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PRAGMATICS: A Literary Perspective
Pedagogical Handouts
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Introduction

This set of handouts is designed for Master 1 students of English specializing in Literature and Civilization. Pragmatics, as a field of study, is often distinguished from a purely linguistic approach by its emphasis on the practical use of language in context. In our context, we have chosen to approach pragmatics with a literary mantle, recognizing its profound relevance to the study of literature and civilization.

During the first semester, we laid the foundation for pragmatics while teaching discourse analysis. Through this groundwork, we clarified the overlapping areas between discourse analysis and pragmatics, preparing the way for a deeper exploration of the latter. One notable observation has been the growing interest among students in pragmatics. This interdisciplinary field offers theoretical and practical pathways for creative and original analysis, particularly within the realms of literature and civilization. Upon closer examination of the study of pragmatics, we aim to foster a comprehensive understanding of its theoretical underpinnings and practical applications. By doing so, we hope to equip students with the necessary tools for critical analysis and interpretation within their respective fields of study.

Language, beyond its dictionary definitions and syntactic rules, thrives on interaction. It is in the dynamic give-and-take of communication that words acquire richer layers of meaning. This fascinating interplay between language and context is the domain of pragmatics, a branch of linguistics. Unlike syntax, which dissects sentence structure, or semantics, which explores word meaning, pragmatics delves into how we use language in real-world situations. It considers the "how" over the "what" – how conversations unfold, how unspoken intentions are conveyed, and how meaning is shaped by the context in which we communicate. Imagine a friend saying "It's cold in here." Pragmatics helps us understand if this is a literal observation

prompting you to close the window, or a subtle hint that they expect you to adjust the temperature regulator.

Pragmatics is an interdisciplinary field, drawing insights from philosophy, psychology, and anthropology. By examining how language interacts with culture, society, and even our minds, it offers a richer understanding of communication. Imagine analyzing a folktale – pragmatics would help us appreciate how the seemingly simple words carry cultural hints and unspoken lessons passed down through generations. Analyzing the well-known folktale "The Tortoise and the Hare," Pragmatics allows us to see beyond the literal words of the story. For instance, when the tortoise calmly states, "Slow and steady wins the race," it is not just a lesson in patience. Culturally, this phrase reflects values of humbleness and perseverance, often unspoken in everyday life. In certain societies, it might also carry an implicit critique of arrogance or haste, passed down as a tacit moral lesson through generations. The tortoise's words capture more than advice—they reflect deep-rooted cultural wisdom.

Through the rich prism of pragmatics, we gain valuable tools for effective communication. We learn to not only choose the right words but also to understand the subtle cues – the context, the unspoken intentions, the cultural background – that breathe life into language. This skill is particularly valuable when studying literature and culture, where understanding the context behind written or spoken words unveils an elusive meaning and a boundless appreciation.

This collection of lectures serves as a foundation for Master 1 students in Literature and Civilization to explore the promising world of pragmatics. However, it is important to note that our approach here extends beyond the traditional linguistic applications of pragmatics. We have developed, and will present, an adapted framework that makes pragmatics particularly relevant and applicable to the fields of Literature and Civilization.

My approach diverges from conventional pragmatics in two key ways:

1. **A more inclusive cultural application:** While pragmatics in linguistics often focuses on the immediate context of spoken communication, our adapted approach embraces the wider cultural context. This allows us to apply pragmatic principles to the analysis of literary works, historical documents, and cultural artifacts. By doing so, we can uncover hidden layers of meaning that are embedded within the cultural fabric of different societies and periods.
2. **Extension to written communication:** Traditional pragmatics primarily deals with spoken language. However, in the realms of literature and cultural studies, we frequently encounter written texts. Our approach extends pragmatic principles to the written word, enabling us to analyze the communicative intricacies of novels, poems, essays, and other written forms of cultural expression. This extension is crucial because literature and culture are replete with refined uses of language that go beyond literal meanings.

This collection of lectures explores the multifaceted meaning of pragmatics and its relevance to literature and civilization. Together, we will explore the significance of context—both immediate and broad cultural contexts—and examine deixis in literary and cultural texts. Additionally, we will investigate the concept of Gricean implicature, as well as the use of reference, anaphora, and cataphora as literary devices. Furthermore, the power of speech acts in cultural and literary contexts will be emphasized, alongside the art of surmounting cultural differences across time and space. Along the way, we will uncover the hidden strata of meaning embedded within language, particularly within literary and cultural texts. By mastering these concepts through our innovative pragmatic framework, we can transform into adept interpreters of language and perceptive critics of literature and culture, capable of unraveling hidden meaning across diverse texts and contexts. We will also be empowered to uncover the elusive

communicative strategies employed by authors and cultural figures, to understand the implicit cultural knowledge that informs these communications, and to appreciate the fascinating interplay between language, literature, and culture.

Moreover, this expanded understanding of pragmatics will empower us to become more effective communicators in a world characterized by a cacophony of diverse voices and viewpoints. It will sharpen our ability to craft transcultural discourses that bridge epistemic divides, to interpret texts with greater sensitivity to their cultural and historical contexts, and to foster deeper connections with the myriad of voices and views that shape our world through the rich tapestry of human expression found in literature and cultural artifacts. As we embark on this journey, we will discover how our adapted pragmatic approach can shed new light on familiar texts, reveal hidden depths in cultural practices, and, in due course, enrich our understanding of the intriguing relationship between language, literature, and civilization.

Finally, in this pedagogical handout on the application of pragmatics in literary and cultural contexts, I have meticulously curated eight comprehensive lectures that provide detailed explanations anchored in authoritative sources. Each lecture is designed not only to elucidate the core concepts of pragmatics but also to contextualize them within both literary and cultural frameworks. To enhance understanding and facilitate the practical application of these concepts, I have incorporated illustrative examples that clarify technical aspects and demonstrate their relevance in real-world scenarios.

Furthermore, this handout is equipped with a variety of rich practice exercises that serve dual purposes: they are intended both as class activities to promote collaborative learning and as opportunities for further exploration outside the classroom. These exercises are designed to engage students actively and encourage critical thinking, thereby fostering a deeper appreciation of pragmatic principles in literature and culture. By integrating these elements, this

handout aims to create an enriching learning experience that not only imparts theoretical knowledge but also cultivates practical skills applicable in diverse contexts.

Lecture 1

What is Pragmatics?

This first lecture explores the fascinating world of pragmatics, a branch of linguistics that explores the ways we use language in real-life situations. Away from memorizing grammar rules, pragmatics is all about understanding how context breathes life into language, allowing us to communicate effectively and construct meaning beyond the literal words we speak.

The fundamental premise of this exploration is remarkably straightforward: language is not merely a tool for conveying information; it is also a vehicle for expressing style. While linguists often utilize neutral, colorless expressions to illustrate linguistic concepts, these sterile examples rarely capture the dynamic, nuanced nature of everyday speech. In practice, our utterances are rich with stylistic variations, tailored to suit different contexts and to convey our emotions.

For instance, instead of a simple declarative statement like "France is hexagonal," a more authentic expression might be, "If I'm not mistaken, France is somewhat hexagonal, isn't it?" This shift not only communicates information but also invites the listener into a more personal and engaging conversation. Even the most mundane communications can carry a stylistic weight. Consider a warning sign in New York that might not simply state "No parking," but rather "Don't even think of parking here." This transition from neutral to emphatic, threatening language underscores how speakers often imbue their utterances with personal significance and urgency.

The need to convey emotional involvement and stylistic choices permeates our everyday language. Galileo's defiant declaration, "And yet it moves," encapsulates a profound emotional investment that a detached statement like "the earth turns" could never convey. Such examples

highlight the pivotal role of style within pragmatics, where understanding the modulation of speech—the intentional strengthening or weakening of statements—becomes paramount.

In practical terms, speakers continuously adjust the intensity of their speech acts, much like a pianist varying the volume of notes. This modulation encompasses two primary directions: mitigation and reinforcement. Mitigation involves softening statements, while reinforcement emphasizes them. However, the interplay between these two can often be complex; a mitigating phrase may subtly reinforce an idea, reflecting the intricacies of our communicative intentions.

Consider, for example, a litotes like "John is not bright." The interpretation of such a statement is context-dependent, leaving it to the interlocutor to discern whether it serves as a mere observation, a critique, or an attempt at gentle advice. This ambiguity showcases the complicated rhetorical function of language, where meaning is not fixed but emerges through interaction.

As we embark on a more in-depth exploration of pragmatics, we will unravel these concepts further, examining how our linguistic choices shape and are shaped by the contexts in which we communicate. By understanding the role of style and modulation in pragmatics, we can gain a more subtle appreciation for the art of effective communication and the richness of human expression.[1]

Perspectives on Pragmatics: A Spectrum of Definitions

Pragmatics is a field of linguistics concerned with how context influences communication. Charles Morris, a founding figure in semiotics, is often credited with laying the groundwork for pragmatics. He defined it as "the study of the relation of signs to interpreters" (Morris, 1938: 6). However, modern pragmatics has broadened its scope to

[1] The examples used in this introductory section are borrowed from Claudia Caffi, *Mitigation*, Elsevier Ldt., 2007, pp. 1-2.

encompass the entire communication process, focusing on "messages" and "language users" rather than just the signs themselves.

The core principle of pragmatics is that meaning is constructed not just by the words themselves, but also by the context in which they are used. Meaning includes the speaker's intention, the listener's background knowledge, and the social setting. It is all about understanding how language functions in real-world situations, beyond the ideal structures explored in grammar.

This user-centered approach to language is closely connected to the well-known concept of "performance" introduced by linguist Noam Chomsky. Performance refers to the actual use of language in everyday situations; as opposed to the underlying grammatical competence (Chomsky, 1965).To further explore this idea, philosopher Jerrold Katz builds on this distinction by emphasizing the difference between grammatical theories and pragmatic theories. While grammatical theories are primarily concerned with the structural aspects of sentences, pragmatic theories delve into how language users negociate meaning in real-life contexts. Katz highlights that pragmatic theories aim to "explicate the reasoning of speakers and hearers" (Katz, 1977:19), underscoring the active process of interpretation and communication in everyday language use. This outlook is in harmony with the user-centered approach, as it focuses on the practical reasoning involved in language performance.

Therefore, the focus on the language user is a defining characteristic of pragmatics. Researchers in this field are primarily interested in how speakers and listeners use language to achieve their communicative goals, taking into account the context and shared understanding. This "user's point of view" (Mey, 2001: 5), serves as the central guiding principle for pragmatic research.

The Importance of Social Context[2] in Language Use: A Pragmatic Perspective

Linguist Stephen Levinson emphasizes the centrality of the language user in pragmatics. He argues that a pragmatic analysis should explicitly consider "the speaker, or to put it in more general terms, the user of language" (Levinson, 1983: 4-5). In his view, pragmatics is "the study of those relations between language and context." (Levinson, 1983: 9).

Pragmatics, in its broadest sense, encompasses everything that defines us as language users who actively "do things with language." As members of a society, we rely on established rules and norms within our communities. Communication primarily occurs through language within a social context. Therefore, a true pragmatic understanding requires considering the users within their specific social environment.

Social Beings Using Language in Society

Language users, as social beings, communicate and utilize language based on societal expectations. Society, in turn, controls their access to linguistic and communicative tools. As the study of how humans use language in communication, pragmatics delves into these societal premises and how they influence language use. Therefore,

> **"Pragmatics studies the use of language in human communication as determined by the conditions of society" (**Mey, 2001: 6)

The Relevance and Value of Pragmatics

[2] A separate lecture will be devoted to Context in pragmatics

A fundamental question arises: what does pragmatics offer as unique insights compared to linguistics? How do pragmatic methods enhance our understanding of the human mind, communication processes, manipulation through language, and overall language use? The answer lies in achieving a more comprehensive, in-depth, and fundamentally more realistic picture of human language behavior.

It is evident that outside of pragmatics, interpretations can be lacking. Sometimes, a pragmatic explanation is the only one that makes sense. Consider the following example:

Two friends, John and Paul, are conversing at a cafe. John shares a story with Paul.

John: "I just met the old Irishman and his son, coming out of the closet."

Paul: "I wouldn't have thought there was room for both of them."

John: "No, silly! I mean I was coming out of the closet. They were waiting." [3]

Pragmatic Analysis

- Relevance: John's first statement seems to stay on topic because they are talking about meeting someone (Maxim of Relation).
- Clarity: Paul's response sounds unclear or confusing since he talks about fitting two people in a closet, which is not typical (Maxim of Manner).
- Truthfulness: John corrects the misunderstanding by providing more accurate information, ensuring he is honest (Maxim of Quality).
- Amount of Information: John's clarification is just enough to clear things up without over-explaining. The word "silly" might seem unnecessary, but in a friendly conversation, it does not feel out of place (Maxim of Quantity).[4]

[3] Levinson, 1983, adapted from David Lodge, *Paradise News*, 1992

[4] Grice's Maxims and Cooperative Principle will be elucidated in detail in our Speech Acts Lecture

A pragmatic understanding is crucial in this conversation because a literal interpretation of John's initial statement results in confusion. The implicature conveyed by John's clarification helps Paul understand the situation accurately. This example highlights how context, social norms, and shared knowledge are essential for accurate interpretation of language and conversational meaning. One of the tasks of pragmatics is to explain how the same context can be expressed differently across various contexts (cultural, religious, professional, etc.).

Pragmatics as Behavior: A Different Perspective

Pragmatics can also be understood from the point of view of behavior, a standpoint championed by some early pragmatists like Watzlawick et al. (1968). They expressed dissatisfaction with information science and linguistics, arguing that these fields focused solely on one-way transmission of signs, neglecting the interactive and communicative aspects (Watzlawick, et al., 1968: 22). In their words, "From the perspective of pragmatics, all behavior, not only speech, is communication, and all communication—even the communicational clues in an impersonal context—affects behavior" (Watzlawick, et al. 1968: 22). Their approach prioritized communication and behavior over a purely linguistic one, viewing them as practically synonymous: "pragmatics is behavior, is communication" (Watzlawick, et al. 1968: 23). They further argued that "one cannot not communicate" due to the inherent communicative nature of all behavior (Watzlawick, et al. 1968:72).

This behavioral emphasis likely explains the lack of influence from this school of thought on the dominant linguistic movements of the era, most of which stemmed from the "Chomskyan revolution" with its focus on formal syntactic structures (Watzlawick, et al. 1968:13). Watzlawick et al. (1968:18) contended that the pursuit of "abstracting the formal relations between communication and behavior" was unrealistic, resulting in the field of communication receiving "remarkably little attention"(12).

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Lecture 2

Part 1

The Importance of Pragmatics: The Power of Communication

Part 1 of this long lecture introduces us to the ways in which pragmatics empowers us as communicators. It is more than an apology for pragmatics or the study of pragmatics in a Master of Literature and Civilization. It brings forth arguments to validate the need for the study of Pragmatics, not only as part of English language learning, but also as part of literary and cultural analysis.

The Importance of Communication

A world without pragmatics would seem like a world where communication is inflexible and one-dimensional. Jokes will be misunderstood, diplomacy will be taken as hypocrisy, and cultural misconstructions will proliferate. The safe world of Pragmatics equips us to understand how people use language to achieve their goals. A simple request as "Can you pass the salt?" depends largely on the context (a tense dinner or a casual gathering), the tone and intent behind the question can vary greatly."

The phrase "Can you pass the salt?" exemplifies how the same words can convey different meanings and intentions depending on the context, tone, and nonverbal cues. Here is how the interpretation might differ:

A. Tense Dinner Scenario:

- Context: During a formal dinner with important guests, where there may be underlying tension or stress.

