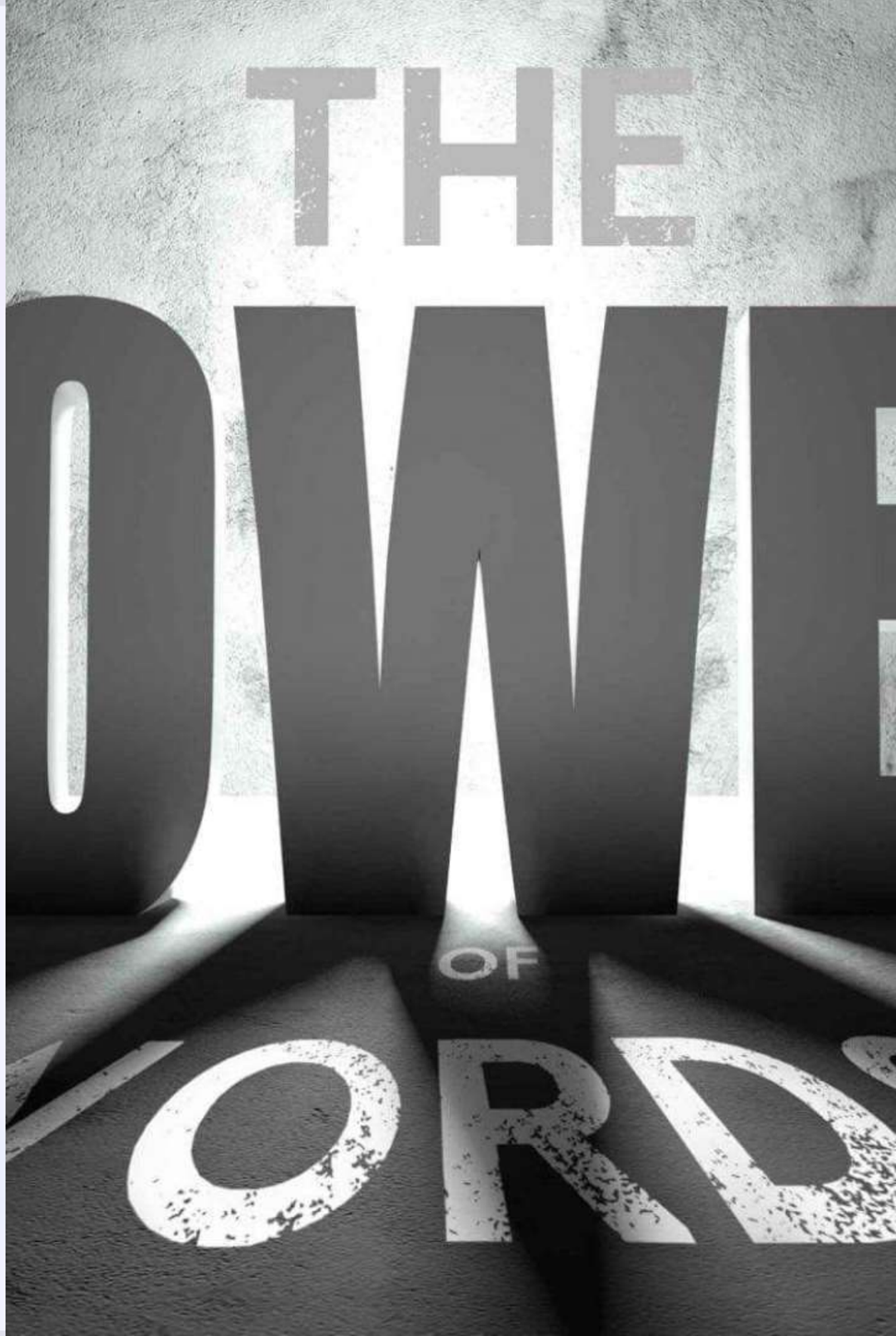
Module I. Lecture 4.
Word meaning and Motivation

Plan

1. Morphological motivation
2. Phonetical motivation
3. Semantic motivation

Word Meaning and Motivation

Words have incredible power in shaping our understanding of the world. In this presentation, we will delve into the theories of word meaning and explore the role of motivation in word learning.



