

Titel: Semantics. Scope, Definitions, Methods, [Nice1951] 046-0610

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It should be kept in mind, however, that such terms as word, morpheme, phrase, sentence, often are used to refer to the form of a word, a morpheme, etc.

4. A language may be called a system of significant in that it is both a system of symbol (i.e. significant) forms, and of symbol meanings.

System of word forms :

son, sun - cup
sin kin kip
soon - coon
seen keep coop
 etc.

System of word marks :
 (phonemes:)

p t k
 b d g
 m n ng

etc.

System of word meanings :

son daughter
PARENTS
father mother
grandfather grandmother
GRANDCHILD
grandson granddaughter
uncle aunt
man wife
CHILD
boy girl
 etc.

night day
 (morning, afternoon,
evening)
day, week, month, year,
 etc.

5. The meaning of a word or any other significant is not a feature common to all the situations in which the word is used or may be used. The speaker may choose a wrong word. He may use it to refer to something that is not covered by the meaning of the word, e.g. when he refers to the stars by the eyes of night. The feeling tone of a word like pig is part of its meaning, but it is absent in many situations. It may be asked whether the meaning of a word has anything to do with the situation in cases where the speaker refers to the form of the significant itself, e.g. the genitive of the second declension in Latin has the phoneme -i. It depends on what we understand by the situation.

It may be that K. Kuipers is right in maintaining that the only feature common to all situations in which a word is used is the presence of the word itself.

Such facts as the possibility of referring to an animal, as well as to a lady or a girl, or to the word cat as such, i.e. as a unit of sound and meaning, a significant (The word cat has three phonemes.), by using the word cat; or of referring to a part of the body of an animal as well as to a part of a ship, or to the word eye as such, suffice to prove that the meaning of a significant is not the common feature to all situations in which the significant may be effectively used, i.e. so that the hearer is able to understand, to identify the something referred to, or the speaker's attitude expressed. Remarkable is also the use of "wrong" words resulting in perfect understanding on the part of the hearer.

So the meaning of a word is not a greatest common divisor, nor is it a least common multiple. The meaning of a significant has a more or less definite number