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# Meaning and Translation

## Part 1: Meaning

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7

## Introduction

Almost everything that one claims about meaning is likely to be questioned or disputed. Translation studies also abound in numerous controversies. Therefore, juxtaposing meaning and translation under one title appears to be a very risky enterprise indeed. Yet, this risk must be undertaken since both these subjects are taught in numerous departments of modern languages and applied linguistics, as well as in schools of translation and in other institutions where linguistics and translation studies, sometimes also called translatology, are taught. Despite all the controversies, there are several truths which appear to be unshakable. One of them concerns the very theme of the present book viz. that translation entails meaning. This means that whenever one talks about translation, one must necessarily talk about meaning even if the opposite may not be true. One can approach meaning in abstraction from its possible relation to translation. The fact that translation evokes meaning results from another unshakable fact, namely that translation is a specific form of communication which rests on meaning. In Leech's words "Semantics (as the study of meaning) is central to the study of communication." (Leech 1974: ix). It follows that translation cannot be approached in isolation from meaning and anything that is said and claimed about translation must needs be placed in the context of meaning. Accordingly, the first volume of the present book concerns this necessary context, while the second volume views translation in terms of the semantic framework presented in the first volume.

Both volumes are hopefully consistent with major tenets of cognitive linguistics as formulated mainly by Ronald Langacker, George Lakoff, Mark Johnson, and Mark Turner, whose inspiration is evident throughout many parts of the book, and to whose works numerous references are made in appropriate places. Langacker's concept of dimensions of imagery has inspired me to approach both language and translation in a number of alternative ways resulting in alternative (meta-)conceptualizations. Such multi-aspectual approach to both these phenomena determined the fundamental structure of both volumes. Thus, both volumes begin with a chapter viewing the described phenomena externally and conceptualizing them by means of the appropriate metalanguage and both volumes continue by providing respective descriptions of meaning and translation internally.

Consequently, Chapter One of the first volume establishes linguistic meaning as the object of semantics (sections 1 and 2), introduces the term 'the terminological principle' as well the cognitive perspective of viewing and conceptualizing language in general and meaning in particular (section 3). Chapter One also elaborates on some technical and notational nuances of the terminological principle by delimiting two important cognitive domains, viz. 'the ontological triad'

and 'the communication sequence'. Relative to these two domains the metalanguage terminology can be rendered more rigorous (section 4). Furthermore, Chapter One implements the terminological principle by defining some fundamental metalanguage terms (section 5), and it finally provides a multiaspectual view of meaning conceptualized from different points of view. These alternative construals of meaning are described by means of a strictly defined set of terms resulting from a rigorous implementation of the terminological principle.

Chapter Two, which views meaning internally, presents various semantic phenomena, such as: relations between sentences (section 7.1), relations between words (section 7.2), relations between sentences (as units in the domain of grammar) and utterances (as units in the domain of discourse), and the consequent distinction between systemic meaning and utterance meaning (section 8). Finally, Chapter Two describes some aspects of connotative meaning (section 9). All these phenomena are described in the metalanguage introduced in Chapter One.

Chapter Three highlights some axiological aspects of meaning which relevant to metaphorical understanding of discourse and its structure.

The second volume, devoted to translation, will be constructed in an analogous way. Chapter One will describe translation viewed externally by presenting various definitions and approaches to translation connected with alternative conceptualizations of translation and, consequently, with different kinds of translation. Chapter Two will deal with translation viewed internally and conceptualized in terms of the semantic metalanguage introduced in the first volume by presenting and exemplifying specific aspects of translation also consistently implementing the semantic metalanguage and semantic distinctions drawn in the first volume.

The book is addressed primarily to students pursuing translation studies but also to all those persons who are interested in semantics and translation for whatever other reasons. The main aim of the book is to provide the prospective reader with a necessary quantum of knowledge in the two areas and with the metalanguage terminology as an indispensable tool to conduct professional discourse concerning meaning and translation.

A subsidiary aim of the book is to tidy up the metalanguage terminology, which is replete with such deficiencies as polysemy of many terms whereby one term is laden with a number of senses, as well as synonymy due to which one sense is connected with more than one linguistic expression (word).\*

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\* The metaterm 'sense' is defined in section 5.3.3.