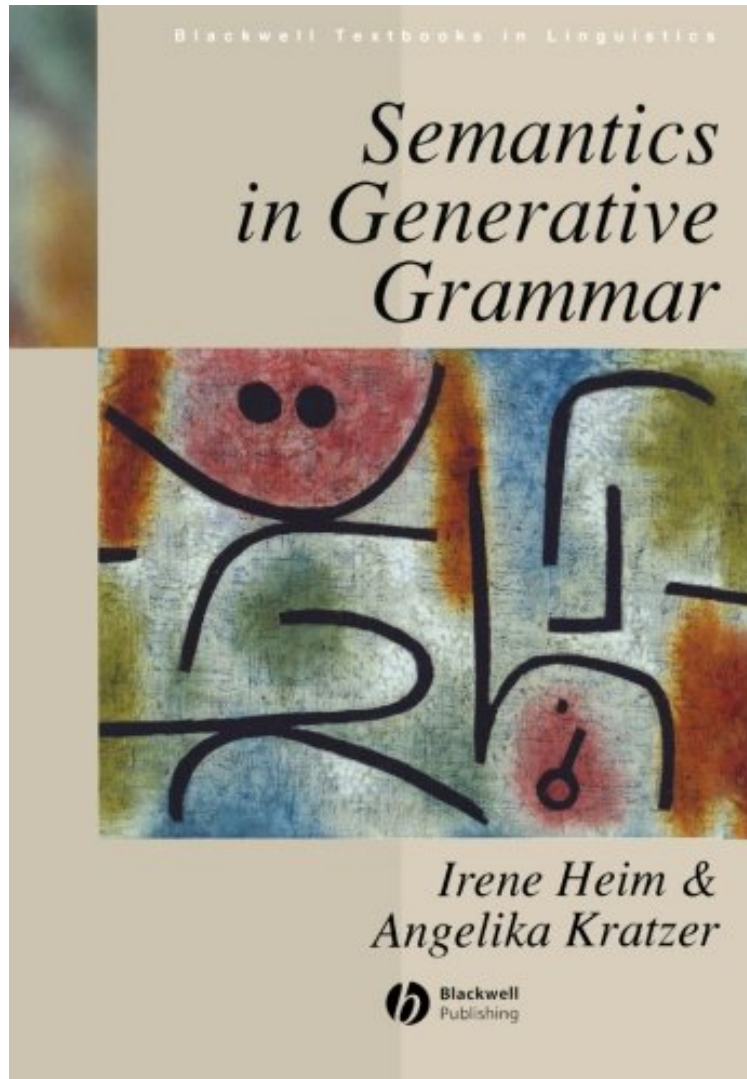


Semantics in Generative Grammar (Blackwell Textbooks in Linguistics)

Irene Heim, Angelika Kratzer

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Irene Heim, Angelika Kratzer : Semantics in Generative Grammar (Blackwell Textbooks in Linguistics) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Semantics in Generative Grammar (Blackwell Textbooks in Linguistics):

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Sets, lambdas, and quantifiersoh my!By Anon. PhilosopherIf you're thinking of studying formal semantics seriously, of course you should read this book. There's no better place to start, and it's what everyone else will expect you to have read. It helps that the pacing and prose are impeccable.But you

don't need me to tell you this, so let me answer some other questions. Should you read this if you're a philosopher with a side-interest in semantics? If the interest is serious, see above. If it's casual, then the answer is still yes. HK are brilliant philosophical thinkers in their own right, and they helpfully explain their project against a background of Fregean philosophy of language. There are also discussions that draw from philosophers in surprising ways; I didn't expect such a meaty quotation from Quine in the chapter on relative clauses! You're also going to want to know about sets, lambdas, and natural language quantifiers, which HK will teach you in no time. Less helpful, but equally delightful, is the excursus on predicate logic. There are a few unsatisfying things about this book's project, which is to make mathy languages that look like natural languages and show how sentences get their meanings from words. How is a semantic theory supposed to hook up to a theory of psychology? How are the basic elements of a semantic theory of English, e.g., "dog" realized in an Anglophone's brain? Do we even know what the prospects are for answering these questions? These are big, hard questions that no one knows how to answer (or so say my friendly neighborhood cognitive scientists). One can't fault HK for failing to settle them in an intro book! The fact is that, whatever problems formal semantics faces, it's already made enormous progress, and an excellent way to catch up with the action is to read HK. The only problems the book faces on its own terms, that I know of, have to do with chapter three (on theta roles and such), which isn't the best treatment of the subject, but isn't an integral part of the book, anyway. Full disclosure: as you can probably tell, I'm a philosopher, not a linguist! I've just taken a couple of graduate seminars on formal semantics and read papers in my spare time. But I can tell you that I found this book extraordinarily engaging, fun, and deep—not to mention useful. If you're a student of my background, you might have a similar experience. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. this lack of clarity is worst in the exercises. By Sassy Stue If you're already familiar with the topics this book is covering, it's an indispensable work, particularly given the stature of the writers and their important work in semantics. There are many important discussions about the theory, but some of the motivation for covering certain topics is not really spelled out. Ironically for a text about semantics, there are many times where the wording is completely obscure. Unfortunately, this lack of clarity is worst in the exercises. If your instructor assigns problems from this book, be sure to make sure that you are both on the same page about what they want. Semantics is a very difficult field to explain to non-specialists once you understand it. This book makes no attempt to remedy this situation. If you're a semanticist, then it's probably fine. But if you're not, you will definitely have to have 3 or 4 other textbooks handy just to make sense of what they're saying. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars. By Ahmand Page Thank you

Written by two of the leading figures in the field, this is a lucid and systematic introduction to formal semantics.

"The reader gets the immediate impression that they are being invited to contribute to real work, which is inspiring. The style is easy to read and the exposition of many difficult and confusing topics is very clear. Semantics in Generative Grammar is really an advanced introduction, and is a good example of how advanced-level texts should be organized...essential reading" Jennifer Spenader, University of Groningen, The Netherlands "This elegant and thorough text will take the reader through many of the advances in linguistic semantics during the past 25 years of generative grammar. It is a fine achievement by two of the most prominent researchers, and teachers, of the subject." James Higginbotham, University of Oxford "This book shows that natural language semantics has reached its maturity. A careful and enlightening discussion guides the reader through the intricacies of argument structure, quantification, and binding, some of the very central topics in semantics and in the syntax/semantics interface. Traditional techniques from logic are presented in a way aimed at bringing out what is really important to the study of language. An excellent introduction for the linguist-to-be." Gennaro Chierchia, University of Milan "This superb new introduction to formal semantics in linguistic theory helps and invites the serious beginner to think through arguments among potential alternatives right from the start. It's a great textbook." Barbara Partee, University of Massachusetts From the Back Cover Written by two of the leading figures in the field, this is a lucid and systematic introduction to semantics as applied to transformational grammars of the "Government-Binding" model. It covers the fundamental constructions thoroughly with analyses, but goes well beyond that core, providing extensive discussion of quantification, binding and anaphora, and ellipsis. With exercises and guides to further reading, the volume will be a key text for graduate level and advanced undergraduate introductory courses in semantics. About the Author Irene Heim is Professor of Linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She is the author of *The Semantics of Definite and Indefinite Noun Phrases* (1987) and, with Angelika Kratzer, is Founder and Editor of *Natural Language Semantics*. Angelika Kratzer is Professor of Linguistics at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and, with Irene Heim, is Founder and Editor of *Natural Language Semantics*.