 and 3, and 3 and 4 (These overlaps will be explained below).

**Diagram (3.3):** The polysemous development of *to show* (12th century-)<sup>10</sup>.



The less core senses that have developed out of these core centres are illustrated in detail with time-referenced examples in Table 3.1. The table quotes the earliest examples of the uses of *to show* in the Helsinki Corpus. The less core polysemous meanings are categorized according to their relation to the core sub-centres of the category. Numbers before the examples indicate the period of English (as divided in the corpus) where an example occurs († = obsolete, +t = th, +g = y/gh, +d = eth).

<sup>10</sup> The polysemous senses of *to show* in this diagram (and in other diagrams and tables in the chapter) are numbered for ease of discussion. The numbering may certainly be taken to reflect the chronological order of the development of the verb as stated in historical dictionaries (i.e. the development of the word from sense 1-5). However, as demonstrated in this study, this order is unlikely to be correct in the light of historical and cognitive evidence. The cognitive evidence has to do with the metaphorical understanding of the concept. Thus, this study presents evidence that the 'historical dictionary' order must be reevaluated, according to the present evidence of metaphor in time.

**Table (3.1): The polysemy of *to show* in the Helsinki Corpus<sup>11</sup>.**

Meaning	Example
<p><b>1. To cause or allow (someone or something) to be seen</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (reflexive) allow oneself to be seen</li> <li>• to exhibit (a marvel, sign or token)</li> <li>• in Biblical language: to work (a miracle)</li> <li>• figurative/personified: to present to physical or mental view</li> <li>• to represent (by graphic art)</li> <li>• said of a thing: to be the means of revealing to sight; to serve to exhibit or indicate</li> <li>• (obsolete) to perform openly (a deed, feat, exploit)</li> <li>• to make (a dream or vision) appear to a person</li> <li>• to perform some interesting object (a stage-play, tricks, etc.) for the amusement of the public</li> <li>• to put in overt act something declared or purposed</li> <li>• to display (goods, wares, etc.) for sale or in an exhibition</li> <li>• to reveal a part of the body</li> <li>• to let (a person) read or examine (a book, writing, etc.) to bring (it) to his notice</li> <li>• to produce (a legal document for inspection)</li> <li>• to display (a countenance, looks, etc.) of a specified sort</li> </ul>	<p>&lt;1150-1250&gt; he him sceawede +te wrecche [poor, miserable] saulen [souls] a-honge [hung] (60)</p> <p>&lt;1150-1250&gt; he him <b>sceawede</b> and stude inne midde-war+de [midst] helle (7)</p> <p>&lt;1250-1350&gt; to <b>shewe</b> him +te merueilynges [marvels] Of men (12)</p> <p>&lt;1350-1420&gt; God of his grete goodness <b>schewe</b> his mercyful myracle (13)</p> <p>&lt;1150-1250&gt; ti semliche [decent] schape <b>schawe+d</b> wel +tt tu art freomonne foster</p> <p>&lt;1350-1420&gt; the sonne upon the west orisonte <b>shewith</b> me the entring of the houre (14)</p> <p>&lt;1350-1420&gt; the south lyne, that <b>shewith</b> the 24 houres equals of the klokke (24)</p> <p>&lt;1350-1420&gt; lettere (E) ne serueth nat but for to <b>shewe</b> the which wey +t+t+ thow shalt procede from letter D. (12)</p> <p>&lt;1350-1420&gt; Y haue <b>schewide</b> to +gou many good workis of my fadir (13)</p> <p>&lt;1420-1500&gt; +tis vision was <b>schewyd</b> me (2)</p> <p>&lt;1420-1500&gt; Xall I breke my neke to <b>schew</b> yow sporte? (6)</p> <p>&lt;1640-1710&gt; Chamberlain, <b>shew</b> the (Lyon) and the (Rose) (1)</p> <p>&lt;1420-1500&gt; .I. sall <b>shew</b> in dede my worde (4)</p> <p>&lt;1500-1570&gt; And was <b>shewyd</b> ther many Dyverse fetis of werre (1)</p> <p>&lt;1500-1570&gt; like a prince that no heretike durst <b>shewe</b> his face (6)</p> <p>&lt;1500-1570&gt; translate into Englishe his former lesson. Then <b>shewing</b> it to his master (17)</p> <p>&lt;1570-1640&gt; ymbassadors man to have hym released and <b>shewd</b> us ther passport (3)</p> <p>&lt;1640-1710&gt; temper of the Pr: of Orange, who <b>shewed</b> so little Countenance (1)</p>
<p><b>1.1. To exhibit or manifest by outward signs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• some inward quality, condition, feeling, etc. by outward appearance</li> <li>• to display (a quality, condition, feeling, etc.) by behaviour or expression</li> <li>• to display (kindness, mercy, malice, etc.) by one's behaviour;</li> <li>• reflexive: to exhibit oneself in a (specified) character or quality in one's behaviour</li> <li>• to grant (favour, honor, grace, †pleasure, etc.)</li> <li>• (obsolete) to put forth, exert (one's</li> </ul>	<p>&lt;1150-1250&gt; +Te doctowr <b>schewyd</b> hir [her] gret [great] cher [cheer] (5)</p> <p>&lt;1150-1250&gt; +Tat dide he forr to <b>sh+awenn</b> swa [in this way] Unnse+g+genndli+g [unsightly] meocnesse [meekness 'gentleness']</p> <p>&lt;1150-1250&gt; we <b>schewen</b> to oure fadre oure desires (36)</p> <p>&lt;1150-1250&gt; All +tis godnesse uss <b>sh+awe+t+t</b></p> <p>&lt;1250-1350&gt; Wit pite [with pity] he <b>sceu</b> his merci (27)</p> <p>&lt;1150-1250&gt; He <b>sceawode</b> hine seluen [himself] on engles [an angel] (23)</p> <p>&lt;1420-1500&gt; also how meche grace he had <b>schewyd</b> for hir (8)</p> <p>&lt;1250-1350&gt; God <b>shewed</b> mi+gt to me vp myn enemys (16)</p>

<sup>11</sup> Historical references consulted for meanings and spelling: Stratmann's *Middle English Dictionary* 1891; *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* 1966; Burrow and Turville-Petre 1996.

<p>power, strength, etc.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>(obsolete)</b> to offer (an example) in one's own person. Also of a thing</li> <li>• <b>(obsolete)</b> <i>to show the fruits of</i></li> </ul>	<p>&lt;1420-1500&gt; be [by] good men digne [worthy] of laude [praise] whiche <b>shewe</b> to vs [us] the waye of vertue <b>(6)</b></p> <p>&lt;1570-1640&gt; we goe in vnitie [unity], and <b>shew</b> the fruits of peace <b>(1)</b></p>
<p><b>2. To make known</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in ME. to confess one's sins</li> <li>• inform (a person ) of something</li> <li>• state, announce, reveal, disclose, tell (a fact, story, etc.). Also said of things</li> <li>• as an expression of defiance or self-assertion</li> </ul>	<p>&lt;1150-1250&gt; his sunnes [sinnes] at srite [confession] <b>sheawen</b> <b>(28)</b></p> <p>&lt;1150-1250&gt; Icc [I] hafe <b>sh+awedd</b> +guw, O [of] fowwre [four] Goddspellbokes [gospels] <b>(19)</b></p> <p>&lt;1150-1250&gt; seint ambrosius <b>shewed</b> +tus; and seid <b>(196)</b></p> <p>&lt;1570-1640&gt; the word of God <b>shew</b> me mine errour <b>(20)</b></p> <p>&lt;1250-1350&gt; Y shal <b>shewe</b> my vengeaunce [vengeance] <b>(4)</b></p>
<p><b>3. To make clear</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clarify, point out, explain (that, what, etc.)</li> <li>• illustrate, demonstrate (by argument, fact, example, etc.)</li> <li>• prove (that) by argument, experiment, etc.</li> <li>• said of a thing: to be a proof, evidence, sign, or indication of</li> <li>• teach; instruct a course of action by example (followed by <i>how</i>, <i>†to</i>)</li> <li>• prove (a person) to be something</li> </ul>	<p>&lt;1150-1250&gt; +Get wile [will] icc <b>sh+awenn</b> +guw forrwhi Goddspell iss <b>(149)</b></p> <p>&lt;1350-1420&gt; I shal <b>shewe</b> yow by manye ensamples that <b>(28)</b></p> <p>&lt;1150-1250&gt; To <b>sh+awenn</b> +tatt hiss dede Iss all i Godd <b>(27)</b></p> <p>&lt;1250-1350&gt; +tis wode shawe,+Tou fare [went a journey] into +te filde [field, countryside] <b>(28)</b></p> <p>&lt;1350-1420&gt; now have I <b>shewed</b> yow how ye shul do in getyng rich <b>(14)</b></p> <p>&lt;1640-1710&gt; as he has here told; for to shew me a presbyterian <b>(6)</b></p>
<p><b>4. To point out</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• guide or lead (a person) to, into, over, through a place, house, etc.</li> <li>• enable a person to identify (a place or object) by pointing to it or taking them to a place where it can be seen</li> </ul>	<p>&lt;1150-1250&gt; cum [come] in to +do londe [land] +de ic wile <b>sceawin</b> [I will guide you to] <b>(8)</b></p> <p>&lt;1500-1570&gt; pointed with her fingar and <b>shewed</b> them the house <b>(10)</b></p> <p>&lt;1570-1640&gt; who went with me, and <b>shewed</b> me the goodly Minster <b>(14)</b></p>
<p><b>5. To be seen</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to make an appearance (said of persons and things)</li> <li>• figurative/personified</li> <li>• impersonal</li> <li>• with adverb or adverb phrase: to represent an appearance (specified by the adverb)</li> <li>• said of a thing: to be seen (<i>through, under, over, etc.</i>) something that partly covers or conceals it</li> </ul>	<p>&lt;1150-1250&gt; Sune Crist Himm sholde onn eot+te <b>sh+awenn</b> <b>(14)</b></p> <p>&lt;1350-1420&gt; same son +tat shynes byyhond +te se <b>Shewes</b> it here <b>(6)</b></p> <p>&lt;1350-1420&gt; that trowthe [truth] may <b>shewe</b> <b>(3)</b></p> <p>&lt;1420-1500&gt; supposyng he had ben a la+ger [liar]as it schewyd be hys [by his] visage <b>(11)</b></p> <p>&lt;1640-1710&gt; proceeding, which would have <b>shewed</b> very handsomely to the world <b>(8)</b></p> <p>&lt;1570-1640&gt; there was <b>shewed</b> a Note under Sir <b>(1)</b></p>

It is clear from Table 3.1 that simultaneous semantic developments within the category *to show* are not only exhibited by the core senses (both literal and figurative), but also by the less core ones. A large number of the less core



meanings appeared during the same period in which the core meanings developed. Before addressing this question, the frequency of the word in the Helsinki corpus needs to be examined. Table 3.2 presents a frequency count of the five senses of *to show* as analysed in their appearance in the Helsinki Corpus.

**Table (3.2) The frequency of *to show* in the Helsinki Corpus:**

Meaning	1. Cause or allow something to be seen (including showing the internal self)	2. Make known	3. Make clear	4. Point out	5. Be seen
Frequency count	318	267	252	23	43

Looking at the figures in Table 3.2, it is clear that centre 1 has achieved the highest frequency level in the corpus. However, if the polysemy of this centre is taken into account, it may be said that the centre has a wider range of meanings than the other centres and therefore a number of meanings are subsumed under the category of the first centre. That is why this centre occurs more frequently. The frequency level of centres 2 and 3 is also high compared to that of centres 4 and 5. But again the semantic range of the latter centres is narrow in comparison with the former ones. Hence, it can be argued that it is the semantic range of these centres which has determined their frequency levels and not their centrality to the category (This means that the polysemy of *to show* in Table 3.1 needs to be considered). The simultaneous development of the five centres (including less core members) points to their equal centrality within the category (Section 3.3 explains the reason behind this equal centrality). This would mean that the numerical order of the five centres as listed in Diagram 3.3 is not necessarily an order of historical appearance although this is the indication given in ‘historical dictionaries’. Moreover, none of these centres was lost in the course of time. The meanings that became obsolete are merely members in the centres. The basic structure of the category has remained stable. This would not have been the case

had semantic change affected the centrality of this structure. At least one component would have become rare in occurrence or even obsolete. The following summary of the polysemous senses of *to show* is based on three modern sources: *The Oxford English Dictionary* (1989), *The Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary* (1991), *The Reader's Digest Oxford Wordfinder* (1993) and *The New International Webster's Pocket Dictionary Of The English Language* (1998).

**To show in time (ME-):**

1. To cause or allow something to be seen (present to view);  
  
to reveal the internal self by behaviour or expression (e.g. To show emotion, to show favour, etc.);  
  
to give a theatrical performance.
2. To make known by statement or argument;
3. To cause (someone) to understand or see;  
  
to help (someone) to become capable of doing something;  
  
to make evident by the use of logic (i.e. prove).
4. To tell someone where something is;
5. be seen, become visible, appear.

Table 3.3 lists examples of the polysemy of *to show* in the corpus of late Modern English Prose. Although this corpus is small, it can still demonstrate how the category has preserved its basic polysemous structure over time. Note also that the frequency of each centre is determined by its semantic range, as argued earlier.

**Table (3.3): The polysemy of *to show* in the Corpus of Late Modern English Prose.**

Meaning	Example
<b>1. To cause or allow (someone or something) to be seen</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to represent (by graphic art)</li> <li>a part of the body</li> <li>to let (a person ) read or examine (a book, writing, etc.) to bring (it) to his notice</li> </ul>	it was no use " <b>showing</b> the flag" (3) There was a broad stained-glass <b>showing</b> a knight in dark armour (1) I don't mind your <b>showing</b> me your own legs (1) At last he <b>showed</b> me the letter he has written (3)
<b>1.1. To exhibit or manifest by outward signs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>some inward quality, condition, feeling, etc. by outward appearance</li> <li>to display (a quality, condition, feeling, etc.) by behaviour or expression</li> </ul>	they would not <b>show</b> a sign of grief in public (2) Roy <b>showed</b> an unusual irritation (4) The switch <b>showed</b> what he was feeling in the depth of his heart (2)
<b>2. To make known</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>state, announce, reveal, disclose, tell (a fact, story, etc.). Also said of things</li> </ul>	I'll <b>show</b> you what to invent (1)
<b>3. To make clear</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>clarify, point out, explain (that, what, etc.)</li> <li>illustrate, demonstrate (by argument, fact, example, etc.)</li> <li>prove (that) by argument, experiment, etc.</li> <li>said of a thing: to be a proof, evidence, sign, or indication of</li> <li>teach; instruct by example (followed by <i>how</i>)</li> </ul>	to <b>show</b> Europe what she really meant (1) the fallacy of the idea was <b>shown</b> (2) He had to <b>show</b> someone he was a man (2) this remark <b>shows</b> you have not grasped what I'm telling (3) if I am not here to <b>show</b> him how to do it (2)
<b>4. To point out</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>guide or lead (a person) to, into, over, through a place, house, etc.</li> </ul>	had commissioned Mary to <b>show</b> him round the garden (1)
<b>5. To be seen</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to make an appearance (said of persons and things)</li> </ul>	let the world turn again and <b>show</b> another, more splendid, perhaps (1)

In terms of prototype theory, the early simultaneous development of the basic structure of *to show*, and the stability of this structure over time suggests that the core sub-domains (whether literal or figurative) have always remained equally central to the category.

This, however, is not the whole story of *to show*. In the thirteenth century, the core centres of *to show* each started to branch into a sub-domain of meaning, each coming to be denoted by a set of synonyms. This branching is not to be

interpreted as due to avoidance of polysemy, because the category has not lost any of its basic senses over time. Diagram 3.4 overleaf illustrates the divergence of *to show* into sub-areas of meaning and the subsequent clustering of synonyms around these areas (Roman numerals stand for centuries).

It is worthwhile noting at this point that the synonyms in Diagram 3.4 are selected randomly from the sources quoted below. The only criterion for the selection is that the words be present in more than just one source.

**Synonyms and Antonyms (Smith 1868):**

exhibit, present, demonstrate, unfold, reveal, teach, inform, conduct, manifest, evince, evidence, prove, explain.

**Collins Pocket Reference Thesaurus (1988):**

1. appear, be visible, disclose, display, divulge, evidence, evince, exhibit, indicate, make known, manifest, present, register, reveal, testify to.
2. assert, clarify, demonstrate, elucidate, evince, explain, instruct, point out, present, prove, teach.
3. accompany, attend, conduct, escort, guide, lead.
4. accord, act with, bestow, confer, grant.

**Harrap's Dictionary of English Synonyms (1990):**

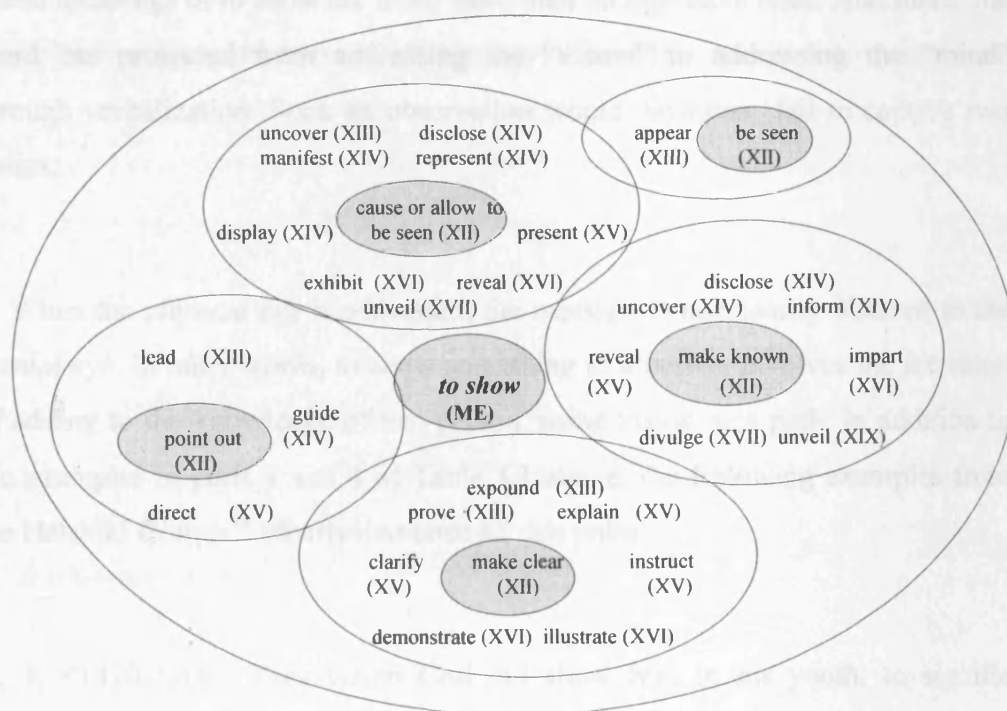
1. appear, display, divulge, exhibit, indicate, make known, reveal;
2. demonstrate, explain, instruct, point out, prove, accompany, escort, guide, lead;
3. accord, bestow, confer, grant.

**The Reader's Digest Oxford Wordfinder (1993):**

1. appear, become *or* be visible, peek through, be seen; represent, symbolize, depict, portray, picture, illustrate.
2. display, present, exhibit.

3. demonstrate, indicate, register; lay (bare), disclose, reveal, expose, betray, make known, divulge, express, make clear *or* plain *or* manifest; grant, accord, bestow.
4. be apparent *or* manifest; show through.
5. prove, demonstrate, point out, illustrate, confirm, corroborate, verify, substantiate, bear out, certify, authenticate; exhibit, reveal, indicate, display, register.
6. teach, instruct, tell, inform, give an idea of, give a lesson in.
7. present, put on, screen; play, be presented *or* played *or* screened.
8. escort, accompany, conduct, usher, lead, guide, direct.

**Diagram (3.4): The divergence of *to show* into sub-domains of meaning<sup>12</sup> (Roman numerals refer to centuries).**



<sup>12</sup> Dictionaries consulted: *The Oxford English Dictionary* (1989) (2nd edition); *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (1973) (3rd edition), *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (1993); *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* (1966)

It is clear from Diagram 3.4 that all the synonyms surrounding the sub-meaning of the category *to show* have come to denote these meanings after the category itself has acquired them. In order to explain the reason why the existence of these synonyms in English is thought to be motivated by the conceptual category *to show*, what needs to be demonstrated is the set of conceptual metaphors that have determined the basic semantic structure of the category.

### ***3.3 Conceptual Metaphors Behind the Semasiological/Onomasiological Development of ‘To Show’***

Knowing that the earlier meaning of *to show* is literally ‘to see’ and comparing its literal senses, ‘cause or allow to be seen’, ‘be seen’, and ‘point out’, to the figurative senses of ‘make known’ and ‘make clear’, one is likely to think that the literal meanings of *to show* are more basic than its figurative ones. And more, the word has projected from addressing the “vision” to addressing the “mind” through verbalization. Such an observation would, however, fail to capture two points:

1. When the physical eye is addressed, the message is necessarily directed to the mental eye. In other words, to show something to a person involves the intention of adding to the knowledge of that person, using vision as a path. In addition to the examples in parts 1 and 4 of Table 3.1 above, the following examples from the Helsinki Corpus<sup>13</sup> clearly demonstrate this point.

- A. 1. <1420-1500> Thes vision God did **show** him in his youth, to signifie  
[signify] unto him his trobles [troubles]
2. <1570-1640> Did you ever **shew** or make known the book me?
3. <1570-1640> who went with me, and **shewed** me the goodly Minster

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<sup>13</sup> All the other examples in this section are from the Helsinki Corpus.

The examples below further demonstrate the high dependence on the physical eye in drawing mental conclusions:

- B. 1. <1420-1500> that Cryste suffered in his bodye **schewyd** to me in the  
blyssede faac [heavenly face]
2. <1570-1640> or if they did burne black, that **shewed** the child was  
bewitched
3. <1570-1640> a rough coat **shews** want of cloathes

A close reading of A.1 and the examples in B will justify the abstraction of the point that visual messages sent by looks or appearances, pictures, graphs, visible facts, personified nouns, and other non-communicating things are perceived as verbal messages, since they convey information to the mental eye. The metaphor that can be deduced from this observation is: VISUAL MESSAGES ARE UTTERANCES.

2. When the mental eye is addressed by the communicating mammal, however, the message is decoded through both verbalization and visual demonstration: to show someone's will, to show a plan, to show a point, to show a place are all acts that require verbalization as well as visual demonstration in order to be captured by the listener. For showing a place, for example, a speaker is aware of the fact that if a place is pointed out, showing without telling might end in the failure to identify that place on the part of the person in need of direction. Similarly, showing a point in an educational setting may not be satisfactorily captured by students without incorporating some visual demonstration as well as verbal explanation. Pedagogues are well aware of that. One of the most persistent and long-standing methods used in teaching young children is known as "show-and-tell" (Children are encouraged to bring objects to school to show them to the

whole class and formally describe them to their classmates) (*Oxford English Dictionary* 1989:361). Even telling a simple story is accompanied by body movements as visual demonstrations.

A glance at the obsolete senses in parts 1 and 1.1 of Table 3.1 should confirm that all these senses refer to human acts that are not accompanied by direct verbal communication at the moment the visual message is decoded. These obsolete senses are: ‘to perform openly (a deed, feat, exploit)’, ‘to put forth, exert (one’s power, strength, etc.)’, ‘to offer an example in one’s own person’, and ‘to show the fruits of’. Although the other senses in 1.1 (repeated in footnote<sup>14</sup>) refer to messages decoded through behaviour, yet this behaviour can include verbalization indirectly related to the message intended to reach the mind of the listener.

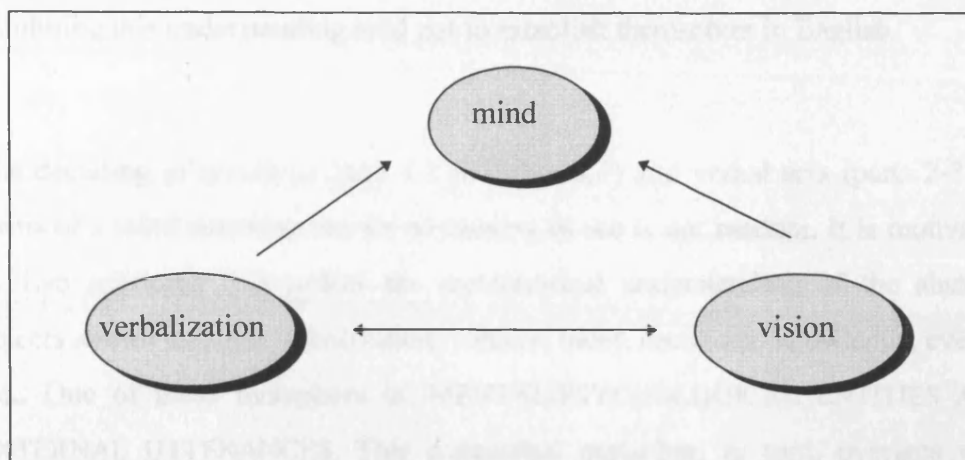
Hence, if the core meanings of *to show* are depicted as a frame that is structured against three general domains: mental, visual and verbal, understanding this frame may be said to involve activating the three domains and not only one as would be conventionally stated by “frame” theory. Understanding the semantic structure of *to show* as a frame may be represented diagrammatically as shown in Diagram 3.5.

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<sup>14</sup> 1. to exhibit some inward quality, condition, feeling, etc. by outward appearance  
2. to display (a quality, condition, feeling, etc.) by behaviour  
3. to display (kindness, mercy, malice, etc.) by one’s behaviour  
4. reflexive: to exhibit oneself in a (specified) character or quality in one’s behaviour  
5. to grant (favour, honor, grace, etc.)



**Diagram (3.5): Understanding *to show* as a frame:**



The proverbs “A picture is worth a thousand words” and “Out of sight, out of mind” reflect rather explicitly human understanding of the category *to show*. Accordingly, it can be claimed that the understanding of *to show* is determined by two overlapping metaphors: VISION IS THE PATH TO THE MIND and SHOWING IS TELLING. These schemata account for the overlaps between centres 1 and 2, 3 and 4, 4 and 1, and 1 and 5 in Diagram 3.3. They also account for the equal centrality of the literal and figurative meanings as well as the stability of the core structure of the category in terms of prototype theory. Put differently, the fact that there is an overlap between the literal meanings (in which vision is used as a path to the mind) and the figurative meanings (in which verbalization or visual messages as verbalization is used as a path to the mind) can be suggested as the main reason why time has not affected the structured centrality of the core meanings of *to show*. Rather, it is the structure itself that has had an influence on the diachrony of the lexicon. The less core senses (illustrated in parts 1-4 of Table 3.1), which were developed during and after the twelfth century, indicate the generative nature of this structure. All of the senses involve sending into the mind either visual messages as utterances by non-communicating entities or

visual/verbal messages by humans. As pointed out earlier, meanings not exhibiting this understanding tend not to establish themselves in English.

The decoding of emotions (part 1.1 in Table 3.1) and verbal acts (parts 2-3) in terms of a word denoting the act of causing to see is not random. It is motivated by two schemata that reflect the metaphorical understanding of the abstract objects shown through verbalization, namely, ideas, emotions, knowledge, events, etc.. One of these metaphors is: MENTAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL ENTITIES ARE EXTERNAL UTTERANCES. This conceptual metaphor, in turn, overlaps with MENTAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL ENTITIES ARE PHYSICAL OBJECTS. That is, mental/psychological entities are brought into the open as concrete physical objects (Barnden 1997). The following concordances (in C) demonstrate this point:

- C. 1. <1420-1500> he sall **shew** the knawyng of him
2. <1420-1500> ye can so wel **shewe** your resons
3. <1420-1500> may bi [by] +tou+gt [thought] and bi wordis ben **shewid**
4. <1570-1640> every man should go to his charge, and **shewe** the same will  
to execute the enterprise
5. <1640-1710> **shew** the curious a new way of judging

In some cases these entities (as utterances/physical objects) are depicted as though they have specific shapes or characteristics, as in the following examples (in D):

- D. 1. 20-1500> blissyng of the fadere, **schewed** to me as a heuen [heaven]
2. 20-1500> wordes ware **schewed** wel tenderlye

Table 3.4 sketches the general analogy in terms of which *to show* is understood and the specific analogy behind the perception of psychological/mental entities as visual/verbal objects.

**Table (3.4): Analogies underlying the use of *to show*:**

<b>A.GENERAL REIFYING</b>	<b>VISION IS THE PATH TO THE MIND</b>	<b>SHOWING IS TELLING</b>
<b>B.SPECIFIC REIFYING</b>	<b>ABSTRACT ENTITY = PHYSICAL</b>  MENTAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL ENTITIES = PHYSICAL OBJECTS	<b>VISUAL MESSAGES = UTTERANCES</b> <b>ABSTRACT ENTITY = VERBAL</b>  MENTAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL ENTITIES = EXTERNAL UTTERANCES

Lakoff and Johnson (1980:30) point out that “We conceptualize our visual field as a container and conceptualize what we see as being inside it. Even the term “visual *fields*” suggests this”. However, the question that needs to be asked in connection with *to show* is: where are physical objects and mental/psychological entities (as external utterances/concrete objects) before they are shown?

The metaphor OBJECTS OUT OF SIGHT ARE HIDDEN OBJECTS is the schema in terms of which the meaning ‘be seen’ is conceptualized: visible objects are those that come into view, or move into the bounded region of an observer’s vision. It is only at the point this movement takes place that the observer begins to see something he would not normally see and so it is hidden up to that point (unless it is the observer who moves). In terms of the EVENTS ARE ACTIONS metaphor (Lakoff & Turner 1989), the appearance of an object is an event. “A noteworthy event is commonly understood not as just happening but as being caused by some agent and thus as being the consequence of an action” (Lakoff & Turner 1989:36). In the case of *show* meaning ‘be seen’, the agent is the object that (literally or figuratively) comes into view, since this object is seen as the actor responsible for the movement. In other words, though the observer in this

case moves his eyes to see an entity, linguistically the observer is conceptualized as stationary and the object as moving towards his bounded region of vision.

Stronger evidence that the meaning ‘be seen’ is understood in terms of the metaphor OBJECTS OUT OF SIGHT ARE HIDDEN OBJECTS may be taken from the selection of the onomasiological alternative denoting this meaning, namely *Appear* (from Latin *appārere* **come into view**)<sup>15</sup>. This is one example showing how the selection of the synonyms explicating the polysemy of a lexical category is determined by the same conceptual metaphor(s) in terms of which that category is conceptualized. This in turn suggests that the development of polysemy and synonymy in language is correlated.

The literal/figurative meaning ‘cause or allow to be seen’ (part 1 and 1.1 of Table 3.1) is only partly understood in terms of the above schema. To show something (whether physical or mental/psychological as physical) is to intentionally bring it into view, as in E. This accounts for the overlap between centers 1 (cause or allow to be seen) and 5 (appear) in Diagram 3.3.

E. <1350-1420> as it is when +tou schalt **schewe** a +ting that is hid in +tin hert  
as it is when you shall show a thing that is hidden in your heart

Note that in the *bring into view* event, the object of central relevance to the situation is conceptualized as fixed in a location and operated on by an agent who (literally or figuratively) brings it into the bounded region of an observer’s vision.

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<sup>15</sup> Etymologies in this chapter are based on three sources: *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* 1966; *The Random House Dictionary* 1969; *The Reader’s Digest Oxford WordFinder* 1993).

It is clear that the metaphor OBJECTS OUT OF SIGHT ARE HIDDEN OBJECTS has two versions: in both versions the scenario of showing is metaphorically understood in terms of motion. The views differ on whether it is the object that moves and operates on us, or whether we, as agents, operate on it to bring it into the observer's region. In other words, this metaphor comes in object/location pairs. Such pairs are called 'duals', and the general phenomenon in which metaphors come in location/object pairs is referred to as 'duality'. (Lakoff 1993:218). Table 3.5 summarizes duality in the metaphor in question.

**Table (3.5): Duality in the metaphor OBJECTS OUT OF SIGHT ARE HIDDEN OBJECTS**  
(After Lakoff 1993:225).

<b>The object-dual</b>	<b>The location-dual</b>
The observer is stationary and an object comes into his bounded region of vision.	The object is stationary and we, as agents, bring it into the the bounded region of an observer's vision.

This duality is characteristic of the general metaphor EVENT STRUCTURE METAPHOR, where an abstract concept like time is conceptualized in terms of relative motion (in a spatial area) between events and observers: sometimes events move toward us through time and sometimes we move through time toward them (as in "The deadline is approaching" and "We are coming up on our twentieth wedding anniversary") (Lakoff & Turner 1989:44-5). The metaphor OBJECTS OUT OF SIGHT ARE HIDDEN OBJECTS may thus be seen to inherit<sup>16</sup> the structure of the EVENT STRUCTURE METAPHOR, with

Event = movement of objects (as agents/by an agent)

Space = the bounded region of an observer's vision

(After Lakoff 1993:223)

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<sup>16</sup> Lakoff (1993:222) put forth the hypothesis that "Metaphorical mappings do not occur isolated from one another. They are sometimes organized in hierarchical structures, in which "lower" mappings in the hierarchy inherit the structures of the "higher" mappings".

The other metaphor in terms of which the meaning ‘cause or allow to be seen’ is understood is OBJECTS OUT OF SIGHT ARE IN CLOSED CONTAINERS. This container must be opened (not emptied) in order for its contents to be (literally or figuratively) shown, as is clear from the selection of the synonyms explicating this meaning. Synonyms in 1 may be said to be generated by the conceptual metaphor OBJECTS OUT OF SIGHT ARE HIDDEN OBJECTS (the location-dual); and those in 2 by the schema OBJECTS OUT OF SIGHT ARE IN CLOSED CONTAINERS.

- |            |             |
|------------|-------------|
| 1. Exhibit | 2. Disclose |
| Manifest   | Display     |
| Present    | Reveal      |
| Represent  | Uncover     |
|            | Unveil      |

*Reveal* and *unveil* are claimed to be understood in terms of the schema OBJECTS OUT OF SIGHT ARE IN CLOSED CONTAINERS, because the human body is conceptualized as a container: it is bounded, with an inside and an outside. The top of the human body (as a container) is normally closed off with a veil, as in the case of the woman’s veil in Islam. The main idea behind this veil is for women to hide themselves from peering eyes. If a Muslim woman takes her veil off, she will be seen to be revealing or unveiling her looks. This is very similar to opening a container so that people can see what is hidden underneath the cover.

For showing mental/psychological entities (as utterances/physical objects), the container that needs to be (figuratively) opened is the mind or the body (as in F):

**F.** <1350-1420> synne openly ben **shewed** biforn God  
sin was openly shown before God

MIND/BODY IS A CONTAINER FOR MENTAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL ENTITIES is, then, another metaphorical concept determining the understanding of the category *to show*. The Chomskyan theory of the black box ‘Language Acquisition Device’ (LAD) has, perhaps, gained remarkable attention in psycholinguistics because it reflects one of the metaphors we live by, namely MIND AS A CONTAINER (Lakoff 1987). To Chomsky, LAD “includes knowledge of the universal principles of human language, together with procedures for discovering how these principles apply to the particular language to which he is exposed” (Summary in Wells 1981:76). Hence, the mind is a container for knowledge and the body is a container of emotions: EMOTIONAL STATES ARE ENTITIES WITHIN A PERSON (Lakoff & Johnson 1980:50).

This explains the reason why words expressing the physical act of revealing something have regularly developed into verbs of telling. This is evidence in favour of the argument that SHOWING IS TELLING, and that OBJECTS OUT OF SIGHT ARE IN CLOSED CONTAINERS. Since mental/psychological entities (as external utterances) are perceived as concrete physical objects, showing them is understood as an act of opening a closed container. This accounts for the overlap between centres 1 and 2 in Diagrams 3.3 and 3.4, namely ‘cause or allow to be seen’ and ‘make known’. In the following concordance, the verb *open* which depicts a bodily activity similar to *reveal*, *disclose*, *uncover* and *unveil* also occurs as a verb of telling (still current in its adverbial form *openly*). This use was first recorded in 1804, as cited in *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* (1966). However, the word in the Helsinki corpus occurs in a collection of private letters written between 1500-1570.

<1500-1570> that if I should **open** and **disclose** the causes why

The semantic development of the above words supports Sweetser's (1990:31) observation that:

*There is ... a general tendency to borrow concepts and vocabulary from the more accessible physical and social world to refer to the less accessible worlds of reasoning, emotion, and conversational structure.*

Looking at the other synonyms surrounding centre 2 in Diagram 3.4 (i.e. *divulge*, *impart* and *inform*), it is clear that the understanding of showing as telling is not always depicted as a bodily act of opening a closed container. Apart from *divulge* which is literal, *impart* (from late Middle English *impart(ire)* (to) share) points to another conceptual metaphor in terms of which the meaning 'make known' is perceived, namely MENTAL ENTITIES ARE SHARABLE OBJECTS. Goatly (1997:47) has rightly said that abstract entities (including mental entities), like physical objects, can be metaphorically transferred/offered to others (e.g. to present someone with information). The existence of *inform* (from Latin *informāre* shape, form an idea of, describe) as a synonym connotes the understanding that SHOWING AS TELLING IS NOT ALWAYS TELLING THE TRUTH. In other words, utterances can convey messages formed by speakers. Listeners tend not to believe verbal messages unless there is a proof or a fact verifying that the contents of the message accord with actual facts, as demonstrated by the examples in G.

- G. 1. <1500-1570> what signe shewes thou then, that we maye se [see] and beleve [believe] the?
2. <1500-1570> But we haue shewed before, that then it is trewe [true]
3. <1570-1640> which he would not beleve [believe] till I showed him the will



Utterances can also be vague or dim and in need of explanation, clarification, demonstration, and illustrations in order to be seen, *grasped* and *realized* (from Middle French *real*) by the listener, as seen in examples in H.

- H. 1. <1500-1570> he hath shewed himself cleere [clear] in these matters  
2. <1570-1640> The word of God doeth shew plainlie that there be witches  
3. <1640-1710> he shews clearly his want of that which he did

Hence, the understanding of this aspect of meaning may be said to be determined by the conceptual metaphor SHOWING AS TELLING NEEDS PROOF OR EXPLANATION/CLARIFICATION. This is the point linking centres 2 (make known) and 3 (make clear) in Diagram 3.3. It is also the point behind the non-random selection of the synonyms explicating this meaning, namely *prove*, *expound*, *illustrate*, *clarify*, *demonstrate*, *explain*, and *instruct*. It is worthwhile noting here that apart from *expound* and *demonstrate*, these synonyms are not brought into English on a literal basis. See the etymologies of the words below (L.= Latin; (O)F = Old French/French; f. = formed on; pp.= past participle; rel.= related).

**Prove** [ME. *pröfian* < OF. *prover* < L. *probäre* test, try, approve, demonstrate (derivative of f. *probus* good)].

**Illustrate** [< L. *illusträt(us)* made bright or clear, honoured (pp. stem of *illusträre*) < f. *in-* + *lusträre* illuminate, *lukstrom*, rel. to *lūmen* LIGHT].

**Clarify** [late ME. <MF. *clarifie(er)* < late L. *clärificäre* < f. *clärus* CLEAR.].

**Explain** [< L. *explänäre* to smooth out, make intelligible, spread out on flat surface <f. *ex-* + *plānus* PLAIN].

**Instruct** [late ME. < L. instruct(us) equipped, trained (pp. stem of L. instruere set up, furnish, fit out, teach) < f. in- + struere pile up, build].

It is clear that these words are imported into English on the basis of metaphors that are grounded on human understanding and experience in the world. Everything *proved* is approved by the mind. What the eye can see will be transmitted into the mind; and here lies the connection between enlightening and causing to see/understand. *Clarify* reflects the same metaphorical concept: CLEAR TO THE EYE IS CLEAR TO THE MIND. Everything seen well is intelligible and, hence, *explained*. Spreading something out on a flat surface makes it (figuratively) plain to see. To construct a building is analogous to building the minds of people where they shelter their thinking and understanding. If this building is not well constructed, it will not only collapse, but will also end the life of its people. The link between this centre of meaning and centre 4 (point out) is based on the metaphor SHOWING/EXPLAINING IS LEADING/DIRECTING THE MIND, as is clear from the selection of the synonyms *lead*, *direct*, and *guide*.

