

## COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS OF MEANING

# APPROACHES TO SEMIOTICS

*edited by*

THOMAS A. SEBEOK

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# COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS OF MEANING

*An introduction to semantic structures*

*by*

EUGENE A. NIDA

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## PREFACE

This volume on the componential analysis of referential meaning has grown out of experience in attempting to communicate to translators some of the basic problems involved in determining the essential features of meaning of lexical units. In a sense it is a logical outgrowth of the book on *The Theory and Practice of Translation*, prepared by Charles R. Taber and myself.<sup>1</sup>

The audience for which this volume is intended consists primarily of underdivision university students who have had some limited exposure to linguistics, but who are only beginning their interest in semantics. Advanced students in linguistics will no doubt want to skim quickly over the two initial chapters, and then read Chapters 6 and 7 before returning to consider the methodological techniques which constitute the major linguistic contribution.

As will be quite evident, the general linguistic orientation throughout this volume is generative-transformational,<sup>2</sup> and the treatment of the relations between components<sup>3</sup> indicates clearly

<sup>1</sup> *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Nida and Taber 1969) contains one chapter on referential meaning, in which a number of basic concepts of componential analysis are introduced, especially from the point of view of interlingual communication. There is, however, a confusion in the treatment of the supplementary components, since cognitive and emotive components are combined.

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of the principal aspects of generative-transformational grammar, the following articles and books are of special relevance: Chomsky 1962, 1965, and 1971, Halle 1964, Harris 1957, Hymes 1972, Jacobs and Rosenbaum 1968, Koutsoudas 1966, G. Lakoff 1970 and 1972, Langendoen 1969, Lees 1960, McCawley 1971, Postal 1966.

<sup>3</sup> See especially pages 204-205.

a dependence upon the generative-semantic approach.<sup>4</sup> However, the manner in which the problems are formulated and the ways in which the results are described do not adhere rigidly to any particular linguistic model. As a result, the procedures can be readily adapted to a variety of approaches to linguistic structure. The basic methodology of componential analysis and the orientation toward different types of meaning depend in large measure upon the insights of Lounsbury and Goodenough,<sup>5</sup> but the procedural techniques introduced have proven useful in a variety of practical situations.<sup>6</sup>

An essential feature of this volume is the series of problems presented. They are gathered together in the Appendix, rather than being distributed throughout the volume. This arrangement is designed to make the format less distracting, while at the same time providing the necessary supplementary illustrative data required for full comprehension of the procedures and the acquisition of skills in dealing with semantic structures. Bibliographical and explanatory footnotes are likewise placed in the Appendix.

As a special help to students unfamiliar with the technical terminology of linguistics, a glossary is appended.

The selective bibliography includes most of the articles and books which have special relevance to componential analysis, as well as materials on semantics written from a broader perspective.

The overall structure of this volume and the underlying reasons for its organization are explained in the last section of Chapter 1.

In the preparation of this book I am especially indebted to a number of colleagues who serve as Translations Consultants of the United Bible Societies, particularly to Charles R. Taber, Paul Ellingworth, William A. Smalley, William D. Reyburn, and Philip Stine, who have criticized various preliminary stages of this

<sup>4</sup> For treatments of generative semantics and interpretive semantics, see Katz 1970 and 1971, G. Lakoff 1971, McCawley 1968, Partee 1971, Postal 1971, and Zwicky 1971. The position of Chafe 1970 is also closely related to that of generative semantics.

<sup>5</sup> See Lounsbury 1955, 1956, and 1964, and Goodenough 1956 and 1965.

<sup>6</sup> See especially Chapter 5.



volume. I also wish to thank those who have helped so greatly in the editorial processes: Paul C. Clarke, Lucy Rowe, and Dorothy Tyler.

Eugene A. Nida

Greenwich, Connecticut  
July 1973



## AN INTRODUCTION TO MEANING

### *Different meanings of single terms*

A single word may have a number of quite different senses. The term *hand*, for example, may occur in several kinds of contexts in which it contributes quite diverse meanings, e.g. *he raised his hand, we gave him a hand, a new hired hand, all hands on deck, and the hands of a clock*. A term such as *chair* may also have a number of different meanings, e.g. *he sat in a chair, he has the chair of philosophy at the university, he will chair the meeting, please address the chair, he was condemned to the chair, and he plays first-chair violin*. (Problem 1)

