

SEMANTICS

72-182 Berry-Rogghe, G. The scope of semantics. *Linguistics* (The Hague), **73** (1971), 5-16.

The scope of semantics has not been precisely delimited. If a purely methodological standpoint is adopted it is not necessary to take sides in the conflicting definitions of meaning. The attitudes of modern linguists are compared with regard to the delimitation of semantic analysis from syntactic analysis, and the reference of semantic analysis to the non-linguistic world. In particular modern theories of the componential and collocational approach are evaluated. No existing theory of semantics has yet been able to account for all the semantic relations between lexical items of a particular language. This lack of comprehensiveness stems from a lack of uniformity in the semantic properties of lexical items and is reflected in the different types of lexicographic definition. It would be useful if sub-categories of lexical items could be established, entering into different semantic relations, just as there are different subcategories of grammatical items, entering into different syntactic relations. **ADF**

72-183 François, Frédéric. Du sens des énoncés contradictoires. [The sense of contradictory utterances.] *La Linguistique* (Paris), **7**, 2 (1971), 21-33.

Coordination of contradictory utterances can be explicit (*grand/petit*); implicitly contradictory statements (*cette vérité est bleue*) can be reduced to explicit contradiction (eg non-spatial/spatial); some oppositions of meaning admit a third possibility (*bête/intelligent*). The 'semantic paradigm', as distinct from the syntactic paradigm, may not be clear in its implications; the sense of a unit is not inherent but functions by opposition with terms in the same system. The sophist's self-cancelling A and non-A may be meaningful taken

from different points of view (*il n'est ni bon ni méchant*). But is the anomalous '*la peinture est silencieuse*' meaningless or simply cumbersome? Changes in the nature of referents may add sememes to a unit – and therefore also negative sememes. The contradictory and the non-attested [*géranium ovipare* and *géranium bleu à pois blancs*] must also be distinguished. The hearer tends to attach sense where there may be formal contradiction; the reading of poetry offers an extreme example. The *a priori* assumption that utterances are meaningful and not contradictory motivates this adaptation, which draws additional information from either context or situation.

Semantic paradigms may be open or closed sets and context dictates the variations in the systems of opposition. Prieto points out that units in natural languages are related by inclusion and intersection, but in artificial codes by exclusion only. This allows for economy in language (polysemy, homonymy) and for stylistic selection. The possible variation in paradigmatic relations between significant units provides another type of economy and underlies the impossibility of linguistically determining what is a meaningful or contradictory utterance. This contrasts with phonology which is fixed in its oppositions, whereas it is a sememe's realization in a particular message which renders it meaningful – intelligibility being retained despite an indefinite possibility of variation because there is a limited number of procedures for contextual modification.

(440) ADF

72–184 Buchbinder, Wolf A. Die Valenz und ihre Berücksichtigung bei der Auswahl lexikalischen Materials. [Valency and how it could influence the choice of lexical material.] *Deutsch als Fremdsprache* (Leipzig), **8**, 5 (1971), 282–6.

Valency has practical applications in the choice of new vocabulary and the establishment of minimum word lists. A definition of valency is given [earlier definitions by other writers quoted]. Valency applies to verbs, nouns, and adjectives. It is basically a logical-semantic relationship which manifests itself on three levels: on the grammatical level in distribution models, on the lexical-semantic level

in the combinability of semantically compatible words, and on the level of linguistic intuition in accepted usage. An analysis of valency is of great use in the delineation of lexical items, in particular of words with more than one meaning, and especially if the deep structure of the distribution model is taken into account.

The practical application as it affects the choice of new vocabulary and minimum word lists is considered in detail. As valency occurs on three levels, there are certain difficulties involved in using it as a criterion. Potentially, valency permits a reasonably objective comparison between words [examples given]. On the lexical-semantic level three categories are used, depending on whether the word in question can be combined with a small, large, or unlimited number of other words [examples provided]. **ADF ADN**

72-185 Grimes, Joseph E. Kinds of information in discourse. *Kivung* (Boroko), 4, 2 (1971), 64-74.

