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## Towards a sociological semantics

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# Towards a sociological semantics

*working-paper\**

1

## «Meaning potential» and semantic networks.

We shall define language as «meaning potential»: that is, as sets of options, or alternatives, in meaning that are available to the speaker-hearer.

At each of the levels that make up the linguistic coding system, we can identify sets of options representing what the speaker 'can do' at that level. When we refer to grammar, or to phonology, each of these can be thought of as a range of strategies, with accompanying tactics of structure formation.

There are also sets of options at the two interfaces, the coding levels which relate language to non-language. We use «semantics» to refer to one of these interfaces, that which represents the coding of the 'input' to the linguistic system. The range of options at the semantic level is the potentiality for encoding in language that which is not language (cf. Lamb, 1970).

The term «meaning» has traditionally been restricted to the input end of the language system: the «content plane», in Hjelmslev's terms, and more specifically to the relations of the semantic interface, Hjelmslev's «content substance». We will therefore use «meaning potential» just to refer to the semantic options (although we would regard it as an adequate designation for language as a whole).

Semantics, then, is 'what the speaker can mean'. It is the strategy that is available for entering the language system. It is one form of, or rather one form of the realization of, behaviour potential; 'can mean' is one form of 'can do'. The behaviour potential may be realized not only by language but also by other means. Behavioural strategies are outside language but may be actualized through the medium of the language system.

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\* A reprint of this paper will appear in M.A.K. Halliday, *Explorations in the Functions of Language*, London, Edward Arnold, 1973.



Let us take as an example the use of language by a mother for the purpose of controlling the behaviour of a child. This example is invented, but it is based on actual investigations of social learning - including, among a number of different contexts, that of the regulation of children's behaviour by the mother - carried out in London under the direction of Professor Basil Bernstein. In particular I have drawn on the work of Geoffrey Turner, who has undertaken much of the linguistic analysis of Professor Bernstein's material and shown how the networks of semantic options can serve as a bridge between the sociological and the purely linguistic conceptual frameworks (Bernstein, 1971, 1972; Turner, 1972).

The small boy has been playing with the neighbourhood children on a building site, and has come home grasping some object which he has acquired in the process. His mother disapproves, and wishes both to express her disapproval and to prevent him doing the same thing again. She has a range of alternatives open to her, some of which are non-linguistic: she can smack him. But supposing she elects to adopt linguistic measures, the sort of thing she might say would be:

- (1) that's very naughty of you
- (2) I'll smack you if you do that again
- (3) I don't like you to do that
- (4) that thing doesn't belong to you
- (5) Daddy would be very cross

These represent different means of control, which might be characterized as (1) categorization of behaviour in terms of disapproval or approval on moral grounds; (2) threat of punishment linked to repetition of behaviour; (3) emotional appeal; (4) categorization of objects in terms of social institution of ownership; (5) warning of disapproval by other parent. And we could add others, e.g. (6) *you're making Mummy very unhappy by disobeying* (control through emotional blackmail), (7) *that's not allowed* (control through categorization of behaviour in terms of the operation of a rule), etc.

The mother's behaviour could also be described linguistically, in terms of grammatical systems of mood, transitivity and so on. For example, (1) is a relational of the attributive (ascription) type where the child's act is referred to situationally as *that* and has ascribed to it, in simple past tense, an attribute expressed by an attitudinal adjective *naughty*, the attribution being explicitly tied to the child himself by the presence of the qualifier *of you*. In (2) we have a hypotactic clause complex in which the main clause is a transitive clause of action in simple future tense with *smack* as process, *I* as actor and *you* as goal, the dependent clause being a conditional, likewise of the action type, with

situationally-referring process *do that* and actor *you*.

But these two accounts of the mother's behaviour, the sociological and the linguistic, are unrelated, except in that they are descriptions of the same phenomenon. In order to try and relate them, let us describe the mother's verbal behaviour in the form of a system of semantic options, options which we can then relate to the social situation on the one hand and to the grammatical systems of the language on the other.

Figure 1 is a first attempt at a semantic network for this context. It uses a simultaneous characterization of the options in terms of two variables: (i) the type of control adopted and (ii) the orientation of the control. System (ii) is redundant for the purpose of discriminating among the present examples, since all are uniquely specified in system (i); but it adds a generalization, suggesting other combinations of options to be investigated, and it specifies other features which we might be able to link up with particular features in the grammar.

2.

### Provisional version of a semantic network.

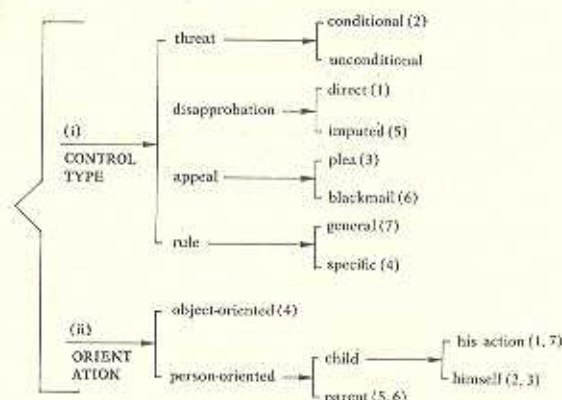


Figure 1

This is the simplest form of such a network, specifying merely options and sub-options. It reads: «select threat *or* disapprobation *or* appeal *or* rule; and *either* object-oriented *or* person-oriented. If threat, then *either* conditional *or* unconditional», and so on. Numbers in parentheses indicate how these options relate to the examples that were given above.

Now there is probably no category of «threat» or «blackmail» or «object-oriented» to be found in the grammar of English. These are semantic not grammatical categories. But it may be possible to specify what are the grammatical realizations of semantic categories of



this kind. For instance, «threat» is likely to be realized as a transitive clause of action with *you* as Goal, and with a verb of a particular sub-class as Process, in simple future tense. The combination of «disapprobation» and «person-oriented: action» leads us to predict an attributive clause type, in which the action that is being censured is expressed as the «attribuend» (the Goal of the attribution) and the Attribute is some adjective of the attitudinal class. Thus the semantic options are relatable to recognizable features in the grammar, even though the relationship will often be a rather complex one.

A semantic option may, in addition, have more than one possible realization in the grammar. For instance, 'threat' might be realized as a modalized action clause with *you* as Actor, e.g. *you'll have to stay indoors if you do that*. Where there are such alternatives, these are likely in the end to turn out to represent more delicate semantic options, systematic subcategories rather than free variants (see Section 6 below). But until such time as a distinction in meaning (i.e. in their function in realizing higher-level options) is found, they can be treated as instances of diversification. This is the same phenomenon of diversification as is found in the relations between other pairs of strata.

We have not expressed, in the network, everything that was included in the description of the forms of control; there is no reference yet to the category of 'ownership', or to the fact that the disapproval is 'moral' disapproval. It is not yet clear what these contrast with; they might be fully determined by some existing option. But they are expressed in the same way, by realization in linguistic forms, and there is no difficulty in adding them as semantic options once their value in the meaning potential can be established.

3

### **The semantic network as a statement of potential at the semantic level.**

A network such as that in the previous section is a specification of meaning potential. It shows, in this instance, what the mother is doing when she regulates the behaviour of the child. Or rather, it shows what she *can* do: it states the possibilities that are open to her, in the specific context of a control situation. It also expresses the fact that these are *linguistic* possibilities; they are options in meaning, realized in the form of grammatical, including lexical, selections.

These networks represent paradigmatic relations on the semantic stratum; so we shall refer to them as 'semantic networks'. A semantic network is a hypothesis about patterns of meaning, and in order to be valid it



must satisfy three requirements. It has to account for the range of alternatives at the semantic stratum itself; and it has to relate these both 'upwards', in this instance to categories of some general social theory or theory of behaviour, and 'downwards', to the categories of linguistic form at the stratum of grammar.

