Model theoretic semantics imposes very few restrictions on possible relations between forms and meanings. Even if a recursive syntax and an assignment of types to expressions are given, any mapping from expressions to elements of the domain of the respective type is a licit interpretation function. It has frequently been observed that human languages are much more restricted in this respect. In fact, this lack of restrictiveness has been used as one of the main arguments of cognitive semanticists against model-theoretic semantics. Gaerdenfors (2000), for instance, argues that cognitive domains have a geometrical structure and that natural denotations of natural language expressions are convex sub-regions of such a conceptual space.

In the talk I will argue that Gaerdenfors' convexity criterion, as well as the well-known semantic prototype effects, are essentially social, rather than cognitive, in nature. The denotations of expressions are constantly modified and reshaped in language usage. Under very natural assumption about this usage-based dynamics, it turns out that only convex meanings are sufficiently resistant against change and thus candidates for conventionalization.