

## Chapter 15

# SEMANTICS

*Derivation*  
The study of meaning and its manifestation in language is normally referred to as semantics. From the Greek noun sema 'sign', signal; and the verb semains 'signal, mean, signify'. The Shorter Oxford Dictionary glosses the term semantics as 'relating to signification or meaning'. Broadly speaking, semantics is that aspect of linguistics which deals with the relations between referents (names) and referends (things)—that is, linguistic levels (words, expressions, phrases) and the objects or concepts or ideas to which they refer—and with the history and changes in the meaning of words. *Diachronic* (historical) semantics studies semantic change, whereas *synchronic* semantics accounts for semantic relationship, simple or multiple. A semanticist would like to find *to discover* how a man is able to paraphrase, transform, and *detect* *difficulties / lack of clarity* ambiguities and why the surrounding words sometimes force him to choose one interpretation rather than another. A *semantic analysis* for example of English, must also explain *opposite* antonyms, *same* synonyms, *classification* homonyms, *having many meanings* polysemes, *irregularities* contradictions, *to elaborate* para-phrases, *anomalies* ambiguities, *difficulties* implications, transformations of the language. It should

*logical / conditional*

give an account of semantic properties and relations. Hence to understand the meaning of a sentence and its semantic relations to other expressions, one must know not only the meaning of its lexical elements but also how they inter-relate. <sup>inter connected</sup>

According to Manfred Bierwisch, a semantic theory must: (a) make reference to the syntactic structure in a <sup>concise/short</sup> precise way; (b) systematically represent the meaning of the single words; (c) show how the structure of the meaning of words and the syntactic relations interact, in order to constitute the interpretation of sentences; and (d) it must indicate how these interpretations are related <sup>show</sup> to the things spoken about.

## IMPORTANCE OF THE MEANING

Although the structuralists tried to study language without meaning, the importance of meaning has been recognized since <sup>beyond memory</sup> time immemorial. Were the words eternal, one word would have meant one and the same thing in all the languages, there would have been no semantic change, and men would not have felt any necessity of learning words. Nevertheless, some western scholars too have started talking about semantic universals now-a-days, and today, there is a wide agreement than it ever was that meaning is the soul of language.

## DIFFICULTIES IN THE STUDY OF MEANING

The problem of 'meaning' is quite difficult. It is because of its toughness that some linguists went on to the extent of excluding semantics from linguistics. A well-known structuralist made the astonishing statement that linguistic system of a language does not include the semantics. The system is abstract, it is a signalling system, and as soon as we study semantics we are no longer studying language but the semantic system associated with language. The structuralists were of the



opinion that it is only the form of language which can be studied, and not the abstract functions. Both these are misconceptions. Recently a serious interest has been taken in the various problems of semantics. And semantics is being studied not only by the linguists but also by philosophers, psychologists, anthropologists and sociologists. Sociologists about human beings scientists

Scholars have long puzzled over what words mean of what they represent, or how they relate to reality. They have at times wondered whether words are more real than objects, and they have simple answer yes or no. It is impossible to describe meaning adequately in any other way except by saying how words are typically used as part of longer sentences and how these sentences are used. The meanings of sentences and their components are better dealt with in linguistics in terms of how they function than exclusively in terms of what they refer to.

Words are tools; they become important by the function they perform, the job they do, the way they are used in certain sentences. In addition to **reference** and **function**, scholars have also attached importance to popular historical considerations, especially etymology, while studying word-meanings. Undoubtedly the meaning of any words is casually the product of continuous changes in its antecedent meanings or uses, and in many cases it is the collective product of generations of cultural history. Dictionaries often deal with this sort of information if it is available, but in so doing they are passing beyond the bounds of synchronic statement to the separate linguistic realm of historical explanation.

