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## Polysemy, semantic change, and lexical representations

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Lexical semantic change often, perhaps always, involves a polysemous stage in which the old and new conventional senses co-exist (Bréal 1900[1897]: 139; Egg 2005; Traugott 2006). What does this imply about the lexical semantic representations of words, i.e. what is in the mental lexicon for each word? According to ‘one-representation’ accounts (Falkum 2015; Vicente 2024), at any given time each word has one unified lexical semantic representation underlying its conventional sense or senses. I argue that diachronic lexical narrowing raises difficult questions for such accounts. Diachronic narrowing seems to require addition of a feature, but narrowing can be to polysemy or monosemy. To account for polysemy the newly added feature has to be optional in use; to account for monosemy it has to be obligatory. Should we introduce such a distinction into our model? I will suggest that to do this is to give up the advantage in parsimony that one-representation accounts have over sense enumeration, lending support to the latter, at least for irregular polysemy.

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