



# **EBS 280 INTRODUCTION TO SEMANTICS**

## **Lesson 1**

### **Introduction to the Course**

# OVERVIEW

- Context and scope of the course
- Course learning outcomes
- Course content and materials
- Modes of lesson delivery
- Assessment procedures



# CONTEXT AND SCOPE OF THE COURSE

- This course examines some of the areas covered by linguists in their attempts to understand the meaning of “meaning”. In the course of the semester, we will discuss, among others, semantic theories; different types of meaning (e.g. denotative vs. connotative; conceptual, stylistic, thematic, etc.); components of meaning; sense relations; context and meaning; and changes in word meaning. The mode of delivery for this course will be discussions, group work, through audio-visuals and individual work. Assessment will be done through quizzes, essay writing, assignments and examinations. The course is in line with NTS 1a, 1b, 2c, NTECF bullets 1,5, and 7; p. 25.



## COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES (CLO'S)

- Demonstrate understanding of what semantic is in linguistics (NTS 2c)
- Exhibit understanding of the sense relations between English words (NTS 2c; NTECF bullet 3 and 5, p. 25)
- Demonstrate understanding of the concept of contextualization in meaning determination (NTS 2b, 2c; NTECF bullet 7, p. 25)
- Demonstrate understanding of the factors that affect changes in word meaning. (NTECF bullet 5, p. 25)



## INDICATORS OF THE CLO'S

- **Demonstrate understanding of what semantic is in linguistics.**
  - Define semantics.
  - Examine the key definitions of meaning.
- **Exhibit understanding of the sense relations between English words.**
  - Define sense relations.
  - Identify some sense relations between English words
  - Discuss the sense relations between English words



# INDICATORS OF THE CLO'S

- **Demonstrate understanding of the concept of contextualization in meaning determination.**
  - Explain context.
  - Identify the types of context.
  - Identify the role of context in determining meaning.
  - Determine the meaning of expression contextually.
- **Demonstrate understanding of the factors that affect changes in word meaning.**
  - Identify factors that affect changes in word meaning.



# COURSE CONTENT

- Study the course manual for details.
- Link between CLO's and Content

Content	CLO
Introduction to, types and categories of semantics	<b>Demonstrate understanding of what semantic is in linguistics.</b>
Sense relations	<b>Exhibit understanding of the sense relations between English words.</b>
Context and meaning	<b>Demonstrate understanding of the concept of contextualization in meaning determination</b>
Changes in word meaning and semantic theories	<b>Demonstrate understanding of the factors that affect changes in word meaning</b>



# COURSE MATERIALS

- Primary materials:

- Botchwey, E. () *What is semantics*. Unpublished
- Sekyi- Baidoo, Y. (2002). *Semantics: An introduction*. Kumasi: Wilas Press Ltd.

- Secondary materials:

- See course manual for details.



# MODES OF LESSON DELIVERY

For now:

- Online lesson
- Internet search
- Individual activities: reading recommended texts, working assignments, etc.

Back to campus

- Group projects and presentations
- Class discussion
- Individual study



# ASSESSMENT

- ***Continuous Assessment (40 marks)***. This is based on:
  - 2 quizzes of 10 marks
  - 2 presentations 10 marks
  - 2 exercises 8 marks
  - 2 assignments 8 marks
  - Attendance 4 marks
- ***End of Semester Examination (60 marks)***  
This consists of an end-of-semester examination covering all aspects of the semester's work.



## WHAT IS SEMANTICS

- Semantics is a scientific study of meaning.
- Semantics is preoccupied with meaning.



# SEMANTICS AS SCIENCE

- It involves:
  - **systematic study:** general stages and activities of any scientific research including observation, formulation of hypothesis or research questions, experimentation and generalisation
  - **Objectivity:** detachment of the researcher from the object of study so as to report on the findings impartially
  - **Explicitness:** the methods used is clear and unambiguous; they are open to all to verify and possibly replicate elsewhere



## SCOPE OF SEMANTIC STUDY

- **Word/lexical semantics:** studying meaning construction of words
- **Sentence semantics:** studying meaning construction in sentences
- **Utterance semantics:** studying meaning construction of sentences within context.



# LINKS BETWEEN SEMANTIC AND OTHER LINGUISTIC FIELDS

- Language faculty is largely divided into modules:

Phonology  Syntax  Semantics

- **Phonology** deals with speech sound production and combination.
- **Syntax** involves the structuring of words to form discourse.
- **Semantics** concerns itself with the meaning generated from the sound production, combination and word structuring in the language.



# LINKS BETWEEN SEMANTIC AND OTHER LINGUISTIC FIELDS

## **Semantics and syntax**

- The manipulation of the sound structure or pattern affects meaning.

e.g. /p/, /t/, /ɔ/

/pɔt/ - a vessel/container

/tɔp/ - the uppermost (of something)

/ɔpt/ - to choose or select



# LINKS BETWEEN SEMANTIC AND OTHER LINGUISTIC FIELDS

## **Semantics and syntax**

- Sentence meaning for example depends on the patterns of the combination between the words and their grammatical roles in the sentence.

e.g.    Kofi loves Ama.

          Ama loves Kofi.



# EXERCISE

1. Explain semantics as a social science.
2. With an example each explain the relationships between semantics and phonology and syntax.
3. Define the semantics in your own words.
4. State the three levels that form the scope of semantics.

