Edited by

Charles J. Fillmore The Ohio State University

D. Terence Langendoen The Graduate Center
and Brooklyn College of
The City University of New York

STUDIES IN LINGUISTIC SEMANTICS

Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.

New York Chicago San Francisco
Atlanta Dallas Montreal

VERBS OF JUDGING: AN EXERCISE IN SEMANTIC DESCRIPTION

Charles J. Fillmore The Ohio State University

1. Preliminaries

In very many ways, assertions made by linguists about the meanings of utterances have been confused and misleading. In the earliest, *mentalist* conception of the meanings of linguistic forms, one spoke of an image or concept or idea that existed in the head of the speaker before the utterance and in the head of the hearer after the utterance. In *behaviorist* definitions of meaning, such as that proposed by Bloomfield, the meaning of a linguistic form was taken to be the situation which preceded the performance of an utterance and the behavior, on the part of the participants in the speech act, which followed it. In the purest of the *structuralist* notions of meaning, the meaning of a linguistic form was given as that feature of social situation which is shared by all utterances of the form, but not present in the utterances of at least some other linguistic forms.

The mentalist definition is of no use to anybody who wants to know whether he correctly understands some linguistic form, if only for the reason that there is no way of knowing whether the images he has in his mind when he produces or encounters the form are shared by his interlocutors. The behaviorist definition is a kind of disguised insult: if instead of telling you what a linguistic form means, I tell you something about when people have used it and what happened after they did, I'm not telling you what the form means, I'm asking you to figure out for yourself what it means. The pure structuralist definition is the most hopeless one of all: if we wish to understand the definition, we must presumably know something about the social situations in which language theorists have proclaimed it; but most of us have simply not heard it often enough or in enough contexts to come up with any particularly reliable conclusion. Completely formulaic "definitions" of meaning have never served our discipline well.

There are theories of meaning, or rather techniques of describing meaning, which regard the meanings of linguistic forms as decomposable into smaller entities of one kind of another, usually called *features* or *components*. The ascription of such components to words and morphemes has often been completely ritualistic, and it is typically carried out in such a way that wherever there are problems, it is certain that the analyst is dealing with unclarities in our understanding of objects in the world or institutions in the associated culture, rather than with facts of the type that are correctly called linguistic.

To show what I mean by this, I ask you to consider one of the "acceptable" ways of determining the semantic properties of a noun like *wolf*. A procedure has been suggested by several authors that when a sentence is not semantically odd, the analyst can be sure that the selectional restrictions associated with the lexical items in that sentence are satisfied and he can perform various replacements in these sentences to detect both the selec-

inherent properties of others (especially the nouns). From such contemplations we can discover that the word *wolf* has the feature *physical object* because of its occurrence in the acceptable sentence (1); we note that it has the feature *living* because of a sentence like (2); and we conclude that it has the feature *animate* because we can say (3).

(1) The wolf fell.
(2) The wolf died.
(3) The wolf felt it.

When both an affirmative sentence and its negative counterpart are odd, the sentence being nevertheless fully grammatical, this is a sign of unsatisfied selectional restrictions; the analyst posits semantic properties of words in ways that will account for the violation. Thus, from the fact that both (4) and (5) are semantically anomalous, we are forced to conclude that, while the verb-phrase requires a *human* subject, the noun *wolf* has the feature *nonhuman*. We know from the oddity of sentence (6) that the noun has the feature (say) *nonrigid*. And so on.

(4) The wolf got a divorce.
(5) The wolf didn't get a divorce.
(6) I accidentally broke your wolf.

We would very soon discover, if we carried out this process much further, first of all, that there is no stopping place, and secondly, that wherever it is unclear to us whether or not a sentence is odd in the intended sense, this unclarity has a lot more to do with what we happen to believe about the creatures known as wolves than with what we, as speakers of English, know about the linguistic properties of the noun *wolf*.

The difficulties that I have mentioned exist, it seems to me, because linguistic semanticists, like the philosophers and psychologists whose work they were echoing, have found it relevant to ask, not *What do I need to know in order to use this form appropriately and to understand other people when they use it?* but rather, *What is the meaning of this form?* And having asked that, linguists have sought to discover the external signs of meanings, the reflexes of meanings in the speech situation, and the inner structure of meanings. It is apparent that the wrong question has been asked.[1]

From the writings of the ordinary language philosophers, linguists can learn to talk, not so much about the meanings of linguistic forms—where "meanings" are regarded as abstract entities of some mysterious sort—but about the rules of usage that we must assume a speaker of a language to

[1] This argument parallels the criticism of philosophical accounts of meaning found in Austin (1961).

