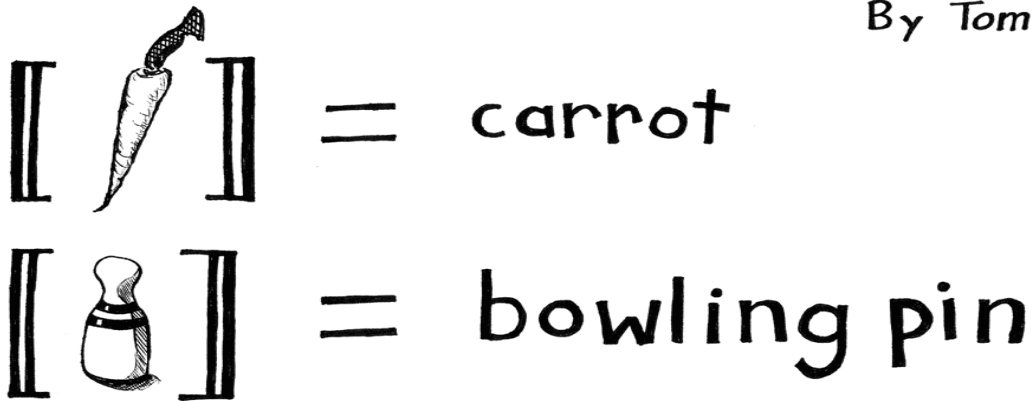


Semantics and Generative Grammar (LING610): Syllabus

By Tom 7



Cartoon above by Tom Murphy (<http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~tom7>)

Linguistics 610
Tuesday, Thursday 1:00-2:15
Classroom: Integrated Learning Center 458
Course Instructor: Seth Cable

Course Website:
<http://people.umass.edu/scable/LING610-FA14>
E-mail: scable@linguist.umass.edu

1. General Overview

- This course introduces students to the concepts and techniques of semantic theory, as well as certain basic results of the field.
- Students will develop experience with a particular formal semantic system (Heim & Kratzer 1998), largely by learning how such a system can be adjusted and expanded in order to cover ever-larger domains of linguistic phenomena.
- These phenomena will largely be taken from English, our primary language of study, but comparisons (and extensions) to other languages will also be made.
- Through the development of this formal semantic system, students will gain a better understanding of how to ask and answer ‘semantic questions’, not only regarding their own language, but also ones for which they themselves are not speakers.

2. Course Requirements

2.1 Problem Sets

You will be assigned approximately nine problem sets. Problem sets will be assigned on Thursdays and will be due the following Thursday. Answers to the problem sets will be discussed in class on the date they are due, and so late assignments will not be accepted.

2.2 Take-Home Exams

There will be two take-home exams. The mid-term exam will be distributed October 23, and due November 4. The final exam will be distributed December 2, and due December 16.

While these exams will include some ‘mechanical exercises’, they will largely emphasize critical thinking and writing. You will be asked to apply the knowledge gained in class to novel empirical and analytic problems.

3. Textbook

There is one textbook required for this class, which should be available at the University bookstore:

- Irene Heim & Angelika Kratzer. 1998. *Semantics in Generative Grammar*. Blackwell.

In addition, I will post scanned excerpts from various other works, particularly the following:

- Gennaro Chierchia & Sally McConnell-Ginet. 2000. *Meaning and Grammar*, 2nd Edition. MIT Press.

4. Outline of Course Content

4.1 Formal Foundations: A Basic Review of Sets and Functions

- Basics of Set Theory
- Basics of Functions

Required Reading:
Heim & Kratzer: 3-11

Suggested Reading:
Chierchia & McConnell-Ginet: 529-540
Partee *et al.*: 3-36

4.2 The Conceptual Foundations of Truth-Conditional Semantics

- The overarching program of ‘formal semantics’
- The principle of compositionality
- The different dimensions of meaning (assertion, presupposition, implicature)
- Analyzing (part of) meaning via ‘Truth-Conditions’
- Intentions and Extensions
- Computing extensions of complex phrases
- Deriving truth-conditions in an extensional semantics

Required Reading:
Heim & Kratzer: 1-12, 13-26

Suggested Reading
Chierchia & McConnell-Ginet: 1-33, 53-73, 99-104
Larson 1995: 361-368
Partee 1995: 311-316

4.3 Expanding Our Formalism

- Transitive verbs and sentence connectives
- The system of ‘semantic types’
- The lambda notation for functions
- Some broader, syntactic consequences of our system

Required Reading:

Heim & Kratzer: 26-42, 43-53

4.4 Further Elements of English

- Semantically vacuous words
- Non-verbal predicates: nouns and adjectives
- The rule of ‘Predicate Modification’
- The semantics of adjectival modification (intersective vs. subsective)
- Definite DPs, and a little on presuppositions

Required Reading:

Heim & Kratzer: 61-85

4.5 Conversational Implicature: The Classic Gricean Theory

- The notion of ‘conversational implicature’
- The Gricean conversational maxims and their relation to conversational implicatures
- Distinguishing conversational implicature from ‘conventionalized meanings’
- Applications: the semantics of disjunction and numerals
- Scalar implicatures
- Some problems for the classic Gricean theory: processing/acquisition of scalar implicatures and embedded scalar implicatures

Required Reading:

Chierchia & McConnell-Ginet: 25-28, 239-255
Korta & Perry 2011: Section 1 and Section 2.1.2

Suggested Reading

Gamut 1991: 195-219

4.6 The Semantics of Pronouns and Movement

- The semantics of deictic pronouns and indices
- Relative clauses, and the semantics of movement
- The semantics of bound pronouns and traces

Required Reading:

Heim & Kratzer: 86-115, 239-245

4.7 The Semantics of Quantificational Determiners

- The basic semantics of quantificational determiners and quantificational DPs
- The basics of Generalized Quantifier Theory
- Formal properties of quantifiers
- The basics of the strong/weak distinction

Required Reading:

Heim & Kratzer: 131-177

4.8 Quantifier Raising and/or Type Shifting

- The puzzle of quantificational DPs in non-subject position
- Two solutions to the puzzle: *covert movement* (Quantifier Raising) and *type shifting*
- Arguments for/against either solution
- More on the syntax of QR

Required Reading:

Heim & Kratzer: 178-188, 193-208, 209-230

4.9 Towards an Intensional Semantics

- Cases where extensional semantics is not enough
- The formalization of intensions: Possible worlds and functions over them
- A basic 'intensional semantics' for clausal complements
- Some major weaknesses of the formalism

Required Reading:

Heim & Kratzer: 299-312

von Stechow & Heim 2011: 1-28

5. Some Important Dates

Monday 10/13:	No Class (Columbus Day)
Tuesday 10/14:	No Class (Monday schedule)
Thursday 10/23:	Mid-Term Exams Distributed
Tuesday 11/4:	Mid-Term Exams Due
Tuesday 11/11:	No Class (Veterans' Day)
Wednesday 11/12:	CLASS (Tuesday schedule)
Thursday 11/27:	No Class (Thanksgiving break)
Tuesday 12/2:	Final Exams Distributed
Thursday 12/4:	Last Day of Class (for us)
Monday 12/16:	Final Exams Due
Tuesday 12/22:	Final Grades to be Submitted