

Presupposition

(Pieces of) Information from speaker, assuming to be true, for utterance to be meaningful

1. Truth-values

Presupposition creates challenges for simple T/F logic

- Truth-value gaps

“The King of France is bald”

≠ T, because the referent (the King of France) does not exist to be described correctly

≠ F, because you can't say speaker is wrongly describing a referent that doesn't exist in the first place

We can counter these gaps by accepting the presupposition (there is a King in France), and determine the at-issue statement to be T/F based on prior knowledge (is he bald?).

2. At-issue

Sentences carry a main message (at-issue) and background assumptions (presupposition)

[I met the {boy from Osaka}]

Presupposition: there was a boy from Osaka

At-issue: I met the boy from Osaka

3. Pragmatics

Measures how a presupposition & at-issue meaning interact with a context

- a. Check presupposition

There was a boy from Osaka

[Our prior knowledge/context] ← **comparison** → presupposition

- b. Truth value judgement (at-issue)

I met the boy from Osaka

[Our prior knowledge/context] ← **comparison** → at-issue meaning
= T/F?

4. Presupposition triggers

Expressions introducing a specific presupposition

- a. Definite noun phrases: “the”, “a”
- b. Factive verbs: “regret”, “know”
“ I regret tagging along” = she followed along
- c. Cleft sentences: “it was .. who”
“ It was Aki who broke the vase” = someone broke the vase
- d. Iterative adverbs: “also”, “again”
“ He also came” = somebody other than him came

5. Holes & Plugs

- Holes - allows presupposition to slip through even though there is a trigger that targets the at-issue content, allows presupposition to project

Issue: I met the king of France (P: there is a king in France)

Hole: He **knows** that I met the king of France (P: there is a king in France)

- Plugs - operators that block the projection of presupposition (does not allow triggers to work)

Issue: I met the king of France (P: there is a king in France)

Plug: He **thinks** that I met the king of France (P: ≠ there is a king in France)

6. Presupposition accommodation

When speaker makes an utterance with a presupposition that is not shared knowledge, but listener accepts without objections

Speech act theory

The SAT allows speaker to give actions to their words, increasing context as to a static description

1. Locutionary act - grammatical act of producing a meaningful utterance
 - The speaker articulates a velar stop/used the word “can” as a noun
 - E.g. “The speaker said go”, “She opened a can of soup”
2. Illocutionary act - the intended discourse function of an utterance
 - The speaker asserted a proposition/asking a question/requesting an action/promising to do something to the addressee
 - E.g. “Help your sister with her HW” → requesting
 - “Help yourself to some cookies” → requesting
 - “Help me!” → requesting
 - “Help, and you may be blessed for your kindness ” → request and receive
3. Perlocutionary act - unintended or intended effects (or a by-product) by locutionary and illocutionary acts → therefore addressee does the action or feels an action
 - As a result of the above actions the speaker annoys, blackmail or trick the addressee
 - E.g. “Watch out, the stove is hot”
Locutionary - speaker uttered the sentence (grammar)
Illocutionary - requesting an action, warning listener of danger
Perlocutionary act - listener becomes startled and pulls hands away from stove
 - “Your presentation was excellent”
Locutionary - speaker uttered the sentence (grammar)
Illocutionary - asserted a proposition, intended to compliment listener
Perlocutionary act - listener feels happy and confident

Classification of Sentences

- a. Performative sentence - the act of uttering a sentence makes it true
 - E.g. “I name this ship the Q.E.” (also illocutionary)
 - “I judge you guilty” (also illocutionary)
 - “I now pronounce you husband and wife” (also illocutionary)

Felicity conditions - ensure that speech act works as intended

Conditions:

- Sentence structure + subject and verb tenses (E.g. “I promise”/ “I promised”)
- Situation in which utterance is being made
- Speaker’s identity and authority
 - False felicity #1 - Christian wedding
“I now pronounce you husband and wife”
Situation: classroom setting

Speaker: some random dude (not a priest)

- False felicity #2 - judge sentences
"I sentence you up to 6 years in prison"
Situation: classroom setting
Speaker: some random lady (not a judge)

