

# Chapter 10 - Pragmatics

Phoneme

Morpheme

Word / meaning

Clause

Sentence/utterance

Pragmatics

Discourse

- **Phonetics and phonology** - unit of analysis?
- **Morphology** - unit of analysis?
- **Syntax** - unit of analysis?
- **Semantics** explores the meaning of linguistic units, typically at the level of words (lexical semantics) or at the level of sentences or more complex structures

# What is Pragmatics?

- *Pragmatics* is:
  - a systematic way of explaining language use in context.
  - How utterances are used.
  - Interpreting what the speaker means
- 
- The study of “invisible” meaning, or how we recognize what is meant when it isn’t actually written

To understand The meaning

The  
meaning  
of the  
word

knowledge  
about the  
context

60%

50%

40%

30%



SALE



**School  
Zone**

# History of pragmatics

It could be traced to two sources:

1- Paul **Grice** ( logic of conversations)+ **Austin & Searl**  
(Speech acts)

Who formed the basis of formal pragmatics.

2- The sociologist Harvey **Sacks** ( social interactions).

Who formed the basis of conversation analysis.



# Sentences vs. Utterances

Sentences:

A string of words put together by the grammatical rules of a language

Utterances:

the use of a sentence, in a particular context.

What you actually say

- What is actually expressed by words is different from the actual meaning of the utterance.

pragmatics = utterance meaning.

Utterance meaning consists of the meaning of the **sentence** plus considerations of the intentions of the **Speaker** (the speaker may intend to refuse the invitation to go to the film), interpretation of the **Hearer** (the Hearer may interpret the utterance as a refusal, or not), determined by **Context and background knowledge**.

Pragmatics is concerned with the meaning and the intention of the whole text

NOT the meaning of one word.

**Context** , **intentions** and **shared knowledge** are the keywords. Also **cultural implications** play an important role.

A.: I have a 14 years old son

B.: Well that's right

A.: I also have a dog

B.: Oh, I'm sorry

It would be hard to catch it, unless you know that A. is trying to rent an apartment from B. and B. doesn't accept pets.

# What might be the functions of the following utterances?

1. It's hot in here.
2. Can you pass me the salt?
3. I'll talk to you tomorrow.
4. It's a beautiful day today.

Mashaël: there is a restaurant over there

Reem: no

Mashaël: why not

Reem: I'm tired.

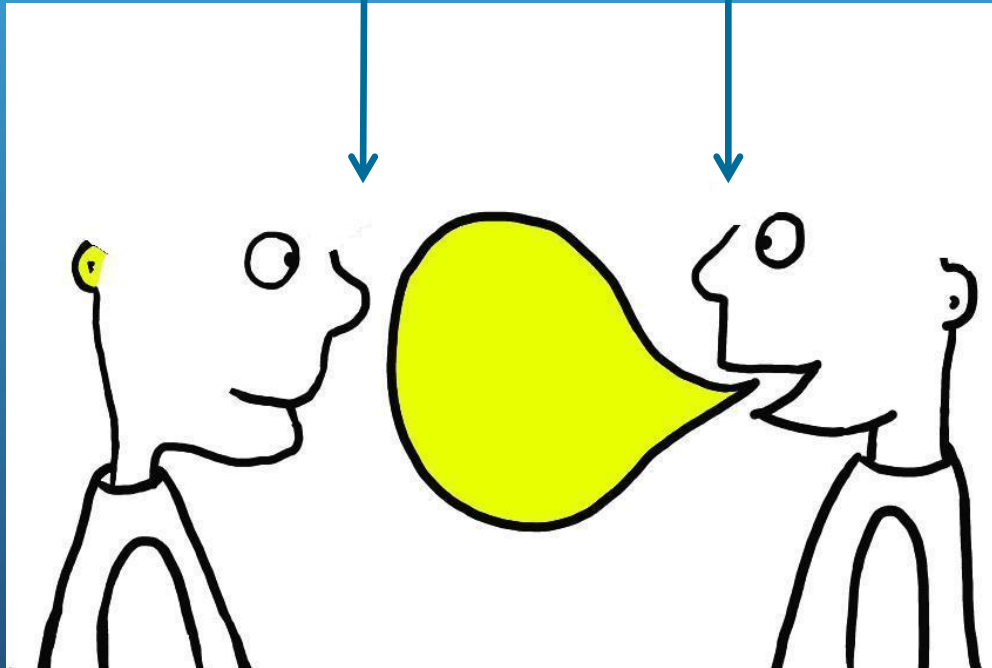
- (From a TV serial “Everybody Loves Raymond”)
- Debra: Your parents seem nice.
- Raymond: Yeah, they *seem* nice.