In the first place, therefore, we are making a hypothesis about what the speaker can do, linguistically, in a given context: about what meanings are accessible to him. In order to do this we need not only to state the options that are available but, equally, to show how they are systematically related to one another. This is the purpose of the system network, which is a general statement of the paradigmatic relations at the stratum in question, and therefore constitutes, at one and the same time, a description of each meaning selection and an account of its relationship to all the others - to all its 'agnates', in Gleason's formulation.

From the network we can derive a paradigm of all the meaning selections. This is the set of 'well-formed selection expressions' from the network in question, and the network asserts that these and no others are possible.

The network is however open-ended in delicacy. We take as the starting point the total set of possible meaning selections, and proceed by progressive differentiation on the basis of systematic contrasts in meaning. It is always possible to add further specification, but it is never necessary to do so, so we can stop at the point where any further move in delicacy is of no interest. For instance, if for the purposes of a particular investigation the social theory places no value on the distinction between different types of 'appeal' in a control situation, there is no need to incorporate any sub-systems of 'appeal' into the semantic network.

We use the paradigm to test predictions about meaning selections that might be expected to occur. This can be illustrated from the same general context, that of parental regulation of child behaviour; but we will use a modified form of the network so that the illustration is kept down to a manageable size. Let us postulate the following network of options:

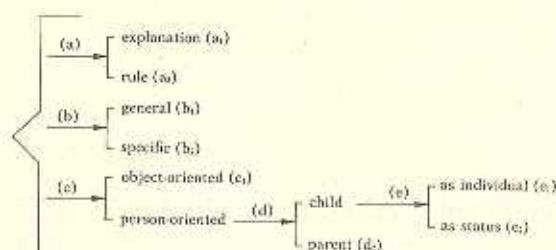


Figure 2

This specifies that the following meaning selections occur:

(a <sub>1</sub> b <sub>1</sub> c <sub>1</sub> )	(a <sub>1</sub> b <sub>1</sub> c <sub>1</sub> )	(a <sub>1</sub> b <sub>1</sub> c <sub>1</sub> )	(a <sub>1</sub> b <sub>1</sub> c <sub>1</sub> )
(a <sub>1</sub> b <sub>1</sub> d <sub>2</sub> )	(a <sub>1</sub> b <sub>1</sub> d <sub>2</sub> )	(a <sub>1</sub> b <sub>1</sub> d <sub>2</sub> )	(a <sub>1</sub> b <sub>1</sub> d <sub>2</sub> )
(a <sub>1</sub> b <sub>1</sub> e <sub>1</sub> )	(a <sub>1</sub> b <sub>1</sub> e <sub>1</sub> )	(a <sub>1</sub> b <sub>1</sub> e <sub>1</sub> )	(a <sub>1</sub> b <sub>1</sub> e <sub>1</sub> )
(a <sub>1</sub> b <sub>1</sub> e <sub>2</sub> )	(a <sub>1</sub> b <sub>1</sub> e <sub>2</sub> )	(a <sub>1</sub> b <sub>1</sub> e <sub>2</sub> )	(a <sub>1</sub> b <sub>1</sub> e <sub>2</sub> )

We can construct a set of possible exponents, one for each:

(a <sub>1</sub> b <sub>1</sub> c <sub>1</sub> )	playing in that sort of place ruins your clothes
(a <sub>1</sub> b <sub>1</sub> d <sub>2</sub> )	grown-ups like to be tidy
(a <sub>1</sub> b <sub>1</sub> e <sub>1</sub> )	it's not good for you to get too excited
(a <sub>1</sub> b <sub>2</sub> e <sub>1</sub> )	boys who are well brought up play nice games in the park
(a <sub>1</sub> b <sub>2</sub> c <sub>1</sub> )	all that glass might get broken
(a <sub>1</sub> b <sub>2</sub> d <sub>2</sub> )	Daddy doesn't like you to play rough games
(a <sub>1</sub> b <sub>2</sub> e <sub>1</sub> )	you might hurt yourself
(a <sub>1</sub> b <sub>2</sub> e <sub>2</sub> )	you ought to show Johnny how to be a good boy
(a <sub>2</sub> b <sub>1</sub> c <sub>1</sub> )	other people's things aren't for playing with
(a <sub>2</sub> b <sub>1</sub> d <sub>2</sub> )	Mummy knows best
(a <sub>2</sub> b <sub>1</sub> e <sub>1</sub> )	you mustn't play with those kind of boys
(a <sub>2</sub> b <sub>1</sub> e <sub>2</sub> )	little boys should do as they're told
(a <sub>2</sub> b <sub>2</sub> c <sub>1</sub> )	that tin belongs to somebody else
(a <sub>2</sub> b <sub>2</sub> d <sub>2</sub> )	I told you I didn't want you to do that
(a <sub>2</sub> b <sub>2</sub> e <sub>1</sub> )	you'll get smacked next time
(a <sub>2</sub> b <sub>2</sub> e <sub>2</sub> )	you can go there when you're bigger

The paradigm seems to be valid. We have substituted just two types of control, 'by rule' and 'by explanation', each of which may be general or specific; and we have sub-divided 'child-oriented' into the more significant system of 'child as individual' versus 'child as status'.

As an example of a wrong prediction, if we kept the original (Fig. 1) network, which had 'child-oriented: child's action' versus 'child-oriented: child himself', and showed this system in free combination with the four types of control, we should almost certainly have found gaps. It is difficult to see how we could have the combination 'appeal' and 'child's action'; one can disapprove of an action, or give rules about it, but can hardly appeal to it. The original network is thus wrong at this point, and would have to be rewritten.

Figure 3 is a rewritten version of it, corrected in respect of this error. In order to test it, we can write out the paradigm of meaning selections and for each one construct an example which would be acceptable as an exponent of it.

Here we have introduced two further conventions. The option 'either child's action or child himself' depends on the selection of *both* 'control type: positional' and 'orientation: child'; there is an intersection at this point in the network. Secondly, this system is characterized by



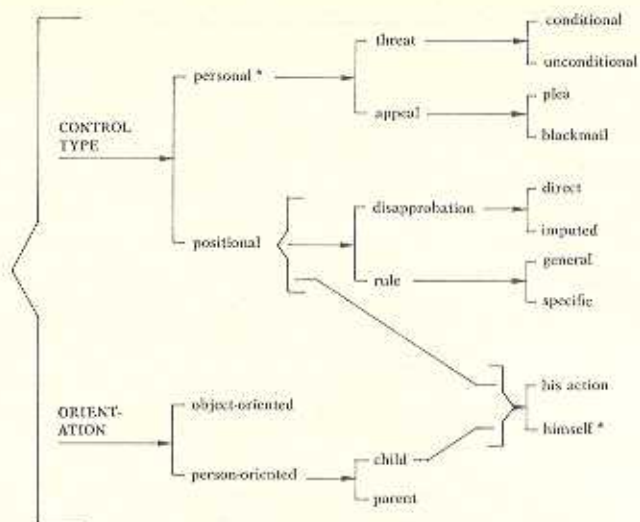


Figure 3

the presence of an unmarked term, 'child himself', indicated by the asterisk. An unmarked option is always unmarked 'with respect to' some other option, here that of 'positional' also marked with an asterisk. The meaning is: «if the speaker selects the 'personal' control type, then if the orientation is to the child it must always be to the 'child himself'». The unmarked option is that which must be selected if one part of the entry condition is not satisfied, some other feature being selected which then determines the choice.

4

### The semantic network as realization of behaviour patterns.

In the second place, as is shown by what was said above, the semantic network is an account of how social meanings are expressed in language. It is the linguistic realization of patterns of behaviour.

We have stressed at various points that a linguistic description is a statement of what the speaker can mean; and that 'meaning', in its most general sense, includes both function within one level and realization of elements of a higher level. These 'higher level' elements will, at one point, lie outside the confines of what we recognize as language.

