

Fourth Year/ Linguistics
Semantics
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Key points

- Meaning
- Semantic Features
- Semantic Roles
- Lexical Relations
- Collocation

Starting tips

▶ Fire department ~~X~~ Extinguishing Department



▶ the police ~~X~~ Crime department



▶ Bomb squad ~~X~~ are they terrorists?!



▶ Wrinkle Cream ~~X~~ will it cause wrinkles?!



▶ Pain pills ~~X~~ relief pill?!



SEMANTICS

- The study of the meaning of words, phrases, and sentences.
- Conventional, literal, objective or conceptual meaning rather than individual, subjective or associative meaning.

Meaning

Conceptual

Associative



Homework

- ▶ Draw a diagram for one word displaying its conceptual and associative meaning



Analysing conceptual meaning

- ▶ Semantic features
- ▶ Semantic roles
- ▶ Lexical relations
- ▶ Collocation

Semantic features

▶ Studying the oddness of meaning in a sentence:

- The hamburger ate the boy ?!
- The table listens to the radio ?!
- The horse is reading the newspaper ?!

NP V NP

The hamburger ate the boy



Semantic features

table horse boy man girl woman

	table	horse	boy	man	girl	woman
▶ Animate	-		+++++			
▶ Adult	-	-			-	+ - +
▶ Human	-			++++		
▶ Female	-		+		-	- ++

Homework :

- ▶ Choose any three words and arrange them in a table considering the presence or absence of a feature to finally enabling describing them.

Semantic features

	table	horse	boy	man	girl	woman
▶ Animate	-		+++++			
▶ Adult	-	-			-	+
▶ Human	-	-			++++	
▶ Female	-		+		-	++

Advantages and disadvantages of Semantic features

1- Advantages:

This approach is the start on analyzing the conceptual meaning component of word meaning

	girl	
- Animate	+	The _____ is reading the newspaper
- Adult	-	
- Human	+	
- Female	+	



Important note:

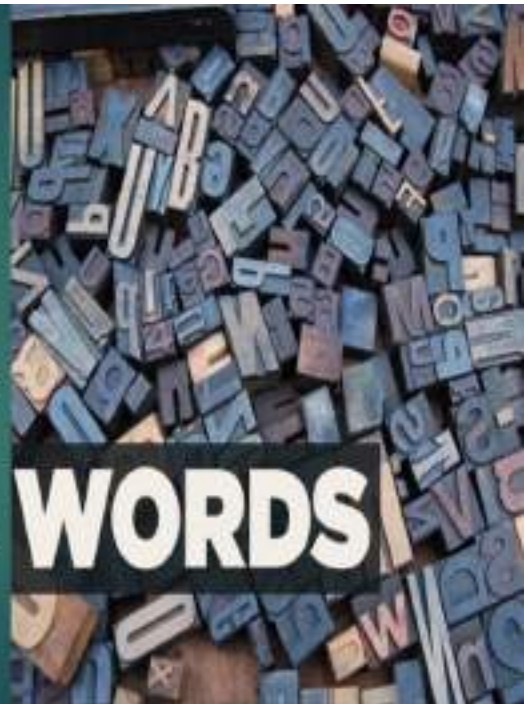
This approach gives us the ability to predict which nouns make this sentence semantically odd. Other nouns would be: horse, table, hamburger r → t these nouns have the required feature [+Human]

2- Disadvantages

- ▶ This approach works best for concrete nouns rather than abstract nouns.

Think of the semantic features of words like 'advice', 'threat' and 'warning'

- ▶ It involves the view that words in a language are some sort of 'containers' that carry meaning components.
- ▶ There is clearly more to the meaning than these basic types.



Semantic Roles

there is a small number of 'semantic roles' or we can also say 'thematic roles'

- ▶ In simple situation like 'the boy kicked the ball'

kicked action →

boy people →

the ball things →

- ▶ Agent and theme
- ▶ Instrument and experiencer
- ▶ Location, source and goal



Agent and theme

- ▶ The boy kicked the ball'

-the boy ~~the~~ entity that performs the action



the agent

-the ball ~~the~~ entity that is involved or affected by the action



theme or patient

The ball was red ~~not~~ performing an action

Important note: agent and theme are the most common semantic roles



Features of agent and theme

- ▶ Agents are typically human; they also can be non-human. Consider the following:
 - The boy kicked the ball.
 - The wind blew the ball.
 - The car run over the ball.
 - The dog caught the ball.
- ▶ Themes are typically non-human but can also be human. Consider the following:
 - The dog chased the boy.
 - The car hit the boy
 - The floods destroy the city
- ▶ **Important note:** the same entity can appear in two different semantic roles

Instrument and experiencer

- ▶ **Instrument** is The kind of semantic role that occurs when an agent uses another entity to perform an action. For example:
 - The boy cut the robe with an old razor the noun phrases 'an old razor' and 'a crayon' fills
 - He drew the picture with a crayon the semantic role of '**instrument**'
- ▶ **Experiencer** is the kind of semantic role that occurs when a noun phrase is used to designate an entity who has a feeling perception or state. For example:
 - The boy feels sad
 - The man thinks of the idea
 - The old lady heard a strange noise.

