

Discourse

LIN 313 Language and Computers

Fall 2025

Instructor: Gabriella Chronis

Admin

- Schedule updated: classification next week
 - HW due later
- Alignment talk reportback
- Instapoll

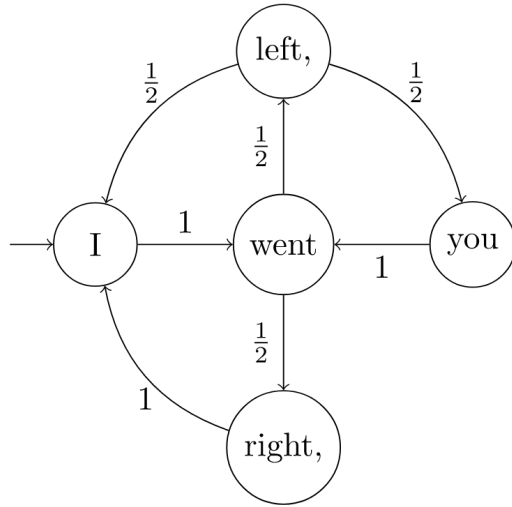
Objectives

Problem 5 on the HW asks you to analyze a piece of discourse into relevant features. For that, we need to know the relevant **dimensions of variation**

Today and Friday, we will look at a few aspects of the organization of linguistic interactions:

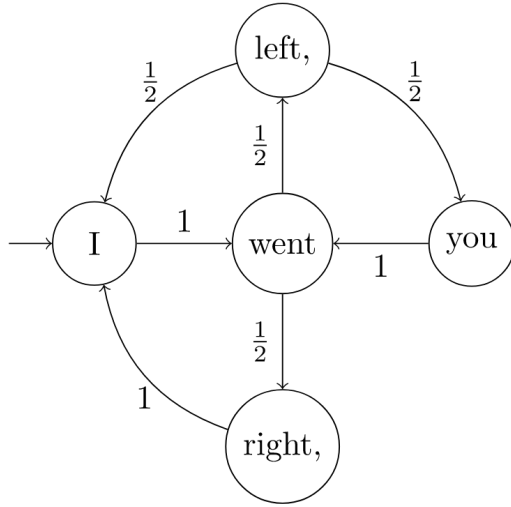
- Jakobson's 6 functions: why people talk
- Speech acts: what utterances do
- Gricean maxims: rules of conversation

Review: Markov Chains



- A. I went left
- B. I went left, you went right
- C. I went left, I went right
- D. I went left, I went left
- E. I went right, I went left
- F. I went right, you went right
- G. I went left, you went right, I went left
- H. I went right, you went left
- I. I went left, you went right, you went right

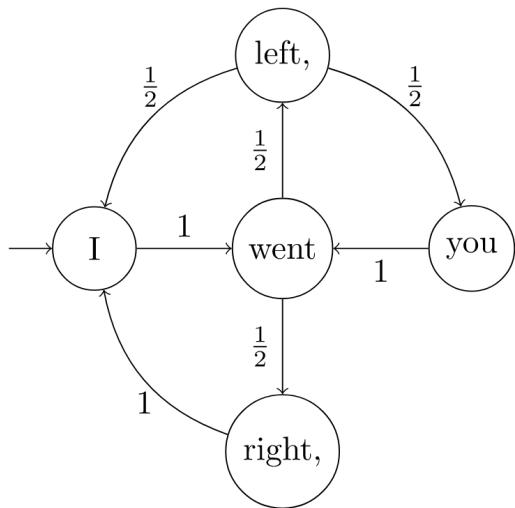
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1. What is the probability of A?
2. What is the probability of B?

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$$\begin{aligned} PP(W) &= P(w_1 w_2 \dots w_N)^{-\frac{1}{N}} \\ &= \sqrt[N]{\frac{1}{P(w_1 w_2 \dots w_N)}} \end{aligned}$$

1. What is the probability of A?
2. What is the probability of B?
3. What is the **perplexity** of A?
4. What is the **perplexity** of B?

Discourse

Anything larger than a sentence. We pay attention to **context** in a way that syntax ignores.

- spoken / signed conversation
- written text
- monologue
- dialogue

Kinds of Variation

Style / (idiolect)

Register

Genre

Dialect

Language

Kinds of Variation

Style / (idiolect): individual “language habits”

Register: linguistic features that mark communicative situations in particular social setting. (primarily non-literary situations)

Genre: a structure common for groups of texts which are recognized as performing broadly similar functions in a society

Dialect: a variety of a language spoken by a particular group of people. There are standard and nonstandard dialects.