# Listener

understanding  
the speaker's intentions

# Speaker

producing  
utterances





# Understanding Any message:

- knowledge of the meaning of the word
- knowledge about the **context**

Linguistics context  
“ Co-text”

Physical context

# Linguistics context

The set of other **words** used in the same phrase or context

Understanding the meaning of the word “

The word **fine** has many meanings..

How do you decide which meaning is intended in a particular sentence

Linguistics context

- 1-

- Hi. How are you?

- I'm fine

2-

- There are several ways you can *pay a fine to the*

# Physical context

- the location will influence interpretation
- Understanding what we read or hear is related to the aspects of the physical context.
  
- I want that book ( accompanied by pointing).
- Be here at 9:00 tonight. ( place / time reference).

you'll have to bring **them** back by **tomorrow**, because **they** aren't **here now** and **they** need **them**

- The sentence is vague
- It contains many expressions that rely on the knowledge of the physical context

# Deictic/ Deixis

- There are many words in the language that cannot be interpreted alone, without being put in a context.
- *Here, there, that, now, I, you, them* and many other examples if used without a shared knowledge or a clear context can result very vague.

- Expressions that we can only understand in terms of the speaker's intended meaning.
- Deictic comes from Greek and it means 'pointing via language'

# Deictic/ Deixis

## 1- Person Deixis:

To point to things ( it, this, these boxes) people ( him, them, her)

## 2- Spatial ( place) Deixis:

To point to a location ( here, there, near that)

## 3-Temporal( time) Deixis:

To point to a time ( now, then, last week)

# Reference

- Words do not refer to themselves.
- People refer.
- An act by which a speaker uses language to enable the listener to identify something.



- **proper nouns** ('Shakespeare', 'Hawaii')
- - **definite noun phrases** ('the author', 'the island')
- - **indefinite noun phrases** ('a man', 'a woman', 'a beautiful place')
- **pronouns** ('he', 'she', 'them')

# Not all referring expressions have identifiable physical referents

indefinite noun phrases can refer to

- a physically present entity: 'There's a man waiting for you'
- an unknown entity assumed to exist: 'He wants to marry a woman with lots of money'
- an entity that does not exist: 'We'd like to sign a nine-foot-tall basketball player'

An **attributive use**: 'who/whatever fits the description'

**Referential use**: has one specific entity in mind

# The referring expression provides a range of reference a number of possible referents

- Can I borrow your Shakespeare?

Yeah it's over there on the table

- Shakespeare takes up the whole bottom shelf
- We're going to see Shakespeare in London
- I hated Shakespeare at school
- The heart-attack mustn't be moved (hospital)
- Your ten-thirty just can
- celled (dentist)
- A couple of rooms have complain
- d about the heat (hotel)

# Inference

- I saw Shakespeare in London.
- Leena is wearing Marc Jacobs.
- The listener's task is to infer correctly which entity the speaker intends to identify by using a particular referring.
- The listener's ability to recognize what the the speaker meant

# Anaphora

- In the film, a man and a woman were trying to wash a cat. The man was holding the cat while the woman poured water on it. He said something to her and they started laughing.
- **The first mention of the noun** ('a man', 'a woman', 'a cat') is called **Antecedent**
- **The second referring expression** ('the man', 'the cat', 'the woman') or with pronouns ('it', 'he', 'she') **Anaphora**

# Anaphora

- A subsequent ( second) reference to an already introduced entity.
- The connection between **Antecedent and Anaphora** expression is created by the use of a pronoun, a phrase ( the + antecedent noun),or another noun.
- Also, The connection between **Antecedent and Anaphora** between is based on inference.
- Example: we found a **house**, but the **kitchen** was very small.

A: Can I borrow your **dictionary**?

B: Yean, **it**'s on the table

- Here, word *it* refers back to the word *dictionary*.
- The previous word *dictionary* is called the *antecedent* and
- The second word *it* is called the *anaphor* or *anaphoric expression*.

# Presupposition

- People design their linguistic messages on the basis of large-scale assumptions.
- Some of these assumptions may be mistaken, but mostly they're appropriate.
- - Your brother is waiting outside.
- Presupposition: You have a brother



*I am washing the vase.*

Presupposition: there is a vase.

My wife will go to London tomorrow

Presupposition: the speaker has a wife

## The following sentences make certain presuppositions. What are they?

- That her pet turtle ran away made Emily very sad.  
Presupposition:

- Disa wants more popcorn.

Presupposition:

- Why don't pigs have wings?

Presupposition:

Who discovered America in 1492?

Presupposition:

- John has stopped smoking.

Presupposition:

- John too was jailed.

Presupposition:

- She is clever!

Presupposition:

- Dina is an American student

Presupposition:

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