In most instances, a word seems to have a central meaning from which a number of other meanings are derived. And we can usually recognize or imagine some kind of connection between each of these meanings and the apparent central meaning. Compare, for example, the various meanings of *head* in *the hat on his head, the head of the line, the head of the firm, a head of cabbage, and the revolt came to a head*. There are cases, however, in which the connection may be tenuous, or the meanings may have become so remote as to obscure any historical relation. For example, the term *bar* originally referred to an object used to secure an enclosure. By extension it referred to any kind of barrier, as in a courtroom. Later the term was used to designate a bar at which alcoholic drinks are served, and it is now employed as a name for the establishment where such a bar is located. A still further extension of meaning refers to a counter where certain special types of objects are sold, e.g. *record bar* or

*stocking bar*. Since *bar* in the sense of an establishment for serving alcoholic beverages has become far more frequent in usage than the original meaning, most persons assume that this later meaning is in fact the central meaning. With such a shift in meaning they no longer see any connection between a bar on a window and a bar where drinks are sold. For such persons these two meanings of *bar* share no common features.

In all languages a number of forms have the same sounds but have completely unrelated meanings. In English the term *bark* may mean (1) a three-masted vessel,<sup>1</sup> (2) the noise made by a dog, and (3) the protective layer around a tree. Similarly, *gum* may refer to (1) a substance which may be chewed or (2) the tissue surrounding the necks of teeth; and *school* may refer to (1) an educational institution or (2) a large group of aquatic creatures. Some persons imagine that there is some connection between the different meanings of *gum* or *school*, but it is difficult to describe any common aspects of such meanings. Historically the meanings are entirely unrelated,<sup>2</sup> and in terms of present-day usage there are no significant semantic features in common. Accordingly, *bark* may be said to represent three homophones, and *gum* and *school* two homophones each; that is, they are forms which are pronounced alike but are semantically unrelated. In addition to being homophones, these sets of forms also constitute homographs;

<sup>1</sup> Also spelled *barque*. When the sounds of two semantically unrelated words are the same, the terms are called homophones, even though they may be spelled differently.

<sup>2</sup> According to *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language*, College Edition, 1969, *bark* (the noise of a dog) is related to Middle English *berk(en)*; *bark* (the external covering of woody stems) is a Middle English borrowing from a Scandinavian source (compare Swedish, Danish *bark*), and *bark* (a type of ship) is derived from late Middle English *barke*, which comes from a Romance form, compare French *barque* and Spanish *barco*. English *gum*, in the sense of a viscid mass, comes from Middle English *gomme*, related through Old French to a variant of Latin *gummi*, while *gum* as the fleshy tissue of the alveolar parts of the jaw is from Middle English *gome*. *School*, in the sense of an educational institution, is derived from Middle English *scole*, and comes originally from a Greek term meaning 'leisure employed in learning', while *school* as a group of aquatic creatures is from late Middle English *schol(e)*, and is related to various terms in Germanic languages.

that is, they are spelled as well as pronounced alike. Sets such as *pair*, *pare*, and *pear* are homophones, but they are not homographs. (Problem 2)

In the analysis of meaning etymology is not relevant if the sense of relatedness has been lost. The form *stock* may occur in three very different types of contexts, e.g. *he has a lot of stock in the warehouse*, *he sells stocks and bonds*, and *he feeds the stock on his farm well*. Though historically these three sets of meanings are related, for many present-day speakers of English there seem to be no meaningful connections and they are best treated as homophones. Similarly, *duck*, referring to a bird, and *duck* meaning 'to thrust under water' or 'to lower the head or the body suddenly', are usually regarded as unrelated, though historically there is a connection. On the other hand, many people would like to relate *root*, meaning 'a part of a plant' and *to root*, meaning 'to dig in the earth with the snout', since it would appear that this action must have something to do with roots; but historically these two forms are unrelated.<sup>3</sup> (Problems 3 and 4)

One aspect of language which complicates the study of meaning is that even a single meaning of a term may include an enormous range of referents, that is, objects to which such a form may refer. The term *chair* as a designation of a piece of furniture may refer to a wide range of objects of different sizes and shapes, made of quite different materials, and employed in very different situations. This fact of numerous referents is true of almost all terms which refer to entities or events. Even a word such as *chrysalis*, though seemingly quite specific and rather technical, includes a very wide range of objects in which insects undergo extensive transformations. Terms which specify abstracts often have even wider ranges. Compare, for example, *good* in *good meal*, *good lecture*, *good medicine*, *good day*, *good feeling*, and *good time*. Also note how *big* can be used to speak of *a big flea* and *a big elephant*.

<sup>3</sup> *Root*, as a designation for a part of a plant, is derived from Old English *rōt*, and is related to Old English *wyr* 'plant' (compare German *Wurzel*, Latin *rādix*), while *root*, 'to turn up the soil with the snout', is related to Old English *wrōt(an)*, akin to *wrōt* 'snout'.

