علم المعاني والبراغماتيك

GREAT HEART

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Great

Lecture 1

❖ What is Semantics?

Semantics is the technical term used to refer to the study of meaning.

This term is a recent addition to the English language. One of the earliest uses of the term was in **1894**, in a paper entitled: "Reflected meanings: a point in semantics." In this case, the term was used to refer **not to meaning only but to its development** which is what we call now "**historical semantics**".

In **1900**, a book called "Semantics: studies in the science of meaning" was published. The term Semantics was treated in this book the way we use it today, to **refer to the "science" of meaning** not the changes of meaning from a historical point of view.

• **The use of the word "semantics" in popular language:**

In popular language, especially in newspapers, the word "semantics" is used to refer to the **manipulation of language**, mostly to mislead by choosing the right word. For example, the following headline in *The Guardian* in 1971: "Semantic manoeuvres at the Pentagon".

In this article the term "*mobile manoeuvre"* was being used to mean "retreat".

❖ What is "meaning"?

"**Meaning**" covers a variety of aspects of language, and there is **no general agreement** about the nature of meaning.

Looking at the word itself, the dictionary will suggest a number of different meanings of the noun "meaning" and the verb "mean".

The word mean can be **applied to people who use language**, i.e. to speakers, in the sense of "intend". And it can be **applied to words and sentences** in the sense of "**be equivalent to**". To understand what meaning is, one has to keep in mind whether we are talking about what speakers mean or what words (or sentences)mean.

- **Utterance Meaning (Speaker Meaning)** is what a speaker means (i.e. intends to convey)when he uses a piece of language. It includes the secondary aspects of meaning, <u>especially those related to context</u>.

- **Sentence Meaning (or Word Meaning)** is what a sentence (or word) means, i.e. what it <u>counts as the equivalent of</u> in the language concerned.

- Example:

- "**Nice day**."

This sentence is equivalent to something like "This is a lovely day."

However, depending on the situation and the speaker's facial expressions, tone of voice, or the relationship that exists between the speaker and hearer, it can mean the exact opposite, i.e. "This is not a nice day."

From what we discussed above, it becomes clear that there is a distinction between what would seem to **be the usual meaning** of a word or a sentence, and **the meaning it has in certain specific circumstances or contexts**. It is this distinction that allows us to say one thing and mean another.

This is a difference between **Semantics** and **Pragmatics**.

❖ What is Pragmatics?

Pragmatics is the study of meaning that a sentence has in a particular context in which it is uttered.

As we mentioned earlier, the difference between Semantics and Pragmatics is that the study of Semantics is independent of context.

- e.g. **There's a car coming.**

This sentence out of context simply gives information that a car is coming, but in a specific context it can be understood as a warning.

Lecture 2

❖ *Sense and Reference*

- **Sense** and **reference** are two very distinct ways of talking about the meaning of words and other expressions.
- **Sense** deals with the relationships inside the language.
- **Reference** deals with the relationship between the language and the world.

❖ *Sense*

The **sense** of an expression is its place in a system of semantic relationships with other expressions in the language.

E.g. The relationship between "big" and "small" is oppositeness of meaning (antonymy).

The relationship between "rich" and "wealthy" is sameness of meaning (synonymy).

• We will talk more about sense relations in a coming lecture.

❍ ***Notes***:

1. In some cases, the same word-form can have more than one **sense**.

□ **E.g.** Look at the word-form "bank" in the following sentences:

"I have an account at the **bank**."

"We took the boat to the other **bank** of the river."

In these examples, "**bank**" has a different sense in each sentence.

2. We can talk about the sense, not only of **words**, but also of longer expressions such as **phrases** and **sentences**.

□ **e.g.** "Rupert took off his jacket."

"Rupert took his jacket off."

We say that both of these sentence have the same sense.

3. One sentence can have different senses.

□ **e.g.** "The chicken is ready to eat."

This sentence has two different senses. The first sense is that the chicken is ready to be eaten. The second sense is that the chicken is ready to eat something.

❖ *Reference*

Reference is a relationship between parts of a language (words and phrases) and things outside the language (in the world).

By reference a speaker indicates which things and persons in the world are being talked about.

- e.g. **My son** is in **the house**.

"**My son**" here refers to a person in the world and "**the house**" refers to a thing in the world.

To make the term **reference** clearer to you, hold a book in your hand and describe it in a sentence. For example: "**This book** is about Semantics."

The English expression "**this book**" is part of the language. This expression can refer to any book. In the example, we used it to refer to part of the world which is the book you are holding in your hand. "**Reference**" is the relationship between the language expression and the real world object.

After looking at the previous example, we can give the following two definitions:

• A **referring expression** is any expression used in an utterance to refer to something or someone.

• A **referent** is the person or thing in the world speakers refer to by using a referring expression.

The relation between a referring expression and a referent is what we call **reference**.

- Notes:

1. The same **referring expression** can, in some cases, be used to refer to different **referents**.

- e.g. The **referring expression** "**this book**" can be used to refer to different books.

2. Two different **referring expressions** can have the same **referent**.

- e.g. The two expressions "**Riyadh**" and "**the capital of Saudi Arabia**" both refer to the same place.

