



Modalidad Abierta y a Distancia

# Semantics and Pragmatics

Guía didáctica



Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, Educación y Humanidades

Departamento de Filosofía, Artes y Humanidades

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## Semantics and Pragmatics

*Guía didáctica*

Carrera	PAO Nivel
▪ <i>Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros</i>	VII

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## **Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja**

### **Semantics and Pragmatics**

Guía didáctica

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## 1. Informative data

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### 1.1. Course presentation



### 1.2. Generic of the UTPL

- Critical and reflexive thinking.
- Oral and written communication.
- Team work.

### 1.3. Specific of the program

- Applies the linguistic knowledge of the English language at a level that allows effective communication to perform professionally in teaching English to children and young people according to international standards.

### 1.4. Problems addressed by the course

Limited methodological and didactic knowledge, as well as little development of critical and reflective thinking.

Limited knowledge on the design, application and evaluation of educational resources and strategies for the adaptation, flexibility and comprehensiveness of personalized learning experiences.



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## 2. Learning methodology

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The student-centered approach will be implemented in this course, following the UTPL guidelines in which the learner is considered as the protagonist of the teaching-learning process. According to this approach, which is based on constructivism and includes activities that focus on the student, the learner is autonomous and independent. This methodology emphasizes student-centered instruction that allows learners to develop skills for lifelong learning and independent problem-solving. As Johnson (2013) affirms, this approach empowers students giving them a voice, making them responsible for their academic work. Furthermore, students are encouraged to produce high-quality work and engage themselves in challenges about real-world problems.

Therefore, the learners' ideas, contributions, and experience constitute essential components in this methodology. All the contents, activities, study guidelines, tools and resources have been proposed according to the program competencies and learning outcomes so that the students successfully achieve their professional exit profile.

Likewise, students are seen as autonomous and active agents who can actively participate in three types of activities: teaching activities, application and experimentation activities, and autonomous learning activities. Teaching activities are carried out under the supervision and direct assistance of the teacher (synchronously or asynchronously), using technological tools such as video collaboration, chat or forum for the development of collaborative work among the participants of a study group. The application and experimentation activities include different tasks that each student should perform throughout the course. Finally, autonomous work requires students to develop their capacity to generate and build learning in a self-regulated way, basically through reading and reflection.



### 3. Academic guidelines per learning outcome



#### First bimester

##### Learning outcome 1

- Identifies the principles and foundations of semantics and pragmatics.

In order to achieve the first learning outcome, you need to consider all the contents, resources and activities included in unit 1. Thus, I encourage you to consider the explanations offered in this unit, complete all the tasks that are proposed, revise the resources for each topic, and participate in the synchronous or asynchronous activities through our virtual platform.

#### Contents, resources and recommended activities



##### Week 1

#### Unit 1. Introduction to Semantics

Welcome to the first week! Let's start studying unit 1. The first part of this unit provides an overview of Semantics as the study of meaning in language. Also, there will be an explanation about the role of Semantics as one of the branches of Linguistics.

##### 1.1. Overview of Semantics in Linguistics

Semantics has been defined in several ways. Bauer (2012) affirms that semantics is the study of meaning and considers how words are connected to each other, this author also acknowledges that meaning is essential for language because human beings use language to construct a message and

communicate with others. Another interesting definition is the one presented by Kreidler (1998), who acknowledges that linguistic semantics is the study of how languages organize and express meanings. For Frawley (2013), linguistic semantics is the study of literal, decontextualized, grammatical meaning. Now, we can realize of the importance of meaning, it is essential in the messages we try to convey. As Morris (1946) mentions, meaning is basically everything including what we see, what we think, and what we do depends on meaning.

After reading the previous ideas about Semantics and meaning, I invite you to answer the following questions in your notebook or Word document:

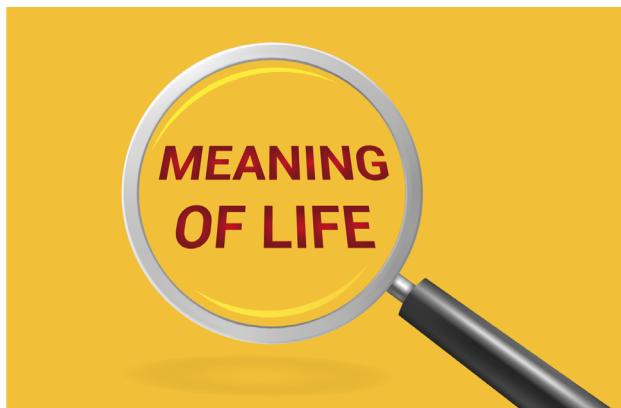
What do you understand by semantics?

Can we separate meaning and semantics?

Do you agree that meaning is an essential part of what we see, what we say, what we think, and what we do?

Note: Please write your answers in a notebook or Word document.

I am sure your responses were based both on your own reflection and the aforementioned definitions. All of your ideas are welcome. In this case, please remember that Semantics is the study of meaning, it is very important to study this field because meaning is present in all the aspects of our life. Now let's continue with other considerations that clarify the role of meaning in language.



It is evident that meaning plays a very important role in any communicative situation. Without meaning, there is no communication or interaction.

Wierzbicka (1988, p. 1) states: "Language is an integrated system, where everything conspires to convey meaning". In addition, Hurford et al. (2007) emphasize that sentence meaning and speaker meaning are fundamental. Also, they acknowledge that native speakers of a language are the ones who know the meanings of words and sentences of that language. In fact, language is all about meaning because meaning is crucial to what we do when we use language (Bauer, 2012). In order to reflect on the importance of semantics as the study of meaning, I present the following quotation.

*"All our work, our whole life is a matter of semantics, because words are the tools with which we work, the material out of which laws are made, out of which the Constitution was written. Everything depends on our understanding of them". Felix Frankfurter*

After reading the quotation above, it is necessary to reflect on the importance of expressing and understanding words and messages. This was a thought associated to the field of law but it might be associated to all the aspects of life because language is an essential part of human life. Now, I encourage you to include your own reflections about two ideas included in the quotation; please, consider the ideas below:

***Our whole life is a matter of semantics...***

Your reflection:

***Everything depends on our understanding of them...***

Your reflection:

Note: Please write your answers in a notebook or Word document.

After writing your own reflections regarding the aforementioned elements, let's revise how semantics is related to other branches of linguistics. Therefore, I invite you to watch a very interesting video "Semantics - An Overview" in the following link: [Semantics and other branches of linguistics](#). This video presents a clear explanation regarding the relationship of semantics with the rest of branches of linguistics.

Once you have watched the video, let's complete the checklist below which includes some of the main ideas presented in the video.

## What I could learn from this video

Yes | No

Language components include sounds, form, and meaning.

Phonetics and Phonology study the sounds of language.

Morphology and Syntax study the form of language.

Morphology studies the internal structure of words.

Different parts of words indicate different types of meaning.

Semantics is the study of meaning in human language.

Syntax is related to semantics because we can create different meaning by changing "order".

Pragmatics studies the meanings that linguistics expressions have in particular contexts.

**Note:** Please write your answers in a notebook or Word document.

Now that you are more acquainted with semantics and its relationship with other branches of linguistics, I encourage you to continue revising some basic concepts related to semantics in the section below.

## 1.2. Basic ideas in Semantics

Semantics involves the study of the meaning of linguistic expressions; these linguistic expressions include morphemes, words, phrases, clauses, and sentences (Rowe & Levine, 2018). Morphemes are considered as the smallest units of meaning which implies that they cannot be broken down further and remain meaningful. Words are units of language that consist of one or more morphemes. Phrases are groups of words that can express a concept and are constituents of a clause. Clauses are groups of words containing a subject and verb. A sentence is a unit of grammar that must contain one or more clauses. Also, a sentence has been defined as a grammatically complete string of words expressing a complete thought (Hurford et al., 2007); also, these authors affirm that a sentence is neither a physical event nor a physical object, but it is conceived abstractly.



**Note:** Taken from TypoArt BS| shutterstock.com.

Now, I encourage you to complete the following chart about some basic concepts that are relevant for studying semantics.

Morpheme	Word	Phrase	Clause	Sentence
----------	------	--------	--------	----------

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Once you have completed the previous chart with your own definitions about some basic elements, let's continue developing the following recommended activity.



### Recommended learning activity

Consider the link below “Words, meanings, and context” in which you will revise an example that demonstrates the relevance of those elements. Link: [Words meaning and context](#).

Once you analyze the example and the explanation, answer the following questions:

Are you always aware of the headlines you see in local newspapers? Explain:

Do you agree that words evoke meanings in us depending on the context and our own experience?

Note: Please write your answers in a notebook or Word document.

After revising the link about “Words, meanings, and context”, we can conclude that words evoke meanings in us. The specific meanings they evoke in us depend on the context in which a word is used as well as the experiences of the evaluator. Sometimes we do not initially grasp the intended meaning of the communicator, but supply an alternative meaning.

Although the recommended learning activity is not graded, it could help you reinforce your knowledge. In case you need feedback or any clarification regarding the topics we have studied so far, participate in the synchronous activities and tutorials and you will get immediate support from your tutor.



### 1.3. The meaning of words: lexical semantics

Welcome to week 2! In this section, we are going to study about lexicon and lexical categories. It is very important to start explaining what lexicon is as the first step for studying these linguistic topics. Therefore, I invite you to consider all the activities that are proposed below.

#### 1.3.1. Lexicon and lexical semantics



**Note:** Taken from iQconcept| shutterstock.com.

Lexicon has been defined as the mental dictionary each human being has; it contains the definitions of all the words someone knows (Rowe & Levine, 2018). Regarding lexicon, Aitchison (2012) affirms that the human mind is very flexible and this allows us to learn new words; therefore, this author emphasizes that the mental lexicon of a person is not a fixed dictionary with a static amount of information about each term but it is an active system in which new links are continuously being formed.

According to Rowe and Levine (2018), when someone hears an utterance, he or she looks for the meaning of the words in his or her mental lexicon and then it is possible to interpret those words. Likewise, in order to express a concept, a person has to scan his or her mental lexicon to find the appropriate words to be used. However, there are different types of meaning that words can have. Therefore, some words have an actual concrete item or concept in the real world: its referent. For example, in the sentence "Marco studied", Marco is a human being in the real world and studied is a real action. The referent for Marco is the specific person who is being referred

to in the sentence. The referent of studied is the act of studying. Thus, the referential meaning describes the referent. As the aforementioned authors state, the referential meaning of a word is its definition.

Rowe and Levine (2018) also explain that some words refer to such prevaricated things as Santa Claus, mermaids, or Mickey Mouse because they do not exist in the real world but people have a mental image of them because of their cultural symbolic representation. In addition, the authors emphasize that there are other words which are abstract concepts such as love, kindness, justice, among others, which do not have concrete referents; nevertheless, they are meaningful because we understand their sense, which is an additional meaning beyond referential meaning. Certainly, we understand the meaning of those abstract terms because sense allows us to understand words that do not have concrete referents.



As Rowe and Levine (2018, p. 142) state, "Sense is the extended meaning of a word or phrase that, in context, clarifies the referent". Furthermore, sense also allows us to understand the distinction between two phrases that have the same concrete referent. For instance, in the sentence: *Professor Andrade is our Lab. Director*, both the phrase Professor Andrade and the phrase Lab. Director refer to the same person; thus, they have the same concrete referent but the sense of each phrase is different. The aforementioned example also demonstrates another distinction in semantics, which occurs between reference and meaning; as we could observe, both of the phrases above have the same referent but they do not have the same meaning. Another important fact to consider is that some words do not have a referent but they express relationships or characteristics. To understand this idea, let's consider the sentence below:

She is the secretary of the committee.

As we can observe, the words she, secretary, and committee in this example have concrete referents. However, the is, the, and of do not have a referent and do not evoke a mental image. Their use tells us about the relationship of one word to another; anyway, those words are very important because if we do not use them appropriately, the meaning of the sentence changes.

Another relevant aspect to take into consideration is that the personal pronouns have concrete referents when they are used in a sentence but those referents are shifting referents, which are different for each speaker and each sentence. As Rowe and Levine (2018, p. 143) state, "Shifting referents are referents that are different for each speaker and each sentence Pronouns have shifting referents". Let's analyze the following sentence again:

She is the secretary of the committee.

In the example sentence, the word she has a concrete referent but without more information, we do not know what the referent is. That information usually is provided in the sentence which is expressed before the one containing the pronoun (Rowe & Levine, 2018). Regarding the previous example, we could have the following information which could have been provided before in a conversation:

Do you know Mrs. Pazmiño? She is the secretary of the committee.

Now we know that Mrs. Pazmiño is the concrete referent for the word "she" in this sentence. Nevertheless, in other sentences the referent for the word "she" will not be Mrs. Pazmiño, but another woman or girl.

In order to continue expanding the knowledge of this topic, I encourage you to complete the following matching exercise in which some relevant elements will be revised.

