



Introducing English Semantics

Charles W. Kreidler

**Also available as a printed book
see title verso for ISBN details**

Introducing English Semantics

Introducing English Semantics is a comprehensive and accessible introduction to semantics, the study of meaning.

Focusing on the English Language, Charles W.Kreidler presents the basic principles of semantics. He explores how languages organize and express meanings through words, parts of words and sentences.

Introducing English Semantics:

- deals with relations of words to other words, and sentences to other sentences
- illustrates the importance of 'tone of voice' and 'body language' in face-to-face exchanges, and the role of context in any communication
- makes random comparisons of features in other languages
- explores the knowledge speakers of a language must have in common to enable them to communicate
- discusses the nature of language; the structure of discourse; the distinction between lexical and grammatical meaning
- examines such relations as synonymy, antonymy, and hyponymy; ambiguity; implication; factivity; aspect; and modality
- has a wealth of exercises
- includes a glossary of terms

Written in a clear, accessible style, *Introducing English Semantics* will be an essential text for any student following an introductory course in semantics.

Charles W.Kreidler is Emeritus Professor of Linguistics at Georgetown University. His previous publications include *The Pronunciation of English* (1989) and *Describing Spoken English* (1997).





London and New York

**Introducing
English
Semantics**

Charles W. Kreidler

ROUTLEDGE



“For Jim and Cynthia, Julie and Mike”

First published 1998
by Routledge
11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE

Simultaneously published in the USA
and Canada
by Routledge 29 West 35th Street,
New York, NY 40001

*Routledge is an imprint of
the Taylor & Francis Group*

This edition published in the Taylor &
Francis e-Library, 2002.

© 1998 Charles W. Kreidler

All rights reserved. No part of this book
may be reprinted or reproduced or
utilized in any form or by any electronic,
mechanical, or other means, now known
or hereafter invented, including
photocopying and recording, or in any
information storage or retrieval system,
without permission in writing from the
publishers.

*British Library Cataloguing in
Publication Data*

A catalogue record for this book is
available from the British Library

*Library of Congress Cataloguing in
Publication Data*

Kreidler, Charles W., 1924–

Introducing English semantics/
Charles W. Kreidler.

Includes bibliographical references

1. English language—Semantics.
 2. English language—Semantics—
Problems, exercises, etc. I. Title.
- PE1585.K69 1998

420.1'43—dc21

97–34090

CIP

ISBN 0-203-02115-0 Master e-book
ISBN

ISBN 0-203-17370-8 (Adobe eReader
Format)

ISBN 0-415-18063-5 (hbk).

ISBN 0-415-18064-3 (pbk).

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	xi
1 The study of meaning	1
1.1 The systematic study of meaning	2
1.2 The nature of language	3
1.3 Language and the individual	5
1.4 Demonstrating semantic knowledge	8
2 Language in use	17
2.1 Pragmatics	18
2.2 Natural and conventional signs	19
2.3 Linguistic signs	22
2.4 Utterance and sentence	26
2.5 Prosody	30
2.6 Non-verbal communication	35

Contents



3	The dimensions of meaning	41
3.1	Reference and denotation	42
3.2	Connotation	44
3.3	Sense relations	46
3.4	Lexical and grammatical meanings	49
3.5	Morphemes	51
3.6	Homonymy and polysemy	52
3.7	Lexical ambiguity	55
3.8	Sentence meaning	56
4	Semantic roles	61
4.1	Sentence and proposition	62
4.2	Semantic roles	66
	4.2.1 Valency zero	68
	4.2.2 Valency one	69
	4.2.3 Valency two	73
4.3	Some changes in valency	78
5	Lexical relations	85
5.1	Lexical fields	87
5.2	Kinship	90
5.3	Hyponymy	92
5.4	Synonymy	96
5.5	Antonymy	100
5.6	Binary and non-binary antonyms	101
5.7	A comparison of four relations	104
5.8	Converse antonyms	105
5.9	Symmetry and reciprocity	107
5.10	Expressions of quantity	110
6	Transition and transfer predicates	115
6.1	Transition	116
6.2	Transfer	121

7	Reference	129
7.1	Referents and referring expressions	131
7.2	Extension and intension	132
7.3	Some different kinds of referents	134
	7.3.1 Unique and non-unique referents	135
	7.3.2 Concrete and abstract referents	135
	7.3.3 Countable and non-countable referents	136
7.4	Different ways of referring	139
	7.4.1 Generic and non-generic reference	141
	7.4.2 Specific and non-specific reference	142
	7.4.3 Definite and indefinite reference	142
7.5	Deixis	144
7.6	Anaphora	145
7.7	Shifts in ways of referring	150
7.8	Referential ambiguity	151
8	Sentences as arguments	155
8.1	Full statement clauses	157
8.2	Question clauses	160
8.3	Infinitive clauses	161
8.4	Gerund clauses	163
8.5	Non-factual clauses	164
8.6	Verbal nouns	165
8.7	Comparing types of clauses	167
8.8	Syntactic ambiguity	169
9	Speech acts	175
9.1	The form of sentences and the purpose of utterances	176
9.2	Analysis of speech acts	180
9.3	Seven kinds of speech acts	183
	9.3.1 Assertive utterances	183
	9.3.2 Performative utterances	185
	9.3.3 Verdictive utterances	187
	9.3.4 Expressive utterances	188
	9.3.5 Directive utterances	189

CONTENTS

9.3.6	Commissive utterances	192
9.3.7	Four speech acts compared	194
9.3.8	Phatic utterances	194
10	Aspect	197
10.1	Generic and specific predications	199
10.2	Stative predicates and dynamic predicates	200
10.3	Durative and punctual	202
10.4	Telic and atelic	206
10.5	Ingressive, continuative, egressive aspect	209
10.5.1	Predicates of location	209
10.5.2	Predicates of possession	210
10.5.3	Predicates of cognition	211
10.5.4	Event predicates	212
10.5.5	Nouns and adjectives as predicates	214
10.5.6	Aspectual verbs	215
10.6	Prospective and retrospective	219
10.7	Some grammatical expressions of aspect	220
10.7.1	The prospective	220
10.7.2	The perfect or retrogressive	221
10.7.3	The progressive	222
11	Factivity, implication and modality	229
11.1	Factivity	230
11.2	Implicative predicates	233
11.3	Modality	239
12	A variety of predicates	251
12.1	Attitudinal predicates	252
12.2	Enabling and preventing	257
12.3	Perceptual predicates	260

13 The semantics of morphological relations	267
13.1 Formal processes of derivation	269
13.2 Semantic processes in derivation	270
13.3 Verbs formed from nouns	272
13.3.1 Transfer meanings	272
13.3.2 Effective meanings	275
13.3.3 Instrumental meanings	277
13.3.4 Vehicular meanings	278
13.4 Verbs from adjectives	280
13.5 Verbs from verbs	283
13.6 Adjectives derived from verbs	285
13.7 Adjectives derived from nouns	287
13.8 Adjectives derived from adjectives	289
13.9 Nouns derived from verbs	289
13.10 Nouns derived from adjectives	293
13.11 Nouns derived from nouns	294
<i>Glossary of technical terms</i>	297
<i>Bibliography</i>	305
<i>Index of lexemes</i>	311
<i>Index of names</i>	326
<i>Index of technical terms</i>	328