

This book introduces the theory and practice of semantics in modern linguistics, focusing on the investigation of speakers' linguistic knowledge. A core assumption is that linguistic abilities stem from inherent knowledge. Modern linguistics recognizes different types of linguistic knowledge: phonology (sound system), syntax (sentence structure), and semantics (meaning of words and sentences). These levels are distinct; one can know a word's meaning without its pronunciation, or vice-versa. Similarly, knowing a word's meaning might not encompass knowledge of its plural or genitive forms. Therefore, knowing a word integrates various types of knowledge, mirroring the interconnectedness of knowledge in phrase and sentence construction. Since linguistic description aims to reflect a speaker's knowledge, semantic description focuses on this semantic knowledge. This is exemplified by the understanding that certain sentences, despite differing forms, describe identical situations.