"know" in order to account for his ability to use linguistic forms appropriately. Although it is true that the use theorists in philosophy have not given linguists a tool which we can merely take over and turn instantly to our own use, I believe that we can profitably draw from some of the philosophers' discussion of language use when we propose or examine semantic theories within linguistics. In particular, we can turn our own inquiry toward the conditions under which a speaker of a language implicitly knows it to be appropriate to use given linguistic forms.

Among the ordinary language philosophers, there is some question of whether a use theory of meaning should begin with words or with sentences; we must hope that there is some way of resolving this conflict. Those philosophers who are particularly concerned with words[2] speak of there being rules for the use of words, and such rules include the principles for the composition of words into utterances; but these philosophers would deny that one can speak of the "use" of a sentence. The analogy is with chess: it makes sense to speak of what to do with a knight, or how to use a knight in a game of chess; but it does not always make sense to ask what one can do with a game of chess.[3]

On the other hand, there are philosophers who are mainly concerned with what one can do with sentences.[4] Utterances can be used in performing various acts (after J. L. Austin[5] we may call these *illocutionary acts*)—such things as informing somebody that a state of affairs exists, making a prediction, committing oneself to future actions, urging, promoting, suggesting, insulting, threatening, requesting, and so on. To such philosophers, the really basic notion of semantic theory is the *illocutionary act potential* of sentences—the range of things that one can do in saying specific sentences. In this view, the uses of words must be derivatively specified: to know how to use a word is to know how to use it in sentences with different illocutionary act potentials.[6]

Philosophers who have paid the most attention to the illocutionary forces of utterances have sometimes exemplified what they call the *happiness conditions* or *felicity conditions*[7] for the use of given sentences. The most common type of example is an imperative sentence like (7).

(7) Please shut the door.

For this sentence, a reasonable set of happiness conditions is given on the following page.

[2] See Gilbert Ryle (1953).
[3] Ryle (1953), p. 35 of Chappell (1964).
[4] See especially Alston (1964).
[5] See Austin (1962a), especially pp. 98ff.
[6] See Alston (1964), p. 39.
[7] These locutions are due to J. L. Austin.

i. The speaker and the addressee of this sentence are in some kind of relationship which allows the speaker to make requests of the addressee.
ii. The addressee is in a position where he is capable of shutting the door.
iii. There is some particular door which the speaker has in mind and which he has reason to assume the addressee can identify without any further descriptive aid on the speaker's part.
iv. The door in question is, at the time of utterance, open.
v. The speaker wants that door to become closed.

An important fact that is typically omitted from a philosopher's record of the set of happiness conditions of a sentence is that the various conditions are separately related to different specific facts about the grammatical structure of the sentence. For example, from the fact that the form of the sentence is imperative, we infer those conditions that relate to the speaker-addressee relationship; from the presence of the definite article, we infer the understanding that there is some mutually identifiable door to which the speaker is referring; the others are inferable from the ways in which we understand the verb *shut*.

More importantly, however, it needs to be pointed out that some of these conditions are really preconditions for the use of the sentence, rather than information about what the actual illocutionary force of utterances of the sentence is. Of the conditions I mentioned, for example, most of them are completely unaffected by negation. Thus, if I say (8),

(8) Please *don't* shut the door.

the same conditions hold about the door being identifiable, about its being now open, and about the relations between speaker and hearer. The only one that changes is the one about the speaker wanting the door closed.

2. The Discovery and Description of Presuppositions

I believe that the speech communication situation can be usefully analyzed into two levels or aspects, and these we might refer to as the presuppositional and the illocutionary. By the presuppositional aspects of a speech communication situation, I mean those conditions which must be satisfied in order for a particular illocutionary act to be effectively performed in saying particular sentences.[8] Of course, we need not be concerned with the

[8] On presuppositions see Frege (1892) and Strawson (1950).

totality of such conditions, but only with those that can be related to facts about the linguistic structure of sentences. In other words, while it is perfectly true that an utterance of sentence (7) cannot be effective if spoken to someone who does not know English or is out of hearing distance, these are necessary factors to every speech communication act, and do not have any special part in the understanding of that particular sentence.