In the sociological context, the relevant extra-linguistic elements are the behaviour patterns that find expression in language. It is convenient to treat these under two headings: social, and situational.

First, there are the specifically social aspects of language use: the establishment and maintenance of the individual's social roles, the esta-



blishment of familiarity and distance, various forms of boundary maintenance, types of personal interaction and so on. These are largely independent of setting, but relate to generalized social contexts, such as those of mother and child already referred to.

The social contexts themselves are in turn dependent for their identification on a social theory of some kind, for instance Bernstein's theories of socialization and social learning. From such a theory, we are able to establish which contexts are relevant to the study of particular problems. The behavioural options are specific to the given social context, which determines their meaning; for example, 'threat' in a mother-child control context has a different significance from 'threat' in another social context, such as the operation of a gang. This may affect its realization in language.

Secondly, there are the situation types, the settings, in which language is used. These enable us to speak of 'text', which may be defined as 'language in setting'. Here we are concerned not with behaviour patterns that are socially significant in themselves but with socially identifiable units - various kinds of tasks, games, discussions and the like - within which the behaviour is more or less structured. Mitchell's (1951) study 'The language of buying and selling in Cyrenaica' provides an instance of a well-defined setting. The structure, in fact, may lie wholly within the text, as typically it does in a work literature, or an abstract discussion; from the sociological point of view, these situation-independent uses of language are the limiting case, since the 'setting' is established within and through the language itself.

The behaviour patterns that we derive from social contexts and settings are thus intrinsic to sociological theory; they are arrived at in the search for explanations of social phenomena, and are independent of whatever linguistic patterns may be used to express them. The function of the semantic network is to show how these 'social meanings' are organized into linguistic meanings, which are then realized through the different strata of the language system. But whereas the social meanings, or behaviour patterns, are specific to their contexts and settings, their linguistic reflexes are very general categories such as those of transitivity, of mood and modality, of time and place, of information structure and the like. The input to the semantic networks is sociological and specific; their output is linguistic and general. The rationale for this is discussed in Section 6 below.

This means that in sociological linguistics the criteria for selecting the areas of study are sociological. We investigate those contexts and settings that are socially significant, for instance those concerned with the

transmission of cultural values. At the same time, it is not irrelevant that language has evolved in the service of social functions, so we may expect to take account of social factors in explaining the nature of language. There is therefore a clear *linguistic* motivation for studies of a sociolinguistic kind.

Here is an example drawn from a clearly-defined setting, from the game of pontoon (vingt-et-un). This is a social context with closely circumscribed behaviour patterns, namely the rules of the game. These define what the participant can do. The semantic network does not describe the rules of the game; it specifies what are the verbalized options in play - what the participant 'can mean', in our terms.

The form of play has been described by Bernard Mohan (1968), as part of an extremely comprehensive study in which he examines various possible methods in the relation of language and setting. Here is a semantic network showing the meaning potential for one move, by a player other than the banque.

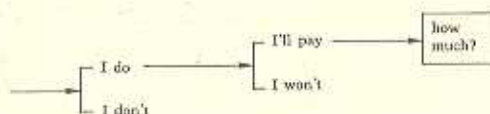


Figure 4

'I do'	=	'I request another card'	
'I don't'	=	'I do not want another card'	, realized as <i>stick!</i>
'I'll pay'	=	'I will pay for the card'	, » <i>buy for...!</i>
'I won't'	=	'I will not pay for the card'	, » <i>twist!</i>
'how much?'	=	'I will pay the sum specified'	, » (numeral following <i>buy for</i> )

Now, having requested one card, the player has the option of requesting another. Is this an option in meaning, or merely a rule of the game? If we recognize it as part of the meaning potential, there is a recursive option in the semantic network

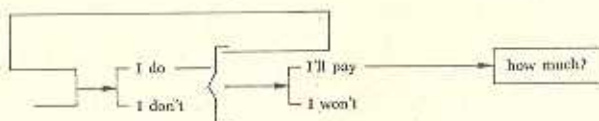


Figure 5

[We might even think of extending this into the grammar: an example such as *buy for two, buy for two, twist, stick* would then form a single paratactic univariate structure. This would be somewhat un-



economical, though as a matter of fact there is some evidence in its favour. It would be uneconomical because we should have to build in to the grammar a number of special features associated with it: the absence of *and*, the possibility of interruption, and so on. The evidence for it is that the player does normally use the intonation pattern appropriate to co-ordination, e.g.

//3 buy for / two //3 buy for / two //3 twist //1 stick //

with the (normally non-final) tone 3 representing the *hope* that he will be able to request another card. The fact that the entire structure is not planned at the start is immaterial; this may be a general characteristic of univariate structures. It is interesting that in contract bridge many players use this 'non-final' intonation when bidding as a means of inviting their partner to make a higher bid. They distinguish

//3 three / clubs // 'I want you to raise it' from

//1 three / clubs // 'and don't you go any higher!'].

If we do recognize a recursive option in the semantics, we must also take account of the fact that the player has first to pass through the option 'I can/cannot request another card', as follows

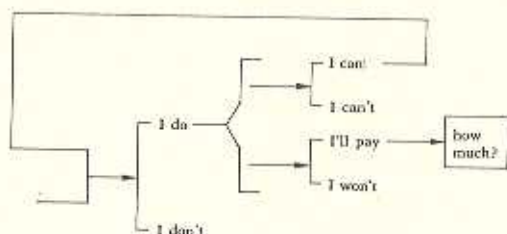


Figure 6

We add to this the condition that if on the third time round he still selects 'I can' he must nevertheless proceed to 'I don't', which is realized this time as *five and under*.

Here, then, there is some indeterminacy between the strata. Whether in fact we represented the whole of one 'turn' in the semantic network would probably depend on the nature of the problem being investigated. But it is possible to do so, since the system can be reduced to a single complex expression of request.

It is, of course, the fall of the cards that determines whether the player has the *right* to request another card or not. But the conditions under

which he may or may not do so are part of the rules of the game; they belong to a higher-stratum context. The semantics cannot specify what are the rules of the game.

Likewise we could make a flow-chart for another game setting, one that is reasonably closed (e.g. the bidding system of contract bridge), and construct an associated semantic network. For this it would be necessary to identify some unit that is appropriate as the domain of the semantic options. For pontoon, we suggested one 'turn'; here it would probably be one bid. The semantics then specifies what is the set of possible bids. It does not specify the circumstances in which the player has the right to make a particular bid - still less those in which it would be a good one!

To summarize: Grammar is what the speaker CAN SAY, and is the realization of what he *means*. Semantics is what he CAN MEAN; and we are looking at this as the realization of what he *does*. But it is 'realization' in a somewhat different sense, because what he CAN DO lies outside language (and therefore, as we expressed it above, semantics cannot tell us the rules of the game). Some of the behaviour potential, the 'can do', can be expressed in sociological terms; not all, since not all language behaviour has its setting in identifiable social contexts, and much of that which has is not explainable by reference to the setting. In sociological linguistics we are interested in that part of language behaviour which *can* be related to social factors and stated in these terms. We examine areas which are relatively circumscribed; and we select those which are of intrinsic interest - noting at the same time, however, that the investigation of the socio-linguistic interface may also shed valuable light on the nature of language itself.

5

### **The semantic network as realized in the grammatical system.**

In the third place, the semantic network is the 'input' to the grammar. The semantic network forms the bridge between behaviour patterns and linguistic forms.

We cannot, as a rule, relate behavioural options directly to the grammar. The relationship is too complex, and some intermediate level of representation is needed through which we express the meaning potential that is associated with the particular behavioural context. It is this intermediate level that constitutes our 'sociological' semantics. The semantic network then takes us, by a second step, into the linguistic patterns that can be recognized and stated in grammatical terms. In some instances, the semantic network leads directly to the 'formal items'



- to the actual words, phrases and clauses of the language.

