Semantics and Pragmatics 2019 Solved Short Questions

1. **What is the difference between temporal and spatial deixis ?**
2. **Ans. Spatial deixis** concerns itself with the spatial locations relevant to an he definition of gritty is "having a rough texture." So, in a literal sense (denotation), we might say:

This sandpaper is *gritty*.

But, consider this sentence:

That side of town is pretty *gritty*.

In that sense, we're not saying that section of the city has a "rough texture" in a literal sense. Instead, we're saying it's a tough neighborhood, perhaps with issues related to crime and poverty.

3. **What is meant by an OPAQUE CONTEXT ? (2019,2017)**

Ans. An **opaque context** is a linguistic context in which it is not always possible to substitute "co-referential" expressions (expressions referring to the same object) without altering the truth of sentences.

For example, "Lois believes x is a hero" is an opaque context because "Lois believes Superman is a hero" is true while "Lois believes Clark Kent is a hero" is false, even though 'Superman' and 'Clark Kent' are co-referential expressions.

4. **Is meaningfulness synonymous with informativeness. Briefly explain. (2019, 2017)**

Ans. Meaningfulness is not necessarily synonymous with informativeness as **meaningfulness** is the quality of having great value or significance, while **informativeness** serves to inform or to provide or disclose information. This information may or may not have value or significance.

5. **What is the difference between reference and sense ?**

Ans. The **reference** of a word is the relation between the linguistic expression and the entity in the real world to which it refers. In contrast to reference, **sense** is defined as its relations to other expressions in the language system. In other

words, the reference of a word is the object it means or indicates, whereas its sense is what the word expresses.

The classic example cited showing the distinction is the planet Venus. As a planet it has reference arbitrarily given the name *Venus*. It is often called the *morning star* when seen in the morning, and the *evening star* when seen in the evening. Thus, it has two senses, depending on the time of day the object is seen.

6. What is meant by co-text and range of reference ?

Ans. Co-text refers to the words surrounding a particular word or passage within a text that provide context and help to determine the meaning. For Example a key to a door, a key on a keyboard or a key to solve the problem The words door, keyboard, and the problem are co-text of the word " key".

A **range of reference** is a collection of all possible entities in the referential realm denoted by a lexical unit. For example, the range of reference of lexical unit "bat" is "a winged, nocturnal animal" and "a piece of sporting equipment used in baseball."

7. Explain the sentence in your own words : "every expression that has meaning has sense but not every expression has reference" ? (2019, 2017)

Ans. The **reference** of a word is the relation between the linguistic expression and the entity in the real world to which it refers. In contrast to reference, **sense** is defined as its relations to other expressions in the language system. Thus, there are words that have a sense, but no referents in the real world.

For example, the name "Odysseus" is intelligible, and therefore has a sense, even though there is no individual object (its reference) to which the name corresponds.

8. What is a referring expression ? (2019, 2017)

Ans. Referring expression is any expression used in an utterance to refer to something or someone, namely used with particular referent in the mind of the speaker.

For example, when I utter "Tom called me last night"; I have a particular person in my mind when I say 'Tom'. So, it is a referring expression.

9. What is the difference between extensions and referents ? (2019, 2017)

Ans. A **referent** is a person or thing to which a name, a linguistic expression or other symbol, refers. For example, in the sentence Mary saw me, the referent of the word Mary is the particular person called Mary who is being spoken of, while the referent of the word me is the person uttering the sentence.

Extension, on the other hand, indicates the range of applicability of a term or concept by naming the particular objects that it denotes. For example, the extension of the word "dog" is the set of all (past, present and future) dogs in the world: the set includes Fido, Rover, Lassie, Rex, and so on.

10. What is meant by prototypes ? (2019, 2017)

Ans. A prototype is a cognitive reference point or the proto-image of all representatives of the meaning of a word or of a category. Thus, a robin or a sparrow can be regarded as a prototype or a "good example" of the category bird, whereas a penguin or an ostrich is a rather "bad example" of this category.

11. What do you infer by cooperative principle ? (2019, 2017 b, 2015, 2015 b)

Ans. In conversation analysis, the cooperative principle is the assumption that participants in a conversation normally attempt to be informative, truthful, relevant, and clear. The concept was introduced by philosopher H. Paul Grice as he suggested that meaningful dialogue is characterized by cooperation.

12. Can different expressions have the same referent ? Give an example.

Ans. It is possible to use different noun phrases to refer to the same referent. The classic example for this is the fact that the expressions the morning star and the evening star both have the same referent, the planet Venus.

13. What is polysemy ?

Ans. Polysemy is the capacity for a word or phrase to have multiple related meanings. A polyseme is a word or phrase with different, but related senses.

English has many polysemous words. For example, the verb "to get" can mean "procure" (I'll get the drinks), "become" (she got scared), "understand" (I get it) etc.

14. Differentiate between definite noun phrase and indefinite noun phrase. (2019, 2017)

Ans. In linguistics, definiteness is a semantic feature of noun phrases, distinguishing between referents or senses that are identifiable in a given context (definite noun phrases) and those which are not (indefinite noun phrases).

