Analyzability and semantic associations in referring expressions : a study in comparative lexicology

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1. The number of analyzable lexical items in a language correlates with complexity of the word and of the sound system. This evidence points to a diachronic trade-off regarding complexity in linguistic subsystems possibly involving homonymy avoidance.

2. A correlation between a preference for derivation as a word-formation device and elaborateness of verbal person marking points to a clustering of typological features which transcends the boundary between lexicon and grammar and hence shows that grammar and lexicon form an organic whole.

3. Semantic patterns in the lexicon of languages are amenable to areal convergence and provide a resource for areal linguistics and studies of language contact that has so far only relatively scarcely been exploited.

4. Cross-linguistically, there are few semantic associations that are extremely common, while there are many that are found in relatively few languages only. The frequency of their occurrence roughly follows a negative exponential distribution.

5. There are semantically based differences between languages as to which nouns can be marked for number. In this, languages do not always strictly have recourse to widely known features such as humanness and animateness. For instance, in Kashaya, a moribund Pomoan language of Northern California, number marking is possible for humans and a few sentient animals.
Reference: Cengerova, Zuzana, Yen-Ling Chen, Roey Gafter, Patrick Hall, Sverre Johnsen, E. J. Kim, Ricardo Lezama, Pamela Munro, Hyejin Nah, Bruno Olsson, Olivia N. Sammons, Matthias Urban, and Oliviana Zakaria. 2009. Notes on Kashaya as spoken by Anita Silva. LSA Institute, Berkeley.

6. Some general tendencies of directionality in semantic change can be identified.
Reference: Urban, Matthias. 2011. Asymmetries in Overt Marking and Directionality in Semantic Change. Journal of Historical Linguistics 1, 3-47.

7. Quantitative phylogenetic methods in typological research ought to be followed by qualitative exploration of the material.

8. Words for the body parts 'nose' and 'lip' are often sound-symbolic in that they, cross-linguistically, are more likely to contain nasals and labials respectively than one would expect by chance.
Reference: Urban, Matthias. 2011. Conventional sound symbolism in terms for organs of speech: A cross-linguistic study. Folia Linguistica 45, 199-214.

9. One of the reasons for the recent surge in diagnoses of clinical depression in developed countries is the increasing pressure to perform in the same time span.

10. The basic income guarantee is a model in which each citizen, regardless of his/her economic situation, is granted a certain amount of money by the government in order to enable him/her to live in dignity without having to provide anything in return. This model is economically feasible and would solve a wide range of societal problems.