In every conversation, we constantly make use of both the implicit, or presuppositional, and the explicit, or illocutionary, levels of communication. We know, for example, that our utterances can be judged as inappropriate or incorrect not only on the grounds that some state of affairs has been wrongly described, or that one has acted in bad faith in promising something or warning someone, but also on the grounds of presupposition-failure. We also know that by counting on the addressee's knowing the presuppositions of sentences, and by using sentences deliberately under conditions of presupposition-failure, we can sometimes communicate certain special messages or attitudes or achieve certain secondary communication goals—as would be the case if somebody were to ask me, *When did you stop beating your wife?*

Any complete account of the grammatical description of a language will need to bring in presuppositional facts at many points. In the counterfactual conditional description of a sentence, for example, one must mention that an utterance of the sentence presupposes the falsity of the proposition contained in the *if*-clause. In the most typical use of the definite determiner the speaker presupposes the existence of the object indirectly described by the associated noun phrase. An imperative sentence presupposes the kinds of speaker/addressee relationships mentioned earlier in connection with sentence (7). And so on.

I believe that linguistic theory is in need of a kind of analysis of the speech act that takes into account the presuppositional and the illocutionary aspects of speech communication, and I think that eventually linguists will be able to construct a system of rules by means of which, given the complete grammatical description of any sentence, one can "compute" the full set of the presuppositions which must be satisfied for any in-good-faith utterances of that sentence. The grammatical information that is needed for this computation is extremely complex, involving lexical information associated with individual words, global structural properties of sentences, the placement of contrastive stress, and just about anything imaginable. What I myself have been more directly interested in is that relatively small aspect of the problem which can be associated with the lexical description of particular verbs. One set of verbs in English that can serve to illustrate this aspect of lexically specific information is the one which includes the words speakers of English use in speaking about various types of interpersonal relationships involving judgments of worth and responsibility.

3. Verbs of Judging

I turn now to a consideration of some of the role concepts that one needs to have available for discussing the semantic structure of these verbs. I begin by identifying the terms needed for describing what I might like to call the *role structure*[9] of these verbs, that is, by identifying the various types or entities or aspects-of-situation that are needed for describing the conditions under which it is appropriate to use these verbs.

First of all, we will need to refer to some situation, action, deed, or state of affairs: for this I choose the term *situation*.

The situation we are speaking of may be one which favorably or unfavorably affects some individual: I refer to this being as the *affected*.

There may be some individual concerning whom it is relevant to ask whether he is responsible for the situation—he may have brought it about, or allowed it to come about. We may call him the *defendant*.[10]

Then there may be somebody who makes some kind of moral judgment about the situation or about the defendant's responsibility for the situation, or who makes a statement about such matters; we may call him the *judge*.[11]

The judge may simply make a judgment, and keep it to himself. On the other hand, he may make a statement—that is, he may say something about the situation or about the defendant. If he makes a statement, this statement is addressed to somebody: we may call that person the *addressee*. The term *addressee* in the descriptions offered below must be understood as referring to the addressee, not of the utterance which contains the verbs we are examining, but of the speech act which these verbs might refer to. Where needed, we shall refer to the speaker of the sentence in a speech-communication-situation as the *locutionary source*, and the addressee of that sentence as the *locutionary target*.

The words that we shall examine are *accuse, blame, criticize, credit, praise, scold, confess, apologize, forgive, justify,* and *excuse*. The ways in which the various role concepts I just mentioned can figure in semantic descriptions may be illustrated as follows: Suppose that somebody named

[9] The "role structure" proposed for this group of verbs is analogous to, but (I believe) distinct from the more general grammatical role structure of predicates of the type discussed in Fillmore (1968) and Halliday (1967–1968).

[10] I regret the courtroom connotations of the word *defendant*, but the other words that come to mind are more inadequate still. The word *culprit*, for example, presupposes that the individual so-identified was the one responsible; the word *suspect* presupposes that it is not known whether the individual is responsible. All three presuppose that the deed was blameworthy. What is needed is some word that is neutral with respect to all such presuppositions.

[11] Once again, the courtroom connotations are unwelcome. I mean merely one who makes or expresses a judgment about blameworthiness.