### 1.3.1.1 Matching exercise

#### Matching exercise

I am sure you successfully finished the matching activity. Please, remember that a referent is the actual concrete item or concept to which the word refers. The referential meaning of an utterance describes the referent, an

action, or a state of being. Sense is the extended meaning of a word or phrase that, in context, clarifies the referent. Shifting referents are referents that are different for each speaker and each sentence. Abstract concepts are those intangible things, ideas or concepts while concrete nouns are tangible objects. After this brief review, you are ready to complete the following exercises.

1. Consider the sentence: "Carlos studied". Then, select one of the options to complete the ideas below:
  - "Carlos" is (a prevaricated concept / a person in the real world).
  - "Studied" is (a real action / the referent for Carlos).
  - The referent of "studied" is (a mental image of a person / the action of studying).
  - A referent is (the actual concrete item or concept to which the word refers / a mental image which does not exist in the real world).
2. Which words in the following sentences have concrete but shifting referents?
  - a. You are very intelligent.
  - b. He was busy.
  - c. They have a new house.
  - d. She was sick.

Note: Please write your answers in a notebook or Word document.

After you have completed these activities, I would like to remind you that pronouns have shifting referents because those referents are different for each speaker and each sentence. For instance, the pronoun "he" might refer to one man in one sentence and then the same pronoun "he" might refer to another man in a different sentence.

Now, let's continue studying about lexical categories.

### 1.3.2. Lexical categories

According to Rowe and Levine (2018), lexical categories or parts of speech are arbitrary categories of words. Words are classified into several groups that include nouns, pronouns, adjectives, determiners, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections. The aforementioned authors define each category as follows.



**Note:** Taken from Undrey| shutterstock.com.

Nouns are the names of persons, places, attitudes, ideas, things, qualities, or conditions. They can be used as the subject of sentences, the object of the verb, or the object of a preposition. In English they can occur after articles a, an, and the. They can be inflected to show number or possession. Pronouns replace a noun or another pronoun. Adjectives modify a noun or pronoun; they identify a characteristic or a quality of a noun or a pronoun. In the English language, adjectives occur before the noun or after some verbs and can be inflected for degrees such as comparative and superlative. Determiners constitute another lexical category which specify something about a noun; although some classifications include determiners in the category of adjectives, a remarkable feature of determiners is that they cannot take a comparative (-er) or superlative (-est) ending. Verbs express an action, an occurrence, a condition, or a state of being; they can be a single word or a group of words that can be inflected. Adverbs modify verbs and adjectives; some of them can have positive, comparative, and superlative degree. Prepositions usually introduce a phrase that ends in a noun or pronoun; they show direction, time, place, location, or spatial relationships. Conjunctions have an important function because they connect words or groups of words. Finally, interjections are not a vital part of the sentence grammatically; in fact, they can be removed of the sentence. They are used to express feelings.

Now, I would like to invite you to consider the questions below and think about examples for all the categories that were previously mentioned. Let's answer the questions proposed.

How many lexical categories have been previously explained?

Can nouns be inflected?

What do verbs express?

Is the word "but" an interjection?

Write two examples of adverbs.

Write two examples of conjunctions.

Note: Please write your answers in a notebook or Word document.

After you have answered the previous questions, I am sure you will have a better understanding of the lexical categories and how they function in meaning as well as grammatically within a sentence. As you could realize, all of the categories are those you use every day for structuring your sentences and ideas because when you express an idea or write a statement, you use nouns, verbs, adjectives, prepositions, and the rest of parts of speech according to what you want to express.

You have been doing a great job so far. Please, remember that in case you need feedback or any clarification regarding the topics we have studied in this week, you can participate in the synchronous activities and tutorials and you will get direct help from your tutor.



### Week 3

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#### 1.3.3. Semantic properties of words

Welcome to the third week! We need to continue with the corresponding topics; first of all, we will study about the semantic properties of words.

As Rowe and Levine (2018, p. 144) state: "semantic properties are the elements of meaning that make up the lexical entry of the word in the speaker's mind". These properties are the elements of meaning that

constitute the mental image of the word in the mind of the person who pronounces this word. The authors also emphasize that one of the ways in which the meaning of a word can be evaluated is by determining its semantic properties. For instance, in the word “woman”, some of the semantics properties include: female, human, adult. In the case of the word “man”, the semantic properties include male, human, adult. It is interesting to observe that both examples have two semantic properties in common, both refer to human beings and both refer to adult people.

When analyzing the semantic properties of words, a system of + and – is used; in the field of semantics, it is called semantic property analysis. This analysis allows to represent meaning with semantic features, indicating the presence or absence of those semantic properties. Let's see the example below:

	Woman	Girl
[adult]	+	-
[female]	+	+
[human]	+	+

Now, let's consider another example:

	Mother	Father
[adult]	+	+
[male]	-	+
[parent]	+	+

As you have observed, we can use the semantic property analysis to establish the difference between the meaning of the words. Let's continue with the following activity.

Analyze the words “man” and “boy” and include their semantic properties by using the semantic property analysis.

### **Man    Boy**

Analyze the words “sister” and “brother” and include their semantic properties by using the semantic property analysis.

### **Sister   Brother**

I am sure you considered aspects such as age or stage of life as well as humanness and other features that were similar or different for each pair

of words. Remember that in the case of “man” and “boy”, both of them are male and human; however, they do not share the same age or stage of life. In the second case in which you analyzed the words “sister” and “brother”, we can realize that both are human and have the same parents; nevertheless, brother has the semantic property as male and sister doesn’t.

Would you like to have additional practice regarding this topic? I invite you to check the OER (REA) “Semantics” in which you will find information to reinforce your knowledge about the semantic properties of words, I recommend you to consider the first section of slides. The link is: [Semantic properties of words](#)

Once you analyze the information presented in the slides, please answer the following questions:

What are the semantic properties of words?

What is the semantic property analysis?

Note: Please write your answers in a notebook or Word document.

After revising the OCW “Semantics”, we can conclude that the semantic properties of words are the elements of meaning that create the mental image of the word in the mind of a speaker. The system of + and – is used to specify the presence or absence of those semantic properties, it is called semantic property analysis. Now, we are ready to continue with the next topic.

#### 1.3.4. Words that have shared semantic properties

According to Rowe and Levine (2018), the words that share semantic properties can be considered a semantic domain. Therefore, the words within a domain are related to each other by lexical relations. One of the examples proposed by the aforementioned authors is the word “tree”, which is a plant that is tall, has a trunk, and is long-lived, in comparison to other plants. Thus, the domain of “trees” includes the words oak, maple, ash, birch, pine, palm, among others. If we analyze these words, we can observe that all of them are plants, they have trunks, they are tall, they are long-lived plants. However, oak, maple, ash, and birch are the ones that have broad leaves while pine and palm do not share this characteristic.

Other examples of semantic domains are the following: furniture, sports, colors, animals, flowers, etc. For instance, if we want to mention some elements in the domain of furniture, we can include the words table, chair, bookcase, bed, sofa, desk, among others. If we consider the semantic domain of sports, we can include the words soccer, basketball, tennis, baseball, volleyball, and swimming. Regarding the semantic domain of colors, we could include the words yellow, green, red, blue, pink, black, and many other colors. For the semantic domain of animals, we have the words cat, horse, dog, frog, tiger, lion, among many others. And if we want to mention elements of the semantic domain of flowers, the words daisy, rose, carnation, sunflower, dandelion, or tulip would be the appropriate ones.

## Furniture



**Note:** Taken from Marko Klaric | vecteezy.com.

## Flowers



**Note:** Taken from | freepik.es.

Now, I invite you to think analyze the semantic domain of birds and include some words that should be included in this group.

## Birds

---

**Note:** Please write your answers in a notebook or Word document.

Let's continue with another semantic domain: fast food. Analyze this domain and include some elements that should be incorporated in this group.

## **Fast food**

---

Note: please write your answers in a notebook or Word document

Finally, I encourage you to analyze the semantic domain of appliances. Think about six words that can be included in this domain

## **Appliances**

---

Note: Please write your answers in a notebook or Word document.

Now, that you have finished completing the activities about semantic domains, I am sure you have a clear understanding of the topic. As you could observe, the words that share semantic properties are the ones included in the same semantic domain; consequently, the words within a domain are related to each other by lexical relations. Please, do not forget that in case you need feedback or any clarification regarding the topics we have studied in this week, you can participate in the synchronous activities and tutorials and you will get immediate support from your tutor. Also, I invite you to use the resource available for you.

### **Words that share semantic properties**



#### **Week 4**

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##### **1.3.5. Markedness in semantics**

Let's start this week by understanding the concept of markedness.

According to Rowe and Levine (2018, p. 146), "markedness is the concept that some members of a semantic domain are more common or usual than others". Therefore, the members or the elements of a semantic domain that are more common are considered less marked. On the other hand, the more uncommon or unusual members of a domain are considered more marked.

Certainly, markedness offers us an idea of how the native speakers of a language conceive their world. It is necessary to consider that some words might be very common for the speakers of a language in a specific place of the world; however, the same words are not very common for those speakers who live in another region or country.

Rowe and Levine (2018) explain that English has a bias toward males because it has been demonstrated that most often the unmarked, simple version of a word has the semantic property of maleness. Therefore, in order to designate a female, the word has to be altered. For instance, the word actor is unmarked, actor refers to a male person; on the other hand, the word actress is marked. Another example is the word waiter which is used to refer to a male person, waiter is unmarked; conversely, the word waitress is marked. The same situation occurs with the words hero and heroine; hero, which refer to maleness, is unmarked while the word heroine is marked.

I am sure the previous examples were helpful to simplify the concept of markedness. Now, let's complete the chart below with the words that are used to refer to femaleness. Use the dictionary in case you do not know the specific term for the female version of the words.

Male	Female
prince	
tiger	
poet	
god	
lion	
host	
Emperor	

Note: Please write your answers in a notebook or Word document.

After you have completed the chart using the words that refer to femaleness, please consider the questions below.

Which word is more commonly used: poet or poetess?

Which word is more marked: host or hostess?

Which word is less marked: lion or lioness?

What do you understand by markedness?

Note: Please write your answers in a notebook or Word document.

Thanks for considering all of the aforementioned activities. I am sure you could successfully complete the chart and answer the questions. You have analyzed that the simple version of a word is the one which is less marked. In the previous examples, we could observe that the unmarked terms (simple versions of those words) have the semantic property of maleness. Now, we need to continue with the following topic.

#### 1.3.5.1 Markedness within a domain

We previously studied the concept of markedness and we realized that some words are definitely more common than others, this means that some words are less marked than others. Now, let's analyze markedness within a domain, we will need to consider that within a domain, there are words that are less marked. We can easily understand this by exploring the domain of colors; thus, we can observe that mint is more marked than green while red is less marked than scarlet. In the same way, if we consider the domain of fruit in our own Ecuadorian context, we can realize that banana is less marked than blueberry because banana is more common. To understand this concept in a better way, I encourage you to carry out with the following activity.

Draw a chart to describe "the domain of flowers". If you consider it necessary, use a dictionary to complete your chart. Remember that in your chart you should place the more unmarked terms at the top and the more specific or marked words at the bottom.

### **Flowers**

Line 1:

Line 2:

Line 3:

Note: Please write your answers in a notebook or Word document.

After you have finished your chart, you have a clear idea of markedness within a domain. I am sure you included the most unmarked (most general / most common) words in line 1 and you could continue until including the most marked (most specific / most uncommon) words in line 3.

Now, I encourage you to complete the following self-assessment, which will allow you to check your learning of the contents studied.



## Self-assessment 1

**Self-assess your knowledge by choosing the correct answer.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ is the study of meaning in \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Pragmatics / universal terms.
  - b. Semantics / human language.
  - c. Phonetics / syllables and phrases.
  
2. \_\_\_\_\_ are considered as the smallest units of meaning which implies that they cannot be broken down further and remain meaningful.
  - a. Words.
  - b. Morphemes.
  - c. Clauses.
  
3. \_\_\_\_\_ has been defined as the mental dictionary each human being has; it contains the \_\_\_\_\_ of all the words someone knows.
  - a. Lexicon / definitions.
  - b. Sense / referents.
  - c. Domain / synonyms.
  
4. \_\_\_\_\_ concepts are those intangible things, ideas or concepts while \_\_\_\_\_ nouns are tangible objects.
  - a. Concrete / abstract.
  - b. Substance / mass.
  - c. Abstract / concrete.
  
5. \_\_\_\_\_ modify a noun or pronoun; they identify a characteristic or a quality of a noun or a pronoun. In the English language, they \_\_\_\_\_ and can be inflected for degrees such as comparative and superlative.
  - a. Prepositions / are used in declarative sentences.
  - b. Interjections / can connect words and morphemes.
  - c. Adjectives / occur before the noun or after some verbs.

