

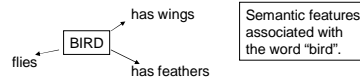
Understanding Words, Part 1

Ling/Psych 371N
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The Lexicon

- Your mental dictionary
- Store words and their properties, for ex.:
 - Pronunciation
 - Meaning (also semantic features)
 - Part of speech (or syntactic category) – Noun, Verb, Adjective, Adverb, Preposition



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What other type of info is in a lexical entry?

- Selectional restrictions
 - **Chase** something concrete, like a **ball**
 - **Pursue** something abstract, like a **strategy**
 - **Form** an idea (abstract)
 - **Make** a cake (concrete)

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What other type of info is in a lexical entry?

- Subcategorization information
 - * Herbert **put** the jellyfish
 - √ Herbert **put** the jellyfish in the bath
VERB object location
 - PUT is subcategorized for : an object and a location.
 - * He is **afraid** of cats. "AFRAID" must be used with a certain preposition, "of"
 - √ He is **afraid** to cats.

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How is the Lexicon Organized?

- Semantically – according to sound
- Phonologically – according to meaning
- Some associations are common to many people.
- Some associations are unique to one person.

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Lexical Retrieval

- Also known as Lexical Access
 - Finding words in your lexicon
- There are two ways to access the lexicon:
 - Via sound (pattern recognition when listening to speech)
 - Via meaning (finding words when you want to put a sentence together)

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Lexical Decision Task

- Deciding whether something is a word or not.
- Can be performed visually or auditorily.
- Possible non-words are slow to be rejected
- Impossible non-words are quick to be rejected.

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What about Accessing Real Words?

Or: Factors that Affect Lexical Retrieval

- **Frequency Effect:** the more frequent a word, the faster you access it.
- **Ambiguity Effect:** if a word is ambiguous (has multiple meanings), you access it more quickly than if it only has one meaning.
- Does this mean that there are separate lexical entries for each word? **YES.**

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Factors that affect lexical retrieval, contd.

- Priming: an experimental procedure
 - Present a word, or picture before a target word, and if the word or picture is related to the target word, you'll access the target word faster than if you were not primed.
- Semantic Priming: when you present a semantically related word before the target word.

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Factors that affect lexical retrieval, contd.

- Other types of priming:
 - Using words that rhyme as the prime
 - Using pictures to prime

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