Even so-called absolute qualifiers such as *open/shut* and *true/false* are used in seemingly relative senses, e.g. *slightly open* and *partly true*.

Since so many words have so many different meanings, and each of the meanings tends to cover such a wide and seemingly poorly delimited area of meaning, many persons have concluded that natural languages, in contrast with mathematical or logical languages, are hopelessly inefficient. They would prefer to have languages in which each referent would be symbolized by a single form and each form would refer to only one specific type of referent. That is to say, the forms of language would then bear a one-to-one relation with each and every particular kind of experience. Such a language would be theoretically ideal, but hopelessly impracticable. In the first place, people would never be able to learn the millions of words which would be required to specify uniquely all the kinds of entities, events, qualities, quantities, and relations existing in their universe of experience, and for each new entity or experience one would have to invent an entirely new term. Furthermore, there could be no creative use of the figurative language which makes possible certain important esthetic and conceptual dimensions of experience.

Though at first one may have the impression that the relations between the different meanings of certain terms are hopelessly unsystematic and unorganized, there is in reality far less arbitrariness than one might suppose. In fact, there are many systematic relations between various types of meanings, and these relations are important to anyone who wishes to study semantic structures. For example, there is frequently a close relation between an instrument and the activity associated with it, e.g. *hoe/to hoe*, *hammer/to hammer*, *motor/to motor*, *saw/to saw*. Similarly, place may be related to activity, e.g. *bank/to bank money*, *tree/to tree a raccoon*; and an entity may be related to an activity typical of the entity, e.g. *a hawk/the bird is hawking insects*, *a dog/to dog his steps*, *wolf/to wolf down his food*. One may also have a systematic relation between certain entities and activities of which the entities in question are the semantic goal, e.g. *fish/to fish*, and *bird/to go birding*.

*Related meanings of different terms*

While the same word may have quite different meanings, different words may have very closely related meanings. In fact, these meanings of different words are generally much more closely related than are the different meanings of a single word.<sup>4</sup> For example, the meaning of *run* in the sense of physical movement by an animate being is more closely related to the corresponding meanings of *walk*, *hop*, *skip*, *crawl*, and *jump* than it is to most of the other meanings of *run*, e.g. *he runs the office*, *a run on the bank*, *a run in her stockings*, *he lives up the run*.

*Types of relations between related meanings of different terms*

There are four principal ways in which the meanings of different semantic units may be related to one another: inclusion, overlapping, complementation, and contiguity.

*Inclusion*

In many instances the meaning of one word may be said to be included within the meaning of another. All poodles, for example, are dogs, and all dogs are animals. Thus the meaning of *poodle* can be said to be included in the meaning of *dog*, and the meaning of *dog* included in the meaning of *animal*. This relation may be diagrammatically represented by concentric circles (Figure 1).

A word such as *color* may be said to include *red*, and *red* in turn may include *vermilion*. One may also describe *walk* as being included within one of the meanings of *move*, and *amble* within the meaning of *walk*. Such inclusions of meaning, one within another, are extremely important in determining the significant

<sup>4</sup> It is natural that the different meanings of the same word are normally much further apart in meaning than are the related meanings of different words. In fact, if this were not the case, communication would be less efficient. We can tolerate slight differences of meaning between completely different symbols, but to have slight differences of meaning for different uses of the same symbol would produce a high probability of misunderstanding.

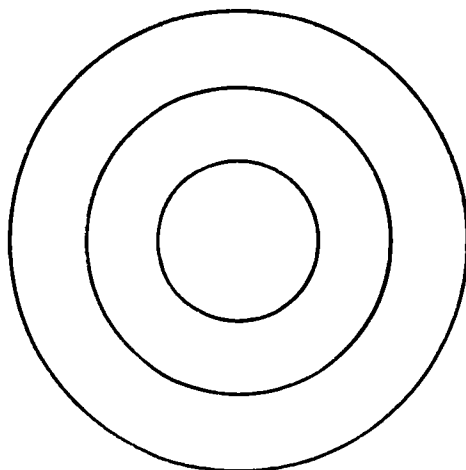


Figure 1

features of meaning, since each “included” meaning has all the features of the “including” meaning, that is, the immediately larger area of meaning, plus at least one more feature which serves to distinguish the more restricted area. For example, one of the meanings of *gobble* has the same features of meaning as *eat*, but it also has the added features of ‘hastiness’ and ‘in relatively large chunks’.<sup>5</sup> (Problem 5)

