Polysemy and synonymy in the lexico-semantic group of great volume in English

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Los principales objetivos de este artículo son: presentar un breve panorama de la teoría de los campos semánticos; aplicarlos a una selección del vocabulario inglés y comprobar la validez del análisis componencial para la descripción de un campo semántico. Para la determinación de un grupo léxico-semántico, los autores aplican los enfoques semasiológico y onomasiológico, así como otros métodos de análisis. Con esta investigación contribuyen a una mejor comprensión del carácter sistémico del vocabulario y *al análisis de las relaciones semánticas que existen entre los vocablos estudiados aquí.*

In this article, the authors offer a brief analysis of thé theory of semantic fields, they apply the study of semantic fields to a selection of English vocabulary to prove the validity of componential analysis in the determination of a semantic field. In order to determine a lexico-semantic group, the authors propose several steps, including the semasiologjcal and onomasiological approaches, as well as other methodological procedures. They make a contribution to the analysis of the semantic relations that exist among lexical items and to a better understanding of the systemic nature of vocabulary.

The flourishing of structuralism in linguistics produced a great impact on the approach to the study of language; for the first time language came to be viewed as a system of interdependent and interrelated parts. These parts are the sound system, the vocabulary and the graimnatical structures.

Structuralist linguists emphasized the systemic nature of graimnatical structures and the sotlnd system but failed to acknowledge the systemic nature of vocabulary. As a result of this approach, they neglected the role which vocabulary plays in the process of communication (James, 1980:83). These linguists were more interested in fonn than in meaning, to such an extent that some came to doubt whether meaning could be studied as objectively and rigorously as grammar and phonology and even stated that meaning should be excluded from linguistics.

Chomsky's acceptance of ambiguity and synonymy among the basic data of linguistics, on the one hand, and the work of Soviet linguists, with a great emphasis on the relation language-thought and language-society on the other, opened a door for semantics; consequently, meaning has been granted a certain place in language study. This change has brought with it a heightening of activity in the study of semantic aspects and in the different groupings of vocabulary according to the meanings of lexical items.

In as much as semantic fields, one of these groupings, is the main concern of this work, the authors intend to:

—make a brief analysis of the theory of semantics fields;
— apply the study of semantic fields to a fragment to the English vocabulary;
—prove the validity of comnqnentiai analysis in the detennination of a semantic field (specifically a lexico-semantic group).

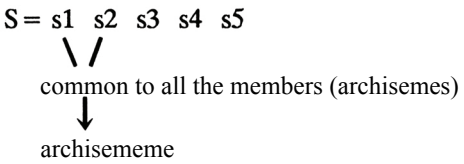
In the fulfillment of these objectives, the authors intend to contribute to a better understanding of the systemic relations that exist among the lexical items which are the object of our study.

The methods used in this work are analysis and synthesis and transfonnational, distributional, contextual and componential analyses.

Some of the ideas of the theory of semantic fields can be traced back to Wilhelm von Hmnboldt. Some of Saussure's structuralists principles also relate to this theory. But it is dining the 20's and 30's that many Gennan and Swiss scholars worked on the theory of semantic fields, among them Jost Trier, who has been criticized by employing a variety of tenns wihtout making their sense clear. This limitation, however, is not only seen on Trier's work; other linguists shift from pne tenn to another without previous explanations.

Later on, in his work on semantics, Bernard Pottier (1968) studied the group of lexemes that are used to name all types of chairs. He performed the componential analysis of each element end detennined the semes that fonned the sememe of each word. The semes which were coimnon to all the elements of the group were enumerated and, thus, the archisememe and the archisemes were detennined. The

relation among the seme, the sememe, and the archiseme was illustrated by means of a diagram:



Pother's method proved efficient not only in the detennination of words that belong to a certain semantic field but also in the differentiation of shades of meaning among these semantically related words.

Another important contribution to semantic analysis is the work written by A.J. Greimás, Semántica estructural; investigación metodológica (1973). He explains the concept of semantic axis (eje semántico) which is a common denominator of tenns by means of which the articulation of meaning is made evident. This concept is relevant for the detennination of the lexemes that fonn a given semantic field.

