

A Discursive–Synergetic Characterization Of The Development Of Word Meaning

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Abstract: This article examines the formation and development of word meaning based on discursive activity and synergetic principles. It analyzes how processes such as disorder and order within the semantic structure of words lead to phenomena like polysemy, homonymy, and semantic instability in language. The study explores the interaction of semantic units such as the ema, sema, and sememe, and their roles and movements within the meaning system through synergetic concepts including nonlinear development, imbalance, fluctuation, and dissipation. Furthermore, the article illustrates the formation of meaning based on human cognition, emotions, imagination, and worldview, showing various semantic changes and the emergence of semantic contradictions through examples. The openness of the semantic system, its dynamic character, and self-organization properties are also investigated.

Keywords: Word meaning, semantic instability, discursive activity, synergetics, ema, sema, sememe, nonlinearity, meaning system, fluctuation, dissipation, semantic contradiction, polysemy, semantic system.

Introduction: Under the influence of discursive activity, the semantic disorder occurring within a word passes sequentially into order and then again into disorder; in language this leads, in turn, to the formation of a polysemous word out of a monosemous one, of a homonymous word out of a polysemous one, and then back again to a monosemous word. According to I. Prigogine, whenever an old system is replaced by a new one, instability and disorder arise first, and only thereafter a stable state and order come into being. Under the impact of discursive activity, disorder, nonlinearity, and instability emerge in the semantic structure of the word. The development of word meaning does not proceed along a predetermined path but follows unexpected, contingent, and novel routes that arise from internal and external influences embedded in discursive activity. Investigating the instability that arises within the meaning system and its transition to stability, and depicting the internal structure of a stable semantic system in specific schemata, is carried out by the method of semic analysis. The composition of a word's meaning is formed by sememas, semes, emas, and other micro-systems. Changes in nature and society, together with the knowledge and information about them, are

consolidated into the make-up of a word's meaning through semema, seme, and ema. As an open system, the semantic composition of a word is in constant change under external influences (the inflow of knowledge and information). Moreover, through the paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations that arise from the mutual semantic influence of words, new emas, semes, and sememas are created. Thus, as a result of external or internal influences, emas, semes, and sememas enter the semantic composition and increase in quantity; consequently, those emas, semes, and sememas that denote older concepts grow archaic and drop out of the semantic make-up. Knowledge and information accumulate in the word via emas, semes, and sememas. Of these, the ones that are important for a given period become active in speech, while the rest lose their relevance. Accordingly, emas, semes, and sememas are divided into active and inactive types. Just as older knowledge serves as a foundation for the formation of new knowledge, the older emas, semes, and sememas play a significant role in the emergence of new ones. The growth in the number of emas, semes, and sememas in the semantic composition, together with the appearance of antagonistic interactions among them, transforms the meaning

system into a complex system. The semantic composition of a word has a complex structure, and the changes within it proceed along a nonlinear path of development. Nonlinearity is a path of development that is multi-variant, multi-branched, and multi-functional. In this respect, it may be said that polysemy and polyfunctionality, in mutual connection, contribute to the changes and development occurring within a word's meaning system. In short, word meaning is a complex system consisting of countless emas, semes, and sememas, among which mutual influences and connections exist. For example, among the meanings (emas, semes, sememas) of a polysemous word, relations of affinity arise according to integral (shared) semes, and relations of differentiation arise according to differential (distinctive) semes. The emergence of synonymic, antonymic, graduonymic, and holonymic-meronymic relations either among the sememas of a polysemous word or among the emas and semes within each semema turns meaning into a complex system. Such interactions and connections also bring about various changes in the meaning system, including narrowing of meaning, widening of meaning, and the structural division and development of meaning. Over time, under external and internal influences, the meaning system continually changes its state. These processes, which occur alongside changes in emas, semes, and sememas, also affect word formation and structure. By these properties the meaning system is evaluated as a dynamic system. Ema, seme, and semema are likewise meaning-bearing units: a semema is a macro-system composed of emas and semes; however, as a unit constituting the composition of a word's meaning, the semema stands at a micro-system level relative to the word's overall semantic system. As a macro-system, word meaning is an integral whole composed structurally of macro- and micro-systems that possess the properties of mutual influence, self-organization, and self-development. In the meaning system, the exchange of knowledge and information takes place through emas, semes, and sememas. Each ema, seme, and semema within the composition of word meaning concentrates within itself a certain level of knowledge and information, and changes in nature and society exert their influence upon them. For this reason, all events and phenomena occurring in the world find their reflection in the semantic system of the word and affect the development of meaning. In the meaning system, which is regarded as an open system, the circulation of knowledge and information through emas, semes, and sememas indicates that it develops in connection with nature and society.

