UINT FIVE
SEMANATICS
## UNIT CONTENT

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INTRODUCTION

PREVIEW

Dear learner,

Welcome to unit five of this course ‘An Introduction to Linguistics’. This unit deals with the study of meanings. It is divided into six sections. In these sections we shall deal with the following areas of interest:

1. The fact that a word can have more than one meaning; for example ‘ball’ can be both a dance and a round object for bouncing.

2. The fact that different words appear to have the same meaning; for example ‘regal’ and ‘royal’ or ‘big’ and ‘large’.

3. The fact that some words can be analyzed into components such as ‘adult’, ‘female’; for example; ‘mare’ implies both adult and female as well as horse.

4. The fact that some words seem to have opposites, for example, ‘long’ and ‘short’, ‘good’ and ‘bad’, but not ‘desk’ or ‘table’.

5. The fact that the meanings of some words are included in the meaning of others; for example, the meaning of ‘vegetable’ is included in that of ‘potato’ and the meaning of ‘tree’ is included in that of ‘elm’.

6. The fact that certain combinations of words have meanings which are very different from the combination of their separate meanings, for example the meaning of ‘pass’ plus the meaning of ‘die’ although that is what ‘pass on’ can mean.

We have already come across the word ‘semantic’ in this book; we examined the different connotations of ‘word’. Semantics refers to meaning and meaning is so unclear to the mind that one group of linguists, the structuralists, preferred not to deal with it or rely on it at all. To illustrate what we mean by the intangible quality of ‘meaning’, think of such words as ‘beauty’, ‘goodness’, ;love’; it would be hard to find two people agree absolutely on what each of these words implies. Similarly, we all think we know what we mean
by ‘boy’ and ‘man’, but at what age does a boy cease to be a boy. At

Both exercises and self-assessment questions (SAQ) are used
to ensure the necessary practice needed to reinforce the material
already discussed.

UNIT OBJECTIVES

Dear learner, by the end of this unit you should be able to:
1- explain that a word can have more than one meaning,
2- use different words to have the same meaning,
3- analyse some words into components,
4- describe things using opposites of words,
5- explain how meanings of some words are included in the meaning of others, and
6- show the fact that certain combinations of words have meanings, which are very different from the combination of their separate meanings.
1. Polysemy

Dear learner, do you know that semantics is the study of meaning? Once, you have started to study this area, you have to come across certain terms. Below is an elaborated discussion of these terms.

The same morphological word may have a range of different meanings as a glance at any dictionary will reveal. Polysemy, meaning ‘many meanings’, is the name given to the study of this particular phenomenon. In a dictionary entry for any given word, the meanings are listed in a particular order with the central meaning given first, followed by the most closely related meanings and with metaphorical extensions coming last. If we look up the word ‘star’, for example, in the Concise Oxford Dictionary, we will find the meanings:

- celestial body
- thing suggesting star by its shape, especially a figure or object with radiating points.
- (in card game) additional life bought by player whose lives are lost.
- Principal actor or actress in a company.

In theory, the idea of words having several meanings is straightforward; in practice there are problems, especially in relation to drawing boundary lines between words. It is not always easy to decide when a meaning has become so different from its original meaning that it deserves to be treated like a new word. The Concise Oxford Dictionary, for example, lists ‘pupil’ as having two meanings:

- one who is taught by another, scholar
- the pupil of the eye.

Many speakers of English, however, regard these as two different words, stated simply, the essential problem is that it is not always easy or even possible to be certain whether we are dealing with polysemy, that is, one word with several meanings, or homonymy, that is, several words with same form.
Normally, dictionaries decide between polysemy and homonymy by referring to etymology (the origins and history of a word) when this is known; but even this rule is not foolproof because, on occasions, etymologically related words may have different spelling as in the ‘case of ‘flower’ and ‘flour’. The simplest solution is to seek a core of meaning and any homonymous items sharing the core of meaning should be classified as polysemous.

The phenomenon of polysemy is not restricted to full words in English. Multiplicity of meaning is a very general characteristic of language and is found in prefixes as well as full words. Let us take ‘un’ for example. When it prefixes a verb, it usually means ‘reverse the action of the verb’: undo, unpack, untie, unzip. When ‘un’ precedes a noun to form a verb, it can mean ‘deprive of this noun’: ‘unhorse’, ‘unman’ (that is, deprive of manly qualities). This usage is rare in English now but previously words like ‘unbishop’, ‘unduke’, ‘unkind’, ‘unlord’, occurred. When ‘un’ precedes an adjective, it can mean ‘the opposite of’: ‘unfair’, ‘ungracious’, ‘unkind’, ‘untrue’.