❖ *Comparing Sense and Reference*

1. The **referent** of an expression is often a thing or person in the world; whereas the **sense** of an expression is not a thing at all.

The sense of an expression is an abstraction in the mind of a language user. When a person understands fully what is said to him, it is reasonable to say that he grasps the sense of the expression he hears.

2. Every meaningful expression has **sense**, but not every meaningful expression has **reference**.

e.g. The words "**almost**", "**if**" and "**probable**" have sense, but they do not refer to a thing in the world.

Lecture 3

Paradigmatic VS. Syntagmatic Relations

❖ *Paradigmatic and Syntagmatic Relations*

Paradigmatic relations are those into which a linguistic unit enters through being contrasted or substitutable, in a particular environment, with other similar units. (vertical relation)

Syntagmatic relations are those into which a linguistic unit enters by its co-occurrence with other units. (horizontal relation)

- e.g.

"a **red** door"

"a **green** door"

In this example, "**red**" and "**green**" are in a paradigmatic relation to each other.

"**Red**" and "**green**" are also in a **syntagmatic relation** with "door".

❖ *Semantic Fields*

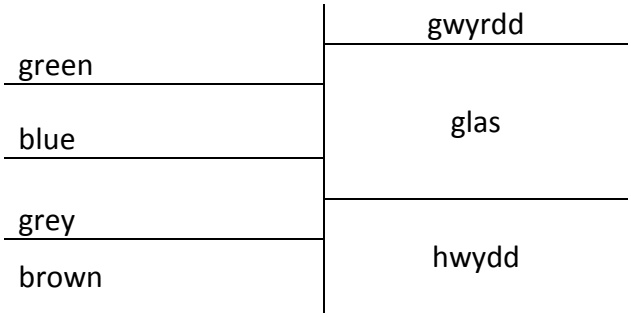
Words in a language can be grouped and classified into different semantic fields.

A **semantic field** contains a group of words which are related in their meaning.

For example, the words "Saturday", "Sunday", "Monday".. etc. belong to one semantic field which we can call "days of the week".

When we look at semantic fields we are concerned with **paradigmatic relations** between words.

- A word can be part of more than one semantic field. For example, the word "**whale**" can be a member of the following semantic fields: "**living creatures**", "**animals**" and "**sea animals**".
- Semantic fields can be useful to compare a single language at two different time periods, or to compare two languages to see the way in which they divide up a particular field.



This is a comparison of a single dimension of the color system between English and literary Welsh. We notice that English has more color terms to divide up this particular semantic field.

There are many other similar examples. For instance, if we look at the **words for noise** in a Mexican language, we find that there are six 'noise' words: referring to children yelling, people talking loudly, people arguing, people talking angrily, increasing noise and funeral noise.

Similarly, in Arabic we have a lot of words like "*klas*" and "*shishi*" that divide up the semantic field of "dates".

In all these examples we have a list of words referring to items of a particular class dividing up a semantic field.

In almost all of these cases, moreover, the words are **incompatible**. We cannot say for example, "This is a red hat" and of the same object "This is a green hat." Also, a creature cannot be described both as a "lion" and as an "elephant" at the same time.

The **incompatibility of terms** within a semantic field is often clearly indicated in language.

- e.g. It was on Saturday that she went there.

This sentence implies that she did not go there on Monday or any other day of the week (but not that she did not go there in August). The words "**Saturday**" and "Monday" are **incompatible** because they divide up the semantic field of "days of the week" in English.

We can, however, recognize terms that seem to be **mixtures**.

For example, a hat can be orange-red. But by introducing such terms we merely increase the words within the field, and divide the field up more finely. So instead of just having color terms like "red", "green", "blue" and "orange", the semantic field of the color system will include color terms like " red-green", "orange-red".. etc.

In some cases the distinction between the terms in a semantic field is **clear**, and reflected by clear distinctions in experience; this is the case, with few exceptions, with animal names. So, the distinction between “rabbit” and “tiger” is very clear.

In other cases, e.g. the Mexican 'noise' words we discussed earlier, the distinctions are far more **blurred**.

Generally, too, the items in a semantic field are ‘**unordered’**. In other words, there is no natural way, as far as their meaning is concerned, of arranging them in any kind of order. If we wanted to list them we should probably do so in alphabetical order.

But there are some groups of words that seem to have some **'order'**. For example, the days of the week and the months of the year form sets of ordered incompatible items.

We cannot say for instance:

“This month is November and it is also March.”

This group of words, however, have sequential relations such that Sunday comes immediately before Monday, and Monday before Tuesday.. etc.

Another example of semantic fields that have members that can have “**natural order**” is the case of measurement units such as inch, foot and yard which can be put in order, starting from the smallest one.

The numerals one, two, three, etc., are another obvious example.

Lecture 4

❖ *Collocation*

In our previous lecture, we mentioned that semantic field theory is essentially concerned with **paradigmatic relations**. Another important type of relations we need to recognize is the syntagmatic relations between words like “bite” and “teeth”, “bark” and “dog”, “blond” and “hair”.. etc.

We notice from these examples that certain words tend to appear together or “keep company”. This keeping company is what is called in semantics “**collocation**”.

