

Pragmatics (1)

Lecture 9

Contents

What is pragmatics?

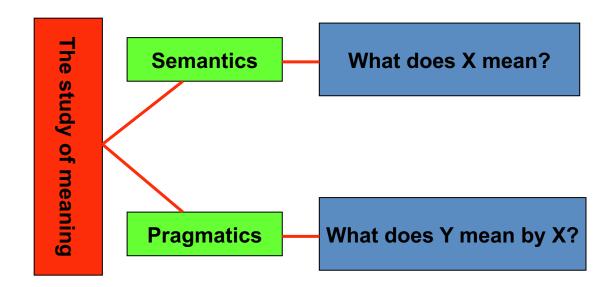
Context

Reference

Pragmatics and semantics

Semantics deals with the conventional meaning conveyed by the use of words and sentences of a language.

Pragmatics studies the intended speaker meaning.



Intended meanings

- Identify the possible messages a speaker might convey using the following sentences.
- John has got a knife.
- Where there is a will, there is a way.
- A same sentence can be used to convey different messages.

- Context (non-linguistic factors) plays a role in the interpretation of the intended linguistic meaning.
- Categories of context

- 1. physical context: what is physically present around the users at the time of communication
- the objects visible, the location of the communication, what is going on around, etc.
- May I read that book?
- (accompanied by pointing)
- The mid-term will be held here at 6:30 pm May 8.
- (place reference)
- Some of you will present your project proposal tonight.
- (time reference)

■ 2. linguistic context: the set of other words used in the conversation

- I'll get to the bank to withdraw some cash.
- The student was late for class tonight, but he/she thought nobody would *notice*.

- 3. Social context: the social relationship of the people involved in communication
- To a friend/family member:
- Call me when you get home.
- # I do hereby humbly request that you might endeavor to telephone me with news of your arrival at your domicile when such arrival occurs.

■ 4. Epistemic context: Knowledge and beliefs of the speaker/hearer

Hey! This is a linguistics class!

- You are sitting at the same table with a couple in the library.
 The couple are babbling, so you say:
- "Excuse me, could you please speak up a bit more? I missed what you said."
- Identify the four categories of context.

- In many cases, what a word refers to can only be identified in a specific physical context.
- You, you and you, come over here.
- 一刻钟后回来。
- Put *that here* and then move *this over there*.

Person deixis:

-- me, you, him, her, us, them, that woman, those idiots

Time deixis:

- -- now, then, last week, later, tomorrow, yesterday, verb tenses
- Place (spatial) deixis:
- -- here, there, beside you, near that, above your head
- These deictic expressions are virtually impossible to understand if we don't know who is speaking, to/about whom, where and when.

- In many cases, we can identify what an expression refers to based on its linguistic context.
- We saw a funny home video about a boy washing a puppy in a small bath. The puppy started struggling and shaking and the boy got really wet. When he let go, it jumped out of the bath and ran away.
- Anaphora
- Antecedent:
- Anaphora:

- Anaphora (cited from wikipedia)
- a. Susan dropped the plate. It shattered loudly.
- b. The music stopped, and that upset everyone.

- c. Fred was angry, and **so** was I.
- d. If Sam buys a new bike, I will do it as well.
- Cataphora (cited from wikipedia)
- a. Because he was very cold, David put on his coat.
- b. His friends have been criticizing Jim for exaggerating.
- c. Although Sam might do so, I will not buy a new bike.
- d. In **their** free time, the kids play video games.

