

Readings on Linguistics

语言学名著选读

策 划： 余宝珠
主 编： 杨达复 谭志明
编 者： 江 澜 黑玉琴
 张 瑛 杨 萍

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【内容简介】《语言学名著选读》精选了著名语言学家的33篇选文,涵盖语言学的诸多方面,每篇选文附选文要点、作者简介、注释、讨论题等。本书系英语专业研究生语言学阅读教材,也可供对英语语言学感兴趣的读者及英语自学者使用。

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网 址: <http://www.nwpup.com>

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前 言

《语言学名著选读》是为英语专业硕士研究生选编的阅读教材。本书选自世界著名语言学家的原著,其 33 篇选文涵盖语言与语言学、语音学与音位学、形态学与句法、语义学与语用学、心理语言学与语言发展等内容。选文前面有一个对材料来源、论述要点的简短介绍及对作者的简要评论。为便于读者阅读,我们在选文的后面附有注释及供复习讨论的思考题,同时对部分原文的章节顺序和全部选文中提及的参考文献的排列格式做了一些调整。

本书第一部分的选文为语言与语言学方面的一般研究。语言方面的 5 篇选文涉及语言的各种基本特征,起源与进化,印-欧语系语言之间的关系以及英语简史。另外 5 篇选文为语言与言语的区分,语言学的定义、研究目标、基本概念及 1 篇比较/历史语言学方面的选文。

语音学与音位学方面的 2 篇选文论述音位学的不同定义,研究方面的发展,以及语音的区分性特征与发音过程。

形态学与句法部分由 8 篇选文组成。4 篇选文涵盖词汇理论探究,英语构词中的词素及其功能,新单词的形成等。句法方面的选文以对传统语法和语言结构的各种描述方法的评论开始。随后是解释生成语法对句子的分析以及介绍生成语法中采用比较的方法进行语言研究的选文。这一部分的最后一篇选文是功能语法对语言三大功能的概述。

我们把语义学、语用学、语篇分析、社会语言学方面的选文放在了同一部分。这一部分的首篇选文探讨语义理论的基本概念与语义分析的原则。随后是意义分类方面的选文。语用学侧重上下文中所反映的情景语义研究,或者更具体地说是包括或不包括语言学意义的交际意义研究,说话人在言语交际过程中的语义推断等。这些在有关言语行为研究、会话含义以及关联理论的选文中都涉及到了。语境在解释交际意义方面作用很大。第 5 篇选文通过所指、前提、隐含、推断等语用构想对语境在话语分析中的作用展开了具体分析。对于语篇中各种衔接现象的研究是语篇分析的另一个重要方面。有关衔接的选文主要探究了文学体裁语篇中的各种衔接手段以及衔接在解释文章结构与连贯方面的作用。这一

部分的最后一篇选文主要探讨研究言语社团与语言变体的因素、任务以及方法。

本书的最后一个部分收入了心理语言学与语言发展方面的6篇选文。3篇选文讨论心理语言学的目标及其基本研究方法,言语产生与理解的认知过程,第二语言习得中的输入假设,输出假设等。还有1篇选文对输入假设的某些方面提出质疑,认为侧重于意义的教学指导活动或许能够诱发交际策略的应用。这一部分以1篇介绍认知理论基本概念的选文结束。此文认为第二语言学习是一个技巧习得的认知过程。这一过程包含语言学习前期各个阶段的习惯化了的次技巧的积累以及后期各个阶段内化表征的重构,另外各种不同的学习与表达策略在第二语言学习过程中也会用到。

有7位编者参与了本书的编辑,各部分分工如下:

1. 语言(5篇): 张瑛
2. 语言学(5篇): 谭志明
3. 语音学与音位学(2篇),形态学(4篇): 杨萍
4. 句法(4篇),语义学(2篇): 杨达复
5. 语用学和语篇分析(5篇): 黑玉琴
6. 心理语言学与语言发展(6篇): 江澜

余宝珠教授负责策划,杨达复和谭志明审订了全书。

尽管编者力图提供一本能够反映语言学全貌,时代特征鲜明的介绍性读物,但由于我们对该学科发展及对有较大贡献的学者在了解方面有一定的局限性,另外在编辑过程中选材也有一定困难,本书仍有不尽人意之处。我们真诚地希望读者提出改进的批评建议。

本书的编辑出版得到了西安外国语学院的支持,对此我们表示衷心的感谢。我们同时感谢西北工业大学出版社为本书的出版所提供的一切帮助。

编 者

2002年8月

Preface

Readings on Linguistics is a comprehensive volume of reading texts for MA students in linguistics and applied linguistics. The thirty-three selections in this volume (cf. sources of selections) cover the studies in language and linguistics, phonetics and phonology, morphology and syntax, semantics and pragmatics, and psycholinguistics and language development. Each selection starts with a short introduction to its source, focus of study and a brief comment on its author when necessary, and ends with some questions for discussion and review. We see to it that notes and relevant references are provided but have made some slight changes in section order of the original selection and the format of references for the sake of readability of this volume.

