

## Definitions of Semantics & Pragmatics

**Semantics & Pragmatics** are concerned with people's ability to use language meaningfully.

**Semantics** is the study of the conventional literal meaning.<sup>1</sup>

Semantics is mainly concerned with a speaker's competence to use the language system.<sup>2</sup>

**Pragmatics** is the study of the interactional intended meaning.<sup>1</sup>

Pragmatics is a person's ability to derive meaning from specific kinds of speech situations.<sup>2</sup>

**Utterance** is an event that happens just once.<sup>1</sup>

The meaning of an utterance is the meaning of the sentence plus the meanings of the circumstances: the time and place, the people involved, (the physical-social context).<sup>2</sup>

**Sentence** is a construction of words in a particular meaningful sequence.<sup>1</sup>

The meaning of a sentence is determined by the meanings of the individual words and the syntactic construction in which they occur.<sup>2</sup>

**Implicature** is a bridge constructed by the hearer to relate one utterance to some previous utterance (unconsciously).

**Prosody** is a spoken utterance consists of more than just words. In speech, meanings are communicated not only by what is said but also by how it is said.

**Paralanguage** are some ways of using the voice including e.g., laughing, giggling, and crying that are vocal but not verbal.

**Gestures** 'body language' are visible signs which possibly create an effect on the interpretation of a spoken message.

**Synonyms** are two or more forms with very closely related meanings, which are often, but not always, interchangeable in sentences.

**Antonyms** are two forms with opposite meanings.

**Reversives** mean not negative but to do the reverse.

**Hyponymy** means the meaning of form is included in the meaning of another.

**Homophones** are when two or more different written forms have the same pronunciation.

**Homonyms** are when one form has two or more unrelated meanings.

**Polysemy** is when one form has multiple meanings that are all related by extension.

**Componential analysis** is a semantic approach which assumes that word meaning can be described in terms of distinct components, many of which are binary.

**Components** are qualities embedded in any word's meaning, like the ones seen in dictionary definitions.

**The "roles" words** fulfill within the situation described by sentence.

**Agents & Themes** are the most common semantic roles.

**Agent** is the entity that performs the action.

**Theme** is the entity undergoing an action or movement.<sup>1</sup>

It is the entity that is affected by the action.<sup>2</sup>

It can also be an entity that is simply being described.<sup>3</sup>

**Instrument** is the entity used to perform an action.

**The Role of Instrument** is when an agent uses another entity in order to perform an action, that other entity fills the role of instrument.

**Experiencer** is the entity that has a feeling, perception, or state.

**The Role of Experiencer** is when a noun phrase is used to designate an entity as the person who has a feeling, perception or state, it fills the semantic role of experiencer.

**Location** is the place where an action occurs.<sup>1</sup>

It is where an entity is.<sup>2</sup>

**Source** is the starting point for movement.<sup>1</sup>

It is where the entity moves from.<sup>2</sup>

**Goal** The endpoint for movement.<sup>1</sup>

It is where the entity moves to.<sup>2</sup>

**Prototype** is an object or referent that is considered typical for the whole set.

It is about mental representation of meaning or categorization.

**Referring Expression** is a noun phrase that is used in an utterance and is linked to something outside language, some living or dead or imaginary entity.

**Primary Referring Expressions** are expressions that refer directly to their referents.

**Secondary Referring Expressions** are headed by pronouns and they refer indirectly; their referents can only be determined from primary referring expressions in the context in which they are used.

**Inference** is additional information to connect between what is said and what must be meant.

**Concrete Objects** are objects which can be seen or touched.

**Literal Meanings** when they occur in concrete contexts.

**Abstract** is when they cannot be perceived directly through the senses.

**Figurative Meanings** when they occur in abstract contexts.

**Concrete Countable Expressions** refer to items that are separate from one another which can ordinarily be counted one by one.

