pragmatics, and **semiotics**. Taken together, these correspond roughly to 'matters pertaining to meaning as conveyed through language'. There is inevitably some overlap with meaning-related aspects of neighbouring areas such as sociolinguistics and stylistics, but this has been kept to a minimum.

Semiotics: This is the study of signs in general. It covers all types of sign – visual, auditory, gestural, olfactory, and so on – whether produced by animals or humans. The entries in this book are confined to aspects of semiotics relevant to human language.

Semantics: The major division in treatments of linguistic meaning is between semantics and pragmatics (although the term *semantics* also sometimes has a general sense which covers both). Unfortunately, there are no fully agreed definitions of the two fields. But there are conventions about what semantics books usually contain and what pragmatics books usually contain. (Having said that, there seems to be a tendency these days for pragmatics to creep more and more often into semantics textbooks. It is, in fact, difficult to keep the two apart.) A very rough working distinction is that semantics is concerned with the stable meaning resources of language-as-a-system and pragmatics with the use of that system for communicating, on particular occasions and in particular contexts. But that characterisation leaves a number of disagreements unresolved.

The bulk of the content of a typical semantics textbook will fall under either **grammatical semantics** – that is, meaning conveyed by grammatical means, such as *Bill saw Pete* vs *Pete saw Bill*, or *Pete saw Bill* vs *Pete will see Bill* – or **lexical semantics**, which deals with the meanings of words. **Historical/diachronic semantics**, which deals with the ways in which meanings change over time, may also be included (but less often). Various approaches to meaning may be adopted: **formal semantics** approaches aim to explain and

describe meanings using the tools of logic, **componential semantics** approaches try to account for complex meanings as being built up out of a limited number of semantic building blocks, and **cognitive semantics** approaches treat meanings as 'things in the mind', that is as concepts. All these topics are represented in the Glossary.

Pragmatics: The central topics of linguistic pragmatics are those aspects of meaning which are dependent on context. Two are of particular importance. The first type go under the name of *conversational implicature*. This refers to meanings which a speaker intends to convey, but does not explicitly express:

Pete: Coming down to the pub tonight?
Bill: I've got to finish a piece of work.

Bill's reply will normally be taken to indicate that he is not free to go to the pub, even though he does not actually say that. The second type of context-dependent meaning concerns expressions which designate different things, places, or times in the world, in different contexts: *this table*, *over there*, *last night*. The general term for identifying the things in the world that a bit of language is about is **reference**, and the mechanism whereby it is achieved, using the speaker as a reference point, is called **deixis**.

An important part of language in use, and therefore of pragmatics, is what people are actually doing with language when they speak; whether they are informing, criticising, blaming, warning, congratulating, christening a baby, and so on. This is the topic of **speech acts**. Other topics covered by pragmatics are politeness as expressed linguistically and **conversational analysis**, which deals with the way conversations are structured.

Theoretical bias
On all topics, there are a number of different theoretical

3. Their main function is to articulate the grammatical structure of a sentence, and while most of them can be said to carry meaning, their meanings are typically basic and very general (see under **grammatical meaning**).

(Compare **open set items**.)

cognitive linguistics   An approach to the study of language structure and linguistic behaviour that has developed mainly since the 1980s. Underlying this approach are a number of basic assumptions. The first is that language has evolved for the purpose of conveying meaning, and so all its structures, whether semantic, syntactic, or phonological, should be related to this function. The second is that linguistic abilities are embedded in, and are inseparable from, general cognitive abilities, there being no autonomous portion of the brain specialised for language. A consequence of this for semantics is that no principled distinction can be drawn between linguistic meaning and general knowledge. The third assumption is that meaning is conceptual in nature and involves shaping or imposing form on conceptual and perceptual raw material in specific ways. Cognitive linguists maintain that a truth-conditional approach cannot give an adequate account of meaning. Cognitive linguistics has close links with cognitive psychology, drawing particularly on work on the structure and nature of concepts. Two scholars have been especially influential in developing this approach: Lakoff and Langacker.