In English, definiteness is usually marked by the selection of determiner. Certain determiners, such as a, an, many, and some, along with numbers (e.g., four items), typically mark a noun phrase as indefinite. Others, including the, that, and genitive noun phrases (e.g., my brother) typically mark the noun phrase as definite.

15. What is an anaphoric reference ?

Ans. Anaphoric reference occurs when a word or phrase refers to something mentioned earlier in the discourse.

Here's an example of anaphoric reference: *Michael went to the bank. He was annoyed because it was closed*. In this sentence, *he* refers to Michael and *it* refers to the bank.

16. Define degree of a predicate.

Ans. The degree of predicates is a number indicating the number of arguments it is normally understood to have in simple sentences.

For example, in the sentence, "*school is between mall and hospital"*, **between** is three-place predicate as it has three arguments : school, mall, hospital.

Similarly, **comfortable** in "*our campus is comfortable"* is one-place predicate as it has one argument : our campus.

Semantics and Pragmatics 2019 b Solved Short Questions

1. What is the difference between semantics and pragmatics ? (2019 b, 2016, 2015)

Ans. Although both semantics and pragmatics are two branches of linguistics that are related to the meaning of language, there is a major difference between the two. Semantics is involved with the meaning of words without considering the context whereas pragmatics analyses the meaning in relation to the relevant context.

2. Describe lexical and structural ambiguity.

Ans. Lexical ambiguity (semantic ambiguity**)** occurs when a word in a sentence has more than one possible meanings. Given below is an example of lexical ambiguity.

The sentence "Becky cannot bear children" can have two possible meanings due to the ambiguous nature of the word **bear.**

- Becky cannot give birth to children.
- Becky cannot tolerate children.

Structural ambiguity (syntactic ambiguity), on the other hand, occurs when a phrase or sentence has more than one underlying structure. Such a sentence can be interpreted in more than one way. Given below is an example of structural ambiguity.

The sentence "Laura hit the boy with a book" can have different meanings due to the structure of the sentence.

- Laura used the book to hit the boy.

- Laura hit the boy who was holding a booking.

3. Differentiate between intension and extension.

Ans. Intension refers to the logical or definitional conditions that specify the set of all possible things a word or phrase could describe, while **extension** refers to the set of all actual things the word or phrase describes.

For instance, the intensions of the word *dog* include properties such as "animal", "alive", and "organism", among others. Whereas, the extension of the word "dog" is the set of all (past, present and future) dogs in the world: the set includes Fido, Rover, Lassie, Rex, and so on.

4. How can prototype be differentiated from stereotype ?

Ans. A **prototype** is a cognitive reference point or the proto-image of all representatives of the meaning of a word or of a category. Thus, a robin or a sparrow can be regarded as a prototype or a "good example" of the category bird, whereas a penguin or an ostrich is a rather "bad example" of this category.

A **stereotype,** on the other hand, is a conventional, formulaic, and oversimplified conception, opinion, or image. For example, "girls should play with dolls and boys should play with trucks" is a gender stereotype.

5. Tell whether the following utterances are referring expressions or not.

a. The girl with an umbrella is waiting for the bus. (Yes)

b. A car in "John intends to buy a car. " (No)

6. What is the difference between icon and index ?

Ans. An **Icon** is a type of signifier that has a physical resemblance to the signified, the thing being represented. A photograph is a good example as it certainly resembles whatever it depicts.

An **Index**, on the other hand, shows evidence of what is being represented. A good example is using an image of smoke to indicate fire.

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7. **Is the Universe of Discourse in the following utterances, the real world or fictitious world:**
    a. **Grandmother to little boy: "If you don't sleep, the dragon will carry you away." (Fictitious world)**
    b. **Doctor to patient : "You are suffering from a deadly disorder. " (Real world)**

8. **Write the hyponyms of the following:**
    a. **Flower** (rose, sunflower)
    b. **Animal** (dog, horse)
    c. **Insect** (cockroach, cricket)
    d. **Tree** (pine tree, oak tree)

9. **What are descriptive synonyms and near synonyms ?**

Ans. Descriptive synonyms are the words that can be used in the same context without changing the truth-conditions of a sentence but are prevented by social taboos from being absolute synonyms. Examples of descriptive synonymy are: *fade, die, decease, nibble off, kick the bucke*t.

Near synonyms, on the other hand, are words, that are almost synonyms. They are distinguished from descriptive synonyms by the fact, that the connotations of the pairs are different and therefore they yield different truth conditions in a given context. For example,

Usama was freedom fighter.

Usama was a terrorist.

These sentences have different truth conditions, though they are referring to the same subject. The difference lies in the pragmatic or interpersonal connotations of the user.

10. **Do the following pairs have the same or nearly the same sense ?**
    a. **Bachelors prefer red heads / girls with red hairs are preferred by unmarried man. (Yes)**
    b. **He is standing at the bank of the river / he has an account at the bank. (No)**

11. What is performative hypothesis ?

Ans. The performative hypothesis is the hypothesis that states that every sentence is associated with an explicit illocutionary act or. is derived from a deep structure containing a performative verb.

For example, sentence (a) is derived from (b), or perhaps (c):

a) I'll write you next week.
b) I claim I'll write you next week
c) I promise I'll write you next week.

