Thus, the definition fails to explain the difference between the definite and indefinite article.

Chapter 8, “Zusammenfassung der Ergebnisse und Ausblick” [Summary of the results and prospects] (pp. 275–283), gives a short summary of the volume and presents open research questions. The book ends with references, a person index, and an extensive subject and language index. The great value of the book is its detailed discussion and analyses of selected linguistic material. Leiss extensively comments on the examples and succeeds in giving us some “feeling” about the grammatical structure of such examples. Unfortunately, she is not always very exact in her terminology and often tries to fit too much material into her main thesis. In spite of these shortcomings, the book is a very original contribution to the discussion of the nature of definiteness and will certainly initiate more discussion on these issues.

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References


Chapman has written a book for linguistics students to provide them with the necessary philosophical background for many aspects of linguistic theory and methodology. The book follows a rather traditional and widely accepted canon and is organized with a short introduction and five chapters. All chapters are organized in the same way: after a short and intuitive introduction into the problems, different philosophers or philosophical schools are presented and related to linguistic ideas or concepts. A short description of the life and the main works of a philosopher is often provided. Each chapter ends with an evaluation of those ideas in linguistics and with suggestions for further readings.

The introduction (pp. 1–7) describes the relation between philosophy and linguistics as follows:
It’s not surprising that there is so much philosophy in linguistics. Linguistics itself is a fairly recent academic discipline, but much of our current thinking about language has developed from ideas which date from the decades and centuries before it came into being (p. 1).

This is, of course, somewhat generalized. While it correctly describes the situation in compositional semantics and pragmatics, it misses that linguistics itself has a very long tradition (reaching back to classical times in Europe and India). Furthermore, linguistics has developed its own paradigms such as structuralism, which then has influenced other disciplines including philosophy (see Peregrin 2001 for a comprehensive discussion of the role of linguistic structuralism in analytic philosophy). The book concentrates on the philosophical background of semantic and pragmatic theories and models.

Chapter 1, “Words and things” (pp. 8–40), discusses different theories about the nature of “meaning” and presents the two opposing views of a “direct reference account” vs. the “ideational account.” In many cases, the two aspects are involved when we use words to refer to things. While the direct reference theory accounts for the way simple names and terms refer, the ideational view covers cases in which the descriptive content of complex expressions delimits the domain of potential referents. Chapman presents a brief and informative summary of philosophers that discussed theories of meaning. Starting with Plato and Aristotle, both in favor of an ideational account, she then summarizes some ideas of the British Empiricists — still in the ideational account. Only Leibniz argued against Locke, and developed a direct reference account, which then was further elaborated by Mill. Frege approached some problems of the direct reference approach by introducing two aspects of meaning: sense and reference — a distinction which Carnap dubbed intension vs. extension (Carnap is only mentioned in Chapter 2 for the first time). The contrast between these two aspects is discussed with reference to opaque contexts (“Pip believes . . .”) and then embedded into a discussion of definite description by Russell. Finally, Kripke and the concept of “rigid designation” is presented. The chapter ends with some open questions on “words and things in linguistics.” While the chapter provides much information and gives an informative survey on basic concepts, the really intriguing question of the nature of reference is left open.

Chapter 2, “Propositions and logic” (pp. 42–71), focuses on the meaning of sentences (or utterances), that is, on propositions. Like words or phrases, sentences have different kinds of meaning: an extensional meaning, which is a truth value, and an intensional meaning, which is much more complex (Frege called it Gedanke “thought”). The reminder
of the chapter discusses relations between propositions in the former aspect, which can be formally described by propositional logic. Propositional logic basically defines the syntactic and semantic rules of combining propositions to more complex propositions by negation, conjunction, disjunction, and condition. Chapman manages to motivate the truth functional definition of the conditional, and she also mentions the difference of the linguistic expression “if” which generally assumes relations between the content of the connected sentences. She then gives a very brief overview of predicate logic and the use of quantifiers, without discussing any more general implication of such a logic. Chapman rather concentrates on “entailment and presupposition,” two very important issues in logic and linguistics. She comes back to the discussion of Russell’s theory of descriptions in terms of the contrast between a uniqueness entailment (Russell) and a uniqueness presupposition (Strawson). She elaborates on Strawson’s view of presupposition and embeds Grice’s idea in the same tradition. The final section, “Logic and Linguistics,” and the suggested readings intend to give some recent developments. Unfortunately, there are only two bibliographical references after 1983.