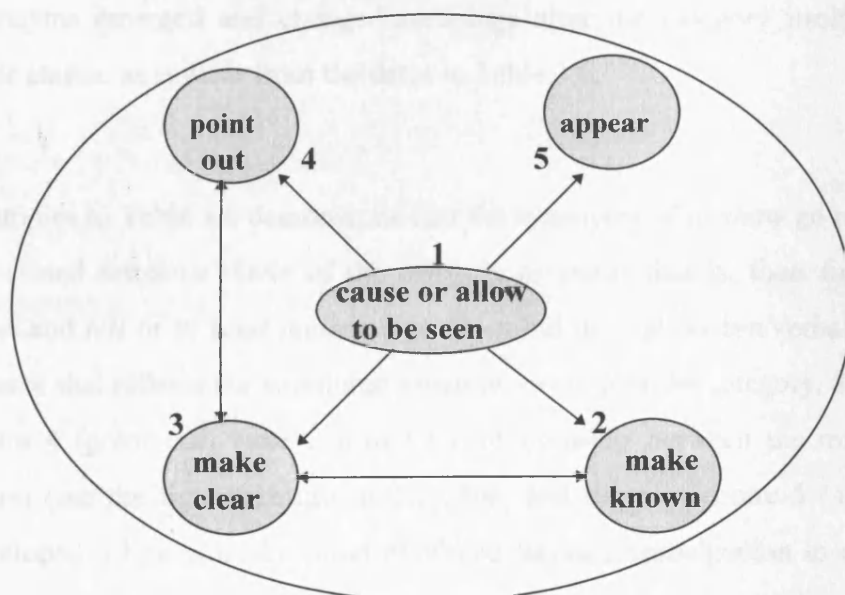
The image-schemata considered in this section and summarized in Diagram 3.6 (and foreshadowed in Diagram 3.1) may be said to have determined the basic semantic structure of *to show* and the selection of the synonyms attached to the concept (The structured semantic overlap in the central sub-domains of the category is indicated by bold numbers). It is suggested that this is how conceptual metaphors shape the semantic and lexical structures of vocabulary.

**Diagram (3.6): metaphorical concepts determining the polysemy/synonymy of *to show*:**

- 1/2 VISION IS THE PATH TO THE MIND / SHOWING IS TELLING**
- VISUAL MESSAGES ARE UTTERANCES
  - MENTAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL ENTITIES ARE PHYSICAL OBJECTS/  
MENTAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL ENTITIES ARE EXTERNAL UTTERANCES.
  - OBJECTS OUT OF SIGHT ARE IN CLOSED CONTAINERS
  - MIND/BODY IS A CONTAINER FOR MENTAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL ENTITIES
  - MENTAL ENTITIES ARE SHARABLE OBJECTS.
- 1/5 OBJECTS OUT OF SIGHT ARE HIDDEN OBJECTS**
- 1/2/3 SHOWING AS TELLING IS NOT ALWAYS TELLING THE TRUTH / SHOWING AS TELLING  
NEEDS PROOF OR EXPLANATION/CLARIFICATION**
- CLEAR TO THE EYE IS CLEAR TO THE MIND.
- 1/3/4 SHOWING/EXPLAINING IS LEADING/DIRECTING THE MIND.**

The structured semantic overlap referred to above can be represented diagrammatically as in Diagram 3.7:

**Diagram (3.7): The structured semantic relatedness of the core meanings of *to show***



The section to follow demonstrates how this structure has determined the semantic development of the synonyms attached to the category. This is further evidence in support of the claim that the development of polysemy and synonymy in language is correlated, and that this correlated development is metaphorical in nature. It is also evidence in favour of the claim that metaphorical concepts shape the lexicon along both the synchronic and the diachronic dimensions of language.

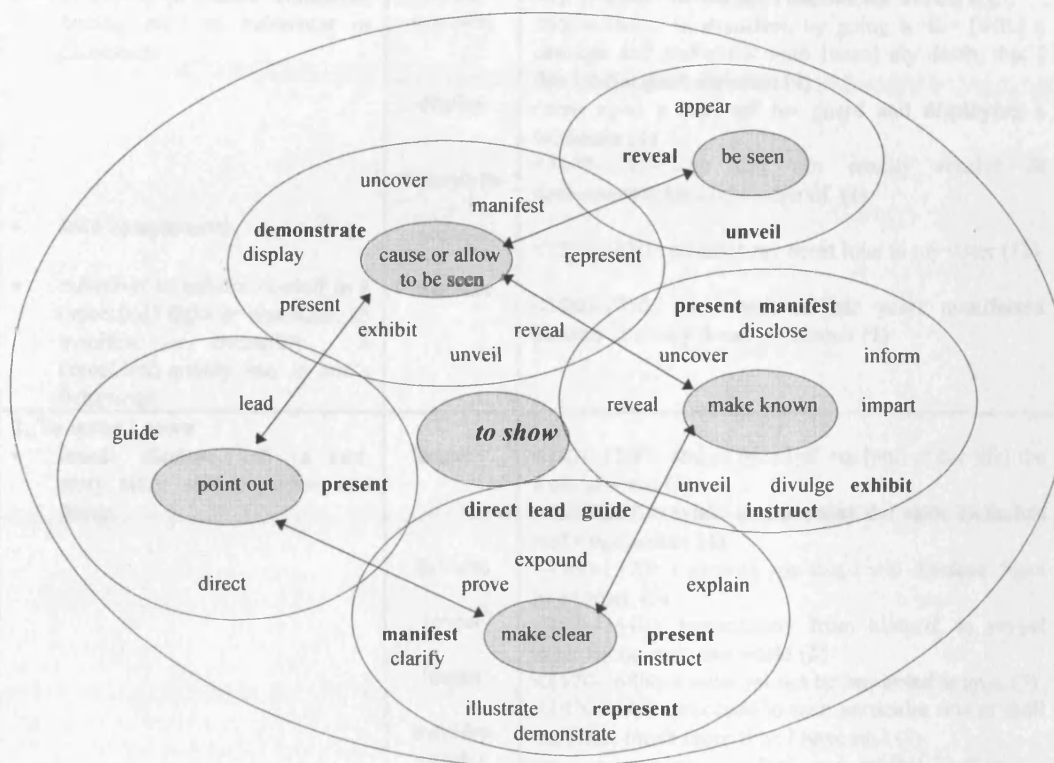
### ***3.4 The Influence of the Polysemous Structure of To Show on the Semantic Development of the Onomasiological Alternatives***

Diagram 3.8 overleaf shows how the semantic development of the synonyms of *to show* is restricted by the polysemous structure of the category. Note that the development of the synonyms reflect the structured semantic overlap between the sub-meanings, namely this between centres 1 and 2; 1 and 5; 1, 2, and 3; and 1, 3 and 4 (as numbered the corresponding in Diagram 3.3 and Table 3.6). Synonyms in bold are newcomers to the centres in Diagram 3.4 (See Table 3.6 for examples). The reason why it is believed that the development of these synonyms is influenced by the polysemous structure of the category is because these synonyms emerged and changed meanings after the category itself underwent these stages, as is clear from the dates in Table 3.6.

Examples in Table 3.6 demonstrate that the synonyms of *to show* go round within the closed semantic circle of the category *to show*; that is, their function is to *show* and *tell* or to send messages to the mind through vision/verbalization in a manner that reflects the structured semantic overlap of the category. Synonyms in centre 4 (point out) have clarified the relationship between the mind and the vision (see the figurative use in the table) and those in centre 5 (appear) have developed a link with the mind exhibited through verbalization to complement the three overlapping, equally central scenes determining the understanding of the

category. This may be supported by indicating the balance in the use of the literal and figurative meanings in these centres, as frequency counts show.

**Diagram (3.8): The structured development of the synonyms of *to show*.**



**Table (3.6): Examples of the synonyms expressing the polysemy of *to show* from the Helsinki Corpus and the Corpus of Late Modern English Prose<sup>17</sup>.**

Meaning	lexical item	Example
<b>1. To cause or allow (someone or something) to be seen</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a part of the body</li> <li>to display (goods, wares, etc.) for sale or in an exhibition</li> <li>to exhibit or personate (a character) on the stage</li> <li>to let (a person) read or examine (a book, writing, etc.)</li> <li>(reflexive) allow oneself to be seen. Said also of a thing</li> </ul>	manifest uncover display represent present present	<1570-1640> the daies when they [men] should be <b>manifested</b> vnto [unto] the world (1) <1420-1500> perclose dressyd hym up and <b>uncoverde</b> hys hede (1) <1250-1350> +tere [there] was <b>displayed</b> many gounfanoun of riche sendel [fine silk] (1) <1570-1640> personages of great astate, to be <b>represented</b> in auncient princely attire (2) <1420-1500> the Knights <b>presented</b> to the King a Bill (4) <1570-1640> dares not <b>present</b> it selfe: shee is too bright to be look'd (1)

<sup>17</sup> Examples not preceded by a date are from the Corpus of Late Modern English Prose. The examples selected from the Helsinki corpus are the earliest ones.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to represent in graphic art</li> <li>said of a thing: to be the means of revealing to sight; to serve to exhibit or indicate</li> </ul>	manifest represent manifest	<1640-1710> For infirmities do not <b>manifest</b> themselves in the first scene (1) <1640-1710> take hold of a hair, in the manner <b>represented</b> in the Figure (7) <1640-1710> the Microscope <b>manifests</b> it to be all over (1)
<b>1.1. To exhibit or manifest by outward signs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to display (a quality, condition, feeling, etc.) by behaviour or expression</li> <li>send compliments</li> <li>reflexive: to exhibit oneself in a (specified) light or character; to manifest or exemplify a (specified) quality, etc. in one's behaviour</li> </ul>	reveal manifest display demonstrate present manifest	<1570-1640> in that his Treasons are <b>reveal'd</b> (3) <1570-1640> to <b>manifest</b> , by going w <sup>th</sup> = [with] a courage and cherefully vnto [unto] my death, that I dye [die] a good christian (4) come upon a man off his guard and <b>displaying</b> a weakness (1) <1640-1710> he did not readily resolve & <b>demonstrate</b> his knowledge of (1) <1570-1640> <b>present</b> my beest loue to my sister (12) <1640-1710> God hath of late years <b>manifested</b> himself in a very dreadful manner (1)
<b>2. To make known</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reveal, disclose, tell (a fact, story, etc.); said of persons and things</li> <li>to give information</li> </ul>	present disclose reveal impart manifest exhibit present instruct	<1420-1500> and of here lyff +te [and of her life] the truth <b>present</b> (1) <1500-1570> fynde and <b>present</b> the saide Defaultes and Negligences (4) <1500-1570> I shewed you that I will <b>disclose</b> them to no man (5) <1570-1640> immediately from himself, to <b>reveal</b> these things vnto the world (2) <1570-1640> it must yet not be <b>imparted</b> to anye (5) <1570-1640> proceede to such particular acts as shall <b>manifest</b> much more than I have said (2) we were only to state facts and <b>exhibit</b> implications (2) <1500-1570> talke with any of them, vntil [until] they <b>present</b> themselues (5) <1500-1570> Moyses ascended vnto the mounte to speke with almyghty god. and Aaron remayned behynde to <b>instructe</b> the people (6)
<b>3. To make clear</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>clarify, point out, explain (that, what, etc.)</li> <li>illustrate, demonstrate (by argument, fact, example, etc.)</li> <li>prove (that) by argument, experiment, etc. (Said of</li> </ul>	expound clarify explain manifest present illustrate represent demonstrate prove	<1250-1350> This verse has mare nede of sorowynge [more need of sorrow] than of <b>expownynge</b> (23) <1420-1500> But, sir, I prey [request] +tis questyon [this question] to <b>claryfye</b> (3) <1500-1570> and <b>explaine</b> the Ambiguities and Doubtes of (6) <1570-1640> in every Chapter I shall endeavour my selfe to <b>manifest</b> the reasons (1) <1500-1570> if the matter were <b>presented</b> unto them (5) <1570-1640> they haue rather depraued than <b>illustrated</b> (2) <1570-1640> I have <b>represented</b> an example of late times (1) <1640-1710> thou hast <b>demonstrated</b> these things (4) <1250-1350> i schal furst (first) ride , And mi

<p>persons and things)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>with complementary object: To prove (a person or thing) to be something. Also with accusative and infinitive (said of persons and things)</li> <li>said of a thing: to be a proof, ovidence, sign, or indication of;</li> <li>to set forth in words</li> <li>teach; instruct by example (followed by how)</li> <li>to give specific directions</li> </ul>	<p>demonstrate</p> <p>prove</p> <p>represent</p> <p>manifest</p> <p>demonstrate</p> <p>reveal</p> <p>represent</p> <p>instruct</p> <p>lead</p> <p>direct</p> <p>guide</p> <p>instruct</p> <p>direct</p>	<p>kni+gthod [knighthood] <b>proue (138)</b>          &lt;1640-1710&gt; he should <b>demonstrate</b> that the premises are untrue (2)</p> <p>&lt;1350-1420&gt; haue [have] don [done] execucion [execution] vpon [upon] any man that had be <b>proued</b> giltif [guilty of] (33)</p> <p>&lt;1250-1350&gt; crucifix hangynge on +te [the] cros, which <b>represente</b> to +te +te passioun of crist (6)</p> <p>&lt;1570-1640&gt; as daily experience will <b>manifest</b> to every one (1)</p> <p>&lt;1640-1710&gt; Reason then doth so clearly <b>demonstrate</b> that God is good (2)</p> <p>&lt;1500-1570&gt; statute [law] thereof made, <b>reveale</b> either to the kings highness (1)</p> <p>&lt;1420-1500&gt; historye <b>representynge</b> the thynges lyke vnto words (4)</p> <p>&lt;1500-1570&gt; of seuen yeres, a chylde shuld nat [should not] be <b>instructed</b> in letters (20)</p> <p>&lt;1500-1570&gt; <b>lead</b> and teach his scholer [scholar, pupil], to joyne [join] the Reweles [rules] of his Grammar (1)</p> <p>&lt;1640-1710&gt; I shall rather chuse to <b>direct</b> you how to catch, than spend more time in discoursing either of the nature or the breeding of this Carp (1)</p> <p>&lt;1640-1710&gt; to <b>guide</b> children in a way of reading (1)</p> <p>&lt;1570-1640&gt; being well <b>instructed</b> by her maister and dame what shee should do (2)</p> <p>&lt;1570-1640&gt; who might doe that well, if they were rightly <b>directed</b> (4)</p>
<p><b>4. To point out</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>enable a person to identify (a place or object) by pointing to it or taking them to a place where it can be seen</li> <li>indicate the direction of</li> <li>figurative: to lead one's mind, life, behaviour, etc.</li> </ul>	<p>lead</p> <p>guide</p> <p>present</p> <p>direct</p> <p>direct</p> <p>direct</p> <p>guide</p> <p>lead</p>	<p>&lt;1250-1350&gt; And <b>ledde</b> hym to another stede [place] (24)</p> <p>&lt;1350-1420&gt; how he scholde himselven <b>guide</b> to take sauf passage (5)</p> <p>&lt;1500-1570&gt; in to the whiche howse ower [house our] savyor was <b>presented</b> (2)</p> <p>&lt;1570-1640&gt; to <b>direct</b> him where he may haue lodging (9)</p> <p>&lt;1350-1420&gt; our lettres to you, <b>direct</b> in +tis same tenur (19)</p> <p>&lt;1420-1500&gt; he shal <b>directe</b> his dedes (25)</p> <p>&lt;1500-1570&gt; to <b>gyde</b> you, coumfort [comfort] you and directe you with his holy spirite (6)</p> <p>&lt;1350-1420&gt; mercy clepid [call] thee and <b>ledde</b> thee unto him (23)</p>
<p><b>5. To be seen</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to make an appearance (said of persons, things and personified nouns/abstracts)</li> <li>figurative: appear to mental view; seem</li> </ul>	<p>appear</p> <p>unveil</p> <p>reveal</p> <p>appear</p>	<p>&lt;1250-1350&gt; and <b>apere</b> to-fore +te [before the] face of God (149).</p> <p>&lt;1350-1420&gt; the glorie of the Lord <b>apperide</b> (27)</p> <p>Extraordinarily life <b>unveiled</b> (1)</p> <p>A few golden freckles, <b>revealed</b> in the cold light, were scattered (1)</p> <p>&lt;1420-1500&gt; reasonable causes, as it <b>apperyth</b> (130)</p>

### **3.5 Summary and Conclusion**

The above study has contributed to historical semantics by linking semasiology to onomasiology on a metaphorical basis. It has been demonstrated that semantic change is deeply rooted in human cognition and experience in the world. It is basically a phenomenon reflecting the metaphorical understanding and the prototypical categorization of human linguistic experience. The fact that language and semantic change are metaphorical in nature makes it sometimes difficult to disentangle literal and figurative meanings. As illustrated by the case of *to show*, the figurative and literal scenes form a frame that requires a multi-scene access in order for the category to be understood. This fact, it has been demonstrated, is behind the simultaneous emergence and stable centrality of the basic literal/figurative meanings of the category. It is also behind the systematicity of semantic processes on both the semasiological and onomasiological levels. Conceptual metaphors determining the polysemous structure of the category are so structured that they have also determined the selection of onomasiological alternatives and restrict their semantic development. This study has attempted to show how the interrelatedness of semasiology and onomasiology is due to systematic metaphor, and that the use of this systematic metaphor forms the basis of not only language understanding, but also language development. This study is not meant to replace earlier studies in the field of historical semantics, but to unify them by merging semasiology and onomasiology, and by viewing ‘prototype’ and ‘frame’ theory from the perspective of cognitive linguistic tradition within a historical framework.

### **3.6 Further Remarks**

The polysemous/synonymous development of the category *to show* is not restricted to English. It is exhibited by other languages. The following examples



from Swedish and Arabic reveal that the same polysemous development can be found in both related and unrelated languages.

### **Swedish:**

1. Det vil **vise** seg  
it will show (appear, e.g. fact, truth make known and be seen)
2. Jeg skal **vise** deg den nye veska mi  
I want to show you my new rag.
3. Jeg skal **vise** deg huordan  
I will show you how to do it.
4. Jeg skal **vise** deg vegen  
I will show you the way
5. Han **viste** segi dura.  
He showed at the door.

### **Arabic:**

1. sa ?**urika** kutubi al jadida.  
I will show you my new books.
2. sa ?aftahu laka sadri wa **urika** ma bidakhilihi.  
I will open my chest and show you what is inside it.
3. sa ?**urika** kaifa taqra?u al ahrufa al arabiiia.  
I will show you how to read the Arabic alphabets.
4. sa ?**urika** al darba ila markazi al madina.  
I will show you the way to the city centre.
5. **ra?aituhu** fi al maktaba.  
He showed in the library.

Concerning the synonyms explicating the polysemy of *to show*, in both Arabic and Greek the onomasiological alternatives for the meanings ‘cause or allow to be seen’ and ‘make known’, for example, are based on the physical act of opening something. The Arabic synonym for both meanings is *kashafa*. Greek uses two

terms: *ksekepazo* (reveal, uncover to vision) and *apokalypto* (reveal, uncover to make known). In Arabic *zahara*, *bada*, and *bana* are parallel to the English *appear*. These terms are also used to mean ‘appear to mind’ or ‘seem’. Even the words *dalla* and *arshada* ‘lead or guide to a place’ are used in Arabic to mean ‘guide or lead mentally’.

In the Malaysian variety of English, for example, the category *to show* together with its synonyms have not undergone any semantic change influenced by the local language and culture. Their meanings still reflect the English usage, which asserts the culture-free nature of the category in question. Even the parallel words in Bahasa Malaysia are based on the the same metaphorical concepts. The word for *show*, ‘*tunjunk*’ is used with the five centres examined above. *Membuka* ‘uncover’ means both to show and to tell, and *Pandu* ‘to guide or lead’ means to lead the eye or the mind.

All this shows that the category in question is understood in a range of languages as an act of revealing something covered (visually/verbally) to the eye/mind. Leading the eye is also understood as an act of leading the mind. This may be said to be the general metaphorical understanding determining the polysemous/synonymous development of *to show*.

The semantic development of sense words seems to be culture-free; at least across the range of examples given. It has been shown in the previous chapter that words for hearing, for example, have regularly developed into words of understanding in a number of languages. This leads to the observation that when metaphorical transfers are not shaded by culture they may reflect potentially universal semantic processes. Other metaphorical transfers are tied in with culture. For example, in English people speak of “the eye of the needle” or more specifically “the foot of the mountain”. In many languages to use body parts in

such connections would seem illogical or even absurd (Fries 1945:40). Another example is metaphorical orientations which “have a basis in our physical and cultural experience. Though the polar oppositions up-down, in-out, etc., are physical in nature, the orientational metaphors based on them can vary from culture to culture. For example, in some cultures the future is in front of us, whereas in others it is in back” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:14).

The question here arises: what will happen to English if metaphors from other cultures or from countries where English is a second or foreign language are transferred into it? The next chapter addresses this question. It concerns itself with the bearings that the concept of a ‘monolithic’ standard has on the study of meaning in place. It argues that although meaning in place is not random and is based on human cognition and imagination which are systematic, the fact that the process reflects foreign minds and cultures is behind studying the regional varieties of English in terms of theories that have more to do with linguistic nationalism than with historical research. Work in the field is mainly concerned with the question as to whether or not the standard argued for in western linguistic circles is adequate for the expression of the diversity of experience across cultures. The consequence of this is the failure of linguists (western and non-western alike) to examine the regional varieties of English as languages in their own right, in terms of their semantic development. This, in turn, has resulted in the non-recognition of the crucial role played by metaphor in the development of these varieties.

## *Part Two*

### MEANING IN PLACE

-IV-

***SEMANTIC CHANGE AND ENGLISH AS A  
WORLD LANGUAGE: ATTITUDES AND ISSUES***

*In the purists' view perhaps English is internationally in disarray, going through a process of decay. In reality, however, English is acquiring various international identities and thus acquiring multiple ownership.*

(Kachru 1986:31)

#### ***4.1 Introduction***

So far, the study has concerned itself with the question of semantic change along the dimension of time. It is clear that meaning in time is not a controversial issue but a postulated fact that is accounted for in terms of scientific theories. However, this is not the case when it comes to the semantic development of English in place. The present study is concerned with the development of research on the instability of meaning from a diachronic study into a synchronic, controversial issue after the global spread of English and the subsequent emergence of local norms. It draws attention to the bearings that the concept of a 'monolithic' standard as the medium of communication in all English-speaking countries has on the study of meaning in place.

The period after the 1960s has witnessed the birth of the term 'world Englishes'. The pluralization of the term *English* is a recognition of new linguistic phenomena which have assigned global functions to the language. This has raised daunting questions in western linguistic circles: questions concerning standardization, intelligibility, the cultural content of English, and its role as an international language (Kachru 1991:181-2; 1997:66-7). As a result, research on linguistic change in the spread of

English has developed into two polarized positions that have more to do with nationalistic attitudes than with historical research. One position (termed ‘deficit linguistics’<sup>1</sup> in Kachru (1991)) involves marginalizing any sociolinguistic contexts which challenge the earlier paradigm of reference, namely the native speaking English speech community (the British and, later, the American)<sup>2</sup>. The second position, which Quirk (1988 [1991]) calls ‘liberation linguistics’<sup>3</sup>, entails the use of theoretical and methodological frameworks which relate the dynamics of English in non-native settings to the complex of culturally and linguistically pluralistic contexts of language acquisition, language contact, and language creativity.

Hence, the effort of some UK/US linguists to preserve the national identity of English on a global scale is confronted by the attempts of non-western linguists to confer on their local varieties the status of national languages. This has had serious consequences on the study of regional varieties. These consequences are as follows:

1. The failure of linguists to examine the regional varieties of English as languages in their own right, in terms of their semantic development.
2. The non-recognition of the crucial role played by metaphor in the development of regional varieties.

Before addressing the above issues, it is worthwhile sketching out the story of the spread of English.

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<sup>1</sup> The choice of the term here is clearly somewhat negatively value laden, and in polarizing the debate in this way, Kachru is probably trading off the established opposition in linguistic circles to Bernstein’s view (1971). This opposition is well represented by Labov’s (1975) often-cited essay, which crystallized sociolinguistic attacks into the term ‘deficit’ (See Edwards 1979; Gordon 1981).

<sup>2</sup> The position is indicated in this study by the term ‘prescriptive linguistics’.

<sup>3</sup> This position is referred to in this study by the term ‘descriptive linguistics’.

## 4.2 *The Story of English*

A few centuries ago English was hardly used outside the British Isles. Richard Mulcaster (1582) described the early situation of English saying that (In Jespersen 1926:227; Quirk 1985:1):

*The English tongue is of small reatch, stretcheth no further than this  
Iland of ours, naie not there over all.*

“In 1714”, reported Jespersen (1926:228), “Veneroni published an imperial Dictionary of the four chief languages of Europe, that is, Italian, French, German and Latin”. At that time, the future success of English was something beyond all expectations, except for John Adams, who, in (1780), made the following insightful prophecy (In Kachru & Nelson 1996:72):

*English will be the most respectable language in the world and the  
most universally read and spoken in the next century, if not before  
the close of this one.*

However, had John Adams been able to witness the present-day world status of English, he would probably have felt that his prophecy did not do justice to the full semantic range of the word *English*. The terms *respectable* and *universal* are only two components of the meaning English has come to acquire. English is now a power; a recognized power dominating the whole world. Kachru (1986:130) tabulates the parameters of the power of English internationally as follows (The parameter of pluricentricity is omitted, but will be discussed later):

**Table (4.1): The parameters of the power of English (Kachru 1986:130):**

<b>Demographical and numerical:</b> unprecedented spread across cultures and languages; on practically every continent.
<b>Functional:</b> provides access to most important scientific, technological, and cross-cultural domains of knowledge and interaction.
<b>Attitudinal:</b> symbolizes—certainly to a large group across cultures—one or more of the following: neutrality, liberalism, status and progressivism.
<b>Accessibility:</b> provides intranational accessibility in the Outer Circle <sup>4</sup> and international mobility across regions.
<b>Material:</b> a tool for mobility, economic gains, and social status .

Hence, the deep penetration of English into the international domains of communication, cultivation, knowledge, advancement, business, etc. has transformed English into a common language or a lingua franca that is widely considered essential for coping with the demands of modern life. Burchfield (1985:160) wrote that:

*English has...become a lingua franca to the point that any literate educated person is in a very real sense deprived if he does not know English.*

Deneire (1993:169) refers to English as “the ‘language of opportunity’, an ideal tool for democracy that opens the door to the wonderful domains of education, science and business”. The question that imposes itself here is: how did English score its path across such dominance? Crystal (1997:5) wrote that “Language has no independent existence, living in some sorts of mystical space apart from the people who speak it. Language exists only in the brains and mouths and ears and hands and eyes of its users. When they succeed, on the international stage, their language succeeds. When they fail, their language fails”. And the English speakers are no

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<sup>4</sup> The Outer Circle is a term coined by Kachru to refer to places where English is used as a second language (e.g. English in India, Malaysia, etc.).

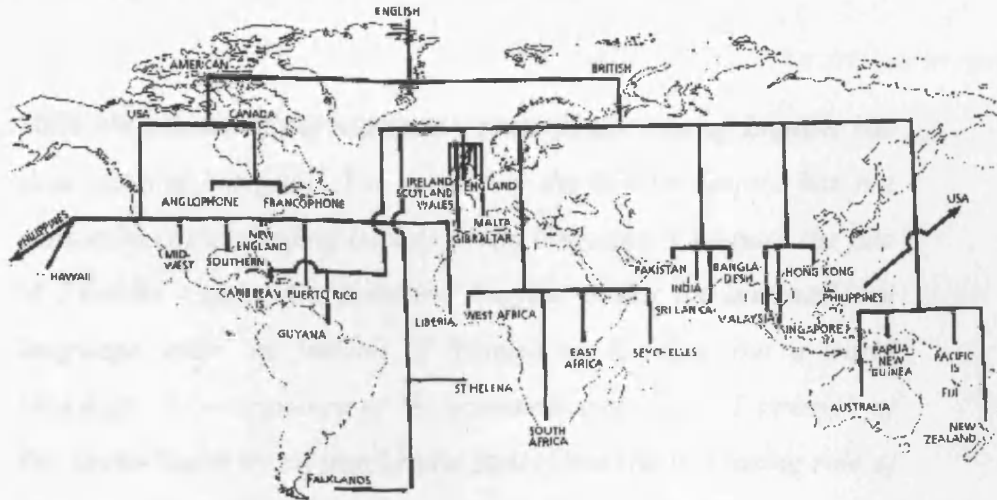


exception. Pinpointing the link between the dominance of English and the successes of its speakers throughout modern history, Troike (1977:2) wrote that:

*From a minor language in 1600, English has in less than four centuries come to be the leading language of international communication in the world today. This remarkable development is ultimately the result of 17th, 18th, and 19th century British successes in conquest, colonization, and trade, but it was enormously accelerated by the emergence of the United States as the major military world power and technological leader in the aftermath of World War II. The process was also greatly abetted by the expenditure of large amounts of government and private foundation funds in the period 1950-1970, perhaps the most ever spent in history in support of the propagation of a language.*

Below is a family tree representation of the way English has spread around the world during the colonial era and pre-colonial era, including the close-to home expansion toward Ireland in (1367), Wales in (1535), Scotland in (1603), and America in (1607) (Kachru 1997:67; Graddol 1997:7). The influence of the two main branches of American and British English is clearly shown.

**Diagram (4.1): The pre-colonial and colonial expansion of English (Crystal 1997:62):**



The first major expansion out of the Island involved transplanting English in the new homelands by the British immigrants (i.e. in North America, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada) (Kachru & Nelson 1996:72). Teaching English as a foreign language appears to have begun in Holland and France in the middle of the 16th century (Graddol 1997:7). The second diaspora involved transplanting the language for what Pennycook (1994) calls the process of ‘Anglicism’. That is, the process of imposing English in the colonies to serve the political, cultural, and economic interests of the principal colonial powers: Great Britain and the United States. According to Ngũgĩ (1981), “English was the official vehicle and the magic formula to colonial elitedom” (In Phillipson 1992:115).

However, if it is possible to view the spread of English in the post-colonial context as a third diaspora, it can be asserted that force is not always the key to success. The power of culture is the most powerful weapon for spreading the word. The success of English speakers in the ‘econo-cultural domain’ in postcolonial times makes for transferring English in the former colonies from a colonial ‘legacy’ into a *neutral*

and *beneficial* language that outlasts all the strategies behind its spread (Quirk 1991:153; Platt, Weber & Ho 1984:1). It also makes for stretching the use of the English tongue across the boundaries of the ex-colonies into the globe. This fact has been pointed out by Chevillet (1994:118; translation in McArthur 1998:31):

*Since the middle of the nineteenth century, the role of English has done nothing but grow. The decline of the British Empire has not entailed a corresponding decline in the language (Compare the fate of French) - quite the contrary. English is not an **international language**, after the fashion of Spanish or Russian, but a **world language**, a consequence of the economic and cultural strength of the Anglo-Saxon world (the United States) and the increasing role of the media.*

This, in turn, has contributed in large measure to the numerical composition of English. Today, rough agreement can be found on the figures that put the total number of speakers of English around 2,000 million. Crystal (1997:60), however, is content with a 'middle-of the-road' estimate of 1,200-1,500 million. This figure can be divided into three roughly equal groups (The following classification is based on Kachru's (1991, for example) model of the three concentric circles):

1. speakers of English in the Inner Circle (e.g. UK and USA);
2. speakers of English in the Outer Circle, where English as a second language is a part of the linguistic repertoire of multilingual speakers: it includes India, Malaysia, Singapore, and many other territories;
3. speakers of English in the Expanding Circles. The Expanding Circles include those countries which have no history of colonization by members of the inner circles, but where English plays an important foreign (or international) role (e.g. Saudi Arabia and Japan).

The number of the last group is very hard to estimate as it is the fastest growing section of world speakers of English; and “if the current trend continues, there will soon be more non-native than native speakers of English” (Kachru 1982:36). These points can be illustrated in two ways. A first example is the constantly accelerating rise in the number of learners of English in China. Graddol (1997:10) sees this as a major shift of the centre of gravity, as millions of speakers from the expanding circle use English more and more in the outer circle. This shift is predicted to have a major impact at the start of the 21st century. There are now more Chinese learning English as a foreign language than the total population of the UK. Studying the situation of English teaching and learning in China, Cortazzi and Jin (1996) note that “There is an impressive commitment to ELT from both teachers and learners”, and that “Many students, including adult learners, see English as a useful world language and study it out of personal interest” (p.61). When a foreign language occupies such a position in a fast developing country with an enormous population like China (1.2 billion in 1996), it is anticipated that increases in the numbers of teachers and learners would be by millions, as the following shows:

*The most significant change in ELT in China is the rise in the number of teachers and learners. In 1957 there were only 843 full time middle school teachers of English in the whole country (Ross 1992: 251-2), compared to 1995 figures of about 400,000 middle school teachers of English and approximately 28,000 at tertiary level (Maley 1995). By the 1990's it was estimated that there were well over 57 million school and university students studying English (Zhu & Chen 1991) and 150 million part time students learning the language (Dzau 1990a) or more conservative estimates of around 200 million users of English (Zhao & Campbell 1995)... (Cortazzi and Jin 1996:63).*

A second example is the trend for universities to offer English-medium courses in such countries as Finland, Denmark, Holland, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Hong Kong. This potentially accelerates the shift of gravity towards more second language users of English around the world.

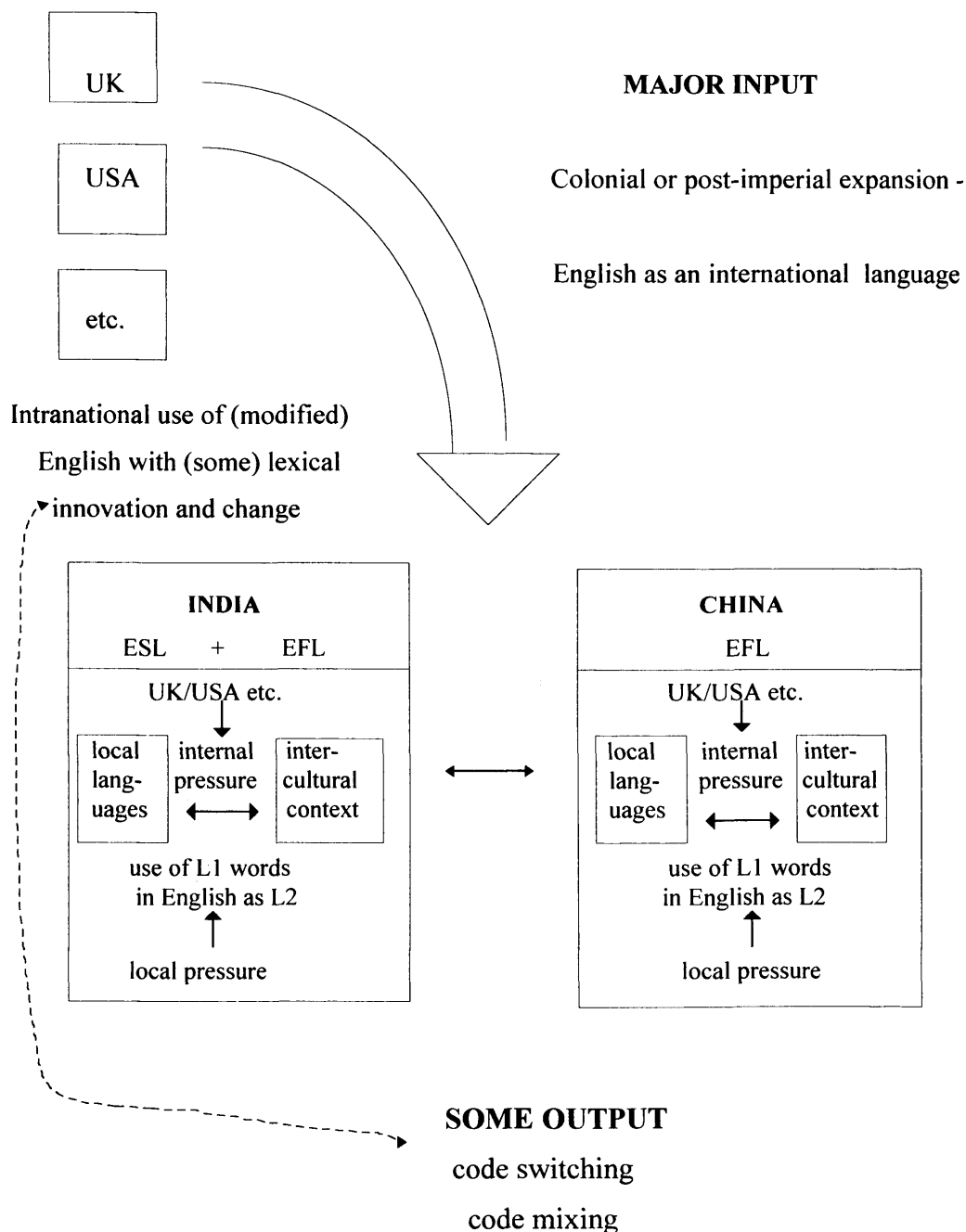
However, this large-scale use of English in diverse socio-cultural contexts (the three concentric circles) is not without its demerits. One example is the resulting linguistic changes. As far as lexical change is concerned, Diagram 4.2 overleaf shows the effect of culture and language contact on the process in two different linguistic situations: in India where English is used as a second or foreign language for intranational and international purposes, and in China where it is used as a foreign language for business (joint ventures) and international affairs.

The influence of the Indian culture on English can be illustrated by loan words, such as *thug*, *bungalow*, *mantra*, a Hindi word denoting religious chanting, and *pundit*, 'a knowledgeable person' (e.g. He is a Sanskrit pundit). Other cases show how the internal use has acquired legitimacy over time and become internationally communicative (through English). Excellent examples are food terms, like *curry*, *samosa*, *tandoori chicken*, and so forth. As for the influence of the Chinese culture, it can be illustrated by the internationalization (also through English) of martial arts, such as *kungfu* (fighting movement) and *tai chi* (controlled exercise for fitness); and of food terms like *lychee*, *chow mein*, and *chop suey*.

Such influences are not necessarily imported to English from so called Indian English or a Chinese variety of English. They could have taken place on the native territories of English. A report from the *Daily Mail* (Wednesday, July 23, 1997) by Dr Phillip Baker of the School of Oriental and African Studies makes it clear how English in such a multicultural society always needs to be seen in the context of large numbers of local languages (many of which have few speakers). This survey

also makes one ponder whether any of the languages spoken in Britain will one day play a role similar to Spanish in the USA.

**Diagram (4.2): An illustration of the influence of cross-cultural and cross-linguistic contact on English<sup>5</sup>.**



<sup>5</sup> It is worth noting that the full cross-cultural uses of English include the likely choice of English as a medium of communication if someone from India communicates with someone from China.

In Puerto Rico, for example, English-Spanish contact is an integral part of daily life for its three-and-a half million inhabitants. Nash and Fayer (1996) studied the influence of bilingualism on English in this region and found that:

*to understand what happens when languages are in contact, we must observe not only how bilinguals **act** linguistically, but also how they **react** linguistically. The difference is crucial, because well-formed sentences in the second language variety of English can be misinterpreted by both native and non-native speakers... For example, the common question, 'What is your direction?' will be interpreted by a Spanish dominant speaker as 'What is your address?' and by an English-dominant speaker as 'Which way are you going?' (P.282).*

Nash and Fayer's (1996) study investigated whether prolonged contact with another language in a non-native environment may affect one's native language intuition. They developed a test which presented Puerto Ricans with sentences containing four types of errors: deceptive cognates, false cognates, accidental similarity and accidental creation. Their results showed that English-dominant respondents (E), as anticipated, tend to accept less lexical deviance of all types than the Spanish-English respondents (S-E), who in turn accepted less than the Spanish-dominant (S) respondents. Table 4.2 overleaf compares the percentages of the three groups of respondents who accept each type of lexical deviance. Only percentages of acceptance above 33 percent are included. This is to exclude ratings that were representative of individuals rather than the group as a whole (ibid:283-7).

