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THE LEXICAL ICONICITY PRINCIPLE IN THE FRENCH LEXICON [1]

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ABSTRACT

The Functional-Lexematic Model (Martín Mingorance 1990) describes the internal structure of the lexicon in terms of its paradigmatic and syntagmatic axes. The paradigmatic axis configures verbal predicates in semantic domains and hierarchically constructed subdomains elaborate on the basis of shared meaning components following Dik's method of *Stepwise Lexical Decomposition* (1978b). The syntagmatic axis encodes the syntactic patterns of the predicates following Dik's predicate frames model (1997a). Predicate frames encapsulate information concerning predicate form, syntactic category, quantitative valency, qualitative valency, selection restrictions, and meaning definitions.

In this paper we will try to show the interrelation between both axes *(Lexical Iconicity Principle)* through the analysis of various subdomains within the semantic domains of SPEECH, PERCEPTION, COGNITION and EXISTENCE in the Frecnch language.

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INTRODUCTION

The lexicon of any language can be organized following the Functional-Lexematic Model[2]. According to this lexicological model, the structure of the lexicon consists of a *paradigmatic* axis and a *syntagmatic* axis. In this paper we shall demonstrate that there is a close relationship between both axes. This relationship has been formulated by Faber and Mairal (1997a) in terms of the *Lexical Iconicity Principle*.

After sketching the layout of the Functional-Lexematic Model, we will focus on the semantics-syntax interplay, a point that we will illustrate through the analysis of some subdomains within different semantic domains.

1. THEORETICAL PRELIMINARIES

As advanced above, the Functional-Lexematic Model postulates two axes as structuring devices in the description of the lexicon, the paradigmatic and the syntagmatic axes.

On the paradigmatic axis lexemes are arranged into a series of semantic domains[3] —each corresponding to a conceptual category— following the theoretical foundations of Coseriu's *Lexematics* (1977). Each semantic field is in turn grouped under subdomains within which hierarchical relations are established among the lexical units. The subdomains thus constitute the central level of the paradigmatic description.

On the other hand, according to Dik's method of *Stepwise Lexical Decomposition* (1978b), each lexeme is composed of an act nucleus, the definiens, and a set of relevant features that differentiate it from the other lexemes within the subdomain and the field. The term which codifies the nuclear meaning component is the *archilexeme*.

The elaboration of the syntagmatic axis entails the description of the syntactic patterns of the lexemes adopting Dik's predicate frames model (1997) as a notational device. The predicate frames include five types of information:

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[2] Cf. MARTÍN MINGORANCE (1984; 1985a,b; 1987a,b,c; 1990) for an exposition of the layout of this model which integrates Coseriu's *Lexematics* (1977) and Dik's *Functional Grammar* (1997) in the description of the primary lexicon.

[3] The following semantic domains can be distinguished (Faber & Mairal 1997): EXISTENCE, MOVEMENT, POSITION, CHANGE, PERCEPTION, FEELING, COGNITION, POSSESSION, SPEECH, SOUND, and GENERAL ACTION.

(i) the form of the predicate

(ii) the syntactic category to which it belongs

(iii) the quantitative valency, i.e. the number of arguments required by the predicate

(iv) the qualitative valency, i.e. the semantic roles of the predicate arguments and the selection restrictions touching upon them

(v) the meaning definition

Thus, a predicate like French *bredouiller* might have the following predicate frame:

$$[\text{bredouiller}_{V}\ (x_1\text{: human } (x_1))_{Ag}\ \ (x_2\text{: message } (x_2))_{Go}\ ]_{Action}$$

This frame indicates that *bredouiller* is a two-place predicate of syntactic type V, taking as arguments a human term in the function of Agent, and a term semantically marked as a message in the function of Goal.

In contrast with most semantic theories (e.g. structural semantics, cognitive semantics), which conceive the semantics of a word as something distinct from its syntactic properties, we claim that there is a strong correlation between the paradigmatic and the syntagmatic axes[4], that is, between a word's meaning and its syntactic realizations (*Lexical Iconicity Principle*).

