



Semantics & Pragmatics SoSe 2021

Lecture 1: Organization & Introduction

27/04/2021, Christian Bentz



Overview

Section 1: Organization

Online Teaching

Course Credits

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Moodle

Learning Strategy

Section 2: Literature

Section 3: Introduction

Form and Meaning

Meaning as Reference

Combinatoriality

Three Levels of Meaning

References



Section 1: Organization



Online Teaching

- ▶ Lectures will be recorded and put on moodle. Questions can be asked via moodle or email, and will be answered at the beginning of the next lecture (if relevant for everybody).
- ▶ Tutorials are held interactively.

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ALMA

Browser address bar: https://alma.uni-tuebingen.de/alma/pages/cm/eva/coursemanagement/basicCourseData.xhtml?_flowid=searchCourseNonStaff-flow&_flowExecutionKey=e1s4

Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen
alma

Deutsch

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Detailansicht

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Semester: Sommer 2021

Grunddaten | **Parallelgruppen / Termine** | Vorlesungsverzeichnis | Gekoppelte Prüfungen | Module / Studiengänge

Semantics and Pragmatics

[Daten für ICalendar \(ics\) exportieren](#) [Einzeltermine anzeigen](#) [Details einblenden](#)

Semesterwochenstunden	4.0	Maximale Anzahl Teilnehmer/-innen	40
Verantwortliche/-r	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ph.D. Christian Bentz 		

	Rhythmus	Wochentag	Von - Bis	Ausfalltermin	Startdatum - Enddatum	Erw. Tn.	Bemerkung	Durch
⚠️	wöchentlich	Di	12:00 - 14:00 s.t.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25.05.2021 	20.04.2021 - 27.07.2021	40		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ph.
⚠️	wöchentlich	Do	12:00 - 14:00 s.t.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13.05.2021 27.05.2021 03.06.2021 	22.04.2021 - 29.07.2021	40		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ph.

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Note: Tutorial Week 1 starts on Monday 3rd May!



Course Credits

- ▶ Exam on **Thursday 29th July 2021: 6 ECTS**
- ▶ Handing in (and passing) 5 Tutorial Exercise Sheets (see details below): **3 ECTS**
- ▶ **Master students in ISCL:** if you need only 6 ECTS for the Semantics and Pragmatics course, then you don't need to hand in exercise sheets.

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Retake Exam

We plan to offer a retake exam for students who failed and who were sick on the day of the original exam. The exact date can only be given once the main exam was marked and students received their marks. It will be roughly at the end of September/beginning of October.



Schedule (2021)

27/04/2021	Lecture 1	Organization & Introduction
29/04/2021	Lecture 2	Information Theory I
04/05/2021	Lecture 3	Information Theory II
06/05/2021	Lecture 4	Formal Semantics I: Propositional Logic
11/05/2021	Lecture 5	Formal Semantics II: Predicate Logic
13/05/2021		Ascension Day (Christi Himmelfahrt)
18/05/2021	Lecture 6	Formal Semantics III: Second-Order Logic
20/05/2021	Lecture 7	Formal Semantics IV: Type Theory
		Pentecost Holidays (Pfingstferien)
01/06/2021	Lecture 8	Formal Semantics V: Lambda Calculus
03/06/2021		Corpus Christi (Fronleichnam)
08/06/2021	Lecture 9	Summary: Formal Semantics
10/06/2021	Lecture 10	Further Topics in Semantics: Modality
15/06/2021	Lecture 11	Further Topics in Semantics: Evidentiality

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Schedule (2021)

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17/06/2021	Lecture 12	Applications & Current Research
22/06/2021	Lecture 13	Introduction Pragmatics
24/06/2021	Lecture 14	Discourse Representation Theory I
29/06/2021	Lecture 15	Discourse Representation Theory II
01/07/2021	Lecture 16	Implicatures
06/07/2021	Lecture 17	Presupposition
08/07/2021	Lecture 18	Speech Acts
13/07/2021	Lecture 19	Summary: Pragmatics
15/07/2021		Mock Exam
20/07/2021	Lecture 20	Cross-Linguistic Diversity in Pragmatic Concepts
22/07/2021	Lecture 21	Overview & Discussion
29/07/2021		Exam



Tutorials

Tutorial 1: Hebah Ahmed, hebah.ahmed@student.uni-tuebingen.de

Tutorial 2: Alla Kutkina, alla.kutkina@student.uni-tuebingen.de

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8-10					
10-12					
12-14					
14-16	Tutorial 1	Tutorial 1			Tutorial 2
16-18				Tutorial 2	

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- ▶ You need to go to **only one tutorial (2 SWS)**, so you can choose one of these four options.
- ▶ The thursday tutorials will not take place on two holidays (13th May, 3rd June). So you might have to change to a different tutorial in these weeks. This will further be clarified by the tutors.



