

Deferred Reference

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Meaning transfer

Nunberg (1978)

- (1)
 - a. The ham sandwich is at table seven. [uttered by restaurant waiter]
 - b. The ham sandwich is at table seven [and really cranky!].
 - c. The fries is at table seven.
 - d.*The fries are at table seven.
- (2)
 - a. I am parked out back [and really late for dinner].
 - b. I am parked out back [# and may not start.]
 - c. We are parked out back [Ok for a couple, not ok for one owner of two cars]

Predicates & Meaning Transfers

- 1 In the parking examples, the meaning of the **Verb Phrase** *am parked out back* is transferred from a property of cars to a property of owners of cars.
- 2 This is a *systematic meaning transfer*:
 - *chicken: the domesticated fowl* → *the meat of that fowl*
 - *lamb: an immature sheep* → *the meat of an immature sheep*
 - *duck: the game bird* → *the meat of that game bird*
- 3 In the *ham sandwich* examples it's **not** a transfer of the meaning of the VP [*is at table seven*]. It's a transfer of the meaning of *ham sandwich*.

Noteworthiness

The identity of their owner is a noteworthy property of cars, relevant to where they are parked. Where a car is parked has consequences for its owner.

- (3)
 - a. My car is parked out back.
 - b. I am (parked out back).'
 - c. Yogi Berra once drove my car.
 - d. # Yogi Berra once (drove)' me.
- (4)
 - a. I am in the Whitney.
 - b. ?I am in the second crate on the right.

Deferred indexical reference

- (5) Murdoch bought that last week. (pointing at a copy of the newspaper)

Features

- 1 No predicate, hence no meaning transfer
 - 2 No word meaning involved, hence no *noteworthiness* constraint.
- (6) a. She works for *them*. (pointing to cookbook)
b. She works for a newspaper/that newspaper (pointing to a copy).
c. ?She works for that cookbook.

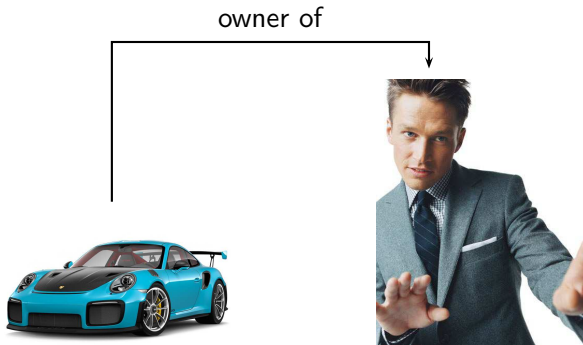
A metonymy function

f



She works for that paper

The metonymy function in a meaning transfer



I am parked out back

Nunberg (1993), Nunberg (2004)

Properties

Alice kissed Sue.

$\lambda x[x \text{ kissed Sue}]$

The property Alice has

$\lambda x[\text{Alice kissed } x]$

The property Sue has

The meaning of “was kissed by Alice”

$\lambda x[x \text{ kissed Sue}](\text{Alice})$

Pred applied to Subj

$\lambda x[\text{Alice kissed } x](\text{Sue})$

The property Sue has

Mng of passive VP applied

Sue was kissed by Alice.

Properties

Fred's car is parked out back.

$\lambda x[x \text{ is parked out back}]$	The property Fred's car has
$\lambda y[y\text{'s car is parked out back}]$	The property Fred has

The idea: BOTH can be the meaning of the verb phrase *am parked out back*, because of meaning transfer.

Noteworthiness and meaning transfer

From one **property** (a property of cars) we get another (a property of car owner's)

$$\begin{aligned}F(P) &= P' \\ P' &= \lambda y \exists x [P(x) \ \& \ \text{owner-of}(x) = y] \\ F(\text{parked}) &= \text{parked}' \\ \text{parked}' &= \lambda y \exists x [\text{parked}(x) \ \& \ \text{owner-of}(x) = y]\end{aligned}$$

Condition: *owner-of* must be a noteworthy property of vehicles (the domain of *parked*).

Noteworthiness and Meaning transfer II

From one **property** (a property of ham sandwiches) we get another (a property of those who order ham sandwiches)

$$F(P) = P'$$

$$P' = \lambda y \exists x [P(x) \ \& \ \text{orderer-of}(x) = y]$$

$$F(\text{ham sandwich}) = \text{ham sandwich}'$$

$$\text{ham sandwich}' = \lambda y \exists x [\text{ham sandwich}(x) \ \& \ \text{orderer-of}(x) = y]$$

Condition: *orderer-of* must be a noteworthy property of hand sandwiches.