Discourse has been categorized into: narratives, procedures, explanations and exhortations. Analysis of discourse is easiest when it is based on edited texts. Events in a time sequence are the backbone of narrative. Overlapping and completion of events are handled in different ways by different languages. The notion of plot seems fundamental, even cross-culturally, involving a complication and a resolution. Participants are usually agents or experiencers and 'props' are patients and instruments. 'Reference' is the book-keeping on who is doing what, and identification is concerned with the reference indicated in the text. [Mention is made of means of identification by nouns, noun phrases, pronouns, grammatical inflexion.] Contextual and time settings, background information and evaluations all contribute to the total text. Collateral information adds a range of possibilities that might happen or might have happened so that actual events stand out by contrast. Characteristically, negatives, futures and questions in a text are likely to be collateral as other grammatical phenomena tend to be limited to certain kinds of information [some detail given]. A final category is performative in which an utterance also becomes an action as in

I pronounce you man and wife. Imperatives and interrogatives fit all the requirements of a performative.

An introduction to a discourse frequently states an explicit separation between the time of talking and the time of happening while the code can bring the two together again. The relation between the act of telling and the contents of a discourse thus constitutes a sixth and final kind of information that is involved in our understanding of a text. ADF ADN

72–186 Levickij, Jurij. World-sectioning and language typology. *Linguistics* (The Hague), **74** (1971), 11–21.

World-sectioning means in this case the systematic organization of the vocabulary of a language. The semantic system of a language is based on two fields: one, the *Vorstellungsfeld*, simple in character and founded on objects, is conditioned by psychological concepts; the other, the *Begriffsfeld*, is that of scientific concepts and appears with the beginning of scientific knowledge. Each field interacts on the other. The first grouping, however, does not correspond to the conceptional grouping, and therefore in reviewing data accumulated during many generations scientists and philosophers need to re-arrange the vocabulary in terms of the *Begriffsfeld*.

A culture may have its own evaluation of, and attitude to, certain objects, and its interpretation of the names attached to objects may vary from that of other cultures. [Examples are given.] Interpenetration between the *Vorstellungsfeld* and *Begriffsfeld* may result in words from the former being used by analogy to express newly-formed concepts, and in new words from the *Begriffsfeld* being drawn into every-day language. This may cause double meanings. Semantic analysis should separate the two fields and analyse their features and interactions. The relationship between the two fields may determine national peculiarities in expressing concepts. Humboldt and Saussure showed that words indicating the ‘same’ thing in different languages have different *valeurs*. [Examples are given.]

Some languages have not yet developed beyond the *Vorstellungsfeld* process. A typological classification of semantic systems requires

comparison of languages which are at a similar level of development, or a clear separation of the fields in the more developed languages. It would then be possible to make some comparison between their *Vorstellungsfelder* and the one-field languages. **ADF AF**

72-187 Ulatowska, Hanna K. A psycholinguistic approach to the study of ambiguity. *Papers in Linguistics* (Champaign, Illinois), 4, 2 (1971), 339-66.

We know little about the factors which make meaning easy or hard to grasp. A necessary prerequisite is an analysis of deep structure. Speech perceptual strategies are learned during the third or fourth year. There is a limit to the amount of ambiguity in the surface structure.

Transformational grammar defines three levels at which ambiguity in sentences may occur; lexical, surface structure, and underlying structure. Two main hypotheses of the perception of ambiguous sentences have been proposed; the unitary perception hypothesis and the exhaustive perception hypothesis. The latest results of investigation favour the view that decisions in speech-comprehension are tentative. Some results indicate that perception time is a function of a linguistic type of ambiguity.

Ambiguities in syntax allow for fewer syntactic constructions to be used in expressing meaning while those in the lexicon reduce its size. It is unusual to notice the ambiguity of ambiguous sentences or to assign the wrong interpretation to them. Linguistic, meta-linguistic, and pragmatic knowledge are used in disambiguation. The linguistic knowledge is lexical, syntactic or phonological. [The author discusses and illustrates each of these types in some detail.]

The memory for meaning is very good, while forms of syntax are rapidly forgotten. Most of the disambiguations studied could be considered renderings in which the underlying structure is more overtly revealed. The context of the sentence can be defined on the basis of the information structure; ie the listener's organization of the sentence in terms of 'given' and 'new'.

