

The Study of Meaning and the Meaning of Life

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Abstract: In one form or another, the phenomena associated with “meaning transfer” become central issues in a lot of recent work on semantics. This study is our contribution towards clarifying the expression “The Meaning of Life” in the proceedings of the 2010 Literary Society of Nigeria (LSN) Annual Conference. Our modus operandi for that set objective is to elucidate the formulation the meaning of life in the conference’s theme and sub-themes, by examining incisively the notion of meaning within the said formulation. Our interest in meaning is rooted in semantics, an academic discipline universally defined as “the study of meaning”. Our intellectual tools for the analysis are (i) the symbolist theory of meaning, attributable to Ogen & Richards (1923), as well as to Lyons (1981 & 1995); (ii) the performative theory of meaning in Uwajeh (1996b, 1996c, 2002 & 2010); and (iii) the subjective well-being theory of meaning, in Diener, Lucas & Oishi (2002). The overall thrust of our argumentation shows up through our confronting the meaning in the 2010 LSN Annual conference’s “The Meaning of Life” with the meaning in “The Study of Meaning” of semantics.

Keywords: Meaning of Life; Semantics; Symbolist theory; Performance theory; subjective well-being theory

Introduction

Those who study the meaning of life have argued that people seek to build meaning in their lives, defend it from threats and repair it from damage (e.g. Battista & Almond, 1973; Reker & Wong, 1988; Steger & Frazier, 2005; Steger, Frazier, Oish & Kaler, 2006; Steger, 2009; 2012). Scholars have Sought to articulate the kinds of meaning people experience at varying levels of abstraction- from the meaning of words to the meaning of “life, the universe, and everything” (Park, 2010; Uwajeh, 2010; Steger, 2012). “The Meaning of Life” is undoubtedly of great consequence in the proceedings of the 2010 LSN Annual Conference. The formulation is a critical component of the conference’s theme, “Literature as an Inquiry into the Meaning of Life”; and it is also an integral constituent of the conference’s seven sub-themes as follows:

(i) Language as an Inquiry into *the Meaning of Life*;

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- (ii) Poetry as an Inquiry into *the Meaning of Life*;
- (iii) Prose as an Inquiry into *the Meaning of Life*;
- (iv) Drama as an Inquiry into *the Meaning of Life*;
- (v) Oral Literature as an Inquiry into *the Meaning of Life*;
- (vi) Film/Home Videos as an Inquiry into *the Meaning of Life*;
- (vii) Theatre as an Inquiry into *the Meaning of Life*.

Within the intellectual background just specified, this paper is our contribution towards an enhanced appreciation of the conference's theme and sub-themes. Our set objective here is to examine incisively the notion of meaning within the said formulation. Our interest in *meaning* is rooted in *semantics*, an academic discipline universally defined as "the study of meaning". However, the definition of semantics has generally been quite uncontroversial since the inception of the discipline as a self-contained field of intellectual inquiry, what exactly to understand by "*meaning*" in that definition remains definitely controversial to date—rendering semantics the most confused and confusing academic discipline indeed! In one of the several different interpretations of "*meaning*" in semantics, meaning is purportedly any instance of whatever the word "*meaning*" is used to refer to in the context of any given linguistic formulation. It is especially the semantic doctrine of this school of thought in semantics that we wish to confront in this paper, in order to clarify the formulation "the meaning of life" in the 2010 LSN Annual conference's theme and sub-themes. Specifically, we wish to determine to what extent, if at all, "meaning" in "the meaning of Life" comes within the purview of semantics defined as "the study of meaning."

Theoretical Framework and Review of Related Literature

"Symbolist", as used in this paper, is derived from the term "Symbol", which term may be technically defined as the general name for a form unit used to refer to any one thing whatsoever—whether the thing is concrete or abstract, real or imaginary, etc. therefore, every word of a language, for example, is a kind of symbol. As should be self-evident from our presentation so far, in a symbolist theory of meaning, the focus of the theory is manifestly on the word itself "meaning" wherever that symbol occurs, and not on what the word expresses as much; hence the appellation symbolist for the theory. Semantics is defined as "the study of meaning", "meaning is anything called "meaning"; and there is hence purportedly not just one phenomenon being referred to with "meaning" in the definition. For Ogden and Richards (1923) and Lyons (1981 & 1995), therefore, to say that semantics is the study of meaning is equivalent to saying that semantics is the study of several different (kinds of) phenomena, each of which is called "meaning".

