

Unit Outline

LN301

Unit Name	Semantics		
Unit weighting	Unit credit points: 3		
Pre-requisite or co-requisite	LN101 Introduction to Linguistics		
Delivery mode	Face to face on site	Full time or part time	
Location	<i>Sheridan</i> 18/7 Aberdeen St, Piccadilly Square West, Perth WA 6000		
Student Workload	<i>Timetabled: 36 hours (3 hours per week over 12 teaching weeks)</i> <i>Personal Study: 132 hours (9 hours per week over 12 teaching weeks + 12 hours per week over 2 non-teaching weeks)</i> <i>Total workload: 168 hours (12 hours per week over 14 weeks)</i> <i>Academic writing support available if needed</i>		
Prescribed Textbook(s)	Saeed, J. (2016). <i>Semantics</i> (4 th ed.). Wiley Blackwell.		
Other resource requirements	Access to the Learning Management System Canvas canvas.sheridan.edu.au		
Work-integrated learning activity	Not applicable		
Timetabled day and time	Friday 1.00 p.m.	Room	3 (Sapphire)
Unit Coordinator	Michael Randall	Phone	6222-4222
Email	mrandall@sheridan.edu.au		

Unit Description

We intuitively know when words and sentences are meaningful, meaningless, or ambiguous. We also know when language has the same or opposite meanings, what it refers to in the real world, and under what conditions it is true. Semantics is a discipline that allows us to describe, categorise, and analyse what we intuitively know about the meaning of language.

This unit builds on the introduction to semantics in LN101 by expanding on the same ideas and taking a descriptive, mostly non-formal approach. It covers the analysis of word and sentence meaning with special reference to certain syntactic and lexical categories, contextual versus literal meaning, componential analysis, semantic change, and the practical application of semantics to translation.

You will have the opportunity to practise what you are learning in assessed weekly exercises, as well as through completion of a research assignment where you apply secondary research to practical examples.

The unit gives a greater awareness of clarity and ambiguity in communication. It also provides a foundation for further study in semantics theory and its practical applications such as semantic issues in language fieldwork, translation, psychology, philosophy, and computer science.

LN301 Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- A. Apply semantic concepts and terminology to describe, categorise, and analyse samples of language
- B. Apply understanding of semantic problems in translation to analysis of a given text
- C. Synthesise secondary research on topics in semantics and apply this to a practical context
- D. Demonstrate coherent knowledge of key concepts and theories in semantics and give examples of their application
- E. Communicate ideas in a clear and academic style in a variety of formats

Sheridan Graduate Attributes

Sheridan graduates will be ...

1. Lovers of truth
2. Seekers of wisdom
3. Innovative thinkers
4. Effective communicators
5. Independent learners
6. Servant leaders

Assessment Schedule

Assessment Type	Value	Due Date	Learning Outcomes (LOs) Assessed	Graduate Attributes (GAs) Addressed
1. Practical Exercises (x 10)	30%	Weeks 2-6; 8-12	A	1, 2, 5, 6
2. Research Assignment	25%	Week 12	B, C, E	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
3. Review Presentation	10%	Week 13	C, E	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
4. Exam	35%	Week 15	A, D	1, 2, 4

NB: You must submit all assessments in order to satisfy the unit requirements.

1. Practical Exercises (10 x 3%)

To consolidate your understanding of what you have read as well as heard in the lecture, you will complete weekly exercises from the textbook. As such, you will be marked on your completion and the depth to which you have engaged with the question as much as on producing correct answers. You are also being assessed on organising your time to complete these exercises before class, which should be evident in your presentation of your work. Extensions will only be granted under extreme circumstances. Answers will be discussed in class.

Submission type: These should be submitted in class and should be typed or neatly handwritten. Include a heading and question numbers, with space between your answers.

