Week 8: semantic and lexical change

[form] = ‘meaning’; FUNCTION

different [form] → sound change

different ‘meaning’ → semantic change

Semantic change: a word’s meaning changes independently of its form

Broadening: word’s conceptual space grows

Narrowing: word’s conceptual space shrinks

Bifurcation: word acquires second meaning, possibly related to first

Shift: old meaning is lost, replaced by a new meaning

Processes in bifurcation & shift

metaphor: experiencing or framing one thing in terms of another

metonymy a word develops a second sense related to the first

Synechdoche: a part is used to refer to a whole

Parts of phrases, parts of referents
Degeneration / pejoration: word gains negative connotation

Elevation / amelioration: word gains positive connotation

Euphemism: new word to replace taboo word

hyperbole: loss of strength of meaning

folk etymology: word (mis)analyzed as (a) complex and (b) having some meaningful component

hypercrcorrection: speakers extend some phonological or morphological pattern to

Possible causes of semantic change

interference & taboo avoidance

invention, technological advancement

sociological change

cultural contact & conceptual borrowing
**Semantic plausibility**: idea that some concepts are more likely than others to extend metaphorically

**Lexical change**

copying/borrowing/loaning words

fitting sound pattern of target language

cultural rather than core vocabulary

filling gaps

replacement of existing words

doublets

**Borrowings and detection of them**