INTRODUCTION TO LINGUISTICS II

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Α-ΚΑΡ, Π-Ω

SEMANTICS VS PRAGMATICS

- In semantics, we focused on:

  - the meaning of words, and

  - their relationships with other words within a conceptual domain.

- In pragmatics, we will shift the focus to:

  - the context of the communicative event,

  - the communicative intentions of the speaker.

TODAY'S TOPICS

- From semantics to pragmatics: What is pragmatics?

- Deixis.

- Presupposition.
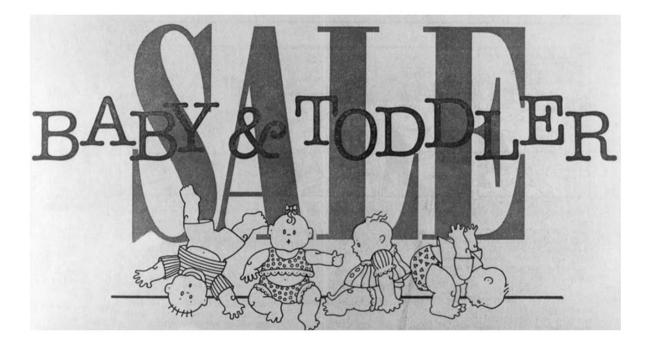

- ➤ <u>Reading</u>: Yule, ch. 10: p. 127-133.

PRAGMATICS

BASIC CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

PRAGMATICS: DEFINITION

- Pragmatics is the study of **meaning in context**.

  - It focuses on the study of '**invisible**' meaning, with the aim to explain how we understand what is meant even when it isn't actually said or written.

EXAMPLES

"John is waiting at the bank".

➢ Lexical ambiguity

"Visiting professors can be boring."

➢ Syntactic ambiguity

"The judge denied the prisoner's request because <u>he</u> was cautious".

"The judge denied the prisoner's request because <u>he</u> was dangerous".

➢ Anaphora

"We will meet here next week".

➢ Deixis

CONTEXT

- There are different kinds of context:

  - the linguistic context, also known as co-text;

  - the physical (or situational) context.

- Note that the context is a dynamic, not a static, concept.

  - Continually changing surroundings that enable the participants to interact.

LINGUISTIC VS PHYSICAL CONTEXT

- On the one hand, linguistic context refers to the text that **precedes and follows** in the flow of discourse.

  - The **co-text** of a word is the set of other words used in the same phrase or sentence.

- Physical context, on the other, refers to the **overall setting** in which the communicative event takes place, as well as the culture of the particular linguistic community:

  - Who is *speaking*?

  - Who is being *addressed*?

  - *When* does the interaction take place?

  - *Where* does the interaction take place?

  - *What* is being discussed?

  - What is *already known* to speaker and listener?

- When communicating, a speaker may **intend** to mean something different from what they explicitly say.

  - e.g., "I am not available for dinner tonight".

- In order to explain meaning, we need to take into account also the **speaker's intention**.

  - What is communicated may be **different** from what is said.

- The listener needs to recognize the speaker's intention in order to **infer** the intended meaning.

  - Verbal communication is grounded in our more **general ability** to derive inferences.

- This type of 'invisible' meaning is generally referred to as **utterance meaning**, also known as speaker meaning, or pragmatic meaning.

  - Utterance meaning vs sentence meaning.

UTTERANCE MEANING

- Utterance meaning is:

  - context-dependent,

  - speaker-intended,

  - inference-based.

- Utterance meaning is the object of study in pragmatics.

  - As opposed to word and sentence meaning, which are studied in the domain of semantics.

IN SUM

- Pragmatics has to do with a **rather slippery type of meaning**, one that isn't found in dictionaries and which may vary from context to context.

    - The same utterance may have **different meanings** in different contexts, and may even mean different things to different people.

- In order to understand the meaning of an utterance we need to consider:

    - the **context** of the communicative event;

    - the communicative **intentions** of the speaker.

➢ Exercise 1.

PRAGMATICS

DEIXIS

AN EXAMPLE

- *"We will meet here next week".*

  - What is the meaning of this sentence?

- Out of context, the meaning of this sentence is **vague**.