**Exercise (1)**

What are the components of meaning?

**SAQs**

1- Define the term ‘polysemy’.
2- What is homonymy?
3- Normally dictionaries decide between………. by referring to………..
4- What is meant by multiplicity of meaning?
2. Synonymy

Most people think of ‘synonymy’ as implying ‘having the same meaning’ but it is easy to show that synonymy is always partial, never complete. ‘tall’ and ‘high’ are usually given as synonyms but whilst we can have both:

A tall building
And:
A high building

We cannot have both:
A tall boy
And:
*A high boy

We can best define ‘synonymy’ by saying that it is the relationship in which two or more words are in free variation in all or most contexts. The closest we come to absolute synonymy is when the synonyms belong to different dialects as with:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>British usage</th>
<th>US usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autumn</td>
<td>fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estate</td>
<td>realtor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pavement</td>
<td>sidewalk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But even here the choice of one term rather than another indicates a regional preference. As well as regionally marked synonyms, we find synonyms which differ stylistically, in that one term may be more formal than another:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Die</th>
<th>pass on/ over</th>
<th>kick the bucket</th>
<th>decease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Steal</td>
<td>relief one of</td>
<td>pinch/ half inch</td>
<td>purloin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smell</td>
<td>odour</td>
<td>stink/ pong</td>
<td>effluvium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
And, as the above items also illustrate, items which are cognitively synonymous may arouse very different emotional responses, the A list below implying less approval than the B list:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conceal</td>
<td>hide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politician</td>
<td>statesman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stubborn</td>
<td>resolute</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total synonymy, that is, the coincidence of cognitive, emotive and stylistic identity, is more of an ideal than its synonymy can have an effect on the words and phrases than can co-occur with it. Let us illustrate this briefly by testing dictionary synonyms for ‘put up with’ and ‘noise’:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Put up with</th>
<th>noise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bear</td>
<td>clamour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brook</td>
<td>din</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endure</td>
<td>disturbance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stand</td>
<td>sound level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolerate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the verbs can collocate with ‘such noise’ although ‘brook’ is more likely to occur with words like ‘impertinence’, ‘offhandedness’ or ‘rudeness’, as soon as we try to substitute ‘clamour’ for ‘noise’ we meet our first problem. We can say:

I can’t put up with such noise.
But for most native speakers:
I can’t put up with such clamour.

Is unacceptable. In addition, if we substitute ‘din’ we need to include an indefinite article ‘such a din’, and the same applies so ‘racket’. What is being stressed here is the fact that items collocate and interact. We must take levels of formality into account in selecting synonyms.
Exercise (2)

Write about the continuum between pragmatics and semantics.

SAQs

Write synonyms for the underlined words in the following sentences:
1. We saw a tiny child.
2. He was praised for his kingly bearing.
3. He hid as the news from his mother and father.
4. He was overcome by the nasty efflrium.
5. Indicate the route to my abode.
6. He could not tolerate the noise.
7. He always referred to himself as a labourer.
8. She lit it.
9. He always nods off as soon as he sits by the fire.
10. Please don’t meddle with my possessions again.
3. Antonymy

This is the general term applied to the sense relation involving oppositeness of meaning. For our purposes, it will be convenient to distinguish three types of ‘oppositeness’, namely.

(1) implicitly graded antonyms,
(2) complemetarity and
(3) converseness.

(1) Implicitly graded antonyms refer to pairs of items such as ‘big’ and ‘small’, ‘good’ and ‘bad’, ‘young’ and ‘old’. In other words, ‘big’, ‘good’ and ‘young’ can be interpreted in terms of being ‘bigger’, ‘better’ or ‘younger’ than something which is established as the norm for the comparison. Thus, when we say that one fly is bigger than another, we imply that ‘big’ is to be understood in the context of flies. This accounts for the apparent paradox of a ‘big fly’ being smaller than a ‘small dog’ because ‘small’ in the latter context means ‘small when compares with other dogs’

In English, the larger item of the pair is the unmark or neutral member. Thus, we can ask:

how big is it?
how old is he?
how wide is the river?