The first section of the volume focuses on the general study of language and linguistics. The five selections on language cover the studies in the features of language, its origin, the Indo-European language family and a brief history of English. This is followed by another five selections on linguistics, specifically its definition, object of study, basic concepts and a selection on comparative and historical linguistics.

There are two selections on phonetics and phonology, which focus on the various definitions of phonology, the development of phonological research and the sounds of English in terms of distinctive features and phonological processes.

The section on morphology and syntax consists of eight selections. The first four selections cover the study in the theory of lexicon, the description of morphemes as the building blocks of words in English and their function, and the formation of new words. Selections on syntax start with comments on traditional grammar and the descriptive approaches to the study of the structure of language. It is followed by explanations of sentential analysis and an introduction to the comparative method of language study in generative grammar. This section ends with an outline of the three metafunctions of language studied by functional grammar.

We put the selections on semantics, pragmatics, discourse analysis and sociolinguistics in one section. The section starts with a discussion on the fundamental

concepts of semantic theory and principles of semantic analysis. This is followed by a selection on the categorization of meaning. Pragmatics focuses on the study of contextual meaning of language, or specifically what is communicated in addition to or other than the linguistic meaning, or hypothesized by the participants of verbal communication. These are reflected by the selections on the study of speech acts, conversational implicature and relevance. Context of situation plays an important role in the interpretation of communicative meaning. A following selection discusses the roles of context in the analysis of utterances, specifying it by such pragmatic conceptions as reference, presupposition, implicature and inference. The study of cohesion is also an important area of discourse analysis. Another selection here explores various cohesive ties reflected in one of the discourse types — literature — and the role of cohesion in the explanation of text construction and coherence. This section ends with a selection on the discussion of the factors, tasks and methodology relating to the study of speech community and language variations.

The last section of this volume gathers six selections on psycholinguistics and language development. The first three selections cover the discussion about the goal of psycholinguistics and its basic approaches, the cognitive process of speech and its comprehension, the input hypothesis in second language acquisition and an output hypothesis. There is also a selection which argues against certain aspects of the input hypothesis, suggesting that instructional activities with an emphasis on meaning may induce the application of strategies for communication. The last section ends with an introduction to the basic concepts of cognitive theory. Second language learning is considered here as a cognitive process of skill acquisition involving the accumulation of automatized subskills at the early stages, restructuring of internalized representations at later stages, and the application of both learning and production strategies of various kinds.

Seven editors have made contributions to the publication of this book. The selection from publications is a group effort. Of the thirty-three selections, the first five on language were edited by Zhang Ying and the five selections on linguistics by Tan Zhiming. Yang Ping edited the two selections on phonetics and phonology and the following four on morphology, and Yang Dafu the four selections on syntax and the following two on semantics. Hei Yuqin wrote the introductions and questions for the five selections on pragmatics and discourse analysis while Jiang Lan was responsible for the six selections on psycholinguistics and language development. Yang Dafu and Tan Zhiming finally revised and proofread the whole book. Professor Yu Baozhu was responsible for the planning and participated in the final revision of the book. Though we aimed to present a comprehensive volume of introductory readings on lin-

guistics, what we faced in the process of editing were the limits of our knowledge of the development, the lack of sources for choice and seminal contributions to the areas of study covered by this book. We hope to hear suggestions and criticism from the readers of this book for its improvement.

The editing and publication of this book is sponsored by Xi'an International Studies University, for which we express our sincere gratitude. Our thanks also go to Northwestern Polytechnical University Press for its assistance in the publication of this book.

Editors
August 2002

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Part Four

**Semantics , Pragmatics ,
Discourse Analysis and Sociolinguistics**

21 Semantics and Semantic Theory

Ronnie Cann

The present selection is the first section of Chapter 1 of the book *Formal Semantics: An Introduction* written by Ronnie Cann. After a brief mention of the distinction between general linguistic semantics and formal semantics, and Montague's contribution to the formal study of natural language, the author moves to the discussion of some fundamental properties of semantic theory, making clear the principles of semantic study of language. In the sketch here, many of the research areas in semantics and their relations to the original research or researchers are mentioned, which is certainly of help for follow-up studies.

