

Text: Pustejovsky, James (1995): *The Generative Lexicon*.

Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.

Chapter 1: Introduction (pp. 1-4)

- problem of the lexicon is problem of **semantic organization**

- creative use of words in novel contexts, lexical semantics and compositionality

- Pustejovsky's result:

“Under such a theory, a core set of word senses, typically with greater internal structure than is assumed in previous theories, is used to generate a larger set of word senses when individual lexical items are combined with others in phrases and clauses” (p. 2).

→ generative lexicon, generative devices create “extended senses”

- four levels of representation

Argument Structure: combinatorial question / **Event Structure:** Aktionsarten and event types / **Qualia Structure:** defining attributes of an object / **Inheritance Structure:** relation between lexical items

→ argument selection is driven by semantic types

- strong distinction between **commonsense knowledge** and **lexical structure**

“The types of creative Polysemy examined in this work exhibit a regularity and systematicity across languages that is absent from patterns of pragmatic sense extension or modes of metaphor” (p. 4).

Chapter 2: The Nature of Lexical Knowledge (pp. 5-26)

- the generative enterprise in the lexicon:

(1) a recursive theory of semantic composition

(2) notion of semantic well-formedness

(3) several layers of interpretation

- assumption of separate semantic modules

“The representation of lexical semantics, therefore, should be seen as just one of many levels in a richer characterization of contextual structure” (p. 7).

► Categorial Alternation

► Verbal Alternation (changing transitivity status)

(a) The boat sank in stormy weather. (intransitive, unaccusative)

The plane sank the boat in stormy weather. (transitive)

- (b) The letter arrived on time. (intransitive, unaccusative)
*The mailman arrived the letter on time. (*transitive)
- (c) John gave a lecture to the academy. (ditransitive (?))
John gave a lecture. (transitive)
- (d) John gave a book to Mary. (ditransitive)
*John gave a book. (*transitive)

“What allows the alternation, I will argue in later chapters, is the interaction of the verbal semantics with semantic information from the complement itself” (p. 12).

▶ Nominal Alternations (count vs. mass nouns)

▶ Adjective Classes (accidental vs. necessary qualities)

- after Dixon: DIMENSION, PHYSICAL PROPERTY, COLOUR, HUMAN PROPENSITY, AGE, VALUE, SPEED, DIFFICULTY, SIMILARITY, QUALIFICATION

▶ Interlexical Relations

▶ synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy and lexical inheritance, meronymy, entailment and presupposition

Chapter 10: Consequences of a Generative Lexicon (pp. 221-239)

- example: “open”

open		
EVENTSTRUCTURE	= process	
	= state	
ARGUMENTSTRUCTURE	= 1 Argument	
	= 2 Arguments (with physical object as Formal = entity)	
QUALIA	= Formal	= result
	= Agentive	= act

- interaction between lexicon and pragmatics

“One of the goals of the present work has been not only to argue in favour of richer lexical representations and compositional mechanisms, but also to show that these structures and devices are still language specific in identifiable ways” (p. 233).

- interface lexicon – pragmatics

→ avoidance of discourse incoherence, reinforcement of rhetorical connections

(Asher and Lascarides (1993, 1995): “Temporal Interpretation, Discourse Relations and Commonsense Entailment”. In: *Linguistics and Philosophy* 16: 437-494)