coherence   see under **cohesion vs coherence**

cohesion vs coherence   These are types of connectedness which distinguish texts from random collections of

ship between *dead* and *alive* only appears if what they are applied to belongs to the appropriate domain, in this case, the domain of organisms. For instance, *The table is not alive* does not entail *The table is dead*. Other examples of complementaries are: *open (adj.): shut (adj.), true: false, continue V-ing: stop V-ing*.

complements   see under **semantic heads**

compositional expressions   see under **compositionality (principle of)**

compositionality (principle of)   The principle of compositionality states that the meaning of a complex expression is a compositional function of the meanings of its parts. That is to say, we work out the meaning of an expression containing more than one meaningful element by combining the meanings of its constituents. So, to get the meaning of, say, *The cat ate the fish*, we add together the meanings of the individual items:
'The cat ate the fish' = 'the' + 'cat' + 'ate' + 'the' + 'fish'
The appropriate way of combining the meanings is given by the syntax. One way or another, this must be true in general terms otherwise we would have to learn the meanings of all multi-word expressions separately. However, not all expressions of a language conform to this principle. Those that do are described as 'compositional'; those that do not are described as 'non-compositional' or 'semantically opaque'. Semantic opacity (which is a matter of degree) is a prototypical characteristic of **idioms**.

concepts, conceptual categories   To a first approximation, conceptual categories are classes of entities in the world, like DOG, CHAIR, DICTATORSHIP (we must interpret 'entity' in the broadest sense, to include properties like

His progress has been a bit slow, but I think he's now got where he wants to be.
We've come a long way together, you and I, and we've overcome many obstacles.
She has come to a crossroads in her life.
I want to put my affairs in order: I'm getting near the end of the road.

conceptual semantics   A variety of componential semantics (see under **semantic components**) associated with the linguist Jackendoff. Jackendoff holds that meanings are essentially conceptual in nature, and that the meanings of sentences are conceptual complexes built up out of basic conceptual components. His system is particularly concerned with the mapping between syntactic structures and conceptual structures. He utilises a set of universal basic ontological categories, which includes such items as EVENT, STATE, OBJECT, PATH, PLACE, and PROPERTY. Many of these categories can be sub-divided using basic semantic features. For instance, OBJECTS (in the broad sense of 'material entities') can be sub-classified using the features [+/– INTERNAL STRUCTURE] and [+/– BOUNDED]:

count nouns: individuals
(e.g. *chair, dog, house*)
                    [+BOUNDED][–INTERNAL STRUCTURE]
collective nouns: groups
(e.g. *team, family*)
                    [+BOUNDED][+INTERNAL STRUCTURE]
mass nouns: substances
(e.g. *milk, glass*)
                    [–BOUNDED][–INTERNAL STRUCTURE]
plural nouns: aggregates
(e.g. *chairs, dogs*)
                    [–BOUNDED][+INTERNAL STRUCTURE]

The following example illustrates the semantic analysis of a sentence in this system:

Bill went into the house
syntactic analysis: [s [NP Bill] [VP [V went] [PP [P into] [NP the house]]]]
semantic analysis: [EVENT GO ([THING BILL], [PATH TO ([PLACE IN ([THING HOUSE])])])]

concrete vs abstract   Roughly speaking, *concrete* in semantics refers to whatever can be seen, heard, tasted, smelled, touched, or felt directly. Whatever has an indirect relation to sensory experience is *abstract*. So, a chair is concrete, but the rate of inflation is abstract; to kick someone is a concrete act, but to excommunicate them is an abstract act; the property of being red is concrete, but that of being illegal is abstract.

connotation   This has several different meanings:

1. In everyday language (often used in the plural) it means little more than 'associations': *For many Americans, the term 'liberal' has negative connotations.*

2. In a more technical use it refers to non-truth-conditional aspects of meaning. These may involve expressive features, such as the derogatory nature of *hovel* or *slum*, or register allegiance, such as the difference in formality between *pass away* and *kick the bucket*. They may also be features which are characteristic, but not logically necessary, like the barking of dogs.

