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# Semantic Theory

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*Semantic Theory*

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*A Semantic Theory of the English Auxiliary System* Walter de Gruyter  
 ".no one in recent decades has written a book of this magnitude about the semantics of natural language. Certainly nothing available today matches this volume in depth, precision, and coherence." -- Zoltan Szabo, in "The Philosophical Review" (January 1997) Current textbooks in formal semantics are all versions of, or introductions to, the same paradigm in semantic theory: Montague Grammar. Knowledge of Meaning is based on different assumptions and a different history. It provides the only introduction to truth- theoretic semantics for natural languages, fully integrating semantic theory into the modern Chomskyan program in linguistic theory and connecting linguistic semantics to research elsewhere in cognitive psychology and philosophy. As such, it better fits into a modern graduate or undergraduate program in linguistics, cognitive science, or philosophy. Furthermore, since the technical tools it employs are much

simpler to teach and to master, Knowledge of Meaning can be taught by someone who is not primarily a semanticist.

*Knowledge of Meaning* Psychology Press

Uriel Weinreich was of the innovative and creative thinkers in the field of semantics in the twentieth century. This volume contains all of Weinreich's writings on semantics, including a number of papers that were not published in his lifetime. It includes the first paper on the universals of semantic theory, an analysis of the fundamental concepts of semantics and semiotics, and a critique of lexicography.

*The Handbook of Contemporary Semantic Theory* John Benjamins Publishing

Current textbooks in formal semantics are all versions of, or introductions to, the same paradigm in semantic theory: Montague Grammar. Knowledge of Meaning is based on different assumptions and a different history. It provides the only introduction to truth- theoretic semantics for natural languages, fully integrating semantic theory into the modern Chomskyan program in linguistic theory and connecting linguistic semantics to research elsewhere in cognitive psychology and philosophy. As such, it better fits into a modern graduate or undergraduate

program in linguistics, cognitive science, or philosophy. Furthermore, since the technical tools it employs are much simpler to teach and to master, Knowledge of Meaning can be taught by someone who is not primarily a semanticist. Linguistic semantics cannot be studied as a stand-alone subject but only as part of cognitive psychology, the authors assert. It is the study of a particular human cognitive competence governing the meanings of words and phrases. Larson and Segal argue that speakers have unconscious knowledge of the semantic rules of their language, and they present concrete, empirically motivated proposals about a formal theory of this competence based on the work of Alfred Tarski and Donald Davidson. The theory is extended to a wide range of constructions occurring in natural language, including predicates, proper nouns, pronouns and demonstratives, quantifiers, definite descriptions, anaphoric expressions, clausal complements, and adverbs. Knowledge of Meaning gives equal weight to philosophical, empirical, and formal discussions. It addresses not only the empirical issues of linguistic semantics but also its fundamental conceptual questions, including the relation of truth to meaning and the methodology of semantic theorizing. Numerous exercises are included in the book.

Semantic Theory BoD - Books on Demand

Originally published in 1977. The Semantics of Metaphor presents a theory for the metaphoric construal of deviant sentences. The theory has two aspects. The first relates to metaphor considered as a productive process of language and describes the mechanisms that operate in its semantic interpretation. This part of the theory is presented in chapters III and IV. The second aspect bears on metaphor considered in the context of poetry and develops a conception of metaphoric truth. This part of the theory is presented in chapters VI and VII. The study is semantic in the sense of dealing with both meaning and truth as these properties pertain to metaphor. Of the remaining chapters, the first isolates certain problems of a pragmatic nature from the central semantic concern, chapter II follows with a survey of recent scholarship on the question of semantic deviance, and chapter V compares the theory expounded in chapters III and IV with three other accounts of metaphor.

Explorations in Semantic Theory John Benjamins Publishing

Dr Jaszczolt describes the foundations of an original theory of meaning in discourse, revealing the cognitive foundations of discourse interpretation, and puts forward a new basis for the analysis of discourse processing.

