pragmatics 2.: dialogue

Magdalena Wolska

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- structure manifested in the dialog partys' contributions
- speech-related phenomena:
  - pauses and fillers („uh", „um", „..., like, you know,...")

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  - overlapping speech

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  - prosody, articulation
  - disfluencies
  - overlapping speech
- spontaneous vs. „practical" dialogs
  - topic drifts vs. goal-orientedness

Dialog

dialog is made up of turns

speaker A says sth, then speaker B, then A...

how do speakers know when it's time to contribute a turn?

there are points in dialog/utterance structure that allow for a speaker shift

→ **Transition-Relevance Points** (TRP)

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→ **Transition-Relevance Points** (TRP)

e.g. intonational phrase boundaries

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at each TRP of each turn:

if current speaker has *selected* A as next speaker, then A must speak next

if current speaker does not select next speaker, any other speaker may take next turn

if no one else takes next turn, the current speaker may take next turn

Dialog

some turns specifically select who the next speaker will be
→ **adjacency pairs**

regularly occuring, conventionalized sequences
conventions introduce *obligations* to respond (and preferred responses)

question : answer
...

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question : answer
complement : downplayer
offer : acceptance

greeting : greeting
accusation : denial
request : grant

set up next speaker expectations (‘significant silence’ dispreferred)

Dialog

entering a conversation we (typically) have a certain *intention*

paradigmatic use of language: making statements...
...BUT there are also other things we can *do* with words

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e.g. ask questions, make requests, give orders, make promises, give thanks, offer apologies

Dialog

entering a conversation we (typically) have a certain *intention*

aspects of the speaker's intention:

the **act of saying** something

what one does in saying it (requesting or promising)

how one is affecting the audience

Dialog: speech acts

certain *actions* we take in communication are designed
to get our interlocutor(s) to do things
on the basis of understanding of what we mean

doing things with words: Austin, 1962, later Searle, Davis
→ **speech acts**

utterances are multi-dimentional *acts* that affect the context
in which they are spoken

Dialog: speech acts

dimensions

locutionary act: uttering something with a certain „meaning”

illocutionary act: act performed by means of uttering the words
→ utterance’s „conventional force”

perlocutionary act: what is brought about as a result (intentionally or not)
→ how hearer is affected: convinced, persuaded, surprised, made sad, laugh, etc.

Dialog: speech acts

examples of illocutionary acts

assertive: get H to form or attend to a belief; e.g. „claim” „conclude”

directive: get H to do sth; e.g. „order”, „request”, „beg”

commissive: S commits to doing sth; e.g. „promise”, „plan”, „vow”, „bet”

expressive: S expresses a psychological state, feeling twrd. H
„thank”, „apologize”, „hate”, „love”

declarations: S changes the state of the world; e.g. „resign”, „fire”, „name”, „baptize”, „pronounce husband and wife”

Dialog: joint activity

for communication to be successful, Speakers and Hearers must *mutually believe* they understand each other’s intentions

Close the window, would you?

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Close the window, would you?

S must believe:

that H knows what window is meant
that H is capable of performing what needs to be done to close the window
that the window is not now closed
that the window will not close without the intervention
that H realises he/she is being addressed
that H understands the language S is speaking, is awake, etc.

Dialog: joint activity

when entering a conversation, we pressupose that there exists certain shared knowledge → **common ground**

introduced by Stalnaker (1978) based on older family of notions: *common knowledge* (Lewis, 1969), *mutual knowledge* or *belief* (Schiffler, 1972)

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stock of knowledge taken for granted, i.e. assumed to be known both by the Speaker and the Hearer

sum of their mutual, common or joint knowledge, beliefs, and suppositions

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sources of the assumptions:
evidence about social, cultural comunities people belong to, academic backgrounds, etc. (*communal common ground*)

direct personal experiences (*personal common ground*)

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What does it mean „You and I (mutually) know that *p*”?

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I know that you know that p You know that I know that p
I know that you know that I know that p You know that I know that you know that p
...ad infinitum...

