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COGNITIVE PRAGMATICS

Lecture 2:

Pragmatic Aspects of Utterance Meaning:
Implicatures, Linguistic Underdeterminacy, and Presuppositions

Consider the following utterances:

(1)   John has a driver's licence *and* is a philosopher.

(2)   John got married *and* became a father.

(3)   John fell from the roof *and* broke his leg.

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(1')   John has a driver's licence *and* John is a philosopher.

(2')   John got married *and then subsequently* became a father.

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(2')   John got married *and then subsequently* became a father.
(3')   John fell from the roof *and, as a result of this,* broke his leg.

Is *and* ambiguous?

(1) —   conjunction, i.e., '∧'
(2) —   '∧' *plus* the chronological order of the reported events
(3) —   '∧' *plus* the causal relationship between the reported events

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(5_{TC})   For each x: (x is the speaker's student $\rightarrow$ x passed the exam)

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(4')   *Some, but not all* of my students passed the exam.

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(4')   *Some*, *but not all* of my students passed the exam.

Is *some* ambiguous?

— (4_{TC})

— *some, but not all*

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Is *some* ambiguous?

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different interpretations to (1), (2), (3), and (4)?

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P. H. Grice:

- 'No' to Q₁, 'Yes' to Q₂.
- The differences in meaning are not *semantic* but *pragmatic* phenomena; they should be accounted *not* by positing ambiguities in the lexicon, *but* by reference to general principles governing communication.

Q$_1$ Is *and* ambiguous?

Is *some* ambiguous?

Q$_2$ Are we entitled to ascribe

different interpretations to (1), (2), (3), and (4)?

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- 'No' to Q$_1$, 'Yes' to Q$_2$.
- The differences in meaning are not *semantic* but *pragmatic* phenomena; they should be accounted *not* by positing ambiguities in the lexicon, *but* by reference to general principles governing communication.

- The total meaning of an utterance:
  — primary meaning (= what is said),
  — secondary meaning (= what is implied, *i.e.*, implicature)

(5) A: Poor John. How can we help him?

B: Peter is Smith's son-in-law.

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context (= *what A and B mutually believe*)

    John works for company C.

    Recently, he got into trouble at his workplace,
and there is a serious risk that he will be fired.

    Smith is the president of company C
and has the final say on all matters regarding its employees.

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(6) Smith is Peter's father-in-law.

(7) We can help John by asking Peter to say a few words in support of John
  and thereby influence Smith's decision regarding John's employment.

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(8) A: Peter has been working for six months, and he has already been promoted!

B: He is Smith's son-in-law.

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   and thereby influence Smith's decision regarding John's employment.

(8) A: Peter has been working for six months, and he has already been promoted!

   B: He is Smith's son-in-law.

(9) Peter owes his promotion to Smith's support.

what is said	*what is implied* (→ *conversational implicature*)
context-insensitive	context-sensitive
'decoded'	inferred
non-cancellable	cancellable
constitute TC (→ *lying*)	has no impact on TC (→ *misleading*)

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(5) A: Poor John. How can we help him?

    B: Peter is Smith's son-in-law.

(10) But Smith is not Peter's parent-in-law.

(11) But there is no point in asking him for help.

(8) A: Peter has been working for six months, and he has already been promoted!

    B: *He* is Smith's son-in-law.

(12) But Peter is beholden to no one but himself.
     He owes his promotion to his hard work only.

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(13) A: Did this car have any more serious accident?

B: Last month, I scratched the mirror when I was driving into the garage.

(14) A's car had no serious accidents.

gloss: In fact, six months ago, A drove this car into a roadside tree
and crushed the hood.

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[!] Sentence meaning (= the conventional meaning of the sentence uttered) *versus* speaker meaning (= what the speaker means in uttering the sentence);

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[!] Sentence meaning (= the conventional meaning of the sentence uttered) *versus* speaker meaning (= what the speaker means in uttering the sentence); the former is a vehicle for conveying the latter.

[!] The speaker meaning of an utterance comprises two aspects:
— the primary speaker meaning (*what is said*, "encoded meaning"),
— the secondary speaker meaning (*what is implied*, inferred meaning).

[!] Sentence meanings, primary meanings, and secondary meanings
     can be represented as **propositions** (= structured sequences of **concepts**).