The mere acceptance of any sort of lexical deviance (no matter how low a percentage this is) on the part of English native speakers living among speakers of a contact variety reveals the influence of socio-linguistic contact not only on language change, but also on the native language intuition. According to Bailey (1987),

multilingualism in the English-speaking countries is a threat to the core of native speakers (In Kachru, 1996:248). This is, however, hard to imagine in the case of the London example, cited earlier.

**Table (4.2): percentages of acceptance of sentences containing lexical deviance (After Nash and Fayer, 1996).**

	<i>S-dominant speakers</i>	<i>S-E dominant speakers</i>	<i>E-dominant speakers</i>
<b>Deceptive Cognates (83 items)</b> (e.g. <i>His days are counted.</i> ( <i>contado</i> = numbered)).	0.54	0.19	0.17
<b>False Cognates (17 items)</b> (e.g. <i>I consider that remark an injury.</i> ( <i>injuria</i> = insult)).	0.53	0.41	0.18
<b>Accidental Similarity (13 items)</b> (e.g. <i>I hurt my code playing tennis.</i> ( <i>code</i> = elbow)).	0.25	0.00	0.08
<b>Accidental Creation (17 items)</b> (e.g. <i>Send it by certified mail.</i> ( <i>certificado</i> = certified)).	0.25	0.25	0.13

The question that needs to be addressed here is: If the concepts of monolingualism and monolingual societies are the norms for hypothesis formation, how are deviations in the spread of English to be explained? Are they differences or deficiencies? If they are to be recognized as differences, on what grounds is this recognition placed? However, if they are to be seen as deficiencies, will that entail rejecting the non-native varieties completely because their Englishness is suspect? Before answering these questions, semantic change in the non-native varieties of English needs to be considered.

#### **4.3 Semantic Change in the Non-Native Varieties of English**

Linguists concerned with the question of semantic change in the non-native varieties of English tend to adopt a typological approach to the process. They simply focus on the influence of the new socio-linguistic contexts on semantic change in place. There has been no attempt to investigate this change in the light of the more adequate theories developed in the field of historical semantics. Semantic change in place is mainly seen to occur when the second language meanings are transferred in a



discourse, resulting in extended, restricted, and redefined meanings. The following is a summary of traditional work on semantic change in place.

**a.** Semantic extension involves adding a meaning to a standard English word, as the case of the word *amount* in Ghanaian English (e.g. 'He sent me some amount.'). The word here means 'money' with which it is used interchangeably. Another example from Ghanaian English is the word *arrangement* (e.g. 'I had no ticket, but I got in by arrangement.'). The word refers to special arrangement, preferential treatment, or mutual arrangement. This word also occurs adjectivally, usually with men and rarely with women, as in the expression 'He is an arrangement man.' - that is, a person who gets what he wants, not by normal means but through his connections. The use of the word in this sense is not restricted to Ghanaian English; but occurs also in Nigerian and East African English. A similar expression in Nigerian English is *long legs*, as in 'He has long legs.' (Sey 1973; in Bokamba 1982:87).

**b.** Semantic restriction involves restricting the semantic range of a Standard English word. In African English, for example, the use of *machine* is restricted to 'sewing machine' and *minerals* to 'soft drinks' (Bokamba 1982:88).

**c.** Semantic modification is the complete reassignment of the meaning of a word. For example, in Hawaiian English the word *hammer* is used as an expression for 'telling off' (e.g. 'The boss, he really hammer me properly today.') (Platt, Weber & Ho 1984:103); in Kenyan English the word *cut* means 'to refuse' (e.g. 'I asked her to dance, but she cut me.') (Bokamba 1982:88); in Standard Nigerian English *globe* is an 'electric bulb', *wet* means 'to water' (flowers), and *environment* is 'a neighbourhood' (Bamgbose 1982:107). Another example from Standard Nigerian English is *go-slow* (traffic Jam) (ibid:106). Examples of semantic modification from African English are *Known faces* (acquaintances), *European appointment* (high-level white-collar position), *tight friend* (close/intimate friend, as in *I was a tight friend of your sister.*), *my dear* (girlfriend or boyfriend, as in *I saw your my dear at*

*the church.*), *take in* (become pregnant, *My wife took in last month.*), *knocking fee* (a bribe fee), and *cop-shop* (police station) (Bokamba 1982:89-90; Kachru 1985:18).

Some examples of semantic modification illustrate the influence of the background culture on the process of change. A case in point is the use of the word *donation* in Ghanaian English. *Donation* in Ghanaian English means ‘gifts of money given to relations of a deceased person to help them to meet the high cost of funerals’. Hence, the receiver of the donation is a private individual, not a charity or a public fund as the word in British English signifies. The new semantic shade the word *donation* has acquired in Ghanaian English is motivated by the need to serve an extralinguistic context which is different from the one the word *donation* would express in native English-speaking countries (Platt, Weber & Ho 1984:101-2). Contextually determined collocations are excellent examples of the influence of the background culture on semantic change, such as *military hotel* (South Asia: ‘a non-vegetarian hotel’), *communal question* (South Asia: ‘a question related to Hindu-Muslim relationships’), and *grave diggers* (Africa: ‘cousins of the dead person, traditionally responsible for digging the grave’) (Kachru 1985:18).

The background language plays an equally important role in bringing about semantic modification. An example from Malaysian English is the use of the expressions ‘open the tap’ (for ‘turn on the tap’) and ‘close the tap’ (for ‘turn off the tap’) which is motivated by the corresponding expressions in Bahasa ‘Buka paip’ and ‘tutup paip’. In Indian English the use of the expression ‘over my head’ (meaning incomprehensible) is a native translation from Malayalam (a South Indian language). The most interesting cases of this type of semantic modification are kinship terms, like the following examples: Kenyan English *my young husband* (mother addressing son), *second husband* (brother in law), and *daughter* (mother addressing son’s wife); Indian English *co-brother* (sister-in Law’s husband) and *co-sister* (brother in law’s wife). Other examples of this instance of semantic modification include the

translation of native similies and metaphors: *a pin-drop silence*<sup>6</sup> (used in India), *roaring silence* (used in Southern Africa), and *as honest as an elephant* (used in South Asia); and the translation of proverbs and idioms (all from African English) *wisdom is like a goat skin-everyone carries his own, to whisper together* (to talk privately), *to have a shadow* (to have a courage), and *to have no bite* (to have no courage) (Kachru 1985:18).

Another mode of semantic shift involves retaining older meanings that have become obsolete in Standard or Native English. In Standard Nigerian English, for example, the word *station* is used to indicate ‘the town or city in which a person works’ which is a retention of the earlier meaning recorded by the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (Bamgbose 1982:107). The same instance is found in Indian English, as in ‘*he is in station today*’ or ‘*he has gone outstation today; he has got an outstation posting*’.

However, a closer reading of the examples above will reveal that many of the instances can be referred to as metaphorical extensions (e.g. *military hotel, long legs, hammer, cut, globe, etc.*). The comparison between *military hotel* and a *non-vegetarian hotel* reflects rather explicitly the attitudes of the Asian vegetarians towards places serving meat. The relation between the other images and their meanings are not so difficult to see if the words are heard in context. This suggests that innovations<sup>7</sup> in the local varieties of English are not random. They are based on human cognition and imagination which are metaphorical in nature. In other words, although the above semantic shifts are due to the use of English in new socio-linguistic contexts, metaphor is the means of reflecting the new speakers’ prototypical categorization of reality and their conceptualizations of their cultural

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<sup>6</sup> This metaphor is English as well (e.g. ‘You could have heard a pin drop’). What is distinctively Indian is this particular collocation: ‘pin-drop silence’.

<sup>7</sup> That is to say those semantic shifts that may be interpreted as not simply due to L1 interference and the imperfect mastery of the semantic range of English words; their semantic boundaries and semantic developments.

values. However, what makes such innovative processes look deviant to the eyes of native speakers is that they are shaded by socio-linguistic contexts that are unfamiliar to the English language and its native speakers: they are translated images from local languages into English. The translated native similes, proverbs and idioms are the most apparent metaphorical expressions disturbing the Englishness (including the socio-cultural content) of the English language. Lakoff and Johnson (1980:22) claim that the most fundamental values in a culture are “coherent with the metaphoric structure of the most fundamental concepts in the culture” which “can vary from culture to culture” (p.14).

Cortazzi and Jin (1999:175) examined, among other metaphors, elicited metaphors about good teachers in cross-cultural data from British, Chinese, Japanese, Lebanese, and Turkish university students. They found that:

*There is a predominance of FRIEND<sup>8</sup> and PARENT<sup>9</sup> metaphors for teachers among the Chinese, Japanese, Lebanese and Turkish groups compared with the much lower frequencies of these metaphors in the British data (there are only 13 instances of ‘parent’ and none of ‘friend’ among 236 British metaphors).*

Cortazzi and Jin (ibid) argue that The students see the teacher as *friend* or *parent* and, following their culture of learning which stresses mutual responsibility and

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<sup>8</sup> The British see the teacher not as a friend, but as one who controls students’ disciplines: he is AN AUTHORITY and A DIRECTOR (Cortazzi & Jin 1999:155-6). This is perhaps because ‘discipline is more obviously a problem in the British social context’ (Jin & Cortazzi 1997-8:45).

<sup>9</sup> Other common metaphors which appeared in the cross-cultural data, but with different frequency, are A GOOD TEACHER IS A SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE; A MODEL OR MORAL EXAMPLE; and A GUIDE. The other metaphors may be interpreted as context-bound. The Chinese metaphors of a good teacher included A GARDENER and AN ACTOR (with entailments of acting, practice, imitation and rehearsal); the Japanese AN AROUSER (‘an arouser of students’ interest’, ‘a prod to make students eager to learn’); the Lebanese A LOVER, FOOD, A CATALYST, A MEDICINE, AN ANCHOR, and AN ARTIST; and Turkish metaphors included A SUNNY DAY and A COMIC (i.e. a source of humour) (Cortazzi & Jin 1999).

reciprocal relations, they expect the teacher in the friend or parent role to be sensitive to students' needs and to offer help when it is needed. However, the British teachers, working with different conceptual metaphors and a different culture of learning, expect the students to be more independent and to ask for help when it is needed; if there is no such request they presume the student has no problem (teachers would help if they were asked to). The conclusion they arrived at is as follows (ibid):

*Overall differences in metaphors may be a clear signal of different cultural frames and these may lead to differing cross-cultural interpretations. While TEACHER AS FRIEND or PARENT is common, it is apparent that the frequencies between groups are different and it is likely that the cultural associations may have different emphases and certainly different cultural sources.*

The above study is mainly concerned with the culture of learning and communication in the classroom. However, it may be taken as an example showing how the link between language and thinking is embodied in metaphor. It is this embodiment that is most influential on meaning in place. It can be claimed (on the basis of the above-mentioned examples) that conceptual metaphor, which is a major force at play behind the development of English in time, is also the work at play behind its innovative development in place.

The link between metaphors and people's thinking is demonstrated by Buley-Meissner (1991). In this work, he shows how metaphors used as titles for teachers in China have changed over time to reflect public attitudes towards change in the official policies of the nation:

*During Reconstruction (1949-1957) teachers were 'gardeners' and 'brain-power labourers'; in the First Five Year Plan (1953-1957)*

*they were 'people's heroes', 'advanced producers', 'engineers of the soul'; in the Great Leap Forward (1958-1959) they were negatively known as 'obstacles', or positively as 'common labourers'. Subsequently, in a period of Retrenchment (1960-1965) the industrial metaphors were again popular and teachers were 'machine-tool makers' and once more 'engineers of the soul'. In the polarization of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), negative metaphors were 'freaks', 'monsters', or 'stinking number nine' (i.e. at the bottom of a list of 'enemies of the people') while positive ones included 'warriors' or 'weapons in the class struggle' and 'red thinkers'<sup>10</sup>. In the 1980s the industrial metaphors were back in favour; teachers were 'technicians', 'machinists' and again 'people's heroes' (Summary in Cortazzi & Jin 1999:169).*

Cortazzi and Jin (1999:169) developed and extended the above study noting that:

*In the 1990s teachers have been 'candles', 'lamps', 'golden key holders' and remain as 'engineers of the soul'. With the development of the market economy there are new metaphors; many workers and teachers have **xia hai** or 'plunged into the sea' of private business and some, particularly English language teachers, **chao geng** ('stir-fry night'; **geng** means both 'a dish of food' and 'night') and go in for evening work, or they **lao wai kuai** ('use a sieve or net, extra money'; **kuai** means both a measure word for money and 'fast') and are busy making extra money, with overtones of moonlighting*

It is this sort of study that is needed to investigate the development of English in place. What also needs to be shown is whether any of the metaphors attached to a

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<sup>10</sup> The positive connotation of red is more than political; it is associated with luck, happiness and weddings (Cortazzi & Jin 1999).

concept or the conceptual metaphors in terms of which a general concept is understood have, in the process of time, become established onomasiological alternatives of that concept. The reason why such a step (i.e. studying meaning in place along the dimension of time) has not yet been taken is, perhaps, because the local varieties of English are still in the process of fighting for their liberation and independence: meaning in place is still a synchronic, controversial issue. As a consequence, research in the field focuses so far on proving the non-deficiency of the local varieties of English, thus, ignoring the question of semantic change in the context of time and the crucial role played by metaphor in this change. These consequences are claimed to be the bearings that the concept of a 'monolithic' standard has on the study of meaning in place.

#### ***4.4 Prescriptive Linguistics versus Descriptive Linguistics***

Prescriptive linguistics and descriptive linguistics, as positions concerned with English in place, differ from one another in their fundamental attitude to English as a world language. From the former (native speakers') perspective, English as a world language is a standardized norm adopted on a global scale. From the latter perspective, however, it is subject to adaptation to suit the new "context of situation" (Firth 1968; Halliday & Hasan 1989); that is, the new linguistic and socio-cultural setting it has spread to. This polarization is demonstrated by Widdowson's words that:

*A disease spreads from one country to another and wherever it is it is the same disease. It does not alter according to circumstances. But language is not like this. It is not transmitted without being transformed. It does not travel well because it is fundamentally unstable. It is not well adapted to control because it is itself adaptable. One might accept the conspiracy theory that there was an intention to use English to dominate, but the assumption that the intention was successful, which is often taken as a necessary*

*corollary, is based on a belief in the invariability of the language*  
(1997:136).

Prescriptive linguistics adopts a monomodel approach that is based on four beliefs  
(from Kachru 1982:49):

1. English as L2 should conform with the ideal speaker-hearer norm;
2. the roles assigned to English in different parts of the world are more or less identical;
3. the goals for the study of English in various parts of the world are more or less identical (i.e. for international purposes);
4. the cultural context for the use of English in all the English-speaking areas is identical.

This prescriptive position manifests itself in Quirk's (1985:6) argument that "The relatively narrow range of purposes for which the non-native needs to use English (even in ESL countries) is arguably well catered for by a single monochrome standard form that looks as good on paper as it sounds in speech". This argument is in line with Prator's (1968:469) hypothesis that:

*if teachers in many different parts of the world aim at the same stable, well documented model, the general effort of their instruction will be convergent; the speech of their pupils will become more and more similar to that of pupils in many other regions, and the area within which communication is possible will grow progressively larger.*

The concept of a single monochrome standard as the medium of communication in all-English-speaking countries (Kachru & Nelson 1996:77) is an offspring of the



Victorian age linguistic purism that sought to create a homogeneous linguistic situation in which form stands in a fixed relationship to meaning. The most influential work behind the search for a sort of meta-language that lies beyond the variability of usage is Locke's (1690) 'translation theory' of understanding. Locke put forth the hypothesis that the universal purpose of communication is to reach a common understanding, and this can only be achieved when the words uttered by the speaker excite the same ideas in the hearer which he makes them stand for in speaking. The belief that standard English is capable of representing the world in an agreed code is entirely in accordance with the tenets of linguistic purism. However, purism underlying the concept of a 'monolithic' standard may be seen as the nationalistic face of Victorian age purism. This argument can be suggested because this standard does not refer to stable norms in regard to English in time. Standard English as a world language is a cure for the development of English in place, not in time.

The existence of codified norms makes it possible to treat non-codified ones as merely performance variations. Some prescriptivists focusing on English in place treat the local varieties of English not simply as performance varieties, but as essentially erroneous performance varieties (i.e. non-institutionalised<sup>11</sup> varieties). This is explicit in Quirk's (1988 [1991]:165) argument that:

*viewing learner's errors as evidence for the emergence of new varieties of the English language is dangerously mistaken, particularly where it leads to the abandonment of Standard English as a model for learners.*

This viewpoint is representative of the attitude of a large number of native speakers towards so called 'new Englishes'. Quirk (ibid:172) reports that:

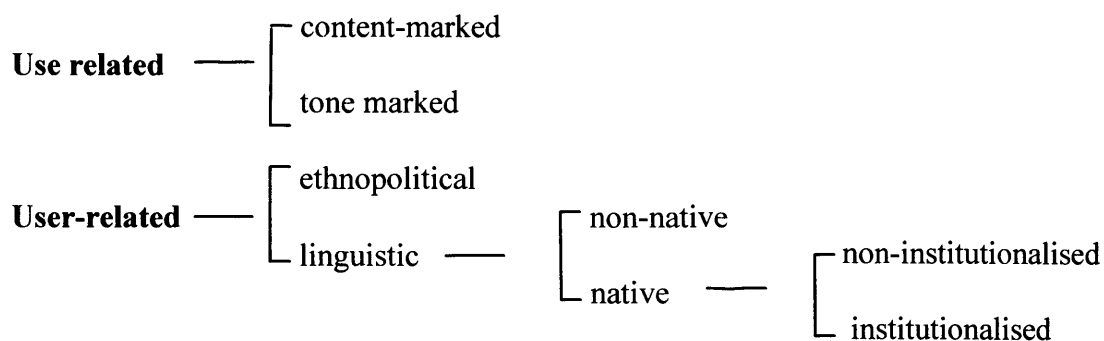
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<sup>11</sup> Institutionalisation means that English is used as a second language in the outer circle and so has undergone nativization and acculturation. These two are responsible for the 'assimilation' of English across culture (Kachru 1982:38-9).

*most of those with authority in education and the media in these countries tend to protest that the so called national varieties of English is an attempt to justify inability to acquire what they persist in seeing as 'real English'.*

Quirk (1982:37) stresses “The absurdities of an earlier generation’s preoccupation with ‘correctness’ have been abandoned”. Quirk rejects the use of identificational terms such as ‘Nigerian English’, ‘West African English’, ‘South Asian English’, and ‘Singapore English’. To him, they are merely connotative of the ethnopolitical background of particular speakers and do not indicate an institutionalised status. He wrote: “I am not aware of there being any institutionalised non-native varieties” (1988 [1991]:169). Diagram 4.3 is a clear representation of Quirk’s position. Note that there is a distinction between *use-related* and *user-related* varieties (Halliday, 1978). The former refers to varieties that an individual employs for a relevant role, such as *legal English*, *literary English*, *computer English*, and so forth. Whereas, *user-related* varieties concern those, “where in general an individual is tied to one only: Americans, for example, express themselves only in American English, the British only in British English...and they sound phony if they try to switch between varieties” (Quirk 1988 [1991]:167).

**Diagram (4.3): A taxonomy of varieties of English (Quirk 1988 [1991]:167):**



Quirk's position is that local diversification, though it may exist, is not to be encouraged (especially if it leads to standardization), since this would compromise mutual intelligibility between local varieties of English. This view which insists on the importance of maintaining the standard language for maximum global intelligibility is also evident in Comte's argument that "Language forms a kind of wealth, which all can make use of at once without causing any diminution of the store, and which thus admits a complete community of enjoyment; for all, freely participating in the general treasure, unconsciously and in its preservation" (In Deneire 1993:169).

The fact that this prescriptive attitude to English in place adopts a nativist monomodel position has led some descriptive linguists to mistakenly view this position as biased against the speakers of the local varieties. For Kachru (1991:4-5), for example, Quirk's taxonomy of English varieties has serious attitudinal implications that can be encapsulated in the dichotomy **us** (the native speakers) versus **them** (the non-native users)<sup>12</sup>. To him, this attitude culminates in Quirk's non-recognition of the distinction between ESL and EFL; that is his settlement for a dichotomy between native versus non-native varieties. Another reason why Quirk's position is thought of as biased against non-native speakers is that he regards their English varieties as erroneous varieties.

Descriptive linguistics deals with local diversification in terms of a polymodel approach. Within this framework, deviations in the spread of English are seen as differences rather than deficiencies (1982:45). They are different from the standard norm in the sense that they are the result of the new 'un-English' linguistic and cultural settings in which the English language is used:

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<sup>12</sup> It is difficult to imagine that prescriptivism is based on this sort of attitude. The aim of this position is to maintain the position of English as a world language, by insisting on a monolithic standard. This inevitably involves purifying the standard from non-standard and un-English or unacceptable foreign elements. Prescriptivism might be founded on principles linked to linguistic purism and nationalism, but it certainly is not a biased trend.

*that there are differences does not automatically imply that someone is wrong. The concept of a monolithic English as the exponent of culture and communication in all-English-using countries has been a convenient working fiction that is now becoming harder and harder to maintain. What we now have in reality is English languages and English literatures - a much more insightful posture for research. And we believe that this insight has theoretical and pedagogical significance, for both describing and teaching varieties of English and their literatures. To understand the pluralism of English, it is therefore vital to see its spread, uses, and users in sociolinguistic contexts (Kachru & Nelson, 1996:76-7).*

This position warrants a distinction between English as a *foreign* language and English as a *second* language. English as a foreign language is seen as indicative of those varieties of English which are used as international languages. They are essentially ‘norm-dependent’ varieties (i.e. dependent on a variety of ‘Standard English’ that is external to the country where ELT is taught or to the country of origin of EFL learners)<sup>13</sup>. The varieties of English as a second language, however, are ‘norm-developing’, or institutionalized, varieties (i.e. they are, arguably, developing their own norms internal to the country using them). The ontological status of these varieties derives from a conflict between norm and linguistic behavior (i.e. between international norm and intranational usage) (Kachru 1982:38; 1985:17). Andreasson (1994:401-2) pointed out that:

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<sup>13</sup> This fact, however, has not stopped EFL users in France from coining *tennisman* or in Germany *dressman* (for male model) (Görlach 1994:107). Also, uses of English items in an un-English way are very frequent. In China, for example, there appears to be a kind of English vocabulary peculiar to the Chinese culture. In addition to political terms, words such as *bad egg* (from Chinese *huai dan*) for ‘villain’ or ‘bad guy’, and *running dog* (from *zou gou*) for ‘lackey’, have become standard in Chinese derogatory remarks or polemics (Cheng:126; In Kachru 1982).

*A speaker in the Outer Circle will be careful to speak English in a way that will make his or her cultural identity clear. In the Expanding Circle, on the other hand, the ideal goal is to imitate the native speaker of the standard language as closely as possible. Speaking English is simply not related to cultural identity. It is rather an exponent of one's academic and language-learning abilities. It would, therefore, be far from a compliment to tell a Spanish person that his or her acquisition of the language left something to be desired!.*

Language and meaning within this framework are seen as very particular socio-cultural constructs by means of which reality is expressed. More generally, language usage by communities is not seen to be universal, but brought about and formed over time by its very use. Pennycook (1994:33) questions whether:

*... the nature of English determines what discourses are spoken, or the nature of discourses determines what language they are spoken in. Rather, there is a reciprocal relationship that is both historical and contemporary. Colonial discourses and discourses of contemporary world relations have both facilitated and been facilitated by the spread and construction of English. English and a range of local and international discourses have been constituted by and are constitutive of each other, both through the history of their connections and their present conjunctions... Clearly, then, language can never be removed from its social, cultural, political and discursive contexts...*

As such, to Pennycook (ibid:29), "it may be more useful to start with a notion of language as constant change" along both dimensions of time and place. The functional basis of this position has its roots in the Firthian and Hallidayan

traditions. In Firth's paradigm, as Kachru (1980:92) summarized it, language is first of all seen as function:

*The Firthian approach to language seeks the appropriateness of the behaviour of participants in a language-event, and the whole background and their coming together, which determines their use of language in a certain way in a particular context. The crucial back drop for such a relationship is the CONTEXT OF SITUATION.*

Halliday (1989) defines the parameters for context of situation as (1) field of discourse (what is happening), (2) tenor of discourse (who is taking part), and (3) mode of discourse (what role language is playing). He also divides the functions of language into (a) ideational, including logical and experiential, (b) interpersonal, and (c) textual<sup>14</sup>. These functions have to do, respectively, with individual identity and social relationships, meaning potential (what the speaker can say in a situation), and the ability to decode situationally appropriate messages.

Halliday's theory seeks to explore the interplay between the context of situation and the function of language in the social semiotic, or the culture, in order to understand the meaning potential of the language. His theory of "meaning potential" is a departure from structuralism, since it views meaning as interpretable in relation to the nonlinguistic elements of the language<sup>15</sup>. He (1975:124) wrote that:

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<sup>14</sup> Halliday (1989:10) defines text as 'any instance of living language that is playing some part in a context of situation'.

<sup>15</sup> The citation of Hallidayan concepts here to support a liberation linguistic viewpoint seems entirely appropriate, since so much of systemic linguistics has been built on concepts of context and meaning which are central to the liberation position. It is, however, not without irony: Halliday (1978) was one of the few linguists of the first rank to give any support to Bernstein (1971) whose work was taken as being emblematic of the deficit position in the UK or USA.

*There are two ways of looking at the meaning potential. We may interpret it in the context of situation, or we may interpret it in the context of culture ... We may choose to think of the meaning potential as being the whole semantic system of the language; or we may choose to think of it in the form of specific sub-systems each of which (or each set of which) is associated with a particular class of situations. The former is a fiction; we cannot describe the whole semantic system. The latter is also, of course, a fiction; but it may be a more accessible one. It may be possible to represent the meaning potential in the form of sets of options that are specific to a given situation type.*

Descriptive linguistics is, then, a trend toward social realism. The norm for English within this framework is not taken to be universal, but one that reflects the needs of the community in question. According to Firth (1968:99), in deciding on a pedagogical norm for English we should not attempt to establish universals for general linguistic description. Rather, we should attempt a description of “material on renewal of connection with experience”. Hence, the debate is one of norms for social semiotics, as Peter (1994:393-4) put it.

*norms and standards for world Englishes are best considered as an interaction of the meaning potential of the social semiotic and the linguistic form of the language. Where the social semiotic is local, the norm must be local. Likewise, when the intended social semiotic is international, an international norm (most likely British or American) will be used.*

According to Kachru (1985:29), if the native-speaker norm is relevant to English as a foreign language, it is by all means irrelevant to English as a second language. He (ibid:13) pointed out that the cross-cultural diffusion of English is unprecedented

among the languages of wider communication<sup>16</sup> not only in terms of territories covered, but also in three other respects. First, English has an extended functional *range* in a variety of social, educational, administrative, and literary domains. For example, in Singapore it is a major language of government, the legal system, and education; in Ghana and Kenya it is recognized as a national language; and in India the Constitution recognizes English as the ‘associate’ official language (Platt, Weber & Ho 1984:14,19,21,23). Table (4.3) lists the main nations and territories in which English still has official or semi-official status, except for the countries which are marked with an asterisk, English is also one of the main media of education (Platt, Weber & Ho 1984:15).

**Table (4.3):**

<b><u>Africa</u></b> <b><i>West Africa</i></b> Cameroon Gambia Ghana Liberia Nigeria Sierra Leone	<b><u>East Africa</u></b> Kenya Tanzania* Uganda Zambia Zimbabwe
<b><u>America</u></b> Caribbean Region Barbados Belize Guyana The leeward Islands Jamaica Puerto Rico Trinidad and Tobago The Winward Islands	<b><u>Asia</u></b> Bangladesh* Hong Kong India* Malaysia* Pakistan* Philippines* Singapore Sri Lanka*
<b><u>Pacific</u></b> Cook islands Fiji Guam Hawaii Papua New Guinea Samoa (Western Samoa and American Samoa) Solomon Islands	

<sup>16</sup> That is to say, those used as colonial languages (e.g. French and Spanish), as religious languages (e.g. Arabic and Sanskrit) and as language varieties of trade and commerce (e.g. pidgins or bazaar varieties).



Second, English has acquired great *depth* in terms of numbers of users at different levels of society. As a result, there is significant variation within such institutionalised varieties of English. Commonly, there are at least three sub-varieties of a variety:

1. educated variety (acrolect): not to be confused with ambilingualism or ‘native-like’ competence;
2. semi-educated variety (mesolect);
4. bazaar variety (basilect)

All sub-varieties within a variety have functional values. They are however not mutually exclusive. An educated speaker may switch between one or more varieties, or mix varieties with other languages (Kachru 1982:41; 1985:13,18). This ability is what Kachru refers to as the cline of bilingualism.

Finally, English is used in a culturally and linguistically pluralistic context. It is natural that in such a variety the language will have been nativized. Peter (1994:387) wrote that:

*Once language is in place, that is, is used or can be used for primary communication in a non-native environment, in most cases it undergoes a process of nativization.*

The degree of nativization of a variety is determined by two factors: the range and depth of the functions of English in the new context, and the period for which the society has been exposed to bilingualism in English. The greater the number of functions and the longer the period, the more nativized is the variety. As far as the nativization of the lexicon is concerned, it involves contextualizing English words in

localised registers and styles. The changed 'context of situation' contributes to the deviations from the native 'norm' or 'model' (Kachru 1982:39,42). Death and marriage, for example, involve ceremonies which are very culture and religious specific. Hence, if the medium in which one is to talk of or to write about them is a non-native language, "it certainly must first be acculturated" (Kachru 1982:336). For example, in South Asia, a person leaves for the 'heavenly abode' (*The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, May 8, 1981) due to the 'sad demise'; in Pakistan a death announcement may state that a person's 'soyam Fateha will be solemnized on...' and 'all the friends and relatives are requested to attend the Fateha ceremony'<sup>17</sup> (*Dawn*, March 14, 1979); and in North India, among Hindus and Sikhs, there will be 'Kirtan (holy hymns) and ardasa (prayer) for the peace of the departed soul' (ibid).

In the first example, the deviation is due to the death metaphor being re-created from the native language into English. In the second two examples, the mixing is determined by religion. Consider also the following matrimonial advertisement (ibid):

Matrimonial correspondence invited from respected Punjabi families  
for my son ... clean shaven [*Times of India*, New Delhi, May 10,  
1981]

*Clean shaven* in this context has a serious religious connotation, especially in the Punjab: it is indicative of non-conformism with traditional Sikhism in India - according to which male followers should not cut their hair or beard. On the basis of the above examples, Kachru (ibid:333) put forward the claim that:

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<sup>17</sup> In Muslim traditions, the family and friends of a deceased person gather on the night of the burial to recite the Quranic verse 'Fateha', as well as some other verses, on his/her soul.

*A native speaker of English, not familiar with the cultural and linguistic pluralism in South Asia, considers these language types lexically, collocationally, and semantically deviant. Such a reaction is understandable. Nevertheless, in South Asian or African English, it is through such formal deviation - including that of mixing - that language acquires contextual appropriateness. True, native speakers' cohesive and coherence procedures have been "violated." But how else can a "transplanted" language acquire functional appropriateness? A language pays a linguistic price for acculturation - for not remaining just a "guest or friend,"... This family identity cannot be given to a guest without initiating him into tradition. The price for acquiring such membership is nativization.*

In sum, from the perspective of descriptive linguistics "An important first step toward being able to discuss English in its global context is to overcome" the "...concept of the ownership of language" (Kachru & Nelson 1996:80). Kachru and Nelson believe that all 'world Englishes' (native and non-native) belong equally to all the communities who use them. Hence, what needs to be taken into account when defining the *nativeness* of English is the distinction "between *genetic* nativeness and *functional* nativeness. The former refers to the historical relationship and the latter to the nativeness of a language in terms of both its functional domains and range, and its depth in social penetration and resultant acculturation" (Kachru 1997:68).

Kachru and others who argue along his line simply fit their arguments within a functional framework in order to hide their real attitude, namely their desire to free their national varieties from the dominance of the world language. It can be said that descriptivism and prescriptivism as two conflicting positions concerned with English in place are simply two branches that have grown off one trunk, namely linguistic nationalism. The positions are mainly concerned with the questions of standardization and the future of the national language/variety: descriptivists have

their minds on conferring on their local varieties the status of national standards and prescriptivists on maintaining a 'monolithic' standard in order to preserve the position of English (their national language) as a world language<sup>18</sup>. The consequence of this is the failure of both positions to approach the regional varieties as languages in their own right in terms of their semantic development and to recognise the role played by conceptual metaphor in this development. The sections to follow discuss in more detail the sort of arguments on which prescriptivism and descriptivism as conflicting approaches to English in place are built.

#### ***4.4.1 Prescriptivism and Descriptivism***

Prescriptivism implies that with the spread of English the learner is expected to acquire a native-like proficiency in the target language. Andreasson (1994:396) pointed out that:

*The general attitude towards foreign language learners is that they are supposed to learn to speak the 'right way'.*

This hypothesis is based on the assumption that language spread entails the spread of culture and norms of behaviour appropriate to the English society. Kaplan (1966:400-401), for example, wrote that:

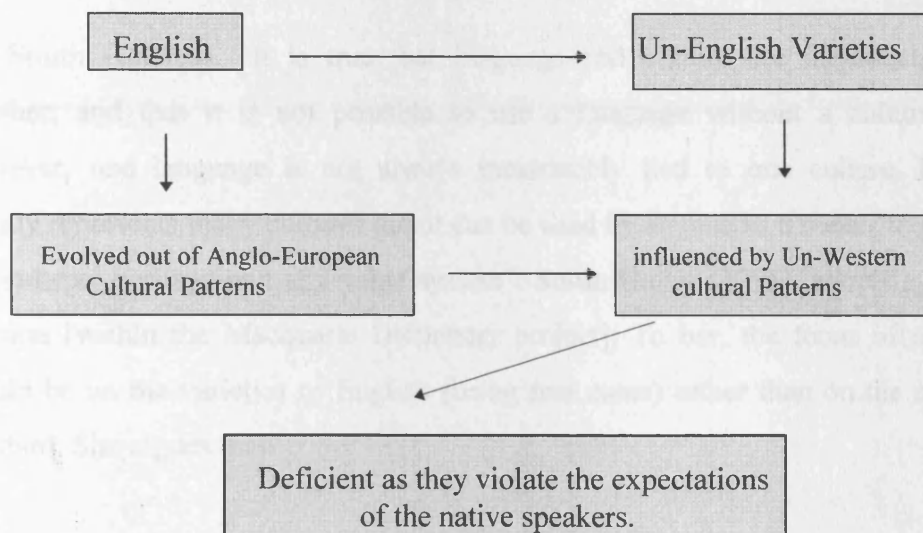
*the English language and its related thought patterns have evolved out of the Anglo-European cultural pattern. The expected sequence of thought in English is essentially a Platonic-Aristotelian sequence, descended from the philosophers of ancient Greece and shaped subsequently by Roman, Medieval European, and later Western thinkers.*

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<sup>18</sup> Linguistics as a field of research seems to be hardly free from the question of 'nationalism'. It is, however, bound to be so since languages are named after the nations that speak them, and since promoting the status of a language is promoting the status of its speakers.

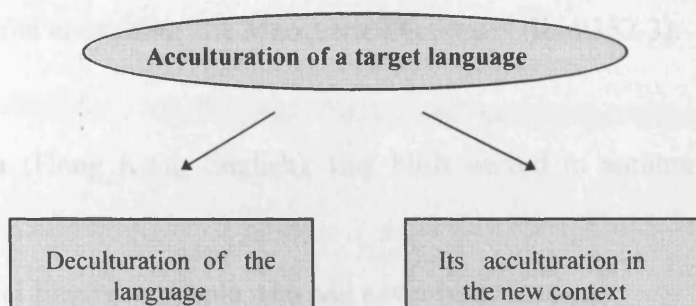
He then continues, the “learning of a particular language is the mastering of its logical system” (ibid:409). The implication here is that the ideal motivation for success in second-language learning is what is called ‘integrative’ motivation: “the foreign student is out of focus because he is employing a sequence of thought which violates the expectations of the native reader” (ibid:401). Such an attitude can be illustrated by Diagram 4.4.

**Diagram (4.4): Acculturation from the perspective of prescriptive linguistics:**



From the point of view of descriptive linguistics, however, English as a second language is an acculturated language. In terms of acculturation, two processes seem to be at work: deculturation of English (i.e. dropping the cultural baggage from the source cultures of the language) and its acculturation in the new context, such as when it integrates with the social semiotic of speakers of other languages (See Diagram 4.5).

**Diagram (4.5): Acculturation from the perspective of descriptive linguistics**  
(After Kachru 1982:329):



For Smith (1987:3), “It is true that language and culture are inextricably tied together, and that it is not possible to use a language without a culture base. However, one language is not always inextricably tied to one culture. English already represents many cultures and it can be used by anyone as a means to express any cultural heritage and any value system”. Susan Butler (1996), adopts a similar position [within the Macquarie Dictionary project]. To her, the focus of research should be on the varieties of English (being real cases) rather than on the myth of standard. She argues that:

*Language, as well as being a vehicle for communication, is itself an icon. If we draw the invisible language out of the shadows into the visibility of acknowledgement and recognition, then we have revealed an icon of enormous power. And an icon of such power can be used to construct a counter-mythology and a new defining context* (ibid: 356).

Butler views the Macquarie Dictionary as a perfect example of the use of English in the real world because while it offers guidance on British English and American

varieties as the prestige varieties, it includes the words which spring from Asian localisms, which are accepted as part of Singaporean and Philippine or Australian English, or which are entering the language because of the demands on it in Thailand or Indonesia (ibid:356). The following lexical items illustrate the sort of information one can get from consulting the Macquarie Dictionary (ibid:352-3):

**field chicken** (Hong Kong English): tiny birds served in autumn at banquets in South China.

**hill tribe** (Thai English): people who had never been in town.

**Mooncake Festival** (Singaporean/ Malaysian/Philippine and Hong Kong English): a festival that began as a celebration to mark a successful rebellion against the Mongol rulers. Mooncakes were used to convey secret messages and the lanterns (which are part of this festival) were used to pass signals.

Kachru (1987:126-7,132) noted that the prolonged colonial period substantially altered the socio-linguistic fabric of the English language. It extended the scope of the historical dimension and cultural tradition from that of Judeo-Christian traditions to an ever-widening range of heritages of the non-western world. It universalized English, and one might say 'de-englishized' it in terms of the accepted native norms of the language. To Hasan (1989), culture is not an entity waiting for language to express it. Learning is a process of contextualization whereby learning language and learning the culture go hand in hand with learning how to mean.

