

Semantics

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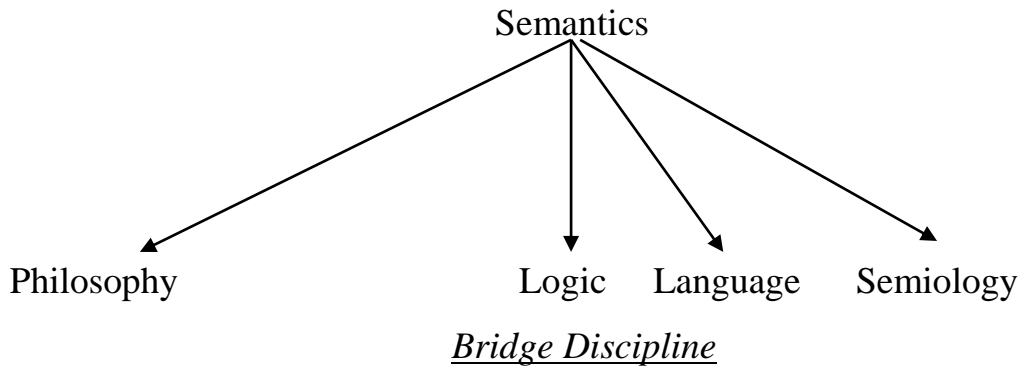
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Introduction

Semantics is a bridge through which we can tackle other disciplines as: philosophy, logic, language and semiology. The latter means the study of signs. In fact, psychologists thought that semantics is part of semiology. This can be clearly shown through the following:



It is meant that *Semantics* belongs to other disciplines, i.e. a point of interest of more than a specialist in different fields. Many differences have been tackled before about “meaning” according to “*Saussure*” who dealt with signs that are part of Semiology; “*Bloomfield*”, who rejected it because he wanted his study to be more scientific, and finally “*Chomsky*”, who gave priority to Syntax rather than Semantics.

Further, *Semantics* was not given a prominent rule. All linguists were aware of the semantic value of the language, but they preferred to deal with the technical way of approaching language rather than its linguistic aspect. It was not acceptable as an integral part of linguistics until recent studies where it was included as sub component of levels of language.

Semantics is a technical term which is used to refer to the study of meaning and since meaning is part of language, *semantics* is part of linguistics.

In fact, the word “meaning” has not a particular definition since there is no general agreement about the nature of “meaning”. One of the most famous books on *Semantics* was “The meaning of meaning” by Ogden & Richards published in 1923.

A different use of “Meaning” is found in sentences as: “It wasn’t what he said, but what he meant” and “Lewis Carroll” made play with the difference between *saying* and *meaning* in “**Alice’s Adventures in wonderland**”:

- “Then you should say what you mean” the March Hare went on.
- “I do” Alice hastily replied, “at least, at least I mean what I say- that’s the same thing, you know!”

But it was suggested that *how* can we fail to *say* what we *mean* or rather how the words fail to *mean* what they *mean*? Of course, words don’t mean what is thought to mean because there is *some other meaning besides the literal meaning of words*.

I-Semantics and Linguistics

- *Semantics* can be placed within *linguistics* for we can assume that *semantics* is a component or a level of *linguistics* of the same kind as phonetics and grammar. Thus, all linguists have accepted that a linguistic model contains the three levels mentioned (phonetics, grammar and semantics).
- *Linguistics* is “The Scientific study of language” and a scientific study must be empirical (concrete). It is very easy to apply this to phonetics because we can observe what is happening, we can listen to a person speaking and describe the physical characteristics of sounds; unlike phonetics, *Semantics* cannot be tackled in the same way.

A further difficulty with *semantics* is that meanings don’t seem to be stable but with generalizations. For this reason, there is a distinction that can be made between the linguistic System, i.e. “Grammar” and the use made of that system by speakers and hearers, i.e. “Semantics”.

II/Types of Meaning

a- **Conceptual Meaning:** Sometimes called “*denotative*” or “*cognitive*”. It is widely assumed to be the central factor in linguistics communication.

The conceptual meanings of a language seem to be organized largely in terms of contrastive features. So that the meaning of the word “woman” could be specified as (+ human, - male, + adult) different from “boy” (+ human, + male, - adult.)

b- **Affective Meaning:** Or “*Emotive*”. It is one kind of expressive meaning, i.e. non-descriptive meaning to which both literary critics and moral philosophers have paid particular attention, i.e. our affection that can affects our every day communication.

c- **Social Meaning:** It is the use of language to establish and maintain social roles and social relations. And much of our every day discourse has this as its principle purpose. It can be seen or taken as “*phatic communion*”, i.e. “*phatic function*” by means of speech.

In fact what is said and the way in which it is said are determined by the social relations obtaining among the participants and social purposes.

d- **Thematic Meaning:** It is the communication through which a speaker or a writer organized the message in terms of *ordering*, *focus* and *emphasis*.

It is clear that the active sentence (1) has a different meaning from its passive equivalent (2) although in conceptual content they seem to be the same.

(1) Mrs. Mary Smith received the first prize.

(2) The first prize was received by Mrs. Mary Smith.

III-The Levels of Semantics:

The linguist has three stating points to study “*semantics*”: (The *word* level, the *sentence* level and the *utterance* level).

- **Word Meaning:** Can be understood either through the word or the word reference.
- **Sentence Meaning:** is directly related to the grammatical and lexical features of a sentence.

- **Utterance Meaning:** includes all secondary aspects of meaning especially those related to context.