Location, source and goal

► This kind of semantic role occurs where an entity is the description of an event. Consider the following:

- where an entity is (on or in something), it fills the role of **location**

- The book is **on the table**] the phrases 'on the table' and 'in the room' fills the role of

- The man is **in the room**] (**Location**)

- Where the entity moves from a place, it fills the role of a **source**. Consider the following

- She traveled from Manchester '← Manchester' is a **source**

- Where an entity moves to a place, it fills the role of a **goal**. Consider the following:

- She travelled to Liverpool '→ Liverpool' is a **goal**

Summary chart

- Mary saw a fly on the wall

EXPERIENCER THEME LOCATION

- She borrowed a magazine from George

AGENT THEME SOURCE

- She squashed the bug with the magazine

AGENT THEME INSTRUMENT

Lexical relations

- ▶ Words are understood according to the connections established between them.
- ▶ Conceal = hide
- ▶ Shallow x deep
- ▶ Daffodil ~~a kind~~ of flower

Lexical relations

- ▶ Synonymy
- ▶ Antonymy
- ▶ Hyponymy
- ▶ Prototypes
- ▶ Homophones and homonyms
- ▶ Word play
- ▶ metonymy

Synonymy

- ▶ Two or more words with very closely related meaning
- ▶ Sometimes, but not always, they can substituted for each other in sentences, e.g.:

What was his **answer**

What was his **reply**

- ▶ Sameness of meaning is not total. E.g.:
- Sandy has only one **answer** X Sandy has only one **reply**

- ▶ formal informal differences, e.g.

My **father** bought **a large automobile**

My **dad** bought **a big car**

Antonymy

- ▶ Two forms have opposite meanings. E.g.:
- big/small, alive/dead
- ▶ Gradable antonyms, e.g.:
- Big/small= can be used in comparative construction
- ▶ Non-gradable antonyms, e.g.:
- Alive/dead= they cannot be used in comparative structure
- The negative of one form does imply the other one, e.g.:
- My grandparents are not alive **MEANS** My grandparents are dead.
-
- ▶ Reversives, e.g.:
- Tie/untie, dress/undress, pack/unpack etc.

Hyponymy

- ▶ The meaning of one form is included in the meaning of another, e.g.: a rose is a **hyponym** of flower.
- ▶ The relationships between the hyponymous connections is **hierarchical**



- ▶ Cockroach is a hyponym of insect
- ▶ Animal and insect are superordinate
- ▶ Dog and horse are co-hyponyms
- ▶ Hyponymy captures the meaning of kind of, e.g.: asp is a kind of snake; banyan is a kind of tree.
- ▶ The actions punch, shoot, and stab are co-hyponyms of injure

Prototypes

▶ The clearest example of a category, e.g.: robin as the clearest example of the category bird.



▶ penguin



▶ Sparrow



▶ Pigeon



Ostrich



Furniture

a chair is a prototype of furniture rather than a bench or stool because it is a better example



Homophones and homonyms

- ▶ homophones : two or more different words have the same pronunciation, e.g.: bare/bear; meet/meat; right/write
- ▶ Homonyms: one form (written or spoken) has two or more **unrelated** meanings, e.g.:

bank



Mole



Polysemy

- ▶ (from Greek *poly* "many" and *semy* "meanings")
- ▶ One form (written or spoken) having multiple meanings that are all related by extension, e.g., head
- ▶ Object on top of the body
- ▶ Froth on top of a glass of drink
- ▶ Person at the top of a company or department
- ▶ Foot of a person, a bed, of mountain,
- ▶ Run ; person does, water does, colors do

- ▶ I have runny nose or



Polysemy or homonymy! How to solve the confusion?

- ▶ If we are not sure whether different uses of a single word are examples of homonymy or polysemy, check in a dictionary.
- ▶ If the word has multiple meanings (i.e., it is polysemous), there will be **a single entry**, with a numbered list of the different meanings.
- ▶ If two words are homonyms, they will have **two separate entries**.
- ▶ In most dictionaries, **bat**, **mail**, **mole**, and **sole** are treated as homonyms (two separate entries)
- ▶ **face**, **foot**, **get**, **head** and **run** are treated as examples of polysemy (a single entry).

Important note!

