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SEMANTIC RELATIONS OF *SUCCESS*-RELATED WORDS: MEANING COMPONENT ANALYSIS

Athriyana S. Pattiwael
Universitas Kristen Krida Wacana, Jakarta
Corresponding email: athriyana.pattiwael@ukrida.ac.id

Abstract

One of the contributions of the study in Semantics area is conducting studies that focus on the meaning relation among lexical choices. The result contributes in providing information related to the appropriate choice of lexical in its context. This is also the interest and focus of this paper. Basing itself on Nida's framework (1975), this paper covers the discussion and the analysis of the meaning relations among *success*-related words namely *accomplishment, achievement, attainment, victory, triumph* and *fulfillment*.

Keywords: Semantic Relations, Meaning Component, Componential Analysis

1. INTRODUCTION

When someone achieves something important by his/her own effort, what word we are going to use to describe such situation? How about if another someone achieve this important thing in a contest? What word now are we going to use? What about if the achievement is notable for its exceptional quality or for being a great achievement? Are we going to use the word *success* to describe all these facts? Do we have different lexical choices for each of these situations, instead of just using the general word such as *success*?

The aforementioned paragraph demonstrates one of among some interesting semantic facts. There is another fact that a single word may have a number of quite different senses. Its occurrence in different contexts will contribute to its diverse meaning. This single word seems also to have a central meaning from which a number of other meaning are derived. Some kinds of connection between each of these meaning and its central one will be somehow recognized or imagined. Some other words may have same sounds but have completely unrelated meanings. Language users may find this inefficient. They might prefer to having sets in which each referent would refer to only one specific. Yet, as Nida (1975) said, the one-to-one relation between form and referent would be impractical. Conducting studies which focus on the meaning relation among lexical choice, then is significant. The result might suggest the appropriate choice of lexical in its contexts.

2. REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE
2.1. Meaning & Meaning Relations

Meanings and their forms relate in several interesting ways. Nida (1975) points out that a single word may have various different senses. Take for example the word *hand*. When it occurs in several kinds of contexts, then diverse meanings will be contributed, e.g. *he raised his hands; we gave him a hand, a new hired hand* and *the hands of a clock*. Words such as chair also display this relationship. The examples such as *he sat in a chair, he has the chair of philosophy at the university, he will chair the meeting, he plays first chair violin, he was condemned to the chair* also displays that the word *chair* has a number of different meanings.

Though words may have several meanings, yet they seem to have a central meaning from which a number of other meaning are derived. Nida (1975) claims that we can usually recognize or imagine the connection between each of these meanings and the apparent central meaning. The set of this example *the hat on his head, the head of the line, the head of the firm, a head of cabbage* and *the*

revolt came to a head shows the various kind of meaning of the word *head*, yet, they all connect to one single meaning that is the top part of something/someone.

There are a number of forms whose same sounds but have completely unrelated meanings. The English word *to duck* may mean (1) lowering your head or body very quickly, especially to avoid being seen or hit, (2) moving somewhere very quickly, especially to avoid being seen or to get away from someone, (3) avoiding something, especially a difficult or unpleasant duty, (4) pushing someone under water for a short time as a joke and (5) avoiding doing something that you have to do or have promised to do. Similarly, *bank* may refer to (1) a business that keeps and lends money and provides other financial services, (2) land along the side of a river or lake, (3) a large mass of clouds, mist, (4) a large sloping mass of earth, sand, snow, (4) a large number of machines, television screens etc arranged close together in a row, and (5) a slope made at a bend in a road or racetrack to make it safer for cars to go around.

While the same words may have quite different meanings, different words may have very closely related meanings. In fact, these meanings of different words are generally much more closely related than are the different meanings of a single word. For example, the meaning of *run* in the sense of physical movement by an animate by an animate being is more closely related to the corresponding meanings of *walk, hop, skip, crawl,* and *jump* than it is to most of the other meanings of run, e.g. *he runs the office, a run on the bank, a run in her stockings, he lives up the run* (Nida, 1975).

Another aspect of meaning – form relationship which complicates the study of meaning is that even a single meaning of a word may include an enormous range of referents, that is the objects to which such a form refer (Nida, 1975). This fact of numerous referents is true almost of all terms or words which refer to entities or events, even for seemingly specific and practical words. The word *chair* as a designation of a piece of furniture may refer to a wide range of objects of different sizes and shapes, made of quite different materials, and employed in very different situations. Further, he argues that words that specify abstract often wider ranges. Compare, for example, the word *good* in *good meal, good lecture, good medicine, good day, good feeling,* and good time. Love (1983) and Leech (1981) identify similar meaning relations to Nida (1975). Meanings are related on both word and sentence level in the relation of synonymy, paraphrase, entailment, presuppositions, and inconsistency.

