

Semantic Solubility as a Complement of Semantic Prosody

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Abstract

In any discipline, the evolvement or introduction of a new theory to explain phenomenon in a better light evidences that knowledge is progressive. In this article This paper focuses on the theoretical foundation of corpus linguistics, by trying to show the limitations of the concept of semantic prosody in order to evolve the concept of ‘semantic solubility’ which supplements the gaps created in the aspect of meaning diffusion and absorption. Semantic prosody is one of the crucial concepts within the frameworks of corpus linguistics, which explains the intrusion of semantic properties (positive or negative) of a lexeme to other lexemes in a semantic net. However, the theory is oblivious of the possibility of a lexeme to imbibe both negative and positive prosodies simultaneously from a mediating lexeme to express meaning. Also, there is the possibility of antonymous lexemes in homologous constructions to express similar meaning as a result of the process of meaning diffusion and meaning inhibition among lexemes. The paper, therefore, argues that oblivion of these aspects of idiosyncrasies of antonymous lexemes is to represent an incomplete picture of the nature of meaning diffusion and inhibition which is crucial to semantic prosody. The evolvement of the concept of

‘semantic solubility’ therefore has the goal of advancing the study of lexical collocational possibilities.

Key words: Corpus linguistics, semantic prosody, meaning diffusion, and semantic solubility

Introduction

The emergence of corpus linguistics in language has been accorded different comments by linguists. According to Anthony (2013, p.141), “corpus linguistics is an applied linguistic approach that has become one of the dominant methods used to analyze language today.” Oster (2010, p. 724) is of the view that “corpus linguistics has grown over recent decades into a well-established field of research, and its methods are now increasingly applied also in cognitive linguistics.” Vincent (2002, p. 263) also cites Tognini-Bonelli’s assertion that “corpus linguistics has become a new research enterprise and a new philosophical approach to linguistic enquiry.” Yusuf (2009, p.104) is of the view that “corpus linguistics is the study of language as expressed in real world text.” Rühlemann (2010, p. 111) points out that:

it seems safe to say that corpus analyses have facilitated fundamental changes in the way we look into and look at language, so fundamental indeed that Crystal (2003, p. 448) speaks of the ‘corpus revolution’. This revolution has affected, first and foremost, lexicography: it is by now standard for virtually all large publishers to produce corpus-based dictionaries (Hunston, 2002, p. 96). Another key area affected by the corpus revolution is the study of grammar.

The various submissions affirm that the emergence of corpus linguistics has increased practical exploration into the nature of language.

Fundamental to corpus linguists is the notion that a word embodies syntactic and semantic properties which determine its collocability with other words in constructions. The different types of information with which a lexical item is loaded are its primings and these are connected to form patterns. Hoey (2009) argues that:

what we think of as grammar and semantics are the products of the accumulation of all lexical primings of an individual's lifetime. Grammar and semantics are the products of the accumulative priming of lexis we encountered. As we connect up collocational primings, so we create semantic associations, as we connect up semantic associations, we create an incomplete, inconsistent and leaky but workable semantic system. As we connect up grammatical primings, so we create colligations. As we connect up colligational primings, we create incomplete, inconsistent, and leaky but workable grammatical system.

Therefore, within the frameworks of corpus linguistics, lexical issues have been explained in terms of colligation, collocation, and semantic prosody. These concepts have advanced language research on how words are organised

into meaningful patterns. Colligation addresses the syntactic structures of lexical chunks. This explains why Gries (2010, p. 1) submits that:

more recently... corpus-linguistic research has begun to address many more syntactic phenomena. While this is to some extent due to the increased availability of syntactically annotated corpora, it is also due to corpus linguists' and many cognitive linguists' adoption of the assumption that syntax and lexis are not qualitatively different.