This connection has been assumed by several authors:

— Levin (1991) claims that the syntactic behaviour of a verb is to a large extent predictable from the verb's meaning.
— Fellbaum (1990) postulates that the distinctive syntactic behaviour of verbs and verb classes arise from their semantic components.
— Atkins et al. (1988: 85,87) suggest that particular syntactic properties are tied to particular semantic classes of verbs and that semantic differences correlate with differences in the syntactic realization of arguments.
— Kiparsky & Kiparsky (1970) and Dirven (1989) discuss the correlation between a verb's semantic make-up and its syntactic properties in various verb classes. In accordance with this, Faber & Mairal (1998:2) remark:

> *«The information codified in the definitional structure of verbs on the paradigmatic axis determines their syntactic representation on*

[4] ATKINS et al. (1988: 101) speak of the «chicken-and-egg» relationship between semantics and syntax.

the syntagmatic axis, which in turn validates their position in a specific dimension».

Evidence of the close correlation between the basic semantic class of a verb and the way it behaves in language can be found in the following facts:

(i) The verbs within the same subdomain share the same complementation patterns. In Levin's terms (1991: 208-209), they «have in common a range of properties specifically concerning the possible expression and interpretation of their arguments.» Levin (1991: 208f.) gives evidence of this by indicating alternations in transitivity exhibited by activity verbs (*eat, type, sew, sweep, read*), on the one hand, and verbs of grooming or bodily care (*dress, bathe, change, shave, shower, wash*), on the other.

(ii) The semantic parameters that permeate each subdomain are syntax-relevant distinctions. Hence they are syntactically encoded. They affect the predicate structure of a verb and are influential in the delineation of the selection restrictions imposed upon the arguments of the predicate. For instance, the argument structure of the predicate *prononcer* (whose meaning definition is «*articuler les phonèmes/mots* ***d'une certaine façon***») encodes the semantic parameter of manner:

$[\text{prononcer}_{V}\ (x_1\text{: prototyp. human})_{Ag}\ (y_1\text{: prototyp. manner})_{Ma}]_{\text{Action}}$

This frame describes an Action qualified by a human Agent and a manner satellite.

(iii) The archilexeme tends to display a wider range of syntactic constructions than its hyponyms. This idea has been formulated by Faber & Mairal (1997a: 8) in terms of the following Lexical Iconic Principle:

«The greater the semantic coverage of a lexeme, the greater its syntactic variations».

Let us take the verbs *aimer* and *préférer*, which belong to the dimension *Eprouver du plaisir/de la joie* (To feel happiness), within the semantic field of FEELING.

Aimer: éprouver du plaisir.
SVO (NP)

(a) S = prototyp. human (Exp)
(b) O = prototyp. +concrete E food, drink (Go)
SVO-Infinitive
(a) S = prototyp. human (Exp)
(b) O = prototyp. action (Go)
SVO-Nominal Clause
(a) S = prototyp. human (Exp)
(b) O = prototyp. action (Go)
Si tu n'as pas goûté la semoule, tu ne peux pas dire que tu ne l'aimes pas.
Il aimait parler et pourtant n'était pas éloquent.
J'aime que ma femme m'accompagne partout.
Préférer: aimer qqch davantage que quelque chose d'autre.
SVO (O)
(a) S = prototyp. human (Exp)
(b) O = prototyp. +concrete ∈ food, drink (Go)
(c) O = prototyp. +concrete ∈ food, drink (Ref)
Ces biscuits sont ceux que je préfère.
Mon père préfère le vin à la bière.

Note that the archilexeme *aimer* shows a greater variety of complementation patterns than its hyponym *préférer*, which only shares with the superordinate the pattern SVO.

Similarly, as we move down the semantic scale —from the superordinate terms to the more specific words—, the number of complementation patterns decreases (cf. below). As Fellbaum (1990: 187) has pointed out:

> *«As one descends in a verb hierarchy the variety of nouns that the verb on a given level can take as potential argument decreases. This seems to be a feature of the increasing elaboration and meaning specificity of the verbs.»*

In the next section we will show how the Iconicity Principle also holds within the description of the French nuclear verbal lexicon.

2. The Lexical Iconicity Principle in the French lexicon

In order to illustrate the semantics-syntax interplay, we have selected a number of subdomains within various semantic domains.

