

## Leech's seven types of meaning in semantics

<sup>1</sup> R Umagandhi, <sup>2</sup> M Vinothini

<sup>1</sup> M.A., M.Phil. Mca, M.Ed, Nadar Saraswathi College of Arts and science, Vadaputhupatti, Theni, Tamil Nadu, India

<sup>2</sup> M.A., M.A, Nadar Saraswathi College of Arts and science, Vadaputhupatti, Theni, Tamil Nadu, India

### Abstract

Language was considered as the most important and well known tool for communication. Linguistics plays a vital role for the development of a language. Linguistics was defined as scientific study of language which consists of four branches one among that was Semantics. Semantics was defined as study of meaning and communication. This journal is mainly dealing with the Leech's seven types of meaning in Semantics.

**Keywords:** semantics, communication

### Introduction

*"A language can be compared with a sheet of paper, thoughts is one side of the sheet and sound, the reverse side. Just as it is impossible to take a pair of scissors and the cut one side of the without the other, so it is impossible in a language to isolate sound from thoughts and thoughts from sound."*

*-Ferdinand de saurra.*

The internal differentiation of human societies was reflected in their languages. Linguistics plays a vital role for the development of a language. There are four different branches of linguistics, and they are, *phonology, morphology, semantics, and syntax* and each of them have their own function for the development of a language.

### Semantics

The term semantics was used broadly to refer to the study of meaning. It was also central to the study of communication. Though the 'meaning' or the information one wants to communicate can be conveyed through a number of means like gesture, picture, signals, etc. language was the main tool of communication of the human beings. Semantics as a branch of linguistics was mainly concerned with how the 'meaning' was conveyed by the linguistics system consisting of different unit structures like sentence, phrases, words, morphemes etc. semantics as a study of meaning, which relates language to the various aspects of non-linguistics reality, was also of interest to various disciplines such as philosophy, anthropology, psychology, communication theory etc.,

Semantics in the broad sense of the term can be considered to study all that was communication by language, but some scholars would like to restrict semantics to the study of logical or conceptual meaning i.e. only those aspects of meaning which are logically acceptable leaving out deviation and abnormalities. Geoffrey Leech in his book semantics breaks down "meaning" in widest sense into seven different types giving primary importance to logical or conceptual meaning. The six other types are *Connotative meaning, Social meaning, Affective meaning, Reflected meaning, Collocative meaning and thematic meaning*. These seven types of meaning are compared with the three types of lexical meaning.

### Conceptual meaning

What Leech calls as conceptual meaning was the same as what other scholars call 'denotative', or 'designative', or 'cognitive', or 'descriptive' meaning. And this meaning was assumed to be the central factor in linguistics communication. It was integral to the essential functioning of a language while other types of meaning are not. Leech considers conceptual meaning as primary because it was comparable in organization and structure to the syntactic and phonological levels of language. The two structural principles that seem to be basis of all linguistics patterning namely the principle of contractiveness and the principle of structure are also the basis of conceptual meaning.

The second principle, that of constitute structure, was the principle by which larger linguistics units are built up out of smaller units. In other words it was the principles by which a sentences can be analyzed into its constitute parts. Here also as sentences are analyzed into its unit i.e. word and morphemes and at the level of phonology into constitute phonemes (sound units), similarly semantics structure of sentence can also be explained. The two principles of constituent structure represent the way language was organized. Contractiveness was the paradigmatic or selection or 'choice' aspects of linguistics structure. Constituent structure was the syntagmatic or combinatory or 'chain' aspects of linguistics structure. Explaining these two aspects in all the levels of language organization called phonological (sound structure), syntactic (sentence structure) semantic (meaning) was the work of the linguists. This done by establishing, a 'phonological representation', a 'syntactic representation' and a 'semantic representation' and the stage by which one level of representation can be derived from another. At the level of semantics representation the conceptual meaning of a sentence will be explained in the form of semantic representation using the abstract symbols and contrastive features. This will help one to know to distinguish a meaning of a particular sentence from all other possible sentence in the language. This representation will also match the meaning of that sentence with its corresponding correct syntactic and phonological form.