The concept of collocation accounts for how lexemes co-habit one another in constructions. The introduction of the notion of Semantic Prosody in particular represents a significant improvement of the traditional view of collocational or lexical patterning's in meaning exploration in a text. "The concept of semantic prosody provides some insights into how lexemes are attitudinally unbiased towards affective meaning" (Olaleye, 2017, p. 70). In terms of semantic prosody neutral words have the tendency to imbibe the semantic prosodic features (positive or negative) of neighbouring lexemes. In other word, neutral words are unbiased recipients of certain semantic prosodies when they keep company with some words which are donors of their positive or negative attitudinal meanings. For instance, the word "result" (as in *good result*, *bad result*) is unbiased towards both the negative and positive semantic prosody. The neutral word *result* has a positive semantic prosody in the environment of the word *good*;

while it has a negative semantic prosody in the environment of *bad*.

Semantic Prosody has therefore proven to be a very fruitful idea in many areas of lexical combination. Its potentials have been used to gain access to attitudinal meaning of words in linguistic context. However, this is not to say that the components of the concept of Semantic Prosody have fully addressed all relevant areas of collocational possibilities of lexemes. In spite of the strengths of it and the vigour with which Corpus linguists present it, the present researcher identifies the possibility of a lexeme to imbibe both negative and positive prosodies simultaneously from a mediating lexeme to express meaning. Also, there is the possibility of antonymous lexemes in homologous constructions to express similar meaning as a result of meaning diffusion and meaning inhibition among lexemes. The purpose of this article therefore is to incorporate another apparatus as an extension of Semantic Prosody. The term 'Semantic Solubility' has been evolved by the present researcher to address those sensitive aspects of idiosyncrasies of antonymous lexemes.

Operational Definitions of Terms

- (i) **Dissolve/Dissolving:** This is a term borrowed from physical science used as a verb to describe how lexemes lose or dissipate parts of their semantic substances or properties in order to embrace new meanings from other lexemes occurring with them, in a semantic net.
- (ii) **Insoluble:** This is a term borrowed from physical science used as an adjective to describe lexemes whose semantic substances or properties are not

‘dissolvable’ in the environment of a ‘solvent’ lexeme.

- (iii) **Soluble:** This is a term borrowed from physical science used as an adjective to describe lexemes whose semantic substances or properties are ‘dissolvable’ as a result of their co-occurrence with ‘solvent’ lexemes, which are capable of ‘dissolving’ or ‘solubilising’ the semantic properties of other lexeme.
- (iv) **Solubilise/Solubilising:** This is a term borrowed from physical science used as a verb to describe how lexemes dissolve their semantic properties.
- (v) **Solubility:** This is a term borrowed from physical science used as a noun to explain the process of how ‘soluble’ lexemes ‘dissolve or ‘solubilise’ their semantic substances or properties as a result of their co-occurrence with ‘solvent’ lexemes which are capable of ‘dissolving’ or ‘solubilising’ the semantic properties of other lexeme.
- (vi) **Solvent:** This is a term borrowed from physical science used as an adjective to describe a lexeme which is capable of ‘dissolving’ or ‘solubilising’ the semantic properties of other lexemes.

Theoretical Background

Semantic Prosody

The term semantic prosody, which was evolved by Sinclair, was introduced to the public by Louw, an influential corpus linguist, to explain the attitudinal meaning of a word in its linguistic context. This view is expressed in the following words of Zhang (2009, p. 2) who says:

the term semantic prosody, also called semantic harmony (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk (1996), discourse or pragmatic prosody (Stubbs, 2001), or semantic associations (Hoey, 2003; Nelson, 2006), was coined by Sinclair (1987), who borrowed Firth's (1957) notion of phonological prosody. Semantic prosody was first introduced to the public by Louw (1993).

Hunston (2007, p. 1) also attempts to trace the origin of the concept when she adds that:

the term "semantic prosody" was first used by Louw (1993) but attributed to Sinclair (1991) who developed the concept in later works (e.g. Sinclair 2004). The term has also been used by Stubbs (1996, 2001), Tognini-Bonelli (2001) and Partington (1998, 2004), among many others... As a concept, it arises from corpus linguistics, and in particular the "phraseological" tradition that focuses on the typical behaviour of individual lexical items as observed using "keyword in context" concordance lines (e.g. Sinclair 2003).