- The direct connection between the morphemic structure of the word and its meaning is termed ***morphological motivation***. It implies a direct connection between the lexical meaning of the constituent morphemes, the pattern of their arrangement and the meaning of the word. Hence, by his definition all one-morpheme words, such as **man, bad, go** are non-motivated, because the connection between the structure of these words and their meaning is completely arbitrary, conventional.
- Morphological motivation is present in derived and compound words. For example, the word **reader** is motivated by its immediate and, here, ultimate constituents the morphemes **read-** and **–er,** which, in their turn, are not motivated. As to compounds, their motivation is morphological if the meaning of the whole is based on the literal meaning of the components, and semantic if the combination of components is used figuratively. For example, the word **eyewash** is motivated morphologically in its literal meaning ‘a lotion for the eyes’; but it is motivated semantically in its figurative meaning ‘deception’.

Theories of Word Meaning

1

Semantic Network Theory

Explore how words are organized in our minds through interconnected networks of meaning.

2

Prototype Theory

Discover how we form mental representations of categories based on typical examples.

3

Embodied Cognition

Uncover how our bodily experiences and sensations shape our understanding of words.

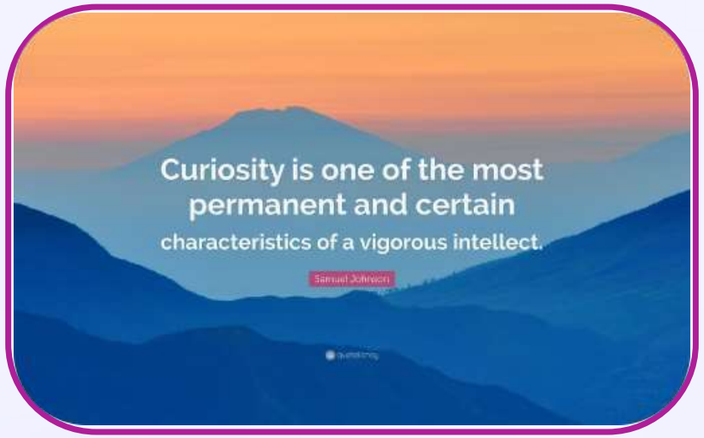
The Role of Motivation

Internal Motivation

Learn how personal desires and goals drive our engagement and commitment in word learning.

External Motivation

Discover how rewards and incentives influence our motivation to learn new words.



Intrinsic Motivation

Explore the role of intrinsic curiosity and the joy of discovery in our word learning journey.

- Motivation is usually thought of as proceeding from form or structure to meaning. Morphological motivation as discussed above implies a direct connection between the morphological structure of the word and its meaning. Some linguists, however, argue that words can be motivated in more than one way and suggest another type of motivation which may be described as a direct connection between the phonetical structure of the word and its meaning. It is argued that speech sounds may suggest spatial and visual dimensions, shape, size, etc.
- Experiments carried out by a group of linguists showed that back open vowels are suggestive of big size, heavy weight, dark colour, etc. The experiments were repeated many times and the results were always the same. Native speakers of English were asked to listen to pairs of antonyms from an unfamiliar (or non-existent) language unrelated to English, e.g. **ching — chung** and then to try to find the English equivalents, e.g. **light — heavy, (big — small,** etc.), which foreign word translates which English word. About 90 per cent of English speakers felt that **ching** is the equivalent of the English **light** (small) and **chung** of its antonym **heavy** (large).

Morphological Motivation

1

Word Formation

Discover how the structure and composition of words provide hints to their meanings.

2

Roots and Affixes

Explore how prefixes and suffixes can change the meaning and function of words.

3

Etymology

Uncover the fascinating historical origins of words and how they contribute to their current meanings.

Phonetic Motivation

Sound Symbolism

Investigate the relationship between the sounds of words and their associated meanings.

Onomatopoeia

Explore the intriguing instances where words imitate the sounds they represent.

Phonosemantics

Delve into the study of how certain sounds convey semantic associations.

Semantic Motivation

1

Metaphor and Metonymy

Discover how figurative language shapes word meaning through conceptual mappings.

2

Contextual Priming

Explore how our prior knowledge and surrounding context influence the meaning we attribute to words.

3

Associative Networks

Uncover the power of word associations in establishing semantic connections between words.

The Dynamic Nature of Word Meaning

Reflect on how word meanings are shaped and evolve through various influences and perspectives.

Word Learning Strategies

Summarize effective strategies to enhance word learning, taking motivation and linguistic cues into account.

Empowering Language Skills

Recognize the profound impact of understanding word meaning in developing strong communication abilities.

Thank You
For Your
Attention