This is likely to happen only where there is a closed set of options in a clearly circumscribed social context.

Systems of greetings would often be of this kind. Figure 7 is a semantic network for a greeting system in middle-class British English:

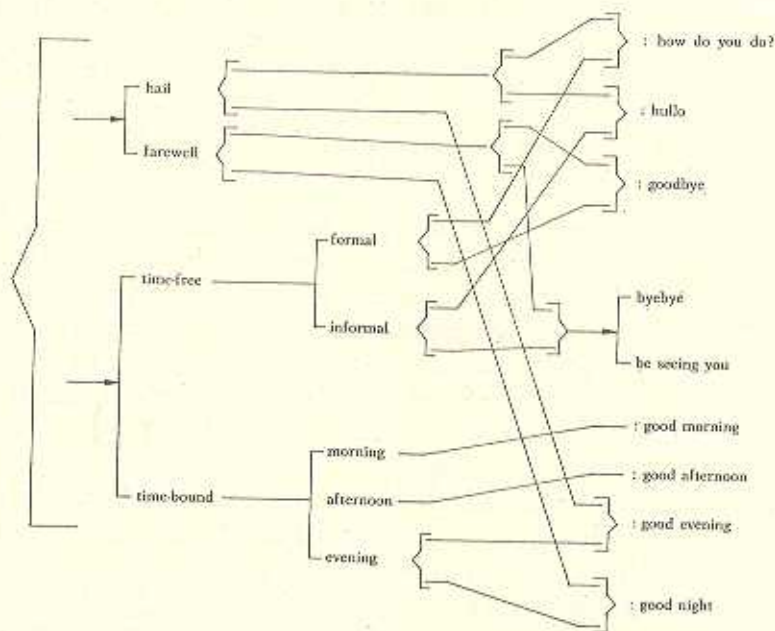


Figure 7

On the right are the items realizing the meaning selections; the colon is used *ad hoc* to show that these are on a different stratum.

[This display leaves out a number of factors, treating them by implication as behavioural (as 'rules of the game') and not semantic. There are severe limitations on the use of time-bound forms, other than *good night*, as valedictions; they are used mainly in the conclusion of transactions, and are probably disappearing. The form *how do you do?* is used only in the context of a new acquaintance, a time-bound form being required in the formal greeting of old acquaintances. Such factors could be incorporated into the network, if they are regarded as part of the 'meaning potential'; but for the present discussion it does not matter whether they are or not].

In this instance, we can go straight from the options to the actual phrases by which they are realized, the 'formal items' as we have ter-

med them. There is no need for any intervening level of grammatical systems and structures.

A number of more specific social contexts, and recurrent situation types, are likely to have this property, that the formal items, the words and phrases used, are directly relatable to the options in the semantic network. Apart from games, and greetings systems, which have already been exemplified, other instances would include musical terms (*adagio*, & c.), instructions to telephone operators, and various closed transactions such as buying a train or bus ticket. If we ignore the fact that the formal items are in turn re-encoded, or realized, as phonological items ('expressions'), which are in turn put out as speech (or the equivalent in the written medium), these are rather like non-linguistic semiotic systems, such as those of traffic signs and care labels on clothing, where the meanings are directly encoded into patterns in the visual medium. There is a minimum of stratal organization.

In language such systems are rather marginal; they account for only a small fraction of the total phenomena. In order to be able to handle systems of meaning potential which are of wider linguistic significance we have to consider types of setting which, although they may still be reasonably clearly circumscribed, are much more open and also much more general. In sociological linguistics the interest is in linguistic as well as in social phenomena, and so we need to explore areas of behaviour where the meanings are expressed through very general features, features which are involved in nearly all uses of language, such as transitivity in the clause.

In other words, for linguistic as well as for sociological reasons we should like to be able to account for grammatical phenomena by reference to social contexts whenever we can, in order to throw some light on why the grammar of languages is as it is. The more we are able to relate the options in grammatical systems to meaning potential in the social contexts and behavioural settings, the more insight we shall gain into the nature of the language system, since it is in the service of such contexts and settings that language has evolved.

This is no more than to recognize that there is a 'stratal' relation of the usual kind between grammar and semantics. In general the options in a semantic network will be realized by selections of features in the grammar - rather than 'bypassing' the grammatical systems and finding direct expression as formal items.

We have exemplified this already in discussing the realization of semantic categories such as that of 'threat'. Let us return to this instance,



and add further examples. The following are some possible expressions of 'threat' and of 'warning' as semantic options in a regulatory context:

I'll smack you			
Daddy'll smack you			
you'll get smacked			
I'll smack you	}	{	if you do that again
Daddy'll smack you			if you go on doing that
you'll get smacked	}	{	
you do that again			
you go on doing that	{	and	{
don't you do that again			
you stop doing that	{	or	{
			I'll smack you
			Daddy'll smack you
			you'll get smacked
I shall be cross with you			
Daddy'll be cross with you			
you'll fall down			
you'll get hurt; you'll hurt yourself			
you'll get dirty			
you'll cut your hands; your hands'll get cut			
you'll tear your clothes; your clothes'll get torn			
your feet'll get wet			
you'll get yourself hurt			
you'll get your hands cut			
you'll get your feet wet			

We suggested earlier, as a generalization, that 'threat' could be realized by an action clause in simple future tense, having *you* either as Goal, or as Actor together with a modulation. We can now take this a little further, building up the network as we go.

The 'threat' may be a threat of physical punishment. Here the clause is of the action type, and, within this, of intentional or voluntary action, not supervision (i. e. the verb is of the *do* type, not the *happen* type).

The process is a two-participant process, with the verb from a lexical set expressing 'punishment by physical violence', roughly that of § 972 (PUNISHMENT) in Roget's *Thesaurus*, or perhaps the intersection of this with § 276 (IMPULSE). The tense is simple future. The Goal, as already noted, is *you*; and the clause may be either active, in which case the agency of the punishment is likely to be the speaker (*I* as Actor), or passive, which has the purpose of leaving the agency unspecified. It is not entirely clear whether, if the Actor is other than *I*, the utterance is a threat or a warning; but it seems likely that in *Daddy'll smack you* the speaker is committing another person to a course of action on her behalf, so we still treat it as 'threat'.



Figure 8

Any one of these threats may then be accompanied by a condition referring to the repetition or continuation by the child of whatever he was doing, and here we can specify almost the entire form of the clause: action verb substitute *do that*, Actor *you*, Conjunction *if*, and either auxiliary of aspect (*go on*) or aspectual adverb (*again*).

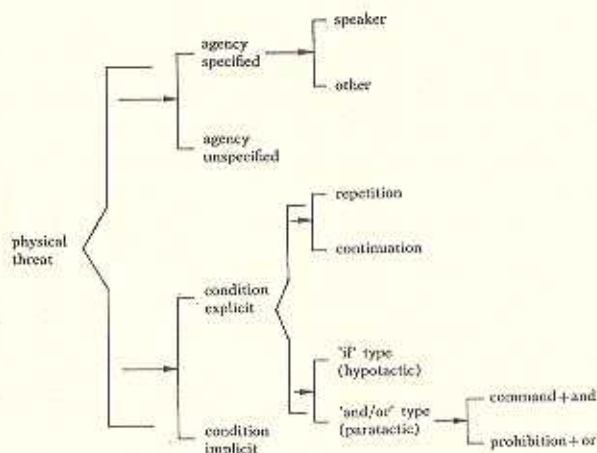


Figure 9

Probably all threats are conditional in this context, so the choice is between a condition that is explicit and one that is implicit. Note the alternative form of the condition - as an imperative clause (which must come first) in a paratactic: co-ordinate structure, either command with 'and' or prohibition with 'or'. (The prohibition also occurs by itself as a form of regulatory behaviour, e.g. *don't you do that again!*; but that is left out because it is not a threat).

