

James R. Hurford, Brendan Heasley, & Michael B. Smith. *Semantics: A coursebook*. 2nd Ed. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007. Pp. 364.

This textbook, following the model of the 1983 first edition, offers students running Q & A exercises exemplifying the topics, interspersed with comments and definitions. Each unit begins with a number of review questions which consult presuppositions for the unit subject matter. This approach promotes active learning through involvement with the text, very helpful in what can be, for undergraduates, a dry and abstract subject. Units and chapters are closed with study guides and exercises.

The five primary chapters, each divided into unit topics, discuss fundamental notions in formal semantics. In Ch 1, utterances, sentences, and propositions are introduced, with the notions of “sentence meaning” and “speaker meaning.” Ch 2 deals with reference and sense, including referring expressions, predication, deixis and definiteness, and prototype theory. Ch 3 leads through sense properties and stereotypes, introducing familiar semantic concepts such as paraphrase, taxonomy, hyponymy, and entailment. Ch 4 introduces concepts in logic and, beginning with the *modus ponens*, the notation system for formal logic, notions fundamental to truth value semantics, and truth tables; it is here that students learn to watch their **ps** and **qs**, & **Vs**. Ch 5 discusses word meaning, meaning postulates, and participant roles, which material reflects work in lexical functional grammar.

The last chapter reprises topics tangential to a broader conception of semantics, briefly introducing speech act theory, perlocutions and illocutions, felicity conditions, conversational implicature, and “Non-literal meaning” with a brief discussion of idiom, metaphor, and metonymy. For this reader, much of this matter is of limited significance today, and these topics are inadequately integrated with the theory of semantics explicated in the rest of the text. For

example, how the logical operations of entailment and implicature, or the construal implicit in speech act theory involve language *in se* remains an open question.

Those who wish to teach traditional semantics augmented by a short list of somewhat faded topics will find that this text offers a step-by-step approach, facilitating student engagement and aiding induction from examples, which is so essential to learning. Those who wish to teach a semantics based on the cognitive operations and conceptualizations undertaken by human language users and the systemic-functional conceptions that guide them in the reality that *all* language use — thus, making and construing linguistic meaning — occurs in concrete situations where knowledge of the potentials of the language, experience in linguistic encounters, and knowledge of the infinitely variegated socio-cultural contexts in which language communication is undertaken should look elsewhere.

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