Karin Müller (1972) analyzed the linguistic field of verbs of movement in space. In her work on the macrofield of verbs of movement, she refers to the analysis of semasiological and onomasiological fields. This author rightly emphasizes the close ties between semasiological and onomasiological approaches and points out their relevance to the study of polysemy and synonymy.

An important conclusion reached by Müller is that an element of cohesion among lexemes is given by a semic axis. That is the semantic axis described by Greimás. The same semantic axis group lexemes under the same field.

A work we cannot fail to mention is the one carried out by the C. Dr. Leandro Caballero. In his doctoral thesis, Caballero compared the field of words related to the idea of appraisal according to large quantity in Russian and Spanish.

In his article "Introducción teórica al estudio semántico ideográfico de la valoración en el español de Cuba", he points out that his three main lines of approach to this aspect are the method of analysis of semantic components, stucture of ideographic dictionaries and classification of appraisal devices (recursos valorativos).

His objective is to elaborate a substantiated conception on the ways to classify the units of appraisal in an ideographic dictionary and to prepare and substantiate a new type of ideographic dictionary with a functional approach, that is, with information about the function of linguistic units.

Componential analysis

It is very difficult, if not impossible, to refer to semantic analysis whitout including componential analysis (CA). In this respect Lyons (1977b:317) states: "The majority of structural semanticists subscribe nowadays to some version or other of componential analysis". Arnold (1986:57) begins her chapter on componential analysis: "A good deal of work being published by linguists at present and dealing with semantics has to do with componential analysis".

CA has been defined by linguists in different ways; let us see what is coimnon among them. For Lyons (1977b:416), "Componential analysis is a technique for the economical statement of certain semantic relations between lexical items and between sentences containing them".

Kempson (1977:18) states: "Many linguists have turned to what has been called componential analysis to give an explicit representation of the systemic relations between words. In this view, the meanings of words are analyzed not as unitary concepts but as complexes made up of components of meaning which are themselves semantic primitives".

Arnold (1986:58) states: "Componential analysis is thus an attempt to describe the meaning of words in tenns of a universal inventory of semantic components and their possible combinations".

These definitions coincide in the idea of components of meanings and relations between lexical items. Thus, CA may be defined as the description of the meaning of a word by decomposing it into its semantic components (semes).

In order to illustrate componential analysis, almost all authors quote the very evident and delimited example of:

man = male + adult + human being

or

spinster = female + adult + human being + never married

by means of which the meanings of the lexemes are clearly descomposed into semantic components or semes. But not all lexemes are so easily decomposed.

In this respect, Kempson (1977:19) rightly refers to the relationship between the words of a given language and apparently independent components as in the case of the word *human* and the semantic component *human.*

Another important point presented by Lyons ((1977b:333) is that it is possible to provide several equally plausible analyses for the same set of lexemes. In this sense, Lyons asks: "Given that this is so, how do we decide that one analysis is correct and the others are not? He states that so far the question has remained unanswered. But it is our opinion that the solution to this problem lies in the combination of componential analysis with other types of analysis to have a wider view of the le-

xemes under study. Since tliis theoretical study will be complemented with a practical one, we will see how this aspect behaves.

The universality of semantic components is also a debatable point. Kempson (1977:99-100) considers three alternative views: the first, that all languages require the same set of semantic components; the second, that all languages can be described by a universal set of semantic components of which each language requires a sub-set and the third, that the description of all languages involves a certain set of semantic components, but that in addition a nmnber of semantic components have to be set up for the description of individual languages.

The assessment of the universality of these semantic components could be performed by means of a comparison of groups from different languages..

Lyons (1977b:334) points out a shortcoming of this analysis when he states: "Since componential analysis promotes the search for generalization, it is always liable to fall victim to rather facile overgeneralizations". This criticism is totally true. In many instances, it is not possible to enclose the meaning of a lexeme into a reduced nmnber of semes. It is for this reason that we think that, although CA has great value in the detennination of semantic relations among the lexemes of a semantic field, it has to be complemented with other analysis.

Steps for the determination of a lexico-semantic group

The critical analysis of the previous studies so far described lias prepared the ground for the practical work carried out in the present study with the lexico-semantic group of adjectives related with the idea of great volume.