There are two other sub-categories of 'threat' among the examples given. One has a relational clause of the attributive type, having as Attribute an adjective expressive of anger or displeasure (Roget § 900 RESENTMENT) and *I* or a committed other person as Attribuent. The other is an action clause with the action modulated by necessity (e.g. *must*, *have to*), *you* as Actor and a wide range of punitive states of which little more can be specified. Contextually the former constitutes



a threat of mental punishment, the latter a threat of restraint on the child's own behavioural options.

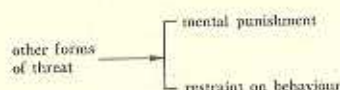


Figure 10

Next, there is the distinct category of 'warning'. This also is inherently conditional; we have given only examples without condition but all of them could occur in an explicitly conditional form.

The warning specifies something that will happen to the child - something considered to be undesirable - if he does whatever it is he is being told not to do. The warning may relate to some process in which the child will become involved. Here the clause is of the 'action' type; it is, however, always 'superventive' the child is involved against his own volition. The action in question may be one that is inherently unintentional, represented by a verb of the 'happen' type; in this case the meaning is 'do involuntarily' and the voice is active (e.g. *fall down*). Otherwise, if the action is inherently intentional, with a verb of the 'do' type (typically from a sub-set of Roget § 659 DETERIORATION, or § 688 FATIGUE), the meaning is 'have done to one, come in for' and the voice is non-active: either passive: mutative (e.g. *get hurt*) or reflexive (*hurt yourself*), according to whether or not some unspecified agency is implied that is external to the child himself.

Alternatively, the warning may specify an attribute that the child will acquire. Here the clause is relational: attributive, also in the mutative form (i.e. *get* rather than *be*), and the attribute is an adjective of undesirable physical condition such as *wet, sore, tired, dirty* (in Roget § 653 UNCLEANNESS, § 655 DISEASE, § 688 or elsewhere).

In all these clauses, there is only one participant, and it is always *you*. This may be Actor, Goal or Attribuent; but it always has the generalized function of Affected.

So far it has been assumed that the warning relates to the child himself. But it may relate instead to a part of his body or an item of his clothing (e.g. *you'll cut your hands, your clothes'll get muddy*). And finally the consequence has been represented as something that will happen to the child (or, again, to his person) without any specified agency: *you'll fall down, you'll get dirty, you'll get hurt, you'll hurt yourself, you'll cut your hands, you'll tear your clothes*. (Note that

the last two are still superventive; *you'll tear your clothes* means 'your clothes will get torn', not 'you will tear your clothes deliberately'; cf. *you'll hurt yourself*). But it may be represented instead as something which he will bring upon himself. In this case, the clause has the resultative form *you'll get your...* (self, part of the body or item of clothing) *hurt, dirty, torn* &c.; here *yourself*, *your clothes* &c., function as Affected and *you* as Agency.

Here is the network of warnings at this point

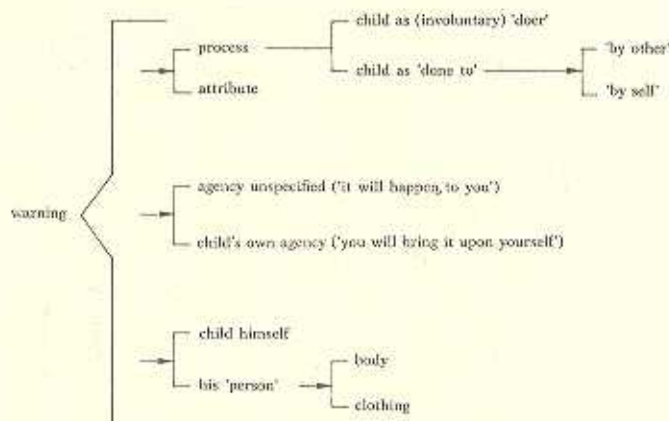


Figure 11

In this network we have shown the three options 'process, or attribute; agency unspecified, or child's own agency; the child himself, or his person' as being independent variables. This asserts that all logically possible combinations can occur, including those formed with the sub-options dependent on 'process' and on 'his person'; there is a total paradigm of  $4 \times 2 \times 3 = 24$  meaning selections. But only some of these are given in the examples, and this illustrates once again the point made earlier, that the paradigm defined by a system network provides a means of testing for all possibilities. If, when the paradigm is written out, it is found that not all combinations can occur, the network needs to be amended.

Here it will be found that the primary options are in fact independent. But the sub-option of 'child as doer, or child as done to', dependent on the selection of 'process', turns out to be at least partly determined in all environments except one, that of 'agency unspecified and child himself'. In the environment of 'child's own agency' it is fully determined - naturally: since the child is represented as bringing the consequence on himself, there is no distinction of how the process comes about. In



the remaining environment, that of 'agency unspecified *and* child's person', it is partly determined: the opposition 'child as doer, or child as done to' is still valid, but the reflexive does not occur. This again is to be expected, since it is not the child himself but his person that is involved.

The final version of the network, showing both threat and warning, is therefore as follows

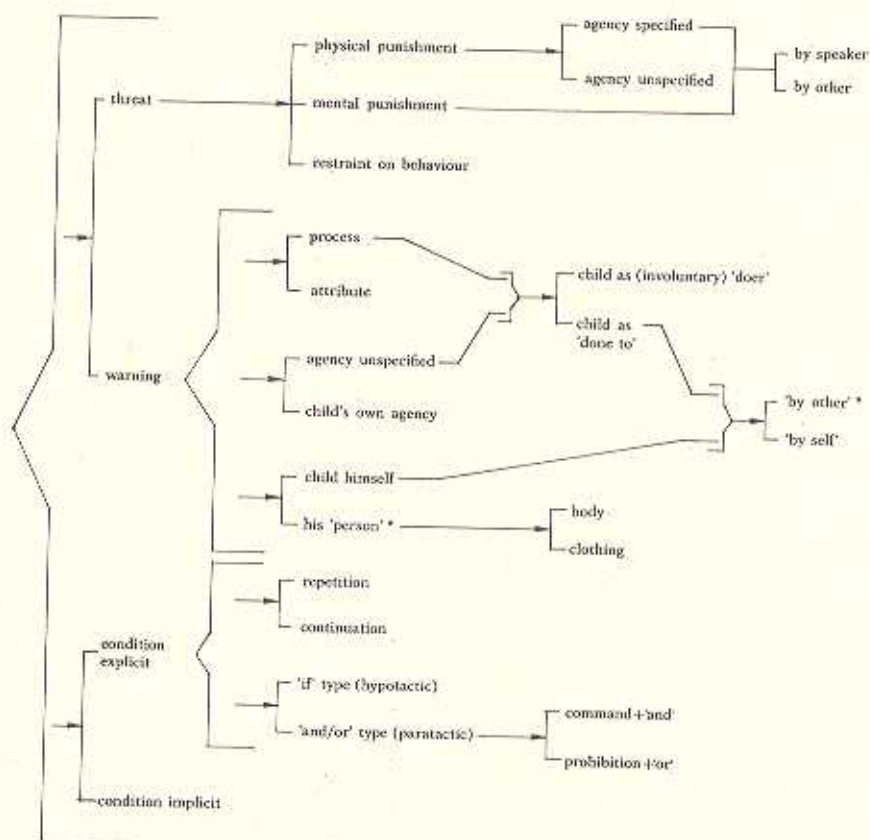


Figure 12

6

## Semantic networks &c grammar

In the last section we have been looking at the semantic network from the point of view of its relation 'downwards', seeing how we get from it into the grammar. In particular, we were considering the question to what extent the grammatical and lexical properties of the sentences

used by the speaker in the speech situation - in our example, the mother regulating the behaviour of her child - can be 'predicted' from a semantics of behaviour, a semantics based on social context and setting.

