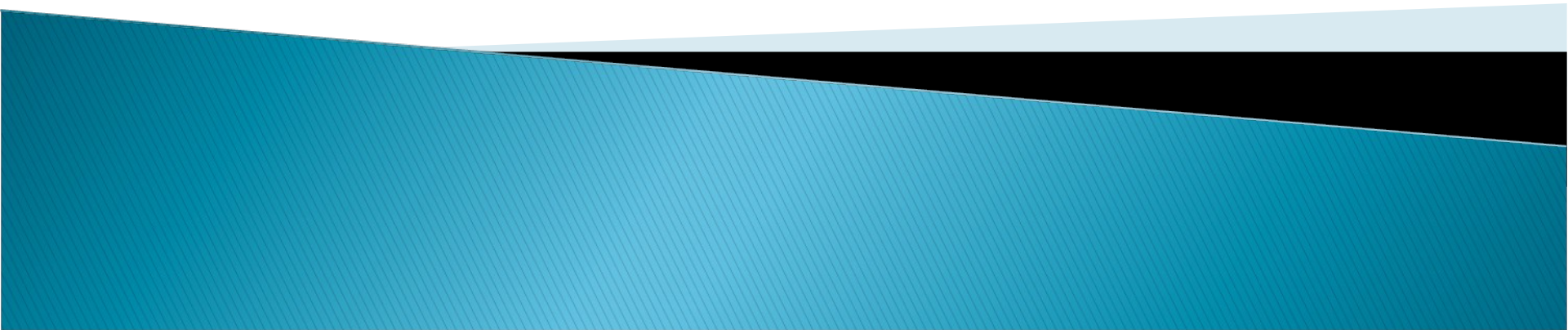


SENSE RELATIONS I

SYNONYMY & ANTONYMY



1.SYNONYMY

- ▶ refers to ‘sameness of m.’, s. relation in which different l. forms have the ?same? m.

- ▶ synonymy=symmetric hyponymy

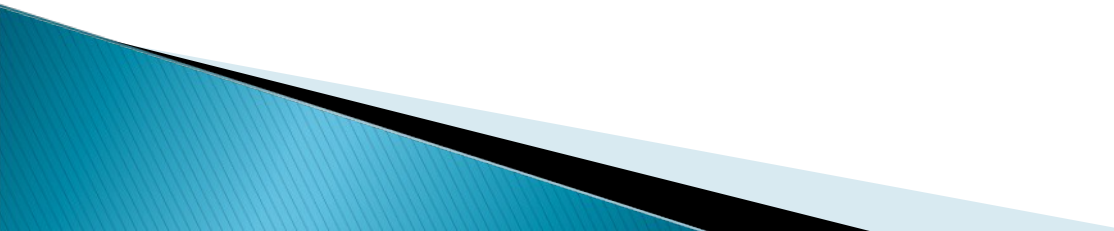
If X is a hyponym of Y and if Y is a hyponym of X, then X and Y are syn.

e.g.all children are kids–all kids are children

- ▶ English–rich in synonyms (2 vocabulary sources)

e.g.brotherly–fraternal; buy-purchase;world–universe

Absolute synonyms?

- ▶ Are there 'real' synonyms (words with **exactly** the same m.)?
 - ▶ 3 criteria for absolute synonymy:
 1. synonyms are absolute s. if and only if all their m. (senses) are identical
 2. synonyms are absolute s. if and only if they are synonymous in all contexts
 3. synonyms are absolute s. if and only if they are identical in all relevant dimensions of m.
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Partial synonymy

e.g. *radio–wireless* old–fashioned & dialectal,
not interchangeable in all contexts

e.g. *airport–airfield–airdrome*

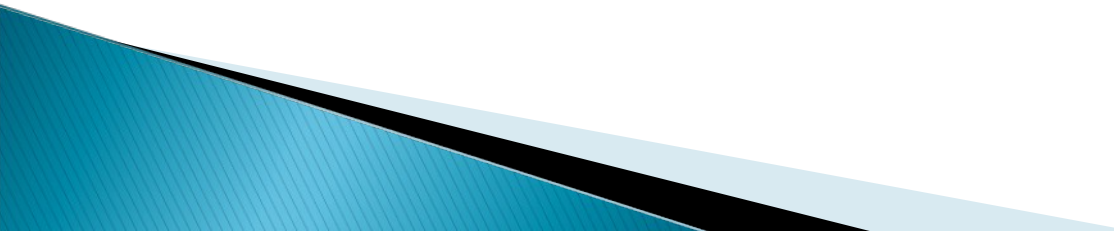
e.g. *pneumonia–inflammation of the lungs*

▶ collocational range–set of contexts in which
a certain term may be used

I live in a *big/large* house.