Exercise Sheets

- ▶ You have to **pass five Exercise Sheets** to get your 3 ECTS points for the tutorial.
- ▶ In order to pass, you have to work on **all exercises**.
- ▶ You can **choose** which Exercise Sheets to hand in or not.
- ▶ Exercise Sheets will go online **after the thursday lectures** for the following tutorial week.
- ▶ You have to send them via email to your tutor **by midnight on the directly following saturday**, in order to get your pass/fail for this Exercise Sheet.
- ▶ The **format for exercise sheet solutions** can be either handwritten and scanned, or in some kind of text editor (but please convert to pdf).

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Tutorials

Week 1: 03/05-07/05/2021

Week 2: 10/05-14/05/2021

Week 3: 17/05-21/05/2021

Week 4: 31/05-04/06/2021

Week 5: 07/06-11/06/2021

Week 6: 14/06-18/06/2021

Week 7: 21/06-25/06/2021

Week 8: 28/06-02/07/2021

Week 9: 05/07-09/07/2021

Week 10: 12/07-16/07/2021

Week 11: 19/07-23/07/2021

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Notes:

- ▶ Tutorial **Week 11** will be used for discussing the Mock Exam.



Moodle

Please go to moodle and sign up for one of the tutorials. Tutorial choice will be open between **today 14:00** and **Sunday 2nd April 23:59**.

Semantics & Pragmatics (SoSe 2021)

Startseite / Meine Kurse / Sommersemester 2021 / 5 - Philosophische Fakultät / Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft/ Computerlinguistik / General Linguistics / Semantics & Pragmatics (SoSe 2021)

- Ankündigungen
- Lecture Slides
- Lecture Videos
- Tutorials
- Literature
 - Cover and Thomas (2009) Elements of information theory, Chapter 2
 - Gamut (1991) Logic, language, and meaning, Volume 1
 - Gamut (1991) Logic, language, and meaning, Volume 2
 - Kroeger (2019) Analyzing meaning
 - Zimmermann and Sternefeld (2013) Introduction to formal semantics

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Learning Strategy

- ▶ Watch the lecture.
- ▶ Go through the lecture slides again.
- ▶ Do the exercises (if possible) before the tutorial.
- ▶ Join the tutorial.

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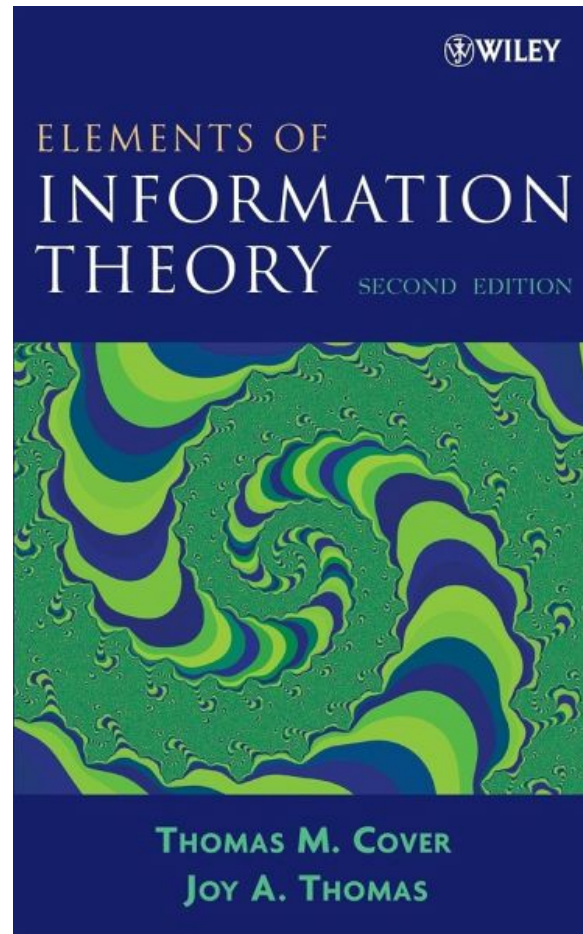


Section 2: Literature



Information Theory

Cover, Thomas M. & Thomas, Joy A. (2006). *Elements of Information Theory*. New Jersey: Wiley & Sons.