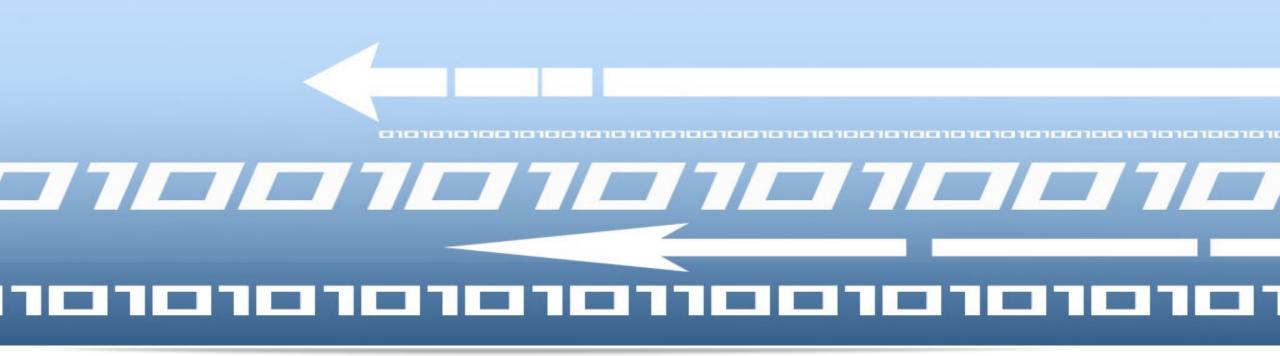
- The connection between antecedents and anaphoric expressions is often based on inference.
- 1) We found a house to rent, but the kitchen was very small.
- 2) I got on a bus and asked the driver if it went near the downtown area.
- 3) The victim was shot twice, but the gun was never recovered.

- Identify what the following italicized expressions refer to.
- 1) Have you ever read Shakespeare?
- 2) 先生,给现钱,*袁世凯*,不行么? (叶圣陶 《多收了三五斗》)

- 3) 你们杀死一个李公朴,会有千百万个*李公朴* 站起来! (闻一多《最后一次讲演》)
- 4) "*圆规*一面愤愤的回转身,一面絮絮的说,慢慢向外走。"(鲁迅《故乡》)

- Reference is not simply a relationship between language and entities in the world.
- It is a social act, in which the speaker assumes that the word or phrase chosen to identify an entity will be interpreted by the listener as the speaker intended.
- It involves at least a four-way relationship among speakers, listeners, words and entities.

- Speech acts
- Implicatures
- Chapter 10 Pragmatics
- Chapter 11 Discourse Analysis



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Speech act

- Language conveys specific meanings/information.
- John was born in 2000.
- Jelly wears a face mask.
- Joe majors in computer science.
- Language also performs specific acts.
- I apologize.
- I name the baby Jack.
- I pronounce you man and wife.
- Asking questions, making requests, giving orders, making promises, giving advice, making threats, ...

- Actually, the act a speaker performs while speaking is reflected in different facets/levels.
- 1. Locutionary act: the act of speaking (the actual words uttered)
- 2. Illocutionary act: the action intended to be performed by a speaker (the force or intention behind the words)
- 3. Perlocutionary act: the bringing about of consequences or effects on the hearer (the effect of the illocution on the hearer)

"It is hot in here."

Locutionary Act

Referring to the temperature.

Illocutionary Force

 Request for someone to turn on the air conditioning.

Perlocutionary Effect

 Someone getting up and turning on the air conditioning.

- Relations among the three facets of speech act
- The same locutionary act can have different illocutionary forces in different contexts.
- The same illocutionary force can be realized by means of different locutionary acts.

- Identify the three facets of the following speech act.
- Somebody tells you: Kiss her!
- Locutionary act:
- Illocutionary act:
- Perlocutionary act:

- Identify the three facets of speech act implied in the following sentence.
- Locutionary act:
- Illocutionary act:
- Perlocutionary act:



Speech act

- The term "speech act" is generally interpreted quite narrowly to mean only the illocutionary force of an utterance.
- What types of speech acts can speakers perform?

- 1. Assertives/representatives acts that commit the speaker to something's being the case (expressing the speaker's belief)
- stating, informing, predicting, confirming, denying, concluding, ...
- stating a fact or an opinion
- Anything boys can do girls can do better.
- The weather will be cold tomorrow.
- confirming or denying something
- It's not true that girls are academically inferior to boys.
- making a prediction
- The number of people living in cities will likely triple by 2050.