We use the expression “symbolist theory” for any serious claim as to what meaning is which endorses the above position that several different (kinds of) phenomena, not just one phenomenon, are referred to by “meaning” when semantics is defined as “the study of meaning”; and “symbolist theorists” are, for us, all scholars who seriously spouse that said symbolist theory position about what meaning is. According to our explanations in this paragraph, Ogben and Richards (1923) and Lyons (1981 & 1995) is symbolist theorist of meaning. In addition, Umagandhi and Vinothini (2017) add that semantics is also central to the study of communication. Though the “meaning” or the information one wants to communicate can be conveyed through a number of means like gesture, picture, signals, etc. Language was the main tool of communication of the human beings. Semantics as a branch of linguistics was mainly concerned with how the “meaning” was conveyed by the linguistics system considering of different unit structures like sentence, phrases, words, morphemes, etc.

Consider the following sentences, extracted from Rosenberg and Travis (1971, p. 397), for an illustration of how the symbolist theory of meaning works.

1. Her expression last Friday was full of meaning.
2. She meant well.
3. There is much meaningless formality in everyday life.
4. These clouds mean rain.
5. Your friendship means much to me.
6. I meant her to say.
7. The superstitious ascribe meaning to the purest accident.
8. In the light of this information the incident acquires a fresh meaning.
9. These two words have the same meaning.

According to symbolist theorists, semantics is not just the study of what “meaning” refers to in sentence 1,7,8 and 9 above, but also to what the derivatives of “meaning” such as “meant” in sentence 2, “meaningless” in sentence 3, “mean” in sentence 4, and “means” in sentence 5. Now, let us attempt to specify the several different things referred to with “meaning” and its derivatives in the said nine sentence examples above. Take sentence 1, for illustration.

1. **Her expression last Friday was full of meaning**
Here, “meaning” obviously refers to some *emotional state* which somebody’s expression made manifest the preceding Friday.
2. **She meant well.**
Here, “meant” obviously refers to *the past intending* of something by somebody
3. **There is much meaningless formality in everyday life.**
“Meaningless” in sentence 3 refers to some useless quality of formality.
4. **These clouds mean rain.**

“Mean” in sentence 4 refers to *the present activity of signaling* which may be deduced from the appearance of the clouds in question.

5. Your friendship means much to mean

“Means” in sentence 5 refers to *the present activity of having value* which the addressee’s friendship exhibits for the sentence- constructor.

6. I meant her to stay.

“Meant” in sentence 6 refers to *the past activity of planning* by the sentence- constructor.

7. The superstitious ascribe meaning to the purest accident

Here, “meaning” refers to *the significance* which the superstitious manage to discover even in “the purest accident”.

8. In the light of this information the incident acquires a fresh meaning.

Here, “meaning” refers to another, different, *interpretation* which some information just received calls for about some past incident.

9. These two words have the same meaning.

Here, “meaning” refers to *something expressed* by the two words as linguistic *forms*, in a specific linguistic communication- according to the intention of the particular communicator, and the understanding of the targeted communicatee.

For symbolist theorists, then, when semantics is defined as “the study of meaning”, the *meaning* in question for study according to the definition is not only each of the ostensibly *different* phenomena referred to with “meaning” in sentence 1 (i.e., *emotional state*), sentence 7 (i.e., *significance*), sentence 8 (i.e., *interpretation*), and sentence 9 (i.e., something expressed with linguistic forms), but also each of the ostensibly *different* phenomena referred to with the derivatives of “*meaning*” that is, *past intending* referred to with “meant” in sentence 2, *useless quality* referred to with “meaningless” in sentence 3, *present activity of signaling* referred to with “mean” in sentence *present activity of having value* referred to with “means” in sentence 5, and *past activity of planning* referred to with “meant” in sentence 6. So, given the foregoing, does the *meaning* in the meaning of Life” of the 2010 LSN Annual Conference theme and sub-themes come within the purview of semantics, defined as “the study of meaning”? According to the symbolist theory of meaning, since in that semantic theory, “meaning” is any called “*meaning*” in “the meaning of Life” should definitely be a preoccupation of semantics; according to our present understanding of the issues involved, the symbolist theory of meaning is, ab initio, Not a tenable basis for determining whether or not *meaning* in the meaning of Life” comes within the purview of semantics because theory is hopelessly flawed in its central tenet, that “*meaning*” is anything called “meaning” Put slightly differently, the symbolist semantics theory, in our estimation, is a *very bad semantic theory* for the conduct of semantics because it *undermines with its central tenet the very basis of semantics* as an academic discipline in two critical ways.

