

تطور نظرية علم الدلالة العربية بالإشارة إلى الترجمة

The Development of the Arabic Theory in Semantics with Reference to Translation

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Abstract

The present study aims at investigating the evolution of the Arabic theory of semantics. Semantics or the study of meaning is concerned with the meanings of grammatical constructions, sentences, words, and phrases. The term "semantic development" describes how the meaning of a certain word evolves over extended or brief periods of time. It may have an external or internal driving force. When speakers use words frequently and their intentions are not always precisely the same, meanings might change. It is hypothesized that semantic development is likely to occur when a word gains traction in usage and the speech community adopts a

distinct meaning for it. Similar to other forms of linguistic change, semantic growth is universal, continuous, and gradual rather than abrupt. It has been discovered that there are various types of semantic growth in Arabic, including specialization, generalization, and semantic shift. Certain word formation processes, including borrowing, production and invention, synthetic words, Arabicization, and blending, give rise to these types of semantic development. Need, social and cultural variables, emotional and psychological reactions, language deviation, metaphoric transition, historical factors, innovation, and purposeful and unintentional factors are some of the causes of these types of semantic growth.

KEYWORDS

Semantics, Vocabulary, Lexicon, Syntax, Morphology.

المخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى دراسة تطور النظرية العربية في علم الدلالة. اذ يهتم علم الدلالة أو دراسة المعنى بمعاني التراكيب النحوية والجمل والكلمات والعبارات. ويصف مصطلح "التطور الدلالي" كيف يتطور معنى كلمة معينة على مدى فترات زمنية طويلة أو قصيرة. وقد يكون له قوة دافعة خارجية أو داخلية. عندما يستخدم المتحدثون الكلمات استخداماً متكرراً ولا تكون نواياهم دائماً هي نفسها تماماً، فقد تتغير المعاني. ويُفترض أن التطور الدلالي من المرجح أن يحدث عندما تكتسب الكلمة قوة جذب في الاستخدام ويتبنى مجتمع الكلام معنى مميزاً لها. على غرار أشكال أخرى من التغيير اللغوي، فإن النمو الدلالي عالمي ومستمر وتدرجي وليس مفاجئاً. وقد اكتشفت أنواع مختلفة من النمو الدلالي في اللغة العربية، بما في ذلك التخصص والتعميم والتحول الدلالي. وتؤدي بعض عمليات تكوين الكلمات، بما في ذلك الاقتراض والإنتاج والاختراع والكلمات التركيبية والتعريب والمزج، إلى ظهور هذه الأنواع من التطور الدلالي. وتعد الحاجة والمتغيرات الاجتماعية والثقافية وردود الفعل العاطفية والنفسية والانحراف اللغوي والتحول المجازي والعوامل التاريخية والابتكار والعوامل الهادفة وغير الهادفة، من أسباب هذا النوع من النمو الدلالي.

الكلمات المفتاحية : علم الدلالة، المفردات، المعجم، النحو، علم الصرف

1. Introduction

The study of meaning that goes into the meanings of words, phrases, grammatical constructions, and sentences is known as language content, or semantics. According to Dolloghan and Campbell (1998), there are three subfields within semantics: grammatical, conceptual, and lexical semantics.

"Content" words, as opposed to "grammatical" words, are the focus of lexical semantics. Therefore, grammatical semantics investigates meaning-related topics that directly relate to syntax, while lexical semantics explores the meaning of words that fall into one of the four lexical word classes: nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, as well as the relationships between these classes (lexical relations). It covers the definitions of various sentence forms, grammatical operations, and function words and inflectional affixes. The main objective of conceptual semantics is to explain how people use linguistic utterances to represent their understanding of the world. It does this by examining the link between formal logical systems and natural language (Hurford & Heasley, 1983).