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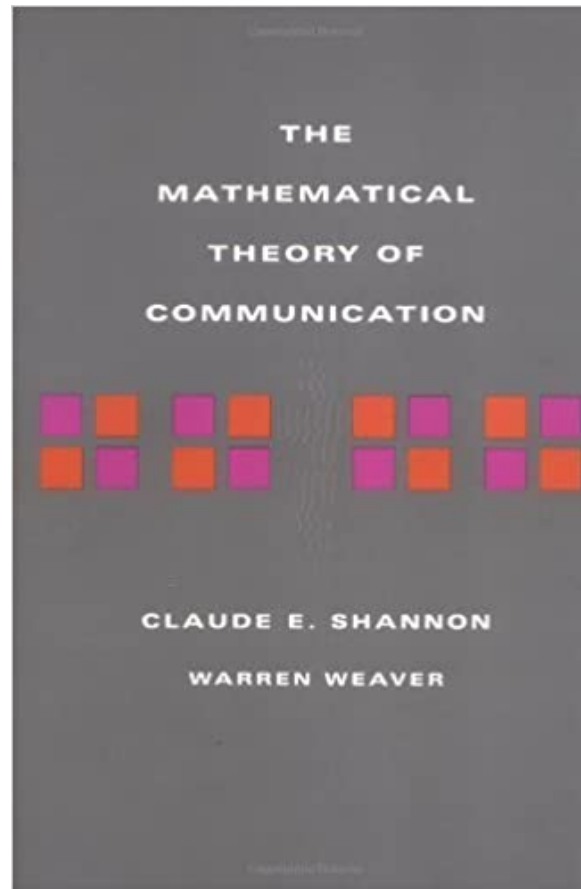
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Information Theory

Shannon, Claude E. & Weaver, Warren (1949). *The mathematical theory of communication*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.



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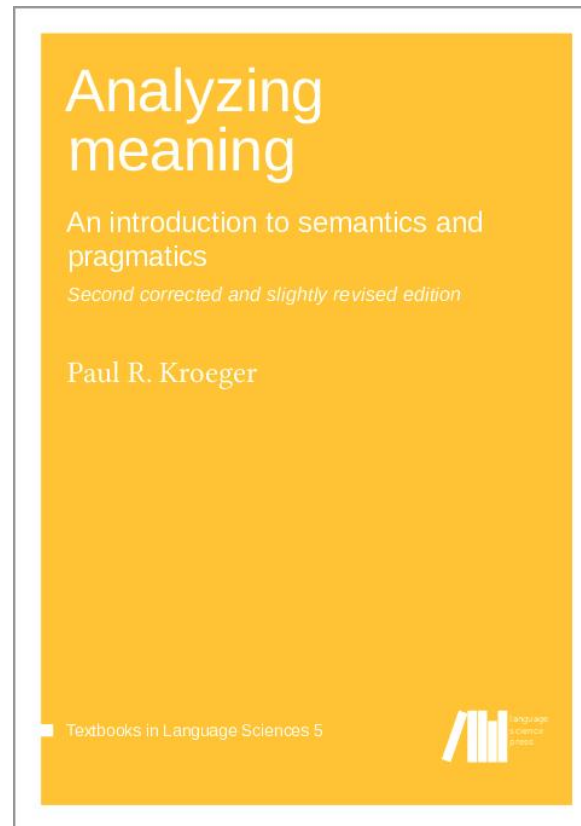
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Semantics

Kroeger, Paul (2019). *Analyzing meaning: An introduction to semantics and pragmatics. Second corrected and slightly revised edition.* (Textbooks in Language Sciences 5). Berlin: Language Science Press.



