

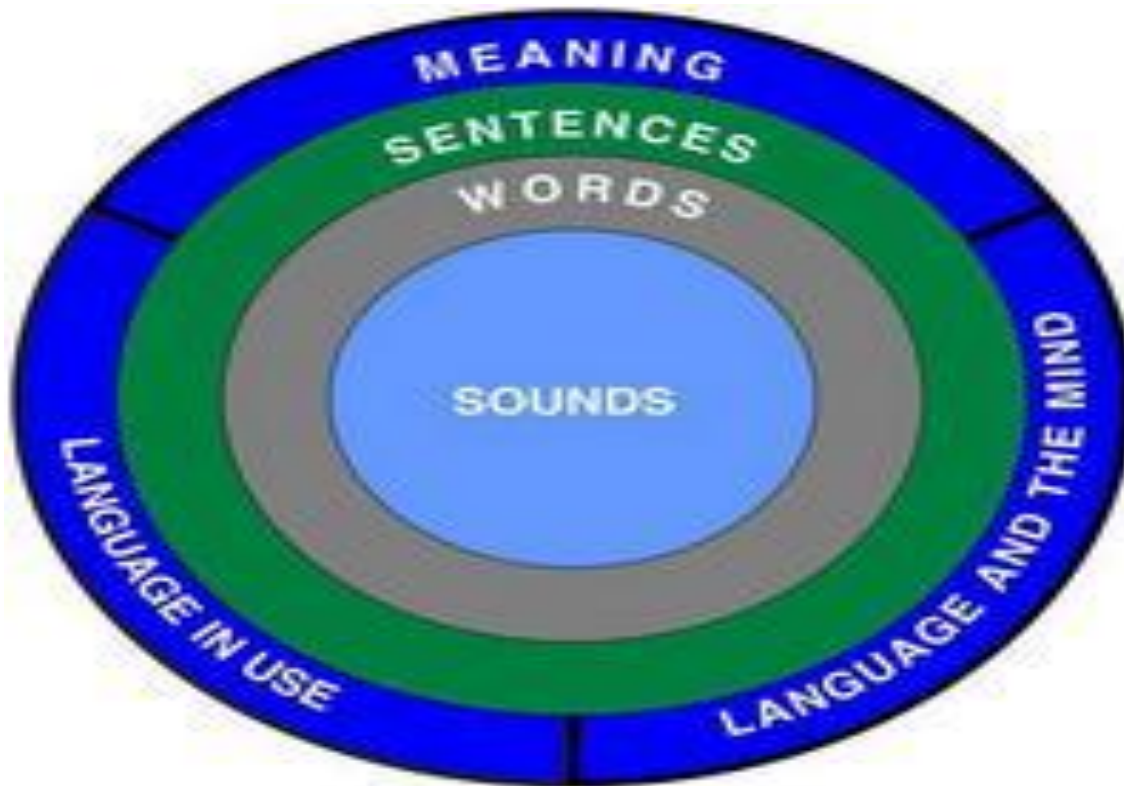
# CHAPTER 10 (The Study of Language by George Yule)

# Pragmatics

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# Introduction

- **Linguistics:** The scientific study of language.



# Example 1

(Book, P:127)

In the late 1960s, two elderly American tourists who had been touring Scotland reported that, in their travels, they had come to a Scottish town in which there was a great ruined cathedral. As they stood in the ruins, they saw a small boy and they asked him when the cathedral had been so badly damaged. He replied *“in the war”*. Their immediate interpretation, in 1960s, was that he must be referring to the **Second World War** which had ended only twenty years earlier. But then they thought that the ruins looked as if they had been in their dilapidated state for much longer than that, so they asked the boy which war he meant. He replied *“the war with the English”*, which they eventually discovered, had formally ended in 1745.

# Note on Example 1

- The tourists and the boy used the word *war* with the **same basic meaning**.
- The boy was using the word to **refer** to something the tourists did **not expect**.

This is what caused the initial **misunderstanding** because when we communicate, we do **not** depend on the **meaning of words** in an utterance, but we **also** pay attention to what the **speaker means** by his/ her utterance.

# Example 2



  
**BABY**  
**SALE**  
UP TO  
**50% OFF**

SHOP FOR TOTS



# Notes on Example 2

This example shows how more is communicated than is said.

To understand and interpret utterances appropriately, we must use:

- The meaning of the words
- The context they occur in
- Knowledge of the world
  - ❖ *So context influences meaning.*

# What is PRAGMATICS?

**Pragmatics** is concerned with the **study** of **meaning** as **communicated** by a **speaker** or **writer** and **interpreted** by a **listener** or **reader**.

- **Pragmatics: The study of the speaker meaning.**
  - i.e. meaning in **CONTEXT** (Contextual Meaning).

# CONTEXT

## There are two kinds of context:

**1- Linguistic context (co-text):** The set of other words used in the same phrase or sentence.

- It has a strong effect on what we think a word means. For example: the meaning of “**bank**” in “*a bank of a river*” is different from “*a bank account*” based on the words of each phrase.

