

## Semantic Content of the Lexical Item *Open* and the Conceptual Dynamism Around its Uses

Kiyofon Antoine KONE  
Departement d'Anglais, UFR LLC,  
Université Félix Houphouët Boigny  
[kiyof15@gmail.com](mailto:kiyof15@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** This article aims at giving evidence that the conceptual dynamism with the use of lexical words in discourse can be adequately addressed in the psychomechanical approach based on the potential → actual relationship which exists between the tongue and the discourse. It gives evidence to the fact that the different scenarios around the uses of the lexical word *open* in discourse should be accounted for on the basis of the conceptual content attached to it. Furthermore, it is postulated that the potential meaning attached to the lexical word *open* allows the circumstances observable around the uses of *open* in discourse. In doing so, we postulate for a different view of lexical words meaning with regard to the context-dependent meaning position adopted by V. Evans (2006).

**Keywords:** potential meaning, open-class lexical concepts, semantics, conceptual system

**Resumé:** Le présent article appréhende le contenu sémantique lié à l'item lexical « open » en anglais, sur la base du principe de distinction portant sur la potentialité instituée en langue et l'effectivité des circonstances d'emploi que cette potentialité permet et conditionne en discours. L'analyse tente, en particulier, de montrer que les différents scénarios impliqués dans les emplois contextuels de « open » en anglais ont pour fondement le contenu sémantique dont il est porteur en langue, c'est-à-dire son signifié en puissance. Autrement dit, le contenu sémantique dont est porteur cet item est la cause des différents scénarios observables en lien avec ses emplois en discours. Dès lors, il convient de définir ce contenu sémantique en premier, et ensuite montrer comment il interagit avec les différents contextes ou scénarios observables en discours.

**Mots clés :** langue, discours, sémantique lexicale, système conceptuel

### 0. Introduction

It is common for a single word to have more than one meaning. However, in dealing with the variation of lexical sense which a given word expresses in different uses, one must find it crucial to distinguish between polysemy, a characteristic of a word and the extra-linguistic situations which are endlessly variable. In fact, attributing any apparent polysemy to the existing circumstances and not to the actualization of lexemes in tongue can lead to wonder how meaning can exist outside language.

The study of the lexical item *open* in V. Evans (2009) based on the different contextual scenarios in line with its particular uses results in the attribution of endless variable meanings.

The following uses of the lexical word *open* in Searly (1983) have served as illustrations in the study:

- (1) John *opened* the window
- (2) John *opened* his mouth
- (3) John *opened* his book
- (4) John *opened* his briefcase
- (5) John *opened* the curtains
- (6) The carpenter *opened* the wall
- (7) The surgeon *opened* the wound
- (8) The sapper *opened* the dam

Despite the fact that the different senses expressed by the lexical item *open* from (1) to (8) can be seen as instances of polysemy, that is, they stand in a close and systematic relation, V. Evans (*ibid:11*) postulates for each of the different uses of *open* a different meaning which involves 'complex and detailed knowledge about the sorts of scenarios' that *open* relates to.

As can be seen, relating the meaning of the lexical word *open* to the different scenarios involved in each of its uses is quite problematic, since it not only suggests that the scenarios in question are part of the full semantics of the lexical item *open*, but it also questions the nature of polysemy as an inherent characteristic of words. The basic question is how can polysemy be addressed on the basis of endlessly variable contextual scenarios?

The goal of this paper is to give evidence to the fact that the different scenarios around the uses of the lexical word *open* in discourse should be accounted for on the basis of the conceptual content attached to it, that is, an unvarying lexical potential meaning. Furthermore, it is postulated that the potential meaning attached to the lexical word *open* allows the existing circumstances observable around the uses of *open* in discourse.

Before getting into the details of the analysis, it should be mentioned that the article is structured around three basic sections: first, a sketch of the nature of lexical items in line with Evan's approach; second, the nature of language in the psychomechanical approach; third, the definition of the semantic content associated with the lexical item *open* in English.