2.1. The semantic field of SPEECH

The lexical domain of SPEECH verbs is one of the richest ones both paradigmatically and syntagmatically. It is divided into twenty subdomains and it activates a rich inventory of predications. On the other hand, the structure of this field is closely linked to the different ways of conceptualising speech. Speech can be seen as the production of a sound, which accounts for the domain overlap of SPEECH with SOUND. This conceptual parameter subsumes the following subdomains:

— *Dire qqch d'une certaine façon*
— *Dire qqch d'une façon peu distincte*
— *Parler beaucoup*
— *Dire qqch d'une voix forte/d'une façon brusque*
— *Manifester son mécontentement*

Speech may also be thought of as the assessment of the degree of occurrence of an action or event. This conceptual parameter, which permeates the subdomains *Dire que qqch est vrai* and *Dire que qqch va se produire*, links SPEECH to COGNITION. The verbs under the remaining subdomains express the interpersonal function of language [5]. Indeed, speech can be understood as a way of expressing one's attitude and of maintaining social relations. Such ways of understanding SPEECH are lexicalized as follows:

(i) Speaking as expressing one's intellectual attitude

— *Dire qqch d'une façon expresse*
— *Parler favorablement de qqn/qqch*
— *Dire qu'on n'est pas d'accord avec ce que qqn dit/pense*
— *Porter un jugement défavorable sur qqn/qqch*
— *Dire qqch pour faire rire aux dépens de qqn*

(ii) Speaking as inducing a course of action on the part of the speaker or the hearer

[5] HALLIDAY (1975) distinguishes three macrofunctions of language:
— *Ideational*: language functioning as a means of conveying and interpreting experience of the world;
— *Interpersonal*: language functioning as an expression of one's attitudes and an influence upon the attitude and behaviour of the hearer;
— *Textual*: language functioning as a means of constructing a text.

— *Dire oui à qqch*
— *Dire qu'on fera qqch*
— *Ne pas accepter qqch / Dire non à qqch*
— *Dire à qqn qu'un mal peut lui arriver*
— *Dire à qqn de faire qqch*
— *Dire qqch à qqn pour obtenir qqch*

(iii) Speaking as a way of interacting with others

— *Dire qqch à qqn sous forme de question pour obtenir une réponse/information*
— *Dire qqch en réponse à*
— *Parler de qqch longuement/en détail/de plusieurs points de vue*

Let us now analyse the subdomain *Dire à quelqu'un de faire quelque chose*

demander: dire à qqn de faire qqch.
dicter: demander à qqn en secret et à l'avance de faire qqch.
charger: demander à qqn de remplir une mission/fonction.
ordonner: demander à qqn de faire qqch (le médecin/les autorités judiciaires).
sommer: ordonner avec autorité à qqn de faire qqch.
enjoindre: ordonner expressément à qqn de faire qqch.
prescrire: ordonner expressément à qqn de faire qqch (qqn qui a l'autorité de le faire).
disposer: prescrire des règles de comportement.
commander: ordonner à qqn de faire qqch en vertu de l'autorité qu'on détient ou qu'on s'arroge.
décréter: ordonner qqch souverainement.
prier: demander à qqn de faire qqch avec humilité/déférence/politesse.
supplier/conjurer: prier qqn instamment.
inviter: demander poliment à qqn de faire qqch.

The verbs belonging to this subdomain are all transitive but differ in the syntactic realization of the object, as shown in the table below.

Synt. pat. Verb	O_D (NP)	O-Quoted Speech Act	O- That-Clause	O_D O (PP)	O_D O(Inf)	O_I O(NP)	O_I O(Inf)
demander			+				+
dicter						+	
charger				+	+		
ordonner		+	+	+			+
sommer					+		
enjoindre					+		
prescrire				+			
disposer			+				
commander							+
décréter	+		+				
prier					+		
supplier / conjurer					+		
inviter					+		

(1) Le gouvernement a décrété la mobilisation des troupes.
(2) Le surveillant ordonna aux élèves: «Mettez-vous en rang».
(3) Le règlement dispose que les élèves ne fument pas à l'école.
(4) On l'a chargé d'une mission délicate.
(5) La sentinelle a sommé l'homme de lui dire le mot de passe.
(6) Il dicta à son fils la conduite qu'il devait tenir devant ses supérieurs.
(7) La maîtresse de maison a demandé à ses invités de s'asseoir.

The verbs in this subdomain are hyponyms of *demander*, which is thus the archilexeme of the subdomain.

If we look at the definitional structure of the verbs, we notice that the meaning components of the definitions are (i) the definiens (*demander, ordonner, prescrire* or *prier*); (ii) the indirect object (*à qqn*); and (iii) the direct object (*qqch /de faire qqch*). Most verbs are elaborated in terms of manner: *dicter* («*en secret et à l'avance*»); *sommer* («*avec autorité*»); *enjoindre* and *prescrire* («*expressément*»); *décréter* («*souverainement*»); *prier* («*avec humilité/déférence/politesse*»); *supplier/conjurer* («*instamment*») and *inviter* («*poliment*»)

It is essential to stress that these meaning components are syntactically encoded as shown in the syntactic pattern governing this subdomain: SVO_DO_I. This three-place predication designates an Action qualified by a human Agent, a Goal argument and a Recipient argument, prototypically human. The direct

object function can be instantiated by a noun phrase (*dicter, charger, ordonner, prescrire*), a nominal clause (*demander*), or an infinitive introduced by the complementizers *de* (*demander, charger, ordonner, sommer, enjoindre, commander, prier* and *supplier/conjurer*) or *à* (inviter).