These relations discussed above may suggest that the relations between the different meanings of certain terms are unsystematic and unorganized for there is a reality of arbitrariness. Nida (1975) stated that there are many systematic relations between various types of meanings. For example, there is frequently a close relation between an instrument and the activity associated with it, e.g. *hammer/to hammer, motor/to motor, saw/to saw.* Similarly, place may be related to activity, e.g. *bank/to bank money, tree/to tree a raccoon*; and an entity may be related to an activity typical of the entity, e.g. *a hawk/ the bird is hawking insects, a dog/ to dog his steps, wolf/to wolf down his food.*

Meanings can also be understood by identifying their types. Finegan (2004) categorizes meanings into three types, i.e. linguistic, social, and affective meaning. Linguistic meaning encompasses both sense and reference. He argues that one way of defining meaning is to say that the meaning of a word or sentence is the actual person, object, abstract notion, event, or state to which the word or sentence makes reference. Further, he explains that referential meaning may be the easiest kind to recognize, but it is not sufficient to explain how some expressions mean what they mean for one thing, not all

expressions have referents. Social meaning is what we rely on when we identify certain social characteristics of speakers and situations from the character of the language used. Affective meaning is the emotional connotation that is attached to words and utterances.

Nida (1975) also discusses the various types of meaning in terms of two intersecting sets of factors: cognitive vs emotive and extra-linguistic vs intralinguistic as diagrammatically represented in this figure below:

	Cognitive	*Emotive*
Extra-linguistic	Referential	Emotive response to extra-linguistic factors
Intra-linguistic	Grammatical	Emotive response to intra-linguistic factors

Diagram 2.1 Types of Meaning (Nida 1975)

Referential meaning is based on the relation between lexical unit and the referent, but the referent is not the meaning. The meaning consist of necessary and sufficient conceptual features which make it possible for the speaker to separate the referential potentiality of any one lexical unit from that of any other unit which might tend to occupy part of the same semantic domain. Goodenough (1956) provides a helpful example in grasping this idea; what do I have to know about A and B in order to say that A is B's cousin? Clearly, people have certain criteria in mind by which they make the judgment that A is or is not B's cousin. What the expression *his cousin* signifies is the particular set of criteria by which this judgment is made. Grammatical meanings involve the relations between

symbols and between sets of symbols, including both primary and secondary configurations.

2.2. Framework of Analysis; Componential Analysis
2.2.1 Components of Meaning

In relation to describing meaning component, Leech (1981) explicates that the analysis of word-meanings involves a process of breaking down the sense of a word into its minimal components. Leech illustrates by providing the example of breaking down meaning components of the words man, woman, boy, girl and other related words in English. He presents the result by representing the relation in a two-dimensional field diagram as seen in Diagram 2.1

Diagram 2.2 Two-dimensional Field Diagram of Meaning Component Analysis
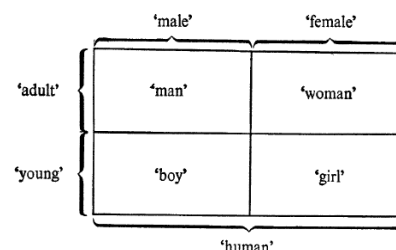
The diagram displays that these words are related in two dimensions of meaning of 'sex' and of 'adulthood. They all belong to the semantic field 'the human race'.

However, the analysis of referential meaning requires the identification of the 'necessary and sufficient' features that distinguish the meaning of any one form

from every other form. Nida (1975) emphasizes that contrast must be found, for there is no meaning apart from significant differences. Words have meaning only in terms of systematic contrast with other words that share certain features with them but contrast with them in respect to other features. Palmer (1976)

highlights this same issue by stating that the total meaning of a word can be seen in terms of a number of distinct elements or components of meaning. Components have a distinguishing function and serve to distinguish the meaning of a lexeme from that of semantically related lexemes, or more accurately they serve to distinguish among the meanings of lexemes in the same semantic domain.

Further, components can be classified into two main types i.e. common component and diagnostic or distinctive component (Jackson, 1996, Nida 1975). Common component is the central component which is shared by all the lexemes in the same semantic domain or lexical field. Whereas, diagnostic or distinctive components serve to distinguish the meaning from others from the same domain. Working with the kinship is the best example to illustrate this classification. We start the work by contrasting the central meaning of *father – the name of one's biological progenitor –* with related meanings of other forms which occur in the same semantic domain (they share certain aspect of meaning as kinship terms, for example father, mother, son, daughter, grandfather, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew). The relationship among these words can be diagrammatically displyed in the table below.