As such, to descriptivists, the integrative function should not be seen as solely involving the cultures of 'norm-providing' countries (including the social assumptions associated with these cultures), but as integrating with the background cultures of non-native speakers. For Kachru (1996:246), for example, the term 'Indian English' refers to the integration of the target language with the Indian

national and cultural context, 'Nigerian English' to the Nigerian national and cultural context and so forth. Within these varieties, as Kachru (1986:91) noted:

*English is not used just with an integrative motivation involving another culture, but essentially as an instrument for exposing students to their own culture. It is like turning an "external" language around for an "inward" look. The "window on the world" or "library language," becomes a window on one's own culture, history, and traditions.*

This position argues as follows. The predominant functions of English in an acculturated variety involve interlocutors who use English as an additional language: Indians with Indians, Indians with Singaporeans, etc. In such speech communities, interactions with native speakers are relatively rare. It follows that the acquisitional target for speakers of English as a second language "is not to participate in the Anglo social semiotic, but to transfer the native social semiotic onto the English base and thus nativize it as an effective means of communication for that culture, without reference to the Anglo culture" (Peter 1994:390). Sridhar and Sridhar (1986:6-7) explain that:

*Learners of IVEs [indigenized varieties of Englishes] go on to use English alongside other languages in their repertoire. English functions like the H(igh) variety in a diglossic situation with respect to other languages in a number of domains in bi- and multilingual communities. This complementarity of functions shows that English is not called upon to serve all the functions that it may serve for a monolingual English speaker, and hence, it is wrong to assume that the IVE learner should exhibit the same range of competence as the learner in a "melting-pot" target language environment. The model of bilingualism appropriate to the IVE contexts is, therefore an*



*'additive' one and not a 'replacive 'subtractive', or 'duplicative' model'.*

Another important reason why non-natives do not exhibit the same range of competence as native speakers is shown by descriptivists to emerge from instrumental attitudes towards English. Dan, Haroon and Naysmith (1996) investigated the attitudes of Muslim Malay students towards English, Arabic and Bahasa Melayu using a questionnaire administered to Malay secondary school students. One finding is that English is seen to be important for a number of reasons, most of which appear to be 'instrumental'. For one student, for example, it symbolized a medium for gaining access to knowledge, or was perhaps even a source of knowledge in itself (ibid:229). For another, it was perceived to be an important tool of communication, both in the rest of the world and, significantly, between the various ethnic groups within Malaysia. This linked directly with a view of English as a channel of technology and information transfer which would be of use in assisting the country to 'modernize'(ibid:228):

*We need to have interaction with the outside world and we need English. Malaysia's development depends a lot on the outside world...Through English we also gain the knowledge and skills needed to achieve development.*

The above points are taken by descriptive linguists to support the claim that the functions which English is called upon to serve in a non-native context do not require the learners either to integrate with the native culture or to gain a native-like competence in the language. Peter (1994:393) wrote that:

*the notion of communicative competence with special reference to world Englishes must also take into account the intended usage of*

*the language. If the use is intended [for intranational purposes], competence must be achieved at only a community-wide level for effective, unimpeded communication to take place. There is no implicit reason for each community's communicative competence to mesh perfectly with others.*

Hence, non-conformities with the norm are not dealt with as deficiencies by descriptive linguists, but as innovations determined by the social semiotic and the role of the language in the new context of situation. Quoting Taylor's (1990b:137) words that "We expect people to obey our norms; and if they do not we look for a reason why", Andreasson (1994:398) wrote:

*This is precisely where the shoe hurts: we all want and need a norm, but we cannot agree on which one. This seems to be the real problem, rather than what Quirk calls 'liberation linguistics' (1988 [1991]:170). I do not believe the native standard is objected to because it limits our freedom: there will always be norms and they are part of speaker's expectations about language. The issue is, what norms are we going to accept as legitimate?*

To Andreasson (ibid:399), "Refusing to consider the non-native standard...amounts to denying speakers both the dignity of responsibility [for communicative success] and the possibility of participating in the fashioning of the English language as a communicative tool".

The descriptive position is not without theoretical difficulties: how many varieties should be recognized? What about their roles in literacy, government or media? What about the practical problems of linking local, national, regional, or international varieties? An example of the difficulty that can arise (Cortazzi 1998) is

in the United Arab Emirates, where over 90% of today's population was born elsewhere. This population includes both long-term residents and short-term workers from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Philippines and Thailand, many of whom speak a local form of English from their country of origin. However, they do not only talk to compatriots and other foreign-born workers; they also need to communicate in English with a wide variety of international visitors in airports, hotels, restaurants, building sites, hospitals and shops. Several levels of English or Englishes are therefore involved. And all of these levels are far from perfect. In short, the descriptive position does not seem to draw a clear line between formal and informal usage of English. Every language develops acculturated norms that serve the different contexts of situations in which the language is used, but normally only one norm of this language (two in the case of English) is recognized as standard. The descriptive position appears to turn a blind eye to the non-recognition of the native, spoken varieties of English as standardized varieties. This shouldn't have happened had this position been really functional at heart. In this sense, Quirk (1988 [1991]) has aptly termed this position 'liberation linguistics'.

#### ***4.4.2 Interference versus Creativity***

Selinker (1974) claims that the concepts of 'interlanguage' and 'fossilisation' account for the observable differences between native and non-native varieties. The term 'interlanguage' has been used in second language acquisition literature "to refer to a variety of 'intermediate' systems between the native language and the 'target language', such as the intermediate stages in second language learners' language, immigrant varieties, institutionalized (indigenized) non-native varieties (IVEs), and different types of pidgin" (Sridhar & Sridhar 1986:7-8); and 'fossilization' refers to "linguistic items, rules, and subsystems which speakers of a particular NL [native language] will tend to keep in their IL [interlanguage] relative to a particular TL [target language], no matter what the age of the learner or amount of explanation and instruction he receives in the TL" (Selinker 1974:36). This position thus extends the term 'interlanguage' to communities using local varieties of English. It does not

seem to distinguish between interlanguages as dynamic individual systems (i.e. unstable, intermediate, target-directed systems used by foreign language learners) and regional varieties as stable constructs of the speech community. According to Sridhar and Sridhar (1986:8), the application of the term 'interlanguage' to regional varieties of English suggests that they represent an intermediate acquisitional stage on their way toward native or native-like norms. However, Sridhar and Sridhar (ibid) maintain, this is not representative of local variety users. For the majority of such speakers, the so called 'fossilized' norms are the 'normal' norms, and they have no others in their repertoire. Sridhar and Sridhar believe that "transfer is more appropriate for explaining the role of the language being acquired in the learner's verbal repertoire" (ibid:10). They wrote (ibid):

*Given that transfer features are not idiosyncratic to learners but shared by speakers with the same substratal languages, they serve as ... modes of acculturation and as markers of membership in the community of speakers of a given indigenized variety. ... The abhorrence of transfer derives from an artificial view of bilingual language storage and processing based on two questionable assumptions: one is that the ideal bilingual keeps his or her languages separate-both in storage and in actual use [a view that derives from Weinreich (1953)]; it is unrealistic prescriptivism to evaluate the success of second-language learning with reference to transfer-free norms in such contexts. It is necessary to take into account the functions that the learner's language is intended to serve, rather than assume that the learner aims at acquiring the full range of native competence in English. Bilingualism is of central importance in developing explanatory models of their acquisition and use.*

Moag (1982), however, believes that linguistic transfer as a theory is valid only with reference to English as a foreign language. For example, German speakers of English often transfer the verb ‘can’ into the sense of ‘to be able to speak a language’ (‘I can English.’). This gives their English a distinctive German flavor. But the functional allocation of the language in such social setting cannot be considered nativized. However, with English as a second language the meaning potential undergoes modification such that the language is no longer European, but African, Indian, etc. (From Peter 1994:400). In this case interference is not related to incompetence, but to function.

A study that can be taken as evidence in favor of Moag’s arguments is offered by Baumgardner’s (1995) questionnaire study to measure the acceptability of 94 features of Pakistani English. These fall into broad general categories of Urdu borrowings, collocations (e.g. *to take out a procession*, *to discuss a topic threadbare*), colonial lag (e.g. *dickey* or *diggie*, meaning the boot or the trunk of a car and a *stepney*, meaning a spare wheel or tire), grammar (including local uses of prepositions, conjunctions, adjectives, verbal complementation, etc.), orthography (e.g. the spelling of *up to* as one word), semantic shift (*a monthly*, meaning a bribe paid every month and *a gunman*, meaning a bank guard), and word formation (formations such as *flying coach* and the verb *to chargesheet*<sup>19</sup> (ibid:266). In this questionnaire, 150 teachers (70 males and 80 females) were asked to indicate whether each of the 94 features were or were not acceptable in English as it is used in Pakistan. The respondents were all either practising English teachers or were undergoing teacher-training courses in Lahore or Islamabad. Included also among respondents were English teachers attending Academic Sessions sponsored by SPELT, the Society of Pakistan English Teachers in Karachi (ibid:262). The results showed that the overall acceptance rate of features of Pakistani English was as high as 79.9 percent. Table 4.4 shows the percentage of acceptance of the seven broad categories in question.

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<sup>19</sup> *Charge-sheet* is not a verb in British English, but a noun compound meaning ‘a record of cases and charges made at a police station’ (Baumgardner, 1992:138).

**Table (4.4): Linguistic features of Pakistani English (Baumgardner 1995:266).**

Yes responses	Total %	Male	Female
Borrowing	88.0	94.1	84.7
Colonial lag	83.5	89.8	77.3
Semantic shift	81.1	85.4	76.9
Collocation	77.4	77.3	77.5
Orthography	77.4	84.0	70.8
Word-formation	76.5	80.2	72.8
Grammar	75.6	79.1	72.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>79.9</b>	<b>83.8</b>	<b>76.0</b>

Baumgardner (ibid:270) concluded that the result has confirmed “that those features of English which I felt to be Pakistani are indeed so, having been accepted by the vast majority of questionnaire respondents”. Very few deviations can be explained in terms of L1 transfer (such as loan translation and direct lexical transfer); others are independent developments motivated by culture, ethnicity marking as well as English rules. Thumboo (1976: ix; in Dan, Haroon and Naysmith 1996:231) wrote that:

*language...remade when necessary, by adjusting the interior landscape of words in order to explore and mediate the permutations of another culture and another environment.*

Hence, from the perspective of descriptive linguistics, deviations from the norm need not be seen as evidence of incompetence. The non-native varieties are nativized and stable, are institutionalized, have developed in bilingual contexts and are creative<sup>20</sup>. Achebe (1975:62) among others believes that an African writer can learn English well enough to use it creatively, but adds (In Andreasson 1994:401)

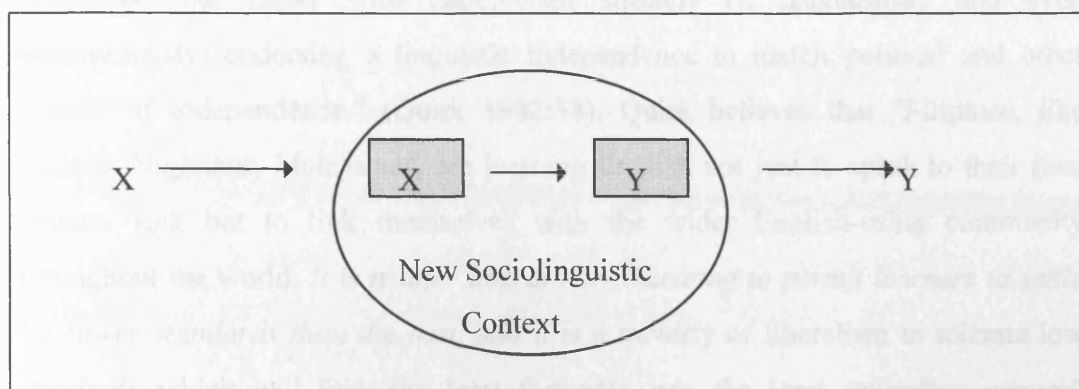
<sup>20</sup> It is worth pointing out at this point that all performance varieties are creative and have stable semantic and other linguistic features, yet they are regarded as no more than performance varieties.

*If on the other hand you ask: 'Can he ever learn to use it like a native speaker?' I should say: 'I have not. It is neither necessary, nor desirable for him to be able to do so...I feel the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, stay in communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings.'*

For Bamgbose (1998:1), “Innovations in non-native Englishes are often judged not for what they are or their function within the varieties in which they occur, but rather according to how they stand in relation to the norms of native Englishes. To this extent, it is no exaggeration to say that these innovations are torn between two sets of norms”.

Görlach (1994:103) pointed out that innovation is much more conspicuous than conservatism in the spoken non-native varieties of English. “This fact is most easily exemplified in the case of vocabulary, where the need to designate new objects is an obvious source of lexical innovation, and the desire to be witty, creative, unusual, etc. is another. It is quite obvious that there will be many opportunities for the first type of innovation in a foreign country, but the expressive innovations, too, may be more frequent, because more called for, in a new colonial society” (ibid:105). Diagram 4.6 demonstrates how a word with meaning X would acquire meaning Y when used in a new sociolinguistic context (within the ellipse in Diagram 4.6). The new meaning would then spread across the whole new nation and, in some cases, across neighbouring nations as well, or even spread internationally.

**Diagram (4.6): Semantic change motivated by the background language and culture: an illustration.**



The implication of this phenomenon is that semantic change in place may at first be gradual or register-specific, but slowly it spreads. Approaching the regional varieties of English as languages in their own right, in terms of their semantic development, can be appealing research into the stability and creativity of these varieties. Descriptivists are fighting a lost cause (at least for the time being) to use these facts about regional varieties as a justification for arguing for the standardization of these varieties at the expense of the world language. The important question that needs to be considered when arguing for such an issue is: What is the future of standard English in relation to the nativized varieties of English? Will standard English become unintelligible to the speakers of the indigenized varieties the same way as these varieties are unintelligible to the native speakers of English? The next sections discuss some replies to this question.

#### **4.4.3 The Question of Intelligibility**

One major motivation for having a norm is that it maintains intelligibility and wider access. It has been argued by Quirk (1988 [1991]:165) that “to displace Standard English from the centre of attention is to deny learners access to the wider world of international communication”. Hence, “the divergence between one country’s



English and another is seen to be in danger of growing much more seriously wide, with no common educational or communicational policy even theoretically applicable, but rather with nationalism strongly (if haphazardly and even unconsciously) endorsing a linguistic independence to match political and other aspects of independence.” (Quirk 1982:38). Quirk believes that “Filipinos, like Indians, Nigerians, Malaysians, are learning English not just to speak to their own country folk but to link themselves with the wider English-using community throughout the world. *It is neither liberal nor liberating to permit learners to settle for lower standards than the best*, and it is a travesty of liberalism to tolerate low standards which will lock the least fortunate into the least rewarding careers” [Emphasis added] (1988 [1991]:173).

Intelligibility from the perspective of descriptive linguistics is not so simple a matter. In order to be understood three questions need to be answered. First, how is intelligibility to be defined? Smith and Nelson (1985) have shown that it is important to distinguish several aspects, namely intelligibility, comprehensibility, and interpretability, and suggest the following definitions (ibid:334):

1. intelligibility: is concerned with word/utterance recognition. That is, the hearer is able to recognize the word at the phonetic level.
2. comprehensibility: is concerned with word/utterance meaning (locutionary force). The hearer is able to understand the meaning of a sentence such as ‘Can you pass the salt?’ as a speech act.
3. interpretability: is concerned with meaning behind word/utterance meaning (illocutionary force). The hearer is able to understand the intention of the speaker and does pass the salt.

All three are necessary for communication, but Smith and Nelson (1985) show that the most serious misunderstandings occur at the level of comprehensibility and

interpretability. These aspects are closely related to the context of situation and provide additional evidence for choosing a standard that will favour interpretability in the particular context where English will be used.

The second question that must be addressed is: who should be the judge of intelligibility? In prescriptive literature this role has been given exclusively to the native speaker. In functional literature, on the other hand, “Intelligibility has to be defined in regional, national, and international terms” (Bamgbose 1998:11).

Smith (1983:20) proposes a new world view of English recognizing that the language does not belong solely to its native speakers. Decisions will be made by the participants. These will be native and non-native speakers in some contexts, various groups of non-native speakers in other, and finally native speakers of different national varieties in yet other situations.

Third, if students are to be intelligible, to whom should they be intelligible? In the context of the Outer Circle, speakers should be intelligible both intranationally and internationally. Their ability is probably seen as a cline by Kachru and not as either/or option. The example of communication within the United Arab Emirates, cited earlier, certainly supports this.

Bamgbose (1998:10) noted that “Preoccupation with intelligibility has often taken an abstract form characterized by decontextualized comparison of varieties. The point is often missed that it is people, not language codes, that understand one another, and people use the varieties they speak for specific functions”. To Bamgbose (*ibid*), what needs to be asked is “who speaks what variety to whom and for what purposes. It is in this regard that intra-variety intelligibility becomes more important than inter-variety intelligibility”. He then rightly says that:

*It must be remembered that all varieties of English, native and non-native, remain dialects of the English language. If they did not, we would today not be talking of Singapore English, Cameroon English, Sierra Leone English, but rather separate languages designated by the national names, i.e., Singaporean, Cameroonian, and Sierra Leonian. It would also have been impossible for an American to read, with some understanding, an editorial in Kenyan or Ghanaian newspaper.*

#### **4.4.4 English: The language or a Family of Languages**

Prescriptive linguistics allows for the standardization of the development of English along the dimension of time, but not along the dimension of place. This is because standardizing change in place can provoke the fragmentation of English. Quirk (1985:3) voiced the fear that the encouragement of national standards would lead English to the fate suffered by Latin:

*Small wonder that there should have been in recent years fresh talk of the diaspora of English into several mutually incomprehensible languages. The fate of Latin after the fall of the Roman Empire presents us with such distinct languages as French Spanish, Romanian, and Italian. With the growth of national separatism in English-speaking countries, linguistically endorsed not least by the active encouragement of the anti-standard ethos I have just mentioned, many foresee a similar fissiparous future in English. A year or so ago, much prominence was given to the belief expressed by R. W. Burchfield that a century from now the languages of Britain and America would be as different as French is from Italian.*

A similar warning on a possible collapse of worldwide English through the standardization of local diversification was pronounced by Greenbaum (1985:32) when he commented on Kachru's (1985) paper entitled "The English language in a global context":

*If the educated varieties of the 'outer circle' assume the status of national standards without reference to the international norms of the 'inner circle', will they diverge too far to remain part of the international standard English? (In Quirk & Widdowson 1985).*

Other linguists, like Trudgill (1975), Görlach (1988), Widdowson (1997) and McArthur (1998), can be regarded as mild prescriptivists because they do not refer to the non-native varieties of English as erroneous varieties. They just do not recognize them as languages in their own right. "For this is to imply that ... they are developments of different virtual languages: not Ghanaian or Nigerian English but Ghanaian or Nigerian, *tout court*." (Widdowson 1997:141-2). This is the position referred to in the introduction, whereby a linguist who adopts a descriptive approach to *English in time* (e.g. Trudgill) supports prescriptivism directed towards *English in place* in order to secure the future of English as the world language. Trudgill (1975:84) wrote that (Compare these lines by Trudgill to those quoted on page 13):

*This is that English is a world language of considerable importance in communication, and that we should therefore insist on standard English in schools so that (a) there is no danger of a breakdown in communication in the English-speaking world, and (b) foreigners learning and using English should have some standard to go by. As far as the first point is concerned, ... there is no danger of English fragmenting to the point of loss of communication. On the contrary, in the modern situation, convergence is much more probable than divergence. We cannot say, then, as many people believe, that it is*

*only a dedicated band of school-teachers that is managing to hold the English language together.*

Running in this same vein is Widdowson's (1997:142) argument:

*A particular virtual language gets variously actualized over a period by communities adapting it to their changing needs. If these communities have reason to assert their own independent identity, they will gradually generate their own norms dissociated from previous coding conventions. They will be oriented inwards rather than outwards, and their actual language then ceases to be exonormative ... and becomes endonormative as a separate language.*

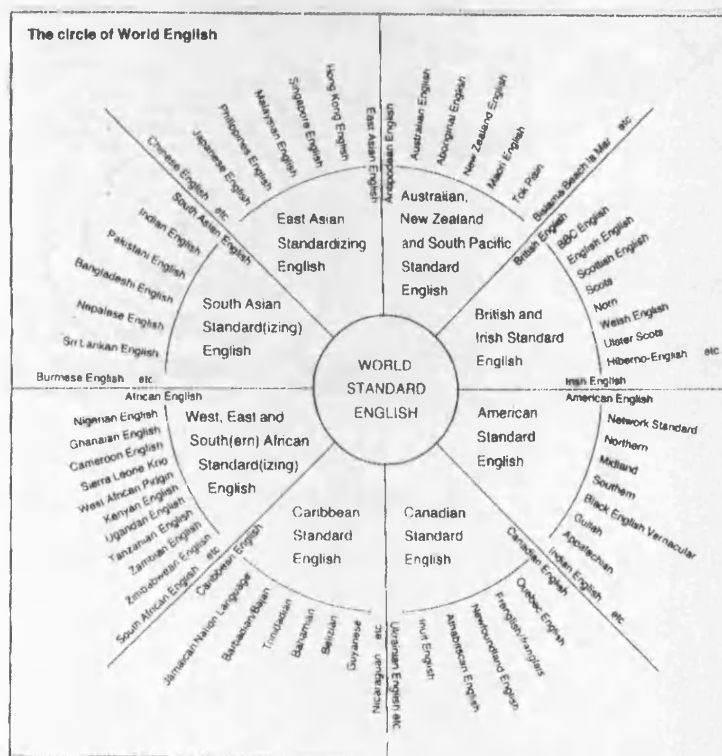
Cheng (1982) noted that when China was outward looking toward the Western technology and inspiration, the Chinese variety of English was much closer to the norm of British and/or American, that is, less nativized. On the other hand, when China looked inward, the English became more nativized. The distinct Chinese cultural element in English is shown mostly in phrases coined during political movements in recent decades. An example is *a capitalist roader* (From Chinese *zou zi pai*, 'someone who takes the road leading to capitalism'). This term is not readily understandable from its constituent words and, hence unintelligible to outsiders who are not familiar with the Chinese political culture (Cheng 1982:133).

According to Widdowson (1997:143), one way of resolving the "dilemma is to let English diversify into kinds of independent dialects, but keep it in place as a range of register". That is, the variety of language which has developed to serve uses for language rather than uses of it, such as English used for banking, commerce, various branches of science and technology. The emphasis here is on communication and

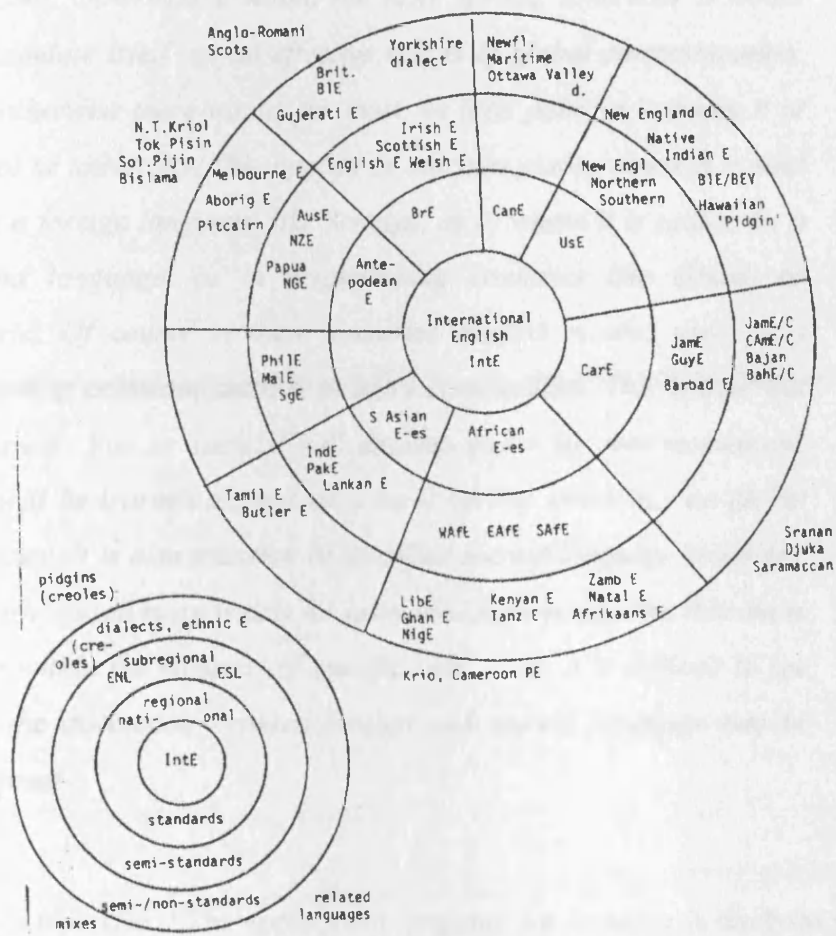
information rather than community and identity. Widdowson's position is based on his belief that English has primarily spread as an international language. This means that learners "learn the language not to conform to any national norms of general use, but to co-operate as members in international modes of communication" (ibid:144).

Widdowson's and Trudgill's standpoint regarding English as an international language is very much similar to McArthur's (1998) model of World English and Görlach's (1988) International English (See diagrams 4.7 and 4.8). In these models, International or World English is depicted as a standard norm placed in the centre of a circle and all the other varieties as linked to that norm. The implication is that if international communication is to take place variations will melt away under the heat of the core form.

**Diagram (4.7): McArthur's model of World English (1998:97).**



**Diagram (4.8): Görlach's (1988) circle model of International English (In MCArthur 1998:101).**



It should be noted that this model of English (i.e. a ‘monolithic’ standard) is based on the view that English as a world language (i.e. English as a second or foreign language) is English for a limited set of purposes. Widdowson (1997:144) wrote that:

*English as an international language is English for specific purposes. Otherwise it would not have spread, otherwise it would not regulate itself as an effective means of global communication. And otherwise there would, for most, be little point in learning it at school or university. This applies as much to places where it is said to be a foreign language, like Senegal, as to where it is said to be a second language, as in neighbouring countries like Ghana or Nigeria. Of course in these countries English is also used as a medium of communication in primary communities. This is true, but irrelevant. For as such...it will develop under its own momentum, and will be learned anyway as a local variety which has no global currency. It is also true that in so-called second language countries, English is used more widely for institutional purposes. But then these come within the compass of specific uses... . So it is difficult to see how the distinction between foreign and second language can be sustained.*

From this perspective, “The appropriate language for learning is likely to be very different from the authentic language of use” (ibid:145). The influence of this view on ELT is examined in the next part. It will suffice at this point to mention that this notion of the model of English is perhaps the main reason why English is diversifying in place. Chevillet (1994; translation by McArthur 1998:31) points to this fact saying that :



*This kind of 'standardization' would appear to be spreading. It will be of truly great use in the twenty-first century. But it will never be enough for the poet or the novelist, because it is not equipped to express human experience in all its complexity. That is why every speaker of English - whether American, English, Jamaican, or Indian - will soon need to be bilingual: on the one hand, to continue refining a rich, particular and personal English so as to affirm their own identities, on the other to master a world English that lets them communicate on a planetary level.*

#### **4.5 Summary and Conclusion:**

This chapter has concerned itself with the bearings that the concept of a 'monolithic' standard as the medium of communication in all English-speaking countries (including countries where English is used as L2) has on the study of the semantic development of English in place. It has been shown that the concept of a 'monolithic' standard involves treating the socio-cultural and linguistic norms of the Anglo-Saxons' nation as international norms. This makes the world language incapable of carrying the weight of the diverse cultures and thoughts of its non-native speakers without considerable change or adjustment. This adjustment, which is based on the socio-linguistic make up of L1 as well as the distinctive imaginative creativity of the speakers of English as L2, has given rise not only to the emergence of so called 'new Englishes' or 'world Englishes', but also to the question of the ownership of the language. This has led to work on meaning in place focusing on nationalistic issues that have nothing to do with historical research. The consequence of this is the failure of linguists (western and non-western alike) to examine the regional varieties of English as languages in their own right, in terms of their semantic development. This, in turn has resulted in the non-recognition of the crucial role played by metaphor in the development these varieties. Hence, the concept of a 'monolithic' standard may be said to have the consequence of research on the instability of meaning turning from a diachronic study into a nationalistic issue. The

following lines summarize the controversies on which the positions investigated in this chapter are built.

## **Prescriptive Linguistics**

### *1. Position:*

Nativist monomodel

### *2. Attitude:*

Us versus them dichotomy

Emphasis on integrative motivation

Emphasis on international roles

Non recognition of institutionalization

### *4. Methodology:*

Error-oriented approach

Emphasis on static

Marginalizing sociolinguistic contexts

Non recognition of verbal repertoire

## **Descriptive Linguistics**

### *1. Position:*

Functional polymodel

### *2. Attitude:*

Us as different from them

Emphasis on instrumental motivation

Emphasis on intranational roles

Emphasis on systemicness of varieties

### *4. Methodology:*

Innovation-oriented approach

Emphasis on dynamic

Emphasis on “context of situation”

Emphasis on cline of bilingualism

The next chapter uncovers another consequence of the concept of a ‘monolithic’ standard. It shows how the association of the standard with the norms of an ideal native speaker and the belief that English as a world language is English for a limited range of purposes have given rise to teaching methods that focus on the ‘fixed’ and ‘basic’ norms of the English vocabulary. Modern vocabulary teaching methods are claimed to be the outcome of adjusting ‘etymology’ to fit the model of a ‘monolithic’ standard.

## *Part Three*

### MEANING IN PLACE AND THE ROLE OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS

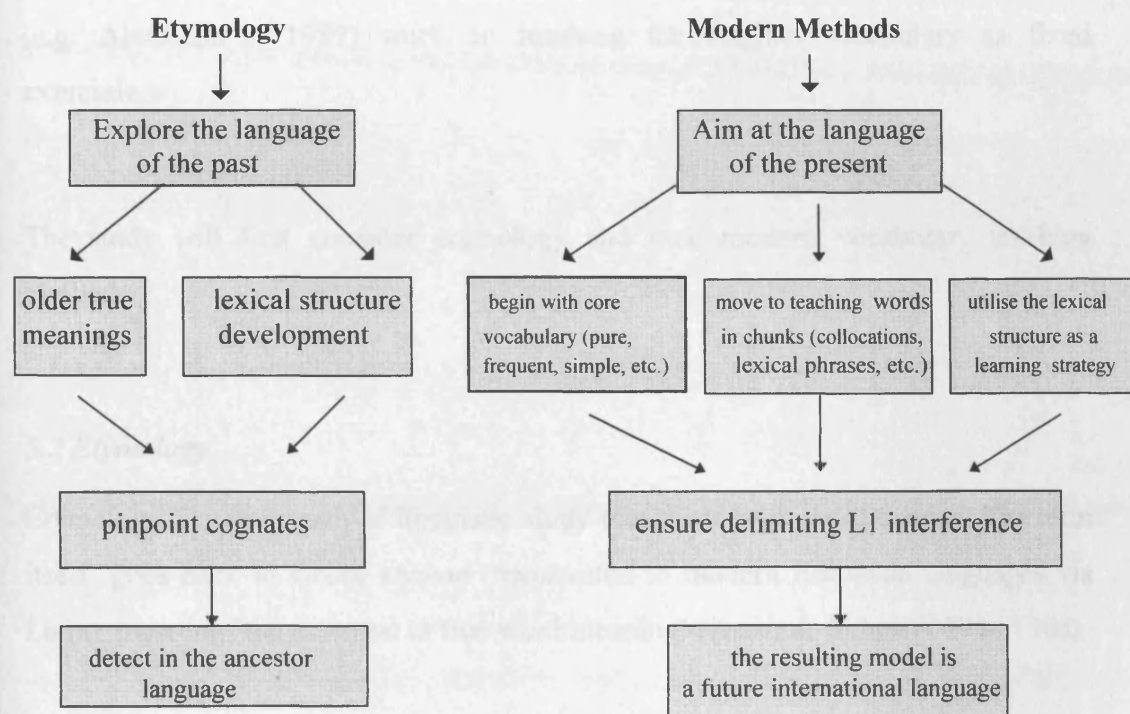
*ALONG THE TRACKS OF ETYMOLOGY*

**5.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter has concerned itself with the bearings that the concept of a ‘monolithic’ standard has on the study of meaning in place. This chapter focuses on the effects that the standard has on vocabulary teaching methods. It depicts modern vocabulary teaching methods as the outcome of adjusting ‘etymology’ to fit the model of a ‘monolithic’ standard. The chapter argues that the divorce of etymology from pedagogy has not emancipated pedagogy from linguistic purism. It presents the view that modern vocabulary teaching methods march along the same tracks laid down by etymology. It is argued, however, that the cause of the marching is different: instead of seeking to defend the supremacy of the ancestor language (as is the case in etymology), in modern methods, there seems to be a tendency to defend the supremacy of the Anglo-Saxons’ language. It can therefore be claimed that modern vocabulary teaching methods are the nationalistic face of purism underlying etymology. This point can be better clarified by drawing a picture of the main principles that distinguish etymology from the modern pedagogical approaches to vocabulary. Consider Diagram 5.1 overleaf.

Diagram 5.1 suggests that the main difference between etymology and modern vocabulary teaching methods is that while the classical method dives into the past to detect ‘prototype’ vocabulary norms by consulting families of languages (i.e. the norms of mother languages from which sister languages descend), modern methods select the ‘prototype’ norms of the English vocabulary for the world version of the language, thus, dealing with English as though it is the mother of thought and cultures.

**Diagram (5.1): Etymology versus modern vocabulary teaching methods.**



Another difference between etymology and modern vocabulary teaching methods suggested by Diagram 5.1 is that within the framework of etymology the original meaning of a word (i.e. historically the first used meaning in the mother language) is the only or major meaning that is held to be true, whereas, in modern methods, the meanings of words are seen to be correct (and hence true) only or mainly when they are used within the limitations of the 'standard' English discourse.

As mentioned above, the development of etymology into modern vocabulary teaching methods is seen to be influenced by the concept a 'monolithic' standard. That is why modern methods are referred to here as the 'nationalistic face' of

etymology. It should be noted, however, that the ‘nationalistic’ trend in ELT is not necessarily intentional, deliberate, or planned. More acceptably, it is an unintended effect. Thus, in many cases, there are side effects which are not intended as realizations of nationalism, but which may still have the same effects, even indirectly (e.g. Alexander’s (1989) work on teaching the English vocabulary as fixed expressions).

The study will first consider etymology and then modern vocabulary teaching methods.

## 5.2 Etymology

Etymology is the branch of linguistic study that deals with word origins. The term itself goes back to Greek *etymon* (transmitted to modern European languages via Latin) meaning ‘the essential or true word meaning’ (Asher & Simpson 1994:1168).

Etymology gained a foothold as an important tool for the teaching of meaning as early as the classical era. This is a logical consequence of classicists having been deeply engrossed in revealing the true meanings of words that modern meanings have (deviated) from:

*Etymology, which investigated the origin of words, was called ‘marking’ (notatio) by Cicero because Aristotle used the word οναμβολονα, which means mark (nota). For Cicero himself, who used to coin words, held in great respect the scholarship involved in tracing one word to another as this was one way of discovering truth<sup>1</sup> (A.D. 100 (Quintillian) 923: I. vi. 28).*

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<sup>1</sup> Translation in Kelly (1969:29-30).

The classicists viewed the etymology of a word as the citation of an earlier word first in the native language and then, if desired, in any other source language (being unaware of, or at least less explicit about, the difference between related and unrelated languages). But their attempts to relate the histories of items in different languages are by no means disciplined or exact. The basis they relied upon was the intuitive judgement which rests on the linkage of words and things (Kelly 1969:30; Palmer 1972:300; Bright 1992:424-425). This was motivated by the belief that “a word remains the same - although its form and meaning change - as a sort of Platonic form that maintains its purity and unity beyond all accidental changes” (Crowley 1989:111-2). Bright (1992:425) noted that the development of classical etymology has been neither linear nor cumulative, since the ancient Greeks failed to look seriously outside Greek and the Romans, in their adulation of Greek learning models, neglected their neighbouring Italic laboratory.

During the Middle Ages, in the context of an increased tendency towards archaism in scholarship, etymology asserted its position as a major method for regulating meaning. Etymologists during this period went so far as to break up words and find histories for their dismembered morphemes. Isidore of Seville (550), for example, claimed that (In Kelly, 1969: 30):

*Meridies is used to refer to midday as the day is then purer. Meros means ‘pure’. Meros is Greek, and Purus is Latin.*

Such studies which dominated the era in question do not apparently follow any scientific method or penetrating theory, but they could (perhaps) be systematic and consistent within their own terms. There is a danger of the *ad hoc* selection of examples and ignoring of counter-examples.

However, during the Renaissance etymology witnessed such progress that it became a discipline rather than a groundless speculation; a comparative method based on the phonological and semantic correspondence of words in related languages. This is due to the interest in Romance languages (French, Spanish, Italian, Romanian, and Portuguese) and the realisation that these living languages are direct descendants of Latin. Hence, Latin *cōr* became depicted as the prototype of French *cœur*, Italian *cuore*, Portuguese *cór*, Old Spanish *cuer*, and so forth (Asher & Simpson 1994:1169). This in turn has contributed a great deal to regarding etymology as a key concept in language teaching (Kelly 1969:31; Bright 1992: 425). The attempt to establish the ‘oldest’ form of the word by consulting the historical hierarchy of languages (Crowley 1989: 112) therefore is no more than an attempt to reveal the ‘original’ or ‘pure’ form of the word. But this is (of course) a more sound basis for linguistic purism than classicists’ etymology.

During the next two centuries, etymological inquiries transcended the limit of focusing on isolated words to concentrate on word families. As a consequence, the concept of ‘root’ which refers to *a head word from which a family of derivatives emerge* occupied a very important position in the teaching of vocabulary. A case in point is the verbal root *ed-* ‘eat’ which was regarded as the common core of English *eat and tooth* (together with their cognates in other languages) (Kelly 1969:31; Palmer 1972:303). An etymological enquiry digging beneath the surface of words was considered by Swift (1712) as the most important stride towards meeting the possibility of ‘purifying’ the language. Swift’s aim was to impose the idea that adopting the pure forms as a refined standard of the English language can fix it for ever (from Crowley 1989:93, 111). However, the failure to establish such a standard and to prevent variations from finding their way into English has led to the abandonment of the concept of morphological primitives in the nineteenth century.

During that century, the continued interest in cognates contributed a great deal to preserving the prestige of etymology. The comparative method was seen as useful in facilitating the acquisition of a second European language vocabulary. For English



speakers learning German, for example, it would be very easy to learn a list of words that looks as follows (Elgin 1973:48):

English	German
blood	Blut
hand	Hand
father	Vater
sister	Schwester
hut	Hütte
birch	Hirke
wind	Wind
door	Tür

Knowledge of systematic sound-spelling correspondence would help learners identify meanings through transfer from L1 to L2. This could be useful for speakers of European languages learning other European languages who may become aware of cognates, but it is of little help for, say, Arab students learning English.

A twentieth-century teacher would very likely treat etymology with caution, since change of meaning came to be viewed as a normal process rather than a result of linguistic decay. For example the identification of English *hand* and *finger* with German *Hand* and *Finger* would meet little resistance - it is accurate and helpful for learners; whereas other cognates would be referred to as dangerous now that the connection between the linguistic sign and the real object is seen as arbitrary (Kelly 1969:32; Palmer 1972:301). Yet, this caution did not exclude etymology from the classroom altogether, but it tended to remain a scholastic discipline that can be defined as follows:

*an etymology is an excerpt, over a selected bundle of morphological and semantic features, from the known historical grammar(s) of a set*

*of culturally connected language stages. To every extent possible, the dating of all stages and attested forms must be specified, either through RELATIVE CHRONOLOGY or through external evidence or documentation. As an excerpt, a good etymology will mention as many ancestor and related forms and stages as are relevant, and permitted by constraints of space and format. If the total reconstruction cannot be shown, sufficient forms should be supplied to outline and substantiate the argument (Bright 1992:426).*

However, the twentieth century could not escape some singular attempts to re-include etymology in the lexical syllabus. Devine, for example, wrote in (1981:128):

*When students see the historical backgrounds of words like 'bonfire', 'education', 'candidate', 'rock-and-roll', or 'television', their study of the more formal aspects of vocabulary is enriched.*

Devine also finds it very useful if students would know, for example, that “ten Latin and two Greek roots lie at the heart of over 2,000 English words!” (ibid:138). The effort to reorder such widely used roots would be useful and productive, certainly for word recognition, perhaps especially for students whose first language is not a European language. See the examples below:

#### *Roots*

##### **Latin**

facio (do, make)  
duco (lead, bring forward)  
tendo (stretch)  
plico (fold)  
mitto (send)  
pono (place)  
teneo (hold, have)  
fero (carry)

#### *English Examples*

facilitate  
educate  
tendon  
complicate  
transmit or remit  
postpone  
tenacity  
transfer

capio (take, seize)  
specio (see, observe)

capture  
spectator

**Greek**

logos (speech or thinking)  
grapho (write)

logical  
phonograph, autograph

Pierson (1989:57), however, believes that “a *meaningful* approach to etymology in second-language learning, as opposed to rote memorization of words, prefixes, suffixes and roots, can offer intermediate/advanced second-language students both practical and theoretical linguistic knowledge congenial to a more permanent retention of words and concepts”. He noted that by etymologically analysing a familiar lexical item into its constituent parts, learners would gain such an understanding of this item that it would not be difficult for them to recognize its meaning in unfamiliar contexts. An etymological analysis of the word *circuit*, for example, “would reveal two distinct linguistic components of Latin origin, *circum* from a preposition meaning *around*, and *eo* from the verb meaning *to go*. Combined, the two segments convey the notion *to go around*. Such etymological information would make the meaning of phrases like *circuitous reasoning* and *racing circuit* recognizable and comprehensible to students” (ibid:58).