John told me that my Congressman was soft on Communism, and suppose that in referring to that event, I utter sentence (9).

(9) John accused my Congressman of being soft on Communism.

I, the speaker of that sentence, am the locutionary source; and you, my intended addressees, are the locutionary target. John is the judge, my Congressman is the defendant; being soft on Communism is the situation; I am the addressee, since John's statement was addressed to me. Suppose now, by way of a second example, that John had written an obscene letter to Mary, and then told her that he was sorry; and suppose that in reporting this to you I utter sentences (10) and (11).

(10) John apologized to Mary for writing the letter.
(11) Mary forgave John for writing the letter.

In each of these cases John is the defendant and Mary the affected. In the sentence with *apologize,* Mary is also the addressee of John's utterance: an apology is directed to the affected.

In the lexical entries gathered in the Appendix, I have associated with each of these verbs—and with *blame* in three senses—various kinds of lexically specific information. In addition to the semantic properties that I attempted to exhibit in these entries, the verbs differ in various syntactic ways. For example, the phrase indicating the Situation is marked off by the preposition *of* in the case of *accuse,* by *with* in the case of *credit,* and by *for* elsewhere; observe sentences (12)a–c.

(12) a. John accused Harry of writing the letter.
b. John credited Harry with writing the letter.
c. John criticized Harry for writing the letter.

There are, moreover, fairly complicated conditions determining the responsibility of the situation as a noun or as a sentential object. Thus we can say (13) or (14) but not (15) or (16).

(13) I accused John of causing the accident.
(14) I scolded John for causing the accident.
(15) *I accused John of the accident.
(16) *I scolded John for the accident.

With *blame,* by way of contrast, we find either (17) or (18). On the other hand, we can say (19) but not (20).

(17) I blamed John for causing the accident.
(18) I blamed John for the accident.
(19) I accused John of murder/treason.
(20) *I blamed John for murder/treason.

A syntactic fact unique (in this set of words) to *blame* is that when the situation is represented with a noun, it can be realized as the direct object of the verb, with the defendant marked off with the preposition *on*. Thus we can say either (18) or (21).

(21) I blamed the accident on John.

The words *criticize* and *scold* agree in that they can function in syntactically complete sentences even though the offending Situation is not explicitly mentioned. Thus we can say (22) or (23)

(22) She criticized him.
(23) She scolded him.

but we do not get, as syntactically complete utterances, (24) or (25).

(24) *She blamed him.
(25) *She accused him.

Sentences (24) and (25) may, however, be used elliptically when the nature of the offense is known from the context, but they cannot initiate a conversation. Put differently, (22) is a paraphrase of (26) while (24) is a paraphrase of (27).

(26) She criticized him for something.
(27) She blamed him for it.

The full roster of lexical information about these words, then, cannot be found in the entries exemplified in the Appendix. These contain only information relevant to semantic description.[12]

On examining these entries, the reader will notice that *accuse, criticize, scold, blame* in three senses, *credit* and *praise* are verbs that conceptually require an understanding of the three entities I have indicated as judge, defendant, and situation.[13] I am thinking of these verbs as they are understood in such sentences as (28)–(30).

[12] For an informal survey of the range of information required in a complete lexicon, see Fillmore (1969b).

[13] Notice that I am considering the word *criticize* only in the sense in which the concepts I have been talking about are relevant. There is also an esthetic sense of *criticize*, in which it is synonymous with 'evaluate on esthetic grounds'; but I do not consider here that sense of the verb.

(28) John accused Harry of writing the letter.
(29) John credited Harry with writing the letter.
(30) John criticized/scolded/blamed/praised Harry for writing the letter.

The words *apologize* and *forgive* require in their role structure an understanding of the three entities affected, defendant, and situation.[14] I am thinking of these verbs as they would be understood in such sentences as (31) and (32).

(31) Harry apologized to Mary for writing the letter.
(32) Mary forgave Harry for writing the letter.

The words *justify* and *excuse* have much wider uses than I am able to discuss here, but we can limit our attention to their use in sentences like (33) and (34).

(33) Harry justified his having written the letter.
(34) Harry excused his writing the letter.

These involve the defendant and the situation.