## 1. The nature of open-class lexical items according to Evans

A good start in understanding V. Evan's analysis of the meaning of the lexical item *open* consists in taking a look at his theory of the nature of open-class lexical concepts. It is worth reminding that V. Evan's analysis of the nature of open-class lexical concepts is in line with the tradition of cognitive linguistics, which makes a distinction between two types of content associated with linguistic words: 'rich' content versus 'schematic' content<sup>1</sup>.

Schematic content is associated with closed-class linguistic units such as prepositions (e.g. *on*) determiners (e.g. *these, my*), the copula or 'linking' verb (e.g. *are*) and bound morphemes such as the plural marker (e.g. *-s*), and the progressive marker (e.g. *-ing*). By contrast, rich content is associated with open-class linguistic units such as nouns (e.g. *cowboy, flowerbed*) and verbs (e.g. *trample*) as illustrated in (9) below.

(9) *These* cowboys *are* *trampling on my* flowerbeds. (cf. V. Evans, *in press*)

More fundamental to the notion of 'rich' content associated with open-class lexical concepts is the idea that a single lexical word can be implicated in distinct perceptual rehearsals<sup>2</sup>. This is so because lexical items are more likely to facilitate access to conceptual structure which, in virtue of its nature gives rise to perceptually and phenomenologically rich aspects of experience. The following pair in line with the use of the lexical word *red* could serve as an illustration:

(10) The teacher scrawled in *red* ink on the student's homework exercises.

(11) The *red* squirrel is almost extinct in the British Isles. (cf. V. Evans, *in press*)

In line with his view of the nature of open-lexical concepts, V. Evans advocates for two different meanings of the lexical item *red* associated with two different mental rehearsals in example (10) and (11):

The distinction in meaning of '*red*' across these examples suggests that language has a role in facilitating simulations. After all, the same word form, *red*, gives rise to distinct mental rehearsals (i.e. simulations). The use of *red* in (10) gives rise to the perceptual experience of *a bright red hue*<sup>3</sup>, while the use in (11) ordinarily gives rise to *a dun/browny hue*<sup>4</sup>. The

<sup>1</sup> The cognitive linguistics tradition is exemplified, most notably in the work of Langacker (e.g. 1987) and Talmy (e.g. 2000).

<sup>2</sup> The term 'rehearsal' can be interpreted as a mental representation. That is, a single lexical word can allow different types of mental representations in virtue of its rich content which gives rise to perceptually and phenomenologically rich aspects of experience.

<sup>3</sup> My italics.

fact that the same word is implicated in distinct perceptual rehearsals is suggestive that the same word plays a role in the activation of conceptual (i.e., non-linguistic) knowledge. That is, *red* appears to have a role in the activation of rich content (Cf. V. Evans *in press*).

What warrants the claim that the lexical item *red* has more than one meaning in (10) and (11)? Admittedly, the phrases *a dun/browny hue* vs *a bright red hue*, evoke quite different mental images, but why is the difference attributed to *red*, and not to *ink* or *squirrel*.

As can be seen, postulating for a distinction in meaning between the use of *red* in (10) vs that of (11) results from a direct confusion between the *semantics* of the lexical item *red*, an intra-linguistic entity and the distinct referents to which the meaning of the lexical item *open* is applied, the extra-linguistic entities *ink* in (10) and *squirrel* in (11). As a matter of fact, the two types of referents which result from the use of *red* in (10) and (11), *a dun/browny hue* vs *a bright red hue*, do not imply two distinct meanings of *red* if we focuss on the conceptual content attached to the lexeme *red*. In both uses it is the same property “*redness*” which is being applied to different referential entities.

As highlighted by C. Ruhl (1989), the maximalist tendencies of traditional thinking put the semantic-pragmatic distinction in the wrong place in describing their inquiries as “conceptual” or “cognitive” and encompassing wide ranges of human ability.

