Linguistics E: Class 5 Prototype theory

1　Prototype Theory

Eleanoir Rosch is known for her work in concepts and categorization in cognitive psychology which has been influential in many fields (one of which is prototype theory in linguistics) and for her more recent work on Eastern psychologies and the psychology of religion.
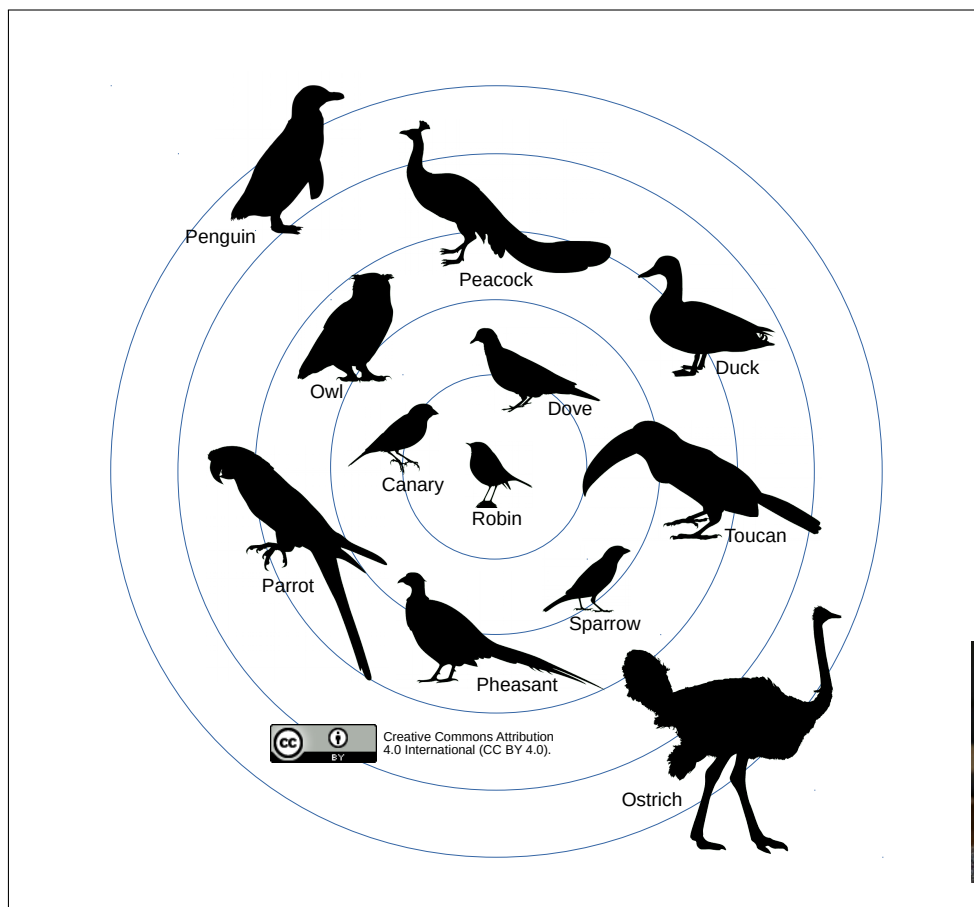
Q.1 Which bird is the typical to you in Fig. 1?

Q.2 What does the center and periphery circles mean in Fig. 1?

Q.3 Look at Fig. 1 and discuss if it agrees with your thoughts.

Q.4 Based on what you understand in Fig. 1, discuss the relationship between human cognition, naming and meaning.

Q.5 In order to draw a diagram like Fig. 1, what other object can you investigate besides "birds"?

Fig. 1　Which bird is the typical? Recreate based on (Rosch 1973, 1987)

Eleanor Rosch, 1938–

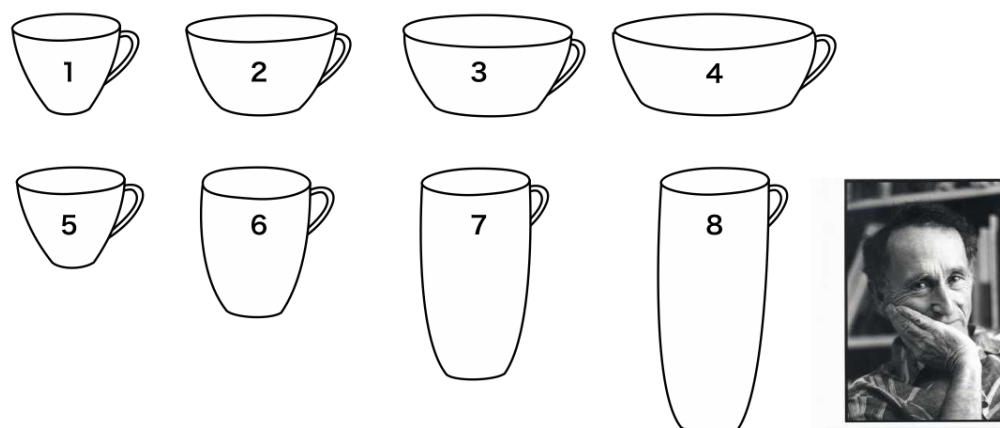## 2   Categorization of objects and language