Some of the verbs in our collection refer to linguistic acts. *Accuse, criticize* and *praise,* for example, are used to refer to situations in which the individual we have classified as the judge *says* something to someone.[15] The content of the linguistic production is represented in the entry as 'X' in quotation marks, a variable whose value is identified in the next line.

Certain others of the verbs—for example the second and third senses of *blame*—refer not to statements made public by the judge, but to inner experiences, to inner and possibly unspoken judgments made by the judge. For indicating these in the entries I have presented the judge and 'X' as the two complements of THINK, with the content of the judge's thoughts indicated on the next line.

The verbs *excuse* and *justify* are also linguistic-act verbs, and so is *apologize;* but *forgive* is not.[16]

Underneath the statements of what I have called the "meanings" of these verbs there can be found one or more formulas that capture what I

[14] It is only this sense of *apologize* that will concern us here.

[15] I use the word *say* in the entries, but it should be understood that the communicative act in question can be carried out in other ways besides speaking out loud.

[16] I have not, the reader will notice, succeeded in offering a very helpful description of the meaning of *forgive.*

take to be the necessary presuppositions of utterances having these items as their main verbs. The content of the presuppositions, the statements, and the judgments made by the subjects of these verbs, are all expressed as propositions or identity-conditions. They include the following: *The situation is blameworthy,* represented as the word *BAD* having, after it, the word *Situation* in square brackets; *the situation is praiseworthy,* represented as the word *GOOD* having, after it, the word *Situation* in square brackets; *the defendant is responsible for the situation,* represented as the word *RESPONSIBLE* followed by the words *Defendant* and *Situation* in square brackets; or *the situation is factual,* rather than merely conceived. This last I have represented as the term *ACTUAL* followed, in square brackets, by the word *Situation.*

We turn now to the description of the verbs *accuse* and *criticize.*

ACCUSE [Judge, Defendant, Situation (of)] (Performative)
Meaning: SAY [Judge, 'X', Addressee]
X = RESPONSIBLE [Situation, Defendant]
Presupposition: BAD [Situation]

CRITICIZE [Judge, Defendant, Situation (for)]
Meaning: SAY [Judge, 'X', Addressee]
X = BAD [Situation]
Presupposition: RESPONSIBLE [Defendant, Situation]
Presupposition: ACTUAL [Situation]

What is claimed by these descriptions is this: a speaker of English uses the word *accuse* when talking about a situation which is unquestionably bad and he wishes to report the claim that a certain person is responsible for that situation; he would use the word *criticize* when talking about a situation in which there is no question about who is responsible for it and he wants to report the claim that the situation was blameworthy. Thus, if I say (35),

(35) John accused Harry of writing the letter.

I presuppose that there was something blameworthy about writing the letter, and I'm telling you that John said Harry did it. If I say (36),

(36) John criticized Harry for writing the letter.

I presuppose that Harry wrote the letter, and I'm telling you that John said that Harry's having written the letter was blameworthy. It is to be

noticed that what is presupposed by the use of one of these verbs is part of the content of the linguistic act referred to by the other.[17]

These two verbs differ in two other interesting ways. Uses of the verb *criticize* presuppose the factuality of the situation; but not so for *accuse.* This distinction is not apparent in the examples given so far because of the use of the definite article in the phrase *writing the letter.* If we replace this by a situation-indicating expression that does not have its own existence presuppositions—such as one containing an indefinite noun-phrase—this other presuppositional difference between these two verbs becomes apparent. Consider the two sentences, (37) and (38).

(37) I accused Harry of writing an obscene letter to my mother.
(38) I criticized Harry for writing an obscene letter to my mother.

With *accuse,* there is no presupposition that such a letter was ever written; with *criticize* there is.

A second way in which *accuse* and *criticize* differ from each other is that *accuse* can be used "performatively," using that term in the sense it has been given by Austin.[18] An utterance of a sentence with this verb in its first person present tense form has a "force" that is different from that of simply conveying information. An utterance of sentence (39)

(39) I accuse Harry of writing the letter.

can in itself be an accusing act; the verb *criticize* is not a performative verb, and what this means is that performances of sentence (40)

(40) I criticize Harry for writing the letter.

cannot in themselves constitute criticisms.

