

LT5432: LEXICAL SEMANTICS

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Lexical Semantics

Subject Code

LT - Linguistics and Translation

Course Number

5432

Academic Unit

Linguistics and Translation (LT)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

P5, P6 - Postgraduate Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course is designed to equip students with adequate knowledge and analytical ability to work on the fascinating field of lexical semantics, the study of the interaction of syntactic behaviour and semantic properties. Lexical semantics can be

approached from different perspectives with different concerns and the class is meant to introduce the major approaches that have shed important light on the study of lexical knowledge and representations. Lectures and class discussions will focus on the major theoretical frameworks and their applications. Each theoretical framework will be illustrated with representative works that show the basic constructs of the theory and how the approach can be applied to the analysis of a linguistic issue. After the theories are introduced, a case study will be provided to show how it may relate to recent works on Chinese or English lexical semantic issues. The ultimate goal of this class is to enable students to acquire a broad range of background knowledge and analytical skills to carry out meaningful and front-line research in lexical semantics.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Exercise enthusiastic and proactive participation in class discussion and weekly reading assignment	20	x	x	
2	Practise team work, critical thinking, clear organization and oral skills in group assignment and presentation	25	x	x	x
3	Demonstrate a clear grasp of the analytical methods in participating in a lexical workshop in teasing out the semantic distinction in a near-synonym set	25		x	x
4	Practise the ability of applying a theoretical approach to the analysis of a set of data and writing up a preliminary proposal for a research question.	30		x	x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs		Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Weekly reading and inquiry	Students will practise critical reading, comprehend original text and form inquiries	1	1-3 hours/wk
2	Group production	Students will practise oral skills in organizing and presenting group discussion results	2	3-5 hours/sem

3	Lexical workshop	Students will exercise and enhance their analytical skills to solve lexical semantic problems	3	4-6 hours/sem
4	Discovery project	Students will apply what is learned in class to a hands-on project for analysing a set of data and write up a research proposal	4	10-20 hours/sem

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

ATs		CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Weekly reading/ inquiry	1	20	Students can use GenAI tools to gather information in weekly reading. However, GenAI tools are not allowed in quizzes.	Yes
2	Group-based creative production and presentation	2	25	Students can use GenAI tools to gather information, format references, and edit language. However, they should give proper acknowledgment to all the content from GenAI tools that they incorporated into the assignment and keep a journal of their GenAI conversations. They should not present texts generated or translated by GenAI tools as their own original work.	Yes

3	Lexical workshop: tell me the difference!	3	25	Students can use GenAI tools to format references and edit language. However, they should give proper acknowledgment to all the content from GenAI tools that they incorporated into the project and keep a journal of their GenAI conversations. They should not present texts generated or translated by GenAI tools as their own original work.	Yes
4	Final discovery project	4	30	Students can use GenAI tools to format references and edit language. However, they should give proper acknowledgment to all the content from GenAI tools that they incorporated into the project and keep a journal of their GenAI conversations. They should not present texts generated or translated by GenAI tools as their own original work.	Yes

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Weekly readings/inquiry (20%) (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

CriterionClear and critical understanding of the reading
and answering the inquiries

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent ability in demonstrating the said criteria

Good

(B+, B, B-) Good ability in demonstrating the said criteria

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Satisfactory ability in demonstrating the said criteria

Marginal

(D) Barely adequate evidence in demonstrating the said criteria

Failure

(F) Little or no evidence of the said ability

Assessment Task

Group production and presentation (25%) (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Clear, interesting, and well-organized oral presentation

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent ability in demonstrating the said criteria

Good

(B+, B, B-) Good ability in demonstrating the said criteria

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Satisfactory ability in demonstrating the said criteria

Marginal

(D) Barely adequate evidence in demonstrating the said criteria

Failure

(F) Little or no evidence in demonstrating the said criteria

Assessment Task

Lexical workshop (25%) (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Clear, interesting and well-delivered arguments for the near-synonym analysis

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent ability in demonstrative the said criteria

Good

(B+, B, B-) Good ability in demonstrating the said criteria

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Satisfactory ability in demonstrating the said criteria

Marginal

(D) Barely adequate evidence in demonstrating the said criteria

Failure

(F) Little or no evidence in demonstrating the said criteria

Assessment Task

Discovery Project (30%) (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Clear, interesting and well-argued proposal for a research question based on a set of data

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent ability in demonstrating the said criteria

Good

(B+, B, B-) Good ability in demonstrating the said criteria

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Satisfactory ability in demonstrating the said criteria

Marginal

(D) Barely adequate evidence in demonstrating the said criteria

Failure

(F) Little or no evidence in demonstrating the said criteria

Assessment Task

Weekly readings/inquiry (20%) (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Clear and critical understanding of the reading and answering the inquiries

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent ability in demonstrating the said criteria

Good

(B+, B) Good ability in demonstrating the said criteria

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Barely adequate evidence in demonstrating the said criteria

Failure

(F) Little or no evidence in demonstrating the said criteria

Assessment Task

Group production and presentation (25%) (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Clear, interesting, and well-organized oral presentation

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent ability in demonstrating the said criteria

Good

(B+, B) Good ability in demonstrating the said criteria

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Barely adequate evidence in demonstrating the said criteria

Failure

(F) Little or no evidence in demonstrating the said criteria

Assessment Task

Lexical workshop (25%) (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Clear, interesting and well-delivered arguments for the near-synonym analysis

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent ability in demonstrative the said criteria

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(B+, B) Good ability in demonstrating the said criteria

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(B-, C+, C) Barely adequate evidence in demonstrating the said criteria

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Assessment Task

Discovery Project (30%) (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Clear, interesting and well-argued proposal for a research question based on a set of data

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(A+, A, A-) Excellent ability in demonstrating the said criteria