The meaning of a word is an integral whole composed of emas, semes, and sememas; as micro-systems, these

units possess the capacity for self-organization, mutual influence, and collaborative formation of a specific concept or image. In studying the laws governing the formation and self-organization of such micro-systems (ema, seme, semema) that constitute the structure of meaning, it is necessary to draw upon knowledge from all fields of science.

Word meaning is rich in semes, and in perceiving a word people, within the limits of their own knowledge, focus attention on one or several of these semes. For this reason, one or several semes within the semantic composition of a word assume the function of expressing the primary meaning. Under the influence of discursive activity, each ema, seme, and semema in the composition of word meaning becomes activated in speech and acquires the capacity to express meaning independently. A single word is perceived and interpreted differently in accordance with people's knowledge and worldview. In this respect, the semantic structure of a word is unstable and unbalanced in character.

The word pomidor ("tomato") is sometimes explained as a "fruit," sometimes as a "vegetable." This is because the tomato has properties characteristic of both. In this sense, the formation of two types of knowledge within the semantic make-up of pomidor—through the semes "fruit" and "vegetable"—produces semantic disequilibrium in usage. As is known, from a scientific point of view the tomato is a "fruit," whereas in popular speech it is regarded as a "vegetable." The contradictions that arise from the interaction of incoming knowledge and information within the meaning system generate instability in the nature of the word's meaning. An increase in the force of such conflicting influences causes the meaning to split structurally and pass from one state to another. Changes of this sort in the semantic structure are manifested especially clearly in diachronic enantiosemy. For example, the lexeme *basir* in Old Uzbek expressed the semes "seeing," "sharp-eyed," "highly sensitive": *Qilurni ayla rioyat demakta asra adab, / Ki do'st fe'lingu qavlungg'adur basiru same'*. (Alisher Navoi, *Khazoyin ul-ma'ani*). This lexeme in modern Uzbek is used with the semema "having no sight, blind": *Pinhon edi unga bor umr, chunki hayot etmishdi basir*. (U. Nosir, *Yurak*).

The qualitative changes that occur within the composition of meaning are caused by a quantitative increase in meaning elements and by the emergence of opposing forces among them, and these processes develop meaning as a complex system. At times, under the influence of discursive activity, unexpected semantic oppositions recur repeatedly within the composition of a word's meaning.

Temur tig'i yetmagan joyni

Qalam bilan oldi Alisher. (Abdulla Oripov, Uzbekistan)

In these lines it is evident that the words *tig'* and *qalam* are used in opposing senses. *Tig'* ("war, force") and *qalam* ("knowledge, enlightenment") bring out a semantic opposition and, by virtue of these *semes*, the words *tig'* and *qalam* stand in contrast. If the lines—which emphasize the primacy of knowledge and enlightenment—are analyzed in terms of equivalence and comparison, it becomes clear that both *tig'* and *qalam* can serve equally for good and for evil; that is, both the word *tig'* and the word *qalam* contain *semes* with positive and negative meanings. One understands that *tig'* may, conversely, serve justice and enlightenment, while *qalam* may serve injustice and ignorance. For this reason, the presence in the semantic structure of both words of antonymous *semes* such as "justice and injustice," "peace and unrest," "truth and falsehood" makes it plain that *tig'* and *qalam* can be harnessed to both good and evil. In this respect, the word *tig'* forms an opposition to the word *qalam* in both positive and negative senses. Proceeding from the content of the above lines, if *tig'* and *qalam* are regarded as symbols of the struggle for justice, enlightenment, and peace, our ideas revive about the deeds of Amir Temur and Alisher Navoi carried out for justice and peace, and that in this the service of the pen exceeded that of the sword. In short, under the influence of discursive activity, unexpected semantic oppositions arise within the composition of word meaning, and such changes and shifts generate ever-new concepts (*semes*). Under the influence of discursive activity, word meaning passes and drifts from one state to another. At times, approaching textual analysis differently—even from the reverse angle—brings out new shades of meaning for the word. For example, focusing on the positive aspects of *tig'* and the negative aspects of *qalam* reveals that these words also possess *semes* with such content.

