

Semantic Broadening and Its Implications for Meaning: The Case of English at the University of Venda in South Africa

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ABSTRACT Words have meaning which has been assigned to them by the users of the language. Meaning of words consists of a stable, core, inherent and objective denotative aspects plus any dynamic connotative flavours governed by factors such as geographical and cultural location, age, gender, education, socio-economic status, politics and others. These features allow for narrowing and broadening of the semantic value of words. However these attributes, should not negate the fact that for communication to occur or for commonality in interpretation of words, expressions and our intentions, there must be a core meaning impervious to innovative usage. Broadened or connotative-rich words and expressions have the potential to create misinterpretation in addition to localising ones utterances. This paper examines the notion of semantic broadening at the University of Venda in relation to selected words and expressions used locally and their impact on meaning creation.