Without implying that the subject is either ‘big’, ‘old’ or ‘wide’. Such questions are unbiased or open with regard to the expectations of the enquirer.

2. Complementarity refers to the existence of such pairs as ‘male’ and ‘female’. It is a characteristic of such pairs that the denial of one implies the assertion of the other. Thus, if one is not male, then one is certainly female. Notice the difference between graded antonyms of the ‘good’/ ‘bad’ type and complementary pairs.

To say:

John is not single.

Implies:

John is married.
But to say:

\textbf{John is not bad.}

Does not imply:

\textbf{John is good.}

In certain contexts, the following can be complementary pairs:

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|l|l|}
\hline
Food & Drink. \\
Land & Sea. \\
Transitive & intransitive. \\
Warmblooded & coldblooded. \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

Related to complementary sets of terms like colours or numbers where the assertion of one member implies the negation of all the others. Thus, if we have a set such as: green, yellow, brown, red, blue, to say:

\textbf{This is green.}

Implies that it is not yellow, brown, red, or blue. In a two term set such as (male, female), the assertion of male implies the denial of the only other term in the set. Converseness is the relationship that holds between such related pairs of sentences as:

\textbf{John sold it to me.}

And:

\textbf{I bought it from John.}

Where sell and buy are in a converse relationship. English has a number of conversely related verbs and so sentence converseness is a common phenomenon:

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|l|l|}
\hline
John lent the money to Peter. \\
Peter borrowed the money from John. \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}
Other frequently occurring converse verbs include:

- Buy and sell.
- Push and pull.
- Give and take.
- Hire out and hire.
- Least and rent.
- Teach and learn.

Occasionally, the same verb can be used in the conversely related pair of sentences as in:

- John rented the house to Peter.
- Peter rented the house from John.

And also:

- John married Mary.

And:

- Mary married John.

Sometimes, in English, we can find converse nouns corresponding to converse verbs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>command</th>
<th>serve</th>
<th>master</th>
<th>servant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>teach</td>
<td>learn</td>
<td>teacher</td>
<td>pupil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>treat</td>
<td>consult</td>
<td>doctor</td>
<td>patient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Exercise (3)**

Write a brief summary of Synonyms and Homophones
4. Hyponymy

Hyponymy is related to complementarity and incompatibility. Whereas the relationship of implicit denial is called incompatibility, the relationship of implicit inclusion is called hyponymy. This relationship is easy to demonstrate. The colour ‘red’, for example, includes or comprehends the colours ‘scarlet’ and ‘vermilion’ just as the term ‘flower’ includes ‘daisy’, ‘forget – me – not’ and ‘rose’. The including term in our latter example ‘flower’ is known as the ‘super-ordinate term’ and the included items are known as ‘co–hyponyms’ the assertion of a hyponym:

This is a rose.

Implies the assertion of the super-ordinate:
This is a flower.

But the assertion of the super-ordinate does not automatically imply one specific hyponym. We can, thus, say that the implicational nature of hyponymy is unilateral or works one way only.

One of the most useful features of the principle of hyponymy is that it allows us to be as general or as specific as a

SAQs

Select the most appropriate antonyms for the underlined items in the following sentences:
1. It was the smallest elephant I had ever seen.
2. My coffee is cold.
3. My feet are cold.
4. My house is cold.
5. He has dark hair.
6. He gave me a dark look.
7. The sky is becoming very dark.
8. He disappeared.
9. We arrived at noon.
10. It was a very wide river.
particular linguistic occasion warrants, as can be seen from the following hierarchies:

```
Plant
  /   
Flower push tree
     /   
Deciduous coniferous
     /     
  Pine    fir

Vegetable
  /     
Green pulses roots tubers
     /   
  Cabbage spinach peas beans carrots turnips potato yams
```

Often these hierarchical diagrams are called ‘taxonomies’. With each downward step we encounter terms of more specific meaning.