Let us make this a little more specific by writing out the realization statements associated with the features in the network of threats and warnings:

1 threat	clause: declarative
2 physical punishment	clause: action: voluntary ( <i>do</i> type); effective (two-participant); Goal = <i>you</i> ; future tense; positive; verb from Roget § 972 (or 972~276)
3 agency specified	voice: active
4 agency unspecified	voice: passive
5 by speaker	Actor/Attribuend = <i>I</i>
6 by other	Actor/Attribuend = <i>Daddy, &amp;c.</i>
7 mental punishment	clause: relational: attributive: Attribute = adjective from Roget § 900
8 restraint on behaviour	clause: action; modulation: necessity; Actor = <i>you</i>
9 warning	clause: declarative
10 process	clause: action: superventive ( <i>happen</i> type)
11 attribute	clause: relational: attributive: mutative; Attribute = adjective from Roget § 653, 635, 688 &c.
12 agency unspecified	clause: non-resultative; Affected (Actor, Goal or Attribuent) = <i>you/yourself</i> or some form of 'your person'
13 child as 'doer'	voice: active; verb of involuntary action; Actor = <i>you</i>
14 child as 'done to'	voice: non-active; verb of voluntary action, from Roget § 659, 688 &c.
15 child's own agency	clause: resultative; Agency = <i>you</i> ; Affected = <i>yourself</i> or some form of 'your person'
16 child himself	Affected = <i>you/yourself</i>
17 by 'other'	voice: passive: mutative
18 by 'self'	voice: reflexive
19 his 'person'	Affected: some form of 'your person'
20 body	'your person' = <i>your</i> + part of body
21 clothing	'your person' = <i>your</i> + item of clothing
22 condition explicit	clause complex; clause (1 or $\beta$ ): action: effective; anaphoric: verb substitute = <i>do that</i> ; Actor = <i>you</i>
23 repetition	aspect: <i>again</i>
24 continuation	aspect: <i>go on/stop</i> (in negative) ... <i>ing.</i>
25 'if' type	clause complex; hypotactic: clause $\beta$ conditional: <i>if</i>
26 'and/or' type	clause complex: paratactic: clause 1 imperative
27 command + 'and'	clause 1 positive; <i>and</i>
28 prohibition + 'or'	clause 1 negative (including form with <i>stop</i> ); <i>or.</i>
29 condition implicit	( <u>          </u> )

Two points suggest themselves immediately. The first is that in this particular example we have been able to generate a great deal of the grammar in this way. We have given some specification of many of the principal grammatical features of the clause or clause complex: para-



tactic complex with *and* or *or*, hypotactic complex with *if*, or simple clause; the clause type in respect of transitivity (action clause, relational clause & c.); whether positive or negative, in some cases; and something of the selection in mood and in modality and tense. We have also determined the items occupying some of the participant functions, especially the pronouns *I* and *you*. We have not been able to specify the exact lexical items, but we have been able to narrow down many of them fairly closely by using the notion of a lexical set exemplified in Roget's *Thesaurus*. A Significant portion of the clause, in this instance, can be related to its 'meaning' in terms of some higher level of a socio-behavioural kind.

Secondly, the features that we have been able to specify are not marginal areas of the grammar but are categories of the most general kind, such as mood and transitivity. Nearly every clause in English makes some selection in these systems, and in this instance we were able to relate the choice to the social function of the utterance. For example in the 'warning' network, where the mother makes explicit the nature of the consequence that will follow if the child continues or repeats the undesired behaviour, we were able to get to the core of the English transitivity system, and to see what lay behind the choice of active or passive or reflexive verb forms. We did not go very far in delicacy, and certainly there would be limits on how far we could go. But we did not reach those limits in this example, and in a more detailed study it would be possible both to extend and to elaborate the semantic network.

It must be made clear, however, that the example chosen was a favourable instance. We would not be able to construct a socio-semantic network for highly intellectualized abstract discourse, and in general the more self-sufficient the language (the more it creates its own setting, as we expressed it earlier) the less we should be able to say about it in these broadly sociological, or social, terms. Of the total amount of speech by educated adults in a complex society, only a small proportion would be accessible to this approach. Against this, however, we may set the fact that the instances about which we *can* say something, besides being favourable, are also interesting and significant in themselves, because they play a great part, almost certainly the major part, in the child's early language learning experience. They are in fact precisely those settings from which he learns his language, because both language and setting are accessible to his observation. He can see what language is being used for, what the particular words and structures are being made to achieve, and in this way he builds up his own functionally-based language system. So even if with some adults the



types of social context that are most favourable for socio-linguistic investigation become as it were 'minority time' usages this does not mean they are unimportant to the understanding of the language system.

. . . . .

We need to say a little more here about the relation between the semantics and the grammar, or level of linguistic form. We began with an example of the simplest type of relation, one of 'bypassing', where the semantic options could be as it were wired directly into a small set of words and phrases, without our having to take account of any intervening organization. This situation does arise, but only rather marginally. In the more usual and more significant instances we have to go through a level of grammatical organization, in order to show how the semantic options are put into effect. This in fact is the definition of grammar - the term 'grammar' being used, as always, for the level of linguistic form, including both grammatical (in the sense of syntax and morphology) and lexical features. Grammar is the level at which the various strands of meaning potential are woven into a fabric; or, to express this non-metaphorically, the level at which the different meaning selections are integrated so as to form structures.

We also express the grammar in networks, such as those of transitivity, mood and modality. The question is, then: what is the relation between the networks of the grammar and the semantic networks that we have been illustrating here?

We already have the notion of 'preselection' between networks, in relating grammar and phonology. For instance, in the phonology of English there is a system of tone, which we show as a network at the phonological stratum. But the selection in this system is fully determined by the grammar: there is 'preselection' of the phonological options. The pattern is rather complex, because there is no one-to-one correspondence between options in the grammar and options in the phonology; a large number of different grammatical systems are realized by means of selection in the phonological system of tone. But it is not impossible to find them out.

Between semantic and grammatical networks the same relation obtains. The grammatical options are the realizations of the semantic ones. Again, there is no one-to-one correspondence: there is what Lamb calls 'interlocking diversification' (many-to-many). But, again, the relations can be stated: the selection of a given option in the semantic network is realized by some selection in the networks of the grammar. Very often more than one grammatical feature has to be preselected in this way in order to realize one semantic choice.



Where there are alternatives, such that a given semantic option is realized *either* by this *or* by that set of features in the grammar, these are often determined by the environment. For instance, the grammar of personal medicine - the language used to describe one's ailments - is not the same in the doctor's consulting room as it is in a family or neighbourhood context: compare *I've got the most terrible tummy ache* with *my digestion's troubling me* as realization of some meaning such as 'intensity and location of pain'. The environment is generally the higher-level environment, either the immediate paradigmatic environment - that is, the other options that are being selected at the same time - or the social context as a whole.

Sometimes however the alternatives are not environmentally conditioned but appear initially as free variants, as simple alternative grammatical realizations of one and the same semantic choice. It may be that they are; it would be rash to pretend that there is no free variation in language. But in the grammatical realization of semantic options the alternatives usually turn out to represent more delicate semantic choices. In other words, there *is* a difference in meaning, although it is not so fundamental as the grammatical distinction would suggest (and therefore one begins by putting the two grammatical forms together as 'having the same meaning'). This is a very general and important phenomenon and we have already seen it illustrated more than once. For instance, three forms of conditional threat:

if you do that again I'll smack you  
do that again and I'll smack you  
don't do that again or I'll smack you

When one has made the point that all these are possible realizations of the semantic option of 'threat', one tends to be satisfied and to stop there, saying merely 'these all have the same meaning'. But they have not the same meaning. They are all threats, and they represent the same semantic options *up to a point* - which means, here, up to a particular point in delicacy. But they are not free variants. There is a more subtle distinction between them, and this is shown by the fact that they realize more delicate sub-options in the semantic network.