- Tone: The tone might be formal, polite, and restrained, but there could also be an undercurrent of frustration or irritation due to the tense atmosphere.
- Intent: The speaker might be subtly expressing frustration or impatience, despite maintaining outward politeness. He/she may be using the request for salt as a way *to break the tension or redirect the conversation.*

1. B. Casual Gathering Scenario:
    - Context: At a relaxed dinner party with close friends or family, where everyone is comfortable and at ease.
    - Tone: The tone would likely be casual, friendly, and light-hearted, with no underlying tension or stress.
    - Intent: The speaker's intention is simply to request the salt in a straightforward and friendly manner. There is no hidden meaning or ulterior motive behind the question; it is just a polite and casual request.

In both scenarios, the literal meaning of the words "Can you pass the salt?" remains the same, but the interpretation is heavily influenced by the context, tone of voice, and overall atmosphere of the situation. This illustrates how pragmatics, the study of how context affects meaning in communication, plays a crucial role in understanding language use in real-life interactions.

Cultural Codebreakers

Have you ever wondered why a simple "no" might be considered rude in some cultures? Pragmatics facilitates the comprehension of cultural subtleties embedded within language. It is the key to unlocking cross-cultural communication and fostering understanding. In many cultures, using a dry "no" as a response, without additional context or explanation may be perceived as rude due to several reasons:

- Directness vs. Indirectness: In some cultures, direct communication is valued, where individuals are expected to be clear and straightforward in their speech.

However, in other cultures, indirect communication is preferred, where individuals often use softer language, such as providing explanations or offering alternatives, to convey their message. A simple "no" without explanation can be seen as abrupt or impolite in cultures that favor indirect communication.

- Respect for Social Harmony: Many cultures prioritize maintaining social harmony and avoiding conflict or confrontation. In such cultures, responding with a plain "no" without offering justification or softening the message can be perceived as disrespectful or disruptive to social harmony.
- Implicit Communication Norms: Certain cultures have implicit communication norms that dictate the expected manner of speech and interaction. These norms may include using polite language, showing deference to others, and avoiding blunt or confrontational statements. Failing to adhere to these norms by responding with a bare "no" may be viewed as breaching social etiquette.
- Cultural Differences in Assertiveness: Cultural differences in assertiveness can also influence perceptions of rudeness. In cultures where assertiveness is valued, such as some Western cultures, a straightforward "no" may be seen as acceptable or even preferable. However, in cultures that prioritize modesty or humility, a blunt refusal may be interpreted as overly assertive or arrogant.

Overall, the perception of a simple "no" as rude varies across cultures due to differences in communication styles, social norms, and values related to politeness and social harmony. Understanding and respecting these cultural differences is essential for effective cross-cultural communication.

The Art of Implication

We often say more than we utter. Pragmatics helps us understand the hidden messages conveyed through "implicatures," those sly winks and nudges embedded in language. Think sarcasm, humor, and the subtle art of reading between the lines.

Here are some illustrations of implicatures in everyday language:

A. Sarcasm:

- Literal Meaning: "Wow, great job on finishing your work on time."
- Implicature: The speaker's tone and context imply the opposite meaning, suggesting that the person did not do a good job or perhaps even failed to finish the work on time.

B. Humor:

- Literal Meaning: "I'm so hungry I could eat a horse."
- Implicature: The speaker is not actually intending to eat a horse, but rather using exaggeration for comedic effect to emphasize how hungry he/she is.

C. Reading between the Lines:

- Literal Meaning: "I guess I'll see you whenever."
- Implicature: The speaker's choice of words ("whenever") suggests a lack of interest or commitment in seeing the other person, implying that he/she is not enthusiastic about the meeting.

D. Politeness:

- Literal Meaning: "Can you please pass me the salt?"
- Implicature: While the literal request is for salt, the use of "please" implies politeness and respect, suggesting that the speaker values the other person's cooperation.

E. Subtle Criticism:

- Literal Meaning: "Your presentation was certainly... interesting."

- Implicature: The speaker's hesitation and choice of words ("interesting") imply criticism or dissatisfaction with the presentation, even though he/she do not explicitly say so.

F. Understatement:

- Literal Meaning: "It's a bit chilly outside."
- Implicature: The speaker's use of "a bit" downplays the actual coldness, implying that it is very cold outside without directly stating it.

G. Insincerity:

- Literal Meaning: "I'm delighted to see you again."
- Implicature: The speaker's tone and context may suggest insincerity, implying that he/she is not actually delighted to see the other person, perhaps due to previous conflicts or negative feelings.

In each of these examples, the implicature goes beyond the literal meaning of the words spoken, conveying additional layers of meaning, intention, and emotion. Pragmatics helps us decode these hidden messages and understand the true meaning behind what is said.

Politeness in Action

Social harmony hinges on managing potentially awkward situations. Pragmatics helps us understand how people use indirectness and politeness strategies to save face and maintain a smooth flow of communication. Pragmatics also plays a crucial role in understanding how people use indirectness and politeness strategies to deal with uncomfortable situations while maintaining social harmony. Here are some examples:

A. Indirectness to Soften Requests or Refusals:

Instead of making direct requests or refusals that could potentially cause offense, individuals often use indirect language to soften the impact of their words.

Example: Instead of saying "I don't like your idea," which could be seen as blunt or rude, one might say "That's an interesting idea, but I think we should explore other options."

B. Politeness Strategies:

Politeness strategies are used to show respect, deference, and consideration for others' feelings, even in situations where there may be disagreement or tension.

Example: Using "please" and "thank you" when making requests or expressing gratitude, even if the other person is obligated to comply.

C. Face-Saving Strategies:

Face-saving strategies are employed to protect one's own dignity and the dignity of others during interactions, especially when there is potential for embarrassment or loss of face.

Example: Providing excuses or justifications to mitigate the impact of a refusal, such as "I would love to help, but I'm really swamped with other projects right now."

Mitigation and Hedging

Mitigation and Hedging: [5] the art of employing linguistic tools to soften the potential impact of our speech acts. Imagine a speech act as an action performed with words—a request, a criticism, a disagreement. Mitigation (or attenuation) helps us deliver these actions with finesse, minimizing the risk of offense or discomfort for the listener. The core principle of mitigation lies in indirectness and reduced forcefulness (this is why it is often studied in contrast to "reinforcement" or "strengthening"). We achieve this by strategically choosing words and grammatical structures:

[5] Mitigation and hedging are part of Speech Acts. Speech Act Theory, as developed by J.L. Austin. Mitigation strategies specifically deal with how we modify these speech acts to achieve a particular effect on the listener. By softening the delivery or phrasing, we can influence how the listener receives the message and potentially their response. Therefore, mitigation refines the way we perform speech acts within a conversation.

E. Polite Forms: Languages often have built-in politeness markers, such as using “pleas”" with requests or “could you” for inquiries. These markers acknowledge the listener's agency and show respect for their time or resources.

F. Indirect Requests**:** Instead of a blunt “Give me that,” we might opt for “Would you mind passing the salt?” This indirect approach softens the imperative and allows the listener the option to decline politely, potentially fostering a more positive interaction.

G. Mitigating Adverbs and Adjectives**:** Words like “a little,” “sort of,” or “slightly” can downplay the intensity of what we are saying. For instance, “I’m a little confused” sounds less accusatory than “I don’t understand!” Beyond individual tools, mitigation is crucial for social harmony. It allows us to handle potentially conflict-prone situations with greater ease. Imagine a colleague’s work is disappointing and does not quite meet high academic expectations. A direct, unmitigated approach like “Your report is bad” is likely to be demoralizing. However, a mitigated approach as “I think there might be a few areas in this report where we could improve...” creates space for constructive feedback without unnecessary negativity (Caffi, 2007).

The importance of mitigation is further amplified in cross-cultural communication. Cultures vary significantly in their tolerance for directness. What might be considered appropriately assertive in one culture could be perceived as rude in another. By being mindful of mitigation strategies, we can bridge these cultural gaps and foster more effective and respectful communication. In essence, mitigation is the art of expressing ourselves clearly while considering the potential impact on our listener. It is mainly the process of managing the social landscape of language with sensitivity and finesse.

Hedging, on the other hand, specifically involves using language to soften the impact of statements or make them less absolute, reducing the risk of causing offense or conflict.

For example, in saying "I'm not sure if that's entirely accurate" instead of "That's wrong."

Hedging is also a pragmatic strategy used to show uncertainty, or express politeness by using phrases like "kind of," "maybe," or "I think" to avoid making a definitive claim as in

"I think the new policy might improve the overall efficiency, but there could be some unforeseen challenges."

In this sentence, phrases like "I think," "might," and "could be" serve as hedges that make the statement less assertive (Hyland, 1996).

Hyland analyzes how academic writers use hedging to manage their assertions, suggesting that hedges help in presenting claims cautiously to avoid confrontation and to acknowledge the complexity of the subject matter. Pragmatic competence involves effectively conveying the intended message, along with its hints, in any socio-cultural setting, and accurately interpreting the messages of others as they were meant.

Despite its crucial role in successful communication, pragmatic competence often receives insufficient attention in second language teaching. Consequently, second-language speakers, even if grammatically proficient, may struggle to achieve their communicative goals. One area where the lack of pragmatic competence can cause significant issues for second-language speakers is hedging, a rhetorical strategy that softens either the full meaning of an expression, as in "He's sort of nice," or the full impact of a speech act, as in "I must ask you to stop doing that." When non-native speakers fail to hedge appropriately, they risk being perceived as impolite, offensive, arrogant, or simply inappropriate. Additionally, misunderstanding a native speaker's meaning due to a failure to recognize hedged utterances can occur. This is particularly

unfortunate when speakers are otherwise fluent, as it is generally expected that someone who speaks a language well grammatically has also mastered its pragmatic subtleties (Fraser 15).

Part 2

The Importance of Pragmatics: Pragmatic Strategies and Limitations in Real-World Communication

In pragmatics, understanding the power of context is essential for grasping how language is used effectively in communication. Unlike a literal approach to language, pragmatics emphasizes that meaning is not solely embedded in words but also shaped by situational, cultural, and relational contexts. Part 2 of this lecture explores several pragmatic strategies and limitations to show how individuals use language in real-world situations. By examining concepts such as vague language, speech acts, cultural nuances, and communication barriers, we gain a deeper appreciation of how meaning is constructed and interpreted.

1. **Vague Language**

Vague language serves as a tool to avoid commitment or confrontation, allowing speakers to handle sensitive topics without causing discomfort. This strategy enables smoother communication and helps maintain social harmony, especially in situations where directness might lead to conflict.

Example: Instead of directly refusing a request by saying "No," a person might say "We'll see" when they are unsure or unwilling to commit.

2. **Negative Politeness**

Negative politeness strategies are used to avoid imposing on others, respecting their autonomy, and minimizing potential conflict. By using more indirect or softened language, speakers can be considerate without sounding harsh.

Example: Saying, "I hate to bother you, but could you please lower your voice?" instead of "Lower your voice!" demonstrates a more polite and less confrontational approach.

Employing these pragmatic strategies helps individuals navigate complex social interactions, promoting effective communication while reducing the risk of offense or misunderstanding.

3. Speech Acts:[6] Language as Action

Speech acts are utterances that do more than convey information; they perform actions. Phrases like "I apologize," "I promise," and "I declare" are not merely statements but actions executed through language. Pragmatics helps us understand how these utterances function beyond their literal meaning to achieve specific communicative goals.

Examples:

"I apologize":

- Literal Meaning: A statement expressing regret or remorse.
- Speech Act Function: An act of apologizing, acknowledging fault, and seeking forgiveness.
- Pragmatic Analysis: The effectiveness of an apology depends on tone, sincerity, and context. Pragmatics examines how it is received and understood.

"I promise":

- Literal Meaning: Assurance or commitment to do something.
- Speech Act Function: The act of making a promise, indicating a commitment to future action.
- Pragmatic Analysis: Factors like credibility, intention, and context influence how promises are perceived.

"I declare":

- Literal Meaning: A formal statement or announcement.
- Speech Act Function: The act of declaring, usually with a sense of authority.

[6] A lecture will be devoted to Speech Acts

- Pragmatic Analysis: Context, authority, and audience expectations determine how declarations are understood.

4. **Limitations of Pragmatics**

1. The Subjectivity Factor

Pragmatic analysis is inherently subjective and context-dependent. What is polite in one culture might be perceived as rude in another, making universal rules challenging. Pragmatics requires cultural sensitivity to avoid misinterpretations.

Example: Interrupting a conversation may be seen as rude in North America but can indicate eagerness and engagement in some Middle Eastern cultures.

Situational Shifts

The same situation can lead to different communication strategies. Pragmatics acknowledges that there is no one-size-fits-all solution because context affects how messages are delivered and received.

Example: At a work meeting, directness might be appreciated ("This deadline seems unrealistic"). At a social event, a softer approach might be preferred ("The frosting on the cake is really creative!").

2. Language Variations: Dialects, Slang, and Individual Speech Patterns

Language variations enrich communication but can also lead to misunderstandings. Pragmatics recognizes that dialects, slang, and individual speech styles shape interpretation.

- Dialect: Regional variations (e.g., "y'all" vs. "you all") provide context clues about the speaker's background.
- Slang: Dynamic language specific to groups (e.g., "lit" or "fire") might be unclear to those outside that social circle.
- Individual Speech Patterns: Unique intonation, pacing, and vocabulary influence how messages are interpreted.

3. The Ambiguity Maze

Language can be inherently ambiguous, and even with context, multiple interpretations can persist. Pragmatics helps overcome this ambiguity but does not always resolve it entirely.

Example: The phrase "I'm fine" can mean many things based on tone, context, and prior interactions—genuine well-being, politeness, sarcasm, or dismissal.

4. Knowledge Gaps

Effective communication relies on shared background knowledge. Pragmatics assumes common ground, but knowledge gaps can lead to misunderstandings.

Example: Using technical jargon or cultural references assumes familiarity. Without shared knowledge, the listener may fail to grasp the intended meaning.

Conclusion

In conclusion, while pragmatics equips us to adapt our communication strategies effectively, it also has limitations due to cultural variability, situational shifts, and language ambiguity. Recognizing these factors allows us to become more mindful communicators, enabling us to navigate complex interactions with greater sensitivity and understanding.

Therefore, the power of context in pragmatics is crucial for understanding how meaning is constructed and conveyed in communication. Context shapes not only the interpretation of words and phrases but also the intent behind them. It allows speakers to go beyond literal meanings, enabling subtle and flexible expressions such as implicature, indirectness, and politeness. Without context, language would be limited to rigid interpretations, stripping away the richness and adaptability that characterize human interaction. Pragmatics highlights that effective communication depends on shared knowledge, cultural norms, situational factors, and the ability to infer meaning, making context a fundamental component of language use. Understanding the interplay between language and context helps us handle social interactions,

decode hidden meanings, and communicate more effectively across different settings and cultures.

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Lecture 3

The Importance of Context in Pragmatics

Context and Meaning

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines context as "the parts of discourse that surround a word or passage and can throw light on its meaning."