Changhu (2010, p. 190) also corroborates the submissions above when he points out that:

the concept of Semantic Prosody (SP) was first introduced to the public by Bill Louw in 1993. From then on it has become one of

the important concepts in corpus linguistics and has claimed more and more attention from corpus linguists. So far, it has found great potential applications in dictionary compiling, translation, and second language acquisition.

In some circles of Corpus Linguistics, the notion of Semantic Prosody is, however, referred to as “Semantic Coercion”. For instance, Jezek and Hanks (2010, p. 12) assert thus:

semantic coercion can be generally described as a modulation of the basic meaning of a word due to semantic requirements imposed by other words in a given context. Coercion is a principled mechanism for accounting for the variety of interpretations that words exhibit in different contexts. In particular, coercion occurs when the meaning that a word exhibits in context is not inherent to the word itself (i.e. coded lexically) but rather the result of compositional processes induced by the linguistic co-text (i.e. by the semantics of the co-occurring words).

Hunston (2007, p. 18) also postulates a different term to refer to semantic prosody when she submits that semantic prosody “is best restricted to Sinclair’s use of it to refer to the discourse function of a unit of meaning...I would suggest that a different term, such as “semantic preference” or perhaps “attitudinal preference”, is used.” Stubbs (2001, p. 65) also prefers the term “semantic

preference” which he defines as “the relation, not between individual words, but between a lemma or word-form and a set of semantically related words.” The divergent opinions of corpus linguists on the concept of semantic prosody make Stefanowitsch (2003) to proffer as follows:

different authors focus on different aspects of this phenomenon: Semantic prosody is the “consistent aura of meaning with which a form is imbued by its collocates” Louw (1993, p. 157, see also Sinclair 1991, pp. 74-75); “[I]t is becoming increasingly well documented that words may habitually collocate with other words from a definable semantic set” (Stubbs 1995); Semantic prosody is “the spreading of connotational colouring beyond single word boundaries” (Partington 1998, p.68); “When the usage of a word gives an impression of an attitudinal or pragmatic meaning, this is called a *semantic prosody*” (Sinclair 1999) “[A] word may be said to have a particular semantic prosody if it can be shown to co-occur typically with other words that belong to a particular semantic set”. (Hunston & Francis, 2000, p. 37).

Going by Zhang’s (2009, p.6) definition, Semantic prosody is “the spreading of connotational colouring beyond single word boundaries.” To take the adjective *impressive* for instance, in English it collocates with items such as *achievement*, *talent* and *dignity*. In this manner, it is considered to have a positive SP... By contrast, *rife* tends to co-occur with words such as *crime*,

misery and *disease*; hence its interpretation has a negative SP (Zhang, 2009, p. 7).

In an article based on the discussion of the components of Lexical Priming of Hoey (2011), it is submitted that:

semantic Association is under different labels and with varying but related meanings: Semantic Prosody, Semantic Preference. It has attention from Louw (1993), Stubbs (1996), Sinclair (1997) and myself “Hoey” (1997).

Hoey (2011) shows how the lexeme “result” is primed for collocation with “good”. It is primed for use as a noun or as a verb; it is primed for semantic association with positiveness. (a good result, a great result, an excellent result, a brilliant result, etc.); and it is primed for use in certain grammatical contexts. E.g. definiteness (the result versus a result). Other famous examples of corpus linguists on the concept of semantic prosody are the verb *cause* which is almost always followed by something negative such as *problems*, *serious illness*, *death* or *damage*; and the verb *provide* which is mostly followed by positive things such as *service* or *support*.