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Concepts:
— building blocks of thoughts,
— meanings of lexical units ($\rightarrow$ lexicalized concepts).

Propositions:
— truth-conditional contents of thoughts (beliefs, sentences, utterances);
   to recognize the content of a thought
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Two facts about English:
- *dog* means DOG;
- *A dog barks* means DOG BARKS.

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     can be represented as **propositions** (= structured sequences of **concepts**).

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(8) A: Peter has been working for six months, and he has already been promoted!
     B: He is Smith's son-in-law.

sentence meaning: [A CERTAIN MALE PERSON] IS SMITH'S SON-IN-LAW.

primary meaning: PETER IS SMITH'S SON-IN-LAW.

secondary meaning: PETER OWES HIS PROMOTION TO SMITH'S SUPPORT.

Two criteria: *dictiveness* ($\rightarrow$ truth-conditional content) // *formality*

Cooperative Principle

Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged. (Grice 1989: 26)

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Conversational Maxims

Quantity

Make your contribution as informative as it is required.

Quality

Do not say what you believe is false.

Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

Relation

Be relevant.

Manner

Be perspicuous.
Avoid obscurity of expression and ambiguity; be brief and orderly.

Grice (1989: 31):

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(5) A: Poor John. How can we help him?

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[!] A's aim is to find an interpretative hypothesis that will enable A to maintain the **assumption that B is a cooperative, maxim-abiding speaker**.

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(5) A: Poor John. How can we help him?

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A's inference

(*i*) In response to my question, B says that Peter is Smith's son-in-law;

(*ii*) in saying this, B appears to violate the Relation Maxim;

(*iii*) however, there is no reason to suppose that that B is not observing the Cooperative Principle and its maxims;

(*iv*) B would not have said it unless intending to convey that we can help John by asking Peter to talk to Smith in support of John;

(*v*) B knows that this interpretation is required to maintain assumption (*iii*);

(*vi*) B did nothing to prevent me to arrive at this interpretation;

(*vii*) therefore, B **implicates** that we can help John by asking Peter to talk to Smith in support of John.

Standard implicatures

→ arise from the assumption that the speaker obeys the maxims or that any violation of one of the maxims is only apparent.

(15)   A: I'm out of petrol.

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(17)   Is Peter a philosopher?

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           ⇒ THE GARAGE IS OPEN AND HAS PETROL TO SELL.   (*Relation*)

(16)   Peter is a philosopher.

        ⇒ I BELIEVE THAT PETER IS A PHILOSOPHER.   (*Quality*)

(17)   Is Peter a philosopher?

        ⇒ I DON'T KNOW IF PETER IS A PHILOSOPHER.   (*Sincerity*)

        ⇒ I WANT TO KNOW IF PETER IS A PHILOSOPHER.   (*Sincerity*)

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(18')   Ann has four children.
(18")   Ann has five children.

     …

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    ⟹ SOME, *BUT NOT ALL* OF MY STUDENTS PASSED THE EXAM.   (*Quantity & Quality*)

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(19)   Headmaster: Johny, did you smoke in the school restroom?

    Johny: Paul smoked.

    ⟹ JOHNY DIDN'T SMOKE IN THE RESTROOM.

    (*Quality Heuristics*, Levinson 2000)

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(2)   John got married *and* became a father.

⇒ JOHN GOT MARRIED AND *THEN SUBSEQUENTLY* BECAME A FATHER.
(*Manner*)

(3)   John fell from the roof *and* broke his leg.

⇒ JOHN FELL FROM THE ROOF AND, *AS A RESULT OF THIS*, BROKE HIS LEG.
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Compare:

(20)   a. Max fell.   b. John helped him up.
(21)   a. Max fell.   b. John pushed him.
     (Asher and Lascarides 2003: 6)

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　　　　(*Manner?*)

Compare:

(20)   a. Max fell.   b. John helped him up.　　　→ *Narration*(20b, 20a)

(21)   a. Max fell.   b. John pushed him.　　　　→ *Explanation*(21b, 21a)

　　　(Asher and Lascarides 2003: 6)

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(22)   War is war.

⇒ ?   (*Quality*)

(23)   a. We need to take a closer look at this man.

b. If someone has money, they must have gotten it from somewhere.