Language: a mutually intelligible system of signs with grammar and vocabulary, not mutually intelligible with other languages

Describing Variation

We describe variation in terms of **dimensions of variation**

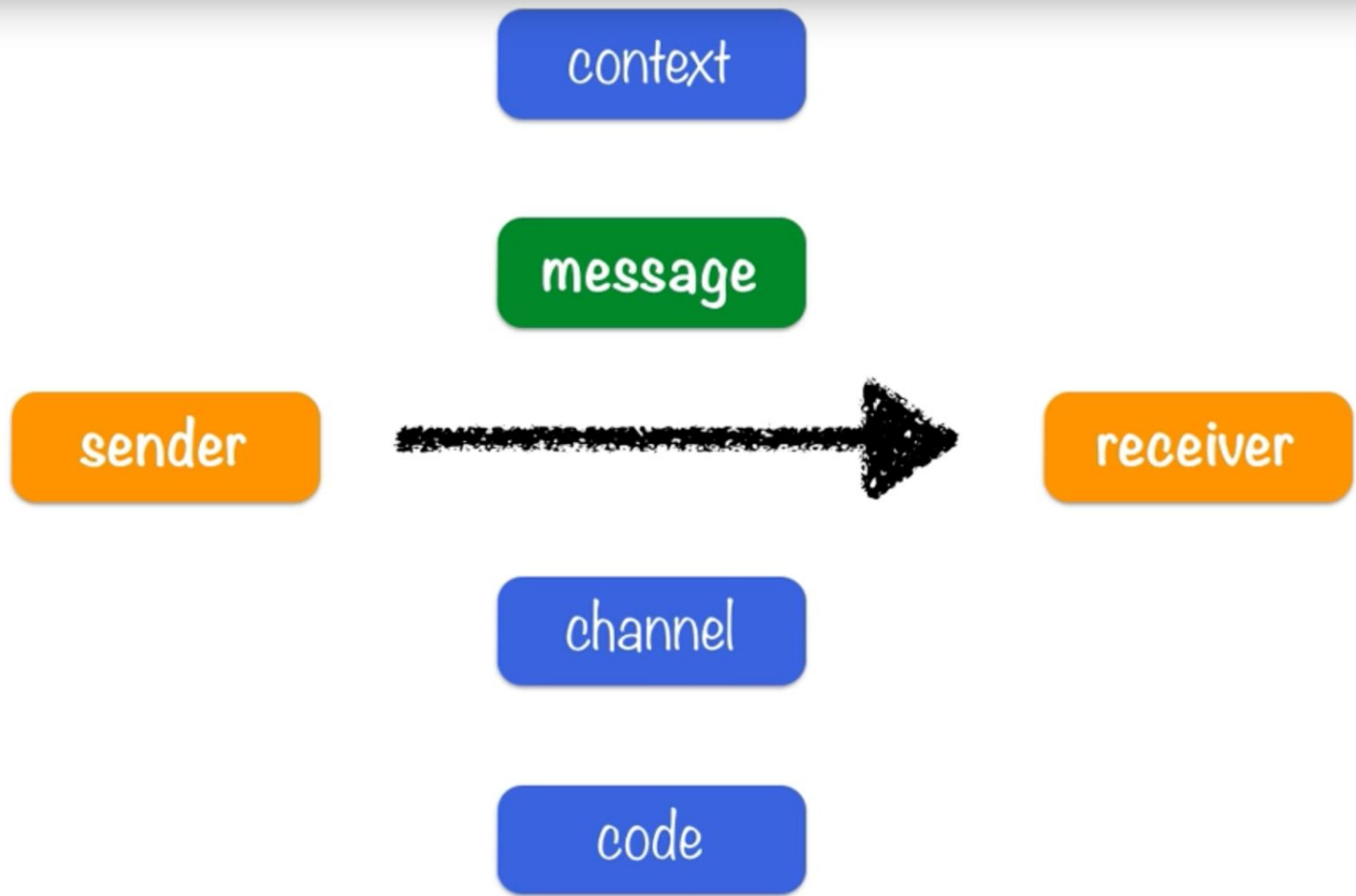
Today we will focus on dimensions related to