• Collocation can be seen as part of the meaning of a word. By looking at the linguistic context of words, we can often distinguish between different meanings. Notice the use of “**chair**” in these examples.

1. sat in a **chair**

2. the baby's high **chair**

3. the **chair** of philosophy

4. has accepted a University **chair**

5. the **chairman** of the meeting

6. will **chair** the meeting

7. the electric **chair**

8. condemned to the **chair**

These examples are clearly in pairs, giving four different meanings of the word. The above examples help to illustrate Firth’s (1951) argument: “You shall know a word by the company it keeps.”

❖ *Types of Collocational Restrictions*

Here we will discuss the three types of restriction that result in collocation of words in a language.

❍ *Types of Collocational Restrictions:*

A.

Some collocational restrictions are based wholly on the meaning of the item.

For example, meaning explains the collocation of "**bite**" and "**teeth**". Meaning also explains why it is unlikely to see the collocation "**green cow**".

Words may have more specific meanings in particular **collocations**. In particular collocations, a word may change. Thus, we can speak of "**abnormal weather**" or "**exceptional weather**" if we have a heat wave in winter, but "**an exceptional child**" is not "**an abnormal child**". In the second example, "exceptional" is being used for greater than usual ability and "abnormal" to refer to some kind of defect.

B.

Some restrictions are based on **range** - a word may be used with a number of other words that have some semantic features in common. Also, we find that individual words or sequences of words will NOT collocate with certain groups of words.

Looking at the range we know roughly the kind of nouns (in terms of their meaning) with which a verb or adjective may be used.

For example, we may say "**The rhododendron died**," but not "**The rhododendron passed away**." This is in spite of the fact that "pass away" seems to mean "die". We should not use "pass away" with the names of any shrubs. It is not very plausible to say that "**pass away**" indicates a special kind of dying that is not characteristic of shrubs. It is rather that there is a restriction on its use with a group of words that are semantically related.

Range accounts for the unlikeliness of collocations like "**The rhododendron passed away**."

In cases like this, we do not reject specific collocations simply because we have never heard them before - we rely on our knowledge of the range.

C.

Some restrictions are collocational in the strictest sense, involving neither meaning nor range.

Although collocation is very largely determined by meaning, it sometimes cannot easily be predicted in terms of the meaning of the associated words.

An *example* of this is the use of "**blond**" with "**hair**". We do not normally say "**a blond door**" or "**a blond dress**" even if the color was exactly that of blond hair.

Another *example* is words for animal sounds such as: **"dog/bark**", "**cat/mew**", "**sheep/bleat**", "**horse/neigh**", etc.

This characteristic of language is also found in an extreme form in the collective words *such as*: "**flock of sheep**", "**herd of cows**", "**school of whales**" and "**pride of lions**".

However, there is no clear distinguishing line between those collocations that are predictable from the meanings of the words that co-occur, and those that are not predictable from the meaning. That is because it might be possible to provide a semantic explanation for even the more restricted collocations, by assigning very particular meanings to the individual words. For example, we can account for collocations like "**dogs bark**", "**cats mew**" in terms of the kind of noise made.

This should not, however, lead us to conclude that all of these restricted collocations can be accounted for semantically. For instance, it is difficult to see any semantic explanation for the use of collective terms. The only difference between "**herd**" and "**flock**" is that one is used with cows and the other with sheep.

Lecture 5

Sense Relations Part 1

❖ *Sense Relations*

In lecture 2, we talked about the notion of "sense". We mentioned that the sense of an expression is the whole set of sense relations it has with other expressions in the language.

In this lecture we will talk about two of these sense relations: **synonymy** and **antonymy**.

❖ *Synonymy*

Synonymy is the relationship between two lexical units (words) that have the same sense. Words that have the same sense are called **synonyms**.

The following pairs are examples of synonymy:

buy/ purchase

hide/ conceal

wide/ broad

deep/ profound

There are, however, no real synonyms. No two words have exactly the same meaning. Perfect synonymy is hard to find because it is unlikely that two words with exactly the same meaning would both survive in a language.

If we look at possible synonyms there are at least five ways in which they can be seen to differ. These ways are as follows:

First, some sets of synonyms belong to different dialects of the language. For instance, the term "fall" is used in the United States and in some western counties of Britain where others would use "autumn".

Second, words that are used in different styles. For example words such as "gentleman", "man" and "chap" have the same meaning but are used in different styles ranging from formal to colloquial.

Third, some words may be said to differ only in their emotive or evaluative meanings. The remainder of their meaning remains the same. Notice the emotive difference between "politician" and "statesman", "hide" and "conceal", "liberty" and "freedom", each implying approval or disapproval. The function of such words in language is to influence attitudes. They are chosen simply for the effect they are likely to have.

Fourth, some words are collocationally restricted. In other words, they occur only in conjunction with other words. Thus, "**rancid**" occurs with "bacon" or "butter" and "**addled**" with "eggs" or "brain". It could, perhaps, be argued that these are true synonyms differing only in that they occur in different environments.