In the language development stage, a child's understanding of locations, actions, objects, qualities, and stages acquired through sensory-motor development forms the foundation for vocabulary learning. Before they turn five years old, the majority of kids can speak their mother tongue with competence. As a result, during these formative years, children learn to: (1) recognize and produce the speech sounds of the language they hear; and (2) develop a broad and varied vocabulary; and (3) learn the rules for assembling vocabulary into intricate grammatical sentences that follow proper morphology. According to Bloom, there are three fundamental components that underlie children's word learning: (a) an awareness of mental states, or social-cognitive understandings; (b) an awareness of the kinds of things that are labeled, or

cognitive biases; and (c) an awareness of syntactic cues, or syntax, that indicate the meaning of words (Hoff, 2005).

Word learning occurs months before children speak their first words, and comprehension vocabulary is acquired earlier and expands faster than production vocabulary. Children's understanding vocabulary at 16 months of age ranges between 92 and 321 words. First words are often spoken by children between the ages of 10 and 15 months. Unlike adults, who mentally represent words as symbols that refer to things, children's first words may always be situation- or function-specific understandings of word use. How early children begin to produce their first production vocabularies depends on a number of circumstances, including:

1) The environments in which children hear the words (words that are explicitly defined and taught as labels have a higher chance of being used referentially right away than words that the kid learns through context).

2) The amount of context-bound words in early children's lexicons may be reflected in the various ways that children approach the language learning task. How much a youngster takes risks; risk-takers may speak without fully comprehending what they are saying, whereas cautious kids don't use.

3) The degree to which kids take risks; cautious kids wait to use words until they are certain of what they mean, thus they are predicted to create fewer context-bound phrases, whereas risk-takers may speak without fully comprehending what they are saying.

4) Sociability: A social youngster is more inclined to talk while their comprehension of word meaning is still weak and limited to specific contexts. They also want a vocabulary of words to employ in specific situations and are more motivated to use whatever tools are available for engagement. A youngster who is

less gregarious, on the other hand, may wait longer to speak since they have less use for words that are purely social in nature. Eventually, though, their comprehension of word meaning will likely enable contextually flexible usage (Heugh, 2000).

Children begin adding words to their vocabulary as soon as the first ones arise.

2. Semantics

The study of language meaning is known as semantics. It is common knowledge that meanings that are comprehended by others are expressed through language. However, we may communicate what is in our brains through spoken and written language (as well as through gestures, action, etc.) and the meanings that we have within. Language's sound patterns are researched at the phonological level, whereas morphology and syntax study how words and sentences are put together. According to Palmer (1981), these are arranged in a way that allows us to transmit or receive messages that are meaningful.

Semantics is important because, in the early stages of language development, babies understand more words than they generate. They can demonstrate that they understand words as early as nine months of age, but they don't start creating words until around twelve months. When a youngster observes and discusses the world around him, it is appropriate to assess his or her word meaning comprehension (Heugh, 2000).

3. Word Meaning

Words are arguably the most evident means by which language expresses meaning. Thousands of vocabulary words in every language relate to ideas that range from the commonplace and concrete (bottle, ball) to the exotic and esoteric

(ponder, perplex). The difficulty of reference, or how symbolic elements like word shapes are connected to real-world things and our unique perceptions of them, is the main obstacle to learning word meanings. Philosophers have debated the essential character of reference extensively (see, for example, Refs 1–3), and there is still significant disagreement over its underlying mechanisms (Palmer, 1981). The fundamental aspect of reference—that is, the idea that objects in the world correlate with words in language—seems to be understood by children, and the speed at which they pick up new words—five-year-olds frequently have vocabularies exceeding 10,000 words—testifies to their ease in making the connection between meaning and word. But in the very early phases of language development, children pick up new words very slowly (it takes them about 18 months to learn the first 50 words in their production vocabulary), and it's possible that at first they don't fully understand that words are referential (Palmer, 1981).

Children need to build accurate connections between language forms and their meaning in addition to comprehending that references occur—a process known as the "mapping problem." Furthermore, kids need to be able to create these mappings quickly, considering how quickly they pick up words (Gules, 2005).

However, identifying accurate mappings presents unique learning challenges. Above all, the meaning of each given word is wildly underestimated by the world.

