# Seminar 17312
# **Introduction to Linguistics**

**Institute for English Philology
Winter Semester 2020/2021**

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**Pragmatics**

# Grading scale

We have agreed on a grading scale for your exam that requires **60% of the points for a grade 4.0** (pass). Since you have two jokers (the two worst submissions will be exempt from the total), you effectively only need 45% of the points.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1,0 | 27 | 100% |
| 1,3 | 26 | |
| 1,7 | 25 | |
| 2,0 | 24 | |
| 2,3 | 23 | |
| 2,7 | 21 | |
| 3,0 | 20 | |
| 3,3 | 19 | |
| 3,7 | 17 | |
| 4,0 | 16 | 60% |

**Resit: 19 March 2021**

# Test: Semantics II

Consider the following entry in the Farlex Partner Medical Dictionary (2012):

**bod·y** (bod'ē),

1. The head, neck, trunk, and limbs. The human body, consisting of head (caput), neck (collum), trunk (truncus), and limbs (membra).

2. The material part of a human, as distinguished from the mind and spirit.

3. The principal mass of any structure.

4. A thing; a substance.

Fill in the correct term describing sense relations:

*Head, neck, trunk, limbs* are _____of the term *body*

Which sense relation is illustrated in the definitions 1-4?

Provide a prototypical and non-prototypical example of the concept BOOK. Shortly explain your answer.

# Pragmatics

# Sentence types: declarative sentences

- Form: SVX

- Express declarations, statements about the world (Middeke 2020: 28);

*We went to the cinema.*

S     v     ADT

# Sentence types: interrogative clauses

- Express questions, request information;
- Yes/no questions: VSX
- Wh-questions: WVSX
- Interrogative pronouns: wh-pronouns

Do   you like this idea? (polar interrogative)
V:fin  S         DO

Why did   you do that? (wh-interrogative)
WH  v:fin X

(Middeke 2020: 28)

# Sentences types: imperative clauses

- express commands or suggestions
- VX
- Put   this letter on the table!

  v: fin X

(Middeke 2020: 28)

# Exclamatives

- Communicative function: expressing evaluation of state of affairs;

- Diverse; mixture of declaratives and wh-interrogatives: they begin with a wh-pronoun and have a subject-verb object structure of declaratives (Middeke, Stefanowitsch 2020: 37-38);

# Pragmatics

- "Pragmatics examines how speakers understand and communicate more than literal meaning of words and sentences when they speak write or gesture, or, in more general terms when they interpret and produce what linguists call utterances" (Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 151).

- **UTTERANCES**: "(...) spoken, written or gestured contributions within a particular social context that derive their meaning partly from that context (ibid., p. 152); „they are context shaped and context renewing"

- Meaning examined in pragmatics is called utterance meaning/meaning in context/meaning in interaction (ibid., p. 151).

- **PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE**: "(...) the ability to use language appropriately within social context" (ibid., p. 153).

# Deixis

- "All linguistic means that have mainly to do with pointing to extralinguistic context" (Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 153);

- Deictic expressions: all expressions that point to someone or something (ibid.);

- Types of deixis: **person deixis, place deixis, time dixis, social deixis, discourse deixis** (ibid., p. 153-154);

- Deictic centre: the perspective from which something is communicated;

- Deictic projection: shift of the  perspective;

**Person deixis**: referring to people (first and second person prononouns) (ibid, p. 154-155);

**Place deixis**: pointing at the location (proximal terms: *this, here*; distal terms: *that, there*) (ibid., p. 153; 156).

**Time deixis**: close (*now, today, this week*) or away (*then, yesterday, this month*) from the deictic centre (ibid., p. 157).

# The Cooperative Principle of Grice

Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.
(Grice 1975:45)

Bieswanger & Becker (2017: 158)

# Four Maxims of Conversation

## The Maxim of 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.

## The Maxim of Quality

Try to make your contribution one that is true, specifically:

1. Do not say anything that you believe to be false.
2. Do not say anything for which you lack adequate evidence.

## The Maxim of Relation (or The Maxim of Relevance)

Make your contribution relevant.