Precision in description is one of the advantages of the formal approach to the study of language, which is characteristic of Natural Language Processing (NLP). The advance or breakthrough in this area of study will therefore be of significance to the research in NLP.

In its broadest sense, semantics is the study of meaning and linguistic semantics is the study of meaning as expressed by the words, phrases and sentences of human languages. It is, however, more usual within linguistics to interpret the term more narrowly, as concerning the study of those aspects of meaning encoded in linguistic expressions that are independent of their use on particular occasions by particular individuals within a particular speech community. In other words, semantics is the study of meaning abstracted away from those aspects that are derived from the intentions of speakers, their psychological states and the socio-cultural aspects of the context in which their utterances are made. A further narrowing of the term is also commonly made in separating the study of semantics from that of pragmatics. Unfortunately, the nature of the object of inquiry of the discipline (what constitutes semantic meaning, as opposed to pragmatic meaning) and the domain of the inquiry (what aspects of meaning should be addressed by the discipline) remain difficult and controversial questions. There are, however, three central aspects of the meaning of

linguistic expressions that are currently accepted by most semanticists as forming the core concern of linguistic semantics. These central concerns of semantic theory, adapted from Kempson (1977: 4), are stated in (1) and may be adopted as criteria for ascertaining the adequacy of semantic theories which apply in addition to the general conditions on scientific theories of falsifiability and rigour.

(1) **A semantic theory must:**

- a. capture for any language the nature of the meaning of words, phrases and sentences and explain the nature of the relation between them;
- b. be able to predict the ambiguities in the expressions of a language;
- c. characterise and explain the systematic meaning relations between the words, the phrases and the sentences of a language.

One may add to these the condition that a semantic theory should provide an account of the relation between linguistic expressions and what may be called 'things in the world'. In other words, it is a primary concern of a semantic theory to explain how human beings can use their language to convey information about the external world. We may thus require a semantic theory to conform also to the criterion of adequacy in (2).

(2) A semantic theory must provide an account of the relation between linguistic expressions and the things that they can be used to talk about.

There are many other aspects of meaning that can be included in the domain of linguistic semantics, but a theory conforming to the four criteria in (1) and (2) will cover the main ground of the discipline and provide a firm basis for further research. In this book, we will be looking at a particular theory of semantics that goes a long way towards satisfying these criteria and that has been very influential in linguistic semantics over the last two decades. This theory is a formal theory of semantics and is distinguished from **general linguistic semantics** by its greater use of mathematical techniques and reliance on logical precision. This is not to say that **formal semantics** and general linguistic semantics are completely separate disciplines. It sometimes appears that these two approaches to the semantics of natural languages are mutually incompatible, but this is not obviously true. The former draws heavily on the long tradition of research in the latter which in turn benefits from the greater precision of the former. Both approaches enable us to understand more about meaning and greater integration between them would doubtless bring greater benefits to the discipline.

Formal semantics itself was devised as a means of providing a precise interpretation

for **formal languages**, i. e. the logical and mathematical languages that are opposed to **natural languages** that are spoken or written as the native languages of human beings. Many logicians considered it to be impossible to apply the same rigour to the semantics of human languages, because of their supposedly inexact syntax, their vagueness and their ambiguity. In the late nineteen-sixties, however, the philosopher Richard Montague asserted that it was possible to use the same techniques in analyzing the meanings of sentences in English. In three articles, *English as a formal language*, *Universal grammar* and *The proper treatment of quantification in English*, all published or presented in 1970, Montague gave arguments for his hypothesis that:

There is in my opinion no important theoretical difference between natural languages and the artificial languages of logicians; indeed, I consider it possible to comprehend the syntax and semantics of both kinds of language within a single, natural and mathematically precise theory.

Montague (1974:222)

Throughout the nineteen-seventies, after his tragic death in 1971, Montague's work had a radical effect on the study of semantics in linguistics. Indeed, his ideas on the semantics of human languages have become central to the understanding of many of the questions and theories being discussed in linguistic semantics today. Owing to the relatively recent application of the tools of formal semantics to the analysis of natural languages, however, there are many topics in linguistic semantics that have not yet been formally analysed, but it is hoped that ultimately a good deal of linguistic meaning will be amenable to the sort of rigorous treatment envisaged by Montague. It is the exposition of Montague's theory in its now classical form that constitutes the subject matter of this book, but, before the main points of his semantic theory are introduced, the four criteria of adequacy in (1) and (2) above will be discussed in more detail in order to provide a clearer idea of the fundamental issues that underlie the development of the theory in later chapters.