The central issue germane to the concept of semantic prosody is that a neutral lexeme may carry negative or positive semantic connotation by the company it keeps. In other words, lexical items share prosodic features of neighbouring items. The application of the tools of semantic prosody is worthwhile especially for literary studies to account for creativity in language. This is why Zhang (2009, p.9) states that “awareness of semantic prosody...can be greatly beneficial in

interpreting a text producer's hidden attitudes." Thus, the exploration of the semantic prosodic features of lexemes used in a text provides access to unlock the writer's attitude toward his/her message.

To explain the Semantic Prosody of the node word "cause" with its "scatters", concordance lines which display the collocations of the word are exemplified by Hunston (2007) as follows:

- | | | |
|---|----------------|--|
| 1. a real downer of a word, likely to | cause | a lot of confusion . |
| 2. until I told her. What I did has | caused | A rift between me and my friend |
| 3. His decision to oppose the war | caused | amazement in the ranks. |
| 4. quality in the borough...The award | caused | anger among anti-racist groups... |
| 5. new media outlets and choice, | causing | Audience fragmentation |
| 6. suffering from a kidney stone, | caused | by excess build-up of urine. |
| 7. chronic unemployment problem is | caused | by leather bedding workers... |
| 8. Isle of Wight, last June which | caused | damage estimated at £100,000. |
| 9. some carrots could | cause | dizziness and vomiting, but... |
| 10. control fairly rapidly... Hepatitis | causes | inflammation of the liver. |
| 11. minority of individuals intent on | causing | misery to their neighbours |
| 12. the government's proposals | caused | outrage among medical association |
| 13. issues, but it is starting to | cause | problems of supply. |
| 14. of things in your life that are | causing | real concern . |
| 15. that her disappearance did not | cause | serious concern |
| 16. against the gynaecologist who | caused | so much unnecessary pain |
| 17. Saddam, journalism so strong it | caused | the West to liberate |

18. No one knows quite what **caused** this **frenzy**.
Concordance lines culled from Hunston (2007, p. 251)

The concordance lines above show what sorts of words tend to occur in the immediate environment of the node word 'cause'. It is obvious that the lexeme 'cause' keeps company with such words as *damage, problem, confusion, a rift, anger, fragmentation, a suffering*, etc. which would normally be considered to be undesirable or unfavourable expressions. Thus, those lexemes diffuse their negative semantic prosodic feature to other lexemes in their immediate linguistic environment, while such a word like 'cause' inhibits or absorbs the negative colouration. Therefore, the word 'cause' has negative semantic prosody in its contexts of use. This is why Hunston (2007, p.251) asserts that "in most cases (line 17 is an exception)... CAUSE "has a negative (or unfavourable) semantic prosody", suggesting that an association with evaluatively negative things is a property of the verb".

It would be insightful therefore, in the interpretation and evaluation of texts, to investigate the prosodic features of words or expressions used by authors because these are aspects of meaning which words assimilate when they keep company with other words. Semantic prosody has the tendency to reveal, in Oster's (2010, p.733) words, 'an evaluative potential of the extended unit of meaning that is not always obvious [...]and which takes the analysis to a pragmatic level.' The semantic prosody of lexemes could be either 'pleasant or unpleasant (or 'positive or negative semantic prosody'); depending on the aspects of attitudinal meaning the user wants to activate. This is why Bednarek (2008, p.132)

maintains that ‘semantic prosody then refers to POS/NEG connotation as well as more complex attitudinal connotations, affecting both single words and larger units of meaning such as phrases.’ In spite of the usefulness of Semantic Prosody in language analysis, Zhang (2009, p.4) observes that ‘due to its nature of subtleness, SP is often hidden from human intuition and so can only be explored by the powerful means of corpus linguistics.’

The Inadequacy of Semantic Prosody: The Need for Semantic Solubility as a Complementary Apparatus

In this section the purpose of this brief sketch is to unveil the inadequacy of semantic prosody to accommodate certain issues pertaining meaning diffusion and meaning inhibition in lexical combinations. Pointing out the flaws has the goal of incorporating another apparatus as an extension of Semantic Prosody.