I have assembled a compelling array of definitions of the term "context" from Eva Illes's *The Definition of Context and its Implications for Language Teaching* (2001). I aim for it to save time and effort for my students while also offering stimulating avenues for research into the pragmatic concept of context:

> "The features of the non-linguistic world in relation to which linguistic units are systematically used. The term 'situation' is also used in this sense, as in the compound term 'situational context'."
>
> 1a. In its broadest sense, situational context includes the total non-linguistic background to a text or utterance, including the immediate situation in which it is used, and the awareness by speaker and hearer of what has been said earlier and of any relevant ex1ernal beliefs or *presuppositions*.
>
> 1b. "Others restrict the term to what is immediately observable m the co-occurring situation." (Crystal 1985: 71)
>
> (2.) "The *context* of an utterance is a small subpart of the universe of discourse shared by speaker and hearer, and includes facts about the topic of the conversation in which the utterance occurs, and also facts about the situation in which the conversation itself takes place .... The exact context of any utterance can never be specified with complete certainty. The notion of context is very flexible (even somewhat vague)." (Hurford & Heasley 1983:68-9)

(3.) "The role of context is not easy to assess and define. One difficulty is that relevant contex1 is not always directly available to the researcher. The researcher may have access to the immediate physical em-ironment in which communication takes place (including speaker. hearer, co-present others, location in time and space, activity, etc.), and may have access to the verbal environment in which a given verbal act is couched (e.g., prior and subsequent discourse). However, although these dimensions of context are significant, they do not exhaust the range of utterance-extemal variables that affect the use and interpretation of verbal behavior. To assess the import of a language user's behavior, one must consider the social and psychological world in which the language user operates at any given time." (Oehs 1979:12).

"The concept of context includes, minimally, language users' beliefs, and assumptions about temporal, spatial, and social settings; prior, ongoing, and future actions (verbal, nonverbal), and the state of knowledge and attentiveness of those participating in the social interaction at hand." (Oehs 1979:5)

(4a.) "*context* has been understood in various ways, for example to include 'relevant' aspects of the physical or social setting of an utterance.

(4b.) I shall consider context to be any background knowledge assumed to be shared by s and h and which contributes to h's interpretation of what s means by a given utterance." (Leech 1983:13)

(5.) "A context is a psychological construct, a subset of the hearer's assumptions of the world. It is these assumptions, of course, rather than the actual state of the world, that affect the interpretation of an utterance. A context in this sense is not limited to information about the immediately physical environment or the immediately preceding utterances: expectations about the future, scientific

hypotheses or religious beliefs, anecdotal memories, general cultural assumptions, beliefs about the mental state of the speaker, may all play a role in interpretation." (Sperber & Wilson 1986:15-6) (6.) "However, the context of an utterance cannot simply be identified with the spatiotemporal situation in which it occurs: it must be held to include, not only the relevant objects and actions taking place at the time, but also the knowledge shared by the speaker and hearer of what has been said earlier, in so far as this is pertinent to the understanding of the utterance. It must also be taken to include the tacit acceptance by the speaker and hearer of all relevant conventions, beliefs and presuppositions 'taken for granted' by the members of the speech community to which the speaker and hearer belong. The fact that it is in practice, and perhaps also in principle, impossible to give a full account of all these 'contextual' features should not be taken as a reason for denying their existence or their relevance." (Lyons 1968:413)

(7.) "What then might one mean by context? First, one needs to distinguish between actual situations of utterance in their multiplicity of features, and the selection of just those features that are culturally and linguistically relevant to the production and interpretation of utterances C ...) The term context, of course, labels the latter C ...). Although, ... , we may be able to reduce the vagueness by providing lists of relevant contextual features, we do not seem to have available any theory that will predict the relevance of all such features, and this is perhaps an embarrassment to a definition that seems to rely on the notion of context." (Levinson 1983:22-3)

(8.) "It is, obviously, not possible for us in a textbook to permit you to have the experience of everyday discourse in what Stenning (1978) calls a 'normal

context', where the hearer is part of the context and then experiences the text. We have to have recourse to what Stenning calls 'abnormal' contexts, where the analyst reads the text and then has to try to provide the characteristics of the context in which the text might have occurred." (Brown & Yule 1983:41-2)

(9.) "The situations which prompt people to utter speech, include every object and happening in the universe. In order to give a scientifically accurate definition of meaning for every form of a language, we should have to have a scientifically accurate knowledge of everything in the speaker's world. The actual extent of human knowledge is very small, compared to this." (Bloomfield 1935:139)

(10.) "Whereas a *communicative situation* is an empirically real part of the real world in which a great number of facts exist which have no *systematic* connection 'with the utterance (either as an object or as an act), such as the temperature, the height of the speaker, or whether grass is growing, a context is a highly idealized abstraction from such a situation and contains only those facts which systematically determine the appropriateness of conventional utterances. Part of such contexts will for example be speech participants and their internal structures (knowledge, beliefs, purposes, intentions), the acts themselves and their structures, a spatio-temporal characterization of the context in order to localize it in some actual possible world, etc." "The first property of context to be emphasized is its 'dynamic' character. A context is not just one possible world-state, but at least a sequence of world-states. Moreover, these situations do not remain identical in time, but change. Hence, a context is a *course of events*." (van Dijk 1977a:191-2)

(11.) Context ... “,which occurs before and/or after a word, a phrase or even a longer utterance or a text. The context often helps in understanding the particular meaning of the words, phrase etc. For example, the word loud in loud music is usually understood as meaning “noisy” whereas in tie with a loud pattern is understood as “unpleasantly colourful.” (Richards et al 1992:82)

(12.) “Context refers to the situation giving rise to the discourse, and within which the discourse is embedded. There are two different types of context. The first of these is the linguistic context - the language that surrounds or accompanies the piece of discourse under analysis. The second is the non-linguistic or experiential context within which the discourse takes place. Nonlinguistic contexts include: the type of communicative event (for example, joke, story, lecture, greeting, conversation); the topic; the purpose of the event; the setting, including location, time of day, season of year and physical aspects of the situation (for example, size of room, arrangement of furniture); the participants and the relationships between them; and the background knowledge and assumptions underlying the communicative event.” (Nunan 1993a:7-8)

(13a.) “In other words, context is a schematic construct. It is not 'out there', so to speak, but in the mind.” (Widdowson 1996b:63)

(13b.) “Those aspects of the circumstances of actual language use which are taken as relevant to meaning.” (Widdowson 1996b:126)

(14.) “The physical environment in which a word is used.” (Yule 1996: 128)

(l5a.) “ ‘Give me all the information, and I'll predict what is going to happen, what this or that utterance is supposed to mean.’ However, this kind of method will never work, because the concept of context that is invoked here is purely static; it bears a certain likeness to the thinking of classical physics, where

> conditions preceding a particular state of affairs in the physical world are thought of as completely determining the next development: a bit like a controlled experiment in the physics classroom or in the laboratory." (Mey 1993:8)
>
> (I5b.) "A context is dynamic, that is to say, it is an environment that is in steady development, prompted by the continuous interaction of the people engaged in language use, the users of the language. Context: is the quintessential pragmatic concept; it is by definition proactive, just as people are." (Mey 1993: 10)[7]

There has been an unending surge in exploring context within communication, as evidenced by the growing number of academic books and edited collections on the topic (e.g., Fetzer 2004, et al. Fetzer & Oishi (eds) 2011; Bouquet et al. (eds) 1999, Akman et al. (eds) 2001, Blackburn et al. (eds) 2003)). Studies of various languages have shown that there are special words or phrases called "pragmatic markers." These markers are unique because their meaning depends heavily on the situation in which they are used. This sensitivity to context (context-sensitivity) needs to be considered when we analyze their meaning, both individually (like looking up a word in a dictionary) and as part of larger sentences. It is important to remember that understanding these markers relies on having a clear definition of what "context" actually means.[8]

[7] See Eva Illes, *The Definition of Context and its Implications for Language Teaching*. PhD thesis, University of London, Institute of Education, August 2001.pp. 16-18.
[8] See Rita Finkbeiner, Jörg Meibauer and Petra B. Schumacher, Introduction, *What is Context? : Linguistic Approaches and Challenges*, p.2

The Centrality of Context in Understanding Language

The concept of context, derived from the Latin "contextus" meaning "connection" or "coherence," plays a critical role in comprehending any form of discourse, whether written or spoken. It encompasses all the surrounding elements that contribute to interpreting a particular piece of text. Notably, German scholars employed this term as early as the 16th century (Danneberg, 2000 [cited in Meibauer, 11]).

Dimensions of Context

Several key dimensions have been proposed to categorize context:

- **Intratextual Context (Co-text):** This refers to the immediate textual environment surrounding a specific element. It considers how a word or phrase relates to the surrounding sentences or clauses.
- **Infratextual Context:** This dimension focuses on the relationship between a particular passage and the entire text it belongs to. It examines how the specific passage contributes to the overall meaning and structure of the work.
- **Intertextual Context:** This dimension explores the connections between a text and other texts. It considers how the meaning of a text might be influenced by references to or allusions to other works .
- **Extatextual Context: The Foundation of Pragmatics**

The most crucial dimension for pragmatics, often referred to as "extratextual context" or "situational context," delves into the relationship between the text and the situation in which it is produced or interpreted . This dimension, also termed "communicative context" by Hanks (2009), forms the cornerstone of pragmatic analysis.

Here, most researchers concur that a communicative context encompasses at least the following elements:

- Speaker/Writer: The individual who creates the message.
- Hearer/Reader: The individual who receives and interprets the message.
- Communicative Act: The intended purpose or action associated with the message.
- Temporal and Spatial Setting: The time and place where the communication occurs.

By considering these various contextual dimensions, we gain a richer understanding of how language functions in real-world communication.[9]

Tim Wharton (2010) declared **"In pragmatics, context is everything"** (75). This statement holds true because pragmatics, unlike other areas of linguistics that focus on the core meaning of words and grammar rules, specifically delves into how those elements are shaped and influenced by the context in which they are used.

Philosopher Kent Bach (2005: 21) defines the multifaceted concept of "context" within conversation as the totality of shared knowledge that facilitates comprehension:

> What is loosely called 'context' is the conversational setting broadly construed. It is the mutual cognitive context, or salient common ground. It includes the current state of the conversation (what has just been said, what has just been referred to, etc.), the physical setting (if the conversants are face to face), salient mutual knowledge between the conversants, and relevant broader common knowledge.

Interestingly Bach's definition includes the key elements of context:

- The discourse history: This refers to the content that has already been communicated within the current conversation, including what has been explicitly said and what has been implicitly referenced.

[9] For an in-depth survey of context research, see Jörg Meibauer, "What is a context? Theoretical and empirical evidence" in *What is Context? : Linguistic Approaches and Challenges*, pp. 9-32.

- The physical setting (if applicable): When interlocutors are physically co-present, the surrounding environment can also contribute to contextual understanding.
- Salient mutual knowledge: This refers to the specific knowledge base that both participants share and can readily access during the conversation.
- Relevant broader common knowledge: This encompasses the general knowledge and background information that both interlocutors are assumed to possess.

By considering these various aspects of shared knowledge, Bach highlights the crucial role of context in enabling successful communication.

Therefore, context is the foundation upon which meaning is built in communication. It is like the stage on which a play unfolds, providing the background information and circumstances that shape how we interpret words and actions. The field of pragmatics specifically focuses on these contextual factors that influence what we say, how we say it, and how it is understood or perceived. From the previous definitions, we can list the following as key contextual elements that affect meaning.

Key contextual Elements Affecting Meaning

1. **Social Setting:** “Hey there!” versus “Good morning, Professor Smith.” The chosen greeting instantly conveys the social setting and relationship between the speaker and listener.

2. **Cultural Background:** In Japan, a bow is a common greeting that can vary in depth depending on the social status of the people involved. A slight bow might be used between colleagues, while a deep bow shows respect to superiors or elders. Misunderstanding the appropriate bow for the situation could be perceived as disrespectful.

3. **Previous Interactions:** Imagine a colleague presents his/her work and you say, "Wow, that's very creative!" Depending on your tone and relationship with the colleague, this could be genuine praise or sarcastic criticism. A close friend might understand your sarcasm through tone and past interactions, while a new colleague might interpret it literally.
4. **Relationship between Speakers:** The way we speak to colleagues differs from how we speak to family. The level of formality, humor, and directness is influenced by the relationship between the speaker and listener.

Examples of Context Shaping Meaning

"It's cold in here":

- Literal Meaning (Intended Meaning): Shivering in a genuinely cold room, requesting someone to adjust the temperature.
- Figurative Meaning (Indirect Expression): Feeling disrespected or uncomfortable during a conversation, hinting at a desire to end it or change the tone.

"Nice to meet you"

- Literal Meaning: A first-time encounter, introduction, and basic pleasantries.
- Figurative Meaning (Depending on Context): Can be sarcastic after a negative interaction or used to re-introduce yourself to someone you have vaguely met before.[10]

"Hello"

- Context of a formal meeting: A polite greeting or acknowledgment.

[10] Elisabeth Camp (2012) argues sarcasm has both semantic meaning and pragmatic meaning. Sarcasm uses a specific "operation" on meaning that people learn and use consistently. Sarcastic meaning builds on, not completely replaces, literal meaning. Therefore**,** Sarcasm can be applied to most sentences, and the intended meaning is often clear even without context. Camp proposes a "Sarcasm Operator" like other semantic rules to explain this consistency. This idea is not entirely new, with linguists like Bach and Harnish acknowledging the semantic impact of intonation in sarcasm.

- Context of passing a friend in the hallway: A casual greeting, possibly leading to further conversation.

By understanding the context, we can become more nuanced communicators, effectively conveying our intended meaning while also being adept at interpreting the messages we receive from others.

Why Context is Cardinal

Understanding language goes beyond its grammatical structure. This is where pragmatics steps in, focusing on how we use language in real-world situations. The crucial element in this puddle between speaker, language, and situation is **context**. It is therefore important to analyse the importance of context in pragmatics, highlighting the limitations of a purely grammatical approach.

Pragmatics and Speech Act Theory: Beyond the Sentence

Speech act theory, as we will see in the upcoming lectures, explores how utterances accomplish actions (e.g., promising, requesting) [Austin, 1962]. However, the meaning an utterance conveys depends not just on the words themselves, but also on the context in which they are spoken. The **grammatical point of view** analyzes language in isolation, focusing on syntax and paradigms (like verb conjugations or noun declensions). Conversely, the **user-oriented point of view** emphasizes how language is used in specific contexts (Levinson, 1983).

Beyond Grammar: Context and Meaning in Communication

Limiting pragmatics to grammatically encoded aspects of context has a certain appeal. It keeps the field focused on linguistic elements and excludes irrelevant factors. However, as Levinson argues, restricting pragmatics to “purely linguistic matters” makes it less insightful (Levinson, 1983:11). Therefore, a pragmatic approach needs to consider the context from the user's perspective, not just what grammar encodes.

The Frame Problem: A Challenge for Context Research

A fundamental challenge in context research lies in addressing the "frame problem" (Wharton, 2010). This problem refers to the difficulty of determining, from the vast amount of information available through memory, perception, and inference, the specific set of assumptions that lead to the intended interpretation by the speaker (hearer in written communication).

Similarly, van Berkum (2009) asks a related question: how can we identify the specific subset of an individual's knowledge – encompassing the world, personal history, goals, current situation, and understanding of the interlocutor – that actively contributes to interpreting incoming words? These are critical questions that highlight the complexities of context in language comprehension.

Minimalism vs. Contextualism

To go deeper into these complexities, it might be fruitful to explore the ongoing debate between minimalists and contextualists. Minimalists argue for a more restricted role of context, focusing primarily on the linguistic elements themselves. Contextualists, on the other hand, emphasize the broader situational and cognitive factors that shape interpretation. By examining the arguments of both sides, we might gain a more nuanced understanding of how context interacts with language to create meaning.[11]

Internal and External Contextualization

In linguistics, context plays a crucial role in understanding the meaning of sentences. Charles Fillmore (1975, 1981) introduced the concept of contextualization, which refers to how

[11] For an elaborate distinction between "broad" context and "narrow" context, see Robyn Carston "Linguistic Communication and the Semantics/Pragmatics Distinction." *Synthese*, vol. 165, no. 3, Dec. 2008, pp. 321-345.

sentences imply important information about their context of use. Fillmore identified two kinds of contextualization: external and internal.