Hyponomy is a recently invented method of indicating the relationships that can exist between words. Occasionally, items have to be put into a context to see whether their relationships can best be illustrated by means of one classification rather than another. ‘black’ and ‘white’ are co–hyponyms when considered as colours but they can be complementary in discussions about race, draughts and piano keys.
5. Idioms

An idiom is a group of words whose meaning cannot be explained in terms of the habitual meanings of the words that make up the piece of language. Thus, ‘fly off the handle’ which means ‘lose one’s temper’ cannot be understood in terms of the meanings of ‘fly’, ‘off’ or ‘handle’. Idioms involve the non-literal use of language and they can be categorised as follows:

(1) **alternative comparisons**:
   - dead as a dodo
   - fit as a fiddle
   - good as gold

(2) **noun phrases**:
   - a blind alley (route that nowhere, a false trial).
   - a close shave (a narrow escape).
   - a red letter day (a day that will never be forgotten).

(3) **preposition phrases**:
   - at sixes and sevens (unable/unwilling to agree)
   - by hook or by crook (by whatever method prove necessary)
in for a penny, in for a pound (I’m involved irrespective of
cost’)

(4) verb + noun phrase:
   kick the bucket (die)
   pop your clogs (die)
   spill the beans (reveal a secret)

(5) verb + preposition phrase:
   be in clover (the exceptionally comfortable)
   be in the doghouse (be in disgrace)
   be between a rock and a hard place (have no room for
manoeuvre)

(6) verb + adverb:
   give in (yield)
   put down (kill)
   take to (like)

Idioms range from the semi–transparent where either the meaning
can be interpreted in terms of metaphor:
   clip someone’s wings (reduce someone’s mobility)
or because one part of the idiomatic phrase is used literally:
   run up a bill
to the totally opaque:
   go bananas (lose one’s temper)

They tend to be relatively fixed with regard to number:
   spill the beans and not *spill the bean

The use of determiners:
   a dead duck and not *the/that dead duck

The use of comparatives and superlatives:
   good as gold and not *better than gold
   red tape and not *reddest tape

Word order:
   hale and hearty and not *hearty and hale

The use of passive:
   they buried the hatchet and not *the hatchet is buried
   he spilt the beans and not *the beans were spilt
there is tendency for the more transparent idioms to allow some change:
run up a bill and run up an enormous bill
but:
kick the bucket and not *kick the enormous bucket
and there is a marked tendency for a few colours – black, blue, green, red and white – to be used idiomatically:
blackmail a blue moon a red herring a white elephant

Idioms differ according to region formality. They are more frequently found in speech than in writing and, because they are both hackneyed and imprecise, they are best avoided in formal contexts. Idioms are a marked example of non-literal use of language and, although they occur in all languages, they can rarely be translated from one language to another.

Exercise (5)

Relate semantics to syntax.
Examine the following sentences carefully and try to establish a hierarchy of the verbs used. (Put the most general verb at the top.)

1. He rushed down the road
2. He went down the road.
3. He walked down the road.
4. He strolled down the road.
5. He ran down the road.

Which of the above verbs are mutually exclusive? That is, if we assert one verb like ‘run’, do we automatically deny another verb?

Complete the following idioms:

1. as right as-------
2. a ------ moon.
3. By the skin of his ------
4. Burn the ------ at both ends
5. Bark up the wrong ------
6. Cry for the ------
7. Go on a wild ------
8. Bite the ------
9. Keep a ------ profile
10. Get the ------ gritty
OVERVIEW

Meaning is not an easy concept to deal with partly because we are dealing with abstractions (one person’s idea of ‘goodness’ may differ radically from another’s), with mobility (‘sily’ used to mean ‘holly’ and ‘regiment’ used to mean ‘government’), with difference of opinion (when, for example, does a hill become a mountain or a sea become an ocean?) and with distinctions essential in one language but not in another (the English only need one word for ‘sand’ but Arabs need many more). To meet some of these problems linguists have tried to deal with sense relations, that is, with the relationships that exist within a specific language, in terms of similarity (synonymy). Differences (antonymy), related sets (complementarity and hyponymy) and the non-literal use of language (idiom). They examine the lexicon in terms of systems in which individual words depend for their meaning on being opposed to other items in a set. (Good can only be fully understood by being opposed to ‘bad’ or ‘better’ or ‘worse’. In addition, qualitative adjectives can only be understood in terms of an implied norm. ‘Good’ for example can be used to modify:

Behaviour
Looks
Mood

We can even talk about a ‘good liar’ because, in each case, ‘good’ is related to a standard relevant to behaviour, looks, moods and liars.

Meaning is not ‘given’ and is never absolute.