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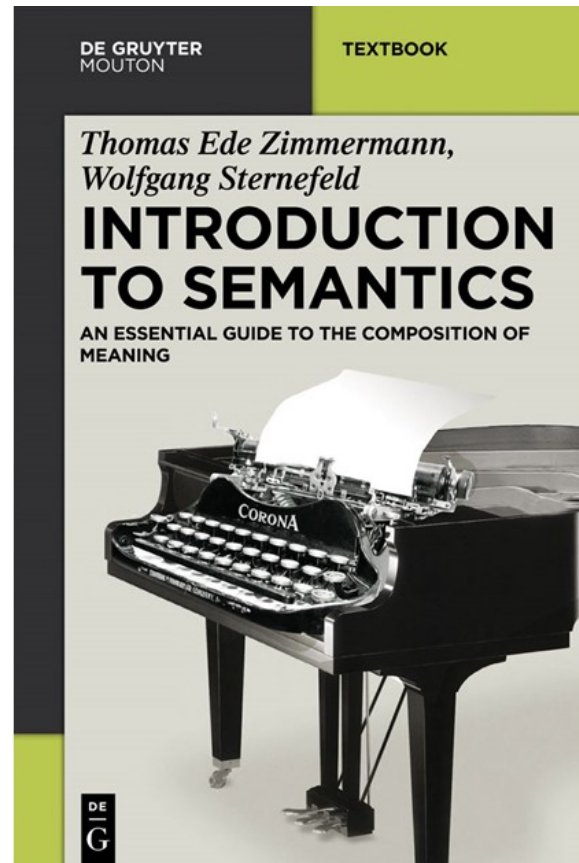
References

download at: <http://langsci-press.org/catalog/book/231>



Formal Semantics

Zimmermann, Thomas E. & Sternefeld, Wolfgang (2013). *Introduction to Semantics. An essential guide to the composition of meaning*. Berlin/Boston: Mouton De Gruyter.



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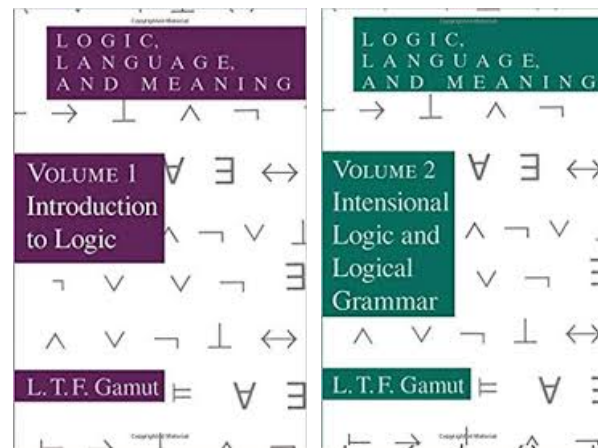
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Formal Semantics

- ▶ Gamut, L.T.F (1991). *Logic, Language, and Meaning. Volume 1: Introduction to Logic*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- ▶ Gamut, L.T.F (1991). *Logic, Language, and Meaning. Volume 2: Intensional Logic and Logical Grammar*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.



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Further Introductions

- ▶ Dowty, David R., Wall, Robert E. & Peters, Stanley (1981). *Introduction to Montague semantics*. Dordrecht/Boston/London: D. Reidel Publishing Company.
- ▶ Ferreira, Marcelo (2019). *Curso de semântica formal* (Textbooks in Language Sciences 6). Berlin: Language Science Press.
- ▶ Heim, Irene & Kratzer, Angelika (2008). *Semantics in Generative Grammar*. Malden/Oxford/Carlton: Blackwell Publishing.
- ▶ Kearns, Kate (2011). *Semantics*. New York/London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- ▶ Roussarie, Laurent (2017). *Sémantique formelle. Volume 1: Introduction à la grammaire de Montague* (Textbooks in Language Sciences 4). Berlin: Language Science Press.

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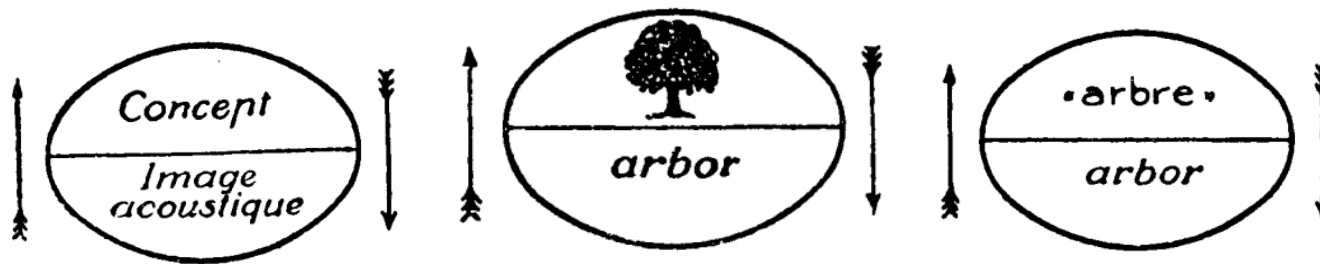