Chapter 3, “Truth and reality” (pp. 72–105), discusses different theories of truth and the relation between the concept of truth and reality. While Aristotle’s definition of truth in his *Categoriae* is basically a correspondence theory of truth (a sentence is true if its content can be matched to the facts of the world), it was only Wittgenstein, who formulated this in the well-known sentence 4.024: “to understand a proposition means to know what is the case if it is true” (p. 72). Chapman first lays the ground for discussing different theories of truth by introducing us to Kant’s distinction between analytic and synthetic sentences on the one hand, and between *a priori* and *a posteriori* judgements on the other. Leaving out Neo-Kantianism, she continues with the problem of verification discussed by the Vienna Circle and other associated logical positivists, in particular Carnap, who wrote his *Logical Syntax of Language* in 1937 in order to eliminate metaphysical questions by showing that those questions are linguistically (and therefore logically) not well-formed. Chapman discusses Tarski’s schema T for defining truth and Davidson’s reformulation in terms of *satisfaction*. Then, Kripke’s concepts of possible worlds and contrafactual worlds are introduced and discussed. Finally, the motivation for Montague Grammar is presented and one long quotation from Montague is given concluding with a very short discussion on the differences between philosophical and linguistics semantics. These two final subsections do not seem to fit in this chapter — they would have been better suited into the discussion of logical vs. grammatical form in the preceding Chapter 2.
Chapter 4, “Speakers and hearers” (pp. 106–143), gives the basic philosophical assumptions for a theory of pragmatics. Linguistic expressions are not understood as referring by themselves, but they are used by speakers in order to refer to objects. Starting with the work of Wittgenstein and the Ordinary Language School at Oxford, Chapman sketches the basic philosophical insights that lead to the linguistic work of Austin and Searle on speech acts. Before she continues with the expected theory of implicature of Grice, Chapman inserts a short subsection on “meaning and intention,” where she presents Saussure’s ideas on arbitrary signs. While this is one of the central ideas of linguistics in the 20th century and of Structuralists in general, I found it not well motivated to introduce it in the context of speech acts and conversational maxims, which are discussed in the next subsection. The final section of this chapter is devoted to the delimitation of pragmatics from semantics. Chapman concludes that pragmatics is developing into a proper linguistic discipline: “perhaps the most significant new work in this area since ‘Logic and Conversation’ has been the development of ‘Relevance Theory’ by Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson, and others” (p. 139). Again, Chapman fails to discuss more recent literature on pragmatics, in particular more formal approaches to it.

Chapter 5, “Language and mind” (pp. 144–172), discusses a more general issue in linguistics, namely whether linguistic competence is innate or acquired. This is a discussion that goes back to Plato’s dialog Kratylos. Chapman discusses Saussure’s theory of signs and concludes: “language for Saussure, then, is a mental structure. That is only part of his definition. No account of language is complete, he argues, without reference to the social function in a society” (p. 147). I would agree with Chapman if mental structure means linguistic structure. She continues to discuss the question of linguistic determinism (or rather relativism); and then the empiricism of Bloomfield and Quine, which are closely connected with behaviorism. It is this philosophical environment in which Chomsky reintroduces the innateness theory of language, which opposes both empiricism and behaviorism. Based on this criticism, Chomsky formulates the hypothesis of the language faculty, which leads to one of the most productive research projects in the recent history of linguistics (a point which is not valued by Chapman). Chapman concludes that linguistics has gained from other disciplines as well: “as we have seen, work which proved important in the development of linguistics came not just from philosophy, but also from psychology, anthropology and other disciplines” (p. 169). The book ends with a very helpful glossary, notes, references, and an index.

Despite minor shortcomings, Chapman succeeds in writing an accessible introduction to the philosophical foundations of linguistics. One can
only hope that more linguists will read this book and understand more complex linguistic theories by embedding them into the general philosophical or epistemological discussion.

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**Reference**


The back cover of this book claims it to be “the first thoroughly worked out framework for language evolution” and to advance “new ideas about grammatical reanalysis, conventional and non-conventional use of language, the structure of speech communities, language mixing, and the notion of ‘progress in language change.’” This review will try to see how it measures up to these claims.

In the book, Croft adopts a general theory of selection drawing on work by Dawkins (1976) and Hull (1988) in biology and philosophy of science. The basics of his utterance-based theory of language change are as follows:

1. utterances are the only observable entities in linguistics; altered replication of utterances may lead to language change;
2. language change consists of two distinct processes — *innovation* and *propagation*. Innovation is the creation of novel forms in the language, propagation is a selection mechanism of novel forms; propagation is generally overlooked by current approaches to language change, whereas sociohistorical linguistics often lacks mechanisms for innovation;
3. the mechanism for innovation is *functional*, whereas the mechanism for propagation is *social*;
4. the traditional distinction between internal and external sources of language change is to be blurred: “all speakers command multiple varieties or codes, and thus some of the mechanisms for internal sources of change are the same as those for external sources of change” (p. 8).