12. How do people tend to regularize their language while speaking ?

Ans. Regularization is a linguistic phenomenon observed in language acquisition, language development, and language change typified by the replacement of irregular forms in morphology or syntax by regular ones.

Examples are “gooses” instead of “geese” in child speech and replacement of the Middle English plural form for “cow”, “kine”, with “cows”.

13. What is implicature ? Write its types ?

Ans. An implicature is something the speaker suggests or implies with an utterance, even though it is not literally expressed. Take for example the following exchange:

A (to passer by): I am out of gas.

B: There is a gas station 'round the corner.

Here, B does not say, but implicates, that the gas station is open, because otherwise his utterance would not be relevant in the context.

There are two types of implicature : conventional implicature, conversational implicature.

14. Define entailment with example. (2019 b, 2017 b)

Ans. In pragmatics (linguistics), entailment is the relationship between two sentences where the truth of one requires the truth of the other.

For example, "Jim rides a bike to school every morning." entails "Jim can ride a bike." If the first sentence is true, then the second sentence must be true as well. That is, if Jim rides his bike to school every morning, then he must be able to ride a bike.

15. Defined deixis and point out deixis used in following sentences :

a. **The plane landed then.** (**then** is **temporal** deixis)
b. **It touched down there.** (**there** is **spatial** deixis)

Ans. In linguistics, deixis is the use of general words and phrases to refer to a specific time, place, or person in context, e.g., the words tomorrow, there, and they.

16. What is the difference between direct and indirect speech acts ?

Ans. An utterance is seen as a **direct speech act** when there is a direct relationship between the structure and the communicative function of the utterance. For example, if a speaker asks, "Would you like to meet me for coffee?" and the other replies, "No, I cannot meet you for coffee" The second speaker has used an direct speech act to reject the proposal.

In contrast, **indirect speech acts** happen if there is no relationship between the structure and the function of the utterance. For example, if a speaker asks, "Would you like to meet me for coffee?" and the other replies, "I have class." The second speaker has used an indirect speech act to reject the proposal.

Semantics and Pragmatics 2017 Solved Short Questions

1. What is the difference between sentence meaning and speaker meaning ?

Ans. There is often a divergence between the meaning of the linguistic expression a speaker uses (sentence meaning) and the meaning he intends to communicate by using it (speaker meaning).

For example, "Would you mind getting off my foot" is an inquiry about whether the hearer would mind doing something, but what the speaker means is "do that" ("get off my foot"). The use of language cannot be understood by considering only sentence meaning. Sentences are spoken in a context.

2. What is the difference between denotative and connotative meaning ? (2019,2017)

Ans. Denotation is the literal meaning of a word, whereas **connotation** is an indirect or implied meaning or feeling.

For example, consider the word "**gritty**". The definition of gritty is "having a rough texture." So, in a literal sense (denotation), we might say:

This sandpaper is *gritty*.

But, consider this sentence:

That side of town is pretty *gritty*.

In that sense, we're not saying that section of the city has a "rough texture" in a literal sense. Instead, we're saying it's a tough neighborhood, perhaps with issues related to crime and poverty.

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Ans. An **opaque context** is a linguistic context in which it is not always possible to substitute "co-referential" expressions (expressions referring to the same object) without altering the truth of sentences.

For example, "Lois believes x is a hero" is an opaque context because "Lois believes Superman is a hero" is true while "Lois believes Clark Kent is a hero" is false, even though 'Superman' and 'Clark Kent' are co-referential expressions.

4. Is meaningfulness synonymous with informativeness. Briefly explain. (2019, 2017)

Ans. Meaningfulness is not necessarily synonymous with informativeness as **meaningfulness** is the quality of having great value or significance, while **informativeness** serves to inform or to provide or disclose information. This information may or may not have value or significance.

5. What is the difference between sentence and utterance ?

Ans. The main difference between **sentence** and utterance is that the sentence coveys a complete meaning, either spoken or written, whereas **utterance** may or may not convey a complete meaning. Utterances exist only in the spoken form.

Here is an example of a sentence "*He went to school".* On the other hand, "*Well.. you know…. Errr*" is an example of an utterance.

6. What is a proposition ? (2017, 2015 b)

Ans. The term proposition refers to the language-independent core meaning of sentences which expresses the factuality of a given state of affairs. Thus, a proposition is the semantic kernel of a sentence that determines its truth conditions, independent of its syntactic form and lexical realization.

For example, when two speakers say the same thing by uttering different sentences, like in, '*get out of here*' and '*I'll have to ask you to leave*', there is some (non-linguistic) thing, **a proposition**, that each has said.

7. Explain the sentence in your own words : "every expression that has meaning has sense but not every expression has reference" ? (2019, 2017)

Ans. The **reference** of a word is the relation between the linguistic expression and the entity in the real world to which it refers. In contrast to reference, **sense** is defined as its relations to other expressions in the language system. Thus, there are words that have a sense, but no referents in the real world.

For example, the name "Odysseus" is intelligible, and therefore has a sense, even though there is no individual object (its reference) to which the name corresponds.

8. What is a referring expression ? (2019, 2017)

Ans. Referring expression is any expression used in an utterance to refer to something or someone, namely used with particular referent in the mind of the speaker.

