

Zimmermann and Sternefeld (2013) *IntoSem*

Chapter 1: Literal Meaning –

Chapter 2: Lexical Semantics

Exercises

Exercise 1: Speaking of Metaphors,

In their book *Metaphors we live by* (1980), Mark Johnson and George Lakoff argue that language is replete with ‘dead’ metaphors we do not recognize.

For instance, words describing sounds are often rooted in another domain. Discuss the use of the adjectives in the underlined phrases with regard to the notion of **non-literal meaning** and to the notion of **polysemy**.

- (1) Butch: [in a low voice] Maybe there’s a way to make a profit in this.
- (2) When Russians speak English, they tend to speak with deep voices.
- (3) Suddenly Ursula said, to the company at large, in a bright voice:
“Rupert and I are going to be married tomorrow.”
- (4) When using a cell phone in the library, please speak in a soft voice so that others cannot be disturbed by your conversation.
- (5) Madagascar Rosewood produces guitars that have a crisp sound.
- (6) Some people still associate digital sound with a brittle sound.

Conversely, a sound-describing word like *loud* can be used to describe, say, a dress.

Discuss what **selectional restrictions** come with this adjective, taking the issue of polysemy and the issue of (non-)literal meaning into consideration.



Exercise 2: Homonymy, Polysemy, neither?

When one phoneme sequence in one language corresponds to two (or more) words in another language, we speak of **lexical divergence**.

For example, Norwegian *klokke* corresponds to German *Glocke* and *Uhr*, and in turn, *Uhr* corresponds to *clock* and *watch* in English.

Discuss (i) whether the Norwegian-German divergence is a case of ambiguity in the sense of **homonymy** or rather a case of **polysemy**, and further (ii) whether the German-English divergence is a case of polysemy or not.

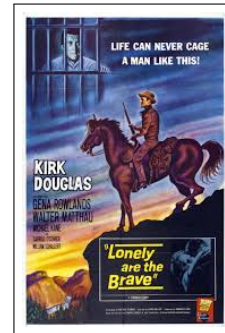
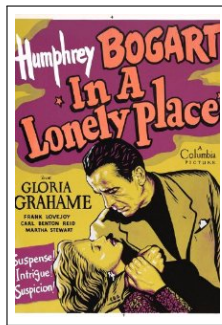
Exercise 3: Regular or Irregular Polysemy

Dictionary.com (<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/painting?s=t>) lists four senses of the noun *painting*. (7) and (8) could illustrate two of them.

- (7) The moment I saw the painting on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, I had chills.
- (8) The painting of the ceiling took him four years, from 1508 to 1512.

Discuss whether this would be a case of **irregular** or **regular polysemy**.

Then note that the adjective *lonely* has two senses that could be illustrated with these two film titles:



Again, discuss whether this is a case of irregular or regular polysemy.