On Kinship and Contrast in the Lexicon

In his remarks on Colour (1977: III-46), Ludwig Wittgenstein wrote "Among the colours: Kinship and Contrast. (And that is logic)." In this brief talk, I shall start from a kite representation (Seuren & Jaspers 2014) of semantic relations in small functional and semi-lexical lexical fields to raise the question why it is that such a geometrical kite object expresses "kinship" as much as "contrast." While historical antecedents to the kite introduced the tools needed for notions of opposition (contradictoriness, contrariness, entailment), we shall focus in particular on "kinship". In particular, we will show that in arguably the most foundational lexical field it results from recursive application of a single operator. That result suggests a general methodology to approach further functional lexical fields.

Seuren, P. A. M., & Jaspers, D. (2014). Logico-cognitive structure in the lexicon. Language, 90(3), 607-643. doi:10.1353/lan.2014.0058.
Wittgenstein, L.. Remarks on Colour. Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1977.