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SEMANTIC FEATURES OF THE TEXT IN ENGLISH

Abstract: In linguistics, “semantics” refers to the study of meaning in language—how words, phrases, sentences, and texts convey meaning. When we talk about the "semantic features" of a text, we refer to the specific aspects of meaning that the text conveys through its structure, word choice, and context. Semantics is the study of the meanings of words, phrases, and sentences. Semantic analysis focuses on the customary meaning of words, rather than the speaker's intended meaning for a given context. The technical approach to meaning focuses on the objective and generic. It avoids subjectivity and localization. Linguistic semantics examines how words and sentences convey meaning in a language.

Key words: text, semantics, analysis, hyponym, lexical semantics, ambiguity, context

INTRODUCTION

The semantic features of a text help in interpreting how the meaning is constructed and understood by readers. These features go beyond simple word definitions and involve the relationships between words, the social or cultural context, and how these elements influence the overall meaning of the text.

We can, in fact, make this observation more generally applicable by trying to determine the crucial component of meaning which a noun must have in order to be used as the subject of the verb ate. Such a component may be as general as 'animate being'. We can then take this component and use it to I describe part of the meaning of words as either plus (+) or minus (-) the feature. So, the feature becomes +animate (= denotes an animate being) or -animate (= does not denote an animate being).

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Not only can words be treated as 'containers' or as fulfilling 'roles', they can also have 'relationships'. In everyday talk, we frequently give the meanings of words in terms of their relationships. If you were asked to give the meaning of the word conceal, for example, you might simply reply "it's the same as hide", or give the meaning of shallow as "the opposite of deep", or the meaning of daffodil as "it's a kind of flower". In doing so, you are characterizing the meaning of a word not in terms of its component features, but in terms of its relationship to other words. This procedure has also been used in the semantic description oflanguages and is treated as the analysis of lexical relations. The types of lexical relations which are usually analyzed are defined and exemplified in the following sections.

METHODS AND DISCUSSION

Key Semantic Features in a Text

1. Lexical Semantics (Word-Level Meaning)

Denotation vs. Connotation: The “denotation” of a word is its direct, literal meaning, while the “connotation” includes the emotional or cultural associations a word carries. For instance, “home” denotes a physical place where one lives but connotes feelings of warmth, comfort, and safety.

Polysemy: Many words have multiple meanings depending on the context. For example, the word “bank” can refer to a financial institution, the side of a river, or even a place to store resources. Analyzing polysemy helps uncover the nuances in a text.

Synonymy and Antonymy: Understanding synonyms (words with similar meanings) and antonyms (words with opposite meanings) is key to understanding the range of meanings and possible interpretations in a text. The choice between synonyms often depends on subtle semantic preferences that contribute to the tone or style of the text.

Hyponymy and Hypernymy: A “hyponym” is a word that denotes a specific instance of a broader category. For example, "rose" is a hyponym of "flower."

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Hypernyms are broader terms that encompass specific instances, such as "flower" being the hypernym of "rose," "tulip," and "daisy."

2. Syntactic Semantics (Sentence-Level Meaning)

The syntax (structure) of a sentence affects its meaning. For example, "The cat chased the dog" conveys a different meaning from "The dog chased the cat" due to the order of words. Understanding sentence-level semantics involves analyzing how word order, subject-verb-object relationships, and sentence types contribute to the conveyed meaning.

Ambiguity: Sentences can sometimes be semantically ambiguous. For example, "I saw the man with the telescope" could mean either the man had a telescope or that the speaker used a telescope to see the man. Disambiguation of such sentences is crucial in semantic analysis.

3. Pragmatics: Context and Interpretation

While semantics deals with meaning in isolation, **pragmatics** explores how context affects meaning. In pragmatic analysis, meaning shifts depending on factors like the speaker’s intention, the listener’s interpretation, and the specific social or cultural situation.

Speech Acts: These are actions performed via language, such as promising, requesting, ordering, or asserting. Understanding how these speech acts operate in a text can uncover deeper semantic meaning.

Presupposition: A presupposition refers to background assumptions made by the speaker that are taken for granted by the listener. For example, the statement "John stopped smoking" presupposes that John once smoked.

4. Discourse Semantics (Meaning Across Sentences)

Coherence: The overall unity of meaning across the text, even when individual sentences may seem ambiguous or incomplete. Coherence refers to how well the different parts of the text fit together logically, through shared references, themes, or ideas.

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Reference and Anaphora: The use of pronouns or other referring expressions (such as "he," "they," "this," or "it") relies on a previous part of the text for its interpretation. Understanding these references helps ensure that the text has cohesive meaning.

Inference: Readers make inferences from the text based on implicit meanings, beyond what is explicitly stated. Inferences can be drawn from word choices, context, or broader societal knowledge, which adds a layer of meaning to the text.

5. Semantic Fields

Words are often grouped into semantic fields, which are sets of related words sharing a common concept or category. For instance, words related to the concept of "emotion" (like happiness, sadness, anger, joy) form a semantic field. Analyzing these fields helps understand how a text constructs its thematic and emotional landscape.

6. Metaphor and Figurative Language

Metaphors, similes, and other forms of figurative language play a significant role in enriching the meaning of a text. For instance, calling someone a “lion in the fight” goes beyond a simple description, evoking images of strength, courage, and ferocity.

Symbolism: Many texts use symbols to represent larger concepts. A “red rose” can symbolize love or passion, while a “dark storm cloud” might symbolize impending doom or uncertainty. Understanding symbolism adds depth to the semantic interpretation of a text.

Analyzing the Role of Semantics in Textual Interpretation

1. Interpretative Depth: The semantic features of a text influence how readers interpret and internalize its meaning. A single word choice or sentence structure can significantly alter how a reader understands the central message, tone, and intent of the author.

2. Author’s Intent vs. Reader’s Interpretation: There is often a complex interaction between the author's intended meaning and the reader's interpretation. Semantics

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bridges this gap, as understanding the explicit and implicit meanings of words helps readers decode the layers of significance embedded in a text.

3. Cultural and Social Context: The meaning of certain words or phrases may change depending on cultural, social, or historical context. For example, certain phrases or expressions may hold specific connotations that are tied to a particular time, place, or group of people.

4. Cognitive Semantics: Cognitive semantics suggests that meaning is shaped by human experience and cognition. The way we conceptualize the world influences how we understand language. For instance, spatial metaphors like “high hopes” or “low mood” reflect how people conceptualize emotions in terms of physical space.

It should be emphasized that the concept of “sameness of meaning” used to analyze synonymy does not necessarily imply 'complete sameness'. Sometimes a single word is appropriate in a phrase, but its synonym may be inappropriate. For example, the word answer fits in this statement. Cathy had only one accurate response on the test, and the near-synonym "reply" may sound weird. Synonymous forms may differ in formality. This sentence My father's purchase of a large automobile appears more serious than the following informal version, with four synonymous alternatives. My dad purchased a large automobile.

CONCLUSION

Semantic features of the text are essential in understanding how meaning is constructed, conveyed, and interpreted in language. These features—ranging from word-level semantics to discourse-level meaning—help readers navigate the complex web of relationships between words, context, and their own knowledge or experiences. Through careful semantic analysis, one can uncover not only the surface meaning but also the deeper implications of a text, enhancing both scholarly and everyday interpretation.

By examining the intricate layers of meaning embedded in the text, linguists, literary scholars, and even artificial intelligence systems can gain deeper insights

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into communication, ultimately improving our understanding of language and its capacity to represent the human experience.

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