3. It is sometimes used in a way equivalent to **intension**: the word *dog* may be said to denote the class of dogs, but connote the property of 'dogness'.

> The government has acted to maintain the price of oil.
> The government has allowed the price of oil to fall.
> The price of oil has fallen.

foregrounding (sometimes called 'highlighting')   There are various linguistic devices for increasing the **salience** of part of an utterance. One obvious device is to pronounce it with emphatic stress:

> PETE did the washing up yesterday.
> Pete did THE WASHING UP yesterday.
> Pete did the washing up YESTERDAY.

(Notice that these different forms not only highlight different items, but also introduce different **presuppositions**. Foregrounding can also be achieved grammatically:

> It was Pete who did the washing up yesterday.
> It was yesterday that Pete did the washing up.
> What Pete did yesterday was the washing up.
> It was the washing up that Pete did yesterday.

Structures like those illustrated above are called 'focusing devices', and the foregrounded part of the utterance is called the 'focus'.

formal role   see under **qualia roles**

formal semantics   This is an approach to semantics which aims to model natural language meanings and their properties by means of a system (or systems) of logic. See under **propositional calculus, predicate calculus, Montague semantics**.

frame semantics   This is a theory of meaning which holds that word meanings can only be properly understood

```
                                    body (1)
              ┌──────────┬────────────┼────────────┐
         body (2) 'trunk'   head         arm          leg
                          ┌──┼──┐                   ┌──┼──┐
                        nose jaw forehead        thigh calf  foot
                                                            ┌──┼──┐
                                                          sole heel toe
```
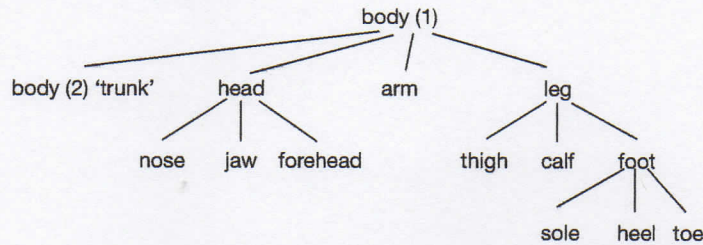
Diagram 2

The two occurrences of *body* in Diagram 2 exemplify 'auto-meronymy'. The levels in a part-whole hierarchy tend to be less significant than those in a taxonomy.

lexical meaning   This is usually contrasted with **grammatical meaning**. It refers to the meaning of full lexical items such as nouns, verbs, and adjectives, which is typically richer and more complex than the meaning carried by grammatical elements such as affixes, prepositions, conjunctions, and so on.

lexical semantics   The systematic study of meaning-related properties of words. Exactly what is included in the field is likely to vary from scholar to scholar, but central topics include: how best to specify the meaning of a word; **paradigmatic** relations of meaning such as **synonymy**, **antonymy**, and **hyponymy**; **syntagmatic** relations of meaning, including **selectional restrictions**; structures in the lexicon such as **taxonomic hierarchies**; change of word meaning over time; and processes of meaning extension, such as **metaphor** and **metonymy**. Lexical semantics is usually contrasted with grammatical semantics, and may exclude aspects of meaning treated under **pragmatics**.

terms'. Natural kind terms behave in some ways like proper names, and according to one influential theory their meanings are acquired in a similar way. For two people to communicate successfully using nominal kind terms they have to have the same notion of what the terms refer to. If one person uses *bachelor* to mean 'unmarried man' and another person uses it to mean 'drunkard', they will have trouble communicating. This is not the same with proper names. Suppose a number of people are introduced to someone called Pete. Some think Pete is an angel, some an android, some a 'normal' human male. These different notions do not prevent *Pete* being used by members of the group to refer successfully. Natural kind terms are similar. We might be inclined to say, for instance, that *(common) salt* means 'sodium chloride'. However, many people use the term *salt* perfectly successfully without knowing anything about its chemical nature, and some may have mistaken ideas. In some ways it would be more revealing to say that *salt* means 'the stuff we conventionally call *salt*', just as *Pete* is 'the person we call *Pete*'. (See under **possible world semantics** for natural kind terms as **rigid designators**.)