Dialog: joint activity

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Close the window, would you?

when H understands S as intended, H infers:
S wants the window closed
S wants H to close it
S wants H to close it because S asked H (and not, e.g., because H thinks the open window might annoy S)
S wants H to realise that S wants H to do it by understanding S's utterance
as a request

Dialog: joint activity

understanding speaker's intention amounts to inferring (*deducing*) the Speaker's *plan*

Close the window, would you?

S's GOAL STRUCTURE:
get window closed
by getting H to close window
by requesting H to close the window
by saying „Close the window, would you?"

Dialog: joint activity

understanding speaker's intention amounts to inferring (*deducing*) the Speaker's *plan*

Close the window, would you?

H's PLAN RECONSTRUCTION:
S has said „ Close the window, would you?"
therefore, S is making a request to close window
therefore, S wants addressee to close the window
therefore, S wants the window closed

Dialog: joint activity

communication relies on *collaboration*

Gricean Cooperative Principle
principles of rational behaviour

→ cooperatively interpret and contribute

Dialog as collaboration (H.P.Grice 1975)

theory about how people **use** language

basic claim: there is a set of general guidelines which ensure **effective and rational use of language**

→ a general **cooperative principle** +
four **maxims of conversation**

Dialog as collaboration: the cooperative principle

make your contribution such as required,
at the stage at which it occurs,
by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.

here we take a break

aside on elementary number theory

Theorem:
The set of prime numbers is infinite, i.e. for every prime number p, there exists another prime number q > p.

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True or false?

The greatest prime number is odd.

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True or false?

The greatest prime number is odd.

The greatest prime number is not odd.

aside on geography

True or false?

The king of Buganda is 42.

If Buganda has a king, then he was born in the 20th century.

(...does Buganda have a king?)

representing definite descriptions

an approximate meaning representation of a definite description says that there is exactly one individual with a certain property:

the
$\Rightarrow \lambda F \lambda G \exists x[\forall y[F(y) \leftrightarrow x=y] \wedge G(x)]$
$\Leftrightarrow \lambda F \lambda G \exists x[F(x) \wedge G(x) \wedge \forall y[F(y) \rightarrow x=y]]$
the chancellor
$\Rightarrow \lambda G \exists x(\forall y(\text{chancellor}'(y) \leftrightarrow x=y) \wedge G(x))$
the chancellor decides
$\Rightarrow \exists x(\forall y(\text{chancellor}'(y) \leftrightarrow x=y) \wedge \text{decides}'(x))$

problem 1: uniqueness doesn't have to hold

The chancellor decides

$\Rightarrow \exists x(\forall y(\text{chancellor}'(y) \leftrightarrow x=y) \wedge \text{decides}'(x))$

"There is exactly one chancellor, and he decides."

The student is late

"There is exactly one student, and she is late."

(?)

problem 2: interaction with negation

The chancellor doesn't decide

$\Rightarrow \neg\exists x(\forall y(\text{chancellor}'(y) \leftrightarrow x=y) \wedge \text{decides}'(x))$

"Either there is no chancellor, or more than one, or there is exactly one chancellor and he doesn't decide."

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better:

$\exists x(\forall y(\text{chancellor}'(y) \leftrightarrow x=y) \wedge \neg\text{decides}'(x))$

"There is exactly one chancellor, and he doesn't decide."

problem 3: falsity vs. uninterpretability

The greatest prime number is odd.

$\Rightarrow \exists x(\forall y(\text{g-p-n}'(y) \leftrightarrow x=y) \wedge \text{odd}'(x))$

the formula is false, because it claims that there is a greatest prime number...

but...

problem 3: falsity vs. uninterpretability

The greatest prime number is odd.
$\Rightarrow \exists x(\forall y(\text{g-p-n}'(y) \leftrightarrow x=y) \wedge \text{odd}'(x))$

the formula is false, because it claims that there is a greatest prime number...

but the sentence is not true or false: it just doesn't make sense!
(greatest prime number?? – what number is that?)

presupposition

a sentence (with a definite NP) contains meaning information of two different types: the **presupposition** and the **assertion**

presupposition: the requirements that the context must satisfy so that the utterance can be interpreted at all

assertion: the claims that are made, based on the context

The chancelor decides.