First, with its fundamental postulate that there is Not any *one* particular object (called “meaning”) which semantics is the study of the symbolist theory of meaning in effect *rejects* “the presupposition of *existence*” of meaning, according to Lyons (1981)-i.e., the presupposition that there is *something* called “meaning”, when it is said that semantics is “the study of meaning”. In so doing, the symbolist semantics theory implies that semantics does not have its own ONE subject matter (called “meaning”) when it is defined as “the study of meaning”! Now, as every serious scholar knows, each academic discipline in question; for example, linguistics is the study of *something*, called “*language*”; physics is the study of *something*, called “*matter*”; sociology is the study of *something*, called “*society*”; psychology is the study of *something*, called “*behavior*”; Anthropology is the study of *something*, called “*culture*”; etc. so, if, according to the symbolist semantic theory, there is purportedly *no* ONE phenomenon as such, called “*meaning*”, which semantics studies, when it is defined as “the study of meaning”, it follows that the conduct of semantics should be an *exercise in futility* for scholars so engaged! The central tenet of the symbolist theory of meaning, as we have just presented it, is thus an example *par excellence* of certain contradictions in semantics which repeatedly provoke the exasperation of its long-suffering students (Uwajeh, 1996; 2002; 2005; 2008).

Second, given that any attempt to use the symbolist theory of meaning, invariably reveals that there is indeed *No* one entity *common* to the several different (kinds of) phenomena referred with “meaning” or any of its derivatives when semantics is defined as “the study of meaning”, it follows that the symbolist theory is in fact *in denial* of “the presupposition of *homogeneity*”, according to Lyons (1981), about *something* called “meaning” which should be *common* to all the usages of the term “meaning” and all its derivatives for “the study of meaning” known as “semantics”. Thus, there is clearly nothing *in common* between (1) emotional state; (2) activity of intending; (3) useless quality; (4) present activity of signaling; (5) present activity of having value; (6) past activity of planning; (7) significance; (8) interpretation; and (9) something expressed with linguistic forms. Therefore, 1 to 9 above would refer to so, if, as claimed in the symbolist theory of meaning, there were really *nothing common* between the several different things referred to with “meaning” (and its derivatives) when it is said that semantics is the study of meaning”, then it should follow that semantics so conducted would become an *impossible* academic discipline-given that such a semantic is in effect studying several different and *unrelated* phenomena, from which inherently unfocused study *no Coherent* significant knowledge could ever be attained (Uwajeh, 1996c).

Admitted, then, that the symbolist theory of meaning is definitely *NOT* a viable basis for determining whether or not *meaning* in “the meaning of life” of the 2010 LSN Annual Conference theme and sub-themes comes within the purview of Semantics defined as “the study of meaning”, because the theory is hopelessly flawed in its central tenet that “meaning is anything called “meaning”, does

meaning in the meaning of life constitute a problem for Semantics by the defining tenet of any other, *non-symbolist* theory of meaning? We answer this question by examining what *meaning* is in *performative* theory of meaning.

The Performative Theory of Meaning

The performative theory of meaning is itself an integral part of linguistic theory in *Performative Linguistics*. The linguistic theory of performative linguistics is described in some detail in Uwajeh (2002), *Beyond Generative Grammar: A course in Performative Linguistics*, as well as in the Second, Revised Edition of the same book (Uwajeh, 2010). The bedrock postulate of “performativism”-in other words, of the performative linguistics, linguistic theory paradigm is that “*Language is an intelligent performance*”, where the term “performance” is used in the special technical sense to posit Language as “*something performed*” (i.e., NOT the *performing activity* itself which gives rise to language, according to how “performance” has hitherto been more commonly understood since Chomsky’s 1965 *Aspects of the theory of syntax*). Thus, Language is “something performed” with due regard for the communication exigencies of real life such that any realist characterization of Language must also take into account those same communication constraints which make Language texts (i.e, actual Language units) *bona fide* communicative constructs of Language users (Uwajeh, 1994).

“*performative Grammar*”, is a context-sensitive characterization of Language *structure* which derives from the tenets of performative linguistics. Also, derived of translation paradigm called “performative Translatology”, as outlined in particular in Uwajeh (1994) “The case for a Performative Translatology”; and as worked out exhaustively in Uwajeh (2007) *Translation Equivalence: An Essay in Theoretical Linguistics*. In some detail, the linguistic theory upon which the performative theory of meaning is constructed is made manifest in the five cardinal tenets of performativism, as follows.

