原版现代语言学丛书

SEMANTICS (Second Edition)

语义学(第二版)

Kate Kearns



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相信本套丛书的引进将进一步满足广大语言学专业师生对权威、实用的 语言学教材及课外阅读资料的需求,推动我国语言学教学和科研事业的长远 发展。 Semantics

Second Edition

Kate Kearns

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Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the University of Canterbury for study leave during the first semester of 2009, during which this edition was written.

I also wish to thank all the students and teachers around the world who have emailed me with queries and comments on the first edition. These messages have been very helpful in deciding what to change, and it has been a pleasure to hear from people who are using the book. Students in my own classes have provided lively and interesting feedback over the last few years, and I have enjoyed and valued their discussions.

Finally, I thank the anonymous reviewers who first gave very helpful comments on a rather cursory outline of the proposed new edition, which greatly clarified my thinking on what was needed, and then gave invaluable feedback on the first full draft.

Preface to the First Edition

This book grew out of a semantics course taught at the second-year level in the general Arts or Sciences bachelor's degree at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand. Most of the students are studying linguistics or philosophy as a major subject, but they also come from a number of other fields in the humanities, physical sciences or professional studies. They generally have taken an introductory course in either linguistics or philosophy.

A mixed undergraduate class in semantics presents the dilemma of deciding what to do about the conceptual and notational complexity of formal theories. A detailed formalization procedure is not of the greatest interest to many of the students, and if the full formal apparatus is used, it isn't possible to introduce more than a limited range of data. If a very limited range of data is covered, this leaves a gap in the linguistics programme, particularly for the teaching of syntax, where some acquaintance with semantic issues is increasingly useful and important. The aim of this book is to introduce a wider range of topics in formal semantics with a limited formal apparatus.

Chapters 1-4 are introductory to the rest of the book, but a selection can be made from the remaining chapters. There are several themes that could be followed: Chapters 4-6 cover NP interpretation and Chapters 8-10 cover events and thematic roles. Verbal and nominal aspect is covered in sections of Chapters 6 and 7 and Chapter 9.

The text is intended to be used as a coursebook, accompanied by lectures on the topics covered and by discussion of the exercises. This book is not a 'teach yourself' text for private, unassisted study. The exercises included are of varying difficulty – some are for basic review and are suitable for private revision, but the more demanding of exercises may best be used as the basis of class discussion sessions.

As always, students are urged to also read other introductions to semantics which take a different approach.

Preface to the Second Edition

All the chapters in this edition have been revised, some extensively.

The main new content is a new chapter introducing formal composition, including type theory and the lambda calculus, at a genuinely introductory level suitable for beginners. A simpler set of rules using first-order functions only (with one small exception) is covered up to and including Section 4.5, with Exercises (5) and (6) based on this material. This can be used as a more basic unit. Section 4.6 introduces second-order functions, with Exercises (7)-(10). However, I have decided not to use the compositional approach as the main framework throughout the book, for two main reasons. First, there is always a tension between concentrating on formalization skills and introducing a wide range of semantic issues and phenomena. This text aims to introduce a wide range of issues, and accordingly, I have retained a simplified presentation of formalization. Second, this text generally assumes little or no background in syntactic theory, but the syntactic structures associated with the binary composition of, for example, tense, modality and quantifier NPs is fairly advanced. A simplified transformational account of quantifier NPs in object position is outlined, but in general I have omitted semantic composition associated with advanced syntactic structures. Where compositionality is discussed, I have included exemplar tree diagrams for students to follow in doing the exercises.

Along with a greater focus on formal theory, I have removed the short section on lexical semantics and reduced the discussion of pragmatics, which is now discussed in Chapter 1 on a 'need to know' basis. That is, I have introduced the main kinds of pragmatic inference, such as scalar implicature, which can be intuitively hard to separate from a literal truth condition. I have also added a descriptive section on presupposition, and brief coverage of indexicality and anaphoricity.

The chapter on thematic roles has been updated and clarified, including a new, fairly comprehensive section on the motivation for and formalisms of lexical conceptual structure (LCS), with particular focus on thematic roles in LCS. The chapter on tense and aspect is also fairly extensively revised, with a full discussion of the analysis of reference to times in a narrative in Discourse Representation Theory.

There are new exercises throughout the book, and many existing exercises have been revised. The exercises are now marked with an indication of level of difficulty: * for basic, ** for intermediate, *** for advanced, and one or

two with **** for very advanced. Some of the exercises are also marked as recommended for discussion.

Overall, I intend the book to be useful for true beginners, including those with very little background in linguistics or philosophy. However, the phenomena and analyses are intrinsically of different levels of complexity – in particular, analysis of generalized quantifiers as lambda functions and the section on lexical conceptual structure may be more suitable for intermediate and advanced students.

Feedback from readers has shown that the book is used for a wide range of teaching situations, and many instructors are using selected topics only – indeed, it would be impractical to attempt to cover everything in a semester. I have increased cross-referencing and briefly repeated information in some places in order to make it easier to use certain parts of the book independently. For example, it should be possible to use the chapter on tense and aspect without previously reading the chapter on *aktionsarten* if you wish, or to use the chapter on referential opacity without reading the material on generalized quantifiers.

Thank you for flying with us – I hope you have an interesting and enjoyable trip.