For example, when I utter "Tom called me last night"; I have a particular person in my mind when I say 'Tom'. So, it is a referring expression.

9. What is the difference between extensions and referents ? (2019, 2017)

Ans. A **referent** is a person or thing to which a name, a linguistic expression or other symbol, refers. For example, in the sentence Mary saw me, the referent of the word Mary is the particular person called Mary who is being spoken of, while the referent of the word me is the person uttering the sentence.

Extension, on the other hand, indicates the range of applicability of a term or concept by naming the particular objects that it denotes. For example, the extension of the word "dog" is the set of all (past, present and future) dogs in the world: the set includes Fido, Rover, Lassie, Rex, and so on.

10. What is meant by prototypes ? (2019, 2017)

Ans. A prototype is a cognitive reference point or the proto-image of all representatives of the meaning of a word or of a category. Thus, a robin or a sparrow can be regarded as a prototype or a "good example" of the category bird, whereas a penguin or an ostrich is a rather "bad example" of this category.

11. What do you infer by an ambiguous sentence ?

Ans. An ambiguous sentence has two or more possible meanings within a single sentence or sequence of words. This can confuse the reader and make the meaning of the sentence unclear.

For example, The sentence "Becky cannot bear children" can have two possible meanings due to the ambiguous nature of the word **bear.**

- Becky cannot give birth to children.
- Becky cannot tolerate children.

12. What is performative utterance ?

Ans. In speech acts theory, performative utterances are sentences which not only describe a given reality, but also change the social reality they are describing.

For example, when Paul says "I promise to do the dishes" in an appropriate context then he thereby does not just say something, and in particular he does not describe what he is doing; rather, in making the utterance he performs the promise; since promising is an illocutionary act, the utterance is thus a performative utterance.

13. What is hyponymy ? (2017 a, 2017 b)

Ans. In linguistics, hyponym, also called a subtype or a subordinate term, is a term used to designate a particular member of a broader class. The phenomenon is known as Hyponymy.

For instance, daisy and rose are hyponyms of flower. Similarly, pigeon, crow, eagle and seagull are all hyponyms of bird.

14. Differentiate between definite noun phrase and indefinite noun phrase. (2019, 2017)

Ans. In linguistics, definiteness is a semantic feature of noun phrases, distinguishing between referents or senses that are identifiable in a given context (definite noun phrases) and those which are not (indefinite noun phrases). The prototypical definite noun phrase picks out a unique, familiar, specific referent.

In English, definiteness is usually marked by the selection of determiner. Certain determiners, such as a, an, many, and some, along with numbers (e.g., four items), typically mark an noun phrase as indefinite. Others, including the, that, and genitive noun phrases (e.g., my brother) typically mark the noun phrase as definite.

15. What is the theory of semantics-syntax interface ?

Ans. In linguistics, the syntax–semantics interface is the interaction between syntax and semantics. Its study encompasses phenomena that pertain to both syntax and semantics, with the goal of explaining correlations between form and meaning and to determine the extent to which the meaning of an expression depends on its syntactic properties and the extent to which its syntactic properties are a function of its meaning.

16. Define prediction as functional application.

Ans. Linguistic prediction is a phenomenon that occurs whenever information about a word or other linguistic unit is activated before that unit is actually encountered.

Prediction seems to occur regularly when the context of a sentence greatly limits the possible words that have not yet been revealed. For instance, a person listening to a sentence like, "In the summer it is hot, and in the winter it is..." would be highly likely to predict the sentence completion "cold" in advance of actually hearing it.

Semantics and Pragmatics 2017 b Solved Short Questions

1. What does term “semantics” mean ?

Ans. Semantics is the branch of linguistics concerned with meaning. The two main areas are logical semantics, concerned with matters such as sense and reference and presupposition and implication, and lexical semantics, concerned with the analysis of word meanings and relations between them.

2. Define “Hyponymy” with examples. (2017 a, 2017 b)

Ans. In linguistics, hyponym, also called a subtype or a subordinate term, is a term used to designate a particular member of a broader class. The phenomenon is known as Hyponymy.

For instance, daisy and rose are hyponyms of flower. Similarly, pigeon, crow, eagle and seagull are all hyponyms of bird.

3. How are sentence meaning expressed ?

Ans. A "sentence" is a group of words that express a specific thought. Sentence meaning refers to the meaning of the linguistic expression a speaker uses. The use of language cannot be understood by considering only sentence meaning. Sentences are spoken in a context.

For example, "Would you mind getting off my foot" is an inquiry about whether the hearer would mind doing something, but what the speaker means is "do that" ("get off my foot").

4. Define ambiguity and give its types. (2017 b, 2016, 2015, 2015 b)

Ans. Ambiguity refers to the state of having or expressing more than one possible meaning or something open to more than one possible meaning. It refers to the state in which a word or a statement, any linguistic entity, can be understood in more than one way.

For example, The sentence "Becky cannot bear children" can have two possible meanings due to the ambiguous nature of the word **bear.**

- Becky cannot give birth to children.
- Becky cannot tolerate children.

Types of ambiguity include lexical ambiguity, structural ambiguity and scope ambiguity.

5. Define entailment with examples. (2019 b, 2017 b)

Ans. In pragmatics (linguistics), entailment is the relationship between two sentences where the truth of one requires the truth of the other.