1. Compositionality

A fundamental property that any semantic theory must have is the ability to pair the syntactic expressions of a language with their meanings. In the first condition of adequacy in (1. a), above, this property is characterised as a requirement that a semantic theory account for the nature of the meaning of linguistic expressions and be able to pair every expression in a language (words, phrases and sentences) with an appropriate meaning. As already mentioned, the characterisation of meaning is a controversial matter, but whatever meanings are taken to be within a theory, it is

obvious that there must be some way of associating them with appropriate linguistic expressions. This is not a trivial matter, however, and there are a number of important points that need to be discussed with respect to this property.

In the first place, let us consider more closely what it is that is to be assigned meanings by a semantic theory. Condition (1. a) refers to words and sentences as the carriers of meaning. The term *sentence* here is being used in its abstract sense, common in linguistics, as the largest unit of syntactic description, independently of its realization in spoken or written texts. Like the term *sentence*, **word** is also ambiguous in everyday English. Within semantics, the notion of word that is most useful is that of the **lexeme** which is an abstract grammatical construct that underlies a set of **word forms** which are recognised as representatives of 'the same word' in different syntactic environments. For example, the word forms *sing*, *sings*, *singing*, *sang* and *sung* are particular inflectional variants of a lexeme which we may represent for the time being as *SING*. It is to lexemes and not to word forms that meanings should be assigned, because while the inflectional properties of the verb *SING* may vary in different syntactic environments, the sort of action described by the verb remains the same. For this reason, the meaning of words is referred to in this book as **lexical meaning**, rather than word meaning.

Although it is possible for the meanings assigned to lexemes and sentences to be very different from each other, it is reasonable to expect the meanings of sentences to be related to the meanings of the lexemes underlying the word-forms they contain. It is intuitively implausible for there to be a language where the relation between the meaning of a sentence and the meanings of its component lexemes is entirely random. While languages do contain idiomatic phrases and sentences where lexical and sentential meaning are not transparently related (e. g. *kick the bucket* meaning the same as *DIE* in English), this is never the general situation. If there were no direct relation between lexical and sentential meaning, of course, the meaning of each sentence in a language would have to be listed. Since the number of sentences that make up a language is infinite, this would mean that no human being would be able to determine the meanings of all the sentences of any language owing to the finite resources of the brain. This is absurd, of course, and just as sentences are defined recursively by syntactic rules, taking words (or morphemes) as their basis, so their meanings should also be defined recursively from the meanings ascribed to the lexemes they contain.

Thus, in addition to associating each expression in a language with a meaning, an adequate semantic theory must also be able to explain how the meanings of smaller expressions contribute to the meanings of larger ones that contain them. A theory that derives the meaning of larger expressions from those of smaller ones is said to be **compositional**. The **Principle of Compositionality**, given an initial definition in (3), is

generally attributed to the German philosopher Gottlob Frege, and is thus sometimes referred to as the **Fregean Principle of Compositionality** or just the **Fregean Principle**, although it is unlikely that he ever stated the principle in precisely this way.

(3) The meaning of an expression is a function of the meaning of its parts.

The notion of a **function** will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, but essentially it is an operation that derives a single result given a specified input. Thus, the principle (3) minimally requires that the meaning of a larger expression be uniquely determined from the meanings of its component parts. This cannot be all there is to compositionality, however, since, otherwise, we would expect that sentences containing the same words mean the same thing. This is, of course, not true. The sentence *Jo kicked Chester* does not mean the same as *Chester kicked Jo*. It must also be the case, therefore, that the syntactic structure of an expression is relevant to the derivation of its meaning. Indeed, we may strengthen the principle of compositionality so that, in deriving the meaning of a composite expression, the meaning of its component expressions are combined in some way that refers to the way they are combined by the syntax. This implies that wherever meanings are combined in a particular way to derive the meaning of a composite expression, all other composite expressions of the same sort have their meanings determined in the same way. In other words, the construction of meanings is **rule-governed**, in the same way that the construction of the well-formed syntactic expressions of a language is rule-governed. For example, whatever rule derives the meaning of the sentence *Jo sang* from the subject *Jo* and intransitive verb *sang* applies to all declarative sentences derived by combining a subject noun phrase with the appropriate form of an intransitive verb.