I will tell my *big/large* sister.

This is a *big/large* mistake.



5 ways in which s. can differ

1. dialectal difference: *fall-autumn*
2. stylistic difference: *gentleman-man-chap*;
pass away-die-kick the bucket-pop off
3. difference in emotive (evaluative)m.(often described in terms of difference in connotation):*politician-statesman*
4. collocational restriction: *rancid* only with *butter* and *bacon*
5. loose synonymy-closeness and overlap in m. (used by the dictionary-maker):
mature-adult, ripe, full

Testing synonymy

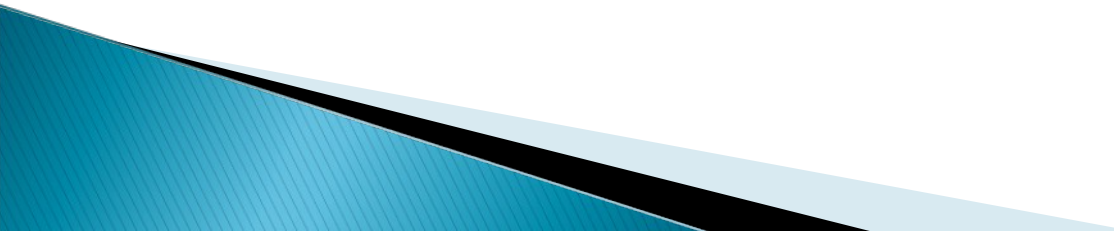
1. **substitution** (some say that absolute synonyms are interchangeable in **all** possible environments)– but some words are interchangeable only in **certain** environments (*deep* and *profound* with *sympathy*, but only *deep* with *water*)
 - ▶ Practically impossible to prove that two items are absolute synonyms by this process–that would mean checking their relations in all conceivable contexts.
1. **investigation of antonyms:** *superficial* is contrasted with both *deep* and *profound*, but *shallow* only with *deep*.

2 basic types of synonymy

1. context-dependent synonymy– two items are synonymous in a particular context, e.g. *dog* and *bitch* in *My ___ has just had pups*; *buy* and *get* in *I'll go to the shop and _____ some bread*. But, this is not an argument for synonymy, but rather hyponymy (one term is more specific than the other). The fact that information can be guessed from the context doesn't affect the meaning (*the book* and *the red book* could be contextual synonyms, but do not have the same meaning).
2. type of synonymy found between *bull* and *male adult bovine animal*. The test of interchangeability rules them out as synonyms, as it is not said *There is a male adult bovine animal in the field*. This is not a natural linguistic phenomenon, it is created by the lexicographer for the purposes of definition and paraphrase.

2. ANTONYMY

- ▶ refers to ‘oppositeness of m.’; **antonyms**– words opposite in m.
- ▶ regular and natural feature of l. (different status from that of synonymy)
- ▶ refers to paradigmatic opposition (Trier: every uttered word evokes its opposite in the mind of the speaker or listener during the articulation)
- ▶ no precise use of the term: *high–low; buy–sell; male–female; arrive–depart; left–right; front –back*

- ▶ **binary opposition** –most important principle shaping l. structure. Its most obvious manifestation in lexis is antonymy
 - ▶ Antonyms–exist universally, but even they reflect speaker's culture (*left–right; north–south–east–west* distinction)
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Basic types of oppositeness