For example, "Jim rides a bike to school every morning." entails "Jim can ride a bike." If the first sentence is true, then the second sentence must be true as well. That is, if Jim rides his bike to school every morning, then he must be able to ride a bike.

6. Define pragmatics.

Ans. Pragmatics is the branch of linguistics dealing with language in use and the contexts in which it is used, including such matters as deixis, the taking of turns in conversation, text organization, presupposition, and implicature.

7. What is presupposition ? (2017 b, 2015 b)

Ans. In the branch of linguistics known as pragmatics, a presupposition (or PSP) is an implicit assumption about the world or background belief relating to an utterance whose truth is taken for granted in discourse.

Examples of presuppositions include:

- Jane no longer writes fiction.

  Presupposition: *Jane once wrote fiction.*

- Have you talked to Steve?

  Presupposition: *Steve exists.*

8. Write down the types of paradigmatic relations. (2017 b, 2016)

Ans. Paradigmatic relation is concerned with the way words are grouped together into categories, like nouns, verbs, adjectives etc. Words in the same group, or word class, can be exchanged for each other in a sentence:

‘The dog / cat / chimpanzee bit me ‘.

There are different types of paradigmatic relations. Paradigmatic relations involve substituting a word for another word from the same word class, either with a similar meaning (**synonymy**), an opposite meaning (**antonymy**), or a-kind-of meaning (**hyponymy**).

9. What is Grice’s cooperative principle ? (2019, 2017 b, 2015, 2015 b)

Ans. In conversation analysis, the cooperative principle is the assumption that participants in a conversation normally attempt to be informative, truthful,

relevant, and clear. The concept was introduced by philosopher H. Paul Grice as he suggested that meaningful dialogue is characterized by cooperation.

10. What is the difference between Agent and Force ?

Ans. Agent is the semantic role of a person or thing who is the doer of an event. It is usually the grammatical subject of the verb in an active clause. Examples of agent are given below,

- The **boy** ran down the street.
- He was chased by the **dog**.

Force, on the other hand, is the semantic role of an entity that instigates an action, but not consciously or voluntarily. Force is distinct from agent because an agent is volitional, while a force is not. Examples of agent are given below,

- The ship was drowned by **storm.**
- The **quake** toppled the building.

11. What is Meronymy ?

Ans. In semantics, a meronym is a word that denotes a constituent part or a member of something. For example, apple is a meronym of apple tree (sometimes written as apple < apple tree). This part-to-whole relationship is called meronymy.

12. What are the different aspects of meaning of a word ?

Ans. Different aspects of meaning of a word include discoursal, lexical, morphological, propositional, syntactic, rhetorical, and functional meaning.

13. How semantic field is different from lexical field ?

Ans. A semantic field is the range of words that is employed to discuss some common topic. For example, the semantic field for hiking might include words like backpack, incline, terrain, wildlife, navigate, GPS, and boots.

A lexical field is then the range of words which could apply in a given position of a sentence, each with a slightly different connotation. Consider the following sentence:

On the trail, I met a hiker.

Let's assume the range of possibilities for the word hiker: its lexical field. In this same sentence, we might choose to use the words backpacker, explorer, climber, alpinist, or adventurer. Each of these words conveys a similar meaning to the word hiker; this is a lexical field for that idea.

14. What are general felicity conditions?

Ans. In pragmatics and speech-act theory, the term felicity conditions refers to the conditions that must be in place and the criteria that must be satisfied for a speech act to achieve its purpose. General felicity conditions are given below,

a. Propositional content
b. Essential conditions
c. Sincerity conditions
d. Preparatory conditions

15. What is a locutionary act ?

Ans. In speech-act theory, a locutionary act is the act of making a meaningful utterance.

Good examples for sentences which are locutionary acts are any utterances which simply contain a meaningful statement about objects. For example: "*the baby is crying*" or "*the sky is blue*".

16. What is Exophoric reference ?

Ans. Exophoric reference occurs when a word or phrase refers to something outside the discourse. Here is an example of exophoric reference:

Speaker A : *"They're late again, can you believe it?"*

Speaker B : *"I know! Well, they'd better get here soon or it'll get cold."*

In this conversation, *they* refers to some people outside the discourse known to both speakers. *It* also refers to something that both speakers know about (perhaps the dinner).

Semantics and Pragmatics 2016 Solved Short Questions

1. What is the difference between linguistic meaning and utterance meaning? (2016, 2015 b)

Ans. Linguistic meaning is the broader term that refers to any type of meaning in the study of linguistics. Linguistic meaning has different types like sentence meaning, utterance meaning, and speaker's meaning.

Utterance meaning is a type of linguistic meaning that deals with the meanings of utterances (a bit of spoken language that may or may not convey a complete meaning.)

2. Differentiate between Semantics and Pragmatics. (2019 b, 2016, 2015)

Ans. Although both semantics and pragmatics are two branches of linguistics that are related to the meaning of language, there is a major difference between the two. Semantics is involved with the meaning of words without considering the context whereas pragmatics analyses the meaning in relation to the relevant context.