In language we observe that words are used differently across social spheres—for instance, a single word may appear in two forms in literary and colloquial speech. Sometimes the variant used in the literary language, at other times the dialectal variant, accords with norms of pronunciation and orthography. For example, the verb *bichmoq* ("to cut") appears in dialects as *pichmoq*, while the literary word *pichoq* ("knife") is rendered in some dialects as *bichoq*. For instance: "In Forish, the people on the Samarkand side of the Nurota mountains are jokingly called Turkmen, and they in turn call those living around Bog'don *bichoqlar* ('knife-people'). 'Turkmen' is understandable, you may say, but what is *bichoq*? I'll tell you: among the Forish people, of Oghuz origin, *pichoq* is pronounced *bichoq*." (Abdulhamid

Mukhtorov, Haydarko'l xayollari).

Depending on whether *emas*, *semes*, and *sememas* directly or indirectly denote referents or their actions—states and properties, they express literal (own) or figurative meanings, and with each of these meanings they take part in word-formation. The verb *bichmoq* carries the *seme* "to cut," and depending on what denotatum the action is performed upon and which analogous action-state it implies, it manifests various facets of meaning, enriching its composition with new *emas*, *semes*, and *sememas* that convey literal and figurative senses and enabling each to participate in word-formation.

A *semema* is structurally composed of *semes*, *semes* in turn of *emas*; the *emas* themselves are structurally formed from other micro-systems, and this continues recursively. Each unit, depending on whether it directly or indirectly denotes a given referent, has the capacity to express literal or figurative meaning. In this respect, the semantic make-up of a word consists of mono- or poly-meaning *emas*, *semes*, and *sememas*. Poly-meaning *emas*, *semes*, and *sememas* can express literal and figurative, nominative and figurative (*tropic*), neutral and connotative meanings.

The semantic structure of a word has a complex organization: the division of a word's meaning into mono- and poly-meaning *emas*, *semes*, and *sememas*, their branching in different directions, the mutual influence of these meaning-fragments attached to a single word-form yielding new fragments, as well as the emergence among them of flexibility and oppositions; the structural subdivision and ramification of *emas*, *semes*, and *sememas*—all this indicates that it is impossible to depict the word's semantic architecture with complete precision, to fix its developmental bounds, or to predetermine the exact trajectory of semantic shifts.

The nonlinear, disorderly developmental paths reflected in a word's semantic structure nevertheless arise within an underlying order; the image that reflects this order—an invariant state, a core template—appears in the semantic construction of the *lexeme* as a unit of language. Changes in the meanings of speech units occur within the general templates and nuclear structures set by language units. We typically draw a fir tree as a triangle and a watermelon as a circle; in nature, however, we observe their development in various forms around these general templates.

As a language unit, each *lexeme* has its own semantic structures, and it is known that under the influence of discursive-cognitive activity these nuclear templates can undergo various—even unexpected—transformations. As a language unit, the *lexeme's*

semantic structure and traces of development can be depicted by specific schemata, ordered shapes, and nuclear templates. The meaning of a word develops on the basis of this root template, exhibiting nonlinear, unbalanced, and disorderly trajectories of development. The order that emerges from semantic disorder finds its reflection in the lexeme's semantic construction. As a unit of language, the lexeme's semantic architecture is subject to general laws and rules. Word meaning in actual speech, however, is subject to various accidental changes and phenomena, and thus generates new regularities along its developmental paths. Here, under the influence of discursive activity, the instability, disequilibrium, and nonlinearity occurring in the behavior of the components of word meaning—ema, seme, and semema—are of crucial importance.

Bosh qo'yay dedim oyog'i tufrog'ig'a. Dedi: qo'y.

Bo'sa istab la'li rangin so'rdum ersa, dedi: ol. (Alisher Navoi)

In the clause "Dedi: qo'y" ("He/She said: 'leave it/put it'"), the word qo'y conveys semes of both affirmation and negation; likewise, in the words so'r and ol two different meanings are understood. In this way, the comprehension of multiple meanings through a single word gives rise to semantic instability. The fact that the constituents of a word's meaning—ema, seme, and semema—are in an unbalanced, unstable state indicates that meaning possesses the capacity for self-organization and self-development. At times the transition of a word's meaning into a stable state causes that word to become obsolete and drop out of the language system. Stability halts the development of the meaning system.