No relationship between the set of heuristics used in disambigu-

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ation and particular ambiguities has yet been established. The problem is complicated by the disambiguations performed at pragmatic level. The diversity of disambiguations reveals the creative aspect of language use. **ADF AG**

STATISTICAL LINGUISTICS

72-188 Mey, Jacob. Computational linguistics in the 'seventies. *Linguistics* (The Hague), **74** (1971), 36-61.

The early and somewhat abortive attempts at machine translation, the use of computational linguistics as a sub-discipline within linguistics, and the development of transformational grammar in its Standard Version and Revised Standard Version are reviewed. The author discusses the relationship of computational linguistics to these developments, its influence on research and his expectations for future developments. He concludes with a discussion of a theory of computational linguistics. **ADP ARK**

LINGUISTIC SOCIOLOGY

72-189 Fabricius-Kovács, F. Linguistics, communication theory and social psychology. *Acta Linguistica* (Budapest), **21**, 1-2 (1971), 69-86.

There has been a tendency to regard language primarily as written, and the components of communication have not been fully considered in linguistic investigations. Saussure's strict separation of diachrony and synchrony was an important step in recognizing the nature and function of language; before that synchronic investigations had been undervalued.

Communication theory has helped linguists to put aside historical views and to loosen the grip of the diachronic approach. Synchrony and diachrony are not two disjunctive alternatives; they are different but complementary aspects of the same thing. Linguistics plays the same fundamental role in social sciences as mathematics does in

natural sciences but even now some linguists do not agree that language must first be investigated as a communicational medium. 'Communication' is preferable to 'information' because the latter evokes the 'coder' whereas 'communication' suggests the 'decoder'. Communication theory has stimulated consideration of the accompanying factors of speech, such as gesture, mimics and verbal behaviour and the living language is becoming the subject of research.

Gombocz first emphasized the need to use social-psychological points of view in investigating language and now there is helpful interaction between communication theory and social psychology. Group psychology has particular significance within the field of social psychology. The recognition of the importance of 'the partner', 'the other man' has freed psychology from introspection. The partner is indispensable to our being humans and human possibilities can be recognized only with and through the partner.

This was recognized by the much neglected Karácsony (d. 1952) who was before his time in urging the importance of the accompanying circumstances of speech, of the 'other person', when he laid down the foundations of his social-psychological system and his universal theory of human communication. **AFK AG AX**

LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL CLASS

72-190 Schutz, Samuel R. and E. R. Keislar. Young children's immediate memory of word classes in relation to social class. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior* (New York), **11**, 1 (1972), 13-17.

This investigation was designed to test Bernstein's hypothesis that the 'lower class' child is particularly restricted in his use of function words (eg conjunctions, prepositions, negation etc) owing to his environmental deprivation. The test focused on the child's ability to echo words belonging to a certain word class, since there is a high relationship between ease of repetition and the subject's familiarity with the words in a sentence.

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The first study was made with sixty children of kindergarten and the first two primary grades, made up of thirty randomly selected pupils from two schools, one poor, one suburban. Seven nouns, seven verbs and seven function words (all very common) were used to construct a word analogue to the digit span memory test. [Details and table of results given.] For the second test an improved design of the first was adopted to avoid monotony for the sixty four-year-old subjects used. [Methods and tables of results given.] The major hypothesis was supported by both tests, that deficiency in the word recall of disadvantaged children is greater for function words than for nouns and verbs, in relation to the performance of middle class children. **AFM EMP**

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN

72-191 Waterson, Natalie. Some views on speech perception. *Journal of the International Phonetic Association* (London), **1, 2** (1971), 81-95.

Experimental evidence points to some unit larger than the phoneme as the unit of perception. The writer's study of a child's acquisition of the English phonological system showed that the child's own patterns were related to adult patterns through the phonetic features they had in common. The child did not reproduce phonemes, but only some of the features of what would be called a phoneme in the adult system. Study of speakers' hearing errors, the relationship between slow and fast styles of speech, of systems of writing, and of recall also provides evidence of phonological schemata.

Semantics is probably more important than syntax in the perception and recognition of speech. Until the 'language system' is built in, it is easier to perceive and recognize patterns with the aid of contextual cues than to create sentences from an insufficient store of dictionary units and grammatical schemata, and to express them by means of unfamiliar articulations. **AGR AJM**