

Lexical Semantics Notes

class 9 - Coordination & Meaning

1. Coordination Test

↳ If you can replace a group of words with a similar group and it still makes sense, it is a constituent (a chunk)

Example:

Ann loves the bread and the cake → ok

Ann loves and she respects him → Not ok

1. "Ann loves" (subject + verb clause) why?

2. "she respects him" (subject + verb + object)

These are different types

2. Semantic Derivation

↳ Sentences are built like math functions

Example:

Aki runs

To understand this sentence, check two things:

If both are true (1. Who is Aki? 2. Is Aki running?)

↓

Aki runs = True sentence

class 10

- Presupposition = What we assume is true

1. Presupposition = Background Assumption

↳ Some sentences come with hidden information that the speaker thinks the listener already knows.

Example:

I repaired the droid Luke destroyed

↳ Luke destroyed a droid

↳ That droid existed

↳ The listener is expected to know this happened

with
Presupposition

I repaired a droid that Luke might've destroyed.

↳ You're telling a new story

↳ The listener doesn't need to know anything beforehand

no
presupposition

Class 102. presupposition triggers

↳ certain words or sentence patterns automatically carry assumptions

* Definite Nouns

Example: "The raccoon stole my tools"
 ↳ We know which raccoon (Rocket) because "the raccoon" specifies that it's that trigger-happy, reckless one.

* Factive Verbs

Example: - "Gamora regrets joining Thanos"
 ↳ she did join him
 you're stating it happened

- "Peter knows Groot saved them"
 ↳ Groot actually saved them

* Additive Particles ("too", "again")

Example: - "Drax crashed the ship again"
 ↳ This man has definitely crashed it before

- "Nebula wants help too"
 ↳ Someone else already wants help

3. Holes and Plugs: Does the presupposition get through?
 ↳ having this helps us understand when assumptions stick and when they don't* Holes (lets assumptions leak through)

Example: "Tony knows that Pepper is mad."
 ↳ This assumes that Pepper is mad.

* Plugs (block the assumption)

Example: "Tony said that Pepper is mad"
 ↳ We're not sure if she's really mad
 → "said" becomes the plug because it stops the assumption from leaking into the meaning

class 11 - Speech Act Theory = Saying Is Doing!

1. Types of Sentences

- ★ Performative Sentence (saying it makes it true)

Example: "I hereby declare Arendelle's gates open" - Elsa

↳ The gates are actually opened by saying this - true

- ★ Constative Sentence (just describes something = ^{could be} T/F)

Example: - "The cold never bothered me anyway" - Elsa

↳ This a statement.

Could be true (Elsa's tough) or false (denial, alert)

- "Olaf is melting!" → (check the weather)
- "Anna is asleep!" → (could be true or cursed)

2. Felicity Conditions : When words have power!

↳ Even if you say the right words, they only work if certain conditions are met

Example:

"I now make you Captain America"

When said by the
U.S. military officers

- official
- right setting

If Bucky jokingly
says this

- ✗
- ✗ very unofficial
- ✗ wrong setting

3. 3 Types of Acts in one sentence

- ↳
- 1. Locutionary Act - The actual sentence
 - 2. Illocutionary Act - What you mean to do
 - 3. Perlocutionary Act - What effect it has

Example:

"I am your father" - Darth Vader

- 1. Locutionary Act: Simple sentence
- 2. Illocutionary Act: Reveals a huge truth, shocks Luke
- 3. Perlocutionary Act: Luke screams, denies it, nearly falls off a platform.

Class 12 - Context, Implicature, and Politeness

1. Presupposition accommodation

↳ Sometimes, a speaker says something new, and the listener slightly accepts it as true to keep the conversation going

Example: "This is the first time I left my tower" - Rapunzel
 ↳ even if Flynn didn't know she lived in a tower he doesn't go, "What?! a tower?"
 ↳ instead...
 ↳ he slightly accepts the new information
 ↳ "Okay, she lived in a tower her whole life. noted."

updating understanding without having to explain every little detail

2. Structured discourse context

↳ In a conversation, we keep track of

- ① what I believe
- ② what you believe
- ③ what we both believe

Example: Guardians planning a Heist

Starlord: "The plan is: Rocket disables the security, Groot grabs the battery, no one touches anything else."

Rocket: "Att. easy"

Groot: "Grabs something else"

Drax: "What about the explosives? Should I light them now or wait for the signal?"

Starlord: "WHAT SIGNAL?! THERE IS NO SIGNAL!!"

- Starlord & Rocket
 - ↳ simple heist, no distractions
 - Drax
 - ↳ There is a signal
 - ↳ explosives are involved
 - Groot
 - ↳ instructions? never heard of
- Common ground
Shattered

how to fix?

Starlord: "Okay. Let's reset. NO explosions. NO extra grabbing. Rocket, security, Groot, battery, Drax, stand still"

↳ kinda repairs the shattered common ground

3. Conversational Implicature (reading between lines)

↳ people often say one thing, but mean something more.
 We can guess that meaning from context, tone, and common sense.

Example: "I suppose I can have a small smackerel of honey..." - Pooh

↳ literal meaning: He'll eat a little

↳ Implicature: He's going to eat it all

Class 12

4. Grice's Maxims = How to be a good speaker
 ↳ according to Grice, a good communication follows these rules:

- | | | |
|---|------------|--------------------------|
| (| ① Quantity | - say the right amount |
| | ② Quality | - be truthful |
| | ③ Relation | - be relevant |
| | ④ Manner | - be clear and organized |

↳ If someone breaks the rule on purpose (called flouting), it can hint something else

Example =

① Quantity

• Too much info
 flouting quantity →

"So there I was, fighting this guy with metal arms, and then this guy opened a portal, and then..." - Peter Parker

• His tone says otherwise
 flouting quality →

② Quality

"Of course I read the briefing. I always do" - Tony Stark

③ Relation

• Dodging the question with a dramatic line, probably hiding something
 flouting relation →

After being asked where she was on a mission:
 "You've ever noticed how quiet it is before a storm?" - Black Widow

④ Manner

• Could have just said:
 "I did it for me"

"Let's just say... I acted in what I perceived to be the optimal interest of my glorious self." - Loki

being intentionally vague or
 fancy to sound mysterious

flouting manner

5. Politeness Theory = Saving face

↳ In a conversation, we try to protect each other's "face"

Two faces:

- | | | |
|---|-----------------|---|
| (| ① Positive face | = wanting to be liked, appreciated, praised |
| | ② Negative face | = wanting freedom, space, and not to be told what to do |

Example =

"Life's full of tough choices... Is it?" - Ursula

① positive face = makes it sound like Ariel has choices

② negative face = she's pressuring her

(The Little Mermaid)

Class 12

6. Indexicality = Words that point to the situation

↳ Some words change based on who says them, when, and where.

• "I" "you" "here" "now" are indexicals

Example:

- "I'm not a toy." - Buzz Lightyear



Buzz (who believes he's a real space ranger)



• to Woody, it sounds ridiculous

• to Buzz, it's deadly serious

- "I am Iron man" - Iron man



Tony

• When Tony says it, of course he is

• If Rhodey says it, totally different meaning