

Chapter 1: Semantics

Semantics is the systematic study of meaning in language. It is a core branch of linguistics that investigates how words, phrases, sentences, and even larger units of discourse convey meaning.

Semantic Features & Semantic Roles

These concepts deal with the meaning of words and the roles they play within a sentence.

1. Semantic Features

- **Definition:** The basic, primitive elements of meaning that make up a word in a binary (+/-) system. It's a way to break down word meaning into smaller components.
- **Explanation:** For example, the word "woman" can be broken down into the features [+HUMAN], [+ADULT], [-MALE]. This allows us to see relationships and differences between words systematically.
- **Example:**
 - Man: [+HUMAN], [+ADULT], [+MALE]
 - Girl: [+HUMAN], [-ADULT], [-MALE]
 - Table: [-HUMAN], [-ANIMATE]

2. Semantic Roles (Thematic Roles)

These describe the function of a noun phrase in relation to the action of the verb.

Agent	The entity that performs an action voluntarily.	<u>The chef</u> cooked the meal.
Theme (Patient)	The entity that is directly affected by the action.	The chef cooked <u>the meal</u>.
Instrument	The entity used by an agent to perform an action.	She opened the jar <u>with a knife</u>.
Experiencer	The entity that perceives, feels, or experiences a state.	<u>Maria</u> heard the song. The baby feels sleepy.
Location	The place where an action occurs or where an entity is located.	They met <u>in the garden</u>. The keys are <u>on the desk</u>.
Source	The starting point or origin of an action.	He flew <u>from New York</u>.
Goal	The endpoint or destination of an action.	He flew <u>to London</u>.

Comparison: The **Agent** *does* the action, while the **Theme** is *acted upon*. The **Experiencer** is distinct from an Agent because the experience is often involuntary (e.g., "I see the car" vs. "I kick the car").

3. Lexical Relations

These describe the relationships between words in a language's vocabulary.

- **Synonyms:** Words with very similar or identical meanings.

- *Example: *big/large, quick/rapid, couch/sofa*.
- *Note:* True, absolute synonyms are very rare. There are often differences in formality, dialect, or connotation.
- **Antonyms:** Words with opposite meanings.
 - **Types:**
 - **Gradable:** Opposites on a scale (e.g., *hot/cold, young/old*).
 - **Non-gradable (Complementary):** Not on a scale; it's either one or the other (e.g., *alive/dead, on/off*).
 - **Reversives:** One action reverses the other (e.g., *tie/untie, lock/unlock*).
- **Hyponymy:** A hierarchical "is a kind of" relationship. A **hyponym** is a specific example of a more general **superordinate** term.
 - *Example: *Apple, banana*, and *orange* are all **hyponyms** of the **superordinate** *fruit*.
- **Prototypes:** The best, most central example of a category. It's a mental model of a typical member.
 - *Example: For the category *bird*, a *robin* is a prototype for many English speakers, whereas a *penguin* or *ostrich* is not.
- **Homophones:** Words that sound the same but have different meanings and spellings.
 - *Example: *bare/bear, right/write, see/sea*.

- **Polysemy:** A single word has multiple related meanings.
 - *Example: The word *head* can mean the body part, the leader of a company, the top of a bed, etc. These meanings are historically and conceptually connected.
- **Metonymy:** Referring to an entity by using the name of something closely associated with it.
 - *Example: "The **White House** issued a statement." (The building stands for the President/staff). "I love reading **Shakespeare**." (The person stands for his works).
- **Collocation:** Words that frequently occur together, forming a predictable "partnership."
 - *Example: *heavy rain, strong coffee, make a decision, commit a crime*. We say "heavy rain," not "weighty rain."

Concept	Definition	Examples
Synonyms	Words with very similar meanings.	<i>fast/rapid, sofa/couch, begin/commence</i>
Antonyms	Words with opposite meanings.	Gradable: <i>hot/cold</i> Non-gradable: <i>alive/dead</i> Reversives: <i>tie/untie</i>
Hyponymy	A "is a kind of" relationship. A	Superordinate: <i>fruit</i> Hyponyms: <i>apple, banana, orange</i>

	hyponym is a specific type of a superordinate.	
Prototypes	The most typical, central example of a category.	For <i>bird</i> , a robin is a prototype; a penguin is not.
Homophones	Words that sound the same but have different meanings and spellings.	<i>bare/bear, see/sea, right/write</i>
Polysemy	A single word has multiple, related meanings.	<i>Head</i> : of a person, of a company, of a bed. <i>Bank</i> : financial institution, side of a river.
Metonymy	Referring to something by the name of something closely associated with it.	"The White House announced..." (Building for President). "I'll have a glass ." (Container for content).
Collocation	Words that frequently occur together.	<i>heavy rain</i> (not "weighty rain"), <i>make a wish, strong coffee</i>

Chapter 2: Pragmatics

Pragmatics is the study of how context contributes to meaning. It's about language in use.

