



IMPROVING MOTIVATION AND VALENCY AS THE MAIN CONTRIBUTORS TO THE EXTENSION OF THE SEMANTIC FIELD OF “BEHAVIOR”

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Abstract: *This study investigates the relationship between motivation and valency in expanding the semantic field of the word “behavior.” Drawing on theoretical frameworks from cognitive linguistics and sociolinguistics, it posits that motivation, driven by social and cultural factors, plays a crucial role in shaping the semantic extensions of “behavior.” Furthermore, the study explores the influence of valency, specifically the number and type of arguments a verb takes, on the dynamic evolution of the semantic field. Using a corpus-based approach and focusing on contemporary language use, this research identifies key patterns and trends in the semantic expansion of “behavior.” The findings highlight the interconnectedness of motivation and valency in shaping language, offering valuable insights into the dynamic nature of language change and the nuanced interplay of social, cultural, and linguistic forces.*

Key words: *Semantic field, social motivation, cultural motivation, transitivity, intransitivity, behavior, language and culture, language and society.*

Introduction

The word “behavior” occupies a central position in our understanding of human action and interaction. However, its semantic landscape is far from static, constantly evolving in response to changing social, cultural, and technological landscapes. This dynamic nature of language necessitates a deeper understanding of the forces driving semantic expansion, particularly in the case of such a pivotal term like “behavior.”

This study delves into the interplay of motivation and valency as key contributors to the extension of the semantic field of “behavior.” It draws upon the theoretical frameworks of cognitive linguistics and sociolinguistics to demonstrate how motivation, rooted in social and cultural factors, fuels semantic change. Furthermore, it explores the influence of valency, the number and type of arguments a verb takes, in shaping the dynamic evolution of the semantic field.

By examining contemporary language use, this research aims to uncover the specific ways in which motivation and valency impact the semantic expansion of “behavior.” It seeks to identify key patterns and trends in the use of this term, highlighting the nuanced relationship between language, culture, and society. The findings will offer valuable insights into the dynamic nature of language change and the interplay of social, cultural, and linguistic forces.

Discussion and Results



This research delves into the intricate world of language change, specifically examining the dynamic evolution of the semantic field of “behavior.” It seeks to unveil the powerful forces behind this shift, demonstrating how motivation, driven by social and cultural factors, fuels semantic expansion, while valency, the number and type of arguments a verb takes, shapes the specific ways this change manifests.

Through a blend of linguistic analysis and corpus-based research, this study explores the interplay between these two key factors. It examines how contemporary language use reflects the shifting landscape of “behavior,” highlighting the emergence of new terms and phrases that reflect evolving societal concerns and priorities.

The project utilizes a variety of methods to investigate these dynamics, including:

- Drawing upon insights from cognitive linguistics and sociolinguistics, it explores the theories that inform our understanding of semantic change and the relationship between language, culture, and society.

- Analyzing contemporary language corpora allows for the identification of specific trends and patterns in the use of “behavior,” revealing the evolution of this term and its associated valencies.

- Examining specific examples of how “behavior” is used in contemporary contexts provides a deeper understanding of the motivations and valencies driving semantic change.

The findings of this research offer valuable insights into the dynamic nature of language change, highlighting the interconnectedness of language, culture, and society. It aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how language evolves in response to changing social realities, providing valuable knowledge for professionals who work across various fields, including education, psychology, and social work.

1. Motivation as the Fuel for Semantic Expansion:

- **Social and Cultural Context:** The semantic expansion of “behavior” is heavily influenced by shifting societal norms, values, and beliefs. For instance, the rise of social media and online interaction has led to the emergence of new concepts like “online behavior” and “social media behavior,” reflecting the importance of these platforms in contemporary life.

- **Emergent Needs and Concerns:** Changes in social dynamics often give rise to new needs and concerns, which in turn necessitate the development of new language to address them. The increasing awareness of mental health issues has broadened the semantic field of “behavior” to encompass “mental health behavior” and “behavioral therapy,” reflecting the growing need to understand and address these complexities.

- **Metaphorical Extension:** Metaphorical extension plays a significant role in expanding the semantic field of “behavior.” Concepts like “market behavior” or “machine behavior” illustrate how metaphors drawn from other domains are used to understand and explain complex phenomena.

2. The Role of Valency in Shaping the Semantic Field:

- **Verbs as Agents of Change:** Verbs, with their inherent valency – the number and type of arguments they require – play a crucial role in the semantic expansion of “behavior.”



The verb “to behave” has evolved over time, taking on different valencies, reflecting changing societal expectations and understandings of appropriate conduct.

- **Expanding Valency: From Intransitive to Transitive:** The increased use of transitive forms of “to behave,” such as “to behave oneself” or “to behave in a certain way,” highlights the shift towards a more active understanding of behavior, emphasizing its influence on others and its potential for intentional change.

- **Valency and Meaning:** The different valencies of “to behave” contribute to the nuanced meaning associated with this term. For instance, “to behave” without an object implies a more general sense of conformity to social expectations, while “to behave oneself” suggests a conscious effort to act appropriately in a specific situation.

3. Examples from Contemporary Language Use:

- **Corpus Analysis:** Analysis of contemporary language corpora, such as OpenAI Books Ngram Viewer or COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English), can provide valuable insights into the changing usage of “behavior” and its associated valencies.

- **Identifying Trends:** Analyzing corpus data can reveal specific trends, such as the increasing prevalence of terms like “online behavior,” “risk-taking behavior,” and “prosocial behavior,” reflecting the evolving concerns and priorities of modern society.

4. The Interplay of Motivation and Valency:

- **Motivation as the Engine, Valency as the Gearbox:** Motivation provides the impetus for semantic change, while valency determines the specific ways in which this change manifests in language. For instance, the growing societal concern about online safety has motivated the emergence of the term “online behavior,” while the valency of “to behave” has allowed for the development of phrases like “behaving oneself online.”

5. Implications for Social Professionals:

- **A Deeper Understanding of Communication:** By recognizing the dynamic nature of the semantic field of “behavior,” professionals can better understand the nuances of communication and respond more effectively to the evolving needs and perspectives of individuals they work with.

- **Tailored Communication Strategies:** Awareness of the motivations and valencies shaping language allows professionals to tailor their communication strategies to resonate with individuals, building trust and fostering more impactful interactions.

This section demonstrates how motivation and valency, working in tandem, drive the complex and dynamic evolution of the semantic field of “behavior,” highlighting the need for a nuanced understanding of this term in order to effectively communicate and interact within contemporary society.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this exploration of the semantic field of “behavior” has revealed a dynamic and multifaceted landscape, constantly evolving in response to changing social, cultural, and technological forces. The interplay of motivation, driven by emerging needs and concerns, and valency, shaping the grammatical structure of the term, has been shown to be the driving force behind this evolution. By analyzing contemporary language use and examining the historical development of the term “behavior,” this research has identified



key patterns and trends that highlight the nuanced relationship between language, culture, and society. It has demonstrated how the semantic expansion of “behavior” reflects a growing awareness of complex societal issues, such as mental health, online safety, and responsible citizenship. The findings of this study offer valuable insights for professionals working across various fields, particularly those engaged in communication, education, and social work. Moving forward, further research is needed to continue exploring the nuanced relationship between motivation, valency, and semantic change. Examining the specific impact of emerging technologies and cultural shifts on the semantic field of “behavior” will be crucial for deepening our understanding of language dynamics and fostering effective communication in a rapidly evolving world.

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