6. Match both columns in order to complete each idea.

- |                            |                                 |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a. "Because" is...         | __ an abstract noun.            |
| b. The word waitress is... | __ a transitive verb.           |
| c. The word waiter is...   | __ an intransitive verb.        |
| d. Honesty is...           | __ a subordinating conjunction. |
| e. Build is...             | __ marked.                      |
| f. Retire is...            | __ unmarked.                    |

**Read the sentences below and choose the correct answer true or false.**

7. ( ) Phrases are groups of words that can express a concept and are constituents of a clause.
8. ( ) Clauses are the smallest units of meaning which implies that they cannot be broken down further and remain meaningful.
9. ( ) Concrete nouns refer to ideas or intangible things.
10. ( ) The more uncommon or unusual members of a domain are considered more marked.

**Answer Key**

- Learning outcome 2**
- Understands how language is used to communicate various types of meaning.

In order to achieve the second learning outcome, you need to consider all the contents, resources and activities included in unit 2. Thus, I encourage you to consider the explanations offered in this unit, complete all the tasks that are proposed, revise the resources for each topic, and participate in the synchronous or asynchronous activities through our virtual platform.

### Contents, resources and recommended activities



### Week 5

## Unit 2. Studying meaning

Welcome to week 5! In this week, we start studying unit 2. I invite you to follow the order of topics presented in this unit. The first topic we will study is “The -nyms”. Please, consider all of the activities that are presented in this unit.

### 2.1. The -nyms

Let's start revising the definition of the -nyms. As Rowe and Levine (2018) acknowledge, the -nyms are words that are similar or relate to each other in meaning or in sound. There are many types of these words; let's revise some of them.

#### 2.1.1. Hyponyms

In this group, we find words that have a similar meaning because they belong to the same segment of a domain (Rowe & Levine, 2018). For example, the words pink, scarlet, orange, hot pink, and pumpkin; if we analyze them, they are more marked and they are very specific terms for colors that derive from the color red. Certainly, they can be understood as specific shades or tones of the red section of the domain of color; therefore, those specific words share many of the semantic properties of the word red. As those specific

words form a subclass of the word red, they are referred to as hyponyms of red.

Now, let's analyze the words hammer, screwdriver, drill, and pliers are all hyponyms for the word tools. Another example would include the words rosemary, lemongrass, and basil as hyponyms for the word herb.



**Note:** Taken from Natasha Breen | shutterstock.com.

You can practice through the following activity in which you should write some hyponyms to complete the chart:

Fruit	-
Purple	-
Roots	-
Insects	-
Nationalities	-

**Note:** Please write your answers in a notebook or Word document.

I am sure you could successfully complete the chart. You might have considered orange, apple, or peach in the first case. For purple, you could have included the words lavender, violet, or crimson. In the case of roots, you could write words like radish, carrot, or beetroot. Then, bee, ant, and butterfly could be considered as hyponyms for the word insects while Irish, Ecuadorian, and Mexican for Nationalities. As you could conclude, hyponyms are more specific words that constitute a subclass of a more general word.

Now, we can continue studying about synonyms.

## 2.1.2. Synonyms



**Note:** Taken from Gustavo Frazao| shutterstock.com.

Regarding synonyms, Rowe and Levine (2018) define them as words that have similar meanings and share the same semantic properties. They are words that sound different but mean the same. We use synonyms when we paraphrase a sentence or an idea. For instance, the words *huge* and *vast* are synonyms. Also, the words *splendid* and *fantastic* are considered synonyms. Some synonyms are selected according to the level of formality the speaker or writer wants to express. However, it depends on the culture and also on the region people live.

This is the moment for practicing with the following matching activity in which you have to select the correct synonym for each word.

### Synonyms (Matching activity)

After completing the matching exercise, let's continue studying the following category: homonyms.

## 2.1.3. Homonyms



**Note:** Taken from BNP Design Studio| shutterstock.com.

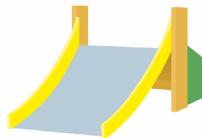
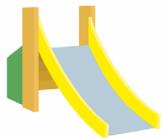
To start, we need to consider that homonyms are words that sound the same, have different meanings, and might be spelled the same or differently

(Rowe & Levine, 2018). For instance, the words: to, too, and two all sound the same, but each word means something completely different. Other examples include tale and tail, flower and flour, weak and week.

Let's practice finding homonyms and writing some pairs of words included in this category

After practicing with homonyms, let's continue with the following category.

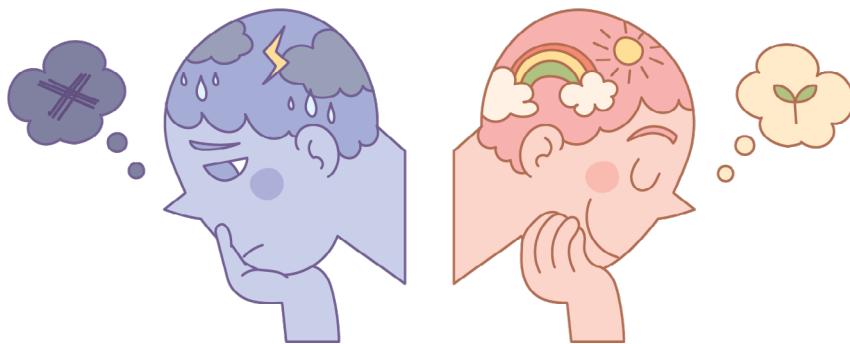
#### 2.1.4. Antonyms



**Note:** Taken from TINA NIZOVA| shutterstock.com.

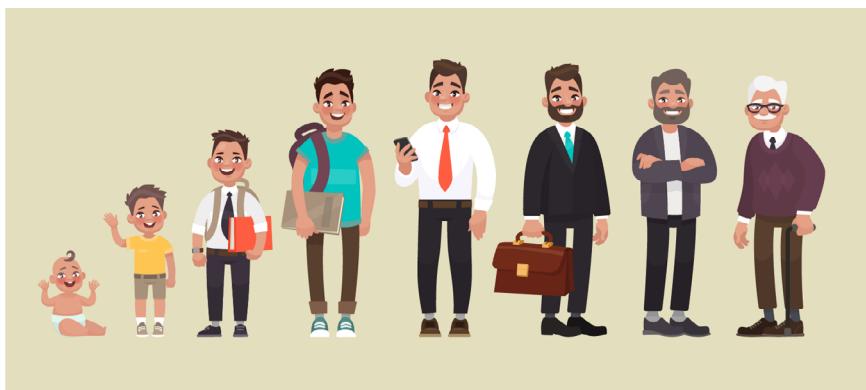
Antonyms are words that have the opposite meaning. They are words that share many of the same semantic properties but are opposite in at least one of them. Rowe and Levine (2018) mention three main kinds of antonyms: complementary pairs, gradable pairs, and relational opposites.

The group of **complementary pairs** include the antonyms that express a binary relationship in which it is perceived that there is no middle ground, such as the words male/female. The word male can be distinguished as "not female" and the word female can be distinguished as "not male". One way in which complementary pairs can be formed in English is by using the prefixes un-, non-, and in-. For example, we have the words happy and unhappy, specific and nonspecific, correct and incorrect.



**Note:** Taken from woocat| shutterstock.com.

The group of **gradable pairs** include those antonyms that are part of a larger set of related words and express the concept that one of them is more, whereas the other is less (Rowe & Levine, 2018). For instance, if we analyze the words old and young, we can realize that those words are relative to the speaker's point of view; therefore, a child's point of view will not be the same as a senior citizen's point of view. From the child's point of view, people who are over 30 are old; however, to a senior citizen, people who are under 65 are young. Therefore, old and young are considered as a gradable pair. In fact, both words have the semantic property of describing the age of a person or an animal. Other examples in this group include the words big and little, high and low, fast and slow.



**Note:** Taken from woocat| shutterstock.com.

The group of **relational opposites** include the antonyms that express a symmetrical relationship between two words. For example, we have the words parent and child, we can say that Pedro is the parent of Alex as we can infer that Alex is the child of Pedro. One way in which relational opposites can be formed in English is by using the suffixes -er and -ee. In this group, we also have other examples such as student and teacher, give and receive, employer and employee.



**Note:** Taken from Asia Images Group| shutterstock.com.

Let's practice through the following activities about antonyms.

1. Write three examples of complementary pairs.
2. Write three examples of gradable pairs.
3. Write three examples of relational opposites.

Note: Please write your answers in a notebook or Word document.

Once you have written your own examples, let's study eponyms.

### 2.1.5. Eponyms

Eponyms are words that come from the proper name of a person or place. These words can be based on both real and fictional people or places. Let's analyze the word Fahrenheit; this word is an eonym because it comes from the name of the scientist Daniel Gabriel Fahrenheit. In the case of the word boycott, it derives from Captain Charles Boycott, a land agent. Other examples included in this group are: zipper, cardigan, sandwich, diesel, nicotine, etc. Many eponyms are commonly used around the world; however, others are more familiar to people who know the cultural reference related to those words.



**Note:** Taken from aksol| shutterstock.com, PhilipYb Studio| shutterstock.com, Ekaterina\_Minaeva | shutterstock.com.

Now, that you have studied about each category. Complete the following activity:

1. Write a list of 5 eponyms you consider that are words commonly used in our country:
2. Explain the difference between homonyms and eonyms.
3. When do you use synonyms?

Note: Please write your answers in a notebook or Word document.

Thanks for completing the previous activity. Now, that you have finished, I am sure you have a clear understanding of the different categories we

have revised. As you could observe, homonyms are words that sound the same, have different meanings, and might be spelled the same or differently. Regarding eponyms, they are words that come from the proper name of a person or a place. With respect to the last question, a common use of synonyms occurs when we paraphrase ideas.

Now to reinforce your knowledge, let's do the following recommended activity.



### Recommended learning activity

Reinforce your knowledge about The –nyms by revising the following OER (REA): “Analyzing meaning”, specifically (Chapter 6), the link is: [Analyzing meaning](#).

After revising Chapter 6 in the OER (REA), continue with the following exercise:

1. Analyze the following sentences and explain if they are different in meaning.
  - a. John frightened the children.
  - b. John scared the children.
2. Are the following pairs complementary antonyms? Explain your answer.
  - a. open/shut.
  - b. alive/dead.
  - c. on/off.
3. Write two sentences in which you include gradable antonyms.

Note: Please write your answers in a notebook or Word document.

I am sure you were successful when completing the recommended learning activity. We can conclude that understanding and using the –nyms is very important because we now realize that words are related in different ways. The analysis of those sense relations provides us a useful tool for understanding the meaning of a word.

Please, consider that although the recommended learning activity is not graded, it could help you reinforce your knowledge. Remember that in case you need feedback or any clarification regarding the aforementioned topics, you can participate in the synchronous activities and tutorials and you will get immediate support from your tutor.



## Week 6

---

Welcome to week six! We need to continue with the corresponding topics; therefore, we will study about structural semantics, playing with meaning, and entailment.

### 2.2. Structural semantics

Structural semantics has been conceived as the study of how the structure (syntax) of sentences contributes to meaning (Rowe & Levine, 2018). It is necessary to consider that sometimes the meaning of a sentence cannot be explained by the meaning of the individual words that are included in this sentence. In order to demonstrate this fact, let's consider an example proposed by the aforementioned authors:

1. The teacher taught the students.
2. The students taught the teacher.

If we analyze both sentences, we can easily observe that they contain the same words. In the first sentence, the teacher is the person performing the action of teaching while in the second sentence, the students are the ones who perform the action of teaching. It is evident that the change in the structure of the sentence affected its meaning. In the first case, a common event is described while in the second case, a more unusual event is described.

Now, let's analyze the following sentences:

1. The cat chased the rat.



**Note:** Taken from foxfinitive| shutterstock.com.

2. The rat chased the cat.

After analyzing the sentences, consider the following questions:

Do the sentences contain the same words?

Do the sentences have a similar meaning? Explain.

Does the structure of each sentence affect its meaning?

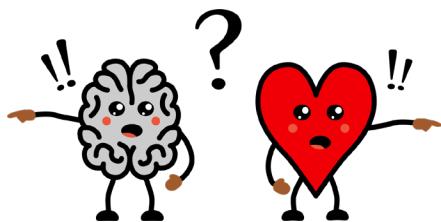
Note: Please write your answers in a notebook or Word document.

I am sure these two sentences helped you recognize the importance of structural semantics since it involves the study of how the structure of sentences contributes to meaning. In the example, we can observe that both sentences contain exactly the same words; however, they do not have a similar meaning. In fact, the structure of the sentences definitely affects the meaning because it depends on the way the words are combined.

### 2.2.1. Playing with meaning

In this section, we will analyze the use of words in unexpected combinations and some ways in which playing with the structure of sentences creates interesting language. First, let's define anomalous utterances, which according to Rowe and Levine (2018), are utterances in which the semantic properties do not match; therefore, the semantic properties of one part of the utterance do not match those of another part. For instance, in the sentence "my glass is thirsty", we can observe that the semantic properties do not match because a glass is an inanimate object while thirst is related to a biological process of living things.