Section 3: Introduction



The Roots

“Signifié et signifiant” at three levels:



Level 1: Abstract Relation

Level 2: Concrete Mapping (Denotation)

Level 3: Metalanguage (Translation)

Saussure (1995). *Cours de linguistique générale*, p. 99.

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Two Fundamental Concepts

- ▶ **Reference:** How does the mapping between form and meaning work? Does it work at all?
- ▶ **Combinatoriality:** How are complex utterances built from smaller units? Are they built from smaller units at all?

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Reference



Meaning as Reference

“[...] we will think about how speakers use language to talk about the world. **Referring** to a particular individual, e.g. by using expressions such as *Abraham Lincoln* or *my father*, is one important way in which we talk about the world.”

“Philosophers have found it hard to agree on a precise **definition for reference**, but intuitively we are talking about the speaker’s use of words to “point to” something in the world; that is, to direct the hearer’s attention to something, or to enable the hearer to identify something.”

Kroeger (2019). Analyzing meaning, p. 15 and page 17 respectively.

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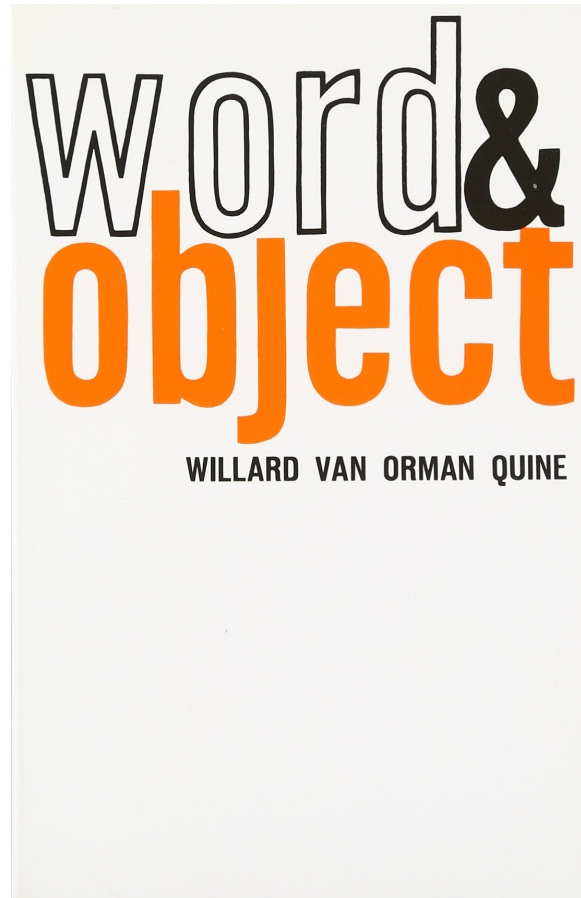
References



Meaning as Reference

“What is relevant rather to our purposes is *radical translation*, i.e., translation of the language of a hitherto untouched people [...] The utterances first and most surely translated in such a case are ones keyed to present events that are conspicuous to the linguist and his informant. A rabbit scurries by, the native says 'Gavagai', and the linguist notes down the sentence 'Rabbit' or 'Lo, a rabbit') as tentative translation, subject to testing in further cases.”

Quine (1960). *Word and object*, p. 28.