Quine invites us to picture a youngster seeing a rabbit rushing by and hearing the scenario named with the word gavagai in a well-known thought experiment. This word can, in theory, refer to a wide range of ideas, from well-known ones like running, rabbit, and dinner to less well-known ones like rabbit running and undetached rabbit parts. The young learner has to determine which of these numerous ideas the word corresponds to (Greig & Taylor, 1999).

Children can employ a technique known as cross-situational observation, which involves monitoring how a word is used in numerous contextual scenarios. Eventually, the youngster would be able to recognize the specific reference for each word due to the variance in the scenes. Quine's problem can undoubtedly be solved in part by this procedure, but for ethical and practical reasons, it cannot be the only option. Some words are practically never differentiated in the world at all, at least not on a fundamental level. For example, the terms "buy" and "sell" usually always occur simultaneously, meaning that whenever one witnesses a scene involving a purchase, they also typically involve a sale. The practical issue is just as significant. Youngsters pick up word meanings quite quickly, and they just can't wait to decide on a meaning in many circumstances.

Children must therefore have access to additional tools in addition to cross-situational observation so they can swiftly and accurately create referential mappings.

Scholars have discovered evidence in favor of numerous additional methods spanning language and cognition. For instance, when learning new words, youngsters take into account social and deliberate indicators like eye contact and a speaker's purposefulness because they are very sensitive to the social aspect of reference, which means that reference depends on human intents. Furthermore, children's preferred lists of potential word referents seem to be biased by cognitive processes (Granville et al., 1997).

When all else is equal, children expect that novel count nouns will relate to category sorts rather than persons, and to full items rather than pieces of objects. Children further use the syntactic context of a word to ascertain its general class of meaning.^{10, 11} We'll talk more about how kids pick up on the idea that argument forms have relevance in the next section. Children's exceptionally quick rate of word

acquisition is made possible by the combined use of these different tools, which do not conflict with one another (Granville, et al., 1997).

4. Tense and Aspect

Abstract temporal components like tense and aspect show when something happened and how it develops across time. Aspect indicates the speaker's perspective on the event: is it being seen as an open and ongoing (imperfective) or as a completed whole (perfective)? Tense locates an event in time (past, present, or future). The fact that the meanings in this domain are rather abstract is one factor contributing to the child's acquisition difficulties. Young children find it rather difficult to understand the key semantics involved in tense and aspect since they generally find it much easier to consider the here and now from their own perspective (Gopnik, 1990).

Although the specific presentation of these temporal aspects varies greatly among languages, all languages share the grammatical marking of at least one of these temporal elements. Some languages mark only aspect (e.g., Mandarin), while others mark only tense (e.g., Modern Hebrew); at times, languages mix up tense and aspect within morphemes (e.g., French imperfect form, which combines past tense and imperfective aspect in a single verb form), or they separate them into distinct morphemes (e.g., English progressive construction, which marks tense in the auxiliary verb and imperfective aspect in the—ing morpheme) (Gopnik, 1990).

Thus, just figuring out which morphemes in this domain are designating which dimensions of meaning is a crucial component of the acquisition challenge for the youngster.

The relationship between the meanings of tense and aspect, which fall into two natural groupings, adds another challenge to the acquisition process. The present

tense and imperfective aspect make up the first class; since the present instant is inherently open-ended and incomplete, it is readily portrayed using both present tense and imperfective aspect. The second class consists of perfective aspect and past tense. Since past tense is necessary to identify completion, a perfective aspect description will probably also need past tense. These two groups are also related to the boundedness lexical attribute (also referred to as telicity or lexical aspect). Because the event boundary aids in defining the perfective aspect's completion point, predicates that describe limited events—such as creation activities like building a house—naturally classify as past tense and perfective aspect. Predicates with an imperfective aspect and present tense characterize unbounded occurrences, such as activities and motion patterns like run, jump, and slide (Genesee et al., 2004).