⇒ ?   (*Quality*)

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(24) Mr. X's command of English is excellent,
and his attendance at tutorials has been regular.

$\Rightarrow$?

$\Rightarrow_1$ THERE IS NOT MUCH MORE GOOD TO SAY ABOUT MR. X

BEYOND THE FACTS MENTIONED.

$\Rightarrow_2$ MR. X IS NOT A GOOD CANDIDATE FOR THE JOB.

$\Rightarrow_3$ DON'T HIRE MR. X AS A PHILOSOPHY TEACHER.

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[?]   Which of these three implicatures is standard, and which is non-standard?

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(25)   Peter is a computer.

⇒ ?   (*Quality*)

(26)   John is a real friend!

⇒ ?   (*Quality*)

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(25)   Peter is a computer.

⇒ ?   (*Quality*)   → metaphor

(26)   John is a real friend!

⇒ ?   (*Quality*)   → irony

Particularized *versus* generalized implicatures

(15)   A: I'm out of petrol.

           B: There is a garage round the corner.

(27)   A: How about going to the movies tonight?

           B: I have an exam tomorrow.

(18)   Ann has *two* children.

Particularized _versus_ generalized implicatures

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→ They depend on special features of the context.

→ Normally (i.e., in the absence of special circumstance),
  they are carried out by using a certain form of words.

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→ They depend on special features of the context.

→ Normally (i.e., in the absence of special circumstance),
   they are carried out by using a certain form of words.

[!] Both particularized and generalized implicatures are *conversational*;
   they arise through maxim-driven inferences and are *cancellable*.

Conventional *versus* conversational implicatures

(28)   a. Ann has three children, *although* she is the president of a large company.
       b. Ann has three children *and* is the president of a large company.

   $\Rightarrow$ 28a

(29)   a. Tom is a rich, *though* honest man.
       b. Tom is a rich *and* honest man.

   $\Rightarrow$ 29a

Conventional *versus* conversational implicatures

(28)   a. Ann has three children, *although* she is the president of a large company.

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   $\Rightarrow$ 28a IT IS DIFFICULT TO RECONCILE PARENTHOOD WITH A PROFESSIONAL CAREER.

(29)   a. Tom is a rich, *though* honest man.

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   $\Rightarrow$ 29a NORMALLY, RICH PEOPLE ARE NOT HONEST.

Conventional *versus* conversational implicatures

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    $\Rightarrow_{28a}$ IT IS DIFFICULT TO RECONCILE PARENTHOOD WITH A PROFESSIONAL CAREER.

(29)   a. Tom is a rich, *though* honest man.

           b. Tom is a rich *and* honest man.

    $\Rightarrow_{29a}$ NORMALLY, RICH PEOPLE ARE NOT HONEST.

[!]   Unlike conversational implicatures, conventional implicatures are not cancellable.

Recall

- What is said (= truth-conditional content)
  → context-independent, non-cancellable;
- implicatures
  → context-dependent, cancellable.

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Linguistic underdeterminacy

- The linguistically specified meaning of the words
  uttered by the speaker fails to determine what she is saying
  (i.e., the truth-conditional content of her utterance);
- to fill this gap, we need to rely on pragmatic, maxim-driven processes.

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  uttered by the speaker fails to determine what she is saying
  (i.e., the truth-conditional content of her utterance);
- to fill this gap, we need to rely on pragmatic, maxim-driven processes.

[!]   Like conversational implicatures, primary meanings
        are context-dependent and cancellable.

Linguistic underdeterminacy

(30)   He went to the bank.

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(PM$_{30}$) JOHN WENT TO THE BANK$_1$.

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(LM$_{30}$) [A CERTAIN MALE PERSON] WENT TO THE BANK$_1$ *or* BANK$_2$

(PM$_{30}$) JOHN WENT TO THE BANK$_1$.

→　indexical expressions and ambiguous phrases

→　Indexical reference fixing and disambiguation as
　　linguistically mandated and linguistically controlled process.

Linguistic underdeterminacy

(31)   On the top shelf!

Linguistic underdeterminacy

(31)   On the top shelf!

(CM$_{31}$) ON THE TOP SHELF.

(PM$_{31}$) *THE MARMALADE IS* ON THE TOP SHELF.