Table 2.1 Relationship Among Words

	Sex	**Different generation**	**Direct line of descent**
Father	Male		Direct
Mother	Female		
Son	male	- 1 generation	
Grandfather	male	+1 generation	
uncle	male		One lateral step removed

The table suggests that the meaning of *father* consists of three diagnostic components: *male sex, one ascending generation above ego, direct line of descent.* This meaning can only be known by means of contrast with the meanings of words that share certain components with *father* but diverge from the meaning of father in respect to other components.

Furthermore, Nida (1975) distinguishes the differences in the role of diagnostic components. The differences can be defined as implicational, core, and inferential. Implicational component are those implied by a particular meaning, though they do not form an essential part of the core meaning. On the contrary, implicational components remain associated with a meaning, even when other components are negativized by the context. The word *repent* has three diagnostic components: (1) previous wrong behavior, (2) contrition for what has been done, and (3) change of behavior, and the first component is implicational. Whether in a positive or negative context, e.g. he repented of what he did or he didn't repent of what he did, the implication is that the person in question did something wrong. The negation affects the core components which specify the central aspects of the event, but does not modify the implicational component. The inferential components of meanings are

those which may be inferred from the use of an expression, but which are not regarded as obligatory, core elements. In the expression *the policeman shot the thief*, 'the thief was killed' is the inference, and without further contextual condition assumed to be the case. However, it is possible to deny this inference, e.g. 'the policeman shot the thief but didn't kill him'. At the same time an inferential component may be explicitly stated, e.g. *the policeman shot the thief to death* or *the policeman shot and killed the thief.*

2.2.2 Componential Analysis;

Aitchison (2003) explicates that the concept of meaning of a word is composed of semantic components is the foundation of componential analysis. The essential features that form the meaning are the elementary units on semantic level. These smallest indivisible units of lexis or minimal components are able to be identified by conducting the componential analysis. Yet, the meaning of these lexis or minimal component should be semantically related or in the same semantic domain.

Componential analysis works as a process of breaking down the sense of a word into its minimal distinctive features; that is, into components which contrast with other components. It refers to the description of the meaning of words through structured sets of semantic features, which are given as "present", "absent" or "indifferent with reference to feature". To describe the presence and absence of a feature binary rules are used. Symbol (+) indicates that the feature is present, while symbol (-) means that the feature is absent (Saeed, 2009: 260).

2.2.3 Procedural Steps in the Componential Analysis of Meaning

(Nida, 1975) stresses the three basic steps in conducting a componential analysis, namely (1) determining the common features and line up all the apparently relevant, (2) differences in form and possibly related functions and studying the relations of the features to one another, in order to determine the redundancies and dependencies, (3) formulating a set of diagnostic features and testing such a set for adequacy. These three basic steps, then, are developed into six procedural steps described below.

Step 1	Conducting a tentative selection of meanings which appear to be closely related, in the sense that they constitute a relatively well-defined semantic domain by virtue of sharing a number of common components.
Step 2	Listing all the specific kinds of referents for each of the meanings belonging to the domain in question.
Step 3	Determining those components which may be true of the meanings of one or more terms, but not of all the terms in question.
Step 4	Determining the diagnostic components applicable to each meaning, so that the meaning of the analyzed word may be indicted as possessing the components.
Step 5	Cross-checking with the data obtained by the first procedure. On the basis of the diagnostic features, one should be able to apply the correct terms to the referents known to possess such features.
Step 6	Describing the diagnostic features systematically. It may be done simply by listing the diagnostic features for each meaning (or term) or the arrangement of such data in the form of a tree diagram or matrix.

3. METHODOLOGY

The analysis was conducted by taking the abstract noun *success* as the focus. Some words that share the common central meaning with this word or in other words, belong to the same semantic domain, then, were identified. Six words were identified namely *accomplishment, achievement, attainment, victory, triumph* and **fulfillme*nt***. These words then were analyzed further by using the componential analysis described above. Three main dictionaries – Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2002), Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary (2000) and Merriam Webster Online Dictionary (2008)—were also used in supporting the analysis.

4. FINDING AND ANALYSIS
4.1 Contrastive Analysis of the *success*-related words

Based on the framework of analysis provided by Nida (1975), the elemental step in contrastive analysis is conducted. The semantic domain of the units as the basis of the contrast analysis is determined. The units (words) should share the greatest number of common components and differ from one another in the smallest number of diagnostic components. Besides, these units should be on the same hierarchical level since on this basis they are likely to share the greatest of common components.