**Abstract Non-Countables** are treated in the English language as indivisible.

**Singular Countable Noun Phrase** must have an overt specifier.

**Plural Countable & Non-Countable** may have a zero specifier.

**Deictic Expressions** from the Greek word *deixis*, which means “**pointing**” via language.<sup>1</sup>

They are bits of language that we can only understand in terms of the speaker’s intended meaning.<sup>2</sup>

They have to be interpreted in terms of which person, place or time the speaker has in mind.<sup>3</sup>

**Personal Deixis** is when we use *deixis* to point to things and people.

Example: *I, you* and *we*, which ‘point’ to the participants in any speech; *he, she, it* and *they*, when used to refer to others in the environment.

**Spatial Deixis** are words and phrases used to point to a location.

Example: *here* and *there*, which designate space close to the speaker or farther away; *this/these* and *that/those*, which indicate entities close to or removed from the speaker.

**Temporal Deixis** are words and phrases used to point to a time.

Example: *now, then, yesterday, today, tomorrow, last week, next month*, etc. all relative to the time.

**Deictic Words** are words which ‘point’ to ‘things’ in the physical-social context of the speaker and addressee.

**Anaphora** can be defined as subsequent reference to an already introduced entity.

**Collocations** is a pair or group of words that are often used together.<sup>1</sup>

They are certain words that tend to appear together or “keep company”.<sup>2</sup>

**Fixed Collocations** for example *take a photo*, where no word other than *take* collocates with *photo* to give the same meaning.

**Open Collocations** are where several different words may be used to give a similar meaning.

**Presupposition** is what a speaker assumes is true or known by a listener.

**“Constancy Under Negation” Test** for identifying a presupposition is used to check for the presuppositions underlying sentences involves negating a sentence with a particular presupposition and checking if the presupposition remains true.

**Linguistic Context** (i.e., co-text) the linguistic context of a word is the set of other words used in the same phrase or sentence. The surrounding co-text has a strong effect on what we think the word probably means.

**Physical Context** is the relevant context is our mental representation of those aspects.

**Speech Act** is the action performed by a speaker with an utterance.

**Direct Speech Act** is when an interrogative structure is used with the function of a question.

**Indirect Speech Act** is when one of the structures is used to perform a function other than the one listed before.

**Speech Act Theory** The word **acts** entails doing actions. Within a specific context, Austin (1962) states that “to say something is to do something”.

**The Locutionary Force** is what is actually said; the production of the words that make up the utterance.

**The Illocutionary Force** is the intended meaning of the utterance (asking for the time).

**The Perlocutionary Force** is the effect achieved by the utterance on the hearer. (The action created; the listener looking at the watch and tells the time).

**Your face**, in pragmatics, is your public self-image.

**Politeness** is showing awareness and consideration of another person’s face.

**Face-Threatening Act** is if you say something that represents a threat to another person’s self-image.

**Face-Saving Act** is when you say something that lessens the possible threat to another’s face.

**Negative face** is the need to be independent and free from imposition.

**Positive face** is the need to be connected, to belong, to be a member of the group.

**Metaphor** is a figure of speech in which a word (or a phrase) is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable.<sup>1</sup>

It is a comparison made between A and B, where you say A actually is B, even though that's not literally true.<sup>2</sup>

**Conceptual Metaphor** refers to the understanding of one idea in terms of another.

**Spatial Metaphor** involves the use of words that are primarily associated with spatial orientation to talk about physical and psychological states.

**Physically Down** is inactivity which involves being on one's back.

**Physically Up** is energy and movement, which involve being on one's feet.

**Idiom** is an expression whose meaning cannot be derived directly from the string of words that make up the expression.<sup>1</sup>

It is an expression where the meaning is not immediately apparent from a literal interpretation of the words.<sup>2</sup>

**Conversation Rules** are our understanding of how language is used in particular situations to convey a message.

**Co-Operative Principle** is the general overarching guideline for conversational interactions.

**The Quantity Maxim** is to make your contribution as informative as is required, but not more, or less, than is required.

**The Quality Maxim** Do not say that which you believe to be false or for which you lack adequate evidence.

**The Relation maxim** is to be relevant.

**The Manner maxim** is to be clear, brief and orderly.

**Hedges** are words or phrases used to indicate that we're not really sure that what we're saying is sufficiently correct or complete.