

## Lexicographic Reflection of Leech's Seven Types of Meanings in English-Albanian and Albanian-English Dictionaries

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### Abstract

*Meaning is one of the most controversial and complex terms in the history of a language. Without meaning there is no interaction of thought. Though 'meaning' can be provided through other means like body kinesthetic, pictures, signals, etc., language is the main mean of communication of thoughts and feelings among human beings. Semantics as a branch of linguistics is mainly concerned with how the 'meaning' is conveyed by the linguistic system consisting of structures like sentences, phrases, words, morphemes etc. Semantics studies all that is communicated through language. Geoffrey Leech in his book semantics breaks down "meaning" into seven different types giving primary importance to logical or conceptual one. The five other types included in the associative meaning are Connotative meaning, Social meaning, Affective meaning, Reflected meaning, Collocative meaning as well as the last type thematic meaning. Meaning in a wider sense embraces all types with the alternative term 'communicative value', which is the crucial importance of meaning. The aim of this paper is to review Leech's seven types of meanings and to observe how they are reflected in bilingual dictionaries. Examples of words, phrases and expressions from dictionaries have been extracted in order to investigate the use of all types in bilingual dictionaries. Meaning and its importance in expressing thought in different contexts from the source language to the target one, its translation and analysis when teaching and learning English lexicology and Semantics as well English as a second language, has been emphasized. Based on the lexicographic reflection the types of meanings which take a significant part in bilingual dictionaries are the social meaning, affective and connotative one in both languages.*

**Keywords:** *linguistics, semantics, meaning, bilingual dictionaries, language.*

### 1. Introduction

A word is the smallest unit of spoken language which has meaning and can stand alone, it is a written representation of one or more sounds which can be spoken to represent an idea, object, action, etc. in order to be understood by the people, a word must have a meaning.

Most words have more than one meaning, it is the characteristic of words that a single word may have several meaning, in fact, words may play an enormous part in our life. Words are used to express something and also convey feelings about we are describing. Words are used not in isolation but related to human situation. It is through our experience with them in human situation that they take on meaning.

If we talk about words, we can not avoid talking about the study of meaning (semantics). The meaning of word is often complex, having such component as a picture, an idea, a quality, a relationship and personal feelings and association. Lyons 1977:643 in Palmer1981:(40-41) suggested that we should draw a distinction between sentence meaning and utterance meaning, the sentence meaning is directly predictable from the grammatical and lexical features of the sentence, while utterance meaning includes all the various types of meaning, then, is the part of meaning of a sentence that we are going to discuss in the next following. Lyons states that, utterance meaning is the part of meaning of a sentence that is directly related to grammatical and lexical features, but is obtained either from associated prosodic and paralinguistic features or from the content, linguistic and non-linguistic[1]. The seven types of meaning are as follows:

Geoffrey Leech in his book semantics breaks down "meaning" in widest sense into seven different types giving primary importance to logical or conceptual meaning. The six other types are *Connotative meaning, Social meaning, Affective meaning, Reflected meaning, Collocative meaning and thematic meaning*. These seven types of meaning are compared with the three types of lexical meaning[3].



## 2. Conceptual meaning

According to Leech conceptual meaning usually called 'denotative', or 'cognitive', meaning is the central factor in linguistics interaction. It is also shown to be integral to the essential functioning of a language. Leech considers conceptual meaning as primary among other types of meaning because it has a complex organization and structure compared to the syntactic and phonological levels of language. The two structural principles that seem to lie at the basis of all linguistic patterning namely the principle of contractiveness and the principle of structure are also the basis of conceptual meaning.

The conceptual meaning of language can be studied in terms of contrastive features as for instance the word +girl, - boy, + child as distinct from 'man', which could be 'defined' as +human, +male, - child. The second principle, that of structure, was the principle by which larger linguistic units are built up out of smaller units able to analyze sentences into its constitute parts. Here also as sentences are analyzed into its units i.e. words and morphemes and at the level of phonology into constitute phonemes (sound units), similarly the semantics structure of sentence can also be explained. The two principles of constituent structure represent the way language is organized. Contractiveness is the paradigmatic or selection or 'choice' aspect of linguistics structure. Constituent structure is the syntagmatic or combinatory or 'chain' aspect of linguistics structure. Explaining these two aspects in all the levels of language organization called phonological (sound structure), syntactic (sentence structure) semantic (meaning) is the work of the linguists. This is done by establishing, a 'phonological representation', a 'syntactic representation' and a 'semantic representation' and the stage by which one level of representation can be derived from another. At the level of semantics representation the conceptual meaning of a sentence will be explained in the form of a semantic representation using the abstract symbols and contrastive features. This will help one to know how to distinguish a meaning of a particular sentence from all other possible sentence in the language. This representation will also match the meaning of that sentence with its corresponding correct syntactic and phonological form.