Fig. 2   Which is a cup, a bowl, and a vase?; based on (Labov 1973)
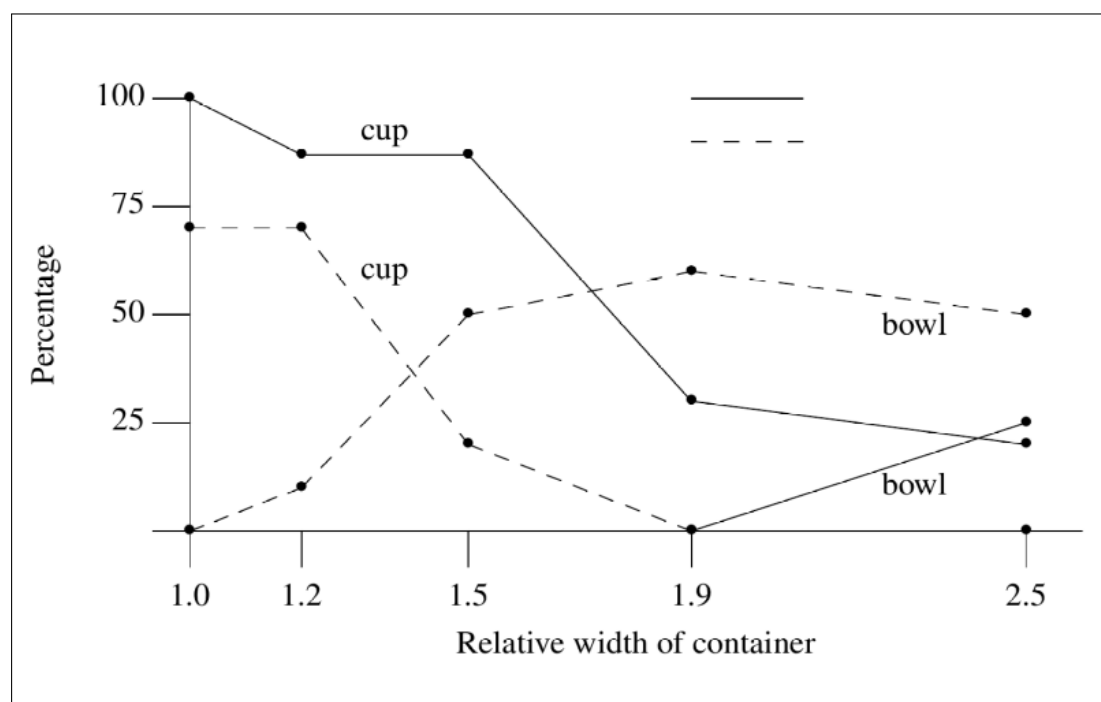
William Labov,
1927.12.4–

Fig. 3   What does the dotted line mean? what does the solid line mean?

Q.6 Labov (1973)'s respondents identified items as "a cup" or "a bowl," with the items often featuring characteristics of both. Which do you choose as a cup, a bowl, or a vase?

Q.7 How do you approach to find out the border between the two?

Q.8 Which elements of these two objects will you pay attention to?

Q.9 Interpret and discuss the elements shown Labov (1973)' results in Fig. 3.

Q.10 What do the dotted line and the solid line mean respectively in Fig. 3.

3 Language constantly changes

Q.11 When using a machine with that you can record something, there is a 'rewind' indication on it, but what will you 'rewind' in fact? Also, look for something that has different meanings with the name.

Q.12 Discuss why the meaning of word changes easily.

Q.13 Discuss if the meaning of word can be artificially changed.

4 Research project

Q.14 Discuss how do you explain what you want to address with your poster.

Q.15 Which do you use the designated template or your own original format for your presentation? What must be included when creating an original format? If you were to create an original format, what kind of improvements would you make?

References

Labov, William (1973) "The boundaries of words and their meanings", in Charles-James Bailey and Roger W. Shuy eds. *New Waysof Analyzing Variation in English*, Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, pp. 340–371.

Rosch, Elenor (1973) "Natural categories", *Cognitive Psychology*, Vol. 4, pp. 328–350.

——— (1987) "Wittgenstein and Categorization Research in Cognitive Psychology", in Dixon R.A. Chapman M. ed. *Meaning and the Growth of Understanding: Wittgenstein's Significance for Developmental Psychology*, Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer, Chap. 9, pp. 151–166.