The steps proposed by the authors for the detennination of a lexico-semantic group are the following:

— semasiological approach
— onomasiological approach
— semasiological approach
— componential analysis
— analysis of the role of syntagmatic associations and context
— structure of the lexico semantic group

The semasiological approach is based on the relation from sign to object signified (the one followed by traditional dictionaries).

The onomasiological approach is based on the analysis of the relation from object signified to sign (the one followed in ideographic dictionaries such as **Lexicon** and **Roget's Thesaurus of the English Language**).

Once the onomasiological approach is completed it has to be complemented by a semasiological approach by means of the analysis of the definitions of all the lexe-

mes that were given by the ideographic dictionaries consulted to verify their relation with the idea of great volume.

Componential analysis shows the interrelation among the elements, of a set because each lexeme is seen in its paradigmatic associations with other lexemes of its own lexical microsystem. This step is based on the analysis of dictionary definitions mentioned above. Transformational procedures are applied in order to determine the semantic components (semes).

The major procedures that are followed in CA are analysis of dictionary definitions, paradigmatic oppositions, syntagmatic associations and context analysis and introspection. Two or more procedures should be combined to make this analysis scientifically reliable. The first three were applied in the development of the present study.

The paradigmatic analysis described above was complemented with the analysis of syntagmatic associations and context. This integration of different types of analyses is extremely important; words do not normally occur in isolation. Their meaning is enriched or complemented by context.

A lexico-semantic group is a smaller lexical group consisting of words of the same part of speech that are linked by a coimnon concept. For this work, the group of adjectives related to the idea of great volmne was selected because it was considered important for pedagogical purposes. Sometimes the difference between two adjectives is so slight that only this type of analysis can give a foreign student of English an idea of their difference.

Most of these adjectives are polysemantic and their various meanings establish innumerable relations. More often than not, the authors have had to analyze the same adjective as one that expresses volmne associated with "quantity" as such or with "quality".

Semasiological approach

Following the steps proposed in the methodology, the word *big* was selected because, as a native English word, it has a monosyllabic structure, high frequency value and a developed polysemy (see Arnold, 1986:253). It was looked up in Webster's Dictionary to verify its connection with the idea of great volmne.

> big 1 a: of great stength b: of great force 2 a: large in dimensions, bulk, or extent, also large in quantity, nmnber, or amount b: conducted on a large scale 3 a: pregnant; esp: nearly ready to give birth b: full of bursting: swelling c: *of the voice:* full and resonant 4 a: CHIEF, PREEMINENT b: OUSTANDING, PROMINENT; esp: oustandingly worthy or able c: of great importance or significance d: IMPOSING, PRETENTIOUS; also: BOASTFUL e: MAGNANIMOUS, GENEROUS *syn* see LARGE

Onomasiological approach

Once this task was carried out, the word *big* was looked up in ideographic dictionaries **(Webster's Dictionary of Synonyms, Lexicon of Contemporary English, Roget's Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases, Roget's Thesaurus of Synonyms and Antonyms** and **The New Collins Thesaurus)** to find words semantically **con**nected with it.

Four hundred and forty nine words are in the ideographic dictionaries consulted.

Semasiological approach

As stated in the steps proposed, the onomasiological approach is complemented by the semasiological approach. This step includes the analysis or the dictionary definitions of all the lexemes given by ideographic dictionaries in order to determine the lexemes related with the idea of great volume. The dictionary used was Webster's Seventh Edition.