In this context, we can analyze contradictions. According to Rowe and Levine (2018), contradictions are utterances in which the semantic properties of one word are in direct opposition to those of another. For example: "My husband is a child" is a sentence in which we realize that the concept of "husband" includes the semantic property of being an adult; therefore, in our culture it is not possible for a married man to be a child.



**Note:** Taken from Lubo Ivanko | shutterstock.com.

Regarding metaphors, these are anomalous utterances in which two dissimilar items are symbolically considered to be the same (Rowe & Levine, 2018). Poets and writers use metaphors to enhance their descriptions. For example, "My dad is a rock", "Life is a game". "Love is a fragile flower".



**Note:** Taken from Yuliya Chsherbakova | shutterstock.com.

Now, let's consider oxymorons and idioms. Oxymorons are phrases that combine contradictory words and idioms are utterances in which there is a contradiction between the meaning of the parts of the utterance and the entire utterance (Rowe & Levine, 2018). For second and foreign language learners, idioms are particularly difficult. Let's analyze some examples of both categories. In the case of oxymorons, some examples are: "sweet sorrow", "clearly confused", and "original copies". The following are some examples of idioms: "Barking up the wrong tree", "It's raining cats and dogs", and "out of sorts". As we can see, idioms include words that cannot be translated literally and separately.



**Note:** Taken from marekuliasz| shutterstock.com, BNP Design Studio| shutterstock.com.

I invite you to complete the following matching activity after you recognize each example.

#### Playing with meaning (Matching activity)

After completing the matching exercise, I am sure you could successfully find two examples for each category. As you could observe, in the case of metaphors two unlike things are compared, in the case of oxymorons, contradictory words are combined in the same phrase, and idioms mean something different than the literal translation of the words that integrate them. Also, I invite you to use the resource available for you.

### Other kinds of meaning / playing with meaning

Now, you are ready to complete the chart below with your own examples:

Category	Example
Metaphor	
Oxymoron	
Idiom	

Note: Please write your answers in a notebook or Word document.

Have you completed the chart? Well, now let's start studying about entailment.

#### 2.2.2. Entailment

Let's study about another interesting topic: entailment. Entailment is considered a relationship between utterances where if utterance A is true, then utterance B is also true (Rowe & Levine, 2018). Therefore, the meaning of sentence A entails sentence B. We can consider the example below:

- A. Luis was murdered.
- B. Luis is dead.

(A) Luis was murdered entails (B) Luis is dead. In this example, we can deduce that Luis is dead, so sentence B is an entailment of sentence A.

Furthermore, entailment describes relationships between linguistic units such as words and phrases. For example, the word vehicle can entail car, automobile, and bus.

I encourage you to analyze the sentence below:

*Karina swims every day.*

What does this sentence entail? As we can see in this case, Karina knows how to swim. Therefore, if the sentence Karina swims every day is true, then the sentence Karina knows how to swim is also true.

Now, I encourage you to consider the following sentence:

*The professor who teaches Law at UTPL university attended a Law Convention.*

If the aforementioned sentence is true. What does it entail?

Note: Please write your answers in a notebook or Word document.

After analyzing the example, you could probably affirm that Law is taught at UTPL and this is true because there is a professor who is in charge of teaching Law. Also, we can infer that there was a Law Convention.

We have finished studying the topics for this week. Remember that in case you need feedback or any clarification regarding the aforementioned topics, you can participate in the synchronous activities and tutorials and you will get immediate support from your tutor.



## Week 7

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### 2.3. The role of semantics on the different levels of abstraction in the linguistic system

Dear students, welcome to week 7! First of all, we are going to revise lexical semantics, situation semantics, and discourse semantics. As we previously studied, lexical semantics is related to the study of word meaning. Lexical semantics considers the categories of words as nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, determiners, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions and interjections; therefore, the meaning properties of individual words are analyzed in isolation. Regarding situation semantics, it starts with the theory that what is called 'the world' is an inconceivably large totality and some limited parts of the world are called 'situations' and can be separated by cognitive agents. Consequently, people perceive situations, cause them to be brought about, and have all sorts of attitudes toward them (Akman, 2009). With respect to discourse semantics, it refers to the study of the meaning of

extended discourse and the semantic relationship among utterances used in context. Now, we can learn about cognitive semantics.

We can conclude by considering what Kroeger (2018) mentions about the role of semantics regarding meaning levels. This author acknowledges that semantics can address meaning at the levels of words, phrases, sentences, or larger units of discourse. Now, let's revise about cognitive semantics.

## 2.4. Overview of cognitive semantics



**Note:** Taken from OpturaDesign| shutterstock.com.

According to Kroeger (2018), cognitive semantics, focuses on the link between linguistic expressions and mental representations. Riemer (2010) affirms that cognitive semantics covers a variety of quite different approaches that are characterized by a holistic vision of the place of language within cognition. This involves the following commitments: an identification between meaning and conceptual structure, a rejection of the syntax–semantics distinction, a rejection of the semantics–pragmatics distinction, a rejection of a modular approach to language. A central notion in cognitive semantics is that linguistic meaning depends on encyclopedic knowledge structures stored in long-term memory. In addition, cognitive semantics emphasizes that metaphor is an inherent aspect of language structure because it is not the exception in language: metaphorical ways of talking are just as well-known as 'literal' ones.

After revising some basic ideas regarding cognitive semantics, we can continue with the matching activity below.

[Overview of cognitive semantics \(Matching activity\)](#)

Once you have finished the matching exercise, you have a clear idea that the focus of lexical semantics is on the categories of words as nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, determiners, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions and interjections while cognitive semantics focuses on the link between linguistic expressions and mental representations. Now, let's consider the importance of semantics in the field of EFL teaching and learning.

## 2.5. Semantics in EFL teaching and learning.

It is very important for us to reflect on the role of semantics for learning and teaching English as a foreign language. As Alsayed (2019) acknowledges, since semantics involves the study of meaning, it is necessary to increase students' understanding and awareness of word meaning, sentence relationships, as well as discourse and context. This awareness is important because it enables students to create and improve their semantic maps or webs of words that can be designed to visualize meaning-based connections between a word or phrase and a set of related words or concepts.

Certainly, the use of semantic maps can benefit students' learning and their understanding of meaning.



**Note:** Taken from buffaloboy1 shutterstock.com.

The importance of semantics in language teaching and learning has also been recognized for the improvement of vocabulary (Alsayed, 2019) and writing skills (Nofriati, 2017). Certainly EFL students need to learn synonyms, antonyms, homonyms, eponyms and many other words included in the category of -nyms. This knowledge allows them to express their ideas in an accurate way. Another aspect to be emphasized is that semantics allows us to understand that the way how language sequences are organized in terms of meaning is also essential; for instance, one sentence can be grammatically correct but it can be incorrect in terms of meaning. Let's analyze the following sentence.

*Freedom eats bananas.*

What do you think about this sentence?



**Note:** Taken from Studiolaut | shutterstock.com.

You might say simply it is meaningless. However, if we analyze it, we immediately realize that it is grammatically correct because we can observe that words appear in the correct order following the grammatical pattern that is accurate for this case. The problem is the meaning; therefore, words need to be used according to their meaning, which is fundamental.

I encourage you to reflect on your own experience as a learner. Then, think about your experience as a teacher when participating in the practicum activities or other opportunities you have had to teach. Consider the questions below for your reflection:

Did you previously analyze the importance of semantics in EFL teaching and learning?

According to your opinion, why should learners be aware of word meaning?

How should teachers help students learn about semantics?

**Note:** Please write your answers in a notebook or Word document.

Thanks for considering these questions. I am convinced that your deep understanding of the topics we have studied will help you improve your linguistic and methodological skills. As you previously reflected, semantics is a very important branch of linguistics that involves the study of meaning. Both EFL students and teachers need to be aware of the importance of meaning for successful communication. Now, I encourage you to complete the following self-assessment, which will allow you to check your learning of the contents studied.



## Self-assessment 2

**Read the sentences below and choose the correct answer true or false.**

1. ( ) The words tale and tail are eponyms.
2. ( ) The words dead and alive are complementary pairs.
3. ( ) Poets and writers never use metaphors.
4. ( ) "Thunderous silence" is an oxymoron.
5. ( ) "To kick the bucket" is an example of entailment.
6. Match both columns in order to complete each idea.

a. We use synonyms when we ...	__ the link between linguistic expressions and mental representations.
b. Some hyponyms for the word furniture ...	__ visualize meaning-based connections between a word or phrase and a set of related words or concepts.
c. The suffixes -er and -ee are used to ...	__ if utterance A is true, then utterance B is also true.
d. Entailment is considered a relationship between utterances where ...	__ form relational opposites.
e. Cognitive semantics focuses on ...	__ include couch and bookcase.
f. Semantic maps can be designed to ...	__ paraphrase a sentence.

**Read the sentences below and choose the correct alternative to complete each idea.**

7. \_\_\_\_\_ considers the categories of words as nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, determiners, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions and interjections; therefore, the meaning properties of individual words are analyzed in isolation.
  - a. Cognitive semantics.
  - b. Entailment.
  - c. Lexical semantics.

8. \_\_\_\_\_ refers to the study of the meaning of extended discourse and the semantic relationship among utterances used in context.
- Cognitive semantics.
  - Discourse semantics.
  - Entailment.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ are words that are opposite in one of their semantic properties.
- Synonyms.
  - Antonyms.
  - Oxymorons.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ are words that come from the proper name of a person or place. These words can be based on both real and fictional people or places.
- Hyponyms.
  - Metaphors.
  - Eponyms.

Answer Key



## Week 8

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### First term final activities

Dear students, we have successfully studied interesting topics that were included in the first term. You have developed several activities during weeks 1-7. I am sure that you have dedicated enough time for each activity and now you should feel confident to demonstrate your knowledge and skills.

I suggest you continue studying during this week. You can use the links, resources, and exercises you have in this academic guide. Please, revise again the self-assessment sections you have in units 1 and 2. Also, you should consider recommended learning activities because they will help you recall the most important topics we have studied so far. Remember that we also had online questionnaires and other graded activities that were included in this term. Finally, I suggest you design your own summary or mind maps, depending on your preferences, as a preparation for the First Term Evaluation. My best wishes for your success!



**Note:** Taken from Kachka | shutterstock.com.



## Second bimester

### Learning outcome 3

- Distinguishes the meaning of words in different contexts.

In order to achieve the learning outcome 3, you need to consider all the contents, resources and activities included in unit 3. Therefore, I encourage you to consider the explanations offered in this unit, complete all the tasks that are proposed, revise the resources for each topic, and participate in the synchronous or asynchronous activities through our virtual platform.

### Contents, resources and recommended activities



### Week 9

## Unit 3. Studying meaning in context

Welcome to the week 9! Let's start studying unit 3. The first part of this unit provides an overview of pragmatics and how context affects meaning in language. Also, we will analyze why this branch of Linguistics is important and what is the purpose of language in the way human beings use it.

### 3.1. Pragmatics: general overview

First of all, let's revise what pragmatics involves. According to Bauer (2012), pragmatics studies the way in which we use language to achieve our goals, in ways which might not be obvious from the words we use. As Rowe and Levine (2018) affirm, the meaning of a word sometimes is totally dependent upon the context in which it is used; thus, Pragmatics is the study of the effect of context on meaning. It involves the practical use of language and how people use it to perform speech acts with performative sentences. This important branch of linguistics also studies social meaning and affective meaning.



**Note:** Taken from pathdoc| shutterstock.com.

According to Yule (1996), pragmatics is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker or writer and as understood by a listener or reader. Therefore, pragmatics has more to do with the analysis of what people mean by their utterances than what the words or phrases included in those utterances might mean by themselves. Pragmatics also involves the interpretation of what people mean in a specific context and how it influences what is said; in fact, it is necessary to consider how speakers organize what they want to say according to who they are talking to, where, when, and under what circumstances.

Let's consider the example Bauer (2012) proposes: someone walks into a room and says: "It's cold in here". If we listen to this, we might think that the speaker really means: "Will you please close the window? Anyway, we need to consider who is in the room and what the relationship between the people present is. However, the statement "It's cold in here" does not explicitly require a response. Therefore, pragmatics is related to the relationship between what we say and what we mean. Now, let's analyze the purpose of language.

### 3.2. The purpose of language

Regarding the purpose of language, Bauer (2012) affirms that there are many different purposes. One of them is that we have language in order to be able to communicate information. For instance, if we read the sentence below:

"The book was on the table"

This sentence tells us something about the book and about the table. In fact, it makes explicit the relationship between the book and the table at some time in the past; therefore, it appears to be communicating information.



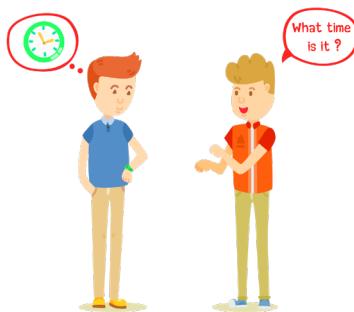
**Note:** Taken from pirke| shutterstock.com.