One, the nature of Language is *not just* a matter of Language *structure*, but also inherently concerns issues of language *use*. The fact that Language is essentially a communication tool, for instance, is of enormous importance in the characterization of Language; yet, the communicative character of Language in certainly not part of Language *structure*. Therefore, it is *scientifically perverse* to assume that the structure of Language *alone* can constitute *all* there is to know which is significant about the nature of Language as erroneously stated and defended in Chomsky’s (1975) *reflections on Language* especially, among other academic works.

Two, Language content comprises TWO, and only TWO, major constituents-in agreement with the Ferdinand de Saussure’s bicomponential model of Language

make-up. The two major components of Language content or make-up are its thought or “meaning” part, and its symbolization or “form” part as shown below:

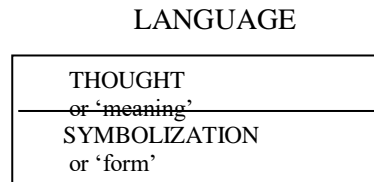


Figure 1. The Performative Linguistic Bicomponential Model of Language

The componentiality of Language, in terms of the two essences of *thought* or “meaning” and *symbolization* or “form”, may thus be gainfully used to set performative Linguistics apart from other paradigms of Linguistics as state hereunder.

First, Performative Linguistics rejects the traditional Grammar and structuralist Linguistics School monocomponential model of Language which is used by Fries (1952) for example to build his modern linguistic theory, whereby Language is supposedly *only* meaningful *form* –is that, being such an intrinsic essence of Language as recognized by Linguistics Departments academic programmes worldwide which routinely consider the scientific study of linguistic *meaning* (i.e., Semantics in Linguistics) to be a *core* Linguistics course, *meaning is definitely an integral part of Language*.

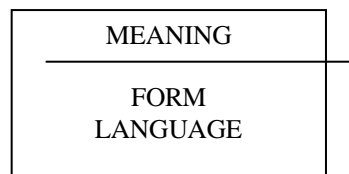


Figure 2. Structuralist Linguistics Monocomponential Model of Language

Performative also rejects Generative Grammar’s tricomponential model of Language first formulated in Chomsky (1965), and illustrated in figures 3 below, whereby Language supposedly comprises (i) form, (ii) meaning, and (iii) syntax. The basis for the rejection is that the so-called “syntax” third major component of Language is *fictitious* (and hence non- existent) – given that *syntax* is *part of the form component of Language*, and NOT a third major constituent as such, if we use the universally accepted notion of “syntax” as concerning supralexical (i.e., above-lexical-level) *formal* structure of Language.

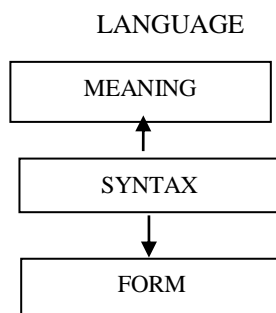


Figure 3. The Generative Grammar Tricomponential Model of Language

The “Meaning-Structure Grammar’s zerocomponential model of Language proposed in Chafe (1970) and illustrated in figure 4 below, whereby Language is some kind of “Link” between sound and meaning (i.e., where Language is *neither* meaning *nor* form nor both meaning and form) is also *rejected* by performativist linguistic theory. The basis for the rejection is that a characterization of Language wherein Language consists of neither form or meaning, nor both form and meaning, but in which characterization meaning is explicitly identified to be of crucial importance for the character of Language make -up and for the nature of Language is perfectly *incomprehensible* to common sense.

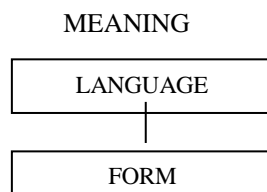


Figure 4. The Meaning-Structure Grammer Zerocomponential Model of Language

Three, Language, as a communication means necessarily is also essentially a *representational* phenomenon. Its representational character is what distinguishes Language from other (*Non-Linguistic*) means of communication, which are essentially *indication* in nature. Language as a representational means of communication inherently, *stands* for (and thereby expresses directly) various realities which preoccupy our consciousness, whereby the communicator makes the communicatee also aware of those realities as *information* intended by that communicator. When, for example, a cashier tells a customer “queue up, please!”, the customer *knows*, by virtue of the *conventional* code (called English) which he/she has learned, exactly what information the cashier intended for him/her, which the cashier’s spoken text “Queue up, please!” is supposed to call up for or convey to the customer. Now, not only is Language as a whole representational

with respect to the realities it is used to communicate, but also the two main components of Language (i.e., Language thought and Language symbolization), are themselves representational with respect to the relationship between them. Thus, the relationship between Language thought or “meaning” and Language symbolization or “form” is representational: Language thought is the “represented”, and Language symbolization is the “representer”.