The concepts formed on the basis of perceiving phenomena of the world and the attitudes expressed toward them are reflected in word meaning. The formation of such concepts differs from person to person, and this enriches the composition of the word with various emas, semes, and sememas; as a result, the arrangement and behavior of the emas, semes, and sememas in the semantic composition of the word become unstable and unsettled. In the perception of nonlinear, unstable, unbalanced worldly phenomena—and in their reflection in word meaning as a product of nonlinear thinking, intellect, and consciousness—the human factor occupies a central place. Each individual influences a word's meaning through their own thinking, imagination, and psychology. As a speaker, a person discovers the subtle facets of a word's meaning within the scope of their abilities, and affectively colored words arise. The unity of body and spirit in a person, and the collision and mutual influence of the

two energies characteristic of them, exert force in the formation and development of word meaning.

If the word asal ("honey") denotes the honey of the bee, the concepts formed on the basis of its effects on the human body and psyche have served as a basis for the emergence of figurative meanings. This word has extended to denote things sweet like honey and to indicate a quality of a person. The associative interconnection of human feelings on the basis of similarity—and the way one evokes another—plays a major role in the formation and development of meaning. Likewise, the mutual influence of pairings such as thought and imagination, thought and psyche, imagination and psyche spurs the formation and development of meaning. The variability and imbalance of attention affect thought and imagination. Their mutual influence affects emotion, reason, consciousness, and activity. The fact that these possess self-developing power influences the development of meaning. The balanced or unbalanced motion of feeling and thought is also reflected in changes within the human body. Imagination affects feeling. Feeling affects the activity of thought, reason, and consciousness. The variable, unbalanced, sensitive, adaptable, and reactive nature of feeling to external influences affects the balance within the activity of thought and consciousness and brings about disequilibrium. The impact of the wave of feeling on the activity of thought, reason, and consciousness strengthens the fluctuations occurring within them and produces bifurcation or polyfuration, and dissipation occurs.

Feeling and thought are governed by the person who bears them—or by another person. The disequilibrium that arises from the mutual influence of feeling and thought also has a creative (constructive) character. There is a self-developing force in cognitive activity. This is due to the stimulus–response processes that take place in thinking. Under the influence of positive thoughts, related positive thoughts are awakened and the process of thinking shifts in a positive direction. Negative thoughts, in turn, trigger the awakening of related negative thoughts, and the process of negative thinking gradually intensifies and develops. The development, intensification, and deepening of thinking in a positive or negative direction arouses feeling, and these processes lead to dissipation. Usually, if emotion does not significantly influence the fluctuations occurring in thought, mental activity is set in motion at the point of bifurcation, and the bifurcation point of synergetic processes in mental activity opens the way to understanding. Such a transition from one system to another gives rise to qualitative changes.

Language serves as a mediator and helper in perceiving the world and understanding the essence of ongoing phenomena. Knowledge and information about the world and humankind, and about the events and processes that occur therein, are accumulated in language. The concepts formed by perceiving real reality and by perceiving the word that expresses it will not be exactly equal in scope. For example, the concepts formed by seeing sugar (qand) and by perceiving the word when hearing it will differ. A single word consolidates within itself an image or concepts characteristic of one or several denotata. The formation of knowledge about the similarities and differences of these denotata gives impetus to the development of meaning. For instance, the word *sabzavot* ("vegetable") gathers within itself knowledge and information about a number of denotata.

Hyperonyms, in relation to hyponyms, display the property of being an attractor (from English "attract" — "to draw, to pull"). In the semantic composition of a hyperonymic word, a particular hyposeme may display attractor-like properties: this seme stands out from among the others and takes over as the main meaning. This sometimes leads to semantic narrowing. The shift of *osh* to expressing the meaning "*palov (pilaf)*" is an example. A decrease in the number of sememas, semes, and emas within the composition of meaning leads to narrowing. Words that have undergone narrowing and can denote only a small number of denotata are replaced by words whose semantic scope is broad and that include both hypersemes and hyposemes within their composition.

In short, the formation and development of word meaning proceed within the scope of discursive activity and synergetic laws. As an open system, word meaning is constantly changing and developing under external and internal influences. Through emas, semes, and sememas, word meaning accumulates knowledge and information. Acting as micro-systems, emas, semes, and sememas cooperate to constitute word meaning as a macro-system. The increase of such micro-systems under external and internal influences, and the emergence and intensification of opposing forces among them, turn word meaning into a complex system, giving rise to imbalance and instability within it. Each ema, seme, and semema in the composition of meaning, as a micro-system, has the property of self-organization and, depending on whether it denotes the referent directly or indirectly, expresses literal or figurative meaning. The emergence of such meanings brings about changes in the form or meaning of the word, and these processes also affect word formation.

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