Semantics - Theories Cambridge University Press

Current textbooks in formal semantics are all versions of, or introductions to, the same paradigm in semantic theory: Montague Grammar. Knowledge of Meaning is based on different assumptions and a different history. It provides the only introduction to truth-theoretic semantics for natural languages, fully integrating semantic theory into the modern Chomskyan program in linguistic theory and connecting linguistic semantics to research elsewhere in cognitive psychology and philosophy. As such, it better fits into a modern graduate or undergraduate program in linguistics, cognitive science, or philosophy. Furthermore, since the technical tools it employs are much simpler to teach and to master, Knowledge of Meaning can be taught by someone who is not primarily a semanticist. Linguistic semantics cannot be studied as a stand-alone subject but only as part of cognitive psychology, the authors assert. It is the study of a particular human cognitive competence governing the meanings of words and phrases. Larson and Segal argue that speakers have unconscious knowledge of the semantic rules of their language, and they present concrete, empirically motivated proposals about a formal theory of this competence based on the

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Current Advances in Semantic Theory Cornell University Press

This study represents a contribution to the theory of meaning in natural language. It proposes a semantic theory containing a set of regular relational principles. These principles enable semantic theory to describe connections from the lexical reading of a word to its figurative contextual reading, from one variant reading of a polysemous lexical item to another, from the idiomatic to its literal reading or to the literal reading(s) of one or more of its component lexical items. Semiotic theory provides a foundation by supplying principles defining motivated expression-content relations for signs generally. The author argues that regular semantic relational principles must derive from such semiotic principles, to ensure the psychological reality and generality of the semantic principles.

Knowledge of Meaning John Benjamins Publishing

It is widely believed by historians of linguistics that the 19th-century was largely devoted to historical and comparative studies, with the main emphasis on the discovery of soundlaws. Syntax is typically portrayed as a mere sideline of these studies, while semantics is seldom even mentioned. If it comes into view at all, it is usually assumed to have been confined to diachronic lexical semantics and the construction of some (mostly ill-conceived) typologies of semantic change. This book aims to destroy some of these prejudices and to show that in Europe semantics was an important, although controversial, area at that time. Synchronic mechanisms of semantic change were discovered and increasing attention was paid to the context of the sentence, to the speech situation and the users of the language. From being a semantics of transformations', a child of the biological-geological paradigm of historical linguistics with its close links to etymology and lexicography, the field matured into a semantics of comprehension and communication, set within a general linguistics and closely related to the emerging fields of psychology and sociology.

**Semantics as Science** Bradford Book

Minimal Semantics asks what a theory of literal linguistic meaning is for - if you were to be given a working theory of meaning for a language right now, what would you be able to do with it? Emma Borg sets out to defend a formal approach to semantic theorizing from a powerful contemporary opponent - advocates of what she call 'dual pragmatics'. According to dual pragmatists, rich pragmatic processes play two distinct roles in linguistic comprehension: as well as operating in a post-semantic capacity to determine the implicatures of an utterance, they also operate prior to the determination of truth-conditional content for a sentence. That is to say, they have an integral role to play within what is usually thought of as the semantic realm. Borg believes dual pragmatic accounts constitute the strongest challenge to standard formal approaches to semantics since they challenge the formal theorist to show not merely that there is some role for formal processes on route to determination of semantic content, but that such processes are alone sufficient for determining content. Minimal Semantics provides a detailed examination of this dual pragmatic position, introducing readers

who are unfamiliar with the topic to key ideas like relevance theory and contextualism, and looking in detail at where these accounts diverge from the formal approach. Borg's defence of formal semantics has two main parts: first, she argues that the formal approach is most naturally compatible with an important and well-grounded psychological theory, namely the Fodorian modular picture of the mind. Then she argues that the main arguments adduced by dual pragmatists against formal semantics - concerning apparent contextual intrusions into semantic content - can in fact be countered by a formal theory. The defence holds, however, only if we are sensitive to the proper conditions of success for a semantic theory. Specifically, we should reject a range of onerous constraints on semantic theorizing (e.g., that it resolve epistemic or metaphysical questions, or that it explain our communicative skills). So Borg's answer to the question of what a semantic theory is for has a particular, minimal slant.