External contextualization refers to what the form and content of a sentence imply about the situation in which it is expressed. For example, when someone says, "I need a box about yea big," the message can only be fully understood if the speaker and the listener are in visual contact. This form of contextualization suggests that certain sentences, when taken out of their appropriate context, may become ambiguous or even incomprehensible. It differs from situation semantics, which implies that understanding sentences is contingent upon being in the context. External contextualization emphasizes the necessity of certain situational cues for comprehension.

Internal contextualization, on the other hand, concerns what the speaker and hearer must presume about the context of the situation to understand the sentence correctly. For instance, in the sentence "The door of Henry's lunchroom opened and two men came in" (Hemingway, 1938/1953, p. 279), the internal contextualization suggests that the sentence was expressed from inside Henry's lunchroom. Even though readers are not physically inside the lunchroom, they understand the context implicitly from the sentence itself.

The processing and interpretation of a sentence depend heavily on both its physical and conceptual context. Sentences are often understood in relation to their context rather than processed independently. Psycholinguistic experiments, such as those by Bransford & Johnson (1972), Bransford & McCarrell (1974), and Dooling and Lachman (1971), have shown that without an appropriate conceptual context, some passages are not comprehended. Additionally, research by Greenspan & Segal (1984) has demonstrated that certain components of a sentence are interpreted based on context before others.

In summary, Fillmore's concept of contextualization highlights the importance of context in understanding language, both in terms of situational cues and conceptual frameworks. It emphasizes that sentences are not isolated units of meaning but are deeply intertwined with the context in which they are used. [12]

Concluding Remarks

The concept of context remains a cornerstone of pragmatic analysis. By acknowledging the challenges posed by the frame problem and delving into the minimalist vs. contextualist debate, we can continue to refine our understanding of how context shapes communication in all its richness and complexity.

[12] See Erwin M. Segal, « Narrative Comprehension and the Role of Deictic Shift Theory », Duchan, Judith F., Gail A. Bruder, and Lynne E. Hewitt, editors. Deixis in Narrative: A Cognitive Science Perspective. State University of New York, Routledge, 2009.pp. 3-18

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Lecture 4

Deixis

Introduction

Natural language is always used in certain situations—at a certain time and place by people who share significant situational perceptions and general knowledge. This contextual relationship largely determines how utterances in natural language are produced and comprehended. For instance, an utterance like: "I told her that yesterday, when she was here" is fully understandable only if we can identify several contextual factors:

(a) The speaker—the word "I" alone does not tell us who performed the action;

(b) The time of utterance—otherwise, we would not know when "yesterday" was;

(c) The location of the utterance—because "here" can refer to anywhere;

(d) The identity of "I"'s interlocutor—where "her" only indicates a female person; and

(e) Part of what was said before—namely, what is referred to by "that (Jürgen Weissenborn & Wolfgang Klein, 1982, 6).

In general, we do not face significant challenges in interpreting such utterances, as all necessary information can be derived from either the non-linguistic context (as in the case of (a), (b), and (c)) or the linguistic context (for (d) and (e), which can be gathered from previous discourse). A speaker who plans their utterance can assume that the listener has access to this contextual information, which clearly affects how the utterance is produced—what is made explicit and what is left implicit, relying on shared context.

The understanding of "what something is uttered" depends on "the linguistic form of the utterance, on features of the situation as perceived by the speaker and listener (including previous utterances), and on general knowledge shared by them." Contextuality is not only "one of the most fundamental characteristics of natural languages, especially in contrast to formal languages; it also serves as a crucial link between language, perception, and cognition" (Jürgen Weissenborn & Wolfgang Klein, 1982, 6-7).

The Pragmatics of Pointing: Deixis and Contextual Meaning

Deixis, derived from the Greek term for "pointing," exemplifies the fascinating relationship between language and its contextual framework. Central to the field of pragmatics, deixis refers to linguistic expressions that rely on a speaker's subjective position for meaning. Words like "I," "here," and "now" function as deictic expressions, their reference points shifting based on the speaker's location in space and time (Levinson, 1983; Yule 2010).

Fundamentally, deixis encompasses a category of linguistic elements designed to signal elements within the situational or discourse context. This includes the participants in the speech act (speaker and listener), the temporal setting (when), and the spatial setting (where). Any linguistic form employed for this "pointing" function is considered a deictic expression. As Anne O'Keeffe, Brian Clancy, and Svenja Adolphs observe,

> There are a number of grammatical items that encode deixis, for example, the demonstratives, this, that ; first and second person personal pronouns, I, you, we ; adverbs of time such as now, then ; adverbs of space such as here, there ; motion verbs such as come, go ; and a variety of other grammatical features such as tense markers.

These grammatical items that encode deixis are commonly referred to as deictics (O'keeffe et al,2012,36) .[13]

In written and oral communication, the addresser (the message encoder) directs a message towards an addressee (the message decoder). The addresser constructs the message from their own perspective, and consequently, deixis reflects the speaker's act of guiding both his/herself and the listener towards the context of the conversation.

John Lyons underscores the centrality of context in his definition of deixis, stating that it signifies "the location and identification of persons, objects, events, ..." (Perkins 1992, 100).[14] This highlights the crucial role deixis plays in establishing meaning within a specific situational framework.

Deictic Expressions: Anchoring Meaning in Context

Deictic expressions, central to the field of pragmatics, are linguistic tools that rely on the speaker's subjective position for meaning. Words like "I," "here," and "now" exemplify this concept. Their meaning shifts based on the speaker's location in space and time.

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[13]This statement succinctly identifies key grammatical items that encode deixis, illustrating their role in establishing context within communication. By categorizing demonstratives, personal pronouns, adverbs, motion verbs, and tense markers as deictics, it highlights how these linguistic tools are essential for situating meaning in relation to the speaker, listener, and context. Overall, this framework emphasizes the dynamic nature of language in conveying spatial and temporal relationships. See Anne O'Keeffe, Brian Clancy, and Svenja Adolphs, *Introducing Pragmatics in Use* (2011), 36.

[14] Deixis helps to anchor language in its context by allowing speakers to specify locations, identify participants, and situate events in time. The meaning of deictic expressions is reliant on the situational context, making them crucial for effective communication. See Revere Dale Perkins, *Deixis, Grammar, and Culture* (1992), 100.
3 See Gisa Rauh, *Essays on Deixis* (1983), 12.

Deictic expressions, as Anne O'Keeffe et al. observe, include "demonstratives (this, that); first and second person personal pronouns (I, you, we); adverbs of time such as now, then; adverbs of space such as here, there; motion verbs such as come, go; and a variety of other grammatical features such as tense markers" (36)[15].

Deictic expressions necessitate contextual reference for interpretation. Imagine finding a message in a bottle that reads: "Please rescue me! I've been here since last month, and my food will run out tomorrow!" Despite the urgency, identifying the author, their location, and the timeframe remains impossible. This is because "me," "I," "here," "last month," "my," and "tomorrow" are all deictic, reliant on knowledge of the author's situation for interpretation.

The Deictic Center

In face-to-face communication, deictic expressions are rooted in the speaker's position. Interpretation hinges on this position. For instance, "here" depends on the speaker's location. This "egocentric" nature arises because "the encoder's ego represents the center of orientation". The speaker's position is also referred to as the "deictic center," "zero point," "ground zero," or "origo" a term coined by Bühler in 1934 (Horn &Ward, 2004,111).[16] This

15 These deictic elements play a crucial role in anchoring language in context, allowing speakers to convey meaning relative to themselves and their audience. By providing specific references to time, space, and personal identity, they enhance clarity and relevance in communication

16 In pragmatics, the term "encoder's ego" refers to the speaker's perspective or viewpoint, which serves as the primary reference point for understanding deictic expressions. This concept is often called the "deictic center," "zero point," "ground zero," or "origo." It signifies that the meaning of deictic terms—such as pronouns, demonstratives, and adverbs of time and space—relies on the speaker's position in relation to the context of the communication. Essentially, these expressions are anchored in the speaker's perspective, affecting how listeners interpret the intended meaning based on their own location in time and space.See Laurence Horn and Gergory Ward, *The Handbook of Pragmatics* (2004), 111

center is typically organized around an "I-here-now" axis where "the speaker casts themself in the role of the ego and relates everything to their viewpoint".[17]

The Deictic Center (DC) refers to the point of reference from which deictic terms are interpreted in language. Deictic terms are words like "here," "there," "now," "I"" "you," and "him/her," which rely on the speaker's and hearer's environmental situation for their meaning. Buhler identified three components of this situation: temporal, spatial, and personal.

At the center of the deictic situation are "here," "now," and "I." "Here" refers to the speaker's current location, "now" refers to the current moment in time, and "I" refers to the speaker themselves. Objects or entities close to the speaker"s location are referred to as "this," while those away are referred to as "that." Similarly, personal pronouns like "you" and "him/her" are used to refer to individuals in relation to the speaker.

Temporal adverbs like "then" and tense markers (present, past, future) indicate the temporal relation to the deictic center. The deictic center is not merely a point of origin but encompasses all elements of the current spatial and temporal context for the user of the deictic terms.

In fictional narrative, Deictic Shift Theory (DST) suggests that readers and authors shift their deictic center from the real-world situation to an imagined location within the story world. This cognitive structure represents a particular time and place within the fictional world or even within the subjective space of a fictional character.

The DC serves to provide coherence to a text when this coherence is not explicitly represented in the syntax or lexicon. Events and aspects of a story may be described without explicit

[17]In this context, the speaker positions him/herself as the "ego," meaning he/she views and interprets the surrounding world from a personal perspective. This approach allows the speaker to reference people, places, and events relative to his/her own situation. See *Introducing Pragmatics in Use*, 42

reference to where, when, or to whom they belong. However, the reader's understanding is constrained by context. If a DC has been established, the reader can correctly localize those story aspects within the narrative.

The DC is dynamic and shifts as the story unfolds. Major research problems in DST include identifying the properties of DCs and the principles by which a DC may be created, identified, and shifted. These issues are central to understanding how readers engage with fictional narratives and how authors construct coherent story worlds (Segal 15-16).

Types of Deixis

There are several categories of deictic expressions:

Person Deixis: The most common examples involve the pronouns "I," "you," and "we." Person deixis refers to using language to directly reference someone present in the context of utterance. It reflects the different roles individuals play: speaker, addressee, and others. The deictic center (origo) shifts when roles shift – "I" becomes "you" and "here" becomes "there." Person deixis also distinguishes between "I/you" and "he/she/it." The third person is not a direct participant in "I/you" interaction and is considered more distant in deictic terms. Using a third person form instead of a second person one can communicate distance and non-familiarity, as in a busy person addressing a lazy one with "Would his Highness like some coffee?" In the use of the deictic *we*, there is a potential ambiguity which allows different interpretations. There is an "exclusive" *we* (speaker plus other(s), excluding addressee) and an "inclusive" *we* (speaker and addressee included). The inclusive- exclusive distinction may also be noted in the difference between saying "let's go" to some friends and "Let us go" (to

someone who has captured the speaker and his/her friends). The action of going is inclusive in the first, but exclusive in the second (Widdowson, 1996,11).[18]

- **Space Deixis:** Space or spacial deixis is used with reference to the location of the speaker or addressee. The prototypical cases of spatial deixis are here and there, as exemplified in "I'll put this here/there." The word here exemplifies what is known as proximal deixis, an indication of something that is relatively close to the speaker. (To "approximate" something is to come close to it.) There is an instance of what is known as distal or non-proximal deixis, indicating a location that is some distance from the speaker. As you would expect, this is proximal while that is distal, indicating relative distance from the speaker.
- **Time Deixis:** Time or temporal deixis is relative to the time of utterance. It is the moment at which the utterance is pronounced, hence, now refers to the span of time which includes the moment of utterance, and today means the day in which the speaking takes place. Expressions such as tomorrow, next Thursday, yesterday, or three years ago, are counted forwards or backwards from the time of utterance.
- **Social Deixis:** Social deixis refers to how language reflects the rank or social status of individuals relative to the speaker or writer, be it within a family, institution, or broader society. A classic example is the distinction between

[18] The **inclusive-exclusive distinction** in pronouns refers to the way the pronoun "we" can either include or exclude the listener. The **inclusive "we"** encompasses both the speaker and the addressee, as in the phrase, **"Let's go to the movies tonight!"** Here, the speaker is inviting the listener to join in the action. Conversely, the **exclusive "we"** refers to the speaker and others while **excluding** the listener, as in **"We are going to the beach this weekend."** In this case, the speaker indicates that the action is intended for himself or herself and their friends, leaving the listener out of this specific plan. This distinction is significant in communication as it clarifies the intended group for an action, thereby managing expectations and social dynamics between the speaker and the listener.See H. G. Widdowson *Pragmatics* (1996), 11.

familiar and non-familiar address forms in some languages, like the T/V distinction (tu/vous) in French. Expressions like "sir" or "madam" that indicate higher status are known as "honorifics."

- **Discourse Deixis:** The least common of the four types, discourse deixis involves deictic terms referencing not the context of utterance (time, place, speaker) but rather a part of the utterance itself or a proposition it evokes. For instance, "I bet you haven't heard this story" uses "this" deictically to refer to the upcoming story within the discourse itself. Here is an interesting definition of discourse deixis as "language which points to a section or aspect of the discourse context or co-text in which that language is used." With reference to referential deictic words, discouse deixis "is the use of these 'pointing expressions to refer to an aspect of the discourse or the discourse situation" (Macrae 35).

Deixis and Meaning in literary texts

Deixis contributes to the meaning of a literary work by encoding the relationships between the specific location, time, participants, and social context of the text. By using deictic expressions, authors can create a sense of immediacy, intimacy, and engagement with the reader, as well as convey complex social and personal relationships between characters. Deixis can also create ambiguity and ambivalence, which can add depth and complexity to the interpretation of the text.For example, in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, the use of the deictic expression "we" in the sentence "we are all in an uproar" creates ambiguity, as it is unclear who exactly is included in the "we." This ambiguity reflects the complex social dynamics of the novel and the power dynamics between the characters. .Similarly, in Mitch Albom's *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*, the use of deictic expressions such as "he,"

"there," and "now" create a sense of immediacy and engagement with the reader, as they are transported into the world of the novel and the experiences of the main character.

Deixis can also reflect social and cultural norms and values, as well as the historical context of the text. For example, in Shakespeare's plays, the use of deictic expressions such as "thou" and "thee" reflect the social hierarchy and power dynamics of the time.

Overall, deixis is a powerful tool for authors to create meaning and engage readers in literary works. By using deictic expressions, authors can create a sense of immediacy, intimacy, and engagement, as well as convey complex social and personal relationships between characters. Deixis can also create ambiguity and ambivalence, which can add depth and complexity to the interpretation of the text.

Deixis and Narrative point of view

Deixis and narrative are closely connected through their mutual reliance on context to convey meaning. In narratives, deixis plays a crucial role in grounding the characters and events within a specific spatial and temporal framework, allowing the audience to travel through the story's world. When a speaker refers to their location or perspective, such as in the expression "there," it not only points to a physical space but also shapes the audience's understanding of the narrative context. For instance, in T.S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," the speaker's self-referential comments and movements create a sense of introspection and disconnection from the surrounding world, thus enriching the narrative by illustrating the psychological landscape of the character.