Furthermore, it would be quite logical to think that for open-class lexical concepts to facilitate access to conceptual structure, they must be part of the potential a speaker (and hearer) has acquired for producing (and understanding) the words and sentences constituting discourse. V. Evans in accounting the difference between conceptual structure and semantic structure makes an insightful observation which can serve in understanding the point in the making:

The function of semantic structure is to provide *schematic structure*<sup>5</sup> which gives the *necessary ‘scaffolding’*<sup>6</sup> for conceptual representations, thereby facilitating linguistically-mediated simulations. This is achieved as semantic structure allows linguistic representations to pinpoint the precise conceptual representations to be activated by open-class lexical concepts in the conceptual system (Cf. V. Evans, *in press*).

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<sup>4</sup> My italics.

<sup>5</sup> My italics

<sup>6</sup> My italics

This observation provides an insightful characterization about the nature of words semantics and its function with regards the conceptual dynamism surrounding their uses in discourse. The fact that it is the ‘semantic structure which provides the *necessary ‘scaffolding’* for conceptual representations suggests that, at the level of the methodological or scientific approach, special attention should be given to semantics. That is, the semantic structure represents the *cause* of the conceptual dynamism around the use of words in discourse. W. Hirtle poses the issue dealt with in the following terms:

The fact of polysemy poses the fundamental problem for language analysis because it concerns the very nature of the basic entity of language: the combination of meaning and form, the symphysis of mental and physical that constitutes every word or morpheme. Furthermore, it is a problem which is commonly met in science: how to derive a plurality of effects or consequences from a single cause or condition (*Cf. W. Hirtle, 1989, p. 138*).

The issue of word’s polysemy has been adequately addressed in the psychomechanical approach based on the potential actual relationship which exists between tongue and discourse.

## **2. Language as a Potential**

One of the fundamental contributions of psychomechanics in the study of linguistic phenomena, including polysemy, has consisted in perceiving language as a reality based on a mental construct and a semiological construct. The former allows a cognitive function relating to the activities of *thinking, conceptualization or representation* and the latter to the activity of actual *expression*. In addition, one of the basic cognitive functions of language is the categorization of the diverse individual experiences construed from the universe into relatively stable concepts or classes or categories<sup>7</sup>. This particular cognitive function of language is a necessary precondition for any possible linguistically-mediated communication. Since *concepts*<sup>8</sup> correspond to the basic classes or categories of the language (cf. Hewson, 1964, p. 45), they must be stored in our mind as latent possibilities to express signifiable things with linguistic signs. Therefore, what is part of our linguistics knowledge, that is, what is stored in our mind as speakers of a particular language is rather the underlying conceptual content attached to the linguistic sign, not the different contexts or scenarios related to its

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<sup>7</sup> The three concepts are used to refer the same mental reality which will receive further explanation.

<sup>8</sup> We consider concepts to be potential meanings. The position adopted in this thesis represents a conceptual view of meaning.

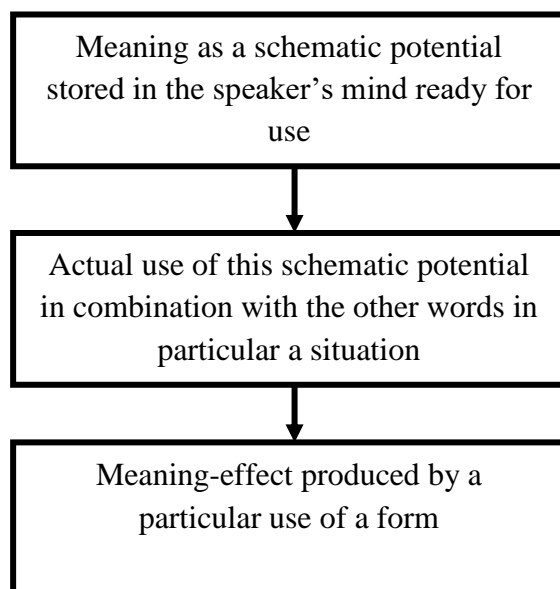
dynamic uses in discourse. Adopting the same view with regard to words meaning, Taylor (2002) makes the following insightful observation which is about how difficult language learning would be if linguistic meaning were to be equated scenarios, situations or realities in the world:

It is not difficult to see why the semantic pole of the linguistic sign cannot be an entity in the real world. There are countless trees out there in the world, each different from every other. If the word tree associated a pronunciation with an individual tree, we should have to say that the word has as many semantic values as there are trees. This would be absurd. Rather, we want to say that the meaning of the word is the 'idea' of a tree, a 'concept', a mental entity located in the mind of a language user. The concept of associated with the linguistic sign tree capture what is common to everything that we should want to call a tree (*cf. Talyor, 2002, p.42*).

The goal of this paper, as highlighted above, is to give evidence to the fact that the different scenarios around the uses of the lexical word *open* in discourse should be accounted for on the basis of the conceptual content attached to it, that is, an unvarying lexical potential meaning. This, subsequently, implies that it is the potential meaning attached to the lexical word *open* which allows the existing circumstances observable around the uses of *open* in discourse.

## 2. Methodological Approach

The conceptual content of a lexical item defined as a schematic potential stored in the speaker's mind ready for use needs to be reconstructed based on an inductive approach through observation and analysis of how the meaning of the lexical word *open* correlates with all its uses in discourse. The following model suggested by P. Duffley (2006) will be adopted as a methodological approach in working out the case at hand:



The task of the analyst in defining the schematic potential meaning attached to the lexical word *open* will consist in both seeking the commonality which lies behind the various uses of the lexical item *open* and identifying what contextual factors interact with this schema in any given use so as to produce the resulting effect observed.

In working out the issue of the semantics of the lexical word *open*, we choose first, to take a look at three dictionaries:

- *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (LDCE), Fifth Edition, (2009), Pearson Education Limited.
- *The American Heritage Dictionary of English Language* (AHDEL), Fourth Edition, (2000), Houghton Mifflin Company.
- *Collins English Dictionary* (CED), (2003), Harper Collins Publishers.

Then, the next step consists in taking a look at the different *characterizing traits*<sup>9</sup> of the lexical word *open* in each of the selected dictionaries in order to find out which of them are recurrent across the three reference documents. The recurrent semantic traits found will not constitute the schematic potential meaning of the lexical item *open*, but it should allow for the induction, or re-construction of the underlying schematic potential meaning.

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<sup>9</sup> We owe the term *characterizing traits* to Hirtle (2013), but it could be added that *characterizing traits* represent phenomenal attributes in the sense that they constitute attributes that can be known or perceived through the senses. They represent the descriptive meanings of the concept, in that they provide *the defining characteristics* as postulated by Kripke and Putnam (cf. Lyons 1995: 93) of a given concept. Therefore, both expressions will be used here indiscriminately. What is more, it should be noted that a characterizing trait corresponds to a way of viewing the entity talked about in line with the *notion of viewing idea* put forward in psychomechanics. It should be noted that characterizing traits can be said to represent the *semes of the concept* as defined by Ouellet: «Les sèmes sont des facteurs conceptuels qui constituent les notions; il s'agit de composantes sémantiques les plus élémentaires et les plus abstraites que puisse reconnaître l'analyse comparative des notions qui constituent les concepts. Une définition adéquate du concept suppose la définition des sèmes qui en opèrent la structuration» (cf. Ouellet 2005: 168).

### 3. In search for the characterizing traits of *open*

Given the limited space to detail all *the characterizing traits of the* lexical word *open*, only the recurrent ones will be mentioned regarding the dictionaries mentioned above.