$\exists x(\forall y(\text{chancellor}'(y) \leftrightarrow x=y) \wedge \text{decides}'(x))$

"There is exactly one chancellor, and he decides."

presupposition and negation

negation only applies to the assertion!

the presupposition is not negated – it is *projected* upwards, outside of the usual rules of semantic composition.

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"There is exactly one chancellor, and she doesn't decide."

$\rightarrow$ "survival" of negation is the standard test for presuppositions

presupposition triggers

certain adverbs, iterative and discourse particles

Only Peter came.

presupposition triggers

certain adverbs, iterative and discourse particles

Only Peter came.

>> Peter came (and nobody else came)

(*only, even, again* etc.)

presupposition triggers

factive verbs:

John regrets that Mary is married.

presupposition triggers

factive verbs:

John regrets that Mary is married.

>> Mary is married (and John regrets this)

(epistemic factives: *know, realise, mean, prove, be obvious*,
emotive factives: *regret, be glad, be surprised, amaze*)

presupposition triggers

aspect verbs:

John has stopped smoking.

presupposition triggers

aspect verbs:

John has stopped smoking.

>> John used to smoke (and he stopped doing it).

(*begin*, etc.)

presupposition triggers

certain syntactic constructions

clefts:

It is Peter who ate the cake.

presupposition triggers

certain syntactic constructions

clefts:

It is Peter who ate the cake.

>> Somebody ate the cake (and it was Peter who did it)

(questions introduced by question word, adverbial and relative clauses introduced by subordinating particles)

presupposition triggers

certain lexical items („connotation”)

?? John accidentally assassinated the President.

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all ?? All of my arms hurt.
→ the set has at least 3 members

presupposition projection

presuppositions "survive" not only negation,
but also other kinds of embedding:

The chancellor decides, or she will lose the election

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>> *There is exactly one chancellor*

John possibly regrets that Mary has married.

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presuppositions "survive" not only negation,
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The chancellor decides, or she will lose the election
>> There is exactly one chancellor

John possibly regrets that Mary has married.
>> Mary is married

Mary believes that John has stopped smoking.

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The chancellor decides, or she will lose the election
>> There is exactly one chancellor

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>> Mary is married

Mary believes that John has stopped smoking.
>> John used to smoke.

presupposition filtering

but: there are contexts that can "neutralise" or *filter* some presuppositions, i.e. block projection

If John is out of town, then his wife is unhappy.

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If John is out of town, then his wife is unhappy.
John is married

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If John is married, then his wife is unhappy.

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If John is married, then his wife is unhappy.

!! does not presuppose: *John is married*

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If John is married, then his daughter is unhappy.

presupposition filtering

but: there are contexts that can "neutralise" or *filter* some presuppositions, i.e. block projection

If John is married, then his daughter is unhappy.
John has a daughter.

presupposition cancellation

presupposition can also be overwritten or *cancelled*
by explicitly claiming that they are false:

presupposition cancellation

presupposition can also be overwritten or *cancelled*
by explicitly claiming that they are false:

John doesn't regret that Mary is married. This is because Mary isn't married.

It is not true that the king of France is bald. France is a republic.

presuppositions: summary

- presuppositions and assertions have a different status
- presuppositions are triggered by a number of different words and linguistic constructions, including definite NPs
- presuppositions behave differently than assertions in semantic construction:
  they are projected unchanged, rather than used in functional application
- presupposition can be cancelled

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Conversational maxims

quality
quantity
relation
manner

Conversational maxims

quality try to make your contribution one that is true:

1. do not say what you believe to be false,
2. do not say that for which you lack evidence

Conversational maxims

quantity 1. make your contribution as informative as is required
for the current purpose of the exchange,
2. do not make your contribution more informative than is required

Conversational maxims

relation make your contribution relevant

Conversational maxims

manner be perspicuous:

1. avoid obscurity
2. avoid ambiguity
3. be brief (avoid prolixity)
4. be orderly

Conversational maxims

if unable to adhere to maxims, Ss explicitely or implicitely signal:

I am not at liberty to say any more.