1- Word Meaning

Word meaning can be tackled through its 'reference' or 'Sense'.

In reference, we try to see the thing that the idea refers to, as for instance: the word "*Spinster*" which refers to "unmarried woman" and "*Calligraphy*" that refers to "the beautiful hand writing". Whereas words that can't be tackled through reference as: why, what, for, the ... can be tackled only in their context.

So, what is '*Reference*'? and what is '*Sense*'?

a- Reference: It is the relationship that holds between words and the things, events, actions and qualities they stand for. It is sometimes described as (*denotation*). Reference necessarily carries with it a *pre-supposition* of existence or reality; when we speak about referent we should speak about reality or external world. We go beyond language. For example: Tree → its picture.

b- Sense: By "a sense" of a word, we mean its place in a system of relationships which it contrasts with other words in the vocabulary. "Sense" carries with it *no-presupposition* about the existence of objects and properties outside the vocabulary of language in question.

For example: Tree → plant/garden/bush/forest. But forest includes tree and it is called: "*Hyponymy*". When we consider "Sense", we don't need to go beyond languages; we look for a word and its relation with another word:
word → word.

Furthermore, the relationship between lexical items inside language are called "*Sense Relation*" which are classified into two broad categories:

«*Similarity in Meaning*». «*Difference in Meaning*». As we will see in "lexical relations".

- Because Semantics is concerned with the way we relate our language to our experience, *Reference* is then the essential element of *semantics*. Yet sense relationships have formed an essential part of the study of language.

E.g.: The word *ram* & *ewe*, they refer to particular kind of animals through which they derive their meaning. They also belong to a particular pattern in English that includes: *Cow/bull/ sow/boar...*etc.

There is another kind of related words; e.g.: duck /duckling, pig/piglet/ involving adult and young, or father/son, uncle/ nephew (involving family relations). These aren't usually thought to be grammatical. They are rather a part of the "Semantic structure" of English. There are many other kinds of sense relations as: *row/ vide/ dead/ alive, buy/sell...* In fact, dictionaries are more concerned with sense relations, to relate words to words. But sometimes there are difficulties in distinguishing between *sense* and *reference* since there is a link or relation that shape the categories of our language & which correspond to real world situations.

In addition to the fact that dictionaries are concerned with stating the meaning of words. The latter are considered to be basic units of semantics. Yet there are difficulties. Not all words have the same kind of meaning as others. Some have little and others none, e.g. *Boys like to play.*

It is easy to identify the meaning of boys, like & play and because meaning implies choice, thus we can replace boys...with girls, hate, fight. "To" can't be replaced by anything, but is wholly predictable in this environment and so has no meaning at all.

The 19th C English grammarian **Henry Sweet** drew a distinction between 'full words' and 'form words'.

e.g₁: tree, sing, blue, gently....

e.g₂: The, at, of, and ...

So the full words seem to have the kind of meaning that we may find in a dictionary. Therefore form words belong to 'Grammar' and they carry "grammatical meaning" only. They can't stand alone unless we combine them with other words.

Moreover, the word is not a clearly defined linguistic unit. It is to some degree rarely conventional, defined in terms of the spaces in the written texts, and of course this placing is not arbitrary. So, there are many sound reasons that help us making our division.

* e.g: Stress: some words permit only one main stress: 'black bird. It is taken as one word (i.e. single) But 'Black' bird as two words. Further the meaning of words is

achieved or gained through many ways as: *Synonymy*, *Antonymy*, *hyponymy* as we shall see later in the "lexical relations".

2- Sentence Meaning

If words have meaning, it could be argued, it is derived from their function as parts of sentences. The meaning of a sentence can be predictable from the meaning of the words it contains. But there has been some debate whether the meaning is to be related to the actual surface structure or some more abstract deep structure. So each sentence will have a meaning, i.e. literal meaning, or if it is ambiguous two or more meanings.

Lyons (1977) has suggested that we should draw a distinction between sentence meaning and utterance meaning. The sentence meaning is directly predictable from the grammatical & lexical features of the sentence. To illustrate the sentence meaning, we can say that it can be simple or complex.

a- **Simple Sentences:** To tackle definitions of words in relation with others in a given sentence; e.g: "*James killed Max*" \implies it means that Someone called James killed deliberately someone called Max.

* Sometimes we change the order of words and meaning remains the same; e.g.

"*The opera house had never been closed before*" \implies "Never before had the opera been closed".

So, the words' order doesn't always change meaning.

b- **Complex Sentences:** There are ambiguous sentences that include complex words as; I went to the *bank* \implies (bank is a complex word).

*There are ambiguous sentences that contain simple words but complex meaning; e.g. "*Flying planes can be dangerous*".

(Either flying which is dangerous or planes themselves are dangerous).

So, "*Semantics*" should be able to clarify the meaning of those ambiguous sentences.

VI- Semantic Roles

Instead of thinking of the words as 'containers ' of meaning, we can look at the 'roles' they fulfill within the situation described by a sentence. If the situation is a simple event, such as "*The boy kicked the ball*", then the verb describes an *action* (kick). The noun phrases describe the roles of entities, such as people and things, involved in the action. We can identify a small number of "semantic roles" for these noun phrases.

a- Agent, Theme, Instrument

In the sentence above, one role is taken by "*the boy*" as the entity that performs the action, technically known as the "**agent**". Another role is taken by the "*ball*", as 'the entity that is involved in or affected by the action', technically known as the "**Theme**". The theme can also be an entity (the ball that is simply being described, as in "*The ball was red*"). Identifying entities denoted by noun phrases as the agent & the theme is a way of recognizing the semantic roles of those noun phrases in a sentence.

