

Einführung in die Pragmatik und Diskurs

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Homework 1: Raising Pragmatic Awareness **Due on Tue 25.4.2006**

- Send me your homework by email as a pdf file (or else as ps or Word)
- Please don't forget to write your name on it.
- Please bring to the class on Wed 26.4.2006 one fresh printout of your examples from Task 2 (without your explanations).

Task 1

Choose an item from the list below and think about different contexts in which you could utter it, and it would mean something quite else each time. Then write down (clearly but concisely; half a page is probably enough):

- i. Two maximally different contexts
 - ii. What the utterance means in each context
 - iii. Explanation of how these meanings arise
- I'm tired. / Ich bin müde.
 - I'm sorry. / Es tut mir leid.
 - It's me. / Ich bin es. (Das bin ich.)
 - I thought so. / Das dachte ich schon.
 - Don't! / Nicht tun!

Example One solution for “It’s me.”

- i. A man is sitting and reading a book. His wife is busy at the balcony. Suddenly the man hears funny noises, and looks up from his book, and starts listening intently. The woman sees this and says: “It’s me.”
- ii. She intends the utterance to mean *it is me who is making the noises, you don’t need to worry*, so it is an explanation of where the noises originate from
- iii. The woman saw that her husband was listening to something he found strange, and she guessed it was the noise she was making. She realized he may worry about the origin of the sound. So she is being cooperative, and provides an explanation without being asked for it, so her husband can relax. This is the way in which her utterance is relevant in the context.

Task 2

Find two sentences (or very short texts) from a newspaper story, caption for a newspaper photograph, or advertisement, etc., which invite the reader to make an inference. Write down your interpretations and explain the inference(s) involved. (Again, make your explanations clear but concise.)

Example A caption under a picture: “The husband of the doctor who disappeared last week refused to comment. Meanwhile the police continued digging in his garden.”

The police suspects that the reason why the doctor-wife is missing is that she may have been murdered, and the husband is a possible suspect. The reason for inferring the murder suspicion is that the police may be digging in the garden to find the body or some evidence (e.g., a weapon). The reason for inferring that the husband may be a suspect is based on an assumption that mentioning the husband in that context is somehow relevant; additionally, being guilty would be a good reason for the husband to remain silent. We also infer that the doctor is/was female, and that the garden belongs to the husband.