Anyway, that is not the only purpose of language. According to Bauer (2012), a person can also use language to ask an interlocutor to provide information. For instance, let's consider the following question:

What time is it?

We can realize that it is clear that the person is asking for a specific detail, he or she is indicating precisely what information is needed from the interlocutor; in this case the exact time.

**ASKING PEOPLE 01**



**Note:** Taken from Baby Path| shutterstock.com.

Furthermore, we can use language to make someone behave in a particular way. In the case of the example: "Close the door". If we analyze it, we can see that the speaker may unintentionally communicate that the door is open, but actually he or she is trying to make the listener behave in a particular way.



**Note:** Taken from chormail153750 | vecteezy.com.

Also, Bauer (2012) acknowledges that human beings also use language to lie, this does not occur with animals. Thus, dogs demonstrate their happiness when they are happy; however, people sometimes can use language to demonstrate something they do not really feel, human beings have the ability to lie using language. Likewise, the author mentions that human beings sometimes use language to insult; in that case, what we say is significantly influenced by the way in which we transmit that message.

After studying about what pragmatics involves and how context affects meaning in language, I encourage you to complete the following matching exercise.

#### The purpose of language (Matching exercise)

I am sure that after this matching exercise, you have a clear idea of what pragmatics studies. As you revised, pragmatics involves the study of the effect of context on meaning and the way in which we use language to achieve our goals. Therefore, we use language to communicate information, express what we feel, make someone behave in a particular way, or ask an interlocutor to provide specific details. However, we also use language to tell lies and offend others.

Dear students, we have finished studying the topics for this week. Remember that, in case you need feedback or any clarification regarding what we have studied during these days, you are welcome to participate in the synchronous activities and tutorials that are offered for you. Also, I invite you to use the resource available for you.

#### Pragmatics general overview



### 3.3. Pragmatic principles, problems, and theories

Welcome to week 10! We are going to study important aspects related to the main principles, problems and theories involved in the study of pragmatics. First of all, let's consider the pragmatic principles.

As Bauer (2012) acknowledges, the cooperative principle was introduced by Grice and contains several subprinciples that are also called maxims. He refers to the subprinciples of quantity, quality, relation and manner. Regarding quantity, it implies that a contribution must be as informative as is required. This subprinciple says: "Do not make your contribution more informative than is required". The subprinciple quality implies that a speaker should not say something that he or she believes to be false, this means that a person should not say something for which he or she does not have adequate evidence. Another important subprinciple is relation, it is related to relevance; therefore, it implies that a person should say something that is appropriate for the topic being discussed. With respect to the subprinciple of manner, it involves that a speaker should avoid ambiguity when expressing ideas; then, the speaker should be brief, concise and orderly.



**Note:** Taken from iQconcept| shutterstock.com.

The main problems of pragmatics are related to the study of meaning in context. And this meaning might be something that sometimes is not expressed in a dictionary. In fact, many of the words we use have a different meaning to the literal significance and this occurs because of the context,

the communicative situation, the shared knowledge among interlocutors, and their relationships. Pragmatics has tried to offer several explanations related to the aspects that affect the use of language. Those explanations are expressed through the resulting theories; they are known as pragmatic theories.

Regarding pragmatic theories, the most important ones include speech acts theory, relevance theory, and politeness theory. We will immediately study each one of them in detail.

### 3.4. Pragmatic theories

#### 3.4.1. Speech acts theory

The Speech acts theory considers language as a type of action rather than a medium to convey and express. It holds that the meaning of linguistic expressions can be explained in terms of the rules governing their use in performing several speech acts; these include asserting, commanding, exclaiming, promising, requesting, challenging, among others. This theory explains linguistic meaning in terms of the use of words and sentences in the performance of speech acts. Therefore, it recognizes that people not only use language to assert things but also to do things.

As Rowe and Levine (2018) assert, speech acts are actions performed by an utterance such as daring, questioning, promising, warning, requesting or betting. These authors acknowledge that although many sentences just communicate information, other sentences actually do something and exhibit the force of language, they are the speech acts. By pronouncing these sentences, the speaker is performing an action. Anyway, these sentences must be said in the correct context and by the correct speaker. Let's consider the examples below:

I promise to finish my project.

I hereby sentence you to eight years in jail.

I bet you a thousand dollars.

I warn you to stay away from that guy.

As we can see, the sentences above can occur in a determinate context and can be said by a specific person. These performative sentences do not only convey information; in the correct context, they also perform the act of promising, sentencing, betting, and warning. For instance, in the case of the second sentence, a judge at the end of a trial can say "I hereby sentence you to eight years in prison"; consequently, the defendant will spend eight years in prison, unless the judge's statement is reversed or modified by someone who has the authority to do so. As we can observe, if that specific sentence is said by another person (who is not a judge), it might not be taken seriously; however, if it is pronounced by a judge, we know that this authority has the exclusive right to sentence a defendant.



**Note:** Taken from MR.Yanukit| shutterstock.com.

The examples previously analyzed help us understand that speech acts are also related to our culture. In fact, a speech act involves a "social contract" among the people in a society (Rowe & Levine, 2018); therefore, this general understanding of who can make a particular pronouncement resulting in the action uttered in that pronouncement can be established formally (by laws), or it can be established by a less formal understanding passed down from generation to generation through the socialization process within a specific culture.

Now, I invite you to analyze the example below and answer the questions.

I now pronounce you husband and wife.

According to our culture, who is an authorized person to say that pronouncement?

What could be the appropriate context for the aforementioned sentence?

Why is it a performative sentence?

**Note:** Please write your answers in a notebook or Word document.

After you analyzed the example and answered the questions, I am sure that you must have a clear idea about the speech acts theory. As you could realize, this theory explains linguistic meaning in terms of the use of words and sentences in the performance of speech acts. In the last example you analyzed, it is evident that this performative sentence is said by a determinate person (with the corresponding authority) in a specific context (a marriage ceremony). Otherwise, it could not have the same value.

To reinforce your knowledge about this topic, let's continue with the following recommended activity.



### Recommended learning activity

Analyze speech acts by revising the following OER (REA): "Analyzing meaning", specifically (Chapter 10, 10.2 Performatives), the link is: [Analyzing meaning](#).

After revising Chapter 10 (10.2) in the OER (REA), continue with the following exercise:

1. Analyze this example: "I declare this meeting adjourned".  
Briefly explain what the speaker is doing when saying this sentence and which the context could be so that the act is valid.
2. What happens if a person who is not licensed to perform a marriage ceremony says "I now pronounce you man and wife"?
3. Write an example of performative sentence using one of the following verbs: declare, confer, accuse, order.

Note: Please write your answers in a notebook or Word document.

Once you have finished the recommended learning activity, I am sure you are ready to continue studying another theory. When you developed the activity, you could imagine the context in which the first sentence was said, probably a formal meeting in which the quorum requirement was not met. Furthermore, in the second case, the couple being addressed will not become legally married as a result of this utterance because the speaker is not the appropriate one and does not have the authority for that specific circumstance.

Finally, please consider that although the recommended learning activity is not graded, it could help you reinforce your knowledge. Remember that in case you need feedback or any clarification regarding the aforementioned topics, you can participate in the synchronous activities and tutorials and you will get immediate support from your tutor.



## Week 11

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### 3.4.2. Relevance theory

Dear students, welcome to the week 11! During this week, we will study two important pragmatic theories: Relevance Theory and Politeness Theory. Let's start studying the first one of them.

To start, it is necessary to revise what relevance is. Relevance is a potential property not only of utterances but also of thoughts, memories and inferences (Wilson & Sperber, 2002). These authors assert that information is relevant to someone if it interacts in a certain way with the person's existing assumptions about the world. This theory argues that a hearer or reader will search for meaning in any given communication situation and once meaning is found, relevance is expected. According to the theory of relevance, utterances raise expectations of relevance because the search for relevance is a basic feature of human cognition.



**Note:** Taken from FrankHH| shutterstock.com.

According to Allott (2010), this theory has a single communicative principle of relevance which implies that each utterance raises a presumption of its own optimal relevance. Therefore, when a speaker makes an utterance, he or she takes up some of the hearer's attention and this means that there is a fallible presumption that what the speaker says will provide a good amount of information, relative to the cost involved in processing it. The communicative principle and presumption of optimal relevance are specific

to communication. As Wilson and Sperber (2002) affirm, the communicative principle of relevance and the notion of optimal relevance are fundamental in this pragmatic theory. The idea of optimal relevance is meant to spell out what the audience of an act of ostensive communication is entitled to expect in terms of effort and effect.

Before we continue with the next theory, I encourage you to reflect on the importance of relevance and the relevance theory by considering the questions below.

How do you define “relevance”?

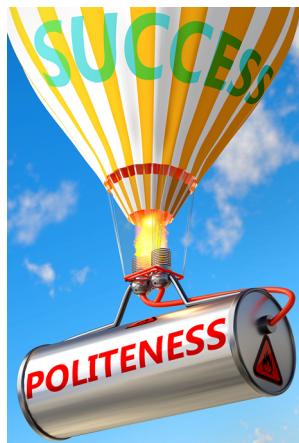
According to Wilson and Sperber, when is information relevant?

**Note:** Please write your answers in a notebook or Word document.

As you could analyze, relevance might be considered as a property not only of utterances but also of thoughts, memories and inferences. Please, remember that information is relevant to someone if it interacts in a certain way with the person's existing assumptions about the world.

After revising the most important notions regarding the relevance theory, we are ready to continue studying about the politeness theory.

### 3.4.3. Politeness theory



**Note:** Taken from GoodIdeas| shutterstock.com.

Politeness can be regarded as a matter of social adequacy (Escandell ,1998). Polite is the word we use to refer to a behavior conforming to a given set of cultural norms. According to Rowe and Levine (2018), the politeness

theory proposes that every speech act involves the concept of "face". Allott (2010) refers to face as the image that a person has as a member of society. In this theory, face is a kind of self-esteem that can be defined as a person's desire to maintain his or her prestige and positive standing in society as well as the prestige and positive standing of others. Furthermore, Rowe and Levine (2018) explain that there are two types of face, negative and positive. Positive face is related to the act of seeking to be admired and approved of by the communicators and negative face is the desire to not be distrusted or imposed upon.

Politeness theory proposes to explain how people deal with or solve affronts or possible affronts to their dignity or face. The politeness theory also considers face threatening acts. Rowe and Levine (2018) define face threatening acts as behaviors that encroach upon a person's need to maintain self-esteem. Every speech act involves a transaction of face, and the speaker negotiates the politeness strategies for avoiding face threatening acts. In a face transaction, the communicators are often attempting not only to save their face (self-esteem) but also to save the face of the person or persons with whom they are speaking. In the same way as two types of face are recognized, two types of politeness are also acknowledged: positive politeness and negative politeness. They depend on the perception of the context in which communication takes place as well as on the social status, gender, and age of the participants in the communication event.

Regarding positive politeness, Rowe and Levine (2018) explain that this type of politeness occurs when we engage people in a way that preserves the communicators' self-image and that lets them know that we enjoy being with them and feel comfortable with them. It emphasizes friendliness and respect. Concerning negative politeness, it is regarded as the act of avoiding intrusion into aspects of a person's privacy or personal space. For example, by avoiding asking about a potentially embarrassing personal situation, a person would be employing negative politeness in order to save the listener's negative face. As the aforementioned authors affirm, there is nothing negative about negative politeness in terms of being something bad because the communicators are using a strategy to avoid an act that would become a face threatening act. Finally, we need to consider that politeness strategies are found in all societies and that's why many researchers consider that politeness is universal.

After reading about the politeness theory, revise the questions below and write the corresponding answers.

Can a person be rude intentionally or unintentionally?

How do you explain the difference between positive politeness and negative politeness?

What role does politeness play in language use?

*Note:* Please write your answers in a notebook or Word document.

Now that you have answered the questions, I am sure you have a clear idea about the politeness theory. You could have answered the first question considering your own experience when communicating with others.

Remember that positive politeness occurs when we engage people in a way that preserves the communicators' self- image and negative politeness is regarded as the act of avoiding intrusion into aspects of a person's privacy or personal space. As we all have experienced, politeness is very important in any language because it involves respectful and considerate ways of communicating with other people.

You have been doing a great job so far. Please, remember that in case you need feedback or any clarification regarding the aforementioned topics, you can participate in the synchronous activities and tutorials and you will get immediate support from your tutor.

Let's continue with the following recommended activity.



### **Recommended learning activity**

Please, provide 2 examples in which you describe how politeness is evident in communication. Although this activity will not be graded, it will help you as a learning strategy for this topic. In addition, you can participate in the tutorials and email your tutor to get feedback in this regard.

*Note:* Please write your answers in a notebook or Word document.