Pierson also believes that etymology is “a potent cultural learning tool” (ibid:62). He wrote (ibid):

*the key to knowing Western culture at its deepest level begins in an understanding of the Graeco-Roman and Hebraeo-Christian cultural roots which have shaped it. These roots are evident in the languages of the West. A systematic knowledge of word origins would do much to nurture mutual cultural understanding and respect.*

It is clear that Pierson's argument for instruction in etymology involves adjusting the method so that it becomes a tool for exposing learners to the semantic and cultural bases of the English vocabulary rather than a search for an 'original' meaning in time. As shown in section 5.4, modern vocabulary teaching methods are built on the same model suggested by Pierson. This adjustment, however, is very necessary for the ELT profession to fulfill the roles it has been created for. The section to follow summarizes the reasons behind creating the ELT profession.

### ***5.3 Spreading the English Tongue***

One tendency to confirm the high position that English occupied during the colonial era was that it became the symbol of cultivation and authority (Phillipson 1992:79). For example, an educated Zambian commented that<sup>2</sup> :

*People who went to school and speak English consider themselves 'elite', upper class....In Tanzania and Zambia people carry English newspapers just to be seen - even if they cannot read it [English] and hold them upside down.*

Realizing the success of their policy to promote English during the colonial era, Great Britain and the United States decided in the aftermath of World War II to combat the propaganda of the Fascist States and to extend their influence worldwide by continuing to use English as a vehicular language. This tendency is evident in the statement of Prince of Wales (later Edward VIII, and later still Duke of Windsor) that he gave at the ceremony of official inauguration in (1935):

*The basis of our work must be the English language . . . (and) we are aiming at something more profound than just a smattering of our*

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<sup>2</sup> From Platt, Weber, and Ho 1984:29.

*tongue. Our object is to assist the largest number possible to appreciate fully the glories of our literature, our contribution to the arts and sciences, and our pre-eminent contribution to political practice. This can be best achieved by promoting the study of our language abroad . . . (In Pennycook, 1994: 147).*

But, for this to happen, would involve supporting the creation of the ELT profession on the part of the two main powers in question, as noted by the British Ministry of Education in (1956:3):

*opportunities unquestionably existed for increasing the use of English as the main second language in most parts of the non-English speaking world.... within a generation from now English could be a world language—that is to say a universal second language in those countries in which it is not already the native or primary tongue. The tide is still running in its favour, but with slackening force . . . it is important that its expansion should take place mainly under Commonwealth and United States auspices (In Phillipson 1991: 49).*

The goals of the ELT profession which came to be identified largely with the organizations typified by the British Council and a number of American institutions (like the US Office of Education, Department of State, the Agency for International Development, the Defence Department and the Peace Corps) was not only for the Anglo-American culture and civilisation to have an effect on the world, but also to restructure the whole world of overseas students (Phillipson 1992:166; Pennycook 1994:153):

*The teaching of English to non-native speakers may permanently transform the students' whole world. Such teaching should be within the total linguistic and educational requirements for the economic, social, and human development of the host country (Anglo-American Conference Report 1961:7; In Phillipson 1992:166).*

However, what was first an emphasis on Westernization or national propaganda overseas, later developed into primarily an economic situation after witnessing the growing demand for English materials, human resources and innovations (e.g. books, jobs for English teachers, ideas, teaching principles, etc.). Illuminating this fact, the Director General of the British Council stated in the 1987/88 *Annual Report* (page 8) that:

*Britain's real black gold is not North Sea oil but the English language. It has long been the root of our culture and now is fast becoming the global language of business and information. The challenge facing us is to exploit it to the full (In Phillipson 1992:49).*

It is clear that the spread of English has not occurred in a policy vacuum. It was largely a matter of promoting the status of the English-speaking nations overseas, but also the employment of the language as a medium for dominating the world econoculturally (if this is true of British English, it is even more true of American English). The success of the ELT profession in fulfilling the roles assigned to it may be attributed to the success of pedagogues in adjusting the one-time emphasis on etymology to fit the model of a 'monolithic' standard which was increasingly promoted around the world. However, as shown in the section to follow, this adjustment has had unintended consequences of 'nationalistic' effects, namely focusing on the prototype norms of the English vocabulary and teaching them as fixed norms (i.e. not as flexible lexical items that can be extended in meaning and used creatively).

## **5.4 Modern Vocabulary Teaching Methods**

The modern history of vocabulary teaching witnessed the development of a number of movements that may be said to be descendants of etymology. One of these movements is referred to as ‘core’ English.

### **5.4.1 Core English**

‘Core’ English as a linguistic trend is built on the belief that:

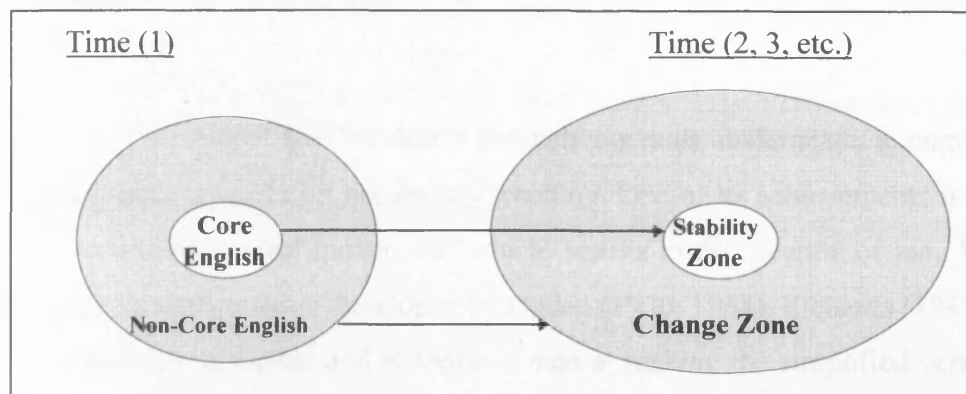
*English vocabulary has a central area ‘whose anglicity is unquestioned’, which contains a smaller, naturally occurring common core. Within this, it is also possible to select, for some communicative or pedagogical purpose, a planned nuclear English. The wider and the more restricted foci have fuzzy boundaries and shade off imperceptibly into marginal and peripheral forms including obsolete words (restricted to earlier temporal dialects), regional words (restricted to particular geographical dialects), rare, specialist, technical or foreign words (restricted to certain fields of discourse), colloquial or slang words (restricted to particular tenors of discourse) and literary words (restricted to an intersection of field and mode<sup>3</sup>), and so on (Stubbs 1986:103).*

On that account, ‘core’ English refers to that pure and stable area of the basic English vocabulary which does not reflect any type of change, either linguistic or extra-linguistic. This may be demonstrated diagrammatically as follows:

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<sup>3</sup> Mode in this context means ‘writing’.

**Diagram (5.2):** Core English conceived as a stable semantic or lexical structure over time.



‘Core’ English can be called neo-etymology. The difference between etymology and this offspring is that instead of going back in time to determine prototype vocabulary norms by consulting families of languages, ‘core’ English starts from the prototype norms of the English vocabulary (apparently detaching itself from its ancestor and sister languages) and claims that they are adequate for the expression of the diversity of experience across cultures. Quirk (1982) and Stubbs (1986) put forth the hypothesis that ‘core’ English as an integral part of the structural organisation of the vocabulary is self-contained and communicatively adequate for general or every day living purposes<sup>4</sup>.

Selecting the core of the English vocabulary for English as an international language has been justified by Quirk (1982:42-3) on the point that now that the feasibility of constructing an artificially universal language for communication, including Esperanto, has been practically excluded, the world needs to adapt one of its natural languages to meet that need, and English seems to be the chosen one “(need is

<sup>4</sup> It is worth noting here that ‘core’ and ‘basic’ seem to refer to the same nuclear area of the core. However, ‘basic’ from a pedagogical point of view would refer to words taught and learnt easily in a beginners’ course for English as a foreign language. This might be distinct from core English if words taught early are not core words. This is unlikely in practice, except for restricted examples in EGP or ESP. For practical purposes and for general English, core and basic refer to the same thing, but this is a practical likelihood, not a necessity.



important and implies willingness to pay the price - educational, social, cultural, even financial)” (Quirk 1982:42).

The concept of ‘core’ (or ‘nuclear’) English operates underneath a number of influential modern works on vocabulary teaching. One of its achievements is the so called ‘vocabulary control movement’ which results in the creation of long lists of basic English, such as those developed by Ogden (1930, 1968), Richards (1942), and West (1953). While Ogden and Richards aimed at making the simplified version of English as a medium for universal communication, West’s objective was to select those 2000 words the knowledge of which can give learners an access to about 80 per cent of the total number of words in any written texts (From Carter & McCarthy 1988).

In the 1980s, some researchers (e.g. Quirk 1982 and Stubbs 1986) suggested a number of criteria for selecting the core vocabulary of English. Nuclear words are those that possess the following properties (Stubbs 1986:104-110):

(1). Nuclear words are pragmatically neutral in a number of respects:

a. They are free from culture-specific uses. Hence, they are easy to translate between languages. A case in point is the verb *give* which, unlike the previously mentioned example *donate*, has no cultural restrictions. Further examples from nuclear English are words such as *sleep, eat, sun, earth, etc.* since they refer to universal human experience and natural physical phenomena. Quirk (1982:43) attempts to set up a variety of a language which is “as culture-free as calculus, with no literary, aesthetic or emotional aspirations”. Stubbs (1986), however, points out that the idea of core as relative to particular geographical or cultural areas must be pondered. For example, in Western Europe and North America words such as *aeroplane, upstairs* and *schools* would be admitted as core. However, many areas of the world have little need for these words in their everyday life.

**b.** Nuclear words do not necessarily convey any attitudinal, emotional or evaluative information. A nuclear word like *thin*, for example, can have both positive and negative connotations, as in the examples ‘she is lovely and thin.’ and ‘she is terribly thin.’. Nuclear words, then, have the potential of occurring in a very wide range of contexts and collocations.

**c.** Nuclear words give no indication of the field of discourse from which a text is taken. Thus, the words *port* and *starboard* immediately recall nautical or aeronautical contexts. Whereas, items like *left* and *right* which have almost the same logical meaning are not restricted in this way at all: they give no immediate information about the social setting of the language used.

**d.** Nuclear words are also neutral with respect to tenor of discourse: they are not restricted either to formal or to casual usage. Hence alongside nuclear *mad*, there is formal *insane* and many colloquial words: *crackers*, *nuts*, *loony*, and so on.

**e.** Nuclear words are used in preference to non-nuclear words in summarising original texts. In an experiment performed by Stubbs, one hundred people were asked to summarise Hemingway’s short story ‘Cat in the rain’. Informants unanimously preferred the term *cat* to alternatives available within and outside the story, such as *kitten*, *pussy*, *moggy* and *feline*.

**(2).** Since nuclear words are generic rather than specific, it follows that:

**a.** they are superordinate rather than hyponyms. In this respect, the word *flower* is the nuclear item in relation to *rose*, *tulip*, etc.

**b.** Nuclear words can substitute for non-nuclear, but not vice versa, as in the case of *kill* when substituted for *murder*, *execute* or *assassinate*.

**c.** Nuclear words can also be used to define non-nuclear words. For example, *young* would be useful in defining *calf*, *lamb*, *puppy* and many other words.

**d.** Nuclear words can collocate with almost any noun. A case in point is the word *good*.

e. Nuclear words have obvious antonyms. As the case of *good*, *fat* and *clean* as opposed to *excellent*, *obese* and *spotless*.

f. Nuclear words also have the property of extension. As such, the words *block*, *key* and *time* are obvious candidates.

g. Nuclear words can help form compound lexical items. As the case of the word *run* which appears in a large number of combinations, like *runabout*, *runner* and phrasal verbs such as *run out* and *run up* (a debt).

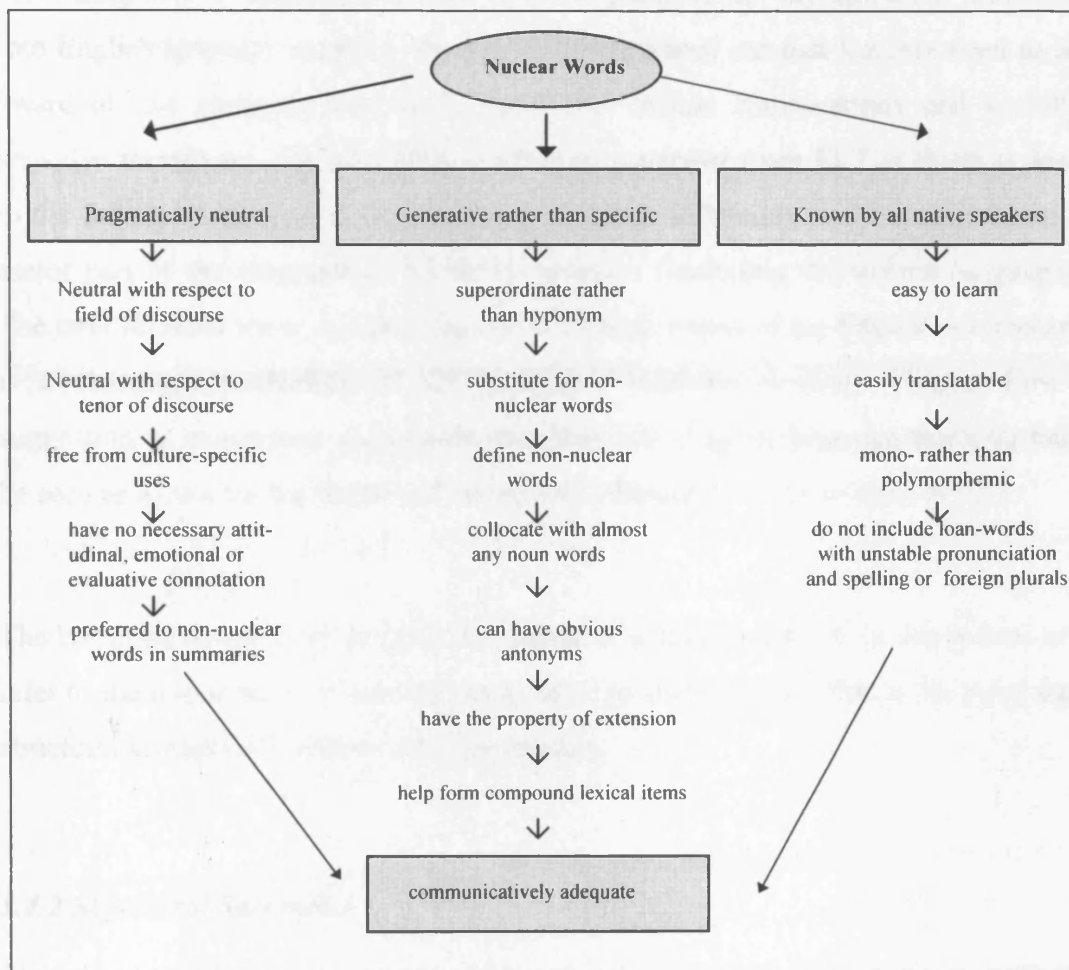
(3). Nuclear words are known by all native speakers, easy to learn and easily translatable. They will normally be mono- rather than polymorphemic and include no loan- words with unstable pronunciation and spelling or foreign plurals (Quirk 1982; Stubbs 1986). Commenting on these points Carter (1987:186) wrote that:

*in British English words based on Anglo-Saxon tend to be generally more core; that non-core words are less easily translatable (though the often polysemous nature of core words needs to be taken into account); and that, inflectionally, core words tend to be more irregular (perhaps reflecting that such words have sufficient centrality to resist regularization over a period of time).*

Diagram 5.3 overleaf summarizes the characteristics of nuclear words. Looking at these characteristics, it can be claimed that ‘core’ English is the unintended ‘nationalistic’ face of purism underlying etymology: treating the part of vocabulary whose ‘Anglicity’ is unquestioned as the prototype of linguistic experience to be used across the variety of cultures; drawing on the difficulties of loan-words as an excuse to exclude them from the list, and replacing foreign words with generic English words are all points supporting the claim. As for selecting pragmatically neutral words for ‘core’ English, it may be regarded as an unconscious attempt to preserve the English tongue from semantic change in place. When a word can be used to express diverse socio-cultural contexts, there will be no need to alter the

meaning of that word to suit global contexts. All this shows 'core' English to be the outcome of adjusting etymology to fit the model of a 'monolithic' standard.

**Diagram (5.3): Characteristics of 'nuclear' words (After Quirk 1982; Stubbs 1986).**



Another point about 'core' English is that it is influenced by the 'Western' understanding that standard English as a world language is English for a limited, unalterable range of purposes. This is an important reason why this movement focuses on the nuclear, stable area of the English vocabulary (i.e. the area that is suitable for communication through English at any moment of time) for the world version of the language. The consequence of this, however, is bleaching English of a major part of its semantic richness. In particular, this richness is an important aspect

of the flexibility of the English lexicon and its creative change (e.g. change based on metaphor). It has been noted in the previous chapters that language is basically a metaphorical structure, and that the metaphorical extensions of a basic term can be just as central to a given lexical category as its literal meaning(s). Low (1988) took a pioneering step in drawing attention to the importance of incorporating metaphor into English language teaching. He (ibid:132-4) pointed out that learners need to be aware of, for example, acceptable topic and vehicle combinations and socially sensitive metaphors. To Low (ibid), excluding metaphor from ELT is likely to lead to the failure of learners to use the target language efficiently and to comprehend a major part of the language of its native speakers (including the written language). The next sections show that the focus on the stable norms of the English vocabulary is a characteristic feature of all vocabulary teaching methods. Hence, Low's suggestion to incorporate conceptual metaphor into English language teaching may be seen as a cure for the neglect of creative developments of the lexicon in ELT.

The last point about 'core' English that needs to be mentioned here is that it does not refer to the importance of learning words in linguistic contexts. This is the point that structural semantics is concerned to emphasize.

#### ***5.4.2 Structural Semantics***

There is a basic agreement among scholars that the vocabulary of a language consists not of a series of isolated items, but rather of many interrelating networks of relations between words (Channell 1981:117; Maiguashca 1984:280). Evidence in psycholinguistics comes from speech errors made by native speakers (often called 'slips of the tongue') which suggest that the mind uses semantic similarity in classifying words. The following typical speech errors show that the wrong words, far from being random, share some meaning with the intended word. That is, they come from the same semantic field (Channell 1981:117):

**(a).** I have my book and my Jigsaw...I mean my crossword

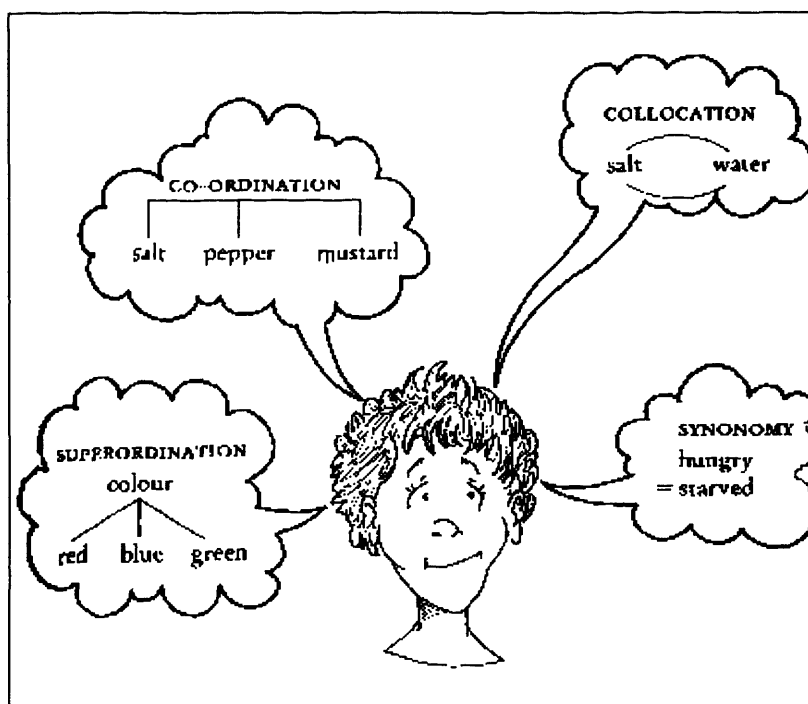
- (b). We invited him to...asked him to buy crisps
- (c). I really like to...hate to get up in the morning

In some cases, errors are the result of blending two words from the same semantic field (ibid):

- (a). \*I swindged (switched/changed)
- (b). \*momentaneous (instantaneous/momentary)
- (c). \*herrible (terrible/horrible)

Such speech errors suggest that the mental lexicon must be arranged in a complex network of relationships, quite unlike the simple alphabetical listing encountered in dictionaries. Words within so called 'human word-web' seem to be organized in semantic fields, depending on four types of links: co-ordination, collocation, superordination and synonymy, as illustrated by Aitchison (1987:75) in Diagram 5.4.

**Diagram (5.4): Types of link in the word-web (Aitchison 1987:75):**



It has been observed that the majority of errors made by intermediate and advanced learners of English as L2 are semantic in nature. This pinpoints the fact that if the paradigmatic relations are not given due weight in teaching English as L2 (as is the case in bilingual lists), L1 interference is likely to take place. An erroneous use of, for example, the English paradigm *high/tall* by Italian or French students of English (e.g. “John *is high* and slim”) is very likely, since this paradigmatic contrast of English does not apply to French or Italian. This point is illustrated as follows (Maiguashca 1984:278):

English	high	tall
French	haut	
Italian	alto	

Such an error is due, in most cases, not to lack of knowledge of the correct lexical items, but to the difficulty of determining the boundaries that separate words of related meaning (Sonaiya 1991:273,279). The following errors made by French speakers illustrate the influence of L1 on L2 (Channell 1981:115):

- (a). \*a *voyage* by train (journey)
- (b). \*I made an *experience* in the laboratory (experiment)
- (c). \*When may I *touch* Mr Ostyn? (contact)

To prevent foreign students from making such errors, Channell (1981) suggests that the vocabulary is better taught within the framework of ‘Componential analysis’. Breaking down word meanings into semantic components and incorporating them into a grid will make them visually explicit. For synonyms, for example, she suggested the grid below which includes verbs relevant to the field of surprise.

Channell believes that semantic grids “cannot represent everything which a native speaker ‘knows’ about a particular group of words. Nevertheless they certainly tell the learner more than isolated dictionary entries or textbook definitions” (ibid:119).

**Diagram 5.5: *Being Surprised*** (Channell 1981:119):

	affect with wonder	because unexpected	because difficult to believe	so as to cause confusion	so as to leave one helpless to act or think
surprise	+	+			
astonish	+		+		
amaze	+			+	
astound	+				+
flabbergast	+				+

A + sign in Diagram 5.5 means that the marked component is part of the meaning of the marked word. The absence of a + means either that the component is not part of the meaning of the word concerned, or that it is not distinctive in differentiating the word from others in the field. The result is a grid which tells the learner exactly what he needs to know about the relationships between words in the field, by making explicit their differences and similarities<sup>5</sup>.

Structural semantics contributes to the field of vocabulary teaching by showing that learning word meanings, far from being simple, is a complicated task that involves learning a complete semantic system of interrelated relations. This system is unique with regard to other languages. So it must be learnt monolingually and contextually and not by means of bilingual lists. However, structural semantics as an approach to pedagogy exhibits a tendency to create a method for teaching vocabulary in which meaning is presented to the learner as a static structure. This can be shown from the way grids are used: they allow no space for inserting new meanings, as if the implication is that this is how the system works and any change can disturb that system. Teaching words as stable rather than flexible semantic units can be taken as

<sup>5</sup> This approach has been extensively applied in Rudzka *et al.* (1985).



one effect of the concept of a ‘monolithic’ standard on the teaching method. Another effect (related to the understanding that World Standard English is English for a limited range of purposes) is that grids do not give the full semantic range of words, but only basic meanings. This is very similar to the practice of ‘core’ English. The difference is that ‘core’ English aims at spreading basic English *forms* whereas structural semantics emphasizes basic English *meanings*. Accordingly, the trends may be regarded as complementary ‘nationalistic’ faces for etymology, whereby the core norms of the English vocabulary are treated as the prototype of linguistic experience promoted on a global scale.

#### ***5.4.3 Assigning a Role to the Student: Cognitive Orientation***

Nation (1990:159) argues that “because of the large number of low-frequency words and because of their infrequent occurrence and narrow range, it is best to teach learners strategies for dealing with these words rather than to teach the words themselves”. Three strategies are suggested: mnemonic techniques, guessing words from contexts, and word parts.

##### ***5.4.3.1 Mnemonic Techniques***

This is a two-stage Keyword procedure for remembering the meaning of foreign language words. Stage 1, the acoustic link stage, involves associating the spoken foreign word to a ‘keyword’ from one’s native language that sounds like some part of the foreign word. Stage 2, the imagery link stage, requires the formation of a mental image of the keyword *interacting* with the translation of the native word (Raugh & Atkinson 1975:1). For example, if an Indonesian learner of English wants to remember the meaning of the English word *Parrot*. First the learner would think of an Indonesian word that sounds like *Parrot* or like a part of it - for example, the Indonesian word *parit*, which means ‘a ditch’. This is the keyword. Second, the learner would form a mental image of a parrot lying in a ditch. The more unusual the image, the more effective it is because it is more likely to be remembered (Nation 1990:166).

In their theory of ‘levels of processing’, Craik and Lockhart (1972) went further and suggested that the more that words are analysed (into affixes and roots) and enriched by associations or images, the longer they will stay in memory. This technique which involves the association of form and meaning is very much similar to the etymological analysis of words into Latin affixes and roots (From Nation 1990:167). This can be taken as evidence in favour of the claim that modern pedagogy is a new face for etymology, particularly for more imaginative speakers, but still seeing basic or root meanings. Using the mnemonic technique does not only involve learning English words as stable semantic units, but also utilising the vocabulary of L1 in the learning task. Suggesting this technique may be a conscious attempt to focus on L2 lexical learning, but clearly this use of an L1-L2 bridging keyword could encourage the interference of L1 which can lead to the emergence of non-standard vocabulary norms.

#### ***5.4.3.2 Guessing the Meaning of Words from Context***

“Once learners know around two or three thousand words, they can use the reading skills they have developed to infer the meanings of unknown words that they meet” (Nation 1990:160).

Studies of guessing words from context describe various types of clues that can provide information to help in guessing. These studies aim at encouraging foreign students to build up their English vocabulary in context (including the connotative values of English words) without resorting to multilingual dictionaries. It is well known that in spite of the fact that languages exhibit some universal properties deriving from the nature of humanity, “different cultures chop up the non-linguistic linguistic world in different ways, almost as if each used a different template in cutting out a jigsaw puzzle of the same photograph or painting” (Anthony 1975:28). For example, it is perfectly possible for words to have similar denotations and connotations cross-culturally, in which case the learner is not presented with any problem. Difficulty occurs when items of similar denotation have different

connotations. For example, while the connotations of the word *socialism* may be favourable or not, the word *communist* can have even more marked connotations of either approval or disapproval. Connotations are derived from the culture and are only understood fully when the culture itself is understood (Wilkins 1972:123). Clarke and Nation (1980:213) wrote that:

*for a general understanding of a reading passage it is often sufficient to appreciate the general meaning of a word. Indeed, it is a useful technique to urge learners not to be over-concerned about exact meanings. Too often the search for a synonym in their own language or the language they are studying meets with no success and has a discouraging effect. In many cases, it is sufficient to establish that the unknown word has a positive or negative value for adequate comprehension to take place.*

Clarke and Nation's (1980) strategy of guessing meanings from context consists of four steps. This strategy can be regarded as a step-by-step training for students to avoid thinking in their mother tongue. The first step is to look at the word itself and to decide on the part of speech (i.e. to determine whether it is a noun, a verb, an adjective, etc.). The second step is to look at the immediate grammar to determine the function of the unknown word (e.g. If the unknown word is a noun, what adjectives describe it? What verb is it near? That is, what does this noun do, or what is done to it?). Step 3 is to study the wider context (usually the conjunction relationships which include cause and effect, contrast, inclusion, time, exemplification, and summary). Step 4, guessing the word and checking the guess. There are three ways of checking: 1). Check that the part of speech of the meaning that you have guessed is the same part of speech as the word in the passage. 2). See if the word has a prefix, root, or suffix that might give a clue to the meaning. Finally, 3). Substitute your guess for the word in the passage and see if it makes sense (Clarke & Nation 1980: 215). Practising this strategy, to Bright and McGregor (1970:31), can lead to acquiring a skill that students should not be robbed of:

*Perhaps the most important thing of all is to remember that the ability to infer in this way is a skill that can only be acquired by practice. Every time we tell a pupil what a word means we are robbing him of a chance to practice this skill.*

The question that one is likely to think about in this connection is: is it true that teaching this staged strategy (from single words to surrounding words, phrases, and sentences) is intended to teach foreign students a useful skill? If this is so, what is the point in incorporating word analysis as a means of checking guessing when it is believed that this strategy is not reliable? Clarke and Nation (1980:215) have themselves admitted that:

*some prefixes and most roots have several meanings, so the relationship between the meaning of the parts and the meaning of the whole is often not straightforward, and in some cases although words seem to have known roots and prefixes they in fact do not, and should not be analysed.*

The strategy of guessing meanings from context is simply an outcome of adjusting etymology to fit the model of a 'monolithic' standard. First, learners are encouraged to learn English not as words of flexible meanings, but as stable semantic units, starting from their smallest parts (i.e. roots and affixes) as once meant by etymological teachings. Second, the strategy involves learning the English vocabulary as a culture-bound semantic system without resorting to translation which can disturb this system<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> There are, of course, other reasons for avoiding translation. Some of these appear to be influenced by the Direct Method of ELT and Transfer Theory/Contrastive Analysis, eg. that translation inhibits thinking in the target language or that it will encourage L1 transfer to L2. Maintaining an English language classroom environment may have pedagogic justification, but it also reinforces an atmosphere of the purity of English, uncontaminated by learners' other languages.

The following example quoted from Cortazzi and Jin (1998) shows the serious impact of direct translation on English words in a foreign context. The figures represent the two sides of a sign hung on the door of a shop in Taiwan. Amazingly (for customers who do not read Chinese), the first means that the shop is open and the second the shop is closed for the staff to have a tea break (This can be the cultural habit determining the use of a parallel phrase in Chinese to indicate that the shop is closed). It is not an invitation for customers to call in and drink tea.





休息中  
DRINK TEA

Adding the connotative dimension of word meaning to discourage learners from resorting to direct translation may be seen as an attempt not only to safeguard the cultural contents of the English lexicon, but also to internationalise its norms. It should be noted that within this framework (as well as the one discussed in the section to follow) Graeco-Latin roots and affixes are seen as belonging to English. Their true meanings start from the time they have established themselves in the language.

#### ***5.4.3.3 Using Prefixes, Roots, and Suffixes***

It is believed that “A knowledge of Latin affixes and roots has two values for an advanced learner of English. It can be used to help the learning of unfamiliar words by relating these words to known words or to known prefixes and suffixes, and it can be used as a way of checking whether an unfamiliar word has been successfully guessed from context” (Nation 1990:168). This strategy involves giving learners lists of affixes and roots to memorise. This memorising, it is believed, helps learners in

three respects. First, it enables them to break new words into parts so as to reveal affixes and roots. Second, it makes them aware of the meanings of the parts and third, it makes them see the connection between the meaning of the parts and the dictionary meaning of the new word (ibid:169).

Brown “tabulated the most important prefixes and root elements and compiled a list of 20 prefixes and 14 root elements which pertain to over 14,000 words in *Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* and a projected 100,000 words in an unabridged dictionary. These have been combined into 14 master words” (Thompson 1958:62). By learning these master words and the meaning of their constituent parts, learners will know the most useful prefixes and roots (See Table 5.1) (From Nation 1990:171).

**Table (5.1): The fourteen words (keys to the meanings of over 14,000 words) (Thompson 1958).**

Derivations				
Words	Prefix	Common meaning	Root	Common meaning
1. precept	pre-	(before)	cape	(take, seize)
2. detain	de-	(away, down)	tenere	(hold, have)
3. intermittent	inter-	(between, among)	mittere	(send)
4. offer	ob-	(against)	ferre (Lat.)	(bear, carry)
5. insist	in-	(into)	stare	(stand)
5. monograph	mono-	(alone, one)	graphein	(write)
7. epilogue	epi-	(upon)	legein	(say, study of)
8. aspect	ad-	(to, toward)	specere	(see)
9. uncomplicated	un- com-	(not) (together, with)	plicare	(fold)
10. nonextended	non- ex-	(not) (out, beyond)	tendere	(stretch)
11. reproduction	re- pro-	(back, again) (forward, for)	ducere	(lead)
12. indisposed	in- dis-	(not) (apart, not)	ponere (pos)	(put, place)
13. oversufficient	over sub-	(above) (under)	facere	(make, do)
14. mistranscribe	mis- trans-	(wrong) (across, beyond)		

It has also been noted by Saragi (1974) that a large number of derivational suffixes found in the words in the *General Service List* (West 1953) are highly frequent and regular in meaning. these are “-ness (n.), -en (v.), -ty/-ity (n.), -less (adj.), -er/-or (n.),

*-al* (adj.), *-ion* (n.), *-y* (adj.), *-ful* (adj.), *-ance/-ence* (n.), and *-ment* (n.). Each of these occurs in more than 30 words. Less frequent suffixes, but having a high regularity of meaning, translation and spelling, were *-ise/-ize* (v.), *-ward* (adj.), and *-ern* (adj.). These 14 suffixes are found in over 60 words with derivational suffixes in the *General Service List*. Other suffixes occurring more than 10 times in the *General Service List* were *-able* (adj.), *-ous* (adj.), *-ant/-ent* (adj.), *-ive* (adj.), *-al* (n.), *-ure* (n.), *-ery/-ary* (n.), *-th* (n.), *-y* (n.), *-age* (n.), and *-ic* (adj.)” (Summary in Nation 1990:169).

Apart from the similarity between the etymological traditions and this breaking of words into Latin roots and affixes, this strategy of vocabulary learning can have the effect of internalizing the English vocabulary on the part of learners as a fixed system (composed of parts and wholes). Once word meanings are acquired as frozen units there will be little or no chance, it can be assumed, for foreign learners to use them creatively or to colour them with local socio-cultural elements. All this shows the teaching method in question to be the outcome of adjusting etymology to fit the model of a ‘monolithic’ standard.

#### ***5.4.3.4 Vocabulary in Discourse: Fixed Expressions and Lexis in Use***

Other pedagogues seek to teach vocabulary through communication. Such attempts demonstrate a departure from teaching the Chomskyan model of the ‘ideal’ competence of the native speaker into what is currently referred to in pedagogy as ‘communicative competence’ (Nattinger & DeCarrico 1992: 2). However, as will be demonstrated below, this shift is also by no means free from the influence of the concept of a ‘monolithic’ standard.

The teaching method in question is based on pragmatics (rules of language use), psycholinguistics and research in computational analysis of language. McCarthy (1984:14) has pointed out that:



*The belief that vocabulary skill is clearly more than understanding the componential features of words and recognizing their typical collocations, more than the ability to define a word or slot it into a sentence, leads me to propose that the key to a new approach to vocabulary teaching lies in an examination of the syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations between lexical items (a) above sentence level; (b) across conversational turn boundaries; (c) within the broad framework of discourse organization.*

McCarthy's aim from working with lexis in spoken discourse is not simply to enable students to develop their skill of 'speaking'. His real objective is "to activate the passive knowledge of lexical relations" (ibid:18) which, if not activated, would be the source of errors. McCarthy's teaching method is clearly influenced by the concept of a 'monolithic' standard. Since McCarthy and Carter's (1997) work depends on a corpus (CANCODE) which is based on predominantly **British** texts and oral transcriptions (rather than a more obviously **international** corpus), it can be argued that the lexical relations, seen in concordancing, are in fact British. This is also true of lexically based applications arising from the British National Corpus, as its name suggests. Similarly, the basis of the Cobuild Corpus was originally mostly British (70%) with some American data (20%) and other regional varieties (Kennedy 1998:46), although later a small subcorpus of English used in texts and coursebooks for TEFL was added. On the other hand, the International Corpus of English aims to include subcorpora from such countries as the UK, USA, Australia, New Zealand, India, but also Nigeria and Singapore, and the accusation of nationalism can hardly apply here (Kennedy 1998:54).

However, the attempt to teach the English vocabulary as 'fixed expressions' may be seen as a side effect of nationalism underlying the concept of a 'monolithic' standard. Alexander (1989:16) has defined the term thus (See Table 5.2 for types included and definitions):

The term "fixed expressions" is sufficiently fuzzy to cover a wide range of items. What they all have in common is that they are often used as full units by native speakers, with varying degrees of change allowed or not, depending on the category. Furthermore, they appear to be learnable only as complete chunks of lexical-semantic-syntagmatic matter, as they are seldom reducible to their component parts...