**2- Physical context:** It is **our mental representation** of those aspects of what is physically out there that we use in arriving at an interpretation. Most importantly, the **time** and **place** in which we encounter linguistic expressions.

- If we see the word “**BANK**” on the wall of a building, the physical location will influence our interpretation.



# DEIXIS

- Deixis is a Greek term which means “pointing” via language
- **Deixis:** Words in our language that cannot be interpreted at all if we do not know the context, especially the physical context of the speaker.
  - **Examples:** Here, there, this, that, then, now, yesterday, today, tomorrow, you, me, she, him, it, them...etc. So a sentence like “*you’ll have to bring it back tomorrow because she isn’t here today*” is vague because their interpretation relies on the knowledge of the immediate physical context.
- **Deictic expressions** can only be understood in terms of the speaker’s intended meaning.

# Types of Deixis

- **Types based on which person, place and time the speaker has in mind:**

**1- Person Deixis:** To point to **things** and **people**.

- Examples: it, this, these, him, them, those...etc.

**2- Spatial Deixis:** To point to a **location**.

- Examples: here, there, near that... etc.

**3- Temporal Deixis:** To point to a **time**.

- Examples: now, then, last week...etc.

# Types of Deixis

- Those types can also be categorised in terms of what is close to or distant from the speaker:

**1- Proximal Deixis:** Near the speaker.

- Examples: This, here, now...etc.

**2- Distal Deixis:** Away from the speaker.

- Examples: That, there, then... etc.

# REFERENCE

- **Reference** : An act by which a speaker (or writer) uses language to enable a listener (or reader) to identify something.
  - Words themselves do not refer to anything. People refer.
- **To make reference, we use: {Referring Expressions}**
  1. **Proper nouns:** e.g. Chomsky, Diana, Ahmed..etc.
  2. **Nouns in phrases:** e.g. a writer, my friend, my cat...etc.
  3. **Pronouns:** e.g. he, she, it, her ...etc.
- We assume that these words identify someone or something uniquely but it is more accurate to say that they have a ***range of reference***.

# INFERENCE

For successful reference to occur, we must recognize the role of **inference**.

- **Inference:** The additional information used by the listener to create a connection between what is said and what must be meant.
  - **Example:** Can I borrow your **Chomsky**? (A book)  
We saw **Shakespeare** in London. (A play)  
Jennifer is wearing **Calvin Klein**. (A shirt)
- **References** are made by the speaker, and **inferences** are made by the **listener**.

# ANAPHORA

(Book, example, P:132)

We saw a funny home video about a boy washing a puppy in a small bath. The puppy started struggling and shaking and the boy got really wet. When he let go, it jumped out of the bath and ran away.

- We usually make a distinction between introducing new referents (a puppy) and referring back to them (the puppy, it).
  - A boy, a puppy, a small bath → Antecedent : The first mention of the referent
  - The puppy, the boy, the bath → Anaphora : The second referring expression = Anaphoric expression
- **Anaphora**: A subsequent reference to an already introduced entity used to maintain reference.
  - The connection between anaphoric expressions and antecedents is often based on inference.

# PRESUPPOSITION

- When we use a referring expression like “*he*” in an utterance, we usually **assume** that our listener can recognise which referent is intended.
- Some assumptions **may be mistaken** but they are mostly **appropriate**.
- We have used the term ‘**inference**’ to describe what the *listener* (or reader) does. When we talk about an assumption made by the *speaker* (or writer), we usually talk about a ‘**presupposition**’.
- **Presupposition: What the speaker assumes to be true prior to making an utterance.**
  - **Example: How fast were you going when you ran the red light?**
  - **Presupposition:**.....
    - Questions with built-in presuppositions are very useful devices for interrogators or trial lawyers.

# EXERCISES

Utterance	Presupposition
Mary's dog is cute.	Mary has a dog.
Your brother is waiting outside.	She has a brother.
When did you stop smoking?	The address
My car is a wreck	.....

- To identify the presupposition, we use the “*Constancy Under Negation*” test , i.e. to negate the sentence.
  - **Example: She regrets marrying him → she doesn't regret marrying him.**
    - The presupposition remains: “she married him”, regardless of whether or not she regrets it.



# EXERCISES

- 1) Identify the anaphoric expressions and the antecedents in this sentence:
  - ❖ I saw a black horse running. It took my breath away.
- 2) What is presupposed by the following sentences?
  - ❖ Fred's wife is 6 feet tall.
  - ❖ Your lunch is getting cold.
- 3) What kind of inference is involved in interpreting the following:
- 4) Have you seen my Galaxy? I need to make a call.