- 2. Directives acts that get the listener to do something (expressing the speaker's desire/wish for the listener to do something)
- Requesting, ordering, forbidding, advising, suggesting, insisting, recommending, warning, inviting, asking, ...
- Making a request
- Could I use your phone, please?
- making an invitation
- Can we do lunch sometime next week?
- issuing an order
- Get out of my face!
- giving advice or permission
- You had better prepare for the mid-term in advance.

- 3. Commissives acts that commit the speaker to future course of action
- promising, threatening, volunteering, offering, guaranteeing, refusals, planning, opposing, ...
- Making a promise
- I'll join you at the country club.
- Making threats
- If you cross that line, I'll shoot you!

- 4. Expressives acts that share psychological attitude or state of the speaker about something
- apologising, thanking, congratulating, condoling, welcoming, ...
- statements of pleasure, pain, likes, dislikes, sorrow, …
- Offering thanks
- Thank you all for being here tonight on this very special occasion.
- Expressing feelings
- I'm really sorry.
- Expressing congratulations
- Congratulations!

- 5. Declarations/declaratives acts that change the state of some entities/affairs
- naming, appointing, resigning, firing, marrying, divorcing, baptizing
- naming a ship
- I name this ship Titanic.
- baptizing a child
- I baptize this child James.
- Priest: I now pronounce you man and wife.
- Referee: You"re out!

- One utterance may express more than one illocutionary act at one time.
- Bus driver:
- This bus won't move until you boys move in out of the doorway.
- Assertive: ?
- Directive:?

- Direct speech act:
- performing one speech act by means of performing that speech act
- I'm hungry.
- Stand up!
- Indirect speech act:
- performing one speech act by means of performing another speech act
- I'm hungry.
- Can you stand up?

- Three sentence types:
- 1. Declarative sentences
- a. The dog ate the bone.
- b. John slept until 11 and missed his first two classes.
- 2. Interrogative sentences
- a. Is it raining today?
- b. How many times have you been to Cleveland?
- 3. Imperative sentences
- a. Go to the end of the line.
- b. Don't even think of trying to cheat on this test.
- c. Tell me what happened.

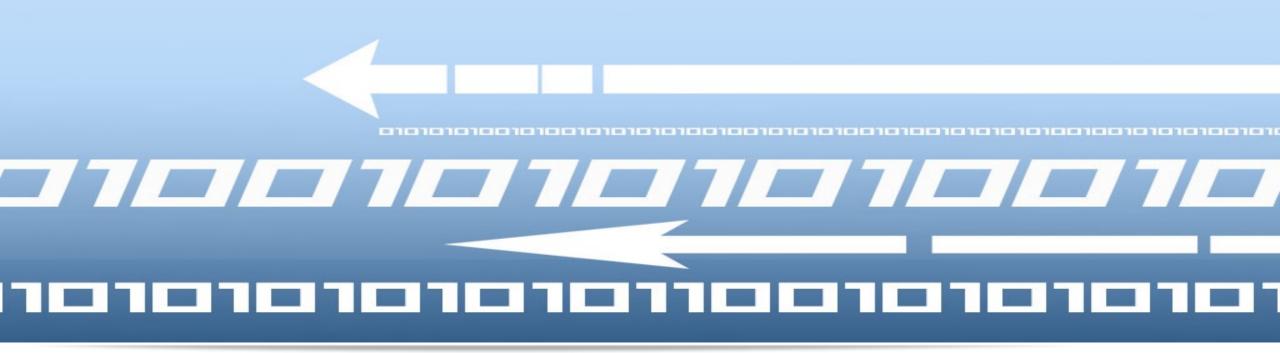
 Certain sentence types are usually used to perform certain acts in communication.

Structure (sentence types)	Function (illcutionary acts)
Declarative	Assertives, Explicit form of Directives, Commissives, Expressives, Declaration
Interrogative	Questions
Imperative	Directives

- direct speech act: direct match between a structure and a function
- -- Can you ride a bicycle? -- I request you to open the window.
- -- I promise I'll help you. -- I apologize. -- I name this ship Titanic.
- indirect speech act: indirect match between a structure and a function
- -- Can you pass the salt?
- -- It is hot in here.

- An utterance might serve as a direct speech act as well as an indirect speech act.
- -- It's cold outside.
- Direct speech act: ?
- Indirect speech act: ?