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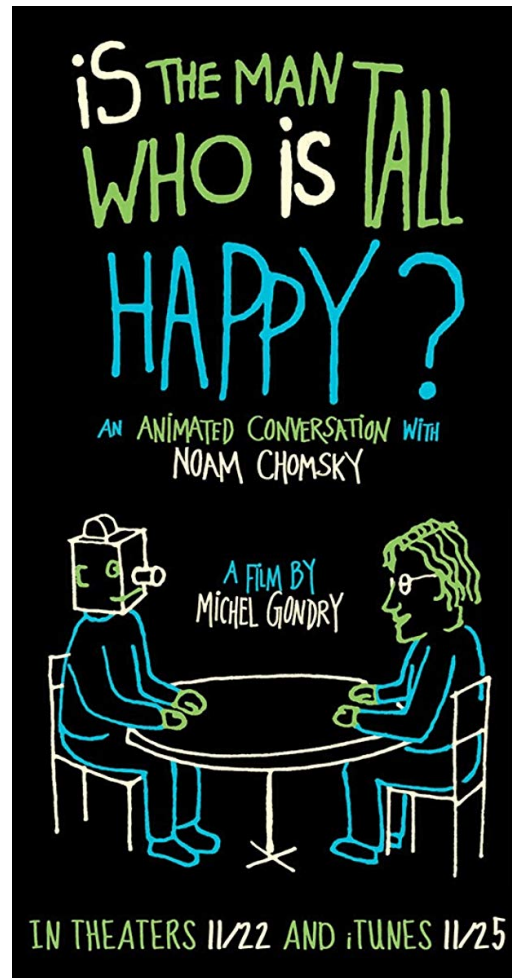
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Against Reference: Words as Mental Representations

“It’s just a classic error that runs right through philosophy and psychology and linguistics right up to the moment. That’s the idea that words... say, meaning-bearing elements, like, say, “tree” or “person” or, you know, “John Smith” or anything... pick out something in the extramental world, something that a physicist could identify so that if I have a word... say, “cow”... it refers to something, and a, you know, scientist knowing nothing about my brain could figure out what counts as a cow. That’s just not true.”

Noam Chomsky



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Semiotic Triangle (Triangle of Reference/Meaning)

“**Semiotics** is the study of the relationship between **signs and their meanings**. In this book we are interested in the relationship between forms and meanings in certain kinds of symbolic systems, namely human languages. The diagram is a way of illustrating how speakers use language to describe things, events, and situations in the world.”

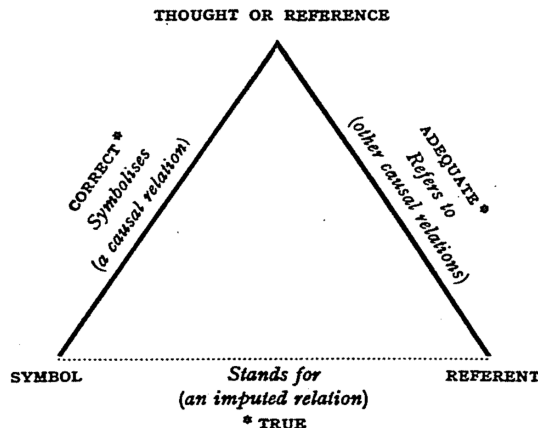
Kroeger (2019). *Analyzing meaning*, p. 16.

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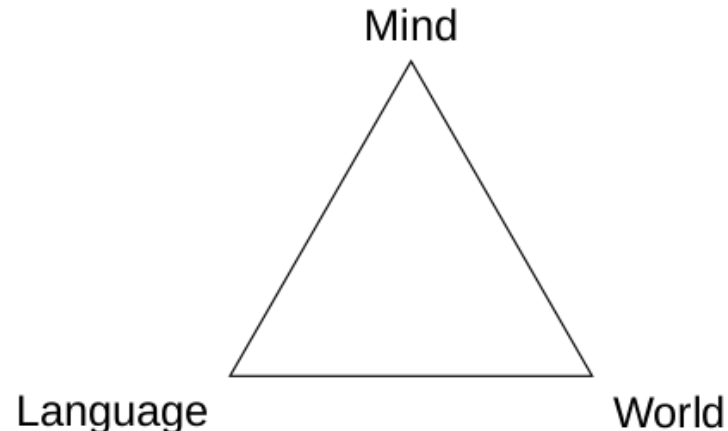
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Ogden & Richards (1923).
The meaning of meaning, p. 11.



Kroeger (2019). *Analyzing meaning*, p. 16.



Denotational vs. Cognitive Semantics

“The basic approach we adopt in this book focuses on the link between linguistic expressions and the world. This approach is often referred to as **denotational semantics** [...] An important alternative approach, **cognitive semantics**, focuses on the link between linguistic expressions and mental representations.”