Some units that likely share the greatest number of common components with the word *success* then are determined. Further, these units are analyzed in order to find the degree of commonality among them as the basis of diagnostic analysis. Some of the alike words of the word *success* namely *accomplishment, achievement, attainment, victory, triumph and fulfillment* are found. The description of the result of the unit features analysis is presented in the table below.

Table 4.1. The Analysis of Central Meaning and Semantic Domain

No.	Word	Meaning features
1.	Accomplishment	• The act of finishing or achieving something • Standard of achievement • Requires ability, skill, hard work
2.	Achievement	• The indication of result • Gained by effort
3.	Attainment	• The pre-determined goals • Reaching particular level
4.	Victory	• Achieving result • Winning battle, game, race • Difficult situation or an obstacles
5.	Triumph	• The value of importance • Difficult struggle
6.	Fulfillment	• Doing something necessary • Bringing about or achieving something • Carrying out request or command • Meeting a standard, requirement, expectation, promise or desire

The common component shared by all the units above is they closely relate to the action of doing, completing, achieving, bringing about something, and thus the semantic domain of all these units. Since each of these words refers to a different context/ thing, none of them will cause indeterminacy.

Further, the diagnostic components are drawn in order to show contrast among these units. The table above suggests some of diagnostic components that later will serve as the contrastive features namely skill requirement; effort and ability requirement; predetermined goal, plan, and schedule; the involvement of standard of achievement; relating to race or battle; relating to competition and championship; the expectation of result; the number of people involve; relating with or involving in academic and/or art sphere; relating with or involving in politics; relating with

or involving in religious; the involvement of the position.

These diagnostic components are presented in Table. 2. The table suggests that some diagnostic features are shared by some words, whereas some others do not. For example, the word *accomplishment* shares the same feature of requiring skill and effort with the word *victory* and *triumph*. But, it has different feature of being related with or being involved in academic sphere from them. The word *attainment* has some common features with the word achievement in terms of being related with or being involved in the academic area, yet share different features of requirement of standard of achievement. In terms of the number of person involved, these two words also shared different feature in which *achievement* can only be by both group and individual, but *attainment* will only be by individual.

Table 4.2. The Contrastive Analysis of the Meaning Features

Feature						
Position	+	-	-	-	-	-
Religious	-	-	-	-	-	+
Politics	-	-	-	+	+	-
Sport	+	+	-	-	-	-
Academic/Art	+	+	+	-	-	-
Who Involved Individual/Group	+	+	-	+	+	+
Who Involved Individual/Group	+	+	+	-	+	+
Result/Something Good, desired, expected	+	+	+	+	+	+
Championship/Competition	-	-	-	+	+	-

Success	Skill, Ability	Effort	Pre-determined Goal, Plan, schedule	Standard of Achievement	Battle, Race
Accomplishment	+	+	+	+	-
Achievement	-	+	+	-	-
Attainment	-	+	+	+	-
Victory	+	+	-	-	+
Triumph	+	+	-	-	-
Fulfillment	-	+	-	+	-

4.2 Contextual Analysis of the su*ccess*-related words

The fact that a central meaning of a word might be derived from a number of other meanings that come from the context where and to which this word is related implies a significance to conduct the contextual analysis to support the result of contrastive analysis. The result of this analysis may inform the contextual meanings of these particular lexical units.

Table 4.3. The Contextual Analysis

Contexts	Meaning	Feature
1. I'm very proud of my **achievements** as program director. 2. They read about his **achievements** in the press, and were filled with pride. 3. We need to raise the level of academic **achievement** in public schools. 4. Winning three gold medals is a remarkable **achievement**.	• Something important that is succeed by using one's own effort • The level of successfulness in completing particular thing	• Succeed in doing something • Using one's own effort • Regarding one's position/ function
1. The Society is giving a dinner for top businesswomen, to reward and recognize their **accomplishments**. 2. The team's undefeated run this year is an outstanding **accomplishment**.	• Achieving or fulfilling something successful or impressive, remarkable • Requiring lot of effort and hard work	• Remarkable, impressive and successful fulfillment or achievement • Requiring a lot of effort and hard work