Furthermore, narrative deixis, as illustrated by Ehlich (1982), emphasizes how the speaker's actual position can diverge from the denotation and reference space within the story. This divergence is particularly significant in narrative texts, where spatial movements may suggest deeper plans of action or psychological states. As Haarwood (1976) notes, in non-literature cultures, spatial deixis often dominates the narrative structure, reflecting the characters' experiences in a tangible world. In this context, deixis serves not only as a tool for orientation but also as a mechanism for character development and thematic exploration. For instance, when a character articulates his/her intent to "go down there" or "up there," this suggests specific goals or challenges that reflect with their narrative position. The alignment of the perceived space with personal experience fosters a deeper connection between the characters and their environments, illustrating how deixis enriches narrative discourse by situating characters within their lived realities. Thus, the relationship between deixis and narrative is not merely one of pointing but also of shaping the audience's emotional and cognitive engagement with the story.

The speaker's or writer's "here" and "now" establish the absolute deictic center. Deictic projection becomes particularly relevant in analyzing deixis within fiction, where the deictic center typically aligns with the position of a narrator or character within an imaginary situational context. Deixis plays a crucial role in shaping the point of view in narrative texts. Contemplate this passage:

> *The wind booms down the curved length of the trailer and under its roaring passage he can hear the scratching of fine gravel and sand. It could be bad on the highway with the horse trailer. He has to be packed and away from the place that morning (Annie Proulx, Brokeback Mountain, 1997).*

Here, the deictic center is relative to the entire narrative timeframe. It is not that the character needs to leave "that morning" the wind blows, but rather "that morning" being described by these events. The use of the distal deictic "that" creates a sense of observation from a distance. Writers frequently utilize such devices for subtle literary effects.

Deixis and Poetic Voice

Reflecting on T.S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," a first-person monologue by the poet persona, it becomes evident that the poem challenges conventional notions of love and self-identity. The title itself is suspect because the poem is far from being a love song. This distrust extends to the consistency of the poet persona, who seems to divide himself at the beginning into "you and I" – acting as both addresser and addressee of the monologue.

Practice:

1. The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock (1920) by T.S. Eliot

S'io credesse che mia risposta fosse
A persona che mai tornasse al mondo,
Questa fiamma staria senza piu scosse.
Ma perciocche giammai di questo fondo
Non torno vivo alcun, s'i'odo il vero,
Senza tema d'infamia ti rispondo.

Let us go then, you and I,
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherized upon a table;
Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,
The muttering retreats
Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels
And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells:
Streets that follow like a tedious argument
Of insidious intent
To lead you to an overwhelming question….
Oh, do not ask, "What is it?"
Let us go and make our visit.

In the room the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo.

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,
The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes
Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,
Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains,
Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from chimneys,
Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap,
And seeing that it was a soft October night,
Curled once about the house, and fell asleep.

And indeed there will be time
For the yellow smoke that slides along the street,
Rubbing its back upon the window panes;
There will be time, there will be time
To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet;
There will be time to murder and create,
And time for all the works and days of hands
That lift and drop a question on your plate;
Time for you and time for me,
And time yet for a hundred indecisions,
And for a hundred visions and revisions,
Before the taking of a toast and tea.

In the room the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo.

And indeed there will be time
To wonder, "Do I dare?" and, "Do I dare?"
Time to turn back and descend the stair,
With a bald spot in the middle of my hair—
(They will say: "How his hair is growing thin!")
My morning coat, my collar mounting firmly to the chin,
My necktie rich and modest, but asserted by a simple pin—
(They will say: "But how his arms and legs are thin!")
Do I dare
Disturb the universe?
In a minute there is time
For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse.

For I have known them all already, known them all:
Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons,
I have measured out my life with coffee spoons;
I know the voices dying with a dying fall
Beneath the music from a farther room.
So how should I presume?

And I have known the eyes already, known them all—
The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase,

And when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin,
When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall,
Then how should I begin
To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways?
And how should I presume?

And I have known the arms already, known them all—
Arms that are braceleted and white and bare
(But in the lamplight, downed with light brown hair!)
Is it perfume from a dress
That makes me so digress?
Arms that lie along a table, or wrap about a shawl.
And should I then presume?
And how should I begin?

. . . . . .

Shall I say, I have gone at dusk through narrow streets
And watched the smoke that rises from the pipes
Of lonely men in shirt-sleeves, leaning out of windows?…

I should have been a pair of ragged claws
Scuttling across the floors of silent seas.

. . . . . .

And the afternoon, the evening, sleeps so peacefully!
Smoothed by long fingers,
Asleep … tired … or it malingers,
Stretched on the floor, here beside you and me.
Should I, after tea and cakes and ices,
Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis?
But though I have wept and fasted, wept and prayed,
Though I have seen my head (grown slightly bald) brought in upon a platter,
I am no prophet—and here's no great matter;
I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker,
And I have seen the eternal Footman hold my coat, and snicker,
And in short, I was afraid.

And would it have been worth it, after all,
After the cups, the marmalade, the tea,
Among the porcelain, among some talk of you and me,
Would it have been worth while,
To have bitten off the matter with a smile,
To have squeezed the universe into a ball
To roll it toward some overwhelming question,
To say: "I am Lazarus, come from the dead,
Come back to tell you all, I shall tell you all"—
If one, settling a pillow by her head,
Should say: "That is not what I meant at all;
That is not it, at all."

And would it have been worth it, after all,
Would it have been worth while,

After the sunsets and the dooryards and the sprinkled streets,
After the novels, after the teacups, after the skirts that trail along the floor—
And this, and so much more?—
It is impossible to say just what I mean!
But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a screen:
Would it have been worth while
If one, settling a pillow or throwing off a shawl,
And turning toward the window, should say:
"That is not it at all,
That is not what I meant, at all."

. . . . . .

No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;
Am an attendant lord, one that will do
To swell a progress, start a scene or two,
Advise the prince; no doubt, an easy tool,
Deferential, glad to be of use,
Politic, cautious, and meticulous;
Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse;
At times, indeed, almost ridiculous—
Almost, at times, the Fool.

I grow old … I grow old …
I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled.

Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?
I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the beach.
I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.

I do not think that they will sing to me.

I have seen them riding seaward on the waves
Combing the white hair of the waves blown back
When the wind blows the water white and black.

We have lingered in the chambers of the sea
By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown
Till human voices wake us, and we drown.

Instructions:

Read the poem carefully and consider the following questions:

1. What kind of speaker is the persona?
2. What is the frequency of deictic expressions?
3. What are the kinds of deixis used?

4. How does the use of deictic expressions interact with other aspects of the poem in order to convey a sense of disorientation?
5. How is the speaker's position expressed from the temporal and spatial points of view?
6. What is the significance of *I*, *you*, *me*, and *we*? (Consider the inclusive and exclusive dimensions).
7. Explore the use of verbs, tenses, and adverbs of time in the poem.
8. Analyse the poem's deictic centre.

Further Practice with Sample Answer:

Analyzing Deixis in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*

Question:

In Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, the use of deictic expressions such as "here," "there," "now," and "then" creates a sense of immediacy and engagement with the reader. Select a passage from the novel that contains deictic expressions and analyze how they contribute to the meaning of the text.

Instructions:

1. Choose a passage from *Mrs. Dalloway* that contains deictic expressions.
2. Identify the deictic expressions in the passage and explain their meaning. Look for words or phrases that indicate a specific location, time, or person in the narrative, such as "here," "there," "this," "that," "now," "then," "he," "she," "they," etc.
3. Analyze how the deictic expressions contribute to the meaning of the text, including the social and cultural context of the novel.
4. Explain how the use of deixis creates a sense of immediacy, intimacy, or engagement with the reader.

5. Analyze spatial and temporal awareness and determine how deictic expressions like “there” or “here” contribute to the reader’s understanding of the story’s setting and timeline. Consider how these expressions immerse the reader into the world of the novel.
6. Examine Personal Engagement: Explore how deictic expressions like pronouns (“he,” “she”) create a sense of intimacy or engagement with the characters. Analyze the effect of these expressions on the reader’s connection to the story.
7. Consider Social and Cultural Context: Reflect on how the use of deictic expressions reflects the social and cultural context of the narrative. Look for indications of social status, power dynamics, and gender roles conveyed through these expressions.
8. Assess how the use of deictic expressions contributes to the narrative’s tone, atmosphere, and themes. Consider how they enhance the reader’s experience and understanding of the story.
9. Provide evidence from the text to support your analysis by quoting directly from the novel.

Example answer:

Sample Passage:

> *"For there she was (Mrs. Dalloway, of course, Lady Rosseter; where else, at this hour, could she be?), coming along the opposite side of the street, returning from Regent's Park, dressed in that particularly attractive dress which she knew he admired, with the flowers in her hair which he had praised so highly the night before" (Woolf 11).*

Analysis:

In this passage, the deictic expressions “there” and “he” create a sense of immediacy and engagement with the reader. The use of “there” indicates the location of Mrs. Dalloway, who

is returning from Regent's Park. This creates a sense of spatial awareness for the reader, as they are transported into the world of the novel and the experiences of the characters.

The use of "he" also creates a sense of intimacy and engagement, as it refers to the unnamed character who admires Mrs. Dalloway's dress and flowers. This creates a sense of personal connection between the characters and the reader, as they become invested in the relationship between Mrs. Dalloway and the unnamed character.

Furthermore, the use of deixis in this passage reflects the social and cultural context of the novel. The use of the title *Mrs. Dalloway* and the honorific "Lady Rosseter" indicate the social status of the character and the power dynamics between the characters. The use of "he" also reflects the gender dynamics of the time, as it implies a male character in a position of power and admiration.

Overall, the use of deixis in this passage creates a sense of immediacy, intimacy, and engagement with the reader, as well as reflects the social and cultural context of the novel. The use of deictic expressions such as "there" and "he" creates a sense of spatial awareness and personal connection, as well as reflects the power dynamics and gender dynamics of the time.

In Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, the deictic expressions "there" and "he" create a sense of immediacy and engagement with the reader. The use of "there" indicates the location of Mrs. Dalloway, who is returning from Regent's Park, thus providing spatial awareness for the reader and immersing them in the novel's world.

Similarly, the use of "he" refers to the unnamed character who admires Mrs. Dalloway's dress and flowers, fostering a sense of personal connection between the characters and the reader. This intimacy engages the reader with the relationship between Mrs. Dalloway and the unnamed character.

Furthermore, the deictic expressions in this passage reflect the social and cultural context of the novel. The use of the title *Mrs. Dalloway* and the honorific "Lady Rosseter" indicate the characters' social status and the power dynamics between them. Additionally, the use of "he" implies a male character in a position of power and admiration, reflecting the gender dynamics of the time.

Overall, the use of deictic expressions such as "there" and "he" creates a sense of immediacy, intimacy, and engagement with the reader, while also reflecting the social and cultural context of the novel.

Discourse Deixis Practice:

As explained earlier, discourse deixis refers to language that points to specific parts or aspects of the discourse context or co-text. As Macrae explains, deixis is "the name given to a subset of words which can be used as 'pointing' expressions" (36). Unlike most words with relatively stable meanings, deictic words have referential values that change with each use and can only be understood in relation to their context. Examples include words like "I," "it," "here," "above," and "soon" (Macrae 36).

Macrae notes that discourse deixis "often works in tandem with general references to, or otherwise foregrounding of, aspects of fictional discourse and/or the fictional discourse situation" (36). This can include metafictional elements like narrators discussing storytelling conventions or overt intertextuality, which can disrupt the reader's immersion and heighten awareness of their role as a reader.

The distinguishing feature of discourse deixis, according to Macrae, is that it "requir[es] the reader to recourse to, reflect on, or re-cognize the context of the utterance, including her deictic centre within the discourse situation, as part of the act of processing and resolving the

meaning of the discourse deictic referent" (36). To illustrate this, Macrae provides a comparison:

> Compare, for example, a narrator within a story stating 'stories are hard to tell' and 'this story is hard to tell'. The core meaning of the former example, 'stories are hard to tell', does not substantially change if spoken by a different narrator, or if occurring in a different story or in discourse of a different type (e.g. non-literary discourse). Even if the identity of the speaker changes, further inferable meanings such as 'the speaker of the utterance believes the proposition entailed in the utterance to be true' hold fast. The meaning of the latter example, 'this story is hard to tell', requires the reader to reflect on the discourse context to resolve the specific reference of 'this story'—that is, which story, in particular is being referred to—and that referent would be different if the statement were lifted out of this context and into a different story (Macrae 36).

Based on this comparison, explore the following practice question:

Read the following excerpt from the opening of Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*:

> "All this happened, more or less. The war parts, anyway, are pretty much true. One guy I knew really was shot in Dresden for taking a teapot that wasn't his. Another guy I knew really did threaten to have his personal enemies killed by hired gunmen after the war. And so on. I've changed all the names."

Now, ponder these two statements:

1. "Wars are difficult to write about."
2. "This war is difficult to write about."

A) Identify which of these statements employs discourse deixis. Explain your choice.

B) How does the use of discourse deixis in the statement you chose affect the reader's engagement with the text? Consider how it might make the reader reflect on the context of the utterance.

C) In the excerpt, find an example of discourse deixis used by Vonnegut. Explain how this example requires the reader to consider the specific context of the novel.

D) How does Vonnegut's use of discourse deixis in this opening paragraph contribute to the overall tone and narrative style of the novel's beginning?

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Lecture 5

Paul Grice's Implicature

Paul Grice, a prominent philosopher of language, introduced the concept of "implicature" in 1989 in his seminal work "Logic and Conversation." Grice contended that a speaker's message is not confined to just the explicit words uttered but also encompasses what is implied or suggested. He coined the term "implicature" to capture this idea, highlighting the importance of understanding what a speaker might mean or imply beyond their literal words (Grice 1967). [19]

Conversational implicature, a crucial component of Grice's theory, refers to the inferences or suggestions that listeners draw from the context of a conversation. It arises from adhering to the cooperative principle, which guides effective communication. For instance, when someone says, "Look, the train!" upon approaching a train station, the implicit message is "we must hurry," not "what a lovely color it has!"

"Implicature" refers to both the act of implying one thing while saying another and the resulting meaning. It can take various forms, including conventional and unorthodox implicatures, and may depend on the discourse context. Examples include metaphor, irony, and understatement.

Implicature is not only essential for effective communication but also serves broader purposes, such as maintaining social harmony, conveying information indirectly, enhancing

[19] Grice's concept of "implicature" emphasizes that communication often involves more than the literal meaning of words. It highlights how speakers can convey additional meanings, assumptions, or suggestions without directly stating them, relying on the listener's ability to infer this implied content. Understanding implicature is crucial for grasping the subtleties of language use, as it accounts for the unspoken elements that contribute to effective communication.See Herbert Paul Grice, "Logic and conversation". - 1967 - In Paul Grice (ed.), *Studies in the Way of Words*. Harvard University Press. pp. 41-58.

stylistic expression, and economizing language. The concept of speaker implicature acknowledges that each speaker's intentions play a pivotal role in determining the message they wish to convey. Grice's work was pivotal in systematically exploring cases where a speaker's intended meaning diverges from the literal interpretation of their words. To illustrate the concept further, think through the following conversation:

Ali: "It's quite warm in here, don't you think?"

Sam: "Yes, I forgot to mention that the heater is on."

Ali: "I see. I'm getting rather warm now."

In this conversation, Ali's remark about the temperature implies that he wants the heater turned off, even though he did not explicitly state it. Sam correctly interprets this implied request and responds accordingly. This example illustrates how implicature is integral to effective communication and how understanding implicit messages is crucial for accurate interpretation.

Grice introduced the technical terms "implicate" and "implicature" to describe situations where a speaker's words differ from what they thereby meant or inferred. This concept aligns with what Searle called an indirect speech act, where the speaker communicates one act (like refusing to go somewhere) by performing another (like saying they must visit their mom).