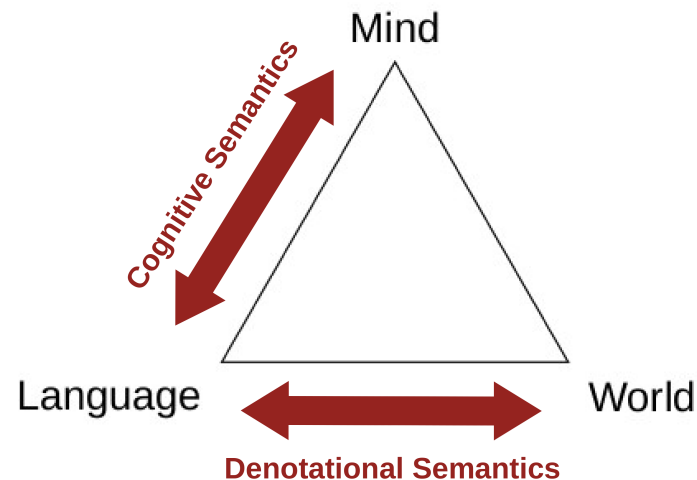
Kroeger (2019). Analyzing meaning, p. 17.

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Combinatoriality



Combinatoriality/Compositionality

Amharic (amh, Afro-Asiatic)

- (1) zaf-u təlləq' nāw¹
tree.NOM.SG-DEF big be.N.3SG
“The tree is big.”
BIG(t)²

Two words might be productively combined (*zaf-u təlləq'*) to yield a new meaning. *Combinatoriality* is a hallmark of human language (and other communication systems) as it enables the *infinite use of finite means*.

¹Amharic is normally written in Ge'ez script. This is a transliteration into Latin script based on Leslau (1995).

²This is the predicate logic notation in Kroeger (2019)

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Problem: Compounds

(2) 笔记本 电 脑
bǐ jì běn diàn nǎo
writing.brush record root/basis electricity brain³
“?”

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³This was glossed using <https://www.mdbg.net>.



Problem: Compounds

- (4) 笔记本 电 脑
bǐ jì běn diàn nǎo
writing.brush record root/basis electricity brain³
“?”
- (5) 笔记本 电脑
bǐjìběn diànnǎo
notebook computer
“laptop”

The combination of single meaning bearing elements to larger meaning bearing chunks is often not straightforward. Especially across different languages this is a difficult task for learners (both human and machine).

³This was glossed using <https://www.mdbg.net>.

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Problem: Idioms

- (6) Kim ha-t de-n Wald vor lauter
kim have-PRS.3SG ART-ACC.SG forest because.of all.the
Bäum-en nicht ge-seh-en
tree\ -DAT.PL not PTCP-see-PTCP
literal translation: “Kim hasn’t seen the forest because of all the
trees.”
actual meaning: Kim was so concerned with the details that s/he
didn’t see the overall picture.

In the case of idioms (e.g. *kicking the bucket*), the intended meaning of the sentence is not a *linear combinatorial* derivation of its parts. Rather, a complex meaning is assigned to the whole phrase.

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Three “levels” of meaning

1. **Word meaning:** Meaning assigned to individual words.
Example: *kick*; *bucket*
2. **Sentence meaning:** Meaning derived via combination of word meanings (compositional). “The term **sentence meaning** refers to the semantic content of the sentence: the meaning which derives from the words themselves, regardless of context.”
Example: KICK(j,b), literally “John kicks the bucket.”
3. **Utterance meaning** (“speaker” meaning): “The term **utterance meaning** refers to the semantic content plus any pragmatic meaning created by the specific way in which the sentence gets used.” Another definition is: “The totality of what the speaker intends to convey by making an utterance.”
Example: *John dies*.

Kroeger (2019). *Analyzing meaning*, p.5.

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Three “levels” of meaning

Teochew (Southern Min Chinese, Sino-Tibetan)

- (7) Lw chya? pa bɔy?
you eat full not.yet
“Have you already eaten?”

Sentence meaning: “Have you already eaten or not?”, i.e. a request for information.

Utterance meaning: Greeting like “hello” or “how are you” in English.