- b. Constative sentence - the truth of a sentence is dependent on the scenario
 - E.g. "I named this ship the Q.E." (past event makes this true)
 - "He judges you guilty"
 - "You promised to help me"

Discourse Model

- Used to understand how language dynamically upgrades the context of a utterance
- Tools:
 1. Possible world - a unit of possibilities
 2. Context set (cs) - a set of worlds (different images of a context)
 3. Common ground (cg) - a set of propositions
 4. Propositions - a set of worlds

The model updates the cs by putting it into a set of worlds and slowly eliminating worlds to fit close to the utterance and is then represented by a new proposition, adding this new proposition in the cg

Conversational Implicature

- Listener makes an inference based on utterance and makes a contribution appropriate to the accepted purpose
- Guided by Grice's cooperative principles:

1. Maxim of Quantity - informative

[P You'll get tea] or [Q you'll get coffee]

a. At-issue $\rightarrow P \vee Q$

P	Q	$P \vee Q$
T	T	T
T	F	T
F	T	T
F	F	F

b. Conversational implicature $\rightarrow \neg(P \wedge Q)$

If P & Q = T,

Waitress could have said [p you'll get tea] and [Q you'll get coffee]

Flouting - when someone breaks rules to make listener guess something

2. Maxim of Quality - make contribution true

[p You are punctual]!

a. at -issue

For speaker: P

b. Conversational implicature $\rightarrow Q$

Cooperative speaker = [p1 You are not punctual]

Flouting speaker = [p You are punctual]!

Q = maybe he does not like me/ maybe he is angry

3. Maxim of Relation (Relevance) - relevant

Speaker A [P He looks sad]

Speaker B [Q The weather is good]

a. at -issue

For speaker: Q

b. Conversational implicature $\rightarrow R$

For addressee, speaker A:

If B was cooperative = [Q1 He had a car accident/ he failed his exam]

But B (flouting) = [Q The weather is good]

R = maybe he wants to change the topic/ disagrees with A

4. Maxim of Manner - perspicuous

Speaker A : Do you know why he got fired?

Speaker B [p let's just say that...]

a. at -issue

For speaker: P

b. Conversational implicature → Q

For addressee, speaker A:

If B was cooperative = [P1 He violated company's policy]

But B (flouting) = [p let's just say that...], quite irrelevant, very roundabout way of explaining

Q = maybe she is being polite, doesn't want to gossip

Politeness Theory

1. Face

a. Positive - set of desires about one's + self-image (i.e. i want to be approved of...)

- E.g. Person B admires by penmanship

b. Negative - freedom from actions/impositions

- E.g. I don't have any obligation to lend him a pen or giving him tea

2. Face Threatening Act (FTA)

- Conflicts with assumed proposition in the speakers faces
- Threat to negative face
 - E.g. A direct request to person A
"Lend me a pen" is a threat because they should be free from any obligation
- Threat to positive face
 - E.g. criticism or disagreements

Politeness is used to counter FTA by changing a manner of a sentence (structure, words, tone) so that person A's face can be respected.

3. Politeness as FTA mitigation

- Basically politeness to the max decreases manner
- Also basically saying things in a roundabout manner

Indexicality

- Indexicality is when the meaning of certain words relies on the context of their use. These word values are determined by the deictic centres (coordinates of utterance)
- Dietetic centres:
 - Speaker (Sp)
 - Addressee (Addr)
 - Time
 - Place

“I have a boyfriend” the pronoun “I” have different value based on dietetic centres.

- a. Reflective pronouns vs indexicals - unshifted, however deep the indexical is in a sentence, must refer back to the deictic centre of the main utterance
 - Reflexive Example: In "Betty said that [Mary blamed herself]", "herself" refers to Mary, the subject of the embedded clause.
 - Indexical Example: In "Betty said that [Mary blamed me]", "me" must refer to the person speaking the entire sentence, not Betty.
- b. Cross-linguistic variation - shifted, indexicals can use “I” (pronouns) etc. to refer to speakers of an embedded clause (E.g Betty)
 - Betty said that I was kind / Betty said that Betty was kind
- c. Intra-language variation - in grammatical context, an indexical expression can be treated as a bound variable (e.g. you your)