

Tutorial Twelve

Semantics & a bit of Pragmatics

Exercise One: Semantic Relations between sentences

For each of the following sentences identify if the relationship is one of paraphrase; entailment; contradiction; or presupposition. For presupposition, explain what you believe from the statement.

1. Nancy brought salmon for dinner.
There is nothing for dinner. _____
2. Mary sang a solo.
A solo was sung by Mary. _____
3. The bear attacked a camper.
The camper was injured. _____
4. Tony has stopped eating sugar. _____
5. George gave Sally the book.
George gave the book to Sally. _____
6. George gave Sally the book.
Sally has the book. _____
7. Sally read the book again. _____
8. Sam is a widower.
Sam's wife is alive. _____

Exercise Two: Thematic Roles

Although there are more, practice the common thematic roles: AGENT, PATIENT/THEME, BENFACTIVE, SOURCE, GOAL, LOCATION. Below each sentence, identify the noun phrases (NP) and the thematic roles assigned to those NPs. The first is done for you.

1. Sarah drove that bus from Toronto to St. John's.
[AGENT] [PATIENT] [SOURCE] [GOAL]

2. The children are eating their ice cream in the living room.

3. Which shoes did you buy at the store?
4. Alyssa came here from work.
5. Theresa brought the movie for you.
6. Sally mailed a package to her nephew.

Exercise Three: Conversational Maxims

The following conversations violate the Maxims of the Cooperative Principle (the guidelines for good conversational contributions). Can you identify which Maxim is violated in each?

Maxim of Relevance	Make your contribution relevant
Maxim of Quality	Make your contribution truthful
Maxim of Quantity	Make your contribution only as informative as required
Maxim of Manner	Make your contribution unambiguous, clear, and orderly

1. a) *When's the next bus?*

b) *At midnight* (that's not possible, he is lying)

2. a) *When's the next bus?*

b) *When I was a little kid, I was obsessed with buses. I wanted to be a bus driver. I had many little toy buses, and my favourite ones had light-up lights on them. Did you know that buses in England have two stories? I'd like to see that someday. Today we will take the bus here. It will arrive in about 15 minutes. I follow the bus schedule almost everyday!*

3. a) *When's the next bus?*

b) *It'd be hours from now if we were in Newfoundland!*

4. a) *When's the next bus?*

b) *They run on the half-hour and it's 2 o'clock now, so..... (waits for a response)*