Fifth, many words are close in meaning, or that their meanings overlap. There is a loose sense of synonymy between them. For the adjective "**mature**", for example, possible synonyms are "adult", "ripe" or "perfect". For the verb "**govern**", we may suggest "direct", "control" or "determine". This is the kind of synonymy that is used by the dictionary-maker.

❖ *Antonymy*

Antonymy is the relationship between two lexical units (words) that have the opposite sense. Words that are opposite are called **antonyms**.

There are three different types of antonymy:

1. binary antonymy (complementarity)
2. converses (relational opposites)
3. gradable antonyms

❖ *Types of Antonymy*

1) Binary antonymy (complementarity):

Binary antonyms are lexical units which come in pairs and between them exhaust all the relevant possibilities. If one of the antonyms is applicable, then the other cannot be applicable, and vice versa.

- **E.g.** dead/ alive

  married/ unmarried

2) Converses (relational opposites):

In the case of converses, a word describes a relationship between two things (or people). At the same time, another word describes the same relationship when the two things (or people) are mentioned in the opposite order. In this case, we say then the two lexical units are **converses** of each other.

- **E.g.** "**parent**" and "**child**" are converses. If we say, "Ahmed is the **parent** of Ali" (one order); this describes the same relationship as "Ali is the child of Ahmed" (opposite order).

The notion of **converseness** can be applied to examples in which three referents are mentioned as in the case of "buy" and "sell".

John **bought** a car from Fred. Fred **sold** a car to John.

3) Gradable antonyms:

Gradable antonyms are two words at opposite ends of a continuous scale of values.

E.g. "**Hot**" and "**cold**" are gradable antonyms.

Between "**hot**" and "**cold**" we have "**warm**", "**cool**" or "**tepid**".

A good test for gradability is to see whether a word can combine with: very, very much, how or how much.

For example, it is possible with the gradable antonyms "**far**" and "**near**" to say: "**very near**" or "**How far is it**?"

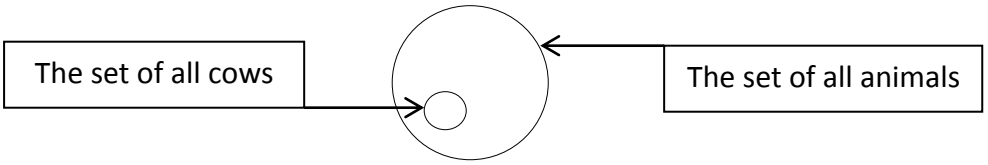
On the other hand, in the case of other types of antonyms like "**married**/**unmarried**" we wouldn't normally say "**very married**" or "**very unmarried**". And with the antonyms "**dead**/**alive**", we normally wouldn't say: "**How alive is he?**"

Lecture 6

❖ Hyponymy

Hyponymy is a sense relation between words in which the meaning of one word is included in the meaning of the other word.

Hyponymy involves the notion of inclusion in the sense that the meaning of "tulip" and "rose" is included in the meaning "flower", and the meaning of "lion" and "cow" is included in "animal" or mammal.



The upper term is called the **superordinate** and the "lower" term is called the **hyponym**.

- e.g. The meaning of "**scarlet**" is included in the meaning of "**red**". "**Red**" in this example is the **superordinate**, and "**scarlet**" is a **hyponym** of "**red**".

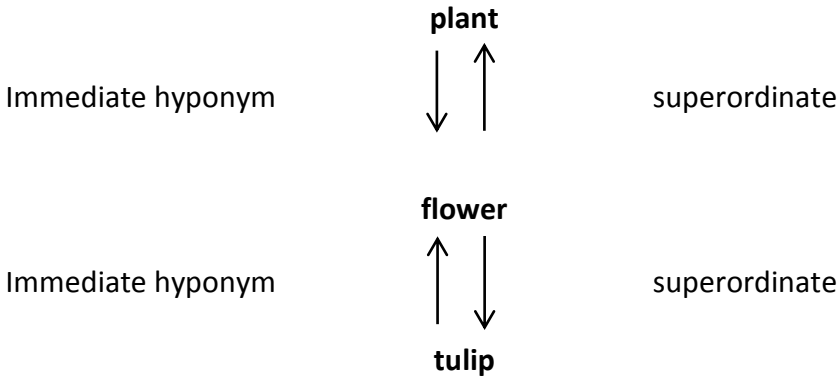
If a superordinate term has more than one hyponym, we call them **co-hyponyms**.

- e.g. The superordinate "emotion" has the hyponyms "fear", "anger", "happiness", "sadness" …etc.

we say that "fear" is a co- hyponym of "anger" and "sadness" is a co-hyponym of "fear"…etc.

A hyponym can itself be a superordinate of another term included in its meaning. For example, "tulip" is a hyponym of "flower" and "flower" is a hyponym of "plant".

In a case like this, we say that "flower" is an **immediate hyponym** of "plant" and tulip" is an **immediate hyponym** of "flower". "tulip" is also a hyponym of "plant" but it is <u>not</u> an immediate hyponym.



There is not always a superordinate term for hyponyms in a language. For instance, there is no superordinate term in English to cover a variety of professions and crafts like "carpenter", "doctor", "flute player" … etc.

