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You do NOT need to memorize this. It is FYI.

Se-man-tics (*noun*) = The branch of linguistics concerned with **meaning**.

Formal semantics: The logical aspects of meaning, such as sense, reference, implication, and logical form.

Lexical semantics: Word meanings and word relations.

Conceptual semantics: The cognitive structure of meaning.

ASL

Linguistics

(Unit 22)

Semantics:
“The Meaning of
Sentences”

CAT CHASE DOG

VS

DOG CHASE CAT

**Why do these two
sentences have
different
meanings?**

Word (sign) order.

“Word order”

helps determine
the **“Semantic
Role”** of each
sign in a
sentence.

**A “role” is a part
you play in a movie.**

**A “semantic role”
is a part played by
a word in a
sentence.**

**Just as we have
names for actors in
movies
(protagonist,
antagonist,
supporting
character, etc.) ...**

**...we also have
names for the parts
played by WORDS
(or signs) in
sentences.**

**The “role” that a
word plays in
determining
meaning in a
sentence is called
what?**

“Semantic Role”

**Here is a first
glance, we will go
over them all, (with
examples) ...**

Semantic Roles:

AGENT

PATIENT

EXPERIENCER

INSTRUMENT

CAUSE

**In the sentence:
CAT CHASE DOG
which sign is the
AGENT or doer?**

CAT

**In the sentence
CAT CHASE DOG
what is the
semantic role of
the sign CAT?**

AGENT

**In the sentence
DOG CHASE CAT
the cat is now the
what?**

PATIENT

**In a sentence like
JOAN EAT PIZZA
Joan would be the
“AGENT” but what
if we changed that
to...**

JOAN LIKE PIZZA

**Instead of calling
JOAN the “AGENT”
it would be a better
fit to call her the
“EXPERIENCER.”**

**If you are doing
something your
role is what?**

AGENT

**If you are enjoying
or (suffering, etc.)
some physical or
psychological
sensation your role
is what?**

Experiencer

**Consider a
sentence like:
DOOR, KEY<t>, dv:
KEY-OPEN-DOOR**

**Since it would be
weird to think of a
“KEY” as a “doer”
of an action we
might instead call
it an...**

INSTRUMENT

**Note: The semantic
role of
“INSTRUMENT” is
often shown in ASL
how?**

**Answer: Via
depiction (formerly
known as
“classifiers”).**

**Consider: <TREE>,
TORNADO
DESTROY.**

**Hmmm, hard to
think of a “tornado”
as an instrument
eh? (Unless you are
God.) Let’s instead
just call it a ...**

CAUSE