Many different answers have been given to the questions, related to meaning. Psychologists have tried to assess the availability of certain kinds of responses to objects, to experiences, and to words themselves. Philosophers have proposed a variety of systems and theories to account for the data that interest them. Communication scientists have developed information theory so that they can use mathematical models to explain exactly what is predictable and what is not predictable when message are channeled through various

kinds of communication networks. From approaches like these a complex array of conceptions of meaning emerges. We shall discuss some of the major semantic theories soon.

## ✓ LEXICAL AND GRAMMATICAL MEANING

When we talk about meaning, we are talking about the ability of human beings to understand one another when they speak. This ability is to some extent connected with grammar. No one could understand:

**hat one the the but red green on bought tried  
Mehmood**

while

**Mehmood tried on the red hat but bought the  
green one** causes no difficulties.

Yet there numerous sentences which are perfectly grammatical, but meaningless. The most famous example is Chomsky's sentence:

**"Colourless green ideas sleep furiously".**

Similar other examples are:

\*The tree ate the elephant.

\*The pregnant bachelor gave birth to six girls tomorrow.

\*The table sneezed.

In a sentence such as **Did you understand the fundamentals of linguistics?** a linguist has to take into account at least two different types of meaning: lexical meaning and grammatical meaning. Full words have some kind of intrinsic meaning. They refer to objects, actions and qualities that can be identified in the external world, such as table, banana, sleep, eat, red. Such words are said to have lexical meaning. Empty words have little or no intrinsic meaning. They exist because of their grammatical function in the sentence. For example, and is used to join items, or indicates alternative, of sometimes indicates possession. These



words have grammatical meaning. Grammatical meaning refers mainly to the meaning of grammatical items as did, which, ed. Grammatical meaning may also cover notions such as 'subject' and 'object', sentence types as 'interrogative', 'imperative' etc. Because of its complexity, grammatical meaning is extremely difficult to study. As yet, no theory of semantics has been able to cope with it adequately. But the study of lexical items is more manageable.

## MEANING OF MEANING

There is a good number of semantic theories. Each of them defines meaning in its own manner. Ogden and I.A. Richards in their book Meaning of Meaning cite no less than sixteen definitions of meaning. To Ludwig Wittgenstein (*Philosophical Investigations*) the meaning of a word or expression is neither more nor less than its use. Usage, not meaning, is the right basis. Bloomfield defines meaning as 'the situations in which the speaker utters it and the response which it calls forth in the hearer' (*Language*, New York: 1933, 139). According to Harris, "the meaning of an element in each linguistic environment is the difference between the meaning of its linguistic environment and the meaning of the whole utterance." J.R. Firth says that meaning is a group of 'situational relations in a context of situation and in that kind of language which disturbs the air and other people's ears, modes of behaviour in relation to other elements in the context of situation, (*Paper in Linguistics*, London 1957: 128, 15).

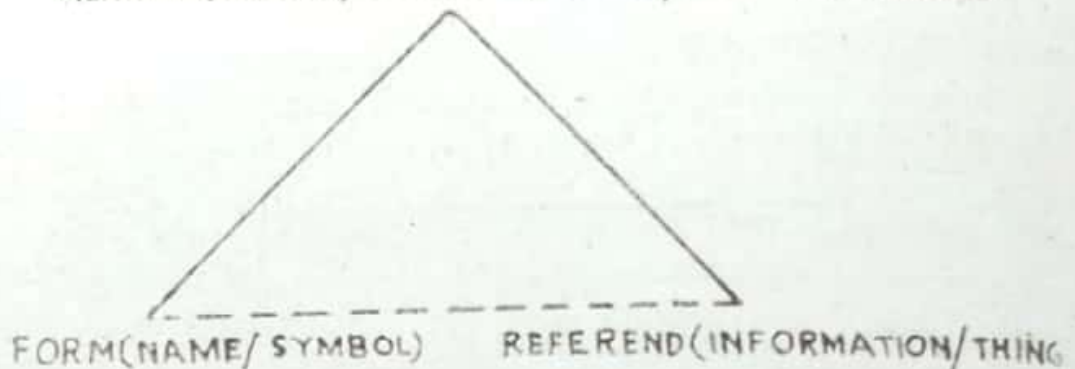
## SEMANTIC THEORIES

### Traditional Approach.

Linguists and earlier scholars of language often had very clear ideas about the importance of meaning and the need for its study. There were, to begin with, numerous preconceptions and false ideas about the nature of meaning which hindered clear thinking, but which it was