Common Types of Conversational Implicature:

Implicature relies on the characteristics of the conversational context rather than the standard meaning of the statement being said. In everyday speech and literature, conversational implicature takes many different forms across all known languages and sentence types. These approaches to language comprehension and usage highlight the relationship between spoken words and implied meanings, as well as the reason or manner of the implicature. Figures of speech, or tropes, are well-known implicatures. Since Aristotle's time, people have recognized the use of irony, understatement (meiosis and litotes), overstatement (hyperbole),

synecdoche, and metaphor as stylistic elements. A sarcastic remark like "The weather is lovely" during a blizzard implies that the weather is terrible. The speaker uses overstatement to mock the extreme weather. Similarly, the phrase "The cheeseburger wants more coffee" is a classic example of metonymy, implying that the person who ordered the cheeseburger desires more coffee. Figurative language is not literal; speakers typically intend something else entirely and expect their listeners to understand them.

Grice's framework for understanding conversational implicature includes a broad cooperation principle and four maxims (quantity, quality, relation, and manner) that describe how to be cooperative in communication. He emphasizes the cooperative nature of language, where speakers and listeners mutually agree to participate in a discourse, understanding and abiding by certain rules for efficient communication:

- **Maxim of Quality**: This maxim advises speakers to provide information that is true and based on evidence. It discourages the sharing of false or misleading information (Grice, 1975).
- **Maxim of Quantity**: Speakers should offer an appropriate amount of information—neither too much nor too little. They are expected to be as informative as necessary without overwhelming the listener with unnecessary details (Grice, 1975).
- **Maxim of Relation**: Also known as the maxim of Relevance, it suggests that speakers should contribute information that is directly related to the topic at hand, avoiding digressions or unrelated responses (Grice, 1975).
- **Maxim of Manner**: This maxim emphasizes clarity, brevity, and orderliness. Speakers should avoid ambiguity and obscurity, ensuring that their message is presented in a straightforward and comprehensible manner (Grice, 1975).

Indeed, the maxims of Quality, Quantity, Relation, and Manner, as outlined by Grice, are fundamental principles in cooperative communication. They guide how speakers provide information and how listeners interpret it. However, as with many linguistic concepts, these maxims are not always universally applicable, and there are instances where they can come into conflict with other principles or social norms.

Balancing Maxims with Competing Principles in Communication

While Grice's maxims offer a foundational framework for cooperative communication, he acknowledged that they are not the only guiding principles at play. In real-world interactions, other considerations, such as style and politeness, can influence how language is used, sometimes leading to deviations from the maxims. These principles introduce distinctions and complexities that reflect the dynamic, context-dependent nature of language:

- **Principle of Style**: This principle emphasizes the importance of using engaging, captivating language to make writing more compelling and enjoyable. However, this can sometimes result in violating the maxim of Manner, as excessive use of figures of speech or complex language can lead to ambiguity or obscurity.
- **Principle of Politeness**: This principle highlights the importance of politeness and social niceties, which can sometimes conflict with the maxim of Quantity. For instance, speakers may choose to omit certain information that could potentially offend or disappoint the listener, even if it would be relevant to the conversation.

It is important to note that language is dynamic and context-dependent, and there are often competing factors at play. While the Gricean maxims provide a useful framework for understanding communicative behavior, they are not absolute rules, and they must be interpreted in light of the broader social and cultural context.

Practice

Practice

1. The following exercise will help you apply your understanding of Grice's maxims to literary analysis and explore how language can be used to communicate more than just the literal meaning. This exercise will help you apply your understanding of Grice's maxims to literary analysis and explore how language can be used to communicate more than just the literal meaning The example is from William Shakespeare's play *Hamlet*:

Hamlet: "'There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio/ Than are dreamt of in your philosophy." (Act 1, Scene 5)

Task:

1. Identify at least two Gricean maxims that are flouted in this line.
2. Explain how the flouting of these maxims creates implicatures (indirect meanings).
3. What are the specific implicatures conveyed by this line?
4. How do these implicatures contribute to the overall meaning and themes of the play?
5. Discuss the possible effects of these implicatures on the audience.

Further Exploration:

- Can you think of alternative ways Hamlet could have expressed the same idea without violating any maxims? How would this change the meaning and impact of the line?
- Research other examples of implicature in Shakespearean plays. How does Shakespeare use implicature to create dramatic tension, develop characters, or convey deeper meaning?

Model Answer:

1. Flouted Maxims:

- **Quality:** Hamlet does not provide evidence to back up his claim, suggesting he either does not know or believes things beyond Horatio's comprehension.
- **Relation:** The comment seems irrelevant to the immediate conversation, hinting at a broader point.

2. Implicatures:

There are unknown and mysterious forces at play beyond human understanding. This hints at supernatural elements or the limitations of human knowledge.

Horatio's understanding of the world is incomplete. This subtly questions his "philosophy" and potentially foreshadows challenges to his beliefs.

3. Contribution to Meaning and Themes:

- Establishes the presence of mystery and the unknown, central themes in the play.
- Introduces the idea of limitations, foreshadowing Hamlet's struggle with fate and self-discovery.
- Creates tension by hinting at things left unsaid, inviting audience speculation.

4. Effects on Audience:

- Intrigues and engages the audience by introducing unanswered questions.
- Creates empathy for Hamlet's sense of isolation and frustration with limited knowledge.
- Prompts the audience to ponder the play's larger themes and interpretations.

Further Exploration:

Alternatives:

"I sense forces beyond our understanding, beyond what your current studies explain." (Less impactful, more direct.)

"The world holds more secrets than you imagine." (Similar meaning, less personal tone.)

Research:

Lady Macbeth's feigned innocence uses **Quality maxim** violation to create dramatic tension. Iago's manipulative language in "Othello" frequently flouts multiple maxims to deceive others.

2. Grice's Maxims (Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner) play a crucial role in determining how the conversational implicature arises. Read this soliloquy use a passage from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and explore the Maxims.

To be, or not to be, that is the question—
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
And, by opposing, end them. To die: to sleep;
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to. 'Tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep—
To sleep, perchance to dream. Ay, there's the rub,
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause—there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life,
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,

The insolence of office, and the spurns

That patient merit of the unworthy takes,

When he himself might his quietus make

With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,

To grunt and sweat under a weary life,

But that the dread of something after death—

The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn

No traveller returns—puzzles the will,

And makes us rather bear those ills we have

Than fly to others that we know not of?

Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,

And thus the native hue of resolution

Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,

And enterprises of great pith and moment

With this regard their currents turn awry,

And lose the name of action.—Soft you now,

The fair Ophelia.—Nymph, in thy orisons

Be all my sins remembered.

Instructions:

Step 1: Divide the text into four parts according to the Gricean Maxims (Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner). Explain how each maxim is observed or violated in each part.

Step 2: Identify the implicature(s) and what is actually meant by Hamlet's words.

Step 3: Discuss how this implicature contributes to the overall understanding of Hamlet's soliloquy, particularly in relation to Hamlet's internal struggle and existential crisis.

Model Answer

Step 1:

- Quantity: Hamlet seems to be providing a balanced discussion of the consequences of living and dying, reflecting the quantity of information expected in such a soliloquy.
- Quality: There is no reason to doubt the truthfulness or sincerity of Hamlet's statements here; he seems genuine in expressing his thoughts.
- Relation: Each part of the speech seems to be related to the central question of existence and the debate over whether it is better to endure life or end it.
- Manner: Hamlet's manner is somewhat reflective and melancholic, befitting the tone of the soliloquy.

Step 2:

- Implicature: Hamlet's words "To die, to sleep; To sleep, perchance to dream. Ay, there's the rub" can be interpreted as an implication that death might not bring the peace that he hopes for. He suggests that in the sleep of death, one may still experience troubling dreams or nightmares, thus undermining the resolution that death would provide a relief from life's troubles.
- Actual Meaning: Hamlet is contemplating the uncertainty of what happens after death. He ponders that death could be a worse state than life, a thought that deeply disturbs him.

Step 3:

- The implicature adds depth to Hamlet's soliloquy, as it showcases his internal conflict. It contributes to the overall understanding of his existential crisis by revealing that he is not simply contemplating the value of life versus death, but also the potential torment of death. This implicature corresponds to the other themes of the play, including the questions of life, death, and the afterlife.

Further Explorations:

Discuss how each maxim is observed or violated and how that contributes to the overall understanding of the text. Provide more context about Hamlet's state of mind and the themes of the play in your analysis.

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Lecture 7

Reference, Anaphora, and Cataphora

Introduction

In pragmatics, "reference," "anaphora," and "cataphora" are concepts related to how language users make connections between words or phrases in discourse. Within this field, these concepts stand out as fundamental mechanisms through which language users create coherence and engage with the vast landscape of discourse.

At its core, pragmatics is concerned with how context influences the interpretation of linguistic expressions. It explores the ways in which speakers and listeners use shared knowledge, assumptions, and contextual cues to convey and understand meaning that goes beyond what is explicitly stated. In this realm, reference, anaphora, and cataphora serve as powerful tools for creating textual cohesion, managing information flow, and establishing connections between different parts of a discourse. Reference, in its broadest sense, deals with how language is used to identify and talk about entities, concepts, or situations in the world. It encompasses the various ways in which speakers and writers point to or invoke particular referents, whether they are physical objects, abstract ideas, or previous segments of discourse. The study of reference in pragmatics extends beyond simple word-object relationships to include complex social, cultural, and contextual factors that influence how referents are identified and understood. Anaphora and cataphora, while closely related to reference, focus more specifically on the linguistic mechanisms used to create links within a text or discourse. These phenomena involve the use of words or phrases (often pronouns or demonstratives) to refer back to previously mentioned entities (anaphora) or forward to entities that will be introduced later (cataphora). By creating these textual links, anaphora and cataphora

contribute significantly to the cohesion and coherence of discourse, allowing speakers and writers to maintain clear referential relationships without constant repetition.[20]

The interplay between reference, anaphora, and cataphora is central to how we construct and interpret meaning in context. These mechanisms allow us to:

- Maintain coherence across stretches of discourse
- Manage the cognitive load for both speakers and listeners by avoiding unnecessary repetition
- Signal the relative importance or prominence of different discourse entities
- Create subtle nuances of meaning through the choice of referential expressions
- Navigate between given and new information in a text
- Establish and maintain common ground between interlocutors

Understanding these concepts is crucial not only for linguists and language theorists but also for anyone interested in effective communication, whether in everyday conversation, literary analysis, or professional contexts such as legal discourse or technical writing. By mastering the use of reference, anaphora, and cataphora, communicators can craft more cohesive, efficient, and impactful messages.

As we explore each of these concepts individually, we will discover their specific characteristics, functions, and the various linguistic forms they can take. We will examine how they operate both linguistically and culturally, their role in both spoken and written discourse, and the cognitive processes involved in producing and interpreting referential relationships. Additionally, we will consider how these pragmatic phenomena interact with other aspects of language use, such as information structure, discourse organization, and the construction of narrative and argumentative texts.

[20] For a detailed exploration of reference, cataphora, and anaphora, see, Andrej Kibrik's fascinating and legthy book, *Reference in Discourse*, 2011.

Through this exploration, we aim to shed light on the sophisticated ways in which language users employ reference, anaphora, and cataphora to create meaning, maintain coherence, and achieve their communicative goals in diverse contexts.

1. **Reference**: Reference refers to the relationship between words or phrases in language and the entities they denote in the world. When we use language, we often refer to objects, people, events, ideas, etc. Reference is the process by which we use language to point to or indicate these entities. For example, in the sentence "The cat is on the mat," "cat" refers to a specific feline animal, and "mat" refers to a particular object on which the cat is located. Therefore, understanding reference involves identifying what specific entities or concepts the words in a sentence or utterance are referring to.

2. **Anaphora**: Anaphora is a specific type of reference where a word or phrase refers back to something mentioned earlier in the discourse. It is a way of connecting different parts of a conversation or text by referring back to previously mentioned entities or ideas. Anaphora often involves the use of pronouns, demonstratives, or other linguistic devices to refer back to something already introduced in the discourse. For example, in the sentence "John said he was tired," the pronoun "he" is an example of anaphora, referring back to the previously mentioned entity, John. Both reference and anaphora are important for understanding how language functions in context, as they help us track and interpret the connections between different elements of discourse.

3. **Cataphora** is the opposite of anaphora in linguistic terms. While anaphora refers to the use of a word or phrase to refer back to something mentioned earlier in the discourse, cataphora involves the use of a word or phrase that refers to something mentioned later in the discourse. In other words, cataphora occurs when a linguistic element precedes the entity or idea to which it refers.

Examples:

“Before she left, Mary kissed her child.”

In this sentence, "she" precedes the introduction of the referent "Mary." The pronoun "she" is cataphoric because it refers to something that comes later in the sentence.

"She left without saying goodbye. Mary, feeling upset, closed the door behind her."

In this example, "Mary" is introduced after the pronoun "her," creating a cataphoric relationship.

Cataphora can be used for various rhetorical or stylistic effects in language, such as creating suspense or maintaining cohesion in discourse by preparing the reader or listener for upcoming information.

Class Practice:

Example Sentences:

1. Before she arrived, Sarah had already prepared dinner for her family.
2. The children played outside until they were called in for dinner.
3. After she finished her homework, Emily went for a walk.
4. He opened the door and saw the surprise waiting for him inside.
5. Despite the rain, she decided to go for a run.

Discussion Questions:

- What words or phrases serve as references in each sentence?
- Can you identify any instances of anaphora in the sentences?
- How about instances of cataphora?
- Why is it important to understand reference and its various forms in language?

Reference, Anaphora, and Cataphora in Literary Texts:

Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*

"It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife."

Explanation: The phrase "a single man" uses indefinite reference, and "in possession of a good fortune" refers to a specific quality that characterizes the men being described.

George Orwell, *1984*

"The Ministry of Truth contained, it was said, three thousand rooms above ground level, and corresponding ramifications below."

- Explanation: The "Ministry of Truth" is a proper noun referring to a specific institution, illustrating specific reference.

2. Anaphora:

J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*

"Harry was fast asleep under the blanket. He was dreaming about a flying motorbike."

Explanation: "He" is an anaphoric reference to "Harry."

F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

"Gatsby turned out all right at the end; it is what preyed on Gatsby, what foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams that temporarily closed out my interest in the abortive sorrows and short-winded elations of men."

Explanation: The repeated use of "Gatsby" helps to maintain reference through anaphora, connecting to the previous mention.

3. Cataphora:

Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness..."

Explanation: The repeated use of "it was" is cataphoric, creating suspense by delaying the specific details of what "it" refers to.

B. J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit*

"In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit."

- Explanation: The clause "there lived a hobbit" introduces "a hobbit" in a cataphoric way, as we learn about the creature only after its home is described.

These extracts can help illustrate how writers use these pragmatic tools to create cohesion and flow in their narratives. Each one provides a clear example of how reference, anaphora, or cataphora functions within a sentence or passage.

The Dilemma of Reference and The Pragmatics of Identity

You find yourself at home, solitary and serene, amidst the late hours of the night. Suddenly, a knock echoes through the stillness, unsettling your tranquility. You timidly ask: "Who's there?" The reply swiftly follows, "It's me." At this point, two plausible courses of action emerge: either the familiar sound of the voice prompts an immediate recognition, leading to the opening of the door, or the alien nature of the voice prompts hesitation and fear, and consequently, the decision not to engage with the unseen visitor.

Upon introspection, the phrase "it's me" emerges as intrinsically truthful from the speaker's perspective, yet inherently deficient in providing informative value to the listener, as it fails to unequivocally establish the speaker's identity. Indeed, the referent of "me" remains fluid, contingent upon the individual articulating it (Evans, 1982).

Thus, the issue of reference presents itself as a pragmatic dilemma. While language facilitates the designation of individuals and entities—such as the renowned poet John Milton or the epic narrative "Paradise Lost"—indirect references, exemplified by the enigmatic "me" in the

nocturnal encounter, necessitate the employment of alternative strategies, both linguistic and non-linguistic, to ascertain the intended referent.