### *Overlapping*

One of the most obvious features of the relatedness of meanings is the tendency for meanings to overlap, e.g. *give/bestow*, *ill/sick*, *possess/own*, *answer/reply*. The words in each pair, normally

<sup>5</sup> It may seem contradictory to speak of the wider meaning (that is, the “including” meaning) having fewer semantic components than the “included” meaning. It would seem only logical that the bigger the area of meaning, the more components would be required. It is true that the wider the area of meaning the greater the number of referents, but also the fewer the number of semantic components. The larger the number of diverse entities within any class, the fewer are the number of features normally necessary to identify the basis for class membership.



called synonyms, are almost never substitutable one for the other in any and all contexts. That is to say, they are not identical in meaning, but they do overlap in that they can be substituted one for the other in at least certain contexts without significant changes in the conceptual content of an utterance. Most people will respond to the use of one term for another by remarking, "He's just saying the same thing but using different words". That does not rule out certain stylistic differences in the use of one term as over against another. *Bestow*, for example, is a much less frequent word than *give* and implies greater formality of expression.<sup>6</sup> (Problem 6)

The relation of overlapping may be diagrammatically represented, as in Figure 2.

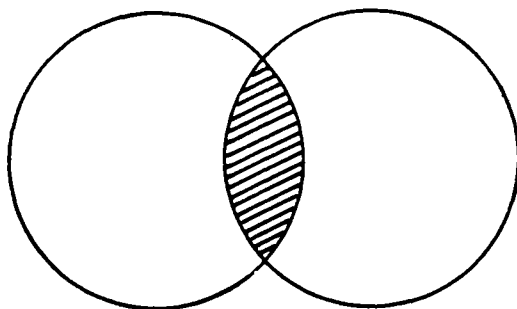


Figure 2

### *Complementation*

Meanings complementary to each other involve a number of shared features of meaning, but show certain marked contrasts, and often opposite meanings. In general there are three types of complementary relations: (1) opposites, (2) reversives, and (3) conversives.

Opposites are often spoken of as polar contrasts, since they involve distinct antithesis of qualities (e.g. *good/bad*, *high/low*,

<sup>6</sup> Stylistic differences have important semantic implications, but these implications are based on certain expectancies which communicators have with respect to various levels of usage. The differences in meaning are essentially emotive.

*beautiful/ugly*), quantities (e.g. *much/little*, *many/few*), states (e.g. *dead/alive*, *open/shut*, *married/single*), time (e.g. *now/then*), space (e.g. *here/there*, *this/that*), and movement (e.g. *go/come*, *enter/exit*).

Certain complementary meanings involve reversives of events, e.g. *tie/untie*, *alienate/reconcile*; others may be better described as conversives, e.g. *buy/sell*, *lend/borrow*. (Problem 7)

Because of the polar contrasts involved in so many aspects of these complementary meanings, the related structures may be diagrammatically represented, as in Figure 3.

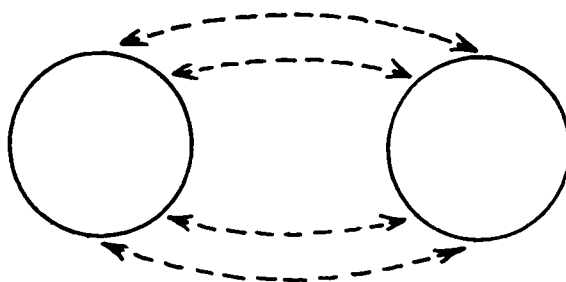


Figure 3

### *Contiguity*

For the analysis of the distinctive features, or components, of meaning, the relation of contiguity is decidedly the most important, since it represents the relations between closely related meanings occupying a well-defined, restricted semantic domain, and exhibiting certain well-marked contrasts. That is to say, each meaning is distinctly set off from other related meanings by at least one important feature. The related meanings of *walk*, *run*, *hop*, *skip*, and *crawl* constitute such a cluster of contiguous meanings. They all share the features of movement by an animate being, using the limbs; but the number of limbs, the order of movement, and the relation of the limbs to the supporting surface involve clearly definable contrasts.

It is important to note, however, that in speaking of a relation of contiguity, we are talking only about certain meanings of terms,

and not about the terms as such. The relation of contiguity does not apply to the words *walk*, *run*, *hop*, *skip*, and *crawl*, but only to the meanings of those words which are related, in the sense that they share certain common features, and hence constitute a single semantic domain.<sup>7</sup> (Problems 8 and 9) The relation of contiguity can be diagrammatically shown, as in Figure 4.