### 3.5. Social meaning

Welcome to the week 12! During this week, we will study about social meaning and affective meaning. First of all, we need to learn what social meaning involves. "Social meaning refers to the use of language to establish and regulate social relations and to maintain social roles" (Mwihaki, 2004, p. 133). According to Rowe and Levine (2018), social meaning is the information in an utterance about the social identity of the person who speaks. This means that an utterance has social meaning if it tells us about the social identity of the speaker. Therefore, when we listen to a speaker, we can learn something about that person; for example, we can realize about the speaker's regional origin, social class, or educational level. Consider the utterances below:

*I ain't done nothing.*

*In my day, we didn't do things like that.*

*Will the foreperson of the jury please stand?*

If we analyze the first one, we can immediately realize that this sentence might probably come from an uneducated person. In the second example, we cannot imagine a child or teenager saying that; instead, we can assure that it was pronounced by an older person. Regarding the third example, we can imagine that this question doesn't come from a surgeon or a jazz musician; in fact, it might rather come from a judge during a trial. All of those utterances have a social meaning because they tell us something about the social identity of the speaker.

When studying social meaning, it is also necessary to revise the concept of code switching. As Rowe and Levine (2018) affirm, code switching occurs when a person intentionally changes from one manner or style of speaking to another. All of us can consciously consider the social meaning of our speech when we change from one manner of speaking to another, according to specific circumstances and our intention of giving an appropriate impression to the people who are listening. Also, it occurs when we want to sound more elegant or educated, when we have to deny a request, when we

want to show solidarity, or when we talk to a child or a baby. For instance, a mother can code switch from an adult way of speaking to baby talk when trying to convince her baby to eat, she might say “Mommy give baby banana” instead of saying “I will give you a banana”.

After studying social meaning, I encourage you to write examples regarding the following situations:

1. A mother trying to comfort her crying baby:
2. A science professor during a university lecture:
3. A politician during political campaign.

Note: Please write your answers in a notebook or Word document.

Once you have written your examples demonstrating what might be expressed in each of the aforementioned situations, you can observe that in each of the examples have social meaning because what the speakers say tells us about the social identity of that person. Now, we can continue studying about affective meaning.

### 3.6. Affective meaning

When we think about affective meaning, we can think about emotions. In fact, affective meaning is more directly a reflection of the speaker's personal attitude or feelings towards the listener or the target of the utterance (Mwihaki, 2004). According to Rowe and Levine (2018), the affective meaning of an utterance conveys the emotions of the speaker. Thus, a speech act that conveys the feelings of the speaker has affective meaning. When speakers select the words they want to use, they describe an event giving an emotional reaction to it. Rowe and Levine (2018) propose the example below:

1. The movie we saw had a runtime of 128 minutes.
2. We sat through a movie that was more than two hours long.
3. *La La Land* seemed to be over in a flash even though it was actually more than two hours long.

As we can observe, the speaker describes an event while giving an emotional reaction to it. Each sentence refers to the same event but it expresses a different affective meaning. In the first case, we see a statement that

emphasizes the length of the movie in a neutral way. The second sentence evidences that the speaker was bored, tired, or unhappy about the length of the movie. However, the third sentence implies that the speaker actually enjoyed the movie. The example demonstrates that affective meaning depends on the individual speaker, the affective meaning for a word is going to be different for each person who uses it. In addition, a person may associate a word to personal experience or memories that imply positive or negative emotions.

Let's consider the example below in which Rowe and Levine (2018) explain the attitude of a speaker about a specific incident.

1. Person A killed person B.
2. The vicious murderer aimed the gun and shot the innocent victim.
3. The hero triumphed over the villain.

If we analyze the example, we realize that the three sentences refer to the same incident; however, the statements are modified to offer more information and also to express the speaker's attitude about this event. As we observe, the first sentence basically expresses what happened in an objective way. The second sentence implies that there was a murderer who shot an innocent victim. On the other hand, in the third sentence, we can realize that the speaker does not refer to a murderer but to a hero who successfully triumphed over a villain.

After studying affective meaning, I encourage you to read a local tabloid and observe what types of sentences are used to catch the readers' attention toward a story. It would be interesting to pay attention to those tabloid headings. Once you analyze them, select two and write them down; finally, explain why they caught your attention. Use the lines below:

Tabloid headings	Explanation
-	
-	

Note: Please write your answers in a notebook or Word document.

Thanks for considering the Tabloid headings activity. I am sure it was helpful for understanding how affective meaning is evident. As you previously studied, the affective meaning of an utterance conveys the emotions of the speaker.

Please, remember that in case you need feedback or any clarification regarding the aforementioned topics, you can participate in the synchronous activities and tutorials and you will get immediate support from your tutor.

Now, I encourage you to complete the following self-assessment, which will allow you to check your learning of the contents studied.



## Self-assessment 3

**Self-assess your knowledge by choosing the correct answer.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ is the study of the effect of context on meaning. It involves \_\_\_\_\_ and how people use it to perform speech acts with performative sentences.
  - a. Pragmatics / the practical use of language.
  - b. The relevance theory / the speaker's emotions.
  - c. The politeness theory / speech acts.
2. Unlike \_\_\_\_\_, human beings also \_\_\_\_\_ and insult others.
  - a. native speakers / interact.
  - b. animals / use language to lie.
  - c. tabloid headings / express meaning.
3. "I hereby sentence you to eight years in jail" is an example of \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. a polite utterance.
  - b. an impolite utterance.
  - c. a performative sentence.
4. The \_\_\_\_\_ considers language as a type of action rather than a medium to convey and express.
  - a. Relevance theory.
  - b. Speech acts theory.
  - c. Politeness theory.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ occurs when a person intentionally changes from one manner or style of \_\_\_\_\_ to another.
  - a. Code switching / speaking.
  - b. A speech act / communicating.
  - c. The cooperative principle / speaking.

**Read the sentences below and choose the correct answer true or false.**

6. ( ) Pragmatics is related to the relationship between what we say and what we mean.
7. ( ) Speech acts are actions performed by an utterance such as daring, questioning, promising, warning, or requesting.
8. ( ) Affective meaning is the information in an utterance about the social identity of the person who speaks.
9. ( ) The politeness theory proposes that every speech act involves the concept of "face".
10. ( ) Negative face is related to the act of seeking to be admired and approved of by the communicators and positive face is the desire to not be distracted or imposed upon.

[Answer Key](#)

## Learning outcome 4

- Discusses semantic and pragmatic issues related to how people use language in everyday communication.

In order to achieve the last learning outcome, you need to consider all the contents, resources and activities included in unit 4. Therefore, I encourage you to consider the explanations offered in this unit, complete all the tasks that are proposed, revise the resources for each topic, and participate in the synchronous or asynchronous activities through our virtual platform.

### Contents, resources and recommended activities



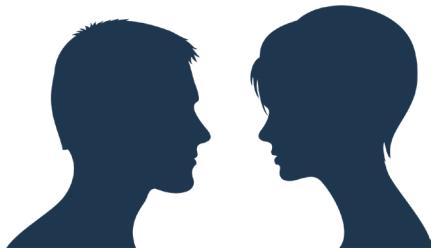
#### Week 13

## Unit 4. Other subfields of pragmatics

Dear students, welcome to week 13! We are going to start studying the last unit of this course. I invite you to follow the order of the topics presented in this unit. The first topic we will study is “Discourse analysis”. Please, consider all of the activities that have been planned.

### 4.1. Discourse analysis

Let's start understanding the word “discourse” which is crucial in this section. According to Allott (2010), discourse is a more general and more technical term than conversation and it can be defined as a sequence of connected utterances. As utterances may be written or spoken, a discourse can be a written text or a spoken exchange. Likewise, Rowe and Levine (2018) emphasize that discourse involves a set of connected utterances, such as a conversation, story, lecture, or any other communication event.



**Note:** Taken from | [www.freepik.com](http://www.freepik.com)

Regarding discourse analysis, it has been described as the process of discovering the rules of communication events (Rowe & Levine, 2018). One of the rules of English discourse directs the selection between the indefinite articles a / an and the definite article the, depending on what has been stated before in the discourse. For instance, let's analyze the use of the articles in the following example proposed by Rowe and Levine (2018, p. 172):

Once upon a time there was a princess, who was very sad. You see, when the princess was born, an evil witch cast a spell. The spell could only be broken by the evil witch, if the princess did as she was told.

If we observe the story fragment, we can realize that there is new information and old information. The new information is information that the narrator believes is being introduced to the hearer for the first time. It must be identified by the indefinite articles a / an. Therefore, the first time the princess, the evil witch, and the spell are mentioned, the words are preceded by a or an. Conversely, the second time these items are mentioned, they are considered old or given information and must be preceded by the definite article the. This also occurs in other kinds of discourse, for example a conversation with a friend or relative in which we distinguish between new information and old information. The first time we mention information, we use indefinite articles; however, the second time we mention it, we assume that our friend or relative already knows what we are talking about.

Now, we can continue with another element in discourse analysis: deixis. Let's study about this topic.

#### 4.1.1. Deixis

Deixis has been defined as "The system whereby references to the here and now is embodied in language" (Bauer, 2012, p.265); according to this author, deixis is concerned with those spatio-temporal features of language

which are fixed in the setting or context of the utterance itself. Rowe and Levine (2018) refer to indexicality or deixis. They explain that some words and expressions refer to their referents by “pointing” to them as in an index. This property is known as indexicality as the way that these words derive their meaning. Pronouns are included in the categories of words that exhibit indexicality or deixis, a property of words that shift reference, changing meaning according to the context. Pronouns are deictic since they change meaning according to the rule of discourse. Let’s analyze the conversation below:

Luis: I have a lot of homework to do. Do you?

Carlos: Yes. I do.

Luis: Does Pedro have a lot to do?

Carlos: Yes. he does.

When Luis uses the word I, the meaning of the word is “Luis.” but when Carlos uses the same word, it means “Carlos”. On the other hand, Luis uses the word you to mean “Carlos” and also Carlos might use the word you to mean “Luis”. Furthermore, both of them might use the word he to refer to Pedro or to any other man.



**Note:** Taken from TINA NIZOVA| shutterstock.com.

In addition, there are other words that can be deictic in regard to place: this or that, here or there, go or come. For instance, we can distinguish distance or position by using this or that. Let’s observe the example below:

This car is new, but that car is old.

We can observe that the use of this and that indicates that the person who is speaking is closer to the new car than the old car. However, if this person walks closer to the old car, then the old car becomes this car and the new car becomes that car.

In the same way, we can have the same situation when we use the words here and there, which change meaning depending on where the speaker is at the time of pronouncing the statement. Also, coming and going are both verbs that have similar semantic properties in that they indicate movement. But they differ in the position of the speaker. If something is moving toward the speaker, it is coming, if it is moving away from the speaker, it is going.

As we have analyzed, deixis refers to words that shift reference, that change meaning according to the context and / or the speaker. After learning about deixis, we can start studying presupposition.

#### 4.1.2. Presupposition



**Note:** Taken from Goodlideas| shutterstock.com.

A presupposition is something that we take for granted or appear to take for granted when we produce an utterance (Bauer, 2012). Because it is simply taken for granted, negating the sentence in which the presupposition occurs does not negate the presupposition. Bauer (2012) explains this notion by using the following example:

A tow-truck crashed into our house.  
A tow-truck did not crash into our house.  
We have a house.

If we see the first and the second sentence, we realize that both are mutually discordant; however, both of them presuppose the following: We have a house.

Furthermore, according to Rowe and Levine (2018), presupposition is the set of assumptions that the speaker makes about the listener's knowledge or circumstances. These assumptions are required in order to make an utterance meaningful. It is another way in which the context of the utterance, within the discourse, affects how it is stated and what words are selected. If two people are speaking about a mutual friend, they can just use the friend's name with no further explanation, for example:

Martha finished her project last week.

In the example, we can assume that both people speaking know Martha. However, if one of the speakers doesn't know Martha, a further explanation is necessary:

Martha, a colleague of mine who is very clever, finished her project last week.

When one of the speakers provides that explanation, Martha's identification becomes old information. Therefore, for the subsequent sentences in this conversation, they can refer to Martha by just using the pronoun she.

Rowe and Levine (2018) also affirm that sometimes presuppositions are implied. For instance, when we see the question: Have you stopped smoking? In this case, the presupposition is that the person referred to by the pronoun "you" smoked in the past, and the speaker of the sentence knew it. Moreover, the question presupposes that the speaker does not know if the person mentioned (using you) has continued to smoke.

We have studied about deixis, presupposition, and the distinction between old and new information as some of the main concepts that guide us in understanding utterances in the context of a discourse. Now, we are going to learn about discourse markers.

#### 4.1.3. Discourse markers

Discourse markers (DM) have been defined in several ways. They are considered as textual cohesion mechanisms (Halliday & Hasan, 1976), discourse connectors (Schiffrin, 1987), or linguistic pieces that explicitly relate textual segments (Calsamiglia & Tusón, 1999). According to Rowe and Levine (2018), discourse markers are words that are not a grammatical part of the sentence, but are used by speakers for starting a conversational turn, indicating their attitude, or indicating the necessity for a moment to think about what was said and how to respond. They can also be used to show politeness by letting the listener know that they are thinking about what was said. The use of some discourse markers can vary by the speaker's age, gender, education, and geographic region.

