

SEMANTICS

1. The following sentences are either tautologies [T] (aka 'analytically true'), contradictions [C], or situationally true or false [S]. Label accordingly.

- a. Queens are monarchs.
- b. Kings are female.
- c. Kings are poor.
- d. Queens are ugly.
- e. Queens are mothers.
- f. Kings are mothers.
- g. Dogs are four-legged.
- h. Cats are felines.
- i. Cats are stupid.
- j. Dogs are carnivores.
- k. George Washington is George Washington.
- l. George Washington is the first president.
- m. George Washington is male.
- n. Uncles are male. My aunt is a man.
- o. My brother is a witch.
- p. My sister is an only child.
- q. The evening star isn't the evening star.
- r. The evening star isn't Venus.
- s. Babies are adults.
- t. Babies can lift one ton.
- u. Puppies are human.
- v. My bachelor friends are all married.
- w. My bachelor friends are all lonely.
- x. Colorless ideas are green.

2. Of the NPs in bold face, which refer?

- a. Kim will bake **a cake** for his birthday party.
- b. Patty used to live in **Dublin**.
- c. He didn't see **anybody** on his hike.
- d. That party was **the bomb!**
- e. Last Monday, he got hit by **a bus**.
- f. Bill wants to marry **a Norwegian**.

3. Each of the following sentences is at least structurally ambiguous, and in some cases also lexically ambiguous. Think of paraphrases for all possible meanings.

- a. We laughed at the colorful ball.
- b. The police were urged to stop drinking by the fifth.
- c. I said I would file it on Thursday.
- d. I cannot recommend visiting professors too highly.
- e. For Sale: several old dresses from grandmother in beautiful condition.

4. Explain the semantic ambiguity of the following sentences.

- a. He waited by the bank.

- b. Is he really that kind?
- c. The proprietor of the fish store was the sole owner.
- d. The long drill was boring.
- e. When he got the clear title to the land, it was a good deed.
- f. It takes a good ruler to make a straight line.
- g. He saw that gasoline can explode.

5. For each group of words given as follows, state what semantic property or properties are shared by the (a) words and the (b) words, and what semantic property or properties distinguish the two classes.

- 1 - a. bachelor, man, son, paperboy, pope
b. bull, rooster, drake, ram
- 2 - a. table, stone, pencil, cup, house, ship, car
b. milk, alcohol, rice, soup, mud
- 3 - a. book, temple, mountain, road, tractor
b. idea, love, charity, sincerity, bravery, fear
- 4 - a. pine, elm, ash, weeping willow, sycamore
b. rose, dandelion, aster, tulip, daisy
- 5 - a. book, letter, encyclopedia, novel, notebook, dictionary
b. typewriter, pencil, ballpoint, crayon, quill, charcoal, chalk
- 6 - a. walk, run, skip, jump, hop, swim
b. fly, skate, ski, ride, cycle, canoe, hang-glide
- 7 - a. ask, tell, say, talk, converse
b. shout, whisper, mutter
- 8 - a. alive, asleep, dead, married, pregnant
b. tall, smart, interesting, bad, tired
- 9 - a. alleged, counterfeit, false, putative, accused
b. red, large, cheerful, pretty, sad

6. For each pair of antonyms below, decide whether they are complementary, gradable, or relational opposites.

- a. good.adj / bad.adj
- b. expensive.adj / cheap.adj
- c. parent.n / offspring.n
- d. beautiful.adj / ugly.adj
- e. false.adj / true.adj
- f. lessor.n / lessee.n
- g. pass.v / fail.v
- h. hot.adj / cold.adj
- i. legal.adj / illegal.adj
- j. larger.adj / smaller.adj
- k. poor.adj / rich.adj
- l. fast.adj / slow.adj

- m. asleep.adj / awake.adj
- n. husband.n / wife.n
- o. rude.adj / polite.adj

7. Identify the thematic roles of each NP in the following sentences, drawing from the following set: {AGENT, THEME, INSTRUMENT, SOURCE, GOAL, EXPERIENCER}

- a. Mary found a ball.
- b. The children ran from the playground to the wading pool.
- c. One of the women unlocked all of the doors with a paper clip.
- d. John melted the ice with a blowtorch.
- e. Harold looked for a cockroach.
- f. Harold saw a cockroach.
- g. Harold screamed.
- h. The ice melted.
- i. With a telescope, the boy saw the man.
- j. The farmer loaded hay onto the truck.
- k. The farmer loaded the hay with a pitchfork.
- l. The hay was loaded onto the truck by the farmer.
- m. Helen heard music coming out of the speaker.

8. For each set of senses below, how many different lemmas are represented?

- a. plant.n: living vegetal organism
- b. plant.n: machinery used in industry
- c. plant.n: something concealed so that its later discovery will implicate someone
- d. plant.n: Snooker. a position where the cue ball can pocket a ball by striking an intervening ball

- e. stay.n: the act of staying in a place
- f. stay.n: the suspension or postponement of a judicial sentence
- g. stay.n: Nautical. a rope or guy supporting a mast
- h. stay.n: anything that supports or steadies
- i. stay.n: a thin strip of metal, plastic, bone, etc. used to stiffen corsets

9. For each pair of words below, what is the lexical relation?

- a. safe.adj / secure.adj
- b. sick.adj / ill.adj
- c. strong.adj / weak.adj
- d. buyer.n / seller.n
- e. open.v / shut.v
- f. salt.n / pepper.n
- g. assemble.v / dismantle.v
- h. hot.adj / cold.adj
- i. car.n / tire.n
- j. move.v / amble.v
- k. freeze.v / frozen.adj

10. Describe the meaning relations between the verbs in bold (i.e. for each pair of verbs)

- a1. The high winds **raised** the water level.
- a2. The water level **rose**.
- b1. Bill **tried** to win the election.
- b2. Bill **managed** to win the election.
- c1. Harry **bought** the car from Sue.
- c2. Sue **sold** the car to Harry.

11. Categorize both the aktionsart of the verb and the sentence's aspect.

- a. We **reached** the summit at 2pm.
- b. I **knocked** for 5 minutes.
- c. Mom has been **painting** all afternoon.
- d. I **saw** right then that he didn't like my cat.
- e. I've been **writing** him for years.

ADDITIONAL / OPTIONAL

A. Ambiguity or vagueness? How many readings do you get, and how many are distinct?

- 1. Kim keeps complaining about her new case.
- 2. Harry tied the knot.
- 3. She can't bear children.
- 4. Bill uses the same computer as I do.
- 5. That woman is wearing my dress.

B. Try to define the following container words using meaning components. To start with, consider components such as material, purpose, and shape.

* jug, jar, pot, bottle, tub, can, glass, vase, urn, tank, tureen

C. Prototypes: consider the superordinate category FURNITURE. What are the basic level objects that belong to this category? Which items of furniture are more and which are less prototypical?

D. Context dependence: Whose home are we talking about? How do we know?

- a. When will you come home?
- b. When will you go home?
- c. Sheila went home yesterday.
- d. Sheila went home with Schwarz yesterday.
- e. Sheila came home yesterday.
- f. I took some documents home last night.
- g. Pat took Kim home after the party.
- h. Bill took Sue home with him after the party.