Natural Semantic Metalanguage This is a system of componential semantics especially associated with Wierzbicka. It utilises what is intended to be a universal set of semantic **primes** derived from the study of as wide a range of languages as possible. It claims that all aspects of meaning can be described in terms of a surprisingly small set of primes (originally only eleven, but the list has been somewhat extended since), all of which can be expressed linguistically. The following is a recent list of primes:

substantives	[I], [YOU], [SOMEONE], [SOMETHING], [PEOPLE]
determiners	[THIS], [THE SAME], [OTHER], [SOME]
augmentor	[MORE]
quantifiers	[MORE], [TWO], [MANY, MUCH], [ALL]
mental predicates	[THINK], [KNOW], [WANT], [FEEL], [SEE], [HEAR]
non-mental predicates	[MOVE], [THERE IS], [(BE) ALIVE]
speech	[SAY]
actions and events	[DO], [HAPPEN]
evaluators	[GOOD], [BAD]
descriptors	[BIG], [SMALL]
time	[WHEN], [BEFORE], [AFTER], [A LONG TIME], [A SHORT TIME], [NOW]
space	[WHERE], [UNDER], [ABOVE], [FAR], [NEAR], [SIDE], [INSIDE], [HERE]
partonomy	[PART (OF)]
taxonomy	[KIND]
metapredicates	[NO], [CAN], [VERY]
interclausal linkers	[IF], [BECAUSE], [LIKE]
imagination and possibility	[IF ... WOULD], [MAYBE]
words	[WORD]

The following is a typical analysis (from Wierzbicka 1996):

X feels frustrated:
X feels something
sometimes a person feels something like this:
    I want to do something

> I can do it
> after this, this person thinks something like this:
>   I can't do it
> this person feels something bad because of this
> X feels like this

Unlike many componential analyses, a Wierzbickan analysis does not in general allow logical or relational properties to be inferred.

natural vs conventional signs   Conventional signs are those which are established for communicative use in some community and which have to be specially learned (and often taught). Linguistic signs are obvious examples; so are traffic signs and the like. There are two interpretations of 'natural' in respect to signs. According to one interpretation, natural signs are based on causal connections in the natural world. In this sense we say that smoke is a sign of fire and dark clouds are a sign of rain. According to another interpretation, natural signs are signs produced by communicating beings that do not have to be learned but are instinctive, like animal cries and human signs such as smiling, weeping, and gasping.

near-synonymy   see under **synonymy**

negation   Negating a proposition has the effect of reversing its truth value. So, to take a simple case, if 'Pete is here' is false, then 'Pete is not here' is true, and if 'Pete is here' is true, then 'Pete is not here' is false. In more complex cases, the question of the **scope** of the negative can arise, as in 'Pete did not go to town and buy wine'. This means that 'Pete went to town and bought wine' is false. But this could be because (a) Pete did not go to town (but still bought wine), (b) he went to town but did not buy wine,

cates intimacy/familiarity or an informal situation (or both). (The rules are quite subtle – the foregoing is a first approximation.) English does not use T/V pronouns, but, as in many languages, politeness enters into the choice of forms of address, such as *Pete*, *Smith*, *Mr Smith*, *Professor Smith*, *Sir Peter*, and so on.