While semantics is the study of meaning in language, there is more interest in certain aspects of meaning than in others. We have already ruled out special meanings that one individual might attach to words. We can go further and make a broad distinction between conceptual meaning and associative meaning. Conceptual meaning covers those basic, essential components of meaning that are conveyed by the literal use of a word. It is the type of meaning that dictionaries are designed to describe. Some of the basic components of a word like needle in English might include "thin, sharp, steel instrument." These components would be part of the conceptual meaning of needle.

However, different people might have different associations or connotations attached to a word like needle. They might associate it with "pain," or "illness," or "blood," or "drugs," or "thread," or "knitting," or "hard to find" (especially in a haystack), and these associations may differ from one person to the next. These types of associations are not treated as part of the word's conceptual meaning.

In a similar way, some people may associate the expression low-calorie, when used to describe a product, with "healthy," but this is not part of the basic conceptual meaning of the expression (i.e. "producing a small amount of heat or energy"). Poets, song-writers, novelists, literary critics, advertisers and lovers may all be interested in how words can evoke certain aspects of associative meaning, but in linguistic semantics we're more concerned with trying to analyze conceptual meaning.

## 3. Connotative meaning

Leech calls connotative meaning the communicative value an expression has by virtue of what it *refers* to over and above its purely conceptual contents. The notion of 'reference' overlaps with conceptual meaning. If the word 'man' is defined by three features: +human-male, + adult, then the three properties adult, human and male must provide a criterion of the correct use of the word. These are the features of the referent or denotatum or segment of the real world which are not included in the conceptual meaning. But there are many non-criterial properties that we expect for the word 'man' to possess such as brave, strong, hard working etc...

Leech's (1981) connotative meaning is concerned with the real world experiences one associates with the linguistics expression one uses or hears. The boundary between conceptual and connotative meaning is coincident similar to the boundary between language and the real world. Connotative meaning is peripheral when compared with the conceptual meaning. It was also relatively unstable as it varies according to culture, historical periods and experience of the individual. Connotative meaning is indeterminate and open ended. This is because this depends upon the knowledge and beliefs of the speakers and may belong to any characteristic of the referent, real or imaginary as identified by the

speaker. Conceptual meaning consists of a closed set of features which are finite in number. Leech's definition of connotative meaning was quite different from Zgusta's connotative as a component of lexical meaning and John Lyon's use of connotative in contrast to denotative. What Leech calls social and affective meaning are included in Zgusta (1971) under connotation. Lyon's and others call affective or emotive, meaning as connotative[4].

#### 4. Social and affective meaning

These two types of meaning are concerned with two aspects of communication which are derived from the situation or environment in which an utterance or sentence is produced in a language. Of these two, social meaning is that information which a piece of language (i.e. a pronunciation variation, a word, phrase, sentence, etc.) conveys about the social circumstance of its use. Social meaning is understood through the recognition of different dimension and level of style within the same language. Aspects of language variation like social or regional dialect variation, style variation like formal, informal, colloquial, slang etc., in a social situation, a functional meaning of a sentence may differ from its conceptual meaning due to its illocutionary force. Affective meaning is the aspect of meaning which reflects personal feelings of the speaker, including the attitude of the listener or his attitude to something the listener is talking about. But Leech's attitude as in the case of social meaning is not only different in the use of words or lexemes but also factors of intonation and voice-timber, referred to as tone of voice. In a more local sense social meaning includes what is called the illocutionary force of an utterance. The function an utterance performs may be indirectly related to its conceptual meaning. For instance the sentence 'It's hot in here' may have the form of an assertion but in an auditorium may mean 'would you please open the window?'