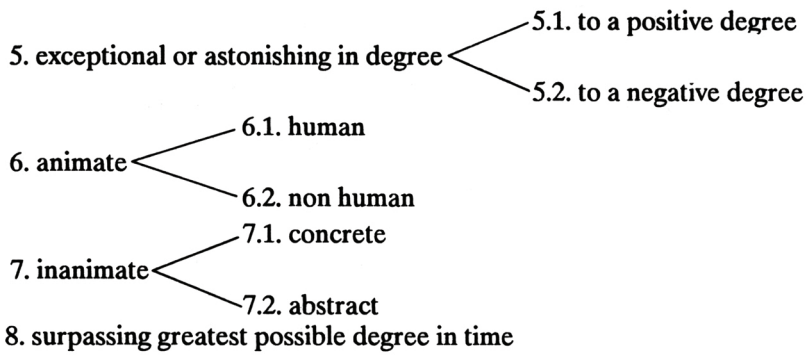
Application of componential analysis

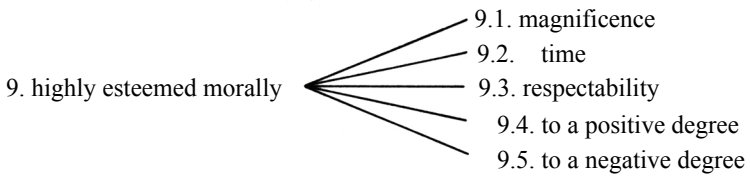
After the combination of the semasiological and the onomasiological approaches for the determination of the lexemes semantically related, the analysis of the semantic components (semes) of these lexemes was carried out.

This inventory of semes is the result of the analysis of dictionary definitions and their decomposition into semes by means of the method of transfonnational analysis. This analysis is based on the assumption that word meaning is not an unanalyzable whole but can be decomposed into elemantary semantic components (see Ginzburg, 1979:254-259).

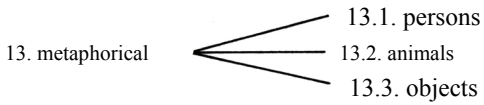
Inventory of semes

1. above nonnal size
   - 1.1. horizontally
   - 1.2. vertically
     - 1.2.1. upward
     - 1.2.2. downward
   - 1.3. in depth
   - 1.4. tridimensionally
2. to a medium degree
3. to a large degree
4. exceedingly surpassing





10. gradable
11. non-gradable
12. above nonnal amount



14. including great amount
15. qualifying parts of the body
16. to a maximum degree
17. lacking or exceeding limits

Fonnalization of the semic analysis

Due to the polysemous nature of most of the lexemes analyzed, the group had to be divided into lexemes related by quantity and lexemes related by quality.

Lexemes related by quantity

This first group is fonned as result of the analysis of the direct meaning of the lexemes.

1. measureless 1.4, 4, 7,8,11,17
2. numberless 6,7,8,11,17,12
3. countless 6,7, 8,11,12,17
4. innumerable 6, 7,8,11,12,17
5. sumless 6, 7,8,11,12,17
6. incalculable 5,6,7,8,11,17
7. unfanthomable 1.2,2,1.3,5, 7,11,17
8. inexhaustible 5,7,8,11,12,17