- ▶ Sometimes **two forms** are distinguished as **homonymy**. For example:

- date (**a thing** we can eat) and for one

- date (**a point** in time)

} homonyms

- ▶ However, only the " **point in time** " kind of date is **polysemous** in terms of a particular **day and month** (= **on a letter**), an **arranged meeting time** (= **an appointment**), a **social meeting** (= **with someone we like**) and even a **person** (= **that person we like**).

- ▶ So, the question ' **How was your date?** ' could have a number of different interpretations.

Word play

- ▶ Homophones, homonyms and polysomes constitute the basis for a **lot of funny word play**

1-the polysemy of **lamb** allows two interpretations

-Mary had a little **lamb**



-Mary had a little **lamb**, some rice and vegetables.



2- The polysemy of **leg** and **foot**

what has four legs but one foot?



3- the homonymy **bark**.

Why are trees often mistaken for dogs?

Because of their **bark**



► Shakespeare used the homophones (*un/son*) for word play in the first lines of the play *Richard III*:

Now is the winter of our discontent

*Made glorious summer by this **sun** of York.*

► Eight /eit/

► ate / eit/

Q. Why is 6 afraid of 7?

Why is the number six so scared?
Because seven eight nine!



A. Because 7 8 9 (Seven Ate Nine)

Metonymy

- ▶ A relation of close connection based on everyday experience, e.g.:
 - Container- contents: water bottle; can/juice
 - Whole-part: car/wheel; house/roof
 - A representative - symbol relationship: king/crown; the president/ the white house
- ▶ We use **metonymy** when we talk about *filling up the car, answering the door, boiling a kettle, giving someone a hand*, or *needing some wheels*.

Collocation

- ▶ This type of relationship depends on speakers' knowledge of which words tend to occur with other words
- ▶ Collocation refers to the idea that words occur usually accompanying particular words, e.g.: hammer/nail; table/chair; butter/bread; needle/thread

- ▶ **Corpus linguistics**

Some of the most common collocations are actually everyday phrases which may consist of several words used together, as in:

- *I don't know what to do* (six words),
- *you know what I mean* (five words) or context of situation
- *they don't want to* (four words)

References :

For fuller discussion to the point of this lecture consult your books

Yule, G. (2010) The Study of Language 4th ed. Cambridge: CUP. PP.112 -114

Yule, G. (2017) The Study of Language 8th ed. Cambridge: CUP. PP319 -324

Best wishes
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FOURTH YEAR/ LINGUISTICS PRAGMATICS PREPARED BY DR SHATHA KHUZAEE DEPT OF ENGLISH/ SCHOOL OF EDUCATION 2020-2021

Pragmatics



Key points

- ▶ Invisible Meaning
- ▶ Context
- ▶ Reference
- ▶ Presupposition
- ▶ Pragmatic markers
- ▶ Politeness
- ▶ Speech Acts
- ▶ Study Questions
- ▶ Tasks
- ▶ Discussion Topics/Projects



speaker's meaning



the war





Second World War



speaker's meaning



The war with the English in 1745 AC

Introductory tips

- ▶ In Semantics we focused on the literal, conventional or conceptual meaning and the relationships between words.
- ▶ There are other aspects of meaning that depend more on context and the communicative intentions of speakers

Pragmatics

- ▶ Speaker's meaning
- ▶ Contextual meaning

Pragmatics

- ▶ It studies meaning in context
- ▶ The study of speaker's meaning or what speakers mean.
- ▶ The study of invisible meaning = the ability to recognize what is meant even if it is not said or written.
- ▶ Depend on shared assumptions and expectations

Invisible Meaning



Starts today!

IN STORES & ONLINE

STARTING AT **\$5**

baby
SALE

UP TO **30%** off

GREAT DEALS ON *new styles*

shop now TODDLER GIRLS TODDLER BOYS BABY GIRLS BABY BOYS

Context

- ▶ A- Linguistic context= co-text
- ▶ Bank --- I will go to the bank to withdraw some cash
- ▶ Bank --- I am walking by the bank enjoying the nice weather.
- ▶ B-Physical context= the physical location



What is co-text?

- ▶ The co-text of a word is the set of other words used in the same phrase or sentence.
- ▶ If the word *bank* is used with other words like *steep* or *overgrown*, we have no problem deciding which type of *bank* is meant.
- ▶ When someone says that she has *to get to the bank to withdraw some cash*, the co-text tells us which type of *bank* is intended.

Deixis

- ▶ We need to know who is speaking, about whom, when and where, e.g.:
 - ▶ Here and there= spatial deictic expression
 - ▶ This and that= spatial deictic expression
 - ▶ Now and then, temporal deictic expression
 - ▶ Yesterday, today and tomorrow= temporal deictic expression
 - ▶ You, me, she, he, it ... etc.= personal deictic expression
 - ▶ Come/go= direction to or away of speaker
- You will have to bring it back tomorrow because she is not here today!

Reference

Any act by which a **speaker** or **writer** uses language to enable **listener** or **reader** to identify something.

