

Ch.6: Semantics

- **semantics:** the study of meaning
- **linguistic semantics:** how languages organize and express meanings

3 disciplines concerned with language:

1. **psychology**
2. **philosophy**
3. **linguistics**

how the human language differs from these animal communication systems?

- animals can only communicate in response to some stimulus, the human language is stimulus-free.
- animals have only fixed messages, human language is creative, it has an unlimited amount of sentences.

language has the feature of **arbitrariness**

the knowledge that a speaker of a language has to know about that language:

- vocabulary + our ways to use it.

the knowledge one has that makes one capable of using the vocabulary productively and receptively:

- the implicit knowledge that the speaker has & the explicit description and explanation of it by the linguist.

grammar contains 4 parts:

1. **phonology:** the knowledge of how speech sounds are organized.
 2. **morphology:** the knowledge of word-formation.
 3. **syntax:** the knowledge of parts of speech and how they go together to form phrases.
 4. **semantics:** the knowledge of meaningful units.
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10 aspects of speaker's semantic knowledge:

1. **anomaly:** speakers know if something is or isn't meaningful.

ex; colorless ideas sleep furiously.

2. **paraphrases:** when two sentences have the same exact meaning.

ex; Alaa got home before doobie.

doobie arrived at home after Alaa.

3. **synonyms:** words that have the same sense in given context.

ex; where did you purchase the coffee machine?

use / buy / release / modify / take

4. **contradictory:** when sentences make the opposite statements about the same subject.

ex; jack is a lonely bachelor, he's happily married.

5. **antonyms:** when words have the opposite meaning.

ex; betty cut a thick/thin slice of cake.

6. **semantic feature:** the common element of meaning shared by all but one word.

ex; street / lane / path / house

7. **ambiguity:** when a sentence has two meanings

ex; I killed the man with the knife

8. **adjacency pair:** when a question and an answer go together in a conversation.

ex; there's a new comedy play at the oldtown playhouse.

so I've heard / what is it called / when did it open

9. **entailment:** when two statements are related.

ex; there are tulips in the garden

there are flowers in the garden

10. **presuppositions:** a message conveyed in one sentence gives other pieces of knowledge.

ex; andy drives his motorcycle to work

- a. there's a person named andy
- b. andy works
- c. andy knows how to drive a motorcycle