3. What is a Paradigmatic relation ? (2017 b, 2016)

Ans. Paradigmatic relation is concerned with the way words are grouped together into categories, like nouns, verbs, adjectives etc. Words in the same group, or word class, can be exchanged for each other in a sentence:

'The dog / cat / chimpanzee bit me '.

4. Differentiate between Meronymy and Hyponymy. (2016, 2015 b)

Ans. In semantics, a **meronym** is a word that denotes a constituent part or a member of something. For example, apple is a meronym of apple tree (sometimes written as apple < apple tree). This part-to-whole relationship is called **meronymy**.

In contrast, a **hyponym**, also called a subtype or a subordinate term, is a term used to designate a particular member of a broader class. The phenomenon is known as **Hyponymy**.

For instance, daisy and rose are hyponyms of flower. Similarly, pigeon, crow, eagle and seagull are all hyponyms of bird.

5. What is Referent ? Give examples.

Ans. A **referent** is a person or thing to which a name, a linguistic expression or other symbol, refers.

For example, in the sentence *Mary saw me,* the referent of the word Mary is the particular person called Mary who is being spoken of, while the referent of the word me is the person uttering the sentence.

6. What is Semantic Field Theory ? (2016, 2015, 2015 b)

Ans. Semantic Field Theory (Lexical field theory) states that words acquired their meaning through their relationships to other words within the same word-field. An extension of the sense of one word narrows the meaning of neighboring words, with the words in a field fitting neatly together like a mosaic. If a single word undergoes a semantic change, then the whole structure of the lexical field changes.

7. How are grammatical meaning expressed in a sentence ?

Ans. Grammatical meaning (structural meaning) is the meaning conveyed in a sentence by word order and other grammatical signals. Words grouped together randomly have little meaning on their own. For example, each of the following words has lexical meaning at the word level but they convey no grammatical meaning as a group:

School went I to.

However when a special order is given to these words, grammatical meaning is created because of the relationships they have to one another.

I went to school.

8. What are types of ambiguity in meaning ? (2017 b, 2016, 2015, 2015 b)

Ans. Ambiguity refers to the state of having or expressing more than one possible meaning or something open to more than one possible meaning. It refers to the state in which a word or a statement, any linguistic entity, can be understood in more than one way.

For example, The sentence "Becky cannot bear children" can have two possible meanings due to the ambiguous nature of the word **bear.**

- Becky cannot give birth to children.
- Becky cannot tolerate children.

Types of ambiguity include lexical ambiguity, structural ambiguity and scope ambiguity.

9. What do you mean by Semantic Narrowing ? (2016, 2015 b)

Ans. Semantic narrowing is a type of semantic change by which the meaning of a word becomes less general or inclusive than its earlier meaning. Also known as specialization or restriction. The opposite process is called broadening or semantic generalization.

For example, the word *girl* originally denoted *a child or young person of either sex,* then the meaning gradually narrowed down to denote *a female child* or *a young woman.*

10. Define ANAPHORA.

Ans. In linguistics, anaphora is the use of an expression whose interpretation depends upon another expression in context (its antecedent or postcedent).

For example, look at this sentence : *Michael went to the bank. He was annoyed because it was closed*. In this sentence, *he* refers to Michael and *it* refers to the bank.

11. How would you define Principle of Compositionality ? (2016, 2015)

Ans. In semantics, the principle of compositionality is the principle that the meaning of a complex expression is determined by the meanings of its constituent expressions and the rules used to combine them. It means that, in a meaningful sentence, if the lexical parts are taken out of the sentence, what remains will be the rules of composition.

Take, for example, the sentence "Socrates was a man". Once the meaningful lexical items are taken away—"Socrates" and "man"—what is left is the pseudo-sentence, "S was a M". The task becomes a matter of describing what the connection is between S and M.

12. What is Superordinate ? What is its relationship with Hyponym ? (2016, 2015)

Ans. A superordinate (hypernym) is a word with a broad meaning constituting a category into which words with more specific meanings (hyponyms) fall. For example, colour is a hypernym of red. And red, orange blue, and yellow are hyponyms of colour.

13. What is the difference among Goal, Source and Location ? (2016, 2015)

Ans. Goal as a thematic role is the direction towards which the action of the verb moves. For example,

- John swam to the **raft**.
- He threw the book at **me**.

Source as a thematic role is the direction from which the action originates. For example,

- John fell off the **chair**.
- The **mother** told her child a story.

Location as a thematic role is the location where the action of the verb takes place.

- The cookies were eaten in the **kitchen** by the baker.

- John fell off the chair in the **class**.

14. What are Paraphrase in Semantics ? (2016, 2015)

Ans. In the linguistics, paraphrases are sentences or phrases that convey the same meaning using different wording. They have an approximate equivalence of meaning. For example, *the dog chased the cat* paraphrases *the cat was chased by the dog.*

15. What is Deixis ? (2016, 2015 b)

Ans. In linguistics, deixis is the use of general words and phrases to refer to a specific time, place, or person in context, e.g., the words tomorrow, there, and they. Here are some sentence examples,

- I enjoy living in *this* city.
- It is raining *now*, but I hope *when* you read this it will be sunny.