*The Semantic Theory of Evolution* Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG

This critical edition of *The Meaning of Meaning* is based on the first edition of 1923. It restores the version of the Word Magic chapter eliminated from all subsequent editions and illuminates the text by collating it with earlier serial publications, the holograph manuscript predating Ogden's collaboration with Richards, subsequent publications and Ogden's private correspondence.

**Minimal Semantics** Oxford Linguistics

Originally published in 1985, *The Semantic Theory of Evolution* addresses the notion that life is not shaped by the single law of natural selection, but instead by a plurality of laws that resemble grammatical rules in language. This remarkable work presents a semantic theory centering on the concept of the ribotype. Supported by both sound facts and logical arguments, this analysis reaches beyond the established cadre of biological thought to unravel many of life's mysteries and paradoxes, including the origin of the cell and the nucleus and the evolution of ribosomes.

*The Handbook of Contemporary Semantic Theory* Dissertations-G  
An introductory linguistics textbook that takes a novel approach: studying linguistic semantics as an exercise in scientific theory construction. This introductory linguistics text takes a novel approach, one that offers educational value to both linguistics majors and nonmajors. Aiming to help students not only grasp the fundamentals of the subject but also engage with broad intellectual issues and develop general intellectual skills, *Semantics as Science* studies linguistic semantics as an exercise in scientific theory construction. *Semantics* offers an excellent medium through which to acquaint students with the notion of a formal, axiomatic system—that is, a system that derives results from a precisely articulated set of assumptions according to a precisely articulated set of rules. The book develops semantic theory through the device of axiomatic T-theories, first proposed by Alfred Tarski more than eighty years ago, introducing technical elaboration only when required. It adopts Japanese as its core object of study, allowing students to explore and investigate the real empirical issues arising in the context of non-English structures, a non-English lexicon and non-English meanings. The book is structured as a laboratory science text that poses specific empirical questions, with 25 short units, each of which can be covered in one class session. The layout is engagingly visual, designed to help students understand and retain the material, with lively illustrations, examples, and quotations from famous scholars.

**A theory of structural semantics** JHU Press

This collection contains a selection of the most important

contributions to semantic theory ranging from Gottlob Frege's essay 'On Sense and reference' written in 1892 to present-day thinkers in the field.

**A Cognitive Theory of Language. Semantic Theory and Analysis.** GRIN Verlag

What is the nature of communicative competence? Carol Kates addresses this crucial linguistic question, examining and finally rejecting the rationalistic theory proposed by Noam Chomsky and elaborated by Jerrold J. Katz, among others. She sets forth three reasons why the rationalistic model should be rejected: (1) it has not been supported by empirical tests; (2) it cannot accommodate the pragmatic relation between speaker and sign; and (3) the theory of universal grammar carries with it unacceptable metaphysical implications unless it is interpreted in light of empiricism. Kates proposes an empiricist model in place of the rationalistic theory—a model that, in her view, is more consistent with recent findings in linguistics and psycholinguistics. In attempting to clarify the nature of utterance meaning, Kates develops theoretical perspectives on phenomenological empiricism and produces an account of reference and intentionality directly relevant to empirically based theories of speaking and understanding. Among the major topics addressed in the book are transformational-generative and universal grammar, cognitive theories of language acquisition, pragmatic structure, predication and topic-comment structure, and empiricism and the philosophical problem of universals. An innovative and probing work, *Pragmatics and Semantics* will be welcomed by philosophers, linguists, and psycholinguists.

