

**SEMANTIC DESCRIPTION OF ADJECTIVES SUCH AS
LONG, TALL, HIGH, LOW AND SHORT IN THREE LANGUAGES:
ENGLISH, PERSIAN AND AZERBAIJANI**

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Introduction

Dimensional adjectives have been studied to a fairly great extent over the last four decades. The studies treat European languages with few exceptions (cf. Zubin and Choi 1984, Stolz 1996, Wienold and Rohmer 1997, and Lang 2001). Dimensions must always be understood as approximations, since very few objects have such a regular shape that each dimension is easily discernible or measurable. However, when placed on the ground or somewhere else, for instance when stored, etc., objects are generally perceived and understood as assuming a position with the dimensions aligned with the vertical and the horizontal axes. Geometric configurations may have one, two or three dimensions. A one dimensional unit is a line, an example of a two-dimensional unit is a surface and an example of a three-dimensional unit is a cube. Objects in the real world have three dimensions (except light projections), but parts of an object may have fewer, such as the top of a table forming a two dimensional surface. Further, objects may be idealised to two or one dimensional units, such as a three-dimensional lawn is comprehended as a two-dimensional surface (Herskovits 1986, Jackendoff and Landau 1991). In this article, an overview of the research on dimensional adjectives will be offered, with an emphasis on the theoretical assumptions. My study was written within the cognitive linguistic framework. Cognitive linguistics involves a functional approach to grammar and semantics. The language is comprehended as an integrated part of our cognitive abilities. There is no specific boundary between semantics and pragmatics, but a gradation. Pre-conceptual, pre-linguistic experiences form the foundations for semantics. An example of such an experience is gravity, which we are exposed to and whose impact on ourselves and on objects around us we learn from very early age.

The semantic description of 'high/tall' and 'low'

The purpose of this part is to give a thorough and detailed account of the meaning of the dimensional adjectives 'high/tall' and 'low'. 'Low' is commonly recognised as the antonym of 'high/tall'. 'High/tall' usually describes a vertical dimension, either in an unmarked use (as when specified by a measure phrase), or in a marked use (indicating great ex-

tension). In some cases, the dimension referred to by 'high/tall' is not vertical, a phenomenon which will also be incorporated in the study. The purpose is not to study to what extent a norm has to be surpassed in order for an object to qualify for description as 'high/tall', i.e. how big or small a dimension has to be in order to be described as 'high/tall'. 'High/tall' as well as 'low' have a dimensional use, such as 'high/tall house', and a positional use, such as 'high bird's nest'. Such as:

(1). The houses are not very tall. They might come only to your waist.

Evlər zox hğndğr deyil. Onlar yalnız sizin belinizə zatar.

خانه ها خیلی بلند نیستند . انها ممکن است تا کمر شما برسند. (زبان انگلیسی 2 نظام جدید سال دوم دبیرستان؛ مترجم: عبدالله قنبري؛ ص: 53)

SAOB dictionary discriminates between five main spatial senses of 'high'. The first sense describes an object, which has a great extension in an upward, vertical direction, such as 'tall buildings' for example:

(1). They went to the top of a tall building in Florence and Zola put on the wings.

Onlar Florensada hğndğr binanın yuxarı mərtəbəsinə qalxdı və qanadlarını geyindi.

انها به بالاي يك ساختمان بلند در فلورانس رفتند و زولا بالها را به خود بست . (زبان انگلیسی 1 پیشدانشگاهی؛ مترجم: عبدالله قنبري؛ ص: 23)

, or an object, which extends or reaches far up, such as 'high boots', or an object, which extends far up from the sea level, such as 'high mountains'. Uses which describe motion, such as 'high throw' and 'high jumps', can also be found associated to this first. The second sense describes an object, which protrudes significantly from the background, independent of direction, such as 'high relief'. The example seems to be a term borrowed from French *haut relief* 'high relief' or Italian *alto rilievo* 'high relief'. The third sense describes an object which is located far up, or at a certain distance, in a vertical direction from the ground level, or from sea level, or from some other specified point, such as 'high shoulders' and 'the sun is already high'. Or:

(1). It was a town of machinery and tall chimneys.

