Semantic Theory (Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics)

By Ruth M. Kempson

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Semantics is a bridge discipline between linguistics and philosophy; but linguistics student are rarely able to reach that bridge, let alone cross it to inspect and assess the activity on the other side. Professor Kempson's textbook seeks particularly to encourage such exchanges. She deals with the standard linguistic topics like componential analysis, semantic universals and the syntax-semantics controversy. But she also provides for students with no training in philosophy or logic an introduction to such central topics in the philosophy of language as logical form, truth, speech acts, analyticity, entailment and presupposition. The exposition throughout is deliberately argumentative rather than descriptive, introducing the student step by step to the major problems in theoretical semantics. Special emphasis is placed on the need to consider individual arguments within the overall perspective of semantics as an integral part of general linguistic theory. Written primarily as a textbook for undergraduates and graduates in linguistics departments, this book will also be useful to undergraduates in philosophy and in psychology where linguistics is a part of their course.

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