Non – linguistic means of communication, as indication means, *point to* (and thereby express indirectly) various realities which preoccupy our consciousness, whereby the communicator makes the communicatee also aware of those realities as information intended by that communicator. If, for instance, your visiting new neighbour has been in your house too late into the night for your liking, you could *deliberately* yawn rather explosively such that your neighbour gets the hint about the information conveyed in the context, when he/she deduces that you must be feeling very sleepy to have yawned so uncontrollably, and that he/she should therefore terminate his/her visit immediately; which conclusion you of course intended all along and *indicated* (i.e., “pointed to” or expressed indirectly) as information with your dramatic yawning. Although, language is essentially representational in nature, it could also in addition to (NOT instead of) being representational also be indicational as a means of communication. For instance, if, instead of yawning explicatively, as presented above, you adroitly slip into your conversation with your new neighbour the statement “I hate keeping awake late into the night”, you could thereby not only be *representing* information about your sleeping habits but also be *indicating* thereby in addition that your new neighbour should end his/her visit immediately so that you can go to sleep.

Four, all Language symbolization types are *equal* as media for representing thought or “meaning” whereby Linguistic theory in Performative Linguistic *rejects* the “primacy of speech principle” in modern Linguistics¹, that *speech* (i.e., spoken Language) is somehow supposedly primary in the nature of Language. In other words, for performativism *no Language symbolization type is inherently more or less important than another Language symbolization type*. In particular, *Language is, by its nature, neither necessarily nor essentially spoken*; and it is hence a serious error to treat written and “sign” Languages as if they were mere derivations of spoken Language. The true picture is that each language medium has certain inherent strengths, but also certain inherent weaknesses, depending on which specific (types of) communication situation is involved. Thus, spoken Language may indeed admittedly be quicker for the *construction* of texts than written Language, but by its very nature, spoken Language is accordingly more liable to the time-constraint-factor errors and slips that are relatively less common in written Language, where there is considerably more time for the communicator’s revisions and corrections of his/her texts *before* the texts’ delivery to the communicatee.

¹ See (Lyons, 1981 for a defence of the principle and Uwajeh, 2002 & 2010 for its repudiation).

Five, for performative Linguistics, pragmatic considerations are *not just important*, but are in fact indispensable for the characterization of Language structure. Put differently, it follows that a correct Grammar, or satisfactory characterization of Language structure, is impossible without a sound pragmatics, or satisfactory characterization of Language *use*. In other words, Language structure is anchored in Language use; and Grammar is therefore pragmatics-bound (Uwajeh, 2008; 2011).

Meaning in the Subjective Well-Being Theory of Meaning

Semantics as a study of meaning, which relates language to the various aspects of non-linguistics reality, was also of interest to various disciplines such as philosophy, anthropology, psychology, communication theory, etc. Semantics in the broad sense of the term can be considered as the study of all that was communicated by Language, but some scholars would like to restrict semantics to the study of logical or conceptual “*meaning*” (i.e., only those aspects of meaning which are logically acceptable leaving out deviation and abnormalities). Psychologists have argued that “*meaning*” is making sense of life (Battista & Almond, 1973), and also that there is an affective quality to meaning (Reker & Wong, 1988); that meaning is primarily nurtured by goal-directed behaviour (Lomher, 1977; Ryff & Singer, 1998; Steger, 2012); that meaning is linked to transcendent or spiritual concerns (Emmons, 2013; Mascarro, Rosen & Morey, 2004; Santos, Magramo, Oguan, Paat & Barnachea, 2012); or that meaning comes from a sense of self-worth, efficacy, self-justification, and purpose (Baumeister, 1991; Steger, Kashden & Oishi, 2008). Diener *et al.* (2002) defined subjective well-being as a person’s cognitive and affective evaluation of his or his life. The affective element in the context of this paper refers to emotions, moods, and feelings. What is important to understand is that “*meaning*” of “*life*” is thought as a variable that provides the conditions from which affection arises (Lent, 2004) and may contribute to the foundation of overall happiness which in turn is subjective well-being. “*Subjective well-being*” can be expressed in simple terms like saying oftenly, “*I feel good*” and “*I feel happy*”.