Proper nouns epitomize linguistic expressions endowed with unambiguous reference, encompassing personal appellations, institutional titles, and identifiable objects (Gundel et al.1993). Nonetheless, reference can be accomplished without recourse to "proper" nomenclature. For instance, Aristotle is commonly hailed as "the father of logic," while historical figures like Emma of Normandy, adorned with various epithets such as "the Rose of Normandy" or "the Fair Maid of Normandy," exemplify the diverse modes of reference employed throughout history. Similarly, individuals like Sir Walter Scott may be denoted by their notable achievements, as in "the author of Waverly." Even inanimate objects, such as automobiles, can be whimsically named based on their attributes, as evidenced by the colloquial moniker "Widowmaker" bestowed upon the illustrious Porsche 911 due to its formidable power.

Anaphora, alongside proper nouns, plays a pivotal role in language reference, particularly through the utilization of indefinite and definite articles. Consider the following illustration: "A mosquito is buzzing about my room. It is keeping me awake." Here, the pronoun "it" in the second sentence directly correlates with the antecedent, the indefinite noun phrase "a mosquito." Similarly, pronouns like "it" and "he" in sentences such as "The man was walking slowly; he carried a big stick" function as referential markers to previously mentioned entities within the discourse context. This phenomenon, known as anaphora, highlights the cohesive nature of language, where subsequent references rely on antecedents established earlier in the conversation or text. In addition to anaphora, which involves the referent preceding the pronoun, linguistic discourse also incorporates "cataphora," where the reference occurs subsequent to the pronoun's mention (Krifka 2013).

In his *Whose Language*: *A Study in Linguistic Pragmatics* (1985), Jacob Mey explores the pragmatic dimensions of anaphora, emphasizing the need to consider not only the immediate antecedent (the entity preceding the pronoun) but also the broader situational context. Mey intriguingly probes the implicit values embedded within anaphoric expressions, particularly in relation to gender implications within the framework of Feminism. Mey astutely observes the gender dynamics inherent in language reference, particularly in the context of the ongoing debate surrounding gendered references. He points to the controversy surrounding the "generic masculine" (Mey, 338), reignited by the feminist movement, questioning the acceptability of employing masculine pronouns to refer to both male and female individuals or mixed groups.

Epicene Pronouns: Gender Equality and Grammatical Norms in English

Various proposed solutions to the dilemma of gendered pronoun reference include the use of generic plurals such as "they," or the adoption of combined pronouns like "s/he" or "he or she," illustrating attempts to address gender inclusivity within language structures.

Moreover, it is noteworthy to mention the contemporary discourse on gender-inclusive language. Today, there is heated debate regarding the use of gender-specific pronouns such as "he" and "she." This controversy underscores the evolving nature of language and societal values.

Charlotte Stormbom (2023) explores this thorny issue in her seminal chapter "Epicene Pronouns New and Old," addressing the complexities surrounding the use of epicene pronouns in English. She highlights the ongoing tension between the pursuit of gender equality in language and the traditional views on grammatical and stylistic appropriateness. She presents the following example:

a. The average person checks his phone 47 times a day.

b. The average person checks his or her phone 47 times a day.

c. The average person checks their phone 47 times a day (Stormbom, 411).

The issue of "epicene pronouns" in English reflects a conflict between promoting "gender equality" in language and maintaining "stylistic" and "syntactic appropriateness." Traditionally, the pronoun *he* was used generically but has been criticized for being "male biased" (MacKay and Fulkerson 1979; Gastil 1990; Miller and James 2009). Variants like *he* or *she* are seen as "awkward" and fail to include those outside the "traditional gender binary" (Bradley et al. 2019; Baron 2020; Stormbom 2021). While singular *they* offers a more inclusive option, it is often deemed "grammatically unacceptable" because it is typically considered a "plural pronoun," conflicting with singular antecedents (Stormbom 411).

The Interplay of Reference, Anaphora, and Cataphora in Advertisements and Cultural Texts

This section explores into the significant roles of reference, anaphora, and cataphora in advertisements and various cultural texts, showcasing how these linguistic devices enhance communication, evoke emotions, and influence perceptions. By analyzing diverse examples, we can appreciate how these techniques shape meaning and engage audiences effectively.

In the world of advertisements and cultural texts, the careful use of language plays a crucial role in conveying messages and influencing consumer behavior. Among the linguistic devices that enhance communication are reference, anaphora, and cataphora. These tools not only provide clarity but also create a rhythmic flow and emotional resonance that captivate audiences.

Reference in Advertisements

Reference in advertisements often involves linking the product to broader cultural contexts or emotions. This can create familiarity and encourage a connection between the consumer and the brand.

Cultural References: Advertisements

An advertisement for a luxury car may state, "Experience the elegance that defines the finest in automotive engineering." Here, "the finest" references not just the car itself but also a cultural ideal of luxury and status, appealing to the consumer's aspirations.

Anaphora in Advertisements

Anaphora, the repetition of words or phrases at the beginning of successive clauses, is a powerful rhetorical device that reinforces key messages and themes.

Repeated Phrases

A campaign for a health drink might use the slogan, "Every sip revitalizes. Every sip refreshes. Every sip inspires." Analysis: The repetition of "Every sip" serves as an anaphoric reference that emphasizes the positive attributes of the drink, creating a rhythmic appeal that makes the message more memorable.

Cataphora in Advertisements

Cataphora, where a reference is made to something before it is fully introduced, builds anticipation and engages the audience's curiosity. Cataphora can also be found in advertisements to generate interest, build anticipation, and create connections with the audience. Here is an example:

"Experience the thrill of the unknown. Step into a world where adventure awaits. But first, you need the right gear."

In this advertisement, the phrase "But first, you need the right gear" serves as a cataphoric reference. It leads the audience into the idea that before they can experience the thrill of the unknown or step into a world of adventure, they need to acquire the necessary equipment or gear. This cataphoric structure builds anticipation and creates a sense of curiosity, encouraging the audience to imagine themselves in the exciting scenarios presented in the advertisement. By using cataphora, the advertisement effectively draws attention to the product or service being promoted while also engaging the audience's imagination and desire for adventure.

Building Suspense

An ad for a travel agency might say, "Discover the adventure of a lifetime. The landscapes, the cultures, the experiences await you." The phrase "the adventure of a lifetime" serves as a cataphoric reference, creating excitement and drawing the audience's attention to what follows. It invites the consumer to envision themselves in the experience being promoted.

Cultural Texts

The use of reference, anaphora, and cataphora extends beyond advertisements into various cultural texts, including speeches, public service announcements, and social media content.

Social Media Campaigns

A social media campaign for environmental awareness might state, "Together, we can change the world. Together, we can protect our planet. Together, we can ensure a better future." The use of "Together" as an anaphoric reference fosters a sense of unity and collective action, encouraging individuals to participate in the movement for change.

Public Service Announcements

A public service announcement may open with, “Before you think of the consequences, consider this: every action counts.” The phrase “consider this” acts as cataphora, drawing the audience’s attention and creating a sense of urgency before presenting the important message that follows.

The interplay of reference, anaphora, and cataphora in advertisements and cultural texts demonstrates the power of language in shaping meaning and influencing behavior. By leveraging these linguistic devices, advertisers and communicators can create impactful messages that resonate with audiences, evoke emotions, and drive engagement. Understanding these techniques allows us to critically analyze how language functions within various cultural contexts, enhancing our appreciation of the art of communication.

Literary Exploration: Anaphora and Cataphora in Poetry

There is truly nothing better than a poem to facilitate our understanding of reference, anaphora, and cataphora:

Anaphora, a poetic device,
Repeats the start, like a rolling dice.
With words that echo, a rhythmic flow,
It captivates hearts, it steals the show.

Cataphora, a twist in the tale,
Introduces ideas before they prevail.
A glimpse of what's to come, a clever tease,
It keeps us guessing; it brings us peace.

AABB, the rhyme scheme we embrace,
A pattern that adds beauty and grace.
With words that dance in perfect sync,
We create a poem that makes hearts think.

Anaphora and Cataphora, hand in hand,
Weaving tales like a poet's band.
With repetition and anticipation,
We craft verses that leave a lasting impression.

So let us celebrate these poetic tools,
Anaphora and Cataphora, the masters' rules.
In every line, in every verse,
They bring magic; they make words converse.

Jacob Mey explains that "a pragmatic approach to anaphora tries to take into account not only what the anaphorical pronoun is referring to, the 'antecedent' (i.e., that which precedes the pronoun and to which the pronoun refers), which can be a noun or noun phrase, a piece of (con)text, but also the whole situation." Poetry often employs reference and anaphora to create connections between different elements of the text, including situations and contexts. Here are a few examples:

Reference to Situations and Contexts

In T.S. Eliot's poem "The Waste Land," the entire poem is rich with references to various historical, literary, and cultural contexts:

April is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.

Here, the reference to April as "the cruellest month" evokes a particular feeling or mood associated with the changing seasons, blending memory and desire. This reference engages with a larger cultural and emotional context, providing depth to the poem's themes of disillusionment and renewal.

Anaphora beyond Pronouns

In Maya Angelou's poem "Still I Rise," the repeated use of the phrase "I rise" serves as anaphora, but it goes beyond just pronouns:

You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Here, "I rise" not only functions as anaphora but also emphasizes resilience and strength in the face of adversity. The repetition of this phrase reinforces the central theme of empowerment and overcoming obstacles throughout the poem.

Reference to Symbolic Contexts

In William Wordsworth's poem "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey," the speaker reflects on his past experiences and their significance in his present:

For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity...

Here, the reference to "the still, sad music of humanity" evokes a symbolic context where nature serves as a metaphor for deeper human emotions and experiences. This reference adds layers of meaning to the poem, inviting readers to contemplate the relationship between nature, memory, and the passage of time.

These examples illustrate how reference and anaphora in poetry extend beyond mere pronouns, encompassing situations, contexts, and symbolic imagery to enrich the reader's understanding and interpretation of the text.

Anticipation and Suspense

Cataphora in poetry can also be used to create anticipation, suspense, or to establish connections between different elements of the poem. Here are some examples:

In Emily Dickinson's poem "Because I could not stop for Death," the following lines create a sense of anticipation through cataphora:

We passed the School, where Children strove
At Recess – in the Ring –
We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain –
We passed the Setting Sun –

Here, the repetition of "We passed" at the beginning of each line creates a cataphoric structure, leading the reader through a series of scenes on the journey with Death. This technique builds anticipation for what lies ahead and adds a sense of inevitability to the progression of the poem.

Establishing Connections

In Langston Hughes's poem "Harlem," also known as "A Dream Deferred," cataphora is used to connect different images and ideas:

What happens to a dream deferred?
Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore—
And then run?

Here, the phrase "What happens to a dream deferred?" serves as a cataphoric reference, leading into a series of questions that explore the consequences of delaying one's dreams. This cataphoric structure helps to establish a thematic connection between the initial question and the subsequent imagery, creating a cohesive exploration of the poem's central idea.

Building Momentum

In Walt Whitman's poem "Song of Myself," cataphora is used to build momentum and highlight the interconnectedness of all things:

This is the grass that grows wherever the land is and the water is,
This the common air that bathes the globe.

Here, the phrase "This is" serves as a cataphoric reference, leading into descriptions of various elements of nature. This cataphoric structure reinforces the poem's themes of unity and interconnectedness, emphasizing the idea that all living things are part of a larger whole.

These examples demonstrate how cataphora in poetry can be used to create anticipation, establish connections between different elements, and build momentum, enriching the reader's experience and understanding of the text.

Through the exploration of reference, anaphora, and cataphora in both poetry and advertisements, we see how these linguistic devices enhance communication and engage audiences. They allow poets and advertisers to create deeper connections with their audiences, evoke emotions, and craft compelling narratives that resonate with readers and consumers alike. As we continue to analyze and appreciate these techniques, we gain a richer understanding of how language shapes our experiences and perceptions.

Creative Writing Exercise: Crafting Narratives Using Reference, Anaphora, and Cataphora

Objective: Write a short narrative (150-200 words) that effectively uses reference, anaphora, and cataphora to create a cohesive and engaging story. This exercise will help you practice how to establish and connect characters, objects, or ideas through various linguistic tools.

Instructions:

1. Choose a Scenario: Select one of the following scenarios or come up with your own:

- A mysterious package arrives at a doorstep.
- An unexpected visitor shows up at a family gathering.
- A long-lost item is discovered in an attic.

- A stray animal follows a person home.

2. Establish Reference: Introduce your characters, objects, or settings clearly. Make sure to use proper nouns, titles, or descriptive phrases to provide clear references. Example: Instead of just saying "he," introduce "Mr. Thompson, the old watchmaker."

3. Use Anaphora: Create sentences where the pronouns or referential phrases point back to something mentioned earlier in the text. For example:

- "She picked up the letter. It was from an old friend."
- "The cat followed her all the way home. It was clear that it wanted something."

4. Employ Cataphora: Craft sentences where the pronoun or reference appears before the specific noun it refers to. Example:

- "He was a quiet man, this new neighbor, who rarely spoke to anyone."

Example:

There was a knock at the door. It was sharp and insistent, echoing through the empty hallway. Mr. Cole, who had been nodding off in his armchair, jolted awake. He grumbled as he shuffled to the door, wondering who could be visiting at such an odd hour. The visitor, it turned out, was no stranger. She had the same bright eyes and determined smile he remembered from years ago. It was her, the one who had once been his brightest student, now standing there after so many years.

Your Task:

- Write a short narrative that includes:
- At least two clear references (names, titles, descriptive phrases).
- Two examples of anaphora (use of pronouns or referential expressions pointing back).
- One example of cataphora (reference before the specific noun).

Hint: Focus on creating suspense or intrigue by playing with how you reveal information through your references.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the exploration of reference, anaphora, and cataphora underscores their vital roles in creating coherence and clarity in communication. These linguistic tools not only enhance the richness of discourse but also reflect the intricacies of how we navigate meaning in social contexts. By understanding the mechanisms of these reference strategies, we gain insight into the dynamic interplay between language and cognition, ultimately enriching our comprehension of pragmatic interactions. As we continue to engage with these concepts, we are better equipped to analyze and appreciate the nuances of language in both written and spoken forms.

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Lecture 8

Speech Acts and Speech Act Theory

In a series of 1955 lectures, J.L. Austin launched the discussion on speech acts for the first time. His lectures were later published in book form in 1962 under the title *How to Do Things with Words*. John Searle further developed Austin's ideas in his *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (1969). Searle concluded that language itself is a form of action, that language *does* things; it does not simply report or describe.

Austin called language that "does" something "performative," in contrast to "constative" language, which does not aim to get something done, but describes or makes a statement. Eventually, however, he came to see all language as performative. An often-cited example of the performative aspect of speech is the statement "I do" at a wedding ceremony.

Speech acts are divided into three categories: the locutionary (or the propositional), the illocutionary, and the perlocutionary. A locutionary act is a proposition; it refers to the act of the speaker as he or she speaks. An illocutionary act refers to that which is performed by the speaker in making the proposition (a threat, a question, an order, an apology). A perlocutionary act refers to how the speech affects or influences the listener (intimidating, puzzling, impressing).