9. limitless 1.4,5,7,8,11,12,17
10. endless 1,5,7,8,11,12,17
11. boundless 1,5,7,11,12,17
12. untold 5,7,11,12,17
13. unnumbered 6,7,8,11,12,17
14. unbounded 1, 5, 7,11,12,17
15. unlimited 1.4,5,7,8,11,12,17
16. record-breaking 4, 5,7,11,12,17
17. lanky 1,6.1,10,15
18. rangy a) 1.4, 3, 7,10
b) 1.2,6,10
c)3,7,10,14
d)3,6, 7,10,14
19. long-legged 1.2,6,10,15
20. long-necked 1.2,6,10,15
21. giraffe-like 1.2,6,10,13.2
22. extensive 1.1,3,7,10
23. expansive 1.4,3, 7,10
24. roomy a) 1.4, 3,7,10
b) 1.4,3,6,10
25. ample a) 1.4,3,6,7,10
b) 7,10,12
c) 4,7,10,12
26. far-reaching 1.4, 3, 7,10,14
27. widespread 1.4,3,7,10
28. worldwide 1.4, 3, 7,10
29. global 1.4,3,7,10
30. uncircumscribed 1.4, 5, 7,8,11,12,17
31. shoreless 1.4,5, 7,11,17
32. extending 1.4,4, 7,10
33. spreading 1.4,3, 7,10
34. branching 1.4,3, 7,11,13.3
35. ramified 1.4,3, 7,11,13.3
36. super 1,4, 6, 7,11
37. supemonnal 4, 6,7,11
38. overtopping 1.2,3,6, 7,11
39. out-matching 1.4,3, 6, 7,11
40. enlarged 1.4, 3,7,10
41. big 1,6,7,10,12,15
42. colossal 1,5, 6, 7,13.3
43. dazzling 1, 6,7,10,12
44. superior 3, 7,11,12
45. trascendent 3,7,10,12
46. tremendous 1, 5,6,7,12,16
47. vast 1,4, 5,7,8,10,12
48. excessive 4, 7, 8,11,12
49. exorbitant 4, 7,11,12
50. extreme 5,7,11,16
51. rich 6, 7,10,12
52. major 6, 7,11,12,16
53. Herculean 1, 3,6,11,13.1, 7
54. gargantuan 1.4,3,6,11,13
55. Titanic 1,6, 7,13.1
56. Cyclopean 1.4, 5,6, 7,11,13.1
57. megalithic 1.4,4, 7.1,11
58. outsize 1,3, 6, 7,11
59. inflated 1.4,5,2, 7
60. sizeable 1, 2,7.1,11
61. considerable 1, 3,7,11
62. bulky 1.4, 4,6, 7,10
63. weighty 1.4,4, 6,7,10
64. voluminous 1.4,4,6, 7,10
65. mountainous 1.2,1, 4,7,11,13.3
66. multitudinous 12,14,6.1,11
67. grand 1,3, 6,7,10
68. grandiose 1,5, 6,7,10
69. great 1,3,6,7,10,14
70. huge 1,3, 5,6, 7,10,14
71. hugeous 1,3, 5, 6,7,10,14
72. immense 1,3,4,6,7,10,14
73. immoderate 1, 3, 7,11,14,17
74. imposing 1, 4,5, 6,7,10
75. inordinate 1, 4,7,11,17
76. large 1 , 3 , 6 , 7,10,14
77. largish 1, 3, 6,7,10,14
78. mammoth 1.4, 5,7.1,11,14,13.2
79. monstrous 1, 5, 6,7,10
80. monumental 1, 3, 4, 7,11,13.3

81. stately 1, 5, 7,10
82. stupendous 1,5,7,10,12
83. astronomic 1,3,4,11,12,7,8,13.3
84. comprehensive 1,2,6,7,10
85. king-size 1,3,4,6,7,11
86. large-scale 1,3,7,11,12
87. overweening 1,3,7,11,12,17
88. extensive 1,3,7,10
89. jumbo 1.4,4,6,7,11,13.2
90. plentiful 6,7,14,11
91. plenteous 6,7,14,11
92. superabundant 6,7,14,11
93. redundant 7.1,10,12
94. many 6. 7,11,12,14
95. elephantine 1,4,6, 7,13.2
96. gigantic 16,1,4,6,7,11,13.1
97. deep 1.2,2,1.3,7,10
98. profound 1.2,2,1.3,4,7,10
99. abysmal 1.2, 2,1.3,4, 7,10
100. tall 1.2,1,6,7,10
101. lofty 1.2,1,4,7,10
102. towering 1.2,1,4, 7,11,5,13.3
103. high 1.2,1,7,10
104. alpine 1.2.1.4.7. 22,13.3
105. mighty 1, 4,6,7,10
106. long-limbed 1,3,6,11,15
107. gross 1,3,4,7,11
108. giant 1,4,7,11,6,13.1
109. enonnous 1,5,6,7,11,12
110. massive 1.4,4,6,7,11

Lexemes related by quality

This second group is fonned as a result of the analysis of the figurative meanings of lexemes in which the archiseme is seme 9. *highly esteemed morally.*