The presentation above is breaking down into social and affective meaning in Semantics. These two meaning are concerned with two aspects of communication which are derived from the situation or environment in which an utterance or sentence was produced in a Language. Of these two, Social meaning was that information which a piece of Language (i.e., a pronunciation variation, a word, phrase, sentence, etc), conveys about the social circumstance of its use. Social “*meaning*” was understood through the recognition of different dimension and level of style within the same Language. Aspects of Language variation like social or regional dialect variation, style variation like formal, informal, colloquial, slang, etc., in a social situation a functional meaning of a sentence may differ from its

conceptual meaning due to its illocutionary force. On the other hand, affective meaning is the aspects of meaning which “*reflect personal feelings*” of the communicator, includes the attitude of the communicatee.

Meanings are thought according to the performative semantic theory and subjective well – being theory of meaning ; that is, meanings are abstract entities in the mind-mental abstractions, in other words Serale (1983) posits that meanings are not only Linguistic, but may also be *non* – Linguistic. All meanings, whether linguistic or non- linguistic, are thoughts in the minds of users of forms which thoughts are expressed by those forms. Linguistic meaning is one component of a linguistic unit, the other component being the corresponding linguistic form; and the relationship between the two linguistic components is *representational*. Therefore, meanings are *thoughts* expressed by *forms* – with a representational relationship existing between each linguistic form and its corresponding linguistic meaning.

Now to establish the exact ontological status of the *meaning* referred to within the formulation “the meaning of life” of the 2010 LSN Annual Conference theme and sub-themes. Clearly, the *meaning* referred to within the said formulation “the meaning of life” is *not* the same as that referred to within another apparently related but quite different formulation “the meaning of life”. In the latter situation, the *meaning* referred to with “meaning” may be quite correctly presented as the *thought* expressed by the *form* (i.e., the word) “Life”, in the former situation regarding “the meaning of life” of the 2010 LNC Annual Conference theme and sub- themes, *the meaning* referred to with “meaning” may be rightly paraphrased as the *purpose or ultimate goal or existential value* of the *reality* referred to with “life”. So, given the presentation above, it is the case for performative Linguistics Linguistic theory that the *meaning* in “the meaning of life” of the 2010 LSN Annual Conference theme and sub-themes does constitute the kind of subject matter studied by semantics, defined as “the study of meaning”? Our answer is “no” and we posit that the performative theory of meaning is the semantic component of performative Linguistics linguistic theory, which establishes the nature of linguistic meaning.

Conclusion

Our modus operandi for this study is to confront a pernicious intellectual tradition whereby many scholars routinely assume that wherever and whenever the language unit “meaning” is involved, then semantics, defined as “the study meaning”, is not far away or in other words, that semantics must somehow have something to do with *every* situation of the occurrence of the Language unit “meaning”. We have thus far argued that the Language unit “meaning”, besides legitimately referring indeed to the subject matter of semantics defined as “the meaning of life”, may actually also refer to all kinds of other phenomena that have absolutely nothing to

do with the conduct of semantics as an academic discipline. We have used this study of the “meaning” in the formulation “the meaning of life” of the 2010 LSN Annual Conference theme and sub-themes to underscore our aforementioned intellectual concern.

What “meaning” refers to their properly interpreted, therefore, the formulation “the meaning of life” of the 2010 LSN Annual Conference theme and sub-themes should be understood as something like “the existential value of life” such that the theme and sub-themes may be paraphrased accordingly as follows:

- (i) Literature as an Inquiry into the Existential Value of Life;
- (ii) Language as an Inquiry into the Existential Value of Life;
- (iii) Poetry as an Inquiry into the existential Value of Life;
- (iv) Prose as an Inquiry into the Existential Value of Life;
- (v) Drama as an Inquiry into the existential Value of Life;
- (vi) Oral literature as an Inquiry into the existential Value of Life;
- (vii) Film/ Home videos as an Inquiry into the existential Value of Life;
- (viii) Theatre as an Inquiry into the existential Value of Life.

Given the foregoing, proper interpretation of “meaning” in the formulation “the meaning of life”, it becomes crystal clear that the 2010 LSN Annual Conference is in fact preoccupied with investigating, through art, a philosophical problem about life. Since that philosophical problem is definitely not a concern of Semantics properly understood as the academic discipline which studies thoughts expressed with *forms*, it follows that the *meaning* with which the 2010 LSN Annual Conference theme and sub-themes preoccupied in the formulation “the meaning of life”, most laudable as it indeed is, falls outside the purview of Semantics, universally defined as “the study of meaning”.

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