



LINGUISTICS RESEARCH CENTER



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Indo-European Linguistics

Semantic Fields

The notion of "semantic fields," or "semantic categories," is a popular topic in ontological thought, especially at the amateur level: after all, everyone categorizes the world in some way, and it seems "so easy and natural." However, formally defining a *complete* and *consistent* scheme of semantic fields and subcategories has proven exceedingly difficult, and it is safe to say that no one has ever fully satisfied these twin demands -- or not, at least, as judged by anyone else. Hence, all semantic category schemes are deficient. Rather than inventing yet another deficient scheme, we selected for our use one that has been published and used by others, with only minor technical modifications.

Among other work concerned with Indo-European (IE) semantics, Carl Darling Buck's list of semantic fields (cf. *A Dictionary of Selected Synonyms in the Principal Indo-European Languages*, 1949) has seen much use. We adopt and adapt Buck's fields for our own semantic category scheme, and we present that scheme here. Slightly simplifying Buck, we employ a strictly two-level organization; most semantic subcategories will have lexical entries drawn from the Proto-Indo-European (PIE) etyma listed by Julius Pokorny in his monumental work *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (2 vols, 1959-69). Because Buck's publication preceded Pokorny's by a decade or more, Buck was not able to categorize Pokorny's etyma; and although Buck did categorize at least some entries found in earlier volumes authored jointly by Walde & Pokorny (*Vergleichendes Wörterbuch der indogermanischen Sprachen*, 3 vols, 1926-30), Buck took pains to categorize later Indo-European derivatives according to their *evolved* meanings, which in many cases differ from the [reconstructed] meanings of their Proto-Indo-European ancestral roots.

We attempt to categorize most if not all of Pokorny's etyma -- possibly not all, because not all PIE etyma have an obvious categorization according to Buck's scheme (especially difficult are, e.g., particles and prepositions). Analogs of Buck's 22 top-level categories, each linked to a description of its subcategories, are listed below and in the navigation bar to the left.

N.B. These pages are **under construction**; as time goes on corrections may be made, and more links from the semantic subcategories to lexical entries in them, drawn from Pokorny's PIE etyma with or without derived ("reflex") words in later IE languages, may be added.

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Semantic Fields

15. Sense Perception

This page lists subcategories for the [semantic field](#) **Sense Perception**. Category numbers are as defined by Carl Darling Buck (cf. *A Dictionary of Selected Synonyms in the Principal Indo-European Languages*, 1949). Our field & subcategory labels are sometimes adapted from those of Buck: in our scheme they are brief but globally unique, parentheses may enclose clues (such as part of speech) to interpreting a label, and verb infinitives are introduced by 'to'.

If we have assigned, to a semantic subcategory, Proto-Indo-European lexical entries (PIE etyma) drawn from Julius Pokorny's *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (2 vols, 1959-69), the subcategory label will be linked to a page that lists those etyma. On that page, links to PIE etyma will lead into our monolithic listing of same, and possibly to separate pages where etyma and more modern reflexes thereof (derived words, e.g. in English) are shown.

N.B. These pages are **under construction**; as time goes on corrections may be made, and more links from these semantic subcategories to pages of lexical entries in them, drawn from Pokorny's etyma and reflexes thereof, may be added.

- 15.11. [to Sense, Perceive; Sense](#)
- 15.21. [to Smell \(subj\)](#)
- 15.22. [to Smell \(obj\)](#)
- 15.23. Smell (n, subj)
- 15.24. [Smell \(n, obj\)](#)
- 15.25. [Good Smelling, Fragrant](#)
- 15.26. [Bad Smelling, Stinking](#)
- 15.31. [to Taste \(subj\)](#)
- 15.32. [to Taste \(obj\)](#)
- 15.33. Taste (n, subj)
- 15.34. Taste (n, obj)
- 15.35. [Sweet](#)
- 15.36. [Salty](#)
- 15.37. [Bitter](#)
- 15.38. [Acidic, Sour](#)
- 15.41. [to Hear](#)
- 15.42. [to Listen, Harken](#)
- 15.43. Hearing (n)
- 15.44. [Sound \(n\)](#)
- 15.45. [Loud](#)
- 15.51. [to See](#)
- 15.52. [to Look](#)
- 15.53. Sight (subj)
- 15.54. [Sight \(obj\), Look \(obj\), Appearance](#)
- 15.55. [to Show](#)
- 15.56. [to Shine, Glisten](#)
- 15.57. [Bright](#)
- 15.61. [Color](#)