Although "**agents**" are typically human, they can also be non-human forces (the wind blew the ball away), machines (the car ran over the ball), or Creatures (the dog caught the ball). If an agent uses another entity in performing an action, that other entity fills the role of "instrument". In writing with a pen or eating with a spoon, the noun phrases "*a pen*" and "*a spoon*" have the semantic role of instrument. The theme can also be human. Indeed, the same physical entity can appear in two different semantic roles, as in "*the boy kicked himself*". Here The boy is "the agent" and himself is "the theme".

b- Experiencer, Location, Source, Goal

When a noun phrase designates an entity as the person who has a feeling, a perception or a state, it fills the role of "**experiencer**". If you see, know or enjoy something you don't really have to perform any action (hence you aren't an agent).

You are in the role of experiencer. If someone asks, Did you hear that noise? The **experiencer** is *'you'* and the **theme** is "*that noise*".

A number of other semantic roles designate where an entity is in the description of the event, where an entity is (on the table, in the room) fills the role of **location**. Where an entity moves from the "**source**" and where it moves to is the "**goal**". when we talk about transferring money from 'savings' to 'checking'. All these semantic roles are illustrated in the following scenario.

- Mary saw a mosquito on the wall

"*Experiencer*" "Theme" "*location*"

-She borrowed a magazine from George

"Agent" "Theme" "Source".

-and she hit the bug with the magazine

"Agent" "Theme" "*Instrument*'

-She handed the magazine back to George

"Agent" "*theme*" "*Goal*"

-"Gee thanks", said George

"Agent"

3-Utterance Meaning

It is due to the context of Situation. Among those who included the context Malinowski, who is an anthropologist and he was observing people in Trobriand Island, in the pacific ocean , when they were hunting and talking , he recorded their speech while hunting in the native language.

At the moment he wrote it, the idea was meaningful, but later when he wanted to translate it, he couldn't. Here Malinowski realized the absence of the situation and that's why the utterance couldn't have a sense and the context was affected. At that level, Malinowski stopped, since he was concerned with human being. Then, the idea of context was taken by Firth who elaborated it. His well known example:

In cockney —→ [Ahng gouna gi'wun far Ber].

In English —→ [I am going to get one for Bert]

The utterance , can't be understood since we don't know the speaker who said it, to whom, when, where.....So, Firth found that we should identify who is the speaker and the listener, the speaker's age, Sex and the relation between them. Only when we understand all this, we can understand this utterance. For this reason, J .R. Firth proposed a list of *parameters* in order to understand the utterance. So we have to identify the following:

1- The Relevant Features of the Participants: There are 2 relevant categories:

a- The verbal actions of the participants.

b-The non- verbal actions of the participants.

2-The Relevant Objects.

3-The Effect of the Verbal Actions.

Every utterance should go through all these steps in order to be pronounced.

1-The Relevant Features of the Participants: It has to deal with their age, sex, the speaker's and the listener's identities and the social degree or the relation between them, i.e. their identities, status and social relationship.

a- **The Verbal Actions of the Participants:** verb actions can be divided into two:

1-**Purely linguistic:** It refers to the choice of the grammatical structure, i.e. Word order. The word order is significant as **Firth** regarded it because part of it helps to understand the sentence. As the active and passive voice which are different.

For example: The active: The car hit the boy → “emphasis on the car”

The passive: The boy was hit by the car → “emphasis on the boy himself”

2- **The prosodic:** (*Suprasegmentals*) It includes *intonation* and *stress* which are very important. *Stress* has an important role to identify the verb from the noun e.g. 'perfect (n) and per'fect(v) and *intonation* has a grammatical function.

Examples: “Intonation”

- He lives in London → tell information
- He lives in London! → Surprise (Has purely grammatical function)

Stress: - I haven't 'seen Mary → May be, I have heard her on the phone.

- I haven't seen 'Mary → implies that I have seen other, except Mary.

So semantics has a big role to understand the meaning of an utterance through intonation and stress.

b-The Non-Verbal Actions of the Participants: Or paralinguistic channel like: the body movements, the hand gestures, facial expressions ... paralinguistic features help us to know when someone is *joking* or telling the *truth*, his attitude can be expressed through his facial appearance. According to **Firth** paralinguistic gives shades of meaning and not the complete meaning of the utterance.

2- **The Relevant Objects:** Referring to the physical setting. The meaning of the utterance can be understood only where it is said. **For example:** “*The Bill is charge*” which can be understood only according to the physical setting; it can mean a law or refers to the “*addition*” if you are in a restaurant.

Another example: Are you looking for “*the bible*”?

“*The bible*” is a complex word. The meaning of this utterance is clarified by the place. If it is in the *house*, we refer to the bible as a *sacred book*, and if in the *Butcher*, the word refers to the *stomach of the cow*.

3-The Effect of the Verbal Action: It is the effect of producing the utterance.

For example: When we say “*go out!*”, we measure the utterance by the reaction of the hearer, or when the teacher explains the lesson, our reactions would be, shaking heads, writing, smiling or why not surprising. According to *Firth*, the degree of the utterance is measured by the effects, i.e. To see the effects that have on the others. We have physical, linguistic & paralinguistic effects. For every utterance should have appropriate effect. All these effects are called: “*Feedback*” through which we know the degree of the utterance measured by the effects.