16. Differentiate between Agent and Experiencer. (2016, 2015 b)

Ans. Agent as a thematic role is the entity that intentionally carries out the action of the verb. For example,

- The **boy** ran down the street.
- He was chased by the **dog**.

Experiencer, on the other hand, is the semantic role of an entity (or referent) which receives, accepts, experiences, or undergoes the effect of an action.

Semantics and Pragmatics 2015 Solved Short Questions

1. What is the difference between Semantics and Pragmatics ? (2019 b, 2016, 2015)

Ans. Although both semantics and pragmatics are two branches of linguistics that are related to the meaning of language, there is a major difference between the two. Semantics is involved with the meaning of words without considering the context whereas pragmatics analyses the meaning in relation to the relevant context.

2. How would you define Principle of Compositionality ?

Ans. In semantics, the principle of compositionality is the principle that the meaning of a complex expression is determined by the meanings of its constituent expressions and the rules used to combine them. It means that, in a meaningful sentence, if the lexical parts are taken out of the sentence, what remains will be the rules of composition.

Take, for example, the sentence "Socrates was a man". Once the meaningful lexical items are taken away—"Socrates" and "man"—what is left is the pseudo-sentence, "S was a M". The task becomes a matter of describing what the connection is between S and M.

3. What is Conceptual Meaning ?

Ans. In semantics, conceptual meaning is the literal or core sense of a word. There is nothing read into the term, no subtext; it's just the straightforward, literal, dictionary definition of the word. The term is also called denotation or cognitive meaning.

For example, A *cougar* has different meanings in the contexts about people and not concerning , but it's meaning in the dictionary is a *big cat*, which is it's conceptual meaning.

4. How Affective Meanings are different from Social Meanings ?

Ans. Affective meaning refers to emotive association or the effects of words that are evoked in reader or listener. It is the emotional aspect connected to words. For example, "*home*" for a soldier and "*mother*" for motherless child. Look at this sentence example,

Hitler was a vicious tyrant and villainous dictator and I hate him.

Social meaning, on the other hand, refers to the meaning conveyed by the piece of language about social context of its use. Sometimes, the use of specific words and pronunciation can tell a lot about the social or regional origin of speaker. For example, following sentence tells us that the speaker is young Indian or Pakistani.

Come on yaar, let's play cricket. Don't be a lallu.

5. What is Semantic Field Theory ? (2016, 2015, 2015 b)

Ans. Semantic Field Theory (Lexical field theory) states that words acquired their meaning through their relationships to other words within the same word-field. An extension of the sense of one word narrows the meaning of neighboring words, with the words in a field fitting neatly together like a mosaic. If a single word undergoes a semantic change, then the whole structure of the lexical field changes.

6. Define Sentential Semantics.

Ans. Sentence semantics (sentential semantics), as well as phrasal semantics, deals with the meaning of syntactic units larger than words, i.e. phrases, clauses, and sentences, and the semantic relationships between them. Propositions play an important role in analyzing the meaning relations among sentences.

7. What are types of ambiguity in meaning ? (2017 b, 2016, 2015, 2015 b)

Ans. Ambiguity refers to the state of having or expressing more than one possible meaning or something open to more than one possible meaning. It refers to the state in which a word or a statement, any linguistic entity, can be understood in more than one way.

For example, The sentence "Becky cannot bear children" can have two possible meanings due to the ambiguous nature of the word **bear.**

- Becky cannot give birth to children.
- Becky cannot tolerate children.

Types of ambiguity include lexical ambiguity, structural ambiguity and scope ambiguity.

8. Differentiate between reference and referent. (2015, 2015 b)

Ans. In semantics, **reference** is a relationship in which a symbol or sign (a word, for example) signifies something; the **referent** is the thing signified. The referent may be an actual person or object, or may be something more abstract, such as a set of actions.

For example, in the sentence *Mary saw me*, the referent of the word Mary is the particular person called Mary who is being spoken of, while the referent of the word me is the person uttering the sentence.

9. What is Paul Grice's Cooperative Principle ? (2019, 2017 b, 2015, 2015 b)

Ans. In conversation analysis, the cooperative principle is the assumption that participants in a conversation normally attempt to be informative, truthful, relevant, and clear. The concept was introduced by philosopher H. Paul Grice as he suggested that meaningful dialogue is characterized by cooperation.

10. Define discourse meanings. (2015, 2015 b)

Ans. In linguistics, discourse refers to a unit of language longer than a single sentence. So, discourse meaning refers to the meaning of a piece of language that is longer than a single sentence.

11. Define referential theory of meaning.

Ans. Referential theory of meaning, also know as direct reference theory is a theory of language that claims that the meaning of a word or expression lies in what it points out in the world. In other words, the best way of indicating the meaning of a word is to refer to the object represented by that word. The object denoted by a word is called its referent.

12. What is superordinate ? What is its relation with hyponym ? (2016, 2015)

Ans. A superordinate (hypernym) is a word with a broad meaning constituting a category into which words with more specific meanings (hyponyms) fall. For

example, colour is a hypernym of red. And red, orange blue, and yellow are hyponyms of colour.

13. Define semantic roles.

Ans. In certain theories of linguistics, thematic relations, also known as semantic roles, are the various roles that a noun phrase may play with respect to the action or state described by a governing verb, commonly the sentence's main verb. Semantic roles include agent, patient, theme, location, experiencer, instruments, goal, and source.