The verb *scold* is like *criticize* in many respects, but it requires that the defendant be identical with the addressee in the linguistic act referred to by the verb. The addressee in the linguistic act referred to by uses of *criticize* can be anybody. Thus, I can criticize Harry to his face or behind his back, but I cannot *scold* him behind his back. The following is the lexical entry for *scold.*

[17] The basis for separating the presuppositions from the rest of the meaning is that the presuppositions obtain even when the sentence is negated or interrogated. Thus, if I say *John didn't criticize Harry for writing the letter,* I presuppose Harry's responsibility for the letter just as much as in the affirmative sentence; similarly, if I ask, *Did John accuse Harry of writing the letter?,* I can utter this question in good faith only if I believe that there is no question that the letter-writing act was objectionable.

[18] See Austin (1962a,b).

SCOLD [Judge, Defendant, Situation (for)]
Meaning: SAY [Judge, 'X', Addressee]
X = BAD [Situation]
Presupposition: RESPONSIBLE [Defendant, Situation]
Presupposition: THINK [Judge, 'ACTUAL [Situation]']
Presupposition: Defendant = Addressee

There may be another presuppositional matter that separates *accuse* from *criticize* and *scold*. If the offending situation is extremely serious, the words *criticize* and *scold* seem inappropriate. Thus, a sentence like (41) sounds more natural than either (42) or (43).

(41) I accused Harry of raping my daughter.
(42) I criticized Harry for raping my daughter.
(43) I scolded Harry for raping my daughter.

This observation probably has nothing to do with specifically linguistic facts about these verbs, however. It's just that we find it difficult to imagine a situation in which somebody is *explaining* to somebody else that an act of rape was immoral or in bad taste.

Blame in one of its uses is a linguistic-act verb; that is, there is one sense of the verb *blame* by which I would mean, in saying *He blamed me*, that he had said something to somebody. This is the sense I call $blame_1$.

BLAME$_1$ [Judge, Defendant, Situation (for)]
Meaning: SAY [Judge, 'X', Addressee]
X = RESPONSIBLE [Defendant, Situation]
Presupposition: BAD [Situation]
Presupposition: NOT (RESPONSIBLE [Defendant, Situation])
Presupposition: Defendant $\neq$ Addressee
Presupposition: Judge $\neq$ Defendant

It is this use of the verb that one would find in the following situation. Harry wrote the letter himself, and then he gave people to believe that I had written it; I say (44).

(44) Harry blamed the letter on me.

In this sense of *blame*, the locutionary source reports the judge's statement that the defendant is responsible for the situation, but with the presupposition that the defendant was *not* the responsible one. With $blame_1$, it follows of necessity, the defendant is *not* the addressee of the judge's statement, and the judge is not the defendant. That is, it is not in the linguistic-act sense of *blame* that one can blame oneself. Otherwise, $blame_1$ has much in common with *accuse*.[19]

The other two verbs *blame* are not linguistic-act verbs, but refer to opinions or thoughts or internal judgments on the part of the judge. Otherwise $blame_2$ and $blame_3$ are like *criticize* and *accuse* respectively.

BLAME$_2$ [Judge, Defendant, Situation]
Meaning: THINK [Judge, 'X']
X = BAD [Situation]
Presupposition: RESPONSIBLE [Defendant, Situation]
Presupposition: ACTUAL [Situation]

BLAME$_3$ [Judge, Defendant, Situation]
Meaning: THINK [Judge, 'X']
X = RESPONSIBLE [Defendant, Situation]
Presupposition: BAD [Situation]
Presupposition: ACTUAL [Situation]

This ambiguity of *blame*, that is, the division of *blame* into $blame_2$ and $blame_3$[20] can be illustrated this way. Suppose there's no question in anybody's mind that I wrote a particular letter, and what I'm telling you is that John for some reason regarded my action as blameworthy. I can say, in reporting his state of affairs, sentence (45).

(45) John *bldmed* me for writing the letter.

This is $blame_2$. Or suppose that there is no doubt of the blameworthiness of this particular letter, and what I'm telling you is that John felt that I had done it. I can say sentence (46).

(46) John blamed *mé* for writing the letter.

That is $blame_3$.[21]

We turn now to the verbs *excuse* and *justify*.[22]

[19] To some speakers, $blame_1$ is a kind of achievement verb, implying that the Judge succeeded in affecting his addressee's beliefs. I think that I would not say **He blamed it on me, but fortunately nobody believed him.* I would have to say, *He tried to blame it on me, but fortunately nobody believed him.*

[20] The distinction being discussed here was pointed out in footnote 2 in Austin (1956).