# Other Than the Speaker Meaning

- We have been considering ways in which we interpret the meaning of an utterance **in terms of what the speaker intended to convey.**
- But we usually know how the speaker intends us to take what is said.
- In other words, **we can usually recognize the type of 'action' performed by a speaker with the utterance.**

# Actions Consists of Three Acts

- On any occasion, the **action** performed by producing an utterance will consist of **three related acts**:
  1. **Locutionary act**: The literal meaning of the actual words.
    - i.e. the **basic** act of utterance
  2. **Illocutionary act**: The intention of the speaker when uttering those words.
    - Normally we don't just produce well-formed utterances with no **purpose**. We form an utterance with some kinds of function in mind.
      - We might utter "I've just made some coffee" to make a statement, an offer, or an explanation or any other communicative purpose.
  3. **Perlocutionary act**: The effect the utterance has upon the thoughts of the listener.
    - We do not simply create an utterance with a function without intending it to have an **effect**.
      - Depending on the circumstances, you will utter "I've just made some coffee" on the assumption that the hearer will recognize the effect you intended (for example, to get the hearer to drink coffee).
- The term '**speech act**' is generally interpreted quite narrowly to mean only the **illocutionary force** of an utterance.

# SPEECH ACTS

- We use the term **speech act** to describe actions such as:
  - Requesting
  - Commanding
  - Questioning
  - Informing
- **Speech Acts:** Action performed by a speaker with an utterance.



# Speech Acts

# 1- Declarations

- **Declarations:** Speech acts that change the status of an entity via an utterance.
  - In order to perform a declaration properly, the speaker has to have a special institutional role (**power**) in a specific **context**,
    - Naming, appointing, resigning, firing, divorcing.
- **Examples:**
  - Priest: I now pronounce you husband and wife.
  - Referee: You're out!

## 2- Representatives

- **Representatives:** Utterances that describe some state of affairs.
  - Statements, giving information, notifications, assertions, conclusions and descriptions.
- **Examples:**
  - The earth is round.
  - Chomsky didn't write about peanuts.

# 3- Expressives

- **Expressives:** Utterances that state what the speaker feels. It expresses the speaker's emotional state.
  - They express **psychological** states and can be statements of **pleasure, pain, likes, dislikes** or **sorrow**.
  - They can be caused by something the speaker does or the hearer does, but they are **about the speaker's experience**.
    - **Apologising, thanking, congratulating, condoling, welcoming.**
- **Examples:**
  - I'm really sorry.
  - Congratulations!



# 4- Directives

- **Directives:** Utterances used to get the listener do (or not do) something.
  - They express what the **speaker wants**.
    - **Requesting, ordering, forbidding, advising, suggesting, insisting, recommending.**
      - They can be positive or negative
  - **Examples:**
    - Give me a cup of coffee. Make it black. **(Positive)**
    - Don't touch that. **(Negative)**

# 5- Commissives

- **Commissives:** Utterances that the SPEAKER commits himself/herself to do or act.
  - They express what the **speaker intends**.
  - They can be performed by the speaker alone, or by the speaker as a member of the group.
    - Promising, threatening, volunteering, offering, guaranteeing, refusals, and pledges.
- **Examples:**
  - I'll be back.
  - We will not do that.
  - I'm going to get it right next time.

# 6- Questions

- **Questions:** Utterances used to get the listener to provide information.
  - They are not restricted to the form of a question.
    - Asking and inquiring.
- **Example:**
  - What is your name?
  - Were you absent yesterday?

# Direct & indirect speech acts

Whenever there is a direct relationship between a structure and a function, we have a ***direct speech act***. Whenever there is an indirect relationship between a structure and a function, we have an ***indirect speech act***.

Function	Structure	Utterance
Question	Interrogative	Did you eat the pizza?
Command (or request)	Imperative	Eat the pizza (please)!
Statement	Declarative	You ate the pizza.

# Direct and Indirect Speech Acts

Structure (direct for each)	Illocutionary Act
Declarative	Representative
interrogative	Questions
Imperative	Directives
Declarative	Commissives
Exclamatory - Declarative	Expressives
Declarative	Declaration

Example:

*It's cold outside.*

{I am telling you that it is cold outside.} Statement (*direct speech act*)

OR

{I am asking you to close the door.}

Request (*indirect speech act*)

# Why do we use indirect speech acts?

**...TO BE MORE POLITE!**

‘Could you open that door for me?’ is more gentle and more polite than saying ‘Open that door for me’.

# POLITENESS

Politeness has to do with ideas like being **tactful**, **modest** and **nice** to other people.

***Linguistic politeness*** deals with the concept of **'face'**.

- **Your face**, in pragmatics, is **your public self-image**. This is the **emotional** and **social** sense of self that everyone **has** and **expects** everyone else to **recognize**.

**Politeness:** Showing awareness of and consideration for another person's face.

# POLITENESS

- If you say something that represents a threat to another person's self-image, that is called a ***face-threatening act***.
  - **Example:** Give me that paper! (*direct speech act*)
    - Here, you are behaving as if you have more social power than the other person.
- Whenever you say something that lessens the possible threat to another's face, it can be described as a ***face-saving act***.
  - **Example:** Could you pass me that paper? (*indirect speech act*)
    - This removes the assumption of social power and is more polite.



# EXERCISES

## Identify speech acts in the following:

1. Can I take your order please?
2. Can I have pizza please?
3. Can I leave now?
4. I'm going to finish reading this novel tonight.
5. A student in an exam: "My pen is not working."
6. How beautiful you look today!