A SURVEY OF SEMANTIC PRIMITIVE ON AUGMENTOR: MORE”

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Some words are innately understood but cannot be expressed in simpler terms. They represent words or phrases that are used through practice but cannot be defined correctly. Those words cannot even be explained by other terms. This is called semantic primitive. The use of the word ‘more’ still has many meaning. Hence, this paper discusses about the semantic primitive on augmentor ‘more’.

Key words: *semantic primitive, augmentor, more*

I. INTRODUCTION

'Semantic primitive' is a concept from semantics. It is understood as a term used to explain other terms or concepts, but which cannot itself be explained by other terms or cannot be expressed in simpler terms. For example, the word ‘touching’ is readily understood, but dictionary defines it only as "touch", "to make contact" and "contact", and there is no other information if neither of these words is understood. Implicitly it may be assumed that terms are primitive regardless of context or perspective, why an analysis of a complex term or concept to its primitives is a matter of logic rather than theoretical perspective.

The process of analyzing concepts in this way is called semantic factoring. In thesauri and in post-coordinative indexing, a certain degree of semantic factoring supposed to be applied.

“It used to be thought that any word could be described in terms of semantic primitives. For instance, M. Bierwisch, writing in 1970, said that semantic features do not differ from language to language, but are rather part of

the general human capacity for language, forming a universal inventory used in particular ways in individual languages.

According to Wierzbicka (1996) the system of semantic primitive has been radically expanded. Despite this expanded expansion the new primitive for example: “augmentor” “more” has not been proposed lightly. Here in this paper the concept of “augmentor” will briefly discussed. The end of this paper will close with a general discussion and a brief conclusion.

II. REVIEW RELATED LITERATURE

According to the theory, every word can be broken up into primitive kernels of meaning, called *semantemes* (also called *semantic features* or *semantic components*). Some sample definitions using semantemes:

Word	**Semantemes**
Father	male + parent
Mother	female + parent
Son	male + offspring
Daughter	female + offspring
Brother	male + sibling
Sister	female + sibling

The process of breaking words down into semantemes is known as *componential analysis* and has been most often used to analyze kinship terms across languages. The components are often given in more detail. For instance, kinship terms like those shown above might have three components: *sex,*

generation, *lineage*. *Sex* would be male or female; *generation* would be a number, with 0 = reference point's generation, -1 = previous generation, +1 = next generation; *lineage* would be either direct, *colineal* (as in siblings) or *abli55neal* (as in uncles and aunts), Henning (1995).

How should semantic primitives be explained? Different theories of knowledge have different views about the nature of semantics and semantic primitives. Empiricist philosophy is based on the view that semantic primitives are related to sensory elements such as the perception of color, mass or temperature. Rationalist philosophy, on the other side, is based on the view that there exist basic concepts or structures in our cognitive systems, in other words, that any concept may be reduced to certain primitive elements of a logical or cognitive nature. Non-foundational epistemologies such as historicism and pragmatism do not accept the idea of universal primitives, but regard the primitives as relative to different conceptual structures.

“While componential analysis is useful for some exercises, it is not a representation of how language works; no linguist has ever been able to develop a complete list of semantic primitives. Invariably, some of the primitives identified are actually molecules that can be broken down into new atoms. For instance, *parent*, *offspring* and *sibling* are all interrelated terms; the word *parent* can be defined as "a person who has offspring" and *sibling* can be defined as "a person with a parent who has other offspring". If semantic primitives were to exist, they would number in the thousands and would resemble a mathematical logic system more than the mind's loom of language.

Another criticism of semantic primitives comes from "theory": "Children seem to understand the meaning of the words they hear in terms of the theories

they have, they treat the words of natural language the way that scientists treat theoretical terms. Moreover, rather than reflecting some fixed set of semantic primitives, children's understanding of words changes in parallel with their changing theoretical understanding of the world. Finally, language itself seems to play an important role in theory-formation. It was also shown empirically that the words children hear influence the development of their theories (Gopnik, Choi, and Baumberger, 1996).

Since semantics, by definition, relates linguistic expressions to our understanding of the world, and it has argued that everyday understanding of the world is theory-like, this is not surprising. Moreover, in so far as semantics provides a foundation for syntax, theory formation also may play a role in syntactic development. People seem to use theory formation to develop an understanding of the meaning of words and sentences, and, as many people have argued before, that understanding might itself play an important role in developing more strictly syntactic abilities (Gopnik, 2003).