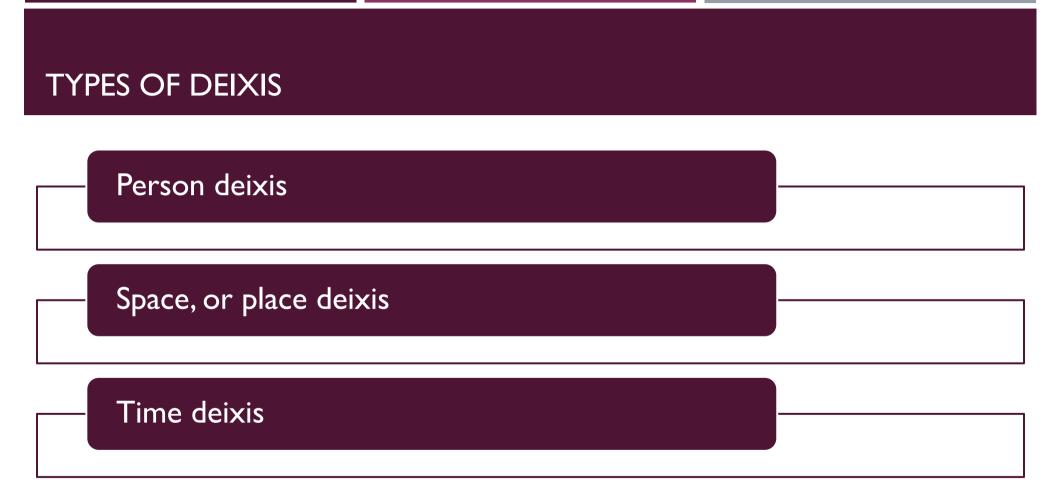# DEIXIS

DEICTIC EXPRESSIONS

- Some common expressions in all languages cannot be interpreted at all if we do not know the context, especially the **physical context** of the utterance:

  - *I, you, we, here, there, now, then, today, yesterday, next week, etc.*

- These are called **deictic expressions**, or simply deictics.

  - From the Ancient Greek *δείκνυμι* 'to show'.

DEICTIC CENTER

- Deixis is **fixed** by the speaker, the place and the time of an utterance.

    - The '**I-here-now**' system: who, where, when.

TYPES OF DEIXIS

Person deixis

Space, or place deixis

Time deixis

PERSON DEIXIS

- Person deixis refers to expressions whose interpretation requires reference to the **participants in the speech event** (speaker and listener).

  - Personal pronouns like *I, we*, and *you*.

- First and second-person pronouns are deictic, whereas third-person pronouns can be deictic only when **gestural**.

  - "*He is my student, he is not*" (said while pointing to specific individuals in the physical context of the utterance).

- *But*: third-person pronouns typically are **anaphoric expressions** that refer to an antecedent, i.e. an entity that has been previously mentioned.

  - "*John is a student, he studies physics*".

SOCIAL DEIXIS

- Moreover, some personal pronouns can point not only to an addressee but also to her/his social status with respect to the speaker.

    - This phenomenon is referred to as **social deixis** and is closely associated with person deixis.

- In many languages, this distinction is **grammatically encoded** in the second-person plural (cf. the T/V distinction):

    - *εσύ/εσείς*   (Modern Greek)

    - *tu/vous*   (French)

- But what determines the choice of an appropriate form depends on **culture-specific factors**.

    - These include, e.g., age, authority, status.

EXAMPLES

- *I am 80 years old.*

- *Do you like apples?*

- *Shall we go to the cinema?*
    - we-inclusive: includes the listener(s).

- *We don't want to go on strike, but you leave us no choice.*
    - we-exclusive: excludes the listener(s).

- *She's not the teacher, she is.*

SPACE DEIXIS

- Space, or place, deixis refers to expressions whose interpretation requires reference to the **place of the utterance.**

  - Such expressions include *here-there,* and *this-that* etc., which make a broad distinction between what is marked as **close to the speaker** (*here*) and what is distant (*there*).

- The verbs *come* and *go* are also deictic:

  - They encode movement **towards or away** from the speaker's location, respectively.

EXAMPLES

- *Professor Jones is <u>here</u>.*

- *Your suitcase is over <u>there</u> by the sofa.*

- *<u>This</u> book is mine.*

- *I left it on <u>that</u> table.*

- *He just <u>went</u> out.*

- *John will <u>come</u> to the office tomorrow.*

TIME DEIXIS

- Time deixis refers to expressions whose interpretation requires reference to the **time of the utterance**.