The nearest possible is "craftsman ", but that would not include "doctor" or "flute player". However, hyponymy relations vary from language to language. Greek, for example, has a superordinate term to include a variety of occupations.

Synonymy can be seen as a special case of hyponymy. For example, if we look at two synonyms, such as "mercury" and "quicksilver", we notice that these also illustrate the hyponymy relationship because the meaning of one of them is included in the other and vice versa. We call this special case of hyponymy : "**symmetrical hyponymy**". The rule here is that if **X** is a hyponymy of **Y** and **Y** is a hyponymy of **X**, then **X** and **Y** are synonymous.

❖ *Polysemy and Homonymy*

Polysemy is a sense relation in which the same word has several very closely related meanings (senses).

- e.g. "Earth/earth" (our planet vs. soil). The two senses are clearly related by the concepts of land (earth as land not sky or water).

In the case of polysemy, a native speaker of the language has clear intuitions that the different senses are related to each other in some way.

Homonymy is a sense relation in which several words have the same shape, but different meanings that are far apart from each other.

- e.g. "Bank" (financial institution vs. the side of a river) is a case of homonymy, the senses of the word are not obviously related to each other in any way that is clear from a native speaker's intuition.

Dictionary-makers have to decide whether a particular item is to be handled in terms of polysemy or homonymy, because a polysemic item will be treated as a single entry in the dictionary, while a homonymous one will have a separate entry for each of the homonyms.

It is important to note that there are cases where homonyms differ in either writing or speech.

- e.g. "Lead" (metal) and "lead" (dog's lead) have the same spelling, but pronounced differently. On the other hand, "site" and "sight", "rite" and "right" are spelled differently but pronounced in the same way. For the former, the term **homography** (words spelled the same) may be used, and for the latter we use **homophony** (words pronounced the same).

Lecture 7

Componential Analysis

❖ *Componential Analysis*

In **componential analysis**, the total meaning of a word is being analyzed into a number of distinct components of meaning (semantic features).

This kind of analysis can offer a theoretical framework for handling all the sense relations we have been discussed in our previous lectures.

As an example of componential analysis, we notice that in English (and also many other languages) there is a three-fold division with many words that refer to living creatures as in the following:

Man	Woman	Child
Bull	Cow	Calf
Ram	Ewe	Lamb

In the light of relationship such as these we can abstract **components** (male) and (female), (adult) and (non-adult), plus (human), (bovine) and (ovine).Thus, "ewe" is (ovine), (female), (adult), "child" is (human), (non-adult) and so on.

Analysis of this kind is called **componential analysis**.

It allows us to provide definitions for all these words in terms of a few components.

In many cases there is an appropriate word in the language to label component. The components (male) and (female) are obvious examples. Such labels for components are not, however, always readily available. For instance, notice the relationship between the words in the following two sets :

come	go
bring	take

From these two sets, we notice that there is a relationship between words "come" and "go" which is similar to "bring" and "take". We could therefore distinguish **components X** and **Y** and **A** and **B** such that "come" is **XA** and "go" **XB**, "bring" **YA** and "take" **YB**. But what could be the names of these components (**X**, **Y**, **A**, **B**) ? It is difficult to provide an answer, for they cannot be identified with features that have any simple kind of physical reality.

We may, perhaps, assume that all societies distinguish between (male) and (female) and that thus the components (male) and (female) are universal components of language. But the "come/go" and "bring/take" examples show that not all components are related to simple physical features, and it becomes less components found in all languages.

A particular characteristic of componential analysis is that it attempts as far as possible to treat components in terms of "binary" opposites, e.g. between (male) and (female), (animate) and (inanimate), (adult) and (non-adult). It clearly gives emphasis to relation of complementarity.

Notationally, there is an advantage in such binary terms in that we can choose one only as the label and distinguish this in terms of **plusses** and **minuses**.

Thus, (male) and (female) are written as (+male) and (-male) and so on. We can, moreover, refer to the lack of a sex distinction as in the case of inanimate objects using the notation 'plus or minus' with the symbol (**±**male). This works well only where there is a clear distinction. Often, however, there is indeterminacy, as with the words "tar" and "porridge" in relation to the components (solid) or (liquid).

Componential analysis has been used to bring out the logical relations that are associated with **sense relations**. Thus by marking man as (+male) and pregnant as (-male), we can rule *pregnant man. Yet, componential analysis does not handle all sense relations well; in particularly, the following two sense relations :

1. converses (relational opposites) in antonymy.
2. Hyponymy.

1. **Converses (relational opposites) in antonymy.**

It is difficult to reduce the relational opposites to components. For the relation of "parent/child" cannot simply be handled by assigning components to each, unless those components are in some sense directional. In componential analysis, cases like these are analyzed as having the same components but in a different direction.

2. **Hyponyms**.

Componential analysis cannot remove the hierarchical characteristic of hyponymy. For the distinction (+male) / (-male) applies only to living (animate) things. Componential analysis, therefore, has to state that : only if something is animate, may it be male or female with a formula such as (+animate, +male/-male).