#### 4.1 Characterizing traits of *Open* in Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English

- Not closed, so that things, people, air etc can go in and out or be put in and out;
- Not restricted, allowing everyone, or everyone in a group, to take part in something, know about something;
- Not secret ;
- Not blocked ;
- Not yet decided ;
- Start operating ;

#### 4.2 Characterizing traits of *Open* in the American Heritage Dictionary of English

- Language Affording unobstructed entrance and exit;
- Affording unobstructed passage or view;
- Having no protecting or concealing cover;
- Accessible to all Available; obtainable;
- To remove obstructions from;
- Make available for use;
- To give access to.

#### 4.3 Characterizing Traits of *Open* in Collins English Dictionary

- Able to be obtained;
- Without barriers;
- Unrestricted; unlimited;
- Free from obstruction;
- To render, be, or become accessible or unobstructed;
- Any wide or unobstructed space or expanse.



#### 4. The Schematic Potential Meaning of *Open* in Tongue

From the defining traits suggested by the dictionaries aforementioned, we can suggest the following underlying schematic potential meaning for the lexical word *open*: “*to make accessible by removing obstructions from*”. With regards to the theoretical approach adopted, the schematic potential meaning proposed should allow the possibility to account for all the uses of the lexical word *open* in discourse.

The underlying assumption is that, it is by virtue of the knowledge of the schematic potential meaning associated with the lexical word *open* that English speakers can exploit the word *open* in different contextual situations in order to make sense.

The ultimate goal with regards the rest of this paper will consist in making evident the fact that the conceptual dynamism around the uses of *open* in discourse can be accounted for on the basis the above schematic potential meaning proposed, *to make accessible by removing obstructions from*. This position is fundamentally opposed to the V. Evan’s position which is basically contextual-focus.

#### 5. Making Evidence the Semantic Content of the Lexical Item *Open* in its Uses

In line with the theoretical position adopted we will revisit V. Evan’s data (i.e. utterances) about uses the lexical word *open*. The first task will consist in identifying the contextual factors interacting with the potential meaning of the lexical item *open*.

(1) John *opened* the window

In this sentence (1), John performed an action, which is the opening the window. The word *open* interact with window, which is a hole cut in a wall or roof and that functions to admit light or air to an enclosure; the holme is usually framed and spanned with glass mounted to permit the opening and the closing actions. Based on this, we can say that a window has a double function: when closed, it cuts any access to the external light or air and in this instance it operates as an obstruction device. When opened, it allows access to light or air. This way, we can see that the action performed by John consists in removing an obstruction (i.e., the window) in order to create access to the light or the air. So, part of our experience is the fact

that opening a window responds to the need to get access to light or air. Therefore, the potential meaning of *open*, that is, *to make accessible by removing obstructions from*, interacts perfectly with the nature of the action performed by John in sentence (1).

(2) John *opened* his book

In (2), *open* interacts with the referential entity *book*. We know through our daily experience that a *book* stands for a set of writing on printed pages encased between covers. These covers have a double function: first, they inform us about the title of the book, the author's name; second, they function as protective covers, preventing the book from being damaged by water, for example. As such, they prevent us from direct access to the content of the book. Whenever we feel the need to get access to the content, these covers should be opened and this is the action book-readers usually do. We cannot get access to the content of the book unless we open it by removing the protective covers which can be considered as an obstruction to getting to the content. It is therefore by opening a book that we make the content accessible. Here again, the word *book* interacts with the potential meaning of *open*.

(3) John *opened* his mouth

The mouth can be perceived as a hole or an entrance giving out to a large cavity. We feed ourselves through the mouth, when we feel the need to drink; we do it through the mouth. So, our mouth can be perceived as the entrance to get into the inside of our body. When closed, it functions as an obstruction to having access to that inside. What is more, in the case of giving our opinion about a situation, we let other people have an idea about our opinion only when we open our mouth and speak out. However, if we do not do so, nobody will have access to. Perceived as such, our mouth can function as an obstructing device, and whenever we open it, it is like lifting this obstruction. Here again the potential meaning of *open* interact with the word *mouth* in that context.