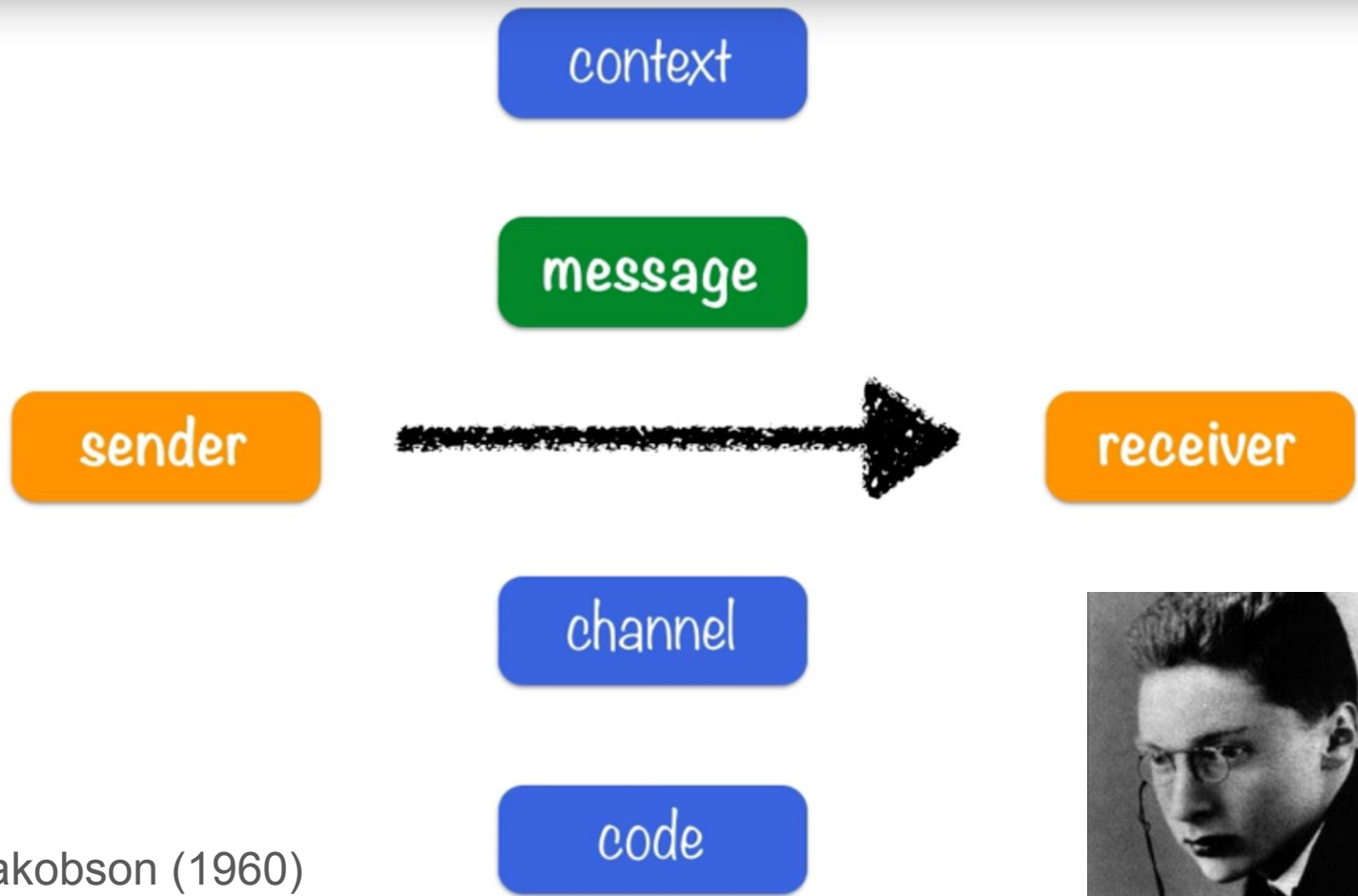
- the speech situations
- the **functions** of speech

Communication Breakdown

(aka elements of the speech situation)

What is necessary for communication to happen?





Roman Jakobson (1960)
Closing Statement:
Linguistics and Poetics

Linguistic Functions

What does language do? Or rather, what do people do with language?

“Each of these six factors determines
a different function of language.”



Roman Jakobson 1960

context

message

sender

receiver

channel

code

context

message

sender

"Ouch!"

receiver

channel

code

context

message

Emotive

sender

"Ouch!"

receiver

channel

code

context

message

sender

"Take a hike!"

receiver

channel

code

context

message

sender

"Take a hike!"

Conative

receiver

channel

code

context

message

sender

"Hello?"

receiver

channel

code

context

message

sender

"Hello?"

receiver

channel

Phatic

code

context

message

sender

"Simple it is not, I'm afraid you will
find, for a mind maker-upper to
make up his mind"

receiver

channel

code

context

message

Poetic

sender

"Simple it is not, I'm afraid you will
find, for a mind maker-upper to
make up his mind"

receiver

channel

code

context

message

sender

"Dr. Seuss's first book was rejected
27 times before publication."

receiver

channel

code

context

Referential

message

sender

"Dr. Seuss's first book was rejected
27 times before publication."

receiver

channel

code

context

message

sender

The first citation for the word 'nerd'
is a Dr. Seuss book.

receiver

channel

code

context

message

sender

The first citation for the word 'nerd'
is a Dr. Seuss book.

receiver

channel

code

Metalinguistic

Linguistic Function

The **function** of an utterance is dependent on which **factor** it emphasizes.

sender ⇒ emotive

receiver ⇒ conative

channel ⇒ phatic

message ⇒ poetic

context ⇒ referential

code ⇒ metalinguistic