To perform an act of reference we use:

- ▶ Nouns: Proper/ Common
- ▶ Pronouns

Jennifer, friend or she ~~we~~ assume that these words identify someone or something uniquely ~~range~~ of reference

-the blue thing depends more on listener's ability to recognize

-Mr. Kawasaki what we mean rather than on the listener's "dictionary" knowledge

Inference

- ▶ It is additional information used by the listener to create a connection between what is said and what must be meant, e.g., Can I look at your **Chomsky**

- Sure, **it** is on the shelf

- ▶ If X is a name of the writer of a book, then X can be used to identify a copy of a book



More examples

- ▶ Picasso is in the museum



- ▶ Jennifer is wearing Calvin Klein



Anaphora

- ▶ Referring back to a noun that has been already introduced in the **text**, e.g.:
a cat /the cat
- ▶ We saw a funny home video of **a boy** washing **a cat** in **a small bath**. **The cat** started struggling and shaking and **the boy** got really wet. When **he** let go, **it** jumped out of **the bath** and ran away.
- ▶ A boy, a cat, a small bath = antecedent reference
- ▶ The boy, the cat, the bath, he, it = subsequent reference, backward reference or anaphoric reference.
- ▶ The connection between the antecedent and anaphoric reference is based on inference, e.g.:
 - We found **a house**, but **the kitchen** is very small
 - I caught **a bus** and asked **the driver** if **it** went near the downtown area.

Presupposition

- ▶ What a speaker or writer assumes is true or known by a listener or reader
- ▶ Speakers design their linguistic messages on the basis of a largescale assumptions about what their listeners already know, e.g.:
 - Your brother is waiting outside// you have a brother
 - When did you stop smoking// you used to smoked before and you no longer do so.
- ▶ Constancy under negation: my car is a wreck/ my car is not a wreck ! → have a car
- ▶ I used to regret marrying him, but now I don't regret marrying him ! → married him

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Presuppositions test

- ▶ Constancy under negation:
 - my car is a wreck/ my car is not a wreck

↓
I have a car

- I used to regret marrying him, but now I don't regret marrying him

↓
I married him



Pragmatic Markers

▶ short expressions that indicate the speaker's attitude to the listener or the utterance.
For example:

- You know to **indicate** that knowledge is being treated as shared
- Well ——— to mark a shift from conveying information to commenting
- I mean to **self-** ——— -correct or to mark an attempt to clarify something.
- I do not know ——— a marker of hesitation or uncertainty

▶ Consider the following example:

*They had been reading something by Charles Wright, **you know**, the famous poet and **well, I mean**, he's famous in America at least, but em they didn't really understand it.*



I don't know: A recent pragmatic marker

- ▶ This phrase has evolved from a way of indicating lack of knowledge
- ▶ It becomes a marker of hesitation or uncertainty when a speaker is about to say something potentially in disagreement with another speaker.
- ▶ For example:

LEE : I'm not very fond of Edinburgh it's so drab and it's always cold there.

*JEN : Oh, **I don't know**, I really enjoyed going to the Festival there last year.*

- ▶ So, by appearing hesitant about disagreeing, the speaker can signal a desire not to challenge the other speaker. It seems to be a new way of being **polite** in interaction.



Politeness

- ▶ In a general sense, **politeness** is linked to ideas of being **tactful**, **modest** and **nice** to other people
- ▶ In linguistics, politeness is focused on the concept of **face**'
- ▶ In pragmatics, your 'face is your **public self-image** which refers to the emotional and social sense of self that everyone has and expects everyone else to recognize
- ▶ Politeness can be defined as showing awareness and consideration of another **person's public self-image**



So, how does it work?

- ▶ If you say :
 - ▶ Give me that pepper! **If you** do not have social power over the other person, you are performing a face-threatening act
 - ▶ *Could you pass me that paper?* **This is an indirect request and in such cases the assumption of social power is removed**
- ▶ You are only asking if it is possible.
- ▶ This makes your request less threatening to the other person's face.
- ▶ Whenever you say something that lessens the possible threat to another's face, it can be described as a facesaving act.



Negative and Positive Face

- ▶ Negative face: is the need to be independent and free from imposition.
- ▶ Positive face: is the need to be connected, to belong, to be a member of the group.
- ▶ So, a face-saving act that emphasizes a person's negative face will show concern about imposition. For example:
 - I'm sorry to bother you...
 - I know you're busy, but ...
- ▶ A face-saving act that emphasizes a person's positive face will show solidarity and draw attention to a common goal. For example:
 - The same thing happened to me ...;
 - Let's do this together ...