(4) John *opened* the curtains

A curtain can be perceived as a movable screen or drape. In a theatre or hall, for example, it separates the stage from the auditorium or serves as a backdrop. In a house or a classroom, a curtain can prevent the light or the air from getting inside. As such, a curtain can function as

an obstruction to an access to. Therefore, the meaning of *open* interacts with *curtain* as the obstruction which should be removed in order to have access to.

(5) The sapper *opened* the dam

A dam can be perceived as a barrier constructed across a waterway to control the flow or raise the level of water. So what the sapper did when opening the dam, was lifting a kind of barrier. From our experience, we know that sometimes the specialist, that is to say the sapper opens the dam for some reasons. It may be for increasing the power of electricity. As can be seen, the contextual interaction of *open* with dam does not create a completely new meaning of *open*. *Open* always keeps its permanent meaning of making accessible by removing an obstruction.

(6) The carpenter *opened* the wall

A wall can be perceived as an upright structure of masonry, wood, plaster, or other building material serving to enclose, divide, or protect an area, especially a vertical construction forming an inner partition or exterior siding of a building. Perceived as such, it functions as a barrier. In more concrete terms, the wall prevents us from having access to the house of our neighbour. Furthermore, the presence of a wall between our neighbour and us prevents us from any interaction with them. Therefore, we can interact with them only if we lift that barrier which is the wall. Here again, there is no contradiction between the underlying permanent meaning of *open* and the function of the wall.

Let us now focus on some more figurative uses of *open* as pointed out by V. Evan (*ibid*). We take for granted that the different images evoked by the figurative use of *open* are provided by the context not by the meaning of *open* per se does not vary. And that is perceivable through the following utterances.

(7) John *opened* the meeting

Utterance (7) can be categorised as performative, that is, an utterance that performs an act or creates a state of affairs by the fact of its being uttered under appropriate or conventional circumstances. We usually refer to this kind of utterance in terms of speech act. The most

important thing to bear in mind is that, these kinds of utterances are performed under “appropriate or conventional circumstances” as indicated by J. L. Austin (1975). To achieve their “action goal”, the utterances should be performed by the one entitled to do so. For example, only a priest is entitled to baptise someone as a Christian in a given church. So, there is a kind of conditions to be satisfied or fulfilled in order for something to take place or happen. Without the lifting or the fulfilment of the conditions, the action cannot happen. So, in utterance (7), John by declaring “I hereby declare the meeting opened”, is lifting at the same time the possible hindrances that could prevent the meeting from taking place, as the one entitled to do so. In doing so, John renders the meeting accessible to anyone. Here again, we can realise that the permanent meaning of *open* correlates perfectly well with this speech act.

(8) The Germans *opened* hostilities against the allies in 1940

In utterance (8), *open* interacts with *hostilities* and *allies*. We know by experience that when people talk about *hostilities*, they talk about war, which is, fighting each other. On the other hand, people talk about *allies*, when there is a formal agreement between two or more states, known as a treaty. Therefore, the existence of any treaty of peace compels the allies not to fight each other. Perceived as such, the treaty becomes a hindrance, a protector or an obstruction to the triggering of war. For an ally to fight another ally amounts to violating the treaty. In other terms, s/he should break down this existing barrier functioning as a protector. And that is what the Germans did. Here again we fall within the purview of the underlying permanent meaning of *open*, *making accessible by removing obstruction from*.

Given the limited space we have for this paper, we will devote the remaining space to the analysis of some occurrences of *open* in contexts others than those described. Our objective in doing so is the same: to show that there is one and only one underlying schematic potential meaning associated with the linguistic sign *open*, which does not shift according to the context, and which can account for the various expressing effects deriving from its contextual uses.

- (9) *Open Medicine* applies the Creative Commons Attribution Share Alike Licence, which means that anyone is able to freely copy, download, reprint, reuse, distribute, display or perform this work and that authors retain copyright of their work.  
In *Open Medicine*, Vol 2, No 4 (2008)

In utterance (9) *open* functions as a modifier of the noun *Medicine*. The underlying idea is removing restrictions so that anyone can have access to the medicine in question. The collocation of the lexical item *open* with the morpheme *anyone* in the utterance (9) constitutes one of the indices indicative of its potential meaning. As highlighted by P. Duffley & Larrivee (2015) “*any opens up to all*”; that is, the notion of lifting restriction in order to make something accessible is also part of the meaning of *any*.