Assessment Type	Practical Exercises				
	High Distinction (80-100%)	Distinction (70-79%)	Credit (60-69%)	Pass (50-59%)	Fail (0-49%)
Completion (1%)	All questions are completed and given appropriate depth	All questions are completed and most contain appropriate depth	Most questions are completed but some answers need more depth	Most questions are completed but they lack any real depth	Few or no questions are completed
Accuracy (1%)	Over 79% of answers are correct	Up to 79% of answers are correct	Up to 69% of answers are correct	Up to 59% of answers are correct	Under 49% of answers are correct
Presentation (1%)	Work is presented in an organised and legible way	Work is presented in an organised and legible way with minor errors	Work is mostly organised and legible	Some attempt to organise work is evident	Work is disorganised or illegible

2. Research Assignment (25%)

In this assignment you will look at a practical application of concepts you have learned about in semantics. You will be given a sample passage in English to analyse as potential material for translation. Examine existing research on semantic difficulties that arise in translation and identify a few areas that present a challenge in translation that you think would be relevant to this passage. Then, collect and synthesise the research on these areas, and apply it to the given passage.

Present your findings as a research report. As background, give a synthesis of what the research sources say about the semantic difficulties you have chosen and connect this to a point-by-point discussion of which parts of the passage would present difficulty for translation and why.

The report should be submitted online via Canvas. Remember to include a Sheridan assignment cover page.

Word count: 2000-2500 words

Sources: At least three scholarly sources

Due: 5pm Friday Week 12

Assessment Type	Research Assignment				
Criteria /Grade	High Distinction (80-100%)	Distinction (70-79%)	Credit (60-69%)	Pass (50-59%)	Fail (0-49%)
Synthesises sources to draw conclusions as a basis for analysis of passage (5%)	Demonstrates excellent ability to synthesise sources and draw conclusions as a basis for analysis of passage	Demonstrates strong ability to synthesise sources and draw conclusions as a basis for analysis of passage	Demonstrates sound ability to synthesise sources and draw conclusions as a basis for analysis of passage	Demonstrates satisfactory ability synthesise sources and draw conclusions as a basis for analysis of passage	Demonstrates limited or no ability to synthesise sources and draw conclusions as a basis for analysis of passage
Demonstrates understanding of theory through integration in analysis (10%)	Demonstrates excellent ability to integrate theory with analysis	Demonstrates strong ability to integrate theory with analysis	Demonstrates sound ability to integrate theory with analysis	Demonstrates satisfactory ability to integrate theory with analysis	Demonstrates limited or no ability to integrate theory with analysis
Communicates clearly in an academic style (5%)	Demonstrates excellent ability to communicate clearly in an academic style	Demonstrates strong ability to communicate clearly in an academic style	Demonstrates sound ability to communicate clearly in an academic style	Demonstrates satisfactory ability to communicate clearly in an academic style	Demonstrates limited or no ability to communicate clearly in an academic style
Uses sufficient relevant and reliable sources, referenced appropriately (5%)	Demonstrates excellent ability to select sufficient relevant and reliable sources and references appropriately	Demonstrates strong ability to select sufficient relevant and reliable sources and references appropriately	Demonstrates sound ability to select sufficient relevant and reliable sources and references appropriately	Demonstrates satisfactory ability to select sufficient relevant and reliable sources and references appropriately	Demonstrates limited or no ability to select sufficient relevant and reliable sources and references appropriately

3. Review Presentation (10%)

Prepare a short presentation on one of the weekly topics to present to the class for the purpose of review in Week 13 (topic to be negotiated with your lecturer and classmates to avoid overlap).

The presentation should include a visual element (e.g. PowerPoint), be around 5-10 minutes long and include:

- Key points on this topic, synthesised from sources
- At least three references for your information
- Your own examples to illustrate (from English or another language with translation to clarify)

Be ready to answer questions from your audience.

Due: Week 13 in class

Submit your slides and/or any script via Canvas.

Assessment Type	Review Presentation				
	High Distinction (80-100%)	Distinction (70-79%)	Credit (60-69%)	Pass (50-59%)	Fail (0-49%)
Demonstrates understanding of theory through synthesis of sources and integration with examples (3%)	Demonstrates excellent ability to synthesise sources and integrate with examples	Demonstrates strong ability to synthesise sources and integrate with examples	Demonstrates sound ability to synthesise sources and integrate with examples	Demonstrates satisfactory ability to synthesise sources and integrate with examples	Demonstrates little or no ability to synthesise sources and integrate with examples
Communicates clearly in an academic style (visual, verbal, and non-verbal) (1%)	Demonstrates excellent ability to communicate clearly in an academic style	Demonstrates strong ability to communicate clearly in an academic style	Demonstrates sound ability to communicate clearly in an academic style	Demonstrates satisfactory ability to communicate clearly in an academic style	Demonstrates little or no ability to communicate clearly in an academic style
Uses sufficient relevant and reliable sources, referenced appropriately (1%)	Demonstrates excellent ability to select sufficient relevant and reliable sources and references appropriately	Demonstrates strong ability to select sufficient relevant and reliable sources and references appropriately	Demonstrates sound ability to select sufficient relevant and reliable sources and references appropriately	Demonstrates satisfactory ability to select sufficient relevant and reliable sources and references appropriately	Demonstrates little or no ability to select sufficient relevant and reliable sources and references appropriately