III. DISCUSSION

The element 'more' included in one of Leibniz's tentative list of indefinable, appears on the semantic primitives not for the first time. Wierzbicka (1989) tentatively included it in one of her list, only to replace it later with the element *much (many)* and proposed at the time and convincingly argued for by Goddard. To have both *much (many)* and more on the list seemed intolerably uneconomical, give the close semantic links between the two concepts, and so it seemed imperative to try to define 'much' via 'more' or the other way round.

Given the intuitive closeness of the two concepts it is certainly worth trying to reduce them to one. However, none of the attempts undertaken in the past were really convincing.

If we want to define ‘much’ via ‘more’ the obvious way to go is to refer to some expectations, along the following lines:

Much (many) = more than one could expect

But this approach, reasonable as it may seem at first, is not always convincing. For example, in the sentence

Many people came to see the dance performance, but not as many as expected.

The word *many* can hardly mean ‘more than expected’.

In the Moscow semantic tradition, the key word used in this and many other similar contexts was ‘norm’, (Zolkovskij in Wierzbicka ,1996).

Much (many) = more than the norm

But the word norm does not always make sense in sentences with much or many. For example: the sentence

Many people are afraid of lightning

The above sentence could hardly be paraphrased in terms of the phrase ‘more than the norm’. Of course it could be argued that what was meant was not the ordinary Russian word *norma* (norm) but an artificial word with a different meaning, but it is not clear what exactly such a statement would mean or how it could be verified.

On the other hand, if people try to define ‘more’ via ‘much or many’ they run into other difficulties. At first sight, the approach which appears to work with other comparatives seems to work here as well.

A is bigger than B =

If someone thinks of these two things at the same time, this person can think: ‘A is big, B is not big’. But, there are many situations when a paraphrase of this kind would not work for ‘more’. For example: if someone say that I want more to eat, a paraphrase along the lines proposed above does not seem to make a sense. Similarly, the sentences:

I want to say more

I want to see more

I want to know more about this

Can hardy be paraphrased in the ‘these two things’ format.

It is not a comparative ‘more’, the a converse of (‘less’), which composted here as a universal semantic primitives, but so to speak, an ‘augmentative’ one, illustrated in canonical sentences such as :

I want more

Give me more

I want to see/hear/know more

An analysis along these lines, which was proposed by Cliff Goddard (personal communication), is simpler and better than the following one which was proposed by Wierzbicka (1971)

A is bigger than B =

If people can say about B ‘it is big’

They can say the same about A

But Wierzbicka (1986) can not say:

‘If people can say this about A, they can say the same about B’

When the presents of lexical exponents of ‘more’ is cross-linguistically tested, it is probably worth including questions about ‘less’ as well. At this stage,

however, ‘less’ seems to be a much less likely candidate for a lexical universal rather than ‘more’. In an argumentative sense, many languages will be found which have a word for ‘more’ (in augmentative sense) but not for ‘less’.

The study of language acquisition strengthens this expectation (based on internal semantic ground), since first, children start using the word ‘more’, in contrast to ‘less’, very early, and second, those early uses of ‘more’ are augmentative, not relative. As for example, Johnston in Wierzbicka (1996) put it : “although we think of more as expressing judgments of relative quantity/extent, the child’s ‘more’ is at first non-quantitative and non-comparative”. As shown by Braine, a combination of ‘more’ and a word designating an object of desire (eg. More juice) is in fact among the most common early two-word utterances in child language, whereas ‘less’ does not appear on the list of the early two word pattern at all. Bowerman in Wierzbicka (1996) notes that her daughters initially use the word ‘more’ in connection with a restricted objects at first—food and drink and Bloom’s daughter produced ‘more’ as a request for an additional serving of food or drink, although within a few days she began to use these words across a range of more varied contexts.

IV. CONCLUSION

Reflecting on the apparent asymmetry between the concept ‘more’ and ‘less’ one is tempted to think that perhaps there is indeed some special psychological link between the concept ‘more’ and ‘want’. As it was known that human beings are perhaps more inclined to think, and to say:

I want to know more.

I want to say more.

I want (to have, to drink, to eat) more.

I want to see more.

than to use the corresponding sentences with ‘less’. It is also worth nothing that ‘very’ another quasi-quantitative concept has universal appropriate either. Finally, it can be said that augmentative element ‘more’ plays a crucial role in our understanding of numbers.

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