difficult to get rid of because of their separable ancestry. One was the tendency to identify words and things to think meaning were some how concrete entities—words would be called 'dirty', 'dangerous', 'beautiful', and so on, instead of the objects or events being referred to. This conception goes back to Plato. To the old philosophers such as Plato and Socrates, the semantic relationship was that of naming of 'significant'. This traditional view of the relationship between name and things is customarily represented by the triangle of 'signification', sometimes referred to as 'the semiotic triangle':

MEANING (THOUGHT / CONCEPT / SENCE / IMAGE / REFERENCE)

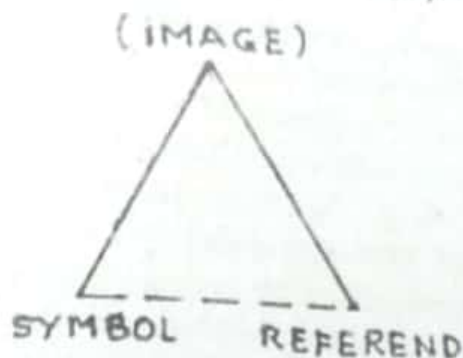


### Analytical or 'Referential' Approach

The traditional approach gave birth to the analytical approach. An important analytical approach is the one by Saussure. Saussure's theory of meaning is based on speech word relationship. Saussure uses the analogy of a sheet of paper whose one side is sound, the other thought, and therefore thought cannot be divided from sound nor sound from thought. Linguistics then operates on the borderland where the elements of sound and thought combine; their combination produces a form, not a substance (Saussure, p.113). The sound is the 'signifier', the thought is the 'signified' and the thing signified is the 'significant'. There is no direct relationship between word and the things they 'stand for'; the word 'symbolizes' a 'thought or reference' which in its turn 'refers' to the features of event we are talking about. We know that the three sounds 'dog' we use in speech to refer to the four legged, domestic animal form an arbitrary or conventional symbol. The dog, the living



creature that we see with our eyes, we may call the referend, and the picture of it that we have in our minds as we speak, whether a memory picture or one actually seen at the moment, may be called the image. We may once again represent it through a simple diagram:



The symbol (name or significant) is the phonetic shape of the word, the sounds which make it up and also other acoustic features such as accent. The reference (sense of thought), put in general terms without committing oneself to any psychological doctrine, is 'the information which the name (symbol) conveys to the hearer' whereas the 'thing' (significant or referend) is the non-linguistic feature or event we are talking about. The letter, as we have seen, lies outside the linguist's province. Hence Bloomfield's famous definition (5). This definition refers primarily to the meaning of a whole utterance, but the meaning of individual words is obtained in the same way. According to the referential definitions, therefore, 'meaning' is a 'reciprocal and reversible relation between name and sense', it can be investigated by starting from either end: but one can start from the name and look for the sense or senses attached to it, as do all alphabetical dictionaries: but one can also start from the sense and look for the name or names connected with it (Ullmann *Semantics*, p.63).

The Referential theoreticians wish to confine themselves to formal meaning because the contextual or functional level of language is difficult to describe rigorously and scientifically. The 'analytical' or 'referential' approach seeks to grasp the essence of meaning by resolving it into its main components.

According to this theory, there is no direct connection between words and the things they stand for; the word 'symbolizes' a thought or 'reference' which in its turn 'refers' to the feature or event we are talking about.