[21] It is $blame_1$ that we find in the request, *Don't blame mé!*, and $blame_2$ that we find in the reassuring words, *I don't bldme you.*

[22] The distinction between these two verbs was described in very similar terms in Austin (1956), p. 42 of Chappell (1964).

EXCUSE [Defendant, Situation]
Meaning: SAY [Defendant, 'X', Addressee]
X = NOT (RESPONSIBLE [Defendant, Situation])
Presupposition: BAD [Situation]
Presupposition: ACTUAL [Situation]

JUSTIFY [Defendant, Situation]
Meaning: SAY [Defendant, 'X', Addressee]
X = NOT (BAD [Situation])
Presupposition: RESPONSIBLE [Defendant, Situation]
Presupposition: ACTUAL [Situation]

One *justifies* an action when there is no question of who is responsible, but where one wishes to say that the action was not really bad. One *excuses* an action when there is no question of the badness of the action, but where one wishes to disclaim responsibility. Thus, I can *justify* bombing a peasant village by pointing out that this deed was part of some larger endeavor that is essentially good. I can *excuse* my having bombed a peasant village by pointing out that I thought the button I pushed was the cigarette lighter.

This description does not tell the whole story. One very clear aspect of the use of these verbs is the presupposition that, in both cases, there is some reason for believing what the judge is denying. That is, it is only appropriate to speak of justifying an action if on the face of it it looks as if the action was bad; it is only appropriate to excuse one's behavior if there's some superficial evidence to believe that one *was* fully responsible for it.

In all of the descriptions that we have examined so far, there was something about badness and something about responsibility, and whenever one of these showed up in the description of the meaning, the other showed up in the statement of the presuppositions. With the words *apologize* and *forgive*, however, both of these show up in the presuppositions. If I say sentence (47),

(47) Harry apologized to Mary for writing the letter.

I am presupposing both that Harry wrote the letter and that there was something bad about his doing that; and I make exactly the same presuppositions if I say sentence (48).

(48) Mary forgave Harry for writing the letter.

APOLOGIZE [Defendant, Affected (to), Situation (for)] (Performative)
Meaning: SAY [Defendant, 'X', Addressee]
X = REQUEST [Defendant, 'FORGIVE [Victim, Defendant, Situation]']
Presupposition: BAD [Situation]

Presupposition: RESPONSIBLE [Defendant, Situation]
Presupposition: ACTUAL [Situation]

FORGIVE [Affected, Defendant, Situation (for)] (Performative)
Meaning: DECIDE [Affected, 'X']
X = ? (Affected will not hold Situation against Defendant)
Presupposition: BAD [Situation]
Presupposition: RESPONSIBLE [Defendant, Situation]
Presupposition: ACTUAL [Situation]

These words refer to changes, or requests for changes, in the negative relationship that has come about between affected and defendant as a result of the latter's having committed some offense.[23]

The verbs *credit* and *praise* have semantic descriptions very analogous to those of *blame*$_3$ and *criticize* respectively, except that the evaluative predicate *GOOD* replaces *BAD* in the presuppositions of the one and in the "meaning" of the other.

CREDIT [Judge, Defendant, Situation (with)]
Meaning: THINK [Judge, 'X']
X = RESPONSIBLE [Defendant, Situation]
Presupposition: GOOD [Situation]

PRAISE [Judge, Defendant, Situation (for)]
Meaning: SAY [Judge, Addressee, 'X']
X = GOOD [Situation]
Presupposition: RESPONSIBLE [Defendant, Situation]

What is apparent from our examination of the semantic properties of this selected group of words is that we have identified a portion, at least, of a semantic "field," in the sense of the German field theorists.[24] It will of course be interesting to see, first of all, what structure is discoverable in the vocabulary field we have been examining (for example, whether it is clear that a language never needs words analogous to *excuse, justify, forgive* and *apologize* but with *BAD* replaced by *GOOD*, whether there are in the system of features suggested for these English verbs any "accidental gaps");