The facts again

- (7)
 - a. The (ham sandwich)' is at table seven.
 - b. The (ham sandwich)' is at table seven and really cranky! (both properties of people)
 - c. The (fries)' is at table seven. (denotes a single person who ordered the fries)
 - d.*The fries are at table seven.
- (8)
 - a. I am (parked out back)' and really late for dinner. (both properties of people)
 - b. I am (parked out back) [# and may not start.] (property of cars conjoined iwth a property of people)

Conventionalization questions

1 The account

*The meaning of the **Verb Phrase** am parked out back is transferred from a property of cars to a property of owners of cars.*

2 Is this meaning transfer a **convention** (a rule) of the language?

3 Does the *ham sandwich* example have the same status?

Other cases

- 1 I am hanging in the Whitney.
- 2 Yeats did not like to hear himself read aloud.
- 3 I ate chicken last night.
- 4 Will you cigarette me? (Clark and Clark 1979)
- 5 pumpkin bus = a bus that turns into a pumpkin at night
(Downing 1977)

Pragmatic/semantics boundary

Classical view I

What is conventionalized is part of literal meaning and it is the job of semantics to account for.

Classical view II

What is conventionalized is opaque. Hardened metaphor no longer meaningful synchronically.

Classical View III

Stylistic effects & metaphor/metonymy (even when synchronically transparent) are the job of the pragmatics to account for.

Consequences of classical view



All the phenomena discussed in this paper are pragmatic phenomena, transparent processes with stylistic effects. Should be accounted for by pragmatics.

Problem for classical view

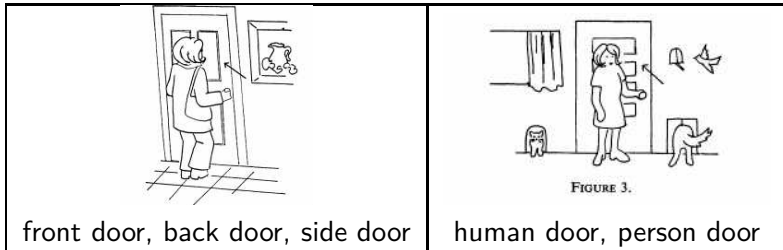
- 1 Meaning transfer is a living active process.
- 2 Systematic meaning transfers are responsible for much of the semantic structure of the lexicon. Many patterns are cross-linguistically attested. A theory of polysemy is hence a necessity for linguistics. (Nunberg and Zaenen 1992).
- 3 There are syntactic/semantic compatibility consequences
 - Mi padre e parcheggiatto a destro.
 - La machina e parcheggiatta a destro.
 - I am parked out back [and really late for dinner].
 - I am parked out back [# and may not start.]

Noteworthiness ← Classificatory Function

Downing (1977)

- (9)
- a. pumpkin bus: a bus that turns into a pumpkin at night
 - b. cow tree: a tree that cows like to rub up against
 - c. pancake stomach: a stomach full of pancakes
 - d. plate length: what your hair is when it drags in your food

Task: Find a two-word phrase to describe the object the arrow is pointing to in the following pictures.



Nunberg contra classical view

A unified phenomenon

- 1 N. has shown that *ham sandwich* and *parked out back* are instances of the same phenomenon.
- 2 Arguably one has been conventionalized and the other has not.
- 3 We want one account that crosses the conventionalization barrier.
- 4 We will argue later in the class that accounts of **semantic change** in historical linguistics **necessarily** require principles that cross the conventionalization barrier.
- 5 Is it correct that the conventionalization barrier is the same as the semantics/pragmatics border?

Examples for discussion

Examples from **Clark and Clark (1979)**. Some are what they call **contextual expressions** (an extended kind of indexical).

- (10)
- a. Never invite two **China trips** to the same dinner party.
 - b. Ruling in death of **Ferrari woman** (headline: the woman's will stipulated that she be buried in her Ferrari)
 - c. He **enfant terrible**'d gracefully (said of a workshop participant)
 - d. Ruth Buzzi **houseguested** with Bill Dodge. (newspaper gossip column)
 - e. He **wristed** the ball over the net. (sports broadcaster)
 - f. Will you **cigarette** me? (Mae West)
 - g. They **timbered off** the hills in the 1880s. (Conservation article)

Polysemy: Possible paper topics I

Productive “word-creation” constructions such as deferred reference, noun-noun compounds, and denominal verbs are common in many languages (**Sadock 1980**).

- 1 “Word creation” constructions in another language analagous to the English noun-noun construction (when a name for a **class of things** is needed ...)
- 2 Functionality shifts in such constructions: Arabic and Japanese seem to have one construction that covers the territory of both the possessive and the noun-noun compound construction.
- 3 Systematic polysemy rule in another language
- 4 Show how a productive English pattern is/is not instantiated in the other language

Polysemy: Possible paper topics II

- 5 Find productive patterns in another language **not** instantiated in English [Nunberg's example: French *une poire* (lit. "a pear") meaning pear syrup or a pear liqueur]
- 6 Explore the pragmatic/arbitrary boundaries of a pattern (Nunberg's portioning construction: *three beers* = *three glasses of beer* vs. *three wines* \neq *three glasses of wine*) in English or another language.
- 7 Nunberg and Zaenen (1992), Downing (1977), Clark and Clark (1979), (Sadock 1980).

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