This approach has its weaknesses too. It gives an account of how the word acts on the hearer but seems to neglect the speaker's point of view. For the hearer, the sequence of events will be different and reverse. Hearing the word, say, **dog**, he will think of a dog and thus understand what the speaker was saying. And this will make him pronounce the word. There is therefore 'a reciprocal and reversible relationship between name and sense' which Stephen Ullmann (*Semantics*, 1962: 57) calls meaning: if one hears the word one will think of the thing, and if thinks of the thing one will say the word. The choice of terms is, of course, of secondary importance as long as the analysis itself is accepted. The analytical approach ignores this reciprocal and reversible relationship between sound and sense.

Furthermore, by excluding the 'referent' the nonlinguistic feature or event referred to, semantics will 'fall prey to an extreme esoteric formalism'. The structuralists are unwilling to assume that 'prior to the utterance of linguistic form, there occurs within the speaker a non-physical process, a thought, concept, image, feeling, act of will, or the like, and that the hearer, likewise, upon receiving the sound-waves, goes through an equivalent mental process' (Bloomfield, *Language*, p.142). According to Bloomfield, human utterances are connected with certain situations and accompanied by certain responses. But Bloomfield's modification too is untenable, which virtually equates 'response' with the 'referent'. It takes no account of the innumerable cases where the thing referred to is not present at the time of speaking—not to mention statements about abstract phenomena. According to Bloomfield then how will a person understand a statement about an earthquake thousands of miles away, if he understands the meaning of a term by corresponding to something in the hearer's memory. Lastly, referential theories of meaning are inspired by



the old metaphysics of body and soul. Hence they need to make a provision for multiple meaning and should remember that words are not associated with situations alone, they are also associated with other words.

### **The Distributional Approach**

The distributional analysis of meaning is the structural treatment of linguistic meaning. To facilitate a scientific study of meaning some linguists recommend to study meaning as a phenomenon isolated from outside world of human experience, that is to say, the meaning of a word is to be understood as the range of its occurrences in sentences consisting of other words. 'Just as there are probably no words exactly like in meaning in all contexts, so there will probably be no two words in any language sharing exactly the same lexical environment (distribution). This approach studies meaning as syntagmatic relations (collocation) and paradigmatic relations (sets). It uses statistical methods and computer techniques (the mechanical collection and sorting of data), considerable precision and exhaustiveness in the study of semantics. But the distributional approach to meaning fails to 'save the phenomena.' Meaning is everywhere understood as involving the relation of language to the rest of the world, and such meaningfulness is an essential part of any definition of language. So this approach is inadequate as a complete treatment of meaning.

Meaning of words in dictionary entries is derived on the basis of their relation to the whole of human experience, on the basis of extra-linguistic criterion and unsystematized commonsense. For this reason some linguists have tried to redefine or reconsider meaning in so far as it is relevant to linguistics as equivalent to distribution. 'That is to say, the meaning of a word, as far as it concerns the linguist within the strict confines of this subject, is to be understood as the range of its occurrences in sentences consisting of other words. Just as there are probably no words exactly alike in meaning in all contexts, so there will probably be no two words in any language sharing exactly the same lexical

environment (distribution)' (Robins, *General Linguistics*, 1967).

### Operational (Contextual or Functional) Approach

In the 1950s, a new and entirely different conception of meaning began to take shape inside and outside linguistics. It received its most pointed and most provocative formulation in L. Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, which was published posthumously in 1953. This theory was also advocated by Malinowski and J.R. Firth. It emphasized purely operational character of scientific concepts like 'length', 'time', or 'energy'. The contextual theoreticians said that meaning or concept was a set of operations: 'the true meaning of a word is to be found by observing what a man does with it, not what he says about it.' So the meaning of a word is its use in the language. From this emerged substitution method. And Firth defined the word as a 'lexical substitution-counter'. So the words were to be studied according to their functions, in the contexts they occurred. As a matter of fact, the operational theory is concerned with meaning in speech, the referential with meaning in language. The functional approach treats words as tools. It incorporates the speaker and hearer, the actions they are performing at the time and various external objects and events. It studied meaning in space and time along with not only the relevant objects and actions taking place at the time, but also the knowledge shared by the speaker and hearer of what has been said earlier. It must also be taken to include the tacit acceptance by the speaker and hearer of all the relevant conventions, beliefs and presuppositions 'taken for granted' by the members of the speech-community to which the speaker and hearer belong.