PREVIEW

Dear learner, in unit six; which is the last unit, you are going to come through the area of language acquisition where to:

1- investigate the relationship between brain and language
2- define language acquisition
3- explain how children acquire language
4- write about milestones and stages of language acquisition during the child’s first months and years
5- explain how parents behave towards children as far as linguistic education is concerned
6- describe how second language acquisition,
7- and mention the principles of language disorders
ANSWERS KEY

EXERCISE (1)
There are two components of meaning:
- Meanings of the parts (lexical meaning)
- Meanings of the combinations (phrase meaning)

EXERCISE (2)

There is a continuum between Semantics (things that are true by the DEFINITIONS and RULES) and Pragmatics (things that are true by virtue of the REAL WORLD). Consider the following sentences:

- The rock ate my lunch.
  Semantically false, because "eat" requires an ANIMATE subject.
- The giraffe ate the hyena.
  Grey area, does SEMANTICS include the concept VEGETARIAN??
- The giraffe ate one hundred pounds of grass today.
  Pragmatics, how much DOES a giraffe eat in a day?

EXERCISE (3)

Two words with the same semantic features (meaning) but which sound different are called SYNONYMS (e.g. "sofa"/"couch").

Two words that sound (or are spelled) the same but which have different semantic features (meanings) are called HOMONYMS or HOMOPHONES (e.g. "bear"/"bare").

One word with multiple related meanings is called POLYSEMOUS.

In practice it can be difficult to distinguish homophony from polysemy.

Homonyms are one source of AMBIGUITY. One sentence can be understood in different ways if the meaning of one of the words changes:
"He hit the bat with the ball."

bat1 — the flying animal
bat2 — baseball bat

"She cannot bear children."

bear1 — give birth to
bear2 — tolerate

Polysemous words can also lead to ambiguity:
marry1 — to take as a spouse
marry2 — declare to be married

Jane married Bill.
Jane and Bill married.
Lanny married Jane and Bill.
Lanny married Jane.

So "X married Y" is ambiguous between marry1 and marry2.

Consider the following sentences:
John sold the house to Bill.
- John sold the house.
- Bill bought the house from John.
- Bill bought the house.

Now consider the analogous sentences for renting instead of buying, with John and Bill playing the analogous roles again:
- John rented the house to Bill.
- John rented the house.
- Bill rented the house from John.
- Bill rented the house.

Thus, "X rented the house" is ambiguous in a way which "buy"/"sell" are not.

Synonyms are different words with the same (or similar) meaning. Some people claim that there are no perfect synonyms, by which they mean words X and Y such that every sentence with X can be changed to a sentence with Y without changing the meaning. But this is too strong a requirement, because it requires ALL meanings of X and Y to be the same, and ALL grammatical properties of X and Y to be the same.
EXERCISE (4)

The meanings of combinations of words is largely a product of the combinations of the meanings of the words:

- \( \text{meaning}(A + B) = \text{meaning}(A) + \text{meaning}(B) \)

However, since some words have NEGATIVE meanings, the meaning of the composite can get complicated.

Some adjectives have a meaning that is largely independent of the noun that they modify. One example is colour words:

- a red balloon
- a red house

are both "red" in the same way.

Other adjectives (for example size words) have a context (prototype) set up by the noun, and the adjectives compare to the prototype:

- a big balloon
- a big house

As someone said, a big mouse is still smaller than a small elephant.

In both morphology and syntax, the HEAD sets up the main component of meaning and the context modifies the meaning:

- a bluebird — a type of bird
- a house with a white picket fence — a type of house
- John sold the house to Bill — an event of selling

What are Thematic Roles

In the case of sentences, the parts of the sentence play specific roles in the meaning, as determined by the verb.

John put the book on the table

\[ \text{Agent} \quad \text{Theme} \quad \text{Goal (a Location)} \]

The thematic roles for "put" are Agent (for the subject), Theme (for the object) and Goal (for the prepositional phrase).

Notice that the PP must be of the correct type:

- *John put the book in the morning.
- *John put the book at five o'clock.
Some thematic roles:
- Agent — doer of action
- Theme — thing done to
- Location — place
- Source — original place
- Goal — destination place
- Instrument — something that aids Agent in doing

Another example:
The boy carried the red brick from the wall to the wagon.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agent</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

EXERCISE (5)

Syntactic scope affects meaning.
- "old men and women"
  has two scope possibilities for "old":
  - narrow — modifies only "men"
  - wide — modifies "men and women"

Scope also affects the interpretations of pronouns. Consider the sentence:
- "THE PRESIDENT thinks that HE will win."