Politeness and culture

- ▶ Directness and indirectness as cultural values.
 - Give me that chair! If said to a person whose culture values indirect request, this be considered as **impolite**
- ▶ Are you using this chair? → If said to a person whose culture values direct request, this will cause **vagueness** and **uncertainty** of whether the speaker really want something or is just asking questions about it
- ▶ In both examples pragmatics is misunderstood and, unfortunately, because more will often be communicated than is said.
- ▶ The distinction between direct and indirect ways of communicating can be analyzed as different types of linguistic action, or speech acts



Speech acts

► The term **speech act** is used to describe an action that involves language such as:

- Requesting
- Commanding
- Questioning
- Informing

For example:

I'll be there at six **promising**

So, what is a speech act?

- An act performed by a speaker with an utterance
- Speakers do not only speak, rather they perform actual actions using linguistic forms, e.g.:

I'll be back / threat



I now pronounce you husband and wife / Declaration



Direct and indirect speech acts



PAY ATTENTION

Structure Function Direct

- Did you eat the pizza? Interrogative Question speech
- Eat the pizza (please) Imperative Command(request) acts
- You ate the pizza Declarative Statement

Direct and indirect speech acts

- ▶ **Direct speech acts** occurs when the structure and the function of an utterance **are the same**. For example: an **interrogative** structure is used with the function of a **question**.
- ▶ Consider the following:

Is she wearing a wig?



If we really don't know something and we ask for the information (e.g. about ability), we normally use a direct speech act, as in *Can you ride a bicycle?*



▶ **Indirect speech act** occurs when a particular structure is used for another function

▶ This another function is called an indirect speech act.

▶ So:



Structure= interrogative

Function= request

▶ we are not really asking a **question** about someone's ability. We are using an **interrogative structure** to make a **request**.

It is really cold tea/

Complaint



praise



Could you open the door, please?/
Request



I am really sorry/ expressive



structure function

- You left the door open declarative statement

~~X~~ request

- A: Do you know where the Ambassador Hotel is?

B: Oh sure, I know where its.

Social assumptions ?

- ▶ Indirect speech acts offer fairly good evidence in support of the pragmatic principle, stated earlier, that communication depends on not only recognizing the structure and meaning of words in an utterance, but also recognizing what speakers mean by their utterances in a particular context.

References :

For fuller discussion to the points of this lecture consult your books

Yule, G. (2010) The Study of Language 4th ed. Cambridge: CUP.

Yule, G. (2017) The Study of Language 6th ed. Cambridge: CUP.

Best wishes
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Fourth Year/ Linguistics Discourse Analysis Prepared by: Dr. Shatha Khuzae Dept of English/ School of Education 2020-2021



Key points

► Basics of discourse analysis

- Cohesion
- Coherence
- Speech events

► Basics of conversation analysis

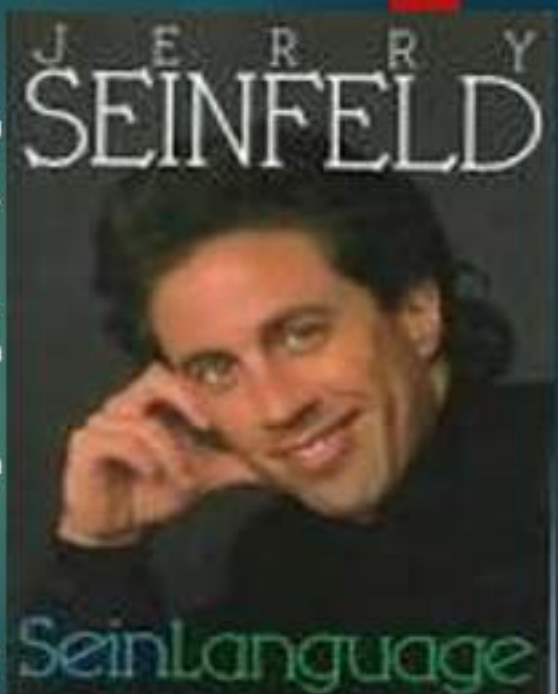
- Turn-taking
- The co-operative principle
- Hedges
- Background knowledge
- Schemas and scripts

There's two types of favors, the big favor and the small favor. You can measure the size of the favor by the pause that a person takes after they ask you to "Do me a favor." Small favor- small pause. "Can you do me a favor, hand me that pencil." No pause at

all. Big favors are, "Could you do me a favor ... " Eight seconds go by. "Yeah? What?" " ... well." The longer it takes them to get to it, the bigger the pain it's going to be.

Humans are the only species that do favors. Animals don't do favors. A lizard doesn't go up to a cockroach and say, "Could you do me a favor and hold still, I'd like to eat you alive." That's a big favor even with no pause.

Seinfeld (1993)



Small favor and big favor

- ▶ Can you do me a favor, hand me that pencil → small favor no pause at all between the favor and its content.

- ▶ Can you do me a favor

Eight seconds pause

YOU "Yeah, What?"