In terms of contexts of situation the meaning of utterance includes both 'reference' (denotation) of individual words and the meaning of the whole sentences. So it deals with the total utterance as a whole. Differences of personal status, family and social relations, degrees of intimacy, relative age, and other such factors, irrelevant to the considerations of sentences as the expression of logical propositions are all dealt with under



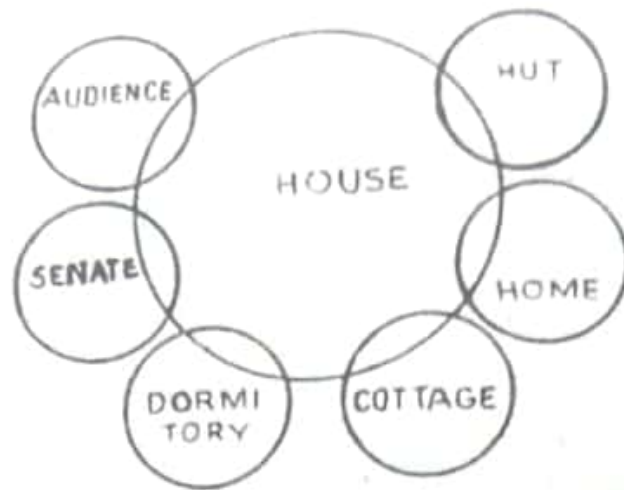
this approach of the context of situations. As stated by Robins:

"Meaning in language is therefore not a single relation or a single sort of relation, but involves set of multiple and various relations holding between the utterance and its parts and the relevant features and components of the environment, both cultural and physical, and forming part of the more extensive system of interpersonal relations involved in the existence of human societies." (*General Linguistics*, 1967:)

Hence sentences are brought into multiple relationships with the irrelevant components of the environment. Language is studied functionally. To mention only a few uses of language, one can distinguish poetry of all kinds, thetic, narrative and historical records, ritual and ceremonial utterances, the forms of legal, political, commercial, and administrative operations, the professional intercourse of technical, learned, and academic persons. J.R. Firth has suggested a typical outline context to bring the utterance and its parts into relationship with the following categories:

- (1) The relevant features of participants (persons, personalities)
  - (a) The verbal action of the participants.
  - (b) The non-verbal action of the participants.
- (2) The relevant objects.
- (3) The effect of the verbal action.

Since words may overlap with others in their possible contexts, as does **house** with **hut**, **home**, etc. it is better to deal with sets of words, rather than with individual word alone. In such study, the words, which fall into a context or set of contexts are referred to as an "associative field". This point has been illustrated by Winfred P. Lehmann (*Historical Linguistics*, 1966) in the following diagram:



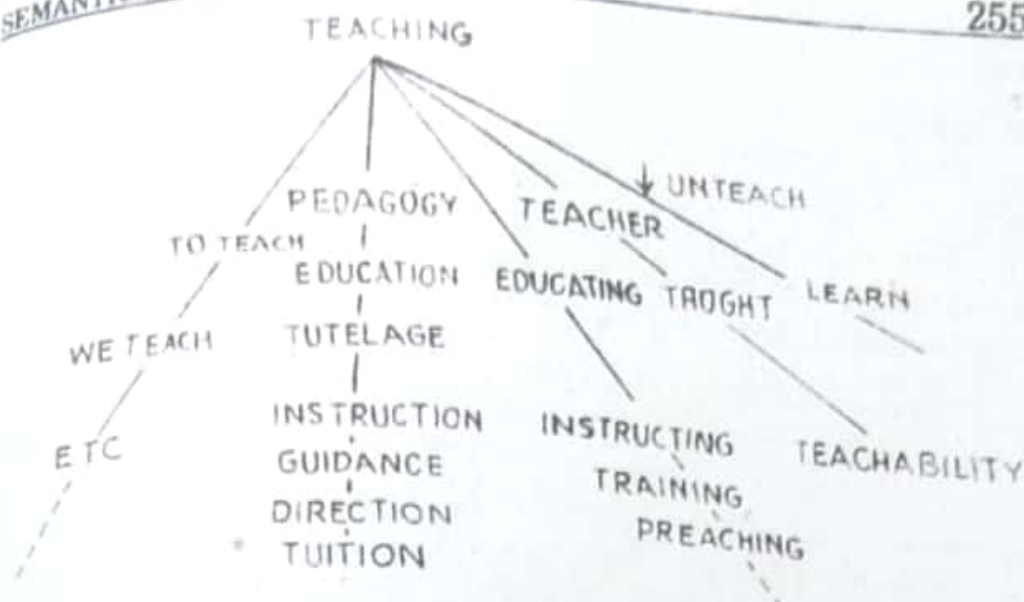
The right section of the circle represent the meaning of **house** as 'habitation'; sections on the left represent its meanings as 'a building belonging to a university,' 'a governing body,' and 'a group of onlookers,' leaving space for still other meanings. Similar sets of circles could be produced to represent the meanings of various words and fields throughout the language.

This approach requires a live and first-hand 'field' knowledge of languages as they are actually used; but to date it has produced little to rival the various analytical approaches.

### Field Theory of Meaning

Saussure demonstrated that each word in a language is surrounded by a network of associations which connect with still other terms. Some of these connections arise between the five senses (synaesthetic); others between the form or shape of words; while others involve formal and semantic connections. 'A given term is like the centre of a constellation, the point where other coordinated terms converge, and their sum is indefinite.' To illustrate one can draw up the following diagram.





In the first 'leg' of this scheme are the terms 'to teach', 'we teach', linked by the similarity of grammatical form. Those of the second 'leg' (pedagogy, tutelage, education, direction, guidance, tuition, instructions, etc.) are linked to the noun teaching by synonymy. The words in the third and fourth 'legs' are linked by no more than the suffix '-ing', which they all share. The words of the fourth leg are a miscellaneous, accidental grouping, comprising nouns, adjectives, etc. The words of the fifth 'leg' show opposite relationships.

The field theory visualizes the vocabulary as a mosaic on a gigantic scale, which is built up of fields and higher units in the same way as fields are built up by words. The associative field of a word is formed by an intricate network of associations, some based on similarity, others on continuity, some arising between senses, others between names, others again between both. The field is by definition open, and some of the associations are bound to be subjective though the more central ones will be largely the same for most speakers. Attempts have been made to identify some of these central associations by psychological experiments, but they can also be established by purely linguistic methods. The identification of these associations by linguistic methods is done by collecting the most obvious synonyms, antonyms of a word, as well as terms similar in sound or

in sense, and those which enter into the same habitual associations. Many of these associations are embodied in figurative language: metaphors, similes, proverbs, idioms, and the link. The number of associations centred in one word will of course be extremely variable and for some very common terms it may be very high.

As one of Saussure's pupils expressed it, 'field is a halo which surrounds the sign and whose exterior fringes become merged.' This field is formed by an intricate network of associations: **similarity, contiguity, sensation, name.** The associative field is by any definition open, that is, no finite limits can be assigned to any given field. Hence the aptness of the concept 'field', which serves an analogous purpose in physics.

According to this approach, words begin to be conceived of as concentrations within a linguistic field, with direction and momentum but with no isolated identity other than that capable of dictionary definition. Words belong in never ending chain-sequences to phrases, sentences, contexts to the fabric of the entire language. The analogy is a limited one, but 'they are crudely similar to what is known about the individual atoms of a complex molecule, displacement of a single one of which will affect the nature of the entire complex to a greater or lesser degree'.

