

# SEMANTICS

## CHAPTER I: BASIC IDEAS IN SEMANTICS

### 1/ What is Semantics?

Semantics is the study of the **meaning of words and sentences** in language.

=> what is meaning? There are different conceptions about it.

=> **Meaning is the relation between language and context/use.**(as maintained by some linguists.)

### 2/ Componential Analysis (C.A):

C.A is an approach to the study of meaning which analyzes a word into a set of meaning components or **semantic features/properties**.

=> Semantic features may be defined as the **smallest units of meaning** in a word.

e.g: boy: <+human> <+male> <-adult>

<-animal> <-female> <+young>

### 3/ Types of meaning:

#### 3.1/ Denotation ( denotative/conceptual/ cognitive meaning):

-> Denotative meaning may be regarded as the **central or core meaning** of a lexical item.

-> Denotation is that part of the meaning of a word or phrase that relates it to phenomena in the real world or in a fictional or possible world.

e.g: bird = a two-legged, winged, egg-laying, warm-blood creature with a beak.

#### 3.2/ Connotation/ Connotative meaning:

-> Connotation is the **additional meaning(s)** that a word or phrase has beyond its central meaning (denotation).

-> Connotative meanings show people's emotions and attitudes towards what the word or phrase refers to.

e.g: lonely = alone, without company. (denotation)  
= melancholy, sad (emotive connotation)

notorious = widely known. (denotation)  
= for bad traits of characters or criminal acts. (connotation)

### 3.3/ Speaker meaning (utterance/interpersonal meaning):

-> is **what speaker means** when he uses a piece of language in a certain context.

e.g: She is very clever.

⇒ The speaker may mean that the girl/woman he is talking about is *bright or intelligent*.

⇒ or the speaker may imply that the girl/woman is *not very honest but witty*.

### 3.4/ Sentence/Word meaning:

-> is **what** a sentence or word means

3.5/ + Lexical meaning ⇔ **content words** (refer to a thing, quality, state or action and have meanings when used alone.)

+ Grammatical meanings ⇔ **function words** (have little meaning on their own, show grammatical relationship in and between sentences.)

3.6/ Social meaning is **part** of the meaning of words that conveys the **identity** of the person who has uttered them.

e.g., 1 U 1 \$, U OK U sit, no OK U go.

Banh mi long, lao.

**3.7/ Affective meaning deals with the feelings, attitudes or opinions of the speakers/writers.**

**e.g., I wonder if you would be so kind as to lower your voice a little. (politely)**

**Please lower your voice! (politely)**

**Shut up! Or, will you belt up? (rudely)**

**3.8/ Collocated meaning refers to the restrictions on how words can be used together. (e.g., white snow, blue sky, do a favor, make an effort...)**

**3.9/ Stylistic meaning deals with the styles of the writers/speakers**