**Table (5.2): Types of fixed expressions (After Alexander 1989:17; Nattinger & DeCarrico 1992:38-57):**

<i>Type</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Examples</i>
<b>1. Collocation</b>	Two words that co-occur habitually.	<i>high expectations, take a walk</i>
<b>2. Polywords</b>	Invariable short phrases which function very much like individual lexical items.	<i>by the way, strictly speaking, in part, in essence, so far so good, at any rate, nevertheless.</i>
<b>Phrasal verbs</b>		<i>die out, break down</i>
<b>Slogans</b>	Disagreement markers	<i>hold your horses</i>
<b>Tournure Idioms</b>		<i>to smell a rat</i>
<b>3. Institutionalized expressions</b>	Invariable lexical phrases of sentence length, functioning as separate utterances.	
<b>Proverbs</b>		<i>a bird in the hand is worth 2 in the bush</i>
<b>Proverbial idioms</b>		<i>don't count your chickens</i>
<b>Catch phrases</b>		<i>little rabbits have big ears</i>
<b>Formulae</b>		<i>how are you?</i>
<b>Gambits</b>	Discourse oriented units.	<i>has the cat got your tongue?</i>
<b>Cliches</b>	Unlike idioms, cliches consist of large stretches of language whose meaning is derivable from the individual constituents.	<i>have a nice day, there is no doubt about it</i>
<b>Quotation</b>		<i>What's a thousand dollars? Mere chicken feed. A poultry matter.</i>
<b>Allusions</b>		<i>I only ask to be free. The butterflies are free.</i>
<b>4. Phrasal constraints</b>	Somewhat variable, short-medium length phrases.	<i>as far as __, good __, a __ ago, the __ er the __ er, see you __</i>
<b>5. Sentence builders</b>	Highly variable lexical phrases that provide the framework for whole sentences.	<i>not only X, but also Y, it is only in X that Y, that reminds me of X, the __ X, the __ er Y</i>
<b>Conventionalized speech acts</b>	<b>indirect</b>	<b>Modal + you (mind/kindly/be willing to)+ VP?</b> e.g. 'Could you pass me the salt?' <b>Modal + I + VP (for you)?</b> e.g. 'Can I help you, can I do that for you'. <b>Aux (not) + you (mind/ kindly/ be willing to)+ VP?</b> <b>I [want/would like/rather] you (to) (not) VP (for me).</b>

Studies of language processing suggest that language is stored redundantly. That is, words are stored not only as discrete items, but also as parts of phrases, or as longer memorized chunks of speech, and that they are retrieved from memory in these pre-assembled chunks (Bolinger 1975). This suggestion has been supported by findings of corpus linguistic research. The research confirms the significance of patterned phrases as basic, intermediary units between the levels of lexis and grammar. For instance, Stubbs (1995:246) points out that the lemma (= lexeme or dictionary head word) COMMIT commonly collocates with unpleasant state of affairs: *crimes, murder, offences, sins, suicide*, and so forth. Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992:27) also note that “a great deal of language that people are exposed to every day is very routine and predictable, just as are the situations they encounter”. The fact that foreign learners of English commit errors is due to the language transmitted to them in a non-routine fashion, as pointed out by Pawley and Syder (1983:215):

*It is a characteristic error of language learners to assume that an element in the expression may be varied according to a phrase structure or transformational rule of some generality, when in fact the variation (if any) allowed in nativelike usage is much more restricted. The result, very often, is an utterance that is grammatical but unidiomatic, e.g. ‘You are pulling my legs’ (in the sense of deceiving me), ‘John has a thigh-ache’, and ‘I intend to teach the rascal some good lessons he will never forget’.*

In order to delimit the possibility of learners producing such pragmatically erroneous utterances, some pedagogues suggest that the vocabulary must be taught as frozen chunks together with the cultural information embedded in them. Alexander (1989:20), for example, wrote:

*The way in which background and language are connected are complex, and difficult of access. It may nevertheless be helpful from*

*a didactic point of view to look at the surface structural links between words. It may help to consider collocations as an entry point to background or as an interface between language and background. One can argue that the cultural information accompanying and surrounding a language - the things which native speakers take for granted - leaves a precipitate in the form of collocations, associations or syntagmatic relationships ("traces") which may be strange to the L2 learner. It is these traces that can be termed cultural collocations; they can be shown to map onto culturally specific phenomena which tend to be differentially coded in L1.*

Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992:118) suggested a teaching method whereby "Phrases are presented in a cyclical rather than linear fashion..., so that students would return to the same functions throughout the course and learn to express them in an increasingly sophisticated manner". For example, "in teaching the function of expressing sympathy, we would begin with a lexical phrase in its minimally expanded form, *I'm sorry*, and then in later lessons cycle back to more expanded versions of this phrase, such as *I'm very sorry to hear that X. ...*" (ibid). Nattinger and DeCarrico further argue that:

*it is also equally important that this practice takes place within varying situations, so that students are provided with the opportunity to acquire the pragmatic competence necessary in limiting particular structures to appropriate use in given contexts. For example, in a context in which a friend loses a book, it is enough to express sympathy in this situation by using the form 'I'm sorry'. But in a context in which a friend loses a close family member through death, the unexpanded version of this lexical phrase would be inadequate indeed, and perhaps seem insincere; instead the expanded version*

*'I'm very sorry to hear that X' would be deemed socially appropriate and sincere (ibid).*

Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992:63-64) have observed that prefabricated speech marks topics about which learners are often asked, or ones that are necessary in daily conversations, such as autobiography (my name is --; I am from --; I'm (a) -- (years old), language (do you speak --?; I speak -- (a little)), Quantity (how much/big is? (not) a great deal), time (when is X?; since X; the -- before/after ---), location (where is --?; how far is --?), weather (is it going to --? it's (very) --- (today)!), likes (I like/enjoy -- a lot; -- is lots of fun), food (a table for --; serve breakfast/lunch/dinner); shopping (it (doesn't) fit(s); a (really) good/bad buy/bargain; -- cost(s) (me/you/them) -- dollars). However, another face of Nattinger and DeCarrico's attempts to teach language in chunks was revealed when they wrote that:

*lexical phrases form/function composites place limits on permissible expansions or substitutions, and violations of these limits result in ill-formed structures and in disassociation of the conventionalized form/function relation (Nattinger & DeCarrico 1992:14).*

It is also worthwhile quoting at length Carter's (1987:9) belief which mirrors rather explicitly the reason behind suggesting the teaching of fixed expressions to foreign students, namely that it prevents foreign students from using the English language creatively which can thus restrict its diversification in place:

*Fixed expressions are both creative of discourse relations and crucial to the maintenance of that discourse. They serve, for certain communicative purposes, to provide a relatively stereotyped, stable and prosaic response to events perceived as recurring and formulaic. There are potential difficulties such as the kind of cultural*

*opacity embedded in some idioms (e.g. 'my Sunday best'); but the utility of such prefabricated discourse-sensitive units is that interlocutors are saved the trouble of inventing new lexical meanings, and can use fixed expressions which are predictable because they are formally and, often, contextually 'fixed'. Vocabulary use does not always require users constantly to make creative interpersonal negotiations and renegotiations; it also requires the acquisition of specific fixed expressions which help simply to maintain discourse relations.*

The resemblance between etymology and this technique lies in the attempt to teach the English vocabulary as a fixed system as though the meanings of English words are true only when they are used within the limitations of the 'standard' English discourse<sup>7</sup>. This is evidence in favour of the claim that modern vocabulary teaching methods are the outcome of adjusting etymology to fit the model of a 'monolithic' standard. It is worthwhile noting at this point that some pedagogues regard frequent expressions as belonging to basic (or 'core') English. Nation and Waring (1997:18) wrote:

*Some items larger than a word behave like high frequency words. That is, they occur frequently as multi-word units ('good morning', 'never mind'), and their meaning is not clear from the meaning of the parts ('at once', 'set out'). If the frequency of such items is high enough to get them into a general service list in direct competition*

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<sup>7</sup> A limited counter-example can be offered here. Fixed expressions can be transferred across languages. This does, in fact, allow for a measure of creativity in using English as a foreign or second language and at the same time, marks the socio-cultural identity of speakers. Thus, some Arabic speakers frequently use the Arabic expression *ya'ni* in English. This is a characteristic discourse marker or filler which allows a speaker thinking or speech planning time. It means 'that is to say', 'what I mean is'. Some Lebanese speakers report that when they use this expression it makes them "feel better" or "feel like themselves", i.e. such expressions mark cultural identity. Occasionally, such fixed expressions can be taken up by widespread usage among L1 speakers of English. An example of this is the Chinese expression 'hao jiu bu jian', 'long time no see', with its characteristic Chinese syntax used in English.

*with single words, then perhaps they should be included under one of their constituent words.*

Hence, the teaching of the English vocabulary as ‘fixed expressions’, like the other teaching methods examined in this chapter, may be claimed to be based on the belief that standard English as a world language is English for a limited range of purposes.

### **5.5 Summary and Conclusion**

This chapter has concerned itself with the bearings that the concept of a ‘monolithic’ standard has on modern vocabulary teaching methods. It has been argued that modern methods are the outcome of adjusting etymology to fit the model of a ‘monolithic’ standard. One consequence of this is the focus of these methods on the ‘prototype’, or ‘core’, norms of the English vocabulary for the world version of the language, thus, dealing with English as though it is the mother of thought and cultures. Another consequence figures in attempts to teach the English vocabulary as a stable rather than flexible semantic system as though the meanings of words are true only when they are used within the limitations of the ‘standard’ English discourse. Modern vocabulary teaching methods are claimed to be the nationalistic face of purism underlying etymology. However, the nationalistic trend in English pedagogy, it has been noted, is not necessarily intentional or planned, but a side effect of nationalism underlying the concept of a ‘monolithic’ standard.

An important point brought into focus in this chapter is how pedagogues wittingly or unwittingly reinforce a focus on a ‘monolithic’ standard, by playing down notions of creative change. Another point discussed is how pedagogues, when creating a teaching method, take into account the sorts of errors that students are likely to commit in the process of learning a target language. It is clear from the above study of teaching methods that pedagogues have considered all sorts of such errors apart from those motivated by the metaphorical structure of L1. These errors have not also received attention in work on error analysis. The word ‘metaphor’ does not appear in

the index of a recent book in the field by Carl James (1998) although the question of metaphorical transfer has been tackled by Low (1988). Low draws attention to the point that:

*there is the question of transfer due to partial overlap in metaphoric structure in the first and target languages. For example, in both Chinese and English, anger can be described in terms of an explosion. It can also be described in terms of a fire, except that Chinese exploits the metaphor far less than English - one cannot, for example, talk of something 'kindling' one's anger in Chinese. Only in English, however, is anger standardly described as an animal, a storm, or a wave. In the absence of empirical evidence, it is hard to show whether this mismatch ever causes serious problems, but one might expect that Chinese learners would tend to prefer to use the explosion and fire metaphors at the expense of others (ibid:136).*

This is because words in a language are not simply pure linguistic units that can be detached from the cognitive experience of speakers and considered separately. It has been shown earlier that conceptual metaphor is the basis on which linguistic experience is built. Hence, it is to be expected that its role in language is crucial on both dimensions of time and place.

If pedagogues are concerned to protect the English tongue from learners' erroneous or creative use, they must attempt to enlarge the scope of English as a world language as it is presented in vocabulary to learners. They should develop more sophisticated methods that help learners approach the competence of native speakers (including their awareness of metaphor) and the development of this competence. In other words, the focus of ELT should not be restricted to what is basic and fixed, but should include what is new in the vocabulary to help learners keep pace with the development of the English lexicon. In principle, this should be possible while still



adhering to necessary elements of selection, simplification and grading in ELT. If this is insufficient to protect English as a second language, it will contribute to protecting it as a foreign language. At least the possibility for the emergence of more non-native varieties in ELT classrooms will be diminished.

An applied linguist may feel content to say that the teaching of English is a matter of grading and that the argument developed above is true only of beginner's courses. The next chapter examines the lexical contents of a number of multi-level English courses. It shows that the teaching of English as a foreign/international language is a matter of grading but within the limited area of 'basic' or 'core' English. In other words, what is called English for general purposes (EGP) is in fact 'basic' or 'core' English and, perhaps surprisingly, it remains so in intermediate and upper levels in some widely used textbooks. This is because English courses for all proficiency levels are built on topics that are central to learning a target language. Such topics are likely to constitute substantial pressure to restrict the lexical syllabus as much as possible to the common core of English. Less core topics are excluded to be taught within the realms of English for specific purposes (ESP). This may be largely due to the belief that English as a world language is English for a limited range of purposes (either general or specific). The consequence of all this may be the failure of foreign learners to acquire a native-like competence of the English vocabulary from mere exposure to pedagogical materials. It is possible though that a learner can approach such a competence through other means such as watching English films, speaking to native speakers and the like. This, however, does not invalidate the claim that English pedagogy is shaped (almost certainly unwittingly) by a 'nationalistic' trend.

## **-VI-**

### ***SPREADING ENGLISH THROUGH COURSEBOOKS: PROTOTYPE TEXTS AND CORE VOCABULARY NORMS***

#### ***6.1 Introduction***

One of the major issues raised in this study is the question of whether linguistic nationalism underlies the western understanding of the concept of ‘World Standard English’. It has been argued that the focus of some western linguists on a ‘monolithic’ standard together with their bracketing of learning English as a second language and English as a foreign language as identical learning situations have the unintended side effect of associating the standard not only with the norms of an ideal native speaker (i.e. the correct, accepted norms of British/American English), but also with the belief that English as a world language is English for a limited range of purposes. This has shaped ELT in the sense that it has given rise to teaching methods that focus on the ‘fixed’ and ‘basic’ norms of the English vocabulary. Modern vocabulary teaching methods are claimed to be the outcome of adjusting etymology to fit the model of a ‘monolithic’ standard (as understood by ‘Western’ linguistics).

The aim of this chapter is to show the influence of this adjustment of etymology on the design of the EFL/EIL lexical syllabus. The starting point is the suggestion that the unwitting ‘nationalistic’ trend in English pedagogy is not restricted to ‘stereotyping’ (i.e. the focus on the cultural norms of the English nation) and ‘Anglocentrism’ (the exclusive focus on the linguistic norms of the native speakers of English) which are behind the inappropriacy of the EFL/EIL materials

for all teaching situations (rather than, perhaps, for some only). This may also be said to be behind what can be referred to as ‘prototyping’; that is, incorporating vocabulary into a multi-level course in a prototypical manner, placing at the centre of the programme ‘general interest’ topics (e.g. travel, education, sports, etc.). In other words, instead of building the different levels of the EFL/EIL lexical syllabus on the basis of different topics, coursebooks writers tend to expand the lexical contents of graded courses within the limitation of topics that are deemed central to learning a target language. The consequences of this are 1). a restriction of the EFL/EIL lexical syllabus to the common core of the English lexicon (or what can be referred to as the ‘visitors’ wing’) and 2). bleaching English of a major part of its semantic richness. In particular, this richness is an important aspect of the flexibility of the English vocabulary and its creative change (e.g. change based on metaphor). The investigation of these two consequences forms the focus of this chapter. The former point is illustrated by a comparison between the vocabulary indices at the back of the four levels of *The New Cambridge English Course* and West’s (1953) *General Service List (GSL)*. The latter point is demonstrated by a semantic comparison between the concordances of certain words obtained from the British National Corpus (BNC) and the use of these words in *The New Cambridge English Course*. The results obtained from these comparisons are as follows:

1. The fact that vocabulary in modern EFL/EIL programmes is expanded within the limitations of topics that are central to learning a target language has had the effect of contributing to broadening the horizon of basic English (or updating West’s *GSL*) by incorporating lexical items denoting basic developments in the life of the English nation (e.g. socio-cultural, educational, and technical developments).

2. Building the EFL/EIL lexical syllabus on the basis of central topics has had the consequence that many lexical items incorporated into a course occur in their prototype meanings (i.e. literal and/or commonest meanings).

Both of these results have the effect of limiting the semantic exposure of learners of English in time and place. The first observation is found to be applicable to the vocabulary indices of other sample courses (Section 6.1.1 lists the courses used in this study). The second observation is considered against the presentation of vocabulary in *The New Cambridge English Course* and the other sample courses to see whether the limitations imposed by coursebook texts on word meaning are compensated by exercises that focus on the multiplicity of meaning (including metaphorical extensions). This is found not to be the case.

The focus on the basic lexical/semantic norms of the English vocabulary, or what is referred to in this chapter as the ‘visitors’ wing’, for the world version of English is also reflected in viewpoints concerning incorporating vocabulary into the EFL/EIL course. It is highlighted how some applied linguists believe that the teaching of English through coursebooks should remain within the limits of basic/core English. Everything beyond these limits, they recommend, is to be left to students to acquire on their own through incidental learning (e.g. through reading). Another point brought into focus is how work on vocabulary teaching centres around three questions: *what* vocabulary items to teach, *how many* and *when*. The question of *how* to help learners acquire flexibility and creativity in the lexicon (or what may be seen as the non-basic zone of meaning) receives little attention; that is, little attention is given to overcoming the limitations of basic meanings or semantic restrictions in time and place. However, there are possibilities of developing learners’ awareness of historical change, variety of English or metaphor. Low (1988), for instance, draw attention to the importance of incorporating metaphor into the EFL/EIL lexical syllabus. It is on the basis of

this direction that suggestions for teaching vocabulary in EFL/EIL instructional programmes will be made in the last section of the study.

### ***6.1.1 Courses Used in the Study***

This chapter is based on the examination of the contents of the sample courses named below. Some of these coursebooks have been very extensively used around the world (e.g. *The New Cambridge English Course* and *Headway*) and have for several years topped the EFL textbook best-seller list. There is every reason to suppose that the authors and publishers (both with established reputations for high standards) make strong efforts to place these works on a sound basis of current ELT theory and practice and, wherever relevant, they take account of recent research. Further, such textbooks are normally piloted extensively in several countries before they go into full production and international marketing. Other books in this sample (e.g. *Notions in English*) focus on notions like affirmation, approval, and inducement, yet the core areas of vocabulary and their language items are, in fact, very similar to other books. The functional-notional methodology of the latter is, perhaps, different from the former best-selling coursebooks, yet remarkably similar ranges of vocabulary can be seen across all of the sample textbooks. Other books selected for analysis are coursebooks which have been explicitly written to develop and extend students' vocabulary of English. This is clear from such titles as *A Way with Words* and *More than Words*. The list of sample courses is:

1. *Notions in English* (1979) by Jones. This is a course for upper-intermediate and more advanced learners.
2. *Discoveries* (1986-1987) by Abbs and Freebairn. It takes students from zero beginner to pre-intermediate level.

3. *English any Time* (1987) by Dougill. It is designed for intermediate pre-First Certificate students.
4. *A Way with Words: Vocabulary development activities for learners of English* (1989-1991) by Redman and Ellis. The series takes the learner from lower-intermediate to upper-intermediate levels of vocabulary use.
5. *Interchange: English for International Communication* (1990-1991) by Richards with the assistance of Hull and Proctor. This course consists of three books intended to take adult and young adult learners from beginning to high-intermediate level.
6. *More than Words: Vocabulary for Upper Intermediate to Advanced Students* (1991-1992) by Harmer and Rossner. This is a two-part approach to vocabulary acquisition.
7. *Headway* (1986-1993) by Soars and Soars, is a multi-level course for adults and adult learners. It takes the learner from elementary to advanced level. The series has since been updated by the *New Headway* series which continues the same basic publishing formula.
8. *The New Cambridge English Course* (1990-1993) by Swan and Walter. This is a four-level course for foreign learners. It takes learners from beginner to advanced level.

It is worth remarking that these books are not necessarily a systematic sample of the full published range of ELT textbooks but they include well-known authors and widely used titles. The publication dates span fifteen years of considerable growth in ELT publishing around the world. Although the most recent publication date is 1993, it is in the nature of coursebook circulation and use that it can be expected that popular books such as most of these will be in classroom for at least five, and perhaps ten years, in some countries and ELT contexts after the original publication date.

### ***6.1.2 Words Selected for the Study***

The semantic occurrences of five words (randomly selected) will be examined in *The New Cambridge English Course*. These occurrence will then be compared with the semantic applications of the words in English; this application will be investigated using data from the British National Corpus<sup>1</sup>. Three of the words examined are representative of two central textbook topics: ‘the human body’ and ‘describing people’. One word appears in two coursebook topics: ‘politics’ and ‘education’. The remaining word is a highly frequent verb that is likely to be present in any text. Diagram 6.1 shows these words in relation to the categories they represent<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The concordances in this chapter are obtained using *simple search*, whereby no more than 50 hits are displayed, with a fixed amount of context. However, the hits are representative of the current use of words, because they are selected randomly from a corpus that is large enough to yield examples of the various applications of a word.

<sup>2</sup> Clearly it is difficult to claim that these words are representative as a sample. However, they seem reasonably common items of fairly wide use and as Diagram 6.1 shows they are located in the coursebook within a range of topics. The main point in this study, however, is that these words are *examples* which will be located within semantic applications judged by using the British National Corpus. This part of the study seeks to demonstrate through examples the semantic limitations of the words as used in the coursebook, i.e. it shows that limitations exist and *how* but not *how frequently* or *how representatively* this occurs.

**Diagram (6.1): Words selected for the coursebook study.**

Categories	Words
The human body:	<i>body</i>
Describing people:	<i>slim</i> <i>fair</i>
Politics/Education	<i>demonstration</i>
A common verb	<i>come</i>

## **6.2 The Literature of Coursebook Evaluation**

This section will limit itself to a discussion of the negative attitudes toward coursebooks. However, it is worthwhile noting that coursebooks are not short of their own supporters. The following lines by Bell and Gower (1998:116-7) reveal the polarisation in debate about the desirability of coursebooks.

*In recent years there has been renewed debate about the desirability of coursebooks.... The debate has tended to be polarised between those who object to coursebooks in principle, whether they see them as instruments of institutional control supported by a range of commercial interests or as implicitly prescriptive and destroyers of teachers and learner creativity; and those who argue that coursebooks provide teachers and learners with a range of professionally developed materials within tried-and-tested syllabus structures and allow teachers to spend their valuable time more on facilitating learning than materials production. The arguments in favour of coursebooks are often made by those with vested interests - writers, publishers and distributors - and are therefore open to the accusation of special pleading.*



*Some also accept the need for coursebooks but argue that the quality of many of those that are published is poor - not only because they are often produced too quickly with too little piloting but because they do not sufficiently reflect what we know about language learning and thus fail to meet the true needs of learners.*

Those who are dissatisfied with EFL/EIL coursebooks tend to address a number of issues, such as the inappropriacy of the EFL/EIL text, the stability of coursebooks contents, and the lack of textual authenticity. The problem that is sometimes condemned on nationalistic grounds is the inappropriacy of the EFL/EIL text. However, as shown in this chapter, the other two problems may also be seen as side effects of the nationalistic trend in English pedagogy. It is worth pointing out that in many ELT contexts around the world, given limited resources, staffing and access to other possibilities, there is very little alternative to depending on textbooks as *a* or even *the* main source of input in ELT classrooms.

### ***6.2.1 The Inappropriacy of the EFL/EIL Text: a Question of ‘Stereotyping’ and ‘Anglocentrism’***

Several articles have appeared in the pedagogical literature, criticising ‘stereotyping’ or ‘inappropriate cultural content’ in the EFL/EIL text. Bell and Gower (1998:118), for example, wrote that:

*From a pedagogic point of view we know that ... many of the cultural contexts in the materials and the text-topics can seem irrelevant to the learners. The material inevitably lacks the targeting to specific learning situations in a particular culture.*

Alptekin (1993) uses a psycholinguistic analysis of target-language culture in EFL materials, arguing that writers' unconscious operation within particular frames of schematic knowledge results in texts which place unnecessary additional cognitive demands on students from language backgrounds based on different schemata. The following learners' attitudes towards inappropriate cultural materials in EFL/EIL texts make the above points (In Jolly and Bolitho, 1998:91-2).

*It is a very nice book and very lively, but in the section on "processes", for example, all the exercises are about unusual things for our country. We are a hot country and also have many Muslims. The exercises are about snow, ice, cold mornings, water cisterns; writing and publishing EFL books and making wine. I can tell you I can't do making wine and smoking pot in my country!*

(Experienced teacher from the Ivory Coast).

*Previous materials were not based on life in Brazil which is why I don't think they worked very well...*

(Brazilian teacher of English in school).

*'Sir...what is Opera?'*

(Iraqi student in mixed nationality class using materials designed to practise reading narrative).

Risager (1991) looks at the cultural contents of the EFL textbook from a historical perspective. "She shows that in the social and geographic definition of textbook characters, the people featured are predominantly middle-class, young people, isolated individuals (rather than family members) who are often tourists

or visitors to urban centres. They engage in rather trivial linguistic interaction in mainly leisure activities or consumer situations. They reveal few feelings or opinions and never engage in social, moral, or philosophical problems. Most cultural information is bland. There is little historical background or cultural comparison - target countries are considered in isolation. There is an avoidance of indication of the authors' attitude and no invitation to critical analysis" (Summary in Cortazzi & Jin 1999:202,204).

'Stereotyping' in the EFL text is approached by some other writers from an ethical position, seeing the EFL text as 'imposing western values':

*English language teaching beliefs, practices and materials are never neutral, and indeed represent very particular understanding of language, communication, learning, education and so on. Such understandings, in turn, are also not merely random views but rather are very much part of a broader range of discursive and cultural practices that emanate from the 'west' (Pennycook 1994:178).*

"This has meant that those at the 'centre' ... have been able to disseminate ideas to further points of the 'periphery' (or, in other words, members of the target language culture have inevitably spread their cultural norms to learners of the language from other cultures)" (Littlejohn 1998:190). Bell and Gower (1998:117) made the following point concerning their writing of a global coursebook:

*In our situation we were writing what is sometimes misleadingly called a 'global' coursebook - which means a coursebook for a restricted number of teaching situations in many different countries rather than all teaching situations in all countries. And those who dislike coursebooks feel they have an even stronger case against the*

*global coursebook: the singing-and-dancing, glitzy (expensive) multi-media package, usually produced in a native-speaker situation but destined for the world with all language in the book (including rubrics) in the target language. Words like 'imperialist' and 'new colonist' are sometimes used to criticise such books.*

Prodromou (1988:76) adds a linguistic dimension to the issue rather than belabouring the political one. He points out that:

*globally designed textbooks have continued to be stubbornly Anglocentric: appealing to a world market as they do, they cannot by definition draw upon local varieties of English.*

Prodromou (ibid) sees the content of the EFL text to be presenting what amounts to as a 'cardboard cut out world'. For Pennycook (1994:177), the real significance of Prodromou's criticism of the EFL text presenting a 'cardboard cut out world' is not that the text is trivial and therefore pedagogically inappropriate to adult learners but that it represents the complexities of the world within a simplified western framework. According to Cortazzi and Jin (1999: 201):

*The portrayal of cultural variation is important; otherwise learners will be led to see only a unified, monolithic culture. Both inter- and intra-cultural variation need to be represented.*

Colebrook (1996:160) noted that: "the EFL text clings to a centralised, monocultural perspective which effectively delegitimizes the plurality of Englishes and their diverse applications throughout the world". He (ibid:156) further pointed out that:

*The ideology of producing a 'world literature' which would transcend national boundaries is very similar to the construct of English as an international language - both claim the potential of being neutral linguistic forms, although, in practice, the norms and constraints governing their use are irrevocably centralised.*

Colebrook's interpretation of the issue is very much in line with the notion of 'nationalism' developed in this study, as is clear from the following quote:

*In relation to the EFL text, norms and standards have a further dimension, beyond the pedagogical imperative to prescribe. These relate to competing claims for the **correct** variety of English. Of course, these claims stand not only in direct contradiction to Applied Linguistics denial that a hierarchy of dialects exists, but also show that the notion of 'English as an international language' is not a natural, neutral path to international cooperation and understanding, but a site for competing national ambitions to 'own' the language of the world and to define it as a singular, marketable entity (1996:160).*

It is quite plausible to argue that 'stereotyping' and 'Anglocentrism' in the EFL/EIL text are unintended side effects of 'nationalism' underlying the notion of 'English as a world language' (i.e. a 'monolithic standard'). They are, however, not the only side effects. 'Prototyping', or expanding vocabulary in the EFL/EIL lexical syllabus within the limitations of 'general interest' topics, may be seen to be another side effect. This issue is addressed as a question of 'content stability' and 'textual non-authenticity', but not as a 'nationalistic' question. It is the concern of the next section to show how 'prototyping' offers a perfect

environment for focusing on the ‘core’ norms of the English vocabulary. The focus on these norms in the EFL/EIL lexical syllabus may be due to the belief that English as a world language is English for a limited range of purposes. The implication of this is that English is treated as a private property of the English nation, so to speak. Consciously or unconsciously it is seen by pedagogues as belonging to this nation and exported elsewhere without loss of ownership. The admission of non-natives is restricted to the ‘visitors’ wing’, namely the ‘core’ or ‘basic’ area of the English vocabulary.

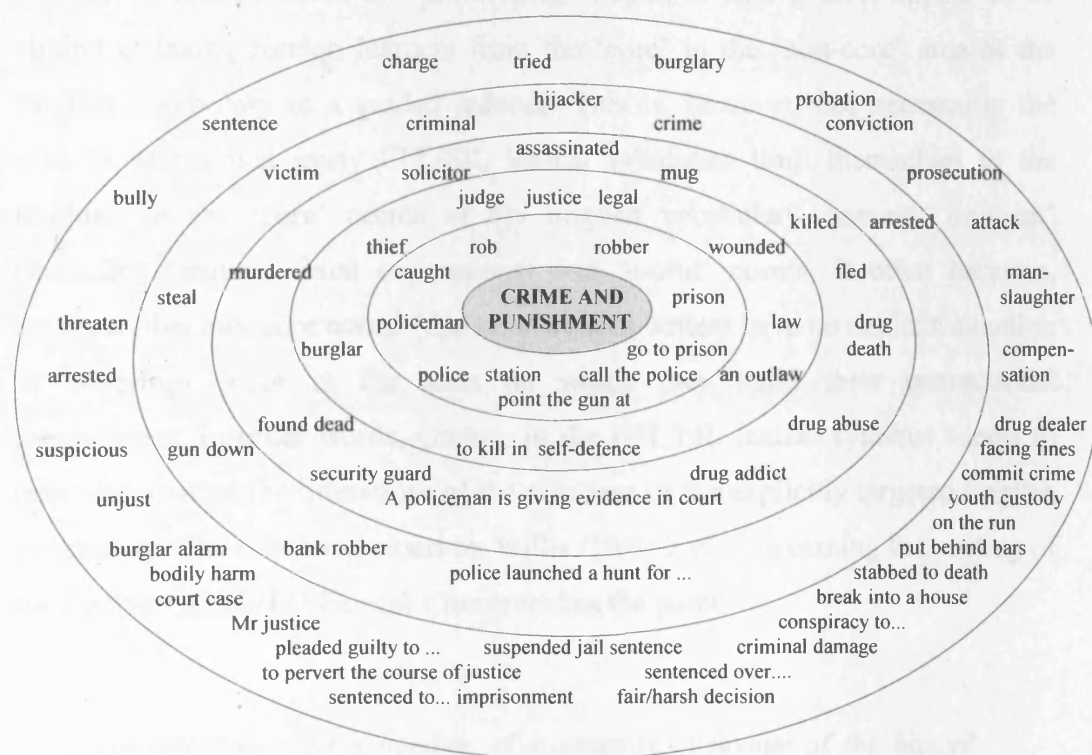
### ***6.2.2 The EFL/EIL Lexical Syllabus: a Question of ‘Prototyping’***

The contents of EFL/EIL coursebooks (including the lexical contents) often come under criticism for their limitations and stability. Sheldon (1988) and Bell and Gower (1998), for example, note that coursebooks are so static that they are frequently predictable in content. This is because coursebooks for all proficiency levels are based on a limited number of ‘general interest’ topics. This inevitably sets restrictions on the lexical contents incorporated into courses. Table 6.1 summarises the topics on which the EFL/EIL lexical syllabus is built (The table is based on the examination of the courses listed in section 6.1.1 above).

**Table (6.1): Topics forming the basis of the EFL/EIL lexical syllabus in the sample textbooks.**

the human body	time and dates	colours and shapes	clothes and fashion	animals and plants	the weather
performing simple communicative tasks and socialising	the language of measurements and statistics	cooking, food, drink, and places of	education and learning languages	home, furniture, housework, and daily routine	geography, countries, and nationalities
sports, exercise, leisure, entertainment and hobbies	family and relationships	describing looks, moods, and personality	work and employment	transport and roads	accidents, health and illnesses
social class	holidays and travel	shopping, economy, and money terms	media terms	politics, war and peace	crime and punishment

**Diagram 6.2:** An example of ‘prototyping’ as a pattern of introducing vocabulary to coursebooks (an analysis of materials from *Headway* 1986-1993).



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It is clear from the above diagram that *Headway* starts the topic of crime and punishment by talking about robbery and its likely consequences, namely getting caught by the police and going to prison. Level 2 presents robbery/burglary as an act of breaking the law. Levels 3 and 4 incorporate more terms denoting the act of robbing something/someone (i.e. *mug* and *steal*) as well as other forms of criminal doings (e.g. murder, assassination, hijacking, drug abuse, etc.). The highest level of the course focuses on legal punishments of criminal acts. It is obvious that elements of collocation (e.g. facing fine, bodily harm, etc.) are very important at this level. It is also clear that the examples of types of crime are remarkably restricted within the general topic.

Lexical syllabuses based on ‘prototyping’ might, at first glance, appear to be aiming at taking foreign learners from the ‘core’ to the ‘non-core’ area of the English vocabulary in a graded manner. This is, however, not necessarily the case. It seems that many EFL/EIL lexical syllabuses limit themselves to the teaching of the ‘core’ norms of the English vocabulary, namely ‘frequent’ (including frequent fixed expressions) and ‘useful’ norms. It often happens, however, that non-core norms (that coursebooks writers have no explicit intention of covering) occur in the texts on which they build their instructional programmes. In other words, grading in the EFL/EIL lexical syllabus seems to take place within the limitations of the core area of the explicitly targeted English vocabulary. The following report by Willis (1990:v-vi) concerning the writing of the *Collins COBUILD English Course* makes the point:

*Sinclair advanced a number of arguments in favour of the lexical syllabus, but the underlying argument was to do with utility and with the power of the most frequent words in English. ... Level 1 would aim to cover the most frequent 700 words together with their common patterns and uses. Level 2 would recycle these words and go on to cover the next 800 to bring us up to the 1,500 level, and*



*Level 3 would recycle those 1,500 and add a further 1,000. We would of course inevitably cover many other words in the texts to which students were exposed, but we would highlight first the most frequent 700, then 1,500 and finally 2,500 words in the language.*

*In one way this took us back to the pioneering work in the analysis of lexis of scholars like West and Thorndike in the 30s and 40s. But the computer would be able to afford a much more thorough and efficient analysis than had been possible in those days.*

This demonstrates the point that the process of designing the EFL/EIL lexical syllabus does not involve exposing learners to natural language use but to a microcosm of this use, namely the ‘core’ area of the English vocabulary- the ‘visitors’ wing’. The non-abandonment of the principles of the ‘vocabulary control movement’ after over half a century of its birth, and employing corpus linguistics to obtain more precise measurements of core vocabulary norms are points which can be taken to support the claim that ‘nationalism’ shapes the western conceptualisation of the notion of ‘English as a world language’ albeit indirectly. The pre-occupation of coursebook writers with the core norms of the English vocabulary is behind the non-authenticity of the EFL/EIL. Nation (1997:172) remarked that:

*The tradition in vocabulary studies has been to see pedagogy as involving a series of staged approximations. The classic example of this is Michael West’s (1953) New Method Readers which systematically took learners from a vocabulary of 222 words to a vocabulary of well over 2000 words in carefully designed stages. Authenticity came not from the source or nature of the material but from the actions that learners performed on the materials. ... This meaning of **authenticity** parallels the way the term **validity** is used in*

*testing. Validity does not come from the test itself but from the match between the test and the use to which it is put.*

All this leads to the point that the EFL/EIL is by no means free from vocabulary control; and ‘prototyping’ offers a perfect environment for this control in two respects:

1. Prototypically added words/expressions will remain in the spheres of topics that are central to learning a target language. Such topics are likely to constitute substantial pressure to restrict the lexical syllabus as much as possible to the common core of English.
2. By sticking to the same topics at the various levels of a course, a coursebook writer stands a good chance of presenting core vocabulary norms in a cyclic pattern for reinforcement but, at the same time, may tend to ignore non-core norms which happen to occur in the coursebook texts.

As an example of how this works in practice, the vocabulary indices at the back of the four levels of *The New Cambridge English Course* can be cited. These indices list the words and expressions which constitute the focal points of the course, namely these which receive a focus in vocabulary exercises and which the learners are asked to learn and revise at the end of every unit. Comparing these indices to West’s (1953) *GSL*, it can be observed that the majority of words and expressions in the indices are members in the West list (including the supplementary scientific and technical vocabulary); that is, the core is surprisingly stable over time. The additional ones may be categorised as basic words on the basis of the ‘utility’ measure<sup>4</sup>. A large number of these vocabulary items can

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<sup>4</sup>The same applies to the vocabulary indices of other courses examined, such as *Interchange: English for International Communication*, *Counterpoint*, and *Discoveries*. Words and phrases which are not members in West’s *GSL*, but which are focused on in these courses are those that refer to education, work and employment, crime and punishment, food and drink, shopping, items of clothing, travel, health and illnesses, sports and entertainment, animals, numbers, personality,

also be regarded as updates of the *GSL*. Tables 6.2-6.5 below list these words and expressions.

**Table (6.2): Words and expressions not included in West's *GSL* (In the vocabulary index of *The New Cambridge English Course*, book 1 (elementary)).**

shopping, economy and money terms	holidays and travel	roads and transport	work and employment	education and learning languages	politics, war and peace
supermarket economical pence bookshop	airport passport visa suitcase	bus stop car park	boss photographer shop assistant income	student communication	embassy revolution
time and dates	family and relationships	sports, leisure, exercise, entertainment and hobbies	home, furniture, housework, and daily routine	health and illnesses	the language of measurements and statistics
Days of the week months of the year o'clock p.m.	divorced widower boyfriend girlfriend mistress	chess piano ski/skiing concert	fridge video sofa wardrobe toothpaste toilet	aspirin chemist dentist injection flu	numbers (1, 1st, etc.) gram kilo litre time(s) calculator
clothes and fashion	cooking, food, drink, and places of	geography, countries, and nationalities	describing looks, moods, and personality	performing simple communicative tasks and socialising	
blouse bra jacket jeans pants sweater trousers tights perfume	banana beef chips mushroom salad tomato steak pub lager	Atlantic Australia Chinese Europe India Soviet Russian USSR Britain/British etc.	slim handsome bored shy talkative impatient intelligent nervy optimistic pessimistic self-confident	surname happy birthday darling not at all (answering thanks) get lost Hello Bye OK Oh	

The focus of the writers of *The New Cambridge English Course* on items like *supermarket*, *bus stop*, *car park*, *aspirin*, *video*, *calculator*, *trousers*, *tights*, etc. may be seen as a cultural update of the *GSL*, since these items denote things which were unknown or less familiar in West's days, but which are basic aspects of modern life. The inclusion of *Hello*, *Bye*, and *OK*. in the programme mirrors the fact that the use of these words is no longer restricted to informal speech; they

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looks, household items, etc.; and all these are useful vocabulary items. These items in the courses in question are not necessarily the same as the ones listed in tables 6.2-6.5 but are on the same footing.

can occur now in any conversation (whether informal or formal). This can be seen as an update of register evolution. A few items may apparently reflect more advanced usage, as is the case of certain words that come under the category of ‘describing looks, moods, and personality’, namely *impatient*, *intelligent*, *nervy*, *optimistic*, *pessimistic*, and *self-confident*. But these sorts of items are very restricted in number compared with the overwhelming majority of basic words. However, these words as well as the other words in the same category are common words in modern times. This is, perhaps, because the personality, mood, and appearance of a person are now important elements that people care and frequently talk about. Talking about one’s family and relationships is also very common in a liberal society such as the modern British society. Items referring to personality, appearance, moods, family and relationships occupy a large space in this course (as well as the other sample courses). In tables 6.4 and 6.5 there are more elaborate lists of such items. All of them may be regarded as social updates.

**Table (6.3): Words and expressions not included in West’s (1953) *GSL* (In the vocabulary index of *The New Cambridge English Course*, book 2 (beginners)).**

family and relationships	health and illnesses	education and learning languages	politics, war and peace	holidays and travel	sports, leisure, exercise, entertainment and hobbies
break up with somebody	aspirin chemist	physics research student	democracy demonstration	helicopter platform compartment	cycling guitar piano
cooking, food, drink, and places of	clothes and fashion	home, furniture, housework, and daily routine	the language of measurements and statistics	describing looks, moods, and personality	roads and transport
banana delicious toast pub	jacket suit sweater jeans pants wallet	pram gardening ironing put the kettle on relax	numbers (1, 1st, etc.) kilo kilometre kph percentage medium	slim thin adult depressed fed up (with) nervous shy	driving licence traffic traffic lights motorbike petrol station top speed speed limit
work and employment	shopping, economy and money terms	geography, countries, and nationalities	performing simple communicative tasks and socialising		
boss assistant photographer journalist hairdresser greengrocer interview day off diary	supermarket bookshop newsagent stationer cash credit card check in economy export import	river nationality (North)Africa third world Australia Britain France Italy Europe/Euro- pean etc.	boring Christmas Eve darling definitely normally Muslim not at all (answering thanks) oh dear OK whereabouts		

The incorporation of the words *democracy* and *demonstration* to the instructional programme in question may be seen as an update of political and social developments. The word *Muslim* is a cultural update in relation to recent changes in the UK population and/or wider international perspectives, i.e. a global update. Other examples of updates are *kettle*, *helicopter*, *check in*, *credit card*, *export*, *import* as well as the words and expressions that come under the category of ‘roads and transport’.