5. Semantic Development

People's feelings and emotions, as well as community interaction at all levels of private or public institutions, cultural or non-culture, are expressed through language, which serves as a mirror of social and intellectual life (Alkhuli, 2006 b). The language is impacted by human contact because it is a byproduct of it and changes meaning utterances to reflect the evolution and its interpretation. After observing this semantic evolution in the Arabic language, Arab linguists noted it and included it in dictionaries, preserving it as a language legacy that reflected cross-cultural exchange.

6. Features of Semantic Development

6.1. Generalizing Specific Reference

This kind of generalization occurs when a word denoting a single person or a specific gender is applied to a large group of people or the entire racial group. For instance, the term "a group of people," /ʔalqawm/, was originally exclusive to men but later came to refer to both men and women (French & O'Brien, 2008).

6.2. Specifying General Reference

Many words that had wide, public meanings were restricted, narrowed, and went from being used generally to being used specifically. Take the Arabic word /ziyarah/, which means "a visit" in English, and the English word /ʔalḥaj/. Following that, Islam created a number of customs and traditions related to /ḥaj/, or "visiting the Sacred Mosque in Mecca at a certain time of the year" (French & O'Brien, 2008).

6.3. Semantic Transition

This type of semantic modification is predicated on a metaphorical relationship, which can be non-similar through metonymy or similar through metaphor, which uses the word in a non-original sense because of the relationship. Metaphorical or transferred meaning is the term used to describe this kind of unreal meaning. One instance of a transfer in meaning due to a similar relationship is when the word "house" (/bayt/) becomes "tent of the Bedouins" (/baytul ashaar/). Another instance of a meaning transfer brought about by a non-similar relationship is the word /ʔassamaʔ/, which is used to signify "the sky" but is now more commonly employed to indicate "rain" (Dolloghan & Campbell, 1998).

7. Reasons for Semantic Development

7.1. Need

When discussing modern technologies and discoveries, language users turn to the classic words they remember and associate with them. This indicates that the meaning has altered since they have been employing words from an outdated gloss with current meanings. Take /assayyarah/, for instance, which denotes "car." Nowadays, this word is utilized in a variety of ways, and the process is usually carried out by organizations, language schools, or gifted writers and poets. While some of

these terms gain acceptance and familiarity, others have no longer been used. Some words, like /ʔassayyarah/, which initially refers to the caravan in the desert, may be so frequently used that people fail to remember its original meaning (Dolloghan & Campbell, 1998).

7.2. Social and Cultural Reasons

The terms and their meanings take on new meanings as social life changes. The following images (Genesee et al., 2004) demonstrate this:

- a. The way that the development of the human mind led to the shift from semantic sensory to semantic abstract.
- b. A deal whereby a "group" of people from different cultures agree to use words with specific semantic features defined in accordance with the experiences, things, and concepts appropriate to their new culture. For example, some religious words, like /ʔašlalah/, which originally meant /duḡaʔ/ (prayer), have been changed to mean carrying out specific rituals five times a day in accordance with Islamic Sharia.
- c. The practice of employing archaic terms with their contemporary connotations, such as /safinah/, which refers to a "ship" that has not altered even if modern ships differ from historical ones, because it is believed that they convey the same meaning or function despite their altered forms.

7.3. Emotional and Psychological Feelings

particular terms are forbidden in particular languages due to their offensive meanings or explicit connotations. Naturally, this resulted in the implications of words changing, such as those associated with sex and dirt. It is observed that all languages lose part of the terms that express these ideas and acquire other ones that

are more esoteric or blinding in meaning and have fewer clear implications (Granville et al., 1997).

7.4. Linguistic Deviation

Language speakers occasionally use words differently than they intended to, which can be a matter of metaphor. This variation can also be the result of miscommunication, ambiguity, or uncertainty. Some people may interpret the word "library"—/ʔalmaktabah/—as a "bookshop" (Gopnik, 1990).

7.5. Metaphoric Transition

There are two categories for speech: real and metaphorical.