*The Semantic Theory of Knowledge* Clarendon Press

Seminar paper from the year 2000 in the subject English Language and Literature Studies - Linguistics, grade: 1,7 (A-), University of Glasgow (Department of English Language), course: Semantics of English., language: English, abstract: "Classical" approaches to categorisation, as called by Taylor (1989, 21 ff.) and Lakoff (1987, 6 ff.), can be characterised by an understanding of linguistic categories as clearly bounded sets of members which have certain essential features in common. These categories are taken to reflect existing categories in the world which are defined by, as Aristotle called it, necessary and sufficient features. These features are binary, i.e. they determine or rule out membership and thereby establish clear boundaries. This understanding of categorisation is manifested in traditional philosophical and scientific thought as well as in "common sense" theories about language and the world. Lakoff calls this approach "objectivism" and identifies the following assumptions: 'OBJECTIVIST METAPHYSICS: All of reality consists of entities, which have fixed properties and relations holding among them at any instant. [...] OBJECTIVIST ESSENTIALISM: Among the properties that things have, some are essential; that is, they are those properties that make a thing what it is, and without which it would not be that kind of thing. Other properties are accidental - that is, they are properties that things happen to have, not properties that capture the essence of the thing. [...] THE DOCTRINE OF OBJECTIVE CATEGORIES: The entities in the world form objectively existing categories based on their shared objective properties.' (Lakoff 1987, 158-161; emphasis in the original) Cognitive scientists have set out to prove these assumptions wrong. Categorisation, in their view, is an operation of human cognition which is determined by experiences of physiological and physical characteristics of the human body and bodily interactions with the environment. Categorisations and their realisations, however, can provide the basis for human experience once they are firmly established, so that conceptual categories can work back upon human perception. Language categories, they maintain, are reflections of conceptual

categories. Thus, they disclaim the autonomy of language which is presupposed by most formalist and generative linguistic theories (cf. Lakoff 1987, ch. 9), as well as a metaphysical notion of reality which is reflected in human perception and categorisation. Rather, reality is made meaning of through these cognitive processes, which in turn are predominantly structured by bodily experiences and interactions.

**Semiotic Principles in Semantic Theory** John Benjamins Publishing

This set of papers represents a unique collection; it is the first attempt ever to empirically test a hypothetical set of semantic and lexical universals across a number of genetically and typologically diverse languages. In fact the word 'collection' is not fully appropriate in this case, since the papers report research undertaken specifically for the present volume, and shaped by the same guidelines. They constitute parallel and strictly comparable answers to the same set of questions, coordinated effort with a common aim, and a common methodology. The goal of identifying the universal human concepts found in all languages, is of fundamental importance, both from a theoretical and a practical point of view, since these concepts provide the basis of the psychic unity of mankind, underlying the clearly visible diversity of human cultures. They also allow us to better understand that diversity itself, because they provide a common measure, without which no precise and meaningful comparisons are possible at all. A set of truly universal (or even near-universal) concepts can provide us with an invaluable tool for interpreting, and explaining all the culture-specific meanings encoded in the language-and-culture systems of the world. It can also provide us with a tool for explaining meanings across cultures in education, business, trade, international relations, and so on. The book contains 13 chapters on individual languages including Japanese (by Masayuki Onishi), Chinese (by Hilary Chappel), Thai (by Anthony Diller), Ewe (Africa, by Felix Ameka), Miskitu languages of South America (by Kenneth Hall), Australian Aboriginal languages Aranda, Yankunytjatjara and Kayardild (by Jean Harkins & David Wilkins, Cliff Goddard, and Nicholas Evans), the Austronesian languages Samoan, Longgu, Acehnese and Mangap-Mbula (by Ulrike Mosel, Deborah Hill, Mark Durie and Robert Bugenhagen), the Papuan language Kalam (by Andrew Pawley), and, last but not least French (by Bert Peters). In addition to the chapters on individual languages the book includes three theoretical chapters; Semantic theory and semantic universals (by Goddard), Introducing lexical primitives (by Goddard and Wierzbicka), and Semantic primitives across languages: a critical review (by Wierzbicka).