In recent years, a lot of work has been done in semantic field. Scholars have investigated lexical systems in the vocabularies of different languages, with particular reference to such **field** (or **domains**) as kinship, colour, flora and fauna, weights and measures, military ranks, moral and aesthetic evaluation, and various kinds of knowledge, skill and understanding. They have amply demonstrated the value of structural approach to semantics, and have confirmed the pronouncements of such earlier scholars as Von Humboldt, de Saussure and Sapir that the vocabularies of different languages (in certain fields at least) are 'non-isomorphic'. That there are semantic distinctions made in one language which are not made in another, that particular fields may be categorized in a totally different way be different languages. As an illustration of this notion we may take



the field of colour or of kinship terms and see how it is determined, or 'informed', in English. The field of colour has been illustrated by a number of scholars (for example, for a detailed discussion, see John Lyons. *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics* 1972).

The etymologist, the lexicographer, and the student of semantic change stand to benefit most from this approach to meaning. This theory has been described as 'Neo-Humboldtian'. Some of its ideas are surely from Humboldt according to whom "each separate language....should be looked upon as an organic whole, different from all the rest and expressing the individuality of the people speaking it, it is characteristic of one nation's psyche, and indicates the peculiar way in which that nation attempts to realize the ideal of speech". (Jespersen, *Language*).

The term 'semantic field' was introduced by G. Ipsen in 1924. According to Duchacek, the term had been used before Ipsen By A. Stohr 1910. Trier also did some useful work in semantic fields. The progress of the field theory was delayed by the war and its aftermath. In the 1960s, however, there was a considerable revival of interest in it, and in the 1960s it was one of the most active branches of semantics.

Meillet was among the first to argue that one cannot know the exact shade of meaning of a word even a century ago in one's own language without a close study of the period concerned. An etymologist has to be steeped in social history and history of ideas, as well as in the literature of the period under consideration.

### **Componential Analysis Approach**

Componential analysis approach underlies the linguistic theories developed by Katz and Fodor (1963), Weinreich (1966), Beirwisch (1969) and others. It is a technique for the economical statement of certain semantic relations between lexical items and between sentences containing them. It is an attempt to describe the structure of vocabulary in terms of a relatively small set of very general elements of meaning called 'components' markers', or 'sememes', and their various

possible combinations in different languages. It tries to discover the ultimate meaning units out of which a particular set of words appears to be composed in some systematic way. Some segments of vocabulary can be better analysed by this method, for example, kinship systems, pronoun systems, colour terms, and sometimes words for discussing various kinds of flora and fauna. Through componential analysis, we can seek to find out how speakers use the vocabulary of a language in order to classify reality by referring to certain parameters of meaning; can establish how parameters such as sex, sanguineness, and generation are used to provide componential meaning.

The term 'componential analysis' in semantics is best explained by means of a simple example by linguists:

(1) man	woman	child
(2) bull	cow	calf
(3) ram	ewe	lamb
(4) drake	duck	duckling

When we consider these sets of English words we can, on the basis of our intuitive appreciation of the sense of these words, set up such proportional equations as the following:

"man : woman : child :: bull : cow : calf"

This equation bears proof to the fact that, from the semantic point of view, the words **man**, **woman** and **child**, on the one hand, and **bull**, **cow** and **calf**, on the other, all have something in common. What **man** and **bull** have in common is not shared by **woman** and **cow**, and what **calf** and **child** have in common is not shared by either **bull** and **man** or **cow** and **woman**. What these different groups of words have in common is called a **semantic component** (other terms used for it are 'plereme', 'sememe', 'semantic marker', 'semantic category'). Thus the sense of **man**, according to componential analysis, is the product of the component (male), (adult), (human); that the sense of **cow** is the product of (female), (adult) and (equine); and so on.