1. princely 9.1,9.4,6,7,10
2. time-honored 9.2, 9.4,6,7,11
3. immemorial 8,11,7,9.2
4. sacrosant 9.3,9.4,6,7,11
5. sanctified 6,7,9.3,9.4,11
6. proud a) 6.1,9.3,9.5,10
b) 6,9.1,10.
7. honorific 7, 9.1,9.3,10
8. upper 3,6,7,9.3,9.4,11
9. senior 3,6.1,9.3,9.4,11
10. high-level 3,6.1,7,10,9.1
II. top-level 6, 7,11,16,9.1
12. uppennost 6,7,11,16,9.1
13. topmost 6,7,11,16,9.1
14. foremost 6,7,11,16,9.1
15. admirable 9.3,9.4,6,11,16
16. august 9.1,9.4,6,11
17. dazzling 6, 7,9.1,10
18. eminent 6.1,9.3,9.4,10
19. sublime 6.1,9,1,7,9.3,9.4,10
20. super 6,7,9.1,9.4,11,16
21. superior 6,7,9.1, 9.3,9.4,11
22. superfine 7,9,1,1.4,11
23. superlative 7,9.4,11,16
24. supreme 6,7,9.1,9.4,11,16
25. surpassing 7,9.1,9.4,10
26. tremendous 5,6,7,9.1,9.4,9.5,11,16
27. virtuous 6.1,9.3,9.4
28. excellent 9.1,9.3,9.4,6,7,11,16
29. exorbitant 4, 7,9.1,9.4,10
30. famous 9.1.9.3.9.4.6. 7,11,16
31. first-rate 6,7,9.1,9.4,11,16
32. glorious 6,9.1,9.4,7,10
33. superb 6,7,9.1,9.2,9.3,9.4,12
34. rich 6,7,9.1, 9.4,10
35. major 9.1,9.3,9.4,11,16
36. substantial 7,9.3,9.4,11

37. grand 9,16,6,7,10
38. imposing 6.1,7,9.3,9.4,10
39. magnificent 6,7,9.1,9.4,10
40. majestic 6,7,9.1,9.4,10
41. marvelous 6,7,9.1,9.4,11,16
42. noble 6,7,9.1,9.4,10
43. perfect 6,7,9,11
44. prime 6,7,9.1,9.4,11
45. stately 6, 7,9.1,9.3,9.4
46. bigtime 9.1,9.4,11,16
47. distinguished 6.1,7,9.1,9.4,10
48. eminent 6,7,9.1,9.4,10
49. lofty 7,4,9.1,10
50. high 7,9.1,10
51. mighty 4,6,7,9.1,11
52. towering 4,5,7,9.1,11

Syntagmatic associations and context analysis

As stated before, paradigmatic analysis should be complemented with syntagmatic associations and context analysis because the meanings of lexemes are delimited and enriched by context.

This analysis is applied to find out information as to the meaning of the lexemes under analysis in a given context. According to Ginzburg, in her book **A Course in Modern English Lexicology** (1979:248) "it is assumed that the meaning of any lexical unit may be viewed as made up by the lexical meaning of its components and by the meaning of the pattern of their arrangement, i. e. their distributional meaning. In this case the tenn distribution is used as to the aptness of a word in one of its meanings to collocate or to co-occur with a certain group, or certain groups of words having some coimnon semantic component (op. cit.: 249).

The lexemes given here serve as an illustration of the importance of this analysis. Because of the limitations of this work, only two examples are given. The texts selected were originally written by. native English speakers. These examples were taken from the novels **Airport, Wheels** and **Overload,** by Arthur Hailey; from examples given by **Webster's New Dictionary of Synonyms** and by **Under the Lion's Paw** by Hamlin Garland.

The *monstrous* turbin generator...

At birth it was a tiny, low pressure area, no bigger than a foothill homestead-next day, it rumbled up the Mississippi Valley, fat and *monstrous*...

The brashes scoured the runaway surface like *monstrous* yard brooms...

It was engulfed in a shattering, almost unbelievable crescendo of sound, a *monstrous* roar of power which seemed to seize the building and shake it.

The lexeme *monstrous* is used to qualify the lexemes *turbine generator, storm, yard brooms* and *roar* respectively. This fact corroborates semes 1,5, 7, and 11.

A *Herculean* task confronted them. Some 1700 miles of track to be laid through a wilderness.

By June of the first year the results of such *Herculean* toil began to show on the fann.

The lexeme *Herculean* is used to qualify the lexemes *task* and *toil.* This fact corroborates semes 1.3,6,7 11,13.1

Structure of the lexico-semantic group

In this lexico-semantic group, there are three semes which can be considered archisemes: 1. *above normal size*, 8. *surpassing greatest possible degree in time* and 12. *above normal amount.* These archisemes bring all the lexemes into the semantic group because the idea of great volume is given by size, time or amount.