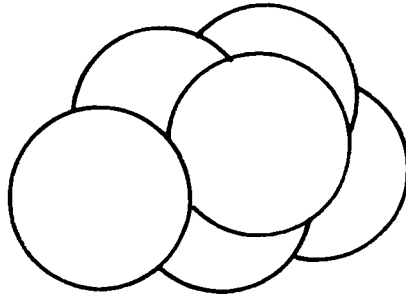


Figure 4

It would be a mistake to think that one can always describe easily the relations between related meanings. For some sets of meanings there may be no readily available terms with which one can talk about the differences. This is true, for example, of colors. We readily recognize that the colors *violet*, *blue*, *green*, *yellow*, *red*, etc. differ from one another, but we do not have the kind of metalanguage<sup>8</sup> with which we can easily speak about the differences. One could employ technical terminology based on the wavelengths of different colors, but this does not represent the manner in which we normally conceive of color differences.

<sup>7</sup> A semantic domain consists of any set of meanings which share a significant semantic feature in common. Accordingly, for any language there are hundreds of structurally relevant semantic domains; some very small, involving only a few closely related meanings, and others very large, including hundreds of meanings. The nature and relevance of domains are discussed extensively in Chapter 6.

<sup>8</sup> A metalanguage is a part of any language which can be used to speak about aspects of the language itself. For example, terms such as *noun*, *verb*, *adjective*, etc. are part of the grammatical metalanguage. But for colors there is no readily available set of terms useful in discussing distinctions.

Some semantic domains may appear to consist of closely related meanings, while in reality the referents are different in many ways. The related meanings of *cow*, *ewe*, and *mare* would seem to form a relatively contiguous semantic domain, since each of these has as a referent a female domesticated quadruped. But here the similarities appear to cease. There are scores of diversities in the referents which one might select as representing the distinctive differences. In reality each of these four meanings belongs primarily to other sets. For example, *cow* belongs to the set *cow*, *dam*, *bull*, *sire*, *calf*, *dogie*, *kine*, etc., while *mare* belongs to the set *mare*, *filly*, *horse*, *stallion*, *gelding*, *colt*, etc.

At other times the difficulty in distinguishing meanings is one of indeterminacy. What is the difference, for example, between the meanings of *bush* and *tree*? In general, one thinks in terms of size, but just when does a bush become a tree? A very small pine is still called a tree, even though it may be much smaller than a nearby bush. Trees are often defined as having a single trunk, in contrast with a spreading structure for bushes, but some trees also have multiple trunks, and in scientific classification certain trees are more closely related to certain bushes than they are to some other trees. (Problem 10)

A fourth problem involved in the description of related meanings is the fading out of sets of meanings. For example, the nuclear kinship terms such as *father*, *mother*, *son*, *daughter*, *uncle*, *aunt*, etc. operate with considerable precision. But when one begins to extend the structure to such designations as *great-great-grandfather*, *great-uncle*, and *second cousin*, not only do the distinctions get blurred but the system as well fades out. The fading out of the structure is not substantially different from what happens to the meanings of individual words. For color terms the central meaning (or color area) is quite readily identified. Almost all speakers will agree as to what a certain color should be called, but as one deals with colors in the peripheral areas there is greater indeterminacy, that is, greater hesitation in deciding on the appropriate designation and greater differences between speakers in assigning corresponding terms.

*Analytical vs. psychological validity in the components of meaning*

In trying to determine precisely the differences between related meanings, one is inevitably faced with the issue of analytical vs. psychological validity.<sup>9</sup> Are the distinctions described by semanticists the same distinctions speakers of the language associate with the terms in question? Obviously, there should be some significant parallels, but there need not be strict correspondences. The analyst seeks to determine those features of the meaning which are necessary and sufficient to predict language behavior. These are often, but not always, the same features which are in psychological focus with individual speakers. For example, almost all speakers of English describe the principal difference between the meanings of *run* and *walk* as being speed, since people can normally run faster than they can walk. When confronted, however, with the fact that some persons can walk faster than others can or do run and that stationary running involves no movement in space, they readily admit that speed is not the determining factor. Once the processes of running and walking have been carefully analyzed, speakers recognize that the distinctive componential difference is whether at successive moments neither foot is on the ground (as in running) or whether at all times one or the other foot is in touch with the ground (as in walking). What is psychologically focal is not, therefore, always analytically crucial. What is important, however, is that speakers of English basically agree as to the analytical distinction of relation to the ground or other supporting surface, which is more predictive of language behavior (that is, in the naming of certain types of events) than is the psychologically prominent feature of speed.<sup>10</sup>

Similar differences between analytical and psychological validity can be seen in different structures of language.<sup>11</sup> On the level of

<sup>9</sup> The subject of analytical validity and psychological awareness of componential features of meaning is discussed more fully in Chapter 7, pages 205-27.