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Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Barely adequate evidence in demonstrating the said criteria

Failure

(F) Little or no evidence in demonstrating the said criteria

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Topics to be covered in class discussion include:

- 1) Syntax-semantics interface: Argument structure (B. Levin)
- 2) Prototype Theory (Dowty)
- 3) Construction Grammar (A. Goldberg)
- 4) Frame Semantics (C. Fillmore)
- 5) Construction Grammar (A. Goldberg)
- 6) Cognitive grammar and configuration (Langacker)
- 7) Conceptualization and lexicalization (L. Talmy)
- 8) Cognitive Semantics and metaphorical extension (G. Lakoff)
- 9) Generative Lexicon (J. Pustejovsky)
- 10) Corpus-based approach
- 11) Grammaticalization and Semantic change (E. Traugott and J. Bybee)

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	1. Tuggy, D. 1993. Ambiguity, polysemy, and vagueness. <i>Cognitive Linguistics</i> 4(3), 273-290.
2	2. Levin, B. 1993. English verb classes and alternations: a preliminary investigation. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press.
3	3. Levin, B. and M. Rappaport Hovav (2005). From lexical semantics to argument realization. in <i>Argument Realization</i> . Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
4	4. Dowty, D. 1991. Thematic proto-roles and argument selection. <i>Language</i> 547-619.
5	5. Goldberg, A. E., & Jackendoff, R. 2004. The English resultative as a family of constructions. <i>Language</i> , 532-568.
6	6. Jackendoff, R. 1997. Twistin' the Night away. <i>Language</i> 73 III:534-559.
7	7. Fillmore, Charles J. & Beryl T. Atkins. 1992. Toward a frame-based lexicon: the semantics of RISK and its neighbors. In Adrienne Lehrer and Eva Feder Kittay (eds.) <i>Frames, Fields and Contrasts</i> . 75-102. Hillsdale, NJ. Erlbaum.
8	8. Liu, Meichun. 2005. Lexical information and beyond: Meaning coercion and constructional inference of the Mandarin verb GAN. <i>Journal of Chinese Linguistics</i> 33,2: 310-332
9	9. Talmy, L. 1991. Path to realization: A typology of event conflation. In <i>Proceedings of the annual meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society, General Session and Parasession on The Grammar of Event Structure</i> , 480-519.
10	10. Liu, Meichun. 1997. Conceptual Basis and Categorial Structure: A Study of Mandarin V-R Compounds as a Radial Category. <i>Chinese Languages and Linguistics</i> 4: 462-473. Taipei: Academia Sinica.
11	11. Lakoff, G. 1990. <i>Women, fire, and dangerous things: What categories reveal about the mind</i> . Chicago: University of Chicago press.
12	12. Bybee, J. L., & Pagliuca, W. und Revere D. Perkins. 1991. Back to the Future. <i>Approaches to Grammaticalization II: Focus on Types of Grammatical Markers</i> , eds by E. Traugot and B. Heine. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
13	13. Traugott, E. C., & König, E. 1991. The semantics-pragmatics of grammaticalization revisited. <i>Approaches to grammaticalization</i> , 1, 189-218.
14	14. Pustejovsky, J. 1995. The nature of lexical knowledge. <i>The Generative Lexicon</i> , 5-26. London: MIT Press.

Additional Readings

Title	
1	韓少功. 1997. 醒, 覺. 馬橋詞典: 27-30, 58-62. 台北: 時報出版.
2	蔡美智, 黃居仁, & 陳克健. (1996). 由近義詞辨義標準看語意語法之互動. <i>Language and Linguistics (中國境內語言記語言學)</i> . Vol. 5 語言中的互動, 439-459. Taipei: Academia Sinica Press.

3	Levin, B. & M.R. Hovav 1996b. Lexical semantics and syntactic structure. <i>The Handbook of Contemporary Semantic Theory</i> , ed. by S. Lappin, 487-507.
4	15. Pustejovsky, J. 1995. <i>The Generative Lexicon</i> . Ch. 4, MIT Press.
5	Biber, D., Conrad, S., & Reppen, R. 1998. <i>Corpus linguistics: Investigating language structure and use</i> . Cambridge University Press.
6	Talmy, L. 2003. Lexicalization pattern. In <i>Toward a Cognitive Semantics</i> , Vol. II., chapter 1. Cambridge, MA: MIT press.
7	Goldberg, A.E. 1995. <i>Constructions: A Construction Grammar Approach to Argument Structure</i> . Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press.
8	Goldberg, A. E. 1996. Jackendoff and construction-based grammar. <i>Cognitive Linguistics</i> 7(1), 3-20.
9	Nemoto, N. 1998. On the polysemy of ditransitive save: the role of frame semantics in construction grammar. <i>English linguistics</i> , 15, 219-242.
10	Petruck, M. R. 1996. Frame semantics. <i>Handbook of pragmatics</i> , 1-13.
11	Jackendoff, R. 2007. <i>Language, consciousness, culture: Essays on mental structure</i> . MIT Press.
12	Langacker, R. W. 1987. <i>Foundations of cognitive grammar: Theoretical prerequisites</i> (Vol. 1). Stanford university press.
13	Hongyin, T. 2003. Toward an emergent view of lexical semantics. <i>Language and Linguistics</i> 4.4: 837-856. Taipei: Academic Sinica.
14	Liu, Meichun., & Chiang, Tingyin. 2008. The construction of Mandarin VerbNet: A frame-based study of statement verbs. <i>Language and Linguistics</i> , 9.2: 239-270. Taipei: Academic Sinica.
15	Liu, Meichun. 2003. From Collocation to Event Information: The Case of Mandarin Verbs of Discussion. <i>Language and Linguistics</i> 4.3:563-585. Taipei: Academic Sinica.