Bura maşınqayırma və hğndğr bacalar şəhəri idi.

آن شهر صنعتی و شهر لوله های بخاری بلند بود. (خواندن و درک مفاهیم (3)؛ مترجم: محمد شاطرلو؛ دانشگاه پیام نور؛ ص: 6)

The fourth sense describes a position, which is far or further in, such as 'the boat ... is now high up on the shore'. The fifth sense is a nautical use where an expression such as 'tack' refers to a manner of sailing against the wind. This use refers to a position on a non-vertical axis. SAOB points out that the collocations 'high water' and 'high water level', listed under the first main meaning, sometimes approach the third main meaning where a location rather than a dimension is described. This is particularly striking when the level of the water surface is considered. The fourth main meaning, which describes a position which is far or further in, SAOB labels as a figurative use of the third main meaning, which describes placement on a vertical axis. NEO defines the spatial use of 'high' as describing objects with a great extension in an upward direction. NEO lists three nuances of this sense. The first one concerns something which is located or which takes place at a great

height, such as ‘high clouds’. The second nuance concerns a position or extension in a horizontal direction, such as ‘it can be read high up on the page’. The third nuance of sense concerns measure phrases. NEO terms this meaning “neutral” and gives the example ‘the house is 10 metres high’. Nusvensk Ordbok discerns two main concrete senses. The first one describes an object that ‘rises a long way up’, that has considerable height and which is elevated above its surroundings. Examples are ‘high mountains’ and ‘tall trees’. For example:

(1). Across the river from the mountain is a line of tall trees. (Men and Mice; Stainbeek; p: 4)

Dağdan zaya qədər həndəz ağaclar yerləşir.

درست کوهستان در سراسر رودخانه ردیفی از درختان بلند وجود دارد. (موشها و آدمها؛ مولف:

جان استینبک؛ مترجم: الهام تاج احمدی؛ ص: 4)

(2). They knew it had no air or water or plant life. It had tall mountains and flat places called seas.

Onlar bilirdi ki, burada nə hava nə su, nə də bitkilər var idi. Burada dəniz adlanan hamar yerlər və uca dağlar var idi.

انها می دانستند ان (ماه) هوا، اب یا زندگی گیاهی ندارد ان کوههای بلند و جاهای مسطحی به نام

دریا داشت. (زبان انگلیسی 2نظام جدید سال دوم دبیرستان؛ مترجم: عبدالله قنبری؛ ص: 31)

The second sense describes an object that is located high up. Example is ‘the town is situated high up’. Nusvensk Ordbok (1981) gives the definition ‘which reaches or is located high’ for spatial uses of ‘high’. It gives numerous examples, separated into eight groups, without commenting on the examples. Among the examples, ‘high mountains’, ‘a high location’, ‘the long grass’, ‘high hurdles’, ‘high water level’, ‘the high sky’, , and ‘high relief’ can be found. Clark (1973) also describes these adjectives “*high, low, tall and short*”. According to his analysis, *tall-short* and *high-low* have ground level as their reference plane, unless another reference plane is mentioned. Furthermore, the adjectives involve a vertical direction. *High-low* and *tall-short* describe three-dimensional objects. *Tallness* Clark glosses as “vertical length”, while *height* is glossed as “vertical distance”. Lyons (1977) deals with English *high* and *low*. He states that *high* and *low* can both describe an extension and a distance. The notions of extension and distance relate to each other in such a way that if a street is hundred yards long (Lyons’s example), measured from one point to another, the two points are hundred yards apart. Like Clark, Lyons is of the opinion that *height* and *tallness* are measured upwards from a point of reference, commonly ground-level (Lyons 1977:701).