  - We make a broad distinction between what is marked as **close to the speaker** (*now*) and what is distant (*then*).

- These expressions include:

  - *now, then*

  - *today, yesterday, tomorrow,*

  - *in an hour/month/year, etc.*

  - <u>*this/that*</u> *week/month, year etc.*

  - <u>*last/next*</u> *week/month, year etc.*

  - *a week/month/year etc. ago.*

- Time deixis relates also to the **tense system**, which grammatically locates how events are located in time.

  - Note, however, that not all languages have tenses (e.g., Mandarin Chinese).

EXAMPLES

- *She is writing a letter right <u>now</u>.*

- *She will come on Monday and I'll see her <u>then</u>.*

- *I'll see him <u>this</u> week.*

- *Where were you <u>last</u> month?*

➢ Exercises 2-3.

PRAGMATICS

PRESUPPOSITION

Η ΚΑΘΗΜΕΡΙΝΗ

Ημερήσια Πολιτική και Οικονομική Εφημερίδα

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Δάνεια με μηδενικό επιτόκιο

Ως κίνητρο σε εταιρείες που συγχωνεύονται

Δάνειο με σχεδόν μηδενικό επιτόκιο (0,35%) θα λαμβάνουν μέσω του Ταμείου Ανάκαμψης οι συγχωνευόμενες επιχειρήσεις, ως κίνητρο για τη μεγέθυνσή τους. Για να ενταχθεί στα κίνητρα μια ...

μένων επιχειρήσεων πρέπει να είναι τουλάχιστον 50% υψηλότερος από αυτόν του μεγαλύτερου εταίρου. Επίσης, η συνεργασία πρέπει να διατηρηθεί για τουλάχιστον 5 χρόνια και να αφο...

Εκλογές χωρίς μπίρες και Μέρκελ

Επιστρέφουν τα ισόβια για ειδεχθή εγκλήματα

Στον νέο Ποινικό Κώδικα

Τις ρυθμίσεις του νέου Ποινικού Κώδικα, προϊόν δισμούς επεξεργασίας από ομάδα πανεπιστημιακών και δικαστικών, ανακοίνωσε χθες ...

ντική αυστηροποίηση των ποινών για εγκλήματα όπως ο εμπρησμός, ακόμη και από αμέλεια, ενώ συνολικά οι δράστες σοβαρών εγκλημά...

DEFINING PRESUPPOSITION

- What a speaker assumes is true or known by a listener can be described as a presupposition.

    - Presupposition refers to a **background assumption**, a precondition of some sort, for the appropriate use of that sentence.

- Like deixis, presupposition is another pragmatic topic that originates within the tradition of the philosophy of language and tackles the **division of labour** between semantics and pragmatics.

- Presupposition is usually generated by the use of particular **lexical items and linguistic constructions**.

EXAMPLES

- *Did you eat the cheese?*

  - <u>Presupposition</u>: there was some cheese.

- *Your brother is waiting outside.*

  - <u>Presupposition</u>: you have a brother.

- *When did you stop smoking?*

  - <u>Presupposition</u>: you used to smoke.

A TEST FOR PRESUPPOSITION

- A test for checking for the presuppositions underlying sentences.
  - If we **negate** the sentence, the presupposition will remain true.

- This is known as "**constancy under negation**".

EXAMPLE 1

- *Your dog <u>is</u> lovely.*

- *Your dog <u>is not</u> lovely.*

  - <u>Presupposition</u>: you have a dog.

EXAMPLE 2

- *John <u>regrets</u> having failed the exams.*

- *John <u>doesn't regret</u> having failed the exams.*

  - <u>Presupposition</u>: John failed the exams.

MORE EXAMPLES

- *You <u>ate/didn't eat</u> the cheese.*

  - <u>Presupposition</u>: there was some cheese.

- *I <u>know/don't know</u> why she baked a cake.*

  - <u>Presupposition</u>: she baked a cake.

- *My new bed <u>is/isn't</u> comfortable.*

  - <u>Presupposition</u>: I have a bed.

PRESUPPOSITION TRIGGERS: DEFINITION

- Expressions which **give rise to presuppositions** are called presupposition triggers.