We can thus say that, it is only when we pass through all these steps that the utterance can be understood.

VI-Lexical Relations

Words can't be only treated as 'containers' or as fulfilling 'roles', they can also have relationships. The latter is known as "*Sense Relations*" which are classified into two broad categories:

- Those involving "*Similarity*" in meaning: "*Synonymy*"
- Those that include "*Difference*" in meaning → "*Antonymy*", "*Polysemy*", "*Hyponymy*".

I-Synonymy: Sameness in meaning between words. It exists in language but not always full. Synonymy, i.e. the degree of sameness is less than 100%.

For instance: Beautiful/handsome, Liberty/Freedom, Stop/give up, world/universe.... In this group of synonyms, the sameness is not 100% in degree because they are synonyms but with reserves because they can't be interchangeable within context. Some of these words aren't of the same origin, *for example* "*Brotherly*" is an English word, while "*Fraternity*" is a French one.

Synonymy as a general definition: Two items are synonymous if they are associated with the same meaning. It is widely believed that there are "few" if any "real" synonyms in natural languages to quote **ULL Man:** "*It is almost a truism (evidence) that total. Synonymy is an extremely rare occurrence, a luxury that language can ill-afford*". For total synonymy one needs at least *five conditions*:

1-Regional and Dialectal: Some set of synonyms belong to different dialects of the language, i.e regional differences. The fact that there are words belong to different regions, they aren't total synonyms. It is the closest degree if synonymy but not a complete one. ex: *elevator* "American" –*lift* "British"

- *fall* "American" – *Autumn* "British"

Another example: Hay mow/ Cow shed/Cow house / byre/Hay stack/hay rick ←→ These are the closest to meaning and they are different according to regions.

2-Stylistic Differences: There is a similar situation with the words that are used in different styles and can't be total synonyms. The fact that words belong to different styles of language, so they are formal and informal.

For example: A Nasty smell/abnoxious effivium/ an horrible "Strink" ↔ They are synonyms but differ in the degree of formality. "The form".

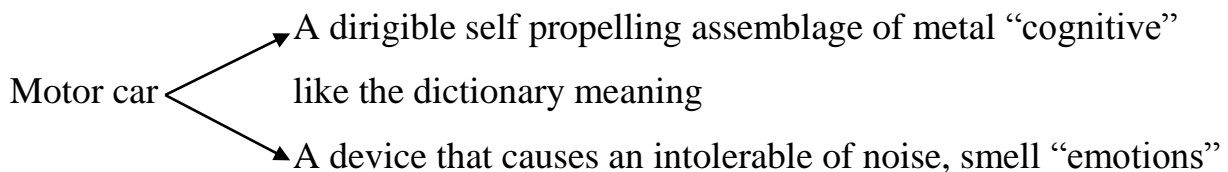
e.g. gentleman/man/chap

3- Some words may differ only in their "Emotive or Evaluative Meaning":

"**Connotative**" means "emotions, evaluation, something subjective" while "**denotative**" or *cognitive* is something "objective concerned with the mind". So connotative is opposed to denotative. By *denotation*, we mean the dictionary or intellectual meaning and when the word is charged with emotions, it is "*connotative*".

For example: The black color is linked with some bad connotation "*feelings*" and the *white* stands for *peace*. The red color also stands for color and communist. So red & communist are synonyms but don't show the same emotive meaning. e.g. Hide & conceal. **Hide:** when something is hidden and approved it, we say "hide".

Conceal: disapproval "emotional"



So words can't be total synonymous until they share the same emotive & cognitive meaning.

As a last example: "*Thrieffy*" = "*Stingy*". Both share the same denotative or cognitive meaning which is "economical" In the sense that "thrieffy" is used when the person is economical and you like it. It is natural & has value. Whereas "*Stingy*" is when the person is economical but you hate this. It is a value+ judgments.

*As a result, we have *three classes of words*:

a - There are only cognitive words like the scientific words, they don't share the same emotive & evaluative meaning.

b- Some words are fully charged by emotions. e.g. Good, bad, beautiful.

c-Some words have both emotive and cognitive meaning, e.g. Colors.

4-Some words are “Collocationally Restricted”, i.e. They occur only in conjunction with other words within the context, e.g. Handsome & pretty can't be interchangeably used in the same place. Another example;

Rancid/Aduld/Sour ↔ All of them are used for "**Spoiled food**"

-**Rancid:** is collocated with *butter/bacon*

-**Aduld:** is collocated with *eggs/brains*

- **Sour:** is collocated with *Milk*

So they are synonymous but we can't interchange one in the place of the other.

5-Loose/Strict Senses of Synonymy: Degrees of Synonymy.

There are words that are "*loose*" in Synonymy and others for "*strict*" ones .e.g. if we have a group of words (a,b,c,d....) that are synonymous, we say a & b are strict synonyms. As the meaning of (mature) in the dictionary is: *Adult/ Ripe/ perfect*. These words are considered as "*strict synonyms*" since they are the *closest synonyms*, but there are others that are considered as '*loose*' ones. So, no total synonymy exists.

- In order to qualify synonymy, there are two principles or measures to test.
- Interchangeability, i.e. "Substitution"
- Oppositeness.

Examples: "*Deep*" & *profound*". Both can be interchanged with *sympathy* but can't be interchanged with water; we say-*deep* water/not *profound* water.

Strong coffee & a *powerful* empire

Superficial ≠ *shallow*

Superficial (deep & profound), shallow is contrasted with (deep).

