# Does *love* come from *to love* or *to love* from *love*?
# Why lexical motivation has to be regarded as bidirectional

Motivation, defined as a synchronic relation between lexical units that manifests itself on both the formal and the semantic side of the linguistic sign (Rettig 1981:12ff., Koch 2001:1156), has traditionally been conceived as unidirectional (Saussure 1916, Ullmann 1966, Gauger 1971). According to Gauger, e.g. Fr. *pommier* 'apple tree' is motivated by *pomme* 'apple', but this motivation does not work the other way round: *pomme* is considered as opaque. For motivational relations based on derivation or composition this directionality seems to make sense. Generally, the lexical unit which shows "a semantic and morphophonological growth" (Iacobini 2000:866) is regarded as derived, i.e. as motivated: Fr. *pommier* differs from *pomme* not only in an additional suffix but has also "extra meaning" (ibid.). However, Iacobini's criterion fails if no difference in the complexity of two units can be determined, as is the case with e.g. conversion: Germ. *Liebe* 'love' – *lieben* 'to love' does not show a clear direction of motivation. As unidirectionality presupposes that this direction is identifiable, conversion pairs consequently cannot be regarded as motivated in this approach. However, it would be counterintuitive to deny a connection between Germ. *Liebe* 'love' and *lieben* 'to love', because both formally and semantically the two words are clearly connected. Similar problems arise with many polysemy relations, which, as recent approaches (e.g. Koch 2001) show, have to be included in motivational research. In order to solve this paradox, different criteria for the determination of direction in non-obvious cases have been developed (e.g. Marchand 1964, Aronoff [2]1981, Sanders 1988). It can easily be shown, however, that these criteria are problematic and insufficient.

But can the unidirectional concept of lexical motivation be really justified? In my talk I will show that a bidirectional concept accounts much better for lexical motivation. Evidence is provided by different approaches which prove that for ordinary native and non-native speakers motivation in a certain language runs in both possible directions: According to one of the organizational principles of the mental lexicon, words are assigned to word families. A certain lexeme, e.g. Germ. *Röte* 'redness' can not only be related to the simpler form *rot* 'red', but also to more or equally complex family members as *erröten* 'to redden' or *rötlich* 'reddish' (Augst 1998:XIff.). The same holds for L2 acquisition, where according to Meißner (1989:377) the meaning of unknown vocabulary can be inferred from already known words of the same language with the help of either expansion (En. *conscious* explained by *consciousness*) or traditional motivation (Sp. *tranquilidad* 'calmness' explained by *tranquilo* 'calm'). Similar results have been found by the systematic study of lexical motivation on the basis of speaker judgements currently realised in our research project: speakers motivate given stimuli not only by semantically and formally simpler, but also by more or equally complex words, e.g. Germ. *unterfordern* 'to ask too little from somebody' by the corresponding noun *Unterforderung,* which has an additional suffix.

Consequently, as far as the understanding, storage, and retrieval of lexical units is concerned, a potentially bidirectional concept of motivation seems not only to be cognitively more adequate but has also the advantage of allowing a uniform analysis of all types of motivational relations, independently of the degree of complexity of their members. Depending on the type of word formation process on which the motivational relation is based, one direction of motivation may be more salient than the other. The determinability of the direction of motivation is then a continuum with a bidirectional and a unidirectional pole.

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