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I know this is irrelevant, but ...

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I know this is irrelevant, but ... [Relation]

As you know, ...

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context: Peter, Paul and Bill are colleagues and friends of Sue. Peter and Paul both know that Bill owns a yellow VW. Paul lives across the street from Sue. Peter and Paul meet in the office in the morning. Bill is late.

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Peter: Where's Bill?

Paul: There was a yellow VW outside Sue's house when I was leaving.

Conversational maxims

context: Peter, Paul and Bill are colleagues and friends of Sue. **Bill just bought a yellow VW. Paul knows about it, but Peter doesn't.** Paul lives across the street from Sue. Peter and Paul meet in the office in the morning. Bill is late.

Peter: Where's Bill?

Paul: There was a yellow VW outside Sue's house when I was leaving.

Peter: ??

→ context, common ground

Conversational maxims

context: A in a car, in a city she doesn't know. Stops at the side walk.

Conversational maxims

context: A in a car, in a city she doesn't know. Stops at the side walk.

A: Excuse me. I'm out of petrol. [Whe-]

B: [There's] a garage just round the corner.

Conversational maxims

maxims generate *inferences* beyond the semantic content of utterances

these inferences are made on the basis of utterance content and assumptions about cooperative nature of conversation

→ **conversational implicatures**

Conversational maxims and conversational implicatures

Quality:

John has 2 children

The flag is white

Manner:

John kicked his boss and got fired

John got fired and kicked his boss

Flouted maxims

Irony: *What a great weather!*

Metaphor: *This lady is made of iron.*

Flouted maxims

Irony: *What a great weather!*

Metaphor: *This lady is made of iron.*

Scalar implicatures

Some of the boys went to the party.

Scalar implicatures

Some of the boys went to the party.

>> Not all of the boys went to the party

Scalar implicatures

Some of the boys went to the party.

>> Not all of the boys went to the party

intuitive explanation:

(1) **All** of the boys went to the party.

|= (2) **Some** of the boys went to the party.

since a stronger form is available, by quantity maxim, (2) implicates ¬(1)

Scalar implicatures: examples of scales

< all, most, many, some, few >

< none, not all >

< n, ..., 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 >

< and, or >

< excellent, good >

< always, often, sometimes >

< must, should, may >

< succeed in Ving, try to V, want to V >

< adore, love, like >

Clausal implicatures

If S asserts some complex expression p, such that

- p contains an embedded sentence q
- p neither entails nor presupposes that q is true
- there is an alternative expression p' of roughly equal brevity which does entail or presupposed that q is true

then, by asserting p rather that p', S implicates that she does not know whether q is true or false

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then, by asserting p rather that p', S implicates that she does not know whether q is true or false

John is in his office, or in the lab.

implicates: S does not know, whether John is in his office.
S does not know, whether John is in the lab.

Clausal implicatures

weak form	stronger form	clausal implicatures
p or q	p and q	P(p), P(¬p), P(q), P(¬q)
if p, then q	since p, q	P(p), P(¬p), P(q), P(¬q)
I believe that p	I know that p	P(p), P(¬p)
I thought that p	I have established that p	P(p), P(¬p)
perhaps p	necessarily p	P(p), P(¬p)

Conversational implicature and presupposition

both conversational implicatures and presuppositions can be cancelled (are *defeasible*)

presuppositions are associated with certain kinds of expressions

conversational implicatures follow from general properties of utterances

Pragmatics: summary

study of understanding intentional human actions

interpretation of acts assumed to be taken in order to accomplish a purpose

→ belief, intention (goal), plan, action

encompasses all sorts of means of *communication*

→ *language use* as well as nonverbal, nonconventional

object of study are the systematic relations between language and *context*

Pragmatics: summary

- semantic context dependence
- textual cohesion and coherence
- discourse structure
- conversational structure (dialogue)
- speech acts
- presupposition / conventional implicature
- conversational Implicature

koniec

(na dziś)

thank you