So, there is no sameness (100%) in meaning.

II-Homonymy and Polysemy

a-Homonymy: Words shared the same spelling, but different meaning or words which have the same pronunciation, but not the same spelling and of course the meaning is different. There are two kinds:

1 - **Homophony**: Words that have the same pronunciation but not the same spelling. For example; meat/meet, see/sea, knight/night.

2-**Homography**: The same spelling and/or pronunciation and different meaning

- The same spelling and pronunciation as: *plant/plant; Bow/Bow; left/left*
- The same spelling but different pronunciation as: *live/live*.

b-Polysemy: When a word has many meanings. So the same morphological word may have a range of different meanings as a glance at any dictionary will reveal. In the dictionary there is entry for any given word, the meanings are listed in a particular order with the central meaning given first followed by the most closely related meanings, and with metaphorical extensions coming last. The principle of polysemy is to transfer. The distinction between “*Homography*” & “*Polysemy*” is evident in the organization of the dictionaries. “*Homographs*” will be listed as different words, whereas “*Polysemes*” will be given under one “entry”

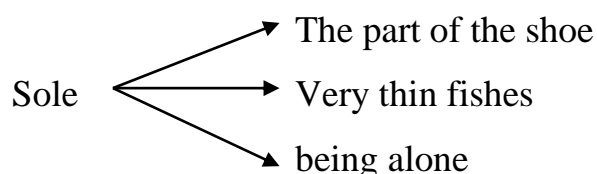
- What are the criteria followed by linguists?

The first criterion is **Etymology** (The origin of the word). Etymologists looked for the meaning of the word, if they find that the word has different origins, they are “*Homographs*” and if they have one origin, they are “*Polysemies*”. But, in fact, the idea of the origin isn’t always successful, it depends on how far we go to the “Etymology” of the word. e.g. “**port**”, *Harbour* is derived from the Latin “**Portus**”, whereas port “**strong wine**” is derived from “**Oporto**” which is the city from where wine is obtained and the origin of this word is “**Portoguese**”.

- The historical study doesn’t guarantee the difference in origins, e.g. *Flower & flour*, *Flower* is the origin since “*flour*” is derived from “*flower*”.

We shouldn’t allow the historical study.

***Relatedness & Non Relatedness in Meaning:** They looked for the central meaning or *core meaning*, then the derived or Metaphorical extensions, but there should be a kind of relatedness in meaning. e.g. “*leg*” is an organ and can be the leg of chair, bed, table. Sometimes, it is difficult to find the central meaning at all, e.g. charge, sole



***Arbitrariness:** It rests upon the lexicographer to decide about words if they are “*polysemic*” or “Homographic” due to some historical evidence.

III- **Antonymy:** Two words with oppositeness in meaning. For instance; *Safe/danger, fat/thin, male/female, buy /sell, easy/difficult, intelligent/idiot, good/bad.*

Some of these words aren’t gradable, i.e. there is a scale of degrees and comparison like “*Hot*” & “*cold*”, there are items that are gradable: warm/coal. But it isn’t always the case; we can say, for example “*more polite*” but we never say “*more alive*”.

That’s why *semantics* classified “*Antonyms*” into three classifications:

1-Complementarity: It is a characteristic of such pairs of lexical items that the denial of one implies the assertion of the other and vice versa. It holds between words as: *male/Female, off/on, single/married.* Example: *John isn’t married,* means “*single*”.

2-Antonymy: It is a characteristic of antonyms that are regularly gradable “*a graded scale of comparison*”. The assertion of one implies always the denial of the other. There are (2) kinds of “*Antonyms*”.

a-Implicitly- graded Antonyms: The denial of one doesn’t imply the assertion of the other. e.g. John is not bad ↔ doesn’t imply that he is “*good*”; the same thing when we say “*thin*” or “*fat*”. It occurs between such pairs as “*young/old*”, young according to other group of people . Here the norm in the comparison is hidden, e.g. *Small elephant is bigger than the big mouse,* i.e. a small elephant is compared to

other elephants and the big mouse is compared to other mice. The same thing with “Intelligence”.

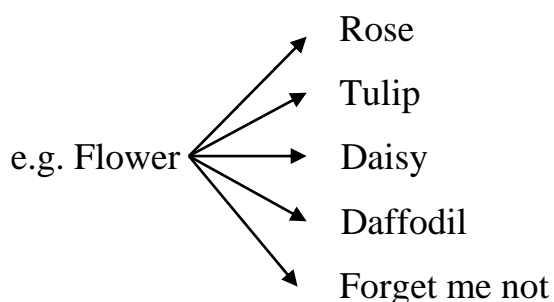
b-Explicitly- grades Antonyms: There is a norm of comparison through the words that end with “*er/more*”. The norm of comparison is explicit, e.g. *Our house is bigger than yours*; The house isn’t big in the absolute but when it is compared to your house, which is smaller than ours.

3-Converseness: Both activities are present at the same time. It holds between such pairs as: *Buy/sell, teach/learn, push/pull, lend/borrow, give/take*.

Converses allow the description of a single event or process from two different angles, focusing on the participants in different ways. They are thus like the *active* and *passive* correspondence where the same verb is used in conjunction with a varying syntax. For example: *John’s father gave him a book* ↔ It implies that John received a book from his father, but here we change the form of the verb completely, not like the passive.

Another example: Bill sold the car to Mary ↔ It implies that Mary bought the car from Bill.