Let's consider an interesting definition and also a taxonomy of discourse markers that will help us recognize them in oral or written discourse. According to Fraser (1999), discourse markers are lexical expressions derived from the syntactic classes of conjunctions, adverbs and

prepositional phrases which, with certain exceptions, indicate a relationship between the interpretation of the segment they introduce (S2) and the previous segment (S1). This author also acknowledges that discourse markers have a central meaning, which is procedural, and their more specific interpretation is negotiated by the context. Fraser's taxonomy includes three classes of discourse markers: contrastive discursive markers, elaborative discursive markers, and inferential discursive markers.

In the category of contrastive discourse markers, which indicate a direct or indirect contrast between segment 1 (S1) and segment 2 (S2), Fraser (1999) includes but, alternatively, although, conversely, despite, however, in spite of, in comparison, in contrast, instead, nevertheless, on the other hand, on the contrary, regardless, though, whereas, yet, among others. Regarding elaborative discursive markers, they point an elaboration in segment 2 (S2) to the information contained in segment 1 (S1). These include and, above all, also, alternatively, analogously, besides, by the same token, correspondingly, equally, for example, for instance, further (more), in addition, in other words, in particular, likewise, more accurately, more importantly, more precisely, moreover, among others. Finally, inferential discourse markers indicate that segment 1 (S1) provides a basis for inferring segment 2 (S2). These include so, after all, as a conclusion, as a consequence, as a result, because, consequently, for this / that reason, hence, accordingly, in this / that / any case, then, therefore, thus, among others.

After studying the three types of discourse markers, I encourage you to write some examples according to each type. Use the lines below:

Contrastive discursive markers	Your examples
-	
-	
Elaborative discursive markers	Your examples
-	
-	
Inferential discursive markers	Your examples
-	
-	

Note: Please write your answers in a notebook or Word document.

You have developed a wonderful job so far. Remember that in case you need feedback or any clarification regarding the aforementioned topics, you can participate in the synchronous activities and tutorials and you will get immediate support from your tutor.



## Week 14

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Welcome to week 14! In this week, we are going to study about greeting rituals and the maxims of conversation. The first topic is greeting rituals, let's start studying this topic and let's complete all the activities proposed for this week.

### 4.2. Greeting rituals

Dear students, let's analyze greetings. For you, are greetings very important? Do you think that greetings are essential in our daily interactions? Think about the gestures that are associated to greetings. La Fontaine (2004) remarks that greetings involve the recognition of an encounter with another person as socially acceptable. A greeting sign might be represented as conveying information and expressing emotion; for instance, an announcement of presence or intended departure, a statement of pleasure when somebody arrives, or a statement of sadness when the person goes away. When greeting, reciprocity is important; therefore, we expect to elicit social recognition in return.



**Note:** Taken from Branislav Nenin| shutterstock.com.

According to Rowe and Levine (2018), greeting rituals constitute a special kind of discourse which is relevant for the social function. Therefore, these rituals can be considered as speech acts that perform the activity

of establishing social ties between individuals. The words that are used in greeting rituals vary from one culture to another. Likewise, the cultural expectations surrounding greeting rituals vary from one society to another. The aforementioned authors acknowledge that greeting rituals are accompanied by specific nonverbal behaviors, those behaviors also depend on each culture. Thus, shaking right hands, bowing, patting the shoulder, hugging, kissing, smiling, making eye contact, or averting the gaze complement greetings. All of them have the function of social interaction.



**Note:** Taken from Altrendo Images| shutterstock.com.

Now, I invite you to reflect on the way we used to greet each other before the Covid-19 outbreak. Think about those greeting rituals we usually had with relatives, friends, neighbors, colleagues, authorities, and other people. Reflect on the change we have experienced in greeting rituals since the Covid-19 started. Look at the picture below and answer the question.



**Note:** Taken from MandriaPix| shutterstock.com.

How have greeting rituals changed during the Covid-19 pandemic?

Note: Please write your answers in a notebook or Word document.

I am sure that all of you answered the question after considering the situations you have experienced during these pandemic times. Unfortunately, we have not been able to shake hands, hug or kiss our friends or relatives. In many places around the world, an elbow bump has been adopted as the preferred pandemic greeting. After studying about greeting rituals and the changes we have observed, I invite you to continue studying about the maxims of conversation.

#### 4.3. Maxims of conversation: quantity, quality, relevance, manner

The maxims of conversation are the cultural expectations that guide human beings when they are talking (Rowe & Levine, 2018). They stipulate what participants have to do in order to have an efficient and cooperative conversation. The maxims of conversation are based on the cooperative principle, which assumes that each person is trying in good faith to communicate and understand. Also, they are related to implicature, a meaning that is implied or implicated, rather than indicated directly. In English, the maxims of conversation include quantity, quality, relevance, and manner. Let's immediately analyze each one of them.

The first maxim we are going to analyze is Quantity. According to Rowe and Levine (2018), this maxim implies that the speaker will say neither more nor less than is required. These authors explain this concept with the following example:



**Note:** Taken from Iakov Filimonov | shutterstock.com.

Parent: Where did you go?

Adolescent: Out.

Parent: What did you do?

Adolescent: Nothing

In this example, it is evident that the adolescent did something out of the house. Then, the maxim of quantity requires that the adolescent respond telling the parent where he went and what he did. He might have gone to the park, the movies, or a friend's house and could have done any activity in one of those places. We can observe that the adolescent intentionally violates the maxim of conversation quantity. The answer provided can have affective meaning that implies a message for the parent: "Don't ask me about my private life".

On the other hand, in the case of two friends who have not seen each other for a long time, if one of them asks the other the question: "What have you been doing?". If the friend answers with a very detailed account of the activities, this also violates the maxim of quantity because the person is offering more information than what is required.

The second maxim we will study is Quality. Rowe and Levine (2018) explain this maxim when the speaker says only what he or she believes to be the truth. For instance, when someone asks about the time and the other person answers using reliable information. In fact, this maxim implies that we do not say what we believe to be false. When we have a conversation, we assume that the person who is talking is telling us the truth.

Another important maxim is Relevance. This maxim implies that when someone speaks, we assume that what he or she says is relevant to the conversation. This maxim indicates: "say only what is appropriate for the topic under discussion". In other words, it refers to preventing randomness and incoherence.



**Note:** Taken from Yuriy Kj shutterstock.com.

The last maxim is Manner which implies that participants in a conversation should be brief, concise, and clear. This means that speakers must avoid ambiguity and they must be orderly. When a person asks a question, he or she might not expect an ambiguous and excessively long reply; instead, a clear and brief reply is expected.



**Note:** Taken from iQconcept| shutterstock.com.

Once you have revised the four maxims of conversation, you have concluded the study of week 14. Remember that in case you need feedback or any clarification regarding the aforementioned topics, you can participate in the synchronous activities and tutorials and you will get immediate support from your tutor. Also, I invite you to use the resource available for you.

#### Maxims of conversation



#### Week 15

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#### 4.4. Cross-cultural pragmatics

Dear students, welcome to week 15! We are going to study interesting topics that will help us apply pragmatics when teaching. Let's start with Cross-cultural pragmatics, which investigates the speech behavior and norms of different cultures (Stadler, 2012). Cross-cultural pragmatics focuses on contextually derived meaning, the appropriateness of language use in differing cultural contexts, and the complexities and challenges associated to the acquisition of pragmatic competence. Understanding cross-cultural pragmatics is necessary because when we know the rules and conventions of a language, we avoid misunderstandings. For instance, members of

different cultures learn to interpret statements differently as a part of the enculturation process. In some cultures, people use direct requests while in others indirect requests are used and people rely on the listener to infer the relevance of a message and respond with action.



**Note:** Taken from Fagreiaj shutterstock.com.

#### 4.5. Difficulty in processing Pragmatics

According to Rowe and Levine (2018), people with the autism spectrum often have trouble understanding indirect speech, irony, sarcasm, and other non-literal utterances. They experience difficulties with non-literal communication such as metaphors, indirect speech acts, and incomplete instructions relying on common knowledge. Also, Reboul et al. (2012) affirm that people with autism might have problems with politeness, turn-taking in conversational exchange as well as in subject maintenance or, with persistence on subjects which are inappropriate in a specific context. Some researchers consider autism spectrum disorders to be a cognitive disorder in which the language pragmatics and theory of mind are impaired (Rowe & Levine, 2018). We need to take into account that people experiencing this real-life difficulty to process pragmatics will take everything that is said literally and it will be necessary to speak directly with them.



**Note:** Taken from White Space Illustrations| shutterstock.com.

## 4.6. Pragmatics in EFL teaching and learning

Pragmatics has been recognized as an important component of language teaching and learning. As Bardovi-Harlig (1996) acknowledges, addressing pragmatics as part of language pedagogy empowers students to experience and experiment with the language, using the language class as an opportunity for learners to expand their communication across cultural boundaries and to thereby participate in the very purpose of language, which is communication. In this context, the real responsibility of the teacher is to make students more aware that pragmatic functions exist in language, specifically in discourse so that they may be more attentive of these functions. It would be impossible to impart knowledge concerning every speech act explicitly; however, if students are encouraged to think for themselves about culturally appropriate ways to compliment a friend or say goodbye to a teacher, then they may awaken their own lay abilities for pragmatic analysis (Bardovi-Harlig, 1996). This author also suggests some activities to promote pragmatic awareness.



**Note:** Taken from Tirachard Kumtanom| shutterstock.com.

One of the activities is guided discussions, which help students become aware of the pragmatic rules governing their native language and the ramifications of enacting such rules appropriately and inappropriately. The awareness of communication goals that this activity generates can then be applied to the target language in the instructional setting. Another activity that teachers can use is "The Classroom Guest", which will help students develop listening, speaking, and pragmatic skills. For this activity, the instructor arranges for someone to interrupt the class (to deliver a message, ask a question, or make any other brief and believable exchange). Before the preplanned interruption, the instructor turns on a tape recorder that can pick up the voices of both the teacher and the visitor and records the entire exchange. When the visitor leaves, the teacher asks the students what was

said. After the discussion, two students are asked to recreate the scene through role-play and it is also recorded. Next, both exchanges are played to the class and the differences between the “real” exchange and the students’ reenactment are discussed (Bardovi-Harlig, 1996).

For learning more about simple ways to incorporate pragmatics in the EFL classroom, let’s do the following recommended learning activity.



### **Recommended learning activity**

Consider the link below “Teacher’s Corner: Simple Ways to Incorporate Pragmatics in the EFL Classroom”.

Link: [Simple Ways to Incorporate Pragmatics in the EFL Classroom](#)

Revise the example and the ideas presented for teaching pragmatics. Once you have revised them, answer the following questions:

What happened to the young teacher when she went to the bank?

Was the young teacher confused? Explain.

After analyzing the example of the young teacher at the bank, do you consider that understanding pragmatic meaning is challenging?

Are questions about age, salary, and shoe size polite in our culture?

Which activity can be used by teachers in order to teach greetings?

Note: Please write your answers in a notebook or Word document.

After revising the link about “Teacher’s Corner: Simple Ways to Incorporate Pragmatics in the EFL Classroom”, we can determine that in the case of the example of the young teacher, there was a misunderstanding because of the types of questions that the bank teller asked. Those questions were confusing for the young teacher and she thought they were not appropriate. Obviously, questions about age, salary, and shoe size are not polite in our culture. Furthermore, there are several activities mentioned and one of them is the use of role-plays to teach greetings. Also, role-plays can be used for apologizing, giving advice, making a request, making an excuse for being late, closing a conversation, or practicing other pragmatic aspects.

Although the recommended learning activity is not graded, it could help you reinforce your knowledge. In case you need feedback or any clarification regarding the topics we have studied so far, I encourage you to participate in the synchronous activities and tutorials and you will get immediate support from your tutor.

Now, I encourage you to complete the following self-assessment, which will allow you to check your learning of the contents studied.



## Self-assessment 4

**Self-assess your knowledge by choosing the correct answer.**

1. One of the rules of English discourse directs the \_\_\_\_\_ the indefinite articles a / an and the definite article the, depending on \_\_\_\_\_ in the discourse.
  - a. selection between / what has been stated before.
  - b. clarification about / the speaker's emotions.
  - c. integration of the relevance theory / the speech act.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ is something that we take for granted or appear to take for granted when we produce an utterance.
  - a. Deixis.
  - b. A presupposition.
  - c. A discourse marker.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ are words that are not a grammatical part of the sentence, but are used by speakers for starting a conversational turn, indicating their attitude, or indicating the necessity for a moment to think about what was said and how to respond.
  - a. Personal pronouns.
  - b. Definite articles.
  - c. Discourse markers.
4. Greeting rituals constitute a special kind of \_\_\_\_\_ which is relevant for the social function.
  - a. indexicality.
  - b. rule.
  - c. discourse.