*Semantics - Foundations, History and Methods* GRIN Verlag

This book discusses the two main construals of the explanatory goals of semantic theories. The first, externalist conception, understands semantic theories in terms of a hermeneutic and interpretive explanatory project. The second, internalist conception, understands semantic theories in terms of the psychological mechanisms in virtue of which meanings are generated. It is argued that a fruitful scientific explanation is one that aims to uncover the underlying mechanisms in virtue of which the observable phenomena are made possible, and that a scientific semantics should be doing just that. If this is the case, then a scientific semantics is unlikely to be externalist, for reasons having to do with the subject matter and form of externalist theories. It is argued that semantics construed hermeneutically is nevertheless a valuable explanatory project.

*Semantics: A View to Logic of Language* Routledge

Seminar paper from the year 2003 in the subject English Language and Literature Studies - Linguistics, grade: 1- (A-), Otto-

von-Guericke-University Magdeburg (Institute for Foreign Language Philology), course: Perspectives in Semantic Theory, 9 entries in the bibliography, language: English, abstract: From the beginning of arts subject in the ancient Greece to modern cognitive science, scholars have been seeking to discover the nature of the relationship between language and thought. This relationship and the basic processes that underlie reason phenomena in general are today called cognitions. Modern cognitive science consists of an interdisciplinary ensemble of various subjects. Findings from the research for artificial intelligence, results of cognitive psychology, neurophysiology, philosophy, and finally linguistics contribute to a better understanding of any type of mental information processing. As language is said to be among the most characteristic human cognitive activities (see LAKOFF, 1987, p 113; see also BIRBAUMER, 1999, p 675), one aim of this work is to show in what respect linguistic findings are crucial to the aims of cognitive science. For this purpose I will discuss theories around the concept of categorization which is relevant for the traditional linguistic field of semantics, and also applicable to cognitive psychology and furthermore to psycholinguistics. The categorization approach seems to allow explanation for the communicative functions of language and how humans organize knowledge in general. It seems that: "Categorization is everywhere. Life is full of decisions and every choice involves a selection between a variety of competing options. These choices are guided by the category structure (...), both in language as elsewhere in cognition." (CORRIGAN et al., 1989, p 195) The process of categorization means that we unconsciously group together every sensory input to meaningful categories. That is, we economically organize the mental representations of the outer world. From the beginning to the late 1970s and again during the 80s cognitive approaches of psychologists and linguists by the name of e.g. ELEANOR ROSCH, HILARY PUTNAM, and not too long ago GEORGE LAKOFF challenged the classical view of how humans organize knowledge while performing language. Whereas their ideas mainly provided a more integrated view of meaning within language at first, these scholars and especially LAKOFF contributed to a more detailed understanding of the fundamental human ability of categorization. Via the outline of the main currents in categorization theory, my argumentation will lead to emphasising psycholinguistic perspectives in semantic theory, as at least LAKOFF's approach may represent a theoretical basis for neuropsychological studies.

*Semantic Theories in Europe, 1830-1930* MIT Press

The aim of this book is the analysis of Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz's meta-epistemological project of the semantic theory of knowledge and its implementations to solve certain traditional epistemological problems and their metaphysical consequences. This project claims that cognitive problems need to be approached from the perspective of language. One of the results of this analysis is the thesis that the philosophical-linguistic legitimisation for the meta-epistemological project is the philosophy of Edmund Husserl from his Logical Investigations. This is the philosophy that makes it possible to speak reasonably of a close relation between thinking and language and provides thereby the legitimisation for this project.

*The Geometry of Meaning* Palgrave Macmillan

Contributors from different disciplines and schools of thought cover topics such as meaning, truth, form of a semantic theory, and natural logic in this book, providing a comparative evaluation of the major new approaches to semantics for natural language. The contributors discuss the different theories and attempt to justify or criticize them, disagreements and points of contact with others, problem areas, and suggestions for future development.

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