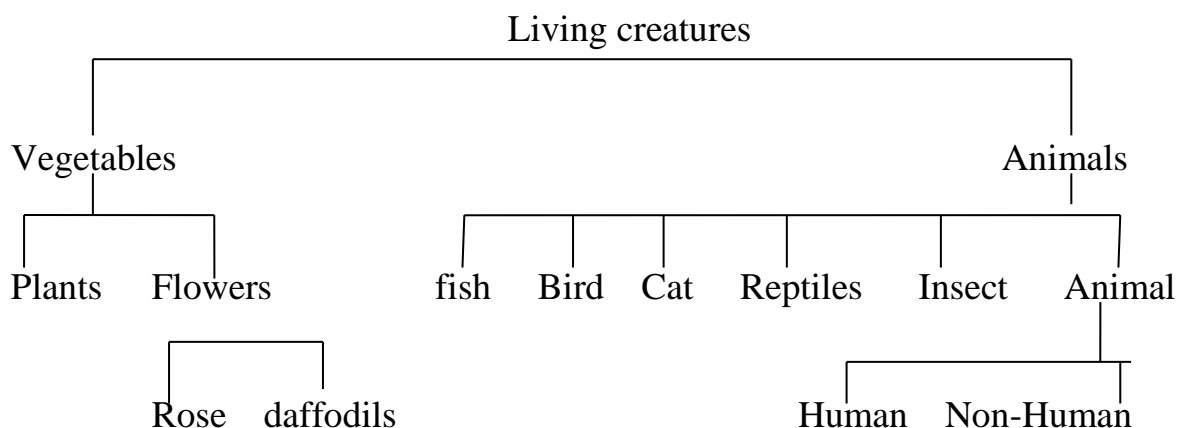
VI- Hyponymy: It stands for meaning *inclusion*, fore example: **Tree & forest**. One is included in the other (*Tree is included in Forest*). The relationship of implicit inclusion in called “*Hyponymy*”



The including item as (*Forest, Flower*), is called: “**Superordinate**” and the included ones are called: “**Co- hyponyms**” as (*rose, Tulip, daisy, tree...etc*)

The assertion of the “*Co- hyponym*” (this is a rose) implies the assertion of the superordinate (*This is a flower*). But the assertion of the superordinate “(*This is a flower*) doesn’t automatically imply one specific “*Co-hyponym*”

In fact, an item can be a “superordinate” & a “co-hyponym” at the same time. For example: “*Living creatures*”. It includes both *animals* and *vegetables*, so “*living*” is “*superordinate*” that includes “*Co-hyponyms*” as *animals* & *vegetables*. And the “*co-hyponym*” *animals*” can be “*superordinate*” of other “*Co-hyponyms*” like (*bird, fish, cat, insect, reptiles...*).



Collocation

Beside sense relations, *J.R. Firth* added “*Collocation*”. By “*Collocation*” it is meant the habitual association of a word in a language with particular words in sentences. *Firth* argued that “*you shall know a word by the company it keeps*”. The keeping company means “*Collocation*”, which was part of the meaning of the word, i.e. the occurrence of one implies the occurrence of the other whether words or groups.

a- **Words:** Night → Dark , Strong → Coffee, Dog → Bark,
Blond → Hair

b- **Groups:** group of people → crowd, group of sheep → flock,
group of lions → pride

There are special cases of *collocation*. The most important ones are “*idioms*” which imply the non –literal meaning of items.

Examples:

- To pick someone's brain ↔ To exploit someone's intelligence
- Fly off the handle ↔ means to lose one's temper. (to be in a bad mood).
- A red letter day ↔ A day that won't be forgotten
- To spill the beans ↔ To reveal the secret
- Good as Gold ↔ kindness, gentleness, in behavior

Collocation, Idioms, and Ready- Made Utterances

Collocation: Firth argued that you shall know a word by the company it keeps. His familiar example was that of *ass* which occurs in *you silly---*, *don't be such an ---* - and with a limited set of adjectives such as *silly*, *obstinate*, *stupid*, *awful*... etc.

For *Firth* this keeping company which he called *collocation*, was part of the meaning of the word. One other example is *blond* with *hair*. For, we should not talk about * *a blond door or a blond*, even if the color were exactly that of blond hair. Similarly it occurs only with *bacon and butter*, and *addled* with *brain and eggs*, in spite of the fact that English has the terms *rotten* and *bad* and that *milk* never collocates with *rancid* but only with *sour*.

This characteristic of language is found in an extreme form in the collective words- *flock of sheep*, *herd of cows*, *school of whales*, *pride of lions*.

Idioms: We cannot predict, for any given language, whether a particular meaning will be expressed by a single word or by a sequence of words. Thus English *punch* and *kick* have to be translated into French with: *donner un coup de poing* and *donner un coup de pied*. In these French examples we clearly have instances of *collocations* that involve some association of ideas; and the meaning of the entire expression can be predicted from the meaning of individual words.

Idioms are a special case of *collocation*. They are used to refer to habitual collocations of more than one word that tend to be used together, with a semantic function not readily deducible from the other uses of the component words apart from each other.

An idiom can also be defined as a group of words whose meaning cannot be explained in terms of the habitual meaning of the words that make up that piece of language. Thus "*fly off the handle*" which means lose one's temper cannot be understood in terms of the meanings of "Fly", "off", or "handle" (He has an inflammable temper and flies off the handle easily). Idioms involve the non- literal use of language and can be categorized as follows.