One question that has been left out of consideration here in this. Is it necessary to recognize 'semantic structures'? In explaining grammar, and in moving from grammar to phonology, we cannot account for everything simply by letting the grammatical networks wire into (pre-select in) the phonological ones and delaying the formation of structures until the phonological stratum. We have to set up structures at the grammatical level. This is simply because, for most of the options in the



grammar, it is not possible to specify their 'output' directly in terms of phonological options. We can do this in the case of those realized by tone, cited above; these are realized directly by choices in the phonology. But we could not handle, for example, the grammatical system of mood in this way. For this, as for the majority of grammatical systems, we have to state the realization first in terms of configurations of functions - that is, of grammatical structures.

Similarly, in going from phonology to phonetics we set up phonological structures, such as syllable and foot, which are likewise configurations of functions.

By analogy, therefore, the question arises whether we need semantic (in Lamb's terms 'semological') structures as well.

It is important to emphasize here that structure is defined as the 'configuration of functions', since this is abstract enough to cover semantic structure if such a thing is to be formulated. The shape of a structure may vary; we may express it lineally or hierarchically or simultaneously. But all such shapes have in common the property of being configurations of functions.

The same would apply to semantic structures. Lamb suggested at one time (see Fleming, 1969) that semantic structures were networks, grammatical (syntactic) structures were trees (hierarchical), morphological structures strings (linear) and phonological structures bundles (simultaneous). In the present account, grammatical and phonological structures are both trees composed of hierarchies of strings; but it remains the case that semantic structures need by no means have the same shape as structures at any other level. All that the term 'structure' implies is that there will be some configurations of functions at that stratum, and that these will realize the meaning selections, the combinations of options in the meaning potential.

The combination of system and structure with rank leads to a fairly abstract grammar (fairly 'deep', in the Chomskyan sense) and enables us to specify fairly accurately in theoretical terms - though not of course in rule-of-thumb terms - just how abstract it is. In principle, a grammatical system is as abstract (is as 'semantic') as possible given only that it can generate integrated structures; that is, that its output can be expressed in terms of functions which can be mapped directly on to other functions, the result being a single structural 'shape' (though one which is of course multiply labelled). This is already fairly abstract, and it may be unnecessary therefore to interpose another layer of structure between the semantic systems and the grammatical systems - given the limited purpose of the semantic systems, which is to account



for the meaning potential associated with defined social contexts and settings.

On the other hand it is possible that one might be able to handle more complex areas of behaviour by means of a concept of semantic structure. It may be, for instance, that the study of institutional communication networks, such as the chain of command or the patterns of consultation and negotiation in an industrial concern, might be extended to a linguistic analysis if the semantic options were first represented in semantic structures - since the options themselves could then be made more abstract. Various complex decision-making strategies in groups of different sizes might become accessible to linguistic observation in the same way. But for the moment this remains a matter of speculation. Sociological semantics is still at a rather elementary stage, and the contexts that have been investigated, which are some of those most likely to be significant in relation to socialization and social learning, are fairly closely circumscribed and seem to be describable by direct pre-selection between semantic and grammatical systems.

## 7

### **Uses of language, and 'macro-functions'.**

These networks are what we understand by 'semantics'. They constitute a stratum that is intermediate between the social system and the grammatical system. The former is wholly outside language, the latter is wholly within language; the semantic networks, which describe the range of alternative meanings available to the speaker in given social contexts and settings, form a bridge between the two.

Like any other level of representation in a stratal pattern, they face both ways. Here, the downward relation is with the grammar; but the upward relation is with the extralinguistic context.

If we have tended to stress the instrumentality of linguistics, rather than its autonomy, this reflects our concern with language as meaning potential in behavioural settings. In investigating grammar and phonology, linguists have tended to insist on the autonomy of their subject; this is natural and useful, since these are the 'inner' strata of the linguistic system, the core of language so to speak, and in their immediate context they are 'autonomous' - they do not relate directly outside language. But they are in turn contingent on other systems which do relate outside language. Moreover we take the view that we can understand the nature of the inner stratal systems of language only if we do attempt to relate language to extra-linguistic phenomena.

Let us turn for a moment to the language of the young child. At an early stage it is possible to postulate very small protolinguistic systems in which the 'grammar' relates directly to the function for which language is being used. For example, in an item such as *byebye mummy* the structure is a direct reflection of the meaning of the utterance: the structure is a configuration of Valediction and Person, and it represents just such options in the child's potential for verbal interaction with his parents. Here grammar and semantics are one.

At this stage the child has acquired a small set of functions or uses of language within each of which he has certain options, a range of meanings open to him. These meanings are expressed through rather simple structures whose elements derive directly from the functions themselves:

	functions	options (with their realizations)	structures	items
form of representation		$a \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} b \\ c \end{bmatrix}$ ('if <i>a</i> , then either <i>b</i> or <i>c</i> ') $\frac{n}{p} \frac{q}{r}$ (' <i>n</i> consists of <i>p</i> followed by <i>q</i> ') (text)		
example	interactional	valediction + V $\rightarrow$ $\begin{bmatrix} \text{general (1)} \\ \text{V: } \textit{byebye} \\ \text{bedtime (2)} \\ \text{V: } \textit{nightnight} \end{bmatrix}$ address $\rightarrow$ $\begin{bmatrix} \text{non-personalized (3)} \\ \text{personalized (4)} \\ \text{+ P: } \textit{mummy} \end{bmatrix}$	(i) $\begin{array}{c}   \\ \text{Valediction} \end{array}$ (ii) $\begin{array}{c}   \\ \text{Valediction + Person} \end{array}$	byebye (1, 3) nightnight (2, 3) byebye mummy (1, 4) nightnight mummy (2, 4)

Figure 13

Note: This example is invented. For a genuine example drawn from the description of a child's linguistic system, see Halliday (1972).

Here there is no need to distinguish between functions and uses of language or between grammar and semantics.

This situation might represent an early stage in the evolution of human language; we do not know.

In the individual, as time goes on, the situations and settings in which language is used become more varied and complex, and the meaning potential associated with them becomes richer. We can no longer write a simple description in which the structure relates directly to the function and 'function' equals 'use'.



Instead, the picture is something like this. We could list indefinitely many 'uses of language'. There are innumerable types of situation in which language plays a part, and innumerable purposes which the speaker makes language serve. It is a useful exercise just to think about these and attempt to categorize them from one's own experience; but this will not by itself provide a systematic basis for understanding grammar. Some of these uses can be systematized into social contexts and settings with at least partially specifiable behaviour potential associated with them. There are uses of language, such as those we have been exemplifying, in which some definable range of alternatives is open to the speaker and these are realized through language. Here we can specify, up to a point, the set of possible meanings that can be expressed.

In a few instances these are like the meanings of the child's proto-language, in that they can be related directly to grammatical structures, as is often the case in the language used in games. Sometimes we would not even need to postulate a structure - we could go straight to the actual words and phrases used. Normally, however, we have to relate the meanings first to systematic selections within the grammar, from which the grammatical structures are then in turn derived.

That is to say, we relate the semantic systems to grammatical systems, regarding them as a form of 'pre-selection', as illustrated in the last section. A choice in the semantics 'pre-selects' an option in the grammar, or a set of such options.

But what is the nature and origin of the grammatical system? Grammar is the level of formal organization in language; it is a purely internal level of organization, and is in fact the main defining characteristic of language. But it is not arbitrary. Grammar evolved as 'content form': as a representation of the meaning potential through which language serves its various social functions. The grammar itself has a functional basis.