Firstly, the notion of Semantic Prosody would have been all encompassing if it is cognisant of the fact that, in the process of meaning diffusion and meaning assimilation, the prosodic features of antonymous lexemes can be totally or partially dissolved or ‘solubilised’ in such a way that we can express similar meanings by substituting a member of antonymous words for its counterpart. For instance, the expression: ‘The cup is half full.’ can potentially describe a similar condition (content level of the cup) that the expression: ‘The cup is half empty’ can describe. Here, the word ‘half’ which mediates between the words ‘full’ and ‘empty’ is neither negative or positive in terms of semantic prosody, yet, meaning diffusion occurs in the constructions.

Secondly, the possibility of a word imbibing both the negative and positive prosodies simultaneously would have earned the theory more credibility. This is exemplified in the following expressions: 'The pastor's comment suppresses my joy.' and 'The pastor's comment suppresses my sadness.' Here, the antonymous words 'joy' and 'sadness' which have positive and negative semantic prosodies respectively sublet parts of their latent prosodic features by 'externally intruding' and imbibing the prosodic features of their counterparts as result of the appearance of the word 'supresses' which is neither negative or positive in terms of semantic prosody in the constructions. These aspects of language nature cannot be trivialised because it explicates how opposite words interact in an incredible mode. These two issues are treated in a better light as follows:

The term 'semantic solubility' is thus evolved by the present researcher to address those sensitive aspects of idiosyncrasies of antonymous lexemes. The word 'Solubility' explains how lexemes are capable of 'dissolving' or 'solubilising' their semantic substances or properties as a result of their co-occurrence with 'solvent lexemes', which are capable of 'dissolving' or 'solubilising' the semantic properties of other lexeme. Semantic Prosody postulated by Corpus linguists opens our awareness that neutral words may be influenced to imbibe or inhibit negative and positive values diffused by neighbouring lexemes. 'Semantic Solubility' is, therefore, a subclass of Semantic Prosody because it extends the explication of how two opposite words can sublet their negative and positive prosodic features or semantic values when they co-occur with a neutral lexeme. The

following pairs of sentences illustrate the notion of ‘Semantic Solubility’:

- 1a. The bottle is **half** full.
- b. The bottle is **half** empty.
- 2a. The bottle is full.
- b. The bottle is empty.

Sentences (1a) and (b) are not only syntactically homologous in structure, they are also semantically symmetrical despite the appearance of the words *full* and *empty* which are extreme words on a semantic cline of oppositeness. It is apparent that the occurrence of the word *half* (a neutral word acting as ‘solvent lexeme’) before the antonymous words *full* and *empty* (the ‘soluble lexemes’) has mediated between their meanings in the sentences. Consequently, the two sentences are alternative propositions, expressing a similar meaning describing the content level of the bottle. The impact of the word *half* can be felt when we compare sentences labelled (2a) and (b) where meaning is asymmetrical. To mediate between the sentences labelled (2a) and (b), we need to introduce a negative marker to either of the sentences. To do this, the sentences are no longer homologous. The word *half* is neither a grammatical item (such as negative marker ‘not’) or morphological device (such as dis-, un- mis- etc.) via which opposite words can be made synonymous. However, the lexical item *half* has acted as ‘solvent lexeme’ by diffusing its meaning to ‘dissolve’ parts of the semantic properties latent to both the words *full* and *empty* in order to convey sameness of meaning in the description of the content level of the bottle. Thus, by ‘dissolving’ their semantic properties, both the words *full* and *empty* imbibe the meaning diffused to them by the mediating lexeme.

By substituting a member of the antonymous words before the 'solvent lexeme', the language user is provided alternative angles of projecting meaning. In alignment with the notion of Semantic Prosody the attitude of the speaker can be seen as intruding into the choice between the alternative constructions. In a situation as sentences labelled (1a) and (b) where one of the 'soluble' lexemes (antonyms) can be perfectly substituted with the other without altering the pragmatic function of the expression, the present researcher evolved the term Absolute Semantic 'Solubility' to describe it. Thus, in absolute semantic 'solubility', the antonymous words perfectly 'dissolve' their meanings as a result of the mediating lexeme to generate semantically homologous expressions.