1-Alliterative Comparison: Dead as dodo (that strange plant of yours is as dead dodo: No one is interested in it any more), fit as fiddle (perfectly healthy), good as gold (kindness, gentleness in behavior)

2-Noun Phrases: A blind alley (route that leads nowhere) a close shave (a narrow escape), a red letter day (a day that will never be forgotten).

3-Preposition phrase: At six and sevens (unable, unwilling to agree), by hook (by whatever methods prove necessary), in for a penny, in for a pound (I'm involved irrespective of cost), in deep water in trouble, in difficulties).

1- **Verb + Noun Phrase:** Kick the bucket (die), pop your clogs (die), spill the beans (reveal a secret).

2- **Verb + prepositional phrase:** Be in clover (be exceptionally comfortable), be in the doghouse (be in disgrace), be between a rock and a hard place (have no room for manoeuvre).

3- **Verb + Adverb Phrase:** Give in (yield), put down (kill), take to (like).

There are sequences of verb + preposition, such as; look after, go for, and sequences of verb, adverb and preposition, such as put up with(*tolerate*) and do away with(*kill*), take in deceive.

Idioms differ according to region and according to formality.

They are found more frequently in speech than in writing. Although they occur in all languages, they can rarely be translated.

Ready- Made Utterances

These are what Saussure has called ("locutions toutes faites"): expressions which are learned as unanalysable wholes and employed on particular occasions by native speakers. An example from English is "*how do you do?*" which, though it is conventionally punctuated as a question, is not normally interpreted as such.

Another "ready - made" English expression is "*rest in peace*" (as a tombstone inscription) which unlike for example; "*Rest here quietly for a moment*", is not to be regarded as instruction or a suggestion made to the person one is addressing, but a situationally- bound expression which is unanalysable with reference to the grammatical structure of contemporary English.

The stock of proverbs passed on from one generation to the next provides many instances of "ready- made - utterances".

e.g. "*Easy come easy go*", "*All that glitters is not gold*"... etc. Many of our utterances cannot rightly be said to have as their sole or primary function the communication or seeking of information, the giving of commands, the expression of hopes, wishes and desires, but serve to establish and feeling of social solidarity and well- being. An example might be "*It's just another beautiful day*", said as the opening utterance in a conversation between customer and shopkeeper. Quite clearly this utterance is primarily intended to "convey" to the shopkeeper some information about the weather; it is an instance of "*Phatic Communion*".

Ready- made utterances may be referred to as "*typical repetitive events in the social process*". Since they have this character, it would be possible to account for the "behavioristic" framework the utterances in question could reasonably be described as "conditioned responses" to the situations where they occur.

PRAGMATICS

Besides the meaning of words, there are, however, other aspects of meaning which are not derived from the meaning of words used in phrases and sentences. In fact, when we read or hear pieces of language, we normally try to understand not only what the words mean, but what the writer or speaker of these words intended to convey. This study of intended speaker meaning is called "*pragmatics*".

- **Invisible Meaning:** "*Pragmatics*" is the study of invisible meaning in order to have some insights into how more gets communicated than it is said.

Driving by a parking lot, we may see a large sign like the one in the picture below;

<p><i>Heated</i> <i>Attendant</i></p> <p><i>Parking</i></p>

We know what each of these words mean and what does the whole sign mean, however, you don't normally think that the sign is advertising a place where you can park your heated attendant. Alternatively, it may indicate a place where parking will be carried out by attendants who have been heated. The words may allow these interpretations, but you would normally understand that you can park your car in this place, that's the heated area and that there will be an attendant to look after the Car. So, how can we decide that the sign means this? especially that there is no word as car in it.

Thus we take the words, understand their meanings, in combination and the context in which they occur, then we try to arrive at what the writer of the sign intended his message to convey .

* **Another example:** It is taken from a newspaper advertisement, and think not only about what the words might mean, but also about what the advertiser intended them to mean: "*Baby & Toddler Sale*". Normally, we understand it as advertising for babies' clothes rather than the selling of children or babies themselves.

The word "*clothes*" doesn't appear, but our normal interpretation would be that the advertiser intended us to understand his message as relating to the sale of baby clothes and not of babies.

In these examples, there is emphasis on the influence of context. The latter can be either "linguistic" or "physical context" due to be place, time...etc.

* **To conclude,** "Semantics" is a very important component as well as "Syntax" and "phonology". They all go together, hand in hand in order to understand a particular language.

Pragmatics

In fact, there are aspects of meaning which are not derived solely from the meanings of the words used in phrases and sentences. Also when we read or hear pieces of language, we normally try to understand not only what the words mean but what the writer or speaker of these words intended to convey. The study of "*intended speaker meaning*" is called "**pragmatics**".

* **Pragmatics:** It has enjoyed a wide range of interpretations. In many ways, "*pragmatics*" is the study of "invisible" meaning, or how we recognize what is meant even when it isn't actually said (or written). In order for that to happen, speakers (& writers) must be able to depend on a lot of shared assumptions and expectations. The investigation of those assumptions and expectations provides us with some insights into how more gets communicated than is said. **For instance;** consider an example taken from a newspaper advertisement and think not only about what the words might mean, but also about what the advertiser intended them to mean:

"Baby & Toddler Sale"

This hasn't dealt with the sale of young children, but rather it is advertising clothes for babies. The word "clothes" doesn't appear, but our normal interpretation would be that the advertiser intended us to understand his message as relating to the sale of baby clothes and not babies.