The fact that all verbs pattern syntactically in the same way suggests that semantic features are in consonance with syntactic features.

2.2. Semantic field of PERCEPTION

PERCEPTION is one of the most basic semantic fields in the lexicon. This is closely connected with the fact that our relations with the outside world are established via sense organs, through which we receive the information that we have to process.

The domain PERCEPTION is divided into six major subdimensions. The first dimension includes the verbs referring to perception through all senses. The other dimensions correspond to our sense organs: SIGHT, HEARING, TOUCH, TASTE and SMELL.

Visual perception is the most salient dimension of the field since SIGHT is the most central perceptual experience. This dimension has the widest range of projections into more abstract domains, particularly into mental perception.

Let us proceed to the analysis of the subdomain *Percevoir par le sens de l'ouïe*.

entendre: percevoir par le sens de l'ouïe.
écouter: s'appliquer à entendre qqch.
ouïr: entendre qqn/qqch (archaïque).

Syntactic pattern Verbs	SV	SVO (SN)	SVO-Infinitive	SVO-Nom.Clause
entendre	+	+	+	+
écouter	+	+		
ouïr		+	+	

In the first place, we note that the archilexeme of this subdomain (*entendre*) takes a greater number of complementation patterns than the other members (*écouter, ouïr*). As a matter of fact, *entendre* has the following syntactic patterns:

1. **SV**

The predicate frame for this government pattern has the following format:

$[(x_1$: prototyp. human$)_{Exp}]_{Process}$

This predication describes a Process encoding an Experiencer subject, prototypically human.

(8) Répète ce que tu viens de dire. Je n'ai pas entendu.

2. **SVO**

The predicate frames for this syntactic pattern have the following reading:

a) $[(x_1$: prototyp. human$)_{Exp}$ $(x_2$: prototyp. human$)_{Phen}]_{Process}$

This frame designates a Process and specifies the relationship between an Experiencer and a Phenomenon - the entity perceived. Both arguments are prototypically human.

(9) Parle plus fort. Je ne t'ai pas entendu.

b) $[(x_1$: prototyp. human$)_{Exp}$ $(x_2$: prototyp. -concrete $\in$ sound$)_{Phen}]_{Process}$

This frame differs from the one above in the selection restriction impinging upon the Phenomenon, semantically characterized as «sound».

(10) On entendit au loin le bruit de la foule.

c) $[(x_1$: prototyp. human$)_{Exp}$ $(x_2$: Cert Sim Pos e_1:
[Pf / Impf $Pred_\beta$ $(x_n)_{Ev}$ $)_{Phen}]_{Process}$

This predication specifies a relation between an Experiencer, prototypically human, and a Phenomenon, which, in this case, is an *Event* (Ev). Events are represented by a variable e_1. This *extensional* value is modified by an intensional value *Certain*[6]. The intensional properties of an Event indicate the

[6] MAIRAL (1994) postulates that the complement of certain higher predicates can be characterized by both extensional and intensional properties. The former indicate what the complement designates in a possible world. Several extensions are to be distinguished: *Quoted Speech Act, Fact, Future Fact, Event* and *Action*. These extensional values are in turn modified by an intensional value that is codified along a Scale of Evaluation. The combination of an extensional property and an intensional value gives rise to the complement meaning.

different degrees of occurrence of such state of affairs. The intension *Certain*, represented by the operator «*Cert*», indicates that the state of affairs designated by the complement is assessed as being the case with no alternatives available.

The object argument of *entendre* is then characterized by a *Certain Event* meaning.

This argument can be instantiated by an infinitive or a nominal clause:

(11) Nous avons entendu éclater la foudre.

(12) J'ai entendu que tu ne veux pas venir à ma fête d'anniversaire. Pourquoi?

In contrast, the predicate *écouter* has two complementation patterns:

1. **SV**

The predicate frame for this complementation pattern goes as follows:

$[(x_1$: prototyp. human$)_{Ag}]_{Action}$

This predication describes an Action qualified by an Agent, prototypically human.

