Ch.6: Semantics

- semantics: the study of meaning
- linguistic semantics: how languages organize and express meanings

3 disciplines concerned with language:

- 1. psychology
- 2. philosophy
- 3. linguistics

how the human language differs from these animal communication systems?

- animals can only communicate in response to some stimulus, the human language is stimulus-free.
- animals have only fixed messages, human language is creative, it has an unlimited amount of sentences.

language has the feature of arbitrariness

the knowledge that a speaker of a language has to know about that language:

vocabulary + our ways to use it.

the knowledge one has that makes one capable of using the vocabulary productively and receptively:

 the implicit knowledge that the speaker has & the explicit description and explanation of it by the linguist.

grammar contains 4 parts:

- 1. **phonology:** the knowledge of how speech sounds are organized.
- 2. **morphology:** the knowledge of word-formation.
- 3. **syntax:** the knowledge of parts of speech and how they go together to form phrases.
- 4. **semantics:** the knowledge of meaningful units.

10 aspects of speaker's semantic knowledge:

- 1. anomoly: speakers know if something is or isn't meaningful.
- ex; colorless ideas sleep furiously.
 - 2. paraphrases: when two sentences have the same exact meaning.
- ex; Alaa got home before doobie.

doobie arrived at home after Alaa.

- 3. **synonyms:** words that have the same sense in given context.
- ex; where did you purchase the coffee machine?

use / buy / release / modify / take

- 4. **contradictory:** when sentences make the opposite statements about the same subject.
- ex; jack is a lonely bachelor, he's happily married.
 - 5. **antonyms:** when words have the opposite meaning.
- ex; betty cut a thick/thin slice of cake.
 - 6. **semantic feature:** the common element of meaning shared by all but one word.
- <mark>ex;</mark> street / lane / path / <mark>house</mark>
 - 7. ambiguity: when a sentence has two meanings
- ex; I killed the man with the knife
 - 8. **adjacency pair:** when a question and an answer go together in a conversation.
- ex; there's a new comedy play at the oldtown playhouse.

so I've heard / what is it called / when did it open

- 9. **entailment:** when two statements are related.
- ex; there are tulips in the garden

there are flowers in the garden

- 10. **presuppositions**: a message conveyed in one sentence gives other pieces of knowledge.
- ex; andy drives his motorcycle to work
- a. there's a person named andy
- b. andy works
- c. andy knows how to drive a motorcycle