A pragmatic theory is seen as a theory of linguistic communication. Such theory aims at providing an account of sentence or utterance meaning and an account of how the hearer determines what the speaker is saying and recognizes both the intended direct and indirect meaning (illocutionary force).

"Gazdar" defined "*pragmatics*" as follows: "*Pragmatics has as its topic those aspects of the meaning of utterances which can not be accounted for by straight forward reference to the "truth conditions" of the sentences uttered*". The term "*truth conditions*" was used by different people .e.g. "A" says: the weather is bad. "B" answers either by "yes" or "no". It is a truth which aims at informing but if it is used in an indirect way, there is some thing behind it.

Pragmatics is also cultural & it differs from one area to another, e.g. The speech Act: "*I divorce you*", when it is uttered, the Woman should leave. There is a cultural as well as religious effects. Moreover, the participants are very important in the case of "*pragmatics*" in addition to the setting (time & place).

In fact, most linguists thought to deal first with Syntax, Semantics and finally pragmatics in dealing with the field of "pragmatics" because:

* **Syntax**: the combination of words.

***Semantics**: the meaning

***Pragmatics**: the study language in use, i.e. How meaning changes according to the context either linguistic or physical.

It is then difficult for most linguists to define what *pragmatics* is and many definitions are found in different books. So, there is a set of definitions of "pragmatics".

***Pragmatics**: is the study of those principles that account for why a certain set of sentences are anomalous or not possible utterances. Some examples of anomalous sentences as: - Come there please.

- Aristotle was Greak but I don't believe it.

- I order you not to obey this order.

Why are they anomalous?

*Because there is no ordinarily context in which these sentences can be appropriate.

"Pragmatics" is the theory of linguistic communication, what is involved in linguistic communication, how the speaker accomplishes the intended communication, How & why certain strategies are selected under particular circumstances'(context) to bring about communication.

The Speakers' intentions to convey are vey important as well as the hearer who should recognize the attitude; like intention to apologize. e.g. when a mother says to her son: "*I will take you out skiing in your birthday*". This utterance can be either a promise or a thereat if the son doesn't like this thing this can be clearly distinguished according to the knowledge that she & he have. That's to say, it is only according to the context that this utterance can be understood.

Context

There are, of course, different kinds of context to be considered. one kind is best described as "*linguistic context*" also known as "*context*". The "*context*" of a word is a set of other words used in the same phrase or sentence. The surrounding "*context*" has a strong effect on what we think the word means .e.g. The word "*bank*" is a complex word & can be understood only in its context, i.e. a form with more than one meaning (homonym) . From the "*linguistic Context*", we can know which type of bank is intended.

More generally, we know what those words mean on the basis of another type of context, best described as "*physical context*". If you see, for example, the word "*bank*" or the wall of a building in a city, the "*physical location*" will influence your interpretation. Our understanding of much of what we read and hear is tied to the physical context particularly the time & the place, in which we encounter linguistic expressions.

In fact, there are some words in the language that can't be interpreted at all unless the physical context, especially the physical context of the speaker, is known. There are words like:"here- there- this- that-now-then- yesterday, as well as most pronoun, such as:" I-you- him- her-them" In English, some sentences can't be understood unless we know who is speaking, about whom, where & when.

e.g. "*You'll have to bring that back tomorrow, because they aren't here now*".

This sentence contains a large number of expressions (you, that, tomorrow, they, there, now) which depend for their interpretation on the immediate physical context in which they were uttered. Such expression can only be understood in terms of speaker's intended meaning. These are technically known as deictic expression from, the Greek word "*Deixis*" which means "*pointing*" via language.

Any expression used to point to a person (me, you, him, them) is an example of "*person Deixis*". Words used to point to a location (here, there) are examples of "*place deixis*" and those used to point to a time (now, then, tonight, last week) are examples of "*time Deixis*".

All these "*deictic expressions*" have to be interpreted in terms of what person, time and place the speaker has in mind.

Semantics and Pragmatics

In general sense "*pragmatics*" studies the relation between linguistic expressions and their users. The use of the term "*pragmatics*" generally implies a dichotomy: The language "*Competence*" in the abstract and the "*use*" that is made of that competence by speakers and hearers. Therefore, the distinction between "*Semantics*" & "*pragmatics*" tends to go with the distinction between "*meaning*" & "*use*", or more generally that between "*competence*" & "*performance*".

There is a debate mentioned on the relation of Semantics to pragmatics in recent history of Semantics. The focus on pragmatics has been due to the influence of three philosophers: "**J.L. Austin**", "**J.R. Searle**" and "**H.P. Grice**".

In linguistics, there have been various challenges to the assumption that competence can be studied in separation from performance such as the transformational Grammar of Chomsky, who excluded "Performance" and Semantics. Semantics is the level of linguistics which has been most affected by pragmatics but the relation between Semantics & pragmatics has remained a matter of fundamental disagreement.

The central issue is: Is it valid to separate pragmatics from semantics at all?

There are three logically distinct positions that can be distinguished:

- a- Pragmatics should be subsumed under Semantics.
- b- Semantics should be subsumed under pragmatics.
- c- Semantics & pragmatics are distinct and complementary field of study.

In short, these can be represented in the following three approaches:

Semanticism (all meaning is semantics), *pragmaticism* (all meaning is pragmatics) and *complementarism* (semantics & pragmatics are complementary to one another in the study of meaning).

- “Ross” regarded the out line of the “*pragmatics Analysis*” is that the subject and performative verb & indirect object are “in the air”; that is, they belong to the extra-linguistic context of the utterance rather than to its actual structures.

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