<sup>10</sup> For discussions of analytical and psychological validity of semantic components, see Sanday 1968, George A. Miller 1972, and Wallace 1965.

<sup>11</sup> For a discussion of structures of which participants are unaware, see Haudricourt 1970.

phonology, for example, the average person tends to think of sounds as being "harsh" or "soft", "rough" or "smooth", "beautiful" or "ugly". These are his psychologically focal categories. Only after he has studied phonetics and phonemics does he find that his psychologically focal distinctions are not very useful in describing the distinctions between sounds and stating their patterns of occurrence. Nevertheless, the analytical distinctions between sounds are psychologically satisfying, in that they make possible far greater insight about language and broader generalizations about language behavior. The issue of analytical vs. psychological validity of componential features will be discussed more fully in Chapter 7, after fuller evidence for analytical distinctions has been dealt with.

### *Different approaches to meaning*

There are many different ways to approach the problems of meaning, since meaning is related to many different functions of language. In general, a primary distinction is made between what is sometimes called the "extensionalist" view of language, which focuses on how words are used in contexts (both linguistic and behavioral), and the corresponding "intensionalist" view of language, which concentrates on the conceptual structures associated with particular units.<sup>12</sup>

The extensionalist approach to semantics may have either of two extralinguistic foci: (1) the referents themselves, that is, the entities, events, abstracts, etc., which are referred to by certain units, or (2) the ways in which speakers behave in response to the use of such units. It is admittedly quite difficult to talk about a behavioral response to many terms, e.g. *nevertheless*, *relativity*, and *quasars*. It is necessary, therefore, to talk about behavioral predispositions, which are often quite similar to descriptions of conceptual structures.

<sup>12</sup> For discussions of the nature of meaning and the various approaches to semantic analysis, see Antal 1963, Bierwisch 1971, Chafe 1970, Coseriu 1970, Greimas 1966, Grice 1968, Ikegami 1967, Lyons 1963, Ullman 1962, Weinreich 1966, and Wotjak 1971.

The extensionalist view of language can, however, be based upon linguistic rather than extralinguistic contexts. Analyses can then be made of patterns of cooccurrence (i.e. what words tend to go together, *bread and butter*, *ham and eggs*, and *baked ham and roast beef*, but not *roast ham and baked beef*); substitution (i.e. what words may be substituted for what other words and in what contexts), e.g. speaking of the same object as *an animal*, *a dog*, *my pet*, and *Boomer*; and opposition (i.e. the exclusion of one term by the occurrence of another).

The intensionalist approach to semantic analysis focuses primarily upon the conceptual structures associated with certain linguistic units and predictive of how such units may be used in designating certain references.<sup>13</sup> This approach is not to be confused with the "mental image" approach to meaning, nor is it merely a technique for describing one's "feelings" about the meanings of words. As will be clearly seen from the following chapters, an intensionalist approach to semantic structure is based upon clearly defined and rigorous procedures of contrast and comparison.

Even an intensionalist approach to the meanings of certain semantic units can be undertaken only in terms of the contextual relations between meanings. This is especially true of the meanings of those words which are often spoken of as the logical words, e.g. *and*, *or*, *if*, *some*, *all*, *not*, etc. One must not only contrast the meanings of these terms with other meanings occurring in the same semantic domains, but also discover much of what they mean by analyzing how they contribute to the meaning of propositions; that is, how they are used in connection with other words — in phrases, clauses, and sentences — relations often called "syntagmatic".

Though for particular purposes one may choose to employ primarily an extensionalist or intensionalist approach to meaning, it would be a serious mistake to rule out or overlook the advantages that may accrue to an approach which employs complementary

<sup>13</sup> For a comprehensive analysis of cognitive elements in meaning, see Tyler 1969.

techniques. In fact, results obtained from an intensionalist approach should always be tested in extensionalist contexts, and vice versa.<sup>14</sup>

The analysis of meaning is further complicated by the diverse functions of language, of which the expressive, the informative, and the imperative are the most important. For such a sentence as *You'll be in Death Valley by tomorrow*, it is not easy to decide (apart from a complete context) whether the statement is designed primarily as information, to tell someone the distance he is likely to travel by the next day, or as a command, to order a person to go to a particular place by the next day, or as an expression of relief, to think that by the next day one's house guests will finally be a long way off.<sup>15</sup>

The problem of meaning vs. intent is highlighted in the distinction made by Grice<sup>16</sup> between the utterer's meaning and the timeless meaning. The utterer's meaning, which is normally a specific meaning related to a particular context, is often quite different from the timeless, or conventional, meaning. For example, the speaker who utters the sentence *John is playing golf this morning* may really want the receptor to understand that John has acquired so much status in the firm that he can take off almost any morning to play golf. A distinction must therefore be made between the so-called timeless, or conventional, meaning and the specific, or particular, intent.