Real refers to "the word's original denotation," which was created by the language's first insertionist; metaphorically, it refers to "the other meaning that is not set in the origin of language." Words were classified as genuine or metaphorical by linguists. Certain people think that words are actual and true, while others recognize that they are all metaphors. Still others think that words can be both genuine and metaphorical at the same time. Since metaphor is a departure from the typical and common, yet truth is frequently used and well-known, Since metaphor is a departure from the typical and common, yet truth is frequently used and well-known, only the hearer/listener may evaluate its metaphoric meaning. The phrase "the student understood the lesson" is an example of this, and it is always used by school teachers: /haḍamaʔatʔalibuʔaddars/. This line is a deviation from its original form, which reads, "the student digested the food," and is used symbolically to indicate that the student understood the instruction (Gopnik, 1990).

7.6. Historical Reasons

The evolution of language from the past to the present results in alterations to word meanings, which can either widen or contract, or even produce a dislocation of any connection between the new and old meanings because connotations are constantly growing and changing. For instance, the word "heretic" (/zindiiq/) originally meant "the person who studied the book of Zoroaster" in Persian, but it was altered to denote the agnostic departure from the Islamic religion in the genre.

7.7. Innovation

Two groups of people are primarily responsible for innovation, which is the act of altering meaning. a. The talented poets and authors are compelled to use innovation in order to either strengthen or clarify their work's semantic meaning.

b. Language academies and scientific organizations, where the usage of a term to convey a certain notion or concept results in the creation of a new meaning.

7.8. Intentional and Non-Intentional Factors

Semantic change throughout time has been addressed by a number of ideas. The variables causing this kind of linguistic shift are divided into purposeful and non-intentional categories by academics like Anis (1989). Regarding the purposeful aspects, modifications occur when linguistic conventions or scientific institutions aim to substitute one term for another in order to signify a specific meaning. On the other hand, there are several ways to approach the non-intentional elements. Abdulwahab (1983), however, divides non-intentional elements into linguistic and extralinguistic categories. Regarding linguistic issues, it has been suggested that two of the most common causes of semantic change are misunderstanding and ambiguous context. As such, they advocate for the incorrect usage of the phrase. In some cases, when a word is heard for the first time, the hearer attempts, through context, to explain the entire sentence in an indirect manner. As an example, المدقع particularly in certain

contexts, like "الفقر المدقع" or "severe poverty," the word "severe" is employed. On the other hand, "Severe sickness" المرء المدقع, "البخل المدقع" severe miserliness is not appropriate.

Extralinguistic factors are typically linked to advancements in social, cultural, and political spheres. For example, this has some lewd terms related to sex and the human body, or terms about illnesses and death. For example, occasionally individuals pronounce the disease سرطان, instead of using the phrase ذلك المرض cancer. (Abdulwahab, 1983)

8. Semantic Development and The Processes of Word Formation

Semantic evolution, according to (1983), is the process by which a word's meaning evolves over extended or brief periods of time. Every language in use is still evolving—not just over centuries, but also every day. In actuality, the majority of individuals seldom perceive any changes in the language. It has been demonstrated that the most expansive sort of language change is the semantic one because the list of words is finite but the senses these words communicate are limitless. This phenomena is definitely based on a variety of linguistic and non-linguistic variables. It is defined by (1980) as the manner in which a certain term is traced throughout its historical development. Arabic language users define new terms for Arabic using these definable processes. These are the ones that will be discussed below:

8.1. Borrowing

Al-Samara'i (1987) generally believed that the Glorious Quran contained a great number of unusual words that even educated people did not know. In actuality, the Glorious Quran's language contains a large number of terms that were borrowed from various ancient languages, particularly Hebrew and Syriac. Specifically, none of

the linguists could translate words like الرقيم, تسنيم, السجين. They tended to interpret their meaning based on how the ayah, which contains these terms, was understood.

8.2. Production and Invention

Words are entirely created with the intention of entering the common language. For example, terms like "السحائل" from the poetry of "The Pauper," الصعاليك, are well-known (Al-Samara'i, 1987).

