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# Words and Meanings: Lexical Semantics Across Domains, Languages, and Cultures

*By Cliff Goddard, Anna Wierzbicka*



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In a series of cross-cultural investigations of word meaning, Cliff Goddard and Anna Wierzbicka examine key expressions from different domains of the lexicon - concrete, abstract, physical, sensory, emotional, and social. They focus on complex and culturally important words in a range of languages that includes English, Russian, Polish, French, Warlpiri, and Malay. Some are basic like men, women, and children or abstract nouns like trauma and violence; others describe qualities such as hot, hard, and rough, emotions like happiness and sadness, or feelings like pain. They ground their discussions in real examples from different cultures and draw on work ranging from Leibniz, Locke, and Bentham, to popular works such as autobiographies and memoirs, and the Dalai Lama on happiness.

The book opens with a review of the neglected status of lexical semantics in linguistics. The authors consider a range of analytical issues including lexical polysemy, semantic change, the relationship between lexical and grammatical semantics, and the concepts of semantic molecules and templates. Their fascinating book is for everyone interested in the relations between meaning, culture, ideas, and words.



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**Words and Meanings: Lexical Semantics Across Domains, Languages, and Cultures** By Cliff Goddard, Anna Wierzbicka **Bibliography**

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### Review

"Words and Meanings is the culmination of a wealth of research by the authors into cross-cultural semantics and the feasibility of using a semantic metalanguage... Overall, Words and Meanings is a thought-provoking text that discusses a wide range of lexical sets, and presents a good introduction to the Natural Semantic Metalanguage for those unfamiliar with it, but will also be of interest to those already engaged in scholarly work within this theoretical perspective." --LinguistList

### About the Author

**Cliff Goddard** is Professor of Linguistics at Griffith University, Brisbane. His books include *Semantic Analysis* (OUP 1998, 2nd edn 2011), *Cross-Linguistic Semantics* (ed., 2008, John Benjamins), and *The Languages of East and Southeast Asia: An Introduction* (2005, OUP).

**Anna Wierzbicka** is Professor of Linguistics at Australian National University. Her many books include *Semantics: Primes and Universals* (OUP 1996), *Emotions across Languages and Cultures* (CUP 1999), and *Experience, Evidence & Sense: The hidden cultural legacy of English* (OUP 2010).

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