What has happened in the course of the evolution of language - and this is no more than a reasonable assumption, corresponding to what happens in the development of language in the individual - is that the demands made on language have constantly expanded, and the language system has been shaped accordingly. There has been an increase in the complexity of linguistic function, and the complexity of language has increased with it. Most significantly, this has meant the emergence of the stratal form of organization, with a purely formal level of coding at its core. This performs the function of integrating the very complex meaning selections into single integrated structures. The way it does this is by sorting out the many very specific uses of



language into a small number of highly general functions which underlie them all (cf. Halliday, in press).

We thus need to make a distinction, in the adult language system, between 'function' and 'use', a distinction which was unnecessary in the case of the child's proto-language. With the child, each use of language has its own grammar from which we can (in the idealized original state of the system) fully derive the structures and items employed in that use. Our example *byebye mummy!* could be described entirely in terms of the grammar of the 'interactional' use of language.

With the adult this is not so. He may use language in a vast number of different ways, in different types of situation and for different purposes; but we cannot identify a finite set of uses and write a grammar for each of them. What we can identify, however, is a finite set of functions - let us call them 'macro-functions' to make the distinction clearer - which are general to all these uses, and through which the meaning potential associated with them is encoded into grammatical structures.

These 'macro-functions' have been recognized for a long time in 'functional' theories of language (for this reason we retain the name 'function' for them). But by using the notion of a grammatical 'system', we can show more clearly how they are embodied in the grammar, where they appear as relatively discrete areas of formalized meaning potential, or in other words relatively independent sets of options. We refer to these as 'functional components' of the grammar.

Three principal components may be recognized, under the headings 'ideational', 'interpersonal' and 'textual'. The ideational component is that part of the grammar concerned with the expression of experience, including both the processes within and beyond the self - the phenomena of the external world and those of consciousness - and the logical relations deducible from them. The ideational component thus has two sub-components, the experiential and the logical. The interpersonal component is the grammar of personal participation; it expresses the speaker's role in the speech situation, his personal commitment and his interaction with others. The textual component is concerned with the creation of text; it expresses the structure of information, and the relation of each part of the discourse to the whole and to the setting.

We now need to relate these 'macro-functions' to what the adult does with language. (By 'adult' we mean someone who has developed the mature language system, as distinct from the child's proto-language referred to earlier.) The adult engages in a great variety of uses of lan-



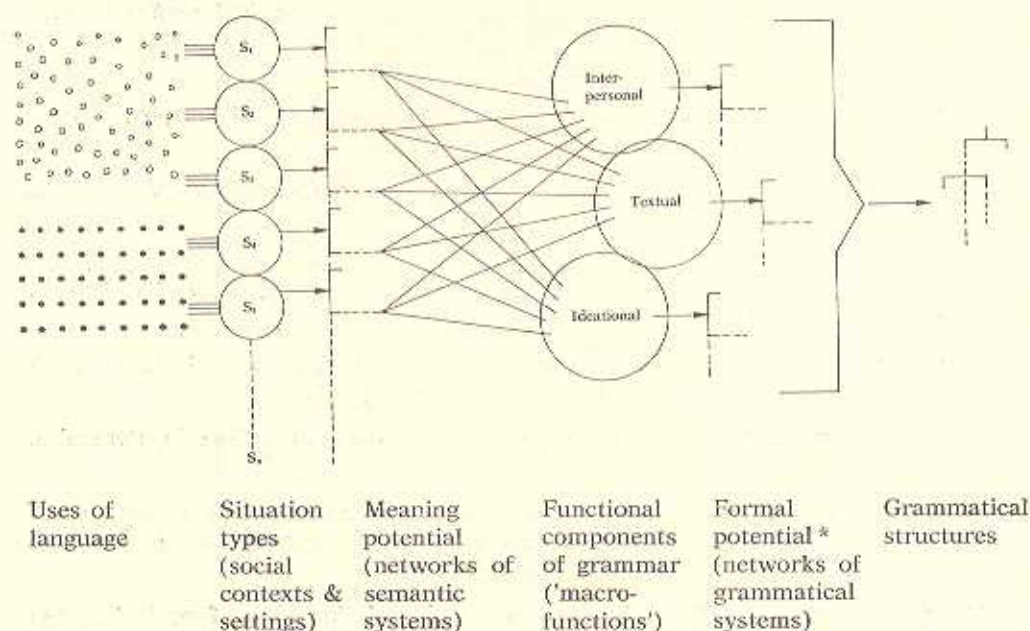
guage, which in themselves are unsystematized and vague. We attempt to impose some order on them, by identifying social contexts and settings for which we can state the meaning potential in a systematic way. But he does not have a different grammar for each of them. He has just one and the same grammar, which is called on in different ways and of which now one part is emphasized and now another.

The macro-functions are the most general categories of meaning potential, common to all uses of language. With only minor exceptions, whatever the speaker is doing with language he will draw on all these components of the grammar. He will need to make some reference to the categories of his own experience - in other words, the language will be *about* something. He will need to take up some position in the speech situation; at the very least he will specify his own communication role and set up expectations for that of the hearer - in terms of statement, question, response and the like. And what he says will be structured as 'text' - that is to say, it will be operational in the given context. These are properties of nearly all acts of communication; by and large, every text unit is the product of options of these three kinds. It is not surprising therefore that these form the fundamental components of the grammar, since it is grammar that turns meanings into text.

This is just another way of saying that it is through its organization into functional components that the formal system of languages is linked to language use. When we say that the realization of meaning potential - of options in semantics - is through the preselection of options in the grammar, this means in fact pre-selection within these functional components. The options in semantics depend on social context and setting, which are extra-linguistic factors. The options in the grammar are organized into general components which are internal to language. But these components are based on 'macro-functions' that are extra-linguistic in origin and orientation. In the evolution of language as a whole, the form of language has been determined by the functions it has to serve.

We said earlier that the input to the semantics was social and specific, whereas its output was linguistic and general. We can now try and clarify this a little. It was not meant to imply that the social contexts and settings themselves are highly specific categories; in fact they are very general. But the range of alternatives which each one offers, the meaning potential available to the speaker in a given situation type, tends to be specific to the situation type in question; whereas the grammatical options through which the meaning selections are realized are general to the language as a whole. In other words, the move

from *general* social categories to *general* linguistic categories involves an intermediate level of *specific* categorization where the one is related to the other. An 'interface' of more specific features is needed to bridge the gap from the generalizations of sociology to those of linguistics. Let us attempt a pictorial representation of the general scheme



\* i.e. meaning potential at the grammatical level, in the system-structure definition of 'meaning'.

Figure 14

An amorphous and indeterminate set of 'uses of language' is partly reducible to generalized situation types, the social contexts and behavioural settings in which language functions. For any one of these situation types, we seek to identify a meaning potential, the range of alternatives open to the speaker in the context of that situation type; these are expressed as semantic networks within which meaning selections are made. The options in the semantic network determine the choice of linguistic forms by 'pre-selection' of particular options within the functional components of the grammar. These grammatical options are realized in integrated structures formed by the mapping on to one another of configurations of elements derived from each of the 'macro-functions'.

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que.

A

Semiotica, linguistica, semantica  
Sémiotique, linguistique, sémantique  
Semiotics, Linguistics, Semantics

B

Semiotica narrativa e discorsiva. Retorica  
Sémiotique narrative et discursive.  
Rhétorique.  
Semiotics of narrative and discourse.  
Rhetorics

C

Socio-semiotica (socio- ed etno-ling)  
Socio-sémiotique  
(socio- et ethno-linguistique)  
Socio-Semiotics (Socio- and Ethno-Ling)

D

Semiotica letteraria; mitologia e folklore;  
poetica  
Sémiotique littéraire; mythologie et folklore;  
poétique.  
Literary Semiotics;  
Mythology and Folkloristics; Poetics

E

Semiotiche auditive.  
Sémiotiques auditives.  
Audio Semiotics

F

Semiotiche visive e audio-visive  
Sémiotiques visuelles et audio-visuelles  
Visual and audio-visual Semiotics