    - These can be **lexical** or **syntactic**.

PRESUPPOSITION TRIGGERS

- Referential expressions: proper names, possessives and determiner phrases (*the/a* + N):

    - *John watched/didn't watch the film.*

    - *Laura's daughter is/is not called Luna.*

    - *The physics professor is/is not ill.*

- All these utterances presuppose that a particular person exists; this is what we call "**existential presupposition**".

PRESUPPOSITION TRIGGERS

- Cleft sentences:

    - *It is/is not John who ate the cake.*

        - Presupposition: someone ate the cake.

- Wh-questions:

    - *Where did you study physics?*

        - Presupposition: you studied physics.

PRESUPPOSITION TRIGGERS

- <u>Implicative verbs</u>: *forget* ('ought to have'), *manage* ('tried'), *happen to* ('didn't plan/intend to'), *intended to, etc.*

  - *John managed/didn't manage to open the door.*

    - <u>Presupposition</u>: John tried to open the door.

- <u>Factive verbs</u>: *realize, regret, know that, be proud/sorry/indifferent/glad/sad that*, etc.

  - *John realized/didn't realize that his father was in debt.*

    - <u>Presupposition</u>: John's father was in debt.

PRESUPPOSITION TRIGGERS

- <u>Expressions of repetition (iterative expressions)</u>: *again, another time, anymore, come back, repeat, restore, etc.*

    - *The student came/didn't come back.*

        - <u>Presupposition</u>: The student had come before.

- <u>Change of state verbs</u>: *arrive, begin, come, enter, go, leave, continue, stop*, etc.

    - *Mary stopped/didn't stop smoking.*

        - <u>Presupposition</u>: Mary had been smoking.

PRESUPPOSITION TRIGGERS

- Expressions of temporal relations: *after, during, whenever, before, as, since, etc.*

    - *We've lacked/not lacked a leader since Churchill died.*

        - Presupposition: Churchill died.

- Comparisons:

    - *Carol is/isn't a better doctor than Barbara.*

        - Presupposition: Barbara and Carol are doctors.

IN SUM

- Presupposition refers to what a speaker assumes to be **true or known** by a listener.

  - Presuppositions are the general background inferences that a speaker assumes to be **shared by the interlocutors**.

Table 1. Classification of presupposition triggers

Presupposition Triggers	Classifications		Examples
Lexical Level	Verbs	Factive Verbs	know, realize, regret, be glad that..
		Implicative Verbs	manage, forget, avoid…
		Iterative Verbs	restore, return, come back…
		Change-of-state Verbs	stop, begin, continue…
		Verbs of Judging	praise, accuse, criticize…
	Restrictive Expressions	(In)definite articles	a, an, the
		Pronouns	his, her, our, their…
		Other expressions	another, only…
	Iterative Particles		again, too, either…
	Other particles		even, still, just…
Syntactic Level	Temporal clauses		after, during, whenever, when, as..
	Comparison and contrasts		more than, as much as, comparative constructions…
	counter-factual conditionals		conditions contrary to facts
	non-restrictive relative clauses		who, which, when, where…
	Cleft sentences		It is/wasn't…that/who…
	Questions		Yes/no questions, rhetorical questions, wh-questions

➢ Exercise 4-5.

IN-CLASS DISCUSSION

- This was the main slogan used by Donald Trump during his 2016 pre-election campaign which led to his victory.

- Can you identify the presuppositions that are activated, as well as the presupposition trigger?

- Discuss the role played by presupposition with regard to the aim of the slogan.

AN EXPLANATION

"If you perceive that you or your country has been losing lately, then you're likely to be risk-seeking. If you do not have that perception, then you're likely to be risk-averse… The political discourses of the Trump and Brexit advocates have framed the stakes in terms of losses rather than gains. The slogans "*Make America great again*" and "*Take back control*" clearly refer to the lost grandeur of the past. This sets the reference point as a lost state that was much better than the current one. Also, fear mongering is by definition talking about the frightening (negative) state in which we find ourselves. All this motivates citizens to favor risky options: the gains, even if they are unlikely, are so strongly desired that they induce discounting the very likely losses."

http://cognitionandculture.net/blogs/christophe-heintz/does-prospect-theory-explain-trump-and-brexit-votes/