(10) *Open science* is emerging as a collaborative and transparent approach to research. It is the idea that all data (both published and unpublished) should be freely available, and that private interests should not stymie its use by means of copyright, intellectual property rights and patents. It also embraces open access publishing and open source software (rather than proprietary software, which limits others’ use of source code and data analysis methods). See Vol 2, No 1 (2008).

Like utterance (9), *open* in (10) functions as a modifier too, modifying the noun *science*. The key idea is that “all data (both published and unpublished) should be freely available”. In another terms these data should be made accessible to all without any cost. Here again, *open* correlates with *all*, conveying the idea “no restriction in getting access to”. That is, anyone in need should have access to these data.

- (11) A window *opens* on pay for bosses. Is it possible that shareholders will finally get a reliable view of what the bosses are getting paid? And that will come this spring? Yes. (See The New York Times, p.1, Friday, January 15, 2010).

In utterance (11), we can realise that a metaphor is used to talk about the pay for bosses which can be considered as the target. We have already seen that a window can be perceived as an opening constructed in a wall or roof that functions to admit light or air to an enclosure. If we take the house as the source, a window can play a double function. When closed, it prevents from getting access to the light or the air. But when opened, it allows getting access to the light or the air. In the aforementioned metaphor, we can realise that the idea of “*getting access to by removing obstruction*” is still present. It is in fact *the underlying commonality* which can be observed. In fact, if a window *opens* on the pays for bosses, it means that

shareholders can from now on get access to any information in line with the pay for bosses. It also presupposes that the obstruction in getting access to this information has been lifted. As can be seen in this metaphor, the contextual expressing effects deriving from the use a linguistic form or sign is, most of the times, related to the capacity of our mind in finding out commonalities between two or more situations.

- (12) Biliary stents are used to *open* blockages in bile ducts and other parts of the digestive system that from as a result of cancerous tumours. (*Ibid.*)

In utterance (12), *open* collocates with the word *blockages*, which can be considered as things that prevent from moving or making any progress. As such they can be considered as obstructions in getting access to something. In the above-mentioned utterance, they prevent from getting access to the bile ducts and other parts of the digestive system. By opening these blockages through biliary stents, we make the bile ducts and other parts of the digestive system accessible. Therefore, we can point out that there is a coherency in meaning through the collocation of *open* and *blockage*. But there is no shift in the constant inherent meaning of *open* as V. Evans is pointing it out. There may be a shift in the message depending on the word with which *open* collocates, but not in the inherent constant meaning of *open*.

## Conclusion

This paper makes evident the fact that the different scenarios around the uses of the lexical word *open* can be accounted for on the basis of the conceptual content attached to it, that is, an unvarying lexical potential. Furthermore, the analysis provided in the paper highlights conclusive evidences which show that it is the potential meaning attached to the lexical word *open* which allows the existing circumstances observable around *open* in discourse.

Failling to take into account the fundamental potential → actual relationship which characterizes the polysemy inherent to words, has led V. Evans (2009) to postulate almost *fourteen* meanings for the lexical word *open* in English. In fact, the analysis of the meaning of the lexical word *open* as postulated by V. Evans (2009) denotes a direct consequence of seeking for the explanation of meaning largely or solely in contextual factors.

This position in line with the explanation of meaning is problematic and quite untenable since it suggests that the scenarios or contextual factors in question are part of the full semantics of

the lexical items. Instead, the position adopted in this article which consists in defining first the conceptual content attached to the lexical item *open*, meaning “*getting access to by removing obstruction*” has proven conclusive in accounting for the different scenarios related to the uses of *open* in discourse.

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