- 15.62. [Light in Color](#)
- 15.63. [Dark in Color](#)
- 15.64. [White](#)
- 15.65. [Black](#)
- 15.66. [Red](#)
- 15.67. [Blue](#)
- 15.68. [Green](#)
- 15.69. [Yellow](#)
- 15.71. [to Touch](#)
- 15.72. [to Feel of](#)
- 15.73. Touch (n)
- 15.74. [Hard](#)
- 15.75. [Soft](#)
- 15.76. [Rough](#)
- 15.77. [Smooth](#)
- 15.78. [Sharp](#)
- 15.79. [Blunt, Dull](#)
- 15.81. [Heavy, Weighty](#)
- 15.82. Light, Nimble
- 15.83. [Wet, Damp](#)
- 15.84. [Dry, Arid](#)
- 15.85. [Hot, Warm](#)
- 15.86. [Cold, Frigid](#)
- 15.87. [Clean, Pure](#)
- 15.88. [Dirty, Soiled](#)

15. Sense Perception

15.51. to See

This page lists Proto-Indo-European lexical entries (PIE etyma) drawn from Julius Pokorny's *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (2 vols, 1959-69) assigned to the [semantic field](#) **Sense Perception**, subcategory **15.51. to See**. Category numbers above are as defined by Carl Darling Buck (cf. *A Dictionary of Selected Synonyms in the Principal Indo-European Languages*, 1949). Our field & subcategory labels are sometimes adapted from those of Buck: in our scheme they are brief but globally unique, parentheses may enclose clues (such as part of speech) to interpreting a label, and verb infinitives are introduced by 'to'.

Pokorny's etyma, *as spelled on **this** page*, have been rendered in ISO-8859-1. Links from these etyma are available to Unicode [3](#), Unicode [2](#), and ISO-8859-1 [page variants](#). [Unicode pages generally render Pokorny's etyma and non-English text more faithfully than is possible in ISO-8859-1, so they are much preferred.] Links to PIE etyma will lead into a monolithic tabular listing of same, which opens in a new window; if available, links are given to separate pages showing etyma and more modern Indo-European **reflexes** thereof (i.e. derived words, glossed in English).

N.B. These pages are **under construction**; as time goes on corrections may be made, and more links from this semantic subcategory to lexical entries in it, drawn from Pokorny's etyma, may be added. Finally, derived reflexes of PIE etyma, in any number of IE languages, may be added at any time.

- der(ep)- 'to see?' ([3](#)) ([2](#)) ([1](#)); reflexes: ([3](#)) ([2](#)) ([1](#))
- dheiu- 'to look, see, show' ([3](#)) ([2](#)) ([1](#)); reflexes: ([3](#)) ([2](#)) ([1](#))
- 1: keu- 'to notice, observe, pay attention to' ([3](#)) ([2](#)) ([1](#)); reflexes: ([3](#)) ([2](#)) ([1](#))
- k^uek- 'to see, show, appear' ([3](#)) ([2](#)) ([1](#)); reflexes: ([3](#)) ([2](#)) ([1](#))
- leuk- 'to light, shine; to see' ([3](#)) ([2](#)) ([1](#)); reflexes: ([3](#)) ([2](#)) ([1](#))
- ok^u- 'to see; eye' ([3](#)) ([2](#)) ([1](#)); reflexes: ([3](#)) ([2](#)) ([1](#))
- prep- 'to catch sight of' ([3](#)) ([2](#)) ([1](#)); reflexes: ([3](#)) ([2](#)) ([1](#))
- 2: reg- 'to see' ([3](#)) ([2](#)) ([1](#)); reflexes: ([3](#)) ([2](#)) ([1](#))
- 2: sek^u- 'to see, notice; show, speak' ([3](#)) ([2](#)) ([1](#)); reflexes: ([3](#)) ([2](#)) ([1](#))
- 2: u(e)id- 'to see, know' ([3](#)) ([2](#)) ([1](#)); reflexes: ([3](#)) ([2](#)) ([1](#))
- 1: uel- 'to see' ([3](#)) ([2](#)) ([1](#)); reflexes: ([3](#)) ([2](#)) ([1](#))
- 8: uer- 'to notice, observe, pay attention' ([3](#)) ([2](#)) ([1](#)); reflexes: ([3](#)) ([2](#)) ([1](#))