**Table (6.4): Words and expressions not included in West’s (1953) *GSL* (In the vocabulary index of *The New Cambridge English Course*, book 3 (intermediate)).**

crime and punishment	shopping , economy and money terms	the weather	family and relationships	geography, countries, and nationalities	animals
security burglary robbery shoplifting victim scream smash (a window)	bank account credit card refund catalogue department store queue	draught hurricane fog/foggy humid disaster	break up with somebody lose contact with somebody pregnant divorced relationship twins	Arctic Asian continent tropical forest Mediterranean nationality regional	bear camel squirrel wasp zoo barn extinct save from extinction
clothes and fashion	roads and transport	education and learning languages	holidays and travel	describing looks, moods, and personality	cooking, food, drink, and places of
blouse bracelet brooch glove jacket perfume pyjamas trousers scarf tights T-shirt handbag	traffic traffic lights car park pedestrian crossing driving licence licence number junction speed limit vehicle motorbike motorway park (a car) public transport road fire service motorist county	approach accent dash vocabulary essay primary school leave school school leaver lecture demonstration technical manual novel magazine publish photocopy culture/cultural	flight timetable picnic camp site suitcase briefcase cancel (a booking) airmail helicopter	handsome slim smart has a moustache adult bored depressed competent crazy disabled romantic sociable precise personality	beef carrot chips chop (food) roast peel delicious sandwich slice lettuce steak pineapple pub chewing gum
politics, war and peace	accidents, health and illnesses	performing simple communicative tasks and socialising	home, furniture, housework, and daily routine	sports, leisure, exercise, entertainment and hobbies	work and employment
congress conservatives liberal democrats	ambulance emergency survive injured	afterwards amazing awful boring	cellar corridor cabinet occupied (a	baseball basketball badminton golf	expert novelist shop assistant butcher

vote federal federation head of state senate house of commons house of Lords senator republicans MP representative PM (Prime Minister) nuclear	recover appendicitis tonsillitis back trouble itch contact lenses dentist hay fever health care injection a pulled muscles tablet aspirin	marvellous nonsense bet coincidence attitude annually impress involve OK	house) computer fax cassette player cassette recorder CD player compact disk personal stereo hair-dryer clothes dryer tumble dryer washing machine convector heater vacuum cleaner Hoover dishwasher electric kettle toaster food mixer mug mugger fridge refrigerator knob dustbin plug plug in/unplug socket pillow poster ironing	champion goal score chess concert cycle/cycling rally driving guitar hobby hockey horse riding jazz judo playing the piano create	lorry driver dustman operator policewoman porter receptionist specialist interview income
<b>the human body</b>	<b>the language of measurements and statistics</b>				
elbow hip fetch grab	maximum majority minority calculator				

In Table 6.4, the words and expressions that come under the category of 'education and learning languages' may be seen as educational as well as social updates. They indicate that schooling, studying languages, writing and publishing have become characteristic features of the modern English society. The word *policewoman* is a social update reflecting the relatively recent emancipation of women and the effective role they play as participating members in modern societies. Another example of this is the word *businesswoman* in Table 6.5. In Table 6.4 (as well as the other tables), there is an element of technical update figuring in the focus on words and expressions referring to electronic goods and household appliances (e.g. computer, fax, CD player, hair-dryer, tumble dryer, dishwasher, food mixer, etc.). Other interesting examples of updates are *motorway*, *photocopy*, *airmail*, and *contact lenses*. Some of these terms are now spread across many languages as modern loan words and hence form a fairly

international lexical base. Note that political update includes terms from both UK and USA. For example, *congress*, *head of states*, *senate*, and *republicans* are all American political terms.

**Table (6.5): Words and expressions not included in West's (1953) *GSL* (In the vocabulary index of *The New Cambridge English Course*, book 4 (upper-intermediate)).**

roads and traffic	clothes and fashion	animals	accidents, health and illnesses	family and relationships	politics, war and peace
traffic lights traffic warden T-junction vehicle wagon car park motorist	glove sandal slipper swimming trunks	camel mammal	emergency exit ambulance injure/injured recover midwife	love at first sight extended family immediate family girlfriend relationship wedding anniversary rootless	democracy democratic federal MP opposition reform demonstration autocide bomb
holidays and travel	sports, leisure, exercise, entertainment and hobbies	food, drink and places of	crime and punishment	home, furniture, housework and daily routine	the language of measurements and statistics
airport passport platform safety belt crew timetable delayed (a train) luggage overseas booking cancel (a booking)	stroll classical music pop music jazz bird-watching canoe cyclist score museum opera scotch cricket sculpt/sculptor statue	biscuit black coffee white coffee dessert groceries jam Strawberry Spaghetti is a typical Italian food consumption	theft smash (a window) target raid jam capture release (from prison) terrify/terrified scream shiver	occupy (a house) cellar cupboard domestic window frame window pane freezer washing machine launderette home computer telephone directory alarm gardening hedge convert (a room) concrete	stone kilogram kilometre kilometres/miles an hour/per hour minus plus surplus one point five hundred million thousand decimal majority enormous approximately Celsius
		the weather	shapes		
		frost disaster	rectangular vertical		
work and employment	geography, countries, and nationalities	describing looks, moods, and personality	shopping, economy and money terms	performing simple communicative tasks and socialising	education and learning languages
builder businesswoman n-an civil servant film director fire brigade receptionist adviser author	geography cliff countryside jungle uninhabitable Middle East Far East Atlantic Coast Pacific Coast	oval/round/ long face high/low forehead high cheekbones generous mouth pointed/firm/ weak chin long/turned up	antique cash purse currency bank/current/ deposit account accounting productivity	chat boring get lost I'll tell you what see red require occur My God!	physics research upbringing style vocabulary phrase stress accent adjective

baby-sit/sitting applicant interview promotion labour working conditions (take) the day off charity volunteer diary	The Third World Asia Chinese Italy/Italian Wales/Welsh Welshman Spain/Spanish Spaniard Egypt/Egyptian etc.	nose bushy eyebrows thin build bald slim heavily-built dark-skinned dull-looking elderly rage casually dressed handsome sober has a moustache scared of relaxed upset cross embarrassed furious nervous nervy frantic intelligent sociable self-confident emotional affectionate reserved practical moody aggressive silly optimistic pessimistic shy/shyness easy-going energetic logical personality	finance inflation recession stock-market exports drugstore market town split the difference recovery economic economics economy industrial output	good heavens insist do you know his/her extension will you hold (the line) I'll put you through I'm trying to connect you I'll see if I can transfer you we were cut off I'll give you a ring his/her line's engaged coincidence encounter convince frankly definitely eventually carefully obviously sufficiently guy amaze/ amazement	bracket sign language publish informal language consonant culture/cultural environment bilingual primary school crèche
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A large number of updates may be seen in this table. For example, some items that come under the category of 'the language of measurements and statistics' mirror conversions from imperial to metric measures which is relatively recent in Britain and elsewhere. These items are *kilogram*, *kilometre*, *decimal*, and *Celsius*. Other interesting examples of updates are *stress*, *accent*, *sign language*, *consonant*, and *bilingual*. These items reflect attention given to the study of language and communication in modern times.



It is clear that a large number of the items in tables 6.2-6.5 mirror basic socio-cultural developments in the outside world (e.g. names of kitchen appliances, road and traffic terms, shopping and economy terms, etc.) since West's *GSL* was drawn up. Hence, the incorporation of these items to the programme in question is motivated by necessity. In other words, it is simply a matter of updating West's *GSL*<sup>5</sup>.

'Prototyping' as a method of vocabulary expansion in the EFL/EIL lexical syllabus might have succeeded in exposing learners to basic lexical developments denoting the changing conditions of the life of the English nation, but the important question is: has the method succeeded in exposing learners to the semantic development of English? Answering this question is the main concern of the section to follow. However, the question that needs to be considered at this point is as follows. On what grounds do pedagogues justify their focus on frequency words for the world version of the English language?

It is often argued that frequency is a basic criterion for lexical inclusion so that English words meet the needs of foreign learners. Nation and Waring (1997:16), for example, raise the following question: "Beyond the 2,000 high frequency words of the *GSL*, what vocabulary does a second language learner need?" Their reply is:

*The answer to this question depends on what the language learner intends to use English for. If the learner has no special academic purposes, then he/she should work on strategies for dealing with low frequency words. If, however, the learner intends to go on to*

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<sup>5</sup> It is worthwhile noting that non-basic words in Diagram 6.2, such as *hijacker*, *drug abuse*, *drug addict* and *drug dealer*, denote crimes that were unknown or less familiar in West's days. The term *burglar alarm* refers to a modern electronic device. Other items like *solicitor* and *mug* are now more in common use than *lawyer* and *rob*. The expressions in the diagram are so frequent nowadays that they are likely to be heard on TV/radio news and read in newspapers on everyday basis. Thus, the incorporation of these words/expressions into *Headway* may also be seen as a matter of updating West's *GSL*.

*academic study in upper high school or at university, then there is a clear need for general academic vocabulary. This can be found in the 836 word list called the **University Word List (UWL)**<sup>6</sup> (Xue and Nation 1984; Nation 1990) (ibid).*

This may be said to be a side effect of the concept of a ‘monolithic’ standard which comes to be associated with the belief that English for international communication is English for a limited range of purposes (either general or specific). This has the consequence of English pedagogy limiting itself to teaching learners only the special/general items they are thought to require. If they are studying English for general or academic purposes, then frequency words will meet their needs. Again, the implication of this is that learners of English are given access only to the ‘visitors’ wing’ of what is consciously or unconsciously treated as a private property of the English nation.

It is worthwhile noting at this point that English language pedagogy concerns itself predominantly with selection based on students’ productive rather than their receptive vocabulary, as is clear from the following quotes:

*Frequency information ... allows teachers, where appropriate, to focus on the most common words, ensuring that students know and can actively use them (Fox 1998:27).*

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<sup>6</sup> “The *UWL* consists of words words that are not in the first 2,000 words of the *GSL* but which are frequent and of wide range in academic contexts. Wide range means that the words occur not just in one or two disciplines such as economics or mathematics, but across a wide range of disciplines. The *UWL* word *frustrate*, for example, can be found in many different disciplines. The *UWL* is ... a compilation of four separate studies, Lynn (1973), Ghadessy (1979), Campion and Elley (1971) and Praninskas (1972)” (Nation & Waring 1997:16).

*In the language learning situation, we would stress the importance of decision-making by the teacher and materials writer about which items are worth learning for productive use and which are only useful for purposes of recognition. The decision-making has several implications; the teacher will need to select what he feels will be most relevant for the students' productive vocabulary and this, in turn, will affect his treatment of those items in the classroom (Gairns and Redman 1986:65).*

Vocabulary items that lie beyond the boundaries of the areas of an ELT target speciality are left to learners to learn on their own, if they wish or require. Nation and Waring suggest that "A way to manage the learning of huge amounts of vocabulary is through indirect or incidental learning. An example of this is learning new words (or deepening the knowledge of already known words) in context through extensive listening and reading" (ibid:11). But, how efficient is incidental learning as a strategy of building up one's target language vocabulary?

In an informal study conducted (for a purpose other than this study) in the Department of English<sup>7</sup> at Aleppo University (one of the biggest Syrian universities), one hundred and fifty students were asked to give their viewpoints as future English teachers, concerning the best method to teaching vocabulary (It should be noted that these learners are supposed to build up their English vocabulary in the process of reading and listening to lectures). Interestingly enough, the suggestions they gave mainly demonstrate a plea to enlarge students' vocabulary. The majority of the subjects (111 out of 150) suggested that students must build up their vocabulary through reading/translating newspapers (rather than books), watching English films, listening to English songs, speaking to native speakers, etc. because they seem to believe that these sources give a real

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<sup>7</sup> This is a part of a four-year institution offering a B.A. degree in English language and literature.

picture about the use of the language in its native setting. Here are some examples of the replies:

*First of all, I prefer to make them encouraged to learn English. I mean to love learning English by listening to English songs and English radio programmes. It is important to speak to English people to improve one's English. Students lack the vocabulary items which are the axis of speaking freely.*

*As a future English teacher, I will advise my students to listen to English radio programmes, to read English newspapers and to try to translate some paragraphs as they can.*

*I think the most useful method is translation, because translation is the only subject in which you cannot use your special words which you have learnt before.*

*The best way I think I prefer is, if we come across a new word I'll try to give other words of the same meaning. If we come across a word we don't know its meaning but we can know its meaning by mentioning other words of the same meaning.*

*After improving my English knowledge, I will try to have a certain method which I think I can follow.*

These responses demonstrate the point that although the subjects have spent long years (a minimum of 10 years) studying English, these years of study have neither helped them overcome the difficulty of the language nor have they helped to

decrease the students' perception of the level of the foreignness of the language. It is true that a number of factors play a role in preserving this foreignness, such as lack of sufficient exposure to and practice in using the target language. The problem, however, starts from coursebooks. The subjects have jumped from studying English materials selected for foreign students to studying literary works written for native speakers. This must have been too long a jump for them (and for any other learners who are in the same position). But, had EFL/EIL coursebooks been designed in such a way as to offer learners access to more than core English, the subjects would have benefited a lot from reading literature.

It seems that these learners have failed to utilise the high frequency words they have been exposed to during their school days in order to build up their English vocabulary through reading. The fact that high frequency words have the potential of appearing with meanings that can be completely unfamiliar to learners makes it difficult for learners to comprehend these words in new contexts and to infer the meanings of new words from newly encountered contexts. Sinclair (1991:101) pointed out that:

*Frequent words have, in general, a more complex set of senses than infrequent words. If we divide and number senses in the conventional dictionary manner, we discover a statistical relationship between the number of occurrences of a word and the number of different senses it realizes. Hence, the accumulation of instances of a frequent word is not just more of the same, but ever more clear evidence of complexity*

It is unlikely that the foreign learners in question (or any other learners who depend heavily on coursebooks for learning their English vocabulary) have been systematically and consciously exposed to the polysemy of high frequency words

or to their uses in metaphor. The reason why this is unlikely is because coursebooks for all proficiency levels are built on the same topics (i.e. ‘general interest’ topics). When a lexical item is used repeatedly in a limited number of contexts, there will be much less chance for it to be semantically exploited.

### **6.3 ‘Prototyping’ and the Problem of Polysemy**

O’Dell (1997:270) reported that: “Work by the COBUILD corpus team drew attention to the fact that the second most common noun (after *people*) in the English language is *way*. But *way* does not fit neatly into a topic-based syllabus like the much less frequent *mouse* or *elbow* do”. This, however, does not mean that it is only high frequency words that suffer from topic-based syllabuses. Many relatively low frequency words have acquired over time a large number of meanings that are also unlikely to be covered in topic-based syllabuses. The problem with the EFL/EIL lexical syllabus is that it is not simply topic-based, but based on topics that are central to learning a target language. The point here is that adopting ‘prototyping’ as a pattern for vocabulary expansion in the EFL/EFL lexical syllabus, placing at the centre of the programme topics that are basic to learning a target language, has resulted in restricting the semantic applications of prototypically added lexical items to their core meanings: literal and/or commonest meanings.

To demonstrate the point, consider the semantic application of the following randomly selected words in *The New Cambridge English Course*: *body*, *fair*, *demonstration*, and *slim*. The semantic ranges of these words in the coursebook will later be compared with the ranges of the same words in the British National Corpus. The first two words are categorised as relatively high frequency words and the second two as relatively low frequency words. Tables 6.6 and 6.7 summarise the applications of the words in the course:

**Table (6.6): The semantic application of the basic words *body* and *fair* in *The New Cambridge English Course* (as high frequency words).**

Word and Meaning	Book 1 (Elementary)	Book 2 (Beginner's)	Book 3 (Intermediate)	Book 4 (Upper-intermediate)
<b><i>Body</i></b>				
1. all physical parts	--	body/bodies/parts of the body (4)	lower body (1) upper body (1)	-- --
2. trunk	--	body (1)	body/bodies (5)	
3. corpse	--	body (1) dead bodies (1)	--	body (1)
<b><i>fair</i></b>				
1. not unfair	--	fair boss (6) fair hair/skin (7)	--	--
2. not dark	fair hair/skin (9)	fair-haired woman (3)	fair hair (1)	fair hair (3)

**Table (6.7): The semantic application of *slim* and *demonstration* in *The New Cambridge English Course* (as relatively low frequency words).**

Words	Book 1 (Elementary)	Book 2 (Beginners)	Book 3 (Intermediate)	Book 4 (Upper-intermediate)
<b><i>slim</i></b>	not fat (7)	not fat (2)	not fat (1)	not fat (2) (As a verb) to deliberately make one's self thinner (1)
<b><i>Demonstration</i></b>	--	an organised public exhibition of condemnation (2)	a talk or explanation (2)	an organised public exhibition of condemnation (2)

A comparison between the meanings of *body* in Table 6.6 and the concordances of the word in Table 6.8 obtained from the British National Corpus<sup>8</sup> shows that *body* is used in *The New Cambridge English Course* in its literal senses only, namely 'all physical parts', 'trunk' and 'corpse'. The first two senses have achieved the highest frequency level in 50 concordances. The third one has come fourth in order of frequency. Hence, these meanings may be regarded as the literal as well as the commonest meanings of the word. Metaphorical extensions of *body*, such as its use in the expressions 'an advisory body', 'the body of the

<sup>8</sup> Numbers in tables 6.8-6.11 indicate the number of occurrences of a meaning in 50 concordances.

essay', 'the body of the evidence', 'a substantial body of troops', 'a body of water', etc., occupy no place in the course.

**Table (6.8): Concordances for *body* in (25526 instances found in BNC)<sup>9</sup>.**

Meaning	Examples
The physical structure of a person, animal, or plant	As we get older, our metabolism slows down and this affects the skin as much as any other part of the <b>body</b> . (14)
The trunk of a person or animal	She looked at her own <b>body</b> , and exposed its imperfections with both ruthlessness and affection. (11)
An organised group of people who are in charge of something or who work together	In May 1990 he had cautiously endorsed the reform plan suggested by the Election System Council, an advisory <b>body</b> to the Prime Minister. (9)
A corpse.	Reports that Mr Stephen Summerchild, the Civil Servant whose <b>body</b> was found in Whitehall earlier this week ... (5)
The main or central part of a thing	While the fortified tower façade at Husaby shows German influence, the <b>body</b> of the church is more English in derivation. (3) Style is important, but in a long document it can be very time consuming to check that the headings, subheadings and <b>body</b> text all conform to the same pattern. (1)
A collection	The resulting hypothesis should explain the observed phenomena in as simple a way as possible, may allow one to predict the behaviour of related phenomena, and should cohere with the <b>body</b> of accepted scientific theories. (3)
A quantity	She proposed that the new king and his brother, who was on a brief visit to Ludlow, should be escorted to London by a substantial <b>body</b> of troops.' (2) A favoured hypothesis is that the persistence of a large <b>body</b> of magma allows it to become vertically stratified with the more viscous and gas-rich component accumulating towards the top. (1)
A body of people is a group of people who are together or who are connected together in some way	to do so could well leave the individual with the feeling that he has not been afforded any opportunity of controverting the public <b>body's</b> view. (1)

Similarly, a comparison between the meanings of *fair* in Table 6.6 and the concordances of the word in Table 6.9 shows that the word occurs in *The New Cambridge English Course* in its literal sense 'not dark (hair/skin)' as well as one of its commonest meanings 'just'. Again, metaphorical applications of the word evident in the other uses listed in Table 6.9 seem to be beyond the scope of the course. An example of these is the use of *fair* in the expression 'fair guess' or 'fair amount'.

<sup>9</sup> These, however, are not the only possible semantic applications of *body*. For example, if one says a particular drink, such as coffee, has **body**, one means that it is full and strong. Another application is the use of the word in physics to refer to 'an object that is physically separate from all other objects' (a foreign body).



**Table (6.9): Concordances for *fair* (9210 instances found in BNC)<sup>10</sup>.**

Meaning	Examples
Something that is <b>fair</b> is reasonable according to a generally accepted standard or idea about what is right and just	I think it is <b>fair</b> to say that hard words were spoken, but I never knew exactly what was said. Railways seem to have thrown up more than their <b>fair</b> share of curiosities. (5) But erm, I woul what, erm, I also, the Hotel, we bought that the same way, they were selling that back and making quite a <b>fair</b> bit of profit, investing the money in arable land. (3)
Someone or something that is <b>fair</b> is just or equitable	That no stay was to be imposed unless a defendant established on the balance of probabilities that, owing to the delay, he would suffer serious prejudice to the extent that no <b>fair</b> trial could be held, in that the continuation of the prosecution amounted to a misuse of the process of the court... (5) Workers wanted managers to be strict, but <b>fair</b> and helpful (2)
A <b>fair</b> guess, idea, etc. is one that is likely to be correct.	There was a fair indication too that, if she got the job, she was going to work harder than she had ever worked, in that she would have an assistant to work with her. (6)
An exhibition of goods produced by a particular industry	On that date in Maysfield Leisure Centre the Northern Ireland Programme Club, organisers of the award, hold their Annual <b>Fair</b> . (6)
<b>Fair enough</b> is used to indicate that: (1). a statement, decision or action seems reasonable, but there is more to be said or done; (2). you understand what someone has said	I mean British Gas, <b>fair enough</b> it was quite efficient, but its not as efficient as it is now, same with Telecom, Electricity, Water and Sewage (1) he'll buy a PC, I said okay <b>fair enough</b> I don't care, I'll get my bedroom done (3)
Not dark (hair or skin)	When we started to rehearse, I had never heard of this slim, <b>fair</b> , rather shy person,' he recalled. (2) She had been very <b>fair</b> , a blonde, he could tell that by her pale brows and lashes, though not by her hair, for someone had clipped all that off very close to the scalp. (1)
A <b>fair</b> amount, degree, size or distance is quite a large amount, degree, size or distance	There's a <b>fair</b> amount of white space in the magazine, too; freelance art editor John Hawkins is jointly named in theaward. (3)
Actions or decisions that are considered to be reasonable according to a generally accepted feeling or belief about what is right are referred to as <b>fair play</b>	Lord Denning is among those who have emphasised that <b>fair play</b> may not always require that you be given a warning and time to improve if you refuse to acknowledge blatant fault on your part (2)
To <b>play fair</b> is to behave or act in a reasonable and honest way	South Africa seldom <b>plays fair</b> with its black neighbours. (2)
<b>To be fair</b> is an expression used to correct an unfair or false impression given about someone or something that has just been mentioned	To be fair to Nixon, other aides question the famous account of a drunken president in Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein's The Final Days. (2)
A person or place that is <b>fair</b> is attractive and rather beautiful	Such is the stuff the dreams of my palate are made on, Kelly, thine is the most potent brew, renowned throughout this fair land.' MY FAIR FERGIE! (2)
If something or someone is described as <b>fair</b> , they are about average in standard or quality, neither very good nor very bad	Most evenings after dinner there was music at his Headquarters in Stenay, with the Crown Prince himself sometimes playing the violin, at which he was a fair performer. (2)

<sup>10</sup> Other uses of *fair* are in the expressions *fair copy* and *fair-weather*. The former expression is used to refer to 'a piece of writing that is neat and has no mistakes', and the latter to 'someone who takes part in a particular activity or offers help when it is easy or pleasant for them to do so'.

To win <b>fair and square</b> is to win in an honest way	I just didn't want to fill that, I wanna win <b>fair and square</b> . (1)
Women can be referred to as the <b>fair sex</b>	'The women (blessed be the Corporation therefore!) are flogged at the Cart's tail when they pick and steal, as happened to one of the <b>fair sex</b> yesterday noon. (1)
To get a <b>fair crack of the whip</b> is to get a fair chance to participate, etc.	Shakespeare gets a <b>fair crack of the whip</b> , but as text samples to be read, examined closely, and evaluated, rather than as monolith. (1)

To move to the words *slim* and *demonstration*, a comparison between Table 6.7 above and tables 6.10 and 6.11 shows that the application of the words in *The New Cambridge English Course* is restricted to the meanings that achieved the highest frequency level in the 50 concordances obtained from the British National Corpus. *Slim* occurred in the course in its commonest meaning 'slender', and *demonstration* in its commonest two meanings 'an organised public exhibition of condemnation/support' and 'a talk or explanation'. The non-core and more creative or metaphoric uses of these words (listed in tables 6.10 and 6.11), such as 'slim chance' and 'a demonstration of feelings' seem to have no place in the course.

**Table 6.10: Concordances for *slim* in the (1274 instances found in BNC).**

Meaning	Example
Slender	Family and friends describe Christine as <b>slim</b> and pretty; a woman who enjoyed life and looked younger than her 46 years. (28)
Dainty	The <b>slim</b> , perfectly manicured, fingers touched her face and hair like a swarm of honeybees exploring a bed of exotic flowers. (7) She was dressed in what must have been the formal evening style of 1915: an indigo silk evening wrap over a <b>slim</b> ivory-coloured dress of some shot material that once more narrowed and ended just above her ankles. (2)
Small or faint chance, etc.	she reckoned her chances of landing a job were <b>slim</b> . (6)
thin	it first appeared in its present format, accompanied by the <b>slim</b> one-volume Supplement which added quotations, words, and meanings that had come to the editors' attention after the publication of the relevant part of the Dictionary. (3)
(As a noun) a course of slimming	Look out for our exercise programme in next month's <b>Slim</b> Plan. (2)
If something <b>slims down</b> , it weakens	Yes, the coal industry has <b>slimmed down</b> ; yes, it may even have to <b>slim down</b> further. (2)

**Table 6.11: Concordances for *demonstration* (1858 instances found in BNC).**

Meaning	Example
An organised public exhibition of condemnation or support	Although the organized activists were not on the whole the very poor, the poorest joined the <b>demonstration</b> (19)
A talk or explanation by someone who shows you how to do or use something, or how something works	It seems far more important to me to provide an effective and clear <b>demonstration</b> of those virtues of the product that you are trying to put across than to lose the proposition in an attempt to set up a credible context for it. (12)
The showing of something, such as skill, talent, etc.	The occurrence turned out to be a public <b>demonstration</b> of the skills and professionalism of the railway and a visitor remarked that it could not have been improved upon had it been stage-managed for the Gala. (6) This initially ran on a short <b>demonstration</b> track around the works but eight years ago developed into a plan to run month long charity specials up the former trackbed and based on the Leek and Manifold's former Hulme End terminus. (5)
A proof by someone that something exists or that something such as a theory or principle is right	It would work, I explained to him -- and it is a <b>demonstration</b> of how something that is essentially simple can on that account have a firmer structure than a more complicated mechanism -- by dint of borrowing from the banks a sufficient sum of money for the initial purchase. (5)
A display or expression of an emotion	I have remembered this further <b>demonstration</b> of Highland hospitality by people obviously poor in everything except the warmth of their welcome for strangers. (2)

The question here arises: are the semantic applications of *body*, *fair*, *slim* and *demonstration* (as examples) in *The New Cambridge English Course* sufficient for foreign learners to use the words efficiently and to comprehend them in the various contexts in which they may be encountered? The answer would appear to be: certainly not. The concordances in tables 6.8-6.11 show that the apparently simple words in question (as found in the coursebook) are far from simple in their semantic applications (as shown in the most frequent authentic contexts of the corpus) and may, therefore, cause comprehension problems to learners if encountered in unfamiliar contexts as seems inevitable if students are exposed to English outside the classroom. The difficulty that foreign learners may find in understanding an unfamiliar meaning of a familiar word derives from the fact that the majority of the polysemous senses of words are metaphorical extensions which can be language-specific (This point is elaborated on later in the chapter).

The applications of the above-mentioned words are relatively simple compared to a word such as *come*, since it has a high potential of appearing as a multi-word verb. The word did occur in the course in question as a semantically complex word, but still, only the prototype norms of this complex verb are exploited. Compare tables 6.12 and 6.13.

**Table (6.12): The semantic applications of the word *come* in *The New Cambridge English Course*.**

Meaning	Example	Number of occurrences			
		Book 1 (Elementary)	Book 2 (Beginner's)	Book 3 (Intermediate)	Book 4 (Upper-intermediate)
To move from one place to another.	<i>Lucy is coming to see us.</i>	2	4	21	5
To arrive at a particular place.	<i>Tomy is coming in half an hour.</i>	–	3	10	5
	<i>Come home</i>	1	2	1	4
To travel to an event such as a party or an interview and spend time there.	<i>Thank you for coming for an interview.</i>	4	4	8	3
To ask someone to go with you/someone else somewhere.	<i>Would like to come with us.</i>	1	–	1	1
If something <b>comes</b> from a particular place, it has that place as its source or starting point.	<i>The light is coming from a strange machine.</i>	1	–	–	–
To <b>come</b> from something means to be obtained or derived from it.	<i>Oxygen comes from plants.</i>	1	–	–	–
If someone or something comes to a particular, position or situation, they get into it.	<i>Come into effect</i>	–	1	–	–
<b>Expressions</b>					
Meaning	Expression	Number of occurrence			
		Book 1 (Elementary)	Book 2 (Beginner's)	Book 3 (Intermediate)	Book 4 (Upper-intermediate)
To find something by chance.	<i>come across</i>	–	–	–	1
Approach the speaker.	<i>come along</i>	–	–	–	1
Leave a place.	<i>come away</i>	1	–	–	–
Return to a place.	<i>come back (again)</i>	3	3	–	2
Be born in a particular place.	<i>come from</i>	–	–	2	5
To enter to a place.	<i>come in</i>	2	–	2	2

Said to invite someone to an outing.	<i>come out</i>	-	-	2	1
To get out of a place.	<i>come out of</i>	-	1	1	-
Said to: encourage someone to do or say something they are reluctant to do or say; encourage someone to hurry up.	<i>come on</i>	-	-	-	2
		-	2	-	-
Come from another country.	<i>come over</i>	-	1	1	-
Call at someone's house.	<i>come round</i>	-	2	2	1
Rise (the sun or the moon); becomes available (e.g. a chance)	<i>come up</i>	-	-	2	-
		-	-	-	1

Note that for *come* as a single verb, only the literal senses of the word which refer to the physical movement of somebody/something from one place to another occur in the course. The non-literal but common uses of the word (listed in Table 6.13), such as its employment for talking about the non-physical movement of time and the human mind do not occur in the course at all. As for *come* as a multi-word verb, note that only few applications of the word occur in the course. These few applications are also bleached of their semantic richness/creativity. *Come across*, for example, appears in its literal sense 'to find something by chance'. The non-literal but commonplace sense 'to communicate effectively' is absent in the course. Further comparisons will lead to the same observation.

**Table (6.13): Concordances for *come/came* (69527 instances for *come* and 47172 for *came* found in BNC).**

Meaning	Examples
To move from one place to another thought of as near or familiar to the speaker or hearer.	Aileen <b>came</b> to the door, still tearful, yellow strands of hair trailing over her face. ' <b>Come</b> and sit on my knee.' I have <b>come</b> to you tonight as much to thank you for that answer as to explain to those of you who already plan to make your home in Eretz ... what lies before you.' (20)
If you come to a place, you reach it.	Although President Nixon may have <b>come</b> to the White House committed to ending the war in Vietnam, it just so happened that his way of ending it was to escalate it. (2)

To arrive at a particular place, especially the place where you are waiting, sitting or standing.	'You <b>came</b> here on the train, didn't you?' (3) If my children <b>came home</b> and said to me that they got the cane at school I'd have just said well you must have deserved it. (3)
To go somewhere with someone when they have said they are going or have asked you to go too.	In fact, she didn't want to go anywhere unless he <b>came</b> with her. (2)
To travel to an event and spend time there.	Didn't <b>come</b> to her funeral? (2)
If someone or something comes to a particular state, position, or situation, they are in it or get into it.	The car <b>came</b> to an abrupt halt outside KGB headquarters. (1) I was listening to songs that he'd written, and was in the process of writing, and <b>came</b> to the conclusion that he was not essentially a singles artist. (1) Predictably, though, there was little resemblance between this defeated Liverpool side and the one that <b>came</b> so close to being knocked out of the FA Cup in the semi-final against Portsmouth at Highbury. (1) We have <b>come</b> to terms with the fact that most of us have subtle differences which determine the strengths and weaknesses of our make-up. (1) Most important of all was the fact that he was devoted to imperial service; thus his role as chancellor and Barbarossa's role as emperor were seldom to <b>come</b> into conflict. (1) decree permitting the free formation of parties <b>came</b> into effect that month ... (1)
If someone or something comes into being, view, sight, etc., they become perceptible or known.	You'll be familiar with Monument Hill and its legend -- how the meteorite landed and the Kershaw Worm <b>came</b> into being, and then the Monument itself being built. (1) The announcement of the losses, which <b>came</b> to light following a report by the US investment bank J.P. (3)
<b>Come</b> is used to indicate the continuous nature of the movement or activity that is mentioned, indicating that the movement is towards the place where the speaker is; in front of an infinitive, to indicate that something happens gradually over a fairly long period of time.	I think Sam accidentally kicked Hannah, or kicked Hannah I don't know I wasn't there, but he <b>came</b> flying down, really got to curb that child he said ... (1)  wheat has <b>come</b> to be an important imported product which reflects the increasing consumption of bread as a staple, rather than maize-based food products such as tortillas . (3)
If someone or something comes first, next, last, etc., they come at that point in the series or orders.	Next <b>came</b> the Iran-Iraq treaty of 1937. (2)
Time or an event to come is used to refer to a future period or to an event that will happen in the future.	But even diaries of terror...were rarely written simply for the author to look back on in years to <b>come</b> (1)
When something such as news or announcement comes, it is announced.	Still to <b>come</b> on Central News. (1)
If you talk about a particular time coming, you are referring to it approaching or arriving in the formal course of events.	... the time has surely <b>come</b> for Britain to make an official admission of Churchill's grievous error in switching our support from the royalist leader Mihailovich to Tito in 1943. (2) It was only when daylight <b>came</b> , overcome by exhaustion, hunger and the cold they gave themselves up. (2)
Traverse or accomplish.	The Inspirals have <b>come</b> a long way from 1989's full-tilt three-minute organ romp early days. (1)
Reach or be brought to a specified situation or result.	She did not specify, even to herself, the harm that might <b>come</b> to Alice ... (1) There was none of the clashing of iron, or stamping of horse that she had <b>come</b> to associate with both skirmish and battle... (2)
If money, property, etc. comes to you, you inherit it.	The words 'I ask you, son, to care for the lands which will <b>come</b> to you with your usual diligence and look after them so that they may <b>come</b> to your sons' ... (1)
If something comes from or out of a particular place, it has that place as its	Unpleasant odours sometimes <b>come</b> from the decomposition of vegetable matter and algae in reservoirs, and in this case the

source or starting point.		remedy lies in cleaning of the storage system. (1) The mind must be relaxed -- the best ideas <b>come</b> out of silence. (1)
To <b>come</b> from something means to be obtained or derived from it.		So that's just illustrating Gillian's point is that, information can <b>come</b> from a number of sources. (1)
If you come to do something, you do it by accident rather than on purpose.		It's when you <b>come</b> to do a job like building a fitted wardrobe that you realise that your house is not 'true'. (1)
<b>Expressions</b>		
Expression	Meaning	Example
<i>Come across</i>	Find something or meet someone by chance; to communicate effectively.	The Kennel Club is the doziest organisation I have ever <b>come across</b> in initiating communication to the outside world. (1) Mrs Clamp has <b>come across</b> with some details on sporadic occasions, too, though they are probably no more to be relied on than what my father's told me. (1)
<i>Come along</i>	Accompany someone somewhere; happen unexpectedly.	And you don't have to have a history degree to <b>come along</b> to one of these things? (1) Many have fickle requirements and others lie dormant until very precise conditions happen to <b>come along</b> . (1)
<i>Come away</i>	Leave a place.	... you used to <b>come away</b> with a big piece of flat brisket and if he's got any sausage left, or bits of pork pies, he used to shove a bit of that in. (1)
<i>Come back</i>	Return to a place; return to a topic, point, question, etc.; becomes fashionable or popular again.	... she admitted to herself that her lover would never <b>come back</b> . (3) To <b>come back</b> to Jonathan for a moment, you say he was a great liberal, he was an admirer of Lloyd George? (2) ... we've given these people who are unemployed our good training, we need their expertise to <b>come back</b> and fight again if we're gonna have any hope for the future. (2)
<i>Come down</i>	If you come down to a place, you visit it; if something comes down, it becomes cheaper.	Before I get the dinner out, and then when I <b>come down</b> it'll be dinner time. (1) Flash memory chips, which retain their state when the power is switched off, are forecast to replace disk storage in handheld devices as prices <b>come down</b> to match disk (although the new generations of fast, light, high-capacity and cheap 1.8" drives keep pushing that date back). (1)
<i>Come forward</i>	To come as an offer.	These approvals are the first to <b>come forward</b> under the transitional arrangements the Government set up to cover RECHAR in the 1992-93 financial year. (1)
<i>Come from</i>	To come from a particular place means to be born in a particular place, or into a particular family, or to have a particular background	Despite the fact that he had <b>come from</b> a long line of soldier forebears, even the combination of breeding, upbringing and training no longer made it easy for him to bear the tedium of army life with good grace. (1) 'I'm not probing, you know, Joe, but we've been together months now, nine of them, in fact, and I know no more about you now than on the day we met, except that you <b>come from</b> the wilds of Northumberland. (1) Their members are appointed by the Secretary of State, with between 40% and 60% of the membership to <b>come</b> from higher education. (1)
<i>Come in</i>	Enter a place; arrive at a place	He heard them murmuring in the hall; then silence; then they <b>came in</b> . (2) Reggie will <b>come in</b> and go straight to bed, he's been up since about quarter to four (1)
<i>Come off</i>	Be detached from something; get off something.	You'd have heard him all over the shop,' he said, 'and he <b>came off</b> the phone complaining that he'd just lost 40,000. (1) ... these all <b>came off</b> the same train. (1)
<i>Come on</i>	Said to: encourage someone to do or say something they are reluctant to do or say;	'Back to the hotel, man, <b>come on</b> !' says Wesley. (1)

	encourage someone to hurry up; tell someone that what they are saying or doing is silly or unreasonable.	' <b>Come on</b> , honey, I'm hungry. (1)  ' no, not quite, you're nearly right, <b>come on</b> (1)
<i>Come out</i>	Go out of a place;  to come out in a particular position is to be in that position at the end of a contest, process, etc.; go on strike;  becomes available or published; revealed or made public (emerge);  declare publicly.	He stayed there for a long time, until he was sure that the dogs had gone, then he <b>came out</b> . But you wouldn't <b>come out</b> with me, would you?' (2) McDonald's <b>came out</b> as the most parent-friendly restaurant, with Forte as the best hotel chain. (1)  Well back in September a few weeks after the quarry men first <b>came out</b> on strike a few of us went up to the picket line, a few of the women. (1) it's just about to <b>come out</b> in three weeks time. (2)  However, the approaches to its main executives only <b>came out</b> under aggressive press questioning of Mr Gatward after yesterday's meeting which a handful of shareholders attended. (1) Whereupon she <b>came out</b> into the open and said she would choose Arts. (1) With Morgan Grenfell the management <b>came out with</b> an equity stake of 15%. (1)
<i>Come out with</i>	Announce.	
<i>Come over</i>	Pay a short visit;  come from another country;  influence, affect.	Joan's just rung see they <b>come over</b> for, all of them <b>come over</b> for dinner every Sunday,... (1) George Herbert was a member of a family which had <b>come over</b> with William the Conqueror and had a long tradition of service to the Crown. (1) 'Don't know what's <b>come over</b> me. (1)
<i>Come round</i>	Pay an informal visit;  move to the other side of something; recover consciousness.	I've been thinking that if I ever meet the kind of young lady who'd make you a nice wife, I'll get her to <b>come round</b> and introduce 'erself.' (1) He stood, and, with one final bow to his opponent, <b>came round</b> the table, facing the three young men. (1) When I quip that he sounds as if he has just <b>come round</b> from anaesthetic, Eva says, 'He has.' (1)
<i>Come through</i>	Arrives, especially after some procedure has been carried out.	What I'll do darling is that all the tiles will <b>come through</b> about there. (1)
<i>Come to</i>	Recover consciousness	It was a natural thing for them to do so I didn't take any action -- told them in no uncertain terms that this man was ill and he eventually <b>came to</b> and everyone was happy then. (1)
<i>Come under</i>	If one thing comes under something else, it is in that class or category.	Don't they all come under the Mamur Zapt?' (1)
<i>Come up</i>	Approach someone;	When they were about to leave for the restaurant, a man standing near the bar <b>came up</b> to Kevin and said, 'If ye're wanting a place here, the Half House is on the market.' (2)
<i>Come up against</i>	something to come up is about to happen. Meet a problem or difficulty.	Oh yes, cos I was going to say there were a lot to <b>come up</b> there innit? (1) Yet over most of the world it inevitably <b>came up against</b> social and institutional obstacles which prevented or inhibited it, and in so doing also stood in the way of the other great task which capitalist -- or indeed any -- industrial development set its landed sector. (1)
<i>Come up with</i>	Think of an idea, plan, etc. and suggest it.	It was then that King Richard <b>came up with</b> a quite brilliant solution. (1)



The focus on the prototype norms of the English vocabulary for the world version of the language can be attributed to the understanding that not all words and meanings are equal in their usefulness for a language learner, and thus the best return for learning effort comes from focusing on frequent words and meanings (Nation 1997:172, Fox 1998:27). Gairns & Redman (1986) express a similar opinion concerning the teaching of multi-word verbs. They (ibid:35) wrote that “different meanings of a phrasal verb rarely have equal usefulness for the students. Occasionally though, this may be a viable approach for revision purposes for advanced students”. They then continue (ibid):

*it should not be forgotten that many foreign learners will not use their English with native speakers but with other foreign learners who may neither use nor understand a wide range of multi-word verbs.*

Based on the above study of a widely used and highly regarded international EFL textbook (presented in diagrams 6.8-6.13), it can be argued that the EFL/EIL lexical syllabus is a system of reinforcing and expanding the learner’s knowledge of the basic norms of the English vocabulary and not a departure from them or extension of them into varieties of time and place. Enough space in the textbook is always found for reintroducing prototype meanings, but only a limited space is given for adding to the knowledge of learners about the creative and/or non-common applications of lexical items. The conclusion might be drawn that the EFL/EIL lexical syllabus is not actually a step by step pattern that takes learners from the basic meanings (semantic or grammatical) of words included in the programme to their less basic and more creative meanings (the non-core zone of meaning). This may be seen as an unintended side effect of nationalism underlying the concept of a ‘monolithic’ standard. As mentioned earlier, one aspect of the unconscious nationalistic trend in ELT is that pedagogues focus on

the ‘core’ norms of the English vocabulary for the world version of the language, namely the ‘visitors’ wing’. Other aspects of this trend discussed above are ‘stereotyping’ and ‘Anglocentrism’.

