

Chapter 5

Meaning Equivalence (ME), Boundary of Meaning (BoM), and Granularity of Meaning (GoM)

ABSTRACT

This chapter describe Meaning Equivalence (ME), Boundary of Meaning (BoM), and Granularity of Meaning (GoM). Meaning Equivalence (ME) is a polymorphous - one-to-many - transformation of meaning that signifies the ability to transcode equivalence-of-meaning through multiple representations within and across sign systems, and multiple definitions of a concept in multiple sign systems. Boundary of Meaning (BoM) is the boundary between two mutually exclusive semantic spaces in the sublanguge: (i) semantic space that contains only representations that do share equivalence-of-meaning with the Target Statement (TS); and (ii) semantic space that contains only representations that do not share equivalence-of-meaning with the TS. Granularity of Meaning (GoM) is the deepest level in which lexical label of a co-occurring subordinate concept appears in the Target Statement. It is therefore a measure of the 'depth of exploration' of building blocks of a super-ordinate concept in TS. Boundary of Meaning (BoM) and Granularity of Meaning (GoM) are concepts in Pedagogy for Conceptual Thinking, a novel teaching and learning methodology in the digital age (Etkind, Kenett & Shafirir, 2016). These constructs describe important aspects of learning outcomes.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-2176-1.ch005

INTRODUCTION

In many situations in daily life we feel the need to express the same meaning by repeating a discourse. This need seems to be non-specific to a particular content, and applies equally to different types of discourse: descriptive; abstract; narrative; and expository. For example, we repeat a narrative discourse when we “tell the same story again”. We sometime repeat an expository discourse when, for example, we give a “repeat performance” of a lecture on a specific topic to different sections of a class; or when we have to reconstruct a lost paragraph that has not been saved in time to avoid the calamity of a computer crash. On other occasions, we find it spontaneously convenient to repeat a sentence during a conversation that re-defines a complex conceptual situation. What is the meaning of “repeat” in such circumstances? Does it mean that the second (third, fourth, etc.) repetition is identical – equal in all details – to the first discourse? As is obvious to any competent language user, what we mean by “repeat performance” is not the verbatim quotation of the original discourse, but rather its re-representation: the re-construction and re-transmission of meaning.

While we may often feel that in subsequent representations we expressed ‘the same’ meaning as in the original discourse, it is easy to verify that, in fact, while conserving the meaning encoded in the original discourse, in subsequent representations we expressed this meaning in different ways. We accomplish this by paraphrasing - putting things ‘in other words’; by choice of metaphor; and by changing emphasis, point-of-view, discourse style, etc. Thus the original representation looks (or sounds) different from the second representation of the meaning; which looks/sounds still different from a third representation; etc.

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

Issues, Controversies, Problems

The term *meaning equivalence* (ME) designates this commonality of meaning, the meaning preserved across several such representations. Meaning equivalence is a polymorphous - one-to-many - transformation of meaning; it signifies the ability to transcode equivalence-of-meaning through multiple

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