

## Lexicon and meaning II

### Cognitive approaches to meaning

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## Cognitive approaches

- Relation between language and mind
- Based upon human perception and conceptualisation of the world
- Language as an instrument for organising, processing and conveying information
- Cognitive linguists: Lakoff, Langacker
- Recent approach (anthropological linguistics)

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## Cognitive approaches

- Language is embedded in the overall cognitive capacities of the human being
- Formal structure of language are not(!) autonomous but reflections of
  - General conceptual organisation
  - Perception
  - Processing mechanisms
  - Experiential and environmental influences
- Primacy of semantics in linguistic analysis

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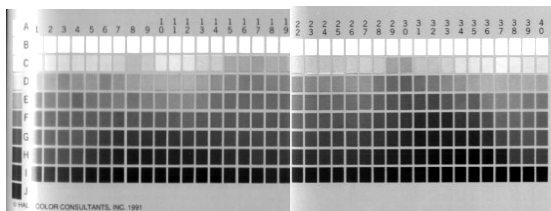
## Cognitive Semantics

- Humans, not words create meaning
  - Borders of meaning: blurred and fuzzy  
Bird [+animate, -human, +wings?, +lays eggs, +can fly?, feathers?]
- Concept of prototypes (for studying the internal structure of categories)
- Student's presentation

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## Berlin & Kay (1969)



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## Universalism vs. Relativism

- Relativism: colour perception determined by culturally specific language associations and perceptual learning
- Universalism: colour naming and categorisation = coherent within and across cultures

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## Example: Scheme (Scene)

- Scene: Commercial transaction
  - Involves buying and selling of goods
- Linguistic means:
  - Verbs: *buy, sell, pay...*
  - Nouns: *price, cost, money...*
  - Grammatical constructions: buyer identified by a *to-phrase* with the verb *sell* but identified as a subject with the verb *buy...*

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## Group work

- Birthday party
- Travelling

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