(13) Ecoute! Je crois qu'on a sonné.

2. **SVO (NP)**

The predicate frames for this government pattern have the following form:

a) $[(x_1$: prototyp. human$)_{Ag}$ $(x_2$: prototyp. human$)_{Go}]_{Action}$

This frame designates an Action and specifies the relationship between an Agent and a Goal, the entity towards which the action is directed. Both arguments are prototypically human.

(14) Ne l'écoute pas. Il ne dit que des bêtises.

b) $[(x_1$: prototyp. human$)_{Ag}$ $(x_2$: prototyp. -concrete E music$)_{Go}]_{Action}$

This predication differs from the previous one in the semantic scope of the Goal, marked as «music».

(15) J'écoute toujours de la musique de chambre.

The analysis of the predications activated by the verbs *entendre* and *écouter* reinforces our assumption about the relationship between the semantic and syntactic properties of a word.

On the other hand, the differentiation pattern operating in this subdomain is **intentionality**: *entendre* is a non-intentional verb, whereas *écouter* denotes deliberate perception. This semantic parameter is linguistically codified, as shown in the meaning component *«s'appliquer à»* within the definition of *écouter*.

These differences in meaning correlate with differences in syntactic behaviour. As already explained, the predication of *entendre* designates a Process encoding a human Experiencer, while the predicate schema of *écouter* describes an Action qualified by an Agent.

2.3. The semantic field of COGNITION

The semantic field of COGNITION is very rich from the cognitive point of view. As a matter of fact, it can be said to be a metaphoriçal extension of the domain of PERCEPTION. The projection of physical perception into mental perception results from a metaphorical process from concrete to abstract. This accounts for the double membership of a few COGNITION verbs (*percevoir, voir, distinguer, remarquer, examiner*).

Some verbs codify metaphorical processes: *ruminer, remâcher, gober* and *avaler* focalize the ontological metaphor «ideas are food».

Furthermore, the configuration of the domain reflects our conceptualisation of thinking. For example, thinking can be seen in terms of its effect on the addressee. This parameter subsumes the subdomain which we will describe, *Faire comprendre qqch à qqn.*

déchiffrer: faire comprendre à qqn qqch de mystérieux/de secret.

débrouiller: faire comprendre à qqn qqch d'obscur/de confus.

tirer au clair: faire comprendre à qqn qqch de confus.

élucider: faire comprendre qqch à qqn en trouvant la raison de ce qui était incompréhensible.

démêler: faire comprendre qqch à qqn en discernant un/plusieurs élément(s) dans un ensemble de choses.

expliquer: faire comprendre à qqn ce qui est ou paraît obscur au moyen du langage ou de gestes.

éclaircir/clarifier: aider qqn à mieux comprendre qqch.

Syntactic pattern Verbs	SVO (NP)	SVO (Nominal Clause)
déchiffrer	+	
débrouiller	+	
tirer au clair	+	
élucider	+	
démêler	+	
expliquer	+	+
éclaircir	+	
clarifier	+	

(16) Un détective privé a débrouillé l'affaire du viol des adolescentes.
(17) L'instituteur nous a expliqué comment nous organiserons le travail.
(18) Si vous n'éclaircissez pas cette question, vous serez renvoyé.
(19) Après une bonne nuit de repos, elle a clarifié ses idées.

All the verbs share the nuclear meaning which labels the subdomain, «*faire comprendre qqch à qqn*». The differentiation patterns operating in this subdomain are the one describing the nature of the object (*déchiffrer, débrouiller, tirer au clair* and *expliquer*), and the parameters of manner (*élucider, démêler* and *expliquer*) and degree (*éclaircir/clarifier*).

Our claim about the semantics-syntax interconnection is supported by the following facts:

1) The semantic parameter decribing the nature of the object imposes a number of selection restrictions on the complement of the predicates in this subdomain. The complement is semantically characterized as «issue».
2) An exploration of the syntactic patterns of these verbs suggests that «the relationship syntax via-a-vis semantics is diagrammatically and iconically motivated.» (Faber & Mairal 1998: 10). Indeed, the verbs in this subdomain share the government pattern **SVO (SN)**. The subject is prototypically human and performs the semantic function of Agent, and the object, which fulfils the semantic function of Goal, is semantically marked as [-concrete].

