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From meaning to text

Volume 2

Igor A. Mel'čuk

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Volume 135

Semantics: From meaning to text. Volume 2

by Igor A. Mel'čuk

Edited by David Beck and Alain Polguère

Author's Foreword

The three-volume monograph *Semantics: From Meaning to Text* is an attempt at a description of natural language semantics within the Meaning-Text framework. This approach considers human language as a system of correspondences between semantic representations of utterances (= representation of their meaning) and their phonetic representation (= representation of their sound). Accordingly, semantics, which is a module of language, is modeled as a system of correspondences between semantic representations of utterances and their deep-syntactic representations (= representation of their syntactic organization).

Vol. 1 of the monograph introduces the general approach and the Meaning-Text model of natural languages, as well as the semantic representation of utterances. The present volume offers a natural continuation: the deep-syntactic representation of utterances and the semantic module itself, which consists of semantic paraphrasing rules, deep-syntactic paraphrasing rules, and transition rules that relate the Sem- and DSynt-representations of utterances. The Meaning-Text model is lexically-oriented—it gives the pride of place to a formal lexicon where all linguistically relevant information about lexical units is stored, known as *Explanatory Combinatorial Dictionary* [= ECD]; therefore, Vol. 2 also includes a chapter dedicated to this lexicon. Vol. 3 will present more detailed discussion of particular linguistic phenomena—such as notions of actant, government pattern, lexical functions, lexical connotation, etc.—crucial to the study of semantics.

Acknowledgments

In addition to people mentioned in the “Acknowledgments” in Vol. 1 of *Semantics: From Meaning to Text*, I want to thank here those whose intellectual help has been crucial in the preparation of this volume. First of all, I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to the editors, David Beck and Alain Polguère. Margarita Alonso Ramos, Xavier Blanco Escoda, Sylvain Kahane and François Louis have read some parts of the text, while Lidija Iordanskaja and Jasmina Milićević went through the whole of the volume. How can I measure their contribution? Finally, the dedicated work of the typesetter Valentin Gusev has been, of course, absolutely vital. Thank you so much, my dear accomplices!

To facilitate the reading of this volume by making it completely independent, I reproduce here “Abbreviations and Notations,” given in vol. 1, pp. xvii–xix.

Abbreviations and Notations

A or Adj	adjective
-A	actant
-A _i (L)	<i>i</i> -th actant of the lexical unit L
ACC	accusative (grammeme of case)
ACT	active (grammeme of voice)
Adv	adverb
AgCo	agentive complement
Anaph-	anaphoric
ART	article or any other determiner
AUX	auxiliary verb
C	inflectional category C
C(w)	inflectional category C expressed in wordform w
Comm-	communicative
Comm-Dom-	communicatively dominant (node)
ConceptR	Conceptual Representation
Conj	conjunction
CONJ	conjunctive (grammeme of mood)
D-	deep
DAT	dative (grammeme of case)
DEF	definite (grammeme of definiteness)
DirO	Direct Object
DMorphR	Deep-Morphological Representation
DMorphS	Deep-Morphological Structure
DSyntA	Deep-Syntactic Actant
DSyntR	Deep-Syntactic Representation
DSyntS	Deep-Syntactic Structure
E	(linguistic) expression E
ECD	<i>Explanatory Combinatorial Dictionary</i>
f	lexical function f
f(L)	application of lexical function f to lexical unit L
FIN	finite verb (grammeme of finitude)
FUT	future (grammeme of tense)
G	grammeme G

G(L)	the syntactic Governor of L
GER	gerund (grammeme of finitude)
GP	Government Pattern
iff	if and only if
IMPER	imperative (grammeme of mood)
IMPERF	imperfective (grammeme of aspect)
IND	indicative (grammeme of mood)
INDEF	indefinite (grammeme of definiteness)
IndirO	Indirect Object
INF	infinitive (grammeme of finitude)
L	lexical unit L
L('X')	lexical unit L expressing the meaning 'X'
$\tilde{L}$	lexical configuration (= phrase)
L	language L
LF	lexical function
LU	lexical unit
<i>lit.</i>	literal gloss
Morph-	morphological
MTT	Meaning-Text theory
MV	Main Verb
N	noun
NON-DEF	non-definite (grammeme of definiteness)
Num	numeral
obj	objectival (marker)
OBL	oblique (grammeme of case)
OBV	obviative (grammeme of obviation)
PART	participle (grammeme of finitude)
PASS	passive (grammeme of voice)
PAST	past (grammeme of tense)
PERF	perfect(ive) (grammeme of aspect)
Phon-	phonic
PL	plural (grammeme of number)
Prep	preposition
PRES	present (grammeme of tense)
PROGR	progressive (grammeme of aspect)
Pros-	prosodic
PROX	proximate (grammeme of obviation)
Q	underlying question
R	rule
R	rheme
-R	representation

-Rel	relation
RhF	rhematic focus
S	sentence S
$\bar{S}$	syntactic structure of sentence S
' $\bar{S}$ '	semantic structure of sentence S
S-	surface
Σ_x	the syntactics of linguistic sign X
' σ '	semanteme ' σ '
' $\tilde{\sigma}$ '	configuration ' $\tilde{\sigma}$ ' of semantemes
SAE	Standard Average European (languages)
Sem-	semantic
SemA	semantic actant
SemR	Semantic Representation
SemS	Semantic Structure
SG	singular (grammeme of number)
SIT(L)	situation denoted by the LU L
<i>SMT</i>	<i>Semantics From Meaning to Text</i> , i.e., the present book
Speaker	the main participant of a speech act (= 'I')
subj	subjectival (marker)
SUBJ	subjective (grammeme of case) /subjunctive (grammeme of mood)
Synt-	syntactic
T	theme
U	utterance U
w	wordform w
' $L_1 L_2 \dots L_n$ '	idiom consisting of lexemes $L_1, L_2, \dots, L_n$
// x	x is a fused element of the value of an LF
' X '	the meaning/the signified of the sign X
'[[X]]'	presupposition ' X '
' $\underline{x}$ '	communicatively dominant meaning ' x '
(' X ')	optional semantic actant ' X '
[' X ']	semantic actant ' X ' that is not syntactically expressible as a direct dependent of its Sem-Governor
{ ' X ' }	semantic actant ' X ' that is represented by an instantiated variable
/ X /	the signifier of the sign X
* X	ungrammatical expression X
? X	questionable expression X
# X	pragmatically unacceptable expression X
{ X_i }	set of elements X_i
$\langle x, y, z, \dots \rangle$	ordered set of elements $x, y, z, \dots$
$x \langle y \rangle$	y is a variant of x

$X \equiv Y / X \cong Y$	X and Y that belong to the same level of linguistic representation are equivalent/approximately equivalent
$X \Rightarrow Y$	X semantically implies Y
$X \Leftrightarrow Y$	X of a particular level of linguistic representation corresponds to Y of a higher level
$\supset, \subset / \cap$	set-theoretical inclusion / intersection
Λ	the empty set

Printing conventions

<i>Lightface italics</i>	: cited linguistic forms
Boldface roman	: linguistic signs
CAPITAL LETTERS	: names of lexical units
SMALL CAPITAL LETTERS	: names of grammemes, such as PL, IND, PRES, COMPAR, etc.
Helvetica	: technical terms on their first mention and in the contexts where it seems important to insist on their terminological character
Courier	: names of lexical functions
<i>Apple Chancery</i>	: names of Sem-Comm-values
	: indicates an important passage—a paragraph where an essential idea is formulated
	: indicates a formal definition or a statement of a similar type

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