### Connotative meaning

Leech calls connotative meaning was the communicative value an expression has by virtue of what it *refers* to over and above its purely conceptual contents. These are the features of the referent or denotatum or segment of the real world which are not included in the conceptual meaning. Of the different features of the referent few are contrastive or criteria features which provide the basic criterion of the correct use of words.

Leech's (1981) connotative meaning was concerned with the real world experiences one associates with the linguistic expression one uses or hears. Connotative meaning was peripheral when compared with the conceptual meaning. It was also relatively unstable as it varies according to culture, historical periods and experience of the individual. Connotative meaning was indeterminate and open ended. This was because this depends upon the knowledge and beliefs of the speakers and may belong to any characteristics of the referent, real or imaginary as identifies by the speaker. But conceptual meaning consist of a closed set of features which are finite in number. Leech's definition of connotative meaning was quite different from Zgusta's connotation as a component of lexical meaning and John Lyon's use of connotative in contrast to denotation. What Leech calls social and affective meaning are included by Zgusta (1971) under connotation. Lyon's and others call affective or emotive, meaning as connotation.

### Social and affective meaning

These two meaning are concerned with two aspects of communication which are derived from the situation or environment in which an utterance or sentence was produced in a language. Of these two, social meaning was that information which a piece of language (i.e. a pronunciation variation, a word, phrase, sentence, etc.,) conveys about the social circumstance of its use. Social meaning was understood through the recognition of different dimension and level of style within the same language. Aspects of language variation like social or regional dialect variation, style variation like formal, informal, colloquial, slang etc., in a social situation a functional meaning of a sentence may differ from its conceptual meaning due to its illocutionary force. Affective meaning was the aspects of meaning which "reflects personal feelings of the speaker, includes the attitude of the listener or his attitude to something the listener was talking about. But leech's includes as in the case of social meaning, not only difference in the use of words or lexemes but also factors of intonation and voice-timber referred to as tone of voice.

### Reflected and collective meaning

These two types of meaning are due to relation between words or interconnection on the lexical level of language. Of the two, reflected meaning was the meaning which arises in cases when a word has multiple conceptual meaning or polysemous, when one sense of a word form part of our response (or reaction) to another sense. Collocative meaning consists of the association a word acquires on account of the meaning of words which tend to occur in its environment. What Leech calls Collocative meaning was the component range of application?

### Associative meaning

Of the six types of meaning discussed so far except the conceptual meaning the other five i.e. connotative meaning,

social meaning, affective meaning, reflected meaning and collative meaning have something in common. These meaning have open ended and variable character. They cannot be analyzed in clear cut either-this-or-that term. Therefore, Leech group all these under the heading of associative meaning. While conceptual meaning was part of the 'common system' of language shared by member of the speech community, associative meaning was less stable and varies with the individual's experience.

### Thematic meaning

Thematic meaning was that "what was communicated by the way in which a speaker or writer organize the message, in terms of ordering, focus, and emphasis". The thematic meaning can also be expressed by means of stress and intonation to highlight information in one part of a sentence.

### Conclusion

Geoffrey Leech (1981) studied the meaning in a very broad way and breaks it down into seven types <sup>[1]</sup> logical or conceptual meaning, <sup>[2]</sup> connotative meaning, <sup>[3]</sup> social meaning, <sup>[4]</sup> affective meaning, <sup>[5]</sup> reflected meaning, <sup>[6]</sup> collective meaning and <sup>[7]</sup> thematic meaning. Of these logical or conceptual meaning was the same as designative meaning. Leech's connotative meaning was different from connotation. Except conceptual meaning and thematic meaning the other five are called associative meaning.

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