In this sentence it is possible to interpret HE in two ways:
- HE = the president
- HE = someone else

as in "What about Clark? Oh, the president thinks that he will win."

Now consider the sentence
- "HE thinks that THE PRESIDENT will win."

In this sentence only one reading is possible:
- HE = someone other than the president.

The reading HE = THE PRESIDENT is not possible! Why are the sentences different? First, some terminology. Let's call the item providing the reference for the pronoun its ANTECEDENT.
- Hypothesis: Pronouns cannot precede their antecedents.

But, consider the following sentences:
• "What about Bush's family, who do they think is going to win this year?"
• "Well, HIS wife thinks that THE PRESIDENT will win."
or
• "The woman who married HIM thinks that THE PRESIDENT will win."
These sentences, in which the pronoun (HIS/HIM) precedes its antecedent (THE PRESIDENT) are OK. Just like the Yes/No Question rule (Subject-Aux Inversion, see the Syntax notes) it is NOT the temporal order (first, last) that matters, rather it is the position in the syntactic tree. For pronoun-antecedent relations, the important notion is the SCOPE of the pronoun. Remember that the scope of an item is the things it modifies, the node where the item is joined into the rest of the tree. In the following diagrams the scope of the pronouns is marked under the words.

```
S
   /
  /  \  
 /    VP
/      /
/       \
/        /
/         S
/          /
/           /
/            /
/              /
NP         /  | NP  | VP
/          /  |   |   |
/            Art   N   V  Comp N  Aux  V
|            |  |  |  |  |
THE PRESIDENT thinks that HE will win.
```

================
HE thinks that THE PRESIDENT will win.

-----------------------------------

HIS mother thinks that THE PRESIDENT will win.
The woman who married HIM thinks that THE PRESIDENT will win.

The woman that HE married thinks that THE PRESIDENT will win.

As we can see, when the scope of the pronoun does NOT include THE PRESIDENT it is possible for the pronoun to be interpreted as referring to the president. When THE PRESIDENT is within the scope of the pronoun, co-reference is NOT possible.

The principle is:
- No antecedent can occur in the scope of its pronoun.

What are Semantic restrictions on Transformations
Recall that there is a transformational rule of passive that can apply to (1) to make (2).

1. John told Bill about the house.
2. Bill was told about the house by John.

The passive transformation moves the Object NP into Subject position and moves the Subject NP to a "by" phrase. However, passive cannot apply to STATIVE verbs:

- John resembles Bill.
- *Bill is resembled by John.
- The book costs ten dollars.
- *Ten dollars is cost by the book.

Thus, there can be semantic restrictions on the application of transformational rules.
Terms

Semantics
The study or science of meaning in language.

Polysemy
Polysemy (from the Greek πολυσημεία = multiple meaning) is the capacity for every sign to have multiple meanings. This is a pivotal concept within social sciences, such as media studies and sociolinguistics, due to the ideological implications.

Synonymy
syn·on·y·my (sĭ-nŏn'ə-mē) n., pl. -mies.
The quality of being synonymous; equivalence of meaning.

Antonymy
an·to·nym (ăn'tə-nĭm') n.
A word having a meaning opposite to that of another word: The word wet is an antonym of the word dry.

[ANT(I)– + –ONYM.]

Grammar
antonyms (an-tuh-nimz)
Two words with opposite meanings. Cold and hot are antonyms; so are small and large. (Compare synonyms.)

Hyponymy
Hyponymy is a paradigmatic sense relation of inclusion that means that the meaning of one lexical item is included in the meaning of the other.
**Homonyms**
Words which are written in the same way and sound alike but which have different meanings, eg lie (1) Lie down! (2) Don’t lie, tell the truth!

**Idiom**
A traditional way of saying something. Often an idiom, such as “under the weather,” does not seem to make sense if taken literally. Someone unfamiliar with English idioms would probably not understand that to be “under the weather” is to be sick.

**Taxonomy**
(in linguistics) classification of items into classes and sub-classes, eg speech sounds into vowels and consonants, consonants into stops, fricatives, nasals, etc.
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