Componential analysis can handle all the sense relations we have discussed, but it handles some sense relations better than others like hyponyms and converses. It can be made to handle these relations with some necessary modifications like adding direction to the analysis in the case of converses, but it is doubtful if componential analysis makes these relations clearer ; it seems rather to obscure their differences.

Lecture 8

❖ *The Problem of Universals*

There is a question about the universality of semantic features - whether all, or some of them at least, occur in all languages. Views differ on the issue of universal semantic features between the following two extremes:

1. At one extreme, there is the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which suggests that each language may "create" its own world and so its own semantics.
2. At the other extreme, it could be argued that components such as (male) and (female) are found in all languages and that there are many others too, e.g. the basic colors.

We will examine three different claims about the universality of semantic features that range between these two extremes in the next section.

❖ *Universalist View Claims*

The simplest form of the universalist view is that there is a **universal inventory of semantic features (components).** There are three claims that try to explain the relation between this inventory and the actual features found in individual languages.

A. The strongest claim says that all languages make use of the whole inventory and so have the same features.
This claim seems highly implausible in view of what seem to be very obvious differences in languages; it can only be made to work by arguing that all the semantic features can be exhibited somehow in each language.

B. A weaker claim is that each language uses only <u>some</u> of the features in the total inventory.
This might seem more plausible – all languages have "male", "female", "black", "white", etc …

However, many other features are found only in some languages, and this claim does not account for these features.

C. A still weaker claim is that only some features are universal, while the rest are characteristic of individual languages. Though it may not even be that the universal features are exactly the same in each language.
This seems to be the case with the color terms and categories.

If we accept the weakest universalist claim that languages share some semantic features, then we are faced with a question.
What kind of explanation can we give for this phenomenon?
There are at least five answers which we will discuss in the following section.

❖ *Explaining language Universals*

1. "The world is like that." (**physical reality**)
2. The structure of the minds of all people is basically the same. (**psychological reality**)
3. The cultural needs of different societies are similar. (**cultural reality**)
4. There is or has been **contact between different societies** with different languages.
5. The languages of the world all have a **common origin**.

There may be some truth in all of these answers, and it is not at all easy to separate them. Let us examine these answers in more detail.

Regarding the first two answers, we can sometimes distinguish between what would seem to be **physical reality** and **psychological reality**. The differences indicated by "cow", "horse", "elephant"…etc. for example can be described on a **physical** basis.

On the other hand, even though it is true that different people make (roughly) the same color distinctions, these distinctions do not really "exist" in **physical** terms but are part of the **psychology of perception**.

We must not, of course, ignore the influence of **cultures** upon the linguistic systems. Kinship terminology, for example, will be much more a reflection of **cultural** influences than of the actual **physical** relationships.

For example, in Pawnee the term that we might translate as "father" is used of all the males from the father's side, while "uncle" is used of all the males from the mother's side.

Conversely, all the females from the mother's side are called "mother" and all the females from the father's side are called "aunt".

However, it will not always be easy, or even possible, to distinguish between **cultural reality** and **physical** or **psychological reality**.

In the case of color terminology, too, there may be three factors at work.

First, there are some **objective (physical) features** - the green of living plants, the red of blood, the blue of the sky. Here we are describing colors by associating them with our physical reality.

Secondly, it may be that there is some **psychological reality** that distinguishes colors when they are perceived by the brain.

Thirdly, **cultural considerations** may make certain color distinctions important. For instance, in the language of the Navaho tribe, the basic colors "white", "black", "red", "blue-green" and "yellow" are related to the use of objects and colors used in ceremonials.

Some apparent universals may be no more than an accident of the history of languages in either of the two ways indicated by our last two answers (**contact between societies** and **common language origin**).

For example, the modern Welsh system of color is now much more like that of English, as a result of increasing bilingualism.

Also, in most semantic areas (including color systems) the languages of Europe have much in common because of the close **contact** between European societies.

However, regarding the last answer of **common language origin** of languages, we often cannot be absolutely sure about the historical relationship of the languages we are examining.

For the language families for which we have evidence, we can go back only a few thousand years. It is possible that all the existing languages of the world have a **common origin**. If so, at least some of the universal semantic features of languages may simply be accidental.

Our languages could also have developed in quite different ways and from quite different origins.

Lecture 9

❖ *Semantics: Practical Applications*

In our previous lectures, we discussed a number of topics related to semantics. We will cover topics related to pragmatics in the coming lectures.

Before we move to pragmatics, however, we will look at a number of practical exercises that will help us apply our knowledge of the theoretical aspects we have been discussing so far in this course.

- If you need more practice, you can find more of these exercises in your reference book Semantics : A course Book.

❖ *Sense Relations*

❍ Binary Antonymy

To identify **binary antonyms**, we can test antonymous pairs by seeing if the negative of one term is the equivalent to (or entails) the other.

Thus, "dead" and "alive" are binary antonyms because if something is not dead then it must be alive.
Use this test to determine which of the following pairs in the exercise are binary antonyms.