2.4. The semantic field of EXISTENCE

The lexical domain of EXISTENCE can be divided into four major subdomains: *Exister, Commencer à exister, Continuer à exister* and *Cesser d'exister*. This division reflects the relevance of the time parameter, which acts as

a structuring device within the field and permeates a few subdomains (*Exister dans le temps, Faire exister qqch dans le temps, Continuer à exister dans le temps, Cesser d'exister dans le temps*). The verbs in these subdomains describe the existence of something in terms of time.

The domain of EXISTENCE is particularly salient from the cognitive point of view, since it is linked to the fields of PERCEPTION, ACTION, CHANGE, FEELING, POSITION and MOVEMENT (cf. Faber & Mairal 1998).

Below we present the paradigmatic organization of the subdomain *Exister dans le temps:*

se produire: commencer à exister dans le temps.
arriver: commencer à exister dans le temps.
se passer: commencer à exister dans le temps.
se produire: commencer à exister dans le temps.
arriver: commencer à exister dans le temps.
se passer: commencer à exister dans le temps.
survenir: se produire de façon inattendue et brusque.
advenir: se produire de façon imprévisible.
s'ensuivre: se produire à la suite de qqch.
avoir lieu: se produire à un endroit ou à un moment donné.
coïncider: se produire dans le même lieu au même moment.
se reproduire: se produire une nouvelle fois.

As shown below, the predicates in this subdomain display a wide range of complementation patterns.

Pattern Verbs	SV	SVO (PP)	SV (Adjunct)	SV (O_i) (Adj)	SV TC[7] (NP) (Adjunct)	SV TC (That-C) (Adjunct)	SVO_i TC (NP) (Adjunct)	SVO_i TC (Inf) (Adjunct)
se produire			+		+			
arriver				+	+	+	+	+
se passer			+		+			
survenir			+		+			
advenir					+			
s'ensuivre					+			
avoir lieu			+					
coïncider	+	+						
se reproduire			+					

[7] We use the French label «*terme complétif*» (term completing the subject) as it has no English equivalent. The syntactic patterns SVTC (NP) (Adjunct), SVTC (That-Clause) (Adjunct),

(20) Sa venue a coïncidé avec mon départ aux Etats-Unis.
(21) Une explosion s'est produite dans l'usine.
(22) Une coupure de courant survint au beau milieu du discours.
(23) Ne riez pas: cela pourrait bien vous arriver.
(24) Il ne s'est rien passé d'extraordinaire.
(25) Gardons confiance, quoi qu'il advienne.
(26) Quand j'étais étudiant, il m'arrivait parfois de manquer les cours.

The verbs belonging to this subdomain describe the existence of an event characterized by a temporal dimension. This accounts for the semantic path of the subject argument, semantically marked as «event» ([+dynamic]).

Further, the time parameter is so salient that it is codified in the predicate frame, as shown in the presence of a time satellite:

$[(x_1$: prototyp. event$)_{Fo}$ $(y_1$: prototyp. time, place$)_{Ti/Loc}]_{Process}$

This frame designates a Process qualified by an argument fulfilling the semantic function of Force, and a time/place satellite.

Paradigmatic distinctions are thus in accord with syntagmatic features.

3. Conclusions

In conclusion, the lexicon is not a random set of words, but a network of interrelated units that belong to a series of fields structured both paradigmatically and syntagmatically. On the paradigmatic axis, the lexemes are grouped under semantic domains, while the syntagmatic axis specifies the syntactic patterns of these predicates.

We have sought to demonstrate the interconnection between the semantics of a word and its syntactic realizations (*Lexical Iconicity Principle*) through the analysis of the paradigmatic and syntagmatic axes in a number of subdomains within the domains of SPEECH, PERCEPTION, COGNITION and EXISTENCE. This analysis has given proof of the following facts:

SVO_t TC (NP) (Adjunct) and SVO_t TC (Infinitive) (Adjunct) involve extraposition of the subject (cf. Noonan 1985). This implies that the subject is moved to sentence final position and the subject slot is filled by the pronoun *il*, which is empty of lexical content. As a result, the extraposed element loses its grammatical role. It no longer functions as the subject. Yet it retains in some way its syntactic status as far as it qualifies the subject *il* - it is the *terme complétif du sujet*. This element can be realized as a noun phrase or as a nominal clause.

a) Certain semantic parameters are syntactically relevant.
b) The semantic parameters may narrow the semantic scope of the predicate arguments.
c) The verbs under the same subdomain share the same complementation patterns.
d) The number of syntactic patterns of a verb decreases as it goes down on the semantic hierarchy.

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