In general the meaning of ‘high’ and ‘low’ is the marking of a point on the vertical axis, which has an upward direction. The adjectives refer to a point of reference. The point may, but need not, coincide with the viewpoint of the observer (Weydt and Schlieben-Lange 1998:219). Further, it should be mentioned that ‘high’ refers primarily to an end point. This leads them to the conclusion that ‘high’ is not an extent adjective in the original sense, ‘high’ can be paraphrased roughly as “big distance from the centre of the earth” (Weydt and Schlieben-Lange 1998:221). The meaning itself does not specify whether a dynamic movement, an extension or a position is considered. Such information is provided from the context (Weydt and Schlieben-Lange 1998:221). Geckeler (1997) suggests that an argument for the direction of ‘high’ (from bottom to top) is that a thread hanging from the ceiling will not

be called 'high' but 'long'. Linde-Usiekniewicz (2000) encompasses the same phenomena by stating that objects to which HEIGHT is assigned are directed upwards. Therefore, neither curtains, nor lamps hanging on a rigid pole from the ceiling are HIGH. The exploration by Dirven and Taylor (1988) of the semantics of *tall* points out that *tall* describes dynamic, upwardly rising structures, such as *tall stalagmite*, whereas *?tall stalactite* (protruding downwards) is barely acceptable (Dirven and Taylor 1988:392–393).

The semantic description of 'long' and 'short'

The purpose of this part is to give a thorough and detailed account of the meaning of the dimensional adjectives 'long' and 'short'. The adjective '*long*' has a marked sense, indicating great extension in relation to a certain norm, and an unmarked sense, indicating no relation to a norm but only indicating the dimension concerned. '*Long*' and '*short*' are commonly referred to as antonyms. They can describe both spatial and temporal dimensions. It is suggested that 'long' has the status of a "default" adjective and that it describes an object if 'high/tall', 'broad / wide' or 'deep' are not preferred. For this reason, 'long' has a tighter relationship to these three dimensional adjectives, since its semantics is described partly by reference to 'high/tall', 'broad/wide' and 'deep'. '*Long*' includes no information on orientation or direction. Although the semantics of 'long' is not specifically associated to a horizontal axis, nevertheless, because of the interaction between the proportions of the object, described as 'long' on the one hand and gravity on the other hand, it often, but not always, describes extension along a horizontal axis. 'Short' is the preferred antonym of 'long' but if the supposedly maximal extension is not easily discerned, '*short*' is not used. Instead, the object is described as 'small'. SAOB distinguishes between two spatial meanings of long: one related to spatial extension in three-dimensional space, such as 'from high up, the town with its long straight street was visible' and the other to movement extending over a great distance, such as 'a long trip' or 'a long walk'. For example:

(1). She had been fond of nature and had often taken him on long walks in the countryside. (Dr. Zhivago, Posternok; p:6)

O təbiətin vurğunu idi və onu həmişə şəhər kənarında uzun gəzintilərə aparırdı.

مادرش طبیعت را دوست داشت و اغلب او را به پیاده روی های طولانی در بیلاغات می برد. (دکتر ژیواگو؛ ترجمه: کامران بهمنی؛ ص: 6)

(2). It was a long difficult trip, but he made it.

Bu uzun zətin gəzinti idi, lakin o, bunu etdi.

سفر طولانی و مشکلی بود اما او از عهده ان بر آمد. (خواندن و درک مفاهیم (3)؛ مترجم: محمد شاطرلو؛ دانشگاه پیام نور؛ ص:32)

In addition, SAOB discerns a spatial, positional meaning which relates to a point at a great distance from something, such as 'far away'. The neuter form of the adjective functions as an adverb in these cases. These three main meanings are the spatial meanings of 'long', according to SAOB. There are other meanings as well, among them 'long' referring to an oral or written utterance, such as 'long novel', or:

(1). It is a long story, Julie said.

Bu uzun hekayədir, Julie dedi.

جولی گفت: داستانش طولانی است. (تاراج تپه ها، مولف: جوزفین فیینی؛ مترجم: صابر شیبانی اصل، ص: 77)

and 'long' referring to temporal extension, such as 'long time'.

(2). For a long time Kino stood in front of the gate with Juana beside him.

Uzun mğddət Kino onun yanında darvazanın qabağında Juana ilə birlikdə dayandı.