Furthermore, it is a general property of human languages that all the sub-expressions of a grammatically well-formed phrase have a role to play in the interpretation of a sentence, even if, on occasions, this role is predictably redundant (as, for example, in double negative constructions in certain dialects of English like *I never did nothing* where the second negative expression merely reinforces the idea of negation introduced by the first). Semantic rules should, therefore, not be allowed to delete meanings during the derivation of the meaning of a composite expression. The effect of this restriction is to make the creation of the meanings of larger expressions **monotonic** with respect to their component parts where a derivation is said to be monotonic if all properties of previous parts of a derivation are maintained throughout. In other words, once information is introduced into a monotonic derivation, it is not lost thereafter. The initial definition of compositionality in (3) may thus be strengthened to give the statement in (4).

- (4) **The principle of compositionality:** The meaning of an expression is a monotonic function of the meaning of its parts and the way they are put together.

The implications of this interpretation of the principle of compositionality is that meanings should be ascribed not only to lexemes and sentences but also to other syntactic constituents. It is thus generally assumed that meanings should be assigned to all the well-formed constituents of a language, not just to its words (lexemes) and sentences. Indeed, the concept of syntax as a bridge between phonology and semantics, current in many grammatical theories, would seem to require that all constituents be assigned a meaning by the semantics and, furthermore, that (surface) syntactic structure should directly determine how the meanings of sentences are derived. It is common to assume that semantic constituency parallels syntactic constituency and hence that an adequate semantic theory must be able to ascribe appropriate meanings to noun phrases like *the old cat*, *Jo's mother*, *Chester* and verb phrases like *sang*, *kicked the cat*, *ran slowly*, etc. , according to their syntactic structure.

One way in which this may be achieved is to adopt the hypothesis that for each syntactic rule of the grammar (or syntactic structure admitted by the grammar) there is a corresponding semantic rule that derives the meaning of the resultant expression (or structure). For example, assuming that there is a rule that defines a sentence in English as consisting of a noun phrase plus a verb phrase, then the adoption of the **rule-to-rule** hypothesis in (5), together with the principle of compositionality in (4), requires that there be a corresponding semantic rule deriving the meaning of the sentence from the meanings of its immediate constituents, NP and VP.

- (5) **Rule-to-rule hypothesis:** For each syntactic rule there is a corresponding semantic rule.

The principle of compositionality in (4) is assumed to be a constraint on semantic theories and, indeed, will be seen to be the primary motivator behind much of the discussion in later chapters. The rule-to-rule hypothesis, on the other hand, is not a necessary requirement of a semantic theory, but a means of achieving compositionality. We will have cause to question the validity of this hypothesis in the later chapters of this book, but it is used in the earlier chapters to maintain a transparent relation between syntactic structures and semantic representations.

2. Meaning relations

Another aspect of meaning that must be accounted for by any semantic theory is the systematic relations that hold between different expressions in a language. According to the condition of adequacy in (1. b), a theory must satisfactorily analyse the intuitions speakers of English have about the semantic relations between lexemes and between sentences. This assumes that expressions in a language which may not be syntactically related may be related semantically and, indeed, such is the case. Consider the sentences in (6). Assuming that the reference of the name *Jo* and the discourse context are held constant for all the sentences in (6), then the sentences in (6. b) to (6. i) are semantically related to that in (6. a), even though it is not always the case that there is a direct syntactic relation between them.

- (6)
- a. Jo stroked a cat .
 - b. A cat was stroked.
 - c. There was a cat.
 - d. No-one stroked a cat.
 - e. There are no such things as cats.
 - f. A cat was stroked by Jo.
 - g. It was Jo who stroked the cat.
 - h. Jo touched a cat.
 - i. Jo stroked an animal.

The relation between the sentences in (6. a) and those in (6. b) and (6. c) is one of **entailment**, as it is intuitively impossible for it to be true that Jo stroked a cat on some occasion without it also being true that a cat was stroked or that there existed a cat to be stroked on that occasion. We may thus define a sentence S_1 as **entailing** a sentence S_2 if the latter truly describes a situation whenever the former also does. The negation of an entailment always derives a **contradiction** and a sentence S_1 may be said to **contradict** a sentence S_2 if the former must be false when the latter is true (or vice versa). For example, the assertion that Jo stroked a cat is contradicted by the non-existence of cats, making (6. e) a contradiction of (6. a). The relation between (6. a) and the sentences in (6. f) and (6. g) is also primarily semantic, although most syntactic theories recognize a syntactic relation between the sentences as well. Using a common term in a technical way, we may say these sentences are **paraphrases** of each other, since they all have the same core meaning. Another way of putting this is to say that they mutually entail each other. Hence, we may say that a sentence S_1 is a paraphrase of a sentence S_2 if S_1 entails