## The Maxim of Manner

Be perspicuous (= be clear). More specifically:

1. Avoid obscurity.
2. Avoid ambiguity.
3. Be brief.
4. Be orderly.

(adapted from Grice 1975:45-46)

(Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 158-159)

# Conversational implicatures

Any meaning implied by or understood from the utterance of a sentence which goes beyond what is literally expressed or logically follows from it. Thus *It is raining* expresses, literally, that it is raining. But when said, on a specific occasion, it might **implicate** e.g.'We had better close the windows', or 'We can't now go for a picnic'. Hence a distinction, in theories of pragmatics, between what is implicated and 'what is said' (Oxford Reference, 2021)

Conversational implicatures are not part of conversational meaning (Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 159).

One someone violates maxims of conversation, one has to search for additional information: it is called inferring (ibid.).

# Speech Acts

Speech act theory: John L. Austin *How to Do Things With Words* (1962); John R. Searle *Speech Acts. An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (1969).
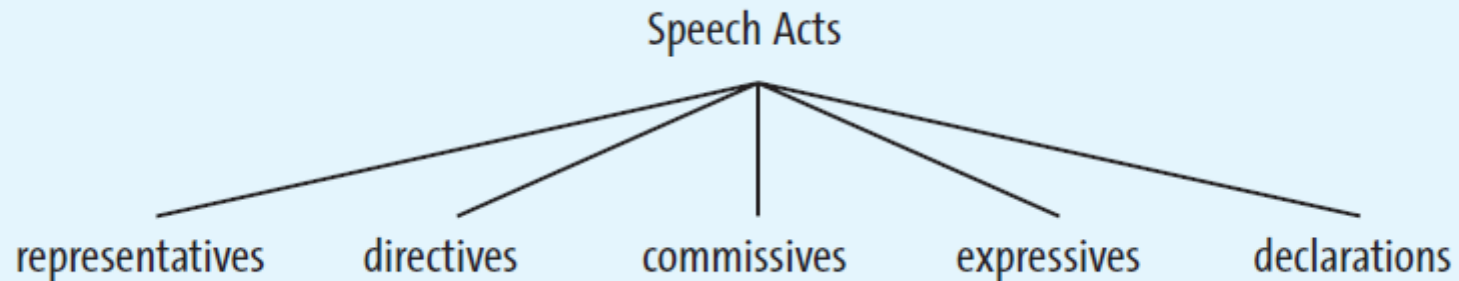
Actions performed by utterances:

- Locutionary act: "the physical act of producting understandable language that may be regarded as meaningful within a given context" (Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 161);

- Illocutionary act: "what we intend to do by producing an utterance" (ibid.);

- Perlocutionary act: the effect on the addressee (ibid.).

Illocutionary force: **communicative intention** (ibid.).

Illocutionary force markers: linguistic structures that suggest the illocutionary force of the utterance (Middeke, Stefanowitsch 2019: 39);

# Types of speech acts

- Representatives/assertives: make statements about the word;
- Directives: make someone perform a specific action (i.e. requests, commands);
- Commissives: inform others about our future actions (i.e. promises, threats);
- Expressives: express our emotions (greetings, congratulations, thanks)
- Declarations: used for actions where a specific formula is pronounced (baptising somebody, marrying a couple (Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 162);

Speech Acts

representatives    directives    commissives    expressives    declarations

# Felicity conditions

- Conditions that have to be fulfilled in order for a speech act to succeed (Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 162);

**Content**
Future act (A) to be performed by the hearer (H).

**Preparatory conditions**
H is able to do A.
The speaker (S) believes that H is able to do A.
It is not obvious to both S and H that H will do A in the normal course of events of her or his own accord.

**Sincerity condition**
S wants H to do A.

**Essential condition**
Counts as an attempt to get H to do A.

(based on Searle 1969: 66-67)

Fig. 7.9

*Felicity conditions for requests*

| | | Sentence Type | Direct Speech Act |
|---|---|---|---|
| (9) | *Anna is singing.* | declarative | representative (or assertive) |
| (10) | *Is Anna singing?* | interrogative | question (= subtype of directive speech act) |
| (11) | *Sing!* | imperative | directive |
| (12) | *How beautifully she is singing!* | exclamative | expressive |

*Sentence types and direct speech acts*

(Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 163)

# References

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3. Huddleston, Rodney & Geoffrey K. Pullum. 2005. *A student's introduction to English Grammar.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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5. Mair, Christian. 2012. *English linguistics: An Introduction.* Tübingen: Narr.

6. Matthews, Peter H. 2007. *Syntactic relations: a critical survey.* Cambridge: CUP.

7. Middeke, Kirsten, AG Stefanowitsch. 2020. *Syntax*. (unpublished)