**Lecture Eight: Types of Meaning**

Unlike structuralists, Functionalists argue for the existence of different types of meaning:

1. **The Conceptual Meaning.** It is known also as ‘denotative’ or ‘cognitive’ meaning , it is neutral and objective and organized largely in terms of contrastive features, for example the meaning of the word woman could be specified as (+human, - male, + adult) and boy as (+human, +male, -adult).
2. **The Connotative Meaning.**  It is the communicative value that an expression has beyond its conceptual meaning. For example, the word ‘woman’ may refer to not only physical characteristics, but extends to features of womanhood (capable of speech, experienced in cookery) due to the viewpoint adopted by an individual, or a group of people, or a whole society. Thus, connotations change from society to another, and from one individual to the other.
3. **Stylistic Meaning.** It is that meaning which reflects the social circumstances of language use. In other words, some words and pronunciations can give information about the geographical or social origins of the speaker (dialect), other features give hints about the speaker-hearer relationship (degree of formality).

e.g.1. They chunked a stone at the cops, and then did a bunk with the loot.

2. After casting a stone at the police, they absconded with the money.

The first sentence could be said by two criminals, talking casually about the crime afterwards, while the second sentence might be said by the chief inspector making his official report.

Therefore, it is rarely possible to find two words with the same conceptual meaning and stylistic meaning which led people to declare that true synonyms do not exist.

e.g. home (general)

Residence (formal)

domicile (very formal)

Abode (Poetic).

1. **The Affective Meaning.** this kind of meaning is used to convey the speaker’s emotions, however, it is often conveyed through other categories of meaning (the conceptual, the connotative or stylistic meaning).

e.g.to get people be quiet, we might say either:

- I’m terribly sorry to interrupt, but I wonder if you would be so kind as to lower your voice a little.

- will you belt up.

Besides, there are elements of language (chiefly interjection like aha!, yippee) used to express emotions, feelings and attitudes without relying on any other kind of meaning.

1. **Reflected and Collocative Meaning.** Reflected meaning is the meaning which arises is cases of multiple conceptual meanings, when one sense of a word forms part of our response to another.

Collocative meaning consists of the associations a word acquires on account of the meanings of words which tend to occur in its environment, in other words, the words with which they are likely to co-occur or collocate e.g.

Girl boy

Boy man

Woman car

Pretty slower handsome vessel

Garden overcoat

Colour airliner

Village, etc. typewriter, etc.

1. **The Associative Meaning.** The connotative meaning, the stylistic meaning, the affective meaning, the reflected and the collocative meaning can all be brought together under the heading of ‘the associative meaning’. All are contrasted with the ‘conceptual meaning’. The associative meaning is part of the ‘common system’ of language shared by members of a speech community, it is less stable and varies with individual’s experience.
2. **The Thematic Meaning.** It is what has been communicated by the way in which the speaker/ writer organizes the message in terms of ordering, focus and emphasis. For example: 1- Mrs. Smith donated the first prize

2- the first prize was donated to Mrs. Smith

Although the conceptual meaning is the same, the active sentence (1) has a different meaning from the passive sentence (2), focus in the first is on Mrs. Smith while in the second emphasis is on the first prize (Leech, 1985)**.**