کینو به همراه همسرش زمان طولانی را جلوی دروازه ایستاد. (مروارید؛ مولف: جان اشتاین بک؛ مترجم؛ م. صفری؛ ص: 14-15)

The first spatial sense, which relates to spatial extension in three dimensional spaces, is described as an object having great or relatively great extension in its largest dimension, especially in a horizontal direction. It is opposed partly to 'high/tall', 'deep' and 'broad/wide', partly to 'short'. The first spatial sense has several sub-senses. Among these are the use of 'long' to describe the human body, body parts and clothes. 60 further, there is the use of 'long' in describing a series or a row (of persons or objects), such as 'a long line of question marks'. Moreover, one sub-sense relates to distances as in 'a long way away':

(1). And I was a long way away, but I am almost certain I was this.

Və mən zox uzaqda idim, lakin mən əmin idim ki, mən bunu gürdəm.

با وجود فاصله زیاد، حتم دارم دیدم. (مزرعه حیوانات، مولف: جورج اورول؛ مترجم: صالح حسینی ومعضومه نبی زاده؛ ص: 27، 49 p)

another sub-sense is the use of 'long/tall' to describe the vertical extension of human beings. Nusvenska Ordbok (1981) describes 'long' as determining an object with a certain length or a (relatively) great length, or determining an entity of certain duration or of (relatively) great duration. According to Nusvensk Ordbok (1981), 'long' has six main senses, of which two have the 'metaphorical' and therefore the remaining four should be considered less metaphorical. The first one of these four remaining main senses concerns spatial extension. More specifically this sense can be used about tallness of a human being as well as about body parts, for example:

(1). A tall attractive woman with long straight hair. (The most practical dictionary of common expression in every day contexts; Trnslated and Compiled by: Assadollah (Amir) Noroozi p: 27)

Uzun dğz sazlı uca cazibədar qadın.

یک زن بلند قامت با موهای صاف و بلند (فرهنگ اصطلاحات و تعبیرات کاربرد؛ تألیف: دکتر اسدالله (امیر) نوروزی ص: 27)

or about a (part of a) piece of clothing which extends far down or far up, about a series or row of persons or objects, and about distances, The second of these four remaining main senses is also a spatial sense but refers to transportation and the explanation reads: 'which extends over a great distance; a long journey, a long walk'. The third of these four remaining main senses is about an 'utterance' or a 'presentation', or a 'train of thought', or a 'discussion'. The examples given are 'book' and 'sermon'. For example:

(1). They are also used to incorporate other people's ideas into a composition, an essay or a long academic paper.

Onlar h mzinin insanların ideyalarını inŒa  zerk, v  ya uzun t dris s n dl ri kimi birl Œdirm k  zɡn istifad  edilir.

 نها همچنين يکسان کردن عقايد افراد ديگر در انشاء ، مقاله يا مقاله طولاني دانشگاهي کاربرد دارند.

(فنون يادگيري زبان؛ مولف: شهرزاد سيف، مترجم: محمد شاطرلو؛ ص: 59 ، 60)

The last of the four remaining main senses concerns clear-cut temporal extension. Nussvensk Ordbok (1981) discerns two main senses: one spatial, one temporal. The spatial sense is divided into two groups with the first treating more concrete uses, such as ‘a three-metre long offcut’ and the second more figurative uses, such as ‘pull a long face’. The former, more concrete spatial sense group is divided into five sub-senses. The first involves clothes, humans and body-parts as well as the piece of fabric quoted above. The second includes uses such as ‘stitches’, ‘steps’, ‘pins’, and ‘threads’. The third sub-sense lists nouns such as ‘way’, ‘distance’, and ‘detour’. The fourth refers to ‘letters’ (pointing out *f*, *g*, and *h*), ‘lines’, ‘sentences’, ‘paragraphs’ and ‘letter’. The last treats an old-fashioned or regional expression ‘how far have you come, Miss’ indicating starting-point of a distance. Like the spatial sense, the temporal sense is divided into two groups, the second labelled ‘freer and figurative’. Here, we find the sub-sense of uses such as ‘speech’, ‘sentences’, ‘sermons’, ‘introduction’ and ‘paper, essay’. According to Fillmore (1997:40), *long* or *short* are used to refer to an object which has one dimension considerably larger than the others. For oriented moving objects, the front-to-back dimension is called *long*, as opposed to stationary objects, for which the front-to-back dimension is called *deep*. Clark (1973) describes English *long-short* and *far-near* as the two most elementary pairs of adjectives, since they can describe one-dimensional lines. The term *length* is considered a neutral term that can be used in the definitions of the other dimensional adjectives. Lyons (1977) starts the process of naming the dimensions of a physical object in English by asking whether the object has a maximal dimension. If the answer is no, the object has no *length*. If the object has a maximal extension, this is identified as its *length*. This is valid for an un-oriented entity. However, verticality (whether inherent, canonical or actual) takes precedence over maximally. Furthermore, a dual-purpose piece of furniture may be described as *long* and *wide* when considered a table but as *wide* and *deep* when viewed as a desk with a canonical orientation. The *width* of an object cannot exceed its *length* since we do not use *length* if canonical orientation has led to the assignment of *width* to its larger horizontal extension (Lyons 1977:701–702).