1. GRADABLE A.-gradation includes comparison; when comparing 2 or more objects in terms of possessing a certain quality (adj) we question the possession of a quality in degrees

wide-narrow; old-young; big-small

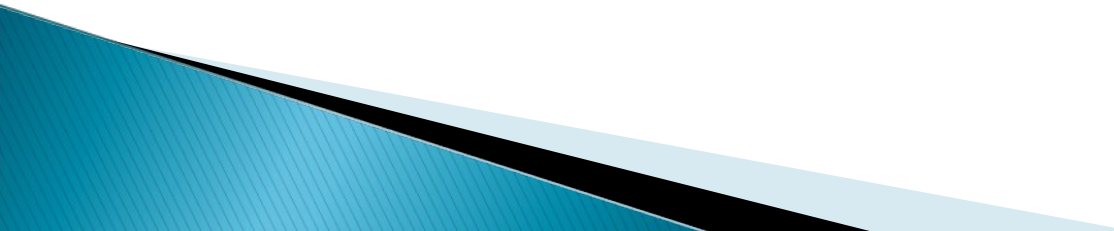
Sapir: use of a graded adj always includes gradation (explicitly or implicitly)

e.g. Our house is big (*ger than the normal house*)

comparative forms of adj (in *-er* or with *more*) are **explicitly graded** (preceeded linguistically by simpler forms, but preceed them logically)

Gradation against different norms: *wide* with *stripe on a dress* or *road*

paradox: *small* elephant bigger than a *big* mouse

- ▶ this is a small elephant; therefore it is a small animal # this is a red book; therefore it is a red object
 - ▶ Plato: co-existence of 2 opposite qualities in the same object (tallness and shortness)
e.g. X is taller than Y and shorter than Z
 - ▶ semi-explicit gradation (use of a comp. construction without mention of the standard)
e.g. Our house is bigger. (standard introduced earlier)
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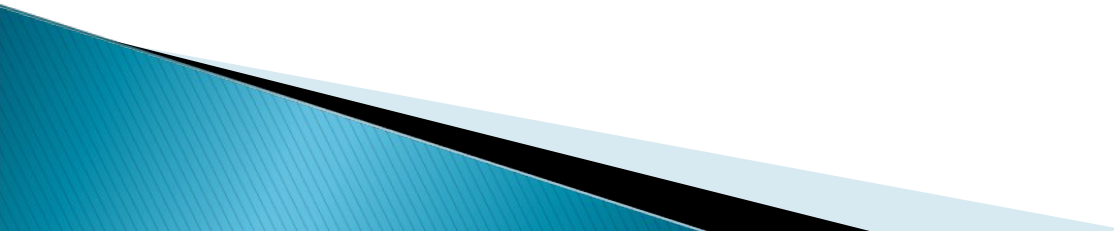
- ▶ chain of a. pairs: *boiling-hot-warm-cool-cold-freezing*
- ▶ marked and unmarked term –unmarked used to ask about or describe degree of quality

e.g. *How high is it? It is 3 feet high.* (no implication it is high)

How low is it? (implies an object is low)

**It is 3 feet low.*

e.g. *How good is it? Vs How bad is it?*



2. UNGRADABLE(COMPLEMENTARY;BINARY)ANTONYMS

members are in complementary distribution:

male-female; married-single; alive-dead

to say that sth. is not the one is to say it is the other

When ungraded a. are used as predicative e.:

1. predication of one element implies the predication of the negation of the other
2. predication of the negation of either implies the predication of the other

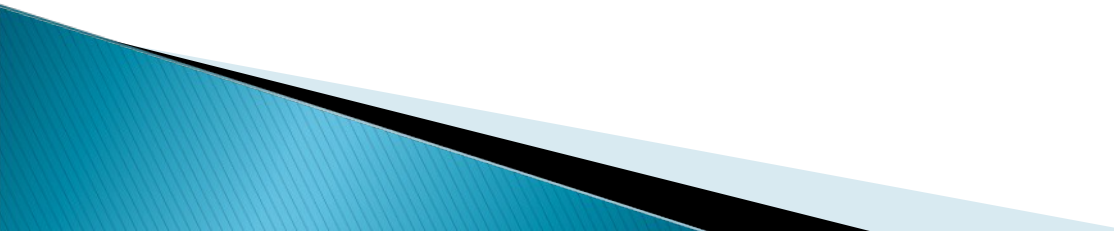
X is **female** implies X is **not male**

X is **not female** implies X is **male**



- ▶ When graded a. are used as predicative e.:
 1. predication of one element implies the predication of the negation of the other
- X is **hot** implies X is **not cold**
X is **cold** implies X is **not hot**
! X is **not hot** doesn't imply X is **cold**!