The longer it takes speaker to say what they want, the bigger the favor is



Is favor a human or animal behavior?

- ▶ Can you do me a favor and hold still, I'd like to hunt and eat you alive!



- ▶ This is a big favor even with no pause!



- ▶ The most important observation in the study of language is not in terms of its component but in terms of the way language is used, even how pauses are used.

Questions to ask when studying Discourse Analysis

- ▶ In pragmatics we saw how it is important to ask and know how language users successfully interpret what other language users intend to convey.
- ▶ Now we need to ask:
 - How we make sense of what we read?
 - How we can recognize well-constructed texts as opposed to those that are jumble or incoherent?
 - How we understand speakers who communicate more than they say?
 - How we successfully take part in that complex activity called conversation?

What is Discourse Analysis?

- ▶ The word **discourse** is usually defined as "language beyond the sentence"
- ▶ So, the analysis of discourse is typically concerned with the study of language in **texts** (written language) and **conversation** (spoken language)
- ▶ Discourse analysis is an approach to the analysis of written, vocal, or sign language use, or any significant semiotic event. The objects of discourse analysis are variously defined in terms of **coherent sequences of sentences, propositions, speech, or turns-of-talk.**

Trains collide, two die



No shoes, no service



If you are wearing no shoes, you will receive no service

- ▶ We have the ability to create **complex discourse interpretations** of fragmentary linguistic messages

Interpreting discourse

- ▶ It is quite possible for readers to cope with texts, written in English, that were produced by others and which appear to break a lot of the rules of the English language.
- ▶ They can build an interpretation. Consider the following:

My Town

- ▶ My natal was in a small town, very close to Riyadh **capital** of Saudi Arabia. The **distant** between my town and Riyadh **7 miles exactly**. The name of this Almasani that means in English Factories. It takes this name from the people's **carrer**. In my childhood I remember the **people live**, It was very **simpl**. Most the people **was farmer**.

What is the focus in the study of Discourse Analysis?

- ▶ To arrive at an interpretation, and to make our messages interpretable, we certainly rely on what we know about linguistic form and structure. But, as language-users, we have more knowledge than that.

Cohesion

- ▶ **Cohesion** is the grammatical and lexical linking within a text that holds it together and gives it meaning.
- ▶ It requires some factors that are quite different from those needed in the structure of a single sentence
- ▶ These factors or structures are called **cohesive ties**.
- ▶ Consider the following example:

My father once bought a Lincoln convertible. He did it by saving every penny he could earn. That car would be worth a fortune nowadays. However, he sold it to help pay for my college education. Sometimes I think I'd rather have the convertible.

My father bought a Lincoln convertible. The car driven by the police is red. That color does not suit her. She consists of three letters. However, a letter isn't as fast as a telephone call.

Coherence

- ▶ The key to the concept of coherence ("everything fitting together well")
- ▶ Unlike cohesion, it is not something that exists in the words or structures of discourse but something that exists in people.
- ▶ Coherence is not restricted to trying to understand "odd" texts but seems to be involved in our interpretation of all discourse.

- ▶ Consider this example :

Is she just carrying a sandwich?



Woman robs bank with **sandwich**



Is she eating the sandwich?



Is she acting as if the sandwich is a weapon
(concealed in a bag perhaps)

Coherence and everyday conversation

- ▶ coherence is essential to cope with everyday conversation and it explains the relationships that link the meaning of utterances in discourse or sentences in a text.

HER: *That's the telephone.* (She makes a request of him to perform action)

HIM: *I'm in the bath.* (He states reason why he cannot comply with request)

HER: *OK.* (She accepts reason)

-There are no cohesive ties within this fragment of discourse. Here, we see coherence but not cohesion.

- Speakers in such interactions use information contained in the sentences involving their conventional actions.

- ▶ language-users must have a lot of knowledge of how conversation works that is not simply knowledge of words and sentences, but must involve familiarity with a lot of other types of structures and their typical functions.

Speech events

- ▶ There are various types of conversations or speech events such as debate, interview and various types of discussions.
- ▶ The various types of speech events leads to have variations in what people say and do in each one.
- ▶ The basic requirements are
 - Specifying the roles of speaker and hearer(s) and their relationships
 - Describing what the topic of the conversation was and in what setting it took place.

Note: even when these factors are described, the actual structure of the conversation itself is still not analysed

Speech events

- ▶ An act in which participants interact via language in some conventional way to arrive at some outcome. For example:



Speech Events

A Speech Event can be defined by a unified set of components through out:

- same purpose of communication
- same topic
- same participants
- same language variety (generally).



For example: exchanging greetings, telling jokes, giving speeches.