- In indirect speech acts, what is said by the speaker is NOT what is actually meant by the speaker.
- A failure to recognize this would make communication weird!
- **A:** Excuse me. Do you know where the Ambassador Hotel is?
- **B**: Oh sure, I know where it is. (and walks away)



Pragmatics (2)

Lecture 9

The Co-operative Principle

- In a conversation, listeners and speakers should act cooperatively.
- Four Maxims of Conversation

- The Maxims of Quality
- i. Do not say what you believe to be false.
- ii. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.
- a. John has two PhD's.
- b. Does your farm contain 400 acres?

- The Maxims of Quantity
- give as much information as is required, and no more than is required.
- a. The flag is white.
- b. A: How did Harry fare in court today?
- B: Oh, he got a fine.

- The Maxims of Relation
- be relevant.
- **a**.
- -- When will you come back?
- -- Next week.
- b. Pass the salt.

- The Maxims of Manner
- be clear, be brief, be orderly, and avoid ambiguity.
- John and Jelly had a baby and got married.

- The Maxims:
- Quality
- Quantity
- Relation
- Manner
- Conversational implicatures arise when a speaker observes or fails to fulfil a maxim of the Co-operative Principle.

- There are three students in the class: Mary, Bob, and Jill.
- A: Which students passed the exam?
- B: Mary and Bob.
- Implicature: ?

A speaker does not want to observe a certain maxim in some cases.

In these cases, a speaker can opt out of a maxim using a special word or phrase called a hedge.

- a. Quality
- As far as I know; I'm not sure if this is true, but...; I may be wrong, but....
- As far as I know, John has two PhD's.

- b. Quantity
- As you probably already know; I can't say any more; I probably don't need to say this, but....
- A: How did Harry fare in court today?
- B: Oh, he got a fine. I can't say any more.

- c. Relation
- Oh, by the way; I'm not sure if this is relevant, but...; I don't want to change the subject, but....
- A: Can you tell me the time?
- B: Well, I don't want to change the subject, but the milkman has come.

- d. Manner
- I'm not sure if this is clear, but...; I don't know if this makes sense, but...; This may be a bit tedious, but....
- I'm not sure if this is clear, but John and Jelly had a baby and got married.

- A speaker can also flout a maxim, typically by uttering something
- -- absurdly false (flouting the maxim of quality),
- -- wholly uninformative (flouting the maxim of quantity),
- -- completely irrelevant (flouting the maxim of relation),
- -- or abstruse (flouting the maxim of manner).
- Flouting a maxim also gives rise to an implicature.

- Flouting Quality
- a. A: Tehran's in Turkey, isn't it, professor?
- B: And London's in Armenia, I suppose.
- b. A drunk man was picked up by an ambulance and he vomited all over the ambulanceman. The ambulanceman said:
- 'Great, that's really great! That's made my Christmas!'

- Flouting Quantity
- a. War is War.
- b. Either John will come or he won't.

Flouting Relation

- a. A: What qualities does John have for this research position?
- B: John has nice handwriting.
- b. Father to daughter at family dinner: Any news about the SAT results?
- Daughter: Ice-cream anyone?

- Flouting Manner
- a. The Corner of John's lips turned slightly upwards.
- b. Miss Singer produced a series of sounds corresponding closely to an aria from Rigoletto.

scalar implicature

- Scales from Levinson (1983:134)
- (all, most, many, some, few)
- (and, or)
- (n, ..., 5, 4, 3, 2, 1)
- (excellent, good)
- (hot, warm)
- (always, often, sometimes)
- (certain that p, probable that p, possible that p)
- (must, should, may)
- (cold, cool)
- (love, like)
- (none, not all)