It is also necessary to distinguish clearly between reference and meaning,<sup>17</sup> reference being the relation between a particular form and its specific reference, and meaning being the structural cluster of semantic components which make possible a number of different instances of reference. As has been frequently noted, the expressions

<sup>14</sup> For a further discussion of the relations between extensionalist approaches to meaning, see pages 195-196.

<sup>15</sup> For discussions of meaning in relation to locutionary contexts, see Fillmore 1971, Hymes 1962, Macnamara 1971, Antal 1963, Kuno 1972, R. Lakoff 1972, Oller 1972, Tanaka 1972.

<sup>16</sup> See Grice 1968 for a discussion of the differences between utterer's meaning, sentence meaning, and word meaning.

<sup>17</sup> For an exposition of the distinctions between reference and meaning (Bezeichnung und Bedeutung), see Coseriu 1970.



*the morning star* and *the evening star* generally refer to the same object, but the meanings of the two phrases are certainly not the same. Similarly, I may use the expressions *Willard Cridland* and *my uncle* and refer to the same person, but the meanings of these two expressions are not the same. While *Willard Cridland* can refer properly to only one person, the phrase *my uncle* can designate several different persons who are the brothers of my father or mother or the husbands of sisters of my father or mother. Even though *Willard Cridland* is a proper name, and supposedly possesses only reference and not meaning, it does exhibit certain classificatory elements of meaning, for in English *Willard* is a name for males, and hence the expression *Willard Cridland* carries a meaningful feature of "maleness".

At this point only certain of these general aspects of meaning are being introduced, since they are important for the subsequent discussions of procedures. They will be discussed more fully in Chapter 7, when the nature of meaning is treated in a more detailed manner on the basis of the analytical principles described in the intervening chapters.

### *Types of meaning*

Though this volume treats only the componential analysis of referential meanings, it is necessary to discuss the various types of meanings in order to appreciate somewhat more fully the limitations of this approach and the ways in which referential meanings are related to other types.<sup>18</sup>

Meanings may be most conveniently classified in terms of two intersecting sets of factors: cognitive vs. emotive and extralinguistic vs. intralinguistic, as diagrammatically represented in Figure 5.

Referential meaning is based on the relation between the lexical unit and the referent.<sup>19</sup> The referent itself may be called the

<sup>18</sup> This classification of types of meanings reflects primarily Lounsbury's treatment of varieties of meaning (1955).

<sup>19</sup> In saying that the referential meaning is *based on* the relation between the referent and the lexical unit, we are not saying that referential meaning

	<i>Cognitive</i>	<i>Emotive</i>
<i>Extralinguistic</i>	referential	emotive response to extralinguistic factors
<i>Intralinguistic</i>	grammatical	emotive response to intralinguistic factors

Figure 5

denotatum (plural denotata), but this denotatum is not the meaning. Not even the total list of all the denotata (which may be called technically the designatum) constitutes the meaning. The meaning consists of that particular structured bundle of cognitive features, associated with the lexical unit, which make possible the designation of all the denotata by the lexical unit in question. In other words, the meaning consists of that set of necessary and sufficient conceptual features which make it possible for the speaker to separate the referential potentiality of any one lexical unit from that of any other unit which might tend to occupy part of the same semantic domain. For fuller explanations of these more technical aspects of meaning, see Chapter 7. (Problem 11)

In speaking of meaning we tend to employ certain expressions which are technically incorrect, yet they are justified provided we understand what is really involved when we use the terminology. For example, we may say that a word *has* or *possesses* a particular meaning, while in reality a word is only a behavioral event and in a strict sense cannot be said to possess anything. Meaning must be related to the conceptions which the participants in a communicative event have or come to share and which they associate with a particular lexical unit.

As will become clearer in Chapter 7, much of what we are able to do in the analysis of meaning is dependent upon a feature of language which Charles Peirce called "the interpretant".<sup>20</sup> That is to say, language consists not merely of symbols and arrangements of symbols; it also possesses the capacity to define its own meaning by employing paraphrases which can more explicitly

consists of this relation. That would be only the reference of a lexical unit, not its meaning.