☐ *Exercise 1 : Binary Antonymy*

⌗ *Are the following pairs binary antonyms?*

1.	chalk	**–**	cheese	⇨	Yes	**/**	No
2.	same	**–**	different	⇨	Yes	**/**	No
3.	copper	**–**	tin	⇨	Yes	**/**	No
4.	dead	**–**	alive	⇨	Yes	**/**	No
5.	married	**–**	unmarried	⇨	Yes	**/**	No
6.	love	**–**	hate	⇨	Yes	**/**	No

Answer

1. No, if something is not chalk, it is not necessarily cheese.
2. Yes, if two things are the same, they are not different: and if they are not the same, they are different.
3. No. 4. Yes. 5. Yes.
6. No, if you don't love someone, you don't necessarily hate him.

❖ *Converses*

We mentioned that if a word describes a relationship between two things (or people) and another word describes the same relationship when the two things (or people) are mentioned in the opposite order, then the two words are **converses** of each other. For example, "parent" and "child" are converses, because **X** is the parent of **Y** (one order) describes the same relationship as **Y** is the child of **X** (opposite order).

☐ *Exercise 2 (A) : converses*

⌗ *Are the following pairs of expressions converses?*

1.	below	**–**	above	⇨	Yes	**/**	No	(if X is below Y then Y is above X)
2.	grandparent	**–**	grandchild	⇨	Yes	**/**	No	
3.	love	**–**	hate	⇨	Yes	**/**	No	
4.	conceal	**–**	reveal	⇨	Yes	**/**	No	
5.	greater than	**–**	less than	⇨	Yes	**/**	No	
6.	own	**–**	belong to	⇨	Yes	**/**	No	

☐ *Exercise 2 (B) : converses*

⌗ *Are the following pairs of expressions converses?*

1.	If John bought a car from Fred, is it the case that Fred sold a car to John?	⇨	Yes	**/**	No
2.	Are buy and sell converses?	⇨	Yes	**/**	No
3.	Are borrow and lend converses?	⇨	Yes	**/**	No
4.	Are give and take converses? (*careful!*)	⇨	Yes	**/**	No
5.	Are come and go converses?	⇨	Yes	**/**	No

1. Yes.
2. Yes.
3. Yes, if borrows something from Y, Y lends that thing to X.
4. No, if X takes something from Y, Y does not necessarily give that thing to X (for example, X might take it without Y's permission), so give and take are not exact converses, although they almost meet the definition.
5. No, if someone goes to the mountain, the mountain does not come to him.

❖ *Gradable antonyms*

We mentioned that a good test for gradability, i.e. having a value on some continuous scale, is to see whether a word can combine with "very", or "very much", or "how"? or "how much"? For example, "how tall is he"? is acceptable, but "how top is that shelf"? is not generally acceptable. Thus, "tall" is gradable, but "top" is not gradable.

Try to apply this test to the following exercises.

☐ *Exercise 3: Gradable antonyms*

⌗ *Are the following pairs of Gradable antonyms?*

1.	tall	**–**	short	⇨	Yes	**/**	No	
2.	long	**–**	short	⇨	Yes	**/**	No	
3.	clever	**–**	stupid	⇨	Yes	**/**	No	
4.	top	**–**	bottom	⇨	Yes	**/**	No	
5.	love	**–**	hate	⇨	Yes	**/**	No	⇨ *(Careful*!)

⇨ 5) yes, we can say "how much do you love/hate something"?

☐ *Exercise 3: antonyms*

⌗ Classify the following pairs as binary antonyms **(B),** converses **(C),** or gradable antonyms **(G).**

1.	easy	**–**	difficult	⇨	B	**/**	C	**/**	G	gradable antonyms
2.	good	**–**	bad	⇨	B	**/**	C	**/**	G	gradable antonyms
3.	pass	**–**	fail	⇨	B	**/**	C	**/**	G	binary antonyms
4.	husband	**–**	wife	⇨	B	**/**	C	**/**	G	converses
5.	parent	**–**	offspring	⇨	B	**/**	C	**/**	G	converses
6.	legal	**–**	illegal	⇨	B	**/**	C	**/**	G	binary antonyms

❖ *Homonymy and Polysemy*

In the case of **homonymy**, we have two words whose senses are far apart from each other and not obviously related to each other in any way.

While in the case of **polysemy**, we have one word which has several very closely related senses (the different senses are related to each other in some way).

Let us apply this to the following exercise.

☐ *Exercise 3: Homonymy and Polysemy*

- Decide whether the following words are examples of homonymy (**H**) or polysemy (**p**).

1.	bark	(of a dog vs. of a tree)	⇨	H	/	p	homonymy
2.	fork	(in a road vs. instrument for eating)	⇨	H	/	p	polysemy
3.	tail	(of a coat vs. of an animal)	⇨	H	/	p	polysemy
4.	steer	(to guide vs. young bull)	⇨	H	/	p	homonymy
5.	lip	(of a jug vs. of a person)	⇨	H	/	p	polysemy

Answers:

1. H, not obviously related to each other in any way.
2. P, the two senses are related by the concept of branching out into different parts or pahs.
3. P, the two senses have the concept of being located at the end of something.
4. H, not obviously related to each other in any way.
5. P, the two senses have the concept of being at the edge of an hollow opening.

❖ *Semantic Fields and Collocation*

- A **semantic field** contains a group of words which are related in their meaning.
- **Collocation** is a relationship between words that specifically or habitually go together.