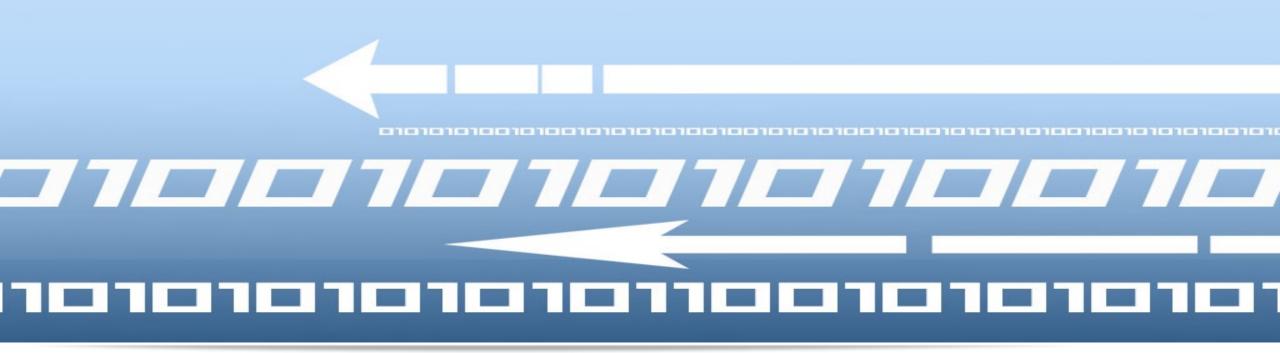
- A few other standard lexical scales
- (first, second, third, fourth, fifth)
- (definite, indefinite)
- (lover, friend)
- (need, want)
- (old, middle-aged, young)
- (general, colonel, major, captain, ...)

scalar implicature

- the use of an informationally weak term in a scale may lead to scalar implicature.
- I'm studying linguistics and I've completed **some** of the required courses.

scalar implicature

- A: How many beers do you have in the fridge?
- B: I have two beers in the fridge.
- BUT
- A: Do you have two beers in the fridge?
- B: Yes, I have two beers in the fridge.



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- Total content of an utterance:
- I'm tired.
- Meaning (what is said)
- Implicature (what is implicated)

■ An **implicature** is an additional conveyed meaning beyond what is actually said.

Types of implicatures

- two kinds of implicatures:
- Conventional implicatures
- conveying the same extra meaning regardless of context.
- Conversational implicatures
- conveying different meanings according to different contexts

- Implications on the basis of the conventional meanings of the words occurring in a sentence.
- a. John is poor but happy.
- CI: ?
- b. Even John came to the party.
- CI: ?
- c. Mary managed to swim the channel.
- CI: ?
- Properties:
- associated with specific words with additional meanings when used
- not having to be in conversation
- not depending on special context for interpretation

- Implications derived on the basis of conversational principles and assumptions, relying on more than the linguistic meaning of words in a sentence
- A: Will you go to his party?
- B: I have to prepare my presentation.
- C: He does not want to see me.
- D: Oh, I'm dying to see him.
- E: Is there anybody who does not want to go to the party?
- Properties:
- not tied to the particular words and phrases in an utterance
- arising from the understanding that both speakers and listeners try their best to keep the conversation going on successfully (conventions are observed in conversation)
- depending on special context for interpretation

The Co-operative Principle

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- Four Maxims of Conversation
- The Maxims of Quality
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- ii. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

- The Maxims of Quantity
- give as much information as is required, and no more than is required.
- The Maxims of Relation
- be relevant.
- The Maxims of Manner
- be clear, be brief, be orderly, and avoid ambiguity.

- Conversational implicatures arise when a speaker observes or flouts a maxim of the Co-operative Principle.
- Implicatures arising from observing the Cooperative Principle
- Fundamental Assumption
- It is assumed that at some level, the speaker is always observing the cooperative principle, even if this is not evident from what is literally said.

Quality Implicatures

- a. John has two PhD's.
- CI: ?
- b. Does your farm contain 400 acres?
- CI: ?

Quantity Implicatures

- a. Nigel has fourteen children.
- CI: ?
- b. The flag is white.
- CI: ?
- c. A: How did Harry fare in court today?
- B: Oh, he got a fine.
- CI: ?



- a. Pass the salt.
- CI: ?

Manner Implicatures

- John and Jelly had a baby and got married.
- CI: ?

Reading materials for the next week

Chapter 12 Language and the brain