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## **COGNITIVE PRAGMATICS**

### **Lecture 3:**

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.
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(TC)  $p \wedge q$

$p$	$q$	$p \wedge q$
1	1	1
0	1	0
1	0	0
0	0	0

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Is *and* ambiguous?

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

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

Is *some* ambiguous?

— (4<sub>TC</sub>)

— *some, but not all*

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P. H. Grice:

- ‘No’ to Q<sub>1</sub>, ‘Yes’ to Q<sub>2</sub>.
- 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**.

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- 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)

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

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

<i>what is said</i>	<i>what is implied</i> (→ <i>conversational implicature</i> )
context-insensitive	context-sensitive
‘decoded’	inferred
non-cancellable	cancellable
constitute TC (→ <i>lying</i> )	has no impact on TC (→ <i>misleading</i> )

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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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[!] 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 (→ 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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- (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* (→ 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.

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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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**A's inference ( $\rightarrow$  *Working-Out Schema*)**

- (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.

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→ based on the assumption that  
the speaker obeys the maxims;  
if she seems to violate one of the maxims  
at the level of *what is said*,  
this maxim is presumed to be obeyed  
at the level of *what is implicated*.

## non-standard implicatures

→ based on the assumption that  
the speaker ostentatiously and overtly flouts  
one of the maxims;  
the perceived violation of this maxim  
is *genuine* rather than *apparent*;  
this maxim is *exploited* in order to produce  
a certain communicative effect.

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A: How about going to the movies tonight?

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

⇒<sub>1</sub> B can't go to the movies tonight.

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A: Tom's lecture was boring.  
B: How about going to the canteen?

⇒<sub>1</sub> Let's change the subject.  
⇒<sub>2</sub> For some reasons B doesn't want to talk about Tom's lecture *right now*.  
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*Weak implicatures?*  
*Insinuation?*

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⇒ 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.

...

$W_0$  — the world in which Ann is childless

$W_1$  — the world in which Ann has exactly one child

$W_2$  — the world in which Ann has exactly two children

....

$W_n$  — the world in which Ann has  $n$  children.

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Johnny: Paul smoked.

⇒ JOHNNY DIDN'T SMOKE IN THE RESTROOM.

(*Quantity Heuristics*, Levinson 2000)

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→ *lying // misleading*

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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.

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Compare:

(20) a. Max fell. b. John helped him up.

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(Asher and Lascarides 2003: 6)

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*narration* (20b, 20a)

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*explanation* (21b, 21a)

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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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⇒ ?

⇒<sub>1</sub> THERE IS NOT *MUCH MORE* GOOD TO SAY ABOUT MR. X  
BEYOND THE FACTS MENTIONED.

⇒<sub>2</sub> MR. X IS NOT A GOOD CANDIDATE FOR THE JOB.

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[?]<sub>1</sub> Which of these three implicatures is standard, and which is non-standard?

[?]<sub>2</sub> Are ⇒<sub>2</sub> and ⇒<sub>3</sub> insinuated?

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(25) Peter is a computer.

⇒ ?

(*Quality*)

(26) John is a real friend!

⇒ ?

(*Quality*)

## Non-standard implicatures

→ arise from the assumption that the speaker **ostentatiously and overtly flouts** (= *exploits*) one of the maxims; that is, the perceived violation of this maxim is genuine rather than apparent.

(25) Peter is a computer.

⇒ ?

(*Quality*)

→ metaphor

(26) John is a real friend!

⇒ ?

(*Quality*)

→ irony

**meaning supplementation:**

*S* says that *p* and implies that *q* **in addition**.

**meaning substitution:**

*S* makes as if to say that *p* and implies that *q* **instead**.

## Particularized *versus* generalized implicatures

GIs depend heavily on the specific conversational context and are not normally inferred without it.

PIs arise normally or by default from certain expressions, without requiring highly specific contextual information.

(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 to pick up my sister from the station.

(18) Ann has *two* children.

(28) A: How was the conference?

B: Well, the coffee in the canteen was excellent.

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→ depend on special features of the context

→ normally, are carried out by using a certain form of words

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[!] Both PIs and GIs are *conversational* (→ maxim-driven; cancellability).

## 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.

⇒ 28a

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

⇒ 29a

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- (28) a. Ann has three children, *although* she is the president of a large company.  
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[!] 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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- 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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(LM<sub>30</sub>) [A CERTAIN MALE PERSON] WENT TO THE BANK<sub>1</sub> *or* BANK<sub>2</sub>

**procedures** *versus* **concepts**

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(PM<sub>30</sub>) JOHN WENT TO THE BANK<sub>1</sub>.

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**procedures** *versus* **concepts**

(PM<sub>30</sub>) JOHN WENT TO THE BANK<sub>1</sub>.

→ indexical expressions and ambiguous phrases

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

## **Linguistic underdeterminacy**

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(31) On the top shelf!

(CM<sub>31</sub>) ON THE TOP SHELF.

(PM<sub>31</sub>) *THE MARMALADE IS ON THE TOP SHELF.*

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→ subsentential utterances (≠ syntactic ellipsis)

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

(33) A: Where is the marmalade?

B: On the top shelf!

## Linguistic underdeterminacy

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→ subsentential utterances (≠ syntactic ellipsis)

→ Provision of *unarticulated constituents*.

In this case, this process is linguistically mandated, though not linguistically controlled.

## Linguistic underdeterminacy

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→ propositional radical

## **Linguistic underdeterminacy**

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(PM<sub>35</sub>) JOHNY IS NOT GOING TO DIE *FROM THIS CUT*.

→ sentence non-literality

## Types of linguistic underdetermination

lexical

(30) He went to the bank.

syntactic

(31) On the top shelf.

semantic

(34) Tom is ready.

pragmatic

(35) You are not going to die.

## Presuppositions

- (36) A: How about going to the cinema together tomorrow?  
B: I must pick up my sister from the airport.

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( $\Rightarrow_{36B}$ ) B WILL NOT GO TO THE CINEMA TOMORROW.

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are discourse meanings that go beyond what is said.

Unlike implicatures, presuppositions:

- (a) survive embedding under negation,
- (b) are not reforcable, 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.
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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.

## 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 was unfaithful to her.
- (43) She *had no idea that* her husband was unfaithful to her.
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### *Change of state verbs*

- (45) Ann *quitted* 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]<sub>F</sub> broke the vase.

(FM<sub>51</sub>) { *A* broke the vase: *A* is a human agent }

(Q<sub>51</sub>) Who broke the vase?

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### *Cleft sentences and pseudo cleft sentences*

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(Q<sub>51</sub>) Who broke the vase?

(52) John [broke]<sub>F</sub> the vase.

(53) John broke [the vase]<sub>F</sub>.

## 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]<sub>F</sub> the most.  
(55) [Ann]<sub>F</sub> likes chocolate the most.