Linguistic underdeterminacy

(31)   On the top shelf!

(CM$_{31}$) ON THE TOP SHELF.

(PM$_{31}$) *THE MARMALADE IS* ON THE TOP SHELF.

$\rightarrow$ subsentential utterances ($\neq$ syntactic ellipsis)

(32)   I prefer tea, and my sister coffee.

(33)   A: Where is the marmalade?

          B: On the top shelf!

Linguistic underdeterminacy

(31)   On the top shelf!

(CM$_{31}$) ON THE TOP SHELF.

(PM$_{31}$) *THE MARMALADE IS* ON THE TOP SHELF.

→   subsentential utterances ($\neq$ syntactic ellipsis)

→   Provision of *unarticulated constituents*.
     In this case, this process is linguistically mandated,
     though not linguistically controlled.

Linguistic underdeterminacy

(34)   Tom is ready.

(CM$_{34}$) TOM IS READY.

(PM$_{34}$) TOM IS READY *TO GIVE A TALK*.

Linguistic underdeterminacy

(34)   Tom is ready.

(CM$_{34}$) TOM IS READY.

(PM$_{34}$) TOM IS READY *TO GIVE A TALK*.

→ propositional radical

Linguistic underdeterminacy

(35)   You are not going to die.

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(35)   You are not going to die.

(CM$_{35}$) JOHNY IS NOT GOING TO DIE.

For each time t following the time of this utterance,
it is not the case that Johny dies at t.

Linguistic underdeterminacy

(35)   You are not going to die.

(CM$_{35}$) JOHNY IS NOT GOING TO DIE.
       For each time t following the time of this utterance,
       it is not the case that Johny dies at t.

(PM$_{35}$) JOHNY IS NOT GOING TO DIE *FROM THIS CUT*.

→   sentence non-literality

Presuppositions

(36)   A: How about going to the cinema together tomorrow?

            B: I have to pick up my sister from the airport.

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Like implicatures, presuppositions
are discourse meanings that go beyond what is said.

Unlike implicatures, presuppositions:

(a) survive embedding under negation,

(b) are not reinforcable, i.e., cannot be explicated without producing
     a sense of anomalous redundancy,

(c) are triggered by certain lexical and/or grammatical features of utterances.
     → *presupposition triggers*

Presupposition triggers

Definite descriptions, quantified NPs, possessive NPs

(37)   *The present king of France* is bald.

(38)   *Some of John's children* are bald.

(39)   I have to pick up *my sister* at the airport.

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(38)   *Some of John's children* are bald.

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Proper names

(40)   *Kepler* died in misery.

Presupposition triggers

Factive verbs

(41)   a. Peter *knows* that Charles is a spy.

         b. Peter believes that Charles is a spy.

(42)   She *realized* that her husband betrayed her.

(43)   She *had no idea that* her husband betrayed her.

(44)   I *regret* that I cannot help you.

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Change of state verbs

(45)   Ann *quit* smoking.

(45)   Peter *continues/goes on/keeps* learning English.

(46)   Tom *started* taking care of his health.

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Presupposition triggers

Implicative verbs

(47)   Tom *managed* to pass the exam.

(48)   Ann *forgot* to visit her grandma.

Presupposition triggers

Cleft sentences and pseudo cleft sentences

(49)   It was John who broke the vase.

(50)   What Ann likes most is chocolate.

Presupposition triggers

Cleft sentences and pseudo cleft sentences

(49)   It was John who broke the vase.

(50)   What Ann likes most is chocolate.

Focal accent

(51)   [John]$_F$ broke the vase.

(FM$_{51}$) { A broke the vase: A is a human agent }

(Q$_{51}$)   Who broke the vase?

Presupposition triggers

Cleft sentences and pseudo cleft sentences

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(51) $[John]_F$ broke the vase.

(FM_{51}) { A broke the vase: A is a human agent }

(Q_{51})   Who broke the vase?

(52)   John $[broke]_F$ the vase.

(53)   John broke $[the\ vase]_F$.

Presupposition triggers

Cleft sentences and pseudo cleft sentences

(49)   It was John who broke the vase.

(50)   What Ann likes most is chocolate.

Focal accent

(54)   Ann likes [chocolate]$_F$ the most.

(55)   [Ann]$_F$ likes chocolate the most.