Conversational analysis

- ▶ An activity in which, for most part, two or more people take turns at speaking.
- ▶ Typically one person speaks at a time
- ▶ There is an avoidance of silence between speaking turns which can be untrue in all situations and societies.
- ▶ If more than one speaker tries to talk at the same time, one of them usually stops. EX:

A: Didn't you [know wh-

B: [But he must've been there by two

A: Yes but you knew where he was going

- In most cases, participants wait until one speaker indicates that they have finished by signaling a completion point. This is done by:
- Asking a question, pausing at the end of a completed syntactic structure like a phrase or a sentence.
- **Turn-taking markers:** making repeated short sounds, using body shifts like facial expressions.

Turn-taking

- ▶ is a type of organization in conversation and discourse where participants speak one at a time in alternating **turns**.
- ▶ Strategies or conventions of turn-taking:
 - Rudeness : if one speaker cuts in on another speaker
 - Shyness: if one speaker keeps waiting for an opportunity to take a turn and none seems to occur.
 - Avoiding complete points to hold the floor longer attempting to work out what speakers are trying to say while really saying it. EX:

A: that's their favorite restaurant because they... enjoy French food and when they were... in France they couldn't believe it that... you know that they had...that they had had better meals back home.

[See pp 146-147 for more examples](#)

- These strategies are not considered undesirable or domineering.

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Strategies or conventions of turn-taking

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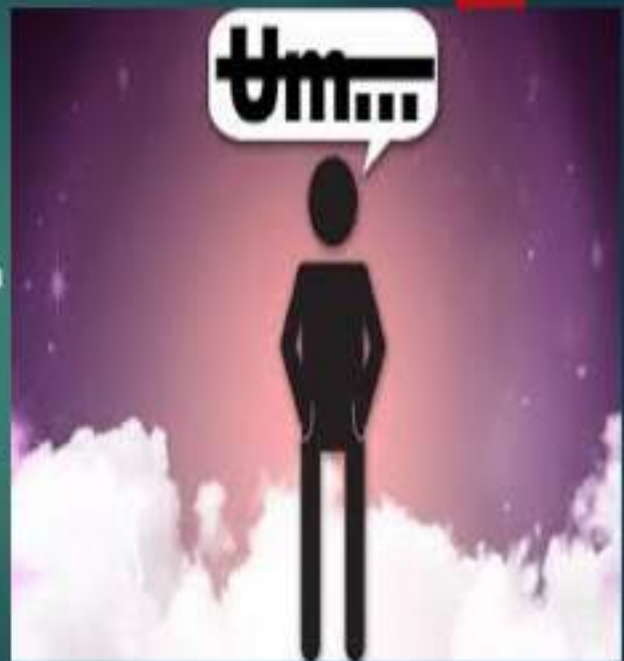
- These strategies are not considered undesirable or domineering.



Pauses and Filled Pauses

- ▶ Pauses are stops in speech marked in writing by (...).
- ▶ These pauses are placed before and after verbs rather than at the end of sentences.
- ▶ It is difficult to understand what a person is saying until we hear the part after each pause.
- ▶ So, in the following example, note how the pauses (marked by ...) are placed before and after verbs rather than at the end of sentences, making it difficult to get a clear sense of what this person is saying until we hear the part after each pause.

A: that's their favorite restaurant because they ... enjoy French food and when they were ... in France they couldn't believe it that ... you know that they had ... that they had had better meals back home



Filled pauses

Filled pauses: a break in the flow of speech, using sounds such as *um* and *er*

In the next example, speaker X produces filled pauses (with *em*, *er*, *you know*) after having almost lost the turn at his first brief hesitation.

X: well that film really was...[wasn't what he was good at]

Y: [when di-]

X: I mean his other ...em his later films were much more...er really more in the romantic style and that was more what what he was...you know...em best at doing

Y: so when did he make that one?

Adjacency Pairs

- ▶ Adjacency pairs are **automatic sequence** which consists of a first part and a second part, and are found in **greetings**, **question-answer (Q~A)** sequences, **thanking** and **leave-taking**. Consider the following:

First part Second part

YOU : *Good mornin'.*

YOU : *Where's Mary?*

YOU : *Thanks for your help yesterday.*

YOU : *Okay, talk to you later.*


ME : *Good mornin'.*

ME : *She's at work already.*

ME : *Oh, you're welcome.*

ME : *Bye.*

- ▶ These examples illustrate the basic pattern, but not all first parts are immediately followed by second parts. For example, one question may not receive its answer until after another question-answer sequence. (See Task E, on page 169, for more.)

- 
- ▶ That example on slide 7 would seem to suggest that conversation is a problematic activity where speakers have to pay close attention to what is going on.
 - ▶ That is not normally the case because a great deal of conversational interaction follows some fairly **well established patterns**.
 - ▶ When someone says **Hi** or **Hello**, we usually respond with **a similar greeting**.