Löbner (2002:27) states that the term social meaning does not refer to this general aspect of verbal interaction, and is thereby not to be confused with the communicative meaning of a verbal act [5]. Rather, social meaning is on par with descriptive meaning: it is part of the lexical meaning of certain words, phrases or grammatical forms. Social meaning refers to the use of language to establish and regulate social relations and to maintain social roles. This type of language use is alternatively described as social or phatic communication. In phatic communication the verbal interaction has little information value, but instead plays an essential role in oiling the wheels of social discourse. Social meaning is hence communicated through ritualistic use of language as found in greetings, apologies, blessings or condolences. Social meaning is the meaning which an expression conveys about the contexts or social circumstances of its use. It chiefly includes stylistic meaning of an utterance. It is the formality of the expression. The examples of social meaning are:

- a. mother (formal), mom (colloquial),
- b. mama (child's language)
- c. dollar (neutral) buck (slang)
- d. father, papa, old boy

#### 4.1 Affective Meaning

Comparable to social meaning, affective meaning is only indirectly related to the conceptual representation. Affective meaning is a reflection of the speaker's personal attitude or feelings towards the listener or the target of the utterance. Such feelings are usually negative or insincere. They are expressed through insults, hyperbole or offense. When affective meaning is used we rely upon the mediation of other categories of meaning to express our emotions such as: conceptual, connotative, or stylistic. The level of meaning that conveys the language user's feelings, including his attitude or evaluation in shaping his use of language is called *affective* meaning or emotive meaning. Affective meaning is conveyed through the conceptual or the connotative content of the words used. For instance the sentence 'You are asked to be quiet' can be more polite if it were, 'would you please, lower your voices a little?!', or shut up! In this case the tone of voice and intonation are important as a well [6].

#### 5. Reflected and collocative meaning

These two types of meaning are due to relation between words or interconnection on the lexical level of language. Of the two, reflected meaning is the meaning which arises in cases when a word has multiple conceptual meaning or polysemous, when one sense of a word form part of our response (or reaction) to another sense. Collocative meaning consists of the association a word acquires on account of the meaning of words which tend to occur in its environment. What Leech calls 'Collocative



meaning' is the component range of application. For instance, *intercourse* Communication or dealings between individuals or groups.

'*everyday social intercourse*' Late Middle English: from Old French *entrecours* 'exchange, commerce', from Latin *intercursum*, from *intercurrere* 'intervene', from *inter-* 'between' + *currere* 'run'. The specifically sexual use arose in the late 18th century[7].

Collocative meaning consists of the associations a word acquires on account of the meanings of the words, which tend to occur in its environment. For instance the words 'pretty and handsome' share common ground in the meaning of good looking. But may be distinguished by the range of nouns in which they are likely to occur or collocate; 'Pretty woman and handsome man'. The ranges may well match although they suggest a different kind of attractiveness of the adjectives.

## 6. Associative meaning

Of the six types of meaning discussed so far, except the conceptual meaning, the other five i.e. connotative meaning, social meaning, affective meaning, reflected meaning and collative meaning, have something in common. These meaning have an open ended and variable character. They cannot be analyzed in clear cut either-this-or-that term. Therefore, Leech groups all these under the heading of **associative meaning**. While conceptual meaning was part of the 'common system' of language shared by a member of the speech community, associative meaning is less stable and varies with the individual's experience[8].

## 7. Thematic meaning

Thematic meaning is the meaning that is communicated by the way in which the speaker or writer expresses the message, word order, focus of attention. It is often felt an active sentence such as (1) below has a different meaning from its passive equivalent (2) although in conceptual content they seem to be the same (Leech. 1974: 19)

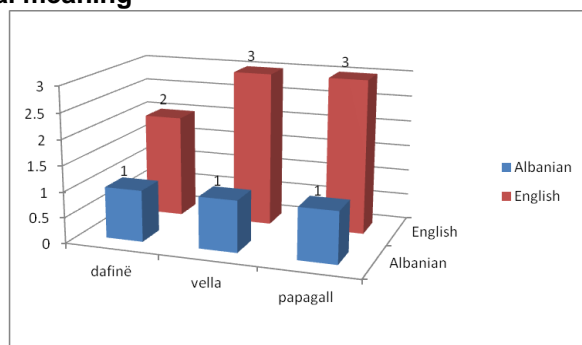
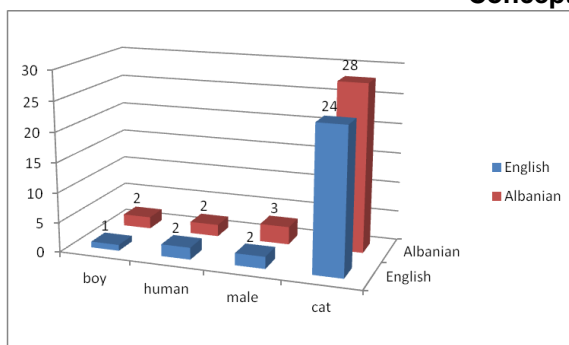
1. Mary gifted this book to the library.
2. This book was gifted to the library by Mary

