

Semantics is an area of inquiry focused on the study of meaning, as it relates to words, phrases, sentences, and larger forms of *text*.

Within the study of **semantics** derives two forms of meanings: denotative and connotative.

Denotation refers to the literal meaning of a word, the "dictionary definition." For example, if you look up the word *snake* in a dictionary, you will discover that one of its **denotative** meanings is "any of numerous scaly, legless, sometimes venomous reptiles having a long, tapering, cylindrical body and found in most tropical and temperate regions."

(http://www.indiana.edu/~slavicgf/e103/class/2011_03_21/03_21.htm)

Connotation, on the other hand, refers to the associations that are connected to a certain word or the emotional suggestions related to that word. The **connotative** meanings of a word exist together with the denotative meanings. The connotations for the word *snake* could include evil or danger.

(http://www.indiana.edu/~slavicgf/e103/class/2011_03_21/03_21.htm)

Much like a sagging posture or upbeat aura, **symbolic** communication is a subjective element that conveys a specific message. Words are in themselves symbolic in nature as they represent something. The word "cat" is symbolic of a cat but is not a cat.

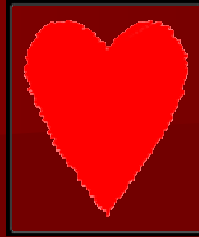
To the human mind, **symbols** are cultural representations of reality. Every culture has its own set of symbols associated with different experiences and perceptions.

http://www.cliffsnotes.com/study_guide/Symbols-and-Language-in-HumanCulture.topicArticleId-26957,articleId-26851.html



The denotation is a brown cross. The connotation is a **symbol** of religion according to the media connotation. However, to be more specific this is a **symbol** of Christianity.

http://www.newworldencyclopediaorg/entry/Denotation_and_connotation



The denotation is a representation of a cartoon heart. The connotation is a **symbol** of love and affection.

http://www.newworldencyclopediaorg/entry/Denotation_and_connotation

Syntax comes from a Greek word meaning “to put together in an orderly arrangement,” and it refers to the ways in which words make up phrases and phrases make up sentences and with the word order in those phrases and in those sentences as a whole.

<http://writerschoices.files.wordpress.com/2011/11/websentelem.pdf>

The term *syntax* is also used to refer directly to the rules and principles that govern the sentence structure of any individual language.

<http://syntax.askdefine.com>

Syntactics is the study of word combinations. Syntactics states that the order in which words are used ultimately determines the outcome of communication. For example, "I am happy" and "Am I happy?" pose two different meanings, yet contain identical words.

Pragmatics is a subfield of linguistics which studies the ways in which context contributes to meaning.

http://www.researchgate.net/topics/786_Linguistics/

Pragmatics refers to how context influences interpretation of meaning. The ability to understand another person's intended meaning is known as pragmatic competence.

<http://www.autism-pdd.net/testdump/test3356.htm>

Relativistic Aspects of Language: Cultural behaviors, including language, may only be judged from the cultural context in which it occurs. This is similar to semantics but it is different due to its strong cultural elements.

Culture however, is not restricted to national culture, but includes geographical, educational, etc. Therefore the words we use may very well affect the way we think and view the world.