The nucleus and the periphery of the lexico-semantic group were determined by means of the analysis of dictionary definitions, lexical oppositions and, in some cases by syntagmatic associations and contextual analysis. This last step was not followed in all cases because not all the lexemes were found in these associations.

The lexemes that belong to the nucleus are *big, large, great, enormous, immense, huge, vast, gigantic* and *mammoth.* Within this nucleus there are two synonymic groups: one fonned by *big, large* and *great* because of their coincidence in semes 1, 6,7,10; the other fonned by the rest of the lexemes because of their coincidence in one or more semes that indicate degree.

All the other lexemes belong to the group because of being connected with the idea of 'above nonnal'. Due to their polysemantic nature they may be found in other lexico-semantic groups. Among these lexemes small special groups are fonned according to their coincidence in semes. These semes may be considered the common denotatinal component which brings words into synonymic groups and therefore the small groups are synonymic groups.

seme 1.2.1	tall, towering, high, lofty, alpine
seme 1.2.2	deep, profound, abysmal
seme 1.4.	rangy, roomy, extensive, expansive, ample, spacious, widespread, worldwide, global, uncircumscribed, extending, speading
seme 3	overtopping, outmatching, enlarged, superior, grand, outsize, considerable, grand
seme 8	time-honored, immemorial
seme 9	princely, proud, honorific, upper, high-level, top-level, upmost, uppennost, foremost, topmost, admirable, senior, sacrosanct, sanctified, august, dazzling, sublime, super, superior
seme 17	measureless, numerless, countless, innumerable, sumless, unlimited, limitless, endless, boundless, shoreless, inexhaustible, unbounded, incalculable, unnumbered, unfanthomable

Conclusions

The practical study of the lexico-semantic group corroborates the postulates of the previous theoretical analysis. A relevant aspect is that the lexico-semantic groups are not clearly seen as independent groups without any gaps or overlaps; on the contrary, the most difficult aspect is the delimitation, if possible, of the words that belong to a field because most of them may be included under several fields. This phenomenon is due to extralinguistic as well as linguistic reasons. The extralinguistic reason is the law of universal concatenation by means of which all phenomena are connected in reality and this reality is reflected by words. The linguistic reasons are the polysemantic nature of words and the greater generalizing character of some words that give them the possibility of belonging to different semantic fields.

Componential analysis lias proved to be very useful in the detennination of the lexemes that belong to a certain lexico-semantic group, but this analysis has to be combined with other procedures because sometimes important details may be left out due to the generalizing character of this type of analysis.

The relation between the semasiological and the onomasiological analyses lias proved to be very useful. It has proved that not all the lexemes given by ideographic dictionaries belong to that lexico-semantic group.

In spite of the irregularities metioned above, regularities may be found in lexico-semantic groups. This theory provides certain principles for the organization of vocabulary and useful information as to the characteristics of polysemantic words and synonymic relations, that is, relations words contract within the system.

Since terminology is an area in which there is no complete agreement among linguists and which lends itself to ambiguity, the significant tenns used in this work are defined. Some definitions are taken from previously revised works which are specified.

Lexemes or lexical items: the simple fonn of a word as entered in a dictionary (Lyons, 1977a : 21; Kempson, 1977:79-80)

Sememe: a group of specific semes that make up the meaning of a lexeme (Lyons, 1977a:71; Müller, 1979:180)

Archisememe: a group of semes that is common to various sememes (Müller, 1979:181)

Seme: the minimum semantic distinctive feature (Lyons, 1977b: 326; Müller, 1979:181)

Archiseme: a seme that is common to various sememes (Müller, 1979:181)

Semantic field: a group of lexemes associated because of the similarity of their meanings

Lexico-semantic group: smaller lexical groups within a semantic field consisting of words of the same part of speach that are linked by a coimnon concept

Componential analysis: the description of the meaning of a word by decomposing it into its semantic components (semes) (Lyons, 1977b: 317-335)

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