Insertion Sequences

- ▶ Insertion sequence is, an adjacency pair that comes between the first and second parts of another pair. In the following example, the sequence Q2~A2 comes between the first question (Q1) and its answer (A1)
- ▶ For example, the sequence Q2~A2 comes between the first question (Q1) and its answer (A1).

YOU : *Do you want some milk?* (= Q1)
ME : *Is it soy milk?* (= Q2)
YOU : *Of course.* (= A2)
ME : *Okay, thanks.* (= A1)

- ▶ In some situations, a complex structure can emerge from the effect of insertion sequences.
- ▶ This is often the case in "service encounters," as in our next example.

Implicature

- ▶ Implicature: is an additional meaning conveyed by a speaker adhering to the Cooperative Principle
- ▶ So, speaker sometimes imply something that is not said. EX:
A sandwich is a sandwich. sandwich wasn't worth talking about it
- Using the co-operative principle and the maxims as guides, analysing what speakers imply becomes workable. EX:

Carol: are you coming to the party tonight?

Lara: I've got an exam tomorrow.

} Maxims of Relation and Quantity

- Carol will interpret Lara's statement as meaning "No" or "Probably not."
- Lara's answer is not just a statement about tomorrow's activities, it contains an implicature

Background knowledge

- ▶ Previous or inferred information speakers/listeners have prior to the written or uttered text allowing them to understand what is not written or said. EX:

-John was on his way to school last Friday
-He was really worried about the math lesson } **John is probably a schoolboy**

Last week he had been unable to control the class → -John is a teacher, he is not very happy

It was unfair of the math teacher to leave him in charge → -John is a schoolboy again

After all, it is normal part of a janitor's duties → -neither of these



Speakers competence in inferencing

- ▶ An interesting aspect of the reported inferences is that **readers can quickly abandon** them if they do not fit in with some subsequent information.

Last week he had been unable to control the class.

- ▶ On encountering this sentence, most readers decide that John must be a teacher and that he is not very happy.
- ▶ Many report that he is probably driving a car to school.

It was unfair of the math teacher to leave him in charge.

- ▶ Suddenly, John reverts to his schoolboy status, and the inference that he is a teacher is quickly abandoned. The final sentence of the text contains a surprise.

After all, it is not a normal part of a janitor's duties.

- ▶ This type of text and manner of presentation, one sentence at a time, is rather artificial, of course.
- ▶ Yet the exercise does provide us with some insight into the ways in which we "build" interpretations of what we read by using more information than is presented in the words on the page.
- ▶ We actually create what the text is about, based on our expectations of what normally happens.
- ▶ To describe this phenomenon, researchers often use the concept of a "schema" or a "script."

Schemas and scripts

- ▶ Schemas is a general term for a conventional knowledge structure that exists in memory. EX:
 - If you hear someone describe what happened during a visit to a supermarket, you do not have to be told what is normally found in a supermarket. You already have a 'a supermarket schema'
 - A script is essentially a dynamic schema. That is, instead of the set fixed features in a schema, a script has a series of conventional actions that take place. EX:
 - you have a script of "Going to the dentist"; another script for "Going to the movies";
 - "Eating in a restaurant"

How do speakers activate their scripts?

Trying not to be out of the office for long, Suzy went into the nearest place, sat down and ordered an avocado sandwich. It was quite crowded, but the service was fast, so she left a good tip. Back in the office, things were not going well.

- ▶ On the basis of our **restaurant script**, we would be able to say a number of things about the scene and events briefly described in this short text.
- ▶ Although the text doesn't have this information, we would assume that Suzy opened a door to get into the restaurant, that there were tables there, that she ate the sandwich, then she paid for it and so on.
- ▶ The fact that information of this type can turn up in people's attempts to remember the text is further evidence of the existence of scripts.
- ▶ It is also a good indication of the fact that our understanding of what we read doesn't come directly from what words and sentences are on the page, but the interpretations we create, in our minds, of what we read.

Another example

- ▶ Indeed, information is sometimes **omitted** from instructions on the assumption that everybody knows the script. This instruction is from a bottle of cough syrup.

Fill measure cup to line and repeat every 2 to 3 hours.

No, you've not just to keep filling the measure cup every 2 to 3 hours. Nor have you to rub the cough syrup on your neck or in your hair. You are expected to know the script and **drink** the stuff from the measure cup every 2 or 3 hours.

- ▶ Clearly, our understanding of what we read is not only based on what we see on the page (language structures), but also on other things that we have in mind (knowledge structures) as we go about making sense of discourse.

References :

For fuller discussion to the points of this lecture consult your books

Yule, G. (2010) *The Study of Language* 4th ed. Cambridge: CUP.

Yule, G. (2017) *The Study of Language* 6th ed. Cambridge: CUP.

Best wishes
Dr Shatha Khuzae