4. Exam (35%) (Closed book)

Answer problem questions similar to the weekly practical exercises, as well as longer written questions explaining concepts. You will demonstrate coherent knowledge and ability to articulate key concepts, as well as the ability to apply these to data.

Learning Resources

Prescribed Textbook(s)

Saeed, J. (2016). *Semantics* (4th ed.). Wiley Blackwell.

Other Prescribed Readings

Loebner, S. (2014). *Understanding semantics*. Taylor and Francis. pp. 248-264.

Traugott, E. & Dasher, R. (2002). *Regularity in semantic change*. Cambridge University Press. pp. 24-40.

Recommended Supplementary Reading

Chierchia, G., & McConnell-Ginet, S. (2000). *Meaning and grammar: An introduction to semantics*. MIT Press.

Horn, L., & Ward, G. (Eds.). (2004). *The handbook of pragmatics*. Blackwell.

- Hurford, J. R., Heasley, B., & Smith, M. B. (2007). *Semantics: A coursebook* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Juvonen, P. & Koptjevskaja-Tamm, M. (Eds.). (2016). *The lexical typology of semantic shifts*. De Gruyter.
- Kearns, K. (2011). *Semantics* (2nd ed.). Macmillan.
- Kroeger, P. R. (2019). *Analyzing meaning: An introduction to semantics and pragmatics* (2nd ed.). Language Science Press.
- Lappin, S. (Ed.). (1996). *The handbook of contemporary semantic theory*. Blackwell
- Levinson, S. (1983). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge University press.
- Lyons, J. (1995). *Linguistic semantics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Portner, P. (2005). *What is meaning? Fundamentals of formal semantics*. Blackwell.
- Portner, P., & Partee, B. (2002). *Formal semantics: The essential readings*. Blackwell.
- Riemer, N. (2010). *Introducing semantics*. Cambridge University Press.
- De Swart, H. (1998). *Introduction to natural language semantics*. CSLI.

Academic Journals

You may find relevant articles in the following journals:

- *Journal of Linguistics*
- *Journal of Semantics*
- *Language*
- *Lingua*
- *Natural Language Semantics*
- *Semantics and Pragmatics*
- *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*

Weekly Schedule of Topics

LN301 Semantics

Prescribed text(s):

Saeed, J. (2016). *Semantics* (4th ed.). Wiley Blackwell.

WEEK	TOPICS	PRESCRIBED READINGS	ASSESSMENTS
1	Introduction to unit - Semantics in linguistics		
2	Meaning, thought and reality	Saeed (2016) Ch 2	Chapter 1 exercises due
3	Word meaning	Saeed (2016) Ch 3	Chapter 2 exercises due
4	Sentence relations and truth	Saeed (2016) Ch 4	Chapter 3 exercises due
5	Sentence semantics 1 – situations	Saeed (2016) Ch 5	Chapter 4 exercises due
6	Sentence semantics 2 – participants	Saeed (2016) Ch 6	Chapter 5 exercises due
7	Mid-semester Study Week		
8	Context and inference	Saeed (2016) Ch 7	Chapter 6 exercises due
9	Functions of language: Speech as action	Saeed (2016) Ch 8	Chapter 7 exercises due
10	Semantics in translation	Loebner (2014) Ch 8	Chapter 8 exercises due
11	Meaning components	Saeed (2016) Ch 9	Chapter 8 (Loebner) exercises due
12	Semantic change	Traugott & Dasher (2002) Ch 1.3	Chapter 9 exercises due Research Assignment due – 25%
13	Review		Review Presentation due – 10%
14	Exam Study Week		
15	Exam week		Exam – 35%