In order to understand the meaning of a sentence



and its semantic relations to other expressions, one must know not only the meaning of its lexical elements, but also how they interrelate. Besides commonness of components, the elements of the vocabulary are connected to each other by other relations such as 'pertinence relation', 'selection restrictions' (see Biewisch, "Semantics", ed. Lyons; *New Horizons*, 1972:)

**Basic assumptions of componential theories of semantics:** The assumptions upon which current componential theories of semantics are based or with which they are frequently associated, the first is the assumption that the semantic components are 'language-independent, or universal'. The semantic components may be combined in various ways in different languages, yet they would be identifiable as the 'same' components in the analysis of the vocabularies of all languages. As Katz says;

"Semantic markers (i.e. semantic components) must...be thought of as theoretical constructs introduced into semantic theory to designate language invariant but language linked components of a conceptual system that is part of the cognitive structure of the human mind".

In matters of kinship, colour, artifacts, needs and functions of physical qualities semantic components may be universal, but they are not universal in many other areas.

The second assumption is that propositional equations with respect to the sense of lexical items should be established. These propositions are cognitively valid, and can be set up on the basis of introspection. As Bierwisch says, 'all semantic structure might finally be reduced to components representing the basic dispositions of the cognitive and perceptual structure of the human organism'.

Whereas other semantic approaches regard the meanings of lexical items as unanalysable or undefinable wholes, this approach defines the meaning of a lexical element explicitly in terms of semantic components. These components or categories are not part of the

vocabulary of the language itself, but rather theoretical elements 'postulated in order to describe the semantic relation between the lexical elements of a given language.' These components are connected again by 'logical constants.' For example, Bierwisch's following analysis:

- (a) **boy**: ANIMATE and HUMAN and MALE and NOT ADULT.
- (b) **girl**: ANIMATE and HUMAN and FEMALE and NOT ADULT.
- (c) **Man**: ANIMATE and HUMAN and MALE and ADULT.
- (d) **Woman**: ANIMATE and HUMAN and FEMALE and ADULT.

A system of such explicitly defined lexical elements, as suggested by Bierwisch, might be supplemented by a set of implicational rules of the following type:

- |     |        |            |
|-----|--------|------------|
| (a) | HUMAN  | ANIMATE    |
| (b) | MALE   | not FEMALE |
| (c) | FEMALE | not MALE   |
| (d) | MALE   | ANIMATE    |
| (e) | FEMALE | ANIMATE    |

These implicational rules automatically complete a redundancy free entry like the (1a) to its fully specified (1b)

- 1a. boy: HUMAN and FEMALE and not ADULT.
- 1b. boy: ANIMATE and HUMAN and MALE and not FEMALE and not ADULT.

'Rules of this type', says Bierwisch, ('not only simplify the necessary dictionary specifications; they also express relevant generalizations about the semantic structure of the vocabulary described'.

### Semantic Features

Within generative-transformational theory meaning is studied through semantic features where the deep syntactic structures of a sentence and the meaning of words used in that structure together represent the total meaning of the sentence. Features mention the



permissible relationship among words. For example, in the following sentences:

That's a fond hope  
The house remained empty  
The cat died  
The man spoke

a linguist may chose to assign at least the following semantic features to the nouns:

[hope	] [house	] [cat	] [man	]
[+noun	] [+noun	] [+noun	] [+noun	]
[-concrete	] [+concrete	] [+concrete	] [+concrete	]
<-animate	> <-animate	> <+animate	> <+animate	]
[-human	] [-human	] [-human	] [+human	]
[-count	] [+count	] [+count	] [+count	]
[-definite	] [+definite	] [+definite	] [+definite	]

## TYPICAL QUESTIONS

1. *What is semantics?*
2. *State the major difficulties faced in the study of meaning.*
3. *Distinguish between lexical and grammatical meaning.*
4. *Discuss briefly the major semantic theories.*
5. *Comment on semantic Features. What do you understand by componential theories of semantics?*
6. *'There have been, in recent years, notable attempts to study all the various relationships of meaning which exist between words in particular language, an approach known as structural semantics'.*