polysemy A word which has more than one distinct, established **sense** is said to be polysemous (or to show polysemy). To be considered as belonging to the same word, multiple senses must be felt by native speakers to be related in some way. (Unrelated senses associated with the same word-form, such as 'side of river' and 'financial institution' associated with *bank*, exemplify **homonymy**, and are usually treated as separate words that just happen to be associated with the same form.) There are a number of relationships which may hold between polysemous senses. For instance, they may be related by **hyponymy**, as in the case of *drink* ('imbibe liquid' and 'imbibe alcoholic beverage') or *dog* ('canine animal' and 'male canine animal'). Several polysemous relations involve a contrast between **literal** and **figurative** meanings of a word. This may be **metaphorical**, as in *position* ('location in space', 'opinion on some controversial issue', and 'professional post within an organisation'), or it may be **metonymic**, as in *wheels* ('revolving parts of a mechanism in contact with ground' and 'car'), or it may involve **hyperbole**, as in *fantastic* ('so extreme as to challenge belief' and 'a generalised term of approval') (from *Longman Dictionary of the English Language*). Dictionaries usually treat homonymy and polysemy differently: homonymous readings are given separate main headings, while polysemous readings are typically distinguished by means of numbers under a single main heading. Some dictionaries make the dis-

tinction between homonymy and polysemy on etymo-
logical grounds, that is to say, meanings which have the
same etymological origin are considered to be poly-
semous, even if modern speakers can intuit no relation
between them, as in the case of *battery* ('infliction of
blows', 'set of similar or connected cells'), both of which
derive from the French *batterie*, while meanings which
are usually felt to be related are treated as homonymy if
they have different etymological origins, as in the case
of *ear* ('organ of hearing' and 'grain of corn on stalk'). It
should be pointed out that although the distinction
between homonymy and polysemy is clear enough in
extreme cases, the boundary between them is not very
well defined. Not only is there a continuous scale of
relatedness, but different speakers vary in their sen-
sitivity to relationships.

possible world semantics   This is an approach to the seman-
tic interpretation of logical formulae in certain systems
of formal semantics, in particular those like the so-called
Montague semantics that are based on **intensional** logic.
The basic idea is that the actual world (in the broadest
sense of everything existing) is only one of an infinite
number of conceivable alternative worlds which differ in
at least one respect from the actual world. Some possible
worlds are very close to the actual world. For instance,
there is a possible world identical to the actual world
except that I did not mis-type the currant sentence.
Others differ in major respects: for instance, there is one
in which Napoleon was victorious at Waterloo. Others
are hugely different, where, for instance, our galaxy does
not exist. The following examples give a very brief idea
of the sort of uses made of the concept of possible worlds
(for a fuller understanding, more advanced works need
to be consulted).

2. Frequency of mention: if the responses of a large number of subjects in the above experiment are combined, it is found that the overall frequency of mention of a member of a category is correlated with its goodness-of-exemplar rating.

3. Priming: in **priming** experiments, the prior presentation of the category name speeds up recognition of all category members, but the effect is greatest for the prototype of the category. Hence, a prior presentation of *fruit* will speed up recognition of *apple* more than it will the recognition of, say, *date*.

4. Verification time: if subjects are presented with two names and have to say as quickly as possible whether or not the first is a member of the category represented by the other, responses are fastest if the first item is the prototype of the category. (For instance, subjects will answer 'Yes' more quickly to *apple: fruit* than to *date: fruit*.)

These effects are taken to show that goodness-of-exemplar ratings measure a psychologically significant characteristic of concepts.

prototype theory   This is a theory about the nature and structure of **concepts**, one of several proposals aimed at remedying the shortcomings of the **classical theory** of concepts (see also **exemplar theory**, the '**theory theory**'). The basic idea is that a concept is centred round a representation of an ideal example, or prototype. On this view, whether something belongs to a category and, if so, how central it is, are determined by its degree of resemblance to the prototype. In most versions of prototype theory, the prototype is represented by a set of features reminiscent of those found in the classical theory. For instance, the concept BIRD might be represented by the

features [HAS FEATHERS], [HAS WINGS], [FLIES], [HAS TWO LEGS], [LAYS EGGS], [BUILDS A NEST], [SINGS], and so on. (This is sometimes described as a 'summary representation', because it does not contain details of individual examples.) The degree of resemblance of an item to the prototype is measured by the number of features it shares with the prototype. Some versions allow certain features to be more important than others. (Some prototype theorists interpret 'degree of resemblance to prototype' as 'degree of membership in the category'. On this interpretation, an ostrich would not be a full member of the category BIRD because it cannot fly.) The main differences between prototype theory and the classical theory are as follows:

1. The set of prototype features does not constitute a definition, as the features are not individually necessary. Membership of a category is determined by having a sufficient degree of resemblance to the category prototype, that is, by sharing a sufficient number of features. Many prototype theorists espouse the notion of **fuzzy boundaries,** believing that there is no sharp division between members and non-members of the kind entailed by the classical theory. Those who recognise boundaries define them as reaching a qualifying threshold of degree of resemblance.

