

Logic and Language

The Semantics/Pragmatics Distinction

What is the difference between semantics and pragmatics?

Essential Reading

- Kent Bach, "The Semantics/Pragmatics Distinction: What it is and why it matters", *Linguistische Berichte*, vol. 8 (1997), pp. 33-50
- Dan Sperber & Deidre Wilson, "Pragmatics", in *The Oxford Handbook of Contemporary Philosophy*, edited by Jackson and Smith, Oxford: Oxford University Press (2007)
- Robyn Carston, "Communication and the Semantics/Pragmatics Distinction", *Synthese*, vol. 165 (2008), pp. 321-345

Additional Reading

- François Recanati, "The Pragmatics of What is Said", *Mind and Language*, vol. 4 (1989), pp. 295-329
- Kent Bach, "Conversational Implicature", *Mind and Language*, vol. 9 (1994), pp. 124-62
- Robyn Carston, "Negation, 'Presupposition' and the Semantics/Pragmatics Distinction", *Journal of Linguistics*, vol. 34 (1998), pp. 309-50
- Herman Cappelen & Ernest Lepore, "A Tall Tale: In Defence of Semantic Minimalism and Speech Act Pluralism", *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, supp. vol. 30 (2004), pp. 3-28
- Dan Sperber & Deidre Wilson, "Pragmatics, Modularity and Mind-Reading", *Mind and Language*, vol. 17 (2002), pp. 3-23
- François Recanati, "Unarticulated Constituents", *Linguistics and Philosophy*, vol. 25 (2002), pp. 299-345

Past Paper Questions

- 2006, 13: What is the best way of distinguishing the semantic from the pragmatic?
- 2007, Q11: Can semantics be sharply distinguished from pragmatics?
- 2008, Q21: How do semantic and pragmatic factors interact?
- 2009, Q3b: Is there a clear distinction between what a sentence literally says and what it conversationally implicates?
- 2011, Q8: How, if at all, do we succeed in expressing a complete proposition using the sentence "Jack is ready"?
- 2011, Q9a: How, if at all, can conversational implicatures be distinguished from literal content?
- 2012, Q5a: What is the difference between semantics and pragmatics?
- 2013, Q9: Can a distinction be drawn between what is said and what is conversationally implicated by a linguistic utterance? If so, how? If not, why not?