The pairs of sentences, that follow, illustrate the second category of Semantic 'Solubility' technically called Partial 'Solubility' which has been evolved by the present researcher.

- 3a. To maintain your wealth, you must **reduce** buying of items.
- 3b. To maintain your wealth, you must **reduce** selling of items.
- 4a. The government policy will **reduce** the level of poverty of the nation.
- 4b. The government policy will **reduce** the level of richness of the nation.

It is obvious that the neutral lexeme *reduce* in sentences (3a) and (b) does not mediate either fully or partially the meanings of the antonymous lexemes in the sentences. Thus, the sentences are semantically asymmetrical because the word *buying* does not incorporate either wholly or partly the meaning of the

word *selling* and vice versa. In the sentence (3a) for instance, 'to reduce buying of items' does not suggest that the person being advised should 'increase selling of items'. Also, in the sentence (3b) 'to reduce selling of items' does not suggest that the person being advised should 'increase buying of items'. Therefore, the words *buying* and *selling* are 'insoluble' lexemes in the contexts above because none of the antonymous words diffuses its semantic substances 'externally' for its counterpart to imbibe. 'Externally' because the word is not present in the sentence and its meaning is not implied.

However, a deeper meditation on sentences (4a) and (b) reveals that the neutral lexeme *reduce* (acting as solvent lexeme) mediates between the two extreme words on the semantic cline of oppositeness. In sentence (4a), the word *reduce* is externally reinforced by the word *richness* on the other extreme end of Semantic Cline of Oppositeness; in such a way that the reduction of poverty conveys the sense of enriching the nation to a certain degree. Conversely, reduction of richness in sentence (3b) conveys the sense of impoverishing the nation to a certain degree. In the sentences, it is apparent that the word *reduce* (a solvent lexeme) unpacks or dissolves a certain degree of positiveness (prosodic feature) in the word *richness* (a soluble lexeme) in order to embrace a certain degree of negativeness in the word *poverty*. On the other hand, the word *reduce* also unpacks or 'dissolves' a certain degree of negativeness embodied by the word *poverty* (a soluble lexeme) to embrace a certain degree of positiveness in the word *richness*. This is called Partial Semantic 'Solubility' because the word *richness* externally accommodates parts of the meaning of *poverty* as a result of the presence of the word *reduce*; while the

previous state of being (richness) exerts a stronger influence. On the other hand, the word *poverty* externally accommodates parts of the meaning of the word *richness* as a result of the presence of the word *reduce*; while the previous state of being (poverty) exerts a stronger influence.

To sum up the various variables discussed above, the notion of Semantic ‘Solubility’, as evolved by the present researcher, may be graphically designated as:

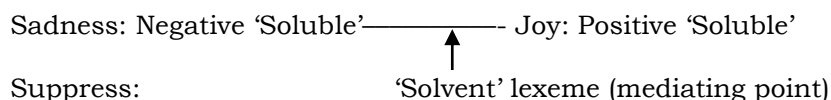


Fig. 1: Semantic Cline of Oppositeness

Using the semantic cline of oppositeness, any of the following sentences can be generated.

- 5a. The pastor’s comment **suppresses** my joy.
- 5b. The pastor’s comment **suppresses** my sadness.

The graphical designation above can be explained with the variables of Semantic Solubility operating on the Semantic Cline of Oppositeness. The ‘soluble’ lexemes are the antonymous words whose semantic properties are being partially or completely ‘dissolved’ as a result of their co-occurrence with a mediating word. The bipolar words or ‘soluble’ lexemes, which contract relationship of oppositeness with each other, are situated on the negative and positive sides on the extreme end of the Semantic Cline respectively. Each end represents the ‘angle of projection’. Based on the previous state of being, this represents the point at which the user intends to capture the event. In other words, the previous state of

being exerts a strong influence to determine the angle of projection the user will use. For instance, the previous emotional state of being, which determines the user's choice of sentence (5a) is joy; despite the fact that the user is expressing emotion of mixed feelings. Conversely, the previous emotional state of being, which determines the user's choice of sentence (5b) above is sadness; despite the fact that the user is also expressing emotion of mixed feelings.