2. Members of a category do not all have the same status: experimental subjects judge some members of a category to be 'better examples' (have a higher **goodness-of-exemplar rating**) than others. The classical theory offers no account of this.

3. The fact that not all features have to be satisfied means two members of a category may resemble the prototype in different ways and as a con-

sequence may have little resemblance to one another. This gives rise to the phenomenon of **family resemblance** as the unifying principle of category membership. (For more details see under **prototype effects.**)

psychological essentialism   see **essentialism (psychological)**

punctual   A punctual verb denotes an event that is thought of as happening in an instant: *The bomb exploded, Liz switched on the lights* (compare **durative**).

pun   A form of word-play in which two or more meanings of an expression are activated at the same time. Some puns involve **zeugma**: *He may well expire before his passport does.* But in other cases no actual anomaly is involved: *Some photographers decided to set up a focus group.* In some cases the ambiguous expression is repeated, as in Benjamin Franklin's famous example: *If we don't hang together, we'll hang separately.* Some puns involve different expressions with similar pronunciation, rather than two meanings associated with a single form: *That's a terrible cough you've got. Consumption be done about it?* (The second and fourth examples above were found at www.punoftheday.com)

pure vs impure deixis   A pure deictic element gives information only about the location of a referent relative to the speaker on some dimension, but gives no descriptive information. *Here* and *there* are pure deictics. Impure deictics convey additional descriptive information. For instance, *he* not only locates the referent relative to the speech event (i.e. is neither speaker nor addressee), but also indicates that the referent is singular and male.

times come to be derogatory, or at least express a negative judgement. One example of this is *interfere*, which originally meant simply 'intervene', without the negative overtones it now has. Another example is *typical* in *Isn't that just typical?* Historically, words referring to women have been particularly prone to pejoration: *mistress, madam, working girl*. Change in the opposite direction, known as amelioration, is somewhat rarer; perhaps the development of *queen* from an earlier form meaning simply 'woman' or 'wife' is an example, although this word has also undergone pejoration at various times. Another example is *sturdy*, which had a pejorative meaning of 'reckless, violent, obstinate', but now has a positive meaning.

6. Bleaching: This refers to a loss of meaning, as with, for example, *make* in *to make a phone call*, where the original meaning of 'construct' has virtually disappeared, leaving only something like 'do something'. The term also applies to a weakening of meaning, as with words such as *awful, terrible, fantastic*.

semantic components (also semantic features, semantic primes)   Supposed indivisible atoms of meaning which combine to form more complex meanings. An example of a complex meaning analysable into more basic semantic atoms is 'girl', which is built up out of the components [YOUNG] + [FEMALE] + [HUMAN]. Each of these components also participates in the meanings of other words:

'boy' = [YOUNG] + [MALE] + [HUMAN]
'man' = [ADULT] + [MALE] + [HUMAN]
'filly' = [YOUNG] + [FEMALE] + [HORSE]