<sup>20</sup> See Peirce 1934 and Jakobson 1972.

designate the underlying semantic features. This potentiality for internal explication (that is, internal to the language structure) is basic to all paraphrase and definition.

The referential meaning based on cognitive, extralinguistic factors is not to be regarded as applying exclusively or even primarily to single words, even though this level of structure is the primary object of our analysis. Any lexical unit may constitute a semantic unit. Referential meanings relate to all levels, from bound morphemes, e.g. the *re-* in *retake*, *reinstitute*, and *redeploy* and the *-ly* in *friendly* and *kingly*, to units of entire discourses. *The Castle* by Kafka, *Macbeth* by Shakespeare, and *The Brothers Karamazov* by Dostoevsky have meanings as total units, and the various thematic units of such texts also have referential meanings. Furthermore, such pieces of literature have several different levels of meaning, and ultimately the referential structures of these meanings are amenable to componential analysis.<sup>21</sup>

Grammatical meaning, which is beyond the scope of this text, involves the relations between symbols and between sets of symbols, including both primary and secondary configurations.<sup>22</sup> The primary configurations involve (1) the relations between events and the entities which participate in these events, the so-called "case relations,"<sup>23</sup> e.g. actor-action (e.g. *John ran*), action-affected (e.g. *hit the dog*), action-instrument (e.g. *hit [it] with a hammer*), action-recipient (e.g. *gave her [money]*), action-content (e.g. *said he would go*), and comitative (e.g. *walked with her*); (2) qualifica-

<sup>21</sup> For discussions of the semantic factors involved in the analysis of discourse, see Bellert 1970, Bremond 1972, De Ryck-Tasmowski 1972, Harweg 1972, Hendricks 1972, Kummer 1972, Lecointre and le Galliot 1971, Longacre 1968 and 1970, Mathiot 1972, Pak 1972, Petöfi 1971a and 1971c, Rayfield 1972, Stempel 1971, and Żółkiewski 1972.

<sup>22</sup> For discussions of grammatical meaning, in terms of the meaning of syntactic structures, see Abraham and Kiefer 1966, Bolinger 1967, Chafe 1967, 1968, 1970, 1971, Chomsky 1971, Coseriu 1970, Fillmore 1968, Fraser 1970, Halliday 1961, 1963, 1968, Hasegawa 1972, Hope 1971, Jakobson 1959, Katz 1971, G. Lakoff 1971, Leech 1970, McCawley 1968, Newman 1954, Newmeyer 1970, and Seiler 1970.

<sup>23</sup> For treatments of "case" relations, see Anderson 1971, Calbert 1971, Fillmore 1967, and Jakobson 1936.

tions of entities, events, and abstracts, as (a) descriptions (e.g. *the boy is good* or *good boy*), (b) classifications (e.g. *John is a professor*), and (c) as identifications (e.g. *John is my father*), and (3) relation and axes of these relations, with prepositions and conjunctions serving as relations and the remaining portions serving as axes (e.g. *by John, at home, since he came, although small*).<sup>24</sup> The secondary configurations are those involving combinations of events and sets of events, from the interkernel level to the most inclusive discourse level.

Considerable confusion has existed in the descriptions of grammatical meaning, since no clear distinction has been made between the meaning of the relation between linguistic units and the class meaning of the combination. For example, in the expressions *the boy is good* and *the good boy*, the attributive *good* is related to *boy* as a descriptive qualifier in both instances; hence the grammatical meaning of the relation is the same in both cases. However, the class meanings of the two expressions are quite different, since the first is a complete utterance and the second is only a topic.<sup>25</sup>

The emotive meanings of expressions are based upon the relation of a semantic unit to the emotive response of the participants in the communicative act,<sup>26</sup> but one must clearly distinguish between the emotive response to the referential content and the emotive response to the formal features of the discourse. For example, one may respond negatively to certain extralinguistic factors of the referential content; that is to say, one may regard the theme of some communication as distressing, vulgar, uncouth, pedantic, etc., but appreciate the adept manner in which the theme is treated. Or one may react strongly against the stylistic aspects of a communication, while emotionally favoring the theme.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> For analyses of the meanings involved in primary and secondary configurations, see Nida 1974, Chapters 4 and 5.

<sup>25</sup> For important discussions of this often neglected concept of class meaning, see Bloomfield 1933, pp. 202-205, 247-251, and 266-268.

<sup>26</sup> See Morris 1964 for a discussion of various types of meaning and for the relation of emotive meanings to other types. His analysis of Osgood's profiles of meaning (1957) is especially useful.

<sup>27</sup> See also Nida and Taber 1969, pp. 91-98.