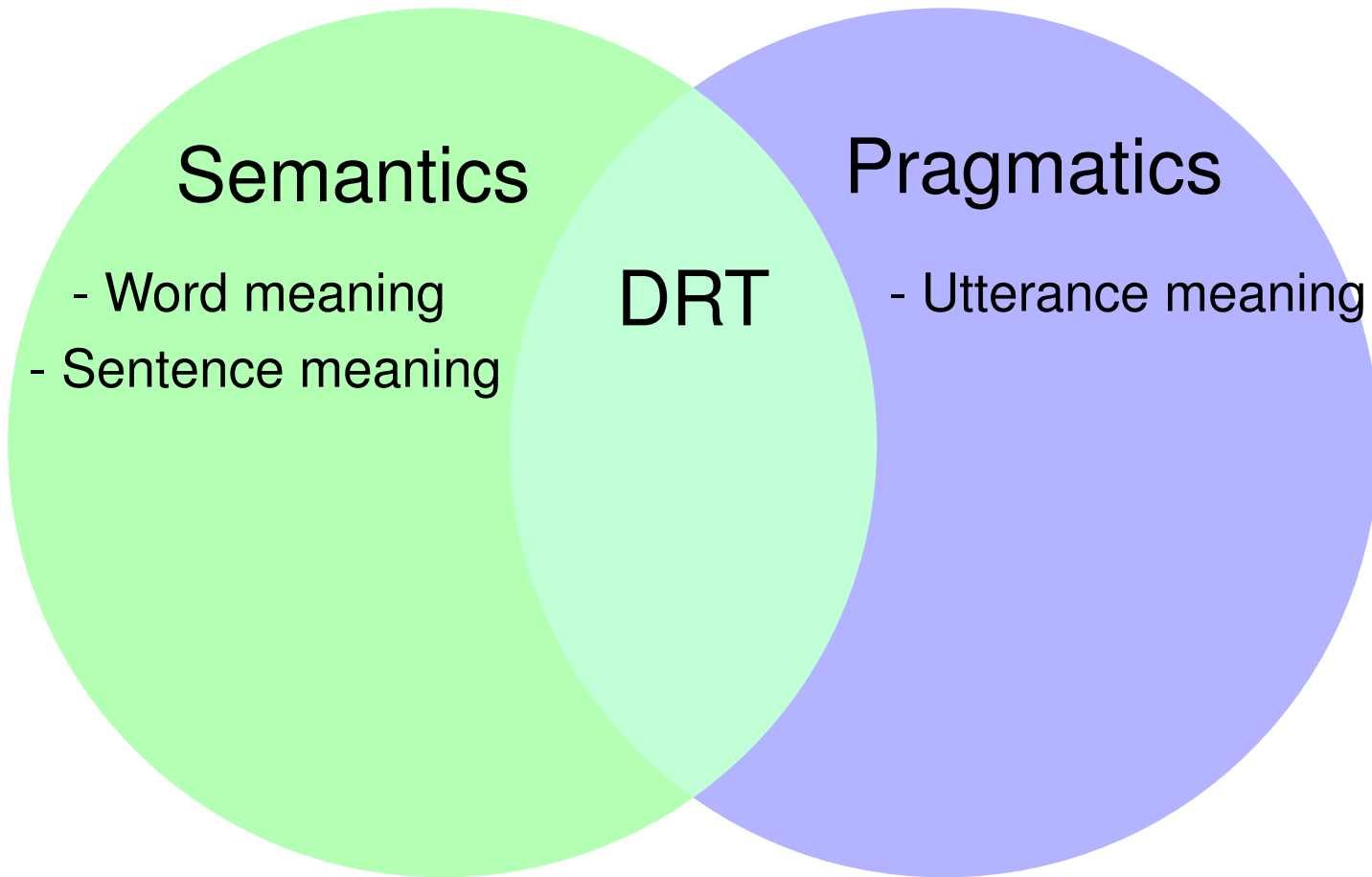
Kroeger (2019). Analyzing meaning, p. 5-6.

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DRT: Discourse Representation Theory



Summary

- ▶ Every syntactic, semantic and pragmatic theory (or all combined) have to deal in some way with the **combinatoriality** of meaning and form.
- ▶ Semantic and pragmatic theories have to deal in some way with the **mapping between meaning and form**.

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References

Leslau, Wolf (1995). *Reference grammar of Amharic*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Ogden, C. K., & Richards, I. A. (1923). *The meaning of meaning*. Orlando, Florida: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Quine, Willard van Orman (1960). *Word and object*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.

de Saussure, Ferdinand (1995). *Cours de linguistique générale*. Publié par Charles Bailly et Albert Sechehaye avec la collaboration de Albert Riedlinger. Édition critique préparée par Tullio de Mauro. Paris: Payot.

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Thank You.

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