Semantic components provide one way of formalising **sense relations**. Take the case of **hyponymy** as it relates to the words *animal*, *horse*, and *mare*. Suppose the meaning of *animal* is expressed as [ANIMAL], the meaning of *horse* as [EQUINE][ANIMAL], and that of *mare* as [FEMALE][EQUINE][ANIMAL] (or some equivalent decomposition). We can then give a general rule that a word W^1 is a hyponym of a second word W^2 if and only if all the components which define W^2 are included in the components defining W^1. Hence, if we define *filly* as [ANIMAL][EQUINE][FEMALE][YOUNG], then *filly* will be a hyponym of not only *mare*, but also of *horse* and *animal*. On this approach, an account of the structural relations within the vocabulary of a language requires a componential analysis of every word, together with a set of rules like the one just illustrated. A distinction is sometimes made between semantic components and semantic features, whereby a feature is a component which has been assigned a value of '+' or '−' (positive or negative). In this system, the notions 'male' and 'female' might be assigned to the same component, with 'male' being represented by means of the feature [+MALE] and 'female' by [−MALE]. The exact nature of semantic components, and their significance, depends heavily on the theory of which they form part. Typically, however, they are held to be restricted in number (far fewer than the number of possible word-meanings, for example), but able to combine in various ways to form a much larger number of complex meanings. The components do this in much the same way as a limited inventory of phonemes gives rise to a much larger number of word forms. They are also usually considered to be universal in the sense that they can be observed in all human languages; they are often claimed to be an inherent feature of the human conceptual system (see also

binarism, structural semantics, Natural Semantic Metalanguage).

semantic field   This term is sometimes used as an equivalent to **lexical field**. It can also be used to refer to a conceptual area, independently of how it is divided up lexically.

semantic heads   The semantic head of a construction is the part of the construction which determines the **selectional restrictions** (or preferences) of the whole construction. Take the sentence *The old tree jumped over the stream*, which most people will agree is anomalous. Can we locate the semantic clash? Perhaps it is between *old* and *jumped*? If so, we should be able to 'cure' the anomaly by substituting another adjective for *old*. However, this does not seem to be possible: *young*, *tall*, *shady*, and *sturdy* are all just as bad. Changing *tree*, on the other hand, can normalise the sentence: *The old man jumped over the stream*. This allows us to conclude that *tree* is one of the parties to the clash; a similar chain of reasoning will lead us to the conclusion that the other culprit is *jumped* (rather than *over the stream*). Hence *tree* is the semantic head of the construction *the old tree*, and *jumped* is the head of *jumped over the stream*. Constructions can be divided into 'head-modifier' constructions and 'head-complement' constructions. A full account of this distinction is not possible here, but, briefly, a modifier is always optional in the sense that it can always be omitted without making the construction ungrammatical. Typical head-modifier constructions are: adjective-noun (*ripe apples*), verb-adverb (*walk quickly*), and adverb-adjective (*very hot*). In the case of a head-complement construction, by contrast, there are always at least some instances where the complement cannot be omitted, or if it can, then the element is **latent**.

Typical head-complement constructions are: verb-object (*stroked the cat*) and preposition-object (*on the table*). The distinction between modifiers and complements has consequences for the direction of selectional preferences: modifiers select their heads, but heads select their modifiers (for the directionality of selection see under **selectional restrictions**).

semantic opacity   see under **compositionality**

semes and classemes   These are types of **semantic components** distinguished in certain versions of **structural semantics**. Semes are semantic units which serve to distinguish members of a particular **lexical field** from one another, but which have no currency outside the field. In the field of animals, for instance, the sense units which distinguish *cat*, *dog*, *horse*, and so on from one another ([FELINE], [CANINE], [EQUINE]) are semes. Classemes are sense units with very general meanings which participate in more than one field and which are frequently expressed grammatically. Examples are [ANIMATE], [INANIMATE], [MALE], [FEMALE].

semiotics   The general study of **signs** (which includes, but is not exhausted by, linguistic signs).

sense   The use of this word in linguistics is not consistent, and can be confusing. The following are the main uses.

> 1. According to one influential view, the sense of, say, a word, is constituted by its meaning relations with other words in the same language, rather than by its relation to things in the world. So, for instance, the sense of *dog* consists of a set of meaning relations, including the facts that it is a **hyponym** of

four minutes to enter.

B: I can do it in four minutes.

