

Titel: Semantics. Scope, Definitions, Methods, [Nice1951] 046-0640

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3. The study of meanings is one of the most essential parts of the study of a language, consequently of linguistics. Linguistics is here used to denote the study of speech and languages. A significant is - to use a term of Roman Jakobson's - bipartite. This does not mean, of course, that it has two parts, but it means that a significant is an indivisible unit of form and meaning. The form is a collection or combination of marks. Form and meaning of a significant are correlative. A form (of a significant) is a form of, or for a definite meaning. A meaning is a meaning of a definite form. To study forms of significant without taking into account their meanings as such, is a theoretical contradiction, and practically impossible. Cp. f.i. Kenneth L. Pike, Grammatical prerequisites to phonemic analysis. Word 3.155-72 (1947).

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 - sup
ain kin kip
soon - soon
seen keep soon
etc.

System of word meanings:

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

System of word marks:
(phonemes:)

p t k
b d g
m n ŋ
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 area of night. The feeling tone of a word like nig 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 pre-