3. Four years of hard work and verifiable **accomplishment** in high school are negated by a 3 hour, multiple choice test. 4. Murray's **accomplishments** in this book are significant.		
1. The South East is the leading region in terms of the educational qualifications of its work force and the level of school **attainment**. 2. Their educational **attainment** was also being affected because their rooms were too cold to study in.	• success in achieving something or reaching a particular level • succeeded in achieving or learning, such as a skill	Achieving or reaching a particular level especially in learning process
1. He had won a comfortable **victory** in the general election. 2. The crowds were celebrating Italy's **victory**. 3. Their 2-1 **victory** over the Australians was completely unexpected. 4. We're very confident of **victory**. 5. Being able to get out of bed was a small **victory** in her struggle against the illness.	• success in a contest against an enemy or opponent, or a particular contest or battle that is won • success in overcoming a difficult situation or an obstacle	• Enemy, opponent. • Difficult situation, obstacles
1. Despite many local **triumphs**, their party stands little chance of winning a national election. 2. Mary's final **triumph** was to see both of her boys go to college. 3. If it is confirmed by longer and larger clinical trials, this will rightly be hailed as a scientific **triumph**. 4. In 167 he celebrated a three-day **triumph**.	• success after a difficult struggle • something that is notable for its exceptional quality or for being a great achievement	• Difficult struggle • Exceptional quality • Overcoming particular situation
1. Seeing my work come to fruition gives me a strong sense of **fulfillment**. 2. Thomas sought **fulfillment** in the religious life. 3. For an artist to travel is to set out on a visual adventure which may or may not end in **fulfillment**.	• being good enough or of the type necessary to meet a standard or requirement • doing what is necessary to complete or bring something to an end	• Meeting the standard or requirement

4. Her **fulfillment** of the most area of the scheme takes her as the nominee.		

The result of contextual analysis seems to both having the relation and supporting the previous result of contrastive analysis. The meaning features such as succeed in doing something, using one's own effort, bringing out something, achieving and fulfilling a standard appear again in this analysis. In addition to that, some 'new' features come up from this analysis. First, the feature that contrasts the word *achievement* and *accomplishment* significantly is that *accomplishment* requires more effort and hard work than *achievement*. Secondly, the feature of the word *victory* does not only limited to battle and race, but it also relates to the overcoming a difficult situation or an obstacle. Thirdly, the feature of something that is notable for its exceptional quality or for being a great achievement becomes the important feature of the word *triumph*. Fourthly, the word *attainment* is found

mostly related with the achieving or reaching a particular level especially in learning process. Finally, the sphere where these words are used becomes clearer and extended. For example, the word victory and *triumph* are also used in the sphere of contest and election, not necessarily war or battle.

In responding to the result of contrastive and comparative analysis, Nida (1975) states that a systematic description of the diagnostic features is necessary to be prepared. It may simply by listing the diagnostic features for each meaning (or term) or the arrangement of such data in the form of data in the form of a tree (space) diagram or matrix. This tree diagram or matrix is helpful in displaying the meaning relation among the words. The next figure of matrix presents the meaning relation among these words.

Figure 4.1. Matrix of Meaning Relation among Words

Success-related Words / Features	Accomplishment	Achievement	Attainment	Victory	Triumph	Fulfillment
The act of finishing, achieving, fulfilling, bringing about	√	√	√	√	√	√
Achieving or reaching a particular level esp. in learning process	■	■	√	■	■	■
Achieving or fulfilling something remarkably and impressively	√	■	■	■	■	■
Overcoming a difficult situation or an obstacle	■	■	■	√	■	■
Success after a difficult struggle	■	■	■	■	√	■
Being notable for its exceptional quality or for being a great success	■	■	■	■	√	■
Requiring one's own effort	√	√	√	√	√	√
Requiring a lot of effort and hard work	√	■	■	■	■	■
Requiring one's skill or ability	√	■	■	√	√	■
The pre-determined goal, plan, schedule	√	√	√	■	■	■
Standard of achievement, level of successfulness	■	√	√	■	■	√

Relating with contest or battle against an enemy or opponent; championship or competition		■	■	■	√	√	■
The party involved	Individual	√	√	√	■	√	√
	Group	√	√	■	√	√	√
Relating to the position or function		■	√	■	■	■	■
Sphere or area	Academic	√	√	√	■	■	■
	Politics	■	■	■	√	√	■
	Sport	√	√		√	■	■
	Religious	■	■	■	■	■	√
	Art	√	√	√	■	■	■

5. CONCLUSION

Firstly, it can be drawn from the analysis that the meaning of lexical units within the same semantic domain can be identified when they are contrasted one to another. The context where these lexical units used contribute significant role in shaping the meaning. Secondly, the result of the analysis demonstrates that the lexical units of *accomplishment, achievement, attainment, victory, triumph* and *fulfillment* are related in meaning in terms that they share certain features among them but contrast to in respect to other features. The finding is extremely helpful when a decision should be made regarding what lexical unit should be used in referring to certain entity or event.

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