8.3. Synthetic Words

This procedure pertains to words that were not known before to a specific event. It differs from the last one, though, because the words generated here seem extremely uncommon and challenging to speak. As an example, الهرطنق designates a certain "arch" (Al-Samara'i, 1987).

8.4. Arabicization

This is a current method that describes how a foreign term's name might be turned into a common noun, verb, or adjective. As a result, the Arabic speaker incorporates a great deal of borrowed words into their regular speech. The word "theme," for example, has been observed to be used as ثيمة, which can be translated as موضوعة (Al-Samara'i, 1987).

8.5. Blending

It is the combination of a specific statement into a single word, which will represent the entire sentence in this meaning. But there isn't a precise guideline for doing so (Al-Samara'i, 1987).

in relation to (بسملة) (بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم) There is no god but God, so let us pray in the name of the Most Gracious and Merciful God for (هالله) (لا اله الا الله). (Al-Samara'i, 1987).

9. Types of Semantic Change in Arabic

In Arabic, there are various kinds of semantic change that will be covered in this discussion:

9.1. Generalization

A word's meaning broadens with time in generalization. For example, "البأس" power," "bravery," formerly denoted a "war" condition, but it now denotes bravery and strength (Al-Samara'i, 1987).

9.2. Specialization

A word's meaning becomes more constrained as one becomes more specialized. For example, the term "hajj" (الحج) was used to refer to journey to any location, but after Islam it came to refer specifically to the aim of visiting the Kaaba (Al-Samara'i, 1987).

9.3. Semantic Shift

It describes how a word's meaning shifts and deviates from its original meaning. One such shift is "صوت عذب," which is based on the resemblance of two characteristics. It is a pleasant voice. "عذب" is essentially used with "water" to convey its purity; hence, in the following term, it is utilized with "voice" to convey its beauty (Al-Samara'i, 1987).

Metaphor and hidden comparisons, such as "شتاء" 'winter' to allude to 'مطر' rain, can be used to create shifts. (Source: *ibid.*) Here are some additional instances. حائط originally meant the orchard; today it refers to that specific aspect of Islam's support and also denotes 'جدار' 'wall', 'صلاة' 'prayer', and the broader invocation.

In this regard, Al-Samara'i (1987) states that there are two subcategories of the semantic shift: amelioration and pejoration. For example, the word "cloth" was used to relate to food or objects that dropped to the ground, but it now refers to "a well-woven textile."

Nonetheless, this word's meaning has been enhanced or ameliorated. Ox is a good example of a word with a derogatory connotation because it was once used to allude to the god of bravery and strength. While it was once considered a source of pride for a gentleman to be called such, today any Arab can identify the derogatory connotation of this term (*ibid.*).

10. Conclusions

The evolution of the Arabic theory as a field of linguistics and semantics has been clarified by this paper. It discussed semantic evolution, semantic change, and the characteristics and causes of semantic development. It also distinguished between semantics and meaning. Semantic shift affects more than just words. Additionally, grammatical structures have meanings. Furthermore, semantic development has occurred when a word gains traction in usage and the speech community adopts a distinct meaning for it. This has validated the hypothesis of this study.

It has been observed that the more contemporary prototype-based view of meaning permits more flexibility and is, thus, a more convincing choice than the traditional, objectivist or truth-conditional semantic theory, which finds it difficult to account for the nuances of meaning change.

Conventional typologies provide terminology that can be used to characterize a wide range of changes. Unfortunately, because there are multiple conceivable pathways for semantic development, these classifications convey the appearance that semantic change is far from predicted.

Ultimately, it was demonstrated that a creative speaker is the catalyst for meaning shift, making it a synchronic occurrence that always begins there. From there, it might or might not reach more speakers. Since it takes time for this dissemination process to occur, meaning change also manifests diachronically. Since the dissemination of invention depends on social circumstances, sociolinguistic theory must be used to describe it, even though the innovation itself is a cognitive activity that needs a psychological explanation.

Semantic change used to be the unloved member of the language change family because of its seeming total unpredictable nature, but because to recent advancements, it is now highly valued.

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