Morphological relatedness

- ▶ morph. unrelated a.: *good–bad; high–low; beautiful–ugly; big–small; old–young*
 - ▶ outnumbered by morph. related a.: *married–unmarried; friendly–unfriendly*
 - ▶ most morph. unrelated a. are graded and those morph. related are ungraded
 - ▶ *married–unmarried/single; friendly–unfriendly/hostile*
- 

- ▶ no logical necessity for l. to have morph. unrelated antonymy
- ▶ they amplify the distinction between two poles; Sapir: contrasting qualities are felt to be absolute
- ▶ Total lexicalization of polarized opposites necessarily includes morph. unrelatedness
- ▶ morph. relatedness—between grammaticalisation and lexicalisation: *good–bad vs friendly–unfriendly*
- ▶ Explicit gradation of ungraded a.: *Is X still alive then? Very much so.*

3. SYMMETRICALLY REVERSIBLE A.–those to which the relationship ‘more and less’ cannot be applied

e.g. *brilliant–stupid* (more brilliant doesn’t equal less stupid)

- ▶ Different from ungradable: if you’re not alive, you must be dead; but if you’re not brilliant, you don’t have to be stupid
- ▶ Different from gradable: more and less can’t be applied

- ▶ 4. RELATIONAL OPPOSITES (CONVERSES)–a different kind of 'opposite' with pairs of words which exhibit the reversal of a relationship between items.

e.g. *buy/sell, husband/wife* If John sells to Fred, Fred buys from John; if Bill is Mary's husband, Mary is Bill' s wife.

Verbs that form pairs in this way: *buy/sell, lend/borrow, rent/let, own/belong to, give/receive*

Nouns that form pairs in this way: *husband/wife, fiancé/fiancée, parent/child, debtor/creditor, teacher/pupil.*

A number of terms referring to spatial position:
above/below, in front of/behind, north of/south of.

In grammar, active and passive exhibit relational opposition (if Tom hits Harry, Harry is hit by Tom).

- ▶ Kinship terms–interesting in the discussion of relational opposites– many of them indicate not only the relationship, but the sex of the person concerned (*father* is the male parent, *daughter* is a female child). This blocks reversibility (to say that John is Sam's father doesn't entail that Sam is John's son. Sam could be his daughter). So we have pairs indicating the same relationship, but different sex:
father/mother, son/daughter, uncle/aunt, nephew/niece.

- ▶ Some terms are not strictly related as relational opposites, but indicate a **temporal relationship**, e.g. *ask/reply*; *offer/accept*. *Reply* and *accept* 'presuppose' that there has been an act of asking or giving; this is a natural result of the temporal relationship.

5. DIRECTIONAL, ORTOGONAL & ANTIPODAL OPPOSITION

- ▶ **Directional opposition:** *up-down; arrive-depart; come-go*
- ▶ 2 kinds of opposition within the set: *north-south-east-west*

Each is in **ortogonal** opposition with the other two: *north* with *east* and *west*; *east* with *south* and *north* and **antipodally** one with the other: *north* and *south*; *east* and *west*

6. NON-BINARY CONTRASTS

- ▶ **Multiple incompatibles**

- ▶ Relationship between {*Sunday, Monday, Tuesday..*}described as **incompatibility**

Trier: *excellent, good, average, fair, poor*
(student perf.)–set of incompatible and ungradable lexemes whose m. are determined by their position in the set

Military terms: *field marshal, general, corporal, private*

- ▶ **Cyclic sets:** seasons, days of the week
- ▶ no extreme points (as with *field marshal–private*); culturally determined

not antonymic, but **subantonymic** sets

- ▶ true prototypical antonyms: direct oppositions of the ungradable type
- ▶ graded sets=entering cultural spheres