> The theory of speech acts starts with the assumption that the minimal unit of human communication is not a sentence or other expression, but rather the performance of certain kinds of acts, such as making statements, asking questions, giving orders, describing, explaining, apologizing, thanking, congratulating, etc." (Searle, Kiefer, & Bierwisch vii).[21]

[21] Searle, John R.,Ferenc Kiefer, and Manfred Bienvisch, eds. 'Introduction." *Speech Act Theory and Pragmatics.* Holland/Boston: D. Reidel, 1980, vii-xii

Speech act theory, then, reintroduces the concept of speaker/ writer with intentions and hearer/ reader with idiosyncratic responses into the study of style" (Winterwood, 215).[22]

Example 1

In 1884, *The Boston Globe* published an article by Joaquin Miller describing the activities of four suffrage advocates (members of militant women's organisations who, under the banner "Votes for Women" fought for the right to vote in public elections). These members were speaking at public meetings at the state Capitol. According to Miller, the first of these advocates arrived at the meeting,

> …with a whirr , a snap, consciousness and self-assertion, that at once was a sort of challenge to battle… she ran around among the chairs and tables and men, like a little hen that had lost her little chicken. Then she fluttered down beside the clerk, slammed down some books, and saying 'I am here to make a speech this morning

There are two levels of speech acts here: the assertive speech act, where the speaker clearly declares her purpose and presence, and Joaquin Miller's ridicule of the speaker as a whole.

A. the speaker's words and actions can be understood as performing various speech acts:

- Assertive Speech Act: The speaker asserts her presence and intention to speak: "I am here to make a speech this morning." This is an example of an assertive speech act, where the speaker expresses a belief or provides information about the world.
- Directive Speech Act: The speaker's actions, particularly her running around and slamming down books, can be interpreted as a directive speech act, specifically as a command or request for attention. Although the words "make a speech" can be seen as

[22] Winterowd, W. Ross. "Linguistics and Composition." *Teaching Composition: Ten Bibliographical Essays.* Ed. Gary Tate. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1976. 197-221.

a directive, the speaker's physical actions emphasize her assertiveness and intention to be noticed.

- "with a whirr, a snap, consciousness and self-assertion, that at once was a sort of challenge to battle…

Here, the "whirr" and "snap" suggest sudden movement and action, while "consciousness and self-assertion" indicate awareness and confidence. This part sets the scene for the speaker's assertiveness and determination.

- "she ran around among the chairs and tables and men, like a little hen that had lost her little chicken."

This simile likens the speaker's frantic movements to those of a hen searching for her lost chick, emphasizing her disoriented and frantic state. This can be seen as a directive speech act, commanding attention through her actions.

- Then she fluttered down beside the clerk, slammed down some books…

The speaker's physical actions of "fluttering down" and "slamming down some books" are directive in nature, drawing attention to herself and her intentions.

- "and saying 'I am here to make a speech this morning'"

This utterance is an assertive speech act, where the speaker clearly declares her purpose and presence.

The passage indeed illustrates how the speaker's words and actions perform various speech acts, demonstrating her assertiveness, intention to be noticed, and declaration of purpose.

On the other hand, it is clear that these are more than mere words spoken or written to describe a suffragist. They *do* something (illocutionary act); they ridicule by making clear women's incapacity for political or legal speech and their absurdity participating in electoral politics.

Facets of the Illocutionary Act:

The illocutionary act refers to the intention behind the speaker's words, or what the speaker is doing by uttering those words. In this case, the illocutionary act is to ridicule and belittle suffragists.

- Description of Suffragists:

The speaker's words are not merely a description but serve a deeper purpose.

- Ridiculing Women's Incapacity for Political or Legal Speech:

The speaker's words ridicule the idea of women participating in political or legal speech. By stating, "she fluttered down beside the clerk, slammed down some books, and saying 'I am here to make a speech this morning'", the speaker portrays the suffragist as incompetent and absurd in her attempt to engage in political discourse. The suffragist's actions are depicted as frantic and ineffectual, contrasting with the seriousness and authority associated with political speech. This ridicules the suffragist's aspirations and emphasizes the societal perception of women as unfit for political involvement.

- Absurdity of Participating in Electoral Politics:

Additionally, the passage highlights the absurdity of women participating in electoral politics. The suffragist's actions are portrayed as comical and out of place, suggesting that women's involvement in political processes is incongruous and inappropriate.

In summary, the passage illustrates how the speaker's words go beyond mere description to perform an illocutionary act of ridiculing and belittling suffragists. By emphasizing women's supposed incapacity for political or legal speech and highlighting the absurdity of their participation in electoral politics, the passage reinforces societal stereotypes and biases against women's rights and political engagement.

Example 2

2. Stephen Crane's *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1893) depicts the struggles of the working poor to survive in a hostile environment. The very title of this short novel alerts us to the fact

that Crane's central female character, Maggie Johnson, will suffer greatly in the dilapidated world she lives in. Maggie not only ends up "a girl of the streets," but she ends up dead, mourned by a mother and brother who showed her little kindness during her brief tragic life. We as readers almost immediately sympathize with her plight (a perlocutionary act) because she possesses a great potential toward "better things." In addition, titles usually perform an illocutionary act of promising something.

Perlocutionary Act:

The perlocutionary act refers to the effect the speaker's words have on the audience or reader. In this case, the text aims to evoke sympathy and emotional response from the reader towards Maggie's plight. The reader is expected to feel compassion and sadness for Maggie's struggles and eventual demise.

The Title's Illocutionary Act:

The illocutionary act refers to the intention behind the title of the novel. The title *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* suggests that the central focus of the story is on Maggie and her experiences within the urban environment. It promises to depict Maggie's life and struggles as a young woman in the streets. The title sets the stage for the narrative, indicating that Maggie is the main character and her environment is the urban streets. Moreover, the phrase "A Girl of the Streets" implies that Maggie's life is intertwined with the harsh realities of urban poverty and degradation. This prepares the reader for the challenges Maggie will face. By using "Maggie" as the title, Crane personalizes the story, emphasizing the individuality and humanity of the protagonist. This makes it easier for readers to connect with her and empathize with her struggles. In fact, the reader's sympathy towards Maggie's plight is enhanced by the perception of her potential for "better things." This suggests that despite her circumstances, Maggie possesses qualities or aspirations that could lead to a more positive outcome. However, the tragic ending foreshadowed by the title and the narrative events

underscores the harsh reality of Maggie's situation. Despite her potential, Maggie's life ends in tragedy, highlighting the challenges faced by the working poor in society.

In summary, Crane's choice of title not only promises to depict Maggie's life in the streets but also invokes sympathy from the reader towards her struggles and tragic fate. This combination of the title's illocutionary act and the perlocutionary effect on the reader sets the tone for the narrative and emphasizes the harsh realities of urban poverty, as well as the inevitability of Maggie's downfall, underscoring the social critique at the heart of the novel.

The Performative Power of Literature: Social Change through Narrative

Some literary works taken as a whole have a **performative** dimension. *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* by Robert Tressell (1914) is a socialist polemic about a group of honest men exploited by money-grabbing capitalists. It was based on the injustices faced by the working classes in Edwardian England. The workers are "philanthropists" because they slave away for a pittance, essentially giving away the value of their labour to their employers. The novel was an integral part of the drive for social reform at the start of the last century. Likewise, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe, which tells the story of African-American slave Uncle Tom, brought the horrors of slavery to the attention of the public on a personal level for the first time, causing an uproar. The novel greatly furthered the abolitionist cause in the north, ratcheted up tensions with southern slaveholders and, as Lincoln suggested, possibly even helped tip the country into civil war. According to some reports, Abraham Lincoln reportedly greeted Harriet Beecher Stowe when he met her in 1862 by these words "So you're the little woman who wrote the book that started this great war." This is a vivid illustration of how certain literary works go beyond mere storytelling and take on a performative dimension, influencing society and inciting change.

An Exploration of the Performative Power of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe

This novel tells the story of Uncle Tom, an African-American slave, and exposes the horrors of slavery. It personalized the experiences of slaves, bringing the issue of slavery to the forefront of public consciousness. It played a significant role in furthering the abolitionist cause, particularly in the northern states. The novel also intensified tensions between northern abolitionists and southern slaveholders, contributing to the growing divide in the United States. There are even reports that President Abraham Lincoln credited the novel with starting the Civil War, showing its profound impact on American society and politics.

In essence, these literary works serve as more than just stories; they are catalysts for social change. Through their powerful narratives and themes, they provoke thought, challenge societal norms, and inspire action, ultimately shaping the course of history. They have a performative action.

Practice: Considering Illocutionary and Perlocutionary Acts in Literary Works:

Here are some classic literary works well-suited for analyzing speech acts:

- **Drama:** Plays like *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare or *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller are rich with dialogue where characters employ speech acts to achieve specific goals (illocutionary force) and influence others (perlocutionary effect).

In such plays, dialogue plays a crucial role in conveying the intentions of characters and influencing the actions of others. This is achieved through speech acts, where characters use language not only to communicate but also to perform actions.

- An Illustration from *Hamlet*:

  In Act 3, Scene 1, Hamlet delivers one of his most famous soliloquies, demonstrating the power of speech acts:

To be, or not to be: that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
And by opposing end them?

In this soliloquy, Hamlet is not just pondering life and death; he is also deliberating whether to take action against the injustices he perceives. This speech act reflects his inner turmoil and his struggle to decide on a course of action.

- An Illustration from *Death of a Salesman*

In Act 2 of *Death of a Salesman*, Willy Loman engages in a heated argument with his son Biff:

Willy: Biff, I swear to God!
Biff: Don't take it away from me, Pop.
Willy: You and Hap and I, and I'll show you all the towns. America is full of beautiful towns and fine, upstanding people.

In this exchange, Willy is not simply expressing his desire to travel with his sons; he is also attempting to assert his authority as a father and persuade Biff to conform to his vision of success. This speech act reflects Willy's desperation to maintain control over his family and validate his own sense of worth.

Therefore, in both examples, characters use speech acts to convey their thoughts, emotions, and intentions, while also attempting to influence the behavior of others. Hamlet's soliloquy reveals his internal struggle and his contemplation of action, while Willy Loman's argument with Biff reflects his desire to assert authority and maintain control. These examples demonstrate how dialogue in plays serves not only to advance the plot but also to reveal the complex dynamics between characters and their motivations.

The Performative Power of Speech Acts in Comedy and Satire: Humor, Irony, and Social Critique

Comedies such as *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde frequently employ ambiguous speech acts and linguistic manipulation to create misunderstandings, which lie at the heart of their humor. In these plays, characters often engage in witty banter, wordplay, and double *entendres*, using language in a way that is intentionally misleading or playful. The humor arises when characters misinterpret or twist the meaning of each other's statements, leading to absurd or exaggerated situations.

For example, in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Wilde uses ambiguous speech acts to highlight the absurdities of social conventions and double standards. Characters like Algernon and Jack use language to deceive and maintain their facades, which creates comic misunderstandings. Through clever dialogue and manipulation of speech acts, Wilde creates a comedic environment where the true meanings of words and phrases are often hidden, resulting in humorous exchanges that both entertain the audience and critique social norms. This technique illustrates Wilde's skillful use of performative language, where the act of speaking itself drives the comedic action, revealing deeper layers of irony and satire in the characters' interactions.Explanation:

Illustration from *The Importance of Being Earnest*

In Act 1 of the play, Algernon humorously manipulates language to tease Jack about his double life as Ernest and his questionable moral character:

> Algernon: My dear boy, I hope you are not leading a double life, pretending to be wicked and being really good all the time. That would be hypocrisy.

Here, Algernon's speech is deliberately ambiguous, implying that Jack might be a hypocrite. This creates humor as the audience knows that both characters are leading double lives, yet they are unaware of each other's secrets.

In Act 2, when Algernon discovers Jack's cigarette case engraved with the initials "Cecily," a humorous exchange ensues:

Algernon: You have always told me it was your aunt's that has been changed.

Jack: Yes! But that was not true.

Algernon: Jack, you are at the muffins again!

Here, Algernon deliberately misunderstands Jack's explanation, pretending to believe his absurd excuses. This manipulation of language adds to the humor of the scene as Jack struggles to maintain his facade.

Thus, in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Wilde cleverly uses ambiguous speech acts and language manipulation to create misunderstandings and absurd situations, which serve as the basis for comedic effect. Characters like Algernon and Jack engage in witty joking and employ wordplay to tease each other, leading to humorous exchanges that entertain the audience. This style of comedy examplifies Wilde's mastery of language and his ability to create humor through clever dialogue and linguistic playfulness.

Satirical Speech Acts as Tools for Social Critique

Satirical works like *Animal Farm* by George Orwell and *A Modest Proposal* by Jonathan Swift make extensive use of speech acts to highlight and critique societal flaws and injustices. These authors cleverly manipulate language to convey deeper meanings, often masking their true intentions through irony, sarcasm, and exaggeration. The intended illocutionary force of these speech acts may not always be immediately apparent, as the surface meaning might suggest one thing while the underlying message conveys something entirely different.

For instance, in *Animal Farm*, Orwell uses the speech acts of the pigs, particularly through characters like Napoleon and Squealer, to assert ideals of equality and fairness. However, these proclamations are laden with irony, as the reality within the narrative demonstrates increasing inequality and manipulation. The phrase "All animals are equal, but some animals

are more equal than others" exemplifies this; while it seems to affirm equality, it simultaneously reveals the perversion of that principle. The perlocutionary effect of such speech acts is to provoke readers to recognize the hypocrisy and corruption of power structures, drawing parallels to real-world political systems.

Similarly, Swift's *A Modest Proposal* employs speech acts to satirically suggest an absurd solution to the problem of poverty in Ireland: the selling of children as food. The illocutionary force of Swift's proposal seems to offer a practical economic strategy, but the use of dark humor and sarcasm undercuts this, forcing the reader to confront the actual issues of exploitation and mistreatment of the Irish by the British government. The perlocutionary effect is one of shock, compelling readers to reflect on the severity of the social and political injustices that Swift sought to address.

By disguising the true meaning behind their words, both Orwell and Swift effectively utilize speech acts to make powerful social critiques. Their use of irony and sarcasm serves not only to entertain but to incite readers to critically examine the flaws in their societies, encouraging social change and a rethinking of accepted norms.

The following are more specific examples:

- Satirical works, such as *Animal Farm* by George Orwell and *A Modest Proposal* by Jonathan Swift, utilize speech acts to reveal societal flaws and injustices. The authors often employ irony, sarcasm, and other rhetorical devices to convey their intended messages.
- Illustration from *Animal Farm* by George Orwell:
- In *Animal Farm*, Orwell uses allegorical characters to satirize the corruption of power and the failure of the Russian Revolution. For instance, when the pigs Napoleon and

Squealer alter the Seven Commandments to suit their own interests, it is a clear example of speech acts being used to manipulate truth:

- Napoleon: "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others."
- Here, the illocutionary force is the assertion of equality, but the perlocutionary effect is the imposition of hierarchy and inequality. The irony in this statement exposes the hypocrisy of the pigs and the corruption of power.
- In *A Modest Proposal*, Swift employs a satirical tone to critique the British government's exploitation of Ireland and the mistreatment of the poor. Swift proposes that impoverished Irish families should sell their children as food to wealthy landowners:
- "I have been assured by a very knowing American of my acquaintance in London, that a young healthy child well nursed is at a year old a most delicious, nourishing, and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled…"
- Here, Swift's use of irony and sarcasm masks the true meaning of the proposal - to highlight the absurdity of British policies towards Ireland and the plight of the poor. The intended illocutionary force is shock and criticism, while the perlocutionary effect is to provoke reflection and social change.

Conclusion:

In *Animal Farm* and *A Modest Proposal*, Orwell and Swift use speech acts to convey powerful social critiques. By employing irony, sarcasm, and satire, they reveal the injustices and hypocrisies of their respective societies. These works aim to provoke critical thinking and incite readers to challenge oppressive systems and advocate for change. Through their masterful use of language, Orwell and Swift demonstrate how speech acts can be powerful tools for social commentary and reform.

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