In (4), B's reply carries a number of weakish implicatures involving sexist and ageist prejudices that he could probably deny if challenged:

4. A: Who was driving?
    B: Some old woman. (Compare *An old lady*.)

structural semantics A branch of structural linguistics, which derives from the work of the Swiss scholar Saussure. His original ideas were further developed by later scholars and this resulted in different versions of structural semantics. The fundamental idea underlying structural semantics is that word meanings are basically relational; that is to say, a word's meaning is determined by its position in a network of semantic relations with other words in the same lexical field. Both **paradigmatic** and **syntagmatic** relations are relevant here (although some structural semanticists have emphasised one of these and some have emphasised the other). A 'lexical field' is a coherent subset of the vocabulary whose members are interlinked by paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations of **sense**. This approach to word meaning is sometimes referred to as **lexical field** theory. We may take *dog* as a concrete example. The meaning of *dog* is determined partly by its paradigmatic relations. For instance, it has *cat*, *mouse*, *camel*, and *rhinoceros* as **incompatibles**, *spaniel*, *Pekinese*, and *collie* as **hyponyms**, *tail*, *paw*, and *dewlap* as **meronyms**, and is itself a hyponym of *mammal*, *animal*, *living thing* and so on. (Fields can be nested within more inclusive fields.) Also relevant are its syntagmatic relations with words like *bark*, *whine*, and *growl*, to mention but a few. Or take the word *auburn*. An important part of the mean-

ing of this word is its syntagmatic relation with *hair*. But its paradigmatic relations are equally important: it is a member of a set of incompatible co-hyponyms including *ginger*, *black*, *white*, *brown*, *blonde*, and *grey*.

A lexical field divides up a conceptual field among its members. According to the strictest version of field theory, the conceptual field is exhaustively partitioned among the members of the lexical field, that is to say, there are no gaps; furthermore, the semantic value of any word is circumscribed by those of other words in the field. This has three important consequences. First, a word in a particular language that participates in a number of different lexical fields will have a different semantic value in each of them. Take the word *red* in English (in its 'colour' sense). This participates in at least three different lexical fields: a default field in which it contrasts with *orange*, *yellow*, *green*, *blue*, *purple*, *brown*, *black*, *white*, and *grey*; a field denoting types of wine, in which it contrasts with *white*, and *rosé*; and a field denoting hair colours, in which it contrasts with *black*, *white*, *brown*, *blonde*, *fair*, and *grey*. In the default field, the range of colours denoted by *red* is limited by the ranges of *purple*, *orange*, and *brown*. In the 'wine' field, *red* has only two contrasts, *white* and *rosé*. As a result, it covers a different range of colours, including, for instance, hues that in the default field would be labelled *purple* in the case of *red wine*, and *green* and *yellow* in the case of *white wine*. A second consequence arises from the fact that different languages may partition a particular conceptual field in different ways, and make a different number of distinctions; hence, there may be no translational equivalence between terms, or terms which may superficially appear to be equivalents actually have different values. For

instance, the conceptual field covered by the English words *hamlet, village, town,* and *city* is partitioned in French by *hameau, village, bourg,* and *ville.* However, with the possible exception of *hamlet* and *hameau,* there are no exact correspondences between the two languages. The English distinction between *town* and *city* is not lexically marked in French, while the French distinction between *village* and *bourg* is not made in English. (A *bourg* is a largish village, typically the main village in a commune, with a *mairie* (mayor's office) and a church. Most examples of *bourg* would be called villages by English speakers.) The third consequence is that a change in the part of a conceptual field covered by a word entails a change in the ranges of other words in the same field. An extension in the range of *red* in the direction of *orange* would cause a corresponding reduction in the range of *orange* and/or *purple.* A related consequence is that it is not possible to have a full grasp of one member of a field without also knowing the other members. One does not know fully what *horse* means unless one has a grasp of the types of 'non-horse'. A structuralist approach to semantics may take a **componential** or a **non-componential** direction (based, for instance, on **meaning postulates**). However, in both cases an analysis must be justified in terms of the structural relations within a given vocabulary.

subjunctive mood   see under **mood**

sub terms   see under **polar antonyms**

subordinate (level of categorisation)   Conceptual categories at the subordinate level are sub-divisions of **basic-level categories.** For instance, the category DOG is subdivided