

**Book Review**

**Howard Jackson**  
**GRAMMAR AND MEANING, A SEMANTIC APPROACH  
TO ENGLISH GRAMMAR**

London and New York: Taylor and Francis Group, 1997

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The textbook titled *Grammar and Meaning, A Semantic Approach to English Grammar* by Howard Jackson is a dual analysis and description of how meaning and grammar can interrelate. The author assumes that there are two levels of organization in the construction of language, which justifies the dual analysis - semantic and grammatical. There are two systems of construction operating in language: a semantic system, concerned with the meaning relations between elements of a construction, and a grammatical system, concerned with the grammatical relations between elements of a construction. This is the reason why linguistic constructions are to be analyzed and described from both a semantic and a grammatical perspective, seeking to relate the two analyses.

The textbook is suggested as the reading material for the elective course in Morphosyntax since it does not only describe the grammar of the English language from the point of view of morphology and syntax but also from the point of view of meaning, i.e. semantics, thus providing students with a skill to relate the meanings to the grammatical aspects of the topic discussed in class and to describe the relevant grammatical systems and structures accordingly.

The book contains ten chapters, preceded by the List of Key Diagrams and Tables and Introduction, and followed by References, Key to Exercises, Glossary and Index. Each chapter begins with an analysis of meaning pertaining to the relevant topic of the chapter and then relates the meanings to the grammatical aspects of the topic and describes relevant grammatical systems and structures. The first three chapters discuss the crucial elements of sentences, or propositions. Chapter 1 treats the central element of the propositions – the situation types, or words referring to states, events and actions, which are grammatically represented by verbs. Situation types are divided into state and non-state situation types. Also, a distinction is drawn among different types of state according to context of use, so that they are summarized as quality, temporary state, private state (distinguished as intellectual, emotional/attitude, perception and bodily sensation) and stance. The features used to distinguish types of events and actions, as non-state situation types, are durative vs. punctual, and

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conclusive vs. non-conclusive. Respecting these features, events are described as goings-on, process, momentary event and transitional event, while actions are analyzed as activity, accomplishment, momentary act and transitional act. The chapter also analyses the word class of verbs and discusses the grammatical categories related to verbs – finite and non-finite verb forms. Chapter 2 is a discussion of the participants of these states, events and actions, or, grammatically speaking, nouns. Participants are described as taking different semantic roles in a situation. Regarding situation types of state, the following participant roles are identified: affected, recipient, positioner and attribute. In situation types of event, the identified participant roles are: affected, attribute, or more specifically the resulting attribute. The participant roles typically associated with action situation types are: agentive, external causer, positioner, affected, resultant, instrument, recipient and attribute. Chapter 3 analyzes circumstances attendant on the state, event or action, and which are represented grammatically by adverbs and prepositions. The most commonly occurring circumstances are identified as locative and temporal, while there are analyzed four further types of circumstances in propositions: process, respect, contingency and degree. The chapter ends with an analysis of adverbs and prepositions as grammatical categories particularly associated with circumstances. Chapter 4 considers the notion of ‘time’ as a ‘specification’ of states, events and actions (i.e., verbs) and its corresponding grammatical category ‘tense’. Chapter 5 is the analysis of the items which identify, classify and describe participants (i.e., nouns). Chapter 6 examines how these elements combine to form semantic constructions (propositions) and grammatical constructions (sentences). Chapters 7 and 8 further discuss propositions (sentences) and show how one proposition may be a constituent of another proposition either as a participant or specifier (embedded clauses, Ch. 7) or as a circumstance (adverbial clauses, Ch. 8). The final two chapters discuss the ways in which propositions combine. Chapter 9 considers coordination and conjunction, whereas Chapter 10 discusses the structure of messages (or texts) – propositions combined with the purpose of achieving meaningful human communication. Moreover, each chapter contains a number of exercises whose aim is to further illustrate the description proposed in the book and thus encourage students to develop their own analytical skills on language data.

The reason why this book is recommended for the students who attend the elective course in Morphosyntax is the dual analysis and description of verbal communication (language): from the perspective of its meaning and from the perspective of its grammatical structure. The two perspectives are combined so that the students are offered two descriptions – they begin with studying the meaning and proceed to grammatical descriptions.

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