Summary

The paper presents an attempt to study uses of size adjectives in English, Azarbaijan and Persian in their relationship to the communicative intentions of the speaker. This paper starts with a list of size adjectives to be studied and problems with their descriptions in existing studies. Then I present the semantic network for describing the uses of the size adjectives in texts and the trinocular view on the lexical network from around, from above and from below. As seen in the examples, we can conclude that these adjectives take different translations according to the context that they occurred.

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**İNGİLİS, FARS VƏ AZƏRBAYCAN DİLLƏRİNDƏ LONG, TALL, HIGH,
LOW VƏ SHORT SİFƏTLƏRİNİN SEMANTİK TƏHLİLİ****M.ŞƏBANİ MİNAABAD****XÜLASƏ**

Bildiyimiz kimi, üç məkan ölçüsü mövcuddur. Bu üç məkan ölçüsünü təklif etməmişdən əvvəl, bir çox dillər müxtəlif sifət ölçüləri irəli sürmüş və hətta bu rəqəm üç rəqəmini ötmüşdür. Ölçü ifadəsi obyektin genişlənməsi kimi istifadə olunur və bu da şaquli oxlarla və ya iki üfüqi oxlarla sıralanmışdır. Mübahisə yarana bilər ki, obyektlərin ölçüləri üç ölçülü yer mühitinin oxlarla sıralanmasına ehtiyac yoxdur. Belə başa düşülür ki, obyekt istiqamətlənməmiş təsvir mənasını verir. Bu təlimin məqsədi aşağıdakı tipli sifətlərin semantik təh-

lilini və məlumatlandırıcı hesabatı nəzər salmaqdır: “*high / tall*” (*yüksək / hündür*), “*low*” (*alçaq*), “*broad/wide*” (*geniş*), “*narrow*” (*dar*), “*thick*” (*qalın*), “*deep*” (*dərin*), “*long*” (*uzun*), və “*short*” (*qısa və ya balaca*).

**СЕМАНТИЧЕСКОЕ ЗНАЧЕНИЕ ПРИЛАГАТЕЛЬНЫХ
LONG, TALL, HIGH И SHORT НА ТРЕХ ЯЗЫКАХ:
АНГЛИЙСКОМ, ФАРСИДСКОМ И АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНСКОМ**

М.ШАБАНИ МИНААБАД

РЕЗЮМЕ

Как вам известно, существуют три меры измерения. Прежде чем предложить эти три меры измерения, многие языки выдвинули различные меры прилагательных и это число опередило три цифры. Выражение меры используется как расширение объекта и было выражено вертикальными и двумя горизонтальными осями. Может возникнуть диспут о том, что нет необходимости перечислять размеры объектов осями трехмерной среды. Так понимается, что объект дает значение ненаправленного описания. Цель этого учения рассмотреть семантический анализ прилагательного и информационный отчет: «*high / tall*» (высокий), «*low*» (низкий), «*broad / wide*» (широкий), «*narrow*» (узкий), «*thick*» (толстый), «*deep*» (глубокий), «*long*» (длинный) и «*short*» (короткий или маленький).