#### **6.4 The Presentation of Vocabulary in EFL/EIL Programmes**

The neglect of the flexibility and creativity of the English vocabulary (or the non-core zone of meaning) is most evident in the presentation of vocabulary in many EFL textbooks. Only a small number of exercises concerned with the multiplicity of meaning can be found in the coursebooks examined in this study (See, for example, *Headway* or *The New Cambridge English Course*). Even courses which clearly demonstrate a particular interest in teaching vocabulary, such as *A Way with Words* and *More than Words*, offer only a very limited number of lessons and exercises focusing on the multiplicity of meaning, although this aspect is referred to in the introduction of these courses as essential to acquiring the vocabulary of the target language. The following section presents examples of this relatively rare exemplification of the multiplicity of meaning. In *A Way with Words*, the only word that is introduced as a polysemous word is the verb *leave*. A distinction is also made between the figurative and literal senses of the verbs *jump* and *crawl*, but these are rare examples; just two drops in the ocean of the figurative uses of English words. A glance at the meanings of the verb *leave* in the following contexts shows that this verb has the potential of occurring in a number of topics classed as central topics in coursebooks: travel, home, work, shopping, relationships, etc.. This is perhaps the reason why the authors have chosen this word in particular to introduce it as a polysemous word.

##### ***A Way with Words: unit 1 (book 3)***

1. The train leaves in ten minutes.
2. I’m afraid I left my books at home.
3. I left the company last year.
4. I’ve only got £10 left.
5. She left her husband two years ago.

6. You can leave your coats here.

There are some exercises in this same course requesting the learners to identify the different meanings of a number of polysemous words, but these are included in the self-study activities and not incorporated into the instructional programme in the same way that fixed expressions, idioms and proverbs are. *More than Words* also shows interest in some aspects of the flexibility and creativity of the English lexicon. Here are the exercises concerned with these aspects:

***More than Words: unit 2 (book 1)***

- How many different meanings can you think of for each of the following words?

can	book	flat	right	left	line	like
-----	------	------	-------	------	------	------

- For each of these words, find at least one meaning which is different from the meaning they have in the text.

singular	patient	admitted	second	carrying on
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- Find different but related meanings for the word drop in the following situations:

- a waiter trying to carry a tray full of plates and dishes.
- walking in the rain.
- using a plane to get food to starving people in Africa.
- a professional football or basketball team.
- driving along a steep road on the edge of a mountain.

- Find different and unrelated meanings for the words in the situations indicated:

- a lie    someone with an illness  
          someone being interviewed by police

row	a classroom
	a boat
racket	a party
	a sport
	criminal activity
stick	making a model car
	an old person going for a walk
tip	a meal in a restaurant
	someone asking for advice before doing something for the first time
	someone trying to remember a word
	an accident while having a drink

Unit 4, book 1, of *More than Words* is concerned with metaphor, idioms and proverbs. Here are some examples of the exercises presented in this unit:

- The following words can be extended to apply to the way human speak and react:

bark   cackle   grunt   bleat   squawk   whinny   hoot   purr   roar
--

- Explain the following metaphors:

It rained buckets.

They wake to a carpet of snow.

The trees sighed in the breeze.

- Correct the following idiomatic expressions:

Pull your horses.

Male chauvinist.

Kill two birds with one bullet.

- Explain the following proverbs:

Don't put the cart before the horse.

A stitch in time saves nine.

Better the devil you know than the one you don't.

Don't put all your eggs in one basket.

Two wrongs don't make a right.  
 A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.  
 It takes two to tango.

Unit 6, book 2, of *More Than Words* quotes a few lines from a number of poems to demonstrate to learners creative, metaphorical uses of English words. Apart from these instances, *More than Words* like *A Way with Words* and, it seems, like other textbooks, is concerned with the formal characteristics of the vocabulary which can be categorised as fixed, core norms. Table 6.14 draws a picture of the types of exercises that one is likely to encounter in conventional coursebooks. The table is based on examining the full range of exercises in the sample courses.

**Table (6.14): The presentation of Vocabulary in conventional coursebooks.**

<b>Words/Meanings</b>	<b>Grammatical meaning</b>	<b>Word building</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Label the picture/diagram using these words.</li> <li>Fill in the missing words.</li> <li>Match A (word) with B (picture, definition, description, etc.).</li> <li>Read the text and find words or expressions which mean the following.</li> <li>Write what you think these words from the context mean.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fill in the table with the correct verb forms.</li> <li>Fill in the table with the correct adjective form.</li> <li>Complete the following words using a suitable adverb and its comparative form.</li> <li>What meaning does the first part of each of the following words have?</li> <li>Find the plural of the following nouns.</li> <li>Complete this chart of verbs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Combine words on the left with the ones on the right.</li> <li>Complete the words in the list using the prefix.../suffix...</li> <li>Complete the table. What endings turn nouns into verbs/adjectives and verbs into nouns?</li> </ul>
<b>Lexical sets</b>	<b>Synonyms</b>	<b>Antonyms</b>
Sort these words into groups/families. Add as many words as you can to the list. Find the odd one out	Match the words which have similar meanings.	Fill in the word in column 2 which means the opposite of the word in column 1.
<b>Word chunks</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fill in the missing/correct preposition.</li> <li>Replace the phrasal verb with one of the verbs below.</li> <li>Complete the sentence with the correct phrasal verb.</li> <li>For each of the following nouns, list two adjectives that could precede them.</li> <li>Which of these verbs are commonly used with which subject?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Which of the combinations of adjectives and nouns below is unusual? Suggest improvement where necessary.</li> <li>Complete the grid by putting a suitable word in each space.</li> <li>Use the chart to complete description.</li> <li>Put the adjectives in the correct column.</li> <li>Correct idiomatic expressions.</li> <li>Here are some expressions involving opposites. What do they mean?</li> </ul>	

The question here is: is the focus on the formal characteristics of the English lexicon at the expense of helping learners to be fully aware of its flexible, creative aspects adequate as an approach to vocabulary teaching? Can small numbers of exercises focusing on polysemy and metaphor give enough access to the semantic and metaphorical structure of English? On the evidence of the coursebooks examined here, the answer to such questions would seem to be fairly negative.

Some pedagogues do believe that the scope of widely used EIL/EFL textbooks needs to be widened. Bell and Gower, for example, pointed to the need to add new materials in coursebooks: “there did need to be ‘new’ language there on the page” (1998:126). However, no writers considering vocabulary in textbooks seem to make it clear that the expansion needs to take into account widening the semantic scope of the EFL/EIL lexical syllabus. Even those who believe that English coursebooks do not represent what native speakers know about the language do not seem to identify this need. To Bell and Gower (1998:117), “the language presented in many coursebooks bears little relationship to real language use and more to coursebook convention”. The concern, however, is often a question of compromise to meet the cultural rather than the linguistic needs of learners.

The non-departure from the ‘core’ area of the English vocabulary in the EFL/EIL lexical syllabus is, again, a side effect of the concept of a ‘monolithic’ standard which comes to be associated with the belief that English as a world language is English for a limited range of purposes. *More than Words* adds a whole unit teaching learners how to fill gaps in their vocabulary (Unit 5, Book 2). Given the arguments presented earlier in this present study, a conclusion that can be drawn is that the cumulative effect of the particular emphasis of *More than Words* is to teach students how to manage with the limited vocabulary materials they are

likely to find in coursebooks. This does not seem to be very much different from the idea of ‘core’ English’ examined in the previous chapter.

### ***6.5 Viewpoints Concerning Incorporating Vocabulary into the EFL/EIL Lexical Syllabus***

The literature on the subject of textbook evaluation is not very extensive, in spite of the range of comments distributed here and there throughout the recent publications which tackle many other issues in materials development (Byrd 1995; Hidalgo, Hall & Jacobs 1995; Tomlinson 1998). These largely ignore multiple meaning in vocabulary learning. Various writers have suggested ways of helping teachers in particular to be more sophisticated in their evaluative approach, by posing checklists based on supposedly generalizable criteria. As far as vocabulary is concerned, this is an example of checklists concerned with vocabulary suggested by Skierso (1991:436-7)

- How is the vocabulary chosen? Is it based on frequency counts, thematic units, or communicative, sociocultural functions?
- Is attention paid to roots, inflectional endings (e.g. plurals, possessives, past tenses), cognates, synonyms, antonyms, thematic groupings?
- How is the vocabulary introduced? In what context?
- Is the vocabulary summarised in some way (e.g. in a foreign language dictionary section or in a bilingual list)?

#### *Vocabulary and Structures*

- What is the level of readability and does it match that of the student?
- Are the basic patterns and vocabulary included in the text sufficient for the level of complexity the text achieves or is required by the syllabus?

- What pedagogical considerations prompted the presentation and sequencing of nouns, verbs, sentence patterns, modifier structures, and vocabulary? Were they (a) simple to complex scheme, (b) functional load (i.e. the item's function is essential in communicating), (c) productivity in generating teaching points (e.g. "be" verbs are necessary in producing positive and negative sentences and short answers to "yes - no" questions), (d) frequency of occurrence, (e) ease and difficulty for individual students (predicted by contrastive analysis), (f) regular versus irregular patterns (i.e. teach the irregular first, so as to avoid overgeneralizations), (g) utility for classroom and community, (h) co-occurrence - that is, teach items that go together (e.g. *here* and *there*, adjectives and oppositions: "He is big" - "He is small"), (I) universals (i.e. teach items that differentiate English from other languages - e.g. do insertion), and/or (j) error analysis?
- Are linguistic items introduced in meaningful situations (contexts) to facilitate understanding?
- Are new vocabulary and structures repeated and integrated in subsequent lessons in a cyclic pattern for reinforcement, and do they when they reappear, do so in varying contexts and situations in order to portray their range of applicability?
- Is "standard English" (including idioms, but excluding substandard dialects, slang, and obscure regional idioms in non-advanced texts) used?
- Are connective words studied?
- Does the text distinguish between British and American English with regard to vocabulary and grammatical structures?
- Does the text differentiate between formal and informal speech and writing patterns with regard to vocabulary and grammatical structures?

It is clear that this checklist has tackled a substantial range of problems apart from the multiplicity of meaning. Although there is reference to the different



applicability of words, it is not clear whether it is specifically the multiplicity of meaning that is pointed to here. It is very likely that ‘range of applicability’ in this context refers to the different grammatical meanings of words, since Skierso is concerned with reinforcement and presenting materials in a cyclic pattern. The different meanings of words can by no means fit in such a pattern because it involves recycling previously presented materials. Moreover, when Skierso pointed to the importance of teaching items that differentiate English from other languages, she did not take into account the fact that the polysemous and metaphorical structures of the English lexicon are also specific to English.

Polysemy seems to be the most unwelcome aspect of the English vocabulary in the EFL/EIL lexical syllabuses. Lewis (1993) lists what he sees as ten practical ways in which lexis contributes as a syllabus component. Here are the most important ones for the purpose of this study:

- Delexical verbs (e.g. *take* and *have* as in *take a break* and *have dinner*), prepositions and modal auxiliaries deserve lexical rather than grammatical treatment.
- Students should be taught more base verbs rather than spend so much time on tense formation (the simple present has a very high frequency as compared with other tense/aspect forms).
- There is no need to present semantically dense items in a context. It is better to teach more items.
- Any content noun should be taught with appropriate verb and adjective collocations.
- Sentence heads (e.g. *Do you mind if I* or *Would you like to*) should be focused on.

- Synonyms with the existential paradigm should be taught partly as an example of supra-sentential lexical linking (e.g. *Isn't it cold! it's freezing*).
- Synopsising verbs - that is those used in summarising what someone else said - should be focused on.
- Students should be given an awareness of frequently used metaphors like the connections between time and money or between the movement of people and the movement of water (Lewis 1993:110-113).

This list may be taken as evidence in favour of the claim that the main concern of pedagogues is to spread the relatively fixed norms of the English vocabulary, neglecting its flexibility and creative uses. Lewis sees no need for presenting polysemous words in textbooks. He, like Meara (1995), is in favour of giving students a large number of lexical items in the early stages of learning. But, like Pawley and Syder (1983) and Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992), he proposes working with lexical chunks which can be termed as fixed norms in the English vocabulary. Lewis, however, took a step in the right direction to agree with Low (1988) on the need to teach metaphor.

## ***6.6 Suggestions for Teaching Vocabulary in Coursebooks***

It has been shown in this chapter that flexibility and creativity in the lexicon are relatively neglected areas in the EFL/EIL lexical syllabus. It has also been shown how 'general interest' topics on the basis of which the EFL/EIL lexical syllabus is built are likely to constitute substantial pressure to restrict the lexical syllabus as much as possible to the common core of English. There are two important steps that need to be taken in order to override these weaknesses in the EFL/EIL lexical syllabus. The first step is to abandon 'prototyping' by building the different levels of a course on the basis of different topics (starting the course with 'general interest' topics but moving to new, less basic ones at every new level). The topics need to be selected from corpora that reflect the use of English in its native

setting(s) (i.e. not from corpora engineered for foreign learners). This would expose learners not only to authentic uses of the English lexicon, but also to different applications of large numbers of words in different contexts. In addition to that, it would give them access to more than ‘core’ English words, since intermediate and advanced levels would be built on non-basic topics. The second important step is to develop vocabulary exercises that focus on flexibility/creativity in the lexicon, or on the multiplicity of meaning and not on reinforcing the learners’ knowledge of ‘core’ English.

The polysemous/metaphorical senses of words can be very difficult for learners to comprehend or infer from context, but they can be very easy to instruct explicitly because the different meanings of words are not random. In other words, although the different senses of a word are determined by the surrounding context, yet it is possible to arrive at the general conceptual metaphor in terms of which this word is conceptualised. As shown in chapter 3, metaphorical meanings are generated from literal ones on the basis of systematic conceptual metaphor(s). Take, for example, the polysemous/metaphorical senses of the word *body*, namely ‘a group of people’, ‘a collection’, and ‘a quantity’. These are generated from the literal senses of the word by means of the simple conceptual metaphor A BODY IS A MASS OF OBJECTS. This explains the reason why physical objects considered as units (e.g. a group of people, a mass of ideas (as physical objects), etc.) are referred to by English speakers as bodies. Speakers of other languages can find this application of the word *body* to be extremely difficult to comprehend if the concept of ‘body’ is not understood the same way in their mother tongues. A case in point is Arabic *jism*, ‘body’, which is simply understood as a physical object. This is evident from the semantic applications of the word which are: ‘the physical structure of a person, animal or plant’, ‘the trunk of a person or animal’, ‘the central part of a thing’, ‘a body of water’, and ‘a foreign body (as in physics)’.

Another point discussed in chapter 3 is that conceptual metaphor is at play behind the semantic development of words in time. Hence, exposing learners to the metaphorical structure of English can solve an important problem behind the difficulty of mastering the vocabulary of English which results from the unique semantic/metaphorical structure of the language and its rapid change. Low (1988:127) remarked that:

*The suggestion that applied linguists ought to take an interest in metaphor rests squarely on the claim that it does indeed contribute significantly to many important language-related activities, or dimensions of language use.*

The metaphorical structure of English is best taught through exercises that focus on sets of words whose development over time is generated by the same conceptual metaphor(s). The reason why metaphor should be taught through sets of words rather than single items is explained by Low (1988:137-8) on the following arguments:

1. It takes children fifteen or more years to cope with the metaphoric structure of their own language, and the average second language learner does not have that long. Moreover, adult learners are frequently required to use quite sophisticated ideas at a relatively early stage of learning.
2. Particles and prepositions are an area of almost universal difficulty among second language learners of English, who often cite the fact that the whole topic seems totally arbitrary. Much confusion could be removed in many cases by a realisation of the metaphoric links between the meaning of terms like 'up' or 'over'.

3. Learning ‘one-off’ examples does not help learners resolve the structural problem of where the boundaries of a metaphor are felt to lie, nor how rigid native speakers perceive particular boundaries as being. Nor does it establish whether the use of a particular example is problematic because of the wording, or because of the inappropriateness of the underlying metaphor.

However, learners need not be given the conceptual metaphor in the form linguists write it (e.g. LIFE IS A JOURNEY). The metaphor can be given in an informal manner, as in the exercise suggested below for teaching metaphor.

Suggested exercise:

Words referring to physical beauty that is pleasing to the eye tend to be used to refer to non-physical beauty that is pleasing to the internal self (e.g. manners, skills, etc.). Here are some instances, read them then give more examples.

<b>Word and Meaning</b>	<b>Literal expressions</b> meaning: pleasing to the eye	<b>Metaphorical expressions</b> meaning: pleasing to the internal self
<b><i>beautiful</i></b> (good to look at or sense; skilful)	She is beautiful. Their house is beautiful.	She has beautiful manners. Falling in love is a beautiful experience. He is a beautiful football player.
<b><i>exquisite</i></b> (extremely beautiful or highly skilled)	She has an exquisite face.	He is a man with exquisite manners. The letter is translated from her exquisite French.
<b><i>pleasing</i></b> (gives pleasure)	She has a pleasing appearance.	This is a pleasing piece of news. She is most pleasing in manners.

Such an exercise will help learners realise that the different meanings of words (i.e. those meanings that words develop over time) are systematic and, therefore, easy to learn. The suggested exercise will also enable learners to understand that there are semantic differences between synonyms. This is not to mention the chance learners are offered to learn word collocation in a simple and meaningful way.

There are many works concerned with the metaphorical structure of English (See Cameron and Low's (1999) survey article "Metaphor"). Such works can be used for designing exercises similar to the one suggested above. The exercises need to also focus on teaching metaphors underlying the applications of particles and prepositions. This can help learners find multi-word verbs easy to understand and learn.

Another possibility for teaching metaphor is to give learners concordances of words (one word at a time) and ask them to abstract the conceptual metaphor(s) determining their polysemy. Teaching metaphor in this manner can help learners reason about the polysemy of lexical items. This reasoning might give them a clue as to how the target language words are understood. If it does not, the teacher can help by giving them the metaphors in a simple way.

This section offers suggestions that aim at stressing the need to teach metaphor in instructional programmes. Teaching metaphor can contribute to broadening the semantic horizon of the EFL/EIL lexical syllabus, as it involves incorporating flexibility/creativity in the lexicon into that syllabus. This incorporation would not only solve an important problem behind the difficulty of mastering the vocabulary of English as L2 (i.e. the one relevant to the unique semantic/metaphorical structure of the target language and the rapid development of this structure), but would also rule out the possibility of learners transferring

the semantic/metaphorical structure of their L1 into L2. Transfer is seen by some linguists (e.g. Sridhar & Sridhar 1986) to be the main reason why English is diversifying in place. As mentioned earlier, different languages exhibit different conceptualisation of socio-linguistic experience. This conceptualisation is reflected in the unique metaphorical and semantic structures of a language. If these structures are not given their due weight in the process of teaching a target language, it is very likely that learners will resort to their L1 to fill gaps in the vocabulary of their L2. If the norms transferred into a target language through direct translation become established in a speech community (due to ignorance of the correct norms of the target language), the outcome of this is semantic change in place. Semantic change in place brought about by using the target language creativity is another story. However, this change can be avoided if learners are helped to approach the competence of native speakers. In this case the learners will learn to think in English and not in their background language.

### ***6.7 Summary and Conclusion***

This part has concerned itself with the bearings that the concept of a ‘monolithic’ standard has on the field of applied linguistics. The previous chapter claims that modern vocabulary teaching methods are the outcome of adjusting etymology to fit the model of a ‘monolithic’ standard in the sense that they focus on teaching the prototype norms (i.e. ‘core’ and ‘fixed’ norms) of the English vocabulary. This chapter, however, demonstrates how this adjustment is reflected in the design of the EFL/EIL lexical syllabus. It draws attention to ‘prototyping’ as a pattern of incorporating vocabulary into the EFL/EIL lexical syllabus. It is demonstrated that ‘prototyping’ offers a perfect environment for focusing on the ‘prototype’ norms of the English vocabulary, and that this has the effect of bleaching the world version of English of a major part of the semantic/metaphoric richness of the language. The implication of all this is that English is treated as a private property of the English nation, so to speak. Consciously or unconsciously it is seen by pedagogues as belonging to this nation and exported elsewhere

without loss of ownership. This may be seen as an unintended side effect of the ‘Western’ understanding that ‘World Standard English’ is English for a limited range of purposes. Put differently, ‘prototyping’ as a trend in the EFL/EIL lexical syllabus (like ‘stereotyping’ and ‘Anglocentrism’) may be seen as a side effect of linguistic nationalism underlying the concept of a ‘monolithic’ standard.

An important point that this chapter demonstrates is the relative lack of attention paid to the semantic/metaphoric richness of the English vocabulary in the design of the EFL/EIL lexical syllabus. It specifically argues that flexibility and creativity in the English vocabulary should be focused on in ELT as they are the most important aspects of the development of English in time. It is suggested that these aspects can be incorporated into the EFL/EIL lexical syllabus by bringing metaphor more centrally into the teaching and learning of vocabulary.

Finally, it needs to be said that with the shift towards globalization and westernization in politics, English as a world language is now fast becoming English for an unlimited range of purposes. Hence, for English to continue to play this role, it requires learners that speak it efficiently in order for them not to trigger change along the dimension of place. This can be achieved if pedagogues attempt to help learners approach the competence of native speakers by exposing them to more than ‘core’ English. Willis (1990:46) wrote that “The commonest and most important, most basic meanings in English are those meanings expressed by the most frequent words in English”. On that account, the basic metaphorical structure of English can be abstracted from the applications of the most frequent words in English. Once this is achieved, ‘basic’ or ‘core’ English can be used in ELT as a path leading to the non-core zone of the English vocabulary (i.e. the area of non-basic words and meanings). The exercise suggested in this chapter shows how this can be done.



## **-VII-**

### ***THE FINAL WORD***

#### ***7.1 Summary and Achievement of the Study***

This study has concerned itself with the question of meaning in English in time and place. Chapter 1 introduces the study and provides discussion of major questions raised in the study, such as attitudes to semantic change in time versus place, the development of linguistic purism into a nationalistic trend after the global expansion of English, and the emergence of the concept of a ‘monolithic’ standard as a cure for semantic change in place. Chapters 2 and 3 focus on meaning in time. Chapter 2 studies five approaches to semantic change: the ‘pre-structuralist’, the ‘structuralist’, the ‘typological’, the ‘cognitive’ and the ‘functional’ approach. Chapter 3 contributes to the field of historical semantics by offering a corpus-based study of semantic change, using the case of the lexical category of *to show* in a diachronic version of the linguistic traditions concerned with the role of conceptual metaphor in processing human experience and language (e.g. Lakoff & Johnson 1980). Chapter 4 concerns itself with meaning in place. It brings into focus prescriptive and descriptive approaches to the regional varieties of English and draws attention to the neglect of the important role played by metaphor in the development of these varieties. Specifically, this chapter argues that the regional varieties need to be examined as languages in their own right, in terms of their semantic development. Chapters 5 and 6 demonstrate the focus on the ‘core’ and ‘fixed’ norms of the English vocabulary and the relative lack of attention paid to metaphor in the spreading of English through ELT. Chapter 5 examines these points in vocabulary teaching methods and chapter 6 in some widely used ELT coursebooks.

## 7.2 *Aims of the Study*

One aim of this study is to draw attention to the important role played by conceptual metaphor in the development of English along both dimensions of time and place. This aim has been met in chapters 2, 3, and 4. Chapter 2 reviews non-cognitive approaches to semantic change in time from a cognitive perspective that stresses the role of conceptual metaphor in semantic processes. Chapter 3 shows conceptual metaphor to be a significant force at play behind the development of both polysemy and synonymy in language, at least the chapter has presented evidence that this is so in the case of *to show* and its synonyms. Chapter 4 (section 4.3) reanalyses some examples of semantic change in place from a cognitive point of view to draw attention to the role played by metaphor in the development of the regional varieties of English.

Another aim of this study is to reveal the bearings that the concept of a ‘monolithic’ standard has on the study of meaning in place. It is argued that the influence of the standard language (English) on the study of meaning in place has figured in the development of research on the instability of meaning from a diachronic study into a nationalistic issue after the global exansion of English. Chapter 4 shows meaning in place, unlike meaning in time, to be a synchronic, controversial issue commonly examined in terms of socio-linguistic parameters that have more to do with nationalistic questions than with historical research. This, in turn, has the consequence that linguists have generally failed to approach the regional varieties from a historical perspective and to recognize the crucial role played by conceptual metaphor in the development of these varieties.

The third aim of the study is reveal the bearings that the concept of a ‘monolithic’ standard has on ELT. Chapter 5 shows modern vocabulary teaching methods to be the outcome of adjusting etymology to fit the model of a ‘monolithic’ standard. Chapter 6 shows how this adjustment is reflected in the design of the EFL/EIL lexical syllabus. It is argued in chapters 5 and 6 that the neglect of

metaphor as well creative and flexible uses of the lexicon in ELT is an unintended side effect of linguistic nationalism underlying the western understanding of the concept of 'English as a world language'. The argument is as follows. The focus of some western linguists on a 'monolithic' standard together with their bracketing of learning English as a second language and English as a foreign language as identical learning situations have the unintended side effect of associating the standard not only with the cultural and linguistic norms of native speakers, but also with the belief that English as a world language is English for a limited range of purposes. This has shaped ELT in the sense that it has given rise to teaching methods and EFL/EIL lexical syllabuses that focus on the 'fixed' and 'basic' norms of the English vocabulary. The consequence of this is not only restricting the world version of English to the common core of the language but also bleaching it of a major part of the semantic richness of English. In particular, this richness is an important aspect of the flexibility of the English vocabulary and its creative change (e.g. change based on metaphor). It is suggested in chapter 6 that flexibility and creativity in the lexicon can be incorporated into the EFL/EIL lexical syllabus by focusing on the teaching of metaphor.

### ***7.3 Limitations of the Study***

Any study of this kind has limitations. In the present research, the choice of *to show* and its synonyms as a case study of polysemous and synonymous development (in chapter 3) could have been supplemented with studies of other terms in various fields to demonstrate the underlying process more widely. A good example of such additional research would be to study the developments associated with *get* and its synonyms. Again, while the present use of two corpora for this case study has proved useful, further corpora might have been used, perhaps including some which have examples of varieties of English around the world. At the time of this study, these were not available to the researcher.

Similar limitations of cases and sampling relate to the study of vocabulary in EFL textbooks (in chapter 6): a wider range of target terms beyond those studied here (*body, slim, fair, demonstration* and *come*) could have been included in the study and these might have been examined in a wider range of textbooks, including some designed and published in developing countries. It is time-consuming and perhaps imprecise to study such textbook occurrences manually, as in the present textbook study. This limitation could have been overcome by using corpus linguistic techniques on textbook data. However, the present researcher is not aware of any corpus of textbooks. Commercial publishers are unlikely to produce such a corpus of any but their own publications and clearly a corpus of textbooks for this kind of study should include a range of materials and a variety of publishers. Such a corpus could, of course, be constructed but to do this and to analyse the corpus is probably a major project on its own right. The textbook study here is, in this respect, exploratory but it has been successful in drawing attention to the lexical and semantic limitations of coursebooks.

Further, the study could have benefited from additional original research into the role of conceptual metaphor in the development of English in place, so that more substantial examples or case studies of regional varieties might have been included. It was not possible to do such research here as it requires systematic access to native speakers of a variety of varieties (e.g. Singapore English) or access to relevant corpora (or both so that access to the former helps the researcher to understand key examples in the latter).

#### ***7.4 Discussion of Major Issues in the Study***

One of the major questions raised in this study is that meaning in time is not a contentious issue, but a historical fact that is studied in terms of scientific theories, whereas, meaning in place is still a synchronic question struggling for recognition. What makes the concept of ‘place’ in such change significant in connection with English is that its speakers in place now include large numbers of

non-natives who add to the language a foreign socio-linguistic dimension. However, to focus on the former dimension and to ignore the latter is to ignore the present status of English as a world language. At the same time, to legitimise semantic changes reflecting global contexts is to recognize the re-fashioning and possible fragmentation of English. To reconcile both dimensions is also a dilemma.

However, the model of English as a world language may be said to be the main reason behind the diversification of the language in place. On the one hand, the failure of this model to meet the needs of communication across cultures and the impossibility of acquiring a native-like competence in a non-native context of learning, on the other, led non-native speakers to resort to their local languages in order to fill gaps in their English vocabulary. In the process of time, these fillers became so stable that they began to be characteristic features of the varieties spoken in place. The influence of L1 transfer/interference is at play behind both English as a second language and as a foreign language. Nowadays one hears of not only Malaysian or Indian English, for example, but also of the Chinese and Japanese varieties of English, and many more varieties world-wide. This points to the change of the function of English in place. English is now assuming the role of a second language even in places where it has previously been used as a foreign language. This again may be due to the shortcomings of the model of English as a world language but also to the unstable nature of meaning.

A major factor behind the instability of meaning is generated by the link between language and cognition. Meanings do not always change to reflect changes in the external world. In many cases, semantic innovations are motivated by imagination and conceptual metaphor. The fact that language processing and change is (partly) metaphorical in nature makes it impossible to hand down the English vocabulary as a fixed, stable system - cognition and imagination can not be handcuffed and imprisoned. This has not happened along the dimension of time and it should not

be expected to happen along the dimension of place. In spite of the existence of universal semantic processes based on metaphor (e.g. the case of *to show* examined in chapter III), large numbers of metaphorical innovations in the local varieties of English are seen as deviations by native speakers because they reflect different conceptualization and categorization of world realities. Such innovations are mainly manufactured in the local language imagination and then exported into English. Non-native speakers prefer their own local images to the ones established in (standard) English because they find them expressive of their minds and cultural beliefs. Many of these speakers simply speak English with foreign minds, as Dustoor (1968:126) put it:

*our mental climate will always foster plants that do not flourish in England or America; and such plants, just because they are somewhat exotic, add to the charm of a garden. All lovers of English will, therefore, encourage them to grow in the world-wide garden of English. It is only the weeds, which spring up whenever ignorance, carelessness or pretentiousness infects the air, that need to be pulled up by roots* (in Kachru 1986:30).

This implies that when a language becomes an integral part of a discourse, as is the case of English as a second language, the response is no longer about the non-native speakers' command of the language (as compared to that of native speakers), but about the speakers' local identity, culture, understanding of the world, and their distinctive use of the language.

It has been pointed out by Maniam (1994:208) that "Malaysians seemed to revere the English language in the same way as they did the British administrator and the union Jack". The implication of this is that there was no possibility for Malaysian writers of using their local variety of English before the federation and

independence of Malaya. “The English language and its implied landscape have often been the scaffolding for their works” (ibid:213). “The Malaysian writer in English began to function as a genuine literary artist from the early 1960s onwards” (ibid:212). In other words, nationhood was a necessary condition for the tradition of literary works in the indigenized varieties of English.

Similarly, in an article on Singaporean writers, De Souza (1994:252) wrote that “The sense of nationhood essential to the creation of a national literature was ... not apparent until after the second world war”. He (ibid:253) divided Singaporean writers into two groups: “Some writers reverted to a more intense consciousness of their ethnic identities. These writers wrote in their mother tongues. Other writers used the English language with a high degree of sophistication; they had been formed in the mould of liberal western learning and as a consequence their training enabled them to communicate only with a select minority - the English-educated elite”. Some of the writers who belong to the second group, but who reflected a sense of local identity and nationhood after 1950s, are Catherine Lim, Rex Shelley, Gopal Baratham, and Lim Thean Soo.

All this shows that the question of nationality, or local identity, took a crucial part in the emergence of the nativized varieties of English. These varieties are now attempting to detach themselves from English (in the same way that English has detached itself from its ancestors) and merge together as Asian varieties. As part of a workshop consideration of etymology for a dictionary for Singapore English, Gupta (1992) draws attention to the complexities of cross-borrowing: items of Hokkien (or, for example, Cantonese, Mandarin, Tamil or Malay) origin, such as food names, are used in Malay and have thence entered Singapore English, and many Singapore English items of Malay origin are also used in local varieties of Chinese. Tracing both the immediate and ultimate origins of such items across several languages or varieties would, Gupta claims, need to be done by teams since no one can be familiar with all the languages at issue. The notion of what

would clearly be multilingual and multicultural Southeast Asian teams of linguists to make a dictionary of a local form of English might well be evidence of a de-nationalizing shift in etymological activity, from Anglo-Saxon or Graeco-Latin towards Asian language origins, and, more interestingly to varieties of Chinese, Malay, etc.. That this is local or regional, but not national, is clear from the fact that the source languages are not at all exclusive to Singapore, and that lexical uses currently identified in Singaporean English are recognized elsewhere (e.g. in Malaysia).

The question of nationhood or local identity is also taking the part of shaping English literacy in the indigenized varieties. Mee (1994, 1998:305) pointed out that:

*English literacy has long been viewed as a set of neutral, technical skills and in some ways will continue to remain so because of the emphasis in examinations on discrete skills. However, increasingly, the link between language and culture is being recognized, and English is beginning to take on the role of a cultural tool used for socializing young Singaporeans into a common consciousness. In conjunction with this role, a notion of literacy as social dialogue can be attributed to English as well for it is through this language that the negotiation of Singaporean cultural meanings can take place.*

If the notion of literacy as *social dialogue* continues to take place in the local varieties of English, it might take over from the *neutral* one and slowly transform English in these varieties into completely unintelligible languages to native speakers. This is not impossible now that these varieties are spoken by independent nations with a status, local identity, and free will. These local forces



for social dialogue are increasingly recognized as part of local identity and cannot be easily dismissed. However, there are counter-balancing local forces for neutral functions. In Hong Kong, for example, parents in the 'elite' English medium schools strongly rejected the new government's decision that the medium of instruction in secondary schools should be Cantonese with 'Hong Kong English' as a compulsory subject. In fact, after considerable debate the government changed the decision for 114 schools to remain English medium (Bacon-Shone & Bolton 1998). There are also strong counter-balancing global forces for neutral functions of English, particularly in Singapore or Hong Kong, where multinational corporations and global financial situations have located themselves partly because of the high levels of international English spoken by local people (*Newsweek*, December 21st 1998: 34-39). Yet the change implied by such a broadening, denationalizing and globalizing is in tension with another key aspect of language: stability. It is perhaps ironic that while some of the most obvious carriers of English today are deeply emblematic of technological change (television, faxes, mobile phones, electronic communication systems, multimedia, etc.) they also bear the stability of the comprehensibility of a widening range of Englishes for increasing numbers of people. These Englishes may be plural, but they are all English, and recent developments in technology are key factors in maintaining a wider stability of English in place, and this stability is, however in the long view, inherently dynamic over time and place or, as the title of this study has it, this stability is in fact unstable.

However, broadening the horizon of the current norm of English as a world language may help to prevent semantic change due to the erroneous usage of English in the local varieties from taking place. This broadening needs to be accompanied by the adoption of a viewpoint that aims at integrating the whole world in more equitable conditions. Linguistic unity and equity are critical factors that can contribute to the continuity of English as a world language. If this condition is established, the ability of learners to use English competently may contribute to playing down the issue of local identity, because the gap between

native and non-native speakers will be narrowed. The point here is that semantic developments in English should be included in the EFL/EIL lexical syllabus. The syllabus should go beyond the established and the general into what is new. Put differently, the view that preserving the language takes place through spreading it as a 'fixed', 'stable' norm should change. A more efficient way is to help learners live the language as it is used (including the use of its metaphorical structure) and as it is developing.

It has been noted in chapter IV that one characteristic of world Englishes is that they tend to preserve older meanings which have changed in British or American English, as is clear from the example *station*. This implies that these varieties are not simply the outcome of the acculturation/nativization of English in new contexts of situations. They are also varieties alienated from the semantic developments taking place in the native setting(s) of English, using, on occasion, meanings frozen in time but displaced elsewhere.

With the shift towards globalization and westernization in politics, English is widely supposed to take a crucial part in establishing the new socio-political norms in the world. If pedagogues do not take immediate steps to spread English as it is used and is developing in a natural input situation, English may in future fail to play this role. The significant emergence of the non-native varieties which are coloured with the sensitive question of identity (at least for such speakers) should be seen as a threat to the intelligibility and functionality of the world language.

In brief, for English to continue to be the world language it needs speakers that maintain it and do not alter it beyond some (yet-to-be determined) optimum extent. For this to happen, semantic and lexical change should be brought to the forefront in designing instructional programmes for non-native speakers. The

metaphorical structure of the language and its development should be given their due weight in these programmes. Language is basically decoding and encoding meaningful messages. Knowledge of the metaphorical structure of the target language is a necessary pre-requisite for a meaningful verbalization of abstract experiences (e.g. emotions, mental activities, etc.). The contents of verbal messages can change in time; and learners in place should be updated.

### ***7.5 Suggestions For Further Research***

The section on limitations has already indicated that further research can be carried out by examining the polysemous and synonymous development of a wider range of key terms. It also showed the need for such research to use additional corpora. Future researchers will need to gain access, as suggested, to speakers of regional varieties of English. The study of lexis in textbooks can clearly be taken further, as mentioned. This would be best carried out by constructing a corpus of textbooks. It is further suggested that the development of meaning in place needs to be approached from a historical perspective. Such research, if embedded within a cognitive framework, can help provide an insightful understanding of the conceptualization, categorization and development of meaning in bi- or multi-lingual contexts.

The development of the indigenized varieties needs to be examined not only along socio-linguistic parameters which focus on how languages and cultures interact with one another to evolve new types of creativity (new as compared to standard English), but also in terms of what happens to a target language over time in a multilingual setting. This is possible now since there is a period of at least fifty years of recognizably indigenized literatures in English.

A first step toward approaching local literatures from a historical perspective is to establish a cognitive model that takes metaphor in the indigenized varieties as a

starting point. Lian (1992:58-9) studied the difference between certain movement verbs in British English and Singaporean English. She pointed out that the verb *follow*, for example, means in British English ‘to move behind in the same direction’. Whereas, in Singaporean English it means ‘to accompany someone or to go along with someone’. The examples below illustrate the difference between the use of these words in the British English and Singaporean English:

I follow her to the police station.

‘I went with her to the police station’.

My husband is going to Canada for further studies so I’ll resign  
from my job and follow him.

‘My husband is going to Canada for further studies so I’ll resign  
from my job and accompany him’.

The above examples may be seen to demonstrate the different understanding of *going along* in British English and Singaporean English. In British English the verb is conceptualized as an act of ‘accompanying’: GOING ALONG IS ACCOMPANYING, whereas, in Singaporean English it is understood as an act of ‘following’: GOING ALONG IS FOLLOWING. A model exploring such facts about the local varieties of English is needed for an understanding of the metaphorical structures of these varieties. It is worthwhile investigating this question in lexical fields rather than in discrete lexical items. Synonyms attached to a general concept can give a clearer picture of the metaphorical understanding of a concept. Once this model is built, the register can be utilized for checking whether synchronic metaphorical concepts changed diachronically; whether the metaphorical structure of a concept shaped its polysemous structure; whether it determined the selection of its synonyms; and whether it affected the semantic

development of the synonyms. A historical study of meaning in place is apt to show whether or not English in bi- or multi-lingual settings develops in a principled manner, the same way it develops in a mono-lingual context. Studying semantic processes in the non-native varieties of English in time can also contribute to the abandonment of the concept of meaning in place. Such research is a step away from the issue of the fragmentation of English. This issue is better left to time.

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