In the first sentence "*Who gifted the book to the library?*", while in the second sentence the question "*What was gifted to the library by Mary?*". In both cases Mary is inferred to be a well known person to the parties interactive in the discourse but the focus of attention differs. In the first sentence Mary is the word to be emphasized whereas in the second the word to be emphasized is this book

## 8. Lexicographic reflection of Leech's seven types of meanings

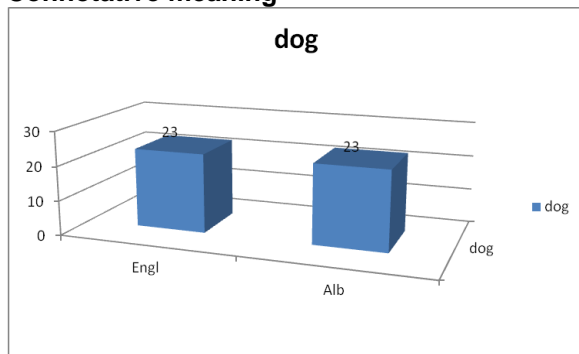
To illustrate the reflection of these types of meanings in bilingual dictionaries some samples have been analysed and extracted.

### Conceptual meaning

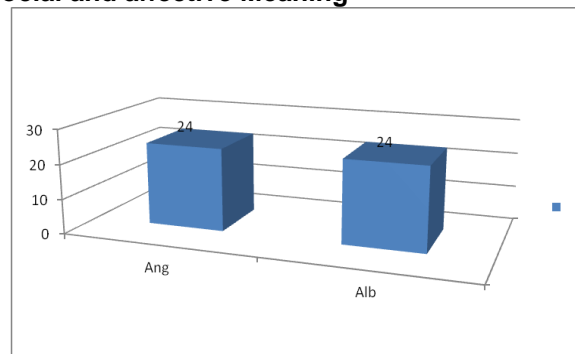




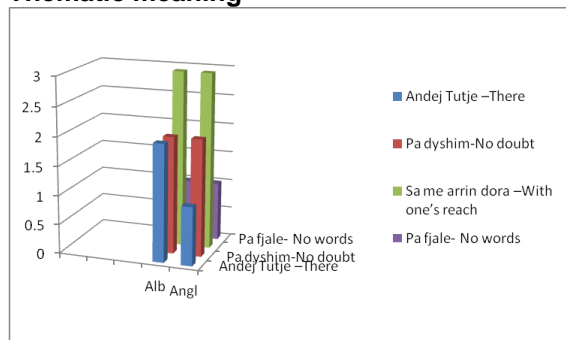
### Connotative meaning



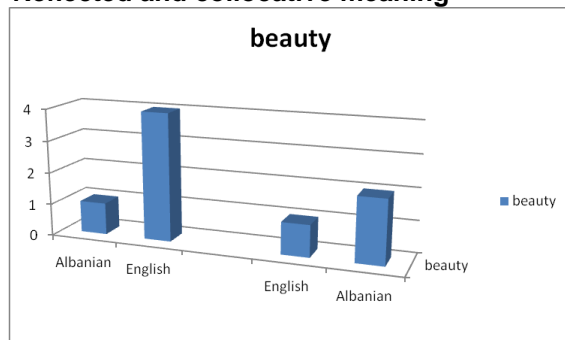
### Social and affective Meaning



### Thematic meaning



### Reflected and collocative meaning



As it is noticed the types of meanings which take a significant part in bilingual dictionaries are the social meaning and the affective one in both languages as well as the connotative one.

## Conclusion

To conclude Geoffrey Leech (1981) studied the meaning in a very broad way and breaks it down into seven types logical or conceptual meaning, connotative meaning, social meaning, affective meaning, reflected meaning, collective meaning and thematic meaning. Of these logical or conceptual meaning was the same as designative meaning. Leech's connotative meaning was different from connotation. Except conceptual meaning and thematic meaning the other five are called associative meaning. This study is an attempt to make a theoretically comparative analysis of the words with a different meanings in English-Albanian and Albanian-English dictionaries. Leech's seven types of meanings in English-Albanian and Albanian-English dictionaries are widely reflected. The dominant ones are the social, affective and connotative meanings.

Based on statistics we have also concluded that in the Albanian-English version we have less use of words with colloquial meanings. This finding is open to researches in the communication field.

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