

Titel: Semantics. Scope, Definitions, Methods, [Nice1951] 046-0660

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sence 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 of aspects (referential or, and attitudinal). Except for special cases in each separate speech situation only some of its elements or aspects are functioning as a clue for the hearer. In some situations or combinations even none of them. An example is obligatory rection of a definite grammatical category by a preposition, a noun, or a verb, or any other word, e.g. the ablative case in ab urbe, de urbe, ex urbe, or gender, number and case of honorum in honorum feminarum, or the ablative in uti gladio in Latin. Here the grammatical categories, which certainly have meanings of their own, are functioning as mere indicators of syntactic rank, as marks of determiners.

So it would be an illusion to assume that the study of meaning is just a matter of summing up a large number of situations. On the other hand it would be unscientific to avoid the study of meanings either because of its complexity and difficulty, or because meanings are not perceivable, but thinkable.

6. Consequently, the study of the meaning of a significant: a word, a morpheme, a combination of words, a sentence intonation, or part of a sentence intonation, is much more delicate than making a comprehensive inventory of situations. Among other problems we have carefully to distinguish independent and combinatory meanings of the same word or other significant; correct and incorrect use which are not identical with effective and not effective use in a given situation; reference to the significant itself, and to something else present in the situation (suppositio materialis, and non materialis); cases where the meaning of the significant actually covers the something referred to, or the speaker's attitude expressed, and where it does not (individual and bold so-called metaphores), and where there even is contradiction between meaning and actually meant (e.g. in case of lying, or irony); cases of ambiguity, and others where there is no ambiguity.

For each of these distinctions the method of distinguishing and the criteria to be applied may be determined and formulated. There may be other such distinctions to be made prior to the actual analysis of a meaning, in order to eliminate cases where nothing or little can be referred from the situation as to the meaning itself. This priority, of course, is more theoretical than practical. In practice, the question whether meaning discussed is independent or combinatory;