14. Differentiate between homophone and homograph.

Ans. Homophones are words that sound the same but are different in meaning and spelling. For example, *to, too,* and *two* sound same but are spelled differently and have different meanings.

Homographs are spelled the same, but differ in meaning and pronunciation. For example, *bow* (of a ship) and the *bow* (that shoots arrows) are spelled alike but have different meanings and pronunciation.

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Ans. In the linguistics, paraphrases are sentences or phrases that convey the same meaning using different wording. They have an approximate equivalence of meaning. For example, *the dog chased the cat* paraphrases *the cat was chased by the dog.*

Semantics and Pragmatics 2015 b Solved Short Questions

1. What is difference between explicit performative and implicit performative ?

Ans. An **explicit performative** is one in which the utterance inscription contains an expression that makes explicit what kind of act is being performed. It includes a performative verb and mainly therefore, it removes any possibility of misunderstanding behind an utterance. In contrast, **implicit performative** is the one which is ambiguous and doesn't contain any performative verb. For example, look at following sentences,

- *I order you to leave.*
- *Will you leave?*

In the first example, the speaker utters a sentence with the purpose to make the hearer leave. The message is clear here. The second utterance is rather ambiguous without an appropriate context. It can be understood in two different ways: it can be either taken literally, as a yes/no question, or non-literally as an indirect request or even command to leave.

2. What is the difference between linguistic meaning and utterance meaning? (2016, 2015 b)

Ans. Linguistic meaning is the broader term that refers to any type of meaning in the study of linguistics. Linguistic meaning has different types like sentence meaning, utterance meaning, and speaker's meaning.

Utterance meaning is a type of linguistic meaning that deals with the meanings of utterances (a bit of spoken language that may or may not convey a complete meaning.)

3. What is a syntagmatic relation ?

Ans. A syntagmatic relationship involves a sequence of signs that together create meaning. The words in a sentence are all syntagms and together they form a syntagmatic relationship that creates meaning. If you change the order of syntagms in a sentence it can change the meaning significantly.

John ate an octopus.

An octopus ate John.

Two sentences using the exact same words (syntagms), but very different meanings because the order (the syntagmatic relationship) of the words changed.

4. What is a proposition ? (2017, 2015 b)

Ans. The term proposition refers to the language-independent core meaning of sentences which expresses the factuality of a given state of affairs. Thus, a proposition is the semantic kernel of a sentence that determines its truth conditions, independent of its syntactic form and lexical realization.

For example, when two speakers say the same thing by uttering different sentences, like in, '*get out of here*' and '*I'll have to ask you to leave*', there is some (non-linguistic) thing, **a proposition**, that each has said.

5. What is semantic field theory ? (2016, 2015, 2015 b)

Ans. Semantic Field Theory (Lexical field theory) states that words acquired their meaning through their relationships to other words within the same word-field. An extension of the sense of one word narrows the meaning of neighboring words, with the words in a field fitting neatly together like a mosaic. If a single

word undergoes a semantic change, then the whole structure of the lexical field changes.

6. Differentiate between grammatical restriction and lexical restriction.

Ans. Lexical restrictions are not matter of rules but of tendencies, not of yes or no but of more or less when judge in term of deviance.

Grammar is not restricted to the study of form of function of words. It is concerned with the categories such as tense, gender, number and syntactic functions such as subject and object.

7. What is generative theory of meaning ?

Ans. Theory of generative grammar states that the deep structure of a sentence is equivalent to its semantic representation, from which the surface structure can then be derived using only one set of rules that relate underlying meaning and surface form rather than separate sets of semantic and syntactic rules.

8. What are types of ambiguity in meaning ? (2017 b, 2016, 2015, 2015 b)

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Ans. In linguistics, discourse refers to a unit of language longer than a single sentence. So, discourse meaning refers to the meaning of a piece of language that is longer than a single sentence.

13. Define presupposition. (2017 b, 2015 b)

Ans. In the branch of linguistics known as pragmatics, a presupposition (or PSP) is an implicit assumption about the world or background belief relating to an utterance whose truth is taken for granted in discourse.

Examples of presuppositions include:

- Jane no longer writes fiction.
  Presupposition: *Jane once wrote fiction.*
- Have you talked to Steve?
  Presupposition: *Steve exists.*

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Ans. In linguistics, deixis is the use of general words and phrases to refer to a specific time, place, or person in context, e.g., the words tomorrow, there, and they. Here are some sentence examples,

- I enjoy living in *this* city.
- It is raining *now*, but I hope *when* you read this it will be sunny.

15. Differentiate between Meronymy and Hyponymy. (2016, 2015 b)

Ans. In semantics, a **meronym** is a word that denotes a constituent part or a member of something. For example, apple is a meronym of apple tree (sometimes written as apple < apple tree). This part-to-whole relationship is called **meronymy**.

In contrast, a **hyponym**, also called a subtype or a subordinate term, is a term used to designate a particular member of a broader class. The phenomenon is known as **Hyponymy**.

For instance, daisy and rose are hyponyms of flower. Similarly, pigeon, crow, eagle and seagull are all hyponyms of bird.

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