- **Pragmatics (General):** The study of "invisible" meaning—how we recognize what is meant even when it isn't explicitly said.
- **Context:** The physical, social, and linguistic environment in which a word or utterance is used. It is crucial for interpretation.
 - *Example: The word "Bank" means one thing in a financial context and another by a river.*
- **Deixis (Deictic Expressions):** Words that "point" to person, place, or time and can only be understood in context.
 - **Person Deixis:** *I, you, we, them.*
 - **Place Deixis:** *here, there, this, that.*
 - **Time Deixis:** *now, then, tomorrow, yesterday.*
- **Reference:** An act by which a speaker/writer uses language to enable a listener/reader to identify something.
 - *Example: Using the phrase "the tall man with the red hat" to refer to a specific person in a crowd.*
- **Anaphora:** Subsequent reference to an already introduced entity. The initial reference is the **antecedent**.
 - *Example: "A woman walked in. She sat down." ("She" is an anaphoric reference to "A woman").*

- **Presupposition:** An assumption that a speaker makes about what the listener already knows. It's the background belief embedded in an utterance.
 - *Example: "Have you stopped eating meat?" presupposes that you used to eat meat. "The King of France is bald" presupposes that France has a king.*
- **Speech Acts:** The actions we perform when we speak, beyond just conveying information.
 - **Types:**
 - **Direct:** The syntactic form matches the function (e.g., "Pass the salt" is an imperative used as a command).
 - **Indirect:** The syntactic form does not match the function (e.g., "It's cold in here" is a statement used as a request to close the window).
- **Politeness:** Showing awareness of and consideration for another person's "face."
- **Face (Positive & Negative):**
 - **Positive Face:** The desire to be liked, approved of, and connected to others.
 - **Negative Face:** The desire to be autonomous, free from imposition, and not bothered.
 - *Example: A request like "Could you possibly pass the salt?" uses hedging ("could," "possibly") to minimize the imposition on the*

*listener's **negative face**. Complimenting someone ("You did a great job!") attends to their **positive face**.*

Chapter 3: Discourse & Conversation Analysis

This is the study of language beyond the sentence level.

- **Discourse:** A continuous stretch of (especially spoken) language larger than a sentence.
- **Cohesion:** The grammatical and lexical links that connect the parts of a text.
 - *Example: Using pronouns (it, he, they), conjunctions (however, and, because), and collocation to create a "texture."*
- **Coherence:** The logical and meaningful connectedness that makes a text make sense. It is in the mind of the listener/reader, not the text itself.
 - *Example: The exchange A: "Can you tell me the time?" B: "Well, the milkman was late today." seems incoherent. But if A knows the milkman usually comes at 7 am, they can infer it's later than 7 am, creating **coherence**.*
- **Conversation Analysis:** The study of the structure and organization of spoken interaction.
- **Turn-taking:** The organized way in which participants in a conversation alternate between speaking and listening.
- **The Co-operative Principle (Grice's Maxims):** A general principle that participants in a conversation expect each other to be cooperative. It consists of four maxims:
 1. **Maxim of Quantity:** Make your contribution as informative as required, but not more.

2. **Maxim of Quality:** Do not say what you believe to be false or for which you lack evidence.
 3. **Maxim of Relation:** Be relevant.
 4. **Maxim of Manner:** Be clear, avoid obscurity and ambiguity, be brief and orderly.
- **Hedges:** Words or phrases used to soften a statement, show uncertainty, or be polite. They often signal that a speaker is "hedging" on a maxim.
 - *Example: "I'm not an expert, but...", "As far as I know...", "kind of", "sort of".*
 - **Implicature:** An implied meaning that is not literally expressed. It is generated when a speaker deliberately **flouts** (breaks in an obvious way) one of the maxims, expecting the listener to infer the true meaning.
 - *Example:*
 - A: "What do you think of my new dress?"
 - B: "Wow, the color is really... something!"
 - (B flouts the Maxim of Quantity by being uninformative and the Maxim of Manner by being vague, creating the **implicature** that they don't like the dress).
 - **Background Knowledge:** The vast amount of shared, common-sense knowledge that speakers and listeners rely on for communication.

- **Schema (pl. Schemata):** A pre-existing knowledge structure in memory for generic concepts (e.g., a "kitchen" schema includes knowledge about fridges, sinks, ovens).
- **Script:** A pre-existing knowledge structure for a sequence of routine events (e.g., a "restaurant script" includes entering, ordering, eating, paying, leaving).

Coherence vs. Cohesion

Aspect	Cohesion	Coherence
Core Definition	The grammatical and lexical "glue" that connects sentences and ideas on the surface of a text.	The logical and meaningful "sense" that a text makes. It is the overall clarity and intelligibility of the writing.
Primary Location	In the text itself. It is observable in the words and syntax.	In the mind of the reader/listener. It is a mental construct.
Nature	Linguistic and mechanical. It uses specific devices to create links.	Conceptual and logical. It is about the underlying message and structure.
Analogy	The mortar between bricks. It physically holds the structure together.	The blueprint or architectural plan. It ensures the structure makes sense as a whole.
Dependency	A text can be cohesive but not coherent .	A text can be coherent without explicit cohesion (especially in short, simple texts).
How it's Achieved	Through the use of specific cohesive devices :	Through logical organization and reader expectations :
Examples of Devices/Techniques	• Reference: Pronouns (<i>it, he, this, that</i>)	• A clear thesis statement and topic

	• Conjunctions: <i>however, because, and, furthermore</i> • Lexical Chains: Repetition of words, synonyms, collocation (<i>pollution... smog... environment... eco-friendly</i>) • Substitution/Ellipsis: "Which one do you want?" "That one." / "She can help, but I can't [help]."	sentences. • A logical order (chronological, cause-effect, problem-solution). • Background knowledge and shared cultural assumptions. • Fulfilling reader expectations (e.g., a news article answers who, what, when, where, why).
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