As illustrated in the figure, another variable exerting influence on the antonymous words is the solvent lexeme. This represents the mediating word capable of 'dissolving' or 'solubilising' the meanings of antonymous words wholly or partially by diffusing its own semantic values. Both the word *joy* and *sadness* at the extreme ends of the cline embrace both negative and positive prosodies simultaneously to express emotion of mixed feelings as a result of the presence of a mediating lexeme *suppress*. The word *suppress* is therefore pulling the two soluble lexemes towards a point where they express similar meanings. For instance, it is apparent that sentences (5a) and (5b) express emotional state of mixed feelings while the previous states of mind of the user also intrude to influence the choice of either angles of projection. From the positive angle of projection, it is expressed in sentence '5a' that the joy is reduced, indicating that emotional feeling of joy is influenced by the word *suppress* to move towards the direction of *sadness* on the other end of the cline to embrace its negative prosody. Thus, the joy is no longer full. From the negative angle of projection, it is expressed in sentence (5b) that the sadness is reduced, indicating that emotional feeling of sadness is also influenced by the

word *suppress* to move towards the direction of *joy* on the other end of the cline to embrace its positive prosody. Consequently, the sadness is no longer full. The reduction or suppression of fullness of joy represents mixed feelings. On the other hand, the reduction or suppression of sadness represents mixed feeling.

Despite the fact that both sentences represent emotion of mixed feeling, substitution is not possible in sentences (5a) and (5b) because the previous states of being exert stronger influence than the 'solvent' lexeme on the antonymous words. The term Partial Semantic 'Solubility' is evolved by the present researcher to capture this. In other words, when the 'solvent' lexeme that diffuses its semantic substances has a stronger influence to 'dissolve' the semantic properties of the 'soluble' lexeme to the extent that substitution is made possible between the antonymous lexemes, there is Absolute Semantic 'Solubility'.

Using the analogous Semantic Cline of Oppositeness which has been evolved, it can be explained how some words such as *repress*, *adjust*, *regulate*, *suppress*, etc. have the tendency to act as 'solvent' lexemes to mediate between pairs of antonymous words such *glory and shame*, *high and low*, *lie and truth*, *sadness and happiness*, etc. As a member of soluble lexemes moves from the bipolar end of the cline to the middle point as a result of the occurrence of the neutral lexeme which mediates between the soluble lexemes, parts of its semantic values are gradually solubilised to imbibe parts of semantic values of its counterpart.

Conclusion

In this article the author has explored the potentials of the notion of semantic postulated by Corpus linguists by showing how the concept opens our awareness that neutral words in constructions may be influenced to imbibe or inhibit negative and positive values diffused by neighbouring lexemes. However, an attempt has also been made to point out that the components of the concept have not fully addressed all relevant areas of collocational possibilities of lexemes in a semantic net. The present researcher has identified the possibility of antonymous lexemes in homologous constructions to express similar meaning as a result of meaning diffusion and meaning inhibition among lexemes.

Also, the other aspect of language nature which cannot be trivialised is how opposite words interact in an incredible mode by imbibing both negative and positive prosodies simultaneously from a mediating lexeme to express meaning. An apparatus technically called 'Semantic Solubility' has therefore been evolved to accommodate the identified flawed grounds in the explication of how the semantic properties of lexemes intrude and meddle with the meanings of other words in a semantic net. Thus, oblivion of these aspects of idiosyncrasies of antonymous lexemes is to represent an incomplete picture of the nature of meaning diffusion and inhibition which is crucial to Semantic Prosody.

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