[23] I have called both of these verbs performatives, but I have described only *apologize* as a linguistic act verb. To say that they are performatives is to recognize that an utterance of the sentence *I apologize for writing the letter* constitutes in itself, if it is acknowledged, the performance of an act which will change the relationship between the two people; and so, I believe, is an utterance of the sentence, *I forgive you for writing the letter.* In nonperformative uses, however, only *apologize* is a verb of saying. This we can recognize if we see that it's acceptable to say *He apologized, but he didn't mean it,* but it's not acceptable to say, *He forgave me, but he didn't mean it.* One would have to say, *He said he forgave me, but he didn't mean it.*

[24] See for work representative of this school, Trier (1931) and Weisgerber (1953–1954).

secondly, whether there are other verbs so far unknown to me that fill out or extend the system I have proposed (there are a great many variants of *scold* that come to mind (*chide, castigate,* and so forth), *commend* has essentially the same analysis as *praise,* and there is a set of verbs including *admit, confess, concede,* and so forth, which lend themselves to description in the terms that have been discussed here); and thirdly, to what extent the concepts that have proved of service for this group of English verbs can provide descriptions of the nearest equivalents of these verbs in other languages. All of these questions I must unfortunately leave to the future.

Appendix

ACCUSE [Judge, Defendant, Situation (of)] (Performative)
Meaning: SAY [Judge, 'X', Addressee]
X = RESPONSIBLE [Situation, Defendant]
Presupposition: BAD [Situation]

CRITICIZE [Judge, Defendant, Situation (for)]
Meaning: SAY [Judge, 'X', Addressee]
X = BAD [Situation]
Presupposition: RESPONSIBLE [Defendant, Situation]
Presupposition: ACTUAL [Situation]

SCOLD [Judge, Defendant, Situation (for)]
Meaning: SAY [Judge, 'X', Addressee]
X = BAD [Situation]
Presupposition: RESPONSIBLE [Defendant, Situation]
Presupposition: THINK [Judge, 'ACTUAL [Situation]']
Presupposition: Defendant = Addressee

$BLAME_1$ [Judge, Defendant, Situation (for)]
Meaning: SAY [Judge, 'X', Addressee]
X = RESPONSIBLE [Defendant, Situation]
Presupposition: BAD [Situation]
Presupposition: NOT (RESPONSIBLE [Defendant, Situation])
Presupposition: Defendant $\neq$ Addressee
Presupposition: Judge $\neq$ Defendant

$BLAME_2$ [Judge, Defendant, Situation]
Meaning: THINK [Judge, 'X']
X = BAD [Situation]
Presupposition: RESPONSIBLE [Defendant, Situation]
Presupposition: ACTUAL [Situation]

$BLAME_3$ [Judge, Defendant, Situation]
Meaning: THINK [Judge, 'X']
X = RESPONSIBLE [Defendant, Situation]
Presupposition: BAD [Situation]
Presupposition: ACTUAL [Situation]

EXCUSE [Defendant, Situation]
Meaning: SAY [Defendant, 'X', Addressee]
X = NOT (RESPONSIBLE [Defendant, Situation])
Presupposition: BAD [Situation]
Presupposition: ACTUAL [Situation]

JUSTIFY [Defendant, Situation]
Meaning: SAY [Defendant, 'X', Addressee]
X = NOT (BAD [Situation])
Presupposition: RESPONSIBLE [Defendant, Situation]
Presupposition: ACTUAL [Situation]

APOLOGIZE [Defendant, Affected (to), Situation (for)] (Performative)
Meaning: SAY [Defendant, 'X', Addressee]
X = REQUEST [Defendant, 'FORGIVE [Victim, Defendant, Situation]']
Presupposition: BAD [Situation]
Presupposition: RESPONSIBLE [Defendant, Situation]
Presupposition: ACTUAL [Situation]

FORGIVE [Affected, Defendant, Situation (for)] (Performative)
Meaning: DECIDE [Affected, 'X']
X = ? (Affected will not hold Situation against Defendant)
Presupposition: BAD [Situation]
Presupposition: RESPONSIBLE [Defendant, Situation]
Presupposition: ACTUAL [Situation]

CREDIT [Judge, Defendant, Situation (with)]
Meaning: THINK [Judge, 'X']
X = RESPONSIBLE [Defendant, Situation]
Presupposition: GOOD [Situation]

PRAISE [Judge, Defendant, Situation (for)]
Meaning: SAY [Judge, Addressee, 'X']
X = GOOD [Situation]
Presupposition: RESPONSIBLE [Defendant, Situation]