5. \_\_\_\_\_ are the cultural expectations that guide human beings when they are talking.
- The maxims of conversation.
  - Discourse markers.
  - Social misunderstandings.

**Read the sentences below and choose the correct answer true or false.**

6. ( ) Pronouns are deictic since they change meaning according to the rule of discourse.
7. ( ) Although, conversely, despite, and nevertheless are considered as inferential discourse markers, according to Fraser's taxonomy.
8. ( ) The cultural expectations surrounding greeting rituals vary from one society to another.
9. ( ) Understanding cross-cultural pragmatics is necessary to avoid misunderstandings.
10. ( ) People with the autism spectrum do not have any difficulties understanding indirect speech, irony, and other non-literal utterances.

**Answer Key**



### Second term final activities

Dear students, we have successfully studied interesting topics that were included in the second term. You have developed several activities during weeks 9-15. I am sure that you have dedicated enough time for each activity and now you should feel confident to demonstrate your knowledge and skills. As a reinforcement of the topics we studied in the second bimester, I invite you to consider the following OER (REA) "Why teach pragmatics in language classes" in which you will find information about the importance of teaching pragmatics. This is the link: [Why teach pragmatics in language classes](#).

Once you analyze the information presented in the link, please answer the following questions:

What are some consequences of committing a type of pragmatic mistake?

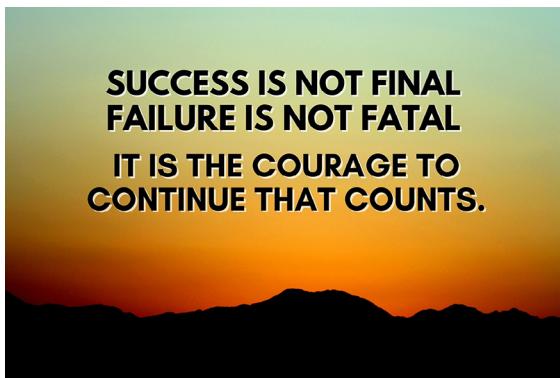
What is the main goal of teaching pragmatics?

Can pragmatics be integrated into the English-language curriculum at the earliest levels?

Note: Please write your answers in a notebook or Word document.

After revising the OER (REA) "Why teach pragmatics in language classes", we can conclude that the consequences of pragmatic mistakes are often interpreted on a social or personal level, they may hinder good communication between speakers, or make the speaker appear abrupt, rude or brusque in social interactions. Therefore, pragmatics should be integrated into the English-language curriculum since the earliest levels. Also, we need to consider that the main goal of instruction in pragmatics is to raise learners' pragmatic awareness and to give them choices about their interactions in the target language.

Once you have finished the previous activity, I suggest you continue studying during this week. You can use the links, resources, and exercises you have in this academic guide. Please, revise again the self-assessment sections you have in units 3 and 4. Also, you should consider recommended learning activities because they will help you recall the most important topics we have studied so far. Remember that we also had online questionnaires and other graded activities that were included in this second term. Finally, I suggest you design your own summary or mind maps (depending on your preferences) as a preparation for the Second Term Evaluation. My best wishes for your success!



**SUCCESS IS NOT FINAL  
FAILURE IS NOT FATAL  
IT IS THE COURAGE TO  
CONTINUE THAT COUNTS.**

**Note:** Taken from Shamil CA| shutterstock.com.



## 4. Answer key

Self-assessment 1		
Question	Answer	Feedback
1	b	Semantics is the study of meaning in human language.
2	b	Morphemes are considered as the smallest units of meaning which implies that they cannot be broken down further and remain meaningful.
3	a	Lexicon has been defined as the mental dictionary each human being has; it contains the definitions of all the words someone knows.
4	c	Abstract concepts are those intangible things, ideas or concepts while concrete nouns are tangible objects.
5	c	Adjectives modify a noun or pronoun; they identify a characteristic or a quality of a noun or a pronoun. In the English language, they occur before the noun or after some verbs and can be inflected for degrees such as comparative and superlative.
6	d,e,f,a,b,c	Each word is an example of the corresponding category.
7	T	Phrases are groups of words that can express a concept and are constituents of a clause.
8	F	Clauses are not the smallest units of meaning.
9	F	Abstract nouns refer to ideas or intangible things.
10	T	The more uncommon or unusual members of a domain are considered more marked.

Self  
Assessment

Self-assessment 2		
Question	Answer	Feedback
1	F	The words tale and tail are not eponyms.
2	T	The words dead and alive are complementary pairs.
3	F	Poets and writers often use metaphors.
4	T	“Thunderous silence” is an oxymoron.
5	F	“To kick the bucket” is an example of an idiom.
6	e,f,d,c,b,a	Each alternative matches the corresponding complement.
7	c	Lexical semantics considers the categories of words as nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, determiners, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions and interjections; therefore, the meaning properties of individual words are analyzed in isolation.
8	b	Discourse semantics refers to the study of the meaning of extended discourse and the semantic relationship among utterances used in context.
9	b	Antonyms are words that are opposite in one of their semantic properties.
10	c	Eponyms are words that come from the proper name of a person or place. These words can be based on both real and fictional people or places.

Self  
Assessment

### Self-assessment 3

Question	Answer	Feedback
1	a	Pragmatics is the study of the effect of context on meaning. It involves the practical use of language and how people use it to perform speech acts with performative sentences.
2	b	Unlike animals, human beings also use language to lie and insult others.
3	c	"I hereby sentence you to eight years in jail" is an example of a performative sentence.
4	b	The Speech acts theory considers language as a type of action rather than a medium to convey and express.
5	a	Code switching occurs when a person intentionally changes from one manner or style of speaking to another.
6	T	Pragmatics is related to the relationship between what we say and what we mean.
7	T	Speech acts are actions performed by an utterance such as daring, questioning, promising, warning, or requesting.
8	F	Social meaning is the information in an utterance about the social identity of the person who speaks.
9	T	The politeness theory proposes that every speech act involves the concept of "face".
10	F	Positive face is related to the act of seeking to be admired and approved of by the communicators and negative face is the desire to not be distrusted or imposed upon.

Self  
Assessment

Self-assessment 4		
Question	Answer	Feedback
1	a	One of the rules of English discourse directs the selection between the indefinite articles a / an and the definite article the, depending on what has been stated before in the discourse.
2	b	A presupposition is something that we take for granted or appear to take for granted when we produce an utterance.
3	c	Discourse markers are words that are not a grammatical part of the sentence, but are used by speakers for starting a conversational turn, indicating their attitude, or indicating the necessity for a moment to think about what was said and how to respond.
4	c	Greeting rituals constitute a special kind of discourse which is relevant for the social function.
5	a	The maxims of conversation are the cultural expectations that guide human beings when they are talking.
6	T	Pronouns are deictic since they change meaning according to the rule of discourse.
7	F	Although, conversely, despite, and nevertheless are not considered as inferential discourse markers, according to Fraser's taxonomy.
8	T	The cultural expectations surrounding greeting rituals vary from one society to another.
9	T	Understanding cross-cultural pragmatics is necessary to avoid misunderstandings.
10	F	People with the autism spectrum have difficulties understanding indirect speech, irony, and other non-literal utterances.

Self  
Assessment



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## 6. Resources

### Words that share semantic properties

Words that have shared semantic properties

### Words that have shared semantic properties



A semantic domain: a set of words that share semantic properties.

Domain of trees: oak, maple, pine.

Domain of sports: soccer, basketball, volleyball.

Other domains: food, animals, clothes, colors, furniture.

	Oak	Maple	Ash	Birch	Pine	Palm
plant	+	+	+	+	+	+
has trunk	+	+	+	+	+	+
tall	+	+	+	+	+	+
long-lived	+	+	+	+	+	+
has broad leaves	+	+	+	+	-	-

2

## Markedness in semantics:

- Some words are more common or usual than others.
- More common: less marked.
- More uncommon: more marked.
- Markedness: an idea of how the native speakers of a language think about their world.

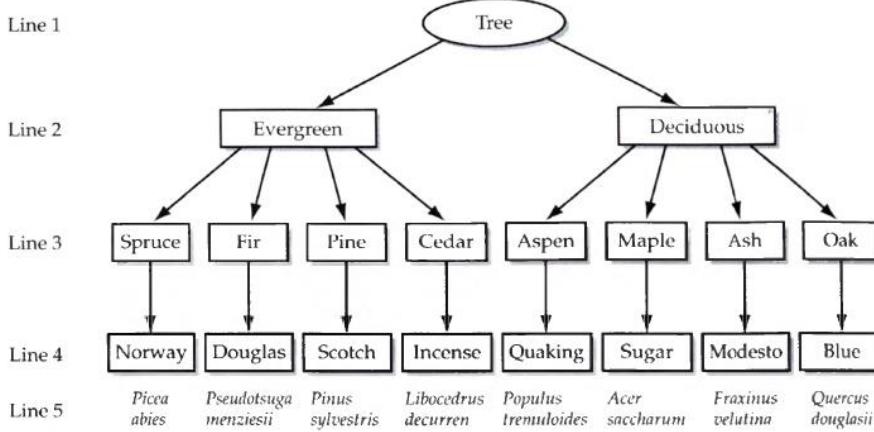
Analyze these words:

tree - palm tree

actor - actress

hero - heroine

3

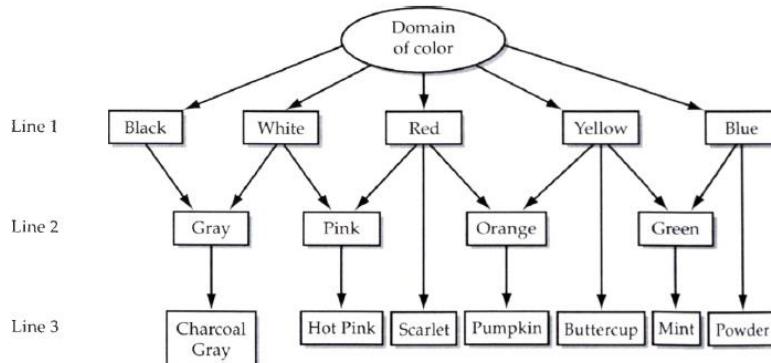


**FIGURE 6-2 Domain of trees**

Note that this illustration is not exhaustive. For example, there are more evergreen and deciduous trees than represented here, and each type of tree on Line 3 has many varieties.

4

**UTPL**  
SANTO TOMÉ



**FIGURE 6-3 Domain of color**

from top to bottom that the terms become more marked the farther down you go. The most marked term is the scientific name (Line 5), which only refers to one species or subspecies.

5

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## **References:**

Rowe, B., & Levine, D. (2018). A concise introduction to linguistics. Routledge.

## Maxims of conversation

### Maxims of conversation: cooperative principle and implicature

- Maxims of conversation: the cultural expectations that guide people when they are conversing.
- The cooperative principle: assumption that participants in a conversation normally attempt to be informative, truthful, relevant and clear. It assumes that each person is trying in good faith to communicate and understand.
- Implicature: a meaning that is implied or implicated, rather than stated directly.

1

UTPL  
sacar los más

### Example:

“How are you?”

Your neighbor.



Your doctor.



Your boss.



2

UTPL  
sacar los más

## Quantity

Related to the amount of information provided in conversations.

Say neither more nor less than is required.

Don't talk for too long / too little.



If you meet a friend you haven't seen in several years, and you ask, "What've you been doing?" and the response is a week-by-week account, that violates the maxim of quantity. It is more than what is required.

3

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www.utpl.edu.co

## Quality

Say only what you believe to be the truth.

Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence

### EXAMPLE:



Boy: How old are you?

Girl: I'm 200 years old.

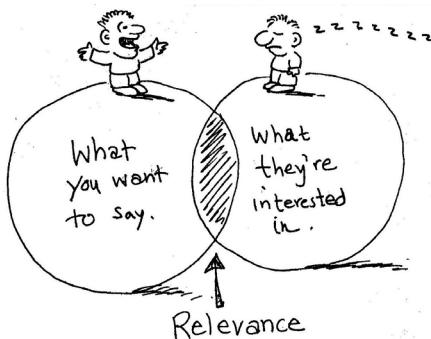
We can clearly see that the receiver has violated the maxim of quality by lying.

4

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## Relevance

Say only what is appropriate for the topic



5

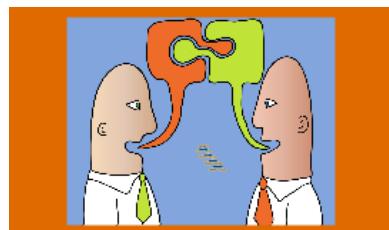
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## Manner

Be brief, concise, and clear.

Avoid obscurity of expression.

Avoid ambiguity.



6

UTPL  
SANTO DOMINGO



## References:

Rowe, B., & Levine, D. (2018). A concise introduction to linguistics. Routledge.