☐ *Exercise 1: semantic field*

Identify the word that does not belong to the group and suggest a suitable semantic field for the group.

1. banana – apple – orange – apricot – <u>flower</u>

2. uncle – aunt – <u>friend</u> – grandmother – cousin

3. car – ship – plane – <u>lake</u> – boat

4. honesty – reliability – generosity – truthfulness

5. running – swimming – thinking – skating

Answer

1. Semantic Field: "fruit", the word "flower" is not part of this semantic field.
2. Semantic Field: "relatives", the word "friend" is not part of this semantic field.
3. Semantic Field: "means of transportation:, the word "lake" is not part of this semantic field.
4. Semantic Field: virtues, all words belong to the field.
5. Semantic Field: "sports", the word "thinking" is not part of this semantic field.

☐ *Exercise 2: Collocation*

⌗ Decide whether the following pairs of words make a collocation.

1. have fun ⇨ <u>Yes</u> / No

2. get place ⇨ Yes / <u>No</u>

3. take place ⇨ <u>Yes</u> / No

4. problem solving ⇨ <u>Yes</u> / No

5. problem care ⇨ Yes / <u>No</u>

6. health care ⇨ <u>Yes</u> / No

Lecture 10

❖ *Sentences & Utterances*

- An **utterance** is any stretch of talk, by one person, before and after which there is silence on the part of that person.

- An **utterance** is the use of a piece of language (one or more word / phrase / sentence) by a particular speaker on a particular occasion.

To make the notion of utterance clear to you, read this sentence once out loud :

e.g. "There is a car coming" .

- Now read it out loud a second time.

The same sentence in this example was involved in the two readings. So, we have one sentence, but you made two different utterances of this one sentence, i.e. two unique physical events took place.

- A **sentence** is neither a physical event nor a physical object. It is an abstract string of words put together by the grammatical rules of a language.

- A sentence, then, exists abstractly in the mind of language speakers before they say it or write it.

- A sentence can be thought of as the ideal string of words behind various realizations in utterances and inscriptions.

To make the difference between sentences and utterances clearer consider the following situation.
Ahmed and Ali both great each other one morning with: 'How are you today'?
In this example, Ahmed made one utterance, and Ali made another utterance. As a result, we have two utterances.
On the other hand, there is only one sentence involved in the situation above.

❖ *Constatives & Performatives*

❍ Constatives

A **constatives utterance** is an utterance with which the speaker describes something which may be true or false.

e.g. " I'm trying to get this box open with a screwdriver".

This utterance expresses and describes something which we may judge as being true or false.
However, utterances can do more than simply describe something.

❍ *Performatives*

A **Performatives utterance** is an utterance that does not report or "constate" anything and is not "true or false".

In this type of utterances, the uttering of the sentence is part of an action.

e.g. I name this ship Discovery.

By uttering this sentences, the speaker actually names the ship. He is not making any kind of statement that can be regarded as true or false.

A **Performative verb** is one which, when used in a positive simple present tense sentence with a 1st person singular subject, can make the utterance of that sentence performative.

There are a number of performative verbs including:

promise, apologize, thank, approve, request, warn, congratulate..etc.

e.g. I thank you all for attending.
I approve this message.

Although most performative utterances have 1st person singular subjects, there are exceptions. The following are some examples of these exceptions.

e.g. 1. "You are forbidden to leave this room".
e.g. 2. "All passengers on flight number forty-seven are requested to proceed to gate ten".
e.g. 3. "We thank you for the compliment you have paid us".

- ◆ Performatives can be either **explicit** or **implicit**.
  - An **explicit performative** contanins a performative verb naming the act. **E.g.** I order you to go.
  - An **implicit performative** does not contain a performative verb naming the act. **E.g.** Go.

In the two examples above, we can achieve the same purpose (giving an order) with "Go" as we did with "I order you to go".

- ✧ Consider the following two examples:

1. "There is a car coming".
2. "I shall be there".

These examples can either be constative utterances, or implicit performatives.

Example **1** is an **implicit performative** if it is used as a warning, and so is example **2** if it is used as a promise. Both examples can also **constatives** if they are simply used to describe something.

❖ *Constatives Vs. Performative*

The difference between performatives and constatives is that a **performative utterance** performs some act and simultaneously describes that act. On the other hand, **a constative utterance** does NOT perform the act.

✧ Compare the following two examples :

- "I promise to repay you tomorrow".
- "john promised to repay me tomorrow".

"I promise to repay you tomorrow" is a performative because in saying it, the speaker actually does what the utterance describes, i.e. he promises to repay the hearer the next day. That is, the utterance both describes and is a promise.

By contrast, the utterance 'john promised to repay me tomorrow', although it describes a promise, is not itself a promise. So this utterance does not simultaneously do what it describes, and is therefore a constative, not a performative.

❖ *Speech Acts*

Words and sentences when uttered are used to do things, to carry out socially significant, in addition to merely describing aspects of world.

The notion of a performative clearly illustrates this point.

Thus, we can argue that part of the meaning of an utterance is what that utterance does. In our next lecture, we will talk in more details about the different characteristics of speech acts.